

# **Preaching in Fourteenth-century Bohemia**

**The life and ideas of Milicius de Chremsir (+1374)  
and his significance in the historiography of Bohemia**

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## Acknowledgments

This study began to take its shape in 1986-87, when I had the opportunity to study at the Prague Comenius Theological Evangelical Faculty for a year. My experiences from this stay in the milieu of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren in then Communist Czechoslovakia laid the foundation for my involvement with many contacts on the church level in this country and the Netherlands. The lectures of Amedeo Molnár awakened my interest in the history of fourteenth-century Bohemia and especially in the preacher Milicius de Chremsir. When in 1993 the Dean of the Faculty Jakub Trojan offered me the possibility to do research in Prague, I gratefully started work on this project. The organizational framework of my study was established as a result of vivid co-operation between the Theological Faculties of Prague and Amsterdam. A stipend from the Dutch Reformed Church enabled the study to take place, for which I express many thanks.

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## Introduction

Research on late medieval Bohemia and developments in the church and spirituality at that time is generally dominated by Johannes Hus, the Hussite movement and the Bohemian Reformation. This is not surprising when we take into account the range and influence the movement had inside and outside Bohemia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Hussites became an impressive power in Central Europe, which for the first time in medieval history seriously threatened the unity of the church and the authority of the hierarchy, thus forcing the church to negotiate compromises and solutions. The movement has the effect of a magnet in and on historiographical research, radiating a field of influence that has colored interpretation of preceding and succeeding periods and events. This is not only the case in Czech scholarship, where moreover the long years of Communist rule stimulated a focus primarily on Hussitism, not wanting to draw attention to other periods in the history of the church and spirituality. Also Anglophone and German research concerning late medieval Bohemia concentrates mainly on Hus and his followers, frequently viewing them as the forerunners of the Lutheran and Calvinist Reformation.

Milicius de Chremsir we encounter predominantly as one of the so-called pre-Hussites or even as the „Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation.“ In nationalist Czech historiography he is practically depicted with an aureole for being the first person to embody the true Czech spirit. He is understood to be the one who prepared the way for the work of Johannes Hus by founding the community „Jerusalem,“ of which „Bethlehem,“ the chapel where Hus' disciples gathered, was simply a continuation. From this perspective, Milicius was the first Czech to make an independent appearance in European history after the Middle Ages.

One might suppose that titles such as „the Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation“ were given to Milicius on the basis of large editions of his writings or at least on solid research of them. Unfortunately this is not the case. From Milicius we have two large postils with 271 sermons for the whole liturgical year, a letter to Pope Urban V, a sermon on the Last Judgment, a treatise about Antichrist and some liturgical prayers. Furthermore, we have two biographies, one hagiographic with substantial detail on his activities and the other depicting him as Elijah revealing the Antichrist and other enemies of truth. Only a handful of writings has been edited (the letter to the pope, the sermon on the Last Judgment, the Treatise on Antichrist and three sermons to the Prague Synod), together with the two biographies. Research has been based on those editions and on the liturgical prayers. No systematic

attention has been paid to the vast bulk of Milicius' work, which, moreover, is structurally connected to his concept of practical evangelical life. Both postils *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*, though they are the fruit of Milicius' efforts in his community, have been overlooked in the discussion on the significance of the preacher. Impressive adjectives used in connection to Milicius are employed based on an analysis of a very tiny portion of his writings and on the two biographies which clearly have church political intentions.

This study is a reaction to the disproportion between Milicius' alleged significance and the small number of analyzed sources. Its main question is whether sermons from both postils do confirm the image of Milicius as a preacher inspired by apocalyptic visions, as a pre-Hussite, as the Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation and as a person bearing the other qualities assigned to him. This study is not so much interested in comparing Milicius to his contemporaries, whose writings have not been edited systematically either. Its first aim is to add new material and a critical analysis of the current views of Milicius to the existing research in an effort to give a more complete idea about the preacher.

The main sources for this study are the two postils *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*, which Milicius compiled for his disciples. On the basis of a general survey of all the sermons, twenty-seven of them have been selected for a closer analysis and they form the foundation of this research. In the first place sermons with an eschatological scope were chosen to get a more complete impression of Milicius' ideas about the end of time, the Last Judgment and eventually about Antichrist. The second group contains sermons that present ideas about issues of church and society. Here we meet with questions on the hierarchy of the church, poverty and the status of secular power. Thirdly, the selection concentrates on some sermons that focus specific attention on the role and place of the preacher in the church and society. The last group contains sermons on the Bohemian saints. These sermons refer directly and exclusively to the church in Bohemia and might therefore reflect more closely the contemporary circumstances Milicius lived in.

The evidence that emerges from the selected sermons is divided in two parts with several thematic groups which do partly overlap. The first part presents an analysis of Milicius' idea of the very alarming state of church and society. Here we speak about the church and the hierarchy, the clergy, the place of secular power and eschatological awareness. In the second part brings Milicius' answers to the crisis, thematically divided in the work of the preacher and evangelical life as lived by individual saints. This thematic analysis forms the heart of this book and is presented in the fourth and fifth chapter.

We lead up to this by briefly looking at the circumstances in fourteenth-century Bohemia during the reign of Charles IV. He was a ruler who had impressive ideas and did his utmost to reestablish stability in the Holy Roman Empire. His enormous efforts, however, could not eliminate social unrest. Chapter II presents a survey of the two biographies on Milicius. Both biographies have their own agenda, depicting Milicius either as an apocalyptic preacher or as an austere saint. In the first biography the author Matthias de Janow employed Milicius in defending himself against accusations from church authorities. In the second, Bohuslaus Balbinus, the editor of the extensive *Vita*, was trying to purge Bohemian history of suspicion of heresy. This chapter also contains a brief overview of Milicius' life related to other sources. In the third chapter we turn to Milicius' preaching activities, placing them within the framework of the extensive European preaching movement from the twelfth century onwards. The preaching movement became an important weapon in this new era for further Christianizing the structures of society. This chapter also presents a dating of Milicius' two postils.

The chapters IV and V thematically introduces several topics from Milicius' sermons in the postils and creates the image of a preacher who was deeply rooted in the church of his day. Finally, chapter VI presents a survey of research on Milicius mainly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As it turns out, in all ages Milicius became a hostage of the times with their political and social needs. Nationalist historiography wanted him to be the forerunner of Hussitism, the „incarnation of the true Czech spirit,“ thereby proving that the Czech nation has its own, independent roots. For the opposing side he was — precisely for the same reason — a heretic and aberrant soul. In the course of the centuries, historiography lost some of its ideological features which enabled a more detailed picture of Milicius to emerge.

Nevertheless, the need to appropriate him by means of historiography is still present.

A final remark has to be made about the spelling of the names. The basis of this problem is very much connected to nationalistically biased historiography, which still has its influence today. Many proper names and geographical names from the Bohemian context had both a Czech and German spelling in the past. Prague was both Praha and Prag. Due to the course of recent history we generally use only Czech names today and the use of German names is still felt to be improper in the Czech Republic. In an attempt to free research from such hidden but influential inclinations, this study uses predominantly the English and Latin spelling of names. In cases where persons are well-known figures in European history like kings, popes, emperors etc., their names are written according to the English spelling. The same method is

adopted for geographical names. The approach is different with names not generally known outside the Czech context, like Milíč z Kroměříže. In such cases names are written according to the Latin spelling, i.e. Milicius de Chremsir. The word „Bohemian“ is used here as a reference to the territory of what is today the Czech Republic, whereas „Czech“ refers to the Czech nation. Quotations of the Bible in English are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

# I

## AN ISLAND OF STABILITY IN A TURBULENT EUROPE:

### Bohemia in the Third Quarter of the Fourteenth Century

It has been said in many ways and by many voices that fourteenth-century Europe was a place of glaring contradictions, great social turbulence and deep uncertainty.<sup>1</sup> This century became known as the Age of the Black Death, which at its climax, in the middle of the century, wiped out between a fifth and a third of Europe's population.<sup>2</sup> Due to climate changes and limited resources, hunger and starvation again became a reality for many after a period of stability and growth in economic and material matters. Rome — the ancient heart of Christianity and Western civilization — witnessed tyranny, anarchy and several uprisings and was abandoned by the pope for most of the century. Its splendor and glory seemed to vanish as many buildings and palaces were devastated. Even the emperor generally avoided facing the dangerous and hostile situation in Rome, the city which still symbolized the unity of Latin Christendom. Italy was disintegrating into minor states each controlled by its own nobility, who were unwilling to co-operate with the unifying structures of church and empire. France and England were draining one another's powers in an ongoing war which caused many casualties. The papacy established its seat in Avignon where it became a victim of French policy. For several years, there was an open conflict between the papacy and Lewis IV who was elected emperor in 1314 because the church refused to recognize his rights and even proclaimed him to be a heretic. This situation ended in 1346 when a new emperor was chosen — Charles IV of Luxemburg, the future king of Bohemia. After the pope had finally moved back to Rome in 1377, the church became seriously divided over the elections of two popes in 1378. The unity of the church, however, was threatened even earlier by radical Franciscans who partly supported Lewis IV. Theologians such as Marsilius of Padua and William of Ockham profoundly doubted the authority of the pope and of the church hierarchy as such. Their criticism found support not only among isolated groups on the peripheries of the continent,

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<sup>1</sup>For a general survey of this period see: Denis Hay (ed.), *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, London/New York, 2nd edition, 1989; Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550, An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe*, London 1980; R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe c.1215-c.1515*, Cambridge 1996.



but it initiated and stimulated one of the most important debates of the Middle Ages about the nature of the church and its right to own property. The lay movement placed increasing pressure on the church hierarchy to allow greater autonomy in spiritual matters. Mystics like Eckhardt and Brigitte of Sweden criticized the church for its lack of faith and leadership. The end of the century was marked by a number of events including the Great Schism that brought with it considerable confusion that manifested itself, for example, in the serious heresy of Wyclif's followers in England, similar movements in Bohemia and the deposition of Wenceslaus IV as emperor. The fourteenth century seems to have lacked a unifying force that embodied and communicated the same sense of political harmony that had existed during the High Middle Ages. The universe of scholastic theology and philosophy of that earlier period was also missing in this new age. None of the powers that constituted medieval society seems to have been able to convince the public of its leadership abilities and find new ways of coping with the changing tides. The fourteenth century was a period of a slow but inevitable disintegration of the social order that had been established in the twelfth century.

One part of Europe, however, is in some respects an anomaly among these developments. The kingdom of Bohemia experienced this turbulent century as its most peaceful time in medieval history. This peace was accompanied by substantial economic and cultural growth. The Black Death epidemic of 1348 hardly inflicted the country nor did it leave any traces of extreme suffering. The kingdom became a fully respected member of the community of the Holy Roman Empire and a pillar of political stability on the European continent. Its capital Prague became the residence of the emperor for almost thirty years resulting in a boom of construction, not only in the city but all over the country. Today, many still view this period as the climax and zenith of Czech history, the equal of which has not been seen since. By the end of the century, however, social unrest and political uncertainty had spread over the country and was a prelude to the revolutionary years of the Hussite movement.<sup>3</sup>

Expectations at the beginning of the fourteenth century in Bohemia were not as optimistic as they became by the middle of the century. In 1306, the last king of the house of the

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<sup>2</sup>For more on the Black Death see Klaus Bergdolt, *Der Schwarze Tod in Europa, Die Große Pest und das Ende des Mittelalters*, München 1994.

<sup>3</sup>For general surveys of the fourteenth century in Bohemia see: K. Bosl, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Böhmisches Länder, Band I, Die böhmischen Länder von der archaischen Zeit bis zum Ausgang der Hussitischen Revolution*, Stuttgart 1967; Z. Fiala, *Předhusitské Čechy (1310-1419)* [Pre-Hussite Bohemia (1310-1419)], Praha 1978. For the Hussite Movement and its roots see: František Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce*, I-IV,

Przemyslids, Wenceslaus III, was killed without leaving a successor to the Prague throne. De facto the Przemyslids, who had ruled the country from the tenth century, had died out. This left behind a vacuum of power since there was no natural heir, causing significant confusion and warfare among every possible coalition of nobility and their rivals and enemies. This ceased in 1310 when John of Luxemburg<sup>4</sup> was chosen king of Bohemia, the result of his marriage to the last female member of the Przemyslid household, Elisabeth. John was nicknamed „the foreigner king“ because he spent the majority of his time traveling abroad. Thus, he was unable to engage in matters of domestic politics which the Bohemian nobility saw as a great advantage. He had the reputation of being a passionate fighter and took part in most European battles of his day. This, together with his many visits to tournaments, may have been the reason why he was regularly absent from Bohemia. This enabled the Bohemian nobility to solve its own problems without destabilizing the country; in other words, there was a king but he seldom interfered with the affairs of the nobility since he did not have the opportunity to do so. The one time John tried to make himself manifest on the domestic scene, all the noble families united in a coalition against him.

John was the son of Henry VII of Luxemburg who was elected Roman king in 1308 and crowned emperor in Rome in 1312. It is necessary to take into account the ambitions of the House of the Luxemburgs in order to understand the reasons for the connection between his family and Bohemia. By the end of the thirteenth century the center of political power in Europe had been moved to France. One of the clear signs of this balance of power was the „Avignonese exile“ of the papal court, which lasted from 1306 till 1377. The rise of the Luxemburg household on the European scene is also evidence of this. Before becoming emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Henry VII had to compete with Albrecht of Hapsburg, a descendant of a household that held old claims to the emperor's throne. The political situation in Europe was more in favor of Henry since France supported him. France, not being a part of the empire, could not nominate a candidate for the emperorship. Both Henry and his son John had very good relations to the king of France. This is seen by the fact that John's son Wenceslaus, the future emperor Charles IV, was educated at the French court. John finally died in the Battle of Crécy in 1346, while fighting on the side of the French against the

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Praha 1995-96. A terse survey of the church in this period can be found in: Anna Petitova-Bénoliel, *L'Eglise a Prague sous la dynastie des Luxembourg (1310-1419)*, Hilversum 1996.

<sup>4</sup>For John of Luxemburg see Jiří Spěváček, *Jan Lucemburský a jeho doba 1296-1346* [John of Luxemburg and His Times 1296-1346], Praha 1994, or an older work by the same author entitled *Král diplomat, Jan Lucemburský 1296-1346* [King Diplomat...], Praha 1982.

English. For Henry, gaining Bohemia through the marriage of his son was part of his strategy to extend his influence into other parts of the empire. He received substantial support from his brother Balduinus, archbishop of Trier, in getting his son to become the next emperor. The archbishop had the right to vote in the college of electors which appointed the head of the Roman Empire. Balduinus would also play a major role in later getting his nephew Charles IV elected to the same position. Despite much social and political confusion in Europe and in Bohemia, the House of the Luxemburgs was relatively stable and reached its temporary climax during the reign of Charles IV.

The situation of the church in Bohemia during the reign of John of Luxemburg was fairly complicated. John did not hesitate to use „royal“ monasteries as a source of income. Those monasteries were founded by his ancestors in Prague and were considered property of the crown. Since John was in constant need of money for his many campaigns abroad, some of the important religious institutions experienced a substantial decrease in their welfare.<sup>5</sup> In general, John's attitude towards the church was based on his own personal and primarily financial aim of profiting from the gifts and benefits he bestowed on it.<sup>6</sup>

Tension over the jurisdiction of the mendicant orders characterized the Bohemian church in the first half of the fourteenth century. Like in many other countries, the rivalry between the secular clergy and hierarchy on one side and the mendicant orders on the other caused much confusion. The widespread and energetic activities of the Dominican and the Franciscan orders were derivative of their new understanding of pastoral care and preaching. As they were not bound to any local hierarchy, they presented a certain threat to the secular clergy. It was not only a conflict about spiritual authority but also about the financial benefits given to the clergy by the parishes and the believers. Several bulls and synods from the first half of the century are devoted to this issue. Pope Boniface VIII addressed the problem in his famous bull *Super cathedram* from the year 1300, where he advocates that the mendicants only preach in their churches when there is no service in the regular ones. As for the issue of confession, only the local bishop could grant mendicant orders the right to hear confession.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Fiala, p.16.

<sup>6</sup>Petitova-Bénoliel, p.31.

<sup>7</sup>See Rolf Zerfaß, *Der Streit um die Laienpredigt, Eine pastoralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Verständnis des Predigtamtes und zu seiner Entwicklung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg/Basel/Wien 1974, p. 302ff. We will discuss this in a broader context in the chapter „Preaching and Sermon Collections in the Middle Ages.“

This question was also discussed at the Council of Vienna in 1312 which mainly supported the view of Boniface VIII. The Bishop of Prague Johannes de Dražicz<sup>8</sup> took part in this council and tried to implement its decisions back in Prague. However, he met with decisive resistance from the mendicants, who accused him at the papal court of sympathizing with some heretics in his diocese. As a result of this conflict, Johannes stayed in Avignon from 1318 till 1329 in order to allow himself time to investigate into his own case and to defend himself.<sup>9</sup> For eleven years the Prague bishopric was practically vacant and this had a destabilizing influence on church relations. Both king and bishop — the heads of the secular and spiritual powers — were often absent and therefore were unable to influence matters within the church and society.

Johannes returned from Avignon a free man and stayed in office for some fourteen more years. Even when he was fully rehabilitated, the conflict with the mendicants continued and even led to an outburst of violence between members of the mendicant orders and secular clergy in 1334. Till his death in 1343 (he died at the age of 93) the bishop constantly faced this conflict.

Despite strong opposition against his authority, Johannes found the energy to give a significant boost to the cultural life of his day. He ordered several churches and monasteries to be built. The most important was the monastery of Roudnice north of Prague, founded for the order of the Austin Canons shortly after Johannes' return from Avignon. The Austin Canons were known for their emphasis on book culture, book production, individual study and self-education and are considered closely associated with the new spirituality of the *Devotio moderna*.<sup>10</sup> During the first 15 years of its existence, the monastery was accessible only to members who had both a Czech father and a Czech mother. Founded under the patronage of Johannes, this monastery gained the sympathy of Johannes' successor Arnestus de Pardubicz and of Emperor Charles IV. It became an important place for manuscript collections, relics and for Bible translation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>In Czech „Jan IV z Dražic“, in German „Johann IV von Dražitz.“

<sup>9</sup>Fiala, p. 24ff. For more on Johannes de Dražicz see Zdeňka Hledíková, *Biskup Jan IV. z Dražic*, Praha 1992.

<sup>10</sup>See Šmahel, 2, p. 183 and Winter, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup>For more on the monastery in Roudnice see Hledíková, *Biskup Jan IV. z Dražic*; Jaroslav Kadlec, *Začátky kláštera augustiniánských kanovníků v Roudnici* [The Beginnings of the Monastery of the Augustine Canons in Roudnice], in: *Studie o rukopisech* [Studies on Manuscripts], 1981, p. 65-86; Manfred Gerwing, *Malogranatum oder der dreifache Weg zur Vollkommenheit. Ein Betrag zur Spiritualität des Spätmittelalters*, München 1986.

Many of the initiatives begun during the first half of the fourteenth century in Bohemia would come to fruition only in the second half of the century. Unlike in other parts of Europe where this age of instability and waning of old certainties brought confusion, war and epidemics, Bohemia was a place of prosperity and growth. From this point of view, the period of John of Luxemburg and Johannes de Dražiczy was a time when energy was concentrated on preparing the way for what would come to be considered the golden age of Bohemia. Over time, new trends begun in the first half of the century were developed and brought to a rather unexpected climax. The foundations laid in this period enabled an impressive household of power, culture and welfare to arise later. True, this golden age would not be reached for a long time. At the end of the century, Bohemia experienced the opposite extreme of its previous stability and became a scene of social upheaval and political confusion. The politics and ideas of Charles IV, however, demonstrate that he was a man of great stature who secured Bohemia's prosperity and its connection to European affairs.

Charles was born on 14 May 1316 out of John of Luxemburg's first marriage to Elizabeth Przemyslovna, the last descendant of the Przemyslid House of Bohemia.<sup>12</sup> Originally his name was Wenceslaus, a clear sign that John and his son strongly emphasized the idea of continuity in this old Bohemian household. After being elected Roman king in 1348, he started to use the name Charles as a reference to the famous model and inspiration of all medieval rulers — and indeed not only medieval — Charlemagne. He was educated in Paris under the guidance of Pierre Roger de Beaufort, who became Pope Clemens V in 1342 (this schooling made Charles the first literate ruler of Bohemia). In 1333, Charles returned to Prague where he was appointed count of Moravia in 1334. This was an excellent opportunity for him to become acquainted with the domestic situation of the Bohemian kingdom that had been complicated by the nobility's attempt to achieve broader independence. From the outset, it was clear that Charles would play a different role as king than his father had done since he was much more engaged in the affairs of the country. He formulated and formed a solid foundation for his reign, thus laying the groundwork for his rise to power after 1342. It was also clear that

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<sup>12</sup>On Charles IV see Zdeněk Kalista, *Karel IV, jeho duchovní tvář* [Charles IV, His Spiritual Identity], Praha 1971; František Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV. a jeho císařství (1355-1378)*, *Země České koruny, rodová, říšská a evropská politika* [The Reign of Charles IV and His Emperors (1355-1378), The Lands of the Bohemian Crown, Family, Imperial and European Politics], I-II, Praha 1993; Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl IV., Ein Kaiser in Europa 1346 bis 1378*, München 1978; Jiří Spěváček, *Karl IV., Sein Leben und seine staatsmännische Leistung*, Praha/Wien 1978, or *Karel IV, život a dílo (1316-1378)*, Praha 1979; Václav Vaněček (ed.), *Karolus Quartus, Piae memoriae fundatoris sui universitas carolina, Sborník vědeckých prací o době, osobnosti a díle českého krále a římského císaře Karla IV.* [Collection of Studies on the Era, Personality and Work of the Bohemian King and Roman Emperor Charles IV], Praha 1984.

Charles' ambitions went beyond that of ruling only the Bohemian kingdom and that he had powerful supporters on the European level who would help him on his way to the highest office in the empire. An important reason for the success of Charles' international career was the good relationship the House of the Luxemburgs had with the papacy and France.

In 1342, John of Luxemburg turned his responsibilities and duties as king of Bohemia over to Charles. Four years later, John died in the Battle of Crécy and his son was officially appointed king of Bohemia. Very soon after, important steps were taken that would change the face of the capital Prague and elevate the city from a second-rate town to one of the major capitals in Europe. In 1344, the diocese of Prague became an archdiocese which was no longer subordinated to the archbishop of Mainz.<sup>13</sup> In 1348, under Charles' initiative, the University of Prague was founded, which was the first university in the empire.<sup>14</sup> In 1348, he started an immense project to enlarge Prague to about three times its original size, which had encompassed the castle, the Lesser Town and the (Old) Town.<sup>15</sup> In the same year, he started the construction of a new cathedral at the Prague Castle, devoted to St. Wenceslaus (Bohemia's main patron saint), St. Adalbertus and St. Vitus. Charles invited many monastic orders that were not yet present in Bohemia to come and begin their activities here. Within a few years, Prague became a major center on the map of Europe and an important player in the empire's cultural and political events.

There are diverse reasons for this enthusiasm for growth and „progress.“ Some explanations are on a European level. In 1348, Charles IV was elected Roman king after a period in which the animosity between the pope and Roman king (de facto emperor) had reached unexpected heights. Lewis of Wittelsbach's election to the post of Roman king was not recognized by the pope, and the king became involved in a theological struggle that had its political impetus in the question of whether the church should own property. Lewis gave protection to radical Franciscans and other opponents of the church hierarchy who had been pronounced heretics by the pope. As a result, the king was also excommunicated, which made the political situation extremely convoluted. In 1348 Lewis suddenly died, thus creating a possible solution to the situation. Moderate powers on the European level who were on the side of the papacy or of the secular power saw in Charles IV a possibility to make a new start. Charles' uncle

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<sup>13</sup>See Zdeňka Hledíková and Jaroslav V. Polc (ed.), *Pražské arcibiskupství 1344-1994* [The Prague Archdiocese ...], Praha 1994.

<sup>14</sup>See Ivana Čornejová, Michal Svatoš e.a. (ed), *Dějiny Univerzity Karlovy* [The History of Charles University], I, Praha 1995.

<sup>15</sup>See Vilém Lorenc, *Das Prag Karls IV., Die Prager Neustadt*, Praha/Stuttgart 1971/1982.

Balduinus, archbishop of Trier, again proved very influential and got Charles elected to this office. The building activities in Prague were significant in that they strengthened Charles' authority as the new head of the Empire.

However, there must have been more behind Prague's expansion than this since preparations for it started long before Charles was elected Roman king. This indicates that the construction works were meant to support some of the Luxemburg House's long-term goals. The concept of creating a more impressive Prague fitted in with the Luxemburgs' ambitions to found a new imperial dynasty in Europe. For the second time in this century, a member of the same house was chosen emperor and king of Bohemia, and this appeared to be a stable and strong basis for gaining and holding on to this position. These new dimensions of the Bohemian kingdom required that there be a representational seat for its ruler, who was also head of the empire. From this point of view, the expansion of Prague was merely another logical step in a political strategy that had been established when John of Luxemburg married the daughter of the last Bohemian king.<sup>16</sup> This idea of creating a representational seat might have been strengthened by the political situation in the natural capital of the empire, Rome. The eternal city was devastated and for a fairly long time it could not serve as a representational seat for its formal head.

Much of Charles' behavior suggests that he had a substantial amount of religious sensitivity. In many instances, he used symbols with a clear religious or even prophetic meanings. When expanding Prague, he employed maps of Jerusalem — the Holy City of Christendom — intending to build a kind of new Jerusalem or Constantinople.<sup>17</sup> Not only did Charles compare himself to Charlemagne, the great example of medieval Christendom, but he openly made references to Constantine who became the first Christian ruler of the empire. Charles also

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<sup>16</sup>This argumentation is strongly criticized by Ferdinand Seibt in his work *Karl IV* (p. 175 ff.). According to him, the idea of the Holy Roman Empire with an emperor chosen by the college of electors did not support the idea of establishing a main capital for the empire since the next emperor could come from another part of Europe and would therefore have his seat in a different place. According to him, Charles could not have intended to build a new capital for the empire when he expanded Prague. Moreover, the founding of the university — one of the important steps Charles took in 1348 — was not unique. Charles founded many universities during his reign, just as he built many churches and buildings in other (German) cities (Nürnberg, Bamberg etc.). However, Seibt's criticism cannot explain the enormous extent of the construction projects in Prague. It seems insufficient to suggest that such an activity was only related to Charles' position as king of Bohemia. As is evident in his autobiography, Charles understood his role as a ruler to be consistent with the aim of both the Přemyslid and the Luxemburg Houses — that is to remain at the forefront of Europe (Fiala, p. 280 ff.). Charles did not see himself as just a contemporary ruler of the empire but as one figure in a line of past and future rulers.

<sup>17</sup>Lorenc, p. 49 ff.; Rudolf Chadraba, Profetický historismus Karla IV. a přemyslovská tradice [Prophetic Historism of Charles IV and the Přemyslid tradition], in: *Karolus Quartus*, p. 421-450, here especially p. 424 ff. See also P.G.J.M. Raedts, Jeruzalem in tijd en eeuwigheid. Een essay over de verbeelding van het heilige

became a passionate collector of pious items which he acquired from every part of the world. The collections of relics in Bohemia grew considerably in these years. The collections confirmed Charles' authority as emperor.<sup>18</sup> The extensive enlargement of Prague certainly was connected to this religious sensitivity. There are also some indications that Charles believed that Slavonic Christianity offered a new chance for Europe to overcome this period of confusion and find a way to achieve the same stability that Slavonic people had brought to the Eastern part of Europe. This would mean that Charles saw his reign as the start of a new era in which Prague was to play a major role, as Rome or Constantinople had in an earlier stage in history.<sup>19</sup>

Despite his strong religious awareness, Charles' relationship to the church was mainly a political one.<sup>20</sup> His policy towards the papacy and the domestic church was motivated by the significance these institutes could have for his own position. In some cases, this approach created disappointment and worsened relations. The clearest example of this disillusionment was the papal court which had high expectations for an emperor who had been educated by a future pope. Charles needed the support of the pope, e.g. to finally receive the imperial crown from the hands of the pope — a ritual which had to take place in Rome according to medieval thinking. The pope, on the other hand, again needed Charles to realize some of his ideas and goals through his church politics. It was a game of tactical alliances based on political calculations.<sup>21</sup> An episode with Cola di Rienzo, a revolutionary from Rome, is a fine illustration of this relationship. In 1350, not long after Charles was elected Roman king, Cola di Rienzo arrived in Prague. Three years earlier he had organized a coup d'état in Rome that denied the pope any legitimate rights in the city. Cola, of course, was excommunicated. But as revolutions are not very kind to those who initiate them, his success did not last long and soon he had to flee from Rome. When he arrived in Prague, the pope immediately requested his extradition, but Charles did not hurry to fulfill the pope's wishes. In fact, he gave Cola a kind of political asylum, imprisoning him in Roudnice. Finally, after two years of political negotiations and tensions, Charles sent his prisoner to Avignon, after having been assured that

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[Jerusalem in Time and Eternity. An Essay on the Imagination of the Holy], in: R.E.V. Stuip (ed.), *Utrecht, Hilversum* 1991, p. 89-102.

<sup>18</sup>For this see Karel Stejskal, Karel jako sběratel [Charles as a Collector], in: *Karolus Quartus*, p. 455-465.

<sup>19</sup>So Chadraba, p. 445 ff.

<sup>20</sup>Zdeňka Hledíková, Karel IV. a církev [Charles IV and the Church], in: *Karolus Quartus*, p. 137-155.



the revolutionary would not be executed. Nevertheless, Cola's life had a fairly tragic end. In 1353 he returned to Rome, this time in the service of the next pope, but he was not accepted by the Roman citizens. He was murdered in 1354. Charles, on the other hand, was crowned emperor in 1355 by a delegate of Pope Innocent VI.

Charles had the same approach toward the church in Bohemia. The many nominations he made as well as his initiative to found many new monasteries secured his position in the country. In Bohemia, he extensively supported the moderate reform movement represented by some new orders and prominent popular preachers like Conradus de Waldhausen and Milicius de Chremsir. Both preachers did not hesitate to openly criticize the attitude and morals of many clergy members. In their conflicts with the clergy and the mendicant orders, they had the emperor on their side. Charles' favorite monastic order was the Austin Canons, who opened 17 new monasteries in Bohemia between 1350 and 1374 (the prestigious monastery in Roudnice belonged to them as well). Another politically motivated decision in church matters was the founding of the Emaus Monastery in the New Town of Prague. This community had to practice rites in the old Slavonic language maintaining its Byzantine connotations. Charles wanted to create a place where religious people from Slavonic countries could devote themselves to the tradition of Cyril and Methodius, the two apostles of the Slavonic people. At the same time, the presence of such an institution in his capital must have strengthened Charles' international reputation.

The Prague diocese became an archbishopric in 1344, which brought to a large extent independence to the internal affairs of the Bohemian church.<sup>22</sup> The church lost some of its feudal characteristics, e.g. by abolishing patronage when nominating pastors and bishops. A separate court of justice for the clergy was established. In the course of the fourteenth century, the church in the Bohemian kingdom became increasingly organized in its details. Christianity finally reached the ground levels of society. A dense net of parishes was set up with more than 3 500 communities which gave the church an enormous influence on everyday life. Closely connected to this pastoral net and the possibilities it offered for local control was a strong centralism, which the Avignonese papal court also promoted. The local churches were used to

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<sup>21</sup>Jiří Spěváček, Politický profil Karlovy osobnosti a ideové kořeny jeho budovatelského díla [The Political Profile of Charles' Personality and the Ideological Roots of his Building Efforts], in: *Karolus Quartus*, p. 17-35. See also Fiala, p. 123 ff.

<sup>22</sup>Fiala, p. 239 ff. See also a separate study by the same author on this subject: Správa a postavení církve v Čechách od počátku 13. do poloviny 14. století [The Organization and Position of the Church in Bohemia from the Beginning of the thirteenth till the Middle of the fourteenth Century, in: *Sborník historický*, III, Praha 1955, p. 64-88.

collecting tithes and requesting other obligations from their parishioners. One effect of this centralism was that corruption spread among the clergy who asked for financial and other privileges such as services, or who received prebends for offices they actually did not execute. Two popular preachers in Prague Conradus and Milicius both worked under the protection of Charles IV and strongly criticized this state of affairs. Charles might have viewed the extensive corruption in the church as a destabilizing element that needed changing. This is possibly the reason why he supported the moderate reformist movement in Bohemia. There are some reports of heretics existing in the southern parts of Bohemia in the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>23</sup> The reports from the inquisition mention Waldensians, whose numbers were very small. It seems they never were a real threat to the *status quo* in the country. From 1343 till 1364 the Prague archdiocese was under the leadership of Arnestus de Pardubicz who was a close spiritual and political ally to Charles IV. He traveled with him on many of his diplomatic visits and negotiated the conditions of Charles' imperial coronation. Together with two other prelates, Arnestus is regarded as the driving force behind the reformist movement called Pre-Humanism. Arnestus himself studied in Bologna and Padua and probably was influenced by a new spirituality which had a profoundly individualistic identity. Back in Prague, he appeared to be a firm sympathizer of Bishop Johannes de Dražic's policy, and, as his successor, he went on to bring new influences into his country. Being well aware of the corruption in the church and the dangers of it, he started a program of reform that included regular instructive meetings for the Prague clergy. Like Charles, he protected Conradus and Milicius against attacks by clergy members and mendicants. The two other representatives of the moderate reformist movement were Johannes Oczko de Vlašim, bishop of Olomouc, and Johannes Novoforensis, chancellor of Charles IV. The former became the successor of Arnestus in 1364 on Charles' request. Charles' attitude towards the reformist movement seems to have been sympathetic but tactical. He actively supported the foundation of new institutions and orders but did not identify himself with them. As he was above all seeking to guarantee stability, he may have believed that the „old“ spirituality needed immediate reform in order to guarantee its existence in the world tomorrow. He saw himself as the *Imperator mundi* who had to care for the well-being of the whole world. Two of his main architectural works — St. Vitus Cathedral in

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<sup>23</sup>See Rudolf Holinka, *Sektárství v Čechách před revolucí husitskou* [Sectarism in Bohemia Before the Hussite Revolution], Bratislava 1929; Amedeo Molnár, *Valdenští, Evropský rozměr jejich vzdoru* [The Waldensians, the European Dimension of Their Resistance], Praha 1991.

Prague and Karlstein Castle just outside of Prague — demonstrate that Charles considered himself to be Christ's servant, inheriting authority directly and indirectly from his ancestors who descended from Christ himself.<sup>24</sup> A keen awareness of this vocation motivated Charles to try to establish a new dynasty that would rule the empire in the coming decades and centuries. The only plausible explanation why such immense financial investments and energy were put into state construction projects is that this was done in the hope that it would enable the House of the Luxemburgs to rise in importance on the European scene; that is, to establish an image of the stability and prosperity seemingly created under the guidance of Christ. Charles' oeuvre shows no sense of crisis, uncertainty or confusion as had the works of many of his contemporaries. Charles' world knew only stability — and it is true that in the fourteenth century, Bohemia would experience its most stable time for many years to come. During the reign of John of Luxemburg and his son Charles, the country witnessed no foreign army nor war within its borders. The foundation had been laid; now the future generations would only have to continue on this path.

Charles' success was, however, quite an anomaly in fourteenth-century European history. The last great emperor of the Middle Ages died in 1378, leaving his offices both in Bohemia and in the Roman Empire to his son Wenceslaus IV. In no way the young ruler could match the stature of his father.<sup>25</sup> He did not have a strong character, was unable to make firm decisions and was not wise enough to find ways to implement those decisions he did make. Soon he became the object of many political games domestically and throughout the empire. Unfortunately, his counterpart in the Bohemian church Johannes de Jenštejn, who became archbishop in 1379, was ill and therefore unable to lead the church. The stable world of Charles IV was quickly turned upside down. In 1378 the Great Schism began which would divide the Western world for more than three decades. In 1400, Wenceslaus IV was forced to step down as Roman emperor. A few years later, the movement led by John Hus grew into a

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<sup>24</sup>See Jiří Fajt, Jan Royt, *Magister Theodoricus, Court Painter of Emperor Charles IV., Decorations of the Sacred Spaces at Castle Karlštejn*, Praha 1997 (publication for the exhibition 'Magister Theodoricus' in the Convent of St. Agnes of Bohemia, 12 November 1997 - 26 April 1998); František Fišer, *Karlštejn, vzájemné vztahy tří karlštejnských kaplí* [Karlstein, the Relationship Among the Three Karlstein Chapels], Kostelní Vydří 1996; Gábor Klaniczay, The Cult of Dynastic Saints in Central Europe: Fourteenth-Century Angevins and Luxemburgs, in: *The Uses of Supernatural Power. The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe*, Cambridge 1990, p. 111-128; Anežka Merhautová (ed.), *Katedrála sv. Víta v Praze* [St. Vitus' Cathedral in Prague], Praha 1994.

<sup>25</sup>See Jiří Spěvák, *Václav IV., 1361-1419. K předpokladům husitské revoluce* [To the Preconditions of the Hussite Revolution], Praha 1986.

revolution and overthrew many of the basic principles of medieval society. Charles' legacy remained unanswered as history moved in other directions.

Our main interest lies in the period of growth and prosperity during the third quarter of the fourteenth century in Bohemia. Let us return to the years of Charles IV, more specifically to the work and personality of the preacher Milicius de Chremsir, who, despite the stability and prosperity of Charles' time, witnessed this deep unrest concerning the church and society and who reflected this feeling in his theological ideas about the immanent end of time.

## II

### MILICIUS' LIFE AND BIOGRAPHIES

It was the Czech artisans and shopkeepers who flocked to hear Milíč preach in their own language at St. Giles' in the Malá Strana, and their sons whom he instructed in Latin about the art and duties of a preacher at St. Nicholas' in the Old Town. When Milíč preached that the wars and pestilences of his own day, the division of nations, the avarice and self-indulgence of clergy and laity alike were all signs that the abomination of desolation was already set in the holy place, that the Antichrist was at hand and that the year of the prophet Daniel had already come, he was merely stating in apocalyptic terms the historical fact that he was living in an age of revolution and that the ecclesiastical and moral order designed for an agricultural, feudal, non-nationalistic society was breaking down into the new commercial and nationalistic society in which he and his listeners were living.<sup>26</sup>

Those are the words of Professor R.R. Betts probably written shortly after the Second World War.<sup>27</sup> He was one of the few non-Czech scholars who devoted himself to the history of Bohemia and Central Europe. Betts was mainly interested in the Hussite period and the so-called predecessors of Johannes Hus, in particular Matthias de Janow. Due to the Second World War, Betts was unable to publish his general study on the Hussite reformation and therefore, his ideas survive only in articles.<sup>28</sup>

As far as the current inquiry is concerned, another Elijah, i.e. a man overflowing with the spirit of Elijah, was needed, who broke the long silence over the last coming of Christ and Antichrist. And if you accept the many archival materials that were presented to me as evidence, this man was Milicius, the honorable priest and preacher, who was

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<sup>26</sup>R.R. Betts, The Place of the Czech Reform Movement in the History of Europe, in: *Essays in Czech History*, London 1969 (p. 86-106), p. 88.

<sup>27</sup>The selected *Essays in Czech History* stem from the years 1939-1957. The date of the first publication of the paper quoted here is not mentioned.

<sup>28</sup>On Betts' life see the Memoir of G.R. Potter in the *Essays*.

mighty in word and deed, whose words burned like torches.<sup>29</sup>

Matthias de Janow wrote this in his *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti* at the beginning of his short biography on Milicius. The quotation primarily reveals the degree to which R.R. Betts was influenced by his favorite predecessor of John Hus. The image the twentieth-century scholar has of Milicius is not very different from the one Matthias offered us just a few years after the preacher's death. Of course, it is Betts' assessment of apocalypticism as a sign of the end of one era and the start of another which makes him a scholar of our times. His modern skeptical understanding of religiously colored pronouncements such as the Last Judgment and the coming of the Antichrist attributes them to the feeling of crisis and uncertainty of that time. In Betts' writing, however, Matthias de Janow's image of Milicius is still present. Moreover, most of the keywords in Betts' short description of Milicius are taken directly from Matthias, as a thorough reading of the *Narracio* will reveal.

Matthias' depiction of Milicius has basically dominated through the ages as we see in the case of Betts. However, we do have a second biography on Milicius which has a much more complicated history. The author of this work entitled *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, praelati ecclesiae Pragensis* is unknown. The biography is quite extensive and portrays Milicius as a very pious and even saintly person. A quick comparison of Matthias' *Narracio* and the *Vita* reveals one important difference. The *Vita* does not challenge Matthias' depiction of Milicius as Elijah, rather it is more or less a long enumeration of his venerable works and life. This may be one of the reasons why Matthias' view prevailed historically and why it was adopted by a twentieth-century scholar like R.R. Betts. Now, we will first survey the *Narracio*, then the *Vita* and finally, we will try to paint a chronological overview of Milicius de Chremsir's life.

### 1. The *Narracio de Myliczyo*

As we have seen, the *Narracio de Myliczyo* is part of the main work of Matthias de Janow,<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>„Quantum ad praesentem inquisitionem attinet, alius Helyas i.e. vir habundans spiritu Helye requiratur, qui diutinum rupit silencium de aduentu Christi ultimo et Antychristi. Et si wltis accipere, quantum noticia gestorum mihi asserendum inducit, ipse est Myliczius, venerabilis presbiter et predicator, potens in opere en in sermone, cuius verbum tamquam facula ardebat.“ *Narracio de Myliczyo* of Matthias de Janow, in: *FRB*, p. 69, footnote 1.

<sup>30</sup>The notation of Matthias' name is different in the several involved languages. In Czech it is Matěj z Janova, in Latin Matthias de Janow (according to Pavel Spunar in his *Repertorium auctorum Bohemorum provectorum idearum post Universitatem Pragensem conditam illustrans*, Tomus I, Wroclaw 1985) or de Janov (according to

*Regulae veteris et novi testamenti*. Matthias can be considered a disciple of Milicius. He was the son of a lower nobleman and studied at the university in Prague in the early 1370's.<sup>31</sup> He continued his studies in Paris, which is why „Parisiensis“ was added to his name. In 1381 after personally applying for the position of canon and being granted it by Urban VI, Matthias returned to Prague. It was this practice of reservations and provisions which Matthias criticized heavily in his later works. He advocated allowing laity to receive frequent or even daily communion. This led him into a severe conflict with the majority of the clergy in Prague. In 1388 a synod in Prague agreed on the measure that forbid lay people to receive the Holy Communion more than once a month. The next year, a second synod forced Matthias and some of his fellow preachers to withdraw their teachings on daily communion and stripped Matthias of his priestly functions. This conflict, which was one attempt by major groups within the Prague clergy to minimize the influence critical preachers and followers of Milicius had over the laity, continued till 1392 at which time Matthias promised to turn himself over to the Archbishop of Prague Johannes de Jenštejn. Matthias died on 30 November 1394 and being a titular canon, he was buried in St. Vitus Cathedral.

Matthias wrote his main work *Regulae veteris et novis testamenti* between 1384 and 1394. It has a typically scholastic structure as it is divided into five books, with the third book containing the *Narracio*.<sup>32</sup> Several of the books are divided into subdivisions and treatises. Every part is written in the form of the classical scholastic university *disputatio* with its *questio* and answer. It is not easy to give a one-line characterization of the work because it contains the author's many different notions on subjects outside church, theology and even society. František Palacký's translation into Czech, however, might offer the best summary: *Books on True and False Christianity*.<sup>33</sup> The titles of the five books, which are preceded by a prologue, give more insight into the content:

I. On the distinction of spirits and prophets according to the rules handed down for that,

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the editor of the *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti*, Vlastimil Kybal). Sometimes „Pařížský“ or „Parisiensis“ is added to his name because of his study in Paris. We use here the Latin notation of Spunar.

<sup>31</sup>On Matthias see František Loskot, *Matěj z Janova*, Praha 1912; František Palacký, *Předchůdcové husitství v Čechách*, in: *Dílo Františka Palackého*, sv. 3, Praha 1941, p. 61-114; this study was also published in a German version: *Die Vorläufer des Husitenthums in Böhmen*, Leipzig 1846; a third source is František Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce*, 2, Kořeny české reformace [The Hussite Revolution, 2, The Roots of the Bohemian Reformation], Praha 1996, p. 204 ff.

<sup>32</sup>The *Narracio* is edited several times. Firstly in the edition of the *Regulae*: V. Kybal, *Matthiae de Janov Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, Praha/Innsbruck 1908-1926, where we find it in the third volume (1911), p. 358-436. A second edition is K. Höfler, *Geschichtschreiber der hussitischen Bewegung in Böhmen II* (Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, erste Abteilung: Scriptorum, II. Band, Theil II), Wien 1856, p. 40-46. The third edition, which we follow here, is by Josef Emler, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum I*, Praha 1873, p. 431-436.

<sup>33</sup>„Knihy o pravém a lichém křesťanství,” Palacký, *Předchůdcové*, p. 90.

here in the Old Testament;

II. On the distinction of spirits in the prophets and the gospel;

III. The Thirteenth main rule;

IV. On the Body of Christ (or the question whether each Christian saint should be permitted to receive the sacrament of communion daily, i.e. the body and the blood of Christ);

V. On the Body of Christ.<sup>34</sup>

Matthias seems to be searching for rules for leading a Christian life under all circumstances and finds his answers in the Scriptures. In his Prologue he even states that he did not use the answers given in the writings of theologians, even though he did learn a lot from them. Here he uses only the Bible as a source. One of his main questions is about frequent or even daily communion for the laity, which brought him into conflict with Prague clerics. Other issues deal with the church, its need for reform and its relation to the state. The tensions between church and state and the overall social situation bring Matthias to the question of Antichrist, who is one of the subjects in the third book.

Like the first and the second book, the third book — which is the most extensive — has several subdivisions or tractates:

1. On rule itself;
2. On witnesses to the truth;
3. Rulings by the holy doctors for daily or frequent communion of the sacrament of the altar by the Christian people;
4. On the unity and universality of the church;
5. On Antichrist;
6. On abomination in a holy place.<sup>35</sup>

The *Narracio de Myliczyo* is found in the fifth treatise on Antichrist where it forms an introduction to the next part, the *Libellus de Antichristo* or „The Book on Antichrist,” which is

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<sup>34</sup>I. De discrezione spirituum et prophetarum secundum regulas traditas ad hoc in Veteri testamento;

II. De discrezione spirituum in prophetis et evangelio;

III. Decima tertia regula principalis;

IV. De corpore Christi (sive Questio, utrum omnibus et singulis sanctis christianis liceat cottidie communionem, id est corpus et sanguinem Christi, sacramentaliter manducare);

V. De corpore Christi.

Josef Tříška, *Literární činnost předhusitské university* [The Literary Activity of the Pre-Hussite University], Praha 1967, p. 89-90.

<sup>35</sup>1. De regula in se; 2. De testibus veritatis; 3. Determinaciones sanctorum doctorum pro cottidiana vel crebra communione sacramenti altaris a plebibus christianis; 4. De unitate et universitate ecclesie; 5. De Antichristo; 6. De abhominacione in loco sancto. Josef Tříška, p. 89-90.



one of Milicius' writings. From the beginning of the work, it is clear what Matthias is up to when he describes his memories of Milicius.

In this, Milicius, whose name in Latin means „the most beloved,“ I saw him overflowing with every love and fondness of mercy to everybody, even to his enemies and persecutors, that there was no one except those possessed by the spirit of Antichrist who, when he had to speak or deal with him, did not draw on the love, grace and kindness of spirit from him; and no one left him unconsolated. He revealed himself in everything to be a second Elijah: incessantly weakening his body by fasting, flogging and penance, as well as many austerities, he tried hard in everything, continuously working for the well-being of the people, so that, according to the opinion of any observer, whatever his works transcended every human power and strength of the body. He was continuously hearing confessions, visiting the sick, the imprisoned and the sick, consoling and converting the sad and the sinners.<sup>36</sup>

Matthias presents Milicius here as a perfect spiritual and religious person whose love and dedication toward other people knew no limits. His pastoral care for his flock never ended and his responsibility for the spiritual welfare of believers caused him to lead a very austere lifestyle. Because of this constant involvement with his community, Milicius is a second Elijah according to Matthias. The perfection which Milicius achieved in his work goes beyond human possibilities and must therefore be of an eschatological kind. Matthias warns that everyone must accept this image of Milicius and those who are unable or unwilling to do so are possessed by the Antichrist's evil spirit. This was a warning sign for those clergy who opposed Milicius' work and accused him of heresy. Or even more pertinent to Matthias: it was a warning to those who were persecuting preachers and other followers of Milicius. In the very first lines of his biography on Milicius, Matthias establishes Milicius as a role model. Matthias used the example of Milicius in his own struggle with church officials and many clerics who doubted Matthias' own faithfulness and orthodoxy. The *Narracio de Myliczyo*

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<sup>36</sup> „In quo quidem Myliczyo, quod nomen latinum in sermonem translatum sonat carissimus, ego vidi eius omnem dilectionem et viscera miserationum et ad omnes homines eciam ad inimicos et persecutores redundare, ut nullus erat nisi forte spiritu Antychristi agitatus, qui cum ipso habebat loqui uel agere, qui amorem et gratiam atque suauitatem spiritus ab ipso non hauriret; nullusque non consolatus ab eo recedebat. Iste veluti alter Helyas in omnibus se prorsus exhibuit: nam inedia, cilicio et cinere multaue austeritate incessanter corpus atterrens, laboribus continuis in salute populorum insudabat in tantum, ut secundum cuiuslibet spectantis iudicium labores

which we read in the life-work of Matthias de Janow is in the first place an *apologia pro vita auctoris*, an attempt to justify his spiritual path and teachings.

Matthias' struggle with church authorities was very bitter. This might be one of the reasons why Matthias frequently used the eschatological vocabulary in the *Regulae* and in particular in the *Narracio*. In his opinion, the struggle with the clergy started with Milicius who was one of the first to criticize the church and its members. He was one of the first to voice the need to liberate the church from the evil forces of sin and Antichrist. Due to his activities, a new force of preachers arose who took up the struggle for the church. Their struggle is the final one since the purity and unity of the church and the faithful are at stake. Matthias might have held those views, causing him to present Milicius as the „first,“ like Elijah the prophet who it is promised will come at the end of time when the final struggle is about to be fought.<sup>37</sup>

Matthias elaborates on the apology he wrote for Milicius by pointing out more details from his life. Although Milicius had a good reputation at the chancery of Charles IV where he worked, he decided to leave behind everything he had, „benefices and honorable offices,“ to follow perfectly in the path of Jesus Christ. Rather than dwelling in the houses of the rich, he wanted to be humbled in the House of the Lord. To Matthias the richness and wealth of the powerful of the world was one more sign of the Antichrist. He wrote, „I confess that a short time ago I was afflicted and covered by the spirit of the Antichrist, full of cupidity and pernicious ambition, very much longing for the wealth, glory and honors of this world.“<sup>38</sup> In Matthias' perspective, Milicius had taken the same step as he had in leaving the environment of Antichrist.

One of the basic concerns of Milicius according to Matthias was for single women, ex-prostitutes and widows. Milicius wished to offer everything he had for the well-being of souls and received in exchange a miraculous gift of mercy from Christ. Within a very short time, he convinced about 200 prostitutes to repent their sins, and numerous pious women all over the country started to live in the love of Christ thanks to Milicius' preaching.

This again seems also to be an aspect of Matthias' struggle with the clergy. Matthias' opponents complained that such pious women were only concerned with their personal redemption, and thereby neglected their social duties in the household. Matthias, however, encouraged this attitude among the women. Frequent or even daily communion was in his

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sui omnem valenciam hominum et robur carnis excedebant. Nam continuus erat in confessiones audiendo, in visitando infirmos et in carcere et infirmatos, mestos et peccatores consolando et convertendo.“ Emler, p. 431 ff.

<sup>37</sup>Malachi 4,5.

<sup>38</sup>Quoted by Palacký, *Předchůdcové*, p. 87.

eyes only acceptable if the person receiving communion was preparing himself (or herself) in a proper way by doing repentance. In the meantime, the number of Beguine houses in Prague increased rapidly bringing together pious women without any official rule. This caused concern to the archbishop and the Emperor Wenceslaus IV who believed these communities could be nests of the Beghard heretics and should therefore be looked upon with caution.<sup>39</sup> To Matthias this concern was unfounded which he tried to illustrate with the case of Milicius. He points out that Milicius himself helped single women to start a new life, liberating them from prostitution by buying them everything they needed. He was a „careful father, full of mercy.“ In this context, Matthias makes a comparison which exceeds the image of Milicius as Elijah, comparing him to Christ and the apostles: „This Milicius, the son and image of the Lord Jesus Christ and a rather true and clear similitude of the apostles, supported those penitent women by his own means.“<sup>40</sup> When he had no money, he sold his books, borrowed and begged from the rich, and took care of the women till the end of his life. The second aspect of Milicius' life was preaching. Here again he is compared to Elijah who struggled with false priests and evil princes. Preaching criticizes those who live according to Antichrist and his law. Milicius struggled with false prophets, monks and clerics, daily defending the truth and the Law of Christ. Here we find the famous reference about Milicius who allegedly characterized the Emperor Charles IV as Antichrist.

He admonished courageously high prelates, archbishops and bishops for what they obviously were doing wrong. And dressed with zeal like an armored knight, he came forward, pointed at the aforementioned emperor with his finger and said to him in front of everyone that he is the Great Antichrist, because of which he was imprisoned for a long time.<sup>41</sup>

Although it makes quite a heroic impression on us when we imagine Milicius as an undaunted prophet revealing the true nature of the emperor as the Great Antichrist while in his presence, there are serious reasons to doubt Matthias' narration. In the first place, it is unlikely that Charles attended Milicius' sermons at all since he presumably did not attend the sermons of

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<sup>39</sup>Šmahel, 2, p. 207.

<sup>40</sup>„Ipse vero Mylicius filius et ymago domini Ihesu Christi, apostolorumque ipsius similitudo prope expressa et ostensa, predictas meretrices penitentes suis sumptibus fouit.“ Emler, p. 432.

Milicius' older fellow preacher Conradus de Waldhausen.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the emperor does seem to have sympathized with Milicius' work. As we will see in the second biography on Milicius, Charles financially supported his work with former prostitutes. Although Milicius was certainly very critical of the powerful, he never doubted their legitimate place and function in society. Whenever he refers in his sermons to the emperor, he seems to express a certain sympathy for him as is the case in the *Libellus de Antichristo*, the main source of Milicius' ideas about Antichrist. Antichrist, he states here, will bring disorder to the world which is already the case in large parts of the Roman Empire. If the emperor could not rely on the stability of Bohemia, he would be without any support, Milicius concludes. This suggests that in his attempt for order, Charles was a victim of Antichrist rather than his potential ally.<sup>43</sup> It seems more likely that Matthias is twisting the image of Milicius again to support his own criticism of and struggle with contemporary authorities. In 1376 Charles IV died leaving behind an immense oeuvre on politics, society, church and culture. The reign of his successor Wenceslaus IV came nowhere near to replicating the great achievements of Charles, who was perhaps the last medieval emperor to follow in the tradition of Charlemagne. Wenceslaus was unable to realize his ideas and impose his will in the political arena and soon became a ruler characterized by strong words and unimpressive deeds. He was unable to cooperate with the Bohemian aristocracy, nor could he resolve the ongoing civil war in Hungary or take a leading role in the schismatic conflict in the church. He showed instead a very selfish attitude, which might have been the result of his spoiled upbringing.<sup>44</sup> Eventually he even gave up his involvement in imperial matters because he was unable to resolve them. Soon a profound uncertainty infected the whole empire and Bohemia which led to his deposition as emperor in 1400.

Matthias developed a very critical view on the question of power in his day. He writes in the *Regulae*:

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<sup>41</sup> „Hic prelatos summos, archiepiscopos et episcopos corripuit viriliter pro hiis, in quibus visi sunt aberrare, his indutus zelo quasi toraci imperatorem predictum aggressus digito indicavit et dixit sibi coram omnibus, quod ille sit magnus Antychristus, propter quod carceres et vincula diutine est perpressus.“ Emler, p. 433.

<sup>42</sup> According to Conradus Charles and he were not in a direct contact, although the emperor himself invited the preacher to work in Prague. See Konstantin Höfler, *Geschichtschreiber der hussitischen Bewegung*, II, p. 37, and Šmahel, 2, p. 186 and 193.

<sup>43</sup> „Discessio ab Imperio perfecta, ex quo ita distractum est et tota die distrahitur, quod dominus Imperator non possit ex eo panem habere, nisi habeat de Boemia, et quoniam in plura regna et imperia divisum est Imperium Romanorum.“ *Libellus de Antichristo*, ed. Kybal, *Matthiae de Janov Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti, III*, Praha/Innsbruck 1911, p. 378. See also „Sovereign or Tyrant: the Morality of Power“ p... in this study.

<sup>44</sup> For an evaluation of the reign of Wenceslaus IV see Jiří Spěvák, *Václav IV 1361-1419, K předpokladům husitské revoluce* [To the Preconditions of the Hussite Revolution], Praha 1986, p. 583 ff.

For truly there are in Christendom many kingdoms, principalities and duchies without mutual respect, harmony or unity, in this age in regard to which that vision of the Beast is fitting. Indeed they are more divided from each other on account of their disregard for government and their disobedience and dissension.<sup>45</sup>

Or, a few chapters earlier he symbolically depicts imperial power as a woman sitting on the back of the Beast. „Indeed that woman, that is the multitude of hypocrites, is seen seated upon the Beast. This Beast signifies the secular, that is the imperial and military powers with all the kingdoms of Christians who are in the flesh.“<sup>46</sup>

Certainly, Matthias had no reason to sympathize with the emperor or any other lordship. As we have seen, in his case both the church and the secular authorities were trying to undermine the effects of the increase in lay spirituality, which had been the work of Matthias and his fellow preachers. It seems reasonable that Matthias in the same way as he defends his own cause in the *Narracio de Myliczyo* by using strong eschatological images of Elijah and even Christ, is paying off a score with Wenceslaus IV. Of course, it would be impossible to directly refer to Wenceslaus as Antichrist, but he might get away with an indirect accusation. To the careful reader of Matthias' writings the message was clear: our current emperor is *Antichristus Magnus*.

Matthias' idea of Antichrist concerns not only secular powers but also the church hierarchy. Matthias writes that Milicius went to Rome to preach to bishops and priests that Antichrist had come and that they were members of Antichrist because „they act against Jesus Christ.“<sup>47</sup> This statement led to him being again imprisoned. Later, when he finally spoke to the pope and his cardinals, he told them again „just as courageously that Antichrist is raging against God's holy men.“ Once again, he did not receive recognition for his honesty according to Matthias, because he „was rejected again and laughed at and devoured by the teeth of Behemoth and Antichrist.“<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> „Multa etenim sunt in Christianitate regna, multi principatus et ducatus, nullum habencia respectum adinvicem, nullam concordiam, nullam connexionem in tempore hoc, cui ista visio bestie est coaptata, sed magis scissa ab invicem propter negligenciam inperii et inobedienciam ad discessionem.“ *Regulae* IV, ed. Kybal, p. 208, quoted by R.R. Betts, *Some Political Ideas of the Early Czech Reformers*, in: *Essays*, p. 71.

<sup>46</sup> „Visa est autem ista mulier, id est multitudo yppocritarum, sedere super bestiam. Que bestia significat potestatem secularem scilicet imperatoriam et militariam cum universis regnis christianorum carnalium.“ *Regulae* IV, ed. Kybal, p. 198, quoted by Betts, p. 72.

<sup>47</sup> „Et quod ipsi hiidem, quia contrarie Christo Ihesu faciebant, sint membra Antychristi.“ Emler, p. 433.

<sup>48</sup> „...iterum fuit abiectus et derisus deuoratusque a dentibus Behemoth et Antychristi.“ Emler, p. 433.

In this case we have a limited possibility to verify Matthias' story. He is referring to Milicius' speeches and texts about Antichrist that were connected to his visit to Rome presumably in 1367. The aim of the trip had been to warn the pope of Antichrist, which is why Milicius wrote the *Sermo de die novissimo*, or „Sermon about the Last Day“ in which he summarized his ideas about the coming of Antichrist and the end of time. The text is probably a sermon which Milicius delivered at the papal court or even in St. Peter. Only one part of the sermon speaks explicitly about the church hierarchy and its corruption:

According to the Gloss, the Lord will not come to judge until there is a separation, i.e. until the nations separate themselves from the Roman Empire, or a separation between the churches and the spiritual obedience. This separation is already visible among the powerful, namely cardinals, archbishops, the regular as well as the secular clergy. Kings are already without mercy, judges without justice, prelates are already armed, priests are seducers, and therefore what is said by St. Paul will be fulfilled (2 Thess.2,8): „And then will be revealed the lawless“ Antichrist, when those predictions have been fulfilled.<sup>49</sup>

A second text called *Libellus de Antichristo*, probably written shortly after the *Sermo*, gives more explanation about Milicius' concept of Antichrist. He wrote the treatise as an elaboration and defense of his view to the Roman inquisition which imprisoned him because of his preaching about Antichrist. The preacher clarifies here on the basis of the apocalyptic texts from Daniel 11,12-13 when Antichrist will come. He goes on to identify Antichrist and his character. Milicius sees the corruption of the church and the negligence of the clergy as the *abominatio desolationis*, or „the abomination that makes desolate.“ These are the signs of the coming of Antichrist. Who is Antichrist, is the next question. „Antichrists are many and who does disjoin from Christ and denies him, he is Antichrist. And how do they deny him? When they keep silent and do not have the courage to confess his truth before the people who

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<sup>49</sup>„Secundum Glosam non veniet Dominus ad iudicium, nisi prius venerit discessio i.e. nisi prius gentes discendant a Romano imperio, vel discessio ecclesiarum a spirituali obediencia. Iam enim in potencioribus scilicet in cardinalibus, archiepiscopis, sacerdotibus et multis ecclesie tam a spiritualibus quam a secularibus discessio videtur. Iam reges sine misericordia, iudices sine iusticia, iam prelati pilati, sacerdotes seductores; et ideo implebitur, quod predictum est, ut dicit Paulus [2 Thess.2,8]: „Et tunc revelabitur ille iniquus“ Antichrist, quando hec predicta certissime apparebunt.“ *Sermo de die novissimo*, ed. F.M. Bartoš, in: *Reformační sborník VIII*, Praha 1946, p. 51 ff.

suppress the truth and justice of God.”<sup>50</sup>

Milicius’ idea about the identity of Antichrist is closely connected to injustice and sin. Prelates and clergy belong to him if they live a corrupt life, thus separating themselves from God’s holy people.<sup>51</sup> Milicius’ judgment, however, never unconditionally designates concrete persons from any particular background in church or society as Antichrists. It is left up to the audience or the reader to answer. Here we see a significant difference from the story of Matthias de Janow. According to him, Milicius specifically identified bishops and prelates in Rome to be Antichrists and was therefore imprisoned. Matthias takes the last step of answering the question of who is Antichrist, which Milicius in his sermons and *Libellus* leaves for everyone to decide personally. Matthias radicalizes Milicius’ notions in this sense, changing their direction to apply them to his own argument. With the help of Milicius’ story, Matthias states without any doubt or reluctance that the hierarchy of the church in Rome (and elsewhere) belongs to Antichrist. Matthias pursues his own aims with Milicius’ biography, by slightly but significantly changing its content and language. He is clearly not telling simply the bare facts from the life of his master. He presents his own opinions by putting them in Milicius’ mouth, thereby lending them added authority. In Matthias’ *Narracio*, the foremost task of the character Milicius is to defend and justify Matthias.

In the subsequent part of his biography, Matthias concentrates on the activities Milicius engaged in after his first visit to Rome. He came back to Prague — the capital and imperial city — which he characterizes as being spiritually close to Babylon because of its corruption and sins. These two evils represent the dragon and the whore of Babylon from the Apocalypse (17,3 ff). Thanks to Milicius’ zealous struggle with all injustice and vice, Prague escaped from becoming a second Sodom or Gomorrah — the two cities full of sin and iniquity from Genesis 18, which were exterminated because of their degenerate state.

But now because of the mercy of Jesus Christ and due to the merits and labour of Milicius, Sodom returned to its former dignity and Prague went from being Babylon to becoming a spiritual Jerusalem now overflowing in the word of Christ and the life-giving teaching. Because the horrible vices, especially the public ones, are defeated and ‘cast behind the back’ [Is. 38,17], the virtues are agitating in the souls of those who

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<sup>50</sup> „Antychristi multi sunt et qui solvit et negat Christum, Antichristus est. Et qualiter alii negant eum? Cum tacent et non audent et eius veritatem coram hominibus confiteri, qui veritatem et iusticiam dei detinent.“ Milicii *Libellus de Antichristo*, in *Regulae* III, ed. Kybal, p. 376.

<sup>51</sup> See also p. 136 and 157.

belong to Jesus Christ and lifting up their heads, they continuously and daily become stronger in number and value, while the crucified Jesus makes them grow gloriously.<sup>52</sup>

The main reason for this victory over evil powers is the foundation of a community with a school and a church by the name of Jerusalem at the place of a brothel named Venice. „Up till today,“ Matthias writes, this foundation has a great reputation in Bohemia and in Prague. The most holy Lord and God will fulfill this mission that Milicius began by the Holy Spirit who works in the many preachers and followers of Milicius.<sup>53</sup>

The message is again clear: the activities which were initiated by Milicius and continued by his followers and preachers like Matthias transformed Prague from a Babylon-like city of corruption into a holy place, equal to Jerusalem. It is through their preaching, of which the „social home“ for former prostitutes was an integral part, that the presence of the apocalyptic threats were removed. Preaching and preachers are able to drive away anti-Christian figures reminiscent of Babylon, which have been brought into the city by the corruption of the hierarchy and those in power. Matthias' activities — being a continuation of Milicius' work — are represented by the image of Jerusalem, the Holy City and center of Christianity.

The idea of preachers expelling evil spirits and cleaning a place from sin is also found in Milicius' writings. Many times he speaks in his sermons about preachers being the ones who have to fight against the devil and his forces. They are like exorcists who use the word of God in their struggle, i.e. preaching is their sword by which they have to triumph over their enemies. The preacher is in Milicius' view a messenger and representative of the coming era when sin and corruption will be exterminated.<sup>54</sup>

Matthias' biography continues giving special attention to Milicius' preaching and postils.

Although he was originally a „simple priest and writer at the court of the king,“ he became a wise and learned preacher who preached even five times a day — three times in Czech, once in Latin and once in German. He accumulated a large amount of knowledge from the Bible

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<sup>52</sup>„Ast nunc Christo Ihesu propicio per meritum et laboro Mylyczii Sodoma rediit in antiquam dignitatem et de Babylone spiritualiter facta est Praga iam Iherusalem habundans omni verbo Christi et doctrina salutari. Nam viciis horrencis presertim publicis iam expugnatis et post tergum proiectis, virtutes in Christi Ihesu animabus iam pulsant, caputque erigentes continue atque cottidie invalescunt secundum numerum et gradus, Ihesu crucifixo ipsis prestante gloriosa incrementa.“ Emler, p. 434.

<sup>53</sup>„Ad designatum illud, quod iam nuper est vocatum, quod dominus Jhesus per Mylyczium saltem quo ad primordia de Praga babylonica et confusa ciuitate ac funesta Jerusalem perfecit lucidam ciuitatem supra montem constitutam et amplius perficiet piissimus ominus et deus fideli, quamvis, ut supra dictum est, modo et successiue, per suum omnipotentem spiritum in predicatoribus, cuius spiritus inicia karissimo presbitero Myliczio in plenitudine sunt donata.“ Emler, p. 434-35.

<sup>54</sup>See p. 160 ff.



and the church fathers, which gave him new thoughts and ideas.

It is likely that Matthias wanted to draw his readers' attention to Milicius' non-academic background. This might be the reason why he speaks about the *simplex presbyter* who nevertheless became a great preacher. As far as we know, Milicius never did study at a university. As we will see, however, his sermons are highly scholastic and do not appear to be written by an unlearned author. It is unlikely that Matthias wanted to put down the value of the academic study since he himself studied for a long time at the Prague and Paris universities. Possibly his point was that to be a proper preacher one does not have to study at a university, but rather follow examples like Milicius.

Anyway, Milicius wrote a new sermon everyday, which was evidently not a difficult task for him. He bound those sermons together in books, which were then copied many times.

All those things were considered to be of minor significance when it is taken into account that he, next to all his labor, confessions, pastoral care, his great hospitality as a priest and his tireless sermonizing, composed large books and wrote them by his own hand, giving them to a multitude of clerics, two hundred or three hundred daily in such a way that what he wrote today, was totally copied by the writers by tomorrow. So he had to compile everyday what about two hundred writers would copy tomorrow. The books which he assembled in this way are numerous, e.g. the sermons, which he called *Abortivus* out of humility, and the postils on all Gospels on the Saints and the entire cycle of feast days, which he entitled *Gratiae Dei*. Every reader can see in those postils and sermons that they do not contain his ideas but rather those from the holy writings, the Bible and the Fathers. How useful are the books to faithful preachers and listeners! I want to point out by referring to the books themselves and their users rather than by recommending them in so many words.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> „Sed adhuc ista parua esse estimabantur, si cum hoc pensetur, quod cum hiis uniuersis laboribus, confessionibus, sollicitudinibus et pro magna hospitalitate ut presbiter et cum sermocinationibus taliter indefessis continue magnos libros comportabat et propria manu conscribebat eosdem multitudini clericorum uel ducentis uel trecentis cottidie exportans ad scribendum, et hoc sic, quod hodie conscribebat, hoc mox in crastino totum scriptores copiabant, et ita omni die, puta pro omni die crastino colligere scribendum bene ducentis oportebat; libri vero illi, quos sic collegit, sunt maxime quantitatis, scilicet sermones, quos Abortiuum propter humilitatem vocitauit, et postille omnium ewangeliorum, scilicet de sanctis et de tempore per totum anni circulum, quibus Gracie dei nomen imposuit. In quibus postillis et sermonibus quilibet legens videre poterit, quod non sensu suo habundant sed potius scripturis sanctis, bible et doctorum. Qui libri quam sint vtilis fidelibus predicatoribus et auditoribus, magis hoc volo ad ipsos libros et ad illos, qui ipsis utuntur, remittere quam sermone commendare.“ Emler, p. 435-436.

Despite all his merits, Milicius did not gain everyone's sympathy. His fellow Christians in Prague made his life difficult with their threats and persecutions and he was forced to leave Prague. Finally he died in exile in Avignon. Even after his death he was persecuted, „especially from the side of the religious and priests and other church authorities, who had nothing more against him than good works.“<sup>56</sup> In Milicius' fate the prophecy of Mt. 23 is fulfilled, warning scribes and hypocritical Pharisees. „Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,“<sup>57</sup> Matthias quoted. In fact, this quotation is the last line of Matthias' biography about Milicius, putting Milicius in the ranks of saints and the faithful who died as martyrs.

