
Bohemian Franciscans Between Orthodoxy and Nonconformity at the Turn of the Middle Ages

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The Franciscans and their Mission among the Heterodox

St. Francis of Assisi and his first *fratres minores* were inspired by a notable missionary zeal leading them to believe that God had sent them “per mundum praedicare Christianis, Saracenis et Judaeis.” This early missionary activity of the Franciscans was marked by an avowed universalism, principled avoidance of compulsion, and a reliance on the power of God’s word alone.¹ This disposition harmonized with the initiatives of the Holy See that led in 1252 to the establishment of the society, *Societas Peregrinatum propter Christum*, composed of Franciscans and Dominicans, and bound to work for the conversion of heretics and infidels.² The extensive missionary campaign of St. Francis’s disciples aimed at Africa (Morocco, Libya, Egypt, and Ethiopia), Asia (Palestine, Persia, India, and China), the margins of Europe (the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkans, Prussia, and Lithuania) and, after 1500, also the Western Hemisphere.³ Major attention was paid to the “schismatics”, above all the Greeks, who were to be permanently gained for a union with Rome. A shameful aspect was the participation in the papal Inquisition against the Albigensians and the Waldensians that signified a most blatant distortion of the true Franciscan (and generally Christian) ideal. More than two hundred Franciscans had served as Inquisitors prior to 1517.⁴ The organization structure of the Order from

¹ Thomas of Celano, *Vita Prima* (chapters 20, 29); St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Maior* (chapter 9).

² R. Loenertz, *La Société de Frères Pèlerins* (Rome, 1937) (Institutum Historicum FF. Praedicatorum, Romae ad S. Sabinae, *Dissertationes historicae*, fasc. VII). The society enjoyed numerous papal privileges, last confirmed by Boniface IX in 1399. It was, however, of greater importance to the Dominicans than the Franciscans.

³ Heribert Holzappel, *Handbuch der Geschichte des Franziskanerordens* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1909) 241-268; Leonhard Lemmens, “Franciscus vir catholicus et totus apostolicus. De primordiis missionum Ordinis Minorum,” *Antonianum* 2 (1927) 21-58; Christian W. Troll, “Die Chinamission im Mittelalter,” *FS* 48 (1966) 109-150; 49 (1967) 22-79; Anton Rotzetter, “Kreuzzugskritik und Ablehnung der Feudalordnung in der Gefolgschaft des Franziskus von Assisi,” *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 35 (1972) 121-137; Kaspar Elm, “Franz von Assisi: Bußpredigt oder Heidenmission?” *Espansione del Francescanesimo tra Occidente e Oriente nel secolo XIII* (Atti del VI Convegno Internazionale della Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani, Assisi 1978) [Società Internazionale di Studi Francescani, Convegni 6] (Assisi, 1979) 71-103. For a comprehensive bibliography of medieval Franciscan missions, see Emmett Randolph Daniel, *The Franciscan Concept of Mission in the High Middle Ages*, (Lexington, Kentucky, 1975); Leonhard Lehmann, “Grundzüge franziskanischen Missionsverständnisses nach Regula non bullata 16,” *FS* 66,1 (1984) 68-81. On Franciscan missions in Bosnia see Iozo Džambo, *Die Franziskaner im mittelalterlichen Bosnien* [Franziskanische Forschungen, 35] (Werl, Westphalia, 1991).

⁴ For about a decade after 1236 individual Franciscans acted as assistants of Dominican Inquisitors. Since 1546, however, they began serving as independent Inquisitors in northern Italy (Lombardy) Provence, Dauphiné, Corsica, Sardinia and Bosnia; see Mariano D’Alatri, “L’Inquisizione francescana nell’Italia centrale nel secolo XIII,” *CF* 22 (1952) 225-250; 23 (1953) 51-165; *idem*, “Inquisitori veneti del duecento,” *CF* 30 (1960) 398-432; *idem*, “Nuove notizie sull’Inquisizione toscana nel duecento,”

the beginning reflected the missionary objectives. Territories inhabited by infidels or heterodox were divided for the purposes of conversion into Vicariates, such as Tartar-Chinese (1291), Russian-Lithuanian (1340), Bosnian (1340) and Canarian (1420).⁵

Palestine, or the Holy Land, served as the touchstone of both peaceful and turbulent coexistence of the Franciscans with Jews, Moslems, and Orthodox Christians. Fratres minores arrived there early and the founder himself made a brief appearance in 1219. The mission failed to produce any mass conversions, and the monks, maintaining tolerance vis-à-vis the heterodox, focused on pastoral work among local adherents of the Roman Church and on catering to the needs of Christian pilgrims. The *provincia terrae sanctae* did not survive the collapse of the Latin Church following the fall of Acre in 1291. The Franciscans, however, did not entirely disappear from Palestine and gradually acquired a significant share in the management of the holy places in Jerusalem and in Bethlehem. In 1333, permission to establish monasteries was granted by the Sultan, and thus the *Custodia terrae sanctae* and with it the privileged position of the Franciscan Order in Palestine had its origin. The custody became a haven of nonconformist brethren, especially the Spiritual Franciscans. Their presence enhanced with eschatological components (stemming evidently from Joachim of Fiore) the already pronounced self-adulation of the Franciscans. The presence in the holy places of Christ's mission and the influence of spiritualism intensified in the entire Order the eschatological feeling that it constituted the true *ordo seraphicus* or *ordo apostolicus* of the last days. The Observants acquired control of monasteries in the Holy Land with the permission of Pope Eugene IV in 1433-1434, and pursued the (necessarily) non-militant mission according to Francis of Assisi's intentions.⁶ The Franciscans had to act with similar circumspection (and tolerance) in the provinces of St. James (that is, Spain after the fall of Grenada in 1492), Greece, Dalmatia, and Hungary; as well as the Vicariates of Bosnia and Russia-Lithuania, to say nothing about the Tartar (Chinese) Vicariate.

A paradigmatic example of the Franciscan mission's ambivalence was the situation in the Province of Poland-Russia, which had belonged to the extensive Observant Vicariate of Bohemia until 1467.⁷ Byzantine Orthodox of Ruthenian nationality prevailed within the population of the east of the Province. These schismatics became a matter of concern to Casimir Jagellonian, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, and Cardinal Zbygniew Olesznicki, who jointly invited the

CF 31 (1961) 637-644. See also Bernd Schmies and Kirsten Rakemann, *Spuren franziskanischer Geschichte. Chronologischer Abriss der Geschichte der Sächsischen Franziskanerprovinzen von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* [Saxonia Franciscana, Sonderband], ed. Dieter Berg (Werl, 1999) 45.

⁵ For an annotated survey of provinces and vicariates, see Raphael M. Huber, *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order (1182-1517)* (Milwaukee and Washington, D.C., 1944) 705-784. The most detailed and user-friendly extant list of provinces with their subdivisions into custodies and listing of all monasteries is available on internet as Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, *Franciscan provinces with their custodies and convents* <http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/province.htm>.

⁶ Kaspar Elm, "La Custodia di Terra Santa. Franziskanisches Ordensleben in der Tradition der lateinischen Kirche Palästinas," in: Kaspar Elm, *Vitasfratrum. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Eremiten- und Mendikantenorden des zwölften und dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*. Festgabe zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Dieter Berg, [Saxonia Franciscana, Bd. 5] (Werl, 1994) 241-262.

⁷ On the origins of the Franciscan mission in Lithuania, see Victor Gidžiunas, "De missionibus fratrum minorum in Lituania (Saec. XIII et XIV)" AFH 42 (1949) 3-36; *idem*, "De vita et apostolatu Fr. Min. Observantium in Lituania saec. XIV et XV," AFH 68 (1975) 298-340; 69 (1976) 23-106.

notorious John of Capistrano to launch a mission for a union of the Ruthenians with Rome. Although Capistrano stayed in 1453 and 1454 in Cracow, the capital of the Polish Kingdom, the project was activated only under his successors, the Polish Franciscans-Observants (Bernardines).⁸ Their monasteries sprang up, as foundations of the royal dynasty or the Rutheno-Lithuanian magnates, in Lvov (1460), Przeworsk (1465), Vilnius (1468), Kaunas (1470), Sambir (1472), Tykocin (1479) and Polatsk (1495). Headed by the Cracow Guardian Ladislav of Hungary, a group of Polish Franciscans launched an unsuccessful expedition to Moscow as early as 1453. However, a number of Ruthenian nobles and burghers were won for Rome by a missionary expedition of Franciscans from Vilnius to Kiev in 1479. In line with this rapprochement, Jan of Dukla (+1484), a Franciscan of Lvov, enjoyed considerable respect also after his death, not only from his co-believers, but also from the Orthodox Ruthenians and from the Armenians. Even more important irenic figure, cherished by the Orthodox, was the Guardian Marián of Jeziork in Vilnius. Marián was the founding father of the Polono-Russian Province that was separated from the Vicariate of Bohemia, and he became the first Polish Provincial Vicar in 1467. Subsequently, Marián induced Pope Sixtus IV to grant his Province in 1489 special privileges for work among the Orthodox and the pagans (“in partibus schismaticorum et paganorum”), placing his Franciscans on par with those of the Holy Land. The privileges conferred a number of rights and dispensations in the areas of liturgy, baptism and the minor clerical orders, as well as greater flexibility in cases of mixed marriages. Their resulting virtual independence from episcopal jurisdiction created an embryonic situation pregnant with future strife.

In line with their indulgent attitude, the Polish Franciscans resolutely opposed the idea of rebaptizing the Orthodox (“rebaptizacio Ruthenorum”) that contradicted the Uniate decrees of the Council of Florence (1439), recognizing the validity of Eastern rite baptism. The Franciscans’ minimalist requirement for a reunion was that an Eastern Christian, who was considered orthodox, promise obedience to the pope as head of the Church. The Franciscans’ benevolence, however, clashed with the elitist bigotry of the Polish hierarchy that viewed the Orthodox Ruthenians and the Armenians as worse than the pagans.⁹ At first the Franciscans seemed to have won when Pope Alexander VI with his bull *Altitudo divini consilii* of 1501 rejected rebaptism. The Polish bishops, however, did not relent and the Primate Jan Łaski convinced Pope Leo X at the Fifth Lateran Council to issue a new bull. *Apostolica Providentialis* of 1515 declared invalid the sacraments of the Orthodox Church and ordered the rebaptism of the schismatics.

Thus the Franciscans’ missionary strategy failed thanks to the obtuseness of the pope and the Polish hierarchy, although the Observants’ (Bernardines)

⁸ Johannes Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran. Ein Leben im Kampf um die Reform der Kirche*, 2 vv. [Bibliotheca Franciscana 2] (Rome and Heidelberg, 1964) 2:255-270, *passim*.

