



LETNÍ ŠKOLA
MEDIEVISTICKÝCH
STUDIÍ since 2005

Centre for Medieval Studies

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Czech Academy
of Sciences

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Science 93

Around
Us
Places
of Common
Memory

The Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences, a publicly funded institution, conducts research in key areas of philosophy and logic. We study metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, as well as the history of philosophy, in both the analytic and the continental tradition. We also conduct research in related disciplines, namely classics and medieval studies, Comenius' studies, science studies and global studies. The Institute is a part of the international philosophical community: we participate in several COST projects, regularly win multilateral and national grants, and build international teams that apply for Twinning initiatives and European grants. The Institute introduces contemporary philosophical findings and inquiries into the Czech national context, thereby enriching the national culture and intellectual discourse. It also explores and develops the teachings of distinguished thinkers in Czech and Central European history. Our main research results include scholarly books, monographs and scientific articles, published both at home and abroad, as well as regularly held conferences, colloquia and public lectures. We are also active in the domain of digital humanities, contributing to large infrastructure databases in the DARIAH-EU network. The Institute of Philosophy works closely with other scientific institutions, engaging, for example, in joint research projects and doctoral programs. The Institute is also home to two publishing houses that put out original scholarly work and translations of renowned philosophical texts. The Institute also publishes several prominent scholarly journals. The Institute's libraries, which are publicly accessible, include more than 110,000 volumes. The Institute also organizes and supports various educational and popularizing events for the general public, including science fairs, open houses, and various summer schools in philosophy, classics, and medieval studies. Follow our activities on our website (www.flu.cas.cz), Facebook, and Twitter.

The Institute of Philosophy organises a number of major scientific conferences attended by leading foreign researchers. During the last 5 years, there have been more than 100 such events. Several major international events have been organized by the Institute, including Performance Philosophy, Via Benedictina, Franz Brentano's Legacy in Prague, and the Congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and Technology. Among the internationally significant conferences organised annually by the Institute are LOGICA, Philosophy and Social Science, and the Ernst Mach Workshop.

The Institute of Philosophy publishes or co-publishes nine peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Most of them are included in international scientific databases, such as Web of Science, SCOPUS, ERIH+ and others.

The Institute of Philosophy houses two book publishers: *Filosofia* and *OIKOYMENH*. *Filosofia* publishes original works in philosophy and the humanities by Czech researchers as well as Czech translations of significant philosophical texts. The publishing house also produces a limited number of foreign-language works. Since its inception in 1992, it has published almost 500 volumes, with some 25 new volumes each year. In 2017 the Institute joined forces with the established publishing house *OIKOYMENH*. *OIKOYMENH* started in the underground during the so-called era of "normalization" when publishing was highly censored and has a long tradition of enriching and reviving Czech intellectual life. It concentrates primarily on translations of classical texts and important contemporary works in the continental philosophical tradition. Since its establishment, it has published more than 550 volumes, and it currently puts out approximately 20–30 new books a year. For more information about the publishing houses, or to purchase published titles online, visit: filosofia.flu.cas.cz/en and <https://en.oikoymenh.cz>.

The Mission of the CMS as an Institute Jointly Founded by the Czech Academy of Sciences and Charles University

The idea of a medievalist institution that would combine the advantages of a university and an academy ripened in the minds of our founders as a result of a number of circumstances. Most of them were related to developments in the study of the Middle Ages. Experts in all the related fields began to feel a growing solidarity across their individual areas of focus. The idea of medieval studies as a field of its own began to be discussed in classical philology where medieval Latin (as opposed to classical Latin) offered specific themes, and a sufficient collection of domestic sources. Medieval archaeology defined itself similarly in the second half of the last century, but a sort of “medievalist identity” blossomed in other fields as well. It became necessary to consider the results of related fields when researching the Middle Ages in order to build the most contoured reconstruction of the past, where the discoveries of a single field are simply insufficient. At the same time – and this is specific to the Middle Ages – there are sufficient surviving sources to make cross-field cooperation possible, but there are too few for anyone to rely simply on the methods and discoveries of their own field.

For years, lectures by the medieval section of the Union of Classical Philologists showed the attractiveness of the cross-disciplinary approach to medieval studies. If the founding of an interdisciplinary institute seemed like a logical step at the time, then the second main characteristic of the new centre – its institutional lodging between two active bodies – was next a contemporary trend as well. The combination of a university and academic workplace to achieve synergies seemed to be clearly beneficial. There were also precedents, such as the Centre for Theoretical Study, which was a joint workplace founded by Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences in 1993. The people behind the founding of the Centre for Medieval Studies were former heads of academic institutes whose intention was to build a body for advanced doctoral studies. When the Academy of Sciences lost the ability to award doctoral titles at the beginning of the century, cooperation with Charles University seemed the most elegant solution. However, communication and cooperation between large research-educational institutions proved to be much more difficult than that between individual researchers from various fields, due primarily to institutional entrenchment, along with the myriad of interests embedded in the realities of scholarly policy over the last two decades.

