
The Bohemian Reformation: Sanctity and/or Piety

Zdeněk Uhlíř

(Prague)

The idea of history may be interpreted in two fundamentally different ways. First, we can understand the work of Clio as an attempt at a more or less objective reproduction of the past whether we mean thereby a bare description of what has happened, or the search for causal connections among the individual facts, or even a discovery of regularities in historical development through the prism of lawfulness or progress. This approach in one of the mentioned variants has prevailed among historians, yet it has become a target of criticism,¹ or the optimism attached to this practice has been dampened.² The second approach understands history as a construction and a narration of stories that do not separate, but rather connect the present with the past. It is not just a matter of a reflection of the past, but also a confrontation between history and cultural memory.³ The second approach seems more promising not because it is a priori more correct or more truthful, but because up to this point it has not become so entrenched as to tie historical professionalism to an esprit de corps, and thus it permits to pose questions more easily, be they silly or wise. After all, questions matter rather more than do answers.

So it is with the Bohemian Reformation that is considered at times as a summit, at others as an abyss, but that never loses its appeal because it connects the present with the past and vice versa. It is true that the Bohemian Reformation evolved rather slowly and initially rather peacefully, but its victory and entrenchment were far from peaceful. As a result there are two competing stories, like the story of the Bohemian Reformation and that of the beautiful style.⁴ The problem arises with how to deal with two different stories; they cannot be told simultaneously, because they cannot be equally valid, yet in some way both are valid, at the very least because they continue to arouse interest. Most likely the source of this problem is our persistent habit of thinking on one level, on a single horizon and linearly. Dynamic events then appear only as accumulations of divers individual aspects. As a result, the tales become divided and separated, as well as subject to nationalization, confessionalisation and ideologisation. Paradoxically, this vision of events prevails in professional historiography, which prides itself on being professional *sensu stricto* and *par excellence*; in its eyes two stories appear – one Czech, the

¹ Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2nd ed. Rev., 2 vols. (London, 1952); *idem*, *The Poverty of Historicism* (New York, 1961).

² Paul Veyne, *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology*, tr. Mina Moore-Rinvulucru (Middletown, Conn.: 1984)

³ See Dušan Třeštík, *Myslití dějiny* (Praha-Litomyšl, 1999); see also Jan Assmann and Tonio Hölscher, *Kultur und Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988).

⁴ See Jan Bažant, *Umění českého středověku a antika* (Praha, 2000) 212.

other Sudeten German.⁵ On the part of the theologians, the story of Hussitism was in recent times formulated repeatedly not only as a part of the Bohemian religious tradition, but also placed into the broader context of human rights.⁶

Hence, it turns out that the problem of stories is a complex one, if there be more than one, and if they are to be grasped in their plurality. A while ago, I suggested that not only for the present, but also for the past, the prime position should be assigned to questions and not to answers.⁷ Perhaps thus, a point of departure can be created from which the individual stories could be seen in a plural way, not merely as particular and linear accumulations. I have also attempted several preliminary probes, which might at least in a small measure prepare the ground for the new departure.⁸ I wish to continue the experimentation in this article.

The Skewed Signs of Sanctity

Sanctity and piety surely belong among the dominant concepts in the Middle Ages, and surely are not without importance in other eras as well. In a sense, their character is that of anthropological constants,⁹ which are subject to changes of their historical forms.¹⁰ In this sense, researchers have also turned their attention to the period of Late Middle Ages.¹¹ One aspect, however, stands out, namely the manner in which the relevant authors approach their theme: their focus is on the theological aspects of interpretation, the questions of the cult and its manifestations, matters connected with the canonization and approbation, the conditions of a saint's life; they are much less interested in sanctity as such in its relationship to piety, to religion as a social phenomenon, to faith as a personal reality, to mentality as a cultural substratum,¹² or ideology as an expression of concrete social interests. It appears

⁵ See Jaroslav Pánek, "Náboženské a národnostní menšiny v tisíciletých dějinách českých zemí," in: *Historikové proti znásilňování dějin. Stanovisko Sdružení historiků České republiky*, ed. Jiří Kocian (Praha, 2002) 9-20.

⁶ See Jakub S. Trojan, *Idea lidských práv v české duchovní tradici* (Praha, 2002). Regrettably this trend may have very little in common with Christian ecumenism, see also *Křesťanství a lidská práva*, ed. Jiří Hanuš (Praha, 2002), and that it may rather be a matter of unsophisticated hybrid traditions of Leftist evangelism, see J. L. Hromádka, *Evangelium v cestě za člověkem* (Praha, 1986). See also Jiří Loukotka, *Humanismus v naší filosofické tradici a dnešek* (Praha, 1974).

⁷ See Zdeněk Uhlíř, "M yšlení o církvi na úsvitu české reformace," in: *M. Jan Hus a M. Štěpán z Pálče*. [Sborník z kolokvia uspořádaného referátem kultury Okresního úřadu Kladno 25. května 2000 v klášteře bosých karmelitánů ve Slaném] (Kladno, 2000) 41-46.

⁸ See Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Eklesiologie v českém sporu o Urbana VI.," *Teologická reflexe*, 8,1 (2002) 17-40; *idem*, "The Anonymus Treatise 'De suffragiis defunctorum' in the Catholic and Utraquist Context," *BRRP* 4 (2002) 161-176; *idem*, "Determinace Mařka Rvačky na obranu Řehoře XII.," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 41,1-2 (2001) 177-193.

⁹ See Michal Wojciechowski, *Jezus jako święty w piskách Nowego Testamentu* (Warsaw, 1996) 14-43; Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*. Tr. John W. Harvey (New York, 1958).

¹⁰ See Henryk Fros, *Pamiętając o mieszkańcach Nioba. Kult świętych w dziejach i w liturgii* (Tarnów, 1994); Arnold Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1994).

¹¹ See André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux Derniers Siècles du Moyen Âge* (Rome, 1981); Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls. Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago, 1984); Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku* (Praha, 1996); Ota Halama, *Otázka svatých v české reformaci. Její proměny od doby Karla IV. do doby České konfese* (Brno, 2002).

¹² Georg Bollenbeck, *Bildung und Kultur. Glanz und Elend eines deutschen Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt a. M., 1996).

that exactly in this welter of complexity, the question of sanctity and piety would acquire its true significance, in which history is connected with cultural memory, and from which it is possible to grasp the normative and formative traits hitherto concealed under the abstract cover of professionalism.

To obtain a more concrete starting point, I will bracket my topic between two sermons on the theme of St. Wenceslaus. The first one, *Tradet autem frater fratrem in mortem*,¹³ dates to around 1361, and thus stemmed from the beginning of the great upsurge in preaching that marked the latter part of the fourteenth century and continued deep into the era of the Bohemian Reformation. It is significant that this scholastically thematic sermon viewed the saint through the prism of social problematic, and thus transcended the customary standard characterized by the image of repentance and *contemptus mundi*. The other sermon, *Quis est hic*,¹⁴ originated from the period of George of Poděbrady, but employed the same typically scholastic discourse, seeking to convey the impression that nothing had changed during the preceding century. It avoided any distinct reference to a social or societal reality, and preserved only a disembodied style that might have been comprehensible, but otherwise had little meaning.

It is evident that during the hiatus between the origins of the two texts, some change must have occurred in the general subconscious or in the possible consciousness. It does not matter at all that the two bracketing texts stem from the Roman Catholic milieu, even though my intent is to focus on the Bohemian Reformation. The first one shows the indubitable signs of Catholic reformism, or reformism as such, so that it can be considered a part of the Bohemian Reformation under Hus's precursors. The other reacts to conditions subsequent to long warfare, social revolutions, and political conflicts, and it demonstrates or documents the changes affecting the mentality of a milieu, that was habitually characterized by doctrinal orthodoxy, continuity, and inertia. It is, however, apparent that this milieu succumbed to changes just as the milieu of the Bohemian Reformation. There is, therefore, no reason why not to treat the two cases side by side and fathom the two common questions that, of course, received two overtly different answers.

