
Iconography of the Mural Paintings in St. James's Church of Kutná Hora

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Kutná Hora belongs among the most significant towns of Bohemia because of its importance in political, economic, cultural, and religious history. Its rise had occurred as early as the end of the thirteenth century when the last of the Přemyslids developed the local mining of silver. It was in Kutná Hora that King Wenceslaus IV issued in 1409 the famous Decree of Kutná Hora, adjusting the nationality representation at the University of Prague, which in a way marked the approach of the upheavals of the Bohemian Reformation. Dominated by German patrician families, the town initially served as a bastion of the Roman party, and still in 1420 provided a haven for the court of Emperor Sigismund. The militia of Prague conquered the city in 1421 and retained control over it until 1424. Burnt down twice, Kutná Hora fell to the Taborites and the Orphans in the late 1420s. The period of the religious wars resulted in a fundamental change of the religious and political conditions in favor of the Czech inhabitants. Afterwards, despite a certain economic decline, the town rapidly consolidated, and Czech families, such as the Prachňanskýs of Prachňany, the Vencelíks of Vrchoviště, and the Smíšeks of Vrchoviště, actively participated in political life. From the 1430s Kutná Hora was the site of important congresses, seeking to mediate the relationship between the Utraquists and the Roman Church. In 1431 a government of twelve members was elected, and a deputation dispatched to King Vladislav in Cracow. The disputations between the Utraquist spokespersons (mainly Peter Payne) and the Polish theologians did not find any resolution, but contacts with the Polish Court continued.

A diet, held in Kutná Hora in 1432, decided to send a Utraquist deputation to the Council of Basel. The following year the Diet accepted the proposed agreements, concluded in Basel, but requested an obligatory lay communion from the chalice over all Bohemia. In 1436 Sigismund of Luxembourg was elected the King of Bohemia, and in Prague there were attempts to restore Roman-style worship. Deprived of his parish of the Týn Church, Jan Rokycana left for Hradec Králové. The Utraquist embassy continued to negotiate in Basel with Jan of Píbram defending the chalice, but the Council summarily rejected any Czech proposals. In 1437 Sigismund died in Znojmo and the government was briefly in the hands of Albrecht of Habsburg (d. 1439).¹ At a diet in Prague in 1434[?] the Austrian party and the party of Ptáček agreed on a "note of accommodation" [*list mírný*], which

1) Jiří Kejř, *Právní život v husitské Kutné Hoře* (Prague, 1958); *idem*, *Husité* (Prague, 1984); František Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce, 4 vv.* (Praha, 1995-1996); J. Roháček, *Nápisy města Kutné Hory* (Prague, 1996).

regularized the country's administration and recognized the *Compactata*. Ptáček's party formed a league of four East Bohemian circuits, and the Utraquist powers increased when George of Poděbrady led also the circuit of Boleslav into the league.² While Oldřich of Rožmberk headed the adherents of the Roman Church, a synod of 1441 in Kutná Hora recognized Jan Rokycana as Utraquism's leader. The Taborites refused to participate in this assembly, and appeared only at the next synod convened in Kutná Hora in 1443. The Taborite priests arrived to treat with Rokycana's party "about the body of God in the sacrament of the altar in accordance with the Scripture and the holy doctors soundly based on the Scripture." The Prague theologians insisted against Mikuláš Biskupec on a definition of the eucharistic dogma, according to which Christ was really present in his bodily nature in the sanctified bread and wine. Such an assertion, however, contradicted the Taborite concept of Christ and their belief in the Second Coming. The assembly at Kutná Hora represented the last significant confrontation between the Taborite radicals and the moderate Utraquists. The synod dissolved without reaching an agreement.³ An assembly in Prague approved the teaching of Rokycana's part in 1444. Political power was assumed by George of Poděbrady with the support of Rokycana who, however, had been deprived of his archiepiscopal title in 1440. In 1462 Pope Pius II solemnly and before all Europe abrogated the *Compactata*, the agreement between the Council of Basel and Utraquist Bohemia. During his reign King George had to fend off the attacks of the Holy See and the Bohemian Romanist barons, and ultimately those of Matthias Corvinus, the King of Hungary. Rokycana died 22 February 1471 and Jiří of Poděbrady one month later.⁴

A diet held in Kutná Hora elected Vladislav Jagellonian as King of Bohemia on 27 May 1471. During the Jagellonian era, the city would experience an impressive economic growth becoming (after Prague) the leading town in Bohemia and a frequent site of Bohemian diets and Utraquist synods. At a diet in 1485 the Utraquists and the Romanists concluded the famous Peace of Kutná Hora providing a solid foundation for religious toleration and barring manorial lords from imposing their religious preferences on their subjects.⁵

The Church of St. James, originally dedicated to the Virgin Mary, is a three-nave edifice with two towers at its western front, two side vestibules, and a prolonged polygonally enclosed presbytery, dating approximately from 1330-1350. The three naves are segmented by profiled pointed arcades from which cross vaults fluently project to be secured on the walls by pyramidal brackets. The first segments of the side naves are adorned by open arcade chapels, bearing choirs. On the northern side is the Mintners' Chapel (Salazarian), established in 1387 and vaulted prior to 1488. On the southern side is the Chapel of Ruthard with an organ choir erected in 1491.⁶

Wall paintings have survived as torsos above the vault on the northern and eastern walls of the Mintners' Chapel, and also in the presbytery and on the pillar of

2) Josef Macek, *Jiří z Poděbrad* (Prague, 1967), 39ff.

3) Amadeo Molnár, *Pohyb teologického myšlení* (Prague, 1982) 258ff.

4) Macek, *Jiří z Poděbrad*, 150ff.

5) Roháček, *Nápisy města Kutné Hory* 33ff.

