
Jakoubek of Stříbro and the so-called “Sermon in Týn Church” of 31 January 1417

Kristína Sedláčková

(Brno)

Jakoubek had expressed his views on the question of images at least since 1411; it was – above all – in his university *quaestio*: *Utrum potest summus princeps*, 1411; *Posicio de Antichristo*, 1412; *Quia heu in templis*, before mid-1414; further, *Evangelijní postila*, 1413-14, and the letter to an unknown priest, *De fumalibus*, 1415.¹ Nevertheless, his name is cited exclusively in connection with the so-called “Sermon in Týn Church” [týnské kázání].² Above all, the literature of art history, which deals with the period “after the year 1420,” views this sermon as a crucial milestone – as an impulse to the “consequent” outbreak of iconoclastic upheavals (for instance, Jan Chlíbec, or Jaromír Homolka).³ These views are based on the fundamental study of Zdeněk Nejedlý,⁴ who was the first to attempt a systematic explication of the manuscript, from which he cites several passages. Nejedlý, however, committed a serious error when he combined two independent items, namely *De fumalibus* (1415) and the so-called Sermon in Týn Church (1417), both of which are found in the same codex (MS. Prague, NK III G 28). While in his letter to the country priest, Jakoubek still expresses himself in a very radical manner⁵ (we can here speak even about “a theoretical iconoclasm”), two years later – evidently under the impact of intermediate events⁶ – we no longer find such ferocious

¹ Spunar I nos. 562, 563, 567, 648, 655; František M. Bartoš, *Literární činnost M. Jakoubka ze Stříbra*, [The literary activity of M. Jakoubek of Stříbro] [Sbírka pramenů ku poznání literárního života v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku III/8] (Prague, 1925) nos. 23, 25, 33, 95, 58.

² I have analysed in detail Jakoubek’s view of images, as well as dealt with those of Matěj of Janov, Nicholas of Dresden, and Peter Payne, in my diploma thesis: Kristína Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus. Matěj z Janova, Mikuláš z Drážďan, Jakoubek ze Stříbra, Petr Payne*. Master’s thesis Masaryk University (Brno, 2003).

³ Jaromír Homolka, “Sochařství,” in: *Praha středověká* (Prague, 1983) 1:463: “A sort of milestone is the fiery sermon of Jakoubek of Stříbro in the Týn Church.” Jan Chlíbec, “K vývoji názorů Jana Rokycany na umělecké dílo,” [Towards an evolution in the thought of Jan Rokycana on artistic production] *Husitský Tábor* 8 (1985) 39; idem, “Husitské obrazoborectví a meze jeho tolerance k výtvarnému dílu,” [Hussite iconoclasm and the limits of its tolerance of the works of art] *Dějiny a současnost* 5 (1994) 49: “from whose pulpit [in the Týn Church] in 1417 Jakoubek delivered his famous iconoclastic address opening the door to an active iconoclasm.”

⁴ Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu* (2. edn., Prague, 1954-56) especially 4:105-116.

⁵ Jacobello da Misa: *Epistola ad quendam plebanum de fumalibus, de ymaginibus, de censibus ecclesiae*, ed., Zdeněk Mareš, *L’ Ecclesiologia calistina di Jacobello da Misa (1373-1429)*, Diss. Pontifical Lateran University (Rome, 1997) 139: “Nam, ut dixi, licet forte bene et bona intencione, invente sunt ymagines ad bonum usum, tamen iam propter antiquatum abusum earum sunt destruende; quantum omnis populus christianus istam intelligeret deordinacionem et abhominacionem stantem in loco sancto, ubi non debet, quis michi hoc dabit, ut omnis homo prophetet istam sentenciam et omnis sacerdos et predicator populos in ambonibus doceant, ut cognoscentes seducciones Antichristi sciant ex Dei gracia penitere et Antichristi laqueos evitare, ut sciret populus christianus, quam potens est iniquitas demonum et Antichristi – in talibus ymaginibus, quasi Dei et suorum sanctorum et in templo Dei – dementare homines et ludificare?”

