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Martin MURPHY

THAME, TÜBINGEN, KRAKÓW AND READING:
THE ITINERARY OF LEONARD COX,
HUMANIST AND SCHOOLMASTER (C.1495-1550)

The peripatetic career of Leonard Cox is gradually coming to light.¹ His contribution to the humanist Renaissance at Kraków in the early sixteenth century has been explored by Polish scholars such as Stanislaw Kot, Henryk Barycz and Henryk Zins, and more recently in this country by Andrew Breeze and Jacqueline Glomski. Glomski's seminal study of the relationship between patrons and writers at Kraków has revealed Cox's central role in the dissemination of Erasmian humanism in Poland. Nor was his influence confined to Poland: Bennet K. Witt has shown that Cox transmitted the educational programme of Erasmus and Melanchthon to what was then the kingdom of Hungary and is now the republic of Slovakia. Back in England, appointed by the last Abbot of Reading to take charge of the town's free school, Cox wrote the first textbook in English on the art of rhetoric, re-published in a modern edition by F.L. Carpenter in 1899. Later, as J.K. McConica has demonstrated, he was one of the Erasmian writers recruited by Thomas Cromwell to support his programme of humanist reform – a subject which has been investigated even further by Agnes Juhász-Ormsby. In a careful account of Cox's life written for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, S.F. Ryle has corrected the many errors contained in the earlier DNB entry.² On these

¹ I am much indebted to Ronald Truman for his comments on the first draft of this article. My thanks are also due to Andrew Breeze, Jacqueline Glomski and Ralph Houlbrooke.

² Henryk Zins, 'A British Humanist and the University of Kraków at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century', *Renaissance Studies*, 8.1 (1994), 13-39; Andrew Breeze, 'Leonard Cox: A Welsh Humanist in Poland and Hungary', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 25 (1988), 399-410; Andrew Breeze – Jacqueline Glomski, 'An Early British Treatise upon Education: Leonard Cox's *De erudienda iuventute* (1526)', *Humanistica Lovaniensia*, 40 (1991), 113-167; Jacqueline Glomski, *Patronage and Humanist Literature in the Age of the Jagiellons: Court and Career in the Writings of Rudolf Agricola Junior, Valentin Eck, and Leonard Cox*, *Erasmus Studies*, 16 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Bennett

foundations, and with the help of new evidence, the present article is an attempt to piece together the disparate episodes of Cox's life, and to explore his character and his career as a whole. That he was – in Anthony Wood's words – 'more eminent abroad than at home' is true even now.³

Cox inserted some brief autobiographical details, which have hitherto been overlooked, into his edition of William Lily's primer of Latin grammar, published in 1540 (see Appendix 1). A grammar is the last place one expects to find such data but, as I will argue later, Cox was writing at a critical moment of his life, when he was out of a job and anxious to remind his patron (Thomas Cromwell) of his European reputation as a man of learning who was on familiar terms with Erasmian humanists in Germany, Poland and Hungary. Hence he illustrated the rules governing the use of the locative by listing the places in Europe where he had studied or taught between 1514 and 1529, and the distinguished company he had kept there. It is significant that all but two of the individuals he names are listed in Bietenholz and Deutscher's *Contemporaries of Erasmus*.

Cox is first recorded as having matriculated at the University of Tübingen on June 12th 1514, where the registrar entered his name as 'Leonhardus Cokken ex Thame'. Four years later 'Leonhardus Kacz de Tham, pauper' graduated B.A., being placed second in a list of twelve students. On both occasions he was excused the normal fee on the grounds of poverty.⁴ The fact that he gave Thame, in Oxfordshire, as his place of origin is all the more puzzling since according to a later family pedigree, his father, Laurence Cox, came from Monmouthshire. This Welsh origin is supported by the fact that in Kraków Leonard sometimes signed his Latin verses as 'Leonardus Coxus Britannus' (rather than 'Anglus'). At a later critical

K. Witt, 'Leonard Stöckel: *Docta Pietas* in the Service of Lutheran Reform' (Ph.D. thesis for the University of Missouri-Columbia, 2008); James K. McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); Agnes Juhász-Ormsby, 'Leonard Cox and the Erasmian Circles of Early Sixteenth-Century England', in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Upsaliensis. Proceedings of the Fourteenth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies (Uppsala 2009)*, eds Astrid Steiner-Weber *et al.*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2012), I, 505-514.

³ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses: An Exact History of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their Education in the University of Oxford, to which are added the Fasti, or Annals of the Said University*, ed. Philip Bliss, 4 vols (London: Rivington, 1813-1820), I (1813), 123-124. Most of the errors concerning Cox's career can be traced back to this source.

⁴ *Die Matrikeln der Universität Tübingen. Erster Band: 1477-1600*, ed. Heinrich Hermelink (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1906), p. 201 (Matrikel 65.14); *Die Matrikel der Magister und Bakkalare der Artistenfakultät (1447-1535)*, eds Miriam Eberlein – Stefan Lang (Ostfilden: Thorbecke, 2006), nr. 1940. I owe these references to Dr Michael Wischnath, the university archivist.

juncture in his life, he withdrew for a short time to Caerleon, in Monmouthshire, which suggests that he had family connections there. But in what circumstances did his father move from Monmouthshire to Oxfordshire? The answer may possibly lie in a connection with Sir John Williams, a native of Llanishen, Glamorganshire, appointed High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1502, father of the more famous John, Lord Williams of Thame.⁵

A mystery surrounds Leonard's education prior to his matriculation at the University of Tübingen. If he spent a period of previous study at Oxford or Cambridge, there is no record of his having done so. He may have travelled to Germany by way of Paris, since one of the first works he published at Kraków in 1519 carried a dedication to the Parisian printer Henri Estienne I ('Henrico Stephano suo'). In a later encomium John Leland would claim with poetic exaggeration that Paris sang Cox's praises ('cecinitque Lutetia laudes'). Since Leland himself was a freelance student at Paris in 1528-1529, he may have found that Cox was still remembered there by humanist scholars such as Geoffroy Tory, the scholar-printer and founder of modern French orthography who was associated with Estienne. Perhaps Cox attended Tory's classes in grammar at the Collège de Bourgogne. Later, in his introductory verses to John Palsgrave's *L'éclaircissement de la langue française* (1531), dedicated 'ad eruditum virum Gefridum Troy [*sic*]', Cox would praise Tory's *Champ Fleury* (1529), a pioneering work on French pronunciation: 'Nam sub legibus hic bene approbatis | sermo Gallicus ecce perdocetur.'⁶

Tübingen was not the most obvious destination for a young humanist. Its most distinguished figure was Johannes Reuchlin, the Hebraist, a friend of Fisher and Colet, but the university was still divided between scholastics and humanists. By his own account Cox attended the lectures of the grammarian Georg Simmler and the astronomer Johann Stöffler. But the most lasting influence on him was that of Philip Melanchthon.

