BONES, STONES, AND BROTHELS:
RELIGION AND TOPOGRAPHY IN PRAGUE
UNDER EMPEROR CHARLES IV (1346-78)

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the complex interactions of religion and topography in fourteenth-century Prague, offering a new approach to the structures and energies that organized and animated later medieval religious culture. It provides an alternative to the rubrics and narratives that have dominated the study of religion in medieval Prague, while contributing to the growing literature on the significances of space in the Middle Ages. At the same time, it sheds light on the city of Prague itself, a dynamic and important urban center of later medieval Central Europe that has too often been relegated to the shadowy edges of the standard depictions of the Middle Ages. Under Charles IV, Prague rapidly grew into its new role as an emperor’s capital. The emperor’s powerful intervention in Prague represented one of several factors that shaped and controlled Prague’s urban space and its local religion.

Each chapter of this dissertation explores one aspect of Prague’s urban topography, the people who produced and inhabited it, and the implications for local
religion. Chapter 1 maps the physical, social, and ethnic compositions of Prague’s parishes and the character of its many monastic houses, setting the stage for the subsequent chapters. The second chapter uses the life of one woman to demonstrate how the economic and religious culture of a single parish converged in the controversial use of perpetual, property-based rents. Chapters 3 and 4 highlight two of the so-called “forerunners of the Bohemian reformation,” but without the usual accompanying teleological and confessional models. One locates the violent clashes surrounding an embattled Prague preacher within the context of the European-wide struggles between parish priests and mendicant friars. Another takes as its subject the controversial attempt of a popular preacher to convert a brothel into an experimental religious community of priests and reformed prostitutes. The final chapter investigates the effects of Charles IV's renowned relic-collecting on the religious culture of Prague, which included the establishment of new holy days, countless indulgences, and even a miracle-producing cult that together reinforced the emperor’s efforts to transform his capital city into one of later medieval Europe’s greatest cities.
for Emily
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### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APMK</td>
<td>Archiv Pražské metropolitní kapituly (Archive of the Prague metropolitan chapter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Apologia”</td>
<td>Conrad Waldhauser, “Apologia”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ČČH</td>
<td>Československý časopis historický (from 1990: Český časopis historický)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDB</td>
<td><em>Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris regni Bohemiae</em>. Ed. Gustav Friedrich (Prague, 1907-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KMK</td>
<td>Knihovna metropolitní kapituly (Library of the metropolitan chapter)</td>
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Lexikon des Mittelalters


Monumenta Germaniae historica.

“Miracula sancti Sigismondi martyris, per ipsum in sanctam Pragensem ecclesiam manifeste demonstrata.”


Folio references to: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouvelles acquisitions Latins, Cod. 1510.


Národní Knihovna České Republiky (National Library of the Czech Republic)

Národní muzeum (National museum)


Pražský sborník historický


Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae. Ed. Josef Emler et al. 7 vols. Prague, 1882-

SÚA AZK  Státní ústřední archiv, Archiv zrušených klášterů (Central national archive, archive of dissolved monasteries), Prague

VL  Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon

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INTRODUCTION

1. A Ditch and a Hill

In November 1344, Charles of Luxemburg (1316-78) had already been ruling the kingdom of Bohemia in his father’s stead for two years. Still, the most weighty title he could attach to his official correspondence remained that of Margrave of Moravia.¹ Prague, technically, was not yet his city. Yet there he was, standing in a ditch (fossa), ready to inaugurate a new landmark for Bohemia’s capital city. The ditch—dug to receive the foundations of a new cathedral—occupied one of the most powerful sites in the entire kingdom: the castle hill presiding over the bend in the river Vltava (Moldau) that at once delimited and bisected the settlements of Prague. Charles’s Přemyslid ancestors had fortified this finger-shaped mount as their dynastic seat, the location of their throne. Known as Prague Castle, its walls enclosed both a royal palace and the church of St. Vitus, the episcopal basilica that doubled as the burial church of Bohemia’s pre-eminent patron saint, Duke Wenceslas (Václav) (d. ca. 929).²

Charles stood in the recently excavated pit, shoulder-to-shoulder with his father, King John (the Blind) (1310-46), his brother, John Henry, and Arnošt of Pardubice,

¹ Autobiography 154-55.; Emil Werunsky, Geschichte Kaiser Karls IV. und seiner Zeit, 3 vols. in 4 (1880-92; reprint of 2 vols. in 3, New York, 1961), 1.297 n. 3. In his numerous requests to Pope Clement VI (1342-52) issued during his 1344 stay in Avignon, for instance, Charles introduced himself as the “firstborn of the king of Bohemia and the Margrave of Moravia” (see, e.g., MV 1.223 no. 368: “Karolus, primogenitus domini regis Boemie et marchio Moravia.”)

Prague’s bishop since the previous year. A Te Deum of clerical voices and a lay Kyrie eleison resounded in their ears, celebrating Prague’s recent elevation to the rank of archbishopric. Arnošt had moments before received the archiepiscopal pallium in a solemn and triumphant ceremony within the eleventh-century basilica. Surrounded by dignitaries, maintaining as much decorum as possible, the four men had then climbed down into the new earthworks to lay the foundation stone for a cathedral worthy of Prague’s new ecclesiastical status. There in the ditch, where ceremony demanded immediate contact with earth and stone, Charles and his companions began the transformation of Prague’s sacred topography with their own bare hands.

On that day Charles was not yet king. Nor was he alone in the ditch. Yet historians have rightly identified him as the motivating power behind the new cathedral. Already the monumental signs of the young margrave’s developing vision for Prague had begun to emerge. From the ditch he could admire his splendid palace rising nearby, a replacement for the ruined residence he had discovered upon his return to Bohemia after a youth spent in France and northern Italy. In early 1344, taking advantage of a complicated political situation and his close relationship with Pope Clement VI (his former tutor), Charles had successfully lobbied for Prague’s promotion from bishopric to archbishopric. At the same time, the pope confirmed the college of twenty-four mansionaries (resident canons) that Charles had established at St. Vitus. It was Charles

3 Charles returned to Bohemia in 1333 after an absence of more than ten years (Autobiography 70-71).

4 Beneš of Weitmil explained that King John did not seek the archbishopric because he was not willing at that moment to offend the archbishop of Mainz, under whose jurisdiction the bishopric of Prague fell (Chronicon, FRB 4.494; 510). The papal bull establishing the new archbishop and that confirming the mansionaries of St. Mary were both dated 30 April 1344 (MV 1.209-211 no. 363; 217-22 no. 367). On the mansionaries, see Zdeňka Hledíková, “Fundace českých králů ve 14. století” ([Ecclesiastical] foundation[s] of the Bohemian kings in the fourteenth century), Sborník historický 28 (1981): 10-12; Francis of Prague,
as well who invited the cathedral’s successive architects to Prague, first Matthias of Arras and then Peter Parler.\(^5\) Charles of Luxemburg, later Emperor Charles IV (1346-78), engaged the cathedral building process directly. As Paul Crossley of the Courtauld Institute of Art has recently and persuasively argued, Charles self-consciously manipulated architectural space in the service of his “politics of presentation” (a term Crossley derives from Ferdinand Seibt).\(^6\)

Charles chose Prague Castle, where the sacral and dynastic centers of his rule coincided, as the keystone for his transformed Prague—for a city worthy of an emperor. The complex of castle and cathedral had for centuries embodied the ruling dynasty’s power, serving as the central landmark, one might say, within Bohemia’s physical and mental “topography of power.”\(^7\) The Bohemian coronation route inevitably culminated

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\(^7\) This is the terminology chosen by a recent collection of essays seeking to explore “the intricate connection between the physical topography of power and its mental counterpart.” Chris Wickham introduces the concept of “topographies of power,” handled variously by the volume’s different authors, in his introductory essay (“Topographies of Power: Introduction,” in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuws, with Carine van Rhijn [Leiden, 2001], 1-8).
there, at the church of St. Vitus, after tracing its way down from Vyšehrad (Prague’s other ancient hilltop castle and sacred-secular landmark), through Prague’s east-bank settlements, across the stone bridge, and up to Prague Castle. As Margrave, Charles had rewritten the manual (ordo) for the coronation ritual. In September 1347, he enacted it in person, finally receiving the new crown of St. Wenceslas that he had personally commissioned. Nearly the entirety of Charles’s later efforts to reshape Prague’s topography can be understood as the elaboration of a symbolic constellation surrounding and leading to the castle hill’s holy of holies: the Wenceslas chapel, which Charles rebuilt upon the precise site it had occupied in two previous churches. Through his architecture and through his multifaceted support for the cult of St. Wenceslas, Charles (who had himself been christened Wenceslas) magnified the prominent position that his saintly Přemyslid ancestor already held within Bohemia’s geography of sacred spaces. For

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9 Crossley makes a similar point in his discussion of the presumed route of the coronation procession and of “a kind of via triumphalis” that Charles likely followed when entering Prague from the south. Both passed a series of memoriae carefully laid out along the way from Vyšehrad through New Town and the rest of Prague to Hradčany and the cathedral, of which the Wenceslas chapel was the undisputed focus (“The Politics of Presentation,” 129-32, 166-72).

10 According to Charles’s autobiography, King Charles IV (the Fair) of France had arranged for the young Wenceslas of Luxemburg to be renamed at his confirmation: “fecitque me dictus rex Francorum per pontificem confirmari et imposuit michi nomen suum equivocum videlicet Karolus...” (Autobiography, 22); on the significance of this renaming, see Reinhard Schneider, “Karolus, qui et Wenceslaus,” in Festschrift für Helmut Beumann zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke and Reinhard Wenskus (Sigmaringen, 1977), 365-87.

11 In addition to his adornment of the physical center of the Wenceslas cult and his establishment, for instance, of altars dedicated to Wenceslas in places like Aachen, Charles also wrote a new Latin life of the saint, of which the standard edition has now been reprinted and translated along with his autobiography
these reasons, the ditch prepared for the new Prague cathedral was for Charles—and is now—a good place to begin.

This dissertation explores the complex religious culture that flourished within the local topography of Prague during the reign of Charles IV. The royal palace and cathedral rising above the Vltava represented the physical and symbolic pinnacle of that topography, sacred and secular alike. Yet Prague Castle formed only one element of the urban landscape, and Charles IV was not alone in shaping it. Circumscribed by walls, inscribed by numerous squares and innumerable streets, divided by a river, connected by a single stone bridge, the several settlements of fourteenth-century Prague expanded to cover hills and flood plains. Its wood and stone houses—here crowded together, there surrounded by green spaces—shared the physical topography with the churches and monasteries that, legally and ritually, constituted the city’s sacred spaces.

Medieval Prague teemed with a diverse and growing population. To probe Prague’s religious culture is to examine the people who inhabited the topography of Charles IV’s city: charismatic preachers and begging friars, record-keeping priests and altar-building lay women, educated prelates and poor prostitutes. All had their own plans for the urban spaces they occupied. With its focus on the urban religious culture, the dissertation attends particularly to the sacred spaces of Prague’s topography and the individuals who moved within them. Yet sacred and secular spaces intermingled, even overlapped, so other elements of the topography (like private houses) also fall within its

purview. Each chapter asks how the people of Prague shaped and controlled urban space, and how the disposition of space in turn molded their religious practices and experiences.

This exploration of the complex interactions of religion and topography in fourteenth-century Prague offers a new approach to the structures and energies that organized and animated later medieval religious culture. It provides an alternative to the rubrics and narratives that have dominated the study of religion in medieval Prague, while contributing to the growing literature on the significances of space in the Middle Ages. Not least important, I believe, is the light it sheds on the city of Prague itself, a dynamic and important urban center of medieval Central Europe that has too often been relegated to the shadowy edges of the standard depictions of the Middle Ages. Prague’s integration into the larger history and historiography of medieval Europe confirms elements of the traditional story of the later Middle Ages, one developed almost exclusively from studies of Europe’s northern and western edges, but challenges others, ultimately pointing to the need for a new synthesis.

2. Historiographies: Medieval Religion, Topography, and “Pre-Hussite” Prague

The power that Charles IV wielded over the course of his thirty-two-year reign to shape his capital’s topography constitutes an important element of the story of medieval Prague. Inspired by the resulting artistic and architectural artifacts—from the glistening

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mosaic adorning the cathedral’s south porch to the walls and squares that defined Charles’s New Town—historians and art historians have employed concepts like propaganda and political self-representation to elaborate increasingly sophisticated (and convincing) theories to explain Charles IV’s motivations. This dissertation approaches the emperor’s reshaping of Prague from a different perspective. My concern is less with the motives behind Charles’s deliberate manipulation of the urban environment (though these remain important), and more with its impact—as well as its interaction with a host of other forces and individuals simultaneously shaping the same space. Charles IV, after all, was not alone in medieval Prague. An exclusive focus on the origin of Caroline Prague’s great monuments can make this easy to forget. On the contrary, the urban topography was indeed inhabited, and not only by the faceless crowds who served as backdrops for the emperor’s choreographed coronation procession. My subjects are the individuals who lived and worshipped in the streets and squares, churches and monasteries that together constituted the physical environment of Prague.

This dissertation, in other words, is not exclusively or even primarily a study of Prague’s urban topography. Rather, it explores how that topography (and the people who shaped it) framed and structured local religion. I am interested especially in the religious

acts, impulses, and energies performed and exhibited by the people living within Prague’s expanding walls. Medieval religion has long attracted scholarly interest, but many of its practices and practitioners remain tantalizingly elusive quarry. The rubrics and narratives applied to this task too often prove ill-equipped to capture its complexities. The eclipse of traditional ecclesiastical history within the historical profession reflects (among many other things) a widespread dissatisfaction with the limitations of normative sources, written and read by the Latin-educated elite. What can the great men and great ideas of medieval Latin Christendom, so the reasoning goes, really tell us about the beliefs and practices of the great mass of medieval Europeans, let alone of an individual or small community living in a particular part of the European landscape? Increasing interest in the roles of religion in medieval society—religion’s ‘social meaning’—has inspired greater attention to the religion of the lay people who composed the vast majority of that society. Historians have consequently mined folklore and a wide range of other sources to unearth a ‘popular religion’ separate from and often opposed to the text-centered, institution-based religion of the learned ‘elite.’

This explicit assertion of the duality of medieval religion (and, more generally, of medieval culture) has now largely fallen out of favor among scholars, widely rejected as simplistic and distorting (though its powerful underlying assumptions remain influential). Recent attention has turned instead to the multiplicity and diversity inherent in medieval religion. Historians have especially endeavored to represent the religion of the

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underrepresented, including women, heretics (or supposed heretics), and all those who wrote and read vernacular religious texts.\textsuperscript{14} Others, by portraying the more-or-less unified ‘local religion’ of a particular place, have raised the awareness of (at least potential) geographical diversity within medieval Christendom.\textsuperscript{15} My approach reflects the influence of both these trends. Rejecting both monolithic and dualistic conceptions of medieval religion, I marshal a wide range of sources to represent multiple aspects of Prague’s religious culture from various perspectives: female and male, poor and rich, lay and clerical, secular and regular. Continuity—among the inhabitants and the topics of this study—is provided by shared space. Like students of local religion, I invoke geography to organize and unite disparate elements of the religious culture. But I am also interested in the functions of the local, physical space—the topography—within the religious culture.

Historians have long attended to the physical spaces of the past. More than a century ago, Václav Vladivoj Tomek based his magisterial history of Prague largely upon his own extensive research into the spatial composition of the medieval and early modern city. The results included not only the extensive topographical sections of his multi-volume \textit{Dějepis města Prahy} (History of the city of Prague), but also his invaluable “topography”: \textit{Základy starého místopisu pražského} (Foundations of the topography of Prague).

\textsuperscript{14} For orientation, see John Van Engen’s recent historiographical article, which can be read as a sequel to his 1986 article cited above: “The Future of Medieval Church History,” \textit{Church History} 71 (2002): 492-522.

\textsuperscript{15} Admittedly, the development of the concept of local religion has been driven more by the attempt to find a suitable replacement for the increasingly discredited model of popular religion than an effort to propagate a theory of geographical religious diversity. See, for example, William A. Christian, \textit{Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain} (Princeton, 1981). For the expanding research on parishes, see chapter 1, p. 34.
old Prague). In an etymological sense, topography (or *mistopis* in Czech) simply means the writing of space. Accordingly, Tomek’s *Foundations* gathered a wide array of textual material to serve as the raw material from which he crafted long prose descriptions of local spaces. For Tomek, topography simply meant the written description of a particular locality. In English, this primary (and most etymologically faithful) definition of topography has become archaic. The element of writing has increasingly been overshadowed by the space itself. “Topography” now more commonly refers to the specific physical characteristics of a place. Topography can be seen with the eye, described by the pen, or represented cartographically on a “topographical” map. In this dissertation, I repeatedly employ the word in precisely this manner, to refer to the complex of physical elements that defined, shaped, and composed the urban space of medieval Prague.

For Tomek, topography was an essential ancillary science for the historian. Since his time, a modest Czech tradition of historical topography has continued to advance the study of the physical space of medieval Prague. In the wider scholarship, however, the

16 Dějepis města Prahy, 2d ed., 12 vols. (Prague, 1892-1906); Základy starého mistopisu pražského, 2 vols (Prague, 1866-1875).

17 The English word derives from the Greek noun *topos* (place) and verb *graphein* (to write), whereas the Czech *mistopis* is composed from the literal translations of these words: *místo* (place) and *psát* (to write).


19 For a justification and brief survey of the scholarship on the historical topography of Prague, see Jiří Čarek and Zdena Pelikánová, “K významu studia historického mistopisu” (On the importance of the study of historical topography), *Pražský sborník historický* (1966): 5-9. The authors relate here the loss of the greater part of a decade’s worth of Jiří Čarek’s topographical research in the 1945 fire at Old Town’s town hall (7).
study of medieval space has hardly been confined to the status of a *Hilfswissenschaft*. Archaeology, art history, historical geography, and particular schools of historical scholarship (notably the *Annales* school) all agree on the central importance of historical space, though they approach its study with diverse methods, theories, and terminologies. “Topography,” for example, appears frequently in archaeological and art historical scholarship on the Middle Ages, both of which focus primarily on human manipulations of space and on urban environments. Geography and the *Annales* school of French history, on the other hand, tend to prefer “geography” to “topography,” ecology to human architecture, and rural regions to cities (though admittedly many counter-examples to these tendencies could be adduced).  

More recently, various disciplinary treatments of space have begun to converge, or rather to overlap, not least through the powerful influence of a series of (mostly French) philosophers and social theorists. To be sure, different disciplines continue to

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21 These include Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, and Pierre Bourdieu. A recent work from the discipline of geography provides a convenient survey of contemporary theories of space by bringing together analyses of the spatial theorizing of all these and several other thinkers: *Thinking Space*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, Critical Geographies 9 (London, 2000).
“do space differently.”\textsuperscript{22} Yet the vocabulary of space and metaphors of mapping
proliferate across the spectrum of academic writing, as do the names (and sometimes the
ideas) of a favored few theorists. Medieval historians too have entered this stream, and
not just through the adoption of “a geographical idiom of margins, spaces and borders.”\textsuperscript{23}
Recent studies have explored the negotiated space of early medieval immunity privileges,
the imagined cartographies of later medieval city dwellers, and the contested
topographies of papal Avignon.\textsuperscript{24}

Like these historians, I enlist space as an analytic tool and an interpretive frame,
in my case for the study of medieval urban religious culture. I do not envision my
dissertation as a case study for a particular spatial theory or terminology. Instead, I
invoke the topography of Prague because I find it a powerful tool for historical analysis
and because I am convinced of the social, political, cultural, and religious significance of
space within the medieval city. I consider topography, furthermore, as an apparatus and a
sign of power. At its core, my dissertation is a study of the intersections and interactions
of power, religion, and space within an extraordinary late medieval city.

This approach allows me to circumvent the historical narratives that have
previously dominated the study of religion in fourteenth-century Prague. The religious
culture of Charles IV’s Prague has most often been considered in light of Bohemia’s

\textsuperscript{22} Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, “Introduction,” in \textit{Thinking Space}, ed. Crang and Thrift, 1.

\textsuperscript{23} Preface, \textit{Thinking Space}, ed. Crang and Thrift, xi.

\textsuperscript{24} Barbara H. Rosenwein, \textit{Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in
Early Medieval Europe} (Ithaca, NY, 1999); Daniel Lord Smail, \textit{Imaginary Cartographies: Possession and
Identity in Late Medieval Marseille} (Ithaca, NY, 1999); Joëlle Rollo-Koster, “The Politics of Body Parts:
Contested Topographies in Late-Medieval Avignon,” \textit{Speculum} 78 (2003): 66-98. See also Barbara A.
Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, eds., \textit{Medieval Practices of Spaces}, Medieval Cultures 23 (Minneapolis,
2000).
subsequent history—namely the disruptive and defining Hussite revolution of the early fifteenth century. When not distracted by the cultural and political glory of the reign of Charles IV, historians have looked to the later decades of the fourteenth century for the causes of what the pre-eminent living Hussite scholar has cautiously termed “an anomaly of European history.” Within the structures of Czech historiography, the fourteenth-century belongs firmly to the “pre-Hussite” period of Bohemian history. Religious historians especially have endeavored to discover in fourteenth-century Prague the inspirations and stimuli of the religious upheavals that surrounded Jan Hus and his followers. This teleological search for the forerunners of Hus inevitably distorts the fourteenth-century situation by highlighting continuities and marginalizing discontinuities. It may be an important strategy for understanding the history of the fifteenth century, but the “pre-Hussite” model proves completely inadequate to capture the complex religious culture of fourteenth-century Prague. I discuss particular examples of this model in subsequent chapters. There I also consider in more detail the parallel attempts to locate a few of fourteenth-century Prague’s key figures—some of the most powerful shapers of the religious topography—within larger narratives of European humanism or religious reform. For the moment, it will suffice to note that my topographical approach to Prague’s medieval religious culture purposefully avoids these dominant master narratives in the hope of elucidating what they occlude.

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3. The Topography of Prague under Charles IV

Many, perhaps most, of the elements of Prague’s religious culture could be found in one or another medieval city, if not in the same precise combination. The same approach to medieval religion and topography could therefore be applied elsewhere. Similar elements, parallel patterns, can be traced in other places. But my study explores the religion that was grounded in the particular topography of Prague. Prague, I would also argue, was exceptional, even unique, in the fourteenth-century: an important cultural, political, and economic center for Central Europe.27 The broader historiography of medieval cities has nevertheless tended to neglect it. The Czech-language scholarship that proudly celebrates the city’s medieval achievements has understandably escaped the attention of most foreign scholars (with the notable exception of German historians, who have rightly regarded Prague as one of the great medieval cities of the Holy Roman Empire).28 Political, ideological, and academic divisions have increased Prague’s isolation from the mainstream of international medieval historiography, especially English language historiography, with its own geographical center of gravity located much further west. Modern conceptions of national identity, bolstered by Cold War political barriers and accompanying mental categories, have often consigned medieval Bohemia to “eastern Europe,” a place where western historians of medieval Europe rarely

27 Central Europe is an idea rather than a geographical entity. I use the term to describe the lands of the medieval Holy Roman Empire together with the kingdoms of Poland and Hungary. The latter are now both normally included with Bohemia as the core lands of “East Central Europe” (see below, n. 29).

28 The majority of relevant literature is accordingly in Czech, and therefore inaccessible to many of the scholars who have written comparative studies of medieval cities. The inevitable result is the continued marginal position of Prague even in extensively researched, recent surveys like that of David Nicholas (The Later Medieval City 1300-1500 [London, 1997]). The relatively brief appearances Prague makes in his survey do not fully reflect, I would argue, its status (for example) as the home of the imperial court for one-quarter of the period under consideration (1348-1400), though they do reflect Prague’s position within the scholarship.
venture. Even “East Central Europe,” the appellation now preferred by many scholars, continues to segregate Prague from the rest of the empire to which it belonged in the Middle Ages.29 For these reasons, and despite a growing acknowledgment of late medieval Prague’s significance, the city of Charles IV remains marginal in medieval scholarship.30 A brief topographical orientation, together with an analysis of Prague’s place within the geography of medieval Europe, is therefore in order.

Medieval Prague was a conglomerate of settlements straddling a bend in the Vltava River. Above loomed the two fortified hills of Prague Castle and Vyšehrad. A tenth-century Jewish traveler from Spain marveled, in Arabic, at its stone (castle?) buildings and its thriving international market.31 But like many other cities of “younger Europe” (roughly, the regions never incorporated into the civilizing Roman empire), the ancient human settlements on this site only began to exhibit unequivocal urban

29 East Central Europe is defined variously, but a standard, minimalist construction includes the Czech lands (later Czechoslovakia, now the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary, and Poland. For a recent discussion of this and other terms applied to these regions, see Piotr S. Wandycz, The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe From the Middle Ages to the Present, 2d ed. (London, 2001), 1-11. Wandycz’s Map 1, “East Central Europe in the late fifteenth century,” marks the area of his book’s study and graphically illustrates the problem of defining medieval (and especially fourteenth-century) Bohemia as a constituent of East Central Europe: it cuts off Bohemia from the rest of the Holy Roman Empire, including Nuremberg and even other nearby Luxemburg lands like Brandenburg, and instead connects it with Vilnius, Kiev, and the Black Sea coast (12).

30 One of the numerous recent undergraduate textbooks for that typically American course, “Western Civilization,” begins its chapter on the later Middle Ages with a description of Prague, Charles IV, Peter Parler, and St. Vitus cathedral. This account locates the Bohemian capital, described as “one of the most splendid cities in Europe,” within “Central Europe” (Mark Kishlansky, Patrick Geary, and Patricia O’Brien, Civilization in the West, 5th ed. (New York, 2003), 304-5.

31 The brief description of Ibrāhīm ibn Yaʿqūb, the first surviving visitor’s account of Prague, has earned a prominent place within Czech history. Several contributions from a recent conference address various aspects of his testimony and its interpretation: Petr Charvát and Jiří Prosecký, eds., Ibrahim Ibn Ya’qub at-Turtushi: Christianity, Islam and Judaism Meet in East-Central Europe, c. 800-1300 A.D.: Proceedings of the International Colloquy (Prague, 1996).
characteristics in the high Middle Ages. Over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the population shifted increasingly from the suburbs of the two castles to the cradle of the Vltava on the right bank. There a marketplace—now Old Town Square—is attested from the early twelfth century. At the same time, many of the local Jewish residents, some from German lands, began to concentrate in the same area. A succession of thirteenth-century rulers imported German colonists, swelling and diversifying the population. The same rulers (now kings, not dukes) fortified the main settlements on both sides of the river. Prague (as it was collectively known by then) seemed poised to expand when Přemysl Otakar II (1253-78), the most illustrious of these kings, nearly brought the imperial crown to Prague. Instead, Rudolf of Hapsburg cut off Otakar’s imperial aspirations, and his life, on the battlefield in 1278. At his death, Prague consisted of a modest but well-fortified group of settlements; one on each side of the river had achieved the legal status of a city.

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33 This does not include the town of St. Gall, which was incorporated into Old Town near the end of the thirteenth century (See chapter 2, pp. 88-89). For the history of Prague, Václav Vladivoj Tomek’s twelve-part Dějepis města Prahy (DMP) remains fundamental for the period before the seventeenth century. None of the many subsequent works has attempted to match its detail or scope. These include Josef Janáček, ed., Dějiny Prahy (History of Prague) (Prague, 1964) and Janáček, Malé dějiny Prahy (A brief history of Prague) (Prague, 1968). Jaroslav Mezník’s Praha před husitskou revolucí (Prague before the Hussite Revolution) (Prague, 1990), like some other Czech scholarship appearing in the early 1990s, was completed two decades earlier but refused publication for political reasons. Despite its more general name, it is in fact a study of the nobility in Old Town in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Other works have focused on the architectural and artistic elements of Prague, e.g., Oskar Schüer, Prag: Kultur / Kunst / Geschichte, 3d. ed. (Munich, 1935); Emanuel Poche, ed. Praha středověká: Architektura, sochařství, malířství, umělecké řemeslo (Medieval Prague: architecture, sculpture, painting, artistic crafts), vol. 1 of Čtvero knih o Praze (Four books about Prague), (Prague, 1983). Among the many studies dedicated to only one part of Prague, two stand out: Vilém Lorenc, Nové město Pražské (Prague New Town), (Prague, 1973), published in German as Das Prag Karls IV., trans. Peter Zieschang (Stuttgart, 1982); and Dobroslav Libal and Jan Muk, Staré město Pražské: Architektonický a urbanistický vývoj (Prague Old Town: Architectural and urban development), (Prague, 1996). The most recent synthetic histories of Prague, incorporating some results from the generations of intervening research since Tomek,
By the beginning of Charles’s reign, a third distinct city had been established. Charles added a fourth in 1348. Each of the four had its own city privileges and government. They even followed different legal codes. The youngest at the time of Charles’s accession was Hradčany, the populated area outside the gate of Prague Castle (hrad). Lesser Town lay below, along the Vltava’s western bank. Prague’s only bridge provided Lesser Town’s residents access to Old or Greater Town, which had been the first part of Prague to have received city status.

Charles IV dramatically increased Prague’s urban area in 1348 by establishing New Town, or Charles’s Town, a centerpiece of the emperor’s grand vision for his capital city (vnser hoepstat). Its impressive new fortifications encompassed a series of

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34 No foundation charter survives for Hradčany, and the first documentary evidence of its existence appears during the early part of Charles IV’s reign. However, historians have generally assumed that it was established at some time during the reign of King John (1310-46) (Jiří Vančura, Hradčany, Pražský Hrad [Hradčany, Prague Castle] [Prague, 1976]; 78; Privilegia civitatum Pragensium, ed. Jaromír Čelakovský, Codex juris municipalis regni Bohemiae 1 [Prague, 1886], XCII; DMP1.556-57).

35 Before the establishment of New Town and Hradčany, Lesser Town often appears in the sources as “Nova civitas sub castro Pragensi” or “civitas suburbii castri Pragensis,” but during the reign of Charles IV is normally called “Minor civitas Pragensis” (attested from 1330) or “Parva civitas” (1337). The modern designation of the area, “Malá strana” (Small Side) seems to have been used first in the fifteenth century (Privilegia civitatum Pragensium, ed. Čelakovský, LIV).

36 The stone Judith bridge was badly damaged during a 1342 flood. A temporary wooden bridge served until 1357, when the new Charles bridge was begun by the cathedral architect, Pete Parler (Dobroslav Libal, “Doba Lucemburská” (The Luxemburg period), in Staré Město pražské, ed. Libal and Jan Muk, 165-69). Previously known simply as “civitas Pragensis,” the area now known as Old Town began to be referred to as “Antiqua” or, more commonly, “Major civitas Pragensis” after the establishment of Lesser Town (Privilegia civitatum Pragensium, ed. Čelakovský, XII).

37 Charles IV used this language when, in 1347, he first announced his intentions to create a new town on the site of the suburbs and fields (“furstat, ekern, erbe vnd felde”) outside of Old Town, which he described as “vnser Groser stat zu Prage, die vnser vns ksungirechs zu Behem stul vnd hoep ist” (Privilegia civitatum Pragensium, ed. Čelakovský, 73 no. 48). He clearly intended his future capital to include both
suburban settlements, villages, and fields. (See Map 1.) But Charles’s ambition was not the sole factor to determine the precise course of the new walls. That was dictated as well by the physical topography of the land itself and the decisions of generations of previous settlers. The New Town wall simply connected river bank to river bank. It began by incorporating the ancient (predominately German) suburban community at Poříčí, then followed the physical features of the land as it extended south and west, eventually joining the fortified Vyšehrad hill above the river.38

Charles himself laid the wall’s first stone within a few weeks of issuing New Town’s foundation charter.39 Chroniclers testified that in 1350, after only two years of construction, the entire 3½ kilometer circuit was complete.40 A decade later, the same factors guided the circuit of new fortifications on the other side of the river, where the new walls looped south from Prague Castle to the Vltava. Together Charles’s two fortification projects quadrupled the size of Prague and created the largest walled urban area (seven hundred hectares) north of the Alps. The great medieval cities of London, Paris, and even Florence occupied smaller spaces. In all of Europe, only the walls of Rome and Constantinople circumscribed larger areas.41 This, indeed, was a ground plan worthy of an emperor’s city.

Old Town and New Town, unified as one town (cf. Privilegia civitatum Pragensium, ed. Čelakovský, 81 no. 49).

38 For a description of the pre-existing settlements in the area of New Town, see Lorenc, Nové město Pražské, 23-39.

39 Francis of Prague, Chronicon, 202.

40 Lorenc, Nové město Pražské, 75-81.

Map 1: The Cities of Prague under Emperor Charles IV (1346-78)
Within these walls, a network of streets and two major marketplaces, carefully aligned with Old Town’s pre-existing topographical features, paid tribute to the ancient Roman model, with its *cardo* and *decumanus* crossing at right angles. The massive Old Town market square of St. Gall now formed a “T” with the even grander New Town horse market (now Wenceslas square). The new cattle market (Charles square) dwarfed both of them. Indeed, no market square in all of Europe could compare to the latter, which occupied more than eighty thousand square meters. Charles IV filled this new urban space with new churches and imported religious houses. Tax incentives and detailed building regulations stimulated the rapid construction of private stone houses along the new streets and markets, though the special invitation extended to Jewish settlers proved less successful.

New streets, squares, churches, monasteries, and houses quickly transformed the physical topography of New Town. Yet Charles’s plans for Prague encompassed more than wall-building and city planning. Tirelessly he sought to transform Bohemia’s undisputed urban hub into an important political, cultural, economic, and religious center for the entire Holy Roman Empire. The frequent residence of his imperial court in Prague, and the permanent presence of certain elements of that court, undoubtedly

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42 For the pattern of streets and market squares, see Lorenc, *Nové město Pražské*, 59-73; on page 72 nn. 32 and 33, Lorenc compares the dimensions of the major medieval and modern market squares of Europe. Only the modern Piazza San Pietro of Rome (57,000 m²) and Place de la Concorde of Paris (74,042 m²) rival the size of what is now known as Charles Square in Prague (though the square’s mature trees now make the space seem more like a park than a square). Lorenc gives the dimensions of the medieval Wenceslas square at 41,730 m² and St. Gall square at 28,500; for comparison, Siena’s medieval Campo measured 10,800 m² and Florence’s Piazza Signoria 8,080 m².

43 The foundation charted stipulated that construction of the houses built on newly delineated plots had to commence within a month and result in a stone building ready for residency within 18 months (*Privilegia civitatum Pragensium*, ed. Čelakovský, 79-85 nos. 49-50; Lorenc, *Nové město Pražské*, 97-104).
contributed to that goal. In conjunction with the foundation of New Town, Charles IV also established the first university (studium generale) in Central Europe, which over the subsequent decades drew masters and students from the entire region. (Before 1348, the nearest university towns had been Italian, French, and English.) Likewise, though with somewhat less success, the emperor strove to re-route important long-distance trade through Prague. He encouraged merchants to pass through the Bohemian capital, for example, on their journeys between Bruges and Venice. The addition of several new churches and monasteries (discussed further in chapter 1) and the introduction of innumerable holy relics (the topic of chapter 5) increased Prague’s reputation as a center

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45 A January 1347 papal privilege to found a university in Prague is the first documentation of Charles’s intention; he mentions the university in the March 1348 foundation document of New Town and issues the university’s own foundation charter in April 1348. For an introduction to the substantial literature, now see Michal Svatoš, ed., Dějiny univerzity Karlovy I: 1347/48-1622 (History of Charles University) (Prague, 1995); more recent contributions address, among other things, the question of when the university in fact began to function: Peter Moraw, “Die Prager Universitäten des Mittelalters im europäischen Zusammenhang,” Schriften der Sudetendeutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste 20 (1999): 97-129; František Smahel, “Die Anfänge der Prager Universität: Kritische Reflexionen zum Jubiläum eines ‘nationalen Monuments,’” Historica NS 3-4 (1996-97): 7-50. For an introduction to the larger context of late medieval universities and of the numerous other Central European universities established in the later decades of the fourteenth century, see Jacques Verges, “Patterns,” in A History of the University in Europe, vol. 1, Universities in the Middle Ages, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge, 1992), 55-60.

of religion and pilgrimage—one more aspect in the emperor’s ambitious program to
enhance and adorn his capital city.

. . . and from Nuremberg, Charles IV withdrew to Prague, which now is
the seat of the archbishop (metropolis) of the kingdom of Bohemia; there
one now finds the seat of the empire, which was formerly at Rome, later at
Constantinople, but now exists at Prague.” 47

With these words, Henry of Diessenhofen (ca. 1300-1376) described the new
identity of Prague: a second (or third) Rome. The emperor endeavored to mirror this
lofty status in the physical reality of the city. In part, Charles succeeded. His court, the
new religious institutions, the university, the countless construction projects: together
they drew scholars and stonemasons, artists and artisans, from throughout the region and
beyond. From German university masters to Avignon craftsmen, they (and many
immigrants from rural Bohemia) swelled the population, even if parts of the expansive
intramural area remained sparsely populated. It is difficult to quantify the result
precisely. Attempts to determine the medieval population of any city yield notoriously
unreliable results of an incredible variety. For Prague in the third quarter of the
fourteenth-century, these estimates range from thirty to one hundred thousand. Most
recent writers accept a compromise figure of forty thousand. Forty thousand inhabitants
would rank Prague among the larger European cities outside the Italian peninsula, second

47 “De Maguncia vero ivit Aquisgrani.... Et inde reversus Magunciam in die palmarum post
officium misse peractum pervenit in Nürrenberg... et ibidem sanctum pascha peregit. Et inde [Karolus
quartus] Pragam secessit, que nunc metropolis regni Bohemie existit, ubi nunc sedes imperii existit, que
olim Rome, tandem Constantinopolim, nunc vero Prage degit,” [Chronicon], in Henricus de Diissenhofen
und andere Geschichtsquellen Deutschlands im späteren Mittelalter, ed. by Alfons Huber from the
Nachlass of Johann Friedrich Boehmer, Fontes rerum Germanicarum, Geschichtsquellen Deutschlands 4
(Stuttgart, 1868), 116.
only to Cologne among cities of the empire north of the Alps. The more controversial estimates of eighty-five thousand or more would place Prague among a handful of Europe’s largest cities.48

Prague’s population was enough to make it one of the great cities of fourteenth-century Europe. But, it must be said, the inhabitants of the medieval Holy Roman Empire never looked upon Prague in the way that the ancient Romans saw Rome. Nor did Prague even occupy the same position within the empire that the capital cities of Paris and London held in their respective kingdoms. In the kingdom of Bohemia, all roads led to Prague. But the medieval empire had no single center. Nor did Charles IV attempt to create one. Prague served him as his personal capital, his Residenzstadt, the new seat of his increasingly powerful Luxemburg dynasty; but he continued to cultivate other cities—especially Nuremberg—as important secondary centers of his imperial rule. His

48 Population estimates for medieval cities are inexact at best, but there is no doubt that Prague belonged among the largest cities of the Empire north of the Alps. The most commonly repeated estimate for Prague’s fourteenth-century population is 40,000, which would place it behind only Cologne, with perhaps 55,000 inhabitants (e.g., David Nicholas, The Later Medieval City, 39, 70). On the other hand, one standard work on urban population gives a much higher estimate of 95,000 in the year 1400 (representing an astonishing increase of 65,000 since 1300), compared with 40,000 for Cologne (reduced from 54,000 in 1300). Such a large population would easily place Prague among the largest ten European cities in 1400 or even—as this work claims—third only to Paris and Venice (Tertius Chandler, Four Thousand Years of Urban Growth: An Historical Census, 2d ed. [Lewiston, NY, 1987], 17-18, 528). Paul Bairouch, Jean Batou and Pierre Chèvre accept Chandler’s population estimate of 95,000 (from the book’s first edition), which would place Prague sixth in their list of largest European cities in 1400—although they in fact inexplicably omit Prague from that list. (La population des villes européennes: banque de données et analyse sommaire des résultats 800-1850. The population of European cities: Data Bank and Short Summary of Results [Geneva, 1988], 68, 6, 277). For comparison, Florence’s population has been estimated to be between 90,000 and 120,000 before 1348, although it lost up to 65% of that by the early fifteenth century (David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, Tuscans and their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427 [New Haven, 1985], 65-7). Vilém Lorenc reviewed the range of previous estimate for the reign of Charles IV (from 30,000 to 100,000, the latter being the indirect inspiration for Chandler’s high estimate). Lorenc himself carefully calculates his own estimate of 85,000 (in the text) or 80,000 (in a footnote) (Nové město Pražské, 129-34). Nevertheless, the estimate of 40,000 (or Jaroslav Mezník’s of 30,000-40,000) remains the most widely accepted (Mezník, “Der ökonomische Charakter Prags im 14. Jahrhundert,” 45-47, 81-83; cf. František Graus, “Prag als Mitte Böhmens 1346-1421,” in Zentralität als Problem der mittelalterlichen Stadtgeschichtsforschung, ed. Emil Meyner, (Cologne, 1979), 26 n. 24; Eduard Maur, “Obyvatelstvo českých zemí ve středověku” [The population of the Czech lands in the Middle Ages], in Dějiny obyvatelstva českých zemí [The population history of the Czech lands], 2d ed., ed. Pravdová Božena [Prague, 1998], 50).
famous Golden Bull, for instance, stipulated that every new emperor should hold his first Reichstag at Nuremberg. As Peter Moraw has argued, the empire of Charles IV possessed no single capital, but rather an axis of powerful cities from Frankfurt to Wroclaw (Breslau), with Nuremberg and Prague as its two most important points. Charles IV’s achievement consisted in part of rapidly boosting Prague into the company of these other cities, just as he propelled the Luxemburgs to rival and exceed the other ruling families of Central Europe. The words of Henry of Diessenhofen quoted above, unique among non-Bohemian chroniclers in their comparison of Prague to Rome, testify to the novelty of Prague’s status. The chronicler considered it necessary to explain, even justify, the existence of Prague on the emperor’s itinerary after stops in Aachen, Mainz, and Nuremberg, cities whose impeccable imperial credentials did not need to be repeated. The late addition of Prague to this cadre of cities was, after all, remarkable. That the Bohemian capital came to exceed the others in many respects, even to function as the first among them, testifies to the vision and achievement of its ruler. Charles IV spent much of his reign expanding (through marriage and by purchase) the lands of the


51 This is the argument of Peter Moraw, “Zur Mittelpunktshoibung Prags,” 457-58.
Bohemian crown. At his death in 1378, Prague was the seat of the territories of a powerful Luxemburg dynasty that seemed likely to dominate the empire and the region for generations to come (see Map 2).

Prague’s rapid rise to prominence began with its 1344 elevation to metropolitan status, leapt forward with the 1346 election of Charles IV as King of the Romans, and advanced still further with the 1348 foundation of its university. The city’s physical topography echoed these changes, from the Gothic cathedral taking shape within Prague castle to the new circuits of walls on both sides of the river (1348-1350; ca. 1358-60). The timing of this golden age of Prague (as its historians have often considered it) is remarkable. Later fourteenth-century Prague witnessed no sign of the “waning” or “crisis” often associated with this century elsewhere in Europe. This ethnically and linguistically diverse city flourished then as at no other time. In precisely the years when much of Europe was suffering the devastating effects of the Black Death, Prague’s nearly unscathed population witnessed the development of its sparsely populated suburbs into a


\[53\] There is a huge and continuing literature devoted to this crisis model; its classic expression, which appeared first in Dutch in 1919, is that of Johan Huizinga: The Autumn of the Middle Ages, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago, 1996). One of the better, more recent expressions that also relates particularly to Central Europe is František Graus, Pest – Geissler – Judenmorde: Das 14. Jahrhundert als Krizezeit (Göttingen, 1987).
Map 2: The Holy Roman Empire under Emperor Charles IV
booming New Town.\textsuperscript{54} Renovation and construction filled the city, especially in New Town, where houses, monasteries, and parish churches rose stone by stone. Those who know twenty-first-century Berlin can perhaps imagine the manic energy and turmoil that countless construction projects must have added to the Prague of Charles IV.

4. Mapping the Dissertation

The religious culture of the flourishing, hectic Prague of Charles IV was neither monolithic nor simple. No single rubric or theme can encompass all of its energies and

\textsuperscript{54} By all accounts, Bohemia’s population did not suffer significantly from the plague until 1380, and even that terrifying outbreak did not cause nearly the demographic devastation that the mid-century Black Death had already inflicted upon many other parts of Europe. For a recent, careful discussion of scholarship on the Black Death within its fourteenth-century context, see Howard Kaminsky, “From Lateness to Waning to Crisis,” 112-120. Kaminsky’s brief reference to a series of “plague years” in Bohemia—beginning in 1349-50 and closely paralleling experience elsewhere in Europe—may however mislead some readers (112). The plague did indeed touch Bohemia at various times, most seriously in 1380 when perhaps ten to fifteen percent of the population perished, but with nothing like the severity of elsewhere in Europe. A Prague chronicler writing before 1355 reported the 1348 outbreak of a “maxima et horribilis ephydimia et pestilencia” in Italy and elsewhere but claimed that plague only gained a foothold in Bohemia before being blown away by a cold, fresh wind: “mortalitas quoque ad Austrian eciam pervenit et in regno Boemie inceperat dominari, sed aura recens et frigida ipsam eliminavit” (Chronicon Francisci Pragensis, ed. Jana Zachová [Prague, 1997], 203-205). Both Jaroslav Mezník and Eduard Maur agree that the earlier waves of plague had some effect in Bohemia, but that only the 1380 outbreak was devastating. Thus Brno, in the part of the kingdom most affected by the Black Death, may have lost ten percent of its population in 1349, but in fact the city apparently gained inhabitants between 1348 and 1365 (Mezník, “Mory v Brně ve 14. století” [Plagues in Brno in the 14th century], Mediaevalia historica bohemica 3 [1993]: 228-31; Eduard Maur, “Přispěvěk k demografické problematice předhusitské Čech (1346 až 1419)” [A contribution to the demographic issues of pre-Hussite Bohemia (1346 to 1419)], Acta universitatis caroliniae, philosophica et historicapro Cum 1989, no. 1]: 7-71); Maur, “Morová epidemie roku 1380 v Čechách” [The plague epidemic in the year 1380 in Bohemia], Historická demografie 10 [1986]: 37-71). These and other recent studies tend to confirm the general arguments made by František Graus, “Autour de la peste noire au XIVe siècle en Bohême,” Annales ESC 18 (1963): 720-24. There was also significant regional variation, even in 1380 (Martin Nodl, “Morová epidemie na Rakovnicku v roce 1380: modelová studie k životu farního kléru” (The plague epidemic in the rural deanery of Rakovník in 1380: a model study on the life of parish clergy), in Facta Probant Homines: Sborník přispěvků k životnímu jubileu Prof. Dr. Zdeněk Hledíkové (Collection of contributions in honor of Professor Dr. Zdeňka Hledíková), ed. Ivan Hlaváček and Jan Hrdina (Prague, 1998), 301-310). For differing views of the significance of the 1380 plague, see Peter Čornej, ed., Dějiny zemí koruny české (History of the lands of the Czech crown), vol. 1 (Prague, 1992), 133-37; Jaroslav Čechura, “Mor, krize a husitské revoluce” (Plague, crisis and the Hussite revolution), ČČH 92 (1994): 286-303; Jaroslav Mezník, “Mor z roku 1380 a příčiny husitské revoluce” (The plague of the year 1380 and the causes of the Hussite revolution) ČČH 93 (1995): 702-710. The only article in English on the subject, based upon a small, eclectic selection of English-language scholarship, unfortunately does not merit attention (Ken Lastufka, “Bohemia During the Medieval Black Death: A Pocket of Immunity,” East European Quarterly 19 [1985]: 275-80).
complexities. This is, in fact, a central claim of the dissertation. Asserting this multiplicity while maintaining a narrative unity has been one of the project’s challenges. Each chapter approaches the central theme from a different perspective; time and space supply the fundamental unities. The limits of Charles IV’s reign (1346-78) offer convenient temporal boundaries, but the heart of the study focuses even more precisely on the second half of the emperor’s rule. The shared physical environment is the city of Prague, though individual landmarks—like the St. Vitus cathedral and the market square of St. Gall—stand out as unifying topographical features. As I have already indicated, however, Prague’s topography is far more than a picturesque backdrop for this study. Throughout the dissertation, I explore the interaction between religion and topography, drawing attention to the people who endeavored to shape and control the physical environment and the impact of the resulting topography on the local religion.

Of the innumerable aspects of the local religious culture that might have been selected, I have chosen four (chapters 2-5). Two factors have guided these choices. First and most important was the haphazard survival of sources, some printed and many unprinted. I was determined, for instance, to write about parishes, which seem to me crucial elements of local religious culture. The selection of the parish of St. Gall in particular and my focus on certain elements of parish life to the exclusion of others was largely dictated, however, by the number and character of extant sources. Secondly, I have been guided by a revisionist’s resolve to avoid the ruts within the well-trodden paths of the historiography. I have accordingly juxtaposed and combined elements that have not normally been considered together—like the preaching of Conrad Waldhauser (typically described as “pre-Hussite” or even “proto-Humanist”) and the new (but
undeniably medieval) cult of the relics of St. Sigismund, both of which animated the people of Prague in 1365. For the same reason, I consistently highlight aspects that the traditional historical narratives have avoided: for example, the role of reformed prostitutes in the religious community of Milíč of Kroměříž.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for the subsequent chapters by establishing the fundamentals of Prague’s sacred topography, starting with the identity, location, number, and character of Prague’s parishes. Re-mapping Prague’s parishes results in a clearer view of the city’s identity and borders, but also in a rejection of too-clear (because unsubstantiated) maps of Prague’s parish boundaries. My account of the ethnic composition of Prague’s parishes likewise highlights salient features but resists any mapping that extrapolates topographical clarity from ambiguous sources. At the same time, I trace through various sources the fundamental ways in which ethnic and religious divisions shaped Prague’s sacred topography. The remainder of the chapter lays out the topography of Prague’s twenty-five religious houses from a wide range of religious orders, with particular attention devoted to the widely varying roles that these communities played in providing pastoral care to Prague’s laity.

The life of Margaret, a resident and sometime citizen of Old Town, provides the framework for the second chapter’s close study of the parish of St. Gall. Her activity as a patron of private altars introduces a discussion of the central place of such altars in the local economy and religious culture. In addition, an innovative analysis of the rents that supported private altars and other benefices allows me to map the invisible topography of the urban and rural properties that supported some of the central activities of the parish and its clerics.
As in many other later medieval cities, two of Prague’s primary providers of pastoral care—the mendicants and the secular parish priests—coexisted uneasily. A series of fourteenth-century confrontations even included outbreaks of violence in the streets. Chapter 3 focuses on the renewed anti-mendicant fervor introduced to Prague by an Austrian Augustinian canon named Conrad Waldhauser in the middle of Charles IV’s reign, as well as on the united and vigorous counterattack mounted by the friars. My re-examination of Waldhauser’s “Apologia,” based on the surviving manuscripts, depicts mendicant-secular relations as a struggle for the control of urban space, exposing the local tremors of a religious fault-line that ran throughout medieval European society.

In the fourth chapter, Prague’s sacred space confronts the space allocated to commercial sex. A close reading of the records of the 1379-80 visitation of Prague allows me to characterize prostitution in later medieval Prague in greater detail than ever before. This background then enriches my re-examination of the life and activities of Milič of Kroměříž, a converted prelate whose preaching ignited a religious passion in many of the city’s prostitutes. Informed by new evidence about the primary, supposedly medieval, source for his life, this account describes Milič’s successful transformation of Prague’s topography of prostitution—he converts “Venice,” the city’s most notorious brothel, into a religious community he entitles “Jerusalem”—as well as his ultimately unsuccessful attempt to reshape Prague’s sacred topography.

No one had more power to transform Prague’s topography than the emperor. Like his foundation of Prague’s new cathedral, New Town, and numerous new religious houses, Charles IV’s unparalleled penchant for collecting relics deeply marked Prague’s geography of sacred places. Prague’s cathedral became a leading European storehouse
for relics gathered from throughout the empire and beyond; new indulgences and new annual feast days drew massive crowds to celebrate the presence the most treasured relics. Chapter 5 explores this process, focusing especially on the neglected cult of St. Sigismund. The translation of his relics successfully implanted the cult of this early medieval Burgundian king into later medieval Bohemia, where his new shrine within Prague’s cathedral immediately drew miracle-seekers from great distances. The long-overlooked record of the resulting miracles allows me to provide a detailed account of how local and regional subjects of Charles IV responded to this new cult, and to map the origin of the (mostly Bohemian) recipients of divine beneficence.

The cult of St. Sigismund also completes the circle of the dissertation, ending where it started: with Emperor Charles IV at the cathedral of St. Vitus. There, through the manipulation of urban space, the emperor anchored the religious culture of his capital city. The ditch was only the beginning.
SPIRES AND STONES: MAPPING PRAGUE’S SACRED TOPOGRAPHY

The sacred spaces of any medieval city tended to dominate its topography. From nearly any vantage point within a city, ecclesiastical towers and spires ruled the skyline. Consecrated by church law and set apart by religious rituals, these spaces together constituted what I have described as urban sacred topography. In fourteenth-century Prague, the new cathedral rising within the hilltop castle represented the pinnacle of this entire landscape. Those who walked Prague’s streets, however, experienced the complex of cathedral and castle primarily as a visual icon of sacred and secular power, ever-present on their horizon. Only occasionally did most of them enter its physical space. The people of Prague instead encountered sacred space most often in the form of the parish churches and religious houses that stood interspersed with their homes in the midst of the city.

Impressive buildings in their own right, some centuries old by the reign of Charles IV, these stone churches and monasteries presented themselves as centers of power and wealth. They served medieval Prague as landmarks. Above all, they at once shaped and reflected the religious culture of Prague’s inhabitants. From baptism to burial, they

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1 Cf. Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago, 1996), 2: “No matter how high and weighty the stone houses of the noblemen or merchants may have been, churches with their profoundly rising masses of stone, dominated the city silhouettes.”
determined the spaces in which the laity and clergy alike practiced all manner of
devotions. Liturgy, preaching, confession, masses for the dead, the cult of saints, the
monastic disciplines: all of this took place within the spaces they defined and enclosed.
On the other hand, these same purposes themselves shaped the sacred spaces and the
entire sacred topography, reflecting the intents and aspirations of their inhabitants.
Without attention to this physical environment, we cannot understand medieval Prague’s
religious culture and all that it embraced.

This chapter offers a bird’s-eye view of this entire landscape of sacred spaces. As
a general account of Prague’s numerous parishes and religious houses, it provides the
context for the subsequent chapters, each of which explores a particular aspect of the
religious culture that flourished within this environment. This chapter, in other words,
sets the stage for the subsequent acts. Yet the stone edifices that are its subject were
neither dead nor empty. Accordingly, this chapter is neither an architectural survey nor a
gazetteer of holy places. Prague was built by and inhabited by people, people who
shaped and controlled the various elements of its topography. These people—and the
institutions they created—inevitably remain its focus.

1.1 Mapping Prague’s Parishes

1.1.1. Parish churches and parish boundaries

Parishes represented the fundamental building blocks of Prague’s sacred
topography. They defined and subdivided the urban landscape and its population. Parish
churches provided the city’s largest indoor public spaces, serving a variety of functions.
The church buildings reflected the identity of the parishioners whose tithes and offerings
helped to build and sustain them, and whose wealth and spiritual aspirations were mirrored in their altars and furnishings. The parish also provided the most immediate point of contact between the urban laity and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Here the teachings of the church and the statutes of the archbishop were to be taught in simple (and vernacular) language to the lay people. Here baptism initiated newborn children into the local and universal church. Its walls and vaults gave context to the Latin liturgy, its graveyard held the Christian dead who remained part of the parish community. Most lay people encountered the human face of the church most directly and intimately in the person of their own parish priest (or his vicar), whose name they knew and to whom they were obligated to confess once yearly. As his neighbors, they were also acquainted with his peccadilloes, as he canonically should have been with theirs. The parish, in short, provides the essential and central *locus* for any study of local religious life.

Medieval parishes, both urban and rural, have attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years. In part this reflects a desire to challenge standard generalizations made about medieval culture by testing them against specific local examples. Frustration with the limitations of “popular religion” as a construct has also encouraged the use of a model based on historical and geographic distinctions—local religion, in other words—rather than on the problematic and increasingly criticized division of society into “popular” and “elite” segments. At the parish level, due attention can also be directed towards regional and local differences. Parish studies lend

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2 In England, for instance, parish studies have been used to carry to the local level a historiographical (and still sometimes confessional) debate about the nature of later medieval religion and the putative need or desire for reformation. Eamon Duffy’s *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven, 1992), provides the outstanding example, but there are several more recent local studies that take up similar questions.
themselves to investigations of medieval community and identity-formation, as well as of rural societies and civic culture.\(^3\) Scholarship on English and Italian parishes in particular has flourished recently, due in part to the nature and quantity of the surviving sources. French and German parishes, however, have not been neglected.\(^4\) Work on Bohemian parishes has understandably lagged behind research on regions that can boast better sources, the attention of more scholars, or both. Much groundwork remains to be done. The following survey combines analyses of previous studies with a new reading of the sources to describe and advance the state of knowledge.

Prague’s parish network developed largely over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in step with the city itself and with Bohemia’s ecclesiastical structure.\(^5\) Mid-thirteenth-century wall-building began to give shape to Prague’s Old Town, the settlement that grew up on the right bank of the Vltava midway between Prague’s two castles. Its walls enclosed numerous chapels and parish churches within their embrace but relegated others on both banks of the river to the *suburbes*. Subsequent

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fortification projects progressively encircled more of the parishes. The majority of the
central churches predated the walls, having been built over the course of the twelfth and
thirteenth centuries by a variety of secular and ecclesiastical patrons. The lack of parish
archives and other sources, however, leaves most of the early development of Prague’s
parishes shrouded in darkness. Not until the mid-fourteenth century does the improved
record-keeping under Prague’s first Archbishop, Arnošt of Pardubice (1344-1364), shed
more light on the situation.6

As in many medieval cities, the original establishment of most Prague parishes
remains obscure. We know that even some of the most important parishes (like St. Mary
of Týn) began as private chapels, achieving parochial status only at later, unknown
dates.7 Architectural studies have helped to date church buildings, yet cannot confirm the
ecclesiastical status of the edifices. The church of Holy Cross the Lesser in Old Town
illustrates the general situation (see Map 1.1, number 30). Standing near the right bank of
the Vltava along the well-traveled route between the river-crossing (later the stone
bridge) and the castle of Vyšehrad, this diminutive Romanesque rotunda can be dated on
architectural grounds to the twelfth century, most likely to shortly after the flood of

6 On the surviving as well as the lost sources for Prague’s parishes, see Ivan Hlaváček, “Zum
Urkunden- und Geschäftsgut der Pfarreien und ihrer Pfarrherren im vorhussitischen Böhmen,”

7 For the most recent and accessible survey of Prague’s individual churches and monasteries, see
Anna Petitova-Bénoliel, L’Eglise à Prague sous la dynastie des Luxembourgeois (1310-1419) (Hilversum,
1996). As the author explains (p. 15), this work synthesizes the fundamental research of Václav Vladivoj
Tomek, Dějepis města Prahy [History of the city of Prague], 2d. ed., 12 vols. (Prague, 1892-1906),
augmenting it primarily with a new reading of the printed editions of many of the sources originally used
by Tomek. Some entries in František Ekert’s church-by-church survey of Prague (not cited by Petitova-
Bénoliel) still contain more extensive information: Posvátná místa královského města Prahy (Most holy sites of
the royal capital city of Prague), 2 vols., (1883-1884; reprint, with an epilogue by Jiří Reinsberg, Prague,
1996).
Yet this church, the oldest preserved Romanesque building in Old Town, appears first in written records only in 1352. It surfaces again in 1369 when the Old Town citizen who was the church’s patron at that time nominated a new parish priest. When it had become a parish church or whether it had always enjoyed parochial privileges cannot be determined with any degree of certainty. Similar circumstances hold for half of the churches identified a century ago by Tomek as likely enjoying parochial status before the foundation of New Town in 1348. Though the architecture of most of them can be dated to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, written confirmation of their existence appears only in the later part of the fourteenth century. Of the remainder, many were first

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9 Tomek, Václav Vladivoj, ed., Registra decimarum papalium (Prague, 1873), 36.

10 LC 2.20 reports the 1369 confirmation of a new parish priest and records the name of his predecessor. Tomek uses circumstantial evidence to suggest the identification of the patron, “Henricus apud S. Leonhardum cius maioris Ciuitatis Prag. patronus,” with Henry Náz, the first known member of what was to be a prominent Prague family. This thesis has not been questioned, but the fact that (according to Tomek) Henry Náz only accepted Old Town citizenship in 1371 reduces the plausibility of the identification (3.146, n. 54; 2.491-2).

11 Zdeněk Dragoun uses the similarity between Romanesque floor tiles found during excavations in the rotunda tiles from the Benedictine monastery of St. John the Baptist at Ostrov (on an island in the Vltava upstream from Prague) to hypothesize a possible connection between the two institutions. He suggests that the rotunda may have begun as a private chapel, part of a noble residence that later donated to the monastery. In this case, the monastery would have held the church patronage (“Výsledky sondáže v rotundě sv. Kříže na Starém Městě pražském” (Results of the investigation in the rotunda of the Holy Cross in Old Town Prague), Archaeologia Historica 17 (1992): 391-392). This theory, probably impossible to verify, unfortunately sheds no more light on the origins of its parochial status, nor does it explain how the patronage came into the hands of a Prague citizen by the later fourteenth century.
reported as parishes in the first half of the fourteenth century, but likewise were undoubtedly built before then.\footnote{DMP 1.401-402, esp. n. 99. For a list of all the churches known to have existed in Prague at the turn of the eleventh to twelfth century, see Jiří Čarek, “K rekonstrukcii vývoje a rozlohy raně feudalní Prahy” (Towards the reconstruction of the development and dimensions of early feudal Prague), PSH (1966): 28-30.}

Tomek counted forty parishes in and around Prague before 1348 (not including Prague Castle and the area of Vyšehrad), and forty-four for the whole territory that Prague came to encompass under Charles IV.\footnote{DMP 1.401-402; 3.25-27.} Subsequent scholars have generally been content to repeat one of these two sums, usually the latter. Establishing a number is more complicated than it might seem, for it depends both on the boundaries selected and the difficult identification or ambiguous status of a few churches. Should the walls be considered the city’s absolute boundaries? Or should scholars follow Prague’s medieval archdeacon and include all parishes within the larger Prague city deanery? What about the churches whose parochial status is debatable? I will leave the detailed arguments for an appendix (see Appendix 1). For the present purposes, it is enough to state my conclusion that Charles IV’s Prague included forty-five (or so!) parishes and to note that the problem raises a series of intriguing questions about how medieval cities defined their boundaries (see Map 1.1).

