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Review of *Histoires prodigieuses (Edition de 1561)*, by
Pierre Boaistuau, edited by Stephen Bamforth,
annotated by Jean Céard

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said to have made a critical edition of Ibn al-Haytham's optics, which he did not. Roshdi Rashed's knowledge of Ibn al-Haytham's optics is said to be based on Friedrich Risner's edition (p. 94), when he is known worldwide for in-depth research on Arabic manuscripts. Finally, there is no mention of A. Mark Smith's eight-volume critical edition of Alhacen's *De aspectibus*, which was the matrix of all the versions known in the West.

Despite these weaknesses, the book contains fine concept analysis and pays equal attention to different civilizations without making hierarchical suppositions. It is superbly illustrated with 108 plates taken from both cultures, half of which are in color. Belting's book will assist in disseminating the standard thesis that linear perspective is dependent on Arabic optics, filtered through medieval re-elaborations.

DOMINIQUE RAYNAUD

Pierre Boaistuau. *Histoires prodigieuses (Edition de 1561)*. Edited by **Stephen Bamforth**. Annotated by **Jean Céard**. 968 pp., illus., tables, app., bibl., indexes. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2010.

First appearing in 1560, just a few years before his death, Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires prodigieuses*, a compilation of natural wonders, monsters, preternatural oddities, curiosities, and legends, was enormously popular throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, appearing in two dozen editions before the end of the sixteenth century alone. Furthermore, with its extensive and elaborate illustrations, the work quickly became an exemplar of illustrated books in the Renaissance. Boaistuau's reputation does not rest on the *Histoires prodigieuses* alone. At the time it first appeared, he was already known as the author of the political treatise *L'histoire de Chelidonius Tigurius* (1556) and the philosophical treatise *Théâtre du Monde* (1558); he was also the editor of the *Les amants fortunés* (1558; later retitled *Heptameron*), a collection of love stories originally attributed to Marguerite of Navarre, and the translator of Matteo Bandello's *Novelle*, which appeared in French as *Histoires tragiques* (1559).

Despite Boaistuau's literary importance in the early modern period, and the widespread interest in *Histoires prodigieuses*, this volume is the first critical edition. Its appearance depends significantly on the discovery of the 1560 illuminated manuscript of the work, dedicated by Boaistuau to Queen Elizabeth I of England, now in the Wellcome Library for the History and

Understanding of Medicine in London (Wellcome Library Western MS 136), which was also edited by Stephen Bamforth. The manuscript version contains thirty-two chapters, whereas the printed edition contains forty chapters. Boaistuau was closely involved with the production of the first printed edition, which appeared in quarto in 1560, indicating in the text where it differs from the 1560 manuscript. Yet, due to the significant *errata* that appeared in the first edition and were swiftly corrected for the subsequent edition, Bamforth has argued that Boaistuau was also likely closely involved in the production of the second edition, which appeared in 1561 (in octavo and with the same engravings), and he has thus chosen the second edition as the basis for this critical edition. Jean Céard, an expert on Boaistuau and the textual traditions of his *oeuvre*, is responsible for the annotations of the text itself.

This critical edition is clear, elegantly laid out, informative, and easy to use. The critical apparatus pertaining to the text of *Histoires prodigieuses* is exhaustive, with extensive notes and indications of variant readings in the Wellcome Library manuscript. Furthermore, the list of printed editions contains complete bibliographic information for each edition, as well as the location and shelf mark for the copies that Bamforth examined. Bamforth's introduction runs well over two hundred pages, providing necessary context on Boaistuau's life, his other works, and the sources for *Histoires prodigieuses*. Of especial value to scholars of visual culture, this edition contains a significant number of images—not only of the prints in the second edition, but also comparative images of the paintings in the 1560 manuscript. Bamforth also addresses the question of why Boaistuau, who had produced his earlier work in France under the patronage of those who were at the court of Henri II, decamped to England in 1559 and sought the protection of Elizabeth I. The increasingly hostile atmosphere to Protestants in France after the death of Henri II in 1559 made it necessary for Boaistuau, a secret adherent of the Reformers, to seek the protection of Elizabeth I in England. This accounts for his sudden move to London in 1559, as well as the production of a lavishly illustrated and bound copy of *Histoires prodigieuses* for presentation to the new Protestant queen of England.

