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**“...quod mulieres, que sunt in Christo, in hoc tempore viros  
in virtutibus antecurrunt.”**

**Bohemian Reformers' Radically New View  
of Women and Marriage?  
From the Late Fourteenth Century to 1419.**

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(Prague)

By the mid-fourteenth century an unusual intellectual atmosphere began to prevail in Bohemia and particularly in its capital of Prague.<sup>1</sup> A major factor was the newly founded university which broadened the diffusion of knowledge to individuals, who stood outside the church structure. The university “made possible the breach of social barriers, when it not only permitted members of all social classes to share the lecture halls, but also helped to equalize opportunities of the clerical and lay estates.”<sup>2</sup> This significant development ushered in the period during which germinated the seed of the Reformation, planted by Konrád Waldhauser, Jan Milíč of Kroměříž, and the learned biblical scholar and native of Southern Bohemia, Matěj of Janov. Their voices resounded from the pulpits of the churches of St. Gallus, St. Giles, the Blessed Virgin Before the Týn, and St. Nicholas in the Old Town, St. Thomas and St. Nicholas in the Lesser Town, and St. George and St. Vitus in the Prague Castle. Their Czech, German and Latin sermons addressed the inhabitants of Prague regardless of their nationality or social standing, including the student youth<sup>3</sup> who would supply the future ranks of theologians and preachers for the Reformation.

### **I. The Precursors of Hus**

The sermons found a fertile ground within the lay audience and probably in a greater measure among women than among men. Perhaps it was the pressure of the gloomy atmosphere, full of anxiety from the daily risk to life, that women – thanks to their greater emotionalism – responded to the exhortatory preaching of Hus’s precursors with so much dedication that it is possible to speak of a strong religious women’s movement, which became a major ingredient in the rise of the Reformation.<sup>4</sup> This situation in relation to women impressed Matěj of Janov, who was a part of the period which witnessed the “breaking of silence”, and of the intensifying struggle with the Antichrist. As Anna Kolářová-Císařová has commented:

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<sup>1</sup> Otakar Odložilík, “Z počátků husitství na Moravě: Šimon z Tišnova a Jan Vavřincův z Ražic,” *Časopis Matice moravské* 49 (1925) 37 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Michal Svatoš, “Obecné učení, 1347/48-1419,” in *Dějiny Univerzity Karlovy* (Prague, 1995) 1:30.

<sup>3</sup> For background literature see Josef Truhlář, trans., “Život Milíče z Kroměříže,” in FRB I:403-430; Ferdinand Menčík, *Konrád Waldhauser, mnich řádu svatého Augustina*, Pojednání Královské české společnosti nauk, VI řady díl 11 (Prague, 1881) 4 ff.; Otakar Odložilík, *Jan Milíč z Kroměříže* (Prague, 1924) 4-5; Miloslav Kaňák, *Milíč z Kroměříže* (Prague, 1975). Karel Červený (Prague, 1975) assisted with the translation from Milíč, 18 ff.; Jan Milíč z Kroměříže, *Jana Milíče z Kroměříže Tři řeči synodní / Iohannis Milicij de Cremsir Tres sermones synodales*, eds. Vilém Herold and Milan Mráz (Prague, 1974) 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Husitská revoluce*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., 4 vv. (Prague, 1993) 2:22-23.

“Matěj of Janov in his work *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti* for the first time expressively captured the images of the new, more intense and earnest Czech women who cooperated with their male counterparts in paving the road towards a Bohemian religious progress.”<sup>5</sup> The church reform began, according to Janov, about fifty years earlier, and gathered strength from of the preachers’ sermons, and the more intense workings of Christ’s spirit. Among the telling signs he listed the laity’s yearning for frequent communion, the revival of the spirit of humility and the flaming love for the crucified Christ, as well as the great piety of women.<sup>6</sup> Referring to the latter, Janov stated explicitly: “I say these are the women who live according to Jesus Christ and greatly excel men in the matters of faith, hope, mercy, prayer, penance, continence, purity, humility, and the cultivation of specific virtues....”<sup>7</sup> Janov’s account dovetailed with the stories about the reform of proud and vain women, who had responded to the admonitions of Waldhauser and Milíč, and demonstrated their inner change from the vice of pride to the virtue of humility by putting away the precious garments and jewels.<sup>8</sup>

Janov’s view of contemporary feminine piety harmonized with his theological interpretation of history. According to him, the effervescence of female piety resulted from a downward trend in the status of males who – although initially outstanding and superior in their power of spirit – currently became enfeebled in their thoughts, and collectively turned to the vanities and splendors of this world. As the crucified Christ once in vain had sought help among the males, so also currently he would have hardly found a place where to lay his head, inasmuch as men – one and all – had looked away and become unhelpful. Christ, therefore, turned deservedly and appropriately to the weak female gender, which was held in contempt in this world. Placed on the lowest level because of their nature’s weakness, women were now clothed in the garment of man, i.e., that of Jesus Christ. According to Janov the erring men were transformed into women through their weakness, while women in a manly way rose to the height of the most noble masculine glory, striving with the utmost virtue in Jesus Christ. While priests “snored and vomitted,” so that they were unworthy to serve the mass properly, women inflamed by the highest yearnings and interests, hastened daily, or as frequently as possible, to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ. While men drowned in self-admiration and knew no humility, Christ

<sup>5</sup> Anna Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* (Prague, 1915) 44.

<sup>6</sup> Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova: jeho život, spisy a učení*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., [Pontes Pragenses 11] (Brno, 2000) 150.

<sup>7</sup> Matěj z Janova, *Regulae* I:154: “...ita dico dehinc semper usque modo ad ea, que dei sunt, ut est fidei, spei et caritatis, oracionis, penitencie, abstinencie, castitatis, humilitatis et operum misericordie atque singularum exercicia virtutum, mulieres, que in Christo Jhesu existunt, ut plurimum viros antecurrunt..;” *ibid.* 155: “Hinc quoque potest evidens ratio et causa illius elici, quod modico superius est assumptum, puta quod mulieres, que sunt in Christo, in hoc tempore viros in virtutibus antecurrunt.”

<sup>8</sup> “Život Milíče z Kroměříže,” 406; František Loskot, *Konrad Waldhauser, řeholní kanovník s. Augustina, předchůdce Mistra Jana Husa*, [Velcí mužové české reformace, 1] (Prague, 1909) 45-46, 84 ff; Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském*, 30; Jaroslav Kadlec, *Mistr Vojtěch Raňkův z Ježova*, [Práce z dějin University Karlovy, 7] (Prague, 1969) 87; *idem*, *Leben und Schriften des Prager Magisters Adalbert Rankonis de Ericinio: Aus dem Nachlass von Rudolf Holinka und Jan Vilikovský*, [Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Texte und Untersuchungen, Neue Folge Bd. 4] (Münster, 1971) 335.

began to bypass them and to bestow his gifts in greater measure on women.<sup>9</sup> “And, therefore, in these times women, virgins and widows are raised up, and care about good morals; they undertake strict penance, rush to the holy sacraments, and take away the kingdom of heaven from men, who are busy with the vanities of this world. It is, therefore, possible nowadays to see the female gender filling the churches in prayers, taking its places at the sermons, presenting itself for confession with cries and plentiful tears, filling its mouth with unending pious promises, and joyfully receiving the sacrament of the altar every day. Forsaking the splendor of the world with its delectations, the women increasingly abound with the love of Jesus Christ. Constantly contemplating holy subjects, women receive Christ’s revelations, prophecies, frequent visitations, and particular graces. These gifts, I say, are nowadays bestowed more on women than on whomever among men and priests. Hence it now appears that a greater prophetic faculty and more intimate acquaintance with the Holy Spirit have been transferred to women, to whom great divine mysteries are revealed, as to Hildegard, the glorious virgin, and to Brigid, the holy and revered matron, and – I say – to other virtuous women whom I have encountered in Prague, Rome, and Nuremberg, and by far most frequently in the city of Prague.”<sup>10</sup> This laudable situation owed much, according to Janov, to the

