

Wilhelm Kühlmann, Volker Hartmann, and Susann El Kholi, eds. *Die Deutschen Humanisten: Dokumente zur Überlieferung der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur in der Frühen Neuzeit*.

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One of the lasting achievements of the European humanists was to make available to the learned public important aspects of the literary past by editing and publishing ancient and medieval texts. With the Renaissance humanists the systematic study of antiquity (*Altertumswissenschaft*) began. This, of course, is a well-known fact. What is lacking in many cases is a precise knowledge of the philological practice: that is, knowledge about the intentions, methods, and work

of the editors. And this knowledge should not be limited to the best-known editors but should also extend to those hundreds of humanists who labored to rescue ancient and medieval texts from obscurity. A new project called *Die deutschen Humanisten* tries to fill this gap. The two volumes under review here are the first of a planned series of bio-bibliographical portraits of German humanists. The intention is to document the reception of ancient and medieval authors in the early modern period in Germany. Inspired by Jean-François Maillard, who in 1999 published his *La France des Humanistes*, the work is part of a European project led by the Paris Centre National de la Recherche whose aim is a complete reconstruction of the various forms of textual reception.

Given the extent of the humanist networks in Europe, it is clear that such an ambitious project can only be undertaken by confining oneself in each case to certain geographically defined areas and limited periods. Kühlmann and his fellow scholars have done precisely that. They concentrate on the Palatinate, whose court and university at Heidelberg had become in the decades before the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War a center of humanist activity. Within this period and territory the editors have concentrated on two leading representatives of late humanism, Marquard Freher (1565–1614) and Janus Gruter (1560–1627), devoting one volume to each of these scholars. Freher was a jurist, legal scholar, historian, and diplomat who placed his extensive philological work in the service of the Palatine court. As the author of the *Origines Palatinae* he became the father of Palatine historiography. His editorial work comprises thirty-three predominantly Latin works. However, the majority of the texts he edited were not from antiquity, as one would expect from a humanist, but from the Middle Ages; a group of texts, especially legal documents, stemmed also from the early modern period. Ancient literature is represented only by an edition of Ausonius's *Mosella* and by the *Facetiae* of Hierocles. His special interests included also compilations of historical texts from German, Russian, and Bohemian history.

Janus Gruter differed from Freher both in his biography and the choice of the authors he edited. Born in the Netherlands, he studied in England, the Netherlands, France, and Germany before becoming professor of history and director of the famous Bibliotheca Palatina in Heidelberg. In spite of numerous personal tragedies — he lost four wives and several children — as well as professional tragedies — he had to witness the removal of the Bibliotheca Palatina to the Vatican — he kept up an untiring program of editing. In contrast to Freher, however, Gruter was mainly interested in Latin literature. A number of his editions of Seneca, Cicero, Plautus, Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus have acquired canonical status. In addition to these editions he also edited fifteen volumes of Neo-Latin poetry with a total of 17,000 pages — a truly Herculean deed, through which thousands of poems that would otherwise be lost were saved for posterity. His bibliography of edited works in Kühlmann's book comprises thirty items.

What Kühlmann and his colleagues have done, in addition to systematically listing and describing with exemplary thoroughness the editions published by

Freher and Gruter, is to publish the so called paratexts: that is, prefaces, dedications, and accompanying poems that usually preceded an edition. These paratexts are preceded by a brief German summary and provided with a detailed commentary explaining biographical, historical, and mythological allusions as well as bibliographical references to these allusions. The accompanying Latin poems are not summarized in German, however. The decision to concentrate on the paratexts was a wise one, as they are extremely revealing for a number of reasons. Not only do they point to the wide range of recipients and dedicatees — including emperors, kings, princes, city councils, and fellow scholars — and the truly international network of the *res publica humanistica*; they also gave the humanist editors a platform to justify the selection of a particular work, to steer the reception, and to explain their methods. In other words, they are a key to understanding the philological practice of the time, allowing us a look into the humanist workshop.

Each volume is organized according to the following principles: the biographical sketch of the humanists is followed by a chronologically-arranged bibliography divided into reference works and monographs and articles. The following part records the authors that were edited by Freher and Gruter. Four different indices of over 100 pages facilitate the use of this work.

The two volumes, consisting of a total of 1,222 pages, are not meant to be read from cover-to-cover. They are reference works that offer a wealth of carefully prepared material, but material that still has to be interpreted and analyzed by future scholars.

*Die deutschen Humanisten* is thus a contribution to the reception of ancient and medieval authors during the early modern period as well as a contribution to a future history of humanist philology: an auspicious beginning of a project that might take many years to complete.

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