The agreement signed by Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences on 26 August 1998 created the Centre for Medieval Studies. The Faculty of Arts participated on the side of Charles University, partnering with the Academy's Institute of Philosophy. The founding document tasked the new Centre with providing a platform for the cooperation of both founding institutions in advanced research and postgraduate studies in fields dealing with the Middle Ages, especially in areas overlapping with traditionally-established disciplines, and the necessary communication with international research. The first director and founding father of the CMS was the historian František Šmahel, and his deputy was the archaeologist

Petr Sommer. The invaluable support and patronage of Vilém Herold, the contemporary vice-president of the Academy of Sciences, allowed the CMS to relocate from its temporary headquarters to a new location, in the academic complex on Jilská Street in Prague's historic Old Town, hence strengthening the ties to the Institute of Philosophy. The Institute also, via the Academy of Sciences, provides CMS with its basic budget, though most of CMS's funding comes from grants and project financing. The remainder of its budget, covering the costs of doctoral students, is contributed by Charles University's Faculty of Arts.

A Platform for Doctoral Students and the Medievalist Community

The budding medievalist acquires experience with interdisciplinary research only in the advanced phases of study. Even if he or she decided to focus on the Middle Ages at the very beginning of their track, they will still spend a significant time gathering experience and knowledge in their own defined field of expertise. When the medievalist chooses their research and begins to examine heretofore unused sources, they will feel the need to expand the breadth of their abilities. They will want to understand medieval languages, learn the methods of the so-called auxiliary historical sciences such as palaeography (the study of old scripts), and use

The auditorium of the Medieval Studies Summer School in the refectory of the Sázava monastery where our meeting takes place each year
(Photo by Robert Novotný, 2011)



methods of digital humanities, such as the computer analysis of social networks, etc. It is usually during doctoral studies that the medievalist needs to grow his or her knowledge of methodologies from other fields, expand their horizons, and come into contact with colleagues from other workplaces. The Centre for Medieval Studies fulfills these needs and offers regular meetings of doctoral students.

Several hundred students from all fields and universities in the Czech Republic are in the CMS address book. The Annual Meeting of Doctoral Students and the Summer School of Medieval Studies are organized precisely for this group. The one-day gathering held at the Academic Conference Centre in Prague at the beginning of each spring provides the opportunity to present colleagues with a report on their work, and to test their presentation abilities while discussing academic topics. The Summer School of Medieval Studies is held during the first weekend of September at the Sázava Monastery, offering doctoral students practical seminars and thematic lecture blocks, a section to present their own projects, and a keynote lecture from a significant medievalist. This event – also popular because of the lively informal debates in the evening – is attended by approximately 60 young medievalists each year. The CMS also offers two annual, two-week-long research fellowships in cooperation with the Hus Museum Association, and the University of Constance, Germany.

Advanced members of the medievalist society can become CMS Fellows. This is a group of respected experts from all areas of research in the Middle Ages: from history to archaeology, art history, musicology, and literary history, as well as research into languages including medieval Latin, Old Czech, Germanic, Romance, and Scandinavian languages, and the so-called auxiliary historical fields such as diplomatics, codicology, palaeography, chronology, numismatics, heraldry, and sigillography. CMS Fellows thus informally act as a sort of professional organization. Membership is established at a general meeting of the Fellows, and the conditions for candidacy include a Ph.D. (or equivalent) and the publication of an academic monograph. The first CMS Fellows were mostly medievalists from the generation born in the interwar period. Many of them had been participants of the table rondes organized by Pavel Spunar in the 1980s, seminars held outside official institutions in private apartments. Meetings of Fellows thus offered this older generation the welcome opportunity to meet and debate, even after their retirement. Subsequent years witnessed a significant youth movement within the community of Fellows, and the current practice is to hold a vote on membership soon after the formal preconditions have been met. The total number of Fellows reached 140 in 2019. They gather at meetings that take place at least twice a year, which include a talk, a discussion of the CMS's activities, and other related news. In serious cases, the Fellows use open letters to express their opinions about current topics associated with research and the preservation of the cultural legacy of the Middle Ages. The Fellows also elect the CMS Scientific Council, which helps set the agenda for the Centre as an advisory body to the director.

