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Tractacus de deificatione sexdecim heroum per Martianum de Sancto Alosio / A Treatise on the Deification of Sixteen Heroes by Marziano Da Sant' Alosio, with text, translation, introduction, and notes by Ross G.R. Caldwell and Marco Ponzi; *The Marziano Tarot The Oldest Known Tarot Deck Conceived by Marziano da Tortona first created by Michelino da Besozzo in Milan between 1412 and 1425; con gli occhi et con l'intelletto / Explaining the Tarot in Sixteenth Century Italy*, translation and commentary by Ross Sinclair Caldwell, Thierry Depaulis, and Marco Ponzi

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TRACTACUS DE DEIFICACIONE SEXDECIM HEROUM PER MARTIANUM DE SANCTO ALOSIO / A TREATISE ON THE DEIFICATION OF SIXTEEN HEROES BY MARZIANO DA SANT' ALOSIO, with text, translation, introduction, and notes by Ross G.R. Caldwell and Marco Ponzi. Illus. from *The Marziano Tarot* recreated by Robert Place. Scholion Press, 2019. 150 pp. ISBN 978-0-244-18101-7. USD \$17.25 through Lulu.com.

THE MARZIANO TAROT THE OLDEST KNOWN TAROT DECK CONCEIVED BY MARZIANO DA TORTONA FIRST CREATED BY MICHELINO DA BESOZZO IN MILAN BETWEEN 1412 AND 1425. Recreated in 2015 by Robert Place. Hermes Publications. 2016. ISBN 978-0-9915299-2-6. USD \$30.00

CON GLI OCCHI ET CON L'INTELLETTO / EXPLAINING THE TAROT IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY ITALY. Translation and commentary by Ross Sinclair Caldwell, Thierry Depaulis, and Marco Ponzi. Second edition 2018. 72 pp. Notes, bibliography, and index. ISBN 978-0-244-67169-3. USD \$10.96 through Lulu.com.

THE MARZIANO TAROT (2016) IS ARTIST ROBERT PLACE'S RECREATION of a Tarot deck now known only from a treatise by the astrologer Marziano da Tortona, who was also called Marziano da Sant' Alosio. Marziano's description of the deck and associated game was first given artistic form by Michelino da Besozzo in Milan and both description and deck date to the early fifteenth century. Robert Place is an artist and Tarot specialist, recognized for his high-quality decks, including *The Alchemical Tarot*, first published in 1995 and now in its fourth edition, and his well-researched books, including *The Tarot, History, Symbolism & Divination* (Penguin 2005). Place also recreated a stunning deck from printed sheets dating between 1465 and 1550 as the *Facsimile Italian Renaissance Woodcut Tarocchi* (the Fool and 21 Trumps),⁷ which showcases some of the Trump designs that fell out of favor as the Marseilles Tarot images gradually became the convention. *The Marziano Tarot*, like this earlier work, demonstrates Place's careful study of his source materials, exacting artistry, and comprehensive understanding of his chosen field and subject. It has ten pip cards and a queen (not included in Marziano's description) and king for each of

⁷ Place mentions the Marziano deck in *The Tarot History, Symbolism, and Divination* (Jeremy Tarcher/Penguin, 2005) 16. He discusses it at greater length in his essay "Iconography and Allegory in Fifteenth to Seventeenth-Century Trumps," *Tarot in Culture* Vol. I (Valleyhome Books 2014) 17-55, and his earlier reconstructed deck in "The Facsimile Italian Renaissance Woodcut Tarocchi," *Tarot in Culture* Vol. II (Valleyhome Books 2014) 685-93.

four suits, and sixteen trumps representing classical gods and goddesses. Place believes that “Marziano’s concern with symbolism and his use of birds, which are connected with ancient augury, suggests that besides a trick-taking game he may have intended a divinatory use for the deck” (book accompanying deck 4).

The little white book accompanying *The Marziano Tarot* is densely packed with useful information, but for everything that is now known about Marziano da Tortona, students must turn to Ross Caldwell and Marco Ponzi’s *A Treatise on the Deification of Sixteen Heroes*, which includes in Latin with English translation Marziano’s description of the cards in the *Tractacus*, a eulogy about him, and a few references to him in letters. The more expansive “Studies in Marziano da Tortona’s *Tractacus de deificatione sexdecim heroum*” will be published at an as yet unspecified date; in the meantime, this slim volume will serve most readers very well.

Marziano became one of Filippo Maria Visconti’s (1392–1447) teachers in 1409; the undated treatise is addressed to Filippo as Duke (from 1412–1447) and was thus written after 1412 and before the author disappears from the known records around 1422. The identification of this treatise as the first to describe a deck of playing cards with a set of trumps added to it is highly significant, as it lends considerable support to the prevailing theory that Tarot is an early fifteenth-century invention, and also pushes the date of the invention of Tarot back several decades from that of the only nearly-complete extant painted decks known through facsimiles as the *Cary-Yale Visconti Tarocchi Deck* (c. 1445) and the *Visconti-Sforza Tarot* (c. 1455). It is important to note, however, that this deck, while touted as the “first” Tarot deck, is hardly recognizable as such. Yes, it has four suits and a set of trumps, but Marziano’s description identifies only ten pips and a single court card—the king—for each suit. Furthermore, there are only sixteen trumps and these do not resemble those of the Visconti-Sforza decks of only a few decades later. Marziano invented his trump characters, as Caldwell and Ponzi explain, from classical figures well over a thousand years after their appearance in the classical world.