⁶ For instance, the Council of Constance in 1415 accused King Wenceslaus IV, as well as his Queen Sophia, that they sided with the Reformers, that they did not oppose those who were

expressions. In my opinion, precisely this error of Nejedlý had caused Jakoubek's Sermon in the Týn Church to be regarded as a key to the subsequent iconoclasm. Not much new resulted from the next work by Jana Bělohávková (1992) that was devoted to Jakoubek's "sermon".⁷ Her aim, however, was more an editorial work, rather than one of interpretation.

Yet, to some extent the discussion about the effect of Jakoubek's "sermon" did continue. Some maintained that his words, proclaimed in the Týn Church on 31 January 1417, did elicit an excited response from "the populace of Prague" (František Bartoš and Jiří Kejř), others had doubts (Josef Macek and František Šmahel).⁸

An analysis of the manuscript itself, both of its form and of its content, is the most likely way to assess the possible impact of the "Sermon in the Týn Church." Although some historians (for instance, already Václav V. Tomek, who was the first

destroying the images of saints and crucifixes, and that they even agreed with the latter; see *Documenta* 640. The same Council accused Jerome of Prague that in 1414 he besmirched the miraculous crucifix at the monastery of St. James in Prague "with human excrement and other impurities," while he simultaneously kept exclaiming that the depiction of the crucified Christ was a heresy; FRB VIII: 300. Subsequently, he was charged in Constance that he also incited two laymen to disgrace a cross; Václav Novotný, *M. Jan Hus, život a učení 2 vv.* (Prague, 1919-1931), I/2:337. An anonymous complaint from 1416 charged that preachers attack the teaching and the rites of the Church in Kozí Hrádek and in the town of Ústí nad Lužnicí: First, that in Kozí Hrádek and its environs, as well as in Ústí, there were and are sermons preached that the veneration of vestments, images, and sacraments was a vanity...It was the bishops, whom these preachers call locust and stallions, invented all that veneration of vestments and images out of avarice... And on Good Friday, they told the people that they adored an idol...and added with contempt that on that day "fornicators and monks" would engage in playing games. See Josef Macek, "Ktož jsou boží bojovníci," [Who are the warriors of God?] *Čtení o Táboře v husitském revolučním hnutí* (Prague, 1951) 31; for the original of the Roman priest's complaint see *Documenta* 636-638. For instance, Štěpán of Dolany (1417) reports sarcastically on the destruction of images: "You talk together with other of your inventions, as if it were a child's play, that statues and images cause idolatry, and therefore you have destroyed many of them in the churches, as they were idols. You have really performed great deeds! You have invented a new law, and corrected an error, which all the holy fathers had failed to correct from the ancient times to the birth, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ until your own coming, so that the holy church of God, hitherto so dangerously misled, used the image of the Crucified with a required veneration to the eternal King Jesus Christ, as well as venerated images of other saints." See Jana Nechutová, "Polemika Štěpána z Dolan s husitskou ikonofóbií," [The polemic of Štěpán of Dolany with Hussite iconophobia] *Husitství-Reformace- Renaissance*, Sborník k 60. narozeninám F. Šmahela, 3 vv. (Prague, 1994) 1:396-397. In 1417, perhaps already after Jakoubek's address in the Týn Church, Křišťan of Prachatice wrote a letter to the priest Koranda in Plzeň, in which he complained about the ordinary people of both genders who – despite the warnings of university masters – were proclaiming that there was no purgatory, that it was useless to pray for the dead or to invoke the saints, and that relics should be discarded on manure piles, and images thrown into fire. See *Documenta* 633-636.

⁷ Jana Bělohávková, "Die Ansichten über Bilder im Werk der tschechischen Reformprediger," *Studie o rukopisech* 29 (1992) 53-64; the article is based on her master's thesis: *Jakoubek ze Stříbra a Petr Payne: O obrazech*, Master's Thesis, Philosophical Faculty, Charles University (FF UK), Library of the Institute of Art History FF UK (Prague, 1987).

