Abstract:

In this paper I deal with the cult of Virgin Mary in Bohemia in the period after the Battle of White Mountain, when there was a very significant rise in the Marian devotion and pilgrimage sites. Around the half of 17th century a substantial change in the social order occurred due to the Battle of White Mountain and subsequent consolidation of Habsburg power. This paper deals with the legends concerning the origin of the pilgrimage sites and the books of miracles. I based my interpretation mainly on the theory of Victor Turner. I was influenced also by a book by Mary Douglas Purity and Danger. I use the examples of Svatá Hora and Stará Boleslav to show how Marian pilgrimages respond to the socio-political changes. Pilgrimage legends managed to link different periods of Bohemian history and thus to legitimate the reinforcement of Catholicism as well as the Habsburg reign. They also managed to bridge social differences and release the social tension, since they involve people from all social classes and articulate a state where the social hierarchy is abolished.