

PICCOLOMINI'S NOVELLA 'THE HISTORY OF THE TWO LOVERS' IN
THE CONTEXT OF THE HUMANISTIC NOVELLA GENRE

In January 1443 Piccolomini joined the imperial court in Vienna, where the emperor Frederick III of Habsburg had personally invited him to work. When the Siense humanist arrived at the court, he was assigned the position of secretary to the imperial chancellor Kaspar Schlick¹. One year later, in 1444, Piccolomini finished his novella entitled *Historia de duobus amantibus* (henceforth, *Historia*)², and in the same year he presented a copy of this work to Kaspar Schlick³. The plot of the *Historia* is well known, but to clarify the purpose of this essay, I shall give a brief résumé of the novella. The context of the novella is an historical episode: in July 1432 the emperor Frederick III arrived in Siena together with his sizeable court. The imperial court remained in Siena until April 1433, when the emperor was finally allowed by Pope Eugene IV to reach Rome, where Frederick was crowned by the pope himself. Piccolomini's *Historia* takes place in the context of the Siense sojourn of the imperial court.

Even if the context is historical, we do not know whether the plot (i.e. the story of the two lovers) really happened, as Piccolomini claims in the third chapter of the *Historia*:

Non tamen, ut ipse flagitas (scil. Mariano Sozzini⁴), fictor ero, nec poetae⁵ utemur tuba, dum licet vera referre. Quis enim tam nequam est, ut mentiri velit, cum vero potest se tueri? Quia tu saepe amator fuisti nec adhuc igne cares, vis tibi duorum amantum ut historiam textam.

¹ On the life of Piccolomini, see M. PELLEGRINI, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 83, Roma 2015, at <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/papa-pio-ii> (Dizionario-Biografico), and the classic work by G. VOIGT, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*, 3 vols., Berlin 1856-1863. The bibliographical overview of scholarship on Piccolomini until 1992 is in R. FEINBERG, *Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405-1464), Pope Pius II, Model of the Early Renaissance. A Select, Annotated Bibliography of English-Language Materials*, in *Bulletin of Bibliography* 49 (1992), pp. 135-155, whilst the best reference work on Piccolomini's literary works is the entry *Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini* by C. KALENDORF, in the *Oxford Bibliography* online, Oxford 2017.

² The best edition of the *Historia* remains that published by R. WOLKAN, in *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, vol. 1, epist. 152, Wien 1909, pp. 353-393, now revised by A. VAN HECK (ENEAS SILVII PICCOLOMINI, *Epistolarium seculare, complectens De duobus amantibus, De naturis equorum, De curialium miseris, post Rudolf Wolkan iterum recognovit Adrianus Van Heck*, Città del Vaticano 2007, in part. pp. 311-345). I am using here the text edited by D. PIROVANO, ENEAS SILVIO PICCOLOMINI, *Historia de duobus amantibus*, Alessandria 2004, where Pirovano has corrected some passages of Wolkan's edition.

³ See the *Epist.* 53 WOLKAN, addressed to Schlick and dated Vienna 1444. The letter is now published as an appendix in PIROVANO, *Historia*, cit., pp. 118-121.

⁴ Piccolomini dedicated the *Historia* to Mariano Sozzini, professor of law at the university of Siena, whose lectures Piccolomini attended in his youth.

⁵ In this paper I shall use a Latin orthography normalized to our current use, though in Pirovano's edition we find, e.g., the form *poete* without the diphthong.

Nonetheless, Piccolomini also confirms the realism of the episode in a private letter to Chancellor Schlick (PICCOLOMINI, *Epist.* 53 WOLKAN *Der Briefwechsel* cit. = PIROVANO, *Historia*, cit., p. 120)⁶:

Scripti quoque duorum amantum casus, **non finxi** (emphasis mine). Res acta Senis est, dum Sigismundus imperator illic degeret. Tu etiam aderas et si verum his auribus hausi, operam amori dedisti. Civitas Veneris est⁷.

