

The Masters and the End of the World: Exegesis in the Polemics with Chiliasm

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“Some of the expressions [in Scripture] are so obscure as to shroud the meaning in the thickest darkness...” wrote St. Augustine in his treatise *De doctrina christiana* (II, 6). “And I do not doubt,” he continued, “that all this was divinely arranged for the purpose of subduing pride by toil, and of preventing a feeling of satiety in the intellect, which generally holds in small esteem what is discovered without difficulty.”¹ If it were so, then the theologians of the Bohemian Reformation period, both priests and preachers, had absolutely no reason to feel sated. The learned theoreticians and, later, the leaders of the popular movements strove to realise, as exactly as possible, the biblical news, that is, what Scripture said, or rather what it meant to say. This effort placed exegesis at the centre of attention. Theological disputes created not only a bone of contention with the Roman Church, but also they had a significance of the internal differentiation of the reform movement. Different interpretations of Scripture led to polemics among the factions within the Bohemian reformation movement.

One of the most serious collisions of this kind took place at the very beginning of the Hussite Revolution. The adventist and chiliastic campaign and the Pikart crisis in Tábor² revealed the fundamental difference between the radical preachers in the countryside and the moderate Utraquist masters in Prague. The university theologians, in the first place Jakoubek of Střibro, opposed the most radical currents despite the fact that in a certain sense they were the outcome of a trend that they themselves set in motion.³ This discrepancy is perhaps understandable from the political viewpoint, and it is not surprising with regard to the typology of revolutionary dynamics. In this article, however, I wish to pose the question whether a basic difference in exegetical method existed between the university masters and the preachers of adventism. Historians customarily see in Hussite adventism a projection of some social, political, or other sort of interest. Even those who acknowledge religious motivation, usually con-

1 The English translation is taken from Aurelius Augustinus, *The Confessions. The City of God. On Christian Doctrine* [Great Books of the Western World, 18] (Chicago, 1952) 638.

2 For literature on chiliasm in the Bohemian Reformation see Petr Čornej, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české V. 1402-1437* [A large history of the lands of the Czech Crown] (Prague, 2000) 192-202, 223-239, 289-296; František Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution* [Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Schriften 43, 3 vv.] (Hannover, 2002) 685-716, 1032-1070, 1131-1158.

3 Jiří Kejř, *Mistři pražské univerzity a kněží táborští* [The masters of the Prague University and the priests of Tábor] (Prague, 1981) 71-73 and passim. On Jakoubek's polemic with Tábor see Paul De Vooght, *Jacobellus de Střibro († 1429), premier théologien du hussitisme* (Louvain, 1972) 225-294.

sider religious formulations as a sort of obsolete language, which thus expresses thoughts and realities for which we have other specialised discourse at present.⁴ The approach is surely justifiable from the viewpoint of source criticism, but it is equally justifiable and methodologically indispensable to pay attention to the language of religious literature as such, even if it be considered merely as a medium for the expression of some other content. In other words, it is a question not only of what was intended to be said, but also how it was said. In my opinion, by directing attention at the principles of exegesis, we can better understand the sources, and thus perhaps also better understand the past.

The first manifestations of radicalism in the countryside are usually dated to the time of Hus's exile from Prague. They acquired a more distinctive form about five years later, when the radicals gained the point d'appui in the pilgrimages to the mountains. Gatherings on elevated locations – for the purposes of sacramental communion, confession, and preaching – gained a broad regional, and subsequently trans-regional, response. At the same time, preachers were rising, whose sermons ever more frequently contained adventist thoughts concerned with the approaching end of the world. In accord with the Book of Revelation and the Epistle of James, they already saw the judging Christ at the threshold, as one of the adventist proclamations asserted.⁵ The signs that the prophets of devastation saw all around corresponded in their eyes most likely to the “little apocalypse” in Matthew 24 which announced that the time of *consummatio saeculi* had come. The declaration of pilgrims from the Bzí Mountain of 17 September 1419 already saw all around the *abominacio desolationis* that, according to Mt 24:15, signalled the beginning of the end.⁶ “The sun will turn to darkness and moon to blood and the stars will fall from the sky, because the dragon will be tearing them down with his tail, as a result nobody will be able to stand, but he will fall and lose his way” – in this way the end of the world was described by the earlier-cited manifesto that drew upon prophetic and apocalyptic texts of the Old and New Testament.⁷

The radical preachers found also in the Bible instructions about how to respond to these peculiar times. “Christ gives a special admonition to his faith-

4 See Howard Kaminsky, “Nicholas of Pelhřimov's Tabor: an Adventure into the Eschaton,” in *Eschatologie und Hussitismus*, ed. Alexander Patschovsky and František Šmahel (Prague, 1996) 139-140.

5 “Slunce se v temnost obrátí a měsíc v krev a hvězdy budú s nebe padati, neb jě drak bude ocasem strhovati tak, že nebude, kto by mohl státi, ježto by nepadl a nezablúdil...” František M. Bartoš, “Do čtyř pražských artykulů. Z myšlenkových i ústavních zápasů let 1415-1420,” [Towards the Four Articles of Prague] *Sborník příspěvků k dějinám města Prahy* 5 (1932) 576; see also Jas 5:9 and Rev 3:20.

6 AČ 3 (1844) 205.

7 Bartoš, “Do čtyř pražských artykulů,” 576. The sentence echoed several biblical loci, namely, Joel 3:4; Rev 2:20; Mt 24:29; Rev 12:4.

ful concerning this time that they should shy not only from sin, but also from the company of evil, hostile, and insincere people.⁸ The radicals became convinced that the mountains and caves, where their followers gathered, would be the only places of salvation in the face of the approaching calamity. One of the so-called heretical articles even considered staying at home sinful, based on Christ's admonition: "At that time, let those who are in Judea escape into the mountains!"⁹ If in this text there was a direct reference to the relevant place in the Bible (Mt 24:26), it did not mean that other articles were not based on Scripture, even if an explicit reference was lacking. Mountain caves, in addition to mountains themselves, were included as refuges of the faithful evidently under the influence of Rev 6:15 and Is 2:19, 21. Gatherings on the elevated places could, of course, preserve their key significance also, and especially, after the expected coming of Christ inasmuch as it was exactly where the sumptuous feasts of the faithful with their Lord would take place¹⁰ – once more explicitly according to

8 "V kterémžto času dáva zvláštnie príkazanie svým verným Kristus, aby utiekali netoliko z hriechov, ale také z prostředka zlych, protivných a neupřímných lidí." AČ 6 (1872) 41.

9 I designate the various editions of the chiliastic articles by the letter symbols, assigned to them by Josef Macek, "Táborské chiliastické články" [The Taborite Chiliastic Articles], SH 1 (1953) 53-64. For Vavřínek's articles from the dispute at Zmrzlík's house (**Aa**) and for twenty articles from elsewhere in his Chronicle (**Ab**) see FRB 5: 454-462 and 413-416; articles from Příbram's *Contra errores picardorum* (**B**) are cited from the edition by Ignaz von Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters II. Dokumente vornehmlich zur Geschichte der Valdesier und Katharer* (Munich, 1890) 691-700. The articles from the manuscript of Kříž of Telč (**C**) were published by Palacký in AČ 3:218-225 and newly in: Josef Macek, *Ktož jsou boží bojovníci. Čtení o Táboře v husitském revolučním hnutí* [Who Are the Warriors of God. Readings About Tábor in the Hussite Revolutionary Movement] (Prague, 1951) 57-66, and as an attachment to: Jan Příbram, *Život kněží táborských* [The Lives of Taborite Priests], ed. Jaroslav Boubín (Příbram, 2000) 93-99; I am citing according to the transcription in Boubín's edition. I designate also by letter symbols the additional list that are considered by researchers as supplementary: Jan Příbram, *Život kněží táborských* 39-87 (= **D**); I number them according to the rubrics which coincide with the list on pp. 33-37; Jakoubek of Stříbro, *Výklad na Zjevení sv. Jana* [Exposition of the Revelation of St. John], 2 vv., ed. František Šimek, *Sbírka pramenů českého hnutí náboženského*, 18-19 (Prague, 1932-1933) 1:525-528 (= **E**); two series of Taborite articles in the treatise of Andrew of Escobar, published by František M. Bartoš, "Španělský biskup proti Táboru a Praze," [A Spanish Bishop Against Tábor and Prague], JSH 11 (1938) 69-70: I designate the first as **F**, the second series coincides with the articles in the treatise *Contra scripta de adventu Christi*, published by Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967) 522-525 (= **G**) (this coincidence was not noted by the editor, but by Kejř, *Mistři pražské university*, 28 note 119). Letter **H** then designates articles of the treatise *Ad occurrendum homini insano*, consecutively numbered with Arabic numerals according to Howard Kaminsky, "K dějinám chiliastického Tábora. O traktátu *Ad occurrendum homini insano*," [History of Chiliastic Tábor: Treatise *Ad occurrendum homini insano*], ČČH 8 (1960) 896-897; letter **J** two series (**a,b**) so-called *Articuli Martinconis*, summing up the views of Martina Húska and published in Höfler 2: 828-830 (these articles coincide to a large degree in content, and also in form, with the version of Martínek's teaching, presented by Jan Příbram, *Život kněží táborských* 66-69 = D 132-139); finally, the letter **K** designates the Adamite articles from the extreme phase of Pikartism, recorded in October by Žižka, and preserved in Vavřínek's Chronicle, FRB 5:517-519. – The cited article is Aa 11 = B 37, agreeing also with Ab 4, C 8, D 7, E 33.

