

Martin Mulsow, Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen, and Helmut Zedelmaier, eds., *Christoph August Heumann (1681–1764): Gelehrte Praxis zwischen christlichem Humanismus und Aufklärung*. Kulturwissenschaften/Gothaer Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit 12. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017. Pp. xvi+265. €54.00 (cloth).

Christoph Heumann is best known for his *Overview of the Republic of Letters* (*Conspectus reipublicae literariae*, 1718), a guide to learned history (*historia literaria*). The book was republished seven times in the eighteenth century, the last time posthumously in 1791 (see also my own article, “Structuring the History of Knowledge in an Age of Transition: The Göttingen *Geschichte* between *Historia Literaria* and the Rise of the Disciplines,” *History of Humanities* 2, no. 2 [2017]: 389–416, esp. 402–6). He was also the founder and editor (1715–28) of the first journal in history devoted especially to philosophy, the *Acta philosophorum* (the title clearly echoes Leibniz’s *Acta eruditorum* [1687–1787]; ironically, we now know Leibniz first as a “philosopher” and Heumann as an “erudite”—“philosophy” was of course a notoriously indeterminate category). But his work in the realm of philology, bibliography, biblical criticism, theology, and ethics has hitherto been largely neglected. A volume to make sense of the intellectual output of this well-selling workaholic and influential, nonradical “enlightened” author is long overdue. After all, a modern history of humanities should follow cultural-historical traditions in diving below the surface of the great names. For the strong currents that are hidden from view could have been very influential indeed.

Before Heumann started publishing, he first traveled through one of the most busy provinces of the Republic of Letters around 1700: the western part of the Dutch Republic. In a well-researched opening chapter, Kasper Risbjerg Eskildsen shows how many scholars of Heumann’s generation toured the Low Countries. Pillaging Heumann’s unpublished diary, Eskildsen presents a series of delightful portraits of scholars living in Holland and shows that this province attracted tourists who were interested in famous, and in particular in religiously controversial, men of learning. Some of these scholars became living monuments: must-sees for scholarly tourists. The reports of such meetings in Heumann’s diary read like selfies with celebs. Heumann’s tour of the Dutch “underground” functioned as “field work” for his later endeavours in the history of learning, although not in a straightforward way (12). The details about Dutch dissidents fail to appear in Heumann’s later work; the salutary effect of the tour was more general than that: it contributed to the education of the traveler by confronting him with the plurality of opinions, enhancing a tolerant attitude, and preventing prejudice. The fact that the behavior of Thomas Crusius (Crenius) is held up as a bad example against the polite attitude of many a radical thinker shows how much the tour was seen as contributing to

the scholarly habitus—of which the *Gelehrtenrepublik* became increasingly self-conscious in the early decades of the eighteenth century. The other chapters in this first third of the volume likewise deal with the social context of Heumann’s career: a fine article analyzes the trouble of anonymously fighting out polemics in scholarly journals that published reviews, including of course negative reviews. Of course, confusion about the identity of polemical authors was not new in what has been called the “humanistische Streitkultur,” but the new open infrastructure of journals and reviews certainly added to renewed reflection on the position of scholars in society. Martin Mulsow carries on the reflexion of the increasing “public sphere,” by showing how intricate the relationship was between printed epistolary essays and the actual manuscript correspondence network of Heumann, although half of his contribution is more of a discussion about the relation of paradigmatic scholarly work (a program of accumulation of knowledge through critique and emendation, often conducted by the middle and lower strata of the Republic of Letters) with the moderate enlightenment that characterizes Heumann’s work. The inventory of Heumann’s correspondence in the appendix will prove very useful for reconstructing Heumann’s network (the *Catalogus Epistularum Neerlandicarum* incidentally adds thirty more letters to this list). Helmut Zedelmaier addresses the character and importance of the *Conspectus* within the *historia literaria* tradition. The work is largely contextual, in that it makes the user aware of the material, institutional, and historical conditions in which critical assessment of bookish learning was conducted, rather than that it presents a “history” of learning in any narrative sense. Zedelmaier expands this insight to other *historiae literariae* and usefully problematizes the character of *historia literaria* as a genre. He also points to an issue that I think deserves its own volume: *historia literaria* was largely a phenomenon in German territory. Why?

The next two articles deal with Heumann’s much-read treatise *Der politische Philosophus* (a somewhat disorientating piece by the late Merio Scattola, and an important article by Marian Füssel about social hierarchies of scholars within and outside the Republic of Letters). Mulsow’s second contribution about Heumann’s little-known activity as a teacher of natural law shows that Heumann warned against theological prejudice and argued for a rational approach of the Bible. This seems to be confirmed by the commendable chapter of Christof Landmesser, who concludes that Heumann thought that the better grammarian (i.e., philologist) is also the better theologian (“*theologia christiana est grammatica*”—it reminded this reviewer of Scaliger’s famous dictum more than a hundred years earlier that “discords in religion proceed from nothing else than from ignorance of grammar”). But note that Landmesser also shows Heumann to axiomatically accept scripture’s authority as a hermeneutical starting point. Hanspeter Marti also cites Heumann’s linking of rationality with philology (in a long, source-driven, and paraphrasing chapter that shows Heumann presiding over a string of disputations

defended by several students over the course of some years that form a systematic series about ethics. Whereas Christoph Bultmann's analysis of the way in which Heumann used Grotius's *De veritate* moves away from philology to "natural religion," Bernward Schmidt's final contribution to Heumann's intervention in the debates about the historicity of Pope Joan affirms Heumann's commitment to philology and historical criticism: protestants should wield better arms against Catholicism than an obviously bogus story about a female pope.

In short: here we meet a scholar who taught in the academic powerhouse of Göttingen, who was read by three generations of students across Germany and probably beyond, who advanced rational philology as a foundation for Protestantism, and who drew some conclusions unwelcome to Lutheran colleagues: that the Reformed interpretation of the Last Supper was superior to the Lutheran one, and that combating Catholic corruption on the basis of legend was unworthy of rational criticism. It also shows Heumann as a teacher of the *history* of philosophy and as someone who, as far as he practiced or wrote as a philosopher, tied the subject to the moral position of scholars in society. The analysis of new material in this volume, as well as the fresh reading of known material, stresses the importance of paradigmatic people like Heumann as key figures in Enlightenment studies and not as epigones or non-innovative teachers. Failing to acknowledge the importance of Heumann in the history of learning and focusing solely on canonical scholars is like attempting to understand the history of politics by ignoring the role of the aristocracy and writing exclusively about monarchs. The result is a less revolutionary picture of the Enlightenment. The volume confirms the Enlightenment as standing in strong continuity with the humanist tradition of engaging critically with texts, history, and books.

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