
“Ipsum Est Omnia in Omnibus”: Matěj of Janov and the Redemption of Corporeal Man According to *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti* V:8

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Introduction

The spirituality of Matěj (Matthias) of Janov (c. 1355–1393), Master of the University of Paris and Canon of the Cathedral of Prague, who promoted frequent sacramental communion for the laity, was characterised by a particular interest in the body.¹ The Middle Ages were, however, a time that to a large extent depreciated the carnal. “There is no period in European history,” says Peter Dinzelbacher, “which has more appreciated the soul and depreciated the body than the Middle Ages.”² Indeed, even Saint Bernard, so balanced in his manner of reflecting on faith, is a testimony to this phenomenon as he quotes Wisdom 9:15 in his treatise *On loving God*: “The corruptible body weighs down the soul and the earthly dwelling preoccupies the mind busy with many thoughts.”³ An essential part of Matěj’s conflict concerning the frequency of communion was his refusal to countenance the corporal obstacles to admission to the sacrament, i.e. sexual intercourse, menstruation and nocturnal emission.⁴ Is it possible to say, then, that Matěj’s stress on the bodily contact with God in the eucharist was a consequence of a renewed appreciation of corporality?

¹ After years of conflict on frequent lay communion with Matěj of Janov and his circle, the Archbishop of Prague, Jan Jenštejn, granted penitent lay people the right to receive communion “as often as they desired” provided they be “confessed, repentant and worthy” (*Primo mandatur, ut veri penitentes, cum sint tamen confessi et contriti et digni, possint communicare quocienscumque alectant*) at the Prague synod of 1391. For the text of this decree, see Jaroslav Polc and Zdeňka Hledíková, eds., *Pražské synody a koncily předhusitské doby* [Prague Synods and Councils from the Prehussite Era] (Prague, 2002) 254. For an overview of this conflict and its resolution, see Peter Browe, *Die häufige Kommunion im Mittelalter* (Münster, 1938) 34.

² Peter Dinzelbacher and Rolf Sprandel, “Körper und Seele: Mittelalter,” in *Europäische Mentalitätsgeschichte: Hauptthemen in Einzeldarstellungen*, 2nd ed., ed. Peter Dinzelbacher (Stuttgart, 2008) 182–202, 183.

³ *De diligendo Deo* IV, 13, J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, ed., *S. Bernardi Opera*, vol. III (Rome 1963) 129 ; the same Latin text alongside a French translation is printed in *Sources chrétiennes* 393 (Paris, 1993) see 91. The English translation is taken from *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, trans. Robert Walton OSB, v. 5 [Cistercian Fathers Series 13] (Washington D.C., 1974) 105f.

⁴ On this issue, see *Regulae*, 6:223–231.

ascension, so it is imperative to understand that Matěj is above all talking about the glorified body. In this way Matěj copes with the precarious state of human corporality in the Middle Ages: Christ has, through his resurrection and ascension, deified and rehabilitated the human body, and this new reality is daily applied to humanity in the eucharist. Even if the eucharist has not been the object of this study, what we have found in Matěj's fundamental theology has made it plausible that Matěj's stress throughout the *Regulae* on bodily contact with God in the eucharist was partly developed within the context of a renewed appreciation of corporality.

a compelling vision of how the recapitulation of Christ's incarnation in the sacrament of the eucharist transformed the fundamental make-up of humanity.

Conclusion

The later Middle Ages and the Renaissance witnessed competing paradigms for understanding the human body, with medieval ecclesiastical culture demonstrating an ambiguity or even contempt of the body that was at odds with the emerging tenets of both humanism and new forms of popular religion. Matěj of Janov's thought developed at the point of intersection between these divergent agendas, and his *Regulae* represent an original attempt to overcome their differences. Sharing the Medieval troubled attitude towards ambiguity or even contempt for corporality, Matěj arrived to the point of defying it. His effort comes through most clearly in the fifth book of the *Regulae*, where he assesses the place of the eucharist in the Christian life in general in order to show how it redeems man's bodily nature. Particularly in *Regulae* V:8, Matěj employs a high Christology that views Christ as the embodied Wisdom and uses his incarnation as such as a means of incorporating the whole of Christ's work into the process of man's corporeal transformation. The eternal Wisdom has become, for Matěj, "everything for everyone." And, just as the human body of Christ is "assumed" by the divine Logos, so are the bodies of faithful Christians assumed by Christ in the eucharist. The problem of corporality is thus not resolved by the incarnation alone, but also by the glorification of Christ's body, whose benefits are translated to humankind sacramentally. Matěj's is hence a theology of "perfected carnation." By applying the traditional Christology of the Church to the issue of redeeming human corporality, Matěj proves himself to be creative within the limits of theological orthodoxy.

The effort to formulate a more complete consideration of the role of the body of Christ in salvation fits into the general character of Matěj's spirituality. The abundant references to the Holy Spirit in the *Regulae* reveal Matěj's need for a counterpart of the body. Or, as he puts it plainly in *Regulae* V:8, the Spirit fulfils what was inaugurated "in the flesh." Matěj uses pneumatology in *Regulae* V:8, but it is less elaborated than his Christology. References to the Spirit of Christ are, indeed, ubiquitous throughout the work, and their presence invites further research into the influence of Franciscan spirituality on Matěj's *Regulae*.

