
Iron and Fire: The Vehicles of Memory in Fifteenth-Century Bohemia

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Introduction

When Petr of Mladoňovice first penned a passion narrative concerning the death of Jan Hus, his central task was to transform the *de jure* heretic into a *de facto* saint. Petr's text, while overtly hagiographic, retains considerable historical value and remains intellectually evocative despite its apologetic bent.¹ Particularly striking is the conclusion of Petr's account, where he lingered on and interpreted the treatment of Hus's remains after he had been burned alive:

After everything had been burnt to cinders with fire, and when the dust and earth had been dug up to a great depth and set in a cart, then they scattered it all in the Rhine flowing past, that his name would be utterly extinguished among the faithful.²

When a Czech edition of the *Golden Legend* was printed as the *Utraquist Passional* in 1495, this text and four of Hus's letters from Constance formed the core of its unique entry on Jan Hus.³ And nearly contemporaneous with this publication, a liturgical song (prose) written for Hus's feast day proclaimed:

He was given while living to the flames, and his ashes were drowned.
For the wicked expected that he would be erased from the earth
And the pious man rooted out of the memory of the pious people.⁴

¹ On the problematic nature of this text as an historical source, see Hubert Herkommer, "Die Geschichte vom Leiden und Sterben des Jan Hus als Ereignis und Erzählung," in Ludger Grenzmann and Karl Stackmann, eds., *Literatur und Laienbildung im Spätmittelalter und in der Reformationszeit* (Stuttgart, 1984) 114–146

² Petr of Mladoňovice, "Narratio historicae condemnatione et supplicio Joannis Hus in synodo Constantiensi," in FRB 8 (1932) 121–149.

³ See the modern facsimile edition of this incunabulum: Zdeněk Tobolka, ed., *Passional: Čili, Život a Umučení všech svatých mučedlníkův* (Prague, 1926).

⁴ This prose is titled "In Honour of the Priest of the Holy Law" (*Ad honorem sacerdotis*). See FRB 8 (1932) 438.

“*Et piorum evellatur| Pius a memoria:*” needless to say, this effort at eradication failed. The song itself denied the intended erasure, as did the words of a Utraquist preacher, perhaps the administrator Václav Koranda the younger, in a sermon preached for Hus’s feast day in the last decades of the fifteenth century:

Today we celebrate the *memoria* of our faithful and holy Bohemian martyrs... namely Master Jan Hus, Master Jerome [of Prague] and all the others, who in these unsafe and last days suffered diverse torments and cruel death for the evangelical law, the name of Jesus Christ, and for his truth.⁵

The preacher continued by asserting that although “no one canonised them, neither the pope nor the holy church,” still they had been canonised “by the supreme pontiff and prince of priests, the Lord Jesus... As he said, ‘you are blessed, when men curse and reproach you and condemn your name as evil on account of the son of man.’”⁶ (Luke 6:22)

This variety of texts – a sermon, a song, and a *passio* – hinted at the vast me-
lange of materials that meditated on, and ensured the survival of, the memory of Jan Hus in the fifteenth century. And through nine decades of conflict in the fifteenth century, which encompassed interdict, interregnum, crusade, and civil war, it was precisely the veneration of this memory, particularly through the cultivation of its commemoration in liturgy and preaching, that enabled Hus’s followers to create and sustain a church that would persist until the Thirty Years’ War. This essay focuses on the ways in which these vehicles of commemoration overlapped and amplified each others’ message, and on the celebration of 6 July by late fifteenth-century Utraquists as a unique site for understanding how art, song, corporate prayer, and preaching could reinforce each others’ messages and create a synthetic, multimedia worship experience that served to construct a religious confession around the commemoration of Jan Hus. In doing so, it will argue that what we call memory played an essential role in the establishment of Utraquist identity around a central symbolic figure: Jan Hus.

The problem, of course, is that “*memoria*” is a tricky term. Within the context of the Christian Middle Ages, it primarily constituted the ritual act of commemoration that stood at the center of the cult of saints. Saint Augustine, for example, saw a two-fold benefit in observing the feasts of the saints: “The Christian people should celebrate the *memorias* of the martyrs with religious observances, both for provoking imitation, and so that the people might be...aided by their prayers.”⁷ Emphasizing how the cult of saints could incite

⁵ Václav Koranda, “Sermo de martyribus Bohemis,” in FRB 8:368–372.

⁶ Koranda, “Sermo,” 369.

