

## SUMMARIES

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MEDIEVAL GERMAN CHANCELLERY LANGUAGE OF SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL MORAVIA

*Ernst Schwarz*

The chancellery of Charles IV can no longer be considered as the starting point for an early Modern High German chancellery language and thus as a forerunner of Martin Luther. For as a result of the Hussite Wars the importance of the German chancellery language in Bohemia declined so greatly in the 15th century that it could no longer have exerted any influence on Meissen. But it would be all the more important to examine its structure, mutations, phonetic and word selection, and relationship with local town idioms and peasant dialects, as well as the disparity between the written and spoken language.

Research in this area has been resumed by the young Czech scholars of German philology. In his *The Medieval German Chancellery Language of Southern and Central Moravia* (1966), Zdeněk Masařík is especially interested in the links between Upper and Middle German in Moravia, which can be readily detected, since there were traces of Bavarian dialect in the southern part of Northern Moravia, as well as of North Moravian — East Middle German in the linguistic islands of Brünn and Wischau and in the eastern part of Southern Moravia. The chancellery language of Brünn and Iglau also bear East Middle German features, which, in the case of Brünn, disappeared again in the 15th century. The present article endeavours to carry these observations further and also to examine the extent to which local town idioms and German dialects were reflected in German chancellery language. Masařík rejected as unreliable the older printed works as basic material and instead concentrated on evaluating unprinted material, especially from Brünn, Znaim, Nikolsburg and Iglau. He was able to distinguish the hand of the various scribes. A number of peculiarities in phonetic transcription can indeed be accounted for: it is evident that the scribes occasionally oriented their orthography toward their own language, usually a local town idiom, and that the latter was close to the peasant dialect of the surrounding area. Examination of the selection of words in the written material reveals that a process of word assimilation was already underway, since, in some instances, two words were used that had been brought by German settlers coming from different regions and one ultimately prevailed. The Middle German characteristics of the chancellery language of Iglau are

a reflection of the fact that in this linguistic island, miners from East-Central Germany and peasants from the Upper Palatinate were compelled to reach a linguistic compromise. In this case it must, moreover, be remembered that a restructuration of the population had been made necessary in the town of Iglau from the last decades of the 14th century on, when the focus had to be shifted to the crafts and trades, especially clothmaking, due to the decline of mining. Thus it may be concluded that in appraising the language used by the German chancelleries, external elements of the public life of the Germans in Moravia in the centuries in question must also be taken into account.