



# Religious Conflict and Its (Meta-)Interpretation

**The Hussite Era, As Told by Early Modern Historians**



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The vast majority of Early Modern European historiographical production is far from being „objective“ for a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader. Nevertheless, the interpretations of key historical events, especially religious and political conflicts, given by the Early Modern authors tell us a lot of about their approach to writing history and the taste of the reading audience. The paper follows several strategies of historical writing in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and briefly compares them with tendencies in modern historiography.

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# Religious Conflict and Its (Meta)-Interpretation

## The Hussite Era, As Told by Early Modern Historians

Historians and biographers of today are expected to meet the requirements of historical objectivity, which is a very young concept in itself. The vast majority of Early Modern European historiographical production is far from being „objective“ for a 21<sup>st</sup> century reader. Nevertheless, the interpretations of key historical events given by the Early Modern authors tell us a lot about their approach to writing history and the taste of the reading audience.

My paper examines how the religious and political conflicts that, in the Czech lands, lasted approximately from 1378 to 1485 - the period known as Hussite era - were reflected in the historiographical works written in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the core part of the presentation I focus on the description of several armed conflicts which happened in the revolutionary years (from 1419 to 1434) in Early Modern Czech historiography. Czech Humanist and Baroque authors had a very limited number of contemporary sources concerning the Hussite Wars. In addition, they tended to paraphrase, complement or comment on the original sources in a way that was often dependent of the Catholic or Reformed orientation of the author. I then show how information from the primary Czech sources was transformed in the Early Modern translations. Primary attention is paid to the works of Antoine Varillas and William Gilpin, who turned the original annalistic records something approaching historical fiction.

The paper follows several strategies of writing history in Early Modern Period and briefly compares them with tendencies in modern historiography.

The lecture is addressed to a broad audience. It is meant for students who are interested in Central European history and historical writing, looking to get a good feel for the basic issues of the Early Modern approach to sources and its development.

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