6) J. Nuhlíček, "Kostel sv. Jakuba ve světle historických pramenů," in J. Vepřek, ed., *Obnovený kostel sv. Jakuba v Kutné Hoře* (Kutná Hora, 1946) 28-55.

the northern main nave of the church. At the center of the chapel's northern wall we see the Man of Sorrows standing under a conspicuous architectonic red canopy which is adorned by motives of gothic flowers at the peaks of its arches and by the suggestion of a panel ceiling. The Man of Sorrows is depicted facing forward as an intercessor with both arms lifted, representing a living Christ with open eyes, a crown of thorns, and with an intimation of wounds in his palms and in his side. A white cloth covers his loins. According to an older photograph, the lower part of the painting depicted the floor of a temple on which to the left rested a chalice with a host. The canopied architecture probably represents the Holy Sepulchre. Its illusory concept is enhanced by a green curtain behind Christ, and by the flamboyant illusory late-Gothic architecture with donkey backs and naturalistic flowers. The final touch in the scene is an inscription which J. Roháček has read as: "Miserere. nostri. domine. miserere. nostri. miserere. mei. vite. deiei." To the left the same scholar has read the inscription: "chr(is)us/Passus/est sic pro te p..."

To the right of the Man of Sorrows, a chalice with a host is depicted with an attached inscription "veritas vincit." Underneath is a crucifixion scene. The chalice is toned with a yellow-brown ochre, and lightly contoured. Except for an ornate knob on its stem, the chalice is simple. Above the chalice we see a host contoured in black. The inscription is in black minuscule.

The crucifixion, painted under the chalice, represents Christ on the cross with the Blessed Virgin Mary standing on the left, and St. John on the right. Conceived rather as a painting on a wooden board, the scene is framed by a red border enclosing the blue background, from which stems a brown cross with an inscribed ribbon. Christ's body, conceived in a pronounced verticality, rests with resignation on the cross, while his spread arms and the expression of his sinking head capture Christ in the moment of his death. Blood flows from his wounds. Light folds created by black lines segment his loin cloth with a corner of the garment loosened and flapping. Mary, slightly turned from her profile, holds onto the loose garment with her right hand, while her left hand is caught in a gesture of impotence. A large yellow halo surrounds her head, a white coat falls over her blue tunic. Also pictured from the profile, St. John on the right observes the Redeemer's death. He holds a book in his right hand, and the gesture of his left hand expresses surprise. St. John is dressed in a blue garment with a red overcoat, the folds of which are lightly bent. The crucifixion resembles depictions in the missal pages of the canon with the images of the chalice and the host emphasizing the eucharistic relevance. Probably original is the stereotypical motive of white rosettes on the blue background, frequently used particularly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The northern wall of the Charvát choir preserves a torso of the Annunciation with the Madonna kneeling on the left in front of a lectern, on which rests an open book. Mary's garment has a pronouncedly black contoured drawing and her overcoat bears the tones of ochre. An angel in red coat was evidently approaching Mary from the right. The scene is markedly disturbed by a large stain; nevertheless it is obvious that the space of the event was of a certain depth, inasmuch as the lectern is depicted in perspective. The scene was framed by a vegetative strip with a relatively simple motive of stylized abstract leaves, colored green and red. The Assumption with an adorning angel on the left was painted on the left of the eastern side. With her head no longer preserved, Mary holds baby Jesus on her right arm. He reaches his right hand to the angel, and holds his mother around the neck with

his left arm. The Madonna wears a white belted cloak, pleated with mainly vertical folds, with the edge of the cloak lightly loosened only near the left foot. The baby Jesus is naked, and the color of his incarnate body lightly ochre. Drawings, black in outline, determine the contours of every figure. The artist, however, used a brown color for Mary's long loosened hair, as well as for the outline drawing of the sun's rays which surround Mary standing on a crescent. The angel on the left also wears a white cloak. His late Gothic visage is characterized by an oval face with preserved details of eyes, nose, and mouth. Short brown hair hems the face. The scene's background has a greenish color. It is evident that other angels were flying down from above, most likely bringing a crown for Mary.

The crucifixion scene surmounted by a painted chalice with a host may be connected with the report of František Palacký in which, describing the Czech embassy's journey in 1432 to Basel, the historian stated that "as the procession approached Nuremberg, Matěj Louda had raised above his wagon a Taborite banner which showed Christ on the cross on one side, and a host above a chalice with an inscription *Veritas omnia vincit*." ⁷

The iconography of the Mintners' Chapel on the eastern wall is unambiguously Utraquist. It corresponds to the contemporary adoration given to the chalice and the host, and to the body of God in the form of the Man of Sorrows, and of the Crucifixion. As distinct from the iconoclastic movement, typical of the early stages of the Bohemian Reformation and rejecting the veneration of images, particularly those of the saints, we find a more nuanced stance already with Matěj of Janov who recognized a limited veneration of images that would enhance the adoration of the eucharist. This adoration constituted the focus of Utraquist piety, and its status on the liturgical level corresponded to the status of *lex Christi* on the dogmatic and moral levels.⁸

M. Bartlová elucidated the origin of the Utraquist chalice, having analyzed the earliest instances of the chalice depiction in the spheres of both Utraquist and Roman iconography.⁹ What is most important for us is that the chalice frequently appears together with the Man of Sorrows even in pre-Utraquist art, for instance, in the wall painting in Loukov, in the miniature in the breviary of Opatovice, and - as mentioned by Bartlová - in the South Bohemian painting on wooden board with the Man of Sorrows and the *Arma Christi*. Also earlier, in connection with an analysis of the paintings in the ground floor chapel of the house "U zvonu" in Prague, I have linked the iconography of the Man of Sorrows with the feast of Corpus Christi, although at this point the chalice had obviously not yet made an appearance.¹⁰

The linkage of the adoration of the body of God with the adoration of the Virgin Mary is also represented on the title page of the manuscript *Liber depictus* (Vienna, National Library of Austria, 370) from the year 1358, intended for the Franciscan Monastery in Český Krumlov, which had been consecrated "In honore SS. Corporis Christi et gloriosae Virginis Mariae." The title page depicts the Virgin as

7) František Palacký, *Dějiny národa českého* (Prague, 1931) 3: 489.

8) Jana Nechutová, "Prameny husitské a předhusitské ikonografie," *Husitský Tábor* 8 (1985) 29-37.

9) M. Bartlová, "Původ husitského kalicha z ikonografického hlediska," *Umění* 44 (1996) 167-183.

