



early modern
CONVERSIONS

McGill University
Wilson Hall, Wendy Patrick Hall
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Renaissance Hermetism: Lodovico Lazzarelli’s Conversion from Poetry to Hermes Trismegistus

Rediscovered by P. A. Kristeller in 1938, in the last decade the Italian humanist Ludovico Lazzarelli has come to the forefront of Early Modern historiography as a paradigmatic representative of Renaissance Hermetism. Recent scholarship, more specifically, have shown that Lazzarelli, whom Frances A. Yates had generally neglected, contributed to the Renaissance reception of the *Corpus Hermeticum* to an extent that match, and even surpass, Marsilio Ficino. Differently from Ficino, Lazzarelli did not succeed in spreading his peculiar approach to Hermes

Trismegistus by means of printed publications and a vast network of correspondents. Also, while Ficino quickly moved away from Hermetism to embrace a philosophical perspective grounded in the works of Plato, Lazzarelli experienced his encounter with Hermes as a life-changing religious conversion, which he continued to explore in his writings. This presentation will explore how Lazzarelli converted to Hermetism at the end of a humanistic career, and he continued to refine his take on Hermetic doctrines for the rest of his life, moving from a Jewish inspired prophetic interpretation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* influenced by Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio toward a personal form of Christian Hermetism.

Claudio Moreschini, professor emeritus at the University of Pisa, is an Italian expert in Classical Philology, Platonism and Patristics, with a focus on Late Antiquity and Renaissance Humanism. After initial studies at the University of Pisa and at the Scuola Normale Superiore in the same city, Moreschini studied at Oxford, notably with E.R.Dodds and Eduard Fraenkel. Among his numerous publications on Apuleius, Gregory of Nazianzus and Boethius, Moreschini has authored two monographs on Hermetism, and more specifically *Hermes Christianus: the Intermingling of Hermetic Piety and Christian Thought* (2011) and *Storia dell’Ermetismo Cristiano* (2000).