

MARTIN LUTHER IN THE LIBRARIES OF BOHEMIAN BURGHERS C.1600: TOWARD THE RECEPTION AND INFLUENCE OF LUTHER'S TEACHING

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In the religiously tolerant climate of the Bohemian townships in the second half of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, the great confessional history played a far less significant role than the local and, above all, individual lives of particular burghers. The authors of this article have analysed 1364 wills of the burghers of Prague and Louny between 1550 and 1620 where they discovered 519 inventories of personal libraries. Luther's works are prominent in sixteen percent of these libraries; these are predominantly in German, seldom in Latin and very rarely in Czech. Luther was amongst the most widely read authors in Prague and Louny, more popular than John Hus and other Bohemian writers. Most numerous are his postils, his catechism, his sermons and, of course, his German translation of the Bible. Even his collected works were owned in Prague. Not present, however, are his most important writings

on Church politics. After 1600 the number of his works in library inventories notably declines and after 1620 they disappear altogether, although more up-to-date Lutheran authors continued to be read until the end of the seventeenth century.