⁷ This quotation comes from the tenth book of Augustine’s *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, and is cited in the article: “Memoria,” in C. Du Cange, ed., *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, v. 5 (Niort, 1885) 335–336, 335.

imitation and spur intercession, Augustine made *memoria* a central transaction in the Christian economy of salvation. According to the same bishop of Hippo, however, “*memoria*” was also more than ritual behavior; it was an intellectual faculty, the member of the “psychological trinity” (along with *intelligentia* and *voluntas*) responsible for judgment, self-awareness, and emotional states.⁸

Memoria was thus both the aspect of the mind that underwrote and the liturgical means that produced what the scholar Jan Assmann has called “*kulturelle Gedächtnis*.”⁹ For Assmann, this “cultural memory” is the product of rituals that embody and enact a group’s identity by choosing and reifying an object of devotion that becomes a mimetic stand-in and intercessor for the group at large.¹⁰ The performance of ritual also serves as a sort of cultural “immune system” that circulates essential ideas (which Assmann calls cultural “antibodies”) throughout a social body in order to protect it from the imposition of external ideas and suppresses the growth of internal incoherence.¹¹ Paul Post refers to this process of circulation as “liturgical inculturation,” where the celebration of certain rituals and the valorisation of certain moments and people produce a specific anamnesis that functions as the foundation of group identity.¹² Seen in light of this concept, medieval *memoria* can therefore be characterised by its slipperiness and simultaneity; it is both the intellectual ground and ultimate goal of ritual acts which are identified with that which they produce.

In the context of Utraquist Bohemia, these aspects of *memoria* were united in the commemoration of Jan Hus, seen as the great champion of the chalice, on 6 July. On that day, the rehearsal of Hus’s life and death, the communal celebration of his feast and the reception of the Eucharist, and the didactic explanation of Hus’s personification of Christian values enlisted all of the components of memory in order to reify the Utraquist community. Inspired by images, united in song, and instructed by story and sermon,

⁸ Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994) 17; and Nello Cipriani, “Memory,” in Allan D. Fitzgerald et al., eds., *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999) 553–555.

⁹ Jan Assmann, “Der zweidimensionale Mensch: das Fest als Medium des kollektiven Gedächtnisses,” in idem., ed., *Das Fest und das Heilige: Religiöse Kontrapunkte zur Alltagswelt* (Gütersloh, 1991) 13–30, 21.

¹⁰ On Assmann’s very high view of rituals and festivals’ ability to function as a site for the expression of group values, see his: “Der zweidimensionale Mensch,” especially 18–25; and idem., *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 143.

¹¹ Assmann, “Der zweidimensionale Mensch,” 23.

¹² Post uses the term anamnesis here to refer to the words of the eucharistic liturgy that are explicitly intended to create and sustain the memory of Christ’s sacrifice (i.e. “Do this in remembrance of me.”) as the foundation of the Christian community; he then applies this term to the broader establishment of collective memory among religious groups. See Paul Post, “Introduction and Application: Feast as a Key Concept in a Liturgical Studies Research Design,” in Paul Post et al., eds., *Christian Feast and Festival: The Dynamics of Western Liturgy and Culture* (Leuven, 2001) 47–77, 61.

Czech Utraquists who engaged in public worship on 6 July could gain a deeper appreciation for what that religious and corporate identity meant through the *memoria* of Saint Jan Hus.

***Memoria*-Making and the Hussite Movement**

As both Catholic and Hussite authors affirmed, the conflict over Hus's *memoria* began practically on the day he died. A plethora of sources from 1415—1417 all attest to a sharp polemical struggle over how Hus would be remembered in the Czech lands and abroad, and these textual witnesses demonstrated a rapidly evolving and expanding set of commemorative practices concerning Hus that began to take root in his native Bohemia. The canons of Olomouc famously complained that the Czechs “held a feast for the publicly condemned heretics Jan Hus and Jerome in churches and in the presence of many people,” during which “they sang ‘*Gaudeamus*’ and other songs concerning the martyrs, comparing them to the holy martyr Lawrence with respect to their suffering and merits, and preferring them to St. Peter and other saints.”¹³ The Carthusian abbot Stephen of Dolany further lamented that a great festival had been held in Hus's and Jerome's honour “in the cathedral church of the Hussites in Prague, called Bethlehem,” during which a Hussite priest had preached a sermon saying that “the Passion of Christ alone could be compared to the suffering of Jan Hus.”¹⁴ And in a decidedly desperate letter to Emperor Sigismund at the end of 1416, begging him to exercise his duty as “the advocate and defender of the church and to destroy the perfidy [of the Hussites] with force,” the conciliar fathers gathered at Constance wrote:

Indeed, those true followers of Belial and disciples of Wyclif, Jan Hus, and Jerome... portray the two men, who were recently condemned as heretics and deviants from the faith by the righteous judgment of this holy synod, as saints in the churches of God, hold them up as saints in their preaching, honour them with suffrages in the divine office, sing Masses for them as if for martyrs, and venerate and worship these blasphemous and heretical men, given over to Satan by the holy church, as if they were citizens of heaven and servants of God.¹⁵

¹³ “Das Olmützer Domcapitel klagt dem Concil über das Wachsthum der husitischen Partei,” in Johann Loserth, ed., “Beiträge zur Geschichte der husitischen Bewegung V.: Gleichzeitige Berichte und Actenstücke zur Ausbreitung des Wiclifismus in Böhmen und Mähren von 1410 bis 1419,” AÖG 82 (1896), 327–418, 386–387. “*Gaudeamus*” is the title of an introit used in the mass for All Saints' Day.

