and disenchantment in her maturity (1494-1527) and finally, after a period of despondent old age, comes to her death in 1559. Professor Lopez, well-known in the field of mediaeval economic history, has clearly narrowed the Renaissance (which he, contrary to traditional views, maintains to be a period of economic regression¹) to a single century from the fall of Constantinople to the treaty of Cateau-Cambrsis, thus excluding the period of civic humanism usually considered an important part of the early Renaissance. He compares the very "youth" of the Renaissance to an Indian summer, giving the reader the impression that it was simply the end of a more glorious era.

The second organizing metaphor which utilizes the analogy of three, is that of the triptych. This image seems to confirm Burckhardt's view of the Renaissance as a work of art. On closer examination, however, it proves to be a less positive consideration of the era as a beautiful but superficial expression of what was already known and felt in the Middle Ages.

In his analysis of each age Professor Lopez, adhering to his belief that "it would be completely artificial, and so completely false to attempt to portray an age without taking material conditions into account,"² links the economic and political aspects to the ideological and cultural ones, concluding each major chapter with his own able translation of a contemporary poem (e.g. Lorenzo de' Medici's "Canzona di Bacco") intended to sum up the spirit of the times.

On the basis of economic data he has succeeded in destroying the myth of unlimited artistic patronage in the Renaissance. However his method does not bring forth original interpretations of the literary and artistic works he discusses: rather, it establishes a forced relationship between material and intellectual currents. For instance, there is an almost deterministic postulation that the financial depression of the cities sparked a speculative interest in the countryside which, in turn, was responsible for the growth of pastoral literature. This exaggeratedly "realistic" attitude is especially evident in the iconoclastic modern idiom used throughout the book.

What were undoubtedly, in their original form, entertaining lectures, have been brought together, and supplemented with a good bibliography and numerous plates of artistic masterpieces, to form a general picture of the Italian Renaissance which at first is dazzling but then reveals its one-dimensional (mainly economic) inspiration and stress.

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Notes

¹ Robert S. Lopez, "Hard Times and Investment in Culture" in *The Renaissance: Six Essays* by W.K. Ferguson, etc. New York, Harper, 1962, pp. 29-54.

² Robert S. Lopez, *The Birth of Europe*. London, Phoenix, 1966, p.2.

Robert J. Rodini. *Antonfrancesco Grazzini, Poet, Dramatist, and Novelliere*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970. Pp. xv, 242. \$12.50.

By combining under the same cover a study of Antonfrancesco Grazzini as a poet, a dramatist and a writer of short stories, Professor Rodini has made a useful, if somewhat limited, contribution to the study of Italian Renaissance literature. In the past, critics have con-

sidered this author piecemeal, so to speak, either as a playwright, or a story-teller, or a poet. Professor Rodini is the first to present an overall picture of this fascinating and versatile figure within the context of a critical examination of all three of his literary genres. Being in English, this book is accessible to all English-speaking students of the Italian Renaissance, and will be especially useful to those who are working in comparative literature and who may not have a perfect command of the Italian language.

The work consists of five chapters with the following headings: I Antonfrancesco Grazzini, II The *vita fiorentina* in the works of Grazzini, III The Poetry, IV The Comedies, V The *novelle*. Also included are two appendices (Appendix I: Grazzini's *Tavola delle opere* and Appendix II: Grazzini's Printed Works), a section consisting of notes on the five chapters (these notes are detailed and contain a great deal of useful information), a section containing a detailed bibliography, and an index listing items according to both subject and author.

Professor Rodini's most original contribution is made in the chapter on poetry. Whereas Grazzini's comedies and short stories have received considerable attention from critics in the past, his poetry has been almost entirely neglected, so that a discussion of his burlesque poetry and his Petrarchan lyrics and Eclogues is welcome indeed. It is a pity, however, that more space was not allotted to this important chapter. The same can be said of the chapters on the comedies and the *novelle*. All three chapters contain useful information, but could have been extended to include much more.

Chapter II (The *vita fiorentina* in Grazzini's Works) is something of a disappointment, particularly the section dealing with comedy. The title promises much and the reader expects to find numerous examples from Grazzini's writing which might be typical of Florentine life. Unfortunately, a good deal of what is said in the chapter could just as easily be applied to the life of the time in Ferrara, Siena or some other Italian city, not to speak of the life described in the classical comedies of Plautus and Terence. For example, we read the following on p. 66: "To capture the spirit of a people attempting to preserve the last vestiges of sanctioned amorality, Grazzini brings to his theatre a world completely devoid of refinement; gross habits are accompanied by gross language. It is a world of servants, prostitutes, pimps, and libertines. There is no place for ideal loves; characters are constantly struggling with one another in a frenzied dance of animal instincts." And farther down on the same page: "Appeasement of the sexual appetite is a major preoccupation of Grazzini's characters, but it is only one. Few commentators have noted, for example, the recurrent theme of gluttony in Grazzini's theatre." Every student of Renaissance Italy knows that during the Sixteenth Century corruption was rife not only in Florence, but in all the major cities of the peninsula as well. It is precisely this sort of life that is described by many Italian playwrights of the time, from Lodovico Ariosto of Ferrara, to Pietro Aretino of Rome, to Giordano Bruno of Naples. The section on the short stories is more successful, but it, like the section on comedy, could very well have been incorporated into the chapters dealing with those genres. In fact, much of what is said in chapter two is dealt with again in chapters four and five.

The merits of Professor Rodini's book by far outweigh its demerits, however, and the work as a whole presents a very good picture of Grazzini and his times. This monograph is certainly recommended reading for all students of the literature of Renaissance Italy.

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