

Charles Trinkaus. *In our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought*. The University of Chicago Press, 1970. Vol. I, pp. xxvii, 457. Vol. II, pp. viii, 461-985.

The most impressive aspect of Professor Trinkaus' work is the dexterity and the keenly intelligent sagacity with which a tremendous mass of material has been interpreted with great insight, controlled, and co-ordinated in an extremely logical conspectus within a conveniently graspable, though complexly ramified, conceptual frame. The next feature which stands out (and even a fugitive glance at the bibliography, at the apparatus of footnotes and references, will bring the matter home to the reader) is the rare pertinacity with which the author has coped with his back-breaking assignment, over a period of several years, in direct, first-hand contact with a bewildering multiplicity of humanistic documents, geographically scattered in the major and minor libraries of Europe (see the *Index* of the manuscripts consulted, II, 913-916. This *Index* constitutes a sort of *iter humanisticum* of preeminent usefulness to present and future scholars).

A third feature of the volumes under review is the *fidélité à soi-même*, the allegiance to intellectual "form," which the volumes reveal when set side by side with cognate previous productions of Professor Trinkaus. I am referring to his *Adversity's Noblemen* and to *A Humanist's Image of Humanism*, books in which the ethical and religious aspects of the humanistic movement occupy, as they do in the present two volumes, an orientational and predominant position.

The two keys to the nature and purpose of this opus are to be found in the *Foreword* to vol. I, and in the last chapter of vol. II, which bears the title "Unity and Plurality in the Humanist Visions of Man and God - an Appraisal." Essentially, Charles Trinkaus has written a history of Christian Humanism in terms of its central metaphor, i.e., the *deiformitas*, the dignity of Man (and in terms of its obverse). Trinkaus is principally concerned with the ethical, religious, theological, philosophical aspects of his theme. And while this concern brings his work into proximity with cognate items in the scholarly literature on Humanism (from Zabughin, Toffanin, Walser, H. Baker, to Carlo Angelieri, F. Olgiati, F. Hermans, Douglas Bush, W. Wilkinson, and others), the amplitude and detail with which Trinkaus handles his theme, the new aspects which he discovers in it, the expertise which he evinces in medieval and post-medieval intellectual history, his amazingly thorough command of "codicological" matters, the internal ligaments which he establishes between his various sub-themes, the absolutely rectilinear and unswerving continuity of the lines of reasoning which he follows and, last but not least, the non-confessional, impartial stance of its author, distinguish this history of Christian Renaissance Humanism from all its precedents and congeners. It is Trinkaus' "assumption that this period ... [Renaissance Humanism] is an autonomous period of history, and therefore should not be strictly medieval, nor modern, nor even that hybrid conception of a transition between the two, but something, clearly and definitely its own" (II, 761).

It is Trinkaus' further assumption that the Humanists were not, as Professor Kristeller and other scholars have claimed, purely grammarians, mere philologists, out and out literati. Some humanists were, undeniably, of this type and should be so categorized. But there

were many others, Trinkaus underscores, who "engaged in intellectual, moral, theological, and philosophical discourse." The feeling of deep gratitude which Trinkaus voices towards his mentor, Kristeller, who (as is obvious from several features of the present work) has taught him *pas mal de choses* (from the necessity of going back *ad fontes* to that of a severe and exhaustive cultivation of the history of thought) has not succeeded in obliterating, in Trinkaus, the sense for the "not quite right" character of Kristeller's distinction between Humanism and philosophy.

