

VICENTINO, NICOLA

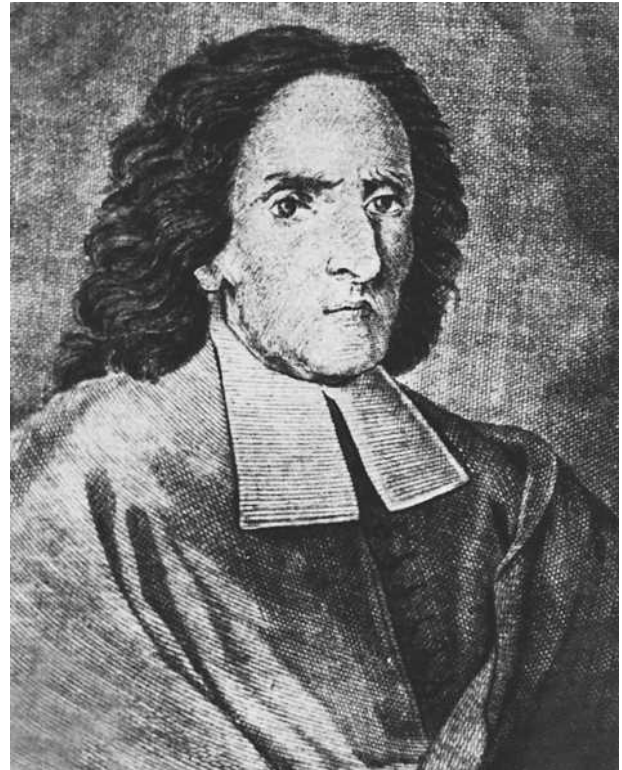
Important Renaissance composer and theorist; b. Vicenza, Italy, 1511; d. Rome, 1572. Vicentino was a disciple of the great musician A. WILLAERT, and after priestly studies and ordination he served as chapelmaster at the Ferrara court (to 1539), at Rome with Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, at Vicenza, and at Milan. One of the leading innovators of the 16th century, he had a significant role in the development of monody and also of a new, expressive harmony further developed by C. de RORE and Gesualdo. In his madrigals he expanded tonality to include chromatic and enharmonic progressions, constructing two instruments, the archicembalo and archiorgano, to demonstrate their intervals. In his church music, notably his several books of motets, his style was that of *musica moderna*. He preferred free compositions to those using a liturgical *cantus firmus*, gave precedence to the text over the polyphonic structure, precipitated the question of *musica reservata*, and in certain of his concepts anticipated the departures of ZARLINO. It was a controversy with Lusitano (1551) that led to his treatise *L'Antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* [1555; microcarded by Eastman School of Music (Rochester 1954)]. In his writings he advocated the liberation of composition from established traditions and the reform of old-fashioned counterpoint and of stereotyped handling of church modes and their cadences.

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[K. G. FELLERER]

VICO, GIAMBATTISTA

Italian philosopher, historian, and jurist; b. Naples, June 23, 1668; d. there, Jan. 23, 1744. His work *Scienza Nuova d'intorno alla comune natura delle Nazioni* (1744) opened a new epoch in the theory of history, of historiography, and of culture.



Giambattista Vico. (©Bettmann-CORBIS)

Early Work. Vico's first philosophical orientation was Cartesian, but his strongly humanistic formation led to an early dissociation from this current. In a literary sense, his criticism is linked to Descartes's animadversions on the humanistic disciplines in the *Discourse on Method*; Vico's corrective is his *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* [1708; in G. B. Vico, *Orazioni inaugurali, De antiquissima Italorum sapientia, le Polemiche*, ed. G. Gentile and F. Nicolini (Bari 1914)], which gives the first intimation of his unification of philosophy and philology. In the doctrinal sense, his criticism of Cartesianism centers upon the *cogito*, which he considers without ontological force, and upon the clear and distinct idea, which he considers too narrowly evidential. His corrective is found in the *Liber metaphysicus* of the *De antiquissima*, which exhibits the first outlines of his doctrine of the human mind and of the philological method in philosophy, both elaborated later in the *Scienza Nuova*.