10 See also the symbolism of the names assigned to the hills, Amedeo Molnár, "Die eschatologische Hoffnung der böhmischen Reformation," in *Von der Reformation zum Morgen*, ed. Josef L. Hromádka (Leipzig, 1959) 84.

Is 25:6 and Rev 19:9: “At the completion of the termination of this age, Christ shall descend from heavens and come overtly in his own person, and will be visible with bodily eyes, in order to assume the dominion of this world, and he will arrange great feasts and a supper of the lamb for his bride, the Church, here on these earthly mountains.”¹¹

Hence, the tenets of the chiliasts had their origin mostly in isolated texts in the New and Old Testament. Likewise the descriptions of the paradisaical joys in Christ’s restored kingdom originated – often verbatim – in biblical statements, and even when it was a matter of concrete appealing promises, such as giving birth without pain or sin and combined with immortality of the children,¹² as well as the disappearance of “the exploiter of the poor” [*dráč chudiny*] – so much applauded by Marxist commentators.¹³ The article about the resurrection of the faithful, whom Christ would take to himself, and who would then live in a newly created earth under new skies, was formulated overtly: the chiliasts believed in the literal fulfillment of the promises, given in Isaiah and in the Book of Revelation: “*et implebuntur in eis omnia ad litteram...*”¹⁴ Gradually an opinion prevailed in the Taborite movement that among the places, where the destruction of the corrupt world could be survived, and the coming of the dream-like Paradise awaited, there were – perhaps solely – five fortified towns.¹⁵ The list of these towns apparently reflected the actual distribution of power within the Kingdom of Bohemia.¹⁶ Certain mundane factors – the coming winter and the growing military danger – undoubtedly contributed to a shift of the eschatological locale from the exposed mountain tops to the protected shelters within city walls.¹⁷ In any case, the choice of the five towns had also a biblical basis in Jer 4:5 and Is 19:18 (“*In die illa erunt quinque civitates in terra Aegypti...*”).¹⁸

The masters of the University of Prague, of course, objected to the application of the prophetic statements to a concrete contemporary situation. “*Est error et mendacium pseudoprophetarum,*” is what master Vavřinec noted with

11 “*Item na konci tohoto skonání věku sestoupí Kristus z nebe a zjevně přijde ve vlastní osobě a bude ho vidět tělesnými očima, aby přijal království na tomto světě, a vystrojí veliké hody a večeři beránka jako svatbu své choti církvi zde na tělesných horách.*” Ab 10, analogously Aa 19, B 43, C 28, D 42.

12 Ab 13-14, see also Aa 29, B 53, C 34, D 47, E 10, F 2, H 12.

13 Aa 22 = B 46, Ab 11, C 40, D 38, G 6. “*Cessabit omnis exactor*” is a reference to Is 14:4, which is cited also by the so-called chiliastic *quaestio*, FRB 5:422.

14 Aa 20 = B 44; in the same sense D 44; analogous articles Ab 19 and C 30 lack the reference to the prophecy’s fulfillment.

15 Aa 8 = B 34, Ab 7, C 23, D 3, E 31-32, F 9.

16 The radical preachers vacillated in the enumeration of these privileged towns, but Plzeň, Písek, Žatec, Louny, Slaný, and Klatovy were often named; see Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution* 2:1048.

17 Such is the opinion of Čornej, *Velké dějiny* 5:224, and also Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution* 2:1048.

18 See the Adventist Manifesto in AČ 6:43-44, moreover containing citations from Jer 51:45 and Is 26:20-21.

respect to the tenet about the five chosen cities.¹⁹ The search for five actual towns in Bohemia, where the faithful would be saved before the material world perished, transcended the limits of exegesis that the university masters were willing to accept. “It is improper to impudently proceed beyond Christ’s teaching to determine the towns, to which people should withdraw...” Jakoubek wrote explicitly.²⁰ Recorded by their opponents, the “heretical” articles of the Taborites often reflected in their formulation the polemical standpoint of the moderate party. Thus, repeated characterisations as errors and heresies accompany the articles from the dispute at Zmrzlík’s House, as recorded by Vavřinec of Březová. For instance, *epiteton constans* in the articles of escape into the mountains, “*montes corporales*” (Aa 10-11), suggests that the bone of contention was the physical character of the mountains, about which Jesus had spoken (i.e. *montes corporales* vs. *spirituales*). Jakoubek, in particular, embraced an extremely spiritualised concept of eschatology, which transferred the real course of the cosmic struggle into the souls of the individual believer.²¹ Always – not just in the case of the mountains – he preferred a spiritual interpretation and he wrote on the address of the adventists: “...they refused to accept the saintly spiritual interpretation of the struggles and of the mountains, maintaining that these matters should be understood literally in the physical sense, not in a spiritual sense.”²² In line with this approach it became necessary to interpret biblical passages urging an escape – of which the adventists had accumulated an impressive quantity – as a call to escape from one’s own sins. In fact, the injunction in an adventist manifesto that the faithful “should escape not only from sins” can be seen as a snide polemical reference to the figurative tropological manner of interpretation, employed by the theologically moderate university professors. Master Jan of Jesenice, reacting to the chiliastic proclamations, extracted three citations of Augustine from the *Decretum* in which the church father of Hippo interpreted spiritually the prophetic statements on fleeing away.²³ Thereby, of course, he could hardly blunt the impact of the fun-

19 FRB 5:455.

20 Kaminsky, *A History* 533. Jakoubek argued against Christ’s coming to the mountain of Tábor and against the final defeat of the Antichrist, in his *Výklad na Zjevení sv. Jana*, 2:104-105.

21 Molnár, “Die eschatologische Hoffnung der böhmischen Reformation,” 78.

22 “... takových svatých výkladuov duchovních o bojích, o horách nechtěli držeti, ale všechno podlé litery, tělesně, pravice, že nemají v rozumu duchovním takové věci rozuměny býti.” Jakoubek, *Výklad na Zjevení*, 1:338. Also in ‘Postila na Pláč,’ which is cited by Amedeo Molnár, “K otázce reformační iniciativy lidu. Svědectví husitského kázání,” [The Question of the Reformational Initiative of the People. Testimony of Hussite Preaching] ARBI 1 (1978) 39 n. 157. Jakoubek objected to the interpretation “*de montibus corporalibus*” and defended only the necessity of escaping figuratively to Christ and to the primitive Church.

23 For instance about Isaiah’s “*Recedite, exite inde ei immundum ne tetigeritis*” (52:11) Augustine noted: “*Sed contactu cordis, non corporis.*” See Jiří Kejř, *Husitský právník M. Jan z Jesenice* [The Hussite Jurist Master Jan of Jesenice] (Prague, 1965) 151, see also PL 38:551, and Friedberg 2:901

damentalist principle of materialist interpretation – much less discredit it completely.

The eschatologically-inspired campaign in the countryside advanced into its second chiliastic stage. Chiliasm added to the adventist vision of Christ's coming a vision about his earthly Kingdom, which would exist before the utter destruction of the world. Such ideas cropped up in sermons and proclamations of the radicals prior to Lent 1420, when Christ's arrival was expected. To be sure, the moderate Utraquist theologians were also prepared for the Second Coming of the Saviour, in line with the sensitivity of the Bohemian Reform movement to eschatological questions. Adventism transgressed their mental horizons only by its assertions that the Second Coming was imminent. Chiliasm, however, went further and introduced inadmissible theological innovations. The main point was a doubling of Christ's coming: *adventus novissimus*, connected with the Last Judgment, was shifted into the future, and currently "another" coming was occurring that ushered in a *regnum reparatum*, a thousand-year long period of life in a condition as before the expulsion from Paradise.²⁵ The Prague masters readily opposed such views, as a caustic remark by Jan of Příbram indicates. According to him, it was clear as day that the Church was not yet purged of lies and unrighteousness, quite the contrary, and the examples of this sorry state were exactly the chiliastic prophets themselves.²⁵ What was theologically more significant was the fact that the chiliastic approach implicitly distinguished between *consummatio seculi* and *consummatio mundi*, while the conservative exegetes considered both expressions synonymous.²⁶ The end of the ages would mean the end of the present time or even of the current year, but not an end of the world, which would provide a stage for another age of human beings, purified from sin.²⁷

When in the days 10 to 14 February 1420 the anticipated end of the world failed to occur, the preachers announced that Christ had come hidden "like a thief." It was again the case of literally applying a biblical text, for instance, from 2 Peter "*adveniet autem dies Domini ut fur.*"²⁸ The first article of Vavřinec's twenty (hence Ab 1) connected the secret arrival with the period of

(C. 23 q. 4 c. 9). For an assessment of the treatise see Kejř, *Husitský právník* 123-124, and Bartoš, "Do čtyř pražských artykulů," 564-565 n. 25.24 Aa 16, see also B 26; similar articles Ab 12 and G 1 speak only of a state under the reformed Church, while F 4 states overtly: "*Item erunt duo adventus Christi, unus in media nocte, alter in consummatione mundi.*"

25 Döllinger, *Beiträge* 2:694 (= B 26).

26 Likewise the so-called chiliastic *quaestio*, copied by Vavřinec of Březová, distinguished between the world and the age (or ages since more than one might have been expected): "*Et sic eciam diffinientes secula ponunt plura habentes differentiam inter seculum et mundum.*" FRB 5:418.

