

## NEO-LATIN NEWS

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◆ *Res seniles, Aggiunte e correzioni, indici*. By Francesco Petrarca. Edited by Silvia Rizzo and Monica Berté. Edizione nazionale delle opere di Francesco Petrarca, 2. Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 2019. 180 pp. €21. This edition of the letters written by Petrarch in his old age is part of the Edizione nazionale delle opere di Francesco Petrarca. The project began a century ago, with the intention of producing definitive texts of Petrarch's works. Over the first several decades, little progress was made, with Festa's edition of the *Africa* in 1926 being followed by Rossi and Bosco's *Familiars* in 1933–1942, Billanovich's *Rerum memorandarum libri* in 1945, and Martellotti's *De viris illustribus* in 1964. Work was taken up again and reorganized at the end of the twentieth century, in conjunction with the celebration of the seventh centenary of Petrarch's birth in 2004. The reorganized effort has already made considerable progress, with a number of volumes currently available and many more in preparation.

The volume under review here is the final installment of the *Seniles*, the first volume of which was published in 2006. In line with the series norms, there is no commentary in the earlier volumes, but there is an apparatus containing authorial variants and some discussion of textual issues along with a second apparatus focused on intertextual references. The Latin text, which is based on the critical edition of E.

the austerity of the boors who say nothing funny and are annoyed by those who do. Pontano adapts what he finds here into a distinction between truthful self-representation and interaction with others on the one hand, and witty, pleasant conversation on the other, but he continues to define his categories as means between extremes. Pontano draws on Cicero's *De oratore* as well, although his Aristotelian roots remain more prominent; the reader will also think of Castiglione, even though Pontano is not trying to define the ideal courtier.

As is always the case with ITRL volumes, the text presented is not designed to be part of a critical edition, but how close it comes depends on the textual status of the work in question. In the case of the Decembrio biographies, a reliable text existed already but has been revised and improved here, with the accompanying translation designed to facilitate comprehension of Decembrio's sometimes-difficult Latin. The text of *De sermone* is based on Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 3413, with the revisions made by Pontano's friend and pupil Pietro Summonte relegated to the notes and the spelling derived from the corrected state of the manuscript. In both volumes the notes are more than adequate to facilitate an understanding of the text, and both volumes are well indexed with an accompanying basic bibliography. In short, these two volumes meet the same high standards as the eighty-six that preceded them. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *Lives of the Popes, Paul II: An Intermediate Reader of Renaissance Latin*. By Bartolomeo Platina. Edited with commentary by Thomas G. Hendrickson et al. Oxford, OH: Faenum Publishing, 2017. xxxvi + 142 pp. \$14.95. This book is the product of the moment, in the sense that the study of Renaissance Latin has taken off in ways that could not have been anticipated a generation ago, but we still lack pedagogical materials to facilitate this study. The International Association for Neo-Latin Studies acknowledged this problem a few years ago by setting up a Committee on the Teaching of Neo-Latin, but much more needs to be done, especially at the beginning and intermediate levels. This textbook is designed to meet this need by supplying an attractive, affordable reader for students who have mastered basic Latin grammar and want to proceed to the next level by using a Neo-Latin

text rather than a classical one.

The text chosen, the life of Pope Paul II by Bartolomeo Sacchi (1421–1481), more commonly known as ‘Platina’ from the name of his birthplace (Piadena), is an unusually good choice for this purpose. The Latin is not particularly difficult, and Platina’s style approximates closely that of Cicero, so the intermediate student will not be confronted with, for example, the eclecticism of Petrarch, whose efforts to recover a classical style were less successful. Just as important is the fact that the content will be engaging to students with a variety of interests, from classics majors to historians and those who are concentrating in religious studies. This is one of those cases where the biographer and his subject had a long and complicated relationship, which adds unusual interest to the presentation. When Pietro Barbo assumed the Papacy as Paul II in 1464, Platina was working as an abbreviator whose job involved drafting Papal bulls. Paul was no friend of humanism, however, and he dismissed the abbreviators whom his humanist predecessor Pius II (Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini) had hired. Platina threatened to call a church council over the issue, which caused Paul to imprison him in Castel Sant’Angelo for four months. Four years later the two came to blows again over Platina’s membership in what has come to be known as the Roman Academy, a group of humanists under the initial leadership of Pomponio Leto who devoted themselves to studying the language, literature, and material remains of ancient Rome. Some of the poems composed in this circle expressed homoerotic desires, and some of its members voiced anti-clerical sentiments, which gave a conservative pope an excuse to imprison and torture its members as heretics who had formed a conspiracy to overthrow him. It is hard to know how many of Paul’s fears were actually justified, and in any event Platina and his friends were eventually released, but as one can imagine, these experiences colored his attitudes toward the papacy in general and toward Paul in particular. The biography presented here therefore offers an unusual opportunity to gain insight into one of the more notorious incidents in the history of humanism and into how a biographer can write a responsible account of the life of someone who had had a profoundly negative impact on him.

The editors have wisely chosen the *editio princeps* (first printed edition) as a base text, to which they have added the grammatical notes that a student at this level will need and the historical notes that will be especially necessary for those who come to the material from the ancient world. They have retained Platina's orthography and syntax, which still shows occasional deviations from his classical models, but they also provide a concise explanation of what might trouble a classicist in these areas. In addition there is a running bibliography that eliminates the need for endless, and discouraging, page flipping in a dictionary and a bibliography that allows the reader to pursue topics of interest.

This textbook was born in a seminar on Renaissance Latin that Professor Hendrickson offered at Dartmouth, which ensures that it actually meets the needs of students. I personally would hesitate to use the book as a text in an intermediate class, because most of my students there will discontinue their study of Latin after this point and I think they should probably read Cicero or Virgil instead. But instructors who do not have this reservation will find the book well suited to their needs, and I would have no hesitations in using it for an advanced class focused on Neo-Latin or in giving it to an interested student for self study. We need more textbooks exactly like this, and I hope that Platina's biography will stimulate a run of similar products. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *Aldo Manuzio e la nascita dell'editoria*. Edited by Gianluca Montinaro. Piccola Biblioteca Umanistica, 1. Florence: Leo S. Olchki, 2019. VI + 110 pp. €14. As one would expect, 2015 unleashed a flood of publications about Aldus Manutius (ca. 1450–1515), the famous scholar-printer of Renaissance Italy. The quincentenary provided a welcome opportunity to pause and reflect on what is currently known about the man who published the first pocket edition of a classical text in cursive type, produced the first printed editions of over ninety Greek texts, and printed everything from Greek grammars to editions of Neo-Latin writers like Giovanni Gioviano Pontano. There were exhibitions in major libraries and essays by specialists in printing history, classics, and Neo-Latin studies. I had thought that the celebration was over, but this collection of essays seems to have inserted itself into the