In this last paragraph we see again Matthias' tendency to understand Milicius' story as his own story. We know that Milicius got into a big conflict with the mendicant clergy at the end of his life. In the inquisition process which then ensued, he chose to defend himself at the papal court, which was residing in Avignon in those years. By the time the investigations were finished, Milicius had died. His death happened just before the final judgment — an acquittal — was made public. We therefore have to think that Matthias' words about the exile are exaggerated and certainly not completely true as far as Milicius is concerned. The following sentences of the biography can offer an explanation for Matthias' manipulation. Even after Milicius' death the persecutions did not stop, Matthias wrote. As we have seen, he and many other followers of Milicius were suspected of heresy and brought before an inquisitional court in an attempt by the mendicants to regain their influence and benefits. Some like Matthias had to renounce some of their teachings and were not allowed to practice their priestly office for some time. To Matthias this was an attack on truth and true faith by church authorities and the emperor, thus revealing their anti-Christian character. He concludes that the end of time must be near because the faithful are persecuted by the church itself. Therefore, he ended his biography about Milicius with the quotation from the „small apocalypse“ of Mt. 23. The prophets and wise men from this biblical text are those fellow preachers and followers of Milicius who are in severe conflict with the church hierarchy.

As became obvious from the previous parts of the *Narracio de Myliczio*, Matthias is deliberately emphasizing key moments in Milicius' life to use in his own defense. It is not in

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<sup>56</sup> „Sed et mortuum quoque sunt persecuti et super dolorem wlnorum eius addiderunt, maxime autem et solum procurantibus ista sibi fieri religiosi et sacerdotibus cum cetero magistratu templi nichil habentes cause contra eundem nisi opera bona.“ Emler, p. 436.

<sup>57</sup> Mt. 23,34-35.

Matthias' interest to mitigate the tensions which may have existed between church authorities and Milicius, or even to put them in the right perspective because his own conflict still existed. Matthias presents Milicius as a martyr and a victim of evil forces that are at work even inside the church, because he considers himself to be a victim of his opponents in the church. He identifies himself with the persecuted prophets from Mt. 23 and expects his reader to recall this passage. The conclusion of the text from which he quotes is: „Truly, I say to you, all this will come upon this generation“ (vs. 36). The life-work of Matthias de Janow, the *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti*, is an apology for the teachings and views of its author, drawing the line between good and evil, holiness and corruption, Christ and Antichrist. For this aim Matthias used his beloved master Milicius, thus making him an apocalyptic preacher or even Elijah, the last prophet. Matthias succeeded in what many biographers would dream of achieving: he determined the image that generations for hundreds of years would have of Milicius. His biography became the leading guide for any study on Milicius in modern historiography. It is highly fascinating to see the immense influence which the mystification of Matthias de Janow has had on subsequent understanding of Milicius de Chremsir.

## 2. The *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, praelati ecclesiae Pragensis*

We have a second biography about Milicius de Chremsir which is much more extensive and detailed than the *Narracio* of Matthias. It is known by the title *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, praelati ecclesiae Pragensis*, „The Life of the Venerable Priest Milicius, Prelate of the Prague Church.“<sup>58</sup> According to most of the scholars who studied Milicius, the *Vita* is of an earlier date than Matthias' biography,<sup>59</sup> but it is not possible to date it exactly nor to determine its precise origin since we do not know who the author was. Probably it was written by someone close to Milicius, because it contains a large amount of concrete details about the life of Milicius. F.M. Bartoš is of the opinion that Stephanus de Chremsir, a relative of Milicius and one of his followers, wrote the biography.<sup>60</sup>

Although it seems most likely that the core of the *Vita* stems from soon after Milicius' death and was written by a person from his inner circle of friends, we cannot be sure what was its exact original content and what alterations and additions were made later. The *Vita* survived

<sup>58</sup>Published by Josef Emler in: *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum* I, Praha 1873, p. 403-430.

<sup>59</sup>Palacký, *Předchůdcové husitství*, p. 77; František Loskot, *Milíč z Kroměříže, Otec české reformace*, Praha 1911, p. 160; Miloslav Kaňák, *Milíč z Kroměříže*, Praha 1975, p. 42.

<sup>60</sup>F.M. Bartoš, *Původce života Milíčova* [The Author of Milicius' Biography], Praha 1956.

namely only as a part of the larger work of Bohuslaus Balbinus,<sup>61</sup> a Jesuit historian from the seventeenth century. We do not know of the existence of any separate manuscript of it, which causes considerable indistinctness.

Balbinus was born in Hradec Kralové in 1621, shortly after the Battle of White Mountain, which became known as the beginning of the re-Catholization of the Czech Lands after the Hussite times. He was only 15 years old when he joined the Jesuit order and started to study philosophy at the Prague Klementinum, the order's main residence in Bohemia. In 1646 he began his study of theology and was ordained a priest in 1649. Till 1661 he taught at several Jesuit colleges all over the country, which led him to write several books on rhetoric. His new assignment was to write the history of the Jesuit province of Bohemia, which is not very surprising since he had shown great interest in historical questions. Some of his publications were, however, criticized and several times censored because of their strong patriotic bias. Balbinus became known as a defender of the Czech language, which he propagated in his book *Defense of the Slavonic Language, in particular Czech*, which was not published until 1775. In 1679 he published his largest work, *Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae*, „Historical Miscellanea from the Kingdom of Bohemia,“ which also obtained Milicius' *Vita*. He died in 1688 and became known as the first modern Czech historian who collected and studied sources on Bohemian history. Later Czech nationalist historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries found it difficult to acknowledge his significance in terms of the continuity of the Czech nation since he was a member of the Jesuit order. To those historians the Catholic Church and especially the Jesuits were the oppressors of the Czech nation.<sup>62</sup>

The *Vita* of Milicius appears in the fourth volume of the first decade of the *Miscellanea historica*.<sup>63</sup> The work as a whole — Balbinus did not finish it — was supposed to survey every aspect of Bohemian society and deal with geography, nature, regions, clergy and the church, estates, rulers and kings, the university, the administration, etc. The volume that is of interest to us is entitled *Bohemia sancta* and contains a discourse on 134 Bohemian saints and martyrs.<sup>64</sup> We find here also a biography of the most important baroque saint of Bohemia,

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<sup>61</sup>In Czech his name is written: Bohuslav Balbín. We choose here again the Latin spelling which Balbinus himself used as well. He published only in Latin.

<sup>62</sup>For Bohuslaus Balbinus see: W. Bobek, *Bohuslav Balbín*, Bratislava 1932; Z. Kalista, *Bohuslav Balbín*, Brno 1947; J.P. Kučera, Jiří Rak, *Bohuslav Balbín a jeho místo v české kultuře* [Bohuslaus Balbinus and His Place in Bohemian Culture], Praha 1983; A. Rejzek, *Bohuslav Balbín*, Praha 1908.

<sup>63</sup>Fully: Dec. I, Liber IV, Pars II, 44-64.

<sup>64</sup>See Kučera, o.c., p. 134 ff.

Johannes Nepomucenus,<sup>65</sup> who was canonized in 1729. It is precisely this example which gives us reason to be somewhat cautious concerning the veracity of the *Vita Milicii*. We should take into account the aims and involvement of Balbinus writing about Bohemian saints and their piety.

As we have seen, Balbinus came into conflict with the Church authorities after publishing his writings because he was considered too patriotic. His aims have to be understood within the context of the position of Bohemia in the seventeenth century and during the ongoing re-Catholicization. From 1620 on, after a long time of prevailing Protestantism, the Catholic Church with the help of the Hapsburgs reimposed the catholic faith as the only legal religion, frequently by force. Many Protestants left the country or died. Balbinus himself was a typical representative of the new generation of catholic clergy who spread the faith through education and reinterpreting history. The seventeenth century witnessed a boom in catholic activities and publications that tried to draw people again to the „true faith.“ Those efforts were very successful when we consider how quickly Bohemia was recatholicized. Balbinus, however, lived in a period in which competition with the Protestant opponents was no longer an issue. His first concern was not to defend the catholic faith against the Reformation and to defeat Protestantism, since what was left of the Protestants was not of any threat to the Catholic Church. Balbinus' main aim was to rehabilitate his country in the eyes of the Hapsburg empire. His oeuvre on Bohemian history was an attempt to defend the piety of the old Bohemian Catholic religion against outside criticism that the Czechs were a heretical nation. He wanted to bring his country back onto the stage of the Hapsburg empire as a full and honorable member of the Catholic community. Balbinus therefore saw the Middle Ages as the zenith of his country's history, especially in the fourteenth century and throughout the reign of Charles IV when Bohemia was respected in Europe as an outstanding and leading country of a true Catholicism. In this period there existed no suspicion of heresy or deviation from the true faith, but rather the glory of a pious and peace-loving emperor.<sup>66</sup>

It is this effort which is the motivation behind Balbinus' writings on Bohemian saints in the *Miscellanea historica*. It brought him to write the biography entitled „The Life of St. Johannes Nepomucenus: Priest, Martyr and Canon of the Metropolitan Church of St. Vitus“ in 1670-71, which was published in the edition *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists in 1680. Two years

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<sup>65</sup>Also Jan Nepomucky or Iohannes de Nepomuk.

<sup>66</sup>See for this Kučera, o.c., p. 193 ff. and Josef Petraň, *Obraz Karla jako hlavy státu v dějepisectví šesti století* [The Image of Charles as the Head of State in the Historiography of Six Centuries], in: *Carolus Quartus*, p. 87 ff.

later, he published the biography in the *Miscellanea* as well. It became a decisive factor for initiating the canonization process of the medieval priest Nepomucenus, who became a symbol of the immaculate state of the Bohemian Church, which had its climax in 1729.<sup>67</sup> Balbinus stated in his biography that he wrote it on the basis of a study of many manuscripts about the saint, even mentioning where he found them. Many scholars already in the years before the final canonization searched for those sources, but did not find any. Their conclusion, therefore, is that Balbinus at least partly made up his story about Johannes Nepomucenus in concordance with his ideas of the Bohemian Church and its needs. He must have been deeply convinced that by a „pious lie“ he was serving higher values than historical reality.<sup>68</sup> Balbinus succeeded in his effort, even when there were many doubts about the truth and historicity of the new saint during the canonization process. Johannes Nepomucenus was canonized with enormous pomp in Prague cathedral and became the best known Bohemian saint ever throughout the world. Balbinus' legend was translated many times and returned Bohemia to the ranks of the countries of an undoubted Catholic nature.

As in the case of the biography of Nepomucenus, Balbinus says in the introduction of the *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii* that he based his work on an older manuscript. He found his source in the library of the monastery at Třeboň in Southern Bohemia. Balbinus stayed in this library in the summer of 1644 in order to select and copy important manuscripts for the Bohemian history, which was an effort he devoted himself to during his whole life. In the writing of his historical works he used those copies, however, without an exact reference to the source, place and content of the original. So it is unclear which manuscript Balbinus used to write the biography of Milicius. As in Nepomucenus' case, scholars have tried to locate the source, but were unsuccessful. The library of the Třeboň monastery was closed by Emperor Josef II in 1786 and the property of the library was transported to Prague, where it became a part of the former Jesuit Klementinum library.

The uncertainty surrounding the source Balbinus used leaves room for some speculation. In the first place, it is possible that Balbinus made up the whole story. In this case his statement that he is simply offering a copy of the manuscript he found in the library is a falsehood. He

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<sup>67</sup>Many books have been written about the saint of the secret of confession. Just a small selection: F.M. Bartoš, *Sv. Jan Nepomucký, světec doby temna* [St. Johannes Nepomucenus, a Saint of the Dark Age], Praha 1921; J. Pekař, *Tři kapitoly z boje o sv. Jana Nepomuckého* [Three Chapters from the Struggle about St. Johannes Nepomucenus], Praha 1921; F. Matsche, E. Sporer, W. Neumeister (ed.), *Johannes von Nepomuk*, Passau 1971; R. Baumstark, J. von Herzogenberg, P. Volk (ed.), *Johannes von Nepomuk, 1393-1993*, München 1993; Jaroslav Polc, *Svatý Jan Nepomucký*, Praha 1993; and especially the very fine book of Vít Vlnas, *Jan Nepomucký, česká legenda* [... Czech Legend], Praha 1993.

just knew some of the basic facts, probably from the *Narracio* of Matthias de Janow, but basically wrote his own work about Milicius, thus eliminating the apocalyptic orientation of Matthias's writing and adding to it his own ideas. This possibility is, however, not very likely. As we will see, the *Vita* gives many details about the life of Milicius which we do not find in the *Narracio*. It is also not very likely that Balbinus added those details himself since they are very concrete and refer to persons from the direct environment of Milicius, which as we know from other sources really did exist.

A second and more convincing possibility is that Balbinus rewrote a manuscript he found in Třeboň and made some additions to it, thus bringing its aim into line with his own opinions. After all, we know of two manuscripts containing Milicius' two postils originating from Třeboň which were then transferred to the Prague Klementinum. They are among the richest postils in the collection as far as the Klementinum National Library is concerned.<sup>69</sup> Balbinus gives us his own general idea about Milicius in his introduction to the *Vita*. According to him, Milicius was falsely appropriated by the Hussite heretics, for whom it was useful to impute to themselves everyone who reproached priests with their faults.<sup>70</sup> Milicius was pressing for an inner renewal of the church, not a separation from it, and deserves, therefore, to be remembered as almost a saint. As we will see, the *Vita* proposes the sanctification of Milicius. This would be in concordance with the general approach Balbinus had towards Bohemian history, i.e. the rehabilitation of it in the new paradigms of the Catholic Baroque. Bohemian history has to be deprived of its heretical image by drawing attention to its fine and pious representatives.

Our conclusion in light of Balbinus' involvement in Bohemian history has to be that when reading the *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, praelati ecclesiae Pragensis* we should regard it as an historical work dating from the time of the Baroque reinterpretation of history. We should be aware of the efforts and aims of this movement of which Bohuslaus Balbinus was a leading figure. From this context we can understand the opening of the *Vita*:

Now I am about to write the life of your servant to the glory of your name, as far as you may give it, Lord, through whom you wanted the church of our times to reflourish in the splendour of the former apostolic grace and virtues, I invoke your love as my helper,

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<sup>68</sup>Vlnas, p. 96 ff.

<sup>69</sup>National Library Prague, *Abortivus*: I D 37 and *Gratiae Dei*: XIV D 5 (pars hiemalis) and XIV D 1 (pars aestivalis).

<sup>70</sup>Bohuslav Balbinus, *Miscellanea regni Bohemiae*, Dec.I, Liber IV, Pars II, p. 43; quoted by Kaňák, p. 47.

which has stimulated me to this long ago. Who would not act and zealously work from your love, in whatever moment of life he is, seeing the testimony of your glory so clear and so faithful, shining uncommonly to the world in our times, who would not do whatever he can in order not to hide from anyone the light lightened by you? But how can a human hand write down that which you yourself unveil and praise in a much better way through the power of works so as to make it shine to everyone present in your house?<sup>71</sup>

The *sol justitiae*, „sun of justice,“ was darkened by clouds and the earth was covered by the shadow of death, when suddenly a splendid light broke through, driving away the rulers of darkness. Those who were struggling with the darkness saw the brightness of Christ’s truth, which could not be annihilated by its enemies. „And behold this most lucid beam, not hindered by any cloud of error, the excellent preacher Milicius, priest of the diocese of Olomouc, from Chremsir, not from sublime parents, but innocent in deeds and pure of heart, full of gifts of mercy from heaven, whose preaching rose like the light up to the full day and illuminated those who were in the darkness and shadow of death.“<sup>72</sup> The first fact of Milicius’ life in the *Vita* is set in Prague where he had the „high office“ of archdeacon. There is no mention of Milicius working at the imperial chancery as in Matthias’ biography. Milicius fulfilled every condition of the holy and apostolic life already from the time he served as deputy to the archdeacon, in which role he visited the pastors under his jurisdiction. He gave of his own property to the clergy he visited or did repentance all the time wearing nothing more than sackcloth. In his zeal to follow Christ fully, however, he resigned from this position and accepted total poverty. Archbishop Arnestus then asked him to help care for the laity. „Lord Milicius, what better act can you do than to help the poor archbishop in grazing the flock which is entrusted to him?“<sup>73</sup> Milicius did not answer this request directly, but went to

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<sup>71</sup> „Scripturus vitam servi tui ad honorem nominis tui, prout tu dederis domine deus, per quem ecclesiam nostri temporis in antiquum apostolicae gratiae et virtutis decus voluisti reflorescere, eum invoco adiutorem, quem jam olim habeo incentorem, amorem tuum. Quis enim de amore tuo, quantumcunque spiraculum vitae habens et videns testimonium gloriae tuae tam praeclarum et tam fidelem temporibus nostris mundo insolitum effulsisse, non agat et satagat, non det operam, quantumcunque poterit, ne lumen a te incensum tuorum quempiam lateat? sed quantum humano stylo fieri potest, quod melius ipse tamen per virtutem operum facis manifestum et exaltatum, velit, ut luceat omnibus, qui sunt in domo tua?“ Emler, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum I*, p. 403.

<sup>72</sup> „Et ecce radius lucidissimus, nullo erroris nubilo praepeditus, praedicator egregius, scilicet Milicius presbyter Olomucensis dioecesis de Chremsir, non sublimium parentum existens, sed innocens manibus et mundo corde donisque coelestis gratiae refertus, cujus initiis praedicatio quasi lux procedens crevit usque ad perfectum diem, et illuxit his, qui in tenebris et umbra mortis erant.“ Emler, p. 403-404.

<sup>73</sup> „Domine Milici, quid melius potestis facere, quam ut pauperi archiepiscopo sibi gregem commissum pascere juvare velitis?“ Emler, p. 404.



Horšovský Týn, a small town in Southern Bohemia which was under the jurisdiction of the archbishop. There he started to preach and was immediately tempted by the devil. The garden of the house he lived in was full of delicious fruits which would only distract him with the pleasures of the body. Therefore, Milicius, recalling the first sin in Paradise, never returned to the garden.

The emphasis on the role of the archbishop in Milicius' conversion in the *Vita* is one of the many traces of Balbinus' editing hand. It is fully in accordance with the spirit of the re-Catholisization of the seventeenth century to draw the attention to the hierarchy and its decisive role in the church. According to the *Vita* the archbishop interfered in Milicius' life several times, always at moments critical to his future or that of his later disciples and community.

After half a year, Milicius returned to Prague and started to preach in the St. Nicholas Church in the Lesser Town. This activity was obviously successful, and so he expanded his practice to the Main or Old Town where he preached in the St. Giles Church.<sup>74</sup> Many people including even his friends, however, criticized his preaching „because of the incongruence of his colloquial speech“ and because of his forgetfulness in matters of holy days. Despite this, Milicius continued in his work recalling that Christ too was laughed at because of his preaching. His decision seemingly proved justified when soon many people came to listen to him and praised God's mercy in sending Milicius to them.

One of the typical characteristics of the *Vita* is Milicius' attitude and relation to women. We hear about rich and proud women attending his sermons, which had such a great impact on them that they took off their luxurious clothes, hats and precious stones.<sup>75</sup> At another place the *Vita* tells about women coming to see Milicius outside of his pastoral duties. He avoided being with them in private and always asked them to keep a proper distance from him. He never shook hands with a woman and refused to make eye contact with them. He asked them to limit their talk to what was vital to discuss.<sup>76</sup> The *Vita* also mentions other people who

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<sup>74</sup>Both the St. Nicholas and the St. Giles churches maintained connections to the reformist movement and the later Hussite movement after the death of Milicius. Part of the St. Nicholas Church was also a school. After the Battle of White Mountain the church was given to the Jesuits who totally reconstructed the buildings. St. Giles was built by two significant bishops of Prague, Johannes IV de Dražicz and Arnestus de Pardubicz, and was transferred to the Dominican order in 1626. Today the church and the adjoining cloister are the main seat of the order in the Czech Republic.

<sup>75</sup>„Crescente itaque praedicatione ejus incoeperunt mulieres superbae pepla alta et gemmis circumdata caputia, et vestimenta auro et argento ornata deponere.“ Emler, p. 406.

<sup>76</sup>„Quandocunque vero mulier aliqua ad eum pro aliquo consilio, rarissime ad commocum suum, licet multis secum manentibus, tamen invitus intromisit, et publice in domo, in qua manebat, et non in occulto loco, neque prope ei consedit, et de salute, in quantum melius valuit, informavit. Et si aliqua mulier sibi loquens corpori suo

comprised his audience: prostitutes, usurers, and artisans „who could not do their job without sin.“ They all were converted by Milicius’ words and left their evil practices. Obviously, the audience belonged to both the Czech and German populations of the city, since somewhat further on the *Vita* states that Milicius also preached in German despite his poor knowledge of the language. The third language he used was Latin when preaching to students and other literate persons.<sup>77</sup>

The biography gives us an image of a zealous preacher who never interrupted his sermonizing. The more he delivered sermons, the holier he appears to have become. Usually he preached twice a day, but often even four times daily. Once he even preached five times in a day according to the *Vita* — in the morning at St. Giles, immediately after that at the Church of The Holy Virgin in front of Týn, that afternoon again at St. Giles, the fourth time then at the house for former prostitutes and finally at St. George’s at the Castle to the nuns living there. *Et ibidem primo prandium suum fecit*, „and only then did he have his meal.“<sup>78</sup> Preparing such sermons did not take more than about two hours, often only one hour. The duration of a sermon generally lasted two hours, sometimes even three. Obviously he wrote down those sermons because, as the *Vita* states, Milicius read them or had them read aloud while he ate breakfast. Then he prepared himself by saying devotional prayers because he did not trust himself to remember the sermon even though he had a very good memory. After his sermons he provided pastoral care to those who needed it, not making any distinction between the rich and the poor.

For two years Milicius continued in his efforts and he assembled a collection of sermons for all Sundays and holy days (*de tempore et de sanctis*). Copies were made by students and others. The archbishop ordered a survey to be made of the collection to check for errors, however, no flaws were found. The *Vita* is obviously talking about the collection *Abortivus* here, the first postil of the two Milicius left. It got its definitive form two years after Milicius started to work as a preacher in Prague, which was presumably in 1363.<sup>79</sup> The *Vita* indicates that *Abortivus* was ready in 1365, which corresponds with the dating in the framework of our

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appropinquavit, et hoc propter suam simplicitatem, statim rigide dixit: carissima, nescis remotius stare? Et sicut moris est a se hominibus recedentibus, quod manus sibi invicem porrigunt, nunquam alicui mulieri manum porrexit; et quandocunque mulieri alicui loquebatur, et quandocunque habebat de suo commoco ad aliquam mulierem exire, licet tunica simpliciter sarta et lata erat indutus, tamen raro sine pallio voluit alicui mulieri adstare, vel ei considerare, et invitus cum eis longos sermones pertractabat; et si aliqua diffusi sermonis erat, ipse vero instruebat eam, ut brevibus verbis materiam, de qua locutura erat, explanaret.“ Emler, p. 407.

<sup>77</sup>Emler, p. 408.

<sup>78</sup>Emler, p. 406.

study.<sup>80</sup>

The *Vita* portrays Milicius as having led a very strict and ascetic life. When walking through the streets of Prague, apparently he did not pay attention to anything around him. He rejected all honors which his clerical colleagues tried to bestow on him. He is said to have not spent one moment of his life in vain, „thus always exercising God’s deeds of justice.“<sup>81</sup> He avoided gossips and gluttons. He never rested after a meal or took a walk for health reasons. Not a mundane word passed his lips, but he exhorted people who used empty words which he said came from frivolous minds. He gave his possessions to the poor and bought students paper for copying books. If he saw a half-dressed woman, he ordered his fellow preacher to give her his coat, because Milicius himself did not wear anything extraneous which he could take off and give away. His attitude toward clothing was one of the basic characteristics of the apostolic life and was based on Christ’s words (Lk 3,11): „He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none.“ He was very restrained in his consumption of meat and wine because he believed it distracts one from penitence.

The *Vita* presents Milicius as a person who does not belong to any order or specific church. He was rather independent from all institutions. He delivered his sermons in several churches thus, in a sense, forming his own community. We are, however, told that Milicius once seriously considered joining an order. He doubted his mission and capabilities, the *Vita* says, and asked himself whether his lifestyle would not be more perfect if he was a member of some religious order. This „more perfect“ life would mean carrying his own cross, crucifying his body, denying himself, serving God and repenting.<sup>82</sup> Finally he decided not to because everybody told him that he would have to give up preaching. This episode indicates that although many of the aims of monastic life were in accordance with Milicius’ ideas, he was not willing to abandon preaching. Here, we have to understand preaching to include pastoral care, which the *Vita* states is an integral part of the „preaching life.“ We have to be aware of the fact that the biography presents an image of monastic life which already in the fourteenth century was partly out-of-date. New orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans existed in Milicius’ time which emphasized an active and practical life that included preaching. These

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<sup>79</sup>Milicius resigned from his position as member of the St. Vitus’ sacristy between 21 August and 23 December 1363. See Loskot, p. 28, and Kaňák, p. 17.

<sup>80</sup>See p. 100 ff.

<sup>81</sup>„Exercebatur igitur in justificationibus dei semper.“ Emler, p. 409.

<sup>82</sup>„Inter haec vero indignum se iudicans verbum dei populo dei seminare, cogitare coepit, quod perfectius esset, mundum totaliter relinquendo religionem aliquam debere intrare et crucem suam tollere et carnem crucifigere et relinquere et abnegare se ipsum, et ibi temporibus vitae suae deo serviendo poenitere.“ Emler, p. 411.

differed from the classical orders based on the Benedictine idea of contemplation and isolation. As we will see further on, Milicius came into conflict with both types of orders. By referring only to the classical idea of monastic life the *Vita* may want to express its basic sympathy to it, while pointing out that its forms are insufficient. In general the *Vita* depicts Milicius as having been an obedient member of the church who respected the hierarchy and its rights, but who criticized the corruption of primarily the new „modern“ orders of the twelfth century.

As the *Vita* continues, it introduces another episode in Milicius' life that took place in Rome. Milicius quit his preaching activities for a long time in order to prepare himself for „deeper“ preaching, which begins a new episode in the *Vita*. Then it „comes to his mind“ to go to Rome and preach the Word of God. The vocabulary of the *Vita* is very similar here to that of the *Libellus de Antichristo*, which suggests some interdependency between the two texts. The next lines confirm this idea when in both texts we are told that Milicius stopped preaching for one month, prayed and fasted like Daniel, and often „offered the sacrifice of Christ.“ The similarities between the texts are obvious:<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>*Vita*, Emler, p. 411; *Libellus de Antichristo*, Kybal, p. 370. According to a footnote in his „Předchůdcové husitství v Čechách“ (in: *Dílo Františka Palackého*, vol. 3, p. 81) Palacký also noticed the similarities, but did not draw any conclusions from them.

Interea incidit in mentem ejus,

Interea incidit in mentem meam

adventus Antychristi. (..)

ut ad urbem transiret Romanam et ibidem verbum  
dei praedicaret, et cum pervenisset in civitatem  
Romanam,

plus quam per unum mensem  
a predicatione abstinuit,  
volens per orationem devotam  
et abstinentiam magnam melius in animo  
progredi.  
Et tunc coepit jejunare jejunium Danielis  
panem desiderabilem non comedendo,  
in oratione instanter  
sacrificium Christo frequenter offerre  
et poenitentiam agere in cinere et cilicio.

Et expectavi  
plus quam per unum mensem  
in Roma, nolens hec vel alia predicare,  
melius putans interim penitencia purgari,  
ne me contingeret errare.  
Et incepti ieiunare ieiunium Danielis,  
panem desiderabilem non manducare,  
et orare instanter,  
sacrificium Christi frequenter offerre  
et penitentiam agere in cinere et cilicio.

The similarities may be obvious, but the differences are as well. The *Vita* and the *Libellus* both agree that Milicius fasted like Daniel<sup>84</sup> and that he did penitence. The *Libellus* also states that the author prayed and offered the Sacrifice of Christ — being the Eucharist — frequently, whereas the *Vita* says that Milicius offered the sacrifice to Christ in prayers frequently. There is reason to believe that the preacher believed frequent communion belonged to a pious life.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, the *Libellus* might be a correct reflection of Milicius' ideas and attitude,<sup>86</sup> while the *Vita* changes the text for its own aim. The *Vita* avoids referring at all to the serious conflict between Milicius and church authorities and presents Milicius as a very pious and holy man of prayer and meditation. This may be the reason why the *Vita* spiritualizes Milicius' effort

<sup>84</sup>A reference to Dan. 10,3 where the prophet refused to eat delicacies like meat and wine as a preparation and concentration on the vision he receives about the end of the age. The phrase „Panem desiderabilem non comedi“ is a direct quotation of Daniel.

<sup>85</sup>See John M. Clifton-Everest, The Eucharist in the Czech and German Prayers of Milič z Kroměříže, in: *Bohemia* 23, 1982, p. 1-15.

<sup>86</sup>In general, however, the dependence on Matthias de Janow as far as the deliverance of the *Libellus de Antichristo* is concerned raises many questions about its originality. See p. ..

towards a frequent communion. At another place, however, the *Vita* allows for the idea of daily communion but strictly in the context of a life of prayer. Anyhow, at this point the *Vita* speaks not about the Sacrifice of Christ, but the sacrifice to Christ, which is done through the mind by praying and by no means acted out in reality. Thereby, the saintly Milicius is made more accessible to the average believer, which may indicate that Balbinus had a hand in writing this edition of the *Vita*.

Pope Urban V had still not arrived in Rome even after Milicius had been there one month. The *Vita* says that Milicius for this reason considered going to Avignon. Urban's goal was to return the papal court to Rome, thus terminating the „Avignonese exile.“ In Avignon the papacy had become a target for all kinds of political tactics by secular powers. Rome would restore dignity to the papacy and with it to the church as a whole. This was certainly in line with Milicius' aims, however, again something „comes to his mind.“ He envisions that he has to hang on the door of the St. Peter's Cathedral an announcement promising that he will preach about the coming of the Antichrist. His sermon has to warn both the clergy and the laity that they should pray for the pope and the emperor that they may „lead“ the church in spiritual and material matters into an environment where the faithful can serve God peacefully. Again the similarity between the *Vita* and the *Libellus* is striking:<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>*Vita*, Emler, p. 411; *Libellus*, Kybal, p. 371.

## *Vita*

Et cum jam desperasset de adventu  
domini Urbani V papae in urbem Romanam,  
tunc praeparavit se,  
volens iter arripere versus Avenion.  
Et in tantum venit sibi talis cogitatio in mentem:

vade, intima publice per chartam,  
quam affiges ostiis ecclesiae sancti Petri,  
sicut solitus fuisti intimare in Praga,  
quando eras praedicaturus,  
quod velis praedicare,  
quod Antichristus venit,  
exhortaberis clerum et populum,  
ut orent pro domino nostro papa  
et pro domino nostro imperatore,  
ut ita ordinent ecclesiam sanctam  
in spiritualibus et in temporalibus,  
ut securi fideles deserviant creatori.

## *Libellus*

Et cum iam desperassem de adventu  
domini nostri pape,  
tunc preparavi me,  
iter volens arripere versus Avinionem.

Et interim irruit in me spiritus ita, ut me  
continere non possem, dicens michi in corde:  
Vade, intima publice per cartam,  
quam affiges hostiis ecclesie sancti Petri,  
sicut solitus fuisti intimare in Praga,  
quando eras predicaturus,  
quod velis praedicare,  
quod Antichristus venit,  
et exhortaberis clerum et populum,  
ut orent pro domino nostro papa  
et pro domino nostro imperatore,  
ita ut ordinent ecclesiam sanctam in  
spiritualibus et temporalibus,  
ut securi fideles deserviant creatori.

This is the only place in the *Vita* where the word „Antichrist“ appears. It is certainly not in the interest of the orthodoxy of Milicius to emphasize his view on the Antichrist and his role in church and society. Too much attention to Antichrist might raise suspicions of heresy since the idea itself was an integral part of the ideas of many Hussite theologians. In this light, it is not surprising that the only mention of the Antichrist in the whole *Vita* is a quotation — although not introduced as such — from the *Libellus de Antichristo*. The author of the *Vita* knew the *Libellus*, used some of its information but did not follow its intentions.

The story goes on with a quite dramatic scene. Immediately after having fixed his note on the door of St. Peter's, Milicius was arrested by an „inquisitor from the Dominican order,“ even though he was quietly praying in the church at the time. The inquisitor put him in a prison at the Franciscan monastery in the Lateran where he was maltreated. He then maintained a strict

fast which even endangered his life. Thanks only to the care of a widow and his pupil from Prague named Theodricus, who had also been imprisoned, was his life saved. Finally, he wrote the sermon he wanted to deliver in St. Peter's, which made a great impression on his warders. He began to preach regularly to them while remaining in prison. Cardinal Albanensis, who arrived in Rome with the pope, marked his definitive liberation from prison. According to the *Vita*, Milicius' enemies were stripped of their dignity and property and begged him for forgiveness. The conclusion of the Roman episode in the *Vita* is basically similar to that in the *Libellus*. The latter, however, does not mention the mendicant orders and their brutal treatment of Milicius, but succinctly states that Milicius intended to wait for the pope's arrival before delivering his proposed sermon. It goes on to say that the inquisitor, however, was interested in Milicius' ideas and asked him to write them down.

Back in Prague, Milicius engaged even more zealously in his life of piety. The *Vita* concentrates mainly on his religious activities like praying and saying mass. Day and night he recited prayers, often texts from the Psalms. Whenever he passed a church, he entered it. The most interesting notion in this section is about Holy Communion which Milicius took every day. „Whenever something kept him from holding the divine service, that day he was very much upset and said very anxiously: whenever I am not refreshed by the most holy bread, that day my soul does not receive any comfort from refreshment; but whenever my soul is fed by this holy food, that day all the bigger adversities are turned into ashes.“<sup>88</sup> In this case the *Vita* does not try to disguise Milicius' great emphasis on the Eucharist which is here connected to his devotion to prayer and meditation.

Milicius made another visit to Rome which the *Vita* does not mention. After his return to Prague, he began to work at the Church of the Holy Virgin Before Tyn, where his older colleague Conradus de Waldhausen was preaching. Conradus, who came from what is today Austria, was invited by Charles IV to come to Prague as a popular preacher. He began his activities not long before Milicius' conversion in 1363, which gives reason to speculate on the influence he may have had on Milicius' decisions. He died in 1369. Milicius was one of his successors at the church in the main square of the Old Town, where he delivered sermons in German. In the meantime, he preached at St. Giles for about three more years, according to the *Vita*. Obviously, the second sermon collection called *Gratiae Dei* dates from this time. The

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<sup>88</sup> „Quocunque vero die propter aliquod impedimentum divina non peragebat, eo die nimium turbabatur, et nimium anxius dicebat: quandocunque isto pane sanctissimo non reficior, illo die anima mea nullo consolationis refrigerio potitur; sed quandocunque hoc cibo sanctissimo anima mea pascitur, illo vero die omnes majores adversitates, quasi in favillam mihi rediguntur.“ Emler, p. 415.



*Vita* says that Milicius wrote down his sermons for Sundays and holy days together with quotations from the Holy Fathers and had them copied by students and others. This implies that *Gratiae Dei* dates from about 1372, which is in accordance with our findings.<sup>89</sup>

Another important event in Milicius' life took place in 1372. Several prostitutes were converted by his preaching, the *Vita* says, and lived at first in a house which a Moravian woman by the name Catharina gave Milicius. Milicius received permission from the archbishop to build an altar in this house where twenty to eighty women lived. Some of these women eventually found proper jobs, others married or returned to their parents. Altogether about three hundred prostitutes abandoned their former lifestyle under the care of Milicius. With the help of the emperor and others, Milicius managed to build a community called Jerusalem which consisted of three houses and a chapel (devoted to St. Mary Magdalene) and whose center was the former brothel Venice. It was a community without a rule, as the *Vita* comments: „Whatever kind of pious works they did in their penitence, they were not under the rule of some order, neither under the obedience of some new order, but they devoted themselves voluntarily to penitence; neither were they required to wear a particular religious habit, but whatever the Lord provided for them was worn humbly as well as repentantly without any finery.“<sup>90</sup> Under the leadership of Milicius, they lived a life of severe and sometimes austere discipline and penitence. Their piety was no less rigid than that of Milicius. Male persons who were priest or pupils of Milicius also began to live in this community. They also did not live under a specific rule, habit nor a special name, but lived a life faithful to Christ. It were precisely these communities which were suspected of heresy by church authorities in the fourteenth century, as we have seen was also the case of Matthias de Janow. They were basically not subject to church control since they did not accept any officially recognized rule. Their members were at least partially lay people with their own specific forms of religious practice and devotion. According to the *Vita*, however, the archbishop knew about Milicius' community and agreed with it. He gave permission for services in the chapel where each day at least two masses — sometimes up to sixteen — were said.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>See p. 100.

<sup>90</sup>„Quidquid vero talium piorum (operum) in sua poenitentia faciebant, non sub aliqua regula alicujus ordinis, nec sub aliqua obedientia ordinis novi, sed sponte ad poenitendum se offerebant, neque habitus erat spiritualis pro eis deputatus, sed quidquid dominus administrabat illis simpliciter, tanquam vere poenitentes sine aliqua palliatione utebantur.“ Emler, p. 420.

<sup>91</sup>„Ita quod fere praedicatio quotidie ex licentia domini archiepiscopi vigeat, multoties vero diebus festivis quinque vicibus in eodem loco praedicabantur, in teutonico, latino et vulgari sermone. Duae vero missae, una mane de b. virgine et alia de die in cantu omni die perficiebantur, aliae vero lectae sex, aliquando 8 et aliquando 16, et sic fere omni die divinum officium usque ad horam meridiei fiebat.“ Emler, p. 421.

The *Vita* compares this community to the first Christians, whom St. Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians described as prophets glorifying God. But the enemy did not sleep. Prelates, pastors (*plebani*) and religious people began to rage against Milicius, prohibiting him to preach and calling him a heretic, Beghard, hypocrite and sodomite. Milicius suffered their defamations and accusations with great patience as the *Vita* extensively describes in moving words. His suffering meant to him a sacrifice for Christ and truth. His opponents finally formulated twelve articles against him which they sent to the papal court to Master Klenkok who would be in charge of the last trial against Milicius. When the pope heard the accusations, he sent a letter to the Prague archbishop commanding him to put a stop to Milicius' activities. A trial against the preacher was now inevitable, but Milicius chose to appeal to the papal court and so „he fled to the Apostolic See, to whom it has been given to judge spirit and writings.“<sup>92</sup>

The *Vita* very much defends Milicius while describing the accusations and the trial itself. According to it, Milicius remained a holy and devout person who never forgot to pray or give alms, not even on his way to the papal court in Avignon (the *Vita* neglects to mention this change in location). It strongly suggests that everyone judging Milicius and his activities must conclude that he was a very faithful, orthodox and holy man. That is also the conclusion Master Klenkok quickly reached when he stood face to face with Milicius and stated that he could not find anything wrong with him. Milicius, who was used to preaching to prostitutes, was then invited to preach to cardinals and eat with them. When a short time later Master Klenkok died, Milicius sent his regrets to the emperor in a letter lamenting the death of his opponent. However, the *Vita* does not forget to characterize the arguments of Milicius' enemies in Prague, whose representative at the papal court was Master Klenkok. It gives „the tenor“ of the letter: „I announce to Your Highness that one of those who wanted to blacken me while defamating the scene of all virtue and the nature of the beauty of the Bohemian Kingdom has passed from this light, Master Johannes Klenkok, God have his soul.“<sup>93</sup> In the view of the *Vita* the attempts of Milicius' opponents to get rid of him damaged the image of Bohemia itself in the end. Milicius' case is the case of Bohemia. The country is one of virtue

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<sup>92</sup>„Quod ille videns tantae eorum vesaniae locum dedit et facta appellatione sub publica manu coram generali vicario d. archiepiscopi et coram officiali et d. inquisitore et publice in ecclesia s. Aegidii et in ecclesia s. Galli majori populo ad sermonem conveniente ad sedem apostolicam confugit, cui datum est probare spiritus et scripturas.“ Emler, p. 425.

<sup>93</sup>„Et tenor in eisdem literis est talis: Serenitati vestrae significo, quia unus ex illis, qui scenam omnis virtutis et pulchritudinis formam regni Bohemiae infamando in me obtenebrare volebant, ab hac luce migravit, videlicet

and faith thanks to the efforts of Milicius and his fellowmen, but it is in danger of losing its good reputation because of the activities of unholy men like some Prague clergy. This is very much the line of thought Balbinus upheld when he rehabilitated important parts of Bohemian history. It might not be too presumptuous to attribute this quotation to the baroque historian. Not long after Klenkok's death, Milicius died. According to the *Vita*, the Lord wanted to give him the sleep of a precious death and bring him to his eternal peace. The *Vita* does not mention the place of his death which is rather strange. In other instances, it does not hesitate to give precise details and numbers, but here the final resting-place or even an indication of it is missing. Shortly before his death, Milicius dictated some letters one of which was addressed to Cardinal Albanensis, his protector at the papal court. According to the *Vita*, the cardinal was very moved by this letter and commented: „My brother, Pope Urban, may become bright from miracles; however, I judge that this Milicius should be canonized before my brother.“<sup>94</sup> The text seems to suggest that Pope Urban V is still in office and that the cardinal believes he should canonize Milicius. At the time of his death, however, the successor of Urban V (pope from 1362-1370), Gregory XI, occupied the Holy See. At any rate, the *Vita* has reached its conclusion: Milicius should be recognized as a saint. Immediately after the cardinal's exclamation, a summary presents the arguments in favor of this canonization.

According to its tenor [i.e. of the letter addressed to cardinal Albanensis — PM] the careful reader could certainly learn at least partially about his blessed heart, how much the tranquillity of his mind was in the ruins of his body, how much the serenity of his soul, the loveliness of his spirit in the offering of the host of salvation — which he till his last moment hardly forsook — sustained his members with the vigor of his spirit, meanwhile offering himself as an acceptable sacrifice to God with the fragrance of loveliness. In his infirmity he did not cease his pious works, and whenever he received anything from devout people he ordered that it be given to the poor.<sup>95</sup>

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magister Johannes Klonkoth, cujus deus animam habeat!“ Emler, p. 427. Emler used the spelling „Klonkoth,“ others use „Klenkoth.“ Today „Klenkok“ is generally used (see Šmahel, 2, p. 185).

<sup>94</sup> „Licet frater meus dominus Urbanus papa clarescat miraculis, his tamen Milicius ante fratrem meum, ut arbitror, deberet canonizari.“ Emler, p. 429.

<sup>95</sup> „Ex cujus nimirum tenore possit diligens lector beatum illius vel ex parte aliquae pectus agnoscere, quanta illi in ipsa sui ruina corporis tranquillitas mentis, serenitas animi, svavitas spiritus in oblatione hostiae salutaris, quam usque ad excessum ultimum vix aliquando intermisit, artus sibi vigore spiritus sustentabat semetipsum pariter offerens acceptabilem hostiam deo in odorem svavitatis [reference to Phil. 4,18]. In ipsa vero infirmitate a piis

Milicius should be canonized because of his absolute spiritual devotion, his sense of sacrifice and his enduring care of the poor. These are the exact characteristics of Milicius' life that are constantly emphasized in the *Vita*, leading to the cardinal's final verdict — this man was among the finest spiritual treasures of Bohemia and therefore deserved to be canonized. The last part of the *Vita* again gives some reason to question its origin and history. Firstly, we read that the path of „you, the most beloved father“ has ended. Here Milicius is addressed directly. On St. Peter's Day in 1374 (29 June) he was taken away from the sorrows of this world to the glory of the Eternal Kingdom. Then, the *Vita* closes with the regular trinitarian formula as in scholastic sermons. This conclusion is, however, not definitive, but the text goes on with a very moving elegy.

He was a father and what kind of a father! It seemed as if our own father had passed away, and yet a father of the whole world. (..) You were a perfect example, the appearance of virtue. „You are the exaltation of Israel, you are the great glory of Jerusalem,“ an olive tree full of fruit, an abundant vine, a blooming palm, a voluminous cedar, an exalted maple, a select vase, a vase of honor in the House of God.<sup>96</sup>

It seems fairly safe to suggest that this second ending was added at a later date, most likely at the moment of its final edition by Balbinus. The rich and exuberant vocabulary in the second ending, of which we have quoted only a fragment, is in strong contrast to the first conclusion with its rather liturgical setting.

The appearance of the two endings of the *Vita* confirms the already existing idea that the *Vita* as we read it today is the work of Bohuslaus Balbinus from the seventeenth century. He has given the work its final style and tone. The *Vita* reflects Balbinus' language which aimed at rehabilitating Bohemian history and which attempts to demonstrate that many of the great historical figures in it are excellent and faithful Catholics whose deepest motivation was the cause of the church. The large number of detailed facts, however, indicates that Balbinus must have referred to some sources or even larger texts which he then simply reworked. The

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operibus non cessabat, quia quandocunque ab aliquibus devotis sibi aliquid dabatur, pauperibus impertiri jubebat.“ Emler, p. 429.

<sup>96</sup>„Pater erat, sed qualis pater! Qui videbatur abire nobis quodammodo proprius, tamen toti mundo communis. (..) Tu perfectionis exemplar, virtutis forma. Tu gloria Israel, tu laetitia Jerusalem [parafrase of Judith 15,10], oliva

numbers and persons which *Vita* mentions, e.g. in the case of the community Jerusalem, are too exact not to have come from other sources. We have identified the *Libellus de Antichristo* as one of those sources.

We should therefore conclude that the *Vita* as we know it certainly does not stem from the time immediately following the death of Milicius. We can reach a similar conclusion from a different angle. We know that after his death the community was closed down and the buildings were handed over to the Cistercian order. Many of Milicius' pupils subsequently got into trouble with church authorities and were forbidden to preach. Matthias de Janow was one such example, but trial reports indicate that there were more. As his writings demonstrate, Matthias saw the hand of Antichrist at work in these events. His view was certainly shared by many followers of Milicius. It seems justified to suggest that some of the roots of the austere eschatology and apocalypticism of the early Hussites lay in the works and influence of Milicius' community. It would be impossible not to write shortly after his death a biography about Milicius that reflected the spirit of eschatological feelings. The *Vita*, however, misses almost every opportunity to make an eschatological reference and presents Milicius simply as a pious and holy man. Bohuslaus Balbinus, architect of the baroque rehabilitation of Bohemian history, obviously had a decisive influence on the final edition of the *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, praelati ecclesiae Pragensis*.

### 3. The Life of Milicius de Chremsir: A Reconstruction

Everything we know about Milicius is profoundly influenced by the biographies of Matthias de Janow and Bohuslaus Balbinus whose aims colored both their writings. Matthias wanted to defend his own ideas which brought him into conflict with church authorities by citing Milicius as his predecessor and model. Balbinus' intention (as the final editor of the *Vita*) was to rehabilitate figures of Bohemian history by emphasizing their holiness. Many of the dates of both texts seem to be reliable, but some are changed according to the aims of the specific author or editor. Let us recapitulate what we can know about Milicius' life.<sup>97</sup>

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fructifera, vitis abundans, palma florida, cedrus multiplicata, platanus exaltata, vas electionis, vas honoris in domo dei." Emler, p. 430.

<sup>97</sup>Many data from other sources like Vatican documents, papal correspondence and bulls, trial documents, etc. have been collected and, as far as Milicius is concerned, worked out by the following authors: F. Palacký, *Über Formelbücher zunächst in Bezug auf böhmische Geschichte. Ein Quellenbeitrag zur Geschichte Böhmens und der Nachländer im XIII. und XV. Jahrhundert*, Praha 1842-1847; J. Klicman e.a. (ed.), *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas bohemicas illustrantia*, Praha 1903 ff.; F. Tádra (ed.), *Soudní akta konsistoře pražské* [Process Acts of the

We do not know exactly when Milicius was born. Both Loskot and Kaňák suggest that he might have been born around 1320. Loskot deduces this from the observation that Milicius must have been of a ripe age when he began to preach in 1363 after having held many responsible positions.<sup>98</sup> Kaňák uses more detailed arguments derived from his hypothesis about Milicius' origins. The preacher was probably born from a noble family that owned property near Tečovice, not far from the present town of Zlín in Moravia. His parents were Bohunko and Rychka of Theczowyzc (Tečovice), who had two other sons Raczko and Bohunko. They both married before 1350. We know that their third son, Milicius, was already a priest in 1348. It is possible that Milicius began his career as a priest and soon became a member of the chapter of Chremsir (Kroměříž) in whose documents his name appears also in 1353. It is therefore likely that his date of birth was shortly before or after 1320.<sup>99</sup>

We also know nothing about Milicius' education and activities before he arrived at the Prague chancery. Some suppose that he might have studied in Italy, but no documents are available to confirm this.<sup>100</sup> He obviously did not study at any university since he did not have a degree. Most likely he was educated at the Latin school of Olomouc Cathedral and then became a priest in this diocese. He might have worked in the town of Chremsir where the bishop of Olomouc had his summer palace and a part of his chancery. In this environment Milicius could have obtained his connections to Prague, especially to the chancery of Charles IV. The Bishop of Olomouc Johannes Oczko de Vlašim became one of the main advisors to the emperor and often accompanied him on his journeys. In 1364 he became archbishop of Prague.<sup>101</sup> It is possible that Milicius entered the Prague chancery thanks to the intervention of this former bishop of Olomouc. In any case, Milicius is documented to have been an employee of the emperor's chancery from 29 June 1358. From that date till 18 February 1360 he was the *registrator* (registrar), then till 17 September he was a *corrector* (copy editor), and finally a *notarius* (scribe) from 10 November 1360 till 7 October 1362.<sup>102</sup> From the surviving documents we further learn that Milicius visited Nürnberg in the autumn of 1358, Wroclaw in

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Prague Consistorium], Praha 1893-1901; František Loskot, *Milíč z Kroměříže, Otec české reformace*, Praha 1911; Miloslav Kaňák, *Milíč z Kroměříže*, Praha 1975.

<sup>98</sup>Loskot, p. 15-16.

<sup>99</sup>Kaňák, p. 11 ff. Kaňák bases his theory mainly on J. Pilnáček, *Moravští rodové* [Moravian Families], 1930; G. Wolny, *Kirchliche Topographie von Mähren II*, Brno 1857; and P. von Chlumecký e.a. (ed.), *Moravské zemské desky, Kraj Olomoucký* [Moravian Land Documents, District of Olomouc], I, Brno 1856.

<sup>100</sup>See Emler in the introduction to the volume I of *Fontes rerum bohemicarum*, p. XXXII.

<sup>101</sup>Z. Hledíková, J.V. Polc (ed.), *Pražské arcibiskupství 1344-1994* [The Prague archdiocese 1344-1994], Praha 1994, p. 301.

<sup>102</sup>Alfons Huber (and Johann Friedrich Böhmer), *Regesta imperii VIII. Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Kaiser Karl IV. 1346-1378*, Innsbrück 1877-1889.

February 1359 and again Nürnberg in January 1362.<sup>103</sup> These journeys were obviously connected to the visits Charles IV himself made to those destinations shortly before Milicius or at the same time. The emperor was, for example, in Nürnberg in June and July (and briefly in September) in 1358, in Wrocław in November of the same year — where he among other things strengthened his links to and influence on the diocese — and stayed again in Nürnberg from September 1361 till April 1362.<sup>104</sup>

At the chancery he worked under the guidance of Johannes Novoforensis<sup>105</sup> who was the chancellor of Charles IV from 1354 till 1374 and at the same time bishop of Litomyšl, a small town in Western Moravia. Spiritually this man belonged to the movement known as Pre-Humanism. Johannes studied in Italy where he encountered the new thinking and spirituality presented by figures such as Dante and Petrarca, with whom he corresponded regularly. He became a strong promotor of the Order of the Austin Hermits which also promoted the ideas of the new spirituality. Those reformist ideas strongly emphasized the importance of personal piety and perfection in spiritual matters. The attention on the individual and his illumination was combined with a renewed interest in rhetorics as a means of spreading those views. Johannes himself founded two monasteries for the Austin Hermits in his own diocese of Litomyšl.<sup>106</sup>

In January 1361 Milicius was granted a benefice by papal provision which had to be connected to some function in the administration of the Prague diocese. In documents dating from 1363 Milicius is cited as a canon of the St. Vitus Cathedral, where his duty was to guard the church and the tomb of the main Bohemian patron, St. Wenceslaus.<sup>107</sup> He was the holder of some agricultural property in Tmaň. In his position at the cathedral he had many practical responsibilities concerning the maintenance of the cathedral building and the masses celebrated there. In 1362 he quit his work at the emperor's chancery, where he is mentioned

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<sup>103</sup>Huber, nr. 2800 ff. See also Loskot, p. 19.

<sup>104</sup>See František Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV. za jeho císařství (1355-1378) (Země české koruny, rodová, říšská a evropská politika)* [The Reign of Charles IV During His Emperorship (1355-1378) (The Lands of the Czech Crown, Family, Imperial and European politics)], I, Praha 1993, p. 121 ff., 129 ff., 187 ff.

<sup>105</sup>In Czech „Jan ze Středy“ or in German „Johann von Neumarkt.“

<sup>106</sup>On Early Humanism see: Eduard Winter, *Frühhumanismus, Seine Entwicklung in Böhmen und deren europäischen Bedeutung für die Kirchenreformbestrebungen im 14. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1964; Manfred Gerwing, Die böhmische Reformbewegung und die niederländische Devotio moderna. Ein Vergleich, in: *Westmitteleuropa-Ostmitteleuropa. Vergleiche und Beziehungen*. Festschrift für Ferdinand Seibt zum 65. Geburtstag, München 1992, p. 175-184; and of the same author: Takzvaná devotio moderna, in: *Jan Hus mezi epochami, národy a konfesemi* [The so-called Devotio moderna, in: Johannes Hus between Epochs, Nations and Confessions], Praha 1995, p. 54-59. On Johannes Novoforensis see Winter, p. 60 ff.

for the last time on 7 October of that year. It is possible that he left this job in order to be able to take on a new function in the Prague diocese. Probably in the autumn of 1362 Milicius was appointed as vicar-archdeacon of Johannes de Marolio, who was archdeacon of Prague from April 1362 till at least 1367.<sup>108</sup>

We do not have direct proof for these last events but are forced to piece together information provided to us by some other sources. In the first place the *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii* tells us that Milicius for some time held the position of archdeacon.<sup>109</sup> It is, however, certain that not he but Johannes de Marolio who did not live in Prague was appointed to this office. This was not unusual in the fourteenth century when above all the honor and the income of the function and not the work itself was of interest to the nominee. Therefore, deputies were appointed who actually carried out the activities required by the function. From 1360 till 1362 the cleric Wenceslaus, who was a pastor at the St. Giles Church, held the deputy position.<sup>110</sup> Milicius obviously became his successor and stayed in this office for about one year, which required him to visit local parishes and clergy. It was Milicius' task to evaluate the morality of the Prague diocese and to take steps to correct or improve it whenever necessary. Anyone in such a function had to experience many situations in which members of the church hierarchy appeared to be people of dubious morality.<sup>111</sup>

We know that by the end of 1363 Milicius resigned from his functions at the Prague cathedral, because his successor is mentioned for the first time on 23 December of that year. Now we enter the period on which both the *Narracio* of Matthias de Janow and especially the *Vita* give many details. Probably in the same year or a few years earlier, the second famous popular preacher of fourteenth century Prague Conradus de Waldhausen started his activities in Prague.<sup>112</sup> In any case Milicius got to know his future colleague at this time, as becomes obvious from the events connected to Conradus' death in 1369 when Milicius took over his

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<sup>107</sup>Loskot, p. 22; Kaňák, p. 15. Both base themselves on documents edited in: J.F. Novák (ed.), *Acta Innocentii VI* (Monumenta Vaticana II), Praha 1907, p. 471 ff; and J. Emler, F.A. Tingl (ed.), *Libri Confirmationum*, I, pars altera, Praha 1875, p. 16.

<sup>108</sup>Novák, p. 502 ff.

<sup>109</sup>Emler, *Vita*, p. 404.

<sup>110</sup>V.V. Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* [History of the City of Prague], V, Praha 1905, p. 131.

<sup>111</sup>An idea of this is given by the edition of the only surviving visitation protocol from the fourteenth century: Ivan Hlaváček, Zdeňka Hledíková (ed.), *Visitační protokol pražského arcijáhenství pražského arcijáhna Pavla z Janovic z let 1379-1382* [Visitation Protocol of the Prague Archdeacony of the Prague Archdeacon Pavel de Janovice from 1379-1382], Praha 1973.

<sup>112</sup>The exact year of Conradus' arrival in Prague is not certain. Some suggest that he started in 1358 (so: Václav Vladivoj Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy* [History of the City of Prague], III, Praha 1893, p. 286ff.), others date the beginning of his preaching in 1363 (so: František Loskot, *Konrad Waldhauser, předchůdce mistra Jana Husa* [Predecessor of Master Johannes Hus], Praha 1909; or Heinrich Felix Schmid, *Konrad von Waldhausen*, 1961).



responsibilities at the Church of the Holy Virgin in front of Týn. Conradus could have played an important role in Milicius' decisions around 1363, when he radically changed his life. The Austrian preacher, who came to Prague on the invitation of Charles IV, was a typical example of the many popular preachers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. „Der Haupttenor seiner Bestrebungen war immer wieder: Belehrung und Aufklärung der Unwissenden, der Laien wie der Mönche, all derer, die um des Profits, der aus der Dummheit zu ziehen ist, oder auch nur aus Nachlässigkeit von jenen, die es besser wissen müßten, in ihrer Unwissenheit belassen werden.“<sup>113</sup> Preaching was approached as a form of education that had to be brought to the illiterate and sinful in order to convince them of the correctness of the church's faith. In Conradus' case — like in many cases of popular preachers — this education also implied a severe criticism of the lifestyle and attitude of many members of the clergy and the mendicant orders. The ideal of apostolic poverty, which such preachers supported in their sermons, was a source of austere reprimands addressed to many practices of the church hierarchy.

Conradus may have inspired Milicius. After leaving his offices at Prague Cathedral, Milicius stayed in the small town of Horšovský Týn in Southern Bohemia, which was under the patronage of the archbishop,<sup>114</sup> for about half a year. This stay was possibly a period of reorientation and preparation for things to come, since afterwards Milicius started his career as a popular preacher. Probably after six months Milicius returned to Prague where he began his activities at the St. Nicholas Church in the Lesser Town and soon also at the St. Giles on the other side of the river in the Main Town. In this period Milicius began to compile his first postil *Abortivus* which is ordered in its arrangement of Sundays and holy days in a way that largely follows the year 1363. He added the finishing touch to the postil in 1365.<sup>115</sup> Central to his sermons is the idea of reforming the moral life of the church and its hierarchy through preaching. In the corruption of the clergy Milicius sees the face of evil forces led by Satan, which unveil the *eschaton* or the end of time. Although his criticism is severe and without compromises, Milicius' ideas about the church, the papacy and the relations between church and society are rather traditional in a medieval light.<sup>116</sup> The origin of the first sermon collection already at the very beginning of Milicius' preaching activities leads to the conclusion that from the outset he understood himself and his preaching from within the

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<sup>113</sup>Johanna Schreiber, *Devotio moderna in Böhmen*, in: *Bohemica*, Jahrbuch des Collegium Carolinum, VI (1965), p. 104. See for preaching in the Middle Ages „The Place and Significance of Medieval Preaching and Sermon Collections“ in this study, p ...

<sup>114</sup>The German name for this place still refers to the archbishop's patronate: Bischofteinitz.

<sup>115</sup>See p. 107.

tradition of the preachers' movement of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Both this movement and Milicius considered preaching to be the main instrument for educating people in the right faith.<sup>117</sup>

Probably in the Spring of 1367 Milicius went to Rome to submit his views to the pope and his court. The pope was Urban V, whose civil name was Guillaume Grimoard and who was allegedly a very pious man.<sup>118</sup> When he was chosen pope in 1362 he was not a member of the College of Cardinals but abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Victor in Marseilles. The main issue during his papal reign became his relation to the cardinals and to the French rulers. During the Avignonese exile the College of Cardinals had become a very powerful body with extensive rights which in a serious way limited the ability of the pope to dictate his own policy. Ten years earlier at the election of Innocent VI, the cardinals had used this nomination to fix and strengthen their position by agreeing on a document about the rights of the college, which had to be respected by the future pope. Many of the measures of Urban V, who himself had not been a member of the cardinals' college, made him quite unpopular among the cardinals. For example, he forbade them to wear shoes with a sharp toe, which was a symbol of the rich and part of the modern fashion of this period. He also took many steps to counteract the misuse of church properties. His aim was to give back to the church its authority and credibility, and he understood very well that in order to reach this aim, he had to improve the education of the clergy and its moral level in matters of simony, concubinage and greed. For this same reason he wanted to liberate the church from the captivity in which it was held in Avignon by the French rulers. The papal court lost its independence and authority in a political sense as both the English and many Italian rulers had profound doubts about the significance of the papacy. Instead of the strong influential body it once was, it became a toy in the political game between the powerful states in the fourteenth century.

All those circumstances led Urban V to the idea of a return to Rome, still officially the property and seat of the papacy. The city, however, had been devastated during the time when the papal court found its safety in Avignon and was therefore no alternative for the cardinals who were used to their pleasant life in the Provence. Moreover Italy was divided among many local rulers and warlords making a safe return to Rome almost impossible. Nevertheless, Urban was determined to realize his aims and was backed by the Emperor Charles IV and also

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<sup>116</sup>See ch. IV.

<sup>117</sup>See ch. III.

<sup>118</sup>For the following see: Danys Hay, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, 2nd ed., New York 1986, p. 288 ff.

Petrarca, who urged him to return to the capital of Christendom. Finally in April of 1367, the pope left France by boat from Marseilles, accompanied by only five cardinals. The core of the administration remained in safety at Avignon, distrusting their own leader. After a long and complicated journey, Urban arrived in Rome on the 16 October 1367 guarded by a strong army of Italian noblemen. Despite his strong will the pope did not succeed. Forced by his main Italian enemy Visconti, the ruler of Northern Italy, and by the outbreak of a war between England and France, he was forced to flee back to Avignon in September 1370. A few months later he died a broken man.

Milicius obviously had many reasons to trust Urban V since his intentions of reform and emphasis on moral life were largely similar to his own views. Urban's departure from Avignon may have been the immediate reason why Milicius went to Rome. When the preacher arrived there, Urban was still on his way to the eternal city. From the *Vita* and the *Libellus de Antichristo* we know what happened.<sup>119</sup> When Milicius made public his intentions to preach in St. Peter's he was arrested by the inquisitor and imprisoned. In a sermon preached during a private audience led by the inquisitor, he explained his ideas about the main reason for his visit to Rome: the coming of Antichrist. This sermon, which survived under the name *Sermon de die novissimo*,<sup>120</sup> says that though many are unable to see Antichrist because of their blindness, the great enemy of truth is about to come. The corruption and injustice in the church led by prelates and in the world under the rule of kings and princes was evidence of this coming. The sermon presents some ideas about the origin and activities of Antichrist common to the fourteenth century. Antichrist will be born from the tribe of Dan in Babylon, the place of confusion, and will seek power over the world as a snake during a battle that will last for years. Finally, he will reign three and a half years and the Jews will take him as their Messiah. He will persecute and kill faithful Christians. Elijah and Enoch will appear to strengthen the remaining believers. He will burn all books that present the true faith and finally, he will be venerated and worshipped in the Temple of Jerusalem. When he tries to ascend to heaven — the parody of the life of Jesus has to be completed — he falls back to earth because of the weight of his sinful body and then he will be killed by the Archangel Michael. Antichrist's followers will, however, have the possibility to do penance before the Judgment Day. Nobody knows exactly when this day will be, but it will be preceded by

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<sup>119</sup>See p. 33 and 48.

<sup>120</sup>Edited by F.M. Bartoš, Miličův Sermo de die novissimo [Milicius' Sermo etc.], in: *Reformační sborník VIII*, Praha 1946, p. 49-58.

destruction and death. Milicius took this scenario of Judgment Day from the Book of Revelation (c. 8-11) where it is told that seven trumpets will sound on this day. Everyone will be judged three times: by God, his own conscience and his guardian angel. Finally, Satan and his demons will take evildoers to hell and the holy will enter God's eternal kingdom.

The ideas Milicius expressed in the *Sermo de die novissimo* are by no means original, but rather belong to the development of apocalyptic and eschatological views of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They are largely set in a context of reform and moral criticism, which lent the originally horrifying images an individual and historical nature. Some call this process „the banalization of evil,”<sup>121</sup> thus indicating the internalization of cosmological images in a historical and personal context. One source on Antichrist which might have been familiar to Milicius is the so-called *Velislai Biblia Picta* dated in Prague about 1350.<sup>122</sup> Most likely the owner of the book was Velislaus who was *notarius* and *protonotarius* at the Prague chancery between 1341 and 1351. This edition of the Bible contains a story in pictures about Antichrist which is very similar to the story Milicius told in his sermon. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the *Velislai Biblia* is the absence of any detestable feature in the pictures of Antichrist. He does not appear in any way as a monstrous person but has a normal human body, and his face is very similar to the one commonly used to depict Christ. Only a devilish figure in the background makes it clear that we are dealing with Antichrist here. We are confronted with a human being whose story to a large extent is an imitation of the story of Christ.

This might confirm the impression that Milicius' image of Antichrist in his *Sermo de die novissimo* is in the first place that of a historical character. With the name Antichrist he did not imagine an ahistoric creature, but someone who proved through his deeds to be Antichrist, i.e. someone in the service of Satan. Antichrist is in Milicius' terms mainly a moral indication. Milicius' second written work on Antichrist, the *Libellus de Antichristo*, gives the same

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<sup>121</sup>A reference to Hannah Arendt made by Bernard McGinn, Portraying the Antichrist in the Middle Ages, in: Werner Verbeke, Daniel Verhelst, Andries Welkenhuysen (ed.), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, Leuven 1988, p.18. For the developments of (medieval) eschatology and apocalypticism see also: Horst Dieter Rauh, Eschatologie und Geschichte im 12. Jahrhundert: Antichrist-Typologie als Medium der Gegenwartskritik, in: Verbeke e.a., p.333-358; Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*, New York 1979 and of the same author *Antichrist, Two Thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil*, New York 1994; Richard K. Emmerson, Bernard McGinn, *The Apocalypses in the Middle Ages*, New York 1992; Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*, Seattle 1981.

<sup>122</sup>Karel Stejskal (ed.), *Velislai Biblia Picta*, Praha 1970. See also Karel Chytil, *Antikrist v naukách a umění středověku a husitské obrazné antithese* [Antichrist in the Doctrines and Art of the Middle Ages and the Hussite Antithesis in Images], Praha 1918; Peter C.A. Morée, *Milíč z Kroměříže, apokalyptisch boeteprediker in vroeghumanistisch Praag, een dertiende-eeuwer in de veertiende eeuw* [Apocalyptic Penitance Preacher in Pre-

impression. This work originates from the same visit to Rome and may have been written shortly after the *Sermo*. The sermon did not convince the inquisitor of Milicius' orthodoxy and he asked him to write down his ideas. The *Libellus* is meant as defense of Milicius' attitude and opinions about the church, but contains also some exhortations addressed to the pope on how to realize serious reforms in the church. It opens with a short description of the confusion in which Milicius found himself when contemplating Antichrist and the „desolating sacrilege“ from Mt. 24,15. Considering this initially as a voice from the devil, he sought peace in meditation and prayer but did not find it and therefore decided to submit his vision to the pope. Urban V, however, had not yet arrived in Rome as we mentioned, and so Milicius' confusion continued till he decided to announce his sermon at the entrance of St. Peter's. In the *Libellus* Milicius gave two possible years for the coming of Antichrist, both based on Dan.12,11-12 the classical text for foretelling the events connected to the end of the times. The first year is 1365, when the army of Charles IV went from Avignon to Germany, Milicius wrote. The second possibility is 1367, which is the very year the preacher visited the pope in Rome. Once again he points to the clergy's laxity, avarice and indifference as signs of Antichrist's work. Those prelates who refuse their vocation to preach and communicate the delicious gifts of the faith. The genealogy of Antichrist in *Libellus* is similar to the one in the *Sermo*, although the *Libellus* elaborates less on this subject. According to Milicius, there are many antichrists, which is a description of everyone who denies Christ by his deeds. He does not know, however, who the Great Antichrist is since God's Spirit will not reveal the identity of this final enemy of Christ.

He wanted to speak with the pope about all these ideas and give him advice on how to lead the church in the direction of reform. Once more, he mentions the signs of Antichrist's influence: heresies, sects, brotherhoods of murderers, Beghards and Beghuines etc. Also he notes that the empire is in a deep crisis as all rulers are divided against one another and the emperor is losing his power. Only the pope can take action to bring both the church and society back into a state of salvation by sending out preachers to separate the good seed from the weeds or to reveal Gog and Magog, i.e. the godless. Preachers will bring together the faithful before the arrival of the Judgment Day. They will unite the church, healing it from its division of sin and corruption. To start this preaching campaign, he advised the pope to announce a general council in Rome where the bishops would be instructed on the *modus corrigendi*, „the ways

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Humanist Prague, a Fellow of the thirteenth Century Living in the fourteenth Century], M.A. thesis, unpublished, Utrecht 1990.

how to correct.“ The bishops then need to send preachers from a religious and secular background to preach to the people.

In the last part of the *Libellus* Milicius promised the pope that he would understand the nature of the situation of the church and society if he follows his advice. Then, the Scriptures will be revealed to him and unveil the Antichrist. But if he does not, then God’s anger will come over the world without any warning to those who are eating, drinking and living in sin. As Milicius said in his final sentences, he wrote his apology in prison waiting for the pope to initiate the liberation of Israel or the holy church.

Many of the themes from both the *Sermo de die novissimo* and the *Libellus de Antichristo* we find as well in the two postils *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*,<sup>123</sup> even though the figure of Antichrist hardly appears in them. The sermon collections present preachers as the ones who are finally uniting the church by separating good and evil, thus preparing for the Judgment Day. They consider the corruption of the church as a sign of the end of time, but are very reluctant to use the figure of Antichrist. We must conclude, therefore, that Milicius’ thoughts were concentrated on Antichrist as such only for about one year in 1367, after which the image of the final enemy lost its urgency for him. He, however, stuck to his view on preachers and their role in the context of the end of the age, which we describe as „immanent eschatology.“

When he wrote the *Libellus* Milicius was still in prison. Soon after the arrival of Urban V in October 1367 he was released, apparently because of a recommendation from Urban’s brother, Cardinal Grimaud, as the *Vita* recalls. We do not know anything further about his consultations with the pope after which the preacher returned to Prague. The next information we have on him is from a letter sent by Milicius to Urban V possibly in 1368 or 1369.<sup>124</sup> The aim of it might have been to underline once more the necessity of moral reform in the church. Basically, Milicius repeated the views and proposals from the *Libellus*. He portrays the pope as the only one who can initiate this process of reform because he has a life-giving medicine at his disposal. Milicius extensively describes the bad situation in the church — the clergy not taking any action against sin, bishops neglecting their office as pastors of their flock, prelates

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<sup>123</sup>See ch. IV and V.

<sup>124</sup>Edited by Ferdinand Menčík, *Milič a dva jeho spisy z roku 1367* [Milicius and two of his writings from the year 1367], in: *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk*, Praha 1890, p. 318-325. Menčík proposed an earlier dating which is however not likely in the context of Milicius’ second visit to Rome. Amedeo Molnár placed the letter in another context, dating it before both the *sermo* and the *Libellus*. He suggested that Milicius wrote the letter from Rome waiting for the pope, who at that moment left Avignon. See Milan Opočenský and Jana

practicing simony and injustice instead of preaching the truth, and canons and monks taking part in tournaments rather than singing in church and finally, all requiring money for their religious services. And meanwhile, the world is full of heretics and sects, Beghards and Beguines. The only way Milicius saw of returning to a state of holiness was by calling a general council to instruct the hierarchy to profoundly change their own behavior and enact moral reform in the church.

