Del vento e delle comete: Speculazioni accademiche. Ovidio Montalbani. Ed. Linda Bisello. Istituto di Studi Italiani Università della Svizzera Italiana: Biblioteca 3. Florence: Olschki, 2017. xxvi + 130 pp. €25.

Instructor in various capacities for forty years at the University of Bologna, Ovidio Montalbani cuts an ambivalent figure in the early seventeenth-century episteme. Member of the free-thinking Venetian Accademia degli Incogniti, proponent of empirical observation in natural philosophy, supporter of a work ethic in contrast to advancing aristocratic hegemony, he also inveighed against Marcello Malpighi's medical ideas while playing down Galileo's astronomical ones, and published astrological predictions for nearly every year between 1633 and 1662. To say that his oeuvre is an interesting example of intellectual eclecticism and cautious innovation in an age of upheaval tells only part of the story. Expertly and exhaustively curated by Linda Bisello, the discourses offered here served as prefaces to the predictions for 1633, 1641, 1642, 1644, and 1646. The actual predictions for those years are partly available on Google Books, in case the reader might wish to investigate further the relevant themes of natural philosophy and transmission of news. In keeping with the playful tone and prevailing Baroque idiom, the illustration on page xxvi does not depict Montalbani at all (contrary to the accompanying annotation) but Giulio Sacchetti, the cardinal protector of the Accademia degli Indomiti, a short-lived association to which Montalbani for a time belonged.

Montalbani's annual prognosticating practice involved conveying doctrine to a broad audience of mainly Bolognese readers—as we conclude from the paucity of extant copies outside the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, where the most complete collection is held, with the exception of a less numerous but still remarkable accumulation in the Biblioteca Aprosiana of Ventimiglia, which served as a basis for this edition. The whimsical titles included, for instance, *Eutichiologia* (on human happiness), *Filautiologia* (on true self-love), *Diceosilogia* (on justice), *Brontologia* (on thunder), *Arioscopia* (on the true spirits of ancient Bologna), *Eticofisiologia* (on natural morals), *Helioscopia* (on the Bolognese colossus), *Diologogia* (on Bolognese dialect), and, chosen for this collection on the basis of relevance to natural philosophy, *Pneumascopia* (on winds), *Drosilogia* (on dew), *Nubilogia* (on clouds), *Chiologia* (on snow), and *Cometoscopia* (on comets).

Montalbani eschews a mathematical approach to his material. Instead, richly detailed descriptions, including personal observations, such as in the discourse on dew (1641), are models of naturalistic prose foreshadowing Francesco Redi. In the work on comets (1646) he mentions Copernicus and Kepler and sides with the innovators against the doctrine of the immutability of the heavens; but he omits the issue of heliocentrism, which would certainly come up a decade later in his professional activity as a censor for the local Inquisition in charge of reviewing the Bologna partial edition of Galileo's works. Instead, he tells us that comets defy both the "doctrine of the epicycles

and eccentrics of Pythagoras, prince of the Italian philosophers, of Hipparchus, of Ptolemy, of Albategnius and of King Alfonso, while equally weak are the homocentric systems of Eudoxus, Calippus, Alpetragius, Averroes, and most recently, Fracastoro" (77). The cause of motion, he suggests, in passages that recall Tommaso Campanella, is an individual motive spirit under the active direction of the body itself.

The same kind of natural philosophy features a prevalence of argumentation by analogy, which in stronger versions may point to actual affinities between items seemingly similar to one another but located in different realms. For instance, in the discourse on winds (1633), the macrocosm-microcosm theory is laid out in an Aristotelian interpretation, where earthquakes are seen to occur due to movements of wind within canals and orifices inside the earth, much as tremors and other symptoms may result in the human body when the movement of air and blood is blocked. Astrological medicine, a specialty of Montalbani, was founded on such analogies and their diagnostic as well as explanatory power, particularly evident in the discourse on snow (1644), where the relevant phenomenon seems to partake of Mars and Venus because at the same time "timid and audacious, terrible and caressing, putting the most ludicrous jocularity in combat against the most severe seriousness" (57). Nonetheless, reducing these writings to their philosophical content may to some extent betray the inimitable literary quality featuring intensely figured language deployed with consummate mastery—for instance, in the discourse on clouds (1642), where we find a two-page eulogy of the air replete with references ranging across the centuries, of which no brief account could hope to substitute for the original text now made available in this handsome edition.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.529

Janello Torriani and the Spanish Empire: A Vitruvian Artisan at the Dawn of the Scientific Revolution. Cristiano Zanetti.
Nuncius Series: Studies and Sources in the Material and Visual History of Science 2. Leiden: Brill, 2017. xii + 450 pp. $121.

Janello Torriani (1500–85), known in the Spanish-speaking world as Juanelo, was in his own times a celebrated inventor and builder of large machines, including the famous water-lifting machine in Toledo, a complex apparatus that carried water up a slope of three hundred meters, from the Tagus River to the palace of Philip II. Janello began his career as a clockmaker in the Northern Italian town of Cremona, and eventually became clockmaker for the emperor Charles V. His highly eclectic skills included surveying, bell design and casting, and the devising of automata, locks, pumps, mills, and instruments.