In conclusion, Matěj's stress on bodily contact with God in the eucharist should be viewed against the background of his intellectual struggle with the problem of corporality. He argues that man's flawed corporality is rehabilitated through Christ's integral work, which is stretched out over the entirety of the incarnation process. In his life, death, resurrection, and glorification, Christ affirmed the human body as a vehicle for the Logos and thus restored the flesh. This took place above all through the resurrection and the

religious orders and other pious associations.⁷⁰ On an even wider social plane, the “cultural revolution“ of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries incited a taste for material pleasure, and Prague certainly experienced a period of economic and political ascendancy in Matěj’s own lifetime.⁷¹ It would even be possible to cite the influence of Arab thought on the European intellectual elite from the eleventh century on, especially in medicine, which valued the body quite highly, but that story cannot be examined here. Finally, the growth of apocalyptic thought from the twelfth century onwards, by which Matěj was inspired, also implied a preoccupation with the outer world, and may accordingly have bolstered the canon’s interest in corporality.⁷² Suffice it to say that Matěj’s distinctive theological reclamation of the body emerged within a broader milieu of European cultural and intellectual life that was fundamentally sympathetic to his views.

We have seen that the argument of Matěj comprises three main elements:

- The redemption of the human flesh through the work of Christ, inaugurated in the incarnation and fulfilled in the ascension.
- The importance of the Holy Spirit in the thought of Matěj, as a complement of the flesh in need of restoration.
- The large scope of salvation: from the pre-existence of Christ (the Divine Wisdom) to the eucharist (communion).

To summarise: Matěj’s spirituality embraced the corporality of man as a positive feature. The theological system he developed centred on the promotion of frequent communion, which represented the locus of man’s transformation from flawed, natural being to deified, spiritual creature. In Matěj’s opinion, the fact that the laity was embedded in the bodily processes of sexuality and birth no longer made them inferior to the clergy and of religious people.⁷³ Rather, priests and laymen are “of the same right and of the same mind,” united by their corporate consumption of the eucharist and consequent regeneration.⁷⁴ Matěj offered

⁷⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages,” in eadem, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1992) 181–238, 182.

⁷¹ James Brundage and Vern Bullough, *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church* (Buffalo, 1982) 206.

⁷² “Sharing with the eschatology of resurrection an emphasis on the end of time, *a sense of the person as embodied*, and a focus on humanity as collective, the eschatology of apocalypse shares with the eschatology of immortality a sense that what matters is the here and now, an end that looms as immediate or very soon,” Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman, ed., *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2000) 8.

⁷³ Jaroslav Polc, “Disputace o častém přijímání laiků na předhusitské teologické fakultě, [The Disputation on Frequent Communion of the Laity in the Pre-Hussite Theological Faculty]” in idem, *Česká církev v dějinách* (Prague, 1999) 231–239, 235.

⁷⁴ *Regulae*, 5:263: “Quod quoad manducacionem sacramenti Christi corporis christianorum, panis cottidiani et communis, sacerdotes et plebei sunt de pari iure et de pari ratione.”

nor presents anything akin to the argument of Matěj.⁶⁶ His presentation of the incarnation similarly deals exclusively with the traditional dogmatic issues.⁶⁷ In short, spiritual presentations were more open to new and current problems, while dogmatics, on the other hand, were more restricted by tradition in its choice of topics. Dogmatic theology therefore took a moderate stance in its evaluation of human corporality. Studies in the development of Christian doctrine have shown that theologians such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Aelred of Rievaulx recognised that the evil *concupiscentia* was located in the core of human personality – in the heart – rather than in the body. Still, these figures maintained the common opinion which identified sin and corporality, as indicated in the quotation from St. Bernard in the introduction of this paper.⁶⁸

As Matěj did not produce a dogmatic treaty and hence discusses the theological issues somehow randomly, it is possible to regard the *Regulae* as an expression of an historical approach to theology. Matěj's spirituality and theological thought were embedded in his apocalyptic interests, and apocalypticism implies a sense of history. This is particularly true for Matěj, as his apocalypticism is less futurist than presentist: he does not deal with the events of the end of the world but with the interpretation of his own time.⁶⁹

It is thus possible to regard Matěj's rehabilitation of man's corporeal nature as part of broader trends in the spiritual and intellectual atmosphere of late medieval Europe. The influence of humanism was certainly strong in Bohemia in the fourteenth century, and scholars such as Caroline Walker Bynum have emphasised "the new religious significance that the body acquired in the period from 1200 to 1500" in Europe, especially among members of women's

⁶⁶ Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, II, 1, ed. Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, IV (Grottaferrata, 1971) 329–336.

⁶⁷ Ibid, III,1–3, V (Grottaferrata, 1981) 23–37.

⁶⁸ Bernhard Stoeckle, "'Amor carnis – abusus amoris:' Das Verständnis von der Konkupiszenz bei Bernhard von Clairvaux und Aelred von Rieval," in *Analecta monastica: Textes et études sur la vie des moines au moyen âge*, septième série (Rome, 1965) 147–174.

⁶⁹ Kybal, *Matěj z Janova*, 203f: "Antikristem jest podle Janova každý, kdo skutky popírá Krista; formou antikristství jest pokrytství a směšování Boha se světem a speciálně pýcha a z ní vyplývající vláda lidských nálezků, lahota a její nejzjevnější forma simonie, tělesná smyslnost mravní vlažnost a zesvětštělost. Klement VII a že chmurným prismaticem apokalyptických symbolův a proroctví pozoruje netoliko svou dobu, ale i minulost a budoucnost. [According to Janov everyone who denies Christ's deeds is Antichrist ; the forms of Antichrist are hypocrisy and mixing up God with the world, and especially pride and its consequences : the reign of human inventions, avarice, and its most pronounced form – simony, bodily sensuality, moral tepidity and worldliness]" I would stress more strongly than Kybal that Matěj's eschatology was primarily presentist in its focus, as we do not find references to future events in his work apart from occasional references to the last judgement or to the eternal rest. The reference to the past, i.e. to the year 1266, when in Matěj's opinion Antichrist manifested himself, serves to define the time in which Matěj lives as the end time. See e.g. *Regulae*, 3:1ff.

