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**Friendship, Admiration, or Hatred?
The Image of the United Provinces in the Travel Diaries
of the Czech Nobility (1650-1750)**

The article deals with the “quality” of the relationship of the Czech nobility to the Northern Netherlands and its inhabitants. It is based on a research of different ego-documents (mainly diaries and correspondence). The author comes to the conclusion that the nobility from the Czech lands were not looking for friendship in the United Provinces in the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century, as there were not many people there they could make friendly contact with. The local elite were predominantly made up of rich merchants and traders from the town establishment. If they did make any friends on their short visits, they were mostly recruited from the international diplomatic cream of society that frequented The Hague during the Baroque period. Thus the aristocracy from the Czech lands admired some things in the Northern Netherlands and its people, and hated others. Admiration (and perhaps envy) was inspired by the enormous economic successes of the local traders and merchants, ports full of boats, stores full of luxurious goods, outstanding lawyers in Leiden, clean and tidy towns and houses, the landscape with its many canals, avenues of trees, and an abundance of gardens. Words of praise always tended to be directed at the aesthetic form of these things, rather than their creators and the lifestyle they led. The Dutch mostly suffered condemnation at the pens of the Czech nobles, and in their words we can sometimes even read hatred for a nation which, in the view of the Central European nobility, did not respect the higher social status of the aristocrats and made life so complicated for the Catholics.

key words: nobility, the Czech lands, the United Provinces, diaries, friendship, baroque period

Introduction

Five years ago in Prague an extensive synthesis was published on the history of the higher Bohemian nobility in the early modern period, covering the long years from 1500-1700. It is entitled *Svět české aristokracie [The World of Bohemian Aristocracy]* and in it its author, Petr Maťa, attempts to picture the basic sources of the aristocratic feeling of exceptionality at the turn of two centuries. Besides the nobility, their property, titles and careers, he also examines the various social relations that helped the aristocracy to maintain or improve their exceptional standing in society. In the relevant chapter he discusses the importance of their ties with family,

ancestral line, kin, friends, and clients, which formed the basis for their social recognition.¹

In his interpretation he is the first Czech historian to make a semantic analysis of the word *friend*, as it was understood by the nobles themselves in the early modern period. He came to the conclusion that the word *friend* had a broader semantic meaning than it does today, and that to a great extent it indicated relationships that were based on “objective” criteria. The term had two principal meanings: “*První označoval příbuzného, druhý osobu projevující sympatie, věrnost, důvěru a ochotu pomoci za jakékoliv situace.*” [“*The first referred to a relative, the second someone who showed affection, loyalty, trust, and a willingness to help in all kinds of situations.*”] In other words: on the one hand friendship meant the obligatory duties of family members and relatives, while on the other it meant a voluntary attachment. However, the word was also used in the fixed and very common collocation “gentlemen and friends”. This phrase “*bylo velice pružné a nabývalo v různých situacích různých obsahů [...] V kruhu pánů a přátel se dohromady mísila rodinná, rodová, příbuzenská, stavovská, závislostní, ekonomická i emocionální pouta. [...] Výrazem páni a přátelé byl označován určité situaci přizpůsobený výsek z přediva svazků, jimiž byl šlechtic ukotven ve společnosti a které mohl – nebo alespoň doufal – v dané situaci aktivovat, aby získal podporu, radu a v případě ohrožení i pomoc a oporu.*” [“*was very flexible and took on different connotations in different situations [...] The circle of gentlemen and friends was a mix of the ties based on family, ancestral line, relatives, status, subservience, economics, and emotions. [...] The term gentlemen and friends was used to refer to one part of the web of ties by which the aristocrat was rooted in society and which he could – or at least he hoped he could – call on in a particular situation to get backing, advice, and, if in some danger, help and support.*”]²

For the Habsburg monarchy the early modern period was a time of constitutional differences and a hierarchical society, so it is no wonder that a noble’s “friends” were mostly his relatives or other peers enjoying the same status. Friendship was therefore socially conditioned and in the pre-modern age – which this article covers – most nobles were unable to cross the boundaries of status. Friendship could not be “freed” from family and relational structures until the arrival of Ro-

¹ Petr MAŤA, *Svět české aristokracie 1500-1700* [The World of Bohemian Aristocracy 1500-1700], Praha 2004.

² Ibidem, pp. 641-656 (quotations from pp. 643, 647-648); also see Václav BŮŽEK, “*Páni a přátelé*” v *myšlení a každodenním životě české a moravské šlechty na prahu novověku* [“Gentlemen and Friends” in the Thoughts and Everyday Lives of the Bohemian and Moravian Nobility on the Threshold of the Early Modern Period], in: *Český časopis historický* 100, 2002, pp. 229-264; Václav BŮŽEK, “*Dobré přátelství*” v *listech Pětipeských z Chýše na sklonku předbělohorské doby* [“Good Friendship” in the Papers of the Pětipeskýs of Chýše at the Close of the Pre-White Mountain Period], in: *Porta Bohemica, Sborník historických prací*, Litoměřice 2001, pp. 27-42.

manticism, when the semantic meaning of the term *friend* took on primarily a subjective and emotional dimension.³

The aristocrat of the early modern period had to internalise all these forms of friendship during childhood and adolescence. The grand tour played a particularly important role in this process. This was an essential means of socialisation: it lasted for several years, during which the young aristocrat was not directly under the control of his father, grew up, and had to learn to move in high society following the established ceremonial rules so as not to bring shame on his family.⁴ His equally noble and wealthy peers were supposed to help him in this (“*adelige ehrbare leüth*”),⁵ as a result of which they would gradually become his “friends”. A series of paternal instructions for nobles and their hofmeisters resolves the problem of who the young nobles should mix with. For example, in 1733 Franz Ferdinand Count Kinský asked, “*daß mein sohn [= Johann Leopold Kinský] sich allein in vornehmen gesellschaften einfinde und nur mit solchen leüthen umbegehe, die ihme zu einer ehr und reputation seyn können, und seines gleichen seynd;...*”⁶ The problem of ‘bad company’, in other words who the nobles should not mix with, was dealt with in a similar way. These were people of a lower social status to that of the nobles, who would lead them astray. For example in 1623 Job Hartmann Enenkel, an important Protestant leader of the Austrian estates, gave the following advice to the young lords of Breuner: “*Hergegen aber Vor allen schändlichen Lastern, Insonderheit für Gottes lesterung, Lügen, Volltrunkenheit, Leichtfertigkeit vnd böser gesellschaft, von Welcher sie bald eingenom[m]en vnd Zu Vntugendt gereizet vnd abgeföhret werden möchten, sich Hüeten vnd fürstehen...*”⁷ Those who were not of the same social standing and who might teach their offspring to go out

³ P. MAŤA, o. c. in note 1, p. 656.

⁴ See Matthis LEIBETSEDER, *Die Kavalierstour. Adlige Erziehungsreisen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Köln 2004; in the Czech sphere also see the study by Zdeněk HOJDA, “*Kavalírské cesty v 17. století a zájem české šlechty o Itálii* [“Grand Tours” in the 17th Century and the Fascination Italy Held for the Bohemian Aristocracy], in: *Itálie, Čechy a střední Evropa*, Praha 1986, pp. 216-239; Zdeněk HOJDA, *Le grandezza d'Italia. Die Kavalierstouren der böhmischen Adelligen, die Kunstbetrachtung und die Kunstsammlungen im 17. Jahrhundert*, in: *Studien zum Humanismus in den böhmischen Ländern. III. Köln – Weimar – Wien 1993*, pp. 151-160 and on the transformation of the grand tours in the 18th century by Ivo CERMAN, *Bildungsziele – Reiseziele. Die Kavalierstour im 18. Jahrhundert*, in: Martin Scheutz – Wolfgang Schmale – Dana Štefanová (Hg.), *Orte des Wissens*, Wien 2004, pp. 49-78.