¹⁴ Stephen of Dolany, *Liber Epistolaris ad Hussitas*, in Bernard Pez, ed., *Thesaurus Anecdotorum Novissimus*, v. 4, col. 503–706, 521.

¹⁵ Interestingly, the word translated here as “portray” (*depingent*) suggested the artistic portrayal of the two martyrs. This passage could thus be read as proof of an early, if no longer

Despite the polemical intentions of these writings, which sought to cast the Hussites as establishing an alternate, idolatrous, and ultimately diabolical church, these authors appear to have been familiar with actual developments in Bohemia. Two passion narratives about Hus that appear to have been intended for liturgical use were quickly written and circulated in the Czech lands, and a letter appended to one of them did explicitly laud Hus as an equal of the early Christian martyrs: “The song of the remarkable martyr Lawrence is deservedly able to be sung [for Hus]: ‘you examined me with fire, and iniquity was not found in me.’”¹⁶ David Holeton has shown that additional texts from the feasts of the martyrs were quickly mined for the creation of a composite liturgy for Hus’s feast on 6 July, and it is certainly true that this anniversary was celebrated at Bethlehem Chapel by 1417.¹⁷ In a famous sermon for the occasion preached by Jakoubek of Stříbro on Matthew 5:10, Hus was called “a counterpart of Elijah, whose spirit, so we piously believe, ascended through fire into heaven and the fellowship of the angels.”¹⁸ This pericope was drawn from the feast of All Saints, as were many liturgical elements of Hus’s feast, so it would seem that early defenses of Hus’s sanctity by his Bohemian followers were articulated by embedding him within the rich tradition of Christian martyr-saints.¹⁹ This process of sacred *bricolage* demonstrated the rapid assembly of a commemorative framework for the veneration of Hus and other Czech martyrs, and gave credence to Catholic concerns. Indeed, both hostile and sympathetic sources reveal how the raw materials for a Utraquist process of “liturgical inculturation” came together, materials that were refined and synthesised for the next two centuries. The question we must ask, though, is why this sort of inculturation was so important in fifteenth-century Bohemia?

It seems clear that the importance of commemoration and the elaboration of Utraquist ritual primarily devolved both from the role of ongoing conflict

extant, tradition of monumental art depicting Hussite “saints.” On the debates over early Hussitism’s stance towards church art, see the recent work of Milena Bartlová, especially: “Understanding Hussite Iconoclasm,” *BRRP* 7 (2009), 115–126; and “The Utraquist Church and the Visual Arts Before Luther,” *BRRP* 4 (2002), 215–224. For this letter, see “Concilium Constantiense Sigismundo Rom. Regi ea quae in Bohemia in detrimentum fidei perpetratur nota faciens,” in *Documenta*, 647–651, 647.

¹⁶ The letter is preserved as an appendix to: Johannes Barbatum, “Passio M. Johannis Hus etc. secundum Johannem Barbatum, rusticum quadratum,” in FRB 8:14–24, 22. On this letter, see Jan Sedlák, “Několik textů z doby husitské,” *Hlídky* 28 (1911) 321–327. On this text, see Thomas Fudge, “Jan Hus at Calvary: The Text of an Early Fifteenth-Century *Passio*,” *Journal of Moravian History* 11 (2011), 45–81.

¹⁷ See, e.g., “‘O Felix Bohemia – O Felix Constantia:’ The Liturgical Commemoration of Saint Jan Hus,” in F. Seibt, ed., *Jan Hus: zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen* (Munich, 1997) 385–401; and “The Office of Jan Hus: An Unrecorded Antiphony in the Metropolitan Library of Estergom,” in J. Alexander, ed., *Time and Community: In Honor of Thomas Julian Talley* (Washington, DC, 1990) 137–152.

¹⁸ Jakoubek of Stříbro, “Sermo habitus in Bethlehem a quodam pio in memoriam novorum martyrum M. Johannis Hus a M. Hieronymi,” in FRB 8:231–242, 238.

