

# Re-use and Reinvent: The Function of Processions in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bohemia

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## Introduction

Religious processions, organized parades and manifestations hold a special place of honor in the history of Bohemia and in its national mythology from the Middle Ages to the modern period. The most recent of them, a student manifestation that took place in Prague in autumn 1989 became the real and symbolic beginning of the Velvet Revolution and portended the fall of the communist regime in the Czech Republic. On November 17 of 1989, several thousand students marched to commemorate Jan Opletal. The peaceful demonstration, accompanied by singing of the student hymn *Gaudeamus igitur* evokes another processional form of disagreement with contemporary regime, which took place also in Prague's New Town, about six hundred years previously. On Sunday, July 30 of 1419, Prague Hussites under Jan Želivský overthrew the leadership at the Town Hall, after they processed there from the Church of Our Lady of the Snows following Želivský bearing the *Corpus Christi*. Eleven councilmen died on that occasion. This successful coup entered history as "the first Prague defenestration" and is considered the beginning of the Hussite revolution.<sup>1</sup>

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1) This article is conceived for an international readership. For that reason, we preferred references to international publications. – Howard KAMINSKY, *The Prague Insurrection of 30 July 1419*, *Mediaevalia et Humanistica* 17, 1966, p. 106–126; Petr ČORNEJ, *30. 7. 1419. První pražská defenestrace*, Praha 2010, see especially p. 117–141; Jörg K. HOENSCH, *Prager Fensterstürze*, in: *Deutsche und Tschechen. Geschichte – Kultur – Politik*, ed. Walter Koschmal et al., München 2011, p. 535–542.

These events exemplify how the original purpose of such “mobile congregations” could be transformed to serve new needs in times of change and conflict. Depending on the circumstances, processions, while preserving the external form, could be given new functions that were religious (confessional), political or military in nature.<sup>2</sup> Using three different examples (Prague, Tabor and Kutná Hora) between the mid-fourteenth and the seventeenth century, we will attempt to illustrate the different functions of processions and the way in which they influenced public opinion and contemporary politics.

The limited source base dictates this approach. According to the current state of research, it is not possible to offer any other but kaleidoscopic picture of medieval processions in the Czech lands. Omitting liturgical sources,<sup>3</sup> which present primarily a normative and static view of the phenomenon, we will offer an analysis of those reports of processions that by the virtue of being written down signaled a certain deviation from the custom, foregrounding that which was unusual and extraordinary. Drawing on three examples, we shall analyze two main types of processions in the kingdom of Bohemia, beginning with the *Corpus Christi* processions and processions that accompanied the annual festival of *ostensio reliquiarum* in fourteenth century Prague. Next we will turn to the commune at Tabor (prior to 1422) as an example of a community, which incorporated traditional processions in a way that addressed the new needs of a nascent town. We will conclude with an analysis of Kutná Hora and its Eucharistic processions between 1392 and 1624 to document the variability of the processional form. The three examples illustrate the malleability of the processional function and the changing meaning that it had for urban communities that organized them.

## Prague

In the mid-fourteenth century, Prague became a leading royal residence in the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup> Since 1344, Prague was the site of an independent ecclesiastical province with a dense parish network that numbered more than 2000 parishes in the bishopric of Prague. There were 44 (unevenly distributed) parish districts and 30 churches that were either capitular or monastic. The late gothic Prague was

2) For introduction to the massive subject of processions, see the summary and bibliography in Károly GODA, *Buda festiva: Urban society and Processional Culture in a Medieval Capital City*, Czech and Slovak Journal of Humanities, *Historica* 2, 2011, p. 58–79; IDEM, *The Medieval Cult and Processional Veneration of the Eucharist in Central Europe. Festive Culture in the Royal Cities of Cracow and Buda in a comparative Perspective*, *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica* 18/1, 2015, p. 101–184.

3) For a study of processions in Prague (before 1420) based on liturgical sources see Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Slavnosti církevního roku – v kostele i na ulici*, *Documenta Pragensia* 12, 1995, p. 45–64; numerous mentions of processions in Zdeněk NEJEDLÝ, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu*, 6 volumes, Praha 1954–1956, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

4) Vilém LORENC, *Das Prag Karls IV. Die Prager Neustadt*, Stuttgart 1982; *Karl IV.: Kaiser von Gottes Gnaden: Kunst und Repräsentation des Hauses Luxemburg 1310–1437*, edd. Jiří FAJT – Barbara DRAKE BOEHM, München 2006; *Kunst als Herrschaftsinstrument. Böhmen und das Heilige römische Reich unter den Luxemburgern im europäischen Kontext*, edd. Jiří FAJT – Andrea LANGER, Berlin – München 2009; František KAVKA, *Am Hofe Karls IV.*, Leipzig 1989, p. 26–34.

not a single town, but an agglomeration of four towns, which resulted from their gradual and entirely organic merging: Old Town and New Town on the right bank of the Vltava River and the Lesser Town and Hradčany on the left bank.<sup>5</sup>

With a knowledge of the general western christian traditions, we can supplement all basic liturgical processions in Prague churches which would have prefaced Sunday or Holy Day liturgies and which would have been closely connected to the sacred topographie of a church. The same holds true for extraordinary processions (intercessory or thanksgiving), which left the church or monastery and its most immediate surroundings, processing to another nearby church or monastery. There were large intercessory and penitent processions on Palm Sunday, feast of St. Mark (*litanía maior*, April 25) and three rogation days following the fifth Sunday of Easter (*rogationes, litaníae minores*).<sup>6</sup> Using a combination of liturgical sources (processionals, agenda, missals, breviaries),<sup>7</sup> we can identify the churches connected to the liturgical life of the cathedral church of St. Vitus. On Palm Sunday, a procession connected the episcopal palace with the monastery of the Premonstratensians in Strahov (about 1 km away) and back, on St. Mark the crowds processed to the Benedictine convent of St. George inside the Castle precinct, which was also the destination of processions on rogation days. In good weather, one of those processions descended from the Cathedral to the monastery of the knights of St. John in the Lesser Town near the Charles Bridge.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the regular, liturgically fixed processions, there were extraordinary processions organized at times of natural disasters, epidemics or ecclesiastical and social crises. Since mid-fourteenth century, Prague synods called for processions for preservation from epidemics and plague, for the well-being of the kingdom, or for peace and the resolution of the Western schism.<sup>9</sup> Due to the high density of the parish network, processions were a common occurrence. During high feasts, there may have been several tens of parish and capitular (and perhaps even monastic) processions taking place at once, ambulating along the borders of parish districts (for example on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary) or towards their ecclesiastical destinations in the neighborhood.<sup>10</sup> Traditional

5) Václav LEDVINKA – Jiří PEŠEK, *Prag*, Praha 2001, p. 136–183.

6) Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Slavnosti*, p. 45–63; Petr ULIČNÝ, *Kristus v pohybu. Přemístitelné objekty v liturgii středověkých Čech*, *Umění* 59, 2011, p. 126–144; IDEM, *Prostor a rituál: Velikonoční slavnosti v bazilice sv. Jiří na Pražském hradě*, *Studia mediaevalia Bohemica* 4, 2012, p. 7–33; Aleš MUDRA, *Výtvarná díla v liturgii velkých svátků*, in: *Kristus z Litovle. Restaurování 2007–2010. Katalog výstavy Victimae paschali laudes*, ed. Helena Zápalková, Olomouc 2011, p. 14–27.

7) Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Slavnosti*, p. 48, n. 10.

8) *Ibid.*, p. 51, 60; Michal DRAGOUN, *Česká středověká kalendária* (unpublished Charles University, Faculty of Arts M.A. thesis, 2000), p. 456–457. Also missal probably from the bishop's church, cca 1395 in the Library of the National Museum, MSS sign. XVI A 16, f. 95va, 128rb, 144vb.

9) Jaroslav V. POLC – Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Pražské koncily a synody předhusitské doby*, Praha 2002, p. 312: *pro cessatione mortalitatis, tempore pestilencie* (1357–1408); *pro pace, pro felici statu Bohemiae* (1380–1408), *pro unitate ecclesiae* (1390, 1409); Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Slavnosti*, p. 58–59 mentions their considerable increase since the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and postulates general popularity of processions.

10) Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Slavnosti*, p. 52, 57, n. 57.

processions, therefore, fragmented the religious landscape in the capital, which at this time numbered around 30 to 40 thousand inhabitants.

