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Autore	Berndt Frauke
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Sommario/riassunto	Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714–1762) is known in intellectual history for having established the discourse of philosophical aesthetics with his "Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus" (Reflections on Poetry) and "Aesthetica" (Aesthetics), which consists of two books and is considered Baumgarten's most important work. But this book amends that history. It shows that Baumgarten's aesthetics is a science of literature that demonstrates the value of literature to philosophy. Baumgarten did not intend to pursue such a task, but in working on his philosophical texts and lectures, he ends up analyzing, synthesizing, and contextualizing literature. He thereby treats it not as belles lettres or as a moral institution but rather as an epistemic object. His aesthetics is thus the first modern literary theory, and his articulation of this theory would never again be matched in its complexity and systematicity. Baumgarten's theory of literature has never been discovered. It waits latently to take its place in intellectual history.