After the mid-fourteenth century (in the period of our interest), sanctity was theologically characterized by three basic traits: the beatific vision [*visio beatifica*], the saints' intercession and help [*intercessionones et suffragia sanctorum*], and example [*exemplum*]. Two more aspects had to be added that were connected with religious practice: first, the ecclesiastical approbation that established a public cult and private veneration; second, the existence of patronages, both general and special. Sanctity was thus represented by a complex of concepts and images that were rooted in intellectually rational discourse and in general subconscious, and that influenced the Weltanschauung and the outlook on life in a distinct manner. Sanctity and saints were not only a part and parcel of the philosophical and theological vision of the world (or understood only within the onto-theological framework), but they

¹³ Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku*, (Prague, 1996) 25n, 236, no. 126; *idem*, "Sermon 'Tradet autem frater fratrem in mortem' jako pramen," *Studie a zprávy Okresního muzea Praha-východ* 10 (1988) 45-76.

¹⁴ Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku* (Prague, 1996) 43n, 197, no. 81; *idem*, "Svatováclavské kázání 'Quis est hic' jako projev katolicismu v Plzni doby poděbradské," *Minulostí Západočeského kraje* 22 (1986) 163-178.

were above all understood as part and parcel of everyday (not just feast day) life. Sanctity and saints were constituent parts of thinking and consciousness that we can call symbolic. Saints' lives, their cult, and veneration represented and provided the experience of the symbolically constructed world in the sense of an absolute universe.

At the first sight it might appear that the outlined concept of sanctity was perfectly consistent and unproblematic, but it is not really so. It is necessary to view this concept in the context of other notions – within the total framework of an outlook on life and a *Weltanschauung*. Then we encounter various discrepancies that more or less impair this concept.

First, the beatific vision [*visio beatifica*]¹⁵ became a dogma thanks to the bull of Benedict XII, *Benedictus deus* (1336).¹⁶ This article postulated that the souls of dead saints (blessed or elect) participate in the eternal bliss immediately after their individual deaths and prior to the general resurrection at the end of ages. There was, therefore, a clear separation of the personal judgment [*iudicium particulare*] from the general Last Judgment [*iudicium universale, generale*]. The beatific vision thus had become a symbolic expression and affirmation of individuation and personalization that came into vogue during the previous centuries of the medieval era. It is, however, obvious that this formulation offered only a partial solution; it covered the individuality and personality of the saints only, not of all humans. The differentiation between the saints and other human beings was clearly understood, and it was demonstrated by the gradual separation of martyrologies from necrologies that occurred after several centuries of their common existence.¹⁷ The counterpart of the beatific vision, which in this instance included human beings who were not saints, was the idea of the purgatory that had become adopted and defined in Western Europe by the end of the twelfth century.¹⁸ As for Central Europe, however, the concept of the purgatory did not gain currency until the turn of the fourteenth century,¹⁹ when the discussion first cropped up in sermons and Tomáš of Štítné gave the first consistent exposition.²⁰ Clearly there was a discrepancy that prevented a common point of view. In the Central European area, the idea of sainthood lacked a firm definition vis-à-vis humanity, and tended to acquire a quasi-folkloristic character, based on the ritualistic practices of the institutional church. The latter moreover, due to the Great Schism, had fallen into a deep crisis and was held together only thanks to external forms. Simply said, the Bohemian intellectual ambiance had lagged behind Europe, and then suddenly, due to Charles IV's

¹⁵ Étienne Gilson, "Sur la problématique thomiste de la vision béatifique," *Archives de l'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 39 (1964) 67-88; Francis Ruello, "Le problème de la vision béatifique à l'Université de Paris vers le milieu du XIV^e siècle," *ibid.* 55 (1980) 121-170; see also Jean Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur: la culpabilisation en Occident, XIIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1983).

¹⁶ See Prague National Library MSS. V.E.6, ff. 248b-249b; IX.E.13, ff. 85a-87a.

¹⁷ Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Martyrologia v kontextu hagiografických pramenů českého středověku," *Miscelanea Oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků* 16 (1999-2000) 38-51.

¹⁸ Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago, 1984); see also *idem*, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1980).

¹⁹ Stanisław Bylina, *Człowiek i zaświaty. Wizje kar pośmiertnych w Polsce średniowiecznej* (Warsaw, 1992).

²⁰ Tomáš of Štítné, *Knížky šestery o obecných věcech křesťanských*, ed. Karel Jaromír Erben (Prague, 1852) 282-283.

policies and the newly founded university, it was exposed to the European context. A confusion of minds could hardly be avoided.

In the second place, the belief in the saints' help and intercession [*intercessionones et suffragia sanctorum*] was based on an ancient tradition. In the antiquity and early Middle Ages, the saint represented a municipality, or a broader secular or religious community; he was the representative of a collective entity. The rituals connected with his cult and veneration were enacted at the level of customs typical of traditional societies. The High Middle Ages, however, ushered in a process of modernization that altered the situation to its very foundations. The individuation and personalization that it had introduced, however, produced paradoxes. On the one hand, every single human being came closer to God because he no longer needed a mediator for contact with the deity, at least in certain cases and under certain circumstances. On the other hand, the mystical insight – *cum grano salis* – was broadened beyond monastic experts in faith and religious life: the laity could not only acquire a closer acquaintance with education and spiritual or intellectual culture,²¹ but also become exposed more vexatiously to the burden of sin.²² The laity then began a search for new mediation and that was finally provided by the institutional sacramental church and its saints; the saints as mediators became a kind of a buffer between the stern judge and the sinner.²³ The decline of the church due to the Great Schism and the quasi-folklorisation of the saints' cult, however, impeded the mediation, and the consciousness of the sinfulness did not diminish; in fact, the contrary was the case.²⁴ A rift and then a conflict developed between the institutionalized ecclesiastical sanctity and the piety, which sought to overcome sin, or at least to escape from it.

In the third place, an example [*exemplum*] has been sought by humanity from times immemorial to this day; the yearning for an example is undoubtedly an anthropological constant. Nevertheless it is necessary that an example correspond to the historical, social and cultural conditions in which it is to be applied, otherwise it loses not only its effectiveness, but its very *raison d'être*. In the Bohemian lands, however, such a harmony between an example and the concrete circumstances failed to occur with the possible exception of the figures of St. Wenceslaus²⁵ and St. Procopius.²⁶ As a consequence, it became difficult to distinguish between the legitimizing and the exemplary character of the saints', or the saintly, figure;

²¹ Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, tr. Catharine Misrahi (New York, 1982³).

²² Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur*.

²³ Norbert Ohler, *Pilgerleben im Mittelalter: zwischen Andacht und Abenteuer* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1994); "Oracionarium de suffragiis sanctorum," Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS. 70.H.35, ff. 150a-171b. *Post predicta cogitabis, quod ad regnum celorum per te nullatenus pervenire poteris quod immediate orare deum non es dignus, quia ad tantam mundiciam et puritatem immediate accedere propter immundiciam peccatorum tuorum presumere non debes, quippe indigem patrociniis amicorum eius, ut pro te quasi medii apud suam bonitatem intercedent, et per oraciones eorum veniam optineas, quam per te optinere es indignus. Ibid.* f. 151a.

²⁴ See Stanislav of Znojmo, *De gracia et peccato*, ed. Zuzana Silagiová (Prague, 1997).

²⁵ Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku* (Prague, 1996) 22; Josef Macek, "Tři studie o rytířské kultuře v Čechách," HT 8 (1985) 343-344; Dessislava Atanassova, *Saint Wenceslaus' Hagiography in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. M.A. Thesis in Medieval Studies, The Central European University, Budapest, June 1996.