⁵ Words from the instructions of Wenzel Eusebius of Lobkowicz to hofmeister Benedetto Manfredi from the year 1673 cited by Tomáš FOLTÝN, *Cestovní instrukce jako pramen k dějinám kavalírských cest (1640-1740)* [Travel Instructions as a Source of Information on the History of Grand Tours], in: *Historie 2005. Celostátní studentská vědecká konference*, Liberec 8. – 9. prosince 2005, Liberec 2006, pp. 74-116, here p. 93.

⁶ Státní oblastní archiv Zámorsk [State Regional Archive Zámorsk], Rodinný archiv Kinských (Chlumec nad Cidlinou) [Family Archive of the Kinskys (Chlumec nad Cidlinou)], inv. n. 336, sign. 237, carton 21; also cited by T. FOLTÝN, o. c. in note 5, p. 92.

⁷ Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec [Workplace Jindřichův Hradec], Cizí rody [Foreign families], sign. 118/1, carton 3.

at night to drink and play cards or dice simply could not become their friends. Moreover, in the United Provinces young Czech nobles found it hard to make high-born friends, as society there was very different to that in Central Europe. The local aristocracy was gradually dying out, was not so wealthy and, with some exceptions, was not so influential.

I. The Czech Lands and the United Provinces in the Early Modern Period

At the end of the Middle Ages both of these regions were still part of the Holy Roman Empire, although in the early modern period they obviously developed very differently in political, economic, social, and cultural terms, so around the year 1700 there were very clear differences between them. One particular thing they had in common for a long time was that their dignity made them unwilling to be part of the integrated core of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation and they gradually distanced themselves from it. The United Provinces (I will use the terms Northern Netherlands or Provinces to mean the same thing) first wrested independence from Spain (1568-1648) and in 1648 it was acknowledged through the Peace Treaty of Westphalia that they were not part of the empire. The Czech lands disengaged from the imperial confederation throughout the whole of the peak period of the Middle Ages and later medieval times and by around 1500 they were practically (in terms of tax, administrative system, jurisdiction, etc.) not part of it at all. But for the entirety of the early modern period the king of Bohemia remained one of the electors and his office of *Erzmundschenk* continued to be an imperial feudatory and a visible link between the Czech lands and the empire.⁸

However, Bohemia and the Northern Netherlands were full of contradictions. They had different constitutions – on the one hand there was a monarchy headed by the Bohemian king, whose subjects were the other lands in the Czech Crown, while on the other hand there was a special form of republic incorporating seven provinces. The most important institutions here were the States-General. Religious development led to another significant difference. Although both regions were greatly affected by the reformation, in the 17th century the two areas developed in different ways. The Provinces became relatively tolerant, with the Calvinists holding the strongest positions, while Bohemia and Moravia were gradually recatholicised during the 1620s, as Catholicism had become the only official religion (it was only in Silesia that Lutheranism still flourished). Another crucial difference was the result of economic development. In the 17th century the Northern Netherlands was a maritime superpower, with large colonies containing big ports housing commercial shipping companies and rich and influential merchants. It was

⁸ For the transformation of the empire in around 1500 see Barbara STOLLBERG-RILINGER, *Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation. Vom Ende des Mittelalters bis 1806*, München 2006, pp. 36-50; for details on the relations between the Bohemian Kingdom and the empire, see Alexander BEGERT, *Böhmen, die böhmische Kur und das Reich vom Hochmittelalter bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches. Studien zur Kurwürde und zur staatsrechtlichen Stellung Böhmens*, Husum 2003.

a country where the aristocracy had diminished (no-one there had the right to be promoted to the nobility), which had only retained some of its former power in the northern provinces and in the east of the republic. In contrast, Bohemia was predominantly agrarian and by far the wealthiest people here were the noble landowners. Therefore in both countries political power was in the hands of different tiers of society. While the most powerful man in Bohemia was the Habsburg king, who was supported by the rich nobility and the Catholic Church, in the Northern Netherlands the last word went to the aforementioned States-General, led particularly by the rich merchants from the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, who only occasionally granted extra power to the stadtholder from the Orange family.⁹

In terms of foreign policy the authorities in both regions (until part of the pre-White Mountain period) also differed. For a long time the principal enemy of the Northern Netherlands was Spain and the Habsburg rulers there, so its leaders were unable to ally with the Austrian Habsburgs. This did not begin to change until the second half of the 17th century, when a deadly foe to the Netherlanders appeared in the shape of France. It was only then that they could join the same camp as the Austrian Habsburgs. This alliance clearly reached a peak at the beginning of the 18th century during the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713/1714), when the Northern Netherlands, England, and other countries joined forces with the Austrian Habsburgs to fight France. It was at this time that the Central European nobility showed greater interest in discovering what life was like in the Netherlands.

The history of relations between the Czech nobility (meaning aristocrats settled in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) and the United Provinces in the early modern period can be divided into three stages on the basis of the circumstances described above. In the first (approx. 1550-1620) issues related to the Northern Netherlands were of interest particularly to members of Protestant families who were in contact with those of the same religion in that country and who recommended England and the Northern Netherlands, which at that time was fighting for independence from Spain, as destinations for their sons' grand tours.¹⁰ It was at this time, for example, that Peter Wok of Rosenberg (1563),¹¹ Zdenko Brtnický of

⁹ See Han van der HORST, *Dějiny Nizozemska* [The History of the Netherlands], Praha 2005, pp. 96-225; Jonathan ISRAEL, *The Dutch Republic, its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1806*, Oxford 1995; Maarten PRAK, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century. The Golden Age*, Cambridge 2005; J. Leslie PRICE, *Dutch Society 1588-1713*, Harlow 2000; Horst LADEMACHER, *Die Niederlande. Politische Kultur zwischen Individualität und Anpassung*, Berlin 1993.

¹⁰ See Otakar ODLOŽILÍK, *Cesty z Čech a Moravy do Velké Británie v letech 1563-1620* [Travels from Bohemia and Moravia to Great Britain in 1563-1620], in: *Časopis Matice moravské* 41, 1935, pp. 241-320.

¹¹ Jaroslav PÁNEK, *Die niederländische raiss Peter Wok's von Rosenberg – eine unbekannte böhmische Reisebeschreibung Rheinlands, der Niederlande und Englands*, in: *Septuaginta Paulo Spunar oblata* (70+2), Praha 2000, pp. 553-560.

