



KLÍMA, OTAKAR

KLÍMA , OTAKAR (b. Prague, 15 Nov. 1908; d. Prague, 29 Dec. 1988), Czech orientalist and philologist.

Otakar Klíma had a modest upbringing. He was the only child of a civil servant employed in military stores. After graduating from a gymnasium in Prague, he studied from 1927 until 1931 at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University (Univerzita Karlova) in Prague. There he studied Slavic, Germanic, and Oriental languages under Bedřich Hrozný (1879-1952), Vincenc Lesný (1882-1953), Jan Rypka (1886-1968), Oldřich Hujer (1880-1942), and Felix Tauer (1893-1981). He received his doctorate in 1931 with a thesis on “*Duál v hlaholských textech staroslověnských*” (Dual in Glagolitic Old Slavonic Texts) (Bečka, 1988, p. 304). But since his early university years, he was particularly interested in Old and Middle Iranian languages. At the time, there was no specialist in these fields in Prague, and his economic situation did not allow him to continue his studies abroad, so he had to access these complex studies unassisted.

From 1931 to 1952, he served as a Czech and German teacher in several gymnasiums in Prague. During all these years, he continued studying Latin, Sanskrit, Greek, Armenian, Syriac, Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, and, of course, Iranian languages. In 1953, he was offered a research position at the Department of the Near East and Africa at the Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. Later, he became head of this department. He retired at 65 in 1973 (*Bio-bibliographies*, p. 303).



Klíma started publishing his scholarly works at a relatively late stage. But he was a prolific scholar and authored more than 250 works (including ca. 140 reviews) written in Czech, German, French, Russian, and English. However, the fact that many of his articles were written in Czech and often in rare journals did not particularly help the diffusion of his works in Western Europe and the United States. The circulation of these articles has remained more often limited to the Slavic area. His first relevant work was a *Grammar of Hebrew and Aramaic* (1956) in collaboration with Stanislav Segert (1921-2005), but most of his later works are related to the Iranian world. His interests extended to Iranian history, history of religion (Zoroastrianism, [Manicheism](#), and [Mazdakism](#), with a particular attention to social problems), and Iranian philology and literature. Central in his scholarly works is the study of the Mazdakite movement to which several of his works are closely related. Social and political aspects of the Mazdakite movement were particularly attractive and studied in the Socialist countries of Eastern Europe (after World War II) and the Soviet Union (after the October Revolution). Very often Mazdak was there represented as a proto-communist (Ognibene and Gariboldi). In any case, Klíma's analysis in his main work of 1957 is very balanced and useful. This monograph was awarded a prize from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (Bečka, 1979, p. 171).

Klíma's scholarship in the field is best reflected in his *Sláva a pád starého Iránu* (Prague, 1977), an account of the history and way of life in ancient Iran until the advent of Islam.

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“Mazdak,” *Nový Orient* 14, 1959, pp. 150-51. “Mazdakitskoe dvizhenie,” *Soobshcheniya chekhoslovatskikh orientalistov* I, Moscow, 1960, pp. 68-76.

Beiträge zur Geschichte des Mazdakismus, *Dissertationes Orientales* 37, Prague, 1977.

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“Manicheismus,” *Nový Orient* 5, 1949-50, pp. 17-20.

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“Zarathuštra, íránský prorok” (Zarathustra, the Prophet of Iran), *Nový Orient* 13, 1958, pp. 66-67.

“The Date of Zoroaster,” *Archív Orientální* 27, 1959, pp. 556-64. *Zarathuštra*, Prague, 1963.

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“Dualismus v předislámském Íráně” (Dualism in Pre-Islamic Iran), *Nový Orient* 25, 1970, pp. 164-68.

“Zarathuštra,” *Věda a technika mládeži*, 1970, pp. 168-69.

“Das Datum Zarathustras,” *Iranische Mitteilungen* 2, 1987, pp. 49-67.

On Iranian philology and literature.

“Dějiny avestské, staroperské a středoperské literatury” (History of Avestan, Ancient Persian and Middle Persian Literature), in Jan Rypka, ed., *Dějiny perské a tádžické literatury* (History of Persian and Tajik Literature), Prague, 1956, pp. 15-68, 411-16; repr. 1963; German ed., Leipzig, 1959, pp. 1-67, 565-71; Eng. ed., Dordrecht, Holland, 1968, pp. 1-67, 753-56; Polish ed., Warsaw, 1970; Russian ed., Moscow, 1970; Pers. ed., Tehran, 1991.

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