
The Martyrs of Kutná Hora, 1419-1420

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A new reading of sources already known, as well as a reading of sources hitherto unknown, can evoke novel contours of events that may have seemed almost boringly familiar. For instance, the massacre of “heretics” at the mines of Kutná Hora at the very beginning of the Bohemian religious wars is a well-known event. It is less well known that the demise of these victims initiated their second life among the Bohemian Utraquists. The Baroque historiography had to grapple with this awkward phenomenon, the echoes of which are encountered even later. This article aims at exploring the second life of the victims of Kutná Hora; at deepening our knowledge of the inner life of the Utraquist Church; and at elucidating a chapter in the history of Utraquism in Kutná Hora.

Jiří Kejř described the events in Kutná Hora in a succinct, graphic and comprehensive manner in the late 1950s, as follows:¹ “We will probably never know, who suggested and implemented the gruesome casting of heretics into mine shafts that became a hallmark for Kutná Hora and aroused so much indignation in Bohemia.”² He says further concerning the organizers of the pogrom: “They even commercialized the process by establishing a tariff of monetary fees for the delivery of potential victims, and thus encouraged the capture of random individuals. The captives provided subjects for a repertoire of atrocities, including torture, beheading, and casting into the shafts. The rate was sixty Groschen for a layman, and five times as much for a priest.”³ If we accept with Kejř the generally trustworthy account of Vavřinec of Březová,⁴ we obtain the figure of fifteen hundred executions during 1419-1420.⁵

Early Sources

Let us now note the characterization of the Kutná Hora victims in sources chronologically close to the actual events.

Vavřinec of Březová writes that the executed were “faithful Christians” [*Christi fideles*], “Bohemians” [*Bohemi*] by nationality, and “priests and laypeople” [*tam spirituales quam seculares; sacerdotes et laycos*]. All were adherents of communion *sub utraque* [*communione utriusque speciei faventes; calicis communionis favencium*]. As “zealous adherents” [*communione calicis zelantes*], they were also identified as zealots for the Law of God [*legis dei zelatores*], and simultaneously identified with the truth of Christ [*veritatis Christi diligencium*]. Once more we read in

¹ See Jiří Kejř, *Právní život v husitské Kutné Hoře* (Prague, 1958), or earlier Rudolf Urbánek, “Kutná Hora a husitství,” in: *Kutnohorské příspěvky k dějinám vzdělanosti české* (1938/9) 105-117.

² *Ibid.* 19.

³ *Ibid.* 20.

⁴ Vavřinec of Březová, *Kronika FRB* 5:351-353, 355; *idem*, *Husitská kronika*, trans. F. Heřmanský (Prague, 1954) 39-41, 43.

⁵ Kejř, *Právní život* 21.

Husitská kronika that the victims were “promoters of the communion from the chalice” [*communio calicis promotores*].

The more concise account in the Wrocław manuscript of the *Old Annals* [*Staré letopisy*] agrees with Vavřinec in characterizing the Kutná Hora victims as those “who received the body and blood of our Lord Jesus in both kinds.” It adds specifically that most were “poor” people with the clear exception of three priests headed by Jan Chůdek.⁶

Another type of source, the three manifestoes of 1420, agrees in the characterization of the Kutná Hora victims, but does not augment the information given by Vavřinec: the victims were “faithful Christians,” “Bohemians, attached to the communion with the blood of God,” and once more both “priests and laypeople.”⁷ Only the manifesto, addressed to Venice and dated 10 July, was less cryptic and specified “Bohemian masters, students, priests, and villagers,” who were put to death “merely because of their communion from the chalice.

The final type of relevant sources are the four compositions in verse of the so-called *Budyšínský rukopis* [The Bautzen Manuscript]: *Žaloba České koruny na uherského krále Zikmunda* [Complaint of the Bohemian Crown Against Hungarian King Sigismund],⁸ *Veršovaná žaloba Koruny české* [A Complaint of the Bohemian Crown in Verse],⁹ *Porok Koruny české ku pánóm českým o korunování krále uherského* [A Remonstrance of the Bohemian Crown to the Lords of Bohemia Concerning the Hungarian King’s Coronation],¹⁰ and *Hádání Prahy s Kutnou Horou* [Prague’s Disputation with Kutná Hora].¹¹ These literary sources are characterized by a relative conciseness so that it may suffice to say that Kutná Hora victims are characterized as “people of both sexes,” “faithful people,” and, of course, as “Bohemians,” and again as “laypeople and priests.”