Research into the Early Middle Ages

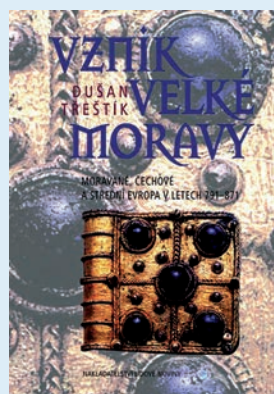
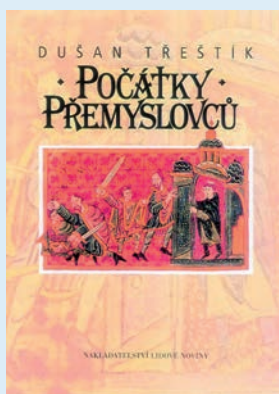
At the dawn of the CMS, its members participated in preparations for the *Europas Mitte um 1000* (The Centre of Europe around the Year 1000) international exhibition project, which was held under the auspices of the Council of Europe. The travelling

exhibition that visited Prague in 2002 offered a unique perspective into the dramatic and dynamic period during which the first stable state-like forms began to appear in Central Europe. Its perspective combined historical, art historical, and archaeological aspects and presented the period around the year 1000 as key to the formation of the political map of the entire region, the effects of which had a significant influence on subsequent centuries. The innovative approach and international dimension of the exhibition was a success among the general public. The project also included research that expanded the knowledge about this period. Historian Dušan Třeštík (see the box below), who was irrevocably associated with research into the early Middle Ages in Bohemia during the first years of the CMS, was able to greatly



Dušan Třeštík (1933–2007)

A leading expert on the early Middle Ages with a focus on the Central European region. His specialization included the oldest periods of Přemyslid history, hagiography and chronicles – especially the *Chronicon Bohemorum* written by the Dean Cosmas – and the foundation and history of the Great Moravian Empire. His original interpretations contributed to the understanding of political thought during the Přemyslid epoch and the importance of legends, as well as the rehabilitation of the fratricidal Boleslav I as the founder of the first Czech state. In 1989, Třeštík became one of the most active academic commentators of current affairs and an expert on historical topics in the media.



influence the conceptualization of this exhibition in his discussions with German, Polish, and Hungarian colleagues.

Dušan Třeštík was also one of those who helped launch the project *Christianity and Czech Society in the Middle Ages: Norms and Reality (The European Context of a Czech Topic)*, which included a number of research initiatives in 2005–2011. It mapped the formation of a European Christian identity over a long period with an emphasis on the several waves of Christianisation. This first appeared on the level of princely authority, and only later the foundations of Christian teachings permeate everyday life. The project introduced a more elaborate understanding of the intellectual and artistic development of Czech medieval society in the context of a discussion regarding European identity in its analysis of changes in faith, religiosity, and the diverse forms of religious life from the arrival of Christianity up to the Hussite Reformation.

Research into the early Middle Ages within the CMS is based on interdisciplinary cooperation – chiefly between historians and archaeologists – on questions of early settlements and the oldest religious and lay buildings. A significant role is also played in cooperation with art historians when dealing with pieces associated with the ruling



The discovery of 14 unusual graves in the “U Mrchovláčky” area of the town of Čelákovice was interpreted in the 1960s as an early medieval burial ground with documented “antivampire measures.” The application of modern scientific methods in connection to the study of written and archaeological sources revealed this is probably a high- or late-medieval location used for non-ceremonial burials or the simplified burial of corpses that, for various reasons, could not be ceremonially interred at the parish cemetery. According to the accounts from normative sources, the individuals may have committed suicide or have been people either excommunicated or un-baptized, vagabonds, or criminals; in short, people on the fringes of medieval society

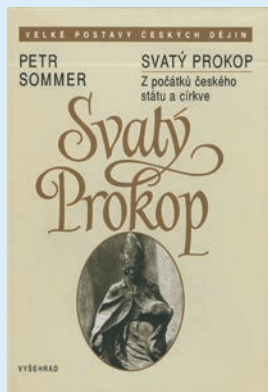
(Photo by Jaroslav Špaček)

Přemyslid dynasty. That is also true for the efforts of historians and philologists researching Latin texts related to the lives of saints, their actions, and especially their continuing influence in the form of cults. The legends describing their lives, deaths, and miracles are among the richest sources of information about contemporary society and religious life, making them a common topic for CMS researchers.



Petr Sommer (*1949)

An archaeologist with a specialization in Church history, Petr Sommer studies the Christianisation of Přemyslid Bohemia, monastic architecture, and life in monasteries in the early medieval period. He led research into the oldest Czech monasteries (Břevnov, Strahov, Ostrov near Davle, Beroun, Sázava) and headed the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in 1993–1998. His work demonstrates his understanding of medieval studies as an interdisciplinary cooperation, in this case a cooperation between archaeologists, historians, and art historians in interpreting the arrival of Christianity to the Czech lands, and the related activities of the oldest monastic communities. He focuses special attention on the Sázava monastery and the associated figure of St. Procopius. He was the deputy director of the CMS since its founding and became the head in 2004. Petr Sommer was recognized for his work many times, most recently receiving the *Česká hlava* National Prize for Science (2017).



The results of long-term research into Czech history during the early and high Middle Ages were processed for the general public in the form of an extensive tome titled *Přemyslovci. Budování českého státu* (The Přemyslids: Building the Czech State), published in 2009. A significant contribution to the idea and concept of the book came from Josef Žemlička, a leading expert on Přemyslid history. The collective of authors under the leadership of Josef Žemlička, Dušan Třeštík and Petr Sommer compiled a diverse and complex picture of this dynasty's rule along with historical, archaeological, and artistic contextualization. The popularity of the book led the CMS and publisher Nakladatelství Lidové noviny to prepare two more books about the subsequent periods: the Luxembourgs and the Hussite Century (see below).