¹⁹ See Ota Halama, “Biblical Pericopes for the Feast of Jan Hus,” herein, 173–184.

and crisis in the Czech lands' long-term process of religious reform and from the uneven and easily reversed process of rapprochement with Rome that began in the 1430s. During periods of relative peace, the commemoration of Hus and his association with the communion chalice served as a badge of affiliation made necessary by the many practices and beliefs that were shared between Prague and Rome. In other words, to venerate Hus, or to march in a Utraquist procession and take communion in both kinds on the feast of Corpus Christi, were unmistakable declarations of Utraquist identity.²⁰ Conversely, during periods of open hostility and armed conflict, the memory of the persecution of the "*fideles Bohemi*" at the hands of Rome and her allies served as a spur to action.²¹ Jan Hus, Jerome of Prague, the victims of the Kutná Hora pogrom, Jan Krasá, Jan Roháč, and Michal Polák: as the pantheon of Czech martyrs expanded over the course of the fifteenth century, it provided a host of pious examples whose embrace of suffering and sacrifice could serve as a model for Utraquists as a whole.²²

Despite this proliferation, though, the fifteenth century (and even more the sixteenth) witnessed a concentration on Hus that allowed him to serve as the primary embodiment of the suffering, apostolic church that had been reborn in Bohemia. Over time, the Czech collective memory of their church's heroic origins came to prioritise the figure of Hus and the symbol of the chalice as the twin pillars of their "invented tradition."²³ That tradition was rooted in the at-least weekly administration of the Eucharist, as well as the annual commemoration of Hus, and over time Hus and the chalice became inextricably (if somewhat ahistorically) linked as the defining symbols of a church

²⁰ As the Czech king George of Poděbrady did in 1461 as an affirmation of his support for the *Compactata* and a rejection of Roman demands that he only take communion *sub una*. For an account of this event, see the anonymous report to Duke William of Saxony from 22 July 1461; preserved in: Adolf Bachmann, ed., *Briefe und Akten zur österreichischen-deutschen Geschichte im Zietalter Kaiser Friedrich III* (Vienna, 1885) 144–149, 147. See also: Otakar Odložilík, *The Hussite King: Bohemia in European Affairs 1440–1471* (New Brunswick NJ, 1965) 129 and 137.

²¹ On the importance of this term in Utraquist self-identifications, see Joel Seltzer, *Framing Faith, Forging a Nation: Czech Vernacular Historiography and the Bohemian Reformation, 1430–1530* (Unpublished Dissertation: Yale University, 2005) 207ff.

²² The consistent centrality of Czech martyrs in Utraquist ideology has been pointed out most recently by: Thomas Fudge, "Želivský's Head: Memory and New Martyrs among the Hussites," *BRRP* 6 (2007) 111–132; and Joel Seltzer, "Re-envisioning the Saint's Life in Utraquist Historical Writing," *BRRP* 5,1 (2004) 147–166; and Ota Halama, *Otázka svatých v české reformaci* [The question of the saints in the Bohemian Reformation] (Prague, 2002).

²³ Eric Hobsbawm's work has been fundamental in recognising the importance of the invention of tradition. See his: "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York, 1983) 1–14; and Paul Post, "Rituals and the Function of the Past: Rereading Eric Hobsbawm," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 10 (1996) 85–107. On the selectivity of collective memory and its tendency to condense long, communal processes of formation into singular acts and figures, see Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser, ed. and trans. (Chicago, 1992) especially 223.

that understood itself as separate from, but superior to, the Roman church with which it uneasily coexisted.

Multi-Media *Memoria* and Utraquist Identity

The centrality of the Hus-chalice dyad, and its diffusion throughout the media that shaped Utraquist religious identity and practice, can perhaps be best understood through an image. Consider the paired portrait of Sts. Sebastian and Jan Hus, which was painted in about 1485 for the village church of St. Wenceslaus in Roudniky.²⁴ This painting comprised one side of a wooden altar panel; on the opposite panel were depicted Sts. James and Lawrence. The panel itself was, according to art historian Milena Bartlová, part of a Utraquist “altar tabernacle, which was closed by the painted panels and in the centre of which was the symbol of the Eucharist, either presented in an exhibited monstrance, or represented by the traditional image of the Man of Sorrows.”²⁵ In this visual composition, as in earlier liturgical texts, Hus was placed among the company of the martyrs of the early church, thus affirming his “traditional” sanctity and reifying his links to Lawrence. Hus was also symbolically and visually connected to the Eucharist, as devotion to, and the consumption of, the sacrament literally lay behind the saints’ holy deaths in this “Utraquist ark.”²⁶

The associations that were strikingly, if implicitly, portrayed in this altarpiece were also explicitly laid out in new liturgical texts written for the celebration of Hus’s feast day. One, entitled “Christ, King of Martyrs,” (*Christum regem martirum*) detailed how Hus’s death and communion in both kinds had granted Bohemia a privileged place in the coming kingdom of God:

Christ, king of martyrs
 Reigning in glory in the kingdom of God
 Whom we praise today, along with all the martyrs of Bohemia
 In memory of those who, for the love of his law,
 And the consumption of his holy blood and body
 Were wounded by fire, cut down by iron
 Thrown into mines, and drowned in the waves...
 O author of faith, make us strong
 From the merit of those acknowledged in your Law,

²⁴ On the provenance and survival of this painting, see Jan Royt, “Ikongrafie Mistra Jana Husa v 15. až 18. století,” [The iconography of Mister Jan Hus from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century] in M. Drda et al., eds., *HT Supplementum 1* (2001) 405–451.