“*corpus carcer*,” it is within the tradition of a (Neo)platonist paradigm: the body is the “prison” of the soul, and there is no attempt to describe the fundamental restoration of corporality.⁶⁰ It is still the soul’s delivery from the body that is emphasised. In the Gelasian liturgy, though, the body is not a prison for the soul, but itself object of redemption alongside that of the soul.⁶¹ Matěj, on the other hand, has little to say about the soul, both in *Regulae* V:8 and in his larger literary corpus. This brief comparison shows that for Matěj the issue is not the soul’s redemption from the body, but the redemption of the body itself.

If we look at texts where medieval theologians discuss the necessity of the incarnation, e.g. the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas (*Utrum fuerit conveniens Deum incarnari*), another intellectual world than that of Matěj is revealed to us: nothing of the restoration of the flesh through the complete work of Christ and nothing of the flesh’s need of redemption is present here. The Angelic Doctor stresses that the creation is being excelled by Divine goodness.⁶² He even does not testify to the problematic stature of human corporality as created when treating of the body.⁶³ Thomas treats the effects of sin on nature and situates the destroying effect of sin on nature precisely on “the natural inclination of man to virtue.”⁶⁴ There is also nothing in his discussion of the ascension of Christ that is anything like Matěj’s handling of this matter in *Regulae* V:8.⁶⁵

Matěj’s argument in *Regulae* V:8 belongs to the field of spirituality, as he has no intent of presenting a systematic theology. The dogmatic presentations of the Middle Ages did not reflect the ambiguous status of the flesh to the same extent as did Matěj, as we have seen in the work St. Thomas. Peter Lombard is a testimony of the same; he neither demeans the body

in Medieval Religion (New York, 1992). The same is true of expositions treating the body as a prison for the soul in European history. See, e.g. Pierre Courcelle, “Tradition platonicienne et traditions chrétiennes du corps-prison,” *Revue des études latines* 43 (1965) 406–443; idem, *Connais-toi toi-même de Socrate à Saint Bernard*, vv. 2–3 (Paris, 1975); and “L’âme au tombeau,” in *Mélanges d’histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris, 1974) 331–336; Ilario Tolomio, “Corpus carcer” nell’alto medioevo: Metamorfosi di un concetto, in *Anima e corpo nella cultura medievale. Atti del V Convegno di studi della Società Italiana per lo Studio del Pensiero Medievale, Venezia, 25–28 settembre 1995*, ed. Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio (Florence, 1999) 3–19. The impression is confirmed by: Pierre Daubercies, “La théologie de la condition charnelle chez les maîtres du haut moyen âge,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 30 (1963) 5–54.

⁶⁰ E.g. Pope Gregory the Great and Isidore of Seville. See Tolomio, “*Corpus carcer*,” 9.

⁶¹ Tolomio, “*Corpus carcer*,” 14–19.

⁶² Thomas of Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (*Sth*) IIIa, q. 1, a. 1 (2121), ed. Paoline (Milan 1988) 1164f. See also a. 2–6, 1864–1870.

⁶³ *Ibid.* Ia, q. LXV “De opere creationis creaturae corporalis,” 308–312.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* I IIa q. LXXXV “De effectibus peccati. Et primo, de corruptione boni naturae,” 915–920. This quotation, 917.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* IIIa, q. LVII “De ascensione Christi,” 2148–2153.

Divinity by fleshly food,” however without tracing how human corporality was theologically restored, and not thematised as a problem.⁵⁴

An examination of the texts of St. Francis of Assisi attests to a common element between him and Matěj in the use of references to the Logos’ mediation in creation: “‘The Word of the Father’ ... whose Father’s will was that his blessed and glorious Son, whom he gave us and was born to us, offered himself by his and our sacrifice on the altar of the cross, not because of himself, by whom all things are made (cf. John 1:3), but because of our sins.”⁵⁵ McGinn underlines the role that Christ as Wisdom plays in the thought of Francis.⁵⁶ His was also a strong devotion to the eucharist.⁵⁷ The references to creation in the texts of Francis are accompanied by his praise of nature and what McGinn designates “a specifically Christian nature mysticism, in which God’s presence is experienced as luminously real and immedie in the cosmos as a whole and in each of its elements insofar as they reflect some aspects of the divine fullness.”⁵⁸ Francis does not, however, present a theology of the redemption of flawed corporality.

In view of the scholarly literature dealing with the relation between the soul and the body in the Middle Ages, the originality of Matěj is utterly confirmed.⁵⁹ When patristic and medieval authors address the problem of

⁵⁴ “Dialogus rationis et conscientiae de crebra comunione,” in: W. Senko and A. Szafranski, *Mateusza z Krakowa, Opuscula theologica* [Textus et Studia 2] (Warsaw, 1974) 368: “... qui sic nobis appropinquare voluit per naturae nostrae assumptionem et hanc sacram comunionem;” *ibid.* 394f: “Quid est quod sic convenienter gustum reformam et cordis palato potuit sapere sicut corpus et sanguis Christi, quae sola sub forma gustabili proponuntur. Unde Hugo super prologum Angelicae Hierarchiae: ‘Sapientia increata, quae se per visibilia manifestat volens ostendere quando ipsa sit animarum cibus et refectio, propterea carnem assumptam nobis in edulium proposuit, ut per cibum carnis nos ad gustum invitaret deitati” (Hugo de Sancto Victore, Commentarius in Hierarchiam Coelestem, PL 175, 953); *ibid.*, 405: “... ut nedum spiritualement, sed etiam corporalem sui praesentiam exhiberet;” *ibid.*, 409 “... hi, pro vehementi desiderio quod habent ad Christum, non possunt sustinere eius absentiam, et quia non possunt eum revelata facie contemplari in gloria, saltem in praesenti pro consolatione sua volunt...” The last quotation draws upon the first lesson of the Office of Corpus Christi, written by Thomas Aquinas, for the text, see Pierre-Marie Gy, “L’Office du Corpus Christi, œuvre de S. Thomas d’Aquin,” in his *La liturgie dans l’histoire* (Paris, 1990) 245: “... hoc sacramentum instituit tanquam passionis suae memoriale perenne, figurarum veterum impletivum, miraculorum ab ipso factorum maximum, et de sua contristatis absentia singularare.”

