

of the Medici. As scholars of the Renaissance, we have often fallen under the sway of the princes and the geniuses who dominated our era, neglecting individuals whose contributions were as essential, but not as crystalline.

Charlet-Mesdjian's book underscores my growing unease. For example, in the years before, but especially following their expulsion, the Strozzi scattered across the Italian Peninsula and eventually to their bank branches in the Low Countries and Northern Europe. The wealth they acquired was stupendous, equaling that of the Medicis, though it was spent, with the exception of the family's grand palace and chapel in Florence, more carefully and less ostentatiously. The Strozzi exile of 1434 made the Strozzi men, with one or perhaps two exceptions, prefer to be courtiers and advisers rather than would-be princes. Put another way, the Strozzi men almost always remained close to those who wielded power, but they rarely directly wielded power themselves.

T. V. Strozzi survived and thrived in the storm-tossed seas of the court of Ferrara, leaving a legacy far more monochromatic than his D'Este masters. Yet, Strozzi, and families like his, were the ones who helped their governments function smoothly; they provided the real noble legitimacy and the refined gentlemanly cunning that was necessary for the survival of their princes, bridging the gaps between the court, the nobility, and the people. This wasn't flashy work, and it remains less attractive to contemporary historians. If our discipline is to survive the present global political crisis it needs to focus not only on the heroes who have defined the Renaissance since the time of Vasari, but also on the community of lesser humanists, artists, and politicians who helped to create the environment that allowed for Italy's many cultures to blossom, even as the peninsula was ransacked and humiliated by foreign oppressors.

In this paradigm, T. V. Strozzi is very important. He was an exile, yet he worked his way with grace, courtesy, and keen intelligence into the D'Este court where he was promoted to the highest levels. For entertainment, he turned to writing verse and prose. Charlet-Mesdjian thus presents Strozzi's *Book of Satires* and *Against the Wicked Wolf*: lighthearted works that also manage to possess an appropriate Florentine seriousness, each prefaced with excellent historical summaries and ample notes. Following Charlet-Mesdjian's lead, let's look in the shadows.

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Letters and Papers. Jean de Langeac.

Ed. and trans. Jan Noble Pendergrass. *Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 558. Geneva: Droz, 2016. 644 pp. \$117.60.

This first volume of Jean de Langeac's letters and papers is an important research tool that accesses his correspondence as a bishop of Avranches and then Limoges as well as

patron of the arts and a royal official for Francis I. First mention is made of him as a member of the Parlement of Toulouse in 1511, and by 1516 he was a member of the king's Grand Council, and then later appointed to the office of royal master of requests. Much of this correspondence deals with his position as diplomatic emissary to a number of states, including Portugal, Poland, Hungary, Venice, Switzerland, Ferrara, Scotland, England, and Rome, in addition to domestic missions in the French provinces. From 1516–41 he performed sixteen diplomatic missions. Also, as a clergyman he administered endowed monasteries, including serving as feudal lord for numerous benefices. Though only a small portion of his cumulative correspondence remains today, this volume provides an indispensable guide to Langeac's role in church and diplomatic affairs for the historian of Renaissance France. Our knowledge of acts of property tenure, records of litigation, mission instructions to diplomats, contracts for artistic services, and even instructions regarding the deliverance of a kidnapped girl shed light on the quotidian duties of this important official and his life's work.

This volume is especially well organized for scholars and contains 150 pieces of correspondence. But first the table of contents, including a helpful chronological table of Langeac's life, from his parent's marriage in 1474 to his death in 1541, will guide the researcher of this volume to the sources she or he is most interested in examining. Then the next item, a list of travel for church and state, 1511–41, facilitates our efforts even further because it lists the specific missions of Langeac at these times. Next, "Letters and Papers" comprises the body of this volume, containing 150 letters from 1512 to 1541. Of great importance here is the variety of subjects covered in history, such as the second war of Kappel, an interview with King Henry VIII at Hampton Court, an oration before King Manuel I of Portugal, or instructions to Langeac's envoys going to the court of Sigismund I of Poland, for example. The beauty of all these subjects is made even more accessible through English translations that paraphrase every single letter and paper of this volume. Since Langeac wrote in French, Latin, Italian, and occasionally German, English summations of the content of these papers provide us with the opportunity to comprehend more fully the cosmopolitan world of court societies and feudal obligations.

Furthermore, this volume retains the original documents for our perusal as well. In addition to the fine translations are the notes after each letter and paper. They provide the reader with a wealth of information on persons and events. Often letters beg for money, complain of a lack of free time, or gripe about personal illness. So it was then as it is today. Even so, the editor of this volume has performed an immeasurable contribution in providing illuminating sources on a number of social, religious, diplomatic, and political events of the sixteenth century. Rounding out this volume is a bibliography of manuscripts and printed material that comprises forty-one pages. Archives from Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, and the Vatican were consulted for the primary sources. Finally, an index of proper names

provides sharper focus to pinpoint topics. Volumes such as these can and should excite further research into Renaissance studies.

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Echoes of an Invisible World: Marsilio Ficino and Francesco Patrizi on Cosmic Order and Music Theory. Jacomien Prins.

Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 234. Leiden: Brill, 2015. xii + 462 pp. \$193.

In *Echoes of an Invisible World*, Jacomien Prins examines Marsilio Ficino's and Francesco Patrizi's views on cosmic order and musical harmony to shed light on significant changes in the disciplines of cosmology and music theory in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this interdisciplinary book, Prins argues that Ficino and Patrizi did not passively revive and uncritically adopt Platonic, Neoplatonic, and medieval Christian views on order and harmony. Instead, she shows that both Renaissance Platonists molded these ideas to their own philosophical and artistic interests. Further, she argues that disputes and disagreements arising from their work on order and harmony clarify large-scale changes to the landscape of Renaissance philosophy, cosmology, and music theory.

This book is divided into two substantial parts. The first focuses primarily on Marsilio Ficino, and the second on Francesco Patrizi. A common thread connecting both parts is the fifteenth-century recovery and reception of Plato's *Timaeus* dialogue and the way it shaped cosmology and music theory in its wake. While the focus of the two parts is primarily on Ficino and Patrizi respectively, both are densely packed with discussions of questions and concepts related to order and harmony from antiquity to the Renaissance, as well as more general philosophical themes. Throughout this book Prins takes an interdisciplinary approach to the topic, and she closes the book with some methodological considerations and conclusions regarding intellectual history from an interdisciplinary perspective.

In the first part, Prins focuses on Ficino's views on order and harmony, especially his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, and she historically situates his interpretation in the Neoplatonic tradition. In general, for Ficino, the cosmos is an animated organism that is a "living and vibrating organic unity, in which each part is harmoniously connected with every other part" (35). The first part of Prins's book includes discussions of Ficino's views on geometry, arithmetic, musical harmony, and their application to nature and the soul, as well as his views on therapeutic planetary music. Many of these concepts come together in chapter 3, where Prins turns to Ficino's views on the ethical implications of cosmic order and harmony. She examines the mechanisms by which Ficino thought that music can alter and improve the condition of the embodied soul,