However, other religious ceremonies served to unite the vast religious network. The *ostensio reliquiarum*, an annual and festive display of imperial relics, holy relics belonging to the metropolitan chapter of St. Vitus and dynastic treasury of the Luxembourgs, rose above the local, regional and even national levels.<sup>11</sup> It was the emperor Charles IV and his spiritual advisers (especially the Prague archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice), who established this festivity (*festum lancee et clavorum Domini*) with the approval of pope Innocent IV. The first *ostensio*, now with a fixed ceremonial *ordo*, took place in 1356 on the second Friday after Easter in the Cattle Market, a new square in the New Town (modern day Charles Square).<sup>12</sup>

The *ostensio* was preceded by a procession through a more remote part of town; the goal of the procession was publicly to “transport” the relics from the cathedral church of St. Vitus to the New Town one day before the feast (on Thursday). A possible reconstruction (fig. 1) of the processional route (not yet established) is based on two nearly-forgotten reports of the *ostensio* ceremonies.<sup>13</sup> The first describes

11) Hartmut KÜHNE, *Ostensio reliquiarum. Untersuchungen über Entstehung, Ausbreitung, Gestalt und Funktion der Heiltumsweisungen im römisch-deutschen Regnum*, Berlin – New York 2000, p. 109–130; David Ch. MENGEL, *Bones, Stones, and Brothels: Religion and Topography in Prague under Emperor Charles IV (1346–78)*, Diss. Medieval Studies. Notre Dame University, Indiana 2003, p. 304–324; Kateřina KUBÍNOVÁ, *Imitatio Romae. Karel IV. a Řím*, Praha 2006, p. 221–254, 291–298; Zoë OPAČÍČ, *Architecture and religious experience in 14th century Prague*, in: Kunst als Herrschaftsinstrument, p. 136–149, especially p. 145, for a thesis about the possible role played by the Benedictine Emmaus Monastery “Na Slovanech” in the New Town at the *ostensio reliquiarum*, EAD, *Emauzský klášter a Nové Město pražské: slovanská tradice, císařská ideologie a veřejný rituál v Praze 14. století*, in: Emauzy. Benediktinský klášter Na Slovanech v srdci Prahy, edd. Klára Benešová – Kateřina Kubínová, Praha 2007, p. 32–60; EAD, *The Sacred Topography of medieval Prague*, in: Sacred Sites and Holy Places: Exploring the Sacralization of Landscape through Time and Space, edd. Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide – Stephan Brink, Turnhout 2013, p. 251–281, especially p. 261–266, on the Benedictine Emmaus Monastery “Na Slovanech” see p. 271–272; Kateřina HORNÍČKOVÁ, *In Heaven and on Earth: Church Treasure in Late Medieval Bohemia*, Diss., Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University Budapest 2009, p. 118–123; Karel OTAVSKÝ, *Der Prager Domschatz unter Karl IV. im Lichte der Quellen. Ein Sonderfall unter spätmittelalterlichen Kirchenschätzen*, in: „...das Heilige sichtbar machen“. Domschätze in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft, ed. Ulrike Wendland, Regensburg 2010, p. 181–236; Jana GAJDOŠOVÁ, *The Charles Bridge: Ceremony and Propaganda in Medieval Prague*, Diss., Birkbeck, University of London 2014, p. 110–146; Martin BAUCH, *Divina favente clemencia. Auserwählung, Frömmigkeit und Heilungsvermittlung in der Herrschaftspraxis Kaiser Karls IV.*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2015 (= Forschungen zur Kaiser- und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters, Beihefte zu J. F. Böhmer, Regesta Imperii 36), p. 365–384.

12) Critical edition *modus ostendendi reliquiarum* see K. KUBÍNOVÁ, *Imitatio Romae*, p. 291–298. Relics were displayed first from a wooden platform (*turris reliquiarum*), since 1390s probably from a stone building near the Corpus Christi chapel. Klára BENEŠOVSKÁ – Zoë OPAČÍČ, *Wenceslas IV and the Chapel of Corpus Christi in the New Town of Prague*, in: Architecture, Liturgy and Identity. Liber amicorum Paul Crossley, edd. Zoë Opačič – Achim Timmermann, Turnhout 2011, p. 157–175; Jan HRDINA, *Kaple Božského Těla na Novém Městě pražském v době předhusitské – dvě drobné sondy*, Staletá Praha 29/2, 2013, p. 21–38.

13) The author (unknown priest) of the first recorded relic procession (Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup> 1418) included it among the historical records from 1378–1432, *Geschichtschreiber der husitischen Bewegung in Böhmen*, ed. Konstantin HÖFLER, Vol. 2, Wien 1865 (= Fontes Rerum Austriacarum I/6), p. 65: *Anno domini 1418 feria quinta proxima ante ostensionem Reliquiarum magister Cristanus plebanus ecclesie*



(1) Route used by processions with imperial relics on the occasion of *ostensio reliquiarum*  
 Based on „Praha po roce 1400“ in *Lucemburská Praha 1310–1437*, ed. Václav LEDVINKA, Praha 2006, p. 41. Edited by Martina Hrdinová

*sancti Michelis in antiqua civitate pragensi cum suis vicariis et aliis coadiunctis sibi sacerdotibus domino Petro a sancto Nicolao cum plebano domino Petro tunc plebano ante letam curiam et plebano ecclesie sancti Benedicti, que [sic] assumptis sibi multis presbiteris conduxerunt honorifice Reliquias incipientes a ponte transierunt per vicum Celtnericum, curiam regis et per vicum in foro sancti Galli, ubi carnes sabbatis diebus venduntur; et consequenter usque turrym nove Civitatis pragensis, ubi predictae Reliquie ostenduntur; quod omnibus temporibus, quando inchoata est hoc ostensio Reliquiarum, hoc idem non est factum etc.* See also P. ČORNEJ, 30. 7. 1419. První pražská defenestrace, p. 74–75 (with a differing interpretation). – A second mention on this procession (Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1437) was left by Jan Turonis, a scribe of bishop Filibert of Coutances, who was an ambassador of the Council of Basel in Bohemia within 1436–1437, *Johannis de Turonis, Regestrum actorum in legationibus a sacro concilio in Bohemiam*, in: *Monumenta conciliorum generalium seculi decimi quinti*, Tomus primus, ed. Ernestus BIRK, Windobonae 1857, p. 860: *Jouis xi, cum magna solemnitate recepte fuerunt reliquie de castro Pragensi, et adducte usque primam ianuam parue ciuitatis, ubi illas receperunt ciues parue ciuitatis, et adduxerunt usque quandam domum prope pontem; et illas acceperunt ciues antiquae, qui duxerunt usque extra ianuam antiquae ciuitatis eundo nouam, et ibidem receperunt alii de noua ciuitate conducentes illas in locum consuetum; et interfuit imperator cum populi multitudine, captiuique detenti liberati.* This is also mentioned by František FIŠER, *Karlštejn. Vzájemné vztahy tří karlštejnských kaplí, Kostelní Vydří* 1996, p. 255.

possibly the last of the pre-Hussite processions carrying imperial relics in 1418, the second, from 1437, describes the renewal of the old Catholic tradition in the predominantly Utraquist Prague after the end of the Hussite wars.<sup>14</sup>

The processions started in the metropolitan shrine at the Prague Castle and proceeded probably through Hradčanské Square, passing through Strahovská Gate and Loretánská Street. At the end they took a sharp turn to the south and proceeded through a local hollow way to the Lesser Town. The procession continued down through Úvoz Street and Nerudova Street all the way to the Malostranská Gate (also called Strahovská), where councilmen from the Lesser Town would await the relics which would be handed to them before continuing with the procession. Another change of guard took place after crisscrossing the smallest of the royal towns in Prague, by the opulent Saxon House at the beginning of the Mostecká Street, where councilmen from the Old Town took charge of them. The procession crossed the bridge to the Old Town Square and, after it had possibly paused in front of the Town Hall, proceeded down Celetná Street to the Royal Court, the site of the royal residence (which Wenceslas had moved there from the Prague Castle in the 1380s). It was probably at this point that the king, queen and assorted courtiers joined the procession. It then continued around the queen's court across the upper part of Havelský Meat Market, bypassing the church of St. Gallus and likely continuing down the wide street Na Můstku and finally entering through the former Havelská Gate the territory of the New Town.<sup>15</sup> Here, the last changing of the guards took place and the local burghers took charge of the relics. The procession then continued to the Cattle Market and the chapel of *Corpus Christi*, where the relics were displayed on the following day, which was a Friday.