⁵ For the family pedigree of Francis Cox, Leonard's son, a Fellow of New College, Oxford, and later residentiary Canon of Chichester Cathedral, see *The Visitations of the County of Sussex, Made and Taken in the Years 1530 and 1633-1634*, ed. W. Bruce Bannerman, The Publications of the Harleian Society, 53 (London: Harleian Society, 1905), p. 173. There are references to Monmouth Coxes in Joseph Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, Volume 1, Part 1 (London: H. Mitchell, 1904), pp. 47, 142.

⁶ The dedication to Henri Estienne I appears in Cox's edition of Jerome's *Letter to Eustochium* (1519), his earliest publication in Kraków. On Tory, see Auguste Bernard, *Geoffroy Tory, peintre et graveur, premier imprimeur royal, réformateur de l'orthographe et de la typographie sous François I* (Paris: Auguste Aubry, 1857). I owe this reference to Agnes Juhász-Ormsby.

Melanchthon was only 17 when he graduated M.A. at Tübingen in 1514 and began teaching Greek to younger students of whom Cox was one.⁷ He was already beginning to develop the pedagogy which would later earn him the title of *Praeceptor Germaniae*. For him, as for Erasmus, education (beginning with mastery of Latin and Greek) was the essential preliminary to the reform and revival of Church and society, and his first public lecture, *De artibus liberalibus oratio*, delivered at Tübingen in 1517 to an audience which must have included Cox, already contained the outline of an educational programme aimed at inculcating *docta pietas*. The initial key to this learning was systematic instruction in grammar, good Latin being the essential foundation for sound scholarship. This was the pedagogical message which Cox would take to Poland, and eventually back to England. It is perhaps no coincidence that his departure from Tübingen towards the end of 1518 followed shortly after Melanchthon left to take up a more congenial post as Professor of Greek at the new university of Wittenberg. In Tübingen Melanchthon had to contend with bitter hostility from opponents of the new humanism among both students and teachers, and he later described it as a place where it was a crime to aim at scholarly excellence ('ubi capitale erat attingere melius litteras'). He also recalled how the theology professor, Jakob Lemp, illustrated a lecture on transubstantiation by drawing a diagram.⁸ Another contemporary of Cox who left Tübingen the following year for the same reason was the *poeta laureatus* Johannes Alexander Brassicanus (Köll), who went on to become Professor of Rhetoric at Vienna.

The relatively new university of Wittenberg was about to become the intellectual capital of Germany. Melanchthon's arrival there coincided with a time of ferment. Luther had just posted up his 95 theses on the door of the Schlosskirche, setting off a chain reaction well beyond the city. Within a matter of months Melanchthon was swept up by Luther into the cause of Reform, and three years later took provisional charge of the movement during Luther's imprisonment in the Wartburg.

⁷ On several occasions, beginning with his edition of Adrian de Castello's *Venatio*, published at Kraków in 1524, Cox would later refer to Melanchthon as 'meus olim Tubingae praeceptor' (*De octo orationis partium libellus* [Londini: Thomas Berteletus, 1540], fol. B i').

⁸ *Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Carolus G. Bretschneider, 28 vols (Halle: Schwetschke, 1834-1860), I (1834), cxlvii; Clyde Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 39.

Cox's choice of Kraków as his next destination is even more unaccountable. It certainly suggests that at this stage in his life he was immune to the spirit which was now abroad in Germany and which had yet to penetrate Poland. He was in Kraków by 24 September 1518, when he matriculated at the Jagiellon University, describing himself as a *poeta laureatus*, from Thame, in the diocese of Lincoln. Johannes Alexander Brassicanus, his Tübingen contemporary, was crowned *poeta laureatus* by the Emperor Maximilian I at about this time, but there is no record of Cox being honoured in the same way. Be that as it may, his rhetorical skill and the facility in composing elegant Latin verses which he seems to have acquired in Tübingen now helped to launch his career in Kraków as a means of acquiring influential patrons. At the beginning of December he delivered before the university an oration *De laudibus celeberrimae Cracoviensis academiae*, a work which Andrew Breeze has described as 'a fundamental document for the history of Polish humanism, an academic *Who's Who* of early Renaissance Kraków'. At the time it was a successful exercise in *captatio benevolentiae*, aimed at securing the goodwill and favour of the audience towards the speaker.⁹ The choice of an outsider to deliver the eulogy allowed the assembled dignitaries to indulge in self-admiration at one remove. Given that Cox had only recently arrived in Kraków, his detailed knowledge of its recent history must have come from a local source – perhaps his earliest patron, Justus Decius, private secretary to King Sigismund I, or possibly the astronomer Nicolaus Schadkovius (Mikolaj Szadek). The patronage of such influential figures was all the more important to him since as a layman he was not eligible for a salaried university lectureship.

Other important patrons whom he celebrated were Piotr Tomicki, Bishop of Kraków and Vice-Chancellor of Poland, and his nephew Andrzej Krzycki, Bishop of Płock and secretary to the Queen. As Jacqueline Glomski has demonstrated, self-promotion and an ability to impress the powerful were essential for success in Renaissance Kraków. Cox had three major advantages: fluent Latinity, familiarity with the works of Erasmus, and novelty value as an exotic stranger from a far-away country of which Poles knew little. Though these were novel qualities likely to appeal to the young, they were regarded with suspicion by representatives of the traditional scholastic curriculum.

⁹ Among the notable Cracovians mentioned was the musician Heinrich Finck (Vinck), Kapellmeister at Kraków and later at the imperial court in Vienna, whose fame – according to Cox – had even reached Britain.