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<sup>9</sup> *Regulae* I, 157: “Conformiter hic sciendum est et de feminis, de quibus sermo, quia viri, existentes primi et maiores natu in virtute, in suis cogitationibus evanescent converteruntque se communiter ad vanitatem et pompam huius mundi ita, ut in eis Jhesus crucifixus querat virum et non inveniatur, sicut scriptum est... Vix habet, inquam, dominus Jhesus in viris, ubi caput suum reclinet, quoniam omnes declinaverunt in unum, simul inutiles facti sunt; non est in eis, qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum. Quapropter merito et oportune dominus virtutum et rex glorie convertit se ad infirma huius mundi et abiecta, puta ad sexum muliebrem...;” *ibid.* 158: “Femine quoque, in infimo gradu pro condicione sue nature fragilis locate, ecce, iam virum, id est Christum Jhesum, induite...;” *ibid.* 159: “...excellentissimorum virorum gloriam rapuerunt viriliter, in Christo Jhesu et in omni virtute operando, ut iam non quidem mulieres, sed viragines merito appellentur. Nam cum sacerdotes stertunt et nauseant, vix debito et officio et alias raro missas santissimas dignari celebrare, ecce, mulieres summis desideriis et studiis festinant cottidie, vel quanto eis sepius potest fieri, corpus et sanguinem Jhesu Christi manducare et potare...;” *ibid.* 162: “...dominus suam salutem parvulis de plebe eo habundantius revelare voluit atque ministrare, ita conformiter dicendum est in communi de comparacione virorum et mulierum quoad capacitatem donorum Jhesu Christ, quoniam in hiis diebus viri precipue, suorum bonorum naturalium seu virum conscii, nesciunt humiliare seipsos neque portare, extra castra exeundo, obprobrium Jhesu Christi...Deus igitur et dominus Jhesus, dives in omnes, proinde viris talibus relictis, ut plurimum, suos thesauros atque divicias transfert ad mulieres...”

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 162-163: “Et per hoc istis temporibus surgunt mulieres, virgines et vidue, et apprehendunt disciplinam, agunt strenue penitentiam, properant ad divina sacramenta et praeipiunt viris regnum celorum circa vanitatem huius seculi occupatis. Eapropter hodie est videre gentem mulierum replere templa in oracionibus, occupare loca in sermonibus, sese representare per confessionem sacerdotibus gemitibus et lacrimis uberrimis, replere maxillas continuis devocionibus, sumere gaudiose sacramentum altaris singulis diebus, perfect relinquere pompam mundi cum suis oblectacionibus, caritate Christi Jhesu magis ac magis habundantes, ea, que domini sunt, incessanter cogitantes, revelaciones a Christo et prophecias visitacionesque crebras et sinulares grate suscipientes. Hiis inquam omnibus et aliis, ut videtur, amplius cencies ditantur femine in hoc tempore, quam viri quicumque vel sacerdotes.

Unde nunc videtur propheta et familiaritas maior cum sancto spiritu translata ad mulieres, quibus magna mysteria dei revelantur, veluti manifestum est in Hyldegarde, gloriosa virgine, et in Brigida, sancta et venerabili matrona, necnon inquam pluribus aliis dignis deo feminis, quas Parysiis et in Roma et in Nuerberg et multo amplius in civitate Pragensi vidi, probavi et dominum Jhesum in suis operibus et dignacionem sum admiratus.” See also Kybal, *Matěj z Janova* 17, Rudolf Holinka, *Sektářství v Čechách před revolucí husitskou* (Prague, 1929) 115.

preaching of Waldhauser and Milíč, who had addressed the female soul in frequent exhortations since the 1360s.

Turning to Waldhauser, he – like the other reformist preachers – expatiated in particular against the prostitutes,<sup>11</sup> but at the same time harshly criticized other women for their love of luxury and vanity. He noted also the detrimental ramification and consequences of ostentatious display, reminding his readers that “the sweat of the poor often clings to a precious garment.”<sup>12</sup> In their proud narcissism women could cause economic and social difficulties to their families with their lavish expenditures.<sup>13</sup> Tomáš Štítný of Štítné and Jan Hus would later put forth similar views.<sup>14</sup> While rejecting expensive clothing for women without any exception, Waldhauser approved luxuries for men for justifiable reasons of their status, such as the customary attire of popes, monarchs, and bishops, or for distinguishing the gradation among masters and princes.<sup>15</sup> Already this assessment of external appearance indirectly indicated the double standard applied to the two genders. More important is the preacher’s evidently higher valuation of the male gender which found its way to the surface within the flood of other thoughts in his statement: “...when a woman gives birth to a son, she rejoices more than over the birth of a daughter.”<sup>16</sup> The joy was here clearly justified by the higher value of the male, because for Waldhauser a woman was primarily a symbol of physical attraction, and hence – as for Vojtěch of Ježov – above all a carrier of the sexual function, which spelled an invitation to pleasure, in other word an invitation to sin. The one justification for female sexuality was motherhood. In harmony with contemporary reverence, Waldhauser likewise esteemed most highly the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. This is evident also from the Old Czech version of Waldhauser’s homiliary [*Postila*], which may be considered a guide to his teaching, albeit somewhat altered from the original. Every protheme ended by the angelic salutation of “Hail Mary”,<sup>17</sup> with an added plea for the Mother of God’s intercession. To this reverence was related a respect of the contemporary earthly expectant mothers, that is pregnant women, whom the preacher placed high – right next to the Apostles.<sup>18</sup> He did not remain indifferent to the omnipresent suffering of a woman in the life-threatening situation of giving birth: “As you know, the grave is always open, and death is always waiting for every pregnant woman. Therefore, she rejoices [after a successful birth] that she escaped unscathed.”<sup>19</sup> It was probably due to the pervasiveness of the Marian cult that Waldhauser adopted a compassionate tone toward the woman giving birth. It was likely for the same reason that he eschewed the harsh words of the Bible, reinforced by comments of church authorities, which ascribed the woman’s

<sup>11</sup> Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* 32.

<sup>12</sup> Loskot, *Konrád Waldhauser* 43; Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* 28-29.

<sup>13</sup> Loskot, *Konrád Waldhauser* 41; *Husitská revoluce* 2:38.

<sup>14</sup> Pavlína Rychterová, “Žena a manželství v díle Tomáše ze Štítného,” *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica* 6 (1999) 95-109; *Výbor z české literatury doby husitské*, eds. Bohuslav Havránek and others, 2 vols. (Prague, 1963-1964) 1:105.

<sup>15</sup> *Staročeské zpracování Postily studentů svaté university pražské Konráda Waldhausera*, ed. František Šimek, *Sbírka pramenů českého hnutí náboženského ve XIV. a XV. století*, sv. 20 (Prague, 1947) xiv.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* xii and *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 24, 26.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

birth pangs to the penalty for the sin committed by the primal mother Eve in Paradise.<sup>20</sup>

According to Waldhauser's opinion, the Virgin Mary was not alone among women in her holiness and election. Among the elect were likewise the holy women, who were the first to come to Christ's empty tomb so that they alone might announce to the entire world, through the Apostles, the miracle of the Resurrection.<sup>21</sup> Hence Waldhauser recognized the chosen women's right to sanctity.

Jan Milíč of Kroměříž with his basically negative stance toward women approached closely the misogynously inclined church authorities, according to which women brought evil to the world. This evil endangered men with a perpetual seductiveness. It affected not only laymen, but also priests, as shown by ecclesiastics' involvement in adultery and fornication, as well as in their embracing of luxurious fashions in order to attract female attention.<sup>22</sup> The preacher drew a lesson from the danger of female seductiveness for his own relationship with the opposite sex, which corresponded to St. Jerome's rule, namely that the safest conduct was to avoid touching a woman under any circumstances.<sup>23</sup> He applied this maxim with a vengeance in his often bizarre detachment from women, as it is attested by sources which historians have utilized with relish.<sup>24</sup> Guided by his convictions, Milíč recalled the connection between the woman and the devil which, starting with the earliest biblical exegetes, had become a cherished explanation of the topos of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise according to the book of Genesis. Seen through these commentators' misogynous spectacles, the medieval woman (as daughter of the primeval mother, Eve) remained a perpetual sinner, with Satan constantly lurking in her presence.

