

Slovak Scholars in Bohemia and Moravia and Czech Scholars in Slovakia Before and After the Battle of Biela Hora (1620)



Slovaški učenjaki v Bohemiji in Moravski ter češki
učenjaki na Slovaškem pred bitko pri Bieli Hori
(1620) in po njej

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ABSTRACT

During several years of research, we registered a relatively large number of mostly Protestant scholars originating from the territory of today's Slovakia or those who are considered significant in the context of Slovak cultural history, who in the period before the Battle of Biela Hora (1620) lived and worked in one of the Czech or Moravian cities. This was a very diverse group of humanists including clergymen, professors from Charles University, teachers, scribes, authors of extensive works in Latin or in the vernacular, patrons, or owners of interesting book collections. The article introduces this group of scholars in general, and examines more closely their confessional orientation, as well as what influenced it or subsequently prompted it to change. On the other hand, we also want to briefly note several Czech scholars who, as a result of the changed religious situation in Bohemia, came to Slovakia after the Battle of Biela Hora.

KEYWORDS: Slovak and Czech scholars, religion, Protestants, Battle of Biela Hora, history, literature

Na podlagi večletnega raziskovanja smo uspeli sestaviti seznam relativno velikega števila večinoma protestantskih izobražencev, ki so prvotno prihajali z območja današnje Slovaške ali so pomembni v okviru slovaške kulturne zgodovine ter so v obdobju pred bitko na Beli gori (1620) živeli in delali v enem od čeških (bohemskih) ali moravskih mest. Gre za zelo raznoliko skupino humanistov, ki vključuje duhovnike, profesorje s Karlove univerze v Prahi, učitelje, pisarje, avtorje obsežnih del v latinščini ali ljudskem jeziku, mecene in lastnike zanimivih knjižnih zbirk. Članek predstavi to skupino izobražencev in natančneje opredeli njihovo versko pripadnost, kaj je vplivalo nanjo ali pa celo povzročilo, da so jo pozneje spremenili. Hkrati se članek na kratko dotakne tudi čeških izobražencev, ki so se po bitki na Beli gori zaradi spremenjenih versko-političnih okoliščin v Bohemiji preselili na območje današnje Slovaške.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: slovaški in češki izobraženci, religija, protestanti, bitka na Beli gori, zgodovina, književnost

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Religion remains throughout the centuries one of the most important spheres of human life. Religious affiliation was related to an individual's identity, determined the person's social relations, employment, social success, and often also the place where the person lived a greater or lesser part of their life. These facts can be very well illustrated by a group of Protestant humanists originating from the territory of today's Slovakia who spent their active lives in Bohemia or Moravia. During several years of research, I found that in the period before 1621 there also existed a large number (more than a hundred) of (mostly) Protestant scholars originating from the territory of today's Slovakia who lived, studied, worked, and published in one of the Czech or Moravian cities. We currently have very little information about Slovak Catholic educators in Bohemia and Moravia during this period, so I will not pay attention to them in the following lines.

I collected and analysed the biographical data of more than a hundred individuals who studied or worked in one of the Czech or Moravian cities and published at least one work. I obtained data about them based on excerpts from Czech and Slovak biobibliographic literature. The biographical data were subjected to analysis in comparison with the data obtained by the so-called content analysis of the paratextual parts of their work: introductions, dedicatory verses, and a selected sample of texts (Martin Moncovicenus, Juraj Tesák Mošovský, Pavel Kyrmezer, Ondrej Rochotský, Daniel Basilius, Eliáš Berger and others) both in Latin and in the vernacular. I took into account the educational networks to which the occasional verses of humanists active in Bohemia referred and the environment in which these individuals worked.

