# The Utraquist Decorations of the Mráz House in Litoměřice

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*(Prague)*

The town square of Litoměřice boasts a prominent house no. 15 belonging to the wealthy Mráz family and erected in the second half of the sixteenth century. The first Mráz, according to archival records that originate from this period, was a brewer called "the old Mráz". He died in 1526 and his sons Jiří, Václav and Adam became the founders of the Litoměřice branch of the Mráz family. Jiří obtained a noble title "of Milešovka" and received a coat-of-arms with the image of Mount Milešovka on the right side, and a vertical lion above a crenellated wall on the left side. The Mrázes before long accumulated considerable properties and acquired an important social standing in Litoměřice. Jiří Mráz was a member of the town council for several years and represented the city, together with the rest of the council, before Ferdinand I's criminal tribunal, following the clumsy revolt of the Bohemian estates in 1547. Other family members served the city: Václav Mráz as mayor in 1568-1569, and Adam's son, Master Jindřich Mráz, as royal judge in 1572-1582.[1]

Jan Smetana in his article about the precursors of Master Pavel Stránský in Litoměřice noted that Jindřich Mráz's teacher was Bachelor Mikuláš Mitas, the author of numerous poems in Latin. Jindřich's influential mentor was also the Humanist poet, Jan Hanuš, a member of the Litoměřice town council, whom his former pupil celebrated in verse in 1555. At that time, Jindřich had already completed his studies at the University of Wittenberg with the title of master of liberal arts, and eventually excelled in the fields of astronomy and astrology. It was probably in the 1570s, when he held the most prominent place in the town government, that the Mráz house was erected in the town square with its characteristic silhouette of the tower in the shape of a chalice. The earliest records know it as the house "Under the Cupola". Jindřich Mráz of Milešovka died during a plague epidemic in 1582. Another family member, who attended the University of Wittenberg, was Zikmund Mráz. On completing his studies in 1560, he received a letter of recommendation from the rector Philip Melanchton with a high praise for his erudition. After further study at the University of Prague, Zikmund had served as rector of the Latin school in Litoměřice since 1571. In 1576, he was appointed head scribe of the town council. Master Matyáš Borbonius, a foremost sixteenth-century physician, noted in his diary as a special event his having dined with Zikmund Mráz in the cupola of his house in the square in 1598.[2]

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[1] Otakar Votoček, "Litoměřický 'Kalich' a jeho obnova," *Zpráva památkové péče* 15 (1955) 125-136; Petr Macek, "Litoměřice renesanční," in O. Kotyza and others, *Dějiny města Litoměřic* (Litoměřice, 1997) 184-194; and recently, J. Jarošová, "Mrázové z Milešovky v Litoměřicích v předbělohorské době," in *Města severozápadních Čech v raném novověku* [Acta Universitatis Purkynianae, Philosophica et historica, IV] 55 (Ústí nad Labem, 2000) 223-237.

[2] Jan Smetana, "Litoměřičtí předchůdci a přátelé M. Pavla Stránského," *Litoměřicko* 23 (1987) 135-148.

External Appearance

Otakar Votoček notes further details about the construction of the Mráz house in the 1570s. The main responsibility belonged to Adam's son, Jan Samuel Mráz of Milešovka, who then headed the wider family. He carried on the grandiose reconstruction of two older Gothic houses into a single whole, on which he impressed his Utraquist faith in the form of a chalice-shaped roof tower, which gave the house its name. The reconstruction had been completed by 1576 and it was performed by Ambrož Vlach, known in literature as Balli. Our sources connect the name of Ambrož Vlach with Jan Mráz. The house was a large edifice with six window axes, two residential stories, and an attic topped with carved escutcheons. The arcade on the ground floor with the vault of two fields opened up to the square with two large arches. In the axis of the building there was a tall polygonal pyramid of the tent roof, crowned by the already mentioned cupola shaped as a chalice. The latter has survived largely unchanged to the present day.

The façade of the edifice was modified in 1834 to its current appearance. The Renaissance front façade retained the entrance portal of the Saxon type with seat-boxes in the wainscoting and with cartouche bearing the builder's crest. The façade toward the courtyard, renovated after World War Two, is richly painted. An outstanding feature is the frieze under the main windowsill and a female caryatid at the second story that also bears in the center an elaborate crest of the Mráz family with the inscription JAN MRÁZ in capital letters. Superadded crested vaults top the interior. The ground floor and the large hall of the first story are also vaulted.[3]

One of the most interesting features, of course, was the centrally located room "In the Cupola" [*V báni*], in which according to traditional accounts the landlord entertained his friends with wine, in a setting affording a wide view of the landscape surrounding the town.[4] Votoček in his cited article sought an analogy of this type of tower with a cupola and offered the suggestion that Jan Mráz might have used as a model the tower of Jan Žižka's castle Kalich that stood above Třebušín and near Litoměřice. The castle tower widened at the first story into a shape resembling that of a chalice.[5] In addition, Votoček has called attention to a tile depicting Žižka from the second quarter of the Utraquist fifteenth century. The tile also depicts a soldier holding a banner with the image of a chalice in front of Žižka. The tile was discovered in house no. 6 in Litoměřice, and it is now deposited in the Town Museum of Litoměřice.[6] It is a specimen of Utraquist iconography favoured in the applied arts. A similar depiction of the chalice can be found on the city walls of Litoměřice that researchers have likewise often compared with the tower silhouette of the Mráz house.[7]

At last, the Mráz House in Litoměřice was subjected to a new historical examination of its architecture, and the results were published in 2003. Michal Panáček a Milada Radová Štiková, the authors of the study, paid special attention to