It may seem odd that the sources never speak about the victims specifically as “martyrs”. Emphasis is placed first on their “faithfulness”, that is, orthodoxy in the Utraquist sense, a sign of which is the communion *sub utraque*. Membership in the Bohemian nation is the second mark attributed to the victims the early sources. The third and final mark is the mixture of laypeople and priests, among the latter particularly Jan Chůdka, the parson of Kouřim.

The absence of explicit references to “martyrs”, however, should not worry us. The above-mentioned sources, in fact, attribute true martyrdom to the victims implicitly. It is so first because their lives were sacrificed for Christ, and second because their executioners acted “*in odium fidei*” [out of hatred of the faith]. The Kutná Hora victims had met all the necessary prerequisites for martyrdom: their death was a passive one; its cause was their orthodoxy, interpreted in the Utraquist way as a devotion to the communion *sub utraque*; and their persecutors and

⁶ *Staré letopisy české z vratislavského rukopisu*, ed. František Šimek (Prague, 1937) 21.

⁷ See the Manifestoes: “Páni a Pražané všem Čechům” (20 April 1420), “Protisatirický husitský manifest” (1420) and “Manifest husitské Prahy do Benátek” (10 July 1420), in: Amedeo Molnár, ed., *Husitské manifesty* (Prague, 1980) 68, 76, 87.

⁸ In: Jiří Daňhelka, ed., *Husitské skladby Budyšínského rukopisu* (Prague 1952) 25, and Molnár, *Husitské manifesty* 96.

⁹ In: Daňhelka, ed., *Husitské skladby* 48.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 78.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 82.

executioners detested their version of orthodoxy, as stated by Vavřinec of Březová: “*Montani, Theutonici, Boemorum et presertim veritatis Christi diligencium crudeles persecutores ac inimici.*”¹²

An important additional feature of some of the sources is the reference to miracles connected with the execution of the Utraquists at Kutná Hora. The miracles are invoked with a double intention. First, they affirm the truth of the Utraquist faith; second, they confirm the holiness of a person whom God has chosen as a paragon for his church.

The first of these miracles was the punishment meted out to the inhabitants of Kutná Hora, which Vavřinec of Březová describes as follows: “*Hanc autem in Christi fideles inhumanam debachacionem ulcio divina iuste est secuta. Elapso namque duorum annorum curriculo, civitas ipsa Montanorum in penam ulcionis multorum fidelium inhumane interemptorum est funditus quasi destructa et ignis consumpta voragine.*”¹³

Another miracle, now of a definitely supernatural kind, may be found in the Wrocław manuscript of *Staré letopisy české*¹⁴ and subsequently in the more recent *Paměti* [Memoirs] of Mikuláš Dačický:¹⁵ “And once having collected the captives and brought them to Kutná Hora, at twilight they began to behead them and cast their bodies into the mines; then the head of one of the beheaded Christians, bouncing on the ground, exclaimed three times: ‘The Blood of Christ!’” This narrative was clearly inspired by an episode in the Old Bohemian *Passionál*,¹⁶ and that text can be also found in the *Postilla* of Jan Rokycana – in the sermon for the feast of Ss. Peter and Paul. Here we read that when Paul “arrived at the place [of execution], he made a sign of the cross on his chest and forehead and, having looked up to heaven, he lowered his head for the executioner to sever; subsequently the head bounced three times, saying each time: ‘Jesus Christ!’”¹⁷

Thus we may conclude that the early sources present the victims of Kutná Hora as authentic martyrs for orthodoxy as understood by the Utraquist Church. Moreover, their holiness is confirmed by the occurrence of miracles. The subsequent narratives of these events abound in additional legendary features and unprecedented details.