Milíč applied this linkage particularly to prostitutes, who in his mind were fully identified with the devil. These women snared impure men in their dalliance in order to kill their souls.<sup>25</sup> As a part of his duel with Antichrist, he might have perceived the disruption of the diabolic alliance as one of the reasons for the conversion of the

<sup>20</sup> Gen 3:16; 2 Thess 2:14-15. See also Thérèse d'Alverny, "Comment les théologiens et les philosophes voient la femme," *Cahiers civilisation médiévale X<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles* 20 (1977) 114.

<sup>21</sup> *Staročeské zpracování Postily* 9 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Herold and Mráz, eds., *Jana Milíče z Kroměříže Tři řeči synodní* 62, 64-65, 93: "Sic et nunc sacerdotes sibi iniquitates congregant, nunc adulteriis, fornicacionibus, incestibus carnalibus, mulierum amoribus, osculis, amplexibus concubinarum, cohabitacionibus meretricum... Rogo, unde est hoc, quod quidam verecundantur vocari sacerdotes... Quidam ocreas pedibus diligenter adaptant, ne alique ruge appareant, et sic calceos sive sotulares strictos deferunt et rostratos, ut oculis hominum et precipue mulieribus placeant."

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, Gabriele Becker, Helmut Brackert, Sigrid Brauner, and Angelika Tümmeler, "Zum kulturellen Bild und zur realen Situation der Frau in Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit," in *Aus der Zeit der Verzweiflung: Zur Genese und Aktualität des Hexenbildes* (Frankfurt a. M., 1977) 18. Jerome's misogynous views also affected Hus and most of his precursors (even Janov, although in a limited way). Likewise the layman Štítný deferred to them.

<sup>24</sup> "Život Milíče z Kroměříže," 407; Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* 31-32; Kaňák, *Milíč z Kroměříže* 35.

<sup>25</sup> Herold and Mráz, eds., *Jana Milíče z Kroměříže Tři řeči synodní* 123: "...sed ipsum pocius dyabolum, qui stat a dextris eorum, id est mulier fornicaria...;" *ibid.*, 125-126: "Et Crisostomus Super Matheum Morali 48 dicit loquens de Herodiade, quomodo idem demon adhuc saltat in corizantibus, sic inquires: '...Cum enim meretrices construant, non caput interficiunt, sed animam occidunt fornicarios operantes. Etsi non filia Herodiadis adest, sed adest ille, qui per illam saltavit tunc dyabolus, eciam per hanc saltat nunc et animas convivancium captivas arripiens abit'."

prostitutes, and the erection of a sanctuary for them, called Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> Of course, his natural sympathy and magnanimity also played a role.<sup>27</sup> In the case of Milíč this possibility can not be ruled out, firmly anchored as he was in the medieval *Weltanschauung*. His rehabilitation of prostitutes and protection of penitent women<sup>28</sup> performed in a different manner the same function as Jan Želivský's subsequent destruction of brothels. Both represented a liquidation of the houses of prostitution, although in different ways. In fact, Milíč, properly speaking, applied the second method as well when he caused a demolition of the bordello, known as "Benátky" [Venice].<sup>29</sup> Just as Jesus had freed Mary Magdalene from the power of the seven demons, Milíč extracted the prostitutes from diabolical clutches. He then took good care of the penitent women, who surrounded him, and – like Mary Magdalene in the case of Jesus – accompanied him in his later life, until his departure for Avignon. As if to underline the connection, he had a chapel erected in honor of Mary Magdalene. A combination of the holy woman's evangelical message with his struggle against the Antichrist helped to explain the apparent contradiction between his misogynist theories and the morbid detachment in his personal contact with women, on the one hand, and his devoted daily care for the penitent prostitutes, on the other.

Beside Mary Magdalene, Milíč showed a fervent devotion to the Virgin Mary, not only according to contemporary conventions, but also as an expression of his own innermost conviction. He repeatedly cited the angelic greeting "Ave Maria" in his synodal sermons.<sup>30</sup> The feast day of Mary's birth occupied a special place among his Sunday and holiday sermons.<sup>31</sup> At his bidding, the prayer "Hail Holy Queen" resounded as an expression of Marian veneration after Friday sermons at the Jerusalem foundation.<sup>32</sup>

Returning to the earlier-mentioned views of Matěj of Janov concerning women's growing piety, it was evident that this biblical scholar did not regard women as creatures of a lower order than men but, to the contrary, in certain respects valued them more highly. In disregard of gender, he posited the rules [*regulae*] for the differentiation between the true and the false Christians. The former, who included women as well as men, were to be admitted to frequent communion without any restriction. Janov used as the fundamental source and model for his gender-blind stance the theological lore of Scripture,<sup>33</sup> and disregarded those church doctors and other authorities who – appealing to St. Paul – had promoted a strongly misogynist line of thought.<sup>34</sup> Largely freed from this dependence, he arrived in his speculation about true Christians to such a favorable female image that he excelled over other ecclesiastical authorities labouring toward a more pro-feminine point of view. The latter pioneers, more often philosophers than theologians, grounded their optimistic views in the veneration of Mary, and postulated an antithesis between the sinful Eve

<sup>26</sup> "Život Milíče z Kroměříže," 418 ff. For a survey of literature on this subject see also Božena Kopiczková, "Žena a rodina v husitství," HT 12 (1999) 40.

<sup>27</sup> For a testimony of admiration see Matěj z Janova, "Matěje z Janova Zpráva o Milíčovi z Kroměříže," FRB I:431-436; concerning Milíč's influence on Janov see, for instance, Kybal, *Matěj z Janova* 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Výbor z české literatury doby husitské* 1:49.

<sup>29</sup> Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* 33.

<sup>30</sup> Herold and Mráz, eds., *Jana Milíče z Kroměříže Tři řeči synodní* 75, 105.

<sup>31</sup> František M. Bartoš, *Dvě studie o husitských postilách* 6.

<sup>32</sup> Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* 34.

<sup>33</sup> Kybal, *Matěj z Janova* 33 ff.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 47.

of the Old Testament, and Mary, the New Testament Mother of God, who had overshadowed the delinquent primal mother.<sup>35</sup> As it will be shown later, this antithesis – rooted in a reverence for the Virgin Mary – was found not only in Janov, but also in Tomáš Štítný and Jan Hus.

Matěj of Janov further emphasized, also in the spirit of Waldhauser, that the Mother of God would be followed by holy and pious women who, as objects of a special divine benevolence, would be chosen to enunciate, through the Apostles, the Resurrection of Christ.<sup>36</sup>

It is possible to state without any exaggeration that Janov adopted toward those women, whom he considered true Christians, a viewpoint that was exceptionally positive, even radically progressive. In line with his conviction that every true Christian had the right to the frequent reception of the sacrament of the altar, he firmly opposed other theological savants who would have excluded all women from frequent communion on the grounds of an inherent weakness and superficiality of their gender.<sup>37</sup> Janov agreed with this limitation only in the cases of unworthy women, that is false Christians, who included not only prostitutes, but all women marked by superficiality of mind and impropriety of behaviour, for whom he favoured only an annual reception of the holy sacrament.<sup>38</sup> Evidently he referred to the pretentious and fashionably dressed seductresses whom Waldhauser and Milíč had also criticized.<sup>39</sup> Otherwise, however, not even the greatest theologians had the right, according to Janov – the Church's permission notwithstanding – to deprive the female gender in its entirety of the benefits of frequent communion. Evidently, he opposed the application of an undifferentiated discrimination against the entirety of womankind.

