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SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NEWS

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rhetorices a special place in the history of rhetoric (Gadamer described it as the first work of rhetorical hermeneutics). All of this is explained with admirable clarity in the volume introduction by William Weaver.

Weaver edited the *Institutiones rhetoricae* and the *Dispositiones aliquot rhetoricae*, with the presentation of *De rhetorica* being overseen by Stefan Strohm and *Elementa rhetorices* by Volkhard Wels. Each section has been presented carefully in accordance with the general principles of the series, beginning with an “Editorial Report” that serves as an introduction to the text being presented and offers information about how it was edited. This is followed by the text itself, with one apparatus containing textual variants and another containing references to sources. Relevant secondary literature is cited, and there are four indices, of Biblical references, citations, names, and terms. The texts are in Latin, but the paratextual material is divided between English (Weaver) and German (Strohm and Wels).

James J. Murphy, one of the pioneer scholars of Renaissance rhetoric, used to give talks that referred to a thousand unknown primary texts in this field. The fact that Melanchthon had written on rhetoric was hardly unknown, but until this volume appeared, it was difficult if not impossible even to say how many principal works on rhetoric he had written, much less to find a modern text of them. Weaver, Strohm, and Wels are therefore to be commended for straightening out a bibliographical mess and for presenting a first-rate edition of their material. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *Dialogus de adoratione*. By Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola. Edited with an introduction by Alessia Contarino. Centro internazionale di cultura ‘Giovanni Pico della Mirandola,’ Studi Pichiani, 18. Florence: Leo S. Olschki editore, 2017. XII + 167 pp. €25. The subject of this book is the little dialogue *De adoratione*, by Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1470–1533), son of Galeotto I Pico, ruler of Mirandola, and nephew of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, author of the famous *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. *De adoratione* is much less famous than the *Oration*, but as Contarino shows, it is worthy of attention in its own right.

The subject of this dialogue is the veneration of images. What makes it of special interest is the moment in which it was written (it

was completed at the beginning of 1524) and what it can tell us about how the church in Italy dealt with the religious upheavals caused by Luther in the years immediately after his break with Catholicism. Luther and his followers called into question the traditional practices of venerating saints, to which Pico responded by affirming the necessity of turning to images as a path to the contemplation of God, although he stressed that what mattered was an interior, spiritual practice, not an exterior, superficial veneration. Many of Pico's ideas were traditional—his foundation was solidly Dominican and Thomist, and his links with Savonarola were profound—and passages in which Luther is excoriated for being the devil had already become commonplaces. Nevertheless the work provides profound insights into the Italian church at a crucial moment and into its relationship with German Catholics. The principal inspiration for *De adoratione*, for example, was Nicolaus Schönberg, the Archbishop of Capua, who also served as one of the protagonists in the dialogue and the mouthpiece of Pico, and Pico was well aware of the iconoclastic controversies that rocked Germany and Switzerland in the early 1520s. *De adoratione* positioned itself in these controversies as a defense of orthodoxy, by arguing in favor of what Pico claimed were the original worship practices of the apostolic church. The gesture backward, however, was carefully calibrated: a syncretism like the Christianizing Neoplatonism of Ficino was not what Pico had in mind, to the extent that pagan statues of mythological divinities were presented as being just as dangerous as Luther and his diabolical ideas.

De adoratione is also important for the light it sheds on the relationship between Pico's family and the church. His uncle Giovanni had written a work entitled *Conclusiones apologales Ioannis Pici Mirandulani*, whose third *conclusio*, on the veneration of the cross and the image of Christ, had been attacked in Pietro Garsias's *Determinationes magistrales Petri Garsie contra Conclusiones apologales Ioannis Pici Mirandulani* and declared scandalous and offensive. Gianfrancesco responded by writing an apology in defense of his uncle that was never published and does not survive, but whose general contours can be recovered from the *De adoratione*, since this work repeats the general arguments about the *adoratio crucis* that had been set forth in the lost apology. In this way Gianfrancesco was able both to defend

his uncle against the accusation of heresy and to make what he felt was an important case for the proper kind of worship.

De adoratione was never published, and we can only speculate about why: did an opportunity not present itself? Did Gianfrancesco decide that its connections with the German church had become too dangerous? Did he fear that his ideas were too moderating, or too closely tied to Savonarola? We will never know, but we can be grateful to Contarino for transcribing the work and providing an annotated translation and a nice bibliography. One can quibble a bit, I suppose—an eighty-one-page introduction for a twenty-eight-page text might appear a little excessive, and in fact the preface would have benefited from some trimming and editing—but gratitude is a more appropriate response than carping. Not every Neo-Latin text merits a modern edition, but one that was born at the moment when the church in Italy could have gone down Luther's path does. We can now understand a little better why it did not. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *The Correspondence of Erasmus, Letters 2472 to 2634, April 1531–March 1532.* Translated by Charles Fantazzi and annotated by James M. Estes. *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 18. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. xxii + 422 pp. \$200. The letters translated in this volume chronicle a year in which Erasmus's principal concern was the fear that the religious controversy in Germany and Switzerland would erupt into war. He was living during this period in Freiburg im Breisgau, and while he had good friends there, freedom from responsibilities to a princely court, and the opportunity to practice his Catholic faith securely, the uncertainty of the political situation was accompanied by an upheaval in his living situation. The latter problem was eventually resolved through a complicated and expensive change in residences, but resolving the broader issues proved even more challenging. Catholic critics like Agostino Steuco, Alberto Pio, and Noël Bédá continued to berate him as the source of the Lutheran heresy, and his protestations to the contrary accomplished little if anything during this period. The situation was exasperated by the fact that his former friends in the evangelical camp continued to claim that he was the source of their unacceptable views. Particularly distressing in this