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## Remembering Bohemia's Forgotten Patron Saint

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Petrarch, hoping that Emperor Charles IV might renew the ancient splendour of the Empire, of Italy, and of Rome, wrote a series of letters over many years to the emperor and members of his court. In December 1354, the great Italian humanist even travelled to Mantua to meet the Rome-bound emperor face-to-face. On that occasion, Petrarch presented Charles IV with several ancient coins from Rome's glorious past. One, he explained, bore the image of Julius Caesar. Many years later, Charles IV puzzled over Petrarch's coin. Surely the adolescent figure depicted with a triumphal arch could not represent Caesar, whose own great victories came later in life. He addressed his doubts to Niccolò Beccari, the student of Petrarch then serving as tutor to the Bohemian prince. Beccari assured the emperor that the coin indeed portrayed Julius Caesar; like divinely inspired augurs, he explained, the ancient craftsmen had presciently depicted Caesar's future triumphs.<sup>1</sup>

Historians have repeated this story to illustrate the humanist prowess of the learned medieval monarch, for twentieth-century scholars agreed with Charles IV against Petrarch; the ancient adolescent on the coin is not Julius Caesar, but Octavian.<sup>2</sup> Charles IV, the great collector and connoisseur, proved in this case a better humanist than the quintessential Italian humanist himself. With his Roman coins and assorted other rarities, Charles IV becomes for these historians – or art historians – a forerunner to the Renaissance collectors whose private libraries and *camerae raritatis* in turn provided the foundations of modern museums.<sup>3</sup>

Yet Charles IV himself, who undeniably collected a wide range of historical and natural objects, would, I suspect, have been much more gratified by another modern confirmation of his judgement. In 1354, Charles IV brought to Prague from Padua what he (and the Paduans) believed to be the head of St. Luke. Recently DNA analysis and radiocarbon dating of a tooth from that head have been offered as evidence that the skull in Prague may indeed have belonged to St. Luke. The

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<sup>1</sup> Karel Stejskal, "Karel jako sběratel," [Charles as a collector] in Václav Vaněček, ed., *Karolus Quartus piae memoriae fundatoris sui universitas Carolina* (Prague, 1984) 456-67; Stejskal, *Umění na dvoře Karla IV* [Art in the court of Charles IV] (Prague, 1978) 90-92; Vojtěch Birnbaum, "Karel IV. jako sběratel a Praha," in Birnbaum, *Listy z dějin umění* (Prague, 1947) 149; Antonín Salač and Karel Hrdina, "Římská mince v majetku císaře Karla IV.," [Roman coins in the possession of Emperor Charles IV] *Listy filologické* 60 (1933) 233-39, at 234; cf. Karel Hrdina, "Niccolò Beccari, Ital na dvoře Karla IV.," [Niccolò Beccari, an Italian in the court of Charles IV] in *Sborník prací věnovaných Janu Bedřichu Novákovi k šedesátým narozeninám 1872–1932* (Prague, 1932) 159-77; C. C. Bayley, "Petrarch, Charles IV, and the 'Renovatio Imperii,'" *Speculum* 17 (1942) 323-41.

<sup>2</sup> This is the argument of Salač and Hrdina, "Římská mince," 238-39; they suggest that the coin may be an Augustan denarius described, e.g., in Harold Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. 1, *Augustus to Vitellius* (London, 1976) 102 no. 624, plate 15 no. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Stejskal, "Karel jako sběratel," 466; Stejskal, *Umění na dvoře Karla IV*, 98-100; Birnbaum makes the same argument even more strongly, not only depicting Charles as a type of early renaissance collector, but also asserting that he gathered many relics of saints out of a pure collector's interest untainted by religious or political motivations ("Karel IV. jako sběratel a Praha," 146-147).

resulting claims that the bone belonged to the evangelist from Antioch in fact rest on rather modest scientific proof: the tooth dates from between 72 and 416 AD, and the interpretation of the DNA evidence involved a lot of guess-work. At best, it does not rule out the relic's authenticity.<sup>4</sup>

The point of relating this research is not to encourage special veneration for the head of St. Luke, nor to inspire pilgrimages to Prague or to Padua (where the headless body in question still resides). Instead, it highlights the typically medieval character of Charles IV's most avid collecting activity: the gathering of holy relics. Whereas an emperor who rightly questioned Petrarch's judgment would seem to belong firmly within a tradition of early humanism, the same emperor's devotion to the bones of saints and their accumulation sits uneasily with standard accounts of fourteenth-century pre-Humanism (or *Frühhumanismus*) in Bohemia.<sup>5</sup> Nor does the traditional story of reformers and pre-Hussite religion in Prague at this time normally reserve a place for the discussion of the emperor's relics. Yet the cult of relics formed an integral part of Prague's urban religion during Charles IV's reign. In precisely the years when Conrad Waldhauser and Milíč of Kroměříž drew throngs of listeners to their sermons, the devout Charles IV deftly orchestrated a growing local devotion of holy relics in the same city. The emperor redistributed relics to define Prague's sacred topography, to inspire its unique holy days, to draw foreign pilgrims, and generally to enhance the status and centrality of Prague (and of its ruling Luxemburg dynasty) within Bohemia and the empire. Furthermore, Charles's Bohemian subjects responded to these conditions and cues. No example illustrates this better than the remarkable miracle-producing cult that developed around an unexpected saint, St. Sigismund, the martyr whom Jaroslav Polc once described as Bohemia's forgotten patron saint.<sup>6</sup>

Charles IV undoubtedly sympathized with Petrarch's interest in increasing the glory of the Holy Roman Empire, but he did not share the Italian's vision for the city of Rome. Prague, not Rome, was Charles IV's capital city. The emperor's desire to adorn his capital and his obsessive acquisitiveness of relics reinforced one another. His many journeys throughout and beyond the Empire provided the opportunity to accomplish both aims. This he explained in a 1354 letter to the archbishop and cathedral chapter of Prague:

The zeal of devotion and love with which we are consumed for the holy church of Prague, our venerable mother, and for the blessed martyrs Vitus, Wenceslaus and Adalbert, our glorious patron saints, stirs our passion, so that when we by our devout generosity acquire something outstanding, an extraordinary jewel

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<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Wade, "Body of St. Luke Gains Credibility," *The New York Times*, October 16, 2001. The DNA analysis suggests only that the tooth's DNA more closely resembles select modern populations in Turkey and Syria than in Greece (Cristiano Vernesi et al., "Genetic Characterization of the Body Attributed to the Evangelist Luke," *Proceedings of the National of Sciences* 98 [2001] 13460-63). A popular article in an Italian Roman Catholic periodical interprets this very limited evidence as tantamount to confirmation of the relic's authenticity (Andrea Torielli, "The Beloved Physician," *Traces*, November 2000, accessed January 2006 at <http://www.traces-cl.com>).

<sup>5</sup> e.g., Eduard Winter, *Frühhumanismus: Seine Entwicklung in Böhmen und deren Bedeutung für die Kirchenreformbestrebungen im 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1964).