Monastic Research

Research into the life of monastic communities and the development of monasteries is one of the key areas of the CMS's research. Since its founding, individual topics related to monastic life have been researched and discussed by leading experts at meetings called *Historia monastica*. This is obviously an interdisciplinary topic that corresponds to the CMS's profile and brings together specialists from archaeology, historiography, philology, and the history of construction whose professional overlaps provide a better understanding of past realities, in this case, of life in monasteries, and their influence on the functioning of society.

Members of religious orders brought civilizational impulses into medieval Czech society and helped spread awareness of the Christian faith. Their activities are still visible in the topology of the land as well as in manuscripts and works of art. The detailed processing of these artefacts and the evaluation of their influence, were the subjects of two extensive projects which were realized in cooperation with the CMS. First, researchers from various fields under the leadership of Petr Sommer analysed the cultural importance of the Benedictine order, which founded some of the oldest monasteries in Bohemia, as part of the project *The Culture and Art of the Benedictine Order in Central Europe 800–1300* (2011–2015). Here, the CMS worked together with the National Gallery and the Institute of Christian Art History at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University. Chronological and thematic research into the influence of mendicant orders (the Dominicans and Minor Friars) on the cultural development of cities, at both the institutional and the everyday level of civic religiosity, continued the fruitful examination into the Benedictine monks, and concluded with an exhibition in the Waldstein Riding School. This subsequent project, titled *The Birth of Bohemian Towns and the Mendicant Orders* (2016–2018) was based primarily on the confrontation of historians' established ideas with current archaeological and artistic research into the early development of the oldest urban settlements.

For years, the main protagonist of this project, Petr Sommer, had focused his academic focus on St. Procopius, founder of the Sázava Monastery. This singular monastic house preserved a trove of old Slavonic writings and a liturgy which dated far back into the eleventh century, and it mediated them in Přemyslid Bohemia. We now understand this connection to be obvious considering the expanded story

of Czech history starting in Great Moravia, but in the Middle Ages it was not well known and finding details in the sources demanded significant effort. The historical importance of one of the patron saints of the Czech lands and the cult associated with him, spanning from medieval to modern history, was expertly described by Petr Sommer in his book published in 2007.

Research into the Luxembourg Period

The Central European region under the Luxembourg dynasty (1310–1437) is a very important topic in the CMS. Our researchers, along with a number of other leading experts, compiled an extensive publication entitled *Lucemburkové. Česká koruna uprostřed Evropy* (The Luxembourgs: The Bohemian Crown in the Middle of Europe), published in 2012, evaluating the entire era in light of dynastic politics and a broad perspective on artistic developments. Traditionally, a significant portion of research was dedicated to Charles IV and the associated unique sources available. Among other topics, the CMS published studies on the Emperor's diplomatic mission to France at the end of his life (by František Šmahel) and the elaborate programme of representation expressed in the coronation rite (by Václav Žurek).

Research into the rituals and ceremonial dynamics of medieval society has been a popular subject in medieval studies over the past thirty years. Timeless phenomena attract historians no matter the period, but it is typical of the Middle Ages that a significant number of sources on these elements should survive to this day, given their arousal of particular attention from contemporary authors. The research project led by František Šmahel and Martin Nodl titled *Rituals, Ceremonies, and Festivities in Central Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (2009–2011), uncovered the importance of extraordinary symbolic events in medieval society and used that knowledge to better understand the mechanisms of medieval society.

Literature written in Latin and gradually in Czech and German, also played a fundamental role in the cultural development of the Czech lands under Luxembourg rule. The rise of national languages, or the so-called vernacularisation process, became the central theme of the project *The Origins of the Vernacular Mode* (2011–2016), for which a prestigious grant from the European Research Council was awarded to former CMS employee Pavlína Rychterová and which was conducted at the CMS in cooperation with the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The central focus of this project was not only theological and catechetical texts that were increasingly written in vernacular languages, but also translations of Latin works that offered the opportunity for adaptation and changes in meaning. The research showed the fundamental way that language choice affected literary as well as scholarly works, especially in the formation and spread of the ideas of the reformation after the year 1400. The rise of vernacular languages in higher education, intellectual life, and political theory and practice during this period not only supported the emergence of Prague as an intellectual centre, but also contributed to the spread of cultural impulses and ideas from the previously-closed community of scholars to noble courts and wealthy burghers. Detailed research including a reconstruction of the library of the Augustinian Canons in Roudnice nad Labem provided a more precise idea of what was read and known in monasteries.