²⁶ Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Národnostní proměny 13. století a český nacionalismus," FHB 12 (1988) 143-170.

although it undoubtedly remained present in religious life, it gradually lost its living context. The historical person of the saint thus turned into a mere literary figure, or was overwhelmed by the literary figure. The root cause was that only those saints, who could be called old or traditional, remained in circulation, and that contemporary saints of domestic origins were failing and had failed to be recognized in contrast to what was happening in other countries. In Bohemia, any moves in that direction were either marginal (Zdislava of Lemberk,²⁷ Agnes of Bohemia²⁸), or the potential candidates failed to make the grade (Arnošt of Pardubice,²⁹ Jan Milíč of Kroměříž,³⁰ and Jan of Jenštejn³¹). Moreover, it is painfully evident that none of these persons or figures was in sync with the newly rising and subsequently empowered upper social layers among the townspeople and the peasantry. In contrast to other more advanced countries, such an example was not available to these new social groups, which eagerly entered into the economic, social, political, cultural and religious life during the fourteenth century. Bohemia, therefore, appeared as rather underdeveloped, and this situation could not but produce negative consequences.

In the fourth place, the question of ecclesiastical approbation was closely related to the scarcity of examples. There was a lack of current transition from historical persons to literary figures and, as a consequence, Bohemian hagiography neglected contemporary living saintly resources. The road from piety to sanctity remained depopulated despite the fact that the norms of the Christian life-style were otherwise observed in large and medium towns,³² as well as the countryside.³³ This meant, however, that the effect of sanctity on piety was also disrupted; religious life was reduced to passive experience and deprived of an active participation and an autonomous intervention of the entire Christian community. Religious life was, therefore, rather half-hearted; although it was experienced through the filter of a symbolic consciousness, it did not savor anything evident or concrete. Such a lop-sided existence could not but breed frustration. The cause was not a substantial deficiency of contemporary Catholic orthodoxy, if one can use such a term. It was

²⁷ Zdeněk Kalista, *Blahoslavená Zdislava z Lemberka. Listy z dějin české gotiky* (Prague, 1991²); see also *Cronica domus Sarensis*, ed. Jaroslav Ludvíkovský (Brno, 1964) 162; and *Staročeská kronika tak řečeného Dalimila*. Vydání textu a veškerého textového materiálu. 3 vv., eds. Jiří Daňhelka, Karel Hádek, Bohuslav Havránek, and Naděžda Kvítková (Prague, 1988-1995) 2:365 (kap. 82, v. 1-8).

²⁸ Jana Nechutová, *Latinská literatura českého středověku do roku 1400* (Prague, 2000) 122-123; Jaroslav V. Polc, *Světičky Anežka Přemyslovna* (Prague, 1988); Jan Kapistrán Vyskočil, *Legenda blahoslavené Anežky a čtyři listy svaté Kláry* (Prague, 1932); Josef Beran, *Blahoslavená Anežka česká* (Rome, 1974); Walter W. Seton, *Some New Sources for the Life of Blessed Agnes of Bohemia* (London, 1915).

²⁹ Jan Kapistrán Vyskočil, *Arnošt z Pardubic a jeho doba* (Prague, 1947); *Vita Ernesti*, ed. Josef Emler, FRB I (1873) 387-400.

³⁰ Peter C. A. Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia. The life and ideas of Milicius de Chremsir (+1374) and his significance in the historiography of Bohemia* (Heršpice, 1999) 27-75; *Vita Milicii*, ed. Josef Emler, FRB I (1873) 404-430.

³¹ Ruben Ernst Weltsch, *Archbishop John of Jenstein (1348-1400). Papalism, Humanism and Reform in Pre-Hussite Prague* (The Hague and Paris, 1968); Jaroslav Kadlec, *Jenštejn 1977*. Sborník (Brandýs nad Labem and Stará Boleslav, 1977) 187-197; *Vita Iohannis*, ed. Josef Emler, FRB I (1873) 439-468.

³² Zdeňka Hladíková, "K otázkám vztahu duchovní a světské moci v Čechách ve druhé polovině 14. století," *ČsČH* 24 (1976) 244-277.

³³ Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Církev, náboženství a měšťané v Čelákovících v době předhusitské," *Studie a zprávy Okresního muzea Praha-východ* 8 (1986) 17-42.

rather its deficient application in the Bohemian environment. The inadequacy stemmed from the meager individualization and personalization in active life. The model of individualization and personalization lacked sufficient strength to embody itself in corresponding forms and, as a result, it was attaching itself almost exclusively to social or collective structures. Although the new currents of thought had become familiar, Bohemian society lacked the capacity for adequate response. The mounting tension created preconditions for short-circuiting in thought and action that would deal with, and vault over, the crucial inadequacy.

In the fifth place, the transition from general patronages of saints to special patronages could not be fully realized in practice. There simply were not enough saints who could play the roles of special patrons or to perform the function of special patronages. The resulting impediment interfered with the formation of collective entities of the middle range, that is social forms between the petty social units of natural kinship and the large forms of political dimension. Although the social and economic structure of the country grew more articulate, the intellectual and conceptual sphere failed to keep pace by producing an adequate number for symbolic forms. Consequently, political, intellectual and religious life was staggering. One way out of this predicament was the transition from a symbolic understanding to an abstract rationalization of life and reality, and not only in the strictly intellectual sphere, but also in the area of practical life. Such a rationalization, of course, could not be easily absorbed and led to a blunt reification as a counterpart of the quasi-folklorisation of sanctity. Although the reification was not intentional, it was the more palpable consequence of the superficiality and underdevelopment of Czech religious life in the fourteenth century, particularly in its second half. The issue, therefore, was not a confrontation between Bohemia (and even less the Czechs) with Rome. It was a matter of the spiritual emptiness of life in the Bohemian society as a whole, including the Reformist currents of all stripes, even if this void might have been concealed by the diversity of the forms of the Gothic and the beautiful styles, or the elaborate pronouncements of university scholasticism. As if moving at two different speeds, the Bohemian social organism was inwardly tearing apart during of the fourteenth century's latter part. The encounter between orthodox Romanism and its critics that led to the Reform movement was not a struggle between conservatives on one side and progressivists on the other, but rather the result of a misunderstanding of the contemporary situation.

***Devotio moderna* and the Bohemian Reformation**

If we examine the Bohemian setting during the second half of the fourteenth century and the following decade from the viewpoint of sanctity and piety, we realize that the two stories mentioned earlier – that of the beautiful style and of the Reformation – can indeed be seen as two sides of yet another story. They do not need to contradict each other if they are not viewed at a single level and linearly. There is only one problem, this third story has not yet been told by anyone. We do not know its structure, because nonlinear history is thus far little developed. We know even less about its theme because the sources are not yet at hand. Thus far we have managed to gather the relics of the past, and more or less created one semantic series of the sources of history. The sources have not yet been fully evaluated, but only perceived from a single point of view, which offers the existing

stories as differing in orientation. The task before us is to discover another angle of vision.

The long distance between sanctity and piety, typical for Bohemia, is properly speaking, an expression of the tension and disconnect between symbolic and rational forms in mental life. It is, therefore, possible to speak about a weak absorption of scholasticism, and about its very superficial internalization. The problem of the movement *devotio [devítko³⁴] moderna* may be examined in this context. It is instructive to note the difference between two centres of religious life in fourteenth-century Europe, between the Netherlands and Bohemia. While in the Netherlands this movement was clearly oriented toward the clergy, in Bohemia it turned in large measure toward the laypeople.³⁵ If it is asserted at the same time, that *devotio moderna* was inspired by an aversion toward scholasticism, it is important to realize the full extent of its meaning. While *devotio moderna* in Bohemia contributed to the emancipation of the laity, it was of course and emancipation of the entire group, rather than individual persons. It posited a collective layperson, not individual and personalized lay people. The meagreness of individualization and personalization, which extended the distance between sanctity and piety, thus further increased, yet at the same time it was as though this deficiency was swept under the rug so that it could not emerge as a distinct problem. The question of individualization and personalization was – plainly said – squeezed out. The emphatic focus on the social and collective aspect of the laity did not permit the individual aspect to be treated and to expose to the light of awareness the retreat from intellectual and rationalistic scholasticism. Individuality thus turned ineffable. The crux of the contradiction was the individuality of the cleric on one side, and the collectivity of the layperson on the other.

