it are bound to appreciate the sensitive scholarship and consummate care of Professor MacCurdy in its preparation.

ROBERT N. SHERVILL, The University of Western Ontario


“History has not yet registered a stable appraisal for Giordano Bruno (1548-1600)”1. The author examines Bruno’s Italian writings, prepared during his stay in England, in order to extract and analyse the essence of Brunian thought with emphasis on the ideas which re-appeared in later thinkers. The work is divided into three sections which deal respectively with Bruno’s cosmology, his theory of knowledge, and his theory of virtue.

Copernicus was taken as the principal starting point by Bruno. The followers of Ptolemy and of Aristotle explained the diurnal motion of the fixed stars by the introduction of a spherical surface or thin shell which contained and moved the stars. Copernicus retained the sphere of the stars as fixed but explained the diurnal motion as a reflection of the earth’s rotation. Bruno recognized that the sphere of the stars could now be dispensed with. There remained no observational incompatibility to the extension of theory by the mind into areas where observational data did not exist. He placed observation and sense data on a high plane; they could not be contraverted, but Authority was granted no such status. This, his theory of knowledge, permitted him to extend the finite Copernican world to an infinite one. As did Cusa before him, Bruno recognized that an infinite world had no centre, no preferred location for the sun, the earth, or for man. Infinity was in his conceptual grasp and he exploited it in extension to a full philosophic system. Copernicus was not necessarily heretical as yet; Bruno was, and his works inevitably led him to conflict with orthodoxy and Authority.

The author clearly shows and documents the above aspects of Bruno’s work and indicates how he may have served as inspiration to later philosophers, particularly Leibnitz. She is at her weakest, however, when she endeavours to show Bruno as a precursor, if not inspiring source, in the development of scientific method, foreshadowing, for example, Einstein. Einstein does justify, as did Bruno, extension of theory or interpretation beyond the limits of sense data, but so did Copernicus implicitly and many others before and after Bruno. Bruno’s contributions were conceptual; no real connection is shown to justify the effects he may have had on method.

The author is on firmer ground when she inveighs against philosophers for the neglect of Bruno. The number of supporting authorities quoted to support Bruno’s stature show, however, he was far from being universally neglected.

The book is valuable for the many references translated from Bruno principally from the Ash Wednesday Supper and for its bibliography which extends that of Salvestrini and Firpo. It is reasonably clear, although sometimes repetitious, in the sections on cosmology and the theory of knowledge. One deplores, however, the retention of key passages in Italian without an attempt at translation. It would have been more helpful to have given both original and translation. A similar comment could be made about the 29 pages of correspondence between Toland and Leibnitz which appear as an appendix.
The book is informative, and valuable to an audience interested in Bruno. It is incomplete, however, in that it does not adequately show the overall intellectual environment in which Bruno worked. A definitive, stable appraisal of Bruno remains to be written.

JOHN W. ABRAMS, University of Toronto

1 Quoted by the author, p. 3 from G. de Santillana, The Age of Adventure (New York: Mentor, 1956) p. 244.

News

Professor R. W. Van Fossen has been appointed Book Review Editor, of Renaissance and Reformation. Professor Van Fossen, who was previously Chairman of the Dept. of English at Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, is presently at Erindale College, University of Toronto, and a specialist in Renaissance Drama.

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE AND NORTHERN EUROPE

In order to inaugurate the work of the Centre for Renaissance Studies in the University of Toronto, the Committee for Renaissance Studies held a conference on the general theme “The Italian Renaissance and Northern Europe”, on November 19 and 20, 1971. The programme included lectures by: Marvin B. Becker (University of Rochester), “History and the Eye of Possibility”, Chairman Beatrice Corrigan (University of Toronto); John R. Hale (University College London), “Renaissance Italy’s Contribution to the Art of War in Europe”, Chairman Brayton Polka (York University); Charles Schmitt (Leeds University), “Ancient Scepticism: the Flow of Ideas from Italy to the North”, Chairman J. W. Abrams (University of Toronto); Franco Simone (University of Turin), “Boccace en France au XVe Siècle”, Chairman W. K. Ferguson (University of Western Ontario); and Ruth Mortimer (Houghton Library, Harvard University), “A Portrait of the Author in Sixteenth Century Italy”, Chairman Marion E. Brown (Head of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Toronto Library). A Workshop on “Italians and Italian Books Abroad During the Reformation” was conducted by Peter Bietenholz (University of Saskatchewan), J.M. de Bujanda (Université de Sherbrooke), and John Tedeschi (Newberry Library, Chicago); Chairman was Natalie Z. Davis (University of Toronto). James McConica, CSB (University of Toronto) was Chairman of the Conference.

HUMANISM


THE FIRST AND SECOND NEO-LATIN CONGRESSES

The First Neo-Latin Congress was held from August 23 to 28, 1971, in the University of Leuven, and the papers of the Congress will be published by Wilhelm Fink Verlag, Munich.

An international committee has been formed to work towards a permanent society for neo-Latin studies and to plan a second congress in 1973. Members of this commit-