

PRAGUE ABOUT 1600 A.D. – AN ANOMALY IN EUROPE?  
SOME POLEMICAL REMARKS CONCERNING LESZEK  
BELZYT

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The book by the Polish scholar undertakes to compare topographic and demographic aspects of the social and ethnic structures in Prague and Cracow. This polemical review focuses on the Prague part and points out some grave mistakes (e.g. with respect to the Prague Jewish township), the failure to include modern (not only Czech) literature and the fact that to a certain degree the book is based on works from the interwar period that were marked by grossly nationalist views. The main criticism, however, centres on Belzyt's uncritical use of source editions and their data on the size, the social and above all the national structure of the Prague population in the Rudolfian time. Mistaken interpretations, sometimes bordering on manipulation, are adopted by Belzyt, who does not use arguments to refute false results of earlier research. He either overlooks these arguments, or he rectifies them without naming reasons and methods. Prague is thus isolated from the context of the history of Central European cities. Instead of a meaningful comparison between two capital cities, there is only a parallel description.