
Master Jan Hus and St. Augustine

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In the following remarks, I wish to deal with the influence of the intellectual legacy of the Church Father and teacher, St. Augustine, on the writings and teaching of Master Jan Hus. Whoever has studied, to some extent, the events of Hus's life, and has familiarised himself with his writings and views, will not be surprised by Hus's sympathy for this thinker of Late Antiquity – one of the most significant and fruitful representatives of the Latin Fathers.¹ Within the framework of this article, of course, I can not aspire to offer a full overview of this theme.

Such a task would presuppose a very thorough exploration and preparation, in the first place including identification and documentation of the very numerous citations from Augustine's – and also Pseudo-Augustinian – writings, which Hus utilised in his own treatises. Further, it would be necessary to assess the context of these citations, that is to say, why and how Hus introduced them, and whence he derived his knowledge of Augustine – whether he knew his entire works and drew on their accessible copies, or selected the citations either from florilegia, or from the writings of other earlier or contemporary authors. It would be necessary to show how Hus related to the Augustinian tradition and its transmission in philosophy and theology. Finally, it would be incumbent, on the basis of this research, to attempt an answer to the question about Augustine's significance in Hus's teaching and, conversely, about Hus's place in the reception of St. Augustine.

I can only attempt to suggest that such research would be interesting and stimulating, and hope that it will be made possible by a completion of the indispensable critical edition of Hus's works. Despite the huge amount of editorial work so far accomplished, the task is still in its initial stage. Its completion would surely be a fitting way to mark the approaching sixcentennial of Hus's death in 2015.²

¹ Despite its significance, as far as I know, little consistent attention has been paid to this question. An exception is the chapter “La part de saint Augustin dans le ‘De ecclesia’ de Huss” in the book of Paul De Vooght, *Hussiana* (Louvain, 1960) 66–92. To some extent this subject-matter is also treated in the following chapter of the cited source, concerned with the Hussite interpretation of Mat. 16:18, which also notes the Wycliffite mediation of the Patristic tradition.

² One of the most rigorous editors, Anežka Vidmanová, has presented a comprehensive overview of the current state of the edition of Hus's writings at the international conference on M. Jan Hus, organised at the Papal Lateran University in Rome in December 1999.

Hus exhibited a sincere and warm interest in Augustine during virtually his entire life. Although we cannot date precisely his initial encounter with Augustine's writings, we can assume that the latest it took place was during his University studies. At that time, he would have been able to familiarise himself with Augustine's authentic works, which were available in the college libraries of the University of Prague, as attested by contemporary catalogues. These catalogues, which appeared in photographic reprints for the sixcentennial of Charles University,³ deserve a critical edition that would undertake the daunting task of identifying, as completely as possible, the registered items as to their authors and – if possible – their titles.⁴ This task should be considerably facilitated, compared to 1948, by the results of the intervening sixty years of intensive research in medieval studies both in Bohemia and elsewhere, and in addition by the unprecedented development of electronic databases.⁵

It is true that Augustine and his writings were not directly treated in the lectures at the University's Faculty of Arts, where Hus first studied – as it was customary at that time for teaching to be based primarily on Aristotle – but there was no doubt about Augustine's popularity in the University milieu,

In that year, Vidmanová's report appeared separately as *Základní vydání spisů M. Jana Husa* [The Basic Edition of the Writings of M. Jan Hus]. Subsequently, it was included in a collection of articles from the conference, *Jan Hus na přelomu tisíciletí. Mezinárodní rozprava o českém reformátorovi 15. století Papežská lateránská universita Řím 15.–18. prosince 1999*. [Hus at the Turn of the Millennium. An International Conference about the Bohemian Reformer of the Fifteenth Century...At the Papal Lateran University, Rome 15–18. December 1999], edd. Miloš Drda – František J. Holeček – Zdeněk Vybíral, *HT Supplementum* 1 (2001) 267–277. The report indicates that the critical edition of Hus's *Opera omnia* (MIHO), launched in 1959 by the publishing house of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (planned in 26 volumes), had resulted in the appearance of only four volumes of Czech writings (MIHO 1–4) and five volume of Latin writings (MIHO 7, 8, 9, 13, 22). The publication of the remaining Latin volumes was then transferred to the Belgian firm Brepols, Turnhout, which in its series, *Corpus christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis*, has published (as numbers 205, 211) two more volumes of Hus's writings (MIHO 19A, 20) in 2004–2006.