²⁵ Bartlová, “The Utraquist Church and the Visual Arts,” 222.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Give your chalice worthily to drink
 That we might be able to pour out
 Our blood for you, fearing no one.
 O teacher of truth, be now the protector
 Of the Bohemian flock
 From those jealous of your law, that they might know
 That your truth conquers and holds forever.²⁷

This prose expressed several distinctively Utraquist themes. The first was the connection between the desire for communion in both kinds and martyrdom. On the one hand, the former was a clear cause of the latter; on the other hand, the consumption of the chalice was seen as enabling self-sacrifice. The Eucharist and martyrdom were thus linked in a mutually reinforcing cycle based around the symbolic consumption and actual spilling of blood. This song also sought to establish the unique relationship between Christ – “the protector of the Bohemian flock” – and the Czech people, which was mediated by the multitude of Utraquist saints who had been killed for “the love of Christ’s law” and had thus sanctified their homeland.²⁸ Two additional phrases highlighted essential components of Utraquist ideology. The first of these was the last line: “*quia veritas tua vincit et manit in eternum.*” This line, of course, echoed the ubiquitous Hussite slogan “*veritas vincit*,” which was drawn from a 1413 letter from Jan Hus to Jan Kardinál.²⁹ This watchword featured in countless Bohemian sermons from the fifteenth century; it graced the banners of the Hussite delegation to the Council of Basel in 1433; and, perhaps most interestingly in this context, it featured alongside a eucharistic Man of Sorrows in a late fifteenth-century monumental church painting from Kutná Hora.³⁰ The incorporation of this distinctive phrase from Utraquist history at the end of this song showed the continuing relevance and power

²⁷ “*Christum regem matyrum*” is preserved in several manuscripts, notably the Ezstergom manuscript from c. 1500, its homologue from Leipzig, and the contemporaneous manuscript MS NKP VI C 20a, f.96v-97r. On these manuscripts, see David Holeyton and Hana Vlhová-Wörner, “A Remarkable Witness to the Feast of Saint Jan Hus,” *BRRP* 7 (2009) 156–184; and František Fišer, “Hodinkové Oficiem Svátku Mistra Jana Husa,” *ČNM* 135 (1966) 81–98.

²⁸ On the notion of the chosenness of the Czech nation and its identity as the new Israel, see František Šmahel, “The Idea of the ‘Nation’ in Hussite Bohemia,” Robert Finlayson Samsour, trans., *Historica* 16 (1969) 143–247; and *Historica* 17 (1970) 93–197; and Rudolf Urbánek, “Český mesianismus ve své době hrdinské” [Czech messianism in its heroic period] in idem., *Z Husitského Věku: Výbor vistorických úvah a studii* (Prague, 1957) 7–28.

²⁹ This letter was written in June, 1413. See Novotný, *Korespondence*, 169–171, 170.

³⁰ In this pairing of images, the symbolic associations present in the Roudnice altar painting are again present, with eucharistic devotion and the martyrs words placed in parallel to each other. This visual coupling corresponds closely to the linking of martyrdom and sacramental devotion in this prose. This particular iconographic pairing has been capably analyzed by: Zuzana Všecková, “Iconography of the Mural Paintings in St. James’s Church of Kutná Hora,” *BRRP* 3 (2000) 127–146, 139–140.

of one of Hus's central insights – that despite persecution and the threat (or reality) of martyrdom, divine truth would persist. It also demonstrated the nearly talismanic significance of Hus and his words, which had consistently shaped Czech polemics against their opponents throughout the fifteenth century.³¹

The second key phrase here was the first description of the martyrs' deaths: "Wounded by fire, cut down by iron." This certainly recalled Hus's death, but the original Latin phrasing – "*igne lesi, ferro cesi*" – did more than provide a clever mnemonic spur. It was also important because it pointed at how liturgy and homily could be tied together to augment the didactic and commemorative potential of images in order to create a multi-media experience geared towards the instruction of the laity and the reification of a distinctive religious body. The key to the importance of this song, and this phrase, was that it became the basis for a homiletic meditation on Hus and his place among the martyrs of Christ. With this commentary, the aesthetically gorgeous if potentially unintelligible Latin of the prose became accessible to the laity.

