Lothar Mundt’s critical edition of *De inventione dialectica*, the influential writing on dialectic and rhetoric by the Frisian humanist Rudolph Agricola (1444-1485), is a landmark in the study of Neo-Latin literature. It is the first modern edition of Agricola’s work, and the first full translation into a modern language.\(^1\) The book contains a brief introduction (XIII-XXVII), the Latin text with facing German translation (9-563), a commentary (565-654), an account of the editorial principles (‘Editionsbericht’, 655-720) containing a survey of the history of Agricola’s text (655-91), two lists of textual emendations and variants (692-720), a bibliography (721-41), and finally three indexes, one of proper names and textual sources, one of subjects, and one of Greek words (743-64). The Latin text is accurate, the translation offers adequate support for the comprehension of the Latin text, and the notes constitute a substantial basis for future research. Mundt’s edition is thus a reliable tool that will be used by Agricola scholars and all those interested in the history of humanistic logic for many years to come, although of course a text edition of this size will give rise to some questions. Some remarks will be made to elaborate this view. In addition, I aim to provide some incentives for further research on Agricola’s text and its influence.

Mundt’s introduction offers a short biography of Agricola and a survey of his writings, some cursory remarks about the influence of *De
inventione dialectica and the renown of Agricola's name among sixteenth-century humanists, and finally a note on the older literature and on the present state of affairs in the Agricola-Forschung. All the information provided is accurate, but in the brief list of modern editions of Agricola's other writings (XXV) one should add the edition of De formando studio in: J. Hauser, Quintilian und Rudolf Agricola. Eine pädagogische Studie, Programm zum Jahresbericht des K. humanistischen Gymnasiums zu Günzburg 1910, 48-59 (a mediocre text based on the collation of the Editio princeps (Antwerp 1511), the Alardus edition of Cologne 1539 and a Paris edition printed by P. Calvarin, 1550). It is to be regretted that the editor has not provided some background information on scholastic and humanistic logic necessary to appreciate the purport of Agricola's book. Indeed, before embarking on the examination of such a massive book, the reader will want to have an idea not only of the content of the book, but also of Agricola's motives for writing it and the reasons which make De inventione dialectica such an important writing. This desire is surely justified because Agricola's book is, after all, one of the first humanistic theories of discourse, and possibly the best, and the value of the humanists' attempt to reform scholastic logic is still very much contested, as is clear, for instance, from the appraisal of Agricola's book given only recently in the 1988 edition of Kindlers Literaturlexikon, s.n. Agricola: "Agricolas Werk ist ein charakteristisches Zeugnis für den Hang des Humanismus, ins Rhetorische und damit schliesslich in die reine Pedanterie abzugleiten und so die Logik am Ende auf die blosse Kunst des richtigen Ausdrucks zu reduzieren." It would therefore have seemed appropriate for the editor to include in the introduction a brief orientation in the innovative aspects of the humanistic theory of discourse such as it is described by Agricola. Additionally, it is only in the context of its originality that we can understand properly the true scale of the influence of De inventione dialectica, as attested by the wealth of editions, epitomes and commentaries it inspired.

If the judgement formulated in Kindlers Literaturlexikon is a travesty, in what terms are we then to define Agricola's endeavor to reform scholastic logic? It is true that Agricola, like all humanists, was opposed to the exclusive training in formal logic in the artes course at the universities, because it failed to train the students in eloquence. Agricola specifically saw this as a problem for students in theology, who had to be well-spoken in view of their pastoral task. (See De inventione dialectica, Book II, chapter 1, 198, lines 54-62. Compare Book III,