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[3] Votoček, "Litoměřický 'Kalich' a jeho obnova."
[4] Eva Šamánková, *Litoměřice* (Prague, 1982) 61-63.
[5] Votoček, "Litoměřický 'Kalich' a jeho obnova."
[6] Otakar Votoček, "Husitský kachel z litoměřické reservace, *Zprávy památkové péče* 20 (1960) 165 ff.
[7] Kotyza and others, *Dějiny města Litoměřic*, on 153 compare the image of the chalice on the city wall with the chalice-shaped cupola on the Mráz house.

the construction of the cupola and the architecture's iconography.[8]  Both agree that the most extraordinary feature is the characteristic non-Italian design of the roof. A tent roof in the form of an eight-sided pyramid rises from between the second and fourth transverse bonding of the ridge roof. The peak of the pyramid extends like an eight-sided tower bearing a compressed hefty onion dome. This unusual (for Bohemia) architectural feature is crowned by a spike with a knob, and equipped with eight squarish dormers with ridge rooflets. According to the authors: "…the interior of the dome, the architecture of which closely resembles the ribbed construction of a ship, creates the impression of a cloister vault with the ribs coming together in a circular coping stone. Every field of the vault has an opening for a window lunette and a dormer that provide an adequate illumination and a convenient lookout point."

Next, the researchers posed the question about what was the source of inspiration for the specific form of the tower and its dome. A possibility to consider was the tent roofs of Benedikt Ried and his disciples that had made their appearance in the early sixteenth century. They noted further that the probable source of the unusual form of the roof in Litoměřice was probably the area of the neighbouring Saxony to the north along the course of the Elbe. The closest analogy was evidently the tower of the ducal castle Hartenfels in Torgau, the image of which was recorded in several paintings of Lucas Cranach. The Hartenfels Castle was a favourite residence of the Electors of Saxony who professed the Lutheran religion. On that basis, Panáček and Radová Štiková maintain that it is necessary to reject Votoček's conclusion in his cited article of 1955 about the Utraquist adherence of the Litoměřice architect, especially since we do not know the appearance of the Kalich Castle that Žižka once had built for himself. An additional argument for the Lutheran provenance is the fact that, in the sixteenth century, castles with similar domes stem always from Lutheran regions.

Frescoes in the Interior and Their Iconographic Derivation

Somewhat earlier, in 2000, Anna Svobodová discovered paintings in the Mráz House, which she restored with the help of Eva Votočková. The frescoes are mainly in the large hall of the first story, and alongside windows of the second.

The Northern Wall

The most notable art is found in the large hall of the first story. On the frontal northern wall, we see a scene from the Genesis: the Creation of Eve that is sketched in an oval form. The left side presents a landscape with two trees and resting animals, probably a doe of brown colour, and another beast currently depicted in white in a faint drawing. Evidently, two rabbits are in the centre of the picture. The Creation itself occurs also in an arboured landscape with God the Father, coloured white with a black undertone, standing under the trees, and wrapped in a white cloak. Adam is lying in front of him with a slightly turned right side, from which God the Father is extracting the figure of created Eve.  Adam's stature is distinguished by the limbs prolonged in an almost mannerist style, and by a refined black drawing, modelling the slender body.

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[8] Michal Panáček a Milada Radová Štiková, "Stanová střecha s vyhlídkovou bání domu čp. 15 Kalich v Litoměřicích," *Průzkumy památek* 10 (2003) no. 1, 109-120.

Certain symbols connected with Eve's Emergence may be noted. The biblical event occurred on the sixth day of Creation. Adam and Eve are the first parents, the forerunners of Christ, and often also the prototype of humankind. Ecclesiastical art frequently placed Adam into the equation Adam=Christ, which inspired the Church Fathers' teaching about the Old and the New Adam. The Creation of Eve from the rib of sleeping Adam is a graphic prefiguration of the wound in Christ's side. For example, the Bible of the Poor depicts the Creation of Eve together with Moses, who struck a rock as a prefiguration of the second Crucifixion, at which Longinus had pierced Christ's side and thus came to believe in his divinity. The image in the Biblia pauerum is accompanied by numerous texts: David's Psalm 21:17; Zechariah 13:6; Creation of Eve in Genesis 2:21-22; Moses strikes the rock in Exodus 17: 5-6; the weeping of Jeremiah 1:12; and Amos 8:9. It is, therefore, an image that above all stresses the respect for the sacrament of Christ's blood. Moses striking the rock symbolizes precisely this theme, which was frequently used during the Reformation to focus attention on the communion in both kinds.[9]

In 1999, Hanna Feyerabend published a remarkable image of Eve's Creation dating to 1525 that is now located in the Germanische Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg.[10] This composition differs distinctly from the Litoměřice fresco, but there is another example that closely resembles the Litoměřice specimen. It is the image of Sixth-Day Creation in the emblem of Nikolas Reusner's book, *Emblemata*, published in Nuremberg in 1581 and accompanied by the inscription: "Spes altera vitae. Mors ianua vitae." Feyerabend interprets the image as an allegory of the Creation and of the New Creation in the Adam=Christ sense. The resting Adam in the *Emblemata* is related to the image of Adam's Creation, which Michelangelo painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome in 1508-1512. Andreas Curtius reacted a year later against Feyerabend's article. He did not see in the image a Protestant sub-text of the Allegory of Creation and New Creation, but rather related it to a traditional depiction in a new Renaissance concept, especially in the form of the sitting "melancholic" Adam.[11] The earlier image by Albrecht Dürer in the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493 is somewhat different, but it still attests to the vogue of this theme. The specimen in the Mráz House reflects the model of Michelangelo's style, transposed into a graphic imaging affected by mannerism.[12]

The Eastern Wall

The neighbouring eastern wall bears in the first field another scene in an oval sketch, bordered by a reddish brown strip and a green cartouche. It is the image of the Transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor with the upper torso of Elijah in the clouds on the right side, and with Moses holding the tablets of the Decalogue on the left. A figure of Christ with aureole stands in the centre; each of his hands points to the prophets. Brown hair frames Christ's face, and his elongated body is covered by

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[9] Gertruda Schiller, "Adam und Eva," in *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* 4,1 (Gütersloh, 1976) 93 ff.