He found it necessary to remind his audience that it was improper to bar females from frequent communion on the basis of a putative intellectual and spiritual

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<sup>35</sup> These authorities included in particular Isidor of Seville, Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abélard, members of the Victorine school of mystical theology in Paris, including Peter Lombard, Hugh, and others. Thus it was mainly under the influence of philosophers and polymath scholars that two differentiated ideological or cultural currents clearly crystallized, as noted already by Pavel Spunar, "Žena, manželství a rodina v počátcích české reformace," in *Příspěvky k dějinám křesťanství* (Prague, 1991) 165-166. Concerning the above thinkers see also d'Alverny, "Comment les théologiens," 117 ff. More generally concerning this issue see at least "Die Eva-Maria-Typologie," *Handbuch der Marienkunde*, eds., Wolfgang Beinert and Heinrich Petri, 2d ed. rev. Vol. 1: *Theologische Grundlegung Geistliches Leben* 369 ff.

<sup>36</sup> *Regulae* I:154 "...quod scilicet nunc et semper in Christo sancte mulieres tam virtuose vivunt et vixerunt sicut confavente eisdem divina bonitate, ut contemptum sue matris Eve reformarent, quod sicut mulieres viros precesserunt in suscipiendo Christum in hunc mundum ac omnium virtutum primordia, veluti patet in Maria, dei matre gloriosa, suscipiendo quoque Christum Jhesum ab inferis per resurrectionem revertentem, quemadmodum manifestum est in Maria Magdalena et aliis duabus, quibus datum est, ut apostolis, beatis viris, ipse essent apostole nunccieque resurrectionis domini Jhesu Christi..."

<sup>37</sup> On the discussion about frequent communion, which had engaged theologians since the mid-fourteenth century, see, for instance, Kadlec, *Mistr Vojtěch Raňkův z Ježova* 37 ff. and Jaroslav V. Polc, "Časté přijímání laiků: základ české reformace. Duchovní proudy od Karla IV. ke kalichu," and "Disputace o častém přijímání laiků na předhusitské teologické fakultě," in his *Česká církev v dějinách* (Prague, 1999) 207-229, 231-239.

<sup>38</sup> Spunar, "Žena, manželství a rodina," 168.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

weakness, or the lack of physical prowess.<sup>40</sup> Such argumentation was invalid because not even the Prophets or the Apostles drew any distinction between men and women in the admissibility to the sacrament. Janov emphasized that improper behaviour was the attribute of human beings regardless of gender, contrary to the opinion of those scholars who maintained that women were of a lesser worth than men when it came to the reception of communion.<sup>41</sup> Contradicting canonical texts, they divided what God had put together, inasmuch as Jesus Christ assembled equally all in his mystical body according to the truth and the spirit without making a distinction between male and female. The first and primeval Lord had endowed all equally, both men and women. His deputies, that is the priests, should act accordingly.<sup>42</sup> The indiscriminantly negative view of women was also clearly negated by Scripture which elevated virgins, widows and married women, endowed them with diverse titles of distinction, and conferred blessings on them.<sup>43</sup>

Let us now briefly examine the views of Hus's precursors on marriage. Waldhauser recognized the necessity of marriage for the preservation of humanity, and hence he held motherhood in high esteem. Despite this fundamental function, however, the Austrian preacher did not condone the marital state without reservation,

<sup>40</sup> *Regulae* I:151, 163-164 "Sunt adhuc quidam et magni viri, qui in suis scriptis reliquerunt, quod scilicet maxime mulieribus non sit istud maiestatis sacramentum cottidie vel alias sepe ministrandum, tum quia sunt vel solent esse inmundae a facie passionis menstruorum, tum quia sunt communiter leves persone et per consequens facile transmutabiles in earum conversacione ad oppositam qualitatem.

Et istos, ut verum fatear, magis libet mirari quam imitari...puta non ad omnes feminas, sed solum ad illas, quae degenerantes a christiana morum gravitate, se prorsus indignas faciunt seu exhibent, non dico crebra, sed etiam annua communione sacramenti per mentem suam fluxam et despicabilem conversacionem et inmundam. Quod si sic intelligunt, tunc non videbitur ratio, quare tantum sexum mulierem hoc dicendo expresserunt...De secundo autem, puta de passione menstruorum, scilicet quod non inpediant mulieres alias dignas sepe vel cottidie sacramento altaris communicare...Illi enim, qui tales infirmitates naturales, quae sunt sine omni culpa et mentis contagione, in Christi fidelibus magnipendunt, multum preferre frontem phariseorum videntur, duci solum iudicio corporali, quia illa in lege perfecta ewangelica non pensantur..." See also Spunar, , "Žena, manželství a rodina," 169, 179; František Šmahel, "Cherchez la femme...Ženská iniciativa v husitství," in *Xenia Spunariana* (1988) 45-46 [in manuscript].

<sup>41</sup> *Regulae* I:152, 154 "...Quem populum sancti prophete et apostoli per multa extollentes, nullibi inter viros et mulieres fecerunt ullam seccionem et principaliter quoad divinorum sacramentorum exercicium et fruicionem...illa manifeste notant vicium animorum tam viri quam femine, sed non sexum vel naturam feminarum...Item si viri secundum illos digniores essent habiti vel sepe vel cottidie hoc gratissimum sacramentum biberent, et manducarent quam mulieres, procul dubio hoc non esset racione sexus, quia ille nichil facit ad propositum salutis in Christo Jhesu secundum paulo ante allegata...ergo illud esset maxime racione virtutis animi et conversacionis digne in religione christiana."

<sup>42</sup> *Regulae* I:153 "Enimvero videntur isti contra decreta canonis disiungere id, quod deus coniunxit, quoniam dominus Jhesus Christus congregavit omnes pariter in suum corpus mysticum secundum veritatem et spiritum, nullam faciens inter mulieres vel masculos differenciam...Quo contra isti indulgent viri sepe tradi corpus et sanguinem, feminas autem inde censent excludendas, cum tamen manifeste dicit apostolus, quod in Christo Jhesu neque vir sine muliere neque mulier sine viro...Sanaque ratio istorum, de quibus sermo, expugnat opinionem, qui iudicant mulieres esse inferiores viris quoad crebram sacramenti altaris communionem. Et primo sic: Illud, quod est primo et principali domino omnibus eque datum et concessum, tam mulieribus quam viris, [a] dispensatoribus debet similiter illud utrisque poscentibus equaliter ministrari."

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* "At neque opinioni ipsorum concordat sancta scriptura, sed magis adversatur quantum ad id, quod indignificant etiam preclaram et castam generacionem virginum et viduarum nec non coniugatarum beatarum, cum tamen sancta scriptura multis laudam easdem preconiiis extollit variisque titulis privilegiorum dotat et benedicit."

commenting critically that “many unite with women not for child bearing, but for satisfaction of carnal desires.”<sup>44</sup> The physical passion made matrimony very dangerous, because husbands made excessive efforts to be attractive to their wives.<sup>45</sup> Milíč’s interpretation of marriage was marked by the same ambivalence. He postulated its triple role in harmony with the Augustinian tradition: a spousal union was consummated as a sacrament, assured mutual fidelity, and provided offspring. Although Milíč did not deny the value of marital cohabitation, he still – like Waldhauser – entertained a dark shadow of suspicion about its moral status. These doubts were reflected in his praises of childless marriages, which involved a strict sexual abstinence [*absque copula carnis*].<sup>46</sup> Contrary to his two predecessors, Matěj of Janov saw no risk in marriage even for the masculine side. Referring to Scripture and to St. Ambrose, he stressed that God gave man a buttress [*adiutorium bonum*] in his wife. Moreover, he did not adopt Ambrose’s qualification that the female contribution to the spousal relationship was of an inferior order.<sup>47</sup> He understood marriage as a genuine partnership and gave no sign of agreement with the entrenched medieval view according to which the husband served as a master and guardian of the wife. Janov did not see anything risky or despicable in the bridegroom’s attachment to his bride. Rather in agreement with Hildegard of Bingen – a mystic much favoured in the Bohemian reformist milieu<sup>48</sup> – he argued for, and stressed, the divine intent according to which a husband and a wife should become one flesh in the unity of love. The spiritual foundations for a mutual understanding were already laid during the engagement to be married. Matěj addressed the spousal condition also from the standpoint of frequent communion and, from this perspective, established rules to foster marital cohabitation, which have attracted frequent attention of historians.<sup>49</sup>

