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Locals and outlanders — an outline of the ethnic composition of Wenceslaus II's Prague court

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Klíčová slova: dvůr, Václav II., Přemyslovci, kancelář, dvorská literatura

We can look at the significance of people who came to the Prague court of Wenceslaus II (1278/1283–1305) from other countries — neighbouring and further afield — at a number of levels. A prosopographical approach remains key, and this involves an elementary identification of people, including uncovering the tasks/roles of each such person at the royal court. In terms of the ethnic origin of these people, which is the subject-matter of the present study, we can state that within Bohemia it is easiest to get a picture of the nobility, in particular the secular nobility. Their origin is based on the territory they own, and this is mainly within Bohemia. Furthermore, we often know the origin of nobles, including having an extensively studied and popular history for each family. With the end of the Přemyslid period and the accession of the Luxembourgs, we are able to estimate or demonstrate when newly arrived nobles settled.¹ We lack such extensive, or broader, information, however, for the clergy and artists, who are much more dependent on the monarch's favour and rewards. Seeking the origin of these people comes into the focus of research in Bohemia in particular at times when they appeared more frequently at the royal court, and their activities in favour of the king came to the fore. A prosopographical approach clearly demonstrates that there were more such people at the Prague court in the second half of the 13th century, especially during the reign of Wenceslaus II.²

¹ There are a number of academic publications on the genealogy of the nobility, and as such we refer only to the Bibliography of the History of the Czech Lands database <https://biblio.hiu.cas.cz/>, where relevant publications can be found. For more on the profiling of newly arriving families at the end of the Přemyslid era and in particular with the accession of the Luxembourgs, see especially BOBKOVÁ 2018, pp. 341–342.

² A comprehensive presentation of the composition of the royal court under Wenceslaus II is given in DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011.

The first group shown to be substantially involved in services to the king was the diverse and growing group of clerics. They were active either in the royal chancellery,³ or as advisors to the ruler without office or services.⁴ We are also able to estimate the origin of some of them by name and nobiliary particle, even where sources do not explicitly mention that origin. For the chancellery, we can also make use of a detailed palaeographic analysis of written material, specifically the activities of the chancellery during Wenceslaus II's reign, produced by historian Dalibor Havel.⁵ Havel has demonstrated a significant number of active scribes who wrote royal documents, and we know the names of some of these scribes directly. Thus we base our presentation of the staff in Wenceslaus's chancellery mainly on Havel's findings.⁶ In terms of palaeographic differentiation, scribes were marked by the letter V, along with a number and name, if it was known. We can now use these names to estimate the ethnic origin of these scribes, since only rarely are more detailed biographical data available:

Number — name — period worked — estimate of origin

- V3 (Jindřich, parson of Gars⁷) 1283–1291, active 8 years — origin evidently Austrian
 V4 (Velislav⁸) — 1283–1289, active 6 years — origin evidently Bohemian
 V6 1284–1286, active 2 years
 V7 1288–1293, active 5 years
 V11 1298 to 20 June 1305, active 7 years (also active in 1309)
 V12 (evidently Jan of Sadská⁹) 1286–1288, active 2 years — origin evidently Bohemian
 V15 1291–1297, active 6 years (poss. 8 years)

³ For research on the chancellery, see: EMLER 1879; POJSL, ŘEHOLKA, SULITKOVÁ 1974, pp. 261–365; following on from their work is: HAVEL 2000, pp. 71–130; HAVEL 2001, pp. 37–65; also DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 46–49.

⁴ At the royal chancellery we come across clerics in positions of *notarius* or *scriba*. When it comes to identifying foreigners, in the 13th century these were generally German speakers, from German or Austrian regions; see below in the following part of the study.

⁵ Havel is also one of the editors of the full-text edition of the so-called *Český diplomatář*, see: HAVEL 2000, pp. 71–130; HAVEL 2001, pp. 37–65; HAVEL 2008; HAVEL 2011; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 46–49; also POJSL, ŘEHOLKA, SULITKOVÁ 1974, pp. 261–365.

