

## News and Notes

THE CENTRE FOR REFORMATION AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES at Victoria University (in the University of Toronto), Toronto, Canada, wishing to make known to scholars the contents of its important collection of works by humanists, reformers, and literati of the period 1450–1650, has started an Occasional Publication Series. Volume I, published in September 1979, is a catalogue of *Humanist Editions of the Classics at the C.R.R.S.* Volume II, scheduled for publication in the summer of 1980, will be a catalogue of historical works in the Centre's rare book collection. Interested scholars should address their inquiries directly to the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Victoria University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1K7.

THE FRANCIS BACON LIBRARY, CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA, held its seventh Bacon Birthday Celebration, January 25, 1980. Virgil K. Whitaker (Emeritus, Stanford U) spoke on "The Child is Father to the Man': The Influence of Francis Bacon's Parents."

THE SEVENTH SAINT LOUIS CONFERENCE ON MANUSCRIPT STUDIES will be held at St. Louis University, October 9–10, 1980. Papers are invited on any of the following aspects of the manuscript: codicology, illumination, paleography, and texts. Interested persons should write to the Conference Committee, Vatican Film Library, Pius XII Memorial Library, 3655 W. Pine, St. Louis, Missouri 63108.

THE ANDREW W. MELLON FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, VATICAN FILM LIBRARY, announces its continuing post-doctoral fellowship program to assist scholars wishing to conduct research in the manuscript collections of the library. Interested scholars should write to the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship Program, Vatican Film Library, Pius XII Memorial Library, Saint Louis University, 3655 W. Pine, St. Louis, Missouri 63108.

THE III CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF SIR THOMAS BROWNE will be marked in 1980 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, with a major cooperative enterprise to be edited for publication by C. A. Patrides (U of Michigan). Contributors are Philip Brockbank (Shake-

speare Inst., U of Birmingham), Stanley Fish (Johns Hopkins U), Marie Boas Hall (Imperial C, London), Frank L. Huntley (U of Michigan), D. W. Jefferson (U of Leeds), John R. Knott (U of Michigan), Arno Löffler (U of Nuremberg), J. R. Mulryne (U of Warwick), Leonard Nathanson (Vanderbilt U), C. A. Patrides (U of Michigan), Balachandra Rajan (U of Western Ontario), R. H. A. Robbins (U of Sheffield), Murray Roston (Bar-Ilan U, Tel-Aviv), Frank J. Warnke (U of Georgia), and Michael Wilding (U of Sydney).

NEW BOOK SERIES: "EUROPE AND THE WIDER WORLD." Book-length manuscripts are invited for this new series which will be interdisciplinary, with chronological bounds encompassing ancient through modern ages. The emphasis will be on the description of historical processes of intercultural relations, with Europe as a point of reference. Proposals and inquiries may be addressed to one of the editors: Deno John Geanakoplos (Yale U), Lewis Hanke (U of Mass., Amherst), Donald F. Lach (U of Chicago), Cyriac K. Pullapilly (St. Mary's C, Notre Dame, Indiana), and Jan Vansina (U of Wisconsin-Madison). The first volume, entitled *Renaissance East and West: Essays in Cultural Interaction*, edited by Cyriac K. Pullapilly, is now available. Caratzas Bros. Publishers, New Rochelle, New York, are the publishers of the series.

THE PHOENIX NEST: A RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL under the direction of Charles E. Daniel and Clare M. Murphy was offered at the University of Rhode Island as part of its Year of the Humanities. The event, which took place December 3-4, 1979, included the following papers: "The Historical Significance of Erasmus' Life of St. Jerome," by John C. Olin (Fordham U); "*Eloquio haud superat Graecia nec Latium: Erasmus and Some English Humanists*," by Clare M. Murphy (U of R.I.); "Rereading Cervantes in an Historical Context," by A. David Kossoff (Brown U); "Biographies of Thomas More and the Problem of Biography," by Richard Marius (Harvard U). Lute songs were sung by Betty Martin Viereck, South Hadley, Massachusetts.

