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Celenza, Christopher S. *The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance: Language, Philosophy, and the Search for Meaning*

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expression after the Reformation, and that it should be considered more often as a complement to Paul's theology. This is a significant argument, and deserves a wide audience.

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Celenza, Christopher S.
The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance: Language, Philosophy, and the Search for Meaning.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. xvi, 438. ISBN 978-1-107-00362-0 (hardcover) US$137.95.

For historians who study the intellectual world of Italy in the 1400s, the contributions of the long fifteenth century seem stubbornly bookended between Petrarchan thought in the late 1300s, and Machiavelli's political philosophy in the early sixteenth century. While studies of humanists and humanism for the fifteenth century are plentiful, the history and historiography of philosophy seem to skim over the 1400s, as Renaissance humanism still evokes an image of intellectuals turning away from "true" philosophy to privilege the ancient intellectual heritage over their own contributions—in spite of several scholarly voices to the contrary.

One voice that demands we heed the intellectual contributions of the fifteenth century is Christopher Celenza, who has written many works arguing for this point. His latest contribution to why the fifteenth century remains important to the history of philosophy is *The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance: Language, Philosophy, and the Search for Meaning*. Oriented around several contributions to the language debates in fifteenth-century Italy, his book highlights the many dialogues surrounding the importance of Latin versus Italian, and why the debate between Latin and the vernacular mattered to the individuals who used them. But in covering this broad topic, Celenza delves quite deeply into the formation and importance of intellectual life through the fifteenth century, and into why the debates from the 1400s matter to the reader in today's world.

The book's seventeen chapters (with a quick epilogue) alternate between biographical and intellectual studies (Dante, Boccaccio, Lorenzo Valla, Poggio Bracciolini, Marsilio Ficino—for two chapters!—and Angelo Poliziano) and thematic ones ("Dialogues, Institutions and Social Exchange," and "The Voices of Culture in Late Fifteenth-century Florence," among others). In all of these chapters, Celenza engages in close readings of many humanistic texts. He leads the reader through how scholars can work in Renaissance Latin, while also paying careful attention to the social and political contexts in which the men lived and the texts emerged. Reaching widely and focusing on the minor as well as the major texts of the fifteenth-century humanists, Celenza emphasizes the importance of the language and philosophy debates—among other concerns—for the lived reality of the intellectuals in their cultural environment. He then suggests that by understanding these thinkers in their own words and how they understood their world, we can reconcile the debates between literature and philosophy about which historians have long rehearsed.

Celenza's book is incredibly subtle in how it works. It lacks an overarching argument or single thesis, but recurrent themes of the importance of language and philosophy to the humanists, and a consistent approach to situating texts and persons in their social environments, keep each chapter linked to the larger monograph. Celenza notes himself that the book is episodic and meant to give a grounding to future readers and to scholars who might continue this work (x). So his text, presenting themes and ideas at the forefront of current scholarship, asks the reader to continue this work of placing fifteenth-century intellectual life and contributions *in situ* while providing a model of how to do so.

When a book is titled *The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance,* one expects Florence to be highlighted. But with Celenza, his entire book is focused on it. While scholarship on Rome, Venice, Milan, and Naples, among many other cities, has revealed flourishing and important nexuses of intellectual life, Celenza keeps his close, careful attention solely on Florence and its intellectual and political circles. This is a notable drawback. He discusses the coming of print to Renaissance Italy, and examines Valla, Alberti, and Bembo, but does not situate them so carefully in their social and political circles as he does with Ficino, Poliziano, and other Florentines. The book's strength is in Florentine intellectual life, but given his aim to study "Renaissance-era intellectuals as they were" (xi), Celenza reaches across the entire peninsula for thematic lenses but omits the precise socio-political contexts of non-Florentine intellectuals. While

humanists were incredibly mobile across Italy, and many drew their identity not from geographical locations but from participation in a republic of letters (which he compares to scholars interacting on Twitter today), Celenza's analysis of Renaissance intellectuals as participants in a wider civic life could have been strengthened by closer analysis of the idiosyncrasies of the Renaissance civic and/or institutional spaces that created and fostered these intellectuals outside of Florence.

Celenza has accomplished an impressive feat with this book. Most of his sources are easily and widely accessible (and, thankfully, in footnote format!), and he very helpfully leads the reader through the workings of Renaissance Latin with his translations in the text itself, introducing the machinations of Latin to the reader. His many asides of "quick parentheses," found throughout the work, are useful and explanatory for understanding the influence of ancient and medieval philosophy that the humanists drew on, and he presents the latest research of the field in a very succinct format. In linking his episodic chapters with the wider question of Latin versus Italian, Celenza presents a rich analysis and narrative of what it meant to participate in Renaissance Italian intellectual life. I recommend his book—either as a whole, or individual chapters as essays—to undergraduates studying intellectual life during the Florentine Renaissance, or to graduate students and early researchers, as a robust and very clear introduction to Renaissance intellectual life and Renaissance humanism.

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Champier, Symphorien.
***The Ship of Virtuous Ladies*. Ed. and trans. Todd W. Reeser.**
The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 61 / Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 528. Toronto: Iter Press / Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018. Pp. xiii, 161. ISBN 978-0-86698-585-7 (paperback) US$39.95.

In the first part of Symphorien Champier's *The Ship of Virtuous Ladies*, the author declaims, "I would be very happy and would feel worthy of the honor bestowed upon me, O chaste ladies, if I had required enough rhetorical skill