

Jewish literature in fifteenth-century German-speaking lands is limited. For example, Gronemann repeatedly stresses the medieval epic *Nibelungenlied*, a text popular in the Middle Ages but almost forgotten in the early modern period and only rediscovered toward the end of the eighteenth century. Finally, and most importantly, her analysis overlooks the existence of Old Yiddish literature, which was much more popular among Jews in German-speaking lands than Hebrew literature due to limited Hebrew literacy among men and women alike. Albeit rarely illustrated, the Old Yiddish material offers crucial insights for an exploration of Jewish literature in fifteenth-century Ashkenaz. Rather than exploring this rich literary tradition, Gronemann solely relies on a comparison with German literature and thus undermines her comparative analysis of Jewish culture.

What it lacks in analysis of literary history the book makes up for in its sections on art history. Gronemann argues conclusively that the pictorial program represents a key to understanding *MH*. Through her meticulous analysis of the five manuscripts, Gronemann is able to argue that these texts' illustrations were closely related and offer essential clues about earlier manuscripts that are now lost. Among the highlights of these sections is the discussion of transcultural developments in contemporaneous aesthetics, underscoring a continuous exchange between Christian and Jewish artists and the impact of everyday Christian art (e.g., in the form of stained-glass windows), which surrounded the Jewish minority and deeply influenced their art. Supplemented by an extensive and easy-to-navigate appendix, Gronemann's work offers the reader access to the technical details of the illustrations and to their content.

This book will enable future research to take the pictorial program of *MH* into account. Gronemann's extensive, systematic overview of the illustrations and the accompanying detailed analysis are poised to inspire new and more holistic research on *MH* and to prompt a new spirited discussion of this important premodern, transcultural Jewish work.

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Giovanni Aurelio Augurello (1441–1524) and Renaissance Alchemy: A Critical Edition of "Chrysopoeia" and Other Alchemical Poems, with an Introduction, English Translation and Commentary. Matteo Soranzo.

The Renaissance Society of America Texts and Studies 14. Leiden: Brill, 2020. xxii + 338 pp. €115.

Matteo Soranzo's publication corrects a long historical injustice: the scholarly neglect of Giovanni Aurelio Augurello's poem *Chrysopoeia* (1515), a work that did not fit the Enlightenment paradigm or traditional Renaissance studies. As Soranzo points out,

Chrysopoeia was only mentioned as a curiosity in Jacob Burckhardt's foundational *Culture of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). As for Augurello, he remained an obscure poet whose main achievement was deemed to be the tutoring of Pietro Bembo (1470–1547). The history of alchemy is currently undergoing a vigorous revival, spearheaded by the works of William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, both of whom are copiously cited in this edition. As part of this revival, the writings of Zweder von Martels and Sylvain Matton have paid renewed attention to *Chrysopoeia*. Soranzo is clearly supportive of the new framework, but describes his approach as “eclectic” (5).

Soranzo's critical edition contains an editorial introduction, the annotated and commented text of *Chrysopoeia* and four other Augurello poems, a bibliography, and two indexes. The introduction is chiefly an intellectual biography of Augurello, set in the context of early sixteenth-century Italy, particularly Venice. Soranzo paints the portrait of a talented poet who was, however, relatively devoid of means and often dependent on patronage. Still, Augurello had the good fortune of obtaining the support of Venetian diplomat Bernardo Bembo and pontifical nuncio Niccolò Franco, among others. Augurello also made a living as a private tutor of local Venetian patricians, and, in his later age, became a canon of the cathedral of Treviso. Soranzo does a good job highlighting Augurello's relationships with various Renaissance figures, and paints a vivid picture of the impact of the contemporary political situation on Augurello's livelihood and writings. There is less on Augurello's exposure to alchemy and metallurgy; a discussion of the Venetian alchemy of the period (and its links with metallurgy) would have perhaps been desirable.

Soranzo emphasizes Augurello's *annus mirabilis* in Florence (1475–76) and the formative influence of Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) on the young poet. The Ficinian influence on *Chrysopoeia* is, of course, already established in alchemical scholarship. Perhaps less known is the link between Augurello and Ermolao Barbaro (1454–93), professor of natural philosophy in Padua. Barbaro is one humanist clearly deserving more research, if only for his outspoken support for the Pseudo-Lullian alchemical framework at a time when the Venetian Council of Ten condemned alchemy (1488). Soranzo seems well versed in the complexity of Renaissance didactic poetry and humanism. He identifies Virgil as the most influential model for the *Chrysopoeia*, followed by Lucretius and Horace. The author also places *Chrysopoeia* in a humanistic trend of engaging with the work of Pliny the Elder—namely, his *Natural History*.

Similarly, Soranzo has delved into many of Augurello's medieval alchemical sources. He rightfully highlights the impact of Petrus Bonus's influential *Pretiosa margarita novella* on *Chrysopoeia*, but also that of Pseudo-Lull's *Testamentum*, Geber's *Summa perfectionis*, and Albertus Magnus's *De mineralibus*. Yet Augurello's use of a variety of medieval sources can obscure the fact that *Chrysopoeia* advocates a specific type of practice: the extraction of the seed from gold. Thus, it does not share the mercury-alone approach that distinguished Geberian alchemy. Similarly, the solvent that extracts the seed of gold is never actually named “philosophical mercury,” despite the manifest

influence of Pseudo-Lull. It is likely that the extraction of the gold seed is done by mercury, but the process itself is unclear.

Editing and translating Neo-Latin poetry, particularly as complex as *Chrysopoeia*, is no mean feat. Soranzo has clearly spent an impressive amount of effort on Augurello's poem, and the translation generally reads well. The annotations point to a large number of ancient and medieval sources, usually with extensive quotations. The critical apparatus brought to the edition is convincing, with the disappointing exception of the general index, which is underdeveloped.

Soranzo's edition is meant to bring *Chrysopoeia* back into scholarly attention, and this goal will most likely succeed. Yet, from the point of view of the history of alchemy, Soranzo's commentary suffers from some missed opportunities. For instance, apart from the association of alchemy and humanistic themes, there is no attempt to offer a theoretical discussion of Renaissance alchemy. The introduction only touches upon the influence of *Chrysopoeia*. The editor's limited engagement with the work of Sylvain Matton on Ficinian alchemy, the absence of a reference to Matton's edition of *De Arte Chimica* (2014), and the lack of discussion of Augurello's vitalist (even panpsychic) theory curb our understanding of *Chrysopoeia*'s great impact on early modern alchemy. It is perhaps telling that Soranzo, as a literary scholar, seems to appreciate *Chrysopoeia* primarily as "a masterpiece in neo-Latin didactic poetry" (72) rather than as a work of Renaissance alchemy.

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The Institutionalization of Science in Early Modern Europe. Giulia Giannini and Mordechai Feingold, eds.

Scientific and Learned Cultures and Their Institutions 27. Leiden: Brill, 2020. xii + 301 pp. €115.

Amid the massive changes to science and education wrought by the coronavirus, this collection of essays is a timely reminder that the institutions where scientific knowledge is produced have always had profound influence on the type and nature of that knowledge. As Giulia Giannini lays out in the foreword, this volume attends to the rise of scientific academies in early modern Europe, linking them to the social and institutional contexts that preceded, enabled, and circumscribed their scientific activities.

Beginning with the context of research in institutional settings, the first two essays lay out the historiographic stakes of studies of scientific activities in English universities and Parisian academies. Mordechai Feingold asserts that we have anachronistically mischaracterized the character of scientific research in early modern English universities and pushes us to remember the religious and humanistic goals of seventeenth-century