

Abstract

In Czech historiography Queen Kunhuta has been quite neglected. Her figure has not been investigated in monographs or specific studies. She can be somehow included within the group of defamed queens, which is especially rich in the Middle Ages. This negative image of the queen finds its origin in medieval chronicles, which blamed Kunhuta for her love affair with Závíš of Falkenštejn, who was accused of being one of the promoters of the defeat of Otakar II. Kunhuta's negative portrayal has been very stable and despite its rehabilitation in the most recent studies, it probably influenced scholars' disinterest in the part she performed as a political agent. The documentary material preserved shows that her active role in Bohemian society of the thirteenth century deserves more attention. She was involved in various administrative and political tasks. The first chapter of the thesis should provide an approach to the study of the queen, which mediates between a partial point of view and Kunhuta's multi-faceted image. It should introduce a figure to whom is linked a letter collection, which represents the main theme of the present dissertation (i.e. the letter collection of master Bohuslav, probably a chaplain and notary of the queen). The analysis and the critical edition of the source can be found in chapter II-III and in the second section of the present work (i. e. Critical Edition). The letter collection, which came down to us through a single manuscript (ONB, sign. 526) was published almost entirely by František Palacký under the title *Formelbuch der Königin Kunigunde* (Formulary of Queen Kunhuta). Palacký published it with another collection of privileges as a whole. Furthermore, he did not edit some of the texts. He noticed their peculiarity and implicitly declared their inappropriate positioning into the collection. The apparent irregularity in pattern of these letters, which was noticed by the Czech scholar is linked to old criteria of historical authenticity, which have been discussed, questioned and rejected in sections II.a, II.b, and II.d.3 (The Erratic Letters). Furthermore, the previous editors, especially Palacký, normalized the text according to classical norms. On the contrary, in the present critical edition the orthography of the codex has been generally preserved since the edition is based on only one manuscript. Besides, the letters have been edited following the order they have in the manuscript.

The interpretation of this letter collection was in the past a matter of dispute among scholars (chapter II). Palacký considered the epistles as documents based on real letters. Jan B. Novák had a different opinion. He defined this source as a compilation of fictive letters ("fingované dopisy"). The past research of letter collections was used to distinguish these sources rigidly into real and fictional. Conversely, the most recent studies stress the "variation in the material" (Ysaerbert) and the complex character of this kind of epistolary work. The letter collection compiled allegedly by magister Bohuslav should be studied taking into consideration this new outlined approach method. The letters investigated are precious historical sources, both from the dictaminal and socio-cultural points of views. They are beyond the brute facts and raise questions about identities and mentalities of the time. From them we learn how relevant contemporaneous events were read at the queen's court. Besides, the letters bring light on the way in which conjugal affection and emotions were expressed at the royal court. Furthermore, they inform us about the development of a rhetoric tradition established in Bohemia from 13th century through the mediation of Henricus de Isernia. Last but not least, the image of the queen portrayed by these letters adds new information about the contemporaneous understanding of Kunhuta's life. A relevant fact is that this epistolary work is preserved in a manuscript, which was held by Queen Kunhuta's court in Opava in the years 1279-1281 (chapter IV). This draws the attention at least to three relevant points: 1) the court of the queen continued to be active after the death of her husband; 2) her notaries perfected their knowledge in the art of letter writing by using the practical model letters contained in the manuscript; 3) the chancery of the queen applied the method of learning the letter composition, which is usually adopted in the main European chanceries.

In conclusion, the collection of master Bohuslav can be considered a meaningful historical source from the socio-cultural and rhetorical point of view. Its historical value was already noticed by the historians of 19th century, who included part of the letters in their editions of documents. This study does not want to be exhaustive. Many aspects should be perfected and more deeply investigated. Its goal is to draw the attention to a queen and a queenly letter collection so far neglected.

Key words: epistles, *dictamina*, rethoric, Queen Kunhuta, magister Bohuslav