
The Anonymous Treatise *De suffragiis defunctorum* in the Catholic and Utraquist Context

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The Bohemian Reformation has been an object of historical and related theological research -- at least in the conventional way of speaking -- from times immemorial. This longevity leads, on the one hand, to a constant interest, which does not fluctuate and needs no justification and, on the other hand, also to a significant confinement, acquiring an aura of monotony, because the past findings, the subject-matter and the themes of scholarship, which are driven by this traditionalism, verge on inertia and lack adequate stimuli of rethinking. In a way this process brings about an identification with the problem and finally, in some instances, the formulation of its own identity. The interest in Bohemian Reformation thus becomes subject to a national delimitation, or even exclusiveness. Hence it is necessary to ask whether this approach is still acceptable at present when we obviously stand before the requirement of changed paradigms (not only in natural sciences),¹ and before the need of new historical formulations,² as we turn our attention to the areas of international, supra-national, European and global perspectives.

The Rebirth of Reformation Research

Recently, however, there have been signs of better things to come at least in two directions. First, Czech historiography, epitomized by František Šmahel's work,³ arrived at a dense synthetic summing-up of the previous tradition of research, thus creating the point of departure for a new take-off. Although historical scholarship has not yet advanced along this path, wider intellectual perspectives have been broached particularly in the non-specialized high-brow journals, and it is only a question of time before historiography will be forced to grapple with them. Second, we must note the work of the so-called Hus Commission, which at last has attempted to understand and to interpret the stale themes in a novel way -- with an

¹ See James J. O'Donnell, *Avatars of the Word. From Papyrus to Cyberspace*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1998; and also, for instance, Pascal Michelucci and Peter Martinson, "Paradigm Lost? Electronic Publishing and the Renewal of Research," CHWP: A.12, <<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/epc/chwp/micheluc/> (16.04.1998)>; Stanley Chodorow, "The Medieval Future of Intellectual Culture: Scholars and Librarians in the Age of Electron," *ARL: A Bimonthly Newsletter of Research Library Issues and Actions*, 189 (December 1996) <<http://www.arl.org/newsltr/189/medieval.html> (21.12.1998)>.

² See, for instance, Dušan Třeštík, *Mysliti dějiny* (Prague, 1999); Josep Fontana, *Evropa před zrcadlem* (Prague, 2001), in which, however, the interpretation of the First Reformation (especially in the Waldensians' case) gives rise to major doubts.

³ See *Husitská revoluce*. In this connection it is also appropriate to mention Josef Macek's *opera posthuma*, see Josef Macek, *Jagellonský věk v českých zemích*, 4 vv. (Prague, 1992-1999), *idem*, *Víra a zbožnost jagellonského věku* (Prague, 2001).

open mind.⁴ This intellectual liberation has shown that various barriers set up by tradition could be transcended. Their origin was not in the edicts of God or the laws of nature, but in the minds of women and men.

And thus we are witnessing a certain, albeit still barely perceptible, change which derives from the very heart of the traditionally oriented research. A detailed study of the entire course of Hus's trial both from the viewpoint of the canon law, and from the viewpoint of the multifaceted domestic and Curial context, which Jiří Kejř has conducted, revealed at first sight a peculiar situation. It showed that Hus and the entire entourage of his disciples and supporters were not sufficiently acquainted with the state of affairs outside Bohemia, or outside the Czech lands; their consciousness or awareness was not significantly touched by that external world.⁵ If Hus was not aware of a wider context of his times, it did not, of course, mean that such a context was not there. This points out clearly that all the research hitherto has been subject to the conceptual, or perhaps even to an outright ideological, straight jacket of the image of the Bohemian Reformation, a conceptualization, which derived from the very initiators of this research.⁶ Once the researchers had become aware of this distorting constraint, it would seem logical for them to turn their backs on this flawed tradition.

It is, however, apparent that the new course is not yet manifest overtly and explicitly, but primarily by certain shifts in rather detailed matters, the significance of which cannot be, as yet, forcefully and unambiguously expressed. The new approach is evident in the continuing and augmented research concerning Hus and the texts related to a major turning point in his life, which has been pursued by Božena Kopiczková a Anežka Vidmanová.⁷ The authors show convincingly that these early letters in Hus's defense are not authentic sources, but merely rhetorical exercises, and above all that they were never publicly disseminated, but served instead as creatures and instruments of academic instruction. Hus's biography thereby loses some of its traditional grandeur, which was accepted by a broad public consensus and which previously played the role of conventional wisdom. It becomes instead integrated into the more modest dimensions of a realistic perception, and of the history of mentality. Thus "The Bohemian religious movement,"⁸ of course, loses some of its hitherto sharply drawn contours, and becomes more deeply embedded in the background or the hinterland of its times. It would seem that gradually more general consequences must be drawn from such particular details.

⁴ A preliminary inventory of these intellectual efforts was taken at a conference in Rome in December 1999, see *Jan Hus ve Vatikánu*, ed. Jaroslav Pánek (Prague, 2000).

⁵ See Jiří Kejř, *Husovo odvolání od soudu papežova k soudu Kristovu* (Ústí nad Labem, 1999); *idem*, *Husův proces* (Prague, 2000).

⁶ This skewing is epitomized, on the one hand, in the emphasis on the figure (rather than the person) of Matěj of Janov, for instance, in Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova. Jeho život, spisy a učení* (Brno, 2000²); and Milan Machovec, *Husovo učení a význam v tradici českého národa* (Prague, 1953); on the other hand, in the emphasis on the Waldensians, as in Robert Kalivoda, *Husitské myšlení*, (Prague, 1997); and Amedeo Molnár, *Valdenští. Evropský rozměr jejich vzdoru* (Prague, 1991²).

⁷ See Božena Kopiczková and Anežka Vidmanová, *Listy na Husovu obranu z let 1410-1412*, (Prague, 1999).

⁸ See Václav Novotný, *Náboženské hnutí české ve 14. a 15. století (Kurs šestipřednáškový)*, (Prague, 1915); Novotný's "classical" formulation gradually turned into a slogan, which clearly defined, but became intellectual sterile. For a broader view see Josef Tříška, "Anonymní česká literatura předhusitské reformace," *ActaUC, HUCP*, 12 (1972) 155-207.

Nevertheless it is evident that the drawing of such consequences has not yet come into favour, and that Czech scholarship continues to resist the inevitable. Recently Peter C. A. Morée⁹ attempted to view Jan Milíč of Kroměříž in a European context and against the background of the dominant scholastic discourse of the time. His interpretation, however, was questioned by Martin Wernisch¹⁰ exactly in the name of the traditional sharp contours of the “Bohemian religious movement.” The critic even spoke of “a trespass into Milíč’s field,” although in reality it was more an intrusion into the eminent domain in which Czech historiography and historical theology have found their nirvana for several generations, and which they are unwilling to abandon without resistance. Yet, it is certain that further attempts at a reformulation and reinterpretation of the established – even perhaps fossilized – paradigms will not cease. At the same time, it is of course probable that the revisionists may find a warmer response and initial success in areas which are less charged with emotion and freer from an accumulation of unacknowledged a priori assumptions.