In contrast to the *Libellus* the letter to Urban V does not mention Antichrist or other controversial apocalyptic ideas. Only the two creatures Behemoth and Leviathan appear, taken from the Book of Job and commonly symbolizing the devilish origin of evil. We can only guess the reason for this difference. Possibly, Milicius wanted to convince the pope of the necessity for reform by using an argument with which Urban could agree. Therefore, Milicius omitted his thoughts on the coming of Antichrist and the true apocalyptic background of the corruption of the church for political reasons. Therefore, this letter could have been more acceptable to the pope than the *Libellus*. Another reason could be that after the experience of his first visit to Rome and his imprisonment, Milicius returned to a purer orthodoxy by leaving out austere notions of an apocalyptic nature. Possibly the inquisitor or the pope himself convinced Milicius that by stressing the coming of Antichrist and even fixing a date for it could mean that one day he would find himself on the other side of the border between orthodoxy and heresy. In that case, the preacher more or less renounced his views simply by refraining from referring to them anymore. In both cases Milicius' decision to write only about the moral corruption of the church and the necessity of profound change while omitting any kind of apocalyptic ideas is a denial of his true philosophy; his letter to Urban V reduces apocalypticism to nothing more than a possible understanding of the nature of the crisis, which does not need to be voiced or brought up in sermons. Apocalypticism can therefore be omitted.

The letter could have been connected to Milicius' second visit to Rome in 1369, while pope Urban V was still residing in the city. This visit was apparently very short according to the *Vita*. Milicius possibly had to return to Prague because of the death of Conradus de Waldhausen, his fellow preacher at the Church of the Holy Virgin in front of Týn. He took over the preaching practice of Conradus at least in part and began to preach regularly at this major church in the Main Town. This certainly implies that he had to preach in German as

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Opočenská (ed), *The Message for the Last Days, Three Essays from the Year 1367, Milič of Kroměříž*, Geneva 1998, p. 15.

well since the inhabitants of this part of Prague were largely German-speaking. As we have seen, the *Vita* speaks about Milicius' sermons being in three languages: Czech, German and Latin. After some time, Milicius began with the preparation of a second sermon collection which he called *Gratiae Dei*. This postil could be dated to 1371-1372<sup>125</sup> and contains homilies rather than the scholastic *sermones* of *Abortivus*. The scholastic sermons were the common form in the fourteenth century but forced the preacher to preach thematically, extracting themes from the biblical text. Homilies like the ones in *Gratiae Dei* provided the preacher with much more freedom to interpret and comment on the biblical text. Obviously, Milicius preferred the less sophisticated form of the homily at this time and avoided the somewhat intellectual approach of the thematic sermon. *Gratiae Dei* seems to be better balanced than its forerunner *Abortivus*.<sup>126</sup> The explanation for this could be that Milicius had become more mature in his preaching after almost eight years of practice.

On at least three occasions in those years Milicius was invited by the archbishop to deliver a sermon to a synod of the Prague diocese. Archbishop Arnestus convened a meeting of his clergy twice a year, on St. Vitus' and on St. Luke's Day (15 June and 18 October).<sup>127</sup> Arnestus might have aimed to improve the knowledge and morality of the clergy by instructing them on those occasions. That would explain why he invited Milicius to deliver a sermon, since the preacher was known for his efforts in this field. The three synodal sermons we know today are cannot be dated exactly, but we can fix some possible years of origin by excluding the years in which Milicius was unable to preach in Prague or was rather considered too controversial by many of the clergy. The year 1367 is not possible because Milicius was in Rome from the spring till autumn of that year. In the autumn of 1369, Milicius visited Rome again. The years after 1372 are unlikely since the conflict between Milicius and a larger group of the Prague clergy grew to serious dimensions. Therefore the three sermons most likely stem from the years between 1364 (Milicius came back to Prague in the autumn) and 1366, 1368 till spring 1369, 1370 and 1371.

In the sermons Milicius mainly analyzed the reasons for the moral corruption of the church, which are very much similar to the criticism he brings forward in the letter to Urban V. Many priests are hypocrites, seeking only money for their services but providing no pastoral care.

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<sup>125</sup>See p. 106 ff.

<sup>126</sup>See p. 100.

<sup>127</sup>Loskot, p. 43 ff. The sermons are edited by Vilém Herold and Milan Mráz, *Iohannis Milicii de Cremsir Tres sermones synodales*, Praha 1974, who concerning their dating conclude that it is impossible to date them more precisely than falling between the years 1364-1373 (p. 31).



They neglect their duties in favor of eating and drinking, gambling, dressing expensively and ostentatiously, going to brothels and practising simony. He recommends that the way to begin changing this situation is with an open and courageous criticism toward everyone who is damaging the church, regardless of his position. Then the clergy has to live according to the principles of their vocation, i.e. they have to look like shepherds after their people. Priests have to live a holy life like that of the apostles and the first Christians.<sup>128</sup>

One of the effects of Milicius' continuous popular preaching was the conversion of some prostitutes who then formed a community. This group seems to have grown quickly and apparently also men and some of Milicius' male pupils joined it. This led to the foundation of Jerusalem at the place of a former brothel named Venice. The *Vita* gives many details about the persons involved in the community. Before it broke up, it might have contained some twenty nine houses and a chapel that could hold up to eighty people. A total of three hundred people lived in the community for varying periods of time during those years. According to the *Vita*, both the archbishop and the emperor supported Milicius in this project, despite the fact that such a concentration of lay people must have evoked fear among the hierarchy. Lay communities were very quickly suspected of heresy as its members lived together without a fixed rule like monastic orders.

Jerusalem and Milicius' preaching became the main points of an accusation formulated by several Prague clerics in 1373. We know, however, about earlier conflicts, possibly in 1368, when Milicius was accused by some mendicants.<sup>129</sup> In his letter to Urban V he referred to this conflict and called his opponents „offenders of the evangelical truth.“ A fragment of some interrogations that possibly took place during this case presents the responses of seven citizens of Prague who belonged to Milicius' audience. They were asked what Milicius told them about mendicants and their authority and, according to the fragment, they all answered that Milicius instructed them to confess only to their own pastor and not to the mendicants who have no authority to hear confession, unless they have permission from the archbishop. In other words, those interrogated denied that Milicius acted libellously toward the mendicants. The accusations made against him in 1373 were, however, more serious. In January of that year, one of Milicius' followers had to face accusations that he slandered prelates by criticizing their moral behavior. Again in April, another pupil of Milicius was accused. Both

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<sup>128</sup>Herold, p. 20 ff.

<sup>129</sup>The only surviving fragment of an interrogation of some Prague citizens is edited by Ferdinand Menčík, *Milič a dva jeho spisy* [Milicius and Two of His Writings], in: *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk*, Praha 1890, p. 318-325 (the fragment we find on p. 317-318). Menčík gives no dating for the fragment.

were banned from preaching until such a time when the archbishop would pronounce a verdict. The first trial directly against Milicius was initiated by the pastor of the St. Stephanus Church not far from Milicius' community. The issue was presented as a material one, the pastor claiming the right to receive an income from the houses of Jerusalem as he had before the community was founded. The result of the trial was that Milicius had to hand over his patronage rights on the community's chapel to the vicar general of the archbishop.<sup>130</sup> Milicius, however, was dissatisfied with this outcome and appealed to the papal court; however, he later rescinded his appeal at the request of the archbishop.<sup>131</sup>

A decisive step against Milicius was taken by some of the Prague clergy together with some mendicants, probably before the end of 1373.<sup>132</sup> They formulated twelve articles against the preacher and sent them to the papal court in Avignon.<sup>133</sup> In 1370 Pope Gregory XI was elected. He would definitively bring the papal court back to Rome in 1377. He had the reputation of being a rather cautious pope in political matters who nevertheless in some respects continued on the path of his predecessor. The twelve articles contained the following accusations: 1. Milicius had preached the coming of Antichrist in 1366; 2. he taught that those who trade in money and real estate are damned; 3. he declared the income clergy received from owning houses was usury; 4. Milicius had ordered lay people to receive holy communion every day or even twice a day as a necessity for their salvation, which resulted in the demands of some lay people to receive communion as frequently as a priest; 5. he ordered some people to receive communion often or even daily as an act of repentance; 6. the community of Jerusalem had grown into an unofficial order with special habits; 7. Milicius had applied for permission to found a parish and order in Jerusalem, but when the Prague authorities refused his proposal, he abused the pope, cardinals and every other church authority; 8. when he was told that he could be excommunicated for founding a new order without permission, he claimed that the emperor would defend him; 9. he said that the study of the arts is a deadly sin; 10. he forbade modest dress and jewelry and even destroyed it; 11. he said that he had done much more than Christ himself and what he could not finish, would be finished with the help of the secular powers; and finally, 12. he preached that priests should not hold property privately but only in common.

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<sup>130</sup>Documents of the process are edited by Ferdinand Tádra, *Soudní akta konsistoře pražské* [Process Acts of the Prague Consistorium], I, Praha 1893, p. 51 ff.

<sup>131</sup>Also edited by Tádra, p. 65-66.

<sup>132</sup>So Loskot, p. 93 ff.

Gregory XI was obviously shocked by these articles. They accused Milicius of attacking some of the very foundations of the church by building a new order without authorization, by criticizing the property of the clergy and by pinning the secular power against the church. On 13 January 1374 the pope sent several bulls to Prague and to other neighboring dioceses urging the bishops to immediately stop Milicius' activities. In a letter, he moreover asked Charles IV for his help in removing this „stain“ from the Bohemian kingdom.<sup>134</sup> We also have a short commentary on the twelve articles, probably written by a theologian at the request of the Prague inquisitor,<sup>135</sup> which concluded that the sentences attributed to Milicius were indeed heretical in the way they were formulated.

Milicius, however, decided to appeal to the papal court instead of subjecting himself to a trial in Prague. This theological commentary might have convinced him that his chances in Prague were slim. We do not know anything more about the journey or the inquiry in Avignon than what has come down to us from the *Vita*. No protocols or other sources survive. Johannes Klenkok was assigned Milicius' case.<sup>136</sup> This man decisively and quickly concluded that Milicius was no heretic at all. Behind this surprising verdict might have stood Cardinal Grimaud, the same man who used his influence to liberate Milicius during his first visit to Rome in 1367. The cardinal invited Milicius to preach on Pentecost, 21 May 1374.

Soon after these events Milicius died. The *Vita* mentions St. Peter's day which is probably 29 June (St. Peter's and St. Paul's). A second possibility is the day of St. Peter, 1 August. It seems most likely that once Milicius was cleared of all accusations, he would have returned to Prague as soon as possible. The weather conditions in June or July would have been favorable for travel. Milicius presumably became ill shortly after his last sermon and never recovered. This could be a reason to date his death on 29 June 1374.

Milicius' triumph in Avignon did not have any effect on the events in Prague. The inquisition started to interrogate many of Milicius' followers and fellow preachers. They were, however, not accused of heresy but lost their legal right to continue with their activities. On 17 December 1374 Charles IV declared that Jerusalem was to be given to the Cistercian order to serve as a college for their students. Jerusalem was renamed St. Bernard.<sup>137</sup> The religious

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<sup>133</sup>Edited by František Palacký, *Über Formelbücher zunächst in Bezug auf böhmische Geschichte*, II, Praha 1847, p. 183-184.

<sup>134</sup>The papal bulls are edited by Palacký in his *Formelbücher* II, p. 182. The letter to Charles IV we find in O.T. Raynaldus C.O., *Annales ecclesiastici*, Tomus XVI, Coloniae Aggrippinae 1691, p. 526.

<sup>135</sup>The commentary is also edited by Palacký in his *Formelbücher* II, p. 184-186

<sup>136</sup>Both Loskot and Kaňák.

<sup>137</sup>Kaňák, p. 30. See also Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce*, 2, p. 197 ff.

atmosphere in 1374 and in subsequent years is reminiscent of the conditions in which Matthias de Janow wrote his *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti*. In this light, it is easy to comprehend how Milicius came to be remembered as a saintly figure with, according to some sources, apocalyptic characteristics.

### III

#### THE PLACE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF MEDIEVAL PREACHING AND SERMON COLLECTIONS

Milicius de Chremsir left two large collections entitled *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*, containing 271 sermons altogether. This study concentrates on twenty seven sermons taken from both postils and analyzes them according to five thematic groupings. Through his preaching activities and his collections Milicius followed an important tradition of the medieval church that aimed to reform Christianity from the twelfth century onward. Before we turn to the selected sermons, we discuss the phenomenon of medieval preaching as such.

##### 1. The Development of the Scholastic Sermon

Sermon collections or postils represent a special genre in medieval literature. The significance of them has been understood only in recent years by pioneers like L.J. Bataillon and D. d'Avray, who paved the way for research focused on medieval sermons. During this research, sermon collections have proven rich resources for understanding everyday life. Sermons tell us about the ideas that the preacher or author considered important enough to spread among his audience or that moved the audience for some reason. A nice example of this is presented in the writings of Thomas M. Izbicki on Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), a Franciscan Observant who was in his own day a well-known and popular preacher.<sup>138</sup> Bernardino became renowned for his zealous preaching against what he considered to be the luxurious way women were dressing. Despite his fervent criticism of the contemporary lifestyle of his day, he remained highly popular, which at first glance seems to us a surprising contradiction. Izbicki explains this disparity by pointing out the feeling of uncertainty that existed among common people in the first half of the fifteenth century. Bernardino and others were addressing this uncertainty in their sermons and giving it voice.

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<sup>138</sup>Thomas M. Izbicki, *Pyres of Vanities: Mendicant Preaching on the Vanity of Women and Its Lay Audience*, in: Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, Beverly Mayne Kienzle (ed), *De ore Domini, Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, Kalamazoo 1989, p. 211-234.

How are we to understand the enduring popularity of Franciscan preachers such as Bernardino who denounced the vanity of women's dress and ornament in such fiery, not to say Old Testament, language? (..) We must also remember that the fifteenth century was an age of social, political, and economic uncertainty. We must add to this explanation the need of audiences to hear a reaffirmation of traditional pieties. Such reaffirmations gave them a sense of security in a turbulent age when the commune was giving way to aristocratic regimes in which the old nobility of birth and the new patriciate of wealth gradually ceased to be distinguishable.<sup>139</sup>

For a long time, mode of dress was the main way of identifying social status. Clothes had the important function of dividing society into distinct compartments. These previously stable social distinctions were changing at the time when Bernardino was a preacher. New social rules required that all classes dress more luxuriously, thus threatening the stability and status of the family by blurring class differences in appearance. This shift that led to an ambivalence toward new roles in society made Bernardino's contemporaries receptive to his preaching against the vanity of women. Therefore, Bernardino's preaching was effective not only due to whatever eloquence he may have possessed, but also because people were concerned about the changing attitudes that brought into question the game of family status.

Bernardino of Siena preached at the beginning of the fifteenth century at a time when popular preaching was immensely widespread in Europe. In his time, both itinerant and non-itinerant preachers were probably a normal phenomenon even in small towns. This has its roots in the profound changes that took place in the twelfth century. Since popular preachers were present everywhere in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they were for the common people probably the most evident sign of the so-called Renaissance of the twelfth century. This term, first adopted by Charles Homer Haskins in his study *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*<sup>140</sup> is also used by M.-D. Chenu in his study on this turning point in Western history.<sup>141</sup> Chenu sees a profound shift in mankind's attitude toward nature, which also had a

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<sup>139</sup>Izbecki, p. 223-4

<sup>140</sup>Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1927) 1979.

<sup>141</sup>M.-D Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century, Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, Chigaco, London, 1968; see for this phenomenon also Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother, Studies in Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Berkeley 1982; Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200*, London 1972; Walter Ullmann, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages*, Baltimore 1966, London 1967.

great impact on theology and the church. Nature was no longer a threat to mankind with its chaotic unpredictability, but was viewed as having patterns and a certain rationality. It was discovered that the human mind could understand and even control natural processes. The universe of nature and the supernatural was found to be a place of stability and strength.

The universe, then, is an admirably ordered unity (..). The integration — at once ontological and noetic — of all the beings it contains in its hierarchical order implies a “continuity” that is at once dynamic and static in principle. Between each of these beings in their separate ranks exists an intimate bond: the greater intensity of the superior being exerts an attractive force upon the one next below it and draws it upward toward its own higher level; and out of this attraction arises the fulfillment of the lower being, or, if it is a spiritual being, its happiness.<sup>142</sup>

Reasons for these changes can be found in several developments from the second half of the eleventh century.<sup>143</sup> As cities expanded, the social life of all layers of society became concentrated in them and all important events were staged there. Partly as a result of this, society began to ossify into the different social groups that would play a meaningful role in the centuries to come, thus giving a new face to daily life and order. The new role of knowledge in society changed the relationship between knowledge and the physical world even in established cathedral schools and universities. New knowledge inevitably led to the need to redefine authority and the boundaries of orthodoxy. Through critical study of sources such as the Church Fathers, the eleventh and twelfth centuries revealed that the situation of the church and society was very different from that during early Christianity. As a result of this awareness, there arose sharp divisions between liberals and conservatives as in the case of Abelard and St. Bernard.

One of the aspects of these changes was a new awareness of the individual, which is visible in the attitude toward history that emerged.<sup>144</sup> History was no longer approached as a static category where nothing would change until the end of time but which rather acknowledged progress. In the works of Hugo of St. Victor and Anselm of Havelberg, history is presented as a process that has a certain development with growth and progress. The new understanding of

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<sup>142</sup>Chenu, p. 24.

<sup>143</sup>Morris, p. 37 ff.

<sup>144</sup>Chenu, p. 171 ff.

time resulted in a creative attitude toward dividing history into eras and verbalizing either optimism or pessimism about one's own time. "Apocalyptic" or, as Chenu says, "messianistic" movements such as that of Joachim of Fiore were an expression of this new understanding of history.

Another — and for our study more important — impact of the Renaissance of the twelfth century was its emphasis on the *vita apostolica*. Chenu characterizes this new form of spirituality as a manifestation of society's greater mobility which was mainly an urban phenomenon. Lay people were given new chances and expanded their radius of activities. This made it necessary to redefine divisions and roles in society. The conflict between the new apostolic life and institutionalized forms of spiritual life like that of monasteries was in fact a conflict between the old social order, in which professional clergy and monks were believed to be the sole proprietors of spirituality, versus the new order based on a different awareness of nature, history and human life. According to the new order, the individual and his creative behavior were an integral part of everyday life, and thus it encouraged people to actively participate in spirituality. This new mentality professed that spirituality was not just the property of church professionals, but that the laity could also actively achieve spirituality using the gospel as a resource.

The new role of the laity was a logical and necessary outcome of the revolution in progress. Since the evangelical awakening took place not by a revision of existing institutions but by a return to the gospel that by-passed these institutions, one could predict what its dynamics had to be: witness to the faith, fraternal love, poverty, the beatitudes — all these were to operate more spontaneously and sooner among laymen than among clerics, who were bound within an institutional framework. The risk could be great — and in this it was great — that laymen would grossly abuse their evangelical liberty, for once on the way to imitating the apostles, they would claim that the right to teach derived from that liberty. It was difficult to distinguish public witness by the faithful from the function of teaching.<sup>145</sup>

This new lay spirituality was not fully under the church's control and to some extent it became a structure parallel to the church. The church no longer had a monopoly on living a life according to the gospel. Lay people began to organize themselves on the principles of



apostolic life — in other words poverty and public preaching — outside the institutions of monastic life. In quite a few instances, this led to movements that were strongly critical of the church and its hierarchy. In his ample survey on European dissent in the Middle Ages, R.I. Moore sees in the uncertainties of this era the roots of heretic groups and movements.<sup>146</sup>

The society of Gregorian Europa was fluid in many dimensions; both vertically and horizontally, both conceptually and in fact, the familiar world was dissolving, and many men knew neither what their place was, nor what it ought to be. Such a climate is unpropitious to the maintenance of religion centered upon ritual, and nourishes the urge of the disoriented to guard themselves against the corruptions of a disintegrating world, and seek by direct inspiration to prepare their own souls for the reception of their maker.<sup>147</sup>

As society continued to redefine itself and the roles of the individual, the clergy and the laity, preaching emerged as a central issue. Preaching became an important public skill which offered its listeners a deeper understanding of their personal lives. Self-knowledge was considered fundamental for spiritual growth and sermons were the mass medium for declaring this new ideal.<sup>148</sup> Many sympathizers of apostolic life and people who were considered heretics began to preach in public. Preaching was for them a way of bearing witness to their ideas and inspiration, and of teaching others how to do the same. The most important preaching movement in the twelfth century was the Waldensian movement, whose ideas were typical of apostolic life as such — the Waldensians wanted to live in poverty and to travel around preaching the gospel. They refused to join a monastic order because that would keep them from living like the apostles in the Book of Acts. Preaching was very important to them, but since they belonged to the laity it was not permitted for them to practice it. The founder of

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<sup>145</sup>Chenu, p. 219.

<sup>146</sup>“To deny that the sudden appearance of popular heresy in eleventh-century Europe is to be accounted for by any single explanation which applies to all these cases of it may be to seem to shrink from the duty of explanation itself. It is not so. There remains one thing that all these heretics have in common, and which also accounts for the profound differences between them. The eleventh century saw the beginning of one of the formative periods of European development, a time whose transformations left nothing untouched. The heretics were isolated from each other, and formed nothing which can properly be described as a ‘heretical movement’, of whatever size or importance. They were not isolated from the world in which they lived. Most of them were touched, in one way or another, by the gathering dissatisfaction with the capacity of the church to perform its spiritual duties, although they did not, for the most part, attack it directly.” R.I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent*, London 1977, p. 44-45.

<sup>147</sup>R.I. Moore, p. 79.

<sup>148</sup>Morris, p. 67.

the Waldensians Peter Waldes asked Pope Alexander III for permission to preach but was not granted it.

In his study on lay preaching, R. Zerfaß sees in these events the basis of the official church attitude and policy toward preaching.<sup>149</sup> For the Waldensians, preaching was a weapon for fighting heresy and hypocrisy among priests who were unwilling and unable to live according to Christ's law.<sup>150</sup> They understood preaching to be their mission or *ministerium* given to them by Christ. Their decision to live in poverty was a direct consequence of this belief and not a secondary result of it. They also upheld the principle of *predicatio libera* or "free preaching," which was not meant to be anti-hierarchic but rather a means of preaching without requiring food or clothing in exchange. To support this special understanding of their mission, the Waldensians argued that every Christian is obliged to be active. Zerfaß calls this "eine neue christliche Grundverantwortung für die Verkündigung des Evangeliums."<sup>151</sup>

The Waldensians did not want to create their own hierarchy, and therefore remained subordinate to the bishop. "Für die Frühzeit ist also festzuhalten, daß die Waldenser sich als besondere Gruppe in der Kirche verstehen, die eine Funktion im Ganzen der Kirche zu erfüllen hat und deshalb dem Kirchenvolk als eine Art Ordensverband oder 'Klerus' mit dem Anspruch der Botschaft gegenübertritt."<sup>152</sup> They never referred to themselves as *praedicatores* (preachers) or *doctores* (theologians) but simply as *pauperes spiritu* (the poor of spirit) or *pauperes Christi* (the poor of Christ) to which, however, in their understanding belonged the *ministerium praedicationis* (the mission of preaching). They never intended to officially undermine the church's monopoly on education and preaching; however, they did require that the lay people be given room to actively seek evangelic spirituality.

Preaching, however, remained a privilege of local priests who readily viewed the activities of lay people as competition. Monks generally did not preach because they were supposed to be "dead" to the world, living in their closed monasteries far away from everyday life where they devoted themselves to prayer and penitence. Itinerant lay preachers did not belong to any concrete monastic order that could officially provide them with this mission. These people simply preached from their own inner enthusiasm. Therefore, the main issue for the church at the outset was how to control such groups. Leaders of the church such as Alexander III

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<sup>149</sup>Rolf Zerfaß, *Der Streit um die Laienpredigt, Eine pastoralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Verständnis des Predigtamtes und zu seiner Entwicklung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg, Basel, Wien, 1974.

<sup>150</sup>Zerfaß, p. 63 ff.

<sup>151</sup>Zerfaß, p. 71.

<sup>152</sup>Zerfaß, p. 75.

accepted these new groups' requests for permission to preach simply because they saw an immense potential in the initiatives of the lay people and searched for ways to incorporate them into the church structures. This issue was solved through theological education and co-operation with the local clergy. However, the Third Lateran Council of 1179 responded with demands that were beyond every layman's ability to meet. Also permission from the local bishop or priest to preach was required, which gave the clergy an effective instrument for terminating the activities of groups or individuals in their territory who were critical of priests or of the church. These measures brought an end to the Waldensians' activities within the church. They were declared unfit to preach because of their lack of theological knowledge. However, because some continued to preach anyhow, the Waldensians were finally excommunicated in 1182/83.

There were, of course, very practical problems with lay preaching. Travelling as the apostles had done was seen as an indissoluble aspect of evangelic life; however, because of this constant mobility, lay preachers did not have close ties to a particular parish or community. It would have been difficult to maintain the pastoral character of preaching because that would have required preachers to work in a fixed place as did the clergy. Some writers of publications that were against the new lay initiatives were quick to point this out. Bernhard of Fontcaude, abbot of the Premonstratensian monastery in Fontcaude, was one such critic. In his tractate *Adversus Waldensium sectam* he stressed that a preacher should be committed to his local community. He argued that priests are in the best position to preach because of their pastoral engagement and that the existence of such professional preachers abolished the need for lay preachers. His concept of the church was very static, which was a result of his aversion to itinerant (Waldensian) preachers.<sup>153</sup> It is interesting that the great visionary of the Middle Ages Joachim of Fiore shared Bernard's opinion. Joachim of Fiore also denied that lay people had a right to preach, believing that this was the mission and vocation of the elect clergy. Monks should be silent, which was the reason he gave for their inability to preach. Joachim as well defended the old order of the church in which lay people were basically just recipients of the church's teachings.

The measures the church taken at the end of the twelfth century led to a stricter and firmer division between clergy and laity. Preaching became basically the privilege of priests, who had a clear mission from the church by virtue of their office. In a period when reforms in the church and theology demanded more flexibility within the church hierarchy, the church's

initial response was one of hesitation. The reason for this was that preaching had proven itself to be a powerful instrument for mobilizing criticism against the church. Preaching by the lay people had to be restricted as much as possible.

However, preaching had not become an item of contention only for lay movements. Also new groups of religious people founded on the basis of a rule considered preaching to be central to their activities. St. Francis of Assisi is the most obvious example of this development. His new concept of regular life contained the principles of apostolic life — poverty and itinerant preaching. A conflict arose between Assisi's followers and the clergy over the right to preach, which was not very different from the uneasiness the clergy elsewhere felt over lay preaching. The new orders appear to have been a strong impulse for church reforms in which the issue of preaching was central. Friars travelled around advocating penitence by means of leading an apostolic life. The outcome of this debate was that preaching became linked to an *ordinatio* granted by a bishop. Innocent III was without a doubt mainly responsible for this temporary solution that was reached over the issue of preaching.

This most intelligent church strategist of the thirteenth century understood very well the importance of preaching as a powerful instrument for strengthening the church and realizing reforms within it. However, in a letter to the bishop of Metz dated 1199 he criticized lay people for studying the Bible and preaching.<sup>154</sup> In itself their interest was laudable, he concluded. However, he did not agree with the tendency of lay groups to gather in secret places — as against publicly in the church — to call themselves preachers and yet not take priests seriously, and to presume themselves to be better than their fellow Christians. The public character of preaching and a clear division of church offices, which he saw as a sign of order, were important to Innocent.

Despite this institutional view of preaching, Innocent was able to give some legitimacy to the act of lay people explaining the faith in public. For this purpose, he made distinctions between types of preaching. *Praedicatio*, or an act of proclaiming the truth, would remain a part of the duties and privileges of the clergy. The laity were not allowed to take part in the activity in this sense. However, *exhortatio*, which is something like bearing witness to the faith, he primarily defined as a private activity which a lay person could practice in his community or group. *Exhortatio* was definitely not a public act of explaining the Scriptures such as a priest does, but simply an act of discussing the faith in a context outside the church. A second

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<sup>153</sup>Zerfaß, p. 32 ff.

<sup>154</sup>Zerfaß, p. 51 ff.

dimension of this “lay preaching” was the *disputatio*, or acting as a witness to the faith against heretics. Innocent tried to involve the laity in his struggle against the many heretical groups of the thirteenth century. He was aware of the fact that if the church was to win this struggle, it desperately needed the help of lay people, the hierarchy alone being insufficient for this fight. He understood that it was necessary to somehow incorporate the energy of these new movements, allowing them to play a role in church reforms. In permitting a kind of lay preaching in the form of *exhortatio* or *disputatio*, Innocent was trying to win the support of the laity, who were already sensitive to movements such as the Waldensians or the Humiliats. Those who wanted to act as witnesses to the faith had to prove the orthodoxy of their ideas through the *professio fidei*. In this way, Innocent temporarily solved the conflict between the local clergy and itinerant “preachers” of exhortation.

In der Perspektive Innozenz’ III geht es also in keinem Augenblick der Verhandlungen um die Übertragung des kirchlichen Predigtamtes an Laien, sondern um die Institutionalisierung neuer, bislang ausschließlich privat geübter Formen des Glaubenszeugnisses. Es wird nicht ein altes Amt auf einen weiteren Kreis von Amtsträgern ausgedehnt, sondern es wird, wenn man so will, ein neues Amt in der Kirche geschaffen. Die *exhortatio*, das Glaubenszeugnis frommer Laien, wird zu einem kirchlich anerkannten Instrument der Seelsorge aufgewertet.<sup>155</sup>

Innocent’s second step was to establish the new orders of the Franciscans and Dominicans by having them accept a rule. Both orders considered preaching to be the center of their work and received on the basis of this rule a mandate to preach from the pope. There was, however, one restriction: the mendicants were required to always ask permission from the local bishop. Their *missio* came from the pope, but the ability to act out this mission was dependent on the bishop.

Innocent III’s massive promotional campaign in favor of preaching was finally confirmed by the constitutions of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. The council approved the policy of the pope and closely linked preaching to the hierarchy by imposing on bishops the task of finding men “mighty in deed and word,”<sup>156</sup> probably to employ as a mobile group that would

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<sup>155</sup>Zerfaß, p. 225.

<sup>156</sup>The tenth Constitution states: “...sancimus, ut episcopi viros idoneos ad sanctae praedicationis officium salubriter exequendum assumant, potentes in opere et sermone, qui plebes sibi commissas vice ipsorum, cum per se idem nequiverint, sollicito visitantes, eas verbo aedificent et exemplo.” Text in Zerfaß, p. 247, footnote 855.

travel within a specific diocese and preach to the laity. Those people had to be recruited from the regular clergy in order to also fulfill the second requirement of the council, the confession. Preaching is an act of pastoral care, which has a second dimension in the sacrament of confession. Therefore, only a bishop could choose priests capable of executing this special function throughout one diocese.

The decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council can be considered a reflection of the needs of the time. Obviously, bishops are not always able to fulfill the pastoral requirements of their community. The council “recognizes that for a variety of reasons (..) bishops may not be able adequately to minister in person to their people, especially in large dioceses. For this reason bishops are ordered to choose suitable men to perform the function of preaching, and to supply these helpers with necessities if need be.”<sup>157</sup> Neither should we forget that the level of theological knowledge that the vast majority of the clergy possessed was quite low. Many priests may not have been able to teach their flocks more than the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and some other basic texts. It was simply necessary to increase the level of education in order to better instruct the laity on the faith on the one hand and on the threat of heretics on the other.

In many ways the Fourth Lateran Council confirmed the previous Renaissance of the twelfth century. This was a response to the new mentality that valued individuality and that gave the laity a bigger place within the church. The council agreed on a program of extensive education for both clergy and laity in order to lead the new mentality in orthodox directions, keeping it distinct from the mentality of heretics. This program demonstrates the great amount of energy and sense of responsibility for the church and society that existed during this historic turning point. “The largest of the medieval church councils, it adopted a wide-ranging program which has been characterized as effecting a pastoral revolution, intended to move the church into the forefront of personal experience and individual existence.”<sup>158</sup>

On one point, however, the council did not support Innocent III’s innovations. The pope had proposed that lay people participate in education and preaching as a way of reconciling differences with several heretical groups. The laity were permitted to practice *adhortatio* and *disputatio* as informal forms of preaching. However, these measures were not officially approved by the Lateran Council, and thus lay preaching remained within the undefined category of special privileges. Permission for lay preaching could be granted as an exception.

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<sup>157</sup>D.L. d’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars, Sermons Diffused from Paris Before 1300*, Oxford 1985., p. 15.

<sup>158</sup>Swanson, p. 2.

Gregory IX, who became pope after the death Innocent's successor in 1227, continued to follow this approach of minimizing lay preaching. In his *Liber extra* of 1234, he forbade any kind of preaching or proclaiming by laymen.<sup>159</sup> Even the solution of the exhortation was unacceptable to him because he maintained that the clergy were ordained to specifically spread the teachings of the church. Gregory returned well-defined and clearly delimited roles to the church. Behind his decision, which reflected a hardening of opinions, lay the escalating conflict with heretical groups. Gregory no longer wished to bring heretics back into the church through words and rhetoric but by force. Laymen were not permitted to interpret or explain the Scriptures even in an auxiliary way. This exclusively became the territory of the clergy. The church was preparing itself for its final struggle with the largest heretic group, the Cathar movement, and had to clearly distinguish between the faithful and unfaithful. The two major orders that were founded on the new understanding of preaching advocated by Innocent III were forced to change their ideas and use of lay preaching. To a certain degree, the position of the Dominicans and the Franciscans fell between that of the clergy and the laity within the spectrum of the church. They utilized preaching as a main way of achieving their purpose, i.e. to reform the church. The Dominicans and Franciscans, much like the lay movements of their days, saw their activities as complementary to the work of the clergy. The mendicant orders embarked on their radical apostolic lifestyle due to what they viewed as the inability of other hierarchic structures to meet the needs for education and reform in local parishes and in the church in general:

Vergleicht man die frühe Entwicklung der Mendikantenorden mit der der Laienpredigerverbände, so lebt man hier wie dort in der Tat aus dem Ethos, für einen veräußerlichten, der Situation nicht gewachsenen Klerus in die Bresche zu springen. Die Humiliaten und Waldenser haben das Verdienst, als erste dieses Problem gesehen und auf eine Lösung gedrängt zu haben. Die besseren Voraussetzungen zur Lösung brachten die Mendikanten mit. Unbelastet von Häresieverdacht und antiklerikalen Ressentiments gewinnen sie das Vertrauen der Kurie und lassen in kürzester Zeit alle älteren Ansätze zu einer Reform der Verkündigung hinter sich.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> „Nos, attendentes, quod doctorum ordo est in ecclesia Dei quasi precipuus, mandamus, quatenus, quum alios Dominus apostolos dederit, alios prophetas, alios vero doctores, interdicis laicis universis, cuiuscumque ordinis censeantur, usurpare officium praedicandi.“ Zerfaß, p. 255.

<sup>160</sup> Zerfaß, p. 299.

The new, strict policy of Gregory IX on preaching changed this position radically. The mendicant orders had to choose whether to continue as preachers and be ordained as clergymen or stop preaching. The latter choice was, of course, unacceptable because of the significance preaching had for these orders. Gregory's steps divided the church into two parts: the passive laity and the active clergy, which included the orders. It is, however, questionable whether Gregory's failure to mention witnessing and exhortation as certain forms of lay preaching really played a role in stopping these activities. The appearance of a huge number of fraternities, i.e. Beghards and Beguines in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, indicates that the laity circumvented the church hierarchy and found a way to continue lay preaching. As a result of these developments and policy towards preaching, both the Dominican and the Franciscan orders became the main vehicles of the vast preaching movement from the thirteenth century onwards. Both orders originated out of the new mentality of the medieval Renaissance in Europe and the church's response at the Fourth Lateran Council to these changes. They presented themselves as itinerant preachers who lived in poverty and were dependent on the gifts of others. The ideal of the apostolic life — itself the clearest expression of the changed mentality of those centuries — was at the heart of both movements. The model life was in the case of the Dominicans very similar to the ideas of the Waldensians, however, with one important difference. The founder of the movement, Dominicus, coordinated his actions with the pope from the outset. In 1215 he received papal confirmation on his rule which enabled the Dominicans to gain the trust of local bishops and priests. The first general council of the Dominicans took place in Bologna in 1220 and required itinerant preachers to obtain the support of the local bishop. In other words, the bishop had to first grant permission and then, all preaching activities had to be coordinated with him.<sup>161</sup> A second major issue for the Dominicans was the theological education of preachers. The order guaranteed the training of its preachers and was even responsible for appointing men to the *officium praedicationis*, that is to the office of preaching. By establishing an order that placed preaching at the forefront of evangelic life and yet which coordinated its activities with the church leadership, the Dominicans found a solution to the conflicting demands of, on the one hand, the church that wanted to discourage poorly educated preachers from practicing and, on the other hand, the need to redefine apostolic life in accordance with the new spirit of the times.

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<sup>161</sup>The council stated: "Cum fratres nostri dyocesim alicuius episcopi ad predicandum intraverint, primo, si poterunt, episcopum illum visitabunt et secundum consilium eius in populo facient fructum, quem facere intendunt." Zerfaß, p. 280, footnote 929.



The case of the Franciscan order is not very different from that of the Dominicans. In the first few decades of the thirteenth century, the Franciscan movement transformed itself into an order dominated by the clergy. Originally, they were a society in which the distinction between clergymen and lay people was insignificant. Until the year 1239 the general minister of the order was a layman, but then a representative of the clergy replaced him. This was on the initiative of Gregory IX, who was presiding over the general chapter of the order. Unlike the Dominican order which was from the very beginning a movement of preaching and scholarship, the Franciscans did not explicitly conceive of their movement as one of preaching. The central idea, however, was the same: to live an apostolic life in poverty. Within this concept, exhortation had a different role from preaching or sermonizing in that it had a free form or structure. Exhortation did not automatically have to involve the context of the church as did preaching. However, as the clergy's importance grew within the order, a shift took place away from exhortation toward preaching, which excluded the lay brothers from playing a constitutive part in the life of the community. Hand in hand with these changes went an increasing emphasis on study and academics within the structure of the order.

The changes of the twelfth century and the confirmation of these changes at the highest level of the church in the beginning of the thirteenth century had a major influence on the theory of preaching. The first twenty years of the thirteenth century witnessed a fast development which had been practically unequaled before.<sup>162</sup> The first early medieval theory on preaching appeared in the *Cura pastoralis* of Pope Gregory the Great. As the title of the book implies, preaching is mainly presented here as an act of pastoral care that the preacher or priest does for his people. According to this idea, preaching is not so much about the dogmatic contents of the faith as about how to practice Christian morality and virtues in daily life. Above all, the preacher must explain how people can avoid sin and live a holy life. Therefore, a preacher's own life should be an example of Christian virtues. He has to live in concordance with his message and always be ready to preach and study the Scriptures.

Moreover, the preacher has to be aware of the differences among the people who constitute his audience. According to Gregory, those distinctions are not to be drawn according to

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<sup>162</sup>For the following see: James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages, A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1974, and Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, Beverly Mayne Kienzle (ed.), *De ore Domini, Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, Kalamazoo 1989. See also Johannes Baptist Schneyer, *Die Unterweisung der Gemeinde über die Predigt bei scholastischen Predigern, Eine Homiletik aus scholastischen Prothemen*, München, Paderborn, Wien, 1968.

intellectual capabilities, i.e. whether someone is literate or illiterate. Rather the distinction should be made on the basis of sins. It is important to understand the role of the preacher in this context. The preacher has to divide his audience into several groups because his listeners are infected by different sins, which are compared with diseases. For every disease the preacher has to provide a medicine to cure the sinful of their lethal infections. The preacher is a healer or a doctor who changes the mental state of people. Gregory ascribes great power to preaching and, in consequence, also to the preacher.

Gregory mainly focuses on the question of what a preacher should preach. His *Cura pastoralis* does not offer a clear structure for how a sermon should be composed. The genre as such has a rather free and open form that does not adhere to any strict rules of rhetorical theory. The only model offered for the medieval sermon was the homily from the early church where it emerged as a non-form or anti-theory. Preaching the liturgy in the early church was not an *oratio*, but simply an address. This liturgical context, of course, resulted in a certain kind of institutionalization of the sermon since it was delivered from a pulpit. But in principle, the homily did not copy the usual arrangement and style prescribed by contemporary rhetorical theories. In this way, the homily more or less followed the scriptural text and was a kind of spoken commentary on the Bible. The homily was in its non-theory a protest against pagan sophistry, characterized by outer rhetoric but also, according to the church, by inner emptiness.

Until the eleventh century, the church followed this model of preaching. When, for example, the Benedictine Guibert of Nogent (1053-1124) published his *Liber quo ordine sermo fieri debeat* around 1084, he did not offer any new ideas on the genre of preaching. Rather, he underlined the moralistic orientation of the sermon as Gregory the Great saw it. Guibert's book, intended to be the prologue of a commentary on Genesis, offers a very general discussion on preaching. Preaching is presented as an exhortation that should deliver souls to God and to a holy life. The four ways of reading the Scriptures — historically, allegorically, tropologically and anagogically — were developed in the early church and had to serve this aim. According to Guibert, allegory is the best way to strengthen the faith, but the tropological way of interpreting the Bible is the most important method since it deals with the moral questions of vice and virtue.

By the end of the twelfth century, a different approach to sermons was taken whereby greater attention was paid to its arrangement. At this time, Alain de Lille, who became a Cistercian shortly before his death, wrote *De arte praedicatoria* (probably 1199). Like Gregory, Alain

viewed preaching as a way of combating sin. In this work, Alain also refers to preaching as a medicine against vice and sin; it is defined as a “manifest and public instruction in faith and morals, zealously serving the information of mankind, proceeding by the narrow path of reason and the fountain of authority.”<sup>163</sup> Preachers are compared to angels ascending and descending Jacob’s ladder, “ascending when they preach of heavenly things, descending when for the sake of moral things they shape themselves to the inferior.”<sup>164</sup> As far as the content and significance of sermons is concerned, Alain kept with the old schemes of Gregory. He maintained that preaching should mainly be on the subject of morality and therefore it should convey the rules of Christian life. This idea would dominate through the whole of the Middle Ages when preaching was explicitly understood as a means of educating and unifying the church. From the twelfth century onwards, the church increasingly proved itself to be the most important unifying force in Europe. The leadership of the church put much of its energy into building one consistent structure for the parishes and into developing a uniform voice for the Christian faith. The decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 were nothing less and nothing more than a reflection of these ideas and of the church’s self-understanding at the beginning of a new period in European history. Preaching was to be the major vehicle of this reform. Therefore, it is not surprising that the main subject of sermons was on living a practical life of virtue. In order to unify the church throughout Europe, Christian life had to be formulated and defined in a uniform way, which preachers had a mission to clarify through their work. In this sense, preaching became “a Christianizing force.”<sup>165</sup>

In order to strengthen this function it was, however, necessary to better define the form of the genre of preaching. Preaching had to become a stronger proclamation and could achieve this by concentrating on one theme. Alain de Lille was one of the first to make a step in this direction. He used a structure based on a *divisio* (he generally chose a three-part division) and cited the *auctoritas* of the church fathers. The idea was that the message of a sermon would be better understood if it had a clear structure and reputable, authoritative sources to support its ideas. This represented the first step towards a scholastic sermon. Alain’s preaching was thematic and viewed the Scriptures not so much as a text or story, but as a theme with a proposition, a division, etc. Alain’s work is one of the first manifestations of the twelfth

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<sup>163</sup> „Praedicatio est, manifesta et publica instructio morum et fidei, informationi hominum deserviens, ex ratione semita, et auctoritatem fonte proveniens.“ Murphy, p. 307.

<sup>164</sup> Murphy, p. 307.

<sup>165</sup> “Regardless of depth, preaching remained a Christianising force. The Christianisation of the mundane was essential for maintaining the Christian ethic and morality.” Swanson, p. 70.

century Renaissance and stressed both analysis and commentary. However, he did not discuss the structure of a sermon as such, as he was not trying to formulate a theory on the art of preaching.

One of the first extensive theories on the structure of a sermon originates from the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is the work *De modo praedicandi* written by Alexander of Ashby, the prior of an Augustinian monastery in this town. According to him, it is necessary for a sermon have a clear arrangement. The basic argument he used to support this was that a sermon should move its audience to repent and lead a holy life, which requires that the speech contain a methodical structure. The desired effect of preaching, i.e. to lead its audience into Christian morality, dictates the need for an outer structure, a “mode” of preaching.

According to Alexander of Ashby “the mode of preaching consists in the parts of a sermon and in its delivery. There are four parts of a sermon, to wit: the prologue, division, proof, and conclusion. The entire material of the sermon is a proposition and authority.”<sup>166</sup> A sermon can have two or even more divisions, which should be supported by proof. Obviously, the preacher has to make those divisions on the basis of the biblical text about which he is preaching. Alexander assumed that the passage from the Scriptures itself provided a guideline and the material for this division.

Alexander was well aware of the diversity of his audience, which consisted of both the learned and the uneducated. Therefore, he believed the preacher should limit the amount of evidence he presented to prove the sermon’s message, in order to avoid boring the audience. A separate kind of evidence in the form of stories, *exempla* and allegories could be especially useful when addressing the unlearned. Alexander wisely recommended that: “The preacher ought not to be less vehement in his commendation of virtue than he is in the reprehension of vices.”<sup>167</sup> The last part of the sermon — that is the conclusion — should include three elements: a brief recapitulation to refresh the audience’s memory, an exhortation to fear punishment and an exhortation to continue one’s devotion to God. Alexander’s sermons would adhere to the following scheme:

## I. Introduction

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<sup>166</sup> „Modus veros consistit in partibus sermonis et pronunciacione. Quartorum autem est partes sermonis, scilicet prologus, divisio, confirmacio, conclusio. Propositio atque auctoritas que sit sermonis tocius materia.“ Quoted by Murphy, p. 313.

<sup>167</sup> „Ut predicator non sit nimis vehemens in commendacione virtutum nec reprehensione viciorum.“ In Murphy, p. 313.

## II. Division (e.g., into three parts)

### Part A. (e.g. two subdivisions)

#### Subdivision 1

Proof from an authority, etc.

Proof by reason, etc.

#### Subdivision 2

Proof by exemplum, etc.

Proof by allegory, etc.

### Part B (e.g. three subdivisions)

As above, etc.

### Part C (e.g. two subdivisions)

As above, etc.

## III Conclusion.<sup>168</sup>

Probably the biggest change Alexander's ideas brought to sermons was the supposition that there must be a common structure. The standard was no longer the free-form sermon; rather, the model which every preacher was expected to replicate contained a thorough and detailed structure with many divisions and subdivisions. It is interesting to note that Alexander did not have the slightest problem with adapting pagan theories on rhetoric to the context of the Christian church. To many theologians in the early church the supposed superficiality of the rhetoric of, for example, Cicero was sufficient reason why to ignore these theories and to maintain an unstructured homily. Alexander's proposed form with its divisions and distinctions, however, stems from the Roman rhetoric school as was mainly formulated by Cicero. This concept required that every speech contain about five or six divisions, the introduction being followed by the *partitio* with its several subdivisions.

A contemporary of Alexander, Thomas of Salisbury, not only confirmed Alexander's ideas about preaching, but developed them in even more detail. Thomas was subdeacon of Salisbury and also taught in Paris around 1213. He wrote his *Summa de arte predicandi* during the first three decades of the thirteenth century. According to Thomas, a theologian should participate in three activities: reading, disputing and preaching. This last activity in particular he believed to be the duty of *doctores* and *pastores*, whose preaching was expected to fulfill two aims, that is to inform and then to instruct the audience. Again, the topic of the sermon should be

faith, good morals, virtues and vices. It is necessary to persuade the hearers of the truth of the Christian faith and life. This general aim has to be strengthened by the form of the sermon. Again like Alexander, Thomas came to the same conclusions on the content and mission of preaching. Rhetorical methods are in no way suspect, but rather useful and even necessary to leading the audience to Christ.

Thomas' recommended structure is similar to that of Alexander. His particular contribution is that he established a specific vocabulary for the new genre of sermons that emerged in his day. He referred to the introduction as the *antethema* or *prothema*, defining it as "a sort of brief theme before the main one, thus helping to make the audience attentive, docile, and well-disposed."<sup>169</sup> In Thomas' opinion, the existence of divisions in a sermon is natural just as all things in nature and life are divided into genera and species. But he also warned that too many divisions could confuse the audience, just as too many details might complicate the exact source of authority.

The writings of Alexander and Thomas had many followers throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the fifteenth century, the invention of printing stimulated even more the proliferation of sermon theories. However, until the Reformation, the theory *ars praedicandi* did not change its fundamental shape. As James Murphy characterized it, "the *ars praedicandi* specifies a special subject matter and then lays out a plan of arrangement for sermons, with a *protheme* or *antetheme* followed by a *prayer* and then a statement of *theme* (Scriptural quotation) with a *division* and *subdivision* of that quotation amplified through a variety of modes."<sup>170</sup> It cannot be emphasized enough that the main reason for this process lies in the altered understanding of preaching in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Preaching was viewed as an instrument for eradicating ignorance, for protecting against the infection of sin, for exterminating sin, for liberating people from the power of evil and Satan, for strengthening good and bringing closer the coming of God's glory.<sup>171</sup> In order to achieve these aims, it was thought that the preacher had to arrange his sermon according to a clear and convincing scheme that would make his preaching more powerful. The *raison d'être* of the scholastic sermon and the *ars praedicandi* was nothing other than to answer the new questions

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<sup>168</sup>Murphy, p. 315.

<sup>169</sup>„Vocant predicatorum quidam prologum suum prothema, quia thema antethema, ut scilicet quidam autem prosequantur principale thema proponant quiddam breve themate et exponant ad capiendum benivolentiam et preparandam attentionem auditorum et docilitatem eorum.“ Quoted in Murphy, p. 323.

<sup>170</sup>Murphy, p. 331.

that arose in the twelfth century due to the concept of personal or individual holiness. It may sound inappropriate to many today that the longing for the apostolic life in those centuries had its counterpart in the scholastic sermon's suggestion of rational analysis. Many scholastic preachers, however, were driven by the very same desire for a life of poverty and penitence, and their sermons were an appropriate expression of this desire.

The main sign of preaching's popularity, however, was not the spread of the *artes praedicandi* from the thirteenth century on, but rather the overwhelming number of sermons that survive from this time. They indicate how busy preachers must have been and that they found a receptive audience among the population of late medieval Europe. Libraries count among their collections a huge number of manuscripts containing sermons for Sundays and holy days, which are to till now only partially explored systematically.<sup>172</sup> In the last few decades, a new awareness of the treasures of medieval sermons has emerged and is resulting in a new approach to the study of preaching and sermons.

What we find today in these manuscripts containing sermons are obviously not the texts as they were spoken. The sermons in the written form are often quite "dry" and terse. At the same time, they can often be quite long. The audience may frequently have been largely illiterate, which must have forced the preacher to make significant compromises in his use of language and his choice of content. What we find in the manuscripts are model sermons, written to help preachers in preparing or delivering a sermon. This is another sign of the effort that was made to unify the message of the church among all its members.

The many preachers who traveled around Europe as much as they could or as much as the bishop allowed generally had already received a thorough education. As we have seen, both the Dominicans and the Franciscans paid much attention to educating their new members. In the case of the Dominicans, every new preacher had to get an official agreement from his superior confirming his ability to preach the truth as the church defined it. However, the order's supervision may not have ended with this agreement. It is imaginable at least on the part of the preachers that they needed some support in their practice, which collections of

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<sup>171</sup>Schneyer, p. 34 ff.

<sup>172</sup>J. B. Schneyer's *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150-1350*, Münster 1969 ff. is one example of this systematic approach, concentrating on the German-speaking areas of Europe. Schneyer's survey ends, however, with the year 1350, leaving at least one century of important developments in society and Church fallow.

model sermons provided.<sup>173</sup> In many cases the manuscripts have a portable form, thus enabling the preacher to take a sermon collection with him as he traveled. Later on books were developed with a special cover that served also as a bag for carrying the book.

Not all preachers took complete sermon collections with them. Certainly there must have been financial reasons for limiting their luggage during their travels. Since books were produced manually, they were quite expensive, so that a poor preacher could not afford them himself.

For this reason, a system of copying only fragments of texts was developed. Preachers could order just a single sermon or some other texts that were copied from the original collection.<sup>174</sup>

There probably also existed groups of preachers who did not directly belong to a specific order but rather to a school of preaching. This school developed model sermons to educate its preachers. Copies of the collections were made to assist the preachers in the field. This seems to have been the case of Milicius de Chremsir. He left two collections of model sermons, both of which covered the whole liturgical year. The first one, he compiled in the beginning of his activities as a preacher when he also founded a school for preachers. The collection by the name *Abortivus* might have been a “lesson book” or a manual intended for use by his pupils and followers. It is, however, unlikely that *Abortivus* was only meant to be used as a manual in the school because the content of the sermons suggests that they were for the actual practice of preaching. The sermon models acted as the foundation for sermons preached to the people. Later on, Milicius created a second collection called *Gratiae Dei* that contained homilies, thus directly strengthening this base for the practice of preaching.

In general, schools and universities played an important role in the development of both *artes praedicandi* and model sermon collections. The aforementioned system of copying was practiced by students in Paris. Many of the sermon collections originate from universities and many sermons were written for a university audience. Also, the structure of the scholastic sermon with its theme and divisions reflects a spirit very similar to the scholastic philosophy. Both share a passion for analyzing a theme throughout the subthemes and subdivisions. There are, however, too many differences to simply equate the scholastic sermon with university scholasticism. One of the main methodical elements of scholasticism, the *questio*, does not appear in the sermons. The sermon does not start from a contradiction as a scholastic text does, but is fundamentally a monologue about a biblical text translated into a theme. The sermon contains no dialectic exchange between two scholars but is an uninterrupted discourse.

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<sup>173</sup>D.L. d’Avray, *The Preaching*, p. 56 ff.

<sup>174</sup>D.L. d’Avray, *The Preaching*, p. 103 ff.



James Murphy sees the chronology as the most convincing evidence against the idea that the scholastic sermon had a university origin. The theory of preaching that later became known as the *ars praedicandi* was already outlined before the full development of universities. The basics of scholastic preaching were defined at the latest by the 1190's, several decades before universities acquired a reputation as centers of scholasticism. Therefore, it is more probable that the theory of the sermon originated in the environment of non-university schools that were connected to the pastoral work of priests.<sup>175</sup>

A model sermon has a general character. The preacher was supposed to use the model for preparing his own sermon. The model sermon had to be appropriate to a particular Sunday or holy day, but at the same time be general enough to be relevant in subsequent years. A model lacks, therefore, direct reference to the current reality unlike a specific sermon meant for only one occasion. It offers the preacher just certain ideas, a format, some *exempla* as illustrations, and, of course, quotations from ecclesiastical authorities to support the sermon's message. The aim of a model sermon is not to introduce new and original ideas, but rather to strengthen attitudes commonly held in the church. In this context, David d'Avray compares model sermon collections with mass media, which is a most valid comparison because of the extraordinary diffusion of them all over Europe.<sup>176</sup> They were the only means of disseminating certain ideas to a large number of people throughout an extensive area over a period of several years. This could be why many sermon collections are somehow connected to Paris as a large city. Here mass communication was possible since this was a city where many people convened and passed through.

The important connections between Paris as a university and Paris as a center for mass communication are not obvious, the most interesting being the development of an ideology for the preacher's role, the exposure of young friars to living paradigms in the form of university sermons, whose forms of thought were closer to those of popular preaching than of scholastic exercises, and finally the oral culture of student friars. Together these things must have made up an academic environment in which the stereotyped model sermon collections could take on an extra value.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup>Murphy, p. 326.

<sup>176</sup>D.L. d'Avray, *The Preaching*, p. 170 and from the same author: Method in the study of Medieval Sermons, in: Nicole Bériou, David L. d'Avray, *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons*, Essays on Marriage, Death, History and Sanctity, Spoleto 1994, p. 3-29.

<sup>177</sup>D.L. d'Avray, *The Preaching*, p. 203.

A second consequence of the general character of the model sermon is that it addresses a general, indeterminate audience. Since the sermon has to be useful not just for one year but also principally for any audience, it cannot explicitly address certain groups or layers of society. We can certainly suppose that many of the sermons were meant for a lay audience, but even this is not always true. Some model sermons refer to the clergy, as do a few sermons from Milicius' postils that indicate that a certain theme does concern the clerical community. Therefore, it seems that the audience may have been mixed containing both clergy and laity. Anyhow, we do not know exactly which audience the author of model sermons had in mind when he was compiling his collection, or which group within society he was addressing. However, one feature of model sermons is fundamental and evident: the majority of them have a liturgical character and are supposed to be used on a certain Sunday or holy day. Many collections are arranged according to the liturgical year and contain sermons for at least Sundays and select holy days. The liturgy is the main structure which determines the content of the model sermons. The sermon is always based on a verse from the Scriptures which is to be read on that particular day in the calendar.

Collections of so-called *sermones ad status* are an exception to the usual rule that sermon collections have a general character. These sermons are intended for a certain group like members of an order, tradesmen, crusaders or even women. *Ad status* sermons are different from the regular model sermons in that they are not determined by liturgical circumstances. They give us a more concrete idea about who the audience was and their social and spiritual needs. This is the reason why such sermons have a specific significance in that "the way or ways in which society is divided up in these collections can itself be illuminating: it tells us much about the social categories of the time, which could be much more sophisticated than the traditional model of three orders."<sup>178</sup>

Even when the general character of model sermons does not allow us to detect the circumstances of the time in which they were written, they are not immune to social influence. The sermons reflect the society they addressed in the sense that the social context is echoed in the content and language of the sermons. The fact that model sermons lack direct allusions to the surrounding world can even be an advantage when looking for the social attitudes and mentality of the time. In sermons a reality is reflected which the contemporaries of the preacher experienced. A preacher could not allow himself to create a large distance between

himself and his audience, not even in his model sermon. Therefore, the underlying reality which penetrates his sermon as the background of the message can be regarded as the commonly felt reality in his surroundings. Or, to put it in another way, the preacher has to refer to a common background if his sermon is to hold any meaning or relevance for his audience. He is bound to use images, language and situations from the world of his listeners in order to make his message clear. In his presentation, the preacher cannot be too progressive if his audience is to understand him. This fact makes his sermon in several ways a mirror of the social circumstances of his day. Moreover, the structure of the scholastic sermon as it was developed at the beginning of the twelfth century hardly changed over the subsequent two centuries. For a long time preachers used the same method to deliver their message. This conservative trend was not just a question of outer form and arrangement, as we have seen that in the mind of a medieval preacher the message itself determined the scholastic form. Despite this refusal to change the method, preaching seems to have been popular to people throughout these three centuries. Obviously, the scholastic sermon with its thematic character and its divisions met the needs of the general public in late medieval society. There seems to be much to be said for the opinion that sermons are one of the best vehicles for transmitting and discovering the long-term religious feelings and mentality that existed in the late Middle Ages exactly because of this conservatism in form and vocabulary.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>D.L. d'Avray, *The Preaching*, p. 80.

<sup>179</sup>D.L. d'Avray, *The Preaching*, p. 248.

## 2. Milicius' two postils *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*

The new awareness of the many facets and levels of scholastic model sermons led to different approaches in the study of medieval preaching.<sup>180</sup> However, the aim of this study on the preacher Milicius de Chremsir is not so much to establish an image of the mentality of his time nor to offer a comprehensive survey of the social and theological questions in Bohemia of the fourteenth century, but rather to understand more of Milicius' theological opinions by analyzing a selection of his sermons which survived in the two collections *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*. As such, this is in the first place a theological study on the author of the sermons. But theology is also a part of society which attempts to formulate answers to questions on normal life. Milicius' sermons reflect in one way or another the reality he was living in. The themes which he brings up in the sermons represent his awareness of and receptivity to contemporary problems and the desire to resolve them. His strong emphasis on the peaceful and sober life of a Christian is more than simply the obligatory content of the moralist medieval sermons. They tell us about a feeling of uneasiness, uncertainty, dissatisfaction and even fear in a period of many changes in society. The great attention he gives to the religious and pious life of King Wenceslaus, the main patron of Bohemia and the founder of the royal household, must also be understood as a criticism of contemporary rulers.

Milicius' image is still determined by the few writings on him which have appeared in editions. As we have seen, those texts gave the impression of a preacher who was strongly concerned with the questions of apocalypticism and Antichrist. The first aim of this study is to critically survey this image and eventually alter it by introducing new material to those known editions of his work. This material was selected from the two model sermon collections which had never been studied before.

The collections survived in many copies which we can find in libraries in Prague, Wrocław, Munich, Vienna and other cities.<sup>181</sup> This study is mainly based on three manuscripts

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<sup>180</sup>L. J. Bataillon was the first to formulate different ways to study medieval sermons in his *Approaches to the Study of Medieval Sermons*, Leeds Studies in English 11 (1980), p. 19-35. The next to write a similar article was D.L. d'Avray, Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons, in: Nicole Bériou, David L. d'Avray, *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons. Essays on Marriage, Death, History and Sanctity*, Spoleto 1994, p. 3-29. Several publications give witness of the renewed and ongoing interest in medieval sermons. To mention some of them: Jacqueline Hamesse, Xavier Hermand (ed.), *De l'Homélie au Sermon. Histoire de la prédication médiévale*, Actes du Colloque international de Louvain-la Neuve (9-11 juillet 1992), Louvain-la-Neuve 1993; Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, Beverly Mayne Kienzle (ed.), *De ore Domini, Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, Kalamazoo 1989.

<sup>181</sup>See Pavel Spunar, *Repertorium auctorum bohemosum protractum idearum post universitatem Pragensem conditam illustrans, Tomus I*, Wrocław 1985, p. 172 ff.

originating from the library of former Austin Canon monastery in Třeboň. This monastery played an important role in Bohemian historiography as it gathered many manuscripts. To historians it became a most important source for medieval history. Bohuslaus Balbinus found materials in it for his work on Bohemian saints and reworked sources from the library for his *Vita* about Milicius. Also František Palacký made extensive use of the Třeboň collection, even when it was dispersed after the secularisation of the monastery in 1786. The majority of the manuscripts from the library was then transferred to Prague.

The existence of a clear „family“ of manuscripts from Třeboň is a clear advantage compared to other manuscripts. About no other available manuscript we know as much as about the three, which are registered in the Czech National Library under the signature I D 37, containing *Abortivus*, and XIV D 5 (*pars hiemalis*) and ms. XII D I (*pars aestivalis*) with *Gratiae Dei*.<sup>182</sup>

There are, however, important differences between the Třeboň manuscripts from both postils. Ms. I D 37 is written on normal paper in two columns without any illumination. The two copies of *Gratiae Dei*, ms. XIV D 5 containing *pars hiemalis* and ms. XII D I with *pars aestivalis* are written on parchment and are not arranged in columns. Ms. XIV D 5 has a small illumination on the first folio. Both of these copies are considerably richer than their “relatives” from *Abortivus*.

It would be interesting to establish the period in Milicius’ life to which the postils can be traced. Currently, the generally accepted dating is by Pavel Spunar, who attributes *Abortivus* to the years 1365-1366 and *Gratiae Dei* to 1368-1372.<sup>183</sup> Even when Spunar is right in

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<sup>182</sup>The Czech National Library in Prague owns two copies containing *Abortivus* or a part of it and seven copies or parts of *Gratiae Dei*. The oldest manuscript of *Abortivus* in Prague is ms. VIII B 26, which according to the dating on folio 151v stems from 1385, nine years after Milicius’ death. It contains, however, only *pars hiemalis* from Advent till Feria III after Pentecost. The second manuscript I D 37 from Třeboň contains sermons for the complete liturgical year. The Prague library contains, next to mss. XIV D 5 and XII D I, some other copies of *Gratiae Dei*: mss. V B 13, IX A 5, X A 7, III D 20 and XII C 12. Ms. V B 13 gives a full record of *pars hiemalis*, but compared to ms. XIV D 5, it gives less detail about the occasions the sermons are meant for. Ms. IX A 5 contains only *Sermones Quadragesimales*, as is written on the first folio. Therefore, some scholars concluded that Milicius left a third postilla entitled *Quadragesimales* (see e.g. Kaňák, p. 39, or Spunar, p. 176). However, the *Sermones Quadragesimales* are identical with the sermons for the same liturgical period from Ash Wednesday till *Vigilia Pasche* from *Gratiae Dei*. Ms. X A 7 begins also on Ash Wednesday but ends, like the Třeboň manuscript XIV D 5, on the fourth Sunday after Easter. Ms. III D 20 is a strange manuscript, which contains sermons up till *Dominica in quinquagesima*, then omits sermons from *Quadragesima* till the third day after Easter and continues (with some omissions) with the rest of *pars hiemalis*. After another text (the *Summa Innocencii*) the manuscript gives the last part of the *pars aestivalis* from *Dominica XX* till the end with one omission. Ms. XII C 12 (*pars aestivalis*) is quite damaged in some places and is missing several folios. The manuscript abruptly ends in *Dominica XIV post Trinitatis*.

<sup>183</sup>Spunar, p. 172 and 174.

considering *Abortivus* the older „sister“ of *Gratiae Dei*, there are some reasons to seriously doubt his dating. The most important clue indicating a different dating for the two postils lies simply in the remarkable differences between them. *Abortivus* is much more limited: the postil contains a total of 106 sermons. *Gratiae Dei* on the other hand contains 165 sermons. The main reason for this is that *Gratiae Dei* offers a sermon for almost every day of Lent. *Abortivus* follows only Sundays and feast days.

*Gratiae Dei* thus provides a preacher with much more complete and extensive help for the execution of his duties than *Abortivus*. The more detailed character of *Gratiae Dei* suggests that it is of a later date than *Abortivus*. *Gratiae Dei* presents the impression of a postil that has been put together with great care. It seems to be the culmination of a long period of work in the field of popular preaching. The character of the work provides insight into the needs of preachers.

The difference in the structure of the sermons forms a second indication that *Abortivus* has possibly earlier origins than *Gratiae Dei*. *Abortivus* presents so-called thematic sermons: a given text from the gospel (on Sundays) or from another part of the Bible (on feast often from the Old Testament) is followed by a sermon based on the text which elaborates on certain themes from it. These sermons are fully scholastic in their structure: a *prothema*, followed by a *sermo*, which is divided into two parts each containing three subdivisions. By contrast, *Gratiae Dei* offers commentarial homilies: the whole pericope for a given Sunday or feast is examined verse by verse, and each verse is explained and reflected on.

*Gratiae Dei* is therefore more likely to have been used selectively by preachers who were looking for some ideas for the sermon they were preparing. The user could without any difficulty take a part of a homily from *Gratiae Dei* and rework or elaborate on it: this can be compared to the present day use of biblical commentaries. With *Abortivus* such a selective use is much more difficult, because its sermons are not divided according to each verse, but form one, complete unit.

Nevertheless, *Gratiae Dei* cannot be regarded as a commentary. The structure of the explanation to the pericope is explicitly one of a homily: first the *prothema* briefly presents the main theme from the sermon, often addressing the preacher and concluding with a greeting to the Holy Virgin; this is followed by a *sermo* which explains the whole pericope verse by verse, which after a conclusion ends with a doxological formula about the Holy Trinity. In this postil the liturgical year determines the choice of the text, whereas a commentary deals with a whole book from the Bible.

Clearly *Gratiae Dei* forms a well thought-out and carefully compiled aid to preaching. It would be logical to assume that Milicius could only have compiled this more extensive work toward the end of his working life. The character of the postil bears out the author's awareness of the need for and use of such a work. It is therefore likely that *Gratiae Dei* stems from a later date than Milicius' other work, *Abortivus*.

A possibly decisive argument in dating *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei* lies in the remarkable differences in the way Sundays and feasts are ordered in the two postils.<sup>184</sup> Postils, as an aid to preaching, are intended for use in any given year, not for a particular year. One could argue that the order of Sundays and feasts is therefore totally incidental, as long as the feasts that take place in spring always have their place somewhere among the Sundays around Easter. The Feast of St. Catherine should similarly be placed somewhere at the end of the liturgical year as it falls on 25 November, which coincides with the period ending the liturgical year. Taken to extremes, this line of argument would suggest that it is impossible to deduce any dating indications from the actual organization of a postil.

However, such a standpoint does not take the nature of a specific postil into account. It cannot explain the striking differences between the position of one and the same feast in *Gratiae Dei* and in *Abortivus*. The author must have had a reason for placing the Feast of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in the first postil after Sunday XIII post Trinitatis and after Sunday XV post Trinitatis in the second.

From the ordering and composition of the postils it would seem that the author used a concrete liturgical year as a model according to which he arranged the Sundays and feasts in a particular order. It would therefore be probable that he chose the year in which he put the edition together as a model.

However, it would seem that the author sometimes diverges from the order of that given liturgical year. Certain combinations of feasts, which follow each other without an intervening Sunday, are simply impossible in reality but nevertheless occur in the postils. Perhaps it was quite natural for the author to make such combinations as he perceived some feasts to be intrinsically linked. In such instances the author's perception prevails over the order of the calendar.

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<sup>184</sup>For the following argumentation Hermann Grotefend's *Taschenbuch der Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, Hannover 1971 has been a leading guide. See also Gustav Friedrich, *Rukověť křesťanské chronologie*, Praha-Litomyšl 1997 (re-edition 1934).

It is interesting to consider whether it is possible to deduce the year of origin of the postils from their specific order. Does the order of Sundays and feasts of a given year conform with that of the postils? The years between 1363 and 1374 are relevant to this line of inquiry. In 1363 Milicius resigned from his job at the chancery of Charles IV and devoted himself to preaching till his death in Avignon in 1374.

Every liturgical year has a different order for Sundays and the feast days of saints. The combination of the *Propria de tempore* and the *Propria de sanctis* varies. By definition, feast days always fall on the same day of the year: the Feast of St. John the Baptist is on 24 June, just as St. Thomas Apostle has its fixed date on 21 December. Sometimes local customs altered these fixed days and celebrated a saint's day on another date. However, even in those instances the principle of linking a saint's day to a fixed date was respected.

This is not the case with the Sundays throughout the liturgical year. Here the position of Easter plays a central role. The exact date of Easter in a given year determines the actual date of all Sundays. As it is dependent on the first full moon in spring, Easter and Sundays with it can fall anywhere within a range of thirty five days. The earliest possible date for Easter is 22 March, which occurred once in the fourteenth century in the year 1383. The last possible date for Easter would be on 25 April and which did not occur in the fourteenth century (the earliest date for Easter within the relevant period was 24 March in 1364, the latest 17 April in 1373). An exception to this system of dating Sundays is seen with the four Sundays of Advent and the Sunday after Christmas. These are linked to the Day of the Birth of Christ, which in the Western tradition falls on 25 December.