On this point, Trinkaus shares the opinion of Eugenio Garin. "The central conclusion of this book," Trinkaus writes, "is that the Italian Renaissance ... was accompanied by a powerful assertion of a philosophy of will by leading representatives of Italian humanism and among philosophical circles influenced by them" (I, xx of the *Foreword*). And just as Paola Barocchi, in her recent republication of writings on art by authors contemporary with the great visual artists of the Cinquecento, discovers that the productions of art of that period were accompanied by a complete consciousness, glaringly evident in its theoreticians, just so Trinkaus verifies in his book the conjectural assertion – up to him – of a "philosophical self-awareness" in the humanistic movement. Thus, what was simply an intuitive suggestion tentatively formulated by Ernst Cassirer becomes a lucidly persuasive demonstration in Trinkaus' two volumes. The latter finds that "humanistic moralism, rather than stressing rationalistic restraint and inhibition of human action, emphasizes the dominance of irrational or arational elements in man's psychic makeup." But Trinkaus also proves that some of the leading proponents of Humanism found inspiration in the pre-scholastic Christian theological tradition, drawing the full eudemonistic and voluntarist implications from the theology of St. Augustine for the first time" (*ibid.*, xx). (Here is a novel viewpoint in scholarship, brilliantly developed in Trinkaus' analysis of Petrarch, for instance.)

In an astonishing way, Trinkaus' opus seems, at times, to embody two antithetical positions; to present the appearance of a paradoxical fusion of the major propositions of Burckhardt and Toffanin. From Toffanin, there stems Trinkaus' effort to stress throughout (even in the case of Valla) the Christian element in Humanism, and Humanism's indebtedness to the theology of Latin and Greek Patristics; from Burckhardt, the emphasis on the secular triumphs of mankind and the great affirmative extolment of individualism. "What Burckhardt found, and emphasized as the central feature of this period, drawing on the secular literature and the chronicles, found its interpretation ... in the writings of the Humanists, not as an arrogant and fearful defiance of a divine fiat of passivity and humility, but as the rightful execution of the task which had been vested in Man by his Creator" (*Foreword*, p. xxii).

In reference to the recent important researches of Frances Yates and D. P. Walker in the magical and hermetic elements in Florentine Neoplatonism, Trinkaus claims (and here is a further element of novelty in his studies) that his conclusions offer "an extension backward in time, and a correction in historical perspective," to the views of both Mrs. Yates and Professor Walker. Trinkaus emphasises that "the Humanists sought in the para-Christian Neoplatonic traditions a support for their views, deriving inspiration from the theurgic impulses of late antiquity; but he underlines that the influence of the *Asclepius* was an early one, prior in time to Renaissance Platonism. Hermetic elements, Trinkhaus says, are present in many medieval texts, and the Humanists found ample precedents in the writings

of Lactantius, Augustine, Cicero, and miscellaneous medieval texts, to justify their views" (*Foreword*, p. xxiv).

An original section of Trinkaus' work is that in which he demonstrates the links that exist between the *theologia poetica* and the *theologia platonica*, thus highlighting a less explored connection between Humanism and Platonism (II, Chap. XV). The section on Giovanni Caldiere's *Concordantia* is, to my knowledge, entirely new in the Humanism scholarship of today. Trinkaus examines *theologia poetica* in Petrarch, Boccaccio, Salutati, Caldiere, and the transformation, in Landino, from *Theologia poetica* into *Theologia platonica*. This chapter is thickly studded with suggestions (I may incidentally mention the fact that the figure of the *poeta teologo* has also, but more superficially, been investigated by E. R. Curtius; the readers of Vico's *Scienza Nuova* will find it there, too). Another feature of novelty in Trinkaus is his Chapter XII, Vol. II, dealing with Italian Humanism and the Scriptures (p. 563 ff).

Two passages seem to me most important so as to warrant quotation in their entirety. In the first, Trinkaus draws a fully reasoned out distinction between the concept of *Humanitas* and *Conditio hominis*.

Whereas the notion of *Humanitas* and *conditio hominis* do seem to be linked in their [i.e., the Humanists'] minds, the ideas are parallel and not identical ones. They derived, as the Humanists were aware, from two quite different myths of the origin of human civilisation: the classical one, foreshadowed in Plato's *Protagoras*, and re-echoed in Cicero's *De inventione*, which found the learned disciplines the instruments through which human civilisation was wrought; the Christian *Genesis* story of the creation of man on the sixth day in the image and likeness of God, of man's lapse into misery, and his regeneration through the Incarnation into a new potentiality of divinity.

