

must be allowed to ask whether a printed bibliography still makes sense. Even a not merely enumerative, but an evaluative and commentatorial bibliography is feasible in digital form. One of the main disadvantages of a printed version is that it is usually out-of-date at the time of publication. For a printed publication an adequate typographic presentation would have been desirable. The dashes around the parentheses are of different length, the quotes on the right side are different in part, there are a lot of hyphens to divide syllables one below the other at the end of the line, and last but not least, I think it would have been better to choose a smaller font size for the bibliographies.

That this book is not focused on the presentation of new research means the value for current research discussions may not seem all that big at first sight. This publication is a kind of guide through Cusanus reception of the last five centuries, offering its readers starting points and orientation. These are values that are not to be underestimated.

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*Pontano's Virtues: Aristotelian Moral and Political Thought in the Renaissance.* Matthias Roick.

Bloomsbury Studies in the Aristotelian Tradition. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. viii + 322 pp. \$114.

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Renaissance scholarship, up until recently, tended to see certain Italian cities, especially Florence and Rome, as singular intellectual centers, and others as periphery. During the past two decades there has been an undeniable attempt on the part of various scholars to shift Renaissance Naples from its peripheral status into a more central position. Much of this endeavor was directed to the study of Pontano. Matthias Roick's study on Pontano's theory of virtue should be seen as a significant contribution to this joint effort.

Giovanni Pontano (1426–1503) was known and often praised for the way he combined perfect humanist scholarship with the highest diplomatic and political responsibilities. Roick structures his book on the basis of these two aspects of Pontano's figure: part 1 concentrates on Pontano's role as a political actor and part 2 on his place in the humanist movement. Only after the author has inserted us deep into Pontano's dual aspects do we move to part 3, which presents us with the main theme of the book—the concept of virtue. This structure helps Roick present a solid philosophical outlook, built on the basis of two firm pillars. Each one of the three parts of the book offers a rich contextual elaboration: he mentions significant precursors of Pontano, such as Lorenzo Valla and Panormita, and examines humanist philosophical traditions, for example in

relation to the concept of fortune, from Petrarca to Poggio. Yet, one wonders if the contemporary Neapolitan humanists should not be included among those who contributed to Pontano's philosophical thought.

Roick displays his thesis with great clarity. His forthcoming style of writing invites the reader to follow him willingly. Roick offers a comprehensive study of Pontano's moral and political thought to readers from a broad spectrum of levels and interests in the history and philosophy of the Renaissance. He focuses on Pontano's complex inquiry into the theme of virtue, which he sees as a moral psychology composed of "metaphysical, astrological and ethical notions" (123). Roick pays special attention to Pontano's treatise *De Prudentia*, which he analyzes thoroughly. At the same time he draws on a large variety of Pontano's works with an impressive familiarity.

The concept of virtue has recently been identified by James Hankins as the "central theme of humanist political writing," as opposed to "republicanism," "civic humanism," or "city-state liberty," which have been previously seen as the major themes of Renaissance political thought (James Hankins, "The Virtue Politics of the Italian Humanists," in *Beyond Reception: Renaissance Humanism and the Transformation of Classical Antiquity*, ed. Patrick Baker, Johannes Helmuth, and Craig Kallendorf [forthcoming]). Matthias Roick is one of the scholars who has followed this new line of research.

Matthias Roick's book also illustrates an up-to-date understanding of the mechanism of Renaissance humanism. His main claim is that Pontano's philosophy is based on a recovery of Aristotle, but it is not a simple recovery based on mere imitation or translation. Roick helps us appreciate the humanist's activity as a creative rewriting of classical writers: Pontano rewrites Aristotle in terms of contemporary culture, and as Roick stresses: "Naples is not Athens." Roick explains that Pontano refuted the Aristotle taught in the traditional university setting that had lost the link between "reason and language, philosophy and eloquence" (103). Pontano recovered this link in a new philosophy which he initiated, defined in his dialogue *Aegidius* as the "Latin Philosophy," which is based on a "refined style and elegance" and a "proper and pure Roman vocabulary" (105).

As the author himself states, he is not the first to deal with themes such as Pontano's recovery of Aristotle, his linkage between philosophy and eloquence, and his concept of virtue. However, he claims, justly, that these issues have been pointed out but insufficiently analyzed. There is no doubt that Roick contributes clarity to all the issues mentioned above, placing them into a coherent philosophical picture. There is room to wonder whether Roick gives enough credit to the Italian scholars who have previously dealt with these issues, some of them already a few decades ago. For example, one could mention the not very known scholar Vincenzo Prestipino, who discusses the concept of virtue in Pontano's work, or, more importantly, one of the greatest scholars of southern Italy—Francesco Tateo, who studied Pontano's moral thought.

To conclude, Roick, following the footsteps of contemporary scholars such as Lodi Nauta, Victoria Kahn, James Hankins, and others, and at the same time revealing orig-

inality and creativity, does an excellent job of restoring to Pontano the fame that he enjoyed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, not only as a poet and a politician, but also as a philosopher.

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*Scientia Kircheriana: Die Fabrikation von Wissen bei Athanasius Kircher.*

Tina Asmussen.

Kulturgeschichten, Studien zur Frühen Neuzeit 2. Affalterbach: Didymos-Verlag, 2016. 220 pp. €39.

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Tina Asmussen's book on the German Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher examines the mechanisms of knowledge production in Kircherian science. Asmussen draws on Kircher's publications, those of his assistants, and his extensive correspondence to examine the method of collection, distribution, and marketing of knowledge under the Kircher label. The book is made up of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, acknowledgments, an appendix, a comprehensive bibliography, and an index. Kircher was controversial in his own day, with opinions on him varying from *Germanus incredibilis* to charlatan. Nonetheless he enjoyed success and recognition then and since. Goethe admired him and more recently interest in Kircher has grown. Asmussen looks at the mechanisms through which Kircher as an author is integrated and commodified, and his name used as a label for knowledge production.

The first chapter covers Kircher's Rome. He arrived at the Jesuit Collegio Romano in 1633 and lived almost exclusively there until his death in 1680. In Rome he was embedded in a network of collaborations and dependent relationships: Jesuit institution, courtly, political, intellectual, and cultural interests. Rome's many courts and the recurring change of ruling dynasties with the election of new popes led to a dynamic alliance of loyalty and dependencies. Rome was also an international stage and home to many diplomats, ambassadors, and visitors on the grand tour. From 1651 the Collegio Romano had a museum where Kircher showed exotic or antique objects to a select public and performed experiments on and skillful demonstrations of entertaining magnetic, pneumatic, and hydraulic machines.

Chapter 2 looks at Kircher's network, covering agents and patrons in the German territories and the Netherlands—book agents, confessors, printers, and publishers. It explores the influence of the European courts in generating and circulating knowledge. Jesuit confessors at courts served as Kircher informants and communicators of the diverse rulers' wishes. Kircher sent his works and curios to them and was astute in dedicating books or chapters of books to important persons. The broad marketing of his works is an example of publication management as a mirror of Counter-Reformation and Jesuit politics. His correspondence covered all of Europe, Africa, South America,