Triple Character of the *Tractatus*

After the rather prolix and perhaps over-philosophical introduction it is appropriate and timely to turn to the brass tacks of my study. The latter seeks to continue my previous attempts at outlining the ecclesiological background of the Bohemian Reformation,¹¹ as well as at grasping more closely the individual eschatology in central Europe of the late Middle Ages.¹² It means that I will attempt something at first sight paradoxical, namely – if it can be expressed that way – a sort of integration of the Reformational background of Catholicism and of the Catholic background of the Reformation, or more exactly Utraquism. I am assuming that here lies the way toward abolishing the monopolistic preserves and to softening the sharp contours, which otherwise turn into impenetrable boundaries. I will try to look at a question, which has been controversial in the past and at present, namely that of the relationship between this and the other world. I will do so not through a doctrinal or ideological prism, that is not from the standpoint of dogmatically formulated answers, but – to the contrary – through the prism of an ordinary awareness, a *Weltanschauung*, and a view of life, that is, grasp this question from the angle of its foundations and motives – from the angle of its living context which is not explicitly predefined. I expect thereby to place into view a segment of an ecumenical understanding of intellectual and religious, as well as cultural and ecclesiastical, history.

The interest of this study focuses on *Tractatus de suffragiis defunctorum*, an anonymous text of the first half of the fifteenth century, preserved among the

⁹ Peter C.A. Morée, *Preaching in the Fourteenth Century Bohemia. The life and ideas of Milicius de Chremsir (+1374) and his significance in the historiography of Bohemia* (Heršpice, 1999); see also review by Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Miscellanea oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků*, 15 (1998) 398-399.

¹⁰ See Martin Wernisch, “Vpád na Milíčovo pole,” *Theologická revue*, Husitská teologická fakulta, 71/1-2 (2000) 154-156.

¹¹ See Zdeněk Uhlíř, “Myšlení o církvi na úsvitu české reformace,” *M. Jan Hus a M. Štěpán z Pálče*, Sborník z kolokvia uspořádaného referátek kultury Okresního úřadu Kladno 25. května 2000 v klášteře bosých karmelitánů ve Slaném (Kladno, 2000) 41-46.

¹² See Zdeněk Uhlíř, “Homiletický traktát Johanna Geuße *Sermo de iudicio particulari animae* v dobovém kontextu,” In: *Facta probant homines*. Sborník příspěvků k životnímu jubileu prof. Dr. Zdeňky Hledíkové, eds. Ivan Hlaváček and others (Prague, 1998) 491-508.

manuscripts of the Wrocław University Library.¹³ In order to choose a suitable approach to the document, it is necessary to note two, or possibly three, preliminaries. Only then it becomes possible to exploit its significance properly.

First, little is known specifically about the text's origin. It can be placed rather vaguely into the Silesian cultural milieu of the first half-century of Utraquism. Its contents, therefore, might not seem particularly relevant to Bohemia's conditions, inasmuch as the document presumably reflected a more or less different historical development, and a different religious and intellectual climate. Yet, such a view is not entirely correct, overly simplifying, as it does, the problem area under investigation. Although diplomatics and codicology – despite their somewhat different self-definitions – have hitherto pursued, by and large, the paths of auxiliary sciences, and have tended to avoid the themes of historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts, nevertheless, with their persistent and consistent drives to inventory and classify (albeit formalistically) their material, these disciplines did create, as a by-product, preconditions for a tentative assessment of more substantive propositions.¹⁴ From their input follows clearly that central Europe during the late Middle Ages formed one cultural whole, that it was a relatively autonomous and integral cultural sphere within the framework of Europe, or rather within the Western Christendom. The differences among the lesser geographic units must then be understood as secondary, such as do not significantly impact the understanding of the basics in the encounters between historical continuities and discontinuities. Hence a certain ineffability of the provenance and genesis of our treatise need not be viewed as a defect, but on the contrary, a condition enabling detachment from secondary particularities, and concentration of attention on the broad underlying mentality, from which the various controversial themes grew, and in which the preconditions of the break of discontinuity were formed.

Second, this *Tractatus de suffragiis defunctorum* is in no way an exclusive work, which would in some way be distinct or stand apart from the extant source materials. It is, in fact, just a pea in the pod, one of a whole series of similar writings, which originated in various localities and have been preserved in various localities to

¹³ See Biblioteka Uniwersytecka Wrocław: I.F.338, fol. 234ra-249va; see ed.: <<http://www.etf.cuni.cz/kat-cd/aurora1.htm> (25.01.2001)>.

¹⁴ These issues have become subject only recently to a consistent and thorough discussion. For the earlier viewpoint see Ivan Hlaváček, "Dvě kritické úvahy nad současnou zahraniční i domácí paleograficko-kodikologickou produkcí," *Studie o rukopisech*, 33 (1999-2000) 253-268; František Hoffmann, "Zásady popisu rukopisů z roku 1983 a zkušenosti z jejich využívání: Soupis rukopisů knihovny Kláštera premonstrátů v Teplé," In: *Problematika historických a vzácných knižních fondů Čech, Moravy a Slezska 1998. Středověké rukopisy a jejich prezentace*. Sborník ze 7. odborné konference, Olomouc 14.-15. října 1998, ed. Jitka Sládková (Brno, 1999) 118-126. For more novel possibilities and views, see Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Katalog tepelských rukopisů a otázky kodikologie," *Ikaros* [online]. 2000, č. 4 [cit. 2000-03-31] <<http://ikaros.ff.cuni.cz/ikaros/2000/c04/katalog.htm> (30.11.2000)>; *idem*, "Rukopisná práce na prahu třetího tisíciletí," (forthcoming); *idem*, "K významu a souvislostem přípravy dat pro digitalizaci rukopisů," *Národní knihovna*, 10 (1999) 117-129; *idem*, "Historické kulturní regiony rukopisného období," In: *Problematika historických a vzácných knižních fondů Čech, Moravy a Slezska 2000. Světová putování a česká knižní kultura*. Sborník z 9. odborné konference, Olomouc, 11.-12. října 2000 (Brno, 2000) 5-10; *idem*, *Martyrologia v kontextu hagiografických pramenů českého středověku* (forthcoming); *idem*, "Dušičková kázání v rukopisech pozdního středověku. I. Rozpad heortologického systému," *Miscellanea oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků*, 15 (1998) 14-57.

this day.¹⁵ We can speak of the normality – rather than the mediocrity – of the presentation of a (then) current theme. We can even grasp this text straight as a *succus* [essence] of commonality, because it encompasses an entire ensemble of problems, without singling out a particular, narrower aspect. For us, who for centuries have tried to evoke the intellectual world of late Middle Ages, the treatise provides a basis, from which we can at least begin to savor the question that was then posed. We eschew a mere systematization of its individual, prefabricated solutions, or mere indulgence in comparisons and architectonics utilizing concrete propositions of agreement or denial. We can simply attempt to understand what was the gist or living concern of the past disputations in their *Sitz in Leben*. We will not just follow the *ex post facto* derivative formulations or cultural trends, fabricated by diverse social or political, doctrinal or ideological parties.