Inasmuch as Piccolomini was not in Siena in 1432, this passage has persuaded some scholars to believe that Piccolomini refers in the *Historia* to a real love affair that Schlick had in Siena. If so, behind the name of Euryalus, the protagonist of the *Historia de duobus amantibus*, we should recognize Schlick himself. Among the arguments in favor of the identification is a hint to be found in the love of horses that characterizes the protagonist, Euryalus, who lends his horse to Lucretia's husband, Menelaus, in order to get rid of him for a few days so he can meet with her in peace. In fact, it is Lucretia herself, who, together with Menelaus' relative, Pandalus, persuades her husband to ask Euryalus for his horse (PICCOLOMINI, *Hist.* 50):

Non multis post diebus rure inter Menelai rusticos rixatum est [...] opusque fuit ad res componendas Menelaum proficisci. Tum Lucretia: "Mi vir," inquit "gravis es homo debilisque. Equi tui graviter incedunt, quare gradarium aliquem recipe commodatum." Cumque ille percunctaretur, ubinam esset aliquis: "Optimum" inquit Pandalus "ni fallor Eurialus habet et tibi libens concedet, si me vis petere".

The episode is not particularly relevant in the economy of the plot, for Menelaus could also have borrowed the horse from somebody else, but Piccolomini likely introduced the scene to insert a joke made by Euryalus, based on the sexually suggestive verb *equitare* (to ride) in Latin (PICCOLOMINI, *Hist.* 50)⁸:

Rogatus Eurialus mox equum iussit adduci idque signum sui gaudii recepit secumque tacite dixit: "tu meum equum ascendes, Menelae, ego tuam uxorem equitabo".

Although in recent decades many scholars have detected an abundance of subtle references to classical sources in Piccolomini's novella, it is still uncertain whether Piccolomini looks to a real episode in his narrative⁹. One might speculate, however,

⁶ The letter is mentioned in footnote 3.

⁷ The expression *Civitas Veneris* is used as title of an important work on the sources of Piccolomini by G. ALBANESE, "Civitas Veneris". *Percorsi dell'elegia umanistica intorno a Piccolomini*, in *La poesia umanistica in distici elegiaci*, Atti del Convegno internazionale di Assisi, 15-17 May 1998, Assisi 1999, pp. 125-146.

⁸ PIROVANO, *Historia*, cit., p. 95 n. 38, rightly points out that also in BOCCACCIO, *Decameron* III 5, Zima provides a horse to F. Vergellesi, in order to win his beloved.

⁹ On the sources of Piccolomini's *Historia* see: G. BOTTARI, *Il teatro latino nell'Historia de duobus amantibus*, in *I classici nel Medioevo e nell'Umanesimo. Miscellanea filologica*, Genoa 1975, pp. 113-126; S. PITTALUGA, *Lucrezia fra tragedia e novella. Seneca e Boccaccio nell'Historia de duobus amantibus di Enea Silvio Piccolomini*, in *In-vigilata Lucernis* 11 (1989), pp. 459-473, reprinted in PITTALUGA, *La scena interdotta. Teatro e letteratura fra Medioevo e Umanesimo*, Naples 2002, pp. 267-280; ALBANESE, *Da Petrarca a Piccolomini: codificazione della*

that Piccolomini introduced the scene of the horses in order to hint at the real-life love affair of Schlick, who loved horses so much that he arrived in Siena, according to firsthand accounts, with forty horses. Moreover, we have to take into account that Piccolomini alluded to the realism of the story not only in the dedication to Mariano Sozzini, where fiction usually plays a significant role, and in another published work, but also in a private letter¹⁰.

During the Sienese sojourn of the Emperor, Euryalus, a member of the court, fell in love with a Sienese woman, Lucretia, the wife of the powerful and jealous Menelaus, whose name tellingly evokes that of Helen's husband from Greek mythology. That prototype, too, was betrayed by his wife. Add to this that Lucretia has a classical name that recalls the wife of the Roman nobleman Collatinus, who committed suicide after she was raped by Sextus, the son of the last Roman king, Tarquin Superbus. While both Menelauses are husbands betrayed by their wives and the correlation between them is patent, Piccolomini uses the name Lucretia for the female protagonist in order to underscore the contrasting characters of the two women. In fact, whilst the Roman Lucretia is usually regarded as an example of chastity, the Sienese Lucretia is described by Piccolomini as a woman who, after some hesitation, aggressively pursues a sexual relationship with Euryalus, until he succumbs and the two lovers wind up satisfying their mutual physical desires¹¹.

