
Introduction

The 2014 and 2016 Symposia

Over fifty people participated in the Eleventh Symposium of the Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice held from 18–20 June 2014 and over forty at the Twelfth Symposium held from 15–17 June 2016. There were thirty-two papers presented during the eleventh symposium and twenty at the twelfth. Each provided for three very full days of reflection and animated discussion. During the Business Meeting of the 2014 Symposium, it was agreed that we change our editorial policy so that all BRRP papers submitted by a fixed deadline would be considered for publication in the next volume. Thus, this volume contains papers from two symposia (2014 and 2016). The next volume will contain papers from both 2016 and 2018. The hope is that this will see papers published more quickly. As has become our tradition, the Symposium was held under the auspices of the Collegium Europaeum which is, itself, jointly sponsored by the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University. Both symposia were held in the Academic Conference Centre located in the heart of the Old Town of Prague which provides a pleasant and comfortable work environment. David Holeton, Zdeněk V. David, Martin Dekarli and Phillip N. Haberkern organised the symposia with the support of Petr Hlaváček, Coordinator of the Collegium Europaeum.

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This volume contains eleven of the papers selected from those presented during the 2014 and 2016 symposia. Many of the authors will be familiar to readers of these pages, while others are by scholars who presented at BRRP for the first time. Again, Zdeněk V. David translated texts submitted in Czech into English. David Holeton continued as principal editor and was joined by Martin Dekarli and Phillip Haberkern. Without the hard work of our editorial team and support by the Czech Science Foundation (Grant No. 17–08410Y) this volume would not have seen the light of day.

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BRRP is interested in finding new participants in its symposia and is always glad to have new young scholars willing to offer the fruits of their research. We also welcome “aspirants” interested in participating in the sessions of the symposium. We hope that the day will soon come when their research and writing has arrived at the stage when they feel prepared to share their work with their colleagues at BRRP. There they will always find themselves both welcome and encouraged in their academic efforts.

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Keeping with the tradition of BRRP, we have asked Pavlína Rychterová to write a short contribution to the Introduction in which she addresses the broader topic and current trends in contemporary research.

Bohemian Reformation and the Vernacular

Religious production in vernacular languages, especially in Czech is one of the characteristic features of the Bohemian Reformation. The vernacular was a very important strategy of identification able to bind the usually disconnected religious, ethnic, and political (regional) identities together and generate a very potent aggregate of identifications. The understanding of the vernacular as the only ‘genuine’ language of the true (Hussite) faith was present in the movement from its beginnings, but it never was supported by an elaborated doctrine and as such it never gained an overwhelming authority, very likely because communication with ‘the enemy’ had to be maintained, and the primary goal of the movement, the reform of the universal Church as well, even then when it was clear that reform would stay limited to Bohemia.

Although the internationalisation of Czech Hussite studies from the 1960s onwards provided innovative theoretical as well as methodological inputs, religious texts produced in Czech in this context remained largely marginalised, confined to Czech literary studies and philology both lacking international scholarly networks and struggling, as they still do, to counter prevailing nationalistic and vulgar Marxist models. A scholarly treatment of the given material has never made any headway. Many of the Czech religious and theological texts do not have any own ‘history’, quoted mainly to illustrate preconceived judgments about their role in the development of Czech language, identity, and literary production.

Even though a large number of texts written by the most distinguished personalities of the Hussite movement are preserved, no systematic historiographic research on them is yet available. Several key texts are not even critically edited so far, while in many cases the editions are very old and do not meet standards of a modern critical edition. The Czech works of Jan Hus critically edited by Jiří Daňhelka represent an exception; the edition,

nevertheless, has not yet led to any systematic historiographic research on the place of the vernacular religious educative work of Hus in the context of European religious literature.

Just recently the vernacular production from the time of the Bohemian reformation has moved into the focus of historiography. The ERC project “Origins of the Vernacular Mode” (OVERMODE) granted to Pavlína Rychterová in the year 2010 aimed at a comparative study and a European contextualisation of late medieval vernacular religious literature in East-Central Europe. It has had as its main goal the re-formulation of several key research approaches pursued in Central and especially Eastern Central European historiographies, philologies and literary studies. The focus of the project on the political dimension of vernacular religious literatures proved to be very fruitful, especially for the research on the dynamic of the Bohemian reformation, on the character of the participation of the laity in it as well as in the other reform movements, on the vernacular character of the reform propaganda, as well as on the strategies of social and religious identifications in Eastern Central Europe.