In the spirit of Jerome and Augustine and in the footsteps of Milíč,<sup>50</sup> whom he adored, the lay author Tomáš Štítný likewise warned against the female snares. He noted: “St. Jerome says: ‘To see a woman is evil, because she is a stimulus; to hear her is worse, because thereby the devil releases his poison; and to touch her is the worst, because it destroys purity.’ And St. Augustine confirms this...”<sup>51</sup> Based on his own experiences, Štítný exempted good housekeepers and wives from the ranks of dangerous females. In agreement with Milíč, he postulated the three main Augustinian components of marriage: fidelity, offspring (for the preservation of race), and sacrament.<sup>52</sup> Unlike the clerics, he could evaluate the spousal cohabitation from his own personal practice. In praising the virtues of women, who nurtured their families and households, the widowed author was projecting his own feelings toward

<sup>44</sup> *Staročeské zpracování Postily* 72.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Spunar, “Žena, manželství a rodina,” 166.

<sup>47</sup> D’Alverny, “Comment les théologiens,” 109.

<sup>48</sup> See, for instance, Václav Novotný, *Náboženská hnutí česká ve 14. a 15. století*, část 1: *Do Husa* (Prague, n.d.) 155; *Husitská revoluce* 2:204; Anežka Vidmanová, “Ke staroboleslavskému husitskému kodexu,” *StR* 31 (1995-96) 22.

<sup>49</sup> Kybal, *Matěj z Janova* 273, and most recently Polc, “Vita coniugale e comunione quotidiana dei laici questione disputata a Praga alla fine del sec. XIV,” *Česká církev v dějinách* 169-205.

<sup>50</sup> Tomáš ze Štítného, *Knižky šestery o obecných věcech křesťanských*, ed. Jaromír Erben (Prague, 1852) xvi.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 76.

<sup>52</sup> Jan Gebauer, “O životě a spisích Tomáše ze Štítného,” in Tomáš ze Štítného, *Spisy*, v. 1: *Prolegomena* (Prague, 1923) 46.

a late spouse, for whom he continued to grieve and whom he respected as his children's mother.<sup>53</sup> Yet, despite his high valuation of the spousal relationship,<sup>54</sup> which imposed duties on husbands toward their wives,<sup>55</sup> Štítný still postulated the requirement of wives' obedience and subordination to their husbands. He followed St. Paul's injunction "Wives be subordinate to your husbands."<sup>56</sup> In order to illustrate the marital relationship, the rustic theologian availed himself of a simile put forth by the earlier mentioned Hildegard von Bingen, who compared a housewife to the moon. As the latter derived its beauty from the sun, the former owed her honour to the husband.<sup>57</sup> The householder had to rear his wife as well as the household staff, and Štítný accordingly taught that it was the responsibility of the head of the household to prevent "his wife and the rest of the household" from falling into vice and evil. First of all, he was to do so by example, kindness, and admonition, but "if goodness failed to affect them, he had the right to unleash his power of dominion."<sup>58</sup> Evidently, the householder was thus authorized to employ harsher means not only toward the servants, but also toward his wife. She, in her turn, was unable to reciprocate in kind, as Štítný considered self-evident, and counseled the wife that she had no other choice but turning to God in order to alleviate any hardships, which her spouse might have inflicted on her.<sup>59</sup>

Respecting the memory of his late wife and his children's mother, and affected by the atmosphere of a pronounced Marian cult, Štítný like his predecessors expressed with a genuine feeling the panegyric to Mary's motherhood and virginal purity in his "Explication of Hail Mary" [*Výklad na 'Zdravas Maria'*].<sup>60</sup> Following a number ecclesiastical authorities, and perhaps particularly affected by Matěj of Janov, he did not forget to emphasize Mary's special favour to womanhood when: "...through her the curse of Eve had been lifted from her entire race which had become eligible for eternal life thanks to the blessed fruit of her womb..."<sup>61</sup>

## II. Hus, Jakoubek, and Želivský

Although Jan Hus also discharged many critical salvos into the female ranks, it is important to note that – like Janov – he avoided generalizing such vituperations. He distinguished virtuous and vicious women applying the yardstick of sinfulness because for him sin, not gender, was the criterion.<sup>62</sup> The virtuous group represented for him true Christians whom he viewed with kindness and affection. These moral, pious, and genuinely religious women had already undergone an internal renewal under the influence of his precursors. Such paragons not only formed the core of the

<sup>53</sup> Rychterová, "Žena a manželství," 103-107.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 106-107.

<sup>55</sup> Gebauer, "O životě a spisích," 44 ff.

<sup>56</sup> Tomáš ze Štítného, *Knižky šestery* 105: "...likewise a humble and wise housewife...from true love will obey her husband, listening to the words of St. Paul, who says: 'Wives be subject to your husbands' ..."

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 100: "A wise and noble housewife is compared to the moon. As the moon takes all its beauty from the sun, so also she has her honor from her husband..." It is a mere variant of Heldegard's dictum that a woman receives her strength from her husband, as the moon does from the sun; see D'Alverny, "Comment les théologiens," 123.

<sup>58</sup> Tomáš ze Štítného, *Knižky šestery* 98.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 106.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 287-298.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 288.

<sup>62</sup> Jan Hus, *Výklady Opera omnia* I:320.

Bethlehem community, but also belonged to the wider feminine circle surrounding Hus, who did not spare the words of praise and gratitude toward them in his sermons and writings.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, even his praise betrayed an underestimation of the feminine kind. In a left-handed compliment, he placed the saintly (and apparently also the pious) women on a higher pedestal than the males of equal religious attainments because of the females' more corrupt nature, the taming of which he found more demanding. Because of this exceptionally corrupt nature, the internal struggle between good and evil was much more exacting for women than for men, and hence the female victory was particularly meritorious in the eyes of God.<sup>64</sup> As an extenuating circumstance it must be noted that Hus adopted this ungallant attitude from Peter Comestor,<sup>65</sup> who was much favored by the Bohemian intellectual milieu so that his *Historia scholastica* had been translated into Czech by the end of the fourteenth century.<sup>66</sup>

According to Hus, the saintly women enjoyed an undeniable right to the status of the elect, because it was exactly they who first had come upon Christ's empty tomb and thus were chosen to announce to the world, through the Apostles, the Redeemer's Resurrection. The prince of the Bohemian reformers, dwelling on this mark of distinction, wrote: "Lo, the merciful Saviour caused that his Resurrection would be announced to others through women..."<sup>67</sup> It is the same interpretation of the Gospel message that we found in Hus's precursors, although some of his successors, most notably the radical Želivský, would reject it. For Hus, the Virgin Mary also occupied the first place among the saintly women. She was "the blessed one, the Mother of God, the queen of the world and the mistress of the angels..."<sup>68</sup> as well as the helper of those in need, in other words, the star to which the wanderers in this disordered world could always turn with their cries for help.<sup>69</sup> Hus himself repeatedly returned to the Virgin and prepared special sermons to mark her feast days.<sup>70</sup> He likewise highly valued her role in overcoming the sinful Eve for the rehabilitation of the female gender: "And inasmuch as death had come to the world through the mischief of a misguided woman, namely Eve, it was only proper that the restoration of life should be signaled by two pious women, the Virgin Mary and St. Elizabeth, humbly and graciously greeting each other."<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Hus considered as irreversible the victory, which had been scored for the righteous women. It had

<sup>63</sup> See Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském*, *passim*. Hus's attitudes and relations to women shone also through his letters from Constance, which were addressed to Bohemia to both "brethren and sisters," and to both "male and female friends," not only in a generalized way, but also mentioned specific female recipients of his greetings among the wives of his supporters, and the women of Bethlehem, such as Petra of Říčany, panna Dóra, Kateřina called Hus, and others; Novotný 223 [no. 100], 268 [no. 128], 274 [no. 130], 277 [no. 132] and others.