⁵⁵ St. Francis of Assisi, “Epistula ad fideles (Recensio posterior [EpFid II]),” in *Die Opuscula des Hl. Franziskus von Assisi*, ed. Kajetan Esser (Grottaferrata, 1976) 208: Francis is talking about “Verbum Patris” and is then placing him into the context of his relation to the Father and to creation: “Cuius Patris talis fuit voluntas, ut filius eius benedictus et gloriosus, quem dedit nobis et natus fuit pro nobis, se ipsum per sanguinem suum sacrificium et nostram in ara crucis offeret, non propter se, per quem facta sunt omnia (cf. John 1:3), sed pro peccatis nostris.”

⁵⁶ McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism*, 52.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 44–53.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 54–55.

⁵⁹ We find nothing like the argument of Matěj referred to in Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body*, nor in her: *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body*

rejoinder to Skalický who partly characterises the spirituality of Matěj by its lack of resurrection theology.⁴⁶

Matěj's *Regulae* testify to the depreciation of, or at least the ambivalent attitude towards, corporality in the Middle Ages. Matěj moves beyond this contempt, though, because his own spirituality is so focused on the nature of the body. That nature is, according to Matěj, theologically pure after the human flesh is, as he puts it, "purged" (*depurgatum*) through the work of Christ.⁴⁷ He therefore criticises his theological adversaries who refuse frequent lay communion, for not understanding the "evangelical law of perfect liberty," according to which "unto the pure, all things are pure." (Titus 1:15)⁴⁸ Matěj also adduces the words of Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew (15:11) to reiterate this point: "What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."⁴⁹ Matěj is conscious of the voluntarist character of his thought when he argues that sins are not "natural sins, but sins of will."⁵⁰ His focus, though, on volition as a requisite for sin underwrites his insistence that man's nature can never disbar him from the sacraments;⁵¹ only conscious sin makes someone unworthy of communion.⁵² In this way Matěj shows himself to be a thirteenth century theologian in the wake of John Duns Scotus.⁵³

To what extent was the argument of Matěj original? We do not find it in other Bohemian texts from his lifetime. I have undertaken a comparison with Matthew of Cracow who reveals the joy of the redeemed body, in the tradition of Hugh of Saint Victor whom he quotes: "that he might invite us to taste

of Philosophy (Oxford, 1998) 150. The observation of Tom Wright is close to my own: "Officially [Christians before the sixteenth century] were still awaiting the final resurrection; but increasingly that wasn't emphasised, and in many medieval portrayals it has dropped out altogether." Tom Wright, *Surprised by Joy* (London, 2007) 177. Dinzlacher also seems to be correct when he says that the resurrection of the flesh is treated by medieval theologians and presented by artists in images, but that "only in the lived religion it plays practically no role." See his: *Körper und Frömmigkeit in der mittelalterlichen Mentalitätsgeschichte* (Paderborn, 2007) 16.

⁴⁶ Skalický, "Církev Kristova," 47, 60, 67, 68.

⁴⁷ *Regulae*, 6:171.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 6:225: "Et adhuc iudaisare videntur, non bene perspicientes in lege ewangelica perfecte libertatis, in qua iam 'omnia munda mundis.'" See also: *ibid*, 5:49 and 294.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 6:225.

⁵⁰ *Loc. cit.* "Scilicet non naturalia, sed voluntaria peccata;" and *ibid*, 6:226: "Cum eorum quodlibet prodeat a natura et non a libera voluntate." Cf. *ibid*, 1:71: "Libera, quia voluntria, id est solum consistens in hominis diligencia et voluntate."

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 6:225: "Et propter hec dixi, quod is, qui censet mulierem menstruatam esse ob id inquinatam et indignam sacramentis, non est spiritualis, sed carnalis, quoniam cristianus popullus talia, que sunt corporalia, munda sive imunda, in nullo debet magnipendere vel diiudicare, inquantum precise sunt talia vel inquantum ex prava voluntate non veniunt vel affectum mentis in peccato non captivant."

⁵² *Ibid*, 6:226: "Quoniam nichil indignificat ad sacramentum Dei nisi culpa affectata; sed nulla prorsus culpa est mulieris ipsam pati menstruata, igitur neque est indigna."

⁵³ Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford, 1999) 83–100, esp. 89.

According to Matěj, the overcoming of corporality should manifest itself in the life of the believer. Christ requires a steady improvement and restitution of human spiritual life that has, at the same time, corporeal ramifications. There are, according to Matěj, three stages of life. The first life is the natural life, which is rooted in corporality and thus an obstacle to faith; it “endures from conception until the death of man.”⁴⁰ The third life, though, which is the spiritual life that extends from one’s coming to faith to eternal life, represents in one sense the total supersession of that first life.⁴¹ In another sense, however, in the third life human corporality is offered to, and transformed by, God.⁴² The third life also depends upon the nutrition offered by the body and blood of Christ that is available in the eucharist, because in this world Christ is only touchable “in food and drink,” which necessitates frequent communion and links the natural and spiritual lives in a cycle of redemption.⁴³ The second life is the “human or rational” life and equals the acquisition and practice of moral knowledge. It “endures from the time at which the adolescent starts to understand and becomes capable of learning until old age or even the weakness of old age or death.”⁴⁴

It is worth repeating that Matěj’s understanding of Christ’s incarnation incorporates not only his life on earth, but also his ultimate glorification. Oddly, Matěj has relatively little to say about the resurrection as part of this larger process, although a key text in *Regulae* V:8 does link the resurrection and the ascension as key moments in the cleansing of mankind’s flawed corporality. Scant attention to the resurrection was commonplace in medieval spirituality though, and not particular to Matěj of Janov.⁴⁵ This is a necessary

ibid, 6:180: “Sicut eas sapiencia divina pro hominibus condidit et preparavit, scilicet in sacramento altaris.”

