Albert Douglas Menut, ed. *Maistre Nicole Oresme: Le Livre de Politiques d'Aristotle*. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1970. Pp. 392. \$10.

Nicole Oresme has been restored in recent years to a deservedly prominent position in the history of ideas, and this in no small measure due to the dedicated efforts and skill of Professor Menut. His editions of Oresme's French translations of Aristotle are now complete, including the *Livre de Ethiques* (1940), the *Livre du ciel et du monde* (1941-1943), the pseudo-Aristotelian *Livre de Yconomique* (1957) and now finally the *Livre de Politiques*. It is Menut's publication of the *Livre du ciel* ... which seems to have stimulated in recent years an intensive re-examination of Oresme's contribution to the history of medieval science, to the point where he is now generally acclaimed as the foremost natural philosopher of the fourteenth century.

However, Nicole Oresme was more than just a distinguished and original scientific mind: a number of his writings are concerned with wider behavioral issues, the rational and orderly conduct of life in society. These humanistic preoccupations are particularly well exposed in the commentary to his translation of the *Politica*. It may well be that this long-awaited edition will stimulate new research into the stature of Oresme the humanist, who seems to be every bit as interesting as Oresme the scientist.

There is a third aspect to Oresme's greatness which is not so well served by Menut's edition. The editor was, of course, primarily concerned with Oresme's thought; but Oresme was also a highly creative user of the French language, to the extent that he has left a rich heritage of over 400 common words in the lexicon of modern French, an achievement rivalled only by those of Rabelais and Victor Hugo. For the lexicologist, however, Menut's text is not entirely adequate. The critical apparatus is severely reduced, not only for understandable reasons of economy – "the expensive waste of printer's ink" – but also, regrettably, to avoid "clutter" and "an extended exercise in futility." In order to explore the full contribution of Oresme to the history of the French language, all manuscripts and early printed editions would have to be re-examined in detail. Practical considerations seem to have dictated against an English translation of the text, a most useful feature of the other three editions given to us by Menut. It is unfortunate that even more of the immense amount of detailed information and understanding accumulated by the editor in his years of painstaking work could not have been made available to future researchers.

The edition, like the others in the series, is beautifully presented, with helpful introductory sections on the intellectual background of the period, the life and work of Oresme, and the sources of his extensive commentary. A word of gratitude and congratulation is certainly due to Professor Menut on the completion of this series of editions which restore to us more completely one of the most remarkable and influential men of the Scholastic age.

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Forrest G. Robinson. *The Shape of Things Known: Sidney's Apology in its Philosophical Tradition*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972.