Although the collective layperson could externally approach and appropriate the church,³⁶ an appreciation of the more profound ecclesiastical layers escaped him. Milíč of Kroměříž postulated a distinction between the prelacy as a sociological group, and the preachers as a mystical body.³⁷ He viewed, however, the dichotomy simplistically as between dispensability and necessity, instead of properly as a relationship between the immanent world and the transcendent one. It was not clear whether Milíč's trivialization of the ecclesiastical hierarchy was based on a vulgarization of the scholastic concept of the contingency of phenomena and acts in the visible world (*contingencia futurorum eveniencium* as against *necessitas absoluta eveniencium*) that was then much discussed in the university,³⁸ or whether it stemmed from a mere primitive distaste toward supervisors and superiors. The distinction, however, was not essential, since in either case the answer would have

³⁴ Pavel Spunar, "K počátkům české devotio moderna," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 31 (1992) č. 1, 35-39.

³⁵ Rijnier Richard Post, *The Modern Devotion. A Confrontation with Humanism and Reformation* (The Hague, 1968).

³⁶ See *Protocollum visitationis archidiaconatus Pragensia annis 1379-1382 per Paulum de Janowicz, archidiaconum Pragensem factae*, eds. Ivan Hlaváček and Zdeňka Hladíková (Prague, 1973); Zdeňka Hladíková, "K otázkám vztahu duchovní a světské moci v Čechách ve druhé polovině 14. století," *ČsČH* 24 (1976) 244-277.

³⁷ Zdeněk Uhlíř, review of Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, *Miscelanea Oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků* 15 (1998) 398-399.

³⁸ Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Mistři a studenti Karlovy univerzity ve středověku a jejich dílo v dobovém kontextu* (Praha, 1998) 55 ff.

remained the same. What was more important was that the idea could be easily fitted into the much more sophisticated context of John Wyclif's thought,³⁹ or conversely, that Wyclif's thought could easily fit into the context of Milíč's thought. It is important to note that Wyclif based his view on a thorough reasoning, while the Bohemian view was rather based on an unreflecting collective awareness. As a result, in the Bohemian case the conclusion was reached through a short-circuiting, hence in a sense by accident, and thus it could not display linear causality, and much less be endowed with an aura of necessity.

Indeed, it appears that we encounter here another contemporary problem of inadequate reflection. The simple acceptance of Wyclif's view in Bohemia was the case of an inappropriate simplification. Discussing Pope Urban VI, Jan of Brakel, a lecturer at Prague University, discussed a similar dissonance between the immanent world and the transcendent one also outside the institutional church, namely in man himself,⁴⁰ and without an explicit connection with actual sinfulness. It followed that the ambiguity of the church and of its relation to man was a normal condition in the visible world, because these matters rested on the hereditary sin, not an actual one. If one were to think in terms of guilt,⁴¹ then it would be a metaphysical guilt, not a moral, much less a criminal one. The Bohemian reform movement (together with Wyclif), however, had a tendency to see the connection in reverse. Its intense moral charge was nothing consequential, much less positive, but rather an inclination toward a simplistic solution, stemming from a reluctance to face problems squarely. There emerged the outline of a story of avoiding and concealing questions, not a conflict of the story of progress and reaction, or the story of art and iconoclasm.⁴² It would seem that it is also a story for today.

Thus, in the Bohemian environment and its intellectual atmosphere, piety assumed the visage of bigotry. While this metamorphosis played its role, even more important was the consequent weakness in the coordination between the religious and the civil spheres. On the one hand, the profane became more independent and, on the other, its value was diminished by the disconnect with the sacred – by losing the interpenetration with the sacred. In a sense, the profane was ignored, as if the civil life should not have existed. The later “anti-ideal of the city” of Petr Chelčický was an expression of that attitude.⁴³ The actual growing independence of the secular urban sphere was not, however, supported by any parallel elaboration of a theoretical justification based on a secular foundation. Municipal legislation, in fact, did develop, but merely as a tool of practical affairs. The disjunction could be seen as a conflict between law and morality, and such perception led to serious consequences.

³⁹ John Wyclif, *Tractatus de potestate pape*, ed. Johann Loserth (London, 1907) 161. It is based on Acts 6:2-4: *Convocantes autem doudecim multitudinem discipulorum dixerunt: Non est aequum nos derelinquere verbum Dei, et ministrare mensis. Considerates ergo, fratres, viros ex fermento boni testimonii septem, plenos Spiritu sancto, et sapentia, quos constituamus super hoc opus. Nos vero orationi, et ministerio verbi instantes erimus.*

⁴⁰ Zdeněk Uhlíř, “Ekleziologie v českém sporu o Urbana VI,” *Teologická reflexe* 8,1 (2002) 17-40.

⁴¹ See Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage* (Munich, 1979).

⁴² Jan Bažant, *Umění českého středověku a antika* (Prague, 2000); Zdeněk Uhlíř, “Tzv. amúzičnost české předhusitské a husitské reformace,” *Estetika* 26 (1989) 164-173.

⁴³ František Šmahel, “Antiideál města v díle Petra Chelčického,” *ČsČH* 20 (1972) 71-94.

A purely intellectual source of this state of affairs was undoubtedly the character of university teaching. It was the disharmony between the Aristotelian philosophical ethics clearly tied up with the secular existence on the one hand, and the moral theology conceived in a mystical and eschatological dimension on the other.⁴⁴ It is obvious, however, that this disjunction was not only a Bohemian problem, but that it was typical for the entire Western Christianity, engendering a historical dynamic of its own. The Bohemian predicament was traceable to the collective social layman and the non-existence of an individual and personal layman,⁴⁵ who could introduce into his activity a touch of concreteness and a situational evaluation that would correlate the mystical theological level with the Aristotelian philosophical one; this would be analogous to the confrontation of the hereditary and actual sin in the ecclesiology of Jan of Brakel.⁴⁶ It is significant that not even the Prague theologians sought to develop systematically the moral casuistry as a way to integrate the two disparate levels through situational settings. It is, therefore, possible to assume that once more – as far as we know – the University of Prague had not attained a world-class level in this area.

This is not to say that there was no awareness of such white spots or black holes. Matthew of Cracow, for one, attempted to treat civil contracts on the theological level.⁴⁷ Whether his treatise was influential is of course another question. In this connection, his basic point of departure was of major interest: one had to be right in small matters before engaging with greater ones.⁴⁸ Small matters were the concerns of the common secular life, the great matters were the works of faith.⁴⁹ In other words, only after a proper fulfilment of temporal duties was it apropos to turn attention to spiritual or sacred ones. Although Matthew was surely a reformer, it seemed clear that his idea of reform contradicted that of most his Bohemian colleagues; it was at the same time clear that Matthew identified the crux of the contemporary malaise.