A comparison of the postil *Abortivus* with the concrete order of the liturgical years between 1363 and 1374 does not immediately yield clear or unambiguous results. The order of the postil between Sunday Judica (Dominica V in XL) and the Thirteenth Sunday after the Trinity does coincide with the order of the liturgical years of 1363, 1369 or 1374. It is noteworthy that Easter in 1363 and 1374 fell on the same date, 2 April, so that both years have the same liturgical order. In the years 1363 and 1374 the period between Judica and Dominica XIII, post Trinitatis ran from 19 March till 27 August. In 1369 this period was from March 18 till August 26.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the liturgical order in the years 1363 and 1374 was also identical to that of 1385, the year of origin of the oldest known manuscript of this postil in the Czech National Library (ms. VIII B 26), which contains only the first *pars hiemalis*.

However, this year is impossible to have been the model year of the postil *Abortivus*, since



this would indicate that the postil would only have come into existence 11 years after Milicius' death.

So far the comparison of the liturgical order of the various years has shown that the complete postil cannot have been composed in one specific year. The search is further complicated by the fact that the years 1363 and 1374 had identical liturgical orders. However, there are several reasons for arguing in favor of the earlier of these two years. In 1374 Milicius had to defend himself at the papal court in Avignon against charges of heresy brought against him by some opponents in the diocese of Prague. His defense was successful and he was about to be released when he died on 29 June 1374, still in Avignon.

As argued above, *Abortivus* is less elaborate and thought-out than *Gratiae Dei* in character. This gives reason to suppose that *Abortivus* stems from the beginning of Milicius' life as a preacher rather than from the end. Of the two years 1363 and 1374, the year 1363 is thus the most probable. However, the year 1369 is also a possibility. Probably the other section of the postil will provide an indication as to which of the two remaining options, 1363 and 1369, could have been the year of *Abortivus*' origin. The hypothesis is that the main part of the postil originates from either 1363 or 1369, while the other sermons were added later.

First we will investigate the possibility of 1363 as the year of origin of *Abortivus*. The Feasts of St. Andrew (30 November), St. Nicholas (6 December) and St. Thomas Apostle (21 December) normally have their place within the cycle of Advent, when Sundays are not dependent on the specific date of Easter. However, their exact position in relation to the Sundays can differ, because the day (not date) on which Christmas falls changes: the first Sunday of Advent can be as early as 27 November and as late as 3 December. As far as the Feast of St. Andrew is concerned, 1362 or 1365 are most likely the years when this sermon was added. The year 1362 fits the Feast of St. Nicholas best, while the Feast of St. Thomas Apostle was probably added in 1363 or 1365.

The year 1362 should then be taken most seriously; if it is assumed that the main part of the postil originates from 1363 and was modeled on the liturgical year 1363, then Advent should of course be related to the preceding year, 1362.

The period around the feasts of the Conversion of St. Paul (25 January) and the Purification of the Holy Virgin (2 February) fits into the order of 1363. This is not the case for the period between Sunday Sexagesima and Sunday Oculi; the Feasts Cathedra St. Petri (22 February), St. Matthias (24 February) and St. Gregory (12 March) fit the liturgical order of 1365.

The feast of St. Jacob on 25 July creates a problem in that it does not fit anywhere in the years around 1363. St. Jacob is placed immediately after the feast of Mary Magdalene (22 July), which does conform to the model of 1363. It is possible that the compiler wanted the feasts to immediately follow each other without placing a Sunday in between.

The section from the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity to the Feast of the Birth of the Holy Virgin (8 September) can be placed in 1364. The two following Feasts of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and of St. Matthew fit 1363. The three Feasts of St. Wenceslaus, the Archangel Michael and St. Jerome (28-30 September) are ordered in accordance with 1365. The Feast of St. Luke (18 October) does not fit in anywhere.

The Feast of St. Simon and Judas (28 October), which fell in 1363 after the Twenty-first Sunday after the Trinity, is placed correctly in the postil. In 1365 the Feast of All Souls also fell on that same Sunday; however, the Feast of All Saints that year, which should follow this Sunday, fell just before it, and so 1365 does not match. It is possible that in the perception of the compiler the link between these two feasts was stronger than their link to the actual chronological order of that year.

The Feasts of St. Martin (11 November) and St. Elisabeth (19 November), which are placed directly after each other in the postil, form an even bigger problem. The two feasts are more than a week apart and there should be an intervening Sunday. However, the placement of St. Martin and also of the Feast of St. Catherine (25 November) does correspond with the year 1365.

If we accept that 1363 was the year from which the main part of the postil originates, we can assume that the remaining parts of the sermon collection were added in 1364 and 1365.

If, on the other hand, we take 1369 as the year of origin of the main part of the postil *Abortivus*, then Advent should fit somewhere in the years around 1369. St. Andrew fits in the year 1371, St. Thomas Apostle in 1368, 1369 or 1371, but St. Nicholas cannot be placed in any year close to 1369.

The sermons on the three Feasts of *Cathedra St. Petri*, of St. Matthias and St. Gregory (22 and 24 February, 12 March) could have been added in 1370. The position of St. Jacob (25 July) corresponds with 1371, as does the Feast of Mary Magdalene, which immediately precedes St. Jacob.

Highly problematic are the Feasts of St. Augustine (28 August), of the *Decollatio Johannis Baptiste* (29 August) and of Mary's Nativity (8 September), which cannot be placed anywhere in the years immediately following 1369. The year 1372 might fit, but not for St. Augustine.

The position of the subsequent Feasts of the *Exaltatio St. Crucis*, of St. Matthew and St. Wenceslaus (14, 21 and 28 September) again conform to 1371, while the Feasts of the Archangel Michael and St. Jerome (29 and 30 September) fit 1370. St. Lucas (18 October), Simon and Judas (28 October), All Saints and All Souls Day (1 and 2 November) could have been added in 1371. St. Martin and St. Catherine (11 and 25 November) fall on the appropriate place for the liturgical year of 1370.

As with 1363 as the hypothetical year of origin for *Abortivus* (see above), the Feast of St. Elisabeth (19 November) presents a problem when trying to place it in 1369. This feast can not possibly fall within one week of St. Martin.

Thus the comparison of the order of feasts and Sundays with the concrete order of the liturgical years between 1363 and 1374 yields two possibilities: the postil *Abortivus* could have originated either from the years 1363-1365 or from 1369-1371. In view of the character of this postil, our conclusion must be that the postil is connected more to the first period, 1363-65, than to the second of 1369-71. There are additional reasons supporting this conclusion. Firstly, from the year 1363 onwards Milicius committed himself completely to preaching. Driven by the belief that good preaching could change the state of the church and society for the better, he had every reason to compile a handbook on preaching that could address this need. He probably prepared the postil *Abortivus* during his retreat in Southern Bohemia at the start of his activities as a preacher.

Secondly, it is striking that the order and composition of those parts of the postil that cannot originate from 1363 form quite a clear unit. Most of the parts which are not from 1363 can be placed in 1365, with the exception of three sermons, which can originate from 1364. By contrast, a hypothetical origin in the year 1369 results in a far less uniform picture.

Consecutive sermons do not form a clear unit that could have been added later, as is the case if we take the origin to be 1363, but are related to different years or cannot be matched to any year. It is for instance hard to explain why the feasts of St. Wenceslaus, the Archangel Michael and St. Jerome (28 till 30 September) do not date from one and the same year.

The conclusion has to be that a comparison of the order of Sundays and feasts places the origin of the postil *Abortivus* between the years 1363 to 1365.

We can try to date *Gratiae Dei*, the second postil which Milicius left, by the same method. This postil, which is considerably larger, was probably more widespread than *Abortivus* given the number of surviving manuscripts. Can we suppose that *Gratiae Dei* is from a later date?

Should we regard the postil as the work Milicius intended to be his most important contribution to the work of preaching?

*Gratiae Dei* consists of two parts. Both yield a surprisingly uniform picture. Starting with the second part, the Sundays after Trinitatis, the order of almost every feast connected to Sundays points to 1371 as the year of origin. Moreover, there is no convincing alternative year, as is the case with *Abortivus*.

A few feasts do not correspond to the grouping of 1371. In the postil the Feasts of St. Vitus and St. John the Baptist follow immediately after the Second Sunday after Trinitatis. This is impossible because the feasts that fall on 15 and 24 June are separated by more than one week, so there must be a Sunday between them. St. Vitus fits the year 1371, whereas John the Baptist does not. The second feast which does not correspond to the model of 1371 is the one of the *Divisio apostolorum* on 15 July. According to the postil, it should follow St. Margaret (13 July) without an interceding Sunday.

The Feast of Mary Magdalene (22 July) also does not conform to 1371. A further problem occurs somewhat later, in September with the Feast of Mary's Nativity on 8 September. In *Gratiae Dei* it follows straight after St. Egidius' Day (1 September), but in 1371 the two were divided by the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinitatis. Finally, the Feasts of the Archangel Michael and St. Jerome do not quite fit in. Both feasts, which fall on 29 and 30 September respectively, follow immediately after St. Wenceslaus, which fell on the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinitatis in 1371. However, in the postil all three are placed before this Sunday. This would have been possible as far as St. Wenceslaus is concerned, but impossible for the Feasts of the Archangel Michael and St. Jerome. Possibly the coherence of these three saints' days was so significant to the compiler that he did not place a Sunday between them.

The remainder of the second part of the postil, from 28 October (Simon and Judas) to 25 November (St. Catherine) do not fit 1371 at all. However, their placement does correspond with 1375, the possible year of their addition to the postil. In this case, those sermons must have been added by followers of Milicius after his death in 1374.

The first part of the postil *Gratiae Dei* seems to date from the leap-year 1372. The division of the complete Easter cycle of 1372 is the same as that of the postil, with one exception. As with the second part, there is no reasonable alternative to 1372 for the date of origin of the first part of *Gratiae Dei*. The exception concerns the Feast of *Conversio Pauli*, 25 January, which in 1372 fell on Sunday Septuagesima. The postil places the feast after Sexagesima, a position which it can only take following the earliest possible date of Easter. Moreover, the

Day of the Mary's Purification follows immediately after Paul's conversion in the postil and this is chronologically impossible because there is more than one week between the two feasts.

The year 1372 would also fit as far as the Advent cycle is concerned. The placement of the three feasts connected to Advent — St. Andrew, St. Nicholas and St. Thomas — in 1372 coincides with their order in *Gratiae Dei*. However, the year 1371 would be more logical as a model, since the beginning of the ecclesiastical year lies in the preceding calendar year (see also *Abortivus*). For the Feast of St. Andrew and St. Thomas the year 1371 would hold true, however, not for the Feast of St. Nicholas.

The arrangement of holy days and Sundays is a convincing reason to date the postil *Gratiae Dei* to the years 1371-1372. This dating supports the assumption that given the extensive character of the postil, the collection originates from a later period in Milicius' life as a preacher. It could indicate that *Gratiae Dei* originated from the end of the period in which Milicius could practice his activities without major opposition. The postil would have come into existence after the two journeys Milicius made to Rome in 1367 and 1369 in an effort to convince the pope about the correctness of his ideas and the urgency of reform, and also after the death of Milicius' fellow preacher Conradus de Waldhausen in 1369, whose work Milicius took over.

It is likely that both events gave Milicius reason to compile his second collection of sermons. During his visits to Rome, he tried to convince the pope of the function and importance of preaching and preachers as a means to reform the religious life of both lay people and the clergy. Urban V gained credibility in Milicius' eyes as he strove to give the church and the papacy greater authority by leading the Holy See out of the Avignonese exile back to Rome. This gave the pope every reason to support Milicius in his fight for reform and to encourage him to continue with his mission. After the death of Conradus de Waldhausen Milicius was the only preacher of his kind in Prague. This responsibility probably inspired him to compile the postil *Gratiae Dei*.

**Table I: Order of sermons in *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei***

***Abortivus***

***Gratiae Dei***

**Feast days**

**Sundays**

**Feast days**

	I Advent	
S. Andreas (30/11)		S. Andreas
	II Advent	
S. Nicolaus (6/12)		S. Nicolaus
	III Advent	
S. Thomas (21/12)		
	IV Advent	
		S. Thomas
Nat. Domini — Dom. IV p. Epiph.		
Conversio S. Pauli (25/1)		
	LXX	
Purificatio Marie (2/2)		
	LX	
Cathedra S. Petri (22/2)		
		Conversio S. Pauli
		Purificatio Marie
	L	
S. Matthias (24/2)		
	Invocavit (Dom. I in XL)	
	Reminiscere (Dom. II in XL)	
S. Gregorius (12/3)		
	Oculi (Dom. III in XL)	
	Laetare (Dom. IV in XL)	
	Judica (Dom. V in XL)	
Annunciatio Marie (25/3)		
	Palmarum	
	Pascha	
S. Ambrosius (4/4)		
	Quasimodo (Dom. I post Pascha)	

	Misericordia Domini (Dom. II p.P)	
	Jubilate (Dom. III p.P.)	
S. Adalbertus (23/4)		S. Adalbertus, S. Georgius
S. Marcus (25/4)		
	Cantate (Dom. IV p.P)	
		S. Marcus
S. Philippus et Jacobus (1/5)		S. Philippus et Jacobus
Inventio S. Crucis (3/5)		Inventio S. Crucis
	Rogationum	
	Ascensio Domini	
	Exaudi (Dom. post Asc.)	
	Pentecoste	
	Trinitatis	
	I p.T.	
	II p.T.	
S. Vitus (15/6)		S. Vitus
		S. Johannes Baptista
	III p.T.	
S. Johannes Baptista (24/6)		
		S. Petrus et Paulus
	IV p.T	
S. Petrus et Paulus (29/6)		
		S. Procopius
	V p.T.	
S. Procopius (4/7)		
		S. Margaretha
		Divisio apostolorum
	VI p.T.	
S. Margaretha (13/7)		
Divisio apostolorum (15/7)		
		S. Maria Magdalena
	VII p.T.	
S. Maria Magdalena (22/7)		

S. Jacobus (25/7)		S. Jacobus
	VIII p.T.	
		S. Martha
	IX p.T.	
		S. Laurentius
	X p.T.	
S. Laurentius (10/8)		
		Assumptio Marie
	XI p.T.	
Assumptio Marie (15/8)		
		S. Bartholomeus
	XII p.T.	
S. Bartholomeus (24/8)		
		S. Augustinus
		Decollatio Johannis B.
	XIII p.T.	
		S. Egidius (1/9)
		Nativitas Marie
	XIV p.T.	
S. Augustinus (28/8)		
Decollatio Johannis B. (29/8)		
		Exaltatio S. Crucis
	XV p.T.	
Nativitas Marie (8/9)		
Exaltatio S. Crucis (14/9)		
		S. Ludmilla (16/9)
		S. Mattheus
	XVI p.T.	
S. Mattheus (21/9)		
S. Wenceslaus (28/9)		S. Wenceslaus
Archang. Michael (29/9)		Archang. Michael



S. Jeronymus (30/9)		S. Jeronymus
	XVII p.T.	
	XVIII p.T.	
		S. Simon et Judas
	XIX p.T.	
S. Lucas (18/10)		
		Omnes sancti
		Commem. animarum
	XX p.T.	
		S. Martinus
	XXI p.T.	
S. Simon et Judas (28/10)		
Omnes sancti (1/11)		
Commem. animarum (2/11)		
	XXII p.T.	
S. Martinus (11/11)		
S. Elizabeth (19/11)		S. Elizabeth
	XXIII p.T.	
		S. Catharina
	XXIV p.T.	
S. Catharina (25/11)		

**Table II: Comparison of the order of *Abortivus* with the liturgical order of the years 1362/63, 1363/64 and 1364/1365**

**Legend**

Dates printed in bold correspond with the order of *Gratiae Dei*

Dates in [ ]: the postil gives no sermon for this Sunday

\* the most likely dates, however not verifiable

\*\* corresponds partly to the indicated year

<b><i>Abortivus</i></b>	<b>1362/63</b>	<b>1363/64</b>	<b>1364/65</b>
I Advent	<b>27/11</b>	3/12	1/12
<i>S. Andreas (30/11)</i>			
II Advent	<b>4/12</b>	10/12	8/12
<i>S. Nicolaus (6/12)</i>			
III Advent	<b>11/12</b>	17/12	15/12

<i>S. Thomas Ap.(21/12)</i>			
IV Advent	18/12	<b>24/12</b>	<b>22/12</b>
<i>Nativitas Domini (25/12)</i>	(Sunday)		
Dominica intra oct. Nat. Dom.	1/1*	31/12	29/12 [5/1]
<i>Epiphania (6/1)</i>			
Dom. I p. Epiph.	8/1*	7/1	12/1
Dom. II p. E.	15/1*	14/1	19/1
Dom. III p. E.	22/1*	-	26/1
Dom. IV p. E.	-	-	2/2
<i>Conversio S. Pauli (25/1)</i>			
LXX	<b>29/1</b>	21/1	9/2
<i>Purificatio Marie (2/2)</i>			
LX	<b>5/2</b>	28/1	<b>16/2</b>
<i>Cathedra S. Petri (22/2)</i>			
L	12/2	4/2	<b>23/2</b>
<i>S. Matthias (24/2)</i>			
Invocavit (Dom. I in XL)	19/2	11/2	<b>2/3</b>
Reminiscere (Dom. II in XL)	26/2	18/2	<b>9/3</b>
<i>S. Gregorius (12/3)</i>			
Oculi (Dom. III in XL)	5/3	25/2	<b>16/3</b>
Laetare (Dom. IV in XL)	<b>12/3</b>	3/3	<b>23/3</b>
Judica (Dom. V in XL)	<b>19/3</b>	10/3	30/3
<i>Annunciatio Marie (25/3)</i>			
Palmarum	<b>26/3</b>	17/3	6/4
Pascha	<b>2/4</b>	24/3	13/4
<i>S. Ambrosius (4/4)</i>			
Quasimodo (Dom. I post Pascha)	<b>9/4</b>	31/3	20/4
Misericordia Domini (Dom. II p.P.)	<b>16/4</b>	7/4	27/4
Jubilate (Dom. III p.P.)	<b>23/4</b>	14/4	4/5
<i>S. Adalbertus (23/4)</i>			
<i>S. Marcus (25/4)</i>			
Cantate (Dom. IV p.P.)	<b>30/4</b>	21/4	11/5
<i>S. Philippus et Jacobus (1/5)</i>			
<i>Inventio St. Crucis (3/5)</i>			
Rogationum	<b>7/5</b>	28/4	18/5
Ascensio Domini	<b>11/5</b>	2/5	22/5
Exaudi (Dom. post Asc.)	<b>14/5</b>	5/5	25/5
Pentecoste	<b>21/5</b>	12/5	1/6
Trinitatis	<b>28/5</b>	19/5	8/6
I p.T.	<b>4/6</b>	26/5	15/6
II p.T.	<b>11/6</b>	2/6	22/6
<i>S. Vitus (15/6)</i>			
III p.T.	<b>18/6</b>	9/6	29/6
<i>S. Johannes Baptista (24/6)</i>			
IV p.T.	<b>25/6</b>	16/6	6/7
<i>S. Petrus et Paulus (29/6)</i>			
V p.T.	<b>2/7</b>	23/6	13/7
<i>S. Procopius (4/7)</i>			
VI p.T.	<b>9/7</b>	30/6	20/7
<i>S. Margaretha (13/7)</i>			
<i>Divisio apostolorum (15/7)</i>			
VII p.T.	<b>16/7</b>	7/7	27/7
<i>S. Maria Magdalena (22/7)</i>			
<i>S. Jacobus (25/7)</i>			
VIII p.T.	23/7**	14/7	3/8
IX p.T.	<b>30/7</b>	21/7	10/8
X p.T.	<b>6/8</b>	28/7	17/8
<i>S. Laurentius (10/8)</i>			

XI p.T.	<b>13/8</b>	4/8	24/8
<i>Assumptio Marie (15/8)</i>			
XII p.T.	<b>20/8</b>	11/8	31/8
<i>S. Bartholomeus (24/8)</i>			
XIII p.T.	<b>27/8</b>	18/8	7/9
XIV p.T.	3/9	<b>25/8</b>	14/9
<i>S. Augustinus (28/8)</i>			
<i>Decollatio Johannis B. (29/8)</i>			
XV p.T.	10/9	<b>1/9</b>	21/9
<i>Nativitas Marie (8/9)</i>			
<i>Exaltatio S. Crucis (14/9)</i>			
XVI p.T.	<b>17/9</b>	8/9	28/9
<i>S. Mattheus (21/9)</i>			
<i>S. Wenceslaus (28/9)</i>			
<i>Archang. Michael (29/9)</i>			
<i>S. Jeronymus (30/9)</i>			
XVII p.T.	24/9**	15/9	5/10
XVIII p.T.	<b>1/10</b>	22/9	12/10
XIX p.T.	<b>8/10</b>	29/9	19/10
<i>S. Lucas (18/10)</i>			
XX p.T.	15/10	6/10	26/10
XXI p.T.	<b>22/10</b>	13/10	2/11**
<i>S. Simon et Judas (28/10)</i>			
<i>Omnes sancti (1/11)</i>			
<i>Commem. animarum (2/11)</i>			
XXII p.T.	29/10	20/10	9/11*
<i>S. Martinus (11/11)</i>			
<i>S. Elizabeth (19/11)</i>			
XXIII p.T.	5/11	27/10	16/11**
XXIV p.T.	12/11	3/11	23/11*
<i>S. Catharina (25/11)</i>			
[Sundays 25-27]			

**Table III: Comparison of the order of *Gratiae Dei* with the liturgical order of the years 1370/71, 1371/72, 1372/73 and 1375**

<b><i>Gratiae Dei</i></b>	<b>1370/71</b>	<b>1371/72</b>	<b>1372/73</b>	<b>1375</b>
(Pars I)				
I Advent	1/12	30/11	<b>28/11</b>	
<i>S. Andreas (30/11)</i>				
II Advent	8/12	7/12	<b>5/12</b>	
<i>S. Nicolaus (6/12)</i>				
III Advent	15/12	14/12	<b>12/12</b>	
IV Advent	22/12	21/12	<b>19/12</b>	
<i>S. Thomas Ap. (21/12)</i>				
<i>Nativitas Domini (25/12)</i>				
Dom. intra oct. Nat. Dom.	29/12	28/12	26/12*	
	[5/1]	[4/1]	[2/1]	
<i>Epiphania (6/1)</i>				
Dom. I p. Epiph.	12/1	11/1*	9/1	
Dom. II p. E.	19/1	18/1*	16/1	
Dom. III p. E.	26/1	-	23/1	
Dom. IV p. E.	-	-	30/1	

			[6/2 V p.E.]	
LXX	2/2	<b>25/1</b>	13/2	
LX	9/2	1/2**	20/2	
<i>Conversio S. Pauli (25/1)</i>				
<i>Purificatio Marie (2/2)</i>				
L	16/2	<b>8/2</b>	27/2	
Invocavit (Dom. I in XL)	23/2	15/2*	6/3	
Reminiscere (Dom. II in XL)	2/3	22/2*	13/3	
Oculi (Dom. III in XL)	9/3	29/2*	20/3	
Laetare (Dom. IV in XL)	16/3	7/3*	27/3	
Judica (Dom. V in XL)	23/3	14/3*	3/4	
Palmarum	30/3	21/3*	10/4	
Pascha	6/4	28/3*	17/4	
Quasimodo (Dom. I post Pascha)	13/4	4/4*	24/4	
Misericordia Domini (Dom. II p.P.)	20/4	11/4*	1/5	
Jubilate (Dom. III p.P.)	27/4	<b>18/4</b>	8/5	
<i>S. Adalbertus et Georgius (23/4)</i>				
Cantate (Dom. IV p.P.)	4/5	<b>25/4</b>	15/5	
<i>S. Marcus (25/4)</i>				
<i>S. Philippus et Jacobus (1/5)</i>				
<i>Inventio S. Crucis (3/5)</i>				
Rogationum (Pars II)	11/5	2/5**	22/5	
Ascensio Domini	15/5*	6/5	26/5	31/5
Exaudi (Dom. post Asc.)	18/5*	9/5	29/5	3/6
Pentecoste	25/5*	16/5	5/6	10/6
Trinitatis	1/6*	23/5	12/6	17/6
I p.T.	8/6*	30/5	19/6	24/6
II p.T.	<b>15/6</b>	6/6	26/6	1/7
<i>S. Vitus (15/6)</i>				
<i>S. Johannes Baptista (24/6)</i>				
III p.T.	22/6**	13/6	3/7	8/7
<i>S. Petrus et Paulus (29/6)</i>				
IV p.T.	<b>29/6</b>	20/6	10/7	15/7
<i>S. Procopius (4/7)</i>				
V p.T.	<b>6/7</b>	27/6	17/7	22/7
<i>S. Margaretha (13/7)</i>				
<i>Divisio apostolorum (15/7)</i>				
VI p.T.	13/7**	4/7	24/7	29/7
<i>S. Maria Magdalena (22/7)</i>				
VII p.T.	20/7	11/7	31/7	5/8
<i>S. Jacobus (25/7)</i>				
VIII p.T.	<b>27/7</b>	18/7	7/8	12/8
<i>S. Martha (29/7)</i>				
IX p.T.	<b>3/8</b>	25/7	14/8	19/8
<i>S. Laurentius (10/8)</i>				
X p.T.	<b>10/8</b>	1/8	21/8	26/8
<i>Assumptio Marie (15/8)</i>				
XI p.T.	<b>17/8</b>	8/8	28/8	2/9
<i>S. Bartholomeus (24/8)</i>				
XII p.T.	<b>24/8</b>	15/8	4/9	9/9
<i>S. Augustinus (28/8)</i>				
<i>Decollatio Johannis B. (29/8)</i>				
XIII p.T.	<b>31/8</b>	22/8	11/9	16/9
<i>S. Egidius (1/9)</i>				
<i>Nativitas Marie (8/9)</i>				
XIV p.T.	7/9**	29/8	18/9	23/9
<i>Exaltatio S. Crucis (14/9)</i>				
XV p.T.	<b>14/9</b>	5/9	25/9	30/9

<i>S. Ludmilla (16/9)</i>				
<i>S. Mattheus (21/9)</i>				
XVI p.T.	<b>21/9</b>	12/9	2/10	7/10
<i>S. Wenceslaus (28/9)</i>				
<i>Archang. Michael (29/9)</i>				
<i>S. Jeronymus (30/9)</i>				
XVII p.T.	28/9**	19/9	9/10	14/10
XVIII p.T.	5/10	26/9	16/10	<b>21/10</b>
<i>S. Simon et Judas (28/10)</i>				
XIX p.T.	12/10	3/10	23/10	<b>28/10</b>
<i>Omnes sancti (1/11)</i>				
<i>Commem. animarum (2/11)</i>				
XX p.T.	19/10	10/10	30/10	<b>4/11</b>
<i>S. Martinus (11/11)</i>				
XXI p.T.	26/10	17/10	6/11	<b>11/11</b>
XXII p.T.	2/11	24/10	13/11	<b>18/11</b>
<i>S. Elizabeth (19/11)</i>				
XXIII p.T.	9/11	31/10	20/11	<b>25/11</b>
<i>S. Catharina (25/11)</i>				
XXIV p.T.	16/11	7/11	-	-
	[Sunday 25]	[Sundays 25and 26]		

## IV

### THE PROBLEM: CHURCH AND SOCIETY ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE

In order to get a better understanding of the ideas of Milicius de Chremsir, 27 sermons were chosen for more thorough study on the basis of a global inventory of *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*.

In the first place, sermons that appeared to contain some references to apocalypticism or Antichrist were selected. Secondly, the selection contains some sermons that present ideas about issues of the church and society. To this second group belong sermons on the hierarchy of the church and the poverty of the clergy.

The third group contains sermons about the Bohemian saints which were selected because here we might find Milicius' most concrete ideas about his own society. In general, local saints had a more concrete appearance and significance, evoking more personal interest and engagement than other, less well-known saints. Therefore, sermons on these saints were written with a greater sensitivity to contemporary circumstances.

The final selection for this study includes the following sermons:

from *Abortivus* (A), ms. I D 37 from the Czech National Library:

Kathedra St. Petri, fol. 57 ra - 59 ra,

St. Adalbert, fol. 103 ra - 104 vb,

St. Vitus, fol. 141 va - 143 ra,

Dominica V post Trinitatis, fol. 153 ra - 156 va,

St. Procopius, fol. 156 va - 157 vb,

Dominica X p.T., fol. 177 rb - 180 ra,

St. Wenceslaus, fol. 213 ra - 215 rb,

Dominica XII p.T., fol. 233 ra - 235 ra,

Omnes sancti, fol. 237 vb - 240 rb;

from *Gratiae Dei* (GD), pars hiemalis, ms. XIV D 5:

Dominica II in Advent, fol. 8 v - 12 r,

Dominica III in Advent, fol. 13 v - 16 v,

St. Nicolaus, fol. 12 r - 13 v,  
Sabato in quattuor temporibus, fol. 24 v - 27 r,  
Dominica in L, fol. 82 v - 84 v,  
Feria IV in L, fol. 86 v - 88 r,  
Feria V in L, fol. 88 r - 91 r,  
Dominica I in XL, fol. 92 r - 94 r,  
Feria III post Dom. I in XL, fol. 96 v - 98 r,  
Dominica III in XL, fol. 118 r - 120 v,  
St. Adalbertus, fol. 189 v - 191 r,  
Dominica IV post Paschalis, fol. 191 r - 193 r;

pars aestivalis (ms. XII D 1):

St. Vitus, fol. 30 r - 31 v,  
St. Petrus, fol. 39 r - 42 v,  
St. Procopius, fol. 50 r - 52 v,  
St. Ludmilla, fol. 117 r - 118 r,  
St. Wenceslaus, fol. 121 v - 124 r,  
Omnes sancti, fol. 140 v - 148 r.

These sermons express many worries about the situation of church and society. In Milicius' eyes the presence of corruption and decay in the church was a sign of the threatening collapse of the world. Therefore, the age has an eschatological character, because everyone has now to decide on which side he stands. It's a decisive moment in the struggle between good and evil. This chapter will analyse Milicius' understanding of this situation, while chapter 5 will concentrate on his ideas how to change it.

## 1. The Church: a Threatened Unity of Salvation

In Milicius's eyes, the church is a holy body, which has to be sanctified and purified from the dirt that evil brings to it. Very often the shadow over the church that prevents it from shining is cast by those who are supposed to lead and guide the believers to a holy life. Therefore, clerics and prelates are looked upon in an ambiguous way. However, there is no sign of doubt in Milicius' words about the church and its hierarchy. The church structure headed by the pope has in no way lost its meaning and importance. The pope is the one who has to initiate reform in the church, freeing it from evil. It is not surprising that in this process of purification the preacher is seen to play an important role.

Two sermons have to be considered the main sources of Milicius' ideas about the church and its leadership. The first one is the *Sermo de cathedra st. Petri* from *Abortivus*. This is an extensive sermon on the qualifications of those who sit on a *cathedra*, an official seat or see. The second sermon is from *Gratiae Dei* for St. Peter's Day. This homily is an elaboration on Mt. 16,18 ("You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church") and is more about the foundations of the church. Both sermons do, however, contain many references to the actual situation and have to be understood as commenting on the actual leadership of the church. Many sermons from both postils contain some remarks on the church as well. Most explicitly this is true of the sermons on All Saint's Day. In general, we can say that the focus of Milicius' work as a preacher is the church. His first concern is its well-being and its purity since it is God's community. He recognizes that the church is a mixed community, which brings together many different groups of people, therefore containing both good and evil. The church is gathered from all corners of the world. From the confusion of Babylon — the place of sin and lust — the church is brought together as a peaceful Jerusalem upheld by the love of God.

From many nations and the errors of the Jews the church is gathered, from the Babylonian confusion to the peace of the reconciling vision, which is signified by Jerusalem. This congregation is especially founded by the love of God, just as the dispersion from the church takes place because of a love of the world or cupidity.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> „Ex multis gentilibus et iudaicis erroribus est ecclesia congregata, de confusione babilonica ad pacem visionis pacifice que per Jherusalem designatur. Maxime autem per amorem Dei hec congregatio fieri solet, sicut dispersio ab ecclesia per amorem mundi vel cupiditatem esse solet.“ Omnes sancti, A, I D 37, fol. 239 rb.



In the same sermon, Milicius points out the diversity of the church. Many saints were once great sinners but then delivered by the blood of Christ.<sup>186</sup> In that the church has a firm and unifying base, since martyrs poured out their blood for the love of Christ.

Diversity within the church is not the only thing that can endanger its unity. Milicius knows that the church is a mixed community where good and evil live together. It is this division between good and evil that is the most dangerous line of separation in the church. Many times Milicius warns against this division, urging people to live “on the right side.” At the same, time he accepts it as a fact that the existence of this division is inevitable for the church on earth. Preachers have the task to unveil evil when it is hidden. They have to recognize where the borderline between good and evil in the church lies. The definitive separation, however, will take place on Judgment Day when the evil will be condemned. In a sermon on fishing (of men) Milicius says:

Then angels will go out and like fishermen will come to the shore of the heavenly homeland. Taking the good together with the evil, they will select the good in their vases, but the evil they throw out. For they „will separate the evil from the righteous, and throw them into the furnace of fire; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.“ [Mt. 13,49-50] Who else are those evil fish than members of the devil, whom Job chapter 40 signifies as the Leviathan or the sea monster?<sup>187</sup>

The unity of the church is of great concern to Milicius. Sometimes he seems to anticipate the coming schism, which became reality only a few years after his death. He speaks about hypocrites who pretend to be good leaders but lead people in a wrong direction. They are even more dangerous than heretics, who everybody knows do not respect the church and its divine law. Hypocrites mislead believers on purpose, even when they themselves know what the truth is. Milicius describes them as the “abomination that makes desolate, and like idols they occupy the temple and stand in the holy place where they should not be. Usurers and proud

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<sup>186</sup> „Ecce unitas ecclesie per Christi sanguinem congregata. Quanti adulteri latrones et fures heretici et perfidi ac diversis erroribus involuti, penitentiam agentes et conversi facti sunt sancti.“ Omnes sancti, A, I D 37, fol. 239 va.

<sup>187</sup> „Tunc exibunt angeli et velud piscatores in littore celestis patrie. Pisces bonos cum malis educantes eligent bonos in vasa sua, malos autem foras miserunt. ‘Separabunt enim malo de medio iustorum et mittent eos in caminum ignis, ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium’ [Mt. 13,49-50]. Qui autem sunt illi mali pisces nisi membra dyaboli, qui Leviathan sive cetus Job 40 cap. nuncupatur.“ Dominica V p.T., Abortivus, I D 37, fol. 154 vb.

women, who to the shame of the death of Christ, are venerated like idols in the temple.”<sup>188</sup>

Milicius does not use the expression *desolatio abominationis* (from Dan. 12) very often. The phrase has a strong apocalyptic connotation and mainly appears in the sections of his work that have such a context. Even then, this term appears mainly in quotations from patristic literature, especially from St. Ambrose. The homily for the Tuesday in Lent from *Gratiae Dei* speaks about Jesus driving out of the temple all who were selling and buying (Mt. 21,12), which is by no means a eschatological theme. Nor is this day a special occasion for sermonizing in such terms and words. Milicius makes this reference simply as a warning to clerics who work in the church, the *templum Dei*. Those clerics who are becoming rich at the expense of the church and the poor are just like the moneychangers, whose tables Christ overturned. The same is true for the bishops who do not act according to their mission. Such people change the temple of God into a “cave of robbers.” Every preacher and prelate has to critically inspect his own thoughts and deeds, and question himself whether he is really acting to drive hypocrites out of the church or whether he is behaving as one himself. He could himself be driven out and exterminated: “Let the surveyors of the church, prelates and preachers, cry out against those who practice simony, against those who collect property and against the avaricious, that they may not exterminate the garden of the holy church. Let them not be exterminated with the exterminated.”<sup>189</sup>

Hypocrites are not the only threat to the unity of the church. Differences of opinion, disagreements and arguments are more than apt cause for the church to disintegrate. In a homily on Lc. 11,14 ff. Milicius comments that a serious division always means the fall of a specific body. This can also be the case of the church because Christianity is divided. Division is the work of Satan, who sends *detractores* and hypocrites to mislead Christians and to bring them into his power. Milicius seems to be alarmed by the struggle over influence and power that was going on in the church. The rivalry he himself experienced with the mendicants, various factions in the church, the leadership in Avignon and during the papacy’s struggle for greater independence from France all are echoed in his sermon on Lc. 11,14:

As is said by Hosea 10,2: „Their heart is false; now they must bear their guilt.“ If the

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<sup>188</sup> „Qui sunt desolatio abominationis, et quasi ydola occupant templum et stant in loco sancto, ubi non debent, utinam et usurarios et superbas mulieres, que in opprobrium mortis Christi tamquam ydola coluntur in templo.“ Feria III post Dom. I in XL, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 97 r.

princes of a kingdom do not agree among themselves, the kingdom is dissolved. If inhabitants of one house are divided against inhabitants of another house, the city is ruined. If members of a religious order discord among themselves, the order perishes. If masters discord among themselves, science perishes. If Christians are divided among themselves, Christianity perishes, not in the good religious orders and masters but in the evil. The kingdom of good Christians, however, stands always and remains for ever.<sup>190</sup>

To Milicius, reform of the church did not mean a modernization or modification of it. There is no sign of „aggiornamento“ in his words, but rather a tendency towards conservatism. It is not the church and its structures or activities that have to change, but the people in it. All kinds of failures, deformations and deviations have to be cut off and the original shape must be restored. The church has to return to the previous state in which it was a true and unified church. In this church the hierarchic structure is of great importance, together with obedience to those who lead it.

The two sermons on St. Peter are clear examples of this conservatism. The first one, from *Abortivus*, is meant for the feast of the *Cathedra st. Petri* on 22 February. The sermon contains the opening text from Job 29,7 (“When I went out to the gate of the city, when I prepared my seat in the square.”) Elaborating on this reference to the “seat” — *cathedra* in the Vulgate — Milicius concentrates his thoughts on the position of Peter. He is the rock on which the church is built, states the *prothema*. This rock is very solid and reliable even in times of great danger and evil. It is a guarantee of truth and faith against all hypocrites:

Yet in many dangers and plagues he [i.e. the rock] has proclaimed this with all his power till death, teaching us to keep to our faith, the unchanging confession, not only by words, but also by works and truth, even if tyrants who take us away from the faith, are not present. Present are, however, hypocrites, demons and tyrants, who undermine us by

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<sup>189</sup> „Clament ergo speculatores ecclesie, prelati et predicatores, contra symoniacos, proprietarios et avaros, ne amplius exterminet ortum ecclesie sancte. Ne et ipsi cum exterminatis exterminentur.“ Feria III post Dom. I in XL, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 97 r.

<sup>190</sup> „Sicut dicitur Osee decimo (v. 2): ‘Divisum est cor eorum, nunc interibunt’ [Note the difference between the Vulgate and the RSV]. Si principes regni dissentiunt, regnum dissoluitur. Si habitatores unius domus divisi sunt contra habitatores alterius domus, civitas desolatur. Si religiosi inter se discordant, perit religiositas. Si magistri inter se discordant, perit scientia. Si christiani inter se divisi sunt, perit christianitas. Non in bonis religiosis et magistris sed malis, bonorum enim christianorum regnum semper stat et manet in eternum.“ Dom. III in XL, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 119 r.

drawing us to sin away from truth and justice, that we, by sinning, deny Christ the Lord.<sup>191</sup>

Then the sermon continues by distinguishing between the three kinds of seats or offices that Peter prepared for himself in the church: the *cathedra predicationis* (the authority on preaching), the *cathedra prelationis* (the authority over the clergy) and the *cathedra subiectionis* (the authority over everyone). Every office is linked to different texts and persons from the Old Testament. The first one is the throne of Solomon (I Kings 10), which was flanked by two lions. Those lions also guided St. Peter when he preached in many languages on Pentecost Day. This *cathedra* is conditioned by six grades of *differentia*, which make clear whether a person has the qualities necessary to preach. Those grades are fully in the jurisdiction of Peter, in whose place the pope must act today. He must decide whether a person is able to take up the seat of preaching and be a preacher. In the first place, he has to make a decision what is permitted and what is not permitted to preach. Secondly, he has to consider what is beneficial to say. Thirdly, it is his authority to fix what is ordained or not ordained to speak about in a sermon, and fourthly, what is opportune to discuss. In the fifth place, the pope must take into consideration what are appropriate moderate or immoderate means of convincing a person to join the side of the good. Sixthly, he has to discern what is useful to say when giving advice to people.<sup>192</sup>

In the church, preachers are responsible to just one authority — the pope. This highest authority occupies the Holy See and is the successor of St. Peter. This image of the pope's authoritative jurisdiction corresponds with some ideas from the two writings Milicius addressed to the pope and his cardinals at the end of his life. In both the *Libellus de Antichristo* and his letter to Urban V, he appealed to the pope to send preachers *cum tuba predicationis et voce magna*, „with the trumpet of preaching and a great voice“ in order to

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<sup>191</sup> „Tamen eam postea in multis periculis et plagis usque ad mortem viriliter est confessus, nos instruens, ut teneamus fidei nostre, confessionem indeclinabilem, non solum lingua, sed etiam opere et veritate, nam et si desunt tyranni, qui nos a fide avertant. Non tamen desunt ypocrite demones et tyranni, qui nos ad peccata trahentes a veritate et iustitia deflectere moliuntur, ut peccando Christum Dominum abnegemus.“ *Kathedra s. Petri*, A, I D 37, fol. 57 rb.

<sup>192</sup> „Per gradus differentiatione designatur que fuit in Petro. Cum recte differeret quod cui et qualiter predicandum, istos enim sex gradus differentiationis habet. Primo, divisit in eo quasi quod foret licitum et quod illicitum predicabat. Secundo, deliberat cum quod foret expediens et quod non expediens perolabat. Tercio, erat in eo dispositio dum quod ordinatum et quod inordinatum esset dicebat. Quarto, erat in eo dispositio dum quod opportunum et quod inopportunum esset distinguebat. Quinto erat in eo modificatio dum quod moderatum et immoderatum foret persuadebat. Sexta erat in eo distinctio dum quod utile et quod inutile esset hominibus consulebat.“ *Kathedra s. Petri*, A, I D 37, fol. 57 va.

bring the church back in *statum salutis*, „the state of salvation.“<sup>193</sup> The pope is the initiator and authority who is able to decide on who will be preachers and what they will preach. Everyone has to obey him. A second conclusion from this part of the sermon on the *Kathedra St. Petri* is even more surprising and provocative: Milicius' concept of the church provides preachers with a separate status. They are an independent power next to the clergy.<sup>194</sup> The second seat, the *cathedra prelationis* is compared to the throne of David. This one is occupied by wise men, who are divided into three orders of wisdom and salvation: *incipientes*, *perficientes* and *perfecti* (beginners, those who are becoming perfect, and the perfect). The opposite of this position is the *cathedra pestilentie*, the seat of pestilence in which sit scribes and Pharisees, who are like the sons of Eli (I Sam. 2,12ff). Both offices are that of priests, but the latter have “no regard for the Lord.”

The sermon associates the third *cathedra subiunctionis* to the throne on which God himself sits, as is stated in Is. 6. It is the same throne that St. Peter sits on to preside over the Holy Church. He became “the vicar of Christ and his successor in the *cathedra* or throne to preside the holy church, where he reigns the angelic spirits while sitting on earth.”<sup>195</sup> To this office everyone, whether preacher, clergyman or lay person, owes obedience.

With this threefold division of seats Milicius is creating a division in the church along the lines of vocation. He distinguishes between the clergy, obedient to the *cathedra prelationis* and the office of preaching, belonging to the *cathedra predicationis*. In this case the *cathedra subiunctionis* is the authority above everyone. St. Peter, and through him the pope, is the head of every part of the church and every *status* is obliged to obey and honor him. He is the key-bearer and deserves every respect. Moreover, in him the unity of the church is rooted and symbolized. He is the rock on which the church stands. Obeying the Holy See means being a part of the Holy Church and being a part of Christ's representation on earth. In consequence, everyone who doubts the pope's authority doubts Christ himself or even denies him. Such a person is by definition a hypocrite and an ally of Satan. He belongs to those who are a *pestilentia* to the church, like those who desecrated the temple of God by trading there or by treating offerings to the Lord with contempt as did the sons of Eli. They deceive the church

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<sup>193</sup> „Postremo incepti attendere, quomodo esset de statu et salute Christianorum. Et stans in hoc stupefactus audivi spiritum in me sic loquentem in corde: ‘Vade, et dic summo pontifici, qui ab hoc Spiritu sancto electus est, ut reducat ecclesiam in statum salutis, ut mittat angelos sive praedicatores cum tuba praedicationis et voce magna.’“ Libellus de Antichristo, edited by Ferdinand Menčík, Milič a dva jeho spisy [Milicius and two of his writings], in: *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk*, Praha 1890, p. 334.

<sup>194</sup> More about this is discussed in the chapter 5, see p. 178.

from the inside, shattering its unity.

This is not the only instance where Milicius draws very sharp lines between the good and the bad. Almost all topics he preaches about outline very clearly in black and white what he considers good and bad. Milicius is not a man familiar with doubt and insecurity, for he is very confident about what the right choice is. In his eyes the very bright spotlights of the messages of the Scriptures reveal every stain. Milicius' view and criticism of the affairs in the church come from a background of conservatism, as is clear from the first part of the sermon on the *Kathedra St. Petri*. According to him the sacred structure of the church, which was handed down by Christ himself to St. Peter, must be restored.

The second part of the sermon, *in quibus verbis*, opens with a second aspect of St. Peter's image. He is the holder of the key to the City of God. The sermon gives a description of six gates that lead into the city. This city represents both the church and also the Kingdom of God. They are the gates of grace, Scripture, truth, discipline, dignity and love of Christ. The last gate is for the flock that St. Peter feeds. Peter has the key to the gates, which is a symbol of hope because it reassures us that the reign of darkness is over. Keys are the symbol "by which the darkness of the devil is pushed backwards, that the light of Christ may come."<sup>196</sup>

The second part of this division tells the story of St. Peter's life, his visit to Antiochia and his death in Rome, which was in the spiritual sense Sodom or Egypt because of the rule of Emperor Nero. In this time the *cathedra* in Jerusalem was occupied by priests, the sermon says, referring to Acts 11. In the conclusion to this quotation Milicius takes some very interesting and remarkable quotations from Pseudo-Chrysostomus, which emphasize the moral imperative on the clergy. "Not the seat makes the priest, but the priest the seat, it is not the place that sanctifies the person, but the person the place. Not every priest is holy, but every holy is a priest."<sup>197</sup> The same quotation also appears in the so-called Synodical Sermons.

According to the editors of the Synodical Sermons, Milicius was the first to fix this moral

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<sup>195</sup> „...Petrus cum fuerit vicarius Christi et successor in cathedra sive trono, ut presideret ecclesie sancte, ubi sedens in terris etiam angelicis spiritibus imperabat.“ *Kathedra s. Petri*, A, I D 37, fol. 57 vb.

<sup>196</sup> „...per que referantur dyaboli tenebre ut lux Christi adveniat.“ *Kathedra st. Petri*, A, I D 37, fol. 58 rb.

<sup>197</sup> „Videte ergo quomodo sedeatis super cathedram. Quia non cathedra fecit sacerdotem, sed sacerdos cathedram, non locus sanctificat hominem, sed homo sanctificat locum. Non omnis sacerdos sanctus est, sed omnis sanctus sacerdos. Qui bene sederit super cathedram, honorem accipiet ab illa. Qui male sederit, iniuriam facit cathedre. Ideoque malus sacerdos de sacerdotio suo crimen acquirit, non dignitatem. In iudicio enim sedens, si quidem bene vixeris et bene docueris, omni iudex eris. Si autem bene docueris et male vixeris, tui solius iudex eris. Nam bene vivendo et bene docendo populum instruis quomodo debeat vivere. Bene autem docendo et male vivendo Deum instruit quomodo debeas condemnari. Hec Crisostomus. Videant ergo prelati ut bene viventes iuste iudicent et iniquitatem dampnent.“ *Kathedra st. Petri*, A, I D 37, fol. 58 rb - 58 va. The quotation is from Pseudo-Chrysostomus, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, Homilia 43, PG 56, c. 876.

criterion, which would play a key role in the Hussite movement some 30 years later.<sup>198</sup> In any case Milicius seems to aim for a more differentiated approach towards the established theological position known as *ex opere operato*. This says that the value of the work of a cleric is not dependent on his moral behavior, but only on his ordination and „professional“ authority. Milicius does not doubt this claim, but underlines the implications the moral behavior of a priest can have on his office. According to his opinion, the value of the see occupied by the priest is dependent on the person who possesses it. The moral behavior of this individual can bring discredit to the office, because a man determines the character of the position. The focus is principally on the person and his behavior. Milicius' approach is fundamentally suspicious of hierarchy and status. A person is not what his profession declares him to be nor what the titles and honors he has acquired claim he is. A man is what he does. This strong moral principle is of course not totally surprising when we take into consideration Milicius' way of thinking. In every sermon he very much stresses the moral question. The virtues of all believers, clergy or laity have to be proven. The church has to return to the holy life of the predecessors of the faith. It is the mission of preachers, who are sent by the pope, to lead and monitor this process of sanctification. According to the moral standards Milicius proclaimed, everybody is equal whether he be a bishop or a beggar. As a result, also the actions a person carries out in the name of his profession are to be judged by the same moral standards. It is not an individual's office that justifies his actions, but his actions, done in accordance with correct moral standards, that justify his position.

It is this profoundly moral and democratic approach, which proclaims everyone to be morally equal, that made Milicius' relationship with some authorities of the church tense. According to them, the value and authority of a clergyman is determined by the hierarchy, the backbone of the church. In none of his sermons does Milicius openly doubt this position. On the contrary, as we will see in the second sermon related to Peter, the homily from *Gratiae Dei*, he even defends this idea. Nevertheless, in the sermon from *Abortivus* he very strongly suggests that a priest living in an immoral way should ask himself whether he still can be priest. In the quotation of Pseudo-Chrysostom everyone living a holy and sanctified life is a priest. Priesthood is not seen here as a state determined primarily by hierarchy, but by virtue and morality. Hierarchy tends here to be an empty and inconspicuous quality, which gains

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<sup>198</sup>Vilém Herold, Milan Mráz (ed.), *Iohannis Milicii de Cremsir Tres sermones synodales*, Praha 1974, p. 22. The quotation of Pseudo-Chrysostomus appears at the beginning of the first Synodical Sermon (line 111, Herold p. 54) and at the end of the second (line 696, Herold p. 99).

significance and meaning only from the perspective of moral behavior. This is only one small step away from making morality a precondition to one's place in the hierarchy; however, this is a step that Milicius does not take.

The last part of the sermon on *Kathedra St. Petri* tells how Christ appointed St. Peter as the foundation of the church. He is from this moment at the head of the church. St. Peter, however, had to do penitence and to fight against evil and sin. The sermon closes with St. Peter weeping after his denial of Christ. The tears of St. Peter were even stronger and more effective than a sermon, because by their substance they touched the listeners completely, not only in their thoughts but also in their feelings. Through this weeping then, St. Peter proved himself to be a good pastor and ruler of the church.

The homily in *Gratiae Dei* is titled "De S. Petro", but in the upper margin of our manuscript "Petri et Pauli" is written in a later hand. Unlike the sermon from *Abortivus*, the homily is not explicitly about the Holy See and St. Peter's significance to it. *Gratiae Dei* does not include a sermon for the Feast of the Holy See.

Nevertheless the homily is on Mt. 16,18, the most important text about St. Peter's authority, declaring it to be the rock on which the church is built. The sermon opens in its protheme with the idea that just as Peter received his name from Christ and was thus an *imitator* of his Lord, so he followed Christ in his work, life, preaching and crucifixion. Many were and are unable to do as Peter did. They seem to be friends of Christ, but are really enemies since they do not possess the real love, but the false love of the flesh. Milicius appeals therefore to his audience — obviously preachers — to stay in the true love of Christ by preaching to His sheep: "Let us abandon carnal love and adhere to the divine love, preaching to the sheep of Christ and providing a meadow in unfeigned love."<sup>199</sup>

The sermon, being a homily, follows and comments on the pericope of Mt. 16 about St. Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. In verse 17 Christ blesses Peter because of this confession. Milicius analyzes seven reasons for this praise, which seems to be not only meant for Peter personally but also for his successors. That at least is the suggestion of the sermon, which is based on the presumption that St. Peter presides over the church through the papacy. The seven reasons for Christ's blessing are:

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<sup>199</sup> „Relinquamus amorem carnalem et adhareamus caritati divine predicantes ovibus Christi et pascua vite ministrantes in caritate non ficta.“ De s. Petro, GD, XII D 1, fol. 39 v.



First, to encourage people more to perseverance and love of faith. Secondly, to greatly encourage within the declared confession. Thirdly, to show the excellence of the clear faith of his confession and to show how it pleases Christ. Fourthly, to give a greater manifestation and an appropriate commendation of the faith of Peter. Fifthly, to show how Christ before the Father in heaven gives witness to those who constantly give witness to him. Sixthly, to show that just as one holds his mind toward God, likewise God does toward him. Therefore, the more fervent someone strives for God, the more effective God unites Himself to him. And hence the more he accepts and magnifies Him, especially if one is elevated to a high position or office, like Peter was. Seventhly, that the special primacy of Peter, placed over all, gets its origin and promulgation from the mouth of Christ.<sup>200</sup>

These reasons give a clear idea why Milicius accepts the pope as the highest authority in the church. His analysis can be divided into three steps, in which he briefly explains his “theology of the papacy.” First he points out the unifying power of Peter’s faith, which has to be maintained, accepted and acknowledged by everyone. It is a firm basis for the unity of the church because it has the ability to bring people together. The reason for this is that this faith pleases Christ and has his support and recommendation.

The second step takes into account the hierarchy of the church. This is not only a physical structure but also a spiritual one. Christ is with all who accept and remain in the faith of St. Peter. A person who holds to this faith is remaining in Christ. He is in the company of God. This is especially the case of those who are in an office, serving Christ and his church as priests or clerics.

Finally, the presidency of St. Peter over everyone is established in order to enable the gospel to be proclaimed. This presidency and its incumbent, the pope, are necessary to the church. Without the existence of this office and its doctrine, the church is no longer united. The explanation on verse 18a (“You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church”) has a similar tenor. A true servant of the church is at the same time also the servant of Peter and of

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<sup>200</sup> „Primo, ad magis incitandum omnes ad constantiam et amorem fidei. Secundo, ad maiorem confluentiam confessionis premisse (?). Tertio, ad ostendendum precellentiam fidei clare confessionis eius et ad ostendendum qua placens est Christo. Quarto, ad manifestationem maiorem et condignam commendationem fidei Petri. (...) Quinto, ad ostendendum quomodo Christus coram Patre in celis confitetur eos, qui constanter confitentur ipsum [a reference to Mt. 10,32]. Sexto, ad ostendendum quod sicut mens se habet ad Deum, sic Deus ad eam. Unde quanto ferventius quis tendit in Deum, tanto et Deus efficacius se iugerit ei. Et tanto plus acceptat et magnificat

Christ. What is in St. Peter is consequently also in Christ.

The second half of verse 18 (“The powers of death shall not prevail against it”) gives Milicius again an opportunity to identify the enemies of the church. They are the “princes of malice and errors” or “tyrants and arch-heretics,” who are altogether establishing the “college of the evil.” They are the “gates of hell,” by which a man enters the community of Satan and his demons. Those enemies have several tools with which to force someone to enter hell. In a reference to Rabanus, Milicius warns that Satan will try to prevail against the church and its true preachers by persecution and by the acts and words of the unfaithful.

Another group that is an instrument in the hands of Satan for bringing people to his side consists of “doctors of heresy and other perversions”, who deceive believers. “Like one enters through the good teachers as through the gates of Sion the heavenly Jerusalem, likewise one is allowed to enter the eternal confusion of hell through the evil teachers, through the gates of Babylon.”<sup>201</sup>

All those evil powers do not have the ability to overthrow the church, because it is in unity with St. Peter. His confession and his presence in the hierarchy are a guarantee that the church will stay untouched through all the attacks of the enemy and his allies. Milicius uses a thought from Cyril when he states:

The church of Peter stays immaculate from all seduction, over all leaders and bishops and primates of the church in their pontificates and fullest faith and authority of Peter. And while other churches are ashamed because of their errors, this one keeps the stability, stopping all the mouths of heretics.<sup>202</sup>

Obviously, the existence of the papacy is to Milicius a guarantee of the unity of the church. The pope is the symbol and instrument of the unifying bond of the church with Christ. He is the guardian of the faith, of the church and its members. Therefore, he has to be accepted and obeyed as well. Lack of obedience is a sign of heresy and a threat to the church and its unity.

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eum, et precipue si sit ad altum statum vel officium elevandus, sicut erat Petrus. Septimo, ut singularis presidentia Petro super omnes danda ex ore Christi sumeret originem et promulgationem.“ St. Petrus, GD, XII D 1 fol. 40 r.  
<sup>201</sup> „Sicut enim per bonos doctores quasi per portas Syon ad celestem Jherusalem intratur, sic per malos doctores tamquam per portas Babilonie ad confusionem eternam inferni patet ingressus.“ St. Petri, GD, XII D 1, fol. 40 v. This warning we know also from Abortivus, where it has almost the same wording: „Sicud enim per bonos doctores quasi per portas Syon ad celestem Jherusalem subintratur, sicsic per portas Babylon[is], id est falsos doctores, ad infernum patet ingressus.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 155 va. See also p. 167.

The pope has the authority, given by Christ to Peter, to lead the church in uncertain and evil times. His authority over the church is total, Milicius says. It is the authority to “lead souls to the eternal life.” This is a divine authority to forgive sins, Milicius adds after having quoted Pseudo-Chrysostom, which was given to St. Peter and his successors. Here we can conclude for the first time that Milicius is definitely not only speaking about Peter and his authority, but also about the pope and the church hierarchy.

Hear now that it belongs to God only to forgive sins by his own might. However, Christ promised to give this property, which was his alone, to Peter and his successors, that they also would forgive sins in their way. Not on their own, but by divine authority. God only, therefore, forgives authoritatively, but the priests ministerially.<sup>203</sup>

St. Peter, the church and its hierarchy are the chain through which God passes down his faith and grace. Clerics have the authority to administer the sacraments, of which the sacrament of forgiveness is the first. The others are e.g. baptism, penitence and the Eucharist. They have a power, which can clean, forgive and free a person. In this context, Milicius is finally defending the principle *ex opere operato*, which we discussed earlier. Because those powers are not ours but given by God, the sacraments do not lose their significance when a priest is living in sin. “Therefore, merits are not ours, but are given by God, because he only can work them, even though they do not cease to be our merits. When priests execute something in an ineffable way according to the power passed on to him, God only works it in them and through them and with them.”<sup>204</sup>

Even more than the sermon from *Abortivus*, the homily on St. Peter’s (and Paul’s) Day from *Gratiae Dei* is clearly an apology of the hierarchy with the papacy as its head. St. Peter and his successors are a guarantee of the church’s unity with Christ. The hierarchy is the channel through which faith, love and forgiveness flow and are poured out. Like in the sermon on the *Kathedra St. Petri* from *Abortivus*, Milicius considers the hierarchy to be a defense against

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<sup>202</sup> „Ecclesia Petri ab omni seductione immaculata manet super omnes prepositos et episcopos, et primates ecclesiarum in suis pontificibus et plenissima fide et auctoritate Petri. Et cum alie ecclesie quorundam errore sint verecundate, ista sempermanet stabilita omnia obturans ora hereticorum.“ St. Petrus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 40 v.

<sup>203</sup> „Audi nunc quia licet proprium sit solius Dei, sua propria potestate peccata dimittere. Tamen hoc ipsum sibi proprium Christus Petro et suis successoribus dare promisit, ut et ipsi suo modo peccata dimittant. Auctoritate non sua propria sed divina. Deus ergo auctoritative solus dimittit, sed sacerdotes ministerialiter.“ St. Petrus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 42 v.

heresy and division. Hypocrites and evil teachers are pernicious, because they try to destroy the unity of the church.

There is no sign of doubt about the role and authority of the pope. This is fully in accordance with the known writings of Milicius — the *Libellus* and the Letter to Urban. Also Milicius' two visits to the pope, once in Rome and once in Avignon, emphasize the authority the pope represented to the preacher. In a sermon on the Twelfth Sunday after Trinitatis on John 4,52 ("At the seventh hour the fever left him"), Milicius suggests going to the pope in order to get advice and new strength. The most convincing evidence we have of his trust in the pope, the vicar of Christ, is contained in the following quote: "The most fitting thing for us to do then is to go to the lord of the earth, i.e. to Christ and his vicar the pope or to someone else who is in the unity and faith of the holy church, and receive from him the grain that feeds the elect, grain, I say, of the principal of God, that they can come to the sevenfold reward."<sup>205</sup>

Obviously, also members of the hierarchy can also be approached to get the necessary means for the fight against sin. They as well belong to the those "who are in the unity and faith of the church."

There is, however, also a substantial difference between the two sermons on Peter. The one from *Gratiae Dei* barely speaks about the moral implications of being a cleric or priest. The confirmation of the *ex opere operato* principle at the end of the homily is therefore no surprise and is a logical conclusion. *Abortivus* on the other hand is far more lively and explicit on the question of morality. Priests are supposed to live a life of high moral standards. Their priesthood is empty when they live in sin and evil. They can remain a priest, Milicius does not deny that, but the content of the position is undermined. The stress on the moral attitude of the hierarchy brings Milicius to state in quoting of Pseudo-Chrysostomus, that everyone who lives a holy life is a priest. In *Abortivus*, Milicius proclaims that morality is primary, and it seems even to bring him into conflict with the hierarchic principle of the church. Everyone, whether layman or priest, is judged on the same basis, that is according to his morality.

It is significant that this implicit conflict of morality and hierarchy is lacking in *Gratiae Dei*.

As we have seen, *Gratiae Dei* was written at a later date and is the result of a longer period of

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<sup>204</sup> „Sic ergo merita nostra non sunt nisi dona Dei, quia ipse solus ea facit, et tamen per hoc non desinunt esse merita nostra. Sic quidquid sacerdotes secundum ineffabilem modum sibi tradite potestatis operantur, solus Deus illa facit in eis et per eos et cum eis.“ St. Petrus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 42 v.

<sup>205</sup> „Quid ergo faciendum nobis incumbit, nisi ire ad dominum terre, id est Christum et eius vicarium papam vel alium qui est in unitate et fide ecclesie sancte, et recipere ab ipso frumenta, que electos nutrant, frumenta, inquam, mandatorum Dei, ut sic possint venire ad septenarium premiorum.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 233 vb.

working and preaching.<sup>206</sup> It therefore has a balanced character of maturity and consideration. *Abortivus* is the first work stemming from the beginning of Milicius' career as a preacher. It is determined by a period in which Milicius was finding his way, when he was very alarmed by the situation he encountered in the church. His strong advocacy of morality is the main feature of his involvement. This postil is not as balanced as *Gratiae Dei*, but is sharper and more urgent. The implicit conflict between morality and the hierarchy is an example of the "unbalanced" character of this opus.

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<sup>206</sup>See p. 100 ff.

## 2. Clergy as the Source of Unity and Decay

The sermons in *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei* do not elaborate extensively on the theme of prelates, clergy or priests, as they do e.g. on preachers. The occasions on which they are mentioned can be divided into two categories. In the first group, the sermons refer to them in conjunction with preachers. These references are positive and describe the duties and responsibilities not so much of the clergy in general, but of leaders of the Christian community. In the other category the sermons are addressed directly to the clergy and the image of them is utterly negative. Prelates are sharply criticized for their lifestyle and attitudes that demonstrate their negligence toward their responsibilities. It seems that Milicius in general is profoundly distrustful of the clergy because of their practical life, yet he accepts them as a necessary aspect of the church.

Milicius utilizes all possible terms that denote those who have an office in the church. At one point he will speak about *prelati*, then later about *clerici* and sometimes, but not often, about *sacerdotes*. It is not easy to make a simple set of rules for explaining why he employs what term when but in general we can see that when he speaks positively about church leaders he more often uses the word *prelatus*, while on occasions with a more negative implication he applies the term *clericus*. In one instance, which we will discuss, he defines prelates as bishops.

The sermons that speak the most systematically about the work of the leaders of the church are those on St. Procopius, who is the great role model for all preachers and prelates.<sup>207</sup> Both postils offer a sermon or homily about this saint. Although they do not differ in their general tenor, these two sermons do vary in what they emphasize and in their degree of completeness. The sermon from *Abortivus* is explicitly addressed to preachers and describes St. Procopius as a rooster, which is the symbol for preachers in the first place, but then also for clergymen. Another image originates in the place where the saint lived and worked, that is on the bank of the River Sázava. He was the great navigator of the ship of the church. Milicius compares the work of the clergy to the way a cock carefully watches his surroundings and defends the hens belonging to him. He is always looking at the sky and the earth for enemies, ready to sound a warning and fight.<sup>208</sup> This is an excellent example for *confessores* — those who hear

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<sup>207</sup> See p. 134 ff and p. 195 ff.

<sup>208</sup> „Gallus enim sic plurimus vigilanti non dum pastum querit, unum oculum versus celum dirigit contra tyrannem, dum aquile accipitis vel avis cuiuscumque rapatis, ut sue rigore custodie eos a se et a gallinis propellat.

confession — and especially prelates, Milicius says, because they have to be rigid toward the obstinate and gentle toward the humble. The sermon concludes with some remarks about poverty and working in the church. This subject we will discuss later more extensively, but for now we can say that Milicius is a clear advocate of poverty for the clergy.

The homily in *Gratiae Dei* speaks from its outset clearly about both preachers and prelates. Both are mentioned in the *prothema*, where they are urged to awaken their sleeping people and turn them into individuals who are eagerly on guard. It states that it is the task of both preachers and prelates to comfort with the Word of God those who mourn. They have to be incessantly awake, keeping others as well as themselves from sleeping, and they must counter evil acts. When discussing the virtues of St. Procopius, who rejected luxury and wealth, Milicius enumerates some tools, which both preachers and prelates need in their work. Firstly, preachers and also prelates should have the light of education and doctrine, the ardor of compassion and material support.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, in the shining lamp there are four qualities that ought to be in the life of a preacher or prelate, related to the vessel, the oil, the flame and the light.<sup>210</sup> Both should be aware of the fragility of the human condition and should be full of the the energy of the conscience. They have to be flames of love and their light has to reveal the sins and injustice of both themselves and their audience.

It should be noticed that Milicius does not mention the prelate in the last three cases (oil, flame and light), but speaks only about the preacher. Obviously, even when he speaks clearly about the responsibilities of all people who work in the church, his first interest is in the preacher. To him, this is the most important and meaningful worker in the church. Prelates have their responsibilities as well but those are not different from the preacher's. Milicius looks at prelates as being — in the best case — preachers and identifies their work with some of the tasks of a preacher. The prelate is mainly a pastor, who guides his flock, comforts the mourning, watches for enemies and exhorts in order to keep sin at bay. A preacher's tasks are, however, more extensive and profound. He is an eschatological worker because he sifts the good from the evil. No such task is given to prelates in Milicius' sermons. In the sermons on St. Procopius' Day about spiritual leadership, the prelate is depicted more or less as a maintenance worker who takes care of the flock and keeps away enemies.

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Alium autem oculum in terram dirigit, ut una cum gallinis victum quirens eas blando tueatur affectu.“ St. Procopius, A, I D 37, fol. 157 ra.

<sup>209</sup> „Lumen eruditionis (..), id est doctrina lucens (..), ardor compassionis (..), subsidium materiale.“ St. Procopius, GD, XII D 1, fol. 51 r.

<sup>210</sup> See p. 176.

There is one other sermon, this time from *Abortivus*, which mentions prelates in conjunction with preachers. It is the sermon on the Twelfth Sunday after Trinitatis and it is full of an awareness of the suffering and misery of the world. This suffering can only end when good is separated from evil. Dividing between good and evil is necessary like in the days of Elijah when the choice was between the Lord and Baal. No place is untouched by evil. Everywhere good and evil are mixed, even among preachers, believers and prelates. “As good prelates are mixed with the bad, so are truly just people mixed with the apparently just and the hypocrites,”<sup>211</sup> Milicius writes. This division in the church and the world has to be executed through preaching. When the true Word of God is preached, the false prophets, the seven false preachers and prelates will be killed or captured with the sword of God’s word.

Not only do prelates belong to the negative grouping of false prophets according to this sermon, but in a way that characterizes Milicius’ ambivalence toward prelates, he also states that they will be the heralds of the end of the world. This positive role of the prelates is not limited here to pastoral care, but they also have an eschatological mission. The seven angels from Apocalypse 8,2 (“Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them”) are preachers and prelates. “The angels are messengers, seven preachers or prelates and seven trumpets are given to them, i.e. the whole of the truth, in order to announce the end of the world and the coming judgment of God.”<sup>212</sup>

It is surprising that in this sermon Milicius entrusts prelates with the same responsibility as a preacher. Yet preaching is to him very much for the decisive moment, that is urging people to immediately choose good and separate themselves from evil. Does the clergy have the same task and is there no difference between a preacher and the clergy? We should not forget that the sermon on the Twelfth Sunday after Trinitatis comes from *Abortivus*, which is the postil Milicius compiled at the beginning of his career as a preacher and which was written in somewhat of a haste. The well-balanced character of the second postil *Gratiae Dei* is not equaled in *Abortivus*. Therefore, we must first ask ourselves what is the aim of this sermon from *Abortivus*. It tells us about the power to divide between good and evil and about the importance of preaching in this process. When Milicius makes some remarks about prelates, he places them always in the context of preaching, which has the power to reveal evil and

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<sup>211</sup> „Sicud ergo commixti sunt prelati boni cum malis, sic et iusti veraces commixti sunt cum iustis apparentibus et ypocritis.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 233 va.

<sup>212</sup> „Angeli sunt nuncii i.e. predicatores seu prelati et 7 tube date sunt eis i.e. universitas veritatis ad nuntiandum finem mundi et iudicium venturum Dei.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 234 rb.



separate it from goodness. This sermon deals in the first place with the turbulent state of the world, which can be changed only through the preaching of preachers and prelates. In other words, in this sermon Milicius is viewing prelates through the act of preaching. Prelates are just a kind of preacher. In this way, the sermon is no more than another confirmation of the primary importance of preaching due to its decisive power to change people.

Also *Gratiae Dei* has some — though more critical — remarks about prelates in relation to the end of the world. This sermon is designated for the Second Sunday in Advent and its theme is the Last Judgment. Not surprisingly this sermon also regards preaching as the instrument for gathering the elect from the four sides of the world. Judgment Day will be preceded by several signs from heaven, as is said in Luke 21 which the sermon is based on. Milicius distinguishes four signs: the sun, moon, stars and earth. They respectively symbolize prelates, the church, the clergy and lay people. The tenor of this message is that sins and oppression in the church and throughout the world indicate the coming end of time.<sup>213</sup> At this point we can learn something about the relationship between prelates and rulers in Milicius' view. Quoting from I Maccabees, Milicius makes some statements that define a prelate's position in the world.

The sun is the prelate who has to be the spring of all warmth and light. As is said in I Mcc. VI (39): "Now when the sun shone upon the shields of gold and brass", i.e. the prelate upon the priests, "and the hills were ablaze with them", i.e. secular rulers who are indeed ablaze when the sun shines and the shields are gold. The moon is the church, the stars are the clerics, the earth are the lay people.<sup>214</sup>

It is clear that to Milicius the significance of the prelate in the world is greater than that of a sovereign. The ruler receives his shine from the prelate and is dependent on him. The first position in the world is occupied by spiritual power, to which secular power is subjected. It is remarkable that Milicius does not speak in general about the church being superior over the world, but specifically about prelates, who are described as being as bright as the sun. The other surprise is that the church is in this case compared to the moon, surely lower in the

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<sup>213</sup>See p. 154.