The individual research tasks of the project were embedded in a dense international scholarly network of research projects on late medieval religious education and on medieval translation (See COST Action IS1301 “New Communities of Interpretation: Contexts, Strategies and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe”, for further information see http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/isch/IS1301). The project has succeeded in turning the overall focus of medieval research in the respective area to vernacular as well as multilingual texts and their social as well as political dimension. It was shown among other things that the vernacular texts from the sources for the history of the Hussite revolution are much more important than previous research assumed. The history of ideas needs to be re-written with a new focus on these texts which are to be regarded not only as witnesses of lay education but as crucial works shaping the basic revolutionary ideology.

Among the project’s publications, the volume *Pursuing a New Order Vol. II., Late Medieval Vernacularisation, and the Bohemian Reformation* has to be mentioned (Turnhout: Brepols 2018, forthcoming) The material covers the second half of the fourteenth century to the first half of the sixteenth beginning with the so-called Hussite ‘forerunners’ including the Austrian Augustinian canon and preacher Conrad Waldhauser. Fourteenth-century Prague was a city where two vernaculars were present – Czech and German. The starting point of David Mengel’s article is a passage of Waldhauser’s *Postilla studentium sanctae Pragensis universitatis*, in which textual elements have been identified, referring to the act of singing in three different languages during the celebration of Easter. This evidence raises the question of the practice of multilingualism in the parishes of Prague during the pre-Hussite period. The survey of primary sources provides an insight into the

practical use of and the relation between Czech, German, and Latin as an act of collective participation in liturgical performance.

The study of Martin Dekarli provides a typology of manuscript traditions of the works by John Wyclif in late-medieval Bohemia, understood as a product of late-medieval *ruminatio* or *réécriture*, a concept focusing on the individual reading and reproduction of texts. Conceiving the act of translation as a political undertaking, Dekarli concentrates on the reception of Wyclif's works in the context of the Bohemian Reformation, paying particular attention to the only extant medieval translation of the *Dialogus* in the Czech vernacular, ascribed to Jakoubek of Stříbro, which is analysed from a literary-critical perspective with regard to the authoritative character of John Wyclif's oeuvre.

Pavel Soukup's analysis focuses on a hitherto unedited and understudied Latin postil of Jan Hus, the so-called *Puncta*, composed at the beginning of the fifteenth century. A detailed comparative study of the relevant manuscript variants and fragments mirrors the processes of linguistic modification and transformation of Hus's sermons, which were delivered in Czech but written down in Latin. The author scrutinises stylistic characteristics of the *Puncta*, the corpus of its sources, and the preservation of, predominantly paratextual, vernacular materials in the text. The methodological limits of reconstructing the oral delivery of Hus's preaching are also discussed in the essay.

The *Tabule veteris et novi coloris*, a propagandistic and very popular work among the Hussite reformers by Nicholas of Dresden, contrasting the Apostolic and the Roman Church, and its Czech adaptation from the turn of the fifteenth and to the sixteenth century have attracted considerable scholarly attention. Nonetheless, several central aspects of this text have been neglected so far. Petra Mutlová's study is devoted to the structural analysis of the *Tabule* in the context of the manuscript transmission of Latin and Czech versions; special emphasis has been placed on a comparison of the different Latin and vernacular versions significantly varying from each other, enhanced with a broader view of related sources.

Jan Hus's *Czech Sunday Postil* was composed in the most precarious period of conflict in the Bohemian reform movement and represents his first and only complete compilation of sermons in the Czech language. From a philological perspective, Jan Odstrčilík pursues a detailed analysis of the only almost complete Latin translation of the *Czech Sunday Postil*, preserved in a manuscript in Brno. Besides the context of transmission, the author analyses the multilingual characteristics of the translation, with a particular focus on linguistic phenomena. The essay offers the first discussion of methodological problems of research into multilingual sermons.

Master Andrzej of Dobczyn was an outstanding proponent of religious reforming ideas formulated in the Polish vernacular, one of the few supporters of Wycliffite doctrines in fifteenth-century Cracow known by name. Paweł Kras devotes his article to the so-called *Song on Wyclif* (*Pieśń o Wicklefie*)

transmitted in a letter by Andrzej in 1449 to an unknown feudal lord, which points to the corruption of the Roman Church by praising Wyclif's philosophical and ecclesiastical teachings. Considering the intellectual and political framework of Andrzej's writings, the essay analyses the role of Polish as a medium of religious communication, concentrating on the strategies and consequences of using the vernacular for the dissemination of dissident theological concepts in late-medieval Poland.