⁶ The full chancellery staff (also based on Dalibor Havel's work with regard to scribes) is presented in DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 46–49, chapter *Královská kancelář*.

⁷ For more on the contested figure of Jindřich, see e.g. HAVEL 2000, pp. 78–81; also see: DUŠKOVÁ 1960, pp. 59–74; PSÍK 2008 and DIENSTBIER 2010; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 79–80.

⁸ HAVEL 2000, pp. 81–83; EMLER 1882, no. 1300; POJSL, ŘEHOLKA, SULITKOVÁ 1974, pp. 320; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 80–83.

⁹ HAVEL 2000, pp. 87–89; also: POJSL, ŘEHOLKA, SULITKOVÁ 1974, pp. 325–327; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 80–83.

- V14 (Master Šimon¹⁰) 1288–1291, active 3 years — origin evidently Bohemian
 V16 (Petr Angeli¹¹) 1291–1305, active 14 years — origin evidently German
 V18 (close to style of Petr Angeli) 1291–1295, active 4 years
 V29 (worked in Saxony too?) 1299–1303, active 4 years
 V41 (royal chancellery scribe) 1304–1305, active 1 year

Although this summary of individual chancellery members provides names for only a few scribes, we see that the numbers of Czechs and individuals from Austrian or German areas were roughly equal — the overall number can be divided into more or less two halves. As already indicated, this is a key phenomenon, since under Wenceslaus II's rule there really was an increase in the number of people from abroad undertaking service in the royal court chancellery.¹² This is particularly evident when compared with the court of Wenceslaus' father, Ottokar II of Bohemia, during whose reign this proportion remained in favour of ethnically Bohemian, or Old Bohemian names.¹³ A list of Ottokar II chaplains, for example, of whom 28 can be found, contains just one name, Wernhard, which would suggest German origin.¹⁴

In addition to the scribes employed in the chancellery under Wenceslaus II, the engagement of unattached clerics from abroad also showed an upward trend. These generally acted as advisors, chaplains and diplomats. There was just one exception, a man who became the chancellor of the royal chancellery. There is an upward trend of these clergymen shown for the years 1290–1305, which was also a period when Wenceslaus II literally got rid of the influential noble of his father's time, Závěš of Falkenstein, as well as a group of supporters of his entire family, the Vítkovci clan.¹⁵ He subsequently surrounded himself with knowledgeable advisors:

Wenceslaus II advisor — *Bernard of Kamenz*,¹⁶ Bishop of Meissen — German origin

¹⁰ HAVEL 2000, pp. 90–91; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 80–83.

¹¹ HAVEL 2000, s. 97–98; HAVEL 2008, here pp. 121–131 and POJSL, ŘEHOLKA, SULITKOVÁ 1974, pp. 261–365; POJSL, ŘEHOLKA, SULITKOVÁ 1974, pp. 231–260; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 80–83.

¹² See, e.g. BLÁHOVÁ 2008, pp. 387–399; or overall see DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 46–49 and 71–92.

¹³ See DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 71–74 for Ottokar II and pp. 75–92 for Wenceslaus II.

¹⁴ For more on Wernhard, see DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 71–75, especially 74–75.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive perspective on the role of Závěš of Falkenstein (who was first lover and later husband of Wenceslaus's mother, Queen Dowager Kunigunda of Halych) and the Vítkovci family in the Přemyslid royal family (including Závěš's death), see DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 98–100, 105–112 and according to index. Among later publications, see, e.g.: CHARVÁTOVÁ 2007; JAN 2015; ŽEMLIČKA 2017.

¹⁶ ŠUSTA 1935, p. 368; also DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2006a, pp. 107–121; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 90–91.