[10] Hanna Feyerabend, "Erschafung der Eva: Ein Andachtsbild als gemalte Allegorese nach dem vielfachen Schriftsinn unter dem Einfluss der Reformation," *Anzeiger des Germanischen National-museums* (Nurenberg, 1999) 261-270.

[11] Andreas Curtius, "Die 'Erschafung der Eva': Zur Deutung eines Schöpfungbildes der deutsche Renaissance," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (Nuremberg, 2000) 119-132.

[12] Albrecht Dürer, *The Illustrated Bartsch* (New York, 1981) 10:498 (fig. 509b).

a white garment that follows the contours of Christ's slender figure. On the left side, three apostles, kneeling in front of a painted rock, gaze in amazement at the miracle: St. John, to his right St. Peter, and behind him St. James in a red cloak. The Apostles had awakened from sleep, and saw the glory of Christ, Moses, and Elijah. They had just been lifted in a cloud and seized by fear before hearing the words: "This is my chosen Son, you obey him." The Transfiguration of the Lord is a celebratory metamorphosis of Christ's divinity. The grand yellow aureole amplifies and stresses the meaning of Christ as the light in the sense of St. John's words (Jn 8:12): "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." Mt. Tabor was considered a holy place, becoming a special symbol exactly during the Bohemian Reformation. For instance, the town church in Tabor was dedicated to the Transfiguration.

It is important that the topos of the Lord's Transfiguration had been selected as a favourite scene early in Christian history. In the East, a mosaic has survived from the sixth century in St. Catherine Monastery on Mt. Sinai that is on the site where God had allegedly appeared to Moses. Moses can be understood as an Old Testament prefiguration of the Transfiguration of the Lord on Mt. Tabor. In the West, the Lord's Transfiguration decorated the church of St. Apollinare in Classe of Ravenna. In the East, the feast day of the Transfiguration had been celebrated on 6 August since the sixth century; in the West, it spread widely only in the fifteenth century. In Syria, the feast day was designated as that of Mt. Tabor. The pericope for the holiday reports the approach of the Passions. In the East, the feast day belongs among the select Twelve Holy Days of the Byzantine Church. St. John Chrysostom interpreted the Transfiguration of the Lord as a prefiguration of the Parousia, the Second Coming of Christ prior to the Last Judgment. The Transfiguration, which occurred on Mt. Tabor, attested that Christ was the Son of God who was sent down from heaven. We have reports that Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, had a church built on Mt. Tabor and it is likely that the temple was decorated by an image of the Transfiguration.[13] In the West, the Transfiguration appeared in the thirteenth century in the following locales: the two-storied chapel in Schwarzheineindorf, on the western tribune of the church in Gurk, in the church St. Maria Lyskirchen in Cologne, and in Allerheiligenkapelle in Regensburg.[14] The relationship to the Apocalypse and Christ's Second Coming is attested by a full-page illumination in the Apocalypse of the French Queen Isabella from 1313, presently deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS Fr 13096.[15] In Bohemia, a significant precursor of the Litoměřice image was the so-called Altar of Slavětín, the middle panel of which depicts the Transfiguration, the left wing shows the donor and Moses with the Decalogue tablets, and the right wing presents the donor's wife and the expulsion of the adulteress from the temple. The altar dates to c. 1540.[16]

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[13] Gertrude Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* (London, 1971) 1:145-152.

[14] Wolfgang Krönig, "Zur Transfiguration der Capella Palatina in Palermo," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 19 (1956) 162-179.

[15] Suzanne Lewis, "The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris, Bibl. Nat. Ms Fr. 13096," *Art Bulletin* 72 (1990) 224-260.

[16] Otakar Votoček, "Master of Slavětín Altar: Altar with the Transfiguration of Christ, before 1540," in *Severočeská galerie v Litměřicích* (Litoměřice, 1983) np [13], (fig. 16).

The second field of the eastern wall depicts, again in an oval form, twenty-four elders venerating the Apocalyptic God the Father with a Lamb at his feet. God the Father sits on a simple brown throne in a plain grayish blue garment; on his right side the standing white Lamb evidently receiving a sealed book. God the Father is surrounded by an aureole, reminiscent of rainbow and hemmed by a green stripe; above him in the upper part of the image, we see seven burning torches symbolizing seven divine spirits, and evidently an angel's torso and four creatures.[17] The standing St. John is placed under the aureole in such a way that his head reaches above the green stripe. Turned toward the left side, the saint gazes forward on a torsally preserved scene of twenty-four adoring elders of the Apocalypse, who, in a usual sign of humility, had put aside their crowns and musical instruments. The pointed crowns, which the elders had taken off, have been preserved. Among the musical instruments, only the harps can be identified.

