Nicholas Everett's essay, on Paulinus of Aquileia's *Sponsio episcoporum*, a vow taken by bishops in the see of Aquileia, comes with a diplomatic edition of the *Sponsio* and an English translation. Dating to the Carolingian period, by Everett's analysis the *Sponsio* reflects how the pressure toward literacy in the Carolingian court came to be felt in Aquileia. The text itself, as Everett argues, represents a hybrid of elements from Frankish reform councils, in which Paulinus would have participated, and previously established church documentary practices. Luca Boschetto's essay takes the reader to Florence, where he traces the emergence of the vernacular at the court of the Mercanzia, which came about thanks to a 1355 law prohibiting the use of Latin in court records. Readers interested in the history of the Florentine vernacular in Italy will find this essay riveting.

The last two essays address editorial issues related to medieval texts. The first, Dominique Poirel's piece on the composition of Angela of Foligno's *Memorial*, is a densely argued study of the several manuscripts of the *Liber Angelae*. Poirel convincingly demonstrates the difficulty of producing an "ideal critical edition" of the text because of the clear evidence of post-mortem interventions by Angela's followers. The last essay, by Susanne Lepsius, exposes the processes by which legal texts in the Middle Ages were composed and later reformulated by others. Like Poirel, she concludes that producing a definitive edition of such texts presents serious challenges, given the layers of intervention the manuscripts evidence.

There are a number of useful illustrations, some decidedly better than others. Text pages reproduce decently in black and white, but illustrations requiring color reproduction, such as most of Safran's, tend to reduce to muddled grays. No doubt color plates would have added much to the cost of the volume, but this is a situation in which twenty-first century technology, such as the availability of color reproductions on-line, could be of great benefit to readers and would demonstrate creativity and thoughtfulness on Toronto's part.

My early education as an Italianist featured a significantly circumscribed view of the medieval canon. I often wonder today what my mentor, long dead, would think about the exciting spread of attention to other areas of medieval Italian culture, which so expands our own sense of the vitality of this bygone age. I would like to think that he would appreciate a book like this one, which travels several new avenues along the peninsula. We are indeed lucky to live in a time in which the past expands dramatically before our eyes, thanks to the diligent archaeology of scholars like these.

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Polcri, Alessandro. *Luigi Pulci e la Chimera. Studi sull'allegoria nel Morgante*. Firenze: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 2010. Pp. 299. ISBN 9788860321497. € 24.

This is a significant contribution for scholars of Italian Renaissance, in particular for those who are interested in Luigi Pulci's literary works and their impact on literature and scholarships. Pulci (1432-1484) was an Italian poet best known for his

epic poem *Morgante*—an ingenious and grotesque parody of the content and forms of the *cantari popolari* of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The first edition of *Morgante*, containing twenty-three cantos, appeared in 1478 and the complete edition of the poem, consisting of twenty-eight cantos, was published in Florence in 1483. Pulci also produced other literary compositions that in comparison with his masterpiece, *Morgante*, are ascribed as minor works. He composed *Epistolario*, numerous sonnets, some of which are considered to be of a controversial nature, *La Beca da Dicomano*, a parody in twenty-three stanzas of the rustic love story that Lorenzo de' Medici narrates in his *La Nencia di Barberino*, authored *La Giostra di Lorenzo de' Medici*, a poem in one hundred-sixty stanzas, which describes a splendid Florentine joust of 1469, wrote *Confessione*, and compiled *Vocabolario di lingua furbesca* that lists classical names and affected diction collected by reading the most popular Latin authors, Virgil, Ovid, and Cicero and Italian writers namely Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

The present book—written in Italian—offers an extensive and detailed analysis of Pulci's literary works focusing mainly on the poem *Morgante* and the sonnets—*Costor che fan sì gran disputazione*, *In principio era buio, e buio sia*, *Poiche partii da voi*, *Bartolomeo*, and *Questi che vanno a San Francesco*—which caused a long lasting polemics between the poet Pulci and the philosopher of the Neoplatonic doctrines Marsilio Ficino. It also examines an extant correspondence between Lorenzo de' Medici and Pulci that reflects the poet's personal life experiences, torments, frustrations, and joyous moments in order to highlight neglected facts concerning the poet's relationship with Lorenzo de' Medici and his views on the Neoplatonic doctrines. Based on his analysis, Alessandro Polcri proposes to reconsider the fossilized statement accusing Pulci of disseminating irreligious and heretical ideas in the poem *Morgante* and several sonnets.

