



1992

Review Essay: William Creely, *Marcello Giovanetti (1598-1631): A Poet of the Early Roman Baroque*

Frede Jensen
University of Colorado

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra>



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Renaissance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jensen, Frede (1992) "Review Essay: William Creely, *Marcello Giovanetti (1598-1631): A Poet of the Early Roman Baroque*," *Quidditas*: Vol. 13 , Article 34.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rmmra/vol13/iss1/34>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Quidditas by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Nevertheless, a book should not carry much blame for what it is not. Rather it should, as with *In Another Country*, be praised for what it is.

James Fitzmaurice
Northern Arizona University

William Crelly, *Marcello Giovanetti (1598–1631): A Poet of the Early Roman Baroque*, Studies in Renaissance Literature 3, Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, iv, 379 pp., ill., \$109.95 (library binding).

Marcello Giovanetti is a relatively obscure poet who was active in Rome during the early decades of the Italian Seicento. Born in the town of Ascoli Piceno in 1598, he was a member of the legal profession in Rome but died prematurely in 1631. His poetic legacy is somewhat limited in scope, in part because of his untimely death, in part because for Giovanetti poetry was a secondary endeavor that, though pursued with vigor and competence and at times with elegance, was never allowed to pose any serious threat to his professional duties. His work has survived in three editions: the Bologna edition of 1620 (113 poems), the Venice edition of 1622 (122 poems), and the Rome edition of 1626 (223 poems).

In a significant preface, William Crelly justifies his decision to save Marcello Giovanetti from oblivion by asserting that a full understanding of a literary or artistic movement can be achieved only if due credit is given to all its major and minor figures. By taking this position Crelly opposes Giovanni Getto and others who downplay individual contributions and present a picture of baroque literature as an emerging whole. This does not mean, however, that Crelly presents his readers with a narrow view of the baroque movement. Quite the contrary, his highly informative book lists the attributes most commonly associated with baroque poetry; it reviews past assessments of the movement, ranging from positive evaluations to Benedetto Croce's harsh equation of baroque art with non-art; and it examines the social and artistic climate prevailing in sixteenth-century Rome. Furthermore, Crelly approaches his topic not only as a literary critic but also as an art historian—hence the addition of fifty-five illustrations that demonstrate the close links between Giovanetti's poetics and the visual imagery of the time. An extensive bibliography suggests the breadth of Crelly's research.

Overall, the poems are presented according to the division proposed in the Rome edition: love poems, religious poems, panegyrical and

nuptial poetry, sonnets. These selections are preceded by a discussion of Giovanetti's prose work *A Discourse on the Mirror* and of his poetic style. Translations of the texts attempt to preserve the patina of the original, but some readers may prefer a more modern rendition. Translations usually appear in the endnotes to the chapters, while three longer poems, including facing-page translations, are placed in an appendix.

Frede Jensen
University of Colorado

Jacques Ferrand, *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, trans. Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella, Syracuse University Press, 1990, xvi, 709 pp., biblio., index, \$49.95.

An editor might introduce an encyclopedic late renaissance treatise to a new readership in several ways, none of which could possibly serve to prepare everyone equally well to appreciate the riot of learning that constitutes such a text. Evidently working under the assumption that more is better, Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella have chosen the arduous task of surrounding the minor medical treatise they have translated and edited, the 1623 revised edition of Jacques Ferrand's *A Treatise on Lovesickness* (1st ed., 1610), with an encyclopedic treatise of their own (much longer than Ferrand's) and an awesome critical apparatus. The result is a fascinating miscellany of information relating to the history of *amor heros*, the perceived condition affecting the body and soul in love, which the Galenist Dr. Ferrand sought to explain, diagnose, and cure.

It would be simpler to situate Ferrand if his treatise had had any noticeable impact, but the editors in their admirable modesty must admit that only one early modern author, Robert Burton, cited him. And as J. B. Bamborough notes in the new edition of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, it seems likely that Burton did not even read French, much less Ferrand, since his descriptions of Ferrand's ideas are simply wrong. However, there may be reason to be slightly more optimistic about the impact of the treatise than the editors allow. A very casual search by this reviewer has revealed, for instance, that there were two English editions, not one as they state.

As a medical writer Ferrand was both unoriginal and eclectic, but the editors' strategy is to treat this as a virtue. They chose to treat the text as a cultural artifact, a crazy quilt of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance ideas