Waldstein (1600)¹² and others stayed here. During the Bohemian Uprising (1618-1620) the estate politicians, seeking help against the Habsburgs, worked together with the local nobility and sent Christoph of Dohna here.¹³ After the uprising had been crushed, many Bohemian opposition leaders came to the Provinces with Fridrich Falcký, some of whom settled for good, as was the case of Radslav Vchynský of Vchynice, who died in Leiden in 1660 at the venerable age of 78.¹⁴

In the second stage (1620-1697) the Catholic nobles of the Habsburg monarchy were not particularly interested in the Northern Netherlands. This was due to all the aforementioned differences and particularly to the foreign political orientation of the Austrian Habsburgs. The United Provinces thus generally became merely a transit country for the Czech nobility on their grand tours, while some nobles did not go there at all.¹⁵ When the young noblemen did come, they mostly spent just a few short weeks, staying no longer before heading off either to the Southern Netherlands, where they stayed at the court of the Spanish governor in Brussels or studied at the nearby university in Leuven, or returned home to Central Europe. This was the case with the visits to the Northern Netherlands taken by Leo Wilhelm of Kaunitz (September – October 1637),¹⁶ the brothers Franz Ferdinand and Anton Pankraz Gallas (March 1659),¹⁷ the brothers Johann Christian and Jo-

¹² See Josef POLIŠENSKÝ, *Život a smrt Zdeňka Brtnického z Valdštejna – přítele škol a akademií* [The Life and Death of Zdenko Brtnický of Waldstein – the Friend of Schools and Academies], in: *Studia Comeniana et historica* 24, XII, 1982, pp. 37-44; for more on his travels, see O. ODLOŽILÍK, o. c. in note 10, pp. 280-288; part of his Latin diary has been translated into Czech by Simona BINKOVÁ – Josef POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), *Česká touha cestovatelská. Cestopisy, deníky a listy ze 17. století* [The Bohemian Yearning for Travel. Travelogues, Diaries and Records from the 17th Century], Praha 1989, pp. 33-64; in English there is G. W. GROOS (ed.), *The Diary of Baron Waldstein. A Traveller in Elizabethan England*, London 1981.

¹³ See Josef POLIŠENSKÝ, *Nizozemská politika a Bílá hora* [Politics of the Netherlands and the White Mountain], Praha 1958.

¹⁴ Aleš VALENTA, *Dějiny rodu Kinských* [History of the Kinsky Family], České Budějovice 2004, pp. 44-46; for more, see Otakar ODLOŽILÍK, *Vchynští ze Vchynic a z Tetova v Nizozemí v XVI. a XVII. století. Příspěvky k dějinám rodu* [The Vchynskýs of Vchynice and Tetov in the Netherlands in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Articles on the Family History], in: *Sborník prací věnovaných prof. dr. Gustavu Friedrichovi k 60. narozeninám*, Praha 1931, pp. 291-309.

¹⁵ The Northern Netherlands was completely missed out by, for example, Dominik Andreas of Kaunitz, who in 1671-1674 visited Italy, France and Switzerland. Cp. Lenka FLORKOVÁ, *Kavalerijská cesta Dominika Ondřeje z Kounic* [The Grand Tour of Dominik Andreas of Kaunitz], in: *Vyškovský sborník* 4, 2004, pp. 87-111.

¹⁶ Libuše URBÁNKOVÁ-HRUBÁ (ed.), *František Hrubý, Lev Vilém z Kounic, barokní kavalír. Jeho deník z cesty do Itálie a Španělska a osudy kounické rodiny v letech 1550-1650* [František Hrubý, Leo Wilhelm of Kaunitz, a Baroque Nobleman. The Diary of His Travels to Italy and Spain and the Fates of the Kaunitz Family in the Years 1550-1650], Brno 1987, pp. 186-188.

¹⁷ Martin KRUMMHOLZ, *Gallasové (1634-1757)* [the Gallasés (1634-1757)], in: Martin Krummholz (ed.), *Clam-Gallasův palác. Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach. Architektura – výzdoba – život rezidence*, Praha 2007, pp. 11-30, here p. 16-17.

hann Seifried of Eggenberg (May 1661),¹⁸ the Sternberg brothers (28th May – 6th June 1663),¹⁹ one of the Waldsteins (13th – 28th June 1664),²⁰ Karl of Harrach (beginning of October 1681),²¹ Johann Friedrich of Herberstein (July 1682),²² Franz Julius Verdugo (beginning of August 1683),²³ as well as a number of other aristocrats from the Habsburg monarchy.²⁴

In the third stage (1697-1740) there was a great resurgence of interest in the Northern Netherlands amongst the Czech nobility, with one of the first people to document this being the Silesian aristocrat Christoph Wenzel of Nostitz, who visited the Provinces in 1705 “out of curiosity”.²⁵ The attraction of the Northern Netherlands was originally based on the fact that the last quarter of the 17th century had seen the “deconfessionalisation” of international relations, that the Austrian Habsburgs were now the new allies of the States-General, and that the cream of the diplomatic world resided in The Hague (in 1697 peace was made in Rijswijk, and then later in Utrecht in 1713)²⁶ and international society was concen-

¹⁸ Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Český Krumlov [Workplace Český Krumlov], Sbirka rukopisů [Collection of manuscripts], Nr. 39 (diary from their journey 1660-1663).

¹⁹ See Martina KULÍKOVÁ, *Cesty bratří ze Šternberka a jejich cestovní deníky* [The Sternberg Brothers and Their Travel Diaries], thesis at FF UK, Praha 2001; extract from the diary taken by S. BINKOVÁ – J. POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), o. c. in note 12, pp. 294-312.

²⁰ Kateřina SALONOVÁ, *Kavalířská cesta Bertolda Viléma z Valdštejna v letech 1664-1665* [The Grand Tour of Bertold Wilhelm of Waldstein in 1664-1665], thesis, Department of Historical Science at FF UPa, Pardubice 2007, chapter VII.

²¹ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Familienarchiv Harrach, carton 677.

²² E. ZEIGERMANN, *Das Tagebuch des Grafen Johann Friedrich von Herberstein*, in: Glatzer Heimatblätter 28, 1942, p. 113.

²³ See the letters of Franz Julius Verdugo and his hofmeister from August 1683, which are preserved in Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec [Workplace Jindřichův Hradec], Cizí rody [Foreign families], cartons 81 and 82 (London 15. 7. 1683, Amsterdam 7. 8. 1683, Brussels 22. 8. 1683).

²⁴ Eva-Marie CSÁKY-LOEBENSTEIN, *Studien zu Kavalierstour österreichischer Adeliger im 17. Jahrhundert*, in: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 79, 1971, pp. 408-434, here p. 427 (Georg Seifried Breuner took a grand tour in 1630-1633, but only stayed in the Northern Netherlands from 9th October – 19th October 1631), pp. 430-431 (Maximilian of Trauttmansdorff travelled between 1651 and 1656; the only time he spent in the Northern Netherlands was at the turn of August and September 1652).

²⁵ This was the opinion of his son-in-law. Part of his diary has been published in the work of Jiří KUBEŠ (ed.), *Kryštof Václav z Nostic, Deník z cesty do Nizozemí v roce 1705* [Christoph Wenzel of Nostitz, Diary from his Journey to the Netherlands in 1705], Praha 2004; for more on the Nostitz, see Jiří KUBEŠ – Marie MAREŠOVÁ – Pavel PANOCH, *Rodová paměť a “sebe-představení” v podání Kryštofa Václava z Nostic (1648-1712): Příspěvek k reprezentacním strategiím barokní slezské šlechty* [Ancestral Memory and “Self-presentation” of Christoph Wenzel of Nostitz (1648-1712): Article on the Representational Strategy of the Baroque Silesian Nobility], in: Slezsko – země Koruny české. Historie a kultura 1300-1740 (in print).