Life on the fringe of the university and precarious dependence on patronage did not offer satisfactory prospects in the long term. That may have been the reason why in 1520 Cox accepted a post as Rector of the grammar school in the Hungarian town of Levoca (Leutschau), just over the Polish border on the other side of the Tatra mountains. The invitation came from Jan Henckel, Provost of the church at Levoca, alumnus of the universities of Vienna, Padua, Venice, Bologna and Kraków, and correspondent of Erasmus. The church of St James at Levoca, one of the most important monuments of sacred art in what is now Slovakia, still bears witness to Henckel's *docta pietas*. In 1520 (the year of Cox's arrival in the town) he commissioned from a master-woodcarver an altar of St John which depicts five Johns. Four of them are saints (John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, John Chrysostom and John the Almsgiver), but the fifth is Jean Gerson, noted for his assertion of the superiority of General Councils over the Pope.¹⁰

When Henckel was appointed Provost of the church in the neighbouring town of Kosice a year later, Cox went with him. He was to spend four years as Master of the school there, gaining teaching experience which would later prove useful in Reading. Kosice was an important administrative, commercial and cultural centre with a multi-ethnic population of Germans, Magyars, Bohemians, Moravians, Slovaks and Poles, for whom Latin was a *lingua franca*. It was at Kosice in 1526 that Cox wrote his treatise on the education of young boys, *Libellus de erudienda iuventute*, published at Kraków later that year.¹¹ It is largely based on Melanchthon's *Institutiones rhetoricae* (1521), itself inspired by Erasmus' *De ratione studii* (1511), but their theory was tempered by Cox's practical experience in the classroom. As Bennett Witt has observed, he was writing for average, not ideal, teachers, based on his experience of day schools for young (often very young) boys who came from the middle ranks of society, not (as in Kraków) from an aristocratic background. He went into much more detail on lesson technique, for instance, and on the choice of classical texts most suitable for study. His references to an astonishing range of classical and neo-Latin writers on education are striking testimony to the breadth of his learning.

¹⁰ See www.chramsvjakuba.sk for an English-language guide to the church.

¹¹ Full text and commentary in Breeze – Glomski, 'An Early British Treatise upon Education', pp. 112-168. Only one copy of the treatise survives, in the National Library at Bucharest.

The treatise also contains evidence of Cox's extraordinary linguistic range. The teacher, he wrote (section 18), should begin the analysis of a Latin text by summarising it in the vernacular (as he himself must have done), but he went on to warn against the corruption of 'pure' Latin by vernacular idioms, giving specific examples from German, Italian, French and Hungarian. He makes frequent reference to other works by Erasmus on education, such as *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* (available in manuscript form from 1510), and his *Brevissima epistolarum formula* of 1520 ('opus vere aureum').

Cox's importance as a transmitter of humanist pedagogy was as crucial in Hungary as it was in Poland. Just as Melanchthon earned the title of *Praeceptor Germaniae*, so Leonard Stöckel, Cox's most notable pupil at Kosice, was to become the *Praeceptor Hungariae*. In his groundbreaking thesis 'Leonard Stöckel: *Docta pietas* in the service of Lutheran Reform', Bennett Witt has shown how Stöckel, taught by Cox, later put Melanchthon's educational principles into practice at his school in Bartfeld (Bardejów), which was to become the seedbed of the Lutheran reformation in Upper Hungary. When Stöckel died in 1560, one of his former pupils delivered a eulogy in which he described Cox, his master's mentor, as a man of acute intelligence and wide learning who later attained high office in England as Chancellor and Supreme Counsellor of the King: 'Hunc fuisse narrant virum acutissimi ingenii et multis scientiis insignitum, qui ad hoc fastigium summae dignitatis pervenit ut cancellarius anglicus et summus consiliarius regis.'¹²

His return to Kraków in 1526 was prompted by the departure from Kosice of his patron Jan Henckel, appointed that year as court chaplain to the Queen of Hungary. Henckel's tenure of that office was brief. On 29 August of that year the Turks, led by Suleiman the Magnificent, defeated the Hungarian army at the battle of Mohacs. The young king, Louis II, was drowned while escaping, and his widowed Queen fled to Bratislava. Suleiman made a triumphal entry into Buda, bringing to an end the rule of the Hunyadi dynasty.

Cox's last four years in Kraków (1525-1529) were his most productive. He now took up residence as Master of the Burza Jerusalem, a university hall of residence on the site of the present Collegium Novum. His

¹² Christianus Schesaeus, 'Oratio describens historiam vitae praecipuam viri Leonharti Stockelii', in *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Ferenc Czonka (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979), pp. 84-93; quoted by Bennett Witt, 'Leonard Stöckel', p. 112, n. 60.

pupils there included the future Cardinal Hosius, later to become the architect of the Polish Counter-Reformation, and – at the other end of the spectrum – Jan Laski, who would end his life in London, as leader of the Protestant community in exile. The works he now published for his young students of Latin and Greek prose and verse composition included dictionaries, grammar books, editions of classical and neo-Latin authors, and a trilingual phrase book (Latin, German and Polish) for use by pupils in the playground as well as in class.¹³

At the same time Cox advanced his reputation at court with an edition of Henry VIII's exchange of letters with Martin Luther, published at Kraków only two months after its first appearance in London. Dedicated to the Grand Chancellor of Poland, the work was well-timed in so far as it kept the Polish governing élite informed of the latest developments in the religious debate then raging further west. As Jacqueline Glomski has observed, it was also cleverly designed to enhance the reputation of the Polish king as a major player on the European stage: a *Fidei Defensor* on a par with Henry VIII. Here Cox aligned himself with the aristocratic defenders of orthodoxy. For example, in his introductory verses to Krzycki's *De afflictione Ecclesiae* (1527), prompted by recent disorders at Gdańsk, he castigated the Lutheran rebels as a plebeian rabble.¹⁴

Some of Cox's pupils would later rise to high office. They included Bishop Krzycki's nephew Andrzej Zebrzydowski, later Bishop of Kraków and Chancellor of the Jagiellon University. Cox's exchange of letters with Erasmus was occasioned by the departure of Zebrzydowski for Basel, where he would spend some months at the feet of the Master. Cox's letter of 28 March 1527 combined flattery with a display of classical erudition designed to impress. He and his pupils ate, walked and talked Erasmus, he wrote: not a day passed without frequent mention of his name. In fact, he went so far as to say, Erasmus was as alive in Kraków as he was in Basel: 'Nam tu Basileae simul agis et Cracoviae saepius.' In reply, Erasmus was gently deprecating. He may not have been impressed at

¹³ *Oratiunculae variae puerorum usui expositae* (Kraków: H. Wietor, 1527). All these works had very short print-runs. Several of the copies which survive outside Poland are in the University Library at Uppsala – part of the spoils looted by the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War. For a list of these publications see Glomski, *Patronage and Humanist Literature*, pp. 206-208.

