

*La biblioteca di Alfonso II del Carretto marchese di Finale: Libri tra Vienna e la Liguria nel XVI secolo.* Anna Giulia Cavagna.

Fonti, memorie e studi del Centro Storico del Finale 2. Finale Ligure: Centro Storico del Finale, 2012. 430 pp. €20.

---

This book, the second of the series Fonti, memorie e studi del Centro Storico del Finale, is a quality production typical of Italian publishers. It is the work of meticulous scholarship and an important contribution to the history of private libraries, book cataloging, the early print industry, and the prosopography of sixteenth-century Italian nobles, especially those within the orbit of the empire. The author presents a study and annotated transcription of *Nota de varij libri della libreria de Marchesi di Finale*, a manuscript catalogue of the private library of a Ligurian nobleman, now in the archives of the Doria Pamphilj Palace in Rome. Cavagna has identified 1,083 titles within the 924 items cataloged in the notebook. Almost all of the titles are of printed books rather than manuscripts. Chapters 1 through 3 of her study describe the making and contents of the catalogue, the owner's background and interests, and the structure and quality of the information recorded. Chapter 4 is a transcription with an introduction.

Cavagna uses a multidisciplinary approach, joining biography, prosopography, library science, and intellectual history to extensive archival research. She ties her detailed analysis of the acquisitions to biographical details of Carretto. The impressive work of providing contemporary catalogue entries for the books is the fruit of consulting digital databases and archival research in Italy and Central Europe. A modern citation following each transcription gives immediate recognition of the contents. Comparisons offered between entries in the *Nota* and modern cataloging reveal the precision and care with which Carretto's anonymous secretaries worked.

Several arguments are sustained throughout the book. Carretto's *Nota* reveals a modern man of the new civilization of the printed book who also had some of the appetites of a sixteenth-century antiquarian. He was, additionally, aware of the social and diplomatic uses of his books. His collection gives insight into the ties and intellectual associations that he had or wanted to be seen as having. The inclusion of paratext (text from the frontispiece and dedicatory pages) in the catalogue entries reveals diplomatic and propagandistic intentions at work in book acquisition.

Carretto was a more successful man of letters and courtier than he was a ruler. He expanded his private library during two long stays in Vienna. It is obvious from a book of extracts copied by him that Carretto read his books. His collection has a lay rather than a religious theme. Polemics are noticeably absent, but there is a cookbook of Pope Pius V's. A scientific bent is seen, for example, in the selected works of Hildegard von Bingen and Venerable Bede. History is represented in popular works of the day by Francesco Sansovino and others. There are also many works concerning nobility and the art of war, typical of a man of Carretto's station.

The catalogue, Cavagna argues, has rare, even unparalleled bibliographical elements. It consists of lists made at different times, marking the moments when books were sent

from Vienna to Liguria. The entries have an extraordinary uniformity and accuracy. The scribes are anonymous and probably Italian (copyist errors reveal a lack of familiarity with the Gothic typeface). The books were inventoried by bound units rather than by individual titles. Comparatively full descriptions are given with author, title, publisher, binding, binding history, and dedicatory information. The *Nota* is the first-known book inventory to take paratext into account.

Cavagna's reconstruction of the library is an impressive work of scholarship. Her judgments show an admirable restraint, for example, in leaving the origins of the *Nota*'s unique style of recording items open to question. Her research and command of contemporary scholarship are substantial and her findings are significant. Scarcely any errors may be found in the apparatus (on 77n2, "p. 256 . . . p. 260" should be "p. 257 . . . p. 261"). A major desideratum is the lack of any images from the *Nota*. Given the other images and plates provided, this seems not to have been the decision of the author or publisher, but, one can only presume, of the keepers of the manuscript.

CHARLES HILKEN, *Saint Mary's College of California*