
How Wyclifite Was the Bohemian Reformation?

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The question of the extent to which the Bohemian Reformation was Wyclifite and the degree to which Wyclif was its English wellspring is a matter of long standing debate. Its complexities are such that it is virtually impossible to answer precisely and fully. Wyclif's influence on the Bohemian Reformation is incontestable and one can only debate its relative weight or the extent to which its role was decisive. In engaging the debate, we find ourselves moving between two extremes. One is the proposition that the ideas of the Bohemian reform programme are entirely dependent on Wyclif and that Hus's teaching is really identical with Wyclif's. The other is the proposition that – to the contrary – the Bohemian Reformation stemmed almost entirely from original autochthonous sources, the so-called precursors of Hus in Bohemia.

As far as the first thesis is concerned, it relates to an older view of the reform tradition which placed Wyclif and Hus (and also Luther) into a definite sequence. In its most extreme form it is, however, a thesis developed by Johann Loserth on the foundation of a rather mechanical textual comparison of Wyclif's and Hus's writings. Loserth embodied his views in his book *Hus und Wicif*, which bore the suggestive title *Zur Genesis der husitischen Lehre* and which appeared on the occasion of the five-hundredth anniversary of the English thinker's death.¹ Loserth's view was further sharpened by his disciple, Mathilde Uhrlirz.² The idea of Hus's utter dependence on Wyclif, however, has been reappearing – on the basis of other approaches – virtually to this day.³

The second position arose in response to Loserth's blunt assertion (certainly not free of nationalist bias) that a lack of originality and mere epigonism characterised the Czech intellectual milieu. In reaction to Loserth there appeared a tendency to give emphasis to the Czech sources of Hus's

1) See "Only Wyclif's works have roused a deep religious movement in Bohemia", Johann Loserth, *Hus und Wicif* (Munich, 1925²) 65. The first edition appeared in Prague-Leipzig, 1884.

2) Her conclusion was: "We may see in Wyclif alone the spiritual inspirer of the religious programme of the Hussites, and further see solely in his teaching the wellspring of the Four Articles of Prague." Mathilde Uhrlirz, *Die Genesis der vier Prager Artikel* (Vienna, 1914) 98.

3) For instance, Robert Kalivoda, *Revolution und Ideologie: Der Hussitismus* (Cologne, 1976) 10: "As far as the character ... of the overall teaching of Hus is concerned, one must stress that Hus's teaching in its completed and ripened form was essentially identical with the teaching of Wyclif."

ideas, especially in the writings of the so-called precursors of Hus, particularly in the texts which may be considered philosophical in the broader sense of the term, comprising the spheres of moral, social, and political philosophy.⁴ This approach, though legitimate in principle, at times, however, continued earlier attempts to demonstrate at any price the originality of Czech fourteenth-century thinkers, for instance, Tomáš of Štítné, despite demonstrated historical realities to the contrary.⁵

Moreover, the question of originality (and so also of epigonism) was understood in the Middle Ages quite differently from our times. It is a well known fact that a medieval author wished to express his own thoughts through the medium of recognized authorities, and his own role as author should not be much emphasized. Biblical, patristic, and older philosophical and theological authorities were provided with their appropriate references, more recent authors were usually cited anonymously. These citations served as means for the expression of the author's own views and did not necessarily indicate an intellectual dependence on the authors cited. At the same time in most cases, the citations played a substantive role in the structure of the text, not merely a decorative role which might flaunt the erudition of the writer. This generally known medieval understanding of "originality" must be also taken into account in exploring the theme of this article.⁶

In addition, it is, of course, necessary from the methodological point of view not to limit the examination to a single source, no matter how important, but to explore a broader context of possible sources. Furthermore, it behooves to posit the question of the sources of such sources themselves, or more precisely, the question of the historical intellectual context. Of course, I cannot claim in any sense to present an exhaustive account of the sources of the thought of the Bohemian Reformation. I trust, however, that I am sufficiently aware of the immense expanse of this intellectual network. The cosmopolitanism of the European Middle Ages embraced a universal Church and Latin culture, as well as universities which respected no boundaries in the

4) This trend resumed the pioneering work of František Palacký, *Předchůdcové husitství v Čechách* [The Precursors of Hussitism in Bohemia], in his *Radhost: Sbírka spisů drobných*, (Prague, 1872) II,iii 297–356, first published in German in 1842.

