

GOTIK IN BÖHMEN: GESCHICHTE, GESELLSCHAFTSGESCHICHTE, ARCHITEKTUR, PLASTIK UND MALEREI. Edited by *Karl M. Svoboda*. Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1969. 487 pp. DM 56.

The editor hints that an earlier publication, *Barock in Böhmen*, and the present volume may possibly be followed by three more—on the Romanesque, Renaissance, and nineteenth century—to form a pentalogy on Bohemian art. *The Gothic in Bohemia* deals with the most important artistic epoch of that country. Austrian and Bavarian specialists, some from the German University in Prague, joined forces to deal with architecture, sculpture, and painting spanning more than two hundred years; “minor arts” (metal work, stained glass, embroidery) unfortunately have been left out. Illustrations of excellent quality invite the reader to contemplate the qualities of the monuments.

Historical and sociohistorical introductions are provided by Karl Schwarzenberg and Ferdinand Seibt. Erich Bachmann’s discussion of architecture up to the Hussite wars, though basically chronological, is also organized topically (lay and monastic architecture, hall-churches, central structures). Well-deserved place is accorded to Peter Parler and the influence of his style. Hilde Bachmann’s survey of the sculpture of the Luxemburgian period is similarly arranged, with notable excursus into Austrian and Silesian production, both of which she considers influential. Czech researchers see the Silesian-Bohemian relationship in reverse. In addition to Parlerian sculpture, attention is paid to the “beautiful madonnas” and pietàs. Yet the main interest of Bachmann’s contribution is her tracing of foreign influences on the earlier production in Bohemia.

The longest and most important section is the one by Gerhard Schmidt on panel, wall, and manuscript painting. His authoritative text explores the Italian-inspired stratum around the middle of the fourteenth century and comes to grips with the attributional problems. He speaks of the “Beautiful Style” (*Schöne Stil*), in agreement with the terminology preferred by Czech art historians, whose work (even the most recent contributions) he knows well. This is less true of other contributors, such as the Bachmanns—as not only their discussion but also important omissions in the bibliography reveal. Czech place names are generally used alongside the German ones, a respect for others’ traditions that would have been unthinkable before World War II.

There are two more, appendixlike, short chapters dealing with the second century of developments. The one on architecture is by Götz Fehr; the other, by Christian Salm, is on painting and sculpture of the *Spätgotik*. The brevity does an injustice particularly to the architecture, in which truly remarkable formal solutions were developed in the late fifteenth century. The separation of these discussions from the body of their preceding developments reveals, perhaps unwittingly, the latent dilemma existing in the periodization of the arts in Northern Europe. The differences between this “Late Gothic” and Gothic proper are certainly greater than between the Renaissance and Mannerism, yet the latter was granted the status of an independent style and period. Steps toward an eventual recognition of this inconsistency have already been taken by introducing the concept of “Northern Renaissance” in painting. These new forms of Netherlandish origin, communicated through German intermediaries, constitute, paradoxically enough, the main fabric of the “Late Gothic” painting in Bohemia.

Czech researchers in their simultaneous endeavor to synthesize their presentation of Bohemian Gothic avoided this unsettled problem by limiting themselves to a much more consistent period in their *České Umění Gotické, 1350–1420* (Prague, 1970). It was carried out in anticipation of a large exhibition which unfortunately could not take place.

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JANUS PANNONIUS VERSEI. Edited by *Tibor Kardos*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1972. 322 pp. 34 Ft.

ELŐ HUMANIZMUS. By *Tibor Kardos*. Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1972. 654 pp. 35 Ft.

Five hundred years ago (March 27, 1472) Janus Pannonius, the most celebrated poet of the Hungarian Renaissance, died. Son of a Croatian father and a Hungarian mother, a relative of the powerful king Matthias Corvinus, and a nephew of the respected archbishop Johannes Vitez, he was destined to have a career that reflected the turbulent and controversial times of fifteenth-century Hungary.

Trained in the humanist tradition, Pannonius was sent at an early age to the famous Ferrara school of Guarinus, became his favorite student, and was soon stunning his friends and patrons with his literary brilliance and knowledge of classical authors. In 1458, having completed his theological studies at Padua, and by then famous as a poet, he returned to Hungary to serve Matthias at the royal court. Soon after he was made bishop of Pécs, thus achieving a politically important, and lucrative, position in the Hungarian hierarchy. Nevertheless, it was exactly the time when the Italian humanist past and the crude realities of a culturally barren daily existence in Hungary confronted one another in his mind and in his poetry. A lavishly executed trip to Rome (1465) representing Matthias at the papal court brought only temporary relief and ultimately deepened his embitterment. He was a true Renaissance man, also in terms of ambitions. His poetry could not flourish "in exile," away from his beloved Italy, and his political concepts (all-out war against the Turks instead of attacking the West) were rejected by an even more ambitious Matthias, whose aim was to become German-Roman emperor. In a last desperate effort, the already ailing Janus (together with other dissatisfied oligarchs) organized a plot against the monarch—and lost. Fleeing the wrath of the king, he died, a broken man, in the Slavonian fortress of his friend, Oswaldus Thuz, bishop of Zagreb. However, his poetry (as far as we know he only wrote in Latin) has survived and has appeared in many anthologies, as well as separate editions, and in various translations into Hungarian and Croatian.

Commemorating the five hundredth anniversary of Pannonius's death, Tibor Kardos, the outstanding Hungarian Renaissance scholar, has published a new selection of his poetry in Hungarian translation, with a seventy-page assessment of his life and work. The collection contains epigrams, elegies, and longer works by Pannonius, in the by now traditional groupings that reflect the three major stations of his life—the Ferrara, the Padua, and the Hungarian periods. The Hungarian rendering (including both earlier and recent translations) is the work of several translators and poets, among them Sándor Weöres, Gyula Illyés, and the editor, Kardos.