

image were in close liaison with his stylistic formulas, beckoning the Western viewers to accept and admire his art and also to contemplate his altarpieces, to which they directed their prayers, as “icons of the most typological sort” (171) and “specifically institutionalized forms of the icon” (172) in the West.

John Mulryan, trans. *Vincenzo Cartari's Images of the Gods of the Ancients: The First Italian Mythography*. Tempe, AZ. Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012. xxxvi + 457 pp. + 21 illus. \$90.00. Review by CATHERINE GIMELLI MARTIN, THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS.

John Mulryan has performed an extremely useful service for all Renaissance and Medieval scholars by translating, annotating, and providing an extremely thorough introduction to an important text previously available only in the original Italian, Vincenzo Cartari's *Images of the Gods of the Ancients*. Nearly as influential as Natale Conti's *Mythologiae*, Cartari's sixteenth-century text was widely used and translated for nearly two centuries, appearing in various Latin, French, English, and German versions where its iconography could be consulted and imitated by poets, painters, sculptors, and students of ancient religion. A complete list of its early publication history and its two modern Italian editions is conveniently printed in an appendix. As Mulryan explains, Cartari of Reggio himself remains a relatively obscure if, in his lifetime, highly regarded moralist, mythographer, occultist, numismatist, translator, and compiler patronized by the famous d'Este family of Ferrara. He was best known for this text, the *Imagini* or *Images of the Gods* (1556, rev. 1571), a standard guide to the allegorical and emblematic symbolism of classical mythology, now available in Mulryan's new edition. Cartari had prepared for his masterwork by translating Ovid's *Fasti* in 1551, which was also dedicated to the d'Este family. His *Imagini* followed five years later, a work of true mythography rather than an emblem book: instead of merely recording, it interprets classical mythology according to a tradition anciently established by Hesiod and continued (among many others) by Plato, the sixth-century scholar Fulgentius, and the

Vatican mythographers—the anonymous authors of twelfth-century manuscripts based on the holdings of the Vatican library. Inheriting a doctrine descended from the last defenders of paganism, Cartari and other Renaissance scholars who followed in their footsteps believed that they were recovering the “lost” wisdom of the ancients. Although hardly a guide to ultimate truth, their images and descriptions of the gods were synthesized and expanded by later artists and poets.

Cartari arrives rather late in this tradition, after Giovanni Boccaccio, Lilio Giraldi, and their many descendents, each of which “had his own particular bias” and weakness (xix). Yet by specifically appealing to artists interested in the physical details ascribed to the gods, Cartari proved far more successful than his predecessors. Like Conti, who frequently if covertly borrows from him, he produced a work that went through more than twenty-five editions, although Conti had the advantage of writing in Latin, the international language of the time. Rather than providing Christian interpretations of classical myth, both authors relate classical myth to the fashionable philosophies of their era, Neoplatonism, Pythagorism, and Hermeticism. Cartari does of course follow Augustine and other Church Fathers in linking these myths to the God-given origins of religion, which, in proto-anthropological fashion, he understands as a more fundamental human impulse than reason itself. Citing the Platonist Iamblichus, Cartari traces natural religion to a “divine light” which awakens the mind to “a natural desire for goodness” and veneration (1). His succeeding chapters on the twelve major gods of antiquity offer valuable, and at times, astonishing information on Saturn, Apollo, Diana, Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, Pluto, Mercury, Minerva, Bacchus, Venus, and Cupid, to which are added three separate chapters on the Great Mother, Fortune, and the Graces. Cartari’s introductory chapter on the history of ancient religion and the concept of Eternity is of broader general and scholarly interest, although each of his sections offers valuable facts and insights. While his material is almost entirely derivative, not original, its syncretism is its outstanding virtue: “Cartari quotes, cites, or alludes to almost the entire corpus of classical literature,” especially to the late Greek encyclopedic compendiums little known today except among specialists in the field (xxiv). Besides Boccaccio and Giraldi, Cartari’s other major sources are “Pausanias’s *History of Greece*, Macrobius’s