The image depicts the scene from the Apocalypse (Rev 4:1-11, 5:6-14), and what follows is essentially a set of citations from this text. The Apocalypse describes the vision of St. John who saw the throne of God the Father surrounded by twenty-four more thrones occupied by twenty-four elders, dressed in white garments and with golden crowns on their heads. Flashes of lightening and sounds of thunder emanated from the throne; seven lights, representing the seven spirits of God, burned in front of the throne; and around stood the four creatures calling unceasingly: "Holy, holy, holy Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come." "Whenever the creatures render glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne and who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing: 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created'." Thereafter the Lamb received the book with seven seals… "He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth'." According to St. John's vision, the twenty-four elders were accompanied by myriads of angels who sang with full voice: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing." Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them singing: "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures – symbols of the evangelists – said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshipped.

In the earlier mentioned manuscript of the Apocalypse for the French Queen Isabella, dating to the fourteenth century, f. 13 depicts in the upper part St. John gazing at Majestas Domini and in the lower part God the Father in an aureole and with the Lamb. The twenty-four elders worship them holding their own crowns in

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[17] Gertrude Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* (Gütersloh, 1991) 5:25-37.

their hands. Isabella's manuscript contains a series of unorthodox depictions, which have few parallels in the early fourteenth century. The Franciscans evidently had a hand in the iconographic innovations of this richly illuminated manuscript. The crisis in the relation between French King Philip IV and the Pope[18] enabled the Franciscan spirituality and stress on poverty to affect the interpretation of the more recent sets of Apocalyptic images.

The veneration of the twenty-four elders prospered particularly at the turn of the fourteenth century and during the century that followed. The elders acquired the reputation of the most effective mediators of the ultimate spiritual experience – the vision of divinity. This function was facilitated by their siting around the throne of God, as indicated by the words of the Apocalypse: "Et in circuitu sedis sedilia vigintiquattuor, et super thronos vigintiquattuor seniores sedentes, circum-amicti vestimentis albis, et in captibus eorum coronae aureae" (Rev 4:4). The Eastern Church celebrated the feast day of the twenty-four elders on 24 November; the Western Church did not provide a feast day for them. The veneration of the elders, however, is documented by the work *Twenty-four Elders* by Otto of Passau that was richly illustrated in the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries.  It was designed primarily as an instrument of lay piety.[19]

In Bohemia, one of the most famous images is the Veneration of the Twenty-Four Elders in the Chapel of the Holy Cross of the castle of Karlstein.[20] The model for the fresco in Litoměřice was probably Dürer's illustration of the Apocalypse on folio 2, or Cranach's illustration of Luther's Bible, in which the twenty-four elders make an offering of their harps, while St. John is turning toward them. St. John is depicted not as a mourner, but as a visionary, while the elders turn toward God.[21] Similarly, Hans Burgkmair depicts a circular scene and St. John who is gazing at the elders and listening to their words. Little winged heads represent the multiplicity of angels of the heavenly choir.[22] Another source of inspiration for the Litoměřice image was evidently Utraquist graduals. In particular, similar iconography can be found in the gradual of Žlutice, illuminated by Fabián Puléř, and deposited in the town museum of Žlutice.[23] A more recent Czech Gradual from 1578 depicts the standard scene on a double-folio honouring the donors. The twenty-four elders with pointed crowns and harps surround and venerate God the Father and the Lamb, the front legs of which touch an open book. St. John is turning toward them. The donors' crests are placed beneath the scene.[24]

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[18] Lewis, "The Apocalypse of Isabella of France," 241 fig. 22, 23.

[19] Norbert H. Ott, "Deutschsprachige Bilderhandschriften des Spätmittelalters und ihr Publikum. Zu den Illustrierten Handschriften der 'Ottos von Passau," *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*  77 (1987) 107-148; Ludwig Grote, "DieVierundzwanzig Alte," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 33 (1971) 85-98.

[20] František Fišer, *Karlštejn: Vzájemné vztahy tří karlštejnských kaplí* (Kostelní Vydří, 1996) 160-169.

[21] Rudolf Chadraba, "Ikonologie Dürerovy Apokalypsy," *Sborník Vysoké školy pedagogické v Olomouci*, Historie IV, 1957, 1-40; *idem*, *Duerers Apokalypse* (Prague, 1964).

[22] Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 5:Textteil, 355; Bildteil, fig. 911, 912 (Burgkmair, Cranach).

[23] Antonín Rybička, "České kancionály Kralohradecké," *Památky archeologické* 2 (1858) 182; J. Er. Wocel, "Miniatury české XVI. století," *Památky archeologické* 3 (1859) 241-257.  [This Utraquist gradual is now deposited in the Památník národního pisemnictví in Prague (fond Žlutice without shelfmark.) *Ed.*]

[24] Jan Smetana, "Národnostní a sociální vývoj: Od husitství do Bílé hory," *Dějiny města Litoměřic* 163.

After this wide-ranging survey of possible precedents, let us now zero in on the most likely and proximate source. Antonín Rybička as early as 1877 called attention to the literary (choir) brotherhoods, the task of which was to enhance liturgical services with religious song.[25] The choir of Litoměřice belonged among the most prominent and wealthiest brotherhoods. It was active as early as the reign of Vladislav II Jagellonian, and from that time dates the famous Litoměřice Kancionál. Because the schools of Litoměřice occupied a place of special distinction in the sixteenth century, the literary brotherhood likewise excelled over its counterparts. The rectors of Litoměřice schools were ex officio members of the brotherhoods that brought together musicians, singers, and poets.[26] It is, therefore, probable that Zikmund Mráz was a member of the literary brotherhood when he administered the school of Litoměřice and then served as a scribe of the city council. In this milieu, he could be inspired by one of the graduals that had illuminations analogous to those of the graduals of Žlutice or Třebenice.