⁸ František M. Bartoš, "Do čtyř pražských artikulů. Z myšlenkových i ústavních zápasů let 1415-1420," [Towards the Four Articles of Prague. From the intellectual and institutional struggles of the years 1415-1420] *Sborník příspěvků k dějinám hlavního města Prahy* 5/2 (1932) 494; Jiří Kejř, "Deklarace pražské university z 10. března 1417 o přijímání pod obojí a jejich historické pozadí," [The declaration of the University of Prague of 10 March 1417 on communion *sub utraque* and its historical background] *Sborník historický* 8 (1961) 144 n. 54; František Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce 4 vv.* 2nd ed. (Prague, 1995-1996) 2:296; 355 n. 269; Josef Macek, *Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí* [Tabor in the Hussite revolutionary movement] (Prague, 1956) 1:195 n. 92.

to introduce Jakoubek's "sermon" to the scholarly audience),⁹ refer to it as a university *questio* (Kejř and Bělohávková),¹⁰ the prevailing ordinary opinion considers it a sermon. Its identity as a *quaestio* is beyond doubt; from the formal viewpoint it contains all the appropriate attributes: It is introduced by the posing of a question (*questio*) that begins traditionally with the word "*utrum*," and defines the problem, the answer for which will be sought in the following part: *Utrum secundum legem ewangelicam plebes Cristi fideles necessitantur in templis suis aliquam habendo ymaginem colere, adorare vel aliter quomodolibet venerari*. The *propositions* follow, suggesting both a positive and a negative solution of the question, without, however, a substantial argumentation. *Notabilia* clarify the basic terms that will be used and that are, therefore, essential for the correct understanding and answering the question. The terms in question are *ymago*, or *figura*, and *adoracio*, with the latter traditionally differentiated as *latria*, *dulia*, and *hyperdulia*; Jakoubek also attempts to distinguish between *adorare* (outward expression of respect), and *colere* (internal expression of respect), without, however, observing the distinction himself. He presents the solution of the question in three *conclusions* with a number of *correlaria*.

The very form of the text raises a number of questions that are not easy to answer. Could a university *questio* take place in a parish church and, moreover, on a Sunday, when disputation should not be staged? What was Jakoubek's relation to the Týn Church; why did he not rather use as his platform the Bethlehem Chapel, where he was a preacher, and where he might have more likely found an appropriate audience? We can only guess what had then transpired. It is certain that the year 1417 was the time of a considerable unrest: Prague was under an interdict because of the presence of Master Jesenice, a struggle for the control of parishes was in progress, etc. Also the fact that Jakoubek, within merely six days after the "unanimous" decision of the university (21 January 1417),¹¹ questioned this decision (at least in the matter of images) and suggests that in all probability he was unable to carry on the dispute on the grounds of the university. The form of a university *questio* indicates that the participants were educated individuals, knowledgeable in Latin, and not members of the ordinary populace, who could be inspired to acts of mass violence. Moreover, the iconoclastic disturbances did not take place until two years later.

Let us turn to the contents of the *questio*. In the normally neutral proposition, it already betrays an adherence to the Bohemian Reformation when it appeals for the negative solution to the authority of Scripture and for the positive solution to St. Dionysius (Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita). The same spirit is manifest in the following *notabilia* when, during the classification of *adoracio*, the appeal is made to Jan Hus instead of the orthodox Thomas Aquinas. The solution of the *questio*, as I have mentioned previously, is presented in three conclusions determined by the divers interpretations of the word *ymago*, as defined in the *notabilia*. The first conclusion deals with the *ymago* of the highest uncreated type, the image of the Son

⁹ Václav V. Tomek, *Děje University Pražské* [The history of Prague University.] (Prague, 1849) 1:244.

¹⁰ Jiří Kejř, "Deklarace pražské university," 144. Only four years later he already speaks of a "sermon". See Kejř, *Husitský právník M. Jan z Jesenice* [The Hussite lawyer M. Jan Jesenice] (Prague, 1965) 111 n. 77. Bělohávková, *Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, and idem, *Die Ansichten*.

