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I was entrusted with the task of evaluating the book “Rinuccio Aretino, *Penia*, Firenze 2011” written by dr. Ludovica Radif.

The book provides a substantial contribution about Rinuccio Aretino's *Penia*, an early Renaissance Latin partial translation / remake of Aristophanes's *Pluto* whose importance cannot be underestimated since it constitutes the first step towards the rediscovery of Aristophanes and the rebirth of theatre which will be fully carried out later on during the Renaissance. The monography fills a gap in the studies about the bridge between classical Greek theatre and Renaissance theatre by providing an historically aware interpretation of the work in its cultural context, a critical edition of the *Penia* and a translation into Italian.

Rinuccio's work had remained unpublished until recently, when Walther Ludwig edited the text (*Die fabula penia des Rinucius Aretinus*, München, Fink, 1975) on the basis of the Oxford manuscript, the only known witness to the *Penia*. Anyway, as pointed out by Radif (pp. 73-74), the previous editor misread the manuscript here and there, and then, sometimes, corrected the text by inappropriate conjectures, and elsewhere he attributed lines to a wrong character (especially in the last part of the work). The new edition provided by Ludovica Radif, based on the same witness more carefully read – the Oxford manuscript previously owned by the English humanist Willian Gray and produced in the scriptorium of Rinuccio –, is faithful to the source, which now proves to be an excellent witness to the text of Rinuccio, that requires a smaller amount of conjectural corrections than previously thought.

The book consists of:

I. a wide and detailed introduction dealing with:

- a) Rinuccio Aretino, his life and works, and his trip to Crete, where he allegedly heard the *fabula Penia* in a tavern (obviously a literary stratagem to frame his translation/remake of Aristophanes's *Pluto*, whose author is not even mentioned): a section in which Rinuccio emerges as an interesting personality of the early Renaissance period, who had a wide culture (it appears he knew quite well the works of Plautus, Terentius, Ovid, and their style; he went to Greece both to improve his knowledge of the language and to find Greek manuscripts, witnesses to the classics) and was the first to rediscover Aristophanes, before the attempts made by Leonardo Bruni and Giovanni Tortelli;
- b) Pietro Tommasi and Cristoforo Buondelmonti, who also were in Crete in the early XV century and met Rinuccio there around 1415-16;
- c) an on-site inspection of the trip report made by Rinuccio, which proves to be geographically faithful;
- d) a comparison of the *Penia* and Aristophanes's *Pluto*, in which the process of enucleation carried out by Rinuccio is analysed, as well as the need to provide the reader information that was commonly known in Aristophanes's times, but not in Rinuccio's times anymore (e.g. who Asclepius was);

e) the *Penia* as humanistic comedy, as Radif points out focusing on the structure of the work and the role of the chorus;

II. a textual section about Ludwig's edition of the text, termed "fundamental work", and the justification of a new edition; a description of the manuscript, including palaeographic observations and concerning the *mise en page*; an explanation of the criteria of the translation;

III. the text itself: a new edition of the text (even pages), with a critical apparatus of the manuscript readings refused by the editor, Ludwig's misreadings and conjectural corrections; the editor's Italian translation (odd pages), intended for non-specialists as a text to be read, understood and staged on its own;

IV. a photo reproduction of the pages that contain Rinuccio's *Penia* in the Oxford manuscript.

The subject-matter is well developed, fully understandable, and solidly argued; the method and the language are proper for an historical-philological approach. Radif, in accordance with her interests, takes into account the fact that Rinuccio's *Penia* could be easily staged even nowadays, translated and with a small amount of textual accommodation for the contemporary audience (a performance, based on *Soldo Bifronte*, an actualisation of the text made by Ludovica Radif herself, actually took place in 2006 in Pisa, under the direction of Francesca Nenci).

The main achievements of Ludovica Radif's work are, on one hand, a more faithful edition of the text itself, and on the other, the fact that the editor fully restores the text its dignity of a real comedy, which the author himself had instead defined as a simple transcription of a short story he had heard by chance in a tavern in Crete, and a sort of rethoric exercise dedicated to a friend. It is not clear, though, as Ludovica Radif points out, whether the work dates back to Rinuccio's youth or he rewrote it in later years. Since the text is not among the most read and studied, the Italian translation, the first one of such text, is helpful to non-specialised readers, as it helps to appreciate the complexity of the work (non-specialised readers would maybe benefit from a translation of the many quotations both in Latin and Greek of literary and documentary sources cited in the very detailed historically aware introduction, even though most non-specialised readers will probably skip the introduction and jump immediately to the text itself). The edition of the Latin text is accompanied, as mentioned above, by a critical apparatus of the manuscript readings refused by the editor, Ludwig's misreadings and conjectural corrections; plus a series of footnotes concerning literary sources (such as Terentius, Plautus, Vergil, Ovid), the comparison with the Greek text by Aristophanes, the argumentation of textual choices, the explanation of difficult terms / passages.

The large and detailed introduction fully reflects the work that Ludovica Radif has been carried out for years on Aristophanean comedy and its reprise in Western Europe during the Renaissance, a field of studies for which the author is appreciated among scholars, and her expertise on Renaissance authors and their bio-bibliography as, among other things, proved and shaped by her long-time cooperation with the prestigious repertoire project *CALMA. Compendium Auctorum Latinorum Medii Aevi*, at SISMEL / Fondazione Ezio Franceschini in Florence.

The book definitely contributes to a deeper knowledge of the subject-matter and fulfills the requirements of contemporary European research standards: the method is appropriate, the language and discussion are specialised and intelligible, formal criteria are respected, and bibliographical references show a deep knowledge of the topic. All the aspects concerned prove the scientific maturity of the candidate.

I do believe that the book fully meets the standard requirements set for habilitation theses in the field both of Classical studies and Renaissance studies /Humanistic Philology.

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