Harder, Hans-Bernd/ Rothe, Hans (Hrsg.): Studien zum Humanismus in den böhmischen Ländern.

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The essays published in this volume were originally delivered as papers at the fifth International Conference of the „Komitee der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur Förderung der Slawischen Studien" at Kloster Walberberg in September 1985. A collaborative effort by German and Czech historians, philologists and literary historians (assisted in particular by Slavomír Wollman and Jaroslav Kolár), *Studien zum Humanismus* represents an outstanding, prodigious feat of international scholarship.

Students of the *litterae humaniores* (the writings of the ancient poets, philosophers, rhetoricians and historians), the humanists achieved prominence in Italy in the later part of the fourteenth century. By the middle of the fifteenth century humanism, which expanded knowledge of Latin literature and revived that of Greece, spread north of the Alps where, facilitated by the invention of printing, it dominated European intellectual life throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Humanism differed from the medieval world-view in its essentially optimistic emphasis on man's creative and rational potential for fulfilment in this life rather than in the next.

The first essay in the collection, "Gab es einen böhmischen Frühhumanismus?" (Ferdinand Seibt, Bochum) sheds new critical light on the problem of the origins of humanism in Bohemia. Seibt's essay counters the thesis of Konrad Burdach and Eduard Winter that humanism formed part of the *devotio moderna* movement of the fourteenth century. Insisting on the ideological conflict between traditional Christian dogma and the secularism of burgeoning European humanism, Seibt suggests that the arrival of humanism was delayed by the reform movement until at least the mid-fifteenth century. As evidence of the absence of widespread classical learning at this time, Seibt cites Charles IV's celebrated letter to Petrarch which is usually adduced to support the theory of a humanist presence at the Imperial Chancellery. Seibt attributes the letter to the Italian humanist Cola di Rienzo who was the Emperor's prisoner in Prague at this time. Turning to the question of patriotism, sometimes regarded as a manifestation of Hussite humanism, Seibt argues convincingly that Hussite patriotism was the consequence of a specific social-political situation prevalent in Bohemia rather than of any humanist *élan*.

The co-editor of the volume, Hans-Bernd Harder (Marburg an der Lahn) provides a survey of the main developments of early humanism in Bohemia and Moravia from the first evidence of humanist manuscripts in Prague, Olomouc and Krumlov to the opening up of contacts between the Bohemian Lands and Italy. During this period noblemen from Bohemia and Moravia studied in Italy: the lords of Rosenberg in Bologna (Ulrich in 1477 and his brother Peter in 1478); Prothasius Boskovitz of Černohra (later Bishop of Olomouc) at Ferrara in 1475; and Bohuslav Hasištejn of Lobkovicz (1461–1510) at Bologna from 1475 to 1480. Bohuslav's family seat, Burg Hassenstein in the north of Bohemia, contained manuscripts by Cicero, Horace and Ovid. Under the bishopric of Stanislaus Thurzó (1497–1540) Olomouc became an important centre of humanist learning. As Peter Wörster (Marburg an der Lahn) points out, Olomouc was the seat of a humanist circle from the time of John of Neumarkt (Bishop from 1366 to 80) thanks to the lack of Hussite disturbances in most of Moravia; this suggests that the reform movement in Bohemia itself impeded the growth of humanism in Prague until after the Hussite wars.

The earliest Italian humanist to take an active interest in the intellectual and religious life of Bohemia was Gian Francesco Poggio Bracciolini, author of a celebrated letter (1416) in praise of Hus's follower Jerome of Prague who was burnt at the stake in Constance. The contact between the two men, one a diplomat of the Papal Curia, the other a fiery non-conformist, is the subject of an essay by František Šmahel (Prague). Another Italian to turn his attention to Bohemia was Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) whose *Historia Bohemica* (1458) has enjoyed a considerable influence in Bohemia up to the present. According to Hans Rothe (Bonn), the *Historia* seeks to reconcile the conflicting interests of humanism and traditional Catholicism. A brilliant synthesis of historiographical scepticism and Christian revelation, the *Historia* sees the history of Bohemia as a resistance or "anti-imperium" to the Empire and its spiritual counterpart, the Holy See. While condemning the weakness and political inefficacy of the Luxembourg dynasty as the historical root of Hussitism, Piccolomini nevertheless perceived Bohemian heresy as part of God's secret providential plan for mankind.