Wenceslaus II advisor — *Arnold of Bamberg*,¹⁷ bishop — German origin
 Advisor, Cistercian abbot from Waldsassen *Dětrich*¹⁸ — German origin
 Advisor and godfather to most of the royal children — *Heidenreich*,¹⁹ Cistercian abbot from Sedlec — German origin
 Advisor, Cistercian abbot from Zbraslav *Konrád*²⁰ — German origin
 Chancellor *Petr of Aspelt*,²¹ doctor, advisor, Wenceslaus II diplomat (1297–1305) — German origin
 Envoy for Wenceslaus II — *Gotfried*²² (1302 travelled to England, to King Edward I's court) — German origin
 Envoy for Wenceslaus II to the Papal Curia — *Alexius*²³ — German origin
 Confessor to King *Hermann*,²⁴ member of Teutonic Order — German origin
 Advisor to Wenceslaus II — *Master Gocio of Orvieto*²⁵ — lawyer of Italian origin
 Chaplain to King Wenceslaus II, doctor of law and Prague canon — *Jan of Ostrov*,²⁶ Bishop of Brixen — origin inferred as Ostrov nad Ohří, ethnically, however, probably German
 Astrologist *Alvaro of Oviedo*,²⁷ 1290–1297 (up to 1311) also attended Prague court — probably Spanish region

Thus amongst advisors, chaplains and chancellors, we see practically only people of German origin. However, another two people of Czech origin also partially belong to this table. The first of these is Bishop of Prague, Tobiáš of Benešov, member of the Bohemian nobility, who was supportive of the king from the beginning of his rule. The other was Jan Přemyslovec, chancellor (1290–1296) and the king's step-brother.²⁸

¹⁷ DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 90–92.

¹⁸ CHARVÁTOVÁ 2008a, pp. 327–346; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 87–89.

¹⁹ HYNKOVÁ 1998, pp. 99–155; CHARVÁTOVÁ 2008a, pp. 327–346; CHARVÁTOVÁ 2008b, pp. 71–89; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 87–88.

²⁰ CHARVÁTOVÁ 2008a, pp. 327–346; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 87–88.

²¹ See in particular DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2006b, pp. 27–35; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 46–47 and 82–85; for Petr's work at Wenceslaus II's court: POJSL, ŘEHOLKA, SULITKOVÁ 1974, pp. 320, 332; also: HLEDÍKOVÁ 2001, pp. 74–89; KIRT 2009, pp. 445–460; KIRT 2013.

²² DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 71–92

²³ DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 71–92.

²⁴ See: JAN 1998, pp. 134–148; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 71–92.

²⁵ DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 91–92; also see: CHARVÁTOVÁ 2007; JAN 2015; ŽEM-LIČKA 2017.

²⁶ DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, p. 91; for more see CHARVÁTOVÁ 2019, pp. 123–143 (on the issue of origin p. 124ff.).

²⁷ DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 91–92; BLÁHOVÁ 2001, pp. 21–28; also: BLÁHOVÁ 2010, pp. 320–324; MENTGEN 2005.

²⁸ CHARVÁTOVÁ 2019, pp. 123–143.

Another group which came significantly to the fore during Wenceslaus II's reign, in addition to the clerics, comprised artists, especially writers. This group was dominated by individuals of foreign origin. At the same time it should be added, however, that the gradual arrival of the literary profession began under Wenceslaus I (1230–1253) and Ottokar II (1253–1278), i.e. Wenceslaus II's grandfather and father. Nevertheless, the number of these artists increased under Wenceslaus II compared to the previous period, and greater works of literature were produced.²⁹ Written production remains a guide to their precise engagement (as for the scribes), specifically the works they left behind at the court.³⁰ Listed chronologically, the oldest documented poet at the Prague court was Reinmar of Zweter from the Rhineland.³¹ Of him, we know, for example, that he was in the service of Emperor Frederick II between 1235 and 1237. We date his stay at the court of King of Bohemia, Wenceslaus I, to 1237–1241. Evidence of Reinmar's activities ends in 1248. His most important works include his spiritual compositions, the *lais*, which are divided into themes — praising the Holy Trinity, Our Lady and Christ. He also wrote songs of contemplation, termed *Sangspruch*, which comprise a body of 329 stanzas. In stanzas 149 and 150, the poet celebrates King Wenceslaus I. His other stanzas deal, for example, with religious teaching, courtly love, honour, politics and jokey riddles.

