

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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*Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla*, by Jerrold E. Seigel. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968. Pp. xvii, 268. \$8.50.

The Renaissance was suffused with speculation about the union of rhetoric and philosophy and study of this speculation is one of the most direct routes to an understanding of the period. In modern scholarship it has long been known that a new adjustment in the rhetoric-philosophy relationship marks off the Renaissance from the Middle Ages, as an earlier adjustment had marked off the Middle Ages from the patristic period. But no one before Professor Seigel has undertaken this analysis of key Renaissance figures in terms of what they have to say explicitly about this relationship.

The key figure is Cicero. The Middle Ages had known Cicero as a mine of information, but they had not regarded him as an intellectual inspiration in the way that Aristotle and others were. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, Italy was producing a good many men strongly attracted to Cicero as an intellectual leader, and often because of his stance regarding the rhetoric-philosophy relationship. Cicero is and was known as a rhetorician rather than a philosopher. But he had not denigrated philosophy, as Professor Seigel makes clear. He held it in high esteem, taking it less as a given body of works or discussions than as a general approach to existence, *philosophia*, love of wisdom. At times he almost let philosophy go its own way as the pure and unconcerned pursuit of truth, independent of rhetoric; but at the end he always reined it in, considering that no teaching could pretend to be true wisdom if it failed to enter into the decision-making of real life, where rhetoric, the art of persuasion, necessarily ruled, and most evidently in the most momentous of all fields, that of public affairs.

Petrarch was the one whom the Renaissance regularly credited with guiding it into Ciceronian paths. Petrarch loved Cicero beyond all other men. For Petrarch, as for Cicero, wisdom was a *sine qua non* of eloquence (p. 34), but it existed for the sake of eloquence, not for its own sake. How can one love wisdom and do nothing to move others? The cause of rhetoric sent Petrarch off on missions which would surprise most persons today: he warred persistently with physicians, who he said should cure their sick patients in silence, leaving to orators the calming or arousing of their emotions. (It is perhaps significant that Peter Ramus, 1515-72, whose title as Regius Professor of Eloquence and Philosophy officially united the two disciplines, found his chief enemies among physicians, too.) What appears to have antagonized Petrarch was that physicians made a great deal of natural philosophy (the forerunner of modern sciences, and a large part of scholastic learning) and of the hard-nosed logic or dialectic which went with natural philosophy.

Many other humanists after Petrarch had equally little patience with knowledge not dealing directly with the human life world, as even metaphysics failed to do. But some were more receptive to philosophy as such than Petrarch. So, for example, was Coluccio Salutati, chancellor of the Florentine republic and, unlike Petrarch, a professionally trained public notary. Leonardo Bruni, Salutati's junior associate, programmatically maintained that true philosophers always joined wisdom and eloquence, and

that at least all ancient philosophers had succeeded in effecting the juncture (despite the fact that Cicero had written that some did not).

Lorenzo Valla's position was far more extreme. Certainly no comparable thinker has ever subordinated philosophy more abjectly to rhetoric. And philosophy of any kind, including ancient as well as medieval. Like Cicero, Valla allowed philosophy a place in life, but more decisively than Cicero, only as subordinated to action, which meant to decision-making, and thus to rhetoric, the art of persuasion. A philosopher in an ivory tower was in fact for Valla not a philosopher at all. Even Cicero annoyed Valla when he claimed actually to speak as a philosopher instead of attacking "the thieving philosophers" with the "the sword of eloquence," as the author here reports Valla's own words (p. 142). "Philosophy," Valla maintains, "is like a soldier or tribune under the command of oratory, the queen." Particularly in handling ethics or moral philosophy, orators come off much better than philosophers. Orators of antiquity regularly treated the great questions of life "more clearly, weightily, and magnificently" than have niggling philosophers, and treated them earlier in history, too. Philosophy was clearly defeated by the higher wisdom of Christianity, which however left rhetoric intact.