Third, last but not least, it is not without significance that we are dealing with an independent treatise, which is not a part of a larger whole, like a *Summa* or something similar. We are not facing an attempt to interpret the total world, much less the universal absolute, but only – so to say – an excised neuralgic point of life. Although the anonymous author attempts to treat his topic systematically by way of the dominant scholastic discourse, he does not pedantically aim at completeness, but attempts to interpret and explain rationally what were at the time weighty, and in a sense central, issues. It is a matter of comparisons involving God, a human being as an individual, and a human being as a member of society, or in other words, it is an effort to resolve the tension between faith, the thinking about faith, and a religious life. It is not a scenario of the world and its component parts, or of diverse human manipulations with such components, but a vision of the contradiction which the human being experiences in her/his awareness of her/his relationship to this world and to that other, which is both here, and not here.

An insight into the anonymous *Tractatus de suffragiis defunctorum* is supplied by the simple listing of its eight component chapters:

- (1) *Istud capitulum tractat de purgatorio et penis eius et de suffragiis animarum ibidem existencium.*
- (2) *Capitulum quomodo oblacio hostie sacre pro mortuis fidelibus oblata maxime suffragatur animabus in purgatorio existentibus.*
- (3) *Quomodo oblacio rerum temporalium suffragatur animabus in purgatorio existentibus.*
- (4) *Capitulum quomodo oracio devota et lacrimosa suffragatur animabus in purgatorio existentibus.*
- (5) *Quomodo elemosine facte pro animabus fidelium defunctorum suffragantur eis in purgatorio existentibus.*
- (6) *Quomodo abstinencia suffragatur animabus in purgatorio existentibus.*

¹⁵ Unfortunately, we lack comprehensive and systematic bibliographies or registers of this material. Hence it is necessary to start with the manuscript lists and catalogs of particular libraries. For an orientation it is possible to rely on the survey of a related type of materials, see Rainer Rudolf, *Ars moriendi. Von der Kunst des heilsamen Lebens und Sterbens* (Cologne and Graz, 1957).

(7) Capitulum quomodo corpora fidelium defunctorum religiose more ecclesie tradi debent sepulture precedentibus crucibus, sacerdotibus et clero cantantibus et psallentibus tactisque campanis, si fieri potest.

(8) Capitulum ostendit, ne infirmus ab adulatoribus deceptus, ad mortem se preparare negligat.

The contents, thus structured, can be simplified into three basic questions or issues, which underpin the whole inquiry, and which frame the problem areas presently to be discussed. These questions/issues are (1) the otherworldly topography, (2) the dominant standing of individual eschatology, and (3) the universal collective solidarity. At the same time, although the treatise is not primarily a polemical one, the author argues against those who reject purgatory, trivialize the significance of the ambiance of human soul during the hiatus between the individual and the universal judgment, and deny the utility of liturgies and prayers for the dead. Although he does not say so explicitly, it can be assumed, that his critique is addressed to the radicals of the First Reformation, and possibly also the Utraquists. At the same time, it can be said that in his opposing propositions he expresses the common views of his time, which using present-day terminology can be called "Catholic" or "Romanist." Let us then attempt to interpret the total context of this text, regardless of its "Catholic" or Utraquist polarization, but with regard to the three questions posed above, which form the frames for the discussion of specific particulars and for the explanation of such particulars.

Otherworldly Topography

Let us set out with the anonymous author into the precincts of purgatory. Having read Jacques Le Goff's famous book about "the birth of purgatory," we could be led to assume that there were, properly speaking, nothing to ponder or explicate, inasmuch as we have to do with an entity, the image of which had been drawn and generally accepted for two centuries or more.¹⁶ The issue, however, is not that simple. It is misleading to assume that purgatory was viewed a definite place in the other world, a concrete coordinate in the otherworldly geography which enabled the rising bourgeoisie to defer the redemption of sinfulness, entailed in its comfortable dolce vita, until the disembodied postmortem existence.¹⁷ A critical assessment uncovers at least two flaws in this vision. The image of purgatory as a place did not emerge as suddenly, as Le Goff has suggested. Its roots are deeper and older, its development more leisurely; a long road had led to its formulation.¹⁸ The stress on social or socio-economic aspects, therefore, appears exaggerated; the setting of Le Goff's purgatory seems unconvincing, even a bit whacky, when examined in the light of facts and actual history. Moreover, and this is the second flaw, Le Goff unduly simplified his task by the geographic limit on his sources. As

¹⁶ Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Aldershot, England, 1990).

¹⁷ Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*, tr. Patricia Ranum (New York, 1988).

¹⁸ Jacques Guy Bougerol, "Autour de 'La Naissance'," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 58 (1983) 6-59; Adrian H. Bredero, "Le Moyen Âge et le Purgatoire," *Revue de l'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 78 (1983), 429-452; George R. Edwards, "'Birth' or Evolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36 (1985), 634-646; see also František Šmahel, "Das purgatorium sompniatum in der hussitischen Topographie, In: *Eschatologie und Hussitismus*, eds. Alexander Patschovsky and František Šmahel (Prague, 1996), 115-138.

a result, it was a child's play for Polish scholars like Stanisław Bylina¹⁹ and Jan Drabina,²⁰ as well as the Dane Knud Ottosen,²¹ not only to weaken, but to fully refute the Frenchman's basic thesis about an abrupt emergence of purgatory's image and its almost immediate and universal acceptance. They show that Le Goff's scenario applied only in the West, as seen through the French eyes, while in other parts of Europe this view of purgatory's parameters prevailed and became the conventional wisdom only between 1350 and 1450. The treatise under examination stemmed from a geographic area, which – contrary to the standard reference literature – had only recently started making sense of purgatory's image in question.

Still a third objection to Le Goff may be added, one concerning purgatory's character as a "place," which the French historian considers its salient feature. It appears that he was misled, and not just once, but twice. First, he was misled by his fascination with "the birth," which severely restricted the selection of his sources, already rather limited by a prevalent concentration on proto-scholastics or early scholastics. As a result, the period of classical scholasticism, to say nothing about a later period, were entirely excluded from his scholarly radar screen, on the specious grounds of offering nothing new. To tell the truth, however, Le Goff's rejected phases of theological speculation offer a more sophisticated image than that of a simple locus or site. Second, Le Goff was misled by viewing medieval scholasticism through the prism of a later "second" scholasticism and the modern neo-scholasticism,²² so that he could not come up with another concept except physical space; he missed entirely the inherently symbolic interpretation, which had been rehabilitated after the flame-out and demise of neo-scholasticism, and propounded in Poland (and even in his native France!).²³ All this means that we could not adopt Le Goff's starting point for the interpretation of the treatise at hand, unless we wished to intertwine experimentally the *Annales* school with the traditional factographic positivism.

Indeed we see that even the *Tractatus de suffragiis defunctorum*, although it did operate with the category of "place," still resisted an unalloyed "topographic" view. There were obviously several references to Thomas Aquinas, who had treated the problem of purgatory's "location," or of purgatory as a "place," in the first question of the twenty-first distinction of his interpretation of Lombard's fourth

¹⁹ Stanisław Bylina, *Człowiek i zaświaty. Wizja kar pośmiertnych w Polsce średniowiecznej* (Warsaw, 1992). For a broader chronological view from the perspectives of literary and cultural history see Jacek Sokolski, *Staropolskie zaświaty. Obraz piekła, czyśćca i nieba w renesansowej i barokowej literaturze polskiej wobec tradycji średniowiecznej* (Wrocław, 1994). For even a wider context see *idem*, *Pielgrzymi do piekła i raju. Świat średniowiecznych łacińskich wizji eschatologicznych* (Wrocław, 1995).