⁹ The issue of rebaptism became a delicate problem in 1495 in connection with Alexander Jagellonian’s marriage to an Orthodox Christian, Helena, daughter of the Moscow Grand Prince Ivan III. The clergy of Vilnius, headed by Bishop Vojtěch Tabor, insisted on a new baptism according to the Latin rite, while the Franciscans were just as resolutely opposed; see *Memoriale Ordinis Fratrum Minorum a fr. Ioanne de Komorowo compilatum*, ed. Xawery Liske and Antoni Lorkiewicz [Monumenta Poloniae Historica 5] (Lvov, 1888) 263-265.

churches still seemed to have a certain appeal for the Orthodox.¹⁰ Yet, even the Franciscans' seeming tolerance of the distinctive Orthodox and Uniate rites was not entirely above board. Their ultimate goal, in fact, was not a coexistence with the Latin rite, but an eventual elimination of the Eastern rites from the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian dual state.

When in our roundabout *tour d'horizon* we finally reach the Franciscans of Bohemia, their attitude toward the Bohemian Utraquism strikes us as (even on the surface) much less tolerant than the attitude of their Polish brethren toward the Orthodox Church. A major reason for this sour view was that the Bohemian Church had been an integral part of the Western Church and consciously disdained unity with Rome, choosing schism in order to reform the Roman Church. The surliness affected also the leadership of the Franciscan Order.¹¹

In pursuing their objectives in Bohemia, the Franciscan Observants (under the leadership of John of Capistrano) recognized the failure of military campaigns against the "Hussite heresy". Therefore, the institutional and theological struggle against the schismatic and heretical Czechs had to be carried on by other means. Hence, the Franciscans dusted off an old weapon from their arsenal – that of passionate preaching. As early as 1430, at the general chapter in Assisi, Capistrano recommended above all the launching of a campaign of sermons "contra praesentem satanicam et damnatam haeresim Hussitarum."¹²

Some of the Franciscan Observants were outright obsessed with anxieties about the "Bohemian heresy" and greatly exaggerated its influence particularly in the region of southern Europe. For instance, the Inquisition targeted in Aragon in 1431 Franciscans and Franciscan tertiaries, whose views allegedly followed "sectam Bohemorum cum secta fraticellorum."¹³ It was almost comical that about the same time a judiciary proceeding was launched "super criminae heresis" against Bernardine of Siena, the principal representative of the Observants. To increase the paradox, the initiator of the case was a Bohemian priest, Michael of Prague, then among others "procurator et promotor causarum fidei in Romana curia," who objected particularly to Bernardine's introducing the veneration of the name of Jesus. Pope Eugene IV, however, terminated the inquisitorial proceedings on 7

¹⁰ *Memoriale Ordinis*, 248-250, 259, 282, *passim*; T. E. Modelski, "Z dziejów rebaptyzacji w Polsce," *Kwartalnik Teologiczny Wileński* 3 (1925) 38-70; Kamil Katak, *Bernardyni polscy* I, (Lvov, 1933) 163-203; M. Niwiński, "Spór o chrzest Rusinów w Polsce," *Oriens* 2 (1934) 67-70; J. Sawicki, "Rebaptisatio Ruthenorum w świetle polskiego ustawodawstwa synodalnego w XV i XVI wieku," *Pastori et Magistro* (Lublin, 1966) 229-246; Urszula Borkowska, "Bracia Mniejsi i prawosławie," in: *Zakony franciszkańskie w Polsce* I, ed. Jerzy Kłoczkowski (Lublin, 1983) 398-406.

¹¹ On Franciscans' involvement in religious and nationality conflicts in Bohemia, see Petr Hlaváček, "Errores quorundam Bernhardinorum: Franciscans and the Bohemian Reformation," *BRRP* 3 (2000) 119-126; *idem*, "Národnostní a jazykové rozpory v českém vikariátě františkánů-observantů na přelomu 15. a 16. století," in: Milada Mikulicová and Petr Kubín, ed., *In omnibus caritas* [Sborník Katolické teologické fakulty UK, 4]. K počtě devadesátých narozenin prof. ThDr. Jaroslava Kadlece (Prague, 2002) 181-202.

¹² *Chronologia historico-legalis seraphici ordinis fratrum minorum sancti patris Francisci*, Tomus I, ed. Michael Angelo (Naples, 1650) 95. See the constitution from Assisi revised according to the bull of Pope Eugene IV, dated 15 March 1431 in *Bullarium Franciscanum* (Nova Series) Tom. I (1431-1455). ed. Ulrich Hüntemann (Florence and Quaracchi, 1929) 8,4. See also Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran*, 1:169.

¹³ *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 21-22 (no. 29).

January 1432 and, to the contrary, designated the Observants' leader as an archenemy of every heresy.¹⁴ The pursuit of "Czech heretics" still continued outside the Bohemian lands with the increasing support of Franciscan Observants.¹⁵ The quarterbacking of the campaign was to be entrusted to James of the March (Giacomo della Marca), one of the prominent Italian Observants, then active in Hungary. Eugene IV named him papal Inquisitor on 22 July 1437 under the assumption that he would shortly transfer his work of ecclesiastical policing to the Kingdom of Bohemia.¹⁶ As it turned out James never set out for Bohemia, and a direct encounter between Franciscan Observants and the Bohemian Reformation was postponed for the time being.

The Franciscans' Clash with the Bohemian Reformation: The Podiebradian Age

Numerous sources document the encounter between the Franciscan Observants and the Bohemian Reformation; most of them were published in the nineteenth century and copiously utilized in scholarly literature from the time of František Palacký to that of Rudolf Urbánek. While much attention has been paid to Capistrano, the "anti-heretical" engagements of his disciples, the Bohemian Franciscan Observants, were relatively neglected. Valuable information is contained in the manuscripts of the Provincial Archives of Bohemian Franciscans, now deposited in the State Central Archive (SÚA) in Prague; and the extant Franciscan chronicles are precious sources as well. The fact that Utraquist and other non-Franciscan sources were also preserved concerning the Order's activities makes it possible to attain a greater depth in our analysis.

Capistrano himself, during his Bohemian sojourn from 1451 to 1454, incongruously focused his ire on the Compactata, which had legitimized the Bohemian Utraquist Church at the Council of Basel. He exhorted the Czechs to abandon the concessions and undergo a full-fledged *Gleichschaltung* with the Roman Church. This misguided line was mandated by Pope Nicholas V who in his bull *Cum intellexerimus* of 28 October 1451 exhorted the acerbic monk to direct his preaching against all who "sub utraque specie communicarunt".¹⁷ The Pope rightfully characterized the monasteries, newly founded by Capistrano, as bastions against "Hussitism".¹⁸ The zealous Franciscan preacher departed from Bohemia in

¹⁴ *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 27-28 (no. 40).

¹⁵ Starting in 1445-1446, Franciscan Inquisitors "contra Hussitas" were commissioned to work in the Bosnian Vicariate of the Observants by the Provincial Vicar Fabián de Bachia; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 411-412 (no. 860) 416-418 (no. 868) 494-495 (no. 1005).

¹⁶ *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 143-144 (no. 306). A year after Capistrano's death in 1457, Pope Calixtus III once more exhorted Jacob to preach against the heretics, including the Bohemian ones whom he viewed as servants of the Antichrist; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* (Nova Series) Tom. II (1455-1471) ed. Ioseph M. Pou Y Marti (Florence and Quaracchi, 1939) 156-157 (no. 309-310); 198-199 (no. 390).

¹⁷ *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 763-764 (no. 1527). For another appeal of 22 February 1452 to eliminate the Hussite heresy, see *ibid.* 774 (no. 1552). The distaste of Nicholas V (and his entourage) for Bohemian Utraquism was quite intense. He did not hesitate to call the Czechs enemies of the cross of Christ ("perfidi Bohemi, crucis Christi inimici") in his bull *Iustis et honestis* of 5 April 1452. The document authorized Brother Jacob, Guardian of the Conventual Franciscans in Kłodzko to consecrate anew the Church of St. Francis, which had been devastated by the Bohemian radicals, see *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 785 (no. 1573). Pope Calixtus III reissued Capistrano's commission to preach against the heretics; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* II, 54-55 (no. 102).

¹⁸ This sobriquet appeared in the bull of 6 March 1452 which erected a new Observants' Vicariate for Bohemia, Moravia, Austria and Styria; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* I, 775-776 (no. 1554). The basic monograph about Capistrano and his Bohemian mission is still Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran*. For recent

1454 without realizing his great dream: a triumphant entry into the heretical capital of Prague. The disappointed Franciscan was supposed to have then prophesied: “Ego Pragam intrare non possum, brevi tempore catuli mei intrabunt.”¹⁹ By the affectionate “catuli” (puppies), he referred to his own young disciples whom he had recruited for the Observants. Capistrano’s militant spirit, in fact, continued to inspire their work, and, despite internal frictions within the Order, the Franciscans in the Bohemian lands remained important supporters of the Roman Church, as well as zealous opponents of the Bohemian Reformation.

Their zeal for Rome led the Bohemian Franciscans to extremes of purism. Thus they refused to accept a new monastery “propter hereticorum Hussitarum incursum.” The edifice was erected for them on his estate by the Bohemian noble, Václav of Wolfštejn, who had joined the Order in Vienna under the name František of Prague in 1451.²⁰ Similarly they refused to assume control over the monastery of Reformed Conventuals in Głogów in Silesia in 1453 because the local Duke Bolek sympathized with the “Hussites’ perfidy”.²¹ Such an extreme scrupulosity should not be surprising. After all, the first superiors of Bohemian Franciscans were Capistrano’s fellow Italians, Gabriel of Verona and Christopher of Varese, and the former Inquisitor in Carinthia, Bernardin of Ingolstadt, held the office of Provincial Vicar from 1457 to 1459.²²

After Capistrano’s death in 1456, closer contacts developed between the Franciscan Observance and King George of Poděbrady thanks to the improved relations between the King and the Roman Curia. Gabriel of Verona, Vicar of the Franciscan Observants for the Bohemian Province, employed his superior diplomatic skills to convince King George to support his congregation. The latter in its reformist zeal stood close to the ethos of the Bohemian Reformation and King by showing it favour could deflect accusations of heresy from himself. A paradoxical situation cast the heterodox Utraquist King into the role of sponsor of the first

supplemental material see František Šmahel, “*Spectaculum fidei* českomoravské mise Jana Kapistrána,” *Z kralické tvrže* 14 (1987) 15-19; Štěpán Kohout, “Pobyt Jana Kapistrána v Olomouci,” *Ročenka Státního okresního archivu v Olomouci* (Olomouc 1995) 117-140; Petr Hlaváček, “Svatý Jan Kapistrán a Kadaň,” *Ústecký sborník historický* (2000) 89-97.