¹⁴ Andrzej Krzycki, *De afflictione Ecclesiae* (Kraków: H. Wietor, 1527). The representation of Lutherans as base mechanicals was later to be a *topos* of Jesuit polemic. See Martin Murphy, 'Franciscus Valsingamius: A Theological Drama of the Poznań Counter-Reformation', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 33 (2000), 64-84.

being told that Zebrzydowski had just been presented with three very rich livings (*sacerdotia tria praepinguia*).¹⁵ The cult of Erasmus at Kraków owed something to fashion, and the wealthy magnates and prelates who embraced it did not practise the evangelical simplicity which Erasmus preached. The pursuit of fame and magnificence was not easily compatible with the Erasmian ethic.¹⁶

The reasons for Cox's departure from Kraków are unclear. His lay status debarred him from full membership of the academic body, and continuing dependence on the goodwill of rival patrons offered no long-term security. He may also have been caught in the crossfire between aristocrats and gentry, and between scholastics and humanists – which may explain why he was accused of libel by a fellow lecturer.¹⁷

He returned to England some time in 1529, and in February 1530 supplicated for an Oxford M.A. by incorporation, as being 'schoolmaster at Redyng'. In the same year he contributed some introductory verses to John Palsgrave's *L'éclaircissement de la langue française* – the first French grammar and dictionary to be published in England, now recognised as a pioneering work of linguistics. There too he is described as 'Radingensis ludi moderator' – Master of the school attached to Reading Abbey. By this time he was a married man, recorded as paying 6 pence for his wife's seat in St Lawrence's parish church nearby.¹⁸

How did Cox come to be eligible for this appointment? A possible answer may be that he was an alumnus of the school. In 1512, two years

¹⁵ *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 1802 to 1925 (March-December 1527)*, translated by Charles Fantazzi, annotated by James K. Farge, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 13 (Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press, 2010), nos 1803, 1824, 1826. Erasmus might also have been disconcerted to find that Cox was plagiarising the text of a letter he had received the previous year from the Hungarian humanist Jakub Piso. See Henryk Barycz, *Z epoki renesansu, reformacji i baroku* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971), p. 10.

¹⁶ See Claude Backvis, 'La fortune d'Érasme en Pologne', in *Colloquium Erasmianum: Actes du colloque international réuni à Mons du 26 au 29 octobre 1967 à l'occasion du cinquantième centenaire de la naissance d'Érasme* (Mons: Centre Universitaire de l'État, 1968), pp. 173-202; Ambroise Jobert, *De Luther à Mohila: La Pologne dans la crise de la chrétienté, 1517-1648* (Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 1974), chapter 2: 'Le royaume érasmien'.

¹⁷ *Acta rectoralia almae universitatis studii Cracoviensis inde ab anno MCCCCLXIX. Tomus primus: continens annos 1469-1537*, ed. Wladislaus Wislocki (Cracoviae: Academia Litterarum Cracoviensis, 1893), p. 689. I owe the reference to Henryk Zins.

¹⁸ The churchwardens' accounts, soon to be published by Joan Dils for the Berkshire Record Society, record the payment within the period between Michaelmas 1529 and Michaelmas 1530.

before he matriculated at Tübingen, a 'Leonard Cokks' was recorded at Reading as having been paid 12 pence for translating an indenture from French into English.¹⁹ If Cox and Cokks are one and the same, as seems likely, then the mystery surrounding his early education is dispelled. 1486 is the generally accepted date of the conversion of the monastic school at Reading into a free school for town boys, housed in the refectory of the abbey's *hospitium*, originally built for the accommodation of pilgrims and travellers. Cox may have been educated at this school, and when he eventually returned to England in 1529 the Abbot, Hugh Cook Faringdon, would have been the only patron he could turn to. The Abbot, for his part, is likely to have been impressed by Cox's record (or what was known of it) and pleased to have a representative of the new European learning as the Master of his school. Cox acknowledged his debt in the preface to his work *The Arte or Craftie of Rhetoryke*, published soon after his appointment, and dedicated 'to the reverend father in God and his singular good Lord, the Lord Hugh Faringdon, Abbot of Reading' by 'his poor client and perpetual servant Leonard Cox' (Appendix 2).

Expressing his gratitude to the Abbot for his longstanding 'singular and beneficial favour', and for having selected him to take charge of the instruction and upbringing of 'such youth as resorteth to your grammar school founded by your predecessors in this your town of Reading', Cox had come to the conclusion that the most appropriate way of marking his appreciation would be the composition of a work on 'the right pleasant and persuadable art of rhetoric' – an indispensable requirement not only for lawyers, diplomats and teachers of God's word, but also 'for all them that have anything to propose or to speak before any company whatsoever'. For this purpose he had written a little treatise on rhetoric, the first in the English language, 'partly translated out of a work of rhetoric written in the Latin tongue', and partly of his own composition.

Cox's source, as F.I. Carpenter was the first to demonstrate, was Melanchthon's *Institutiones rhetoricae* (1521) – itself a simplified version, for school use, of the same author's *De rhetorica libri tres* (1519). Carpenter has estimated that about a third of Cox's work is a direct translation of Melanchthon, while the rest owes much to Cicero's *De inventione*. Melanchthon was one of the German reformers then regarded with suspi-

¹⁹ *Reading Guild Accounts, 1357-1516*, ed. Cecil Slade, Berkshire Record Society, 7 (2002), p. 173. I owe this reference to Michael Naxton's *History of Reading School* (Reading, 1986), p. 12, and to Peter Durrant of the Berkshire Record Office.

cion in England, which may explain Cox's failure to acknowledge him by name. Carpenter has shown that Cox omits some of Melanchthon's more controversial allusions, such as his endorsement of the need 'to free Germany from papal tyranny'. Cox, on the other hand, declares that 'nothing is so necessary as to heal divisions in the Church'.²⁰

It is notable that although Cox had only recently returned from Poland he writes of his 'long memory' of previous favours bestowed on him by the Abbot. This suggests that their acquaintanceship went back much earlier. Perhaps it was Abbot Hugh – 'the chief maintainer and nourisher of my study' – who originally encouraged him to pursue his studies abroad.