Two observations are apropos at this juncture. First, the connection of the University with the world of the collective layperson through the preaching of popular theology remained rather limited, and in comparison with other countries weak until the start of the fifteenth century. Neither the University, nor the collective layperson possessed sufficient critical mass that would permit proceeding beyond an effort for simplistic solutions. The intellectual discussion thus by and large remained in a vacuum; the great commotion in the external forum hid a tense immobility in the interior. Therefore, to the double speed, mentioned earlier, we may now add a motion along double tracks. As a result, our story acquired clearer contours. Second, it is notable that the scholars who brought up the truly crucial issues, such as Jan of Brakel and Matthew of Cracow, hailed from abroad and did not belong to

⁴⁴ Jerzy Bartłomiej Korolec, *Etyka* [Dzieje filozofii średniowiecznej w Polsce] 7 (Warsaw, 1980); see also Uhlř, *Mistři a studenti Karlovy university* 30-31.

⁴⁵ As an exception that confirms the rule, concerning Dorota of Montau see Jerzy Misiurek, *Historia i teologia polskiej duchowości katolickiej*. Vol. 1: W. X – XVII (Lublin, 1994) 33-34.

⁴⁶ Uhlř, "Ekleziologie v českém sporu o Urbana VI," 17-40

⁴⁷ Matthaeus de Cracovia, *De contractibus*, ed. Matthias Nuding (Heidelberg, 2000).

⁴⁸ See Lk 16:10: *Qui fidelis est in minimo, et in maiori fidelis est; et qui in minori iniquus est, et in maiori iniquus est.*

⁴⁹ Jas 2:14, 17: *Quid proderit, fratres mei, si fidem. Quis dicat se habere, opera autem non habeat? Numquid poterit fides salvare eum? ... Sic et fides, si non habeat opera, mortua est in semetipsa*

the Bohemian segment of the University of Prague. The Czech masters, to the contrary, tended to pander to the desires of the collective layperson and sought to articulate his views; occasionally, these academics even usurped the right to speak for the civil governors of the collective layperson.⁵⁰ This behaviour revealed the closed character of Bohemian society that concentrated on its own superficial objectives without reflection or consideration of the global context.

The great exception was the penetration of the temporal with the spiritual in the phenomenon of pilgrimages,⁵¹ and here the reasons were primarily practical. In accord with the general European trend, there was a shift from penitential pilgrimages to pious ones in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and within the pious pilgrimages to the touristic ones. This was true also of the custom of writing the last will and testament prior to setting out on the journey. Nevertheless, in the first decade of the fifteenth century the phenomenon of pilgrimages was vanishing in Bohemia under sharp criticism.⁵² As noted, Bohemian society was unable to accept the intermingling of the temporal with the sacred, as also represented by the pilgrimages. Another way of looking at the predicament was a tension between culture and religion.⁵³ The temporal sphere was in no other way connected with the sacred, and the profane sphere was unable to operate within its own intellectual resources, nor could the collective layperson. The unbearable poverty of inner inspirations was not remedied in its own sphere, but rather the frustration burst into the outside sphere.

Pilgrimages were linked with the phenomenon of indulgences.⁵⁴ The Bohemian reformist circle viewed the sale of indulgences as immoral trading.⁵⁵ This was largely because organized activity was involved, and any form of imposing organization onto the sacred and transcendental sphere was viewed as suspicious and mostly undesirable. Moreover, the critique of indulgences was connected with that of the purgatory,⁵⁶ inasmuch as the concept of the latter was a complete novum in the Bohemian and, indeed, in the entire Central European area. Another interesting aspect of the trade with indulgences is documented especially by its development in England, where it produced a tense network of contractor and subcontractor rela-

⁵⁰ Božena Kopiczková and Anežka Vidmanová, *Listy na Husovu obranu z let 1410 – 1412. Konec jedné legendy?* (Prague, 1999); for an opposite view, see Aleš Pořízka, "Listy na Husovu obranu ze 12. září až 2. října 1410. Konec druhé legendy?" ČČH 99 (2001) 701-724.

⁵¹ Ohler, *Pilgerleben im Mittelalter*; Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Poutnictví v Lounech v době předhusitské," *Sborník okresního archivu v Lounech* 3 (1990) 6-13.

⁵² For instance, Hus on Wilsnack, see Václav Novotný, *M. Jan Hus. Život a dílo. 2 vv.* (Prague, 1919) 1:147-150; or the phenomenon of the pine tree of Mnichovo Hradiště, see Zdeňka Hledíková, "Ještě k počátkům blanické pověsti," *Sborník vlastivědných prací z Podblanicka* 20 (1979) 121-140.

⁵³ Assmann and Hölscher, *Kultur und Gedächtnis*.

⁵⁴ Eva Doležalová, Jan Hrdina, František Šmahel, and Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Indulgences, their reception and criticism in the late medieval Czech Lands" (forthcoming).

⁵⁵ Vlastimil Kybal, "Učení Husovo o odpustcích," *Českou minulostí. Práce žáků Václava Novotného* (Prague, 1929) 167-174.

⁵⁶ František Šmahel, "Das purgatorium sompniatum in der hussitischen Topographie des Jenseits," *Eschatologie und Husitismus*, eds. Alexander Patschovsky and František Šmahel (Prague, 1996) 115-138; Nicola della Rosa nera, *De reliquiis et veneratione sanctorum: de purgatorio*, ed. Romolo Cena MPP 23 (1977); see also Zdeněk Uhlíř, "The Anonymous Treatise *De suffragiis defunctorum* in the Catholic and Utraquist Context," BRRP 4 (2002) 161-176.

tionships, as well as lively inter-regional contacts.⁵⁷ Undoubtedly, we can see here the emerging outlines, if not the origins, of capitalist entrepreneurship. Projected from the economic to the social sphere, this process engendered a network of societal ties and social contacts, which occupied an intermediate position between groups of natural kinship and the large political entities, and this network did not assume the rigid form of a hierarchical organization, but remained fluid to accommodate particular situations. Since the indulgence trade was directed primarily at the intermediate social layers, we can also see here the birth of what may be – *cum grano salis* – called the middle class.

In this light, the quasi-theological struggle against indulgences dealt from the properly theological viewpoint with a pseudo-problem. It was not a class struggle against a wealthy institutional church, and it did not amount to a defence of the poor. The struggle against “human inventions” was really one against innovation. The break-neck speed of development in the second half of the fourteenth century caused an internal emptiness that produced an ennui from Gothic,⁵⁸ and led to a peculiar idiosyncrasy. On the one hand, there was a great sensitivity to the new – still largely hidden – currents, and on the other there was an inability to grasp these phenomena rationally and reasonably, or even to formulate clearly and convincingly an approach to them. The result was *Angst* and short-circuiting. The sensitivity to the hidden events did not lead to deciphering the signs of the time, but rather to a Messianism;⁵⁹ at the same time there was an inclination to simplistic solution, and to premature foreclosing of questions. The illusion of attaining the summit meant then, as it does now, straying from the correct path. In the end “the middle class” obtained a political satisfaction, but only at the price of forfeiting a chance of a long-range settlement of problems. “Eschatology” prevailed over “Mysticism,”⁶⁰ and the result was the ability to view the temporal immanent world and the spiritual transcendent one only sequentially, but not simultaneously.

Matěj of Janov: The Image and Concept of the Bohemian Reformation

Thus, we arrive at the categories and concepts from which the structure of the Bohemian Reformation was constructed, or on the basis of which the image and the idea of the so-called First Reformation rested. These intellectual building blocks were the Law and the Truth, or in reverse the Truth and the Law. The two were identical with Christ, as the Scripture taught, but they were not identical with the Scripture. In this way, Matěj of Janov characterized the principles of the Bohemian Reformation.⁶¹ In vain, he tried to create the impression that he did not postulate anything new, but only repeated views that had been entertained by the Bohemian Reformers earlier. Nevertheless, his entirely original contribution could not be

⁵⁷ Robert N. Swanson, “Spirituality and the Market: Indulgences and the Indulgence Business in Late Medieval England,” unpublished paper, presented at the Centre for Medieval Studies, Prague, 12 April 2002.