²⁰ Jan Drabina, "Wyobrażenia o zaświatach na Śląsku w XV wieku," In: *Eschatologia w religiach, kulturach i systemach myślowych*, ed. Jan Drabina (Cracow, 1995), 123-129.

²¹ Knud Ottosen, unpublished paper, delivered at the Twenty-Fifth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, May 1990.

²² It was not a matter of the substantive history of theological doctrine, with respect to which Le Goff actually opposed the traditional neo-scholastic historical theology, but rather of his rigid, discursively rationalistic method, which, in fact, mimicked the methodology of the traditional historical theology. This dichotomy may appear paradoxical, but see, for instance, F. Spirago, *Utrpení a radost očistce* (Prague, 1936).

²³ As an illustrative example of the critical approach to the traditional neo-scholastic historical theology, see Marian Rusecki, *Cud w chrześcijaństwie* (Lublin, 1996²).

book.²⁴ Here we find the typical Thomistic *uno modo – alio modo*. Furthermore, the author of the treatise adduced several *exempla* references to the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great,²⁵ who naturally had not operated with any “place,” in the sense

²⁴ Viz Thomas Aquinas, *Super quarto libro Sententiarum* (ISTC it00172000), d. 21, qu. 1: "Ad secundam questionem dicendum, quod de loco purgatorii non invenitur aliquid expresse determinatum in scriptura, nec rationes posunt ad hoc efficaces induci, tamen probabiliter et secundum quod consonat magis sanctorum dictis et revelationi facte multis, locus purgatorii est duplex. Unus secundum legem communem, et sic locus purgatorii est locus inferior coniunctus, ita quod idem ignis sit, qui damnatos cruciat in inferno et qui iustos in purgatorio purgat, quamvis damnati, secundum quod sunt inferiores merito, et loco inferiores ordinandi sint. Alius est locus purgatorii secundum dispensationem, et sic quandoque in diversis locis aliqui puniti leguntur, vel ad vivorum instructionem, vel ad mortuorum subventionem, ut viventibus eorum pena innotescens per suffragia ecclesie mitigaretur. Quidam tamen dicunt, quod secundum legem communem locus purgatorii est, ubi homo peccat; quod non videtur probabile, quia simul potest homo puniri pro peccatis, que in diversis locis commisit. Quidam vero dicunt, quod puniuntur supra nos secundum legem communem, quia sunt medii inter nos et deum quantum ad statum; sed hoc nihil est, quia non puniuntur pro eo, quod supra nos sunt, sed pro eo, quod est infimum in eis, scilicet peccatum."; Thomas Aquinas, *Super quarto libro Sententiarum* (ISTC it00172000), d. 21, qu. 1: "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ignis purgatorius est eternus quantum ad substantiam, sed temporalis quantum ad effectum purgationis. Ad secundum dicendum, quod pena inferni est ad affligendum, et ideo nominatur omnibus illis, que hic nos affligere consueverunt, sed pena purgatorii est principaliter ad purgandum reliquias peccati, et ideo sole pena ignis purgatorio attribuitur, quia ignis habet purgare et consumere. Ad tertium dicendum, quod ratio illa procedit secundum dispensationem et non secundum legem communem."

²⁵ Gregory the Great, *Dialogi de vita et miraculis patrum Italicorum et de aeternitate animarum*, IV, 39 (PL, 77, 393D-396C): "An post mortem purgatorius ignis sit. Gregorius. In Evangelio dicit Dominus: 'Ambulate dum lucem habetis' (Jn 12:35). Per Prophetam quoque ait: 'Tempore accepto exaudivi te, et in die salutis adjuvi te' (Is 49:8). Quod Paulus apostolus exponens, dicit: 'Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis' (2 Cor 6:2), Salomon quoque ait: 'Quodcumque potest manus tua facere, instanter operare, quia nec opus, nec ratio, nec scientia, nec sapientia erit apud inferos, quo tu properas' (Eccles. 9:10). David quoque ait: 'Quoniam in saeculum misericordia ejus' (Ps 117). Ex quibus nimirum sententiis constat quia qualis hinc quisque egreditur, talis in iudicio presentatur. Sed tamen de quibusdam levibus culpis esse ante iudicium purgatorius ignis credendus est, pro eo quod Veritas dicit, quia si quis in sancto Spiritu blasphemiam dixerit, neque in hoc saeculo remittetur ei, neque in futuro (Mt 12:31). In qua sententia datur intelligi quasdam culpas in hoc saeculo, quasdam vero in futuro posse laxari. Quod enim uno negatur, consequens intellectus patet, quia de quibusdam conceditur. Sed tamen, ut praedixi, hoc de parvis minimisque peccatis fieri posse credendum est, sicut est assiduus otiosus sermo, immoderatus risus, vel peccatum curae rei familiaris, quae vix sine culpa vel ab ipsa agitur, qui culpam qualiter declinare debeant sciunt; aut in non gravibus rebus error ignorantiae, quae cuncta etiam post mortem gravant, si adhuc in hac vita positus minime fuerint relaxata. Nam cum Paulus dicat Christum esse fundamentum, atque subjungat: 'Si quis supraedificaverit super hoc fundamentum, aurum, argentum, lapides pretiosos, ligna, fenum, stipulam; uniuscujusque opus quale sit, ignis probabit; si cuius opus manserit quod supraedificavit, mercedem accipiet; si cuius opus arserit, detrimentum patietur; ipse autem salvus erit, sic tamen quasi per ignem' (I Cor. 3:12 ff.). Quamvis hoc de igne tribulationis in hac nobis vita adhibitio possit intelligi, tamen si quis hoc de igne futurae purgationis accipiat, pensandum sollicitate est quia illum per ignem dixit posse salvari, non qui super hoc fundamentum, ferrum, aes, vel plumbum aedificat, id est peccata majora, et idcirco duriora, atque tunc jam insolubilia; sed ligna, fenum, stipulam, id est peccata minima atque levissima, quae ignis facile consumat. Hoc tamen sciendum est, quia illic saltem de minimis nihil quisque purgationis obtinebit, nisi bonis hoc actibus in hac adhuc vita positus, ut illic obtineat, promereatur."; Gregory I, *Dialogi de vita et miraculis patrum Italicorum et de aeternitate animarum*, IV, 40. *De anima Paschasii diaconi* (PL 77, 396D-397C): "Nam cum adhuc essem juvenculus, atque in laico habitu constitutus, narrari a maioribus atque scientibus audivi, quod Paschasius hujus apostolicae sedis diaconus, cuius apud nos rectissimi et luculenti de sancto Spiritu libri exstant, mirae sanctitatis vir fuerit, eleemosynarum maxime operibus vacans, cultor pauperum, et contemptor sui. Sed hic in ea contentione quae inardescente zelo fidelium inter Symmachum atque Laurentium facta est ad pontificatus ordinem Laurentium elegit; et omnium post unanimitate