The Abbot's care for the young is illustrated by the fact that in 1535 he was entrusted with the education of James Basset, the 6-year old stepson of Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle, Governor of Calais. The boy's guardian reported that 'my Lord of Reading playeth him to his learning, both in Latin and in French. [...] He is as tender with him and [*sc.* as if] he were the King's son.' The Abbot, for his part, declared James to be 'the most towardly child in learning that I have knowen'.²¹ Perhaps Cox's reputation was one of the factors which determined Lord Lisle's choice. Evidently the school at Reading included boarders as well as town day-boys, since James Bassett was lodged with the Abbot's under-steward and his wife.

Cox's return to England coincided with the beginning of a decade of unprecedented events set in motion by the King's divorce proceedings: the fall of Wolsey, the passing of the Act of Supremacy, the execution of More and Fisher, the Act against the Pope's authority and the dissolution of the monasteries. Evidence of Cox's growing sympathy with the cause of Reform is provided by the story of his encounter with John Frith, as narrated in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Arrested at Oxford in 1528 on a charge of heresy, Frith was freed by the intervention of Wolsey, his patron, but broke the terms of his release by fleeing overseas, to Marburg:

After ij. yeares (so Foxe relates), hee came ouer for exhibition of the Prior of Readyng (as is thought) & had the Prior ouer with hym. Being at Readyng it happened that he was there taken for a vacabound, and brought to examination, where the symple man, which could not craftely enough colour

²⁰ Leonard Cox, *The Arte or Crafte of Rhethoryke*, ed. Frederick Ives Carpenter (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1899), p. 31.

²¹ *The Lisle Letters*, ed. Muriel St. Clare Byrne, 6 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), III, nos 551-552a.

hym self, was set in the stocks. Where after he had sytten a long tyme, and was almost pyned with hunger, and would not for all that declare what he was, at the last he desired that the Scholmaister of the town might be brought to him, which at that tyme was one Leonard Coxe, a man very wel learned. As sone as he came vnto hym, Fryth by and by beganne in the Latin tongue to bewaile his captiuitie. The Scholmaister by and by being ouercome with his eloquence, did not onlye take pitie and compassion vpon hym, but also began to loue and embrace such an excellent wytte and disposition, unloked for, especiallye in suche a state and myserie. Afterward, they conferryng more together upon many thynges, as touching the vniversities, scholes and tongues, they fell from the Latin tongue into the Greke, wherin Fryth did so inflame the loue of that Scholmaister towards hym, that he brought hym into a maruelous admiration, especially when as the Scholmaister heard hym so promptlye by hart, rehearse Homers verses, out of his first booke of Iliades. Wherupon the Scholmaister went with al spede vnto the magistrates, greuously complainnyng of the iniury which they did shewe vnto so excellent and innocent a young man. Thus Fryth through the helpe of he Scholmaister, was freely dimitted out of the stockes, and sett at libertie without punishment.²²

The market place at Reading was an incongruous setting for this meeting between two exceptionally learned scholars – both fluent in Latin and Greek, the one a graduate of Tübingen, the other just returned from Marburg. It is not difficult to imagine how Cox felt at seeing the younger man exposed to public humiliation. Frith was arrested soon afterwards, and burned as a heretic at Smithfield the following year.

The fact that Frith was connected with John Shirbourne, then Prior of Reading, shows how Lutheranism had already infiltrated the monastic community there. In March 1528 the Bishop of Lincoln wrote to Wolsey of his fear that one Thomas Garrett had ‘corrupted’ the monastery of Reading by supplying it with heretical books, sixty of which he had sold to Shirbourne.²³ Like Frith, Shirbourne was imprisoned in the Tower but was moved to separate quarters ‘for conversion’, before being released. Cromwell put pressure on Abbot Hugh to reinstate him, but the Abbot replied that ‘Dan John Shirburn, late Prior of this house’ had declined to return to the community – something ‘clean contrary to his mind’ – and had ‘utterly refused’ the offer of a benefice.²⁴

²² John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 3rd edition (London: John Day, 1563), Book 3, p. 554.

²³ *State Papers*, Henry VIII, 4 (2), no. 4004.

²⁴ *State Papers*, Henry VIII, 5, no. 1467 (John Whalley to Cromwell, 23 October 1532); 6, no. 943 (5 August 1533). For later evidence of dissent within the community, see *State Papers*, Henry VIII, 13 (1), nos. 264 and 571.

Cox – who must have been on familiar terms with Shirbourne – made no secret of the way his own mind was moving, as is made clear by the preface to his translation of Erasmus' *Paraphrase* of St Paul's Epistle to Titus, published in 1534, the year of the King's assumption of the title of Supreme Head of the Church. It may not be irrelevant that Melanchthon's edition of the Greek text of this epistle was the first work he published at Wittenberg in 1518. 'You know how elegant it is', Melanchthon wrote to a correspondent, 'and how suitable for moral improvement.'²⁵ Perhaps that was why it recommended itself also to Cox, but its emphasis on obedience to established civil authority may also have been a factor. In his preface Cox was not sparing in praise of the monarch:

What thyng most gentle reader can better prove how wel almighty God is pleased with this gracyous matrimonye between our redoubted and victorious prynce King Henrye and his most noble and excellent Queene Anne than [...] to shewe abrode in this regyon the lyghte which afore lay many yeres under a bushell. And what can be a more evydent token of ye hye indygnation of the godhede agaynste the churche of Rome than that this Pharao and all his Egyptians be so hardened in ther hertes that they wyll in no wyse receyve the truthe and doctryne of hym whose followers they profess themselves to be? [...] I was myselfe a great whyle blynded and went asyde in the counsell of wycked men. I trust I have escaped the foule storme of false beleve, or what shall I call els ye trust in papystycall power?

He went on to assert that just as David had been divinely appointed as the keeper of Israel, so Henry was God's chosen 'hed of his Englishe flocke, as well in spiritual governaunce as in erthly domynyon'.²⁶

What did the Abbot of Reading make of this? And was he aware that his *protégé* was seeking the patronage of Thomas Cromwell, in the hope of being promoted to a more lucrative post as Master of the Free School at Bristol? Cox asked the publisher John Toy to show his *Paraphrase* to Cromwell (then Recorder of Bristol), adding: 'For though I have many good masters in the cawse, yet I had lever have his favour than all the others.' With his new patron in mind he was already 'translating of a boke which Erasmus made of the bringing upp of children'.²⁷

²⁵ Bretschneider, *Philippi Melanthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, I (1834), cxlviii.

²⁶ *The Paraphrase of Erasm[us] Roterdame upon [the] Epistle of Sai[n]t Paule unto his Discyple Titus, Lately Tra[n]slated into Englysshe, and Fyrste a Goodly Prologue* (London: John Byddell, 1535).