⁵⁸ Aleksander Gieysztor, “Lassitude du Gothique? Reflets de l’Iconoclasme hussite en Pologne au XV^e siècle,” *Ars auro prior. Studia Ioanni Bialostocki sexagenario dicata* (Warsaw, 1981) 223-226.

⁵⁹ Rudolf Urbánek, “Počátky českého mesianismu,” *Českou minulostí. Práce žáků Václava Novotného* (Prague, 1929) 124-145; *idem*, “Český mesianismus ve své době hrdinské,” in *idem*, *Z husitského věku. Výbor husitských úvah a studií* (Prague, 1957) 7-28.

⁶⁰ On the use of the two terms, see Hans Emil Weber, “*Eschatologie*” und “*Mystik*” im Neuen Testament. *Ein Versuch zum Verständnis des Glaubens* (Gütersloh, 1930).

⁶¹ Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova* (Brno, 2000²).

denied. Wishing to appeal to an historical precedent in support of his argumentation, he made spurious reference to Jan Milíč.⁶² Actually, Matěj created an entirely new situation that established a tradition rather than continued a previously established one. He established a new approach to sanctity and piety.⁶³ Four aspects need to be examined at this point.

First, Matěj's historicisation of the Reform of the church and of Christendom opposed and replaced hagiography. A new view of the world, society and humanity penetrated into Bohemia. Our interpretation needs to be formulated in a heavy-handed way, and thus somewhat distorting the actual model, but only in this way is it possible to grasp the significance of Matěj's innovation. Hagiography can be viewed as historiography, but surely not in the normal linear sense. The coordinates of hagiography – the locus of the cult and the date of the feast – are relative and repetitious, not unique and unrepeatable. Because it is tethered not to the net of abstract time and space, but to liturgy, the hagiographic vision despite its concreteness lacks a definite anchorage. The fixed feasts within the framework of the liturgical year produce the sanctoral cycle and contain the cyclical time. Inasmuch as the sanctoral cycle is the opposite of the temporal one, time and anti-time of salvation's history stand against each other and together, and they form – let us say – the mystical aspect and the time of human history, representing something like an eschatological aspect. In other words, the cyclical time permeates the linear one and both end up in eternity, which is neither immobility nor an endless duration of the sum of individual moments, but it is, above all, a synthetic simultaneity of both these types of time. The transcendental part of this complex is uncertain from the human point of view because it dissolves in an objectless state, yet even so it is concrete and real. The saints are expressions of the hagiographic coordinates and refer to an uncertain and objectless sanctity. Thus, they act as intersections of the immanent and transcendent spheres, or points of penetration from here to the beyond. The saints, therefore, must fulfil the condition of correlation: they must correspond to the articulateness of the immanent world, there must be many of them, they must be concrete, individual, not anonymous. Although they may be grouped by types, they must not be reduced to abstract entities. Thereby a feast day substantially differs from what we nowadays understand as an anniversary.⁶⁴

Matěj of Janov fabricated the figure of Milíč as his precursor, and as the father of the Bohemian Reformation. He thus vitiated the delicately balanced configuration of the communion of saints. In his version, Milíč turned into an abstract entity of linear time. Speaking in terms of faith and religion, the eschatological element was over-accentuated, and the concretely objectless mystical aspect was turned into a mere point, into a mere abstract substance, which – aspiring to enlarge its volume in the world – emptied its contents. It was, therefore, impossible to replicate and repeat Matěj's Milíč as a model. Instead, he always had to be filled with a new content; he always had to acquire a new objective form. Consequently, an internally static model could become dynamic only externally with the formation of newer and newer living conditions. Briefly stated, the figure of Milíč that Matěj had fabricated historically and non-hagiographically was in its natural character a source for the

⁶² Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia* 27-75.

⁶³ Halama, *Otázka svatých v české reformaci*.

⁶⁴ See the collection of articles on Wyclif in: *Křesťanská revue* 51 (1984).

justification of the so-called human inventions. It was, however, a harsh, although indubitable, paradox because Matěj resisted exactly such a conclusion. The explicit and implicit meaning of his assertions were, therefore, in a deep and irreconcilable contradiction with each other; he simultaneously advanced and denied the desire for an innovation. In this sense, perhaps, Matěj could truly be regarded as a man of crisis.⁶⁵ Even more ominous, however, was that subsequently the Bohemian Reformation did not succeed in overcoming this duplicity. Milíč remained monumentalized deep into the sixteenth century,⁶⁶ but there was no recognition of the reasons for the external dynamics that such a monumentalisation produced from the beginning. The Milíčian monument conjoined a daring self-evaluation with a much less shining reality. Subsequently, the main problem has been that, thanks to František Palacký, most modern historians automatically adopted Matěj's fabrication, and under the aegis of Masaryk, the construct became an ideological part of the everyday life and the political life of the Czech nation in the twentieth century.

Second, Matěj truly – without any additional fabrication – followed Milíč in the eucharistic interest and eucharistic adoration.⁶⁷ Although this tendency was typical for the Bohemian reform movement,⁶⁸ it was by no means a unique phenomenon.⁶⁹ The final phase of medieval hagiography concerning St. Wenceslas showed a warm regard of the Eucharist also in the Bohemian lands of the pre-Reformation era.⁷⁰ An exceptional significance, therefore, can be attributed only to the idea of frequent communion, which, to a certain extent, became a substitute for the vanishing cult of saints. In this area, there were frequent mentions of the issue of transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or remanence,⁷¹ but for my interpretation the problem is insignificant in its strictly theological or philosophical character; it is only meaningful as an objectivisation of faith. This aspect was already recognized by Wyclif,⁷² who through his advocacy of remanence began to recognize traces of idolatry in the eucharistic veneration. Bohemian reformers were more cautious in that regard and they remained in a state of denial that the eucharistic veneration implied a radical objectification. The Taborite radicals called attention to that fact,⁷³ but they were rejected and suppressed by the mainstream of the Bohemian Reformation. The issue of an objectification of faith, therefore, remained unclear in the Bohemian Reformation because it was present only implicitly; it could be formulated explicitly only by modern historians of religion, who, however, have been confounded by their

⁶⁵ See Milan Machovec, *Husovo učení a význam v tradici českého národa* (Prague, 1953).

⁶⁶ Ladislav Klicman, "Studie o Miličovi z Kroměříže," *Listy filologické* 17 (1890) 28-44, 114-125, 256-268, 347-362

⁶⁷ Ondřej M. Petřů, *Matěj z Janova o častém svatém přijímání* (Olomouc, 1946).

⁶⁸ Jaroslav Kadlec, *Mistr Vojtěch Raňkův z Ježova* (Prague, 1969) 83-84, č. 19; Jaroslav Kadlec, *Leben und Schriften des Prager Magisters Adalbert Rankonis de Ericinio* (Münster, 1971) 190-230; see also Ferdinand Tadra, "Mistr Vojtěch, profesor učení Pařížského a scholastik kostela Pražského," *ČČM* 53 (1879) 558-560.

⁶⁹ Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, Eng., 1991); Burkhard Neunheuser, *Eucharistie im Mittelalter und Neuzeit* [Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte, IV/4b] (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 1963).

⁷⁰ Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku* (Prague, 1996) 29 ff.

⁷¹ Stanislav Sousedík, *Učení o eucharistii v díle M. Jana Husa* (Praha, 1998)

⁷² Halama, *Otázka svatých v české reformaci..*

⁷³ Robert Kalivoda, *Husitská ideologie* (Prague, 1961).

regard for either confessionalism or ecumenicism. For our story, the important point was that the Bohemian Reformation did not face the problem squarely, but rather it engaged in an evasion. The Reformation exhibited the averted side of the mass social character especially in its initial stages, and history of course consisted of both the front side and the reverse one.