THE SCUOLA VATICANA DI PALEOGRAFIA, DIPLOMATICA E ARCHIVISTICA was the sponsor of a seminar, "Copisti e scrittori attivi a Roma nel Quattrocento," held in the old Aula Sinodale of Vatican City June 1-2, 1979. Sixteen papers were presented during the seminar and there were three panel discussions. The seminar represents the first

phase of a major project dealing with “Scrittura, biblioteche e stampe a Roma nel Quattrocento.” The Socola would welcome pertinent information on the graphic culture of Quattrocento Rome (manuscripts copied in Rome, documents, etc.) in order to further its intention of making a full investigation of this subject. Such information should be conveyed to Mons. Terzo Natalini, Vicedirettore, Scuola Vaticana di Paleografia e Diplomatica, Città del Vaticano, Rome.

A NOTE OF CLARIFICATION: I am grateful to Professor James H. Beck for calling attention (*RQ*, 30.2, 284–285) to the fact that the letter of August 25, 1451, by Arduino da Baise or Baiso (who signs himself Ardouino da Baesse), quoted in my article, “Eyeglasses and Concave Lenses in Fifteenth-Century Florence and Milan: New Documents,” 29.3, 350, had been published more than one hundred years ago by Gaetano Milanese, who had transcribed the word “maestro” in a place left blank in my transcription. Professor Beck might have taken note of my statement that the letter reached me at the last moment after the completion of the article and was necessarily quoted from a smudged xerox copy. Nonetheless, I stand by my statement (350, n. 21) that “the questionable readings do not alter the substance of the message,” which clearly centered on Arduino’s eyeglasses.

In pursuing the matter, Professor Beck produced a set of statements which themselves require clarification and correction lest the reader be confused. To begin with, Arduino’s letter consists of 37 lines, excluding the signature and date. Only the first seven lines deal with eyeglasses. The complete text was published in 1869 once, not “twice,” by Milanese in a rare periodical that ceased publication in 1894. The second even rarer publication (1876) cited by Professor Beck was edited by Carlo Pini with biographical sketches of the artists provided by Milanese. It published in facsimile with accompanying transcription only the final nine lines of the letter, which do not mention eyeglasses. Similarly, the five-line citation of the letter in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* merely refers to the artist’s wish to receive a commission in Florence. The record to date shows that among art historians only Professor Charles M. Rosenberg, who generously sent me a xerox copy of the letter, noted the valuable optical information contained in the first seven lines. He properly received credit for it along with Professor Creighton Gilbert, who referred me to him.

After a century of oblivion, the significance of Arduino’s letter for

the history of optics was briefly noted by Enrico De Lotto, *Dallo smeraldo di Nerone agli occhiali del Cadore* (1956). This book, published in a limited edition, is not listed in the Library of Congress Catalogue and is not cited by leading historians of optics. It reached me after the publication of the article. De Lotto quoted from the first five lines of the letter, which he misdated August 29, to document the use of concave lenses for myopes by the middle of the fifteenth century. But he did not raise the larger questions for the history of optics discussed in my article. The letter, in fact, gives the first hint but does not establish with certainty the existence of eyeglasses with concave lenses. Its significance is highlighted by the other documents published in my article, which prove this point beyond doubt. Thus, while Arduino's letter cannot be termed a "new" document in the absolute sense, it was "resurrected" and used by me in a new and more meaningful way.

In November of 1978 I had the opportunity to examine the original letter, and discovered that whereas at the end of the fourth line my smudged copy showed a word beginning with the letter "m," the original showed the word, "maestro," written out but faintly visible because the ink had eaten through the paper. Thus it was not a case of "misunderstanding a common abbreviation," as Professor Beck charges. He is right, however, in pointing out that goldsmiths did not make "lenses," although I wrote "eyeglasses." Actually goldsmiths must have been involved in making gold or silver spectacle frames and cases, records of which have been found in France and Italy from the late fourteenth century onwards. The fact that Arduino mentioned a goldsmith in his request for spectacles may in fact demonstrate this close collaboration between the two trades.

Vincent Ilardi