A small crest of the Mráz family is placed further to the right on the eastern wall above the original rectangular portal. In the oval field of the crest, Mount Milešovka stands on the right side, and the split left side contains only a white and a black field.

Nowadays the room is interrupted by a partition, but in the hallway we see another scene from the Apocalypse. According to the Apocalypse of John the Divine (c. 12), it shows the woman of the Apocalypse fleeing a dragon, and St. Michael slaughtering a seven-headed dragon with a bust of God the Father above him. The woman of the Apocalypse with a crown on her head stands on the half-moon. Undoubtedly, she can be understood in the sense of Herrada of Landsperg, who identified her as "Mulier hec est ecclesia."[27] Similarly, the Apocalypse of Queen Isabella on folio 34 depicts the Woman in the Sun in front of a church symbolizing the Ecclesia, the golden rays of sun even suggest the Church Triumphant.[28] The Velislav Bible also designates the Woman of the Apocalypse, who stands without a child, with the word "ecclesia."[29] Notable features of the Litoměřice image are: crowns on the dragon's heads, the stream of fire projecting from the monster's mouth, and the monumentally impressive figure of Archangel Michael piercing the dragon's tail with a spear. The composition of the image is influenced by earlier woodcuts by Dürer, illustrating the Apocalypse, particularly by the image on folio IX. There a woman surrounded by rays stands on a half-moon; a dragon with crowned heads pursues her on the right side, and God the Father blesses her from above. The following folio X depicts Archangel Michael's duel with the dragon.[30]

Probably, the role of the dragon can be interpreted from the viewpoint of the so-called Antichristvita. For instance, *Liber Floridus* views the dragon as the Antichrist riding on the Leviathan, and this depiction relates historically to the

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[25] Antonín Rybička, "O bývalých společnostech čili kůrech literátských," *Památky archeologické* 10 (1972) 719-734.

[26] Michaela Hrubá, "Bratrstva a cechy z pohledu měšťanských testamentů královských měst severozápadních Čech v raném novověku," *Documenta Pragensia* 18 (2000) 27-47.

[27] Gertrude Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst* 5:2 (Gütersloh 1991) 97-106.

[28] Lewis, *The Apocalypse of Isabella of France*.

[29] Josef Cibulka, "Korunovaná Assumpta na půlměsíci: Příspěvek k české ikonografii XIV. – XVI. století," in *Sborník k sedmdesátým narozeninám Karla B. Mádla* (Prague, 1929) 80-127.

[30] Chadraba, "Ikonologie Dürerovy Apokalypsy."

concept of the dragon's head in Joachim of Fiore's *Liber Figurarum*. Elsewhere the large dragon symbolizes the Satan who was conquered despite his great strength.[31] According to some authors, Dürer's Woman in the sun represents the Assumption – hence the Virgin Mary. Lucas Carnach allegedly adapted this image from Dürer's in his own illustration of Luther's Bible, but Luther – in harmony with the Reformational attitudes – explicitly designated the Woman of the Apocalypse as "Ecclesia."[32]

The Western Wall

The western wall of the large hall preserves a partially obliterated scene, placed in an oval form. The image apparently depicts on the left side the torso of a man, over whose body two animals drag a no longer preserved wagon, most likely with the spectacle of the Triumph of Death. There is some resemblance between this scene and the woodcut that illustrated Savonarola's sermon on the subject of *ars moriendi*. Rudolf Chadraba published a copy of this woodcut in connection with Dürer's Apocalypse.[33] On the graphic leaf, a wagon with death standing on a coffin is pulled by four oxen over the bodies of dying humans.

The sudden death of Master Jindřich Mráz in 1582 might have inspired the image of Death's Triumph. In a way, it could also allude to the Horror of the Six Seals that the Lamb has broken: "And when the Lamb had broken the fourth seal I heard the voice of the fourth living creature: 'Come!' And behold a ghastly pale horse with a rider named Death, and it left behind the world of the dead" (Rev 6:7-8).

We can also speculate that historical events of carnage could have evoked the depiction. One such event was the sacking and looting of Litoměřice in 1419-1420 when sixteen burghers' sons were seized, and in the presence of Emperor Sigismund convicted of heresy and consequently executed.[34] Another event was the invasion by Žižka's host that threatened a full assault on the town, in particular on the Dominican monastery.[35] The Taborite warriors ejected and executed burghers, some of whom were Jewish. Returning to the image in the Mráz house, the men wear the stereotypical Jewish hats, black attire (perhaps reminiscent of a rabbi), and one of them raises his left arm in fright. The draft animals are probably a bull and a horse, their hooves are stamping over the dying men. Behind the group of figures, the background shows a town in flames, and additional figures are preserved only as drawings. A certain analogy of the same period is represented by the drawing in Spalatin's chronicle that was produced at the request of Georg Spalatin, probably by the Cranach workshop in Wittenberg c. 1530.[36]

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[31] Ulrich Rehm, "Eine Bildfolge des 14. Jahrhunderts zur Apokalypse: Das Bild als Medium des kulturellen Gedächtnis," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (Nurenberg, 1996) 7-34.

[32] Gertrude Schiller, "Reformationszeit," in *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 5:1 (Gütersloh, 1990) 343-351; *idem*, "Der Engelkampf und der Drachensturz,"in *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 5:2 (Gütersloh, 1991) 106-109.

[33] Chadraba, , "Ikonologie Dürerovy Apokalypsy," no. 125. The relevant work is Savonarola, *Predica dell'arte bene morire* (Florence, 1496).

[34] Jan Smetana, "K počátkům husitství v Litoměřicích," *Litoměřicko* 11 (1974) 59-79; Jaroslav Macek, "Město za válek husitských," in Kotyza and others, *Dějiny města Litoměřic*, 151-152.