5) See Vilém Herold, "K sociální filosofii předhusitské doby: Předpoklady a počátky rozvoje v Čechách až do recepce wyclifismu" [Concerning Social Philosophy of the Pre-Hussite Period: Prerequisites and Beginnings of Development in Bohemia Prior to the Reception of Wyclifism], *Sborník Okresního muzea Praha východ "Jenštejn 1977"* (Prague, 1978) 77–112.

6) Concerning citation of authorities by Hus, see Anežka Schmidlová-Vidmanová, "Hus a Víklef" [Hus and Wyclif], *Listy filologické* 79–4 (1956) 219–227; and her "Hus a Vilém z Auvergne" [Hus and William of Auvergne], *Studie o rukopisech* 18 (1979) 29–47; Jiří Kejř, "Kdo je 'Parisiensis' ve spisech Husových" [Who Is 'Parisiensis' in Hus's Writings], *Studie o rukopisech* 18 (1979) 3–27.

diffusion of doctrines and ideas, and which did not strictly separate individual disciplines, such as philosophy and theology, or individual methods of communication, such as academic lectures and ecclesiastical sermons. I shall, therefore, only attempt to demonstrate with two major examples a possible approach to the solution of the problem suggested by the title of this study. In agreement with the orientation of this volume, I have chosen for examination several aspects of the sources of Jan Hus's reformational thought.

As a first example I shall discuss the homiletic work of Jan Milíč of Kroměříž, one of the most important of Hus's precursors; as a second example the teaching about Platonic Ideas at the University of Prague, developed at the Faculty of Liberal Arts in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The first example dates to the period when Wyclif's writings were as yet virtually unknown in Prague. In contrast, the second example stems from a time when Wyclif's works enjoyed an extensive reception in the Czech milieu, and when there could be no doubt about the very strong influence of the Oxford scholar on the thought of the masters at the University of Prague.

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Let us first turn to Milíč who has been characterized as the father of the Bohemian Reformation.⁷ It is known that Hus compared Konrád Waldhauser, Milíč of Kroměříž, and Matěj of Janov to the Old Testament prophets and it is possible to say that he already viewed them as his precursors. This view remained alive during the entire course of the Bohemian Reformation. It can be documented in the works of Czech writers, like Jan Rokycana and subsequently Jan Blahoslav, Pavel Stránský, and Jan Comenius (in his *History of Bohemian Persecution*), as well as in the works of writers abroad, such as Flacius Illyricus or Wengerscius.⁸ It is indisputable that the preaching in the Bethlehem Chapel directly continued the homiletic tradition of Milíč, which, therefore, must have still been alive in Hus's time. It is beyond doubt that Hus was familiar with Milíč's "fiery words" from the numerous texts which were constantly recopied and circulated. I shall use as my point of departure Milíč's *Tři řeči synodní* [Three Synodal Sermons], written and probably delivered between 1364 and 1373.⁹ Since the time of archbishops Arnošt of Pardubice (1344–1364) and Jan Očko of Vlašim (1364–1379), and in line with

7) František Loskot, *Milíč z Kroměříže, Otec české reformace* [Milíč of Kroměříž: Father of the Bohemian Reformation] (Prague, 1911).

8) See the discussion in Miloslav Kaňák, *Milíč z Kroměříže* (Prague, 1975) 44ff.

9) Iohannis Milicii de Cremsir, *Tres sermones synodales*, eds. Vilém Herold and Milan Mráz (Prague, 1974), subsequently cited as Milíč, *Tres sermones*.

their reformist agenda, regular semiannual gatherings of the diocesan clergy laboured to correct numerous abuses and to stimulate a moral rebirth in contemporary church. This purpose was also served by synodal statutes, issued to regulate the lifestyle of the clergy.¹⁰

