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the anonymous early editor, followed by a commentary that describes the context in which the poems were produced and identifies references both to sources and to other writings of Petrarca. Much effort has gone into the preparation of this edition—the eight lines of poem XVII, for example, are followed by eight pages of commentary—and the results are well worth the effort.

It is worth noting that both of these volumes are beautifully produced and reasonably priced. *Improvvisi* in particular is a marvel, with eight pages of plates on special glossy paper and almost 200 pages of text for about the price of a pizza and a beer in the city where it was printed. At a time when the cost of scholarly books continues to spiral out of control, it is good to see that in Italy at least, excellent scholarship can still be published at a fair price. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *Nicoletto Vernia: studi sull'aristotelismo del XV secolo*. By Ennio De Bellis. Quaderni di “Rinascimento,” 50. Florence: Olschki, 2012. VII + 235 pp. €25. Ennio De Bellis presents a comprehensive study of the life and works of Nicoletto Vernia (*ca.* 1420-1499), the key figure of Averroism in fifteenth-century Padua. De Bellis of the Università del Salento in Lecce (Italy) is well known through his studies on Vernia, Agostino Nifo, and other representatives of the philosophy of Renaissance Padua. This book offers detailed analyses and interprets Vernia within the context of his times. The book has two major parts: a first chapter of about 125 pages describes in chronological order the events of the life and individual writings of Vernia; then four shorter chapters contextualize Vernia's philosophy. A detailed chronology, bibliographies, and an index complete the book.

Vernia was the editor of the first collection of the complete works of Aristotle combined with the commentaries by Averroes (Venice, 1483); he also edited some medieval Aristotle commentaries. It was mostly in added *quaestiones* that the Paduan developed his philosophy. What transpires from De Bellis's reports and interpretations is a confluence of late medieval Aristotelianism, recent Averroism, humanism, and Renaissance Platonism. The Paduan professor was evidently not only well trained in the methodology of medieval epistemology, metaphysics, and physics (ch. 2, 137-59), but he also read Averroes critically

in comparison with Greek and Arabic commentators (ch. 1, section 10, 51 ff.); he engaged in a discussion with the humanist Ermolao Barbaro, who had made Aristotelian works of Themistius available in Latin (ch. 1, 52 f., 87 ff.); and he regularly took Plato's works into account when discussing questions of cosmology and psychology, while switching from previous Latin versions to that of Marsilio Ficino (ch. 1, 38, 66 f., 122 ff.). Vernia was also the teacher of personalities as distinct as Giovanni Pico (1463-1494), Agostino Nifo (*ca.* 1473-*ca.* 1545), and Pietro Pomponazzi (1462-1525).

Among the philosophical questions tackled by Vernia is that of the competence of the disciplines: he distributes them according to human activities, that is to say, according to practical, social, empirical, and theoretical endeavors that culminate in pure speculation. His key concept is probability, which ranks from common opinion up to necessary wisdom (*De divisione philosophiae*, 54). Noteworthy is his adding of 'perspective' as a fifth discipline to the mathematical learning of the *quadrivium* (56). Connected with that is Vernia's solution to the humanist debate on the ranking of medicine and jurisprudence, a question that involved the specifically human and social setting of scholarship. Here he favors medicine because it is based not on consensus and tradition, as is the case with law, but on logic and certainty of knowledge (63), a criterion that will become predominant in early modern philosophy. Vernia became most famous for his turning away from Averroism when he defended the immortality of the individual soul and the plurality of souls in his *Quaestio de pluritate intellectus*. De Bellis shows convincingly that Vernia was not only forced to do so late in his life due to Bishop Pietro Barozzi's edict of 1489 that prohibited public disputations on the unity of the intellect, but that he actually was the main target of that ruling (121-31). We can find, quoted in full, both the edict (95) and Barozzi's complacent approval of Vernia's treatise (131). This was an important event in the history of philosophy because it foreshadowed the bull *Apostolici regiminis* of the Lateran Council of 1513. Whereas Barozzi only tried to stifle public debates on Averroism, the Lateran Council prescribed for the first time in Church history that philosophy professors had to teach Church doctrine, namely, the immortality of the individual soul. Vernia therefore inaugurates Pomponazzi's solution in that both cre-

ate a rift between philosophical stringency and compliance with the doctrine of faith (127).

Some passages of this book (e.g., 57-63, 166-71) are footnoted with surprising scantiness, although the book is full of information, and inevitably we find some repetitions (cf. 100-4 with 181-95, 115 f. with 207). However, among the virtues of this book are the extensive quotations, including those from manuscripts, that allow the reader to engage closely with one of most the fascinating Aristotelians of the Renaissance. (Paul Richard Blum, Loyola University Maryland, Baltimore)

◆ *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami recognita ed annotatione critica instructa notisque illustrata. Ordinis quinti tomus septimus.* By Desiderius Erasmus. Ed. by C. S. M. Rademaker *et al.* Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013. 384 pp. The collected works of the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus were first printed shortly after his death by Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius in Basel (1538-1540, 9 volumes), and a second time at the beginning of the eighteenth century by Petrus van der Aa in Leiden (1703-1706, 10 volumes). Following the previous editions of Basel and Leiden, the first critical edition of Erasmus' *Opera omnia* (Amsterdam, 1969-) is also arranged according to the thematic division into nine *ordines* which Erasmus himself laid down for the posthumous publication of his collected works. The forty-third volume in the Amsterdam series (*ASD*, V-7), published in 2013, is the seventh within *ordo* V, that is, the category of religious works. Although the six minor writings related to religious instruction included in this volume are little known today, they did enjoy a considerable success in the author's own lifetime: with the exception of the *Disputatiuncula*, they were all reprinted very soon and very often, both in Latin and in the vernacular languages (Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish).

The volume opens with two works edited by C. S. M. Rademaker, ss.cc, which were first printed in Basel by Johann Froben in September, 1524. The sermon *De immensa Dei misericordia concio* (1-97), which was commissioned by Bishop Christoph von Utenheim and which has been described as "an example of ideal Erasmusian preaching," consists of a biblical meditation on the infinite mercy of God, who