

Nikolaus von Kues: Leben, Lehre, Wirkungsgeschichte. Hans Gerhard Senger. Cusanus-Studien 12. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017. 348 pp. €48.

Hans Gerhard Senger is a well-known scholar and researcher within the Cusanus community and far beyond it. He has divided his latest publication on the life, doctrine, and *Wirkungsgeschichte* (impact history) of Nicholas of Cusa (1401–64) into four main parts: the vita, the oeuvre, the doctrines, and the influence of the medieval scholar.

The first part, “Vita,” is handled quickly. Considering the huge number of already available publications on the biography of Cusanus, a more detailed presentation is not necessary. The chapter dedicated to the oeuvre begins with a chronological list of the writings. This is followed by more or less detailed explanations of the texts related to theological-philosophical, political, mathematical, and other topics, including the *Sermones*. In the third part, the author directs attention to the doctrine, respectively the teachings of Nicholas of Cusa, which the author has subdivided into various thematic aspects. These include the doctrine, the philosophy of religion, aesthetics, mathematics, and cosmology, to name just a few. For me, the fourth chapter is the most interesting of this book. It deals with the impact of Cusanus, both on the people and thoughts around him in his time and his continuing effect in later years and centuries. In this chapter you find essential information about the influence of Cusanus on other great thinkers. It’s a rewarding read to see how his ideas spread within the works of prominent scholars like Philipp Melancthon, Michel de Montaigne, Johannes Kepler, Robert Fludd, René Descartes, Carl Gustav Jung, Jacques Derrida, or Niklas Luhmann. Thematically, Cusanic thought can be found in works and authors with theological, philosophical, mathematical-scientific, political, and even psychological backgrounds.

Substantial space is taken by the bibliographies attached to the particular chapters. The titles are then quoted in the running text with author name, year of publication, and the respective number in square brackets. On the one hand, this has the advantage that this book can go without footnotes; on the other hand, the chosen citation method does not have a positive effect on the reading flow, especially on the pages with multiple or long citations (e.g. 158, 243, 277).

The present book is well suited as a short introduction to the life and work of Nicholas of Cusa, and considering the detailed bibliographies, it is also a good introduction to Cusanus research. The author himself mentions the handbook character of his publication, which I can fully agree with. The combination of manageable presentation parts and detailed bibliographies also makes the book appear as a commented bibliography. Senger speaks of a *bibliographie raisonnée* and guides the reader through five centuries of Cusanus literature. Accordingly, the publication may be useful for different groups—both beginners and more experienced researchers—as a small reference book.

Experience and familiarity with the subject matter are more than obvious in this paper, and readers will certainly appreciate this scholarliness, but in our digital age it

must be allowed to ask whether a printed bibliography still makes sense. Even a not merely enumerative, but an evaluative and commentatorial bibliography is feasible in digital form. One of the main disadvantages of a printed version is that it is usually out-of-date at the time of publication. For a printed publication an adequate typographic presentation would have been desirable. The dashes around the parentheses are of different length, the quotes on the right side are different in part, there are a lot of hyphens to divide syllables one below the other at the end of the line, and last but not least, I think it would have been better to choose a smaller font size for the bibliographies.

That this book is not focused on the presentation of new research means the value for current research discussions may not seem all that big at first sight. This publication is a kind of guide through Cusanus reception of the last five centuries, offering its readers starting points and orientation. These are values that are not to be underestimated.

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Pontano's Virtues: Aristotelian Moral and Political Thought in the Renaissance.
Matthias Roick.

Bloomsbury Studies in the Aristotelian Tradition. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. viii + 322 pp. \$114.

Renaissance scholarship, up until recently, tended to see certain Italian cities, especially Florence and Rome, as singular intellectual centers, and others as periphery. During the past two decades there has been an undeniable attempt on the part of various scholars to shift Renaissance Naples from its peripheral status into a more central position. Much of this endeavor was directed to the study of Pontano. Matthias Roick's study on Pontano's theory of virtue should be seen as a significant contribution to this joint effort.

Giovanni Pontano (1426–1503) was known and often praised for the way he combined perfect humanist scholarship with the highest diplomatic and political responsibilities. Roick structures his book on the basis of these two aspects of Pontano's figure: part 1 concentrates on Pontano's role as a political actor and part 2 on his place in the humanist movement. Only after the author has inserted us deep into Pontano's dual aspects do we move to part 3, which presents us with the main theme of the book—the concept of virtue. This structure helps Roick present a solid philosophical outlook, built on the basis of two firm pillars. Each one of the three parts of the book offers a rich contextual elaboration: he mentions significant precursors of Pontano, such as Lorenzo Valla and Panormita, and examines humanist philosophical traditions, for example in