This detailed description of the route has its purpose here: The procession followed (at least in part) an older ceremonial route, which connected the exempt chapter of St. Peter at Vyšehrad, formerly a temporary residence of the Přemyslid dukes and kings and also a symbolic commemoration of the dynasty's origins, with the contemporary political and ecclesiastical center at the Prague Castle. This route was, however, used only on very special occasions: during a special *adventus* of the king or of relics, during royal coronations, and also royal funerals.<sup>16</sup> There is enough

14) Sigismund took possession of the imperial relics in the tumultuous situation at the beginning of the Hussite revolution, possibly the summer of 1420 during one of the crusades. In March 1420, he had them transported in secret from Hungarian Visegrad to Nuremberg, where they were displayed until 1524. Julia SCHNELBÖGL, *Die Reichkleinodien in Nürnberg*, Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg 51, 1962, p. 78–159. In 1437, inhabitants of Prague had to be content with relics of St. Vitus and a partial collection from Karlštejn Castle.

15) Processional route may have been more direct, alongside the church of St. Martin to Martinská (Zderazská) Gate in Perštýn and then via Spálená Street directly to Cattle Market.

16) This ceremonial route, its dynastic and sacral importance, has generated a vast literature. See, for example Josef CIBULKA, *Český řád korunovační a jeho původ*, Praha 1934; František KAVKA, *Am Hofe Karls IV.*, p. 90–95; Paul CROSSLEY, *The Politics of Presentation: The Architecture of Charles IV of Bohemia*, in: *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe*, edd. Sarah Rees Jones – Richard Marks – Alastair J. Minnis, York 2000, p. 128–132; Václav ŽŮREK, *Korunovační řád Karla IV. jako ritualizovaný panovnícký program*, *Časopis Národního muzea – řada historická* 176, 2007, p. 105–143; IDEM, *L'usage comparé des motifs historiques dans la légitimation monarchique entre les royaumes de France et de Bohême*

reason to believe that the regular annual processions related to *ostensio reliquiarum* fixed that part of the route (from the cathedral of St. Vitus to the Royal Court in the Old Town), which later came to be called Royal Road and which was followed (though in the opposite direction) on the occasion of royal coronations until 1836.<sup>17</sup>

These relic processions became the most significant repeated sacral processions in medieval Prague and in the Czech lands. We lack more detailed reports about their composition and participants, but it is clear that in the atmosphere of conflict, which in 1419 resulted in the Hussite revolution, processions became the bearers of new meanings, as evident from the following two examples.

In the first half of 1412, Prague became the site of a papal indulgence campaign, declared by pope John XXIII in support of his crusade against Ladislaus the Magnanimous, the King of Naples. King Wenceslas IV backed the collection of alms in his kingdom, but the financial aspect of the campaign, which must have been emphasized, met with indignation, especially in the university circles. Jerome of Prague, one of the leading figures among the reform masters at the Prague university, with the silent support of influential courtiers, organized a procession that parodied the indulgence campaign: A wagon, decked with replicas of the papal bulls, occupied the center of the spectacle. In it, a student was seated, dressed as a whore, with bare breasts, who with suggestive gestures and words invited passers-by to buy indulgences. The student masquerade left the Malostranské Square, crossing the bridge to the Old Town, walking near the Royal court, and probably proceeding to the Cattle Market in the New Town, where the bulls were publicly burnt. The processional route may have consciously imitated that of the official relic processions in order to lend an additional subversive charge to the whole proceedings.<sup>18</sup>

The second example is from 1418. In the atmosphere of growing radicalism and deepening ideological differentiation inside the Hussite circles, the very act of (non)participation in relic processions equaled a public and personal proclamation

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à la fin du Moyen Âge, Diss. Charles University – École des hautes études en sciences sociales Paris, Paris 2014, p. 246–247 (with a date of the coronation ordinal of Charles IV not being 1347, but rather 1360–70). – František ŠMAHEL, *Spectaculum et pompa funebris. Das Leichenzeremoniell bei der Bestattung Kaiser Karls IV.*, in: Zur politischen Präsentation und Allegorie im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert, ed. F. Šmahel, München 1994, p. 1–37; IDEM, *Poslední chvíle, pohřby a hroby českých králů*, in: Slavnosti, ceremonie a rituály v pozdním středověku, edd. Martin Nodl – František Šmahel, Praha 2014, p. 121–198. 17) Jiří PEŠEK – Bohdan ZILYNSKYJ, *Královská cesta*, Praha 1988; Benita BERNING, „Nach altem löblichen Gebrauch“. *Die böhmischen Königskrönungen der Frühen Neuzeit (1526–1743)*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2008, p. 82, 87–96; Petr ČORNEJ, *Pohaslý lesk panovnického majestátu v porevolučních Čechách*, in: Lesk královského majestátu ve středověku, edd. Lenka Bobková – Mlada Holá, Praha – Litomyšl 2005, p. 99–122; František ŠMAHEL, *Korunovační rituály, ceremonie a festivity české stavovské monarchie 1471–1526*, in: Rituály, ceremonie a festivity ve střední Evropě 14. a 15. století, edd. Martin Nodl – František Šmahel, Praha 2009, p. 147–170; Václav ŽŮREK, *Korunovace českých králů a královen*, in: Slavnosti, ceremonie a rituály, edd. Martin Nodl – František Šmahel, Praha 2014, p. 15–66.

18) An examination of these three sources was conducted by Václav NOVOTNÝ, *M. Jan Hus. Život a učení* 1/2, Praha 1921, p. 104–107. The destination of the processions is not completely clear. The most recent summary in František ŠMAHEL, *Život a dílo Jeronýma Pražského*, Praha 2010, p. 58–59, 138; Pavel SOUKUP, *Mařík Rvačka's Defense of Crusading Indulgences from 1412*, *The Bohemian Reformatio and Religious Practice* 8, 2011 (= Filosofický časopis, special issue 3), p. 77–97.

of allegiance to the Catholic faction and affirmation of its cult of the saints. This held true in the case of Christian of Prachatice, a respected representative of conservative Utraquists, who along with clerics from three churches in the Old Town marched a long way to meet a regularly scheduled procession with holy relics and then accompanied it along its usual route to the chapel of Corpus Christi.<sup>19</sup> It was a demonstrative way of disassociating from his more radical colleagues at the university, who argued against even moderate adoration of relics.

### Commune at Tabor

The fluidity of processional functions becomes especially evident at times of religious conflict when confessional allegiances were still being formed: we see that different factions each used processions to mobilize and organize their supporters.<sup>20</sup> The Hussite reform and revolution is a prime example of such a time of ecclesiastical conflict and division, and exemplifies the different uses of processions by different religious groups.

The early years of the Hussite reform and revolution, the period between 1415 (the death of the Czech reform preacher John Hus in Constance) and 1422 (the defeat of the second crusade sent by Rome to suppress heretics in Bohemia) were characterized by intense religious competition between the reformers, the heirs of Hus's reforming legacy, and the Roman church, interested in squashing any reform efforts that threatened its integrity or livelihood.<sup>21</sup>

This period of conflict seems to have heightened the popularity of processions, adding more functions to their usual arsenal. All the different reform and traditional factions organized them.<sup>22</sup> As mentioned above, the Roman Catholic parishes, which operated as usual, followed their usual schedule of processions, before mass on Sundays and feast days, as prescribed by the liturgical rubrics.<sup>23</sup> The Hussite reformers were more creative with their use of processions; they organized them

19) See first part of note 13. For Master Christian of Prachatice and for a conservative utraquist party, see Jaroslav PROKEŠ, *M. Prokop z Plzně. Příspěvek k vývoji konservativní strany husitské*, Praha 1927; *Křišťan z Prachatic, Stavba a užití astrolábu*, edd. Alena HADRAVOVÁ – Petr HADRAVA, Praha 2001, p. 13–24.

