

BOHEMIAN STATEHOOD ON "SOFT PAPER":
FACTS, MYTH AND SYMBOLIC MEANING
IN CZECH POLITICAL CULTURE

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Subject of the present article is an attempt, in 1871, at reconciliation between Czechs and Austrians as far as Bohemian statehood was concerned. The author does not, however, deal with the political negotiations about what was termed "Fundamental articles," but with rather impulsive reactions by the Czech political elite and large parts of the public to the whole action being cancelled all of a sudden. Analysing hitherto unknown sources and deciphering a familiar myth, the author examines a specific case of *lèse-majesté*, in which the breaking of the Emperor's promise to accept the title and crown of a King of Bohemia was circulated, in printed form, on toilet paper, which some people did even use for its intended purpose. Frustration and annoyance at the sovereign's decision thus gained a public expression. The article describes to what extent the administration was at a loss when it came to dealing with this form of protest, how traditional, symbolic values, such as trust in the sovereign, gradually disappeared, and how far these changes have influenced modern Czech political culture.