³ J. Bečka – E. Urbánková, *Katalogy knihoven kolejí Karlovy University* [Catalogues of the Libraries of the Colleges of Charles University] (Prague, 1948) 97.

⁴ Much pioneering work in that direction was performed by František Šmahel, who was concerned with dating, attribution and current preservation of the volumes registered in these catalogues. See his fundamental study "Knihovní katalogy koleje Národa českého a koleje Rečkovy" [Library Catalogues of the College of the Bohemian Nation and of Reček's College], in: *AUC-HUCP* 2–1 (1961) 59–85; and the German translation "Die Bücherkataloge des Collegium Nationis Bohemicae und des Collegium Reczkonis," in: František Šmahel, *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter* (Leiden, 2007) 405–439.

⁵ Such possibilities were pointed out especially by Ivan Hlaváček in the collection of his articles, *Knihy a knihovny v českém středověku* [Books and Libraries in Medieval Bohemia] (Prague, 2005) 395, which includes his studies, among others, of the library of Charles College, of the libraries of other institutions as well as private ones, accompanied by editions of relevant lists of books.

including the Arts Faculty. Here we do not even speak about the theological studies, in which Hus continued after obtaining the degree of *magister in artibus*. The mentioned catalogues of college libraries – although from a period after Hus’s studies – attest to Augustine’s popularity by the number and representative selection of his recorded works.⁶ We are justified to assume that Hus could avail himself of these writings, in particular since the book holdings of the colleges in Prague were accessible also to students, contrary to the rules of similar college libraries elsewhere in Europe.⁷

Otherwise, Hus could have been exposed to Augustine’s teaching even at the Arts Faculty, or shortly after graduation, at least in two ways. Since 1366, one of its professors was Master Jenek Václavův of Prague, who had been appointed as one of the six members of Charles College, directly by Charles IV, in the year of its establishment for the masters of the Arts Faculty. It is true that, by the time of Hus’s studies at the Arts faculty, Jenek had already advanced to the higher Theological Faculty, but Hus could have met him there at the start of his own theological studies. Moreover, we know that Jenek, in 1400, bequeathed to the College of the Bohemian Nation his house and library, which, among others, contained *Augustini opera*. Thus, we can assume that Hus had access to them, or at least could have become aware of their value through his mentor, whom he highly esteemed; he mentioned Jenek as one of the most distinguished Czech professors of Prague University in a speech during his own installation as Rector of the University in 1409.⁸

⁶ For instance, one can cite *Registrum librerie nacionis Boemorum*, which begins on p. 110 of the manuscript of the Roudnice Lobkovic Library in Nelahozeves (sig. VI E f 8) and represents the catalogue of the College Library of the Bohemian Nation, the beginnings of which must be dated before 1420. It includes, especially in the alphabetical sequence E a truly impressive and representative number of several dozens of Augustine’s writings, found among the holdings of this library. These works include, among others: *Confessiones*, *Retractiones*, *Enchiridion*, *De beata vita*, *De ordine*, *De civitate Dei*, *Solliloquia*, *De vera religione*, *De bono conjugali*, *Contra Faustum*, *De Trinitate*, *De Genesi ad litteram*, *De libero arbitrio*, *De doctrina christiana*, *Contra Pelagium*, furthermore, Explanations of St. John’s Gospel, of the Psalms, his letters, etc. Some of these writings are listed repeatedly; therefore, they were preserved in several exemplars. The situation is similar in the alphabetic sequence of E in the library catalogue of Reček’s College (p. 15 of the cited manuscript), except that the number of Augustine’s works is not by far so numerous. The cited pages of the Roudnice manuscript are included in photocopies on pp. 50–54 and 15 in Bečka – Urbánková, *Katalogy knihoven*.

⁷ Šmahel, “Die Bücherkataloge des Collegium Nationis Bohemicae und des Collegium Reczkonis,” 436. By and large, there is very little information about Hus’s own library, which he had donated to the Bethlehem Chapel. See Ivan Hlaváček, “Hussens Bücher, Einige Überlegungen zu Hussens Bibliothek und Bücherbenutzung,” in: HENC 113–119. We are, therefore, unable to seek any evidence from that source about Hus’s relation to St. Augustine.