The Bohemian Reformation and its authentic institutional embodiment, the Utraquist Church, retained for their entire duration the veneration of Jan Hus, the martyr of Constance whom the Council had condemned for alleged heresy. Hus’s feast day on 6 July was not, however, an anomalous singular oddity, but rather an umbrella institution for the commemoration of all the martyrs of the Bohemian Reformation. First, it covered also Jerome of Prague, and the three youthful

¹² Vavřinec of Březová, *Kronika* FRB 5:352.

¹³ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁴ *Staré letopisy české z vratislavského rukopisu*, ed. Šimek 21.

¹⁵ Mikuláš Dačický of Heslov, *Prostopravda – Paměti*, eds. E. Petru and E. Pražák (Prague, 1955) 139: “A když jednou nabravše lidi i přivezechu je do Hory a v první súmrak rubáše jim hlavy, vmetali do šachty, tehdy ta hlava státá skočiece po zemi, promluvila, říkáje po třikráte: Krev boží, krev boží, krev boží!”

¹⁶ *Kališnický pasionál z roku 1495*, ed. Zdeněk V. Tobolka (Prague, 1926): Život svatého Pavla (F 10 – 11): “A tu jemu jeho svatá hlava jednu ranú štata, hlava od těla skočivši, ‘Jezus Kristus’ řekla.” (F 11).

¹⁷ Jan Rokycana, *Postilla*, II, ed. František Šimek (Prague, 1929) 812.

precursors executed in Prague during the protest against indulgences in 1412. Secondly, the rest of known and unknown martyrs were also included under the collective designation of the feast day as that of Jan Hus, Jerome of Prague and other martyrs of the Bohemian Reformation. The last category, of course, covered also our Kutná Hora martyrs, and it, therefore, becomes germane to examine the texts connected with the feast day of Hus.

Most of the relevant texts may be found in two publications: volume 8 of *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum* [FRB], and the *Husitský zpěvník* [Utraquist Hymnal],¹⁸ both edited by Václav Novotný. It soon becomes evident that the earliest texts are sparse and vague concerning the victims of Kutná Hora. The anonymous sermon *De martyribus Bohemis* mentions them in a single sentence,¹⁹ and few other explicit references may be found as allusions in literary compositions in verse.²⁰

Middle Period

After a long hiatus the silence of sources is broken in milieu of the Unity of Brethren by a sermon *Na den mistra Jana Husi* [On the Day of Master Jan Hus] from the *Výklad řečí Božích* by Ondřej Štefan (1575). The reference to the Kutná Hora victims is again just an appendage to the story Hus: “And these martyrs were not alone [i.e., Hus and Jerome], but many other after them, for preaching and observing the truth of God, were at Kuthá Hora cast into mine shafts, others drowned, or traded like cattle for money: a layperson for two Gulden, a priest for five, concerning which see in history.”²¹

Let us now follow the challenge of Ondřej Štefan and turn “to history” for further enlightenment. If we discount Vavřínek of Březová and *Staré letopisy české*, the first such history is the now rather neglected work of Brother Vavřínek Krasonický, which dates to c. 1525 and bears the title *Sepsání bratra Vavřínce Krasonického o tom, co se dalo předešlých let mezi Římány a Čechy* [The Account of Brother Vavřínek Krasonický About What Has Happened Between the Romanists and the Bohemians in the Years Past].²² Since we lack access to most ecclesiastical

¹⁸ *Husitský zpěvník. Nábožné písně o mistru Janovi Husovi a mistru Jeronýmovi*, ed. Václav Novotný (Prague, 1930).