¹¹ Documenta 654-656; Bartoš, *Do čtyř pražských artikulů* 13.

of God, Jesus Christ. Unsurprisingly, it is entirely positive: “According to the law of God both the church triumphant, and the church militant, is to adore [*colere*] and to venerate [*venerari*] that living first uncreated image of God.”¹² In the spirit of the high regard of the Bohemian Reformation for the Eucharist, the image of the sacrament of the altar also deserves the ultimate respect (*colere adoracione latræ*), because it contains Christ truly, really, powerfully, presently, and essentially. The second conclusion refers to the image of man and also has a positive tenor: “According to the law of the Gospels people are to pay respect through the ‘*dulia*’ to the living created images, that is those that are the members of Christ, the poor, the simple, and other neighbours, as well as enemies; and according to the law of God, they are to esteem these living images rather than the fabricated ones.” By *dulia* he understands the love for one’s brethren, manifest by mutual *good works spiritual and physical* (Romans 12:10ff).¹³ At last, the third conclusion explicates the word *ymago* as referring to fabricated images, admonishing: “According to the law of the Gospels, Christians should not keep, venerate or in any other manner pay respect in their temples to that last and least type of images produced by human craftsmanship.” The main and decisive argument is that Scripture does not mandate such a practice.¹⁴

Because of the size of the *questio*, Jakoubek devotes relatively little space to the fabricated images. He advances virtually no novel arguments; he limits himself to the “traditional” material of Matěj of Janov, only somewhat enriched by new input from Nicholas of Dresden. Thus in the discussion of the Eucharist he does not fail to emphasize that the human mind is fickle; it turns easily to external sensual matters which absorb its attention and interfere with adoring the sacrament in spirit and in truth. The earthly man prefers to honour a fabricated image rather than the invisible image of God. Thus the sight of beautiful, appealing, pious virgins, such as St. Katherine, elicits physical love, piety, and even tears and great trust toward the saints, but none of that springs from the spirit of Jesus. In addition, there are heretics who perceive human forms where they do not belong. Thus, they created an image of God in the form of a great, handsome, and noble man; they are called anthropomorphists, because they assume that God has human parts that are described in Scripture. Therefore, everything that is in the temples that the people venerate and adore and that may interfere with the true cult of adoring the uncreated image of the sacrament should be removed from the sight of the people. Otherwise,

¹² “Secundum legem Dei tam ecclesia triumphans quam militans necessitantur habere, colere et venerari illam vivam et primam ymaginem increatam Dei. Probatur, quia talis ymago, ut supra notatum est, est primogenitus Dei Filius...” See Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 163.

¹³ “Secundum legem ewangelicam pebes cristiane necessitantur vivas ymagines creatas, scilicet que sunt membra Cristi, pauperes, simplices et alios omnes proximos, eciam inimicos, *dulia* venerari et ex lege Dei debent multo magis honorare tales ymagines vivas quam artificiales; et hoc veneracione *dulie* patet: Quia ex precepto cristiani necessitantur proximos diligere in effectum, et ut sic secundum Apostolum debent se invicem prevenire honore et opera nunc spiritualia et carnalia sibi invicem ostendenda.” Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 167

¹⁴ “Plebes cristianorum non necessitantur secundum legem ewangelicam in templis suis illud extremum et minimum genus ymaginum artificio humano fabricatum habere, colere vel aliter quomodolibet venerari. Patet, quia nullibi hoc lex ewangelica precipit discurrendo similia Dominica et ewangelica precepta, igitur etc. Ecce ut dicit Augustinus in fine 2i libri De Doctrina cristiana, quod ita perfecta est lex Dei, quod quidquid homo extra didicerit, si noxium est, ibi dampnatur; si utile est, ibi invenitur. Cum ergo ex scriptura Legis non invenitur utilitas talium ymaginum, sed plus dispendium et periculum, miror, quomodo quis zelanter eas audet defendere sine fundamento legis Cristi ewangelice.” Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 168.