<sup>6</sup> "Zapomenutý český patron," [The forgotten Czech patron (saint)] in *Se znamením kříže*, ed. František Dvorník (Rome, 1967) 127-131.

from among the treasures of the holy relics somewhere in the holy empire, in our royal benevolence we use it to adorn that church.<sup>7</sup>

Charles IV in fact acquired huge quantities of these holy jewels. Rarely did he leave a church or monastery without bits of its most treasured relics. His hosts, who in a few cases wrote accounts of his visits, were often shocked. This was the case at Trier, where the inhabitants of the city's religious houses were taken aback that their honoured visitor came "to possess their relics" (*causa reliquiarum habendarum*) and not "just to see them" (*ad videndum solummodo easdem*).<sup>8</sup> His power, his public requests, his gifts and privileges, and even his pious tears left abbots and deans with little choice. Over the years, Charles IV perfected his method of what one might call *extorsio sacra*. At the monastery of St. Gall, for instance, a powerful entourage of nobles and bishops, an emotional display of personal devotion, an insistent public request, and the promise of an imperial privilege achieved the desired effect: the abbot grudgingly ordered the opening of the long-sealed altars of St. Gall and St. Othmar. The emperor left with relics of each.<sup>9</sup> On another occasion he similarly sought from the monastery of St. Martin at Pavia the head and other relics of St. Vitus, the late antique martyr to whom Prague's cathedral was dedicated. The attendant local clergy and people, "reluctant and possessive of their relics," eventually acceded to the bishops and high-ranking clerics who conveyed the emperor's request. Nevertheless, this removal of the "most precious treasure of the city and church of Pavia" was accompanied by an outpouring of citizens' tears (*lacrimarum profluvio*).<sup>10</sup>

Operating in the same manner throughout his travels, Charles IV quickly amassed great reliquary wealth. Sometimes circumstances aided his efforts. He arrived in Trier, for instance, shortly after the death of his uncle Baldwin, the archbishop, who was probably the only one in the city powerful enough to resist his nephew's avarice for saints' bones. In a letter describing his resulting great haul of holy relics, the emperor directly compared the sacred objects with mundane currency. He took relics from Trier, he explains, in lieu of customary payments from the chapter and new archbishop that, he says, were his entitlement:

Although we could have legally, reasonably, and blamelessly received great and innumerable quantities of money from the archbishop-elect and the chapter of Trier, our regal dignity spurned this and instead required payment of heavenly and spiritual treasures, which moths do not destroy and rust does not corrupt, and

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<sup>7</sup> "Zelus devotionis et amoris, quo circa sanctam Pragensem ecclesiam, venerandam matrem nostram, et beatissimos martyres Vitum, Wencezlaum et Adalbertum, gloriosos patronos nostros incessanter afficimur, animum nostrum sollicitat, ut dum de sacrarum reliquiarum thezauris per loca sacri imperii egregium aliquid et insigne clenodium devotorum nostrorum largitione consequamur, per illud eandem ecclesiam benignitate regia decoremus" (Antonín Podlaha and Eduard Šittler, *Chrámový poklad u sv. Víta v Praze: jeho dějiny a popis* [The cathedral treasure at St. Vitus's in Prague: its history and description] [Prague, 1903] 36 n. 3).

<sup>8</sup> Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad* 31 n. 2.

<sup>9</sup> The abbot's surviving letter offers an account of the emperor's visit (Prague, Státní ústřední archiv, Archiv zrušených klášterů, č. 1234).

<sup>10</sup> Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad* 44-45 n. 3; *Summa Cancellariae (Cancellaria Caroli IV.)*, ed. Ferdinand Tadra, *Historický Archiv* 6 (Prague, 1895) 35-6, n. 58; Gustav Pirchan, "Karlstein," in *Prager Festgabe für Theodor Mayer*, ed. Rudolf Schreiber (Salzburg 1953) 68 n. 26.

which thieves do not break in and steal – namely, the relics enumerated below – from the archbishop-elect and the chapter, despite their unwillingness and heart-felt sadness.<sup>11</sup>

With this allusion to the Gospels,<sup>12</sup> the high-minded emperor claimed for these rare objects a higher status than that occupied by the metallic fruits of the subterranean mines that supplied much of his own earthly wealth. Apparently he was oblivious to the ironies of his comparison. He knew from personal experience, for instance, the tendency of ancient bones to crumble into dust.<sup>13</sup> The theft of relics, moreover, was a well-documented and time-honoured practice of which Charles IV was certainly aware.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, some of his hosts may have seen the emperor's own actions in precisely this context.

True to his rhetoric, Charles IV sent the lion's share of these relics to the cathedral of Prague, though he also stored many (or at least pieces of them) together with the imperial relics at Karlstein castle. Upon Charles IV's accession to the Bohemian throne in 1347, Prague, one could say, was notably relic-poor. Three centuries later, proud Prague historians claimed that the emperor's donations had made the Bohemian capital city to rival or exceed all cities in Christendom, save Rome, in the rarity and quantity of its relics.<sup>15</sup> Charles IV himself, in a letter announcing his acquisition of additional relics of St. Vitus, crowed that Prague was twice-blessed: honoured, first of all, to be chosen as the seat of the *imperium orbis terrae*, and glorified secondly by the innumerable relics gathered from far and wide.<sup>16</sup> Once he acquired the relics, the emperor expertly arranged to enhance their value and maximize their local impact. Repeatedly he sought and obtained papal indulgences for them. At his instigation, the pope instituted two new feast days: the Conveying of the Relics (*Allacio reliquiarum*, celebrated only in the diocese of Prague) and the Feast of Holy Lance and Nail. He also secured a special occasional indulgence for the veil of the Virgin that evolved into a kind of jubilee year (*annus gratie sive indulgentiarum*) in Prague every seventh year.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Et quamquam magnas et innumerabiles pecuniarum quantitates ab electo et capitulo ecclesiae Treverensis iuste et rationabiliter ac sine ulla reprehensione habere potuissemus, regalis tamen dignitas respuens, censuit thesauros huiusmodi coelestes et spirituales, quos non tinea demolitur, erugo non consumit, nec fures effodiunt vel furantur, videlicet reliquias infrascriptas ab eisdem electo et capitulo, licet invitis et cum dolore cordis eorum, obtinere” (Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad* 31 n.2).

<sup>12</sup> Mark 6.19-20; Luke 12.33.

<sup>13</sup> He describes, e.g., the relics of St. Vitus, “quas ex nimia vetustate pro maiori parte redactas repererunt in pulverem” (Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad* 44 n. 3).

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1990); Charles IV alludes to the danger of relics being sent back to Prague being vulnerable to thieves (Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad* 31 n. 2); he also instructs the church of St. Gall in Prague to have a chest built to house the precious relic he is sending them, with two locks whose different keys are held by two different people (Prague, Státní ústřední archiv, Archiv zrušených klášterů, č. 1235).

<sup>15</sup> Bohuslav Balbin, *Vita venerabilis Arnesti primi Archiepiscopi Pragensis* (Prague, 1664), quoted in Antonín Podlaha, *Catalogi ss. reliquiarum quae in sacra metropolitana ecclesia Pragensi asservantur*, *Editiones archivii et bibliothecae s. f. metropolitani capituli pragensis* 24 (Prague, 1931) 131.

<sup>16</sup> Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad* 44 n. 3.