The synodal preachers' task was to assist in the rectification of the generally understood and perceived moral decline in contemporary church, manifest particularly in the numerous cases of scandalous demeanour and lifestyle of the priests. In Prague there gradually developed a distinct tradition of synodal preaching, at the beginnings of which stood, next to Waldhauser, our own Milíč. Its sequential links included, among others, the synodal homilies of Matthew of Cracow from the time of his stay in Prague (1378–1389), those of Vojtěch Raňkův of Ježov, as well as those of Hus's teachers Stěpán of Kolín (1393) and Stanislav of Znojmo (1405). Hus's synodal sermons of 1405 and 1407 stand at the end of this tradition.¹¹

Also in the synodal sermons the citation of authorities, especially biblical and patristic, is entirely common. In Milíč's case, likewise, their choice is intentional and purposeful, and supportive of the preacher's aim, which independently and firmly expresses his predetermined intent. This can be substantiated already by the choice of the themes of the *Three Synodal Sermons*. For the first, Milíč selected a verse from Ezekiel (22:26): "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my sanctuary,"¹² for the second, a verse from Jeremiah (50:6): "My people were lost sheep, whose shepherds have caused let them astray;"¹³ and for the third, a verse from The Wisdom of Solomon (6:2–3): "Listen therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations."¹⁴

Through his choice of biblical texts for his sermons Milíč conjures up an unusually critical atmosphere because it becomes evident that he posits a certain equation between the priesthood of the Old Testament and that of the present. The same may be roughly said also about other biblical quotations used in the individual sermons, and it would be of interest to trace their occurrence in, and use by, Hus's other precursors and Hus himself. Let us

10) Zdeňka Hledíková, "Synody v pražské diecézi 1349–1419" [Synods in the Prague Diocese, 1349–1419], *Československý časopis historický* 18 (1970) 117–146; Jaroslav V. Polc, "Councils and Synods of Prague and Their Statutes", *Apollinaris* 52 (1979) 131–166; 53 (1980) 421–457.

11) See the introduction to Milíč, *Tres sermones*, and Vilém Herold and Milan Mráz, "Johann Milíč von Kremsier und das hussitische revolutionäre Denken", *MRP* 21 (1975) 27–52.

12) "Sacerdotes contempserunt legem meam, polluerunt sanctuaria mea", Milíč, *Tres sermones* 49.

13) "Grex perditus factus est populus meus, pastores eorum seduxerunt eos", Milíč, *Tres sermones* 73.

14) "Audite reges and intellegite, discite iudices finium terrae! Praebete aures vos, qui continentis multitudines et placetis vobis in turbis nationum!" Milíč, *Tres sermones* 103.

consider at least one, this time from the New Testament. Milíč cites Christ's words in Matthew (23:2–4), stating in part: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach." Always emphasizing the beginning and the end of a quotation, Milíč uses it to show the hypocrisy in contemporary church, contrasting the priestly ideal with the current state of affairs.¹⁵

Hus has the same understanding of the citation, and introduces it in the twenty-first chapter of his *De ecclesia*, where he calls attention to the fact that his opponents intentionally omit the beginning and the end of the quotation. He writes: "I wonder why the doctors have cut short the Saviour's words at the beginning and at the end," and he offers this explanation: "It seems to me that it is done because the pope and other prelates do not wish to be compared with the scribes and the Pharisees."¹⁶ Milíč comments on the end of the citation in the following way: "But it is to be feared what [Jesus] adds," and he continues the quotation from Matthew: "They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them."¹⁷

As far as the patristic tradition is concerned, it is indisputable that Milíč had at his command an abundant knowledge of the Church Fathers' writings, and many of them, which were then available in Prague, he knew from the originals. In some cases apparently he also used contemporary *florilegia* or anthologies, which contained collections of patristic citations, at times thematically selected for a particular purpose. Milíč cites these authorities frequently, while pursuing in his selection an intentional purposeful objective. In the *Tres sermones synodales* his most frequently cited authorities are Saints Augustine, Gregory the Great, John Chrysostom (including *Opus imperfectum* of Pseudo-Chrysostom), and Bernard of Clairvaux.

