

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM
LATE MEDIEVAL PRAYER BOOKS IN CENTRAL EUROPE
ART HISTORY, CODICOLOGY, LINGUISTICS

INTERNATIONALES KOLLOQUIUM
SPÄTMITTELALTERLICHE GEBETBÜCHER IN MITTELEUROPA
KUNSTGESCHICHTE, KODIKOLOGIE, LINGUISTIK



Prague, 3.– 4. 10. 2024

Academic Conference Centre, Husova 4a, Prague 1

THURSDAY 3RD OCTOBER

14:00 Registration

14:15 Introductions by Jan Klípa, the deputy director of the Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences and by the organisers Milada Studničková and Jan Dienstbier

I. PRAYING COMMUNITIES – SOURCES RECONSIDERED

14:30 *Prayer books for lay women in medieval Bohemia? A few probes*

Věra Soukupová

Institute for Czech Literature of the CAS, Prague

15:00 *Saints in the litanies of Bohemian manuscripts*

Michal Dragoun

Charles University, Prague

15:30 COFFEE BREAK

II. PRAYING ELITES – VISUAL AND TEXTUAL ASPECTS

16:00 *Eigenartiges Design. Das Stundenbuch für König Wenzel IV.*

Milada Studničková

Institute of Art History of the CAS, Prague

16:30 *Prayerbook of George of Poděbrady and the advent of print*

Jan Dienstbier

Institute of Art History of the CAS, Prague

17:00 *Clypeus spiritualis. On the set of protective prayers of King Sigismund I the Old*

Rafał Wójcik

Adam Mickiewicz University, University Library, Poznań

17:30 DISCUSSION & REFRESHMENT

FRIDAY 4TH OCTOBER

9:30 VISIT TO THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Round-table discussion with leafing through a selection of Bohemian prayer books

12:00 LUNCH BREAK

III. PRAYING IN VERNACULAR – CZECH AND GERMAN CASES

13:00 *Das Berliner Gebetbuch Ms. germ. oct. 489*

Maria Theisen & Kathrin Chlench-Priber

Institute for Medieval Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna,
University of Bonn, Department of German and Comparative Literature and Culture

13:50 *Linguistic adaptation in Old Czech books of hours*

Kateřina Voleková

Czech Language Institute of the CAS, Prague

14:20 *Communion prayers in Old Czech manuscripts: signs of confession and gender*

Andrea Hlaváčová Svobodová

Czech Language Institute of the CAS, Prague

14:45 CONCLUSIONS & FINAL DISCUSSION OVER COFFEE

Organisers:

Milada Studničková & Jan Dienstbier

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The colloquium is organized within the framework of the project Libri precum: The Book of Hours of King Wenceslas IV in the Context of Lay Prayer Books (Czech Science Foundation, No. 22-28502S) by the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

ANNOTATIONS

Prayer books for lay women in medieval Bohemia? A few probes

Věra Soukupová

Most of the prayer books from late medieval Bohemia, with the exception of the most luxurious ones, were owned by people whose identity remains unknown. If a few books could be ascribed to a female owner on the basis of formal aspects of the texts included, it still seems rather difficult to circumscribe more precisely the contours of the book's readership. I will analyze the content of the MS XVII A 18 from the National Library (14th/15th c.) with the leading question: Can we trace any aspects which would allow us to connect the book with a lay woman, or with a lay female community, whose number flourished in Bohemia at the end of the fourteenth and at the beginning of the fifteenth centuries? The comparison with a few other contemporary prayer collections will be conducted in order to better ground the hypothesis about the possible owner's milieu.

Saints in the litanies of Bohemian manuscripts

Michal Dragoun

Litanies are found mainly in two types of manuscripts: breviaries and prayer books or books of hours. They are one of the less exploited parts of manuscripts and their presence is often not even mentioned in older manuscript catalogues. Based on research in a number of dozens of Bohemian manuscripts from the 13th to the early 16th centuries, this paper will focus on identifying the distinctive characteristics of litanies in the codices of individual religious orders and the dioceses of Prague and Olomouc - while many religious orders used litanies that were specific, this is considerably less true for the diocesan setting. It has been possible to identify one relatively frequently used litany type of the Prague diocese, but a similar characteristic type is absent from the Olomouc material, and the litanies of the prayer books are also significantly different from each other.

Eigenartiges Design. Das Stundenbuch für König Wenzel IV. / Peculiar Design. Oxford Book of Hours of King Wenceslas IV

Milada Studničková

Ein Stundenbuch, das in Westeuropa das populärste Buch in Laienhand des späten Mittelalters war, enthält eine stark konventionalisierte Kollektion von Gebetstexten und Bildern, die dem Besitzer ein regelmässiges Stundengebet nach dem Vorbild der Geistlichen erlaubte. Auch das Gebetbuch für König Wenzel IV. aus der Oxforder McGowin Library, das hauptsächlich für das angebliche Porträt des Königs und seiner Frau Sophie von Bayern bekannt wurde, wird als Stundenbuch bezeichnet. Sein Inhalt wurde bisher jedoch noch nicht ausreichend erforscht. Ausgehend von dem Vergleich der Struktur eines typischen Stundenbuches mit dem Oxforder Manuskript werde ich in diesem Beitrag versuchen zu zeigen, dass es einige ganz einzigartige Texteinheiten enthält. Ich konzentriere mich weiter auf die Frage, welche Elemente zur Individualisierung des Buches beitragen und worin die unikate visuelle Gestaltung der Handschrift besteht.

