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Karl Schuhmann. *Selected Papers on Renaissance Philosophy and on Thomas Hobbes.*

Eds. Piet Steenbakkers and Cees Leijenhorst. Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004. xiv + 278 pp. index. bibl. \$128. ISBN: 1-4020-1973-4.

Karl Schuhmann, who died from cancer in 2003 at the age of sixty-one, was an extraordinarily erudite scholar. Born in Germany, he moved to Louvain in 1963, where he worked in the Husserl Archives; later, in 1975, he became professor in the history of philosophy at the University of Utrecht. He was one of the world's leading experts on Husserl, author of several books on Husserl and the phenomenological movement, and editor (together with his wife) of Husserl's correspondence in ten volumes. Next, he was one of the world's leading Hobbes scholars, editor of the first critical edition of Hobbes's *De Corpore* and coeditor (with John Rogers) of the first critical edition of *Leviathan* (posthumously published in 2004 in two magnificent volumes). His third area of specialty was Renaissance philosophy, on which he published several important articles, in particular on Telesio and Patrizi. But he also wrote penetrating pages on Plato, Aristotle, Hermeticism, Francis Bacon, Spinoza, Gassendi, and other seventeenth-century thinkers.

This volume contains some of his best articles on Renaissance philosophy and on Hobbes, while another volume brings together some of his articles on Husserl and phenomenology. Except for two papers originally written in Dutch, which are published here in a German translation, the papers have generally been printed in their original (with minor alterations and emendations by the editors) so that, in spite of the English title, the volume contains only two articles in English, seven in German and three in French — a combination of languages which came easily and naturally to Schuhmann, but has sadly become an impediment to wide readership these days. Schuhmann himself made the selection, and while all articles are

important contributions to the field, it is a pity that it does not contain for instance his articles on Hobbes and Renaissance philosophy (most notably his “Thomas Hobbes und Francesco Patrizi” in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 1986; “Hobbes and Telesio” in *Hobbes Studies*, 1988; “Hobbes and Renaissance Philosophy” in *Hobbes oggi*, ed. A. Napoli, 1990), perhaps because they would have shown some overlapping with the articles here selected.

Seven papers are on Hobbes, often comparing his thought and scholarship to those of other thinkers (Plato and Aristotle, Bacon, Gassendi, Spinoza). They are required reading for anyone interested in Hobbes. His thorough survey of the Hobbesian *Short Tract* aims at showing that this work is definitively by Hobbes, an ascription however recently contested on paleographical grounds by Raylor and Malcolm. He questions the natural association of Spinoza and Hobbes, showing how much the two differ from each other in principle and detail. Other papers treat Telesio on matter; Telesio on space; the birth of the modern concept of time in Telesio, Patrizi, and Gassendi (a particularly impressive article); Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Hermeticism; Patrizi and Hermeticism. All these papers testify to Schuhmann’s wide-ranging scholarship, an impressive command of both primary sources and secondary literature, his keen eye for textual details, his interests in the use and transmission of texts and in the vagaries of quotations or dicta through the ages (e.g. the “homo homini lupus” in the article on Bacon and Hobbes). It is old-fashioned scholarship in the best sense of the word, showing a rare combination of a deep sensitivity to texts and their historical context on the one hand, and on the other hand a recurring attempt to place arguments in the broader framework of the history of philosophy, often comparing and contrasting arguments and systems of thought at a more general, structural level.

The richness of these papers and their close discussion of texts defy summarization, in particular those on Patrizi and Telesio, which I consider his best among the papers on Renaissance philosophy. The one on Pico is less groundbreaking, though Schuhmann convincingly shows how selective Pico’s reading of Ficino’s *Pimander* was, tracing Pico’s hermetic theses to Ficino’s text. The difference between the two is also well-brought out. For Pico the *Pimander* and *Asclepius* were not philosophical texts in the strict sense, lacking in particular an argumentative and ratiocinative method. In the end Pico was skeptical about Ficino’s account of a primeval wisdom in the hermetic writings only later to be rediscovered by Plato and Aristotle. Patrizi was more unconditionally enthusiastic about hermetic philosophy, as his *Discussiones Peripateticae* and his *Nova de universis Philosophia* show. Schuhmann gives a lucid treatment of Patrizi’s appropriation of hermetic thought.

The volume is well-edited, and provided with an index and a bibliography of Schuhmann’s works. The editors will not be disappointed in their hope, expressed at the end of their fine portrait of the author that this volume “will add to his fame as an extraordinary historian, and will keep alive the memory of an extraordinary man” (xiii).

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