Piccolomini describes the development of the love between Euryalus and Lucretia through an exchange of letters; there are four letters sent by Lucretia and three by Euryalus in the first part of the *Historia*, where the letters show the feelings of the two lovers.

After the initial exchange of letters (*Hist.* 5-25), the central part of the novella unfolds. There are no more letters, and the narrative tone, if occasionally interrupted by dialogue, prevails. Here Piccolomini describes the two lovers' adventures and the strategies they employ for meeting each other. In this section there is also an account of the diversion caused by another member of the imperial court, the Hungarian Pacorus, who was also in love with Lucretia. His two attempts to contact her, however, were discovered by Menelaus, who officially lamented the courtier's behavior to the emperor in person (*Hist.* 39). Conversely, when Menelaus left Siena on an errand, Euryalus took advantage of his absence and, with the help of Lucretia's cousin, Pandalus¹², went into Lucretia's house, where he spent a night making love with her (*Hist.* 40-52).

novella umanistica, in G. ALBANESE-L. BATTAGLIA RICCI-R. BESSI (eds.), *Favole Parabole Istorie. Le forme della scrittura novellistica dal Medioevo al Rinascimento*, Atti del Convegno di Pisa 26-28 October 1998, Roma 2000, pp. 257-308, in particular p. 305; D. PIROVANO, *Memoria dei classici nell'Historia de duobus amantibus di Enea Silvio Piccolomini*, in *Studi vari di Lingua e Letteratura italiana in onore di Giuseppe Velli*, Milan 2000 (= *Quaderni di Acme* 41), pp. 255-275; ALBANESE, "Civitas Verneris", cit.; PIROVANO, *L'arte allusiva di Enea Silvio Piccolomini: per una lettura dell'Historia de duobus amantibus*, in *Rivista di Letteratura italiana* 24, 3 (2006), pp. 11-22.

¹⁰ See A. FRUGONI, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini e l'avventura senese di Gaspare Schlick*, in *Rinascita* 4 (1941), pp. 229-249 [reprint in *Incontri nel Rinascimento*, Brescia 1954, pp. 25-42].

¹¹ On the meaningful names taken by Piccolomini from classical sources, see PIROVANO, *L'arte allusiva*, cit., p. 20.

¹² The name recalls that of *Pandaro*, the cousin of Criseide in Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, who also encouraged the love of the two protagonists: see PIROVANO, *L'arte allusiva*, cit., p. 20.

In the third and final part of the *Historia*, there are two letters, one sent by Lucretia and one by Euryalus. This exchange was prompted by Euryalus' departure for Rome, where he was to prepare for the arrival of the emperor. When Lucretia found out about this, she wrote the final letter, in which she offered to escape with her lover or to commit suicide (*Hist.* 53). Euryalus answered by letter, urging Lucretia to remain calm and promising that he would come back to Siena (*Hist.* 54). In fact, however, he joined the imperial court that left Siena and moved north. Disappointed by Euryalus' lies, Lucretia allowed herself to die, while Euryalus, for his part, after an initial period of suffering, married a German noblewoman (*Hist.* 54-57).

As many scholars have already demonstrated, this plot depends on the Italian tradition of novellas and recalls in many aspects some of Boccaccio's stories. In particular, Piccolomini follows the outline of Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*¹³:

- 1) The triangular structure of the relationship (husband, wife, lover);
- 2) The unhappy ending, with the suicide of one of the two lovers;
- 3) The vicissitudes and the adventures of the two lovers in order to deceive Lucretia's husband and to meet secretly¹⁴.

While these aspects look to the novelistic tradition of Boccaccio, scholars have also observed that Piccolomini introduces some features that do not belong to that tradition. For instance, the length of the *Historia*, which is much longer than one of Boccaccio's novellas, allows Piccolomini to insert the correspondence between the two lovers, while in Boccaccio there is only space for one or two letters¹⁵.

Of course, we can trace the origin of epistolary fiction back to Roman literature, where we find not only Horace's philosophical *Epistles* but also, more especially, Ovid's *Heroides*, a collection of love poems in the form of letters sent to various lovers. Near the end of Ovid's amatory epistolary collection, the poet inserts correspondence between three pairs of lovers (Paris and Helen, Hero and Leander, Acontius and Cydippe). The structure of this Ovidian work undoubtedly influenced Piccolomini.

