dedicated to Petrarch.

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Vittore Branca. *Poliziano e l'umanesimo della parola*. Torino: Einaudi, 1983. Pp. 375.

Joining several previously published articles (1963–1981) and some new critical pieces, Vittore Branca has assembled an impressive anthology of studies devoted to Angelo Poliziano. The book's core is composed of a dozen chapters, arranged chronologically to follow the subject's development; an array of complementary materials, which enrich and supplement this thematic nuclei, are included in appendices and as "marginalia" providing an unfocused sub-text. Taken altogether, these varied writings offer a panorama of Branca's long and productive research into the humanist environment surrounding Poliziano. Although the core chapters are clearly separate threads which have been carefully rewoven to fashion a unified design, each can also stand alone as a source of self-contained information.

Neither an introduction nor a standard monograph, this is a scholar's book. The topics covered in each chapter are specific and circumscribed; the data *proved* is detailed, learned, and often unfamiliar or overlooked. The author furnishes a wealth of new or unknown documents while concurrently gathering facts and figures which are of great service to future scholars interested in the particulars of Poliziano's erudition and associations. To cite some instances, Branca includes details of the humanist's coursework at the Studio Fiorentino, unpublished letters to friends and collaborators, lists of libraries and codices consulted during his travels, examples of manuscript glosses, and the location of incunabula formerly held by San Marco's monastic library, as well as an assortment of bibliobiographical data and educated suppositions—such as Poliziano's possible but unproven familiarity with the Vatican collection. A direct consequence of Branca's generous utilization of original sources is the presence of a large body of materials cited in Latin or ancient Greek, which are untranslated; the reader must, therefore, possess some knowledge of these languages to do justice to the text. As befits such a scholarly study, the book is equipped with a bounty of lengthy notes, which demonstrate the critic's formidable and comprehensive background research and provide considerable additional information and commentary. The bibliography is extensive and all previously published materials have been carefully revised and up-dated.

In the introduction, Vittore Branca proposes his personal view of Poliziano's intellectual career. The man emerging from these pages is a coherent if complex figure, whose shift from poet to philologist is not interpreted as an existential contradiction but as a logical spiritual progression. While other scholars have pointed to 1480 as a watershed in Poliziano's life, Branca rejects the image of a cloven individual whose interests are neatly divided between poetry and erudition and points for a deep-seated harmony uniting artist and humanist, vernacular poet and Latinist. The core chapters of this book take pains to point out the budding

thinker present in the young writer and the aesthete within the bibliophile. A case in point is the article—one of Branca's better known essays—on the *Orfeo*, in which the critic traces the play's temporal genesis to Poliziano's first journey to the north, where he was influenced by courtly society and his encounter with Aristotelianism; the fabula's working of the mythological subject is attributed to the impact of the momarie and the Aristotelian emphasis on realism, making the *Orfeo* a play dressed "in panni di foggia veneziana" (66). Also at issue is the dating of Poliziano's poetry, which Branca suggests is flawed, preferring to regard it as a life-long occupation rather than assigning it to the 1470's. In brief, Branca presents a mind in process, ever expanding and growing, moving philosophically from the Neo-Platonism of the Laurentian circle to a growing tendency towards realism, leading naturally to the acceptance of the *Poetics* as the key text for the understanding of the written word, in a series of transitions associated with personal and intellectual discoveries and changes. In point of fact, the Renaissance poet is a minor character in this book; the protagonist is Poliziano the scholar, the humanist who unfolds slowly but steadily, deepening in awareness and knowledge. Branca follows this intellectual itinerary by presenting a series—not a flow—of suggestive episodes: from the vernacular poet of the *iti Stanze*, already conscious of metaphysical values, to the chair of Greek and Latin eloquence preparing his lessons on ancient texts along a historical, philological, and philosophical line of interpretation; the professor gives way to the philologist reconstructing ancient manuscripts and analyzing specific words and expressions, who, in turn, becomes the bibliophile gathering and copying codices for Lorenzo and other humanists, consulting the great private and public collections for new and better texts, journeying to Rome and the Veneto in search of intellectual openings and soul-brothers. Through Poliziano, Branca actually depicts the rich universe of fifteenth-century humanism rotating around the Florentine scholar, influencing him and being influenced in turn. It is a realm of collaboration and rivalries, sharing and squabbles. On the one hand, the friendly association with Ugoletti, librarian to the Hungarian king, permits Poliziano to compare codices and reconstruct the *Argonautiche*; on the other, the Florentine's library and papers are dispersed because of political and personal vendettas after his death.

