

History of the Florentine People, Volume 1: Books I-IV (The I Tatti Renaissance Library)

By Leonardo Bruni

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Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444), the leading civic humanist of the Italian Renaissance, served as apostolic secretary to four popes (1405-1414) and chancellor of Florence (1427-1444). He was famous in his day as a translator, orator, and historian, and was the best-selling author of the fifteenth century. Bruni's *History of the Florentine People* in twelve books is generally considered the first modern work of history, and was widely imitated by humanist historians for two centuries after its official publication by the Florentine Signoria in 1442. This edition makes it available for the first time in English translation.

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Editorial Review

Review
An aristocratic devotion to our culture continues to manifest itself even today in the most prestigious centers of study and thought. One has merely to look at the very recent (begun in 2001), rigorous and elegant humanistic series of Harvard University, with the original Latin text, English translation, introduction and notes. (Vittore Branca *Il Sole*)

The Loeb Classical Library...has been of incalculable benefit to generations of scholars...It seems certain that the I Tatti Renaissance Library will serve a similar purpose for Renaissance Latin texts, and that, in addition to its obvious academic value, it will facilitate a broadening base of participation in Renaissance Studies...These books are to be lauded not only for their principles of inclusivity and accessibility, and for their rigorous scholarship, but also for their look and feel. Everything about them is attractive: the blue of their dust jackets and cloth covers, the restrained and elegant design, the clarity of the typesetting, the quality of the paper, and not least the sensible price. This is a new set of texts well worth collecting. (Kate Lowe *Times Literary Supplement*)

[Thanks to Hankins' text and translation] it is now possible, in a real sense for the first time, for a wide academic audience, ranging from Renaissance specialists to undergraduates, to confront the historian Leonardo Bruni, a fundamental figure in the birth of modern historiography. This volume, and the entire series of which it forms only a part, is a crucial contribution to the prosperity of Renaissance studies today. While Bruni's history is an important source for understanding Bruni's humanism, as well as Florentine humanism more generally in the fifteenth century, its complete translation should expand our understanding of Bruni's importance in European intellectual history beyond the confines of the Baron thesis and the nature of Florentine civic humanism. He should play an equally important role in the history of modern historical writing, on a par with Machiavelli, Bodin and Gibbon. Elegantly translated and modestly priced, Hankins' volume should go a long way to restoring Bruni to the historiographical prominence that he rightly enjoyed in his own time. (Mark Jurdjevic *Sixteenth Century Journal*)

The text of Bruni's *History* that Hankins has given us is an excellent text that marks a notable advance on its predecessors and will allow the modern reader to draw the greatest profit from reading this work. (*Lettere Italiane*)

Bruni, in trying to demonstrate that Florence could trace its legitimate republican tradition back to deep antiquity, wrote a history of his city on the model of the ancient history of Rome by Livy. As he did so, he read Livy's eloquent, stagy book in a very imaginative, critical way. From the ancient historian's idealized account of virtuous Romans, Bruni reconstructed the virtuous and powerful world of their enemies, the Etruscans--from whom, he claimed, the modern Tuscans were descended. In Bruni's historical imagination, Livy's stories of Horatius, heroically defending the bridge across the Tiber, and Mucius Scaevola, thrusting his hand into the fire to show his contempt for death, metamorphosed into instances of Roman weakness, superstition and dishonesty. (Anthony T. Grafton *New York Review of Books* 2006-10-05)

About the Author
James Hankins is Professor of History, Harvard University. He is the General Editor of the I Tatti Renaissance Library.

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