⁸ The news of Jenek’s donation was recorded shortly before the Battle of the White Mountain by the unfortunate rector of Charles University, Johannes Campanus, *Calendarium beneficiorum Academiae Pragensis collatorum strenae loco ineunte Anno 1616 missum generoso et strenuo equiti Domino Udalrico Gersdorffo*, ed. Karel Hrdina (Prague, 1949) 31–34. – Hus’s reference to Jenek Václavův is included in his oration *Confirmate corda vestra*, ed. Anežka Schmidtová: Johannes Hus, *Positiones, Recommendationes, Sermones* (Prague, 1958) 126.

The other, even more clearly evident, way of Hus's acquaintances with Augustine dated to 1398 when, two years after obtaining the degree of *magister in artibus*, Hus copied four of Wyclif's philosophical treatises by hand: *De universalibus*, *De ideis*, *De materia et forma*, and *De tempore*. In the first place, of course, from these treatises he learned Wyclif's philosophical teaching, which inspired him and which he did not cease to admire and to defend for the rest of his life. Still at the Council of Constance in July 1415, Hus sincerely proclaimed that he highly cherished Wyclif's philosophical books (*libri in artibus sibi valde bene placebant*).⁹ More importantly, in the second place, Wyclif's writings also led Hus to a deeper understanding of the teaching of Augustine, whom the Oxford theologian highly respected, frequently cited, and utilised. For instance, in his treatise, *De ideis*, citations from Augustine – often introduced by an enthusiastic endorsement – are the most frequent (after the Bible), and the same is true in the treatise *De universalibus* (after citations from Aristotle).¹⁰

While Hus became familiar with Wyclif's texts and the embedded ideas of Augustine through copying, he undoubtedly got to know them even better by translating them from Latin into Czech. We know that Hus translated Wyclif's late theological and philosophical treatise *Triologus*, in which Wyclif to a certain extent carries on an evaluation and assessment of his extant work or, if we wish to use an Augustinian term, his *retractatio*.¹¹ It is essential that in this treatise Wyclif's principal authority was Aurelius Augustinus,¹² which in the teaching about Ideas he even juxtaposes to the authority of Aristotle. According to Wyclif, Aristotle – while criticising Plato in the seventh book of the *Metaphysics* – stupidly conceives of the Idea as

⁹ Petri de Mladenovic, "Relatio de Mag. Joannis Hus causa." *Documenta*, 280.

¹⁰ As for the treatise *De ideis* (the critical edition of which I am preparing with Ivan J. Müller), I sum up the available data in Vilém Herold, *Pražská univerzita a Wyclif* [The University of Prague and Wyclif] (Prague, 1985); as for the treatise, *De universalibus*, see Müller's critical edition: John Wyclif, *Tractatus de universalibus*, ed. Ivan J. Müller (Oxford, 1985) 403 (Citations from St. Augustine are noted in the index 383–385.)

¹¹ Hus's translation of the *Triologus*, reported by Štěpán of Dolany, unfortunately is no longer extant. See F. M. Bartoš – Pavel Spunar, *Soupis pramenů k literární činnosti M. Jana Husa a Jeronýma Pražského* [A List of Sources Concerning the Literary Activity of M. Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague] (Prague, 1965) 184. Undoubtedly, it was conjoined to the translation of Wyclif's *Dialogus*, prepared by Hus's associate, Jakoubek of Stříbro. (This translation has survived and was published as *Překlad Viklefova Dialogu* [A Translation of Wyclif's *Dialogue*], ed. Milan Svoboda, [Prague, 1909].) Jerome of Prague had brought both Latin texts from Oxford at the start of the fifteenth century, as he had himself testified: "Cum eram adolescens, habens ardorem discendi, perveni in Angliam et audiens famam Wicleff, quod fuit vir subtilis atque excellentis ingenii, dum exemplaria habere potui, Dialogum et Trialogum transscripsi et mecum in Pragm traduxi." (ed. Jan Sedláč, "Filosofické spory v Praze v době Husově," [Philosophical Disputes in Prague in the Period of Hus], in: *Studie a texty* [1915] 208.)