<sup>17</sup> All three are described briefly by Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, ed. Josef Emler, *FRB* 4:519, 522, 538; cf. Jaroslav Polc and Zdeňka Hledíková, eds., *Pražské synody a*

The emperor employed his new treasury of relics, together with the wealth of the Bohemian silver mines, to realize his elaborate plans for Prague. Under Charles IV's careful direction Prague rapidly became a worthy capital city, one that proclaimed the glories of its ruling dynasty. Stones and bones: the emperor carefully orchestrated the arrangement of both. New altars, chapels, and even religious houses arose to house the relics. The donations brought by pilgrims in turn helped pay for further construction – of the new cathedral, for instance. Processions ushered relics along precisely defined routes through Prague's streets and squares, some of them only recently laid out. The Feast of the Holy Lance and Nail, for instance, quickly became the occasion for an elaborate annual procession and public display of many of Prague's most treasured relics (the so-called *Ostensio reliquiarum*). Each Spring, these most holy objects passed down the hill from the cathedral into Lesser Town, across the stone bridge into the Old Town, then through the city gates to the Cattle Market in the New Town Charles IV had founded in 1348. A special liturgy dictated the order in which they were then revealed, one-by-one, to the crowds from a wooden platform (*turris reliquiarum*).<sup>18</sup> Charles IV systematically enlisted these relics, and the cults created for them, to bolster the position of Bohemia within the empire, of Prague within Bohemia, and of the cathedral of St. Vitus within Prague.

Of all the relics Charles IV sent to Prague, arguably the most important were those of St. Sigismund, the sixth-century Burgundian king. Yet they remain among the least studied. Sigismund's bones reveal Charles IV at his best, marshalling all his resources to create a potent and symbolic new cult around a relatively obscure saint. Together with the Prague archbishop, the emperor established the conditions for a rollicking cult of Sigismund in Bohemia, exported the same cult to other parts of central Europe, and reinvigorated devotion to him in his native Burgundy. Charles IV introduced hundreds of relics to Prague, but only those of Sigismund touched off a spate of local miracles. Likewise, Sigismund alone ascended into the ranks of Bohemia's patron saints. Crucial for historians is also the unique survival of a fragmentary record of Sigismund's Prague miracles. This text makes it possible to explore not only the purposes of the monarch who sparked the cult, but also the individual responses of the people who fanned the flames, who authorized and established a miraculous cult anchored in Prague's cathedral.

Charles IV's first recorded encounter with Sigismund's relics came in 1354, when he stopped at the Benedictine monastery of Einsiedeln on the return leg of a journey notorious for the relics it yielded.<sup>19</sup> According to the monastery's treasury-

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*koncily předhusitské doby* [Prague synods and councils of the pre-Hussite era] (Prague, 2002) 176. I discuss the origin and development of these feasts within the context of the emperor's relic-collecting in chapter five of my doctoral dissertation, "Bones, Stones, and Brothels: Religion and Topography in Prague under Emperor Charles IV (1346-78)," University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> The sources for the complicated development of this feast include the following: Tomek, *Dějepis* 2:225; Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica*, FRB 4:519; Polc and Hledíková, *Pražské synody*, 176; *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia*, ed. Ladislav Klicman et al., 7 vv. (Prague, 1903-1998) 2:84 n. 197; 1.672-673 n. 1263, n. 1264; Francis of Prague, *Chronicon Francisci Pragense*, ed. Jana Zachová, FRB, series nova 1 (Prague, 1997) 211; Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad* 56-58.

<sup>19</sup> The visit took place between 20 and 25 April, 1354 (P. Gabriel Meier, *Heinrich von Ligerz, Bibliothekar von Einsiedeln im 14. Jahrhundert* [Leipzig, 1896; rpt. 1968] 24-25). The Bollandists,

keeper and librarian, the emperor took away “a great portion of our relics.”<sup>20</sup> These included part of the skull of Sigismund and a piece of the arm of St. Maurice, both of which likely came to Einsiedeln directly or indirectly from Agaune where these two saints were buried.<sup>21</sup> Like so many other relics, those from Einsiedeln ended up in Prague. A gilded head reliquary for Sigismund appeared a year later in the cathedral inventory (1355),<sup>22</sup> but there seems to have been no special celebration or veneration offered for either of these saints; they merely contributed to the mass of relics funnelled to Prague in these years. I have found no evidence of pre-existing devotion to Sigismund in Bohemia, and very little even after the arrival of his relic in 1354. No churches or chapels are known to have been dedicated to him.<sup>23</sup> I can identify only two Sigismund altars in Bohemia, one founded in 1364 and the other sometime before 1362. In each of these, moreover, the lowly Sigismund shared the altar’s dedication with two other saints.<sup>24</sup>

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following the Einsiedeln chronicler Christopher Hartmann, erroneously date the visit to 1353 (*Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur*, ed. Jean Bolland et al., 3d ed. [Paris, 1863- ] May v. 1, 93E).

<sup>20</sup> Henry of Ligerz reported that Charles IV “magnam partem reliquiarum nostrarum secum detulit” (Georg von Wyss, “König Karl’s IV. Besuch in Einsiedeln,” *Anzeiger für schweizerische Geschichte* 7 (1876) 222-24; cf. Robert Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige,” *Deutsches Archiv* 14 [1958] 338).

<sup>21</sup> Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige” 338; Edourd Aubert, *Trésor de l’abbaye de Saint-Maurice d’Agaune* (Paris, 1872) 65; Leon Dupont Lachenal, “Einsiedeln et Agaune,” *Les echos de Saint-Maurice* 32 (1933) 44 (both cited in Gilbert Coutaz, Elsanne Gilomen-Schenkel, Germain Hausmann and Philipp Kalbermatter, “Saint-Maurice d’Agaune,” in *Les chanoines réguliers de Saint-Augustin en Valais*, ed. Brigitte Degler-Spengler and Elsanne Gilomen-Schenkel, *Helvetia sacra* 4.1 [Basel, 1997] 354 n. 202). Einsiedeln reportedly received Sigismund’s relic from the Bishop of Chur in 1030; how it came into his possession is not recorded (Joachim Salzgeber, “Einsiedeln,” in *Frühe Klöster: Die Benediktiner und Benediktinerinnen in der Schweiz*, ed. Elsanne Gilomen-Schenkel, *Helvetia Sacra* 3.1.1 Bern, 1986] 517; P. Rudolf Henggeler, “Die mittelalterlichen Kalendarien von Einsiedeln,” *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 48 [1954] 47).

<sup>22</sup> Reference to the head of Sigismund appears for the first time in the 1355 inventory of St. Vitus, both in a gilded reliquary as “Caput sancti Zyzmundi martyris, regis Burgundiae, argenteum deauratum” and undecorated as “caput sancti Zygmundi regis Burgundiae et martyris.” These seem to refer to a single relic; the second entry, included among the relics “nondum ornat[ae] auro et argento,” does not appear in the subsequent inventories (Podlaha and Šittler, *Chránový poklad* XII n. 23, XIV n. 80, n. 7). Already the 1354 inventory include a “manus sancti Mauriti cum paucis gemmis,” but it is not among the new arrivals to the church and may refer to a relic previously in the church’s possession (ibid. IV n. 38; XIII n. 32).

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., Zdeněk Boháč, “Časové vrstvy patrocinií českých měst a jejich význam pro dějiny osídlení,” [The time levels of patronage of Czech towns and its meaning for the history of settlement] *Historická geografie* 4 (1970) 7-41; Boháč, “Patrocina románských kostelů v Čechách,” [The patronages of romanesque churches in Bohemia] *Historická geografie* 8 (1972) 31-51; Boháč, “Patrocina kostelů při nejstarších klášterech a kapitulách v českých zemích,” [The patronages of the oldest monasteries and capitular churches in the Czech lands] *Historická geografie* 5 (1970) 51-77.