The interpretation of the one by the other allowed the liturgy to be incorporated into a broader articulation of Utraquist identity on 6 July. In 1478, the priest Václav of St. Gall's (Havel's) parish in Prague preached a sermon for St. Jan Hus's feast day using Matthew 5:11 as his text: "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me."³² Unsurprisingly, then, this sermon centred on the notion that "whoever wants to be saved, he will have to suffer."³³ Indeed, Václav began his sermon with the observation that "today we have the *memoria* of the martyrs of Christ, who did not begrudge him their souls up to their deaths on account of the name of Christ and his truth. For no persecution, no suffering... [and] not even death could separate them from Christ."³⁴ Perhaps this allusion to Romans 8 [:37] would have recalled to Václav's audience that "we are more

³¹ Consider, for example, Peter Payne's invocation of this phrase during his 1429 oration to Emperor Sigismund at Bratislava, or the influence of Hus's *Sermo de Pace* on Nicholas of Pelhřimov's speech at Basel in 1433. On these orations and their references to Hus, see Peter Payne, "Oratio ad Sigismundum Regem Bratislaviae A.D. 1429 Habita," in František M. Bartoš, ed., *Peter Payne Anglici, Positio, replica, et propositio Concilio Basiliensi a 1433 atque oratio ad Sigismundum* (Tábor, 1949) 81–90, especially 85; William Cook, "Negotiations between the Hussites, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the Roman Church, 1427–1436," *East Central Europe* 5 (1978) 90–104; and Thomas A. Fudge, "Crime, Punishment and Pacifism in the Thought of Bishop Mikuláš of Pehřimov, 1420–1452," *BRRP* 3 (2000) 69–103, especially 89.

³² This sermon, entitled "Sancti Johannes Hus," is preserved in MS NKP XXIII F 113, f. 50v–52v. I am grateful to Dr. Ota Halama for bringing the existence of this sermon to my attention. On this manuscript and its provenance, see Noemi Rejchrtová, "Sondy do Postilní Literary Pokompaktátního (či Předbělohorského) Utraqvismu," *FHB* 15 (1991) 59–71; and František Bartoš, "Dvě studie o husitských postilách," *Rozpravy Československé Akademie Věd* 65 (1955) 1–100, 55–56.

³³ Priest Václav, "Sancti Johannes Hus," 51r.

³⁴ Priest Václav, "Sancti Johannes Hus," 50v.

than conquerors through him that loved us.” To remove any lingering doubts, however, Václav asserted that “Our Saviour praises his soldiers (*“militēs”*), and on account of their great suffering calls them blessed... Because few are found who suffer persecution, therefore few reach the kingdom of heaven.”³⁵

The suffering saint as soldier: this simile was often applied to Hus in the late fifteenth century, as his death in spiritual combat with the institutional church marked him as one of the first of the near-mythical Hussite “warriors of God.” Václav ended his sermon by offering solace to his listeners, though, in case they doubted their own ability to emulate literally this sort of suffering: “Wounded with fire, and cut down by iron: St. Paul by the sword, St. Peter by crucifixion, Jan Hus with fire. But we, if we are not able to tolerate such torment, at least we should endure being cursed on account of God [and] those calling us heretics on account of the truth and law of God.”³⁶ The passage began with a familiar phrase, *“Igne lesi, ferro cesi,”* and the wording was exactly the same as that used in the prose. The reference to Sts. Peter and Paul was also not coincidental, as 6 July was the observance of the octave of their their feast day in the Roman rite.³⁷ So, much as early Catholic polemics had affirmed, Hus was here placed on an equal footing with the “princes of the apostles,” Peter and Paul, even as the repetition of a liturgical couplet recalled the catalogue of Bohemian saints included in “Christ, King of Martyrs.” Although it is possible to see this overlap as coincidental, it could also have been a conscious move by the preacher to borrow from a liturgical song in order to emphasize a key point in his sermon, and to use his sermon as a means of expanding on the sacramental and martyrological theology of “Christ, King of Martyrs.” Taken together, this sermon and prose conspired to articulate a multi-media message about the essentially suffering and persecuted life that a true Christian could expect, a teaching embodied by Jan Hus and taken up with considerable creativity and force by his followers.

