
Eschatological Elements in Hus's Understanding of Orthopraxis

Ivana Dolejšová

(Prague)

Eschatological Elements in Hus's Understanding of Orthopraxis

Introduction

In this paper I am going to examine roots of Hus's emphasis on orthopraxis as a complement to orthodoxy, and the types of eschatology underlying this process. The choice of this theme has been motivated by several wider questions: First, what role is played by the institutional church in Hus's understanding? That is to say, is it worth struggling for the improvement of the institution or is the institution in the end dispensable? Does Hus make a distinction, as did Joachim de Fiore,¹ between the spiritual and the institutional church? Will the church institution last till the end of the time? Then, how does he use apocalyptic imagery? When he speaks of the works of the Antichrist in his time, does it imply that he is convinced that the end of time is to happen in his generation? Or, in other words, can we draw a line of thought from Hus to later Hussite Chiliasm? This wider debate is of a considerable importance not only for the sake of drawing an historically accurate portrait of Hus's theology, but also for reconsidering his influence on the further developments of the church. I will approach the debate from the standpoint of Hus's developing response to the crisis of the church at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries which, in my use of terminology, comes under the heading of orthopraxis. Although Hus does not explicitly use the concept, I will argue that his typology of faith, his definitions of heresy involving both teaching and practice, and his emphasis on truth and justice as conditions of God's peace capture the meaning of it.

Then, after grounding Hus's understanding of orthopraxis, I will look at what type of eschatology we find in Hus's writing while placing Hus into a wider theological and spiritual perspective. The basic types of eschatology of his time will be drawn and a contrast between those of Augustine, Bernard and Joachim will be made. Then, the eschatological emphases we find predominantly in Hus will be identified. I will concentrate mainly on his *De ecclesia* and *Sermo de Pace* at this stage, as these writings seem to be most representative of the theme, and also are sufficiently different to allow us to see a development in Hus's own position.

In the conclusion I will revisit the initial question, namely, in which sense can we say that Hus's understanding of orthopraxis was eschatological? Answering this question will shed some light on how closely we can link Hus with the later developments towards chiliasm within the Bohemian reformation movement.

¹ Joachim de Fiore (c.1130-1202) a monastic exegete, apocalyptic theologian and mystic was abbot of the Cistercian house of Curazzo, Calabria, but left his monastery and founded his own congregation with a more contemplative emphasis at San Giovanni in Fiore in the Sila mountains. He is known for his theology of history, as will be referred to later.

The notion of orthopraxis applied to Hus's theology

The word "orthopraxis" comes from Greek *orthos*, which means straight or right, and *praxis*, which means doing or practice. In the history of theology it has represented an important complement to "orthodoxy", "a correct or sound belief according to an authoritative norm."² Although in patristic and medieval Christianity the main emphasis was placed on correctness of belief, I will argue that Hus developed the strands of biblical, patristic and medieval tradition which considered practice to be a vital criterion for the correctness of belief, and both were seen as inseparable. In this sense, I will argue that orthopraxis represents Hus's main concern. Practice is a vital criterion for Hus's distinctions between salvific and non-salvific faith, in his definitions of heresy, as well as in his examination of God's peace.

Typology of faith

"To believe in God is to love while believing, to walk in faith, to hold the faith, and to become an embodiment of his limb," says Hus in the "Exposition of Faith."³ This Augustinian theme occurs throughout his Czech writings. In "The String of Three Strands" Hus offers more detailed typology as he distinguishes three types of faith: (i) belief that God is; (ii) belief that what is said about God is true; (iii) faith, loving God above all things.⁴ Hus remarks that neither of the first two types bring salvation: "both are affirmed by good as well as by evil people, even by devils."⁵ The first two types of faith remain on the level of a rational agreement, without necessary consequences for one's attitude towards God and one's way of acting. Hus adds that neither of these types of faith bring salvation, or in other words, these alone are not authoritative for Christians, as "both are affirmed by good as well as by evil people, even by devils."⁶ They lack hope and love and, therefore, they are dead, concludes Hus. The third type of faith that is said to bring salvation, then, depends on what we might call today an existential relationship with Christ as the Truth. The distinction of three types of faith makes orthopraxis stand and fall with the loving faithfulness to God. Hus is aware that this is the gift of the Holy Spirit, but the fruitfulness of God's presence in the church,⁷ however, according to him, comes fully from God as well and has to be embraced fully by a wo/man. A lack of acceptance on human side, when combined with a Christian verbal profession, is expressed by Hus in terms of heresy. Then, positively, Hus says that faith, loving God above all things, is recognisable according to God's peace, when truth and justice meet.⁸

²S. McDounough, "Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York & London, 1987) 11:124-129, at 124. Compare to Tim Noble's definition: "There can be no orthodoxy which does not issue in orthopraxis. Faith is not a mere verbal affirmation, but is about life, and if it is not lived out in a correct way, which concretely means in the service of God and the disinterested love of our neighbour, then it cannot claim to be the right faith." "Being All Things to All People: Faith, Practice and Culture in George Tyrrell and Liberation Theology." *The Month* 10 (1997) 406.

³ Hus, "Výklad viery," OO I:69.

⁴ Hus, "Provázek třípramenný," OO 4:149. See also I. Dolejšová, "Hus a Páleč," in Jan B. Lásek ed., *Jan Hus mezi epochami, národy a konfesemi* (Prague, 1995) 84-85.

⁵ "Provázek třípramenný," OO 4:149.

⁶ *Loc. cit.*

⁷For the distinction between validity and fruitfulness of sacraments, see B. Leeming., *Principles of Sacramental Theology* (London, 1960) 147.

⁸Hus elaborates the criteria for justice later in the *Sermo de pace* in Franitšek M. Dobiáš and Amedeo

Who is an heretic?

