

CONVERTS ADVISE THE HERETIC KING.
TWO VERNACULAR WRITINGS ADRESSED
TO KING GEORGE OF PODIEBRAD

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The present article deals with two manuscripts that were addressed to King George of Podiebrad (1458-1471) and pursued the goal of advising him what he ought to do in order to better control the situation in a Kingdom of Bohemia which was split between Catholic and Utraquist confessions, and to generally improve his reign. The first one is the “Letter to King George of Podiebrad” which was written in 1462 by the then administrator of the Prague archdiocese, Hilarius of Leitmeritz. The second, a listing of princes and principalities called “*Handbuch der Verwaltung*” [A Handbook on Administration], was completed by university scholar Pavel Židek in 1471. According to both authors, conversion to the Catholic faith by the King and subsequently, it was hoped, by all observers of Utraquism was the principal prerequisite for peace in the kingdom. They both viewed the past relations of the kingdom to the Holy See, particularly under Charles IV, as a model for its present administration. The authors advise the King in religious questions, but they also seek solutions for problems which are a consequence of people of different religious observances living together in one country. Both works are motivated in part by the widespread quest for identity among Catholics of the time, with features such as nostalgia for the “good old times” and, on the other hand, an outspoken patriotism. The preserved copies of both texts are in Czech, and it is not improbable that they were written in the vernacular with the explicit aim of reaching not just the king, but also his court.