*Saturnalia*, “Suidas’s” *Lexicon*, Eusebius Pamphilius’s *A Preparation for the Gospel*, and Alexander of Naples’ *Genialium Dierum* [Festival Days]” (xxv). His late antique and medieval sources additionally include Martianus Capella’s *Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, Dante, Petrarch, and other lesser known figures too numerous to mention. Written in a witty and lively style, the resulting compendium exerted a strong influence on the continent that has received some scholarly attention, but no detailed investigation either of Cartari’s influence on Conti or on the English Renaissance has yet been produced. One of Mulryan’s major goals is thus to facilitate such studies (xxx), which one hopes will soon appear.

Cartari’s introductory chapter conventionally follows Plato in tracing the origins of the Greek gods to Egypt, and while he provides no explanation for the many differences between the Greek and Egyptian deities—the Hellenistic mainly anthropomorphic, the Egyptian mainly bestial in form—he does suggest that many of the ancient gods were originally heroes accorded immortal status by their appreciative people. He also provides an interesting discussion of the ancient prestige associated with statues and the power formerly ascribed to venerating and collecting them, which he explains in quasi-consumerist terms. This discussion is balanced by a discussion of the Judaic prohibition of images of God and similar sentiments among the gentiles, including Lycurgus, Numa, and even the early Egyptians themselves (8). Cartari nevertheless defends the use of images as representing humanity’s natural and pious reverence for the elements and for “ancestors” such as the fire god Prometheus, the mythical father of mankind. This chapter concludes with a fascinating discussion of why Demogorgon is the sole companion of Eternity, why Eternity differs from Perpetuity, and why (in a long quotation taken from Claudian) time as we know it is a joyous female, the “ancient mother of the numberless years, . . . whose generous womb is both the cradle and the grave of time” (23). This image greatly differs from Hesiod’s description of the “womb” of Chaos and Night, thus providing a new source which both Spenserians and Miltonists would do well to investigate. The following chapter on Saturn and his Italian predecessor, Janus, is equally rich in relating multiple symbols of time and their often unexpected meanings.

Chapter 3 on Apollo is typical of the rest of the book; it supplies both well-known and completely novel details about the sun god. Even readers well-versed in mythology will find themselves startled to learn that in Assyria Apollo was once identified not just with Jupiter but in fact, with all the gods, and especially Hebe, the goddess of youth. Less surprisingly, Apollo was considered the center of things, which is why his lyre symbolizes celestial harmony and why he holds the three Graces in his right hand. Yet like most gods, he contains his own opposite: his arrows represent both the violent, plague-inducing rays of the sun and the underworld to which they send mortal men. For that reason, the wolf, crow, and hawk are all associated with Apollo, although due to the whiteness of his light and his arrival every morning, the swan and the cock are also his birds. More familiar emblems like the laurel are shown not simply to represent the art of poetry but the art of preservation and health. Because the laurel “tree is never touched by heaven’s thunderbolt,” it “was supposed to be very useful for keeping healthy” (53). From here Cartari goes on to detail the lore associated with Apollo’s son, Aesculapius, for whom the cock is similarly sacred, and who is himself the father of Hygeia, or Health, which is associated with the cornucopia he frequently holds. At times these various emblems are given causal explanations, as when Cartari states that the Cyclopes killed by Apollo represent the “fogs and other wretched qualities of the air” (65), but these connections are just as frequently noted as simple facts or associations long ago established by the ancients with no known rationale. For instance, the pentagon, another symbol of health, simply “is” because Alexander the Great gave it to Antiochus as such, and Antiochus afterward inscribed it on his medals. Here as elsewhere Cartari writes in a chatty, digressive style which at times produces interesting links between symbols and gods but usually makes little attempt to group them in any natural or logical order. Thus Chapter 3—here taken as representative of the whole—concludes with an entirely new group of animals sacred to Apollo, the rat, ass, goat, dove, ram, and horse, only the latter of which will probably appear at all “logical” to modern readers given the ram’s link to Aries and the horse to Apollo’s chariot.