20) For a basic introduction in English, see Hugh AGNEW, *Kingdom of Heretics or Against All*, in: *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*, Stanford 2004, p. 39–54, and Ferdinand SEIBT, *Deutschland und die Tschechen. Geschichte einer Nachbarschaft in der Mitte Europas*, München 1993. For monographs covering the entire span of the Hussite reform and revolution, see Howard KAMINSKY, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, Berkeley 1967; František ŠMAHEL, *Die Hussitische Revolution*, 3 volumes, Hannover 2002 (= MGH Schriften 43); Zdeněk V. DAVID, *Finding the Middle Way. The Utraquists' Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther*, Washington 2004. For a useful though now outdated bibliography, Jarold K. ZEMAN, *Hussite Movement and the Reformation in Bohemia: A Bibliographical Study Guide with Particular Reference to Resources in North America*, Ann Arbor 1977.

21) Thomas A. FUDGE, *Magnificent Ride*, Brookfield 1998 and *The Crusade against Heretics in Bohemia, 1418–1437*, Hampshire UK 2002; Josef MACEK, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*, Praha 1958.

22) On the different use of processions by the Catholic party, see Z. NEJEDLÝ, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu IV*, Praha 1955, p. 59.

23) Processions took place every Sunday and were thus ordinary phenomena in the urban landscape. Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Slavnosti*, p. 46.

as means of assembling their faithful, using any occasion that presented itself: various public events and parades thus turned into processions, including relatively secular events, such as welcoming and sending out of troops, thanksgiving after military victories and the like.<sup>24</sup>

The breadth of processional functions is illustrated on the example of the commune at Tabor, the most radical of the reform factions that emerged in southern Bohemia during this time.<sup>25</sup> Not only did Tabor grow out of large-scale processions, but it also continued to employ processions in its ritual celebrations as well in its military campaigns.

The commune at Tabor even had its origin in processions in the countryside: A contemporaneous chronicler, Lawrence of Březová, reports that the Taborite segment of the Hussite reform grew out of massive processions in the countryside that first started in the spring of 1419. The faithful had traveled there for several reasons, to channel their religious zeal for reform, and also perhaps to express their eschatological feelings or expectations.<sup>26</sup> The gatherings consisted of a small nucleus of regulars, which swelled around important feast days and which called for religious reform. Subsequent meetings did not take place every Sunday, but were convened only on important feast days or holidays. There was nothing inherently radical about the fact that these gatherings took place; religious processions and pilgrimages, which is what these gatherings were, belonged to the very basic arsenal of appropriate venues for the expression of religious convictions and feelings in the late Middle Ages.<sup>27</sup> What is ironic is that this very traditional kind of gatherings led to the establishment of one of the most radical communes in the history of Western Middle Ages.

Liturgical minimalism was the hallmark of Tabor and its reform thinking: the mass minimalistic, stripped down to its basic elements. Taborites celebrated communion out in the open instead of on altars, using wooden implements instead of golden paten and chalice, wearing regular clothes instead of ornates. The priests celebrated mass daily and in the vernacular, in a much simplified form.<sup>28</sup> Lawrence of Březová reports that the devout spent the whole day in things that serve for salvation of souls: The priests were divided into three groups, and the more learned

24) Z. NEJEDLÝ, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu* IV, p. 59–60. Nejedlý states that “whatever in the least could resemble a procession, was turned into a procession, with the priest leading the way carrying the body of Christ. At first, the chalice would also be processed ... but that soon ceased”.

25) Howard KAMINSKY, *Chiliasm and the Hussite Revolution*, Church History 26/1, 1957, p. 43–71; IDEM, *Hussite Radicalism and the Origin of Tabor 1415–1418*, *Medievalia et humanistica* 10, 1956, p. 102–130.

26) H. KAMINSKY, *A Hussite Revolution*, p. 284; Eduard MAUR, *Od hory Tábor k svatoludmilskému srazu. K historii poutí na hory v roce 1419*, *Táborský archiv* 11, 2002, p. 5–37; Petr ČORNEJ, *Slavnosti husitské Prahy*, *Documenta Pragensia* 12, 1995, p. 75–103, 94.

27) H. KAMINSKY, *A Hussite Revolution*, p. 284; Jan HRDINA, *Pious Travelers: Pilgrimage and its Affect on Devotional Practices in Pre-Hussite and Hussite Bohemia*, International Medieval Congress, Leeds, U.K., July 2010.

28) Howard KAMINSKY, *The Religion of Hussite Tabor*, in: *The Czechoslovak Contribution to World Culture*, ed. Miloslav Rechcigl, The Hague 1964, p. 210–223; František ŠMAHEL et al., *Dějiny Tábora* 1/1, České Budějovice 1988, and F. ŠMAHEL, *Dějiny Tábora* 1/2, České Budějovice 1990.

and loquacious ones preached (after dividing people into men, women and children) God's word and especially against clerical pride, greed and arrogance, others heard confessions of sins, and yet others offered communion to the people from dawn to noon, under both kinds.<sup>29</sup>

And yet the rite of processions had been retained, beginning and ending the day-long religious service spent in religious ritual, preaching and fellowship. In the morning, the pilgrims came in an organized fashion: "brothers, priests everywhere around on a pre-arranged holy day led the people associated with them with the holy sacrament of Christ while singing loudly to Tabor for confirmation of the truth, as they say, for rejuvenation and delight of brothers and sisters dwelling there. And while they were approaching, brothers and sisters came out to meet them with the holy sacrament [*Corpus Christi*]"<sup>30</sup> The day's celebrations likewise ended with a procession. Lawrence again reports that: "...after they had been refreshed, the priests and the people got up to give thanks to God and walked around with the sacrament [*Corpus Christi*], circumnavigating the Tabor mountain, the maidens came before the sacrament, it was followed by men and women in an orderly procession, singing songs vigorously, as seemed fitting/profitable. When they finished this procession, they bid each other goodbye and left with their priests back where they came from, not straying from the path so as not to trample grain fields".<sup>31</sup>

Processional activities served as elaborate and ritualized bookends to the day of intense of Christian activities. They served to express religious zeal, unity and solidarity. There was nothing out of the ordinary about ending a liturgy with a procession, except perhaps the fact that Taborites ostensibly rejected all forms of the Catholic ritual that did not have a basis in the New Testament. The persistence of processions even in this radically reformed context underscores the popularity of processions and the malleability of its function.

The second example describes another Taborite procession, organized about a year later, in November 1420. The situation is now one of war: Tabor has solidified into a commune, built as a permanent habitation for its members and organized itself militarily. The Taborite regime could be described as a theocracy.<sup>32</sup> Because the leadership of the commune was entrusted to the priests, the religious function

29) *Chronicon Laurentii de Brzezowa*, in: FRB V, ed. Jaroslav GOLL, Praha 1893, p. 329–534, 401.

30) *Chronicon Laurentii*, p. 401: *Hec cum ad aures adiacencium civitatum, opidorum et villarum devenirent, fratres presbiteri circumcirca vicini conducto certo festivitatis die populum eis iunctum cum venerabili corporis Christi sacramento ad Thabor sonoris vocibus deducunt pro veritatis ibidem, ut dicebant, confirmatione ac fratrum et sororum ibidem existencium confortacione ac consolacione. Quibus taliter venientibus occurrunt de Thabor cum venerabili altaris sacramento fratres et sorores pro alacri venientium suscepcione.*

31) *Chronicon Laurentii*, p. 402: *Peracta itaque, ut dictum est, modica corporis refeccione surgunt cum populo presbiteri ad agendum deo graciaram acciones et cum venerabili eukaristia Thabor montem processionaliter circumeunt, virginibus sacramentum precedentibus et viris ac mulieribus in suis turmis sequentibus, vociferantes et pallentes in canticis, prout videbatur expedire. Hac processione finite vale sibi mutuo facientes cum suis presbiteris non declinantes ad dexterum nec sinistram, ne blade conculcarent, veniunt, unde exierunt. Factum est autem, cum supradicta in longiores partes vulgarentur, cepit numerus venientium de die in diem notabiliter augmentari.*

32) H. KAMINSKY, *A Hussite Revolution*, p. 387.

of the procession is now fused with militarism, and religious processions are used to march troops out into war.

