

## SUMMARIES

### THE SENIOR COMMUNITAS — A REVOLUTIONARY INSTITUTION OF THE PRAGUE HUSSITE CITIZENRY

*Karel Hrubý*

Among the political institutions of Hussite Prague, the „senior communitas“ played a particularly important role. Soon after the outbreak of the revolution they had grown into a political instrument of the active circles of the propertied bourgeoisie. Originally exercising only limited control functions, the senior communitas now made virtually all the important decisions. The aldermen (Schöffen), trustees, arbiters and delegates involved in various municipal negotiations were drawn from the senior communitas. And thus within a short period of time the membership of the senior communitas and the municipal council were largely identical. The field of activity of the former extended to political, diplomatic, ideological and probably also military affairs.

Except for the years 1421—1424 when they were temporarily merged, each of the two Prague towns had a senior communitas of its own. The social character of their functions, however, was basically the same, and despite differences over economic and prestige questions, they often acted jointly.

In the struggle against the radicals and the minimalist wing of the Prague patriciate, the senior communitas emerged as an opponent of every kind of autocratic tendency. The peak of their development was reached between 1427 and 1437, when they functioned as a kind of citizen's parliament, whose membership, to be sure, was increased not by election but by co-optation. The changed power configuration after the compromise with Sigismund and the council also transformed the structure of the political institution. The senior communitas was paralyzed by the persecution measures of the years 1438—1440, and after George of Poděbrad conquered Prague in 1448, it was never reconstituted in its original form.