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Fabio Massimo Bertolo – Marco Cursi – Carlo Pulsoni. 'Il Bembo ritrovato. Il postillato autografo della «Prose».' Rome: Viella, 2018.

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Fabio Massimo Bertolo – Marco Cursi – Carlo Pulsoni.
Il Bembo ritrovato. Il postillato autografo della «Prose».
Rome: Viella, 2018. 335 pp. €60.

This dense volume focuses on one of the most important discoveries of recent decades in the field of philological studies on the Italian Renaissance: the recovery of a copy of the first edition of Pietro Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* richly annotated by its author. As it is well known, Bembo's work is one of the basic texts of Italian linguistic history, as well as one of the most important theoretical works of the Renaissance. The volume analyzed in this new monograph was discovered by the three authors in the library of an Italian private collector. Now they publish the results of an extremely detailed and precise analysis of Bembo's own copy of the *Prose*, which allows them to add an important contribution to the history of this precious text.

The book is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter (*Il postillato delle 'Prose' [P1]: la storia*, pp. 7-17) Fabio Massimo Bertolo reconstructs the history of the volume containing Bembo's autograph notes (P1). Already in 1931, Carlo Dionisotti hypothesized the existence of a copy of Bembo's *Prose* in which the author had noted the passages to be corrected and the additions to be made for the new editions of his work. However, as pointed out by Bertolo, this copy should not be considered a typography *specimen*, but rather a tool that the author used privately in an intellectual effort to continuously improve his most important theoretical work. Indeed, according to the testimony of the many annotations written by the "weak" hand of the old Bembo, the author continued to work on this volume adding handwritten notes and corrections until the last years of his life (p. 13). In the eighteenth century the volume was acquired by the Venetian ambassador in Rome and future doge of the Most Serene Republic, Marco Foscarini. In the following century, the books belonging to the splendid Foscarini Library were dispersed. The copy of the *Prose* annotated by Bembo reappeared in the 1950s in the library of a wealthy and refined Italian collector. Only recently the State Archives of Venice acquired the volume, which is now available to scholars.

In the short second chapter (*La carta di guardia iniziale*, pp. 19-22) Marco Cursi examines the notes in the third fly-leaf, most of which are completely erased. Through a multispectral analysis, the author was able to identify a series of notes from the 17th century. By analyzing these reappearing manuscript texts, he assumed that in the seventeenth century P1 belonged to the library of the noble Roman family Cenci.

The third chapter (*Edizione e commento delle postille di P1*, pp. 23-121) provides the critical edition of the marginalia contained in P1, superbly edited by Carlo Pulsoni. First of all, the editor points out that Bembo did not limit himself to correcting the *editio princeps's* typographical misprints, but continued to introduce textual amendments, personal observations and quotations of works such as Boccaccio's *Filocolo* and *Decameron* [Book III, chapters 17, 24, 56] and Brunetto Latini's *Tesoro volgarizzato* [Book III, chapter 8]. Then, Pulsoni examines the 100

chapters Bembo modified in P1. His analysis reconstructs the stratigraphy of the annotations, so as to chronologically map the various interventions that the author made to his work over a period of more than twenty years.

In the fourth chapter (*Descrizione codicologica e paleografica*, pp. 123-76), Marco Cursi conducts an in-depth paleographic examination of the hand that wrote the notes. In these pages, the paleographer demonstrates the autography of Bembo's interventions and determines a chronology of the various phases in which the Venetian humanist inserted his notes in P1.

The fifth chapter (*Gli autori e le opere in P1*, pp. 177-217) focuses on the authors and works that Bembo cites in P1 and identifies several manuscript sources that the author used during his many revisions of the *Prose*. It is very interesting to notice that Bembo used as a reliable source for the references to Dante and Petrarch the codex Vat. Lat. 3197, i.e. the manuscript that the humanist compiled for the editions of the *Canzoniere* and *Commedia* edited by him, and published by Aldo Manuzio in 1501 and 1502 (p. 185).

The last chapter contains the text of the *Prose* "according to the last intention of the author" (pp. 219-316). This portion of the book provides the complete transcription of the text of the 1525 edition accompanied by the additions and changes that Bembo inserted in his personal copy of the *editio princeps* of the *Prose*.

In conclusion, the volume edited by Pulsoni, Cursi and Bertolo is a work of crucial importance for the philological studies of the Italian Renaissance. Through this book, the authors open new avenues of investigation not only on the figure of Bembo as a scholar and a book-man, but also on the study of marginalia as a fundamental element of Renaissance cultural and literary history. *Il Bembo ritrovato* is a book that is destined to be used by all those scholars who, in the future, will be interested in the "Fourth Crown" and in the work that marked the history of the Italian language.

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Marsilio Ficino.

De Christiana Religione.

Guido Bartolucci, ed.

Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2019. 356 pp. €30.

De Christiana religione has always been one of the most fascinating and elusive texts in the production of the Platonic philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499). The recent critical edition by Guido Bartolucci offers therefore a crucial contribution to clarify many questions related to the work itself and its relationship with other writings of the philosopher from Figline, going "nei meandri dell'officina di Ficino" (11). He does so through a patient comparison between the variants of the text and a painstaking recognition of its several sources.