²⁶ A list of imperial diplomats in the Hague is given by Ludwig BITTNER – Lothar GROSS (Hg.), *Repertorium der diplomatischen Vertreter aller Länder seit dem westfälischen Frieden (1648), Bd. I (1648-1715)*, Berlin 1936, pp. 153-154; as well as Klaus MÜLLER, *Das kaiserliche Gesandt-*

trated around the Orange court.²⁷ From the early 1720s, however, the attention of the Central European Catholic nobility was drawn by the university in Leiden, or rather its public law school (*ius publicum*). The local professors – particularly Johann Jakob Vitriarius (1679-1745) – applied this law to the empire and interpreted it in a manner that favoured the emperor.²⁸ Therefore a more thorough tutoring in law in Leiden became an important part of the new type of grand tour, which became properly established in the 1720s. The nobles then rounded off their stay in the famous university town with visits to the most important towns in Holland.²⁹ This is shown by the travels of the brothers Karl Maximilian and Johann Leopold of Dietrichstein (September 1721 – March 1722),³⁰ Philipp Joseph Gallas (June 1724),³¹ Hermann Jacob Tschernin of Chudenitz (September 1725 – summer 1726),³² the brothers Franz Wenzel and Johann Anton of Clary-Aldringen (spring 1727),³³ the brothers Franz Leopold and Karl Jacob Buquoy (January – June

schaftswesen im Jahrhundert nach dem Westfälischen Frieden (1648-1740), Bonn 1976, pp. 72-73. This was why Johann Adam of Questenberg or Adam Franz of Schwarzenberg spent so much time here. Questenberg stayed here from the end of December 1696 to November 1697 (it was only at Easter that he went to Brussels). Another journey to France opened up for him with the signing of the peace treaty in Rijswijk in October 1697. Schwarzenberg lived here from September 1697 to June 1698 and then he headed to France too. See Alois PLICHTA (ed.), *O životě a umění. Listy z jaroměřické kroniky 1700-1752* [On Life and Art. Records from the Jaroměřice Chronicles 1700-1752], Jaroměřice-Brno 1974, pp. 39-46 and Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Český Krumlov [Workplace Český Krumlov], Rodinný archiv Schwarzenbergů [Family archiv Schwarzenberg], fasc. 416.

²⁷ See Heinz SCHILLING, *The Orange Court. The Configuration of the Court in an Old European Republic*, in: Ronald G. Asch – Adolf M. Birke (edd.), *Princes, Patronage and the Nobility. The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c. 1450-1650*, Oxford 1991, pp. 441-454; also Olaf MÖRKE, *Sovereignty and Authority. The Role of the Court in the Netherlands in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century*, in: R. G. Asch – A. M. Birke (edd.), o. c. in note 27, pp. 455-477.

²⁸ See Heinz SCHNEPPEN, *Niederländische Universitäten und deutsches Geistesleben. Von der Gründung der Universität Leiden bis ins späte 18. Jahrhundert*, Münster 1960, pp. 54-57; I. CERMAN, o. c. in note 4, p. 57.

²⁹ This tendency is apparent throughout the 17th century, but only with the Lutheran nobility of Silesia (the Frankenbergs, Gersdorfs, Knobelsdorfs, Nimptschs, some of the Nostitz family, the Tschirnhauses), or Protestant nobles from the empire, which was moreover allied with the Oranges. Cp. August MÜLLER, *Schlesier auf der Hochschule in Leiden (1597-1742)*, in: *Archiv für schlesische Kirchengeschichte* 17, 1959, pp. 164-205; Antje STANNEK, *Telemachs Brüder. Die höfische Bildungsreise des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt – New York 2001, pp. 80-82.

³⁰ Ivo CERMAN, *Zrození osvícenského kavalíra. (Vzdělání a cestování Jana Karla z Dietrichsteina)* [Birth of an Enlightened Noble. (The Education and Travels of Johann Karl of Dietrichstein)], in: *Časopis Národního muzea – řada A* 173, 2004, Nr. 3-4, pp. 157-190, here pp. 165-167.

³¹ M. KRUMMHOLZ, o. c. in note 17, p. 27.

³² Cp. correspondence and bills from his journey in Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec [Workplace Jindřichův Hradec], Rodinný archiv Černínů z Chudenic [Family Archive of the Tschernins], not inventorised, provisionally carton 342.

³³ Jiří KUBEŠ, *Fragments písemností z kavalírské cesty hrabat z Clary-Aldringenu z roku 1727* [Fragments of Sources Relating to the Grand Tour of the Counts of Clary-Aldringen from 1727], in: *Theatrum historiae. Sborník prací Katedry historických věd Fakulty filozofické Univerzity Pardubice* 1, Pardubice 2006, pp. 83-110.

1727),³⁴ the brothers Johann Karl and Rudolph Chotek (October 1727 – June 1728),³⁵ Maximilian Wenzel and Karl Joseph Lažanský of Buková (June – July 1730),³⁶ and also partially by Wenzel Anton of Kaunitz-Rietberg (6th September – 2nd October 1732)³⁷ and a number of others.³⁸

In the 1720s and 30s the Northern Netherlands became a very fashionable destination for grand tours and some powerful Czech noblemen even recommended it as the most important place to visit. In 1730 the wealthy Franz Joseph Tschernin of Chudenitz claimed the United Provinces played a key role in the upbringing of the Czech nobility in a remarkable study that he sent to his young relatives Maximilian Wenzel and Karl Joseph Lažanský of Buková. He recommended them to spend two to three months there in the summer of 1730 at the beginning of their grand tour after studying at the Jesuit university in Pont-à-Mousson in Lorraine. He presented a great many arguments as to why they should do this. Not only was it cheap, the food was good, there were excellent coffee shops, beautiful buildings, ports and canals, but mostly it was “*das Landt, woh am allerfreyesten geredet wirdt.*” For Tschernin the practical side of the grand tour was very important, so for him free communication – he meant the spoken and printed word – was the most important precondition for a speedy and good-quality education and upbringing. And as there were ambassadors from all over Europe in The Hague, people there knew everything that went on and everything was apparently discussed in an open manner. Moreover, there were no strict ceremonies here to impede access and communication amongst the representatives of the different countries and the young nobles. It was this that the young Lažanskýs were to make the most of: they were to cultivate contacts with important figures from the diplomatic sphere, visit Vitriarius in Leiden, buy specialised books in The Hague and observe the standard of the local economy so that they could later apply their findings and experience back in Bohemia.³⁹ Tschernin then heightened the importance of the Northern

³⁴ Cp. Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], Rodinný archiv Buquoyů [Family Archive of the Buquoyos], inv. n. 589, carton 95. See also Zuzana DRAHOŇOVSKÁ, *Kavalířská cesta Františka Leopolda a Karla Jakuba Buquoyů v letech 1726-1731* [Grand Tour of Franz Leopold and Karl Jacob of Buquoy in 1726-1731], Pardubice 2009 (bachelor work defended at the Department of History of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of the University of Pardubice).

³⁵ Ivo CERMAN, *Vzdělání a socializace kancléře Rudolfa Chotka* [The Education and Socialisation of Chancellor Rudolf Chotek], in: *Český časopis historický* 101, 2003, pp. 818-853, here pp. 828-834.

³⁶ Cp. the plan of their journey by Franz Joseph Tschernin of Chudenitz dated 22. 4. 1730 and the body of his correspondence in Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec [Workplace Jindřichův Hradec], Cizí rody [Foreign families], carton 35.

³⁷ Grete KLINGENSTEIN, *Der Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz. Studien zur Herkunft und Bildung des Staatskanzlers Wenzel Anton*, Göttingen 1975, pp. 231-238.