Heretic, according to Hus, is a false Christian; someone, who claims to follow Christ yet, either in teaching or in practice, follows Antichrist. In his Synodal sermon in 1407⁹ Hus emphasizes the element of practical following as vital for a Christian identity:

Only the one who keeps God's commandments and resembles Christ in his morals can be called a true Christian. The one who is finally strengthened by the virtue and power of Christ to oppose devil's attacks, flesh and blood, against princes and authorities, against rulers of this world, who are rulers of darkness, against evil spirits, to put fire shots out and to be able to stand in a perfect opposition on the dark day; ... However, a false Christian rejects the commandment of the Apostle and, having received the name of Christ, he takes on himself weapons of the devil and leads the fight of the Antichrist; he confesses that he knows God, but rejects God in his actions, he is a false Christ and a true Antichrist; and there is not just one, but many of them.¹⁰

A little further on, Hus adds that "everyone, who sins in this way, who denies God, is vile and unsubjected, incapable of all good actions, is to be considered an heretic."¹¹

The second heresy is "a heresy is of believing", where Hus opposes requirements "to believe in the Virgin Mary, in saints and in popes" as if these stood above the faith in God, which has to come first. Hus makes a distinction: "to believe in" - which he reserves to God as a supreme confession, which involves loving and following; and "to believe about" - which he uses when speaking of believing about the church etc. He refers to Augustine in his usage.¹²

The third is "a heresy on forgiving sins" that is, claiming that the power of forgiveness is of priests and not of God. Here, Hus grounds his position on Leviticus, Isaiah and the Gospels, referring to Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose.¹³ The fourth heresy is, "a heresy on obedience", which consists of the demand to obey "elders, bishops, lords, fathers and other spiritual as well as worldly rulers in all they command, whether for good or ill." The position that if one would be led into sin, obedience to God comes before obedience to other authorities, is again well grounded in the Scriptures and in the Latin as well as Greek Fathers.¹⁴ The fifth heresy is, "a heresy on a curse", that a curse or an excommunication is effective even if an unjust person condemns the just one. According to Hus a curse or an excommunication is effective only when a deadly sin on the side of the one who is

Molnár edd. *Mistr Jan Hus: Sermo de Pace – Řeč o míru* (Prague, 1963) 51-70.

⁹ Hus preached on Eph 6:14-15: "Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace."

¹⁰ Hus, "Synodální kázání ..." [Synodal Sermon on Eph. 6], SSL 162

¹¹ *Ibid.* 169. This theme is developed and actualised in Hus's Czech writings; in his *On Six Hereses* in particular. Hus analyses what he sees as hereses of clergy in his time, and similarly to his approach in the Latin writings, keeps teaching and action together. Thus, he speaks first on "a heresy of creation", which is that "foolish priests think that they can create the body of God as many times as they like, and that they are creators of their Creator."

¹² See: Hus, J., "O šesti bludiech," OO 4:274.

¹³ *Ibid.* :277-279.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 279-282.

affected by it is involved. Hus, then refers to Augustine claiming that a curse or an excommunication is to be treated as a medicament, not as means of destruction, that they are to proclaim that one cannot communicate with the Church of God unless one is healed from one's sin, and emphasizes the authority of one's conscience in this process.¹⁵ Finally, the sixth heresy is, "a heresy of simony", selling and buying holy things, where the one who sells, "has an evil desire to get some temporary material reward for a spiritual thing" and the one who buys is brought to a conviction that it is possible to treat things of God given for salvation as a material possession.

This chapter is the longest one: Hus is especially critical of the practice of the buying and selling of the priesthood and of bishoprics. However, it has to be said that, here, Hus moves out of Augustine's position and into a Donatist one, as he opens up the possibility of losing priesthood because of staying in this heresy.¹⁶ Hus makes reference to Innocent,¹⁷ but radicalizes his claim.¹⁸ Augustine defines as a heretic the one "who for the sake of some temporal advantage, and chiefly for the sake of his own glory and preeminence, either gives birth to, or follows, false and new opinions."¹⁹ In the fifth point, there is an important recognition, namely that for an evil action to be a heresy, conscious agreement of the person involved is needed. Hus speaks of the "witness of our conscience," and quotes St Gregory: "Where conscience does not accuse, or whom it defends, then one is free among the accusers." In "Dcerka" Hus adds that a conscience, however, needs to be informed by the Scriptures.²⁰ This theme is developed and actualised in Hus's Czech writings, particularly in his *On Six Hereses*. Hus analyses what he sees as the hereses of the clergy of his time and, similarly to his approach in his Latin writings, keeps teaching and action together. Thus, he speaks first on "a heresy of creation" which is that 'foolish priests think that they can create the body of God as many times as they like, and that they are creators of their Creator.'²¹ The second is "a heresy is of believing", where Hus opposes requirements "to believe in the Virgin Mary, in the saints and in popes" as if these stood above faith in God which has to come first.²² Third, "a heresy on forgiving sins", claiming that the power of forgiveness is of priests and not of God.²³ Fourth, "a heresy on obedience" which consists of the demand to obey "elders, bishops, lords, fathers and other spiritual as well as worldly rulers in all they command, whether for ill or good."²⁴ Fifth, "a heresy on a curse":

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 282-287.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 295-6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 294.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 288-296.

¹⁹ Hus cites Augustine's *On the Profit of Believing* in *ibid* 4:286. English translation from P. Schaff ed. *St Augustine, Doctrinal Theatyses*, [A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers] 3:347-366.]

²⁰ "Dcerka," OO 4:166-167.

²¹ "O šesti bludiech," OO 4:271.

²² Hus makes a distinction: "to believe in" - which he reserves to God as a supreme confession, which involves loving and following; and "to believe about" - which he uses when speaking of believing about the church etc. He refers to Augustine in his usage. See *ibid* 4:273-274.

²³ Hus grounds his position on Leviticus, Isaiah and the Gospels, referring to Augustine, Hieronymus and Ambrose. See: *ibid.* 4:277-279.