of the so-called otherworldly topography. The reader is quite obviously offered a view that, so to say, purgatory may be there and also here. This idea is not an idiosyncrasy of our anonymous author, but a rather typical tenet at least in late medieval central Europe. The evidence here is, for instance, Jakub Kartuzián's treatise, *De apparitionibus et receptaculis animarum*, which has survived not only in a multiplicity of manuscripts, but also in twelve printings of the incunabula period.²⁶

superatus, in sua tamen sententia usque ad diem sui exitus perstitit, illum amando atque praeferendo, quem episcoporum iudicio praeesse sibi Ecclesia refutavit. Hic itaque cum temporibus Symmachi apostolicae sedis Praesulis esset defunctus, ejus dalmaticam feretro superpositam daemonicus tetigit, statimque salvatus est. Post multum vero temporis Germano Capuano episcopo, cujus superius memoriam feci, medici pro corporis salute dictaverant, ut in Angulanis thermis, praedictum Paschasium diaconum stantem et obsequentem in caloribus invenit. Quo viso vehementer extimuit, et quid illic tantus vir faceret inquisivit. Cui ille respondit: Pro nulla alia causa in hoc poenali loco deputatus sum, nisi quia in parte Laurentii contra Symmachum sensi. Sed quaeso te, pro me Dominum deprecare, arque in hoc congnores quod exauditus sis, si huc rediens me non inveneris. Qua de re vir Domini Germanus se in precibus constrinxit, et post paucos dies rediit, sed jam dictum Paschasium in loco eodem minime invenit. Quia enim non malitia, sed ignorantiae errore peccaverat, purgari post mortem a peccato potuit. Quod tamen credendum est, quia ex illa eleemosynarum suarum largitate hoc obtinuit, ut tunc potuisset promereri veniam, cum jam nihil posset operari. PETR. Placet quod dicis. Sed de tanto viro Paschasio hoc animum ad quaestionem movet, quod post mortem ad poenalem locum ductus est, cujus feretri vestis tanti potuit ut malignus spiritus ab obsesso homine fugaretur. GREGOR. Hac in re magna debet omnipotentis Dei dispensatio et quam sit multiplex agnosci. Cujus iudicio actum est ut idem vir Paschasius et ipse intus ad aliquantum temporis reciperet quod peccasset, et tamen ante humanos oculos mira per corpus suum post mortem faceret, qui ante mortem eis quoque cognoscentibus pia opera fecisset; ut neque hi qui bona ejus viderant, de eleemosynarum illius aestimatione fallerentur, neque ipsi sine ultione laxaretur culpa, quam nec esse culpam credidit, et idcirco hanc fletibus non exstinxit."; Gregory I, *Dialogi...*, IV, 55. *Quid sit quod post mortem valeat ad absolutionem animas adjuvare; et de Centumcellensi presbytero; ac de anima Justi monachi* (PL 77, 416D-417C): "Si culpae post mortem insolubiles non sunt, multum solet animas etiam post mortem sacra oblatio hostiae salutaris adjuvare; ita ut hanc nonnunquam ipsae defunctorum animae expetere videantur. Nam praedictus Felix episcopus a quodam vitae venerabilis presbytero, qui usque ante biennium vixit, et in dioecesi Centumcellensis urbis habitabat, atque ecclesiae beati Joannis, quae in loco qui Taurania dicitur sita est, praeerat, cognovisse se asserit quod idem presbyter in eodem loco in quo aquae calidae nimios faciunt, quoties corporis necessitas exigebat, lavari consueverat. Ubi dum die quadam fuisset ingressus, invenit quemdam incognitum virum ad suum obsequium praeparatum, qui sibi de pedibus calceamenta abstraheret, vestimenta susciperet, et exeunti de caloribus sabana praeberet, atque omne ministerium cum magno famulatu perageret. Cumque hoc saepius fieret, idem presbyter die quadam ad balnea iturus, intra semetipsum cogitans, dixit: Viro illi qui mihi solet tam devotissime ad lavandum obsequi ingratus apparere non debeo, sed aliquid me necesse est ei pro munere portare. Tunc duas secum oblationum coronas detulit. Qui mox ut pervenit ad locum, hominem invenit, atque ex more ejus obsequio in omnibus usus est. Lavit itaque, et cum jam vestitus voluisset egredi, hoc quod secum detulerat, obsequenti sibi viro pro benedictione obtulit, petens ut benigne susciperet quod ei gratia charitatis offerret. Cui ille moerens afflictusque respondit: Mihi ista quare das, Pater? Iste panis sanctus est, ego hunc manducare non possum. Ego etenim quem vides, hujus loci dominus aliquando fui, sed pro culpis meis hic post mortem deputatus sum. Si autem mihi praestare vis, omnipotenti Deo pro me offer hunc panem, ut pro peccatis meis intervenias. Et tunc exauditum te esse cognosce, cum huc ad lavandum veneris, et me minime repereris. In quibus verbis disparuit, et is qui homo esse videbatur, evanescendo innotuit quia spiritus fuit. Idem vero presbyter hebdomada continua se pro eo in lacrymis afflixit, salutarem hostiam quotidie obtulit, et reversus post ad balneum, eum jam minime invenit. Qua ex re quantum prosit animabus immolatio sacrae oblationis ostenditur, quando hanc et ipsi mortuorum spiritus a viventibus petunt, et signa indicant quibus per eam absoluti videantur."

²⁶ See ISTC ij 00020000; 00022000; 00022300; 00022400; 00022500; 00023000; 00024000; 00024500; 00025000; 00026000; 00027000; 00027700.

We can, therefore, clearly see as untenable the simplistic image of purgatory as a distinct site in the otherworldly topography.

This finding, of course, reveals a much more dynamic situation than we might have expected, in which two aspects stand out. One is a kind of intertwining of this and the other world in a process, which of course has a special character. The other is a rehabilitation of purgatory as a state of consciousness, a concept, which Le Goff has rejected, if not simply ignored. This approach tends to transfer the entire question from the traditional onto-theological level of vision onto an existential and anthropological plane. The quest is no longer conducted on the abstract metaphysical level of seeking to determine the character of the absolute universal, or of one of its aspects. The inquiry rather shifts to a living experience, which has not only an objective meaning (to which it is necessary to react), but also a subjective meaning, which needs to be not only sought, but also formulated.²⁷ That, of course, requires a more detailed explanation.