it might become a stumbling block that may prevent the concentration of attention on the public cult of adoring Christ, whether these distractions are images, or relics, or other matters. Even though Jakoubek includes the Eucharist among the fabricated images that interfere with the adoration of Christ, this particular case is an exception, because “the figure of the sacrament from *Christ’s power* has a much greater effectiveness for inspiring the people to adore Christ than has a fabricated image from *the power and work of a painter*.”¹⁵ Therefore, when it was felt that the people misused such inanimate objects and ascribed to them the honour of divinity, the great saints of the Old and New Testaments removed such objects so that they might not become occasions of idolatry. This was done, for instance, by the saintly King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:4) and by Moses (Ex 32:24, 20), as well as mandated by canon law (D. 63, c. 28). In the same way, when speaking of man as the image of God, Jakoubek does not fail to mention the persecution of living images, while the non-living images are invoked and defended. He quotes the words of St. Augustine: “Let not religion be for us the cult of human works, because the artists themselves, who produce them, are better than the works, yet we are not to venerate the artists;”¹⁶ and the words of Clement: “If we venerate visible images in honour of the invisible God, that is for sure mendacious; if you really wish to venerate the image of God...venerate the actual existing divine image, because an image of God is in every man, yet there is not the figure of God in everyone, it is only where there is a kind soul and a pure mind...Because what kind of an honouring of God is that which attaches itself to stony or wooden forms, venerates empty and spiritless idols as divinities, and values an honour that shows contempt for the true image of God?” Jakoubek adds further: from all this it is evident “to what extent the modern clergy, together with the misguided people...likes its inventions and is exceedingly eager to defend and protect them.”¹⁷

The principal argument, however, is the authority of Scripture, which notes more the divisiveness and danger of fabricated images than their usefulness. Jakoubek states: “I wonder how someone can dare to zealously defend them, without finding a basis in Christ’s evangelical law.” The argumentation is also based on the order of creation. Any fabricated image, albeit the most beautiful, was less apt to inspire in the faithful an adoration of God than a being that is higher in the order of creation, for instance, plants (Mt 6:29), animals – simply everything alive that, as a divine creation, was better and more perfect than any human artefact. Yet, we do not venerate such humble creation, therefore, a fortiori neither the beauty of fabricated images ought to be venerated.

¹⁵ “... figura sacramenti ex Christi institutione multo maioris efficacie est ad erigendum plebes in adoracione ibi ad Christum, quam artificialis ymago ex institutione vel operatione pictoris.” Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 165.

¹⁶ “Non sit nobis religio humanorum operum cultus. Meliores enim sunt ipsi artifices, qui talia fabricantur, quos tamen colere non debemus.” Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 167.

¹⁷ “Unde *Clemens sanctus in Itinerario suo dicit*: Ymagines visibiles nos ad honorem Dei invisibilis adoramus, quod certissime falsum est, si et vere velitis Dei ymaginem colere, homini beneficientes, veram inesse ymaginem Dei coleretis. In omni enim homine est ymago Dei, non tamen in omnibus Dei similitudo est, sed ubi benigna est anima et mens pura ... Quis enim honor Dei iste est per lapideas et ligneas formas discurrere et inanes et exanimas figuras tamquam (id est Deum)¹⁷ numina adorare et honorem, in quo vere Dei ymago est, spernere?... Ex quibus correlarie patere potest, quantum modernus clerus cum seducto populo relinquens Dei preceptum de veneracione vivarum ymaginum Dei in proximis amplectitur suas adinventiones, easque nimis zelanter defendunt et protegunt.” Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 167-168.

