
The Fifteenth Century Origins of Lay Communion *sub utraque* in Bohemia

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The question¹ of the restoration of the practice of lay communion *sub utraque* in fifteenth century Bohemia has attracted historians' attention for a long time. There are, however, still a number of questions that remain to be answered satisfactorily. Over time, there have arisen a number of hypotheses which we now must dispel as mythological in the hope that new (and equally spurious) legends do not spring to life to plague our successors. Until now we know neither whether the beginnings of Bohemian Utraquism lie in the forum of academic debate or in actual pastoral practice; nor do we know with certainty who was responsible for the fifteenth century Bohemian restoration of this ancient practice.

My article addresses only the modern version of the Dresden theory. I have left aside its original version which starred in the leading role Master Peter of Dresden who allegedly convinced Jakoubek about the necessity of lay communion from the chalice. As, however, Bartoš² has already demonstrated, the oldest chronicles speak only about anonymous Dresden Masters who assisted Jakoubek. It is the later sources (particularly Piccolomini) that specify Peter of Dresden and portray the chalice as an import from the Waldensian milieu. After the identification of Nicholas of Dresden's role the older variant of the Dresden theory was discarded. In addition, this variant was linked with the statement in one of the more recent sources, namely in the verse version of the *Staré letopisy české*,³ informing us that, prior to Jakoubek, Jan Jičín distributed communion from the chalice. All the older sources, including contemporary tracts, however, give credit solely to Jakoubek of Stříbro.

1) This article notes certain issues considered in a monograph which I was just in the process of completing during the sessions of the 1996 SVU Congress, namely Helena Krmíčková, *Studie a texty k počátkům kalicha v Čechách*, [Spisy Filosofické fakulty Masarykovy university, 310] (Brno, 1997). The work includes references to literature not cited in this article.

2) "Počátky kalicha v Čechách", *Husitství a cizina* (Prague, 1931) 75–80

3) SRB 3:472.

Aside from the Dresden theory (in its two variants) several other theories have been set forth concerning the origin of Utraquism. The most widespread among them is the Janovite theory which postulates that Jakoubek derived the Utraquist conviction from his reflections on the eucharistic tracts of Matěj of Janov. A theory, discredited already in the nineteenth century, postulated a continuous Utraquist communion in Bohemia from the times of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. The Wyclifite and the Hieronomian theories arose in the twentieth century. The former remains unconvincing because Wyclif's and Jakoubek's teachings differ in their respective conceptions of Christ's real presence in the sacrament of the altar. According to the Hieronomian theory the origin of Utraquism in Bohemia was based on Jerome of Prague's accounts of the liturgical rituals of the Eastern Church, as he had observed them on his journey through Lithuania. This theory is weakened by the fact that Jerome's earlier travels in the Orthodox regions (on his way to the Holy Land) had not produced any Utraquist consequences in the liturgical practice in Bohemia. Similarly, discussions of Eastern Orthodox liturgical rituals appear relatively late (after 1414), and their Utraquist significance is appreciated only gradually, and thus belatedly. The most cogent argument against the Orthodox derivation of Utraquism, however, is that the Eastern mode of communion (*communio intincta*) clearly differs from the Bohemian communion from the chalice. In short, the Hieronomian theory likewise remains unconvincing.⁴

Unfortunately, the chronicles and annals which date from the early fifteenth century and which offer accounts on this matter are clearly unreliable and cannot be trusted. Of these texts, the most useful information probably is found in the *Husitská kronika* [Hussite Chronicle] of Vavřinec of Březová,⁵ which opens with an account of communion *sub utraque* which it dates to the year 1414 – before the opening of the Council of Constance. The *Staré letopisy české* [Old Czech Annals]⁶ advance the date to the time of Hus's imprisonment in Constance [after 28 November 1414], while the *Chronicon breve regni Bohemie*,⁷ as well as the derivative account in the *Chronicon universitatis Pragensis*,⁸ propose an even later date – 1416.

Despite these disparities, authors in the past have used these sources as their starting point while the conclusions they drew depended on their preference for either the *Husitská kronika*, or the *Staré letopisy české*.

