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**Pierno, Franco, ed. The Church and the Languages of Italy  
before the Council of Trent**

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real service to the student not only of the reception of the *Metamorphoses* in the English Renaissance but also of the pervasive Ovidianism in Tudor and Stuart literary culture. This attractively produced volume should spur new interest in the Ovidian vogue in early modern England.

ALISON KEITH

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**Pierno, Franco, ed.**

***The Church and the Languages of Italy before the Council of Trent.***

Studies and Texts 192 / Toronto Studies in Romance Philology 3. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2015. Pp. ix, 319. ISBN 978-0-88844-192-8 (hardcover) CDN\$ 90.

In this new volume of the series Toronto Studies in Romance Philology, Franco Pierno edited and introduced the papers presented at the workshop “*Verba Domini: The Church and Vernacular Italian before the Council of Trent*” (held in Toronto in March 2011) and also other essays on the same topic written for the occasion by the most important scholars in the field. The result, based primarily on contributions in Italian, is a historical-linguistic view of the religious texts from the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century in Italy.

The index is thematically divided into four sections. Part 1 (“Between Orality and Writing”) includes essays by Francesco Bruni, Vittorio Coletti, and Giuseppe Polimeni. The first two dwell on the role played by preaching orders (Franciscans and Dominicans) and how their messages turned into a written version thanks to *reportatores*. In particular, the comparison between the most charismatic figures of the two orders in play, Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) and Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98), highlights their different ways of preaching: the former adhering to a bombastic and often theatrical style, the latter depending on an academic attitude that didn’t lower itself to the audience’s level. Polimeni focuses, instead, on the *Sermon* by Pietro from Barsegapè, the most ancient text (second half of the thirteenth century) in Milanese vernacular on the Creation, Christ, and the Last Judgment. The contributor shows the strategies adopted by the author to help the audience identify with the poem’s contents, and how they possibly belong to other devotional texts.

Some of them are in fact analyzed in part 2 (“Devotional Texts”). Raymund Wilhelm and Miriam Wittum illustrate some of the Lombard variants in the manuscript tradition of the medieval poetical biography of Saint Margaret of Antioch. Wanda Santini provides readers with a detailed and well-grounded overview of the linguistic and stylistic features of the *Lives of the Holy Fathers* by Domenico Cavalca (ca. 1270–1342), a thirteenth-century translation of the infamous *Vitae patrum*. The biblical quotations in the writings of Saint Catherine of Siena are reviewed by Rita Librandi: Catherine incorporates Latin expressions from the Vulgate in her vernacular, and takes on the role of preacher of Saint Paul. Carla Damnotti analyzes the linguistic patina of the *Giardino de oratione* (“The Prayer’s Garden”), a spiritual treatise published in Venice in 1494 and then reprinted many other times in the following century.

In part 3 (“Between Literature and Religion”) Dorothea Kullmann and Marco Prina face the successful *laude* genre during the Middle Ages. The former analyzes the possible links between the profane poetry’s vocabulary, especially from the *Stil novo*, and various Latin hymns and vernacular *laude*. Kullmann maintains, in particular, that the increased usage of Marian epithets in medieval lay poetry reflects the success of the *laude*. On the other hand, Prina’s essay dwells on Iacopone da Todi’s *laude* and illustrates the many facets of the concept of *esmesuranza*. In his approach to Iacopone’s texts, Prina adopts a perspective that considers them not as a consistent and progressive collection of poems (a *Laudario*) but one-by-one in their specific context of composition. Olga Zorzi Pugliese deals with the religious figure of Girolamo Benivieni (1453–1542), focusing on his commentary on his own verse production: according to the scholar, a lot of Benivieni’s theological words and even his rhetorical strategies (metaphors, paronomasias, definitions by negations) are taken from Saint Bonaventure’s *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*.

In part 4 (“Linguistic Heritage”) Nicoletta Maraschio unfolds the many (about seventy) medieval religious texts quoted in the first edition (1612) of the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* according to a “philologic-naturalistic vision of language” (262) that was unrelated to the Bembian extremely literary canon. The list, which includes works by above-mentioned Cavalca, is provided as an appendix by Giulia Stanchina. Carla Marcato, on the other hand, shows the vitality of the religious roots of Italian culture through a systematic analysis of toponyms (towns and villages), anthroponyms (given names), and phytotoponyms (herbs and plants).

The volume edited by Pierno offers a thorough sample of the Italian religious writings and their various genres from the Middle Ages to the late Renaissance, and encourages scholars to continue along this research trajectory. Above all, it shows the non-canonical but always literary works of that period, and the role of Catholic Church in shaping Italian vernacular before the Council of Trent imposed its severe cultural politics and before the linguistic model of Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) got the better of the others.

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**Poliziano, Angelo.**

***Coniurationis commentarium*. Ed., intro., and trans. Marta Celati.**

Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2015. Pp. vii, 109. ISBN 978-88-6274-636-6 (paperback) €15.

Written and distributed immediately after the Pazzi Conspiracy—an anti-Medicean plot culminating in the gruesome assassination of Lorenzo de Medici's brother and the subsequent reprisal against the conspirators in April 1478—Poliziano's *Coniurationis commentarium* is a book that defies any easy classification. An act of political propaganda responding to specific events and confined to the narrow borders of Florence, the text—as some sort of dark counterpoint to Poliziano's *Stanze*—is also a refined work of literature, engaged in a dialogue with the immortal models of Roman historiography. By means of a new critical edition, commentary, and Italian translation of this often neglected text, Celati skillfully situates Poliziano's work in its cultural context, thus contributing to our knowledge not only of the author but of humanistic historiography at large.

The book comprises an introduction, the text in Latin with facing Italian translation, a selection of epigrams against the conspirator Francesco Salviati, and a detailed commentary. The introduction discusses the *Commentarium's* genesis and context of publication, the definition of conspiracy-history as a sub-genre of humanistic historiography, the political implications of Poliziano's angle on the Pazzi conspiracy, the text's classical models and sources, the differences between the *princeps* of 1478 and the second edition of 1480, the