The mutual influence of religious and cultural traditions can be traced back to the period of the common Great Moravian Empire. Economic, political, and cultural relations between the Czech and Hungarian states were established very early. The rapid economic

and cultural boom in Prague and Bohemia in the 14th century also significantly influenced Hungarian conditions. Cultural contacts, especially between western Slovakia and Moravia, represented by the arrival of scribes from Bohemia, mutual contact, and exchange of members of religious orders, and gradually also the arrival of Czech, Moravian, and Silesian Protestant preachers in Slovakia can also be traced back to before the 15th century (Pauliny 1965: 30). They settled in the border area, worked here among Slovak evangelicals, and spread Czech religious literature on Slovak territory, which was used in religious ceremonies. In the second half of the 15th century, during the reign of Matej Korvín, especially after the annexation of Moravia to Hungary, favourable conditions arose for intensive economic and cultural relations, as well as for the fluctuation of people between Moravia and Slovakia, which also spread to Bohemia under the Jagiellonians (Janek 1961: 41–48). After the Battle of Mohács (1526), the Czech lands and Slovakia became part of the multinational Habsburg monarchy, which created circumstances that enabled mutual Czech-Slovak relations to develop within one co-state, i.e. a union of several states united by the person of the monarch. In the period at the turn of the 17th century cultural, literary, and confessional relations are documented by the participation of a relatively large number of Slovak scholars in the formation of Czech cultural, religious, and literary life.

In the case of scholars coming from Royal Hungary, the fact that there was no university on the territory of today's Slovakia was certainly one (but not the only) determining factor for their activity outside their original homeland. *Studium generale* in Bratislava functioned only for a very short time (1467–1491), and the need for education in the humanistic spirit was saturated by the university centres of Krakow and Vienna and, last but not least, by the Protestant universities in Wittenberg and Prague, where our Protestant students mainly studied after completing their studies at gymnasiums and lower schools, in the 16th century already abundantly established on the territory of Slovakia. The Kingdom of Hungary was a predominantly Protestant country at this time. Protestants coming from prosperous Upper Hungarian towns mostly chose prestigious schools in cities where they had relatives and acquaintances, or where members of the religious community who they could apply to studied and worked, as their first starting schools for foreign studies.

The Jihlava school was famous and probably one of the most attended Czech city schools with students coming from the territory of today's Slovakia. In 1562, its rector Matej Rakovsky was the brother of the well-known humanist Martin Rakovsky. Among its students we can mention, for example, Jan Pruno Fraštacky, who compiled the bilingual Latin-Slovak catechism printed in Hlohovec in 1585 (*Malý katechizmus* 2018), as well as his classmates Ondrej Tursky and Jan Bizacius, the evangelical priest and educator of Palatine Juraj Thurzo Nikodem Sartorius, the teacher and priest Martin Monkovicenus from Lip-tovský Bobrovec (Maťovčík and Valentovič 1990: 218), or Samuel Ričinsky, who in 1622 represented the rector and co-rector at the school in Banská Bystrica (Szinnyei 2018; Kuzmík 1980: 531). Among the future professors of the University of Prague, Slovak scholar Vavrinec Benedikt Nedožersky studied here alongside Martin Bacháček from Nauměřice and Jan Campanus Vodňansky (Kákošová 2004: 45). One of the prominent representatives of

Utraquism was the parish priest and prolific writer Juraj Tesak Mošovský. Among the lesser-known were Gašpar Janoš, Klemens Klein, Štefan Omasta, Juraj Šmidelinus and Matuš Vita (Kuzmík 1980; Ružička 1974).

Another city interesting for Slovak students was Uherský Brod. Already at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century, there was rich cultural contact between humanists from the territory of today's Slovakia and the educational environment of Uherský Brod. From 1576 the dramatist and religious writer Pavel Kyrmezer was the parish priest and then the dean, while in 1581 his religious theater play *Tobias* was also performed here (Winter 1901: 743). Prominent representatives of evangelicals and representatives of contemporary humanistic writing from Slovakia worked at the higher school in Uherský Brod (*Pamätnica trenčianskeho gymnázia* 1969: 7,147), e.g. in 1586 these included Jeremiaš Parlagius and Pavel Parlagius, whose family origins are probably linked to the Slovak village of Očová (Kuzmík 1980: 599), as well as Peter Berger, a well-known supporter of Slovak students studying in Wittenberg and Prague, who also lived in Uherský Brod – and was the guardian of the prolific humanist author Ondrej Rochotius (Škovierová 2022), who probably also studied here.