The critic highlights Poliziano's contribution to this universe, outlining his unique methodology in dealing with ancient works, from an initial historical appraisal to a linguistic analysis, and, finally, a comparison with other cultural sources. This early form of paleography eventually leads the humanist to new materials, such as the legal codices, the *Pandette*, in an attempt to further understand, having achieved the recognition that each discipline adds to the knowledge of man and culture: textual and linguistic analysis is the means of owning the past and reviving it. The instrument of such possession is the word.

The unifying force in Angelo Poliziano's work is the constant presence of a "religione della parola," a love for the words which animate thought and civilization. Whether it be poetry or philology, philosophy or science, law or literature, it is through the word that man expresses himself and his world. Branca proposes that Poliziano had embraced the Aristotelian adage that the word is thought itself. *Verba* and *res* are indissolubly united and language is made of things. This book could just as aptly be titled *Poliziano e la parola dell'Umanesimo* for its focus

on the centrality of "words" in the Florentine's opera is inseparable from the historical framework in which the subject lived and produced. The relationship of Poliziano to words is the dominant theme of this study. There is the philologist's concern with the single phoneme and its evolution; the poet's elaboration of the written page; the collected words which compose the multiplicity of books occupying the scholar's attention; the numerous codices filled with words that needed explication and correction on the part of the bibliophile. There are Poliziano's own words in letters, poetry, and the *Miscellanea* which need to be investigated and clarified. Vittore Branca has accomplished much in forming a portrait of the humanist in Poliziano, the man avid for the knowledge contained in the books of the past in order to disseminate it to the present. The Renaissance poet concerned with the prototypical qualities of *eleganza*, *invenzione*, and *dottrina* in his own works is the counterpart of the humanist philologist preoccupied with the perfect reconstruction of a mutilated codex. These are facets of the same intellect not products of a schizophrenic mind. In Branca's capable hands, an organic Poliziano emerges, the questing curious erudite child of his times, one of the last great Humanists in the Quattrocento mold.

It can only be regretted that Branca's prodigious scholarship is somewhat less organic in its totality than his protagonist. While a thematic center exists, the core chapters do not always achieve the desired synthesis, occasionally suffering from their origins as individual articles, being unrelated to preceding and ensuing topics save for the loose chronological sequence imposed by the author. Nevertheless, this remains an important addition to the growing body of studies dedicated to Renaissance erudition, interpreted through the experiences of one of its most significant personalities, and produced by an expert in the area. Having edited the long forgotten *Centuria prima* and published the *Centuria secunda* (lost for hundreds of years) for the first time, Vittore Branca has made extraordinary contributions to the understanding of an infrequently studied aspect of Italian letters; this series of essays on Poliziano the humanist sheds further light on the intellectual development of an accomplished scholar who has been obscured by his reputation as a great poet.

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Marco Santoro. *La stampa a Napoli nel Quattrocento*. Napoli: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento Veridionale, 1984. Pp. 210.

This catalogue of books published in Naples before 1500 is the result of a systematic investigation that the author has carried out 1) to determine, as accurately as possible, just how many editions are known, 2) to verify (and reject, where necessary) the attributions to Neapolitan printers, and 3) to establish the location of each edition in European and North American libraries. As a result he makes numerous additions to existing standard repertories and succeeds in showing how rare each edition is.