

Czech-Polish relations on the example of the songs of Virgin Mary in the 18.–19. century

Abstract:

The paper deals with a little-known topic of Czech-Polish relations in pilgrim songs in the 18th-19th century. It focuses on cultural contacts in the area of the Czech-Polish border and presents examples of pilgrim songs (brodside ballads) that were taken over from the Czech to Polish environment and vice versa.

Paper:

The topic of Czech-Polish cultural relations in popular religious songs (brodside ballads) is rather little explored topic in context of Czech-Polish cultural relations research. We compared Czech and Polish songs originated in 18th and 19th century and we discovered about 30 pilgrim songs that have both a Czech and a Polish version. We believe that this cultural transfer took place through the spontaneous takeover of the songs when contacts of pilgrims of various territorial and etnical origins occurred. Several times we found out even the existence of both a Czech and a Polish song variant for the same pilgrim site in Czech-Polish border area. Cultural transfer was powered as well by the commercial activity of publishers of the popular religious literature in Czech-Polish border area, who, thanks to similarity of both languages, knew the songs of neighbors well. In most cases the direction of the translation can be revealed thanks to occurrences of Bohemisms or Polishisms in the text. Incorporation into the domestic song repertoire took place without difficulty, as evidenced by the fact that these songs were then further adapted to other pilgrim sites.

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