<sup>24</sup> On the translation, see Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” in *Kaiser Karl IV.: Staatsman und Mäzen*, ed. Ferdinand Seibt (Munich, 1978) 94; in the period from 1358, when dedications of altars, chapels, masses and other ecclesiastical foundations within Prague’s archdiocese were recorded systematically in the *Libri erectionum*, until the arrival of the new Sigismund relics in 1365, only a single new altar was dedicated to Sigismund, in 1364. Moreover, the patronage of this altar in a parish church in České Budějovice (Budweis) was shared with saints Oswald and Briccius (*Libri erectionum archidioecesis Pragensis*, lib. 1, ed. Clemens Borový [Prague, 1875] 47 no. 91). Another altar was founded sometime before 1362; in that year, a new priest was appointed to the “altare S. Martini, Marchi et Zygmundi” in Čáslav upon the death of the previous chantry priest (*Libri confirmationum ad beneficia ecclesiastica Pragensem per archidioecesim*, vol. 1.2, ed. Joseph Emler [Prague, 1874] 190).

In short, nothing distinguished Sigismund's relic from the countless others arriving in Prague during these years; nothing, that is, until Charles IV had himself crowned at Arles in 1365 as the king of Burgundy, making him a successor of the sixth-century King Sigismund of Burgundy. This was Charles' sixth and final coronation, a symbolic element of his attempt to consolidate imperial power in the region. With this coronation, the emperor briefly resurrected a long-dead tradition. Barbarossa had been the last to take the Burgundian crown nearly two hundred years before (1178).<sup>25</sup> Once crowned, Charles IV also acted to reinvigorate the weakened cult of his royal predecessor. Passing through Savoy in the company of his vassal, Count Amadeus VI (1343-83), Charles IV suggested a detour, one that brought him and his noble entourage to the monastery of St. Maurice at Agaune along the Rhone south of Lake Geneva.<sup>26</sup> His goal was the centre of the cult of St. Maurice and his fellow Theban soldiers: namely, the monastic house that King Sigismund had dedicated to these martyrs in 515.<sup>27</sup>

The Augustinian canons of St. Maurice had long experience with pilgrims, even royal ones; Maurice's cult had widespread adherents and strong imperial associations. The canons were not accustomed, however, to handing out bits of their patron saint. More than a century before an abbot had pointedly called an end to the prodigal dispersal of his remains.<sup>28</sup> This important medieval cult greatly overshadowed that of Sigismund both locally and throughout Europe.<sup>29</sup> Though a king, Sigismund had never risen to the status of national patron enjoyed, for instance, by St. Denis in France or St. Wenceslaus in Bohemia, a fact related in part to the status of the kingdom Burgundy itself.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, a modest and largely local cult persisted. Sigismund's *vita* recorded sixth-century miracles after the return of his body to his beloved Agaune; fever was his specialty.<sup>31</sup> Gregory of Tours

<sup>25</sup> Peter Hilsch, "Die Krönungen Karls IV," in *Kaiser Karl IV.: Staatsmann und Mäzen*, ed. Seibt, 111; on the wider significance of the coronation within Charles IV's political aims, see Heinz Stoob, *Kaiser Karl IV. und seine Zeit* (Graz, 1990) 207-213; Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl IV. Ein Kaiser in Europa, 1346-1378* (1978, rpt. Munich, 1994) 350-360; Laetitia Boehm, *Geschichte Burgunds* (Stuttgart, 1979) 162-165.

<sup>26</sup> Savoy had originally been part of the kingdom of Burgundy, by this time known as the kingdom of Arles and Vienne, but since 1361 the count had been an immediate vassal of the emperor.

<sup>27</sup> According to Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Charles "venit in Aganum causa devocionis visitandi limina sanctorum martirum Thebeorum" (*Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, FRB 4:533). On the monastery of Saint-Maurice, see Elsanne Gilomen-Schenkel, "Saint-Maurice," in *Frühe Klöste*, ed. Gilomen-Schenkel, 304-20; Gilbert Coutaz et al., "Saint-Maurice d'Agaune," 281-494; Barbara H. Rosenwein, "One Site, Many Meanings: Saint-Maurice d'Agaune as a Place of Power in the Early Middle Ages," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuws, with Carine van Rhijn (Leiden, 2001) 271-90.

<sup>28</sup> Gilbert Coutaz et al., "Saint-Maurice d'Agaune," 309.

<sup>29</sup> Laetitia Boehm, *Geschichte Burgunds*, 68; Robert Folz, "Zur Frage der heiligen Könige," 321, 336. A piece from Maurice's arm and several other relics were gifts of Jindřich Vladislav, Margrave of Moravia, in 1212 (Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad 7*, IV).

<sup>30</sup> Folz, "Zur Frage der heiligen Könige," 320-21; on royal saints, now see Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, trans. Éva Pálmai (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> *Passio sancti Sigismundi regis*, MGH *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* 2, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannover, 1888) 339-40, which mentions quartan fever in particular; Gregory of Tours, *Gloria Martyrum*, MGH *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum* 1:537 c. 74. More miracles centred upon the well into which the murdered bodies of the royal family had been thrown. *Acta sanctorum*, May, v. 1, 87. The specialisation in fevers seems to have been inspired by Sigismund's own healing from fever by the cloak of St. Apollinaris (d. 520) (Folz, *Les saints rois*, 129; for the miracle, see the life of

lauded the Burgundian king as an aid for fever, and the proper for the feast of St. Sigismund in the seventh- or eighth-century Bobbio Sacramentary confirm that reputation.<sup>32</sup> Starting in the eleventh-century, Sigismund's cult spread through the distribution of his relics from Agaune; one landed as far away as Bamberg cathedral, but again the effect was mostly local and regional.<sup>33</sup> By the fourteenth-century, however, such gifts appear to have stopped; the sixth-century saint's cult remained limited to the places of his death and burial together with the handful of churches and monasteries in possession of his relics.

Notwithstanding the relative weakness of Sigismund's cult, it was almost certainly the Burgundian martyr-king who drew Charles IV. Obtaining further relics of St. Maurice was little more than an afterthought. This is certainly the picture painted by the *Chronique de Savoie*, the chronicle penned in French half a century later (1417–1419).<sup>34</sup> This vivid, if not entirely trustworthy, account describes the emperor's search for his royal "ancestor," as well as the grudging accommodation of the abbot and canons who showed him the parish church next to the monastery where Sigismund was buried but pled ignorance of the precise location of his tomb. The emperor, guided by an old chronicle he carried with him, discovered the holy relics behind a wall, and eventually left the monastery with pieces of both Sigismund and Maurice.

The surviving account of the monastery's abbot, written on the day of the visit as a testimony to the relics' authenticity and preserved in the archive of the Prague cathedral chapter, provides an alternative description of the same events. The abbot contradicts the fifteenth-century chronicle on some details, but also makes clear just how significant Charles IV's acquisitions were. He took away not only a bone of St. Maurice, but also the axe (*achia*) of his third-century martyrdom. After commanding the tomb of Sigismund to be opened, the emperor confiscated both the saintly skull and half the body—the greater part, in other words, of the relics. In honour of the saint, and perhaps as a consolation for the monastery, he also promised to exalt (or

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Apollinaire, bishop of Valence, in *Acta sanctorum*, October, v. 3, 59). Frederick S. Paxton, however, has now offered a persuasive argument that Sigismund's connection with fever may have resulted from other factors unrelated to Apollinaris, including the existence at Agaune of a spring and a Roman pagan sanctuary that may have enjoyed a reputation for healing long before the monastery was founded. The life of St. Apollinaris, attested only from Carolingian times, may in fact have been written after the connection between Sigismund and fevers was established ("Power and the power to Heal," 97-106).