<sup>64</sup> Jan Hus, *Výklady I:320*; Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* 79.

<sup>65</sup> D'Alverny, "Comment les théologiens," 127. Comestor's influence was occasionally reflected in Hus's written works, see for instance Jan Hus, *Výklady I*: 594 (chapter 52, lines 9-11).

<sup>66</sup> Peter Comestor, *Historia scholastica* 3 vv. ed. Jan V. Novák, *Sbírka pramenů ku poznání literárního života v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku, Skupina 1: Památky a věci literatury české, řada 2, číslo 9-11* (Prague, 1910-1920). On the translation see at least Vladimír Kyas, *česká bible v dějinách národního písemnictví* (Prague, 1997) 64-65.

<sup>67</sup> Jan Hus, *Výklady I*:188.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 320.

<sup>69</sup> Jan Hus, *Postila sváteční Opera Omnia III*:113-114.

<sup>70</sup> In particular, for the feast days of the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin; see *ibid.* 131-146.

<sup>71</sup> Jan Hus, *Postila sváteční* 139.

definitely made up for the sinfulness of Eve and her daughters (the contemporary corrupt females): “And let it be known, that the presence of corrupt women within the female ranks can cast no shadow on Mary or the other saintly virgins and matrons.”<sup>72</sup> In other words, Hus had granted a plenary absolution to the righteous women.

Applying rigorous moral and even ascetic criteria, Hus viewed in a distinctly negative light those females who were incorrigible, empty-headed, and vain. He considered them low, sensuous and corrupt beings, and censured their unwarranted pride, just as his precursors had done. The great reformer’s moralistic and ascetic tone struck the same misogynist notes which had marked the chorus of various ecclesiastical authorities, like Paul, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Bernard, on whose intellectual and rhetoric arsenal he drew. In the spirit of Honorius of Autun,<sup>73</sup> he characterized the debased females as the devil’s instruments, which “[kept] man from communion with God and from the recognition of truth, pull[ed] him down into the sin of fornication, and eventually destroy[ed] him both physically and mentally.”<sup>74</sup> Like Milíč, he specifically warned the priests against the vile daughters of Eve.<sup>75</sup> In agreement with his precursor, and in the spirit of Paul and Jerome, Hus noted that women were conducive to sin, and a man could sin simply by scrutinizing them with interest. Hence an upstanding male should close his eyes, and guard against the female touch.<sup>76</sup> The peril of seductive women derived from their satanic associations which Hus readily acknowledged when he called them “the devil’s spokespersons or mistresses” or emissaries, as “exemplified by Eve, the wife of St. Job, and Pilate’s spouse.”<sup>77</sup> Another pernicious tool for attracting and ensnaring men was dancing. Hence Hus strongly condemned choreographic exercises, sensing in them – as Milíč had earlier – the presence of an evil spirit. What Milíč merely implied, was found explicitly in Hus when he spoke of the Antichrist: “Thus the dancers transgress divine commandments, give birth to a variety of mortal sins, and follow the path of the Antichrist...”<sup>78</sup>

Despite the harsh critique, however, Hus afforded hope of salvation even to corrupt women, as long as they would reform and repent. For this optimistic expectation, he relied on St. Mark’s Gospel, stressing that Jesus after rising from the dead appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had previously cast the seven satanic spirits. Thereby he proffered a consoling hope to repentant sinners.<sup>79</sup>

What distinguished Hus from both his precursors and allied contemporaries was the exceptionally close and systematic attention to the issue of marriage, a fact which has been noted by a number of historians.<sup>80</sup> As for Waldhauser and Milíč, and other precursors, like Štěpán of Kolín,<sup>81</sup> marriage for him was a highly elevated state, which traced its origins to the establishment by God in the Garden of Eden.<sup>82</sup> In his

<sup>72</sup> Jan Hus, *Výklady* I:320.

<sup>73</sup> D’Alverny, “Comment les théologiens,” 115.

<sup>74</sup> Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském* 61.

<sup>75</sup> See, for instance, *ibid.* 62.

<sup>76</sup> Pavel Spunar, “Rodzina i dzieci v podglądach Jana Husa,” *Kwartalnik historyczny* 40 (1983) 753; *idem*, “Žena, manželství a rodina,” 170.

<sup>77</sup> Jan Hus, *Výklady* I:320.

<sup>78</sup> Novotný 15-18 (no. 7); Hus, “Vdově šlechtičně proti tanci,” in *Sto listů* 11 (no. 2).

<sup>79</sup> Jan Hus, *česká nedělní postila* Opera Omnia II:186.

<sup>80</sup> See Spunar, “Žena, manželství a rodina,” 169.

<sup>81</sup> See Otakar Odložilík, *M. Štěpán z Kolína* (Prague, 1924) 14.

<sup>82</sup> Jan Hus, *Česká nedělní postila* 93. See also Spunar, “Žena, manželství a rodina,” 184, n. 80.

pronouncements on the marital condition, Hus once again relied on established ecclesiastical authorities, namely Paul, Ambrose, and Augustine. Despite the respectability of wedlock, Hus together with Christ, Paul, the church fathers (like Ambrose and Jerome) and other authorities<sup>83</sup> held in higher esteem the state of virginity,<sup>84</sup> because it observed the principle of avoiding female contact,<sup>85</sup> which was a great abomination.<sup>86</sup> Hence matrimony was a highly ambiguous condition, because "...the body [was] until death subject to a woman's service...and this subservience [was] inherently bitter..."<sup>87</sup> The principle meaning or "reason" of this institution was again the Augustinian trioka: offspring, fidelity, and sacrament.<sup>88</sup> In addition, Hus accepted Paul's dictum that the prototype of marital fidelity was the mystical union of Christ as bridegroom with the Holy Church as bride.<sup>89</sup> Matrimony was a sacrament that was not to be violated by committing adultery, and marital infidelity was, as a grave sin, a frequent object of Hus's censure.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Hus's disapproval extended to over-exuberant sexual activity even within the marital union. He cited Augustine's dictum that "...every zealous and ardent lover of his wife [was] an adulterer."<sup>91</sup> In harmony with this principle, the reformer elaborated an entire ethical and legal code of marital cohabitation, including the obstacles to a spousal bond as, for instance, certain degrees of consanguinity.<sup>92</sup> While husband and wife became one flesh through matrimony, it was evident to Hus that the husband's position was superior. According to him, "the wife should be willingly subject to her husband whose status [was] of a higher dignity."<sup>93</sup> The wife was also likely to acquire wicked habits that the husband – in view of his superior natural character – was authorized and required to curb through regimentation.<sup>94</sup>

Because of its sacramental status, Hus considered the spousal bond indissoluble and was in that regard even stricter than the Roman Church: "Oh Lord, how much confusion arises among spouses and how many diverse adulteries occur, for which the ignorant do not and cannot repent, because they assume that when an ecclesiastical judge or a bishop grants them separation, then the male can immediately take another wife and the female another husband, while the first spouse is still alive. They do not know that, although they were absolved from common bed and board, this does not entitle the man to take another wife, as long as the original spouse is alive, and the same applies to the woman."<sup>95</sup> Yet, Hus was also conscious of the fact that the failure of many marriages had its root in

<sup>83</sup> Mt 19:12; 1 Cor 7:7. At least see also Tomáš Hudec, "Manželství v Novém Zákoně," *Hlídky* 55 (1938) 11.

<sup>84</sup> Spunar, "Žena, manželství a rodina," 170.

<sup>85</sup> Jan Hus, *Drobné spisy české* Opera Omnia IV:297-298.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 299.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 298; Kolářová-Císařová, *Žena v hnutí husitském*, 63.

