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## NEO-LATIN NEWS

Vol. 65, Nos. 1 & 2. Jointly with SCN. NLN is the official publication of the American Association for Neo-Latin Studies. Edited by Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University; Western European Editor: Gilbert Tournoy, Leuven; Eastern European Editors: Jerzy Axer, Barbara Milewska-Wazbinska, and Katarzyna Tomaszuk, Centre for Studies in the Classical Tradition in Poland and East-Central Europe, University of Warsaw. Founding Editors: James R. Naiden, Southern Oregon University, and J. Max Patrick, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Graduate School, New York University.

♦ *Sozomeno da Pistoia (1387-1458): Scrittura e libri di un umanista*. By Irene Ceccherini. Preface by Stefano Zamponi, with an essay by David Speranzi. Biblioteca dell'«Archivum Romanicum», Serie I: Storia, letteratura, paleografia, 431. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2016. XX + 466 pp. €65. I have to admit that I began reading this book with a sinking feeling. Basically a library catalogue of a minor humanist that no one has ever heard of, presented in enormous detail, as homage to a favored local son and funded by a bank that (unlike many others) succeeded in completing its act of cultural homage before the fiscal crisis hit and terminated most projects like this in Italy, the project initially seemed to promise little. By the time I finished the preface, however, it became clear that this book fully merits all the time, effort, and expense lavished on it. Let me explain.

The protagonist of this story is one Zomino (also referred to in the sources as Zambino, Zembino, and Zombino), who Hellenized his name to Sozomeno and is now generally referred to as such. He was born in Pistoia and received his initial education there, but after winning a scholarship for students of modest means, he studied canon law, first in Padua, then in Florence. While in Florence he entered the orbit of the humanism that was emerging there and studied Greek with Guarino da Verona. He was fortunate enough to attend the

Council of Constance, where he had the chance to learn of Poggio Bracciolini's manuscript discoveries and to rub shoulders with some of the students of Manuel Chrysoloras, after which he returned to Italy and was elected canon of the cathedral in Pistoia. For more than a decade he continued to live and study primarily in Florence, teaching (probably privately) the sons of Palla Strozzi, Matteo Palmieri, and Leonardo Dati and lecturing at the Florentine *Studio* in poetry and rhetoric. After finally returning to Pistoia and actually taking up residence there, he participated in the religious and cultural life of the city until his death some twenty-five years later.

Sozomeno was not, to be sure, a superstar scholar like Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni, or Lorenzo Valla, but he is an excellent representative of the middle to upper middle register of learning at the dawn of humanism. This by itself merits some attention now, but the same could be said for a good number of others. There are, however, three things that render Sozomeno and his work unique. First is the fact that the surviving documentation allows us to study him in more detail than anyone else like him: he is the only mid-level humanist born in the 70s and 80s of the Trecento whose passage from his initial scholastic education to the new grammatical and rhetorical learning, based in Greek as well as Latin, can be followed in this kind of detail. This transformation can be followed in the books that he copied or had copied for himself and annotated as part of his scholarly and pedagogical activity. Second, we can see this transformation on another level as his handwriting transforms itself at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Like most educated people of his day, Sozomeno began writing a Gothic bookhand and a cursive based in the notarial matrix, but as he adopted humanist principles, he also developed a humanist hand that allowed him to begin preparing books in what was then understood to have been the *all'antica* manner. This transformation extended to Greek as well, as David Speranzi explains in his accompanying essay. Finally, there is the question of his library and its disposition. Other early humanists had more books than Sozomeno and had similar ideas about what to do with them, but Sozomeno had decided as early as 1423 that he wanted his books to be useful to others and he was the first to act legally and to destine his library for public usage. This is one of those fortunate cases where a good

idea—to take advantage of the richness of the surviving resources to fill out our picture of mid-level humanism—was joined with top-level scholars able to do the work and with financial resources adequate to fund the research and subvent its presentation. Quite remarkably, Ceccherini has been able to find 83 of the 110 manuscripts listed in the inventory of 1460, along with four others not noted there, and to provide exacting descriptions of them. Given the importance of the handwriting issues discussed in the paragraph above, extensive illustration was necessary to do this job right, and the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e Pescia, after financing the research, provided the funds to offer an illustration of every single manuscript, making this volume a virtual reconstruction of a library that has been dispersed throughout Europe. Additional relevant information can be found in four appendices, and the whole is well indexed and easy to use. We are told that as part of the same project, Giliola Barbero will be publishing the results of her research on the life of Sozomeno and on his work as a grammarian and commentator of classical texts. I look forward to seeing this material as well and to learning more about someone who deserves to be better known than he has been up to now. (Craig Kallendorf, Texas A&M University)

◆ *Iohannes de Certaldo. Beiträge zu Boccaccios lateinischen Werken und ihrer Wirkung.* Hgg. Karl Enenkel, Tobias Leuker, and Christoph Pieper. *Noctes Neolatinae / Neo-Latin Texts and Studies*, 24. Hildesheim: Olms, 2015. xxiii + 267 pp. €39.80. Dieser Band stellt die Ergebnisse einer Tagung zu „Giovanni Boccaccios (1313–1375) lateinischen Werken und ihrer Wirkung“ vor, die 2013 anlässlich des 700. Geburtstags des Dichters in Münster stattfand. Es handelt sich um den ersten Sammelband, der nicht vorrangig Boccaccios italienischen Werken, sondern (fast) ausschließlich seinem lateinischen Oeuvre gewidmet ist. (Auch im jüngsten Überblickswerk zu Boccaccio (G. Armstrong et al. (Hgg.), *The Cambridge Companion to Boccaccio*, Cambridge, 2015) bleibt das lateinische Oeuvre ein Randthema.) Sein lateinisches Frühwerk (z.B. die *Elegia di Costanza*) und seine Briefe bleiben dabei zugunsten der Hauptwerke – der mythographischen *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, der biographischen Werke *De casibus virorum illustrium* und *De mulieribus claris* sowie des *Buccolicum*