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# Renaissance and Reformation

## Renaissance et Réforme



### Lettere: Edizione critica

Marco Piana

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des analyses et l'apport de nouvelles générations de chercheurs apparaissent comme extrêmement bénéfiques pour faire fructifier l'héritage de Jean-Claude Margolin, qui fut l'auteur d'un article fondateur sur « Érasme et la France », et un pionnier des études érasmienne auquel un article émouvant de Daniel Ménage rend hommage en conclusion. Cet ouvrage collectif, édité par Blandine Perona et Tristan Vigliano, sert donc de bilan critique pour mesurer le chemin parcouru dans les études érasmienne. C'est ce dont témoigne par exemple le dialogue que certains articles nouent avec l'ouvrage de Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Érasme hérétique*, qui continue de nourrir le débat sur la question épineuse de la réception de l'« érasme ».

Dans cet état des lieux, certains déséquilibres apparaissent (en particulier le nombre d'articles, fort intéressants par ailleurs, consacrés aux relations entre Érasme et Rabelais), tout comme certaines lacunes, en particulier sur la question des traducteurs d'Érasme en français : ce chantier est ici abordé, mais le rôle d'autres « passeurs », célèbres (Marot) et moins célèbres (par exemple Claude d'Espence), mériterait aussi une analyse étendue. L'essentiel n'est cependant pas là, mais dans le formidable outil que constitue cet instrument de travail pour qui veut initier une réflexion sur les relations ambiguës d'Érasme avec la France. Ces dernières, on l'aura compris, ne se résument pas aux anathèmes de Bédac ou de Dolet, puisqu'elles rendent compte d'une réception riche, fructueuse et... ironique.

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**Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni.**

*Lettere: Edizione critica.* Ed. Francesco Borghesi.

Studi picchiani 19. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2018. Pp. xi, 188 + 3 maps, 5 ill. ISBN 978-88-222-6574-6 (paperback) €26.

Few authors of the Italian Quattrocento shaped our modern narratives of the Renaissance like Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), a scholar of undying fame and intellectual depth. Pico's theological and philosophical works are often seen as a fundamental testimony of the humanist moment occurring in

the Italian peninsula between the late Middle Ages and the first centuries of the early modern period.

Notwithstanding the fame and influence of his works in Italian lands and beyond, no definitive critical edition of Giovanni Pico has ever been attempted until now. Contemporary scholars often dealt with this fundamental corpus by using partial and faulty editions printed between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this sense, Francesco Borghesi's critical edition of Pico's *epistolarium* comes not only as a very welcome addition to the library of any scholar of the Italian Renaissance, but also as the necessary filling of a massive gap in studies of early modernity. Acknowledging the work of Francesco Bausi and his ground-breaking edition of Pico's entire *Opera omnia* on CD-ROM, Borghesi's edition provides us with a well-defined collection of seventy-four letters written by Pico (forty-seven from the 1496 *editio princeps* and twenty-seven *extravagantes*) with a clear and straightforward critical apparatus.

The paratextual apparatus of the volume, written in elegant Italian, begins with a short and essential foreword where the editor outlines the importance of Giovanni Pico, the relevance of his work, and the necessity for a critical edition of his letters. In this foreword, Borghesi also summarizes Pico's life for the lay reader and briefly tackles his editorial choices regarding the *editio princeps* and other possible primary sources. Following a brief but felt acknowledgement section, part 1 contains a short overview of the state of the art regarding the publication of the Renaissance *carteggi umanistici*, a summary of the academic studies concerning Pico's letters, a synthetic analysis of the *editio princeps* and other related printed sources, an introduction to the fundamental manuscript Capponiano 235 by Maria Agata Pincelli, a chapter on the modern *querelle* on Gianfrancesco Pico's 1496 collection of Giovanni's letters and the other texts pertaining to Pico's *epistolarium*, and a fundamental note to the text, where Borghesi specifies his editorial choices and an apparatus of textual variants between the different witnesses. Part 1 ends with an appendix, including an extremely useful list of manuscripts containing letters of Giovanni Pico, and a chapter on the diffusion of the *editio princeps* and its consequent counterfeited witness known as the Lyonnais incunabulum. The second part of the text includes the critical edition of the primary collection of letters, based on the 1496 *editio princeps*, the Capponiano 235, and two letters collected by Bausi in his electronic edition of the *Opera omnia*. Part 3 is composed of a series of epistles *extravagantes*—i.e., letters not included in the *editio princeps*. The book

contains a synthetic but useful bibliography of primary and secondary sources, an index of names, and an index of the addressees of Pico's letters.

