

Pozvánka na přednášku

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Vita activa/Vita contemplativa:
The ethical and civic Ideal of Gasparo Contarini,
Venetian Nobleman and Cardinal

V rámci přednáškového cyklu
Renaissance a novověk I

5.3. v 15:00 hod.

Katedra filosofie FF UP Olomouc
Křížkovského 12, učebna 220

'Vita activa'/'vita contemplativa':

The Ethical and Civic Ideals of Gasparo Contarini († 1542), Venetian Nobleman and Cardinal

It is well known that the aspiration to live a life which would link together *negotium* and *otium*, political commitment and the search for wisdom, the 'active life' and the 'contemplative life' was present and recurrent in both classical and Christian culture and philosophy. A lot has been written on these themes in recent decades, with a specific focus on the development of its interpretation among medieval thinkers. Among these some masters in the arts faculties seem to have made the first steps towards a secular way of thinking, one which is no longer religious, a contrast between a life in the *saeculum* and a contemplative life which required one to *exire de saeculo*. Without hardly any loss of continuity this contrast came to form the central nucleus of the aspirations of the humanists. Petrarch, while meditating on the *vita solitaria*, raises the question as to what should be the way of life of those who distance themselves from the scholastic manner of doing philosophy and theology in order to recover, reformulate and revive the civic and aesthetic ideals of the Greeks and the Latins and the religious ideals of the Fathers. From Salutati to Bruni, from Bracciolini to Leon Battista Alberti and Cristoforo Landino, and even as far as Erasmus and Thomas More and their contemporaries, reflection upon and (not infrequently) discussion of the way in which one should live wisely is a theme which is constantly present and to which specific writings are often dedicated. Gasparo Contarini was a member of one of the leading noble families of Venice. A student of Pietro Pomponazzi at Padua, he was then a functionary and later ambassador of the Republic of Venice. In those which had been the last years of his life he was created bishop and cardinal, and was a representative of the Pope in the delegations which met with the German reformers (he was at the Diet of Regensburg). But he was also a leading member of a circle of Catholic laymen and ecclesiastics (among whom was the English cardinal, Reginald Pole) who aimed at promoting the reform of the Catholic Church. Some of his writings deal with the question regarding the pre-eminence or otherwise of the 'contemplative life' (understood not only in the Aristotelian sense) over the 'active life', the latter being understood as civic commitment, an ideal towards which above all the formation of those who have public responsibilities should tend. He also wrote a *De officio viri boni et probi episcopi*, a kind of *Speculum episcopi*. Sperone Speroni, in his *Dialogo della vita Attiva et Contemplativa*, assigns to Contarini the role of someone who sustains the primacy of the *vita contemplativa*, a role assigned polemically perhaps, given that nearly all of Contarini's life was spent at the service of the Republic of Venice and of the Papacy.

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