

Leonardo Bruni. *Leonardo Bruni Aretino: Histoire, éloquence, et poésie à Florence au début du Quattrocento.*

Textes de la Renaissance 118. Ed. and trans. Laurence Bernard-Pradelle. Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2008. 992 pp. index. illus. bibl. €93. ISBN: 978-2-7453-1485-7.

Laurence Bernard-Pradelle's *Leonardo Bruni Aretino: Histoire, éloquence et poésie à Florence au début du Quattrocento* seeks to broaden Bruni's appeal among readers of French. Toward this end, the book offers an extensive introduction to the life and works of Leonardo Bruni. It also includes new Latin editions of several of Bruni's shorter works with facing-page French translations. The book concludes with a lengthy bibliography. The volume's primary interest for readers of English will be Bernard-Pradelle's detailed and learned analysis of Bruni's sources for the texts published in the volume. For French readers, this book should become the standard introduction to Bruni's thought and his basic works.

Bernard-Pradelle argues that his selection of texts in the volume reflects the major shifts in Bruni's literary focus and thought. According to Bernard-Pradelle, Bruni's first period of writing, lasting from his first works in the late fourteenth century until 1415, focused on Greek-to-Latin translations. During Bruni's second period, 1415–28, he focused on history writing. In this period, Bruni moved away from being a translator of others' works (*traducteur*) and toward being an author (*auteur*). This change reached fruition in Bruni's third period, 1428–44. Bernard-Pradelle argues that throughout these three periods Bruni's works display a consistent concern with the relationship between the vernacular tradition of the fourteenth century and the classical focus of the new humanist studies. Bruni ultimately concluded that Latin, Greek, and Tuscan were all valid languages for written expression. As he makes these arguments, Bernard-Pradelle covers Bruni's life and aspects of his thought across a range of topics, including translation, history, philosophy, and oratory.

The second section of the book publishes several treatises by Bruni with French translations. Included are Bruni's much-studied *Laudatio Florentine Urbis* and the *Dialogi*. Bernard-Pradelle uses manuscripts in the Vatican and Paris to offer a handful of minor alterations to the standard Latin editions of these texts previously published by Stefano Baldassarri. For these and every text in the volume, Bernard-Pradelle carefully marks the deviations of his Latin editions from the previous versions of Baldassarri, Paolo Viti, and even earlier editions of the texts

published by Hans Baron and others. The volume contains several of Bruni's biographical writings: *Cicero novus*, *Vita Aristotelis*, and *Vite di Dante e del Petrarca*. Bernard-Pradelle bases his editions of these texts on that of Paolo Viti with small variations. Three other treatises round out the volume: Bruni's comments on translating (*De interpretatione recta*); his short educational treatise (*De studiis et litteris*); and his introduction to the moral philosophy of Aristotle (*Isagogicon moralis discipline*). Bernard-Pradelle organizes these texts in chronological order to reflect the three periods of Bruni's life and Bruni's conception of vernacular culture in each period. The short introduction to each work and Bernard-Pradelle's extensive and learned notes in the French translations are particularly useful for identifying Bruni's sources and the areas in which Bruni altered or omitted aspects of these sources.

This book succeeds in providing an introduction to Bruni and some of his major works for a French-reading audience. Bernard-Pradelle's introductions provide ample context for readers encountering Bruni for the first time. The text selection in the volume reflects the author's focus on ideas within Bruni's works rather than on his biography or social world. The inclusion of some of Bruni's public orations and letters would have broadened the book's scope. Yet, as Bernard-Pradelle himself points out, such an inclusion would have fallen outside of the book's central argumentative focus. All of the works in the volume are already available in English either in their entirety or in extensive excerpts. The book, thus, will not replace *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni* as the standard introduction to Bruni and his works for English readers. However, the book will still be of interest to specialists of Italian humanism. Bernard-Pradelle's erudite comments and notes throughout his translations will prove indispensable for future studies of these texts. Portions of the introduction, such as the author's discussion of the theoretical side of Bruni's oratory, are fascinating and break new ground. Moreover, the book provides a long bibliography that supplements the extensive, but now-over-ten-years-old list in James Hankins's *Repertorium Brunianum*. I would recommend this book to humanist specialists and native French speakers seeking an introduction to the thought of Leonardo Bruni.

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