<sup>214</sup>„Sol enim est prelatus qui debet esse fons totius caloris et luminis. Sicut dicitur primo Mach. VI (39): ‘Refulsit sol in clypeos aureos,’ id est prelatus in presbiteros, ‘et resplenduerunt montes ab eis,’ id est principes seculares, qui revera resplenderent si sol luceret et clipei essent aurei. Luna est ecclesia, stelle sunt clerici, terra sunt layci.“ Dominica II in Advent, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 10 v.

hierarchy of existence than the sun. Is Milicius implying that prelates have a greater importance than the church itself? In our survey of Milicius' view of the church it was made obvious that to him the church hierarchy is indispensable as far as the existence of the church is concerned. In this sermon Milicius seems to stress this idea with a very unexpected example. Prelates are presiding over the church, just as the sun is in a sense "leading" the moon. Without their "light" there would be only chaos and injustice, is the suggestion. That is at least the implication of the lines following this quotation. Milicius speaks about the sign of the blood on the moon (the church), which he identifies with the carnal love of consanguinity. Together with other signs of decay among both prelates and clergy — the sun and the stars — it signifies the total breakdown of all structures and the end of the world.<sup>215</sup> Through this complicated metaphor Milicius confirms the indisputable importance of prelates and clerics to the church. At the same time though, he uses the image to criticize them by identifying the corruption among them as the main reason for the collapse of law and order. More in general, Milicius concentrates on the idea that the failures of the clergy result in them losing their credibility. They destroy the work of preaching if they do not take seriously their work in the church. They tear the net of preaching, which is full of fish, into pieces and do not cooperate with the Holy Spirit. God does not choose such people to be his fishermen of men, because whenever they do something praiseworthy, they ascribe it to their own virtues.<sup>216</sup>

Much of the more concrete criticism Milicius makes of the clergy is connected to the issue of poverty. In the discussion of whether or not living in poverty is valuable and closer to the life of Christ, an issue which in one way characterized the fourteenth century, Milicius has an unambiguous position. The *vita apostolica* is the ideal for all who live a religious life, as it was for the saints. In the sermon on St. Procopius in *Abortivus* which focuses on the act of preaching, Milicius argues in favor of a life of poverty using the circumstances of the early church as his defense: "So was the Holy Church established in early times, that saints adhered to a life of restraint, loving poverty and leaving behind riches."<sup>217</sup> The sermon concludes that the need to possess material goods alienates a person from the "eternal prize" and from Christ's patrimony.

It is not surprising that Milicius links preaching and poverty in the sermon on St. Procopius. In

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<sup>215</sup>See p. 157.

<sup>216</sup>See p. 163.

<sup>217</sup>„Sic ecclesia sancta primitiva tempore plantabatur, ut sancti paupertatem amantes et divicias relinquentes, vite continentiam conservarent.“ St. Procopius, A, I D 37, fol. 157 vb.

the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the church shared many of the same views about apostolic life held by the Franciscan order. The pope even quoted them in his bulls. However, in the first quarter of the fourteenth century the attitude of the church towards poverty changed.<sup>218</sup> The year 1323 was in this regard a turning point. In the bull *Cum inter nonnullos* the pope to some degree distanced himself from the issue of poverty as he did not consider it to be the highest goal of apostolic life. From this point, voluntary poverty became suspect. The official church spoke about spiritual poverty and real, voluntary poverty was no longer a manifestation of sanctity. The general of the Dominicans, Herveaus Natalis, formulated this restraint in the following way: “The poor are called the blessed not because of their poverty being in itself sanctity, but because it predisposes to sanctity in the measure in which the good temporal things constitute obstacles to the love of God.”<sup>219</sup> Property is not regarded as negative, but has simply a tendency to keep one away from God. The letter in which Herveaus wrote this was addressed to Pope John XXII and must have been in support of the bull *Cum inter nonnullos* issued by this pope. No wonder that John XXII was called by some Franciscans and lay people the great whore of Babylon.

To Milicius, property is always negative as far as the church and its hierarchy is concerned. Clerics who do not handle church money well and become rich off the gifts of the poor are like those who changed money in the temple, he says in a sermon from *Gratiae Dei* about this story.<sup>220</sup> The same is the case with bishops who “hand over churches.” They have the power to administer sacraments or execute a holy office for carnal or financial reasons. Their tables will be overturned as Christ did in the temple to the vendors and money-changers.

The most extensive discussion on the question of poverty is in Milicius’ homily on All Saints’ Day from *Gratiae Dei*. The sermon is a kind of commentary on every blessing given by Christ during his Sermon on the Mount. Speaking about the blessing of the poor, Milicius makes a distinction between three kinds of poverty. The first type of poverty is involuntary and is unfortunate because it simply makes life difficult. The second is spiritual and is fed by humility. The third one is voluntary and all *religiosi*, canons and monks should be devoted to it.

Those who take a vow of poverty, so that they have no personal property, can have it in

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<sup>218</sup> André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age*, Roma 1981, p. 457 ff.

<sup>219</sup> Quoted from Vauchez, p. 460.

<sup>220</sup> Feria III post Dom. I in XL, GD, XII D 5. fol. 97 r.

common. Every order is based on this, that whatever they own, belongs to the community, so that nobody can say that something is his and nobody among them be in need, as is written in Acts 4.<sup>221</sup>

If members of the clergy do not obey these rules, they are robbers and thieves, Milicius says. He describes in detail the attitude the religious have to sustain in order to be poor. It is not enough just to declare oneself poor, but poverty must be practised in every way. E.g. when a religious needs a book, he has to ask his superior. Everything which is beyond that which the others have, requires permission from the superior. But also the superior has to be just because his decisions can turn a person into a violator of the ideal of poverty. When a community acquires more property than it needs, it violates poverty. Poverty is meaningless when it is feigned. It becomes hypocrisy and obscures sin. The poor should not be obsessed with wealth; although they are disregarded in the world, they should concentrate on the richness of good, spiritual poverty.

It seems that in this sermon Milicius is giving his community of preachers some concrete rules. The detailed nature of the regulations, for example when he speaks about having books or even a special diet, suggests that these are problems he encountered in his community. In another section of this study, we pointed out the tendency of Milicius to regard preachers as a third entity within the church, apart from the clergy and the laity.<sup>222</sup> But poverty is not only limited to preachers. It is the most important practical characteristic of all people who have some leading position in the church. Violating poverty therefore means violating the sacred life of the church and is an attack on the credibility of the institution.

Clergy and prelates along with preachers bear the responsibility for teaching believers how to live. They have to behave holier than in an average life, as the canonist Hostiensis wrote in his *Summa aurea* of 1255.<sup>223</sup> Hence, it is only one small step from declaring voluntary poverty the ideal for everyone in society. Sometimes Milicius seems to take this step. At one point he speaks about the relativity of all ownership and the importance of giving. The sermon is from *Gratiae Dei*, on the sixth day in Quinquagesima and contains a long elaboration on the theme of giving alms. They have the power to purify, to set free, to give shelter, to bless, to justify

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<sup>221</sup> „Quidam autem si vovent paupertatem, ut nichil habeant proprii in speciali | possunt tamen habere in commune. Et in hoc fundatur omnis religio ut quidquid habent, sit eis commune, ut nemo dicat aliquid suum esse et quod nemo sit inter eos egens, sicut scribitur Actuum quarto.“ Omnes sancti, GD, XII D 5, fol. 141 r-v. See also p. 177.

<sup>222</sup>See p. 178.

and to save. Milicius concludes his homily with an exhortation to be a good merchant. Giving away your possessions is more lucrative than holding them for yourself, is his conclusion. “When you want to be the best merchant, an excellent usurer, give away what you cannot hold to receive what you cannot lose. Give a little and you receive a hundred times more. Give your temporary possessions to gain the eternal inheritance.”<sup>224</sup> To Milicius poverty is a virtue which is definitely a necessity to preachers and clergymen, but its significance transcends the borders of communities bound by a vow only.

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<sup>223</sup>Swanson, o.c., p. 104.

<sup>224</sup>„Si ergo vis esse mercator optimus, fenerator egregius, da quod non potes (in marg. retinere), ut recipias, quod non poteris amittere, da modicum et recipias centuplum. Da temporalem possessionem ut consequaris hereditatem eternam.“ Feria VI in XL, GD, XII D 5, fol. 91 v.

### 3. Sovereign or Tyrant: the Morality of Power

Milicius has concerns not only about the church and its clergy, but also about secular power. This theme is not without ambivalence in Milicius' sermons. He at times speaks about it in an approving way, especially when he discusses the theme more extensively. At the same time, he frequently uses the word "tyrants" to address those who commit wrong-doings themselves or allow evil to be committed by others. There seems to be a parallel with the theme of the clergy: Milicius confirms the significance of the clergy in the church structure, but at the same time sharply criticizes the practical lifestyle of members of the clergy.

We find his approval of secular power expressed most directly in the two sermons on St. Wenceslaus, in which he formulates the principles of a good ruler. The sermons will be discussed in this study's section on saints,<sup>225</sup> but we will briefly describe some of Milicius' ideas related specifically to power, which we meet in those sermons. The sermon presents Wenceslaus as a king driven by a prophetic spirit. He was a good ruler because he "was working in the Word of God," comments the protheme of the sermon. Good rulers listen to God's word and propagate it during their rule. In this way, they are like preachers who meditate on the Law of God and spread the gospel of God's mercy.<sup>226</sup>

Milicius goes on to say that God gives some people the dignity of power, however, as an instrument with which to do good works and to serve others. This was the case of St. Wenceslaus who was appointed by God and subjected himself to the Lord through his obedience. This was reflected in his life: he was humble, poor, and refusing the world.<sup>227</sup> The good ruler is at the same time also a "ruler of the church or the Christian people,"<sup>228</sup> bringing good things to his subjects. He receives all his virtues from God and returns them to him by ruling his people well. Milicius compares the good ruler to Solomon, because he was an obedient king, unlike Saul. The former grew in perfection, whereas the latter lost himself in the arrogance of his power. The good ruler has God at his side when realizing his politics. Again St. Wenceslaus is the example of the pious king who dedicates himself to God. He fasted, restrained himself from vengeance, and as a king he frequently took part in silent vigils, staying awake to meditate all through the night. St. Wenceslaus gave to the poor from

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<sup>225</sup>See p. 182.

<sup>226</sup>See p. p. 168 and 184.

<sup>227</sup>See p. 185.

<sup>228</sup>See p. 186.

his own property whenever some evil sovereigns confiscated their scant possessions.<sup>229</sup>

However, good rulers like Wenceslaus have many enemies. Wenceslaus led a holy life like Abel, who was killed by his brother Cain when God accepted the pious brother's sacrifice. In the same way, Wenceslaus — the purest sovereign of the holy church — was perfidiously killed by his brother Boleslaus.<sup>230</sup>

The Wenceslaus homily in *Gratiae Dei* also paints an image of the good ruler, though the homily is more generally about his piety. The same virtues are mentioned as in *Abortivus*, but they are not related so specifically to rulers, but to everyone in general. Wenceslaus cared for the poor, giving them his clothes, working with his own hands to prepare the wine for the altar etc. The sermon stresses the relative value of temporal goods and power compared to eternal life, which is the reward for a holy life. Milicius' main remark about rulers is made rather reluctantly. After describing some of Wenceslaus' virtues, he concludes: "He carried his cross in the spiritual sense because he was humble in glory, devoid of any vain glory, which is among sovereigns very rare."<sup>231</sup> Obviously, Milicius does not have high expectations for the average ruler of his day, since the good ones are rather rare. In praising Wenceslaus he is at the same time sharply criticizing those who are in power.

The good ruler in the eyes of Milicius is humble, ascetic and pious. He has certain prophetic and sacerdotal characteristics and is certainly not only the ruler of the country, but of Christendom. In his power he is a servant to the needy and the poor. Reigning over his subjects who are obedient to him, he is himself subject and obedient to God. It is not their power or glory that Milicius is referring to when he speaks about kings, but their obedience and care. The bad ruler, on the other hand, is the opposite according to Milicius. Like the brother of Wenceslaus, the bad sovereign is only hungry for power and temporal possessions and in being thus, he becomes a servant of Satan. Boleslaus was only interested in obtaining power, not as an instrument for doing good but as a way to gain temporal glory through use of weaponry and horses. His reign turned out to be nothing other than robbery and oppression. Milicius concludes that such evil rulers should be called tyrants.

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<sup>229</sup> „Carnem terens inedia sive fame procul existens a viciis et sub veste regia utendo silitiis, sacra frequentans limina, nocte surgens media, cruentans nudis pedibus vestigia, in hyeme nunc lingua egenis defert, nunc matutinis interest, nunc autem pauperes a principibus spoliatur, quibus beatus Wenseslaus propria condonabat.“ St. Wenceslaus, A, I D 37, fol. 214 ra-rb. Milicius is paraphrasing a strophe from the song *Wenceslaus, dux gracie*, which was frequently used in the liturgy on St. Wencelaus' Day: "Sacra frequentat limina, nocte surgens media, callis ferens gravamina, cruentat vestigia." See Orel, p. 441 or p. 391, 400, 434 ff.

<sup>230</sup> See p. 186.

<sup>231</sup> „Etiam in mente crucem portabat quia humilis in gloria fuit, expers inanis glorie, quod est intra principes valde rarum.“ St. Wenceslaus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 122 r.

Tyrants are a frequent theme in the sermons of Milicius. The evil ruler always finds himself in company with other terrible sinners like the hypocrites and the proud. He is dominated by seven evil spirits, Milicius says in his sermon on the Twelfth Sunday after Trinitatis from *Abortivus*. Those spirits are similar to those Christ identifies in Mt. 12,43-44 („When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then he says: ‘I will return to the house from which I came’. And he finds the house empty, swept clean.“). “What else can I say about the condemned and what else about the tyrants of the modern times than that they are marked by the seven spirits.”<sup>232</sup> The seven spirits are here the evil counterparts to the seven angels or preachers to whom are given the seven trumpets for announcing the end of time and the Last Judgment.

In the sermon on St. Vitus’ Day from the same postil, Milicius puts tyrants again in the contraposition, this time opposite holy martyrs, who suffer all kinds of torture and pain. This is the world dominated by “evil spirits.” Those “spirits, who possess hypocrites, tyrants and heretics opposed to the truth, are multiplied in them, seeing the end of the world or the defeat of the army of the world.”<sup>233</sup>

In the homily on the Third Sunday in Lent, Milicius gives a small list of weapons that the devil uses to divide the church and to rule the world.

(Mg. Sinners are the army of the devil.) Is it not that the luxurious are his breastplate (..), the proud are his helmet and they are pushed back as much as possible from the front by the lance of the Word of the Lord (..), those who makes things ridiculous are his bow (..), hypocrites are his shield (..), and tyrants are his sword?<sup>234</sup>

The faithful have to separate themselves from these evil tyrants. Milicius enumerates a long list of the Lord’s enemies in the St. Vitus homily in *Gratiae Dei*. The church has to remain clean of those who are self-indulgent, avaricious, full of errors and greed, just as St. Vitus separated himself from such sinners. Milicius comments that this is a good separation, because it divides us from those who are the friends of the secular rather than of the eternal.

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<sup>232</sup> „Quid ergo dicam de reprobis, quid de tyrannis moderni temporis nisi quod significati sint per septem spiritus.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 233 vb.

<sup>233</sup> „Ita maligni spiritus qui possident tyrannos ypocritas et hereticos adversarios veritatis in eis multiplicati sunt, videns finem mundi sive stragem exercitus mundialis.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 142 ra.

<sup>234</sup> „(Mg. Peccatores sunt arma dyaboli.) Nonne lorica eius sunt luxuriosi (..) galea eius sunt superbi, qui maxime retunduntur hasta verbi Domini in fronte (..), arcus eius sunt detractores (..), scutum eius sunt ypocrite (..), gladius eius sunt tyranni?“ Dominica III in XL, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 119 v.



He points out all the great of the world and tyrants, declaring them condemned.<sup>235</sup> This separation is a special instruction for preachers, who must as powerless men in the worldly sense bind mighty tyrants, just as the angels bound demons. Preachers have the sword of the Word of God with which they can divide sinners from Satan,<sup>236</sup> Milicius says in a sermon on the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, which is especially dedicated to the work of preachers. Tyrants can be very powerful, but the faithful will never succumb to them. *Possunt ergo tyranni adversus bonos sedere sed prevalere non possunt*<sup>237</sup> — “They can beleaguer the good, but they cannot prevail”, is how the sermon on St. Wenceslaus from *Abortivus* concludes. The same message is stated more extensively in the homily on St. Ludmilla — another Bohemian saint, who was oppressed by her mother in law Drahomira:

Behold how the New Gospel and the Old Testament are fulfilled in this, because evil tyrants and proud women are sent like Drahomira to the oven of fire, which the officers or torturers of blessed Ludmilla indicate, because they have died several deaths.<sup>238</sup>

This, of course, is in contrast to St. Ludmilla who was lifted up to the glory of the Kingdom of God. Tyrants will certainly be defeated and deprived of their power. This is, however, the vision of the *eschaton* when Christ will come to triumph over evil and Satan. In other words, these illustrations make real the judgment of God, in which tyrants and their companions will have no chance of salvation.

In general, we can say that Milicius approves of power that is executed in the way God meant it to be. Those in power first and foremost must care for the poor. When this is the case, as during the reign of the good ruler St. Wenceslaus, Milicius does not hesitate to believe that this power is given by God. His approval of power is conditional however on the way it is used. Whenever a sovereign uses his power to gain profit and property for himself, he is nothing more than a tyrant and oppressor. Taken in and of itself this conditional endorsement of those in power is not original; however, Milicius' purpose is distinct in that he uses this

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<sup>235</sup> „Bona ergo est ista separatio, dum ab amicis mundialibus separamur. Unde si vides superbos separa te ab eis. Noli dicere: Numquid omnis superbi dampnabuntur? Sed vide quia omnes gigantes mundi et tyranni, Pharao, Nero et alii perditii sunt.“ St. Vitus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 31 r.

<sup>236</sup> „Ut infirmi predicatorum potentes tyrannos alligent, sicut angeli demones ligaverunt et quia predicatorum gladio verbi Dei peccatores ab ipso dividunt et scindunt.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 155 ra.

<sup>237</sup> St. Wenceslaus, A, D 37, fol. 214 vb.

<sup>238</sup> „Ecce quomodo ewangelium novum et vetus testamentum in hoc impletum est, quia mali tyranni et superbe mulieres ut Drahomirz missi sunt in caminum ignis, quod significant lictores sive tortores beate Ludmille, quia diversis mortibus sunt occisi.“ St. Ludmilla, GD, XII D 1, fol. 118 r.

conditionality to emphasize that most rulers are worthy of our distrust. Milicius was often openly critical of power probably because he saw the practical result of its use. He concluded that many sovereigns do not care enough about the poor and are not humble nor obedient to God. The attitude of St. Wenceslaus is rare among rulers.

Another tendency in Milicius' sermons confirms this distrust of rulers. Only in the sermons on St. Wenceslaus' Day does Milicius speak in a positive way about power — which means, however, at the same time that he is limiting and defining “good power.” In all other instances, his remarks about those in power always have a negative tone. Milicius is familiar with the misuse of power, as exemplified in the oppression of the saints and torturers of the martyrs. Tyrants are the allies of Satan, who is trying to conquer the world and exterminate the good.

In this sense, we can consider the sermons on Wenceslaus as a critical review of the practice of power. Realizing this, it is clear that the message of these sermons is above all meant for the contemporary rulers of Milicius' time, to whom he presents St. Wenceslaus as a role model. Milicius tries to persuade the powerful to execute their office according to the Law of God and sharply criticizes the powerful who reject these norms. More radically, Milicius even rejects all power that does not have the character of St. Wenceslaus' reign, claiming it comes from Satan and that the possessors of such power will certainly be sent to hell.

Finally, we notice that this image of power has a profoundly human character. Its primary aim is to make the life of the poor more human, to care for the needs of those who are dependent. Power is a way of spreading humanity. Milicius' view is again moral, as it is a manifestation of his will to change and improve the world. However, this change does not signify a revolution from the existing structures, but rather a return to the “good old world” characterized by obedience and piety.

#### 4. Sin: The Spiritual Battle and Eschatological Implications

The complex issue of sin, its form and the struggle with it is a subject that is present everywhere in the sermons of Milicius of Chremsir. Our approach, which is to select certain themes from these sermons and to elaborate and analyze them, has a drawback when it comes to the issue of sin. While it is easy to make a compilation of quotations from the sermons about other topics relevant to our study, e.g. preachers, prelates or the church, this is not so much the case with the theme of sin and the end of time. This issue is much larger, it is like a thread throughout the sermons and is in fact the overall subject of the sermons. It is sin against which preachers and others have to fight. Sin originates from Satan and hell and its nature implies an end of time. Criticism of clerics is closely connected to a description of the nature of sin. The works of the great saints were all characterized by a fight with Satan and his allies. The mission of the church and its head, the pope, is to eradicate sin and evil. Sermons are the preacher's weapon against sin. Hence, the battle with sin inspires the sermon making it impossible to distinguish it from other themes appearing in the sermons.

With this in mind, however, we will elaborate on the issue of sin to give an idea of what Milicius thought about its nature and appearance. The main reason for this is that the theme is too important to his thinking to only link it to the preachers or clergy. In a certain sense, we can say that sin is the backdrop for all of Milicius' ideas about the church and the world. His fight against sin gets its identity and concreteness from the works of those who labor in these two realms. Sin is a most important subject to Milicius because his main aim is to search for ways how to combat it.

Sin is an aspect of our sad, daily reality because we are constantly tempted by it. We must therefore be open to correcting our ways, to curing ourselves from the "daily fever, because we sin incessantly,"<sup>239</sup> as Milicius says in the sermon on Dominica XII after Trinitatis from *Abortivus*. He seems to be referring to Holy Communion as an instrument against sin, which otherwise rules us completely.

Milicius refers to these daily sins as ties, and he divides them into two categories. There are „the loins of the mind (mg. of affection), and of course of the intellect from which come

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<sup>239</sup> „Correctionem ergo accipiamus et medicamen contra febrem cotidianam dum incessanter peccamus. Contra febrem interpolatam quando intercise peccamus, nunc bonum nunc malum faciendo. Contra tercianam quando fidem et spem habendo, contra caritatem peccamus. Contra quartanam quando a quattuor cardinabilis virtutibus deviamus ut sic sanati ad eternam salutem feliciter veniamus.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 235 va.

opinions and desires. (...) Likewise there are the loins of the flesh, the seat of reproduction which give birth to the carnal longings.<sup>240</sup>

According to Milicius, knowledge is suspect because it can easily distract one from the faith. Those who teach possess a power which can be misused to lead students to the devil instead of to a better understanding of God and the faith. In an *Abortivus* sermon on the Fifth Sunday after Trinitatis, Milicius describes the knowledge of wise and learned people as “the head of Leviathan,” or the dragon from the underworld. God chooses the unlearned to be fishermen of people, he says.<sup>241</sup>

In his sermon on All Saints’ Day from *Abortivus*, a whole list of those people who live in sin and are Lucifer’s associates is mentioned. Not only evil teachers belong in this category, but also judges and sovereigns.

But we should shudder at the thought that heavenly and earthly things are associated with the underworld. There are many who announce small evil things to their fellow creatures. Others teach big evil things to others. Others hinder the good by force. Others are ruling or reigning in a evil way. Others are judging unjustly. Others are full of the knowledge of perfidy and betrayal. Others are full of the fire of luxury and carnal love.<sup>242</sup>

According to Milicius, the angels will throw such people into hell together with Lucifer. Sin associates a person with the devil, making him a part of the evil and malicious world. Sin is a sign that someone is overwhelmed by evil. Therefore, sin in itself is a mark of the end of time. Sin makes visible the eschatological world, the struggle between good and evil — evil being characterized by apocalyptic names such as Lucifer or Leviathan.

The devil has many methods of winning a person over to his side. *Gratiae Dei* contains a sermon about the temptation of Christ in the desert, which is in many ways a sermon about the struggle against evil in the world. In his comment on Mt. 4,6a (“If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down”), Milicius mentions the devil’s ability to deceive. “Behold the slyness

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<sup>240</sup> „Sunt enim lumbi mentis (mg. affectus), scilicet et intellectus, ex quibus cogitationes et desideria. (...) Item sunt lumbi carnis ubi est sedes generationis de quibus oriuntur carnales concupiscentie.“ St. Procopius, GD, XII D 1, fol. 50 v.

<sup>241</sup> See p. 167.

<sup>242</sup> „Sed horrendum est quod celestia et terrena infernalibus sociantur. Sunt enim multi qui mala parva proximis nuntiant. Alii magna mala alios docent. Alii potenter bonos inpediunt. Alii male principantur seu dominantur.

of the devil because he knows that many who are strong at overcoming bigger sins such as greed and lust, but do, in fact, in a subtle manner strive for the fame of honour derived from works of holiness especially in a holy place.”<sup>243</sup> He points out that the devil may be astute, however, Christ is able to defeat the false wisdom of the devil with the real light of the Scriptures.

In a sermon (*Feria quinta in L*) based on another part of Matthew (8,5-13) which tells the story of a Roman centurion requesting Christ to heal his servant, Milicius explains why the centurion is said to be “unworthy.” Being a pagan officer, he has many things in his house which will offend Christ. He has to get rid of everything that prevents him from inviting Christ into his house, which symbolizes the house of his heart. Milicius claims it is necessary to throw all idols and female images and forms out of our (men’s) hearts, as well as knowledge and adulterous love. Then we can invite in the chaste groom Christ. This according to Milicius is real humility and does not offend the eye of the Lord.<sup>244</sup>

Such idols and images are the work of men, according to the sermon on the Third Sunday of Advent, referring to unholy things that can draw a person away from Christ. Those who will not take offense at Christ’s demands are blessed. But there are also evil people who dress up women in order to distract others from the peace of Christ. Obviously, Milicius is referring to prostitution and especially to those people who “sell” women. He says they are nothing but demons because they lead others away from God’s mercy to luxury and sin: “So are evil men or demons who decorate women and send them or place them where they deceive men, leading them into luxury and sinning against God’s mercy.” Milicius urges his audience to strive for the peace of Christ and stop sinning until the time when the Lord will come to fight against evil with the sword of the Word. “So on Judgment Day a double-edged sword will come out of the mouth of Christ, killing the soul and body of the damned. Woe to the man through whom scandal comes.”<sup>245</sup> It is not the outer ornamentation which designates the bride

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Alii iniuste iudicant. Alii pleni sunt scientia perfidie et fallaciarum. Alii pleni igne luxurie et carnalis amoris.“  
Omnes sancti, A, I D 37, fol. 238 va.

<sup>243</sup> „Ecce astutia dyaboli, quia scit multos fortes ad vincendum grossiora peccata videlicet gulam et luxuriam, sed subtiliter honoris gloriam appetere de operibus sanctitatis precipue in loco sancto.“ Dominica I in XL, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 93 r.

<sup>244</sup> „Forte habebat ydola in domo et ideo timebat oculos Christi offendere. Sic et tu stude prius omnia ydola et mulierum ymagines et formas et omnium peccatoris cogitationes et adulterinos amores de domo cordis eicere, dum castum spondum invitas. Ne offendatur in te oculus divine maiestatis. Intendite carissimi, quanta est virtus humilitas.“ *Feria quinta in L*, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 87 r.

<sup>245</sup> „Sic sunt maligni homines vel demones, qui mulieres ornant et mittunt vel statuunt ad decipiendos homines, ad luxuriam trahentes et super misericordiam Dei peccantes. Et ut pacem Christi recipiant sperantes, nunquam tantum peccare cessantes, donec veniat Dominus, qui in prefato capitulo talibus minatur, dicens: Veniam et pugnabo cum illis gladio oris mei. Dum in die iudicii exhibit de ore Christi gladius bis acutus. Ite videlicet

of Christ, but an inner decoration, such as in John the Baptist's heart. The sermon on this Sunday presents St. John as an example of virtue, whom the true follower of Christ should imitate. John the Baptist was a virgin, without a spot or wrinkle (Eph.5,27). John was adorned on the inside, ready to receive his groom at his coming — a condition which all other prophets met as well.<sup>246</sup>

In Milicius' postils, sermons about saints often focus on the particular virtues that the saint represents. The saint then serves as a shining example of the rejection of sin and of fierce opposition to the devil. The sermon on St. Nicholas' Day from *Gratiae Dei* gives an excellent example of this approach. The homily is based on Lc. 12,35 ("Let your loins be girded and your lamps be burning"). In the protheme — which is exceptionally not about preachers — Milicius contrasts lightness to darkness, the later being the dwelling place of evil. Light enables the soul to see the Lord. "The man whose heart is with the Lord, his eyes are full of light and his spiritual mind is pure."<sup>247</sup> The homily refers to the blessed of Mt. 5,8 who are pure of heart and will see God. The opposite is the fate of the one who *graves oculos habet*, "has heavy eyes", because he can see only in dark places. Such people are unable to see anything in sunlight, as they are only used to the light of a candle. Then, Milicius explains his metaphor in moralistic terms:

Thus a man of the world who has his eye i.e. his mind dirty and confused by earthly desires, when you place him in worldly matters, he is wise and smart. But when you turn him to spiritual matters, his eye becomes obscure to him because his mind is corrupt with earthly desires. He does not sense the good of justice. He does not sense it, I say. I say he knows it very well, he knows it but does not sense the good of justice, because he does not take delight in Him. He has his heart preoccupied with earthly sorrows.<sup>248</sup>

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maledicti animam et corpus occidens. Ve ergo homini per quem scandalum venit." Dominica III in Advent, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 15 r.

<sup>246</sup> „Cum ergo Johannes virginem non habentem maculam neque rugam Christo venerit adaptare recte intus, vestiri non debuit, sed ab intra decorari ad suscipiendum sponsum in eius adventu, quem ipse cercius omnibus aliis prophetis demonstravit." Dominica III in Advent, GD XIV D 5, fol. 16 r.

<sup>247</sup> „Qui ergo cor habet ad Dominum, illius oculus lucidus est, id est illius mens spiritualis munda est." Dominica II in Advent, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 12 r.

<sup>248</sup> „Sic et homo mundialis qui oculum i.e. mentem terrenis desideriis sordidam habet et turbulentam, si ponas eum in rebus mundialibus, sapit et astutus est. Si autem trahis eum ad res spirituales, obtenebrescit, quia mens illius corrupta terrenis desideriis. Iustitie bonum non sentit, non sentit dico, non (in marg.: dico) ignorat, scit enim sed non sentit bonum iustitie, quia nec delectatur in eo. Preoccupatum enim habet cor circa occupationem terrenam." Dominica II in Advent, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 12 r.

Saint Nicholas is presented as an example of a man who had the Word of God to light his path. He was the example of humility, a man who took care of everyone and fled the comfort of women. Through speech, he fought his battle against sin and exhorted the sinful and liberated those endangered by sin.<sup>249</sup> Saints offer the perfect contrast to men of the world, who are unable to orient themselves in spiritual matters.

It is necessary to dissociate oneself from this group of sinners because they are evil. Another saint, Vitus, is an example of the necessity to remain separated from evil. Milicius' homily on him in *Gratiae Dei* is full of references to battles and wars against the devil and his forces. Preachers especially are said to have a mission to dissolve the false contentment the devil offers. Milicius mentions the seven mortal sins which the faithful have to avoid.<sup>250</sup>

Milicius does not simply threaten and condemn "the evil ones." In the sermon on Ash Wednesday from *Gratiae Dei* which we have already mentioned, he speaks about forgiveness and purification as ways of becoming acceptable to the Lord. In this homily, he recommends saying the following prayer if one wants to invite Christ into his heart. The prayer gives a strong impression of Milicius' humble piety:

Lord, I am a sinner and you are righteous. I am impure and you are so pure that even the stars are not pure in your sight. You are the son of a virgin. And I am lascivious, or a prostitute or an adulterer or a sodomite, full of loathsomeness. How such an odoriferous chastity enters under the roof of such an evil-smelling body? You, Lord, were killed for me and I am a murderer, killing by tongue, scoffing or conspiring by will, or killing by sword. Your mansion is heaven, though you come into my heart which is an awful dunghill. As light is to darkness, so is my impurity to your chastity. Who can, therefore, make something which is conceived by seed pure from impurity but you, who alone are pure. Yours is pure purity. Let my heart also repel my loathsomeness of scent and sanctify the dwelling of my heart for you.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> „Unde et in vigilia cum iret ad matutinum, electus est in episcopum humilitatem et morum gravitatem, in omnibus sectabatur, mulierum consortia fugiebat, humilis erat, in omnes suscipiendo, efficax in loquendo, alacer in exhortando, pia gestans, viscera peccatores et pauperes a fame anime et corporis liberando, et trium innocentium vitam tendentium colla, subiugulo de tyrannorum manibus liberando et in tempestate maris nautis subveniundo.“ Dominica III in Advent, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 13 v.

<sup>250</sup> St. Vitus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 31 r - 31v. See also p. 194.

<sup>251</sup> „Domine, peccator sum, et tu iustus. Immundus sum, et tu tam mundus, ut etiam astra non sunt, munda in conspectu tuo. Tu filius virginis, et ego luxuriosus aut meretrix, aut adulterans, aut sodomita, plenus fetore. Et quomodo tam odorifera castitas tua intrabit sub tectum tam fetentis corporis mei? Tu, Domine, occisus es pro me et ego homicida sum, aut ligwa occidendo detractio, aut voluntate consentiendo, aut gladio percutiendo. Mansio tua celum est et quomodo venies in cor meum, quod turpius est sterquilino. Que conventio lucis ad

Milicius was obviously familiar with human fragility and weakness, which he may understand as belonging to our human condition; however, he is not prepared to accept it as unavoidable. He believed that with the help of the Lord a person can cleanse his heart of sin, that we must always strive for this aim, because he who continues sinning is an ally of the devil. Milicius believed that the division between good and evil existed in everyone, and therefore we must all fight against the evil in ourselves. Evil in Milicius' eyes is not primarily something that exists independently in the world or cosmos. The devil, Satan or Leviathan are just some of the names which he uses to define evil, but the concrete image or presence of evil is always personal — people are doing evil; people are carrying evil in their hearts. Milicius did not write about an external evil force that is outside people's hearts but gives evil a name and a concrete, human face.

It is important to note this in order to understand Milicius' eschatology. Evil and sin represent the end of time in the sense that they ban us from the heavenly kingdom which is eternal. A battle has to be fought against sin and evil according to Milicius who uses words from an apocalyptic background. He speaks about the *bellum spirituale* or "spiritual war" and the *pugna* or "battle" against the devil. In a truly apocalyptic context, those words refer to the final battle between good and evil before the heavenly kingdom can come. Milicius never speaks about a final battle as a cosmic event involving angels and demons. His spiritual battle is a personal one, to be fought by every faithful individual within himself. We could, therefore, characterize Milicius' eschatology as a personal one. The battle of tearing oneself away from sin is something every believer has to engage in during his lifetime, and this only has an apocalyptic character insofar as it represents the coming of the Kingdom of God into one's own life. Milicius' eschatology is an everyday event, immanent in the life of every individual.

The sermon that most openly uses the term *bellum* or *bellum spirituale* in the context of sin is the one on St. Vitus' Day from Abortivus. The prothema addresses preachers who have the *gladium acutum* or "sharp sword" with which to announce and explain the truth. Preaching is presented in terms of war, as something that can triumph over both secular and spiritual matters (*mundalia et spiritualia*). The words in Mt. 10,38 are relevant to preachers who

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tenebras, que comparatio mee inmunditie ad tuam castitatem. Quis ergo pottest facere mundum de immundo conceptum semine nisi tu, qui solus es mundus. Tua ergo munditia munda, cor meum et odoris fetorem meum repelle et sanctifica tibi habitaculum cordis mei." Feria quinta in L, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 87 v.



neglect this mission: “He who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”

„Let us take up in the spiritual war the banner of the cross and clean off the mud of pleasure.

Let us take it up in his name, work and preach before kings and sovereigns and sons of men.“<sup>252</sup>

The sermon makes a distinction between three kinds of battles: those of the flesh, of the world and finally, of the devil. In a battle against the flesh, one faces three enemies — the devil, tyrants and seductive women. This was St. Vitus’ battle. Demons attacked him and tyrants tortured him, then finally, when time came to resist the lasciviousness of women, he received help from seven angels as this temptation was too big for him to fight alone.<sup>253</sup> In a battle against the world on the other hand, the enemy is hypocritical tyrants and heretics obsessed by a malign spirit. Martyrs are often the victims of such evil powers. In the third battle against the devil, victory can be achieved when a believer has four spiritual weapons — “magnanimity to attack (..), prudence to advance (..), constancy to maintain his position (..), courage to gain the victory.”<sup>254</sup>

In the second part of the sermon, the inner reason for the spiritual battle is explained. Eternal life can only be gained through a test of temptation, Milicius writes.<sup>255</sup> Every believer must experience such battles and knows four reasons why to subject himself to it — firstly to fight for the faith; secondly for salvation or the spread of *pax hominibus* so that the unjust will not prevail over the just; thirdly to slay the pride of men; and finally, to exercise justice.<sup>256</sup> Again, a saint is presented in the sermon as an example of this effort to fight evil. St. Vitus even had to oppose his own father, which fulfilled Christ’s warning in Mt. 10,35 that he came to bring division within families. This is also the experience of the church, which suffers with those who perish and rejoices with those who gain peace when it is in combat with people from outside or inside its institution. *Pax* is reached through battles, such as those which God is engaged in, Milicius concludes.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> „Portemus in bello spirituali crucis vexillum et delicias lutum putemus. Portemus inquam nomine eius, opere et sermone coram regibus et principibus et filiis hominum.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 141 va.

<sup>253</sup> „Cum enim a demonibus infestatur et a tyrannorum punitur tortoribus, tacetur de angelis, quomodo autem de mulierum lasciviis temptabatur tunc ei solempne VII angelorum adiutorium destinatur.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 141 vb.

<sup>254</sup> „Magnanimitas in aggreduendo (..), prudentia in progrediendo (..), constantia in susteniendo (..), fortitudo in expugnando.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 142 ra.

<sup>255</sup> See p. 193.

<sup>256</sup> „Quattuor enim cause sunt propter quas bellum suscipitur: (..) propter fidem (..), propter salutem (..), ut pax hominibus procuretur, ne iniuriosi iustioribus dominantur (..), ut superbia hominum prosternatur (..), ut iusti exerceantur.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 142 ra.

<sup>257</sup> See p. 193.

The spiritual battle also brings personal change. A person who struggles has to learn patience through suffering. He is purified in battle as his will is trained for the sake of peace.<sup>258</sup> This peace, which will fill the mind and soul of the faithful, can be reached through God's spirit. It is the peace of paradise "where the flesh does not strive against the spirit nor the spirit against the soul." This battle can only be won if one perseveres; this perseverance leads apostles, martyrs and other believers to victory, in other words to the crown of the heavenly kingdom. *Gratiae Dei* contains a homily that expresses Milicius' opinion about the spiritual battle using the same vocabulary. The homily on the First Sunday in Lent is based on the story of Christ being "led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Mt. 4,1). These temptations are linked to the experiences of believers, who have to fight against evil and sin. Again the preacher is told to hold the sword of the Word when going into this battle. Also, the devil is said to have several means of deceiving people, which we mentioned earlier in this analysis. At the end of the sermon, Milicius makes some conclusions about the character and meaning of temptation in everyday life. Christ has gained victory over the devil all by himself. As is written in Mt. 4,11, the devil then left him and angels came to minister to him. All glory therefore belongs to the Lord.

Milicius concludes this homily with some remarks about the inner connection between the suffering and victory of Christ and believers. Christ suffered for the faithful and was victorious on their behalf, he remarks. That is the reason why we should rally around his banner and be prepared to fight the same battle he fought. The spiritual battle does not just involve the one who is struggling but also Christ who is the leader of the faithful. The believer is not alone in his battle against evil, according to Milicius, because he receives help from Christ who suffered in the same way as his follower: „Thus Christ, tempted on our behalf, achieves victory for us and receives the crown. Let us stand under his banner in this sacred time, so that he may fight for us, crowning us in the eternity.“<sup>259</sup>

## Eschatology

The presence of evil and sin in the world is to Milicius a sign of the transitoriness of time.

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<sup>258</sup> „Bellum ergo sanctorum est ut sint pacifici et proprias iniurias sufferant pacienter et se prius et suos motus supprimant, ut voluntas semper sit ad pacem, ad bellum non nisi necessitas magna compellat.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 142 va.

<sup>259</sup> „Ergo Christus pro nobis temptatus, nobis vicit et coronam obtinuit. Stemus sub eius vexillo in hoc sacro tempore ut ipse pro nobis pugnans, nos coronet in secula seculorum.“ Dominica I in XL, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 94 r.

Evil is in many ways a kind of reference to the end of time when there will be no more evil. In Milicius' opinion, the presence of evil forces everyone to decide where he wants to belong — on the side of God or on the side of evil. It is the pressing nature of this decision which gives Milicius' sermons an eschatological flavor. In the analysis of his thinking about preaching and preachers, we will see the special position and mission the preacher has during this time of deciding where to belong. The preacher must make a distinction between good and evil and has to gather the followers of good for Judgment Day. Eschatology colors a preacher's activities because the end of time is immanent in his preaching. A sermon is nothing less than a presentation and representation of Judgment Day, which urges a person to make up his mind. Sermonizing has to reveal the difference between good and evil, whereas the distinction is often vague. Therefore, we term Milicius' eschatological ideas as immanent eschatology. In this section, we will concentrate on this eschatology and the expectation of the end of time as presented in the sermons of the two postils, without deducing their character from other issues in Milicius' writings.

The sermon on the Twelfth Sunday after Trinitatis from Abortivus is full of eschatological allusions. The church is compared to Israel in the time of the prophet Elijah who was competing with the priests of the god Baal on Mount Carmel. Elijah, the prophet of the eschatological time, pressed the people of Israel to make a choice between Baal and the Lord. The church and its members have to make the same choice and preachers have the same role as Elijah.

The decisive character of time is made evident by several signs, all originating from the devil. We read about tyrants, false prophets, i.e. false preachers, prelates and enemies of the church. It is the time of the seventh misery, *tribulatio*, or, elsewhere, the seventh generation which is also the final one. Christ will soon come to liberate his church from this suffering.

„Everywhere in this seventh misery of the end of the world, the Son the Lord will free his bride,”<sup>260</sup> Milicius wrote. And just a few sentences later, he makes this notion clearer and more concrete:

Thus, now the church is being pushed through the seventh and last generation in the peace of Christ, carrying justice, walking with God like Enoch and being zealous for the

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<sup>260</sup> „Utique in hac septima tribulatione consumationis mundi suam sponsam Dominus similiter liberabit.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 234 va.

law of the Lord like Elijah, because the last hour is here and it is the end of the ages.<sup>261</sup>

Milicius did not hesitate to link two eschatological figures to the sufferings of the church.

Both Enoch and Elijah are supposed to appear at the end of time and announce the coming of the Eternal Kingdom.

Milicius seems to expect the end of time to arrive soon. In these sermons, he was, however, reluctant to set an exact time for the end as he later did in the *Libellus de Antichristo*.

Nevertheless, the sermon on the Tenth Sunday after Trinitatis gives a certain idea of time and its division. A contrast between expectation on one hand and our lack of preparation for the Judgment Day on the other characterizes the sermon. In its protheme, the sermon on Lc. 19,43 (“Your enemies will surround you”) again points to the power of preaching as a means of disassociating oneself from heresy and abolishing it. Eschatological images like the spiritual battle between Jerusalem and Babylon are mentioned in extensive quotations from St. Bernard. The text also presents St. Ambrose’s division of time.<sup>262</sup> There are four eras in this division, the first being from the beginning of the world till the deluge called *tempus prudencie*, “the time of prudence.” The second era, the *tempus temperantie*, “the time of restraint,” spans from the deluge till Moses. The third era between the lifetimes of Moses and Christ is named *tempus fortitudinis*, “the time of courage” when King David, King Solomon and the prophets did not despair. The fourth and last era is the *tempus iusticie* or “the time of justice” which began with the coming of Christ and will end with the Judgment Day.

This division is more or less identical to that made in the homily on St. Nicolas in *Gratie Dei*.<sup>263</sup> Here we find a threefold division of time based on Lc. 12,37-38. This text speaks about three vigils during which servants wait for their masters to return. Milicius understood these vigils as three eras in time. The first one he called the *vigilia legis naturalis*, “the watch of the natural law,” which ends with the coming of the law of Moses. Then the second period begins, the *vigilia legis Moysayca*. The third vigil is that of the gospel, the *vigilia legis ewangelica*, which obviously begins with the coming of Christ. Unlike the division described in *Abortivus*, the postil *Gratie Dei* leaves out the Flood as an extra point of division. However, *Gratie Dei* adds another qualification to the division because it speaks about the

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<sup>261</sup> „Ita nunc ecclesia septima et ultima generatione rapiatur in pace Christi, tenens iustitiam, ambulans cum Deo sicut Enoch et zelans pro lege Domini ut Helias, quia hora novissima est et consumatio seculi.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 234 vb.

<sup>262</sup> Dominica X p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 179 vb.

<sup>263</sup> St. Nicolaus, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 12 r - 13 v.

eras of boyhood, youth and old age.<sup>264</sup>

Both of these divisions are by no means apocalyptic in nature. They are rather a division of time that is common in Christian theology because they are based on the structure of the Bible and the eras in it. This division originated in the *Letter to the Hebrews* and some writings of St. Paul, which make a distinction between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. This division of time has an eschatological emphasis since it defines the present as a time of waiting for the Judgment Day. It does not, however, determine when this day is going to take place. The faithful are waiting for it, knowing that it can happen any day.

Milicius' understanding of „the last era“ is basically eschatological and by no means apocalyptic, as is sometimes suggested in studies of his *Libellus de Antichristo*. The notion of the end of time in the sermons is primarily a warning and exhortation to all people to take their Christian duties seriously. An apocalyptic division of time, on the other hand, is characterized by its determining nature, which pinpoints a particular moment when time will end. Such a division is comparable to a modern public transport timetable whose schedule is met under any circumstances. Milicius' divisions lack this concreteness.

In the sermon on the Tenth Sunday after Trinitatis, we find one of Milicius' typical references to the end of time. People lasciviously eat and drink in order to simply achieve temporal peace, Milicius writes. Believers should fear that the Lord might arrive unexpectedly, stealthily as would a thief, and group them with the hypocrites.<sup>265</sup> The same idea is conveyed in the sermon on All Saints' Day from *Abortivus*. Firstly, Milicius explains that the church is a mixed congregation of evil and good individuals and that the two must be separated. Then he quotes St. Augustine on the difference between Holy Jerusalem and Babylon, both places having an eschatological connotation. The main question is whether we belong to Jerusalem or to Babylon. „And when someone finds himself to be a citizen of Babylon, let him ban cupidity, let him cultivate love. But when someone finds himself to be a citizen of Jerusalem, let him bear captivity, let him hope for freedom.“<sup>266</sup>

It is certainly too extreme to call Milicius an apocalyptic preacher who predicts the precise end of time. His opinions and visions are tied too much to the context of his era to reach such

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<sup>264</sup> „Beati qui in prima vigilia legis naturalis vigilaverunt. Beati qui in secunda lege Moysayca vigilaverunt. Et beati qui in tertia lege ewangelica vigilaverunt. Vel sic beati qui hac triplici lege, pueritie, iuventutis et senectutis vigilaverunt.“ St. Nicolaus, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 13 r.

<sup>265</sup> „Sed comedimus et bibimus lascivientes in die nostro ad pacem temporalem. Timeo ne veniat Dominus sicut fur et ponat partem meam cum ypocritis et destinamur carnaliter dampnabilis quam Iudei.“ Dominica X p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 179 vb.

a conclusion. The use of eschatological images in his preachings always has a moral aim and works as an exhortation to break with sin and evil. Eschatology has a moral tendency in Milicius' sermons because it confronts his audience with a question about the nature of the Last Judgment and its relevancy to the present moment. In his preaching where he presents Judgment Day as a future event, he crystallizes and sharpens the immediate situation of his audience, clarifying the border between good and evil, hypocrisy and faith, tyranny or ministry.

In the meantime, the opposite is also true. The presence of evil, hypocrisy and tyranny makes it obvious to Milicius that „this age“ is ending. The increasing tendency toward evil is a sign of the eschatological character of this time. This age is impregnated with evil which indicates that it will soon end. On the second Sunday in Advent from *Gratiae Dei* Milicius writes a sermon about the structure of society (this passage we partly quoted when elaborating on the prelates and clergy). He compares the celestial bodies to the different layers of society. The sun symbolizes the prelates, the moon is the church, the stars are the clergy and the earth refers to the lay people. All of them are in a terrible state of darkness, blood and oppression, mutually attacking each other. The clergy are primarily to blame since due to their lack of leadership and example the laity live in sin and violence and even attack the leaders. The clergy itself is the reason for the violence used against the church. This crisis and confusion is an indication of the great battle that will occur before the glorious victory:

The sign in the sun is darkness, in which the inexperience of the prelates is pointed out. The sign in the moon is blood, in which the carnal love of consanguinity is pointed out. The sign in the stars is the fall on earth, in which the avarice of clerics is signified. The sign on earth is pressure, in which the mutual oppression of lay people is pointed out. The first is the cause of the second, and the third of the fourth, thus the fourth destroys the third and the second the first. And because after the great battle the glorious victory will follow, it is added: “Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> „Et si se invenerit civem Babilonie, exstirpet cupiditatem, plantet caritatem; si autem se invenerit civem Jherusalem, tolleret captivitatem, speret libertatem.“ Omnes sancti, A, I D 37, fol. 239 rb.

<sup>267</sup> „Signum in sole est obscuratio, in hoc notatur imperitia prelatorum. Signum in luna est sanguis, in hoc notatur carnalis amor consanguineorum. Signum in stellis est casus in terram, in hoc significatur avaritia clericorum. Signum in terra est pressura, in hoc notantur mutua oppressio laycorum. Primum est causa secundi et tertium quarti, ideo quartum destruit tertium et secundum primum, et quia post magnam pugnam sequitur gloriosa

In the same sense, the homily on Saturday after the Third Sunday in Advent comments on the horror of the times. The part after the introduction briefly discusses the historical circumstances under which Christ was born. Those times were bad because there were many tyrants like Caiphas and Annas, who are also mentioned in the context of Christ's suffering. Only John the Baptist zealously preached against this evil. By using the word Antichrist for the very first and very last time in his postil, Milicius reveals the true nature of those earlier times. This section is also an introduction to a quotation from St. Ambrose about the Antichrist:

For the current times are more dangerous than they were then, since many who seem to be Christians do more harm to the church than pagans, and do many anti-Christian abominations. Let us therefore take care as St. Ambrose warns us in his commentary on Lucas, the tenth book, the sixth chapter: "The abomination of desolation and of the awful Antichrist has come."<sup>268</sup>

In the following quotation, Ambrose distinguishes between three Antichrists. Firstly, Antichrist is compared to priests who are not serving God. Secondly, those frauds who doubt God are referred to as Antichrists; and finally this term is applied to heretics like Arius or Sabellius who lead us away from the correct interpretation of the Scriptures. *In tali ergo tempore mali*, "in such bad times" Christ came on earth.<sup>269</sup>

Milicius is very worried about the nature of his era, which according to him is full of lies, impiety and evil. He could only understand the meaning of his era by using words from an eschatological background. The times are so bad that he must speak about the Antichrist — however, only when quoting others. It is significant that the word Antichrist never appears in *Abortivus* and only once in the postil *Gratiae Dei* where it does not originate from Milicius himself, but from St. Ambrose. Moreover, this term is found in a homily during the time of Advent — a period when it was usual to sermonize about the Judgment Day and the end of

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victoria ideo subditur: 'His autem fieri incipientibus, respicite et levate capita vestra, quoniam adpropinquat redemptio vestra' [Lc. 21,28]. "Dominica II in Advent, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 11 r. See also p. 137.

<sup>268</sup> „Periculosiora enim sunt tempora quam tunc fuerunt, cum multi qui videntur esse christiani, magis noceant ecclesie quam pagani, multas abhominaciones antichristianas facientes. Caveamus ergo nobis sicut cavet nobis beatus Ambrosius super Lucam, libro decimo, capitulo secundo, dicens: 'Abhominatio desolationis et execrabilis antichristi adventus est.' " Sabato in quattuor temporibus, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 25 r. See also p. (preacher in GD).

time. During Advent, a remark about the Antichrist and his abomination is more or less obligatory. Obviously, Antichrist was not an important notion to Milicius when he wrote his postils. For the first time at the end of his life he devoted one sermon and the *Libellus* to this notion because he was experiencing hard and decisive times. In *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei* the issue of the end of time is primarily a mirror of the age: „For the times are more dangerous.“

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<sup>269</sup>Sabato in quattuor temporibus, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 25 v.



## V

### THE ANSWER: THE WORD OF THE PREACHER AND THE EXAMPLE OF THE SAINTS

Milicius not only gave his analysis of the problems and danger as he saw them, but also gave an answer to them. According to him preachers were to play a key role in the decisive battle with evil. This chapter takes a closer look at his ideas about the necessary change. Only the preacher has the power to change the situation for the better and to bring salvation. Milicius' sermons on saints emphasize the responsibility of every individual to the fate of church and society.

#### 1. The Preacher breaking the power of evil

##### 1.1. *Abortivus*

The main source we have for knowing how the postil *Abortivus* views the role of the preacher are the so-called *prothemata* or introductions to the sermons in the collection. The *prothema* usually speaks about the preacher and his task in the church or community. Very often it relates the text of the sermon to the preacher by comparing him to the main character of the text. In the sermons for holy days the preacher is compared to the saint to whom the particular day is devoted.

In general, it is the preacher's task to save people from final punishment and hell. It is a sacred task assigned by Christ himself. The preacher does not operate in his own name but in the name of Jesus according to the first sentence in the sermon on the Fifth Sunday after Trinitatis. This sermon, based on Lc. 5,5 ("Master, we toiled all night and took nothing") and which likens the preacher's task of saving souls to catching fish, is entirely devoted to the work of preaching and preachers. "Every preacher is obliged, not in his own name but in the name of Christ Jesus, to urge, that is to pull people from the waves of the sea, that is from the

world to the shore of the eternal fatherland.”<sup>270</sup>

In a sermon on St. Procopius’ Day, the preacher is compared to the captain of a ship. St. Procopius lived and preached on the bank of the Sázava River, where many people came to see him. He and his followers founded a monastery, which became of great importance to the church in Bohemia. In this sense his work — and with it the preacher’s work in general — is connected to the image of the church being like a ship on the waves of the unquiet world.

Thus in order to be worthy of hearing the preaching, let us enter the boat of Peter in which yet, according to Jude, no storm can be evoked. But when Christ and blessed Procopius were preaching the sea, i.e. the world, became placid and the boat of the church became quiet.<sup>271</sup>

It is God himself who speaks through the mouth of the preacher. The preacher is God’s instrument to correct sinful behavior, to offer salvation and to save his flock from eternal punishment. Preaching is a pedagogic activity through which God acts as a father to his children.

In one way God rebukes the ones who will be damned and in another the ones who will be saved, the first by punishing them eternally, the others by admonishing them physically and gently. As a father corrects his young son with a rod so as not to loose his heir, so God acts by the word of preaching<sup>272</sup>.

The aim of preaching is thus to educate people, to tell them about the life of the faithful, the children of God. Through sermons, people should get to know the principles of the faith and of the devout life. The preacher has to inform his audience about God’s law and rule, to urge obedience and to warn against perpetrating these rules. To be able to do this, the preacher needs certain skills. The preacher cannot present Christ, “the cornerstone”, to his people without help from the Holy Spirit. The preacher himself has to be educated first, to be

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<sup>270</sup> „Omnis predicator non in suo sed in Christi Jhesu nomine debet instari, id est homines de fluctibus maris, id est mundi, trahere ad littus patrie sempiternae.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 153 rb.

<sup>271</sup> „Ut ergo nos predicationem digni sumus audire, Petri naviculam ascendamus, in qua iam propter Iudam tempestas nullatenus concitatur [a reference to Jude vs. 13]. Sed Christo et beato Procopio predicante mare, id est seculum, placatur et naviculam ecclesie quietatur.“ St. Procopius, A, I D 37, fol. 156 va.

reworked as is a piece of wood, or more precisely, as is done with some raw material that contains a highly valuable core. The sermon on the fishing of men states:

Just as the Lord seeing them, does not elect their deeds but their hearts, so shall it be with you if you are inept in the work of preaching. The Maker of everything, the Holy Spirit, can model, smooth and round, and so by shearing, compose you, so that you can be of value like a precious stone or ornament, and a buttress of the church or to link walls against sinners as an image of Christ, who is the cornerstone. And if you are not fit to fish men, he will make you fit for him. Let us therefore come together, humbly and devoutly, that his word might catch us, that we, thus caught by it, catch others and that we will be led together to the gate of the eternal salvation.<sup>273</sup>

The education that a preacher has to provide for his people is not just a matter of transmitting certain knowledge. The motive of preaching is to fight the war against evil, Satan and his forces. A preacher is a fisherman, whose task it is to catch as many people as possible in the net of God by his preaching. Satan however is also trying to catch fish with his own preachers, who also have their nets. They are also capable of attracting and fooling people by distorting the truth so that they become lost to Christ.

The beast has become foolish along with everyone who follows him, because many are those who widen the net as they are preaching, disputing and writing, making opinions not for the sake of the truth, but for the vanity of their pride, and so they catch souls not for Christ, but for the devil and themselves.<sup>274</sup>

As is required in a proper scholastic sermon, a third type of fishing net is distinguished in

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<sup>272</sup> „Aliter Deus corripit dampnandos et aliter salvandos, quia illos eternaliter puniendo, istos corporaliter et leviter admonendo. Sicut pater filium virga corrigit, ne ille hereditatem perdat, sic Deus facit per verbum predicationis.“ Dominica X p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 177 rb.

<sup>273</sup> „Sic et Dominus videns illos non opera illorum eligit sed corda, sic et tu si ad opus predicationis ineptus es. Artifex omnium, Spiritus Sanctus, postest te dolare, planare, quadrare, et ita tonsionibus componere, ut velud lapis preciosus aut ornamentum et sustentamentum ecclesie vel ad coniungendum parietes adversantium peccatorum ad instar Christi, qui est lapis angularis, posset valere. Et sic si inhabilis es ad piscandum homines, te habilitabit ad illum. Ergo confugiamus humiliter et devote, ut nos capiat verbo suo, ut sic capti per ipsum alios capiamus et deducamur pariter ad portum salutis eterne.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 153 va.

<sup>274</sup> „Bestia stulta factus est et omnes qui secuntur illum, quoniam multi sunt qui laxant hoc rethe, predicando, disputando, in scriptis dando, non pro veritate sed pro sue superbie vanitate opiniones faciendo et sic capiunt non Christo, sed dyabolo et sibi animas.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 153 vb.

addition to those of Satan and God — that is the *rethe mundi*, “the net of the world,” which Milicius identifies with the seduction of the world. It distracts people from God toward all kinds of comfort. Here the *delicatio luxurie*, “the pleasure of lust,” is the factor which a preacher must criticize and warn against. This quality or characteristic is a danger to one’s salvation and must be dismissed.

God’s net with which he gathers his people into the Holy Church is, of course, related to preaching. In this part, Milicius has some rather negative opinions about clerics, he compares them to pillars. Many in the church are *columpne*, he says, but not all of them have the net of preaching. In other words, those who are pillars are necessary, but not all of them can preach the Word of God. However, the same is true for many preachers, he says. They have the *rethe scripture*, „the net of the Word,“ but are not pillars so they collapse under any small burden. They are unable to support the building of the church.

But even those who have both the strength to carry and the net to catch are not necessarily righteous. They can still be collaborators of the devil rather than allies of the Lord. Many of them are not trying to catch and hold the people and care for their souls like good pastors do, but are cutting the net and enabling the fish to escape from God.

But many are also pillars because they are strong and have a net, which is Scripture, and nevertheless they do not decorate the Temple of Solomon, but rather the Tower of Babylon. How many are there in the church tearing the net of the Scriptures while the fish, i.e. the elect, escape. By no means are they worthy of the Holy Spirit holding onto them.<sup>275</sup>

Milicius has serious doubts about the ability of many members of the clergy to contribute to the well-being of the church. Many of them are unworthy of the work of preaching to the people, because they do not do good deeds for God and the salvation of men, but simply for their own personal well-being. They only want to highlight their own virtues, which is not a sufficient reason to be a fisherman of men. “Such a one, God does not elect to be fisherman of men. They do nothing good and ascribe themselves virtues,” is Milicius’ conclusion in the

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<sup>275</sup> „Multi autem sunt et columpne quia fortes et rethe habent, videlicet scripturam, et tamen non decorant templum Salomonis, sed potius turrim babylonis. Quancumque sint tales in ecclesie scindentes rethe scripture cum pisces, id est electi, excidere. Nequaquam valent Spiritui Sancto eos tenente.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 154 ra.

sermon about the net of preaching.<sup>276</sup>

In the section *In quibus verbis*, the sermon analyzes why a preacher is or is not able to convert people with his words. The main cause of ineffective preaching is when a preacher does his work without God. In this case, his work is useless but consumes a lot of energy. However, when a preacher performs his service together with God, his preaching brings the fruit of salvation. The sermon distinguishes seven reasons — being the seven deadly sins — for fruitless preaching without God:

1. *Superbia*, “pride,” which disables both the preacher and audience to enter the Lord’s net in humility. It is a sign of the absence of love between the preacher and his audience.
2. *Luxuria*, “lust,” either in the preacher or his audience.
3. *Avaricia*, “covetousness,” which is a characteristic of all who are “striving after honors, practicing usury, simony, and gathering property.”
4. *Invidia*, “envy.”
5. *Gula*, “gluttony,” which is when one is in the devil’s net and thereby cannot be caught in God’s net.
6. *Ira* or *iracundia*, “anger,” by which frogs rather than fish are attracted to the Lord’s supper.
7. *Accidia*, “sloth,” deprives one of God’s grace which is as deadly as dry land to fish.<sup>277</sup>

All these obsessions distract both the preacher and his audience from Christ and his church and originate with Satan. He is the source of all human greed and hatred, which separates one from God. Every preacher who is filled with these temporary desires is therefore fishing for Satan, not for the Lord.

A preacher will be successful, however, when he does his work with God. His behavior is characterized by the polar opposite of the obsessions Milicius just described. The preacher and audience have to empty themselves of everything that distracts them from God. Only then will God’s net catch them and bring them to eternal life.

The word of God does not catch the proud, but the humble, not the angry, but the meek.  
(..) Likewise the word of God does not catch those who hate, but those who love, not

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<sup>276</sup> „Non tales elegit Deus piscatores homini. Ne quidquid boni facerent, sue virtuti ascriberent.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 154 ra.

<sup>277</sup> Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 154 rb.

those who are distorted by the image of carnal dissipation, as they are curly, slightly undressed, chatting, tightened up, dressed in the purple of beauty, not like God created them, but like the devil deformed them.<sup>278</sup>

The third part of the *In quibus verbis* has an unusual structure that does not follow the strict scholastic rules for a sermon. The subject of this *tertio* part is the Last Judgment when the fish will be divided into two groups: the good and the bad. In this separation, the fishermen or preachers will play a key role. They will be like angels, the helpers of God, and will have the power to decide who will be saved.<sup>279</sup>

Milicius continues with an explanation on a passage about Leviathan, who is the symbol and presence of Satan, from Job 40,20 - 41,25. It is partly in the style of a homily as it is practically a commentary on the Job text and is not in the thematic style of the scholastic sermon. This is the only unusual change of styles in the sermons contained in *Abortivus*. The work of the preacher is viewed within the context of the battle between good and evil, God and Satan, Leviathan and the angels. Preachers use their weapon of God's Word to free sinners from Satan and his power. By preaching, they take people from the side of the devil and bring them to God. "You understand that therefore servants, i.e. preachers as well as angels, that weak preachers drive away potent tyrants, just as angels bind demons, and therefore preachers divide sinners from them and destroy them by the sword of the Word of God."<sup>280</sup>

In another sermon on the Twelfth Sunday after Trinitatis, Milicius states that it is the preacher's task to announce the end of the world. This sermon about John 4,52 („At the seventh hour, the fever left him“) is full of the expectancy that the world will soon end, that the judgment and condemnation of evil people — in this context primarily tyrants — will soon occur. Preachers have to announce the end of the world, as angels do in the book Apocalypse when they blow the seven trumpets of the truth.<sup>281</sup>

The importance of preaching has an eschatological dimension: wherever preachers work, they

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<sup>278</sup> „Verbum enim Dei non capit superbos sed humiles, non iracundos sed mansuetos.(..) Item verbum Dei non capit invidios sed caritativos (..), non distortos per ymaginem carnalis lascivie, ut sunt crispatis, nodulatis, rostratis, strictis, fuco pulchritudinis ornati, non sicut Deus eos formavit, sed sicut dyabolus deformavit.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 154 va.

<sup>279</sup> See p. 120.

<sup>280</sup> „Subaudis ut ergo in servis, id est in predicatoribus sicut et in angelis, ut infirmi predicatorum potentes tyrannos abigent, sicut angeli demones ligaverunt, et quia predicatorum gladio verbi Dei peccatores ab ipso dividunt et scindunt.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 155 ra.

<sup>281</sup> See p. 135.

fulfill an eschatological task by announcing the coming of the Judgment Day. The content of their work itself is eschatological, no matter under what circumstances they live and work. To Milicius, the meaning of preaching is understandable only in an eschatological context. Preachers have to lead their listeners away from the gates of Babylon and bring them to Jerusalem. They have to bring them to eternal salvation. In a way, the preacher himself represents the Judgment Day by urging his audience to make a choice. His preaching has to convey the full weight of the Final Judgment, commemorating this day of the definitive decision. In his sermonizing the preacher has to become an immediate embodiment of the Final Judgment. The preacher himself is an eschatological figure and his preaching an eschatological act.

A preacher is therefore a liberator, freeing his people from the captivity of Babylon, the city of Satan. He sets people free from the power of evil and the devil, bringing them to Jerusalem. It should be noted that in these quotations clerics or prelates do enjoy a better reputation than in the sermon on the fishing of men.

Would that these prelates or preachers under the true Cyrus, Jesus Christ, together with the faithful Israelites leave the captivity of Babylon or the devil in order to build a new Jerusalem, a holy church, no matter how much they were hindered by tyrants, because if they perish because of them, they will rise again.<sup>282</sup>

Special attention should be paid to the relationship between preachers and the powerful of the world. Those secular powers are understood to be not only those who rule but also those who possess knowledge and are learned. For the most part, this relationship has negative connotations, but not all the time. According to the sermon on the fishing of men, the powerful and wise of the world are connected to Leviathan. His collaborators are mighty tyrants and clever philosophers full of the wisdom of this world. Milicius uses here a kind of anti-intellectual argument against learned and eloquent people. The Lord does not need such people, but chooses the simple to be preachers and fishermen. Preachers are not necessarily educated in the institutions of the world, but are the pupils of God, who teaches them how to catch fish, i.e. how to lead people into the right way of living.

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<sup>282</sup> „Utinam ergo ipsi prelati sive predicatorum sub vero Syro Christo Jhesu una cum veris Israelitis exirent de captivitate Babylonica | sive dyaboli ad edificandam novam Jherusalem, ecclesiam videlicet sanctam, quantumcumque a tyrannis fuerit impediti, quia et si coram eis ceciderint tamen resurgent.“ Dominica XII p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 234 rb - 234 va.

The head of it [i.e. of Leviathan] are the most powerful and wise, the wise of the world and the philosophers who are caught by the fishermen in their own hovel, i.e. tow-net. The Lord firstly collects the unlearned in order to gain the philosophers after that. God did not teach the fishermen through orators, but by the extraordinary power through the fishermen he has subdued the orators.<sup>283</sup>

These wise men are the false preachers, who are in the service of Satan and lead people into hell. Through these *sapientes* Leviathan is able to draw many souls to himself, or more precisely to the horrible place of Babylon. “Just as someone may enter through the good teachers as through the gates of Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, likewise he may gain entrance to hell through the gates of Babylon, i.e. the false teachers.”<sup>284</sup> Milicius’ words reveal a tendency to distrust preachers who study some kind of knowledge, which we can identify as either philosophy or theology. Knowing the wisdom of the world or possessing eloquence are not necessary for being a good preacher is what Milicius is trying to say. Only the preacher who guides his audience to the gates of the Eternal Jerusalem is good.

The sermon on St. Wenceslaus is an exception to this tendency in *Abortivus* to be wary of the learned and powerful. Of course, this sermon is important since it speaks about the main patron of the Czechs, King Wenceslaus. In a sense, the sermon and its theme transcend the context of the postil by discussing Wenceslaus who was of a doubtless significance to Milicius’ audience. This can be the reason for the fact that this sermon is the only one that speaks in an unambiguous way about the powerful and the mighty.

At any rate, the sermon presents King Wenceslaus as a role model for all good people no matter what their station in life might be. Therefore, he is also an example to preachers because his work was basically the same as theirs. Princes are people *qui in verbo Dei laborant*, “who work in the Word of God,” the sermon says. They are not ashamed, nor do they hesitate to preach God’s Word. The good ruler acts according to the Law of God and is therefore at the same time a preacher, a prophet and a priest. He represents God’s kingdom on earth, just as preachers do. St. Wenceslaus was a superb example of this type of model king.

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<sup>283</sup> „Capud autem eius [i.e. Leviathan] sunt fortissimi sapientes, huius mundi sapientes et philosophi, quos piscatores in suum gurgustium, id est sagenam comprehendant. Primo namque Dominus collegit indoctos ut post modum lucraretur philosophos. Et non per oratores docuit piscatores, sed mira potentia per piscatores subegit oratores.“ Dominica V p.T., A, I D 37, fol. 155 rb.

<sup>284</sup>See p. 129.



„Likewise every preacher should meditate on the divine law, so as not to be confused when face to face with kings, whoever accuses him of a crime. The Lord gives him the word to evangelize many of virtues.“<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> „Similiter omne[i]s predicator meditetur in lege divina, ne confundatur in conspectu regum arguere quoscumque hoc scelere. Dat enim Dominus verbum ewangelizantibus virtute multa.“ St. Wenceslaus, A, I D 37, fol. 213 rb. See also p. 141 and 184.

## 1.2. *Gratiae Dei*

In *Gratiae Dei* the preacher is presented as practically the savior of the world. He is compared to the apostles, to saints, and even to Christ. His mission is to bring the Word of God into the world, that is to be a soldier on behalf of the Eternal Kingdom. More than prelates he is capable of spreading the gospel of hope and love. He is responsible for the faithful, for guiding the church, for separating his flock from evil, and for criticizing and consoling them. His tasks in fact are endless. It is clear that Milicius expects everything from a preacher, whom he considers to be the last and only instrument of God for delivering the church from sin and evil. In this sense, the preacher has an eschatological mission.