³⁸ Names by I. CERMAN, o. c. in note 35, p. 829.

³⁹ Tschernin summarises it as follows: “*Dann die Oerther, als Rom, woh jezo das Conclave ist, Soisson undt Paris, woh die Tractaten seyndt haben viel ein künstlichere undt verschwingenere lebensarth, daß mann da lang seyn kann, Ehe ein Junger Mensch was erfahret, nacher aber doch nicht alles weyß, woh in der freyen Republicque Hollandt einem gleich alles zu ohren kom[m]et, da*

Netherlands for the grand tour by comparing the situation in the republic with France and other countries. According to him, after their experience in Holland, nothing could now surprise the Lažanskýs: “*Nach also in Hollandt [...] angefangener Praxi kom[m]et mann dann in die andere Ländern, als wan[n] mann in eine Opera kommete, woh mann das Büchel schon zu Haus gelesen hatt undt schon weyß, was kom[m]en wirdt, nur sehen will, ob es so ist, wie es im Buch stehet. Undt da währe.*” Also, he claimed that they could not learn anything new anywhere else, not even in Paris: “*Dann währe das berühmte Paris zu sehen, woh aber wahrhaftig nicht viel zu lehrnen ist undt da mann von dem französischen Hoff schon die Idaeam in Hollandt mit mehr Wahrheit undt fundament einhollen kann, ist nichts als das aug mit Versailles, Marli undt der einfältig Welth umb sagen zu können, mann ist da gewessen, zu contentiren undt das Geld zu anderen nöthigen ausgaben aufzuheben...*”⁴⁰

II. Friendship, Admiration, or Hatred?

The Image of the United Provinces in the Travel Diaries of the Czech Nobility

Reading Tschernin’s words it might seem that the Czech nobility had nothing but admiration for the Northern Netherlands. However, was this really the case? There is no quick and easy answer to this question, as nobody has yet asked how the Czech nobility perceived the very different state of affairs that reigned in the Northern Netherlands and what their inner feelings about it were. We can of course make comparisons with the results of research done by others and ask whether their reaction to the Provinces and the local inhabitants was the same as that of the German travellers described in the work of Anja Chales de Beaulieu entitled *Deutsche Reisende in den Niederlanden. Das Bild eines Nachbarn zwischen 1648 und 1795*. This came to the conclusion that the Germans saw the Netherlands and its inhabitants as being very different. They regularly associated the Provinces with water, cleanliness, the Dutch language, and tolerance. They had a very high regard for the beauty of Amsterdam, The Hague, and other towns, their buildings, sanitary facilities and their cleanliness. They also praised the water and local canals for their importance in terms of transport, trade, and town fortifications, but at the same time they were bothered by the smell from the canals and the lack of clean water. Almost all of them admired the freedom enjoyed by the local townspeople, the liberal regime and religious tolerance, which did, however, have its limits – the situation was worst for the Catholics. German travellers shook their heads in incomprehension at the tolerance towards the Jews. By the middle of the 18th cen-

leuthe von keinem Caeremoniel seyn, folgsamb der access leicht undt mann baldt mit Ihnen in Confidentz kom[m]et und in omni genere Scibili leuthe da seyn, woh mann Profitiren kann ohne großen Unkosten undt sogar nützlich 2. bis 3. auch mehr Monath zubringen kann.” Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec [Workplace Jindřichův Hradec], Cizí rody [Foreign families], carton 35, copy of a letter dated 22. 4. 1730 from Ignác Cornova from the year 1810.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

tury they were also praising the standard of the local universities and scholars, but later in the same century this had changed and the Germans had even begun to look down on the Dutch language. What the travellers liked about the Dutch was the fact that they were hardworking and their egalitarian views, which respected the standing of the town and rural strata of society. On the other hand the Germans considered the local people to be penny-pinching, cold, rude, cruel, and particularly greedy.⁴¹ Can these conclusions also be applied to the Czech nobility? Or did the greater distance and more apparent differences between the Czech lands and the Northern Netherlands paint a different picture of the Netherlands and its people?

This question can only be answered by personal sources, particularly diaries, personal correspondence, as well as travel instructions and travelogues, which contain subjective reactions and also offer an insight into the mind-set of the writers. In one of his works in the 1970s Antoni Maćzak wrote that “*A group consisting of several persons and travelling far from its native country was rather like a meteor, which preserved in its small mass the material structure of the larger body from which it had torn itself away.*”⁴² This opinion was also shared by Michael Harbsmeier, who sees travel diaries as an unrivalled source of information for researching the history of thought. As these sources are very subjective, it is assumed that they tell us far more about their authors than about the countries these people visited. Harbsmeier therefore suggests that diaries be perceived as a specific means of witnessing what the author was thinking, which also indirectly reflects the mentality of his homeland. For him, diaries are a “mirror”, a kind of involuntary cultural reflex of the home culture as it tries to protect the essence of its nature against the “otherness” of the world outside. Diary and travelogue records can then be analysed using basic asymmetric pairs of terms. For Harbsmeier, who analysed Herodotus’ treatise on the Scythians, the description of the journey of the Russian merchant Afanas Nikitin to India, or the description of Brazil by Jean de Léry, such pairs include we/them, here/there, Christians/pagans, Greeks/barbarians, etc.⁴³

I assume that a similar analysis could be made of the diaries of the Czech nobles who visited the Northern Netherlands, where the situation was very different to the one they were familiar with at home. I will therefore be focusing on the four main travel diaries written by Czech nobles from the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries, which also contain passages about travels through the Northern Netherlands. The oldest of these is the travel diary of the

⁴¹ See Anja CHALES DE BEAULIEU, *Deutsche Reisende in den Niederlanden. Das Bild eines Nachbarn zwischen 1648 und 1795*, Frankfurt am Main – Wien u. a. 2000, pp. 219-242.

⁴² The quotation comes from the English translation of his book, originally in Polish. See Antoni MAĆZAK, *Travel in Early Modern Europe*, Oxford 1995, p. 121.

⁴³ Michael HARBSMEIER, *Reisebeschreibungen als mentalitätsgeschichtliche Quellen: Überlegungen zu einer historisch-anthropologischen Untersuchung frühneuzeitlicher deutscher Reisebeschreibungen*, in: Antoni Maćzak – Hans-Jürgen Teuteberg (Hg.), *Reiseberichte als Quellen europäischer Kulturgeschichte. Aufgaben und Möglichkeiten der historischen Reiseforschung*, Wolfenbüttel 1982, pp. 1-8.