The readers of the corpus of letters collected and edited by Borghesi will find Pico a recognized figure of international repute, encircled by the most prominent names of the Florentine court and corresponding with them and other acquaintances in Rome, Ferrara, Mantua, and the rest of the Italian peninsula. In this sense, the *extravagantes* included by Borghesi allow us to break the narrative of redemption imposed by Gianfrancesco Pico's *editio princeps* and delve further into Pico's political relations. Part 3, in fact, includes a missive to Pope Alexander VI, a short letter to Ercole d'Este, and an outstanding number of political missives in the vernacular addressed to Federico I Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, and his wife Margaret of Bavaria. The collection of *extravagantes*, moreover, further enriches our understanding of Pico's influence in Florentine society from a new perspective, devoid of the invasive lens of his nephew Gianfrancesco. The letters to Marsilio Ficino, Lorenzo de' Medici, Lorenzo Valla, Domenico Benivieni, and Angelo Poliziano provide us with an unblemished and un-moralized vision of Pico and his networks of friends and patrons in Florence.

Notwithstanding the merits of the section dedicated to the *extravagantes*, the core of the collection, orbiting around Gianfrancesco Pico's 1496 *editio princeps*, must not be underestimated. The work, in fact, provides us with invaluable contributions to our understanding of Pico's relationship with many prominent figures of the Italian Renaissance such as Lorenzo de' Medici, Poliziano, Ficino, Ermolao Barbaro, Battista Spagnoli, and the same Gianfrancesco Pico. On this subject, Borghesi is especially attentive in recognizing the possible impact that Gianfrancesco (a fervent *piagnone*, who devoted great efforts to a revision of Pico's life and works under a Savonarolan light) might have had on the selection and editing of Pico's letters—a concern that he shares with scholars such as Francesco Bausi, Brian Copenhaver, and James Hankins. By adhering to the *editio princeps* as closely as possible, Borghesi allows us to penetrate Gianfrancesco Pico's grand narrative of a "sanctioned" Giovanni Pico, tantalized by the sinful ideas of Florentine society and finally redeemed by his conversion to Savonarolism.

All in all, this edition is not only an example of high scholarly standards crucial to the studies of Giovanni Pico, but also and most importantly a vital instrument for any future academic research on early modern European history,

philosophy, religion, and beyond. One can only hope that such a pivotal edition might spark new interest in a modern translation of Pico's letters, which would further promote the influence of this fundamental Renaissance thinker beyond the boundaries of Latin readership.

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**Sainte-Marthe, Scèveole de.**

***Œuvres complètes. VI. Gallorum doctrina illustrium elogia. Édition chronologique avec introduction, notes et variants par Jean Brunel.***

Textes Littéraires Français 649. Genève : Droz, 2018. 709 p. ISBN 978-2-600-05930-5 (broché) 79 CFH.

Avec ce tome six des *Elogia*, Jean Brunel procure le dernier volume d'une entreprise éditoriale qui avait débuté en 2010. Fidèle au protocole qu'il s'était fixé, l'éditeur reproduit les *Gallorum doctrina illustrium [...] Elogia* selon l'ordre chronologique de parution entre 1598 et 1630. Au total, c'est plusieurs centaines de personnages historiques de la période 1515–1620 qui sont ainsi rassemblées et dont l'œuvre et la doctrine font l'objet d'une traduction française portée en regard du texte latin. Depuis la version de Guillaume Colletet (1644), les *Elogia* n'avaient plus été traduits ; la présente édition critique vient donc combler ce vide.

L'édition est précédée d'une introduction qui rappelle la genèse des *Elogia* : un premier livre en 1598, un second en 1602, et une refonte de l'ensemble (augmenté de dix-huit entrées) en quatre livres en 1606, édition suivie d'une quatrième augmentée de neuf entrées mais répartie en cinq livres (1616). L'édition posthume (1630) accueille deux entrées supplémentaires qui prennent place dans le dernier livre.

L'éditeur définit les caractéristiques du genre de l'éloge, intermédiaire entre la *vita* et l'*epitaphium*, et retrace sa fortune au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (P. Giovio, M.-A. Muret, P. Masson, P. Nevelet). De facture souple, l'éloge suit les règles du discours et sa charpente révèle ce qu'elle doit à la rhétorique (exorde, narration, péroraison) et au genre épideictique. Surtout, Jean Brunel met en valeur la variété des portraits qui sont dessinés par Sainte-Marthe, soucieux de varier