Third, the very question of Law or the Truth was immensely significant. It was neither the Scripture, nor its text, but something more profound: Christ himself. Two important aspects could be discerned in this problem. The first one concerned what was actually denoted. It is fairly obvious that a symbolic person, if it can be said so, was here transformed into an abstract concept. The dynamics of the Gospel foundation⁷⁴ gained above all in gravity: the exemplary mutated into the obligatory, as if the two were identical. In other words, normativity was as if actualized, and in the actual form as if it prevailed over purposefulness. Hus's idea of "Truth" clearly followed Matěj of Janov, although his concept also might have had roots reaching into antiquity.⁷⁵ The transition from the symbolic person to an abstract concept, which had surreptitiously taken place, was of course the source of another paradox: although Truth had become fully interiorized, it was not as an act (*via – veritas – vita*), but as an object.⁷⁶ Although this object was obvious in an abstract way, it was much less so for his concrete, real content, or it was not so at all. Here, therefore, was the crux of the paradox: the allegedly obvious Truth was not far from fideism – a rational arbitrariness.⁷⁷ Therefore, expressed in present-day language, if Truth were to be inter-personal, it could not be so without a consensus coming from the outside, because only this consensus could become under these conditions a guarantor of its validity. Here again we encounter a profound contradiction: this intellectual process of validation implicitly justifies the human inventions, but the Bohemian Reformation rejected them as contrary to the Truth. From the intellectual confusion there was only a small step to confusion in behaviour and action. The result was agitation for either a so-called inexpensive church [*levná církev*] (which in fact had actually existed earlier through a natural tendency),⁷⁸ or for a clerical theocratic regime. Unfortunately, this tension never reached the surface, remaining outside conscious awareness and inarticulate. The Bohemian Reformation thus lost another important plank for its platform; the split personality and the half-heartedness of the Bohemian ambiance was once more confirmed.

The other aspect concerned the text as such and the relationship to it. Once more resorting to present-day language, the Bohemian Reformation understood and defended biblical text as transparent, although in its real existence the text was problematically opaque.⁷⁹ This attitude undoubtedly was inculcated by the university

⁷⁴ See Jn 15:1: *Ego sum vitis vera et pater meus agricola est*; 14:6: *Dicit ei Iesus: Ego sum via et veritas et vita; nemo venit ad patrem nisi per me*.

⁷⁵ Pavel Spunar, "Husovo pojetí pravdy," *Veritas vincit: Pravda vítězí*. Symposium 20.10.1994, ed. Jiří K. Kroupa (Praha, 1995) 36-39.

⁷⁶ Then Matěj without any problem can *habere Christum*.

⁷⁷ Joseph Seifert, "Pravda jako fundament svobody svědomí (K etice Jana Husa)," in: *Jan Hus na přelomu tisíciletí*, eds. Miloš Drda, František J. Holeček, and Zdeněk Vybíral (Tábor, 2001) 281-301.

⁷⁸ Uhlíř, "Církev, náboženství a měšťané v Čelákovících," 17-42.

⁷⁹ Zdeněk Uhlíř, "K významu a souvislostem přípravy dat pro digitalizaci rukopisů," *Národní knihovna* 10 (1999) 117-129; *idem* "Souborný katalog historických fondů a digitální knihovna: teoretické problémy," dostupné z URL: <http://www.dbase.cz/download/workshop/>; Michael Giesecke, *Der*

scholars,⁸⁰ and it afflicted the entire European scene, surfacing at both the councils of Constance⁸¹ and Basel.⁸² To get to the brass tacks of the difference, it can be said that the transparent text was explicated on its face, simply on the basis of what it denoted; while the opaque text was explicated from its context and in reference to its consequences that were not explicitly stated. In other words, the difference was between a closed text and an open one. Of course, each of the approaches in its purity would have been dysfunctional, leading either to complete inertia or to chaos.⁸³ At the time, the tension between the two approaches created a real problem for the Bohemian Reformation that impeded a clear understanding and comprehensible formulation of propositions,⁸⁴ and necessarily led to conflicts. The embracing of the concept of the transparent text merely escalated the earlier-mentioned conflict that was engendered by the adherence to the entities of “Law” and “Truth,” not as symbolic persons, but as abstract concepts validated by a collective consensus. The intense conflict prevented a genuine stable solution. Only a *modus vivendi* out of necessity could be arrived at after exhausting intellectual debates and the subsequently armed struggle. It was not just a political weakness of the Bohemian Reformation, but also an intellectual one. It was half-hearted in its essence, and its half-heartedness was its legacy to future generations.

Fourth, the idea of sanctity in the Bohemian Reformation manifested a major contradiction between theory and practice, and it led to a schism between the two. Matěj of Janov was the author of this lasting predicament. He did note what I have called a quasi-folklorisation of the cult and the veneration of saints, and as a solution he chose pussy-footing. He thus unleashed unintended consequences that substantially affected the Bohemian Reformation in all its branches.

Although Matěj resorted to an earlier theological tradition,⁸⁵ he limited at the same time its application in religious practice. In his opinion, the contemporary quasi-folklorisation of the cult and of the veneration of saints represented such a misuse and perversion that it tended to negate the original theological meaning. He feared the danger of idolatry, and even perceived evidence of it. Like the Bohemian Reformation in general, he did not deny the existence of sanctity, but he clearly deemphasized its observance. In short, he theoretically recognized the cult of saints together with its traditional theological underpinning, but he did not endorse the practice, seriously fearing that its perversion might lead to scandal and ultimately to damnation. Concerned about salvation, Matěj thus exhorts to an attenuation of the cult of saints.

Matěj also stressed the juxtaposition of the dead saints to the living ones. In the preceding view of the Roman Church, the true saints were only the former. The

Buchdruck in der frühen Neuzeit: Eine historische Fallstudie über die Durchsetzung neuer Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien (Frankfurt am Main, 1998).

⁸⁰ Michal Svatoš, untitled and unpublished opening statement at the exhibition “Mistři a studenti Karlovy univerzity ve středověku a jejich dílo v dobovém kontextu,” Prague, 15 October 1998.

⁸¹ Anežka Vidmanová, “Zitationsprobleme zur Zeit des Konstanzer Konzils,” *CV* 40 (1998) 16-32.

⁸² Alois Krchňák, *Čechové na basilejském sněmu*, (Svitavy, 1997²).

⁸³ Zdeněk Uhlíř, “Hypertext a otazníky nad jeho metodologií,” *Ikaros* [online] 2000, č. 1 [cit. 2000-01-05], accessible from URL: <http://ikaros.ff.cuni.cz/ikaros/2000/c01/hypertext.htm>

⁸⁴ Zdeněk Uhlíř, “Determinace Mařika Rvačky na obranu Řehoře XII.,” *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 41,1-2 (2001) 177-193.

⁸⁵ Halama, *Otázka svatých v české reformaci*.

living saints could be characterized as those pious people who currently strove for sanctity, who were on the road to salvation, and who at the moment were recipients of *gratia gratum faciens*. Curiously and importantly, Matěj felt that the cult of the dead saints derogated from the respect for the living saints, indeed, that the veneration of saints dead might often have its accompanying obverse in the persecution of saints living. Essentially, the subtext of these assertions was the effort toward an emancipation of the laity, although of course only in the sense of the collective layperson -- a concept repeatedly mentioned in this article. The syndrome remained actively in place until the end of the sixteenth century.⁸⁶

The living saints were obscured by the cloud of anonymity, while the dead saints attained individual distinctiveness. Matěj faced a dilemma. For him, the living saints were worthy of greater attention than their dead counterparts, yet he could not rescue them from a subordinately anonymous or anonymously subordinate position. He seemed to be apprehensive concerning the public revelation of sanctity because piety should not be flaunted. Piety should have been commonplace, and the commonplace should not be on display. Such was the crux of Matěj's concept of sanctity and piety.