Study of the Bohemian Reformation

František Šmahel (see the box below) is the spiritual father of the Centre for Medieval Studies. He is the authority on the Hussite period, which helped to shape the direction of research at the newly-created institution. At least half of the CMS's researchers have either directly or indirectly touched upon topics dealing with the Czech reform movement, and research into the period has become a pillar of its scholarly activity. It has to be said that the “Bohemian Reformation” has enjoyed growing popularity around the world, and connects researchers from New Zealand, Argentina, the United States, and Canada. This has allowed us to abandon the long-favoured national framework of research and participate in a broader international discussion about the nature of the Czech reform movement and its place in European history.

This incorporation into an international framework takes place both at the individual and the collective level. The “Hussitological” nucleus of the CMS began to form during the project *Reform and Compactata: A New Configuration of Lay and Religious Power in the Epoch of the Council of Basel* (2009–2011), which helped establish closer relations with renowned Viennese institutions (The Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna, and the Regesta Imperii at the Austrian Academy of Sciences). A sounder foundation for research into the Hussites came from its success in the scheme “projects of excellence in fundamental research”. The CMS, in cooperation with the Czech Language Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Christian Art History at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University, was awarded a project that was titled *Cultural Codes and Their Transformations in the Hussite Period* (2012–2018).

The generous support received during this project not only significantly facilitated interdisciplinary research, but also presented the current state of knowledge around the time of Jan Hus's sexennial in 2015. Besides the respective biographies of Hus himself, published by František Šmahel and Pavel Soukup, a new and extensive collective volume was published, edited by Soukup, Pavlína Cermanová, and Robert Novotný, entitled *Husitské století* (The Hussite Century), presenting the general public with the current state of knowledge about the period. Visually, the book continued the legacy of the successful *Přemyslovci* (The Přemyslids) and *Lucemburkové* (The Luxembourgs), but replaced the dynastic perspective with an analysis of the revolutionary period and other phenomena of the “short” fifteenth century.

The presentation of the state of research on the Hussites took place internationally as well: two volumes were published in the series *Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition*, a series which often serve as an introduction to various topics. Specifically, these include *A Companion to Jan Hus* edited by Ota Pavlíček and František Šmahel, and the forthcoming *Companion to the Hussites* edited by Pavel Soukup and Michael Van Dussen. Besides the “mainstream” Hussite research, other projects focused on placing the Czech reform movement into a broader European context. Some of these will be listed in the following section on intellectual history. There were positive international reactions to the Czech-French research program *The Later Crusades: Interconfessional Confrontation in the 14th–15th Centuries* (2005–2010), which was undertaken in cooperation with the University of Toulouse. The program helped to place the campaigns against the Hussites into the broader phenomena



The altar wing from the former gothic reredos in the church of St. Wenceslas in Roudníky near Chabařovice (tempera, around the year 1480) is the only monumental depiction of the burning of Jan Hus that has been preserved from fifteenth-century Bohemia. On the four fields of the inner part of the altar, we can see Hus in the company of three protomartyrs of the Christian church: St. Sebastian, St. Lawrence, and St. James the Greater. Lawrence was probably not selected by chance as, like Hus, he was killed by fire, roasted on a hot gridiron. Hus is shown standing at the stake, and the originally-mocking paper cap with three devils meant to signify a heretic is re-imagined as an attribute of sainthood. The entire scene from the altar wing in Roudníky testifies to the exceptional charisma that was attributed to Hus for his fearless reforming activities, and especially for his martyrdom. The depiction also shows that the Utraquist Church of the second half of the fifteenth century adopted Catholic forms of religiosity. Jan Hus thus becomes a part of the community of Christian saints and martyrs

(Hussite Museum in Tábor; OP 4335, OP 4336)

of late medieval crusades. While the Toulouse team focused on the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula, the Czech team focused on the reactions of Christian Europe to the Hussite and Turkish threats. The project included eight scholarly conferences, two of which were in Prague, and the proceedings were published in French thanks to the work of editors Jaroslav Svátek and Martin Nejedlý.

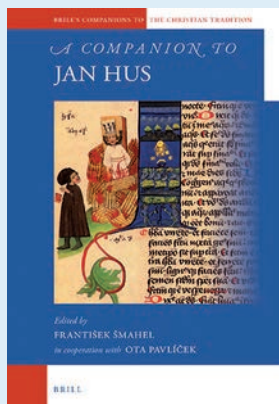
If the previous period was characterized by interest into the Hussite movement in association with the anniversaries of the deaths of Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague, the same level of interest can be expected for the foreseeable future. A series of



(Photo by Robert Novotný)

František Šmahel (*1934)

A historian specializing in the Hussite period, humanism, and university history in the late medieval period, František Šmahel is a globally-recognized expert on the Bohemian Reformation and the Prague University. He is a prolific author, and a large portion of his 30 books were published abroad. His scholarly activities are diverse, covering historical figures (Jan Hus, Jerome of Prague), university texts, political history, research into rituals, and the publication of source editions. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, Šmahel was head of the Historical Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences for eight years. He led the CMS in 1998–2004, and he has been its deputy director ever since. František Šmahel is a member of many prestigious scholarly associations and is the recipient of a number of foreign and Czech honours, including the Česká hlava National Prize for Science (2013).



significant cultural milestones around the year 2019 will assure the Hussites a constant place in the sun. Medievalist research only stands to gain, not just through more generous financial support, but also by offering the public a balanced and scientifically accurate view of events that took place exactly six hundred years ago.