Also in this area interesting concords may be found between Milíč and Hus. I shall give at least one example. In his third synodal sermon Milíč extensively quotes from the thirty-third sermon in Bernard's *In Cantica*, in which this saint subjects the contemporary church and the profligacy and greed of its leaders to a merciless critique:¹⁸

Here is the origin of the whore-like splendour, of the jester's attire
and royal ostentation. Here is the origin of bridles, saddles, spurs
– all made of gold. Here is the origin of so much gluttony and

15) Milíč *Tres sermones* 53.

16) Ioannes Hus, *Tractatus de ecclesia*, ed. S. Harrison Thomson (Prague, 1958) 192–193.

17) Milíč, *Tres sermones* 53.

18) Milíč, *Tres sermones* 113/288–296.

drunkenness ... and of belching from overeating and excessive drinking ... and of overstuffed moneybags. For these reasons they wished to be, and have become, provosts, deans, archdeacons, and archbishops in the church.

St. Bernard, by the way of an introduction, contrasts this state with the primitive church of the Christian martyrs.

This very quotation, used by Milíč, is also found in Hus's *Řeč o míru* [Sermon About Peace], which he prepared for the Council of Constance, but could not deliver there.¹⁹ In this sermon, Hus also inserts the following quotation from Gregory the Great, which Milíč likewise had used: "The world is full of priests, yet a worker is difficult to find for the divine harvest, because we have accepted the priestly dignity, yet we do not perform the duties of this office." In addition, both Hus and Milíč further concur in the citation of the following words of Pseudo-Chrysostom: "Many priests and a few priests: many in name, a few in deed."²⁰

No matter how remarkable such textual correspondences may be, it is evidently impossible to prove thereby a direct connection between the works of Milíč and Hus, the more so because the biblical and patristic literature then belonged among the commonly known intellectual properties. What is important for our argument, however, is a corollary observation that a comparison between Hus and Wyclif may be similarly treacherous and misleading. Let us then examine at least one example in that regard. Developing the thesis of her mentor Loserth that only Wyclif's writings aroused the passionate religious movement in Bohemia, Mathilde Uhlírz reaches the conclusion that "Wyclif alone [!] is the originator of the religious programme of the Hussites and only [!] in his teachings can one see the origin of the Four Articles of Prague".²¹

As far as the Fourth Article is concerned – the punishment of priests' public sins by the temporal power – Uhlírz calls attention to the textual correspondence between Hus's polemic "Contra occultum adversarium",²²

19) Ioannis Hus, *Sermo de pace*, ed. F. M. Dobiáš and Amedeo Molnár (Prague, 1995) 50–51. This very significant quotation from St. Bernard is also found in Hus's university sermon "Abiciamus opera tenebrarum", in Jan Hus, *Universitní promluvy* [University sermons], ed. Anežka Schmidtová (Prague, 1958), and in his rejoinder "Contra occultum adversarium", in M. Ioannis Hus, *Polemica*, ed. Jaroslav Eršík (Prague, 1966) 102–103. Moreover, another part of the same citation from Bernard also appears in Hus's "Responsiones ad articulos Páleč", in František Palacký, *Documenta* 211, and in Hus, *De ecclesia* [see n.16] 113.

20) Hus, *Sermo de pace* 72/656–659; Milíč, *Tres sermones* 57–58/205–208.

21) See n.2 above.

22) Hus, *Polemica* 71–107. Uhlírz still relies on the 1558 Nuremberg edition of Hus's writings.

and Wyclif's forty-second sermon in the collection "Super evangelia dominicalia" and his treatise "De praelatis contentionum".²³ She juxtaposes the two passages from Hus's polemic and the coinciding passages in the cited works of Wyclif, and reaches the conclusion that "the Hussites could adopt only [!] from Wyclif the most effective substantiation of this demand".²⁴

If we, however, compare the entire text of Hus's work *Contra occultum adversarium* with Milíč's *Three synodal sermons*, we find many more notable coincidences than in relation to the cited works of Wyclif. The "hidden adversary", apparently Master Mařík Rvačka, wrote Hus an anonymous letter in which he complains in particular that by attacking and criticizing the clerical estate in his sermons, Hus thereby *ipso facto* attacks the law of God. He explicitly chastises Hus for the comparing the Old Testament priests and their sins with contemporary priesthood, that is for the approach which is strikingly reminiscent of Milíč ("noli exequare sacerdotium evangelicum Levitico ... et ex malitia sacerdotum veterum non deicias sacerdotes praesentes!").²⁵