Forty-five parishes gave Prague by far the most dense parish network in Bohemia. The number of parishes within the diminutive Prague city deanery, for instance, is comparable with the totals of the other, much larger, and predominantly rural, deaneries of the archdeaconry of Prague.\footnote{P-B 51, 54.} As for the more than thirty other royal cities of the
Map 1.1: Parish Churches in Later Fourteenth-century Prague
kingdom, the vast majority could boast only a single parish each.\textsuperscript{15} Forty-five parishes was in fact a substantial number for any medieval European city, placing Prague somewhere in the middle of a wide spectrum. The range is dramatic. Brussels contained only a single parish, whereas London was divided into more than one hundred.\textsuperscript{16} Paris in the fourteenth century held between thirty-three and thirty-five parishes of remarkably different sizes.\textsuperscript{17} Italian cities tended to have many parishes: Venice included about seventy and Florence more than fifty.\textsuperscript{18} Even Padua had twenty-nine parishes in the early fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{19} Cologne, the only city of the Holy Roman empire at the time to rival (or perhaps exceed) the population of Prague, had nineteen (or more?) parishes by the end of the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{20} On the other hand, St. Stephen and St. Michael were


\textsuperscript{16} In Brussels, five dependent chapels enjoyed some parochial privileges but were not technically parishes. The oft-repeated figure of 126 London parishes comes from William FitzStephen’s 1173/74 description of London, in which he inflated the numbers by including the county of Middlesex; Brooke’s map includes 109 parishes, several of which are extramural, (Coste, “L’institution paroissiale,” 308, 306; Christopher N. L. Brooke, “The Ecclesiastical Geography of Medieval Towns,” Miscellanea Historiae Ecclesiasticae 5 (1974): 15, 22).


\textsuperscript{18} David Nicholas, The Later Medieval City 1300-1500 (New York, 1997), 210; Trexler, Public Life in Renaissance Florence, 13 n. 19.

\textsuperscript{19} This includes the cathedral parish (Coste, “L’institution paroissiale,” 307-8).

\textsuperscript{20} Wilhelm Janssen counts nineteen parishes (Das Erzbistum Köln im späten Mittelalter, 1191-1515: Erster Teil (Cologne, 1995), 381-383), whereas Hans Planitz reports twenty parishes for the later medieval city (Die deutsche Stadt im Mittelalter [1954; reprint, Wiesbaden, 1996], 227), and Eberhard Isenmann reports more than twenty at the end of the fourteenth century (Die deutsche Stadt im Spätmittelalter 1250-1500 [Stuttgart, 1988], 216).
later medieval Vienna’s only two parish churches.\footnote{Hans Lentze, “Das Seelgerät in mittelalterlichen Wien” Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte 75, Kanonistische Abteilung 44 (1958): 56-57; Planitz includes Vienna among cities with three parishes (Die deutsche Stadt, 228, n. 12).} Closer to Prague, Nuremberg was divided into two parishes and Regensburg into at least seven.\footnote{Planitz counts seven parishes in Regensburg (Die deutsche Stadt, 227), while Isenmann claims that both Strasbourg and Regensburg had more than nine already in the twelfth century (Die deutsche Stadt im Spätmittelalter, 216-17). Both agree that Nuremberg had two parishes; cf. Fritz Schnelbögl, “Kirche und Caritas,” in Nürnberg: Geschichte einer europäischen Stadt, ed. Gerhard Pfeiffer (Munich, 1971), 100-101.}

As these comparisons makes clear, the published counts of Prague’s parishes are not uniquely muddled; historians of other cities often identify and count a city’s parishes differently. It should also be evident that the number of parishes can by no means serve as an index of a city’s size or population. On the contrary, studies of these cities have confirmed that various local circumstances might encourage or stifle the proliferation of urban parishes. Nor did a paucity of parishes necessarily impoverish urban pastoral care. Chapels could fill some parochial roles and even enjoy some parochial rights. Likewise the social significance of parishes varied according to city. In some, parishes were less important than wards or quarters—civil subdivisions—in forming the identities of urban inhabitants.\footnote{Trexler, Public Life in Renaissance Florence, 11-13.} Nevertheless, the network of parishes formed an essential part of a city’s topography, and the fundamental element of its sacred topography. Their boundaries subdivided the urban space and assigned its inhabitants to the places where they, at the very least, occasionally encountered liturgy and the sacraments. In Prague, a relatively dense network of parishes kept the number of souls served by each church relatively low. This is true especially in comparison with the other, generally parish-poor cities of the German Empire.
It should not be forgotten, however, that Prague was in fact composed of four legally and physically distinct cities. Prague’s fortifications separated not only town from suburb, but also one Prague town from another. Official records identify Prague’s inhabitants not as residents of the urban agglomeration, but rather as citizens or inhabitants of Old Town, New Town, Lesser Town, or Hradčany. Parishes then subdivided these important legal and social entities into smaller communities. Each city had its own characteristics, as did each city’s parish network. Old Town’s relatively small walled area was dwarfed by New Town, but it held eighteen parishes to New Town’s thirteen. Prague’s entire left bank area (both inside and outside of the walls) was home to a mere fourteen parish churches. Hradčany’s walls enclosed only a single parish.

These different parish densities reflected both varying population densities and the respective ages of the settlements. The Old Town parish topography was complete before the middle of the fourteenth century. Its parish boundaries abutted one another tightly; all houses and properties not specifically exempted belonged to a particular parish. There was certainly no room for new parishes. Founders of new chapels hoping to receive tithes from the surrounding houses thus found themselves in tough negotiations before the archbishop’s ecclesiastical officials, eventually succeeding only by agreeing to pay annual indemnities to the affected parishes.24 On the other hand, the new mid-fourteenth-century walls surrounding New Town and Lesser Town incorporated significant portions of rural land. Theirambits owed more to the physical topography of

24 This was true of both Jerusalem and Bethlehem chapels. The founder of the Holy Spirit convent of Benedictine nuns in Old Town, established near the beginning of Charles IV’s reign, also had to pay an indemnity for the lost tithes to the Crosiers with the Red Heart, the religious community that administered the local parish church of Holy Cross the Greater (P-B 136). For Jerusalem, see chapter 4, pp. 253-57.
the region, and especially of its fortified hills, than to pre-existing settlement patterns. Even the great New Town building projects failed to fill its entire area with truly urban population densities. Two new parishes established on the city’s east side corresponded to new residential areas, but the southeast part of the city, home to some of New Town’s newly founded religious houses, seems not to have had the population in the fourteenth century to warrant its own parish church.25 Similarly, the Lesser Town walls incorporated largely uninhabited areas that in practice (and perhaps even in theory) belonged to no parish.

Parish borders mattered. They determined where residents baptized their children, married, confessed, and paid tithes. Those living within the parish boundaries formed a community of shared experiences, aims, and identity. Their boundaries also carried serious financial implications, periodically inspiring lawsuits between neighboring parishes.26 The 1351 creation of the new parishes of St. Henry and St. Stephen in New Town reveals the precision with which their borders were defined: the documents establishing them removed all potential ambiguities by identifying the local landmarks, streets, and even individual houses along the borders.27 The topography of


26 In 1376 the Prague consistory court settled a border dispute between the parish priest of St. Nicholas in Lesser Town and the adjacent, extramural parish of St. Procopius in Újezd (SA 1.149 no. 14). The archbishop’s general vicars likewise awarded the Old Town church of St. Gall financial compensation when it lost the extramural portion of its parish to the two New Town parishes established shortly after the city’s foundation; the 1351 document is printed by Jan Florián Hammerschmid, Prodromus Gloriae Pragenae (Prague, 1723), 231-233.

27 E.g., the parish of S. Henry was to include: “...omnes domos factas, et fiendas a domo Jechini fabri, dicti Tursimo, una cum eadem domo, per unam lineam sursum ad portam S. Procopii procedendo, per aliam vero lineam, quae est penes viam publicam, veniendo usque ad hospitale domini Joannis Jacobi civis Pragensis, quo excepto, totum etiam, quidquid est retro Hospitale hujusmodi, usque ad muros civitatis infra viam, quae currit penes Curiam praedictorum hospitaliorum, quam habent apud ecclesiam s. Petri in Porzicz. ...” (Hammerschmid, Prodromus gloriae Pragenae, 232-233; Tomek reprinted part of this document and identified the houses mentioned it mentions in ZSMP 2.163-4; 203-4).
Prague’s other parishes must have once been equally clear, but no surviving written records map these older, longer-established borders. Strong incentives, not least the accurate collection of tithes, guaranteed the clear subdivision of all inhabited urban areas into identifiable parishes. The local people, especially the parish priests, knew these well. The very lack of ambiguity rendered it purposeless to repeat in writing the clearly established parish borders.

Unfortunately, this common knowledge proves extremely difficult to recover. The turmoil of the Hussite revolution confused the city’s ecclesiastical map by destroying many churches and monasteries. As a consequence, reconstructing the medieval parish structure from modern traditions is problematic.\(^{28}\) This was undoubtedly the reason that Tomek, the great Prague historian and unrivaled expert on the surviving city sources, did not mark parish boundaries on his massive 1892 maps of the streets, churches, monasteries, private houses, and even gardens of medieval Prague.\(^{29}\) The property records informing Tomek’s map identified the owners and circumstances of individual houses, but only very rarely recorded the parish to which a particular house belonged.\(^{30}\) The difficulty of re-establishing the parish limits is illustrated well by the painstaking research behind Alexandr Putík’s impressive study of the topography of Prague’s Jewish Town.

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\(^{29}\) This large-scale map measures more than five feet on each side, and remains the most detailed map of medieval Prague available (Tomek, *Mapy Staré Prahy* [Prague, 1892]).

\(^{30}\) For the parishes that overlapped Jewish Town, Putík was aided by reports recorded by the 1380 visitation about the number of Jewish houses within two of the three parishes. Putík also uses information about church rents connected with houses to determine the parish to which a house belonged (31-32). Unfortunately, this methodology is flawed. Any house or other property could be burdened with a rent owed to any church, whether or not the house belonged to that church’s parish. St. Gall, for instance, earned income from rents on many houses outside its own parish. For more on this, see chapter 2.
Town in the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{31} By re-evaluating all available sources for the small area of northwestern Old Town, Putík reconstructs the Jewish Town street by street and house by house, identifying and correcting along the way errors made by Tomek and subsequent scholars (Figure 1.1).\textsuperscript{32} The record of the 1379-1380 visitation of the city of Prague provided him sufficient additional indirect evidence—in the form of priests’ complaints that detail the precise numbers of Jewish houses within their parishes—to allow an approximate reconstruction of the parish boundaries that divided the same area. The evidence assembled by Putík unfortunately depends upon distinctions unique to Jewish Town; the same methods cannot yield similar reconstructions for other parish boundaries in Prague.

Under such circumstances, it is perhaps best to restrain the impulse to map the medieval parish boundaries. Even admittedly provisional maps are unavoidably deceptive when only fragmentary evidence underlies them. Thus Petitova-Bénoliel’s recent hand-drawn parish maps of Prague ultimately confuse as much as they enlighten (Figure 1.2).\textsuperscript{33} At first glance, her Old Town map seems to provide a useful and generally plausible picture of the parochial subdivision of the city.\textsuperscript{34} The jigsaw puzzle of oddly shaped parishes fleshes out what a bare map of parish churches can only suggest. Yet a comparison of her map with that of Putík highlights the problems with such provisional mapping (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). On the one hand, it lacks precision.


\textsuperscript{33} On the sources used to develop her maps, see P-B 21-22.

\textsuperscript{34} P-B 88.
Figure 1.1

Parish Boundaries around Prague’s Jewish Town c. 1380 according to Putík

Figure 1.2 Old Town Parishes according to Petitova-Bénoliel
The city blocks and streets are entirely absent, making it difficult even to compare her borders with those carefully established by Putík. The discrepancies are nonetheless detectable, beginning with Petitova-Bénoliel’s isolation of an amoeba-shaped Jewish region from the parish network. Her Jewish Town, unlike that of Putík, is abstracted from the city and its parishes—a clear contradiction of medieval sources. The juncture of the parishes of St. Nicholas, St. Valentine, and St. Leonard (the latter not included on Putík’s map) is also depicted quite differently. We can be confident that the priests of these three parishes (and of Prague’s other forty-two parishes) knew precisely where their jurisdiction ended. Most of that knowledge, however, has been lost. Therefore it seems preferable to refrain entirely from mapping borders for which we lack adequate historical evidence.

1.1.2. Parish People: Patrons, Priests, and Parishioners

The parish priest knew his parochial boundaries; he also knew his parishioners and the liturgy he celebrated in their presence. He baptized his people’s children, married them, and buried them. He heard their confessions and witnessed (or even wrote) their last testaments. The parish priest occupied a pivotal social position within the parish. Accordingly, the person who appointed him possessed an important local power. The patron’s exercise of this power could dramatically impact the experience of the parishioners by naming a particular individual to serve and guide their parish. Benefices provided incomes to all sorts of clerics: regulars and seculars, conscientious pastors and non-resident pluralists alike. Some of these posts supported advanced students on their way to high-flying ecclesiastical careers; others rewarded faithful officials and
administrators. Many benefice-holders dumped their duties into the hands of poorly paid vicars. The identity of a parish’s priest was crucial. Power to appoint him accordingly constituted an important mechanism for control over the city’s sacred space.

Of Prague’s forty-five parish churches, twelve had lay patrons during the reign of Charles IV, thirty had ecclesiastical patrons, and three had patronage that was in some way shared between clerics and the laity (see map 1.2). Yet this broad division between lay and ecclesiastical patrons does not do justice to the wide range of individuals and groups wielding this power. Of Prague parishes with lay patrons, only five were controlled by citizens (or families of citizens) of Prague. Just one group of parishioners—that of the modest New Town parish of St. Adalbert below Zderaz—had any official role in choosing their own parish priest. Even they shared their patronage right with the archdeacon of Prague. Four parishes fell under the patronage of various nobles and only three churches had royal patronage. Charles IV may have shaped the sacred topography of fourteenth-century Prague more than any other individual, but his

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35 There are a few reasons why my count differs from that which Peter Klassen (The Nobility and the Making of the Hussite Revolution [Boulder, CO, 1978], 38) made from Tomek’s account of parochial patrons (DMP 3.144-148) and which was adopted from Klassen by Zdeňka Hledíkova (“K otázkám vztahu duchovní a světské moci v Čechách ve druhé polovině 14. století” (On the question of the relation between clerical and secular power in Bohemia in the second half of the 14th century), ČČH 24 (1976): 261), from whom in turn Petitova-Bénoliel (P-B 65) adopted it: namely, thirteen lay patrons, twenty-eight clerical patrons and three shared. First of all, I include the Strahov parish church in my count, raising the clerical category by one. Secondly, neither Tomek nor Klassen here includes the parish of St. Vitus (whose parish priest was appointed by the cathedral chapter). Nevertheless, Klassen’s total of forty-four churches equals Tomek’s total number of Prague parishes including St. Vitus (DMP 3.25-27). If Klassen simply counted all the churches in Tomek’s categorized but uncounted list of parishes, he may perhaps have counted the parish of St. Stephen in the Wall twice. Tomek includes it both under royal and monastic patronage, rightly noting that it passed from the Benedictine house of Louny to the crown in 1380. In any case, Klassen considered the patron to be the last person exercising that role before 1419, and thus considered St. Stephen to be under royal patronage (36; 38 n.13). I am concerned primarily with the reign of Charles IV (d. 1378), and thus count it along with the other churches of monastic patronage.

36 The parishioners of St. John at Podskalí in New Town themselves named a new priest in 1360, but already later in that year the church patronage evidently passed into the hands of a noble family (LC 1.1.122, 137; DMP 3.146)
Map 1.2: Patrons of Prague Parish Churches
formal power to appoint priests to Prague parishes was remarkably limited. (As Chapter 3 demonstrates, however, the emperor nevertheless found ways to install his favorites in local parishes when it suited his purposes). In all, just over one-quarter of the parishes had lay patrons. On the other hand, lay-controlled parishes were among the most important in Prague.\(^{37}\) In Old Town they included St. Nicholas, St. Mary of Týn (shared patronage), and St. Castulus, as well as five more of the town’s eighteen parishes. In Lesser Town, the patronage for St. Nicholas, by far the town’s most important parish, was in the hands of the king.

Lay patrons, then, named priests to some of the most important parochial benefices in Prague. On the other hand, ecclesiastical patronage dominated overall with a full two-thirds of the parishes. The Prague cathedral provost (\textit{prepositus}), for instance, was the patron of St. Gall in the fourteenth century.\(^{38}\) Clerics controlled patronage rights especially in New Town and on the entire west side of the Vltava. This characteristic set the city of Prague apart from the diocese as a whole, where more than seventy percent of the parishes had lay, usually noble, patrons.\(^{39}\) Like lay patronage, however, ecclesiastical influence was hardly monolithic. Patronage of those thirty Prague churches was spread among twenty-one different monasteries, chapters, or individual office-holders. The Crosiers with the Red Star, a hospital order that originated in Prague, held the patronage for four parishes, more than any other individual or community. Prague’s archbishop


\(^{38}\) There is some question whether the Welfl family—who shared the patronage of Týn church—had previously been the patrons at St. Gall, but the provost appears as the patron as early as 1311 (DMP 3.147, n.65).

\(^{39}\) Klassen, \textit{The Nobility}, 37. These figures do not include the Bohemian deaneries of the Litomyšl diocese (part of the Prague archdiocese) which Klassen also counted.
personally controlled only one appointment. The colleges of clerics at St. Vitus cathedral and Vyšehrad together controlled numerous parishes, but no individual office-holder or chapter at either held the patronage rights to more than two. Prague’s parish priests, in other words, were named by a large number of diverse people from both lay and clerical segments of society. Considering the relatively long tenure of parish priests (ten years or more on average), no single patron in fact exercised his (or, in a few cases, her) patronage rights very often.\textsuperscript{40} Nor did any institution or individual—not even the emperor—control enough parishes to shape single-handedly the staffing of the city’s parishes.\textsuperscript{41}

The diversity among parishes extended far beyond their different types of patrons. Parishes varied first of all in wealth, as reflected in the great range of papal tithes they paid.\textsuperscript{42} They also varied in type and size. In addition to the parish priest, all but the poorest parishes had at least one vicar. Some had schools (with schoolmasters and students), preachers, sacristans, as well as bell-ringers (who were often, but not always,

\textsuperscript{40} This is the conclusion of Martin Nodl, who looked at the length of tenure reported by parish priests in four rural deaneries in Prague’s archdeaconry during their 1379-1380 visitation. The average was eleven years to the point of their interview during the visitation, suggesting an average overall tenure that was even longer (“Moravá epidemie na Rakovnicku v roce 1380: modelová studie k životu farního kléru” [The plague epidemic in [the rural deanery of] Rakovník in 1380: a model study on the life of parish clergy], in \textit{Facta Probant Homines: Sborník přispěvků k životnímu jubileu Prof. Dr. Zdeňky Hledíkové} [Collection of contributions in honor of Professor Dr. Zdeňka Hledíková], ed. Ivan Hlaváček and Jan Hrdina [Prague, 1998], 303-304). When applied to the Prague parish churches visited in 1379-1380, this methodology yields just under or just over ten years as the average tenure to that point (depending on whether one includes or excludes the remarkable, but possibly erroneous, tenure of sixty years reported for the parish priest at St. Mary Magdalene [PV 130]). Many of the priests interviewed, of course, outlived the visitation by a number of years.

\textsuperscript{41} There is no question, on the other hand, of the disproportionate power wielded by the king, the archbishop, and some of the collegiate churches over appointments to the lucrative and prestigious (and non-pastoral) prebends and canonries in the city (see, e.g., DMP, 3.149-152. One might also note that two of Prague’s most famous preachers from the later fourteenth century, Conrad Waldhauser and Matthew of Janov, were in fact non-resident holders of rural parish benefices. On Waldhauser’s appointment, see chapter 3, pp. 162-63.

\textsuperscript{42} These ranged from less than five groschen to more than 180 groschen annually. The amount paid by each parish is presented conveniently in chart format by Petitova-Bénoliel (P-B 200).
lay). These and any other associated clerics held no benefices, but seem to have been appointed and paid by the parish priest.\textsuperscript{43} The greater the parish income, the more such helpers a parish could afford. Well-to-do parishes also tended to attract more side-altars, many endowed with incomes or benefices for mass-chanting altar priests. Although nominally limited to three altars per (non-collegiate) church, several churches far exceeded this. St. Mary at Týn boasted seven and St. Nicholas in Old Town eight side-altars before the end of Charles IV’s reign.\textsuperscript{44} These privately endowed altars, discussed at greater length in Chapter 2, became increasingly important fixtures of parochial devotion in the later decades of the fourteenth century. The parishes that contained them became at least the part-time homes for larger and larger numbers of affiliated priests. Yet even these overgrown clerical communities continued to be dwarfed by Prague’s two collegiate parish churches: St. Giles and the cathedral of St. Vitus.\textsuperscript{45} Both housed communities of secular canons, as well as numerous associated clerics serving in various other capacities. (Prague’s three other collegiate churches did not serve as parishes).

One final category of parish church stands out. These were the churches incorporated in one way or another into monastic houses. Nine of Prague’s parishes—one out of five—were of this type. Prague’s parish network, in other words, was intertwined with the network of local religious communities. In several cases, parish churches were physically attached or adjacent to the monastic house. Unlike others

\textsuperscript{43} DMP, 3.149.

\textsuperscript{44} Rostislav Zelený, “Councils and Synods of Prague and their Statutes (1343-1361),” \textit{Apollinaris} 45 (1972): 530 (no. 57); The number of side-altars in both churches exploded after 1378, leading to a total sixteen for St. Nicholas and an extraordinary twenty-three for St. Mary before 1419 (DMP 1.146, 1.201).

\textsuperscript{45} The cathedral and St. Giles were not Prague’s only collegiate churches (there were three others), but of the five only these two served parishes.
parishes under monastic patronage, these nine had priests who belonged to the affiliated monastic orders. This provides an important reminder that regular priests of a variety of orders—not just the mendicant friars—took active roles in Prague pastoral care. The appointment of regular priests was permitted only for these particular churches, or for churches traditionally served by regular priests.\textsuperscript{46} In some cases, this exceptional status reflected the monastic foundation of the parish church. For example, at the Old Town house of the Crosiers with the Red Heart (not to be confused with the Crosiers with the Red Star), the pastorally oriented community had administered the adjacent parish church since their joint 1256 foundation.\textsuperscript{47} The church of St. Procopius likewise may have been built by the Prague Hospitallers of St. John, to whose house the church seems to have been incorporated since its origin.\textsuperscript{48} The church of St. John at the Battlefield, on the other hand, came to the Hospitallers of St. John by the donation of the church’s lay founder.\textsuperscript{49} In a more unusual situation, the Crosiers with the Red Star received the parishes of St. Henry and St. Stephen as compensation for lost property: these two New Town new parishes had been built by royal decree on land originally belonging to their community. The parishes were incorporated into their house to make up for their financial losses thus incurred.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{46} “Religiosi in ecclesiis ad ipsos etiam pleno iure spectantibus, rectores sui ordinis locare non audeant que alias sunt solite per SECulares clericos gubernari” (Zelený, “Councils and Synods,” 523 no. 45); this rule could be waived by a dispensation from the archbishop (e.g., LC 1.1.98).

\textsuperscript{47} P-B 102, 165-66.

\textsuperscript{48} Ekert, \textit{Posvátná místa}, 2.344-345; P-B 82, 163.

\textsuperscript{49} Ekert, \textit{Posvátná místa}, 2.489-90; P-B 117. I have questioned, however, whether the extremely sparse information surviving for this church adequately demonstrates that it was a parish church during the reign of Charles IV (see Appendix 1).

\textsuperscript{50} Ekert, \textit{Posvátná místa}, 2.5-23; 2.105-119. For the 1351 document of the vicars general of the Prague Archbishop assigning these churches to this monastic house, see Hammerschmid, \textit{Prodromus}. 53
These religious houses, after all, not only installed members of their own orders as the priests at their affiliated parishes, but also enjoyed the parish incomes. Yet incorporated parishes were more than cash cows for impecunious religious communities. The types of orders which administered parishes in Prague makes this evident. Between them, four varieties of hospital (or military) orders and one house of Premonstratensian canons ran these nine parishes. For the houses belonging to hospital orders in particular, pastoral care was central to their late medieval identity. Most of them also administered other Bohemian parishes outside of Prague as well. Studies on medieval pastoral care tend to focus on the secular clergy and the rivalries offered to them by the mendicant orders. My own analysis in chapter 3 of the resultant competition and controversies in Prague continues this scholarly tradition. But as this survey of Prague parishes makes clear, it is important not to forget the central role that the hospitallers and other religious orders played in delivering pastoral care by way of incorporated parishes.

The parishes of Prague differed dramatically in size, wealth, and type of patron—just as they did in many medieval cities. Some of Prague’s parishes were also marked by religious diversity. Three Old Town parishes, we have seen, incorporated significant numbers of Jewish residents. Prague’s sacred topography was not, after all, exclusively Christian. The city’s Jewish population remained concentrated primarily in the so-called Jewish Town of Old Town’s low-lying northwestern corner. There two synagogues served approximately 750 Jewish inhabitants, according to a recent and particularly

*gloriae Pragenae*, 231-233. For a summary of the 1352 papal bull confirming the incorporation of these parishes, see P-B 119.
careful calculation. (The traditional estimate is 4,000). Charles IV’s 1348 attempt to attract Jews to help populate New Town seems to have met with limited success at best.

Jewish Town was no early modern ghetto, however. It lacked walls and was probably not even separated from the rest of the city by a series of street-closing gates until the reign of King Wenceslas IV (1378-1419). (Gates were certainly in place by 1389, when they nevertheless failed to protect the Jewish inhabitants from a murderous Christian mob). Christians and Jews rubbed shoulders in Prague parishes. This proximity gave rise to the concern, addressed by Prague synodal statutes, that Jews might not be distinguishable from Christians. As Putík has shown, Prague’s parish boundaries extended right through the Jewish enclave: there was nothing like a “Jewish parish.” Churches and religious houses surrounded and even subdivided the Jewish population. The convent of the Holy Spirit, a house of Benedictine nuns established in 1346, took over a space midway between the community’s two synagogues (see Putík’s map in Figure 1.1). Certain houses in this area were deemed Jewish and thus exempt from the normal ecclesiastical tithes and contributions. Jews also purchased and inhabited some

51 Putík’s new population estimate of 750 represents a drastic revision of the conventional estimate of 4,000, an estimate based on the contemporary report that 3,000 Jews died in the 1389 pogrom (“On the Topography and Demography of the Prague Jewish Town,” 44-45); cf. Brosche, “Das Ghetto von Prag,” 106, 117; Tomáš Pěkný, Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě [History of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia], 2d ed. [Prague, 2001], 387 n. 2; 637).


54 Zelený, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” 704.

55 The foundation of this house and the accompanying exemption of its properties from local parish fees occasioned an agreement by which the convent paid 5 schocks annually to the parish of Holy Cross the Greater. The archbishop confirmed the foundation of the monastery in 1348 (DMP 3.81; ZSMP 1.215-16).
legally Christian houses, probably after receiving royal approval. The coexistence was not necessarily happy. Both priests and lay people resentfully complained of the great damage to the parish’s finances caused by the exemption of Jewish houses from obligatory parochial fees. The parish of Holy Cross the Greater went so far as to bring legal action before the papal curia against the Jews of the parish for failure to pay tithes.

Most Prague parishes, however, had few or no Jewish residents; the vast majority of city residents were baptized Christians. Prague’s Christians shared a religious identity, but they also spoke two different languages: Czech and German. This distinction was crucial to the identity of Prague’s inhabitants and to the functioning of its parishes. It is also a topic that demands care and precise language. Post-medieval relations between Czech and German inhabitants of Bohemia, especially those of the first half of the twentieth century, have dug numerous pitfalls for the unwary scholar. Much of the relevant literature rests upon questions and answers whose origins are more political than historical. Some of it transparently grinds modern axes against the medieval material. Even scholars with no evident personal stake often have trouble avoiding terms and constructions evocative of modern ethnic and national divisions. My own discussion of Czechs and Germans in Prague follows the convention of dividing the Prague population


57 e.g., “Dominus Fridricus, plebanus [ecclesiae sancti Walentini]... dicit, quod Judei habent XI domus pociores in plebe sua et per hoc ecclesia sua et ipse damnificatur in magna parte, nam deficiunt ipsi ofertoria et iura parochialia” (PV 82).

58 PV 96. It is possible that the parish was demanding church fees from Jews inhabiting legally Jewish as well as legally Christian houses. The outcome of the case, which was delegated to the Prague archbishop, is not known (Putík, “On the Topography and Demography of the Prague Jewish Town,” 13-16).
according to linguistic lines, a strategy which seems most closely to mimic the distinction in medieval sources between “bohemici” and “teutonici.” I use the adjectives “ethnic” and “linguistic” interchangeably in this context to discuss the two populations whose most salient distinction was in their mother tongues. When I occasionally refer to “Czechs” or “Germans,” those terms function as shorthand labels for the Prague inhabitants whose primary language was Czech or German.

There is broad agreement about the overall picture of fourteenth-century Prague’s ethnic composition: Old Town’s elite was largely German but its lower strata especially included many Czechs; Lesser Town contained a somewhat higher proportion of Czechs, especially in positions of power; and New Town was predominantly Czech from its foundation but included a significant German minority. Scholars also agree that the number and percentage of Czechs in all of Prague’s cities (and in many other Bohemian and Moravian cities) grew over the course of the later fourteenth century.

Czech- and German-speakers coexisted more or less peacefully in fourteenth-century Prague, but even peaceful coexistence carried serious implications for the parishes. Communication among parishioners and between clerics and their charges depended in many cases upon bridging these linguistic divisions. There is little evidence that any single parish contained exclusively Czech or German parishioners. This situation demanded priests and vicars capable of serving two linguistic groups. The local ecclesiastical hierarchy recognized this challenge and made some provision for it. The

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archbishop, for example, provided official Czech and German translations of the Apostle’s Creed and the Lord’s Prayer for the instruction of the people in all parishes.61 Yet the 1379-80 Prague visitation documented several cases in which reality fell short of the ideal of bilingual pastoral care.62

At St. Clement in Poříčí (in New Town: no. 33 on Map 1.1), for instance, a baker and long-time parishioner complained that the many residents who could not speak or confess in Czech (bohemico) had no one to hear their confessions. Parishioners had tried without success to convince the priest to provide a capable, German-speaking vicar.63 The baker’s testimony was confirmed by that of the neighboring parish’s priest, who likewise aired the St. Clement parishioners’ complaints.64 The grievance seems to have been well-founded. This small New Town parish was located in an area that probably began as a suburban community of German merchants. It remained in the fourteenth century one of the most German areas of New Town.65 Yet despite the visitor’s

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61 Zelený, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” 491.

62 The examples discussed below are analyzed more briefly by Ivan Hlaváček, “Beiträge zum Alltagsleben in vorhussitischen Böhmen: Zur Aussagekraft des Prager Visitationsprotokolls vom 1379-1381 und der benachbarten Quellen,” Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung 1974-75 (34-35): 873.

63 “Theodoricus pannifex... respondit: sunt XXIII hospites et plure homines deptunici [sic] et ipse testis, qui nesciunt in bohemico loqui et confiteri et dominus plebanus non tenet ipsis aliquem, qui sciat ipsorum confessiones audire et sepius monitus et per ipsos homines suos petitus, hoc facere non curat,” (PV 58). It seems best to understand “hospes” in this context as ‘house owner’ or perhaps ‘landlord’, and to read “deptunici” as “teutunici.” Thus he is testifying that a significant number of the parish’s houses are owned by Germans and that many others parishioners are Germans. For “hospes,” see Ladislav Varcí and Karl Ernst Georges, eds., Latinitatis Medii Aevi lexicon Bohemorum (Slovník středověké latiny v českých zemích), (Prague, 1977-), 2.1025, def. 4a.

64 PV 58.

encouragement, St. Clement’s parish priest, pleading poverty, remained reluctant to appoint a vicar for his German-speaking parishioners.\(^66\)

Circumstances were similar in the Old Town parish of St. John (no. 26 on Map 1.1), where a parishioner estimated that half of the parish inhabitants were German. He accordingly wanted a second vicar capable of ministering to the Germans.\(^67\) Here the situation was exacerbated by the priest’s chronic absenteeism and an extremely high turnover of vicars. The vicar at the time of the 1379 visitation was the parish’s third in the past six months, and had himself only arrived two weeks before.\(^68\) Ideally, St. John’s parish priest would have personally provided his German-speaking parishioners with pastoral care. He was apparently capable of hearing confession in German and possibly also in Czech. However, his parishioners complained that he was not present in the parish often enough to meet the demand for confession.\(^69\) (In the aftermath of the visitation, the priest regularized his absenteeism by obtaining the necessary archiepiscopal dispensation.)\(^70\)

The language spoken within the parish church could also attract or repel parishioners. At the parish of St. Mary at the Pond in Old Town (no. 20 on Map 1.1), one resident asserted that many more of the parishioners, the majority of whom were German,

\(^{66}\) “Hortatus sum dictum plebanum, ut teneret socium vicarium scientem theotunicum pro confessionibus suorum parrochiarum, qui dixit, quod non tenetur habere socium, nec facultates suppetunt ecclesie sue, tamen faciet populum suum” (PV 58).

\(^{67}\) “... dicit, quod plebs ipsorum bene staret, si plebanus ipsis teneret aliquem vicarium theotunicum, quia media pars ipsorum sunt theotonici” (PV 73).

\(^{68}\) PV 73-74.

\(^{69}\) “Item dicit, quod sepium parrochiani dicte ecclesie vellent confiteri in theotunico et interdum in bohemico, qui interdum non habent, cui confitentur propter absenciam, ut predict” (PV 73).

\(^{70}\) PV 75.
would attend the church if only the priest would hire a German preacher. As it was, he claimed, they visited other churches instead.\textsuperscript{71} This relatively wealthy parish of central Old Town did enjoy the luxury of its own preacher in addition to a parish priest, but not one who preached in German.\textsuperscript{72} Although it is hardly surprising that German parishioners might be drawn to a nearby parish with a German preacher, Prague’s provincial statutes strongly proscribed this kind of parish-hopping.\textsuperscript{73}

Linguistic divisions, it is clear, could cause difficulties and even controversy within a parish. However, specific evidence is very limited. The archdeacon’s 1379-80 visitation only uncovered these three cases from the forty-five churches visited in the city deanery.\textsuperscript{74} Perhaps the ecclesiastical hierarchy’s recognition of the population’s linguistic divisions helped. Widespread bilingualism may also have eased the situation somewhat.\textsuperscript{75} On the other hand, similar cases of tension or resentment between Czech- and German-speaking parishioners may simply have escaped the attention of the ecclesiastical visitor. The archdeacon interviewed only a small minority of parishioners, and they were not asked directly about the impact of different languages on their

\textsuperscript{71} “Item dicit, quod pro maiori parte sunt homines parrochiani dicte ecclesie teotonici, et si plebanus teneret ipsis predicatorem theotonicum, multum alicerentur ad ipsam ecclesiam, sed ex quo non facit, tunc eciam non curant et intrant ecclesias alienas” (PV 78).

\textsuperscript{72} The preacher, a certain Laurencius Conradi de Cadano, also gave testimony at the visitation (PV 78); cf. Ekert, \textit{Posvátná místa}, 2.380.

\textsuperscript{73} Priests were specifically instructed to inquire before the celebration of the mass whether any foreign parishioners were present, and then to expel them (Zelený, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” 522).

\textsuperscript{74} Three other examples of German-speaking inhabitants complaining of inadequate pastoral care in their own language appear in the visitation records for the rural deanery of Rakovník (\textit{decanatus Rakonicensis}), west of Prague (PV 363, 367, 371); cf. Hlaváček, “Beiträge zum Alltagsleben,” 873.

\textsuperscript{75} Emil Skála, “Vznik a vývoj česko-německého bilingvismu” (Origin and development of Czech-German bilingualism), \textit{Slovo a slovesnost} 38 (1977): 197-207.
parishes—like whether confession was available in their own language, for instance. (The scribes, who clearly heard testimonies from both Czechs and Germans, recorded all the proceedings in Latin). Linguistic and ethnic fault lines ran through all of Prague’s parishes, but the evidence suggests that they remained relatively inert during the reign of Charles IV. Only after his death, in the late fourteenth and especially the fifteenth century, were tremors along these fault lines (described as “national” differences in most of the scholarship) felt with increasing strength and even violence.

The balance between Czechs and Germans varied from parish to parish in the fourteenth century, with the population in some areas undoubtedly dominated by one or the other. Yet mapping the ethnic composition of Prague, like mapping its parish boundaries, arguably obscures more than it reveals. The enormous methodological difficulties involved in determining the population’s ethnic identity have not, however, stifled all attempts. All of the resulting generalizations about the ethnic map of Prague derive in some way from the recorded names of the city’s inhabitants. However, these sources are limited essentially to lists of city councilors and urban property records. The names of citizens who neither held city office nor owned property make no appearance whatsoever. The property records in particular have been mined for the ethnic data they seem to contain. The most vigorous study to date examined eight hundred names of homeowners in Old Town in 1360, seven hundred and sixty from the same city in 1410, and nearly sixteen hundred from New Town in 1400. It might seem a simple matter to

76 No list of questions asked by the archdeacon during his 1379-1382 visitation survives, but they can be inferred from the answers given and from other surviving lists of visitation questions. See Zdeňka Hledíková, “Česká visitační Interrogatoria do počátku 15. století” (Bohemian visitation Interrogatoria up to the beginning of the 15th century), ČČH 16 (1968): 90-98.

77 Šmahel, Husitská Revoluce 1.350-51.
separate the German names from the Czech and chart the results. But determining whether these names correspond to “German” or “Czech” individuals in fact presents serious difficulties. There is, first of all, the question of the influence of the scribe’s primary language: how often did the notary recording sales translate the names of buyers and sellers into his own first language? Then there are the countless ambiguities of particular cases. Should ‘John the tailor’ be considered Czech if the Czech form of his name is recorded, if Czech is used for his occupation, or only if both his name and occupation appear in Czech? What should be done with names in which Czech and German forms both appear? How are Latin forms to be construed? Isolated examples prove that even unequivocally Czech-sounding names sometimes refer to people known from other sources to stem from German-speaking families (and vice-versa).78

The oft-cited study of Jaroslav Mezník admits all of these obstacles to determining an individual’s ethnicity. Mezník argues, however, that an analysis of a sufficiently large number of names should produce approximately accurate results.79 Such a judgment, it would seem, assumes that the best available source, despite its evident shortcomings, must necessarily provide at least a relatively reliable statistical answer to modern questions, even questions that the creators of the original documents had no intention to address. A whole series of necessarily subjective judgments from problematic data thus yields an apparently statistical result. Overall Mezník’s categorization of names appears laudably conservative. He consistently leaves one


quarter of the population “unassigned” to either group, for instance. For Old Town in 1360, Mezník concludes that 48% of homeowners were German, 28% Czech, and 24% unknown. For Old Town in 1410, these numbers change to 36% German, 42% Czech, and 22% unknown. He further calculates that New Town homeowners in 1400 were 62% Czech, 12% German, and 26% unknown.

Yet even if we were to accept these results as approximate indications of the towns’ ethnic compositions, Mezník’s attempt to map Old Town’s ethnic distinctions block by block stretches the already strained sources to the breaking point. He categorizes each block as either Czech, German, or neutral, further specifying whether there was an absolute majority (e.g., in which Czech names outnumber German and unknown names together), a majority (e.g., in which Czech names outnumber German names by at least two), or an equilibrium. Each city block earns a categorization so long as it contains at least three recorded names. Thus a block having two Czech owners and one German owner, together with an unspecified number houses whose owners are unknown, would appear as an area with an absolute majority of Czechs. The result is a neat and clear representation of the homeownership patterns of Old Town in 1410—far more neat and clear, I would argue, than the sources support (see Figure 1.3).

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80 Mezník is impelled to be more daring when he attempts to allow for the influence of the scribe’s language. Judging from the time and from the relatively larger incidence of “mangled” Czech names, Mezník argues that the 1360 Old Town scribes were less likely to have significant knowledge of the Czech language than their 1410 counterparts. Accordingly, he changes his criteria for determining whether a name refers to a Czech or German. This makes even more problematic the statistical comparisons he then offers between the 1360 and 1410 results (“Národnostní složení,” 7).


Figure 1.3 German and Czech Areas of Prague according to Mezník (see my discussion)
Some conclusions seem reasonable to draw from Mezník’s research: for instance, the southwestern part of the city was predominantly Czech, and most of the expensive houses surrounding Old Town Square were owned by Germans. Yet for many of the remaining individual city blocks, the small number of names compound the inherent methodological problems presented by the sources to reduce the value of the categorizations to almost nothing. The numerous inhabitants who did not own houses, remember, are not depicted at all. Noble, clerical, and Jewish homeowners are also “understandably” left out. Mezník’s well-drawn map has proven popular for reproduction, but invariably without restatement of the underlying methodological challenges. (For this reason, I even hesitated to include this potentially misleading map here). Maps like this often travel independently of their original research, called upon in some cases to countenance explicit or implicit claims that their creators would never countenance. In one reproduction of Mezník’s map, for instance, the prominent date (1410) has been removed and replaced with the vague caption, “The nationalities in Prague Old Town.” Topography is never so clear as when represented cartographically. Unfortunately, this clarity can badly misrepresent the ambiguity of the underlying information.

83 For a four-block area in southwestern Old Town, Mezník counts twenty-six Czech names, four German names, and fourteen “neutral” names (Mezník, “Národnostní složení,” 15-17).


85 Vlk, ed., Dějiny Prahy 1.211; P-B 96. A reader of the latter might understandably infer from the book’s focus on the reign of the Luxemburgs in Prague that the undated map refers to the entire period, 1310-1419. Cf. Václav Levinka and Jiří Pešek, Prag, trans. Martina Bartucz et al. (Prague, 2000), 192, where the year “1410” has been replaced with a new caption that dates the situation represented by the map to “around 1400.”
Prague’s network of parishes formed the most significant element within the ecclesiastical topography. Its forty-five stone churches represented the local faces of the universal church for nearly every Prague inhabitant. This overview of the parishes has therefore described not only the churches themselves, but also the parishes and parishioners of the entire city. None of these elements was static. Dramatic change and renewal characterized the parish network throughout the second half of the fourteenth-century, despite the addition of only two new parishes during Charles IV’s reign. New wealth and growing populations, for instance, resulted in a remarkable series of renovated or completely new parish churches, built in the Gothic style to replace their outdated and undersized predecessors.86 Prague’s parishes, like the other elements of the local topography, reflected the dynamism and change characteristic of Prague under Emperor Charles IV.

1.2. Mapping Monasteries

Dynamism was even more evident among the monastic communities of Prague during the same period. The collection of local religious communities dedicated to established monastic rules was also a monument to diversity. At Charles IV’s death, Prague could boast a representative house of every major religious order. This testifies in part to the central position that the city of Prague played within the region. Even more, it provides dramatic witness to the power that Charles IV wielded over the urban sacred topography. His monastic foundations reflected his larger aims for Prague, for Bohemia, and for the place of the Luxemburg dynasty within the empire. Of the approximately

86 On these, see Líbal, “Umění románské: Architektura,” 218-314; Líbal, Pražské gotické kostely (Gothic churches of Prague) (Prague, 1946).
twenty-four Prague religious houses in 1378—again, a precise count depends upon the borders chosen—one quarter were founded by Charles IV.  

The characters and ideals of these communities, seventeen male and seven female, varied dramatically. Some espoused strict claustration and separation from the world; others actively engaged the local laity as an essential component of their mission. Their locations reflected their respective rules and traditions, with the Benedictine and Cistercian houses established in semi-rural areas a short journey from the city walls and the mendicant and hospital orders firmly implanted in the midst of the bustle of urban life. The ages, wealth, prestige, size, and even ethnic composition of the various communities all varied in ways that points on a map cannot communicate. (But I have, nevertheless, plotted their locations on Map 1.3). With a handful of notable exceptions, Bohemia’s monastic houses have not been well-studied. Even those in Prague need far more research before a full picture can be drawn. This brief survey of Prague’s religious houses therefore seeks only to map their positions within the sacred landscape

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87 Tomek counts twenty-five (DMP 3.27-28), but this includes a dubious Celestine house (see below, n. 114). It also includes, for instance, the Benedictine monastery of Břevnov to the northwest of Prague, even though neither I nor Tomek include the parish of Břevnov, incorporated into the monastery, among the Prague parishes. Tomek’s does not, on the other hand, count the slightly more distant Cistercian monastery of Zbraslav, which was located south of Prague along the Vltava. The modern city of Prague has expanded to include both areas.

88 The recent house-by-house study of the medieval Cistercian communities in Bohemia is a welcome addition to this still sparse literature: Kateřina Charvátová, Dějiny Cisterckého řádu v Čechách 1142-1420 (History of the Cistercian order in Bohemia 1142-1420), 2 vols. (Prague, 1998-2002).

89 The best-studied Prague houses include the Benedictine house at Břevnov, the house of Poor Clares (the Agnes monastery), and the St. Thomas community of Augustinian friars. See, e.g., Marie Bláhová and Ivan Hlaváček, ed., Břevnov v českých dějinách: Sborník z konference pořádné ve dnech 14. a 15. Září 1993 Filozofickou Fakultou Univerzity Karlovy u přiležitosti milénia břevnovského kláštera (Břevnov in Bohemian history: Proceedings from the major conference of 14 and 15 September 1993 at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University on the occasion of the millennium of the Břevnov monastery) (Prague, 1997);Helena Soupková, Anežký klášter v Praze (The Agnes convent in Prague) (Prague, 1989); Jaroslav Kadlec, Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas in Prag vom Gründungsjahr 1285 bis zu den Hussitenkriegen, mit Edition seines Urkundenbuches, Cassiciacum 36 (Würzburg, 1985)
Religious house established by Emperor Charles IV

1. St. Margaret at Břevnov (Benedictine)
2. St. George (Benedictine nuns)
3. Strahov (Premonstratensians)
4. St. Thomas (Augustinian hermits)
5. St. Mary below the Chain (Hospitalers of St. John)
6. Penitents of St. Mary Magdalene
7. St. John the Baptist and St. Anne (Dominican nuns)
8. Garden of St. Mary (Cartusians)
9. Holy Cross the Greater (Crosiers with the Red Heart)
10. St. Francis (Poor Clares)
11. St. Francis (Franciscans)
12. Holy Spirit (Benedictine nuns)
13. St. James (Franciscans)
14. St. Benedict (Teutonic Knights)
15. Hospital of St. Francis (Crosiers with the Red Star)
16. St. Clement (Dominicans)
17. St. Anne and St. Lawrence (Dominican nuns; formerly Templars)
18. St. Ambrose (Benedictines of Ambrosian rite)
19. St. Mary of the Snows (Carmelites)
20. St. Peter and Paul at Zderaz (Crosiers of the Holy Sepulchre)
21. St. Jerome (Benedictines of Slavic rite)
22. St. Catherine (Augustinian nuns)
23. St. Mary on the Meadow (Servites)
24. St. Charlemagne (Augustinian canons)

Map 1.3: Religious Houses in Later Fourteenth-century Prague
and to characterize generally their functions within the local religious culture. It will highlight two aspects in particular: the different types of relationships that the various communities enjoyed with the Prague laity, and the impact of the new monasteries introduced by Charles IV.90

When Charles IV acceded to the Bohemian throne in 1346, seventeen different religious orders were represented in and immediately around Prague. The most ancient and best endowed tended to be the traditional, cenobitic communities dedicated to the celebration of the monastic liturgy and (for the men, at least in theory) manual labor. The oldest was the tenth-century house of St. George, a community of Benedictine nuns located within walls of the castle complex that had long served as the seat of the Přemyslid dynasty. It was founded by Mlada, sister of Duke Boleslav II, near the time of the 973 establishment of a bishopric in Prague. When she became its first abbess, Mlada (then called Maria) initiated a long tradition of close relations between the noble nuns of St. George and the Bohemian ruling house. Before the end of the tenth-century, Boleslav II and Prague’s second bishop, St. Adalbert of Prague, together established a house for Benedictine monks a few kilometers west of the castle. It was the first community of Benedictine monks in Bohemia. In 1140, Duke Vladislav II founded the

90 For the details of the foundation of individual houses mentioned below, the most accessible resources are Pavel Vlček, Petr Sommer, and Dušan Foltýn, Encyklopedie českých klášterů (Encyclopedia of Bohemian religious houses), (Prague, 1998), 439-607 (arranged according to the districts of modern Prague), and Petitova-Bénoliel, L’Eglise à Prague sous la dynastie des Luxembourg (see above, n. 7), 133-69 (a gazetteer of the medieval monasteries). More detailed information can be found in Franz Machilek, “Reformorden und Ordensreformen in den böhmischn Ländern vom 10. bis 18. Jahrhundert,” in Bohemia Sacra: Das Christentum in Böhmen 973 – 1973, ed. Ferdinand Seibt (Dusseldorf, 1974), 63-80. Tomek’s DMP remains fundamental, and Ekert’s Posvátná místa still has value (see above, n. 7). Now also see Zdeněk Boháč, Topografický slovník k církevním dějinám předhusitských Čech: Pražský archidiakonát (Topographical dictionary for ecclesiastical history of pre-Hussite Bohemia: Prague archdeaconry) (Prague, 2001). The following survey relies is drawn from these sources and from other literature where cited.
Premonstratensian monastery of Strahov, just to the southwest of Prague castle. For over a century, these three houses were alone in the vicinity of Prague. The Cistercians, an enormously influential order in Central Europe, only arrived in 1291 when King Wenceslas II finally established a house for them near Prague. Located near the Vltava upstream from the city, this community at Zbraslav was just distant enough from the urban settlements that it is not normally counted among Prague’s medieval religious houses. Yet the members of this predominately German, königsnahe monastery (also known as Aula regia for the royal tombs located there) remained closely connected to the ruling dynasty and its capital. For instance, the Chronicon Aulae Regiae, a fourteenth-century chronicle produced by two of its abbots, reveals an intimate knowledge of events occurring in Prague. Much closer to the urban settlements, the Penitent sisters of St. Mary Magdalene possessed a house outside of Prague’s Lesser Town. This community of cloistered nuns belonged to an order established in early thirteenth-century Germany for repentant prostitutes. (There is no evidence, however, that the community continued to recruit reformed women in the fourteenth century). The Carthusians, whose architecture reflects so transparently their strong eremitical tendencies, established the

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91 Originally established as a double monastery, the canonesses left already in 1144/45 (Machilek, “Reformorden und Ordensreformen,” 66).

92 Accordingly, I have not included Zbraslav in my count of twenty-four Prague religious houses or of the seventeen existing before the accession of Charles IV.

93 On this chronicle, see Jana Nechutová, Latinská literatura českého středověku do roku 1400 (Latin literature of the Bohemian Middle Ages to 1400) (Prague, 2000), 131-36.

94 An isolated reference indicates the existence of the community of Magdalenes, presumably the same community, on the other side of the river, in St. Gall’s Town next to Old Town, as early as 1282.

95 On the order of St. Magdalene, see chapter 4, pp. 248-49.
final cenobitic house on the western side of the Vltava. King John (the Blind) of Bohemia (1310-46) founded this monastery in 1342, the first Carthusian house in Bohemia; its first monks likely came from the Austrian house at Mauerbach. In stark contrast to the foundations of his son and successor, this Charterhouse was the only major ecclesiastical foundation of King John’s long reign.96

The rules of these traditional monastic orders, based upon a cenobitic vision of the ideal religious life, kept most of their members isolated from the lay population of Prague, at least in theory. (This was somewhat less true of the Premonstratensian canons). Their locations had been chosen accordingly. St. George, tucked away within the walls of Prague castle, was the most accessible of any of them. As wealthy institutions, all of these monasteries nevertheless had significant economic impacts on the surrounding population. More unexpectedly, some also played direct or indirect roles in the delivery of pastoral care. The Benedictines of Břevnov and the Premonstratensians of Strahov both administered parish churches associated with their monasteries. So did the Magdalene sisters, although the parish priest they appointed was a secular cleric.97 Even Prague’s most cloistered religious houses were not completely discrete from its parish network and the lives of the laity.


97 The 1380 visitation of this parish revealed a strained relationship between the long-time parish priest and the Magdelene nuns. The sisters, he complained, received the “offertoria et alias utilitates ecclesie” that he considered to be rightly due to the parish priest (PV 130-31).
This intertwining of parochial and monastic institutions was even more evident for Prague’s hospital or crusading houses. Five of these orders were represented in Prague, at houses established in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: the Hospitallers of St. John, at St. Mary below the Chain at the Foot of the Bridge (1169); the Crosiers of the Holy Sepulcher at Zderaz (1188); the Teutonic Knights at St. Benedict (before 1217); the Crosiers with the Red Star at St. Francis (1233); and the Crosiers with the Red Heart at Holy Cross the Greater (1256). The missions of these houses dictated their urban locations. The Hospitallers settled in Lesser Town near the bridge, while the other four crowded into Old Town.98 (The Templars had also possessed an Old Town house before the dissolution of their order in 1312). Each of these communities administered at least one Prague parish church.99 Most also controlled several other Bohemian parishes, to which they appointed their own members. These communities, all actively engaged in pastoral care and most in the administration of hospitals as well, also enjoyed an importance within their respective orders that reflected the regional stature of Prague. Prague, for instance, was the seat of provincial priors for both the Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights. Charles IV’s capital city even became the center of the (admittedly small) order of the Crosiers with the Red Heart, after the house at Rome closed in the first half of the fourteenth century. This was an order dedicated to parochial ministry. All but one of its houses, spread over Bohemia, Poland, and Lithuania, administered incorporated parishes. The Prague house, furthermore, also controlled at least six other parishes in

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98 The Teutonic Knights had moved from Poříčí—later part of New Town—to the Old Town church of St. Benedict in the thirteenth century.

99 See above, p. 52.
Bohemia. The (similarly named) Crosiers with the Red Star originated in Prague. Another order of canons committed to pastoral care, the first house had been founded by Agnes of Prague to oversee her new hospital of St. Francis. Its brothers combined pastoral care with ministry to the poor and ill. Having taken over the former location of the Teutonic Knights at St. Peter of Poříčí, they too eventually moved to Old Town and established a hospital next to the bridge. They also administered the nearby parish church of St. Valentine. Their order remained closely allied with the ruling dynasty of Bohemia, spreading only within Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia.

There was no neat separation between the network of Prague parishes and the religious houses of the hospital and military orders. These small communities—the Crosiers with the Red Heart, for instance, probably never had more than ten members residing in Prague—dedicated themselves to the care of bodies and souls through their own hospitals and especially through the parish system. Crucially, their incorporated parishes remained within the normal structure of the secular church and under the authority of the secular hierarchy. As such, the churches were subject to visitation by the archbishop or his deputies. For this reason they did not spark controversy with their

100 On the order and the Prague house, see Zdeňka Hledíková, “Řád Křížovníků s černým srdcem ve středověku” (The Order of Crosiers with the Red Star in the Middle Ages), Sborník prací východočeských archivů 5 (1984): 209-35.


102 Although the members of the Prague community, the largest in the entire order, may have numbered around thirty, the majority of these were spread around the country in small groups at the order’s incorporated parishes (Hledíková, “Řád Křížovníků s černým srdcem,”218-19).

103 Hledíková, “Řád Křížovníků s černým srdcem,”216. The situation was more ambiguous for the parishes incorporated into the Benedictine and Premonstratensian monasteries, as demonstrated by the experience of the archdeacon who attempted to visit them in 1380 (PV 127-28; 131-32).
pastoral activities, like preaching, hearing confession, and burying the dead. Their
delivery of pastoral care may have blurred the distinctions between traditional religious
orders and the parishes, but ultimately they remained solid and uncontroversial elements
of the city’s religious landscape.

The same cannot be said for the mendicant orders. The friars engaged at least as
actively as the hospital orders in the same pastoral activities, but not through parishes
incorporated into their houses. Instead they appealed to all inhabitants of Prague. Often
this resulted in tensions and outright hostility with the parish priests. Chapter 3 explores
this subject in detail with a study of the controversy surrounding Conrad Waldhauser in
the 1360s. Here I want only to map the position of the mendicant houses within the
urban sacred topography. The Dominicans, sent out from the young house of friars
preachers at Krakow, arrived first. They established themselves in 1226 at the diminutive
church of St. Clement in Poříčí outside of Old Town, in the midst of a community of
German settlers. Sometime before 1240 they moved to a much more prominent location
within Old Town. There they founded the church of St. Clement across from the heavily
traveled Judith bridge, the predecessor to the fourteenth-century stone bridge connecting
Old Town with the left bank of the river.104 Fourteenth-century Prague also contained
two houses of Dominican nuns. In 1313, the original community of St. Anne moved
from their house outside the walls of Lesser Town to the monastery of St. Lawrence in
Old Town, which had been vacated by the Templars. Nearly twenty years later, Queen

104 Tomáš Černušák, “Vznik provincie a její rozvoj do husitských válek” (The foundation of the
province and its development until the Hussite wars), in Černušák, Augustin Prokop, and Damián Němec,
_Historie dominikánů v českých zemích_ (History of the Dominicans in Bohemian Lands), (Prague, 2001),
19-22. Černušák’s contribution, which originated as his doctoral dissertation, is a welcome addition to the
very sparse literature on medieval mendicants in Bohemia. See also Vladimír J. Koudelka, “Zur Geschichte
der böhmischen Dominikanerprovinz im Mittelalter: II: Die Männer- und Frauenkläster,” _Archivum
Elizabeth (Charles IV’s mother) installed a new group of Dominican nuns from Olomouc in the original Lesser Town house, thereafter known as St. John the Baptist and St. Anne.\textsuperscript{105}

The Franciscans arrived next in Old Town, in or shortly after 1228. There they established the house of St. James near the city’s eastern wall.\textsuperscript{106} The minorites enjoyed the special favor of King Wenceslas I (1230-53) and especially his sister Agnes (d. c. 1281). In 1233 the two founded a house of Poor Clares together with a second community of Franciscans (at St. Francis) in Old Town. Agnes herself, who corresponded with Clare of Assisi, became the first abbess in 1234.\textsuperscript{107} On the other side of the Vltava, the community of Augustinian friars at St. Thomas settled at the heart of Lesser Town in 1285.\textsuperscript{108} Like the Dominican and Franciscan houses, it possessed a \textit{studium generale} that made it an important regional center of study for members of its own order. All three \textit{studia} proved essential for the university established by the emperor in 1348.\textsuperscript{109} Prague’s three houses of mendicant friars developed deep roots and loyal followings among the city’s lay population. With no parish churches of their own, however, the friars’ pastoral activities cut across parish lines. To parish priests, the

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\textsuperscript{105} Shortly before her 1330 death, Elizabeth changed her mind and decided instead to create a community of Cistercian nuns at the original monastery of St. Anne. This decision, however, apparently came too late to prevent the settlement of the Olomouc nuns in Lesser Town (Koudelka, “Zur Geschichte der böhmischen Dominikanerprovinz,” 2.157, 159-60.)


\textsuperscript{107} On the life and cult of Agnes, see the work of Vlastimil Kybal, written in 1955 but only recently published: \textit{Svatá Anežka Česká: Historický obraz ze 13. století} (St. Agnes of Bohemia: An historical scene from the 13th century), Pontes pragenses 8 (Brno, 2001).

\textsuperscript{108} Kadlec, \textit{Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas in Prag}.

\textsuperscript{109} See chapter 3, p. 169.
mendicants often seemed unwelcome invaders and formidable competitors for space within the urban topography.

These seventeen religious houses gave Prague a dense population of religious houses before the accession of Charles IV in 1346. Eight were crammed together with eighteen parishes into the densely populated area of Old Town. Few cities could match this number and variety of religious orders, but Charles IV had greater plans. Over the course of his reign, he personally established six more religious houses. All helped to anchor his topographical design for New Town, which he had founded in 1348. They also formed part of the emperor’s larger program of ecclesiastical foundation that resulted in sixteen major institutions (monasteries or colleges of canons) throughout Europe. This was an extraordinary number even for a monarch, especially in comparison with the single major foundation his father had managed during an even longer reign.\(^{110}\) A series of personal and public motives converged in their creation. He devoted a New Town house of Augustinian nuns, brought from Bavaria, to St. Catherine—a personal favorite since his battlefield victory on her feast day in 1340.\(^{111}\) He likewise cultivated a particular devotion to his namesake and imperial predecessor, Charlemagne. Dedicating a New Town house of Augustinian canons to Charlemagne was far more, however, than a simple act of personal piety. No contemporary would have missed the political and dynastic symbolism of Charles IV’s attempt to associate himself with his holy forerunner.

\(^{110}\) For an account and analysis of all of the emperor’s major ecclesiastical foundations, see Hledíková, “Karlovy církevní fundace,” 143-51 and Hledíková, “Fundace českých králů,” 5-55.

