

GIORDANO, Antonella, NALDINI, Nico, eds. 2021. PASOLINI, Pier Paolo, *Le lettere*. Garzanti: Milano. Pp.1502. ISBN 978-88-11-69713-8, Paper € 60. Ebook € 40.

The new edition of Pasolini's epistolary productions edited by Antonella Giordano and Nico Naldini collects and significantly updates the two volumes edited by Naldini and published by Einaudi three decades ago.¹ As noted by Giordano in her brief *Introduction*, the volume should have opened with a story narrated in first person by Naldini "in line with the structure given by the chronology that characterized the edition by Einaudi, then turned into a volume, that can be read as a novel, *Pasolini, una vita* (7)",² but his death, in September 2020, shortly before the completion of the volume, precluded this possibility.

Compared to the two volumes published by Einaudi, the new edition of Pasolini's letters shows three innovative editorial practices: first, it collects "within an organic corpus all the letters written by the author and found until today" (8) by integrating the materials of the earlier edition with more than "300 new documents among the unpublished letters and the letters published in journals, newspapers, and other publications" (11); second, it enlarges and significantly deepens the *Cronologia* of the life of the author in light of the scholarship of the last thirty years (such a chronology, which preserves the structure of the earlier one by giving a relevant space to the texts and to the author's voice, is likely to represent the most updated and complete); and third, it includes a rich and up-to-date bibliography of Pasolini's works (by giving up, though, and unfortunately, the analytic table of contents of the letters that was a useful and effective instrument of consultation in the earlier edition).

The first innovation is certainly the most important one and is the result of a great and fruitful work of research, of consultation and examination made by the curators of the author's papers both in research centers, libraries, and foundations, and in various archives and public and private sites, including Pasolini's original addressees and the addresses of his heirs. As emerges from many passages in the letters, the main places for the preservation of the letters (listed, through the initials, in the *Nota al testo* edited by Giordano) are the Archivio Contemporaneo "Alessandro Bonsanti" of the Gabinetto Viessesux in Florence and the Centro Studi Pier Paolo Pasolini in Casarsa della Delizia (where are kept, by the way,

1. PASOLINI 1986; PASOLINI 1988.

2. NALDINI 1989.

numerous copies of Pasolini's letters used for the realization of the earlier edition), and the Centro per gli studi sulla tradizione manoscritta di autori moderni e contemporanei of the University of Pavia (where are kept, for instance, some of the letters by Leonetti and the unpublished — and in many ways exceptional — letters by Elio Bartolini).

Not all the documents that enrich the new edition of Pasolini's epistolary productions were unpublished. Among the letters already edited, but not present in Einaudi's edition, those published by Naldini in the addendum to his *Vita attraverso le lettere*³ stand out (let us think, for instance, of some of the letters sent by Pasolini to Ercole Carletti, Roberto Longhi, Carlo Calcaterra, and Novella Cantarutti), hence confirming — once again — the decisive role played by Naldini both as a rigorous scholar and as a passionate and generous witness in the collection of Pasolini's letters and in the construction of his epistolary productions. The new edition reunites letters already variously edited in an organic corpus and facilitates their consultation and interpretation, hence offering a valid research instrument especially in relation to the many aspects of Pasolini's intellectual path (e.g., the letters sent from Roberto Longhi or to the editors of "Officina"). Many letters already curated by Naldini join a collection that integrates as many letters published also elsewhere, thus allowing for a continuum which did not exist until today.

As observed by Giordano in her "Introduction", among the unpublished letters here published for the first time emerge for their quantity and quality those addressed to Paolo Volponi (the letters sent to him number twenty-four)⁴, Elsa Morante⁵, Gianfranco Contini, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Attilio Bertolucci, Giorgio Bassani, Gianbattista Vicari, Luciano Anceschi, Elsa de' Giorgi, Vanni Scheiwiller, Mario dell'Arco, and Elio Bartolini: "letters of work and private letters, very short or very long, written in haste, 'with the left hand', or with the attention of a critical essay or of a narrative prose, composed with various styles, depending on the occasion or on the addressee" (8).

