

Summary

REFERENCES TO CZECH HISTORY IN THE ROBERT BELLARMINE'S TREATISE ON VERNACULAR TRANSLATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the second book of his *De Controversiis*, the Italian Jesuit and Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542 to 1621) presents his opinion on three questions concerning vernacular translations of Scripture. The main question which determines the structure of both chapters is whether vernacular translations of Scripture should be used in liturgy. Bellarmine's answer is negative: the three traditional languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, should be reserved for liturgy. In relation to this, he indicates the solution of two more questions: whether the sacred text may be translated into vernacular languages and whether vernacular translations of Scripture can be used for private reading. He answers the first question positively but in the answer to the second question he emphasizes that Scripture should be read only by those who are mature enough in this respect. Within the positive-historical argumentation, some examples from Czech history also appear: the use of the Slavonic liturgy in the Great Moravia and the Pope's approval of this liturgy, the prohibition of Slavonic liturgy in Bohemia, authorized by Pope Gregory VII in 1080, and the role of vernacular translation of Scripture in the Hussite movement in the first half of the 15th century. Bellarmine is also acquainted with the opinion that St. Jerome translated Scripture into Slavonic language. He expresses his doubts about this conjecture and he points out that neither Jerome himself nor any other ancient writer mentions this translation. Bellarmine's sources of knowledge about the events of the Czech and Slavic history are especially *Examen Concilii Tridentini* by the German Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz and *Historia Bohemica* by the Italian humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini.

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