²⁴ The position that if onewould be led into sin, the obedience to God comes before the obedience to other authorities, is again well grounded in the Scriptures and in the Latin as well as Greek Fathers. See: *ibid.* 4:279-282.

that a curse or an excommunication is effective even if an unjust person condemns a just one.²⁵ And, finally, six, “a heresy of simony”: selling and buying holy things, where the one who sells “has an evil desire to get some temporary material reward for a spiritual thing” and the one who buys is brought to a conviction that it is possible to treat things of God given for salvation as a material possession.²⁶ In the fifth point, there is an important recognition, namely that for an evil action to be a heresy, conscious consent of the person involved is needed. Hus speaks of the “witness of our conscience”²⁷ and quotes Gregory the Great: “Where conscience does not accuse, or whom it defends, then one is free among the accusers.”²⁸

Criteria of truth and justice

In the “Exposition of Faith” Hus defines a Christian as a “truth fighter.” He writes:

So, faithful Christian, search truth, love truth, speak truth, keep truth, defend truth even till death, because the truth will release you from sin, from the devil, from the death of the soul, and at the end from the eternal death, that is the eternal separation from the grace of God.²⁹

Here loving and following Christ are in Hus’s terms defined as living in the truth. A. Molnár states: “The truth Hus talks about here is the truth of God, in its releasing aspect identical with the personality and work of Jesus Christ.”³⁰ Similarly J.B. Lášek states: “The truth is the truth of the living God, that is, Christ Himself.”³¹

He emphasises that peace must be accompanied by justice as he states: “The divine peace does not allow a reconciled man to live in crime.”³² Hus speaks of six features of divine justice in opposition to the six hereses: unity,³³ humility,³⁴ poverty,³⁵ moral purity,³⁶ willingness to suffer,³⁷ and faithful preaching of the Gospel.³⁸ According to Hus reconciliation and peace cannot be gained other than

²⁵ According to Hus a curse or an excommunication are effective only when a deadly sin on the side of the one who is affected by it is involved. Hus, then refers to Augustine claiming that a curse or an excommunication are to be treated as a medicament, not as means of destruction, that they are to proclaim that one cannot communicate with the church of God unless one is healed from one’s sin, and emphasizes the authority of one’s conscience in this process. See: *ibid.* 4:282-287.

²⁶ This chapter is the longest one, Hus criticizes especially selling and buying of priesthood and of bishoprics. However, it has to be said, that here Hus moves out of Augustine’s position to a Donatist one, as he opens up a possibility of losing priesthood (see 295-296) because of staying in this heresy. Hus in this refers to Innocent (see *ibid.* 4:294), but radicalizes his claim. See: *ibid.* 4:288-296.

²⁷ *ibid.* 4:286.

²⁸ *Loc cit.* In “Dcerka” Hus adds that a conscience, however needs to be informed by the Scriptures. See “Dcerka o poznání cesty pravé k spasení,” OO 4:166-167.

²⁹ Hus, “Výklad viery,” OO 1:69.

³⁰ A. Molnár, *Na rozhraní věků* [On the Boundary of Ages] (Praha, 1985) 12.

³¹ J.B. Lášek, *Mistr Jan Hus, svědek Kristův* [Master Jan Hus, the Witness of Christ] (Prague, 1991) 17.

³² Hus, *Sermo de pace* 41.

³³ Hus refers to Mt 5:39-40, and emphasizes that unity grows from the willingness not to return evil for evil, but to offer the second cheek. See *ibid.* 51-53.

³⁴ Referring to Mt 11:29 Hus makes a contrast between learning from the one who is meek and humble in heart, and the “sons of the church”, who are ruled by pride. See *ibid.* 55.

³⁵ Here apostles, who left everything behind are given as counter-examples to the church in which “money have become our patriarch.” See *ibid.* 61-65.

³⁶ See *ibid.* 65.

³⁷ A reference is given to L 21:19, and the endurance is graded: offences in words, loss of property, bodily suffering. See *ibid.*: 67-68.

³⁸ Hus is strict with putting the demand from Mt 10 and the end of Mk into practice. According to him, if the followers of Christ do not preach the word of God, “even if they have not committed other evil

by following Christ. Hus quotes Job 9:4 (in the Vulgate version): “*Quis ei restitit, et pacem habuit?*” (Who opposing Him [God] could retain peace?)³⁹

And now we will trace two stages of Hus’s account of how Christ is to be followed.

From *lex Christi* to *vita Christi*

Hus’s stress on orthopraxis is best understood if we follow his development from requiring a faithfulness to the *lex Christi* (the law of Christ) to the following of *vita Christi* (the life of Christ). In this part, I want to demonstrate that Hus, with his emphasis on practical following, does not effect a new type of legalism but, rather, stresses that faith must be faith incarnated into the life of the Christian who is following his/her Master, into the life of the Church, who is Christ’s body.

Lex Christi

Influenced by John Wyclif’s “anti-nominalism”, which was not willing to accept demands of unexceptional obedience of the mediating authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy⁴⁰, and by Conrad Waldhauser’s and Jan Milíč of Kroměříž’s appeal to understand ecclesiastical reform in moral terms⁴¹, Hus saw his early apologetical task in vindicating *lex Christi* as a foundation of the true and just life of the church.⁴² Bernhard Töpfer emphasizes that *lex Christi* in Hus involves both the Scripture and reason, which are to be united in knowing and in doing the truth.

Hus speaks of the *lex Christi* when he opposes what he sees as a false interpretation of obedience, namely that people must obey whatever they are told to by their hierarchy. This, according to Hus, takes out of context e.g. the conclusion of Jesus’s critique of the scribes and the Pharisees in Mt 23:3: “therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it;”⁴³ or Augustine’s and Bernard’s texts on obedience.⁴⁴ Hus recalls Wyclif’s argument in the text, which became a model for the Four Articles of Prague:

...from our side, our intention is not to seduce people from the true obedience, *but the unity of people being governed by the law of Christ*. Secondly, from our side, we intend that the institutions of the Antichrist would not confuse people and would not divide them from Christ, but that the law of Christ and the habits of

things, they are antichrists and a satan, who changed himself into an angel of light, they are robbers, stealers, killers of sheep and betrayers, who turn a house of prayer into a den of robbers.” *Ibid.* 73-75.
³⁹ *Ibid.* 30.

