

Abstract: Honour of the merchants at the Old Town of Prague in the years 1623-1661.

My thesis looks into the problem of merchant's honour at the Old Town of Prague especially in the first half of the seventeenth century. My goal is to show the difference between merchant's honour and traditional understanding of defamation. To show that commercial debts poses one way in which merchants view themselves in a society and that enforcing payments of "real and just debts" was one of the aspects that maintained the continuity of merchants trade and also constitute their social honour. People who didnt pay their commercial credits and debts were considered as dishonest and often ended up in a prison for debtors. The commerce then was operated mostly on credit and trust because of the scarcity of money, and that created extensive and intertwined network of merchants that introduced moral factors for cooperation within the market structures of the period. In this situation the repayments were vital and not repaying one's own debt could lead to loss of trust. The loss of merchant's honour could lead to exclusion from those social commercial networks that could eventually lead to the end of their merchants trade or to mistrust of other merchants to provide the goods on credit. In my paper I used the probe method to analyze judicial protocols to observe an interconnection of people in the commerce and dynamic course of disputes over money debts. It actually validated the hypothesis that says merchants honour is not only a matter of honest origin and social position but it is above all a matter of trustworthiness and creditworthiness.