The end result is an enormous compendium of images and associations impossible to summarize in even an extremely lengthy

review. They would also be very difficult to predict or locate without Mulryan's useful index of mythological personages, which he of course accompanies with a separate index of titles and authors. Although a careful reader will find much commonsense or "peasant" logic in the ancient systems of thought represented here, they have few analogies with modern habits of mind or philosophical traditions. An important exception is Plato's dialogues, where for instance one finds Socrates offering a cock to Aesculapius before his death. Otherwise, there are many surprises; one would for instance expect to find Isis listed among the goddesses associated with Juno, when she instead appears beside Diana and the vulture, which according to Cartari is a common image of nature. On the other hand, since like Diana, Isis is a tri-form moon goddess, not just the wife of Osiris, it is probably not so strange to find her grouped with the virgin huntress. The work of modern mythographers, Freudian as well as anthropological, has long since made such pairs of analogues and opposites relatively familiar, but reading Cartari offers the additional advantage of showing how selective and unpredictable both ancient and Renaissance poets could be in their use of the ancient gods. After reading Virgil and his innumerable followers, who would have suspected that Juno more often appears as a beneficent than a maleficent mother figure, or that Homer himself misogynistically emphasizes her jealousy at the expense of her many gifts, including riches, nobility, marital bliss, and the rainbow, Iris, "the daughter of Thaumas or Admiration," and herald of the gods (140). These associations and many others like them are carefully detailed throughout all sixteen of Cartari's chapters, accompanied by well-reproduced plates by his best illustrator, Bologna Zaltieri. Mulryan takes both these plates and his text from the last edition that Cartari himself probably prepared for publication, his 1569 text, "the parent of all later editions" (xxx).

It should go without saying that the bulk of this frequently idiosyncratic and even startling material is not available in many of the best modern sources, even though it was well known to the Renaissance poets and artists who regularly used both Conti and Cartari. As a result, Mulryan's edition of the *Imagini* should provide an invaluable resource for Renaissance art historians and students of Italian, continental, and English poetry alike. During the English Renaissance, at least some

of Cartari's subject matter was reprinted in Steven Batman's *Golden Booke of the Leaden Goddess* (London, 1577) and Abraham Fraunce's *The Third part of the Countesse of Pembrokes Ivychurch* (London 1592); yet since many early English poets such as Phillip Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, Edmund Spenser, and their circle, as well as later poets such as Phineas Fletcher, Abraham Cowley, John Milton, Andrew Marvell, and John Dryden, doubtless had access to original or at least fuller versions of the Italian mythographers, scholars in this field can hardly afford not to have a copy of Cartari at hand. While not all of his discussions will prove immediately useful, all should be immensely entertaining to readers even moderately interested in the broader mythical tradition.

David Cast, ed. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Giorgio Vasari*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014. 337 pp. + 32 illus. £85.00. Review by MAUREEN PELTA, MOORE COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN.

Who exactly was Giorgio Vasari? Scholar or scoundrel? Historian or fabulist? Consummate courtier and artist of the "first rank" or shameless sycophant and second-rate mannerist? Increasingly problematized in late twentieth-century scholarship, Vasari has become a polarizing figure among scholars in the opening decades of the twenty-first. In the wake of Patricia Rubin's quintessential *Giorgio Vasari Art and History* (Yale, 1995), and recent celebrations honoring Vasari's fifth centenary in 2011, Vasari studies have arguably become their own academic industry and it is difficult to maintain a neutral position about Vasari and. To quote one contributor to Ashgate's new addition to the Vasari bookshelves, "We all ride our own hobby horses" (Barolsky, 121). Indeed.

Readers might reasonably expect a self-professed "Research Companion" to be comprehensive in scope. This was certainly the case with Marcia Hall's excellent *Companion to Raphael* (2005), along with its similarly indispensable sister-volumes from the same Cambridge University Press series (cf. Derbes and Sandona, 2004; Ahl, 2002), all of which presented their subjects as complex and multidimensional.