4) For a detailed analysis of these issues see Krmíčková, *Studie a texty*, 47–119.

5) Vavřinec of Březová, *Husitská kronika*, FRB 5:329–330.

6) *Staří letopisové čeští od roku 1378 do 1527, čili pokračování v kronikách Přibíka Pulkavy a Beneše z Hořovic z rukopisů starých vydané*, SRB 3:20.

7) A. Horčíčka, "Ein 'Chronicon breve regni Bohemie saec. XV'", *Mitteilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* 37 (1899) 464.

8) *Tak zvaná Kronika University pražské*, FRB 5:580.

František Palacký,⁹ accepted September 1414 as the date for the re-introduction of the chalice for the laity and Václav Novotný¹⁰ was of the same opinion. Subsequently – under the influence of František Michálek Bartoš¹¹ – most scholars have inclined toward adopting a somewhat later dating. Bartoš adhered to the interpretation of the *Staré letopisy české* and, because of the lack of other contemporary sources, he also resorted to the much later testimony of Jan Rokycana¹² concerning Hus's injunction not to hasten with Utraquism: "Dear Jake [addressing Jakoubek], do not rush since when, God willing, I shall return, I wish to be truly helpful."¹³ On the basis of this statement Bartoš assumed that Hus's wish referred to Jakoubek's intention of making a public statement on the matter at the university, and that Jakoubek made this public declaration soon after Hus had departed for Constance. He then dated to 18 October 1414 a prohibition of the lay chalice by the St. Luke's Day Synod, even though there is no evidence for the occurrence of such an assembly. According to Bartoš, the pastoral introduction of Utraquism followed in short order.¹⁴ Subsequently, however, Bartoš developed his views further to the point that he postulated Sunday, 28 October 1414, as the most likely date for the introduction of lay communion from the chalice.¹⁵

Bartoš apparently did not read the entire text of Rokycana's testimony¹⁶ even prior to the second edition of his own *Počátky kalicha v Čechách* [The origins of the chalice in Bohemia]. The nature of Rokycana's knowledge of Utraquism's origins is, in fact, unimpressive. Not only did Rokycana not know the exact identity of Hus's fellow preacher in the Bethlehem Chapel who was to become Jakoubek's opponent, Havlík, (about whose later life we are informed by the *Anonymi invectiva contra Hussitas*¹⁷ from the early 1430s), Rokycana referred to him vaguely as "some priest Havel". And, apparently, neither did Rokycana know about Hus's other profession of the chalice, which is contained in Jakoubek's treatise *Omnibus Christi fidelibus* (with the

9) František Palacký, *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a na Moravě*, (Prague, 1894–96⁴), 3:102; 6:303 n.283.

10) Václav Novotný, *M. Jan Hus: Život a učení*, (Prague, 1921) I/2, 352 n.1.

11) Bartoš first published his study, "Počátky kalicha v Čechách", in ČČM 96 (1922) 43–51; 157–173 and 97 (1923) 34–51. My citations refer to a somewhat revised version of this work in his *Husitství a cizina* (Prague, 1931) 59–112.

12) Rokycana's homiliary, containing this information, dates to the late 1450s.

13) Bartoš derived his knowledge of Rokycana's homiliary only from a concise analysis by Jaroslav Goll in "Rokycanova postilla", ČČM 53 (1879) 65.

14) Bartoš, "Počátky kalicha", 59; 86–88.

15) František M. Bartoš, *Čechy v době Husově*, [České dějiny, II/6] (Prague, 1947) 398.

16) František Šimek, ed., *Postilla Jana Rokycany*, (Prague, 1928) 1:692–693.