27 This was evident from article Aa 17, see also B 42 a D 41.

28 2 Pet 3:10; see articles Ab1 a C 27 and the so-called chiliastic *quaestio* (FRB 5:418 with the citation from 1 Thess 5:2); see also n. 72 below.

vengeance – with the destruction of the world by the seven calamities according to Sirach 39:35-36 (or 29-30). This reference is very significant, because it showed a shift of interpretation between the first and the second stage of chiliasm. Version Aa, in fact, in its second paragraph promised the same calamities – i.e., destruction by fire, sword, hunger, teeth of beasts, scorpions, snakes, hail, and death – to all sinners and opponents of the Law of God in the simple words: “they shall perish, and they must perish so that none remain.” The mentioned article Ab 1, however, added: “the faithful should be exhorted to their execution [i.e., of the calamities].” Christ had secretly descended in order “to conquer by himself and through his angels the antagonistic house, and to put an end to it through vengeful death by sword and fire, and especially by fire” (C 27). The chosen Taborite brethren would play the role of helpers in this work of destruction, and they would lead the people into the mountains, as the angels had led Lot from Sodom. The image of the burning city of vice resonated with the image of the earlier-cited saying of Jesus about the correction of the kingdom: “The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt 13:41-42).

The university masters who tried to dampen the enthusiasm of the radical adventists were denounced by the latter as false prophets, whose activity belonged to the traditional image of Antichrist’s shenanigans prior to the end of ages. A chiliastic leaflet objected to the accusations by “the university masters and lordly personages” that the chiliastic preachers misled the simple folk, and interpreted the Scripture “out of their own heads.” The leaflet retorted that the accusers misled the people by their own fabrications “when they lacked Scriptural arguments.”²⁹ The crux of the conflict clearly involved the area of biblical interpretation, or the field of exegesis, and the contemporaries already were aware of this fact. “The basis of all the subsequent calamities was an erroneous interpretation of the Bible,” Vavřinec of Březová wrote, when summing up retrospectively the origins of the Taborites.³⁰ The Adamites at Nežárka River brought into bizarre extremes their arbitrary treatment of the Bible. They also imagined that they acted according to the apocalyptic scenario: “At the time when the seventh angel pours out his bowl in the Revelation of St. John there is a voice saying (Rev 16:17) that blood will be all over the earth up to the horses’ bridles, and the sickle will be swung all over the world (Rev 14:19-20)...”³¹ If they actually justified their nocturnal raids by reference to the Gospel text:

29 AČ 6:42.

30 FRB 5:403.

31 “*Item čas sedmého anjela báně vylitíe v Zjevení svatého Jana praviec [Rev 16:17], že bude krev po všie zemi až do uzd koňských, kosu na vešken svět již poslanú pravili [Rev 14:19-20]...*” See article K 11 in Žižka’s list of the Adamites’ errors.

“...at midnight there was a shout...” (Mt. 25:6), then it was a cynical use of a biblical text, which, in fact, speaks of the coming of the kingdom of heaven (the parable of the ten virgins), nevertheless there was not even an inkling of violent force. It would, however, be in line with the extreme exegetical practice of a community that allegedly supported the performance of sexual orgies by Christ’s statement: “the prostitutes are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you” (Mt 21:31).³²

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We can now formulate a tentative hypothesis on the basis of what was said so far about the exegetical approaches of the two sides. It might go as follows: While the moderate university masters maintained a figurative explanation of the key prophetic and apocalyptic statements, the radical preachers applied them in their literal meaning. The basic dichotomy of medieval exegesis can be seen exactly in the distinction between the spiritual meaning of the biblical text – tropology or morality, allegory or the realm of faith, and anagoge referring to hope of things to come belong here – from the historical or the literal meaning. The wall between the masters and chiliasm was, therefore, created by the boundary separating the *sensus literalis* from the sphere of spiritual interpretation. This thesis, in fact, appears plausible at first sight, and the sources provide many instances for its support.³³ If, however, one might wish to see it as the criterion dividing contemporary exegetical practice into two irreconcilable camps, then considerable cracks would appear in this wall. Let us penetrate deeper into the extant material, the modest number of documents of the chiliastic campaign, and above all into the polemical literature.³⁴

32 K 9: “Item zákon svuoi jsú na rufiánství zakládali, že čtenie jest: ‘rufiáni a nevěstky předejdú vás do nebeského království’. A protož jsú i žádného, ktož by rufiánem nebo kurvú nebyla, v svuoi zákon přijieti nechtěli...” [They based their law on seduction, because the Scripture said: ‘seducers and prostitutes will precede you into the kingdom of heaven.’ Therefore they refused to admit into their society anybody who was neither a seducer nor a prostitute]. Leaving aside the authenticity of the Adamite accounts, I refer to the most recent treatments: František Šmahel, *Husitské Čechy. Struktury, procesy, ideje* [Hussite Bohemia: Structures, Processes, Ideas] (Prague, 2001) 584 note 153; Krista Feigl-Procházková, “Frei sollen sie sein, die Söhne und Töchter Gottes. Chiliastisches Gerüst, gnostisches Fundament des taboritischen Radikalismus?,” HT 13 (2002), 9-30; Petr Čornej, “Ráj je na ostrově aneb Prostor pro adamity,” [Paradise is on an Island, or Space for the Adamites], *Táborský archiv* 13 (2007) 37-46.

33 All the important authors mention the masters’ efforts to discredit the literal interpretation of the prophecies – the tendency widespread among the provincial preachers. See Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution*, 2:1049; idem, *Husitské Čechy* 285; Kaminsky, *A History* 315; Čornej, *Velké dějiny* 5:224; Molnár, “K otázce reformační iniciativy lidu,” 21; Robert Kalivoda, *Husitské myšlení* [Hussite Thought] (Prague, 1997) 185 n. 39.

34 The sources are listed by Josef Macek, *Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí* [Tábor in the Hussite Revolutionary Movement] 2 vv., (Prague, 19562) 1:379-385, and Kaminsky, *A History* 344-345 n. 88.

The most agile opponent of adventism among the Prague masters was probably Jakoubek, who was then considered the greatest theological authority of the Hussite movement. This was partly because some of the provincial preachers were his former students,³⁵ and partly because his standpoint – although moderate – was more open to the radical opinions so that he could be considered a possible intermediary between the conservatives and the chiliasts. Jakoubek was an author or co-author of several expert opinions and theological explanations on behalf of the university, as well as circular and polemical letters.³⁶ One of the most revealing letters in our context is the one intended for Master Jan of Jičín, one of the leading adventist preachers. “It seems to me,” wrote Jakoubek, “that the statements of Jer 51, ‘Escape from the midst of Babylon,’ and Is 19, ‘That day there will be five towns in the land of Egypt,’ should not be interpreted literally as referring to the material Babylon nor to the physical or material five towns, nor to a material ‘town of the Sun,’ if they are to serve us according to the intentions of the Holy Spirit.”³⁷ He then expressed his idea about the exegesis of these statements in the following way:

May you apply the words of the texts of *Genesis*, Isaiah, Daniel, and the *Apocalypse* in such a way that would suit your own interpretation, without randomness or abbreviation, and moreover that you would add to the literal meaning also the mystical meaning, where perhaps they do not coincide, and consequently that you would demonstrate from reason, or from Scripture, or from an authority that the mystical sense was acceptable...

Up to this point it appears that the crux of the controversy, in fact, rested in the contrast between the explanations *litteraliter* and *spiritualiter*. It is the case in the concrete example of the five towns: “*ille quinque civitates, de quibus prius, debent spiritualiter intelligi.*” Did that mean, however, that Jakoubek would reject on principle the possibility of interpreting the prophetic books literally? Not at all. In the same letter to Jičín, he wrote: “I do not wish to deny also that fairly numerous prophecies are interpreted literally, when in these

35 Kaminsky, *A History* 344 n. 87, calls attention to the M.A. degree of Jan of Jičín, and the B. A. degrees of Mikuláš of Pelhřimov, and Markolt of Zbraslavice; he assumes a connection with the university also in the case of Koranda and Čapek. The list of Taborite priests in František Šmahel and others, *Dějiny Tábora*, 1v. in 2 pts (České Budějovice, 1988-1990) 1, pt 1:319, indicates that the M. A. was held also by Pavel of Oleš, who was active among the radicals in the region of Ústí nad Lužnicí in 1417-1418.