\(^{111}\) For the account of this battle, see Karoli IV Imperatoris Romanorum vita ab eo ipso conscripta et Hystoria nova de sancto Wenceslao martyre: Autobiography of Emperor Charles IV and His Legend of St. Wenceslas, ed. Balázs Nagy and Frank Schaer, trans. Paul W. Knoll and Frank Schaer (Budapest, 2001), 148-51.
The motives that drove the emperor’s ecclesiastical foundations cannot, therefore, be boiled down to any single, simple essence. Yet I would like to draw particular attention here to one important—arguably the most important—aspect of the entire series of Prague foundations. Through his careful choice of religious orders and congregations, Charles IV transformed the sacred topography of Prague into a microcosm of the entire sacred geography of Christendom. Even as he voraciously assembled holy relics in Prague (the topic of Chapter 5), Charles IV accumulated religious houses to adorn his capital city. Focus on any one foundation in isolation risks missing this larger point. Some scholars have detected in the emperor’s acts a special fondness for one order or another (especially “the Augustinians”). Others have rightly pointed to the rich cultural and dynastic symbolism in the establishment in New Town of a monastery of Benedictines who observed a Slavic rite. Yet Charles IV, who looked west as well as east, also brought Benedictines from Milan to practice the Ambrosian liturgy in New Town. In addition to the Augustinian canons, he introduced Carmelites and Servites to Prague as well. Together these foundations formed an important part of the emperor’s universalizing vision for New Town, for Prague, and for his empire.

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113 On the significance of this monastery (known in later times as the “Emmaus” monastery), see Jan Petr and Sáva Šabouk, eds., Z tradic slovanské kultury v Cechách: Sázava a Emauzy v dějinách české kultury (On the tradition of slavic culture in Bohemia: [The monasteries of] Sázava and Emaus in the history of Bohemian culture), (Prague, 1975).

114 The suggestion that Charles IV also founded a Celestine house in New Town seems to have been based on confusion between the emperor’s 1366 establishment of a community of Celestines at Ojvín and the 1387 donation to that community of the chapel of St. Michael below Vyšehrad in Prague (P-B 141; DMP 3.27, 28; cf. Hledíková, “Karlovy církevní fundace,” 151; Beneš of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.534; LE 3.271-72 no. 412).
Even the visions of emperors are not always brought to fruition. And Charles IV, despite his access to the wealth of the Bohemian silver mines like Kutná Hora, did not have the resources or perhaps even the attention necessary to fulfill all of his lofty aspirations. Four of the six New Town religious houses, and twelve of his sixteen ecclesiastical foundations overall, were products of his first decade of rule. As he continued to expand his empire, his gaze inevitably wandered from Prague. Nor had he endowed most of the Prague monasteries as richly as the royal foundations of centuries past. This, and the slow pace of monumental medieval construction, ensured that the majority of the new houses remained building sites for the greater part of Charles IV’s reign. The Slavic Benedictines of St. Jerome, established in 1347, only consecrated their church in 1372. The house of St. Charlemaigne came into existence with a 1350 imperial letter, but was not consecrated until 1377. Construction of the Carmelite church of St. Mary of the Snows was never completed. The collective impact of these six houses on Prague’s sacred topography, in other words, was more modest and slow-developing than the rhetoric of their imperial foundations and papal confirmations suggested. Charles IV possessed the power to shape the urban space—especially of New Town—by ordering the introduction of new elements. Ultimately, however, not even he had (or was willing to expend) the power necessary to control the function of those elements within the larger environment over time.

1.3. Conclusion: Elements of Prague’s Sacred Topography

Prague’s forty-five parish church divided the urban area into a parochial network that formed the backbone of the sacred topography. Twenty-four religious houses overlay and interpenetrated this network. Unlike the parochial structure, these monasteries did not together constitute a single local entity. As members of different international religious orders, they instead each represented a single node within the networks of the regional or multi-regional orders to which they belonged. They converged in Prague and joined the parish network to create the city’s unique geography of sacred space (see Map 1.4). And these were only the two largest categories of urban religious institutions. Five collegiate churches, including the cathedral, also existed in Prague. In addition, there were more than two dozen non-parochial churches and chapels, plus several houses of so-called beguines (about whom very little is known). Finally, Prague’s medieval Jewish community boasted two synagogues; the Old-New synagogue, a remarkable thirteenth-century Gothic structure, still survives. This chapter has mapped the basic structures of Prague’s sacred topography, introduced its inhabitants, and begun to explore the powers that shaped and controlled both. The remaining chapters build upon this foundation, each contributing to the final structure by investigating a single element of the religious culture that was rooted in Prague’s local topography.
Map 1.4: The Sacred Topography of Later Fourteenth-century Prague
CHAPTER 2

MARGARET AND THE PARISH OF ST. GALL: ALTARS, PATRONS, AND RENTS

In 1366 a single woman named Margaret signed over her house to her father’s former business partner.1 Her building occupied a prominent corner overlooking the market square of St. Gall in Prague’s Old Town, a fitting symbol of the strong ties Margaret and her father, John Steglitz, enjoyed to the St. Gall parish. This property transfer by no means ended this relationship. Margaret’s property and her piety—like that of her father and later her two husbands—permeated the parish of St. Gall, and indeed several other parishes. Margaret and her family exercised ecclesiastical patronage, remembered their dead with altars and masses, and secured it all with real estate. Their stories illuminate the contours of a single Prague parish and parish church, illustrating the fundamental place both occupied within the city’s sacred topography.

Lay parishioners both inhabited and shaped the sacred landscape of the city, primarily through their parish churches. Families of merchants and artisans filled their naves. The desperately poor begged at their doors. Well-to-do parishioners like Margaret had power to leave more lasting marks through their obligatory tithes, one-time gifts, and permanent legacies. Their patronage within and beyond their parishes created familial networks responsible for appointing and supporting a large number of clerics.

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1 ZSMP 1.115 no. 503.
Equally important was the function of their property within parish religion. The parish topography, after all, was not limited to the space occupied by the local church. Private houses, like the one that Margaret inherited from her father on St. Gall’s marketplace, defined and preserved parish life. Houses and other private buildings often served as the boundary markers dividing one parish from another. The same houses, and more specifically the rents \((census)\) attached to them, directly supported the cure of souls and the remembering of the dead. These property-secured rents guaranteed annual masses for the wealthy deceased as well as regular incomes for countless clerics. To be sure, the great advantage of such property-based rents—their perpetuity—could also make them unbearably onerous for those obliged to pay them. Yet in spite of some limited contemporary criticism, rents remained indispensable cornerstones of Prague’s parishes.

Surprisingly, the growing scholarship on medieval parishes has largely ignored the importance of rents for urban parish life. The economically oriented rent contracts, it seems, have not caught the imagination of the predominately social, cultural, and religious historians who have devoted their attention to medieval parishes. Highlighting the central place that this vital but neglected economic mechanism occupied within Prague’s parishes therefore represents an important contribution of this chapter. Rents established and perpetuated by people like Margaret connected parish churches to domestic property beyond the parish boundaries, and even beyond the city borders. The individual financial and devotional decisions of well-to-do parishioners over generations together created a new and largely invisible topography that bound together sacred and secular, public and private, pious and worldly. Parish churches like St. Gall became the hubs of these networks, central points of the social, economic, and religious life of the
city. The parish of St. Gall proves a particularly well-documented example of the neglected medieval phenomenon of rents. Its rich documents also illustrate the importance of lay patronage and altar foundation—likewise activities in which Margaret was active—in creating social and financial networks that traversed the city. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter is not only to reveal the importance of parishes within Prague’s sacred topography, but also to assert the centrality of parish topography for medieval urban life.

2.1 The Parish of St. Gall

2.1.1. Margaret, daughter of John Steglitz

There was nothing terribly special about Margaret. She was the eldest daughter, perhaps the only daughter, of an Old Town citizen of some wealth and local importance. She married and outlived two respectable husbands from good Prague families. Invariably identified as either the daughter, wife, or widow of one of these three men, Margaret nevertheless twice took Old Town citizenship in her own name (in her legal standing as a widow) and periodically exercised some minor ecclesiastical patronage. Yet she is of interest here not for her independence or exceptionality, but instead for leading a life enmeshed in the local culture of her parish and her city. Pieced together, the scattered shards of her life preserved in assorted documents provide a window onto the Old Town parish of St. Gall during her lifetime. One could choose another perspective from which to tell the story of her parish. I have chosen Margaret’s.
Margaret’s father, John Steglitz,² had been closely involved with St. Gall’s central landmark: the great market hall of drapers’ and shearers’ stalls that ran for two hundred meters along the central axis of Prague’s longest square. In 1362 John Steglitz and a man named Peter (Peslinus) together sold several of these stalls to various shearers (pannicidae). (Records of these sales provide the first historical evidence of the St. Gall stalls). Whether the two men had themselves been selling textiles from the stalls or had otherwise acquired them remains unclear. They may have built the stalls, or even the entire hall. In any case, John and Peter seem to have had a close business relationship.³ This would help to explain how John Steglitz came into possession of the large house opposite from the market hall in the same year (1363) that Peter had purchased it from a relative, and why Margaret turned it back over (resignat) to Peter in 1366 after her father had died.⁴ Perhaps the property, together with the several small rent-owing buildings behind the main house (cum omnibus parvis domunculis et domibus censualibus retro predictam domum), served to pay off other debts still owing to Peter.⁵ Not that the Steglitz family was poor: John left behind enough property in and beyond Prague to preserve his local memory for years to come. It fell in part to Margaret, apparently his primary heir, to oversee the cultivation of this memory.

Margaret’s responsibilities (and the wherewithal to execute them) increased through her later marriages into two of Prague’s more illustrious families. First came

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² John Steglitz’s name is spelled variously in the sources (e.g., Juhil Stecklicz, Johlinus Steclicz, Johlinus Steglitz) (LE 1.72 (#149, 150); ZSMP 1.115 no. 503; 127).

³ DMP 2.164.

⁴ Peter (Pesko Pilungi) bought the house from Bartha Pillungi in 1363; Margaret turned it back over to Peter (Pesslinus Pillungi) three years later (ZSMP 1.115).

⁵ See below, n. 110.
Simon, son of Bohuslav, a member of Old Town’s Wolfram (Olbram) family who controlled the important church of St. Nicholas on the Poultry Market. Simon had given up his Old Town citizenship in 1357 when he inherited rural property from his father, but took it up again in 1371. He began to call himself “miles de Rostok” after his village of Roztoky near Prague. Simon had married Margaret by 1369, but it proved a short marriage: already in 1375 she appears as his widow.6

Although the extended family of Margaret’s next husband could not compare with the Wolframs, few Prague citizens were as personally accomplished as he. From 1364 to 1374, Hans Beneschauer held the office of Old Town city magistrate, one of the highest offices available to a Prague citizen. In 1367 Old Town and New Town joined together, and Hans became magistrate of the unified town. (This attempt by Charles IV to unify the two cities did not succeed; after a decade, the two separated again).7 After his term as city magistrate, Hans served on the Old Town council. He is also probably the same Hans who in 1374 acceded to an even loftier position, that of subchamberlain (subcamerarius) for Prague, responsible for exercising royal authority in the city on behalf of Charles IV.8 Margaret would have known of such a prominent man long before she married him. The two were almost certainly old acquaintances as well; they had been next-door neighbors in the parish of St. Gall for a time.9 It was not the first marriage for

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6 DMP 2.450; 447 n.3; LC 3-4.46.

7 DMP 2.285; 2.460.

8 His successor as subcamerarius, as Tomek points out, had certainly served previously as Old Town judex (DMP 2.303).

9 Hans Beneschauer bought his house in 1363, the same year in which John Steglitz first appears as the owner of the adjacent house (ZSMP, 1.115-116 no. 502, 503).
either of them, and it proved even briefer than Margaret’s first. They married sometime after December 1375, and Hans died around 1380.

Margaret herself lived another decade or so, faithfully exercising her duties and remembering her father (and others) to the end. There is no evidence that she had any children of her own. Both of her husbands had sons, but Hans Beneschauer’s heir was the product of a previous marriage and Simon’s son John may have been as well. Margaret probably did not reside in the parish of St. Gall for her entire life; her principal residence during her second marriage, for instance, was most likely her husband’s village of Roztoky, about fifteen kilometers downstream from Old Town along the Vltava. Yet Prague and especially St. Gall always remained central to her life and activities, so far as they can be reconstructed. She knew its church with its altars, its market square and its houses, and many of the people who inhabited them. Its topography and its residents were familiar to her. To explore the parish and Margaret’s place within it, we must also become acquainted with the same people and landmarks.

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10 Hans had a son, also Hans Beneschauer, who served on the Old Town council from 1379-1381 (DMP 2.460).

11 Margaret appears as Simon Bohuslai’s widow (rather than as Hans’ wife) in a December 17, 1375 document (LC 3-4.46). Tomek reports that she once again took Old Town citizenship in 1379, this time as Hans’ widow (DMP 2.461, n.33); however, Margaret is still described as Hans’ wife (not his widow) as late as May 9, 1380 (LC 3-4.125). On September 19, 1380, his nephew holds the patronage to a parish church that Hans and his brother had previously shared, suggesting that both men were dead by this date (LC 3-4.143; cf. DMP 2.480-1).

12 She makes arrangements for a new anniversary mass for her “procurator” in August 1390, at which time she also stipulated precisely how to celebrate the anniversary of her father connected with an altar he established (LE 2.330-32 nos. 482, 483). Tomek puts her death in 1391 (DMP 2.461-2 n. 33).

13 DMP 2.461-62 n. 33; John, son of Simon, takes part in a legal act dated 1386. In his reconstruction of the family tree, Tomek makes John the son of Simon and Margaret, but it seems to me at least plausible that he was born before their c. 1369-1375 marriage (DMP 2.452, 2.449). It is of course possible that she had daughters or sons whose names do not happen to appear in surviving documents.
2.1.2. The Physical Topography of St. Gall

Margaret’s parish of St. Gall belonged to the densely populated Old Town. Its position along that city’s southern wall made it absolutely central to fourteenth-century Prague’s right bank. Passing from Old Town Square to New Town’s massive Horse Market (now Wenceslas Square) involved crossing the parish of St. Gall and its own market square. The house that Margaret inherited from her father lay precisely along this well-traveled route. A combination of historical accidents have also made St. Gall the best-documented parish of medieval Prague. An unusually conscientious record-keeping priest (1380-1390) ensured that the most important parish documents were entered into archiepiscopal records.14 The seventeenth-century cession of the parish to the Carmelites later transferred the original copies of the same documents to their care. A century and a half after that, Emperor Joseph II closed this house and a host of other religious institutions in Bohemia that he deemed superfluous. The confiscated remnants of St. Gall’s parish archive—apparently the only one from Prague to survive at all—now reside in the Statní Ústřední Archiv (State Central Archive) in Prague together with the other documents from dissolved monasteries. They provide invaluable insight into one of Old Town’s most important fourteenth-century parishes.15 These sources together make possible an unusually detailed picture of a parish in all its aspects—from topography and architecture to patronage and finances.

14 The *Libri erectionum* survive and have been edited; they form an important source for this and the other parishes of Prague (ed. Klement Borový, vol. 1-5 (1358-1407) (Prague, 1875-1889).

St. Gall had not always been near the center of Prague’s settlement. It emerged first in the thirteenth century, not (just) as a parish, but as an independent town. One hundred years before the foundation of Charles IV’s New Town, St. Gall became the “new town” on the outskirts of Prague. Archaeological evidence indicates the presence of some inhabitants before this time, but its importance as a population center began with its foundation as a town.¹⁶ A 1265 charter of King Přemysl Ottokar II (1253-1278) provides the first documentary evidence: the “new city at St. Gall,” it relates, had its foundation in the time of Ottokar II’s father, King Wenceslas I (1230-1253), was built “magnifice,” and enjoyed all the rights and liberties held by the other cities of the realm. Moreover, the charter indicates that Eberhard, master of the royal mint under Wenceslas and then Ottokar, had together with his associates (sui amici) been responsible for building the greater part of the new city.¹⁷ Eberhard, it seems, had functioned as the

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¹⁶ A series of early thirteenth-century houses and furnaces have been uncovered on the market’s eastern side, but they seem to have ceased functioning or to have been destroyed in conjunction with the growth of St. Gall’s Town around the middle of the century. Further digging in the same area has also uncovered a fountain, a well, and a series of trash pits. For more on the archaeological findings, see Václav Huml, “On the Settlement of the St. Gallus Town Before its Annexation to the Old Town of Prague,” *Archeologia Polski* 37 (1992): 201-207; cf. the more extensive and well-documented articles by the same author, “K počátkům havelského města. Předběžná zpráva o výzkumu na ovocném trhu v letech 1985 – 1988” (On the origins of St. Gall’s Town. A preliminary report on the research on the fruit market in the years 1985-1988), *Archaeologia historica* 17 (1992): 63-82; “K osídlení ovocného trhu na Starém Městě pražském na základě archeologického výzkumu v l. 1984-85” (On the settlement of the fruit market in Prague Old Town on the basis of archaeological research from the years 1984-85), *Archaeologica Pragensia* 12 (1996): 247-72.

¹⁷ The charter survives in an abbreviated form in a thirteenth-century formulary as well as in two seventeenth century transcriptions: “Cum nova civitas circa Sanctum Gallum temporibus domini Wenceslai, felicis memoria patris nostri, magnifice sit constructa, institutis in ea iuribus et libertatibus universis, quibus alie civitates regni nostri solite sunt gaudere, nos . . . scire cupimus presencium quoslibet inspecturos tam presentes quam futuros, quod consideratis meritis et fidelibus obsequis dilecti nobis Eberhardi, magistri monete nostre, tam patri nostro felicis memoria quam nobis ab ipso sepius exhibitis et inspenis, tum etiam quod dictus Eberhardus magister monete nostre, et sui amici constructionis ipsius nove civitatis pars maxima extiterunt, ipsis ibidem civibus habere scolas [sic] concedimus ad Sanctum Gallum modo et libertae per omnia, qua in aliiis nostris civitatibus haberi communiter consveverunt . . .” (CDB 5.1, 667-8 no. 452). On the possible meaning of “scolas,” see below, n. 18.
city’s locator, organizing its settlement by Germans under license from the king.\textsuperscript{18} This mid-thirteenth-century foundation, early for the kingdom of Bohemia, made St. Gall’s town one of only nineteen towns in Bohemia and Moravia at the time, and a relatively close second after Old Town in the area of Prague.\textsuperscript{19} A surviving 1282 document confirms St. Gall’s continued distinction from Prague by its reference to an otherwise unknown house of Magdalene sisters “\textit{apud S. Gallum juxta Pragam}.”\textsuperscript{20} Nevertheless, the city of St. Gall had always been closely tied to its neighbor. For example, the Old Town walls, begun under the reign of Wenceslas I (1230-1253) and apparently completed before the death of Wenceslas II (1305), encompassed both cities.\textsuperscript{21} Sometime between the death of Ottokar II (1278) and the turn of the next century, St. Gall’s town was legally as well as physically incorporated into Prague’s Old Town.\textsuperscript{22}

St. Gall’s heart was its marketplace. The vast majority of houses in the parish overlooked it. This dominant topographical feature extended approximately 560 meters

\textsuperscript{18} This early charter has attracted the attention of many scholars over the years. Particularly vexing has been a textual problem relating to the purpose of the charter; the transmission of “solas” (usually emended to “scolas”) has given rise to various interpretations of the right actually given to the town. Early and oft-cited treatments include Václav Vojišek, “K počátkům pražského města” (On the origins of the city of Prague), \textit{Časopis národního muzea} 104 (1930): 27-36; Bedřich Mendl, “‘Vici theutonicorum’ a ‘civitas circa S. Gallum.’” \textit{ČČH} 38 (1932): 237-59. The best hypothesis has been offered by Jiří Kejř, “
\textit{K interpretaci práv měšťanů svatohavelského města pražského},” \textit{PSH} 9 (1975): 5-18, who argued that the word should be read “salas” and interpreted as permission for Eberhard and his associates to appoint an official “Salman” for the city. Such middlemen for city property were common in German cities that prohibited the direct sale of land from citizens to non-citizens. For more on Eberhard, see František Hoffman, “Mincmistr Eberhard,” \textit{PSH} 12 (1980): 70-84.

\textsuperscript{19} Jiří Kejř, \textit{Vznik městského zřízení v českých zemích} (The origin of the city privilege in the Bohemian lands) (Prague, 1998), 121-22.

\textsuperscript{20} RBM 2.553ff. no. 1287.


\textsuperscript{22} Huml, Václav. “On the Settlement of the St. Gallus Town,” 201.
along its East-West axis. Despite a relatively narrow breadth, its total area still made it
the second largest marketplace in the Bohemian kingdom, nearly double the size of Old
Town square.23 Once St. Gall was incorporated into Old Town, its market appears in the
sources simply as Old Town’s “New market” (novum forum). As such, it provided one of
Prague’s major public spaces. Some of the city’s most august celebrations took place
there. At the 1297 coronation of Wenceslas II, wine flowed like a river from special
fountains fed by subterranean channels constructed for the occasion.24 For Charles IV’s
own 1347 Bohemian coronation, he chose the “market at St. Gall” for the erection of a
pavilion (domus convivii) to house the exuberant celebrations.25

Around the square lived a variety of artisans and merchants, including cobblers, drapers,
tailors, goldsmiths, and other smiths. City councilors and even city magistrates (iudices)
also owned houses here, as did members of some of Prague’s most prominent land-
owning families.26 Perhaps the grandest house of all was built sometime before 1371 by
John Rotlew, who (like Eberhard long before him) held the lucrative post of royal
mintmaster of Kutná Hora. His house occupied a prominent place on the square directly
behind the church of St. Gall (see Map 2.1, no. 7); its erection probably involved the
destruction of several smaller houses. Only twelve years later this grand house was given

23 Líbal, “Raně gotické Staré Město a doba Václava II,” in Staré Město pražské: architektonický
a urbanistický vývoj, ed. Dobroslav Líbal and Jan Muk (Prague, 1996), 67; František Hoffman, České
město ve středověku (The Bohemian city in the Middle Ages) (Prague, 1992), 117.

24 Peter of Zittau, Chronicon Aulae Regiae, FRB 4, ed. Josef Emler (Prague, 1884), 76.


26 The records of names and often occupations of the owners of houses in medieval Prague were
collected from various sources by Tomek in his ZSMP. For St. Gall, see esp. 1.107-140.
to Charles’ College. (It remains in university hands today).  

Before building this house, John Rotlew had purchased another one not far away on the marketplace’s north side—just four doors down from the house Margaret inherited from her father (see Map 2.1, numbers 5 and 3). This was a prime location near the church and the eastern end of the market hall. All the houses on the row anchored by Margaret’s corner building qualified as desirable residences. Margaret’s immediate neighbor was Hans Beneschauer, the Old Town city magistrate who became her second husband (no. 5).  

On the other side of John Rotlew lived the long-time parish priest of St. Gall, Wenceslas Tausentmark (1346-1380) (no. 6).

Yet the parish’s most prestigious houses were not those occupied in the 1360s by Margaret, Hans Beneschauer, and John Rotlew, but rather the ones directly opposite them on the southern side of the square. Archaeological investigations have revealed a regular series of carefully laid-out stone houses here dating from the mid-thirteenth century. Several still include the foundations for stone towers, although it seems that only one of the towers—still surviving but hidden under a baroque façade—was ever completed. The size and location of these regularly drawn plots directly across from the church of St. Gall confirm their status as some of the most important of the town’s residences. Ottokar II’s

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27 The college fellows actually moved into the *domus Rotlebi* from their previous Old Town home, the *domus Lazari*, three years later, in 1386 (ZSMP 1.136; DMP 2.472-473).

28 DMP 2.285; ZSMP 1.116.

29 ZSMP 1.116; Tausentmark appears as a canon of the chapel of All Saints in Prague Castle in 1342 (DMP 1.399). He may have had connections to the parish of St. Gall before becoming its parish priest; his brother Francis sold a house on the marketplace of St. Gall in 1335 (DMP 1.321).

30 An overview of the archaeological research in this area is provided by Dobroslav Libal, “Rané gotické Staré Město a doba Václava II,” 67-73.
1 St. Gall parish church
2 market hall
3 John Steglitz (later Margaret)
4 Hans Beneschauer
5 John Rotlew
6 Wenceslas Tausentmark (St. Gall parish priest)
7 John Rotlew (later Charles’ College)
8 Nicholas of the tower (later Matthew of the tower)
9 Borzuta, Old Town magistrate (later Dietrich, Bishop of Minden)

Map 2.1: The Parish of St. Gall
praise of the buildings of St. Gall’s town probably referred to them. At a time when wooden city houses would have been the norm, these stone houses attest to the wealth of at least the most prominent residents of St. Gall’s town. These included Borzuta, a previous magistrate of Old Town. The tower house almost directly across the square from Margaret was only one of his two St. Gall houses (no. 9). Borzuta sold the house in 1360 to a royal counselor, Dietrich, Bishop of Minden. Dietrich, who not long after became Archbishop of Magdeburg, reportedly purchased the house for his nephew. The house just across a side-street belonged to members of the wealthy and influential Welfl family, Nicholas and later Matthew “of the tower” (no. 8).

Partly obscuring Margaret’s view of these grand houses was the three-story market hall that formed the centerpiece of St. Gall’s square, the source of at least a portion of her father’s wealth. The stalls that John Steglitz and his partner sold to various drapers in 1362 were no ramshackle stands, but rather belonged to the crown jewel of St. Gall’s market. By this date they formed part of a massive, covered complex of stalls

31 Libal et al., “Raně gotické havelské město,” 51-55. By the reign of Charles IV, further stone houses had been built between and behind these tower-houses, filling in the empty spaces; see, for instance, the result of the investigation of the houses along one side street that joins the market square, in Jana Vodičková, “Rekonstrukce ulice Na Můstku a výsledky stavebně historického průzkumu přilehlých domů” (Reconstruction of the street, “Na Můstku,” and the results of the architectural-historical survey of the neighboring houses), Staletá Praha 16 (1986): 131-46.

32 The house is called “curia Mindenensis” in 1363; by 1404, it seems to have become the official residence of the city magistrate, the “domus judicis,” (ZSMP 1.129; DMP 2.159). For Borzuta, see DMP 2.479.

33 Matthew “de Turri” sold the house in 1364 to Peter of Thaust (Domažlice). Earlier in 1364 Nicholas “de Turre,” Matthew’s cousin, was listed as the owner. According to Tomek, the name, “of the tower” derived from the house “of the tower” owned by the same Nicholas near St. Nicholas in Old Town, and not from the apparently never-finished tower of the house on St. Gall’s marketplace (DMP, 2.436-444, esp. 440; cf. 2.158; ZSMP 1.131 no. 403; 1.47 no. 27h).
running from east to west for two hundred meters in the center of the marketplace. Examination of the buildings now occupying the site, together with an early seventeenth-century etching, allows its approximate reconstruction (see Figure 2.1). The stalls were arranged in two long rows, with a covered central walkway between them. Its great height can be seen by the positioning of its upper windows; one surviving pair now sits alone atop the third level of the building’s modern windows. A transverse passageway

Figure 2.1 1606 Etching of the Parish of St. Gall by Sadeler (looking East)

34 The royal privilege relating to these stalls, however, is dated 1377 and jointly issued by Charles IV and Wenceslas IV. This privilege, known only from a sixteenth-century copy, stipulates the precise dimensions of each stall and calls for a total of one hundred total (DMP 2.164).
divided its length into two parts. The section nearest the church and directly opposite the Steglitz house (*in minori parte pannilobiorum*) contained two rows of ten stalls each. The other, longer part (*in majori parte pannilobiorum*) had twenty-three stalls on each side.35 Two spiral staircases located at the building’s division apparently provided access to attic space above the stalls’ gothic vaulting. Each of the sixty-six stalls (for which the words “*gasa*” and “*hutta*” are both used) could be bought, sold, rented, and taxed separately.36 They housed both workshops and retail space, with access from the central hall rather than the outside walls. Drapers and shearers tended to group in different parts of the building, but there was no exclusive division. The modern buildings now occupying this space trace some of the original ground plan, providing a good sense of the magnitude of this massive market hall, the longest known medieval building of any kind in the kingdom of Bohemia.37

The St. Gall market hall anchored the square architecturally, but did not house all the parish’s economic activity. During the first half of Charles IV’s reign, the St. Gall marketplace as a whole established its central economic importance for Prague. Around the middle of the fourteenth century, Old Town’s coal market seems to have been relocated to the square’s western end. A series of shelters there held piles of coal, and a

35 ZSMP 1.121, 122.

36 Surviving records of the sale these stalls, almost all from the fifteenth century, provide the most insight into the inhabitants and appearances of the individual stalls. They are gathered in ZSMP 1.121-128.

37 In later centuries, the smaller, eastern wing was destroyed and replaced by a block of buildings. The larger section lost its roof at the end of the eighteenth century, and the two rows of stalls were gradually transformed into residences. The architectural investigations of Milada Vilímková, and František Kašička, (“*Minulost pražských Kotečů a předpoklady pro jejich regeneraci*” (The history of the market stalls of Prague and the preconditions for their renovation), *Památková péče* 26 (1966): 135-49) greatly enhanced the document-based description of Tomek (DMP 2.164). Now see also Dobroslav Libal, “*Doba Lucemburská*,” in *Staré Město pražské*, ed. Libal and Muk, 169-70; Vilém Lorenc, *Nové Město pražské* (Prague, 1973), 124.
nearby smithy supplied horseshoes. More towards the center of the marketplace, wooden goods—ranging from planks and timbers to wheels and carved objects—were offered for sale. In 1376, a new Saturday meat-market was established near the church of St. Gall. Nearby salted fish was sold in the fifteenth century, and perhaps already in the fourteenth.

St. Gall’s marketplace dominated the parish’s physical topography. Its market hall and various other markets attracted the trade that generated the bulk of the parish’s wealth. This money in turn built and maintained the houses circumscribing the square. The same wealth, in the forms of tithes and donations, also erected and furnished the gothic church situated at the heart of the parochial topography: the parish church of St. Gall. Together with the stone houses and massive market hall, the church of St. Gall revealed to all passers-by the unmistakable affluence of its parishioners.

2.1.3. The Parish Church of St. Gall

Now hidden under Baroque renovations, the two-towered gothic church of St. Gall has been dated on architectural grounds to the second quarter of the fourteenth century. This would make it the parish’s second church—a public reflection of the

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38 DMP 2.163-64; ZSMP 1.112.

39 Although the king transferred the wood market to New Town in 1372, some of the associated tradesmen (notably wheelwrights) continued to live along St. Gall’s New market (DMP 2.165; ZSMP 1.113).

40 DMP 2.165; ZSMP 1.121-122; But compare the 1367 royal privilege granting New Town, stipulating that all buying and selling of salted fish, coal, grain, and cattle be limited to New Town markets (Jaromír Čelakovský, ed., Privilegia civitatum pragensium, Codex Juris Municipalis Regni Bohemiae 1 [Prague, 1886], 144-46 no. 88).

41 On the choice of church patrons in Bohemia, see Zdeněk Boháč, “Patrocinia románských kostelů v Čechách” (The patronages of Romanesque churches in Bohemia), Historická geografie 8 (1972): 31-51.
The community’s increasing wealth and importance in the fourteenth century (see Figure 2.1 above for a view of the church before it received its Baroque facade). The central aisle of the triple-aisled nave originally rose to an impressive height of approximately 25 meters; the visitor’s impression of verticality would have been accentuated by the church’s modest length (about 34 meters) (see Figure 2.2). Isolated remnants of painted vaulting hint at the church’s original polychromatic magnificence. These colorful vaults enclosed the community’s central ritual and liturgical space. Daily masses, weekly

Figure 2.2 Ground Plan of the Parish Church of St. Gall
(Gothic with Baroque Renovations)

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42 Dobroslav Libal, “Doba Lucemburská,” 136-139; Libal, Pražské gotické kostely (Prague, 1946), 32-34; Helena Smetáčková, “K středověké stavební etapě kostela sv. Havla na Starém Městě pražském” (On the medieval architectural stage of the church of St. Gall in Prague Old Town), Památková péče 32 (1972): 119-20. A May 1326 charter’s mention of a “magister operis” of the parish church of St. Gall may suggest that a new church was then planned or already under construction, thus providing textual confirmation of the architecturally-based dating of the Gothic building; the charter documents a census payable to the “provisor sive magister operis” of this church (LE 1.114 no. 236).
services, occasional feast days, and annual confession filled its walls. The rhythm of these regular celebrations was punctuated by baptisms, marriages, and masses for the dead, all within these architectural boundaries. Here priests (including one who became a Baroque saint!) celebrated the Eucharist. Here some of Prague’s most dynamic preachers (including Conrad Waldhauser, discussed in chapter 3) captivated their listeners. The ground plan of the St. Gall church defined the parish’s most sacred space, and its towers proclaimed its presence throughout and beyond the parish.

The parish church that Margaret knew was not only painted, but also furnished—with the gifts of generations of parishioners and the purchases of a series of parish clergy. Whether waiting to confess or twiddling through the chanting of familiar, inscrutable Latin verses, the people of St. Gall had far more to attract their gazes than the bare walls that modern tourists usually encounter within medieval churches. Leading parishioners were at once proud and jealous of the objects adorning their church. At their insistence, their new parish priest made a detailed inventory of the church’s moveable wealth in 1381, “lest with the passage of time [these objects] should happen to be dispersed or otherwise alienated by [the priest’s] successors.” St. Gall’s parishioners had reason to be nervous: the 1379-80 Prague visitation uncovered countless complaints about parish clergy pawning or simply absconding with parish property of all kinds, including the occasional relic. After having been served by the same priest for more than thirty years, the parishioners of St. Gall may also have been mistrustful of their new parish priest, a

43 “. . . ne tales successu temporis per meos successores, dictae ecclesiae plebanos vel per quospiam alios forte dissipari seu quovis modo alienari contingat in futurum. . .” (LE 4.345 no. 485).

44 e.g., PV 46, 49, 54, 56, 59-60, 65, 67-8, 73, 74, 81-82, 88, 91-2, 98-99, 100, 104, 117, 120, 130, 133.
career-minded pluralist and law student named John of Nepomuk. (They presumably had no inkling that their priest, who lived and studied in Padua for much of his tenure at St. Gall, would be canonized as St. John of Nepomuk more than three hundred years later).  

The result of the parishioners’ worries and the meticulousness of John of Nepomuk (a former public notary and secretary to the archbishop) was a remarkable inventory of the church’s furnishings. This document provides a rare, detailed glimpse into the interior environment of a Prague parish church. Included are descriptions of dozens of sets of church ornaments (ornatus), mostly silk, to be used on feast days and during particular liturgical seasons. Lions, dragons, flowers, and saints appear embroidered or otherwise depicted upon red, green, and gold fields. Many were gifts, means by which wealthy parishioners supported their church and showcased their ability to do so. A few gift-givers took no chances that their largesse might be forgotten. For example, a yellow ornatus portraying the Virgin with golden lions also carried the family crest of the Rotlews (whose massive house stood directly behind the church). Besides these many brightly colored ornatus, St. Gall also possessed a large collection of elaborate relic-holding monstrances, numerous silver and gilded silver chalices, a

45 On the life of John of Nepomuk, see Jaroslav Pole, Svatý Jan Nepomucký (Prague, 1993). For his cult, see also Vít Vlnas, Jan Nepomucký: Česká legenda (John of Nepomuk: The Bohemian legend), (Prague, 1993).

46 Completed in September 1381, the inventory was registered in the archiepiscopal chancery at John’s request in 1390 (LE 4.345-349 no. 485).

47 A further nine sets of everyday vestments are mentioned briefly at the end of the long list: “Praedicti ornatus, prout descripti sunt, pertinent ad ecclesiam S. Galli in Praga praeter ornatus communes, in quibus singulis diebus officiatur, et in sacrastia servantur, qui in numero sunt novem tantum” (LE 4.347-48 no. 485)

48 LE 4.348.
respective complement of liturgical books, as well as candelabras and sundry other ornaments.\textsuperscript{49}

The most visually dramatic (and distracting!) church furnishings, however, were undoubtedly its twelve tapestries. Tapestries were often hung in various parts of medieval churches, especially on feast days. They might even be carried outdoors occasionally to decorate the route of liturgical processions.\textsuperscript{50} A few of St. Gall’s tapestries served clear didactic and liturgical functions: one portrayed a series of Advent scenes, including the Annunciation, Epiphany, and the three kings; another took the Passion as its subject. The image of a pelican with its young on another tapestry expressed a well-established christological message. The majority of the tapestries, though, seem to have been simply decorative wall-coverings that would have been equally at home in the house of a noble or wealthy merchant. Indeed, they may once have hung in precisely such homes. In one, a group of women catch fish in a river while others capture birds in nets. Hunting scenes, very common in medieval tapestries, appear on two others. Other subjects included birds and sea monsters. Surely none was more prized, though, than the first tapestry listed in the inventory. It contained “images of the emperor and empress,” along with a sword-pierced lion, and “many other images.” Battlements were woven across the top, along with a series of French texts.\textsuperscript{51} This woven

\textsuperscript{49} LE 4.345-349 no. 485. The parish relics, and especially the relic of St. Gall donated by Charles IV, are discussed at greater length in chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{50} A good introduction to medieval tapestries, including their making, their uses, and a survey of recent scholarship, is provided by Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo, \textit{Medieval Tapestries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art} (New York, 1993), esp. 27-80.

\textsuperscript{51} “Primo tapete cum imaginibus imperatoris et imperatricis, in medio imago leonem cum gladio penetrans et plures aliae imagines supra ciboria seu moenia castri cum cedulis in francigeno scriptis diversi coloris,” (LE 4.348).
emperor probably represented Charles IV, the first Bohemian king to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor. No doubt the sight of these images reminded St. Gall’s parishioners of the proud day in 1347 when Charles IV’s Bohemian coronation had been celebrated on the marketplace outside their church. The inventory preserves neither the donors nor the origins of these valuable tapestries, although the appearance of French texts on two of them may suggest that some had been woven in the leading fourteenth-century tapestry centers of Paris or Arras, or at least by craftsmen from these areas. Together these rich scenes, many of them iconographically alien to the divine cult, framed the liturgical space of St. Gall’s parish church.

Much of the church’s moveable property came directly from parishioners as one-time gifts. These decorative and liturgical objects represented links between the church’s public space and St. Gall’s inhabitants, as well as visible manifestations of the wealth of local families. But secure legacies demanded more serious investments. Enter the side altars: the immoveable memorials to St. Gall’s most well-to-do parishioners. Altars, unlike moveable gifts, became part of the fixed topography of the parish church. Each new altar subdivided the sacred space, carving out a section for a new saint and the associated cult. Although nominally limited by statute to three such altars, St. Gall accrued no fewer than ten between 1340 and 1400, six of them before the end of Charles IV’s reign in 1378. Four were situated within their own chapels. The same escalation

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53 Zelený, “Councils and Synods,” 530 no. 57.

54 Tomek counts 10 side altars for St. Gall (DMP 2.162-3), but elsewhere states that there were nine altar priests at St. Gall (DMP 3.32). Zdeňka Hlédková lists nine altars for St. Gall, although she omits two counted by Tomek and adds another—to an unspecified saint (“Fundace pražských měšťanů do roku 1419” (The foundations made by Prague citizens to the year 1419), Documenta Pragensia 4 (1984): 123; 131-32, nos. 13-14). I count ten altars. The document cited by Hlédková (LE 4.448-9 no. 619) confirms
of altar-foundations transformed other prominent parish churches throughout the city. St. Mary at Týn boasted seven and St. Nicholas in Old Town eight side-altars before the end of Charles IV’s reign. St. Gall’s altars carried dedications to a wide range of saints, including the apostles Simon, Jude, and John, the late antique virgin saints Catherine and Dorothy, and even Thomas of Canterbury. John Steglitz’s will mandated the establishment of a permanent altar and associated benefice in honor of the Bohemian patron saints, a group that at the time included Wenceslas, Vitus and Adalbert. With this endowed altar, John Steglitz cemented his position within the parish and its church, a

the selling of a rent of 9 schocks annually by Ela, the widow of Fancza of Beroun to two Old Town citizens, secured by her house on the marketplace of St. Gall (no. 422) as well as two villages. But although the edited text carries the subtitle, “pro altari erigendo in ecclesia s. Galli Pragae,” there is no direct evidence of any altar in the text, which is dated May 1, 1378. It seems that this rent—payable, according to the contract, to whomever possesses the document—was later sold to Matthew Goldner, who planned to build an altar in St. Gall using the census of 9 schocks on this house. On May 11, 1386, apparently before building the altar, he transferred the right of patronage to another man: “donavit jus patronatus cuiusdam altaris erigendi in ecclesia S. Galli Prag. d. Wolbramo de Squorz” (SA 2.372 no. 95). There is no evidence that this altar was ever built. We do know that Ela’s house already was burdened by an annual rent of 5 schocks, due to the altar priest of the chapel and altar of St. Anne at St. Gall’s church (whose patrons from 1375 until at least October 13, 1386 happened to include the same Matthew Goldner) (LE 1.109-110 no. 227); SÚA AZK 1241; SA 2.404 no. 268). We also know that in January of 1378, the altar priest of this altar had called Ela before the Prague Consistory court, perhaps for failure to pay the rent. A month later, the same court excommunicated her for failure to appear (SA 1.250 no. 25), 253 no. 47). Perhaps the sale of this new rent a few months later was an attempt to raise money to pay the overdue rent to the altar of St. Anne. In any case, there is no evidence that the rent described in the May 1378 document was originally intended for establishing a new altar at St. Gall. Hledíková does not list the altar of the apostles Simon, Jude, and John nor the altar of St. Bartholomew and Thomas of Canterbury. The latter is known only from the surviving 1353 charter (SÚA AZK 1233), which attests to its existence at that time and names the first altar priest. Admittedly, there are no records of any subsequent priests being named to it, so it may not have continued in existence.

The number of side-altars in both these churches exploded after 1378, leading to a total sixteen for St. Nicholas and an extraordinary twenty-three for St. Mary before 1419 (DMP 1.146, 1.201); other churches in Old Town had fewer; there were fewer still spread out of the New Town and Lesser Town churches (Hledíková, “Fundace,” 124-126).

For the 10 known altars, their founders and their foundation dates (or dates of first mention), see Appendix 2.

LE 1.72 no. 149; The altar is most often described as dedicated to “the holy patrons,” although Vitus, Wenceslas, and Adalbert are all mentioned by name in at least one document (e.g., SA 2.91-92 no. 96; LC 5.27; LC 6.165). Sigismund, whose relics reached Prague in late 1365, was probably not yet then considered one of Bohemia’s patron saints, though he almost definitely was by 1369. Ludmilla and Procopius are also often included (e.g., Beneš of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.544).
position that would survive his death and even the relocation of his heirs away from the parish of St. Gall.

2.2. Pious Networks: St. Gall, Prague & Beyond

This new St. Gall altar to the Bohemian patron saints, for which John named his daughter Margaret patron, encapsulates the themes that occupy the remainder of this chapter. All relate to private altars and the accompanying complex of religious, personal, and financial activities. Together the many private altars in Prague parish churches wove a tapestry of personal and economic connections covering Prague and the surrounding countryside. Here I will trace primarily the threads tied to Margaret and the parish of St. Gall. Together they reveal how the parish topography repeatedly reached outwards, forming financial and social networks that linked the local religion of the parish with people and places beyond, in some cases far beyond, the parish borders. Newly endowed altars created new connections, so these networks inevitably thickened as the pace of new altar foundations accelerated over the course of the fourteenth century.

First of all, the provisions for patronage established by altar founders created bonds between the parish church and the founders’ families or trusted friends. Anchored on one side by a fixed altar benefice, such bonds regularly shifted from individual to individual and family to family when patrons died or transferred their rights. In this way, for instance, Margaret and her husbands came into possession of numerous patronage rights throughout and beyond Prague. Such patrons and the rights they exercised linked together otherwise unconnected altars and churches. Further ties to a parish church emerged from the endowed masses stipulated by altar founders. Very often the
performance of these masses involved numerous individuals within and beyond the parish. It fell to the altar priest to disperse the endowment income to assorted office-holders and institutions stipulated by the founder. Money, of course, supported the entire system of altars and masses for the dead. But the dead pay no bills. Altar founders needed a mechanism by which they could ensure continued payment beyond their deaths. Rents provided this. Like altar patronage and masses for the dead, they also created yet another unintentional network of social and financial connections reaching far beyond the parish church. The local religion of the parish was, in the end, never exclusively local.

2.2.1. Altars and Patrons

The physical erection of the altars was only the beginning of an ongoing relationship between the founder (and his or her successors) and the altar priests who normally celebrated both weekly and anniversary masses there. John Steglitz’s will specified that his daughter Margaret and her heirs, should she have any, should be the patrons for his altar to the Bohemian patron saints. When, about four years after his death, John Steglitz’s four executors finally enacted his instructions, it fell to Margaret to appoint the first altar-priest to his benefice. In this case, her power was merely formal; evidently John had already built the altar and paid its altar priest personally during his lifetime. As in many cases, the new altar mentioned in his testament was not new at all.

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58 If no heir should exist, then the patronage was to revert to his executors and their successors (LE 1.72 no. 149).

59 John Steglitz died around 1365; he exercised his patronage over the village parish church of Lesser Dubeč (Dubeček) in May of 1364 (LC 1.2.47), but is dead in 1366 (ZSMP 1.115 no. 503). His executors issue a charter establishing the altar’s funding on March 1, 1369, and the archbishop’s officials confirmed it as a benefice on March 5. A week later, Margaret named to the priest Michael Hinconis to it (LC 2.2).
The purpose of his testamentary request was not to erect the altar, but to endow it and establish for it a benefice (an authorized, permanent ecclesiastical office)—to insure, in other words, that after his death masses would continue to be sung at the altar he had built during his lifetime. As patron, Margaret therefore simply confirmed to the newly established altar benefice the same priest whom John himself had previously chosen.\(^{60}\) Altar priests frequently left and even traded their benefices, but this one remained until his death in 1390. Margaret, by that time a widow twice over, dutifully named another priest to her father’s altar.\(^{61}\) Margaret herself died before the benefice again became vacant. From her the patronage passed to a relative, who exercised it in 1402, and subsequently to his heirs.\(^{62}\)

In comparison with the patrons of parish churches, altar patrons were more likely to have close contact with their appointees. Often the patrons remained parishioners themselves. And when a patron (like Margaret) was the immediate heir of an altar’s founder, the masses chanted there remembered the patron’s own family. The altar priest, in other words, might be little more than a prominent family’s private chaplain whose office had been formalized as a benefice. The patron/heir would in such cases remain far

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\(^{60}\) This seems the best way to read the evidence: that “altare . . . ipse Johlinus . . . D. Michaheli presbytero . . . contulit,” and that in 1369 the altar is described not as newly built but as newly endowed (“de nouo dotatum”). The archbishop’s officials’ comment that the altar was “per nos erectum” refers to the previous week’s mandate “ut . . . altare . . . in beneficium erigere” (LE 1.72 no. 149); LC 2.2). Such informal arrangements, taking various forms, were apparently not uncommon, and were not always successfully transformed into permanent benefices, especially when left to one’s executors. (cf. PV 54, 80, 102).

\(^{61}\) LC 5.27

\(^{62}\) Nicholas Heklik de Zap names a new altar priest in 1401 to replace Herman (whose appointment was not recorded) (LC 6.52; cf. 6.165, 6.270-71). I take him to be the same person as Nicholas Heckel, whom Margaret described in 1390 as one of her “consanguines”; he was probably a maternal cousin, as he seems to have been the heir (and probably son) of Jacobus Hockel, whom Margaret at the same time had called her “avunculus” (LE 1.330-332 no. 482, no. 483).
more important to the altar priest than the local parish priest. We do not know anything of Margaret’s relationship with the priests she appointed, except that the first altar priest did not report any problems when the church was visited in 1380.63 It is clear, though, that an altar priest was expected to maintain a respectful relationship to his altar’s patron even after his nomination: when in 1386 the patron of the St. Gall altar of the Virgin transferred his patronage rights to another person, the current altar priest promised in consistory court to accept the new man as “the patron of his altar, and to exhibit due reverence to him.”64

The founders of St. Gall’s ten altars established between 1340 and 1400 included some of the most prominent St. Gall parishioners. There is Borzuta, the former city magistrate, and Martin Rotlew, the son of John Rotlew who held the posts of royal mintmaster and of Old Town magistrate. Members of the Welfl family, including the heirs of Nicholas “of the Tower,” founded two altars. Barta Pillungi, a one-time owner of Margaret house, erected one in fulfillment of his mother’s and his brother’s wills (see Appendix 2 for the St. Gall altars and their founders). Like tapestries and other moveable gifts, these altars embodied the status of St. Gall’s leading families within the parish. This was primarily a local, parochial network. Yet the passage of time and generations inevitably widened the circle to include patrons with little or no previous association to St. Gall. Patronage of the altar to the Blessed Virgin founded by Borzuta, for example, passed first to another, apparently unrelated, resident of St. Gall’s market square. That

63 PV 108.

64 “Ubi eciam statim d. Johannes rector dicti altaris huiusmodi donacionem, quantum in eo fuerit, laudavit et approbat, promittens, extunc et inantea d. marchionem predictum [Jobst, the margrave of Moravia and nephew of Charles IV] pro vero dicti sui altaris patrono habere reputare et nominare sibique ut patrono debitam reverenciam exhibere . . .” (SA 2.408).
patron in turn later transferred the patronage to a powerful outsider with no known previous connection to the parish of St. Gall: Jobst (Jodocus), the Margrave of Moravia who was the nephew of Charles IV.65

In other cases, wealthy individuals also established altars outside their own parish churches. Parishes provided most Prague inhabitants with an important local identity, but they were not entirely closed communities. Many prominent and wealthy citizens—the ones whose activities can be traced in written records—also cultivated ties to other parishes. A handful of particularly important Old Town churches in particular attracted their interest; every important Prague family seems to have wanted to stake out a space within them. Yet some also maintained ties to less prominent parishes outside their own.

John Steglitz and especially his daughter Margaret illustrate how a person or family could come to exercise the patronage over numerous altars. Margaret only ever named two priests to the altar of the Bohemian patrons in St. Gall’s church, but she inherited from her father other altar patronage rights as well. John Steglitz made clear by his bequests that the parish of St. Gall, the only parish where he is known to have owned a house, was dearest to him. Like some of Old Town’s other most powerful citizens, however, he also forged connections to two other of Old Town’s most important parishes. By establishing a presence in three of Old Town’s wealthiest and most important parishes, John lay claim to an elevated status in Prague society. In St. Nicholas on the Poultry Market (adjacent to Old Town Square), he shared patronage of the altar of the Holy Trinity with another citizen. After his death, Margaret inherited and exercised her

65 SA 2.408 no. 281; LC 3-4.207, 5.73, 6.172; in 1412 and 1419, King Wenceslas IV himself named a new priest to this altar (LC 7.70-71; 7.289). Fancza Neuburger, the previous patron, purchased an unidentified house “in novo foro” in 1363, which almost certainly made him a parishioner of St. Gall (ZSMP 1.237).
father’s part. John also seems to have founded one of the many altars in the prominent Týn church (*St. Maria ante Letam curiam*), located between Old Town square and the so-called “merry court” where foreign merchants paid tariffs on their wares upon entering the city (hence the courtyard’s other name: *Ungelt*). Patronage of this Týn altar (established in honor of St. Catherine) did not pass to his daughter. Margaret did inherit the oversight of yet another altar he established, however, one dedicated to the Blessed Virgin in the New Town parish of St. Michael in Opatovice, located along the Vltava adjacent to the Old Town wall. There was nothing especially prestigious about this little New Town parish, but it did have close ties to her family (see below).

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66 The situation of this altar is complicated. Tomek writes of an altar of the Holy Trinity “in the crypt” as existing by 1357 (DMP 2.201), whereas Hledíková only mentions an altar of the Holy Trinity founded in 1408 (“Fundace,” 129-30 n. 7). The *Libri confirmationum* include several new appointments in the later fourteenth-century to a “Holy Trinity” altar in St. Nicholas. There were clearly two altars by this name, having different patrons and different priests. One, referred to in 1395 as “in the crypt,” has Jaxo Payer and then his son (among others) as patrons (LC 2.74; 5.216; 5.290). John Steglitz and another citizen named Jesco Rot (one of John Steglitz’s executors) authorize the translation of a new priest to this altar in 1364; Margaret and Jesco name his successor in 1378, then allow him to trade it for a rural parish benefice two years later (LC 1.2.48; 3-4.96; 3-4.125). From Margaret and Jesco, the patronage passed first to Matthew “of the Tower” of the Welfl family, a resident of St. Gall and another of John Steglitz’s executors, and then to his relative John “of the Tower” of Dubček (LC 3-4.214; 5.89; 5.281; on these members of the Welf family, see DMP 438-9, 443). The altar listed by Hlediková may refer to a third altar-cum-chapel dedicated to the Trinity: in 1408 a priest is named “ad altare S. Trinitatis seu capellaniam in eccles. parroch. S. Nicolai in Foro pullorum Maioris ciuit. Prag. de nouo dotatum et in beneficium erectum . . .” (LC 6.238-9).

67 DMP 2.146-7.

68 Tomek states that this altar was founded by John Steglitz, but gives no date (DMP 2.143); Hledíková does not include it in her list of Týn altars (“Fundace,” 127-29). In 1358, four Old Town citizens described as “executores vltimae voluntatis Johlini de Steklicz ciuis Prag.” name a new altar priest after the death of the previous one (LC 1.1.70). It is not clear to me why John Steglitz himself, who lived until at least the middle of 1364, did not personally name the new priest. In any case, the same executors again exercised the patronage in 1360, although this time their connection to John Steglitz is not mentioned (LC 1.1.135). In 1391, Matthew “of the Tower”—a later executor of John Steglitz—appears as the altar’s patron (LC 5.103; cf. LE 1.72 no. 149).

69 LE 1.72-3 no. 150; LC 2.8; 3-4.105; 3-4.182; 3-4.205. After Margaret’s death, Jaxo and Nicholas Mulner appear as the patrons in 1395. The same Jaxo Mulner of Dubček, who as Margaret’s uncle, exercises the patronage alone in 1399 (LC 5.208; 6.3; cf. LE 330-331 no. 482), where Jaxo is described as Margaret’s “avunculus.”
The property and patronage of wealthy Old Town citizens like John Steglitz extended beyond his parish, beyond Old Town, and even beyond Prague. He and many other wealthy Prague citizens owned villages or parts of villages in the countryside. When the village had a parish church, its patronage normally belonged to the owner or owners.\textsuperscript{70} John Steglitz’s rural property included at least two villages.\textsuperscript{71} At one of them (Dubeček), he held not only the church patronage, but also that of a side-altar—something of a rarity for a village church. Upon his death, the patronage to this altar of St. Leonard passed from him to his widow Catherine rather than directly to Margaret.\textsuperscript{72}

Many Prague citizens, especially Old Town citizens, founded altars in their own parish churches, and some established a presence in other Prague churches as well.\textsuperscript{73} Nor was it uncommon for Prague citizens to exercise the patronage at the parish churches in villages they owned. Only a handful, though, joined Margaret in possessing the power to

\textsuperscript{70} Patronage of a parish church included control over its income. This financial aspect of patronage could be sold along with the property, but naming a new priest was considered a spiritual prerogative and technically could not be sold. Nevertheless, it seems that all aspects of the \textit{ius patronatus} normally were transferred upon sale of a village. Perhaps only when a village was pawned or mortgaged were the financial and spiritual aspects of patronage actually separated, as Prague’s 1348 synodal statutes stipulated: “... si quis alteri castrum vel villam seu possessionem quamlibet titulo pignoris obligat, ratione cujus ad eundem ecclesie inibi situate ius pertinet patronatus etsi hoc non exprimat, nichilominus apud obligantem ius remanet presentandi ex eo, quia fructus rei pignorate minuaut debitum principale, fructus vero iuris patronatus, cum sit spiritualis, nequit cum rebus temporalibus compensari,” (Rostislav Zelený, “Councils and Synods of Prague and Their Statutes (1343-1361)” \textit{Apollinaris} 45 (1972): 520 no. 37).

\textsuperscript{71} Mstětice, Dubeček (LE 1.72 no. 150; LC 1.2.47); He also had incomes from Zapy and Ostrov (a name shared by many villages), but did not necessarily own them (LE 1.72 no. 149). Tomek concluded that Steglitz also owned the village of Dalov from the fact that the parish priest of St. Gall purchased this village from (or through) two men who also were executors of Steglitz (DMP 2.434; cf. LE 3.169 no. 305); SÚA AZK 1248). This assumption seems unwarranted, especially in light of another (undated) document that describes the property transfer and their role in it somewhat differently (SÚA AZK 1244).

\textsuperscript{72} LC 1.1.129; 3-4.72. The patronage then passed, presumably through Margaret, to several citizens of Old Town: Jaxo Mulner, his wife, and Nicolas Heckel were related to Margaret (see above, nn. 62, 69). The other citizen, Wenceslas Stuk, was the son of one of John Steglitz’s executors, Andrew Stuk (LE 1.72 no. 149); DMP 2.452-455).

\textsuperscript{73} On the altars founded by Prague citizens, see Hledíkova, “Fundace,” 121-137. Tomek’s detailed descriptions of the topography of Prague lists all the altars, and often their founders, for all Prague parish churches (DMP 2.72-262).
name a priest to a Prague parish church. John Steglitz, though a citizen of Old Town, was a patron of the New Town parish church of St. Michael in Opatovice (where he also founded an altar). He shared this right with another citizen and the archdeacon of Prague, but by the time Margaret exercised it she held two-thirds of the patronage, sharing only with the archdeacon—she had two turns to each of his. Not one of Prague’s better-paying parish benefices, St. Michael experienced significant turnover. Margaret and the archdeacon together authorized two trades involving this benefice in 1369, and another in 1374. Together with her husband Simon Bohuslai of Roztoky, Margaret named a new priest in 1371 after the previous one died. It was the archdeacon’s turn to name a priest in 1375.

Naming a Prague parish priest placed Margaret in a select company. It was a powerful position, entailing control over both church endowments and the benefice of the parish priest, and not one enjoyed by many Prague citizens. Margaret had become an important lay patron in and beyond Prague, at the center of a patronage network linking rural and urban benefices. From her father she inherited at least partial patronage over three Prague altars, a New Town parish church, and perhaps also the patronage rights to a village parish church or two (although there is no evidence that she exercised them). She presided over this network of benefices built by the property and the benefactions of her

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74 LC 1.1.87.
75 P-B 117.
76 LC 2.2; 2.7-8; 3-4.20.
77 LC 2.40.
78 LC 3-4.46; After Margaret’s death, her uncle Jaxo Mulner of Dubeček and his heirs took over the patronage (LC 6.27; 6.185; on Jaxo, see above, n. 69).
father. Women like Margaret normally inherited the power to appoint priests to benefices only when a father or husband had no suitable male heir. In Margaret’s case, two marriages further enhanced the patronage network that she had inherited from her father.

The families of Margaret’s two husbands, both powerful within Old Town, possessed their own networks of patronage and benefices throughout and beyond Prague. Together they also appointed the priests to two of the five Prague parish churches under citizen-patronage. The Wolfram family of her first husband Simon controlled the important church of St. Nicholas on the Poultry Market, the same parish at which John Steglitz owned partial patronage of an altar. Various family members were the patrons of altars and chapels throughout Prague. The family’s house on Old Town square also included a private chapel (All Saints) along with a small beguinage, one of the oldest in Prague.79 Simon was closely involved with the private hospital and chapel of Saints Simon and Jude founded by his grandfather in Old Town.80 Nor was Margaret’s second husband, the powerful Hans Beneschauer, a stranger to ecclesiastical patronage. He and his brother Nicholas held the patronage to the Old Town parish church of St. John (in Vado), a relatively small parish near the stone bridge with a population nearly evenly

79 DMP 2.447-452, P-B 91, 106; cf. LC 1.1.66. There is very little information on any of the “beguinages” in Prague beside their occasional appearance in records of house owners. Tomek has gathered the references in DMP 3.233-235, from which Petitova-Bénoliel takes her account (109-111). The community at the private chapel of All Saints contained in 1385 six “Deo devotae mulieres,” who are listed by name. One of them is described as a “procuratrix” (LE 2.220-221 no. 374).

80 In the 1380 Visitation, the hospital was referred as under Simon’s brother’s name (“hospitalis Peslini Bohuslai”), but Simon and another relative also helped to increase the hospital’s endowments (DMP 2.447-448, n.3; Johannes Hammerschmid, Prodomus Glorae Pragenae (Prague, 1723), 220; PV 97; ZSMP 1.211 no. 847a); Bedřich Mendl “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy” (On the economic history of medieval Prague), Sborník příspěvků k dějinám hlav. města Prahy 5.2 (1932): 250-51). Simon renounced his Old Town citizenship when he inherited his rural property in 1357, but took it up again in 1371 (DMP 4.450).
divided between Germans and Czechs. Together with a third brother, they also shared the patronage over an altar dedicated to the Virgin in St. Nicholas on the Poultry Market. The same church was home to two other benefices controlled by a group of four citizens that included Hans. And it seems that no powerful Old Town citizen could keep entirely away from Týn church: Hans inherited partial control of the altar of All Saints there. He had no patronage rights, on the other hand, within his own parish church of St. Gall. Outside of Prague, his property entitled him to patronage of the parish church in Hobšovice and to partial patronage in at least two other villages.

The patronage rights held by the families of Margaret and her two husbands brought together churches and altars throughout and beyond Prague, creating a network of individuals, families, and communities that transcended geography. Many of these came together in the person of Margaret herself. Although there is little evidence that she

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81 LC 1.2.9; 2.20. At the visitation, one parishioner complained that the parish priest provided no German-speaking vicar for the parishioners, despite the fact that “media pars ipsorum sunt theotonici,” (PV 73; cf. P-B 105).

82 LC 1.2.30. Seibot (Sypethea) Beneschauer and his two brothers founded this altar, and Seibot increased the income attached to it in his will. Tomek considers Seibot and Hans to be cousins, but Hans Seibot as his uncle (fratruelus) (LE 1.42 no. 80; DMP 2.460-463).

83 LC 1.2.32; 1.2.36; 2.65. Both benefices were earlier controlled by Seibot Beneschauer and his two brothers (LC 1.1.3; 1.1.138; 1.1.139). One of them was worth seven schocks annually, the other eight. Neither, it seems, was attached permanently to a specific altar.

