

Rizzi, Andrea.

Vernacular Translators in Quattrocento Italy: Scribal Culture, Authority, and Agency.

Turnhout: Brepols, 2017. Pp. x, 233 + 5 ill. ISBN 978-2-503-56785-3 (hardcover) €75.

Andrea Rizzi's monograph truly inspires a shift in our opinion of the *studias humanitatis* and the scribal culture of Quattrocento Italy. In this publication, he brings to the reader's attention what an important role the vernacular translation of classical Latin and Greek texts played in promoting the culture and an appreciation of magnificent texts of the past. Of course, fifteenth-century Italy and Italian humanism are known for the revival of the classics. Nevertheless, what has been deemphasized—all the way to the twenty-first century—is that without the concurrent vernacularization of the Latin texts, their revival may have not flourished as much, considering that an increasing number of people in power were not schooled in Latin for various reasons. The author's aim is to shed light on the role that translators played as agents of culture.

According to Rizzi's investigation, in the Quattrocento at least eighty-one scholars were producing translations of the texts of antiquities. Rizzi explains how most of these scholars would, one way or another, deprecate their vernacular works because of a high regard for the Latin language. To analyze their thought process, he takes advantage of paratexts of the literary productions of these translators. His study is divided into seven chapters to provide a general survey of this group of cultural agents, their motivation, the opinion on translations in the era, and, most importantly, the four common traits that he outlines as authority, eloquence, collaboration, and friendship.

In chapter 1, the reader is introduced to a list of major vernacular translators who are not often studied. However, we can reshape the "contours" of humanism when we begin to take into account their cultural contributions (33). In the next chapter, a noteworthy number of prefatory texts are examined to provide an overview and analysis of the self-perceived agency of these Quattrocento scholars. These prefaces are part of the texts produced mainly in the courts of Naples. Rizzi explains how the translation of classical texts was part of the training and education of these humanists, who employed the prefaces they wrote to their own benefit by dedicating them to prospective employers and supporters in the hope of economic or status gains. Chapter 3