Individual Eschatology

Nowadays we view with much suspicion an intertwining of this and the other world, seeing in this concept a form of folkish paganism, superstition, sorcery, magic, or a similar aberration. Of course, to apply this view to the past would not be appropriate. The possibility of interpenetration between the transcendent and the immanent worlds is for us only an abstract idea, which can be expressed just metaphorically, albeit we are beginning to sense a certain inadequacy about this approach. The late Middle Ages, which we are exploring here, understood this possibility concretely, and placed it outside the sphere of reflective rationality. Hence the late Middle Ages concentrated on what might be called the points of interpenetration. This non-abstract approach grasped and sensed with particular intensity the distinction between God and the world, the creator and the creation. Of an awesome seriousness was, therefore, the question not only about mediation, but also about a universal cohesiveness. Without the latter, an existential vacuum would not only loom, but actually occur. That was understood, for instance, by Meister Eckhart, when he said that at first we see God, then the divinity, and then nothing (or Nothing?) more. This existential *Angst*, therefore, was in no way a matter of either simple credulity, or simple philosophical or theological questioning, employing the tools of ratiocination.²⁸

Then we can follow here a syndactylism of several roots. The results of this process were (1) a more profound understanding of the sacraments, which was achieved by scholasticism; (2) a cult of saints, which – with the increasing differentiation in society – developed the legitimizing function of specialized patron saints; and (3) a better appreciation of the individual, which expressed itself in the emergence of the image of personality. Thus our points of interpenetration were established: eucharist and penance,²⁹ the saints and the intercourse between the

²⁷ Herein from the beginning rested the tension between scholasticism and the *devotio moderna*, see for instance, Pavel Spunar, "K počátkům české devotio moderna," *ActaUC, HUCP*, 31/1 (1991) 35-39. Here also belongs the idea of the so-called charismatic piety, see Pavlína Rychterová, *Viklefice a její předchůdkyně*, (forthcoming).

²⁸ See Jan Sokol, ed., *Mistr Eckhart a středověká mystika* (Prague, 2000²).

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

living and the dead, as well as a literary objectification of Christ's Passions.³⁰ These overt forms concealed the constantly threatening existential void. At last, we have arrived at what we called the Romanist-Utraquist context: it is a matter of differing accentuation of different points of penetration, of differing approach to intermediacy and mediation, but always on the same basis, which is an effort to deal with the menacing abyss of that existential void. To the extent that modern historiography has reacted and articulated this situation, it has done so by various circumlocutions of varying value; in any case, instead of "a crisis of feudalism,"³¹ it is surely preferable to speak of "an ennui from Gothic."³²

The suggested syndactylism of roots evoked further more specific problems, which provided a powerful impetus to the dynamics of events. Today, of course, we can understand them only, so to say, at second hand. It is important to mention, above all, two of these problems. One concerns the relationship between saints and those simply dead, which surely impinged upon the very core of human nature. A sense of this relationship was in a way externalized in martyrologies and necrologies.³³ In the early Middle Ages these two types of documents coalesced to a considerable degree into a peculiar kind of calendars, which exemplified the communion of saints, permitting a sacral glimpse of humankind. The lack of differentiation between saints and plain mortals expressed an indiscriminate view of human collectivity, and faithfully reflected a very simply structured society with little distinction of functions. In short this homogeneity was just a reflection of small self-contained communities. In the high Middle Ages, however, the martyrologies and necrologies became strictly distinguished. Small communities began to open up, to create more complex internal networks, and to acquire more elaborate hierarchical gradations. The rules of canonization were defined with increasing precision. Theology and canon law tended to coalesce; citations from decrees and decretals, *litterae communes* and also *extravagantes*, became normal components of theological treatises, such as the one under examination in this study. The process of diversification became so rampant that formal prescriptions had to keep it within proper bounds. A major response was to shift the center of gravity from the customary realm of general saintly patronage to the new sphere of specialized patronage.³⁴ Accordingly, a variety of brotherhoods arose, but at the same time a certain sterility of the special patronages became evident. Having lost the trait of commonality, even the fine-tuned fraternities failed to touch the individual. Simply said, they were not fit to legitimize the formerly small communities, which had now opened up and escaped their cocoons.

Here then is the starting point of the useful mediating function, which the necrologies could perform, thanks to their potential of reaching all the way to the

³⁰ For instance, Adolf Patera, "Rýmované 'Pravenie o božiem umučenie a o jeho svaté krve prolitie' z druhej polovice XIV. storočia," ČČM, 57 (1883) 370-396, 550-593; Maria Adamczyk, Wojciech R. Rzepka, and Wiesław Wydra, *Cały świat nie pomięściłby ksiąg. Staropolskie opowieści i przekazy apokryficzne* (Warsaw and Poznań, 1996).

³¹ For instance, František Graus, "Krise feudalismu ve 14. století," *SbH*, 1 (1953) 65-121; and from a broad perspective, Josef Polišenský, *Historik v měnícím se světě* (Prague, 2001) 167 ff.

³² Aleksander Gieysztor, "Lassitude du Gothique? Reflets de l'Iconoclasme hussite en Pologne au XV^e siècle," In: *Ars auro prior. Studia Ioanni Białostocki sexagenario dicata* (Warsaw, 1981), 223-226.

³³ Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Martyrologia v kontextu hagiografických pramenů českého středověku* (forthcoming).

³⁴ *Idem*, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku* (Prague, 1996).

individual. Henceforth, the earlier brotherhoods turned, by and large, into funeral brotherhoods,³⁵ and as a result the collectivity of the deceased began to take over the function of a special saintly patronage. Thus a small community was legitimized through them, despite the fact that the legitimization was camouflaged by a liturgy tied up with the feast day of a particular saint. In order to be comprehensible and communicable, the liturgy became increasingly standardized. Although, in a Franciscan manner, it targeted a specific saint,³⁶ at the same time it increasingly adopted the overarching Roman commonality. This union, a consequence of which was the incremental character of religiosity, kept the collective together, while also permitting the individual to stand out within its framework. A problem remained in that the individual was here understood as an “individuum,” and not as a person [*persona*].³⁷

Despite this fact, homiletics and devotional literature in general nevertheless kept talking about persons [*personae*], not only about individuals just as singulars [*singuli*]. Here we arrive at the second problem, which interjects another dash of dynamics. It is customary to talk in such a case about the parallelism between macrocosm and microcosm. In my opinion, however, it is preferable to speak of a conception of the absolute universal, in which the transcendental is linked with the transcendent, *sit venia verbo*. Here we approach the fundamental meaning of our anonymous author's citations from Gregory the Great. Hereby he introduced the reader into a peculiar world, which was not only the world of deep-seated tradition, but also a world of intuitive rationality, as opposed to discursive rationality. Here was the foundation for an understanding of what was a person in distinction from the *individuum*. We encounter here, indeed, an immensely significant circumstance. The treatise of the Dominican, Kolda of Koldice, *De mansionibus celestibus*,³⁸ somehow connected the objective ontological angelology of Dionysius the Areopagite with Gregory the Great's view of the same issue, which however aimed at a coordination of the spiritual sphere with the intellectual sphere, as we would say today. Kolda understood the connection of these differing aspects in a way which made it possible to link the communion of saints “there” with the community “here,” whereby this community could be understood entirely in the sense of society. Even though – from the purely intellectual point of view -- he offered only a pedestrian echo of the Dionysian tradition, his importance rested exactly in this transformation of it, namely, it expressed thereby a premonition of the turn from existence to the subject.³⁹ What was, however, basic, Kolda thereby created a basis, on which that cherished point of interpenetration could affect each and every human creature as a concrete being, not just as a mere abstract entity.⁴⁰ No matter how surely exclusive

³⁵ Hana Pátková, *Bratrstva ke cti Božie* (Prague, 2000). As a separate issue, it is important to bear in mind that the so-called *collegia tenuiorum*, or *collegia funeralicia*, have been known since antiquity, see Josef Češka, *Zánik antického světa* (Prague, 2000), so that it is, so to say, an anthropological issue.