<sup>32</sup> Paxton, "Power and the Power to Heal," 96-97; Folz, "Zur Frage der heiligen Könige," 331-2; "Missa Sancti Sigismundi Regis," in *The Bobbio Missal: A Gallican Mass-book (MS. Paris. Lat. 13246)* ed. E.A. Lowe [The Henry Bradshaw Society 58] (London, 1920) 101-2 nos. 336-8.

<sup>33</sup> Folz, *Les saints rois*, 176; Folz, "Zur Frage der heiligen Könige," 337.

<sup>34</sup> The only edition of the chronicle, part of a 1989 Ph.D. dissertation by Daniel Chaubet, was inaccessible to me. I have used Chaubet's translation of his edition into modern French (Jean d'Orville, dit Cabaret, *La chronique de Savoie de Jean d'Orville*, trans. Daniel Chaubet (Le Marches, 1995)) as well as the edition of the later chronicle published as *Chroniques de Savoye*, ed. D. Muratore, Monumenta Patriae Historiae 3, Scriptores 1 (Turin, 1840) 5-382. Previously believed to be the work of d'Orville, this second text is rather a 1464-66 adaptation of d'Orville's chronicle by Jean Servion (Chaubet, *L'Historiographie Savoyarde*, vol. 1, 93-98). The two accounts are nearly identical; the latter is more verbose in a few places, adding for instance that the chapel in which Sigismund was found was underground. On the unpublished edition of d'Orville's chronicle, see Chaubet, trans., *La chronique de Savoie*, 11; Chaubet, *L'Historiographie Savoyarde*, vol. 1, 80.



lift-up) the remaining bones.<sup>35</sup> The emperor kept his word by donating a reliquary for the bones which later sat prominently on the church's main altar. It still survives.<sup>36</sup> Even if the bones of St. Sigismund had not in fact been lost or forgotten by their custodians, there is no question that the emperor's intervention boosted the prestige of a local cult that had long languished in the shadow of the Theban martyrs.

That hardly exhausted, however, the emperor's ambitions for the cult of the holy martyr. Charles IV proceeded to orchestrate the establishment of Sigismund's cult in Bohemia. The relic's ceremonial arrival in Prague included a procession that led to the cathedral, dated variously to August or September of 1365. The different, very brief accounts may in fact describe two different events: a late August arrival in Prague and a late September ceremony situating the relic in its new chapel within the new Gothic cathedral that was rising around it.<sup>37</sup> This particular chapel had probably been complete for three years, but was only dedicated (or rededicated) upon the arrival of Sigismund's relic.<sup>38</sup> Sigismund's chapel occupies a large and prominent space almost directly across the choir from the most hallowed part of the entire cathedral: the chapel of St. Wenceslaus, the tenth-century duke of Bohemia. The two previous churches on the site, of course, also had Wenceslaus chapels occupying the same space. This latest Wenceslaus chapel was still under construction when Sigismund arrived; it was consecrated exactly one year later.<sup>39</sup>

By that time, the cult of St. Sigismund was well-established. Almost immediately, the saint came to be associated with wonders and miracles. The morning after his arrival, on the feast of St. Wenceslaus, a great light shone down upon Prague and especially upon the cathedral perched high above the banks of the Vltava, shining supernaturally upon the people gathered there for Matins. Those present understood that the glow symbolized the saint's merits and foreshadowed

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<sup>35</sup> The Latin word is "relevare" (Praha, Archiv metropolitní kapituly, 309). But note that the Prague miracle collection seems to indicate that the relics were kept on the main altar already when Charles IV arrived ("Miracula sancti Sigismundi martyris, per ipsum in sanctam Pragensem ecclesiam manifeste demonstrate," in *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum latinorum antiquorum saeculo XVI qui asservantur in Bibliotheca Nationali Parisiensi*, ed. the Bollandists, vol. 3 [Brussels, 1893] 62-69).

<sup>36</sup> Folz, "Zur Frage," 338 n. 87; Seibt, ed., *Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen*, 258 fig. xx.

<sup>37</sup> For different accounts and the evidence for my suggestion that a month passed between the arrival of Sigismund's relic and his ceremonial translation, see Mengel, "A Holy and Faithful Fellowship: Royal Saints in Fourteenth-century Prague," in *Evropa a Čechy na konci středověku. Sborník příspěvků věnovaných Františku Šmahelovi*, ed. Eva Doležalová, Robert Novotný and Pavel Soukup (Prague, 2004) 153 n. 28.

<sup>38</sup> In 1362 an altar to Saints Urban and Cecelia was established where later the chapel of St. Sigismund was located (*Libri erectionum*, lib. 1, 40-41, no. 76), suggesting that the construction of this chapel was complete by this time (Dobroslav Líbal and Pavel Zahradník, *Katedrála Svatého Víta na pražském hradě* [The cathedral of St. Vitus at Prague castle] (Prague, 1999) 127. Cf. Jaroslav Pešina, ed., *České umění gotické, 1350–1420* [Czech gothic art] (Prague, 1970) 78. V. V. Tomek refers to it as the chapel of Saint Urban, opining that its dedication was likely changed shortly after the 1365 arrival of Sigismund's relics (Tomek, *Dějepis* 2:87). The account in the *Miracula sancti Sigismundi* gives evidence for such a 1365 dedication or rededication to Sigismund, explaining that the relic was deposited "in capella nova ejusdem ecclesiae, sub nomine et vocabulo dicti sancti martyris tunc intitulata," (463; f. 1r). Bertalan Kéry offers no evidence for his statement that the chapel to St. Sigismund already existed in 1362 (*Kaiser Sigismund: Ikonografie* [Vienna, 1972] 42).

<sup>39</sup> Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, FRB 4:534.

what was to come.<sup>40</sup> Three days later, a man with a broken foot and a crippled woman both obtained healing at the saint's tomb (*sepulcrum sancti martyris Sigismundi*). A wave of miracles followed, including three the following week. News spread quickly, not least due to the high-level support for the cult. Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim (1364–1378) took advantage of the upcoming semi-annual diocesan synod to publicize the new arrival and encourage the cult. There he commanded Bohemia's parish priests to proclaim from the pulpit the news of the new saint's recent translation and miracles.<sup>41</sup> The miracles continued, and at the next October's synod, the archbishop added the feast of St. Sigismund (2 May in Bohemia) to the handful of obligatory feasts for the Prague archdiocese.<sup>42</sup> Around or shortly after this time, Sigismund even broke into the ranks of the patron saints of the Bohemian kingdom.<sup>43</sup>

The emperor and the archbishop together introduced, fostered, and spread the cult of Sigismund. One or both of them ordered the ceremonial translation to a prominent new chapel, the diocese-wide announcement of the translation, and the adoption of Sigismund as a new Bohemian patron. Both the emperor and the archbishop later claimed to have been healed through this saint's intervention. The remainder of this paper will address two questions arising from their activities. First of all, why did Charles IV choose Sigismund in particular as the centre of this new cult? Secondly, what kind of responses did their actions evoke?

