

SPEAKING CZECH: A CAREER ADVANTAGE?
PROFESSIONALIZATION OF OBSTETRICS
AND MIDWIFERY AND THE PROBLEM
OF LINGUISTIC "UTRAQUISM"
AT THE TURN OF THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES

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The present study deals with the professionalization of obstetrics and midwifery that came about in Bohemia at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. It focuses on the linguistic and socio-linguistic problems of this process, which took place in a period of gradual vernacularization and de-Latinization. Possible connections between the improvement of obstetric services at the behest of the state, and the language question, are analysed on three levels: First, the author demonstrates how difficult it was to introduce and enforce obligatory training for midwives. A second important aspect is the creation of textbooks which had to take into account language proficiency as well as the overall educational level of different target groups – students, physicians, and midwives. Finally, the example of the conflict about filling the chair of obstetrics at Prague university, which was won by Antonín Jungmann, is used to demonstrate the importance attached by the professors involved in the selection, with the future development of their discipline in mind, to the demand that the candidate have a good command of both German and Czech.