84 LC 1.35-6 no. 67; LC 1.1.174; Hans shared the patronage first with Seibot Beneschauer’s executor (LC 1.1.182; cf. LE 1.42 no. 80) and later with his brother Nicholas (LC 2.33). Their brother Peter named a new priest to it in 1378 (LC 2.85); cf. Hledíková, “Fundace,” 128 n. 5; DMP 2.463.

85 Various members of the Beneschauer family owned houses in Old Town and New Town, but the only one that Hans himself definitely owned was located on St. Gall’s marketplace (no. 502) (ZSMP 1.116, cf. DMP 2.463 n. 35).

86 Hobšovice: LC 3-4.78; Újezdec: LC 3-4.22; Vskury: LC 3-4.50; Tomek attributes to Hans and his brother the patronage over Chrast (DMP 2.421, 461), but this seems to stem from an erroneous reading of the admittedly misleading entry in LC 1.2.9, where these two men, along with the dean of the Chapel of All Saints in Prague Castle, approve a benefice trade between Chrast and the parish St. John in Old Town. The two brothers were undoubtedly the patrons of the latter. Cf. LC 1.2.89, where the same dean of All Saints approves a subsequent trade involving Chrast.
personally exercised the patronage rights belonging to her husbands’ families, she shared in the connections forged by these rights. The convergence of the interests of these Old Town families at three churches in particular—St. Nicholas on the Poultry Market, the Týn church, and (to a lesser extent) St. Gall—almost certainly reflects the social significance of these parishes within the upper ranks of Old Town society. These wealthy parishes encompassed some of Old Town’s most prestigious domestic addresses, including especially the houses surrounding Old Town square. The leading families of the three parishes clearly maintained social and other ties with each other, ties manifested in part through altars founded within each others’ parish churches. As Margaret’s example shows, they also tended to intermarry.

Margaret outlived her father by more than twenty-five years and her second husband by more than a decade. As a woman exercising multiple Prague benefices over a quarter century, she was remarkable. Her patronage rights and those of her husbands’ families were unusual in number and prominence, but they illustrate well the kinds of ecclesiastical patronage held by many Prague citizens. Margaret, her husbands, and other patrons of multiple altars and churches personally forged ties between their local parishes and the larger sacred geography of Prague and the surrounding countryside.

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87 Margaret may have technically inherited Hans Beneschauer’s patronage rights in Vskury and Hobšovice, for example, but there are no records of anyone naming a new priest to either benefice between his death and hers (cf. DMP 2.433).

88 Tomek gives 1391 as her year of death, although he characteristically fails to note what evidence supports this dating (DMP 2.461-2, n. 33).
2.2.2. Remembering Altar Founders

Parishioners did not, however, found altars primarily to provide their heirs the power and prestige of appointing priests to vacant benefices. Nor was gaining a foothold in the most socially significant parishes the only consideration. Immortality was at stake. The services performed at an altar were intended to aid both the eternal state of the soul and that person’s place within the collective memory of the parish. Benefices played an important role in this process, securing the future repetition of these divine offices, ideally in perpetuity. But the real focus was upon the masses themselves. Wills and foundation documents carefully stipulated how and when masses were to be read and alms to be distributed. The altars of St. Gall were far more than silent stone memorials. They were the objects and spaces set aside for remembering the dead. Altars and their endowed masses also established liturgical and financial bonds between otherwise unconnected elements—different parish churches and monasteries, for instance—within the city’s geography of sacred places.

Wills and other documents establishing altars or recording pious bequests have been mined by scholars seeking to unearth detailed evidence of medieval devotion. How a person facing death chose to distribute his or her resources, the argument goes, should prove an excellent index of deeply held beliefs.89 But the beliefs that John Steglitz and his fellow parishioners held about Purgatory and the afterlife are not my primary interest.

89 An excellent example is Robert Brentano, Rome Before Avignon: A Social History of Thirteenth-Century Rome (New York, 1974), who mines wills as sources for the beliefs of individuals (e.g., p. 261) as well as communities: “But wills, in their connection with death, have a special strength. They are a particularly nice token of that piety which hovers over a community like a guarding genius, a distillation of a community’s feelings of guilt and inadequacy and fear, as well as of hope and wonder” (285). Scholars have scoured late medieval English wills in particular, often seeking to discern how deeply new ideas of reform impacted local religious beliefs. For these studies, the rhetoric with which pious bequests are made can be as important as the bequests themselves.
here. Indeed, even the relatively rich documents that survive for St. Gall would prove disappointing for an inquiry of this sort. There are no private notary’s cartularies recording the wills that distributed testators’ entire wealth, no documents in which pious bequests appear alongside private gifts and the division of property among heirs. Instead, the sources preserved at St. Gall or enlisted by its priests in the archbishop’s *libri erectionum* detail only those bequests related directly to the church itself. The other contents of a donor’s last will—like the fact that John Steglitz left his St. Gall house to his daughter rather than his widow—must be inferred from other sources.⁹⁰

The same carefully preserved documents can, on the other hand, reveal much about the social and topographical connections established by the pious bequests. We may not be able to plumb the depths of John Steglitz’s personal beliefs, but we can witness the local ramifications of his testament after his death. The obsessive particularities of the masses that patrons established provide important evidence for one aspect of the impact of altar foundations: the chains of links between individuals, offices, and institutions forged by pious bequests. The foundations of John and Margaret are entirely conventional in this respect, and can stand for a host of others.

John Steglitz’s will does not survive, but his four executors drafted different charters enacting specific codicils. One such charter outlined the establishment of the altar to the Bohemian patron saints in the church of St. Gall. Four days after they issued this document, the altar’s first priest presented it to the archbishop’s officials. They in turn approved the new benefice and recorded the charter in the *libri erectionum*.⁹¹ John’s

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⁹⁰ ZSMP 1.115.

⁹¹ LE 1.72 no. 149.
will provided ten “schocks” and twelve groschen annually for this altar, which he established for the sake of his soul, that of his ancestors, and of all the faithful. (A schock was equivalent to sixty Prague groschen, as its name made plain: “sexagena grossorum Pragensium.”)² According to his testators, John Steglitz also painstakingly enumerated how the money was to be spent. He reserved nine schocks for the support of the altar priest (to be named by his daughter Margaret), with the remaining seventy-two groschen to be distributed by the priest for special masses and alms. Half of this, John stipulated, should commemorate the anniversary of his father’s death: on that day, eighteen groschen were to be given to the Old Town Franciscans at St. James for vigils and masses for the dead, and another eighteen as alms to the poor. This left thirty-six groschen for quarterly masses for John in the church of St. Gall. These masses presumably took place at the main altar, for the parish priest was to receive seven groschen for each of them, with another two groschen being reserved for the poor.³

A second document, likewise surviving in the *libri erectionum*, explained the even more complicated instructions John Steglitz left for the altar to the Virgin in the parish church of St. Michael in New Town. Two separate endowments, totaling thirteen schocks, supported a series of masses and observances. The lion’s share (ten schocks)

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³ “9 sexg. idem presbyter . . . qui ad . . . altare fuerit . . . praesentatus, pro sua sustentatione habere debeat et cum residuis 72 grss. idem presbyter . . . tenetur obsequium facere . . ., ita, quod in anniversario . . . Nicolai, patris . . . Johlini, 1 fertonem debet tribuere pro vigilis et missis defunctorum fratribus minoribus monasterii S. Jacobi pro pitantia et hoc circa festum S. Laurencii et 1 fertonem eodem die pauperibus erogare et cum residuo debet idem presbyter . . . Johlino obsequium facere quater in domo [sic] in ecclesia S. Galli, dando plebano . . . ecclesiae 7 grossos singulis quatuor temporibus et residuum pauperibus erogando . . . .” (Most of the numerous ellipses are the work of the editor of the *Libri erectionum*, who in the interest of space assiduously omitted all words he deemed not strictly necessary) (LE 72 no. 149).
went to the altar priest, who was allocated nine schocks for his personal support. Unlike in the previous document, John made perfectly clear what the altar priest himself was being paid to do: to celebrate a perpetual mass at this altar. (He does not specify the regularity of this mass, but four or more times per week was the norm). He further instructed that the tenth schock should be divided to commemorate the anniversaries of his grandfather’s and his mother’s deaths.

Not all of the money stayed within the church, however. On the anniversary of each of his parents, one-quarter schock was to go to the Old Town Franciscans and another one-quarter to the poor. The remaining three schocks did not pass through the hands of the altar priest at all, but were to be distributed by Margaret with the consent of the executors. Her instructions were first of all to spend two schocks annually on her father’s anniversary. Determining the location and details of these anniversary masses was left to Margaret. With the final schock, Margaret was to pay for more quarterly vigils and masses for the dead, with one-eighth of a schock (seven and one-half groschen) reserved for the parish priest and one-eighth for the poor on each occasion. Yet these masses were not to be held in the same church as the altar (St. Michael in Opatovice), but rather in the parish church of St. Gall where John Steglitz had already endowed a series of quarterly masses.

\[94\] Four times per week or daily would be normal, from evidence in PV (passim), but Michael Hostovic, the altar priest, is one of those who says he celebrates “quando graciam habet” (PV 108). Cf. SA 2.296 (no. 262), for the altar of St Anne, for which the requirement is “tres vel quatuor missas in septimana, quando graciam legendi habuerit.”

\[95\] “Quarum 8 sexg. cum 2 sexg. . . . dicti census honesta Margaretha, filia Johlini, . . . cum . . . nostro . . . scitu anniversarium patris sui . . . circa festum S. Remigii debet peragere omni anno, sed cum tertia sexg. . . . censu . . . anno quolibet singulis . . . quatuor temporibus apud S. Gallum in Novo foro plebano . . . pro vigilis ac misis defunctorum . . . medium fertonem grss. dictae sexg. ipsa debet tribuere, nec non alium medium fertonem grs. . . . tenetur pauperibus . . . ergare. Residuas vero 5 sexg. . . . censu . . . nec non alias 5 sexg. . . . censu . . . perpetui . . . Johlinus pro missa perpetua ad altare S. Mariae V. in . .
Such detailed, even niggling calculations milked every last groschen of its heavenly potential. Benefactors like John expected value for money. Yet testators needed executors and heirs to keep their wills from becoming dead letters. John seems to have been fortunate in this respect. Margaret in particular took her responsibility quite seriously. Not that every aspect of her father’s will was implemented exactly; the source of funding for the altar in St. Michael in Opatovice was changed twice, for example.96 The second time, in 1390, Margaret also took the opportunity to reiterate her father’s wishes. For the most part, she simply repeated the original instructions. But she also outlined much more precisely how the two schocks for her father’s anniversary were to be spent, perhaps based on the way she herself had distributed the money for the past twenty-one years. The entire sum was to be paid out at the church St. Gall on the feast of St. Remigius (October 1). One schock provided for the various elements of the divine services. Twelve groschen to the parish priest for the offertory (offertorium), six more for singing the vigils, three for the ringing of the bells (de pulsu), and one to the student who prepared everything. Two groschen were offered to any vicar or chaplain of the church present at the services, and one to any other priest attending the vigils and masses. (Margaret apparently expected the attendance of numerous vicars and priests, for she reserved twenty-eight groschen for them). The final ten groschen paid for the necessary

96 LE 1.72 no. 150; LE 3.331-2 no. 483.
wax. Margaret apportioned the second schock as alms: fifteen groschen for the students at the parish school for firewood, and forty-five more to be distributed to the poor. Margaret’s new instructions, issued near the end of her life, left no ambiguity for her successors. She further safeguarded the future celebration of her father’s anniversary by transferring control over her part of the income (three schocks) to the altar priest at St. Michael and his successors.97

John Steglitz’s multiple pious foundations—altars in the parish churches of St. Gall and St. Michael in Opatovice, and probably the one in Týn church as well—were impressive but not unprecedented. The Welfls, the Wolframs, even the Beneschauers: these families set the standard for establishing altars and chapels. Yet each of John Steglitz’s altars created a complicated series of relationships between the individuals and office-holders of different parish churches and religious houses. His altar priest at St. Gall not only drew his own stipend from the altar, but also received money that he was obligated to pay at regular intervals to St. Gall’s parish priest, to the poor of the parish, and to the nearby Franciscan friars. In practice, this could become complicated. The

97 John Steglitz’s original instructions had called for two of the three schocks entrusted to his daughter to be spent on his anniversary (LE 1.72 no. 150). Margaret treats the two schocks separately, but in fact instructs that both of them (here the “second” and “third” schocks) be spent on her father’s anniversary: “de secunda vero sexagena ejusdem census anniversarius praedicti Johlini Stecklitz peragi debet in eadem ecclesia S. Galli in festo S. Remigii, primo plebano ibidem duodecim grossi pro offertorio, pro vigiliis decantandis sex grossi, de pulsu tres grossi et scolari aptanti necessaria unus grossus, cuilibet vicario s. capellano plebani, qui divinis interfuerit, duo grossi, sed aliis presbyteris praesentibus in vigiliis et missis defunctorum cuilibet unus grossus et residui decem grossi pro cera debent expended; de tertia vero sexagena census praedicti eodem die scolaribus ad scolas ibidem dari debent erogari. Quas quidem praedictarum trium sexagenarum pecunias D. Johannes Schuffler, nunc capellanus praefati altaris, et sui successores percipere debet et. . . distribuere modo praescripto,” (LE 3.331 no. 483).
priests at the parish church of St. Gall, for instance, did not always enjoy friendly
relations with their mendicant neighbors.98

The duties of the altar priest at St. Michael in Opatovice enmeshed him in an even
more extensive network. After Margaret transferred her own duties to him, he was
charged with distributing portions of the altar’s income to the same Franciscans, to the
poor on various occasions, and to a host of clerics and students at St. Gall. In this way,
the personal connections and predilections of John Steglitz (including an apparent
fondness for the Franciscans) hardened into permanent institutional and financial
relationships between his Old Town parish, the nearby Franciscan friary, and the New
Town church where he was a patron. And this does not reckon with the instructions he
may have left for his altar at Týn church, for which no such detailed documentation
survives. Each altar in St. Gall’s church carried its own founder’s requirements and
forged its own connections, as did the scores of other side-altars spread throughout the
cities of Prague.99 Only a minority of these connections can now be discerned, but there
is no doubt that together they wove a tight web extending across and beyond the Prague.

Margaret’s careful inclusion of so many different people at St. Gall in her father’s
anniversary celebration provides an important reminder of how many livelihoods
stemmed directly or indirectly from parish churches. Remembering the dead formed a

98 The virulent accusations and counter-accusations that flew between Conrad Waldhauser, a
German preacher at St. Gall, and the nearby Franciscans (together with the other mendicant communities of
Prague) are discussed in detail in chapter 3.

99 To give just one other example, the Welfl brothers, John and Matthew “of the Tower,” gave the
parish priest of St. Gall oversight of the regular distribution of money to long lists of office-holders and for wax and other necessary supplies at the following: the parish church and the school of St. Gall, the altar of
the apostles Simon, Jude, and John at the same church (in which chapel their brother was buried), the
Prague cathedral, the collegiate church of Vyšehrad, and the Franciscan friary of St. James in Old Town
(where their parents were buried) (LE 2.134-6 no. 250; SÚA AZK 1232).
crucial part of the local clerical economy. Poor priests and well-to-do pluralists alike derived important income from altar benefices. They found these benefices primarily at the wealthiest churches. Parishes like St. Gall owed their high incomes (from tithes, offerings, endowments, and other incomes) to their wealthy parishioners and benefactors; the same parishes also inevitably attracted the most privately endowed altars. The dramatic increase in the number of these altar foundations over the course of the later fourteenth century fundamentally changed the character of these parish churches’ clerical communities. St. Gall’s community included the parish priest, more than one vicar, a churchwarden (procurator), a German-language preacher, a sacristan, a school master, one or more bell-ringers, and other ministeres.100 To this group, the independent foundations of private patrons added no fewer than ten altar priests before the end of the fourteenth century.101 The resulting transformation of the clerical communities attached to several of Prague’s leading churches was complicated, and certainly not always positive. The parish priest did not normally appoint altar priests; rarely did he have any official say at all in their selection. Nor did their financial support depend upon him. Indeed, in some cases they paid the parish priest to perform masses associated with their altar endowments. Both factors tended to undermine the parish priest’s authority in his own church, a situation that clearly concerned the higher ecclesiastical official.

100 The sacristan also served as the organist in 1380, but these two positions were not necessarily always connected. Also in 1380, the procurator curie et dotis plebani sancti Galli also served as a vicar (PV 109). Some of the best evidence for the existence of these offices comes from the detailed instructions associated with endowed masses, especially those associated with the altar of the apostles Simon, Jude, and John (LE 2.128 no. 239; 2.134-6 no. 250; SÚA AZK 1232) On bell-ringers, cf. Zelený, “Councils and Synods,” 515 no. 28.

101 See above, n. 54.
The extent to which altar priests contributed to their parishes clearly varied. Some were pluralists and non-residents (although absentee altar priests tended to employ vicars who lived locally). Others seem to have fulfilled their altar duties (or in some cases not fulfilled them) without demonstrating much loyalty to the parish or parish priest. The churchwarden and a parishioner at St. Nicholas on the Poultry Market, for instance, both complained that only the minority of their numerous altar priests attended services there despite their obligation to be present for processions and celebrations of major feasts. The parish priest of the neighboring parish of St. Leonard similarly complained that two altar priests there “rarely officiate mass and are never present at processions or at vespers on high feast days, as they are required to be.” Such abuses (as these priests and parishioners considered this behavior) should not be surprising. It developed almost inevitably out of a system of privately endowed altars whose masses commemorated the altar founders and their families. In some cases those establishing altars had never even been parishioners at that church. As relatively low-paying benefices with no responsibilities for pastoral care, altars tended to attract pluralists whose obligations required them to travel across or beyond the city and thus prevented them from participating fully in the liturgical life of any one parish church.

Prague’s ecclesiastical officials sought to counter the potentially divisive effects of a proliferation of independent-minded altar priests by attaching supplementary conditions to those stipulated by the altars’ founders. These were the conditions that the

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102 PV 79-80.

103 “Item dicit, quod domini Vilricus et Jacobus, habentes altare sancte Marie in ecclesia sua predicta, tenerentur vicissim officiare cottidie missas ebdomada qualibet, videlicet tres et alter IIII et sic mutuo viceversa, qui raro officiant missam et nunquam intersunt processionibus neque in summis festis vesperis ut tenentur” (PV 90).
altar priests mentioned above allegedly failed to meet. For two of St. Gall’s altars, for instance, the archbishop or his official confirmed the altar founder’s wishes but added additional requirements: the altar priest must be present (and properly attired) for services on major feast days and must take part in processions along with all the church’s other clerics. Moreover, the altar priest was commanded to exhibit “due reverence” to the parish priest.104 A new altar priest, in short, was expected to contribute to a harmonious clerical community under the oversight of the parish priest. Lawsuits before the archbishop’s court—like that in 1377 between the parish priest of St. Gall and the priest attached to the altar of the Virgin—provide ample evidence that strife and discord sometimes marred this ideal.105 Relations between clerics in a parish church could disintegrate into nasty feuding.106 Each new altar foundation introduced a new priest to

104 “Nos igitur . . . donationem praedictam . . . admittimus . . . ac . . . super dicto altari . . . beneficium ecclesiasticum erigimus . . . omnesque . . . conditiones . . . confirmamus, adicientes, ut rector . . . in summis festivitatibus religione indutus infra divinum officium in choro cum aliis altaristis et ministris devote stare debeat et se in processionibus et ceteris observantibus aliis altaristis . . . in omnibus studeat conformare, plebano . . . reverentiam debitam exhibendo (LE 236 no. 392); “Nos dictum altare S. Erasmi in beneficium ecclesasticum creamus, . . . proventus praedictos eidem altari . . . invisceramus ac omnia . . . confirmamus . . . adicientes, ut rector dicti altaris . . . et . . . successores in festivitatibus D. N. J. Christi, B. Mariae Virg. et SS. Apostolorum superpelicio induti in vesperris, missis et processionibus se . . . debebunt plebano ecclesiae S. Galli . . . conformare et eidem exhibere reverentiam debitam . . .) (LE 4.386-7 no. 539).

105 Jacha (alias Johannes) the altar priest brought this case against Wenceslas Tausentmark, the parish priest, complaining that Tausentmark had taken possession of valuable vestments, a missal, and a chalice belonging to the altar, and that he was wrongly keeping from him the altar’s original foundation charter. For his part, Tausentmark accused Jacha of failing to perform even a fraction of the required four weekly masses and thus demanded 86 groschen in penalties. (According to the foundation charter, the altar priest owed to the parish priest one groschen per missed mass, to be distributed to the poor). His lack of attendance at feast day masses and processions also drew criticism from the parish priest: “Insuper dictus Jacha processiones visitare vespers et divinis officiis in summis festivitatibus ut puta in in [sic] festis assumptionis beate Virginis, sancti Wenceslai, sancti Michalis, sancti Galli et aliorum patronorum, nativitatis Christi ac aliarum festivitaturn in habitu suo prout et alii altariste in ecclesia ipsius sancti Galli et in aliis ecclesiis per civitatem et diocesim Pragensem ubilabet constitutici hoc idem faciunt et fecerunt ab antiquo ac de jure facere tenentur interesse neglexit ac visitare et interesse non curavit simuliter neque curat” (SÚA AZK 1247).

106 A parishioner of the collegiate church of St. Giles complained, for example, that there were often “lites et gwerre” between the parish priest, dean, and the sacristan, “nam quivis ipsorum wlt esse dominus in ecclesia,” and that on this account “plures errores et scandala committuntur” (PV 54).
the parish, created new financial and social relationships, and thereby carried the potential to create tension or exacerbate already troubled situations among parish clergy—unintended consequences of the complex of motives that caused an explosion of privately founded side altars in later fourteenth-century Prague.

2.2.3. Rents and the Parish Topography

New altar foundations crowded the spaces of Prague’s parish churches, creating new patrons, introducing new priests and services to the parish church, and establishing new conditions among the parish clergy. The detailed instructions for remembering their dead founders obliged their altar priests to enter into financial relationships with monks and clerics completely unassociated with the parish church. But the linchpin of the entire, growing system, was the property-secured rent (*census*). In theory it guaranteed regular and perpetual income for an altar priest and thereby safeguarded the long-term performance of an altar founder’s instructions. This crucial financial mechanism provided the benefactor assurance that his pious investment would continue paying dividends for his soul long after his death and the death of his executors. Likewise it gave the altar priest the security of a regular income.

Some of the most profound effects of rents, however, were accidental to these intended purposes. By spinning nearly unbreakable threads between altars (or parish churches, as we shall see) and particular houses or properties throughout and beyond Prague, rents wove intricate but robust webs of financial obligations that supplied the money to sustain many of the central services and celebrations of Prague parish life. The effect of this simple financial tool upon Prague’s sacred topography can hardly be
overstated. Rents built and supported many of the city’s key ecclesiastical landmarks. Through rents, the majority of the city’s domestic and other properties were eventually enlisted in support of its religious institutions. Increasingly, Prague parishes and their growing numbers of altars came to rely upon these invisible infrastructures: haphazard networks of rent-paying properties.

Rents played a central role in the economic life of late medieval Prague, as even a passing acquaintance with surviving city and archdiocesan documents makes abundantly clear. Prague was not alone in this. Rents and the sale of rents were prevalent in cities throughout the Holy Roman Empire and beyond. Nevertheless, their profile in historical scholarship remains surprisingly low. Nor are they always well-understood. At its most generic, a rent (census) was simply a regular payment based on or secured by real estate or other “real” property. This definition includes the payments owed by tenants to rural or urban landlords in exchange for the property tenancy as well as the mortgage-like payments a city householder made in exchange for cash—in effect, a loan. Rents were enormously versatile. By selling a rent on one’s property, an owner could raise capital from wealthy individuals and institutions for any number of purposes. By purchasing the rent, those same individuals and institutions could transform surplus capital into secured, regular income. Legally considered real property in its own right, a rent could be sold, exchanged, inherited, or donated. Many not surprisingly found their way into the possession of ecclesiastical institutions of all kinds. Here they ensured regular income for individual benefices as well as entire communities while providing benefactors some measure of security that the masses and services they established for the good of their souls would continue forever. It was true that rents brought a whiff of canonically
proscribed usury: in practice, rents sold on property in exchange for regular payments closely resembled property-secured loans for interest. Nevertheless, they became indispensable tools for the economic life of later medieval cities.¹⁰⁷

The rents attached to an increasing number of Prague’s houses over the course of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries had different types of origins.¹⁰⁸ Some began as ground rents payable by tenants to the original owner or developer (locator) of the land. Thus a group of house owners in an outlying part of the city might pay small annual sums to the monastery, for instance, that originally owned the property.¹⁰⁹ Or, on a smaller scale, an urban property owner like Margaret might receive annual payments from assorted small residences built on the edges of her house’s lot.¹¹⁰ In other cases, a home owner might for pious purposes establish a rent on his own property, obliging himself and his successors to pay an annual sum in support of an altar or anniversary masses. Other property owners used rents to raise capital. Functioning very much like


¹⁰⁸ Based on careful study of a wide range of archival sources, the monographic article of Bedřich Mendl “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy” (On the Economic History of Medieval Prague), Sbornik přispěvků k dějinám hlav. města Prahy 5 (1932): 161-389, remains extremely valuable for the study of rents in fourteenth and fifteenth-century Prague. The following introductory account of the nature of rents is based primarily on his work; for the various types of rents, see esp. 201-215.

¹⁰⁹ For examples, see Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 381-87.

¹¹⁰ When Margaret “resignavit” the house on St. Gall’s marketplace in 1366, she did so “cum omnibus parvis domunculis et domibus censualibus retro predictam domum,” quoted in Bedřich Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 241, n. 35, where he corrects the Tomek’s reading: “cum V domunculis et domibus . . .” (ZSMP 1.115).
modern mortgages, such rents were sometimes established when a house changed hands; the value of the rent made up the difference between the sale price and the amount of cash the buyer could offer—but of course only if the seller would agree to the arrangement.\footnote{Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 261.} Other medieval rents bear closer comparison with modern home-equity loans, as they supplied the capital necessary to build or expand the property securing the rent.\footnote{This was the case for a certain Stephen, who in 1356 testifies that he received thirty schocks “in subsidium aedificationis curiae suae in Nova civ. Prag.” in exchange for an annual rent of six schocks. The value of the land itself secured the rent (LE 3.283-4, no. 423).}

Regardless of the original circumstances of their establishment, most Prague rents by the later fourteenth century conformed closely to a common model. Firstly and crucially, they were permanent. Although occasionally a contract might limit a rent to the lifetime of the original seller, the vast majority were intended to be perpetual. (This fact made them particularly attractive for individuals and institutions looking for safe ways to provide regular income over a long term). The original contract likewise laid out the terms for payment. These might require one, two, or four annual payments, but the most common terms stipulated two payments, on the feasts of St. Gall (October 16) and St. George (April 23).\footnote{Until the seventeenth century, the diocese of Prague generally celebrated St. George’s day on the 23rd rather than the 24th, although some fourteenth-century monastic missals from this diocese indicate April 24th (Gustav Friedrich, \textit{Rukověť křesťanské chronologie} [Handbook of Christian chronology] [1934; reprint, Prague 1997], 310).} As the number of rents increased over the course of the century, these two dates came to rank among the most important in Prague’s calendar, even though neither was included in the province’s list of mandatory feasts.\footnote{Zelený, “Councils and Synods,” 528 no. 55; Mendl is surely correct that these dates did not demonstrate particular devotion in Prague to these two saints; he suggests that they instead point to an agricultural origin of the practice—with one payment falling due after the Fall harvest and another in the...} Failure to pay

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on time often invoked agreed-upon financial penalties, which varied widely. Like the
due dates and penalties, the price of an annual rent also depended upon the particular
contract. For later fourteenth century Prague, however, ten times the yearly payment was
standard. In other words, the annual payment normally amounted to ten percent of the
purchase price.\footnote{Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 264-68.} So while it was the prerogative of the seller and the purchaser to set
the terms of a rent, most conformed to a standard formula: ten percent of the purchase
price should be paid in perpetuity to the rent owner in two equal payments on the feasts
of St. Gall and St. George, with an additional penalty for late payments.\footnote{The terms of one 1378 rental contract are entirely in keeping with this model; the only unusual
provision is for the rent to be secured not only by the seller’s house on St. Gall’s market square, but also by
her properties in two villages: “Noverint universi, quod ego Ela, olim Phanczonis de Werona relicta, civis
Maj. civ. Prag. . . . recognosco, me meo, heredum et successorum meorum nomine super domum meam et
puerorum meorum, quam inhabitamus, sitam in novo foro dictae civitatis penes domum olim Heylnini
Stach et super hereditatibus nostris Lhotha et Swol et ipsarum pertinentiis . . . novem sexagenas gross. prag.
den. census annui . . . honestis viris Endrlino Stach et Henslino Harer, dictae civ. Prag. civibus, . . .
vendisse pro 90 sexagenis grss. . . . michi integraliter persolutis, ita videlicet, quod ipsius census medietas
in festo S. Galli. . . et alia . . . in festo S. Georgii . . . perpetue per me . . . et successores meos de praedicta
domo et ipsius area et hereditatibus Lhota et Swol . . . praedictis Endrlino et Henslino debet solvi . . .
Quandocunque autem in aliquo . . . festo et infra octavam . . . census . . . non fuerit persolitus, extunc super . . .
qualibet sexagen medius ferto grossorum nomine poenae crescit . . . septimana qualibet. . .” (LE 4.448
no. 619).} Rents of all types, including those owed to rural landlords, thus proved ideal
mechanisms for pious foundations. Over time they redefined the urban topography by
linking otherwise unrelated properties to Prague’s leading churches and religious houses.
The parish church of St. Gall was no exception; indeed, it is unique among Prague’s
parish churches in its rich documentation of fourteenth-century rents.\footnote{Religious houses even more than parishes collected large numbers of rents. Mendl produced
lists of rents owned by the Lesser Town house of Augustinian canons (St. Thomas) and the New Town
(Zderaz) house of the Crosiers of the Holy Sepulchre from their surviving archival sources. Mendl also
provides a house-by-house account of rents in Old Town, based on a 1427 Old Town financial book but

Spring—as well as the continued importance of agriculture in producing the wealth that found its way into
the city economy (“Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 199-201).
first of all in the rents that supported its altars and altar priests. Together they forged connections between this Old Town parish and numerous properties (and their inhabitants) within and beyond Prague.

Through rents, piety and property tied the local religion of the parishes into networks extending far beyond the local parish. John Steglitz, for instance, provided an annual income of ten schocks and twelve groschen for the altar of the Bohemian patrons, to be drawn from two villages that he owned. The foundation document did not explicitly call this income a census. John Steglitz simply “bequeathed to the altar of the Holy Patrons in the church of St. Gall ten schocks and twelve groschen . . . which he has on the villages of Zapy and Ostrov.” Yet even without the label, the reality was the same: the inhabitants of these two villages northeast of Prague were obligated to pay (directly or indirectly) the altar priest at St. Gall an annual sum, probably in two equal payments, for which the property of the villages served as security. The first priest holding this benefice did in fact later describe the same income as a census; he reported to the ecclesiastical visitor in 1380 that he possessed nine schocks (the part of the total also including earlier references. Various parish churches appear here as rent recipients, and Mendl has even supplied an index. However, only a small minority of the references predate 1400 (“Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 219-27; 279-380).

118 “Joehinus in suo . . . testamento . . . 10 sexg. . . . cum 12 grss. pro suo, progenitorum suorum et OO. FF. . . . remedio . . . legavit, quas super villas . . . Zap et Ostrow habuit, . . . ad altare SS. patronorum in ecclesia S. Galli,” (LE 1.72 no. 149). Zapy (or Zápy) lies about 25 km northeast of Prague’s Old Town; Ostrov (“island”) is a common name for Bohemian villages, but this one should probably be identified with the one located near to Zapy (Sedláček, Místopisný slovník historický království českého (Historical topographical dictionary of the Bohemian kingdom) [1909; reprint, Prague, 1998], 676, 1007); Antonín Profous, Místní jména v Čechách: jejich vznik, původní význam a změny [Place names in Bohemia: their origin, original meaning, and changes], 5 vols. [Prague, 1949-1960] 3.297 no. 2).

119 For instance, the more full documentation for the altar of the apostles Simon, Jude, and John specifies that census shall be paid by the current owners of the village, in this case the heirs of the original owner. The village would have provided the owner with a regular income and thus indirectly have funded the altar, and also served as security for its payment (LE 2.134-36 no. 250; SÚA AZK 1232).
sum reserved for his personal maintenance) “in censu... quem habet in bonis in Zap.”

For the altar he founded at St. Michael in Opatovice, John Steglitz provided two different rents. He bequeathed eight schocks “annui census” on his village of Mstětice (around 40 kilometers south of Old Town), of which three schocks were to be spent at the parish of St. Gall for various services. To this Steglitz added a census of five schocks drawn from several different properties: a group of New Town houses and plots (domus ac aree) around the parish church of St. Michael together with four mills in northern Old Town along the Vltava. This kind of rent, requiring many individuals to make small biannual payments, could create all kinds of headaches for the collecting priest. It also established regular financial obligations that bound the inhabitants of nearby properties to the altar priest at St. Michael.

Together the ten altars of St. Gall parish tied a large number of urban and rural properties to this church. Houses and villages, many of which had no previous connection to this parish, thereby came to support the altar priests and divine offices at St. Gall. Through the legal acts of altar founders, these properties became part of the extended topography of the parish of St. Gall. Rents for six of the ten altars came from villages or other rural property, most located within fifty kilometers of Old Town.

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120 PV 108.

121 LE 1.72 no. 150.

122 “.. nec non alias 5 sexg. ... census ... perpetui, quas ... Johlinus Steklicz ... habuit super ... domibus ac areis ... circumquaque ecclesiam s. Michahelis [sic] in Opatovicz Prag. civ. ... adjacentibus et super 4 molendinis in obstaculo superiori molendini Wolfframi Meynhardi,” (LE 1.72 no. 150). For the location of the mill of Wolfram Meinhardt, see ZSMP 1.233 no. 873.

123 Simon, Jude & John: the oppidum Chlumín, 25 km north of Old Town, and (for a time) the village Lethany; Bartholomew and Thomas of Canterbury: village of Štěmy, 35 km north of Old Town; the Blessed Virgin: village of Trohanicz; Catherine & Dorothy: village of Malešice; Bohemian Patrons: Zapy and Ostrov, villages 25 km north of Old Town; Erasmus: village of Kofec, 50 km north-northeast of Old Town. For the references to each of these altars, see Appendix 2.
some cases these villages merely served as the legal guarantee that a founder’s heirs would continue to pay the annual rent. In others the altar founder had previously purchased the census from the village’s inhabitant(s), who themselves became obligated to pay a St. Gall altar priest directly. The same two possibilities obtained for rents secured by Prague houses: the founder might bind her heirs to support the altar priest by establishing a rent on her own residence (in which case the altar’s patron might also pay the altar priest) or she might sign over to the altar priest a census on another house or group of houses. Both rents tied the house or property permanently to the altar. Whoever inhabited the house would be obliged to make regular payments to the altar priest in perpetuity.

The explosion of altar foundations in later fourteenth century Prague thus not only brought numerous villages into direct or indirect financial relationships with Prague parishes, but also burdened an increasing portion of Prague’s urban properties with obligations to the altars of Prague parishes. In addition to being the center of its own parish, the church of St. Gall also held sway over an idiosyncratic gathering of individual properties throughout Prague—many of which can be identified with relative certainty (see Map 2.2). Three of these houses happened to be located on the St. Gall marketplace, although probably only one (almost directly across from the parish church) fell within the

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124 The rent, e.g., for the altar of Simon, Jude, and John, was paid by a series of the Welfl brothers called “of the Tower,” and the property securing the rent was transferred more than once (LE 2.128 no.239; 2.134-6 no. 250; SÚA AZK 1232).

125 For example, the rent supporting the altar of S. Erasmus was owned by Martin Rotlew, the altar’s founder, but pertained to a village in the possession of a minor noble (cliens) from that village; the latter and his heirs were responsible to pay the altar priest directly (LE 4.386-7 no. 539).

126 e.g., the altar of Corpus Christi founded by the widow Christina with a rent on her own house (LE 2.236 no. 392), and the altar of St. Anne, founded by Henry Ziegler with a group of rents on various Prague houses and properties (LE 1.109-10 nos. 226, 227; SÚA AZK 1236, 1237, 1238, 1240, 1241, 1245).
Map 2.2: Properties Owing Rents to the Altars and Parish Church of St. Gall
parish boundaries. The other eight properties, which included a malt house (braseatorium) and a stall in the German meat market, were spread over several parishes in Old Town and New Town. No geographic logic governed the selection of these properties. Rather, the independent financial affairs and decisions of numerous St. Gall benefactors together determined the topography that financed the altars of St. Gall. The same process created a patchwork of properties throughout Prague and the surrounding countryside linked to side altars in many of the city’s parishes. A house on the marketplace of St. Gall carried a rent for an altar in the parish church of St. Mary in Old Town, while the inhabitant of a house on Old Town square paid an annual rent for St. Gall’s altar of St. John the Baptist. Only the most wealthy Old Town parishes contained as many altars as St. Gall, and none are as well documented, but the dynamic was the same for each parish containing even a single secondary altar.

Establishing a permanent altar almost necessarily involved rents. Yet rents were much too useful a financial tool to be limited to altar foundations. The vast majority were originally bought and sold by individuals. Rent ownership, however, was normally

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127 House no. 422 on the western edge of the marketplace probably belonged to the parish of St. Martin in the Wall, as the house two doors to the north did in the early fifteenth century (ZSMP 1.108). House no. 414 near the southwest corner of the marketplace, located just a few doors from the church of St. Martin, may also have belonged to that parish (ZSMP 2.75).

128 See Appendix 2.

129 The owners of the house on the marketplace of St. Gall (no. 413) sold a rent “duarum marcharum gravium” (or two shocks and eight groschen—it specifies that each “marca gravis” equals 64 groschen) in 1363 to an Old Town furrier (pellifex) for twenty schocks. Fifteen year later the furrier’s daughter transfers this and other rents to the altar of the Virgin at the parish of St. Mary in Old Town (LE 3.289-291 no. 430; ZSMP 1.112). The rent on the Old Town Square house (no. 928) was one of several provided by Leonard, the parish priest of St. Gall (from 1390) for the new altar of St. John the Baptist in 1392 (LE 4.371-2 no. 518; ZSMP 1.19; LC 5.26, 28.)
transferable. Payment was due to whomever possessed the original rent document. Like wealthy citizens, parish churches and other religious institutions took part in this credit market as a way to exchange surplus capital for regular income. Parishes also received rents as donations that were not tied to altars. Complaints raised during the 1379-80 visitation in Prague reveal the existence of many rents owed directly to parish churches. Over the course of decades, a church or religious house might accumulate large numbers of rents. Unlike the rents established for private altar, these parish rents were directly controlled by the parish priest, who often depended upon them for a significant portion of the parish’s general income.

Rents appeared in visitation records or court cases only when disputes arose. Those attached to the erection of new benefices (including the side altars already discussed) often appear in the archbishop’s *libri erectionum*. Selling a rent invariably involved the creation of records: in addition to the original documents held by buyer and seller, the sale of rents, as real property, were normally entered into city books. Very few of these survive, however, for fourteenth-century Prague. Once again the parish church of St. Gall proves unique. The notarial instincts of John of Nepomuk, St. Gall’s parish priest from 1380 to 1390, have left more information about the rents owned by this parish than exists for any other in Prague. In his first year at St. Gall, John brought twelve charters to the archbishop to be entered into the *libri erectionum*. Together they documented rents owned by the parish church on more than twenty houses spread throughout New Town and Old Town, many of which can be identified with reasonable

\[130\] Often these documents contain clauses explicitly confirming this, e.g., “Et qui hanc litteram habuerit, eidem plenum jus competit omnium praemissorum” (LE 4.448 no. 619).
A great number came into St. Gall’s possession as bequests many years after first being sold. The first six documents, grouped together in one entry in the *libri erectionum*, all establish rents on Prague houses payable to individuals. They range in date from 1362 to 1373. When or how each of these transferable rents reached the parish church of St. Gall remains unknown, but John of Nepomuk’s possession of the documents sufficed to establish his and the church’s right to collect the rents. The parish priest may have purchased some of them from previous owners. Others were likely donated to the church by parishioners, perhaps in payment for anniversary or other masses. This is certainly the case for the third of the six documents, confirmed in a second entry. Albert (Elblinus) Waczinger donated to St. Gall rents he owned on four different houses in exchange for quarterly masses, plus morning and evening services on the anniversary of his death. He laid out precisely what portion of the four schocks and thirty-two groschen was to be spent for wax and how much should go to various members of the parish community.

This document and four of the remaining five, dated between 1326 and 1366, originated from either the Old Town or New Town council and confirmed the church’s possession of various rents. The location of the houses and usually the identities of the current owners or inhabitants appeared, but not the original circumstances under which the rent had been established. Three provide no explanation whatsoever for how the rents became the property of St. Gall. Another records the parish priest’s purchase of a rent.

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131 LE 1.112-15 nos. 235, 236.

132 After repeating the text of the six documents, the archbishop adds: “Nos . . . census . . . ecclesiae S. Galli et rectori ipsi . . . incorporamus, . . . omnia . . . confirmamus. Nichilominus etiam, ut clausulae in dictis litteris positae sub tenore . . . ‘et qui hanc litteram habuierit, eisdem,’ ecclesiae jam dictae et . . . plebano ipsius jus dumtaxat tribuant, nullumque aliis quibuscunque personis jus competere debere in eisdem . . . decernentes . . .” (LE 1.112-13 no. 235).
from a homeowner: Adam the malter sold an annual rent of two schocks to Wenceslas Tausentmark (in his capacity as St. Gall’s parish priest) in exchange for twenty schocks in cash. By the time John of Nepomuk had this 1365 document confirmed in 1381, this initial investment had yielded a return of more than thirty schocks, or over 150 percent.133 The final document in the entry had been commissioned in 1346 by Wenceslas Tausentmark to record a rent on a house located near the St. Gall marketplace in the parish of St. Martin. The rent had been given to the church by a certain Ulrich for the good of his soul, probably through the performance anniversary masses. The current owner of the house, who acknowledged that he had purchased knowing this condition, agreed to pay an annual sum to the church.134

John of Nepomuk successfully enrolled all of these rents in the *libri erectionum*. They had come to the parish variously through individual bequests and direct purchase. The oldest of them had been providing income for more than fifty years, having repaid the original investment decades before. Together they amounted to more than twenty schocks of annual income, drawn from more than twenty Prague properties. And the parish of St. Gall did not stop there. John of Nepomuk himself added to the church’s treasury of rents; in 1383 he paid an Old Town citizen twenty-six groschen in exchange

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133 The 2 May 1365 charter records Adam the Malter’s acknowledgement of this rent in the presence of the New Town council. If, as it seems, the rent had only then or recently before been sold, the first payment would have been due on the feast of St. Gall (16 October) later that year, followed by two payments a year for the next fifteen years. By 5 April 1381, when this document was entered into the *libri erectionum*, the house’s owners would have paid 32 schocks; the next payment was due on the feast of St. George (23 April).

134 It seems that either Ulrich “dictus Kezer” established this rent on his own house, which he then sold to the present owner, or that he had purchased a rent on this house from the house’s previous owner: “Martinus auricremator... recognovit, quod de sua domo, quam sub illa emit conditione, ... 1 fertonem... plebano... ecclesiae S. Galli... debet dare... anno quolibet... pro remedio animae... Vlrici dc. Kezer, quam... Vlricus... plebano... ecclesiae S. Galli... super dictam domum assignavit, de qua... assignatione... D. Wenczeslaus petivit sibi per me notarium... confici publicum instrumentum” (LE 1.113-15 no.236).
for an annual rent of one-tenth that amount.\textsuperscript{135} Other rents appear among the remnants of St. Gall’s parish archive. One inexplicably escaped the attention of John of Nepomuk—a 1361 will in which an Old Town citizen instructed his executors to sell his house on the St. Gall marketplace and purchase rents worth nine schocks annually, eight of which were to support masses at St. Gall. (He reserved another one-schock rent for his uncle, an Augustinian friar at St. Thomas in Lesser Town).\textsuperscript{136} Two more rents came to St. Gall after Nepomuk’s tenure, in 1395 (on a group of houses owned by New Town citizens) and 1406 (on a village forty-five kilometers southeast of Old Town). Both provided for perpetual masses for the benefit of their founders’ souls. Each paid two schocks annually.\textsuperscript{137}

The parish church of St. Gall continued to accumulate rents in the early fifteenth century. By that time, more than twenty different properties in Old Town alone paid rents to the church or one of its altars.\textsuperscript{138} Rents created powerful ties between the parish church of St. Gall and properties throughout and beyond the city. The entire system of private altars and endowed masses had been built upon this invisible infrastructure.

\textsuperscript{135} SA 2.197 no. 32.

\textsuperscript{136} SÚA AZK 1239. The testator, Dietrich Plafus, must have died relatively soon after making this will, as already in 1362 his executors sold the house, which cannot be located with certainty: “in novo foro; quondam Didrici Plafus; Dyrsko filius Andreae Goldner emit erga Nicolaum Weger et Fanczam de Berona” (ZSMP 1.238).

\textsuperscript{137} SÚA AZK 1251, 1253. On the village of Barchovice, see Profous, \textit{Místní jména v Čechách}, 1.28.

\textsuperscript{138} Several of these houses cannot be identified with houses known to owe rents to St. Gall in the fourteenth century, suggesting that these rents were established since that time. For example, one Old Town property (no. 188a) paid a one-schock rent to the altar priest of the Apostles Simon and Jude [and John] at St. Gall in 1407. This seems to have supplemented the altar’s original ten-schock rent, which was established on a village (Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 331; LE 2.128 no. 239; 2.134-5 no. 250; SÚA AZK 1232). For the other Old Town properties owing rent to St. Gall in the fifteenth century, see Mendl, 284, 288, 290, 292, 301, 302, 308, 309, 310, 312, 313, 330, 331, 339, 358, 359, 369, 375.
Without their support, these central elements of later medieval local religion would have collapsed. Rents were indispensable. There were always some people, however, who wanted to escape or even abolish them.

2.2.4. Escaping and Attacking Rents

Most Prague houses that did not pay a rent to the parish of St. Gall paid one to some other church or institution. By the fifteenth century, it was quite exceptional for an Old Town house not to be encumbered with at least one rent. Only one of nine remained completely free from rents for the first two decades of the fifteenth century. And it seems that even more of the New Town houses carried rents. Very few house-owners in Prague, then, would not either pay or receive rents. Some paid multiple rents: the owner of one New Town house owed rents both to the parish church of St. Gall and an altar in Týn church. Payment of all nearly these rents, like those supporting the church’s altars, theoretically continued indefinitely. They created permanent bonds between a

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139 Only 65 of the 593 Old Town houses counted by Mendl remained completely free of rents between 1400 and 1419; the percentage is even lower for the areas of New Town that he studied (“Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 165).

140 The Old Town citizen Jeclinus Peutler sold a rent of one schock on his New Town house (possibly no. 774; the neighboring house is certainly no. 775) to another Old Town citizen in February 1372; at some point before 1381 this rent came into the possession of St. Gall (LE 1.112-13 no. 235; ZSMP 2.49-50). In April 1374, he sold another rent of one schock—this time he specifies that he received eight schocks for it—to an Old Town citizen named Jesco of Kutná Hora. In 1383 Jesco gave this and other rents for an altar in Týn church (LE 2.200-3 no. 346). As Mendl’s data for fifteenth-century Old Town demonstrates, it was by no means unusual for a house to owe two or more small rents (Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 282-375). However, there was a limit, at least in New Town. Upon the foundation of New Town in 1348, Charles IV limited rents on New Town properties to one-half the possible rental value: “Itm precipimus, vt nullus supra domum seu edificium suum censum aut redditus uel pensionem vendere, dare uel concedere alicui perpetuo uel ad tempus aut eadem edificia valeat onerare, nisi solum pro media parte, pro qua posset tradi ad censum uel redditus annales, ne propter census et redditus onus graue edificia constructa cum maximis laboribus et expensis in deformitatem ciuitatis huiusmodi corruant et penitus negligantur” (Čelakovský, ed., Privilegia civitatum pragensium, 82 no. 49).

141 Lifetime or temporary rents seem not to have been common, or at least they rarely appear in extant records. In exceptional cases, a rent only became permanent after an initial period. For instance, one
property and a church so strong as to be nearly unbreakable. This permanence provided the great advantage of rents for a parish church and its benefactors, but also burdened property owners with nearly inescapable payments.

But not entirely inescapable: surviving fourteenth-century documents provide multiple examples of changes and even redemptions of perpetual rents. The most common way to liberate a property was to replace one rent with another secured by a different house or village. The Welfl brothers (called “of the tower”) twice changed the village upon which the rent for their family altar was based. The second time, one brother’s intention to sell his village motivated the switch. Similarly, when John Steglitz’s executors established an altar at St. Michael in Opatovice, they allowed Margaret’s husband to replace the rent on the village specified by John Steglitz with one secured by two other villages. Twenty-two years later, Margaret transferred the same rent to yet another village. A clause in the rent contract would often explicitly allow

1362 rent on one-half a house on the St. Gall marketplace included the provision that the sellers could repaid the sale price of ten schocks within four years, at which point the census would be considered “exsolutus”; otherwise, the one-schock census “super medietate . . . domus perpetua remanere debuit.” Evidently the sellers were unable to meet this deadline; the rent remained in the possession of St. Gall in 1381, and was still being paid in 1418 (LE 1.112 no. 235; Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,” 302).

142 Jaklinus de Turri requested in a 1344 document that his brothers establish the altar “de censu annuo, quem in oppido Chlumyn [Chlumin] possideo,” but specified that another rent of equal value could be substituted; in 1349, Matthew and John de Turri transferred the census to Letňany, which already had a rent of four schocks—of which two went to St. Gall—established by their grandfather. In 1376, however, Matthew decided to sell Letňany, and received permission from the archbishop to transfer the entire rent of fourteen schocks back to Chlumin in order to render Letňany “libera,” (LE 2.128 no. 239; 2.134-6 no. 250; SÚA AZK 1232).

143 Simon Bohuslai is not identified in this March 5, 1369 document as Margaret’s husband, but she is described as his wife in another document dated one week later (LE 1.72 no. 250; LC 2.2).

144 To be more precise, Margaret secured the census with another, larger census—itself considered real property—that in turn was secured by a village: “. . . ego Magaretha, . . . recognosco, quod sicut . . . legittimi executores et testamentarii ultimae voluntatis olim Johlini Steklicz . . . octo sexagenas grss. denar. prag. annui et perpetui census, spectantes modo infra scripto ad altare S. Mariae Virg. in ecclesia s. Michaelis in Opathovicz, de villa Msteticz [Mstětice] in et super villas Rostok [Roztoky] et Kleczan.
such an exchange, sometimes with the provision that the new property be located nearby (presumably to facilitate collection). Similarly, the seller of a rent could reserve the right to buy back the rent for its original price. It was unusual, however, for a seller to accede to such a condition unless city law demanded it. This was in fact the case in New Town and Lesser Town in the later fourteenth century, where property rents could be redeemed with cash. One New Town citizen did precisely this in 1388, removing a thirty-four-groschen rent owed to St. Gall by paying five schocks and forty groschen (or 340 groschen) to the parish priest. His right to do so stemmed from the city’s “law


145 A charter for St. Gall’s altar of Catherine and Dorothy stipulated that any replacement rent must be “in aliis bonis tam certis . . . in distantia duorum vel trium milliarium a civitate Prag.” (LE 4.452 no. 625). Another contract allowed a bit more leeway—the initial rent could be replaced by another one “super unam certam hereditatem in distantia 10 milliarium a civitate Prag. situatam” (LE 4.448 no. 619). The founder of the altar of Corpus Christi was less stringent, specifying only: “quod quondocunque ipsa domina Cristina . . . aut ejus successores in praedicta civit. Prag. vel extra . . . ipsam censum . . . aequivalentem comparaverit . . ., quod extunce domus praedicta esse debeat a . . . praeducti census solutione libera” (LE 2.236-37 no. 392).

146 The New Town councilors who issued the charter stated: “Sane quia iure et consuetudine dicte civitatis Nove Pragensis Regum Boemie auctoritate approbatis a prima ipsius fundatione tantum est ut quilibet possessor legittimus posset libere domum et aream suas a solutione census quibus grauatur, soluto eo quod debere, absolvere et liberare, nos dictos domum et aream ac possesores ipsarum a predicti census solutione absolvimus et liberamus et solutas ac liberas volumus deinceps et inantea reputari,” (SÚA AZK 1249; cf. LE 1.115 no. 236) (This house can be identified as New Town 141b, one of five in a row owing rent to St. Gall since 1366 (ZSMP 2.94; cf. Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,”231)). The origin of this right in New Town is not entirely clear, as it does not appear in the city’s 1348 foundation charter (Čelakovský, ed., Privilegia civitatum pragensium, 79-83 no. 49). This 1388 document seems to be the first known reference to this “ius et consuetudo”; Mendl only cites fifteenth-century evidence that this right was believed to have been established at the city’s foundation. Lesser Town received a royal privilege to the same effect in 1351, but Old Town only received an analogous privilege in 1418 (Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy,”211-13, 216). The body of Old Town city laws covering rents evolved as rents became more. For more on this, see Emil Rössler, ed., Das altprager Stadtrecht aus dem XIV. Jahrhundert, Deutsche Rechtsdenkmäler aus Böhmen und Mähren 1 (1845; reprint, Aalen, 1963), LX-LXIV, with references to the relevant laws.
and custom,” so the priest of St. Gall had no choice but to accept the cash. The priest would not likely have had difficulty purchasing another rent to replace it, however.

Both of these legitimate ways to free a property from a rent. Nevertheless, both endangered the permanence of the rent and, in some cases, the benefice it supported. Promises were not always fulfilled, and new rents were not always established to replace old ones. Rents paid by the original benefactor or his heirs from their own rural property were especially vulnerable. These rents, unlike those on urban properties, were not entered into the city fiscal books. Although the benefactor might continue to make the annual payments after releasing the original property from its obligation, the endowment remained insecure so long as no new property-secured rent was established. When Matthew “of the tower” freed one village of its rent, he did not—despite his promise—transfer it to another village. He continued to pay the annual rent, but four years later the parish priest of St. Gall worried that his benefice at the altar of the Apostles Simon and Jude and the Evangelist John was in jeopardy. It seems that Matthew was guilty of more than negligence; he had also managed to gain possession of the church’s original charter (ostensibly to have a copy made) and had not returned it. The parish priest, who described himself as Matthew’s uncle, felt betrayed.

147 Cf. the case of a Lesser Town altar priest, who had to explain to an ecclesiastical visitor why he had allowed a rent to be redeemed: “Item interrogatus per quem modum deponenti census suas deperiti, respondit, quod ante IX annos Marsso, dictus Sedlak, exsolvit I sexagenam census, quam ipse deponens habuit in domo sua pro dicto altari. Interrogatus, quare ipse testis permisit dictam sexagenam census exsolvvere ab altari, respondit, quod non potuit defendere, quia eives dictae civitatis habent privilegia imperialis, quod ipsi possint domus sua[?] libertare et censum exsolvvere” (PV 123). In this case, the altar priest proved unable to purchase another rent, and was left with neither the income nor the capital (see below, n. 152).

148 According to Wenceslas Tausentmark, the parish priest of St. Gall, in 1380 Matthew had not yet secured the rent with any real property: “Item dicit, quod Mathias de Turri vendidit villam Letnani, in qua fuerunt XII sexagene pro altari sanctorum Johannis evangelistae et Symonis et Jude apostolorum, ad quem dominus Johannes, predecessore archiepiscopi moderni, consensit, qui tamen promiserat alia bona eque bona pro dicto altario emere, quod non fecit et quadam vice venit ad plebanum rogans, ut daret eidem literam.
The rent supporting another St. Gall altar likewise proved less than secure. The founder of the altar of St. Dorothy and St. Catherine had provided a ten-schock census that he had purchased on village property. After his death, the village’s current owner, Procopius Wasserman, a powerful Old Town citizen and notorious usurer,149 sold the property with the permission of the guardians of the founder’s young heir. (One guardian was Procopius’ brother, and another was Matthew “of the tower”). Procopius promised the archbishop’s vicar that he would secure the rent with a property of equal value, and the vicar in turn had convinced the altar priest to hand over the original charter (litera erreccionis). The altar priest justifiably complained to the ecclesiastical visitor in 1380 that he had been left with neither the legal document nor a guaranteed rent. He continued to receive ten schocks yearly, but he feared that the unsecured rent would eventually lapse.150 Not until sixteen years later, several years after the altar priest’s death, did the

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149 An altar priest at the Old Town parish of St. Michael levelled against Procopius Wasserman a similar charge of failure to secure a rent as promised with real property (PV 112). Numerous others made accusations against Procopius during the 1379-1380 visitation, most specifying usury; an altar priest at his own parish church (Týn church) claimed that he was the “maior usurarius in civitate Pragensi” (PV 102; cf. PV 53, 104, 105, 109, 111, 112, 113). Procopius Wasserman seems to be the same person as Procopius, son of Seidlinus of Písek and brother of Frana and Bernhard Seidlini; these three men sold the original rent in or before 1365 on their village of Malešice to the altar’s founder, and Procopius inherited or otherwise acquired it from them (LE 1.50 no. 100; cf. DMP 2.477).

150 “Wenceslaus de Usk in Albea, presbyter a XX annis, altarista a XV annis altaris sanctarum virginum in ecclesia sancti Galli predicta, confirmatus, habens de censu annuo X sexagenas, de quorum duarum ipsae facit servicia et dicit, quod dictum censum habuit in villa Maleczicz in bonis Procopii Wasserman, quem censum legaverat pie memorie Menlinus Dubczo, civis Pragensis, quem in dictis bonis obtinebat, qui solvebat sibi per dictum Procopium Waserman et demum post obitum dicti Dubczonis dictus Procopius ipsa bona vendidit cum adiutorio Bernhardi Zeidlini et Mathie de Turri et Peslino Rotonis, civium Pragensium, executorum ultime voluntatis dicti Menerlini Dubecz, qui tamen promiserant ad manus domini Johannis Cantoris, decani sancti Apollinaris, tunc vicarii in spiritualibus domini archiepiscopi Pragensis, dictum censum eque bonum et firmum pro dicto altario, et ipse depone[n]s hoc promisso facto, literam erreccionis altaris tradidit ipsi dominio decano, quam ipse dictis civibus tradidit; et ipse depone[n]s adhuc nulla bona habet deputata pro dicto altari, sed tamen censum predictum solv[en]t sibi cives predicti, interdum Bernhardus et alii, sed tamen pro maiori parte Johannis Rottonis, civis
original benefactor’s son make right the misdeed of his guardians and purchase a new rent for the altar, apparently on his own initiative.\footnote{151} Clearly the legal status of the rent depended largely on the presence of the physical document itself. This explains both the physical survival of several of these charters and John of Nepomuk’s efforts to have St. Gall’s rent documents entered into the \textit{libri erectionum}. It also explains the occasional attempts of others to confiscate and even destroy them.\footnote{152}

Pragensis, solvit sibi censum predictum de camera, et timet, ne sibi et dicto altari censum deperiret,” (PV 107-8). Incidentally, an altar priest in the Old Town church of St. Michael—who came from the same town (Ústí nad Labem) as the altar priest just mentioned—brought similar charges against both Procopius Wasserman and the same Bernard, Procopius’ brother: “Johannes de Usk super Albea, presbyter in VIII\textsuperscript{o} anno, altarista altaris XII apostolorum in dicta ecclesia [S. Michael] confirmatus, habens in censu VIII\textsuperscript{o} sexagenas, quas habuit in villa Knyeziewess, sed dominus Bernhardus de Pieska dictus Zeidlini, civis Pragensis, easdem bonas vendidit ante duos annos et promisit dare pro dicto altari eundem censum eque bonum et certum, sed adhuc literas non habet renovatas, sed promittit cottidie ipsas renovare. Item dicit, quod Procopius Wasserman, civis Pragensis, solvit unam sexagenam census eidem deponenti ex testamento patris sui, ut credit, quam debet perpetuare et in certis bonis suis deputare et prescribere, quod non facit, sed solvit sibi eandem sexagenam de camera et valide debiliter” (PV 112).

\footnote{151} The situation is explained in a 1396 charter: “Sed quia mortuo patre ipsius Johannis [John of Dubeč] tutores ipsius, cum adhuc minor annis esset, praedictum censum . . . ipso inscio vendiderunt litterasque desuper confectas annichilaverunt, cum autem ipse Johannes Dubecz venisset ad annos discretionis et se de bonis paternis intromississet, tun . . . tutores ipsius eidem 100 sexagenas grss. prag. . . . parata in pecunia, pro quibus vendiderant censum altaris . . . , restituerunt, quia pecunia . . . recepta censum 10 sexg. grss. de camera rectoribus altaris . . . lucusque solvi consuevit . . . Cum autem ilia, quae . . . documentis non sunt firmata, cito a memoria hominum labantur . . . , ideo . . . Johannes Dubecz cupiens testamentum patris sui eviterne permanere rectoresque altaris . . . in redditibus . . . certificare, pro altari antedicto et ipsius rectoribus 10 sexagenas grss. . . . census annui . . . in curia et villa Kralowicz in bonis suis hereditariis demonstravit” (LE 4.452-53 no. 625). The altar priest Wenceslas had died by April 1389, when his successor was named (LC 3-4.209).

