

Scrivere lettere nel Cinquecento: Corrispondenze in prosa e in versi.

Laura Fortini, Giuseppe Izzi, and Concetta Ranieri, eds.

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xiii + 294 pp. €38.

This thought-provoking collection of eighteen essays, which emerged out of a colloquium held at Università Roma Tre on sixteenth-century Italian letters, sheds new light on vernacular prose and verse correspondence during this period. Under the direction of Laura Fortini, Giuseppe Izzi, and Concetta Ranieri, this ambitious volume uses both biographical and thematic studies to address the ways in which both men and women shaped vernacular correspondence in early modern Italy. The essays broadly explore both epistolary language and style, but also the rise of printed correspondence in the vernacular. This latter development legitimized vernacular letter-writing as an art form that, while not on the margins per se, was nonetheless previously considered inferior to Latin epistolography (vi).

The volume is organized roughly into three parts: the emergence of vernacular correspondence innovated initially by Pietro Aretino and Pietro Bembo; studies of individual prose writers, poets, and their epistolary corpus; and a final section devoted to broader studies of style and language in sixteenth-century letter-writing. The volume opens with a helpful overview (Mario de Nonno) of the letter's evolution from instrument of simple communication to a malleable site of self-fashioning and network formation (xi). This is followed by an essay on the importance of Aretino's (Paolo Procaccioli) collaboration with the printer Francesco Marcolini to the professionalization of publishing letter-books. Further scholarly incursions into the editorial process are made with an analysis of the Travi edition of Bembo's correspondence (Claudia Berra), complemented by a second essay on the same writer's use of epistolary fiction in literary works, particularly in dedicatory letters, as a rhetorical device (Luca Marcozzi).

The subsequent eight chapters focus on individual writers and poets, including Mario Equicola (Pietro Petteruti Pellegrino), Francesco Maria Molza (Franco Pignatti), Ludovico Ariosto (Vittorio Gatto), Cesare Rao (Giuseppe Crimi), and Torquato Tasso (Emilio Russo), each treating the linguistic and stylistic elements of the writers' contributions to Renaissance epistolography. Finally, the volume concludes with five varied contributions on the language and legacy of vernacular correspondence via essays on the *topos* of the letter in sixteenth-century narrative (Raffaele Morabito), courtiers' letters (Roberto Vetruigno), philological explorations of a sixteenth-century epistolary corpus (Paolo d'Achille and Antonella Stefinlongo), and the editorial project EpistolART (Paola Moreno). The volume is bookended by a final contribution on Giacomo Leopardi's fascination with sixteenth-century letters and their subsequent influence on his eighteenth-century literary work (Giuseppe Izzi).

Of particular importance, however, is the emphasis given to female letter-writers for whom the vernacular was an enabling tool to enter the literary space and participate

in these intellectual and religious networks. While the first of these essays on Maria Savorgnan (Monica Farnetti) addresses her love letters with Pietro Bembo, Farnetti emphasizes the importance of the vernacular letter for women of Savorgnan's cerebral qualities to assert themselves in intellectual and courtly circles. The author cites, among others, Cassandra Fedele, Veronica Franco, Isabella Andreini, and Lucrezia Gonzaga, all of whom engaged with elite networks through the letter and, indeed, created a female tradition of literary epistolography distinct from the epistolary canon of female mystics. This theme is echoed in excellent essays on Veronica Gambara (Laura Fortini), Tullia d'Aragona (Julia L. Hairston), and Vittoria Colonna (Concetta Ranieri), the latter of which explicitly treats the confluence of the literary and spiritual in Colonna's writing. These essays contribute to the already vibrant Italophone scholarship on female letter-writers and further encourage its growth through delineating the spiritual and literary as distinct genres for women, but also as sites of experimentation for figures like Colonna who engaged with both spaces in distinctly feminine ways.

The essays collected here encourage a variety of ways to approach sixteenth-century vernacular letters as their own genre distinct from, albeit as descendants of, the Latin letter. The collection is fundamentally an invitation for scholars to engage with the vernacular letter as a source capable of astounding insight into many avenues of historical inquiry. This volume is a welcome addition to the historiography and encourages further scholarship and engagement with Renaissance vernacular epistolography in all its forms.

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Gabriele Simeoni (1509–1570?): Un Florentin en France entre princes et libraires. Silvia D'Amico and Catherine Magnien-Simonin, eds.

Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 568. Geneva: Droz, 2016. 640 pp. \$106.80.

A polyvalent figure and Italian writer between Renaissance Italy and France, Gabriele Simeoni has been reevaluated thanks to the conference organized by the University of Savoy in 2011. The volume presented here collects seventeen papers of important Italian and French Renaissance scholars who participated in the conference and who tried to draw up new perspectives and research about this Italian author, whose personality exemplified the transition from the *sprezzatura* of the Renaissance courtier to the melancholic intellectual at the end of the Cinquecento.

The first two papers by Bramanti and Balsamo study the years spent by Simeoni in Florence and in France. Bramanti gives much more information about the relation between Simeoni and Cosimo de' Medici, with particular attention to the period from 1543 to 1546; the letters of Simeoni and some of his contemporaries (many of them unpublished) are edited by Bramanti at the end of the paper. Balsamo, on the other