Milicius compares the preacher to whomever he is speaking about in his sermons. The work of the great forerunners of the faith can for the most part be categorized as a preacher's work. The preacher is the actual embodiment of the history of salvation. There is no one from biblical or ecclesiastical history to whom the preacher cannot be compared. What began with the apostles was a small spark that grew into a big fire, which is now spreading throughout the world by preaching:

Let us therefore set each other afire, let one provoke the other into attending sermons, that even if the priests do not want to preach, you nevertheless excite their will. From a tiny spark a huge fire is born, and from a tiny preaching a huge fire of divine love is lit in many people. As through only twelve apostles the whole world is reached, let that be fulfilled in us and in the whole world.<sup>286</sup>

Preachers have to be like Peter, the “imitator of the name of Christ,” who in his life and work, by preaching and carrying the cross followed Christ. Like Peter, the preacher has to give up his carnal life and devote himself to Christ's love. Only in this way can we bring the church to Christ: “Let us abandon the carnal love and adhere to the divine love, preaching to the sheep of Christ and providing a meadow in unpretended love, that we together with them could

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<sup>286</sup> „Ut ergo et nos mutuo accendamus, unus alium provocet ad sermonem ambulare, ut etiam si sacerdotes nolint predicare, tamen et vos excitetis eorum voluntatem. Ex parva enim scintilla magnus ignis nascitur, et ex parva predicatione magnus ignis divini amoris in multo populo accenditur. Sicut per XII solos apostolos totus mundus fuit accensus, quod ut in nobis et toto orbe terrarum impleatur.“ Omnes sancti, GD, XII D I, fol. 140 v.

happily reach the meadow of eternal life, together with the sheep of Christ.”<sup>287</sup>

Elsewhere in one of his most lively sermons on the Saturday after the Third Sunday in Advent, the preacher is compared to John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus Christ. Preachers are encouraged to do the same, preparing the way for Christ to come into people’s hearts:

This veil John removed from our hearts that we would recognize Christ by his revealed face and see the profound mysteries of the Old Testament, fulfilled in Christ. He prepared rightly for us the way to Christ and other preachers are exhorted to do the same, that the divine word may have a free way to come into our hearts.<sup>288</sup>

Martyrs have been oppressed and killed, because they revealed the evil of the enemies of the truth, who pose as true believers. Like those holy forerunners, preachers are also sent to reveal the hypocrites. It belongs to the fate of the true followers of Christ to be prosecuted, especially by those who say they are the church. Even when the costs are high and the resistance hard, preachers have the holy duty to tell the truth not only to those who are receptive to it, but also to those who refuse to listen. Preachers should be aware of the reaction of their audience and adapt their approach according to it.

Listen how any preacher must be meek towards the meek, and rigid towards the obstinate, towards the adversaries of the truth, like Christ was meek to the apostles and others to whom he was preaching, but rigid to the obstinate, especially to the Pharisees who resisted him so much that he called them hypocrites, sons of the devil.<sup>289</sup>

However, the preacher is warned that his work cannot be postponed. His holy task is to sound the trumpet by preaching against the sins of Babylon. Since there is so much resistance to the

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<sup>287</sup> „Relinquamus amorem carnalem et adhaereamus caritati divine predicantes ovibus Christi et pascua vite ministrantes in caritate non ficta, ut sic una cum eis possumus ad eterne vite pascua, una cum ovibus Christi feliciter pervenire.“ St. Petrus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 39 v.

<sup>288</sup> „Hoc velamen Johannes deposuit a corde nostro, ut revelata facie Christum cognosceremus et profunda veteris testamenti archana conspiceremus in Christo completa. Recte ergo viam nobis preparavit ad Christum et alios predicatorum exortatus est ad hoc ipsum faciendum, ut verbum divinum expeditam viam habeat in cor nostrum veniendi.“ Sabato in quattuor temporibus (Saturday after III Advent), GD, XIV D 5, fol. 24 v.

<sup>289</sup> „Audi qualiter quilibet predicator debet esse mitis contra mites, et rigidus contra obstinatos, contra adversarios veritatis, sicut Christus mitis fuit, erga apostolos et alios, quibus predicavit, sed rigidus erga obstinatos, et precipue phariseos, qui sibi resistebant, ita ut vocaret eos ypocritas, filios dyaboli.“ Omnes sancti, GD, XII D 1, fol. 142 v.

truth, it is all the more clear that the root of this resistance is the empire of evil. Even when it seems that Satan has left, it is necessary to continue:

Most beloved sons, listen, that a short time ago the holy prophet of the Lord, Joel, proclaimed the house of Christ and his faithful, when he said to the preachers: „Blow the trumpet in Zion“ [Joel 2,1]. Because the flutist and the trumpeter of Babylon ceased, therefore he ought to sound the trumpet of the word in their hearts even more.<sup>290</sup>

Preaching in the eyes of Milicius is an eschatological activity. The preacher must stop evil by revealing its character. Sins such as simony, greed and all the others which Milicius accuses many clerics of, are not just a failure or wrongdoing but a denial of the very heart of the church. Through such sins, they themselves become instruments of Satan, who through them gains power over the church. The situation is very serious, according to Milicius, because many clerics use their positions for their own personal advantage rather than for that of their people. This is truly an apocalyptic sign of the times. The forces of sin and evil are intruding into the Holy Church, even winning over some of its hierarchy. It is for this reason that Milicius does not expect clerics, but rather preachers to offer hope to the church in these bad times by preaching the mighty Word of God. They are the church's last line of defense. It is their task to stop the devil's forces and to die if necessary. The *prothema* to a sermon on Mt. 4,1 relates this mission of the preacher to the work of St. Paul:

So a preacher, seeing the army of the devil in beastly human beings, has to hurl himself upon them with the sword of the Word of God and cut them down from the right of prosperity and from the left of adversity, even if it is necessary then to die, like Paul did in the courts, in Jerusalem, in Rome, in Greece. The court did not hide from him, that finally in the whole world preachers both fight and win.<sup>291</sup>

To emphasize this apocalyptic context, Milicius uses words with an apocalyptic background,

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<sup>290</sup> „Carissimi filii, audistis, quia heri sanctus propheta Domini Johel curiam Christi et eius nuptias proclamavit, cum dixit predicatoribus: Canite tuba in Syon [Joel 2,1]. Quia videlicet fistulatores et tubicine babilonici cessaverunt, ideo debet eo fortius in vestris cordibus tuba ewangelica insonare.“ Feria quinta in L, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 86 v.

<sup>291</sup> „Ita predicator videns arma dyaboli in hominibus bestialibus, debet gladio verbi Dei in eos irruere et a dextris prosperitatis et a sinistris | adversitatis prosternere, et si necesse est etiam ibi mori, quod et Paulus faciebat in

however without indicating an imminent end of the world. This requires some explanation. In *Gratiae Dei* the name Antichrist never appears in a direct way but only in quotations from St. Ambrose. The only time the followers of Antichrist are mentioned is in the sermon on Lc. 3, 1-6, which is referred to earlier on as well. The sermon's place in the liturgical order is more important here. It is designated for the Saturday in the third week of Advent — Advent being a period that seems to elicit references to Antichrist. Here, he is connected to heretics, tyrants and hypocrites — a threefold indication of evil forces, which often occurs in the sermons. The preacher is bound to zealously preach against these representatives of Satan, just as John did:

Truly take note that John began to preach the evangelic justice or that of Christ to those evil rulers and to those who destroy the faith of God. So do we have to zealously preach the justice of Christ who is coming to judgment, to rulers, to many tyrants and heretics and hypocrites, in the zeal of John and Elijah, or rather of Christ. For the times are more dangerous than they were then, when now many who seem to be Christians, harm the church more than pagans, doing many anti-Christian abominations.<sup>292</sup>

Many words in this quotation have an apocalyptic connotation. A keyword quoted from Daniel 12 — the famous text which breaks history up into eras and discusses the coming end of the world — is *abominatio*. This same term plays a central role in the *Libellus de Antichristo*. Moreover, the text refers to Elijah — the eschatological prophet who will return at the end of time.

In spite of all these apocalyptic and eschatological images, in his *Gratia Dei* sermons Milicius by no means proclaims the end of the world nor does he divide history into apocalyptic periods. This is an important difference from the *Libellus*, which mentions even specifically that the coming of Antichrist will occur in two possible years (1365 or 1367). In *Gratia Dei* Milicius says no more than that the „times are dangerous.“<sup>293</sup> He uses apocalyptic images to

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curiis, nunc Ierusalem, nunc Rome, nunc in Gretia. Nec fuit curia que (mg. absconderet se) ab eo, ut ergo in toto mundo predicatorum sic pugnantes, sic vincant.“ Dominica I in XL, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 92 r-v.

<sup>292</sup> „Notandum vero quod sicut istis malis regnantibus et quasi omnem cultum Dei destruentibus, cepit Johannes iustitiam ewangelicam predicare sive Christi. Sic et nos regnantibus, multis tyrannis et hereticis et ypocritis iustitiam Christi ad iudicium venturi zelo Johannis et Helie ymmo potius (mg. Christi) zelanter predicare debemus. Periculosiora enim sunt tempora quam tunc fuerunt, cum multi qui videntur esse christiani, magis noceant ecclesie quam pagani, multas abominaciones antichristianas facientes.“ Sabato in quattuor temporibus (Saturday after III Advent), GD, XIV D 5, fol. 25 r.

<sup>293</sup> See p. 154 ff.

stress his message and the urgency of the preacher's role. The badness of times and the degree of the clerics' sinfulness can only be exposed by an apocalyptic vocabulary. Evil in the church and society has a very harsh and defined character, a fact that can only be understood when seen in an apocalyptic light. But in *Gratia Dei* Milicius does not take the next step: He is not foreseeing or predicting the end of the world. His apocalypticism in *Gratia Dei* is therefore instrumental; in other words it reveals the real character of the present time and of a preacher's work.

The apocalyptic vocabulary places more stress on the importance of preachers. Their struggle is not just with sin among lay people and clerics, but in fact with the devil, Leviathan, himself. This cosmic, apocalyptic force is behind all evil. The preacher's vocation in this sense is the same as Christ's — to separate good people from the devil:

Christ, seeing many who disagree among each other and contradict the common good, many who sinned in time of peace just like robbers who have peace to rob the state, came to separate and break the bad peace, because he himself was not the author of the bad peace, neither the cause of their disagreement. But so he made himself into their enemy in order to make them friends. Like Job 39 says about the devil and his members under the name Leviathan: „Will friends bargain over him? Will merchants divide him up?“ [Job 41,6]. Look, those are preachers who negotiate for the sacred words and buy souls. They take the sword to divide the good from the body of the devil, from evil, out of friendship, to make friends from enemies.<sup>294</sup>

The preacher is the last one who is considered capable of defending the church and its faithful members. In a sermon on the Second Sunday in Advent, Milicius compares preachers — his audience as it seems to be — to the angels in Mt. 24,31, who will come with the sound of the trumpet in order to gather the elect: “He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds.” This is a text often used by Milicius to characterize the importance of preaching and preachers. Again, a text that comes from a

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<sup>294</sup> „Ita et Christus videns multos discordare et contradicere salutis communi, qui in pacem peccabant, tamquam latrones, qui pacem habent ad rempublicam spoliandam, venit separare et rumpere malam pacem, quia ipse auctor male pacis non fuit, nec fuit causa eorum discordie. Sed ideo adversarium se fecit illorum ut eos faceret amicos. Unde Job XXXIX dicitur de dyabolo et membris eius sub nomine Leviathan: ‘Concident eum amici dividant eum negociatores’ [Job 40,25 (Vulgate)]. Ecce predicatorum qui pro verbis sacris negocantur et emunt animas. Ad hoc accipiunt gladium ut dividant a corpore dyaboli bonos a malis ex amicitia, ut ex inimicis faciant

strongly eschatological context and is typically used during Advent is made relevant here to preachers. Their role can only be understood in an eschatological light — this is the reason for Milicius' approach. The urgent character of a preacher's work can only be conveyed by a language that is connected to the expectation of an impending end of the world, like that in Mt. 24.

But again, there is no explicit sign or word about the end of time. After the quotation Milicius simply states: "May this happen not only in resurrection by the angels, but already now by preachers. Let angels, that is preachers with the trumpet of the Scriptures, gather the elect in the church from the four parts of the world."<sup>295</sup> This message implies that the time of the resurrection or the *eschaton* has not come yet, however the work of preachers has to be understood in terms of eschatological significance as gathering the faithful.

It cannot be emphasized enough, that to Milicius preachers have a much greater importance in the dynamics of the church than priests or clerics. The latter are only the managers of the church.<sup>296</sup> Milicius does not consider their role to be that of educating believers or telling people to repent. They are the rulers but have no power to really reform the church. The real dynamic input for change and for cleansing the church of unholy elements must come from preachers. They are God's moving force.

The preacher, therefore, has great power. His word can change the lives of people and the life of the church. Not only can the word of the preacher correct people's behavior, it can also renew them. It revitalizes the church and its members. Milicius compares this renewing ability of the preacher to the prophet Isaiah, whose preaching not only cured King Hezekiah, but even increased his life span.<sup>297</sup> This is the mighty power of the word, which the preacher proclaims. It contains a secret life-saving and life-giving quality, which the preacher transmits. The word, uttered by his mouth, performs mighty things. The preacher has a certain charisma, which qualifies him to preach. He has a particular disposition that enables him to mediate salvation and eternal life, however not through his own personal merits, but as a servant of God. His word brings salvation and damnation, it distinguishes between good and evil. He not only

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amicos." St. Vitus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 30 v. The translation of Job 41,6 follows the Vulgate and is therefore different from the Revised Standard Version.

<sup>295</sup> „Quod non solum fiet in resurrectione ab angelis, sed etiam nunc a predicatoribus. Ut angeli id est predicatores cum tuba ewangelii congregent electos in ecclesiam a quattuor partibus mundi." Dominica II in Advent, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 9 r.

<sup>296</sup> See p. 133.

<sup>297</sup> „Quando ergo nunc concordat tuba cum fletu et infirmitas cum hiis, qui in nuptiis gratulantur, nisi quia tuba predicationis que ad curiam Christi invitat non solum infirmos letificat, ymo vitam prolongat, sicut tuba insonans per os Ysaie addidit annos XV Ezechie." Feria quinta in L, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 86 v.

explains the Word of God, but he is the channel of God's judgment. His sermon brings life and death.

The preacher, therefore, has a huge responsibility for the salvation of his audience. He has to correct sinners, urge for repentance and criticize clerics who misuse their position. If the word of the preacher is not successful, then damnation will follow. Milicius says this even more strongly: the preacher allows sinners to be damned when he does not rectify their ways:

“Though the preacher has have peace with good people, he has to produce the sword of the Word of God against bad people. Because if he does not correct them, he allows them to be sent into damnation and gives the righteous the occasion to sin.”<sup>298</sup>

Once again, he characterizes the mission of the preacher in an eschatological sense without declaring an imminent end of the world. Milicius' conviction that the preacher's sermon brings with it life and death and divides between the faithful and the hypocrites leads him to compare the power of preaching to God's judgment on good and evil and even to identify who they are. Milicius' eschatological vision, or in some places apocalypticism, is not futuristic but an immediate vision based on the historic circumstances of his day. The core of his work — preaching — is motivated by this immanent eschatology. The nature of preaching is itself eschatological.

However, this does not mean that every preacher is a good servant of God. There are many who mislead and betray believers, drawing them away from God. But they themselves will be taken away from God and sent to hell. Good preachers, on the other hand, use every means to save their audience from the “outer darkness,” where “men will weep and gnash their teeth.” These preachers shout, cry and weep, only to spare their audience from hell:

So now some preachers preach flatteringly and therefore despise many who follow them. To those, though, they say in the coming judgment: ‘We piped to you, and you did not dance’ up to heaven, but actors have piped to you and you danced into hell. Others are preachers who grieve in the heart, weep, humiliate themselves in ashes and sackcloth, cry from the moaning of their heart, preach tears and prevent the people from going „into the outer darkness, where men will weep and gnash their teeth.”<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> „Quamvis cum bonis pacem habere debeat predicator, tamen contra malos debet producere gladium verbi Dei. Quia si eos non corrigit, ipsos in dampnationem transire permittit et iustis dat occasionem peccandi.“ St. Vitus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 30 r.

<sup>299</sup> „Ita et nunc predicatorum quidam blande predicabant et quia eos sequi multi contempnunt. Ideo eis dicent in futuro iudicio: ‘Cecinimus vobis et non saltastis’ [Mt. 11,17] suppra ad celum, sed cecinerunt vobis hystriones et



In a sermon about St. Procopius, Milicius outlines what the character and behavior of a preacher should be. A preacher's task is not only to encourage repentance — though this is his main and most frequently discussed task. A preacher also must console people who are filled with grief and sorrow. It is one of the things a preacher has in common with prelates, who are not mentioned in connection to the preaching of repentance and reform. Both of them have to provide consolation through the Word of God.<sup>300</sup> Preachers and prelates both must provide pastoral care to their flock. Milicius states that in order to provide this care, a preacher must fulfill four requirements: to be aware of the fragility of human existence, to be a man of conscience, to be burning with charity and to be honest to himself and others. These he compares to the qualities of an oil lamp:

There are four things in a lamp that should be in the life of a preacher or a prelate. The first is the vessel, i.e. the fragility of the human condition, which he has to have permanently before his eyes in order not to be proud. (..) The second is the oil, i.e. the splendour of conscience, without which he can never be a preacher who can console others. (..) The third is the fire of love, with which the whole preacher should glow. (..) The fourth is the light that the preacher must constantly have so as not to seem righteous to himself, while calling others sinners.<sup>301</sup>

We can therefore conclude that Milicius viewed the act of consoling as more than just giving relief and comfort, but also searching one's own mind and conscience for sin. This again is the central task of a preacher: to protect from and prevent sin.

On the issue of property Milicius identifies the position of a preacher with that of members of a religious order. His answer is very clear. No *religiosus* and no preacher is allowed to possess

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saltastis ad infernum. Alii (mg. sunt) predicatorum qui lugent in corde, plorant oculis, in cinere et cilicio se affligunt, rugiunt a gemitu cordis sui, predicant lacrimas et precavent populo, ne eiciantur 'in tenebras exteriores, ubi est fletus et stridor dentium' [Mt. 8,12].“ Omnes sancti, GD, XII D 1, fol. 143 v.

<sup>300</sup> „Ita prelatus sive predicator ut bonus comes iungat se hiis, qui ambulantes in via huius miserie ambulant tristes, et consoletur eos verbo Dei. Non dormitet in sompno oblivionis, nec alios dormire permittat, surgat invigilet, malis actibus contradicat.“ St. Procopius, GD, XII D 1, fol. 50 r.

<sup>301</sup> „Sunt autem quatuor in lucerna quem debet esse in vita predicatoris sive prelati. Primum est testa, id est fragilitas humane conditionis quam iugiter debet habere pre oculis ne superbiat. (..) (Mg. secundum est oleum), id est nitor conscientie sine quo numquam debet esse predicator qui debet alios consolari. (..) Tercium est ignis caritatis, quo totus debet ardere predicator. (..) Quartum est lumen quod debet habere iugiter predicator ne sibi iustus videatur et alios reputet peccatores.“ St. Procopius, GD, XII D 1, fol. 51 r. See also p. 134 and 198.

private property. Individuals from these groups can only hold property in common with their fellow members. Anyone who has private property is sinning against God and his church in a very serious way. He is depriving the dominion of Christ of its property, thereby turning himself into a thief and a looter.

Wherever members of a religious order call themselves the poor of Christ and nevertheless have riches belonging to the community, that they usurp as their own, they are robbers of the patrimony of Jesus Christ and thieves and bandits. Let their superior be on his guard not to allow them anything that might give them some property, some income or special benefit or menu. In this case, therefore, whatever they have in private, is not theirs, but of the community. When, therefore, something is allowed to one, without very good reason, it is an injustice to others, and the vow and the oath is broken. The only exception when someone deserves something from the community is when the lector needs books. Let him have an allowance, that he has the use of the books on behalf of the allowance. Similarly concerning the preacher.<sup>302</sup>

Being a monk or preacher means basically the same thing — being fully dependent on Jesus Christ, whom they serve. This makes them different from other people who are dependent on their property and therefore trust primarily in their possessions. Preachers and *religiosi* trust foremost in God and their property is always communal, thereby owned by Christ himself. It is somehow surprising that on the issue of property Milicius compares the position of a preacher to that of a *religiosus*. The latter is a member of a community, generally an order, where he does not have to worry about his material well-being. The community is the owner of a small or even large amount of property and provides him with food and clothing. This offers an economic guarantee to its members, whereby they can still uphold the principles of living in poverty and of not owning property. The preacher on the other hand is not necessarily a member of an established community. He can be a *religiosus*, but also an ordinary priest who is allowed to own private property according to canon law. There is no order or

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<sup>302</sup> „Ubi cumque ergo in religione pauperes Christi se vocant et tamen divitias habent videlicet quod commune est sibi proprium usurpantes sunt raptore patrimonii Jhesu Christi et fures et latrones. Caveat etiam superior eorum ne eis aliquid indulgeat ut proprium habeant videlicet censum vel speciale comodum vel coquinam. Ex hac causa quia quecumque singuli habent non sunt eorum, sed communitatis. Cum ergo uni conceditur quod omni sine summa causa aliis iniuria infertur, votum frangitur et iuramentum. Nisi quis comunitati deserviret, ut lector indigens libris potest indultum (mg. habere), ut usum librorum habeat ex indulto. Similiter predicator.“ Omnes sancti, GD, XII D 1, fol. 141 v. See also p. 137 ff.

institution that defines the rights and duties of a preacher. Milicius himself was not a member of a monastic order but just a preacher.

In other words, the fact that Milicius differs between *religiosi* and *predicatores* suggests that to him preachers were a third group or community in church and society in addition to the clergy and laity. Preachers only have some material guarantees when they belong to a separate community. This hypothesis is then confirmed by the comparison of *prelati* and preachers, which Milicius made in the sermon on St. Procopius' Day about the question of pastoral care. In addition to these two constitutive elements in the church that are both bound by a vow — the religious orders and the secular clergy — there is a third group, the preachers, to whom rules about celibacy and poverty should also be applicable. When this is true, then it is no surprise that Milicius asked Pope Urban V in a letter to send preachers into the world to save the church from sin and decay.<sup>303</sup> Neither the clergy nor the *religiosi* would be able to fulfill this task, but only preachers because they carry the immanent eschatological power of God's Word.

In *Abortivus* we have seen similar ideas about the preacher in the sermon on the *Kathedra St. Petri*.<sup>304</sup> There Milicius distinguishes between three authorities that St. Peter's office has: one general over all people, one over the clergy and one over preachers. Preachers are again presented separately from the clergy. Preachers are responsible directly to the highest authority in the church, the pope.

It is striking that Milicius' opponents used precisely this point, that preachers are an independent group, against him in the letter they wrote to the pope. They professed that Milicius was founding a religious order in his community since its members were not allowed to possess private property. Three out of the 12 articles in their accusation they wrote to the pope focused on this point.<sup>305</sup> It looks as if they were not totally wrong. In his sermons in *Gratiae Dei* Milicius elevates the preacher to the same level as a cleric or monk. He defines a preacher as having several characteristics in common with the other two groups. In addition, the preacher has his own mission, which is different from that of the cleric or the monk — he

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<sup>303</sup>Epistola ad Papam Urbanum V, edited by Ferdinand Menčík, Milič a dva jeho spisy z r. 1367 [Milicius and Two of His Writings from the Year 1367], in: *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk*, Praha 1890, p. 318-325.

<sup>304</sup>See p. 122.

<sup>305</sup>Articles six to eight from the accusation deal with this issue. According to the sixth the community of Jerusalem had grown into an unofficial order with special habits; the seventh said that Milicius had applied for permission to found a parish and order in Jerusalem, but when the Prague authorities refused his proposal, he abused the pope, cardinals and every other church authority; the eighth article stated that when he was told that he could be excommunicated for founding a new order without permission, he said that the emperor would

has to convert sinners and divide between the good and the evil. The central message of Milicius' immanent eschatology is the element which distinguishes the preacher's role from clergy and religious orders.

The views in both *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei* on the role and significance of the preacher are very similar. Both see the preacher as a representative of the eschatological age, even when there is no sign of an immediate end of time. *Gratiae Dei* is working out this idea to an extent. *Abortivus* indicates in the sermon on St. Peter's seat that preachers are an independent element equal to the clergy and religious orders. It is most likely that the experiences he had in the community Jerusalem brought Milicius to formulate his ideas on this point. This is again a confirmation of our general impression of both postils and the differences between them. Compared to *Abortivus*, *Gratiae Dei* is the ripe fruit of a long period of work and preparation.

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defend him. The twelve articles are published by František Palacký, *Über Formelbücher zunächst in Bezug auf böhmische Geschichte*, II, Praha 1847, p. 183-184. See also p. 71 of this study.

## 2. Saints as Models of the Evangelical Life

In both his postils, Milicius gives 31 sermons for the days of particular saints. As we have seen in the investigation of the dating of the postils,<sup>306</sup> there are significant differences between them. The first postil, compiled by Milicius entitled *Abortivus*, does not contain sermons on the days of St. Martha, St. Giles (Egidius) or even St. Ludmilla. The second postil, *Gratiae Dei*, recognizes these feasts but does not provide homilies for St. Ambrose's or St. Luke's Day.

It is interesting to contemplate what importance the saints could have held to a strict preacher like Milicius de Chremsir. His close attention to moral issues of the life of the church and its members does not automatically include a vast admiration of saints. In fact, his view seems to be critical of the popular medieval veneration of saints that focused on their supernatural powers. Not so much the teaching or moral life of the saints, but those miraculous powers captured the main attention of common people, as scholars of medieval sainthood like Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell point out.<sup>307</sup> Saints were used as talismans in everyday life, because they had the power to intercede in favor of the believer. Popular ideas about saints were often at odds with the approach of the official church, which stressed to a much greater degree the doctrinal purity of these holy persons. Nevertheless, even to the church the *virtus signorum* — the proven miracle-working powers of saints — was decisive in the process of canonization.

It is important to realize that here we are not referring to facts about saints, but the way they were perceived by medieval people like the preacher Milicius. In this respect saints are a mirror of the times. As Aviad Kleinberg says, sainthood is not about an individual's charisma, but about communities shaping their ideas of sainthood around specific individuals.<sup>308</sup> Saints reflect the needs of the people who venerated them. It is therefore necessary to search for the aim of the person speaking or writing about saints.

At the same time, saints are an expression and confirmation of the hierarchy of life with God, saints being at the top and sinners at the bottom. For several reasons saints gained a place in

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<sup>306</sup>See p. 100 ff.

<sup>307</sup>Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society, The Two Worlds of Western Christendom 1000-1700*, Chicago-London 1982, p. 142. See also Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in their own Country. Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, Chicago-London, 1992 and Vauchez.

<sup>308</sup>Kleinberg, o.c., p. 4 ff.

the divine presence.<sup>309</sup> In this sense, sainthood did not bring ordinary people closer to experiencing God directly, but fixed the faithful at their position at the base of the hierarchy. Or, like Weinstein and Bell say, saints transfer responsibility from the individual to the venerating community.

It is true that saints can be guides to a spiritual life, and these great personalities reflect a life of faith and divine love. Popular medieval perception was, however, much more fascinated by their supernatural powers than by their moral behavior. In this way, the greater their sainthood is in the eyes of the common people, the greater is the distance between the people and the beloved saint. In such cases, saints are in the first place intercessors between us and God in heaven. They are not like us, rather they are the heroes of spiritual life, far above the sorrows of the everyday. Following them in their way of living is then simply not a question: they are substantially greater and thus different from us. The conclusion of this seems to be that morality, the main subject of Milicius' work, disappears in the presence of this type of veneration. What then is Milicius' perception of sainthood?

In general, Milicius provides sermons only for the days of those saints who lived in the early centuries of the church. He recognizes St. Thomas, St. John, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great and many others. The sainthood of these "witnesses" is always characterized by their martyrdom. They suffered for their faith. Only a few of the saints in both postils are from a later date. Among them we find St. Margaret and St. Giles. All other saints who do not stem from the early church are local saints, in one way or another linked to Bohemia.<sup>310</sup> A clear example of the last category are St. Elisabeth and St. Catherine. The appearance of the latter in Bohemia is for example closely connected to the emperorship of Charles IV, who very much supported her cult in his country, as he attributed the victory in his very first battle in 1332 to her. He devoted one of the chapels of Karlstein to this saint. Moreover, because St. Catherine was quite popular in Germany, Charles might have introduced her to build a bridge between Bohemia and the empire dominated by Germany.<sup>311</sup> For this aim he used a spiritual symbol

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<sup>309</sup>Weinstein and Bell, o.c., p. 240.

<sup>310</sup>See for this Gábor Klaniczay, *The Cult of Dynastic Saints in Central Europe: Fourteenth-Century Angevins and Luxemburgs*, in: *The Uses of Supernatural Power, The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe*, Cambridge 1990, p. 111-128; Rudolf Chadraha, *Profetický historismus Karla IV. a přemyslovská tradice* [Prophetic Historism of Charles IV and the Přemyslid Tradition] in: Václav Vaněček (ed.), *Karolus Quartus, Piae memoriae fundatoris sui universitas carolina, Sborník vědeckých prací o době, osobnosti a díle českého krále a římského císaře Karla IV.* [Collection of studies on the time, personality and work of the Czech king and Roman Emperor Charles IV], Praha 1984, p. 419-450.

<sup>311</sup>So Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl IV. Ein Kaiser in Europa, 1346 bis 1378*, München 1978, p. 392.

from outside Bohemia, introducing her to the public also by means of a biography.<sup>312</sup>

All other local saints are of Bohemian origin or have a direct connection to it. They are St. Adalbertus, St. Procopius, St. Ludmilla, St. Wenceslaus and St. Vitus.<sup>313</sup> The last one, not of Bohemian origin, has been one of the patrons of the cathedral at the Prague Castle from its earliest existence. In general, we can say that Milicius pays attention only to the main saints from the “international” church — which is an obligatory approach — and to the local Bohemian saints, who have a greater identity and impact in the Bohemian environment. Two important saints venerated in the Bohemian country do, surprisingly, not occur in Milicius’ calendar: St. Cyril and Methodius, the Byzantine missionaries who brought Christianity to Bohemia in the ninth century. The reason for this probably is the novelty of their cult in the fourteenth century. Thanks to Charles IV they got a place in the liturgy after being forgotten for several centuries.

In this part of the study we concentrate mainly on the five saints mentioned earlier and the sermons on them in order to grasp the significance of saints to Milicius. The two sermons on All Saint’s Day also provide us with useful information and are therefore included in this discussion.

## 2.1. St. Wenceslaus

St. Wenceslaus is considered the main saint in the Czech Lands. Even today, his statue looks out over Prague from the top of the Wenceslaus Square, where it was put at the beginning of the first Czech independence. He is the good king who will save Bohemia in times of great trouble. In 1918, the year of the founding of Czechoslovakia, the cathedral in Prague Castle was not finished yet. Basically only the choir and the transepts were erected. In an effort to finish this national symbol, of which St. Wenceslaus was one of the patrons, enormous energy and money were spent to finish the work of Emperor Charles IV, who saw Wenceslaus as his great example. The building was finished and reopened in 1929, not by accident in the year of St. Wenceslaus’ millennial anniversary.<sup>314</sup>

Saints from the nobility are a special chapter in medieval holiness. Also in medieval days,

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<sup>312</sup>Život svatě Katařiny [The Life of St. Catherine], edited in: Josef Hrabák e.a., *Dvě legendy z doby Karlovy* [Two Legends from Charles’ Age], Praha 1959, p. 93 ff.

<sup>313</sup>For Czech saints see Jaroslav Kadlec (ed.), *Bohemia sancta, životopisy českých světců a přátel Božích* [Biographies of Czech Saints and Friends of God], Praha 1989.

power had something of an ambiguous character, giving occasion for both corruption and for holiness. In the words of Weinstein and Bell: “For both princes and prelates the possession of power was an opportunity to cultivate the virtue of humility; to command obedience and yet to remain as humble as the lowliest of one’s subjects was a saintly manifestation of that Christ-like virtue.”<sup>315</sup> The public need for their sainthood may lay in the effect it had on the country: their sanctity sanctifies the country.<sup>316</sup> The king can be an intercessor in heaven on behalf of the country. For the church, royal sainthood offered an opportunity to further christianize the secular structures and fight the remains of paganism. This sainthood could emphasize the ideal of the *rex bonus*, „the good king“ or *rex justus*, „the just king“ in that they collaborate with the church and can even be *ac si bonus sacerdos*, „like a good priest.“

The medieval cult of St. Wenceslaus had an important aim for those in power since it legitimized their authority. He was one of the first and, moreover, the main representative of the House of the Přemyslids, which ruled Bohemia for several centuries. The authority of this house was given by God, which was symbolized by St. Wenceslaus. Sermons about Wenceslaus therefore must necessarily deal with the question of legitimate power. To speak about Wenceslaus is to speak about the symbol of power and discuss the question of power in general. Zdeněk Uhlíř has made an inventory of all sermons, legends and other texts about St. Wenceslaus from the high and late Middle Ages, grouping them according to two paradigms.<sup>317</sup> The first one was in support of the king, the second in support of the nobility. The paradigms are a theological reflection on the endless struggle of power between the two sides. Fundamental to all texts and paradigms is the legend *Oriente iam sole* from the second half of the thirteenth century. In the first quarter of the fourteenth century, Peregrinus de Opolí published his biography on St. Wenceslaus, which may have influenced Milicius’ understanding of the good king. “It is true that Saint Wenceslaus here as a model or *exemplum* does not cease to be monarch; nevertheless, the understanding of his figure does not legitimize the dynasty or the abstract royal power, but legitimizes the *nobiles et divites*, the nobility, and not only this, but most likely also the so-called old patriciate.”<sup>318</sup>

In the third quarter of the fourteenth century, a second version of *Oriente iam sole* was

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<sup>314</sup>Anežka Merhautová, *Katedrála sv. Víta*, Praha 1994. On the occasion of the millennium feast, Josef Pekař published his *Svatý Václav* (Praha 1929).

<sup>315</sup>Weinstein and Bell, p. 158

<sup>316</sup>Vauchez, p. 190 ff.

<sup>317</sup>Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku* [Literary Sources of the Cult and Veneration of St. Wenceslaus in the High and Late Middle Ages], Praha 1996.

<sup>318</sup>Uhlíř, p. 22.



published, most likely originating from Roudnice. It presents a new synthesis by gathering all known facts about Wenceslaus. It also reworked political-theological legitimation of the power of ruling. It takes not only the kingdom into account, but also the second structure of power in the country, the nobility. This new version of the old legend is characterized by a strong emphasis on the Eucharist, which is a characteristic of the Bohemian *devotio moderna*, especially in the monasteries. This cult of the Eucharist could be a threat, because it implied also a profound democratization of the faith.<sup>319</sup>

Little is known about the historical figure Wenceslaus.<sup>320</sup> He was king of Bohemia at the beginning of the tenth century. Tradition says he was a peaceful king, who preferred praying to ruling the country. Most likely on 28 September 935<sup>321</sup> he was murdered by his brother Boleslaus, possibly for political reasons, but certainly because of envy. Boleslaus became king after his brother was assassinated. The famous scene of the murder at a church in Stará Boleslav shows Wenceslaus trying to escape into the church, which was unfortunately closed. After Boleslaus' take-over no major political changes took place.

Milicius uses the sermon on St. Wenceslaus's Day (28 September) in *Abortivus* to introduce a classical text from Psalms 104 (105),<sup>21</sup> („He made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions“). In the *prothema*, princes are compared to preachers, because they, too, work with the Word of God. St. Wenceslaus reigned over his people according to the Law of God.

“A king then is the one who does not put to shame, is not caught in a reprehensible act or speech, since he should be firm in life. And he is perfect in words as if he were a prophet.” (..) So blessed Wenceslaus reigned over the people entrusted to him according to divine law, while he flourished through a prophetic spirit.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>319</sup>Uhlíř, p. 26 ff.

<sup>320</sup>For St. Wenceslaus see Jiří Hošna, *Druhý život svatého Václava* [The Second Life of St. Wenceslaus], Praha 1997; Pavla Obrazová, Jan Vlk, *Maior Gloria, svatý kníže Václav* [The Holy Prince Wenceslaus], Praha 1994; Dušan Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců. Vstup Čechů do dějin (530-935)* [The Beginnings of the Premyslids. The Entry of the Czechs into History], Praha 1997.

<sup>321</sup>Some date the murder of Wenceslaus on 28 September 929. For this discussion see Třeštík, p. 428 ff.

<sup>322</sup>„Rex igitur est qui non erubescat, nec in actu reprehendatur vel redarguatur in sermonibus eo quod vita debeat fundatus. Et verbis itaque quod quamvis perfectus, ita esset propheta.“ St. Wenceslaus, A, I D 37, fol. 213 rb. The quotation is from St. Ambrose, *Super beati immaculati*, lib. 6, vs. 5. The link between Wenceslaus and his prophetic spirit is also made in the *Antifonarium* of Arnestus de Pardubicz, where the third antiphon in the second nocturn says: “Spiritu prophetico vir sanctus florebat, dum verbo veridico multa predicabat.” See Dobroslav Orel, *Svatováclavský sborník na památku 1000. výročí knížete Václava svatého, II, 3, Hudební prvky*

The first part of the *sermo* distinguishes between obedience, prudence and justice when speaking about the question of power given by God. A human being is created by God in order to obey him. Also a person who has power owes obedience to God, because he has received his power from God. Ruling means at the same time serving. Also St. Wenceslaus was subject and obedient to God. Milicius paints an almost monastic image of Wenceslaus: „humble in glory, poor in riches, refusing the world and chaste in wealth.“<sup>323</sup> Neither force of weapons nor the splendor of property is the sign of real power, but humility and poverty. Then Milicius gives in more abstract terms a kind of definition of a good ruler. “Secondly, in him who bears the office of ruler of the church or of the Christian people there should be serviceable providence, that he is generous and virtuous to his subjects and that he returns to God all virtue, which he has received from God.”<sup>324</sup>

The practice of such a ruler is similar to Wenceslaus, who founded the church of Prague, dedicated himself to God, and cared for the poor who were robbed by the rulers.

The power given by God is to be used to fight the lack of order in the world. Milicius does not have a very positive image of the world where demons, enemies and the flesh try to deceive us and establish the reign of darkness. God invests rulers like Wenceslaus with power in order to establish the reign of justice. In a quotation from St. Ambrose, Milicius compares this conflict with the conflict between rulers and prophets. The tyrants of darkness can be very strong, but they will never be able to prevail over the good, he concludes. He implicitly calls St.

Wenceslaus a prophet rather than a ruler.

This conflict is again demonstrated by the stories of Saul and David or by Cain and Abel.

Wenceslaus, *clarissimus princeps ecclesie sancte*, “the most distinguished prince of the holy church,” reflects the life of Abel, since he too was murdered by his brother. He lost the reign over his kingdom, but gained the eternal kingdom by his martyrdom.<sup>325</sup> The end of the sermon

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*svatováclavské* [Studies on St. Wenceslaus on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of his death, II, 3, Musical elements in the cult of St. Wenceslaus], Praha 1937, p. 471. See also p. 141 and p. 164.

<sup>323</sup> „Nam humilis in gloria fuit pauper in divitiis, mundi refutans, gaudia castus in delitiis.“ St. Wenceslaus, A, I D 37, fol. 213 va. Milicius is quoting from the Antiphon to the Magnificat „Gaude felix bohemia.“ See Orel, p. 343.

<sup>324</sup> „Secundo in eo qui constitutus est in principem ecclesie vel populi christiani debet esse utilis providentia, ut erga suos subditos sit beneficus et virtuosus et omnem virtutem a Deo recipiens ad Deum referat.“ St. Wenceslaus, A, I D 37, fol. 213 va.

<sup>325</sup> „Beatus ergo Wenceslaus tamquam, clarissimus princeps ecclesie sancte, vita sancta sicut Abel refulsit. Sedebant autem principes adversus eum, martyr videlicet eius et frater eius Boleslaus ut Caym invidens eius sanctitati cupiditate dominandi, dum in Boleslavia convivium fecerunt et eum invitaverunt ut occiderent, ubi cum regno suum principatu privare putabant, ibi ad regnum eternum per martirium provexerunt.“ St. Wenceslaus, A, I D 37, fol. 215 ra.

describes in detail how St. Wenceslaus was murdered.

The sermon on St. Wenceslaus in *Abortivus* offers an image of the saint as a good and holy ruler. Leadership is not about power and glory, but about serving the poor and fighting darkness. The way Wenceslaus reigned is the way God wants kings and rulers to govern. Necessarily, St. Wenceslaus had his enemies, including his own brother Boleslaus who finally murdered him. Milicius points out that this image is repeated in several stories from the Bible. Milicius does not doubt that authority comes from God. Structures of power in society are given by God and have to be accepted. Milicius, however, asks a moral question of those in power. Authority has its aim in fighting disorder and evil. When a leader does not fulfill this mission given to him by God, he associates himself with darkness. Tyrants, therefore, do not deserve any respect, because they deny God and his commandments. The consequence of this line of thought is a conditional obedience to authority. If a ruler is spreading the reign of darkness instead of light, it is no longer our duty to follow and obey him.

The homily in *Gratiae Dei* on St. Wenceslaus' Day discusses a second biblical text, which is also commonly applied to the image of a good king, Mt 16,26 ("For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?"). It is worthless to strive for temporal profit if God's truth is absent, the *prothema* states. Preachers have to dedicate themselves to the truth of the gospel, because only in this way can they gain eternity for their soul.

The pericope that the homily comments on begins in verse 24, which is about following Christ. Milicius adds that it is not important what one's background is. Everybody is equal when it comes to their ability to follow Christ: be it woman or man, king or servant, ruled or ruler.<sup>326</sup> Wenceslaus followed Christ even when he was king, carrying his cross in his heart. He refused to wear a *cilicium*, a kind of shirt, under his clothes. Even in winter he frequently visited chapels to the saints and gave firewood to the poor. He did hard labor with his own hands, preparing wine and bread for the sacrifice of the altar, which he served himself, Milicius says. St. Wenceslaus is the king-priest, which is similar to the image presented in the *Abortivus* sermon where Wenceslaus was inspired by a prophetic spirit. These characteristics are quite unusual among rulers, Milicius comments in a critical note.<sup>327</sup> Wenceslaus was a true follower of Christ, even when his mother tried to prevent him from taking that path.

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<sup>326</sup> „Id est si mulier, si vir, si rex, si servus, si regens, si rectus.“ St. Wenceslaus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 122 r.

<sup>327</sup> See p. 142.

What a loss it is, not to have the courage to suffer for Christ and gain the eternal crown, Milicius laments. For the evil ones have the courage to suffer for the devil, even when the consequence is eternal penance. Christ, however, assists and comforts us when we follow him, while the evil-doers cannot expect any support.

In the main verse of the pericope (v. 26) Milicius comments that if someone continues sinning, his soul has to expect the coming damnation. What was Boleslaus gaining when he murdered his brother? True, his profit was reign over the country, but because of this *fratricidium* he had to suffer the penance of damnation. Therefore, “let us break the desire of earthly longings, which is to carry the cross in times of peace, as in times of persecution to carry the cross means to die for Christ.”<sup>328</sup>

Again Milicius uses the story of St. Wenceslaus to criticize the rulers of his day. They are just the opposite of the saint, for they are concerned with gathering more property and selling souls. The righteous, however, give from their own possessions.

Blessed Wenceslaus by following [Christ] poured out his blood and gave his support to those who returned from slavery under foreign nations. He exchanged his money rightly for the souls of gentiles and liberated them. Our people, however, exchange and sell their own souls to the devil *pro robotis* (?), i.e. for the service of the poor and servitude, forcing them to subject themselves to their ownership with their lives and money, just as a horse is a mule — they use men as animals.<sup>329</sup>

Like the sermon in *Abortivus*, the Wenceslaus homily in *Gratiae Dei* is practically about being a good ruler.<sup>330</sup> However, the point of view on a leader's duties is more general. It is the duty of everybody to carry a cross, serve the poor and thus to gain eternal peace, no matter whether he is a king or servant. There is no principal difference between human beings in this sense. Anyone who is a follower of Christ, will gain the same reward, just as anyone who is like Boleslaus and is only striving for temporal profit will have to suffer the eternal penance. Wenceslaus is a saint not so much because he was a leader protecting his people from evil and

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<sup>328</sup> „Frangamus ergo desiderium terrenarum concupiscentiarum, quia hoc est crucem portare tempore pacis, sicut tempore persecutionis crucem portare est mori pro Christo.“ St. Wenceslaus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 122 v.

<sup>329</sup> „Beatus hunc Wenceslaus imitando sanguinem suum fudit et substantiam suam per gentibus in servitutem reditis tribuit. Bene comutavit pecunias pro animabus gentilium et eos liberavit. Nostri autem comutant et vendunt dyabolo animas proprias pro robotis (?), id est pro angariis pauperum et servitute cogentes eos proprietati sue et vita et pecuniis deservire, sicut equus et mul[us] utuntur enim hominibus sicut brutis.“ St. Wenceslaus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 123 r.

injustice, but because he fulfilled the commands of love given by Christ to everyone. His story is again an excellent illustration of the way Christ asks us to follow him.

Unlike *Abortivus*, the homily from *Gratiae Dei* is addressed to everybody. *Abortivus* gives us some principles of the good sovereign, while *Gratiae Dei* offers us the principles of following Christ. The fact that Milicius openly criticizes the rulers of his time more directly than in *Abortivus*, does not dismiss the more general tenor of the homily. *Gratiae Dei* again offers a perspective that is more accessible to everyone in the audience by presenting a personal and concrete kind of sainthood. It is not explained very much why St. Wenceslaus is canonized, but rather what sainthood means to us in the case of good King Wenceslaus. The homily concentrates rather on the moral principles that come out of the biblical text, instead of elaborating on the theme of how one rules well as in the Wenceslaus sermon in *Abortivus*. Zdeněk Uhlíř sees in the *Abortivus* sermon a synthesis of the ideas of Peregrinus de Opolí and the later reform views of early Hussite preachers.<sup>331</sup> According to him, Peregrinus was the defender of the interests of the nobility at the expense of the king's authority. However, all we can say with certainty is that Milicius is by no means explicitly defending the rights of either king or nobility. He gives a view on the duties of rulers in general. Implicitly, however, he also stresses the necessity of accepting any authority given by God, because its substance is divine. In the concrete circumstances of the fourteenth century, this also must have lent support to the rights of the king, since he was a descendant of St. Wenceslaus.

## 2.2. St. Adalbertus

The life of St. Adalbertus had many highs and lows and was full of unexpected changes.<sup>332</sup> He was a descendant of the House of the Slavnikids, which ruled the greater part of North Eastern Bohemia. In 982 he became the second bishop of the diocese of Prague, which became independent in 973. For several reasons, he did not gain much support from the mightiest house in Bohemia, the Přemyslid. The most powerful reason for this was certainly the rivalry between the two houses, which ended in a massacre of the Slavnikids whence St. Adalbertus escaped to safer places. Nevertheless, even the concept and vision of his work was a source of conflict with the king. He spent some time in Germany, and finally he went to

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<sup>330</sup>See p. 141.

<sup>331</sup>Uhlíř, p. 31.

<sup>332</sup>For Adalbertus see Jaroslav V. Polc (ed), *Svatý Vojtěch, sborník k mileniu* [Collected Studies on the occasion of the Millennium], Praha 1997; Kadlec, p. 85 ff.

Poland and Prussia to bring the gospel to pagan communities. During his efforts he was killed by the Prussians in 997. Soon after his death, his bones were transported to Prague, where today they are among the relics of the St. Vitus Cathedral. For this reason he became one of the patrons of the cathedral, together with St. Vitus and St. Wenceslaus.

Milicius includes sermons about St. Adalbertus both in *Abortivus* and in *Gratiae Dei*. The sermon in *Abortivus* based on John 15,1 (“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser”) opens with the general remark that the innocent blood of martyrs is an appeal to us. Their faith and innocence are a call to our spirits and senses, a recommendation to follow the suffering of those spiritual role models. In the *sermo*, Milicius states that martyrdom is the ultimate way to follow Christ. Through his suffering as human flesh, Christ sacrificed himself and offered us the sweetness of his sacraments: “Likewise we should follow Christ to the battle and thence to the victory.”<sup>333</sup>

This was also what St. Adalbertus did. His adherence to Christ consisted of uniting the church in Bohemia: „So did blessed Adalbertus, because he untied the donkey, the church of Bohemia, from many errors and bound it, unifying it with Christ.”<sup>334</sup> However, he met with a lot of resistance and had to leave the country. He asked the pope in Rome for advice and consent for his plans. Milicius compares the pressure and resistance of Adalbertus’ enemies with the pressing that a grape requires in order to become wine. After the murder of his entire family, St. Adalbertus left Bohemia again. Milicius calls this decision the fruit of the *iustitia interne contemplationis*, “the justice of an inner contemplation,” and he adds: “In this we must follow him, that we do not abandon justice when much is offered to us, that we in this way can be martyrs and even if we do not pour out our blood, we live piously and saintly.”<sup>335</sup>

Milicius is searching for ways in which his audience can imitate the life of the saints. How can someone have a holy life without being threatened and persecuted by some enemies? The key to answering this question Milicius finds in a kind of internalization of sainthood. Everybody can be a martyr, even without pouring out his blood. The only necessity is to live quietly, in holiness and piety. Sainthood is accessible to everyone. This holy life also has its fruits in that it gives us spiritual children and is in a sense the life of paradise. These sons and daughters are

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<sup>333</sup> „Ideo nos sequi deberemus Christum ad pugnam et per consequens ad coronam.“ St. Adalbertus, A, I D 37, fol. 103 rb.

<sup>334</sup> „Sic fecit beatus Adalbertus, quoniam solvit asinum ecclesiam Bohemie ab erroribus multis et alligavit uniens Christo.“ St. Adalbertus, A, I D 37, fol. 103 va.

received not through seduction, but through the way of the spirit, *per adiutorium rationis*.

This is the way Adalbertus received his spiritual children: “He begot spiritually Bohemians, and other nations, Poles and Prussians.”<sup>336</sup>

In the section following *ex quibus verbis*, St. Adalbertus is depicted once more as an *exemplum Christi*, an “example of Christ.” The sermon still uses images of the vineyard, calling Adalbertus the planter of the spiritual vineyard of the church of Bohemia. He was like Noah, who planted a vineyard after the flood as a sign of God’s love. In a spiritual sense, the flood represents a situation characterized by lack of truth, mercy and knowledge of God on earth. Moreover, hatred, murder, revenge and adultery rule during such a time. This was also the situation in Bohemia, when St. Adalbertus became bishop of Prague. In those times, Milicius says, one man — including the clergy — usually had many women. There was no justice and, as a sign of the total wickedness of the times, he adds in the usual anti-Semitic spirit of his time: “Tyrants sold the Christians to the Jews.”<sup>337</sup>

*Tertio* tells us about St. Adalbertus’ death when he was killed by the Prussians. He is again symbolized by the grape that is then poured out as wine. His murderers cut off his arms and legs, then his head, as a grape is severed from the vine.

The homily from *Gratiae Dei* on St. Adalbertus’ Day is about the same text as the sermon from *Abortivus*, John 15,1. The big difference, however, is that the homily does not even once refer to St. Adalbertus. The saint is also not mentioned at the beginning of the homily, where we usually find an address referring to the particular day. Only in the upper margin of the manuscript XIV D 5 do we read “Adalberti.” Other copies attribute this homily generally to St. Adalbertus, St. Georgius and to whichever other saint.

The symbolic theme of the homily — the vineyard and the grapes — is explained however in the same way as in *Abortivus*. Milicius believes the significance of the parable of St. John lies in the image of the grape being pressed into wine. Martyrs are in this way also food for the church or, better yet, fertilizer needed by the church for growth.

Because saints entrust their bodies to the earth, they bring much profit, not only with a physical plowshare, but also with the plowshare of (spiritual) divine culture,. Hence, our

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<sup>335</sup> „In hoc ergo ipsum sequi debemus, ne cum nobis multa offeruntur, iustitiam deseramus, ut et per hoc martires esse possimus et si non sanguinem fundendo tamen pie et sancte vivendo.“ St. Adalbertus, A, I D 37, fol. 103 va.

<sup>336</sup> „Bohemos et alios romanes Polonos et Prucenos spiritualiter generavit.“ St. Adalbertus, A, I D 37, fol. 103 vb.

<sup>337</sup> „Tyranni etiam vendebant christianos Iudeis.“ St. Adalbertus, A, I D 37, fol. 104 rb.

veneration of them is right. If we do not imitate them only in words alone but also in habits, then we too will bear fruit.<sup>338</sup>

In this parable, the homily is stating that the church is the vine, which has as many grapes as there are martyrs. And, at the same time, the church drinks their precious wine, the blood of the martyrs. It is a more vivid way of illustrating the idea that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. We, the audience, have to follow and imitate the martyrs. Our martyrdom is to lead the life of Christ and to carry our cross. It is not necessary to be a spiritual hero or do great deeds. Martyrdom is a part of normal, daily life, according to Milicius. One has to concentrate on one's own personal life and on God's commandments on how to live. Martyrdom has become a personal and individual dimension of everyday life. It is not supposed to be easy, because only through many difficulties can we enter into the Kingdom of God. Therefore, let us flee from pleasure and glorify in misery, Milicius says. Only in this way can we gain eternal life, where no enemy can come.

### 2.3. St. Vitus

The main reason why both *Abortivus* and in *Gratiae Dei* dedicate a sermon to St. Vitus is that he is a patron of the cathedral in Prague Castle. Charles IV ordered a new church to be built on the place of the existing one.<sup>339</sup> The new cathedral, just like the old one, was dedicated to three saints: St. Adalbertus, St. Wenceslaus and St. Vitus. It is in a twist of history that only the name of St. Vitus is used to identify the church today. The fact is that the second one of the three saints was far more important to the cathedral, to the house of the king and to the Czechs generally. Even today at the heart of the church is the chapel of St. Wenceslaus, the symbol of the Czechs.

According to the legend St. Vitus, who was born in Sicily, was tortured in Rome.<sup>340</sup> An angel brought him then to Southern Italy where he died and was burnt. Historically it is more likely that he died in Sicily, probably in 304-305. The main impulse for his cult in Bohemia came from Wenceslaus, who on Prague castle built a chapel devoted to St. Vitus. The saint may

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<sup>338</sup> „Sancti enim quia terram corporis sui tradiderunt, non solum ferro corporali, sed etiam (mg. spiritali) culture divine, id est fructum multum attulerunt. Et merito ipsos veneramur. Sic tamen si ipsos non solum verbis, sed et moribus imitamur, sic et nos ad fructificandum notare debemus.“ St. Adalbertus, GD, XIV D 5, fol. 189 v.

<sup>339</sup> Anežka Merhautová (ed.), *Katedrála sv. Víta*, Praha 1994.

<sup>340</sup> For St. Vitus and Bohemia see Kadlec, p. 72 ff.



have been known in the country due to the missionary activities of Cyril and Methodius and their followers who spread the cult also in Eastern Europe. Wenceslaus brought some of his relics to Prague, an example which was followed later by Charles IV. Vitus was seen as one of the patrons of the country.

Milicius preaches on St. Vitus's Day, 15 June, on the text "In his arduous contest she gave him victory" from The Wisdom of Solomon 10,12. The life of this saint was that of a holy war, which everyone, a preacher in particular, has to fight in the name of Christ. It is necessary to have sharp weapons in this war, which are provided by the Word of God. When preachers are not sent by God, they just drift about without any orientation and obscure the way to truth. But when we fight in truth, anything can be conquered through preaching. Even in front of the rulers and princes and the son of men preachers have to bring the Word to the people through their acts and speech without fear.<sup>341</sup>

The rest of the sermon is not addressed in particular to preachers, but rather it elaborates on the theme of the holy war and the fight against evil. In holy war there are three enemies, the sermon says: the flesh, the world and the devil. St. Vitus had experience with all of these during his lifetime. He served God from his childhood, which caused him to come into conflict with his father. He was thrown out of a window by his father, but survived miraculously because seven angels guarded him. The assistance of the angels gave him the strength to resist the attacks of the flesh by demons, tyrants and women. Martyrs, Milicius says, do not fear their enemies. Even when undergoing the most horrible tortures — he mentions some of them in a catalogue — they do not renounce their faith, but gain the victory of eternity.

"Blessed is the man who suffers temptation because as he has been tested, he will gain the crown of life."<sup>342</sup> This sentence at the beginning of the section *in quibus verbis* summarizes the whole sermon. The spiritual battle has to be accepted for five reasons: for the faith, for salvation, for guarding the *pax hominibus*, to annihilate the pride of men and to train the righteous.<sup>343</sup> This time the whole church is encouraged to learn from St. Vitus' example of how he fought the holy war:

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<sup>341</sup> „Portemus in bello spirituali crucis vexillum et delicias lutum putemus. Portemus inquam nomine eius, opere et sermone coram regibus et principibus et filiis hominum.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 141 va.

<sup>342</sup> „Beatus enim vir qui suffert temptationem, quoniam cum probatus fuerit accipiet coronam vite.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 142 ra.

<sup>343</sup> See p. 152.

Blessed Vitus undertook war in order to look after the faith and peace and well-being of the church, not only against those from outside, but also against his father, because Christ came to separate man, i.e. a son against his father, as is said in Mt. 10,35.

Likewise the church, if it fights against those who are outside or those who belong to it, mourns for those who are killed and is comforted by those who have peace, which peace procured through wars such as David fought.<sup>344</sup>

In the duty of this pastoral care, St. Vitus had mercy on Valerian, the son of the Emperor Diocletian. He liberated the child from demons and put the light back in his eyes.

Saints and martyrs fight the holy war also by „peaceful“ means, for example by suffering injustices. They survive by their will to attain peace, which cannot be forced to fight a war. This is the peace of paradise, which can and will be reached only in and with the Holy Spirit. It knows no contradiction between the flesh and the soul.

St. Vitus won the holy war he fought with the emperor. God ruined the temples full of idols that the emperor had erected. Diocletian tried to escape his fate, but died while fleeing. Milicius concludes: “Behold how the patience of St. Vitus, strengthened by suffering, subdued the mightiest enemies.”<sup>345</sup> It is the perseverance of the faithful, which conquers all enemies and brings the eternal victory to the holy martyrs. St. Vitus demonstrated this faith during his life and received the crown of the kingdom of heaven.

Thematically *Gratiae Dei* just continues with the topic of St. Vitus in the same direction as *Abortivus*. The homily is based on a text, which is also quoted in the *Abortivus* version: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace but the sword” (Mt. 10,34). The *prothema* is again addressed to preachers, who have the sword of the word, which gives them the power to separate the good from the evil.<sup>346</sup>

Also in the main part of the homily the language of war is used. Like an army, the church needs unity to fight the enemy. The church may be longing for peace, but on earth it will

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<sup>344</sup> „Beatus ergo Vitus propter fidem et pacem et salutem ecclesie procurandam bellum suscepit, non solum adversus extraneos sed etiam contra patrem quia venit Christus separare hominem, id est filium adversus patrem suum, sicut dicitur Mt.10 (35). Ita ecclesia si pugnat contra extraneos sive suos doleat de pereuntibus et consoletur de pacem habentibus, que pax per bella procuratur sicut fecit David (..).“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 142 rb.

<sup>345</sup> „Ecce quomodo patientia sancti Viti passionibus roborata hostes fortissimos sic devicit.“ St. Vitus, A, I D 37, fol. 142 vb.

always be a false peace. It is the task of preachers to disclose this false peace by cutting off the good from the devil. It is necessary to accomplish this task of separating all the time, while being prepared for hatred and martyrdom.

Even becoming separated from one's family and beloved as stated in Mt. 10,37 is good and necessary, Milicius says. "Let us separate from the friends of the world." Those friends of the world are those, who commit the seven deadly sins: they are the proud, the lustful, the covetous, the angry, the envious, the gluttonous and the slothful.<sup>347</sup> We have to carry our cross, which means killing those parts of ourselves that are captive to matters of the earth and damning the voluptuous spirit in our life. Only then can we enter eternal life.

The homily concludes with a short reference to some of St. Vitus' virtues. He lived according to the strict principles of the text of the homily. He left his father and his friends "in order to receive Christ and his gospel, and he gave not only a cup of cold water, but also his own blood for Christ."<sup>348</sup> His way of life brought him martyrdom and a cruel death.

In both sermons about St. Vitus, Milicius deduces from the life of the saint some principles for preachers primarily but also for the church as a whole. In *Abortivus* Milicius addresses preachers only in the *prothema*, while in *Gratiae Dei* he does so in the main part of the homily. Both sermons offer some details from the life of St. Vitus, but *Abortivus* is more extensive in this. The structure of *Abortivus* is that of a classical scholastic sermon, which seems to offer more opportunities to concentrate on the saint's life. The sermon is about St. Vitus, whose life is compared to the biblical text on which the sermon is based. Because of the fact that this kind of sermon is thematic, more attention can be paid to the subject. In *Abortivus*, St. Vitus is the subject of the sermon, but is discussed within the idea of the holy war. Biblical references are no more than an illustration of the saint's holiness. In this respect, *Gratiae Dei* is just the opposite — it is above all a commentarial homily on a larger biblical text and adds to it stories from the life of St. Vitus. Here St. Vitus is the illustration, which results in a more profound — but more abstract as well — emphasis on the text and its message, that is separation from evil. This message, compared to the one in *Abortivus*, requires the audience to be more active. They have to separate themselves from everything that might put them under the power of Satan. Our conclusion is again that *Gratiae Dei*

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<sup>346</sup>St. Vitus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 30 r. See p. 174.

<sup>347</sup>St. Vitus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 31 r - 31 v. See also p. 164.

<sup>348</sup>„Ut reciperet Christum et ewangelium eius et non solum calicem aque frigide, sed et sanguinem proprium pro Christo dedit.“ St. Vitus, GD, XII D 1, fol. 31 v.

stresses more the moral impact of the message on the audience's daily lives.

The sermons give us a clear foundation for establishing the reasons for St. Vitus' sainthood. St. Vitus is holy because of the holy or spiritual war he fought with evil, sin and tyrants. This is also the task of the church (*Abortivus*). Or, more concretely, the faithful have to separate themselves from evil (*Gratiae Dei*).

## 2.4. St. Procopius

Another saint whose vocation was in the church is St. Procopius, the founder of the monastery at the Sázava river, which is located about 40 kilometers southeast of Prague. Today, some buildings in the monastery still stand on the top of a hill next to the ruins of the once impressive church. Like many other famous monasteries and institutes, it was closed by Josef II during his reforms in 1785. Once this house was a center of Christianity and Bohemian culture. As one of few monasteries in the region, it had permission to practice the old Slavonic rite in the language of the apostles of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyril and Methodius. Little is known about the life of St. Procopius.<sup>349</sup> According to his earliest biography, written by the end of the 11th century, he was married and had a son. Probably in the beginning of the 11th century he founded a convent on the Sázava, which became an abbey under a Benedictine rule in 1032. Nevertheless Procopius cultivated the liturgy in the Slavonic language instead of in the usual Latin. His relationship to the ruling house of the Přemyslids and the bishop of Prague was close. The Slavonic rite did not survive long after Procopius' death. After a first exile in the 1060s, the monks of Sázava had to leave their monastery definitively in 1096, and the new inhabitants introduced the Western Latin rite. In 1204 Procopius was canonized. He became a very popular saint in Bohemia, as the many editions of his biography may prove. Also Charles IV was his venerator. In 1347 he founded the Emaus monastery in Prague, which as a center of the Slavonic liturgy was a continuation of St. Procopius' legacy. St. Procopius' feast is on 4 July.

The sermon from *Abortivus* again describes for us in a lively manner quite a few details about the life of St. Procopius. The text for this sermon is from Proverbs 30,31 ("The strutting cock"), which is in the translation of the Vulgate: "Gallus succinctus limbos." St. Procopius

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<sup>349</sup>For Procopius see Kadlec, p. 126 ff. For the Sázava monastery see Pavel Vlček, Petr Sommer and Dušan Foltýn (ed.), *Encyklopedie českých klášterů* [Encyclopedia of Czech Monasteries], Praha 1997, p. 632 ff.

is, of course, compared to the cock, which is here the symbol of a preacher. As a result of this, the sermon presents the saint mainly as a great preacher.<sup>350</sup> During the night of infidelity and sin, Procopius spread the light of the gospel along the borders of the Sázava river, navigating those who are in trouble through the storm, as Christ did on the Sea of Galilee. The ship in trouble symbolizes the church, which is in need of rest and safety. “But when Christ and blessed Procopius were preaching, the sea, i.e. the world, became placid and the boat of the church became quiet,”<sup>351</sup> the *prothema* concludes.

In the subsequent part of the sermon, several stories and miracles about St. Procopius are told. His preaching and his healing were instruments for enlightening people. After his death he also saved a woman by the name of Labessa from certain death by enabling her to escape from her persecutor, Prince Spitigneus, the ruler who forced the monks of Sázava for the first time to leave their monastery. Procopius prayed all night, longing for meditation and solitude. The aim of this work was to bring relief and love to people.

Pastors, who must care for their people, should learn from St. Procopius how to tend their flock. Like a cock always on his guard with one eye watching the sky and with the second on the earth, so too those who hear confession and especially prelates must watch their people. They must be harsh with the obstinate and gentle with the humble. Through this approach they can transform people as Procopius did. He changed the avarice of some people he met into a spiritual wine, or the piety of true believers.

Also St. Procopius resisted the devil, creating a holy place out of a pagan place. Until his death, he was as firm as a guard, taking care that the devil did not regain his former property, i.e. the souls of the converted. Milicius does not have a high estimation of his audience’s ability to resist evil. “What about us?,” he asks, “we who are so strong and wise and yet cannot resist the devil.”<sup>352</sup> He advises those who are weak to remain in Christ, where the devil cannot win him over.

Finally, St. Procopius liberated others from the bonds of carnal temptation. In this way, the church in the early times was planted, Milicius says. Saints adored poverty, renounced riches and practised self-constraint. Milicius stresses once more the significance of poverty for clerics. The last remarks of the sermon are written in a very direct way:

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<sup>350</sup>See p. 161.

<sup>351</sup>„Sed Christo et beato Procopio predicante mare i.e. seculum placatur et navicula ecclesie quietatur.“ St. Procopius, A, I D 37, fol. 156 va.

<sup>352</sup>„Quid ergo nos qui quando fortes et sani sumus, dyabolo non resistimus.“ St. Procopius, A, I D 37, fol. 157 va.

But if you say: “I need to own riches to live with my friends the poor,” be careful lest, while wanting to display a pious work, you rob yourself all too easily from your eternal reward. Which is the case if the poor are denied what they need and yet are called friends of Christ’s patrimony.<sup>353</sup>

The sermon from *Abortivus* mainly presents St. Procopius as an example to preachers and clerics. He was the perfect pastor who took care of his people in every possible way. He was able to navigate the church through hard and difficult times. This is also the task Milicius assigns his audience — obviously clerics and preachers. In contrast to the general tendency in the sermons on St. Adalbertus, this sermon on St. Procopius leaves a wide gap between the audience and the saint. The sainthood of St. Procopius as presented by Milicius does not have the internalization or personal character we saw in the case of St. Adalbertus. On the contrary, Milicius stresses some of the inabilities of his audience when comparing them to St. Procopius, whose qualities are almost superhuman. These qualities are not only dependent on moral issues, but also on physical abilities. St. Procopius was able to work miracles, which makes him different from us.

The homily from *Gratiae Dei* is again not very different from the interpretation of St. Procop’s life in *Abortivus*. Here as well, Procopius is presented as the perfect preacher and pastor, who chose the life of a hermit in a monastery. *Gratiae Dei* is, however, far more sober about his qualities as a holy man. As far as his life is concerned, the homily refers basically only to his dwelling in the convent at Sázava. There is no mention of any miracles. In general, we can say that the homily from *Gratiae Dei* concentrates on the qualities a preacher or prelate should possess, employing St. Procopius simply as an example and to offer inspiration.<sup>354</sup>

The homily is based on Lk. 12,37 (“Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes”). Preachers and prelates have to encourage the sad and console them with the Word of God, the *prothema* states. They cannot sleep, but have to constantly be on watch and criticize evil acts. The *sermo* distinguishes between two kind of attractions or bonds: those of the flesh and those of the mind or intellect. St. Procopius resisted both by leaving his marriage

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<sup>353</sup> „Sed si dicis ‘necesse habeo possidere divicias ut vivam cum amicis pauperibus,’ vide ne volens opus pietatis ostendere te possis de facili eterno premio defraudari. Quod fit cum pauperes necessariis defraudantur et de Christi patrimonio amici dicantur.“ St. Procopius, A, I D 37, fol. 157 vb.

<sup>354</sup> See p. 176.

in order to be ordained and choosing monastic life by becoming a canon at Vyšehrad (before 1143 Bohemia did not know an obligatory celibacy — a fact not respected by Milicius). Again, as in *Abortivus*, the homily uses the image of light to explain the work of Procopius. A preacher or prelate needs three things to do his work well: the teachings of the church, compassion to console people and material support.<sup>355</sup> In a second division, a preacher or prelate is said to need four qualities in his life: the fragility of the human condition, the beauty of conscience, the fire of love, and light to see his own pride.<sup>356</sup> Finally, St. Procopius is compared to a pelican (a magnificent bird, the explanation says) of solitude, because he lived as a hermit. He was by virtue of his preaching, life and example a shining light to the ruler of Bohemia. The case was similar in his “residence, as he, leading a monastic life, instructed in discipline, unity of love and common life.”<sup>357</sup> St. Procopius was canonized because of his incessant vigilance against sin and evil. Compared to the sermon from *Abortivus*, St. Procopius’ homily in *Gratiae Dei* concentrates more on the moral contents of his life. His main quality was his constant alertness against the temptations of the flesh and the mind. Milicius finds in Procopius a great example of a pastor and brings him close to his audience. The distance created in *Abortivus* between the saint and the audience is due to its stress on miracles, which is replaced in *Gratiae Dei* by an emphasis on the serious and complex character of being a pastor. *Gratiae Dei*’s approach to St. Procopius is basically educational, while *Abortivus* simply admires the saint.

## 2.5. St. Ludmilla

St. Ludmilla lived in the time of the Christianization of Bohemia.<sup>358</sup> As the daughter of Prince Slavibor from a small tribe in Northern Bohemia she married Borzivoj, the prince of the Czechs and ancestor of the Přemyslids. Both were baptized around the year 870 and enabled monks representing the Slavonic rite to do their missionary work in Bohemia. Due to the conversion of Czechs, the first churches were built among them. Ludmilla was the grandmother of St. Wenceslaus, whose father died before he reached adulthood. The reason for her violent death was the upbringing of the young boy. Ludmilla came into conflict with

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<sup>355</sup>See p. 134.

<sup>356</sup>See p. 134 and 176.

<sup>357</sup>„Domicilio, dum vitam monasticam ducens, disciplinam et unitatem caritatis et communem vitam edocuit.“ St. Procopius, GD, XII D 1, fol. 52 r.

<sup>358</sup>For St. Ludmilla see Kadlec, p. 41 ff.

her daughter-in-law Drahomira and was murdered in 921. In 924 her remains were brought to the monastery of St. George at the Prague Castle by Wenceslaus, which was regarded as a part of the canonization process. Her cult gained increasing popularity and was widely spread by the 12th century.