The Sons of the Saints: *Memoria* as Constitutive Discourse

The echoes of liturgy in homiletic texts were not limited to this possibly serendipitous example from 1478. A similar conjunction of sources occurred in the previous decade, when Václav of Dráčov, the preacher at Bethlehem Chapel, prepared a sermon for the feast of Jan Hus that took Ecclesiasticus 45:1 as its text: “Moses, whose memory is blessed, was beloved by God and

³⁵ Priest Václav, “Sancti Johannes Hus,” 51r and 52r. On the image of Hus as a “Kristovým rytířem,” see Royt, “Ikonografie Mistra Jana Husa,” 406. See also Milena Bartlová, “Původ Husitského Kalicha z ikonografického hlediska,” *Umění* 44 (1996) 167–183, 179.

³⁶ Priest Václav, “Sancti Johannes Hus,” 52r.

³⁷ On the supersession of Peter and Paul on this day by the feast of Hus, see the observations by David Holec in his: “The Celebration of Jan Hus in the Life of the Churches,” *Studia Liturgica* 35 (2005) 32–59, 33, n. 3.

men.”³⁸ In his sermon, Dráčov initially asserted that this reading “can also be easily adapted and spoken with divine hope about that powerful preacher of good memory, Master Jan Hus, (*“in spe sancto et strenuo predicatore, bone memorie Magistro Iohanne Hus”*), whose *memoria* we celebrate today.”³⁹ The body of this sermon extolled six virtues that Hus had embodied – humility, faithfulness, prudence, modesty, purity, and patience – and dwelt extensively on the last of these. Regarding patience in suffering, Dráčov noted that earthly tribulation tested the believer “like gold in the fire,” and affirmed, along with Paul, that “it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.”⁴⁰ In reflecting on the centrality of suffering in the Christian life, Dráčov used Hus’s own words to bolster his claim; by taking a quotation from a letter from Hus to Martin of Volyn in 1414, Dráčov emphasised how perseverance in the face of opposition led to ultimate salvation: “You know that because I cursed the avarice and sinful lives of the clerics, I am suffering persecution by the grace of God, which will rapidly reach its culmination in me. I do not fear being destroyed for the sake of Christ Jesus’s name.”⁴¹

For Dráčov, Hus’s willingness to suffer made him worthy of recollection and imitation. Thus, he ended his sermon with repeated biblical injunctions to remember the people of God’s righteous predecessors. Dráčov cited Proverbs 10:7, “The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot,” and Ecclesiasticus 35:9, “The sacrifice of the righteous man is acceptable, and the Lord will not forget his memory,” as a basis for his demand “that the good people bless and praise the life of the saints, and imitate them,” so they could claim a share of their eternal rewards.⁴² The act of commemoration staked the Christian community’s claim to an eternal inheritance, and it was as the followers of Hus that the Utraquists could do this. It was fitting, then, that Dráčov ultimately employed the filial language of Tobit 2:18 in order to assert the Utraquists’ elect status: “We are the sons of the saints and we look forward to the life, that God gives to those who never shift their faith from him.”

Interestingly, Dráčov shared his text with, and perhaps drew it from, a prose written for the feast of Hus in the first half of the fifteenth century. This composition, known as “King of Kings,” (*Rex regum*) incorporated the words of Ecclesiasticus 45:1 in its initial description of Hus as a holy man who belonged among, and even surpassed, the company of Christian saints:

³⁸ Václav of Dráčov, “Sermo de M. Iohanne Hus,” in FRB 8:373–376. On Dráčov’s career and his sermon collections, see Bartoš, “Dvě studie,” 54–55.

³⁹ Dráčov, “Sermo de M. Iohanne Hus,” 374.

⁴⁰ Philippians 1:29. Ibid.

⁴¹ For the text of this letter, written in October 1414, see Novotný, *Korespondence*, 204–206. The quotation occurs in: Dráčov, “Sermo de M. Iohanne Hus,” 375–376.

⁴² Dráčov, “Sermo de M. Iohanne Hus,” 376.

Christ, then drinking your cup on the Saturday,
 The octave day of the princes Peter and Paul
 He hastened bravely toward the eternal prize.
 The excellent master, O pious, just and holy
 A priest beloved by man and God (“*deo et hominibus dilectus presbiter*”)
 He enlightened equally by his teaching and character.⁴³

This prose went further in its ascription of sanctity to Hus, who “possesses a halo with the holy martyrs.” Shifting into an eschatological mode, the author of this prose affirmed that “when the judge comes on the last day, the eyes of the good and the wicked will then discern that Jan called Hus bears the crown of heaven.”⁴⁴ Until that time, however, only the Utraquists could perceive this soteriological truth. Thus, in its last two verses “King of Kings” assembled the various social, professional, and even familial estates of the Czech people in a chorus of due praise for the martyred saint:

It would have been very much to be grieved and intensely wondered
 By the Bohemian faithful, if they did not arrange
 So remarkable a man to be continually mourned.

You dazzlingly white university of scholars,
 Harmonious fellowship of doctors, masters
 Bewail your godly, distinguished colleague.