¹⁹ Other contemporary sources claim that Capistrano uttered his prophecy as early as 1454 in the town of Most in northwestern Bohemia; see Hofer, *Johannes Kapistran*, 2:139. *Chronica Fratrum Minorum de Observancia Provincie Bohemie*, Prague National Museum MS VIII F 75 p. 78. See also Pavel Brodský, *Katalog iluminovaných rukopisů Knihovny Národního muzea v Praze* (Prague, 2000) 82 (no. 67, illus. 80). The chronicle was first utilized by Klemens Minařík, “Vikáři české františkánské provincie od r. 1451 až do r. 1517,” SHK 15, č. 3-4 (1914) 200-218; SHK 16, č. 1 (1915) 1-9; *idem*, “Die Provinzvikare der österreichisch-böhmisch-polnischen Observantenprovinz von 1451 bis 1467,” *Franziskanische Studien* 1 (1914) 328-336, which, however, eliminates references to the nonconformism among the Franciscans. František Šmahel, “Intra et extra muros. Společna rola franciszkanów obserwantów i klarysek na ziemiach czeskich od polowy XIV do końca XV wieku,” *Zakony franciszkańskie w Polsce I*, ed. Jerzy Kloczowski (Lublin, 1983) 305-307, 314-315. Capistrano left in 1454 for Hungary to preach a crusade against the Turks. He was accompanied by two other outstanding preachers, Bernardin of Ingolstadt and Bonaventure of Bavaria, both of whom were later destined to become Provincial Vicars in Bohemia; see *Memoriale Ordinis Fratrum Minorum*, 175.

²⁰ *Chronica fratris Nicolai Glassberger ordinis Minorum observantium*, ed. a Patribus Collegii S. Bonaventurae [Analecta Franciscana 2] (Quaracchi, 1887) 337.

²¹ “...perfidia Hussitarum...,” *Chronica Fratrum*, 60. Lucius Teichmann, *Die Franziskaner-Observanten in Schlesien vor der Reformation* (Wrocław, 1934) 19.

²² *Memoriale Ordinis*, 183-184: “Et erat inquisitor heretice pravitatis in illis partibus. Hunc homines tanquam angelum Dei venerabantur, fratres vero aliqui ut demonem persequebantur.”

Observant monasteries directly in Bohemia. At his request, Pope Pius II decided on 13 February 1459 to transfer to the Observants the Conventuals' monastery at the Church of the Virgin Mary in Plzeň.²³ On the insistence of the Papal Legate, Cardinal Bessarion, King George also agreed on 13 February 1459 to transfer to the Observants the deserted monastery of St. Ambrose in the New Town of Prague. In his petition, Bessarion called King George a special favourite of St. Francis.²⁴ The Greek cardinal's willingness to stick his neck out for the Franciscans reflected his office as Cardinal-Protector of the Order since 1458.²⁵ The Franciscans' arrival to Prague was a fulfilment of Capistrano's prophecy, and the order gained a new self-confidence. The Prague monastery was to head the entire Bohemian Vicariate of the Observants. Gabriel of Verona, the Provincial Vicar and the noted papal Inquisitor, soon arrived to Prague to receive the monastery. He was accompanied by four brethren, among whom were František of Bohemia and Michael of Prussia. The latter, once Capistrano's comrade-in-arms, was appointed the first Guardian in Prague. Gabriel remained in Prague until the early 1461, and engaged in negotiations with King George concerning the status of the Franciscan Observants in Bohemia.

The awkward cooperation between the Franciscan Observance and the Bohemian Reformation also found a reflection in the area of ecclesiastical art. The Observant churches, particularly in Plzeň, but perhaps also in Prague, exhibited images with distinctly Utraquist topoi, such as a prominent display of the chalice. Conversely, King George condoned in his ambience the display of the so-called Bernardine Sun, a symbol cherished by the Observants. On the Franciscan side, the Guardian in Plzeň, Matyáš, a born Bohemian, was particularly noted for his tolerance toward Utraquist symbolism. The benign atmosphere was disrupted by the Provincial Chapter, held in Vienna in 1465. The Vicar General, Mark of Bologna, who presided over the Chapter session, accepted Gabriel's resignation from the position of Vicar of the Bohemian Province, and henceforth barred all Italians from assuming

²³ SÚA Prague, fond: Archiv české františkánské provincie (ŘF) item no. 31 (13 February 1459, Siena: Pope Pius II grants the Observants the Conventuals' monastery in Plzeň) and item no. 34 (28 April 1460, Prague: King George of Poděbrady confirms the grant). *Chronica fratris*, 384-385. A role in this transfer was also played by a dissident Franciscan Conventual from Plzeň, who made a penitent's pilgrimage to Rome in order to offer the monastery to the pope for the Observance; see *Chronica Fratrum*, 78. See also *Bullarium Franciscanum* II, 383-384 (no. 746).

²⁴ The originals of these documents are not extant, but the insertions of King George's privileges (Prague, 14 June 1461) and those of Cardinal Bessarion (Vienna, 13 June 1460) may be found in the renewed privileges of the monastery by Vladislav Jagiello (4 April 1483); see SÚA, fond Zrušené kláštery (ZK) item no. 1220. See also *Chronica fratris*, 385; *Chronica Fratrum*, 78; Rudolf Urbánek, *Věk poděbradský*, 4 vv., *České dějiny* III, 1-4, (Prague 1915-1962) 4:288. The Prague Guardian Michael of Prussia (also known as "de Russia") experienced – according to later reports – considerable difficulties with the Bohemian Utraquists. Allegedly he was offered the office of Prague Archbishop; see *Memoriale Ordinis*, 211; Zdeněk Nejedlý, "Česká missie Jana Kapistrána," *ČČM* 74 (1900) 461-462. The initial members of the Franciscan community in Prague included Bonaventure of Bavaria, Jacob of Styria, and the earlier-mentioned František of Bohemia; see "Vita S. Johannis a Capistrano, scripta a Fr. Christophoro a Varisio," *Acta Sanctorum*. October Vol. 10 (Paris and Rome, 1869) 501. Pope Pius II requested Bessarion in a letter of 14 January 1460 to support the Franciscan Observants of St. Pölten in their dispute with the parish clergy, inasmuch as the monastery was a strong *point d'appui* in the struggle against the Utraquists; *Bullarium Franciscanum* (Nova Series) Tom. III, ed. Joseph M. Pou y Marti (Florence and Quaracchi, 1949) 1005-1006, Supplementum (no. 271).

²⁵ Huber, *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order* 934. Bessarion remained Protector of the Franciscan Order until 1472.

that office. Mark then travelled to Bohemia and ordered the destruction of all “inappropriate” images there. Two paintings in particular appeared to him in violation of the canons and the ancient tradition of the church – an unusual representation of the Holy Trinity, and an image of Christ the Redeemer pouring his blood from the chalice into a royal crown, from which birds were drinking.²⁶

Confirmed by the pope in his Inquisitorial office for Bohemia and the neighbouring countries in 1461, Gabriel of Verona apparently attempted to mediate further negotiations between King George and the Roman Curia. In a letter, sent to George from the Paradies monastery near Vienna on 18 November 1461, he profusely praised the King’s wisdom and benevolence toward the Franciscan Observance but, at the same time, he urged his royal correspondent to submit totally to the Holy See. The missive was dispatched through the Prague Guardian, Michael of Prussia.²⁷ While Gabriel still entertained a measure of sympathy for the Bohemian King, reinforced apparently by the expectation of additional favours for the Observant Congregation, most of the leading partisans of Rome within the Bohemian lands rather looked forward to solving the ecclesiastical conundrum by force. When Gabriel preached a crusade against the Turks in Wrocław in 1461, the local inhabitants *sub una* wondered why he did not preach a crusade against the Bohemians instead.

The situation changed drastically when Pope Pius II declared the Compactata void in 1462. Gabriel continued to call George “a father of peace” and exhorted him to obedience to the Holy See, although a new tone of bitterness crept into his complaints about the King’s unfulfilled promises concerning the St. Ambrose Monastery in Prague. He pressed George for a speedy response, promising in turn to try and avert the approaching catastrophe of a conflict with Rome.²⁸ With his *amour propre* wounded by George’s failure to react, Gabriel reversed his hitherto friendly attitude. Executing a volte face, he launched a sharp campaign, both overt and covert, against the Utraquists and their “heretical” ruler, who had scorned his overtures. In 1464 Emperor Friedrich III sent him to Rome to mediate the dispute between the Bohemian Monarch and the papacy. Instead, according to the testimony of Fabián Hanka, the procurator of the city of Wrocław, the venomous Franciscan argued most vehemently against the Bohemian heretics in the Roman Consistory, held on 16 June 1464,²⁹ and moreover sought and obtained from Pope

²⁶ Lucas Wadding, *Annales Minorum* XIII (Florence and Quaracchi, 1932) 429-430; Ivo Hlobil, “Bernardinské symboly jména Ježíš v českých zemích šířené Janem Kapistránem,” *Umění* 44 (1996) 223-234.

²⁷ Prague, National Library MS. I G 11c, ff. 22^a – 23^b: “Incipit Epistola admonitoria eiusdem Fratris Gabrielis Ad Regem Bohemie pro obediencie sedi Apostolice exhibenda - Ex loco sancte Marie de Paradiso die decima octava Nouembris 1461.” See also Prague, National Library MS. XI A 10, ff. 1^a – 3^b: “Epistola patris et fratris Gabrielis Veronensis, vicarii protunc provinciarum Austrie, Bohemie et Polonie, ad fratres ordinis praedicatorum.” This manuscript comes from the monastery in Krupka.

²⁸ Urbánek, *Věk poděbradský* 4:116, 156, 163, 287-289, 509-510, 563, 664, 744; Hlobil, “Bernardinské symboly jména Ježíš,” 227-230. See also the correspondence of Gabriel of Verona with Pope Pius II in Wadding, *Annales Minorum* XIII, 214-216, *passim*.

²⁹ “Politische Correspondenz Breslaus im Zeitalter Georg von Podiebrad,” *Scriptores* 9, ed. Hermann Markgraf, (Wrocław, 1874) 87-90 n. 254; “Uff solche sein antwurt hat ytzund der keysars here gesand bruder Gabrielem ordinis minorum de observancia, den ir denne wol kenne, als er spricht. [...] frater Gabriel hat sein botschafft geworben; er hat adir auch do bey gesagt, was yn gut dünckt in seiner consciencz als ein fromer religiosus, der dem ketzer feynt ist. Item er bleib auch im consistorio und hort do zu, das ers dem keyser eigentlich gesagen möge.” *Ibid.* 89.

