

PhD thesis, supervisor's report:

Pavel Vrtílka – *Ars inveniendi als philosophische Methode. Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651-1708) und seine angewandte Erkenntnistheorie*

Pavel Vrtílka achieved his MA degree at the Hussite Theological Faculty of the Charles University as early as 2005; his MA thesis was devoted to Spinoza *qua* the author of the *Compendium grammatices linguae Hebraeae*. He did not continue his academic career immediately thereafter; for several years to come, he worked (among others) as a librarian, an editor, a translator, or a product manager. However, he never ceased engaging in the field of the Early Modern thought: he managed, during that period, to prepare and publish his own edition and translation of Spinoza's *Compendium grammatices* (Prague 2015) and to join Tschirnhaus-Gesellschaft e. V. and of Oberlausitzische Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften e. V.

It was not until 2015 that I met him in person as he suggested to me that I supervise his PhD studies at our department, his aim being to deal in his envisaged PhD thesis with epistemological and methodological layers of the *Medicina mentis* by Walter von Tschirnhaus. This proposed project caught my interest immediately as it seemed to me that such an envisaged result might well amount to an important contribution to the history of ideas in the Early Modern period and that Pavel Vrtílka was well disposed – given his expert background and linguistic abilities – to deliver that much. In view of the proposed topic, I insisted that the dissertation be written in one of the major languages of international discourse in philosophy and history of ideas. I am very glad that Pavel Vrtílka accepted my demand, that he eventually managed to fulfil his PhD studies and that he indeed has delivered what he proposed in terms of the present dissertation.

Pavel Vrtílka's principal objective in his PhD thesis is to take up, delimit and analyse the epistemological, logical and methodological layers of Tschirnhaus's overall intellectual stance, focusing, quite naturally, mainly on the *Medicina mentis*; to set the results of these procedures in the context of the long tradition of thought on the *ars inveniendi* from Aristotle up to Leibniz; and to pick up shifts and modifications by Tschirnhaus concerning the grasp of the nature and scope of the topical method in question. As for details and critical feedback, I leave it to the distinguished and highly competent opponents of the present PhD thesis. By my lights, Pavel Vrtílka has succeeded in putting forward a valuable and useful contribution to the history of ideas of 18th century in Europe, which clearly exhibits his competence and skill in the given field of historical and philosophical enquiry. Therefore I unhesitatingly recommend the present PhD thesis of his for defence.

Jan Palkoska, Prague, 16th November 2023