

ABSTRACT

The dissertation looks into the book culture, book production and readership in the kingdom of Bohemia in early humanism. It explores the conditions of rise and reception of book printing in the kingdom of Bohemia. The mind-set of the Utraquist society, resistant to the influence from abroad, international isolation of the Utraquist Bohemia and the previous insignificant manuscript production proved to be the factors which failed to encourage the arrival of book printing in the country. The initial advancement of book printing was hesitant and could not keep up with the more developed trade abroad. The Czech printing production related to the efforts of reformation to further enhance the moral status of the society soon turned to disseminating literature in the vernacular, yet often they were translated literature. The early Czech printed production however was affected by low quality and quantity of prints and was not of the significance declared by the previous generations of researchers. Personalities of the Catholic society were more inclusive about new ideas from abroad. In the contemporary society the Catholics were therefore the first ones to embrace book printing and also they were quicker in reception of humanism. The early humanist literature in Bohemia is related to the personality of Bohuslav Hasištejnský, a staunch Catholic, or in Moravia to the educated figures close to the Olomouc bishopric. The Utraquists, on the other hand, prevailed in the reformation literary tradition and mainly dealt with translating moralistic and educational literature which proved to be cautious in the reception of some of the works of humanism. Řehoř Hrubý z Jelení, an industrious translator, is the most significant representative of this trend. He surpassed other Utraquist scholars with his knowledge of Antiquity and his effort to bring humanist moralistic literature to the readers. The modern Czech literary theory describes this trend as national humanism. This description is however highly insufficient and requires revision taking the whole post-Hussite wars period into account.