Pius II a bull of indulgences for Franciscans martyred by heretics.³⁰ Thereby he burned the existing bridges between the Franciscan Observance and the King of Bohemia.³¹

There was no evidence of slain Franciscans in Utraquist Prague, although the Order's members suffered many slights. Alms were meagre and the monks were targeted for humiliation. Hooligans would pull the monks by their hoods, or carry them off to taverns thus creating scandalous situations. Even the cross in front of St. Ambrose Monastery was toppled and dishonoured.³² At the same time Pope Pius II escalated the tensions by urging the transalpine Franciscans to escalate preaching against heretics and schismatics, particularly the cursed sectarians "de Pragensibus".³³ Jan Rokycana, the Utraquist Archbishop, was also a stern critic of the Franciscans. The sermons, collected in his *Postilla*, spoke of the sandled and cowed mendicants as useless beggars, who wished to avoid work. They used their alms to make loans at interest, or to indulge in gambling and gluttony in the taverns. According to Rokycana's harsh judgment, the "rule of Capistrano" was not compatible with the law of Christ.³⁴

In 1466, Pope Paul II declared King George deposed as a heretic, and proclaimed a crusade against the Utraquists. Rudolf of Rüdeseim, the Papal Legate, commissioned Gabriel of Verona to contact Řehoř of Heimburk, the King's councillor and another opponent of the Franciscans, and to notify him about the excommunication.³⁵ On 8 September 1466, Gabriel accompanied the Bishop of Wrocław, Jošt of Rožmberk, to a gathering of the *sub una* barons in Zittau, at which he represented the Legate, Rudolf of Rüdeseim. Gabriel, however, also tried to stir up trouble for the King on his own initiative. He (mis)used an intercepted letter from George to Matthias Corvinus, sent from Kłodzko and dated 28 June 1466. Drafted by Řehoř of Heimburk, the missive complained about the difficulties in dealing with the Roman Curia. Gabriel twisted the text to mean that George was, in fact, covertly appealing from the pope to a general church council, a procedure that Pope Pius II had prohibited under the threat of excommunication by the bull *Execrabilis* of 18 January 1460. Gabriel publicized this charge in a decree, which he composed in the Observant Monastery of St. Bernardine in Wrocław and promulgated on his authority as a Papal Legate's representative on 6 October 1466. The decree commanded the clergy of the Wrocław, Meissen and Olomouc dioceses to convey the charge to the faithful from their pulpits together with a warning that approval of the King's "appeal" resulted in automatic excommunication.³⁶ By this time Gabriel divested himself of his

³⁰ SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document no. 35 (dated 23 November 1464, belonging to Albrecht of Schaumburg, Provost of St. Stephen's Church in Vienna with an insertion of the bull of Pius II for the Bohemian Observant Vicariate, dated 16 June 1464).

³¹ The situation, however, was not entirely straightforward. Gabriel would appear once more as King George's emissary at the Roman Curia on 6 June 1468. He was definitely in the service of George's opponent, King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, only a year later. Caesar Cenci, "Documenta Vaticana ad Franciscas spectantia ann. 1385-1492," Pars V, AFH 94 (2001) 130.

³² *Chronica fratris* 427.

³³ *Chronica fratris* 404. See also *Bullarium Franciscanum* II, 625-626 (n. 1206).

³⁴ Jan Rokycana, *Postilla*, ed. František Šimek (Prague, 1929) 2:152, 579, 660, *passim*.

³⁵ *Chronica fratris* 427, 434.

³⁶ *Scriptores* 9 (1874) 181-190 (n. 329) letter of King George to Matthias 197 (n. 336) digest of Gabriel's decree. See also Mag. Peter Eschenloer, "Historia Wratislaviensis," *Scriptores* 7, ed. Hermann Markgraf (Wrocław, 1872) 119, 122.

formal functions in the Observant Congregation, having resigned the office of Vicar at the Provincial Chapter in Vienna. He was now free to concentrate on ecclesiastical diplomacy, working at first as an advisor to the city council of Wrocław.³⁷

Gabriel's career had escalated by February 1467 when a letter of Fabián Hanko to the Wrocław city council of the 3rd of the month placed him in Rome.³⁸ On 10 March 1467 Gabriel was appointed by Paul II as papal Inquisitor against the Utraquists, styled as Hussites and Wiclifites, or followers of Hus and Jerome with the objective of enlisting the secular authorities to destroy them.³⁹ On 4 May 1467, the Papal Legate Rudolf of Rüdesheim dispatched letters to the leading figures in the Franciscan Vicariate of Bohemia. One went to Prague, addressed to the local Observant Guardian, Pavel of Moravia, and to other clergy of the city, and bearing the news of King George's deposition and the papal instructions for a crusade. Guardian Paul was commissioned to preach the crusade and instructed about the festive formula of conveying the cross. A similar letter reached Bonaventure of Bavaria, the Guardian of the Observant Monastery in Graz, who, however, would be elected several months later the first Vicar of the newly independent Austrian Vicariate.⁴⁰ On 15 May 1467, Pope Paul II reappointed Rudolf as his Nuncio and Legate with a commission to employ the available ecclesiastical weaponry to depose King George, "Bohemie regni occupatorem". The same day the pope appointed Gabriel of Verona as "censor fidei sacrae adversus impios Wiclefistas",⁴¹ who thus remained – together with the entire Observant Vicariate of Bohemia – in the forefront of the offensive against Utraquism. His importance was reflected on 17 December 1467 during the funeral of Jošt of Rožmberk, the Bishop of Wrocław, which brought together the leadership of the party *sub una*. At the opening of the ceremonies in the city hall of Wrocław, Gabriel headed the group of notables, including Zdeněk of Šternberk, which stood to the left of the presiding Legate Rudolf. The group on Rudolf's right was headed by Duke Mikuláš of Opole.

At the next gathering on 22 December 1467, Gabriel composed a tractate in which he caustically responded to King George's letters to the party *sub una*. The missive accused the King of debasing the currency, believing in alchemy, and bringing his country into disrepute by his deviousness. Rokycana was also attacked as "tocius ecclesiastice usurpator". On 5 November 1468, the estates *sub una*

³⁷ Traces of his activity are reflected in two letters of the Wrocław city fathers to the pope, dated 24 November 1466 and 17 January 1467; the first concerned the Peace of Toruń between Poland and the Order of the Teutonic Knights; the other endorsed the proposals of the Polish embassy; see *Scriptores* 9, 200-201 (n. 341) 217-218 (n. 348).

³⁸ *Scriptores* 9, 220 (n. 352): "Unser heiliger Vater ist vollkommen zufrieden mit dem von [dem Bischof von] Lavant und ist ihm sehr geneigt. Auch meldete er ihnen, dass er von dem Bischof Jodocus das Aergste bei den Cardinälen redete. Der Frater Gabriel meinte, dass er es nicht thun sollte. [...] Die schöne Antwort, die auf des Ketzers Klage gemacht worden, welche er über den Papst und die Cardinäle geführt, würden sie aus Frater Gabriels Briefen durch den Legaten vernehmen." On the situation in Wrocław see also Jan Drabina, "Rola argumentacji religijnej w walce politycznej w późnośredniowiecznym Wrocławiu" in *Universitas Iagellonica. Acta Scientiarum Litterarumque DCCXLVIII – Studia Religiosa*, Fasciculus XIII (Cracow, 1984) 20-23.

³⁹ *Bullarium Franciscanum* II, 707-709 (n. 1411-1412).

⁴⁰ For a digest of the letters see *Scriptores* 9, 228 (n. 359); their full text in contemporary copies can be found, for instance in Leipzig, University Library, see R. Helsing, *Katalog der Handschriften der Universitäts-Bibliothek zu Leipzig* VI/3. Band (Leipzig, 1905) 229 (Cod. 1092). See also Josef Vítězslav Šimák, *Bohemica v Lipsku* (Prague, 1907) 38.

⁴¹ *Scriptores* 9, 233-236 (n. 365).

selected Gabriel together with Hilarius of Litoměřice as emissaries to the pope.⁴² Later Gabriel alleged that King George had plotted his assassination. On 5 November 1467, Legate Rudolf had granted plenary indulgences to the Franciscans in Tachov, who were to sing daily the psalm “Deus laudem” [Ps.108 (109)] with litanies for a victory over the Utraquists, as well as to converts who would pray Paternoster and Hail Mary daily. The Franciscan also received the authority to grant plenary indulgences to those Tachovites who would join the anti-Utraquist campaign.⁴³

At the same time the Utraquists’ defensive measures against the Franciscans were mounting. At Whitsuntide of 1467, as a precautionary measure, Legate Rudolf ordered the brethren to leave Prague. The Franciscans gave the keys to St. Ambrose Monastery to King George, their benefactor, who released them in peace and even offered a protective guard to the border with Kłodzko. From there, they continued over the river Neisse to Wrocław.⁴⁴ In the same year, Gabriel joined Legate Rudolf in composing four accusatory articles against the Bohemian King. The latter responded with a categorical denial of guilt, and went on to characterize the two Romanist accusers as bloodthirsty individuals and scabby dogs who fan the fires of discontent and drive the land into war, although “the greatest victory was usually the one attained without a shedding of blood.” [najvyššie víťazstvá bývá, ktoréž bez krve prolitie jest].” In conclusion, he launched a series of invectives against the impudent letter writers.⁴⁵

While Bohemia faced the aggressive actions of the crusaders headed by the Hungarian King, Matthias, in 1468 and 1469, the Observant Vicariate became inactive. The war danger prevented the holding of Provincial Chapter, as well as the customary visitations. While the brethren attempted to move in the countryside either in secret or under guard, their property and health were at risk not only from the Utraquist, but also from those *sub una*, who resented the impertinence of a foreign intervention.⁴⁶ It must be stated in that regard that the Franciscans belonged among the most shameless supporters of the crusaders’ campaign. At Easter and Whitsuntide of 1468, Legate Rudolf dispatched a number of seasoned Franciscans to preach the crusade against Utraquist Bohemia, always in the presence of Zdeněk of Šternberk and other *sub una* traitors. Bonaventure of Bavaria and Pavel of Moravia, both highly educated preachers, were sent from the monastery in Wrocław, and journeyed through Frankfurt an der Oder and Leipzig to Nuremberg. Their attempt to enlist the assembled German princes for the Bohemian crusade by and large failed because of the antecedent ties of friendship of many of these notables with King George.⁴⁷

⁴² *Scriptores* VII, 165, 175. See also Peter Joachimsohn, “Die Streitschrift des Gabriel von Verona gegen Georg Poděbrad,” *Gymnasialprogramm* (Augsburg, 1896).

⁴³ SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document no. 39 (Papal Legate Rudolf of Rudesheim to Guardian Paulin and brethren in Tachov, dated Wrocław, 5 November 1467).

⁴⁴ *Chronica fratris* 427; *Chronica Fratrum* 97.

⁴⁵ “O přenestydaté hrdlo, že usliněné powětríe lži z sebe vypúšťieš ! O nemilostiwý nedwěde, proč mumleš? O wíce hltawý, proč wyješ okolo chodě ...? Běda tobě, jenž klněš, sám najproklatější jsa ! Poznaj blázne wzteklý swoj věčný odsudek, a žeť newinní rukama a čistí srdcem w chrámě božiem postaweni budú, ale ty nemilostiwý krwe newinné prolewači, kde se octneš ?” AČ 4, ed. František Palacký (Prague, 1846) 157-160.

⁴⁶ *Chronica fratris* 434; *Chronica Fratrum* 96.

⁴⁷ *Chronica Fratrum* 97.