10) Zuzana Všecková, "Nástěnné malby v přízemní kapli domu U zvonu," *Umění* 38 (1990) 377-400; M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi* (Cambridge, 1991) 308-310.

the apocalyptic woman with the Man of Sorrows within a medallion, surrounded by rays of the sun.¹¹ These solar rays are considered not only as a reflection of the Apocalypse (12:1), speaking of a woman clothed with the sun, but also of the text of the Psalm (104:2) "wrapped in light as with a garment," and especially of the verse in John (8:12), "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me... will have the light of life." From 1358 to 1417, the Franciscan monastery of Český Krumlov organized annual processions on the feast of Corpus Christi with exhibitions of relics related to Christ's passion. Franciscan theology with its emphasis on the subjective and immediate knowledge of God, with its special devotion to Christ's suffering and to his cross, and with its flaunted dedication to poverty, might have had an input into the genesis of the Bohemian reform movement.¹²

In this context we find undoubtedly relevant the Adoration of the chalice and of a radial monstrance among the illuminations of the Krumlov miscellany (in Prague, Národní muzeum), which evidently originated under the influence of the Franciscan monastery. Karel Stejskal has interpreted the image as a Utraquist adoration.¹³ The adoption of a radial monstrance with a host became, after the chalice, the most important mark of Utraquist liturgy. It is graphically documented by the pen drawing in the Göttingen Codex from c. 1460 in which a priest carries a radial monstrance at the head of a military contingent, followed by Jan Žižka on horseback and by Utraquists with a banner depicting the chalice with a host. Vavřinec of Březová states that "Many thousands of Taborites of both sexes arrived at Prague, while their priest with the host elevated in the monstrance on the top of a pole preceded the crowd in entering the city."¹⁴

The Bohemian reform movement rejected in its program the need for monastic orders, whose way of life it criticized as inconsistent with their alleged rules, making especial reference to their enormous properties. This led at the beginning of the religious wars to the burning of monasteries, slaughter of monks, and plundering of their possessions. Nevertheless, it was exactly the Observant Franciscans who chose as an antithesis to the Utraquists' radial monstrance the Bernardian sun, namely a radial monstrance with an inscription of Christ's name YHS. In Bohemia the new cult was championed in the 1450s by one of the fiercest opponents of Utraquism, John of Capistrano.¹⁵

11) G. Schmidt, "Der Codex 370 der Wiener Nationalbibliothek," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 17 (1956) 14-48; *idem*, "Patrozinium und Andachtsbild," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 64 (1956) 277ff.; *idem*, "Der Krumauer Bilderkodex," in G. Schmidt and F. Unterkircher, eds., *Kommentarband zu der Faksimile Ausgabe des Kod. 370* (Graz, 1967) 7-42; E. M. Vetter, "Mulier Amicta Sole und Mater Salvatoris," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 10 (1959) 33-71.

12) J. Müller, "K charakteru výtvarné kultury Českého Krumlova v letech 1420-1470," *Umění* 33 (1985) 520-546; Molnár, *Pohyb teologického myšlení* 174ff.

13) Krása assigns the origin of the Krumlov miscellany (Prague, Národní muzeum) to a Bohemian monastic community with the possibility of its use by a nunnery in view of one of its components, a treatise "On the perfection of the soul for the sisters." He dates the tome to 1419. J. Krása, "Studie o rukopisech husitské doby," *Umění* 22 (1974) 17-50; Karel Stejskal and Petr Voit, *Illuminované rukopisy doby husitské* (Prague, 1990) 51-52.

14) Josef Macek, *Ktož jsú Boží bojovníci* (Prague, 1951) 78; Rudolf Urbánek, "Starší obdoba rukopisu Jenského, rukopis göttingký," *VČAVVU* 61 (1952) 21 ff.; Z. Drobná, *Jenský kodex* (Prague, 1970).

15) D. Stehlíková, "K českému zlatnictví doby husitské a pohusitské," *Umění* 40 (1992) 301-311.

Let us now return to the depiction of the chalice in the context of contemporary events. Within the context of the Bohemian Reformation, the chalice had become a symbol in the struggle for the Law of God. For Jakoubek of Stříbro it was a divine revelation that led him to an uncompromising restoration of the lay chalice. We need only to recall his words: "Do not oppose the sacrament of the Lord's chalice, established by Christ himself and through his apostle."¹⁶ Already Matěj of Janov was fully aware of the eucharistic meaning of St. John's Gospel (6:53): "...unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." Above all, the chalice as a symbol reached a programmatic level, transcending the issue of a sacramental rite. For Matěj of Janov the Lord's Supper had become an act through which Christ's cross and his victory, remembered by the means of bread and wine, are shared by the faithful, gathered at the table of the Lord. The roots of this view may be sought in patristic literature, and a role was undoubtedly played also by the contemporary respect for the feast of Corpus Christi, for which Thomas Aquinas had written a sequence in the thirteenth century. Officially introduced to Prague by Bishop John IV of Dražice, the feast is recorded in the calendar of manuscripts of the Benedictine nunnery of St. George.¹⁷

The cult of Corpus Christi undoubtedly inspired the earlier mentioned depictions of the Man of Sorrows, as well as the founding of the Corpus Christi fraternities and the related establishment of altars and chapels. The motive of the chalice very often appeared next to the Man of Sorrows during the fourteenth century. There is a reliable report that a chalice was to be placed in the tower, and another painted above the door, of the Chapel of Corpus Christi in the Cattle Market of Prague in 1437 to commemorate the conclusion of the *Compactata*, the text of which was recorded in the chapel on stone tablets. The Chapel of Corpus Christi was erected, evidently according to an earlier plan of Charles IV, after 1382 to replace an older wooden structure where originally imperial relics were displayed. The chapel was transferred to the University of Prague in 1403, and after 1416 lay communion was distributed there in both kinds. Nevertheless, during Sigismund's stay in Prague in 1437 a display of relics once again took place there, and this points to a Romanist orientation since the Utraquist were dubious about the veneration of the saints' remains.¹⁸

An analogous situation can be probably seen in Kutná Hora, where a Chapel of Corpus Christi was erected at the Church of St. Barbara, and a fraternity of Corpus Christi established. H. Pátková has noted that an existing report documents the conduct of both a Utraquist and a Romanist procession on the feast of Corpus

The author has called attention to the seal of the Fraternity of Corpus Christi in Kutná Hora from 1388, which depicts St. Barbara with the chalice and the host in the moment of transubstantiation. The chapel of Corpus Christi stood near the church of St. Barbara. Studying the origin of the radial monstrances, Stehlíková linked their origin with the cult of Corpus Christi. She has asked the question whether it had served from the beginning as a Utraquist symbol. I. Hlobil, "Bernardinovské symboly jména Ježíš v českých zemích šířené Janem Kapistránem," *Umění* 44 (1996) 233-234, n. 34, attempts to explain the origin of radial monstrances from the text of Charles IV.

