

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE HISTORY
OF THE PEOPLE OF NORTH BOHEMIA
FROM THE ELBE TO THE RIESENGBIRGE

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After a survey of the landscape and climate of the area dealt with, which influenced the Czech and German land settlement, and a short reference to the conditions of settlement in the pre-Germanic and Germanic period, the author shows that only the Elbe area around Leitmeritz, Aussig and Tetschen belongs to the regions settled earliest by the Czechs, with Czech settlement advancing at first slowly from the South and the West. With the help of Czech place-names the area of Czech settlement is marked out, and at the same time a certain temporal stratification is attempted. The older Czech place-name types are found in the south of the area under discussion. In the 13th century the contact began with German land settlement, which had already started north of the bordering mountain chain in the 12th and early 13th century. The presence of German townspeople can be established earliest for Leitmeritz, since 1235. A number of other towns and market-towns follow from the middle of the 13th century on, and in a number of cases the activity of German locators can be well observed. An examination is made of the juxtaposition of the two peoples, where they lived together. Town foundations and the elevation to town status continue from the 13th into the 20th century, with a certain order being unmistakable in the temporal succession in the first period. Where German peasant villages arose at the same time around the towns, where, in other words, the latter were the economic centers for districts where the Germans were clearing the land, German nationality was preserved beyond the Hussite period. Others in Czech surroundings partly lost their German council majority already before 1400. From the Hussite period on Leitmeritz became Czech.

In order to be able to examine more closely the juxtaposition of the two peoples than the existing historical sources permit, the area of distribution of Czech place-names is compared with that of the German ones. They prevail on both sides of the lower Polzen River and to the north of it, including the Rumburg and Friedland tip. Here Germans cleared the land „out of the green root.“ The first names used for the place-names, which probably reach back into the 13th century, belong to this period, as a comparison with the personal names appearing in the documents shows. The names of saints which were newly coming into use appear in a proportion

corresponding to this period. It follows that German „Waldhufen“ villages arose in rapid succession in the decades after 1250. In their manner of formation, the German place-names belong into the great German settlement region north of the Erz-, Lausitzer- and Isergebirge. The period in which place-names of Czech origin were taken over into German — whether before or after 1320 — can be determined from their phonetic form.

The „mixed names“, in which a Czech personal name is combined with a German root, or a German personal name with a Czech suffix, accompany the living together of the two peoples in a mixed zone; of course the Czech vernacular of the Prague offices introduced after the Hussite Wars has to be taken into consideration. It follows that a mixed zone precedes the formation of a stable language border. These observations can be supplemented by the field-names, if it can be shown where and when Czech field-names came into German before c. 1320, how German and Czech field-names were distributed in villages and districts, and where there are no Czech field-names at all. A percentage of c. 5—6 accompanies the border of German land settlement where it became fixed in the Hussite age.

Personal names represent an important source — both the Christian and the rising family names. Insight is gained into the problems by comparing the naming of towns and villages that are demonstrably Czech with those that are German. The Czechization of names in the mixed zone or at the language border can thereby also be observed. If these names in the sources of the pre-Hussite and post-Hussite periods are used — with the numerous names of witnesses in the documents pertaining to boundary disputes being of particular value — the evidence of the documents and of the research on place-names and field-names can be supplemented. A new land settlement can be discerned since the 16th century, which was carried out mainly with the forces available from the older settled land. There thus developed in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries a stable language border, which remained until 1945. The results of the Hussite Wars were grave only in the interior of Bohemia, not on the periphery, and were overestimated on the German side. Some developments had already previously begun. The new foundations of the 17th and 18th centuries remained on a modest scale and are connected with economic conditions. In the areas around Auscha, Dauba and B. Aicha, which became German at a relatively late date, several loan-words of Czech origin recall the former inhabitants.