<sup>88</sup> Jan Hus, *Výklady* I:93-96, 248; Spunar, "Rodzina i dzieci v podglądach Jana Husa," 748; *idem*, "Žena, manželství a rodina," 170; Alena Šubrtová, "Populační myšlení v české homiletice feudálního období. část I," *ČČM*, řada historická, 157 (1988) 118 ff.

<sup>89</sup> Jan Hus, *Drobné spisy české* 301 ff. On Paul's teaching see Hudec, "Manželství v Novém Zákoně," 9; and also Spunar, "Žena, manželství a rodina," 171.

<sup>90</sup> See at least *Výklady* 241 and *passim*.

<sup>91</sup> Spunar, "Žena, manželství a rodina," 170.

<sup>92</sup> See at least *Výklady* 250-255; *Drobné spisy české* 305-310.

<sup>93</sup> *Drobné spisy české* 249.

<sup>94</sup> Spunar, "Rodzina i dzieci v podglądach Jana Husa," 753; *idem*, "Žena, manželství a rodina," 170.

<sup>95</sup> *Drobné spisy české* 300.

involuntary weddings which lacked the affection that would provide a secure basis for the union of two persons joined by the sacramental bond.<sup>96</sup> In agreement with the church, therefore, he insisted on the consent of both parties prior to a wedding ceremony: “because otherwise, if he or she [had been] coerced, there [was] no marriage.”<sup>97</sup> In this connection he also disapproved of a significant difference in the ages of spouses, which might have implied either an act of coercion or mercenary motives.<sup>98</sup> The same opinion was held, for instance, by Tomáš Štítý.<sup>99</sup>

In examining attitudes toward the feminine gender, let us now advance to Hus’s successor in the famous pulpit of the Bethlehem Chapel, and in the leadership of Bohemia’s Reformation. Among issues concerning women, Jakoubek of Stříbro focused prior to 1419 on the critique of whoredom. Accordingly, he rejected the opinion that prostitution served a useful function because it prevented a greater evil, namely adultery, as Augustine had maintained: “Take away the harlots and you open the flood gates of adultery.”<sup>100</sup> Likewise, Jakoubek denounced the profits flowing to officials from the houses of ill repute or bordellos, and the harlotry particularly in Prague was a thorn in his eye. A restriction on prostitution was not enough. Nothing short of its absolute prohibition, leading to a full eradication, would satisfy him.<sup>101</sup> Subsequently, this path would be taken by his disciple and admirer, Jan Želivský.<sup>102</sup>

With a striking single-mindedness, Jakoubek could hardly sympathize with any specimens of the female gender, as he subsequently demonstrated in his *Výklad na Zjevení Sv. Jana* [Explication on the Revelation of St. John], in which women were indiscriminately characterized as proud, fornicating, and erring.<sup>103</sup> His distaste for the opposite sex was virtually universal. Any distaff, without exception, represented a danger, perpetually menacing the male species, without sparing the priestly class. Clergymen faced the feminine peril even in the exercise of their pastoral office. For instance, such an apparently benign procedure as a confession could lead to a moral downfall, inasmuch as young lasses “[ran] to confess to rookie priests in search of carnal love.”<sup>104</sup> Neither did Jakoubek embrace the traditional respect for virgins. Instead, he blamed them for delinquent behaviour, echoing the critique of many years ago by Waldhauser, Milíč, Janov, and Hus concerning the ladies of Prague. There was much iniquity and a multitude of sins in Prague, according to Jakoubek. In cloisters and at aristocratic courts there lived virgins who were, it was true, pure in body, but corrupted in mind and so only in form – not in substance – virgins, similar to a person who existed only as a painting. They yearned for sex and worldly glamour, adorned their tresses, used cosmetics, and – unless they repented

<sup>96</sup> Hus was here close to the view of Matěj of Janov.

<sup>97</sup> Jan Hus, *Drobné spisy české* 301. See also Spunar, “Rodzina i dzieci w podglądach Jana Husa,” 754-755; *idem*, “Žena, manželství a rodina,” 171; Šubrtová, “Populační myšlení,” 118.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 118-120.

<sup>99</sup> Gebauer, “O životě a spisích,” 90.

<sup>100</sup> See František Graus, *Chudina městská v době předhusitské* (Prague, 1949) 66.

<sup>101</sup> František M. Bartoš, “Betlemská kázání Jakoubka ze Stříbra z let 1415-16,” *Theologická příloha Křesťanské revue* 20 (1953) 60.

<sup>102</sup> See at least Božena Kopiczková, Božena, *Jan Želivský* (Prague, 1992) 61.

<sup>103</sup> Jakoubek ze Stříbra, *Výklad na Zjevení Sv. Jana*. v. 2, ed. František Šimek, [Sbírka pramenů českého hnutí náboženského ve XIV. a XV. století, sv. 19] (Prague, 1933) 684.

<sup>104</sup> “...sic contingit in confessionibus iuvenes mulieres plus ad iuvenes sacerdotes currunt propter amorem carnalem,” in Rudolf Holinka, “Nová betlemská postila M. Jakoubka ze Stříbra,” *Věstník české akademie věd a umění* 60 (1951) 8, 20.

and confessed – returned to their former sinfulness, namely embraces, dancing, and empty chatter. Such carnal yearnings consumed them inwardly, just like the worms annihilated the kernels of nuts. Jakoubek’s denunciation rose to an ominous, though apparently hyperbolic, crescendo: “I fear that such [pseudo-virgins] might be more abominable than the harlots in the eyes of God.” Worse still were the virgins who were corrupted not only in mind, but also in body. According to Jakoubek, such delinquents, who presented themselves as virtuous virgins, were overabundant in Prague.<sup>105</sup>

The champion of the people, Jan Želivský, surpassed even Jakoubek in his misogynist sallies. He despised not only prostitutes, but also looked askance at all women everywhere. The apprehensiveness about a woman’s touch, which was so striking in Milíč and also in Hus, was among Želivský’s least concerns.<sup>106</sup> In a drastic manner he placed the female species into a triad: devil-worm-wife. The devil coveted the soul, the worm the body, and the wife (in league with her relatives) the temporal goods.<sup>107</sup> In linking women with the devil, Želivský relied not only on patristic authorities, but also on Milíč and Hus. Although harlots were the most treacherous, Satan likewise used, as his net and bait for capturing males, attractive and well groomed ladies from the upper social crust.<sup>108</sup>

If anything softened Želivský’s attitude vis-à-vis the female gender, it was poverty, which he viewed as the most formidable fortress of salvation.<sup>109</sup> In distinction from the individual representatives of the other reforming tendencies in Prague, he considered social standing as a matter of prime concern. Only Jakoubek – in the earlier pre-revolutionary period – could be compared with him in that respect. His critique of affluent and indolent ladies was derivative from his dim view of the plutocracy as a whole. He grouped the gentlewomen with those practitioners of sloth who had forfeited their right to sustenance because they did not earn their living through labour: “Every Christian ought to earn his livelihood through work...Those who do not work, let them not eat. The idle life attracts nowadays all the courtiers, lackeys, and also virgins... Slothful females because of their very idleness fall into

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* 24-25: “Alie autem sunt virgines corpore incorupte, mente tamen corrupte...Hee sunt multe in claustris et circa curias, qui sunt equivoce virgines sicut et homo pictus. Ille enim cupiunt amari et mundo placere, crines suas exornantes, se colore fucantes et si confitentur, in actus pristinos malos revertuntur, ad amplexus, coreas et fabulas, que habent se sicut nux a verme perforata, in cuius medio non est granum; et timeo, ne tales sint abhominabiliores meretricibus coram deo. Alie autem sunt virgines solo nomine, cum tamen sunt mente et corpore corrupte, quarum multitudo nimia est Prage, qui apparent coram hominibus bone et cupiunt virgines appellari.”

<sup>106</sup> Only, as if parenthetically, he reminds us of Lk 7:39.

