

Tomislav Matić, Humanisten als Händler von Geheimnissen. Die Rolle des Frühhumanismus im zentraleuropäischen Informationsaustausch am Beispiel des Johannes Vitez von Sredna

Abstract: Humanists as Dealers of Secrets. The Role of Early Humanism in the Central European Exchange of Information

This paper investigates connections between politics and scholarship in mid-15th century Central Europe. It focuses on the circles formed around influential politicians who harboured artistic and scholarly leanings toward Renaissance Humanism. Such persons were Enea Silvio Piccolomini, John Vitez of Sredna, and Prokop of Rabštejn. Four cases concerning these men and their circles are considered which could point towards interdependence between diplomatic liaisons and the spreading of Humanism. These are the meeting and the first exchange of letters between Piccolomini and Vitez; the persons travelling between the Imperial court and the court of King Ladislav in Prague in 1453/54; the astrologers employed by both the Emperor and Ladislav in the 1450s; and a winter gathering of Humanists at Vitez's palace in 1462. All of these cases included exchange of confidential information. The results of this research suggest that there was an international network of Humanistically inclined diplomats at the time, and that its primary purpose was intelligence gathering. The Humanist aspect of this network seems to be a by-product of these connections, but one should not disregard the fact that it was precisely their scholarly interests that may have brought these men together. They would no doubt have lent books and recommended their protégés to each other, as well as exchange letters. It would therefore be beneficial to view Humanist scholarly endeavour in the context of political agendas.

Keywords: Renaissance Humanism – diplomacy – Central Europe – Renaissance literature – astrology

Schlagworte: Renaissance-Humanismus – Diplomatie – Mitteleuropa – Renaissance-Literatur – Astrologie