

SUMMARY

*Země dobrá, to jest země Česká (1754)*, the Bible and the Austrian Monarchy

This patriotic publication from the era of Maria Theresia (and thus from the period before the beginning of the Czech National Revival) celebrates important men, saints and incidents in Czech history in unexpectedly vivid Czech. At the same time, it emphasizes the loyalty of the Czech nation to the Austrian monarchy and the Catholic church. This paper is an attempt to clarify the question of the author and purpose of this anonymous work, which has not yet been solved. Neither A. Stich's study on the subject (1981) nor the re-edition of *Země dobrá* (1998) was able to give a definitive answer. However, A. Stich assigns the authorship of this work to monks of the Benedictine order and names the prelate and historian Josef Bonaventura Piter (1708-1764) as the probable author.

Our analysis of the numerous Biblical quotations in *Země dobrá* shows that the majority of them were taken over from the Catholic Czech translation of the Vulgata, the so-called *Bible svatováclavská* (1677-1715). Some other passages – especially those that were paraphrased more freely – suggest that the publications by the Baroque Czech historian J. F. Beckovský (1658-1725) might have been used. Surprising is the presence of the holy Five brethren, Benedictine martyrs in Poland, among the national patron saints in the book's dedication, as well as our discovery that the long introductory quotation from the Bible is the passage of the Epistle that was read on their religious holiday. This is a clear, but at the same time a hidden indication of the importance of their cult and also of Benedictine environment, from which this publication emerged. J. B. Piter was an ardent admirer of those martyrs himself.

The book *Země dobrá* also played a certain role at the imperial court in Vienna. A copy was found in the private library of the emperor Joseph II. (who partially knew Czech) with his personal signature and traces of his reading of certain passages. Piter stayed in Vienna in the 1750ies and was in contact with the imperial dynasty through the court archivist Theodor Anton Taulow von Rosenthal. He might have given the book *Země dobrá* to Maria Theresia during an audience, as a present for the successor to the throne archduke Joseph. As a publication, it was probably originally intended to support the self-confidence of the Czech nation and its loyalty to the Austrian monarchy in the time of war with Prussia.