These reproofs alone make apparent the relatedness of Hus's and Milíč's approaches. Both agree in their conviction that bad priests are the cause of the corruption and misfortune of the people. Milíč blames the priests: "vos estis causa ruinae et damnationis populi", and Hus: "ruina populi maxime ex culpa sacerdotum fuit". In this connection Hus and Milíč further agree in using the biblical text about the expulsion of the traders from the temple, and both compare a priest to the tree roots or to the digestive system: if the roots or a stomach fail, the entire tree dies, or the entire body is afflicted. Hus and Milíč both invoke for that purpose John Chrysostom's (actually Pseudo-Chrysostom's) treatise *Opus imperfectum*, and they adduce a long citation from that work.²⁶

Hus's and Milíč's texts coincide in asking what safeguard can a flock have if entrusted to bad shepherds who are concerned only about their own interests ("omnes quaerunt, quae sua sunt"), chase after temporal joys (lucra terrena sectantur), become idolaters of money ("avaritia est idolorum servitus") and of their bellies ("quorum deus venter est"), and so companions of thieves and robbers ("socii furum"). Hus cites again in this connection the long quote from Bernard's *Sermones super Cantica*, which was already mentioned with reference to Hus's *Sermon About Peace*.²⁷

23) J. Loserth published both of Wyclif's cited works, respectively in Ioannis Wyclif, *Sermones I: Super evangelia dominicalia* (London, 1887) 278–284; and Ioannis Wyclif, *Opera minora* (London, 1913) 92–97.

24) Uhrlirz, *Die Genesis der vier Prager Artikel* 94–97.

25) Hus, *Polemica* 111.

26) Milíč, *Tres sermones* 78/118, 78/130–80/163; Hus, *Polemica* 75/3 and 9–10, 75/14–76/20.

27) Milíč, *Tres sermones* 60/261, 76/57–58, 94/21, 67/442, 122/559; Hus, *Polemica*, 102/1–2 (with reference to Bernard of Clairvaux), 102/16–18. See also n.18 above.

Finally, Milíč and Hus view simony as the worst abuse or even heresy. Both agree in comparing those who engage in this practice to Judas, and in insisting on removing such delinquents from priestly offices.²⁸ Up to this point there is a virtually perfect coincidence in thought and text between Milíč and Hus. Only when it comes to the manner of removing the unworthy priests from office, do their ways part, and Hus apparently turns to Wyclif for inspiration (although he does not quote him by name). Noting that in the Old Testament delinquent priests were punished by temporal monarchs, he interprets the New Testament pericope of Christ's expulsion of the traders from the temple suggesting that Jesus here played the role of a king, and thus provided a model for temporal kings and lords who, also, should use their power of enforcement to chastise clerical transgressions.²⁹

The examples, just discussed, demonstrate the need for caution in textual comparisons, avoiding the pitfalls of purely mechanical approaches. The basic criterion must be a distinctly substantive agreement in the approaches to specific issues, such as are decisive for determining which views can be characterized as truly "Reformational". The boundary between what is traditionally "orthodox", and what already transcends these limits (or what appears from the standpoint of orthodoxy as heterodox or heretical), may be fairly vague. It is necessary to weigh most carefully when and where to posit this boundary, or – at times – whether it should be posited at all.

I do not wish, nor can I, analyze here the individual doctrinal stances, their specific historical sources, or developments, the more so that – at least in words – the need of correctives (or reforms) was commonly entertained in the period under discussion. Exactly for this reason there arises the need of applying a distinctly moral criterion. I am assuming that the charisma of Milíč, his well-known moral earnestness and deep piety, portrayed in *Vita Milicii*, and by Matěj of Janov,³⁰ render this native of Moravia closer to Hus than could be the case with Wyclif. Hus could not but be distinctly affected by Milíč's propositions that the see does not bestow dignity on the priest [bishop], but the priest [bishop] on the see, that the place does not sanctify a person, but a person the place, not that every priest is a saint, but that every

28) Milíč, *Tres sermones* 98/679–681. 67/447–452; Hus, *Polemica* 100/3–5, 12–13, 15.