⁴⁰ Ibid, 6:178: “et durat a conceptione usque ad mortem hominis.”

⁴¹ Ibid, 6:179: “Seminatur in carne, augetur in Spiritum, seminatur in corruptione hominis, surgit in incorruptionem Iesu Christi, seminatur in mortalitate, terminatur in immortalitate, durat autem a susceptione fidei usque in vitam eternum.”

⁴² Loc. cit.. “Propter vitam rudem et gravem corporalem ... tertia vita.. Cristi Iesu in nobis vel spiritualis et divina, prime vite carnali fluide ponit fortiter regimen et mensuram.”

⁴³ Ibid, 6:177.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 6:179.

⁴⁵ The limited emphasis on the resurrection in the Middle Ages is an issue that has been paid little attention to by most medievalists. There are, however, exceptions. Jaroslav Polc, for instance, notes that concern for eternal life paled beside the attention paid to the passion and death of Christ. See his: “Časté přijímání laiků – základ české reformace, duchovní proudy od Karla IV. ke kalichu, [Frequent Lay Communion: The Foundation of the Bohemian Reformation, the Spiritual Currents from Charles IV to the Chalice]” in idem, *Česká církev v dějinách* [The Czech Church in History] (Prague, 1999) 211. Caroline Walker Bynum notes that “Resurrection belief was less central, yet more pervasive, in medieval theology than in early Christian writing” in her: *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995) xvii. For Catherine Pickstock, the concentration in the Middle Ages on the crucifixion put the resurrection and the eschatological achievement of the material world to the side. See her: *After Writing: On the Theological Consummation*

Church.³⁰ Indeed, the Spirit empowers the transformation of the body. Or, as Matěj puts it in *Regulae* V:8, the deified body of Christ became “spirit and life” as the flesh and blood of Jesus were changed into Spirit.³¹ In a similar vein, Jesus now “guides” the souls of the faithful from flesh to Spirit through the mediation of the third person of the Trinity.³² Throughout the *Regulae*, then, the Spirit animates and elevates the body, as Matěj’s pneumatology theologically rehabilitates human corporality.

In *Regulae* V:7, Matěj interprets the eucharist as the sacramental imitation of Christ’s overcoming of fragile corporality, saying that “He [Christ] has become our daily bread after his resurrection.”³³ For Matěj, the eucharist is the best means of facilitating the fundamental change that Jesus wants to effect among men because it implies the same transformation that happened to the human flesh when it was assumed by the Logos.³⁴ In other words, just as the eucharistic species are changed from bread and wine to Christ’s body and blood, so too is the human body deified in the sacramental communion.³⁵ Matěj’s understanding of Christ as embodied Wisdom, when combined with his generally high Christology, locates the presence of Christ’s body and blood in all of creation, but particularly in the eucharist. As such, Christ is at the same time “totally” seated at the right hand of God the Father and “totally” present on the altars all over the universal Church.³⁶ Matěj typically states that the Logos is “everything for everybody” (*omnia omnibus*), a phrase that he also applies to the eucharistic elements.³⁷ And while Matěj presents this formulation in a number of variations, the essential point is that the Logos has an all-embracing function and, in fact, “is and contains everything.”³⁸ As a consequence, the eucharist is “to us everything in all” because Christ is the ubiquitous Logos who contains creation in himself; in the eucharist Christ gives himself to mankind in created form. Matěj states this succinctly when he says that Wisdom “instituted ... a large banquet all over the world from one end to the other.”³⁹

³⁰ E.g. *Regulae*, 2:12: “Semper etenim per contrarium a principio domini Jhesu humiles et simplices discipuli a magnis et divitibus hominibus huius mundi sunt perpressi, quia illi sunt, qui ut plurimum magis offendunt deum et eius veritatem et agitantur spiritu Antichristi, cum pauperibus vero plebeis et simplicibus pacem habuerunt sancti dei, quia similia similibus ubique applaudebant,” *ibid.* 23f: “Non namque potest homo, spiritu Jhesu adductus, non esse contrarius hominibus inflatis per spiritum huius mundi, sed necesse est, ut curiosi sint adversi simplicitati, divites contemptori diviciarum, delicati et molles rigido in penitencia et rigido in iusticia et duro in vita, superbi humili, amici mundi huius amico Jhesu Christi.”

³¹ Matěj first highlights this equivalence in: *ibid.*, 6:158. Cf. *ibid.*, 6:160 and 165.

³² *Ibid.*, 6:175–176.

³³ *Ibid.*, 6:141: “Post resurrectionem suam noster panis cottidianus est effectus.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6:176.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6:166 and 176.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 6:164–165.