That said, there are, of course, also significant differences between the *Historia* and the works of Ovid and Boccaccio. Ovid's *Heroides* were written in verse and the exchange was represented by only one letter for any given character. By contrast, Piccolomini's work is in prose and the exchange of letters is conspicuous. Boccaccio's novellas, too, contain one or two letters exchanged by the lovers, while in Piccolomini's *Historia* or in the following successful novellas influenced by the *Historia*¹⁶, the

¹³ See A. CHIARI, *La fortuna di Boccaccio*, in *Questioni e correnti di storia letteraria*, Milan 1949, pp. 275-348, in particular p. 300; PITTALUGA, *Lucrezia fra tragedia e novella*, cit.; PIROVANO, *L'arte allusiva*, cit., pp. 13-14, and R. GLENDINNING, *Love, Death, and the Art of Compromise. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's Tale of Two Lovers*, in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 23 (1997), pp. 101-120. Petrarch had already started to translate into Latin one of Boccaccio's novellas.

¹⁴ This aspect of the plot depends not only on the novelistic tradition, but also on the Roman comedy of Terence: see BOTTARI, *Il teatro latino*, cit.

¹⁵ See the list of the letters in Boccaccio's *Decameron* in A. QUONDAM, *Le cose (e le parole) del mondo*, in A. QUONDAM-M. FIGRILLA-G. ALFANO (eds.), *BOCCACCIO, Decameron*, Milan 2013, p. 1763.

¹⁶ See J. FIANU, *Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, auteur à succès. étude de diffusion du de duobus amantibus et du de remedio amoris*, Montréal 1987.

entire plot¹⁷ develops through letters, which inform the reader about the progression of the story as well as changes in the opinions and feelings of the protagonists. In other words, the letters reveal what is going on in the novella. Therefore, the *Historia* has been rightly considered the first epistolary novella¹⁸.

There are many scholarly works that have pointed out the influence of further sources, particularly classical ones, on the structure and the language of the *Historia*, where each word, each sentence, each dialogue, and each scene seems to suggest that a classical source may have served as a model¹⁹. If we consider the list of Roman authors identified by scholars as being referenced in the pages of the *Historia*, it is evident that Piccolomini variously uses (via explicit or hidden quotations, paraphrases, allusions, recasting, etc.) a relatively small *corpus* of classical authors. In order to quantify these classical sources I am availing myself of data provided by the apparatus and the footnotes of WOLKAN, *Der Briefwechsel*, cit.; PIROVANO, *Historia*, cit.; DOGLIO, *Storia dei due amanti*, cit., and other articles on the classical sources of the *Historia*, that I have mentioned in the previous pages:

Hor. *Epist.* 14.21.

Juvenal: 4.35, 6.82-83, 85-86, 181, 347-348, 9.103-104, 10.207-208, 209, 297-298, 313-314, 314-317 (cfr. Plaut. *Merc.* 81), 13.164-245, 14.126-133, 205-207, 16.4-5.

Ovid: *Ars am.* 1.664, 2.113, 447-448, 577-584; *Amor.* 1.5.2, 15-16, 20, 6.3-4, 8.3-4, 9.39-40, 2.5.37; *Fast.* 1.414; *Her.* 2.99, 4.1-2, 52, 70, 15.9-10, 37-38, 16.1-2; *Met.* 1.625-688, 4.55-56, 68, 167-189, 7.17-28, 37, 43-48, 51-53, 149 (cfr. Sen. *Herc. Fur.* 531-532), 9.535-537, 543, 547, 548, 13.576-622; *Pont.* 1.10.1-2; *Trist.* 5.13.1-2.

Plaut. *Amph.* 633-635; *Asin.* 224, 627.

Plin. Sen. *Nat.* 7.85.

Propertius: 2.15.31-35, 34.7, 3.6.13.

Seneca: *Epist. Lucil.* 119; *Phaedr.* 129-135, 138, 142, 151, 162-163, 165-172, 177-180, 204-213, 246-249, 250-254, 255-257, 258-261, 265-266, 268-272, 280-389, 290-393, 341-354, 710, 761-763; *Herc. Fur.* 571-572; *Oct.* 561-563.

Tacitus: *Hist.* 2.1.