⁴⁰ John Wyclif (1329-1384) represented the second wave of anti-nominalist thought, reacting against Ockham and Scotus and against their scepticism about the employment of the direct transcendent authority of God in the life of a Christian.

⁴¹ Conrad Waldhauser was invited by Archbishop Arnošt to come to preach in Prague in 1363. His sermons, as well as influencing his followers (among others Jan Milíč of Kroměříž and Matěj of Janov), initiated reform in Bohemian Christianity. In Hus’s time also Masters of the Prague University took part in public preaching. See V. Novotný, *Mistr Jan Hus, život a učení I*. [Master Jan Hus, Life and Teaching I] (Praha, 1919) 41-47.

⁴² See: B. Töpfer, “Lex Christi, Dominium and the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy in Jan Hus and John Wyclif Compared,” in HENC 163.

⁴³ The longer text goes like this: “Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ‘The scribes and the pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach (Mt 23: 1-3)’...” And in the following verses we find a very sharp critique.

⁴⁴ See: Bernard’s “Letter to the Monk Adam” or Augustine’s homilies, in Hus’s *Tractatus de ecclesia* (Praha, 1904) 23-24.

people agreed upon from the law of the Lord would reign in purity. Thirdly, from our side, we intend that clergy would sincerely live according to the gospel of Jesus Christ, giving away all pomp, miserness, and lechery. And fourthly, our side demands and commands that the militant church would be mixed just according to the parts, which the Lord instituted, namely from priests of Christ, who keep his law in purity, from the world's nobility exhorting to keep Christ's institutions, and from ordinary people serving both other parts according to the law of Christ.⁴⁵

This view of Hus is accompanied by a more radical form of it. Specific situations provide him with a decisive criterion for keeping the *lex Christi*: first, when, in 1411 in the polemic against John Stokes, he composes a defence of Wyclif. He writes that Wyclif in all his writings passionately tried to bring people back to the "*lex Christi*" and especially clergy, who were to put aside their "*pomposa dominatio*" and, as apostles, follow the "*vita Christi*".⁴⁶

Vita Christi

As we have seen, *lex Christi* and *vita Christi* do not represent opposites in Hus. Rather, he sees the second as a fulfilment of the first. In Hus we encounter a transition from a principle to a personal authority: the *lex* being incarnated, becoming *vita*. This understanding of the Law of Christ – as following the life of Christ – became decisive for Hus's later position expressed mainly in his Czech writings addressed to a popular audience, and in his letters and small writings prepared for the Council. Here he deals with the questions of what prevents the church from a Christ-like discipleship. In his "Books on Simony", as was mentioned, Hus classified these obstacles in terms of heresy either in belief or in practice. He stated that "some keep heresy against the Holy Scriptures in action others in words."⁴⁷ In "The String of Three Strands" he identified disobedience to the divine law with not loving God and wrote: "No one truly loves God, who does not keep his commandments".⁴⁸ Finally in the *Speech on Peace*, quoting Jn 21:15-17, he claims that such lack of love is destructive to the church, as the succession of Peter rests on love.⁴⁹ The problem, of course, is how this is going to be measured.

Following the *vita Christi* has an eschatological dimension in Hus. To follow the life of Christ or, in other words, to live as Christ lived, involves suffering, persecution, and possibly even death. Christ's victory is not limited to the present. It is not a synonym of the church's "victory" in terms of gaining power in this world. When Hus appeals to the highest authority of Christ, he does not necessarily expect that

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 354. The latin text goes as follows: "cum nostre partis non est intencio seducere populum a vera obediencia, sed quod populus sit unus a lege Christi concorditer regulatus. Secundo, intencio nostre partis est, quod constitutiones antichristiane non efatuent aut dividant populum a Christo, sed quod regnet sincere lex Christi cum consuetudine populi ex lege domini approbata. Et tercio, intencio nostre partis est, quod clerus vivat sincere secundum ewangelium Ihesu Christi, pompa, avaricia et luxuria postergatis. Et quatro, optat et predicat nostra pars, quod militant ecclesia sincere secundum partes, quas ordinavit dominus, sit commixta, scilicet ex sacerdotibus Christi pure legem suam servantibus, ex mundo nobilibus ad observanciamordinacionis Christi compellentibus, ex wlgaribus utrique istarum parcium secundum legem Christi ministrantibus." *Mistr Jan Hus: Tractatus de Ecclesia*, ed. S. Harrison Thomson (Prague, 1958) 148-149.

⁴⁶ See: Hus, *Contra Iohannem Stokes*, OO 22:63; Töpfer, HENC 162; Molnár, *Na rozhraní věků* 19.

⁴⁷ "O svatokupecství," OO 4:193.

⁴⁸ "Provázek třípramenný," OO 4:154.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 57.

Christ's judgment will necessarily come through the Council's judgement but neither does he hold the opposite. This perspective can help us to understand this gesture of Hus while he was silenced by the church: "I commit this my appeal to Jesus Christ, the most just judge, who reliably knows, defends and judges, makes visible and rewards the equitable cause of every man."⁵⁰

Hus wrote his final appeal to Christ in October 1412, when the pope pronounced an interdict on Prague until Hus left the city.⁵¹ Christ's judgement is eschatological as concerns the ultimate reality which may or may not become visible in our time. This judgement, according to Hus the realist, belongs to God sovereignty and cannot be "created" by wo/men. The extreme situation freezes discussion over the problem of the right criteria for Christian belief and life. And Hus, like Christians of the early period when the church was persecuted, is left with the "utopia" of the Kingdom. In the end, the Kingdom of God does not have a place in this world or a share among the powers of this world, including the Church, if she "follows Constantine and not Christ" and destroys her messengers. Following the *vita Christi* includes the possibility of martyrdom: the most powerful witness that our hope is in God and not in this world; yet this hope mediates salvation to this world. This is the deepest level of Hus's eschatological orthopraxis.

