

Summary

CHOCENSKÝ'S TREATISE ON BLOODLETTING AND ITS MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

The books on bloodletting attributed to John Berka of Choceň (Jan Chocenský, 1494–1545 or 1548) – a doctor, Prague politician, the rector of the Prague University and printer – belonged to the most known and widespread phlebotomic treatises printed in the 16th century. The article demonstrates that Chocenský's work was not original but based upon older treatises, especially those written by Křišťan of Prachatice. Then, it compares the three editions of Chocenský's book (1532, 1538 and 1597) and shows that their language was deliberately adapted to the changes which Czech language underwent during that time. Later editions attest to the fact that publishers tried to make the text as comprehensible and exact as possible. The vocabulary of bloodletting was not very abundant and was rooted in the Medieval Czech: e.g. bloodletting through veins / cupping glasses – *púšťěti žiloulbaňkami*; strike / cut open a vein – *zatútilotevřítí žílu*; blood-letter (the person) – *púšťědlník*; blood-letter (the instrument) – *pušťadlo*; cupping glass – *baňka*. The comparison with the 16th century dictionaries, published e.g. by Tomáš Rešelius and especially by Daniel Adam of Velešlavín, demonstrates that the vocabulary formed a stable part of the Czech Humanist language. At the same time, in comparison with the terminology of other branches, this vocabulary appears to have been limited in its development, not following the tendency to specification. This was the consequence of the fact that the method of bloodletting had been pushed off to the periphery of medical therapies and went to the hands of non-doctors – barbers and tonsorial practitioners.

Keywords: Jan Berka of Choceň; Křišťan of Prachatice; Old Czech language; bloodletting

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