29) "Praeterea in multis locis sacrae Scripturae correcti sunt sacerdotes scelestes Veteris Testamenti per reges gentiles de mandato Dei;" Hus, *Polemica* 93/14–15.

30) "... having forsaken all he had, his offices, emoluments, and honours deriving from the church of Prague, having elected to bear the humiliation of Jesus crucified, and having abandoned the mansions of the rich, he preferred to be humbled ... and instead of possessing the riches and glory of Pharaoh's daughter, he preferred to dwell in the shanties of sinners. ... He lived righteously, he taught righteousness, he did not deviate in deed from what came out of his mouth."; Matthiae de Janov, "Narracio de Milicio", in Matěj z Janova, *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamentis*, ed. Vlastimil Kybal (Innsbruck, 1911) 350–359; "Vita Milicii", in FRB 1:432.

saint is a priest,³¹ as well as by Milíč's tireless preaching of atonement, the agreement between his words and deeds, and by his striking moral example.

Wyclif was known in Prague, above all, from the brilliant recommendation of the University of Oxford, which was read at the *quodlibet* disputation of Matěj of Knín in 1409. Nevertheless, he could not impart a great measure of personal charisma even if we assume that it remained unknown in Bohemia (1) that the Oxford attestation was a *fraus pia* of Peter Payne,³² and (2) that the evangelical doctor, a fervent critic of ecclesiastical riches, in fact himself was a holder of multiple benefices. In contrast to the relative vagueness of Wyclif's personal image, there can be no doubt that the exaltation of Milíč, recorded by Matěj of Janov, must have still been in clear and living memory in Hus's time.

So much then about Milíč of Kroměříž.

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The second example, the teaching about the Platonic Ideas at the University of Prague, can be presented more concisely. I have had the opportunity to deal with this topic in my paper on the "Hussite" philosophy presented at the last Congress of the Society for Arts and Sciences in Prague in 1994, and published in the preceding volume of this series.³³ The main concern here will be with a correlation of the two chosen examples which differ in their chronology, their themes, and in their formal framework (or rather as to the contexts in which these works originated).

The chronological difference is relatively minor. Barely two decades separate the year 1374, when Milíč died, from the time when the Czech nation at the University of Prague enthusiastically welcomed the teachings of Oxford's evangelical doctor. Even so, it is necessary to bear in mind the significant difference between Milíč's context in which he was ignorant of Wyclif's writings and that of the thorough and intimate knowledge of most of

31) "... cathedra non facit sacerdotum sed sacerdos facit cathedram, non locus sanctificat hominem sed homo sanctificat locum ...;" Milíč, *Tres sermones* 54/111–118, 99/696–704. Milíč for this citation refers to Pseudo-Chrysostom's *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum*.

32) Payne apparently misused the university seal for authentication of the Oxford document. The circumstances of this misdeed, also from the viewpoint of Lollard relations with the Bohemian Reformation, are surveyed in Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation* (Oxford, 1988) 100.

33) See the summary of my article "Platonic Ideas and 'Hussite' Philosophy", in BRRP I, 13–17. Subsequently the complete text appeared under the title "Die Philosophie des Hussitismus: Zur Rolle der Ideenlehre Platons", in *Verdrängter Humanismus, Verzögerte Aufklärung*, v. I: *Vom Konstanzer Konzil zum Auftreten Luthers*, ed. Michael Benedict and others (Klausen-Leopoldsdorf, 1997) 101–118.

those works by the Prague university masters in the 1490s and in the first two decades of the following century.

As for their themes (or subject content), if a classification is to be attempted, Milíč's homiletic writings (as well as those of Wyclif and Hus) may be classed within the broad current of contemporary thought on social ethics, which had a distinctly practical agenda and reformist orientation. The Prague texts about Ideas and Wyclif's treatise *De ideis* undoubtedly belong to another sphere, namely to the realm of philosophy in the proper sense of the word. More specifically, the subject matter falls within the subdivision of metaphysics or ontology (Wyclif's treatise *De ideis*, in fact, forms a part of his larger work *Summa de ente* [Summa of Being]). At the same time the topics treated in the two works in question have a close relationship with theology.