The same chronicler, Lawrence, describes a procession between Písek, a town occupied by Taborites, and Prachatice, a neighboring town, about 30 kilometers from Tabor. The relationship had not been peaceful. Taborite warriors had earlier attacked Prachatice, burnt it down and destroyed a part of its city walls. But after they left, some of the old enemies, who had fled from the Taborite attack, returned to the city. After fixing up some of the houses to make them habitable again and repairing the city wall, they started to attack their opponents, waging a kind of guerrilla warfare against them: The chronicle mentions a man Andrew from Výrov, who had been taken while he was working in the field, and burnt to death, with two others. Yet others were captured and tortured, yet others had their property confiscated and expelled from the town.<sup>33</sup>

The chronicler that tells us that “on account of those things”, Tabor’s commander organized a procession for November 12, with brothers and sisters carrying the *Corpus Christi* before them and marching towards Prachatice.<sup>34</sup> But this procession had a twist to its intention: it was to invade the town and subdue it militarily. What we are left with is a strange phalanx: brothers and sisters arriving in a religious procession, following their priests carrying the sacrament. This phalanx then separates, presumably, into warriors (the men) and the spectators (the women), instantly transforming its function from religious celebration to military attack. Upon arriving at Prachatice, commander Žižka addressed the town peaceably, saying: “Open the gates and let us enter the town with the holy sacrament of Christ’s body and with the priests, and we promise that we would cause you no damages on life or property”.<sup>35</sup> The battle is framed religiously, as if the holy sacrament (rather than an army of Taborite men) were entering the town. But the defenders insist that: “We do not need your body of Christ nor your priests, because we have both Christ’s body and priests, who suit us”.<sup>36</sup> The sacrament not only led the way in the procession, it also led the way in battle. The procession, which in the previous example served to cement religious uniqueness, here became fused with physical and military expressions of that uniqueness.<sup>37</sup>

33) *Chronicon Laurentii*, p. 443–444: *Et hii aliquid reformatis domibus et muro totaliter reparato inceperunt crudeliter persequi omnes sub utraque specie communicantes, quosdam captivantes et ad periurandum compellentes et quosdam receptis eorum rebus a civitate expellentes et quod deterius fuit, duos vel tres legis dei zelatores innocenter combusserunt, de quorum numero fuit quidam clericus Andreas de Wírow, quondam ecclesie Prachaticensis campanarius, quem de agricultura tollentes inhumaniter propter fractionem ymaginum voragine ignis consumpserunt.*

34) *Ibid: Qua re Zizka, Thaboritarum capitaneus, die supradicta cum fratribus et sororibus sacramento corporis Christi precedente iter arripit ad invadendum Prachaticz civitatem.*

35) *Ibid: Quos Zizka veniens primo pacifice alloquitur dicens: ‘Aperite portam et permittite nos cum venerabili corporis Christi sacramento et presbiteris pacifice civitatem ingredi et promittimus nulla vobis inferre dampna nec in corpore nec in rebus’.*

36) *Ibid: Illi vero quasi blasfemantes dixerunt: ‘Non indigemus vestro corpore Christi nec vestris presbiteris, quia habemus et corpus Christi et presbiteros pro nobis valentes’.*

37) František J. HOLEČEK, *Makkabäische Inspiration des hussitischen Chorals*, „Ktož jsú boží bojovníci“, in: *In memoriam Josefa Macka (1922–1991)*, Praha 1996, p. 111–125; *Dying for the Faith, Killing for*

The cruelty that followed the Taborite entry into the town is difficult to square with the overt religiosity of the proceedings. “Having opened the city gates, they brought in the body of Christ with the rest of the brothers and sisters, who were singing [religious songs].<sup>38</sup> Then they divided up and entered different houses, removing the property and upon finding men hidden there, killing them or taking them captive to Žižka, sparing only women and children.”<sup>39</sup> Žižka ordered that the captives be locked up in a church and when it was sufficiently filled with people, about 85 men, Žižka had them all burnt, not heeding their begging and tearful cries for mercy. Another 230 dead bodies were left in the streets, some of them were buried and the rest thrown into a well.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, the entry of the Hussite armies into battle or military expeditions also started in the form of processions. The presence of a priest with a host at the helm of every unit added to the festivity of the occasion and increased the readiness to sacrifice.<sup>41</sup> It was also believed that the *Corpus Christi* that marched at the helm of processing troops offered additional protection.<sup>42</sup> In this example, the procession and sacraments symbolize intense partiality, each side claiming to have its own sacrament and its own priests to produce it.

### ***Corpus Christi* processions in a Post-Hussite Prague (1448–1470)**

The first reports of processional festivities celebrating the feast of *Corpus Christi* in Prague (and probably also in Bohemia) date to the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>43</sup> In the 1370s, *Corpus Christi* processions not only became the liturgical standard in Prague, but their organization become mandatory for dioceses.<sup>44</sup> Several years later, central ecclesiastical authorities complained about pipers and actors in masks taking part

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*the Faith. Old-Testament Faith-Warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in Historical Perspective*, ed. Gabriela SIGNORI, Leiden 2012. The first and second book of the Maccabees gave theological support to these and similar ideas.

38) The function of singing in processions has yet to be fully analyzed. For initial discussion of the subject, see Z. NEJEDLÝ, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu*, volumes II and IV, and, more recently, Marcela K. PERETT, *Vernacular Songs as “Oral Pamphlets”: The Hussites and their Propaganda Campaign*, *Viator* 42, 2011, p. 371–391.

39) *Chronicon Laurentii*, p. 444: *Et aperta porta civitatis corpus Christi cum fratribus residuis et sororibus cum cantu introducunt, qui per omnes domos divisi tollunt res et viros hinc inde absconditos reperientes, parcendo mulieribus et parvulis, crudeliter occidunt vel captos ad Zizkam deducunt.*

40) *Ibid.*

41) P. ČORNEJ, *Slavnosti husitské Prahy*, p. 94.

42) Some of the reformers, namely Jakoubek, saw this practice as dishonoring the sacrament and argued against it. – Z. NEJEDLÝ, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu* IV, p. 134.

43) The feast of Corpus Christi was incorporated in the mandatory feasts in the bishopric of Prague between 1312–1318, J. V. POLC – Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Pražské koncily*, p. 102; Antonín PODLAHA – Eduard ŠITTLER, *Chrámový poklad u Sv. Víta v Praze. Jeho dějiny a popis*, Praha 1903, p. IV, No. 61 (1354); Rostislav ZELENÝ, *The Quaestiunculae of Stephan of Roudnice*, Reprint from *Apollinaris* 38, Roma 1965, p. 33, the word *sigellatoribus* must be emended to *figellatoribus* (before 1365); K. HORNÍČKOVÁ, *In Heaven and on Earth*, p. 50–52; FRANTIŠEK ŠMAHEL, *Ordo ostendendarum reliquiarum Crumlovii: Zkoumání pod drobnohledem*, *Studia mediaevalia Bohemica* 6, 2014, p. 187–234, especially p. 208–214.

44) Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Slavnosti*, p. 55; J. V. POLC – Z. HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Pražské koncily*, p. 200, 206.

in these festivities.<sup>45</sup> The absence of any further references of pre-Hussite *Corpus Christi* processions is all the more remarkable, because the cult of the altar sacrament along with a requirement for frequent communion was one of the pillars of the Czech reform movement.

After the Hussite wars had ended (1434) and after the Utraquist confession had been legalized by the Basel Compactata (1436), the Czech lands became a kingdom of two faiths, with Utraquists predominating. The Utraquists and the Catholics continued the pre-Hussite tradition of *Corpus Christi* processions, which perhaps does not come as a surprise given their high view of the sacrament.

The Utraquist processions in Prague in the post-Hussite period have an unusual position in the national context given the fact that the city served as a permanent royal residence. Wenceslas IV moved it from Prague Castle to the Royal Court in the walls of the Old Town, where it remained until 1480s.<sup>46</sup> The lower consistory, that is the central administrative body of the Utraquist church, operated from the Church of Our Lady before Týn near the Old Town Square (fig. 2).<sup>47</sup> Most inhabitants of Prague preferred Utraquism in its moderate and somewhat conservative interpretation. Catholics in the Old Town were based in the priory of the Friars Minor at St. James, which was very close to the main Utraquist church.<sup>48</sup> Both churches served as the starting point of *Corpus Christi* processions, which followed in part the same route, a fact that at times gave rise to conflicts about who ought to hold the privileged position, as we will see below.

The period between 1448 and 1470 forms a special chapter in the history of the *Corpus Christi* processions in Prague.<sup>49</sup> George of Poděbrady, regent and later king, (1458–1471), conquered Prague then in the hands of conservative Utraquists in September of 1448. The takeover by George of Poděbrady and John of Rokycana, the leader of Czech Utraquists, began a new era of dominance by moderate Utraquists.<sup>50</sup> The change was supposed to be reflected also in religion. In the octave of *Corpus*

45) Ibid, p. 225 (statute from 1380–1384), p. 262 (statute probably from 1393).

