
Renaissance and Reformation
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Tanzini, Lorenzo, ed. Il laboratorio del Rinascimento. Studi di storia e cultura offerti a Riccardo Fubini

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is said about the state of Sophia's written French, which is consistently awkward and ungrammatical (even by seventeenth-century standards), which led Forrester to exclaim that Sophia was such a law unto herself with spelling and grammar that she effectively devised her own version of French! Translating Sophia is thus no easy task, but Ward manages to turn her mangled French into very readable English, thanks in no small part to a conscious decision to aim for a conversational tone (28). The result is smooth and lucid, though the presence in the translation of a handful of modern terms—such as “canoodled” (58), “prenuptial agreement” (122), “interior decorator” (123) and “pet project” (174)—is a bit jarring.

As a final point, it is interesting to note that this volume is published in The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe series. At its inception in 1996, the series was devoted to books by women writers who had contributed to the growth of humanism from ca. 1300 to ca. 1800. Sophia's *Memoirs* fall a long way outside this remit; indeed, they contain scant evidence of any kind of intellectual engagement whatsoever, never mind a contribution to any discipline or movement. The *Memoirs* themselves are primarily concerned with issues of pomp and circumstance, descriptions of protocol and etiquette followed and not followed, personal and political machinations, and tales of parties, festivities, and other amusements (especially dancing and gambling), giving the reader the impression that Sophia was little more than a privileged aristocrat with a penchant for gossip and an obsession with rank and status. This impression is unfortunate, as she was a woman of great learning who had important things to say about philosophy, politics, and theology. To find such, one will need to mine her voluminous correspondence.

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Tanzini, Lorenzo, ed.

Il laboratorio del Rinascimento. Studi di storia e cultura offerti a Riccardo Fubini. Biblioteca 58. Florence: Le Lettere, 2015. Pp. 294. ISBN 978-88-6087-966-0 (paperback) €28.

On the occasion of the eightieth birthday of Professor Riccardo Fubini, sixteen of his colleagues, pupils, and friends decided to put together a collection of

essays to celebrate. This scholarly genre—as the editor explains in the preface—is Fubini’s own favourite strategy to promote academic research (5).

As Fubini’s publications have demonstrated over the course of his long career at the University of Florence, the fifteenth century in Italy, and especially in Tuscany—with its vital connections among history, political theory, literature, and, more broadly, culture—was the crucible of the modern age. This is why Fubini himself, and now the contributors of the volume under review, devoted themselves to authors, cities, and institutions from that period. Each of the essays examines a peculiar aspect of the fifteenth century from an original perspective, while taking into account the most recent works in the field: offices and officers, ideological strains, and major and minor figures of Italian history and literature are at the centre of this book.

Patrick Gilli analyzes the problematic status of embassies and ambassadors in the medieval communal statutes, where the diplomatic body did not yet have the prestige it later enjoyed. Serena Ferente dwells on the extent to which historiographical writings and the private reports were influenced by official diplomatic practice. Alessandro Fabbri examines the ecclesiology of French clergy and their relatively constant loyalty to the crown during the Great Western Schism in France in light of juridical works and political facts. The essay by Lorenzo Tanzini traces an overview of the official correspondence of the Florentine chancellery under humanists Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) and Leonardo Bruni (ca. 1370–1444).

The image of Florence and of its equity-oriented institutions (especially the Mercanzia tribunal) emerges from the missives addressed to non-Italian states, and confirms how politically relevant some commercial facts could become. Re-reading Nicolai Rubinstein’s *The Government of Florence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), and several studies by Fubini, Alison Brown investigates how the Medici regime was able to legitimize itself in fifteenth-century Florence by alternately confirming the current political organs and imposing its own sovereignty. Petra Pertici develops a research line very dear to her, dwelling on the strong personality of Antonio Petrucci from Siena (1400–71). A new document on the Pazzi conspiracy (1478) is brought to light by Tobias Daniels: in a letter sent from Rome a month after the event, “Henningus Cossebade” (a member of the Curia) underlines the secret involvement of Bona Sforza, who would have supported the traitors and even provided them with an army if needed. A connection to Milan appears in the essay by Giorgio Chittolini, who

delves into the proposed creation of a board of canonists (“colegium canonistarum”) between 1479 and 1488.

A political and cultural component of the Festschrift also permeates the essays specifically dedicated to Renaissance humanists. Gary Ianziti returns to his beloved Leonardo Bruni as official historian of the pre-Medicean oligarchy, with whose support he wrote part of his *Histories of the Florentine People*. The tormented manuscript and print tradition of the *Lives* by Vespasiano da Bisticci (1422/23–1498) is explored by Wi-Seon Kim. Some pivotal episodes of the career of Cristoforo Landino (1425–98) are the subject of Lorenz Böninger’s study. Concetta Bianca analyzes the figure of Iacopo di Poggio Bracciolini (1442–78) and his letter/oration *Contra detractores*, addressed to Lorenzo the Magnificent. Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby studies the political and ideological implications of the cult of Franciscan saints in early modern Florence in the context of the contemporary crusading spirit.

There is also room in this collection for the giant name of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527): through a further examination of Agostino Vespucci (born Nettucci), a Florentine functionary and assistant of Machiavelli during Soderini’s Republic, Francesca Klein speculates on the possibility that already at that time the project of a history of Florence was elaborated. On the other hand, Jérémie Barthas presents a Machiavellian constitutional proposal concerning a “plebeian” authority in Florence, which was able to counterbalance the *magnati*’s. Finally, an examination of an enlightening epistolary exchange between two outstanding modern scholars, Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905–99) and Edward Lowinsky (1908–85), is offered by Antony Molho.

Through a very well-grounded analysis, based on new documents and archive data, this Festschrift in honour of Riccardo Fubini does justice both to his teachings and to the productivity of his research interests—especially those he carried out most precociously, anticipating their following developments.

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