Another author in Bohemia was Sigeher (sometimes also called Meister Sigeher).³² He was active at the courts of Wenceslaus I and Ottokar II. He was probably from southern Germany or Austria. He likely arrived at the Přemyslid court during the reign of Wenceslaus I, i.e. prior to 1253. Most of his works on Bohemia were political contemplative songs in which he celebrated Ottokar II. In 1254–1255, for example, he took part in the first Přemyslid crusade to Prussia, and in the composition he wrote for the occasion, he asks God for his favour for the Bohemian King. A number of hints suggest that he also called for the Přemyslid king to strive for the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. In summary, Sigeher's work reveals celebration and desire for a strong empire, with Alexander the Great one of the models for King Ottokar.

²⁹ For more on court literature of this period, see the anthology of German literature in Bohemia: *Moravo, Čechy, radujte se!* 1998; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 165–181; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA 2011, especially pp. 194–250; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, especially pp. 40–76.

³⁰ For a comprehensive perspective on this issue, see Sylvie Stanovská in: DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, especially pp. 40–76; also STANOVSKÁ, KERN 2010 and STANOVSKÁ, KERN 2013.

³¹ ROETHE 1877, p. 425n. and comprehensively Sylvie Stanovská in: DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, especially pp. 54–56.

³² BRODT 1977 and comprehensively Sylvie Stanovská in: DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, especially pp. 56–63.

Another lyric poet active in Prague was Fridrich of Sonnenburk, who came from the monastery in Pustertal, Brixen, South Tyrol.³³ Referring to King Ottokar II of Bohemia, he celebrated his wealth and generous gifts to supporters. He compared Ottokar to the Arab ruler Saladin, Parthian King Osroes and King Cosdras of Persia. He also accompanied him on his campaign to Hungary in 1273, and wrote another poem to celebrate the entire expedition.³⁴

In addition to lyric poets, authors of shorter works, an epic poet — author of two epics — Ulrich of Etzenbach was also established at the Prague court.³⁵ He began there under Ottokar II and continued during the reign of Wenceslaus II. Specifically, it can be estimated that he wrote works at the Prague court from the 1270s to the 1290s. He was one of the few authors to mention his own origins, at least partially. He stated that he was born “in the land of the lion”, which would mean in one of the Czech lands — under the rule of Přemysl Otakar II (Ottokar II). He began by writing an epic on Alexander the Great for Ottokar II, written in German, *Alexandreida* (28 000 verses).³⁶ He completed his work under Wenceslaus II, and he dedicated its second section to Wenceslaus. He subsequently penned an epic tale in the early 1290s for Wenceslaus II, entitled *Wilhelm von Wenden* (8358 verses).³⁷

Another epic poet active at the Prague court at the time was Heinrich Clusener. Only one of his works has survived — an epic poem called *Die Marienlegende*.³⁸ According to its dedication, the work was commissioned by the ruler (i.e. Wenceslaus II). Furthermore, one cannot overlook within the work that the author captured the atmosphere of the time in the work’s introduction, specifically the rivalry between poets. This is seen in the prologue, where he refers to certain unnamed poets who were mere minor masters, not the true masters they perceived themselves to be.³⁹ We can get a picture here of the rivalry among the poets who wrote at the Prague court. It is also assumed that the renowned Heinrich of Meissen, known

³³ *Friedrich von Sonnenburg* 1878 and comprehensively Sylvie Stanovská in: DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, especially pp. 63–65.

³⁴ We could add that poets who clearly did not visit the courts of Wenceslaus I and Ottokar II also spoke of these courts: Tannhäuser (active in 1245–1265) and the poet known as Bruder Wernher (active around 1217–1250), who in one of his poems called on Ottokar II to “appreciate the reliability of Austrian nobles”. The wording clearly relates to the beginnings of the Přemyslid rule in Austria. Ottokar II is clearly also referred to in a poem by a poet called Meißner (Mísañer), see DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, especially pp. 40–76.