¹² Joannis Wiclif *Triologus cum supplemento Trialogi*, ed. G. Lechler (Oxford, 1869) 475. (References to the citations of Augustine's works are listed in the index, 462–463.)

an absolute essence, different from the divine essence, when no wise person can understand it so. On this false premise, Aristotle then deduces that such an Idea would be superfluous.¹³

There again appear thoughts, with which Hus had already become familiar from Wyclif's treatise *De ideis*. Subsequently, they reappear often in Prague – including Augustine's postulate that without knowing Ideas no-one could be wise – during the defence of Wyclif, in which Augustine's authority is fully utilised. Such a defence of Wyclif's writings against heresy charges was organised by Hus at the University of Prague toward the end of July 1410, barely fourteen days after the Prague Archbishop had Wyclif's books burned in his courtyard in order "that the fiery flame might remove them from the sight of the faithful." It is not necessary to dwell on these well-known events, but let us at least point out how Augustine's authority was "utilised" by Hus's pupil and young adherent, Prokop of Plzeň, to defend the treatise *De ideis*. He stated, among other things: Those, who condemned and incinerated the treatise *De ideis*, either reject Ideas, or they do not. If they reject the Ideas, then – according to St. Thomas, who relies on St. Augustine, they are unbelievers. If they do not deny the existence of Ideas, then they either get to know them, or they do not. If they do not know them, then they are fools, because, according to the earlier noted citation from Augustine, no-one can be wise without knowing the Ideas. If they knew the Ideas, then their senseless condemnation of the latter proved them to be blasphemers. Prokop then posed a rhetorical question: "I ask you, how can then fools competently assess wisdom, and blasphemers and unbelievers assess the Catholic truths?" He compares their relation to truth to the relation of an ass to the lyre, which he cannot play, or the relation of swine to the most beautiful pearls, which they trample under their feet.¹⁴

This passionate and polemical, although somewhat idiosyncratic, utilisation of Augustine, must have been in principle agreeable to Hus. One can assume so, judging from the fact that within half-a-year in January 1411, Hus once more entrusted his pupil Prokop of Plzeň with the preparation of a question about the Ideas for a major *quodlibet* disputation, which he directed at the University of Prague. In his introduction of the event, Hus lauded Prokop and exhorted him to shed light in the manner of the most divine Plato – of whom he was an outstanding and faithful interpreter – on the multitude of Ideas, which were the most beautiful concepts of created things. Prokop not only sought to fulfil Hus's request, but in conclusion he

¹³ "Unde Aristoteles VIImo Metaphisicae arguens contra ydeas Platonis equivocavit in logica stulte concipiens, quod ydea sit essentia absoluta, distincta ab essentia divina; sed quis sapiens ita intelligit? Sed sicut Aristoteles concipit, tunc omnis talis ydea foret superflua." Joannis Wiclif *Triologus*, 62.

¹⁴ Prokop's defense, "*Defensio tractatus De ideis Magistri Wycleph*," was published in the appendixes to the book of Johann Loserth, *Hus und Wyclif, Zur Genesis der hussitischen Lehre*, (Prague, 1884) 277–285.

again utilised the Augustinian authority, this time in an escalated manner to designate the burners of Wyclif's book – that is the Archbishop and other prelates – without explicitly naming them, as heretics. They consciously denied, prohibited, or condemned the teaching about Ideas, and stubbornly persisted in their error.¹⁵

Besides his own studies and Wyclif's mediation of Augustine's works, Hus also could acquire his sympathies for St. Augustine through the mediation of his own "precursors," who often referred to Augustine in the same context as Hus himself. They included Konrád Waldhauser and Milíč of Kroměříž, as well as Matěj of Janov and Vojtěch Raňkův of Ježov. Their works contain a multitude of citations and a broad utilisation of this Church Father's writings. We know that Hus recalled the first three in one of his sermons in the Bethlehem Chapel, and noted the last one (Vojtěch) – perhaps, not quite accurately – among the important Czech professors of the Prague University.¹⁶

In the milieu of the Bohemian Reformation, Hus also demonstrated his warm attitude toward Augustine during his work at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. He had many important citations from Augustine inscribed, apparently in 1412, on the walls of the Chapel; the inscriptions covered the northern wall entirely, and the southern one in part. The source of these quotations was Hus's treatise *De sex erroribus*, about which he wrote in the Czech translation, *O šesti bludiech* the following: "I have noted six errors, by which many could be misled, and placed ... the saints' writing on the wall in Bethlehem so that the faithful might avoid them." Hus saw these errors as stemming from certain assertions of contemporary "lunatic priests," which related to the creation, to the faith, to the remission of sins, to obedience, to anathema, and to simony. Virtually in all the cases, Hus appealed to the writings of Augustine and other patristic authors, and, of course, to the Bible.¹⁷ It is of note that, in Constance, Hus worried about the fate of these inscriptions, because they were denounced by his one-time friend, now "the fiercest opponent," Štěpán of Páleč. Páleč maintained that Hus thereby introduce errors among the faithful, and he, therefore, most emphatically insisted "that this writing be destroyed."¹⁸