\footnote{152} In one case, a one-schock rent established for the Old Town parish church of St. Castulus was cancelled by the founder’s son, who also happened to be an altar priest in the same church. Having sold the house, the son tore up the rent document with the consent of the parish priest in order to receive the capital from the new owner. The parishioner who had purchased the house and redeemed the rent from the altar priest later reported the circumstances to the ecclesiastical visitor: “Wenceslaus Piskorz dicit, quod ante sedecim annos Fenczlinus, pater domini Jaxonis altariste in dicta ecclesia [S. Castulus], prescriptus tenuit domum, quam nunc ipse deponentem tenet, in qua pro ecclesia sancti Castuli deputaverat unam sexagenam an[n]ui census, quam eciam ipse deponentem bene bis solvit ipsi ecclesie, quam quidem domuni ipse deponentem emit a dicto domino Jaxone, filio dicti Fenczlini, pro LIIII sexagenas, et cum X sexagenas retinuisset in pignore census dicte sexagene, tunc dictus Jaxo aportavit literas civitatis facientes fidem de dicto censu, quas de consensu plebani sancti Castuli domini Hermanni pie memorie laniavit, quibus laniatis deponentis dictas X sexagenas retentas sibi tradidit et sic a solucione dicti censu fuit solutus. Ubi dictus Jaxo r[e]ceptis dictis X sexagenas ad plebanum dixit: ‘Plebane, ego ita bene volo servire et deum exorare pro anima patris mei sicut tu et easdem mulieriibus dare’” (PV 88). A beleaguered altar priest in a Lesser Town parish complained during the same visitation that a rent on a local house providing part of his income (one schock) had been redeemed nine years ago—according to Lesser Town law—but that both the
Less devious, but nearly as exasperating for an altar priest, was simple default on a rent. Automatically triggered late penalties could in fact exacerbate the problem by increasing an already unpayable debt. Some contracts went so far as to invoke excommunication for protracted failure to pay.\textsuperscript{153} In one case at St. Gall, the priest of the altar of St. Anne called the altar’s patron before the archbishop’s court, almost certainly for nonpayment of the five schock rent she owed him. When she, a widow named Ela who lived in a house on St. Gall’s marketplace, failed to appear before the court, the archbishop’s officials pronounced her excommunicate. There is no record of the resolution of this case, but three months later she raised ninety schocks by selling a rent on the house she and her children inhabited on the market square.\textsuperscript{154} If, despite this, she failed to pay the altar rent, the altar priest would have had the right to confiscate and sell the rural property by which it was secured. The value a property or house burdened by a large rent, however, might be negligible. Prague property records include several examples of practically worthless properties encumbered by unpayable rents. Such rent-

\textsuperscript{153} E.g., LE 4.452-53 no. 625

\textsuperscript{154} LE 1.109-110 no. 227; SA 1.250; 1.253; LE 4.448 no. 619.
bearing properties changed hands without any exchange of cash; the new owner merely agreed to take over payment of the associated rent.155

Rents could clearly have serious and pernicious effects on urban property. Even more troubling to many were the ramifications for permanently indebted property owners. Rents had become such an integral part of the later medieval economy that their absence was almost unthinkable. Yet increasingly in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, important voices cried out against them. Rents, some claimed, merely clothed immoral usurious loans with a thin cloak of respectability. Perpetual rents, by far the majority type witnessed in the Prague sources, drew the most opposition. The associated theological and legal debate drew in some of the leading fourteenth- and fifteenth-century university figures from throughout Europe, including Henry of Langenstein, Henry of Oyta, Matthew of Krakow, John Gerson, and John Nider.156 Prague itself produced a famous opponent of rents in Milič of Kroměříž (d. 1374), a charismatic and controversial preacher whose opponents claimed that he condemned all priests who received income from rents.157 (Chapter 4 considers another aspect of Milič’s local activities). Later, several treatises composed in Prague condemned rents as forms of usury; one was attributed to the master of theology Conrad of Ebrach (d. 1399) who was associated with the Prague Cistercian college of St. Bernard from 1375 to

155 E.g., ZSMP 2.62 no. 41a, b, c.


The debate, now only partially recoverable in the surviving sources, raged in Prague as elsewhere. Yet even when local ecclesiastical authorities could be convinced to prohibit perpetual rents, they remained in widespread use. Numerous German cities responded by outlawing or limiting perpetual rents, at least in the hands of ecclesiastical institutions. Many required that rents be redeemable for the original purchase price, for instance. Prague’s New Town (as noted above) had precisely such a law, perhaps since its 1348 foundation. More notoriously, Vienna received a similar statute from Rudolf IV of Austria in 1360. Rudolf opposed permanent rents in part because of the burden they placed upon the poor and for their tendency to lead to the abandonment of urban houses. His law became the central issue in another round of debate at Vienna’s university in the 1390s, when Henry of Langenstein famously defended non-redeemable perpetual rents in his Tractatus de contractibus. Langenstein considered Rudolf’s statute dangerous to the church, which relied on perpetual endowments to pay its clerics. How else, he demanded, can lay donors be sure that their pious bequests (and, presumably, the accompanying masses) will be perpetual?

158 Despite the attribution to Conrad of Ebrach in all three surviving manuscripts, Lauterer has raised doubts about the authorship (“Konrad von Ebrach,” 19:22-26; 17:193-199).
159 On the disputes and treatises in Prague, see František M. Bartoš, “Milič a jeho škola v boji proti socialní metle velkoměsta” (Milič and his school in the struggle against a social scourge of the big city), Jhočeský sborník historický 21 (1952): 121-32. Bartoš somewhat misleadingly construes all Prague opponents of rents as members of the “school” of Milič.
161 See above, n. 146.
162 For a summary of the arguments of Henry of Langenstein’s treatise, see Gilomen, “Renten und Grundbesitz in der toten Hand,” 141-44.
Despite the persistent expression of theological and legal misgivings, rents simply proved too essential to the ecclesiastical economy to disallow. The entire system of altars, altar priests, and endowed masses depended upon rents for financial support. St. Gall’s altars provide concrete evidence of the indispensability of rents for an increasingly important aspect of local religious expression. Parish churches likewise found rents an ideal mechanism for converting capital to regular income. On the other side, property owners continued to raise money by entering into contracts that burdened themselves, their children, and their houses with rents. For them, too, rents supplied an otherwise unmet financial need. Even Milič himself, reportedly an outspoken critic of rents, could not avoid them. During negotiations involving his new community of Jerusalem (discussed at length in Chapter 4), Milič agreed to pay an annual rent, secured in part by his own house, to a nearby parish church.¹⁶³

Fourteenth-century critics drew attention to the deleterious effects that rents could cause. No one, however, remarked upon the other unintended and comparatively benign social side-effects of rents that this chapter has explored. Through the gifts of donors and the purchases of parish priests, inhabitants of houses throughout Prague, and of rural property outside it, entered into financial and social relationships with parish and altar priests, relationships that in most cases outlived the clerical office-holders and the lay house-holders alike. Twice a year property owners and inhabitants carried their money through the streets to the parish church. Failing this, they met their clerical counterparts before the archbishop’s court. Before now, historians have not noticed this process or

¹⁶³ SA 1.51-52 no. 263.
mapped the constellations of private, secular houses (and their inhabitants) that came into the orbit of altars and parish churches.\textsuperscript{164}

Complementing this process, I have argued, were parallel mechanisms that extended the parish topography beyond its own borders. Altar and church patrons like Margaret tied together disparate ecclesiastical institutions through the multiple patronages they exercised. Similarly, the masses that they endowed and oversaw channeled money through beneficed altar priests to other priests, friars, students, and even the poor who congregated at church doors. Together, these mechanisms ushered St. Gall and every other Prague parish into a tangled web of relationships that represented a vital, if invisible, part of the city’s sacred topography.

\textsuperscript{164} The one partial exception I know is Joëlle Rollo-Koster, “From Prostitutes to Brides of Christ: The Avignonese Repenties in the Late Middle Ages,” \textit{Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies} 32 (2002): 125-27. Rollo-Koster (who kindly sent me a copy of her article) maps the properties for which a convent of reformed prostitutes in Avignon owned rents, arguing that the central urban location of these properties represents the successful appropriation by the reformed prostitutes of “traditional Avignonese topography.” Rollo-Koster does not, however, use the term rent for what her sources call a \textit{cens}. She provides in footnote 100 a clear definition of this term—what I and the wider literature term a “rent”—but she somewhat confusingly refers to these rents in the text as “direct lordship” over property.
CHAPTER 3

SPITTING SERMONS: MENDICANTS AND SECULARS IN PRAGUE

In the early Spring of 1365, Conrad Waldhauser (d. 1369) arrived in Žatec (Saaz), an important royal town approximately seventy kilometers northwest of Prague, in a region now renowned among brewers for the exceptional quality of its hops.¹ The German-speaking Augustinian canon was there to preach, perhaps as one stop along one of his larger preaching journeys.² The local Franciscans were expecting him.³ On Thursday, 1 April, Waldhauser began to deliver his sermon within the parish church (whose benefice, it happens, was controlled by the king). The Franciscans of St. Peter and St. Paul responded from across the square by sounding their bell to drown out the preacher’s words. The stubborn preacher refused to admit defeat, and finished his sermon despite the incessant clanging. During his Friday sermon, when the friars once again began to peal their bell, Waldhauser took the offensive. He gathered his listeners

¹ Antonín Profous, Místní jména v Čechách: jejich vznik, původní význam a změny (Place names in Bohemia: their origin, original meaning, and changes), 5 vols. (Prague, 1949-1960), 4.806-8; August Sedláček, Místopisný slovník historický království českého (Historical topographical dictionary of the Bohemian kingdom) (1909; reprint, Prague, 1998).

² These are attested most clearly by two preaching licenses or safe-conducts granted to him, one by Pope Urban V and another by the Albrecht I, Duke of Bavaria (Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řadu svatého Augustina,” 26-27 nos. 11-12.

³ The Fransican house had in fact suffered damage at the hands of a mob during their controversy with the Prague bishop (Pavel Vlček, Petr Sommer, and Dušan Foltýn, Encyklopedie českých klášterů [Encyclopedia of Bohemian religious houses] [Prague, 1998], 702; Zdeňka Hledíková, Biskup Jan IV. z Dražic [Bishop John IV of Dražice] Studie a texty 6 [Prague, 1991], 85).
and led them outside to the square. There, occupying the most prominent public space in
the city, he defiantly continued his sermon. But the Franciscans also persisted.

Escalating the conflict, they brought out their relics, which they then processed through
the same square while singing loudly. This move, brilliantly calculated to disrupt the
sermon, did not please the city councilors; they later complained that it was not even the
feast day of the saint whose relics they displayed. The struggle continued. Before

Waldhauser’s next sermon, on Sunday morning, someone had thrown his preaching stool
(sedes in qua praedicabat) into the local fountain. Suspicion pointed to the Franciscans.

Finally on Monday, during Waldhauser’s final sermon, the friars abandoned all pretense
of subtlety. The eight Franciscan brothers simply showed up and shouted him down:

“Whatever this Conrad has preached to you, all of it is a lie (except, of course, the
Gospels and Epistles)!” The Franciscans of Žatec wielded whatever weapons they
possessed or could devise to defend their territory—the public spaces of Žatec—against
the invading, notoriously antimendicant, preacher from Prague. A bitter Conrad

Waldhauser left Žatec defeated, and subsequently penned a scathing invective against his
adversaries. Perhaps he also took some solace in the memory of the victories he had
recently enjoyed over the mendicants in Prague.

This chapter explores the conflict between Conrad Waldhauser and the mendicant
friars of Prague during the reign of Emperor Charles IV. It sets aside Waldhauser’s
modern reputation as the first of Jan Hus’s reforming forerunners, and instead grounds

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4 The account of these events is provided by the Žatec city councilors, whose public letters seem
designed to absolve them of any repercussions (Ferdinand Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řadu
svatého Augustina” [Conrad Waldhauser, a monk of the order of St. Augustine], Pojednání královské české
společnosti nauk 6, fady díl 1. Třída pro filosofii, dějepis a filologii 1 [1881]: 22-23 no. 8).

5 Both the letters survive in a formulary; the one by Waldhauser has never been printed: Munich,
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 22373, f. 198v-199v.
his Prague activity firmly in its fourteenth-century context. This is not the place for a new analysis of Waldhauser’s entire life and impact. Nevertheless, a fresh look at one of his most characteristic activities—namely, his conflict with the friars—suggests ways in which the traditional story can be modified. I will focus here particularly on how the controversy surrounding him reflected competition between parish priests and mendicant friars for control over space within Prague, as well as how the urban topography shaped the contours of the controversy. Waldhauser’s arrival, I will argue, catalyzed the explosion of secular-mendicant conflict in later fourteenth-century Prague. Yet Waldhauser found all of the necessary elements already in place. These included the shared memories of more than a century of widespread antimendicant animus in Europe as well as unresolved Prague antipathies of the early fourteenth-century.

3.1 Conrad Waldhauser in History

Two years before Conrad Waldhauser’s visit to Žatec, sometime after Easter in 1363, this fiery preacher from Austria had begun to preach regularly to Prague citizens in German. Conrad Waldhauser belonged to the house of Augustinian canons at Waldhausen, in northern Austria. A contemporary claimed never to have heard his equal as a preacher, “in Germany, Bohemia, Bavaria, or France.”6 Others apparently concurred. Duke Rudolf IV of Austria (1358-65) had invited him to preach at Vienna.7

6 Jan Sedláčk, M. Jan Hus (1915: reprint, Olomouc, 1996), 1*.

7 This and many of the other details known from Waldhauser’s life come from a series of his letters printed from a Seitenstetten (Austria) Stiftsbibliothek manuscript: Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řádu svatého Augustina,” 15 no. 2. This letter appears along with an introduction that dates the letter to 1362 and identifies its recipient as the bishop of Passau, Gottfried of Wieseneck (1342-62). If this is correct, then the “dominus dux” who invited Waldhauser to Vienna must be Rudolf IV and not Albrecht II (1326-58). However, it is likely that Waldhauser’s preaching in Vienna spanned the reign of both dukes. In another letter, datable (it seems) to 1364, he speaks of having preached for fifteen years before the dukes of
From this ducal capital Waldhauser was eventually called to the imperial capital of Prague. Reports of his preaching visit to Prague seem to have impressed Emperor Charles IV enough to offer him a Bohemian benefice.⁸

Historians have long portrayed Conrad Waldhauser primarily as a moralistic preacher and outspoken advocate of reform in fourteenth-century Prague. The Prague prelate and chronicler Beneš Krabice of Weitmil provided the classic (and nearly hagiographic) summary of Waldhauser’s influence in Prague: his eloquent preaching against all manner of immorality inspired Prague women to throw off their rich clothing for more humble dress, while his criticism of the widespread simony associated with the reception of novices into mendicant houses damaged the friars’ recruiting and caused all the mendicants to rise up against him.⁹ Heavily influenced by František Palacký (1798-1876), subsequent scholars have also almost invariably depicted Waldhauser as the first

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⁸ “Apologia” (Höfler 37).

⁹ “Eodem anno [1369] in festo Concepcionis beate Virginis Marie mortuus est egregius predicator frater Conradus, canonicus regularis, rector ecclesie sancte Marie ante Letam curiam in civitate Pragensi, et ibidem in cimiterio sepultus. Hic cum esset nacione de Austria, vir magne litterature et maioris eloquencie, veniens Boemiam vidensque homines nimie voluptati deditos et in multis, ut supra meminimus, excedere metas suas, predicacione sancta sua correxit mores hominum patrie nostre, ita ut multi obmissis vanitatis seculi, sedula mente Deo servirent. Inter multa alia bona, que hic vir fecit, unum magnum et memoria dignum fecit, ut mulieres civitatis Pragensis, que ante hec tempora magna et multum superba pepla nec non vestes superbissimis modis exquisitas deferebant, illa etillas deponerent et satis humili habitu omnibus diebus huius predicatoris et doctoris eximii utenterunt. Hic eciam predicabat intrepide contra usurarios et alios male fide possessores et specialiter contra religiosas personas utriusque sexus, que per symoniaeam pravitatem fuerant ad ordines recepere. Unde cum multe hiuismodi persone hac sancta predicatione compuncte dispensacionem a sede apostolica ptererent et ulterius suos pueros alii ad ordines cum pacto tradere detractarent, insurrexerunt omnes frtres ordinum mendicancium contra hunc et plurima conviclia eidem intulerunt. At ille, cum esset vir perfecte caritatis, omnia equo animo sustinuit pro Domino et in bona confessione migravit ad Christum. Requiescat in pace. Amen” (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.540).

On Beneš, see Jana Nechutová, Latinská literatura českého středověku do roku 1400 (Latin literature of the Bohemian Middle Ages to 1400) (Prague, 2000), 137-38.
in a series of three or four “forerunners the Hussites.”¹⁰ His popular preaching about moral matters, so the story goes, laid the groundwork in Prague for subsequent reformers, most notably Jan Hus. (As an Austrian canon who apparently never spoke Czech, Waldhauser never seriously challenged Milič of Kroměříž in the historiography for the title of “Father of the Bohemian Reformation”; despite Palacký’s claim that Waldhauser had become a naturalized Bohemian, he remained simply too Germanic).¹¹

The last book-length study on Waldhauser appeared in 1909, as the first volume of a series devoted to the “Great Men of the Bohemian Reformation.”¹² Since then, a series of articles have offered slightly different interpretive frames for Waldhauser and the other “forerunners” by emphasizing one or another aspect of the traditional picture. Eduard Winter, for instance, portrayed Waldhauser both as an under-appreciated reformer and as a sterling example of the “early Humanism” that Winter detected almost everywhere in fourteenth-century Bohemia.¹³ Johanna Schreiber later argued that Waldhauser and the other central fourteenth-century figures should together be

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¹⁰ František Palacký (published under the name of J. P. Jordan), Die Vorläufer des Husitenthums in Böhmen (Leipzig, 1846). For more on Palacký and the historiography of the forerunners of the Hussites, see chapter 4, p. 216.

¹¹ Palacký, Die Vorläufer des Husitenthums, 1.


understood as a Bohemian example of Devotio moderna. Jana Nechutová, unconvinced by both of these portrayals, insisted instead that Waldhauser foreshadowed not only the spirit of the sixteenth-century reformation, but also important elements of its content.

All of these studies depend overwhelmingly upon the handful of printed works of Waldhauser, including a series of letters and especially his so-called “Apologia” against the Prague mendicants. Still lacking is a systematic study of his unprinted collection of model sermons de tempore, the Postilla studentium sanctae universitatis Pragensis. This collection, which in many manuscripts fills more than two hundred folia, enjoyed a remarkable popularity: it survives in more than one hundred copies from the fourteenth

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and fifteenth century. Other sermons appear (in far fewer manuscripts) singly and grouped in at least two additional collections. These especially have been almost entirely neglected. The *Postilla* and most or all of the other extant sermons were model sermons, to be used by students and preachers to develop their own sermons. In the prologue to the *Postilla*, for instance, Waldhauser claimed to be writing at the request of the Prague university students to whom he had already preached versions of the Latin sermons. Such model sermon collections are notoriously conventional, freely repeating the wisdom of predecessors—often without acknowledgment. For this reason they

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18 Schneyer’s “series 1” of Waldhauser’s manuscripts (*Repertorium* 1.791-97) is called “Excerpta postille” by Tříška (“Příspěvky 3.19”). Schneyer also lists the incipits for another collection, represented by even fewer manuscripts, known as “Flores de tempore,” or “Greculus Piper” (805-16). To my knowledge, neither of these two collections have been studied. I have not yet been able to confirm whether the Gdańsk manuscript of *sermones de sanctis* attributed to Waldhauser in fact can be reliably attributed to him (Biblioteka Gdańska Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Cod. Mar. F 263, f. 111v; Tříška, “Příspěvky 3.19”). It may be the same text that is now preserved in Kraków, Bibliotheka Jagiellońska, Cod. 303. My own brief study of this manuscript confirms what Ladislav Klicman concluded more than a century ago: it contains only excerpts from the saints’ legends, without any significant additions (“Zpráva o cestách po knihovnách v Rakousku a Německu, kterou s podporou České Akademie a c. k. ministerstva vyučování za účelem badání o předchůdcích Husových a hnutí husitském víbce” (Report of a journey through libraries of Austria and Germany, with support of the Czech Academy and the education ministry for the purpose of conducting research on the forerunners of Hus and the Hussite movement itself), *Věstník České Akademie Císaře Františka Josefa pro vědy, slovesnost a umění* 2 (1893): 67). The Czech adaptations of twenty-two sermons from Waldhauser’s *Postilla* together represent an important example of Old Czech vernacular sermons, but (as the editor admits) vary too significantly from the Latin sermons to be considered a translation of Waldhauser’s own work (František Šimek, ed., *Staročeské zpracování postily studentů svaté university Pražské Konráda Waldhausera* (Old Czech adaptations of the *Postilla studentium sanctae universitatis Pragensis* of Conrad Waldhauser), Sbírky pramenů českého hnutí náboženského ve XIV. a XV. století 20 (Prague, 1947), XI.

19 See, e.g., Prague NK I D 11, f. 1r.

often prove disappointing as sources for the thought of their authors. The (not particularly controversial) postils de tempore of Jan Hus, for example, depend heavily on the Postilla of Conrad Waldhauser. No one, to my knowledge, has attempted to identify the models that Waldhauser himself may have used. Much work remains to be done, in other words, before a definitive study of Conrad Waldhauser can be written.

We do know with certainty, however, that Conrad Waldhauser spent most of his Prague ministry embroiled in controversy with various local mendicant communities. From almost the moment of his arrival, he sparred especially with the Dominicans and the Augustinians. He died in 1369 shortly after returning from Rome, where he had been litigating against Prague mendicants before the papal curia. In the standard portrayals of these events, the mendicants appear as the recalcitrant and mean-spirited opponents of the admirable and forward-looking reforms introduced by Waldhauser. Mired in institutions and habits compromised by centuries of accumulated greed and hypocrisy, these friars vainly defend the status quo against the shining sword of the reforming prophet.

Fourteenth-century supporters of Waldhauser helped to create this image. The cathedral canon Beneš Krabice of Weitmil in particular praised the Austrian canon’s high-minded virtue in the face of virulent mendicant attacks: “he endured it all with equanimity, since he was a man of perfect charity.” Beneš set the tone for most subsequent appraisals of Waldhauser. Little noted, on the other hand, is the more balanced judgment of another

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22 “…insurrexerunt omnes fratres ordinum mendicancium contra hunc et plurima convicia eidem intulerunt. At ille, cum esset vir perfecte caritatis, omnia equo animo sustinuit” (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.540).
contemporary—the same one who considered Waldhauser’s preaching unequaled by any
he had heard in Bohemian, German, or French lands: “But he had one fault: namely, that
he never wanted to stop his legal wrangling with the mendicants.” The author
considered this a serious failing, the sort that could undermine the effect of a preacher’s
labors in his parish.23

In this chapter, I will offer a new evaluation of the struggle between Waldhauser
and the mendicant friars, one that locates the controversy within the physical topography
of Prague as well as within the larger tradition of controversy between Prague and
European mendicants and secular priests. This particular conflict, I will argue, was not
simply an unintended consequence of Waldhauser’s long-running crusade against simony
and immorality. Rather, there is every reason to believe that the Austrian canon arrived
at Prague with a well-developed antimendicant animus, and that he, like others of his
generation elsewhere, invoked elements of the local and European antimendicant
tradition to pursue his fundamental opposition to the orders of friars. As a secular priest
attached to a parish, Waldhauser had a vested interest in limiting the power of the friars
to control the spaces and inhabitants of Prague. His own self-defined mission as a
popular, traveling preacher—a rather unusual one, it must be said, for an Augustinian
 canon—paralleled that of leading friars of the day. Not surprisingly, the result was
competition and conflict, with each side striving to push the other out of the sacred and
public spaces of Prague.

23 “Sed unum eciam sibi defuit, scilicet quod cum religiosis ordinum mendicancium nunquam
cessare voluit litigare. Et tu tibi ergo de talibus cave, eciam cum hiis predictis vivas pacificus et cum hiis
eciam, qui pacem oderunt. Hoc tamen dico, si fieri potest, quia cum predictis litigando modicum fructum
facies et in sermonibus tuis multos supervacuos labores tibi facies in plebe” (Jan Sedlák, *M. Jan Hus*, 2*).
The key sources for this conflict are a group of letters to and from Waldhauser, each printed from a single manuscript, together with the “Apologia” that contains his defense against a series of mendicant charges. A partial edition of the latter appeared in 1865. Printed from only one of the four extant manuscripts, this widely used text has rightly been described as inadequate. The editor omitted as unnecessary, for instance, many of the Biblical, legal, and patristic authorities cited by Waldhauser. He also seems to have lost patience with the text; he left out twice as much of the second half as he does of the first. As a result, significant parts of Waldhauser’s arguments were simply not reproduced. Numerous misreadings and (often erroneous) textual emendations further mar the text. For these reasons, I have begun to prepare a critical edition from all four manuscripts. In this chapter, I use my collation of three manuscripts to supplement and correct the 1865 text.

The “Apologia” offers an unusually evocative source for understanding the struggles between individual mendicants and seculars. It also provides a particularly clear example of how this process manifested itself within the local topography of a later medieval city. The “Apologia” was occasioned by a series of charges brought against

24 See above, n. 16.

25 Machilek, “Konrad von Waldhausen,” 266.

26 The text of the first 21 sides of the manuscript (ff. 43r-53r), containing the 18 charges brought by the coalition of mendicants together with Waldhauser’s responses, fills 17 printed pages; the 6 Augustinian accusations and Waldhauser’s more extensive rebuttals fill a further 16 sides of the manuscript (ff. 53r-61r) but only 6 pages of printed text (NK XIV G 17; Höfler).

27 I have collated Prague NK XIV G 17, ff. 43r-61r; Prague KNM XIII E 10, f. 1r-13r; Prague KMK E 24, f. 141v-150v. The fourth known manuscript is St. Florian Stiftsbibliothek XI 152, ff. 12r-24v.

28 I cite the Höfler edition here when referring generally to a passage in the “Apologia” or citing one that is adequately reproduced in his text; when Höfler omits the passage in question or when I do not accept Höfler’s reading, I cite the manuscript or manuscripts that present the better reading.
Conrad Waldhauser by coalition of mendicant communities in Prague. They complained especially that the Austrian canon had been attacking them and their activities in his public sermons. Four parts make up the complete text: a collection of eighteen articles levied by a Dominican-led group of mendicants; a further six charges raised by the Augustinian friars of St. Thomas in Prague’s Lesser Town; Waldhauser’s response to the first eighteen articles; and finally, his rebuttal of the Augustinian’s six articles. The charges and especially the rebuttals echo standard legal and theological arguments. Yet both the complaints and responses focus on individual events that can be precisely dated and localized. Most of the first eighteen articles, for instance, identify the specific days on which Waldhauser said or did something objectionable. From the time he arrived after Easter (in 1363), the prologue claims, he preached without ceasing against the mendicants.29 The specific accusations contained in the articles, it continues, relate only to his sermons and activities since the feast of St. Michael (29 September). The last dated accusation pertains to 27 December, the feast of St. John the Evangelist. Pentecost (13 May) marked the end of this entire episode, with Waldhauser’s public “proclamation” of the articles before the crowds assembled for the visit of Duke Rudolf IV of Austria.30 That visit also occasioned the surviving written form of Waldhauser’s responses to these charges, which he had answered previously before the archbishop. The mendicants,  

29 The text does not mention the year of the events or the composition, and there has some been disagreement about its dating. A February 1364 letter of Waldhauser to the prior of the Augustinian friars of St. Thomas mentions the Augustinians’ articles. Tomek believed that the sermons mentioned in the “Apologia” took place in 1358 and 1359, in part because the feast of St. Barbara fell on a Tuesday (feria three, as the “Apologia” witnesses) in 1358 (DMP 3.287-88 n. 85; cf. Menčík (“Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řádu svatého Augustina,” 13). Loskot’s solution, which dates the entire episode to 1363-64, seems to be the best. His suggestion that the text simply errs in assigning St. Barbara’s day to Tuesday (feria tertia) instead of Monday (feria secunda), the day on which the feast fell in 1363, is plausible; all three manuscripts I have checked, however, do agree on the reading: “feria tertia”(Konrad Waldhauser, 35-36 n. 40). 

30 “Apologia” (Höfler 24); cf. KMK E 24, f. 143v.
Waldhauser explained, had been disseminating their claims against him throughout Austria. The “Apologia” represents his hastily composed defense, which he dispatched back to Vienna with the ducal entourage.31

3.2 Parishes, Friars, and Shared Urban Space

Waldhauser’s bitter conflicts with the mendicants of Prague and of Žatec arose in particular locations, in response to local rivalries and animosities. Yet they also exemplified a long history of struggles between mendicant friars and secular priests throughout Europe.32 Local and European elements, in other words, together shaped these controversies. In retrospect, such conflicts seem to have been almost inevitable. In the thirteenth century, the newly established Franciscan and Dominican orders rapidly developed into pastoral care specialists. Widely respected for their prowess at preaching and hearing confessions, they supplied perceived and real lacks in local religion.33 Typically better educated and often more devoted than secular parish clergy (their

31 “Haec, dilectissimi compatriotae mei praesertim in Vienna et per tomat Austriam constituti, responsa praefatis fratribus, me absente demantibus prisco suo more invidioris malitiae spiritum ductis ad dei laudem et erundem perversitatis evidentiam objecere, ubilibet non timeatis, quae valde curorie manu propria eo tempore, quo dominus noster, dux Austriae, moram traxit in Praga, paucis diebus conscripsi. .”(Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich říadu svatého Augustina,” 18 no. 4). A similar passage in the “Apologia” seems to have some textual problems, but the speculative emendations of Höfler (like rendering “quod de me, ut verius credo” as “quod divinae veri(tatis inimic)us credo”) are completely unjustified (25; cf. KNM XIII E 10, f. 3r). “Apologia” (Höfler 25)

32 There is a vast literature on many aspects of the medieval conflicts between secular priests and mendicant friars, but there is no recent, general survey of the entire phenomenon. Jürgen Miethke made this point more than two decades ago, and it still holds true (“Die Rolle der Bettelorden im Umbruch der politischen Theorie an der Wende zum 14. Jahrhundert,” in Stellung und Wirksamkeit der Bettelorden in der städtischen Gesellschaft, ed. Karpar Elm, Berliner Historische Studien 3, Ordensstudien 2 (Berlin, 1981), 142 n. 83). For the early stages of the controversy, especially in France, the brief survey by Camill Paulus is still useful: Welt- und Ordensklerus beim Ausgange des XIII. Jahrhunderts im Kampfe um die Pfarr-Rechte (Essen-Ruhr, 1900).

33 See, for example, P. Hugolin Lippens, “Le droit nouveau des mendiants en conflit avec le droit coutumier du clergé séculier du concile de Vienne à celui de Trente,” Archivum Franciscanum Historicum 47 (1954): 244.
voluntary poverty especially stood out), these early mendicants won the hearts of many parishioners and bishops alike. Their religious houses with preaching-oriented churches sprouted up in so many cities that they became essential characteristics of medieval urban culture. Jacques Le Goff famously argued that the presence of a mendicant house demonstrates the urban status of any medieval settlement.

The pastoral care delivered from these new houses of friars supplemented the work of parish priests, but at the same time drew away people (and their money) from the parishes to which they were assigned. A lay woman who confessed regularly to a nearby Franciscan might neglect even her required yearly confession to the priest of her parish. If she then chose to be buried at the same Franciscan house rather than in the churchyard, her parish might lose the accustomed burial fees and donations. The structural competition established by the overlapping missions of the friars and parish clergy


36 Whether or not a person who had already confessed to an authorized mendicant was nevertheless obligated to confess the same sins to his or her parish priest in the annual confession remained a point of contention. For the episcopal licensing of mendicants as confessors in England, see Williams, “Relations between the Mendicant Friars and the Regular Clergy,” 29-44.

37 The apportionment of customary burial fees was among the most hotly contested local issues between parish priests and mendicant friars. Pope Boniface VIII attempted to resolve the issue once and for with his bull, Super cathedram (1300), but the controversy nevertheless continued. The same issue seems to have been the primary occasion for the outbreak of violence in Prague, for instance, in 1334 (see below, p. 172).
spawned countless controversies—usually over contested rights of preaching, confession, and burial—of an inevitably *local* character. Individual friars and particular mendicant houses vied with their neighboring parish priests for the affections and purses of the laity.

This competition, worked out in cities throughout Europe, empowered the lay parishioners to shape the surrounding sacred topography. Even many people of relatively modest means could now choose where to be buried—could choose, in other words, which part of the local topography their bodies would inhabit. Likewise, the alms, customary burial payments, and legacies directed towards their favorite priests, preachers, and confessors endowed parish churches and mendicant houses with the money to decorate, renovate, and even rebuild the local landmarks of the sacred geography. In this way, the options provided by the coming of the friars enabled lay people to contribute to the shape of their urban surroundings. Friars and priests, with their competing visions for the same spaces, needed the support of the laity to fulfill them. Most of these lay people had little incentive to alienate either their parish priests or the neighboring mendicants. On the contrary, many individuals and families (like that of Margaret discussed in chapter 2) maintained close ties to both the secular and fraternal clergy. The same could not always be said for the clergy themselves. Underlying tensions between friars and the parish priests periodically exploded into caustic exchanges of public accusation and sometimes even street violence. Conrad Waldhauser’s entry into Prague occasioned precisely such an episode.

Charles IV himself was responsible for Waldhauser’s presence in Prague—one more example of the emperor’s intervention in the religious culture of his capital city.

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38 This can be illustrated, for instance, by the legacies left by people like John Steglitz to their own parishes and to mendicant friars. See chapter 2, pp. 115-21.
Charles, according to the Austrian preacher, had sent the lord of Rosenberg (from southern Bohemia) to call him from Vienna to Prague.\(^{39}\) The emperor clearly wanted the renowned preacher for his own city; no doubt luring the Vienna fixture away from the Hapsburg Duke of Austria also brought the Luxemburg ruler some satisfaction. There was a problem, though. Charles IV, as I explained in the first chapter, possessed only very limited power to appoint priests to Prague parishes. In August 1363, with none of the three parish benefices he controlled in Prague vacant, the emperor therefore offered Waldhauser the parish of All Saints in Litoměřice, a town sixty kilometers north of Prague.\(^{40}\) Litoměřice was the seat of one of Bohemia’s ten archdeaconries and a relatively important town—both the Dominicans and Franciscans had considered it significant enough to settle there. Judging from the papal tithes it paid, All Saints was also among the wealthier churches in the kingdom.\(^{41}\) The All Saints benefice at Litoměřice, whose incumbent had recently died, therefore provided Charles IV the mechanism for paying Conrad Waldhauser. That it was nearly a two-day journey from Prague caused little inconvenience; like many absentee priests, Conrad Waldhauser spent very little time in his parish, relying instead on hired vicars to fulfill the duties of the post.\(^{42}\) This tradition of absenteeism allowed Charles IV to introduce this new preacher to Prague despite his limited \textit{de jure} control over the parish benefices.

\(^{39}\) “Apologia” (Höfler 37).

\(^{40}\) LC 1.2.16.

\(^{41}\) Zdeňka Hledíková, “Struktura duchovenstva ve středověkých Čechách” (The structure of the clergy in medieval Bohemia), in Struktura feudální společnosti na území Československa a Polska, ed. Ján Čierny, František Hejl and Antonín Verbík (Prague, 1984), 350-51; Václav Vladivoj Tomek, Registra decimarum papalium (Prague, 1873), 26, 74.

\(^{42}\) “Apologia” (Höfler 21, 32-33). Waldhauser blames the mendicants for his non-residency in Litoměřice (see below, p. 210)
Conrad Waldhauser made an immediate impact in Prague, especially in the parish of St. Gall where he was most active. The majority of the charges recorded in the “Apologia” stemmed from sermons he preached there. The Austrian canon held no benefice at the St. Gall parish church, but he regularly delivered German sermons to this community for more than a year after arriving in Prague. Parish priests normally delivered their sermons within parish churches. Waldhauser, however, preached in the even more public space of the market square outside the church. The large church, he explained without modesty, simply could not accommodate the crowds thronging to his sermons. There, next to the church and not far from the great market hall of St. Gall, the talented orator addressed the crowds of people.

The exact location from which he spoke is not clear, but he referred several times in the “Apologia” to a pulpit that may have been a semi-permanent fixture of the square. The market at St. Gall attracted many people from outside the parish. Since

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43 In at least one place Waldhauser refers to himself as “ad sanctum Gallum praedicator” (Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řadu svatého Augustina,” 14 no. 1), although elsewhere he less precisely describes himself as as having preached “juxta S. Galli ecclesiam” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 22]); this position may or may not have existed as a recognized benefice that Waldhauser held in addition to that of parish priest in Litoměřice. It was common for parish priests to hire a preacher informally even when no endowed benefice existed, and I suspect this to have been the case at St. Gall as well. The next known preacher associated with St. Gall does not appear until 1373 (DMP 5.210; cf. SA 1.51-52) Identified as “John,” he may be identical with John of Mies (Stríbro) who appears as the “predicator theotonico rum” of St. Gall at the 1380 visitation (Rudolf Schreiber, “Johann von Mies: Ein vorhussitischer Prediger der Prager Deutschen,” in Heimat und Volk: Forschungsbeiträge zur sudetendeutschen Geschichte, ed. Anton Ernstberger (Brno, 1937), 159-94. The first conclusive evidence of a St. Gall benefice for a preacher appears in 1392, when the parish priest, Leonard, established a new altar at St. Gall with an associated position for a preacher. He assigned the newly endowed living to the same preacher whom he had been paying personally (“pro nunc praedicator meus”) (LE 4.371-372 no. 518; SUA AZK 1250).

44 “Ego Conradus in Walthausen, professus ordinis sancti Augustini canoniconrum regularium, in Lûthmericz Pragensis dioecesis plebanus, verbum dei in civitate Pragensi quasi per annum continuum predicassem iuxta sancti Galli ecclesiam in foro coram omni populo quia in ecclesia, licet magna, locum habere non potui” (“Apologia” [KNM XIII E 10, f. 2v; cf. Höfler, 22]).

45 Waldhauser refers repeatedly to preaching “in ambone”; in some cases this may be more a description of the status of his speech (cf. “ex cathedra”) than its location (e.g., “Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, 164
Waldhauser’s preaching was not limited exclusively to Sundays and feast days, market-goers likely witnessed some of his sermons, whether or not they came to St. Gall for that purpose. Some of his hearers sat; others stood; still others undoubtedly milled about or watched as they passed by; even Jewish men and women occasionally paused to listen—at least until overzealous Christian hearers drove them away.\(^{46}\) The windows of the well-built houses overlooking the square also provided convenient perches for interested hearers. It was quite possibly one of these windows from which the empress once leaned out to hear Waldhauser preach.\(^{47}\) Margaret, whose father John Steglitz owned one of the market houses at this time, could have seen the assembled crowds from her window over the square.\(^{48}\) As prominent parishioners of St. Gall, both John and Margaret almost certainly heard some of the German sermons of the dynamic and controversial new preacher from Austria.

Waldhauser’s association with St. Gall established his position within the wealthy, predominately German-speaking Old Town parish. The flourishing St. Gall parishioners had shaped the geography of their parish with their gifts, bequests, and—eventually, through burial—even their bodies. St. Gall could boast an impressive church, a series of new altars, and (inevitably) a regular stream of burials for its churchyard.

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\(^{46}\) On the Jews sitting and standing among the Christian listeners, and Waldhauser’s chagrin at those who chased them away, see “Apologia” (Höfler, 28). Other references to the sitting listeners include Höfler, 29.

\(^{47}\) “Qui cum ad suam [concionem] inter ceteras multitudines quasi infinitas Pragensi in studio vidisset adesse imperatricem, collum suum protendentem per unam fenestram cuiusdam domus, ita exorsus fuit suum sermonem cum firmata versa facie contra faciem predicte imperatricis in communi sic verba sua applicabat correctoria, sed cum voce non aspera sed blanda: ‘Czwar, czwar, sy ist nicht fichs an den Grad, dy das Fenster zu vil am holse hat’” (Sedláčk, \textit{M. Jan Hus}, 1*).

\(^{48}\) See chapter 2, p. 81, 87.
Many of the local inhabitants, however, had also developed close relationships with a particular mendicant communities, who preached to and confessed Prague’s people regardless of parish. As their wills testified, some St. Gall parishioners left money to the Franciscans or the Augustinians. Others went so far as to be buried among the surrounding friars. And the friars literally surrounded the parish of St. Gall, as Waldhauser would immediately have noticed (see Map 3.2). None fell within the boundaries of the parish itself, but several were nearby. The Franciscans of St. James lay just to the northeast in Old Town, the Carmelites just across the wall in New Town. The house of Dominican nuns (whom Waldhauser repeatedly criticized) sat in western Old Town, with the Dominican friary nearby (see Map 3.1).

Prague, like most cities of its stature, in fact had a full complement of mendicant communities. All had been there long before Waldhauser’s arrival. Many had already sunk century-deep roots. Their houses and their activities had become integral parts of the urban culture, if sometimes controversial ones. By the middle of the thirteenth century, Old Town contained two well-established Franciscan houses (St. James and St. Francis) and one Dominican house (St. Clement). Both orders also provided pastoral care to affiliated women’s houses in Old Town: the Poor Clares at the house that Agnes of Prague built, and the Dominican nuns at St. Anne and St. Lawrence. The Augustinian friars arrived in Prague a half-century later, but by the 1360s had become a powerful institution in Prague’s Lesser Town. In 1354 they were also entrusted with spiritual oversight of the newly established house of Augustinian sisters in New Town, St. Catherine. In 1347 Charles IV, the founder of that community, had also established a
Map 3.1: Mendicant Communities in Prague
New Town house of Carmelite friars—the last of the four mendicant orders considered canonical after 1274, when the Second Council of Lyon had reined in the sprawling growth of new begging orders. The Carmelite church of St. Mary of the Snows rose (but was never finished) along with the rest of New Town over the following decades. The Servites, an order that had managed to avoid dissolution despite the Second Council of Lyon, likewise gained a foothold in New Town (in 1360) through the activity of Charles IV.

By the time of Waldhauser’s entry to Prague in the middle years of Charles IV’s reign, the city’s mendicant houses had become powerful local institutions. This was especially true for the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians, and increasingly so for the Carmelites. In pursuit of their own interests, they might variously ally themselves with, or oppose themselves to, any of the other powers of the city—city councilors, secular priests, royal officials, and (in the case of Prague) the archbishop and the emperor. The friars of Prague often enjoyed the patronage of the emperor, who, for

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49 The relevant conciliar decree, *Religionum diversitatem*, explicitly invoked the poorly enforced prohibition of new orders by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. The Franciscans and Dominicans were approved, the Carmelites and Augustinian friars were allowed to continue provisionally, and all other mendicant orders, even those with explicit papal approval, were suppressed or phased out. (A few nevertheless managed to survive in one form or another). This conciliar ruling represented a victory for the secular opponents of the friars, but also for the more established mendicant orders. Indeed, Humbert of Romans, the master general of the Dominicans, had suggested to pope Gregory X before the council that the multiplication of mendicant orders should be checked. (Richard W. Emery, “The Second Council of Lyons and the Mendicant Orders,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 39 (1953): 257-71).


example, chose a Dominican as his personal confessor. As members of international orders with powerful protectors throughout Europe, they could also harness external forces to accomplish their local goals.

The needs of their international orders also determined some of the friars’ local activities. For example, the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians in Prague all administered important regional studia; all three gained the status of studia generalia before or immediately after the 1348 foundation of the university at Prague. Each educated its own brothers, sent from throughout the province to study theology with some of the order’s most learned members. The impact of these educational centers extended beyond the orders themselves, however. Without the three pre-existing mendicant studia, the university established on paper by Charles IV in 1348 could hardly have come into existence: the theology faculty’s first five professors were all mendicants from these studia.


53 Prague gained a fourth mendicant studium generale in 1379, when the general chapter of the Carmelites granted St. Mary of the Snows that designation. The Cistercian order also authorized a Prague studium generale shortly after the foundation of the university, but it seems only to have come into being after the emperor provided them with the Old Town property to house it. On all of these studia, see Kadlec, Jaroslav. “Řeholní generální studia při Karlově universitě v době předhusitské” (The orders’ studia generalia at Charles University in pre-Hussite times), Acta universitas Carolinae. Historia universitatis Carolinae Pragensis 7 (1966): 63-65; 79-80; 82-83; 92-93. On the late medieval proliferation of Franciscan studia generalia, the variation between different studia of that rank, and the tendency to associate them with the theology faculties of new universities, see Bert Roest, A History of Franciscan Education (c. 1210-1517), Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance 11 (Leiden, 2000), 27-36.

54 Peter Moraw, “Die Universität Prag im Mittelalter: Grundzüge ihrer Geschichte im europäischen Zusammenhang,” in Die Universität zu Prag, ed. Richard W. Eichler, Schriften der Sudentendeutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste 7 (Munich,1986), 35; see now his more recent article, in which he advances the thesis (one of sixteen into which the article is divided) that the Prague university did not begin to function effectively until ten or twelve years after its nominal foundation, and was only capable of functioning fully around 1370 (“Die Prager Universitäten des Mittelalters im europäischen Zusammenhang,” Schriften der Sudetendeutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste 20 (1999): 110-111). František Šmahel likewise stresses the importance of the mendicants for theology at the early university, but otherwise interprets the evidence for the early years of
A small number of friars were also active as inquisitors, at first appointed by the Prague bishop and, since 1318, by the pope. The power to seek and prosecute heretics made this handful of Franciscan and Dominican inquisitors controversial figures in Prague. One had been partly responsible for initiating proceedings against Prague’s bishop, John (IV) of Dražice (1301-43). These charges, also partly the result of the bishop’s personal rivalry with a certain Henry of Schönburg, led to the bishop’s 1318 deposition and eleven-year sojourn in Avignon before he finally was able to exonerate himself. Bishop John, who claimed that the Dominicans and Augustinians had played a role in the situation, did not forget his enemies when he returned. During the bishop’s long absence, the mendicant inquisitors clashed with Prague’s secular priests and city council. At one point the Dominican inquisitor, Colda of Koldic, placed the city under an interdict that the secular clergy refused to honor. Nor did later mendicant inquisitors find much favor in Prague or Bohemia. In 1341, a visiting Dominican inquisitor was

55 On the appointment of the papal inquisitors in 1318, see Alexander Patschovsky, Die Anfänge einer ständigen Inquisition in Böhmen: Ein Prager Inquisitoren-Handbuch aus der ersten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts (Berlin, 1975), 191-93 no. 109. The feud between John of Dražice and Henry of Schönburg involved the bishop’s opposition to Henry’s elevation to Provost of Litoměrice. Henry seems to have been responsible for the original charge that Bishop John was guilty of simony and supporting heretics. The second charge related to Bishop John’s support for a certain doctor, Richardin of Pavia, whose book had been declared heretical by a Franciscan inquisitor (whom the bishop himself had appointed). The bishop had also made enemies among the Bohemian nobles through his powers to strengthen the Prague episcopacy (Peter of Zittau, Chronicon Aulae Regiae [Kronika zbraslavská], in FRB 4, ed. Josef Emmer [Prague, 1884], 248; Hledíková, Biskup Jan IV. z Dražic, 17-39).

56 Specifically, the bishop claimed that the Dominicans and Augustinians had led the attack on Richardin, the accused heretic whom he had allegedly supported (Patschovsky, Die Anfänge einer ständigen Inquisition, 15-18, 30-38, 80-82 no. 1, 82-89 no. 2, 185-90 no. 104; Hledíková, Biskup Jan IV. z Dražic, 78-98).

57 Patschovsky, Die Anfänge einer ständigen Inquisition, 46-55; Tomáš Černušák, “Vznik provincie a její rozvoj do husitských válek” (The foundation of the province and its development until the Hussite wars), in Černušák, Augustin Prokop, and Damián Němec, Historie dominikánů v českých zemích (History of the Dominicans in Bohemian Lands), (Prague, 2001), 42-43.
murdered while staying with the Dominicans at St. Clement in Old Town. About a decade later, another Dominican inquisitor died after being injured in an attack.58

As masters at their various *studia*, Prague mendicants dominated the theology faculty of the early Prague university. As papal inquisitors, they prosecuted heretics throughout Bohemia. The latter role in particular stoked antimendicant sentiments, sometimes with violent results. Yet the most bitter controversy surrounding the mendicants’ place in Prague inevitably arose from their more conventional activities: preaching, hearing confession, and burying the dead. Each of these involved them in the daily life of many of Prague’s citizens. The resulting donations and perpetual rents had brought the friars a long way from their origins as property-eschewing beggars. A house like St. Thomas in Lesser Town owned rents on numerous local and regional properties, endowing the community with considerable economic power and financial control over a network of property.59 At the same time, the begging friars continued to beg. In the streets, churches, and houses, as pastors, property-owners, and beggars, the friars were ubiquitous features of the topography of fourteenth-century Prague. There, on a daily basis, they vied with secular priests for control over urban space—and over the lay people who inhabited that space.

By the time Conrad Waldhauser had begun preaching at St. Gall, in other words, the friars already had a long history of activity in the city. Some of it had created tension and periodic controversy with the parish clergy. The most notorious episode had


59 The economic situation of the house of Augustinian friars at St. Thomas is unusually well documented. Many of its fourteenth-century charters were copied into a single book that survives, and has now been edited in Kadlec, *Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas*. 
occurred nearly thirty years before. Like many such incidents throughout Europe, it involved a dispute over the burial of lay people at mendicant houses. More specifically, it involved the portion of the accompanying payments that the friars were obligated to pay to the lay person’s parish church to offset the parish’s loss. Already in 1300, Pope Boniface VIII had tried to lay to rest this and other controversies surrounding mendicant pastoral care. His *Super cathedram* stipulated (among other things) that one-quarter of the burial payments received by a friary must be returned to the parish church.\footnote{According to *Super cathedram*, friars might preach in public spaces or within their own churches, but not at the same time as the local secular clergy. A friar could only preach in a parish church with the invitation of the parish priest or authorization of a bishop or superior secular cleric. Mendicants were also allowed to hear confession, but only with a license from the local bishop. The friars could furthermore continue to bury lay people in their houses or cemeteries, so long as they turned over one-quarter of the associated income to the parish to which the person belonged (Clem. 3.7.2, in *Corpus iuris canonici*, ed. Emil Friedberg, 2 vols. [Leipzig, 1879-81], 1.1161-64).}

Boniface’s solution pleased no one completely, and over the subsequent decades *Super cathedram* was revoked, reinstated (at the Council of Vienne, 1311-12), and repeatedly challenged.\footnote{For a detailed account, see Lippens, “Le droit nouveau des mendiants,” 241-53.} Prague’s mendicants refused to abide by this ruling, arguing that the bull had been developed for Italian circumstances and therefore did not apply to the different customs of Bohemia.\footnote{The argument is summarized by the chronicler Peter of Zittau: “Papalis illa constitucio nostros ordines in Boemia non tangit, eo quod non sit idem fructus nec usus funeralium in regno Boemio, qui habetur in partibus Lombardie” (*Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, FRB 4.321). It is not clear, however, whether or precisely how the payments associated burial in Bohemia may have varied from those in Lombardy.}

The disagreement over burial duties persisted for decades, both in Prague and elsewhere in Europe. It took a local spark, however, to ignite violent conflict over the issue. For the Prague incident of 1334, that spark came from Bishop John of Dražice. The bishop had taken part in the Council of Vienne. Upon his return, he had pursued the full application of *Super cathedram* (and the council’s other reforming bulls) in
Bohemia. He even went so far as to offer a forty-day indulgence to all people choosing to be buried at their parish church—and not, in other words, at a mendicant house. If the mendicants enjoyed some respite during the bishop’s long sojourn in Avignon, after 1329 they felt the full force of an old enemy’s pent-up animosity. Once again he tried to enforce Super cathedram. When Prague’s friars resisted, he enlisted the support of Pope John XXII, whose November 1333 bull once again ordered Super cathedram to be enforced.

Several months later, the controversy still unsettled, Prague’s parish priests and their lay supporters gathered together on a summer Sunday to enact the pope’s ruling. They had chosen for their ceremony a prominent Prague landmark, one of the largest and most important parish churches in Prague's Old Town: the church of St. Nicholas overlooking the poultry market that lay just to the north of Old Town Square. The crowds also occupied the nearby church of St. Mary and perhaps the market square and street between the two. Suddenly all lights were extinguished and deputed priests solemnly pronounced the excommunication of Dominican, Franciscan, and Augustinian

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65 For the church of St. Nicholas, see Dobroslav Libal and Jan Muk, *Staré město pražské* [Prague Old Town], 88; František Ekert, *Posvátná místa král. hl. města Prahy* [Sacred places of the royal capital city of Prague], 352-62. The priests and their followers "ad ecclesiam sancte Marie in Lacu et sancti Nycolai in Foro pullorum convenirent in unum" (Peter of Zittau, *Chronica Aulae Regiae*, FRB 4.320-321). The church of St. Mary before Týn, another of Old Town’s most important, became Prague’s largest parish church after its gothic reconstruction, which began before 1339 and lasted throughout the second half of the fourteenth century (Dobroslav Libal, "Umění gotické: Architektura" (Gothic art: architecture), in *Praha středověká: čtvero knih o Praze*, ed. Emanuel Poche, [Prague, 1983]) 288-93; Libal and Muk, *Staré město pražské*, 158-63.)
friars for failure to obey previous papal rulings on the issue. All contact with the intransigent friars was forbidden.

Prague's mendicants and their local supporters, however, had no intention to submit meekly. Having received advance word of the gathering, they too arrived at the two churches with a great crowd of lay followers. Some began to heckle the priests reading the excommunication, shouting that the friars, not the priests, held Prague’s moral high ground. A few friars pushed their way through the crowd and seized from the priests' hands the papal document at the center of the hubbub. This act touched off a powder keg of barely restrained animosity. Great crowds, some favoring the priests and some the friars, began grabbing and throwing stones. Soon knives appeared in the mêlée, followed by swords and clubs. Friars and priests alike were struck, pummeled, and even bloodied. As the danger increased, the priests and friars began to slink away one by one. The Cistercian abbot who witnessed and later recorded the event identified no heroes or martyrs that day. Instead he wryly invoked the experience of Stephen the protomartyr as a foil to the occasion: at this stoning no one saw the heavens opened above—instead, all sacred gazes were firmly directed at the ground, as heads were covered in fear and ignominious escapes effected.66

66 “Multi visi sunt karakterem tegere in capite et exire de templo, ut se absconderent a calore tante furie, et ne cum protomartyre Stephano lapidibus obruerentur inviti. Non enim celos apertos videbant, nam oculos suos statuerunt declinare in terram multo amplius, ut conservarent capita, quam viderent ad celos” (Peter of Zittau, Chronica Aulae Regiae, FRB 4.321). The critical Cistercian abbot of the nearby monastery of Zbraslav ended his long account of the event with a poetic conclusion praising the monastic life above that of mendicants or secular priests:

Rem non dico bonam   talem fore, quando coronam
Abscondit clerus,   nec amor poterit fore verus
Illorum fratum,   si qui vestigia patrum
Nolunt sancta sequi,   sed sicut equi minus equi
Vadunt elati,   qui sunt ad bella parati
Verbis et factis,   que temporibus retroactis
Non sunt audita.   Magis hoc valet, ut redimita
This “battle of the clergy,” according to the same chronicler, became the talk of the town: “wherever two or three were gathered, they spoke of nothing else except the battle of the clergy that they had witnessed.” Nor did the street violence release the tension, which continued to build for several more months. Friars and secular clergy excommunicated one another. The bishop ordered the people of his diocese not to consort with or give alms to the mendicants. Such dramatic tactics threatened to reinforce the divisions, already evident in the June violence, between loyal parishioners and the lay followers of the friars. The stalemate only ended after the intervention of Charles, then the young Margrave of Moravia who had only recently returned to Bohemia. Dragged to the negotiating table, the respective leaders each offered concessions. (Bishop John of Dražice represented the secular priests and his old nemesis, Henry of Schönburg, represented the friars). Yet even with Charles’s application of pressure, the squabbling dragged on. Final resolution only came several years later in 1341, when the bishop reconciled with the last hold-outs, the Augustinians of St. Thomas.

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67 Peter of Zittau, Chronicon Aulae Regiae, FRB 4.321: “ubi duo vel tres congregati fuerunt, nil locuntur aliud, nisi de cleri prelio, quod viderunt.” Note, once again, the abbot’s ironic scriptural allusion, to Matthew 18.20: “ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo ibi sum in medio eorum” (Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem, ed. Fischer).

68 The central issue of whether or not the friars were obligated to pay one-quarter of any burial fees to the appropriate parish remained unresolved even after the initial concessions. Both sides agreed, however, to abide by a future papal decision—which, not surprisingly, upheld Super cathedram (Peter of Zittau, Chronicon Aulae Regiae, FRB 4.321; Kadlec, Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas in Prag, 38-39; 223-25 no. 71). The Augustinians continued to hold out, though: “Nam licet ceteri fratres ordinum mendicancium iuxta eandem constitucionem [Super cathedram] licenciam habeant predicta omnia et singula faciendi, memorati tamen fratres heremitani contempta constitucione predicta nostraque licencia minime expetita, omnium plebezanorum nobis et vobis ut predictur subjiciortum temeritate propria passim et indiferenter confessiones audire presumunt ipsosque in prejudicium parochialium ecclesiariun, si aput...
Decades later, when Conrad Waldhauser moved from Vienna to Prague, he entered a city with firmly entrenched mendicant communities and a certain history of conflict between them and the parish priests. When relations were at their worst, some of the lay population even got involved by siding with one group or another. This was not so unusual for a late medieval city. In each, parish priests and mendicant friars shared space and pursued overlapping missions. The result was endemic tension that periodically broke out into open controversy. Yet the effect of the numerous recorded conflicts involving friars in late medieval cities should not overestimated. Peaceful, even friendly relations between mendicant friars and their neighbors—including many of their clerical neighbors—were in fact the norm. St. Gall’s parishioners were hardly the only ones to patronize both their parish churches and nearby mendicant houses. Even some secular priests preferred to confess to friars.69 Parish priests and friars rubbed shoulders daily in the streets of Prague. We should not imagine that they invariably glowered at one another.

3.3 Conrad Waldhauser and the Antimendicant Tradition

When Conrad Waldhauser arrived in Prague, a generation had passed since the stone-throwing street battle of 1334. Bishop John of Dražice, that lightning rod of

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mendicant animosity, had been in his grave for two decades. Of the principal actors in the controversy, only Charles IV—then the young peacemaker—remained. Since that time, the emperor had shaped Prague’s sacred topography by establishing and supporting a wide range of religious communities, including mendicant houses. There is no reason to believe that he expected the advent of his new protégé from Austria to disturb the peace within Prague. Yet that is precisely what occurred.

The controversy began almost immediately after Waldhauser began delivering sermons at St. Gall. The preacher’s opening volley consisted of charges of simony against the Dominican nuns of Old Town. His concern with simony was hardly novel. Since the time of the eleventh-century reforms associated with the Investiture Contest, simony, usury, and clerical concubinage had been favorite targets of nearly all medieval reformers, prelates and preachers alike. Simony, the buying or selling of ecclesiastical offices or services, especially attracted criticism. It was an easy charge to make. Few aspects of medieval religion—including entry into a religious order and burial by a parish priest, to name just two—did not at least potentially carry the taint of simony. Those even moderately well-versed in canon law (as Waldhauser’s “Apologia” shows him to have been) also knew simony as the first topic treated both by Gratian’s *Decretum* and the standard collection of subsequent decretals. An entire legal tradition had developed to define precisely which acts constituted simony.

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70 But compare Jaroslav Kadlec, *Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas in Prag*, 39-40, for whom these decades seem to pass much more quickly: “Kaum waren diese Auseinandersetzungen einigermaßen beigeglegt, als eine andere Schwierigkeit auftauchte, diesmal von einer Seite, von der man dies am wenigsten erwartet hätte.”

It is no surprise, then, that a reforming preacher like Waldhauser targeted simony. Indeed, when still a preacher at Vienna in 1362 he had written to the Bishop of Passau to warn him generally against simony, and specifically about permitting the simoniacal purchase of ecclesiastical office.\textsuperscript{72} In Waldhauser’s self-presentation, his conflict with the mendicants of Prague was simply a by-product of his anti-simony preaching: he had not “aim[ed] the bow of God’s word” at the mendicants in particular, but rather targeted any and all who supported and fomented the sin of simony.\textsuperscript{73} According to him, this general attack on simony elicited the violent response of the friars only because they were particularly implicated in this sin. There are good reasons to doubt this account. Many aspects of the “Apologia” suggest, to the contrary, that Waldhauser construed his entire ministry as directly or indirectly opposed to the friars.

First of all, the tone and rhetoric of Waldhauser’s “Apologia” demonstrate his participation in the active tradition of antimendicant criticism in fourteenth-century Central Europe. Waldhauser almost certainly left Vienna already a bitter enemy of the friars, well-versed in the antimendicant literature of his and earlier ages. The arguments and language of the “Apologia” fit perfectly into this literature, despite the fact that its extensive use of antimendicant commonplaces has so far gone unnoticed. I will argue here that Conrad Waldhauser’s application of this tradition unveils him as a representative of a strong fourteenth-century revival of outspoken opposition to the friars throughout Europe—and not, as he claimed, a simple reformer who found himself the

\textsuperscript{72} Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řadu svatého Augustina,” 15-17 no. 2.

\textsuperscript{73} “Cum igitur arcum verbi dei fortius non contra eosdem sed in genere contra fautores et fatores talis pravitatis intenderem...” (“Apologia” [KNM XIII E 10, f. 2v; cf. Höfler, 23])
accidental opponent of intransigent Prague friars. In order to make this argument, a brief review of the history of organized opposition to mendicant friars is in order.

The entire antimendicant tradition in Europe ultimately flowed from thirteenth-century Paris and especially the works of William of St. Amour. The best known of these works, *De periculis novissorum temporum* (1256), emerged from the local conflict between friars and secular clergy at the University of Paris. Both the Franciscans and Dominicans had established houses of studies at Paris within a few years of their establishment as orders. By mid-century, the increasingly powerful mendicants held a majority of the fixed number of chairs within the theology faculty. The resulting disgruntlement of secular masters of theology was exacerbated by a series of local events specific to the university and city of Paris. In particular, the friars’ refusal to honor a university strike in 1253 unleashed a hurricane of antimendicant abuse. Despite the best efforts of a series of popes (each with his own pro- or antimendicant predilection), the University of Paris controversy was resolved only in 1257, when a ban on mendicant masters at the university was lifted.