The failure of the campaign in Nuremberg was enhanced by the misadventures of Jakub of Glogow, who had served the last Vicar of the combined Bohemian, Austrian, and Polish Observants (he resigned in 1467). Legate Rudolf appointed Jakub his deputy for the archdiocese of Magdeburg,⁴⁸ and enlisted also him to preach in Nuremberg the anti-Utraquist crusade with the power of granting plenary indulgences. Upon learning that Pope Paul II had replaced his patron Rudolf as Apostolic Legate for Germany by Lawrence Rovarella of Ferrara, Jakub secretly left Nuremberg for Tachov with the money he had collected for the indulgences. His pursuers, eager for reimbursement for the invalid indulgences, caught up with him just before the Bohemian border in the village of Lerrersteig, and recovered the loot. Deprived of his wealth, Jakob suffered ridicule and insults from both the Utraquists and their *sub una* sympathizers.⁴⁹

The Anti-Utraquist campaign was joined by the recently established Franciscan monasteries of Slovakia – in Hlohovec (1465) and Skalica (1467). Mikuláš of Moravia, the Guardian of Skalica, was commissioned to preach the crusade in the area of Trenčín in 1469; Brother Petr of Hlohovec preached against the Utraquists in the area of Brno, and ended up as Vicar of the Bohemian Observant Franciscans.⁵⁰ Unrelentingly, Paul II sent on 12 April 1469 to the general superiors to the Cisalpine Observant Congregation a new bull “In Coena Domini,” in which he once more solemnly excommunicated all Utraquists together with King George. On 3 May 1469 he renewed the order for preaching against Utraquism.⁵¹

Let us now turn once more to the *éminence grise* of the Anti-Utraquist campaign, the relentless Gabriel of Verona, an exponent of both the Hungarian King Matthias and the Emperor Friedrich III. The years 1467 to 1469 were marked by his remarkable agility and ubiquity. While he figured as a companion of the new Legate Lawrence Rovarella in Graz on 8 June 1468,⁵² on 2 August he already could be found in the camp of King Matthias at Olomouc, from where – at the King’s behest – he urgently invited the former Legate (now Bishop of Wrocław) Rudolf to negotiations in Olomouc.⁵³ The importance of Gabriel’s position was once more stressed by Legate Lawrence in a report on the battle field situation, which he dispatched to the former Legate Rudolf from Bratislava on 5 October 1468.⁵⁴ Legate Lawrence and Brother Gabriel did carry on important negotiations with the Hungarian King in Brno in March 1469. Several weeks later, Matthias was irregularly elected King of Bohemia in Olomouc, and Gabriel entered his service as a counsellor and secretary.⁵⁵ Glancing briefly back at Bohemia, we may note that

⁴⁸ The appointment was promulgated in Graz; *Scriptores* 9, 285 (no. 408).

⁴⁹ *Chronica fratris* 435; *Chronica Fratrum* 151. Next we hear of Jakub of Glogow in October 1468 when he was among the crusaders at Olomouc; *Scriptores* 9, 297 (no. 424).

⁵⁰ Vševlad J. Gajdoš, “Franciszkanie na Slowacji w średniowieczu,” *Zakony franciszkańskie w Polsce* I, ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski (Lublin, 1983) 252-253, 257-258.

⁵¹ *Bullarium Franciscanum* II, 762-763 (no. 1542); Šimák, *Bohemica v Lipsku* 43.

⁵² *Scriptores* 9, 270 (no. 392).

⁵³ *Scriptores* 9, 289-290 (no. 414). See also *Scriptores* 7, 186.

⁵⁴ *Scriptores* 9, 297 (no. 424).

⁵⁵ *Chronica Fratrum* 147-148; Karl Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus, Kaiser Friedrich III. und das Reich. Zum hunyadisch-habsburgischen Gegensatz im Donauraum* [Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 72] (Munich, 1975) 35. By a letter of 31 December 1470, Paul II congratulated Matthias on his victory over the Utraquists, and at the same time appointed Gabriel Papal Legate for Hungary. The newly appointed Legate delivered the pope’s congratulatory letter of 14 January 1470 to Emperor Friedrich III on his

during the war the Franciscans, in addition to the monastery in Prague, also abandoned their monasteries in Tachov and Opava, all of which were still noted as vacant in 1472.⁵⁶

The relationship of the Franciscan Observants to the Bohemian Reformation aptly illustrated the ambivalent attitude of Rome to the solution of the Bohemian ecclesiastical problems. Rome's continuous vacillation between potential compromises and repression deepened within the Bohemian Utraquist Church its disrespect for the Papal Curia. A genuinely purposeful approach was proposed by Gabriel of Verona, who as only a few prelates close to the Curia grasped the complexity of religious divisions in Central and Eastern Europe. His idea was to apply to Bohemia the Franciscan *modus operandi* in Poland. Polish Franciscans maintained close contacts with the Polish King of "two peoples," Casimir Jagellonian, and with his support laboured to unite the Eastern Christians with Rome. Similarly, Gabriel wished to induce the Utraquist King George of Poděbrady to cooperate with the Congregation of Observant Franciscans and thus to assure a privileged position for his Order in Bohemia and to provide the Monarch the needed *entrée* to Rome. The reality on the ground, however, proved to be more delicate and complicated than the Italian Franciscan anticipated. His scheme for the solution of the Bohemian problem collapsed after a short time.

Ecclesiastical Conflicts of the Jagellonian Era

The political conditions remained turbulent in Bohemia even after the death of King George and Archbishop Rokycana in 1471. Vladislav Jagellonian, who was elected King, had to defend his title against the claim of King Matthias, the papal favourite. The Franciscans on the whole favoured Matthias who supported their interests above all in Silesia. After the settlement between the two monarchs in Olomouc in 1479, the Franciscans, however, were able to normalize their relations with King Vladislav and thus to enjoy the favour of both rulers who had temporarily divided the Bohemian lands between themselves.⁵⁷

Prior to the settlement of 1479, life could be dangerous for the Franciscans. In 1472, three of them, including Guardian Basil of Olomouc, were captured despite their guards by knight Hopko on their way from the Provincial Chapter in Brno. Elsewhere two Franciscans, Alexius of Prussia and Jiří of Kadaň were likewise

peace with Matthias; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* 2, 833 (no. 1678) 834 (no. 1682) 841 (no. 1696). See also Wadding, *Annales Minorum* 14 (Florence and Quaracchi, 1933) 52-247, *passim*; Giovanni Giraldi, "La 'Oratio de laudibus Gabrielis Rangoni S.R.E. cardinalis' di Giovanni Michele Alberto Carrara," AFH 50 (1957) 83-98.

⁵⁶ Pope Sixtus IV, in his letter from Rome on 18 June 1472, ordered the Bishop of Wrocław, the Archdeacon of Olomouc, and the Provost of Prague to enable the Franciscans, expelled from Prague, Tachov and Opava, to establish three new monasteries; see SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document no. 49. See also *Bullarium Franciscanum* III, 111-112 (no. 268).

⁵⁷ Writing from Rome on 25 April 1487, Pope Innocent III responding to King Matthias permits, *inter alia*, the establishment of new Observant monasteries; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* (Nova Series) Tom. IV-1 (1484-1489) ed. Caesar Cenci (Grottaferrata [Rome] 1989, 306-308 (no. 731); Writing from Wrocław on 21 October 1474, Matthias permits Bohemian Franciscan Observants to erect new monasteries in Silesia and elsewhere on the territory of the Bohemian Crown; see SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document no. 57; *Chronica Fratrum*, s. 117-118, 135; Státní oblastní archiv, Litoměřice, fond Řád františkánů Kadaň, inv. č. 46, karton č. 4. 24. See also Gabriela Wąs, *Klasztory franciszkańskie w miastach śląskich i górnośląskich XIII-XVI wieku* (Wrocław, 2000) 95-124.

detained on their way to the Diet of Bohemia. Pleas of peasants *sub una*, especially women, secured their release.⁵⁸

Franciscan Kryštof of Wittbach, General Commissioner of Papal Legate Lawrence, issued in Plzeň on 19 December 1471 plenary indulgences to Jiří, the Provost of the Premonstratian nuns of Chotěšov, if he died in carrying out “sanctum opus contra perfidos hereticos.” On 5 January 1473 he granted the indulgences also to two nuns, Anna and Ludmila, for their part in the struggle against the Utraquists.⁵⁹ Pope Sixtus IV endorsed the mission of the Franciscans among the Bohemian dissidents with a grant of permission on 29 March 1475 to say masses before “heretics and excommunicated Christians.”⁶⁰ Along these lines, the Provincial Vicar Pavel of Moravia held a theological disputation in Kłodzko in 1478 “cum hereticis ... tam Hussitis quam Bacardis,” namely with members of the Unity of Brethren who journeyed to join the persecuted Waldensians in Brandenburg.⁶¹ In the following year Sixtus IV also revamped the rules for conduct of Inquisition by the Franciscans.⁶²

An interesting encounter between the Franciscan Observants and the Bohemian Reformation took place in 1479. The humid summer of that the year, of course, witnessed the momentous accommodation between Vladislav of Bohemia and Matthias of Hungary, in which also the Provincial Vicar Pavel of Moravia participated.⁶³ Among the arrivals to Olomouc at that time were the dramatic personae of our story: two Franciscans of the Province of Strasbourg, Mikuláš Glassberger, a Moravian by birth, and his companion, Mikuláš of Bamberg. The original purpose of their journey was to visit Glassberger’s parents and Vicar Pavel arranged for them accommodations in Olomouc. After the festivities, marking the settlement between the two monarchs, both Franciscans joined the entourage of King Vladislav on its return journey to Prague. Along the way their ascetic appearance, in particular their foot wear attracted much attention from the Utraquist population. In the town of Vysoké Mýto a local member “de secta Hussitarum”, who was impressed by their piety and love of poverty, found shelter for them in the house of a pious townswoman who received them with kindness. Glassberger delivered an exhortation before the members of her household stressing obedience to the pope,

⁵⁸ *Chronica Fratrum* 114.

⁵⁹ SÚA Prague, fond ZK, documents nos. 2223 and 2227. See also Josef Strnad, *Listář královského města Plzně a druhdy poddaných osad II* (Plzeň, 1905) 176 (no. 207).

⁶⁰ See copy of the papal breve, made in Plzeň on 16 October 1496 by Vilém, Bishop of Nicopol and Archdeacon of Brno, at the request of Jakub of Glogow, Bohemian Provincial Vicar, and Pavel of Moravia, Bohemian Commissioner, SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document no. 59. See also *Bullarium Franciscanum* III, 309 (no. 683).

⁶¹ *Chronica Fratrum* 169. See also Jaroslav Goll, “Některé prameny k náboženským dějinám v 15. století,” VKČSN, *Třída filosoficko-historicko-jazyková* (1895) 1-12.

⁶² Copy of Innocence VIII’s Roman breve of 3 March 1490, made in Plzeň by Matouš, Abbot of the Augustinian Monastery of St. Charles of Prague on 16 October 1496 at the request of Bohemian Provincial Vicar, Ambrož of L’viv, see SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document 83. See also *Bullarium Franciscanum* (Nova Series) Tom. IV-2 (1489-1492) ed. Caesar Cenci (Grottaferrata [Rome], 1990) 671-672 (no. 1796).

⁶³ Pavel of Moravia, alias Pavel Bosák, counseled the two kings not to use execution, but harassment against members of the Unity of Brethren: “... aby jim smrti nedělali, ale dlouhým vězením trápili a z městeček i ze vsí aby je vypovídali” See Tůma Přeloučský, *Spis o původu Jednoty bratrské a o chudých lidech*, ed. Vojtěch Sokol (Prague, 1947) 54.

condemning communion *sub utraque*, and praising monasticism. The Utraquist listeners calmly retorted that they intended to remain loyal to the instructions, which came from their own priests.

