

THE PROBLEM OF TOLERATION IN THE OLD BOHEMIAN STATE

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With the so-called „age of confessionalism“ in Europe there developed a perception of the need for toleration, for a religious tolerance that could bridge the opposing fronts — simply because political, economic or humane motives urged as much. German historiography has thus far not reflected the fact that these problems of toleration appeared a hundred years before the „age of the Reformation“ in the Bohemian lands, and that there is good reason for dating this age back to Hussitism, because of the meaningful analogies which an examination of the historical problem yields. Following some explanatory remarks on the concept and the historical phenomenon, this article on the problems of toleration in the old Bohemian state presents some examples and views pointing up the basic questions of religious toleration in the context of Bohemian problems, tracing them up to the „Patent of Tolerance“ (1781). The purpose is to stimulate detailed interest in these questions, so that — applying a comparative historical approach — their significance for our picture of confessionalism in Europe may be taken into consideration.