Surprisingly, St. Ludmilla does not appear in the postil *Abortivus*. The reason for this absence can only be guessed. Possibly her significance to Milicius was not great enough to place her in league with the non-classical, local saints discussed in *Abortivus*. The later postil *Gratiae Dei*, however, presents her as one of the main patrons of the country and contains a short homily about her based on Mt. 13,48 (They “sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad”). The homily introduces the saint to us with: “Hence blessed Ludmilla, which is pronounced in Czech ‘lydu mila’, i.e. beloved by the people, noble by birth, but even more noble by virtue, the first Christian woman of the Czechs, the grandmother of St. Wenceslaus, the leader of Bohemia, our patron.”<sup>359</sup>

The *prothema* of the homily compares the audience to the catch of fishermen in the story of the gospel. Just as the good and bad fish are mixed together in the fisherman’s catch, so too are the good and evil in the church intermingled. This is also the case with preachers since some of them are indifferent about catching souls.<sup>360</sup>

The *sermo* talks about the virtues of St. Ludmilla, who maintained the chastity of her body and soul after the death of her mother and lived like a turtle. She was as vigilant as Judith, prayed as Anne, gave alms to the poor and constantly offered an excellent example of the Christian faith. Milicius then compares the church of Prague with a vineyard, obviously because St. Ludmilla is also regarded as the patron of vintners. “This vineyard, namely the church of Prague, is planted by those three planters, St. Wenceslaus, St. Adalbertus and St. Ludmilla, our patrons, who in our homeland in the press of martyrdom poured out their own blood.”<sup>361</sup>

Just as Naboth was murdered because Jezebel wanted to gain his vineyard (I Kings 21), St.

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<sup>359</sup> „Hinc ergo beata Ludmilla, quod in bohemico sonat lydu mila, id est populo dilecta, nobili genere sed nobilior virtute, prima bohemorum christiana, awa sancti Wenceslai, ducis Bohemie, nostri patroni.“ St. Ludmilla, GD, XII D 1, fol. 117 v. According to André Vauchez the formulation „nobilis origine...sed nobilior virtute“ was used extremely often in the hagiography from the 11th century on, making a link between the highness of nobility and purity of sanctity. André Vauchez, *La Sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age*, Roma 1981, p. 205.

<sup>360</sup> See also p. 119.



Ludmilla was killed by her daughter-in-law Drahomira. She wanted to deprive Ludmilla of her vineyard, which was Christianity. However, she was not “amputated” from Christ, the homily says, but died in memory of Christ. Drahomira murdered her because she wanted to be the sole ruler, which is the same reason why Achab murdered all his potential rivals. The life and death of Ludmilla fulfills the gospel. While St. Ludmilla was taken to the glory of the heavenly kingdom, Drahomira was sent to the eternal fire, together with evil tyrants and proud women.

The homily on St. Ludmilla presents her in a quiet, low-profile way, compared to the other saints we have analyzed. Milicius tells her story briefly and compares her to Naboth, the victim of the evil Queen Jezebel. Her story is nothing more than an illustration of the reading from Mt. 13. The reader or audience of this homily receives an image of a holy woman, who was in danger because of pagan enemies. The main exhortation the audience gets from Milicius is already formulated in the *prothema*: be careful to be a good fish, i.e. to be on the same side as St. Ludmilla. Although this presentation is formulated on a personal level — confirming the idea we have of *Gratiae Dei* — Milicius does not give concrete and direct advice on how to achieve St. Ludmilla’s sainthood. The rather general character of her holiness could be the reason why a sermon about her is missing from *Abortivus*. She was then later added to *Gratiae Dei* because its intention is to be complete and well-balanced.

## 2.6. All Saints’ Day

Not only the sermons about saints give us an impression of what sainthood meant to Milicius. A second source consists of the two sermons on All Saint’s Day. As we will see, *Abortivus* elaborates more on the eschatological dimension of sainthood, while *Gratiae Dei* stresses the existing consequences of it.

On the occasion of this feast, *Abortivus* offers a sermon based on Apoc. 21,2 („And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband“). According to the *prothema*, a city is primarily a location where people keep their possessions. Jerusalem is therefore a place where the *ecclesia militans*, the „church militant“, has its treasure, which has to be mentioned and described by preachers.

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<sup>361</sup> „Hec enim vinea ecclesia videlicet Pragensis ex hiis tribus propaginibus sanctis Wenceslao, Adalberto et Ludmilla, patronis nostris est propagata, que in nostris domiciliis per torcular martirii suum proprium sanguinem effuderunt.“ St. Ludmilla, GD, XII D 1, fol. 117 v.

This refers to the treasure of the martyrs, which the church possesses. Who is then acting as a witness to our virtues and the wealth of our souls, Milicius asks. The life and deeds of the saints are for him like a book that describes their virtues, enabling us to compare our deeds with theirs. Therefore, we have to listen to what the saints before us have done, so that we deserve to be entered with them in the book of life or of heaven.<sup>362</sup>

Jerusalem, our fatherland, is worthy of praise because it signifies the heavenly country. In describing the beauty of this country Milicius contrasts it with its opposite, the *terrena infernalis*, the „land of hell.“ Inhabitants of that country will all fall down with Lucifer. But the inhabitants of Jerusalem will all live in God’s light, as indicated by Christ’s coming into the world: “And this has all happened to us through the descent of Christ to us as he betrothed our humanity to his divinity and renewed our old age. Therefore, it is correctly said about us that we are the church militant and are moving towards the church triumphant.”<sup>363</sup>

In the second part of the sermon Milicius explains how the holy church has been united; out of a wide range of diversity it has become one.<sup>364</sup> Out of thieves, heretics and all kinds of sinners, Christ has created saints. Sainthood here means to Milicius belonging to Jerusalem, the holy city where the church finally shall be unified. In this sermon, sainthood does not imply a specific quality or condition. Those who are gathered from the sinners and the unjust of the world are all saints, because Christ has chosen them to be so. It is a profound “democratic” definition of sainthood, because it understands every true follower of Christ to be a saint. There is no mention of supernatural powers nor divine evidence of a saint’s ability to be an intercessor between God and man. Above all, sainthood has the eschatological dimension of the *vita imitationis*, and in this way it is in the future of every faithful individual.

*Gratiae Dei* provides an extensive homily on All Saints’ Day on the Sermon on the Mount, Mt.5,1ff. Milicius relates the blessings from this text to those people who want to follow Christ. As in *Abortivus*, this homily does not glorify the supposedly heavenly nature of sainthood, but concentrates on the morality of it. The difference from *Abortivus* is that the

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<sup>362</sup> „Queramus nunc qui fuerit nostri scriptores in mundo qui nostras virtutes hoc nostrorum animarum divitias conscripserunt. Nonne prophete, nonne apostoli, nonne ewangeliste, nonne confessores, nonne virgines in quarum pellecebraras hec de picta noscuntur? Nonne et martires quorum sanguine libri sunt ewangelisti rubricati et eorum mortibus cum sigillis signati? Audiamus ergo que illi scripserunt, ut cum ipsis libro vite sive celesti mereamur ascribi. Quod ut facilius efficere et consequi valeamus ad illam bibliothecam que omnia verba divina in sui pectoris archano servabat matrem gratie recurramus.“ Omnes sancti, A, I D 37, fol. 238 ra.

<sup>363</sup> „Et quia hec omnia facta sunt nobis per descensionem Christi ad nos quando nostram humanitatem sue divinitati desponsavit et vetustatem nostram innovavit. Ideo de nobis qui sumus ecclesia militans et ad ecclesiam tendimus triumphantem bene premissum est.“ Omnes sancti, A, I D 37, fol. 239 rb.

*Gratiae Dei* homily describes the moral issues of sainthood in a very concrete way. Often, Milicius explicitly refers to preachers and prelates, whom he mentions in the *prothema* as people who have the duty to spread and preach the “great fire of the Lord” on earth.<sup>365</sup>

Sainthood is, however, signified by suffering and martyrdom. Those who want to live in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount have to expect resistance and persecution, Milicius explains using the text from Mt.5,4 (“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”).

So the holy martyrs conquered all kingdoms by meekness. Some were killed by the sword, some burnt by flames, others beaten with a whip, others pierced through by a bar, some tortured by a cross, some submersed in the sea, others skinned alive, others put in prison, some deprived of their tongue, some covered by stones, others afflicted by cold, others tortured by hunger, others, truly as a spectacle of injury, placed naked before the public, their hands being cut off or other members of their body missing, because they carried the name of the Lord. Therefore, they shall inherit the earth because of their meekness.<sup>366</sup>

## 2.7. Conclusion

Our survey of eleven sermons from *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei* indicates that to Milicius sainthood primarily has a moral content. Each of the Bohemian saints from the early church whom Milicius added to the obligatory calendar represents a specific moral virtue, which is used by the preacher to warn and direct his audience. St. Adalbertus was the persevering planter of the church in Bohemia; St. Procopius was the great preacher who rejected worldly luxuries; St. Vitus kept himself separated from evil; and St. Wenceslaus was the perfect ruler. Only St. Ludmilla does not have a specific quality but suffered for Christianity and the church in general.

Saints are examples for us, from whom we have to learn and imitate in our personal lives.

They are like books that we can study to discover the Word of God. Milicius presents us with

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<sup>364</sup>See p. 119.

<sup>365</sup>See p. 169.

<sup>366</sup>„Sic sancti martires per mansuetudinem omnia regna vicerunt. Alii ferro perempti, alii flamma exusti, alii flagris verberati, alii vectibus perforati, alii cruciati patibulo, alii pelago submersi, alii vivi decoriati, alii vinculis mancipati, alii linguis privati, alii lapidibus obruti, alii frigore afflicti, alii fame cruciati, alii vero truncatis manibus sive ceteris membris cesis spectaculum contumelie in populos nudi, propter nomen Domini portaverunt.

an image of sainthood that is in principle accessible to everyone. By following the same moral principles as the saints did, everybody can achieve holiness. However, we must be prepared for persecution, because it is integral to the holy life. It may not mean to die for Christ as martyrs did, but sainthood in times of peace has its equivalent in breaking with all earthly desires.

In comparing sermons for the same feast days from the postils *Abortivus* and *Gratiae Dei*, we can observe how this tendency evolves. In the thematic sermons of *Abortivus*, the saint himself is often the subject. This approach makes the distinction between the audience and the saint more marked. Often, the miracles performed by the saint are told, which stresses the supernatural power of this holy person. To some extent *Abortivus* still belongs to the world that admired saints and considered them to be intercessors at God's throne.

*Gratiae Dei* is clearly the product of a development that made morality the fundamental dimension of Christian life. Milicius does not present any supernatural saints, but offers homilies about biblical texts in which the saint is no more than an illustration of an ideal. They stress a moral virtue that applies to everyone, making a holy life accessible to the entire audience. In part, this shift is the result of a different approach to the homily as a literary and rhetoric form, which does not concentrate on a theme but rather on a biblical text. This approach was obviously a logical choice for Milicius, given his theological development.

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Ideo propter mansuetudinem possident terram.“ Omnes sancti, GD, XII D 1, fol. 142 v. The catalogue refers to Hebr. 11,35-37.

## MILICIUS IN THE MIRROR OF HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

On 6 July 1915 the Swiss city of Geneva was the site of a meeting of Czech intellectuals, politicians and refugees. This gathering would gain great significance in the next few years. The occasion was the 500th anniversary of Master Johannes Hus, the martyr from Prague who was burned at the stake in Constance. The circumstances of the festivities were rather sober. Times were at least as confused and uncertain as five centuries earlier during the unfortunate end of the master from Prague. In 1915 it was not at all certain what would be the outcome of the war that had broken out almost exactly one year earlier, first in Serbia but soon after in Western Europe as well. From the Central European perspective, the Hapsburg Empire had finally come to an end after many attempts to innovate its structures during the nineteenth century. The old world, which had existed in more or less the same form since the seventeenth century, fell apart and its successor had not yet been born.

The main speaker at the conference in Geneva was a professor of philosophy and a former member of the Austrian parliament for the Czechs, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. He spoke after the French historian Ernest Denis who was a specialist in Bohemian history and an important supporter of the Czech national cause in Paris. Denis gave an interpretation of some developments from Czech history, thus legitimizing and stimulating the chance for change offered by these specific historical circumstances. The Czech people could regain the independence that was taken from them in the seventeenth century. Then, Masaryk made his statement: "Every Czech who is aware of his nation, has to choose either in favor of the Reformation or the Counter-Reformation, either for the Czech idea or the Austrian idea, the institution of the Counter-Reformation or European conservatism. Hus, Žižka, Chelčický, Comenius are our live program."<sup>367</sup>

Masaryk's speech marked, in fact, his definitive decision to advocate Czech independence as the only option in the postwar division of Europe. He waited to take this stance as a politician

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<sup>367</sup>"Každý Čech, znalý svého národa, musí se rozhodnout pro reformaci nebo protireformaci, pro ideu českou nebo pro ideu Rakouska, orgánu protireformace a evropského zpátečnictví. Hus, Žižka, Chelčický, Komenský jsou naším živoucím programem." Quoted from Jan Herben, *Chudý chlapec, který se proslavil* [The Poor Boy Who Became Famous], Praha 1990 (re-edition of 1930), p. 75.

until 1915, even though it was a position that more radical parties had taken in the last days of the Hapsburg Empire. The historiographic argumentation he used in his declaration that year, however, was not new. Earlier he had already identified the Czech cause with the four historical figures he mentioned in Geneva: Hus, Žižka, Chelčický and Comenius. In 1895 he published his famous study *Česká otázka*, “The Czech Question,” in which he drew a historical line from the earliest times of Bohemian history to determine the political aims of the Czech people. At that time he did not come to the conclusion that independence for the Czechs was the logical consequence of this interpretation. In 1915, confronted with the inevitable fall of the Hapsburg multi-ethnic state, he did not hesitate to use his historical arguments for the political aim of independence.

The study *Česká otázka* engendered a discussion about the foundations and interpretation of Bohemian history, which lasted till the end of the new Czechoslovak state in 1938. Many intellectuals, historians, philosophers and theologians participated in this debate, thus turning the question into a shibboleth for Czech historiography for many decades. The debate, which became known as *Spor o smysl českých dějin*, “The Dispute over the Meaning of Czech History,” continued in a different form during the Communist dictatorship, when it was not possible to discuss in public the *res publica*. Articles published abroad or in illegal magazines kept the discussion alive, though not accessible to the general public. After the changes that followed on the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the debate resurfaced a third time and was partly determined by the search for the Czechs’ new political position within the context of today’s Europe.

Every historian studying any period of Bohemian history has to confront the debate over the meaning of this history, as no period is untouched by this question. Every new generation of historians since 1895 sees itself somehow forced to formulate its answer to the question on the *Leitmotiv* of Bohemian history and its relationship to the national existence and identity. In this last part of our study about Milicius de Chremsir we ask what is the “second life” of the fourteenth-century preacher or his changing image in history, especially in modern historiography. Like any historical issue, the discussion about Milicius in the last two centuries has been marked by the larger historical debate. Therefore, in this chapter we will not only analyze the views on Milicius of Palacký and his colleagues, but try to put these views into the broader context of the debate on the meaning of Czech history as well. Historians cannot satisfy themselves merely with historical facts and their explanations. They have a duty as well to study the role these facts play in the collective national memory.

## 1. Historiography in a Time of Nation Building

As we have seen in chapter II of this study, Milicius became an object of historiographic study soon after his death. Matthias de Janow was the first to write about him in his larger work *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti*. His biography on Milicius would become the defining authority for the greater part of Milicius' afterlife throughout the subsequent centuries.

Milicius is mentioned in many of the Hussite chronicles and calendars as a zealous preacher and priest, who worked for the sake of the church and God's word.<sup>368</sup> The more moderate sources from an Utraquist background do not depict Milicius as being in opposition to the church or Rome. Later texts, however, written by followers of the small Protestant group of the Brethren Unity or the *Unitas Fratrum* present him as the first reform preacher who dared to speak up against the Roman Catholic Church and the pope.

The second major text we have on Milicius was put into the form of its final edition by Bohuslaus Balbinus, the famous Jesuit chronicler of the Bohemian Baroque. As we have seen in our analysis of this second biography, Balbinus' aim was to rehabilitate Bohemia in the eyes of Europe's Catholic orthodoxy. He did so by emphasizing the pious character of many of the important figures from Bohemian history, one of them being Milicius de Chremsir. It is worth noting that Balbinus did not have to rewrite or reformulate the story of Milicius in order to present him as a true son of the church. Already in many of the Hussite or Utraquist chronicles Milicius was characterized as a preacher who struggled for moral reform within the church. Other Catholic historians from the baroque period continued along Balbinus' line of thought.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Bohemia had entered an era that would fundamentally change its appearance.<sup>369</sup> An important impetus for this transformation had been given by

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<sup>368</sup>See for a brief survey of these sources: František Loskot, *Milíč z Kroměříže, Otec české reformace* [Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation], Praha 1924, p. 160ff., or Miloslav Kaňák, *Milíč z Kroměříže*, Praha 1975, p. 42 ff.

<sup>369</sup>See for the following Josef Kočí, *České národní obrození* [The Czech National Revival], Praha 1978 (the study is written in a strongly Marxist spirit); Jiří Kořálka, *Tschechen im Habsburgerreich und in Europa 1815-1914. Sozialgeschichtliche Zusammenhänge der neuzeitlichen Nationsbildung und der Nationalitätenfrage in der böhmischen Ländern*, Wien 1991, or in the Czech translation: *Češi v Habsburské říši a v Evropě 1815-1914. Sociálněhistorické souvislosti vytváření novodobého národa a národnostní otázky v Českých zemích*, Praha 1996; Jan Milíč Lochman, *Duchovní odkaz obrození. Dobrovský, Bolzano, Kollár, Palacký. Náboženské profily* [The spiritual legacy of the Revival. (...) Religious profiles], Praha 1964; Otto Urban, *Česká společnost 1848-1918* [The Czech Society ...], Praha 1982. A survey of Czech historiography give František Kutnar and Jaroslav Marek, *Přehledné dějiny českého a slovenského dějepisectví. Od počátku národní kultury až do sklonku třicátých*

some baroque scholars who were strong supporters of the Czech language. They emphasized the necessity of studying and cultivating the language, which would underline the specific character of Bohemia and its people. This patriotism was meaningfully strengthened by a work by Balbinus on the Czech language, *Dissertatio apologetica pro lingua slovenica, praecipue bohemica*, “Apologetical Study of the Slavonic Language, Especially Czech.” During his lifetime, publication of the book was forbidden. Finally in 1775, nearly 100 years after his death, it had its first printed edition. A more profound impetus for change came from the philosophy of the Enlightenment, which on a political level led to the rationalization and centralization of state structures. In 1781 Emperor Josef II published his *Patent of Toleration*, a package of political measures to reform and innovate society. He repealed the institute of serfdom, thus introducing a principal equality among the inhabitants of his country. Moreover, he ended the monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church on matters of faith by allowing other, Protestant churches to found congregations. On an academic level, the Enlightenment brought many changes, especially to the field of history. In 1783 the subject of history received its first independent statute at the University of Prague, headed by a separate chair. History as an academic subject was reformulated on the basis of profound, critical study of sources and archives. The foundation of the Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences in 1790 significantly boosted support for this new approach.

One of the main scholars who adapted the spirit and methods of the Enlightenment to Bohemian history was Gelasius Dobner (1719-1790). He began a project to collect and publish documentary sources for Bohemian history. In 1795 he published six volumes of his *Monumenta historica nusquam antehac edita*, “Historical Monuments Never Edited Before.” His pupils Mikuláš A. Voigt and František M. Pelcl continued with this work. The latter published the first edition of several of the great chronicles on the Bohemian Middle Ages and Reformation. Probably the most influential figure from this first phase of the movement, which was about to bring major changes to Bohemia, was Josef Dobrovský (1753-1829). He adopted the new critical methods of scholarly research for the field of biblical exegesis and Slavonic philology. Several times during his life he found himself to be in sharp opposition to church authorities because of his criticism on the subjects of piety and worship. In the historical field he devoted himself mainly to the ninth and tenth centuries of Bohemian history.

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*let 20. století* [Synoptical History of Czech and Slovak Historiography. From the Beginning of the National Culture till the End of the Thirties of the 20th Century], Praha 1997.



The academic developments that occurred during these last few decades of the eighteenth century announced and prepared the way for the important changes which would take place in the nineteenth century. The era became known as the *Národní obrození*, “National Revival,” marking the birth of a new phenomenon in the Bohemian environment — the Czech nation. Most of the intellectual energy from this movement was concentrated in two important areas. In the first place, the period witnessed a rise in the Czech literary culture, which would continue to grow in the nineteenth century. The second *momentum* was in history and historiography, where new emphasis was placed on sources and editions that dealt with the Czech past. This resulted in the birth of a nationalistic, if not chauvinistic historiography, imposing the new paradigm of a nation on history and its research. No wonder that the more or less official name for this era, National Revival, suggests that the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century saw not the birth, but the rebirth of the Czech nation. Periods from the history of Bohemia that could be presented as evidence of political, cultural or spiritual prosperity were emphasized and identified as the national heritage of the Czech people. In this sense the nineteenth century gave way to the birth of the modern myth of the Czech nation, which distorted much of the historical evidence.

This development also influenced the image of Milicius de Chremsir in a profound way. The first to write about him in the new era was František Palacký, who is beyond any doubt the father of modern Czech historiography and the main historian of the National Revival. His significance to historical research and to the process of the birth of the Czech nation can hardly be overestimated.<sup>370</sup> Palacký was born in Hodslavice, a village in the northeastern part of Moravia on 17 June 1798. During the Counter-Reformation, this region was a hiding place for some of the surviving members of the *Unitas Fratrum*. This might have been a reason for its self-proclaimed Protestant identity soon after the *Patent of Toleration* of 1781. The vast majority of the citizens of Hodslavice took the opportunity offered by Josef II’s new politics to leave the Catholic Church and enter the Lutheran Church, which was one of the permitted Protestant churches. František’s father was the local schoolmaster and even the main local representative for a while. During his years at the Evangelical Lyceum in Bratislava (or Pressburg, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century it was part of the Hungarian side of the monarchy) František became friends with some of the intellectuals who would be of great

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<sup>370</sup>On Palacký see Joseph F. Zacek, *Palacký, The Historian as Scholar and Nationalist*, The Hague-Paris 1970; Jiří Morava, *Palacký, Čech, Rakušan, Evropan* [Czech, Austrian, European], Praha 1998.

importance to Czech culture in the next few decades. Together with them he decided to devote himself to the Czech National Revival. In 1823 he moved to Prague and became acquainted with Dobrovský and his pupils. Soon he received a position as an archivist working in circles of the Bohemian nobility. He started some projects that were in the spirit of the Revival. In 1827 he became the first editor of two journals on Bohemian history, culture and literature, written both in German and Czech. The German *Monatschrift der Gesellschaft des vaterländischen Museums in Böhmen* was in print until 1831, when it was finally abandoned due to lack of readership. The Czech edition under the name *Časopis společnosti vlastenského museum v Čechách* became a forum for passionate discussions about Czech culture and still exists today in a modified form. The year 1827 was important to Palacký in another respect. He was offered the function of historiographer to the Bohemian Estates, which became a position from which he would develop many of his activities till the end of his life. He started to work on his greatest historiographic project, the *Geschichte von Böhmen grössentheils nach Urkunden und Handschriften*,<sup>371</sup> which was followed by a Czech version, *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a na Moravě*,<sup>372</sup> (History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia). The work describes the history of Bohemia and its inhabitants from the earliest ages till 1526 and is still considered a standard source of medieval and late medieval history.

Palacký's political activities date from the revolutionary year 1848. The political structures of the absolutist Hapsburg Empire and of other European institutions were no longer able to satisfy the ambitions of the awakening nations on the continent. In April of that year, representatives of the various German groups in Central Europe met in Frankfurt to discuss the future of the nation. Palacký was also invited, but refused to attend. He explained his reasons in a letter which would become famous because of its political orientation. "I am a Czech of Slavonic blood. ... [My] nation is a small one, it is true, but from time immemorial it has been a nation of itself and existing of itself. ... The entire connection of the Czech lands with the German Reich ... must be regarded not as a bond between nation and nation but as one between ruler and ruler." For opportune reasons, Palacký appeared to be a defender of the Hapsburg Empire seemingly arguing that the small nations in Central and Southern Europe would not be able to survive as independent states. "Assuredly, if the Austrian State had not existed for ages, in the interest of Europe and indeed of humanity itself we would have to

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<sup>371</sup>Published in five volumes between 1836 and 1867.

<sup>372</sup>The first edition was published between 1848 and 1867, also in five volumes. There have been many re-editions, the last one from 1998.

endeavor to create it as soon as possible... If Europe is to be saved, Vienna must not sink into the role of a provincial town.”<sup>373</sup> Palacký was then chosen chairman of another assembly, this time of the Slavonic Congress, which was to take place in Prague in June 1848. Unfortunately, the assembly did not have the opportunity to formulate its ideas and demands, since it was broken up by a police force under the authority of martial law, due to riots that had erupted in Prague. Despite this complicated start, the Czechs were allowed to organize their own parliament, the Imperial Constituent Assembly, which officially functioned for nearly one year. The assembly met in the Moravian town of Kroměříž. It was able to publish a proposal for a new constitution of the Austrian state, based on a confederal arrangement. Palacký was one of the main authors of the text.

In the meantime, the prevailing political line at the Imperial Court in Vienna appeared to be that of a very conservative absolutism. Because of his political orientation, Palacký was forced to leave politics between 1851 and 1860. In 1861 he founded his own political party, which promoted a federal state and substantial autonomy for the Czechs. Later in his life, he became very pessimistic about a peaceful settlement of the political situation, expecting a “new Thirty Years’ War.” He died in April of 1876 and would soon be called the Father of the Nation. In 1907, a statue of Palacký was finished in Prague on the embankment of the Moldau, giving concrete shape to his significance as a national symbol.

Palacký’s concept of Bohemian history was mainly based on the idea of a nation. In the Czech context it had its specific form due to contact and conflict with the German nation. In his introduction to the *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia* he presented his basic view: “The chief content and basic feature of the whole history of Bohemia-Moravia is ... the continual association and conflict of Slavdom with Romandom and Germandom...; and as Romandom did not reach the Slavs directly, but almost entirely through the mediation of Germandom, one may therefore say that Czech history is based chiefly on a conflict with Germandom, that is on the acceptance and rejection of German customs and laws by the Czechs.”<sup>374</sup> Palacký formulated the differences between the two nations in terms of aggressiveness and power. He concluded that the Slavs — and thus the Czechs — throughout history have lived in peace and acted democratically to reach their goals, whereas the Germans

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<sup>373</sup> Quoted from Zacek, p. 25 ff.

<sup>374</sup> „Hlavní tedy obsah a základní tah celých dějin českomoravských jest ... ustavičné stýkání a potýkání se slovanství s římanstvím a němečtstvím ...; a jelikož římanství dotýkalo se Čechů ne samo sebou, ale téměř veskrze jen prostředkem němečtství, může se také říci, že české dějiny zakládají se vůbec hlavně na sporu s Němečtvem,

have used violence to oppress opposition to their power.<sup>375</sup> Palacký was well aware of the violence Czechs used in history as well, but he explained that they learned from the Germans to use violence as a means. In one way or another the violence that ended the most splendid era of Czech history, the Hussite movement, came from a German source. The darkest era in Czech history after 1620 had two main characteristics: Germanization and Catholicization. The Hussite movement, with its criticism of hierarchic authority and abstract dogmas and its advocacy of morality and tolerance, was the first complete and enduring implementation of the ideas that later became the heart of the Reformation. In Palacký's analyses, two enmities played a role in the development and decline of this period. Both the confrontation between the German and Czech nations and the one between Catholicism and Protestantism are the foundation of his philosophy of Czech history. Between these two conflicts, the first one seems to have been more important to Palacký.<sup>376</sup> He understood his first duty to be in formulating, for the first time in modern history, the concept of his nation by telling its history.

The discussion about Milicius de Chremsir in historiography over the last two centuries is determined by the Czech National Revival and especially Palacký's contribution to it. In 1846 Palacký published his study *Die Vorläufer des Husitenthums in Böhmen*<sup>377</sup> on Conradus de Waldhausen, Milicius de Chremsir, Matthias de Janow and Johannes Sczekna.<sup>378</sup> In his introduction to the first essay on Conradus he wrote: "Together with Milicius de Chremsir he was among the first Czech preachers who exerted themselves zealously for better morals for all Christianity, especially that of the clergy. Not only were they prosecuted by many enemies already during their lifetimes, but also after their life they were considered and counted as

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čili na pojímání a zamítání způsobu a řádů německých od Čechů." *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a na Moravě*, I, 1939, p. 19. The English translation is quoted from Zacek, p. 84.

<sup>375</sup>In a polemic article against his main opponent, the historian Höfler, „Die Unterschiede in der Geschichte der Deutschen und der Slawen” Palacký differentiated between “kriegerische und erobende” and “friedliche, erwerbfleissige” nations. And he went on: “Aber was ist die Eroberung Anderes, als ein im grossen Massstabe mit überlegener Gewalt durchgeführter, daher strafloser Raub? Und als solche erobernde, ursprünglich Räubervölker, werden in der Geschichte vorzüglich genannt: die alten Römer, die Deutschen, die Hunnen und Avaren, die Mongolen und Tataren, die Türken und Magyaren; als nichterobernde Völker stellen sich dar insbesondere die Juden, die Griechen und vorzüglich die Slawen.” The original article was published in 1868, this quotation is from František Palacký, *Zur Böhmischen Geschichtschreibung*, Prag 1871, p. 204.

<sup>376</sup>Zacek, p. 88 ff.

<sup>377</sup>The study was written in 1842, but first published in Leipzig under the pseudonym J.P. Jordan in 1846, as it was not authorized by the official Bohemian censor in 1843. Here the Czech version is used: *Předchůdcové husitství v Čechách*, in: *Dílo Františka Palackého* [The Oeuvre of ..], Praha 1941, p. 64-114.

forerunners of the main Czech reformer, Master Johannes Hus.”<sup>379</sup> As for Conradus, he stated that the preacher’s ideas did not concern the teachings of the church, but the moral life of it, which he tried to correct.

Palacký devoted his second essay to Milicius, whose significance he declared to be even bigger than that of Conradus: “An even greater name and greater merits than Conradus attained were gained by another priest and preacher in Prague from that age, Milicius de Chremsir, who, however, had to also suffer greater enmity.”<sup>380</sup> After this remark, Palacký went on to tell the story of Milicius’ life from the two biographies.<sup>381</sup> That Milicius’ efforts had a bigger effect on people than Conradus’ is one of the few conclusive remarks Palacký made about Milicius. Otherwise, he mainly stuck to the facts from his sources, concentrating on the Antichrist episode and the foundation of the Jerusalem house. In Palacký’s view, the opposition Milicius met among the Prague clergy was a natural consequence of the preacher’s strong criticism of the religious. Palacký recognizes in his work that Milicius was acquitted in Avignon of the charges the clergy brought against him. To Palacký, however, Milicius was not the most significant figure of the so-called predecessors of Hus, but rather Matthias de Janow.<sup>382</sup> In the third essay of the study from 1842, Palacký provides no specific reason for this ranking, but from the text it seems that he was mainly impressed by Matthias’ intellectual abilities. According to Palacký, Matthias might have been the first to systematically criticize not only the moral life of the church, but also its teachings. In the essay, Palacký extensively quotes from Matthias’ oeuvre.

In his main work, the *History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*, Palacký mentions the pre-Hussite reform movement in the eleventh book in the series, which is about Hussitism and its beginnings. Here the reform efforts from the Middle Ages till today are presented as a resistance movement, which “took away from the medieval church the absolute reign over the human spirit, forced it to acknowledge other and higher authorities besides itself, and gave to

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<sup>378</sup>Sczekna was a preacher at the Bethlehems Chapel in 1393. In 1400 he became professor at the University of Cracow. Some of his remaining sermons are directed against the ideas of John Wicleff. He died in 1407. In Czech his name written Jan Štěkna or (according to Palacký) Jan ze Štěkna.

<sup>379</sup>„On s Milíčem Kroměřížským první byl mezi těmi kazateli českými, kteří o napravení mravův celého křesťanství, zvláště ale duchovenstva, horlivě se zasadivše, za to již nejen za živa od mnohých nepřátel pronásledováni, ale i po smrti své za předchůdce hlavního reformátora českého, M. Jana z Husince, považováni a pokládáni byli.“ Předchůdcové, p. 64.

<sup>380</sup>„Ještě větší, nežli Konrád, jmeno a zásluhy získal sobě, ale také spolu větší protivenství snášeti musel jiný toho věku kněz a kazatel v Praze, Milíč z Kroměříže.“ Předchůdcové, p. 77.

<sup>381</sup>Palacký knew the writings of Milicius presented by Matthias de Janow, *Gratiae Dei* and the *Sermones quadragesimales*. The last sermon collection is identical with a part of the *Gratiae Dei* (see p. (sermons))

<sup>382</sup>„V řadě tak nazvaných předchůdcův Husových mistr Matěj z Janova obyčejně třetí, avšak dle mého soudu nejvyšší zaujímá místo.“ Předchůdcové, p. 86.

the nations for the first time the possibility to engage themselves in decisions about world affairs with their own, independent voice. This conflict and struggle endures till today.”<sup>383</sup> In the context of his introduction to Hussitism, Palacký depicts the conflict in the context of the confrontation between Protestantism and Catholicism. The latter is the authoritarian form of Christianity, which he says opposes freedom for the human mind. Protestantism, on the other hand, emphasizes the moral dimension of the Christian faith, which is the central message of Christ. The conflict in the context of Bohemia had one other specific feature. Palacký distinguishes between two types of criticism of the Roman Catholic Church’s absolute claim on authority. In the first place there was the Western approach of the Waldensian movement or St. Francis of Assisi, which tried to change the practical life of the church, but not the teachings as such. The other type of criticism came from the Eastern Church, which separated from the Roman Catholic Church because it considered its teachings wrong and dangerous. This Christianity was brought to Bohemia by Cyril and Methodius, thus imputing an element of otherness into Bohemian Christianity, which would remain for ever. Even when Bohemia came under the authority of Rome in the course of history, there were always people who were guided by other leading, spiritual forces than that of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>384</sup> This idea of a different, non-Roman force in the history of Bohemia is decisive to Palacký and his understanding of the roots of the Hussite movement. Though there might have been some influences from Waldensians and other heretic movements on the developments in Bohemia, the foundation was based on different historical circumstances:

It is no less certain that this great movement of the spirit, the religious unrest and storms, which were the main content of history in the fifteenth century and which changed profoundly every appearance of Czech affairs, did not have its origin in any medieval sect, neither in the Waldensian nor in the Cathar, but it came forward and developed from its own reasons and seed, in the beginning insignificant to the eye, but with time it acquires greater genuineness and importance. It was the idea of the Christian life in conflict and struggle with the adversary of the real life that gave no satisfaction to the deeply pious heart of the old Czechs, which always led them to new

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<sup>383</sup>Odpor „odňal církvi středověké absolutní vládu nad duchem lidským, donutil ji k uznání moci jiné a vyšší mimo sebe, a zjednal národům po prvé možnost vkládati se do rozhodnutí osudů světových vlastním a samostatným hlasem svým. Spor a zápas tu počavší trvá i podnes.“ *Dějiny, III*, p. 9.

<sup>384</sup>*Dějiny, III*, p. 15.

attempts to realize it in human society.<sup>385</sup>

The Czech reform movement had its own roots, which were independent from Western heresies or reform efforts, since the foundation of Christianity in Bohemia had come from a different religious region. The drive for a real Christian life came from the Eastern origins of Bohemia's spirituality. This was manifested in the efforts of Bishop Johannes de Dražicz and Arnestus de Pardubicz, who both encountered opposition from the mendicant orders. It was also the reason for the success of Conradus de Waldhausen, whose example was followed by Milicius de Chremsir. The ideas of both preachers might have been the same, but, according to Palacký, Milicius had a different spirit. Milicius used a different vocabulary than the German Conradus since he preached in Czech. According to Palacký, Czech preachers had a special kind of clarity and true naturalness, which because of its mystical and apocalyptic colors affected the audience's emotions and imagination.<sup>386</sup> Milicius' spirituality had a specific Czech character, which made it different from Conradus' German approach. The roots of the Bohemian Reformation had, in the words of Palacký, an element of national determination. In his conclusion about the work of Milicius, he again made this point, which would influence scholarly research on the preacher for the next century. Milicius' image awakened:

a great and lasting force in the Czech nation. In his personality came forward the freshness of emotion and imagination, the deep but somewhat suffering piety, the fresh mildness and the tough decisiveness, by which this nation is for ever characterized; therefore it was him who, supported by the favor of the highest secular and spiritual offices, was moved by this national spirit to its deepest profundity and for the first time brought it to a motion similar to the waves of the sea, from where a storm came forward as never heard before, when other elements were mixed with it. His power was especially manifest in his convincing words and immediate acts; his writings, however, that bear the obvious signs of haste, do not have this vigor and vitality that could assure

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<sup>385</sup> „Avšak neméně jisté jest, že ono veliké hnutí duchů, ony nepokoje a bouře náboženské, které v XV. století činí hlavní obsah dějin a proměnily podstatně tvárnost věci českých, nebraly původu svého z nižádné sekty středověké, ani valdenské, ani katarské, ale že povstaly a rozvinuly se z vlastních příčin a zárodků, s počátku na oko nepatrných, ale nabývajících čím dále tím větší opravdovosti a důležitosti. Bylat' to idea života křesťanského ve sporu a zápasu s protivou života skutečného, která nedajíc ukojení hluboce nábožnému srdci starých Čechů, vedla je vždy k pokusům novým o její uskutečnění ve společnosti lidské.“ *Dějiny*, III, p. 17.

<sup>386</sup> *Dějiny*, III, p. 21.

them lasting significance, except in some places.<sup>387</sup>

Palacký related Milicius' life and work to a spirituality specific to the Czech nation, distinguishing it from other reform ideas of a German or Italian background. His piety was "Czech made," independent from sources of a German or Catholic type. It was this national element that made Milicius unique and different. This view would be presented more extensively by the first monograph on Milicius published in 1924 and is still present in some of the latest studies on the preacher.

In a certain sense, Palacký's view on Milicius was also accepted by this "Father of the Nation's" main German antagonist, Constantin Höfler (1811-1897).<sup>388</sup> Höfler represented exactly the opposite of Palacký's background as he originated from German Bavaria and a strongly Catholic family. In 1851 he came to Prague on the invitation of the Minister of Education and Culture Leopold Lev Thun-Hohenstein to teach history at Prague University. As a pedagogue, he had a good reputation among both German and Czech colleagues. Höfler became the spokesman of the large German minority in Bohemia and Moravia, which still enjoyed many privileges in the second half of the nineteenth century since the country's administration was organized from Vienna. In 1846 on the territory of the present Czech Republic there lived about 2,4 million inhabitants of German nationality according to a census taken that year. This made up about thirty six percent of the total population. In 1880 the number of Germans increased to more than half a million, but their proportion to the total population remained about the same. They lived mainly in the border areas of the country, today known as the Sudeten Lands.<sup>389</sup>

Höfler soon made initiatives to concentrate and organize German historiography on Bohemian

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<sup>387</sup> „Zjevení se jeho ... provozovalo v národu českém moc velikou a trvalou. V osobě jeho zajisté byla se takrka vtělila ona jarota citu i obraznosti, ona hluboká nábožnost, ale poněkud bolemyslná, ona čilá jemnost i urputná odhodlanost, jimiž národ řečený od jakživa se vyznamenal; a protož on to byl, jenž podporován jsa přízní nejvyšších úradů světských i duchovních, hnul tímto duchem národním až v samé hloubi jeho a uvedl jej ponejprv do ševlení onoho, podobného vlnám mořským, z něhož, když se přimísili ještě živlové jiní, vyvinula se později bouře neslýchaná. Moc jeho jevila se zvláště důraznými slovy a bezprostředními skutky; naproti tomu spisy jeho, nesouce na sobě patrné známky kvapu, nemají do sebe té ráznosti a jadrnosti, málo míst vyjímajíc, která by jediná jim pojistiti mohla stálou důležitost.“ *Dějiny, III*, p. 25.

<sup>388</sup> Höfler's name is written in different ways: Karl Adolf Konstantin Höfler, sometimes von Höfler. Here we use the notation of the source about his ideas on Milicius: *Concilia Pragensia 1353-1413. Prager Synodal-Beschlüsse*. Zum ersten Male zusammengestellt und mit einer Einleitung versehen von C. Höfler, re-edition Wien 1972. On Höfler see Kutnar and Marek, p. 350 ff.



history, founding the “Verein für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen” in 1862. This society was a reaction to the increase of Czech nationalistic historiography, as Höfler said in his first speech at the occasion of the foundation of the Verein. Since it was a time when all nations were mobilizing their history to use it as a weapon in their struggle for their own future, the Bohemian Germans had to do the same, he pronounced. Due to this approach, he clashed in the course of his scholarly work, as would be expected, with the protagonist of the new Czech historiography, Palacký. When he began publishing his edition of the chronicles of the Hussite movement *Geschichtsschreiber der husitischen Bewegung in Böhmen, I-III* in 1856, he still evaluated Palacký positively. In his later work, however, he changed his view and criticized strongly the orientation of his Czech colleague. He even projected his rejection of Czech nationalistic historiography on Bohemian history itself, condemning the Hussite movement because of its allegedly nationalistic nature and rejecting the idea that Hus’ teachings had any originality. In reaction to this in 1868 Palacký published a polemic “Streitschrift” *Die Geschichte Husitenthums und Prof. Constantin Höfler*.

The *Concilia Pragensia* of 1862 offers perfect insight into Höfler’s ideas concerning the pre-Hussite period. In the introduction of this edition, Höfler briefly surveys the developments in the Bohemian church of the fourteenth century. The events in Bohemia were very much linked to the “Deutsche Reich,” as Höfler called the Roman Empire. The reason for this was not any kind of pressure or imperialism from the side of the Germans, but the orientation of the Czechs themselves toward the West, which was already apparent in the politics of the first Přemyslids. The establishment of a royal house itself, acknowledged by the emperor, was an implementation of a concept of German origin. The election of Charles IV, king of Bohemia, was a confirmation of this orientation toward Western Europe.

Höfler emphasized very much the efforts of Arnestus de Pardubicz, the first archbishop of Prague and, later as a cardinal, a candidate to the papacy. Arnestus put very much energy into reforming the moral life of the clergy and in fighting vestiges of paganism and heresy in his diocese. One of his methods was through instruction of the clergy. He called together synods to discuss how to reach his aims of reform. According to Höfler these synods — documents from which he edited — had a significant place in the life of the Bohemian church. He did not hesitate to pronounce them of greater importance than the activities of Milicius, Conradus and

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<sup>389</sup>For the statistics see Kořalka, p. 138 ff. The numbers do not include the Jewish inhabitants (about two percent), who mostly registered themselves as using German as their first language. In Bohemia the nineteenth century saw a change in this respect due to the assimilation of many Jews to the Czech environment.

others whose works he said had been overestimated. The main problem according to him was that there was no knowledge of these instructive meetings that Arnestus held:

Und diess ist denn auch der Grund, weshalb die Thätigkeit einzelner Männer wie Konrad Waldhauser, Milič und anderer so oft von denen, welche über die husitische Zeit geschrieben haben, überschätzt wurde. Ja freilich, wären sie im verderbten Zeitalter allein dagestanden als diejenigen, welche das Bessere, eine gründliche Heilung der Uibel der Zeit erstrebten, so verdienten sie ungeachtet ihrer eigenen Ausschreitungen und Sonderbarkeiten das gespendete Lob. Anders aber wird sich nothwendig die Auffassung gestalten, wenn sich zeigt, dass die eigentlichen Wächter für Sitte und Ordnung, die Erzbischöfe Böhmens, nicht schliefen, nicht die Hände in den Schooss legend der beginnenden Wasserfluth ruhig zuschauten, sondern fortwährend jene Mittel der Abhilfe ergriffen, in welchen man in de schwersten Zeiten Hilfe und Rettung gesucht und gefunden. Man wird eben deshalb in Betreff der inneren Gründe der Entstehung des Husitismus weniger die Verderbtheit des Clerus als die gesteigerte Überschwenglichkeit, den Überreiz religiösen Gefühles, das unter Führern wie Milič über seine Ziele krankhaft hinausstrebte und einem falschen Mysticismus huldigte, annehmen müssen.<sup>390</sup>

As a Catholic historian, Höfler felt the need to defend the church and its authorities by pointing out the purifying mechanisms and reform efforts begun by the archbishop. The church itself was able to provide an answer to the questions of the age. The answer formulated by Milicius and his fellow preachers were exaggerated and lacked loyalty to the church. No wonder Höfler's general judgment of Milicius was very critical and rejected the very nature of the medieval preacher's reform movement. Already Conradus had severely criticized the clergy, but he had still maintained a certain amount of reasonableness. Milicius had lost all contact with the church and its needs and simply strove after his own visions and austere, sectarian spirituality:

In Milič zeigte sich mehr das Schwärmerische, welches im čechischen Charakter liegt, verbunden mit dem Bestreben ideale Zustände herbeizuführen, bei dem Möglichen, dem Erreichbaren nicht stehen zu bleiben. Ihm sagte die mystische Auffassung des

Chistenthums und eine derartige Neugestaltung des Lebens ungleich mehr zu, als die einfache, klare, verständige seines Vorgängers, welche sich an die wirkliche Welt wandte und diese, die Sitten und Gebräuche zu bessern suchte. Milič schien dieser Erfolg nicht zu genügen; ihm war es um vollständige Umwandlung des Menschen zu thun und während Konrad nur in der Kirche und durch diese zu wirken suchte, verengte Milič sehr bald das grosse weite Ganze der letzteren, um ein von ihm selbst geleitetes, von ihm abhängiges Kirchlein in der Kirche zu haben. (..) Bald griff er [Milicius] seinen Oberen [Arnestus] ebenso gut an als den Kaiser, den er öffentlich als den Gegenchrist bezeichnete, endlich auch den Papst und die Cardinäle. Nur seine Kirche scheint von dem Verdammungsurtheil ausgenommen worden zu sein, jedoch nicht Prag, welches das grosse Babylon und die apokalyptische Bestie war.<sup>391</sup>

Milicius' radicalism was of the same nature as that of the *fraticelli* who denied the right of Christians and of the church to own property. As a consequence of his fundamentalism, Milicius found himself in a position of isolation when he finally died in an Avignonese prison, expelled from his own country. Höfler considers Milicius to have been the main domestic source of the Hussite movement, due to his spirituality that emphasized personal enlightenment: "...so bleibt er doch als die eigentliche (einheimische) Quelle, aus welcher der Husitismus sich erhob und seinen vorherrschend individuellen Character annahm, immer von grosser historischer Bedeutung, der Reinheit seines Willens nach eine höchst achtbare Erscheinung."<sup>392</sup>

It might be a surprise to some that Höfler and his Czech opponent Palacký had basically the same view of Milicius. Palacký stressed the originality of his spirituality, which he believed was rooted in an independent, distinctly Czech segment of history. The core of Milicius' ideas did not come from any Catholic or German tradition, according to him, but had its own source, which was also the origin of the Czech national spirit. In the eyes of the Czech nationalist historian, whose primary interest was the nation and the building of it, this necessarily was a highly positive aspect of Milicius' persona. To Palacký, the growing awareness of the existence of a Czech nation in the nineteenth century was the main criterion for understanding and evaluating history. In the end, history became the justification for

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<sup>390</sup>Höfler, p. XIX ff.

<sup>391</sup>Höfler, p. XXXII.

<sup>392</sup>Höfler, p. XXXIV.

current political aims.

Höfler, although both a Catholic and a German, also observed this same growing awareness of the Czechs. He stood, however, in the opposite position from Palacký and feared the changes emerging out of the awakening Czech nationalism. To him many of the Czech political claims were radical and lacking any sense of reason. As did his Czech antagonist, he projected his perspective on the Czech efforts onto his interpretation of historical events, in this case those of the fourteenth century. He also saw in Milicius a prototype of Czech nationalist efforts, which led him to reject the preacher because of his austerity and sectarianism. He understood Czech efforts to gain an independent and equal place next to the Germans in Bohemia as an attempt to dissolve the larger community of the empire, the church and even Europe. In Milicius' work, he saw a parallel to this striving, and saw in the preacher a narrow concern for only his own immediate community. In Höfler's mind, the ideas of Milicius and Czech nationalism could only bring schism and separation.

The consensus the German and Czech historians reached on Milicius, which is simultaneously a decisive difference, is first and foremost a manifestation of the inability of opponents in a situation of nationalism to find a common ground. Even when Palacký and Höfler agreed on the significance of Milicius de Chremsir, they were completely divided in their evaluation of this significance. Contemporary loyalties to the Czech and the German political causes prevailed over their professional capabilities. In this case, history became the victim of an ideology that needed support from historical myths, which pretended to be self-evident. Palacký and Höfler did not discuss their methods and approach to history in their works, but only presented their analyses. Ideology dictated history, thus widening an already unbridgeable gap between two very competent scholars of history. This is the problem that Ernest Gellner identified in his study on nationalism when he spoke about the "pervasive false consciousness of nationalism." "Nationalism tends to treat itself as a manifest and self-evident principle, accessible as such to all men and violated only through some perverse blindness, when in fact it owes its plausibility and compelling nature only to a very special set of circumstances, which do indeed obtain, but which were alien to most of humanity and history."<sup>393</sup>

The only real surprise in the conflict between Palacký and Höfler is the choice of the latter to basically accept the "Czech made" perspective on Milicius. Höfler was familiar with Balbinus' biography of Milicius, which considered him a good, orthodox and very pious

Catholic who deserved to be canonized by the church. Höfler could easily have taken this image from Balbinus and formed his own picture of Milicius that did not contain any nationalist features. It is difficult to find precise reasons for this choice. The pressure and influence of both Czech and German nationalism might have prevented him from taking this step. The appropriation of Milicius by one side may have disabled the other side from formulating an independent position on the historical figure. History had become an instrument for both sides for realizing political ambitions. Höfler had to defend his own community by rejecting the symbols and myths of the other side. Paradoxically, he only confirmed the myth of his opponents through his very rejection.

The conflict between Palacký and Höfler established the parameters of the historiographic debate about Milicius for a long time. Höfler found a successor in Konrad Burdach, who in 1891 published a study on manuscripts, in which he also mentioned some of the pre-Hussite preachers like Milicius.<sup>394</sup> He called Milicius a sectarian apocalyptic, whose efforts de facto destroyed the social and church reforms of Charles IV and Arnestus de Pardubicz. He accuses the preacher of zealously criticizing the church as such, the veneration of holy relics, scholarly study etc. His sermons were, according to Burdach, full of hatred against non-Czech elements in society and church, a feature which reached its climax during the Hussite wars against the rest of Europe. Burdach radicalized Höfler's ideas about the nationalist conflict between the Germans and the Czechs in history, pushing the Czechs into a minority position that was isolated from the rest of the Europe.

Milicius was not only criticized by German historiography, but also appreciated. Scholars from Protestant backgrounds viewed him as a predecessor of the Reformation. Gotthard Viktor Lechler, professor at Leipzig university, emphasized the role of Milicius' apocalyptic views in the radical Taborite wing of the Hussite movement.<sup>395</sup> Lechler did not pay attention to the nationalist tendencies in Höfler's or Palacký's work, but concentrated on the theological and religious dimensions of the preacher's significance. Another German scholar found reasons as well to accept Milicius. Johann Loserth (1846-1936), historian at the universities of Czernowitz and Graz, regarded him as a representative of the mystic movement, the aim of

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<sup>393</sup>Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford 1983, p. 125.

<sup>394</sup>Konrad Burdach, *Zur Kenntnis altdeutscher Handschriften und zur Geschichte altdeutscher Litteratur und Kunst*, in: *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, VIII, Leipzig 1891.

<sup>395</sup>Gotthard Viktor Lechler, *Johann von Wyclif und die Vorgeschichte der Reformation, II*, Leipzig 1873, p. 118-122.

which was to reform the church from inside.<sup>396</sup> In his eyes, Milicius' moral effort was an important contribution to the life of the church and an attempt to find new directions in a time of crisis.

On the Czech side, the last quarter of the nineteenth century brought many new editions of documents and works on Bohemian history. In 1873 Josef Emler (1836-1899), a pupil of Palacký, started his grand edition *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum*, "Sources for Bohemian History", which is still today the main collection of chronicles, vitae and other documents. The last, fifth volume was published in 1893. The first volume contained documents from the era of Charles IV, among them being the two biographies on Milicius. Another important edition on Milicius was published by František Menčík in 1890. He edited Milicius' letter to Urbanus V and his *Tractatus de Antichristo*. The last document together with one biography was published again in the third volume of the *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti* of Matthias de Janow, edited by Vlastimil Kybal in 1911. At the beginning of the twentieth century, researchers on Milicius had only a few writings at their disposal, which basically confirmed Palacký's idea of a preacher who deviated from the orthodox Catholic way and advocated a strongly moral, eschatological and Bohemian Reformation. The *Tractatus* together with the biography by Matthias de Janow gave the impression that Milicius was in strong opposition to the authorities of both church and society. The more moderate *Vita* and the letter to Urban V, which lack larger apocalyptic images, were incapable of tempering this image of Milicius, as we can see from the first monograph about Milicius, which appeared in 1911.

The first phase of the Palacký-dominated historiography on Hus and the pre-Hussite preachers reached its climax in František Loskot's study on Milicius, published in 1911. Loskot (1870-1932) was one of many Czechs who left the Roman Catholic Church in protest against its alleged anti-Czech character.<sup>397</sup> He studied Catholic theology and became a teacher of religion

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<sup>396</sup>See his *Hus und Wyclif. Zur Genesis der hussitischen Lehre*, (1st ed. Prag-Leipzig 1884) 2nd ed. München-Berlin 1925, p. 35 ff.

<sup>397</sup>Many citizens with a Czech nationality left the Roman Catholic Church between 1910 and 1920. This movement acquired the name "Los von Rom" and was not only a Czech phenomenon. In several European countries the idea of a national church connected to the national cause and state was strong. In Bohemia the movements had its sympathizers mainly among intellectuals. The leading personalities of the National Revival of the nineteenth century were members of the Lutheran or Reformed Church. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk for example left the Roman Catholic Church to enter the Reformed Church in 1880. Till about 1910 more than ninety five percent of the Czech population in the country belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. Among the German inhabitants the percentage was even higher. In Prague - where the changes were without a doubt more radical than in the countryside - the Catholic Church lost between 1910 and 1921 more than a third of its members. These people went partly to a new, national church or to the Evangelical Church (a junction of the Lutherans and the Reformed from 1918). The majority did not join any church at all and considered themselves

at a secondary school. He changed his job for a position at a newspaper and became a popular journalist. His spiritual journey ended in the community of the Free Spirit after associations with other groups and churches. Between 1909 and 1912 he published three monographs on the three main pre-Hussite preachers Conradus, Milicius and Matthias.<sup>398</sup> The studies, though of a scholarly quality, contain a strong aversion to the Roman Catholic Church and the Hapsburg Empire.

Loskot's characterization of Milicius is a grand eulogy of the preacher's Czech features and his moral struggle, which placed him outside the church. He called him "the Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation," distinguishing him from Conradus de Waldhausen, whom he claimed was nothing more than a predecessor of Johannes Hus. He characterizes Conradus as a scholastic preacher, who in his sermons only appealed to the mind in order to reach the soul. Milicius on the other hand:

...was a mystic, a man of inspiration, who was able to communicate the impressions of his soul to others in an admirable way. (...) Waldhauser was a foreigner, German: in Milicius the listeners felt something congenial, the Czech soul. By this we explain the mystery why Milicius was able to evoke a wave in the Czech soul, which soon would explode in an enormous storm and which would not calm down for ages.<sup>399</sup>

Milicius is viewed as the first person to give basic direction to what would become the Bohemian Reformation. The vocabulary of Loskot makes it clear that he not only continued along the lines of Palacký, but he even popularized his ideas. Loskot's analysis of Milicius is to a large extent a vulgarization of Palacký due to its polemic and self-complacent tone:

Milicius is a Czech human being by birth, his nature, his labor, his idea of Christianity and life, even when he considered himself strictly orthodox and by others was regarded

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atheists. See for this Jan Havránek, Sociální struktura pražských Němců a Čechů, křesťanů a židů ve světle statistik z let 1890-1930, in: *Český časopis historický*, 1995/3 [The social structure of the Prague Germans and Czechs, Christians and Jews in the light of statistics from 1890-1930, in: Czech Historical Review], p. 470-480; and Kořalka, p. 86 ff.

<sup>398</sup> *Konrád Waldhauser*, Praha 1909; *Milíč z Kroměříže*, Praha 1911; *Mistr Matěj z Janova*, Praha 1912. On Loskot see Kutnar and Marek, p. 568.

<sup>399</sup> „Waldhauser byl scholastik a jeho operace pohybují se především v oblasti rozumu. Rozumem se chce dostat k srdci. Milíč byl mystik, muž inspirace, jenž dovedl podivuhodným způsobem dojem své duše sdělit s jinými. (...) Waldhauser byl cizinec, Němec: v Milíčovi cítili posluchači cosi spřízněného, českou duši. Tím vysvětlíme si tajemství, proč se podařilo Milíčovi vyvolat v duši české vlnění, které se mělo brzo rozpoutat v ohromnou bouři a které nemělo se stišit ani po staletích.“ Loskot, p. 31.

as such. (..) It is the purely Czech soul of Milicius that primarily explains why the efforts of Milicius found such resonance in the Czech nation. Milicius is a direct incarnation of the Czech spirit and this circumstance made him under the given conditions the Father of the Bohemian [Czech] Reformation.<sup>400</sup>

The Hussite movement or Bohemian Reformation of the fifteenth century was in the eyes of Loskot not just a protest against the corruption of the church, stimulated by some outside ideas like those of Wyclif and others. In Loskot's analysis, the Bohemian Reformation (as he and many Czech historians called and still call the reform movement of Hus and his followers in an attempt to distinguish it from the European Reformation of Luther and Calvin) was "an elementary opposition of the Czech spirit against the Roman Catholic Church, against the Christianity, which the Czech person saw being practiced in life within the church and by the church, and finally also against the ecclesiastically Christian culture, especially in the social sphere."<sup>401</sup> Loskot plainly projected the anti-Catholic mentality of his day onto the events of the fourteenth century, which was to him the cradle of the Bohemian Reformation and the Czech nation as such.

The Bohemian Reformation, its nature and goals, just like the circumstances under which it was born, makes evident that the Czechs never became fully a Roman-Catholic nation. They had only the outer paint of Catholicism, maybe even beautiful, which is able to confuse a scholar who is not penetrating far enough. (..) The church distinguishes itself by dogmatic fanaticism, unlike the Czechs who placed the main stress on morality and who view heresy not only in theoretical aberrations of the faith and its doctrine, but also and foremost in the transgression of moral norms. To them a heretic is not so much an erring spirit but more a simoniac, a usurer, a vicious man.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> „Milíč jest český člověk svým narozením, svou bytostí, svým působením, svým pojetím křesťanství i života přes to, že sám sebe považoval za přesně orthodoxního a že od jiných za takového byl považován. (..) Jest to ryze česká duše Milíčova, která především vysvětluje, proč působení Milíčovo nalezlo takovou ozvěnu v českém národě. Milíč, toť přímo inkarnace českého ducha, a tato okolnost jej učinila v daných poměrech otcem české reformace.“ Loskot, p. 7 ff.

<sup>401</sup> [The Bohemian Reformation meant a] „živelní opposici českého ducha proti církvi římské, proti křesťanství, jak je český člověk viděl uváděti v život v církvi a církvi, a konec konců i proti církevně křesťanské kultuře, zvláště v oboru sociálním.“ Loskot, p. 8.

<sup>402</sup> „Česká reformace, její podstata i cíle, jakož i okolnosti, za nichž se rodila, dokazují, že národem římsko-katolickým se Čechové plně nestali nikdy. Měli pouze zevnější nátěr katolicismu, třeba skvělý, jenž je s to, aby zmátl badatele nedosti pronikavého. (..) Církev se vyznačuje fanatismem dogmatickým, ne tak Čechové, kteří přední důraz kladou na morálku a kacířství vidí nejen v theoretických uchytkách od víry a dogmatu, ale také, a to



Because of his orientation toward reform, which was inspired by the Czech spirit, Milicius was bound to be in opposition to the church, even when he regarded himself to be orthodox. The Czech nature of his deeds brought him into conflict with the foreign, international and anti-Czech ecclesiastical structure. The Reformation, following in his tracks, was inevitably declared heretical since its nature, which found its beginnings with Milicius, was non-ecclesiastical, Loskot writes. The Czech mentality cannot partake in a Catholic structure, since it is fundamentally foreign to the Czech spirit. As he was fiercely propagating Czech nationalism, Loskot saw a definitive difference between the two types of Christianity, one tending toward dictatorship, the other toward practical morality. A few years after the publication of his book, the old Hapsburg world was torn apart by the forces Loskot supported in his Czech environment. Loskot used the history of the church and of Milicius in particular as a heavy weapon against those whom he regarded as the enemies of the Czech struggle for a kind of independence.

Shortly after Loskot's book appeared, a large study was published about John Hus by Jan Sedlák (1871-1925), a Catholic professor of theology in Brno.<sup>403</sup> To a certain extent, this work can be regarded as a Catholic response to the ideas expressed by many Czech intellectuals such as Loskot. His approach can be compared with that of Loserth, who emphasized Milicius' genuine and orthodox efforts for church reform. Sedlák rejected the view of Palacký and his followers that Hus had taken his fundamental inspiration only from domestic traditions of a Slavonic character and from his predecessors like Milicius and Matthias. In the beginning, Hus was basically just another zealous preacher in favor of church reform, but he abandoned orthodox teachings when he came into contact with the ideas of Wyclif. Foreign influence from England turned him into a heretic, who was rightly denounced by the church. The implication of this approach, of course, is that the Czech tradition itself, as demonstrated by Milicius and his fellow preachers, was fully within the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy. Milicius had some ideas about eschatology and Antichrist that were almost aberrant, but the verdict of the process in 1374 showed clearly that he was by no means a heretic.<sup>404</sup>

The year 1924 was the 550th anniversary of Milicius' death in Avignon, which resulted in several publications about the preacher. The main study that year was made by the young

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především v přestupování norem mravních. Kacířem jest jim ne tak bludař, jako svatokupec, lichvář, člověk neřestný.“ Loskot, p. 9.

<sup>403</sup>Jan Sedlák, *M. Jan Hus*, Praha 1915, re-edition Olomouc 1996.

<sup>404</sup>Sedlák, p. 67 ff. and 370.

historian Otakar Odložilík (1899-1973),<sup>405</sup> who devoted himself in the initial years of his work to detailed research on the period of Hus and the Bohemian Brethren. He presented Milicius as a critic of church corruption who did not want to leave the church. He and his successors Hus and Jacobellus de Misa (or Jakoubek ze Stříbra) wanted to reform the church from inside, in accordance with the claims of truth. Milicius was a witness to the truth in a time when the church preferred secular power and outward pomp. He tried to restore the church to its original vocation in the world through his preaching and his activities in the social field. He was still accepted by the church as an orthodox preacher, and accusations of heresy were denied by the papal inquisition. Despite this, his followers were persecuted and his legacy, the house *Jerusalem*, was closed down. This kind of reform effort was not tolerated by the church because of its implications, which was also the case of Johannes Hus' proposed reforms. According to Odložilík Milicius was rightly called "the Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation," because he and Matthias de Janow publicized the errors of the church, while Hus and his fellow preachers went on in this direction and started indeed to break down Babylon.<sup>406</sup> In many regards, Odložilík agreed with Loskot, except he did not share the nationalist bias of the latter. Odložilík never describes Milicius as being a representative of the Czech nation or national idea, but views him simply as a reformer of the life of the church and society.

## 2. The Dispute over the Meaning of Czech History

Loskot, Sedlák and Odložilík published their works on Milicius and the other pre-Hussite preachers in a time dominated by grandiose discussions about the political future of Central Europe. To many it was obvious that the arrangement of the Hapsburg Empire, still fairly centralized and dominated by the German-speaking part of its inhabitants, had to be seriously reformed. Soon, however, it would be too late for such efforts. One of the debates that arose in the Czech environment during this era had a historiographic character and became generally known by the name *Spor o smysl českých dějin*, "The Dispute over the Meaning of Czech History." It can be briefly described as a controversy over the identity of the Czech nation lasting from 1895 until 1938. Practically all Czech historians, philosophers and theologians of this time participated in one way or another in the debate, in which Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk

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<sup>405</sup>Otakar Odložilík, *Jan Milíč z Kroměříže*, Praha 1924.

<sup>406</sup>Odložilík, p. 26.

and Josef Pekař were the two main antagonists. Even today the controversy plays a certain role in Czech historiography and philosophy, as many scholars still feel the need to answer the question: what is the Czech identity?<sup>407</sup>

The dispute had its clear beginnings when Masaryk published his book *Česká otázka*, „The Czech Question“ in 1895.<sup>408</sup> Masaryk was born from a Slovak-German family living in the Moravian town Hodonín on 7 March 1850.<sup>409</sup> He studied philosophy in Vienna and Leipzig, and finished his studies with a dissertation on suicide, viewing it from the context of modern society, which had lost in his eyes a unifying religious philosophy of life. Soon after, he became assistant professor at the University of Vienna. In 1882 he was awarded the position of professor at the Prague university, where he taught philosophy, logic, ethics, sociology and psychology. He became involved in the Czech national cause, which he intended to support by innovating Czech scholarship. He rejected those tendencies in Czech nationalistic historiography to rewrite history even by falsifying documents. In the second half of the 1880's, he became one of the few critics who denounced two falsified documents, which resulted in the so-called “battle of the manuscripts.” In 1817 and 1818 two manuscripts had appeared under the names *Rukopis královédvorské*, “The Queen's Court Manuscript” and *Rukopis zelenohorské*, “The Green Mountain Manuscript,” supposedly dating from the thirteenth and tenth centuries respectively. Many historians, among them also Palacký, accepted these documents as genuine and regarded them as the first manuscripts written in Czech. It took more than fifty years to determine without a doubt that both writings were falsifications from the nineteenth century. Masaryk played a major role in disclosing this “historical lie of the century,” for he was convinced that the national cause could only be strengthened by substantial and critical scholarship. However, he was severely criticized for this stance by the nationalists, who denounced him as a traitor to the nation.

Masaryk also became politically involved. From 1900 till 1914 he was the leader of a political

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<sup>407</sup> A collection of the main contributions to “The Dispute over the Meaning of Czech History” has been edited by Miloš Havelka, *Spor o smysl českých dějin 1895-1938*, Praha 1995. See also Martin Kučera, *Pekař proti Masarykovi* [Pekař versus Masaryk], Praha 1995.

<sup>408</sup> The full title is *Česká otázka, snahy a tužby národního obrození* [The Czech Question, the efforts and desires of the National Revival]. The book has seen quite a few reprints since 1895. Here we use the edition of 1969, published in the fall of the *détente* of the late sixties, known as the Prague Spring.

<sup>409</sup> The main biographies on Masaryk have been written by (future) Marxists. The first one is by the historian and later Communist Minister of Education Zdeněk Nejedlý: *T.G. Masaryk*, four volumes (about the years 1850-1886), Praha 1930-35. The second one is by Milan Machovec: *T.G. Masaryk*, Praha 1968. A third one - which is actually the first, since it was published even before Masaryk's death in 1937 - is written by Masaryk's admirer Jan Herben: *T.G. Masaryk*, 3 volumes, Praha 1926-27. For Masaryk's ideas see A. van den Beld, *Humanity. The Political and Social Philosophy of Thomas G. Masaryk*, Den Haag 1975.

party with a moderate, so-called realistic program. In the last seven years of the Hapsburg Empire, he was a member of the Austrian Imperial Parliament. In the course of these years he changed his position from that of a protagonist of a reformed Hapsburg Monarchy to one of a defender of Czech independence. During World War I, he lobbied in many ways for international recognition of a Czechoslovak Republic to be founded after the war and gained the support of the allied powers, especially of President Wilson of the United States of America. When the new republic was established in 1918, Masaryk was elected its first president. He held this office until 1935, when he abdicated it at the age of 85. He died on 14 September 1937, in a time when Nazi-Germany was casting its shadows.

In his study *The Czech Question* Masaryk discussed the contents of the National Revival and drew some conclusions about the country's political presence. History was to him a source of ideas and ideals, which motivated the Czech nation from its beginnings. In this thinking, Hus, the Hussite movement, the Bohemian Brethren, Comenius, Palacký and some others represented the finest of the Czech national tradition. Masaryk fully accepted Palacký's idea of Czech history, which had its peaks in periods of democratic and peaceful rule. This ideal Masaryk simply called "humanity:" "By humanity, fully and truly conceived, we join the best of our times with the past, by humanity we bridge the spiritual and moral slumber of several centuries, by humanity we have to forge ahead with human progress. Humanity is for us our national task, as it has been prepared and bequeathed to us by our Brotherhood: the ideal of humanity holds all meaning for our national life."<sup>410</sup> In another study, published on the occasion of the hundredth birthday of Palacký in 1898, Masaryk wrote even more directly about his acceptance of this historian's approach. He described Palacký's idea of the Czech nation with obvious sympathy, putting his keyword "human" into the historian's mouth:

Durch ihren Volkscharakter sei die böhmische und slavische Nation human, sie sei geraduzu die Repräsentantin des reinen Menschentums. So erklärt sich, dass unser Volk sich das erste an die Reformation wagt und durch die Reformation die bis jetzt reinste christliche Kirche begründete — seine Brüder-Unität, welche daher auch das Centrum der Ganzen historischen Entwicklung der Menschheit bildet. Die Brüder-Unität ist der Höhepunkt der historischen Entwicklung des böhmischen Volkes und der Menschheit

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<sup>410</sup> „Humanitou, plně a opravdově pojatou, navážeme na nejlepší svou dobu v minulosti, humanitou překleneme duchovní a mravní spánek několika století, humanitou kráčet máme v hlavě lidského pokroku. Humanita znamená nám náš národní úkol vypracovaný a odkázaný nám naším Bratrstvím: humanitní ideál je všecek smysl našeho národního života.“ *Česká otázka*, p. 220.

überhaupt. In derselben offenbarte sich das eigentliche böhmische Wesen, das böhmische Menschtum.<sup>411</sup>

According to Masaryk, Hus and his Reformation represent the best of the Czech nation, even when the Hussite movement was not totally consistent. Hussite theologians taught that moral life in the church must be renewed, but they were not prepared to take the final step, i.e. to formulate a new doctrine. They tried to reach a compromise with church authorities and therefore lost the strength that became the heart of the Bohemian Brethren. Nevertheless, the struggle of Hus and his predecessors was a Czech struggle.