46) *Umělecké památky Prahy. Staré Město, Josefov*, ed. Josef VLČEK, Praha 1996, p. 537; František ZÁRUBA, *Hrady Václava IV*, Praha 2014, p. 155–159.

47) On ecclesiastical administration in post-Hussite period, see Zdeňka HLEDÍROVÁ, *Dějiny správy v českých zemích od počátku státu po současnost*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Praha 2005, p. 184–187, bibliography p. 200–201; Blanka ZILYNSKÁ, *Kališnická církev*, in: Husitské století, edd. Pavlína Cermanová – Robert Novotný – Pavel Soukup, Praha 2014, p. 586–605.

48) V. LEDVINKA – J. PEŠEK, *Prag*, p. 246–271; post-Hussite ecclesiastical topography in Václav Vladivoj Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy IX*, Praha 1893, p. 51–165, especially p. 155; Petr ČORNEJ, *Kočička, Kurvička, Kokot a Múdrá hlavička aneb Staroměstští řezníci v husitské revoluci*, Pražský sborník historický 40, 2012, p. 7–130, especially p. 104–106.

49) Rudolf URBÁNEK, *Věk poděbradský I–IV*, Praha 1915–1962 (= České dějiny III/1–4); Petr ČORNEJ – Milena BARTLOVÁ, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české VI (1437–1526)*, Praha – Litomyšl 2007, p. 90–271.

50) R. URBÁNEK, *Věk poděbradský III/2*, p. 276–326; Otakar ODLOŽILÍK, *The Hussite King. Bohemia in European Affairs 1440–1471*, New Brunswick, NJ 1965; Frederick G. HEYMANN, *George of Bohemia. King of Heretics*, Princetown, NJ 1965; most recently on the controversy between Catholics and Utraquists Michal ŠRONĚK, *The Veil of the Virgin Mary. Relics in the Conflict Between Roman Catholics and Utraquists in Bohemia in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, *Umění* 57, 2009, p. 118–139, especially p. 127–131.



(2) Prague, Church of Our Lady before Týn. Photo: National Heritage Institute, Prague

*Christi*, June 19 of 1449, Rokycana organized a procession from the Týn Church to the cathedral, where fifteen masses were celebrated and the chalice was offered to all.<sup>51</sup> In order to maximize the effect, Rokycana banned Eucharistic reception in all other churches on that day. A rumor circulated that on Sunday there would be an armed procession to the priory of the Friars Minor at St. James, a Catholic bastion. The rumor was dispelled before the portreeve and councilmen in the Old Town, who were all eerily reminded of the Prague defenestration in 1419 and feared its repetition. The procession was thus a triumph of moderate Utraquism, which not only took over the rule over the town but also gained control over the main church in the land.

Rokycana was also probably responsible for the abolition of the *Corpus Christi* processions in individual Utraquist parishes.<sup>52</sup> Around 1462, Johannes Kitzing, the procurator of Wrocław in Silesia at the papal curia, described the situation fittingly. In his complaints against the heretical king, he argued that the *Corpus Christi* processions in Prague publicly showed who was Catholic and who was sectarian. In his view, the participants in the procession to the cathedral church or the priory of St. James were good Christians, unlike those, who joined the *sub utraque specie* procession of Rokycana. He also noted that Utraquist processions carried the host in the form of bread in the monstrance as well as chalices with the blood of Christ whereas neither the procession to the cathedral church nor the procession of the Friars Minor had them. He closed by saying, *et sic confusum Pragae chaos cognoscitur*.<sup>53</sup>

Kitzing's surprise at the fact that George, his family and relatives joined Rokycana's procession brings us to yet another aspect of the *Corpus Christi* processions: its political character. The participation of the king and leading noblemen in the Utraquist procession was an important form of representation and confessional partisanship and as such was closely observed. Pope Pius II, well informed about the situation in the Czech lands, scolded the king for his participation in a "heretical" procession and in 1462 the king's diplomats in Rome could not persuade him that the king ruled a kingdom with two faiths and had, therefore, to appease both sides.<sup>54</sup>

51) After the occupation of Prague in 1448, the canons from St. Vitus escaped to the Catholic Plzeň, where they remained until the reign of Ladislaus the Posthumous in 1453. The report is based on the letter of Catholic priest published in *Listář a listinář Oldřicha z Rožmberka IV*, edd. Blažena RYNEŠOVÁ – Josef PELIKÁN, Praha 1954, p. 67–68, No. 91. Paraphrase in R. URBÁNEK, *České dějiny III/2*, p. 313–314.

52) For resources that document the state before 1448 see *Staré letopisy české z vratislavského rukopisu*, ed. František ŠIMEK, Praha 1937, p. 59 (1431), p. 106, 153 (1446), p. 109 (1447); *Staré letopisy české z rukopisu křižovnického*, edd. František ŠIMEK – Miloslav KAŇÁK, Praha 1959, p. 191, 423 (1446), p. 202 (1447).

53) Edited by Max JORDAN, *Das Königthum Georg's von Poděbrad*, Leipzig 1861, p. 391. Also noted by R. URBÁNEK, *Věk poděbradský IV*, Praha 1962, p. 283–284.

54) Report about the legacy of king George to the pope in Rome in 1462, published in *Archiv český VIII*, Praha 1888, p. 323–324; R. URBÁNEK, *Věk poděbradský IV*, p. 270, 283–284, shows convincingly that the king attempted to attend both processions. On the negotiations with the curia, see O. ODLOŽILÍK, *The Hussite King*, p. 135–160; Janusz SMOŁUCHA, *Polityka Kurii Rzymskiej za pontyfikatu Piusa II (1458–1464) wobec Czech i krajów sąsiednich. Z dziejów dyplomacji papieskiej w XV wieku*,

In Prague, the *Corpus Christi* procession turned into an annual demonstration of power by both parties. In the narrow streets of the Old Town, two processions would meet and sometimes it was only the decisive word of the king or the leading nobleman that would prevent an open conflict.<sup>55</sup>

Since 1471, when Rokycana and George of Poděbrady had both died and Catholic Jagiellonian dynasty came to power, mentions of the processions have not been in such a high number, comparing to the previous period. There were probably also fewer conflicts, which is why these processions (which did not deviate from what was normal) did not attract the attention of chroniclers.<sup>56</sup> The lack of open conflict can perhaps be attributed to improving co-existence of the two churches and their equal rights in 1483.<sup>57</sup>

The Utraquist town of Kutná Hora, in which the sources allow us to analyze Eucharistic processions in a continuous period since the end of the fourteenth century to the beginning of the counter-reformation, exemplify this confessional *status quo*.

## Kutná Hora

The town of Kutná Hora was founded sometime around the year 1300, by merging of several mining settlements located near abundant deposits of silver. Owing to silver, the town became the second important town in the kingdom and also the treasury of the Luxembourg and Jagiellonian dynasties.<sup>58</sup> Because many people in Kutná Hora held dangerous jobs in the mines, the personal interest of the faithful to die a good death as a condition for salvation was strictly observed. A good death naturally involved the last rites and that is why, in Kutná Hora, the devotion to

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Kraków 2008. Most recent summary in Petr ČORNEJ, *Kvadratura kruhu (Jiří Poděbradský, Kompaktáta a papežství)*, in: Idem, *Světla a stíny husitství*, Praha 2011, p. 276–285.

55) *Briefe und Actenstücke zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter Kaiser Friedrichs III.*, ed. Adolf BACHMANN, Wien 1885 (*Fontes rerum Austriacarum* II/44), p. 147. The report from Prague to the Saxon duke from June 1461 mentions long knives, which some of the participants in the Catholic procession had hidden under their fur-coats in order to defend themselves against potential attack. Also see R. URBÁNEK, *Věk poděbradský* IV, p. 284, 471.

56) In 1480, Utraquist priest refusing to make way for the Catholic procession that contained the king (when the procession collided with the Utraquist one) received a smack on the head from one of the courtiers. František PALACKÝ, *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě* V/1, Praha 1865, p. 199–200; Václav Vladivoj TOMEK, *Dějepis města Prahy* X, Praha 1894, p. 12–13; Jaroslav KADLEC, *Přehled českých církevních dějin* 1, Praha 1991, p. 309–310.

