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## SUCCESSION AND INHERITANCE IN PONTANO'S *ANTONIUS*

### *Abstract*

Pontano's dialogue *Antonius* memorializes Antonio Beccadelli, the Antonio of the title, but its underlying subject is the preeminence of Pontano himself. Scholars have noted that *Antonius* implicitly demonstrates Pontano's succession to Antonio as head of the Neapolitan sodality. The present discussion revisits this theme and links it to two other claims of succession by Pontano: to have surpassed the ancient critics of Cicero and Vergil and to have inherited the mantle of the great classical Latin poets.

### *Keywords*

Pontano; Antonio Beccadelli; Neapolitan sodality; Etna; Gellius; Calderini; Landino; Carnival.

Giovanni Gioviano Pontano (1429-1503) was a man of diverse interests and accomplishments.<sup>1</sup> He served five kings of Naples in the several positions of scribe, secretary, diplomat, and prime minister. He enjoyed and cultivated the society of his fellow humanists, and from his first days in Naples he took part in the gatherings of their sodality, the center of their social and intellectual life; he became head of the group in 1471 after the death of its first leader, his mentor and friend, Antonio Beccadelli (called Panormita).<sup>2</sup> He was a serious student of ancient authors, transcribing, correcting, and annotating their texts, and above all imitating and building on their ideas in his own works. He wrote Latin poetry in many genres and enough prose works to fill several copious volumes: a history, treatises on such various topics as orthography, conversation, astrology, and virtues and vices. He also wrote five dialogues: *Charon*, *Antonius*, *Actius*, *Asinus*, and *Aegidius*.<sup>3</sup>

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1 For Pontano's biography see MONTI SABIA 1998. See also PÈRCOPO 1938; KIDWELL 1991.

2 For Beccadelli's biography see RESTA 1965; RYDER 1976.

3 The five dialogues were edited by Previtiera in PONTANO 1943. Kiefer et al. translated them into German in an edition with Previtiera's text in PONTANO 1984. *Charon* and *Antonius* are edited and translated into English by Gaisser in PONTANO 2012. Both dialogues are cited from PONTANO 2012; references are to its section numbers.