An important aid to the dissemination of humanist learning in Central Europe (as elsewhere) was the invention of the art of printing in the form of movable type. Václav Bok (České Budějovice) discusses the neglected phenomenon of the German printing-press in the Bohemian Lands in the sixteenth centuy. According to Bok, German-language printing flourished in Prague, Cheb, Mladá Boleslav, Olomouc, Jihlava, Mikulov and Znojmo. Most of the printing took place in Prague where it enjoyed a steady continuity from the 1570's onwards. In his essay on the Czech humanist printer and historian Daniel Adam of Veleslavín, Josef Hejnic (Prague) concentrates on the phenomenon of Czech-language publishing: during his career in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, Veleslavín printed sixty-two works in Latin, sixty in Czech, two in German and fifteen in other languages. The Czech texts strengthened the unity of the legal life of Bohemia and Moravia as well as reinforcing the links between the schools and the Charles University.

Two of the essays contained in *Studien zum Humanismus* deal with the influence of humanism on the development of historical writing. For Jaroslav Kolár (Prague), the lay status of writers of historical prose in the sixteenth century endowed them with a non-partisan intellectual freedom denied to their medieval forbears. An example of this new type of historical writing is Hájek von Libočan's *Kronika česká* and its German translation. In his close textual study of the chronicle, Walter Schamschula (Berkeley, California) isolates various characteristics of humanist discourse, principally the "Etymologie als Denkform" (E. R. Curtius) according to which the etymology of nouns and proper nouns are believed to yield the true identity of places and characters: for example, the city of Prague (Praha) is derived from "práh" ("threshold") while "Čechy" (Bohemia) takes its name from the mythical father of the nation Čech (compare Romulus as founder of Rome). Hájek frequently compares the figures of Slavic mythology with those of classical legend: Libuše, the foundress of Prague, for instance, is attributed with even greater powers of prophecy than the renowned Sibyl of Cumae or Medea, wife of Jason (see book six of Vergil's *Aeneid*). Consistent with the examples set by the Roman historians Livy and Tacitus, Hájek includes references to classical deities like Jupiter, Mars and Ceres. Like earlier (medieval) chronicles, Hájek's *Kronika* aspired to lend legitimacy to Bohemia as a distinct political-cultural entity which, as Schamschula infers, should not be equated with nineteenth-century nationalism (based on one exclusive language), but on a linguistically undifferentiated sense of "Bohemian" identity.

All the works discussed in this volume – from chronicle to *Kleinepik* (Milan Kopecký) or drama (M. Česnaková, Werner Barlmeyer, Winfried Baumann) – are didactic and programmatic to a certain extent. In his analysis of Comenius's school drama *Diogenes cynicus redivivus* (1638/9) (performed under the author's own direction at Lessen grammarschool in Poland in 1640), Baumann sees this play, based on the work of the Cynic Diogenes, as fulfilling the great pedagogue's ambition to forge a "new man" from the metaphysical and political ruins of the Thirty Years War.

It is remarkable that few of these works are read today except by specialists and scholars. Why is it that in Italy, England and France humanist learning engendered a rich imaginative vernacular literature (from Petrarch and Ariosto in Italy to Shakes-

peare and Marlowe in England) while the literature of the Bohemian Lands was restricted to a largely scientific or didactic corpus of chronicle, epic and drama? Was the disruption of the fourteenth-century Czech vernacular literature by the Hussites so complete that the native literature could not regain its former powers? Did the entrenched religious politics of the fifteenth century prevent a flowering of a vernacular culture as enjoyed by France (Rabelais, Montaigne, Ronsard) and Spain (Cervantes, Lope de Vega and Calderón)? A general introduction to this erudite volume of essays could have begun to pose at least some of these fundamental questions.

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