The opportunity for a focused, deep look at the long fifteenth century in Central Europe has been offered by the five-year Project of Excellence *From Performativity to Institutionalization: Handling Conflict in the Late Middle Ages*, awarded to CMS, in cooperation with the Institute of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Archive Studies of Masaryk University, in 2019. In three thematic strands, the project approaches religious and ideological controversies, conflicts surrounding members of the Luxembourg dynasty, and tensions and disputes between Estate corporations. The peculiar situation in the Czech Lands after the Compactata treaty of 1436, officially ending the Hussite wars, is understood as an “institutionalized conflict”. Despite the stabilized situation which allowed the evolution of an Estate system, neither party (Catholic nor Hussite) could accept the other’s faith without jeopardizing their own legitimacy. Seen as intertwined issues, the strategies of conflict management employed by individual actors, the communicative and performative aspects of controversies, and the evolution of institutions in a divided society will render a more adequate and nuanced image of the Late Middle Ages in Central Europe as a contentious period.

Intellectual History and Manuscript Research

Bestsellers existed in the Middle Ages as well. The success of a work of literature (in the broader sense, including pragmatic and scholarly texts) was simplified due to the shared Latin language of the entire elite class of the western portion of the European continent. Collections of legends, summaries from chronicles, templates of sermons, handbooks for religious administration, or university textbooks could all be distributed to remote locations and could maintain their influence over several centuries. Today, we can view their success through the number of surviving manuscripts: despite the fact that, up to the mid-fifteenth century, there was no other way to distribute a text than by manual copying, and even despite the large proportion of manuscript loss over the years, some texts have been preserved in hundreds or even thousands of copies. The Czech lands were not exempt to this cultural exchange. While works created in Bohemia and Moravia have seen traditional interest from literary historians, we knew little about the usage of texts distributed from abroad, and this despite their relatively greater influence on contemporary culture. The CMS’s grant project *Transfer of Knowledge: The Fate of Four Best Sellers in the Late Medieval Czech Lands (2017–2019)* strives to expand our knowledge of this topic. It studies the reception of the encyclopaedic *Secretum secretorum*, the catechetical handbook known as the *Elucidarium*, the social allegory *On the Game of Chess*, and the *Chronicle of Popes and Emperors* by Martin of Opava in Bohemia. More than the context of their creation, the researchers led by Pavlína Cermanová were interested in the identity of the Czech readers of these texts, and how they were used and distributed as manuscripts throughout Central Europe.

The focus of the project was characteristic for a significant area of recent medieval research: the study of manuscripts. Going to the sources, in this case archives and libraries' historical collections, was and continues to be necessary, and research into manuscript collections has never stopped in Czech medieval studies. Nevertheless, manuscripts have become a certain point of fascination for the younger and middle generations over the last two decades. It is not just codicologists and palaeographers that are "going to the sources," but also students of Latin, Czech, and German, along with art historians and musicologists. Significant help comes from the continued cataloguing of manuscripts and their fragments, and by the gradual digitization of manuscript collections and their publication on the Internet. Intimate contact with the medieval artefact continues to remain an irreplaceable source of information and inspiration for reflecting on the Middle Ages. The material aspects of medieval literature uncovered by current research have provided a wealth of knowledge on the spread and usage of texts.

A trove of unresearched material still remains in archives and libraries, even after two centuries of rigorous study. Research by CMS has also contributed to the discovery of previously-unknown sources. For example, as part of the detailed study of the so-called Prague indulgence affair of 1412, newly uncovered texts have enriched our knowledge of this key episode from Jan Hus's life, and uncovered heretofore unknown actors and points of conflict. The final goal of studying manuscripts is not just to create a complete catalogue of all surviving texts, but to acquire a deeper understanding of the spiritual and intellectual history of the Middle Ages. The study of polemical treatises from the Hussite period have revealed previously unknown associations. As part of the *Anti-Hussite Polemics and the Czech Question in the Fifteenth Century* (2009–2011) project, a database of anti-Hussite texts was created at www.antihus.eu thanks to Pavel Soukup, including information on more than 250 treatises. A surprising amount of texts against the Hussites from authors all over Europe confirmed the epochal significance of the Hussite challenge to the contemporary Church and society. A similar grant project undertaken by Dušan Coufal, *The Polemic About the Chalice at the Council of Basel, 1432–1433* (2016–2018) uncovered unpublished and uncited information on the theological and political circumstances surrounding the key debates between Hussite and Catholic thinkers.