Types of eschatology

Now we will examine the sources of Hus's eschatological emphasis. While using the word "eschatology," we have to recognise that it is only a 19th century coinage for what earlier Western theology had included under the heading "on the last things". Nineteenth century eschatology included under this heading: death, judgment, heaven and hell. Twentieth century eschatology changed its focus, as it underlined the centrality of the Kingdom of God, and translated the "last things" from a category of time to a category of importance, "eschatological has become a convenient adjective corresponding to that decisive and definitive reality of God's rule and realm whose effects are not limited to the end in a merely chronological sense." Having claimed that the final authority of Christ gives an eschatological dimension to Hus's orthopraxis, it is important to ask: what type of eschatology⁵² we find in Hus? Is it a type of present or futurist eschatology? Or does Hus make this distinction? Is it apocalyptic?⁵³ And, if so, in which sense?

In this passage I will sketch eschatological models, whose influence we can trace in Hus, namely, those of Augustine, Bernard and Joachim.

Augustine's influence

Hus, in his understanding of orthopraxis, articulates elements we find already in the late Augustine and, then, in medieval Christendom where it becomes apparent

⁵⁰ Hus wrote his final appeal to Christ in October 1412, when the pope pronounced an interdict on Prague until Hus left the city.

⁵¹ See: *Husova výzbroj do Kostnice* [Hus's Equipment for Constance]. Franitšek M. Dobiáš and Amedeo Molnár edd. (Prague, 1965) 30, 32.

⁵² G. Wainwright, "Eschatology," in *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*. Ed. G. Wakefield (London, 1983) 135-137 at 135.

⁵³ We have to distinguish between the more general term eschatological as defined above, and the term apocalyptic: "It refers specifically to the imagining and depicting of those endtime events which were expected to take place on earth prior to the return of Christ, the Last Judgment, and the end of time." W. Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages: Apocalyptic Expectations in the Radical Reformation* (Lanham, Maryland & London, 1992) vii.

that the claims to orthodox doctrine do not suffice for the church to live and communicate the reconciled life transformed by the love of God in Christ. Hus's development of thought resembles that of Augustine.⁵⁴ The early Augustine, following Cyprian's thought, was convinced that the Spirit is not operative outside the Catholic Church.⁵⁵ But the experience of the Donatist controversy widened his horizon to the extent that he was able to speak of those who "secretly belong to the new covenant."⁵⁶ Augustine recognises the ambiguities involved in belonging to the Catholic Church. He says: "But the Church, which is the people of God, is an ancient institution even in the pilgrimage of this life, having a carnal interest in some men, a spiritual interest in others."⁵⁷ Here, as was mentioned above, Augustine signals his later views on the Kingdom of the City of God which is not identical with the Catholic Church as an institution, an emphasis which, again, had a significant impact on Hus.

Then, after the defeat of Rome, when the social certainties had gone, Augustine is more concerned than previously with hope for others. His understanding of what ultimately matters cuts deeper than his previous concern about who belongs to the right institution and holds the right teaching; these are included and changed in response to a new priority: how the hope of his fellow Christians may be sustained.⁵⁸ Thus Augustine's eschatology involves a theology of history based on an explanation of God's plan for humankind. In the *City of God* Augustine argues that the works of Divine Providence are independent of what we call prosperity and diversity.⁵⁹ Rome was defeated for her vices; nevertheless, God's plan for

⁵⁴ In his early period Augustine proposes that orthodoxy can be measured in terms of an attitude towards the Catholic Church. In *Of True Religion* he states: "religion is to be sought neither in the confusion of pagans, nor in the offscouring of the heretics, nor in the insipidity of schismatics, nor in the blindness of the Jews, but only among those who are called Catholic or orthodox Christians, that is, guardians of truth and followers of right." (Augustine, *De vera religione* IV, 10) In the middle period this belonging is not enough, one has to follow the teaching of the Catholic Church. When he succeeded to the bishopric of Carthage, the African Church was split almost in half: out of 570 African bishops meeting in conference in Carthage, 284 were Donatists and 286 were Catholic. Augustine was confronted with a serious division of the church, and had to oppose an extreme determinism of Manichees on one side, claiming that decision making and responsibility for moral evil are not in human hands, and on the other side Pelagians and Donatists saying to a church disunited after periods of persecution, that her holiness is dependent on the actual quality of her members, in other words, that only those who have not failed can call themselves a church and thus operate as means of salvation. And after having made every effort at reconciliation, Augustine goes as far as using forcible measures against those who ascribed salvation only to "their" church and used violence against others. Augustine's last period is a response to the fall of Rome, and most strongly pronounce an eschatological hope as well as a theology of history. See: Ch. Kirwan, *Augustine* (London, 1989) 209. Leeming, *Principles of Sacramental Theology* 145.

⁵⁵ "He that holds not to this Unity, does not hold the Law of God, does not hold the Faith of the Father and the Son, holds not Life and Salvation." Cyprian, *The Unity of the Catholic Church* (London, 1924) VI.

⁵⁶ Augustine, *De baptismo* I,xv,24.

⁵⁷ Augustine, *De baptismo* I,xv,24.

⁵⁸ Augustine was confronted with a crisis not only of the Church, but of the whole Empire: the defeat of Rome, believed by many to be the eternal city. Augustine is faced with accusations from the side of pagan Romans who blamed Christians for the loss of political certainties and nervous Christians who thought that the fall of Rome signalled the apocalyptic end of time. Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* had introduced the idea of the sacred Empire, which was the political expression of the one true worship of one true God, and the Empire thus assumed an important place in the salvation plan. The fall of Rome thus meant for the Christians who shared Eusebian political theology the end of the divine plan with human history.