Hus and his predecessors began to preach a moral and religious renewal; they were not mainly concerned about the teachings. The whole Czech nation became involved with the reform of morals and the freedom of moral and religious conscience. Because of this moral and religious claim, Hus and the whole nation found themselves in conflict with Rome, with the highest authority in matters of the rules of living.<sup>412</sup>

Although Masaryk's ideas may be for the greater part congruent with Palacký's views, we should be aware of an important development in the case of Masaryk. To Palacký the high points of Czech history were based on differentiation. Hus must be counted among the best of the nation because in him the nation distinguished itself from others, especially the Germans. The Czechs were at their best when there was no foreign influence, when they could just draw from their own sources of democracy and equality. Palacký glorified certain parts of the nation's history on the basis of nationalist reasoning. Masaryk was different in this respect. His approach was to base the greatness of the nation on morality and ethics. He agreed with Palacký's analysis of Czech history, but from a moral point of view. Hus was not great because he made the Czechs different from the Germans or the Catholics, but because of his moral appeal for humanity. Masaryk tried to establish the Czech movement for autonomy or independence on the basis of humanity that Hus, Comenius and others had presented. According to this approach, the nation is above all defined by its moral effort and activity, by

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<sup>411</sup>T.G. Masaryk, *Palackého idea národa českého*, Praha 1947 (first published in 1898), p. 18. The quotation is taken from the German edition *Palacký's Idee des Böhmisches Volkes*, Prag 1898, p. 23 ff.

<sup>412</sup>„Hus a jeho předchůdové počínali kázat opravu mravní a náboženskou, učení se ve větší míře nedotýkali. O obnovu mravů a svobodu svědomí mravního a náboženského stál celý národ český. Z tohoto mravního a

its contribution to the greater community of nations. “Humanity,” said Masaryk in the conclusion of his book, “is our last national and historical goal; humanity is the Czech program.”<sup>413</sup> Or, at the end of his study on Palacký, he calls the Bohemian idea of humanity “eine Weltidee” that concerns and determines the relationship between individuals and nations “sub specie aeternitatis.”<sup>414</sup> The ideal of humanity, the main force in Czech history, had a metaphysical significance for all mankind. This led Masaryk necessarily to criticize Palacký’s bias about German-Czech antagonism and his Slavonic nationalism or even attitude of superiority in moral issues. Rivalry among nations was not decisive for Masaryk, but the extent to which a nation — especially the Czech nation — paid attention to the idea of humanity:

Deshalb braucht man aber nicht sein Volk für das auserwählte und einzig auserwählte zu betrachten; die wahre Humanität widersetzt sich den Gegensätzen der Individuen, Classen, Staaten und Völker, der Kirchen und der Bildung. Palacký hat oft die nationalen Gegensätze, namentlich die der slavischen und germanischen Nation, mehr als die Übereinstimmungen und die verbindenden Momente betont.<sup>415</sup>

Masaryk’s view verges on a kind of messianism since he suggests that the values found in the history of the Czech nation are of a greater significance to the world. These Czech values were to him the answer to the questions of the modern world. He might not be a nationalist in the common sense of the word, but he was truly convinced of the irreplaceable moral magnitude of the giants in Czech history, among whom he included Hus, Comenius, Chelčický and some others.

The main opponent of Masaryk in the „dispute about the meaning of Czech history“ was the historian Josef Pekař (1870-1937).<sup>416</sup> He was born in a farmer’s family in a small village near to Turnov in North Bohemia, an area dominated by German-speaking citizens. He studied history at the philosophical faculty in Prague, where he became a pupil of Jaroslav Goll

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náboženského požadavku Hus a národ celý dostali se do sporu s Římem, s nejvyšší autoritou ve věcech životní správy.“ *Česká otázka*, p. 223.

<sup>413</sup>“Humanita je náš poslední cíl národní a historický, humanita je program český.” *Česká otázka*, p. 240.

<sup>414</sup>*Palacký’s Idee*, p. 73; *Palackého idea*, p. 50.

<sup>415</sup>*Palacký’s Idee*, p. 58; *Palackého idea*, p. 40.

(1846-1929), the founder of positivist historiography in Bohemia. This orientation determined Pekař's historical involvement. In 1897 he became an assistant professor in Austrian history, only to become professor in the same department a few years later. He held this position until the end of his life, however, the subject's name was changed to "Czechoslovak history" in 1918. He published many studies and articles about different topics on the fifteenth up to the seventeenth century.

One of Pekař's initial, larger reactions to Masaryk's idea of the meaning of Czech history was published in 1912 under the title *Masarykova česká filosofie*, "Masaryk's Czech philosophy."<sup>417</sup> In his eyes, Masaryk idealized history for his own cause — the Czech Revival and its political implications. To compare and identify the humanity that was present in the thinking and theology of the Bohemian Brethren in the sixteenth century with a modern idea of humanity influenced by Herder — according to Pekař — was historically a mistake. Masaryk used and even manipulated historical events when he drew a continuous line between Hus and the Czech Revival as if the two were motivated by the same idea and orientation. His view that the Czech nation has to continue with this movement that supposedly began in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did not respect basic historical facts and differences between the past and the current situations:

If I understand him well, then it means: I have formulated my philosophical opinion and those activities of our nation-builders that agree with it [Masaryk's theory], I select. The rest of it that I cannot use, I ignore. (..) And we understand very well how Masaryk easily found the genealogy of his spiritual predecessors, the gallery of his ancestors in Czech history. We understand how the family tree was founded: Hus, Chelčický, Comenius, Dobrovský, Kollár, Šafařík, Palacký, Havlíček, Masaryk... Masaryk did not start from the objective reality of those figures (about whom we are taught only by what Masaryk calls historical empiricism, i.e. the method which creates an image of a person on the basis of critically researched data about him or about his conditionality or context within contemporary lines of development to which he belongs), but he *started from himself* and looked for *himself* in the traditions of the past. That means that he looked

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<sup>416</sup>About Pekař see Kutnar and Marek, p. 490 ff; Zdeněk Kalista, *Josef Pekař*, Praha 1994 (due to the political changes of the last century in Bohemia this study from 1941 could only be published fully for the first time in 1994).

<sup>417</sup>Published in *Český časopis historický XVIII*, 1912, no. 2, p. 170-208. The article is reprinted in Havelka, p. 265-302.

only for congenial or similar or apparently similar sides.<sup>418</sup>

To Pekař, the ideas of Masaryk and his disciples<sup>419</sup> were unhistoric since they did not comprehend that there is an unbridgeable difference between the Czechs of the late Middle Ages and those of the nineteenth century.

The paper *Masarykova česká filosofie* was mainly a reaction to some offensive statements against Pekař and his teacher Jaroslav Goll made by two followers of Masaryk. Pekař's analysis of Masaryk's paradigm in this article was still short and did not deliver a broader presentation of his own philosophy of history. Some years later, Pekař published a study that can be regarded as his main response to the ideas of Masaryk's *Česká otázka*. The text, which was entitled *Smysl českých dějin*, "The meaning of Czech history,"<sup>420</sup> was written as a lecture and printed a year later in 1929. We have to consider that this was quite a different period from 1912, since it was about ten years after the foundation of the new state, the Czechoslovak Republic. The new political situation was much in favor of the founder of the state Masaryk, whose ideas and authority were at that point widely respected. In the eyes of many, Masaryk's "Czech philosophy" had given birth to a new era of independence and national pride, which led to an outburst of energy in many social fields. The cultural, political and scientific efforts of the so-called First Republic were considerable, even though many issues concerning the relationship of the Czechs to their neighbors, as reflected in the status of the German minority and in the tone of the now official historiography, were unresolved. Masaryk's prestige could not be shattered now. It might not have been gratifying to write a study criticizing the self-images of those who were currently victorious. Pekař opened his study by stating his doubt that history alone could possibly have some meaning. To him Masaryk's idea that the Czech nation and with it Czech history bore a

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<sup>418</sup> „Rozumím-li dobře, znamená to: utvořil jsem si svůj názor filosofický a co se v projevech našich buditelů s ním shodovalo, to jsem z nich vybral. Ostatek, co se mi nehodilo, jsem ignoroval. (...) A porozumíme výborně, jak se stalo, že Masaryk tak snadno našel genealogii svých duševních předchůdců, galerii svých předků v českých dějinách. Porozumíme, jak vznikl rodokmen: Hus, Chelčický, Komenský, Dobrovský, Kollár, Šafařík, Palacký, Havlíček, Masaryk... Masaryk totiž nevyšel od objektivní reality těchto postav (o které nás může poučit pouze to, co Masaryk zve historickým empirismem, tj. metoda, která si tvoří obraz osobnosti na základě kriticky vyšetřených všestranných dat o ní i o její podmíněnosti nebo souvislosti se soudobnými liniemi vývojovými, do nichž náleží), nýbrž vyšel *od sebe* a *sebe* hledal v tradicích minulosti. Hledal, rozumí se, jen stránky příbuzné nebo podobné nebo zdánlivě podobné.“ Pekař, *Masarykova česká filosofie*, in: Havelka, p. 291-2 (italics by Pekař).

<sup>419</sup> There were quite a few of them, who often in a popularizing way spread the views of Masaryk, while ignoring basic principals of scientific research and discussion. To name just two of them: Jan Herben, Jindřich Vančura.

<sup>420</sup> *Smysl českých dějin (O nový názor na české dějiny* [About a New View on Czech History]) Praha 1929, reprinted in Havelka, p. 499-560.



certain thought or philosophy was unacceptable. Empirical historiography cannot use arguments from the fields of metaphysics or religion, which is exactly what Masaryk did in his concept of history. To Pekař the meaning of history could only be understood in terms of „collecting knowledge about the main factors of historical development and the explanation of the contexts formed by them.“<sup>421</sup> Pekař had an opposite stance here from František Palacký. In the thinking of the latter, the main factor that can make the history of Bohemia into Czech history is the distinctiveness of the Slavonic people in general and of the Czechs in particular. Their culture was more developed than that of their Western neighbors, meaning foremost the Germans. The relationship between Bohemia and Europe was dominated by an animosity between those who uphold freedom and peace on the one hand and those who support violence and aggression on the other. This concept Pekař utterly denounced. From the Middle Ages to modern times, the historical developments in Bohemia on every level were fundamentally determined by European influences. The Czechs adapted to outside models: “Thus not only association and conflict, as is according to Palacký’s formula, but a continuous adopting, submitting, consuming the model of life and thought of the more developed neighbors of the German and Roman world is the most powerful and by far the most significant fact and factor of our history.”<sup>422</sup> In this concept, the Hussite movement was not an event that confirmed the distinction of Bohemia from the rest of Europe, but it was rather proof that the Czechs were and wanted to be a part of the continent. For Pekař it was an attempt by the Czechs to give Europe a guideline for responding to the actual questions of the fifteenth century. It was not a movement that arose out of the Czech spirit and environment; on the contrary, it was a sign and result of Bohemia’s deep adherence to Europe. Pekař wanted to make historical distinctions according to the spirit of the particular period. Every era has its own spirit, according to him, and he pointed out the distinctions from periods in art history. This approach from the *Geistesgeschichte*, as Pekař dubbed it, provided him with some important arguments to support his case against Masaryk. The different periods — he names the Roman, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicist and Romantic periods — correspond to changes in spiritual mentality, which makes each distinct from the next. It is impossible to compare the Czechs from the fifteenth century to those from the nineteenth

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<sup>421</sup> „Nejde tu v podstatě o nic jiného než o poznání hlavních faktorů dějinného vývoje a výklad souvislostí jimi vytvořených.“ Havelka, p. 502.

<sup>422</sup> „Tedy ne pouze stýkání a potýkání podle fomule Palackého, ale stálé přejímání, podléhání, sycení se vzorem života a myšlenky pokročilejších sousedů světa germánského a románského je nejmocnějším a daleko nejvýznamnějším faktem a faktorem našich dějin.“ Havelka, p. 504.

century since they do not have the same nature. Therefore, Masaryk's statement that the struggle of the Czechs for their national cause in the nineteenth century fulfills a journey begun with the Hussite movement is nonsense. The world between these two periods, separated from one another by many hundreds of years, has changed in the sense of its views, emotions and goals.

Some other factors that determined the historical development of Bohemia are its geographical position among mainly German-speaking states, coincidence which brings sudden changes and unexpected events and historical development itself which encourages people to act a certain way. Again Pekař pointed out the many advantages of the German influence on Bohemia, while at the same time acknowledging the dark side of the massive German presence in Bohemia. The German inhabitants brought prosperity to the country by their new agricultural and industrial technology. Pekař, however, recognized the downside illustrated in history by several attempts to Germanize the country. These attempts all failed because they evoked Czech nationalism, which defended its own rights and culture.

Even when Pekař quite clearly refused Palacký and Masaryk's historiographical concept, he proposed his own that connected the separate periods and developments in Bohemia into one idea. The empirical historian seemed sensitive to the idea of a national identity as well, when he declared that national awareness is the link between the past and present. When the spiritual nature and orientation, the goals and ideals of the Czechs have changed throughout the course of history:

[W]e must emphasize the reality that only one link connects those dissimilar worlds of thought and creates an uninterrupted continuity of life and will throughout the centuries — that is *national awareness*. Only where its voice of hope, fear, prayer or anger sounds from the distance of the past, only there can we understand and feel like sons of a national family, that we are spiritually united with generations of long extinct ancestors, only there are we fully and without differences aware that we are part of a spiritual collective living from age to coming age, traveling with the same fundamental effort: to maintain, strengthen, ennoble our individuality among the nations.<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> „...nemůžeme nezdůraznit skutečnost, že jen jedno pouto spojuje ty nepodobné si světy myšlenkové a představuje nepřetržitou kontinuitu života a vůle přes všechna staletí - to je právě *vědomí národní*. Jen tam, kde z dalek minula zazní nám jeho hlas naděje, obavy, modlitby nebo hněvu, jen tam rozumíme a cítíme všichni synové národní rodiny, že jsme duchovně zajedno s pokoleními předků dávno vymřelých, jen tam uvědomujeme si cele a

To Pekař the meaning of history was this „national awareness“, or the main factor of the Czech historical development, as he said in the beginning of his essay. He called it even conditional to the existence of a Czech history, its reason or blood, its beating heart. Here seems to be a contradiction in Pekař's position. On the one hand Pekař rejected Masaryk's concept of a supernatural force that leads history toward its final goal of humanity. On the other hand, despite his very strict empiricist argumentation, the historian did not hesitate to himself use a concept based on a “supernatural” origin. Pekař's idea that the nationalistic feeling of the nineteenth or early twentieth century was the same as the alleged national awareness during the Hussite movement is parallel to Masaryk's idea of humanity existing among the Bohemian Brethren and centuries later during the National Revival. Just as Masaryk's idea of humanity is very much a concept belonging to nineteenth-century idealist philosophy — as Pekař correctly noted — so too does the paradigm of national identity, which Pekař employs, have its origin in the nineteenth century. Pekař was able to reveal the origin of Masaryk's idea, but did not see the parallel to his own line of thought. The main difference between the two competitors was that Masaryk used his concept of history in his political program, which finally led to the founding of an independent Czechoslovakia. Pekař did not have any clear political ambitions, which might be the reason why his concept never had any political implications.

Masaryk reacted to Pekař's study with a statement written in 1928-29 — at which time he had already been president for ten years — soon after the third edition of *Smysl českých dějin*. Surprisingly, the text entitled *Masarykova česká filosofie* was never published until 1993, when it was printed in the collective oeuvre *Masarykův sborník* (vol. VIII). It has one more remarkable, somewhat alienating feature — it was written in the third person. Masaryk wrote about Masaryk, possibly indicating that he planned to publish the text under a pseudonym, but finally decided not to do so.

Masaryk rejected the accusations of Pekař, stating that his colleague did not properly understand history or historiography, while pointing out his own merits in founding the Czechoslovak state,

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bez rozdílu, že jsme částí duchovního kolektiva žijícího od staletí a do staletí budoucích putujícího s toužou základní snahou: zachovat, zesílit, zušlechtit svou individualitu mezi národy.“ Havelka, p. 513 (italics by Pekař).

Masaryk appeared to perceive the historical meaning and the understanding of history not only by comprehending our national situation, but also by comprehending the situation of the world and the political utilization of it; to re-establish the Czech state (sic), to win our independence under such circumstances and by such means and to organize a new state in its constant direction as experience teaches — is not that to perceive an understanding of our and every history?<sup>424</sup>

The course of history itself had shown that Masaryk was right in his concept of the Czech nation. In a fairly polemic vocabulary, the president attacked Pekař for his idea that national awareness was the main linking element in history. It might be true that the National Revival has its primary roots in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century as Pekař said, but he did not understand that the Enlightenment itself was a consequence of the Reformation and its criticism on authoritarian Catholicism. The Reformation, which first appeared in Bohemia in the fourteenth century, led naturally to the individualism and subjectivism of Kant and the philosophers of the eighteenth century. The nature of Czech history, as it is defined by Hus and the Bohemian Reformation, is therefore religious. This religiosity is not a reference to a metaphysical level that might be present in Czech history, but is identical with the idea of humanity, with the personal and social morality that was the heart of the Bohemian Reformation. Masaryk “is in this a Czech and defender of our Reformation, endeavoring for a religious revival of primarily a moral kind. The Bohemian Reformation invoked Jesus and the gospel as the highest religious authorities, and therefore it was against ecclesiastical absolutism, against the papacy and clericalism as the spiritual reign of a theological caste over the laity.”<sup>425</sup> The great leaders of the National Revival worked in the same spirit, even though they were Catholics or even members of the clergy. Masaryk did not see this as a serious complication of his concept. They all accepted the new philosophy of the Enlightenment or appealed to the church to renounce some of its anti-Hussite verdicts. They might have been Catholics, but their loyalty to the church had less meaning to them than that of the Czech cause of humanity. Their Catholicism was in itself nothing more than a peel that would have

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<sup>424</sup> „Masaryk historický smysl a pochopení historie dokázal rozpoznáním nejen naší situace národní, nýbrž rozpoznáním situace světové a jejím využitím politickým; znovuzřídit český stát, vydobyt naši samostatnost za takových okolností a takovými prostředky a řídit nový stát, jak zkušenost poučuje, svým stálým směrem — není to postihnout a pochopení naší a celé historie?“ T.G. Masaryk, *Masarykova česká filosofie*, in: Havelka, p. 575.

<sup>425</sup> „V tom [Masaryk] je Čechem a obhájcem naší reformace, usilující o náboženské obrození v první řadě mravní. Česká reformace dovolávala se jako nejvyšší náboženské autority Ježíše a evangelia, a byla proto proti

fallen off if free political and social circumstances had existed.

The initial reaction to Masaryk's refusal of a nationalist concept of history was, of course, sympathetic since it was a time when historiography was full of similar ideologies. By establishing his idea of history on the moral notion of humanity he basically opened the history of his country to others who did not belong to the same ethnic group. The Bohemian Reformation is the spiritual heritage of everyone who believes in the same ideal of humanity. When we, however, look critically at the implications of Masaryk's position, many aspects of his stance seem to be as intolerant as a nationalistic view. In Masaryk's eyes the history of the Czechs is a string of episodes highly motivated by morality, such as Hus, the Bohemian Brethren, Comenius and others. Periods that do not follow this basic guideline do not belong to Czech history but were imposed on the Czechs from outside, in Masaryk's view mainly by the Catholic Church and its secular arm, the Hapsburg Empire. Catholicism and its influence on Bohemian culture has *au fond* no place in the idea of humanity, which is supposed to form the character of the Czechs. Or, in other words, true Czechs reject the Catholic religion and the Hapsburgs and belong to the Hussite tradition. Their identity is fundamentally Protestant since humanity is incompatible with Catholicism. As a result of his concept, Masaryk denied a large part of his fellow Czechs a share in the national tradition and identity.

Pekař, on the other hand, based his view of Czech history on the nationalist principle. The practical result was that he was able to accept historical periods dominated by the Catholic Church as belonging to the Czech national heritage. The clearest example of this is the baroque era, which Masaryk and others cursed as the *doba temna*, the "Time of Darkness," but Pekař nevertheless valued because of its cultural impulses. Surprisingly, Pekař was able to develop a more critical and objective view of Bohemian history compared to Masaryk precisely because of his choice of a nationalist orientation. From a historiographic point of view his studies on subjects from the fifteenth till the seventeenth century have a greater value and are less biased than publications by his contemporary antagonists. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the idea of national awareness deformed his view on e.g. the Hussite movement. Pekař in turn was not able to accept that the contributions the German-speaking inhabitants of Bohemia made were fully a part of the country's heritage and tradition.

Many Czech historians have taken part in the dispute over the meaning of Czech history.

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církevnímu absolutismu, proti papežství a klerikalismu jako duchovnímu panství teologické kasty nad laiky.“ Havelka, p. 589.

Some of them also wrote directly about the main subject of our interest, Milicius de Chremsir. We will refer to these historians later. Here, however, one historian and indeed politician is worthy of mention for several reasons. Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878-1962) made his contribution to the dispute in 1913. About fifty years later, in 1962 he was buried as someone who had established the basic guidelines for Communist education in the second half of the twentieth century. Like Pekař, he had studied with Jaroslav Goll, and in the beginning of his publishing activities he devoted himself to the history of music. His books about the Hussite and pre-Hussite singing practices of 1904 and 1907 are still authorities in their field. From 1930 till 1937 he published four volumes of a biography about Tomáš G. Masaryk. The work was never finished. During the Second World War he worked as a history professor in Moscow, where he fully converted to the Communist idea. After the war, he became minister of education. With a two-year interruption, he acted in this function till 1953. He wrote down his basic ideas about the education of history in a book whose title makes clear his line of thought: *Komunisté, dědici velkých tradic českého národa*, “The Communists, the Heirs of the Great Traditions of the Czech Nation.”<sup>426</sup>

Nejedlý’s study *Spor o smysl českých dějin*, “The Dispute over the Meaning of Czech History,” was printed as a separate publication.<sup>427</sup> This work was an attempt to find some kind of compromise between Pekař and Masaryk, between positivist historiography, which tried to describe only the facts and the philosophy of history, which interpreted the facts from a moral point of view. Nejedlý sympathized with both scholars, who according to him basically agreed with one another but only spoke both on different and incompatible levels. The dispute between Masaryk and Pekař was not one between equally qualified scholars, since the former was a philosopher and the second a historian. Historical science wants to know the facts, but science as such — like the human mind — wants to know why something particular happened. It is the task of the philosophy of history to give an answer to that question. By the use of intuition a scholar can find answers that are unacceptable to the pure, positivist historiographer. History, however, is about people whom we can access by understanding them through psychology. This can bring us to conceive the aims and ideals of our ancestors during, e.g. the Hussite movement or the Bohemian Brethren.

Nejedlý did not agree with Masaryk’s idea that the Hussite movement and its aftermath occurred on a purely moral and religious level. It was primarily a progressive national

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<sup>426</sup>Published in Prague in 1946.

<sup>427</sup>Published in Prague in 1913. It is also included in Havelka, p. 321-360.

movement, as he called it. It was progressive because of its moral implications, which Nejedlý refused to identify as religious. We have to take away the religious packaging from Hus' thinking to find his pure humanity, his love for the nation, his ideas about society, freedom and responsibility. The thrust of the Hussite movement did not allow for agreement with the church or with religion itself. Its nature was anticlerical because of the oppression of the nation by the church. It was an attempt to reform public life on a basis different from the church and the secular power had up to that time. Its ethical claims concerned not exclusively or even primarily the church, but the whole of society including the church. Since the church appeared to be an enemy of the reform efforts, the rupture between the Czechs and the church became definitive. The Czech nation abandoned the church as such in the course of history, which became obvious later, especially in the time of the National Revival. The religious freedom of the nineteenth century did not result in a massive return to the Protestant churches, but rather led to a secularization due to the anticlericalism of Czech thinking and self-understanding.

For Nejedlý the meaning of Czech history was primarily the split between the nation as such and the church. According to him, secularization belongs at the heart of the national heritage and began in the late Middle Ages. It might not have been too difficult for Nejedlý to convert to the Communist ideology during the Second World War. The national tradition of progressive liberation from authoritative and oppressive forces found in his opinion its natural continuation in the socialist movement, which proclaimed the end of bourgeois rule and the beginning of a new age of the proletariat.

The Dispute over the Meaning of Czech History practically ended with the occupation of the young republic by Nazi-Germany. By that time the two main protagonists, Masaryk and Pekař, had died. The next generation of historians did not have the opportunity to find its own answer to the question, thus leaving the final outcome of the dispute open. Two totalitarian systems did not allow open debate about the self-understanding and identity of the Czechs. The result of this fate might be more far-reaching than it appears at first sight. The debate affected not only the interpretation of the Hussite era, but basically the self-definition of the Czech nation among its neighbors, primarily Germans. There was no opportunity to finish the debate and to find a mature answer to the question of the position that Czechs have in Europe. During Communist rule, the dispute continued mainly in unofficial circles outside the control of the state. Only at the end of the 60's during the Prague Spring did a public discussion on the issue

take place in a few magazines. Among the authors were Václav Havel and Milan Kundera. The debate was too dangerous to the bureaucratic regime of the 1970's and 1980's to be permitted and again had to find its place outside the official scholarly forums and publications.<sup>428</sup> The consequence of these attempts to marginalize such important questions about the meaning of Czech history and identity is that even at the end of the twentieth century the Czechs are still grappling with many issues on their relationship to their environment, their neighbors and their self-determination.

### **3. Milicius in the Historiography after the Second World War**

As we have seen, the context and atmosphere of research on Milicius before the Second World War was dominated by the dispute over the meaning of Czech history. The debate was then, however, completely interrupted for more than fifty years. The war and the Communist regime after it had a disastrous effect on Czech historiography. Scholars of history could not continue in the traditions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Those who chose to stay in their posts were very limited in their research possibilities and often had to pay tribute to the regime. Many fields of research were not recommended, especially where the history of the church or religion was concerned. There was no systematic study of the fourteenth century in the years after the war, although sporadically some publications were printed. Hus himself and the Hussite movement, however, were studied. This was partly for political reasons since the regime wished to confirm that Communist rule was an inevitable historical development and the climax of history. Hus and especially his radical followers had to be presented as proto-Communists who had no specific religious background. Both Masaryk and Pekař's lines of thought were abandoned in order to make place for the new, Marxist historiography, which employed the model of class warfare. Nevertheless, some elements of the historiography of the 1930's were ready for Marxist use. The Czechoslovak regime after the Second World War regarded the Roman Catholic Church as their greatest domestic enemy. Anti-Catholic tendencies in the historical memory of people were vulgarized and strengthened by many publications, films and literature. The fate of many historians who were persecuted, sentenced

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<sup>428</sup>To name just a few of them: Božena Komárková, „Česká otázka“ v průběhu století [The „Czech Question“ in the Course of the Century], in: *Sekularizovaný svět a evangelium* [The Secularized World and the Gospel], p. 248-281, Brno 1997 (the text itself was written in 1985); Jan Patočka, *Co jsou Češi? — Was sind die Tschechen?*, Praha, unofficial edition 1973, printed in 1990; Karel Skalický, *Prolegomena k budoucí filosofii*



to imprisonment or even executed is a reflection of the extensive manipulation of history during Central Europe's recent past.

In the years between the end of the war and the Communist take-over in February 1948 it was still possible to do an unbiased study of history, even when the political circumstances were unfavourable. In 1947 the Protestant church historian František Michálek Bartoš (1889-1972)<sup>429</sup> published his study *Čechy v době Husově, 1378-1415*, "Bohemia in Hus' Time." The book was the first volume of a larger work of three volumes and presented a synthesis of Hussite history. The other volumes were published in 1965 and 1966. Bartoš was a professor at the Hussite Theological Faculty and later at the Comenius Theological Faculty, where he applied the concepts of Palacký and Masaryk to church history. He edited many manuscripts and sources from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He placed the main emphasis in his work on the religious character of the Hussite movement. He paid much attention to the individual, even psychological elements in the history of the persons he was studying. Precisely these two components were not much appreciated by the Communist regime after 1948. Although he was able to continue his work, his high output of publications dramatically declined after this date.

In his main work on the Hussite revolution, Bartoš presented Milicius as the most important predecessor of Hus. Both preachers shared the same agenda, which was simply to return the church to the purity of the first period of its existence. Both found themselves in open confrontation with the majority of clergy and church authorities because of the radicalism and sense of purpose with which they realized their program. Milicius was miraculously freed, whereas Hus was condemned as heretic and died at the stake in Constance. Bartoš described Milicius as a preacher who wanted "only to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, without deliberation, whatever the final consequences, because any kind of half-heartedness was against his soul."<sup>430</sup> In the beginning of his career as a preacher he left all his positions that were connected to power and wealth in order to follow Christ independently. According to Bartoš, a movement of great historical dimensions arose thanks to Milicius' work. This movement was prescribed by heaven already during Milicius' lifetime or immediately after his death. Since Milicius died in Avignon before the final verdict, his followers were banned from Prague and

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českých dějin [Prolegomena to a Future Philosophy of Czech History], in: *Za nadějí a smysl* [For Hope and Meaning], Praha 1996, p.143-179 (text written in 1976).

<sup>429</sup>Kutnar and Marek, p. 710 ff.

<sup>430</sup>„Chce byt pouhým učedníkem Ježíše Krista, nesmlouvavě, až do posledních důsledků, neboť se mu z duše přičí jakákoli polovičatost.“ F.M. Bartoš, *Čechy v době Husově, 1378-1415*, Praha 1947, p. 241.

the reform movement had its first major setback in its history. “However, it was rooted too deeply in the heart of the nation, and it was also kept alive by the conditions which it turned itself against and which it wanted to reform.”<sup>431</sup>

According to Bartoš, Milicius’ pioneer work led to the translation of the Bible. Returning to original Christianity, and therefore to the Bible, was at the heart of the reforms and indeed at the heart of the Reformation in Bohemia and Europe in Bartoš’s view. One of the goals of the movement was to translate the Bible into the vernacular. Moreover, whenever Milicius and his followers had to defend themselves against the accusations of some clergy, they were forced to return to the Bible to find arguments supporting their struggle for truth. On the basis of Milicius’ activities, the spiritual foundations of the Bethlehem Chapel were laid, which emphasized the Bible and preaching. This was the gathering place of Hus and his followers, who according to Bartoš wanted to fight for the truth. “He became the heir and successor of the Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation, the speaker of Milicius’ preaching school. The witness Milicius and the Master of Paris [Matthias de Janow] were dead, but they spoke directly and explicitly to Hus in the founding document of Bethlehem and in his friends and charitable people in whose memory are the principles, aims and struggles of Milicius and his disciples, their persecution and writings.”<sup>432</sup> Hus’ struggle was the struggle of Milicius, and the efforts of Hus’ enemies to overthrow his work were driven by their will to stop Milicius’ inheritance once and for all. In the eyes of his adversaries Hus was “a new and much more dangerous Milicius.”<sup>433</sup> The parallels between the fates of Milicius and Hus confirmed Bartoš in his analysis, which dubbed Milicius to be the first forerunner of Hus, the great Bohemian reformer. Both were preachers and considered preaching as their main task, both were accused by groups of Prague clergy, and both were in one way or another condemned by church authorities. Milicius’ absolution in Avignon did not change this. His followers were oppressed and his work was diminished anyhow, notwithstanding his acquittal from heresy. In Milicius, the church returned to the purity of the time of the apostles, which became the heart of the Bohemian Reformation.

Bartoš’s interpretation of Milicius was basically supported by Howard Kaminsky, who saw

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<sup>431</sup>[Hnutí] „bylo však zakotveno příliš hluboko v srdci národa a stále živým činily je také poměry, proti nimž se obracelo a které chtělo napravit.“ Bartoš, *Čechy*, p. 242.

<sup>432</sup>„Stal se dědicem a nástupcem Otce české reformace, mluvčím kazatelské školy Miličovy. Světec Milič i Mistr Pařížský byli mrtvi, ale mluvili k Husovi přímo a výmluvně v zakládací listině Betléma a v jeho přátelích a dobrodincích, v nichž dosud žily v zbožné úctě paměti zásady, záměry i boje Miličovy i jeho žáků, jejich pronásledování a spisy.“ Bartoš, *Čechy*, p. 265.

<sup>433</sup>„Nový a mnohem nebezpečnější Milič.“ Bartoš, *Čechy*, p. 320.

Milicius as a kind of Francis of Assisi, remarking that times were different and Milicius never received the stigmata. Kaminsky spoke about “the more or less Franciscan style of Milič’s practical, non-denunciatory efforts” in attracting “a band of preachers who joined him in his poor life, dependent on alms, constantly working among the people.”<sup>434</sup> Milicius stood at the beginning of a movement that would choose the Hussite Revolution as its destination.

*Jerusalem* turned into *Bethlehem*, the base for Johannes Hus and his followers.

In his aforementioned study F.M. Bartoš did not turn this definition of Milicius and of the Bohemian Reformation explicitly against the Roman Catholic Church. For its genre and time the book was a fairly objective study of Hus and his life. The study did not systematically use the nationalistic argumentation of Palacký’s school. This is even more of a surprise when we take into account that Bartoš researched his work during the Second World War. In earlier publications, the church historian did not hesitate to stress this nationalist idea of history. Among his contributions to the dispute over the meaning of Czech history<sup>435</sup> is a small brochure published in 1919, in which he vehemently defended Masaryk and Palacký against Pekař. The movement of the National Revival was nothing but a continuation of Hus’ Bohemian Reformation, he stated. The re-Catholization of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a serious violation of this orientation of Czech history, resulting in a long-standing deviation from the main path. While searching for its identity, the modern Czech nation can find in the Bohemian Brethren a source of inspiration for formulating its social and spiritual direction. “To continue in the work of the nation-builders today presupposes primarily an understanding of the right extent of their yearning and ideas, to experience internally the whole philosophical development that began with our Reformation and Revival, to experience it and go through it and then to continue in the traditions of our greatest spirits.”<sup>436</sup>

Bartoš’ work established the trend for much of the historiography from the Protestant side concerning Hus and his significance in Czech history. To the modern successors of the Bohemian Brethren, who are a minority in Czech society today, the key role that nation-builders such as Palacký and Masaryk gave Hus signifies that Evangelical Protestants are finally recognized for their contribution to Czech history and the nation. They were not only

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<sup>434</sup>Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, p. 12.

<sup>435</sup>F.M. Bartoš, *Masarykova česká filosofie*, Praha 1919; also printed in Havelka, p. 369-386.

<sup>436</sup>„Pokračovat v díle buditelů předpokládá dnes především pochopit pravý dosah jejich tužeb a idejí, niterně prožít všecek myšlenkový vývoj započatý naší reformací a obrozením, prožít jej a dožít a pak v tradicích největších našich duchů pokračovat.“ Bartoš, *Masarykova česká filosofie*, in: Havelka, p. 383.

historically the descendants of the Bohemian Reformation movement but regarded themselves no less than the keepers of the spirit of the modern Czech nation. During the building of this nation, the heart of the Protestant movement became the foundation of the national identity as it was defined by the mainstream of the Revival. The Protestants were the custodians of the best of Czech tradition and were respected by the spiritual authorities of the nation. Still today this idea is present in Czech Protestant churches and theology, as becomes clear when viewed in the context of the canonization of the baroque Catholic agitator Jan Sarkander in 1995.<sup>437</sup> Amedeo Molnár (1923-1990),<sup>438</sup> the successor of Bartoš at the Comenius Theological Protestant Faculty in Prague, saw the significance of the Hussite movement predominantly in its religious and social content. He downplayed the national element in the history of Czech Protestantism, but turned his attention to its revolutionary character. From its very first beginnings the Hussite movement, which Molnár consequently called the “Hussite revolution,” had a very critical relation to secular power. It was the merging of secular and spiritual powers that had brought corruption to the church. From the fourth century on the church had not concentrated only on its spiritual aspects, but had gained power in society due to the position of the official or even state church. The root of the crisis of the late medieval church had to be attributed to Constantine the Great’s decision in 313 to establish Christianity as the official religion in his empire. According to Molnár’s analysis, Hussitism has to be understood as a protest against the close relations and convergence of religious and secular powers. Constantinism had captured the church and deprived it of its prophetic voice that could be used to protest against and admonish those in power. The church itself had become a factor in the balance of power in society and therefore shared responsibility for the existing injustice and corruption. This fact was the main target of the Hussite movement and the

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<sup>437</sup>In 1995 Jan Sarkander was canonized in Olomouc. He was a priest in Moravia who openly propagated a re-Catholisization of the country dominated by Utraquists. He was tortured and killed by Protestant nobility in 1620. His canonization brought a serious crisis to the ecumenical relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants in 1994 and 1995. To the latter Sarkander was a symbol of the intolerant Counter-Reformation and the suffering of its opposers, their ancestors. In their protests even official representatives of the Protestant churches like the synodical senior of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren used arguments stating that the canonization was not only an insult to Protestantism in the country, but rather to the whole national tradition of the Hussite uprising and the Czech Brethren. See *Evangelíci o Janu Sarkandrovi* [Protestants on Jan Sarkander], Heršpice 1995; *The Correspondence between the Moderator of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Mgr. Pavel Smetana and the Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in the Years 1990-1995 and with President Václav Havel to the Problem of Canonization of Jan Sarkander*, Praha s.d.; Peter Morée, *Česká evangelická teologie v očích jednoho cizince* [The Czech Protestant Theology in the Eyes of a Foreigner], contribution to the symposium “The Czech Protestant Theology at the End of the 20th Century,” December 1995, published in: *Ročenka Evangelické teologické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy 1993-1996*, Praha 1996, p. 65-71.

<sup>438</sup>On Molnár see Noemi Rejchrtová (ed.), *Směrování, Sborník k šedesátinám Amedea Molnára* [Orientation, Festschrift to the sixtieth birthday of Amedeo Molnár], Praha 1983.

preachers who laid its foundations.

In a publication from 1956, Molnár called this fundamentally critical approach the eschatological orientation of the Bohemian Reformation or the “First Reformation,” as he used to say. The situation of the church in the fourteenth century as well as in the seventeenth century urgently needed to be changed. The followers of the Reformation understood their era as one in which a definitive decision had to be made about the future of church and society. They found a true face for this crisis — that is an identity and form for it — in the struggle between Christ and Antichrist. They believed a radical reform of the church was necessary to reverse God’s verdict of condemnation. A choice had to be made on which side one stood, either on the side of life or of death, light or darkness, good or evil.

The eschatologically founded and only in an eschatological context understood claim of clear confession and declaration of color, the claim which contained an appeal to a spiritual or even a physical battle plays a decisive role in the lives of the Czech reformed Christians, though in a different manner, but always as a starting point, from Milicius de Chremsir till Comenius. *Eschatology therefore belongs among the most fundamental characteristics of the Bohemian Reformation, to the motifs which it guarded independently and as a contribution to the general church.*<sup>439</sup>

In the sermons of Milicius this emphasis on eschatology began, and it lasted during the Hussite movement and the Bohemian Brotherhood, till the defeat in the Battle of White Mountain in 1620. Molnár called the later Hussite preachers even *miličovci*, “Milicians,” followers of Milicius and his eschatological concept. This preacher was truly the Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation because the movement continued in his spirit. “Milič’s purifying concept of Christianity determined the future direction for Hussite and Brethren theologians.”<sup>440</sup>

In Molnár’s view, the Bohemian Reformation returned to some very fundamental principles of

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<sup>439</sup> „Eschatologicky zdůvodněný a v eschatologické souvislosti jen vnímaný požadavek jasného vyznání a přiznání barvy, požadavek obsahující výzvu k boji duchovnímu, ano i tělesnému, podmanivě platí nad životy českých reformačních křesťanů v různé sice míře, ale vždy vychozivě, od Miliče z Kroměříže až ke Komenskému. *Patří tedy eschatologie k nejzákladnějším charakteristickým rysům české reformace, k motivům, které samostatně a pro obecnou církev přínosně dostřežila.*“ Amedeo Molnár, Eschatologická naděje české reformace, [The Eschatological Hope of the Bohemian Reformation], in: *Od reformace k zítřku* [From the Reformation to Tomorrow], Praha 1956, p. 13 (Italics by Molnár).

<sup>440</sup> Amedeo Molnár in the introduction to Milan Opočenský, Jana Opočenská (ed.), *The Message for the Last Days, Three Essays from the Year 1367, Milič of Kroměříž*, Geneva 1998, p. 8.

early and pure Christianity. In practice this meant that the Czechs went their own way till they were forced back into the Catholic Church after the Battle of White Mountain. Like Palacký he also gave the image of an *Alleingang* of the Bohemian Reformation, but unlike Palacký he saw it not so much as a conceptual decision, but rather as a practical outcome of the choice of the reform movement for radical changes without compromising basic issues. This radicalism had also major social implications as the Bohemian Reformation became involved on behalf of the poor and oppressed. The poor are the sign of the coming age. Solidarity with them is not only a protest against social injustice, but more profoundly a turning away from the values of this world with its eschatological reality of oppression. Preaching and poverty are the two basic ideas of the Bohemian Reformation as it started with Milicius. This orientation has two features in practical life, Molnár said. In the first place, there was the appeal for frequent communion as a symbol of salvation from eschatological anxiety. The second point was that Milicius and his followers had a dislike for scholastic education, which was dominated by logic, because they regarded it as a harmful, human addition to the teachings of the early church.<sup>441</sup>

Molnár did not follow Palacký or Bartoš in their approach towards the Bohemian Reformation in terms of its significance to the national cause. His work places no explicit sign of importance on Hussitism in relation to the national Czech tradition as such, nor can such significance be inferred from his concept of it. From a logical point of view, notions of this kind could not be a part of his idea of the Bohemian Reformation because they would contradict his emphasis on having a critical relationship with secular powers and the state. The church is not supposed to take part in this world, which is inevitably based on oppression and social injustice. Rather the church has to keep a distance from secular power and its foundations such as a national identity. According to Molnár's concept, church and state are rather on terms of opposition or even animosity, which makes it impossible that the church could supply a constitutive contribution to the affairs of the state or the nation.

On the occasion of the six hundredth anniversary of Milicius' death, several publications were written about the preacher. The main monograph came from a professor in church history at the Theological Faculty of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, Miloslav Kaňák.<sup>442</sup> The greatest merit of his study is the completeness of its inventory, which contains all known facts and

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<sup>441</sup>Eschatologická naděje, p. 16-17.

<sup>442</sup>Miloslav Kaňák, *Milíč z Kroměříže*, Praha 1975.

ideas on Milicius. Its weakness is that it did not give a broader analysis of the preacher's significance. According to Kaňák, Milicius was primarily a preacher for the moral conversion of the church, protesting against the power and wealth of substantial parts of the clergy. The preacher definitely did not belong to the Roman Catholic tradition that had become involved with secular power. He was the first to show the way to a deeper change after similar but quite inconsequent attempts by the emperor and the archbishop. He was one of the reformers who understood that the church had to return to its roots, to its origins from the first centuries when it was still poor and pure. In this regard, Milicius belonged to the tradition of the Waldensians and the Hussites, to the fundamental stream of the Reformation. Therefore, in the Czech context, he is called the "Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation." He conceived some of the basic ideas of the Reformation, to which he himself belonged.<sup>443</sup>

The anniversary of 1974 brought also the first new edition since 1946 of some of Milicius' texts. Vilém Herold and Milan Mráz edited the three synodical sermons<sup>444</sup> which Milicius delivered at some councils of the clergy of the Prague diocese on request of the archbishop. In the introduction to the edition, the authors concluded that as far as his theological ideas were concerned, Milicius was not exceptional for his time nor for his environment. He was in many respects a child of his age, sharing the values and mentality of his contemporaries. Above all, he wanted to reform some of the features of the church affected by corruption and wealth. The means he wanted to use were rather moderate since he did not want to change the existing order in the church nor in society.

However, Herold and Mráz saw another level of Milicius' significance, which they called the objective one. The consequences of preacher's work were far-reaching. His ideas, though moderate in their own field, were one of the main impetuses for the Hussite movement, which would shatter the existing structures of power. He prepared the way for Hus and the Hussite movement by the substance of his appeal for reform, which was very close to the four Prague articles of 1420. The similarity with this Hussite declaration can be seen in Milicius' efforts in preaching, in his criticism of the clergy's indulgence and in his struggle against moral corruption in society. Finally, Herold and Mráz stated that Milicius independently came to conclusions similar to John Wyclif in England reached in the same time period. He prepared the ground for a warm acceptance of Wyclif, who had a decisive influence on Johannes Hus. Milicius might not have wanted to realize reforms in the sense of changing the social order,

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<sup>443</sup>Kaňák, p. 55-60.

<sup>444</sup>Vilém Herold, Milan Mráz (ed.), *Iohannis Milicii de Cremsir tres sermones synodales*, Praha 1974.

nevertheless he initiated such changes through the course of history. The interesting conclusion of these two scholars is that Milicius must be considered one of the main predecessors of Hus, but only in the sense that he was the unwitting Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation.

The German discussion on Milicius and pre-Hussite history took a different direction in the years after the Second World War. Scholars from the former German minority in Bohemia stressed this part of history's connection to other developments in Europe. In the case of Milicius, they pointed to the movement of Pre-Humanism in Italy and of the *Devotio moderna* in the Netherlands. In 1964 Eduard Winter published in East Berlin a study on the influence of Pre-Humanism on the church reforms in Bohemia.<sup>445</sup> Pre-Humanism is in his definition the movement that connected the reception of ancient philosophy to the new emerging awareness of life and nation. Replacing the clerical element as the foundation and center of thinking — which necessarily had an international character — came the secular-national element. The most important consequence of this shift in awareness was the approach toward the church and possible reforms in it. No longer were structures and hierarchy decisive, but the institution as such had to be reformed.<sup>446</sup> This movement that started in Italy with philosophers and writers such as Dante and Petrarca found a fertile ground in universities in Northern Italy and was soon spread to Bohemia by clerics who had gained high positions in the church and state. In the Bohemian context the initiators of Pre-Humanism were, according to Winter, Johannes de Dražicz, Arnestus de Pardubicz, both archbishops of Prague and Johannes Novoforiensis, the counselor of Emperor Charles IV. The ideas of the movement were propagated by some new monastic orders, of which the Austin Canons were the most important. At the center of the activities of theologians stood the vernacular language and its use within the context of the church. Several new monasteries founded in the era of Charles IV, such as Roudnice or Emaus in Prague, based their conception on the Czech or Slavonic language. Another element of Pre-Humanism strengthened this idea. The culture of the book and, connected to that, the emphasis on study were cultivated in the new monasteries and made the movement a powerful

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<sup>445</sup>Eduard Winter, *Frühhumanismus. Seine Entwicklung in Böhmen und deren europäischen Bedeutung für die Kirchenreformbestrebungen im 14. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1964.

<sup>446</sup>„Unter Frühhumanismus wir jene geistige Bewegung verstanden, die die Rezeption der Antike mit einem neuen Lebens- und Nationalgefühl verband. Sie stellte gegenüber dem Klerikal-Internationalen, das im Mittelalter weitgehend herrschte, das Säkular-Nationale in den Mittelpunkt des Denkens. Eine solche Bewegung mußte eng mit Kirchenreformbestrebungen verbunden sein, die aber nicht von außen, von außerkirchlichen



cultural impetus in church and society. The new orientation on important questions such as how to communicate and to study the teachings of the church led to a new concept of devotion. Pre-Humanism understood the needs and contribution of the individual as being more meaningful than the collective notion. Devotion became personalized; individual experience became the focus of the relationship between God and humankind. This profound change brought to an end the clergy's monopoly on devotion since the laity was recognized and became involved in theological matters. According to Winter, this new devotion moved away from the rationalistic understanding of Scholasticism to a more emotional appeal to the heart of the listeners. Such were the basic features of the *Devotio moderna* in the Netherlands led by Geert Groote.<sup>447</sup>

Winter placed Milicius in this context of Pre-Humanism, as his ideas were close to those of Arnestus de Pardubicz, Johannes Novoforiensis and Charles IV. Winter saw in him the main force that brought a change to the religious environment in Bohemia. For many reasons, the preacher stood in the shadow of his disciple Johannes Hus, who could not have gained the support he did without the pioneer work and influence of Milicius.<sup>448</sup> Winter stressed the efforts of Milicius in the field of popular preaching and lay community building. Sermons were delivered in the vernacular, one of the main issues of Pre-Humanism. Milicius built his community *Jerusalem* for a broad circle of people, mainly from a lay background, without entering one of the monastic orders. With his activities Milicius sowed the seeds of the Hussite movement, which would change the face of church and society profoundly. The existing social structures were no longer indelible, but were to be adapted to the individual needs of the time and the people.

Man versteht jetzt aber auch, warum die Tschechen gerade heute wieder mit Recht stolz auf den Reformator, ja Revolutionär Militsch sind. Er ist derjenige, der die Fackel entzündet hat, die dann über Matthias van Janov durch Hus aufgenommen und weitergetragen wurde. Die Tschechen können wirklich stolz sein auf dieses Geschlecht revolutionärer Fackelträger mit den drei leuchtenden Namen: Militsch von Kremsier,

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Faktoren, herangetragen wurden, sondern die Kirche von innen her zu reformieren suchten, selbst wenn dies zu Überwindung der institutionellen mittelalterlichen Kirche führen müßte." Winter, p. 7-8.

<sup>447</sup>Winter, p. 165 ff.

<sup>448</sup>Winter criticizes here one of his predecessors in historiography on Bohemia, Constantin Höfler. "Militsch gehört zweifelhaft zu den interessantesten und großartigsten Gestalten, die das tschechische Volk hervorgebracht hat. Die deutsche bürgerliche nationalistische Geschichtsschreibung ist ihm nicht gerecht geworden. Sie sah in ihm einen überstieghenden Ekstatiker, der nur Unruhe in Böhmen erregt habe." Winter, p. 86.

It is interesting that Winter both acknowledged a nationalistic element in Milicius' work and bridged the gap that could have resulted from such an *Alleingang*. In his eyes it was true that Milicius very much cared about national elements in his effort for church reforms, such as preaching in the vernacular. Through this aim he engendered a movement which was very much a Czech development. These components can also be found in Palacký's concept of Czech history, but with one important difference. Palacký stated that the movement of the Bohemian Reformation originated purely from Czech sources, that foreign influences were of a minor significance and that the Czechs have their own, independent history. Winter placed the Czech developments in a broader context and saw their roots in a European movement that led to a shift from a medieval to a modern mentality in both the church and society. Milicius was one of the reformers of the fourteenth century who, in his case in a Bohemian environment, conceived and practiced the new understanding of life and faith. He contributed to a development that took place everywhere in Europe and that placed the individual with his specific conditions at the center of attention.

Winter found approval for his viewpoint from another German scholar, Johanna Schreiber or Girke-Schreiber from the Munich-based Collegium Carolinum for research on Bohemian history. In two articles, she presented Milicius as a representative of the movement of *Devotio moderna*, which is, according to her, generally wrongly attributed to the Netherlands only.<sup>450</sup> There are remarkable parallels between the lives of Gerardus Magnus and Milicius when we take into account their conversion, their preaching activities, emphasis on a lay movement, criticism of the clergy and their difficulties with church authorities. The devotion that both preachers taught to their disciples was based on a return to the values of the first Christians, fear of the consequences of sin and evil and on individual *exercitia* of Christian virtues. Both were very much concerned about the fate of the church, which in their eyes was corrupted by the attitude of many clergymen. The way to purify the church was to return it to the roots of Christianity. This goal could only be achieved by educating the people in a deeper understanding of the faith and by bringing them to a true conversion. Following Christ was at the heart of their ideas about the church and society. It is, however, not yet possible to speak

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<sup>449</sup>Winter, p. 101.

<sup>450</sup>Johanna Schreiber, *Devotio moderna in Böhmen*, in: *Bohemica*, Jahrbuch des Collegium Carolinum, VI (1965), p. 93-122; Johanna Girke-Schreiber, *Die böhmische Devotio moderna*, in: Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Bohemia Sacra, Das Christentum in Böhmen 973-1972*, Düsseldorf 1974, p. 81-91.

about a direct connection or a mutual influence of both movements. Rather, we should view the similarity between the two as parallel developments occurring within a larger European context.

Girke-Schreiber had similar conclusions to Winter about Milicius and his movement. On one point, though, she took a very different stance. Winter saw Milicius as a predecessor of Hus, as the first one to open the way to a profound change in the church and society. Girke-Schreiber, however, disassociated Milicius and Hus, delegating the first one to only moderate reform efforts. Milicius trusted in the pope and church structures to realize the reforms he regarded as necessary. Or put even more strongly: the reforms had to be initiated by the pope since he was the head of the church. Milicius was not prepared to criticize the internal hierarchy of the church nor to declare this order a possible reason for the corruption of the clergy.<sup>451</sup> However, this is exactly what later Hussites believed, thus deviating from the path Milicius took. According to Girke-Schreiber there was no continuity between Milicius and Hus. The *Devotio moderna* in Bohemia “wird in eine Defensivhaltung abgedrängt, aus der dann ganz andere Kräfte wachsen als beschauliche Frömmigkeit. Zu bruchloser Weiterführung und Entwicklung hat es hier nicht kommen können: Chelčický und die Brüder stehen im Gegensatz zur Kirche.”<sup>452</sup> The change was already obvious in the work of Matthias de Janow, who, according to Girke-Schreiber, proclaimed suffering simply as fate and a task of humankind, instead of as a struggle against evil and injustice as Milicius had done. “Resignation, Schickung in Unvermeidliches — noch als allgemein christliche Haltung empfunden: das steht am Ende jener Erneuerungs- und Verinnerlichungsbewegung, einer böhmischen devotio moderna, die nicht zur Entfaltung gekommen ist.”<sup>453</sup>

Girke-Schreiber was still able to accept Milicius, but rejected Hus and the Bohemian Reformation as a separation from the church and from Europe. In her analysis some remnants of the old German distrust towards Bohemian history are present. The Hussite movement is felt to be the development of a nationalistic character that excluded the German inhabitants from the prevailing view of history and society, as happened in the first half of the twentieth century. Milicius is in her eyes still on the right side of the line because he represented a broader European development within the Bohemian context. Girke-Schreiber's position is in

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<sup>451</sup>Schreiber, p. 112.

<sup>452</sup>Schreiber, p. 122; also Girke-Schreiber, p. 89.

<sup>453</sup>Schreiber, p. 122. Was Girke-Schreiber in this conclusion suggesting that the mentality of resignation by which the Czechs often are depicted (“the nation of Švejk”) is a result of an alleged *Alleingang* of the Czechs, which started with Hus?

its conclusions close to the Catholic viewpoint of e.g. Sedlák. Both were able to include Milicius in their scheme of “good historical figures,” whereas they excluded Hus from this category.

In April 1990, during his visit to the recently liberated capital Prague, Pope John Paul II made an official appeal to re-evaluate the theological ideas of Johannes Hus and the circumstances of the trial against him in Constance, which led to his death. His aim was to understand the significance of the Bohemian reformer and to bring reconciliation between the different churches and between the Czech nation and the Roman Catholic Church after a long alienation and exclusion. Many understood the pope’s appeal as an attempt to rehabilitate the Bohemian reformer. Impulses for this decision originated already in the 1960’s when, during the Second Vatican Council, Czech Cardinal Josef Beran recalled the fate of Hus and his significance for the Czech nation. During Communism, the discussion continued in some Czech exile magazines, and the first studies were published by the Polish professor Stefan Swiezawski.<sup>454</sup>

In September 1993 an international symposium took place in Bayreuth, Germany titled *Jan Hus, Zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen*. It was the first visible sign of a change in both the German and Czech, Catholic and Protestant perceptions of the Bohemian reformer. All possible aspects of Hus and Hussite history were discussed in order to find a common ground for new research into Hus’ persona and influence. Soon after the symposium, a commission was established in the diocese of Prague, which was assigned the mission to formulate the Roman Catholic Church’s new position.

In Bayreuth, the presentation on the pre-Hussite period was delivered by Manfred Gerwing, who proceeded in the direction of Eduard Winter and Johanna Girke-Schreiber.<sup>455</sup> In an earlier paper, he had already defined his position on the discussion about Milicius.<sup>456</sup> Between the

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<sup>454</sup>Stefan Swiezawski, Jan Hus — heretik, nebo předchůdce Druhého vatikánského sněmu [heretic, or forerunner of the Second Vatican Council], in: *Studie*, no. 107, 1986, p. 346-354. In the same magazine more papers on the question of Hus were published. See for this Tomáš Halík, *Víra a kultura, Pokoncilní vývoj českého katolicismu v reflexi časopisu Studie* [Faith and Culture, The development of Czech Catholicism after the Second Vatican Council as reflected in the Magazine *Studie*], Praha 1995, p. 96 ff.

<sup>455</sup>His contribution „Die sogenannte Devotio moderna“ was published in Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Jan Hus. Zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen*, München 1997, p. 49-58, and in the Czech version of the collected conference texts: Takzvaná devotio moderna, in: Jan Lášek (ed), *Jan Hus. Mezi epochami, národy a konfesemi*, Praha 1995, p. 54-59.

<sup>456</sup>Manfred Gerwing, Die böhmische Reformbewegung und die niederländische Devotio moderna. Ein Vergleich, in: *Westmitteleuropa, Ostmitteleuropa — Vergleiche und Beziehungen. Festschrift für Ferdinand Seibt zum 65. Geburtstag*, München 1992, p. 125-142.

reform movement in Bohemia and the *Devotio moderna* in the Netherlands there existed a great similarity of content and structure. Gerwing saw the parallels between Milicius and Groote in the threefold orientation of the work of both preachers and reformists. Both were critical toward the avarice of the world, showing solidarity to those who were its victims. Both encouraged the *vita communis* among their followers, by struggling for the presence of the Kingdom of God in the world. Like Johanna Girke-Schreiber Gerwing also saw the later developments of the Bethlehem Chapel and its preacher Johannes Hus as a deviation from the direction Milicius had indicated. The movement became at this point radicalized and lost its connection to the church.<sup>457</sup>

In response to the ideas of Gerwing, the Czech historian Jana Nechutová suggested applying the name “charismatic spirituality” to the reform movement of Milicius and Matthias de Janow.<sup>458</sup> She proposed that a distinction be made between the reform efforts of certain new monastic orders and those of Milicius and his fellow preachers. The efforts of the reform orders and of the Prague church leadership were close to Geert Groote’s movement in their attitude toward an individual, inner spiritual life. Though Milicius and his circle had certainly many ideas that were similar to Groote, their orientation was collective, “eine Theologie koinonistischer Prägung.”<sup>459</sup> The difference between the Netherlands and Bohemia was that in Bohemia the crisis of church and society was seen by Milicius as being the responsibility of every faithful person, whereas in the Netherlands the emphasis was put on the inner perfection of the individual, on the individual’s relationship to God, in the context of which fellow human beings and the church as a collective play a minor role. Nechutová therefore proposed “charismatic spirituality” as a separate name for Milicius’ movement, because it can contain also those elements that might not be totally orthodox.<sup>460</sup> Milicius’ work was continued by Matthias de Janow, who emphasized the political or collective scope of the theology of the Pre-Hussites in his notions on the Eucharist. Here the difference between *the Devotio moderna* and the Pre-Hussites became obvious.<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>457</sup>Gerwing, Reformbewegung, p. 132 and 141.

<sup>458</sup>Jana Nechutová, Die charismatische Spiritualität in Böhmen in der vorreformatorischen Zeit, in: *Österreichische Osthefte*, Jahrgang 39/1997, Heft 3, p. 411-419.

<sup>459</sup>Nechutová, p. 415.

<sup>460</sup>Nechutová, p. 412.

<sup>461</sup>„Seitens der deutschen Historiker hat (...) Manfred Gerwing speziell die Lehre und Lebenspraxis Militsch’ von Kremsier als eine den niederländischen *Devoten* sehr ähnliche Erscheinung bezeichnet. Ihm ging es hierbei hauptsächlich um die ähnliche Organisation des gemeinsamen Lebens der Gläubigen. Es scheint jedoch, daß eben fast nur hierin ein Ähnlichkeit besteht, da die Frömmigkeit der böhmischen Vorläufer Hussens starke kollektive Züge aufwies, wie wir es hauptsächlich in Janovs Lehre über die heilige Kommunion beobachten konnten. Dieser

To Nechutová, the term *Devotio moderna* was too general for correctly characterizing Milicius and his followers. She wanted to assure a more recognized place for the specific nature of the Bohemian movement, which led to the Hussite period and the Bohemian Reformation, whereas for Gerwing Milicius' identity was sufficiently explained by the *Devotio moderna*. One of his reasons might be that the model of this reform movement guaranteed a firm connection to Europe and its developments in the church and society. From another Czech historian the idea of Milicius as a representative of the *Devotio Moderna* got support. František Šmahel in his large monograph on the Hussite Revolution divided Milicius' life into a threefold pattern of the *Vita nova*, *Vita contemplativa* and *Vita activa*,<sup>462</sup> which are the three elements Gerwing also stressed. According to this idea Milicius' conversion represents the *Vita nova*, his inner voices leading him to important decisions exemplify the *Vita contemplativa*, and his work in the house *Jerusalem* demonstrate the *Vita activa*. Like Howard Kaminsky, he compared the preacher to Petrus Waldes and Francis of Assisi. Unlike Gerwing he stressed the continuity between the work of Milicius and his successors, Matthias de Janow and finally Johannes Hus. In this sense Šmahel connected two interpretations of Milicius, regarding him as a predecessor of Hus who spiritually belonged to the new and critical devotion of the fourteenth century.

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Nachdruck auf die kollektive, eine Einheit bildende, theologisch gesagt *koinonische* Funktion der Eucharistie, fehlt, soweit bekannt, bei den *Devoten* der niederländischen Parallelbewegung völlig.“ Nechutová, p. 419.

<sup>462</sup>František Šmahel, *Husitska revoluce, II, Kořeny české reformace* [The roots of the Bohemian Reformation], Praha 1996, p. 190 ff.

## CONCLUSIONS

It might be our main conclusion that in all periods of history, Milicius became in one way or another — openly or more secretly — a hostage of the age. This was not only the case in the times of the nationalistic historiography of the 19th century, but the process as such had its first appearance in the very first texts about Milicius written shortly after his death. It began with Matthias de Janow who, for his own reasons, made Milicius out to be an apocalyptic preacher.<sup>463</sup> He found himself in a fundamental and lasting conflict with his archbishop and other church authorities, in which he finally had to declare his obedience to his superiors and retract some of his statements about the church, the laity and the frequency with which the lay people received Holy Communion. Matthias constructed a life for Milicius in which he mainly defended himself in his dispute with his opponents. In telling Milicius' story, Matthias justified his own course and teachings.

The fate of the second biography is no less afflicted by the church political interests of its author or final editor. We know it in its final form by Bohuslaus Balbinus, the influential baroque chronicler and historian from the Jesuit order. He certainly employed older material that he probably found in the rich library of the monastery of Třeboň, as he said he did in his introduction to his work on Bohemian saints. The *Vita* is to a large degree highly hagiographic, nevertheless it provides a lot of information about Milicius' life and doings. The tone of the biography is in close harmony with Balbinus' main aim which is to cleanse Bohemian history of its heretical and unfaithful image, caused by Hussitism and Utraquism. Balbinus was in desperate need of Czech saintly figures and depicted Milicius as a true son of the church, full of good deeds and teachings, who certainly deserved to be canonized. This aim might have been the reason that the biography simply does not discuss Milicius' eschatological ideas. Through his story of Milicius, Balbinus demonstrated the orthodoxy of the Bohemian tradition and church.

The vastly divergent tendencies of the two biographies turned out to be decisive in the centuries to come. Basically we can say that they influenced the two main images of Milicius that developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The image painted by Matthias de Janow became the basis for the Protestant, Czech depiction of Milicius as the Father of the Bohemian (Czech) Reformation and even of the Czech National Revival. The direction

established by Balbinus became the cornerstone of the idea about Milicius that accepted him as a good (Catholic) Christian, but at the same time denied any connection between him and the Hussite movement.

Historiography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was therefore no exception whatsoever to the trend of taking Milicius hostage. František Palacký used Milicius to support his concept of Czech history and the nation.<sup>464</sup> In his view Milicius represented the inner strength of the Czech nation, which gave birth to the Hussite movement of the fifteenth century, the Czech Brethren of the sixteenth century and finally to the rebirth of the Czech nation in the nineteenth century. Milicius did not take his deepest inspiration from other, foreign movements or persons, but from the inner, independent, spiritual source of the Czech nation. One of Palacký's followers, the popularizing historian František Loskot, basically vulgarized this image of Milicius, calling him the "incarnation of the Czech spirit." Palacký's main opponent Constantin Höfler had no choice other than to reject Milicius.<sup>465</sup> His idea of German provenience of the Bohemian tradition excluded independent Czech sources of any kind. He regarded Milicius as one of the unstable forces in Bohemian history, who promoted an aberration from the main and rational path.

In the course of the twentieth century nationalistic historiography lost its attractiveness, even when elements of it were still present in the depiction of Milicius. Some like Jan Sedlák<sup>466</sup> — coming from a Catholic background — accepted the preacher but separated him from the heretic Hus to demonstrate that critical voices of reform can have a place in the church. Others like Johanna Girke-Schreiber<sup>467</sup> — coming from a German background — took the same position in an effort to appropriate as much history as possible for her own national identity. Even the latest studies show signs of an argumentation that pays tribute to distinctions made along nationalistic or confessional lines in issues of the past. The effort of Pope John Paul II to reconcile the areas of Europe that were divided from the church by historical developments is certainly a laudable initiative. It is, however, another moment which makes use of history, trying to find ways to accept the hereticized Johannes Hus, one of the powerful symbols of the Czech nation.

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<sup>463</sup>For the biographies see ch. II.

<sup>464</sup>See p. 209 ff.

<sup>465</sup>See p. 216 ff.

<sup>466</sup>See p. 225.

<sup>467</sup>See p. 250.



History was manipulated as it will always be because it is a reflection of who we are. In the mirror of past events and contexts we can understand ourselves and our society. The same is true of the reverse: to a large extent the writing of history is a reflection of our present social constellation. In this sense it is our human fate to be confined to understanding only through the use of a mirror. It is, however, the duty of historians and theologians to try and understand our past as objectively as possible, even when we know that our model of understanding has a temporary significance, determined by our time. In the case of Milicius, historians like Palacký, Höfler, Loskot, Bartoš, Winter and others offer us, precisely because of their one-sided approaches and biases, the possibility to engage in a dialogue that is necessary to understand our own aims and strivings. In discussing their standpoints we become aware of our reasoning and sources of information.

The evaluation of the views of Palacký and other nationalistically or confessionally biased historians brings us to the conclusion that in many ways the message of Milicius de Chremsir was overshadowed by later events. Milicius gained significance only in the light of the Bohemian Reformation or even of the National Revival. Understanding Milicius as a forerunner of the Hussite Reformation of the fifteenth century closes our eyes to many details of Milicius' work and finally misleads us in our understanding of the nature of it. Even if nowadays the modern version of this approach rejects the nationalistic language and perspective of Palacký and Loskot, it still regards Milicius mainly as a forerunner to Johannes Hus, thus overlooking the deeply medieval and scholastic concerns of the preacher's theological ideas.

The understanding of Milicius as a representative of the *Devotio moderna*,<sup>468</sup> though attractive, does not fully take into account the "old-fashioned" character of the preacher's devotion. He did not reflect on the way the individual soul may live with God, nor did he refer to a threefold *vita activa, contemplativa* and *nova*. An alleged similarity between the lives of Geert Groote and Milicius or between Milicius' range of activities and the nature of the *Devotio moderna* cannot justify this model of understanding. A sudden and profound conversion like Milicius or Groote experienced before they became preachers and founders of their communities belongs to the life of any saintly person in the biblical and ecclesiastical tradition. In all his writings Milicius stressed with his full weight the significance of a renewal of the old and safe order. His ideas about this order were close to those of Boniface VIII as formulated in his bull *Unam sanctam* at the beginning of the fourteenth century: a strong

church, to which the secular power is obedient. Rulers and kings have to guarantee a peaceful life for their people and the church. In Milicius' view preachers have to play a key role in the return to the old world. There is no sign in Milicius' writings of an inner, individually experienced spirituality — he simply did not allow himself time for that. To him the presence of corruption and decay in the church was a sign of the eschatological character of the age. This study has tried to understand Milicius de Chremsir primarily in the light of the preacher movement that found its origins in the Renaissance of the twelfth century. This approach offers some new insights into the work and motivation of the preacher who devoted his life to reforming the church by using the weapon of the word. To him the church is a holy body threatened by the moral attitude of many of the clergy. In spite of their many faults, Milicius does not doubt in any way the authority of the clergy. They belong to the hierarchy, the backbone of the holy order, of which the pope is the head. He is the highest authority on earth, who has to decide which steps to take toward reform.

Milicius was without a doubt a venerator of saints. Our survey of the way he regarded the Bohemian saints in both his postils pointed out that Milicius did not pay much attention to their miraculous qualities. Saints are characterized by their evangelic life, helping the poor, defending the helpless, leading the people to Christ and pouring out their blood for the church. Milicius encouraged his audience to follow their example, thus defining sainthood from a moral point of view.

Milicius was primarily a person and theologian who was fascinated by the power of the spoken and, to some extent, written word. To him those who use the word are able to change the world either in a good or bad way. The word is the main weapon against the power of evil present due to the lack of discipline in the church and disorder in society. In this respect we could compare Milicius to many individuals from different groups in our times who use mass media to evangelize the world. His understanding of preaching brought him to regard it as a separate office in the church, with preachers holding their own mandate. Their role is to distinguish between good and evil and identify this as characteristic of an eschatological age. It is deceiving to portray Milicius as an apocalyptic preacher who predicts the exact year of the coming of Antichrist. His two writings about Antichrist were both written in a year of crisis, which the year 1367 was without a doubt to Milicius. His experiences in Rome may have colored the wording of both the *Sermo de die novissimo* and the *Libellus de Antichristo*. The sermons in *Abortivus* and in *Gratiae Dei* do not elaborate on apocalyptic issues anywhere.

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<sup>468</sup>See p. 248 ff. and 253.

Milicius' ideas about the end of time have to be characterized as eschatological and not as apocalyptical.

As such Milicius was very much a part of the preaching movement which started in the twelfth century and gained an important place in the developments of the late Middle Ages. As a result, ordinary people were more and more confronted with the church and its demands, which were mainly of a moral character. The preacher movement of the twelfth till the fourteenth centuries was the main vehicle of this second Christianization of Europe. Milicius' idea of the preacher and his influence being a key to the reform of the church and society is a product of this movement and a contributing factor to its reception in Bohemia.

Many questions about Milicius and his significance in the Bohemian context have yet to be answered. Special attention should be paid to the role of saints in the works of Milicius' contemporaries to identify the character of his own remarks about them. The sermons of Conradus de Waldhausen, Milicius' fellow preacher, have not been analyzed yet. Many other preachers have worked in Prague during the fourteenth century, but their work and importance has not been studied systematically. Archbishop Arnestus de Pardubicz played an important role in the reform efforts during the reign of Charles IV. What was the scope of his ideas and church politics? The relationship and mutual influence of those men is basic to comprehending the spiritual mentality in Prague in the third quarter of the fourteenth century. What was the interdependence between Milicius and his milieu in Prague and, in a broader context, in Central Europe and eventually in Avignon and Rome?

For the first time after a long period of totalitarian rule the political orientation of the Czech Republic is not an obstacle anymore for the study of medieval church history. This offers many new possibilities for scholars to continue in the work of their ancestors of the nineteenth century. At the same time they have the difficult task to pull down the many historical myths in Czech history and historiography<sup>469</sup> and to show new ways of understanding key periods and figures of the past.

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<sup>469</sup>For a survey of the Czech national myths and their present significance in Czech society see Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation. National Identity and the Post-Communist transformation of society*, Cambridge 1996. For an impression of the new tasks of Czech historiography see: Dušan Třeštík, *Die Tschechische Geschichte und die Tschechische Historiker nach dem 17. November*, in: *Bohemia*, 32 (1991), p. 277-295.

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