36 On Jakoubek’s polemics with the chiliasts, see Miloslav Ransdorf, *Kapitoly z geneze husitské ideologie* [Chapters from the Genesis of Hussite Ideology] (Prague, 1986) 143-156, which lists also earlier literature.

37 Kaminsky, *A History* 531. Similarly also in his Letter against the chiliasts; *ibid.* 519.

prophecies were mystically and mysteriously demonstrated practices and events of the New Testament Age, which are mentioned in the Gospels.”³⁸

Jakoubek surely did not favour applying the Old Testament as the norm of behaviour, but with a certain reservation – which was typical of him – he admitted to it in principle. None of chiliasm’s opponents, of course, asserted that the prophecies, on which the radicals based their theories, were false. They also could strengthen faith, but only if interpreted cautiously. This is stated in the so-called Circular Letter of Rakovník, again evidently written by Jakoubek: it was necessary to shy away from the fantastic interpretations that the provincial preachers can extract from them.³⁹ During the polemic with chiliasm Jakoubek wrote overtly:

Reading the prophecies of the Law of God is good for understanding; if you would understand something for certain, then you can preach it to the people with profit. However, there are also certain mysteries, which you do not understand or in which you are not able to find a certain or safe meaning...⁴⁰

Jakoubek considered particularly dangerous Jičín’s interpretation of Babylon in the sense of real corrupt society in the case of Jer 51. It was based on the possibility (or necessity) of the physical flight of a handful of faithful from their current habitats.⁴¹ This interpretation by itself, however, does not constitute a material exegesis. Rather, as far as the interpretation of this text (Jer 51:6.45, but also Rev 18:2-5) is concerned, it is possible to speak of tropology in the case of Jakoubek and about allegory in the case of the adventists. As in the classical example of Guibert of Nogent, Jerusalem meant in the moral sense the soul of the Christian and, allegorically, the Church,⁴² so in our case Jakoubek’s interpretation stressed the moral aspect (to flee Babylon = distance oneself from sin), while Jičín offered an allegorical exegesis of Babylon, which is viewed as a society of evil men (i.e., opponents of the Bohemian Reformation) and which was to be physically abandoned.

This meant, however, that both approaches – although their authors were in a mutual conflict – occurred in the setting of spiritual interpretation.⁴³ The chiliastic interpretation of the five cities is noticeably more materialistic, nev-

38 All the citations, *ibid.* 531-533. What continues is, however, significant. There Jakoubek warns against misuse of this leeway for crude interpretations of the prophecies “*sicut litera historie prima facie pretendit*,” because then we would, for instance, still await the Messiah, about whom the Old Testament speaks in the future tense.

39 Bartoš, “Do čtyř pražských artykulů,” 577.

40 Kaminsky, *A History* 530. See also Molnár, “K otázce reformační iniciativy lidu,” 9-10.

41 When there was a question that a large number of common people might be on the move, Jakoubek was always cautious. In this sense, he is portrayed by Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution* 1:605-624, where other relevant literature is listed.

42 James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages. A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA, 1974) 302.

43 Kaminsky, *A History* 315, considered Jičín’s interpretation to be in the “physical sense”.

ertheless even it does not correspond to what was considered a literal explanation, for instance, by the Parisian professors in the thirteenth century. Their *sensus historicus* would rather require understanding the version, which was produced by the human author of the biblical text, and it would be necessary to seek the five cities – in Egypt. The transference to the towns of Bohemia and to Bohemian conditions, after all, requires at least an elementary engagement with a figurative meaning. Jakoubek himself in the end caustically noted that – if the material meaning was applied rigorously – the faithful would have to come out of real Egypt and cross the Red Sea.⁴⁴ Also Christ's challenge in Mt 24:16, cited earlier: "then those in Judea must flee to the mountains," did not fit entirely into the category of literal interpretation. This was noted also by Jakoubek, who reproached Jičín that, while he tried to interpret the mountains literally and gather his followers there, he interpreted Judea figuratively, as representing the pseudo-Christians. Why then did he not interpret spiritually the five cities of Isaiah as well? or Judea materially, i.e., as the circumcised people?⁴⁵ It is again evident that Jakoubek theoretically admitted all the various types of biblical exegesis, and that the criterion for endorsing one of them had to be sought elsewhere than in the stark dichotomy: literal versus figurative.

A shift in the interpretation of Christ's statement was required by the substitution of fortified towns for the mountains, as assembly points of the adherents of radicalism, which signified a transition from the initial Taborite activity (pilgrimages into the mountains) to the adventist stage.⁴⁶ This shift was represented exactly by the use of the figurative meaning: "Flee to the mountains,' that is to the faithful people, who have raised high their hopes, thoughts and prayers to God against all and above all powers."⁴⁷ The interpretation of mountains as the faithful people, who rise up to God, is a figurative, spiritual, and even moralistic explanation par excellence. It is my inclination to see in this formulation a common technique in preaching, which bases an explanation on any similarity whatever of the phenomena compared. We could normally find such an illustrative allegory in the sermons of any of the Prague masters, and it was used also by the spokesman of the Prague radicals, Jan Želivský.⁴⁸ Any-

44 "Ita etiam populus fidelis deberet exire de materiali Egipto et transire per Mare rubrum, sicut olim filii Israel." Kaminsky, *A History* 541.

45 See the version b of the Letter to Jičín, Kaminsky, *A History* 540-541, for instance: "Et si, ut vos vultis, per montes intelliguntur sensibiles et materiales montes, tunc eadem ratione, sine ratione diversitatis, Iudea deberet intelligi gens iudaica circumcissionis."

46 This was noted by Kaminsky, *A History* 317.

47 AČ 6:41.

48 In connection with the first gathering on Mount Tabor in the spring of 1419, Želivský, speaking about the Transfiguration of the Lord, interpreted the Mount of Galilee as the highland of contemplation, from which a person could rise ever higher in virtues; Jan Želivský, *Dochovaná kázání z roku 1419*, ed. Amedeo Molnár (Prague, 1953) 1:43. It was Kaminsky, *A History* 282, who connected this sermon of 21 April 1419 with the first gathering on Mt. Tabor.

way, the figurative meaning found its application in the very centre of the adventist concepts. The apocalyptic dragon, who ripped down by his tail the stars from the sky (Rev 12:14), is first treated as a symbol of a cosmic catastrophe, but only a bit later – in the same manifesto – the dragon's tail was explained as a figurative image of priests/prophets who spread falsehoods. The basis of the latter explanation was Isaiah's statement about the head and a tail (Is 9:14), which could be used by every well-informed preacher.⁴⁹ In their polemics against the conservative priests, the adventists therefore welcomed even allegorical exegesis.

Even the extreme radicals did not arrive at their tenets through a literal interpretation of the apocalyptic prophecies pushed to the utmost, but rather through a spiritualisation of the eucharistic theory among the Taborite Pikarts.⁵⁰ The words “this is my body,” according to the Pikarts did not mean the bread, which Christ held in his hand at the Last Supper, but his real body, and analogously by blood he did not mean wine, but the blood which he would shed on the cross.⁵¹ “Then it must be understood that he spoke symbolically,” Martin Húška thus defended the figurative interpretation of the Word of God.⁵² In his treatise *Vyznání o chlebu živém a věčném* [Testimony about the Living and Eternal Bread], he also discussed at length the relationship between the Old Testament prophecies and the Law of Grace.⁵³ Although he himself allegedly held the chiliastic view that the commencing era of the renovated Kingdom had terminated the validity of the New Testament, just as the New Testament had cancelled the injunctions of the Jewish law and the prognostications of the prophets,⁵⁴ nevertheless he arrived at this opinion through the study of the Bible. Vavřinec of Březová tells us that the Prague tavern keeper

49 “A napomínám vás, varujte se od lhářův kněží falešných, neb oni sú ten ocas, jenž trhá hvězdy s nebe, jako die Yzaías prorok.” Bartoš, “Do čtyř pražských artykulů,” 577.

50 Alexander Patschovsky, “Der taboritische Chiliasmus. Seine Idee, sein Bild bei den Zeitgenossen und die Interpretation der Geschichtswissenschaft,” in *Häresie und vorzeitige Reformation im Spätmittelalter*, ed. František Šmahel (Munich, 1998) 177 and 195; Molnár, “Die eschatologische Hoffnung,” 89-90. Concerning the fate of the Pikarts and Adamites and their physical liquidation by the Taborite “party of order” see the recent discussions of Petr Čornej, “Potíže s adamity” [The Troubles with the Adamites], *Marginalia Historica* 2 (1997) 33-63, and Stanisław Bylina, *Na skraju lewicy husyckiej* [On the edge of the Hussite left wing] (Warsaw, 2005) 52-89 and *passim*.

51 See Vavřinec of Březová, FRB 5:429, and articles H 3, Ja 3 and Jb5, see also E 1; transubstantiation was rejected in most of the lists of chiliastic and Pikart errors, see Aa 44, B 4, C 92-94, F 6 and 10.

