

**Catholic Reformation in the Prague Towns after the Battle of White Mountain.  
Prague's New Town in a context of the process of the catholic confessionalisation**  
**Abstract**  
**Olga Fejtová**

This thesis' methodological ground is a conception of both clerical and secular politics of recatholisation in a relation to Prague's New Town within the Post-White-Mountain period as part of a process of confessionalisation, i. e. catholic confessionalisation, within the paradigm that was introduced into European historiography in 1980<sup>s</sup>. The recatholisation within Bohemian lands in relationship to the paradigm of confessionalisation invokes a strategy of state and clerical power. Its enforcement and exercise in political practice were illustrated by normative materials that represented attendant signs of a development of the catholic confessionalisation. The target of this thesis is firstly to describe the progress of politics concerning recatholisation in a relationship to one of Prague's towns by using contemporary decrees of both secular and clerical origin. Furthermore, it shall investigate issues echoing within and from life of the New-Prague-Town's society of the 17th century. This within both public and private spheres of burges' life.

In order to reveal a correct reflection of the whole structure of the progression concerning the catholic confessionalisation, this thesis has harnessed the following resources: those of a normative origin, that determined the subject of dynamic of assertion; along with this, the secular and clerical resources have been employed to illustrate the reaction of the municipal population through the social spheres on the bases of evaluation of followed formal and contentual changes of the resources. The later allows us to spotlight the reaction of the municipal population on the resources connected with probate proceedings, i. e. testaments and probate inventories.

The decisive role within the process of the enforcing of the arrangements of recatholisation was played by royal institutions. The actual form of this policy was also influenced by the clerical milieu too, whilst it stood in the background of many concrete decisions of the institutions mentioned above. On the other hand, the clerical administration followed within the milieu of the Prague's cities, within the frame of the policy of recatholisation, its own targets that were not always in accordance with the approaches of the secular administration. An accompanying sign of royal politics of recatholisation of Prague's New Town was the flip of both religious directives and narrow confessional interests by directives of the life of burges' society, i. e. through its social discipline, within the 2nd half of the 17th century. Strategies of recatholisation had become, since 1630s, a part of a political

concept of the 'gute Policey' (good policy). From the normative secular origin resources' point of view, the second half of the 17th century had deepened the process of catholic confessionalisation that had been formally almost crowned in the 1st half of that century. From the formal and stereotypical control of confessional belonging, it had proceeded to a check on the veracity concerning conversion and practice of the faith by the New Town's citizenry in the 2nd half of the 17th century. As the Alpha and Omega of this policy was a formal aspect of catholic devoutness and its fulfillment that doubtlessly had succeeded before the cusp of the end of the 17th century.

The norms of clerical administration that were dedicated for the New Town's milieu tuned with the policy of the secular power, though with definite leap. Whilst clerical regulations had predicated the stabilisation of religious circumstances within New Town yet from the 1680s, the norms of the secular institutions had pushed this frontier to the 1690s. In both cases, it dealt with the formal stabilisation that had originated from a situation, when the majority of Prague towns' inhabitants had made a practice of annual confession. The city was capable of providing a sufficient participation of its inhabitants at the processions and clerical feasts. Together with this, the clerical decrees prove the evidence of a minimal effort of clerical power to have a hand in the royal policy of the 'gute Policey', i. e. in an effort to compose the recatholisation, a narrowly defined policy, into a wider concept of directives of life of the town's society. The Catholic Church had concentrated, on the contrary, its attention on deepening the quality of catholic devoutness of the inhabitants from the 1680s. Though this quality bound up with the moral quality of the life of the parishioners, it did not play a dominant role in the clerical policy.

Reactions to the advancements of recatholisation mentioned above, springing from Prague's New Town, differed in accordance to a concrete milieu that they had originated from. The city administration adopted a reserved attitude to this policy within the first half of the 17th century, that was accompanied of course in parallel by the activities to defend the interests of the town and of its inhabitants. The City policy was formed within intentions of a perception of the contemporary town's identity that had preferred a social status both with a bond with the town's concrete location. This took precedence over the confessional applicability. Open demonstrations of the city's inhabitants against the policy of recatholisation, i. e. against the Catholic Church, had references almost exclusively to the lower classes of the New Town's inhabitants from the 2nd half of the 17th century. Contemporary catalogues of the libraries of the New Towns' burghesses document lasting interest of these readers of a protestant religious literature that was not touched even by the

interferences of religious censorship. These catalogues purport that though these fully-fledged inhabitants of the town did not accede to the open demonstrations against the policy of recatholisation, they can not be taken as committed Catholics. The testaments of the New Town's inhabitants convey, above all, a record to the exterior aspects of the common folk devoutness. Both formal and contextual components of this catholic devoutness were not largely established within the testamentary praxis even within the 2nd half of the 17th century.

The catholic faith had become under pressure from both recatholic and secular politics in different forms, a part of everyday life of Prague's New Town. Its acceptance from the individual inhabitants took on very different shape (influenced mainly formally by the practice of the faith), against the unifying endeavours of the secular and clerical power. The processes of the confessionalisation at New Town could not successfully step over the border to the private life of the burgess' society. This is a reason, why the policy of recatholisation had a limited influence upon the formation of popular devoutness – because it could influence and form its outer, formal and public demonstrations, but to the inner part, that was connected with formation of religious consciousness and awareness of the congregation, it could interfere only in a limited manner. Since the 2nd decade of the 18th century, these insufficiencies together with an installed level formality of policy of recatholisation had created conditions for the revealing of a new wave of heresies.