[35] *Ibid.*, 152-154.

[36] Christian Andersson, "Die Spalatin-Chronik und ihre Illustrationen aus der Cranach-Werkstatt," in *Lucas Cranach: Ein Mahler-Unternehmer aus Franken*, edd. C. Grimm, J. Erichsen, and E. Brockhoff (Leipzig, 1994) 208-207, fig. A 161.

The decoration of the great hall of the Mráz house, contained in ovals with framed in brown, is supplemented on the side with decorative leitmotifs reminiscent of vegetation and wreaths. The scene of the Lord's Transfiguration is accompanied by two jugglers with typical pantaloons and pointed slippers. A man on the left evidently held a sprig in his right hand. The man on the right strides to the right, but is turning toward the scene. A peculiar hat with the suggestion of a feather is his special feature.

The Utraquist Character of the Art

The selection of the images and our attempt at a succinct interpretation indicate that the artist's patron was a member of the Mráz family who had studied in Wittenberg, the hotbed of Lutheran teaching. Whether it was Master Jindřich Mráz or the younger Zikmund is probably impossible to determine for certain, even though – as indicated earlier – the paintings may date to around 1582 when Master Jindřich had died of plague.

From the viewpoint of artistic inspiration, the painter utilized above all graphic models, which the cultured patron obtained from the ambiance of Dürer's and Cranach's workshops. Other sources were probably emblematic books and, in my opinion, in large measure also illuminated Bohemian hymnals which the patron might have encountered in the above-mentioned literary brotherhood.

Jarmila Vacková has studied the illuminations in graduals that were painted largely by Fabián Puléř. The artist favoured complicated scenes with many figures from the Old Testament; and from the New Testament, among others, precisely the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the Last Supper, and Resurrection; and, specifically from the Book of Revelation, depictions of the Veneration of the Lamb, and of the virgin of the Apocalyse.[37] For our purposes, the author's identification of the sources of the individual artists' styles is of major importance. Fabián Puléř was influenced by southern Germany, the Danube region, and above all Dürer's graphic art. His younger colleague, the painter Matouš Ornys of Lindperk, author of the Třebenice gradual[38], was influenced not only by southern Germany, but also by the Netherlandish graphic art, Italian motifs, and particularly Jost Amman's woodcuts. The latter lost the typical character of woodcuts and appeared more like rough ink drawings that, according to Vacková, had become a virtual must for the illuminators. The landscape background of Třebenice gradual is influenced by the miniaturized landscape painting of the post-Brueghel type. This stylistic trend presumably finds reflection in the frescoes in the great hall of the Mráz house. Today, we appreciate especially the drawing of Eve's Creation, and the dynamic character of the Lord's Transfiguration. A somewhat later version of the latter was painted by Matouš Radouš in the second part of the Hradec Králové gradual, dating to 1592-1604.[39]

It is possible to speculate that the apparently Reformational character of the paintings was connected with Lutheran ambiance that was mediated to the

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[37] Jarmila Vacková, "Podoba a příčiny anachronismu," *Umění* 16 (1968) 379-393; *idem*, "Závěsné malířství a knižní malba v letech 1526 až 1620," in *Dějiny českého výtvarného umění* II/1 (Prague, 1989) 93-105.

[38] [Třebenice, MS. Muzeum Českého granátu without shelfmark. *Ed.*]

[39] [Hradec Králové, MS. Muzeum východních Čech Hr 14. The manuscript was substantially completed by 1585 or the next year; two illuminations were added after the book was bound. See: Barry F.H. Graham, *Bohemian and Moravian Graduals 1420-1620 No. 18* (forthcoming). *Ed.*]

Bohemian Utraquists by University of Wittenberg. Another venue may be traced to the Italian art, inasmuch as Utraquist priests of Litoměřice had travelled to Venice for their ordination. Klement Borový, discussing the reappointment of the Consistory in 1542, mentions two young priests who had returned from Venice and were given chaplaincies. Joannes Hranicensus Moravus was assigned as chaplain to priest Valentin Tobiáš for three years. A report of 1554 states that Joannes Špomilar Monatanus was sent for ordination to the bishop in Venice, and on his return was assigned as chaplain to priest Mikuláš, the dean of Litoměřice for four years.[40]

In Jan Smetana's opinion, the burghers of Litoměřice became acquainted with Lutheran Reformation thanks to their parsons.[41] Amedeo Molnár has called attention to the role of Havel Cahera in facilitating Luther's influence in Bohemia. Cahera, a native of Žatec, became a master of the Prague University in 1518, then an Utraquist parson in Litoměřice. He visited Luther several times as early as 1519, and stayed in Wittenberg several months during the spring and summer of 1523. On the latter occasion, he interested Luther in Bohemia to the extent that the Reformer devoted an entire treatise to Bohemian affairs. Published by Pavel Severin in a Czech translation by Sobek under the title, *Vo ustanovenie služebníkuov církve*, the treaties stated, inter alia, "a Christian gathering or congregation has the right and power to judge all teaching, and to appoint and remove its teachers" [křesťanské shromáždění či sbor má právo a moc všecko učení soudit a učitele povolávat a sesazovat]. Smetana is of the opinion that Cahera's receptivity of Lutheran ideas was one of the reasons why Cahera had to leave Litoměřice in 1522.[42] The denominational situation in Bohemia and the relationship between Bohemian Utraquists and Luther are discussed in detail by Zdeněk V. David in his article, "Utraquism's Curious Welcome to Luther and the Candlemas Day Articles of 1524."[43]

The dean of Litoměřice was named among those who in 1525 denied heresy and affirmed a recognition of the pope. In 1527, the burghers of Litoměřice petitioned the Utraquist Consistory to have priest Václav appointed as their next parson. Cahera's colleague Jan Miruš, who was expelled from Prague after 1525, went on to live in Litoměřice where he was still staying prior to 1531. He was blamed for seeking to explain complex mysteries of faith to the simple folk. Lutheranism was spreading in northern Bohemia from as early as the 1520s, but almost entirely in the German-speaking areas. In Litoměřice, the new religion won the sympathies only of a few Utraquists who were dissatisfied with the outcome of the Bohemian Reformation.