16) Molnár, *Pohyb teologického myšlení* 230.

17) J. Vilíkovský, *Písemnictví českého středověku* (Prague, 1948) 26-47; A. Škarka, "Dominikán Domaslav a čeští hymnografové jeho směru," *VKČSN* (1951), 1-43; Zdeňka Hledíková, "Svatojříské kalendáře doby abatýše Kunhuty," *AUC* 2, *Z pomocných věd historických* 9 (1991) 61-81.

18) František Kavka, *Poslední Lucemburk na českém trůně* (Prague, 1998) 240ff.

Christi in Kutná Hora in 1424.¹⁹ It is my opinion that exactly the iconography on the eastern wall of the Mintners' Chapel in the Church of St. James reflects the tradition of Corpus Christi, and a new respect for communion *sub utraque*. The Man of Sorrows with his gesture of prayer was also to serve the function of Christ as intercessor, with whom the faithful could seek charity, as expressed by the attached inscription. The Crucifixion of Good Friday is here expanded by the depiction of the Man of Sorrows who probably was also a reminder of the feast of Corpus Christi, celebrated on Thursday after Trinity. Its meaning was to emphasize the significance of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday, apparently in order to stimulate the faithful to a more frequent reception of the communion. The inscription "veritas vincit", similarly as the chalice, can be derived from the writings of Jan Hus, from which I can cite a passage in a letter of June 1413, addressed to Master Jan Kardinál: "Above all, truth conquers."²⁰ In a similar spirit Master Peter Payne addressed a defense of the Utraquist program to Emperor Sigismund in Bratislava in 1429: "... I beg you, oh glorious king, stop with your followers and desist from challenging Christ; do not wish to deprive your name of its glory...After all, as long as you were on God's side, you were victorious over the pagans, but once you had forsaken God, you have suffered defeats from peasants. We do not consider it our accomplishment, but that of God, who is the impetus and the victor; he is the witness that we do not battle for our gain, nor that we defy you out of pride... Promise that you will faithfully serve the Lord and his law, and we are ready to obey you faithfully. Behold, we are offering you before God in Christ the administration of justice and of law, and we wish to obey you as our lord... Because verily, even if your spirit fails to grasp it, *it is the truth that prevails over all.*"²¹

It is my opinion that the iconography on the eastern wall is a sort of a program of contemporary Utraquist *Weltanschauung*. Perhaps only to complete the picture, I note that the chalice had become a part of the coat of arms of Kutná Hora in which it is painted above St. Wenceslaus on the ornate long shield with the supplements of a double W, with an eagle and two medallions depicting miners at work with a windlass, and miners carrying the coat of arms.²² Under the influence of Martin Schongauer's prints a Blessing Christ was painted at Hrádek as an infant at whose feet there stood a chalice with a host.²³ At a lower level Jesus appears in the form of a small naked child, who is being offered at the altar by the Blessed Virgin Mary. We encounter him also in a miniature in Oldřich of Krumlov's missal of 1423, which is usually interpreted as a counterpoise to the Taborite conception of the eucharist.²⁴ In any case, the miniature lacks the typical chalice on the altar, which

19) H. Pátková, an unpublished lecture at a Symposium to Mark the 600th Anniversary of the New Town, Prague, New Town Hall, 1998. According to J. Nuhlíček, "Kostel sv. Jakuba ve světle historických pramenů," 36: "As early as the fourteenth century in the High Church there was a chaplaincy of Ruthard, and the elders of the miners had an altar of Corpus Christi, in conjunction with which they maintained a miners' chaplain." The scholar further states that in 1485 Bishop Augustine Sancturien consecrated a Miners' and a Mintners' altar in the High Church on the feast day of St. Margaret.

20) Jan Hus, *Listy z vyhnanství, 1412-1414*, ed. V. Flajšhans (Prague, n.d.) 79-81.

21) František M. Bartoš, *M. Petr Payne: Diplomát husitské revoluce* (Prague, 1956) 53-73.

22) Last discussed by Bartlová, "Původ husitského kalicha z ikonografického hlediska."

23) E. Matějková, "K nově odkrytým malbám v kutnohorském Hrádku," *ZZP* 20 (1960) 233-236.

24) J. Krása, "Studie o rukopisech husitské doby," n. 25; Stejskal and Voit, *Illuminované rukopisy*

undoubtedly is evidence of Rožumberský owner's Romanist orientation.

The northern wall bore two Marian pictures: the Annunciation with a kneeling Virgin Mary, and the Assumption with an aureola of sun rays. The *humilitas*, emphasized by the Franciscans, can once again explain Our Lady's humbleness. The Assumption may be derived from the Book of the Apocalypse, as the woman dressed in the sun and standing on a crescent. Furthermore, according to J. Cibulka, the image relates to the feast day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (15 August), which is well documented by a relief in the cathedral of Regensburg from the period around 1390.²⁵ It depicts a standing and praying Virgin, surrounded by sun rays which are arranged similarly to those of the Assumption in Kutná Hora. Another interpretation relates to the Song of Solomon (6:9-10): "My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the darling of her mother, flawless to her that bore her. The maidens saw her and called her happy; the queens and concubines also, and they praised her. 'Who is this that looks forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as the army with banners?'"