Terence: *Adelph.* 315, 408; *Andr.* 27-28, 32-34, 133, 143, 208, 330-332, 333-334, 670; *Eun.* 193-196, 225-227, 318, 445, 556-558, 569, 603, 604-606, 638-641, 735, 812-813, 859-860, 886; *Heaut.* 210, 211, 249, 259-60, 278, 341-342, 350-352, 356 (cfr. Plaut. *Men.* 978), 372-373, 374, 406, 422, 457-458, 574 (= Plaut. *Cas.* 224), 645-646, 871, 994.

Val. Max.: 4.4, 4.6.5, 6.1 (*bis*), 8.3.3.

Virgil: *Ecl.* 2.68, 10.69; *Georg.* 1.447, 3.79-88; *Aen.* 1.497, 749, 2.8-9, 3.587, 4.1-5, 5, 7, 11, 12, 54-55, 296-297, 314-319, 336, 450, 5.833-871, 6.337-383, 7.19-20, 789-792, 9.427, 11.72, 831, 12.64-69.

The list of Latin authors mentioned by Piccolomini is not very large and contains authors belonging to the scholastic *curriculum* of the liberal arts. Presumably, Piccolomini had read these authors in school, as would have every schoolboy of his epoch.

¹⁷ As I have already said, in the *Historia* the correspondence takes place in the first and the last parts, not in the whole work.

¹⁸ See E. GARIN, *La letteratura degli umanisti*, in E. CECCHI-N. SAPEGNO (eds.), *Storia della letteratura italiana. Il Quattrocento e l'Ariosto*, 2nd ed., Milan 1988, p. 192; M.L. DOGLIO, Introduction to ENEA SILVIO PICCOLOMINI, *Storia dei due amanti*, with an essay by L. FIRPO, Milan 1990, p. 37.

¹⁹ See the bibliographical references in footnote 9.

Setting aside, for the moment, Virgil, whose works were and have always been central in scholastic curricula, let us consider the tragic development and epilogue of the *Historia* as it leads up to the suicide of Lucretia. Many quotations, allusions, or paraphrases of verses and scenes were taken from Seneca's tragedies, the classical corpus that Piccolomini cites most often. The ponderous presence of Seneca's tragedies is not surprising, if we consider that Seneca's tragedies were introduced into the scholastic curriculum in the thirteenth century and were becoming a central text for teaching Latin, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries²⁰. The use of Seneca's tragedies for teaching Latin also extended into the humanistic schools, where Guarino da Verona made use of them in his school as much as Gasparino Barzizza did in his²¹.

After Seneca, in second place we find Ovid, whose works became important in the scholastic canon after they were moralized in France during the twelfth century, in the so-called *Ovidius moralisatus*. The third most-used author by Piccolomini is Juvenal. In fact, the large number of quotations from Juvenal's satires was justified by their strongly moralistic tone and by the fact that many of their verses had become proverbs. Moreover, Juvenal's success was not only determined by his moralistic tone but also by that poet's popularity, as his poems were often taught in the medieval and humanistic schools. It is particularly noteworthy that until the sixteenth century, Horace's satires were neither a scholastic textbook nor a frequently quoted text, while the reception of Juvenal remained unaltered since the eleventh century²².

Finally, one of the pillars of Latin education during the medieval and humanistic ages was the comedies of Terence, in part because they could be explained through the commentary written by Aelius Donatus, the master of Saint Jerome. This combination of Terence's comedies and Donatus' commentary represented as much of a foundation for teaching Latin as Virgil's poems and Servius' commentaries²³.

The manner in which Piccolomini made use of these works confirms the pedagogic attitude towards the classical sources that we have seen. In fact, Piccolomini rarely limits himself to taking a single verse or one small scene from a classical work, nor does he try to recast the classical source. Rather, he simply exploits multiple verses from the same episode. Thus, for instance, the first dialogue between Lucretia and the butler of her house, a German called Sosia, (a scene that takes up more than three pages in Pirovano's edition²⁴), is based on verses 138-180 and 246-282 of Seneca's *Phaedra*. Piccolomini makes such a heavy use of sentences, images, paraphrases, successions of scenes, etc. from Seneca that one might wonder whether this scene of the *Historia* can be regarded as simple imitation of that classical source; someone might even allege plagiarism. Elsewhere, similarly, Piccolomini gathers a set of quotations taken from Terence's *Eunuchus* in chapters 16-17 of the *Historia*.