First: why would the King of Bohemia take such an interest in the royal Burgundian martyr? Why go to such lengths to establish his cult in a land where his name was almost unknown? Historians have rightly associated Charles IV's interest in Sigismund with his known devotion to other royal saints, saints whom he considered to be his predecessors. Foremost among these was Wenceslaus, his Přemyslid forbearer. Charles IV, who himself bore the baptismal name Wenceslaus, expended considerable wealth and effort to encourage Wenceslaus-devotion at home and abroad. In addition to the lavish new Prague chapel, the emperor established altars to the holy duke in Aachen, Nuremberg, and even at St. Peter's basilica in Rome. At the same time, Charles cultivated devotion to his imperial predecessor and other name-saint, Charlemagne. To give a just one example, the golden head reliquary of Charlemagne that still exists in Aachen was almost

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<sup>40</sup> "Nuper siquidem in die festi sancti Wenceslai, xxviii dicti mensis, dum matutina in ipsa Pragensi ecclesia agerentur officia, lux magna de caelo resplenduit et descendit, quae quasi totam terram Boemiae et nonnullas alias provincias ei vicinas, sicuti sufficienti testimonio sumus edocti, et signanter Pragensem ecclesiam, illuminavit more mirabili atque magno, ut hii qui ibi tunc aderant aperte cognoscerent eam lucem descendisse per merita hujus sancti, et ut cognoscerentur mystica futurorum praenuntia ac praesaga nec non relevatrix meritorum sancti Sigismundi praefati" ("Miracula sancti Sigismundi," 463).

<sup>41</sup> Polc and Hledíková, eds., *Pražské synody a koncily* 192.

<sup>42</sup> Polc and Hledíková, eds., *Pražské synody a koncily* 194. Some manuscript copies of Arnošt of Pardubice's 1349 archdiocesan statutes add St. Sigismund's feast to the original list of obligatory feasts outlined in these statutes (ibid. 144).

<sup>43</sup> According to the late fourteenth-century Prague martyrology, Sigismund "propter preclara et grandia miracula annotatus est cum aliis patronis ecclesie Pragensis et Regni Boemie. . . Huius festi fit specialis in dyocesi Pragensi tam in officio quam in celebracione memoria die sequenti post Philippi et Jacobi quia cum per miraculorum magnitudinem sit factus patronus Boemie decens fuit ut specialem pro sua festiuitate habeat diem" (MS Prague, Knihovna metropolitní knihovny C 5 f. 64v; cf. N 30 f. 7v). Lists of Bohemian patron saints varied, but included at most the following: Vitus, Wenceslaus, Sigismund, Adalbert, Procopius, and Ludmila.

certainly a gift from Charles IV. Charles associated himself and his crowns with these ruling saints; he even patterned himself on them.<sup>44</sup>

In this context, it is no surprise that he adopted St. Sigismund shortly after he claimed the Burgundian crown: Sigismund represented another royal saint whose direct successor Charles could now claim to be. The very obscurity of Sigismund (in comparison with Charlemagne, for instance) may also have eased his adoption as a Bohemian saint. As emperor, Charles IV possessed the so-called imperial relics or insignia with all of their associations to Charlemagne. Yet he clearly understood that these did not belong to him as King of Bohemia or as the Luxemburg heir; they would inevitably pass to the next elected emperor. Sigismund, on the other hand, unclaimed by any rival dynasty, was free to become a Luxemburg and Bohemian saint. The majority of his physical body and the new centre of his international cult was Prague. He inhabited the cathedral that was itself literally enveloped by the primary castle of Bohemia's ruling Luxemburg dynasty. An elevated walkway even connected palace and cathedral directly. Sigismund's chapel; the multiple representations of him in and around the cathedral occupy important spaces within the elaborate matrix of symbols that Paul Crossley has associated with Charles IV's "politics of presentation".<sup>45</sup> The most dramatic of these was the mosaic commissioned by the emperor and installed in 1370–1371 above the south porch, the medieval cathedral's primary entrance. Its famous Last Judgment scene depicts Charles IV and his empress in postures of supplication, gazing up towards Christ the Judge. Between them, acting as intercessors, appear Bohemia's patron saints, whose names can just be made out from the square below: Procop, Sigismund, Vitus, Wenceslaus, Ludmilla, and Adalbert. Barely six years after the ceremonial arrival of his relics, Sigismund stood shoulder-to-shoulder in this mosaic with the ancient patrons of the realm.

Once Charles had taken the Burgundian crown – and the Burgundian royal saint – he spared no effort to promote St. Sigismund. The chapel, the mosaic, his bust in the cathedral triforium, and his image on the stone tower guarding Prague's bridge all publicly supported this new Bohemian devotion. In 1368, the emperor had his third son baptised Sigismund. Charles IV also strategically dispersed relics of Sigismund.<sup>46</sup> Those he gave to King Casimir the Great, for instance, successfully introduced the cult to Poland (and the name, incidentally, to the Polish ruling dynasty). The emperor recommended the saint to Prague's archbishop, who himself proved an energetic promoter of Sigismund's cult. Curiously, however, the emperor never sought papal indulgences for those who visited Sigismund's relics, even

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<sup>44</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses* 327-31; Machilek, "Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit," 91; Reinhard Schneider, "Karls IV. Auffassung vom Herrscheramt," *Historische Zeitschrift Beiheft* 2, NF (1973) 126-30; "Karolus, qui et Wenceslaus," in *Festschrift für Helmut Beumann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke and Reinhard Wenskus (Sigmaringen, 1977) 365-87. At Aachen and Rome, Charles IV further provided for Czech-speaking priests who could hear confession in the Bohemian vernacular (Machilek, "Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit," 90-91; Folz, *Le Souvenir et la Légende de Charlemagne* 448-450).

<sup>45</sup> Paul Crossley, "The Politics of Presentation: The Architecture of Charles IV of Bohemia," in *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones, Richard Marks, and A. J. Minnis, (York, 2000) 99-172.

<sup>46</sup> Folz, "Zur Frage der heiligen Könige," 338; Percy Ernst Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte vom dritten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, 3 v. [Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica 13] (Stuttgart, 1954-1956) 3:76-78, fig. 28.

though he repeatedly secured indulgences for many of the other relics he had brought to Prague, an increasingly common practice throughout Europe in the later Middle Ages.<sup>47</sup>

Arguably, these particular relics needed no indulgences to attract pilgrims. Miracles, not indulgences, drew visitors to Sigismund's body. Yet here even the resourceful emperor reached the limit of his direct power. Charles IV had obtained these relics. Together with the archbishop, he had promoted the cult of Sigismund, the martyr king with whom he hoped to associate himself and his dynasty. In short, Charles IV masterfully manipulated contemporary devotion to relics (a devotion he shared) to establish an entire framework for a miracle-generating cult around St. Sigismund. The miracles themselves, however, depended upon the responses of the devout. The evidence of their devotion, unlike that of the emperor's political and dynastic program, cannot be read so simply in stone monuments or shining mosaics. To discern how the cult was received, one must instead turn to another source: a single fragmentary text, six meagre folia, that can speak the stories first told under the mute vaults of Prague's cathedral.