Editions of Sources

Publishing medieval sources in printed scholarly editions is a delicate matter. It is theoretically a service to researchers that provides a tool for historical understanding. It is more a method than a goal: histories are to be written from these editions. In reality, the standards for modern critical editions are set so high that only a few specialists know how to achieve them. Their task is not only to copy medieval texts and send them to the printer, but to transcribe the sources according to special rules: manuscript versions must be compared and their possible variants evaluated, named individuals and places must be identified, cited and uncited sources must be uncovered, the probable dates of provenance of undated documents must be set, etc. The edition itself contains so much interpretation and creative work that it is comparable to any other scholarly work, though often exceeds these in terms of utility and difficulty.

The CMS gives a great deal of attention to editions of sources, well-aware of the importance of this work. On the one hand, researchers prepare and publish editions themselves, both within series managed by the CMS and elsewhere. The CMS also fulfills the role of coordinator, offering a platform for publishing editions created by researchers from other institutions. The most prestigious long-term project is the publication of Hus's collected texts. Affiliated to the CMS is the Commission for the Publication of Jan Hus's Writings, established by the Academy of Sciences, coordinating work on Hus's *Opera omnia* which is now published in the renowned *Corpus christianorum* series by Belgian publisher Brepols. Thanks to Jana Zachová, an edition of *Dicta de tempore* attributed to Hus was created at the CMS, as was František Šmahel's and Gabriel Silagi's collected works of Jerome of Prague, published as a supplement to Hus's texts. Other volumes were prepared, and continue to be processed, by researchers at Masaryk University in Brno. Similarly, the series *Sbírka pramenů k náboženským dějinám* (A Collection of Sources on Religious History) coordinated by the Centre for Medieval Studies is open to editions both internal (i.e. the works of Tomáš of Štítné edited by Pavlína Rychterová) and external, created at other institutions (like the works of Petr Chelčický published by the Institute of History at the Czech Academy of Sciences).

The Centre for Medieval Studies also took up two orphaned series of editions founded by the great nineteenth-century historian, František Palacký. The first is *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, which presents mostly literary sources such as chronicles and legends. The eight volumes published in 1871–1932 remain part of the foundation of medieval research, and the CMS has enriched that legacy with three new volumes. Besides a new edition of *Francis of Prague's Chronicle from the time of Charles IV* by Jana Zachová, two volumes of the largest annalistic corpus, the so-called *Staré letopisy české* (Old Czech Chronicles) were published thanks to the effort of Petr Čornej, Alena M. Černá, and Markéta Klosová. Another publishing project where the CMS continued the legacy of František Palacký is the most famous series of editions for research into Czech history: *Archiv český* (The Czech Archive). This series is meant for texts of a non-literary nature, such as documents, correspondence, and accounting sources. Thirty-six volumes were published between 1840 and World War II. After the revival of the series in 2000, six volumes have been published under the auspices of the CMS thanks to the work of editors František Hoffmann, Ivan Hlaváček, František Šmahel, and others. These works cover the history of the towns of Jihlava and Tábor, the history of Jews, excerpts from Wenceslas IV's court registries, and the files of the overseers of clerics in the pre-Hussite period. The CMS thus offers the medievalist community a platform of three established series of editions that carry on the legacy of traditional publications and include most types of medieval sources.

Periodicals and Series of Publications

Since its foundation, the CMS has actively taken part in the organization of scholarly life in medieval history, publishing various forms of periodicals and non-periodicals. The *Colloquia mediaevalia Pragensia* series includes the results of conferences organized by the CMS. The largest share of credit for their production

goes to Martin Nodl, a tireless organizer of scholarly gatherings, and a promoter of cooperation between Czech and Polish medievalists. This was supplemented in recent years by the so-called “small-format series” of edited volumes, focused on a more compact collection of texts on the late Middle Ages. Moreover, like any specialized institution, the CMS needs to facilitate communication between scholars in diverse fields. Various meetings serve this purpose, as does an exchange of information on the pages of periodicals. That is why the CMS has published the scholarly journal *Studia mediaevalia Bohemica* under the leadership of František Šmahel and Robert Novotný since 2009. Its biannual issues significantly serve researchers by presenting an exhaustive overview of current scholarly literature covering Central Europe in the Middle Ages. A significant contribution to the continuation of specialized research into coinage is represented by the renewal of the *Numismatický sborník* (Numismatic Review), thanks to the efforts of Jiří Militký.