The stole of preachers and the garland of the virgins
 The griefs of the widows and the faith of spouses
 And all the holy commonwealth of craftsmen.

Of the extraordinary glory of the famous lord
 The magnates, princes, steadfast soldiers
 And the whole Bohemian nobility laments.⁴⁵

⁴³ I have chosen to follow the translation of this prose by David HOLETON and HANA VLHOVÁ-WÖRNER, which is based on a no longer extant Leipzig manuscript which contains the “*Historia Joannis Hus maximi patroni Bohemiae*.” For this translation and a codicological analysis of the manuscript, see HOLETON and VLHOVÁ-WÖRNER, “A Remarkable Witness,” here 172–173. See also JANA FOJTÍKOVÁ, “Hudební doklady Husova kultu z 15. a 16. století: Příspěvek ke studiu husitské tradice v době přebělohorské,” *MM* 29 (1981) 51–142, 88–89.

⁴⁴ HOLETON and VLHOVÁ-WÖRNER, “A Remarkable Witness,” 176.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* This translation differs from that of HOLETON and VLHOVÁ-WÖRNER in one place, preferring “craftsmen” to “authors” in the third stanza; this change reflects the present author’s argument that these verses sought to literarily represent the entirety of Bohemian society by their gender/family roles, their economic function, and their rank.

The final verse of this song looked ahead to the eschatological perfection of this community, when Jesus would unite the faithful Utraquists “to the glorious preacher, the blessed martyr Jan” for eternity.⁴⁶ This liturgical song as a whole represented the most explicit expression of how the veneration of Hus effectively constituted the Utraquist Czech nation. United in celebrating the *memoria* of this distinctively Bohemian patron saint, affirming his place among the church’s earliest martyrs, and tying him to the consumption of the chalice, “King of Kings” highlighted the Utraquists’ commitment to their distinctive religious practices and objects of veneration. It also confirmed their status as the only nation that suitably recognised and remembered their forerunners in faith and consequently would share with them the reward of salvation and divine vindication.

Conclusion

In 1461, Dráchov wrote another sermon “On the day of the holy martyrs” that he intended as part of a commemorative service for Jan Hus.⁴⁷ In the macaronic *explicit* for this sermon, Dráchov rehearsed (in Czech) the details of the treatment of Hus’s remains that would have been familiar from Mladoňovice’s *passio* (and with which this article began): “*S zemi dosti hluboko gi gessie wykopawsse, na kary gsu wyspali a w Ryn, genz tudiez tecze, wyspali su geho pamatku wiecznie, czoz gest na nich bylo, shladiti chtiecze.*” Immediately following this brief summary of the events, Dráchov concluded his account with a prayer (in Latin): “*Alleluja, ora pro nobis, s. Johannes Hus. Explicit passio sancti Johannis dicti Hus magistri Pragensis universitatis sub anno domini M CCCC sexagesimo primo finita.*”⁴⁸ With this pairing of texts, Dráchov demonstrated again his willingness to tailor his preaching as a complement and augmentation to the liturgical framework in which it was embedded. Whether by pairing *passio* and sermon, or sermon and song, Dráchov demonstrated how the components of Utraquist *memoria* (in Augustine’s ritual sense) could be bound together in an experiential whole, a ritual cycle in which *memoria* (in Augustine’s psychological sense) and intercession continually evoked the other and reified a Utraquist community gathered in worship and intimately linked to its past. Dráchov was not alone in taking advantage of the variegated components of Christian liturgy – songs, sermons, prayers, and images – in order to articulate a distinctive Bohemian religious identity in the late fifteenth century; other preachers, artists, and

⁴⁶ Holeton and Vlhová-Wörner, “A Remarkable Witness,” 177.

⁴⁷ This sermon was appended to a Sunday postilla currently held as MS NKP III H 9; the Sunday sermons comprise the first 350 folios of the manuscript, with the sermon “*In die sanctorum martyrum*” (f. 352r-358r) and a sermon for Advent (358v-366v) following.

⁴⁸ Dráchov, “*Sermo de martyribus*,” 352r.

authors worked alongside and independently of him to reinforce both the centrality of suffering for salvation and the necessity of sacramental devotion as a means of ensuring perseverance in the Christian life. These notions were essential to Utraquist identity, and they revolved around, and coalesced in, the figure of Jan Hus. It was particularly on his feast day of 6 July that these central components of Utraquist religiosity came to the fore in a variety of media that was united by its integration into the ritualised *memoria* of Hus. It was on that day, and in the prayers, sermons, and songs that marked its celebration, that the idealisation of Hus's life, the commemoration of his death, and the veneration of the role he played in mediating between heaven and earth most clearly identified and valorised the Utraquist Church as God's chosen people, the sons of the saints.