Elizabeth I's Italian Letters, edited by Carlo M. Bajetta. Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2017

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With 9 illustrations from the original manuscripts

This is the first edition ever of the Queen's correspondence in Italian. These letters cast a new light on her talents as a linguist and provide interesting details as to her political agenda, and on the cultural milieu of her court. This book provides a fresh analysis of the surviving evidence concerning Elizabeth's learning and use of Italian, and of the activity of the members of her 'Foreign Office.' All of the documents transcribed here are accompanied by a short introduction focusing on their content and context, a brief description of their transmission history, and an English translation.

Reviews:

"An important work which anyone interested in Elizabeth and her court should read, *Elizabeth I's Italian Letters* shows how significant the queen's skill in foreign languages was in establishing her position as a successful monarch. Italian was the language of diplomacy as well as European culture, and this volume, painstakingly assembled by Professor Bajetta after years of archival research, demonstrates the central role it played in English politics and intellectual life. The substantial introduction, based on serious scholarship but written with a light touch, provides a wonderful analysis of Elizabeth's secretariat at work, carefully reading elusive clues to show how the monarchy and its bureaucracy functioned from day to day. The volume will be of use to scholars for many years, but there is much here that will inform and engage general readers eager to understand the work that went into the myth of Gloriana."

(Andrew Hadfield, University of Sussex, UK)

"A wonderful resource for students and scholars alike. Bajetta has provided elegant translations of Elizabeth I's Italian letters, together with insightful commentary on their political and cultural significance. *Elizabeth I's Italian Letters* should be required reading for anyone interested in the history of Elizabethan England."

(Elizabeth Goldring, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, University of Warwick, UK)