Hus follows Augustine very distinctly also in his *Explication of the faith* [Výklad na vieru] and in other Czech-language treatises of this time.¹⁹ Of

¹⁵ Hus's introduction of Prokop of Plzeň's quaestio about the ideas was published by Bohumil Ryba: *Magistri Iohannis Hus Quodlibet*, (Turnhout, 2006) 205–209. Prokop's text of this quaestio (*Utrum simpliciter necessario multitudo ydearum praequiratur ad multitudinem productorum*) was prepared for publication by me within the context of Prague University quaestiae concerning the Platonic ideas. See the commentary in Herold, *Pražské univerzita a Wyclif*, (Prague, 1985) 194–203.

¹⁶ An assessment of Augustine's influence on these thinkers would deserve a separate study.

¹⁷ Bohumil Ryba, *Betlémské texty* [Texts from Bethlehem Chapel], (Prague, 1951) 246.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, 22 and Novotný, 252 (Hus's letter to Petr of Mladoňovice).

¹⁹ For an initial orientation it suffices to peruse the indexes to the first four volumes of Hus's *Opera omnia*, which were published by Jiří Daňhelka. Prague 1975–1995.

course, this is likewise true of Hus's treatise *De ecclesia* from the year 1413, which was to become the main cause for his sentencing in Constance. The trial focused especially on Hus's teaching about the Church, in which the Bohemian reformer drew largely – although not without reservations – on Wyclif's ecclesiology and the treatise *De ecclesia*, bearing the same name as Hus's work.²⁰ In his work, Hus repeatedly cites St. Augustine in support of his concept of the Church as a community of those predestined for salvation and whose leader is Christ.²¹ This concept, of course, aroused the deepest suspicion among the representatives of the institutional Church. The head of this Church was the pope (or, as the case may be, the ecumenical council) and the cardinals, and it was a community not only of the predestined, because nobody – unless he had received a personal revelation – could know who was predestined for salvation.

The fathers of the Council of Constance, who were Hus's judges, could be even less enthusiastic about Hus's statement that:

Hence, it is not to be doubted that St. Augustine was more profitable to the church than many popes, and in matters of doctrine more profitable than all the cardinals from the first cardinals down to those now in office. For, in the government of the church, he knew the Scriptures of Christ better than they and also defined the nature of the catholic faith better by clearing the church of heretical errors and correcting them.

These words of Hus are included in his *De ecclesia* (c. 15), and he gave them even greater prominence by briefly repeating them in the index to this work, which he himself supplied.²²

Hus maintained the respect for St. Augustine until the last bitter days in Constance. Not even there, did he cease his appeals to this Church Father. In 1415, the Council requested him to defend himself against the charge of upholding 45 of Wyclif's "heretical" articles, among which Wyclif allegedly stated in article 44 that Sts. Augustine, Benedict, and Bernard must have been doomed to damnation, unless they had repented, because they owned property and established the religious orders, which they joined. Hus responded that he never had held such a belief, nor did he hold it at present: *nec tenui, nec teneo*, and he added: "Furthermore I consider Sts.

²⁰ Vilém Herold, "Hus a Wyclif, Srovnání dvou traktátů *De ecclesia*" [Hus and Wyclif; a comparison of two treatises *De ecclesia*], in: *Jan Hus na přelomu tisíciletí*, 129–154.

²¹ Paul De Vooght in his cited work (see n. 1 above) calls attention to a good hundred citations from Augustine in this work of Hus and, among others, he has ascertained that at times Hus also quotes Augustine from Gratian's *Decretum*.

²² Jan Hus, *Tractatus De ecclesia*, ed. S. H. Thomson (Prague, 1958) 121 ("Unde non dubium quin beatus Augustinus plus profuit ecclesie quam multi pape et in doctrina forte plus quam omnes cardinales a primis usque iam currentes. Ipse enim scripturam Christi in regimine ecclesiastico plus cognovit, diffinivit materiam catholicam, purgando et corrigendo errores hereticos ab ecclesia.") In the index p. 246. English translation, *De Ecclesia. The Church by John Huss*. David S. Schaff, trans. (New York, 1915) 149–150. For a Czech translation of the cited text see František M. Dobiáš and Amedeo Molnár in: *Jan Hus, O církví SSL 1* (Latin Works 1) 122.