17) For *Anonymi invectiva contra Hussitas*, see FRA 1:623.

incipit: Plures tractatuli pullulant).¹⁸ In addition to this, Rokycana's reliability is also weakened by his imputation of an advocacy of Utraquism to Matěj of Janov, a position which had already been refuted at Basel by John of Ragusio [Dubrovnik],¹⁹ and, more recently, by Josef Kalousek.²⁰

Bartoš's datation is contradicted by (1) the previously known fact that Michael de Causis accused Hus of preaching about communion *sub utraque* in Prague²¹ (although Master Jan expressed his agreement with the lay chalice only in Constance), further by (2) the fact that Nicholas of Dresden mentioned in his tractate, *De purgatorio*,²² the preparations for the adoption of the chalice which were underway prior to Hus's departure for Constance, and by (3) the sequence of Jakoubek's writings on Utraquism. While it is difficult to establish an absolute chronology of Jakoubek's works, it is clear that his *quaestio* "*Quia heu in templis*",²³ and the short tract, *Pius Iesus*,²⁴ preceded his larger work, which is derivative from his polemics with Ondřej of Brod and which begins with the *incipit: Premissis positione scholastica* which I shall call it by its occasional title, *Responsio*.²⁵ Jakoubek's short tract, *Magna cena*,²⁶ exhibits a more advanced thinking on Utraquism than does the *Responsio*, and thus can be assumed to be a later work. If this reconstructed chronology is accepted, then the *Responsio* was written before the end of 1414, and not just before the prohibition of the chalice by the Council of Constance on 15 June 1415. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the existence of a witness to this text in a manuscript from the library of

18) Romolo Cegna, "Początki utrakwizmu w Czechach w latach 1412–1415: W związku z odnalezieniem dzieła *Plures tractatuli pullulant ... Omnibus Christi fidelibus* Jakoubka ze Stříbra", *Przegląd historyczny* 69 (1978) 112–113.

19) *Replica Magistri Johannis de Ragusio ad Replicam Magistri Johannis Rokycana*, MS Prague NK IX D 10, f. 223^{a-b}.

20) Josef Kalousek, "O historii kalicha v dobách předhusitských", *Výroční zpráva obecního reálného gymnasia v Praze* (Prague, 1881) 19–23.

21) *Primi articuli contra M. J. Hus per Michaelem de Causis praesentati Joanni pp. XXIII*, in *Documenta* 194.

22) *De purgatorio* VII,1–2 in Romolo Cegna, *Nicola della Rosa Nero detta da Dresda (c. 1380–c. 1416): De Reliquis et De Veneratione Sanctorum: De Purgatorio*, MPP 23 (1977) 117–119.

23) Unpublished; see list of Jakoubek's works in P. Spunar, *Repertorium auctorum Bohemorum provectorum idearum post Universitatem Pragensem conditam illustrans*, [Studia Copernicana, 25] (Wrocław, 1985) 216–217 no. 567.

24) Jaroslav Kadlec ed., in "Literární polemika mistrů Jakoubka ze Stříbra a Ondřeje z Brodu o laický kalich", *Acta Universitatis Carolinae*, [Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis, 21/2] (1981) 80–87.

25) A Reply to Ondřej of Brod's tract by Jakoubek, see *Tractatus de communione sub utraque specie adversus doctorem Andream de Broda*, in *Hardt* 3: col. 416–585.

26) See Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 131–136.

Chapter of Gniezno dating from the year 1414.²⁷ The maturity of the *Responsio* presupposes a preexisting disputation about the chalice, and thus the *quaestio* “*Quia heu in templis*” could not possibly date from October 1414 but, most probably, came into existence prior to the university’s summer vacation of that year.²⁸

In addition to the various traditional views on the beginnings of Czech Utraquism in 1414, a new trend has arisen during the last quarter century. This school of thought has sought to date the origins of Utraquism in Prague as early as 1412 and connected it with the house of Black Rose [Černá růže], and particularly with the person of Master Nicholas of Dresden.