Students coming from Royal Hungary then acquired a higher humanistic education at foreign universities, especially at German universities and in Prague, for which they decided, on the one hand, because of its territorial and linguistic proximity, and on the other hand, based on the Protestant orientation of Charles University and the fact that, in the historical context, although most of its students and professors came from Germany (Šmahel 2016, 186–187), in the pre-White Mountain period (i. e. before the Battle of White Mountain – Biela Hora, which took place on November 8, 1620), representatives of the Slavic peoples gained significant representation and influence here.¹ And this despite the fact that they were only assigned to study at the Faculty of Arts (Philosophy), because Charles University was not a full-fledged university including all four faculties from the beginning of the 15th century (arts, theology, law, and medicine). As far as language proximity is concerned, Czech, which in the case of educated people coming from the territory of today's Slovakia was certainly contaminated with elements of Slovak dialects, became the common language of communication (the so-called *lingua franca*) with supraregional validity from the 15th century.

A certain, though smaller number of students coming from Royal Hungary and subsequently working mainly in the territory of Bohemia or Moravia, studied in Wittenberg (e.g. Martin Preyss and Jan Silvan).

It was not unusual for a Slovak studying in the Czech countries or returning home from studies at a foreign university through the Czech regions to stay there, find a place, or accept an offer of employment from a Czech school or parish. It was common for educated people to be active producers of literature/poetry, and the production of occasional works

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In 1611, for example, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, V. Benedikt Nedožerský (1555–1615), proposed to restore the old privilege of four votes at the university, three of which were awarded to the Czech nation (including the Czechs, Moravians, Slovaks and Hungarians), and one to the Germans. University officials were also elected accordingly (Frimmová 2014b: 34).

was considered standard. If a former university student was literary active, his works were usually published on Czech territory. A general phenomenon in the life of former Prague students and graduates after their departure from the academic environment was marriage, often multiple times, which helped the former teacher obtain both the status of a full-fledged citizen and a more significant social position in the city.

Based on the prints that people originally from Slovakia published in the Czech countries or contributed to as authors, we can deduce their professional, religious, or political orientation. An important group of humanists active in Bohemia and Moravia consisted of those whose activities were in some way directly connected with Charles University. They worked here as professors, also held the positions of deans and rectors or other positions connected with the administration and activities of the university (e.g. Vavrinec Benedikt Nedožerský, Daniel Basilius, Jan Jessenius, Peter Fradelius, and among the lesser known Juraj Berger, Matyáš Molesynus and Juraj Moller). Some of them, e.g. Peter Fradelius or Jan Jessenius, were actively involved in the resistance of the Czech Protestant estates.

The university had lower schools in central Bohemia under its management, to which it appointed its graduates as rectors and teachers; many of them also continued their master's studies or earned a doctorate, and so many students from Royal Hungary were connected in their professional activities with some Czech school. They usually even alternated between several positions (Matyáš Molesynus, Ondrej Rochotský, Gašpar Sextius and others), and there were also those who worked as tutors in noble families during their studies (Juraj Fabricius, Matej Plorantius, Juraj Michal, Ondrej Rochotius and others). They were often actively involved in social and religious life in the cities where they worked, and in their literary work expressed sympathy for the local representatives of Protestantism.

The second, equally important group consists of clergy. These were mostly originally Royal Hungarian members of the evangelical confession, who after ordination found employment in Bohemia and joined one of the Protestant churches there, such as Pavel Kyrmezer from Banská Štiavnica, who worked in Moravia and became a dean in Uherský Brod in 1575, Matej Plorantius, a Lutheran church administrator from Lipník nad Bečvou, Samuel Rochotský, a spiritual administrator from the Moravian village of Prusinovice, Juraj Tesák Mošovský, an important evangelical church official, who sympathised with utraquism, Pavel Jessenius, who participated in the translation of the well-known and for the evangelical language environment indispensable *Bible of Kralice*, and was a member of the Unity of Brothers (Jednota Bratská), and Anabaptist Ján Silvan. These educated people fully developed their confessional feelings in the new environment, and some, e.g. Pavel Kyrmezer, who had a long-term enmity with the Unity of Brothers, was also involved in disputes between individual denominations (Škovierová 2001: 90–91). As already mentioned, most Slovak scholars operating in Bohemia and Moravia were literarily active. From the point of view of genre composition, the literary work of Slovak humanists also reflected the variety of contemporary Czech literature. A specific genre aimed at the folk and middle class environment was preaching. In addition to sermons, our authors in Bohemia and Moravia also published various religious and moral tracts, commented on ethical and moral issues, and developed