A similar situation was encountered in the town of Chrudim where the two Franciscans stayed in the house of friends of Doctor Alexander, a Prague Augustinian. There, Glassberger argued with an elderly lady, whose two brothers were Utraquist parsons. He made every effort to convince her and other listeners about the ambiguities around the communion *sub utraque*, as well as the impermissibility of infant communion. His arguments, however, fell on dead ears. From Chrudim, the royal retinue proceeded to Prague via Kutná Hora and Český Brod. The Franciscans, carrying their prejudices from the German Empire, viewed the Bohemian capital as a centre of all types of heresies, schisms and apostasies – in other words, enemies of Rome.⁶⁴ Glassberger's account was in many ways remarkable. According to him, the Utraquists (whom he regarded as "Czech heretics") readily listened to diversity of theological opinions, yet without willingness to abandon their own orthodoxy. Although the Franciscan overtly deprecated such an obstinacy, there was a veiled respect for the strength of the Utraquists' convictions.

Following the lifting of the interdict in Prague in 1482, King Vladislav permitted the Franciscans to recover St. Ambrose Monastery. The brethren heedlessly launched into a fierce campaign against lay communion in both kinds. They gained converts to the *sub una* side even among university students. One of the latter was undoubtedly Jan Vodňanský who later would enter the Franciscan Order. The brazen expansionism of the *sub una* finally provoked an uprising in Prague in September 1483, and much of the animus turned against the despised discalced friars. An armed mob cut down the cross standing in front of St. Ambrose Church, and the newly restored church itself, as well as the monastery, were razed to their very foundations. The Franciscan community, headed by Guardian Jan of Planá, was immediately forced to leave Prague; only priest Vavřinec of Hungary, infected by plague, stayed behind in a refuge with the Minorites at St. James's Church. Special hostility toward the Franciscans was indicated by the fact that their exclusion from Prague continued even after 1496 when other religious orders (Minorites, Dominicans, and Carmelites) had received permission to return.⁶⁵

The Franciscans' struggle against the Utraquists relentlessly continued. The Provincial Vicar, Pavel of Moravia, inspired a judgment by the Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna, which condemned four books by Jiří of Cilia, a physician.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *Chronica fratris* 467-469.

⁶⁵ *Chronica Fratrum* 137-139. František Šmahel, "Pražské povstání 1483," *Pražský sborník historický* 19 (1986) 45-46, 69, 89. See the hitherto neglected letter of Pope Sixtus IV from Rome on 4 December 1483 to Legate Bartholomew de Marasca, expressing the pope's concern about the gravity of the Prague events; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* III, 898-899 (no. 1793). Pope Innocent VIII urged the Praguers to permit the return of the expelled monastics, see his breve of 23 February 1486 in *Bullarium Franciscanum* IV/1, 191-192 (no. 364). At the request of Guardian Jan of Prague, the same pope permitted on 25 November 1488 Franciscan Conventuals, expelled "per Bohemos haereticos" from the monastery at St. James' Church in Prague to establish a new monastery in Bavaria or Bohemia; see *Bullarium Franciscanum* IV/1, 501 (no. 1310).

⁶⁶ *Chronica Fratrum* 169. Nejedlý, "České missie Jana Kapistrána," 461, without citing his source, claimed that Jiří's books were burned as tainted by Utraquism.

Theological issues could involve the Franciscans in embarrassing political complications. In 1487, two Franciscan functionaries, Tobiáš of Žďár and Florián of Žagaň inquired from the General Chapter in Assisi about granting absolution to Bohemian nobles, who held estates, which were originally ecclesiastical, but granted to them by Emperor Sigismund during the Bohemian religious upheavals. The top Franciscan leadership answered in the negative, inasmuch as an indulgent attitude would contradict the view of the Holy See.⁶⁷ This placed the Bohemian Franciscans in an awkward position since their noble benefactors, who were otherwise loyal partisans of the Roman Curia, were guilty of having usurped ecclesiastical property.

The Franciscans devoted considerable energies to the unpromising tasks of bringing Utraquists to *sub una*, at least on an individual basis. On 31 July 1489 Papal Legate Angelus, Bishop of Ortona, directed them to establish new monasteries among the dissidents and permitted them to grant absolution to Christians, who had fallen into error, but subsequently repented.⁶⁸ In 1488-1489, during the mounting national tensions among Bohemian Franciscans, the Czech-speaking brethren spread a hoax that the King of Bohemia would incur excommunication and the country would be placed under interdict, unless all heretics were expelled from Bohemia.⁶⁹ The General Chapter in Urbino dealt with Bohemian issues in 1490. The representatives from Bohemia stressed the significance of their mission “because they maintained the Catholic faith in the Bohemian lands, as Capistrano had wished.”⁷⁰ Along these lines, Pope Innocent VIII confirmed on 31 March 1490 the Bohemian Franciscans’ right to accept heretics back under Roman jurisdiction, contingent on a performance of the prescribed repentance.⁷¹

Pavel of Moravia was a major achiever in this field. His great coup was to secure an apostasy from Utraquism on the part of Vilém of Pernštejn, the Supreme Court Stewart. On 1 April 1490, Pavel accepted him under Roman jurisdiction in St. Bernardine’s Monastery of Brno in the presence of the monastery’s Vicar Jakub of Russia, and Petr of Hradec, a Czech preacher.⁷² Another important personage, won over by the Franciscan Observance, was the Bishop of Oradea, Jan Filipec, born in Prostějov, who entered the Franciscan Order in 1492 with principal residence in the monastery of Wrocław.⁷³ From Wrocław he conducted confidential correspondence with the above-mentioned Vilém of Pernštejn. On 2 May 1493 he warned Vilém against the physician, Jan Černý, a member of the Unity of Brethren, who cared for his ill wife, Johanka of Liblice. He spoke of the doctor as a black sheep that could infect the entire fold [“všecko stádo muože zkaziti”]. Despite Filipec’s admonition Johanka turned into an enthusiastic protectress of the Unity.⁷⁴ We also know about

⁶⁷ *Chronica Fratrum* 149.

⁶⁸ Angelus’s letter to Bohemian and Hungarian Franciscans from Buda, dated 31 July 1489; see SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document no. 74.

⁶⁹ *Chronica Fratrum* 156.

⁷⁰ “neboť drží Českou zemi při katolické víře, jak bylo Kapistránovým přáním...” See *Chronica Fratrum* 163.

⁷¹ This permission led to the foundation of an Observant monastery in Bechyně, which was to help the local heretics to find their way “ad fidem orthodoxam.” See SÚA Prague, fond ŘF document no. 83. See also *Bullarium Franciscanum* IV/2, 671-672 (no. 1796).

⁷² *Chronica Fratrum* 161.

⁷³ *Chronica Fratrum* 171.

⁷⁴ AČ XVI, ed. Josef Kalousek (Prague, 1897) 14-15 (no. 29).

a letter that Filipec wrote to Peter of Rožmberk from the Viennese Observant Monastery in 1508, concerning Emperor Maximilian's attitude toward his family.⁷⁵

Above all, Filipec became involved in an attempt to reunite the Utraquists with Rome. At the behest of Jan of Sigester, General Commissioner, currently sojourning in Bohemia, he wrote early in September 1493 to Vilém of Pernštejn and others, seeking information about the issues between the Utraquists and the Roman See. On 22 September 1493 he wrote again to Vilém asking for information to arrive in time for the Provincial Chapter to be held in Brno in October [“na čem ta věc mezi Otcem svatým a Čechy o víru stojí”]. Filipec was rather sceptical about the chances for reunion that Jan of Sigester wished to promote.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, he implored Vilém to do his best for the worthy cause, at the same time cautioning him to be prudent.⁷⁷

Although Filipec genuinely favoured a reunion between the Utraquists and Rome, he entirely lacked sympathy for the “Pikarts”, as he called the Unity of Brethren, which he wished to see suppressed entirely. The elderly Franciscan managed to advance this task personally when, as a spokesman for King Vladislav at the Bohemian Diet, he helped to craft the St. James's Day Mandate of 1508 against the Brethren. He hoped to enact a reprise, when he appeared in the same capacity at the Moravian Diet in Olomouc, but Jan of Žerotín's resistance permitted only a much weaker document to be enacted.⁷⁸ A curious exception in his hostile relation with the Unity was his friendship with Jan Klenovský, a Brethren leader in Litomyšl, whom he esteemed as a companion from the years of his youth. In general, however, our Franciscan was an object of horror and abomination from the Unity members. Still many years later, the Brethren's elder [“senior”] Jan Blahoslav (+1571) wrote about him in an unkind way: “He rode hither and thither across Moravia and Bohemia like a spectre ... wore a cowl, girding himself with a rope (might he have rather been hanged by it).”⁷⁹

Another important polemicist on the Franciscan side was Jan Bosák Vodňanský, briefly mentioned earlier, who had transferred his allegiance from Utraquism to Rome.⁸⁰ Apparently in 1489 he prophesied the destruction of Bohemian “heresy” in a Latin treatise, “Vade mecum in tribulatione,” which is no longer extant. Its existence is only known from a parodical rendering by an

⁷⁵ “...co jest ... ke cti mluvil domu pánuov z Rozumberka;” see AČ XI, ed. Josef Kalousek (Prague, 1892) 131-132 (no. 1183).

⁷⁶ “Než mněť se zdá, byť jeho mule, kterouž má, tři měla ocasy, žeť je prvé v Čechách ztratí, nežli skrze něj ta věc k konci bude moci přivedena býti”; see AČ XVI, ed. Josef Kalousek (Prague, 1897) 15-18 (no. 30).

⁷⁷ “Prosímť muoj najmilejšie pane kmotře, daj mi vždy věděti, což muožeš, o tej českej vieře a na čem stojí ... a jsou-li jaká jednání o srovnání s Otcem svatým, můžeš-li jim v tom prospěti, pilně se přičiň, všakž s rozumem. Velikáť by se věc stala, by aspoň k nějakému dobrému počátku za našich časuov mohla přivedena býti...,” *loc. cit.*

⁷⁸ Ferdinand Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu*, 6 vv. (Prague, 1947-1950) 4:173-175. To this period also probably dates Filipec's treatise “Proti kaczierzom a pikhartom y proti wssem bludnym,” in Prague, National Library, MS, XI E 1, ff. 196^b – 224^b.

⁷⁹ AČ XVI, ed. Josef Kalousek (Prague, 1897) 18. On Filipec's ecclesiastical and political views see Josef Macek, *Víra a zbožnost jagellonského věku* (Prague, 2001) 163-171. See also Pavlína Foltýnová-Mikulcová, “Jan Filipec, diplomat ze sklonku středověku,” *Dějiny a současnost I* (1999) 13.