It has taken almost half a millennium for Nicholas to emerge from the shadow of his much better known namesake Peter and, only in the early twentieth century, to take on a personality of his own. Subsequently, for over half a century, he was confined to Jakoubek’s shadow until voices began to be heard in the early 1970s which have credited this German theologian with the initial advocacy of the lay chalice. Such voices have not only persisted, but have gradually gained ascendancy. Romolo Cegna²⁹ has served as the most zealous champion of the Dresden theory. Cegna daringly forsook the hitherto accepted views and formulated a theory according to which Nicholas had already embraced Utraquism before the Decree of Kutná Hora [18 January 1409] when he left Prague and, according to Cegna, settled in Wildungen. On this question Cegna introduces a rather neglected work of Nicholas, the *Replika rektorovi v Korbachu* [A Reply to the Rector in Korbach].³⁰ Beginning with Jan Sedlák,³¹ earlier scholars had dated the work to 1415, postdating the rest of Nicholas’s works concerned with lay chalice. Cegna, on the contrary, advanced the view that the *Replika* was Nicholas’ earliest work dating from 1409–1411, and that he (as Rector of Wildungen) addressed an opponent of the chalice, the Rector in Korbach. Moreover, the Italian scholar considers this work of exceptional significance among

27) See Cegna, “Początki utrakwizmu w Czechach”, 106.

28) For a detailed discussion see Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 23–25.

29) Romolo Cegna first suggested this interpretation in his study “Appunti su Valdismo e Ussitismo: La teologia sociale di Nicola della Rosa Nera (Cerruc)”, *Bolletino della Società di studi Valdesi* 92, 130 (1971) 10–13 and then developed it further in his works “Początki utrakwizmu w Czechach”, especially 104 and *Nicola della Rosa Nera detto da Dresda: De reliquiis* 11–16; 46–49, nn. 40–49.

30) This work, as yet unpublished, is preserved incomplete in MS Prague, Bib. Cap. D 118 ff.1^a–51^b.

31) Jan Sedlák prepared the first study of Nicholas together with a survey of his literary legacy in *Hlídka* 31 (1914) 35–39; 122–126; 204–209; 291–293; 349–399; 445–449; 540–543; 619–626; 697–701; 760–764; 824–826; 898–901 reprinted as *Mikuláš z Dráždan*, (Brno, 1914).

Nicholas's other eucharistic tracts and seeks to show that it served as the source for entire passages of Jakoubek's *Responsio*.

To this debate, I wish now to introduce another passage which is common to both works, but which was neglected by Cegna. It is a lengthy segment in which both authors examine two types of spiritual communion.³² Interestingly, Jakoubek also used similar textual formulations in his *quaestio*: "*Quia heu in templis*" some of which correspond almost verbatim to passages in both the *Replika* and the *Responsio*. In his *quaestio*, however, Jakoubek drew these texts, both in substance and form, directly from Matěj of Janov's *Regulae*.³³ In light of this, real doubts must be raised about the early datation of Nicholas's work because, had Jakoubek been relying on the *Replika*, he would have been copying second hand an author whom he had definitely drawn on since 1408, and whom he had apparently introduced to his colleagues in the Bohemian reform movement.

If Jakoubek was relying on the *Replika*, the passages in question would further indicate that Jakoubek also drew his Utraquist terminology from Nicholas. Particularly striking is the phrase *tempore et loco oportunis et dum fideles commodose possunt habere*,³⁴ a phrase which occurs frequently in Jakoubek's later works concerning Utraquism. This raises further doubts about Cegna's theory in that Nicholas does *not* use the phrase in his other works on Utraquism, while Jakoubek, on the contrary, introduced the phrase *commodose possunt habere* in connection with the eucharist in his *Tractatus responsivus*³⁵ as early as 1412, that is at a time when Nicholas had only just returned to Prague. Only a comparison of the *Replika* with Nicholas's other Utraquist works can determine whether the *Replika* or the *Responsio* is older.

Of crucial importance here is the relationship between the *Replika* and the treatise *Contra Gallum*³⁶ which Nicholas wrote in the second half of 1415 at the earliest, in reaction to an attack on Jakoubek by Havlík, the preacher of Bethlehem Chapel. Here, Cegna has argued that the treatise *Contra Gallum* contains a long passage from the conclusion of the *Replika*. A closer examination of Havlík's treatise *Asserunt quidam*,³⁷ which provoked the composition of *Contra Gallum*, makes it evident, however, that Nicholas was quoting verbatim passages from Havlík to which he then responded. The most conspicuous piece of evidence is the analysis of *Výklad na evangelium*

32) Nicholas, *Replika* ff.44^b–45^b; Jakoubek, *Responsio* col. 424–426; 428.