³⁶ Bedřich Malina, *Dějiny římského breviáře* (Prague, 1937).

³⁷ Concerning the issue of “person” within these ramifications, see Zdeněk Uhlíř, “Prokopa Písaře *Liber de arte moriendi*,” *ActaUC, HUČP*, 30/2 (1990) 25-40.

³⁸ *Frater Colda, ordinis praedicatorum, 'Tractatus mystici. Mystické traktáty'*, ed. Dana Martínková (Prague, 1997).

³⁹ Heribert Mühlen, “Die Wir-Philosophie als dritte Thematisierungsstufe in der abendländischen Denkgeschichte,” *Theologie und Glaube* 84 (1994), 1-36.

⁴⁰ Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Mistři a studenti Karlovy univerzity ve středověku a jejich dílo v dobovém kontextu* (Prague, 1998).

in its origin and bedeviled by elitism, this approach would persist and become the foundation of the idea about a direct contact between a human being and God, without the need of any kind of intermediary. This was indeed the source of not a little tension, even a paradox. There emerged a sort of bottomless pit, and glancing into it meant gazing into Medusa's face, and thus through a backlash arose an even more pressing need of an intermediary, although a mediation – following this great awakening – was no longer adequate by far.

Exactly this then was the source of an enhanced need for religion, because faith appeared as very risky, requiring strong nerves. Who was actually capable of attaining it? At the same time, it is obvious that purgatory (just like a kingdom) was from this perspective an idea, and that it was a place only as an indirect and figurative expression of symbolic theology. Let us say that thereby human consciousness reached a crisis state. It yearned for what it suspected to be a mere ersatz, namely a reification, a doctrine, or an order of custom. Faith thus changed imperceptibly into a conviction, turning comprehensive rather than deep, and it identified with the "law" hither, and with ukases and customs thither. Here it is where we arrive at that emblematic Romanist-Utraquist context – the question "what does it mean?" turns into a question "what is it?" The debate about purgatory (and other so-called inventions), therefore, began here at the level of a tenet; it did not wait to reach the horizon of faith. Properly speaking, it was just a matter of an excessive number of the various points of interpenetration, causing disorder and confusion. Only two possibilities remained at the level of argument, either retain these points, provide them with ever more crafty justification, and endow them with ever more elaborate forms, OR radically reduce their number and interrelationships. Either choice, however, was an answer to the same question, and it was a half-hearted answer. Either choice introduced the human being into the realm of rigid parties, which were assigned an exaggerated legitimacy. Either misled the pilgrim from God. The choice resulted in an unintended origin of a religion, not in a renewal of a *religio* in whichever of its earlier meanings. This was the basis of the modern secular meaning of the term "confession," even though the fact did not become a matter of awareness, much less of articulation. Nevertheless, a believer was the one who "had" a confession. In sum, it appeared that all the actors several centuries ago failed to utilize all the possibilities, which were available. The stage was set for the hectic dynamics of Bohemian Reformation's several stormy decades. Paradoxically, the dynamic derived from an effort to freeze what was in motion.

Universal Collective Solidarity

The question of purgatory, to be sure, was tied up with something much less obvious, namely with an existential fright in confrontation with individual eschatology.⁴¹ In principle, the problem arose when the person began to be understood as a distinct entity in addition to body and soul, and its crux, therefore, turned out to be not so much the plain fear of death, but the disruptive division of the well-defined body-cum-soul entity. This predicament then generated a double uncertainty: one concerning the final disposition of the human being as a person after the Last Judgment, the other concerning its disposition in the hiatus between his death and the Parousia. Everything here was virtually incomprehensible and shrouded in mystery; the situation was pregnant with puzzles and challenges. What was the

⁴¹ Zdeněk Uhlíř, "Homiletický traktát Johanna Geuße," 491-508.

human being's final destination? How will the body and the soul be newly joined together in order to enjoy pleasure or experience suffering? How will the relations of time and space – which are so innately known to us – function “over there,” if at all?⁴² What was the nature of time during the hiatus, when the soul was already “over there,” but only in a kind of “preliminary” way? Was it a peculiar kind of “a third,” or possibly “a two-and-a-half,” world? Was it a tranquil waiting, a precursory sojourn at the final destination, or a special “anticipation” of the ultimate abode? These were tormenting questions, because they concerned the human being's ultimate destiny, which would confer a permanent form on its life. And to what extent was this form already present “here and now”? In all of this it was a matter of human identity, the identity of a human being, which understood that it was more than a mere member of society. Something in its existence was ontologically distinct from its empirically verifiable reality.

Artes moriendi began to appear in central Europe at the turn of the fourteenth century.⁴³ Likewise, *quatuor novissima*, originating in the lower Rhineland at that time, rapidly penetrated into central Europe.⁴⁴ The anonymous author of *Tractatus de suffragiis defunctorum* likewise included a chapter on the art of dying. Subsequently, this literary genre persisted in both Romanist and Reformed Europe beyond the threshold of modern history into the early eighteenth century. The Romanist-Utraquist context, therefore, was clearly evident in this common background. The discourse on death and dying was the voice of the age and the sign of the times.

Naturally, there were also dogmas concerning both purgatory and the beatific vision.⁴⁵ As all dogmas, so also these, should have been understood primarily in a symbolic way, but such an approach proved to be a non-starter. The reason was that the symbolic understanding of dogmas did not diminish the existential *Angst* or fill up the existential vacuum.⁴⁶ All writings, touching on individual eschatology, soon betrayed a tendency toward reification of ineffable notions, and toward a boom production of how-to-do-it manuals. However, the latter – to make their methodical directives useful – could not treat the dogmas as symbols, which would have been too ethereal. Instead, the instructional manuals converted dogmas into axioms, that is, assertions, which did not require proof, but were ipso facto valid. The certainty, which the instructive methodologies imparted, was reminiscent of a petrification. Reflected in all these methodological instructions on death and dying, we see an identical mentality regardless of schools and orientations, regardless of Romanist or Reformed thinking or sensitivity. Everything here was penetrated by Gersonian systematization,⁴⁷ and the echoes of Anselmian *interrogationes*.⁴⁸ Bigotry and

⁴² Stanislav Sousedík, “Stanislav de Znoyma Tractatus De felicitate,” MPP 19 (1974) 65-126.

⁴³ Rainer Rudolf, *Ars moriendi. Von der Kunst des heilsamen Lebens und Sterbens* Cologne and Graz, 1957); Maciej Włodarski, *Ars moriendi w literaturze polskiej XV i XVI w* (Cracow, 1987); Alberto Tenenti, *Il senso della morte e l'amore della vita nel Rinascimento (Francia e Italia)* Florence, 1957). For Bohemia, the following authors should be noted: Jan of Střibro, Jan of Jenštejn, Matouš of Cracow, and Prokop Písař.

⁴⁴ ISTC id 00245500; 00246000; im 00869000.