The Bollandists printed most of the legible portion of this unique manuscript over a century ago. The document serving, as its half-hearted binding suggests, that the manuscript, now in Paris, may once have been at the burial church of St. Sigismund in Agaune.<sup>48</sup> The text itself, and possibly the manuscript, almost definitely stem from the Prague cathedral. There, according to the chronicler and cathedral canon Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, the miracles of the saint were recorded in a *tractatus* or *libellus* preserved in the sacristy (immediately adjacent to the Sigismund chapel).<sup>49</sup> What survives is either a partial copy of that *libellus* or some derivative of it. This remarkable text has almost entirely escaped the attention of the numerous scholars who have written about Sigismund and his late medieval cult.<sup>50</sup> In the final section of this essay, I will offer a glimpse of what this text can reveal about the Bohemian cult of St. Sigismund.

The *Miracula sancti Sigismundi* contains a preface recounting the arrival of the relic in Prague followed by brief accounts of a series of thirty-five or thirty-six miracles performed over the next four months. Then the text breaks off, mid-

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<sup>47</sup> On indulgences in general, see Gustav Adolf Benrath, "Ablaß," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 1 (1977):347-64; Elisabeth Vodola, "Indulgences," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 6. (1985): 446-50; Nikolaus Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses im Mittelalter* 3 vv. (Paderborn, 1922-1923).

<sup>48</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouvelles acquisitions Latins, cod. 1510; bound to the end of the gathering and serving as a protective covering is a seventeenth-century charter that links the manuscript to the region of Saint Maurice (Agaunum) at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

<sup>49</sup> "Et de hiis miraculis sancti Zigmundi habetur specialis tractatus vel libellus in sacristia Pragensi" (FRB 4:533-534).

<sup>50</sup> See above n. 35. A few scholars have made brief reference to the text, but I know of no analysis of the text of the miracles themselves (e.g., Neureither, *Das Bild Karls IV. in der Zeitgenössischen Französischen Geschichtsschreibung*, Ph.D. diss. Ruprecht-Karl-Universität Heidelberg, 1964, 197, n. 2; Polc, "Councils and Synods of Prague," *Apollinaris* 52 (1979) 213, nn. 53-54; apparently Polc did not yet know of the text when he published an article on St. Sigismund, "Zapomenutý český patron," 131. Robert Folz, who published extensively on royal saints, does not make use of this text in his analysis of miracles attributed to Sigismund and other royal saints (*Les saints rois du moyen âge en occident (VI<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècles)*, Subsidia Hagiographica 68 (Brussels, 1981) 117-135.

sentence.<sup>51</sup> The author does not identify himself, but no doubt belonged to the community of canons and clerics associated with the cathedral.<sup>52</sup> The *libellus* provided an official record of the miracles of the saint, a written counterpart to the public pronouncements in the cathedral made by those receiving healing or other miraculous benefits. In other words, the text represents an official description and construction of the cult. The preface, for instance, highlights the guiding role of Charles IV. Strikingly, the author also underlines the close association between Sigismund and Wenceslaus, even asserting that no rivalry existed between the two saints. Certainly the timing of the translation of Sigismund's relics and the first miracle – on the eve and the morning of Wenceslaus's feast day, respectively – suggests a connection of some kind. Elsewhere I have suggested that Charles IV may have used Sigismund's relics to reinforce devotion to Wenceslaus; some evidence suggests that the cult of the Bohemian duke may have been embarrassingly weak in Bohemia at this time, at least among the kingdom's German speakers.<sup>53</sup>

But if one looks beyond the official rhetoric, beyond the strategies of an emperor, one glimpses the individuals who responded to the proclamations. To be sure, the text's writer inscribed the people's originally oral accounts of miracles using clerical words dressed in impeccable theology. The cathedral chapter also vetted the miracles, in one case launching an investigation because the story told to them fit no known model or precedent.<sup>54</sup> Yet it reveals the names, occupations, maladies, and often the geographical origins of those who gathered in gratitude around the new tomb.<sup>55</sup> They represented nearly the entire social spectrum, from the archbishop down to a blind beggar woman. Several nobles (including a *dominus* and two *militēs*) came to receive or announce miracles. There is a baker (*pannifex*), a mason (*murator*), a blacksmith (*faber*), two tailors (*sutores*), and a simple parish priest (*presbyter plebanus*). Of the women, one usually learns a first name, a place of origin, and sometimes a husband's name and occupation. (Men, incidentally, outnumber women nearly two-to-one in the miracle collection.) These people are not literary fabrications; records of several of them appear in unrelated contemporary sources. Nicholas "called Turnovic," for instance, a Prague blacksmith, bought a prominent house in the parish of St. Gall in the same year

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<sup>51</sup> Most, but not all of the miracles are numbered in the text, which breaks off in the middle of the miracle numbered 33. Folio 6v is badly rubbed and many words are illegible even with the aid of ultraviolet light. Thus the printed edition ends with the rubric announcing miracle 31.

<sup>52</sup> For the clerics known to be associated with Prague's cathedral, see Tomek, *Dějepis* 3:165-80, 5:135-77 and Antonín Podlaha, *Series praepositorum, decanorum, archidiaconorum aliorumque praelatorum et canonicorum s. metropolitanae ecclesiae Pragensis a primordiis usque ad praesentia tempora* (Prague, 1912). Possible authors of this text include but are not limited to: Nicholas, canon and schoolmaster (1361-1369), Buzek the sacristan (from 1363) and Beneš Krabice of Weitmil himself (canon 1359-1375), although the latter makes no claim to the authorship in his chronicle (Podlaha, *Series praepositorum*, 39-41).

<sup>53</sup> Mengel, "A Holy and Faithful Fellowship," 152-158.

<sup>54</sup> "Sed quia huic miraculo novoet prius in nostris partibus non audito decanus et capitulum Pragense fidem protinus noluerunt adhibere, sed commiserunt inquisitionem super veritate facti decano Lyppii et duobus aliis presbyteris, qui postea rescripserunt quod, facta inquisitione diligenti ac fideli, ita ut praescribitur invenerunt" ("Miracula sancti Sigismondi," 465).

<sup>55</sup> For the specific entries upon which the following discussion of the miracle recipients is based, see "Miracula sancti Sigismondi," 62-69.

(1365) he reported that Sigismund had healed his career-threatening paralysis of the hand.<sup>56</sup>

Often the text offers clues to where the pilgrims lived. Abstracting geographical places of origin from medieval surnames is admittedly problematic and has in the past been the occasion of pointed debate.<sup>57</sup> Fortunately, in many cases one does not have to rely on surnames. “Katherine of Čáslav, known to many” and “a certain man, Nicholas of Kutná Hora” may both have been residents of Prague whose names reflected previous residences or family origins. But it seems relatively safe to assume that “a certain man from the village of Lhota near Řevnice” and “Stanek from the *oppidum* of Mníšek” did in fact hail from those places. Nearly two-thirds of the thirty-six named individuals can reasonably be associated with a particular geographical location. Irregular spellings and numerous villages that share a single name unfortunately make it impossible to pinpoint all of these places. The text nevertheless supports some specific and some general conclusions. Fourteen of the faithful came from Prague; of these, three lived in the Old Town, five in the New Town, and two in the Lesser Town. For five of these, their parish is also known. Twice the city of Vienna is mentioned, but in neither case can the Austrian city be definitively identified as the immediate residence of the miracle recipient. All other places of origin seem to have been Bohemian. Most of the other devout arrived in Prague from Bohemian towns and villages within 100 kilometres of the capital city; many had far less distance to travel.