²⁰ See R. BLACK, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge 2001, pp. 212-215.

²¹ See BLACK, *Humanism*, cit., p. 247.

²² On the fortune of Juvenal's satires in the Middle Ages and among the Humanists, see G. ABBAMONTE, *La satira nella poesia latina medievale*, in G. ALFANO (ed.), *La satira in versi. Storia di un genere letterario europeo*, Rome 2015, pp. 49-66; and ABBAMONTE, *La satira latina nella letteratura umanistica*, in ALFANO, *La satira in versi*, cit., pp. 101-117.

²³ See BLACK, *Humanism*, cit., pp. 178-180 on the presence of Terence in the early Middle Ages.

²⁴ PIROVANO, *Historia*, cit., § 13, pp. 34-38.

Since the *Historia* seems to be deeply influenced by the Latin works commonly studied in the scholastic curriculum, one will find no allusions, for instance, to the works discovered thirty years earlier by Poggio Bracciolini at the council of Constance (Lucretius, Valerius Flaccus, Silius Italicus, or Statius' *Silvae*, etc.), nor to Latin works that were diffused less widely or not used in the schools. Accordingly, Piccolomini makes frequent use of Terence, while Plautus does not actually serve as a source, as we can see in the list above reported, where quotations from Plautus are almost always questioned because of the presence of similar passages in Terence's comedies.

Yet in spite of all this imitation, Piccolomini was also quite an original author. Before him, no one had tried to write a novella in the epistolary form, unless we regard as a fictional work the well-known exchange of letters written by the philosopher Peter Abelard and by his highly educated lover, then wife, Heloise, in the twelfth century. Although some scholars have suggested a connection between the two works, including one based on the title of Abelard's work *Historia calamitatum*, there is no evidence that Piccolomini in fact knew Abelard's work. Therefore, we cannot assume that Piccolomini had in mind Abelard and Heloise's correspondence, which was based on real-life experience, as a model for his fictional *Historia*²⁵.

Piccolomini's works was immediately appreciated by readers throughout Europe, as is evidenced by the numerous fifteenth-century manuscripts transmitting the novella, but also by the numerous printed editions (the *editio princeps* was printed in Cologne by Ulrich Zel about 1467-70, was followed by sixty-seven printed editions through the end of the fifteenth century and around forty in the sixteenth century²⁶), and by translations into various languages: by Anthitus Faure into French, by Nicolaus Wyle into German, by Alamanno Donati, Alessandro Braccesi, and Giovanni Paolo Verniglione into Italian, and in 1496 into Spanish by an anonymous translator²⁷.

In conclusion, Piccolomini built the style and the language of his *Historia de duobus amantibus* using a limited set of Latin writers that he seems to have learned during his school years. The plot of the novella recalls the medieval tradition of the genre. Nevertheless, the length of the epistolary structure cannot be traced to any previous work in its genre, in Latin or the vernacular, except perhaps Abelard's *Historia calamitatum*. Therefore, we hypothesize that this aspect of the *Historia de duobus amantibus* is the original contribution of Pius in the development of the novella towards the epistolary novel.

²⁵ The common genre of the two works is noted by G. MAZZONI, *Theory of the Novel*, Cambridge, MA, and London 2017, p. 72.

²⁶ See PIROVANO, *Historia*, cit., p. 7, and the list of incunables in the website of the *Incunable Short Title Catalogue*.

²⁷ See FIANU, *Aeneas*, cit.

ABSTRACT

La *Storia dei due amanti* di Piccolomini non è solo una novella sotto forma di racconto educativo, ma anche uno scambio di lettere tra due amanti, come la famosa novella epistolare del logico medievale Pietro Abelardo. Quest'opera di Piccolomini rappresenta il primo tentativo di stabilire il canone di un nuovo genere di novella epistolare, che mescoli la tradizione classica e medievale del genere.

Piccolomini's "History of the Two Lovers" is not only a novella in the form of an educational tale but also an exchange of letters between two lovers, like the famous epistolary novella of the medieval logician Peter Abelard. This work, therefore, represents the first attempt to establish the novella as a new genre, mixing the classical and the medieval traditions of tales.

KEYWORDS: Novella; Epistle; Peter Abelard; Poggio Bracciolini; Classical Sources.

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