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Review by: Beverly Louise Brown

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Albrecht Dürer nelle fonti Italiane antiche, 1508–1686. Giovanni Maria Fara. Biblioteca dell'“Archivum Romanicum” Serie 1: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia 426. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2014. xi + 590 pp. €58.

From late 1505 until January 1507 Albrecht Dürer was in Venice working on *The Feast of the Rose Garlands* for the German community's chapel in San Bartolomeo. It is likely, although not certain, that he had already been in Northern Italy in 1494–95. The impact of his Italian sojourns on his artistic output and the influence of his graphic art on Italian artists have been studied in depth. Giovanni Maria Fara's meticulously researched book looks at Dürer and Italy from another point of view, by tracing his fame as an artist through Italian literary sources and chronicling his reputation as a scientific theoretician by examining the Latin and Italian translations of his writings on geometry, military fortifications, and human proportions.

After an ample introduction, Fara chronologically lists approximately 200 Italian sources mentioning Dürer and his work. Each is preceded by a commentary and followed by a full quotation of the relevant passages. The earliest is Christoph Scheurl's *Libellus de Laudibus Germanie et Ducum Saxonie* of 1508 because it includes a poem written in Latin by Riccardo Sbruglio celebrating Dürer's trip to Ferrara at the end of 1506. At the other end of the spectrum is Filippo Baldinucci's 1686 commentary on the origins of copper engraving, which opens with a substantial “Vita d'Alberto Durero.” Although Fara cites Marcantonio Michiel's 1521 report of seeing works by Dürer in the collection of Cardinal Domenico Grimani, inventories of collections are not included in the list of sources.

Michiel did not mention the works by name, but it is likely he was referring to prints, not paintings. As Baldinucci attests, Dürer's fame in Italy rested almost entirely on his graphic oeuvre. By the late 1490s Italian painters were freely quoting motifs from his prints. Writing home from Venice in 1506, Dürer complained that his work was imitated in churches and every place else. According to Giorgio Vasari, when Marcantonio Raimondi arrived in Venice he spent his entire savings on Dürer prints, which he proceeded to study stroke by stroke. While such diligence might be praiseworthy for a printmaker, in Vasari's eyes it was a detriment for a painter like Jacopo Pontormo, who was heavily criticized for following the German's style too closely. Fara suggests that Vasari deliberately chose to call him Alberto Duro rather than Alberto Durero because he wanted to emphasize the harshness of the German's style, which, like the Italian word *duro*, was hard.

Dürer's theoretical writings also found an audience in Italy from a very early date. In 1525, three years before his death, Dürer published *Unterweisung der Messung*. By 1537

Cosimo Bartoli had translated this treatise on geometry into Italian. Although it remained only in manuscript form, it was consulted by a number of people interested in what Erwin Panofsky termed “workshop geometry.” Far better known was the Latin translation published in Paris in 1532. A long list of authors, including Paolo Pino, Daniele Barbaro, Galileo, Vincenzo Scamozzi, and Giulio Mancini, make reference to it.

Dürer’s 1527 treatise on military architecture, *Etliche Unterricht zu Befstigung der Stett, Schloz unnd Flecken*, was less well known. However, thanks to two 1532 Latin translations, his posthumous *Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion*, on the human body, was widely studied and read throughout Europe. In Italy, Giovan Paolo Lomazzo’s 1584 treatise on art reprised large sections of Dürer’s text, making it ostensibly the first Italian translation. In 1591 Giovan Paolo Gallucci published the first official Italian translation of the four books on human proportions, which includes a substantial bibliographic introduction. Fara concludes his book with a section listing annotated editions of Dürer’s treatises in Italian libraries. Although, as Fara admits, the list is not comprehensive, it does show that the Latin editions from the 1530s far outnumber the later Italian translations.

Interspersed among the more familiar sources are small gems such as Salvator Rosa’s satirical poem comparing Jacopo Bassano and Dürer’s depictions of animals. But anyone wishing to find a specific work is bound to be frustrated, since references to Dürer’s artistic oeuvre are not listed in the index. Nevertheless, this is an extremely useful volume, not least because of Fara’s comprehensive comments for each source.

BEVERLY LOUISE BROWN, *Independent Scholar*