¹⁹ See *Historické spisy Petra z Mladoňovic a jiné zprávy a paměti o M. Janovi Husovi a M. Jeronýmovi z Prahy*, ed. Václav Novotný (Prague, 1932), 368: “Eciam quanti in Plzna ad fontem proiecti sunt, quanti in Montibus ad foveas, in Olomuc, Prage sunt decolati, quanti etiam istis temporibus sunt occisi pro veritate Christi ... et in sanguine occisorum lavabuntur et ibi responebat eis remissionem suorum delictorum et indulgencias fundabant ex instinctu pessimorum sacerdotum et monachorum, sicut et hodierna die no cessant hereticare, excommunicare et persequi viam domini, specialiter comunione duplicis speciei.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*: “Písně, jež složil M. Václav Nicolaides Vodňanský z Radlova,” 453: “Nuže, milí Čechové, den slavný pamatujme našich milých krajanů, kteříž pro boží pravdu zbaveni životů, jedni u Hory do dolů sú metáni, jiní v Labi ztopeni ...”; “O mistru Janovi Husovi,” 458: “kteříž sou pro Krista a pravdu jeho krev svou prolili, než by jí ustoupili, Mistr Hus Jan, Jeroným, také mnozí jiní, kteří sou u Hory do šachet vmetáni...”; “O svatém mistru Janovi z Husince,” 460: “Radujte se moci nebeské, neb jsou k vám připojeni mučedlníci země České, kteříž pro Krista v Konstanci jsou spáleni a jiní u Hory do šachet vmetáni ...”; “Antifona,” 461: “Krista, krále mučedlníkuov, kralujícího v slávě Boha v Otce, chválíme dnes, pamatujíc všech Čechuo, v naději boží mučedlníkuov, kteříž pro jeho zákona milování i také přesvatého těla a krve přijímání vohněm pálení, mečem zbiti, v šachty metáni, v vodách topeni ...”

²¹ See “Výklad řečí božích” (Knihopis č. 15953) s. 876-877. For this sermon about Hus see A. Císařová-Kolářová, “Husova památka v Jednotě bratrské.” *Jednota bratrská* 31,6-7 (1954) 84-86.

²² Prague, National Museum Library Ms. V. F. 41 ff. 29a – 62a.

records for the Bohemian Lands in the latter part of the fifteenth century, Krasonický's account is of utmost importance for the further pursuit of our inquiry.

Krasonický, a Utraquist and a Bachelor of Arts, prior to his ordination and subsequent switch to the Unity of Brethren, resided in Kutná Hora c. 1479-1481, probably at the school attached to the church of St. James.²³ Looking back at his stay in Kutná Hora after approximately forty years, he recalls the murders in Kutná Hora with victims tied together, like a string of beads, when cast into the mine shafts with their total number estimated at 1,200 or 1,600. The account further notes the subsequent pilgrimages during the Rogation Days, and sermons in memory of the executed, as well as the erection of a small church at the place of their passion. Krasonický adds that the perpetrators offered three score Groschen for an ordinary layperson and five times as much for a priest.²⁴

In searching for the precedents of this account, we note that the exact sums offered for the delivery of victims are also given in the *Kronika Starého Kolegiáta*,²⁵ and in the Prague Manifesto to Venice. This information probably reached Krasonický either through the oral tradition, or through a lost intermediate document. Such a missing link might be a source for the number of 1,200 victims, which – unlike the number of 1,600 – is not found in any other extant source.

Somewhat more significant is the reference to the victims being bound together as beads in a necklace. Elsewhere, this simile is borrowed from Krasonický by another member of the Unity Jan Jafet in 1600, and an iconographic rendering had appeared in the Smíškov gradual from 1490-1495.²⁶

Finally, Krasonický's most significant contribution is his report of a specific cult of the Kutná Hora martyrs manifest in Utraquist processions to the place of their immolation, and in the erection of a pilgrimage church there. The official records of the Kutná Hora Consistory from the sixteenth century remain silent about the tradition of such a special procession.²⁷ The processions are not then mentioned until mid-seventeenth century in Komenský's *Historie o těžkých protivenstvích* (1655), where he records that after 1420 every year solemn gatherings took place on 18 April on the spot of the martyrdom where also a church still stood. These commemorative gatherings with sermons continued despite an attempt by a certain Vřesovec, the supreme master the mint, to stop them in 1613. The celebrations ceased only as a result of the Post-White-Mountain repressions.²⁸

²³ See V. Sokol, "Vavřinec Krasonický," in: ARBI-III. *Praga mystica* (Prague, 1984) 52.

