

Serena Stefanizzi, *Il «De balneis» di Tommaso Giunti (1553). Autori e testi* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2011), pp. x+210, 6 figs., €18.70, ISBN 978 88 222 6030 7.

The aim of this book is to introduce the study of the first and most important collection of writings on thermal and medical waters published during the Renaissance: the *Balnea*, the subtitle of which explicitly declares the printer's intention to put together "omnia quae extant apud Graecos, Latinos, et Arabas (...) scriptores (...) in quo aquarum ac thermarum omnium (...) explicatur." The edition appeared in Venice in 1553 and was published by the well-known Tuscan printer Tommaso di Lucantonio Giunti. It collects more than seventy texts that witness the revival of the interest in thermal baths in Europe. For Tommaso Giunti, "Europe" meant above all Italy, Germany and Switzerland. This publication, however, complemented the modern humanistic literature by integrating also fragments of an important series of classical and medieval texts originating from Greek, Arab and Latin civilisations. As such, it is a testimonial to a cultural and medical program in which antiquity and modernity could still profitably converse with one another in the context of an ongoing Galenic tradition. That resilience of the Galenic tradition in the sixteenth century is one of the interesting aspects about this collection, notably in the light of the critical reflections of anatomists like Vesalius. It is interesting to observe that in other fields, this dialogue between antiquity and modernity was no longer practicable. At the time of the publication of the *Balnea*, there appeared in Venice (by the same printer) three volumes of the *Navigazioni et viaggi* by Giambattista Ramusio (1550–1559), the most important geographical *summa* of the Renaissance. In that collection, the dialogue between ancient geography and modern discoveries appears to have broken down, with the Ptolemaic conception of the world having practically disappeared in favour of new geographical knowledge.

In her short preface, Serena Stefanizzi explains that her program is to reconstruct the philological tradition of the texts edited in the collection, in such a way as to "lay the foundations for critical editions and related monographic studies" (5). Let us here briefly examine how Stefanizzi develops her program and mention her most meaningful results.

Her book is divided into two main parts. The first part contains a short Preface (v-vii), an Introduction to the cultural context (3-24) and a bibliographical Appendix describing the content of the *Balnea* (25-29). This first part, especially the Appendix, expands on some of Stefanizzi's previously published articles, which have however been revised in the light of her current research. The second part is completely new and consists of a series of bio-bibliographical presentations of the various authors whose works are collected in the *Balnea* (33-180). The book closes with the indices of manuscripts and of personal and geographical names.

One of the most interesting aspects of this study is the careful description of the 1553 edition, which aims to illustrate its structure in the light of a cultural history. Stefanizzi identifies and describes three distinct sets within the collection, which obviously refer to different periods in the history of the *thermae*. The first (fols. 1r-308v) is centred on Venetian texts and specifically on the Paduan and Veronese traditions of

thermal baths. The second (fols. 309r-438v) contains several Arab texts showing the importance of Arab medical culture in the transferral of ancient knowledge on the subjects; the third part (fols. 439r-488r) includes Greek texts belonging to the Hippocratic-Galenic and Aristotelian traditions and such followers as Aretheus, Aetius, Oribasius, Paulus of Eginne or Avicenna. Stefanizzi's analytical contributions to our comprehension of the Giunti edition are: (1) her emphasis on the centrality of the Paduan culture; (2) the identification of insertions of Giunti's own views into several passages of the edition; (3) the author's stress on Giunti's awareness of the importance of this ancient tradition and of the involvement of the modern humanists in its revival; and (4) the influence of Arab and Greek medical traditions of thermal baths.