For at least the first four months after the introduction of the new cult of St. Sigismund, most of the pilgrims probably came from Prague or its immediate vicinity. The new relic reinforced Prague’s role as a religious centre, but apparently only for Bohemia, not the entire empire. Perhaps this distribution would look dramatically different if the entire text of the miracle collection survived. Later inventories of the cathedral hint that this would be the case; the duke of Masovia (in Poland) and a “certain noble from Hungary” both donated images of Sigismund for his chapel, presumably out of devotion or even gratitude to the saint.<sup>58</sup>

Charles IV certainly recognized the political and economic import of thoughtfully deployed relics within the sacred topography. This was the monarch, after all, who established a new annual market in Prague to coincide with the arrival of masses of foreign pilgrims for the feast of the *Ostensio reliquiarum*.<sup>59</sup> The tomb of St. Sigismund likewise brought a steady stream of visitors into his city and his cathedral – witnesses to all of the dynastic, imperial claims embodied in its art and architecture. But Sigismund’s shrine also provided a centre for miracles, miracles

<sup>56</sup> Old Town city records refer to this house “in novo foro” which in 1365 “Mikechs [a variant spelling of Nicholas] Turnowicz faber emit erga Eligast sutorem,” Václav Vladivoj Tomek, *Základy starého místopisu pražského*, [The basics of the old topography of Prague] 5 vv. (Prague, 1866, 1875) 1:238.

<sup>57</sup> Richard W. Emery, “The Use of the Surname in the Study of Medieval Economic History,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 7 (1952): 43-50; Robert Sabatino Lopez, “Concerning Surnames and Places of Origin,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 8 (1954): 6-16; Richard W. Emery, “A Further Note on Medieval Surnames,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 9 (1955): 104-106; Benjamin Z. Kedar, “Toponymic Surnames as Evidence of Origin: Some Medieval Views,” *Viator* 4 (1973) 123-29.

<sup>58</sup> These objects accrued to the cathedral between the inventories of 1368 and that of 1374 (Podlaha and Šittler, *Chrámový poklad XXIX*. For further evidence for the cult of St. Sigismund in Hungary, see Polc, “Zapomenutý český patron,” 130.

<sup>59</sup> Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, FRB 4:519

that took place with a frequency that was evidently unmatched in Charles IV's kingdom. People came to find what they could not obtain elsewhere. Like many royal saints, the Bohemian Sigismund had no particular holy specialty.<sup>60</sup> The record of miracles makes no mention of his traditional association with fever, and only two Bohemian supplicants, one of them the archbishop, received this kind of healing from him. Most reported some sort of physical healing – from blindness, paralysis, and assorted other illnesses. Others praised him for exorcisms, or for the reversal of injustices, like false imprisonment. There was even a cicada extermination. In one case the saint reconciled a noble with one of his villagers whom he had condemned to death; Sigismund miraculously released the prisoner shortly before the scheduled execution. Strikingly, it was not the prisoner, but the well-known nobleman – Hynek Krušina of Lichtenburg [Lichnice] – who subsequently travelled to Prague to proclaim the miracle.<sup>61</sup> Another day, the caretakers of an unbaptised infant reported the resurrection of the child, who had died in their care. The little boy lived just long enough to be baptised. Journeying to Prague, they thanked Sigismund for saving them from the wrath of the child's parents. Charles IV introduced to Prague something more vital than a new relic or a new chapel; he gave his subjects a source of divine intervention, a miracle-making saint whose new home was Prague cathedral. The people responded. They prayed to Sigismund, visited his tomb, made vows to him, experienced his miracles, and then praised him publicly before the other believers at his shrine.

Without the rest of the miracle collection, it is impossible to know how long the intensity of this cult persevered. It almost certainly flourished at least through 1371, when the emperor himself was healed after the empress made and fulfilled a vow to Sigismund.<sup>62</sup> Widespread devotion to the martyr-king most likely continued until the emperor's death in 1378, and quite possibly beyond it. One hint emanates from a general impression born of reading various Bohemian sources from last three decades of the fourteenth century: they begin to contain many instances of people named Sigismund. Yet despite the unquestionable success of the cult of St. Sigismund in Bohemia, a few generations later this adopted patron saint became the "forgotten Bohemian patron saint."<sup>63</sup> Partly to blame was the rise of the Hussites and their, at best, ambivalent attitude to the cult of relics.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the cult of St. Wenceslaus, the relatively young veneration of the Burgundian king never recovered in the Czech lands. Charles IV's son, Emperor Sigismund, further damaged Prague's status as a centre for relics when he removed the cathedral treasury to Karlstein castle during the Hussite wars. He even melted down many of the valuable

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<sup>60</sup> Folz, who did not take this miracle collection into account, notices the same tendency among the posthumous miracles of other royal saints (*Les saints rois*, 129); for the cases described below, see "Miracula sancti Sigismondi," 62-69.

<sup>61</sup> On the Lichtenburg family and its property, see Vratislav Vaněček, *Velké dějiny země Koruny české*, 2 (1197-1250) (Prague, 2000) 180; Jan Urban, "Lichtenburská država na Českomoravské vrchovině ve 13. a 14. století," [The dominium of Lichtenbourgs in Czech-Moravian highlands in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century] *Historická geografie* 18 (1979) 32-68; for Hynek in particular, see Urban, *Lichtenburkové: vzestupy a pády jednoho panského rodu* [Lichtenbourgs: the rises and falls of one aristocratical family] (Prague, 2003) esp. 220-21.

<sup>62</sup> Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, FRB 4:543-544.

<sup>63</sup> Polc, "Zapomenutý český patron."

<sup>64</sup> For the Hussite responses to the cult of saints, see Ota Halama, *Otázka svatých v české reformace* [The question of saints in the Bohemian Reformation] (Brno, 2002).

shrines to pay his mercenaries.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the crusade led by the same Sigismund against Bohemian Hussites cannot have strengthened popular devotion to his name-saint.

Charles IV collected bones – saints’ bones, bones he and his contemporaries believed somehow still to embody the power of the saints themselves. He had his favourites, like St. Catherine. But the emperor loved none more than the holy kings whose several crowns he wore. They were his predecessors, his models. Close association with them could only strengthen his position and that of his dynasty in Bohemia and the Empire. For these reasons, he sought out Sigismund. Once he had literally uncovered the martyr-king’s relics, Charles IV applied his unparalleled reliquary expertise to create for Sigismund a Bohemian cult. He assigned him one of Prague cathedral’s most prominent new chapels, and ceremoniously introduced his relics on the eve of Bohemia’s most celebrated feast day. With iconography and architecture, he featured Sigismund prominently within the topography of the capital city so deeply marked – to this very day – by his vision. Prague’s people, the individuals who inhabited its topography, responded. They brought to Sigismund their ailments, their poverty, their conflicts, and their thanksgiving. The prominence of the cult of relics within the Prague of Charles IV, which was also of course the Prague of Waldhauser and Milíč, two preachers who enjoyed the emperor’s support, offers a reminder of the complexity of the city’s local religious culture at the time, and of the complexity of the emperor’s own religious identity. The Emperor who corresponded with Petrarch, and the city known to historians for its “pre-Hussite” reforming preachers, both remained devoted to the miracle-producing cult of a sixth-century martyr-king imported from Burgundy. Any attempt to characterise or to categorise the religious climate of fourteenth-century Prague must remember the significant role of Bohemia’s forgotten patron saint.

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<sup>65</sup> Polc, “Zapomenutý český patron,” 131.