The works cited are, indeed, letters of various types, related to various occasions (a trend typical for epistolaries like the one here collected), that shed light not only on the connections between Pasolini and the Italian cultural world in the second half of the twentieth century, but also on some crucial moments of his artistic evolution, of the debts contracted with some

3. NALDINI 1994.

4. For letters sent by Volponi to Pasolini see FORETTI 2009.

5. For letters sent by Morante to Pasolini see MORANTE 2012.

important figures, and on his interests and projects, some of which will never be accomplished but nonetheless contain some key lines of research and obsessions of the author. Unpublished and precious are furthermore the letters addressed from Pasolini, to his friend Franco Farolfi, and to Gianfranco D'Aronco, Mario Argante, Pina Kalk, Enrico Falqui, Giorgio Caproni, Leonardo Sciascia, Gianna Manzini, Nicola Lisi, Armando Depretis, Luciano Erba, Marco Forti, Vittorio Sereni, Sergio Solmi, Camillo Sbarbaro, Italo Calvino: letters that — again — are very different for their content and for the occasions in which they were written, and that suggest a general frame whose nature, as observed by Giordano, “shall never be complete” (9).

The obstacles for the completeness of this frame may be identified as follows: first, Giordano observes, “we know of some addressees of Pasolini’s letters that jealously preserve them and do not want to see them published”; second, the editor continues, due to the “lack of consensus of the persons cited” (9), this new edition necessarily excludes — or publishes only in part — some letters that had already appeared in the Einaudi edition (an aspect of which an explicit clarification in the text or in a footnote would have been useful); and third, as Giordano points out, it is always possible that the other letters by Pasolini may surface in the future, as happened in the case of a letter casually found in a copy of *Poesie a Casarsa* and addressed perhaps to Carlo Calcaterra (Pasolini’s thesis supervisor)⁶. The new edition of Pasolini’s epistolary productions is not, therefore, merely an updated version of the earlier volumes published by Einaudi, but an enriched work of scholarship that collects and systematizes a series of documents published and dispersed, while also making accessible a series of letters otherwise readable only in archives. Among these unpublished documents (though partially), we must recall the sad diaries in form of an epistolary that Pasolini writes to his brother Guido after the news of his death in May 1945 (470–80), some pages of which were partially published in *La Repubblica* on 28 October 2015, and are now published in full here.

The letters added to this edition, whether already published or still unpublished, are signed by a double “*” (preceding the name of the addressee), and the corrections concern only typos and evident formal mistakes. As a proof of the great work made by the editors we must signal two more aspects. On the one hand, the editors have rightly corrected some dates (e.g., the letter to the editors of “Officina” of 16 June 1955,

6. La lettere autografa fortunatamente ritrovata è stata pubblicata nel catalogo *Indizi di giorni memorabili*. Cfr. BURELLI 2016.

wrongly dated 12 June), and have updated the information about the places of preservation of the original documents; on the other hand, and most importantly, beyond reporting in an addendum to each letter essential textual information from the earlier edition — type of document, type of text writing and signature, presence of corrections or parts added to the text in handwriting, headlines, place of preservation of the original document, notes of publication — the editors have published in a longer form (as compared to the precedent edition) the exchanges between Pasolini and his addressees (let us think, for instance, of the letter by Antonello Trombadori of 4 June 1956, to which Pasolini replies on June 7 of the same year). Instead of closing the collection with the letter of 3 October addressed to Gianni Scalia, the volume ends with a piece of paper undersigned by the author, addressed to Graziella Chiarcossi, the person that has mainly supported Antonella Giordano in the various phases of the realization of this volume and to whom Giordano addresses “her most felt gratitude” (1497).

Tiziano Toracca
University of Udine, Ghent University

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