

I Marmi: Edizione critica e commento. Anton Francesco Doni.

Ed. Carlo Alberto Girotto and Giovanna Rizzarelli. 2 vols. Biblioteca dell’“Archivum Romanicum,” Series I: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia 408. Florence: Olschki, 2017. xxxiv + 942 pp. €95.

Anton Francesco Doni (Florence 1513–74 Monselice or Venice) was a low-born author and social critic who wrote numerous works for the vernacular presses of Venice. Spurned by scholars as second-rate for centuries, he has attracted increasing attention in the past half century for the content and literary style of his works. Consequently, most of his works have been reissued in critical editions or as photographic reprints. The present volume offers a comprehensive critical edition of what is usually viewed as his major literary work. *I Marmi*, or what was overheard on the marble steps of Santa Maria del Fiore, the cathedral of Florence, was first published in Venice in 1552 and 1553 by Francesco Marcolini, a major publisher of vernacular works. *I Marmi* is a substantial work of wide-ranging dialogues by many interlocutors, written in a vivacious literary style.

After its initial publication, *I Marmi* was republished in Venice in 1609, in a version that lightly censored and domesticated Doni’s exuberance; again in 1863; and in 1928, in the respected Scrittori d’Italia series published by Laterza. However, neither of the last two editions included the illustrations of the first edition. And neither investigated Doni’s extensive plagiarisms from and refashionings of the works of other authors, which recent scholars have identified. The great value of this critical edition is that it does both.

Doni borrowed from three major sources in *I Marmi*. Since neither the introduction nor the notes provide much information about them, it is given here. Doni’s most important sources in quantity and message were Italian translations of the *Libro llamado relox de principes en el qual incorporado el muy famoso libro de Marco Aurelio*, of the Spanish bishop, courtier, and vernacular humanist Antonio de Guevara (ca. 1480–1545). It was first published in 1529, with a partial Italian translation in 1542 and a full but free translation in 1544. It is a book about Emperor Marcus Aurelius that pretended to be an authentic ancient biography. In reality, it is a loosely organized treatise of moral and social advice presented by means of fictional stories from ancient Rome, epideictic orations, epigrams, and more. Doni’s second most utilized source was Seneca’s *Epistles*, which does not need explanation. The third source was *De Homine* (1474), of Girolamo Manfredi (1430–93), a Bolognese physician, philosopher, and astronomer who taught at the University of Bologna. Despite the title, it is a vernacular question-and-answer text that offers information concerning health issues and much else based on Aristotle and other sources. The notes locate plagiarisms and reworkings of texts from these three authors and often present the original passages at length. Indeed, the fulsome notes are probably longer than the original text. The notes also identify other authors and works from whom Doni borrowed, or mentioned, plus

the many real individuals who appear in the book. And the notes suggest which interlocutors were fictitious. Although previous scholars have identified many plagiarisms, the editors have located more.

The introduction also assumes a thorough knowledge of Doni's life, which is necessary to understand the text. Born the son of a scissors maker in Florence, Doni joined the local Annunziata monastery, but then fled the religious life and Florence in 1540. He unsuccessfully sought courtly patronage in several North Italian towns for several years and began to publish vernacular works with the Venetian presses. But an explosive temper and a quarrelsome nature hampered his attempts to obtain a permanent position. He then returned to Florence as a printer and editor in 1546, at which time he enjoyed the patronage of the Medici. But after another quarrel, in 1548 he left for Venice, where through 1556 he published about fifteen works for the Venetian vernacular presses. After that his movements are difficult to follow. It is known that he moved to the small town of Monselice and continued to write.

While Doni plagiarized extensively, he also reworked the material and fitted it into his own point of view and imagination. Overall, *I Marmi* consists of vivacious dialogues with numerous real and imaginary interlocutors who commented on a variety of topics. Prominent persons, artisans, events, literary works, music, paintings, and comments on daily life appear throughout *I Marmi*. His attitude toward Florence fluctuated. He remembered with affection members of the Medici who ruled the city in his youth, and he praised Duke Cosimo I de' Medici (ruled 1537–69). He was also critical toward Florence and the Medici, however, and minded the vein of Florence's ingratitude toward its most famous sons. Criticism of Florence is also implicit in his praise for Venetian patricians. *I Marmi* has little of the scathing social criticism, cynicism, and rejection of contemporary learning found in his *I Mondi* and *Infernii*, also published in 1552 and 1553.

Doni's language is polymorphic and moves through different registers. It was literary, and it sought to reproduce contemporary oral speech. It is not surprising that Doni's use of language is increasingly attracting scholarly attention. In addition, the first edition made lavish use of illustrations, most of them created by Anea Vico da Parma (1523–67). This edition reproduces all of the illustrations of the first edition. This is important, because Doni tightly integrated text and illustrations. This is an excellent critical edition intended for scholars already thoroughly familiar with the Doni corpus and career.

Paul F. Grendler, *University of Toronto, emeritus*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.260