

3-1-1991

Studies on Humanism in Bohemia - German - Harder, HB; Rothe, H

Mark Edward Clark

University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: http://aquila.usm.edu/fac_pubs



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Clark, M. E. (1991). Studies on Humanism in Bohemia - German - Harder, HB; Rothe, H. *Renaissance Quarterly*, 44(1), 116-117.
Available at: http://aquila.usm.edu/fac_pubs/7022

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

Hans-Bernd Harder and Hans Rothe, eds., with the assistance of Jaroslav Kolár and Slavomír Wollman. *Studien zum Humanismus in den böhmischen Ländern*. (Schriften des Komitees der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur Förderung der slawischen Studien, 11.) Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1988. vii + 566 pp. DM 158.

This collection of twenty-seven essays is the result of a conference held in 1985 at Kloster Walberberg in Brühl. The essays, written in German and summarized in Czech, are accompanied by extensive indices of persons (with spellings in Czech and Latin), subjects, places, titles of works discussed, and the names of authors of secondary literature. A bibliography is not provided.

The book invites comparison with the three volumes of essays recently edited by Albert Rabil, Jr., *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, which also has been reviewed in this journal (John W. O'Malley, *RQ* 43: 1 (Spring, 1990): 158–61). While the present volume does not equal the scope of Rabil's monumental undertaking and will not attract as wide an audience, its contribution to scholarship is welcome. In fact, both collections complement each other and can be profitably read together. For instance, Rado L. Lencek's discussion of the Slavic cultural tradition and Czech humanism in Rabil (2: 335–75) provides a valuable overview of the subject. The papers collected by Harder and Rothe bear splendid testimony to the complexities of intellectual activity in Renaissance Bohemia and Moravia.

In a short review, I cannot give full justice to all the essays, but two in particular require mention. In the lead article, "Gab es einen böhmischen Frühhumanismus?", Ferdinand Seibt cautiously deals with the connection between the Hussite revolution and early humanism. He argues, primarily on the basis of *Latinitas*, that the Hussite movement must be identified with the tradition of the late Middle Ages rather than with Renaissance humanism. Seibt's argument provides a basis for the scope of the project as a whole. While due attention is given to Hus and his followers in this volume, much greater focus is concentrated upon those figures whose contributions directly reflect the patterns of humanism elsewhere in Europe. This aim is clarified in the second article, by H.-B. Harder, which surveys the centers of humanism in Bohemia and Moravia. Harder delineates three phases of the historical development of humanism in Bohemia: the association of early Bohemian humanists with their Italian counterparts, the participation of

Czechs in such societies as the Viennese *Sodalitas litteraria Danubiana*, and the contributions of Bohemians to the northern Renaissance.

The remaining essays evaluate the significance of particular figures and explore related topics. For instance, excellent articles on Poggio's account of the trial of Jerome of Prague and on the *Historia bohémica* of Aeneas Silvius shed light upon the relationship between Italy and Bohemia. Other essays focus upon Stanislaus Thurzó and the circle of humanists at Olomouc, the political ideas of Bohuslaus Lobkowitz von Hassenstein, the Greek scholarship of Bohuslaus Balbinus, and the humanistic contribution of Georgius Sibus Daripinus in Moravia. An appropriate amount of attention is paid to Neo-Latin literature, particularly drama, but essays on Slavic literature are also included. Still other discussions provide insightful treatments of the book trade and publication, the introduction of the *studia humanitatis* at the University of Prague, the translation of texts into Czech and German, the expansion of humanistic and technical knowledge in sixteenth-century Bohemia, and the relationship between humanism and national languages.

Without exception, the articles are of uniformly high quality, each standing on its own as an independent contribution. One of the dangers of putting together a collection of such closely focused papers is that at times it may appear disjointed. The topics discussed here, however, have been selected in such a way that the reader will gain a sense of the role of the individual humanist, even one of minor significance, in the grand scheme of things. Moreover, the essays have been skillfully arranged and, apart from the occasional misprint, carefully edited.

The editors inform us in the preface that the subject of humanism in Bohemia will be addressed again at a conference in 1990. Let us hope that a second volume, as rich in substance as the present one, will follow.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI Mark Edward Clark

James S. Grubb. *Firstborn of Venice: Vicenza in the Early Renaissance State*. (The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, 106.) Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. xx + 238 pp. \$29.50.

As James Grubb notes in the introduction to his study of Vicenza during the first century of Venetian rule, the myth of Venice had