Priest Václav Šídlo, appointed to Litoměřice after 1536, was considered a Lutheran sympathizer. He was soon followed by Jakub of Prague. It is relevant to note that the Litoměřice literary brotherhood of All Saints parish acquired a Czech language gradual from the Prague scribe and illuminator Jan Táborský (dated

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[40] Klement Borový, *Jednání a dopisy konsistoře katolické a utrakvistické*. Vol. 1: *Akta konsistoře utrakvistické* (Prague, 1868) 211, 323; Zdeněk V. David, *Finding the Middle Way: The Utraquists' Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther* (Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, 2003) 145.

[41] Jan Smetana, "Náboženský život," in Kotyza and others, *Dějiny města Litoměřic* 164-169.

[42] Amedeo Molnár, *Na rozhraní věků: Cesty reformace* (Prague, 1985) 218 ff.

[43] Zdeněk V. David, "Utraquism's Curious Welcome to Luther and the Candlemas Day Articles of 1524," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 79 (2001) 51-89; *idem*, *Finding the Middle Way*, 65. I wish to thank the author for making copies available to me.

between 1542 and 1544[44]) from which to sing the Utraquist liturgy and just over ten years later (1578) acquired another Utraquist gradual.[45] The Táborský gradual is among the oldest extant Utraquist graduals in the Czech language.[46] The number of saints' days contained in it (even though smaller in number than in Latin Bohemian graduals)[47] makes it clear that the Táborský gradual was intended for Utraquist and not Lutheran use. Evidently a genuine defection to Lutheranism had not occurred in Litoměřice. The position of Utraquism was fortified by expanding the linguistic link with the Czech community, and by the government's post-1547 ecclesiastical policy that favoured Utraquism and opposed Lutheranism.[48]

This article explored the possible relationship between the decoration of the Mráz house and the Lutheran Reformation. The effect of the Lutheran Reformation and the genesis of the Bohemian Confession might be further illuminated by exploring the influence of the antecedent Franciscan teaching. The latter undoubtedly affected the Bohemian and the Protestant reformations, and the impact is, inter alia, manifest in the visual art inspired by the Apocalypse, such as the décor of the Mráz house.

[Translated from the Czech by Zdeněk V. David]

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[44] [Prague, MS Strahov DA I 6. All the liturgical texts in this gradual are in Czech. See: Graham, *Bohemian and Moravian Graduals 1420-1620,* (forthcoming) no. 99. *Ed.*]

[45] [Litoměřice, MS Okresní vlastivědné muzeum č. inv. 12.952; Graham n. 37. *Ed.*]

[46] [The earliest known being Prague, MS National Museum Library V B 5 (Graham no. 92) and Hradec Králové, MS Muzeum východních Čech Hr 16 (Graham no. 19) which are dated 1539. *Ed.*]

[47] Liturgical propers for both the *temporale* and the *sanctorale* are fewer in number than they are in their Latin homologues. That both liturgical cycles provide for fewer liturgical celebrations points more to the general impoverishment of liturgical life in Bohemia (i.e. a considerable reduction of the frequency that the liturgy was sung rather than said) than it does to an intentional de-emphasis on the place of saints in the liturgy. The printed editions of the Prague Missal which Utraquists continued to use showed no diminution in the number of saints commemorated during the space of the liturgical year. *Ed.*

[48] Jan Smetana, "Náboženský život," in Kotyza and others, *Dějiny města Litoměřic* 164-169.