²⁴ "Bývaly ukrutné války ... u Hory na Kutnách do šachet metali, navážice jich někdy dlhý páteř, do dvou šachet blízko sebe, do jedné pravili dvanácte set a jiní šestnácte a do druhé ještě více. A chodívali sme tam v křížové dny s procesí. A tu kněží kázali žalostně připomínající ty služebníky Boží. A již sou tu kostelík ustavili na památku. Za kněze dávali pět kop a za obecného člověka jednu kopu, aby vyhladili všechny kacíře etc." Prague, National Museum Library V. F. 41 ff. 47a-b.

²⁵ In: Höfler 1:79: "Et interim Montani ad aliquot centena hominum communioni utriusque speciei favencium emerunt, et in ssachtas proiecerunt, et dabant pro quolibet laico 1 sexagenam gr. et pro sacerdote quinque sexagenas."

²⁶ Smíškovský Gradual, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung Mus. Hs. 15492 [olim: Series nova 2657] f. 258a; reproduced in: J. Homolka, J. Krása, V. Mencl, J. Pešina, J. Petráň, *Pozdně gotické umění v Čechách* (Prague, 1978) 419.

²⁷ F. Trnka, ed., *Náboženské poměry při kutnohorské konsistoři r. 1464 – 1547* (Prague, 1932-34).

²⁸ "[K]aždoročně 18. dne dubna na tom místě (kdež i kostel vystavený posavad zůstává) slavná shromáždění a na památku týchž mučedníků kázání mívati obyčej byl až do léta 1613, když nejvyšší

Krasonický's report can be used to correct Komenský's dating of the pilgrimages. If these exercises, of which Krasonický's was a direct witness, actually occurred during the Rogation Days, then his dating of 18 May is more appropriate than Komenský's 18 April.

Soon after Krasonický's account, *Kronika česká* of the prominent Utraquist cleric, Bohuslav Bílejovský, a native of the Kutná Hora region, was published in 1537. According to his report the victims of Kutná Hora massacres were early Utraquist faithful who were captured on their way to mountain retreats. At that time Utraquist clergy was excluded from urban and rural churches by the Germans and other perverse church patrons, and communion *sub utraque* could be surreptitiously administered only in such remote locales. Eventually Utraquists had to obtain arms and organise for defence.²⁹

Kronika o založení Země české [A Chronicle About the Foundation of the Bohemian Land] by Martin Kuthen, whose very name indicated a tie with Kutná Hora, appeared only two years later (1539).³⁰ While Kuthen reiterates the price schedule for captured Utraquists, he also brings up fresh information about the excavatory results in the mine region of Kutná Hora in 1492. Many bones were then discovered belonging to those whom for their faith the Germans had cast into the mineshafts. Among them was a body fragment (chest and ribs) clad in a chasuble that emitted a most pleasant scent like myrrh. Some thought that it was a relic of priest Jan Chůdek, once a parson of Kouřim, who had become a victim of Teutonic fury seventy-three years earlier.³¹ The new piece of information fits into the Utraquist paradigm of authentic martyrdom, outlined earlier. It continues the theme of

mincmistr Vřesovec to, ale nadarmo, zastaviti se pokoušel. Potom teprv, když protiventství se rozmohlo, v létu 1621, to ustalo." See Jan Amos Komenský, *Historie o těžkých protiventstvích*, VSK 9/I, 71.

²⁹ A modern edition of Bílejovský's chronicle appeared under the title *Kronika církevní*, ed. J. Skalický (= J.V. P. Dittrich) (Prague, 1816) 10: "Nebo kněží věrní, ač milost k posluhování měli, ale v kostelech zjevně posluhovati nesměli; neb i kolátorové svěštější naší strany na hradích, na tvrzech i v městech byli se také zvrátili a někde i Němci byli, ješto se tehdaž v Čechách náramně rozmohli, a ti kněžím zprotivilým proti pravdě velmi pomáhali. Avšak věrní Čechové milosti Boží hledati nepřestali a jako synové Izraelští pod Filištínskými radlice doma vostřiti nemohli; tak ač v svých kostelích posloužení docházeti nemohli; ale když kněží věrných užiti nemohli, na horách putující s nimi se scházeli a tu tělo i krev Boží s náboženstvím přijímali, muži nábožní, ženy i dítky, jakož ještě posavad památná sou místa, a na nich kostely ustavěli. Jako na Bradle u Kamenice sv. Máří Magdalény, u Církvice sv. Markéty, na Hradišti, kdež již Tábor a jinde, ješto ještě tu putují, ač proč, nevědí. V tom pak veliké nebezpečnosti a nesnáze mívali; neb když cestou šli s zámkův a s tvrzí, na ně stýkali, bili, loupili, jímali, šacovali, potom je pálili, stínali, topili, u Hory do šachet metali a divně mučili, takže musili zbrojně choditi a v houfích."

