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News and Prophecy Between Upper Hungary and Amsterdam: Mikuláš Drabík, Jan Amos Comenius and Learned Communication

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This paper focuses on textual practices related to the creation, communication and circulation of mid-seventeenth-century prophetic texts. They have been studied as tools of political propaganda during the Thirty Years War, in relation to apocalyptic discourses and to biographies of individual actors, including one of the most active promoters and disseminators of early modern prophecies, educational reformer and theologian Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670). The paper offers a new interpretative perspective by analyzing the transfer and circulation of prophetic texts originally written in Czech in the exiled community of Bohemian Brethren as a specific case of cultural translation across geographical, linguistic and social boundaries. Comenius' communication network made it possible to connect local communities in Upper Hungary with Dutch and English centers of information and knowledge. The paper shows how prophecies and visions of Mikuláš Drabík from Upper Hungary were received by local networks of supporters and opponents, and how they became a topic of learned discussion within the international network of scholars in Amsterdam and London. An attempt to translate and adapt them to the Muslim environment in East-Central Europe in order to convert the Turks predictably failed. The causes of this limited transcultural adaptability of prophecy are also discussed.

Short Biography

PhDr. Vladimír Urbánek, Ph.D. is a senior researcher at the Department of Comenius Studies and Early Modern Intellectual History, Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, where he served between 2012 and 2021 as a head of the department. He teaches at the Charles University in Prague (2000-2011, 2023-25) and taught at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (2007). His research interests focus on early modern millenarianism, scholarly communication and correspondence networks, Protestant intellectuals exiled from the Czech lands after 1620 and life and work of Jan Amos Comenius. He was a coordinator of the Czech participation in the COST Action Project 'Reassembling the Republic of Letters, 1500-1800' (2014-18). He was a co-investigator and leader of the team of the Institute of Philosophy participating in a grant project: 'Between Renaissance and Baroque: Philosophy and Knowledge in the Czech Lands within the Wider European Context' financed by the Czech Science Foundation (2014-18). He is an editor-in-chief of the journal *Acta Comeniana* and a PI of the project 'Network of Letters (NETLET) – The correspondence of intellectual elites in turbulent times of Bohemian/Czech history from the digital perspective' (2023-27). He was co-organizer of the Scientiae 2023 conference in Prague. Among other publications, he authored a monograph *Eschatologie, vědění a politika: Příspěvek k dějinám myšlení pobělohorského exilu* [Eschatology, Knowledge and Politics: On the Intellectual History of the Post-White-Mountain Bohemian Exiles] (České Budějovice, 2008), and edited and co-authored annotations of three volumes of the critical edition *J. A. Comenii Opera Omnia* (2013, 2018, 2024). His latest publications include the articles 'Historia Persecutionum Ecclesiae Bohemicae between History, Identity and Martyrology,' in *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* vol. 114 (2023) and 'Conceptualizing History in Pavel Skála's „Church Chronology“: Encyclopaedic Approach and Eschatological Framework,' in *Listy filologické* vol. 147 (2024).

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