There are also differences in the context of a homily, destined for a wide and varied audience, and that of an academic treatise or *quaestio*, intended for a university disputation, although – as I have already indicated – such differences need not be diametrically opposed, or absolute. We know that despite Milíč's lack of formal university training, his erudition and intellectual qualities were admired by, among others, such a quintessential academic as Vojtěch Raňkův of Ježov who was so proud of his doctorate of theology earned at the University of Paris. Moreover, Milíč – like Waldhauser before him – enjoyed sizable audiences from the university community. With Hus (and to some extent with Wyclif) university lecturing and priestly preaching come together still more closely.

On the other side of the coin, university disputations – in particular the annual ceremonious disputations *de quodlibet* – also attracted the attention of a wider public. Accounts of their results spread just as widely and speedily throughout the community, as was the case with the contents of sermons by famous preachers.³⁴

Our comparison and clarification offers the possibility of at least two deductions:

(1) On the one hand, Wyclif's work, such as the treatise *De ideis*, had an undeniable intellectual impact in Prague. Let us inventory the reasons. It was personally copied by Hus in 1398; it circulated in many versions in Prague during the next dozen years, provided with a subject index and with a concise commentary in the form of a glossary; it acquired notoriety by being burnt, together with Wyclif's other works, on the initiative of Archbishop Zajíc in 1410; on Hus's initiative it became subsequently (together with other writings of the Oxford philosopher and theologian) an object of formal academic defense at the University of Prague; and finally it directly inspired several independent local treatises on the Platonic Ideas. Under these

34) Vilém Herold and Pavel Spunar, "L'université de Prague et le rôle des disputations de quodlibet à sa faculté des Arts à la fin du 14^e et au début du 15^e siècle", in *Compte rendu de la 69^e Session de l'Union Académique Internationale* (Bruxelles, 1996) 27–39.

circumstances, one can, therefore, assume a very strong and probably exclusive influence of the English thinker's *De ideis* on the teachings of the Prague professors on this subject.

(2) On the other hand, the abstract metaphysico-theological theme of Ideas, couched in the paradigm of the late medieval quarrel about the universals, might not have had much direct influence on the formation of the Bohemian programme of religious reform. This subject matter might not have had any immediate effect on the genesis and the execution of the scheme of rectification, which aimed at an amelioration on the contemporary ecclesiastical conditions.

Do these two propositions correspond to reality?

Let us turn to the first one. We can examine in detail the texts about the Platonic Ideas, stemming from the University of Prague, the authors of which were Štěpán of Páleč, Matěj of Knín, Pavel of Prague, Prokop of Plzeň, Hus, and Jerome of Prague.³⁵ Such an examination shows something similar to what has been demonstrated in the case of Milíč's *Three Synodal Sermons*. The Prague texts also draw on a wide range of authorities, not only biblical and patristic, but also philosophical and theological. In addition, they reflect substantial knowledge of the developmental trajectories and literature in this field from late antiquity to the fourteenth century. Of course, the Prague texts also reveal a thorough knowledge of Wyclif's *De ideis*, agreeing with the treatise in the definition of the Ideas, and in the sequence of its arguments. At the same time, however, the authors of the texts advance their own solutions which tend to differ from those of their models, including their favourite English master.

Most tellingly, the Prague texts cite authors and present quotations that cannot be found in Wyclif. Along these lines, Jerome of Prague's direct quotation from Plato's *Timaeus* is particularly to the point. While recognizing Plato as the founding father of the teaching about Ideas and frequently mentioning him, Wyclif never quotes the Greek sage directly. Jerome also presents long citations from the treatise *De divisione naturae* of Duns Scotus Erigena. Another example is the influence of the School of Chartres, which is evident in the Prague texts and absent in Wyclif.³⁶

The Prague teachings about Ideas are properly characterized as Platonistic. Czech university masters developed them in polemics with their

35) I have prepared an edition of these and other Prague *quaestiones* concerning the Ideas, under the title *Quaestiones Pragenses de ideis Platonicis*, Prague, 1998 (forthcoming). I have not included Stanislav of Znojmo's text about the Ideas. It forms a part of his treatise *De universalibus*, which was mistakenly attributed to Wyclif by Michael H. Dziewicki and published by him in Ioannis Wyclif, *Miscellanea Philosophica* (London, 1905) II.

