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to conclude that unlike other works of Biondo's, this one did not go through various compositional phases. Marc Laureys's "Johannes Hinderbach's Notes on Biondo Flavio's *Roma instaurata*" considers a series of annotations that focus on the content and structure of one of Biondo's major works, while Paolo Pontari's "'Nedum mille qui effluxerunt annorum gesta sciamus': l'Italia di Biondo e l' 'invenzione' del Medioevo" examines the contribution of *Italia illustrata* to the conception of the Middle Ages, the notion of cultural decline and rebirth, and the issue of national identity. In "The *Fortuna* of Biondo Flavio's *Italia illustrata*," Catherine J. Castner notes how the influence of *Italia illustrata* suffered from the contentious relations that often emerged within the republic of letters, while Jeffrey A. White's "Biondo Flavio as Henry James's Dencombe (?): Revising the *Italia illustrata*" analyzes the four compositional phases of the same work and the revisions carried out in each phase. Finally in "'Fama superstes'? Soundings in the Reception of Biondo Flavio's *Roma triumphans*," Frances Muecke reconstructs the reception of *Roma triumphans*, with special attention paid to such pivotal ancient customs as burial practices, Bacchanalia, oath-swearing, and the 'sortes Virgilianae.' The volume concludes with a thirty-page bibliography of primary and secondary sources and an *index nominum*.

All in all, this is a fine volume that contributes to the revival of interest in one of Italy's more versatile and engaging Neo-Latin writers. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *Leon Battista Alberti: la vita, l'umanesimo, le opere letterarie*. By Martin McLaughlin. Biblioteca dell' 'Archivum Romanicum,' serie 1: Storia, letteratura, paleografia, 447. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2016. XXII + 174 pp. 25 euros. Long considered a minor figure in both literary and art history, Leon Battista Alberti has moved decisively onto center stage in the last generation, especially as the exhibitions and congresses stimulated by the 2004 centenary have helped us see how compatible he is for our own age, which values creativity and interdisciplinarity in the humanities. This increased interest is reflected in the founding of an international association, La Société internationale Leon Battista Alberti, along with a web site, the journal *Albertiana*, and the first volumes of Alberti's *Opera omnia* sponsored by

S.I.L.B.A.; the recent publication of editions of individual works, along with Roberto Cardini's monumental *Leon Battista Alberti: umanista e scrittore* (Genoa, 1981, rpt. 1991), which contains all the Latin literary texts; a series of exhibitions and accompanying catalogues; and the completion of the first volumes of the critical editions contained in the Edizione nazionale delle opere di Leon Battista Alberti. Secondary bibliography has grown proportionally, especially in Italy and the Anglophone world, with Anthony Grafton's *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (Harmondsworth, 2000) being especially influential—indeed, more books and articles on Alberti have been published from the end of the last century to the present than appeared in the preceding five centuries.

The essays contained in this volume, which for the most part appeared elsewhere between 2004 and 2014, mark a welcome addition to this Albertian deluge. They focus on Alberti the humanist and writer rather than on the architect of the great churches in Rimini, Florence, and Mantua. These essays have been selected to make a book that hangs together as a book, which can be divided into three parts. The first two chapters are devoted to significant aspects of Alberti's life. "La vita dell'Alberti: dall'autobiografia al ritratto di Burckhardt" analyzes the crucial differences between the mythical figure of Alberti as 'universal' or 'Renaissance' man that Burckhardt created and the myth fashioned by Alberti himself in his autobiography. In "Da 'Lepidus' a 'Leon Battista Alberti': metamorfosi onomastiche e identità," McLaughlin explores the significance of the name 'Leo' for Alberti's conception of himself, as a symbol of the excellence to which he aspired in his work. Part 2 is devoted to Alberti's humanism. "Alberti e la nuova direzione dell'umanesimo rinascimentale" is a general analysis of the new direction in Quattrocento humanism inaugurated by Alberti, especially the ability to appreciate texts of every type, including technical treatises, works of humor, and books by 'bad' writers that are nevertheless useful for the wisdom they contain. "Ritratto dell'artista da cucciolo rinascimentale: struttura e fonti del *Canis* di Leon Battista Alberti" focuses on one work that is typical of Alberti's humanism, in its autobiographical strand and in its humor and ethical focus. The last section offers three essays that serve as detailed analyses of important works of Alberti's. "Unità tematica e strutturale nel *De familia*" stresses the sense

of structure in Alberti's first dialogue *in volgare*, "Pessimismo stoico e cultura classica nel *Theogenius* dell'Alberti" reveals an exceptional command of a variety of Greek and Latin sources, and "Tradizione letteraria e originalità del pensiero nel *De re aedificatoria*" shows how Alberti confronted antiquity not with a sense of inferiority, but with the determination to incorporate what he could learn there into his own original works.

Certain themes and approaches serve to unify the essays: the striving for interdisciplinarity and originality; a concern for ethics, humor, and friendship; an openness to every type of text, literary, artistic, and scientific; the fascination with the new works recovered during the humanism of the Quattrocento, both Greek and Latin; and the central role of certain fundamental writings of Cicero's, especially the *Brutus*. The last group of essays becomes somewhat narrow in focus, but even there, the links on the thematic and methodological levels increase their value, and essays like the one on Alberti's humanism that opens Part 2 should be required reading by anyone with even a passing interest in Alberti. In an age when the interlibrary loan unit of a university library can find a copy of almost everything, one begins to wonder about the value of reprinting essays that were published elsewhere, but everything here has been revised and updated bibliographically, and the original venues are sufficiently obscure that reprinting seems merited. In sum, this is a valuable book that belongs on the shelves of anyone with an interest in Neo-Latin studies of the fifteenth century. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *The Commentaries of Pope Pius II (1458-1464) and the Crisis of the Fifteenth-Century Papacy*. By Emily O'Brien. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015. xiv + 335 pp. \$65. The subject of this book is the *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae temporibus suis contigerunt*, the thirteen-book account of the life, pontificate, and age of Pope Pius II, known as Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini before he assumed the papacy. Like most of Pius's other writings, this one has not been easy to study: the first modern edition of the Latin text did not appear until the mid-1980s, which forced readers to rely on a censored sixteenth-century version, partial publication of missing fragments, and Italian and English translations. Its size is daunting