spiritual poetry in the form of psalms reworked into songs or verses. However, the integration of Slovak scholars into the Czech cultural, social, and confessional environment is reflected the most in small occasional literary genres such as congratulatory, condolence, celebratory, and other verses. The year 1621 is considered a turning point. On 23 June 1621, as a result of the defeat of the Czech estates in the Battle of Biela Hora (White Mountain) on 8 November 1620, 27 rebellious estate leaders were executed in the Old Town Square in Prague. However, the situation in Bohemia had already changed a few days after the Battle of Biela Hora, when King Ferdinand II began to implement a vigorous antireformation policy. When he failed to win over some non-Catholic clergy, voluntarily even under the pretext of allowing the chalice, he in 1621 proceeded to excommunicate all the preachers who subscribed to the Czech Confession, which was the common confession of faith presented by the Czech non-Catholic estates at the Land Assembly in 1575. The so-called *Confessio Bohemica* was also enforced in the period that followed, and in 1609–1620 it was the legal basis of Lutheranism in Bohemia. In 1622, all privileges were taken away from Karolinum (Charles University) in Prague and handed over to the Jesuit University, Klementinum. After the activity of the non-Catholic clergy was made impossible, a campaign against the non-Catholic laity also began. In 1624, a mandate was issued to restore the Catholic faith in cities and in the countryside, with the exception of the nobility. In the royal cities, the emperor ordered that only Catholics could be accepted as burghers, and others were to be allowed burghership only if they became Catholics. In the spirit of this regulation, trade was also restricted in a similar way. In 1626, the marriage of non-Catholics was forbidden, and in 1627, mandates were issued against non-Catholic nobility. If the nobility did not want to change their faith, they could move out. Subjects did not have the right to leave. Religious mandates resulted in the mass departure of the population from the country. The first wave of refugees for purely political reasons in 1620–1621 was followed by numerous Protestant priests in 1621–1622, then refugees from royal cities, and the strongest stream left in 1624–1630 (Daňhelka et al. 1959: 337–338). In Bohemia, not only the political situation and society's attitude towards non-Catholics changed but also the status of Charles University, and many non-Catholic scholars were forced to leave the Czech lands. It was because many of them were followers of the so-called Utraquism (and they referred to themselves as Utraquists/Utraquisti or Kališníci), a Christian confession that arose from the Czech Reformation (or Hussites) and was only suppressed by re-Catholicisation after the Battle of Biela Hora. The name “Utraquism” itself comes from the Latin expression *sub utraque specie*, that is, under both ways, which refers to the main self-identification of the Utraquists – receiving the Sacrament of the Altar under the method of bread and wine. The Utraquists, based on Hussiteism, also advocated the view that the University of Prague can (and should) take theological positions even on controversial questions of faith. Already in the 15th century, Utraquism was the dominant faith in Bohemia and had a strong presence in Moravia, although the Utraquists were always considered a full-fledged part of the undivided Catholic Church (Gažík 2008: 36). Despite the fact that the non-noble population was not allowed to leave for their faith, members of all classes went into exile. Czech and Moravian Protes-