57) Winfried EBERHARD, *Konfessionsbildung und Stände in Böhmen 1478–1530*, München – Wien 1981, p. 56–60. The revitalisation of the processions of the *Corpus Christi* in the Old Town in relation to the catholic offensive has been studied by Anna OHLÍDALOVÁ, *Präsenz und Präsentation. Strategien konfessioneller Raumbesetzung in Prag um 1600 am Beispiel des Prozessionswesens*, in: *Formierungen des konfessionellen Raumes in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Evelin Wetter, Stuttgart 2008, p. 207–217.

58) Michaela OTTOVÁ, *Pod ochranou Krista Spasitele a svaté Barbory. Sochařská výzdoba kostela svaté Barbory v Kutné Hoře (1483–1499) / Under the Protection of Christ the Saviour and Saint Barbara. The Sculptural Decoration of the Church of Saint Barbara in Kutná Hora (1483–1499)*, České Budějovice 2010, p. 13–15.



(3) Kutná Hora (Central Bohemia), St. Barbara's church (originally dedicated to *Corpus Christi*), founded 1388. Reproduction after: *Mittelalterliche Kunstdenkmale des österreichischen Kaiserstaates I*, Stuttgart 1858, p. 185

the Eucharist was ubiquitous. The town was divided into two parishes, with the patronage over the larger of the two, which contained the majority of subsidiary churches, belonging to the nearby monastery in Sedlec. The local burgher elite founded a fraternity of *Corpus Christi*, whose goal was to build a new parish church of Corpus Christi (fig. 3), thereby extricating themselves from the oversight by the monastery in Sedlec. Founded in 1142, Sedlec was the first Cistercian monastery in Bohemia and, around 1300, it was the richest ecclesiastical institution in the country, creditor to kings and dukes and builder of the first church of the cathedral type in Central Europe. At the turn of the fifteenth century, however, the economic situation of the monastery was not nearly as favorable, and given its vast debts, maintaining the patronage over profitable chapels in Kutná Hora became vitally important. At this time, the Eucharistic processions served to demonstrate the monastery's determination to defend its right of patronage over the assertive urban community, supported by Prague's chapter of St. Vitus, which in turn held, along with the fraternity, the patronage rights to the second parish in Kutná Hora. The first reliable information about the Eucharistic processions in Kutná Hora, organized at Easter and on the feast day of *Corpus Christi*, date to the 1390s.

The attempts to introduce processions in Kutná Hora met up with a reticence to non-canonical forms of devotion on the part of the church hierarchy and intellectuals: In 1392, a priest Matyas from Kutná Hora was interrogated before the court of general vicars of the Prague archdiocese for criticizing the opulence of the processions on the feast of *Corpus Christi*, saying that it “venerated the devil more than God ... and that it served to display external ostentation, pride and vanity rather than honoring God”. He further stated that village priests took part in the processions only for money, that “the carrying of candles in processions was devil's pride and that he prayed to God that he would send rain in order to interrupt the procession”.<sup>59</sup> The interrogation suggests that criticisms of the processions echoed contemporary proto-reform sentiments on the part of the Czech society, which later culminated in the Hussite movement. The theophoric processions at Easter did not appear in the sources until 1395,<sup>60</sup> when it gained support of the Prague archbishop John of Jenštejn.<sup>61</sup> An indulgence charter mentions a procession with the sacrament, which began in the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre by the church of Sts. Philip and James in Sedlec. This chapel became the main cultic center of the monastery, where

59) *Soudní akta konsistoře Pražské / Acta judiciaria consistorii Pragensis* III, ed. Ferdinand TADRA, Praha 1896, p. 68; Jaromír ČELAKOVSKÝ, *Klášter Sedlecký, jeho statky a práva v době před válkami husitskými*, Praha 1916, p. 65.

60) Both records of processions in Kutná Hora are rather late (1392 a 1395), especially if we consider that the introduction of *Corpus Christi* processions fall in the three decades after the decree of pope John XXII from 1317 and Easter processions were customary even earlier. See Peter BROWE, *Die Verehrung der Eucharistie im Mittelalter*, München 1933, p. 94; Andrea LÖTHER, *Prozessionen in spätmittelalterlichen Städten. Politische Partizipation, obrigkeitliche Inszenierung, städtische Einheit*, Köln – Weimar – Wien 1999, p. 63.

61) State District Archives in Třeboň, Archival Group: Velkostatek Sedlec u Kutné Hory (1248–1801), document no. 88; Aleš MUDRA, *Ecce panis angelorum. Výtvarné umění pozdního středověku v kontextu eucharistické devoce v Kutné Hoře (kolem 1300–1620) / Art and Architecture of Late Middle Ages in the Context of Eucharistic Devotion in Kutná Hora (c. 1300–1620)*, České Budějovice 2012, appendix XV/4.

the Eucharist was displayed in a monstrance and venerated *in altario in modum sepulcri dominici exstructo*.<sup>62</sup> There, archbishop founded a fraternity called *confraternitas altaris Corporis Christi et Sepulchri Domini* and repeatedly granted it with indulgences.<sup>63</sup> The reason behind the indulgences, awarded, among others, for participation in processions, was not only to attract pilgrims to Sedlec but also to increase the attractiveness of the monastery to local parishioners. It is, therefore, not surprising that processions became also the matter of negotiation in the litigation regarding parish privileges in Kutná Hora (1396–1410). According to the final agreement, processions inside the parish could take place without any limitation. Such processions symbolically renewed the control of the urban community over its parish district and visibly affirmed the unity of the parishioners and their identification with the community. The processions that crossed the boundaries of the community, however, were strictly regulated, subject to an explicitly formulated rule, whose purpose was to keep the balance between rival factions, or to demonstrate consensus through the participation of both parties in joint processions. The regulation also prevented either faction from claiming more of the public space than it was due. The first procession took place on Thursday in the octave of the Holy Trinity, when the priest of the New Church (of *Corpus Christi*) led a procession to the High Church (of the Virgin Mary). There, he set down the sacrament and “along with the local rector and his priests, he set out in a joint processions of priests and pupils with the body of Christ and in accordance with an established custom, he passed through all quarters and streets of Kutná Hora”. After his return to the High Church, the priest of the New Church took the *Corpus Christi*, which he had previously set down there, and returned with the procession to his church. On Sunday in the octave of *Corpus Christi*, the plan was reversed.<sup>64</sup> On the first occasion, the High Church was



(4) Kutná Hora, Czech silver museum, the boundary stone between Malín and Pněvice parish, probably in the first decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Photo: Czech Silver Museum

62) State District Archives in Třeboň, Archival Group: Velkostatek Sedlec u Kutné Hory (1248–1801), document no. 84; A. MUDRA, *Ecce panis angelorum*, appendix XV/2.

63) State District Archives in Třeboň, Archival Group: Velkostatek Sedlec u Kutné Hory (1248–1801), document no. 84, 85; A. MUDRA, *Ecce panis angelorum*, appendix XV/3.

64) CIM II, p. 1123–1124.

the symbolic center of the entire town, on the second occasion, it was the New Church. Thus, the identity of the community of Kutná Hora as a whole was strengthened, regardless of the ecclesiastical administrative divisions. The demarcation of parish limits with boundary stones was a part of the agreement (fig. 4).

Silver monstrances were an expression and means of competition. Neither the monstrance mentioned in 1391 in the New Church<sup>65</sup> nor the monstrance in the High church survived the Hussite wars. Fortunately, a beautiful monstrance from the monastery in Sedlec dated to around 1389 did survive (fig. 5).<sup>66</sup> It used to be displayed at the altar of the Corpus Christi and was probably a gift from bishop John of Jenštejn. It is unique as to its large size and exceptional quality. This particular type of monstrance, shaped like a cross-section of a three-aisled gothic church, was first designed at the Prague court in the 1370s–1380s and later became quite popular. It allowed numerous variations and survived well into the seventeenth century alongside other, baroque, types of monstrances. In 1631, for example, a goldsmith from Kutná Hora created an enormous monstrance for the dean church in Chrudim



(5) Monstrance of Sedlec near Kutná Hora, 1389. Roman Catholic parish Kutná Hora – Sedlec. Photo: Aleš Mudra



(6) Monstrance from Chrudim (Eastern Bohemia), 1630–1631. Roman Catholic parish – archdeaconate Chrudim. Photo: Aleš Mudra

65) *Vasa perlucida* in papal charter of indulgence. Ibid., p. 822–823, no. 641; A. MUDRA, *Ecce panis angelorum*, appendix XIII/1.