As in Oldřich of Krumlov's illumination, the Virgin Mary in St. James's Church similarly holds in her hand the naked infant Jesus - the real host which can be interpreted according to Master Jan of Píbram's text: "the sacrament is the Body of God in a natural state which Christ took from the Virgin Mary."²⁶ Master Jan Rokycana mentions several times the Virgin Mary's role as the one who conceived by the Holy Spirit: "If in Egypt all the waters turned into blood, is it possible not to believe that this is also the precious holy blood that streamed from his side? Inasmuch as all the waters in Egypt were turned to blood, why could not here also be his precious blood out of wine, and his precious body born of the Virgin Mary, and conceived by the Holy Spirit?" Rokycana also emphasized the status of Mary as the queen of heaven, albeit in connection with the poverty of virgins and widows: "It is written about the Virgin Mary that barely could she have owned a skirt because of her great poverty, that queen of heaven."²⁷ Perhaps an indication of Mary's veneration, as early as 1421, is conveyed in the mention of Vavřinec of Březová's chronicle that "Jan Žižka having discussed many matters with his own and with the Praguers on the day of the Annunciation, moved on with his own toward [Kutná] Hora."²⁸ It is evident that the Virgin Mary was regarded, above all, not only as the mother of Jesus and as an intercessor, but also as the queen of heaven. Perhaps in this sense it is possible to explain also the two Marian images in the chapel.

Josef Krása assumed that the decorations of the chapel dated from around the year 1460 because of the placement of the coat of arms of Jan Charvát of Ostrov. Earlier researchers had placed the origin of the paintings near the year 1440.²⁹ From the viewpoint of style, Krása drew attention to the corpulent figures

doby husitské 56.

25) J. Cibulka, "Korunovaná Assumpta na měsíci," in *Sborník k sedmdesátým narozeninám K. B. Mándla* (Prague, 1929) 80-127; F. Fuchs, *Das Hauptportal des Regensburger Domes* (Munich, 1990) 37.

26) Macek, *Ktož jsú Boží bojovníci* 140.

27) F. Šimek, *M. Jan Rokycana: Obránce pravdy a zákona Božího* (Prague, 1949) 154.

28) Macek, *Ktož jsú Boží bojovníci* 140.

29) J. Krása, "Nástěnná malba," in *Pozdně gotické umění v Čechách* (Prague, 1978) 259-260; Nuhlíček, "Kostel sv. Jakuba ve světle historických pramenů," 30.

and to the earthy types, characteristic of late Gothic paintings.

Mural paintings are also preserved in the apse of the church, where they provide the decorative ornamentation for the tabernacle, respectively on the northern and the southern sides. At the northern tabernacle we see the torso of the figure of a kneeling angel in a vestment which is now turning black. This angel apparently held a candle in his hands. The angel on the right side is preserved substantially better. This results perhaps from a better condition during the uncovering of the images, and possibly also thanks to a later restoration. He was dressed in a white tunic with collar hemmed in black and with a red stole. His wings, reminiscent of peacock's feathers, are arranged upward in a fan-like manner; the space between them resembles a small flame, which creates a background studded with stars. The wings are toned in blue. The drawing of the face is preserved, particularly its brownish red outline which emphasizes the light skin color of the youthful angel's face. Notable is the very design of the tabernacle in the form of a rectangular case, the stone profile of which extends into the form of a stone tabernacle with a Gothic arch, topped by a flower in the middle with two narrow pyramids at each side. In the middle of the arch, a *vera icon* is partially preserved in a rather lightly-sketched form. Today we can determine the contours of Christ's face with brownish green hair, symmetrically surrounding his visage. It is perhaps possible to connect the depiction of the ; with the words of Matěj of Janov who speaks about images which are according to him most authentic and oldest, and which include foremost the Roman image on cloth with the imprint of Christ's true visage.³⁰ In the space between the narrow pyramids and above the Gothic arch there is a red background, on which there are two letters, resembling ornate "M" and "P." The tabernacle has a little door with an inscription relating to the cult of Corpus Christi. It reads: "Ave Caro Cristi Cara Immolata Crvcis Ara pro redemptis Hostia mors Tva nos. o. mira fac. redemptos." It emphasizes the reception of the Body of Christ without reference to the Blood which according to J. Roháček indicates its origin prior to the manuscript *Malogranat*, that is before the mid-fourteenth century.³¹

The tabernacle to the right is accompanied on each side by two flying angels bearing instruments of torture. The stone rectangular tabernacle itself is enhanced by illusionist painted late Gothic architecture with a donkey back and with a flower, at the lower part in the shape of a tracery with nuns and little flames, executed in the form of a grisaille. On the left side at the top a kneeling angel is flying toward the tabernacle, dressed in a white tunic and a red external vestment. He holds a spear in his right hand, and a sponge in the left. Today the finely shaped face is obviously the work of restoration, but the restorer has apparently respected the late Gothic form of the angel. It is evident, above all, from the compact hairstyle with mid-length hair, decorated by undulating ring-shaped strands. The angel's outer garment is remarkable for its sharp folds, preserved in outline, which make an almost metallic impression, pointing to the late fifteenth century. The lower angel was dressed in a light tunic, decorated with a red stole. He held a pillar in both hands. His face has a light bland skin color of the cheek. The underlying drawing of the face makes the most authentic impression. The hair is depicted less tightly. The angel wears a

30) J. Krása, "Husitské obrazoborectví: Poznámky k jeho studiu," *Husitský Tábor* 8 (1985) 9-17.

31) Roháček, *Nápisy města Kutné Hory* 72.

diadem or a blue hair band. Both angels' heads are surrounded by now-darkened halos, which stand out against the blue background of the painting.

The upper flying angel on the right is bringing a cross and a crown of thorns. His head is not turned toward the tabernacle, but rather sideways toward the beam of the cross. His face expresses personal respect toward the most significant Christian symbol. The angel is parallel to the beam of the cross, dressed in an inner white tunic and a green external garment. Notable are his elongated fingers which indicate a later mannerist phase of the painting. The folds of the outer garment are not particularly pronounced, rather they blend vertically toward the feet. The lower angel is preserved only in the upper half. His face does not bear any traces of an underlying drawing. He carried a rod and evidently a cat-o'-nine-tails on a long pole. J. Nuhlíček reminds us in connection with the paintings in the presbytery of the personages of pastor Jíra (fl. 1464) and priest Jan (fl. 1484).³²

As for other tabernacular paintings with stone Gothic architecture, a well developed example can be found in the church in Bořitov, also from the last quarter of the fifteenth century.³³ The depiction of the *vera icon*, which is celebrated by the hymn "Salve sancta facies," is usually connected with the *vera icon* on white cloth. The hymn "Ave facies praeclara" was usually connected with the depiction of Christ's face distorted by fear and with traces of blood, and expressed the compassion of the faithful.³⁴ Other examples of the depiction of *vera icon* at a tabernacle are the paintings in the St. Nicholas's Church in Znojmo, and the older paintings in the St. James's Church in Slavětín.