Sternberg brothers from 1663, followed by the diary of one of the Waldsteins from 1664. I also draw on the diary of Christoph Wenzel of Nostitz from 1705 and the memoirs of the Clary-Aldringen brothers from 1727.⁴⁴ In all cases I attempt to find their critical reaction to the Northern Netherlands and its inhabitants and try to determine how the actual situation in the Netherlands created conceptual stereotypes in the minds of the Central European Catholic nobility and whether these stereotypes were passed down from generation to generation.⁴⁵

It is first necessary to say that the Northern Netherlands, despite the many differences, did not instill only negative ideas in the minds of the Czech nobility. In fact three basic positive things about life in the Netherlands are often repeated, and these can be interpreted as words of admiration. Firstly the Czech nobility greatly appreciated the standard of the Dutch economy and trade. Initially they probably found the articles imported to be of curiosity value – they were nothing essential, but rare, and therefore very interesting. This was the opinion, for example, of Karl Eusebius of Liechtenstein in around 1680. He recommended his son Johann Adam to visit the Northern Netherlands, saying: “*In Niederland ist das vornehmste zu sehen Holland wegen der Festungen und Meerhafen oder orientalischen und indianischen Raritäten, so dahin gebracht und zum raresten alldorten ersehen werden.*”⁴⁶ A few decades later, however, this changed, as the nobility now appreciated the standard of the economy and trade as a whole. No longer a curiosity, it was now wonderful economics. So it is logical that when in 1725 Hieronymus the Count of Colloredo wrote out his travel instructions for his eldest son Rudolph Joseph’s grand tour, he warned him that “... *dan auch gahr nutzlich seyn wierd, sach von commercien und handlung der kauffleithe sich zu informieren, welches an besten in holland beschehen kan...*”⁴⁷

The majority of Czech nobles did not come to this conclusion, however. They did not appreciate the standard of the economy in general terms, but what they particularly appreciated – as with Liechtenstein – was its visible symbols, ones that the economy in the Habsburg monarchy could not boast. They were dazzled by the large ports, the fleets of ships, or the huge stores of valuable items from overseas. Obviously they were most taken by the port in Amsterdam, where a great

⁴⁴ S. BINKOVÁ – J. POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), o. c. in note 12, pp. 294-312; K. SALONOVÁ, o. c. in note 20; J. KUBEŠ (ed.), o. c. in note 25; J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33.

⁴⁵ A similar course was taken by A. CHALES DE BEAULIEU, o. c. in note 41; Milena LENDE-ROVÁ, *Stereotyp střední Evropy v cestovních zprávách francouzských cestovatelů 17. a 18. století* [The Stereotyping of Central Europe in the Travel Reports of French Travellers in the 17th and 18th Centuries], in: Václav Bůžek – Pavel Král (edd.), *Společnost v zemích habsburské monarchie a její obraz v pramenech (1526-1740)*, České Budějovice 2006, pp. 193-205 or Włodzimierz ZIENTARA, *Sarmatia Europiana oder Sarmatia Asiana? Polen in den deutschsprachigen Druckwerken des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Toruń 2003.

⁴⁶ Jakob von FALKE, *Geschichte des fürstlichen Hauses Liechtenstein*, II, Wien 1877, p. 406.

⁴⁷ This instruction from 20. 8. 1725 is filed with the Státní oblastní archiv Zámorsk [State Regional Archive Zámorsk], Rodinný archiv Colloredo-Mannsfeldů [Family archive of the Colloredo-Mannsfelds], non-inventorised, temporarily carton 31.

many ships lay at anchor. The young Sternbergs wrote about this in 1663, saying: “*Tu jich [lodi] na tisíc bylo, tolik pořád jich nikdy z nás žádnéj neviděl.*” [“*There were a thousand of them [boats], more than either of us had ever seen.*”]⁴⁸ The Clary-Aldringen brothers were similarly impressed in 1727, when they gazed from the tower of the town hall in Amsterdam: “*Wiederumb ist zu sehen die große mächtige schif, Welche aldorden seyn, solche seynd so groß als ein hauß und haben sie 4 stäck, die lenge ist Von einen hundert und zwanzig schug lang gewest und die anderen nicht Viel Weniger...*”⁴⁹ They were also fascinated by the store of spices held by the United East India Company (VOC), which brought the local merchants huge profits: “*... daß schönste aber ist daß Indianische hauß, Wo alle ihre sachen auß Indien, Welche sie bekom[m]en, aufgehalten Werden und bestehet daß mäiste in gewirtz, Wovon sie umb edliche hundert dausend provision haben und daß gantze Jahr dag Vor dag darvon Verkauffen, also daß sie Von solchen den grösten gewinn haben...*”⁵⁰

Furthermore, between 1650 and 1740 a positive stereotype arose amongst the Czech nobility regarding the high standard of law teaching at the university in Leiden, which was closely associated with their appreciation of the merits and work of Professor Johann Jakob Vitriarius, who worked there in 1719-1745. What was also obviously important was that there were a great many “German” students there, so the Czech nobles could forge ties with their peers from home. In 1649 the then Protestant (and later convert) Johann Sigmund of Hardegg was lavish in his praise of the oldest university in Holland when he wrote: “*... daß Leyden eine von den fürnehmsten universiteten in Teutschlandt sey, da so viel gelehrte leuth ... leben, alle disciplinen floriren...*”⁵¹ Leiden did not become popular with the Czech nobility – as mentioned earlier – until later, although a great many nobles went there in droves. The reason for the visits was generally the same – to study under the famous Vitriarius: “*Wür seynd hin umb daß [jus] publicum zu hören bey dem herrn Vidriariam, Welches ein hibscher und gelerter mann ist...*”, the Clary-Aldringens wrote in their diary in 1727.⁵² And they were not alone.⁵³ A year later the Chotek brothers wrote about him saying that he had acted towards them as a father and a friend,⁵⁴ while the Bavarian aristocrat Maximillian Emanuel of Törring-Jettenbach praised his lectures in 1735. Apparently it was a delight to listen to

⁴⁸ S. BINKOVÁ – J. POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), o. c. in note 12, p. 296.

⁴⁹ A fragment of the diary was published in the work of J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33, pp. 100-107; the quotation is from p. 105.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Cited following Gernot HEISS, *Integration in die höfische Gesellschaft als Bildungsziel: zur Kavalierstour des Grafen Johann Sigmund von Hardegg 1646/1650*, in: *Jahrbuch für Landeskunde von Niederösterreich* 48-49, 1982-1983, p. 109.

⁵² J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33, pp. 94, 103.

⁵³ The Czech nobles that studied there are mentioned by I. CERMAN, o. c. in note 30, pp. 165-166.

⁵⁴ I. CERMAN, o. c. in note 35, p. 831.

him.⁵⁵ The importance of Vitriarius' lectures was also highly regarded by the hofmeister of the young Hermann Jacob Tschernin of Chudenitz, who in September 1725 faced the decision of whether he and his charge should stay around Brussels and wait for the arrival of the new governor, the Archduchess Marie Elisabeth, or whether they should head straight for Leiden so as not to miss the start of Vitriarius' lessons. He went for the second option and they immediately set off for Leiden.⁵⁶

As for the third thing, the aesthetically-inclined nobles from Central Europe admired everything that was pleasing to the eye. For example, the Clary-Aldringens wrote that *“es ist unerhört sauber in den holländischen städen, dann sie nachts als dem gantzen dag Waschen thun und butzen und sich mann ihre heyser recht magnifique eingericht, die gassen so schön braidt und grat gebaudt, als mann sehen kann, der menge Canal in der statt und auch in der statt spatzirgang Von beimern außgesetzt...”*⁵⁷ Christoph Wenzel of Nostitz had a similar experience in 1705, when after arriving in Deventer, the capital of the Overijssel province, he wrote in his diary: *“... Die gantze stadt aber schon auf holländische arth gar sauber gebauet und reinlich die gassen gehalten...”*⁵⁸ Some travellers speak of the typical beautiful Dutch houses which, due to the softness of the subsoil, stood on wooden pilots and had walls that were made just of bricks. This was the case with the building that the Czech nobility enthused about the most – Amsterdam Town Hall. They even considered it to be the eighth wonder of the world.⁵⁹ Besides the lovely buildings, the nobles regularly praised the fact that there was water and greenery in and around the towns. The young Waldstein, for example, when looking around Amsterdam, noted that *“gar schön umb und umb mit wasser bekossen ist, und in der statt auch zwischen den heußeren viel Canalen zu sehen ist, auch ... auff den gassen ... schöne linden und andere beumer gesezt sein, alßo daß die statt*

⁵⁵ M. LEIBETSEDER, o. c. in note 4, p. 110.

