

In 14th-century Prague, the capital of Bohemia and seat of the Emperor under the Luxembourgs, a language similar to Luther's was used in records and other writings. In a recently published book entitled „The Development of the Chancellery Language in Eger (1330—1660)“ and based on the abundant material in the municipal archives of Eger, Skála has examined the relationship between the chancellery language of Eger and the language used by Luther. The problem is a complicated one: the view, predominating until the 1930's, which held that the Bohemian chancellery language of the Luxembourgs was only, so to speak, a tributary of Luther's has since been abandoned.

Skála surveys the chancellery language of Eger from the appearance of the German language in documents of the town (c. 1310) up to the mid-17th century; his examination of the period up to 1500 is based on an unpublished dissertation by Maria Nowak. Phonological and morphological aspects, the selection of words, and some problems of syntax are dealt with. He devotes almost no attention to the question of the scribes, holding that the location of the chancellery itself is more important. Skála concludes that the Eger chancellery language developed independently and was not influenced by the Imperial Chancellery of the Luxembourgs in Prague. This view is in harmony with the political position of the Egerland, which despite its submission to the feudal overlordship of Bohemia from 1322 on, was otherwise independent. The Eger chancellery language was one of the territorial chancellery languages of the 14th—15th centuries for which communication and politics lay the basis.

Too little attention is paid to exceptions to the rule. These show the occasional penetration of dialect and that the confrontation between the East Franconian and Upper Palatinate dialects since the German land settlement which set in vigorously in the 12th century was still quite evident in writing. This applies equally to phonetics, forms and vocabulary (with which a subsequent work by Walter Besch — *Sprachlandschaften und Sprachausgleich im 15. Jahrhundert* [1967] — has dealt). Comparison with other studies published since Skála's work appeared shows that intensive work is being done on the origins of Modern High German writing, with less emphasis being placed on the spoken language. Luther, however, was not only concerned about writing in harmony with the standards of the Meissen chancellery, but also paid the greatest attention to the spoken tongue. It is clear that much

more research has to be devoted to dialect. In his later years Luther himself attached prime importance to the process of consolidating word selection.

An appendix signals a number of shorter studies by Czech scholars on the German language in Bohemia and Moravia.