33) For an analysis of concrete instances, see Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 91–97.

34) Nicholas, *Replika* f.45^a.

35) Jan Hus, *Tractatus responsivus*, ed. S. H. Thomson, [Sbírka pramenů českého hnutí náboženského ve XIV. a XV. století, 15; Spisů M. Jana Husi, 10] (Prague, 1927), e.g., 11–12. This work of Jakoubek is wrongly attributed to Hus.

36) Published in Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 165–195.

37) Published in Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 137–147.

sv. Jana [The Explication of St. John's Gospel]. Havlík, *Contra Gallum* and the *Replika* all consider Nicholas Gorran as the author of the explication. However, in another citation from this work used in his *Expositio super Pater Noster*, Nicholas of Dresden attributed the authorship to Bonaventure. Had Nicholas written these views before 1412 (assuming the provenance of the *Replika* to be from this period), he would have been unlikely to manifest such a discrepancy in the attribution of authorship with the alleged earlier position as he does here when he simply accepts his opponent's view.

Jana Nechutová, writing prior to Cegna,³⁸ also noted another textual connection. Havlík maintained that his opponents rejected many saints and modern doctors recognized as authorities by the church. Nicholas responded by pointing out discrepancies between such recognized doctors. The *Replika* does not contain any such close textual parallel. Here, the final piece of evidence is the citation and the exegesis of a sermon by John Chrysostom on the Gospel according to St. John. It was Havlík who first used this citation to bolster the case for Utraquism.³⁹ In turn, Nicholas borrowed this citation for his *Contra Gallum*,⁴⁰ a text which is also found in the *Replika*.⁴¹ Thus, it is here that we have the third textual proof that *Contra Gallum* is older than the *Replika*, in that the *Replika* borrowed from *Contra Gallum* and, therefore, could not possibly have been written before the second half of 1415.

This conclusion also supports the *Replika's* quoting certain passages from Jakoubek's *Responsio*, which must be now seen as clearly older. In addition, the *Replika* contains a longer passage⁴² which coincides verbatim with Jakoubek's other work, namely his famous treatise, *Salvator noster*, which he had inscribed on the walls of Bethlehem Chapel.⁴³ More recent than the *Responsio*, *Salvator noster* was written after Hus's death: either in the second half of 1415 or, perhaps, even as late as 1416. The exact relationship between these two works remains, however, still to be determined. *Salvator noster* consists of a florilegium of citations concerning the chalice, some of which are accompanied by a brief commentary by Jakoubek. We must now examine if and how these citations had been used previously by our two authors. Altogether, there are sixteen of them, of which ten had never been used previously by either author. Three citations were used previously by

38) Jana Nechutová, *Mikuláš z Drážďan a jeho kázání 'Querite primum regnum Dei' II*, (Candidate diss., Brno: Masarykova universita, 1965) 135; see also 133.

39) *Asserunt quidam* in Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 145–146.

40) *Contra Gallum* in Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 187.

41) *Replika* ff.2^{a-b}.

42) For specific examples and extracts from the works of Nicholas and Jakoubek, see Krmíčková, *Studie a texty* 69–76.

43) Bohumil Ryba, ed., *Betlémské texty* (Prague, 1951) 105–139; see also 209–218; 231–234.

both Jakoubek and Nicholas, but their formulation corresponds more closely to Jakoubek's previous usages in every case. Two were used only by Jakoubek, and one citation (from St. Cyprian) was used only by Nicholas. The agreement between the citations from Cyprian in the two works of Nicholas is not as close as is the agreement between the respective citations in Jakoubek's works. Moreover, a brief commentary attributed to St. Donatus is found in Jakoubek's treatise *Quod non solum sacerdotes*⁴⁴ a work composed, at the latest, prior to mid-1415, so that in the present context the passage was first cited by Jakoubek and was then borrowed by Nicholas. After his polemic with Ondřej of Brod in the *Responsio*, Jakoubek attributed the source of the text of Donatus to the *Dialogues* of Gregory, a mistaken attribution. With the exception of his *Replika*, Nicholas does not mention this erroneous information in any of his other works. Here again, it appears that the *Replika* borrowed from Jakoubek.