The most authentic specimen of a late Gothic wall painting in the St. James's Church in Kutná Hora, which was uncovered in 1942, depicts the Assumption with the miners' coat of arms and is located on the vertical support of the third pillar in the northern nave. The painting bears even a part of the dating inscription "147. f (eria) v ante lawrencii ways byb." Both J. Nuhlíček and J. Krása relate the Assumption to the year 1473 and viewed it as commissioned by a member of the Ways family, which had supplied many of the elected wardens of St. James's Church.³⁵

The Virgin Mary, depicted as the woman of the Apocalypse, evidently stood on an illusory pedestal, underneath of which is a coat of arms with two crossed hammers, which also could have belonged to the corporations of mintners. Standing against a red background, the Virgin Mary is dressed in a blue coat and a red inner garment. Her fine oval face of a light tone is defined by high arches of the eye sockets, narrow slotted eyes, a delicate long nose, and red lips. Her light yellow hair is adorned by a high crown with the motive of lilies and an inner miter with her head surrounded by a large yellow halo, hemmed in black. The Virgin holds on her left arm a naked infant Jesus who with his right arm embraces his mother's neck and with his left apparently holds onto her coat, which exposes her left hand, thin and elongated in a virtually mannerist style with long fingers. The infant Jesus

32) Nuhlíček, "Kostel sv. Jakuba ve světle historických pramenů," 35.

33) V. Kratinová, "Gotické nástěnné malby v Bořitově," *Umění* 3 (1955) 298-307.

34) H. Belting, *Bild und Kult* (Munich, 1990) 233-252; 602-605.

35) Nuhlíček, "Kostel sv. Jakuba ve světle historických pramenů," 32; Krása, "Nástěnná malba," 260.

inclines his head toward the faithful. Of interest is a string of red beads, a motive which was obviously connected with the prayer of the rosary. A similar decoration hangs around the neck of the infant Jesus in the picture of the crowned Assumption in Sepekov.³⁶ The original halo, crown, and sun rays, surrounding the Virgin Mary, were probably golden, but they are preserved only in yellow color at present. All the contoured drawings are executed in black color. The painting of the Assumption and of the red shield with small blue hammers is enhanced by a stylized green vine branch, winding around a yellow staff alongside the little pillar, above which the Assumption is painted. In my interpretation, presented elsewhere, the motive of the green vegetative tendrils, associated with the Virgin in the form of the Assumption, is an evocation of the Garden of Eden.³⁷ Properly speaking, the Marian cult was accented twice in the St. James's Church of Kutná Hora, even when we assume that the Assumption on the pillar in the nave is more recent than the Assumption in Kutná Hora on the wall of the Charvát choir. From the viewpoint of style, the Virgin Mary in the nave is notable for her certain bulkiness. Nevertheless, the pleats of her garment have not been preserved. The determination of style is based primarily on the preserved inscription. The dating to the 1470s is indicated especially by the youthful visage of the Madonna, her narrow slotted eyes, and also the animated image of the infant Jesus whose representation is reminiscent of the kind characteristic for the Beautiful Madonnas. Also the motive of the apple, held in the right hand of the Virgin, points to the symbolism often associated with the Beautiful Madonnas of the early fifteenth century.³⁸

It is obvious that the mural paintings in St. James's Church in Kutná Hora, like those in St. Barbara's Church, had their origins in the commissions placed by the townspeople and particularly the priests. The iconographic content reflects the favorite themes of the time. The Annunciation and the Crucifixion represent respectively the beginning and the end of Christ's earthly journey. The image of the Man of Sorrows signals the respect for the Corpus Christi. The highly sensitive demand of the time, the lay communion *sub utraque* is symbolized by the virtually emblematic chalice with a host placed above the Crucifixion. The adoration of the Corpus Christi and of the Arma Christi was signified also by the two angels next to each of the two tabernacles in the apse of the presbytery. We have also connected with Utraquist iconography the placing of the *vera icon* into the wainscoting of the tabernacle.

An unalloyed Marian devotion can be seen in the depiction of the Assumption in the choir and on the pillar in the church's nave. Intriguing is a certain parallel with the contemporary veneration of Mary cropping up in the letters of indulgences within the framework of the Roman Church. As an example, we can cite Cardinal Bessarion's letter of indulgences from 1470 which bears an image of the Virgin Mary, surrounded by golden rays.³⁹ Looking in another direction, N. P. Neuheuser suggested a relationship to the theme of the Immaculate Conception, which would

36) Cibulka, "Korunovaná Assumpta na měsíci."

37) Zuzana Všecková, "Nástěnné malby v domě 'U kohouta' čp. 2/1 na Staroměstském náměstí v Praze," *Umění* 42 (1994) 399-404.

38) E. Guldán, *Eva und Maria* (Cologne, 1966) 108ff.