36) See my articles cited in n.33 above.

German counterparts, among others Johann Arsen of Langenfeld and Heinrich Totting of Oyta.³⁷ These teachings reject Aristotle's critique of Plato's ideas and draw on the tradition of Christianized Neoplatonism which stems – as far as the concept of Ideas is concerned – from St. Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and which comprises St. Anselm, Robert Grosseteste, and even Thomas Aquinas. Wyclif also embraces principally this tradition.

Nevertheless, it is possible to postulate a distinctive position from Wyclif for the Prague texts due exactly to the influence of the School of Chartres. The Prague masters adopted from Guillaume de Conches the category of the archetypal world (*mundus archetypus*), which they used to designate the plethora of Ideas in God, or in the divine mind. This concept became the pivotal category in virtually all the texts about Ideas, which originated in the Czech university milieu. While Wyclif employed in this connection the concept of the intelligible world (*mundus intelligibilis*) which linked up with Augustinian version of the Neoplatonic tradition, the Czech philosophers in Prague eagerly embraced the concept of *mundus archetypus* in its exemplary status as perfect in its beauty, luminosity, and harmony. This ideal *mundus archetypus* was to serve both as a contrast, and as a model to emulate, for the existing world of current sensory perceptions (*mundus sensibilis*).³⁸

* * *

Hence, an analogous procedure or a similar paradigm to Milíč's *Synodal Sermons* can be discerned in the Prague teachings about Ideas. First, there was an evocation of the ideals entertained by the primitive Christian church of the martyrs, the *ecclesia primitiva* about which Milíč spoke with such enthusiasm. Second, this image became a springboard – via a comparison with the contemporary corruption – for urging an improvement, in other words, for advocating reforms.

Despite the generally perceived and acknowledged need for a regeneration, the reformist messages of Milíč's sermons, as well as those of the Prague texts, did not elicit welcoming responses from those in power. Milíč's earthly pilgrimage ended in Avignon where he had narrowly avoided conviction in a judicial process conducted against him. Hus and Jerome ended their lives more dramatically and painfully on the martyrs' pyres at

37) Vilém Herold, "Die Polemik mit der Prager 'hussitischen' Auffasung der platonischen Ideen in der Handschrift der Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, 1445", in *Husitství, Reformace, Renesance: Sborník k 60. narozeninám Františka Šmahela*, ed. Jaroslav Pánek, Miloslav Polívka, and Noemi Rejchrtová. 3 vv. (Prague: Historický ústav, 1994) II, 565–583.

38) See Herold, "Die Philosophie des Hussitismus", 111 ff.

Constance. There, the view of Ideas, couched in the philosophy of realism, significantly contributed to the condemnation of particularly Jerome.³⁹

In conclusion, how can one respond to the query posited in the title of this article? It is clear that the genesis of the Bohemian Reformation must be sought within the diverse currents of the intellectual tradition of Europe. It encompasses Milíč who prepared the ground for an adoption of ideas which in retrospect may have seemed to have come from Wyclif. Nevertheless, it also includes Wyclif together with other English corollaries of his work and influence, just as it encompasses the Prague university masters, above all, Hus and Jerome. The degree to which (1) the domestic intellectual input, (2) Wyclif's influence, and (3) the contributions of the diverse components of the European intellectual tradition, played in the Bohemian Reformation all must be measured through detailed examination and juxtaposition of the relevant texts in their substantial meaning and significance, as well as in their thematic and historical contexts. It is my conviction that the sheer volume of the available and hitherto unexplored documentation renders an unequivocal apportionment of credit for the intellectual contents of the Bohemian Reformation, for the time being, premature.

(Translation from the Czech by Zdeněk David)

39) Concerning the reasons of Jerome's conviction, see Vilém Herold, "Der Streit zwischen Hieronymus von Prag und Johann Gerson", in *Société et Eglise: Textes et discussions dans les universités d'Europe centrale pendant le moyen âge tardif*, ed. Z. Wlodek (Turnhout, 1995) 77–89.