Thus, in light of these facts, it now becomes necessary to abandon the alluring phantom of a work of proto-Utraquism which served as a substantial source for the Bohemian Reformation and which has been preserved by happy accident in at least one, albeit defective, copy. The truth is that the *Replika* is really a literary epilogue to Nicholas's Utraquism; one in which he wished to display for his audience not only his own views but also those of his colleagues. Hence, I would suggest that there is no evidence of Nicholas's adherence to Utraquism prior to the second half of 1414 when he preached his sermon *Nisi manducaveritis*.⁴⁵ There are still other considerations which cast doubt on Cegna's hypothesis. First, prior to this sermon, Nicholas gave no indications of Utraquist tendencies in any of his writings. This silence contrasts markedly with most of his later writings, which date from the time when Utraquism was commonly discussed and when Nicholas simply could not resist mentioning the chalice whether or not Utraquism was relevant to the topic at hand.

Later, Cegna adds one more piece of information in his attempt to demonstrate his theory. Here, he suggests another influence of the Dresden School on Jakoubek, this time in the person of Friedrich Eppinge, a master from Heidelberg, who resided for some time at the Black Rose.⁴⁶ According to Cegna, Jakoubek was already influenced by Eppinge and his ecclesiology

44) Unpublished; see Spunar, *Repertorium auctorum Bohemorum* 225–226 no. 605.

45) Unpublished; for reference see a listing of manuscripts in Nicholas of Dresden, *The Old Color and the New: Selected Works Contrasting the Primitive Church and the Roman Church*, edd. Howard Kaminsky et al., [Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, 55, pt. 1] (Philadelphia, 1965) 30 no. 7.

46) Cegna elaborates this influence, which he had suggested previously, in his "La Scuola della Rosa Nera e Nicola detto da Dresda (1380?–1417?): Maestro tedesco al Collegio della Rosa Nera in Praga (1412–1415)", which is his introduction to Nicholas's, *Expositio super Pater noster*, MPP 30 (1990) especially 26; 66–67.

in 1412 when he wrote his *Tractatus responsivus* just as was Hus. This included, in part, his teachings concerning the eucharist. Here, however, the scholarly literature has not yet noted the source from which Eppinge drew. In fact, both our German theologian and Jakoubek copied the triple meaning of the expression *communio* from the Fourth Book of Matěj of Janov's *Regula*.⁴⁷ Even if Jakoubek had been familiar with Eppinge's view, he borrowed from Janov for his own writings quite independently of the Heidelberg master. Other allegedly Utraquist passages in Eppinge's work also derive from the *Regula*. In sum, prior to Jakoubek's presentation in his sermons, disputations, and tracts of 1414, there are in Prague neither Utraquist writings, nor any references to full-fledged Utraquist activity.

While rejecting Nicholas's importance for the idea of the chalice, it is important to emphasize that the development of this idea can be traced in Jakoubek from its relatively embryonic stage in the *quaestio*, "*Quia heu in templis*", which was often dependent verbatim on Matěj of Janov, to its later, fully developed, form. At first, there was no ready made formulation. New ideas were born mainly from the crucible of acrimonious polemic. And it is exactly these stages of growth that we can trace in Jakoubek's early works. On the other hand, Nicholas's first work concerning Utraquism, the sermon *Nisi manducaveritis*, is already, in a certain sense, a full-fledged formulation. Thus, we can conclude that Nicholas was in both the theory and practice of Utraquism no more than a significant assistant of the true restorer of lay communion *sub utraque*: Jakoubek of Stříbro.

(Translation from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David)

47) Matěj of Janov, *Regulae* V, 30–33. These borrowed passages are presented in synoptic form with texts from Janov, Eppinge, and Jakoubek in Krmíčková *Studie a texty* 78–84.