39) H. P. Neuheuser, "Eine Florentiner Miniaturmalerei in Kempen mit dem Porträt eines Kölner Propstes," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 54 (1993) 105-127.

be germane to every church building, as a symbol of such fundamentals as purity, innocence, and freedom from original sin. The dogmatic issue of the Immaculate Conception was *au courant* already in the late fourteenth century, when Heinrich of Oyta was raising the issue also in Bohemia, and it remained an object of special attention throughout the fifteenth century.⁴⁰ Inasmuch as the painting on the pillar originated only after Vladislav II's election as King of Bohemia, which occurred precisely in Kutná Hora, the question arises whether the contemporary Marian devotion was not linked with his person. The theme of the Immaculate Conception, however, was not absent either in the period of the Hussite wars, or in the Poděbradian era. A measure of evidence for this is also the pronounced Marian iconography in the prayer book of Jiří of Poděbrady, which however was given to him on Christmas Eve of 1466 by his wife Queen Johanna of Rožumbersk, who was originally of Roman allegiance.⁴¹ The prayer book has on fol. 2^v a full-page image of the Assumption, standing on a crescent and surrounded by an aureole of sun rays. The infant Jesus is naked, and the beads, reminiscent of the rosary, do not appear. Similarly a miniature of the Annunciation depicts the Virgin Mary as kneeling. The relationship between the Assumption as interpreted by the Utraquists, on the one hand, and the Romanists, on the other, is perhaps best illumined by the antiphon in the texts for the Song of Songs "Gaude Dei genitrix," which is as follows:

Gaude Dei genitrix, virgo immaculata; Gaude, que gaudium ab angelorum suscepisti. Gaude, que genuisti eterni luminis claritatem. Gaude mater, gaude dei genitrix virgo; Tu sola mater innupta; te laudat omnis factura, genitricem lucis. Sis pro nobis quesumus, perpetua interventrix.⁴²

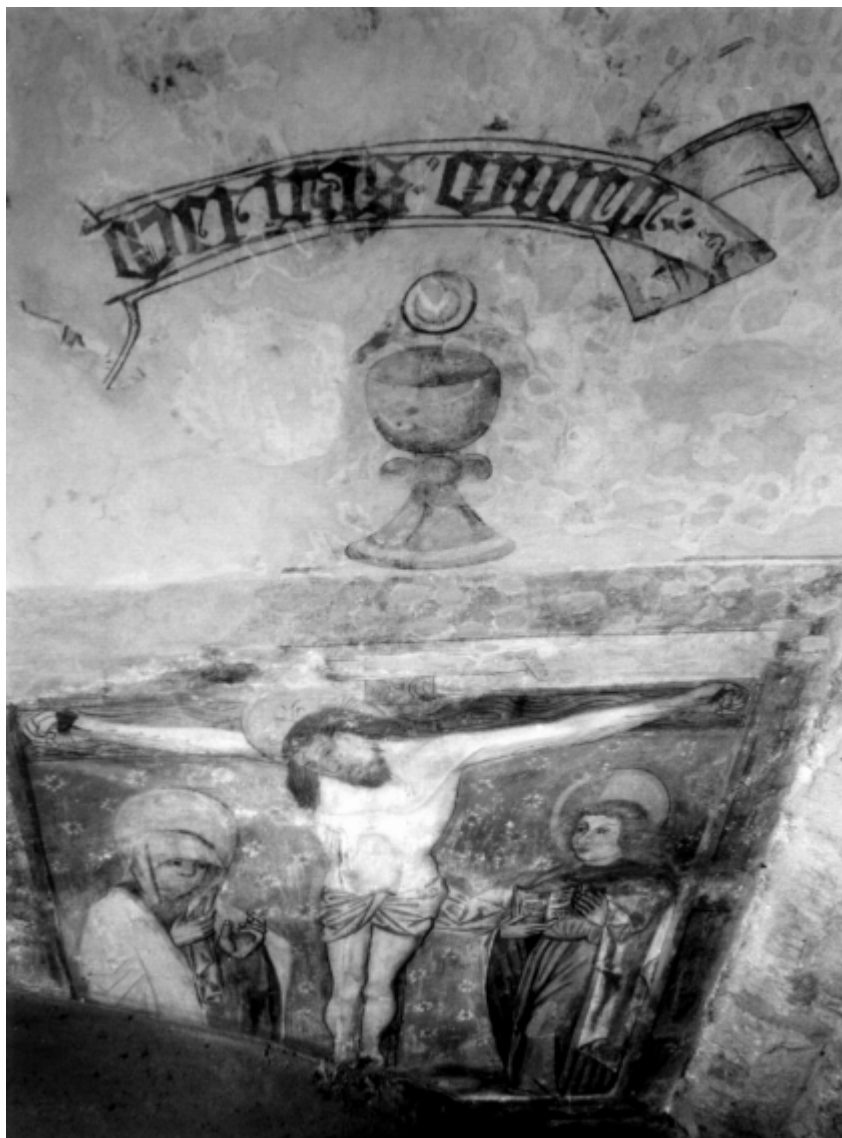
As mentioned earlier, it was especially the Utraquist theologians, Jan of Přebor and Jan Rokycana, who venerated the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. The future research agenda calls for an analysis of the antiphons in Utraquist hymn books, which will hopefully determine more fully the specificity of the Marian devotion in the latter fifteenth century that could only be adumbrated in this study.

(Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David)

40) Molnár, *Pohyb teologického myšlení* 165.

41) J. Pěšina, "Modlitební kniha Jiřího z Poděbrad," in *Sborník k sedmdesátinám Jana Květa* (Prague, 1965) 133-145.

42) I wish to thank Dr. R. Hankeln for calling my attention to this text, and for sending me the musicologically elaborated Latin text of the antiphons copied from a manuscript in Regensburg, cgm. 716, fol. 89v.



KUTNÁ HORA – kostel sv. Jakuba
Kalich + ukřižování (kol. 1450)



KUTNÁ HORA – kostel sv. Jakuba
Kalich s nápisem Veritas Vincit (kol. 1450)



KUTNÁ HORA – kostel sv. Jakuba
Andělé s Arma Christi u Sakristie (kol. 1470)