52 “Tehdy to musí rozumino býti, že mluvil znamenáně...” and he maintained further “A takové mluvení v podobenstvích položil jest často Duch svatý v Starém i v Novém zákoně” [And such talk in the parables the Holy Spirit often inserted into both the Old and the New Testament]. See A. Frinta, “Vyznání víry dobré a svatě paměti Petra Kányše,” [The Confession of Faith by Petr Kányš of Good and Holy Memory] JSH 1 (1928) 10.

53 *Ibid.* 11.

54 Relevant passages from Přeboram's *Contra articulos picardorum* (derived from unpublished refutations) are cited by Kaminsky, *A History* 350. On the invalidation of certain provisions of the New Testament see also articles Ab 17, Aa 28, B 52, C 39, D 69 a G 7.

Václav, a profound student of the Bible, taught the chiliastic preachers how to interpret the New Testament through the eyes of the Old, and vice versa.⁵⁵ Kaminsky assumed⁵⁶ that the extreme chiliastic method of exegesis, represented by Húska, was analogous to the approach of Joachim of Fiore. Also according to him, the anonymous treatise *Cum eadem est via*, and the so-called chiliastic *quaestio*, recorded by Vavřinec, both apply a reciprocal typological interpretation of the Old and the New Testament in order to gain a new body of wisdom, which would characterise the new age, *regnum reparatum*.

The text, reproduced by Vavřinec, rather than being a *quaestio* (it lacks the question and other formal attributes) was more likely an academic statement attesting to the correctness of the opinions, preached by the author.⁵⁷ For this purpose, he gathered a massive amount of biblical materials that were to illuminate his ideas about the day of vengeance, its course, and its consequences.⁵⁸ With some exceptions, however, there was a lack of commentary that would sort out the citations into chains of proof, and there were no systematic typological interpretations specifying the validity of the New or the Old Testament. In any case, the citations were introduced without regard for the original context and were placed into a new context – the culmination of the ages. Thus the treatise *Cum eadem est via* offered in an extensive form the lore known from the chiliastic articles. The author described the method of biblical exegesis thus: one should keep in mind the law of Moses, yet respect above all the head, i.e., the Gospel of Christ, from which the body of the sermon grew, interconnected by the joints and the sinews of the law and the prophets.⁵⁹ I would hesitate to identify this formulation with the cross-interpretation of the Old and the New Testament, as practiced by the tavern keeper Václav.⁶⁰ In my opinion, it is rather a proclamation of respect for the Gospels, and thus a sort of defence against accusations that the chiliasts preferred prophecies to the Law of Mercy.

55 “*Hii omnes respectum habebant ad quendam Wenceslaum in Praga pincernam, qui ultra omnes in Biblia notus Novum per Antiquum et e converso exponebat testamentum.*” FRB 5:413.

56 Kaminsky, *A History* 351.

57 See also “*Quibus supposicionibus positus hoc modo formavi posicionem, que est fundamentum fere omnium mearum predicacionum,*” FRB 5:417.

58 Kaminsky, *A History* 351 n. 119, maintains that the treatise represented “much more than a mere heaping together of quotations drawn indiscriminately from both Testaments.” This assertion can be supported by the first supposition, which Kaminsky cites. With respect to the other parts, I doubt that the author intentionally used cross-references from the Old to the New Testament in order to actualise the words of the prophecies.

59 Bartoš, “*Do čtyř pražských artykulů,*” 582. As noted by Kaminsky, *A History* 351, the passage subsequently adhered to the procedure specified by the author.

60 The nexus, which the author mentioned at the start (“*nexus coniunctionesque legis et prophetas*“), was a biblical metaphor (Col 2:19) and it did not establish any special theory of typological succession, or of varying validity of the laws of the old, the middle, and eventually the third age. Vavřinec’s statement, in any case, was much too vague and brief to constitute the starting point for such a speculation.

Similarly, as in the position of the *Hussite Chronicle* also here in *Cum eadem* the relation between the Old and the New Testament could be characterised as synergistic. The treatise *promiscue* drew its arguments from the Old and the New Testament, with regard to their utility value. In practice, this involved an arbitrary use of segments of the Bible in the conviction that not only the prophets, but also the evangelists, and above all Christ, knew the future, and provided glimpses of it.⁶¹ The signs of Christ's Second Coming were scattered in various places of the Scriptures; it sufficed to collect them, and recognise their current realisation. Jesus himself had refused to indicate the day and the hour of the end, he merely described the signs of its coming.⁶² The exegetical principle of the treatise was, therefore, a selection of biblical citations and their explication so that the most exact image of the descended Christ's Kingdom could be obtained. Although the Old Testament was valid for the Jews, and the New one for the Christian era, both could yield information about the next age. According to the author of the treatise, Christ's renewed presence would signify the end of the New Testament epoch.⁶³ That was evident, inter alia, from his discussion of the sacraments. In the author's opinion, the Eucharist would remain, but its consumption would no longer commemorate Christ's death – this practice according to 1 Cor 11:26 was valid only before his Coming – henceforth it would commemorate his victory. The renewed kingdom was an exclusive realm of the apocalyptic Christ; it shut out the Holy Spirit to whom Joachim and the Adamites had consecrated the third age.⁶⁴ There was no mention of a pneumatic input even in the last paragraph of the treatise that foretold the demise of the extant worldly wisdom.⁶⁵ The author himself, of course, still ardently utilised the written law of God in order to detect the symptoms

61 “*Et quia secretum suum Deus revelavit ad servos suos prophetas dans eis intelligere, signa hiis ampliora ne queramus.*” Bartoš, “Do čtyř pražských artykulů,” 584.

62 Ibid. 584; the author here drew on the key presumptions of adventism, Mt 24 and Lk 21. The author's unease that the adventists' predictions would fail to materialise, was noted by Bartoš, ibid. 573-574.

63 The parameters of this article do not allow for an assessment of Joachim of Fiore's influence on such an exegesis, as presupposed by Kaminsky; but see at least the views of Stanisław Bylina, “Dwa nurty prorocत्व chiliastycznych,” [Two currents of chiliastic prophecies] in idem, *Hussitica. Studia* (Warsaw, 2007) 84 [reedition of a study from 2002]. For the incidence of Joachimite works in Bohemian manuscripts, see Kurt-Victor Selge, “Handschriften Joachims von Fiore in Böhmen,” in *Eschatologie und Hussitismus* 53-60. In any case, the Joachimite influence seems more likely than that of the sect of Free Spirit (in its highly organised form), see Patschovsky, “Der taboristische Chiliasmus,” 179-180.

64 Čornej, “Potíže s adamity,” 45 attempted to connect Joachim's three ages with the symbolic names adopted by the Adamites' leaders: Moses, Jesus, and Adam.

65 Bartoš, “Do čtyř pražských artykulů,” 591 with reference to Jn 6:45, Jer 31:34, 1 Cor 1:19, and other instances.

of the last day of his own era.⁶⁶ Evidently he worked with allegorical and analogical explications, even where he maintained the thesis that the prophecies of the world's end were actually in the process of fulfilment. His interpretation was always directed toward an outcome that would support the author's idea about the final rectification of the church and the destruction of evildoers. The material interpretation of sayings about the world's end was intertwined with a figurative explication of other texts, which were thereby drawn into the theme of universal eschatology.

* * *

The hypothesis about the material and spiritual explication of biblical statements thus obviously exhausted its potentialities. Where, then, can one seek an essential difference between the exegetical approach of the masters and that of their misbegotten chiliastic pupils? Let us first of all seek to characterise the exegetical approach of the preachers of Prague. Here the best example is Mt 24, the crown witness of the adventist campaign. Master Jan Hus paid attention to it long before the outbreak of the Hussite Revolution. The discussion stems from his Czech homiliary, and significantly from the sermons for the first two Sundays in Advent.⁶⁷ As customary, Hus divided the subject matter into distinctions and distinguished the triple coming of Christ: physical, i.e. incarnation in the womb of the Virgin Mary; spiritual, when he visited the faithful with his grace; and finally, the future one.⁶⁸ Hus recognised the coming of Christ as a judge, who after all – as the preacher noted – was a part of the Nicene Creed. A significant difference, in comparison with the adventist anticipations, was, of course, the fact that Hus did not attempt to date the Second Coming. Thus – using the standard homiletical method – he explained the statement “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking” (Rev 3:20), in a moral sense, while carefully respecting every detail.⁶⁹ He connected the *pièce de résistance* of the apocalyptic visions with individual eschatology, the feast of the faithful with their

66 In any case even Joachim had thoroughly examined the entire Bible in order to support his thesis of the third age. See Gian Luca Potestà, “‘Intelligentia Scripturarum’ und Kritik des Prophetismus bei Joachim von Fiore,” in *Neue Richtungen in der hoch- und spätmittelalterlichen Biblexegese*, ed. Robert E. Lerner (Munich, 1996) 105.

67 Jan Hus, *Česká nedělní postila. Vyloženie svatých čtení nedělních* MIHO 2: 61-71.

68 Ibid. 62. An analogous triple distinction of the advent is found in Hugh of St.-Cher, see János Bartkó, *Un instrument de travail dominicain pour les prédicateurs du XIIIe siècle : Les Sermones de evangeliiis dominicalibus de Hugues de Saint-Cher (†1263). Edition et étude*. Thesis, Université Lyon 2, 2003, <http://demeter.univ-lyon2.fr:8080/sdx/theses/lyon2/2003/bartko_j>, sermo 1, § 35.