<sup>107</sup> Ms. NK Prague V. G. 3 f. 128<sup>a</sup>: “...petunt tria, scilicet dyabolus, vermes et uxor cum cognatis: dyabolus animam, vermes corpus, uxor et cognati bona temporalia.”

<sup>108</sup> See Jan Želivský, *Dochovaná kázání z roku 1419. v. I: Od neděle velikonoční do páte neděle po sv. Trojici. / Ioannis Siloensis Collectarum quae ad nos pervenerunt. Tomus I. Collectae de tempore a festo Resurrectionis usque ad dominicam quintam post Trinitatem anni 1419.* Ed. Amedeo Molnár (Prague, 1953) 146, 169, 197. See also Ms. NK Prague V. G. 3, f. 7<sup>a-b</sup>: “Quia sunt recia triplicia: primum Petri, secundum dyaboli, tertium hominis avari...Rethe dyaboli est intentus viciorum, quo capiuntur peccatores, sicut mulier pulcra, corea, ludus...sic mulier meretrix in suo ornatu querit decipere iuvenem....”

<sup>109</sup> Želivský, *Dochovaná kázání* 198: “Quia paupertas est tamquam turris firmissima salutis.”

many an evil. The Apostle says: A widow enjoying luxury, although still living, had already died. The toiling masses do not succumb so easily to sin...”<sup>110</sup>

Although Želivský did not prepare a systematic disquisition on marriage, his opinion about the superior status of the husband, as the family’s head, was clearly on record: “All must listen to the word of God so that the greater may teach the lesser, and so that every paterfamilias could control his family.”<sup>111</sup>

Only the Virgin Mary, according to the fiery preacher, merited the status of election and sanctity. She was entitled to the primacy among all women also because she had followed Christ in the fullness of the poverty and humility of his life.<sup>112</sup> Želivský did not concede to other women the right to sanctity, based on a divine election. His demonstrated his attitude in that regard by discrediting the hoary tradition of female primacy in witnessing Christ’s resurrection. In doing so, he took considerable liberties with the Gospel account. According to his version, while Christ appeared to the male disciples under his own visage, his epiphany to Mary Magdalene was in the form of a gardener, because this disguise was “suitable for such novices as Mary Magdalene, who needed to uproot evil and to plant good seeds....”<sup>113</sup> In this connection, Želivský did not cite exactly the words of St. John’s Gospel, where it stands: “When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman why are you weeping ? Whom are you looking for?’ Supposing he was a gardener, she said to him....”<sup>114</sup> Želivský transformed what was an erroneous assumption into a statement of fact so that he might gain an opening to connect Mary Magdalene with a reference to evil. Ultimately, he crowned his anti-feminine campaign with an assertion of women’s neglect of Jesus.<sup>115</sup> In distinction from Waldhauser, Janov, Štítný, and Hus, the radical preacher of Prague did not see the women’s early witness of Christ’s resurrection as a matter of privilege and election but, on the contrary, accused them on that occasion of negligence whereby they had set a bad example for other Christians.

Contrary to church fathers and other writers of the Bohemian Reformation, the militant populist of Prague held that only Our Lady enjoyed her rights and primacy by virtue of being a virgin. In agreement with Jakoubek, Želivský did not value virginity very highly. For reasons of religious politics he was particularly critical of the nuns

<sup>110</sup> Jan Želivský, *Výzva: Výbor z kázání*, ed. Amedeo Molnár (Prague, 1954) 77-78; *idem, Dochovaná kázání* 37: “Quia quilibet cristianus debet victum querere ex labore....Quia qui non laborant, non manducant. Sic omnes volunt esse curienses, ut ociarentur clientes et virgines et sacerdotes dotati, altarieste canonici. Ex quo mulieres ociantes ad multa mala incidunt...Quia laborantes non ita cito cadent in peccata....”

<sup>111</sup> Ms. NK Prague V. G. 3, f. 2<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* f. 92<sup>a</sup>: “Tales sunt beati, qui hoc vident, sicut...Maria Virgo eum videbat et tangebatur et gaudebat....;” f. 93<sup>b</sup>: “ Quia non solum sunt oculi beati, qui viderunt Cristum, ymmo si viderimus beatam Virginem vel sanctum Petrum, qui viderunt Cristum et amaverunt eum sequendo eum in vita sua pauperrima, humillima, abiectissima...;” f. 145<sup>a</sup>: “Maria virgo inter omnes mulieres principatum tenet...”

<sup>113</sup> Želivský, *Dochovaná kázání* 27: “Sed undecim apparuit in forma propria, Magdalene in forma ortulani. Forma ortulani ad incipientes pertinet, qui debent erradicare mala et plantare bona, sicut Magdalena.” For Czech translation see Želivský, *Výzva* 38.

<sup>114</sup> Jn 20:14-15.

<sup>115</sup> Želivský, *Dochovaná kázání* 16: “Quia videntes eum pridie mortuum, putabant in monumento, quem propter tradicionem seniorum neglexerunt...Sic nunc multi propter tradiciones et mandata hominum negligunt Cristum....”

who, according to him – together with monks, canons, and parish priests – exuded the spirit of the Council of Constance and grumbled against the Gospel, as well as challenging Christ by their hostile attitude toward the communion for infants.<sup>116</sup>

## Conclusion

Our exploration of attitudes toward women has shown that Milíč, Jakoubek, and Želivský were captivated by the antifeminist tendency entirely, and Waldhauser and Tomáš Štítný to a lesser degree. In contrast, Janov and Hus embraced another tendency, namely that of those church doctors, more often philosophers than theologians, who since the twelfth century had toned down the antifeminist sallies, while not entirely escaping an ambivalent attitude toward women. Janov and Hus modified this line of thought even further in women's favour. The boundaries between the spheres of the two genders were drawn less sharply. According to Janov, moral failings derived from general human nature, not from the characteristics of a particular gender. Similarly, Hus did not distinguish Christians according to their sex, but according to their moral conduct. This modification made possible a clearer differentiation among the members of the female gender. Based on strict moral criteria, the two reformers divided women into false, that is corrupt, and true, that is proper, Christians. There was no double refraction in the judgment passed by them on the members of either of the two categories. In an unambiguous way, their view of the former was harshly condemnatory, of the latter kind and understanding. Relying more heavily on the church doctors, Hus could not free himself entirely from a slightly deprecatory tinge in his assessment of even the proper Christian ladies. Relying mainly on biblical inspiration and formulas, Janov attained to a still higher level of evenhandedness. His positive evaluation of the true Christian women was unique in its unconditional character, and his stand could not find any equally radical counterpart either among the standard ecclesiastical authorities, or in the intellectual milieu of the Bohemian Reformation.

Most importantly, not only Janov's, but also Hus's concept of a true Christian female, created the image of a new religiously reborn woman, which both of the reforming theologians projected publicly through their daily preaching. Their influence helped to arouse among the female supporters of the Reformation who surrounded them, an active religious, and subsequently political involvement, which represented a *phenomenon sui generis* within the Bohemian reform movement. This feminine engagement has been frequently noted in historical literature.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, it was these religiously and politically engaged women who would become targets of the defamatory propaganda from the Bohemian Reformation's opponents. Also these negative reactions have attracted the attention of numerous historians.<sup>118</sup>

Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David

<sup>116</sup> Želivský, *Dochovaná kázání* 226: "Quid tunc faciet Dominus concilio Constanciensi, qui murmurant contra ewangelium, canonici, monachi, plebani, moniales...?" See also Ms. NK Prague V G 3, f. 149<sup>b</sup>: "...ut nunc plebani cum monachis, monialibus convenerunt contra Cristum, qui quondam in doctrina non erant concordēs, ut de comunione laicali, sed iam sunt concordēs contra comunionem parvulorum..."

□ For a survey of basic literature see Kopiczková, "Žena a rodina v husitství," 40-41.

<sup>118</sup> For a recent discussion of these attacks see Jana Nechutová, "Ženy v Husově okolí: k protiženským satírám husitské doby," HENC 68-73.