

- VACULÍNOVÁ, MARTA 2021: *Literární tvorba na jezuitské akademii v Olomouci v letech 1597-1598 a její odrazy v tiskařské produkci*, in: *Bibliotheca antiqua* 29, pp. 81-92.
- VOIT, PETR 2020: *Humanism in the Czech Lands in the First Half of the 16th Century*, in: STORCHOVÁ (ed.) 2020, pp. 1-22.

## Summary

### THE NEO-LATIN EPIC IN THE CZECH LANDS BEFORE 1620

The study provides an overview of the themes and forms of epic poetry in the Czech Lands in the period before the Battle of White Mountain (1620) on the basis of a large amount of extant material. In the introduction, it outlines the problems of understanding epic poetry in antiquity and the Early Modern period, combining insights from modern neo-Latinist handbooks and experience with a corpus of Bohemical (i.e., Bohemia-related) material to create a basic division of epic poetry applicable to poems from the Czech Lands. It divides epic poetry into secular, religious and animal poetry, with religious epic outnumbering secular poetry. Both of these include many types of poetic compositions, not all of which are typical examples of epic poetry, often straddling several genres. Classical heroic epics, as we know them from antiquity, occur little in the Bohemical material; when they do, they deal with battles with the Turks, or are genealogical epics or have biblical themes. This is related to the state of patronage and the social status of poets, which in Bohemia rarely allowed them to devote enough time to demanding epic work.

Shorter epic compositions, for which the term *epyllion* is now also used, were more popular and more widely published, responding to a current event. The practical solution was a cycle of shorter poems, most often in chronological order – this was usually how the popular series of rulers were composed, the type of composition for which poets received the laurel wreath of *poeta laureatus* from the emperor. The theme of the Neo-Latin *epyllia* used to be descriptions of historical events, battles or natural disasters, often depicted in so-called recapitulatory *strenae*. Religious epic concentrates on the depiction of Christ's life and

its most important phases (birth, passion and ascension), associated at the same time with important Christian feasts. Old Testament themes, often parallel to New Testament themes or to current events, or the lives of saints, conceived differently by Catholic and non-Catholic authors, or poems about angels and their duties, are also treated. A special kind is the animal epic, represented by Jan Dubravius's *Theribulia*, a work variously interpreted as an animal epic, allegory, or mirror for princes. The presented outline of the types of epic based on the Bohemical material is not intended as a codification, but rather as a call for a discussion on the categorization of the Neo-Latin epic in the Czech Lands.

Keywords: Neo-Latin Genres; Neo-Latin Epic Poetry; Czech Lands; Biblical Epic

MARTA VACULÍNOVÁ

Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences

Centre for Classical Studies

Na Florenci 1420/3, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic

vaculinova@ics.cas.cz