69 Jan Hus, *Česká nedělní postila* 62. Anticipation of Christ, the Judge, was used for moral exhortation by the theologians of piety in the Late Middle Ages, as described by Christoph Burger, “Die Erwartung des richtenden Christus als Motiv für katechetisches Wirken,” in *Wissensorganisierende und wissensvermittelnde Literatur im Mittelalter. Perspektiven ihrer Erforschung*, ed. Norbert Richard Wolf (Wiesbaden, 1987) 103-122.

Lord.⁷⁰ While Hus and his colleagues maintained that no mortal could foretell the world's end, the adventists blithely situated the image of Christ at the door in the present or in an imminently approaching moment, and they saw – around the corner – the Last Judgment Day that would terminate the existence of the material world. In his Ash Wednesday sermon of 1416, Jakoubek enumerated the three matters that God hid from man's knowledge – whether a given person was in grace or in hatred, when he would die, and when the Last Judgment Day would come: “A third matter is hidden from our knowledge – the Day of Judgment, since Christ himself says that no man knows the day or the hour thereof, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father, as Mark writes in chapter 14 [actually Mk 13:3].”⁷¹ The study of biblical texts confirmed the masters in the conviction that man was not destined to know everything.

Another bone of contention was the expression “I will come like a thief” from Rev 3:3, from which – as noted earlier – derived the chiliastic thesis about the hidden coming of Christ, *ex post facto* brought up in the early spring of 1420.⁷² In distinction, Hus, of course, used this biblical quotation as a testimony only to the uncertainty of the time of Christ's coming. He was led to the insertion of the given text from the Apocalypse by the method of verbal concordances, which was common for the homiletical construction of intertextual parallels. It utilised all the available reference books that medieval scholarship had created for preachers.⁷³ For his sermon on the theme *adventus*, Hus gathered statements that had the word *venire* in common; for the distinction of the three comings of Christ alone, he accumulated at least five such quotations.⁷⁴ These created a network of meaning, in the framework of which the individual quotations explained each other, even with the help of their unspoken contexts

70 The preference for individual eschatology in the interpretations of Jakoubek of Střibro was noted by Molnár, “Die eschatologische Hoffnung,” 76.

71 “Třetí věc jest skryta před naším poznáním – den súdný, neb die sám Kristus, že o tom dni neb hodině žádný člověk nevie, anděl v nebi ani Syn, jedno Otec, jakož píše sv. Marek v 14. kap.” Jakoubek of Střibro, *Betlemská kázání z roku 1416* [Sermons in Bethlehem Chapel from 1416], ed. Karel Sita (Prague, 1951) 23. See also Molnár, “Die eschatologische Hoffnung,” 77.

72 The statement comes from Mt 24:43, but it also appears in the Bible in other places (Lk 12:39, 1 Thess 5:2, Rev 3:3; 16:15). Hus (*Česká nedělní postila* 62) employed it when speaking of the individual judgment after death, but he then uses the same quotation (Mt 24:44) with reference to the Last Judgment Day (*ibid.* 64).

73 Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia ad Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland* (Toronto, 1979) 3-90; R. H. Rouse, “L'évolution des attitudes envers l'autorité écrite: Le développement des instruments de travail au XIIIe siècle,” in *Culture et travail intellectuel dans l'Occident médiéval*, eds. Geneviève Hasenohr and Jean Longère (Paris, 1981) 115-144; Louis-Jacques Bataillon, “Les instruments de travail des prédicateurs au XIIIe siècle,” in *ibid.* 197-209.

74 Jn 16:28, Jn 14:23, Mt 24:42, Rev 3:3, and Mt 25:31-32; the quotation from Rev 3:20 is in concordance only by its meaning, the key verb in the Vulgate text is *introire*.

that were familiar to the author (or the reader). In this light, Hus's metaphor of the thief did not mean somebody who was coming stealthily (as the chiliasts maintained), but one who would come at a time previously unknown in the sense of Mt 24:43-44: "If the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour." A similar explanation of the thief metaphor was offered by Jakoubek, who enhanced the impact by adding a reference to the unexpected arrival of the great flood: "...and then the angry Lord will come, just as the flood at the time of Noah." It was, of course, pointless to speculate "in which hour and which day this should be happening."⁷⁵

Since the time of Milíč of Kroměříž, of course, the Bohemian reform movement felt under the imminent threat of the Antichrist's approaching victory.⁷ Likewise, in Hus's eyes, the signs of the world's end were becoming increasingly ominous. His statements in that regard, however, did not transgress the bounds of more or less orthodox Christian pessimism. Designating a reigning pope by name as Antichrist, as Jakoubek had done in the *quodlibet* of 1412, was already out of the ordinary and must have attracted attention,⁷⁷ nevertheless it was still a matter of dealing only with a rapid passage of time, not outright with the end of time. The pre-revolutionary sermons and determinations of the university masters were separated by a sharp divide from the declarations that the Last Judgment was already in effect, or just about to begin in an identified moment. It is true that the Prague preachers of Hus's entourage voiced in their eschatological pronouncements views that were fairly radical – often sharpened by an immediate excitement, and possibly in mutual contradiction. At the latest, however, the arrival of the adventist campaign forced a clarification of viewpoints. Then it was shown that the masters were in no way ready to declare, as completed, the abominations that were to precede the world's end. Obviously the situation was not so bad that it could not get still worse. The masters could still sustain the thesis about the Antichrist's already existing

75 Jakoubek, *Výklad na Zjevení 1:305*; the reference was noted by Molnár, "Die eschatologische Hoffnung," 165 n. 39. Jakoubek utilised the image of the nocturnal thief in 1 Thess 5:1-3, while the reference to Noah and the flood alluded to Mt 24:37.

76 A survey of the anticipations of the Antichrist's arrival in the Bohemian reform movement is provided by Molnár, "Die eschatologische Hoffnung," 61-108, and Šmahel, *Husitské Čechy 283-285*. On Jakoubek and Biskupec see Pavlína Cermanová, "Jakoubkův a Biskupcův Výklad na Apokalypsu. Porovnání s důrazem na interpretaci antikristovského mýtu," [Jakoubek's and Biskupec's Explanations of the Apocalypse: Comparison with an Emphasis on the interpretation of the Antichrist Myth], in *Jakoubek ze Stříbra. Texty a jejich působení* [Jakoubek of Stříbro: Texts and their Effect], eds. Ota Halama and Pavel Soukup (Prague, 2006) 209-228.

77 Vlastimil Kybal, "M. Matěj z Janova a M. Jakoubek ze Stříbra. Srovnávací kapitola o Antikristu" [Master Matěj of Janov and Master Jakoubek of Stříbro: A Comparative Chapter on Antichrist], *ČČH 11* (1905) 22-37.

activity in the world. The rapid end of ages, however, had turned, strictly speaking, into a rather leisurely process. The accompanying signs should serve the faithful not for calculating the date of the Judgment, but rather for a spiritual preparation to face the cosmic denouement.

Thus Hus's entire Advent sermon turned out, in the final analysis, to be a call for the rectification of morals: "That day, dearest brethren, conscientiously remember to correct your life, change your habits, overcome evil temptations, revenge committed sins with weeping..."⁷⁸ The tropological interpretation and the preponderance of moralism were also evident in Jakoubek's case.⁷⁹ This final purpose, however, was not, as I have attempted to show, the product of applying *sensus mysticus* strictly. It is clear that there was something that exerted a restraining effect on the Prague preachers despite their sense of eschatological urgency. This restraint caused them not to transgress the conceptual boundary, and kept them from announcing the imminence of the world's end, and from exhorting their listeners to participate actively in a realization of the Apocalypse – as the adventist preachers were doing. According to Jakoubek, the real problem was to recognise when Christ was visiting a person with his grace. The disciples had inquired from Jesus concerning this coming (Mt 24:3), and he warned them against the false messiahs. They said: "We shall recognise you when you come as a judge; but tell us the signs – so that we may recognise you – when you come through grace."⁸⁰ It was, therefore, pointless to speculate about the signs of the world's end, and human intellect should be applied to recognising the correct path through life. In fact, Jakoubek's entire *Exposition of the Revelation* was an illustrative demonstration, how – even at the height of the Antichrist's raging fury – it was possible to relate the Apocalypse to individual eschatology, and project the cosmic conflict into the bosoms of the faithful. Drawing lessons from the winter events of 1419-1420, Jakoubek confined himself to the realm of moralizing: "Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains' (Mt 24:17), that is, avoid the angers of Satan, shield yourselves from errors and bad habits. 'Pray that your flight may not be in winter...' (Mt 24:20). Cold heart, with the love of God doused, cannot flee; but who is warmed by Christ, the sun of righteousness, and is illumined by faith, he runs

78 "Ten den, bratříe najmilejší, vši neb plnú myslí pamatujte, života popravte, obyčeje proměňte, zlá pokušení přemáhajte, hříchův dopuštěných pláčem mstěte..." Jan Hus, *Česká nedělní postila* 71.