²⁷ Letter of 13 May 1534, *State Papers*, Henry VIII, 7, no. 659, quoted in McConica, *English Humanists*, pp. 140-141. Cox may have been translating Erasmus' *De pueris instituendis* (1529), but there is no record of its publication. McConica lists other translations of Erasmian works which may possibly be attributed to Cox.

Abbot Hugh had hitherto been on good terms with the King, whose secretary described Henry as well contented with the hospitable welcome he received at Reading in 1520.²⁸ As late as October 1537 he was chosen to officiate at the requiem for Queen Jane Seymour, at a time when the suppression of monasteries was already under way. The first Act of Dissolution (1536) covered only the smaller houses, but the larger abbeys were put under pressure to dissolve themselves voluntarily. The Abbot of Reading declined to do so, though he attempted – vainly – to keep Cromwell at bay by financial concessions. The wealth of the abbey, the fifth richest in England, estimated at about £2000 *per annum*, was too rich a prize for Cromwell and the King to forego. If the Abbot could be found guilty on a charge of treason its estates would automatically and immediately become forfeit by attainder.

Abbot Hugh chose that moment, on the 12th of August 1539, when his own future was in imminent danger, to draw up a formal contract with ‘our beloved in Christ, Leonard Cox’, confirming him in his post for life, at an annual income of £10, along with free accommodation and daily meat and drink ‘at my table and that of my successors’, on condition that Leonard continued to conduct the school personally, to give his pupils accurate instruction in grammar and poetry, and by good example to foster in them a devout and orthodox Catholic faith (*‘hoc tamen pacto nempe quod [...] pubem illuc confluentem grammaticen et poesim exacte doceat eamque bonis moribus ad catholicam religionem pie et orthodoxe instituat’*).²⁹

That was Abbot Hugh’s last recorded testament. It is revealing that the future of the school and the welfare of its pupils should have been uppermost in his mind at a time when he and his community were on the verge of extinction. Just over a month later, on 19 September, the abbey was officially dissolved, and by then he was in the Tower of London, charged with treason. The ‘treason’ was his reported denial of the royal supremacy. ‘The Abbot Redyng to be sent down to be tryed and executed at Redyng’, Cromwell instructed.³⁰ He was convicted by a packed jury of compliant local gentry. Their verdict was the inevitable conclusion of a

²⁸ *State Papers*, Henry VIII, 3 (1), no. 1003 (Richard Pace to Wolsey).

²⁹ Reading Cartulary, MS D 1/19/1, fol. 32r, Wiltshire Record Office, Chippenham (Appendix 2). I am grateful to Dr Robin Darwall-Smith, Archivist of Magdalen College, Oxford, for his reading of the original.

³⁰ *State Papers*, Henry VIII, 14 (2), no. 139. For the contemporary documents detailing the indictment and trial, see J.E. Paul, ‘The Last Abbots of Reading and Colchester’, *Bulletin of Historical Research*, 33 (1960), 115-120.

stage-managed trial. On 13 November he was sentenced to the death of a traitor, by being hung, drawn and quartered – no exception being made for his status as a lord spiritual of the realm. The execution took place the following day, probably by the outer gate of the abbey, where his quartered remains and severed head were later exposed.

There is no contemporary eyewitness record of this public execution, the most sensational event in the history of the town of Reading. The town burgesses had long resented the Abbot's jurisdiction over them as Lord of the Manor of Reading, and took immediate advantage of the suppression of the abbey to elect their own mayor. What determined the Abbot's fate was a convergence of two special interests. For the King the execution was a pretext for the appropriation of one of the richest abbeys in England and a deterrent to others who might dare to challenge the royal supremacy. For the local merchant class it meant the end of feudal dependence.³¹ But what was the reaction of ordinary townsfolk as they saw the Abbot dragged through the streets on a hurdle to the place of execution, strung up on the gallows, cut down, and disembowelled? Were Cox and his pupils among them? Their school was now dissolved along with the abbey.

Cox is next heard of two months later in Monmouthshire, where at Caerleon on 6 January 1540 he wrote the dedicatory preface to his edition of Lily's primer, *De octo orationis partium constructione libellus*, dedicated to Cromwell. He praised his former patron as the King's most trusted servant, his 'fidissimus Achates', chosen by the monarch for his discretion, prudence, moderation, powerful intelligence and penetrating judgment ('ob insignem prudentiam, sobrietatem, moderationem, mentis incredibilem vim, nec non perspicax in rebus quantumvis aut arduis aut inexplicabilibus iudicium'). Under Henry VIII and his chief minister, he claimed, England, a Platonic republic governed by a philosopher king, had entered a Golden Age.

Cox claimed that Lily's *Syntax*, commissioned by Colet and emended by Erasmus, had not been generally adopted in schools because of its difficulty, and that his new annotated version would enable pupils to master the essentials of Latin in one or two years, rather than six or seven. That makes it all the more curious that he should have chosen to insert per-

³¹ The complex issues at stake are analysed in the late Jeannette Martin's Ph.D. thesis 'The People of Reading and the Reformation, 1520-1570' (University of Reading, 1987). See also her 'Leadership and Priorities in Reading during the Reformation', in *The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640*, eds Patrick Collinson – John Craig, Themes in Focus (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 115-118.

sonal details into the section on the rules for indicating place. Thus, he explained, he had written his commentary at Caerleon ('Carleone') on the banks of the River Usk ('ad fluminis Uscae ripam') in Wales ('in Valia'). After his studies at Tübingen ('Tubingae') he had taught the humanities at Kraków ('Cracoviae'), where the Bishops of Kraków and Plock were among his benefactors. In Hungary ('in Hungaria') under the patronage of Jan Henckel he had opened a school first at Levoca ('Leutschomae') and then at Kosice ('Cassoviae'), where he enjoyed the friendship of Jan Antonin (later Erasmus' physician), Georg Werner, Jan Thomasius and Valentin Eck. Earlier in Germany ('in Germania') his teachers had included Georg Simmler, Philip Melanchthon, Johannes Stöffler and Jakob Lemp. In Poland ('in Polonia') Johannes Rullus, Hosius, Andrzej Trzeciński and Georg Rapa had been his pupils, and at Vienna ('Viennae in Austria') he had been on intimate terms with Johannes Alexander Brassicanus.³² Almost all these scholars belonged to what might be called the Erasmian International.³³