The scholarly output of CMS employees is not just for the internal use of the Czech medievalist community, but also for our foreign colleagues abroad. Researchers regularly publish their results at prestigious international publishing houses, especially in foreign-language books and collections focusing on topics associated

The Czech Medieval Sources online internet portal, which is visited by 300–400 users daily

The screenshot shows the website of the Centre for Medieval Studies (CMS). The header features the CMS logo and the text "CENTRUM MEDIEVISTICKÝCH STUDIÍ" with the URL "cms@flu.cas.cz". Below the header is a navigation bar with icons for search, home, and other functions. The main content area displays the title page of "ARCHIV ČESKÝ", which is a collection of medieval sources. The title is "ARCHIV ČESKÝ" in large, bold letters, followed by "ČILI" in smaller letters. Below this is "STARÉ PÍSEMNÉ PAMÁTKY" and "ČESKÉ I MORAVSKÉ,". The subtitle is "SEBRANÉ Z ARCHIVŮ DOMÁCÍCH I CIZÍCH." The publisher information is "NÁKLADEM DOMESTIKÁLNÍHO FONDU KRÁLOVSTVÍ ČESKÉHO" and "VYDÁVÁ KOMISSE K TOMU ZŘÍZENÁ PŘI KRÁLOVSKÉ ČESKÉ SPOLEČNOSTI NÁUK." The editor is "REDAKTOR: JOSEF KALOUSEK." On the left side of the page, there is a sidebar with a list of links: "Archiv český 10", "Titel", "Dopisy rodů Hradeckého etc.", "Dopisy Zdeňka Lva z Rozmitála", "Jednání sněmovní a veřejná", "Listiny Jindřicha Hradeckého", "Registra soudů komorního", "Registřík písemnosti", "Registřík jmen", and "Registřík věcný".

with Central Europe. The processing and presentation of these topics is in constant demand by international scholars (e.g. *Die Hussitische Revolution* by František Šmahel published as part of the prestigious “Schriften” series by the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, or the *Companion to Jan Hus* by Brill publishers). Another example is the close cooperation of Czech experts on the Hussite reformation with scholars of the Wycliffite movement in England.

International cooperation is a characteristic and necessary part of the CMS's scholarly operations, and many projects include foreign collaboration or rely on cooperation with foreign scholarly institutions. This aspect of research and publishing is still being enhanced. Besides traditional partners from Poland, Germany, France, and Austria, the CMS continues to seek out new and deeper forms of cooperation in the Anglo-Saxon world as well. As a highly-specialized research institution, it is natural to look for partners among universities, both domestic and foreign.

The Middle Ages and the Public Sphere

The history of the Middle Ages is still a significant part of Czech identity even in the twenty-first century, as proven both by the interest in related literature and by the number of visitors to related exhibitions. As a result, the adaptation of academic works for the broader public is an imperative part of scholarly activity. CMS researchers continue to popularize the subjects of their research, an effort aided not only by the anniversaries of significant figures like Jan Hus (2015) or Charles IV (2016), but also by talks and lectures at cultural and educational institutions, and by statements for the media. Experts from the CMS traditionally take part in a large number of exhibitions associated with their field of research (*The Middle Europe Around 1000; Open the Gates of Paradise: Benedictines in the Heart of Europe 800–1300; Emperor Charles IV, 1316–2016; Were There Vampires in Čelákovice?*), which allow them to reach a broader audience and effectively spread awareness about the results of current research. The preparation of documentaries for Czech Television – e.g. *Mistr a kazatel* (The Master and Preacher, 2015) or *Sedm pečeti Karla IV.* (The Seven Seals of Charles IV, 2016) – provides the wider public with new perspectives on historical figures or events, and removes layers of deeply-rooted clichés.

The CMS library is equipped with useful editions of sources and scholarly literature, amounting to some 9,000 volumes, and is an excellent resource for students and researchers alike. Its highly-specialized and constantly-expanding collection is available to all those interested. For those who first seek information on the internet, the CMS has adapted by building the *Czech Medieval Sources online* portal, offering quick access to fundamental sources, and widely used by many Czech and foreign colleagues. The institute thus serves as a real and virtual place to meet and exchange information about medieval studies. The CMS has proven its importance to this field over the first 20 years of its existence, both in aiding scholarly projects and supporting interdisciplinary cooperation, as well as in supporting the next generation of researchers. The contributions of specialists from this body have been repeatedly lauded. Both scholars who have led the CMS have been recognized for their contributions by being awarded the *Česká hlava* (Czech Head) National Prize for Science (František Šmahel in 2013, Petr Sommer in 2017).

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Useful links:

- Centre for Medieval Studies – <http://cms.flu.cas.cz/en.html>
- Czech Medieval Sources online – <http://cms.flu.cas.cz/en/researchers/czech-medieval-sources-on-line.html>
- Benedictine monasteries – <https://www.libellus.cz/>
- Repertorium operum antihussiticorum – <http://antihus.eu>
- Viaticum. Database of visitors to the Czech Lands – <https://viaticum.eu/>

The Centre for Medieval Studies was founded in 1998 as a joint body of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and Charles University. It was tasked with providing a platform for cooperation in advanced research and post-graduate studies between the two founding institutions in fields dealing with the Middle Ages – especially in areas transgressing the boundaries of traditional disciplines – and gaining the necessary contact with international research. Today, the CMS is engaged in fundamental research as part of grant projects in medieval studies, and organizes events to support the scientific education of doctoral candidates.

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