⁵⁹ Augustine, *De civitate Dei* I.8.

humankind continues. Orthodoxy involves orthopraxis, more of the personal side of Christ's presence in the church. As Peter Brown observes: Augustine is concerned with the process of healing, and within this process: "The Catholic church existed to redeem a helpless humanity."⁶⁰ Augustine's eschatology is dynamic, we are exposed to on-going transformation by the issues we struggled with, as much provide a challenge to them. Yet this process is related to God, "the unchangeable, and yet changing all things; Never new, never old, renewing all things... always active, always peaceful...changing works but not advice;"⁶¹ a standpoint, which suited Hus's realist philosophy.

There is also a paradox that, in spite of Augustine's fighting against Donatism, he was profoundly influenced by a Donatist theologian Tyconius (c.330-390). And, again, this influence, without a reference to the source, was passed on to Hus. Tyconius employed a typological and symbolic approach to eschatology. Walter Klaassen summarises:

He viewed every symbol as working in two ways, positive and negative. The church which he considered to be one body also included the antichurch. It could therefore represent both Christ and Antichrist. Thus the church was composed of true believers and hypocrites, and the hypocrites were identical with the Antichrist collectively.⁶² The Antichrist was therefore already in the world, primarily in the false prophets and priests in the church. ...This corporate Antichrist destroyed by means of his sacraments. Thus priests who were lovers of the world and whose god was their belly could not be guides to salvation. The true believer should therefore flee from the sacraments they administered.⁶³

Augustine does not accept the sacramental consequences, but they recur in Hus.⁶⁴ But what we find in Augustine is the symbolic approach identifying the coexistence of the positive and the negative in this temporary life, for the "carnal interest in some men, a spiritual interest in others",⁶⁵ for the Gospel being preached as well as betrayed until the end of the world.⁶⁶ Augustine also works with the multiple images, while refusing to give a single literal value to the concepts like Antichrist. It can be a collective or a singular or both, according to Augustine, and also according to Hus, as we have noted earlier.⁶⁷ The symbolic tone we find in Hus comes from Augustine's account of soul, of church and of world, where good and evil forces

⁶⁰This task becomes even stronger when Hippo is surrounded by the Vandals plundering Numidia. The latter were famed for their brutality, which made many of Augustine's ecclesiastical contemporaries desert their flocks. Augustine, however, decides to stay. See: P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London, 1967) 406-407.

⁶¹Augustine *Confessiones* I,iv.

⁶²Compare to H.D. Rauh, *Das Bild des Antichrist im Mittelalter: Vom Tyconius zum deutschen Symbolismus*.(Münster, 1973) 107-109.

⁶³ Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages* 4.

⁶⁴ See Hus's elaboration on the heresy of simony, "O šesti bludiech," OO 4:295-296.

⁶⁵ Augustine, *De baptismo* I,xv,24.

⁶⁶ R.A. Markus shows the ambiguity of Augustine's position saying that on one side, Augustine holds that "the Church would continue to bear witness to its Lord until the end. But the shape of this witness and the historical form of the Church's existence, the human structures within which its life is carried on, were changeable." On the other side: "the Gospel continues to be betrayed in these "Christian times", as it always must continue to be betrayed." *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (London, 1970) 157.

⁶⁷ See: SSL 162

interplay, yet the sovereignty of the Lord can be suppressed only temporarily.

Bernard versus Joachim?

Now I will look at two competing eschatological models from the twelfth century⁶⁸ and their possible influence on Hus, especially in relation to his vision of the Church, and I will ask the question whether we can find a transition from Hus to the Chiliasm movement.

It is noticeable that in Hus we find a growing affinity with Bernard. While *De ecclesia* is dominated by references to Augustine, in the *Sermo de Pace* the positions reverse. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), the most influential leader of the Cistercian movement, influenced Hus's eschatology in the place which is given to the reform of the church institution among the things which are of ultimate importance.⁶⁹ And although we find in Hus's *Sermo de Pace* a reference to Bernard's distinction between following Peter and the saving commandment given to him: "tend my sheep" (Jn 21:16), and following Constantine, "who walked decorated by precious stones in silk vesture, dressed in gold, riding a white horse, accompanied by guards or by bustling servants",⁷⁰ the church institution does not come from Constantine, but from Christ. When Hus is wrestling with the problem of the highest authority and, in the end, ascribes it to Christ, he feels, at the same time, at home with Bernard's critique of the church, which does not touch its authority in general, but powerfully opposes her particular deviations. Thus in the early 1130s, Bernard interprets the papal schism as a rivalry for the bride of Christ, in terms of Pope standing against Anti-pope.

A younger contemporary of Bernard of Clairvaux, Joachim of Fiore (c.1130-1202) was a monastic exegete, apocalyptic theologian and mystic, who claimed to have received a gift of spiritual understanding of the meaning of history. With him we have to ask the question if, and if so then in which aspects, we can trace an implicit influence of Joachim on Hus, whether in a perception of history and its finality, or in a critique of the papacy and the symbol of the Antichrist or in an understanding of the last times and the second coming of Christ. As will be shown, Joachim saw his role, as did Augustine, to interpret earlier texts in a new light; yet his eschatology is far more apocalyptic than that of Augustine.

History, in Joachim's exegesis, appears as a three-fold work of the Trinity, embodied in the three ages of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Joachim interpreted these as being "the first, in which we were under the law; the second, in which we were under grace; the third, which we expect very soon, under a more ample grace."⁷¹ The first age, ruled by the law, lasted until Jesus's first coming; the second age, ruled by grace, then was expected to close shortly after Joachim's days as, according to him, the signs of the end announced in the Gospels were fulfilled. The third age, ruled by a fuller spiritual illumination, by freedom and love was, thus, at

⁶⁸ Pelikan writes: "During these two centuries we must look not primarily to the systematic theologians and summists, nor to the canonists and lawyer-popes, but to the monastic exegetes and expository preachers for a comprehensive doctrine of the church." *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine III: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago & London, 1978) 298.

