Book Reviews/Comptes Rendus

F. Edward Cranz. *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions 1501-1600*. Second Edition with addenda and revisions by Charles B. Schmitt. Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana, XXXVIII*. Baden-Baden: Verlag Valentin Koerner, 1984. Pp. xxiv, 247.

Compiling bibliographies of printed books in the post-incunabular era (i.e., after 1500) is a formidable task whose difficulties can be fully appreciated only by those who do it. While the cataloguing of incunables is well in hand, less has been done for sixteenth-century printing because so many more books were printed in so many different places. Moreover, sixteenth-century books are usually considered less beautiful and less interesting historically. But one can argue that the bibliography of sixteenth-century printing deserves more scholarly attention than that of incunables because books then truly spread to all who could read. Sixteenth-century bibliography is especially important for documenting the Renaissance in northern Europe.

Possibly Aristotle was the most influential and often-printed ancient author in the Renaissance; only the Roman Cicero might rival him. Aristotle continued to be studied and interpreted, albeit sometimes in different ways than during the Middle Ages. In 1971, F. Edward Cranz published a comprehensive listing of all the Aristotle editions appearing between 1501 and 1600, based on the findings of the *Index Aureliensis*, about a thousand in all. It was a significant and useful book. But the coverage of the *Index Aureliensis* was far from complete, because it tended to limit itself to major northern European libraries; Italian libraries were particularly under-represented.

Now Charles B. Schmitt, a noted scholar of Renaissance Aristotelianism, has published a revised edition of Cranz's bibliography. This second edition reprints Cranz's listings in the same format, but makes a number of corrections, and adds significantly to the total. Based on visits to about 100 libraries in western, eastern, and southern Europe plus the United States, Schmitt has added 430 more printings of Aristotle. It is an important achievement. Although Schmitt warns in the introduction that other editions will turn up, he speculates that 90 to 95% of the total have now been located. This revised edition includes, as did the original, useful indexes, bibliography, and adds a table of places of publication for the sixteenth century. Paris, Lyon, and Venice printed over 60% of the total.

In his brief introduction, Schmitt makes some points worth repeating. Probably no individual library contains more than a third of the total. The British Library of

London and the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris combined shelve about one-half of the total. This underlines the importance of bibliographic research in numerous libraries. One sometimes finds notable printings in obscure libraries very far from the places of publication. Another conclusion, with which this reviewer fully concurs, is that, while the cataloguing of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts is important and difficult work – and is appreciated as such – producing a comprehensive bibliography of sixteenth-century printings on an author or subject can be equally important and difficult – but is less recognized and appreciated. The Cranz-Schmitt volume is a very useful one that should facilitate and encourage further study of Renaissance Aristotelianism.

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Jerry H. Bentley. *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983 Pp. xiii, 245.

Ever since the time of Burckhardt, it has been an historiographical commonplace that Renaissance humanists displayed a radically new attitude towards the ancient world. They venerated that world, and passionately sought to recover it as fully as possible: they collected classical cameos and statues, studied architectural remains, copied inscriptions, and reclaimed and circulated previously neglected texts. At the same time, they were acutely aware of the gulf that separated them from that world. In order to bridge that gulf and recover their beloved antiquity, both pagan and Christian, they developed tools of philological analysis and historical criticism – and so created modern scholarship.

Jerry Bentley illustrates this commonplace with a detailed appreciation of New Testament scholarship in the Renaissance. Renaissance humanism, according to Bentley, broke with the medieval tradition of biblical studies, a tradition dominated by allegorical and spiritual exegesis and framed in the Aristotelian terms of scholastic theology. “The Renaissance humanists,” he says, “were determined to set aside the medieval tradition of New Testament study and replace it with a brand of scholarship that aimed to recover or reconstruct the assumptions, values, and doctrines not of the Middle Ages, but of the earliest Christians” (p. 31). The pioneer in this undertaking was Lorenzo Valla, “the first westerner since the patristic age to enjoy a thorough knowledge of Greek and to apply it extensively in his study of the New Testament” (pp. 32–33). Valla used his knowledge of Greek and mastery of philology to criticize and emend the Vulgate, to propose better Latin translations of certain passages, and to attempt a sounder explanation of the literal sense of scripture.

The second step in the progress of humanist New Testament scholarship was taken in Spain, by a team of scholars at the university of Alcalá. This university had been founded by the noted reformer, Cardinal Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros, and it was Ximénez who gave the impulse to the Complutensian Polyglot Bible. He assembled a group of experts in the three biblical languages and charged them with preparing a scholarly edition of the scriptures. The editors of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible improved on Valla’s methods in some ways. They recog-