Vico's doctrine takes its greatest impetus from his studies in the history of law. He concluded that the codes of Roman law were subject, both in construction and interpretation, to the *boria degli dotti*, the illusion of the learned "who will have it that whatever they know is as old as the world" (*Scienza Nuova* 1.2.127; Bergin and Fisch, 55). That is, the laws so codified were considered to be the products of reason and will. Vico's vision is that

they must be, rather, crystallizations of a vast body of historical experience, behind which lay not only the development of institutions but that of the human mind itself. The first results of his efforts in this direction appear in the *Diritto Universale* [1719–23, ed. F. Nicolini 3 v. (Bari 1936)]. In this document, however, the intellectualism against which his criticism is directed is only partially overcome. The fulfillment of this insight had to await the *Scienza Nuova* itself.

The New Science. The *Scienza Nuova* records Vico's two basic and profoundly revolutionary achievements: the reconstruction of human presence and, on this basis, the reconstruction, in principle, of historical social process. Though for purposes of exposition these achievements are best distinguished, in this document and in Vico's thought as a whole they are absolutely immanent to each other and to the concrete process of interpreting historical documents. On these two chief achievements depend all of the celebrated "discoveries" of the *New Science*: for example, the theory of poetry and myth, the poetic ages of man, and the theory of the class struggle as the basic dynamic of social change.

The "reconstruction of human presence" turns about the epistemological vindication of the senses and of the imagination, and an assertion of the practical effectiveness of the passions. In classical INTELLECTUALISM, the principle of consciousness had been reason; by contrast, sense and imagination had been assigned inferior cognitive roles. In like manner, the center of ethical force had been placed in the will, and the passions denigrated. Vico mitigates such intellectualism. Reason and will remain for him ultimately normative; yet he assigns to sense, imagination, and passion an autonomous validity. This validity is nevertheless subordinated, through the dialectic of spontaneity and reflection, to reason and will in the total economy of "human presence."

The second achievement documented in the *Scienza Nuova* is the reordering of human cultural history upon the basis of the moments of presence or "modifications of the human mind." In the classical tradition the distinctions and relations between these moments of presence had been purely formal. Above all, any time-existential relationship between them had been, if at all, only inchoately indicated. As a result, there had emerged various dualisms, such as that between the logical and the real; and history, regarded essentially as a logical process, had been assigned little value. Vico opposes this tradition. He deploys the moments of human presence through time, presenting the time process as generating the logical order, and not as incidental to it. For him, in fact, history is not merely a science, but the universal matrix of significant human discourse.

Vico maintains that the deployment of human presence through time is in the collective consciousness rather than in the individual. He does not, however, conceive this deployment along psychological lines. Rather, he places it in the document, which, for him, is not simply the written record; it is also, and even more, the living social process and the institution. Thus one can understand how, for Vico, the Roman law is *un serioso poema*. At the same time, the "course of nations" is the working out in time of the "eternal and ideal history," and these are entirely immanent to each other. Yet, between them appears a tension that leaves place for providence. For Vico, providence is the principle of rectification of the temporal course of nations in the direction of ideal and eternal history; the latter, moreover, is subject in its temporal manifestation to the law of *ricorsi* or eternal return. It is traversed anew by every nation and in every nation works itself out afresh.

These principles are applied in the substantive portion of the *New Science*: the history of "poetic wisdom." Poetic wisdom is the record of the spontaneous consciousness of early man in his literature, social institutions, and the like. The dimensions of this wisdom include poetic theology, poetic physics, and poetic politics. These Vico undertakes to reconstruct on the basis of the documents of early Mediterranean culture.

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[A. R. CAPONIGRI]

VICTIMAE PASCHALI LAUDES

THE SEQUENCE that was traditionally used during Easter Week. Its composition is traditionally assigned to WIPO (d. after 1046). One of the finest of the transitional Sequences, the *Victimae paschali laudes* or "Praise to the Paschal Victim bring," is in rhythmical prose of seven strophes; the first stanza is unpaired but the others—two and three, four and five, six and seven—form a strophe and antistrophe, with correspondence between the Sequence's literary structure and its music. The first strophe calls on Christians to praise the Paschal Victim. In stanzas two and three, Christ's redemptive work is pictured. The middle section, stanzas four and five, is a lively dialogue in which the faithful question Mary Magdalen, who