The prose adaption of the *Vitas patrum* in Czech may be characterised as a 'bestseller' among late-medieval and early-modern Bohemian literature. Nevertheless, due to the lack of a modern edition, it has only attracted limited scholarly attention, which explains the motivation for the present study. Jakub Sichálek addresses himself to the translation of the *Vitas patrum* written by the Bohemian country nobleman Řehoř Hrubý of Jelení. His essay focuses on the transmission of the manuscripts with a special emphasis on the widely overlooked preface in two different versions, including a reflection on the ideological and methodological foundation of Řehoř Hrubý's translation. This leads subsequently to the question of the target group and recipients of the Czech *Vitas patrum* among the Catholic and Utraquist readership.

The essay of Jiří Černý concentrates on the literary production of the Anabaptist groups in sixteenth-century Moravia. The author investigates early printings of the Nikolsburg reformers Johannes Spittelmaier, Oswald Glaidt, and Balthasar Hubmaier, in order to reveal Anabaptist strategies in the creation and promotion of a unifying religious identity. In the setting of the Reformation, the German language appears as an effective means to construct a religious sense of belonging, dissociating itself from those used by other religious denominations. Apart from the ideological significance of using the vernacular, the proponents' approach to the languages of Scripture and its translation, as well as theoretical reflections on oral communication in the vernacular, are considered.

Among the project outputs also the PhD Thesis of Jan Odstrčilík belongs with the title Analysis of Two Latin Translations of Hus's Czech Sunday Postil in the MSS Brno, Moravian Library, Mk 56 and Mk 91 and their Partial Edition. It represents the first formulation of a completely new research strand in Eastern Central European historiography and philology. Odstrčilík was able to develop an interdisciplinary research approach concerning the multilingual homiletic texts extant in great number and variety in the Central and Eastern Central European area and untouched by research until now. The study represents a major contribution to the translation studies and studies on late medieval multilingualism especially because it introduced the Slavic languages into the comparative research and helps, therefore, to differentiate the comparative approaches on the given material. It represents also a major contribution to contemporary Hussite studies, because the great number of multilingual homilies produced in Bohemia may help to illuminate the

relationship of Utraquist and Catholic lay believers especially in the second half of the fifteenth century in more detail and contribute, therefore, significantly to the research on the transformation of religious communication in Late medieval Bohemia.

The research on the Bohemian Reformation, especially concerning lay participation, education and collective identities cannot provide us with sound results without a detailed, methodologically well elaborated comparative research concerning the transformation of religiosity in individual European regions during the fifteenth century. Besides a whole range of religious educative innovations, including liturgical ones, may be detected especially in economically well-developed regions of the time. Concerning the methodologies of comparison, critical editions should play a crucial role. The collaborative sub-project “The *Vade mecum in tribulatione* of John of Rupescissa in Seven Vernaculars” concentrated on one of the most popular late medieval prophetic works, *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, written by French Franciscan John of Rupescissa in the 1350s in Latin. The project focused on the edition and comparative analysis of medieval vernacular translations and adaptations of the text extant. Sixteen individual translations into seven medieval vernaculars were identified, edited and cross-analysed whereas various interdependencies were described by an international team of philologists who were working on the editions of individual texts.

John of Rupescissa’s *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, composed in 1356 in Avignon, was the most widely copied eschatological-prophetic text of the Middle Ages written by a known author. There are forty-three known copies of complete or abbreviated Latin versions. Documented evidence exists of several others. The work was translated into French, English, German, Czech, Italian, Catalan, Castilian, and probably Hebrew (not extant). Four different translations and/or versions of one translation are known in French, three in German, three in Czech, three in Castilian, two in Italian, and single copies in English and Catalan respectively. The number of languages in which the *Vade mecum in tribulatione* was translated is very high compared even with the most popular medieval religious educative bestsellers as *Horologium sapientiae* of Heinrich Seuse or *Meditationes vitae Christi*. The first, very detailed translation was made into French already two years after Rupescissa finished his prophetic warning which contains a critique of the church hierarchy, orders as well as the secular lordship, information on the arrival of the Antichrist and of future plagues and catastrophes. The reception of Rupescissa’s prophetic compendium in medieval Europe shows how different texts were read and interpreted. The edition of all the extant translations of *Vade mecum in tribulatione* provides an excellent basis for new approaches concerning late medieval religiosity. Two independent Czech translations (adaptations) of the text were made to interpret the Hussite reformation and subsequent religious wars. Their textual context may help us to understand better the ways how individuals as well as groups understood the events they

experienced and the texts they used to define their own place in the events. The joint editorial work, the first enterprise of this type in medieval studies will be published in 2018 by Vita & Pensiero, the publishing house of the University of Milan.

Individual achievements of the OVERMODE project demonstrate how rich the material is with the help of which we may enlarge our knowledge on the many facets of religious life in Bohemia during the fifteenth century.

Pavλίna Rychterová

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The Fourteenth Symposium of BRRP will take place at the Academic Conference Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague 17.–19. June 2020.

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