that have been published following the original 1992 edition. Wilson's book is not necessarily a light read, but it is quite transparent and not written in a dry, academic style; it presents the subject in a clear, concise, organized manner. *From Byzantium to Italy*, with its richness and wealth of information and with its accurate and up-to-date details, is an invaluable tool to scholars and readers interested in classical Greek studies and their resurgence and reception during the Italian Renaissance.

JESSICA GREENFIELD

Oberlin College & Conservatory

Angelo Poliziano. *Lettere volgari*. Introduzione, edizione critica e commento a cura di Elisa Curti. Temi e Testi, 154. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2016. Pp. 156. ISBN 978-8-8637-2977-1.

With the publication of Angelo Poliziano's *Lettere volgari*, Elisa Curti provides the first complete critical edition of all 40 vernacular letters by the Renaissance humanist and poet. Curti's detailed annotations provide a rich context for understanding the content of the letters, while her insightful introduction underscores their philological value, by illuminating the lexical and syntactical peculiarities of Poliziano's Italian. Indeed, as Curti points out, these are the only autograph documents in Italian by Poliziano that we possess.

Written over a period of twenty years (1475–1494), the letters are addressed primarily to Lorenzo de' Medici, his immediate family, including his wife Clarice Orsini and his mother Lucrezia Tornabuoni, and to other Medici courtiers such as Lorenzo's secretary Niccolò Michelozzi. We find alongside these letters a handful addressed to members of Poliziano's own family and friends, such as Bernardo Ricci and Alessandro Cortesi. Together the 40 letters bring into sharp focus Poliziano's quotidian concerns as a courtier and tutor to Lorenzo's sons, without ever completely losing sight of the grand historical events in which they are embedded, such as the outbreak of the plague in Florence, the uprisings in Volterra and Genoa, and the Medici family's relations with the Este and Sforza courts (x, xix).

Curti states that most of Poliziano's letters serve one of three functions: 1) to request benefices from Lorenzo and to ensure that they are then officially assigned

to him; 2) to request favors, recommendations, and pardons on behalf of others; or 3) to inform Lorenzo and his immediate family of the academic progress of his sons. These letters provide insight into the everyday reality of a Renaissance courtier, who is seemingly forever beseeching his prince for either financial favors or the power to override Clarice Orsini's decisions regarding the education her sons. His clashes with Clarice led to his temporary dismissal from the household, a situation which he sought to, and eventually did, rectify, through letters in both Italian and Latin. I see a great pedagogical potential in this volume, for the letters serve as a wonderful counterbalance to the idealized portrait of court life presented in Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano*.

Other letters reveal fascinating aspects of late fifteenth-century literary culture. For example, in Letter 27 to Lucrezia Tornabuoni, dated 18 July 1479, Poliziano writes to say he is sending back Tornabuoni's "laude, et sonetti, et ternarii" which her daughter-in-law and granddaughters very much enjoyed reading and reciting (55). The letter testifies both to the existence of numerous sonnets written by Tornabuoni (only one is extant today) and to their circulation among the Medici women (55). As such, the letter allows us a glimpse, albeit fleeting, of a distinctly female literary culture existing in the domestic sphere. In Letter 33, dated 11 August 1489, Poliziano writes to his friend Alessandro Cortesi in Rome regarding the reception of his Latin translation of Herodian's *History of the Empire from the Death of Marcus*. Here, in one of his more rhetorically formal letters, Poliziano skillfully defends his translation after the text's chilly reception among Roman humanists. Poliziano insists that learning of the criticism of his translation from Cortesi's letters has not angered him in the least. Instead, he suggests that he might still amend his translation according to those few criticisms that were warranted, justifying his decision with references to palinodes by Hippocrates, Cicero, and Augustine. In this way, Poliziano limits the power of his critics and inserts himself into the company of great learned men of antiquity. In Letter 37, written to Lorenzo from Venice on 20 June 1491, Poliziano documents in detail his efforts to acquire Greek codices and antiquities in Ferrara, Padua, and Venice for the Medici library. This same trip afforded him the chance to meet the Venetian scholar Cassandra Fedele, whose own mastery of Latin and the vernacular provokes in Poliziano a bilingual response: "Discretissima, *et meis oculis etiam bella*. Partimi stupito" (85).

In the second part of the volume, Curti assembles another 21 letters "scritte per delega," written by Poliziano for Clarice Orsini between 1478–1479, and

addressed to her husband Lorenzo, Lucrezia Tornabuoni, and Niccolò Michelozzi. Many of these letters provide additional context for those written by Poliziano in the first part of the volume. Oftentimes, they also reveal the curious position of Poliziano the courtier, who is asked to transmit the voice and thoughts of a woman whom he criticizes in his own letters. However, he never completely cedes his own voice, for, as Curti notes, in these letters Poliziano skillfully “mantiene i propri usi linguistici e stilistici, e dunque un certo grado di autorialità” (xxxiii).

Curti is to be commended for making Poliziano’s vernacular letters readily available in a well-annotated volume with an extensive bibliography. Undoubtedly, this excellent edition will appeal to a wide variety of readers, from scholars of Poliziano and fifteenth-century Florence to students of Renaissance courts.

SUZANNE MAGNANINI

University of Colorado, Boulder

Rodney Lokaj. *Two Renaissance Friends: Baldassarre Castiglione, Domizio Falcone and Their Neo-Latin Poetry*. Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2015. Pp. xii, 372. ISBN 978-0-8669-8519-2.

Baldassarre Castiglione e Domizio Falcone furono conterranei, coetanei, compagni di studi, intimi amici. La loro differente estrazione sociale li portò però ad avere un destino molto diverso: mentre il primo, trasferitosi dal nativo ducato di Mantova alla corte dei Montefeltro di Urbino, intraprese una brillante carriera diplomatica che gli aprì le porte dei circoli più esclusivi del Rinascimento romano, il secondo restò a svolgere l’umile incarico di precettore del fratello minore del suo illustre sodale nella sperduta tenuta padana di Casatico, dove lo colse una morte prematura. La sorte postuma dei due letterati ha seguito una parabola in qualche modo analoga. Infatti, sebbene entrambi fossero apprezzati dai contemporanei per la loro produzione poetica neo-latina, soltanto l’autore del *Libro del cortegiano* è riuscito a conquistare una fama duratura. Falcone, invece, penalizzato anche dal fatto di non avere lasciato opere in volgare, ha finito per essere ricordato quasi esclusivamente come dedicatario dell’elegia *Alcon*, composta in occasione della sua improvvisa scomparsa da un commosso Castiglione, che vedeva così svanire tragicamente i loro progetti d’una vita insieme nella Roma di Giulio II.