English schoolboys' understanding of the Latin locative will hardly have been assisted by this roll-call of unpronounceable foreign names. Nor were they capable of appreciating the editor's erudition, displayed in an impressive range of grammatical examples drawn from his wide reading not just of the classics but of neo-Latin writers such as Lorenzo Valla, Thomas Linacre, Angelo Poliziano and Guillaume Budé. In any case Cox's version was made redundant by the publication in the same year of the definitive Latin edition of Lily's grammar (*Institutio compendiarie totius grammaticae*), followed by a version in English published two years later.³⁴ Cox's edition may have been a form of self-advertisement, intended to remind his patron of his credentials. His salary had ceased at the suppression of Reading Abbey, he had a wife and sons to support,

³² *De octo orationis partium constructione libellus* (Londini: ex officina Thomae Betheliti, 1540), ff. A i^v, G i^v, G ii^r, G iv^v. Cox may have visited Vienna during his time at Kosice. Brassicanus was appointed Professor of Rhetoric at Vienna in 1524, and Cox contributed some introductory verses to his Latin translation of selected satires by Lucian, published at Vienna in 1527. (I owe this reference to Jacqueline Glomski and Dr Farkas Kiss.)

³³ Only Thomasius and Rapa are absent from P.G. Bietenholz and T.B. Deutscher's *Contemporaries of Erasmus. A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols (Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

³⁴ *Lily's Grammar of Latin in English: An Introduction of the Eyght Partes of Speche, and the Construction of the Same*, edited and introduced by Hedwig Gwosdek (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

and for the moment there was no prospect of immediate employment.³⁵ He ended his preface therefore by expressing the hope that Cromwell might favour him with further assignments, and in a letter of 23 May from Caerleon wrote of his intention to dedicate to him ‘a farre better worke’ entitled *Erotemata rhetorica*, and to follow it up by producing a book every year, ‘to the perpetuall praise of your lordeshippes most excellent vertues and the commune profite of students’.³⁶ The appeal and the hope were ill-timed. Two months later, on 25 July 1540, only nine months after the execution of Abbot Faringdon, Cromwell was beheaded on Tower Hill, brought down by his political enemies on a charge of heresy.

Although the income from the sale of monastic estates largely went into the exchequer, some of the monastic and cathedral schools survived in a secular form. A year and a half after the suppression of Reading Abbey a royal patent formally reinstated Cox as Master of Reading School, now under royal patronage. The terms of the contract, dated 10 February 1541, hardly differed from those granted by Abbot Hugh, and there was no pay increase. As before, the Master was to receive an annual salary of £10, backdated to Michaelmas 1539, in addition to rent-free accommodation – all paid for out of the revenues of the Manor of Cholsey, an abbey property confiscated at the Dissolution.

Cox resumed his duties in profoundly altered circumstances. The King might have been expected to respect the tomb of his ancestor, Henry I, in front of the high altar, but this was destroyed along with the shrine at which pilgrims had venerated the abbey’s most famous relic, the supposed hand of St James the Apostle. The abbey church was stripped of its monuments and treasures and within months the sanctuary had become little more than a shell, later to be quarried for freestone and rubble by local developers.³⁷ What the townspeople of Reading made of the vandalism is not recorded.

Cox remained as Master of the reconstituted school, in the shadow of the derelict abbey, until succeeded by another *c.* 1546.³⁸ Soon after

³⁵ He and his wife, Margaret Devon, had two sons. The elder, Francis Cox, went on to become a Fellow of New College, Oxford, and a Canon of Chichester Cathedral. For the family pedigree, see Bannerman, *The Visitations of the County of Sussex*, p. 173.

³⁶ Letter of 23 May 1540, *State Papers*, Henry VIII, 15, no. 706, quoted in McConica, *English Humanists*, p. 193.

³⁷ Cecil Slade, *The Town of Reading and its Abbey* (Reading: MRM Associates, 2001), pp. 25-28.

³⁸ His successor, Leonard Bilson, described by Anthony Wood as ‘the learned school-master of Reading’, graduated M.A. at Oxford in 1546 and is recorded as being paid his stipend at Reading in 1549.

the accession of Edward VI, between July 1547 and May 1548, he was one of those who received a preaching license under the Great Seal. The list of licensees included such famous names as Matthew Parker, Hugh Latimer, John Knox, John Jewell and Edmund Grindal – all of the evangelical tendency.³⁹ In 1549 his translation of Erasmus' *Paraphrase* of the Epistle to Titus was reissued as part of an edition undertaken by Myles Coverdale. This time his contribution was dedicated to John Hales, Clerk of the Hanaper to the new king and founder of the Free School at Coventry, whom he described as 'the chefe and only socourer of myne old age'.⁴⁰ The phrase strikes a melancholy note. His choice of patron was again unfortunate. After the fall of Protector Somerset later in 1549, Hales fled abroad and did not return to England until 1559.

The date and place of Cox's death are unknown, and many questions remain to be further investigated, particularly regarding his early years. What was his connection with Thame? Where was he educated? Who was the patron that subsidised his travels? What, or who, drew him from Thame to Paris, Tübingen and Kraków? Never again would he achieve such success and exert such influence as he did in Poland. England, to which he returned after ten years' absence, was more difficult territory for an independent scholar. There he had to start afresh to build a support network. He was fortunate to be recruited by Abbot Faringdon, but Reading was a provincial backwater compared with Kraków. As a pedagogue he deserved wider recognition. A published version in English of the *De erudienda iuventute*, for example, would have anticipated Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* by many years. But under an autocratic and arbitrary monarch it was dangerous to court the wrong patrons. Cromwell must have appeared to be an ideal protector, but his sudden and unpredictable fall ended Cox's hopes of further advancement.

It is more difficult to understand the relationship between Cox and his patron Abbot Faringdon. For ten years they had lived on close terms with each other. Faringdon must have known of Cox's increasing Lutheran sympathies, and of his association with Cromwell. Yet only three months before his death he still had sufficient trust in his 'beloved Leonard' to confirm him in his appointment for life. Although there is no reason to

³⁹ *State Papers*, Dom. Edward VI, 1547-1553, ed. C.S. Knighton (1992), no. 74; Diarmuid MacCullough, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2002), pp. 84-86.

⁴⁰ *Second Tome or Volume of the Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the Newe Testament* (London: Edwarde Whitchurche, 1549), fol. ccciii^r.

doubt the sincerity of Cox's conversion to the cause of Reform, his career was equally determined by his mastery of the art of survival.

