

Nobility and the codification of the Bohemian town law

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the influence of the nobility in the process of codifying Bohemian town law, in particular during the sixteenth century, and with the reasons of success of the Town laws of the Bohemian kingdom by Pavel Kristián of Koldín. It describes the evolution of royal towns and town law from the Hussite Revolution to the release of the Town laws, and the particularities of the areas of law relevant to this matter, meaning the north-German and the south-German areas of law. It briefly covers the beginning of the Estates period and its influence on the Bohemian towns, especially the adoption of Vladislav land order and the disputes that followed.

The codification attempt of Brikcí of Licsko is observed next, as well as its source materials and the reasons why his work never become a sanctioned codification of town law.

Particular importance is given to the evolution of political situation from the viewpoint of the towns and to their relations with the nobility from the resolution of the Bohemian Diet that the town law shall be codified, adopted in the year 1545, until the release of the Koldín's codex in the year 1579. It explores the reasons why the creation and sanctioning of an acceptable codification took such a long time, describes the resistance of the Litoměřice law area against being forced to comply with a codification based on Prague Old Town law and also touches on the religious unrest during the seventies of the sixteen century. The description of the role of William of Rosenberg as the highest situated noblemen of his time concerning the sanctioning of the Town laws, and of his connections to Koldín himself follows.

The thesis further delves into the preparation and creation of the Koldín's work itself and explores both the most important moments in Koldín's life which led to the creation of the Town laws, and the political and social connections which made their release possible.

The last part contains the description of the Town laws of the Bohemian kingdom, their releases and translations, analysis of the particular sources used by Koldín and points to the essential factors in the mayor success of the codification both in Koldín's time and during their two hundred years of being in force. The thesis terminates with selection of several concrete articles of the Town laws directly concerning nobility and their analysis.

Key words: town law, Koldín, codification