³⁰ Martin Kuthen, *Kronika o založení Země české a prvních obyvatelích jejich, tudíž o knížatech a králích i jich činech a přiběžích velmi krátce z mnohých kronikářův sebraná*, ed. Zdeněk V. Tobolka (Prague, 1929).

³¹ *Ibid.* S3b. Kuthen for certain drew on *Staré letopisy české*, as some of the manuscripts record the discovery of the Chůdek's relic. For instance, *Staří letopisové čeští*, ed. J. Charvát, in: *Dílo Františka Palackého* (Prague 1941) 211: "Léta božího 1492 Horníci dobývajíce starých dolův, do kterýchž metali někdy věrné Čechy, kteříž přijímali tělo a krev pána Ježíše, v týchž dolích dobývali kosti těch Čechův. Tu také našli tělo ač necelé, ale toliko prsy s žebrami, neb havěti to rozpalovali, dobývajíce perku; a to tělo tak jest čistou a libou vůni mělo jakžto myrrha výborná; to jest všudy u Hory svědomo bylo. A tak se domýšlejí, že by to čistou a libou vůni mělo jakžto myrrha výborná; to jest všudy u Hory svědomo bylo. A tak se domýšlejí, že by to tělo bylo kněze Jana Chudka, faráře kouřimského, kteréhož sou stáli s jinými kněžími a do šachty uvrhli, a to se bylo stalo léta božího 1419."

adornment by miracles, and the “scent of myrrh” betrays a link with the marvel connected with St. Paul.

Chronologically speaking, the next history is the *Kronika česká* of Václav Hájek of Libočany which emerged from the printing shop in 1541.³² Because his interpretation reflects the Roman point of view that is hostile, his work cannot help to elucidate the concept of martyrdom entertained in the Bohemian Reformation. Hence, we will leave him alone, and advance to a more fruitful source, more than fifty years later, the work of Jan Jafet from 1600, *Hlas strážného*.

Seventeenth Century and After

Jafet’s work together with the cited writings of Ondřej Štefan and Komenský illustrate what may be called the third way of regarding the atrocities at Kutná Hora which is distinct from either the Roman or the Utraquist points of view. The Romanists obviously held a negative view of the Bohemian schismatics, and the Utraquists cherished the martyrs of Kutná Hora above all as adherents of communion *sub utraque*. The Unity tended to downplay the lay chalice, and in relation to the Kutná Hora martyrs switched the emphasis to the free preaching of the word of God, combined in the case of Komenský with an emphasis on the freedom of conscience. Jafet wrote: “The papists could not tolerate the free preaching of the word of God by the Bohemians, and therefore began to oppose them in murderous and cruel ways. Those who gathered to hear the Word of God were oppressed and tormented everywhere, both for preaching the word of the Lord and for receiving the sacrament *sub utraque*. Hence [the papists] exiled priests and faithful from towns and villages, confiscated their property, and took their lives...”³³ Komenský in his noted *Historie o těžkých protivenstvích* writes: “When, after the death of Wenceslaus, Emperor Sigismund took over the kingdom and through his commissioners instituted various measure to diminish the freedom of human consciences, then those, who upheld the pure teaching, escaped to a rocky mountain to which they gave the name of Tábor. Having angered the Romanists, and even the Utraquists, the Taborites were molested in all possible ways; the enemies bought them and paid for their priests five times three scores of Groschen...”³⁴ I think that the Brethren’s distinctive viewpoint is evident from the two examples and we can now bid the Unity farewell.