79 Significantly, he added to his explanation of God's three hidden matters: "A proto ty věci jsou před námi skryty, abychom tiem snažněji hříchův se vystřiehali, dobré skutky činili, a tím jistějšě byli milostí Boží, a tiem bezpečnějšě čekali smrti své i dne súdného." [And therefore are those things concealed so that we might more ardently avoid sins, perform good works, and thereby become surer of God's grace, and less fearful of our death and of the Judgment Day], Jakoubek, *Betlemská kázání* 23.

80 "Jakož přijdeš na soudě, tak tě poznáme; ale když přicházíš skrze milost, pověz nám znamenie, abychom tě poznali." Jakoubek, *Výklad na Zjevenie* 2:582.

away from friends and worldly things, yes, from his very own body, so that inside him there would remain only what is pleasing to God.”⁸¹

In the discussions of the world’s end, it was always an ad hoc decision, at which instance in the Bible to prefer a literal meaning, and at which a figurative one. Of course, the preacher took into consideration the result that he wished to attain. It did not, however, mean sheer arbitrariness in exegesis. We do not speak of conscious and intentional twisting of the biblical account, but about a time of extreme religious excitement, when all the parties sought for an understanding of Scripture that would be most adequate in the given situation. If Jakoubek chose a spiritual interpretation of key passages in prophecies, the Gospels, and the Apocalypse, it was not a blind and simplistic endorsement of the metaphorical interpretation. Spiritualization – or, better, maximal gain for Christian faith and morals from every biblical passage – constituted Jakoubek’s *regula dilectionis*, or Golden Rule, that had already led St. Augustine through the intricate landscape of biblical hermeneutics.⁸² The utility for Christian life was the criterion, determining the choice of either the literal or metaphorical interpretation of any given passage. Such a definition of the exegetical method, however, is still too general. How did the application of such a rule look in practice? The texts of the university preachers indicate that the criterion of correctness for the choice of an explication was, for these authors, the Christian exegetical tradition.⁸³ The tropological conclusion of Hus’s Advent sermon, cited earlier, is a clear evidence of this – it is a quotation copied from a sermon of Gregory the Great.⁸⁴ Not only time authenticated the classical works of the Church Fathers and doctors, they also basked in the glow of a supernatural inspiration. It would have been exceedingly rash to claim the ability to understand all the mysteries directly – such a pretension in the opaque presence was rather a sign of the pseudo-prophets. It was, however, possible to seek understanding from those who had possessed exceptional gifts. The scholastic panoply of glosses and reference manuals did not replace, but mediated, the direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit.⁸⁵

81 “‘Tehdy kteří sou v Židovstvu, utiekajte k horám’ [Mt 24:17], totiž varujte se od zlosti šatanovy, uzavierajte se od bluduov a navyklostí zlych. ‘A modlte se, aby utiekanie vaše nebylo v zimě.’ [Mt 24:20] Srdce studené, od lásky božie uhašené, nemuož utiekati; ale kdež zahřievá Kristus, slunce spravdnosti, a osvěcuje skrze vieru, tent’ utieká od přátel a časných věcí, ano i od vlastnieho těla, jediné aby toliko zuostati mohlo vnitř to, což se Bohu líbí.” Ibid. 1:490.

82 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 1:22.

83 Molnár, “K otázce reformační iniciativy lidu,” 13, speaks of “a hermeneutical and exegetical concern of the theoreticians [of the Bohemian Reform movement].”

84 See n. 78 above.

85 In this way – at least for the radicals of the Bohemian Reformation – I would like to complement the conclusions presented by Franco Morenzoni, “Parole du prédicateur et inspiration divine d’après les artes praedicandi,” in *La parole du prédicateur (Ve-XVe siècle)*, ed. Rosa Maria Dessì and Michel Lauwers (Nice, 1997) 271-290. The author investigated, how the preachers with the passage of time were losing the sense of direct divine inspiration, and sought to replace it with a reliance on scholastic studies of homiletics and exegesis.

Two extant versions of “The Letter to Jan of Jičín” belong among the richest sources for the understanding of Jakoubek’s hermeneutical theory. Let us, therefore, attempt, with the aid of this source, to substantiate the thesis about the significance of the exegetical tradition. Jakoubek’s explicit aim was to develop his interpretation *ad intentionem Spiritus sancti*. If we were to define the fundamental exegetical principle expressed by Jakoubek’s statement, it would not be to distinguish between *literaliter* and *mistiche*, but apparently an exegesis “in harmony with the intention of the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁶ It really appears that Jakoubek presupposed a kind of supernatural legitimacy in the interpretation of Scripture. He was apparently convinced that his understanding of the Bible was a gift from God.⁸⁷ He himself described interpretation in harmony with the Holy Spirit as “*certa revelacio, sive per scripturam sive alio modo*.”⁸⁸ It is in the concept of *revelacio* that I see the basic difference in the approach to the biblical text: while the revelation of the radicals had a genuinely prophetic character, Jakoubek’s interpretation of Scripture is discursive. Jakoubek, in fact, explicitly posited “a revelation from the Scriptures” as a synonym of evidence, *certificacio*, and it had the same validity whether the source was the law, the prophets, the Gospels, or the apostolic writings. He indicated elsewhere how to conceive of “revelation” *alio modo*, when he asked Jičín to substantiate his conclusions “*ratione vel scriptura aut auctoritate*.”⁸⁹ He, therefore, included under “*revelacio*” hermeneutical work with the Bible, as well logical ratiocination and the application of authoritative texts.⁹⁰ Ferdinand Seibt has shown that, even in the case of the lay chalice, Jakoubek’s *revelacio* was not a “revelation” in the adventist sense.⁹¹ It was more a matter of gaining a kind of *sensus certus* through the employment of hermeneutical interpretative means in the study of the Bible.

86 See, for instance, Kaminsky, *A History* 531, 537, 543. It must be noted that even Martin Húska required from exegesis, “*aby vždy pravý a věrný rozum Ducha svatého při tom zachováán byl*” [that in all this the right and truthful reason of the Holy Spirit must be respected], see A. Frinta, “*Vyznání o chlebu živém a věčném (Martina Húska)*” [Confession of the Living and Eternal Bread (by Martin Húska)], *JSH* 1 (1928) 10. The difference rests in the view, how to attain to “the reason of the Holy Spirit.”

87 “*Ideo iam tangam, prout Deus dederit michi hiis scriptis sententiam,*” – this is his formulation at the start of the Letter to Jičín, see Kaminsky, *A History* 531.

88 *Ibid.* 543.

89 *Ibid.* 531.

90 Indeed, Jakoubek cited at length from Origen in the Letter to Jičín. Likewise in his Letter against the chiliasts he referred to the interpretation of Babylon by the same author, as well as to Augustine’s allegory of the City of God; *ibid.* 541 and 520. Authors of the patristic era, whose ideas Jan Přeboram had summoned to refute Pikart errors, are listed by Stanisław Bylina, “*Jana z Přibramia Contra articulos picardorum,*” in *idem, Hussitica* 119-120.

91 Ferdinand Seibt, “*Die revelatio des Jacobellus von Mies über die Kelchkommunion,*” *Deutsches Archiv*, 22 (1966) 618-624.

Jakoubek mentioned the *revelacio* concerning the lay chalice in his treatise *Pius Iesus*,⁹² and then elaborated in his response to the polemic of Ondřej of Brod: “If I designate as a revelation the manner of understanding that derives from the study of God’s Law and from certain interpretation and authorities of the ancient saints, such as Augustine, Cyprian, Chrysostom, and others, who follow them, then I can claim a revelation, because I derive an understanding from the Law and from reliable writings.”⁹³ These *auctoritates* also represented a connecting bond between the intellectually oriented exploration of the sacred text and the supernatural legitimisation, which Jakoubek attributed to himself. A segment from the *Výklad na Zjevení* expressed this nexus most pithily. Commenting on the words of the Apocalypse, prohibiting any addition or subtraction from prophecies (Rev 22:18-19), Jakoubek stated:

He adds who finds new meaning beyond the reason of the Scripture and the Holy Spirit. Peter in his Epistle says: ‘First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation’ [2 Pet 1:20-21] nor may it be interpreted with twisted meaning, but we should diligently look into the books of saints, who are filled with the Holy Spirit, how they interpret morally, spiritually and competently, or in a God-fearing fashion. Therefore, those tend to fall into heresy in this kingdom, who rely only on their intellects.⁹⁴

Contact with the divine wisdom was guaranteed not by a pretended prophetic ecstasy, but by the books of those saintly teachers who actually possessed true understanding. It was exactly the inspired theological sources that guaranteed a harmony between exegesis and the intent of the Holy Spirit. This was so despite the fact that Jakoubek counted the teaching of the holy Fathers – in ecclesiastical practice – among accidental matters, which could be disregarded in the case of necessity. In the normal course of events this teaching was useful, if it did not contradict the Law of God. The Taborite priests, however, were unwilling to accept even this qualified viewpoint, as they had shown during the dispute at Zmrzlík’s house.⁹⁵

92 Jaroslav Kadlec, “Literární polemika mistrů Jakoubka ze Stříbra a Ondřeje z Brodu o laický kalich” [Literary Polemic of Masters Jakoubek of Stříbro and Ondřej of Broad Concerning the Lay Chalice], *AUC-HUCP* 21:2 (1981) 80.