While Matěj had in mind a church of the anonymous layperson, actually he conjured up a sect of the Troeltschian type.⁸⁷ Although he did not wish to face up to it, his concept was implicitly Anti-Roman: it defied medieval orthodoxy, as well as catholicity. Catholicity, for him, was not a structure highly articulated into types and subtypes, rather it had the visage of an unrelieved sameness, inasmuch as the collective layperson (whom he had discovered) was devoid of individuality and/or personality. Although Matěj's inspiration continued to animate Hus and Jakoubek of Stříbro, his implicit ecclesiological concept was not realized until the Unity of Brethren, which chose the life of voluntary modesty and then separated entirely. It was emblematic that, for the entire duration of the Unity's existence till Comenius, the Brethren survived on the borderline between illegality and civil legality, between approbation and disapprobation, and between legitimacy and illegitimacy. The half-heartedness and split personality would continue as the characteristic trait of the Bohemian Reformation from its inception without any interruption or alteration. Moreover, the half-heartedness would reveal its affinity with bigotry, exemplified by the Brethren's rough treatment of Václav Mitmánek in the mid-sixteenth century.⁸⁸

Half-Heartedness and Split Personality

The pronounced traits of the Bohemian Reformation from the very beginning were the striking objectivization of faith on the one hand, and, on the other, the vacuity of the sphere intermediate to groups of natural kinship and to large social and political structures. An articulation of individuals as subjects failed to develop, and thus failed to correspond to the progressive articulation of the structures of the objective world. It was exactly this milieu, which was most supportive of the Reformation, that suffered from the malaise of an amoebic singularity and formlessness. Only during the fifteenth century, was the vacuum filled, but only

⁸⁶ Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Ošemetná pocta svatých a pokrytá mezi středověkem a novověkem," in: *Příspěvky ke Knihopisu, 11: Dr Bedřišce Wižďálkové – Přátelé a spolupracovníci k významnému životnímu jubileu* (Prague, 1996) 25-54.

⁸⁷ Ernst Troeltsch, *Deutscher Geist und West Europa* (Tübingen, 1925).

⁸⁸ Kamil Krofta, "Václav Mitmánek a Bratři," *ČČM* 91 (1917) 2-20, 143-156.

partially and at its lowest levels. Small local groups emerged, functioning through their pedestrian rituals.⁸⁹ In this regard, the Bohemian Reformation approached the folkways of the *sub una*, although it did not reach the sophistication of the Roman reforms that had begun developing in Italy.⁹⁰ A genuine alteration of mentality, of course, could not be expected: the half-heartedness of the Bohemian Reformation was necessarily accompanied by a superficiality, as its other salient mark.

This awareness made understandable the rapid and intense embracing of Wycliffism that was soon followed by a complete abandonment. The themes of the Universals,⁹¹ or of Ideas,⁹² aside from their intellectual interest, were suitable for filling the ideological vacuum, which bedevilled Bohemia in general, and Prague in particular, during the turn of the fourteenth century. The frequently discussed theme had less to do with pure ratiocination than with responding to the prevalent confusion of life styles and religious practice. Thus the academic learning could pander to the mentality of the commoners. For the purposes of this linkage, the Prague professors altered the concept of rational understanding. In the Middle Ages reason was not thought to be a method of argumentation, but rather a capacity to perceive universal and eternal truths.⁹³ The Prague Reformers rejected the latter approach, characterized by the symbolic steps of proto-scholasticism that Aquinas epitomized by his *uno modo – alio modo*. Instead, they preferred Wyclif's use of discursive reason that would reach a convincing conclusion through argumentation.⁹⁴ The sense that convincing conclusions might be reached, in turn, raised the danger of falling into the trap of bigotry.

The adoption of discursive reasoning might have opened the door for chiselling away at the collective layperson by enabling lay people to acquire individual distinction and thus lifting out of anonymity a phalanx of living saints. As was almost inevitable, however, the Bohemian Reformation once more missed the boat. Instead of creating heroes of social or cultural distinction, it fell back on the unexciting image and model of the priest-preacher that had been monumentalized by Jan Milíč and by Matěj of Janov after him. The blame could be placed once more on the endemic half-heartedness of the Reformation. Instead of boldly creating new appealing departures, it fell back on the old dull warhorse of the literary brotherhoods.⁹⁵ These ersatz living saints never rose above the level of servility. One may wonder whether the Bohemian Reformation could reach its objective, whether it had an objective at all, or whether it was fated to miss its goal.

⁸⁹ Hana Pátková, *Bratrstva ke cti Božie. Poznámky ke kultovní činnosti bratrstev a cechů ve středověkých Čechách* (Prague, 2000); Zdeněk Uhlíř, "The Anonymus Treatise „De suffragiis defunctorum“ in the Catholic and Utraquist Context," *BRRP* 4 (2002) 161-176.

⁹⁰ František J. Holeček, "K duchovním kořenům protireformačního zvratu. Reforma Církve – katolická reforma – protireformace," *Teologické texty* 11 (2000) č. 3-5.

⁹¹ František Šmahel, "Universalialia realia sunt heresis seminaria," *ČsČH* 16 (1968) 797-818; *idem*, *Verzeichnis der Quellen zum Prager Universalienstreit 1348-1500* (Warsaw, 1980).

⁹² Vilém Herold, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif* (Prague, 1985).

⁹³ Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N.J., 1979).

⁹⁴ For a survey of Wyclif's writings see Williel R. Thomson, *The Latin Writings of John Wyclif. An Annotated Catalog* (Toronto, 1983).

⁹⁵ Julius Hůlek, "Hudba," in: Miroslava Hejnová, Julius Hůlek, and Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Ve znamení nové doby. První dvě století tištěné knihy v Čechách* (Prague, 2000) 98-99.

The Bohemian Reformation's stumbling block was its penchant for abstraction and objectivisation. Faith as an act became replaced by faith as an object. An illustration of this mutation was the successive adoption of objects as embodiments of faith: the Law, the Truth, the Eucharist, and eventually the Chalice. The Four Articles of Prague turned the project of objectivisation into a slogan. Contrary to conventional wisdom, the tendency toward objectivisation might have been stronger in the Bohemian Reformation than in the Roman Church. In any case, the tendency toward objectivisation differed between the two religious camps not in kind, but only in degree. These differences existed merely in intensity and in the detailed slogans or images. Aside from such trifles, the stories of the beautiful style and of the Bohemian Reformation ran a parallel course: a common tale of objectivisation, and of half-heartedness, split personality, and double speed in its execution.

The objectified faith actually pandered to the faith of the collective layperson, the national ecclesiastical collective, which shunned individual distinction. This herd mentality apparently did not exist in the Roman Church (outside the Bohemian lands) and – aside from the Waldensians – in no other church of the so-called First Reformation. The amoebic mass performed in the role of the warriors of God, a throwback to the Maccabeans. A sectarian exclusivity à la Troeltsch came to the surface that juxtaposed religion to faith and culture. This confrontation was blunted only in the sixteenth century. Instead of cultivating individual achievement and excellence, the collective herd of the Bohemian Reformation mutated into a proto-nationalist exclusivity, into a Messianism. Yet, despite its ethnic coloration, it retained a supranational religious basis. Thus the references to bad Czechs, and good Germans, did not ring entirely false. Therefore, the idea of a national church did not really seem on the agenda.

In conclusion, we return to the perennial haunting quality of the Bohemian Reformation. Together with the National Awakening, it has maintained a constant presence in the Czech consciousness as one of the fundamental events in history. It has become mythologized. Surreptitiously, the unfortunate legacy of the Bohemian Reformation has continued to exert its debilitating effects on the Bohemian mind and character by means of its inherent flaws, which have been often recounted in our study: its half-heartedness, its split personality and double speed, and on the top of it all – pusillanimity. May the progress of historical knowledge cure the Czech psyche of these afflictions.

[Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David]