Marziano uses the term *deification* to mean culture heroes who attained divine status by popular acclaim. Their myths were biographical legends with a kernel of historical truth; their supernatural and miraculous deeds were interpreted as allegories of real events and natural processes. This way of interpreting pagan gods was itself a pagan invention, associated preeminently with the 4th century b.c.e philosopher Euhemerus, giving this interpretative method the name of *euhemerism*. [...] In the context of the game, the deification of these heroes, turning them into gods, may well be a reference to the act of raising them above the common suits. (8-9)

The Treatise includes descriptions of Jupiter, Juno, Pallas, Venus, and so forth, all of which are primary source documents for students of mythology quite apart from their importance to our understanding of just how the notion of trumps and modern Tarot images evolved.

The second book recently published by Caldwell and Ponzi, with the added contributions of Thierry Depaulis, is *Explaining the Tarot in Sixteenth Century Italy*, which presents two more documents of considerable importance to Tarot history in Latin and translated into English. The first is Francesco Piscina's "Discourse on the order of the figures of Tarot" and the second is the anonymously authored "A Discourse on why game-playing, and Tarot in particular, was invented." Neither document was widely circulated, but they do provide rare evidence regarding perceptions of Tarot cards and their meanings in sixteenth-century Italy. Both authors

find that the symbolism of the cards, and their order, offer moral lessons and a wholesome guide to the ultimate purpose of life, which is to seek God. [...] With these discourses, Tarot takes its place alongside previous moralities of Chess and regular playing cards, along with the ubiquitous dice, as a symbol of the vagaries of Fortune, as another avenue of reflection on the human condition, and the concerns of people of their time and place. (5-6)

The authors of the present volume have collated the opinions expressed in the two discourses into an exceptionally concise and handy chart that makes it easy to see their shared and differing views. There is much in that single chart for Tarotists of all kinds to ponder and much more in the pages that follow. The Tarot as an expression of social and divine order, the Fool as herald of a fable, the Fool as image of the beginning and end of human life, the Fool as representing the madness of game players who are overly eager to "put under the dominion of fortune what they are securely holding in their hands" (15), hints of the trumps conceived as a series of triumphs . . . and that is not even a complete list arising from the first few translated pages of Piscina's Discourse.

Dominant throughout, of course, is the overt sixteenth-century assumption of Christian meaning in the card images and deck structure. Recognizing that the deck or decks referred to in these discourses are the historical children of Marzino's far more pagan production of a century earlier, *A Treatise on the Deification of Sixteen Heroes by Marziano Da Sant' Alosio* and *Explaining the Tarot in Sixteenth Century Italy* together prove that Tarot maintained legitimacy in a Christian world by way of visual adaptation and conformity to the belief systems underpinning contemporary religious and secular authority. Tarot survived initially because pagan figures were popular and undoubtedly because people liked the game. It survived into the sixteenth

century because people continued to enjoy the games that could be played with it, and also because it was redesigned and rethought in a manner that allowed it to be perceived and interpreted as conforming to and even condoning prevailing beliefs and hierarchical power structures.

More recent evidence of the adaptation of Tarot to a predominantly Christian culture appears in what is now the most popular Tarot deck in the western world, the *Rider-Waite Tarot* (1909), also often called the *Waite-Smith Tarot* to acknowledge the important contributions of its artist Pamela Smith. Waite and Smith are both remembered today for this deck, and Waite is noted secondarily as a Christian mystic and for his involvement with the Golden Dawn. Students of mythopoeia, however, also know him as one of Charles Williams's more important mentors and sources of inspiration for his Tarot novel *The Greater Trumps* (1932). *A Treatise on the Deification of Sixteen Heroes by Marziano Da Sant' Alosio* and *Explaining the Tarot in Sixteenth Century Italy* will be of tremendous interest to those in pursuit of the deep back-story to Williams's Tarot, and Place's reconstruction of Marziano's deck lends tangibility to what can easily become a purely theoretical study. Tarot may have been invented as a game and it may have accrued Christian associations and imagery as the times demanded, but to Smith, to Waite, and to Williams it had implications and applications that are at least as far from prevailing sixteenth-century views as Piscina's were from Marziano. All three publications are recommended to anyone with a serious interest in the history of Tarot, particularly anyone who has embraced the modern interpretation of Tarot images as "archetypal." Archetypal they are, of that there is no doubt, but even archetypes vary in expression with the times and social context.

—Emily E. Auger



BECOMING C.S. LEWIS: A BIOGRAPHY OF YOUNG JACK LEWIS (1898-1918). Harry Lee Poe. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. 312 p. ISBN 978143356273-0. \$22.99.

I HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF SYMPATHY FOR THE OBSERVATION made by the theologian Stanley Hauerwas: "I think C.S. Lewis is better than his readers, but his readers just about kill him!" (Bock and Hauerwas 166). Apologies, of course, to devoted readers of Lewis (myself among them). Given the endless volume of secondary literature on Lewis, I think it would be fair to say that far too often his researchers "just about kill him" too. I am pleased to report that I finished Harry Lee Poe's new biography with the sense that, far from killing Lewis, Poe has brought new life to his subject.