Books of hours, the most popular books of late medieval Western Europe, usually contain a highly conventionalised collection of prayer texts and images, which allowed their owners to pray regularly according to the model of the clergy. The prayer book of King Wenceslas IV, currently kept in the McGowin Library in Oxford, is also described as a book of hours. So far, the manuscript, primarily known for the alleged portrait of the king and his wife, Sophie of Bavaria, has not been sufficiently studied in terms of its content. Comparing the Oxford manuscript with the structure of a typical book of hours, I will show that it contains several unique textual units. Furthermore, I shall focus on the question of which elements contribute to the individualisation of the book and what the unique visual design of the manuscript consists of.

Prayerbook of George of Poděbrady and the advent of print

Jan Dienstbier

One of the crucial factors that transformed artistic production in the 15th century was the advent of print. The new medium enabled the rapid copying and dissemination of models and, to some extent, initiated a stylistic transformation and unification of local schools. The Prague illuminators began to use printed models relatively late, probably due to the Hussite revolution curtailing the communication between the heretical kingdom and the rest of Europe. Until the 1450s, the production of Prague illuminators was based mainly on designs passed down from generation to generation in workshops. The situation reversed in the 1460s with the rapid advent of prints. Prayerbooks were fundamental in this process, especially the manuscript commissioned for George of Poděbrady in 1466. In this paper, I will focus on what this esthetical and technological change meant for the form of prayer books and what opportunities new printed models offered. Furthermore, I will discuss the survival of older pre-print traditions under new circumstances.

Clypeus spiritualis. On the set of protective prayers of King Sigismund I the Old

Rafał Wójcik

The paper will focus on a collection of prayers composed for the Polish King Sigismund I the Old. *Clypeus spiritualis* and its two early sixteenth-century translations into Polish - the *Soul Summit* and the *Spiritual Shield* - were written during the Jagiellonian era, in the period (for the individual texts) around 1514-1531. In the history of the Jagiellonian dynasty, this is the peak of the flowering of Polish culture. It is essential that, in addition to the well-known works from this period, such an important element of daily life at the time as daily prayers should be subjected to research. In the case of this prayer set, it is insanely important that it was created for a specific ruler, Sigismund I the Old - one of the most prominent of the Jagiellonian dynasty. In this paper, I would like to focus primarily on determining the possible origin of the individual prayers that are part of it.

Das Berliner Gebetbuch Ms. germ. oct. 489

Maria Theisen – Kathrin Chlench-Priber

Dieser Beitrag ist dem deutschsprachigen „Gebetbuch einer unbekanntten Fürstin“ gewidmet, das seit 1914 zu den Beständen der Berliner Staatsbibliothek zählt. Es wird

aufgrund seiner Miniaturen nach Prag lokalisiert und grob um 1390/1400 datiert. In Zusammenschau von Germanistik und Kunstgeschichte werden neueste Überlegungen zu Texttradition, Bildikonografie und Gebetspraxis, historische Kontexte und regionale Zuweisungen vorgestellt. Nicht zuletzt wird auf mögliche Adressatinnen des Gebetbuchs eingegangen.

This presentation is dedicated to the German-language 'Prayer Book of an Unknown Princess', which has been part of the holdings of the Berlin State Library since 1914. Based on its miniatures, it is localised to Prague and roughly dated to around 1390/1400. The latest considerations on text tradition, pictorial iconography and prayer practice, historical contexts and regional attributions will be presented in a synopsis of German studies and art history. Last but not least, we will discuss possible addressees of the prayer book.

Linguistic adaptation in Old Czech books of hours

Kateřina Voleková

The surviving manuscripts of vernacular books of hours provide valuable insights into the rise of lay piety in the Czech lands during the late 14th and early 15th centuries. The frequent use of feminine grammatical forms in these Czech devotional texts suggests that noblewomen were often their patrons and primary users. However, the degree of gender inflection varies; feminine forms appear inconsistently, sometimes in the psalms, sometimes only in the prayers, but rarely throughout the entire text. Additionally, the manuscripts exhibit other linguistic complexities, such as the coexistence of modernized vocabulary alongside archaic morphological forms. These features reflect the evolving religious language and style that these texts helped shape.

Communion prayers in Old Czech manuscripts: signs of confession and gender

Andrea Hlaváčová Svobodová

The paper is based on a study of Old Czech manuscripts containing communion prayers and will present to what extent the textual and linguistic clues can be used to infer the confessional and gender affiliation of the users to whom they were addressed. The material under study comprises around two dozen manuscripts (dating back to 1526) and more than 60 prayer texts, however, these numbers may not be definitive – with such a large and largely unprocessed body of material, the identification of the prayers is necessarily faced with methodological obstacles, which will also be discussed. The contribution will therefore only present a comparative probe into the texts from the prayer book of Jindřich of Rožmberk and his second wife Eliška of Kravaře, the so-called Orationale Rosenbergense.