⁸⁰ On his polemical writings see Josef Truhlář, “O životě a spisech známých i domnělých bosáka Jana Vodňanského,” *ČMKČ* 58 (1884) 524-547.

anonymous Utraquist, who sought to discredit the mendicants, ridiculing them for going around barefoot [“bosáci”] or in slippers [“vlčatí trepníci”]. In the period 1489-1490, Vodňanský wrote a Czech treatise attacking the Utraquist view of the Eucharist, and provoked a sharp response in 1496 from Václav Koranda, administrator of the Utraquist Consistory. Koranda referred to the treatise as “Gossip of Discalced Friars [*matrykát bosákuov*],” or “A Gruel of Weeds [*matlaniny blenové*],” and applied to the author many pithy epithets that were in common use among the Utraquists, especially for mendicant friars, such as “shaved busybody [*vštečko prohlená*],” “gloomy cowl [*šerá kápičko*],” “pathetic monk [*mniše zúfalý*],” “hypocritical and false zealot [*nábožníčku pokrytý a falešný*]” and “little monk-adulator [*mnišku pochlebníku*].” Koranda resented, in particular, Vodňanský’s charge that the Utraquists’ view of the Eucharist coincided with that of the Unity. In a counter offensive he claimed that the Franciscans were poor followers of their own founder, St. Francis of Assisi, and even worse in following Christ and the Apostles. He charged that: “Claiming to be monks, that is solitaries, they live in towns where they are not in solitude, but among many... Furthermore, they wear sandals, while being – as they claim – of the Order of St. Francis. He, however, went around barefoot, not in sandals; he lived in the desert in a hut, not in a monastery like a ducal palace; he derived his meagre sustenance working with his own hands, not through abominable beggary. If they are to follow their progenitor, who is their founder, how come they only boast of him and follow him in almost nothing? ... The Pharisees did not obey the Lord Jesus, not knowing him to be the Son of God ... The friars are in worse hypocrisy and unrighteousness, knowing Christ’s teaching and his examples, as well as those the Apostles and the Prophets.”⁸¹

Subsequently, Vodňanský devoted much energy to pursuing the Brethren. A treatise, *Triplex funiculus*, by an anonymous author challenged him to a theological dispute with the Unity in 1498. In his reply, *Annihilatio*, he mentioned the execution of the Dominican Savonarola in Florence in 1498 and compared him as a heretic to Jan Hus. Four years later, he sharply attacked the first catechism of the Unity, written by Lukáš of Prague. In his campaign against the Brethren, he found an effective comrade-in-arms in Bernard of Netolice, a preacher in the Jemnice Monastery in Moravia. As noted later, toward the end of his life, Vodňanský was yet to encounter the novel teaching of Martin Luther.⁸²

The Utraquists did not take the Franciscans’ harassment lying down. Around the year 1478, Oldřich Kalenice of Kalenice wrote a satirical *Luciperův list* [Lucifer’s Letter], which he addressed to the prominent aristocrat *sub una*, Lev of Rožmitál. The barefoot Franciscans received a rough literary treatment, evocative of the

⁸¹ “Praviece, že jsú mnišie, to jest samotní, avšak bydlé v městech, jenž nejsou samotných ale mnohých ... Dále, že na trepkách chodie a jsúce řeholy, jakož pravie, svatého Františka. Ten chodil bosými nohami, ne na trepkách, bydlil na púšti v katrči, ne v klášteře, v domu kniežeciem, a dělál rukama svýma, ztravičku maje hubenú z toho, a ne skrze žebrotu ohyzdnú. Jest-li to následovati svého předka, na němž mají založenie, jím se chlubiti a téměř v ničemž nenásledovati ? (...) Zákonníci, pána Krista neznávše synem božím býti, jeho neposlúchali ...Bosáci, Kristovo znajíce učenie, jeho příklady i jeho apoštolův a prorokův, v horšiem jsú pokrytství a nepravosti.” Václav Koranda, *Manuálník*, ed. Josef Truhlář (Prague, 1888) 45-96.

⁸² Truhlář, “O životě,” 534-535. Augustin Neumann, *České sekty ve století XIV. a XV* (Brno, 1920) 56 (in the supplement).

dialectical pictorial treatment in the *Jenský kodex* [Codex of Jena] a quarter of a century later.⁸³

The Franciscans continued to maintain their interest in Utraquists' reunion with Rome during the last two decades of Jagellonian rule in Bohemia. At the request of King Vladislav, Pope Julius II granted in 1505 to the dean of the Prague Cathedral and to the Franciscan Vicar of the Bohemian Province the authority to admit under Roman jurisdiction those dissidents, who renounced their errors under oath and returned illegally held ecclesiastical estates.⁸⁴ When a major dispute broke out in 1509 between Franciscan Observants of Bohemia and Reformed Conventuals of Saxony, King Vladislav came emphatically on the side of the Bohemians. In a letter to Julius II of February 1510, the monarch pointed to their merit in keeping the Czechs "in fide orthodoxa," and to their zeal in opposing any type of heresy.⁸⁵ The Franciscans could never condone the fact that the Bohemians disobeyed the Roman Curia and insisted on following Christ in their own way. Early in the sixteenth century, an anonymous Franciscan chronicler, perhaps Michael of Carinthia, expressed regret over dissident Bohemia and the past glory of the Czech Kingdom in a maudlin elegy on the capital of Prague: "Oh, Prague, once a splendid city of the Bohemians, a teacher of truth; now a teacher of errors of the most perfidious heretics."⁸⁶

Their zeal against the deviations of the Bohemian Reformation did not spare the Franciscans from clashes with the Roman Curia and other ecclesiastical superiors. Thus in 1455 the Synod of the ecclesiastical Province of Mainz in Aschaffenburg dealt, inter alia, with the controversial teaching of Conventual Heinrich Bichler of Strasbourg. The Synod deemed his views erroneous ("similes doctrinae Wicel et Huss"), and Johann Gneip, Provincial Minister of the Conventuals of Upper Germany, forced him to renounce his tenets publicly. The chronicler, Mikuláš Glassberger, an Observant, later noted with satisfaction that the penalized Bichler, coming "de grege Conventualium non reformatorum", thus had nothing in common with Franciscan Observants.⁸⁷ Another suspect of flirting with the Bohemian deviation was Petr of Prague, Provincial Minister of the Franciscan Conventuals of Bohemia. He took his own life in the prison of the Minorite Monastery of Brno in 1515.⁸⁸

The Franciscans' conviction of their own impeccable orthodoxy was not necessarily shared by others. This was true of Petr Nosek of Klatovy, Dominican lector in Brno and Olomouc, who inventoried the various types of religious deviations in Bohemia during 1458-1462 and gathered the results in a voluminous

⁸³ Zdeněk Nejedlý, "Oldřicha Kalenice z Kalenic Satirický list Luciperův k Lvovi z Rožmitálu z roku 1478," VKČSN, Třída filosoficko-historicko-jazyková (1903) 1 ff. Zorozlava Drobná, *Der Jenaer Kodex. Eine hussitische Bildsatire vom Ende des Mittelalters* (Prague, 1970) 35, 63, *passim*.

⁸⁴ SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, document no. 101: Copy of Julius II's letter, dated Rome 16 June 1505; copy made in Olomouc on 12 September 1509 by Řehoř of L'viv, Canon, Vicar and Official of Olomouc Bishopric, at the request of Beda, Guardian of the Franciscan Monastery of St. Bernardine in Olomouc.

⁸⁵ *Chronica Fratrum* 219-221.

⁸⁶ "O Praga, quondam civitas splendida Bohemorum, veritatis magistra, nunc perfidissimorum hereticorum magistra errorum ..." (Ó Praha, kdysi skvostné město Čechů, učitelko pravdy, nyní učitelko bludů nejvěrolomnějších kacířů); *Chronica Fratrum* 139.

⁸⁷ *Chronica fratris* 352-353.

⁸⁸ Augustin Neumann, *Die Chroniken der mährischen Minoriten* (Olomouc, 1936) 56.

compendium, *Confessiones sectarum bohemicarum*. The treatise included thirty-one heretical articles that Petr attributed to some of the Bohemian Franciscans under the title “*Errores quorundam bernhardinorum*.” In view of the traditional rivalry between the disciples of St. Dominic and St. Francis, these charges must be examined cautiously.⁸⁹ The alleged Franciscan errors were of two types: (1) those based on eschatological expectations; and (2) those influenced by the Bohemian Reformation.⁹⁰

Beginnings of the Protestant Reformation

A part of the Order of St. Francis initially welcomed Luther’s critique of Rome with enthusiasm. Even the General Minister of the Order, Franciscus de Angelis Quiñonez (serving 1523-1527), as well as the Netherlandish Franciscan Jan Galpion, confessor of Emperor Charles V, expressed their sympathy with the German Reformer’s teaching, viewing it as a start of Church’s renovation according to the Gospel.⁹¹ Others, however, responded to the new tenets with fierce opposition. The Observant Monastery in Jüterbog near Wittenberg, led by its Lector, Bernard Doppen, rejected Luther’s Reformation as early as 1519. Cardinal Albrecht, the Bishop of Brandenburg, however, vetoed at a crucial moment the petition of Franciscan Observants, who wished to preach against Luther.⁹² Journeying through Central Europe, and visiting the Franciscan Provinces of Saxony and Bohemia in 1520, General Minister Francesco Lichetto of Brescia recognized the danger that Luther posed for the unity of the Church. According to his orders, Luther’s writings were to be burned and all able preachers were to be mobilized to assail the embryonic Reformation. In the same year, a delegation of Saxon Franciscans, led by Provincial Minister Andreas Gron, failed to convince Elector Friedrich to stop the spread of Lutheranism. The General Chapters in Burgos appointed in 1523 two Inquisitors to head the Franciscans of Central Europe in their battle against the Lutherans.⁹³ The ecclesiastical and political trends, however, proved irreversible, and the Franciscan Provinces of Saxony, Thuringia and Bohemia during the next few years would stop de facto to exist. The turbulence in the Order led to paradoxical situations. Thus, at a theological disputation in Düsseldorf in 1527, Franciscan Johann Heller argued against his former fellow Franciscan, Friedrich Myconius, who had since become the Reformer of Thuringia. Previously, between 1510 and 1524,

⁸⁹ On Petr Nosek and his manuscript, see Neumann, “České sekty,” 16-17, 34, 68-69, 77; Vladimír J. Koudelka, “Zur Geschichte der böhmischen Dominikanerprovinz 3,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 27 (1957) 78-81; Kamil Boldan, “Ke středověké knihovně dominikánského konventu v Klatovech,” *Miscellanea* 13 (1997) 7. Nosek’s manuscript also includes a treatise against heresies by Václav of Krumlov and other items; see Josef Tříška, “Středověký literární Krumlov,” *Listy filologické* 84 (1961) 88.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of Nosek’s and other charges of heresy against the Franciscans, see section “Franciscans as Heretics” in Hlaváček, “*Errores quorundam Bernhardinorum*,” 123-125.

⁹¹ Heribert Holzapfel, *Handbuch der Geschichte des Franziskanerordens* (Freiburg im B., 1909) 461-468.

⁹² Ursula Creutz, *Geschichte der ehemaligen Klöster im bistum Berlin in Einzeldarstellungen* [Studien zur katholischen Bistums- und Klostersgeschichte 38] (Leipzig, 1995) 198-199.