⁴⁵ Étienne Gilson, “Sur la problématique thomiste de la vision béatifique,” *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 39 (1964) 67-88; Francis Ruello, “Le problème de la vision béatifique à l'Université de Paris vers le milieu du XIV^e siècle,” *ibid.* 55 (1980) 121-170.

⁴⁶ See: Paul Tillich, “The Religious Symbol / Symbol and Knowledge,” in *Main Works*, (Berlin-New York, 1987) 4: ch. 13.

⁴⁷ Jean Gerson, “Opusculum tripartitum de praeceptis Decalogi, de Confessione et de Arte Moriendi: Tertia pars hujus opusculi de Scientia mortis,” In: his *Opera omnia*, ed. Ludovicus Ellies du Pin, I,

formalistic respectability commenced their rule in a universal and absolutistic way. Such a denouement could be most cogently attributed to what might be called a doctrinal democratization. Weighty propositions had acquired the character of ordinary banal clichés. Once more the intellectual evolution of the western world arrived at the familiar crossroads. One road aimed at a more sophisticated elaboration of the stale themes, delving into the naturalism of the “dances of death”⁴⁹ or “the encounter of three living and three dead.”⁵⁰ It also encouraged the industry of further manufacturing the various *suffragia*, etc. The other road led to attempts at a simplification, carried on in the spirit of boredom, and contempt for the existing complexities. Even this streamlining, however, retained the methodicalness, given by the treatment of dogmas as axioms. We find here the manifestation of another “ennui from Gothic,” and not really a stimulus for something more creative.

It would be, however, a mistake to assume pedantically that the religious development became simply mired in a depressing realm of the blues and stagnant waters. *Tractatus de suffragiis defunctorum* paid particular attention to votive masses, pious bequests, prayers, alms, and fasts, namely the “good works” and “inventions,” toward which the Utraquist attitude was at times ambiguous. Nevertheless something remained, which was held in common, and which recreated the Romanist-Utraquist context. It was the funeral, which was regarded not just as a disposition of the body in a proper, that is, consecrated, ground, but above all as a ritual, as a paraliturgy, as a ceremony.⁵¹ The proper disposition of the body had a long tradition, but the general acceptance of the ceremony – in all the cultural and social strata – was actually a novelty. This was, of course, a substantive change, which from a formerly private, so to say, cozy family or neighborly affair, created now a fully public event, or something staged as a public event. Here exactly was the great paradox, whereby a private person came fully into its own only by starring in a public proceeding.⁵² It was not accidental that exactly the early fifteenth century witnessed a snowballing of funeral sermons, which did not merely record specific homilies pronounced at the obsequies for socially prominent persons, but – as a sign of the funeral’s democratization -- served as models to be adapted for use repeatedly for the deceased in the urban, and even lower, social strata.⁵³

Hagae Comitum, 1728, col. 447-450; *idem*, “Tractatus de consolatione in mortem amicorum Novem continens Considerationes,” *ibid.* III, col. 345-353; *idem*, “Brevis instructui ad senem Quomodo se ad mortem praeparet,” *ibid.* III, col. 275-276.

⁴⁸ Anselm of Canterbury, “Admonitio morienti et de peccatis suis nimium formidanti,” PL, 158, 685-688.

⁴⁹ Stephan Cosacchi, *Makabertanz. Der Totentanz in Kunst, Poesie und Brauchtum des Mittelalters* (Meisenheim, 1965). Bohemian scholarship has entirely ignored the personalist aspect of the “dances of death,” see Antonín Grund, “Renesanční tance smrti,” *Listy filologické* 72 (1948) 202-211, 277-293.

⁵⁰ Willy Rotzler, *Die Begegnung von drei Lebenden und drei Toten. Ein Beitrag zur Forschung über die Mittelalterlichen Vergänglichkeitsdarstellungen* (Winterthur, 1961).

⁵¹ Bogdan Rok, *Człowiek wobec śmierci w kulturze staropolskiej* (Wrocław, 1995); Marek Derwich, ed., *Śmierć w dawnej Europie* (Wrocław, 1997).

⁵² Future scholarship will face considerable obstacles in this problem area due to the, as yet, inadequate elaboration of concepts and terms. To be sure, it is obviously a matter of imparting a substantive content on the concepts, or at least on the perceptions, of “public” and “private.” In a way, it seems that we encounter here the first intimations of the much later political concept of “the private person.”

⁵³ This phenomenon, however, has not yet been captured heuristically, much less explored monographically. Nevertheless, it was obviously responsible for the subsequent tempestuous vogue of encomiums, as well as sort of protonecologies, which emerged in the sixteenth century. See

And here we, of course, reach what was most fundamental. Making the person public in the funeral rites (which rose above the private, family, or neighborly level) began to infuse ordinary lives with something like a historical consciousness, which was undoubtedly more than a mere collective memory. History – let us dare to say it – began to descend from the ethereal heights into ordinary lives. The dynamics of time – inherent to Christian thought and sensation – became only now fully manifest in central Europe. In my opinion, this development overshadowed in significance the epiphenomenal doctrinal disputes about the subject of faith. This heritage merged the Gothic Roman synergism with the Proto-Reformational struggle against human intermediaries. The result was a fundamental renovation of human lives and societies. These forms arose everywhere, where small communities, forced to end their isolation, were able to perceive time as neither a pointless sequencing, nor perpetual increments, but as a constituent part of their consciousness. Because the forms required conscious adoption and appropriation, the process, of course, was by no means automatic.

At the same time, however, we encounter another unexamined and unresolved paradox. The emancipatory process occurred under the cover of a discourse about doctrines and methods.⁵⁴ The final arbiter in this discourse was the authority of one kind or another, beyond which there yawned the implicit – and, therefore, hidden – existential void. With this in mind, any further change necessitated also the change of authority, a realization, which in turn opened up a Pandora's Box of further issues. The subversion of religious authority set off a chain reaction of social upheavals and political revolutions.

In conclusion, I will attempt a brief summary. I sought to suggest that garden-variety writings, or routine sources, may become of major importance, if in studying them we manage to rise above concrete particularities (which by themselves are sterile), and if we manage to set our sight at their context – at the horizon to which they are oriented. I sought also to outline one of the possibilities of viewing the Romanist/Utraquist context in an ecumenical way, and how to utilize this context more broadly in historical scholarship. Finally, I sought to suggest the ways in which to liberate Czech historiography from the oppressive provincial constraints, namely by exploring its subject matter from other shores and perspectives. Some may find my suggestions unconvincing, or even scandalous. In my opinion, however, if the Czech historical community wishes to advance, it cannot avoid embarking on new and unprecedented paths of scholarly inquiry.

Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David.

Rudolf Lenz, *De mortuis nil nisi bene? Leichenpredigten als multidisziplinäre Quelle unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der historischen Familienforschung, der Bildungsgeschichte und der Literaturgeschichte* (Sigmaringen, 1990); see also review by Zdeněk Uhlíř in *Miscellanea oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků* 8 (1991) 206-207.

⁵⁴ On the issue of “discourse,” see for instance, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, tr. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1995); concerning the civilizational concept of “existential emptiness,” see John Carroll, *Humanism: The Wreck of Western Culture* (London, 1993).