

## Hans Baron (1900–1988)

On November 26 of last year the celebrated Renaissance historian Hans Baron died at his home in Urbana, Illinois, at the age of 88. He lived long enough to see the appearance of a two-volume work entitled *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism* (Princeton, 1988), containing seventeen essays in English, some previously published in various languages but in most cases radically revised and others hitherto published.

Baron was born in Berlin, studied at Leipzig and Berlin, and received his doctorate from the latter university in 1922. Following several years of post-doctoral study at Berlin and Italy, he served as research assistant on the Historical Commission of the Munich Academy of Sciences from 1928 to 1933. During the same period he held the position of Privatdozent in medieval and modern history at the University of Berlin. In 1924 and 1925 he edited two volumes of Ernst Troeltsch's work (*Deutscher Geist und Westeuropa; Gesammelte kulturphilosophische Aufsätze und Reden* and *Spektator-Briefe; Aufsätze über die Deutsche Revolution und die Weltpolitik 1918/22*). His *Calvin's Staatsanschauung und das konfessionelle Zeitalter* (1924) reflects the initial orientation of his research interests but studies in Italy led him to focus on the Italian humanists of the early Quattrocento. In his *Leonardo Bruni Aretino. Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften mit eingearbeiteter Chronologie seiner Werke und Briefe* (1928) he first used the term "Bürger-Humanismus" ("civic humanism").

Leaving Nazi Germany in 1933, he studied in Italy and England before coming to the United States in 1938. From 1944 to 1948 he was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. From 1949 to 1965 he served at the Newberry Library in Chicago as Research Fellow and Bibliographer and from 1965–1970 as Distinguished Research Fellow. Institutions where he held teaching appointments include Queens College, Johns Hopkins University, Ohio State University, Cornell University, University of Chicago, Dartmouth College and Harvard University.

After intensive study of the character of Italian humanism in several dozen articles in as many years, in 1955 he published his best known work, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., Princeton; revised in one volume, 1966; second revised edition published in Italian 1970). Reinforced by a third volume largely devoted to a redating of many literary sources, *The Crisis* provided a new orien-

tation for much of the discussion of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian humanism. Baron's *From Petrarch to Bruni: Studies in Humanistic and Political Literature* appeared in 1968 and his *Petrarch's Secretum* in 1985.

Grants from the Guggenheim Foundation (1943–44 and 1975), the American Philosophical Society (1943–44), the Rockefeller Foundation (1961–63), and the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences (1967–68) aided his research. In 1957 he was awarded an honorary L.H.D. by Lawrence University and in 1985 the Premio Internazionale Forte dei Marmi for his contribution to the study of Italian history.

Despite a lifelong struggle with his hearing, Hans Baron was a superb teacher. With his passionate curiosity, indefatigable attention to the sources, unsurpassed talent for synthesis, and consummate generosity, he became master to many scholars of the younger generations both in the United States and abroad.

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