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74 On the composition and redactions of this treatise, see Dufeil, *Guillaume de Saint-Amour*, 212-39. For a list of the works of William of St. Amour, see Palémon Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, vol. 1, Études de philosophie médiévale 17 (Paris, 1933), 343-46. The treatise itself was printed along with most of his other works at Constance in 1632: Guillaume de Saint-Amour, *Opera omnia* (1632; reprint, Hildesheim, 1997), 17-72.


76 Penn R. Szittya, who prefers the more precise term “antifrateral” to the more common “antimendicant,” identifies this event as the “terminus a quo of the antifrateral tradition” (*The Antifrational Tradition in Medieval Literature* [Princeton, 1986], 11).

Local conditions at Paris, including control of a handful of contested theology chairs, had sparked these conflagrations.\footnote{Szitty makes a similar case for the reason that antimendicant controversy first developed at Paris: “Paris, to begin with, had the most eminent spokesmen for the secular clergy in the masters at the University of Paris, particularly in the Faculty of Theology. But Paris also had a local arena with its own strictly local issues in which the friars and secular clergy were ripe for a fight: the university” (The Antifraternal Tradition, 12).} Yet the involvement of popes (and other powerful rulers, both ecclesiastical and secular) inevitably widened the debate. Some of the papal responses included strictures on the basic activities of all friars, not just those mendicant brothers involved in teaching theology at the Paris university. Similarly, the champions of the Paris secular masters did not limit themselves to a critique of the role that Dominicans and Franciscans played within the theology faculty. Their treatises and accusations attacked the very legitimacy of the mendicant form of religious life. Leading mendicants, including the Franciscan Bonaventure and the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, leant their weight to a vigorous mendicant defense. It is for this reason that the participants in these local Paris skirmishes remained so important for subsequent generations of mendicants and seculars. They had established the battle lines, forged the weapons later wielded by countless friars and secular priests across Europe.

No individual contributed more to the arsenal of antimendicant invective than William of St. Amour, the secular theology master whose unbending opposition to the friars was not diminished by the Paris controversy’s official resolution. Scriptural exegesis dominated his De periculis novissorum temporum and other antimendicant works, which invoked the tradition of Antichrist to condemn (always indirectly) the orders of friars.\footnote{For the nature and influence of William of St. Amour’s works, see especially the account in Szitty, The Antifraternal Tradition, 11-61. See also James Doyne Dawson, “William of Saint-Amour and the Apostolic Tradition,” Mediaeval Studies 40 (1978): 223-38. In part William of St. Amour was}
Biblical figures in particular that foreshadowed and warned against the pernicious influence of the friars: Pharisees, false apostles, and antichrists. Closely associated with the latter two groups were the penetrantes domos of 2 Timothy 3—the falsely pious men who in the last days would enter into houses and lead astray women burdened with sin and guided by various lusts.80 To William of St. Amour, the friars were the modern hypocrites foretold by these figures of Scriptures. All four types and the associated Biblical passages reappear regularly in the antimendicant literature of subsequent centuries. The phrase penetrantes domos in particular “becomes a tag for the friars for the next two hundred years.”81 The widespread adoption of these eschatologically charged terms illustrate how William of St. Amour, more than any other single figure, provided the stock vocabulary for the numerous local debates between mendicants and seculars that emerged over subsequent generations.

Once unbottled, the antimendicant genie could not be contained.82 Local conflicts between mendicants and seculars continued, while a series of university and church leaders attacked the mendicants’ privileges and legitimacy through treatises and responding to the condemned Liber introductorius ad evangelium aeternum of the fanatical Franciscan, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, with its eschatological claims derived from Joachim of Fiore (Szittya, The Antifraternal Tradition, 15-31; Marjorie Reeves, The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism, 2d ed. [Notre Dame, IN, 1993], 59-70, 187-90.

80 “...ex his enim sunt qui penetrant domos et captivas ducunt mulierculas oneratas peccatis quae ducuntur variis desideriis” (2 Timothy 3.6, Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem, ed. Bonifatio Fischer et al., 4d ed., [Stuttgart, 1994]).

81 Szittya, The Antifraternal Tradition, 32-61, at 58.

82 Historians and theologians have traced in great detail both the course of the entire debate and the implications for theories of papal rule, for ecclesiology more generally, and even for medieval political theory. For this, see esp. Yves M.-J. Congar, “Aspects ecclésiologiques de la querelle entre mendiants et séculiers dans la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle et le début du XIVe,” Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age 36 (1962): 35-151; Jürgen Miethke, “Die Rolle der Bettelorden im Umbruch der politischen Theorie an der Wende zum 14. Jahrhundert” (see above, n. 32); Miethke, “Politische Theorie und die »Mentalität« der Bettelorden,” in Mentalitäten im Mittelalter: Methodische und inhaltliche Probleme, ed. František Graus (Sigmaringen, 1987), 157-76.
legal cases. Boniface VIII’s *Super cathedram* (1300), as I have already mentioned, was just one of several papal attempts to end the bickering. The conflict continued to simmer throughout the early fourteenth century, until a new series of outspoken antimendicant leaders raised the temperature once again. Most notable was Archbishop Richard FitzRalph (d. 1360) around the middle of the fourteenth-century, followed later in England by John Wyclif (d. 1384). Once again the treatises flew back and forth, with the mendicant position represented by people like the Dominican Bartholomew of Bolsenheim (d. 1362) and the Augustinian friar Geoffrey Hardeby (d. ca. 1385). At the same time in Central Europe, the Regensburg priest Conrad of Megenberg (d. 1374), now known best for his works on the natural world, also contributed to the stock of antimendicant literature.

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83 One of the better-known antimendicants of the early fourteenth century was Jean de Pouilly (fl. c. 1307-21), a Paris theology master (Lippens, “Le droit nouveau des mendians,” 253-62; Joseph Koch, “Der Prozess gegen den Magister Johannes de Polliaco und seine Vorgeschichte [1312-1321],” *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 5 [1933]: 391-422).


This literature of the middle and later fourteenth-century was based upon the
treatises produced in the thirteenth-century Paris debates. Penn Szittya has even been
able to trace the particular means by which William of St. Amour’s antimendicant ideas
were disseminated in fourteenth-century England. In part through manuscript
miscellanies of antimendicant treatises and even an “antifraternal encyclopedia,” William
of St. Amour’s arguments influenced FitzRalph, Wyclif, and several authors of
vernacular English literature.87 No comparable study has ever been attempted for Central
Europe.88 For this reason, the mechanisms by which the ideas of William of St. Amour
spread in this region remain unclear. There is no doubt, however, of his influence. Seven
surviving fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts of his *De periculis novissorum
temporum* in the National Library of the Czech Republic indicate, at the very least,
knowledge of his antimendicant work in the area.89 Matthias of Janov (d. 1394), the
controversial Prague priest who styled himself a successor to Waldhauser and especially
Mílič of Kroměříž, even reproduced the entire text of William of St. Amour’s treatise
within his own *Regulae veteris et novi testamenti* (in a section devoted to Antichrist).90

Much more material remains to be uncovered and analyzed before a full picture
can be drawn for the antimendicant tradition in Central Europe.91 We can be certain,

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87 Szittya, *The Antifraternal Tradition*.

88 Katherine Walsh, however, has made an important start with her study of FitzRalph’s influence
among Lollards and Hussites: “Die Rezeption der Schriften des Richard Fitzralph (Armachanus) im
Miethke (Munich, 1992), 237-53.

89 Prague NK I G 35; III A 19; III D 16; V D 10; VIII A 25; XII F 15b; XIII D 8.

90 RVNT 3.252-314; Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova: Jeho život, spisy a učení* (Master Matthias of

91 Hermann Meyer long ago noticed the confluence of antimendicant literature and pointed to
some of the central figures. Referring to the *Lacrima ecclesiae* of Conrad of Megenberg (see below, p.185),
though, that Conrad Waldhauser knew and participated in it. First of all, he had personal contact with one or more of the region’s leading enemies of the friars. Several months after arriving in Prague, for instance, Waldhauser received letters from Adalbert Rankonis of Ježov (Ericinium) (d. 1388), a Paris master from Bohemia then embroiled in controversy with mendicants at the university of Paris. There is also good reason to suspect that he knew Conrad of Megenberg (1309-1374), the Regensburg cathedral canon who was the most outspoken Central European mendicant critic of the time. The two


Adalbert had spent time at Oxford, probably in 1356-57, where he had encountered Richard FitzRalph and his opposition to the friars. It was probably at that time that Adalbert obtained the manuscript of FitzRalph’s antimendicant work, De pauperie salvatoris, that he later brought with him to Prague (now Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 1430). Some believe this heavily corrected manuscript, the earliest copy of this work to survive, to be an autograph (Walsh, “Die Rezeption der Schriften des Richard Fitzralph,” 249-50; Kadlec, Leben und Schriften des Prager Magisters Adalbert Rankonis de Ericicinio, 47-48). Adalbert’s 1365 (or 1364?) letter praised Waldhauser, of whom he had heard report, for his preaching against the “false prophets” and “Pharisees” in Prague—the traditional code words for mendicants. Adalbert wrote this letter anonymously rather than risk the ire of powerful mendicant enemies: “Vester devotus filius et amicus sincerrimus, occultus tamen propter metum Iudeorum et Phariseorum, manifestandus tamen, dum tempus venerit opportunum” (Kadlec, Leben und Schriften, 332-36 no. 25). His fears seem to have been well-grounded, for he explained in a subsequent letter (this time signed “A. R. de Er.”) that the first had fallen into the hands of his “enemies,” who had made his situation at the university very difficult; so difficult, in fact, that he had written a public letter criticizing Waldhauser. The second surviving letter, dated 10 December (1365?), accordingly apologized for and explained the difficult circumstances that occasioned the previous, negative letter. He singled out the Franciscans in particular as his enemies. (Kadlec, Leben und Schriften, 336-38 no. 26; cf. 47-48).

For Conrad of Megenberg, see above, n. 86. If the two did not ever meet in person, in Vienna for instance, Waldhauser probably became acquainted with the elder Conrad’s ideas and early works there. Conrad of Megenberg was rector of the school of St. Stephen in Vienna from 1342-48, and was fondly remembered there in later years (Weber, “Konrad von Megenberg,” 223-30). Waldhauser preached regularly in Vienna from perhaps 1349, and his connection with St. Stephen’s school has long been assumed (Loskot, Konrad Waldhauser, 33). Both also served Charles IV, Megenberg as a representative of the emperor to the pope (Weber, “Konrad von Megenberg,” 297) and Waldhauser as imperial chaplain and messenger, as his letter of protection from the archbishop of Prague indicated: “Cum honorabilis et religiosus vir, frater Conradus, plebanus ecclesiae beatae Virginis prope Letam curiam in Majori civitate Pragensi, ostensor praesentium, domini nostri imperatoris capellanus, devotus vir dilectus, in quibusdam secretis et magnis negotiis praefatum nostrum imperatorem concernentibus ad dominum nostrum vadat
were undoubtedly kindred spirits, at least in their staunch opposition to the mendicants. Indeed, two fifteenth-century manuscripts seem to identify Waldhauser as the author of Conrad of Megenberg’s (never edited) antimendicant treatise Lacrima ecclesiae.94 (This attribution has caused confusion for some modern scholars).95 This scribal error underscores the similar reputations of the two men. It may hint at even more: namely, Waldhauser’s possession of a copy of Conrad of Megenberg’s treatise.96

Waldhauser’s own application of the arguments and rhetoric of the antimendicant tradition provides the best evidence for the Austrian preacher’s previous familiarity with that tradition. Examples of this fill the “Apologia,” written after only one year in Prague. The ideas he expressed there were not new to him. And although it is not yet possible to trace with certainty the texts by which Waldhauser learned these antimendicant commonplaces, his enthusiastic embrace of the tradition can be easily demonstrated.

94 Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. 322, ff. 138-93: “Explicit lacrima ecclesie, collecta per d. Cunradum pie memorie quondam predicatorem Pragensem, tunc temporis existentem plebanum ad. b. Virginem in Leta curia etc. a. 1450; cuius anima requiescat in pace” (cited by František M. Bartoš, “Husitika a Bohemika několika knihoven německých a švýcarských” (Husitica and Bohemica in some German and Swiss libraries) [Prague, 1932] [first printed in Věstník královské české společnosti nauk 1 [1931],1-92], 32-33); Trier, Bibliothek des Priesterseminars, Cod. 81, ff. 121v-144v: “Lacrima ecclesie collecta per Conradum plebanum et predicatorem Pragensem” (cited by Meyer, “Lacrima ecclesiae,” 486-88). For the arguments for Conrad of Megenberg’s authorship, see Meyer, “Lacrima ecclesiae,” 486-88.

95 The normally impeccable Verfasserlexikon attributes the Lacrima ecclesiae to both authors within the space of forty pages: Georg Steer, “Konrad von Megenberg,” VL 5.222-34; Machilek, “Konrad von Waldhausen (Waldhauser),” VL 5.260-68. Machilek cites Bartoš, “Husitika a Bohemika,” 32f. as his only source, but seems not to have accepted that author’s final judgment: “Nevertheless, despite all the correspondences in date of origin and in ideas, the [Stuttgart] manuscript’s declaration for the authorship of Waldhauser is an error, [even though] the same wording is also found in another, Trier manuscript. Its author, however, is Conrad of Megenberg . . .” (33). Steer cites three manuscripts, but not the Stuttgart manuscript that Machilek cites.

96 This depends in part upon the interpretation of the unusual phrase, “collecta per d. Cunradum,” used to describe the “lacrima ecclesiae.” It may simply be a metaphorical way to attribute authorship to Conrad Waldhauser; it might, however, also indicate a different kind of relationship to the text—that of copyist or adapter, perhaps. So far as I know, the four manuscripts have never been compared to one another, so it is not known whether all four contain precisely the same text.

itinere. . . .” The letter is dated to 31 October, but without any indication of year (Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řadu svatého Augustina,” 22 no. 7).
Clearest of all is his application of the standard antimendicant Biblical texts and images. The exegetical innovations of William of St. Amour that formed the most fundamental conventions of subsequent antimendicant literature also appear. Repeatedly Waldhauser compared himself to the persecuted Christ, or to unappreciated prophets. His mendicant opponents, on the other hand, were the scribes, Pharisees, and false prophets of the New Testament.

To be sure, controversial medieval religious reformers, innovators, and zealots of all stripes almost inevitably adopted similar rhetorical positions, associating their own causes with that of Christ and depicting their opponents as the successors of the Pharisees. Yet in this context, the language carried more precise connotations. When Waldhauser lamented the times in which those who denounce the “seduction of the false prophets (pseudoprophetae)” are shouted down as disturbers of the peace, there is no doubt that he was referring to William of St. Amour’s “false prophets”—namely, the friars. Waldhauser applied the same term to the friars several times, once explicitly citing the apocalyptic Gospel passage that warns of false prophets who would come to seduce many people. In this case, the context was Waldhauser’s description of his sermon for the second Sunday in Advent—a sermon that occasioned several of the friars’ complaints against him recorded in the “Apologia.” In general, Waldhauser’s antimendicant invective carried little of the apocalyptic tone of William of St. Amour. He never referred to the friars as “antichristi,” for example. But preaching that day on the

97 “O quanta sunt adhuc individua huius maligne generationis, qui incircumcisci cordibus et auribus spiritui sancto resistant. Quicumque igitur aliquid de seduccione pseudoprophetarum loquitur, statim turbator pacis et a pessimis, licet vtique hoc dicendo non sit malus, pessimus appelatur” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 57r-57v]).

98 “… tunc surgent multi pseudoprophete et seducent multos,” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 45r; cf. Höfler, 22-23]; Matthew 24.11).
Gospel reading, a passage from Luke in which Christ describes the signs of the end times, Waldhauser delivered a message that would have made the thirteenth-century French priest proud.\footnote{Luke 3.7.} Signs of Christ’s “second advent” abounded on that second Sunday of Advent. There were the “lovers of themselves” of 2 Timothy 3, for instance.\footnote{“Apologia” (NK XIV G 17, f. 45v); for William of St. Amour’s use of this and other Biblical images, see Penn Szittya’s index of biblical references (The Antifraternal Tradition, 313-14).} Even more pointedly, Waldhauser warned against those who “penetrate houses” to deceive women—the penetrantes domos that William of St. Amour had made synonymous with the friars.\footnote{See above, p. 181; “Apologia” (Höfler, 23).}

Throughout the “Apologia,” Waldhauser repeatedly alluded to these Biblical counterparts of the friars: the false prophets, the penetrantes domos, and the Pharisees.\footnote{e.g., “Apologia” (NK XIV G 17, f. 58r): “...sed constat quod ipsis circueuntes in ciuitate uel villa sicut canes famen patientes nullam domum in qua se sperant aliquid accepturos penetrare obmittunt.”} Occasionally he hid behind the coded language to criticize the friars indirectly. He denied, for instance, having called members of religious orders foolish for their belief that the sanctity of their founding saints somehow applied to them as well. “I was merely discussing,” he claimed, “John the Baptist’s criticism of the Pharisees for glorying in their father, Abraham.”\footnote{Matthew 3.7-9.} The hidden message would have been perfectly clear to his listeners, including the mendicant listeners who later complained about it. Even his (presumably sanitized) written account of the sermon in question left no doubt that the Pharisees were to be understood as friars.\footnote{“Nullus religiosus debet sperare quod propterea salvetur quia institutor ordinis sui fuerit vir sanctus.” In this case, members of other religious orders are included as well; Waldhauser, as an

\[\text{Equation}\]

\[\text{Equation}\]
stronger. He associated his written defense against the mendicant charges to Christ’s exasperated response to the Pharisees’ demands for a sign. The Pharisees demanded that sign, he continued, because of their unbelief—just as the Glossa ordinaria explains.\

Similarly, Waldhauser likened the friars’ complaints that he was disturbing Prague’s peace to the voices of the Pharisees falsely accusing Christ before Pilate.

In his controversy with the Prague mendicants, Conrad Waldhauser consistently applied the rhetoric of the antimendicant tradition. Yet that rhetoric represented more to him than a convenient weapon to wield against local rivals. Waldhauser did not just talk like an embittered enemy of the friars; he was one. As he defended himself in the “Apologia”, he repeatedly trotted out the standard critiques: the friars were rich beggars who offered prayers in return for money, they were far too wealthy, ate exceedingly well, and owned more books than they need. They had fallen far short of the ideals upon which they were established. Nor did he limit his opposition to their failure to uphold their own standards. It is true that Waldhauser never directly called for the abolishment of the mendicant orders—such a public demand would have been nearly unprecedented even among the most virulent antimendicant critics. Instead, he advocated their complete reform. On the other hand, he hardly considered reform likely, or even feasible: “It is not

Augustinian canon, added that he did not himself hope to be saved by the merit of St. Augustine “sine propriis bonis” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 27]).

105 “Apologia” (Höfler, 25). The interlinear gloss to which he refers is for Mark 8.11; Höfler’s “cap. VII” is an erroneous reading.

106 “Apologia” (Höfler, 36)

107 “Apologia” (Höfler, 27, 39; NK XIV G 17, f. 55v). Waldhauser does not, however, repeat the complaint of FitzRalph, Wyclif, and others, that the friars’ monopoly of the book market kept much-needed books out of the hands of other university members (Walsh, “Die Rezeption der Schriften des Richard Fitzralph, 246).

108 “Apologia” (Höfler, 18, 19, 26-27).
that I would want their order to be abolished, but rather, for their benefit and for the benefit of many others, that the Lord, for whom all things that are humanly impossible are possible, should gently return them to the state of their original establishment."\textsuperscript{109} Reform of the mendicants, in other words, was not humanly possible. Waldhauser expected no thoroughgoing reform of the friars.

Similarly, Waldhauser denied having taught that the status of a member of a mendicant order was not a beneficial one.\textsuperscript{110} Quite the contrary, he retorted: “I said that the condition of members of good religious orders is the most perfect.”\textsuperscript{111} (Note that he did not write: “members of good mendicant religious orders). Parents who wanted their children to be saved, he advised, should therefore seek out an upright religious order, one that would not inevitably cause their children to transgress its rule. He compared the fallen religious orders to a leaky vessel. No one, he explained, would choose such a boat to cross the Danube River. Once again, however, Waldhauser seems to have despaired of finding a worthy religious community, certainly among the mendicants.\textsuperscript{112}

Even though he judiciously refrain from attacking directly the founding “viri antiqui” of the respective orders, Waldhauser in fact opposed the very core of the mendicant ideal.\textsuperscript{113} Christ, he repeatedly insisted in the “Apologia,” did not beg.

\textsuperscript{109} “Non quod velim optare quod ordo eorum deleatur, sed quod ipsi, ad proprium et multorum aliorum salutem, ad primitatem [sic] institutionis clementer a domino, cum quo omnia aput homines impossibilia sunt possibilissima, reducantur” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 61r; KNM XIII E 10, f.13r]).

\textsuperscript{110} “Primo quod status religiosorum mendicantium non esset salubris” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 21]).

\textsuperscript{111} “Respondeo quod in hoc plene mihi imposuerunt falsum, sed per contrarium dixi quod status bonorum religiosorum est perfectissimus” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 34]).

\textsuperscript{112} “Apologia” (NK XIV G 17, f. 52v).

\textsuperscript{113} Waldhauser admits having said, “quod jam non invenirentur ita reverendi viri antiqui in ordinibus sicut prius quia jam essent nimis crapulosi,” but insists that he had never used the complimentary “reverendi” to describe the original members of the mendicant orders (“Apologia” [Höfler, 18, 26-27]).
Therefore those who claimed to follow Christ by begging were deceived. He rehearsed at length the arguments against Christ’s absolute poverty and mendicancy. And was there not a group of Franciscans burned at the papal court, he taunted, for holding precisely the views defended by Prague Franciscans?114 Waldhauser’s extended discussion of the poverty of Christ, together with a (perhaps not altogether fair) allusion to the fate of a group of Spiritual Franciscans in 1318, underscored his rejection of one of the fundamental tenets of the mendicant orders: their spiritual commitment to begging.115 The Austrian canon in fact rejected not only the debased form of mendicant religion he claimed to perceive, but also the basic principles of the orders of friars. His well-developed expression of these views using the terminology of the antimendicant tradition demonstrates his place within that tradition already at the beginning of his Prague tenure. He almost certainly held these opinions and prejudices before Charles IV called him to Prague.

3.4. The Struggle for Urban Space

When Beneš Krabice of Weitmil glowingly summarized Waldhauser’s impact on Prague, he listed the central themes addressed throughout the Augustinian canon’s Prague career: women’s vain and over-elaborate clothing; usury; those who possessed things ‘in bad faith’; and especially those who were received into religious orders through

114 “Sed bene verum est quod, disputans de paupertate seu mendicitate Christi cum quibusdam fratribus in privato, cum dixissent Christum omnino pauperum fuisse nec quidquam proprio habuisse, respondi, hoc non dicatis, cum dicitur Christum loculus habuisse quia ut audivi fratres ordinis vestri qui hoc irrationabiliter tenebant et dicebant, fuerunt in curia cremati…” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 34-35]). Höfler’s text reproduces only a small part of the entire argument about the poverty of Christ (NK XIV G 17, f. 53r-56r).

115 On the fate of these Spiritual Franciscans, now see David Burr, The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis (University Park, PA, 2001), esp. 206.
At first appearance, only the last of these seems to be related to his struggle with the mendicants. Yet a close reading of the “Apologia” reveals how Waldhauser employed all of these themes—and others, like the misuse of holy relics—to limit the power and position of the friars within Prague’s sacred topography. Simony, with which six of the twenty-four articles deal, was just the most prominent of an array of public criticisms he leveled against his mendicant neighbors.

As his own testimony in the “Apologia” makes clear, Waldhauser conceived of the struggle as a zero-sum game. The mendicants’ loss was his gain and, conversely, his success depended upon the failure of the friars. Waldhauser considered his ministry to the parish of St. Gall (and to his other listeners) necessarily to involve opposition to the mendicant orders that had become, in his mind, so corrupt. He was fighting them for control of his parish and its inhabitants. Repeatedly he warned Prague’s lay people not to attend the mendicant churches, listen to their sermons, give them alms, or allow their children to enter mendicant orders. Through these sermons, Waldhauser sought and achieved an extraordinary measure of power over particular parts of Prague’s topography—especially the market square of St. Gall where he delivered his sermons.

Whereas the emperor manifested his power in part by shaping the physical topography of the city, Waldhauser sought to control some of the spaces delineated by Prague’s landmarks and to shape the behavior of the people who inhabited those spaces. In part

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116 “Inter multa alia bona, que hic vir fecit, unum magnum et memoria dignum fecit, ut mulieres civitatis Pragensis, que ante hec tempora magna et multum superba pepla nec non vestes superbissimis modis exquisitas deferebant, illa et illas deponerent et satis humili habitu omnibus diebus huius predicatoris et doctoris eximii uterentur. Hic eciam predicabat intrepide contra usurarios et alios male fide possessores et specialiter contra religiosas personas utriusque sexus, que per symoniacam pravitatem fuerant ad ordinem recepere. Unde cum multe huismodi persone hac sancta predicacione compuncte dispensacionem a sede apostolica peterent et ulterius suos pueros alii ad ordines cum pacto tradere detractarent, insurrexerunt omnes fratres ordinum mendicantium contra hunc et plurima convicia eidem intulerunt.” (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.540).
Waldhauser’s exercise of power resulted in what many (including contemporaries) described as the reform of lay morals. This is an accurate portrayal, but not a complete one. Also essential to his ministry—and essential for his control over urban space—was the marginalization of the Prague mendicants.

Waldhauser did not hesitate to make bold statements and accusations. According to the coalition of friars, he even claimed that no one had preached the truth in Prague before his own arrival. Some Prague preachers, he reportedly said, had simply never learned the truth; others knew it but feared to speak it, lest they lose their beloved incomes. “All of these things are true,” Waldhauser responded, “and it is possible to prove it all, if necessary.” He then proceeded to offer an example of the friars’ failure to tell the entire truth.117 Waldhauser judged the mendicants on their own terms. The friars had dedicated themselves to providing urban pastoral care, a mission that made them the inevitable rivals of the parish priests. To Waldhauser, the moral condition of Prague’s laity indicated a failure of pastoral care. And he placed the blame for that failure squarely on the shoulders of the friars, whose dependence upon begging, he charged, undercut their willingness to preach against sin.

This perspective allowed Waldhauser to accompany every major message of his preaching with an antimendicant rant.118 He even implicitly blamed the friars for the over-elaborate dress of the proud Prague women: the mendicants should have warned the women of the danger that their pride posed to their souls.119

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117 “Apologia” (Höfler, 18, 26).

118 For Beneš Krabice of Weitmil’s summary of the central themes of Waldhauser’s preaching, see above, n. 116.

119 The people of Prague, Waldhauser asserted, were in a better condition since his arrival than they had been before, when (he implies) the mendicants held sway: “... tum quia multae superbae mulieres
usurer who had repented of his ways through Waldhauser’s intervention likewise proved, he asserted, the failure of the friars to confront public sin. According to Waldhauser, had the man in question died without penitence and had he given his ill-gotten gains to the friars rather than making restitution to those he had cheated, the Augustinian friars would have undoubtedly buried him at their convent, after an exuberant ceremonial procession across the stone bridge. According to canon law, a usurer’s rotting corpse should be denied ecclesiastical burial, but Waldhauser claimed that this had never stopped any friars he knew in the German lands from granting burial to even a well-known usurer, particularly if they had some expectation of monetary benefit. He attributed the local prevalence of these and other moral failings to the negligence and outright deception of the preaching friars. Their “flattering sermons” (*blandi sermones*), he charged, were designed more to raise money than to declare the truth. As a result, the friars not only neglected Prague’s laity, but also endangered their souls.

No matter the topic of his sermon, regardless of the day’s assigned Gospel reading, Waldhauser could thus find some way to speak to his lay audiences about the

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120 “… tum quia plures usurarii a malitis suis resipiscere certa scientia se velle dinoscuntur, quorum unum notabilem ego tamquam suae animae medicus in cura mea praesenter ex commissione domini Archiepiscopi et sui plebani habeo, qui omnibus restituit, quicunque per me fuerint dejurati, quod utique ut credo praedicatorum fratrum sollicitudine non fuisset factum, ymo ut firmius existimo, si idem in peccatis suis fuisset mortuus et eam quam restituit debitoribus pecuniam ipsius ad suam sanctum conventum ex devotione et eorum inductu dedisset, ipsi ipsum postposita omni conscientia in ecclesia sua absolutum suo dicto ab omnibus peccatis suis gloriose et cum longa processione fratrum altisone cantando per pontem Multaviae apportantium sepelissent, non attendentes quod anima illius ut sic miseri cum divite epulone fuisset in inferno sepulta, et proper hoc ejus cadaver foetidum merito ecclesiastica sepultura fuisset privandum. Et quod vere plangendum quia oportet eos, si talia fecissent, sibi in aeternum in flammis ultricibus gehennalis punire consepelire; quod probabiliter veritatem loquens coger dicere, quia in Alemanniae partibus nunquam comperti aliquem usurarium licet valde manifestum ab eorum monasteriorum sepultura et praeertim si quas pecunias notabiles se inde sperassent assecuturos coherecri…” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 38]).

121 “Apologia” (Höfler, 38).
pernicious effect of the friars. Any sin of the laity or excess in religious practice might occasion at least an indirect attack on the city’s mendicants. His sermon on St. Barbara’s day (December 4) was no exception:

In the fifth article, [the coalition of friars] wrote that on St. Barbara’s day I said that it was foolishness (truffa esset) to run after the head of St. Barbara, because it is in Prussia rather than in Prague. My response is that I said that people are often deceived by relics, and that an example (signum) of this is that the head of St. Barbara is supposed to be in Prussia while some (quidam) claim to possess it in Prague. To this I added in my [previous] responses, and I now add, that it is sadly true that on account of greed [lucrum] the bodies of saints are often loved more than their life is loved on account of the kingdom of heaven. But since saints did not make sanctity, but rather sanctity made saints, sanctity should not be loved less than saints.122

At first glance, it might be tempting to construe this passage as evidence of Waldhauser’s precocious, pre-Reformation opposition to the cult of relics—an integral element of the local religion that was strongly supported by Charles IV. Relics, as I argue in chapter 5, were essential components of the emperor’s vision for the renewed sacred topography of Prague. Does this accusation prove that Conrad Waldhauser attempted to undermine all of this? Hardly: the St. Gall preacher was merely voicing the traditional warning that saints (and their relics) should not be preferred to holiness itself. He cited Chrysostom as his authority for this idea, alluding to the commentary on Matthew 24 that Waldhauser

122 “Ad quintum articulum ubi me scripserunt dixisse in die sancte Barbare quod truffa esset currere ad caput sancte Barbare quia in Prussia esset et non in Praga. Respondeo quod dixi quod homines sepe deciperentur per reliquias cuius signum esset quod in Prussia diceretur esse caput sancte Barbare et eciam quidam dicerent se in Praga habere. Cui dicto in responsionibus hoc addidi et eciam nunc addo quod sicut heu verum est quod propter lucrum diliguntur sanctorum corpora sepe plus quam diligatur propter celeste regnum eorum uita. Cum tamen sancti non fecerint sanctitatem sed sanctitas sanctos vnde non minus sanctitas quam sancti esset diligenda” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 48r; KNM XIII E 10, f. 4r-4v; cf. Höfler, 27]).

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may have known through Rabanus Maurus’ commentary on the same gospel. Nor was Waldhauser the first to express doubt about the authenticity of a particular relic.

But why single out St. Barbara, other than the fact that he happened to be preaching on her feast day? The crucial piece of information here, which all of Waldhauser’s medieval listeners would have known but his modern readers have missed, is the location of the putative head of St. Barbara within Prague. Who were the *quidam* who claimed to possess the head of St. Barbara in Prague? They were almost certainly the Franciscans of the community of St. Francis in Old Town, the group of minorite friars closely associated with the city’s Poor Clares. They had only recently completed construction of their house, and a new church or chapel seems to have been at least in the planning stages. (The impressive, double-aisled structure was completed around 1380.) St. Barbara was the church’s patron saint. The Franciscans almost certainly would have possessed a relic to accompany such an important dedication. St. Barbara was by no means unknown in Bohemia, though dedications to her were not nearly as widespread then as in later centuries. Of all of the altars, chapels, and churches of fourteenth-century Prague, I know of only one other (a side altar in a parish church).


124 DMP 2.210; Helena Soupková, *Anežký klášter v Praze* (The Agnes convent in Prague), 206-9; Vlček, Sommer, and Foltýn, *Encyklopedie českých klášterů*, 510; Libal and Muk, *Staré město pražské*, 158. I am not convinced by Soupková’s argument that the twentieth-century discovery of an double tomb within the St. Barbara church or chapel is sufficient evidence to describe it as a “charnel house” and assume that a local family—perhaps the Sternbergs, she offers—probably founded it as a place to bury its members. Such burials would have been completely in keeping with its identity as the primary church of the friars on the site. The larger St. Francis church seems to have served both the Poor Clares and the Franciscans. In the fifteenth-century, the Franciscan house is sometimes referred to as the house of St. Barbara (Soupková, *Anežký klášter*, 209).
These Franciscans, in other words, are by far the most community or institution in Prague to have claimed possession of the head of St. Barbara. Conrad Waldhauser, it seems clear, was not attacking the entire cult of relics by voicing his skepticism about the Prague relic of St. Barbara. Instead, he was criticizing the local Franciscans’ use of a particular relic—one whose authenticity he questioned—to raise money for a new chapel. He was warning his parishioners not to give the Franciscans money for their construction project. And lest there be any doubt among his audience, the passage from Chrysostom he adduced to support his argument implicitly associated the abusers of holy relics with the Gospels’ equivalent of the friars: the scribes and Pharisees. No wonder the mendicants objected to his sermon so strongly.

Conrad Waldhauser could turn nearly any sermon topic against the friars. When he wanted to criticize the mendicants more directly, however, he often resorted to his most powerful accusation: simony. It was not his concern with simony, I have argued, that caused his rift with the mendicants. The opposite was closer to the truth. Waldhauser recognized the popular and legal vulnerability of the friars to charges of simony, and relentlessly pursued them on this point. Not long after his arrival in Prague, he complained to Archbishop Ernest of Pardubice that female religious houses (probably the Dominican nuns in particular) were accepting new nuns, often young girls, on condition that they brought a monetary endowment with them. This common practice had good financial grounds, but shaky legal ones. Since the reforms of the Investiture

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125 One of the side altars of the parish church of St. Philip and James was dedicated to St. Barbara (DMP 2.183). For other Prague altars and chapels dedicated to St. Barbara at later times, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see the numerous entries in the index of František Ekert, Posvátná místa králového města Prahy (Most holy sites of the royal capital city of Prague), 2 vols., (1883-1884; reprint, with an epilogue by Jiří Reinsberg, Prague, 1996), 1.484 , 2.522.
Contest, simoniacal entry into religious orders had been outlawed. The legal problem was not with the money that changed hands, but rather the advance agreement (*pactum*) to receive a particular sum. Free-will gifts were permissible, enforceable contracts not.

Despite the efforts of generations of reformers, however, the practice persisted.\(^{126}\) It would be difficult or impossible to determine how prevalent simoniacal entry into the religious life remained in Prague. Nevertheless, archival documents from the Prague house of Dominican nuns document the practice of providing endowed incomes for a monastic relative. On two occasions a certain Gymramus of Průhonice promised to pay his sister Anne, a Dominican nun in Prague, four schocks annually until her death and one-half shock annually after her death (payable to whomever Anne should appoint).\(^{127}\) Strictly speaking, this contract did not amount to simony. It may indicate, however, the previous existence of an illicit oral agreement between Gymramus and the Dominican nuns that he would support his sister financially.\(^{128}\) Waldhauser claimed to have been told of a similar scheme by a mother of an Augustinian friar. After hearing him preach against mendicant simony, she told him of her own experience of it. The friary of St. Thomas, she explained, had demanded that she provide two schocks of annual income in order to secure her son’s admission.\(^{129}\)

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\(^{126}\) On the practice and the reforms, see Joseph H. Lynch, *Simoniacal Entry into Religious Life from 1000 to 1260: A Social, Economic and Legal Study* (Columbus, OH, 1976). Lynch’s study, which concludes in the thirteenth century, argues that the practice was less common then than in the twelfth century but admits that it persisted (224).

\(^{127}\) SÚA AZK 1093, 1095.

\(^{128}\) It may also simply document Anne’s private income, another favorite target of monastic reformers demanding strict adherence to personal poverty. As Waldhauser points out, though, such an income might in any case be considered simony if it resulted from a previous agreement (“Apologia” [Höfler, 33-34]).

\(^{129}\) “Sed contigit cum primo cepissem contra prauitatem symoniacam, perditricem multarum animarum, in Praga praedicare, quedam mulier honesta cum quodam Augustinensi filio suo ad me venit,
In response to Waldhauser’s complaint about the Dominican sisters of St. Anne and St. Lawrence, the archbishop of Prague disclaimed responsibility, noting that most of these female houses fell under the jurisdiction of the mendicant friars and not his own.\textsuperscript{130} So the preacher took his complaint directly to Prague’s lay inhabitants, warning them not to endanger the souls of their children by committing them to the mendicant orders under such conditions. It would be safer, he reportedly preached, to hand their daughters over in marriage to torturers—or even to send them to the brothels—than to risk the devil’s eternal torture for the sin of simony.\textsuperscript{131} From his pulpit on St. Gall’s market square, Waldhauser used the charge of simony to undercut the credibility of the friars with his listeners. His focus on simoniaca\textipa{132}l entry into their religious houses targeted their ability to recruit. Another favorite topic of his—the simoniaca\textipa{132}l pacts the friars used to arrange burial within their monasteries—likewise threatened the power of the mendicants by attacking an important source of their income.\textsuperscript{132}

Conrad Waldhauser applied every available means to convey the messages of his antimendicant agenda in Prague. His pulpit gave him the opportunity to spread his warnings against the simony of the mendacious friars. It was his undeniable charisma and oratorical skill, however, that drew the crowds and convinced many to follow him.

\textsuperscript{130}“Apologia” (Höfler, 23).

\textsuperscript{131}Waldhauser denied saying that it would be better to make one’s daughter a prostitute than to hand her over to the mendicants, though he did contest the truth of the claim (Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řadu svatého Augustina,” 18 no. 4; “Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 56v-57r; cf. Höfler, 25]).

\textsuperscript{132}“Apologia” (Höfler, 26, 38).
Waldhauser considered himself a prophet, a speaker of hard truth against the blind and the wicked. Again and again he identified himself with the Old Testament prophets, or with Christ himself. But he did not rely entirely upon the power of his voice. Nor was he naïve. He knew that his local power depended upon the patronage of powerful secular leaders, and he was always ready to invoke that authority to back up his hard words. In an early letter to the Bishop of Passau, Waldhauser had prefaced his strong, almost impudent, warnings against simony by introducing himself as one enjoying the patronage of the Duke of Austria. Later he made a similar appeal to his powerful patrons when the Prague mendicants challenged the legality of his status in Prague. He was, after all, an Augustinian canon serving at a church over which his religious house had no authority. In his response, Waldhauser immediately reminded them who had brought him to Prague: the Archbishop of Prague had been informed of his status, he claimed, by letters from the emperor, the noble Rosenberg family, as well as from the prior and members of his religious house in Waldhausen. He also cultivated the support of Prague’s city councilors, even once publicly calling upon them to discipline a man who had spoken ill of him. (The terrified man immediately made his peace directly with Waldhauser).

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133 Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mnich řádu svatého Augustina,” 15 no. 2.

134 “Apologia” (Höfler, 36).

135 Waldhauser admitted the general charge, but challenged the precise wording on several counts, quibbling, for instance, about whether the man in question really was probus and whether he had spoken his threatening remarks privately among his family members or “publicly” in someone else’s house. He also denied having “named” the man publicly, though admitted “denouncing” him in a sermon: “Quod cum cognovissem, statim manifeste coram omni multitudine civitatis et scabinis in sermone proximo denuntiavi ipsum, rogans publice scabinos, ut ipsum ad verbum ponerent et productis testibus quos eis nominarem, quia audiverant contra ipsum, in terrorem aliorum et praesertim monachorum, quorum fautor erat, bene disciplinarent. Sed in hoc mihi falsum imponunt qui dicunt me ipsum nominasse publice” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 31]).
Waldhauser was not afraid to invoke his powerful supporters. More often, though, he relied upon a legal approach. Canon law was the language of medieval church governance and discipline, and all successful controversialists spoke its jargon. Of necessity, Waldhauser appealed repeatedly to canon law in his “Apologia”, both to defend himself and to attack the mendicants. It seems unlikely that Waldhauser had any formal legal training. Despite the speculation of historians that he studied at Bologna, there is no direct evidence that connects him with any university besides Prague, where he delivered Latin sermons to students.136 His “Apologia” nevertheless demonstrates a working familiarity with the *Decretum*, other collections of canons, and some of the major legal commentators. In defense of his legal status in Prague, for instance, he did not stop after naming his powerful supporters. He offered as well a litany of legal canons and commentaries in support of his right to preside over a church (the parish church in Litoměřice) that was not incorporated into the Augustinian house at Waldhausen.137

Waldhauser’s attack on simoniacal reception into mendicant houses similarly followed the norms of canon law. He denied having preached that anyone receiving children into a religious order for money or with money (*pro pecunia vel cum pecunia*) would incur eternal damnation. “I said,” he responded, “that those receiving children for money and with an agreement (*pro pecunia et cum pacto*) are eternally damned.”138 That, after all, was the legal definition of simony. The visiting master general of the Dominican order, he continued, had defended the practice in Prague by citing the legal


137 “Apologia” (NK XIV G 17, f. 59r; cf. Höfler, 36-37, where all references to canon law have been omitted).

138 “Apologia” (Höfler, 25).
commentator Hostiensis. Yes, admitted Waldhauser, but the master general failed to mention that even Hostiensis thought it safer not to accept new members under such circumstances. Hostiensis, he continued, would not be the final authority on this even had he expressed such an opinion more forcefully, as it clearly contradicts canons on simony in the Liber extra and numerous canons from the Extravagantes. And lest anyone challenge his own legal competence, Waldhauser concluded by asserting that the legal experts in Prague agreed with him on this point.

Waldhauser also invoked canon law to defend himself (indirectly) even against the powerful Dominican master general and papal legate, Simon of Langres (1352-66), in whose name the coalition of Prague friars against Waldhauser had been organized. Canon law was essential as well to his successful navigation of two hearings before the archbishop. The legal approach even figured occasionally into the public struggles that occurred during the months preceding the friars’ official accusations. Yet

139 “... determinavit illam questionem in hoc residens quod monasterium pauper puero recepto de pecunia per eum danda pacisci posset etiam ante professionem, adducens Hostiensis hoc dicentem sicut et verum est” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 47r; cf. Höfler, 26]).

140 “Sed quod subdit ibi Hostiensis quod tutius est dimittere non dixit cum et in hoc causu nec etiam Hostiensis si etiam valde assertive diceret nec sibi sit credendum, cum sit contra textum Extra de Symonia capitulo quinto et capitulo tria et in pluribus canonum Extravagancium locis. Sed excusor a mendacio quia credebam quod sic determinaret et per consequens contra mentem meam mentiendo non iri cum mentiri sit contra mentem iri.” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 47r; KNM XIII E 10, f. 3v; KMK E 24, f. 144r; cf. Höfler, 26, where the entire passage is omitted]).

141 “...enim iuristae in hoc dicto civitatis Pragensis, sicut haecenus auduii, approbant quod dixi in casu isto, cum sit ipsorum fori.” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 47r; KNM XIII E 10, f. 3v; KMK E 24, f. 144v]).


143 In confronting an Augustinian friar about the existence in his community of those received simoniaically, for instance, Waldhauser avoided the larger moral issue in favor of a legal and technical argument: the friars in question would seem to need a (costly and laborious-to-obtain) papal dispensation. His Augustinian interlocutor agreed, adding that two of his coreligionists had gone to the curia and received bulls requiring the prior of St. Thomas to return the promised income and related contracts to the friars and
Waldhauser’s successful bid for power within Prague—power to guide the actions of some of its inhabitants and to control significant parts of its topography—depended much more upon his ability to win over the crowds through his sermons.

Waldhauser presided over the market of St. Gall and (to a lesser extent) the streets of Prague as a demagogue. It was this power, and the resulting eclipse of the Prague mendicants in Prague, that ultimately inspired the charges against him. Waldhauser asserted his power over the public spaces of Prague, taunted his mendicant opponents to challenge him within those spaces, and ridiculed them for their increasing marginality.

“There are always certain to be many people opposed to whomever God sends as his messenger. But where is he, or where are they, who are brave enough to speak against me?”144 If Waldhauser did not use precisely these words (ascribed to him by the friars), he conveyed the same confident bravado:

Indeed, when I heard that they were murmuring against my preaching and my teaching from their nooks [in angulis] and using their beguines to turn people against my teaching, I said and pronounced in the open marketplace [in publico foro]: ‘None of you should believe the seducer of the world, or a seducer saying anything other than what I preach to you, unless [the friars] pronounce it openly in the pulpit of this place where I stand. For they are also unable to attract anyone to the German sermons in their monasteries, with the exception of four or five beguines, as is evident today.’145

their parents. He was not receptive, though, to Waldhauser’s suggestions that he ‘go and do likewise.’ (“Apologia” [KNM XIII E 10, f. 9v; cf. Höfler, 35]).

144 “Apologia” (Höfler, 20).

145 “Sed bene dixi cum audirem eos in angulis contra sermonem meum et doctrinam meam murmurare et per beguinas suas homines inducere ad oppositum doctrine mee et in publico foro declamatu: Nulli credatis de mundo seductori uel seducenti (?) aluid quam uobis predico dicenti nisi illud manifeste in ambone huius loci in quo ego sto per eosdem fuerit reclamatum, quia alibi neque in suis monasteriis populum nullum sed quatuor beginas uel quinque in suis sermonibus teutunicis ut hodierna declarat evidentia habere potuerunt.” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 50v; Höfler, 32]).
The Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians all preached public sermons in Prague. According to Waldhauser, his presence had occasioned their retreat from the city’s public markets into their own monasteries. Even there they had trouble attracting any hearers. Waldhauser openly dared them to answer his criticisms. Later he also invited them to attend his public rebuttal of their articles. The friars shrunk from the challenge. They confirmed his claims of success with their complaints that Waldhauser had turned the people of Prague against them. Doors were closed in the faces of alms-seeking friars, they lamented. Those that made it into the homes were often expelled with a torrent of violent words. Friars were openly called heretics, with Waldhauser’s approval. They were even threatened with violence at St. Gall’s marketplace during one of Waldhauser’s sermons. (They were present, with a public notary, to collect evidence against the preacher). In other words, the friars had lost control of the public spaces within the sacred topography of Prague—places where, according to Super cathedram, they had the right to preach. Even more importantly, they had lost much of their influence over the city’s inhabitants.

Within a matter of months, the zealous and charismatic preacher from Austria had made significant progress against the friars. His mendicant opponents, by all accounts,

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146 “Apologia” (Höfler, 24-25).

147 “Tales contumelias usque in hodiernum diem fratres sustinent a multis in multis locis, quem in multis domibus clauduntur hostia, cum fratres intrare volunt ad petendum elemosynam et si intromissi fuerint confusibiliter multis malis verbis invasi inde expelluntur. Item approbavit hoc quod et multos fratres haereticos esse dixerunt.” (“Apologia” [Höfler, 20]).

148 “Apologia” (Höfler, 19).

149 According to Super cathedram, friars might preach in public spaces or within their own churches, but not at the same time as the local secular clergy. A friar could only preach in a parish church with the invitation of the parish priest or authorization of a bishop or superior secular cleric. (Clem. 3.7.2, Corpus iuris canonici, ed. Emil Friedberg, 2 vols. [Leipzig, 1879-81], 1.1161-64).
had become increasingly marginalized. They suffered losses in listeners, recruits, and income. In response, they bitterly carped at him “not openly, but from the shadows” (*non palam sed in angulis*). More importantly, they banded together. Waldhauser and other opponents of the mendicants tended to treat the different orders of friars as a unity. I have followed their practice throughout this chapter, referring collectively to friars and mendicants rather than separately to Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinian friars. Yet under normal circumstances, the various mendicant friars were rivals as often as allies. Their preachers vied for the same audiences and their friars sought alms at the same houses. They competed as well for the right to bury the city’s dead. Or, as Waldhauser scathingly described this aspect of competition among the Prague friars: “they had often fought each other like famished vultures for human cadavers.” Throughout Europe, local persecution drove communities of friars together and may even have stimulated the development among friars of a common ‘mendicant’ identity. In some cities, the different groups of friars went so far as to draft treaties of

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150 “Apologia” (Höfler, 26).

151 Most of the points on which he criticized them applied equally to the different mendicant communities. At the end of his response to the first eighteen articles, he describes their authors as the “friars preachers and their supporters—of whatever orders or friars”: “Et in hoc terminantur articuli per frates predicatores et sibi adherentes aliorum ordinum nescio fratres contra me Conradum ut premittitur scripti cum breuibus responsionibus pro ista vice ad eosdem” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 51v; cf. Höfler, 34]).

152 “Cum tamen caput huius negocii esset magister generalis ordinis praedicatorum pro tunc in Praga constitutus et apostolice sedis ut dicebatur legatus a fratribus suis et aliis ordinibus mendicantibus quos contra me convocauerat in hoc casu..., duo magni hostes fuerunt sibi mutuo reconciliati coadunatos coamicatos qui ut ab omnibus in Praga dicitur communiter nunquam se prius dilexerunt alterutrum ymo stipende quod cadaueribus humanorum corporum tamquam famelici volucrese sepe certauerant...” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 45v-46r; cf. Höfler, 33-34]). The “two enemies” presumably refer to the Dominicans and one other order of friars, most likely the Franciscans but possibly the Carmelites. The Augustinians, who submitted their own list of charges, seem to have remained partly separate.
cooperation. In Prague, Waldhauser’s success stimulated the four main mendicant communities to work together. (The Servites, still very new to Prague, make no appearance whatsoever in the controversy). Prague’s friars had rallied together during previous crises; now they gathered to oppose their attacker under the leadership of the Dominican master general Simon of Langres. Together they produced the twenty-four articles preserved in the “Apologia”, though the division between the eighteen Dominican-drafted charges and the six added by the Augustinian friars reveals the limited nature of their cooperation.

Conrad Waldhauser was hardly cowed by the coalition or their powerful figurehead. (Waldhauser implies that Simon of Langres, as a “purus Gallicus,” would have been unable to understand his German preaching, and therefore must have been “inductus” into the matter by others.) “They devised and wrote these twenty-four articles,” he later crowed, “believing me to be a such a shrinking soldier of Christ as to be terrified by the battle with [Simon of Langres’] testimony.” He wrote his defense, a “libellus responsonis,” within three days of the articles’ public presentation to the archbishop before Waldhauser and the assembled friars. The archbishop then formally requested all of Waldhauser’s mendicant accusers to attend another public hearing. On


154 “Apologia” (NK XIV G 17, f. 46r; cf. Höfler, 24, who misreads “purus Gallicus” as “praesens Gallicus”). Waldhauser made a similar argument to discount the written testimony on his German sermons presented by a Prague notary who was found to be a “purus Bohemus”; the testimony, Waldhauser concludes, must have been planted by the friars (Höfler, 29).

155 “Apologia” (Höfler, 24).

156 “Apologia” (Höfler, 24, 36).
that second occasion at the archbishop’s court, none of the charges made in writing could be substantiated, “as the legal documents made for this occasion trumpet.”¹⁵⁷ Finally, on the Monday after Pentecost, Waldhauser brought the controversy over the twenty-four articles to an official close with his public pronouncement in Prague before the visiting Duke of Austria. Relishing his victory, he publicly invited the friars to attend.¹⁵⁸

The coalition of friars failed in their attempt to convict Waldhauser of error and heresy before the Prague archbishop’s court, and thus to arrest his growing power over Prague’s populace. His defense owed its success in part to his cogent written responses and his skilled application of canon law. Yet in his numerous clashes with the friars, Waldhauser accompanied his displays of learning and intellectual prowess with raw exhibitions of power. On one occasion in particular, his preaching resulted in a public event that demonstrated to the friars and archbishop alike his control over public space in Prague and his influence with the people who inhabited that space. Conrad Waldhauser, in other words, incited a mob. On Sunday, 10 December 1363, he announced in his sermon that on Monday he would be defending himself against the mendicants’ accusations before the archbishop for a second time.¹⁵⁹ Anyone interested in hearing the

¹⁵⁷ “...et eosdem articulos coram domino archiepiscopo per modum denunciationis nulla tamen amonitione canonica premissa præsente quodam alicio legato et pluribus honestis et literatis viris presentibus et eciame me presente in scripto dederunt. Quibus ex superhabundati, quia tali denunciatione respondere non debui, infra triduum scriptis eorundem falsitatum detegentibus ita respondi ut usque hodie non viderim [sic] unius articuli responsionem a predictis fratribus informatam. Sed cum dominus archiepiscopus sub manu publica et suo sub sigillo scripsisset ad hostia monasteriorum omnium mendicancium iubens easdem literas affigii ut quicumque esset qui aliquid haberet querele contra me et doctrinam meam tali die in curia sua archiepiscopali hora tercia compararet quo termino venientes publice profitebantur quod nichil eorum que scripsisset possent contra me protestari sicut canunt instrumenta publica super hiis confecta.” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 46r; cf. Höfler, 24])

¹⁵⁸ “Apologia” (Höfler, 24-25).

¹⁵⁹ As report of this event is included among the the mendicants’ twenty-four charges against, the appearance in question cannot have been one of the two appearances before the archbishop to answer these charges. These took place in the late Winter and early Spring of 1364.
truth, he continued, was welcome to attend. In the next day’s sermon, according to the complaint of the mendicants, Waldhauser informed the crowd that some friars were plotting to kill him. Nevertheless, he told his regular listeners, he still intended to proceed—immediately—to the archbishop’s palace. Not surprisingly, the crowd followed him. The mendicants charged that Waldhauser had intentionally raised a mob. He countered that he had simply asked, from the pulpit, for a couple members of the town council to accompany him for the sake of security. The mass of men and women that followed them, he claimed, acted spontaneously out of concern for his welfare. They were not, he added, under his control.¹⁶⁰

The angry mob passing through the Prague streets offered a frightening demonstration of the power that Waldhauser could wield (if not completely control, as he claimed) within the city. What happened next was determined in part by the geography of sacred space within Prague. The archbishop of Prague conducted the business of his curia at the archiepiscopal palace in Prague’s Lesser Town, just beyond the stone bridge over the Vltava (see Map 3.2).¹⁶¹ So although Waldhauser had some choice in the path to take from the market of St. Gall to the archbishop’s palace, he and his followers had to pass along Prague’s only bridge. Critically, the Dominican house of St. Clement was located just across from the eastern bridgehead. Prague’s topography left the mob little choice: they had to pass by this religious house, the home of the friars who had organized the bitter opposition to Waldhauser. The mob reacted. As they passed, the men and women in the assembly spat and yelled abuse at the Dominicans, saying that all friars

¹⁶⁰ “Apologia” (Höfler, 19-20; 29-30).

¹⁶¹ Zdeňka Hledíková, “(Arci)biskupský dvůr v Praze do doby husitské” (The (arch)bishop’s court in Prague up to the Hussites times), Documenta Pragensia 9 (1991): 341-60.
Map 3.2: Conrad Waldhauser’s Mob

Approximate route of Conrad Waldhauser and followers

Map 3.2: Conrad Waldhauser's Mob
should be burned because they were worse than heretics. They repeated the scene on their way home.¹⁶² Waldhauser exonerated himself of any responsibility: he did not control the mob; the violence was not inspired by him but by the many misdeeds of the friars; and the Dominican house “was there, along their path across the bridge.”¹⁶³ The city topography, in other words, was to blame.

Waldhauser’s power and influence only grew over the next years. He gave up his benefice at Litoměřice when he was named to the parish of St. Mary before Týn, one of Old Town’s most important and well-paying parishes. Its new Gothic building, then under construction, would become Prague’s largest parish church.¹⁶⁴ The patronage for this benefice was shared between a lay family and the Vyšehrad chapter of canons, but according to a (not very sympathetic) observer, Waldhauser received the post because of the emperor’s intervention.¹⁶⁵ His struggle against the mendicants continued for the rest of his life. Scattered evidence reveals a series of controversies until his 1369 death. Brother Weiglin, for instance, the Franciscan sacristan at the nearby house of St. James, complained that Waldhauser had forced his new vicar at St. Mary before Týn to stop confessing to Weiglin.¹⁶⁶ For a committed antimendicant like Waldhauser, the thought of his own subordinate confessing to a Franciscan must have been maddening. There was also a controversy with the Carmelites of New Town over the nature of the beatific

¹⁶² “Apologia” (Höfler, 20; 30).

¹⁶³ “... cum tali turba virorum et mulierum pontem transiturus ecclesiam fratrum praedicatorum transierem quia est ibi in via...” (“Apologia” [NK XIV G 17, f. 49v; cf. Höfler, 30]).

¹⁶⁴ See above, n. 65. Waldhauser resigned from his Litoměřice parish on January 30, 1365 (LC 1.2.59).


Near the end of his life, Waldhauser even traveled to Rome to answer mendicant charges that he was an illegitimate child, but had not received the required dispensation before ordination.

The issues varied, but Waldhauser’s basic opposition to the friars—and theirs to him—seems to have continued unabated for all of his Prague ministry. As his experience at Žatec in 1365 demonstrated, he did not always win. Indeed, in defense of his non-residency in Litoměřice, Waldhauser claimed to have completely lost control of that city’s sacred topography through the machinations of hostile friars. The houses of Dominicans and Franciscans there, he explained, had turned his own parishioners against him. Waldhauser’s dogged opposition to local friars reflected his deep commitment to the antimendicant tradition, but it also revealed something more fundamental in the sacred geography: a fault line between the network of parish churches and the mendicant communities. The same fault line existed in all medieval cities. The ecclesiastical structure itself groaned as the forces representing the secular priests and mendicant friars moved to occupy the same space. Within a city like Prague, the arrival of a single charismatic zealot like Conrad Waldhauser could reopen the ancient fissures and shake the urban space with violent controversy.

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168 Menčík, “Konrad Waldhauser, mních řadu svatého Augustina,” 23-33 no. 16.

169 “Apologia” (Höfler, 21; 32-33)
CHAPTER 4

FROM VENICE TO JERUSALEM AND BEYOND:
PROSTITUTION, EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION, AND TOPOGRAPHY

In the early 1360s, a canon of Prague’s cathedral and former member of Charles IV’s chancery resigned his lucrative benefices. There was a long tradition of precisely such conversions from secular to religious life, but this relatively minor prelate named Milič of Kroměříž (d. 1374) did not follow the standard model. Rather than entering a monastic order, Milič began to preach publicly, regularly criss-crossing the city to deliver sermons in Czech, German, and Latin. Among those who responded to his message of repentance were a number of the city’s prostitutes. Some even became his disciples, depending upon him for their sustenance. With the support of the Emperor, this group took over the city’s most famous brothel. Known to locals as “Venice,” the brothel was rechristened with the apocalyptically charged name, “Jerusalem.” By this act, Milič transformed Prague’s topography of prostitution and challenged its sacred topography.

This episode vividly illustrates the interplay between space, power, and local religion in medieval Prague—the subject of the entire dissertation. Unpacking this complex relationship involves a dramatic revision to three central elements of this story, one well-known to historians of medieval Bohemia. The first to be reconsidered is Milič of Kroměříž himself and his place within the larger historical narratives. Milič’s legacy,
contested in the centuries following his death by historians pursuing opposing religious
ragnendas, was firmly established in the nineteenth century: he was a forerunner of Jan
Hus and therefore (by some transitive property) a precursor of the sixteenth-century
reformers. To Czech historians in particular, he became the uncontested “Father of the
Bohemian Reformation.”¹ Scholars have accordingly emphasized his dedication to
preaching, his advocacy of frequent communion, and his struggles with the ecclesiastical
hierarchy—the very elements echoed by his fifteenth- and sixteenth-century successors.
Even recent attempts to associate (or contrast) him with the Devotio moderna of the Low
Countries continue to be informed by the paradigm of the forerunner. That Milič built his
experimental religious community around reformed prostitutes sits uneasily with this
characterization. Prostitutes therefore play only a bit part in the received versions of the
reformer’s drama, serving primarily to highlight his general piety. Yet new information
about the central source of Milič’s life now calls for a revised script. Not surprisingly,
the preacher’s story turns out rather differently when his house of holy harlots takes
center stage.

Next come the prostitutes themselves and their places—physical, legal, and
social—within medieval Prague. Understanding the significance of the transformation of
Venice into Jerusalem demands a clear picture of the prostitution and its geography in
Prague. Prague, however, has been almost completely ignored in the growing literature
on later medieval prostitution, despite the city’s prominence in Europe precisely at this

¹ “Father of the Bohemian Reformation” is the subtitle of František Loskot’s 1911 biography,
Milič z Kroměříže: Otec české reformace (Prague, 1911), which was the second volume in the series,
“Great Men of the Bohemian Reformation.”
time.² A new examination of the remarkable record of a 1379-1380 visitation can now provide this picture, one composed from assorted images of the women and places involved in commercial sex in the city. The result allows Prague to be integrated into the larger story of medieval prostitution, showing how prostitution in medieval Prague conformed to patterns found elsewhere in Europe as well as how it challenges aspects of the accepted models. At the same time, it facilitates a new understanding of Mílič’s Jerusalem and its place within Prague’s urban topography.