There has been a conflict in the interpretation of Jakoubek's attitude toward the opinion of Thomas Aquinas that he quotes: "And even, if some modern doctors were found, who would celebrate and invoke these images, let them be believed only if they offer proofs from rational arguments and written sources; only to that extent Thomas Aquinas and others should be believed, who allegedly maintain that such images should be venerated in the manner of *latria*."¹⁸ While Zdeněk Nejedlý maintains that Jakoubek disputes with Aquinas,¹⁹ on the contrary, Bělohlávková assumes (and Stejskal agrees with her)²⁰ that Jakoubek was seeking a compromise. I am inclined to agree with Nejedlý, because – considering the entire context – it is not possible to interpret Jakoubek's statement otherwise than as a clear disagreement with the opinion of Aquinas and he is proving it by the highest authority, from which no further appeal is possible – Scripture. He supports his opinion also in another way: if it is claimed, on the contrary, that the church holds, multiplies and venerates images (*et si in contrarium allegatur: ecclesia, que tenet ymagines, multiplicat et veneratur*), then Jakoubek asks: But which church? The church of Constance, or every Christian land or kingdom? Has not the former one erred in the questions of the chalice or of simony? And it also errs in the question of excommunication and absolution. Some, who proved this modern church guilty of simony, of sheltering hypocrites, or of poison infecting its precincts, these defenders of righteousness were subject to excommunication and persecution. Regarding these excommunications and penalties, as not in accordance with God and his law, the righteous ones rejected such sentences and faced their own death. Even today, this church condemns many whom God blesses. And, if the church errs in other difficult matters, it is not surprising that it should do so in the issue of images that rest *merely* on human custom and tradition.²¹ Here I also differ from Bělohlávková's interpretation. She translates the sentence: *Ex quibus patet, quod ymagines, si*

¹⁸ "Quodsi aliqui doctores moderni inveniuntur, qui multum magnificant et appreciant huiusmodi ymagines, tantum credatur eis, quantum probant dignis rationibus et scripturis, ut sic *Thome de Aquino* vel aliis est credendum, quod huiusmodi ymagines *sint latria adorande*." Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 169.

¹⁹ Nejedlý, *Dějiny husitského zpěvu* 4:108.

²⁰ Bělohlávková, *Die Ansichten* 59: "Obwohl Jakobellus von der Unnützlichkeit, Gefahr ja Schädlichkeit der Kirchenausschmückung für das gemeine Volk überzeugt ist, fügt er den Satz hinzu, die *Kompromissbereitschaft* ahnen läst. 'Falls einige moderne Doktoren solche Bilder hochschätzen, sollte ihnen geglaubt werden, falls sie es mit geeigneten Gründen und der Heiligen Schrift beweisen; so soll auch Thomas Aquinas und anderen geglaubt werden, dass die Bilder dieser Art durch *Latria* verehrt werden sollen.' Dieser Traktat klingt also nicht eindeutig bilderstürmerisch aus. Wenn die Bilder frei von Überspanntheit und Misbrauch wären, könnten sie aus Gewohnheit und Tradition in Kirchen sein. Zur Verteidigung führt er ein bekanntes Zitat des hl. Gregorius an, das die Bilder die Bücher der Ungebildeten sind." Karel Stejskal, "Ikonoklasmus českého středověku a jeho limity," [Iconoclasm in the Bohemian middle ages and its limits] *Umění* 4 (2000) 210.

²¹ "Et si in contrarium allegatur: ecclesia, que tenet ymagines, multiplicat et veneratur. Sed que, rogo, ecclesia? An Constanciensis vel omnes terre et regna cristianorum? Numquid illi non errant et erraverunt de comunione calicis, de simonia, de mortificatione bonorum et sic de aliis. *Ideo 5to decretalium de sententia excommunicationis capitulo A nobis*: Confitetur papa de sua ecclesia, quod sepe fallit et fallitur etiam de excommunicatione et absolutione, que videntur arduissima puncta ecclesie. Unde nonnulli hanc modernam ecclesiam de simonia, de dotacione yppocrisi et veneno inmisso in ecclesiam arguentes excommunicati sunt, sentenciati ad supplicium in causa Dei, quam excommunicationem et sententiam considerantes non esse secundum Deum et legem eius pro nichilo eam duxerunt et ad mortem se in causa Dei exposuerunt. Et hodie nonnullos hec ecclesia maledicit, quibus Deus benedicit. Si ergo in aliis tam arduis hec ecclesia fallitur, non mirum, si etiam per ymagines sit illusa etc. Ex quibus patet, quod ymagines, si essent sine omni deordinatione et abusu, tunc eas esse in ecclesiis est sola consuetudo humana et tradicio hominum." Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 170.