93 “*Generaliter vocando revelationem modum cognoscendi venientem ex scrutinio legis Domini et ex solidis expositionibus et auctoritatibus antiquorum sanctorum, ut Augustini, Cypriani, Bernhardi, Chrysostomi et aliorum eos in eodem senso sequentium, concedere possum, quod habeo revelationem, quia habeo cognitionem ex lege et scriptis authenticis. Haec cognitio, noviter per illum modum acquisita, generaliter vocari potest revelatio, quia per eam quodammodo velamen ignorantiae intus deponitur juxta illud psalmi: ‘Revela oculos meos, considerabo mirabilia de lege tua’ [Ps 118,18]. Et hanc cognitionem veram sive revelationem probavi rationibus et scripturis, ut superius patuit in isto scripto et alibi.*” Hardt 3:566.

94 Jakoubek, *Výklad na Zjevení* 1:634. The identical passage from the Apocalypse was, however, cited also by the Taborite priests to support liturgical reform, see FRB 5:406.

95 Jakoubek formulated his standpoint in his response to Biskupec concerning liturgical vestments, which reflected his position on extra-biblical matters of ecclesiastical tradition: “*Et sic eodem*

In my opinion, it was exactly the issue of using theological literature that formed the fundamental divide between the exegesis of the University masters and the radicals.⁹⁶ This was also attested by the chiliastic articles which prohibited any kind of utilising of theological or philosophical literature. Taborite preachers targeted not only the study of liberal arts and philosophy,⁹⁷ but also church decrees, as well as the writings, teachings, and exegetical interpretations of the holy doctors. Dionysius, Origen, Cyprian, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory were all placed on the blacklist.⁹⁸ The basis of this view was the article that one should believe only what was contained in the canon of the Bible.⁹⁹ The chiliasts went even further. In their renewed kingdom there would be no need for any kind of extrinsic teaching, because “they shall all be taught by God.” (Jn 6:45).¹⁰⁰ Then even written Bibles would not be needed, because everyone would have the Law of God inscribed in his heart.¹⁰¹ Also Martin Húska upheld the view that the life of Christ was “correctly described in the Gospel and the Epistles, but not in the doctors’ writings, which were invented by the masters and are called glosses.”¹⁰²

Jakoubek himself denounced in his *Výklad na Zjevení* the radical fundamentalism of the pilgrims, who went into the mountains, who had rejected the

modo intelligendum est de omnibus humanis sanctorum patrum institutionibus, que non sunt contra legem dei, nec eam impediunt, sed potius promovent aliqua mystice significando.” FRB 5:464. Jakoubek’s ambivalent relation to various forms of learning is briefly sketched by Josef Pekař, *Žižka a jeho doba*, 4 vv. (Prague, 1927) 1:200-203 n. 3/2 and 8/3.

96 Most of the references, cited in n. 33 above, call attention to the radicals’ rejection of the learned tradition, for instance, Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution* 1:651 and 705; idem, *Husitské Čechy* 285; Patschovsky, “Der taboritische Chiliasmus,” 175; Kaminsky, *A History* 337. The relation of Tábor to the university learning is systematically treated by Kejř, *Mistři pražské univerzity* 25-33, see also Bylina, “Jana z Přibramia Contra articulos picardorum,” 122-123.

97 Aa 58: “Item quod omnes veritates in philosophia et in artibus, quavis sint legis Christi promotive, nullo umquam modo sunt amplectende sive studende.” See also B 62, C 71, D 55-59, F 5.

98 Aa 56: “Item quod decreta universalis ecclesie et sanctorum patrum a spiritu sancto constitutiones, quomodocunq; legitime, non sunt observande, quia in observacionibus evangelii expressis est contentandum.” Aa 57: “Item quod scripta, doctrine et postillationes sanctorum doctorum in scientia et vita ab ecclesia primitiva approbatorum, ut Dyonisii, Origenis, Cipriani, Crisostomi, Jeronimi, Augustini et Gregorii et aliorum non sunt a fidelibus legende et discende nec in confirmationem sensuum scripture allegande.” Srov. B 60-61, C 70, D 50-52. Article E 25 in Jakoubek’s *Výklad na Zjevení* 1:527 named for good measure also Gallus, Michael, and Paul; in my opinion, however, these were not doctors, but they wandered in from an article concerning the intercession of saints. A similar formulation, which appears to back up this assumption, is found in Vavřinec, FRB 5:412-413.

99 Aa 53, B 58, C 69, D 49, F 9. – The contentious issue of the holy doctors between Tábor and Prague continued and was to culminate with the Judge of Cheb.

100 Aa 26 (with citations Wis 5:3, Jer 31:34 and Jn 6:45); see above n. 65. Similar statements are in Ab 16, B 50, D 48 and 62, E 16 and G 5.

101 Aa 27 (see Jer 31:33 and Rom 2:15). The same standpoint was expressed in articles B 51, C 38, D 60, E 16, F 3 and K 1, attesting that the view persisted into the Adamite phase.

102 Frinta, “Vyznání o chlebu živém a věčném,” 8. It is true that he himself once referred (p. 10) to Augustine, clashed with his theoretical framework and could be considered a slip. In the articles, prior to his execution, he maintained: “quod sufficit ad salutem vivere vita Christi sine papis et doc-

writings of the saints, “wishing to understand the Scripture without their interpretations.”¹⁰³ It was unthinkable for Jakoubek and the circle of his colleagues to admit that an understanding of the Scripture would be possible without the glosses and exegetical sentences of the holy doctors. Already Hus – by a letter from the jail in Constance in June 1415 – admonished his adherents in the Bethlehem Chapel that, in their treatment of the Law of Christ, they should not rely on their own interpretation, but on the glosses of the holy doctors.¹⁰⁴ Three and a half years later, at the St. Wenceslaus Synod the Utraquist masters and clergy denounced, in opposition to the growing radicalism, the principle of *sola scriptura*, on the grounds that not all the component parts of faith were explicitly contained in the Scripture. It was not proper, therefore, to reject what was not written in the Bible outright; there were truths that were based on the Bible, albeit in a discreet way. In any case, nobody could understand everything that the Bible contained. As a result, the Synod defended the ecclesiastical rules and tenets of the holy teachers of the primitive church, as long as they did not contradict the Law of God.¹⁰⁵ The participants in the Synod recognised very clearly the “novelties” that the radical preachers would push to ever greater extremes. Only a bit later there would appear in the Taborite and chiliastic articles analogous enactments about ecclesiastical statutes and holy doctors’ writings, but only turned upside down.

I have tried to identify the exegetical principles of the chiliastic preachers and of their university opponents. In my opinion, the fundamental contrast rests not in the literal interpretation of the Bible’s prophetic visions, but in the rejection of the hermeneutical tradition by the radicals, for whom – at the world’s end – books were no longer of any use. The manner in which the Taborite preachers, who heralded Christ’s Second Coming, “strangely stultified the faithful” was, according to Vavřinec of Březová, the idiosyncratic interpretation of prophecies without any regard for Church doctors’ writings: “They proclaimed many things that were heretical and contrary to the Christian faith, interpreting out of their heads the prophets’ writings and rejecting generally

toribus,” Job 2. The quotation from Augustine in *Cum eadem est via*, Bartoš, “Do čtyř pražských artykulů,” 590, is the editor’s error; the correct reading is “*Et item: ‘Angustus et michi locus...’* [Is 49:20]”. See, however, article D 52, in which Příbram maintained that the Taborites used the doctors’ writings, where they suited their purposes. Evidently, this was not valid for the radical chiliasts and, in any case, this assertion was in conflict with Příbram’s immediately preceding article.

103 “... písnuom rozuměti chtějíce bez výkladu jich...” Jakoubek, *Výklad na Zjevení*, 1:528.

104 Novotný, 278, no. 132. A discussion of this letter concludes František Šmahel’s “Husitští „doktoři“ jehly a verpánku,” [The Hussite Doctors of the Needle and Cobbler’s Stool], in idem, *Mezi středověkem a renesancí* [Between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance] (Prague, 2002) 238-248 [a revised version of the 1983 study].

105 See articles 2, 14 and 15, in *Documenta* 678 a 680. Concerning the Synod, see Blanka Zilinská, *Husitské synody v Čechách 1418-1440* [The Hussite Synods in Bohemia in 1418-1440] (Prague, 1985) 31-39.

Christian postulates of the holy teachers.”¹⁰⁶ Jakoubek retained his knowledge gained through study, and continued to utilise it critically. The discursive conception of the biblical exegesis defined his method, and consequently also his views both vis-à-vis the Roman Church, as well as vis-à-vis the extreme left in the Bohemian Reformation, which he tried to confront with all the stalwarts of patristic literature behind him.¹⁰⁷

Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David.

¹⁰⁶ FRB 5:355; also 403.

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