His influence on a remarkable generation of highly educated young Poles is well documented, but the same cannot be said of his impact in Reading. How many of his pupils there went on to distinguish themselves in the service of the state, or even of the borough? How relevant was a humanist curriculum to the needs of a predominantly mercantile community? The answers to these questions can only be guessed at. His fellow-countrymen knew little of his earlier European fame. John Leland's encomium is an exceptional and well-informed tribute to one 'more eminent in foreign countries than at home':

Inclyta Sarmaticae Cracovia gloria gentis
 Virtutes novit, Coxe diserte, tuas.
 Novit et eloquii phoenix utriusque Melanchthon
 Quam te Phoebus amet, Pieriusque chorus.
 Praga tuas cecinit, cecinitque Lutetia laudes
 Urbs erga doctos officiosa viros.⁴¹

Appendix 1: *De octo orationis partium constructione libellus, aeditus a Guil[elmo] Lilio, emendatus ab Eras[mo] Rot[erodamo] & scholiis non solum Henrici Primaevi verum etiam doctissimis Leonar[di] Coxi illustratus (Londini: ex officina Thomae Bertheliti, MDXL)*

[G iv – ii^r] Cracoviae apud Polonos dum ibi publice bonas literas docuit, Maecenates habuit Cokus Petrum Thomicius Episcopus Cracoviensem, Andream Critium Episcopus Plocensem et Iustum Ludovicum Decium Polonorum regi a secretis. In Ungaria ludum aperuit Cokus Leutschomae primum, dein Cassoniae, ubi Ioannem Hencellum Reginae Hungariae a concionibus studiorum suorum fautorem habuit, et inter amicos Ioannem Antonium, Georgium Vernerum, Ioannem Thomasium et Valentinum Echium viros eruditissimos.

[G iv^v – v^r] Sic Latine dices, Leonardus Cokus haec in Syntaxim scholia Carleone ad fluminis Uscae ripam in Valia scripsit, at non Valiae. Et in Germania praeceptores habuit Cokus, Georgium Simlerum, Philippum

⁴¹ John Leland, *Principum ac illustrium aliquot et eruditorum in Anglia virorum encomia, tropaea, genethliaca et epithalamia* (Londini: apud Thomam Orwinum, 1589), p. 50. Prague is not otherwise known to have been on Cox's itinerary, but Praga adorns a couplet more easily than the Latin versions of Levoca and Kosice.

Melanchthonem, Ioannem Stoefferum et Iacobum Lempum. In Polonia amicis fruebatur Antonio Medico, cui prius in Ungaria innotuerat, Ioanne Rullo, Hosio, Tricesio et Georgio Rapa Boemo. In Hungaria Georgio Venero, Valentino Ecchio, Valentino Carbone et Ioanne Thomasio [...] Viennae in Austria familiariss[ime] usus est Coxus Ioanne Alexandro Brassicano.

[H ii] Coxus bonam magnamque eruditionis suae partem academiae Tubingensi apud Suevos acceptam fert. Id est, Coxus attribuit magnam partem doctrinae quam habet praeceptoribus quibus olim in Germania usus est.

Appendix 2: Abbot Faringdon's Patent, 12 August 1539 (Wiltshire Archives, MS D1/19/1, fol. 32)

Omnibus Christo fidelibus ad quos praesens scriptum pervenerit Hugo divina providenc[ia] Abbas monasterii de Reddyng et eiusdem loci conventus salutem in domino sempiternam. Noveritis nos p[re]fat[um] abbatem et conventum unanimi assensu et consensu [...] damus concedimus et confirmamus dilecto nobis in Christo Leonardo Coxe ludum nostrum literarium de Reddyng predict[o] cum parva venella eidem inclusa et adiuncta ex parte orientali ejusdem. Concessimus etiam et damus ac per praesentes confirmamus eidem Leonardo unum annualem redditum sive annuitatem decem librarum sterling percipiend[um] annuatim de et in omnibus et singulis terr[is] et ten[ementis] nostris in Comitatu Berks ad quatuor anni terminos, viz. ad fest[um] Nativitat[is] Domini, Annunciacionis Beate Marie, Nat[ivitat]is Sanct[i] Johannis Baptist[ae], et Sancti Mich[aelis] Arcangel[i] per equales porciones [...] una cum cibis et potibus pro predicto Leonardo in dies sumend[is] ad mensam mei p[re]fat[i] Abbatis et successorum meorum infra monasterium ipsum quotiens venerit absque rationabili causa alioqui ad mensam prioris ejusdem monasterii. Habend[um] et tenend[um] et gaudend[um] dict[um] ludum nostrum literarium cum venella adiuncta et annualem redditum sive annuitatem decem librarum una cum cibis et potibus ut p[re]fat[is] eidem Leonardo Coxe ad totum vite sue terminum. Hoc tamen pacto nempe quod idem Leonardus personaliter eundem ludum literarium regat, moderetur et temperet, pubemque ad illum confluentem grammaticen et poesim exacte doceat eamque bonis moribus ad catholicam religionem pie et orthodoxe instituat atque meliori modo quo poterit aut sciverit cultioribus litteris educare et promovere invigilet.

To all faithful Christians who shall read the present patent, Hugh, by divine providence Abbot of the monastery of Reading, and its community, eternal salvation in the Lord. Be it known that we the aforesaid abbot and community by unanimous assent and agreement do give grant and confirm to our beloved in Christ Leonard Cox our grammar school of Reading including the little lane adjoining it on the east side. We also grant and give and by these present confirm to the same Leonard an annual salary or annuity of ten pounds sterling to be taken annually from and in our lands and estates in the county of Berkshire every quarter in equal portions, viz. at the feasts of the Lord's Nativity, the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the birthday of Saint John the Baptist, and St Michael the Archangel, together with daily provision of food and drink for the said Leonard at my table and that of my successors as often as he shall come within the monastery itself, unless there is reason to the contrary, and otherwise at the table of the Prior. This our grammar school and adjacent lane and annual salary or annuity of ten pounds together with food and drink to be had held and enjoyed by the same Leonard Cox until the end of his life on condition that the same Leonard should himself personally govern, direct and regulate the said school, and give careful instruction in grammar and poetry to the youths foregathered there and by good example bring them up in devout and orthodox observance of the catholic religion, and take vigilant care to instruct and advance them in the humanities to the best of his ability or knowledge.

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