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Summary

DESCRIPTIO MONSTRI. THE RECEPTION OF OVID IN THE MANUSCRIPT POEM BY GEORG BARTHOLDUS PONTANUS (1550–1614)

The reception of Ovid in the literature of the Early Modern Czech Lands has not been satisfactorily investigated up to now. He was undoubtedly the favourite ancient poet after Virgil, his works were part of many libraries, were avidly studied at universities and at Latin schools. His poems served as an important source and model for the poetry of humanists from the Czech Lands. Motifs from his poetry, phrases or even entire verses can be found in poems of various content – in religious and occasional poetry, in moralizing poems or in panegyrics. The poem by Georg Bartholdus Pontanus, poet laureate and member of the high Catholic clergy, represents a type of Ovid reception which occurred rarely – being a parodic invective. The composition written in about 1580 at the monastery in Louka in Moravia and consisting of 166 dactylic hexameters is in all probability based on an actual event, a delict by an unnamed Catholic priest in Austria. In the first part of the poem, Pontanus describes the priest and his metamorphosis into a monster in the cave. In the second part, called “fiction”, all of Protestantism is depicted as a dangerous monster, which can bring mankind into ruins and bring about the victory of Satan. Pontanus plays with the basic idea of the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid that the transformation and the loss of human appearance is the punishment of gods/God. He uses entire parts from ancient poems mainly by Ovid, Virgil and Silius Italicus,

depicting various mythological beings and creatures in a cave. The motif of a monster was common in contemporary confessional polemic, wherein the poem by Pontanus is particularly offensive in the attack against Protestantism. Because of that, it could not be printed at the time of its composition and remained as a manuscript work shared by a few similarly thinking intellectuals in the monastery of Louka.

Keywords: Georgius Bartholdus Pontanus; Neo-Latin Poetry; Ovid; Parody; Monster

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