³⁵ *Moravo, Čechy, radujte se!* 1998, pp. 89–110; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, pp. 67–74.

³⁶ See ULRICH VON ETZENBACH 1888; for a comparison of the German and later Old Czech version see DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, pp. 57–61 (Petra Rajterová).

³⁷ ULRICH VON ETZENBACH 1857; Czech translation ULRICH VON ETZENBACH 2015.

³⁸ ZEMAN 2011.

³⁹ See excerpts from a translation and analysis of the epic poem in: DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2016, pp. 35–73.

as Frauenlob, visited the Prague court.⁴⁰ There is no document directly noting his Prague stay, although the influence of the author can be seen in poems which even Wenceslaus II himself penned.⁴¹ The Bohemian king's works comprised three love poems of so-called late *Minnesang*, and their method of stylisation is considered to be showing a marked influence of the famous Frauenlob. We can demonstrate his presence with some certainty around Wenceslaus II only during the king's expedition to Opole in 1292. Here, the king was knighted and Frauenlob celebrated this with a poem.⁴² Moving between rulers' courts was a common way of life for poets, and we can find Frauenlob, for example, previously in the service of the King of the Holy Roman Empire Rudolf I of Habsburg (later Wenceslaus II's father-in-law). He wrote a famed composition for Rudolf on his victory over King Ottokar II of Bohemia at the Battle on the Marchfeld. He also wrote poems at the court of Henry, Duke of Carinthia (subsequently Bohemian King in 1306/1307–1310), as shown in the so-called *Tyrol Books of Numbers*.⁴³ According to a record in an accounts book from the Austrian town of Thauer of 17 August 1299, he received as remuneration a certain sum to purchase a horse.⁴⁴ It is also not without interest that Frauenlob's later patron was the Archbishop of Mainz and former chancellor to Wenceslaus II, Petr of Aspelt, at whose court the poet died (29 November 1318). His final resting place is in the Mainz Cathedral.⁴⁵

We can add that German literature in Bohemia was not limited to royal courts. Through fashion, literature was enjoyed for entertainment, instruction or education and naturally found its way to the nobility. This clearly meant, among other things, the arrival of more artists who became established in Bohemia, for which they wrote various works. Ulrich of Etzenbach, for example, appears to have authored a piece entitled *Appendix to the Alexandreida* for the nobleman Boreš II of Rýzmburk in the 1290s. In addition, Version C of the *Alexandreida* was written prior to 1305 at the court of the Lords of Hradec by a certain Frederik, and his work subsequently became the most widespread. The oldest extant manuscript of the work is from 1322. Also discovered at the court of the Lords of Hradec was the oldest extant fragment

⁴⁰ Comprehensive information in: DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 166–167; DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, pp. 65–67.

⁴¹ See *Moravo, Čechy, radujte se!* 1998, pp. 28–30, the latest Czech translations of Wenceslaus II's poems by Sylvie Stanovská, in: *ibidem*, pp. 135–150, 163–174 and 185–191.

⁴² Frauenlob also appears to have produced an elegy (*Totenklage*) on Wenceslaus II's death, but unfortunately the work has not been preserved, with just chronicler Otakar Štýrský, or Ottokar aus der Faal, mentioning it (MGH, V, v. 86556). We would add that Frauenlob made a name for himself during his life around the year 1290 when he transposed the *Song of Songs* into the poem *Mary's Song* (*Marienleich*).

⁴³ DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 166–167; SCHONACH 1911, pp. 1–8 and 119–126.

⁴⁴ SCHONACH 1911, especially pp. 4–7, for 1299 and 1303 this was Frauenlob.