Ultimately it was the emperor, though, whose personal intervention effected the physical transformation of brothel into religious house. Charles IV personally ordered the destruction of Venice and the transfer of its property to Mílič for his community. The creation of Jerusalem cannot be understood without appreciating the grounds for such imperial intervention. His act represented more than a vague gesture of piety or the outworking of generic support for religious reform. Vital to Jerusalem’s creation was its place within the emperor’s own plans for his city. Mílič’s plans happened to fit quite neatly into Charles IV’s larger vision for an enlarged and re-ordered Prague. Topography likewise provided a strong motive for the later confiscation of Jerusalem from Mílič’s followers. Mílič and Jerusalem left legacies in Prague, not least in the successful redefinition of space formerly devoted to prostitution. The community itself, however, enjoyed only a fleeting existence. Largely to blame, I will argue, was its own brash...

challenge to Prague’s topography of sacred places—a challenge the emperor ultimately proved unwilling to support.

4.1 The Histories of Mílič of Kroměříž

Not many names are better known within Czech medieval historiography than that of Mílič of Kroměříž. As the acknowledged Father of the Bohemian Reformation, he remains a central figure of the so-called Pre-Hussite era of Bohemian history. The memory of Mílič has been well-preserved since the time of his death, though it has proved a remarkably malleable remembrance. Matthias of Janov (d. 1394), a one-time follower of Mílič and a Paris master, embedded an account of the preacher’s life within the masterwork he wrote near the end of his life. Janov sought to legitimate his own controversial position in Prague by lionizing Mílič as a second Elijah, crying out against the unmistakable influence of Antichrist in the church—a claim with some substance to it.

A second, putatively fourteenth-century vita survives only in the work of the rabidly patriotic seventeenth-century Jesuit historian, Bohuslav Balbín (1621-1688).

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3 Mílič continues to play an introductory role to Jan Hus and the Hussites in nearly all surveys of the latter, e.g., Howard Kaminsky, A History of the Hussite Revolution (Berkeley, 1967), 9-14; František Šmahel, Husitská Revoluce [The Hussite revolution], 4 vols. (Prague, 1993), 2.181-198. For reviews of the historiography, see Loskot, Mílič z Kroměříže (Prague, 1911), 160-174; Miloslav Kaňák, Mílič z Kroměříže (Prague, 1975), 42-55. On the nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship in particular, see Peter Morée, Preaching in Fourteenth-century Bohemia: The Life and Ideas of Milicius de Chremsir (†1374) and his Significance in the Historiography of Bohemia (Heršpice, Czech Republic, 1999), 203-254.


5 The Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, praelati ecclesiae Pragensis appeared in Balbín’s Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae, Decas 1, lib. 4 (Prague, 1682), 44-64. It was reprinted, with a few variants, in Josef Emler, ed., FRB 1.403-430.
This markedly hagiographical text has long been considered the earliest and best witness to Milíč’s life, its anonymous author presumed to have been a close follower of the preacher. My discovery that large portions of the *vita* were borrowed verbatim from other medieval sources, most notably William of St. Thierry’s life of Bernard of Clairvaux, has proven the composite nature of the text. Some oft-repeated anecdotes about Milíč were in fact originally penned for Bernard; others not verified by independent witnesses must now be questioned. Much of the evidence points to Balbín himself as the most likely compiler and partial inventor of the biography. There is no doubt that it served the Jesuit’s admitted agenda: to demonstrate that medieval Bohemia had been genuinely Catholic before the advent of Hussite heresy—that Czechs, in other words, were not inherently or naturally heretics. Protestant historians (including Mathias Flacius Illyricus in 1562) had claimed Milíč as a forefather, and Balbín was eager to rewrite that reputation. But Balbín, whose life of John of Nepomuk (d. 1393) propelled

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7 Peter Morée’s recent work was the first to suggest Balbín’s involvement in the creation of the text, arguing that the Jesuit combined excerpts from Milíč’s known works with other lost sources and reworked them to serve his own ideology (*Preaching in Fourteenth-century Bohemia*, 42-69). See also Jana Nechutová, *Latinská literatura českého středověku do roku 1400* (Latin literature of the Bohemian Middle Ages to 1400) (Prague, 2000), 127-28. My finding that the *vita* borrows heavily from unrelated medieval texts demands an even more thoroughgoing revision than the one Morée has suggested. I have argued, however, that some elements of the text are verifiably and others quite possibly drawn from authentic, near-contemporary sources that are now lost. Careful analysis of the *vita*, I believe, can still allow a reading not captive to the compiler’s intention: “A Monk, a Preacher, and a Jesuit: Making the Life of Milíč” (paper presented at the Symposium on the Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice, sponsored by the Philosophical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and the Centre for Mediaeval Studies, Prague, Czech Republic, June 2002). A version of this paper is currently in preparation for publication.

that medieval prelate to a baroque canonization (1729), had no such luck with the biography of Milič.\(^9\)

The *vita* published by Balbín successfully introduced spurious and misleading elements into the standard depictions of the medieval preacher, but Balbín’s ultimate aim was thwarted. Indeed, the historically minded Jesuit would have been horrified to learn the eventual place that his saintly Milič came to occupy in Czech historiography. That position was established above all by the so-called Father of the Czech Nation, the Moravian Protestant historian František Palacký (1798-1876). Palacký, whose *Die Vorläufer des Husitenthums in Böhmen* (1846) tagged Conrad Waldhauser as the first of a quatrain of pre-Hussite reformers, named Milič as the second (followed by Matthias of Janov, and Jan Štěkna (d. 1407)).\(^10\) Unlike the Austrian-born and German-speaking Waldhauser, Palacký’s Milič was a hero worthy of a devout nationalist: an authentically Czech spirit who sowed the seeds of a specifically Bohemian Reformation.\(^11\)

The two *vitae*, refracted by Palacký’s influential prism, have projected a lasting image of Milič as the first pre-eminent forerunner of Jan Hus. Even later works committed to a fundamentally economic and social explanation of the Hussite revolution

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\(^10\) Subsequent treatments of the forerunners of Hus often include only the first three men.

adopted the same genealogy. More recent treatments have added caveats and nuances, in some cases even suggesting parallels to events and individuals outside the Czech lands. Careful comparison has recently been made, for instance, between Milič and Geert Grote. Yet whether the Prague preacher emerges as a leading representative of a Bohemian Devotio moderna or instead as an example of a more general “charismatic spirituality,” Milič’s role as the leading spiritual light of “pre-Hussite” Bohemia has remained almost entirely unchallenged. In a wider context, this interpretation places him among the precocious vanguard of what some are now calling the “premature Reformation.”

12 Particularly striking in this regard is the early work of František Graus, Chudina městská v době předhusitské [The city poor in pre-Hussite times] (Prague, 1949), 147-73. Likewise the attempts to claim for Bohemia a kind of “early Humanism” continue to trace a direct line from Milič to Hus, e.g., Eduard Winter, Frühhumanismus: Seine Entwicklung in Böhmen und deren Bedeutung für die Kirchenreformbestrebungen im 14. Jahrhundert (Berlin, 1964); cf. Ferdinand Seibt, “Gab es einen böhmischen Frühhumanismus?” in Studien zum Humanismus in den böhmischen Ländern, ed. Hans-Bernard Harder (Cologne, 1988), 1-19.


14 The term, borrowed from Anne Hudson’s The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard history (Oxford, 1988), has now been adopted to describe the Hussite revolution and other later medieval religious movements, e.g., in Häresie und vorzeitige Reformation im Spätmittelelter, ed. František Šmahel (Munich, 1998), VII-XIV.
Milič does not precisely qualify as a “forerunner of the Reformation,” he at least receives honor within this historiographical tradition as one of their important predecessors.\(^{15}\)

My approach here is different, my aim more focused. Turning a blind eye, for the present, to events in Prague half a century later, I want to re-examine Jerusalem and its role within Prague’s urban environment. Liberating Milič’s *vitae* from the constricting, teleological story of the origin of the Hussites allows us to see more clearly the details that do not conform neatly to expected “pre-Hussite” patterns. Attending to his female followers in particular provides new insight into neglected aspects of the story of Milič: the nature of his vision of the religious life, its inclusion of reformed prostitutes, and the impact of both of these on the topography of Prague. But in order to explore Jerusalem, we must first visit Venice and map the geography of prostitution in fourteenth-century Prague.

### 4.2 Prague’s Topography of Prostitution

Medieval European societies routinely reserved a place for prostitution. Indeed, Augustine of Hippo had famously warned against its abolition: “Remove prostitutes from human affairs, and you will throw everything into turmoil with lusts. Put them in the place of matrons, and you will dishonor everything with scandal and disgrace.”\(^{16}\) For

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\(^{15}\) Witness the recent biographical dictionary, *The Late Medieval Age of Crisis and Renewal, 1300-1500*, ed. Clayton Drees (Westport, CT, 2001), which includes those people “who made important contributions to European culture in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries” (xiv). The entry for Milič, citing as bibliography Heiko Oberman’s *Forerunners of the Reformation* (1966; reprint, Philadelphia, 1981) and Steven Ozment’s *The Age of Reform (1250-1550)* (New Haven, 1980), portrays him as an important influence on “an entire generation of reformers” (354-55). The dictionary has no entry for Emperor Charles IV.

Augustine, prostitutes were like hangmen—necessary, if unsavory, elements within the
divinely ordered human society. Thomas Aquinas, marshalling the words of Augustine,
later classed prostitution among the lesser evils that authorities tolerate to mitigate greater
ills. These and other authoritative Christian voices served to justify a range of more or
less tolerant approaches to prostitution over the subsequent centuries. In the later Middle
Ages, many European cities instituted authorized municipal brothels, a culmination of the
long tradition of making space within the city (if usually a marginal one) for prostitution.
Recent scholarship traces in increasing detail the rise of these official brothels in cities
across continental Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as well as the nearly
universal abolition of the same brothels in the sixteenth century. (Authorized brothels
were much less common in England). The grounds for their establishment and
subsequent destruction during these particular centuries remains largely a matter of
speculation. Here the example of Prague, which fits some but not all parts of the general
pattern, may be instructive.

Prostitution in medieval Prague is not well documented. There are no
municipal statutes establishing official brothels, no surviving records from the houses of
prostitution. Only very rarely does the name of an individual prostitute survive by
chance in one or another record. Yet enough disparate witnesses survive—in chronicles
and property records, for instance—to reveal the basic features of the landscape of
prostitution. The few previous studies that touch upon the subject have accomplished just

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17 Summa Theologiae 2a 2ae, q. 10, a. 11, Opera omnia iussu impensaque Leonis XIII P.M. 8
(Rome, 1895), 93. On this, see Kelly, “Bishop, Prioress, and Bawd in the Stews of Southwark,” 343-49.

18 Karras, “Prostitution in Medieval Europe,” 244-47.

19 Ruth Mazo Karras, Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England (Oxford,
1996), 32-43.
that. The relevant sources, however, and especially the record of the archidiaconal
visitation of 1379-80, can yield a much more precise picture than previously recognized.
The visitor’s questioning produced testimony from clerical and lay witnesses on a wide
variety of issues, from the theft of church furnishings and non-residence of parish priests
to the commission of usury and simony. Sexual trespasses were also well represented.
Particularly numerous were the reports of clerical concubinage, but in addition one
encounters adultery by married parishioners as well as “clandestine” marriages lacking
ecclesiastical sanction. There is also a wealth of testimony related to prostitution in
medieval Prague. When read closely, not only do the physical locations of the brothels
emerge, but also the distinctions in kind between various centers of prostitution; not only
where individual prostitutes lived, but also how their involvement in commercial sex
differed—and what their neighbors thought of them. Together they bring into greater
relief Prague’s topography of prostitution, both before and after its dramatic reshaping by
Milič’s new religious community.

20 Only one brief article (in Polish) has been devoted specifically to the topic of prostitution in
medieval Prague: Wojciech Iwanczak, “Prostytucja w późnośredniowiecznej Pradze” (Prostitution in late
medieval Prague), in Biedni i Bogaci: studia z dziejów społeczeństwa i kultury ofiarowane Bronisławowi
Geremkowski w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin (The poor and the rich: studies on the history of society and
culture presented to Bronislaw Geremek on the sixtieth anniversary of his birth), ed. Maurice Aymard et al.
(Warsaw, 1992), 95-104. Iwanczak builds upon the topographical work of Václav Vladivoj Tomek in DMP
and makes extensive use of the work of František Graus, Chudina městská, 147-173.

21 This rich source, now edited, was used by Tomek and a few others in manuscript: Protocollum
visitationis archidiaconatus Pragensis annis 1379-1382 per Paulum de Janowicz archidiaconum
Pragensem factae, ed. Ivan Hlaváček and Zdeňka Hledíková (Prague, 1973). The witnesses responded to
series of questions posed to them on various subjects. These questions can be inferred from their answers as
well as by comparison with other surviving fourteenth- and fifteenth-century lists of model visitation
questions from Bohemia, e.g.: “an sciat aliquem clericum . . . concubinam habere . . . vel cum aliqua
muliere suspecta in loco suspecto colloquia habere”; “si aliquis teneat concubinam in domo vel extra
domum vel alias tenuerit et an habeat consortium cum mulieribus suspectis”; “an aliqui de ecclesia vel
clero inhonestis personis, concubinis vel suspectis mulieribus dent victum vel vestitum . . .”; “an sciat vel
credat aut fama sit, aliquos esse sceleratores vel adulteros”; “an credat, sciat vel fama sit, aliquos esse
usurarios vel baratatores,” (Zdeňka Hledíková, “Česká visitační Interrogatoria do počátku 15. století”
[Bohemian visitation interrogatoria up to the beginning of the 15th century], ČČH 16 [1968], 92-97).
Just as each of Prague’s towns boasted its own privileges, legal code, and walls, so each had its own local prostitutes. As with so many other matters, though, when it came to brothels Old Town enjoyed pride of place. And “Venice”—the eventual object of Milič’s activity—was the crown jewel (see Map 4.1). The report of its 1372 destruction described it as a “long-established brothel (lupanar) . . . called Venice.”

Matthias of Janov referred to it rather more critically as the “long-established and most famous brothel (prostibulum) in Prague, that is, the worst, most awful neighborhood, which is called Venice.” The brothel and the street bore the same name, apparently both a reference to Venice’s licentious reputation and a suggestive pun playing on the similarity between “Venetiae” and “veneriae,” an adjectival form of “Venus.” Old Town’s second brothel took over the pre-eminent position after the destruction of Venice.

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22 “lupanar antiquum . . . qui locus Venecie dicebatur” (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, ed. Josef Emler, FRB 4 [Prague, 1884], 546).

23 “antiquum et famosissimum prostibulum in Praga, videlicet vicum illum pessimum et horrendum, qui dicebatur ‘Venecie’” (RVNT 3:362).

24 Janov explains that the name, Venice “utique a Venere nuncupate,” though he also attests that it was known by the Czech form of the city’s name, Benátky; presumably only those literate in Latin would have understood the pun (RVNT 3:362). The name appears in Prague city documents from at least the early 1350s, precisely when these types of sources begin to survive in significant numbers (e.g., ZSMP 1.100, 102, 237). On prostitution and sexuality in Venice, see Elisabeth Pavan, “Police des moeurs, société et politique à Venise à la fin du Moyen Age,” Revue historique 244 (1980): 241-88. For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Guido Ruggiero, The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice (Oxford, 1985). I am grateful to Alan Stahl for the latter reference and for his insight into Venice’s medieval reputation.
Map 4.1: Topography of Prostitution in Later Fourteenth-century Prague
in 1372. It was located in “Hampays,” a Czech word meaning “brothel.”²⁵ At the 1380
visitation of the (appropriately named) parish of St. Valentine, exasperated parishioners
and their priest complained of unchecked gambling, prostitution, and violence in and
around the brothel. According to the parish priest,

there is a certain place called “the brothel” (hampays), in which bowls and
dice are played publicly on feast days and every other day throughout the
year, and in which there is also a public brothel (prostitulum publicum)
where there is common access to [the prostitutes]. He also said that never
a year goes by without two or three men being killed there.²⁶

This testimony was confirmed by parishioners of St. Valentine as well as inhabitants of
the neighboring parish of Holy Cross the Greater. Hampays, it seems, was at that time
Old Town’s major center for public prostitution, gambling, and “many other evils.”²⁷

In New Town, “Krakow street” (Krakovia platea) was by 1379 notorious for
prostitution and gambling.²⁸ The local parish priest described the street, which still bears

²⁵ This Czech word, in a variety of spellings, appears in the Latin sources and apparently derives
from the German “Hahn” (Iwańczak, “Prostytucja w późnośredniowiecznej Pradze,” 96). In modern Czech,
hampejz” still means “brothel.” This brothel certainly existed by 1365, but most surviving references are
from the fifteenth century. The sources use the same word to describe both the area or street and the brothel
itself, referring to it interchangeably as “hampays” and “gallimordium” (ZSMP 1:231, 232, 247). By 1417,
there was both an “old” and a “new” brothel here (ZSMP 1:231, 232, 247; cf. Josef Teige, Základy starého
místopisu pražského (1437-1620) (Foundations of Prague’s old topography), Part 1 [Prague, 1910-1915],
2:272). Alexandr Putík has now refuted convincingly Tomek’s identification of the location of the brothel
at hampays in the fifteenth century, moving it a short distance to “Hampejs street” in an area of Christian
houses near but not within the area of Prague’s most concentrated Jewish population (“On the Topography
and Demography of the Prague Jewish Town Prior to the Pogrom of 1389,” Judaica Bohemiae 30-31
(1994-1995: printed 1996): 24-26). This is very likely at or near the location of the fourteenth-century
“antiquum gallimordium” (cf. Putík, 26 n. 96).

²⁶ “Item [Fridricus plebanus] dicit, quod est quidam locus dictus hampays, in quo publicus ludus
globorum et taxillorum diebus festivis et aliis cottidie per cirriculum anni, in quo loco eciam est prostitulum
publicum et communis accessus habetur ad easdem et dicit, quod in eodem loco nunquam est annus, quo
non interficiantur duo vel tres homines” (PV 82).

²⁷ PV 82, 96.
the same name, as “an entire street of suspect women.” On the other side of the Vltava, only one area was particularly known for prostitution. Lying outside the original Lesser Town walls in a suburb called “Obora,” it was the abode of a group of persecuted but persistent prostitutes. The local parish priest complained in 1380 that the city councilors had repeatedly expelled them at his request, but that they always returned—under the protection of the city magistrate.

Within Prague’s landscape of prostitution, these were the four major landmarks. Nevertheless, as the Prague archdeacon’s visitation makes clear, they hardly held a monopoly on the city’s commercial sex. Seventeen different parishes—more than forty percent of those visited—reported the presence of prostitutes or at least women of ill repute. Yet no study of the visitation record has addressed the most salient feature of these testimonies: the range of Latin terms used to describe the women. These terms

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28 The street name appears in New Town records from the later 1370s. It was located near New Town’s eastern wall, and emptied into the expansive new horse market (now Wenceslas Square) (ZSMP 2:170-174). For the identification of the medieval and modern Krakow streets, see DMP 2:247.

29 “. . . dicit, quod habeat unam plateam integram de istis mulieribus suspectis, que platea Krakovia nuncupatur” (PV 62-64). “Halda meretrix” owned a house there in 1382 (ZSMP 2.171 no. 593b).

30 On Obora, see Václav Hlavsa and Jiří Vančura, Malá Strana / Menší Město pražské (Small Side / Prague’s Lesser Town) (Prague, 1983), 22-23, 37, 267-71; DMP 1:255, 2.124-25, 307.

31 PV 118. This is almost certainly same place as the Obora “prostitulum” mentioned in 1405 as being “ante valvam Strahowiensem” (ZSMP 3:78, no. 242; Iwańczak, "Prostytucja w późnośredniowiecznej Pradze," 98).

hold the key to understanding prostitution in Prague. The visitation record translated the
Czech and German oral testimonies into the Latin of the archdeacon of Prague, who was
a canon lawyer, and of his scribes. The result is not a transparent transcription of
testimonies, but a summary interpretation of orally reported public rumor.33 Far from
being random or haphazard, the terminology employed in this summary reflects precise
distinctions.34 Four terms appear most frequently in complaints about prostitutes,
understood for the moment in the broadest sense: meretrix publica, meretrix occulta,
mulier publica, and mulier suspecta.35 Scholars have treated these as synonyms, but their
usage leaves no doubt that they have distinct meanings. Discriminating among these
meanings in turn brings to light previously hidden contours of the city’s topography of
prostitution.

Who were these prostitutes and suspect women? The context makes clear, first of
all, that the designation of some meretrices as “occulte” was intended to distinguish them


34 On the archdeacon Paul of Janovice and the scribes active in recording the entire 1379-1382
visitation, see the introduction to the edition, (PV 23-25, or 38-39 in the abbreviated Latin introduction).
The distinction between an occulta and a publica meretrix was significant enough, for instance, that a
scribe emended the phrase “publice meretrices” in one passage to “occulte meretrices” by deleting the
“publice” and writing “occulte” above it in the original, unique manuscript of the visitation (PV 67 note h).

35 These terms appear most frequently in the nominative plural form, leading to ambiguity in some
cases as to whether “publice” and “occulte” function as adjectives or adverbs.
from the “publice meretrices.” Of the four, _meretrix publica_ appears least frequently in
the visitation record, relating to only a handful of situations. Most instances refer to
Hampays, the “locus” containing a “prostibulum publicum” in Old Town. In addition
to this brothel, the parish priest asserted that his parish contained “four houses of
mulieres publice meretrices, to whom there is public access.” Similar language applies
to the area in the suburb of Obora outside Lesser Town. According to the long-time
parish priest of Lesser Town’s major parish, there was a “certain place of _mulieres
publice meretrices_ outside the gate.” This was the “locus”—a “prostibulum” is
mentioned there in city records from 1405—whose _publice meretrices_ enjoyed the
support of the city magistrate. Another apparent reference to _meretrices publice_ places
them in houses occupied by university students in the Old Town parish of St. Nicholas
(which extended to within a block of Hampays). However, “publice” may function
here—as it demonstrably does in some cases in the visitation record—as an adverb rather
than an adjective, leaving the precise status of the _meretrices_ in doubt. The testifying
parishioner, whose primary concern seems to have been the general scandal caused by the
students’ residences, asserted that “there are many houses where students live in his and
in other parishes, and there is hardly a single one in which _meretrices publice_ are not
harbored, by which people are greatly scandalized.”

36 It is worth noting that this is the only use of the term “prostibulum” in the visitation record; the
Czech word _hampays_ is likewise used only in reference to this particular Old Town location (PV 82).

37 The priest’s testimony is confirmed (with a slight discrepancy in the number of houses) by his
parishioners as well as by lay witnesses from a neighboring parish (PV 82, 96).

38 PV 118; cf. ZSMP 3:78 no. 242.

39 PV 79.
The remaining appearances of *meretrices publice* in the visitation record clustaround Procopius, an Old Town parish priest. Procopius accused some fellow priests of consorting with “publice meretrices” at the rectory of a nearby parish.\(^{40}\) It turns out that Procopius was something of an expert on the matter. He admitted to having a “publica meretrix” at night occasionally, but justified his actions by insisting that he did so in secret, being sure to kick her out in the morning. His attitude (and that of other clerics employing a similar defense) illustrates well the overarching concern of the archdeacon and visitation witnesses: public scandal and *mala fama*. It was not the particular acts so much as the public rumor that generated concern.\(^{41}\) Incidentally, Procopius’s self-evaluation proved rather too charitable: several other witnesses from around the city reported his frequent association with disreputable women and *publice meretrices*.\(^{42}\)

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\(^{40}\) “Item [Procopius] dicit, quod plebanus sancti Johannis in Vado est meretricator et fornicator publicus et dicit, quod ipse invitat plebanos sancti Egidii, sancti Philippi et Jacobi, sancti Andree ad domum dotis et aducit *publicas meretrices* et ipsos permittit commisceri et hoc idem facit alios presbyteris et dicit, quod faciunt coreas ibidem cum dictis mulieribus nudi, solum in camisis existentes. Item dicit, quod est quasi communis introitus *publicarum meretricum* ad dotem dicti plebani sancti Johanni et multa enormia committuntur per ipsum et dicit, quod dicti plebani sepius invitant se mutuo cum dictis mulieribus et domino Czinkone, canonico Wissegradensi, de quo homines huius rei noticiam habentem scandalizantur” (emphasis added; PV 90).

\(^{41}\) “Item dicit, quod ipse deponens interdum, sed raro, habet unam publicam meretricem per noctem, sed oculte et ipsam in crastino repellit” (PV 90). A rural vicar uses almost precisely the same defense: “dicit, quod ipse interdum commiscetur una nocte mulieri publice et statim de mane, soluto precio, ipsam dimittit” (255). In addition to emphasizing the secrecy of their trysts, the priests tend to emphasize the impermanence of these relationships in order to shield themselves from the charge of harboring a concubine. Another village vicar thus admits that he “sepius commiscetur mulieribus publicis, sed nunquam habuit aliquam specialem” (261). On “common fame” as a basis for prosecuting prostitutes in England, see Karras, *Common Women*, 26, 138: “being thought of as a whore could be as damaging as actually being a prostitute.”

\(^{42}\) One nearby vicar testified that “dominus Procopius . . . sepius solet habere convivia cum mulieribus publicis meretricibus in domo sua, ut ipse testis audivit, de [quo] homines scandalisantur ut plurimum” (PV 78; cf. 77, 81). An altar priest at Procopius’ own church was tactfully ambiguous on the subject, admitting that “sepius veniunt mulieres ad dotem,” but asserting that he “nes[c]it, quales sunt” (91).
All references in the visitation record to *meretrices publice* relate to this handful of cases. In contrast, the term *occulta meretrix* appears much more frequently, in at least seven different parishes. Often the owners and tenants of certain houses, a group in which both sexes were well-represented, were said to be harboring “mulieres occulte meretrixes.” One of the best known houses belonged to a priest. Several witnesses report that a woman named Nedcza lived in a house owned by Ludwig Kojata, a New Town parish priest and pluralist, and that she in turn harbored “mulieres occultas meretrices” there. Witnesses disagreed, though, as to who was responsible for their presence. The priest’s vicar implied that Ludwig himself was at fault, but the bell-ringer (the next witness interviewed) claimed that the vicar had rented the house to Nedcza without Ludwig’s knowledge. The bell-ringer further asserted that the prostitutes always flee whenever he or Ludwig visits the house, but that the two men make sure to beat and expel any they happen to find there. Ludwig’s activities, like those of Procopius, were notorious in Prague. In addition to having a long-time concubine and being a “magnus fornicator,” he was a well-known gambler with the habit of arriving unclothed (*nudus*) at the same house where he kept prostitutes. Twice Ludwig, naked, barely reached the safety of his own house ahead of the pursuing New Town magistrate.\(^\text{43}\)

The predominance of priests in the visitation’s prostitution-related testimony stems in part from the general principle, spelled out in numerous brothel regulations from other cities, that prostitution should be tolerated specifically to provide a sexual outlet for unmarried (and potentially troublesome) men. Married men and clerics were accordingly

\(^{43}\) PV 115-16, 48-49, 80, 82. For the identification of the testifying vicar, “Petrus de Suticz,” with the man blamed by the bell-ringer “dominus Petrus dictus Sosna,” see DMP 5:214.
barred from brothels. A priest or a monk who consorted with prostitutes thus immediately invited gossip and accusations. Moreover, it was precisely such rumors about priests that the archdeacon sought during his visitation. For this reason, prostitution usually appears in his record when it involves secular priests (monks did not fall under his jurisdiction) or when a priest or parishioner, questioned about the general state of the parish, complained about neighbors who harbored disreputable women in their houses.

Who were these women? What distinguished the meretrices publice with whom Procopius occasionally spent the night from the mulieres occulte meretrices living in Ludwig’s house? Discerning the identity of both of these groups of women (or at least their reputed identity) depends first of all upon the interpretation of meretrix. Canon law, following Roman law, had long considered multiple sexual partners to be an essential characteristic of the meretrix. The classic definition, transmitted by Gratian and thus commented upon by subsequent generations of canon lawyers, is that of Jerome: a meretrix is a woman who is available to the lust of many men. The acceptance of money for sex was a secondary consideration. For these reasons, Ruth Mazo Karras in her study of later medieval English prostitution translates meretrix with the more general term, “whore,” reserving the modern English word, “prostitute,” for women who exchange specific sex acts for money.

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Clearly the Prague visitor’s definition of *meretrix* implied a woman’s sexual availability to multiple men. The *meretrix* was thus distinct from the many clerical concubines who also appear in his visitation record. The scribe applies the phrase “to whom there is common access” to both *publice* and *occulte meretrices*. The same description also appears periodically in connection with *mulieres publice* as well as *mulieres suspecte*. This assertion of general availability sums up the classic legal definition of the *meretrix*. All the women “to whom there is common access” fit into Karras’ broad category of “whore”—that is, women having multiple sexual partners. Women from all four categories, in other words, shared the same promiscuous reputation. Any of them might be called a *meretrix*. But which ones were also engaged in commercial prostitution? And how did a *publica meretrix* differ from an *occulta meretrix*?

Here studies on prostitution elsewhere in medieval Europe prove instructive. This terminology is not unique to the Prague sources. One finds the same or similar language wherever authorized and unauthorized prostitution coexisted. Jacques Rossiaud, for instance, describes a series of public, municipal brothels in southeastern France that were home to “common public prostitutes” (*filles communes publiques*). Legal and civic documents distinguished them from the unauthorized but sometimes tolerated “clandestine prostitutes” (*filles secrètes*), women engaged at least part-time in prostitution but not in the officially sanctioned city brothels. They tended to work in the baths or out of private houses. Unlike the public prostitutes, they did not normally follow

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47 e.g., PV 82, 86, 97, 115, 116.

48 For *mulieres publice* see, e.g., PV 49, 85, 130; for *mulieres suspecte*, see 117, 125, 130. The same phrase appears in connection with both uses of the less precise term, *mulieres meretrices* (86, 115).
the statutes requiring them to announce their status by their dress. Sometimes public
prostitutes from the municipal brothels exposed these clandestine prostitutes, who
represented their unauthorized competition.\textsuperscript{49} For German-speaking lands in the
fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, Peter Schuster has chronicled a similar distinction
between the public prostitutes of the municipal \textit{Frauenhaus} and private prostitutes living
in private houses; at least some of the latter were unauthorized, clandestine prostitutes
\textit{(heimliche Dirnen)}.\textsuperscript{50} In short, public prostitutes practiced their profession with official
sanction and under municipal control; clandestine prostitutes did not.\textsuperscript{51} Increasingly in
the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the only places to find public prostitutes were the
newly founded municipal brothels. Those cities that did permit some public prostitutes to

\textsuperscript{49} Rossiaud even reconstructs a typical career path that might lead a young woman from a start in
clandestine prostitution to public prostitution in the city brothel. He also records instances in which public
prostitutes helped to expose their clandestine competitors \textit{(Medieval prostitution}, trans. Lydia Cochrane
[Oxford, 1988], 3-10, 32-37, 43), as does Bloch \textit{(Die Prostitution}, 1:781). Leah Lydia Otis argues that the
term \textit{meretrix publica} began to appear in the twelfth century as a general term for professional prostitutes,
the adjective \textit{publica} by then being necessary “to distinguish the professional public woman from the
private amateur,” \textit{(Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc
[Chicago, 1985]}, 16-17). However, Otis also notes that after the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century
establishment of municipal brothels, a distinction developed between the “agent of municipal prostitution”
and the “illicit prostitute flaunting the police regulations by working outside the authorized center” (94-95).

\textsuperscript{50} Schuster follows Otis in describing \textit{meretrix publica} as a term used since the twelfth century by
clerics and lawyers to refer generally to prostitutes. However, like Otis he also discusses the competition
between the prostitutes of the municipal brothel and unofficial prostitutes. Furthermore, his references to
sumptuary regulations of prostitutes provide evidence of distinctions in city legislation between prostitutes
“im Frauenhaus” and “heimliche” prostitutes; or “offenbare Dirnen” and “heimliche Dirnen” \textit{(Das
Frauenhaus: Städtische Bordelle in Deutschland (1350-1600)} [Paderborn, 1992], 24-29, 121-28, 148, 150).
František Graus similarly recognizes a distinction in medieval sources between “freilebende Dirnen, Dirnen
in Frauenhäusern und heimliche Prostituierte (die den “offiziellen” Dirnen Konkurrenz machten),” in his
“Randgruppen der städtischen Gesellschaft im Spätmittelalter,” \textit{Zeitschrift für historische Forschung} 8
(1981): 394 n. 33; see also Bloch, \textit{Die Prostitution}, 1:780.\textsuperscript{51} Cf. Bronislaw Geremek on different types of
prostitutes in Paris: “Among the professionals, only some lived permanently in the streets assigned to them,
that is, in the brothels. These ‘public’ prostitutes exercised their profession in a regular manner and under
official control,” \textit{(The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris}, trans. Jean Birrell [Cambridge, 1987],
216).
live outside the public brothels often limited them to strictly defined parts of the city or banned them from the so-called honest neighborhoods. Like their counterparts in the municipal brothel, these authorized prostitutes might also be subject to a special city tax.52

The distinction made by the Prague visitation record between “public” (publice) and “clandestine” (occulte) prostitutes reveals in Prague the same combination of authorized and unauthorized prostitution found in many other European cities. Furthermore, the particular contexts in which these terms appear reveal the existence in fourteenth-century Prague of municipally sanctioned districts for prostitution and even municipal, or at least municipally authorized, brothels. In 1949 František Graus speculated that Prague, like Wrocław and Brno, may have had a public brothel. He suggested that the poor survival of city records might explain the absence of documentary evidence for it.53 Graus’ surmise can now be substantiated.54

It is also now possible to draw distinctions between Prague’s different disreputable districts and to pinpoint the locations of authorized prostitution. According

52 Lömker-Schlögell, “Prostituierte” (see above, n. 2), 65-68; Schuster, Das Frauenhaus, 121-28. Schuster also cites a 1469 survey of prostitutes in Strasbour that divides prostitutes into three groups: those in the municipal brothel, those living in private (but apparently authorized) brothels, and those that “wellent nit offen huren sind” (122); cf. Bloch, Die Prostitution, 1:780.

53 Chudina městská, 65. It should be noted that Graus’s speculation fit extremely well into his attempt in this book, informed by Marxist ideologies, to highlight the institutional ways in which the upper segments of society repressed the “urban poor.”

54 Peter Schuster, who did not identify a Frauenhaus in Prague, claimed that there was evidence of an authorized municipal brothel in every larger city in his (primarily German-speaking) area of study, a region extending as far east as Wrocław and Vienna: “In allen größeren Städte des Verbreitungsgebiets der Frauenhäuser ist ein städtisches Bordell nachweisbar” (Schuster, Das Frauenhaus, 54). In light of the paucity of relevant sources, it is not surprising that Schuster does not include Prague as one of the cities having such a brothel. Iwan Bloch, on the other hand, includes Prague in his list of cities with Frauenhäuser, even asserting that it had more than one (Die Prostitution, 1:744). His source is Johann Scheible, Die gute alte Zeit geschildert in historischen Beiträgen, vol. 6 of Das Kloster. Weltlich undgeistlich (Stuttgart, 1847), 471; Scheible in turn attributes this information to Julius Max Schottky, Prag, wie es war und wie es ist, 2 vols. (Prague, 1831).
to the visitation record, public prostitutes lived in only two parts of Prague. The parish of St. Valentine contained several houses that harbored them, all within or near the area called Hampays. Hampays, remember, also contained the only prostibulum publicum mentioned explicitly in the visitation record. This is significant. Prostibulum was by this time among the most common Latin terms for a municipal brothel, equivalent to the German Frauenhaus. The addition in this case of the adjective “public” and the presence of public prostitutes leaves no doubt of the existence within Hampays of a municipal brothel. Other public prostitutes inhabited the suburb Obora outside the Lesser Town walls. They presumably lived in a similar municipal brothel rather than private houses; a prostibulum certainly existed there by 1405. The prostitutes’ legal right to be there explains their persistence in spite of the local priest’s long-running campaign to oust them. Their landlord (or brothel manager?) who “harbored them there” was in fact the

55 PV 82, 96.

56 Schuster identifies lupanar and prostibulo (sic, for prostibulum) as the two Latin words used to translate Frauenhaus between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (Das Frauenhaus, 34). Otis finds a different situation in fourteenth-century Languedoc; citing the example of Nîmes, she argues that postribulum (a local corruption of prostibulum) and lupanar both “usually corresponded to an entire district of prostitution rather than to an individual house” (Prostitution in Medieval Society, 49). Rossiaud, on the other hand, takes prostibulum to refer to a single building (Medieval Prostitution, 60). This seems to be the best way to interpret nearly all the references in Prague to a prostibulum, with the possible exception of Matthias of Janov’s reference to the “prostibulum” called Venice as a “vicum”—a street or neighborhood: “. . . antiquum et famosissimum prostibulum in Praga, videlicet vicum illum pessimum et horrendum, qui dicebatur ‘Venecie’” (RVNT 3:362).

57 ZSMP 3:78 no. 242.

58 The parish priest complained that whenever he successfully campaigned to have the public prostitutes expelled by the town councillors (scabini), “they always return to that place and there are harbored (ibidem foventur) by the city magistrate” (PV 118). The suburb or village of Obora remained legally separate from Lesser Town even after its fourteenth-century inclusion within the second, much larger circle of walls surrounding Prague’s western-bank settlements. In the thirteenth century Obora was subject to the legal jurisdiction of Lesser Town’s magistrate, but it had its own magistrate and council by the later fourteenth century (DMP 1:289; 2:307).
city magistrate himself, Lesser Town’s highest legal official. Studies of medieval prostitution elsewhere in Europe suggest that such an arrangement was not unusual.

In 1380, Prague’s public prostitutes were concentrated in these two areas on the margins of Old Town and Lesser Town respectively. All evidence suggests that both districts possessed some kind of official status or recognition, whether or not the respective towns directly profited from their brothels. The “famosissimum prostitutum” known as Venice, though defunct by the time of the visitation, undoubtedly had shared the same official designation. Women in these places practiced prostitution publicly and with municipal sanction; quite possibly they distinguished themselves by their dress. Their existence and the activities that surrounded them sometimes drew the ire of their neighbors—even authorized brothels were notorious centers of gambling and

59 This is clear from the use of the verb “foveo,” especially in conjunction with the adverb “ibidem.” The visitation record repeatedly employs the same verb to describe the harboring of clandestine prostitutes and suspect women in particular houses, e.g., PV 49, 63, 66, 67, 69, 70, 79, 86, 115, 116, 117, 120, 125, 127. The city magistrate at the time of the visitation (3 March 1380) was probably Bohuslav Hrubec, a lesser noble (cliens de Schonanger) who owned a house across from the parish church on Lesser Town’s main square. For his house, see ZSMP 3:7 no. 267; for his title, see SA 1:134 no. 139. So far as I can determine, he last appears as the city magistrate in a document dated 8 December 1379, whereas his successor, Peter Polstarz, first appears as the city magistrate in a document of 31 May 1380, (Jaroslav Kadlec, Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas in Prag vom Gründungsjahr 1285 bis zu den Hussitenkriegen, mit Edition seines Urkundenbuches [Würzburg, 1985], 282, no. 267; for his title, see SA 1:134 no. 139. So far as I can determine, he last appears as the city magistrate in a document dated 8 December 1379, whereas his successor, Peter Polstarz, first appears as the city magistrate in a document of 31 May 1380, (Jaroslav Kadlec, Das Augustinerkloster Sankt Thomas in Prag vom Gründungsjahr 1285 bis zu den Hussitenkriegen, mit Edition seines Urkundenbuches [Würzburg, 1985], 282, no. 118; 258, no. 99; cf. DMP 5:97). It is not clear whether the magistrate was harboring the public prostitutes as a private person or ex officio.

60 For other examples of civic and clerical officials running brothels (authorized or otherwise), see Karras, Common Women, 41-45; Lömkert-Schlögel, “Prostituierte,” 61-62; cf. Schuster, Das Frauenhaus, 99-112. According to Bloch, it was common for a city official to have oversight of the male or female bawd who personally ran the brothel (Die Prostitution, 1:763).

61 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil described Venice as a “lupanar,” the other Latin word commonly used to retranslate Frauenhaus into Latin (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4:546; cf. Schuster, Das Frauenhaus, 34).

62 For examples of the widely varying clothing regulations for prostitutes, see Schuster, Das Frauenhaus, 147-50.
violence. Yet ultimately the public prostitutes had municipal authorization to reside
and work in these three areas of Prague.

“Clandestine prostitutes” had no such civic sanction. Like the public prostitutes,
many or most of them were almost certainly prostitutes (in Karras’s terminology).
Spread throughout Prague’s parishes, these women exchanged sex for money. Despite
their clandestine status, their presence was widely known. A certain widow named Mara,
for instance, “publicly kept clandestine prostitutes” (tenet publice occultas mulieres
meretrices) in two different houses, and harbored still more “clandestine prostitutes” in
the house she occupied. Others accused of sheltering clandestine prostitutes included a
tailor, a painter, and a nobleman, as well as several women identified only by a single
name: Vela, Ela, and Polka, for instance. The clandestine prostitutes themselves remain
anonymous, with the exception of Clara, said to be both a clandestine prostitute and the
rumored concubine of Peter, a canon of St. Apollinaris in Prague. The existence and
location of these women—commercial prostitutes—was not secret in any meaningful
sense of the term, but they nevertheless lacked the official status of the public prostitute.
Indeed, the term occulta meretrix itself, best translated as “unauthorized prostitute,”
makes no sense outside the context of authorized prostitution. Without a municipal
brothel, or at least municipally authorized prostitution, there could be no clandestine
prostitutes.

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63 Schuster, Das Frauenhaus, 72-77.
64 PV 69.
65 PV 69, 71, 74, 97, 116. For more on Peter, see 80, 115; DMP 5:203.
The same does not hold true for the broader *mulier publica*. This term sums up the classic definition of the *meretrix*: a woman available to many (or all) men. A certain “mulier publica” named Dorothy, for instance, lived with her mother in a house where there was “accessus publicus” to Dorothy. She was a common woman, considered “public” precisely because of the reputation of her sexual availability to all. Any whore might be called a public woman. Context suggests, however, that many were more than just women with multiple sexual partners. These women also received money for sex, and tended to do so in unauthorized places. Sometimes different witnesses refer to the same women variously as both “public women” and “clandestine prostitutes.” The latter was the more precise term, but both were accurately applied. The relative frequency of the terms suggests that a prostitute working in Prague without municipal authorization was more likely to be classified a clandestine prostitute than a public woman. For the rural areas of the Prague archdeaconry, by contrast, the relevant testimony is completely dominated by “public women,” some of them manifestly

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66 For “public women” and “common women,” see Karras, *Common Women*, 138; cf. Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, 50, who sees *mulier publica* as the new conventional term for prostitutes from the end of the fourteenth century, replacing (and apparently equivalent to) *meretrix publica*. She interprets this vocabulary change as evidence for a new acceptance of prostitution accompanying the introduction of municipal brothels. See also Schuster, who cites a much earlier appearance of “publicae mulieres” as equivalent to *meretrices publice* (*Das Frauenhaus*, 24). Neither of these interpretations can be reconciled with the distinct usage of the two terms in the Prague visitation record.

67 A parishioner from St. Nicholas in Old Town—the same one who complained of prostitutes in students’ residences—seems to associate the activity of *mulieres publice* with beer-cellars: “in multis domibus in parrochia nostra sunt celaria, in quibus cervisia propinatur, ubi publice mulieres manent et publice coeunt ac fornicantur.” Here, though, the only instance in the visitation record of “publice mulieres” (as opposed to “mulieres publice”), the first “publice” may function as an adverb, as the second “publice” certainly does. If so, the reference may not be to public women, but more generically to women who publicly consort with men (PV 130, 79).

68 In one rural example, there is explicit reference to a public woman charging money for sex (with a priest). He testifies that he “occasionally has sex [*commiscetur*] for a night with a public woman,” but that “in the morning, immediately after paying her fee [*soluto precio*], he expels her” (PV 255).

69 e.g., PV 49, 115.
engaged in commercial prostitution. On the other hand, not a single “clandestine prostitute” is to be found outside of Prague. It would have been redundant to describe a prostitute as “unauthorized” (occulta) in places where no centers of authorized prostitution existed.

“Suspect women” were even more widespread in Prague than clandestine prostitutes or public women. This term covered the broadest range of women, likely embracing unauthorized prostitutes along with unattached, single women. Neighbors suspicious of a woman’s activities and living arrangements simply reported her to the visiting archdeacon. Sometimes the adjective “suspect” functioned as a shorthand form of “suspected of being a prostitute,” as in the case where the witness asserted that there was “common access” to a group of women living together. Other “suspect women” were simply women with bad reputations. Disreputable cellars in the parish of St. Gall served beer and caused scandal, while the disreputable women (mulieres suspecte) frequenting them gave rise to mala fama. Keeping company with gamblers, thieves, 

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70 Small towns could serve as centers in which nearby village men could find prostitutes. The parish priest of the little village of Trnová admitted to occasionally bringing back public women from the nearby town [oppidum] of Davle, located near the confluence of the Vltava and Sázava rivers, though he denied that he did so openly and publicly: “Interrogatus, si publicas mulieres de Dabel [Davle] op[p]ido receperit sibi et duxerit easdem publice de op[p]ido et utrum easdem commiscuerit carnaliter, respondit, quod quando non potest carere, tunc ducit sibi oculte et caute commiscetur” (PV 321).

71 There is, however, one instance of a “mulier publica meretrix” in the visitation record from the rural parts of the Prague archdeaconry, namely from the village of Tuřany approximately 30 kilometers (20 miles) from Prague. The vicar there presented the episode as a one-time occurrence, with the prostitute arriving (from out of town? from the nearby town of Slaný? from Prague?) and staying the night with the parish priest at the manse: “dicit, quod quadam vice venerat quedam mulier publica meretrix et mansit una noxium [sic, for nocte?] ibidem in domo dotis, quam plebanus coniacuit” (PV 219).

72 One priest reportedly harbored “mulieres suspectas occultas meretrices, ad quas est communis accessus.” The same witness reported the rumor that another man was keeping “mulieres occultas suspectas” (PV 116; cf. 117, 125, 130).

73 A witness described these places as “celaria suspecta” and claimed that “quasi continue solent intrare mulieres supecte” (PV 110).
and pickpockets—or with priests—was enough to tarnish a single woman’s reputation and earn her the moniker “suspect.” 74  The notorious priest Procopius claimed to have seen “suspect women” enter the rectory of another priest and sit down with him. Procopius admitted that he was not positive that the priest had sexual relations with the women, but he assumed that they had been paid for their company. 75  In other cases, the reason for a woman’s unfavorable reputation is even more obscure; for some, it may simply have been their status as single women not living within the traditional household or holding a position considered respectable. 76

All of these women—suspect women, public women, clandestine prostitutes, and even public prostitutes—occupied fundamentally insecure positions in Prague.  Clerics and parishioners alike complained of the scandalous activities surrounding the municipal brothel at Hampays: public prostitutes, gambling (even on holy days), and violence hardly endeared Hampays to its neighbors. The public prostitutes of Obora likewise had an indefatigable opponent in the local parish priest, who managed to have them temporarily expelled on more than one occasion. Yet the law was on their side; they were always able to return. The same cannot be said for the clandestine prostitutes,

74 The parishioners of the Old Town parish of St. Benedict reported that their previous parish priest “sepius habuit mulieres circa se suspectas” (PV 99). Parishioners of St. Adalbert in New Town said “quod Sramo sutor fovet cottidie in domo sua lusores taxillorum, fures, bursicidas et mulieres suspectas”; the parish priest confirmed their testimony, but spoke of “fures utriusque sexus” rather than “mulieres suspectas” (117).

75 “Item [Procopius] dicit, quod interdum ipse testis vidit mulieres suspectas in domo plebani sancte Marie in Lacu et dictum plebanum eisdem consedere, sed nescit, si commiscetur eisdem et credit, quod non gratis intrant ibidem ad plebanum” (PV 90).

76 On this topic, see the work that Judith Bennett and others have done on “singlewomen,” e.g., in Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250-1800, ed. Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide (Philadelphia, 1999). Cf. Bronisław Geremek, The Margins of Society, 221: “It seems that every unmarried woman, and every girl who lived separated from her parents and outside the context of family, if she belonged to the popular and plebeian classes, was suspected of immorality.”
public women, and suspect women, some of whom may have been guilty only of being single women. Clearly the presence of any of the three within a parish was a cause of scandal and *mala fama*. The priest of the Old Town parish of St. John, for example, reported that “in his parish there are two or more houses of clandestine prostitutes who are openly [publice] visited by men, scandalizing many people in the parish.” Two parishioners of St. Gall similarly fingered two “suspect cellars” where beer was served as causes of scandal in the parish: “suspect women were almost constantly entering them, giving rise to *mala fama*.” The class of men involved made no difference. In the wealthy parish of St. Gall, a certain lady from the Rhineland (*domina de Reno*) rented a room. Rumor spread throughout the city that nobles, barons, and others had “common access” to her, and that she had sex with many men. In this and in other cases, the parish priest attempted to intervene. Preachers fulminated from the pulpit against those harboring any of these women, though often to no avail. In at least one case, several Old Town city councilors scoured their parish to find and expel *malas mulieres*. The Prague archdeacon repeatedly exhorted parish priests and parishioners alike to rid their

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77 The stock phrase, “de quibus homines scandalizantur,” parallels the formulaic English complaint that the existence and activities of a particular prostitute was “to the nuisance of her neighbors” (Karras, *Common Women*, 95).

78 PV 74.

79 PV 110.

80 “. . . Frana dictus Gannher, parrochianus ipsius, convenit commodum in domo sua cuidam domina de Reno, ad quam est communis introitus nobilium baronum et aliorum, de qua volat mala fama per totam civitatem, ut commisceretur diversis” (PV 108).

81 “Dominus Petrus, plebanus . . . dicit, quod plures suspecte mulieres sint in plebe sua, de quibus ipse fecit plures publicas moniciones in ambone in ecclesia sua, ut non tenerentur, que tamen hucusque tenentur.” Similarly, a vicar from another parish claimed that he “sepius fecit exortaciones in ecclesia monendo, ut tales mulieres suspecte non foverentur . . . tamen hucusque foventur et moniti per plebanum et me adhuc foventur” (PV 71, 125).

82 PV 73.
own parish of such women. Women like these, he implied, should not be allowed to defile the parish by their presence. Interestingly, the archdeacon limits his efforts to individual parishes rather than scheming to expel them from the entire city.

The contours of Prague’s topography of commercial sex now emerge more clearly. Old Town had two authorized districts for prostitution, containing two public brothels at Venice and Hampays. Lesser Town similarly had a place of authorized prostitution, probably with a public brothel, in the suburb of Obora. Krakow street in New Town, on the other hand, was home to many “suspect women” and even “public women,” but neither a *prostitulum* nor “public prostitutes.” It seems also to have been a magnet for transient women and occasional prostitutes. There was Dorothy, for example, a *mulier vaga* who lived in *Krakovia* along with other transient women. She seems to have traveled to nearby villages selling salted fish, and had once been the concubine of a rural priest. After hearing testimony about the women of Krakow street, the visiting archdeacon commanded some parishioners, who were also city councillors of Hradčany (the urban area adjacent to Prague castle), “ut dictas malas mulieres de plebe expellant, ut non defedent plebem ipsorum”; and again, “mandat plebano, ut dictas duas domus, de quibus supra, mundet, ut dicte mulieres occulte [=mulieres occulte meretrices] amplius non teneantur” (PV 121, 66). Elsewhere he likewise tempered his command with the realistic concession, “quantum valet” (67).

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83 *e.g.*, “dominus archidiaconus predictus mandavit ipsi plebano deponenti, quatenus det opem et operam, ut dicte mulieres [mulieres occulte meretrices], de quibus supra, ex[s]irpetur cum adiutorio plebesanorum suorum . . . et expellat de plebe sua predicta” (PV 74). The archdeacon, however, did not always seem very optimistic about their likely success in this endeavor: “mandavit eidem plebano . . . ut extirpet dictas mulieres [mulieres suspecte], *quantum in eo est et in exortacionibus moneat et inducat hospites domorum, ut tales mulieres non foveantur*” (emphasis added; 120). Elsewhere he likewise tempered his command with the realistic concession, “*quantum valet*” (67).

84 The archdeacon commanded some parishioners, who were also city councillors of Hradčany (the urban area adjacent to Prague castle), “ut dictas malas mulieres de plebe expellant, ut non defedent plebem ipsorum”; and again, “mandat plebano, ut dictas duas domus, de quibus supra, mundet, ut dicte mulieres occulte [=mulieres occulte meretrices] amplius non teneantur” (PV 121, 66).

85 Not all sex with authorized prostitutes necessarily took place within these districts, however. As Schuster has shown, even the public prostitutes of municipal brothels were in some cities allowed to make private house calls (*Das Frauenhaus*, 71). This seems to be what Procopius the parish priest described (PV 90).

86 I take “Krakovia” not to be the Polish city but Prague’s Krakow street (often simply called “Krakow,” *e.g.*, ZSMP 2:170-174), not least because the same Dorothy once arrived at a nearby village “from the city of Prague” with another transient woman, “carrying salted fish in their arms.” The vicar of the same village—Třebotov, located less than fifteen kilometers (ten miles) south of Prague—admitted to having had the same Dorothy as a concubine: “Benessius de Cladrub, presbyter, nunc vicarius in
archdeacon insisted—under threat of excommunication—that the local parish priest attempt to remove them.\textsuperscript{87} It is no accident, I believe, that Prague’s archdeacon repeatedly commanded parish priests and their parishioners to expel both clandestine prostitutes and suspect women from their parishes, but never prescribed action against the public prostitutes of Hampays or Obora.\textsuperscript{88}

Like most other European cities of the time, Prague consigned even its authorized prostitution to the city’s margins.\textsuperscript{89} Hampays lay in the flood-prone region between Prague’s Jewish population and the river. The authorized prostitutes of Obora lived just outside Lesser Town’s walls, while the unauthorized prostitutes of Krakow resided on the very edge of New Town. Prague’s brothels thus fit perfectly into the larger picture of later medieval European prostitution. Yet in another respect, Prague challenges a common element in the standard account of later medieval prostitution. Authorized municipal brothels first appear in great numbers during the second half of the fourteenth century, the “troubled decades of plague, war, and social disorder.”\textsuperscript{90} This temporal coincidence has inspired various theories identifying the plague, with its dramatic

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Trzebotow, interrogatus, confessus fuit, se habuisse Dorotheam interdum moram trahentem in Kracovia, mulierum vagarum, pro concubina pro necessitate sua, dicens se angelicam vitam ducere non posse. Item dixit, quod due mulieres vagabunde venerunt de civitate Pragensi portantes pisces salitos in humeris suis usque in Trzebotow et quod ibidem in curia dotis in stuba pernoctaverunt et hoc in vigilia Annuncciacionis sancte Marie anno depresenti et quod statim de mane abinde recesserunt, videlicet Dorothea predicta una cum quadam alia, quam nominare nescivit” (PV 390-91).
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\textsuperscript{87} The archdeacon commanded the priest of St. Stephen in New Town to take action against the \textit{mulieres suspece} of Krakow street, ordering “ut ipse det opem et operam ad dictas mulieres extirpandas sub pena excommunicacionis” (PV 62).
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\textsuperscript{88} See above, n. 83. Unfortunately, the visitation record does not preserve the archdeacon’s response to the vast majority of testimony he received.
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\textsuperscript{90} Otis, \textit{Prostitution in Medieval Society}, 31.
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demographic and social effects, as at least one cause for this new institutionalization of prostitution. Peter Schuster pointed to both demographic and “mental” consequences of the Black Death and subsequent decades of plague.91 Jacques Rossiaud considered the resulting urban depopulation to help explain the acceptance of public prostitution as an alternative to the three ‘crimes against nature’—sodomy, masturbation, and chastity—and as a way “to encourage young men to ‘natural’ efforts and eventually to marriage.”92 Richard Trexler argued that the fifteenth-century Florentine promotion of prostitution should be understood primarily as an effort to combat male homosexuality and thereby, indirectly, to stimulate the birthrate and restore an urban population decimated by plague.93 Even Leah Lydia Otis, who considered the fundamental reason for both the rise and fall of institutional prostitution to be a gradual (and largely unexplained) transformation in lay sexual morality occurring in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, conceded that the Black Death and its demographic effects may explain “some aspects of institutionalized prostitution (especially its developments in the second half of the fourteenth century).”94

By all accounts, though, Bohemia’s population did not suffer significantly from the plague until 1380, well after its municipal brothels are known to exist. The initial mid-century Black Death in particular largely spared the Czech lands, but even the

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91 Das Frauenhaus, 49-51.

92 Medieval Prostitution, 86-97.


94 Prostitution in Medieval Society, 101-110, at 103, 41-45; cf. Karras, “Prostitution in Medieval Europe” (see above, n. 2), 247.
terrifying 1380 outbreak did not cause nearly the demographic devastation that the Black Death had already inflicted upon many other parts of Europe.\footnote{See Introduction, p. 26 n. 54.} Whatever may have inspired the establishment of a municipal brothel in Prague, it was not plague. The evidence from Prague seems to support a less dramatic explanation, one suggested by an observation made nearly a century ago by Iwan Bloch: that in many cities the widespread institutionalization of urban prostitution paralleled the development of urban institutions in general.\footnote{“Wenn man also wohl nicht daran zweifeln kann, daß unter dem römischen und später fränkischen Einflusse schon lange vor dem 14. und 15. Jahrhundert Bordelle in verschiedenen Formen bestanden haben . . . so sind doch gerade die beiden letzten Jahrhunderte des Mittelalters die Zeit der systematischen Organisation und der planmäßigen Förderung des Frauenhauswesens, dessen Entwicklung mit dem Ausbau und der Konsolidierung des Städtewesens überhaupt parallel geht” (Die Prostitution, 1:739).} In Prague, documentary evidence for the brothel called Venice first appears in the middle of the fourteenth-century, precisely when the volume of both civic and ecclesiastical records increased dramatically.\footnote{See above, n. 24.} This undoubtedly reflects the maturation of Prague’s institutions. Old Town, for example, established its first town hall only in 1338.\footnote{Privilegia civitatum Pragensium, ed. Jaromír Čelakovský (Prague, 1886), Codex juris municipalis regni Bohemiae 1:55-57 no. 35.} Unfortunately, the precise foundation dates of Prague’s municipal brothels cannot be determined from the surviving records, so any explanation of their introduction must remain speculative.\footnote{It does seem, though, that Prague’s towns were among the earlier in central Europe to institute authorized brothels. Schuster documents only a handful established before 1375 (Das Frauenhaus, 35-40).} We do know, however, that the earliest references to Prague city brothels coincide with the consolidation of its civic institutions, not with the aftermath of devastating plagues.
4.3 From Venice to Jerusalem: Topography Transformed

Prague’s topography of prostitution changed dramatically in 1372, with the imperially ordered destruction of Venice, Prague’s leading public brothel. This act represented only a very small part of Charles IV’s ambitious refashioning of Prague’s topography, but it enabled Milič of Kroměříž to develop his nascent, experimental religious community. Jerusalem did not, however, grow directly out of Milič’s initial conversion. Rather, it was a project of the final years of his public and sometimes controversial ministry in Prague.\(^\text{100}\) Having given up his canonry and the position of sacristan in the cathedral of St. Vitus, Milič was preaching regularly in Prague by late 1364. Conrad Waldhauser had at that time been active in Prague for over a year, and his charismatic example may have inspired Milič. Eventually Milič was delivering sermons several times daily throughout the city in three languages.

Then Milič nearly underwent a second conversion, this time from popular preacher to cloistered monk. Attributing his spiritual impulse to the voice of the Holy Spirit and borrowing words from Apocalypse, Milič wrote that he was “in the spirit” and that the Spirit, speaking to him in his heart, commanded him to take up his cross and deny himself—that is, to enter a religious order (\textit{intrare religionem}) and cease preaching. Remarkably, Milič once again resisted the well-worn path to the cloister; he claimed to have ignored this divine command on the advice of his “counselors.” He did, however, take a long sabbatical from preaching.\(^\text{101}\) In what Milič described as a time of penance

\(^\text{100}\) The most recent account of Milič’s life appears in Morée, \textit{Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia}, 60-75, though even this careful reconstruction now requires revision in light of my findings about the life printed by Balbín.

\(^\text{101}\) “I, Milič, was in the Spirit . . . Thus the Spirit said to me in my heart that I should take up my cross and crucify my flesh and forsake and deny myself, and enter the religious life [\textit{ut . . . intrarem religionem}], and not think any longer about myself, and not preach, as I was not suited [\textit{idoneus}] for this.
and study, of searching and anxiety, the same Spirit drew the now-silent preacher’s attention to the arrival of Antichrist. Spurred to travel to Rome in 1367, he hoped to proclaim as much directly to Pope Urban V (1362-70), whose own advent in the city of St. Peter was then eagerly anticipated. An announcement of his proposed sermon, nailed by Milič to the doors of St. Peter’s at the behest of the Spirit speaking within him, landed the charismatic preacher briefly in an inquisitor’s prison.\footnote{102} The same controversial apocalypticism also earned him a period of incarceration in Prague. Yet it seems that in later years Milič toned down or even abandoned the apocalyptic fervor he exhibited in 1367.\footnote{103} Certainly he remained a respected public figure in the Bohemian capital city.

Yet all my advisors prevented me from entering the religious life and from fleeing preaching. Over the protests of my counselors, however, I held back from preaching for a long time” (“Libellus de Antichristo,” in RVNT 3:368-669; cf. Apoc. 1.10. The 1890 edition of Ferdinand Menčík, under the title, “Prophecia et revelatio de Antichristo,” has been reprinted along with an (unfortunately unreliable) English translation as Milič of Kroměříž, The Message for the Last Days: Three Essays from the Year 1367, ed. Milan Opočenský and Jana Opočenská (Geneva, 1998): 56-71.