Professor Trinkaus subjoins: "a study of their interrelation ... is essential to an understanding of the Renaissance conception of man" (I, 321).

In the second passage, Trinkaus uncovers the source of much of the confusion and controversy which prevail concerning the Renaissance.

From a religious point of view – modern Protestant or Catholic – the Humanists and Platonists went much too far in secularizing, classicizing, stressing the oneness of spirit of the Christian traditions and revelation with the pagan and secular tradition and ideas. From the non-religious, or even anti-clerical and anti-religious point of view, which has been fairly endemic among modern historians, the Humanists obviously did not go far enough in rejecting the peculiarly and traditionally Christian and revelational Renaissance thinkers, and particularly Humanists and Platonists, predominantly stressed the accommodation of the traditions. The succeeding world of Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the triumph of secularization tended more to stress the separateness and uniqueness of the traditions, wanting any kind of universality to be strictly in their own terms, completely Catholic, completely Evangelical, completely secular. This was not the Renaissance outlook, which sought unity within plurality" (II, 764).

Eminently fair and objective are the remarks of Trinkaus on the specific influence exerted by the Humanistic movement on subsequent religious developments, both Protestant and Catholic (II, 765-765). The "lead" which he throws out to future researchers concerning

the relationships between Humanists and the clergy in the history of the Conciliar movement and of its ineffectiveness should be followed up, and would undoubtedly yield a scholarly harvest of value (II, 764).

Clinching a point which may seem obvious but still needs reiteration, is Trinkaus' statement that "none of these men [the Humanists] were reformers in the sense of Protestant reformers. The Humanists represent a certain ideal of human life within a Christian framework in the age of the Renaissance ... they were not Reformers, nor even pre-Reformers; nor did they succeed in changing the course of events in the history of religion.... If it was not to be their destiny to shape the major events of European history, they nevertheless did contribute markedly," Trinkaus feels, "to a new view of human nature and to a new attitude towards man's place in the world" (II, 766).

The scrupulous attention with which Professor Trinkaus has scrutinized his materials results in the disclosure of the importance of some hitherto little-known figures: Fra Antonio da Barga, Benedetto Morandi, Giovanni Garzoni, Aurelio Brandolini (see I, 200-321). The reader may wonder why Pomponazzi is included among the Humanists, except as a "foil," and why there is not mention, instead, of a personality very close, in his irenic, universalistic outlook to Pico: I am referring to Steuco Eugubino. But let not this minor stricture spoil or diminish the admiration which the work of Charles Trinkaus, by its stupendous scholarship, by its formulation of original viewpoints, by its always cogently persuasive lines of argument, so abundantly and richly deserves.

ELIO GIANTURCO, *Washington, D.C.*

Alfonz Lengyel, *The Quattrocento: a Study of the Principles of Art and a Chronological Biography of the Italian 1400s*. Dubuque (Iowa): Kendall-Hunt Publishing Company, 1971. Pp. xii, 208.

Any teacher of Renaissance art must welcome the publication of a brief and inexpensive handbook that presents students with the necessary facts for a serious study of Renaissance art. The book under review would seem, at first sight, to satisfy just that description. Its purpose, to quote the introduction, is "to give the reader something which could help him in understanding the principles of 15th century art in Italy, rather than a pictorial account of the Quattrocento." The volume is divided into two main sections. The first contains a series of eight brief essays on aspects of art and culture, 'The Rediscovery of Man,' 'Light and Shade'; the second, biographies of artists with a list of the most important works that they produced. The Appendix contains lists of Popes, the ruling families of Italy and a selection of fifteenth century treatises and literary compositions.

From this description the book would seem to answer itself to the problem. But unfortunately, the material included in each of these sections is poorly written, poorly presented and, on occasion, poorly thought out. The essays are so brief as to be unhelpful and so badly written as to confuse; an example, for the chapter entitled 'The Rediscovery of Man,' "Aided by Greek philosophy, the recognition of man was already practiced in Grecian art." The biographies of the artists suffer from the same faults; for example, the entry on Ercole de' Roberti, "Roberti was an eclectic painter who was mainly active in Ferrara