tants went to the nearest border countries, especially to Saxony, Lusatia, Silesia, and the Kingdom of Hungary (on the territory of today's Slovakia and Hungary). During this period, many of the Slovak scholars working in Bohemia and Moravia ended their public activities. Some converted to Catholicism to save their social position, business or life (e.g. Daniel Basilius, Eliáš Berger (Frimmová 1997: 26; Frimmová 2014a: 394, 399), Juraj Moller)² and some of them returned to their original homeland (Samuel Rochotius, Michal Lazius). However, there are also those who lost their lives (e.g. Johan Jessenius) and property or we have no information about their further existence (e.g. Ondrej Rochotius). Jakub Jakobeus mentions in the dedication of his work *Idea mutationum Bohemo evangelicarum in florentissimo regno Bohemiae* (About Transformations Among Czech Evangelicals in the Flourishing Czech Kingdom) (Minárik and Vytíjalová 1963), allegedly published in 1624 in Amsterdam, that numerous evangelical preachers found refuge on the estate of Gašpar Ilešházy from Ilešház in the Trenčín and Liptov county. Other sources state that many people left Moravia and Bohemia and went to the estate of the Prince of Transylvania, Juraj I. Rakoci, Lednica and Púchov, another to the estate of Count de Thurzo, Lord Count Révay, of the families Nádaždy, Nári, Viskeleti and others in the area of Myjava, Vrbovce, Lubina, and Stará Turá, as well as to the surroundings of Nitra. Slovakia in general had a special meaning for the Czech emigrant community. The Hungarian nobility led by Gabriel Bethlen supported the Czech uprising, but not very strongly, and Bethlen therefore managed to achieve a favourable peace, thanks to which the Hungarian estates received complete amnesty and the confirmation of religious freedoms. Even though Catholicism was on the rise in Slovakia in the years that followed and the evangelicals did not escape persecution, the Counter-Reformation was never brought to fruition here, and therefore, alongside the Counter-Reformation literature, literature continuing the pre-White Mountain cultural tradition could also develop in the Slovak region. In this way, the Czech cultural continuity was (at least partially) maintained. During the period of the ruling Counter-Reformation, Slovakia was important for Czech religious literature in two ways. On the one hand, Czech Protestant literature printed abroad could be consumed in Slovakia, which reached Czech countries only to a small extent and was therefore practically unknown; on the other hand, Czech emigrants took refuge in Slovakia, not only from neighbouring Moravia but also from Bohemia. Thus, for example, after the publication of the renewed provincial constitution, Jozef Heliades, master of liberal arts, also known as a Latin poet, emigrated to Slovakia (†1639). Heliades was the rector of the school in Český Brod, and later became a wealthy burgher and councillor. He went to Slovakia with his friend Jan Vokal, who worked at a school in Český Brod. Vokal's son Vaclav, who was a printer, then set up a publishing business in Slovakia, first probably in Senica, and later in Trenčín. More Czech non-Catholics took refuge in Trenčín. Even in a new environment, a culturally and religiously homogeneous group is evidenced by e.g. funeral sermons delivered here by Adam Trajan Benešovský over the Czech

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However, many Czech exiles converted to Catholicism only in the second generation.

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exiles. The Czech emigration to Slovakia had a special position because it remained within the boundaries of the monarchy and lived in an environment linguistically and culturally close to the Czech environment. The use of Czech in Slovakia did not automatically (and in full) mean Czech cultural continuity. However, only Lutheran emigration merged with the new environment, similar to how writers of Slovak origin operating in Bohemia and Moravia merged with the Czech evangelical environment before the Battle of Biela Hora. The Czech-Brothers (Unity of Brothers) emigration, on the other hand, isolated itself and merged in later development rather with the Hungarian Calvinists. Juraj Tranovský (Eng. Transcius; 1542–1637), a native of Těšín, best demonstrates the fusion of Czech Lutheran emigration with the Slovak environment. After his studies in Germany, he worked in Prague, then in Holešov and in Valašské Meziříčí. From there he emigrated to Silesia, where he lived in Bělsko for three years and finally took refuge in Slovakia. He died as a priest in Liptovský Mikuláš. He demonstrated his poetic talent with Latin odes, which he published in print after leaving for Slovakia, but he had composed them earlier in Moravia or in Bělsko. In 1636, he published a large hymnal, *Cithara Sanctorum*, in Levoča. It is an extensive collection containing a set of older Hussite songs, Tranovský's own compositions and songs by his collaborators. This collection, also called "Transcius" for short, became the most frequently published hymnal in Slovakia, and is still used among Slovak evangelicals today (It was later also published abroad – in Lubań (Poland) and Pest (Hungary), and newer editions were gradually supplemented) (Škovierová 2002: 240–241). No less important is the Utraquist priest and teacher Jakub Jakobeus, who after arriving in Slovakia profiled himself as a Slovak patriot on the soil of the Hungarian Kingdom with an anti-war orientation (wars in this period represented estate uprisings). His most important work is the epic-reflexive composition *Tears, Sighs and Pleas of the Slovak Nation*, a poetic addition to the missing historical work *Living Description of the Slovak Nation*. In his work, he defined with precision the meaning of the term Slovak nation in the ethnic (but not territorial) sense. Just like the work written in Slovakised Czech, the Latin composition celebrates the national past of the Czechs and Slovaks. Both played an important role in the process of national awareness in the 18th century. The significance of the Slovak region for the preservation of Czech literary and religious continuity has not yet been properly investigated, but it is already clear today that Slovakia contributed to it in two ways: because Slovak literature written in the so-called biblical Czech language (or also the Czech language used in the *Bible of Kralice*) was still felt in the Czech lands during the Renaissance to be a part of Czech literature, and partly because, thanks to Slovakia, the literary activity of the Czech emigration was maintained. In fact, the emigrant literature was largely based on sales in Slovakia. The fact that it was still in circulation in our country is evidenced by the appearance of emigrant prints in Slovak libraries. Some of these prints have even been preserved as unique items in Slovakia. Czech in its literary form gradually lost its communicative function in Protestant communities in Slovakia, but it remained in use as a *lingua sacra*, the language of worship, and became an identifying mark of Protestants. The questions associated with people originating from the territory of today's Slovakia, active at the turn of the 17th century in Bohemia and Moravia, and in paral-