⁹³ Dieter Berg, “Die Franziskaner in Westfalen,” *Monastisches Westfalen. Klöster und Stifte 800-1800*, ed. Géza Jászai (Münster, 1982) 157; Lázaro Iriarte, *Der Franziskusorden. Handbuch der franziskanischen Ordensgeschichte* (Altötting, 1984) 215.

Myconius had been a member of the Observant Monastery of Annaberg in Saxony.⁹⁴

The situation was even more perplexing in the Bohemian lands, where the Roman Church had lost its monopoly some hundred years earlier. Around 1517-1518, three monks, expelled from Wrocław for their heterodox views, arrived in Prague: Michael Weisse, Jan Zeising and Jan Mnich. Most probably, they had belonged to the Wrocław community of Observant or Reformed Franciscans. Favoured by Vavřinec Krasonický, and despite the objections of Lukáš of Prague, they were received into the Unity of Brethren, and brought with them an infusion of Lutheran ideas. Weisse served as preacher to the German community of Brethren in Lanškroun; he also traveled to Wittenberg jointly with Jan Roh in 1522 and 1524, as an authorized Brethren's emissary to Luther. Executing a volte face in 1525, the three former monks began to propagate in the Unity the tenets of Zwingli, earning a severe reprimand from Lukáš of Prague. Zeising defied Lukáš's authority, and went on to work actively among the Anabaptists with Balthasar Hubmaier. On the orders of King Ferdinand I, Zeising was executed by fire in Brno on 14 April 1528.⁹⁵

Elsewhere I have discussed the defection and implosion of the Franciscans in Wrocław, Olomouc, and Kadaň.⁹⁶ The apostasy of twenty-one brethren in Kadaň was followed by a gradual self-destruction of the entire Franciscan Province of Bohemia. Also Ambrož of Wrocław, lector in Brno, left the Roman Church in 1524 and joined the Lutheran Reformation, which caused a major scandal because he had been an associate of the Provincial Minister Eusebius of Meziříčí and a well-known figure in Brno. Kašpar of Bautzen, the Lector of Nysa, left the Franciscan Order in 1525 to become a secular priest.⁹⁷ Vincenc of Kadaň, one of the most important Franciscans in the Province, who served as Czech-language confessor of the brethren in Plzeň and Krupka, mysteriously disappeared during a conflagration of the Krupka Monastery in 1527. Several months later, he reappeared in his native Kadaň without the monastic habit to much rejoicing of local Lutherans. In 1528, Franciscan Tomáš, famous as an outstanding sculptor, also defected from the Roman Church.⁹⁸

The disintegration of the Franciscan Province of Bohemia could not be averted even by the labours of the tireless preachers Michael Hillebrant, Antonín of Wrocław, and Eusebius of Meziříčí, known as "haereticum debellator."⁹⁹ The irrepressible Vodňanský also entered the fray. Opposing the spread of heresy, he produced the treatise, "Locustarium" (1524), in which he argued against the tenets of the Unity of Brethren. In 1529, producing the Czech-language, "Satanášova věž"

⁹⁴ Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, *Städtische Predigt in der Frühzeit der Reformation. Eine Untersuchung deutscher Flugschriften der Jahre 1522 bis 1529* (Göttingen, 1996) 109-112. See also Ferdinand Doelle, *Reformationsgeschichtliches aus Kursachsen. Vertreibung der Franziskaner aus Altenburg und Zwickau*, FS, Beiheft 3 (Münster, 1915) 78-79; *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, edd. Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner (Freiburg i. B., 1961-1963) 5:222, 7:715-716.

⁹⁵ On the three monks see Hrejsa, *Dějiny křesťanství v Československu* 4:287, 290-291, 296, 303-310; 5:21, 35, 38-39.

⁹⁶ See Hlaváček, "Errores quorundam Bernhardinorum," 125-126.

⁹⁷ *Chronica Fratrum* 301, 309-310. The chronicler also discussed the problems caused in 1524 by the apostasy of Franciscan Rafael of Wrocław, originally a preacher in the Olomouc Monastery, then a supporter of Lutheranism in the city; *ibid.*, 310-312.

⁹⁸ *Chronica Fratrum* 321-322, 325.

⁹⁹ Holzapfel, *Handbuch der Geschichte des Franziskanerordens* 470-471.

[Satan's Tower], he assaulted Lutheranism which was wreaking such havoc in the Franciscan community. Martin Luther was depicted as Antichrist's servant, seeking the ruin of the Roman Church.¹⁰⁰ Vodňanský's anxiety was justified: by 1533 one third of the Bohemian Franciscans would have defected from Rome. In 1534, King Ferdinand I concluded in Kadaň a peace treaty with the Lutheran princes of the Holy Roman Empire. The counterfeit friendship was sealed by a sumptuous breakfast in the garden of the local Monastery of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, at which the Franciscans received hefty alms from both the Catholics and the Lutherans. More broadly, the sham symposium of love represented a poignant epilogue to the Franciscans' former glory.¹⁰¹ Only pitiful remnants remained from the Franciscan Province in the Bohemian lands, once a mighty pillar of Roman renewal, and distinguished at its origin by the towering figure of John of Capistrano. Contrariwise, Bohemian Utraquism, under the challenge of the novel ideas of the Lutheran Reformation, was proving its strength and vitality.

Franciscanism as a Nonconformity

The Franciscan nonconformity was potentially embedded in the very essence of the Order of St. Francis. After all, the first (or more properly, second) set of rules, composed by St. Francis in 1221, bore the tell-tale qualification "unauthorized" [*regula non bullata*] that showed the Roman hesitation about the Franciscan manifesto.¹⁰² The intellectual ambiance of Franciscanism bred a series of nonconformist groups, harshly combated by the Inquisition. Exploring the roots of Franciscan spirituality, atavistically embedded in the Gospel, led the brethren to alternative ways of explaining the Christian message. The Franciscans then faced either a compromise (often grossly deforming the original ideal), or a conflict with the Church at large. The precariousness of the situation was moreover intensified by the sense of Franciscan exceptionalism within the Church as a whole. The idea of such a *Sonderweg* was inherent in the several branches of the Order, but particularly among the Observants, who cherished the conviction of participating in the eschatological process à la Joachim of Fiore.¹⁰³

Granting its intellectual intensity, the encounter of the Franciscan Observants with the Bohemian Reformation, either in the form of Utraquism or that of the Unity, could not result in mutual indifference. Certain Reformist approaches of the Franciscans must have resonated with the Bohemian Reformation, and vice versa.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Truhlář, "O životě a spisech," 539-542.

¹⁰¹ *Chronica Fratrum* 339-340. Concerning the *Grosse Politik* significance of the Kadaň gathering, see Otto Winckelmann, "Über die Bedeutung der Verträge von Kadan und Wien (1534-1535) für deutschen Protestanten," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 11 (1890) 212-252.

¹⁰² See *Spisy sv. Františka a sv. Kláry* [Františkánské prameny I] ed. Jiří Bonaventura Štivar (Velehrad, 2001) which is an annotated trans. of the critical edition in *Fontes Franciscani*, eds. Enrico Menesto, Stephano Brufani and others (Assisi, 1995). The cornerstone of the Spiritual, and subsequent Observant, movements was the so-called Testament of St. Francis. A holograph copy of 1499 by Bishop Jan Filipec is deposited in SÚA Prague, fond ŘF, sig. 660, kniha no. 267.

¹⁰³ Ernst Benz, *Ecclesia spiritnalis. Kirchenidee und Geschichtstheologie der franziskanischen Reformation* (Darmstadt, 1969) 175-180, and *passim*.

¹⁰⁴ In particular, the "folkish" Franciscan preachers with their ascetic appearance and passionate rhetoric attracted the attention of both the Utraquists and the *sub una*. To the contrary, Bohemia's urban population viewed with disapproval any evidence, on the part of the Franciscans, of abandoning the original rigour, mandated by St. Francis and understood as an utmost "humilitas." The character of the Observant homiletics in Bohemian Lands, however, has remained an academic

The religious earnestness of the Bohemian Reformation incited the Franciscans to return to the roots of their Order's ideal and confront the eschatological issue and its dilemma: Who was with Christ? and Who was Antichrist? This context made it understandable why some of the Franciscans rallied under the banner of the Bohemian Reformation, while others hardened in their attachment to traditional Franciscan spiritualism. The dilemma turned even more poignant for the Bohemian, as well as Saxon, Franciscans after the emergence of Luther's message. Some saw him as the Joachimite *predicator veritatis* of the last age commissioned by Christ, others as an incarnation of Antichrist's perversity. An instructive example was that of Franciscan Johann Eberlin of Günzburg (+1533), originally attached to a monastery in Ulm in Swabia. Having bid farewell to his brethren in a solemn sermon in 1521, he set out to Wittenberg to assist Luther in his struggle against the Antichrist (that is, the pope). Feeling still spiritually at one with the Franciscan Order, Eberlin composed in the same year a treatise about the perfect polity, "Wolfaria," and engaged in a literary dispute with a fellow Franciscan, Thomas Murner (+1537) of Alsace, who remained loyal to the Roman Church. Eberlin's work, "Die Fünfzehn Bundtgenossen," with unexpected realism proposed a monastic system for the new Reformed (that is, Lutheran) Church. He advocated abolishing the mendicant orders, and reducing and rationalizing the others. The scaled-down monasteries of no more than ten monks should not exceed two in a municipality and focus on charitable, particularly medical, activity.¹⁰⁵

The extreme excitement of the era fostered unambiguous decisions, which in their consequences led to a schism of the Franciscan community and a subsequent collapse.¹⁰⁶ Still in the 1530s Wittenberg swarmed with defecting Franciscans, who sought succour with the German Reformer. Yet, an anonymous attack on the Franciscan Order, published in 1542 by the Wittenberg printer Hans Lufft with Luther's preface, definitely testified to a divorce between the Franciscan and the Lutheran idea of Reformation. The preface opened up with the words: "Franciscus est in coelo. Quis dubitat de illo? Totus mundus."¹⁰⁷

[Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David]

terra incognita. For the purposes of contextualization, see Jacek Wiesłowski, "Problemy społeczne klienteli bernardynów poznańskich na przełomie XV/XVI wieku," *Zakony franciszkańskie w Polsce* I. ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski (Lublin, 1983) 337-367.

¹⁰⁵ Ferdinand Seibt, *Utopica. Zukunftsvisionen aus der Vergangenheit* (Munich, 2001) 70-81.

¹⁰⁶ František J. Holeček, "Riforma della Chiesa – Riforma cattolica – Controriforma? Alle radici spirituali di una svolta," *Gegenreformation und Barock in Mitteleuropa/in der Slowakei*, ed. L. Kačič (Bratislava, 2000) 41. Stanko Andrić, "The Making of a St. John of Capistrano's Death and Funeral," *Annual of the Medieval Studies at the Central European University, 1993-1994* (Budapest, 1995) 81-99.

¹⁰⁷ *Der Barfuser Muenche Eulenspiegel vnd Alcoran. Mit einer Vorrede D. Martini Luther* (Wittenberg, 1542) title page.