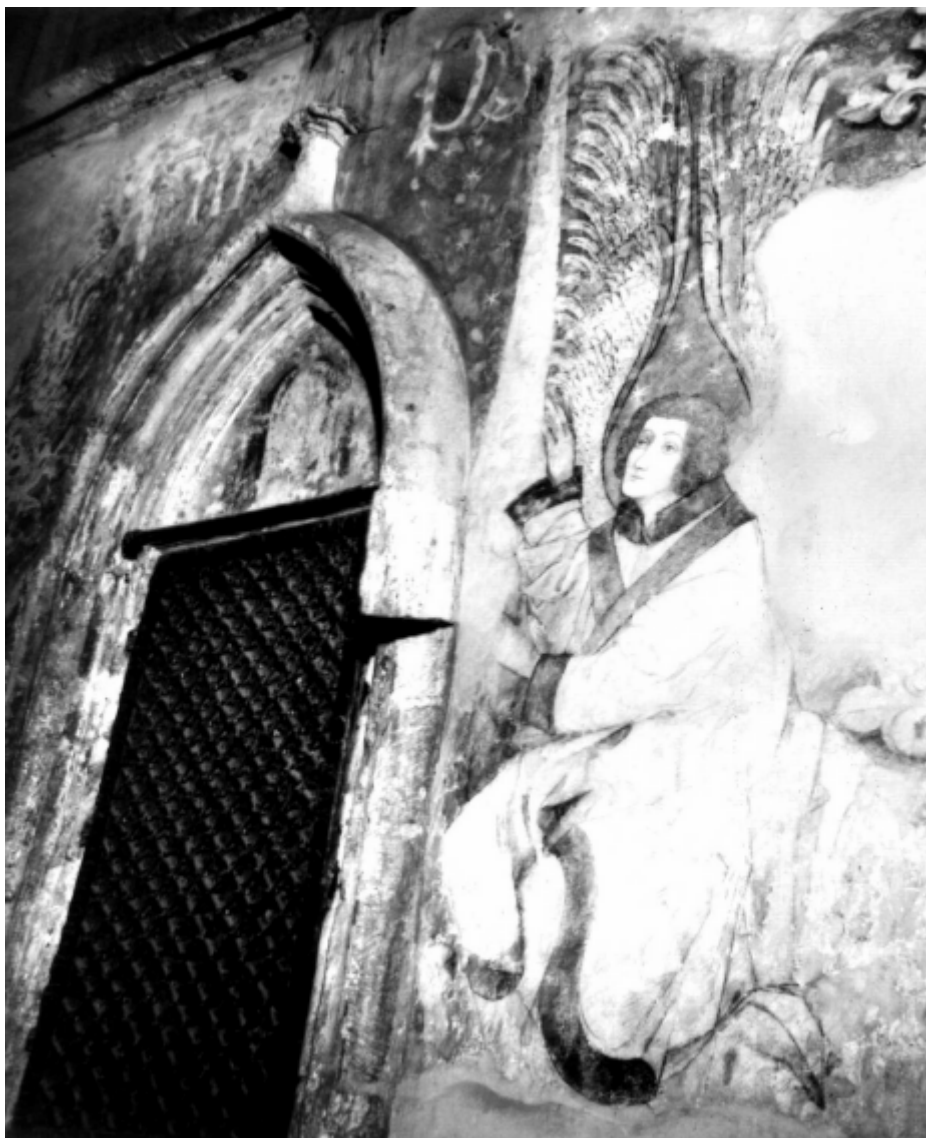
KUTNÁ HORA – kostel sv. Jakuba
Zlomek Zvěstování Panny Marie nad minciřskou kaplí (kol. 1460)



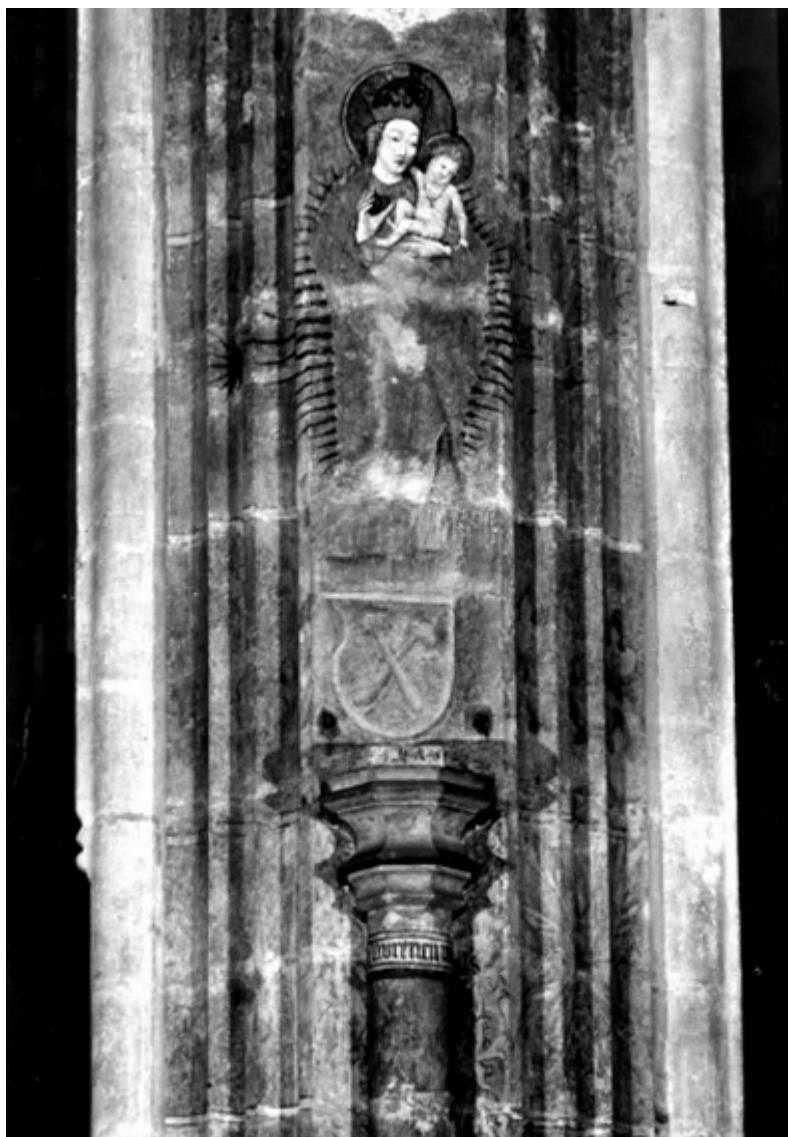
KUTNÁ HORA – kostel sv. Jakuba
Panna Marie ve Slunci nad minciřskou kaplí kol.1460



KUTNÁ HORA - kostel sv. Jakuba
Bolestný Kristus nad kaplí mincířů (kol. 1450)



KUTNÁ HORA – kostel sv. Jakuba
Anděl (kol. 1470)



KUTNÁ HORA – kostel sv. Jakuba
Panna Marie ve Slunci - pilíř v lodi kostela (po 1470)