³⁷ Christ “has become all for all” (*omnibus omnia factus est*). See *Ibid.*, 6:73.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6:161.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6:156: “Instruxit secundum eius condecenciam convivium amplissimum per totum orbem a fine ad finem, hospitalitatem suam fortiter ampliavit et suaviter disposuit;” and

conception of man's flawed corporality, or, as Matěj puts it, in the incarnation, Christ came into the "*domo lutea*" (dirty house) of the human flesh in The incarnation, Christ came.²⁴ In a similar vein, Matěj describes Christ's descent "to the inferior parts of earth, which is manifestly the human nature."²⁵ It is the essential work of Christ, however, that exalted the miserable human nature to a glorious state. When his habitation in the flesh was ended, Christ "was liberated from the shackles of his flesh which he had received from the womb of Virgin Mary, and therefore he returned to his divine clarity which he had before he made the world."²⁶ In short, Christ overcame the deficiency of corporality, which medieval authors repeatedly emphasised, by his work of salvation. Matěj's argument is that the Logos resolved the problem of the ambiguous status of corporality by living in and perfecting the flesh: "He unravelled all the claims of the flesh even as he went the way of all flesh."²⁷ As discussed above, Christ's resurrection and ascension were part of the incarnation in Matěj's more expansive sense of the word. Here, it becomes clear *how* the resurrection and ascension perfect incarnation, as "human nature" and its inescapable corporality are overcome by the power of the pre-existent Logos.

This premise sheds light on a major feature of Matěj's spirituality: the ubiquitous references to the "Spirit of Jesus Crucified" that are found throughout the *Regulae*.²⁸ It may be a Franciscan mark on his spirituality; the texts of St. Francis contain many references to the Spirit.²⁹ This emphasis on pneumatology in Matěj's work could be seen as a counterweight to his stress on corporality, but it actually represents a necessary complement. Paying attention to the function of pneumatology in the *Regulae*, one cannot ignore the root of Matěj's pneumatology in his apocalyptic thought: as the present age of the world with its ecclesiastical careerism is penetrated by the "spirit of Antichrist," so the "Spirit of Christ" is necessary for the renewal of the

²⁴ Ibid, 6:171–172.

²⁵ Ibid, 6:175: "Venit igitur Filius Dei ad inferiores partes terre, scilicet ad naturam humanam."

²⁶ Ibid, 6:159: "Habitatione carnis in domo lutea per mortem resoluta et terminata ... solutus est Deus a legibus carnis illius, quam de Marie Virginis utero assumpsit, et ideo rediit ad suam divinam claritatem, quam habuit priusquam mundus fieret."

²⁷ Loc. cit.: "Omnia iura carni persolvit viamque carnis universe percurrit."

²⁸ See, e.g.: *Regulae*, 1:303; *ibid*, 6:63.

²⁹ Ctirad Václav Pospíšil, *Dar Otce i Syna: Základy systematické pneumatologie* [The Gift of the Father and the Son: the foundations of systematic pneumatology] (Olomouc, 2003) 97. I would like to quote two examples from Francis's corpus of texts: "... et fuit in eis habitaculum et mansionem (cf. John 14:23). ... Sponsi sumus, quando Spiritu Sancto coniugitur fidelis anima Jesu Christo. ... Et omnes illi et illae, dum talia fecerint et perseveraverint usque in finem, *resquiescet super eos Spiritus Sanctus Domini* (Is. 11:2)," *Epistola ad fideles* (Recensio posterior [EpFid II]), Kajetan Esser, ed., *Die opuscula des hl. Franziskus von Assisi. Neue textkritische Edition* (Grottaferrata, 1976) 211. McGinn talks about Francis's "biblical Spirit-Christology" in his: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200–1350* (New York, 1988) 52. Cf. also the concept of the "Spirit of Christ," which are typical in the texts of the Cistercian Gueric of Igny (d. 1157). See Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century* (New York, 2004) 281.

divinity. Despite this qualification, Matěj offers an expansive vision of the incarnation, saying that the Son of God adapted to human life “from the beginning to the end, from conception to death.”¹⁷ For Matěj, the foundation for this broader view of Christ’s work is the presence of God’s Wisdom in all creation. Indeed, the evocation of Christ as the embodied “Divine Wisdom” is the basis for the high Christology that is characteristic of the entire *Regulae* and enables Matěj to view Christ primarily in his relation to the creation via the mediation of Wisdom (cf. Prov. 8: 22ff. ; and John 1: 10).¹⁸

Matěj emphasises Christ’s omnipresence in the created world throughout the *Regulae*.¹⁹ Essentially, this omnipresence began with the Incarnation, but became complete only when Christ overcame corporeal weakness by surpassing the limits of the flesh in the resurrection.²⁰ Put another way, the Logos’s assumption of a new nature in the incarnation made it possible that human corporality could be subsequently perfected through the resurrection and human ascension of Christ. This is why Matěj repeatedly refers to the ascension and session of Christ at the right hand of Father, in *Regulae* V:8.²¹ Tellingly, Matěj refers here to the “body of Christ which was on the cross and is seated at the right hand of God,” eliding Christ’s burial and resurrection in order to emphasise the reality of his corporeal presence alongside God the Father.²² The essential point is that Matěj considered the human body in light of this glorification because the Logos had resolved the problem of inherent human weakness by living in the flesh and, by means of that flesh’s suffering, atoned for the sin of the world.²³ Matěj’s theology of the incarnation is thus a theology of perfected “carnation” (my expression) through the totality of Christ’s work.

What is the background for this theology of perfected carnation? A careful examination of the text shows that Matěj starts from the common medieval

¹⁷ Ibid, 6:159: “Conmensuravit se vel conformavit humane nature a principio usque ad finem, a conceptione usque ad mortem.”

¹⁸ Ibid, 6:156.

¹⁹ This theme is particularly notable in, e.g.: ibid, 6:161: “Igitur sicut Verbum Dei est omne bonum simul et omnia in omnibus, ita caro Verbi deformis est nobis per Verbum omne bonum et omnia in omnibus;” ibid, 6:163: “Ut ipsum sit sicut est omnia in omnibus;” and ibid, 6:172: “Eoquod ipsum est omnia in omnibus;” and “secundum quam tunc nondum exhibuit se Christus omnia in omnibus.”