66) Ibid., p. 67–81.

(fig. 6). The long survival of the Gothic forms perhaps coincides here with specific re-catholization historicism.<sup>67</sup>

In the Luxembourg period, processions in Kutná Hora exemplify the understanding of the Eucharist as a social symbol of unity and exclusivity,<sup>68</sup> an understanding, which was, on the one hand, strengthened by exclusion of external enemies (Jews, heretics) and, on the other hand, continually had to deal with internal disintegrative tendencies, when certain groups claimed the right to privileged access to the Eucharist and the benefits related to it. At the same time, in the public space of the mining town, the Eucharist quickly became the leading means of expressing and constructing the borders of social groups, their living space and their interests.

The tradition of public processions in Kutná Hora was marked by two interruptions, both caused by religious reformations, first the Czech Hussite and then the German Lutheran. When studied over longer period of time, it becomes clear that the functions of processions were malleable and that each generation defined them anew according to its specific needs.

### The pre-Hussite period

In the course of the Luxembourg period, when Eucharistic processions had only been organized for a short time (c. 1393–1421), processions had primarily a confrontational character. Both sides, aspiring to gain ecclesiastical control over the entire city, used them to show that they possessed the Eucharist, that they held the necessary license to dispense the sacraments, to expose the Eucharist and grant indulgences, that they held charters from the pope and other ecclesiastical authorities as well as significant financial sources to pay for opulent processions. In addition, they also had a unifying function, when both parishes agreed to participate in joint processions. The participation of village priests expressed solidarity of Kutná Hora with villages, where wealthy burghers, members of the town councils circles held land as well as patronage rights.

### The Utraquist period

Following the Hussite wars, the urban community in Kutná Hora aligned with Utraquism; Christians who did not receive from the chalice were not allowed to gain burgher privilege and only Czech-speaking burghers were allowed to hold office. Since 1470s, the town council openly enforced the model of a society unified by religion and nationality, a society free from conflicts and peaceful enough to ensure the smooth operation of the mining enterprise and the town's prosperity. In this situation, integration appears to be the main function of the processions. Eucharistic processions enacted the unity of the urban community, and their

67) *Ibid.*, appendix XXI.

68) See Miri RUBIN, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in late medieval culture*, Cambridge 1991, p. 351; A. LÖTHER, *Prozessionen*, p. 40 ascribes this function to the procession itself.

structure corresponded with the hierarchical arrangement of important offices and corporations. Potential conflicts were sublimated into open competition as to which guild would have more splendid, more expensive and more numerous banners.<sup>69</sup> In the moderate version of Utraquism practiced in Kutná Hora, lay communion under both kinds was the most important among the minimal differences between the Roman and Utraquist churches. The chalice became a symbol that identified the whole urban community and Eucharistic processions became public demonstrations of adherence to a given church, one that venerated and obeyed Christ alone, present in this world via the Eucharist. Utraquist communion was the basic value shared by the participants in the processions, and symbolically constructed the borders of the urban community and, especially, the border between those chosen for salvation and those condemned, which at that time included not only non-believers and heretics but the entire Roman church. From the heyday of processions (c. 1490–1540) and on, the profane elements contained in them gradually increased. *Corpus Christi* processions, for example, became more of a social occasion, an opportunity for commerce, entertainment etc. Prior to the feast, the guilds liked to convene a meeting to oversee and count banners, and “while they were together, they would go to a pub afterwards to feast and drink, at the expense of the guild”.<sup>70</sup>

### The reformation period

Reformation ideas led to the attenuation and gradual abandonment of public Eucharistic processions. Since 1530s, the Utraquist priests in Kutná Hora tended to abandon those external expressions of the faith that lacked their grounding in the Scriptures, such as exposition of Eucharist for veneration or processions. In return, the Utraquist consistory in Prague persecuted them, transferred them to a different place or defrocked them.<sup>71</sup> However, it was of little effect, because the society affected by Lutheran preachers lost interest in participating in processions altogether. Indeed, the generations since 1550s never experienced processions in their splendor all. The complaints, made by the consistory to the councilors of the Prague’s Old Town in 1589, charmingly illustrate this generational shift. They complained that “their predecessors processed every week on Thursday with large candles, but now there are only two beldams, half-dead”.<sup>72</sup> Processions became

69) Wealthy guilds spent unimaginable amounts of money on banners; some were decorated with gold and silver embroidery, pearls, and precious stones, so much so that the foundation fabric was no longer visible – *Jana Kořínka, velebného kněze z Towaryšstwa Jeżjssowa, l. P. 1675 w Praze na swęto wysłé Staré Paměti Kutnohorské. W dwacjti drahých rudnych kamenjch (gimż hornjci Handsstány řjkağj) wyobrazené a wypodobněné, nynj s přináležejcjmi rytinami obnowené a pooprawené*, ed. Jozef Fr. DEWOTÝ, Praha 1831, p. 234.

70) Emanuel LEMINGER, *Stará Kutná Hora. Část 1. Místopis*, Kutná Hora 2006, p. 99.

71) For example *Jednání a dopisy konsistoře katolické i utrakvistické I. Akta konsistoře utrakvistické*, ed. Klement BOROŮVÝ, Praha 1868, p. 81.

72) Zikmund WINTER, *Život církevní v Čechách. Kulturně-historický obraz z XV. a XVI. století*, Vol. 1, Praha 1895, p. 186.

a dying tradition, a marginal ritual, which lost its social function. Whereas in the 1530s, processions were organized, “because people requested it” and “in order to keep the peace in the urban community”, now ecclesiastical representatives Catholic and Utraquist alike looked in vain for ways to encourage participation. Only one procession survived in Kutná Hora, it was the Easter procession that started in the monastery, but it too met with mockery and threats from the Lutherans in Kutná Hora. The traditional rivalry between town and monastery surfaced again, this time under very different social conditions and in a different confessional framework.<sup>73</sup> Eventually, a fair was all that remained from the local feast day celebrations of the *Corpus Christi*,<sup>74</sup> which had originally been merely accidental to the main celebration.

After the Letter of Majesty by emperor Rudolph II granting religious freedoms (1609), Kutná Hora symbolically completed its religious transformation by aligning with Augsburg Confession. Forcible re-Catholization would sweep the entire Kingdom of Bohemia in the course of the following decade. In Kutná Hora, where all the priests had joined Protestantism, the re-introduction of processions on the feasts of *Corpus Christi* between 1618 and 1624 was met with great repulsion.<sup>75</sup> Those, who were forced into participating by threats of expulsion, symbolically confirmed the acceptance of the new order. The processions were very ornate, loud and pompous; the contemporary descriptions suggest a kind of militarized triumphal atmosphere. The procession served as a demonstration of power and determination to continue in this anti-reform trajectory of the entire society.

## Conclusion

These individual analyses of public religious processions in Bohemia between the mid-fourteenth and the seventeenth century show a great malleability of processional functions. In addition to the social-constructive function (representation of urban identity) other meanings, often competing, emerged. Organizers used processions to express religious intentions (regular liturgy, intercession, celebration of feast days, expression of religious devotion and zeal) but, in times of political crises, did not hesitate to use processions to accomplish political and even military goals. For example, processions were put to the use of the state and served to legitimate the ruler in Bohemia in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century but they were also used for mobilization and indoctrination of followers of both parties (Catholic and Utraquist) and to symbolize the on-going competition for religious hegemony in the mid-fifteenth century. The Hussites, especially, re-invented the militaristic potential of processions, for thanksgiving after military victories, sending out troops to war or even as aids in battle and conquest.

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73) See for example the complaint of monastery from 1563. Josef ŠIMEK, *Kutná Hora v XV. a XVI. století*, Kutná Hora 1907, p. 257.

74) Simeon Eustachius KAPÍHOŘSKÝ, *Historia kláštera sedleckého řádu svatého cistercienského*, Praha 1630, reprint Kutná Hora 2006, p. 46.

75) A. MUDRA, *Ecce panis angelorum*, p. 197–198.

Processions became even more fraught with meaning after Luther. In the moderate Utraquist circles, processions became synonymous with conservatism and served to separate Utraquists from the “real” heretics (Lutherans), who had deviated from the Roman church much more emphatically than Utraquists. Religious processions also played a significant role in the process of re-Catholicization, with the Catholic party using processions to confirm and enact its triumph.<sup>76</sup>

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