lel, the origin of Czech educated people working in Slovakia, are very broad and can be viewed from several perspectives. It can be useful research into the history of the book culture of Slovaks in Bohemia and Moravia and Czechs in Slovakia as an integral part of historical research; especially research into the religious, spiritual, and cultural development of these nationalities. For now, it seems most feasible to follow the life and works of selected individuals and then, based on the available secondary information, try to create some kind of “social networks” within which they functioned. When delving into the study of the life and work of individual humanists, new connections emerge that show their diverse cultural, confessional, personal, business, and political connections. At the same time, we can see that the gifted individuals coming from Slovak territory did not get lost, they were able to establish themselves in a culturally close environment, flexibly adapt to the requirements and conditions of their new homeland, establish new beneficial contacts, develop their gifts and talents, and enrich their surroundings with them. It was similar with the Czech exiles in Slovakia.

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POVZETEK

Na podlagi večletnega raziskovanja smo našli več kot sto (večinoma) protestantskih izobražencev iz obdobja pred letom 1621 našli, ki so prihajali z območja današnje Slovaške, živeli, študirali, delovali in objavljali pa v enem od čeških (bohemskih) ali moravskih mest. Zgodovina vzajemnega delovanja na področju verskega in kulturnega življenja ter ustvarjanja med Čehi in Slovaki sega nazaj do obdobja Velikomoravske in je trajala vse do prehoda v 17. stoletje. Nekaj desetletij pred bitko na Beli gori je mogoče opaziti naraščajoče število protestantov z območja Kraljevine Ogrske (današnje Slovaške) na Karlovi univerzi in šolah nižjih izobrazbenih stopenj. Dejstvo, da na območju današnje Slovaške v tistem času ni bilo univerze, je bilo za izobražence iz Gornje Ogrske zagotovo eden od razlogov, da so se odločili živeti in delovati zunaj svoje prvotne domovine. Po končanem šolanju v Bohemiji (takratni zgodovinski pokrajini Češki; redkeje na Dunaju ali v Wittenbergu) so se izobraženci iz Gornje Ogrske zaposlili v čeških in moravskih mestih kot učitelji, duhovniki ali v službi plemstva. Brez posebnih težav so se lahko prilagodili lokalnemu okolju, saj so tudi sami prihajali iz protestantskega okolja. V Bohemiji in Moravski so se pridružili različnim lokalnim verskim skupnostim – luterancem, anabaptistom, češkim bratom ali utrakvistom. Nekaj dni po bitki na Beli gori je Kralj Ferdinand II. uvedel ostro protireformacijsko politiko (8. november 1620) in situacija v Bohemiji se je spremenila. Številni slovaški intelektualci v Bohemiji in Moravski so v tem obdobju prenehali z javnim delovanjem. Nekateri so se spreobrnil v katolike in tako ohranili svoj družbeni položaj, poslovno dejavnost ali življenje, nekateri pa so se vrnili v svojo domovino skupaj s češkimi protestanti, izseljenci, ki so prišli na območje današnje Slovaške. Nekateri izmed njih, na primer Vaclav Vokal, Juraj Tranovský in Jakub Jakobeus, so tudi pomembno obogatili našo kulturno in literarno zgodovino. Pred bitko na Beli gori so bili Slovaki v Bohemiji dobro umeščeni in povezani s češkim verskim okoljem, in na podoben način so v skladu s svojo veroizpovedjo po bitki zaživel tudi Čehi na območju Slovaške.