

*Against the Jews and the Gentiles, Books I–IV.* Giannozzo Manetti.

Ed. Stefano U. Baldassarri and Daniela Pagliara. Trans. David Marsh. The I Tatti Renaissance Library 79. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017. xx + 488 pp. \$29.95.

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The works of the Florentine humanist Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459) continue to attract scholarly attention. Recent years have seen editions of several of his works, some of them in the I Tatti Renaissance Library series: Manetti's *Biographical Writings* (no. 9) came out in 2003, and *A Translator's Defense* (no. 71) in 2016. *Against the Jews and the Gentiles* has now appeared as no. 79 in this series. It is edited by Stefano Baldassarri and Daniela Pagliara, who have both worked on Manetti before. The introduction and the English translation are by David Marsh.

Manetti wrote *Against the Jews and the Gentiles* in his later years, when he had already made a name for himself as a humanist. He wrote this work partly in Florence, where he lived until the early 1450s, and partly in Rome. According to his friend and biographer Vespasiano da Bisticci, Manetti meant to write a work in twenty books, to prove the superiority of the Christian religion. As Manetti informs us himself in his biography of Pope Nicholas V, his work on *Against the Jews and the Gentiles* was interrupted by the Pope's death, in 1455, and he never finished it. The ten books he completed have come down to us in only one manuscript (Vatican Library, Urb. lat. 154). It seems unlikely that it found many readers. The editors of this volume hypothesize that the Urbino manuscript was copied from an exemplar in the Manetti family library, provided by Agnolo Manetti, Giannozzo's son (421–22).

This volume contains only the first four books of *Against the Jews and the Gentiles*. Book 6 has been published before, by Baldassarri (in *Letteratura Italiana Antica* 7 [2006]), and parts of it are included in Manetti's *Biographical Writings* (2003, ITRL 9). This means that a significant portion of the work is still not available in edition. The four books in this volume cover the history of the world from Creation and roughly the Old Testament period—the preparation for the Gospel (book 1)—to Christ's life, his teaching, and his death and resurrection (books 2–4). The other six books, which are not included in this volume, describe “great Christians who demonstrated the excellence of their religion” (xii).

What makes *Against the Jews and the Gentiles* interesting is not its argumentation but the way its author selects and digests his source material. Manetti makes his case for Christianity by informing his readers of historical events and religious practices, occasionally reflecting on the merits of the pagan and Jewish religions. When describing the life, teaching, and death of Christ, he does this from a Jewish perspective, dwelling on the Old Testament prophecies and Christ's descent from David, and on the Jews' role in the Gospel narrative. The work is a rich source of information about humanistic learning in this period. It reflects the scope of Manetti's studies, which comprised a wide

range of subjects in both the scholastic and the humanist tradition. He studied Greek, Latin, and Hebrew and authored translations of Aristotle and the Bible. In *Against the Jews and the Gentiles*, Manetti applies his linguistic skills by exploring the etymologies of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew words.

This edition will be especially useful to readers interested in Manetti, but it is also relevant for students of the apologetic genre or Italian humanism in this period. In addition to making the first four books of *Against the Jews and the Gentiles* accessible, the editors have documented Manetti's sources meticulously in the notes to the text, and the introduction gives a good overview of the state of Manetti scholarship, including several forthcoming publications.

Annet den Haan, *Aarhus Universitet*  
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*Giovanni Pontanos "Urania" Buch 1: Einleitung, Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar.* Dennis Weh.

Gratia: Tübinger Schriften zur Renaissanceforschung und Kulturwissenschaft 58. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017. xiv + 430 pp. €72.

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Dennis Weh's book offers a careful study of Giovanni Pontano's *Urania*, a didactic poem in 6,049 verses and five books entirely dedicated to astronomy and generally regarded as Pontano's poetic masterpiece. Giovanni Pontano (Cerreto, 7 May 1428–Naples, 17 September 1503) worked on this poem in the last thirty years of his life. Weh's publication presents a critical edition of *Urania's* book 1 (1,173 verses), accompanied by a German translation (105–77) and a substantial commentary (179–373). In the latter, the German scholar skillfully brings to light the complex net of ancient, medieval, and early modern sources Pontano used for each of the passages of his *Urania* (especially Ovid, Manilius, Pliny the Elder, Firmicus Maternus, Ptolemy, Averroes, Basinio da Parma, Lorenzo Bonincontri, and Panormita). The *Urania's* Latin text was edited once before, by Benedetto Soldati (Florence, 1902), but Weh adopts a new set of criteria (see below). Weh's German translation of *Urania's* book 1 is the first one in a modern language.

Weh's book opens with a large preliminary study. Here, the scholar briefly presents Pontano's life, works, and astronomic interests, to which his friendship with Tolomeo Gallina and Lorenzo Bonincontri, the astronomy experts at the Aragonese court of Naples (7–11), testifies. In the third chapter, Weh carefully describes the content of the five books of the *Urania*, and in particular, that of the first one, in which Pontano introduces the seven Ptolemaic planets and the sublunary world both from an astronomic and astrologic point of view (we should keep in mind that astronomy and astrology were indistinguishable until the discoveries of the sixteenth century). In this part of his *Urania*, but also elsewhere, Pontano renders the didactic plot more pleasant by frequently inserting