essent sine omni de ordinacione et abusu, tunc eas esse in ecclesiis est sola consuetudo humana et tradicio hominum; as “if they were purged of misuse, they could be in churches from **custom and tradition**.” I believe, on the contrary, that the translation of the statement should be the following: “Thereby it is evident that images, if they were not improperly misused, then their presence in the churches is a **mere** human custom and popular tradition.”

In conclusion of his work, Jakoubek quotes from the letter of Gregory the Great to Bishop Sereno. On the whole, it might seem surprising that Jakoubek includes this text, because Gregory’s words are relatively positive toward the images. It is true that Gregory opposes the adoration of images, but resolutely denies that they should be destroyed, because of their service as *libri laycorum*: “Because it is one thing to adore a painting, and another to learn from the contents of a painting what should be adored. Because what Scripture offers to readers that is given to illiterate laypeople by the sight of a painting, because it permits uneducated people to see how they should behave; it is read by those who do not know letters.”²² Bělohávková assumes that Jakoubek quotes Gregory “in defence” of images; that he is aware of the contrast between the educated class and the simple folk, and therefore keeps “the backdoor open.”²³ My own opinion is that one must understand Jakoubek’s intent rather differently. Jakoubek is not at all interested in “a defence” of images; his *entire questio* unambiguously reflects his firm conviction about the “harmfulness” of images. His use of Gregory’s statement must not be overestimated. It is true that images may have a certain utility for the “common folk,” as a source of instruction or information, but it is just one among many means. As noted earlier, in the order of creation the fabricated images stand in the last place;

²² “...nonnullos hec ecclesia maledicit, quibus Deus benedicit. Si ergo in aliis tam arduis hec ecclesia fallitur, non mirum, si eiam per ymagines sit illusa etc. Ex quibus patet, quod ymagines, si essent sine omni deordinacione et abusu, tunc eas esse in ecclesiis est sola consuetudo humana et tradicio hominum.” Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 170.

²³ Bělohávková, *Die Ansichten*, 59. When Bělohávková speaks of “the half-opened back door,” she does not refer as much to the total text of the *questio* as to Jakoubek’s “concluding words”: *Quia de Scripturis non habet auctoritatem, ea facilitate contempnitur, qua probatur*. These words are found on the following folio (f. 203r) that bears the inscription *Regule contra auctoritates in oppositum sonantes*; thereafter there are twenty-four more folia, which contain only biblical citations attacking idolatry and those who fabricate idols. (As I have shown in my diploma thesis, this list is identical with that found in Nicholas of Dresden’s *Querite primum regnum Dei*.) Bělohávková attaches this first folio without any separation to the text of the *questio* as its terminal part. It really differs from the following folia. In addition to biblical citations, we find here also references to other authorities, and there is no mention of images. Jakoubek’s statement is rather general. On the one hand, it gives the impression of ending the *questio*, providing a kind of final seal. On the other hand, the statement also serves as an appropriate introduction to the following biblical citations that give an unambiguous answer to what Scripture deems about images. The evidence *per auctoritatem* begins with the citation from the Exodus: *you will not join the majority in evil doing*. Next, citations from canon law show that there is no other truth but that confirmed by Christ and Scripture. Only such truth should be accepted, not a human custom. Human beings can err, therefore, even the disputations of praiseworthy people should not be taken for canonical Scripture. Although speaking in a general way, not specifically about images, Jakoubek clearly establishes that to appeal to tradition (as happens in the case of images), is rather dubious. Truth, as the ultimate criterion, is found only in Scripture and Scripture does not speak positively about images. In my opinion, Bělohávková, somewhat overestimated the significance of that sentence. The latter is entirely taken out of the context of Jerome’s text (already in Jakoubek, who does not adduce more of Jerome’s text), therefore it sounds rather truncated. It lacks an object, and therefore, it is not concerned with images, but entirely with the exclusive authority of Scripture. It is only one of the citations which Jakoubek used in order to confirm the binding character of Scripture. As for images, Jakoubek had already abundantly shown in the *questio* itself that Scripture spoke about them quite unambiguously – in the negative.

