

Paul Richard Blum. *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism*.

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Paul Richard Blum notes at the start of this volume that, “The benchmark of philosophical quality is what philosophers learnt on school benches” (xi): what most early modern philosophers learned, of course, were innumerable variations on Aristotle’s philosophy. The essays collected in *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism* cash out the implications of this remark by tracing an erudite path through the intellectual and pedagogical worlds of what Blum terms “school philosophy”: the forms of philosophy taught in universities and colleges across Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The seventeen essays in this collection, many of them translated from German, French, and Italian for the first time, draw together Paul Richard Blum’s diverse and important work on early modern Aristotelian philosophy and theology and the intellectual culture

of the Society of Jesus. As Blum emphasizes in the preface, the historiography of both fields has changed greatly over the past few decades, moving from initial, “apologetic” work that stressed the validity of these topics for intellectual historians to a more self-confident historiography that maps the vast intellectual diversity of Renaissance and early modern responses to Aristotle’s philosophy: Blum’s own work has done a great deal to influence this transition. Yet as these essays show in different ways, there is still much territory left to explore.

The collection is divided into three sections. The first, “Philosophy at Early Modern Schools,” focuses on the philosophical and pedagogic cultures of the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, with particular emphasis on Jesuit philosophy teaching in Hungary and the German lands. In part, this section develops themes first explored in Blum’s 1998 book, *Philosophenphilosophie und Schulphilosophie: Typen des Philosophierens in der Neuzeit* (Franz Steiner Verlag). The second section, “Science from the Renaissance through the Enlightenment,” includes essays on topics in the history of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century natural philosophy, from the reception of Averroes to the place of mathematics in university pedagogy, again with a primary focus on Jesuit authors. Essays in the last part of the book, “Metaphysics and Theology,” include a discussion of the Jesuit (and legendary Prague philosophy professor) Roderigo de Arriaga’s treatment of the immortality of the soul and a study of the shifting conceptions of ontology that lay behind the development of Porphyrian logic trees in early modern textbooks. Two appendixes, on Dante and early Jesuit education, conclude the volume.

Within the collection, individual essays range from tightly focused monographic studies of individual authors, often based on painstaking archival work, such as “Péter Pázmány: The Cardinal’s Philosophy” (chapter 4), which examines the lectures and philosophical textbooks the future Hungarian cardinal produced at the beginning of his career, to broader overviews such as “Jesuits between Religion and Science” (chapter 6), which traces the complexities of the relationship between natural philosophy and natural theology within the Society. “Benedictus Pererius: Renaissance culture at the Origins of Jesuit Science” (chapter 9) presents a thoughtful reading of the Collegio Romano professor’s natural philosophical project and its relationship to humanist erudition. “Apostolato dei Collegi: On the Integration of Humanism in the Educational Program of the Jesuits” (chapter 2) develops some of these themes on a larger scale, tackling the place of humanism within Jesuit educational practice.

The best feature of this collection is its marriage of erudition with a sense of the broader intellectual landscape: some of the best essays combine acute attention to the philosophical issues at stake with careful textual and contextual work. However, although the emphasis in many of the essays on Jesuit authors gives the volume coherence and focus, it also clearly signals its boundaries: while the engagement of authors like Pererius with intellectual traditions outside of Catholic scholasticism, and the eclecticism of Jesuits like Honoré Fabri, is stressed throughout, this book offers a look at late Renaissance intellectual culture from one significant, but not necessarily typical, perspective. For all the rich and often unexpected perspectives

it offers, the book also has some blemishes: in particular, the English translations are not as clear, idiomatic, and fluent as they could be. Overall, though, *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism* has something to offer to historians of philosophy as well as to its target audience of specialists in the intellectual history of early modern Aristotelianism.

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