The last source, which will conclude our exposition, is the sermon of the Prague parson, Havel Phaeton Želanský, who was strongly influenced by the extra-Bohemian Protestant Reformation. The homily was preached on the feast day of Jan Hus in 1614.³⁵ Of all sources, this sermon and Komenský’s text offer the most detail. Both apparently drew on the (now unknown) book of the priest Václav Štefan Thermen-Teplický, *Rozmlouvání dvou osob o Horách*, published in Prague in 1610, of which no copy has survived. Let us cite at least a small part of Želanský’s homily, which was printed in 1619: “How terrible, how sad, the spectacle when the infidels

³² See Václav Hájek z Libočan, *Kronika česká*, ed. Jaroslav Kolár (Prague, 1981) 552-553.

³³ See copy Prague, National Museum Library IV. A. 6; I cite from another copy, deposited at the Department of Historical Theology [Katedra historické teologie] of the Protestant Theological Faculty of the Charles University in Prague [UK ETF] 35

³⁴ Komenský, *Historie o těžkých protivenstvích* 71.

³⁵ An anonymous selection of Želanský’s sermons was published as *Hus a Jeroným, svatí mučenníci pro pravdu Boží a Jan Žižka z Kalicha, boží bojovník* (Prague, 1873).

dealt so satanically with the faithful. O glorious death of those martyrs, who, bravely and steadily standing for Christ, opposed errors to the point of shedding their blood. Together with St. Paul, they fought the good fight, they finished their race, and preserved their good conscience, wherefore they received the crown of glory in heaven.”³⁶

Unsurprisingly, following the Battle of the White Mountain, Baroque historiography interpreted the 1419-1420 events at Kutná Hora entirely in the spirit of the Counter Reformation. Without reliable support in earlier sources, its interpretations were based mainly on Hájek’s historical narrative, albeit abounding in interesting and novel details that were, however, by and large fabricated and mendacious. This applies to the works of Simeon Evstachyus Kapihorský, Jan Kořínek, Jan František Beckovský, and the anonymous author of the book, *Země dobrá, to jest země česká* [A Good Land, That Is the Land of Bohemia].³⁷ Agreeing that it was the Taborite heresy that provoked the drastic actions of the orthodox miners, the authors multiply the numbers of executed dissidents, and in general confuse historical events to suit the interests of the newly privileged religion. We shall not be concerned with these perversities here. Let them be treated elsewhere.

Let us now sum up the conclusions of our brief study. The churches, which dissented from Rome in the Bohemian lands in the centuries before the White Mountain, enjoyed a more intensive religious practice and internal life than has been generally assumed. Local specifics often obscured more general significances as, for instance, in the cult of Jan Hus, which also encompassed not only the veneration of Jerome of Prague, but also that of the three young men of 1412, the martyrs of Kutná Hora from 1419-1420, and other random martyrs of the Bohemian Reformation, such as Michal Polák and Marta of Poříčí. It is worthwhile to reinterpret sources that might have seemed boringly familiar, because a new perspective might tease out new facts from the old texts. The search for new sources, of course, also needs to continue, especially in the smaller archives and libraries. Interdisciplinary approach is needed as well, as our own study demonstrates, combining literary and material sources, secular and ecclesiastical texts, and literature of historians and preachers. Finally, it is worthwhile to interpret historical events not only on the basis of early documents, but also from the perspective of their afterlife, which tends to affect and formulate our understanding of these events to a higher degree than we are ready to admit.

[Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David.]

³⁶ Havel Phaeton Žalanský, *Třetí kázání historické při památce mistra Jana Husa*; *Knihopis*, 2/6, 133, č. 7152; I have used a copy from the Library of UK ETF in Prague 104-105.

³⁷ Simeon E. Kapihorský, *Historia kláštera sedleckého* (Prague, 1630) 39; J. Kořínek, *Staré paměti kutnohorské z r. 1675*, ed. M. Brož (Kutná Hora, 1997) 104-109; Jan F. Beckovský, *Poselkyně starých příběhů českých* (Prague, 1700) 653-656; and *Země dobrá, to jest země česká*, ed., Ivana Kučerová and Lucie Medová (Brno, 1998) 145-146.