⁶⁹ Bernard was influenced not only by Augustine and Gregory the Great, but also by Origen and other Eastern Fathers, and passed this influence on to Hus.

⁷⁰ Hus, *Sermo de pace*, 57.

⁷¹ Joachim, *The Book of Concordance, (Concordia)* 5.84.

hand. The three ages overlapped: Joachim did not identify them in terms of years, but in terms of human generations.⁷² He used triplets to demonstrate the differences among the ages and the progression from lesser to greater integration: knowledge-wisdom-complete understanding; servitude of slaves -service of sons-complete freedom; plagues-actions-contemplations; fear-faith-love; starlight-dawn-full daylight; nettles-roses-lilies; water-wine-oil.⁷³ Klaassen stresses that Joachim 'combined in his writings a typological and symbolic exegesis with a view of history on the move.'⁷⁴ It was vital for Joachim, that things can change, that they do not have to continue as they are till the end. Bernard McGinn shows this type of Joachim's longings for a more perfect time on religious life:

Such hopes usually centered on the image of the "apostolic life," the imitation of Christ and the apostles, and were for the most part, backward-looking, given life by their attempt to revive a golden past. For Joachim, however, the renewal of monasticism was to be a new eruption of the power of the Holy Spirit within History - a *renovatio* from the future rather than from the past.⁷⁵

Here we can trace a need similar to that of Augustine when he was searching to make sense of the fall of Rome. But his conclusion is different. Joachim was a witness of a century old-conflict between the Church and the Empire, of the fall of Jerusalem in 1187, and of the rise of Islam's power. He was convinced that the end of all things was to come in his generation.⁷⁶ Joachim speaks in length of the tribulations of Antichrist and of the Age of the Spirit, which is significant for our search for roots of eschatological elements in Hus's orthopraxis.

I will concentrate here on the comparison between Joachim's and Bernard's approaches in order to prepare a ground for identifying which of their models more strongly complements that of Augustine. There I will concentrate mainly on Hus's last writings, when his specific personal situation radicalises the need to express what is of ultimate importance.

Let me start with an examination of what the differences in expectation are of the development of the church-world relationship according to what was believed to be "God's plan". As Pelikan says, Bernard's vision of the church 'was "extremely spiritual" and yet included its spotted actuality'⁷⁷ in Joachim's vision of the church "all of human history was 'the progressive assimilation of society to the mystical body of Christ'".⁷⁸ In Bernard's vision, which we find strongly echoed in Hus's writings (in *On Peace* in particular)⁷⁹ there is a strong parallel with the Dionysian angelology, both in its hierarchical structure and in the orders of God's care. For

⁷² The first began with Adam, the second with King Uzziah, the third with Benedict of Nursia. See Joachim, *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, ff. 5a-b.

⁷³ See: *Concordia* f.112a, in Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages* 13.

⁷⁴ Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages* 15.

⁷⁵ B. McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (London, 1980) 108; Cf. M. Reeves, *Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford, 1969) 505-508.

⁷⁶ See: Joachim, "Letter to All the Faithful" and "Letter to the Abbot of Valdona" in McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality* 113-119.

⁷⁷ Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition* 3:298.

⁷⁸ Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition* 3:298; Pelikan refers to M.W. Bloomfield, "Joachim of Flora: A Critical Survey of His Canon, Teachings, Sources, Biography and Influence," *Traditio* 13 (1957) 249-311 at 265.

⁷⁹ In *Sermo de pace* Hus refers to Bernard eleven times.

Bernard “the church of the elect”⁸⁰ represents a primary concern of God. Therefore, “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”⁸¹ is a condition for mediating salvation to the world. Pelikan emphasises: “The tension between the church as an object of faith and hope and the church as an object of criticism Bernard manifested but did not resolve.”⁸² Joachim incorporated this tension and offered an eschatological solution to it, the institutional church suffers a loss of spiritual vitality, therefore she has to be “resurrected, as it were from the grave.”⁸³ According to Joachim, during the transition from second to the third age, when the church was to suffer the greatest tribulation of Antichrist, she would make the transition from the *ecclesia activa* to the *ecclesia contemplativa* in the brief time left before the Last Judgment. In this third age of the new “spiritual” church “men will cease being zealous for those institutions that have been established temporarily [*pro tempore et ad tempus*].”⁸⁴ This new church will include, according to Joachim, both Christians and Jews, who would finally be converted to Christ. The sacraments will be left behind as well as the observances of the Law, and so would both institutions, as God would arise “a new leader, a universal pontiff of the new Jerusalem.”⁸⁵ In this vision, the kingdoms of the world will return with their fruits to the kingdom of God.

Joachim claimed the possibility of unmediated grace, in other words, that *virii spirituales* (spiritual men) would be taught directly by God, a statement we find throughout the mystic tradition. Yet, for Joachim, this was to include simple people beginning to think and to speak for themselves and to be illuminated in questions of faith. Here, indeed, there is much similarity between Joachim and Hus, especially as Hus moved from the position of being a welcome critique of the church speaking to her representatives to one preaching the need of reform to the crowds. Yet, Joachim, in a contrast to Bernard, makes a split between the spiritual and the institutional, and claims that the spiritual will overcome the institutional while, in Bernard, these two remain inseparable. Joachim’s eschatology leads to ceasing to be worried about the institutional church, as it will die out anyway, and to concentrate on the “spiritual church”, which will endure. In Bernard’s model, however, it is one church, and its reform must involve the reform of the institution.

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) condemned Joachim’s Trinitarian doctrine, which opposed Peter Lombard and claimed that all three persons operated throughout history as one. This also clouded with suspicion his eschatology and his theology of history. Thus, although his thought was known in Hus’s time, he would be quoted directly only rarely. Therefore, the simple fact that we do not find direct references to Joachim in Hus does not resolve the question of whether he was influenced by his thought or not. This must be investigated on the basis of themes and methods we find in both thinkers. There are important differences: Joachim’s final orientation on contemplation does not accord with Hus’s stress on justice.

