

Rinucius Aretinus' *Penia*, edited by Ludovica Radif offers the critical edition of the Latin text (written by the humanist in Cretan land, around 1415), based on the English manuscript preserved in Balliol College (B 131). Beside the Latin text, it is also provided a translation that is not only the first Italian translation of the text, but the first translation at all into a modern language. Introductory pages talk about the personality of the author in his relationships with other well-known humanists, the origins of the present text, the hypothetical connections among biography and texts, sources and text, context and aims of the text.

1. *How relevant is the topic*

The topic is significant. Although it has not been much researched by the scholars of the field, it is quite an important one because Rinucius' *Penia* is the first attempt to translate an Aristophanic comedy in the West.

2. *How precisely, clearly and understandably is the topic formulated*

The wording of the topic is clearly stated and perfectly intelligible. We also appreciate the author's style, which is very personal, especially in the introductory pages, while still being well understandable.

3. *What contributions does the thesis make to the field and how does it compare to other works both foreign and domestic in the field*

The contribution of this study is relevant. In 1975 a first entire critical edition was made by Walther Ludwig in München, with good German commentary and notes about the *loci paralleli*, but some mistakes in transcription made the readers consider the source partly incorrect. Suffice to say (p. 118) that the adjectivus *aptos*, was read like *apros* and so changed by W.L. into *acres vel acros vel asperos*. Similarly a lot of verbal forms had been misunderstood, like *aderit* instead of *adesset* (r. 278), *est* instead of *esset* (r. 280), *compararentur* instead of *comparantur*, and so on. Therefore a new critical edition was very timely.

The reproduction of the manuscript pages in the last part of the book let us appreciate the beauty and correctness of codex.

4. *Methodology and formal standards*

L.R. shows perfect mastery of ecdotic methodology. This book is not an isolated experience in the course of researching followed by L.R., but, as we can see on p. 90, at least fifteen other essays had been produced and published before that editing. That is the culmination of seven years' work, when a critical maturity suggested to the author to sign the text most deep and definitely, starting from the manuscript source. The methodology appears correct, mature and in accordance with the usual standards of philology.

### 5. *What is the level of analysis?*

The level of analysis is well in-depth, the result of rigorous work on the text, and consists of several levels of investigation: philological, historical, literary, *etc.* The survey reveals the theatrical potential of the text, which, maybe, we would like to have been explored further. The deeper interest to that play expressed by the author encouraged the release of the reading of *Penia* also for basic college and university course applications.

### 6. *Formal criteria*

The formal criteria are adequate to a philological and scientific academic research. An extensive bibliography is added to the footnotes.

### 7. *Conclusion*

The aim of the present book is to fill a gap in the history of Humanistic theatre, and something more than this, because *Penia* is also part of the humanistic revival of ancient Greek comedy. Making use of both competences in Latin and Greek literatures, L.R., specialized in Aristophanic lecture (she had published some articles and an Italian translation of the *Birds* in *Spasso Carrabile*, Genova 2007), for the first time considers the *Penia* not only a pedestrian rhetorical exercise, as the humanist would like us to believe according to his lines addressed to Matthew, the friend the dedicatory letter is addressed to, but a new unusual remake of one section of Aristophanic *Plutus* (from v. 403 to 626) nestled in the picturesque biographical experiences and enriched by a lot of erudite reminiscences and cultures allusions to Greek and Latin authors. We are invited to consider the text as a real comedy, as the ending *tu vale et plaude* suggests, with new stress on the power of *Penia*, and new values involved (in the ll. 99-100 it is clear the monotheistic view of reality in contrast to the following lines devoted to the god *Asclepius*).

By an on-site visit in the land of Crete, where the *fabula* was compounded, L.R. compares the Rinucius' rendering of the panorama and the current reality, arguing a substantial matching between reality and fiction in *fabula*. Without denying the suspicions expressed by scholars like Ernesto Berti or Maria Pasqualina Pillolla about the real competences of Rinucius at that time of his life, the beginnings, we are persuaded about an interesting creative inventiveness of Aretinus.

I think that this book can be considered a not insignificant contribution in that field of Aristophanic revival in the first middle of XV century, where the scholar Radif occupies a position internationally recognized. In 2016 she was designated to write the entry *Rinuuccio Aretino* in the Treccani Collection *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*; she offered a contribution in the book *Ancient comedy and reception* in honour of the brilliant scholar Jeffrey Henderson (ed. Douglas Olson, Degruyter 2014), as well as she has been invited and took part in the recent editing of the *Encyclopedia of Greek Comedy* (cur. Alan H. Sommerstein in 2019, Wiley Blackwell) by making entries about Italian writers who somehow interpreted Aristophanic comedies (Giovanni Tortelli, Niccolò Machiavelli, Giovanni Pascoli, *etc.*).

**In conclusion, this habilitation thesis meets the standard requirements placed on**

**habilitation thesis in the field.**

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