⁵⁶ Cp. the letter of hofmeister Johann Moritz of Besold to Franz Joseph Tschernin of Chudenitz from Brussels, dated 11. 9. 1725. He wrote that all the nobles were saying *“wie daß der Vitriarius den Grotium so wohl wie auch daß Jus Publicum den 17.ten dieseß monathß zu tradiren anhebet, so sehe daß ich nicht saumen, sondern morgigeß tagß mit dem herr graffen gerad nach leyden über Anvers, mordik, mich begeben mueß...”* Hofmeister Besold and Hermann Jacob Tschernin of Chudenitz went to Leiden on 15th September, immediately visited Vitriarius and on 18th September began their tuition with him. Besold's correspondence is deposited in the Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec [Workplace Jindřichův Hradec], Rodinný archiv Černínů z Chudenic [Family archive of the Tschernins], non-inventorised, temporarily carton 342.

⁵⁷ J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33, p. 103.

⁵⁸ J. KUBEŠ (ed.), o. c. in note 25, p. 324.

⁵⁹ This is what the young Sternbergs wrote in 1663 (S. BINKOVÁ – J. POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), o. c. in note 12, p. 297), but also the non-noble travellers, such as Adam Samuel Hartmann, in 1657 (ibidem, p. 258). Waldstein expressed himself slightly differently: *“Nachmittag habe ich daß Raht-hauß gesehen, welches uber die massen mir wohl gefallen...”* (K. SALONOVÁ, o. c. in note 20, p. 92).

*uber die massen sehr lustig ist...*⁶⁰ Czech nobles were also surprised in the Northern Netherlands and literally in raptures over the large number of gardens that were set up not only by rich merchants, but also by many peasant farmers: “... *seynd ... auch die schensten garden, die mann nirgentz sehen Wird, und hat ein jeder bauer hier seyn garden, thuen auch grausamme unkosten d[a]rauf ahnwenden und ist in frü[h] jahr daß gantze holandt nichts anders als ein garden*”.⁶¹ So it seems that the things that delighted them most were the neat Dutch towns with their typical wooden and brick houses, their clean, wide streets, their avenues and canals, all surrounded by an abundance of gardens. Their diaries thus create a stereotype of a tastefully laid-out, beautiful town full of water and greenery, the sort of things a noble might prefer to see back home in Central Europe.

So far it might seem that the Czech aristocracy was keen on the Northern Netherlands, but this is only half true. Next to these words of admiration the diaries contain some relatively sharp criticism, which indeed does not relate to the “form” of reality in the Provinces (ports, ships, buildings, gardens...), but mostly to the originators of this form, i.e. the local people and their lifestyle. The thing that most annoyed the Czech nobility was how power was distributed in society and the resulting self-importance of the rich townspeople and wealthy farmers in particular. This was something the Czech nobility was unable – if it compared all this with its homeland – to understand, and from the point of view of the highborns it was seen as “vulgarity” on the part of the local people. This led to the negative stereotyping of the low-born Dutchman as a “big-head”. Christoph Wenzel of Nostitz complained of this in 1705, when he travelled to the Provinces with the mail carrier. Unfortunately, not one of the post offices they stopped at had fresh horses for them to replace their tired mounts, so they had to keep going on their original horses. This meant that they travelled more slowly, as they had to keep stopping and feeding the horses regularly. This delay made Nostitz very angry, but there was nothing he could do, so he contented himself with a tirade against the Dutch postmen in his diary: “*Weilen aber ... die meilen sehr groß und keine frische pferde geweckßlet worden, mus[s]te man den holländischen groben gesinndl den willen lassen und fast ein und ein halb meilen zu füttern vergönnen...*”⁶² More than twenty years later the Clary-Aldringen shared a similar opinion, tersely noting: “...*daß Volck dorden ist erschröcklich grob; und ist ein jeder bauer herr und so Viel, als die staden selber seynd...*”⁶³

Another thing that greatly complicated the everyday lives of the Czech nobility in the Northern Netherlands was the religious situation. Relative tolerance prevailed, although of course the worst off in the provinces were – as the Sternberg brothers observed in Leiden in 1663 – the Catholics: “... *lidi ... jsou víry reformíro-*

⁶⁰ K. SALONOVÁ, o. c. in note 20, p. 94.

⁶¹ The words of the Clary-Aldringens from 1727. See J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33, p. 103.

⁶² J. KUBEŠ (ed.), o. c. in note 25, pp. 318-323.

⁶³ J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33, pp. 103-104.

vané, na křesťany hrozně nevraží. Mši čísti křesťanským kněžím tu jest veliká zápověď. Když se ponejprv dostane, 100 tolarů dáti musí, po druhé 200, po třetí pak svým krkem zaplatiti musí.” [“... people are reformed by faith, they have a terrible grudge against us Christians [read Catholics]. To read the mass to Christian priests is a great prohibition. The first time, you have to pay 100 tolars, the second time 200, and the third time you have to pay with your neck.”]⁶⁴ However, it was not the same everywhere, as in some places Catholics could at least hold services in private. The Czech nobles had to make do with this and obviously they greatly resented it, as they saw Catholicism as the only true religion. At the very least they saw the reformation as a whole as “*das unglücklich irrthumb des Glaubens*.”⁶⁵ They had a very negative opinion of everything that reminded them of the reformed church. The comments made by the Sternberg brothers about the main church in Utrecht are typical of this: “*na stavení dost pěkněj*” [“a very pretty building”], although “*že lutherány nakažen byl, nám se nelíbil...*” [“it was tainted by Lutherans, we didn’t like it...”]⁶⁶ One criticism made by Count Nostitz in 1705 seems almost hateful, when he harshly condemned those who had destroyed one Catholic house of worship in Deventer: “*Es lagen unterschiedliche geistliche bilder und statuen auf gemelten saal, welchen bey stirmung eines catholischen oratory von dem insolenten pövel ... abgerissen und heraussgetragen worden.*”⁶⁷

The Central Europeans were also not used to water transport in their homeland and most of them were afraid of water as an element. Therefore some nobles forbade their sons not only from sailing down the canals and on the sea, but even from swimming.⁶⁸ The fear of water naturally increased when people were in coastal countries and regions where transport by canal was more widespread. This flourished particularly in northern Italy and also in the Northern Netherlands, making it a relatively dangerous country for the Czech aristocracy. Therefore in their eyes it raised up the victims – particularly well-known victims – who lost their lives in the water. The young Sternbergs, for example, when visiting Utrecht, noted that they were in the church “*kde dva hrabata němečtí, bratří vlastní von Breda, se tu v kanálu utopíc, pochováni byli.*” [“where two German counts, the von Breda brothers, had drowned here in the canal, and were laid to rest”]⁶⁹ This clearly did not put them off making regular use of canal transport, as there was

⁶⁴ S. BINKOVÁ – J. POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), o. c. in note 12, p. 298. The Clary-Aldringens expressed in 1727 similarly: “...*sejnd die Calvinischen denen Catholischen sehr gehasset...*” Cited in J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33, p. 104.