Augustine, Bernard, and Benedict as great saints, and especially the blessed Augustine, as a great and holy doctor of the Church." ("Ymmo habeo sanctum Augustinum, Bernhardum et Benedictum pro magnis sanctis et specialiter beatum Augustinum pro magno et sancto doctore ecclesie.")²³

Hus appealed to Augustine's authority once again in his last response in which, on 18 June 1415, he reacted to the articles of accusation selected from his treatise *De ecclesia*. In particular, he is reproached for his ecclesiological concept as a community of the predestined and for undermining the authority of the institutional Church, including the questioning of blind obedience to the authority of the pope and of unworthy priests. Hus then wrote that "for lack of time and paper and because of risks" he could not respond in entire sentences. Despite that, in his brief annotations to the individual accusatory articles he repeatedly cited Augustine, particularly concerning the Church of the predestined. He stressed that this is the Church in the most proper sense of the word, "*ecclesia propriissime dicta secundum Augustinum*," or that it is the teaching of St. Augustine, and he cites the relevant works containing this teaching: "est sententia beati Augustini *super Joann. It. Super Enchiridion. It. Super psalterium. It De doctrina Christiana in libro de Ove*."²⁴

We can now pose the question to what extent Hus was justified to appeal for support to St. Augustine in these instances. On the basis of what was said so far, I do not think that there is any need to doubt the sincerity of his conviction that he was so justified, although the conciliar fathers could see and did see in his claims of coincidence with St. Augustine an attempt to ease his situation in the face of his trial. Of course, it is another question to what extent Hus's views did, in fact, coincide with Augustine's teaching. I have indicated that Hus derived his Augustinian sympathies at least partially from Wyclif. It is apropos to note that the issue of coincidence had already arisen during the contemporary polemics against the Oxford thinker. It was then that two members of the Carmelite order had voiced rather contrasting opinions concerning Wyclif's references to St. Augustine. Still during Wyclif's lifetime, the first one of the commentators, John Cunningham, engaged in polemics concerning Wyclif's concept of the intelligible being of created things, as well as concerning his explanation of the biblical *quod factum est in ipso vita erat*. Cunningham admitted that Wyclif was justified in his reference to Augustine, but at the same time he went on to raise doubts about the orthodoxy of the concept as such. He presented his point of view in the following way: Seeing that Augustine was a great admirer of Platonic teaching on the Ideas and therefore whatsoever he found in the Bible that could be interpreted in the Platonic sense he thus eagerly seized upon and utilised, it is possible

²³ "Responiones Mgri. Johannis Hus ad articulos Johannis Wiclef" in: Jan Sedlák, *M. Jan Hus*, (Prague, 1915) 310x.

²⁴ "Responsum ultimum" was published in *Documenta*, 225–234.

to reject Augustine's concepts.²⁵ At the time of the Council of Constance, Cunningham's successor in the Carmelite order, Thomas Netter Waldensis, did not admit such doubts about Augustine's orthodoxy. Criticising the same places in Wyclif's writings (after the latter's death), he challenged the Oxford thinker, writing: "Why then do you still appeal to St. Augustine, when you hear that he expresses views so contrary to yours?"²⁶

To resolve this problem definitively, it would be necessary to investigate the individual component parts of the teaching of both Wyclif and Hus, and then attempt a comparison with the corresponding components of the teaching of our ancient Church Father. This would, of course, involve an extraordinarily demanding and difficult task. As far as ecclesiology is concerned – that is the area for which Hus had been convicted – Paul De Vooght, in the analytical chapter of his work, reached the conclusion that the concept of the true Church, or the Church in the most proper sense of the word, which was so dear to Hus's heart (*sponsa immaculata*, the Church of the predestined), without any doubt could be found in Augustine's texts, which Hus cites in *De ecclesia*. He points out, however, that Hus undertook a certain shift of approach vis-à-vis Augustine. While Augustine uses as his point of departure the existing earthly Church and does not call into question any of its institutions, but rather seeks to lift it up to "the invisible reality," Hus on the contrary starts from the invisible community of the predestined and attempts, from that vantage point, to evaluate the earthly Church.

