

JOHANN VON NEUMARKT AND COLA DI RIENZO

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Ever since Burdach's time the allegedly close relationship between Cola di Rienzo and the Imperial Chancellor, Johann von Neumarkt, has been regarded as a starting-point for the "Renaissance" or "Pre-humanism" in 14th century Bohemia. The written correspondence of the two men provides practically all the evidence there is for this friendship, and yet even Burdach's successors recognised that one of Johann's supposed three letters to Cola probably had a quite different addressee. Analysis of another of these letters now shows it to be a self-justification, probably addressed to the Emperor, and certainly not to Cola. Johann wrote only once to Cola, politely but sternly refusing to intervene on his behalf. This letter does not serve to express any genuine admiration, and the circumstances (Cola was under examination for heresy!) also made friendship between the two highly improbable. Any profound influence of the former tribune on the Chancellor seems most questionable.