⁶⁵ J. KUBEŠ (ed.), o. c. in note 25, pp. 276-277

⁶⁶ S. BINKOVÁ – J. POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), o. c. in note 12, p. 295.

⁶⁷ J. KUBEŠ (ed.), o. c. in note 25, pp. 322-325.

⁶⁸ “...*die erlernung des schwimens aber hiermit ausdrückentlich verboten seye...*”, David Ungnad of Weissenwolf wrote in the instruction to his son’s hofmeister in 1651. Cp. Státní oblastní archiv Zámorsk [State Regional Archive Zámorsk], Rodinný archiv Šliků [Family archive of the Schliks], inv. n. 627, carton 87. See T. FOLTÝN, o. c. in note 5, p. 112.

⁶⁹ S. BINKOVÁ – J. POLIŠENSKÝ (edd.), o. c. in note 12, p. 295.

simply no other way to get around in the Northern Netherlands and anyway, they soon found that it was quite fast and comfortable.⁷⁰ Despite this, they sometimes set off very worried as some places had a fairly bad reputation. One of these places in particular was the wide Moerdijk in the delta of the River Rhine, where in 1711 a punt carrying the Frisian stadtholder Johan Willem Friso overturned, drowning its passenger. The young Clary-Aldringens warned of the Moerdijk in 1727: “*mordeck [...], Welches daß mehr ist, Wo mahñ muß überfahren, ist solches ein sehr gefeñliches Wasser und Viel unklik schon dorden geschehen...*”⁷¹

Conclusion

The nobility from the Czech lands were definitely not looking for friendship in the Northern Netherlands in the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century, as there were not many people there they could make friendly contact with. The local elite were predominantly made up of rich merchants and traders from the town establishment. If they did make any friends on their short visits, they were mostly recruited from the international diplomatic cream of society that frequented The Hague during the Baroque period.⁷²

The image of the Northern Netherlands in the heads of the Czech nobility was therefore not shaped by ties of family or friendship, but by the visible differences that were apparent between life in the Habsburg monarchy and the United Provinces. For the Czech aristocrat the Northern Netherlands was an alien land that they had to somehow come to terms with based on their background, social status and education, and they had to take a clear standpoint to the place in the face of the rest of the Czech nobility (the readers of their diaries). This therefore led to a very peculiar complex of positive and negative conceptual stereotypes, as there were some things the Czech nobles liked about the Northern Netherlands, and some things they could not accept or reconcile themselves to.

The picture of the Northern Netherlands as presented in the diaries and letters of the Czech nobility is definitely not the same as that created by the writings of German travellers, which were analysed by Anja Chales de Beaulieu. I claim this despite the fact that not many of such documents have been discovered and only a few of them were analysed as part of this study. I see the main reason for this difference in the fact that in her work the author basically did not work with the manuscripts of the travel reports of the nobility and managed with documents written by people from an urban environment. These people were generally full of praise for the highly liberal local regime and the freedom of the townspeople.⁷³ The

⁷⁰ A. CHALES DE BEAULIEU, o. c. in note 41, pp. 113-118.

⁷¹ J. KUBEŠ, o. c. in note 33, pp. 102-103, 106.

⁷² It is these very people that Franz Joseph Tschernin of Chudenitz recommended the young Lažanský to keep in close contact with in 1730. Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archive Třeboň], pracoviště Jindřichův Hradec [Workplace Jindřichův Hradec], Cizí rody [Foreign families], carton 35, copy of letter dated 22. 4. 1730 by Ignác Cornova from 1810.

⁷³ A. CHALES DE BEAULIEU, o. c. in note 41, pp. 229-230.

majority of Czech nobles would not agree on this, however, as they were used to townspeople not having much freedom and not playing a very important role in society. This is the reason for their somewhat different view of the behaviour of the Dutch townspeople and villagers, who seemed “vulgar” and rude to the Czech nobility, i.e. they did not respect the higher social status of the aristocratic travellers.

Similarly, the Catholic aristocracy from Central Europe found it hard to reconcile itself to the relatively broad religious tolerance of the locals, something many German travellers admired.⁷⁴ Firstly, these nobles were not accustomed to it, as in most of the Habsburg countries the only religion permitted was Catholicism; also, what bothered them most was that this tolerance was extended to the Catholics in the Northern Netherlands by all branches of the church and religious sects at the very least. The Czech nobles might have found it demeaning to have to attend a secret Catholic mass away from the main life in the town, without even the proper trappings. On the other hand, most Germans took a negative view of how the Jews were tolerated in the United Provinces,⁷⁵ while this seemed completely normal to the aristocracy from the Czech lands, as many of them had large or small Jewish settlements on their estates.

Like the German travellers, the Czech nobility admired the beauty of the large Dutch towns, while apart from The Hague, most of their attention focused on the wealthy Amsterdam. They were delighted by the local town hall; they praised the size of the ports, the stores of oriental goods and other Dutch symbols of success.⁷⁶ Nowhere, however – unlike the Germans – did they reflect on the standard of the local stock exchange as they did not want anything to do with this form of trade, nor did most of them understand it. The majority of them saw the famous local institutions (mainly the workhouses) as a curiosity, as they did not know anything like that in Central Europe. There they dealt with the matter of beggars, vagabonds and loafers in a totally different manner, and who knows what the Czech nobles thought of the idea of “teaching” such people to work.⁷⁷ The nobles also overlooked the dirty and reeking ditches, as they saw the canals and avenues around them (like the exteriors of the churches or Dutch houses made of bricks and wood) in primarily aesthetic terms, which is why they described them as beautiful.⁷⁸

The Czech nobility had a slightly different image of the university in Leiden. In the first half of the 18th century it shared a similar opinion to that of Ger-

⁷⁴ Ibidem, pp. 151-157, 230-231.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, pp. 157-160, 231.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, pp. 77-90.

⁷⁷ Bronislaw GEREMEK, *Slitování a šibenice, Dějiny chudoby a milosrdenství* [*Compassion and Gallows, the History of Poverty and Mercy*], Praha 1999, pp. 207-228; Pavel HIML, *Zrození vagabunda. Neusedlí lidé v Čechách 17. a 18. století* [*Birth of a Vagabond. Rambling people in Bohemia in the 17th and 18th Centuries*], Praha 2007.

⁷⁸ I discussed this specific noble discourse, which was based on an aesthetic view of the world, in my work J. KUBEŠ (ed.), o. c. in note 25, pp. 81-85.

man travellers in that the standard of the university was excellent, but each of them personified the local university with a different teacher. While the Germans mostly named the physician Herman Boerhaave,⁷⁹ the Central European Catholic nobility was taken by the lawyers from the Vitriarius family, who offered them very desirable lectures in imperial (i.e. not Dutch!) law.

Thus the aristocracy from the Czech lands admired some things in the Northern Netherlands and its people, and hated others. Admiration (and perhaps envy) was inspired by the enormous economic successes of the local traders and merchants, ports full of boats, stores full of luxurious goods, outstanding lawyers in Leiden, clean and tidy towns and houses, the landscape with its many canals, avenues of trees, and an abundance of gardens. Words of praise always tended to be directed at the aesthetic form of these things, rather than their creators and the lifestyle they led. The Dutch mostly suffered condemnation at the pens of the Czech nobles, and in their words we can sometimes even read hatred for a nation which, in the view of the Central European nobility, did not respect the higher social status of the aristocrats and made life so complicated for the Catholics.

⁷⁹ A. CHALES DE BEAULIEU, o. c. in note 41, pp. 167-178, 232-233.