⁸⁰ Bernard, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* Cant 68.1.2.

⁸¹ Bernard, *Apologia* 4.7.

⁸² Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition* 3:301.

⁸³ Joachim, Ev.3 (FSI 67:251).

⁸⁴ Joachim, Ev 3.

⁸⁵ Joachim, Conc 4.31.

Conclusion

Hus's concept of orthopraxis was influenced by all three types of eschatology, although we find direct references only to those of Augustine and Bernard. He combines different elements from these and, again, a different type of eschatology can be found in the various strands of the church inspired by the figure of John Hus.

Augustine's influence

Hus takes from Augustine his typological and symbolic approach (partly coming from Tyconius) but, unlike in Augustine, Donatism affects Hus's sacramental theology as he states that it is possible to lose priesthood by abiding in heresy.⁸⁶ He is influenced by Augustine's symbolic interpretation of apocalyptic themes according to which "The sign of the End, the Antichrist, and the apostasy of Christian leaders... are always with us. We all constantly live in the time of the End."⁸⁷ Antichrist can also be a singular, plural, or both, but is never given a single identification. Along with Augustine, Hus is convinced that in the soul, in the church, in the world history good and evil interfere, the Gospel will be preached and betrayed, yet it does not do away with God's sovereignty.

Bernard's influence

Hus takes from Bernard an explicit link between orthopraxis and the struggle for the reform of the institutional church. Bernard, even more strongly than Augustine, emphasises that the church institution does not come from Constantine but from Christ, and will be here until the end and, thus, a reform of the Church is the reform of the institution. This involves a critique of the church vices, yet most definitely from a position within the church institution. This is a position which we, again, find in Hus and, interestingly, the more he is in conflict with the actual representatives of the institutional church, the greater his affiliation with Bernard. In Hus we also find Bernard's stress on obedience to the Law of Christ as informing one's conscience.

Joachim's influence

Hus's perception of history and its finality, its evolution dynamics, and the simple constructive belief that things can change, accords with that of Joachim, although, as mentioned earlier, we do not have a direct evidence for that among Hus's direct citations. Hus also shares Joachim's belief that the Age of the Spirit is dawning, in which all lay people will be direct recipients of her gifts. This strengthens his critique of the vices of the present-day hierarchy which he sees as lacking the Spirit. Joachim's stress on living out the utopia of the Kingdom here and now and his emphasis on the *viri spirituales* who would, under God's Spirit, put into practice once again the communal ideal of the early church is also found in Hus, but to a much stronger degree later in the Taborite interpretation of Hus. It is not surprising that a Chiliast movement also developed within the Taborite framework although this was considered to be heretical by main-stream Taboritism. Hus's notion of Antichrist comes from Augustine and not from Joachim, and so his understanding of the last times and of the second coming. His emphasis on the role of lay people is combined with a critique of the papacy which comes from Bernard and does not make a split between Christian orthopraxis and living in the institutional and hierarchical

⁸⁶ See "O šesti bludiech," OO 4:294-296. Although Hus refers to Innocent, he radicalizes his claim.

⁸⁷ Klaassen, *Living at the End of the Ages* x.

church.⁸⁸

Summary

In Hus we find a tension between eschatological universality and present particularity. Hus, as a philosophical realist, assumes one universal ideal of the Christian orthopraxis towards which our particular journeys are to lead but, besides this philosophical underpinning, there is a strong desire to recognise and to reach the ultimate here and now, to reform the church, so that the values of the Kingdom, the very roots of his concept of orthopraxis, could be shared among her members.

There are also apocalyptic elements in Hus's orthopraxis, but not coming out of a prospective theology, rather from an analysis of experiences of specific situations. Hus employs Augustine's vocabulary which enables him to spell out the variety and the symbolic power of the apocalyptic imagery. Yet, Hus's work with types and antitypes, especially in his early and middle writings, allows for an easier identification of the type or the antitype here and now, than does that of Augustine. In the latter writings, most of all in his *On Peace*, Hus shows the need for theological reflection as a permanently open, committed discourse and, while he has no opportunity to defend his position at the Council, it becomes influential for his followers.⁸⁹

Finally, Hus moves to the recognition that eschatology represents the horizon within which the utopia of God's Kingdom in the church can be generally realised, where the following of the *vita Christi* can be embodied and his final authority, thus, be relied on. In Hus's life it takes an expression of moving from the idea that priesthood will guarantee him a comfortable life, to keeping the *lex Christi*, to following the *vita Christi*, including its ultimate consequence: martyrdom.

⁸⁸ Joachim's influence can be also traced in Comenius's ecclesiology and its emphasis on new and permanent reformation with open door for all nations of the world. Filipi points to that from here Comenius developed his project of general remedy (*emendatio rerum humanarum*), which included pedagogical, irenic and ecumenical efforts, including a plan of a "*consilium oecumenicum*". The death of the unity of Moravian Brothers he sees as a gift related to this new rising universality, for the new unity, which the Lord gathers from all nations under the heaven. See: Filipi's unpublished manuscript.

⁸⁹ Filipi shows that the Taborite heritage: "theology is open and must remain eschatologically open, pointing to the coming Christ; otherwise it is not a theology, but its misuse justifying the *status quo* of the church," was passed also on to the Moravian Brothers and developed in two ways, first, in their perception of a need for critique inspired by the Scriptures and leading to a dialogue with other "unities", Luther, Bucer and Swiss reformers in particular; second, in the absence of *anathemas* in all versions of their confessions. Filipi states: "The brothers did not feel a need to limit themselves, to express their knowledge of faith in an exclusivist manner, the truth, which they have learnt and which they express unites them with other confessing Christians." See Filipi's manuscript.