

**Renaissance and Reformation**  
**Renaissance et Réforme**



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Claudia Villa, eds. Il ritorno dei classici nell'Umanesimo. Studi  
in memoria di Gianvito Resta. Editorial coordination and  
indexes by Paolo Pontari**

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## Book Reviews / Comptes Rendus

**Albanese, Gabriella, Claudio Ciociola, Mariarosa Cortesi, and Claudia Villa, eds.**

***Il ritorno dei classici nell'Umanesimo. Studi in memoria di Gianvito Resta.***

**Editorial coordination and indexes by Paolo Pontari.**

Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2015. Pp. xxxi, 700 + 32 ill. ISBN 978-88-8450-477-7 (paperback) €75.

The academic and human figure of Gianvito Resta (1921–2011) is deeply intertwined with the project of *The Return of Classics during Humanism*, which now hosts four parallel series: Commentaries of Latin Texts; Early Translations of Latin Texts in Italian Vernaculars; Translations of Ancient Greek Texts; and Historiographical Texts. All four series promote the publication of scientific critical editions—and their respective coordinators, editors, and authors, including the presidents (Gabriella Albanese, Claudio Ciociola, Mariarosa Cortesi, and Claudia Villa), are the contributors of the miscellany under review.

Thirty-one essays follow an extensive introduction, in which the editors illustrate not only the academic career of Resta, in light of the theme in question, but also the evolution and development of a relatively recent research field and its most useful publications and projects—such as the free online manuscript catalogue associated with the series.

The initiative seals and legitimizes works that for centuries were victims of critical prejudice or simply neglected. In the case of medieval versions, the negative attitude was due to the lack of a solid discipline that integrated classical into Italian philology. A further contributing factor was the effort among the first generation of humanists to replace past commentaries and translations with their own endeavours; nevertheless, while previous authors were rejected in words, they often served in fact as points of reference for the humanists, or even the basis for their “original” works.

The essays here reflect the four series of the project, and in many instances they dialogue with one another. From different points of view but with the same rigorously philological approach, the contributors examine the tradition and consequent circulation (both manuscript and press) of classical and humanist texts. Such a line of research allowed scholars to bring to the light of

day—together with the actual authors, translators, and texts—the scribes and owners of codices, and to highlight their reciprocal relations, exchanges, and cultural influences.

Well-known commentaries, versions, and historiographical works are considered together with others recently discovered or re-evaluated. All the results are based on an attentive and meticulous analysis of the works' tradition that, in the case of versions, has to be accompanied by the tricky reconstruction of the text that the translator had in sight.

Some of the most relevant classical authors find their place in the volume in connection with a specific episode of their reception between the late medieval and early modern period: Isocrates, Xenophon, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Epictetus, Aesop, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Vegetius, and Seneca—in addition to various minor anonymous works. Very often these classical personalities are accompanied by equally illustrious translators, commentators, or historians from the humanist era: Bono Giamboni, Brunetto Latini, Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Colonna, Giovanni del Virgilio, Albertino Mussato, Lapo da Castiglionchio, Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini, Giovanni Tortelli, Roberto Rossi, Biondo Flavio, Ludovico Saccano, Bernardo Bembo, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Antonio Panormita, Guarino Veronese, Ficino, Gaspare Pellegrino, and Angelo Poliziano, to mention only the major ones. There is also room for a painter of the likes of Sandro Botticelli, whose so-called *Spring* is read through Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* as a means to found a new hierarchy of liberal arts. These names clearly show how broad and widespread were their cultural interests, which intersected various environments and centres: courts, academies, private libraries, manuscript workshops, and other lay as well as ecclesiastical circles.

The authors here treated cover an exceptionally wide array of literary genres and fit the division into four series of the project launched by Resta: from historiography to fables, from philosophical reports to orations, from poetical allegories to epistolary documents, from lexical glossaries to medical treatises. These works, most of which are still unpublished, represent—through contemporary or later circulation—the whole of Italy and its different political settings: to wit, monarchical, republican, municipal. Historiography in particular had a close and sometimes delicate connection with political regimes, especially monarchies like in Naples, and therefore its study sheds new light both on classical sources and on the contemporary events and propaganda drives.

Guided by a philological approach in outlining the manuscript tradition of the works in question and by an acute stylistic and linguistic expertise in commenting on Ancient Greek, Latin, and vernaculars, the contributors locate many episodes in the history of Italian literature neglected until now. What emerges from the essays is a sort of counter-melody, more than merely erudite, beside the canonical works that are normally associated with medieval and humanist times. Translations, commentaries, and historical accounts in fact lie behind—and in many cases enabled—works that are considered masterpieces today and that would have been probably never composed without them.

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**Arnauld d'Andilly, Angélique de Saint-Jean.**

*Writings of Resistance.* Ed. and trans. John J. Conley, S.J.

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 41. Toronto: Iter Academic Press / Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2015. Pp. xiii, 189. ISBN 978-0-8669-8539-0 (paperback) US\$31.95.

Among the many distinctive features of the Jansenist movement was the prominent role played by women in its formation and early development. Most of them were Cistercian nuns at the convents of Port Royal, and undoubtedly the best known were members of the Arnauld family. When the original reformer of Port Royal, Mère Angélique Arnauld, died in 1661, the community was under pressure to accept the famous formulary pledging obedience to a papal bull that condemned five propositions from Cornelius Jansen's *Augustinus*. And when Louis XIV and the archbishop of Paris renewed demands for unequivocal acceptance in 1664, the leadership of nuns unwilling to comply passed to Angélique's niece, Angélique de Saint-Jean. Strong-willed and formidably well educated, she inspired eleven of her sister nuns to defy the archbishop to his face, and in response he expelled them from their community and scattered them among houses of other orders where they were cut off from contact with each other and the outside world. Angélique was sent to the Sisters of the Annunciation in the Marais, where she was confined between July 1664 and June 1665. During the Peace of the Church in the 1670s, she wrote a long account of