(1) The Mráz House (Kalich) Litoměřice, no. 15: Architect Ambrož Vlach, known as Balli, 1578-1584
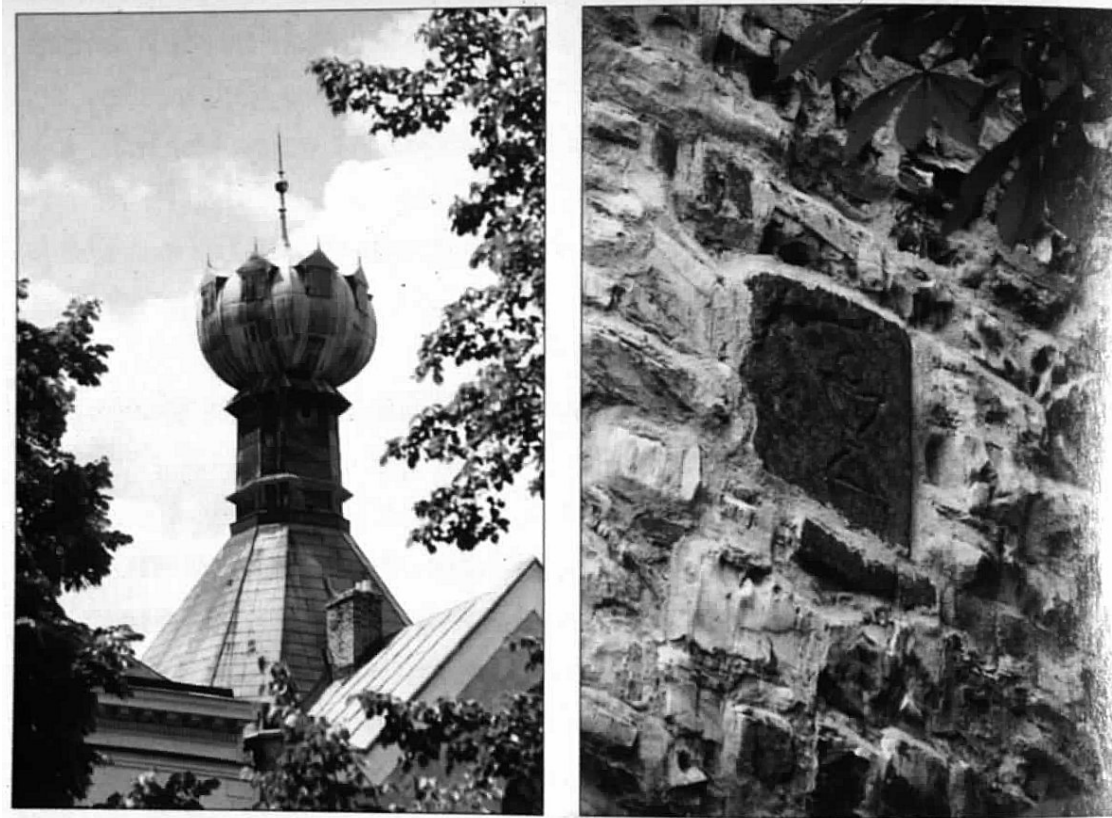
(2) The Mráz House with the chalice carved on a stone in the walls of Litoměřice, 16th century

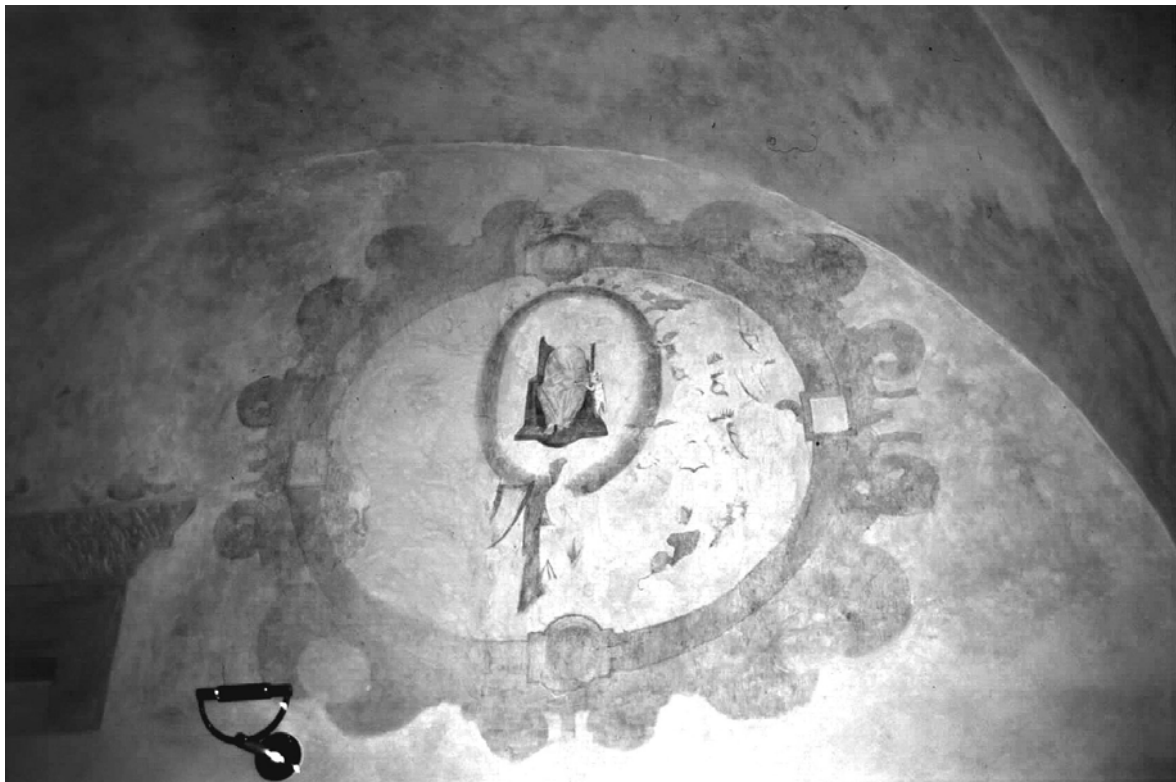(3) The Mráz House: a painted coat of arms of Jan Samuel Mráz of Milešovka, end of 16<sup>th</sup> century

(4) The Mráz House, interior: The Creation of Eve, a fresco, end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century

(5) Biblia pauperum, Esztergom, end of 15<sup>th</sup> century: typological depiction of The Creation of Eve

(6) The Mráz House, interior: The Transfiguration of the Lord on Mt. Tabor, fresco, end of the 16th century



(7) The Mráz House, interior: Veneration of the Lamb of the Apocalypse, fresco, end of the 16th century

(8) Fabián Puléř, The Žlutice Gradual, 1557-1558, Town Museum, Žlutice:
illumination with Veneration of the Lamb of the Apocalypse

(9) The Mráz House, interior: The Woman of the Apocalypse and St. Michael Slaying the Dragon, fresco, end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century



(10a, b) Albrecht Dürer, The Apocalypse, graphic art, 1511: The Woman of the Apocalypse and St. Michael Slaying the Dragon