

of his dialogue, complete with translation and commentary.) His posthumous fame was finally secured by the two volumes of *Epistolae et Opuscula* (1769) published by Gabriele Maria Scarmagli and Paolo Redi, his successors as the Benedictine abbots of Santa Fiora.

David Marsh, *Rutgers University*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.387

*Ambrogio Leone's "De Nola," Venice 1514: Humanism and Antiquarian Culture in Renaissance Southern Italy.* Bianca de Divitiis, Fulvio Lenzo, and Lorenzo Miletto, eds.

Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 284. Leiden: Brill, 2018. xiv + 256 pp. \$98.

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Recent years have seen a significant rise in scholarly interest in Southern Italy. In terms of the Renaissance, the most up-to-date contributions have been above all those related to the interdisciplinary project HistAntArtSI, funded by a prestigious ERC starting grant and directed by Bianca de Divitiis, as principal investigator. Among the rich output emerging from this five-year study is the publication of *Ambrogio Leone's "De Nola," Venice 1514*, by De Divitiis herself along with Fulvio Lenzo and Lorenzo Miletto.

The book presents the first thorough analysis of *Ambrogio Leone's De Nola*, published in Venice in 1514 by Joannes Rubeus of Vercelli. As the editors make clear in their introduction, this is not a critical edition but an interdisciplinary work meant to underline the complexity of Leone's book and the many themes it covers. The originality of *De Nola* in itself justifies a monograph: it is, in fact, the first history of the Campanian city, to which Leone was native, as well as the earliest systematic and illustrated antiquarian description of a city other than Rome. What emerges from the text is Leone's fine knowledge of sources, as he moves effortlessly between Leon Battista Alberti, Grapaldo, and Vitruvius. Combining his Aristotelian education with a sensitivity to literature and knowledge of architecture, he approaches antiquarian description in his own way, and differently from Flavio Biondo. His humanistic culture is overlaid with encomiastic and patriotic intent: Leone is less interested in offering a diachronic account than in superimposing historical strata that underscore the virtues of Nola's inhabitants through an exposition of the continuum between the ancient and Renaissance eras.

The editors recognize the value of confronting the material with a variety of approaches and bringing together a team of scholars capable of examining *De Nola* from multiple perspectives. Indeed, throughout the pages of the book, the reader is a witness to continuous meticulous analyses organized by theme: the antiquarian sources used by Leone (Miletto), the attention paid to local antiquities (De Divitiis, Lenzo), an analysis of the prints (Lenzo), a discussion of sixteenth-century patrician houses (De Divitiis), Leone's position among the artists of his time (Loffredo), and the social aspects

of the history of Nola (Vitale), as well as those related to festivals and traditions (Imbriani).

In addition to the analytical essays, the volume contains a series of appendixes: a bibliographical note on *De Nola*; an index of the sections in the sixteenth-century edition, paired with transcriptions of some of the passages frequently cited by the authors; and a bibliography and index of persons' names. The book has seventy-one black-and-white illustrations. The topics covered and the disciplines involved range from social history to art history, from philology to literature—although the volume is aimed at a specialized audience, experts in many fields will find the research of interest.

The authors analyze the sixteenth-century text with impeccable rigor. Thanks to a series of systematic, critical investigations and the compilation of a rich bibliography, *De Nola* has been revitalized for future research. An accurate reconstruction of Leone's milieu—which included literary figures, scholars, aristocrats, and artists—grants proper weight to a figure who has thus far received only limited attention. The principal challenge of this book lies on the interpretative level. Focused on a city with a sixteenth-century population of 4,000, *De Nola* is presented as a work pertaining to European humanism more broadly: it did, in fact, receive a positive reception from international men of letters, such as Erasmus, Pietro Summonte, and, later, Leandro Alberti. In page after page, we leave behind the borders of Nola and find ourselves projected onto sixteenth-century Europe: from the Venice of the League of Cambrai to the world of sixteenth-century publishing and the frenetic mechanisms of artistic commissions. Ultimately, there is much merit in this work: fixing its lens on *De Nola*, it presents a highly original picture of the period and cleverly plays with various aspects of cultural history, demonstrating in an exemplary manner the importance of portraying the Renaissance from hitherto little explored perspectives.

Francesca Mattei, *Università degli Studi Roma Tre*  
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.388

*De l'orator au secrétaire: Modèles épistolaires dans l'Europe de la Renaissance.*  
Maria Cristina Panzera.

Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 585. Geneva: Droz, 2018. 454 pp. \$82.80.

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The main objective of Panzera's very substantial book is to reconstruct a long and complex tradition that transformed letter writing into a new genre, manifested by the publication of a large number of treatises on epistolography and letter collections (both in Latin and vernacular) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in Italy particularly. As its subtitle indicates, this book aims to explain the evolution from the model of the orator, taken from antiquity, to the new figure of the secretary. To this figure Francesco Sansovino dedicated the celebrated *Del Secretario* (1564), meant to teach how to