Renaissance thinkers evidently do not simply write off philosophy but rather play it down in playing changes on the irreducible dialectical relationship between rhetoric and philosophy, or action and contemplation. What made playing the changes so exciting at this time? This crucial question is really another version of the basic question, What was the Renaissance? Professor Seigel handles it in the latter section of his book. Here he treats the medieval background and particularly the way the humanist scholars evolved out of medieval notaries and *dictatores*. Recalling how earlier historians had built a concept of Renaissance by contrasting fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy with the North European Middle ages (often as centered in France), he notes, with a good many recent historians, how different the picture appears when one looks for medieval-Renaissance contrasts within Italy itself. They are much harder to find. Medieval Italian culture had remained relatively free of speculative scholastic philosophy, preserving its orientation toward the practical disciplines of medicine and law. It developed to high perfection the *ars notaria* or professional training for notaries and the related and overlapping *ars dictaminis* or professional training for drafters of letters or public executive secretaries. Both of these were decidedly practical arts. Notaries and secretaries were deep in practical administrative affairs, and this fact gave them common cause with the practitioners of ancient rhetoric, the orators deep in Roman politics. Their skill in writing also inevitably interested them in literature.

Yet there were changes between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, even in Italy. Notably, an invasion of French culture and with it of scholastic philosophy and poetics both stimulated the notaries and secretaries and called forth from them defenses of established nonscholastic or parascholastic Italian values. The notaries and secretaries were also turning more from private to public affairs and thus developing a more self-conscious sense of cultural mission. Under these circumstances a sense of patriotism easily revived greater interest in classical Rome, with which Italy had always been very really connected, historically, culturally,

geographically, and developments here, a work, notably P. O.

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*Music and the Renaissance*  
York: Oxford University Press

This well-written to music historians accompanied by the ability to read music background chapters Bethan Settlement

Though Professor well aware that one first comprehend what it is intended during the reigns which list the considerable musicians: Giles, Weelkes, and music was somewhat English composer posers, they developed

As a counterpointally solo parts were the result. Unique accompaniment. The versatility are, Anglican Church

geographically, and demographically. Seigel spells out very well the developments here, and his findings and interpretations support other recent work, notably P. O. Kristeller's books.

A good book always suggests possibilities for further good books. There is one characteristic in the humanist rhetorical tradition which especially today invites more attention than Professor Seigel has here given it. While the ancient rhetorician was professionally a speaker, an orator, or at least a trainer of orators, the Italian Renaissance rhetorician, whether notary or clerk, was professionally a writer, trained, as Seigel well puts it, "to provide the written necessities of urban life" (p. 206). The rhetoric which emerged was a rhetoric directed largely, though seldom avowedly, to the study and production of texts. The Renaissance had inherited from the Middle Ages a scribal culture significantly different from the more oral culture of antiquity. This significance as such has not been treated here. It is important, however, because it helps explain the massive Renaissance orientation toward the classical past (accessible in writing) and also because it suggests differences between medieval and ancient philosophy due to the changed relationship between thinking and speech and writing. With the help of Professor Seigel's valuable account here, recent studies suggesting the vast psychological, intellectual and emotional differences between oral and scribal cultures open the possibilities for further study of the Renaissance rhetoric-philosophy dyad.

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*Music and the Reformation in England 1549-1660*, by Peter Le Huray. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967. Pp. viii, 454. \$12.50.

This well-written and excellently researched book will be of special value to music historians, for the stylistic analyses are in numerous cases accompanied by the musical notation,—and these examples presuppose an ability to read music. The non-music-reading historian will find the several background chapters ("Music and the English Reformation," "The Elizabethan Settlement," and a couple of others,) interesting and informative.

Though Professor Le Huray's main concern is musicological, he is well aware that liturgical music cannot be properly understood unless one first comprehends how the liturgical ceremony is formulated and what it is intended to do. Hence, he traces the changes that were made during the reigns of both Henry and Elizabeth. He also provides tables which list the compositions written by all the notable (and some less notable) musicians for the reformed services—Tallis, Byrd, Tompkins, Giles, Weelkes, and many others. In general, the evolution of polyphonic music was somewhat slower in England than on the Continent. Though English composers freely adopted the techniques of the continental composers, they developed a style which was demanded by English words.

As a counterpart to the Latin motet, they fashioned the *anthem*; gradually solo parts were joined to the choral sections, and the *verse anthem* was the result. Unique to these solo-chorus compositions is an instrumental accompaniment. The composers who handled the verse anthem with greatest versatility are, as a rule, the greatest sacred composers of the early Anglican Church. Many of them also excelled in secular music-madrigals