This critical edition of one of the most influential and popular works of natural history from the sixteenth century is long overdue. It will be of tremendous value to scholars interested in natural marvels and early modern collections, those pursuing the relationship between visual

culture and the production of knowledge in this period, and historians of the book.

E. R. TRUITT

Thomas Bradwardine. *Insolubilia*. Edited and translated by **Stephen Read**. (Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations, 10.) viii + 235 pp., apps., index. Paris/Leuven: Peeters, 2010. €39 (paper).

Even though the medievals were acquainted with a version of the famous Liar Paradox (quoted in the Epistle to Titus 1:12 as follows: “One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians [= Cretans] are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies”), it appears that their fascination with such paradoxes can be traced back to a remark of Aristotle’s in *On Sophistical Refutations* 25.180a27b7, where he poses the question whether it is possible for the same man at the same time to keep and break his oath. Another likely incentive for the medievals to reflect on paradoxes is the game of obligations, a kind of disputation between a so-called *opponens*, who puts forward a series of propositions, one at a time, and a respondent, who is asked to accept or deny the proposition presented to him on the basis of inferential relationships or, if there are no such relationships, simply on the grounds of his personal convictions. The respondent wins if he manages to maintain logical consistency within the time frame assigned to the game.

Although logicians had mentioned and commented on paradoxical statements earlier, the genre of *insolubilia* was not firmly established until the early fourteenth century. Thomas Bradwardine’s treatise, presumably dating from the early to mid 1320s, gives a systematic account of the solutions to the paradoxes available during his time, but also introduces a highly original solution of his own, based on his view of signification. His proposal clearly had an impact on the works of other logicians in Oxford, like William Heytesbury and Richard Swineshead, and traces of his *Insolubilia* can also be found in the writings on that subject by John Buridan, in Paris.

Stephen Read’s critical edition and English translation concerns a fourteenth-century treatise that has now been recognized as an important work on *insolubilia*. The substantial introduction covers the main biographical data on Bradwardine, offers an accessible overview of the *insolubilia* literature, and presents an in-depth study of Bradwardine’s own particular way of dealing with these puzzles. The critical

edition and translation of Bradwardine’s treatise is followed by three appendixes: a chapter quite possibly belonging to the *Insolubilia*, a short extract from Ralph Strode’s *Insolubilia*, and sections from an anonymous treatise on *insolubilia*.

The introduction presents a historical overview of the origins and development of the medievals’ interest in *insolubilia*. It traces the development of this field of inquiry to its origin in the Scriptures and medieval readings of Aristotle’s *Sophistical Refutations*. It continues with a presentation of the most common solutions to paradoxes during Bradwardine’s time. The main part of the introduction is devoted to an elaborate commentary on Bradwardine’s *Insolubilia*. It concludes with a discussion of the editorial principles and contains a very useful glossary of technical terms.

I have but a few minor comments. First, in the introduction, Read’s explanations are at times somewhat too brief to be entirely clear: examples are his account of a specific solution to the *insolubilia* on page 14, in the final paragraph of section 4; and his description of *consequentia* in the glossary, on page 44. Second, Read claims that the notion of *consequentia ut nunc* was new in the early fourteenth century (p. 15), whereas in fact it already features earlier—for example, in Matthew of Orléans’s *Sophistaria*, dating from the latter part of the thirteenth century. Finally, while Read’s translation is perfectly intelligible and pleasant to read, it sometimes deviates quite a bit from the Latin, such that different turns of phrase in the text are not found in the translation. While such liberties are perfectly acceptable, they should have been accounted for in the introduction.

Read’s meticulously prepared text and translation should prove to be a welcome contribution to research on fourteenth-century logic in general and on the discussions of *insolubilia* in particular. This important book is highly recommended, not only for historians of logic, but also for people interested in paradoxes.

JOKE SPRUYT

Philippe Glardon. *L’histoire naturelle au XVI^e siècle: Introduction, étude et édition critique de La nature et diversité des poissons (1555) de Pierre Belon*. (Travaux d’Humanisme et Renaissance, 483.) 716 pp., illus., tables, bibl., indexes. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2011. €75 (cloth).

Philippe Glardon’s new publication is noteworthy for several reasons. First, as has been the case for his previous books, Glardon provides a serious and well-annotated critical edition of an