In the case of St. Augustine, according to De Vooght, the existence of the earthly Church is so much a reality that nothing of what he wrote about the Church of the saints or the predestined does relate as such to the institutional Church, except in the sense that it proves this Church's soundness. The earthly Church is sound because it encompasses the Church of the saints and the predestined, namely, a spiritual reality, the development of which is its goal. In the case of Hus, on the contrary, this spiritual reality overshadows the earthly Church and thus Hus – against his will, as De Vooght emphasises – embarks on a course that leads him to a rejection of this institutional Church. Hus's ecclesiology, therefore, is not a reproduction of Augustine's because the latter solidly placed the Church of the saints and the predestined into the pale of the earthly Church, while Hus does not succeed in inserting this earthly Church into the Church of the predestined, although he adopted the very

²⁵ W. W. Shirley, *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, (London, 1858) 82: "Tercio exponit B. Augustinus hunc textum sicut dictum est: Nec tamen requiritur ad fidem ut eius expositio in hac parte teneatur. Cujus ratio est, quia B. Augustinus fuit multum adhaerens sententiae Platoniorum de ideis; et ideo quicquid ex Scripturis ad illum sensum applicari potuit, gratanter sic exposuit; et ideo posset negari expositio sua" ("*Tertia determinatio* Iohannis Kyngham *Contra Wycleff De esse intelligibili creaturae.*")

²⁶ Thomas Netter Waldensis, *Doctrinale anitiquitatum fidei catholicae ecclesiae*, ed. B. Bianciotti, (Venice, 1757) I: col. 37.

concept of the Church of the saints and the predestined, as he claims, from St. Augustine. De Vooght concludes that Hus's theology was in error, even though his spiritual intuition, seeking to place this concept in the centre of ecclesiology, was correct.²⁷

Stimulated by Vladimír Boublík, Karel Skalický, a prominent Czech theologian, relatively recently has dealt with Wyclif's and Hus's definition of the Church as a community of all the predestined, on the one hand, and with its relation to Augustine's concept, on the other. Skalický's view represents a definite shift in interpretation. Skalický likewise agrees with the conclusion that Hus's and Wyclif's view is derived from St. Augustine's teaching, but he formulates the salient issue from the standpoint of Catholic theology in the following way: "If Augustine's concept of predestination is theologically correct and true, then the Wyclif-Hus definition of the Church (as a community of all the predestined) is also correct and true, so that it was not right for the Council of Constance to condemn it. If, on the contrary, the condemnation of the Wyclif-Hus definition of the Church was theologically correct and true, then as a consequence a rejection of Augustine's theology of predestination should follow." Skalický thus reaches the following conclusion from the viewpoint of Catholic theology: "The Wyclif-Hus definition of the Church is unacceptable, because Augustine's teaching on predestination is equally unacceptable."²⁸

It is a conclusion that the Council of Constance could hardly have reached in its own days. The Council's intentions would not have allowed it to assess impartially the life and the works of Jan Hus, who was – in the words of Pope John Paul II – "a reformer of the Church," "a famous Czech preacher, one of the most brilliant among the many outstanding masters coming out of the Prague university," or to appreciate "his moral courage which, face to face with adversity and death, made him a figure of special significance for the Czech nation."²⁹

Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David

²⁷ Paul De Vooght, *Hussiana*, 82–92.

²⁸ Karel Skalický, "Predestinace jako tajemství spásy v teologii Vladimíra Boublíka" [Predestination as a mystery of salvation in the theology of Vladimír Boublík] in: *Česko-římský teolog Vladimír Boublík. Symposium (Teologické fakulty Jihočeské univerzity) k jeho nedožitým 70. narozeninám* [The Czech-Roman Theologian Vladimír Boublík: A Symposium (of the Theological Faculty of the University of South Bohemia) for His Incomplete Seventieth Birthday] (České Budějovice, 1999) 26–27. – It might be ahistorical to attempt drawing here a certain parallel between Cunningham's assertion also "rejecting" Augustine, on the one hand, and that of Netter, chastising Wyclif for an unjustified appeal to Augustine, on the other hand.

²⁹ "Projev papeže Jana Pavla II. k účastníkům římského sympozia o M. Janu Husovi" [The Declaration of Pope John Paul II before the Participants of the Roman Symposium on M. Jan Hus] in: *Jan Hus na přelomu tisíciletí*, 685.