²⁰ Ibid, 6:165: “Sicut etenim humanitas per Verbum et iam glorificata per resurrectionem deposuit suas proprietates carnis, que non sunt de essentia intrinseca humanitatis, puta corruptionem, mortalitatem, gravitatem, corpulenciam.”

²¹ Ibid, 6:163ff; cf. ibid, 6:126.

²² Ibid, 6:163. This text goes directly from the passion to the heavenly enthronement of Christ. Another example of this can be seen in ibid, 2:33: “Qui in cruce pependit et sedet ad Patris dexteram;” and ibid, 6:160. On the centrality of Christ’s resurrection and ascension in traditional Christian theology, and particularly for the importance of the ascension for Saint Bernard, see Bernard McGinn, “Resurrection and Ascension in the Christology of the Early Cistercians,” *Cîteaux* 50 (1979) 5–22.

²³ *Regulae*, 6:159: “Ut sic mediante carne tamquam delicta solveret tocius mundi et peccata.”

In this overview, it becomes clear that *Regulae* V:8 sets out from the soul's capacity for the Logos (*Verbum*) and the Logos' concomitant capacity for all created things, and proceeds to demonstrate how the Logos invests human nature and communicates itself in the eucharist as a means of accommodating human kind. In short, *Regulae* V:8 establishes how human nature and the flesh were rehabilitated through Christ's work as the embodied Logos. Man receives the benefits of this cleansing in the eucharist, which recapitulates and multiplies the same transformation that took place when Christ assumed human flesh. Matěj does not discuss fundamentally the Trinity, incarnation or salvation history, but applies the traditional theology on these topics to the resolution of the medieval problem of flawed human corporality. For this reason we will not investigate Matěj's Trinitarian theology and Christology as such, but only as *Regulae* V:8 applies this theology to the particular problem of the redemption of corporeal man.

The Argument of *Regulae* V:8

Within this larger theological argument, *Regulae* V:8 focuses on incarnation theology. Karel Skalický is right in setting out the central place of the incarnation in Matěj's thought, which is demonstrated by the ubiquity of citations and references to Col 2:9 in the *Regulae*: "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."¹⁴ Col 2:9 is not, however, quoted in *Regulae* V:8. The Incarnation is here referred to in other ways, such as when Matěj urges the reader "that he remember the divine Majesty, the omnipotence and the goodness, whose corporal presence takes place here as all the fullness of the Godhead is corporally [present]."¹⁵ Matěj's presupposition in this passage is that the incarnation makes possible the soul's grasp of divinity, as the soul contemplates spiritual things through the senses.¹⁶

The weight that Matěj places on the incarnation throughout this distinction concomitantly implies that he concedes a high value to corporality. On a theological level Matěj anchored this attitude in a broader view of Christ's work in which the incarnation was not sufficient in itself to secure the Christological foundation for the rehabilitation of corporality, even though it inaugurated the process through which humanity could be assimilated to

¹⁴ Karel Skalický, "Církev Kristova a církev antikristova v teologii Matěje z Janova," [The Church of Christ and the Church of Antichrist in the Theology of Matěj of Janov] in *Mistr Matěj z Janova ve své a naší době: Sborník vědeckého sympozia, konaného na teologické fakultě Jihočeské univerzity 29.–30. listopadu 2000*, ed. Jan Lášek and Karel Skalický (Brno, 2000) 47, 60, 67f. For a sampling of Matěj's use of this verse in the *Regulae*, see, e.g.: *Regulae*, 1:49, 101, and 301; *ibid.*, 5:13, 237, and 298; and *ibid.*, 6:25 and 196.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6:25: "Ut sit memor divine maiestatis, omnipotentie et bonitatis, cuius presenciam ibi corporaliter assistit, quoniam in Cristo est omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 6:154: "Ex sensibilibus transfert se ad insensibilia contemplanda."

history. *Regulae* V:8 itself contains twelve chapters, and the text as a whole is characterised by repetitions of, and elaborations upon, its main sacramental theme. Analysed topically, the structure of the distinction can be arranged in five parts:

- I. Ch. 1–2: Logos, the mediator of creation, is present in the eucharist
 - a. *Ch. 1*: The soul is capable of Logos, possessor of the forms of all created things.
 - b. *Ch. 2*: Logos, the “divine Wisdom,” is present in the eucharist via created matter.

- II. Ch. 3–6: Christological Foundations
 - a. *Ch.3*: The human body is deified through Christ, the embodied Logos who divinised human nature and offers this in the eucharist.
 - b. *Ch. 4*: An explanation of this mutual assumption of human/divine nature.
 - c. *Ch. 5*: An explanation of this phenomenon from the point of view of a history of salvation. The resurrection implied the end of corporal weakness. This is a presupposition for the effective and essential being of Christ’s body and blood in the eucharistic species as it is present in all creation.
 - d. *Ch. 6*: A discussion of the eucharistic transformation and ubiquity.

- III. Ch. 7–8a: The restrictions on the exaltation of Christ in his earthly life.¹³
 - a. *Ch. 7*: The restriction on worship (cf. John 12:23–25).
 - b. *Ch. 8a*: The restriction on proclamation (cf. Mark 8 :30).

- IV. Ch. 8b-10: Comparison between the transformation of Christ’s and the believer’s flesh.
 - a. *Ch. 8b*: The initial comparison.
 - b. *Ch. 9*: Human nature was elevated from corruption to the Spirit by Christ’s assumption of flesh, and this is applied to Christians in frequent communion
 - c. *Ch. 10*: The movement from corporal to spiritual in the life of Jesus.