⁴⁵ DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ 2011, pp. 166–167.

of the *Alexandreida*.⁴⁶ Another noble court, of the Lords of Lichtenburk, hosted poet Heinrich of Freiberg. He transposed the epic *Tristan* by Gotfried of Strassburg for Raimund of Lichtenburk, probably in the 1280s.⁴⁷ The same author composed another epic poem for the nobleman Jan of Michalovice, celebrating his trip to the Rhineland and Paris, including his tournament victory.⁴⁸

To this summary list we can add that all the authors of lyrics and epics mentioned here wrote in German, which suggests that they came either from German or Austrian lands. This also appears true for Ulrich of Etzenbach, even though he was born in the “land of the lion” under the rule of King Ottokar II.

Summary of cited literary figures at the Prague court

Reinmar of Zweter — under Wenceslaus I
 Meister Sigeher — under Wenceslaus I and Ottokar II
 Friedrich of Sonnenburg — under Ottokar II
 Ulrich of Etzenbach — under Ottokar II and Wenceslaus II
 Heinrich Clusenere — under Wenceslaus II
 Heinrich of Meissen, Frauenlob — ? — under Wenceslaus II

Summary of literary figures in the service of nobles

Ulrich of Etzenbach — wrote for Boreš of Rýzmburk
 Heinrich of Freiberg — wrote for the Lords of Lichtenburg and Jan of Michalovice
 Friederik — wrote for the Lords of Hradec

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⁴⁶ VÁŽNÝ 1949, verses 122–125; in publications especially VÁŽNÝ 1964; for a comparison of German and later Old Czech version see DVOŘÁČKOVÁ-MALÁ, ZELENKA et al. 2014, pp. 57–61 (Petra Rajterová).

⁴⁷ HEINRICH VON FREIBERG 1978, pp. 1–213 (II. Teil, Texte); on Ulrich von Etzenbach's work *Moravo, Čechy radujte se!* 1998, pp. 136–139 (some believe the work dedicated to Boreš of Rýzmburk need not necessarily have been authored by Ulrich von Etzenbach).

⁴⁸ HEINRICH VON FREIBERG 2005.

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Locals and outsiders — an outline of the ethnic composition of Wenceslaus II's Prague court

The so-called foreigners who were present at Wenceslaus II's royal court were mainly people of German origin, although even ethnic German origin may have meant that they came from a family which had settled in the Kingdom of Bohemia (as was the case of Jan of Ostrov in all likelihood). Most of them were educated clerics engaged at the court — in the chancellery and as the king's advisors. Another group, no less interesting, comprised men of letters — lyric poets and authors of epics, who sought royal patronage at the Prague court in the second half of the thirteenth century, thus securing their own livelihood. Thanks to their activities, which reached their peak at Wenceslaus II's Prague court, they have left us a number of literary works. Although they are written in German, they represent the very oldest works of fiction in Bohemian history, predating even the Old Czech works of literature from the fourteenth century. With the presence of people of both Bohemian and German origin, the beneficial multi-lingual potential of the Bohemian lands is no less interesting. There was a bilingual environment in daily communication at Wenceslaus II's Prague court: in other words, the individuals in question spoke both Czech and German. It is clear from the concentration of foreigners that this fact must have suited the ruling family, which understood German. This is undoubtedly true of Wenceslaus II, as we know that between the ages of seven and twelve he grew up in Brandenburg, at the Ascanian court of his cousin and guardian, Otto V. Furthermore, Wenceslaus II is named as the author of three German late Minnesang love poems. In addition, Wenceslaus II's first wife Guta was the daughter of the King of the Holy Roman Empire, Rudolf I from the House of Habsburg, and German would have been her mother tongue. This multilingual trend became gradually stronger in the fourteenth century in written form too, as is evidenced by emerging Old Czech literary works and continuing Latin documents. Latin remained the principal language in the royal chancellery, although with the government of Henry, Duke of Carinthia, for example, German was sometimes used as well. When it comes to court and German literature, however, we should add that although the works produced in Bohemia comprise the oldest ever documents of local fiction, within the context of the development of German court literature, they originated at a time when the zenith had been reached, spreading the farthest to the east.