The book is divided into two sections. In the first section, Polcri examines overlooked aspects of Pulci's biography, personality, and his literary oeuvre. In particular he studies motives for Pulci's exile based mostly on his financial crisis, its consequences, and Pulci's conflict with the priest Matteo Franco and the principal exponent of the Neoplatonic Academy of Florence Ficino. In the comprehensive examination of Pulci's correspondence with Lorenzo de' Medici and the most controversial sonnets composed by Pulci in response to Franco and Ficino's attacks that significantly defamed Pulci's personality and his literary works, the author establishes that Pulci was, in fact, a victim of a violent and definite ostracism caused by the false accusations made by Franco and Ficino. The first section of the book, therefore, sets up the basis for the second section which is dedicated entirely to the analysis of allegory with moral and religious connotations masterfully portrayed in the poem, *Morgante*. Polcri asserts that most scholars believe that Pulci was not a religious man and therefore was not interested in composing a poem filled with allegory containing moral traits. However, considering his analysis of allegorical elements with theological characteristics extensively present in the poem and the facts that the poem was composed under the urging of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Lorenzo de' Medici's mother, who was rigorous in her devotion and that in 1474 Pulci became a member of the confraternity of the Magi and was

never expelled from it for his allegedly heretical beliefs, Polcri convincingly suggests interpreting the poem not only as a literary composition enriched with allegorical structure in the attempt to entertain its readers but also as a poem representing allegory with moral and religious significance that clearly reflects Pulci's intention to profess genuine religious cannons.

Along with offering a new approach to re-evaluate Pulci's *Morgante* and sonnets, Polcri compiles indispensable sources of extant documents, letters written in Latin and Italian, and scholarly works concerning both Pulci's biography and literary compositions written throughout the centuries. The meticulous work of compiling such valuable information for his research certainly demonstrates that Polcri's analysis is based on substantial evidence. This book, therefore, should be a great resource for further examination of Pulci's literary compositions especially his minor works that still wait to be thoroughly studied.

Pulci's literary works, namely his masterpiece *Morgante* and controversial sonnets have inspired literary intellectuals to produce scholarly works throughout the centuries; however, the majority of these scholarships is conducted in Italian. Hopefully, the appearance of this book will increase Anglo-American Renaissance scholars' interests in examining further Pulci's literary compositions and perhaps encourage translation of his minor works into English.

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Rothman, E. Natalie. *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects Between Venice and Istanbul*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012. Pp. 323. ISBN 9780801449079. \$ 45.00 (Hardback).

E. Nathalie Rothman's *Brokering Empire* challenges the common scholarly assumptions on the important, and yet often bastardized concepts of subjecthood, otherness and belonging in the early modern Venetian and Ottoman empires. To do so, the author proposes to move beyond mainstream, and elite-based, analysis and conceptualizations of Venetian society as divided into patricians, citizens and plebs (11). Instead, Rothman introduces the concept of 'trans-imperial subjects' in order to "explore the complex networks of alliance and interest, hierarchies of authority, and modes of interaction between the various groups and individuals that helped draw political, religious, and linguistic boundaries in early modern Venice" (3). Borrowing from post-colonial theory and language, the author brilliantly underscores the relevance of these 'trans-imperial' actors whose multiple social formations and interactions pertained to, and helped shape, the shifting boundaries between the Venetian and Ottoman empires between the mid-fifteenth and the late seventeenth centuries. In other words, Rothman claims that the study of persons and groups that populated and articulated the complex web of networks of interrelatedness underscore the necessity to comprehend the import of their "in-betweenness" so as to better approach certain a priori social, religious and political categories and boundaries (13-4).