- V. Ch. 11–12: Appendix
 - a. *Ch. 11*: A distinction between three levels of the life of the Christian.
 - b. *Ch. 12*: A reiteration of the dangers inherent in the negligence of communion.

¹³ Cf. the “messianic secret” particularly elaborated in the Gospel according to Mark, e.g. 8:27 and 6:7ff, according to which Jesus forbade his disciples to proclaim that he was the Messiah. See William Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien: zugleich ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Markusevangeliums* (Göttingen, 1901).

the problem of human corporality. What were the main elements of his resolution, and what is the most appropriate intellectual framework for its understanding?

The Content and Context of *Regulae* V:8

The *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti* was written between 1388 and Matěj's death at the age of forty in 1393.⁸ The *Regulae* as a whole is organised according to thirteen rules (*regulae*) from the Scriptures. They are then divided into five "books," each of which is further subdivided into "treatises" and "distinctions."⁹ The fifth book of the *Regulae* was first written in 1388 and revised in 1393.¹⁰ A modern critical edition was published in connection with the sixth centennial of Matěj's death in 1993. Book V comprises a prologue and twelve distinctions, many of which are concerned with the history and administration of the eucharist:

Dist. I: Of the understanding of those who receive the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord.

Dist. II: Of worthy communicants.

Dist. III: Of those who receive communion unworthily.

Dist. IV: Of the daily reception of the sacrament in the primitive church.

Dist. V: Of the fashions and relations of the body of Christ Jesus.¹¹

Dist. VI: Of pictures and statues in churches.

Dist. VII: Of the fulfilment of sacrifices on the altar.¹²

Dist. VIII: Of the likeness of the sacrament of the altar and the Christian

Dist. IX: Of the intimacy of the body of Christ.

Dist. X: Of pretexts not to receive the sacrament of Christ.

Dist. XI: Of obstacles not to receive the body of Christ.

Dist. XII: Of feigning pretexts not to receive the body of Christ.

The eighth distinction, entitled "*De conformitate sacramenti altaris ad hominem cristianum*" in the original Latin, does not discuss the practical and pastoral conditions for participation in the sacrament, but rather examines the eucharist from a fundamental theological perspective. Together with distinctions five and seven of this book, it views sacramental theology and practice against the background of the history of religious cult in world

⁸ Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova*, 42.

⁹ Böhringer, *Die Vorreformatoren*, 42.

¹⁰ *Regulae*, 6.xi.

¹¹ The distinction suggests how the eucharist is a fulfilment of Jewish and gentile religious cults respectively.

¹² Matěj deals in this chapter with a comparison equivalent to that in dist. V but from the viewpoint of sacrifice.

Research on Matěj of Janov has generally ignored the issue of corporality,⁵ evidently as Matěj nowhere thematises this question, apart from the treatment of the corporeal obstacles to communion from a New Testament perspective, and what is implied in his view of salvation history, to which we will immediately turn. The self-referential phrase found in the Prologue of *Regulae* V, “being put in the body” (*in corpore posito*) reveals, however, that the issue of corporality was an underlying problem for Matěj:

Consequently the word of Augustine does not advise me only to remain in spiritual communion consisting in faith, for this type of communion would perhaps be enough for angels who are mere spirits or for souls, freed from the bodies. For me however, a human being still put in the body, joint spiritual and corporal communion is more fitting.⁶

We could easily cite more places from the *Regulae* where this or similar expressions are used. Furthermore, we can see Matěj’s mention of “rustic people” (*rustici*) to whom sacramental communion is an accommodated way of divine contact. In *Regulae* V:8, to provide just one example among many, Matěj notes “that many rustic and simple people stand up and demand with utmost desire and require this sacrament full of divinity.”⁷

In considering the question of corporality, this essay will focus on one essential part of Matěj’s *magnum opus*, the *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti*, which reveals his fundamental thoughts in this regard. It was in the eighth distinction of the fifth book of the *Regulae* that Matěj considered the entire work of Christ, including the resurrection and ascension, in the light of restoring human corporality, with particular focus on the eucharist as the expression and the tool for this restoration. Indeed, this text is crucial for understanding Matěj’s work in general. As such, this paper offers a careful examination of this distinction in order to assess how Matěj tries to resolve

⁵ For detailed analyses of Matěj’s theology, see Friedrich Böhringer, *Die Vorreformatoren des vierzehnten und fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Zürich, 1858); Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova: Jeho život, spisy a učení* [M. Matěj of Janov: his life, writings and teaching] (Prague, 1905); Ondřej Petřů, *Matěj z Janova o častém svatém přijímání* [Matěj of Janov on Frequent Communion] (Olomouc, 1946); Jana Nechutová, “Matěj z Janova, Mistr Pařížský († 30.11.1393),” in *Mladá Vožice k počtě Mistra Matěje z Janova († 1393)* [Mladá Vožice Honors Matěj of Janov († 1393)], 2nd ed., ed. Milan Machovec and Jana Nechutová (Mladá Vožice, 2000); Josef Dolista, “Duchovní proudy v době Matěje z Janova, [Spiritual Currents in the Time of Matěj of Janov († 1393)]” in Lášek and Skalický, *Mistr Matěj z Janova*, 7–15 see n. 14 below; and Martin Weis, “Mistr Matěj z Janova a jeho myšlenkové současníci, [Master Matěj of Janov and His Intellectual Contemporaries]” in Lášek and Skalický, *Mistr Matěj z Janova*, 16–30.

⁶ *Regulae*, 6:17: “Non igitur verbum Augustini suadet me in sola manducacione credulitatis spirituallii sistendum, nam hoc forte ipsis angelis sufficeret, qui tantum sunt spiritus, vel animabus, que sunt a corporibus absolute; sed michi, homini adhuc in corpore posito, optime congruit manducacio spiritualis simul et corporalis.”

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6:157.