Not all the conclusions presented in Stefanizzi's Introduction are new. For instance, her interpretation of Giunti's project as a "dialogue between old and new knowledge" and as a "synthesis of classical doctrines updated to the most advanced theories" (23) have been anticipated elsewhere (e.g., in *Gli Umanisti e le terme. Atti del convegno internazionale di studio...*, eds. P. Andriola Nemola, O. Silvana Casale & P. Viti [Lecce, 2004], 320). Likewise, the role of humanists like Giovan Battista Rasario and Antonio Gadaldino in recovering rare and unpublished texts for the Giunti *Balnea* has been mentioned by others (see *ibid.*, 320, 324). The interpretation of the presence of Bartolomeo Viotti's text as a "link to the writings of the German authors Leonhard Fuchs, Georg Agricola and Conrad Gessner" (15) is not new either and would have deserved a reference to the above-mentioned article, p. 313. The author of that article, who discussed the compact German section of the *Balnea*, had already underlined that Fuchs, Agricola and Gessner represent the "transition ... from antiquity to modernity." Other observations made by Stefanizzi are, by contrast, innovative and more interesting. She identifies, for instance, in the Paduan humanist Francesco Frigimelica one of Giunti's unknown assistants (5-6); stresses the role and the personality of the Venetian Francesco Contarini, to whom Giunti dedicates the *Balnea* (7-8); recognizes implicit references to Padua in various texts (10-12) and gives a first general illustration of the structure of the *Balnea*. Her analysis of this structure documents (better than any previous analysis) how several texts are related to the Greek and Latin traditions, by which the humanist writers were deeply affected. One example must suffice here: Stefanizzi shows that the insertion of a fragment by Dioscorides after an excerpt by Pliny reveals that Giunti recognized in Dioscorides Pliny's source (15).

The second part of Stefanizzi's book offers a bio-bibliographical characterization of the authors collected in the *Balnea* and a first catalogue of the manuscripts and editions on which the philological tradition of texts contained in the *Balnea* is founded. The bibliographical entries describe (albeit not always extensively) the state of the research on classical and medieval authors. The list of manuscripts reviewed for each author and the identification of the various texts published in the collection is decidedly more interesting. These are the main results. For 46 of the 72 texts collected in the *Balnea*, no manuscript version is extant; for 6 others, we have only one manuscript source. Yet of the 46 texts of which no manuscripts are extant, some are classical and medieval authors (11 and 13, respectively), for whom there is a manuscript tradition. For the remaining 22 writers, all modern humanists, there is no known manuscript tradition

or (as in the case of the Swiss Conrad Gessner) we only have some *descripta*. 14 authors on the list do not seem to have published anything before 1553. Most of them are modern humanists, with the remarkable exception of Oribasius (fourth century AD). Here, of course, further research will have to be done. It is beyond the scope of this review to add manuscripts to the list compiled by Stefanizzi, but at least one should be mentioned. The case of the Greek Dioscorides is interesting because the manuscript housed in Zurich's Zentralbibliothek is the gift of Antonio Gadaldino to Conrad Gessner (see U.B. Leu, R. Keller & S. Weidmann, *Conrad Gessner's Private Library* [Leiden, 2008], 285 and n. 7). These two humanists were probably directly involved in the compilation of the *Balnea*: Gadaldino was responsible for Oribasius' compendium of the Venetian collection (fols. 373v-480r), while Gessner (in my opinion) probably assisted Giunti in recovering Swiss and German texts for the *Balnea* and was the closing point of the tradition of Swiss writings on thermal baths spanning more than two centuries and to which Felix Hemmerli, Heinrich Gundelfinger and Paracelsus also contributed. The catalogue of manuscripts compiled by Stefanizzi shows that some of the authors of the *Balnea* enjoyed a remarkable circulation between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries: first of all, Peter of Eboli with 26 mss. and Gentile da Foligno with 14 mss, next Pietro d'Abano, Ugolino da Montecatini or Cristoforo Barzizza with no less than 10 mss. each. Of these authors, only Ugolino's writings had remained unpublished before 1553.

In conclusion, this book is a relevant first contribution to the *Balnea* collection of 1553 and on the philological tradition to which its authors belonged. Less important, in my opinion, is the focus on the content of the texts. It is clear that a more complete assessment of this important collection will be possible only on the basis of a more thorough analysis of its contents. However, the panoramic view offered by this young scholar of the University of Lecce will certainly be a good starting point for future editions on the subject.

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