Hence some knowledge of God may be mediated by any other creature, the more perfectly, the higher it stands in the order of creation. This interpretation may be supported by the following words of Jakoubek. He maintains that every piece of creation bears a trace of the Most Holy Trinity and, therefore should be venerated. Despite this fact, he does not admonish simple laypeople to venerate everything. In sum, although mortals can in principle, without a sin, venerate God by a pious thought in any object, be it even in a stone or a piece of wood, yet inasmuch as a danger lurks there (because of a resemblance to idolatry), it is preferable to refrain from such an adoration.²⁴ With these words, Jakoubek terminates his *questio*.

It is my conviction that the foregoing discussion depicts Jakoubek, as one firmly opposed to the images. If we see Jakoubek as a man, who was intrinsically convinced about the necessity of the lay chalice for salvation and not afraid to air this conviction in public, and was ready to do the same with his requirement of communion for infants, we can assume that, also in the matter of images, he did firmly maintain his conviction. Similarly, I would not suppose that some less emphatic passages indicate Jakoubek's efforts to avoid a collision with an opposing authority, be it Roman or Utraquist, as Bělohávková suggests. If Jakoubek was not afraid to air his opinions publicly within a week after the solemn pronouncements of Jesenice and of the University, then I assume that he simply could not agree with their declaration, and considered it his duty to express his own views. But why did he, from the entire declaration, seize upon the images?

In my opinion, the answer is as follows. As a leading member of the party of Reform, he is convinced about the necessity of the Eucharist (under both kinds) for salvation, and from this angle he views everything else. The defence of the lay chalice, that he interprets as a direct revelation from God, enhances in him the conviction about the normative obligatoriness of Scripture for everyday life. Hence the legitimization of things by Scripture becomes for him the sole criterion of assessment of everything in the world. Inasmuch as many derogatory things are said about images in this source of the ultimate truth, and because images distract the faithful from the adoration of the body and blood of Christ, the demand for their removal from the divine temple (or even for their destruction) is a legitimate corollary of these beliefs.

The content and the form of the *questio* indicate that Jakoubek's address delivered in the Týn Church on 31 January 1417 could not have "aroused among the public a powerful excitement and indignation."²⁵ For one thing, it was directed toward the learned Latinists, and it hardly could have elicited a widespread response from the popular classes; for another, the very content of the *questio* was in no way stirring. It is true, Jakoubek here unambiguously rejects the images, but he does so in a calm, unexcited fashion. On the other hand, we must not underestimate the fact,

²⁴ "Quod si aliquae auctoritates videntur sonare, quod adorentur remota reverentia, et si aliqua talis esset, non est dicenda laicis, sicut quolibet creatura aliquomodo, quia habet esse in Deo et a Deo et habet in se ad minimum Trinitatis vestigium, ut sic est veneranda, sed tamen laicis simplicibus non dicitur, quod eas adorent etc. ... Non inquit, docendi sunt simplices, ut sic et lapidibus et lignis Deum adorent propter similitudinem ad ydolatriam, quamvis homo possit adorare Deum pia intencione in quacumque re sine peccato, quia tamen habere posset speciem mali, melius est a talibus adoracionibus abstinere. Idem super illud *Sapientie XIII*: Infelices autem sunt, dicit, quia in hac leccione vituperantur adoratores ymaginum." Sedláčková, *De ymaginibus* 172.

²⁵ Bartoš, *Do čtyř pražských artikulů* 494.

that not only Jakoubek, but his very many friends, who most likely attended the lecture, and who were at the same time preachers, could also have subsequently disseminated their views further, even among the laypeople.

(Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David)

