

scholars with a fascinating perspective.

Because his text is written in Italian and refers in its title to authors of a specific birthplace, Canova's work could be overlooked by researchers of non-Italian literature. However, as promised by him early in the text, Canova's treatise is much more than an exegesis of minor Italian authors. *Le lacrime di Minerva* is a journey into the development of the *tragedia* and *commedia* genre in early modern Italy. Finally, the text is about Machiavelli and, to an extent, Dante, confronting their peers in matters of genre tradition, authorial influence, and linguistic prestige.

Pier Paolo Vergerio the Propagandist. Robert A. Pierce. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003. 293 pp. €33.00. ISBN 88-8498-077-1.

REVIEWED BY: Paul V. Murphy, University of San Francisco

Among those Italians who left Italy and the Roman Church during the sixteenth century, perhaps none is more difficult to understand than Pier Paolo Vergerio the Younger (1498–1565). Early in his career he played the role of a Renaissance courtier and prelate, seeking friends and patrons as he advanced his career. After he became bishop of Capodistria his career stalled. Increasing ambivalence toward the potential for reform in the Catholic Church and hostility toward Pope Paul III and the Farnese family led Vergerio to a fundamental break with his past. In 1549 he fled Italy and took up a career as a propagandist for reform, operating from Switzerland and Germany. Robert A. Pierce has made a significant contribution to our knowledge of Vergerio's role both during his years in Italy and, most importantly, as a propagandist for a reform that never fully materialized.

Although Pierce's primary focus is on the work of Vergerio after his departure from Italy he does address the complex development of the man's thought and relationship to the Catholic Church prior to his flight to Switzerland. Vergerio did not openly embrace a Protestant theology until that time. This has led to speculation among historians as to the timing of his conversion. Did Vergerio really not embrace Protestantism until 1549 or was he in fact a dissimulator for several years? Pierce advances the discussion by utilizing a method for studying conversion that arises from the sociological study of religion: conversion as a process of socialization. This framework for understanding the phenomenon of conversion rejects instantaneous changes in beliefs and allows for conversion as a slow integration of new knowledge and new sources of social support. Such a view is especially useful in the case of Vergerio, whose path to Protestantism developed gradually over a period of more than ten years. In the end, Pierce retains 1549 as the date of conversion in the sense that it is at that time that the process was complete and Vergerio then recognized the full significance of the views he had come to hold.

Pierce makes his most valuable contribution in his analysis of Vergerio's role as a propagandist for reform in Italy. The statistics that he presents demonstrate that Vergerio alone was responsible for almost one-third of all Italian Protestant books published outside of Italy in the sixteenth century. Pierce has included as appendixes to the volume two lists of such books that document this publishing role. Vergerio's message in these works was one based in patristic and Erasmian images of light and darkness, persecution and liberty. Underpinning these themes was a historical criticism that contrasted scriptural evidence of the early church with the later practice of medieval Christianity. These elements of his thought became the foundation for his specific attacks on Catholic beliefs and practices.

Pierce also presents a fuller picture than we have had until now of how Vergerio

operated in Italy. Vergerio emerges not simply as a propagandist, but as an innovative one at that. As the restrictions on the importation into Italy of Protestant books increased in the late 1540s and 1550s, Vergerio turned from books and pamphlets to letters that could be sent through ordinary post. This direct mail method of spreading his views allowed Vergerio to present his ideas and his interpretation of events in a direct, vivid, and personal way to a broad range of readers. This also allowed his associates and followers to evade detection for many years.

Vergerio's work depended upon a committed reading public in northeastern Italy. The network of friends and supporters that sought out and exchanged Vergerio's pamphlets reveals a community of dissenters who maintained themselves well into the 1570s. The circles that found inspiration in him included lower-ranking nobles, doctors, lawyers, artisans, and clergy. The social networks formed by these readers promoted the continuing transmission of his ideas late into the century. An appendix to the volume that lists Vergerio's primary supporters, who were located broadly across northern Italy, documents his influence in this regard. In the absence of an institutionalized form of Protestantism, Pierce argues, "Vergerio's leadership, propaganda, and example provided many of his readers a cohesive center that served as an alternative to institutionalization of Protestantism" (192). Even after Vergerio's death, readers continued to come under his influence as he became a symbol of sanctity and resistance. One of the more curious incidents in the posthumous veneration of Vergerio involved the construction of a shrine in his honor in Capodistria that, ironically for one who had severely criticized Catholic practice in this matter, even included one of his bones. This indicates that for Vergerio's followers "the holy was contained in material objects that served to recreate the memory of the leader" (195), in a way that was consistent with the sixteenth-century Italian religious imagination. Catholic officials soon saw to the elimination of this memorial.

Historians have tended to be critical of Vergerio as a theological lightweight and Pierce does not essentially reject that view. However, he does emphasize that the pastoral, legal, and diplomatic training of his early career made Vergerio an appropriate candidate to take up the role of propagandist for and leader of the remnant of the reform movement in Italy.

L'Eresia dei perfetti: Inquisizione romana ed esperienze mistiche nel Seicento italiano. Adelisa Malena. *Temi e testi* 47 "Tribunali della fede," ed. Adriano Prosperi. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003. xviii + 315 pp. €39.00. ISBN 88-8498-118-2.

REVIEWED BY: Anne Jacobson Schutte, University of Virginia

Since February 1998, when the Archive of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith—containing not only records generated by the Congregations of the Holy Office and the Index but also the intact archive of the Sieneese Inquisition—was opened to scholars on a regular basis, opportunities for investigating the repression of heresy on the Italian peninsula have expanded significantly. Using material newly available in Rome in conjunction with the records of "peripheral" tribunals of the Inquisition (Florence, Livorno, and Pisa) held in those cities, as well as manuscripts and books in several other archives and libraries, Adelisa Malena explores Tuscan manifestations of "Quietism," a congeries of spiritual attitudes and behaviors labeled and fiercely combated by the Inquisition. In this published version of her 2002 *tesi di dottorato* (Scuola Normale Superiore, directed by Mario Rosa), foretastes of