\footnote{102} “Interea incidit in mentem meam adventus Antychristi . . . Et interim irruit in me spiritus ita, ut me continere non possem, dicens michi in corde, ‘Vade, intima publice per cartam, quam affiges hostiis ecclesie sancti Petri, sicut solitus fuisti intimare in Praga, quando eras predicaturus, quod velis predicare, quod Antychristus venit . . .’ (“Libellus de Antichristo,” in RVNT 3:369, 371, emphasis added). A bowdlerized version of this entire passage finds a place in the vita printed by Balbín, where both the claim of divine inspiration and every reference to Antichrist have been removed: “Interea incidit in mentem ejus, ut ad urbem transiret Romanam, et ibidem verbu dei praedicaret . . . Et in tantum venit sibi talis cogitatio in mentem: Vade, intima publice per chartam, quam affiges ostiis ecclesiae s. Petri, sicut solitus fuisti intimare in Praga, quando eras predicaturus, quod videlicet predicares” (Miscellanea historica Regni Bohemiae, Decas 1, lib. 4, 49-50, emphasis added). Emler, whose 1873 edition purportedly reprints Balbín’s text exactly, evidently noticed this borrowing and partly emended the end of the censored passage to read: “Et in tantum venit sibi talis cogitatio in mentem: vade, intima publice per chartam, quam affiges ostiis ecclesiae s. Petri . . . quod velis prae dicare, quod Antichristus venit” (FRB 1:411, emphasis added). This editorial addition, apparently never before noticed, is the only significant deviation of Emler’s text from that of Balbín.

\footnote{103} This may be inferred in part from the eschatology manifested in his model sermons (Morée, Preaching in Fourteenth-century Bohemia, 153-58). It is not entirely clear from an accusation made against him in 1373 whether or not he had eventually abandoned his earlier views regarding the appearance of Antichrist: “Primo quod ipse tenuit et affirmavit, quod in anno domini MCCCLXVI Antichristus fuisse natus, et quia eandem opinionem dimittere noluit, fuit per dominum Johannem archiepiscopum Pragensem incarceratus” (“Articuli domini Milicii,” in František Palacký, ed., Über Formelbücher zunächst in Bezug auf böhmische Geschichte, 2 vols., (Prague, 1842-47), 2.183). On this and the other 1373 accusations, see below, p. 252.
On at least three occasions he was invited to preach at Prague’s biannual diocesan synod, and his Latin model sermons were eagerly and very widely copied.\textsuperscript{104}

The circumstances surrounding the foundation of Jerusalem in 1372 are obscure, in part because of the problematic character of the richest account of Milič’s life. Its compiler in fact lifted significant parts of his portrayal of the Prague community verbatim from a twelfth-century depiction of the monastery Bernard founded at Clairvaux.\textsuperscript{105} The remainder of its testimony must be carefully sifted and compared with other sources. This much is clear: several years into Milič’s Prague preaching ministry, prostitutes began to attend his sermons in significant numbers. Many, including public prostitutes from the municipal brothels (\textit{publicae meretries de prostibulis}), reportedly converted. A group of them began to live together in a house in southwestern Old Town, a kind of halfway house from which many re-entered respectable secular society as domestic servants, wives, and obedient daughters.\textsuperscript{106} Others remained with Milič. It seems that the fiery preacher understood the economic realities that had led these women to prostitution, for he combined moral suasion with the offer of food and clothing. Some women he even redeemed from prostitution by paying the otherwise inescapable debts that bound

\textsuperscript{104} Milič’s three synodal sermons have been edited by Vilém Herold and Milan Mráz, \textit{Jana Miliče z Kroměříže tři řeči synodní / Johannis Milicii de Cremsir: Tres sermones synodales} (Prague, 1974). Matthias of Janov relates that two hundred or three hundred clerics copied the works of Milič as quickly as he wrote them (RVNT 3:363-64). On the surviving manuscripts of Milič’s unpublished sermons, see Pavel Spunar, \textit{Repertorium auctororum bohemorum provectum idearum post universitatem Pragensem conditam illustrans}, vol. 1., Studia Copernicana 25 (Wroclaw, 1985), 171-92. I know of more than 150 manuscripts containing his sermons, including several not known to Spunar.

\textsuperscript{105} See above, n. 7.

\textsuperscript{106} “... in brevi tempore prope ducentas meretries ad penitentiam convertit notorias et publicas ... .” (RVNT 3:359); cf. the \textit{Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii}: “publicae meretries de prostibulis per ejus praedicationem ad poenitentiam converterentur” (FRB 1:418.) The same \textit{vita} identifies the first Old Town house they occupied and the reason why their numbers fluctuated between twenty and eighty: “quia quotidie per probas matronas civitatis Pragensis ad servitia recipiebantur, aliae vero in matrimonium proborum tradebantur; multae vero a parentibus resumebantur” (FRB 1:418).
them to their so-called “landlords” (hospites).\textsuperscript{107} Mílič, in other words, provided alternatives for poor and indebted women driven into and trapped in prostitution by poverty. For some he facilitated their return to an honorable position in secular society—much as Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) had promoted marriage to former prostitutes as an act efficacious for the remission of sins.\textsuperscript{108} Other women received from him continuing shelter and sustenance.

His efforts clearly made an impression, for one (repentant?) landlord-cum-bawd (quaedam hospita illarum mulierum) bequeathed to Mílič two houses on Venice street—houses, that is, within Prague’s primary area of authorized prostitution, home to public prostitutes. Then the emperor stepped in, destroying the nearby brothel and transferring the property to Mílič for a chapel, dedicated appropriately to Mary Magdalene and two other prostitute saints, Afra (of Augsburg), and Mary of Egypt.\textsuperscript{109} Mílič himself laid the chapel’s cornerstone on 19 September 1372.\textsuperscript{110} By this time, the preacher seems to have developed a vision for his new religious community. Former prostitutes not already converted to marriage, domestic service, or filial obedience were to become religious women. Mílič purchased twenty-seven nearby properties with donated money and

\textsuperscript{107} František Graus uncovered records of numerous small loans in the 1390s between “Krakow” creditors (mostly women) and prostitutes. The terms of these loans tended to bind the prostitutes to their creditors/bawds until the repayment of the debt, while insuring that such an eventuality was extremely unlikely (Chudina městská, 66-67).

\textsuperscript{108} X 4.1.20, ed. Emil Friedberg, Corpus iuris canonici, 2:668.


\textsuperscript{110} ZSMP 1.98 no. 293.
christened the impressive complex “Jerusalem,” apparently a reflection of his continuing eschatological predilections.111

The public brothel known as Venice and its immediate surroundings thus gave way to a religious community. Urban space dedicated to commercial sex—the “worst and most horrible neighborhood”—became something new.112 But what precisely was it? Jerusalem was hardly the first experiment in transforming prostitutes into women dedicated to the religious life. Its own chapel’s dedication evoked an entire Christian tradition of holy harlots. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe witnessed the foundation of many religious houses for former prostitutes.113 An order, the Penitents of St. Mary Magdalene, had been established in the thirteenth century for precisely such women.114 Prague itself had a Magdalene house outside Lesser Town, although there is

111 Both vitae report that Milíč paid the debts of prostitutes, fed them, and clothed them. Only Balbin’s text reports the location of the initial group of penitent prostitutes and of the houses bequeathed to Milíč (Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, FRB 1.418-419; RVNT 3.359-60), but city records independently confirm the existence of Geruša Hoffart (Hofarta in the vita). She bought two lots on this street in 1353, and last appears as the owner in 1364 (ZSMP 1.102 no. 309a). Matthias of Janov omits Charles IV’s role in the creation of Jerusalem, but the Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii is here confirmed by the chronicle of Beneš Krabice of Weitmil. The emperor, according to Beneš, had the brothel destroyed in 1372 and an oratorium to three prostitute saints built on its site. Beneš does not mention Milíč by name, but writes that the emperor was “ductus consilio quorundam presbiterorum secularium, qui pro illo tempore verbum Dei predicando in civitate Pragensi multa bona faciebant” (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.454). Only Balbin’s text records the purchase of the further “XXVII areas” (Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, FRB 1.419). Matthew of Janov’s explanation that the place was named Jerusalem “according to the prompting of the spirit of Jesus” sounds like something Milíč himself might have claimed; it is entirely in keeping with the rhetoric of the writings associated with his 1367 sojourn in Rome (see above, n. 101).

112 Matthias of Janov termed it “vicum illum pessimum et horrendum” (RVNT 3.362).

113 Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*; 72-76; Graus, “Randgruppen der städtischen Gesellschaft im Spätmittelalter” (see above, n. 50), 405-406. For a particular example, see Joëlle Rollo-Koster, “From Prostitutes to Brides of Christ: The Avignonese Repenties in the Late Middle Ages,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32:1 (2002), 110-44. My thanks to the author, who kindly sent me an offprint of this article.

no evidence that it still recruited from the ranks of prostitutes in the later fourteenth century. In one sense, Milíč’s Jerusalem fit perfectly into this ongoing tradition. Prostitutes undoubtedly became the special object of his ministry. He watched over his converts physically and spiritually, he sought out and reclaimed any recidivists. Not that his audiences were composed exclusively of Prague’s disreputable women: women and men of all sorts, including members of religious orders, were said to have attended Milíč’s sermons. Some were inspired by him to penitence. Yet friend and foe alike reported that Jerusalem’s female inmates were all reformed prostitutes. One can imagine that the life at Jerusalem under the charismatic preacher might have appealed broadly to all kinds of impecunious “suspect women,” women whose poverty and social status closed to them the gates of the many traditional religious houses where endowments or rents (as Waldhauser complained) normally accompanied the profession of new converts. Reportedly, though, Jerusalem’s female members came specifically from the ranks of Prague’s public prostitutes (meretrices publice).

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116 RVNT 3.359-60.

117 There has been some confusion on this point, giving rise to the portrayal of Jerusalem as a religious community notable not so much for combining reformed prostitutes and preaching clergy as for bringing together lay and clerical members—a depiction well-suited to the argument that Jerusalem resembled houses of the Devotio Moderna in the Low Countries: “1372 gründete er in Prager Diernenviertel eine Stätte für bußwillige Mädchen und Frauen—nicht nur ehemalige Dirnen—, die hier ein gemeinsames Leben in Gebet und Buße führen sollten” (Girke-Schreiber, “Die böhmische Devotio Moderna” [see above, n. 13], 85). This opinion seems to stem from a mistaken interpretation of the testimony of Matthias of Janov, who reported widespread penitence inspired by Milíč’s ministry but specified that the penitent former prostitutes were the ones cared for and incorporated into the preacher’s community: “in brevi tempore prope ducentas meretrices ad penitenciam convertit notorias et publicas, exceptis alis peccatoribus sexus utriusque, que latenter penitenciam assumpserunt; adolescentularum autem virginum et viduarum non erat numeros, que miro modo igne caritatis Jhesu a verbo ipsius inflamate
Venice, forcibly removed from Prague’s network of brothels and transformed into a house of repentant prostitutes, might have been easily inserted into the city’s sacred topography—a topography marked most prominently by its numerous parish churches and religious houses (see map 4.2). Jerusalem, however, did not fall neatly into any of the traditional categories. First of all, the community adopted no rule. The time-honored and approved outlet for religious impulses like that of Milič had since Lateran IV been to enter an established order or at least adopt an accepted rule. This was normally the case even for houses of repentant prostitutes, like the one that Pope Gregory XI was supporting at Avignon at precisely this time. Milič, however, had resisted his own strong urge to join the religious life; nor did he now force a monastic rule upon his new religious community. Furthermore, his followers came to include preaching priests as well as reformed prostitutes. All the men residing at Jerusalem seem to have been clerics, who preached, heard confessions, and confected the Eucharist. Matthias of Janov described the complex as including a “scola et templum.”

usque hodie per universam Boemiam perseverant . . . Ipse vero Mylycius . . . predictas meretrices penitentes suis sumptibus fovit . . . ad curam suam assumptis vestiendis, nutriendis et informandis” (RVNT 3.359, emphasis added). My interpretation is consistent with the portrayal in the anonymous Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, which (in parts not borrowed from other known medieval sources) refers to the women as “publicae meretrices de prostibulis” and as “poenitentes mulieres,” a common designation for former prostitutes (FRB 1.418-19). Milič’s opponents pointedly omit all qualifying adjectives and refer repeatedly to the female inhabitants of Jerusalem simply as “meretrices mulieres” (“Articuli domini Milicii,” in Palacký, ed., Über Formelbücher, 2.183).

118 Gregory XI provided this community with its own adaptation of the Augustinian rule, the most common to be followed by Magdalene communities (Rollo-Koster, “From Prostitutes to Brides of Christ,” 119-20; Bloch, Die prostitution, 1.819-20.

119 Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, FRB 1.421; this is confirmed by the testimony of several of them before the archbishop’s court (e.g., SA 1.21 no. 101, 1.72 no. 1).

120 RVNT 3.362.
Map 4.2: Jerusalem and the Sacred Topography of Prague
Jerusalem, in other words, was more than a traditional house for penitent women. It was also a place for housing and training preachers, perhaps even a poor priest’s alternative to the mendicant studia and other colleges associated with Prague’s university.\(^{121}\) This combination of elements broke molds and invited gossip. Nor was it easy to overlook the new establishment, with its two dozen properties and unusually large number of inhabitants. The anonymous vita claims that at times eighty-three people of both sexes were supported at Jerusalem, while Matthias of Janov asserted that every day Milič provided for two hundred penitent women in his community.\(^{122}\) Such numbers, even accounting for a healthy measure of exaggeration, would have dwarfed the majority of Prague’s religious houses.

It did not help that Jerusalem’s leader possessed the zealot’s ability to offend. His words and deeds stirred up a remarkable coalition of mendicants and secular priests who, as chapter 3 demonstrated, had recently experienced one of the more raucous episodes of an always turbulent relationship. In 1373, led by the parish priests, they wrote and forwarded to Avignon a series of charges against Milič. Together with Pope Gregory XI’s shocked response, these preserve valuable evidence of the character of the

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\(^{121}\) The majority of Prague’s university students, like other medieval university students, would never have received a degree. Many would be or become beneficed parish priests; learning to preach was thus an important practical part of their university experience, including for those—the great majority in Prague—studying in the arts faculty (Peter Moraw, “Careers of Graduates,” in *A History of the University in Europe*, vol. 1, *Universities in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge, 1992), 263; Jean Dunbabin, “Careers and Vocations,” in *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 1, *The Early Oxford Schools*, ed. J. I. Catto (Oxford, 1984), 565-605; cf. D. L. D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (Oxford, 1985), 191-97). A rivalry between Jerusalem’s preachers and Prague university students may help to explain the accusation that Milič preached against studying the liberal arts and stirred up local animosity against arts students: “ipse in publico praedicavit, quod nullus artes liberales studere deberet, alias omnes, qui in artibus studerent, mortaliter peccarent. Et sic in tantum populum contra studentes artes suis praedicationibus incitavit, quod ipsi studentes a populo non solum odio habentur, sed haeretici appellarentur” (“Articuli domini Milicii,” in Palacký, ed., *Über Formelbücher*, 2.184).

\(^{122}\) *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii*, FRB 1.420; RVNT 3.360.
community at Jerusalem. To be sure, they are hostile witnesses. Yet at the very least they capture the claims and perceptions of Jerusalem’s contemporary critics.

Moreover, independent evidence confirms at least the general tenor of several of them.

Milíč, it is clear, sought to create in Jerusalem a religious community that was unrecognizable and ultimately unacceptable within Prague. The space it sought to occupy—physical, legal, and social—proved too contentious. Jerusalem challenged institutional categories and bent canon law. For this reason, the community and its leader were embroiled in legal action before the archbishop’s consistory court for the entire period of its existence. First of all, Milíč was not content with the ecclesiastical status of his little chapel. His opponents claimed that he had petitioned to have it elevated to the status of a parish church, and consistory court records support this assertion. Through two deals in June 1373, Milíč arranged the exemption of Jerusalem and twenty-one nearby houses from the tithes and burial duties of their former parishes, in exchange for annual indemnities. For the inhabitants of those houses, some or all of which by that time probably belonged to Milíč and Jerusalem, the small chapel dedicated to prostitute saints in effect became their local parish church. Carving out this island of parochial

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123 The papal bull dated 13 January 1374, the articles to which it responded, and a partial refutation of the teachings they contain survive in a Prague manuscript dated to 1384: KMK I 40/2, ff. 128v-128v-129r, 137r-139r. For the dating, see Antonín Podlaha, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum qui in Archivio Capituli Metropolitani Pragensis asservantur* (Prague, 1923), 156-59. They three texts were printed in Palacký, ed., *Über Formelbücher*, 2.182-186 (with erroneous folio references). The same papal letter was sent simultaneously to the archbishop of Gniezno as well as the bishops of Wrocław, Krakow, Litoměřice, and Olomouc; a very similar one was sent on 10 February to Emperor Charles IV (MV 4.2.444-45 no. 783, 451-52 no. 791).

124 On the use of these accusations as evidence, see Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 13; Loskot, *Milíč*, 87. Given the composite, strongly hagiographical, and at times defensive character of the *vita* printed by Balbín, its testimony should no longer be given precedence over that of Milíč’s contemporary opponents.

exemption was no small matter. As I argued in chapter 1, parish boundaries were carefully defined and fiercely defended. This was especially true of the small, densely packed parishes of southwestern Old Town. An entire constellation of parish churches encircled Jerusalem. Milíč’s efforts to reshape Prague’s parish topography, to add a nineteenth parish to an already crowded Old Town, never came to fruition. Subsequent hearings finalized the financial details of the original agreements and established more firmly the exemption of Jerusalem’s immediate surrounds from two neighboring parishes. In return, Milíč not only agreed to secure the annual indemnities with rents (including a rent of two and a half schocks on the house he personally inhabited), but he also had to abandon to the archbishop’s general vicar the patronage rights over his own chapel.126 A space had been gained for Jerusalem, but this achievement had cost Milíč a significant portion of his power to control that space. Furthermore, the full parish status that Milíč coveted for his new community always eluded him.

If Jerusalem in some ways came to resemble a parish, in other ways it mimicked a religious house. Having expelled the brothel’s original inhabitants—apparently they did not all convert—Milíč installed his new converts.127 The resulting community’s similarities to a traditional religious house were unmistakable to outsiders. Milíč not only dressed his converted prostitutes, his opponents charged, but dressed them alike, “in a single, monastic-like habit”—a claim that met repeated and vigorous denials in the

126 The agreement to the establishment of three rents, totally fivs schocks annually, is especially noteworthy considering Milíč’s reputation for condemning clerics to receive rents (see below, p. 255). For the legal agreements, see SA 1.50-51 no. 259, 1.51-52 no. 263, 1.57 no. 293. For an account of all of the legal action involving and surrounding Milíč, see Jaroslav Polc, Svatý Jan Nepomucký [St. John Nepomuk], 2nd ed. (Prague, 1993), 53-67.

127 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil reports that Venice’s original inhabitants were expelled when it was destroyed (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.546).
anonymous vita. Moreover, his accusers wrote, Miloč ruled the pious women as their superior and enforced strict enclosure. For those who left without permission, he imposed special disciplines. Sometimes he beat them as a penance. These descriptions are entirely plausible, if perhaps overstated. When Miloč criticized monastic women, he railed against abuses he explicitly associated with a lack of strict enclosure: gravitating to royal courts, attending dances and jousts, and taking lovers. It was not the ideal of the traditional female monastic life, but its perversion, to which Miloč objected. He would have been careful to prevent his former prostitutes, whom he praised as holier than any virginal nuns, from following such licentious examples. Prague priests further charged that Miloč’s clerical male followers also wore a particular habit, and that he referred to their common life as the “vita apostolica.” In his petition to create a parish around Jerusalem, Miloč described the little community as a “place for the learned” [locum literatorum]. His unimpressed opponents instead termed it a “new order,” something all knew to be forbidden by canon law. And then there was his heretical and dangerous teaching, most notably his demand for frequent communion by the laity and his condemnation of priests who receive income from rents or even possess private property.

128 Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii, FRB 1.420, 421. There is little question that the Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii responds directly to these charges against Miloč, but it is not now possible to determine whether the responses originated among his fourteenth-century apologists or perhaps with the compiler of the vita, who may have been working centuries later. These denials should not therefore be granted any more credibility, and probably less, than the charges of his contemporary accusers.

129 One of the articles against Miloč claimed that he “asserted that these women should be preferred over all monastic women [sacres virgines],” (Palacký, Über Formelbücher, 2.183). For his criticism of monastic women (virgines), see In Christi nomine [Epistula ad Papam Urbanum V], reprinted from Menčík’s 1890 edition in Miloč of Kroměříž, The Message for the Last Days, ed. Opočenský and Opočenská, 18-31, here at 26).

130 The novel character of Miloč’s experimental religious community was sufficient to inspire local opposition, but the accusations leveled against him in the twelve articles also point a wide range of
Devotio Moderna as one more later medieval example of a *vita semireligiosa*, an experimental middle way between monastic and secular spirituality.¹³¹ Milič’s local opponents saw it differently. To them, Jerusalem was a hotbed of heresy in the form of an unsanctioned religious house.

The legal battle in Prague did not go well for Jerusalem. Pope Gregory XI’s January 1374 bull ordered the Prague archbishop to investigate the charges against Jerusalem, and the Prague court obliged. Under these circumstances, Milič seems to have considered his chances of a successful defense better in Avignon. There Milič died on 29 June, probably before the resolution of his case.¹³² Three weeks later, Gregory XI’s controversial teaching. While I have already treated the accusations relevant to my argument, it may be useful for the reader to summarize the entire list, especially as the edition can be quite difficult to find. (Paul Freedman kindly sent me a copy of the relevant pages before I was able to see the manuscript in person.) Milič’s accusers claimed that: (1) he taught that the Antichrist had been born in 1366; (2) he preached publicly that all who buy property and other goods, and sell them for a profit, should be excommunicated; (3) he taught that the rents on houses or other property received by priests should be considered usury; (4) he taught lay people that they are required to receive the Eucharist daily, or at least twice a week; (5) he assigned daily or twice-a-week reception of the Eucharist as a penance; (6) he had created in Jerusalem what amounted to a new order, with a community of prostitutes (*congregatio mulierum meretricum*) living under strict enclosure, subject to corporal penance at his hand, and clothed in a monastic-like habit together with a congregation of priests, who were also dressed in a special habit and living under what he termed the “apostolic life”; (7) he had requested that his chapel at Jerusalem be elevated to the status of a parish church, describing it as a “place for the learned” (*locum litteratorum*); when his request was refused by the Prague cathedral chapter, he claimed publicly that there was no truth among the pope, cardinals, bishops, prelates, parish priests, religious, and other priests; (8) when he was told that, according to canon law, he was subject to excommunication for founding a new order, he claimed that the emperor would defend him if the pope were to excommunicate him; (9) he publicly preached that no one should study the liberal arts, and that anyone who does commits mortal sin; (10) he prohibited the wearing by women of certain (modest and upright) clothing, once even publicly ripping the coronet or ornamental garland (*sertum vel crinale*) from the head of a nun at one of his sermons and tearing it to pieces; (11) he claimed that he had achieved much more and converted many more than Christ himself, and that he would accomplish through the secular authorities what he could not by the power of his ideas; (12) he preached that no priest should have any private property, but that priests instead should hold everything in common (Palacký, *Über Formelbücher*, 2.182-186).

¹³¹ Kaspar Elm, “Vita regularis sine regula: Bedeutung, Rechtsstellung und Selbstverständnis des mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Semireligiosentums,” in *Häresie und vorzeitige Reformation im Spätmittelalter* (see above, n. 14), 239-73. One critical difference between the Devotio moderna and Milič’s Jerusalem was the commitment of the former to remain regular members of their local parishes (John Van Engen, *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings* (New York, 1988), 14-15).

¹³² On the death date of Milič, see František M. Bartoš, “Ze studií husitských” (Of Hussite studies), *Casopis matice moravské* 61 (1937): 213-14. The improbable account in the *Vita venerabilis*
papal bull and the list of articles against Milič were read publicly before Prague’s assembled clerics in the refectory of the Dominican house. The archbishop’s vicars general ordered those in attendance to condemn from the pulpit the teachings and practices described in the articles.\textsuperscript{133} They were serious. Within a week, they were interrogating priests suspected of neglecting this order or of expressing support for the censured opinions.\textsuperscript{134} Already several preachers who followed Milič had faced examination before the consistory court as well as suspension from preaching or even exile from Prague.\textsuperscript{135}

Jerusalem did not long outlive its founder. In December of the same year, Emperor Charles IV signed over Jerusalem with all its properties and rights to the Cistercians for a theological \textit{studium} modeled on the Cistercian college of St. Bernard at the University of Paris.\textsuperscript{136} Milič’s transformed brothel once again underwent a transformation. There is no word of the fate of Jerusalem’s converted prostitutes.\textsuperscript{137} Some may have had little choice but to return to Prague’s brothels. Ultimately there was no room within the city’s sacred topography for Milič’s experimental community.

\textit{Presbyteri Milicii} of Milič’s exoneration and the praise he gained at the papal court is suspiciously well-suited to the seventeenth-century purposes of Bohuslav Balbin. I can find no independent confirmation of the claims made there (FRB 1.426-430). Nor does Matthias of Janov even hint at a respite from persecution, let alone this kind of an exoneration, at the end of Milič’s life (RVNT 3.364).

\textsuperscript{133} The reading took place on 19 July 1374 (SA 1.95 no. 116).

\textsuperscript{134} SA 1.96-97 nos. 119-20.

\textsuperscript{135} SA 1.72 no. 1, 1.81 no. 52, 1.88 no. 88, 1.92-93 no. 104.

\textsuperscript{136} LE 1.105 no. 219.

\textsuperscript{137} There is some evidence, on the other hand, that a few of Milič’s clerical followers continued to live together elsewhere after his death (e.g., PV 103).
Unsuccessful in his attempts to gain official sanction, Milič instead incurred the animosity of those who represented the traditional ecclesiastical structure.

In some respects it had been a revolutionary experiment. Milič did not merely buy up the cheap properties of one of the city’s less reputable districts, but ostentatiously reclaimed (with the emperor’s help) Prague’s most famous bordello, a municipal or at least municipally sanctioned brothel—transforming in an instant the landscape of prostitution in Prague. Nor did Milič adopt a recognized monastic rule for his charges, who represented an unusual, perhaps unprecedented combination of repentant prostitutes and preaching clerics. On the other hand, Milič’s understanding of the religious life for women seems to have been patterned on a very traditional model of strict enclosure. For him, the conversion of women who once publicly prostituted themselves involved almost entirely restricting their access to the public spaces of the city.

4.4 Jerusalem and the Emperor’s New Prague

Milič inspired, built, and directed Jerusalem. His experiment would not have been possible, however, without the support of Emperor Charles IV. It was the emperor who ordered the destruction of Prague’s most famous brothel and transferred the property to Milič. Scholars have generally interpreted this act as evidence of Charles IV’s approval of Milič’s endeavors, an example of the emperor’s general (if not unlimited) support for individuals and religious orders associated with “reform.”

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138 e.g., Zdeňka Hlediková, “Karel IV. a církev” (Charles IV and the Church), in Karolus Quartus, ed. Václav Vaněček (Prague, 1984), 149-50. Charles IV’s support of Milič was apparently strong enough to withstand even personal attack from the preacher. Matthias of Janov makes the surprising, perhaps even incredible, claim that Milič once identified Charles IV himself as the Antichrist in a public sermon before the emperor—and spent time in prison because of it (RVNT 3.361). The accusations brought by Milič’s contemporaries confirm that Milič was imprisoned (by the archbishop) for teaching the 1366 arrival of the Antichrist, but no mention is made of the emperor in this context (Palacký, Über Formelbücher, 2.183).
correct. Yet there are further motives at work here. The conversion of Venice into Jerusalem matched perfectly with Charles IV’s larger program for the topography of his blossoming capital city. With his new cathedral, new palace, new monasteries and especially new walls, Charles IV had been transforming Prague since before his coronation. By the later 1360s, the cumulative impact of these numerous (and mostly ongoing) projects on Prague’s geography had become more and more evident. It was time, the emperor decided, to implement a plan outlined in New Town’s 1348 foundation charter nearly twenty years before. In 1367, he ordered the walls dividing New Town from Old Town to be pulled down and the two town councils reduced to one. They were to be joined, physically and legally. Here, finally, would be a city worthy of an emperor. Yet in this case, Charles’s power failed his vision. Local sentiment never completely acceded to his grand idea. Ten years later most of the sturdy Old Town walls stood strong, and the pragmatic emperor quietly agreed to the renewed separation of New Town from Old Town.\footnote{Lorenc, Nové město pražské, 129; DMP 2.59, 70-71. For the 1348 foundation charter of New Town, see Privilegia civitatum Pragensium, ed. Čelakovský, 79-83 no. 49; for a chronicle account, see Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.536.}

For the decade between 1367 and 1377, however, the two cities were united as Greater Town. Suddenly Venice street found itself very near the center of the new urban topography. Previously it had been a perfect place for authorized prostitution—in an accessible but safely marginal area near Old Town’s walls. After the 1367 unification of Old Town and New Town, the new central position of Venice street made its brothel something of an embarrassment. Indeed, Venice street was ripe for urban renewal even before the cities were united. It does seem to have been a poor area, probably inhabited
predominately by Czech-speakers. Janov wrote scathingly of the street’s character two decades later. Property records, however, tell a more nuanced story. For a marginal neighborhood, its character had been remarkably mixed. On the one hand, Old Town’s executioner lived there for a time (a telling sign of a street’s reputation) on property rented from the same bawd who later donated her house to Milič. Directly across from the brothel, however, lay a large house (domus seu curia) that was sold to a nobleman in 1361 by the wealthy collegiate church of Vyšehrad. Charles IV’s decision to unite New and Old Towns would undoubtedly have immediately encouraged the improvement of this mixed neighborhood.

So even if the idea to eradicate Prague’s most famous brothel in 1372 came from Milič, it must have immediately appealed to the emperor—not only as an ostentatious act of piety and support for a popular local preacher, but also as a way to eliminate what had become a topographical anomaly. By replacing Venice with Jerusalem, Charles IV secured an honorable reputation for a street that his urban development had brought to the center of Prague. And what better name for a mid-city religious house than Jerusalem, the city at the center of the idealized medieval world? Topographical considerations also help to explain the startling alacrity with which Charles IV transferred the property to the Cistercians after Milič died, barely two years after the birth of Jerusalem. In one sense, the new college for Cistercian students of theology represented a sharp break from the

140 The majority of known house-owners in southwestern Old Town forty years later (around 1410) had names that suggest they were Czech-speaking, according to the oft-cited study of Jaroslav Mezník, “Národnostní složení předhusitské Prahy” (The ethnic composition of pre-Hussite Prague), Sborník historický 17 (1970), 5-30, esp. 14-17. Mezník himself offers several reasons to be cautious about extrapolating from the small and difficult-to-interpret set of surviving data.

141 DMP 2.176-79; ZSMP 1.102-104.

142 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Chronicon, FRB 4.546).
ideals of Milič’s experimental community. In another sense—one probably recognized
by the emperor—the substitution of a traditional, uncontroversial religious community
for the leaderless and embattled Jerusalem secured for this part of Prague the very
improvements originally achieved by Milič.\footnote{In the royal edict transferring Jerusalem to the Cistercians, Charles IV makes no attempt to
distance himself from Milič, who had become very controversial indeed in the year before his death. He
refers to Milič as “our beloved and devoted Milič of good memory.” This rhetoric, however, may also
represent an attempt to justify the emperor’s right to dispose of Jerusalem and all its property without the
permission of the community (LE 1.105 no. 219).}

4.5 The Legacy of Jerusalem

Milič permanently transformed the geography of prostitution in Prague. Venice
gave way to Hampays as Old Town’s most notorious brothel, while Venice street
remained free from prostitutes. The name Jerusalem also lived on as a local landmark
even after the Cistercians resettled it.\footnote{ZSMP 1.99 no. 293.} Yet although Milič gained numerous devoted
local admirers, none attempted to recreate his failed experiment in the religious life.
Many scholars, it must be said, have considered Prague’s Bethlehem chapel (founded
1391) the direct descendent of Jerusalem.\footnote{See, for instance, a clear summary of the general view: “Although these buildings at his death
were given to the clergy who opposed his ministry, Milič’s community remained alive and eventually
found a new building and new leaders in Bethlehem chapel and its preachers” (John Klassen, The Nobility
and the Making of the Hussite Revolution [Boulder, CO, 1978], 64). Remarkably, few commentators have
expressed the slightest curiosity about the fate of the women of Jerusalem. The primary evidence for direct
personal connections between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is a fragment of a document, c. 1386-88, in which
a prominent Prague cathedral canon entrusts to a group of clerics and laymen—including priests described
as Milič’s associates or preachers, and one of the lay founders of Bethlehem chapel—the legal rights to a
“house and property” (\textit{domus ac area}) that Milič in turn had entrusted to the canon but was now in the
possession of certain “lords and brothers” (\textit{domini et fratri}). Since its discovery, this document has been
interpreted as evidence that a group of Milič’s followers were attempting to reclaim Jerusalem (the \textit{domus})
from the Cistercians (the \textit{domini et frateres}) shortly before they founded Bethlehem chapel (Antonín
Podlaha, “Paběrky z rukopisů knihovny metropolitní kapitoly v Praze” [Gleanings from manuscripts of the
library of the Metropolitan Chapter in Prague], \textit{Věstník České akademie} (1909), 328-31; Otakar Odložíl, “The Chapel of Bethlehem in Prague: Remarks on its Foundation Charter,” in \textit{Studien zur älteren

\textit{Studien zur älteren

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the example of Milíč, the famous preacher, when they established the architecturally
innovative preaching hall primarily as a place devoted to Czech sermons and secondarily
as a center for mentoring poor theology students. Yet although it provided a home to Jan
Hus and several important Hussite preachers, Bethlehem chapel was never intended as a
home for religious women and certainly not for converted prostitutes.\textsuperscript{146}

As for Prague’s prostitutes, Matthias of Janov’s assertion that Milíč had
transformed Prague itself from a spiritual Babylon (or Sodom and Gomorrah) into a new
Jerusalem was something of an overstatement.\textsuperscript{147} The visitation record makes perfectly
clear that Prague did not lack for prostitutes in the years following Milíč’s death. Yet
Milíč’s solution—to convert and enclose willing prostitutes as religious women—
apparently did not appeal to Prague’s fifteenth century inhabitants. The Hussite mobs of
1419 responded differently to urban prostitution in Prague: they burned the brothels to
the ground and brought authorized prostitution to a fiery end.

\textsuperscript{146} The intentions of the founders are carefully laid out in the foundation charter, which envisioned
stipends for one or more poor theology students when and if future income should allow it (\textit{Codex
diplomaticus aliae Carolo-Ferdinandeae Universitatis Pragensis}. Monumenta historiae universitatis
Carolo Ferdinandeae Pragensis 2.1 [Prague, 1834], 307-308; Otakar Odložilík, “The Chapel of Bethlehem
in Prague: Remarks on its Foundation Charter,” in \textit{Studien zur älteren Geschichte Osteuropas}, vol. 1,

\textsuperscript{147} RVNT 3.362.
CHAPTER 5

THE EMPEROR’S NEW BONES:
CHARLES IV AND THE CULT OF RELICS IN PRAGUE

Oh, what a venerable, precious and indescribable gift, the aid for every infirmity, is the body of St. Sigismund! Who would doubt that our most holy patron Wenceslas—who while still alive secured for himself a holy abode—now in the presence of God obtained for himself St. Sigismund as a companion. Oh, what a holy and faithful fellowship, which no rivalry could break and which in unity makes up for the corporal and mental faults of the people. Oh, happy and holy church of Prague, that you have deserved to possess so much in the precious treasures of so many saints. Rejoice also, happy Bohemia, that in affliction you have more intercessors for you before God.¹

This prayer of thanksgiving, penned by a cathedral canon of St. Vitus in 1365 or 1366, returns this dissertation to the place where it began: Prague’s new cathedral (“the church of Prague”), the symbolic and geographic centrality of St. Wenceslas’s tomb, and the powerful shaping of Prague by Emperor Charles IV (who introduced the relics of St. Sigismund to Prague). The canon’s eloquent encomium also encapsulates the central themes of this final chapter: holy relics—the “precious treasures” that Charles IV

¹ “O venerandum, pretiosum et ineffabile donum, omne infirmitatis auxilium, sancti Sigismondi corpus. Quis dubitet sanctissimum patronum nostrum Wenczeslaum apud Deum sanctum Sigismondum sibi obtinuisse in socium, qui adhuc positus in humanis sanctum sibi impetravit et vicum. O sancta et fidelis societas, quae nullo potuit violari certamine, quaeque adunata corporibus pro delictis populorum staret et mente. O felix et sancta Pragensis ecclesia, quae tantum tot sanctorum pretiosis meruiisti possidere thesauris. Gaude et tu, felix Boemia, quae habes afflicta multiplicatos pro te intercessores ad Dominum” (MsS f. 2r [p. 463]).
accumulated and strategically deployed—and their impact on the religion and topography of Prague in the later fourteenth century.

Of all the people who shaped and controlled the physical spaces of Prague, none could compare in vision or power with the emperor. As I have already argued, Charles IV carefully restructured the topography of his capital city over the decades of his reign. Two rebuilt castles, the new cathedral, a new stone bridge, and an ambitious circuit of new fortifications left no doubt that he intended to transform Prague into one of Europe’s great cities. Charles not only established several new monasteries and new parish churches, but also painstakingly arranged for their physical positioning. Details mattered to him. In chapter 4, I argued that the Holy Roman Emperor even took a personal interest in the location of his city’s brothels. Yet nothing better illustrates Charles IV’s devoted improvement of Prague than the massive quantities of relics he showered upon it. Remaking his great European capital involved transferring saints’ bones from locations all over the continent to Bohemia’s capital city, a redistribution of reliquary wealth that served both devotional and dynastic motives.

The emperor’s obsession with the bones of long-dead saints offers important evidence of his political self-presentation; often, the bones in question carried royal, imperial, or other dynastically significant meaning. But this same devotion also challenges traditional accounts of religion and culture during Charles IV’s reign. It receives at best a passing, sometimes rather embarrassed, reference in many of the relevant histories. The emperor’s accumulation of bits of holy old bones also sits uneasily, for instance, with accounts of fourteenth-century pre-Humanism (or
Frühhumanismus) in Bohemia.\textsuperscript{2} Nor does the narrative of reformers and pre-Hussite religion in Prague normally reserve a place for the emperor’s beloved relics. Likewise, the single monograph devoted to the “spiritual side” of Charles IV neglects entirely his passionate involvement in the cult of relics.\textsuperscript{3} Only studies of the emperor’s dynastic politics and propaganda have embraced this realm of the emperor’s activities. Yet, as I hope to show, the cult of relics formed an integral part of Prague’s urban religion in the fourteenth century. The devout Charles IV deftly redistributed relics to anchor Prague’s sacred topography, to inspire its unique holy days, to draw foreign pilgrims, and generally to enhance the status and centrality of Prague (and of its ruling Luxemburg dynasty) within Bohemia and the empire. This process, well-documented in a wide range of sources, provides one of the best examples of the emperor’s purposeful shaping of Prague’s religion and topography.

This chapter explores the methods and mechanisms by which Charles systematically gathered relics from across Christendom, concentrated and dispersed them, and finally adorned and publicized them. The emperor’s multifaceted relic-centered activities were driven by a variety of motives: political, dynastic, economic, religious, and occasionally even whimsical. Though not limited to Prague, the impact there was crucial. Ultimately, however, even the emperor’s power in this regard was limited. He could accumulate and deploy relics, decorate them with gems and precious metals, and invest their carefully chosen locations with all manner of artistic and architectural symbolism. Yet the significance of the relics and the success of the cults

\textsuperscript{2} e.g., Eduard Winter, Frühhumanismus: Seine Entwicklung in Böhmen und deren Bedeutung für die Kirchenreformbestrebungen im 14. Jahrhundert (Berlin, 1964).

\textsuperscript{3} Zdeněk Kalista, Karel IV.: jeho duchovní tvár (Charles IV: His spiritual side) (Prague, 1971).
that surrounded them depended as well on the individual responses of the people who inhabited Prague and the surrounding regions. These responses are much harder for the historian to reconstruct from documentary evidence. Accordingly, I devote a large portion of this chapter to the singularly important and uniquely well-documented cult of St. Sigismund. A series of surviving and almost entirely neglected sources allows me to describe not only the emperor’s extraordinary efforts to implant in Prague the new cult of this little-known saint, but also to explore the responses of Charles’ Bohemian subjects to the conditions and cues he provided—to reveal, in other words, how Prague’s inhabitants reacted to the emperor’s transformation of the sacred topography of their city.

Before considering in detail the process by which Charles IV channeled so many relics to Prague, however, I want to establish a conceptual framework for my analysis. Various accounts have been offered to explain Charles IV’s relic-collecting motives. I am interested even more in the function of the relics themselves within Prague’s topography and its religious culture. Medieval relics, I argue, represented treasures, and treasures that carried a powerful topographical resonance. This concept is critical to the argument of this chapter, which considers the purposes to which Charles IV put these treasures, especially in his capital city, and the ramifications of his actions.
Part One: Charles IV and his Treasury of Relics

5.1.1 Treasures of the Sacred Places

Charles IV’s provision of relics for Prague stands out for its scale, not for its principal. Prague’s churches, like those of all other medieval cities, possessed relics long before his reign. In the tenth century, Duke (later saint) Wenceslas (c. 907-929) had received the arm of St. Vitus from Emperor Henry I, leading to the dedication of the rotunda (and later the cathedral) within Prague castle to the late antique Italian saint. Duke Břetislav I (1034-1055) had brought relics of St. Adalbert back to Prague four decades after the bishop’s death in Poland. Cities and kingdoms habitually claimed particular saints as their special patrons. For Prague and Bohemia, saints Vitus, Adalbert and Wenceslas were among the most important of its rather modest collection of saints’ remains. Prague and other cities of “younger Europe” were at a comparative disadvantage to those within the boundaries of the former Roman Empire, having only developed into full-fledged cities after the greatest distributions of relics from the Italian peninsula were already in the past. Yet Bohemia’s second Luxemburg ruler so radically augmented the city’s treasury of relics that three centuries later a Bohemian Jesuit historian could assert that since the time of Charles IV no other European city—Rome

4 CPSVP 3-17.


alone excepted—could equal Prague in the rarity or number of its saints’ relics. Charles IV accomplished this through habitually and systematically collecting relics wherever he went.

Charles IV’s avid gathering of relics has not escaped the attention of historians and art historians. Nor did his contemporaries fail to notice the activity: a fourteenth-century life of Pope Innocent VI states that “the emperor was exceedingly diligent and solicitous in gathering relics from all parts, which he then treated with great veneration and adorned magnificently, placing them in the churches and monasteries of the city of Prague.” On his numerous journeys, most directly connected with his political rule, Charles IV opened the tombs and shrines of revered saints all over Europe and took parts of the saintly remains away with him. This was by no means limited to his sojourns in Italy, the land richest in relics; he likewise gathered relics in French and German lands and even in Prague itself. A glance at the collection of relics he donated to Prague’s St. Vitus cathedral provides a good sense of the magnitude of this activity. More than 450 relics were catalogued at Prague’s cathedral in the seventeenth century, of which more than sixty percent were known to have been brought by Charles IV. For many of the rest, no provenance information is transmitted. In fact, just over seven percent were known to have been brought to Prague by someone other than Charles IV. It is thus likely that

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8 Winfried Eberhard counts 1227 visits to 438 different places by Charles IV between 1330 and his death in 1378 (“Herrschaft und Raum: Zum Itinerar Karls IV.,” in *Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen*, ed. Seibt, 102); on Charles IV’s itinerary, see below, n. 31.

9 Tomáš Jan Pešina z Čechorodu, *Phosphorus septicornis, stella alias matutina* (Prague, 1673), 501-524. This inventory is reprinted under the title: “SS. Reliquiarum, quae in S. Metrop. Prag. D. Viti Ecclesia pie asservantur, Diarium” by Podlaha in his *Catalogi ss. reliquiarum quae in sacra metropolitana*
Charles was personally responsible for bringing at least three hundred relics to the church of St. Vitus. This is not to mention those kept at Karlstein castle outside of Prague or those given by him to other churches in Prague or elsewhere. Proud Prague historians in the seventeenth century earnestly claimed that the Bohemian capital city rivaled or exceeded all cities save Rome when it came to the rarity and quantity of its Christian relics—a situation (if true) they rightly attributed to the activities of Charles IV.10

The translation of relics from one location to another was by no means novel. Indeed, the sacred topography of Christendom had since late antiquity been defined by precisely such relocations.11 Charles IV’s process of reliquary redistribution must be understood within this tradition. The most novel aspect of the emperor’s interest in relics was its scale, yet that scale can itself tend to cloud its significance. Or, rather, the massive volume makes different patterns of significance almost too easy to discover. Accounts of Charles IV’s relic-collecting accordingly cover a relatively wide interpretive range as they attempt to account for his motives. Like early medieval rulers, Charles IV collected relics from martyrs bearing names associated with victory and triumph.12 Like previous and later rulers, he venerated relics of holy kings and thereby associated them

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10 Tomáš Jan Pešina z Čechorodu makes this argument at length, going so far as to name the clerics from whom he has learned the contents of other famous cathedral treasuries throughout Europe in order to strengthen his claim for Prague’s superiority (Phosphorus septicornis, 399-401). Pešina also cites Bohuslav Balbín’s convergent opinion from the latter’s Vita venerabilis Arnesti (Prague, 1664): “Quem non moveant tot Sanctorum Corpora, & coelestes Exuviae a Carolo IV. toto Orbe quaesitae, & in arcem Caroli compositae, quibus raritate & singularitate rerum pares (scio quid scribam) vix hodie ulla Civitas habet, ut mecum sentiunt Eruditi: a Roma vincimur, pluribus alis nihil concedimus.”


with his own rule and with the Luxemburg dynasty. The emperor also undoubtedly devoted particular attention to the acquisition of the imperial relics and to the cult of his imperial predecessor and namesake, Charlemagne. Furthermore, Charles’s special devotion to the patron saints of Bohemia deserves mention. All of these represent valid elements, but none exhausts the meaning of the imperially facilitated translations. The examples chosen by various historians to illustrate such theses in each case represent only a small proportion of the larger picture. Increasingly, scholars have come to recognize Charles’s simultaneous interest in the cults of numerous saints, combined with his ability to draw upon the unique symbolic and historical power of each. Charles IV’s appetite for relics was voracious, but he remained a connoisseur, acutely aware of the characteristics and affinities of each delicacy he encountered.

Charles IV’s interest in the relics of saints can therefore be safely characterized as general but also unusually savvy and well-informed. But it is possible to explain more precisely the function of these relics, in part through consideration of the emperor’s own

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rhetoric. Charles IV described his trafficking in relics as a process of using rare treasures to adorn the city, and especially the cathedral, for which he felt a unique love and devotion. This vocabulary, I believe, provides important insight into the function of relics within fourteenth-century Prague. Relics, as I argue below, were the treasures of the sacred places of Christendom. Charles IV’s own fervent belief in this quality of relics, combined with his ambitious plans for Prague as a religious, political and cultural center, motivated his activity.

The zeal of devotion and love with which we are consumed for the holy church of Prague, our venerable mother, and for the blessed martyrs Vitus, Wenceslas, and Adalbert, our glorious patron saints, stirs our passion, so that when we by our devout generosity acquire something outstanding, an extraordinary jewel from among the treasures of the holy relics somewhere in the holy empire, in our royal benevolence we use it to adorn that church.17

With these words, Charles IV announced one of his numerous donations of relics—in this case, a piece of Christ’s cross—to the cathedral church of St. Vitus. His zeal for this church and for its (and Bohemia’s) patron saints, he explained, impelled him to send to Prague any particularly outstanding jewel (clenodium) from among the many sacred treasures (thesauri) he encountered on his travels. (In fact, the acquisitive emperor hardly limited himself to the most extraordinary relics.) Critical to the argument of this chapter is the understanding expressed here by Charles IV: that holy relics represented jewels or treasures. As rare and desirable objects, medieval relics were a coveted form of

17 “Zelus devotionis et amoris, quo circa sanctam Pragensem ecclesiam, venerandam matrem nostram, et beatissimos martyres Vitum, Wencezlaum et Adalbertum, our glorious patron saints, stirs our passion, so that when we by our devout generosity acquire something outstanding, an extraordinary jewel from among the treasures of the holy relics somewhere in the holy empire, in our royal benevolence we use it to adorn that church.”
moveable wealth, capable of serving numerous purposes. To employ another terminology, a medieval relic could function as an apparatus of power.

Just as Charles IV received a steady stream of silver from Bohemian mines, had it minted into Prague groschen, and spent much of the resulting coinage to build his city and his empire, the emperor likewise hoarded saints’ relics, adorned them with reliquaries and indulgences, and dispersed them in ways calculated to achieve his aims. Not that relics could be considered simply another form of currency. On the contrary, their extreme rarity (at least in theory) made each a unique object of value. Unlike minted money, individual relics were not interchangeable. The jewel or treasure metaphor is thus perfectly apt. Furthermore, it is a metaphor that appears frequently in the various documents drafted to record the emperor’s transmission of relics. Repeatedly these texts’ authors describe saints’ bones and holy objects as “treasures.” Whether the head of St. Gall or the crumbling bones of St. Vitus, each of the relics qualified as a treasure (thesaurum) and was to be treated as such.18 The emperor represented his redistribution of relics as the discovery, obtaining, and transmitting of treasures or gems (clenodia).19

Relics may not have been equivalent to currency, but they were valuable and portable enough (like jewels or certain other treasures) to stand in for money in particular circumstances. Of his magnificent reliquary harvest at the collegiate church of Trier shortly after the death of its archbishop (Charles’s great-uncle, Baldwin of Luxemburg), the emperor explained that he had removed numerous “heavenly and spiritual treasures” in lieu of customary payments from the chapter and new archbishop:

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18 SÚA AZK 1235; CPSVP 44 n. 3.
19 CPSVP 36 n.3; 41 n. 1.
Although we could have legally, reasonably, and blamelessly received great and innumerable amounts of money from the archbishop-elect and the chapter of Trier, our regal dignity spurned this and instead required payment of heavenly and spiritual treasures, which moths do not destroy and rust does not consume, and which thieves do not break in and steal: namely, the relics enumerated below, from the archbishop-elect and the chapter, despite their unwillingness and heart-felt sadness.\textsuperscript{20}

In this case, the high-minded emperor demanded holy relics in place of money, while attempting with his rhetoric and an allusion to the Gospels to distinguish these reliquary treasures from other earthly types of wealth.\textsuperscript{21} Perhaps he did not consider the irony of associating bits of saints’ bones with the heavenly riches invoked by Christ, riches that could neither perish nor be stolen. Not only did the emperor know from personal experience the tendency of ancient bones to crumble into dust,\textsuperscript{22} but the theft of relics was a well-documented and time-honored practice of which Charles IV was certainly aware.\textsuperscript{23} Indeed, many of the emperor’s ecclesiastical hosts would have been justified in seeing his own actions—breaking open long-sealed tombs and altars to remove their

\textsuperscript{20} “Et quamquam magnas et innumerabiles pecuniarum quantitates ab electo et capitulo ecclesiae Treverensis iuste et rationabiliter ac sine ulla reprehensione habere potuisse semus, regalis tamen dignitas respuens, censuit thesauros huiusmodi coelestes et spirituales, quos non tinea demolitur, erugo non consumit, nec fures effodiunt vel furantur, videlicet reliquias infrascriptas ab eisdem electo et capitulo, licet invitis et cum dolore cordis eorum, obtinere” (CPSVP 31 n. 2).

\textsuperscript{21} Mark 6.19-20; Luke 12.33. Cf. the similar rhetoric of Nicholas, Patriarch of Aquilea (Charles IV’s brother): “Karolus. . . velut mundus et acceptus deo Samuel, non materiali lucro, sed humilitatis cinctus ephod ad dictum monasterium devote accessit et non aurum, nec veterascentem thesaurum, sed devotas devoti devotus reliquias perquisivit, et inuento eo, illud in gudio devotionis et puritatis munere acquisivit” (CPSVP 43 n. 1).

\textsuperscript{22} He described, e.g., the relics of St. Vitus, “quas ex nimia vetustate pro maiori parte redactas repererunt in pulverem” (CPSVP 44 n. 3).

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. Patrick Geary, \textit{Furta Sacra}; Charles IV once alluded to the danger of relics being sent back to Prague being vulnerable to thieves (CPSVP 31 n. 2); he also instructed the church of St. Gall in Prague to have a chest built to house the precious relic he sent them, with two locks whose different keys are held by two different people (SÚA AZK 1235).
contents—in precisely this context. If the emperor’s efforts to categorize the relics along with the heavenly treasures of the Gospels does not convince, it is clear that both the reluctant donors and the elated recipient at Trier agreed that their relics were invaluable treasures whose worth far exceeded that of simple currency.

As treasures, relics could stand in for currency a special form of capital. But they were also much more. Similarly, my treatment of relics as treasures should not imply a purely economic, or even Marxist, understanding of these physical objects. Each bit of bone was (or could be) invested with its own historical, symbolic, and religious meaning. (Few were better at recognizing and manipulating these meanings than Charles IV).

Relics were also objects of sacred power, earthly connections to the otherworldly intercessory power of the saint. Saints maintained a presence in their physical remains, and even in the so-called secondary relics that had come into contact with them or their bones. This religious dimension transcended their economic worth, but at the same time enhanced that worth. Their perceived spiritual power made relics all the more valuable as treasures. A church or community not only could enjoy the possession of a rarity, but also could hope for the beneficial effects of the saint’s heavenly influence. A particularly active saint might attract pilgrims to visit his or her relics. An influx of pilgrims could bring a significant monetary benefit for the community, not to mention prestige and renown.

Relics, in other words, were treasures that possessed an unusual power to invest meaning in a particular space. It is precisely this topographical significance that links relics to the other themes considered by this dissertation. The earthly remains of saints
had long provided the physical foci of Christian worship. Altars and churches were built around their remains, creating a mosaic of holy sites both north and south of the Alps. The result was a lively process of distribution and redistribution of bones and assorted other relics from the early epicenters of Christianity to areas where Christianity was weak or non-existent at the time of the confessors and martyrs. By the fourteenth century, the cults of such antique saints had been augmented by local and regional medieval ones. Relics retained, however, a vital role in Christian religion, defining and establishing the landmarks within the sacred landscape of Christendom. Santiago and Canterbury, like countless of other cities and churches, drew steady streams of pilgrims in the late Middle Ages precisely for the relics located they treasured. In this way, sacred relics came to be identified with particular sacred places. Charles IV once tellingly described his relics as precious objects that he had received “from among the treasures of the sacred places.”

The most famous, miracle-generating, relics tended to be associated with a single location, or perhaps with a small number of locations. The body of St. James with its reputation for producing miracles rendered out-of-the-way Santiago de Compostela one of the best known cities of Christendom. On the other hand, the desire to replicate such results at other places, coupled with the nearly infinite divisibility of bones and other holy relics tended to be associated with a single location, or perhaps with a small number of locations. The body of St. James with its reputation for producing miracles rendered out-of-the-way Santiago de Compostela one of the best known cities of Christendom. On the other hand, the desire to replicate such results at other places, coupled with the nearly infinite divisibility of bones and other holy

24 This is not to deny that Christian relics might also tend to be concentrated at locations with more ancient sacred associations. See, e.g., Jean-Claude Schmitt, The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, Healer of Children since the Thirteenth Century, trans. Martin Thom (Chicago, 1983).


26 On the changing role of relics within medieval society, see, e.g., Geary, Furta Sacra, 15-22.

27 “quidquid per terras et loca sacri Imperii, cuius Deo propitio, licet immeriti, moderamur habenas, de thasauris [sic] sacrorum locorum preciosum nobis et nobile ministratur” (CPSVP 41 n. 1).
relics, could threaten to disperse a saint’s cult and weaken the association with any particular place.28 Hence the reluctance of relic-holders to share their holy prizes with Charles IV, and the emperor’s equally powerful desire to take away the biggest and most significant relics (like skulls) possible. The key was to associate the sacred treasure with a new location but not, through the division and translation of the relic, to diffuse the cult’s topographical significance. One of the emperor’s most important translations of relics—namely, the relics of St. Sigismund—succeeded precisely by balancing these inherent tensions in the cult of relics and making Prague an important, second center of Sigismund’s cult.

Charles IV’s treatment of relics as the treasures from Christendom’s holy places helps to explain their importance for his remaking of Prague. The emperor hoped to employ relics to create at Prague a microcosm of the universal sacred topography, just as he did by importing religious communities from various orders and geographical regions (the Slavic and Ambrosian rite Benedictines stand out in this respect). The entire program involved the reshaping of Christendom’s sacred landscape by funneling relics to Bohemia. The emperor’s new map would have Prague at its center, or at least, after Rome, as its second focus. This ambitious goal may never have been realized, though Charles IV did succeed in bolstering the regional reputation of Prague as a city of saints. The remainder of this chapter chronicles the process by which Charles IV amassed relics—his holy treasures—and subsequently invested that reliquary wealth. The remarkable cult of St. Sigismund that he fostered in Prague demonstrates this particularly

28 Saints’ bodies had not always been divided for purposes of distribution, but by the fourteenth century the practice had already been common for several centuries (Arnold Angenendt, “Reliquien/Reliquienverehrung II. Im Christentum,” Theologische Realenzyklopädie 29.71.)
well. But before proceeding to Sigismund, it is important to establish the larger context: the massive redistribution of relics effected by Charles IV throughout his reign.

5.1.2 Accumulating Sacred Treasures

No comprehensive study of Charles IV’s relic-related activity has been made. The scale of the activity is one obstacle. Another is the fact that no single source or group of sources records the emperor’s gathering of relics. Besides those cases mentioned by various chroniclers or those recorded in imperial or papal charters, the overall picture must be recreated from a plethora of local stories drawn from various regional sources, many of which remain unpublished. One recent study, for example, employs local histories and sources from Tuscany to Lower Lusatia to bring to light the previously unidentified source for the relics of St. Paulinus that Charles IV transferred from Lucca to Luckau via Prague. This illustrative example of a relatively insignificant translation serves to highlight the existence of dozens of other, untold stories yet to be uncovered in local archives and histories across Europe.

Until more of these stories come to light, select examples must serve to illustrate the methods and effects of Charles’ relic-gathering. Some general patterns of acquisition emerge. The powerful emperor had little need to stoop to outright theft—

29 The most comprehensive account to date is the excellent survey by Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 87-101. Many of the relevant sources are edited in the footnotes and appendices to CPSVP.


what Patrick Geary has memorably termed *furta sacra*. Instead, Charles IV obtained relics predominately by two mechanisms that might be termed *donatio sacra* and *extorsio sacra*: in other words, as gifts from other powerful individuals or through the application of persuasive pressure.

Some of the most rare relics that passed through the emperor’s hands were placed there by royal and ecclesiastical hosts or guests. The valuable objects cemented personal and political relations with the ruler whose devotion to saintly remains was no secret.32 From the Byzantine emperor came relics of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.33 In 1356, the French Dauphin brought with him to the Metz Reichstag two thorns from Christ’s crown of thorns preserved at Saint-Chapelle. A gift from King John II, these extremely valuable christological relics underscored the importance attached to the French alliance with the emperor. The emperor considered the donation significant enough to merit a memorial; he commissioned its depiction in a mural that still adorns the Marian chapel of Karlstein castle outside of Prague.34 Charles IV received another thorn, along with relics from saints Martin and Dionysius, upon his celebrated 1378 visit to Paris.35

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33 Stejskal, *Umění na dvoře Karla IV*, 80.


35 Neureither, “Das Bild Karls IV.,” 186; Charles IV’s mother, Queen Elizabeth, had in 1326 already requested and obtained from Charles IV of France a thorn from the same crown (Peter of Zittau, *Chronicon Aulae Regiae* (*Kronika zbraslavská*), FRB 4, ed. Emler, 280). Louis IX himself had begun the practice of giving thorns from the crown as gifts almost immediately after obtaining the crown in 1239 (Paul Riant, *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae*, vol. 2 (Geneva, 1878), 125).
of Hungary had sent to Prague another precious relic: part of the tablecloth from the Last Supper. Relics such as these, especially those of particular rarity, served as diplomatic gifts to create or reinforce dynastic and political ties.

Charles IV took a much more active role in the majority of his acquisitions, though. Power and persuasion obtained relics for him at sites across the empire. Grumpy and half-willing donors might have preferred to term it extortion. Some of the pressure was applied through the mere presence of the emperor and his illustrious companions. Charles’s visits to churches and monasteries were hardly simple or private occasions. His entourage could number in the hundreds, with many noble and high-ranking clerical companions adding both to the honor and the burden of the hosts. The May 1357 visit to the tomb of St. Elizabeth of Thuringia in Marburg demonstrates the public manifestation that such an entourage could create. On the Sunday following Ascension day, the emperor and a great crowd of nobles—including Elizabeth, the queen-mother of Hungary and an escort of knights reported to number 700—processed through the streets of

36 CPSVP 19.
Marburg with the saint’s shrine. Although it is not specifically reported, Charles IV’s acquisition of a relic of the Thuringian saint at this time is generally assumed.38

Apart from the impact of crowds of attendants, the imperial office itself gave Charles IV important powers to impose his will. Those powers, admittedly, did not necessarily include the right to confiscate any relic he coveted in Christendom, but the Luxemburg emperor nevertheless proved adept at using his position to acquire whatever he coveted. A series of letters, penned by abbots and deans across Europe, chronicle the mixture of defiance and ultimate acquiescence that often characterized their responses to Charles IV’s demands. Written at the emperor’s request to provide sealed evidence of the authenticity of the relics, several protest the glad accession to the emperor’s pleading while nevertheless communicating an underlying unwillingness. Nicholas, Patriarch of Aquilea and illegitimate brother of Charles IV, recounted such a situation at Feltro in the most positive light possible: “although it would have been rightly and incontrovertibly his to take according to his plenitude of power, [the emperor] humbly petitioned that the head of St. Victor be given to him.” The dean and chapter of the church could not possibly resist such a request. The episcopal see was then vacant and the local clerics lacked a high-ranking champion; their own archbishop, the king’s brother, was present in the company of the king. In the patriarch’s words, the relic “neither could have nor

38 F. Küch, “Zur Geschichte der Reliquien der Heiligen Elisabeth,” Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 45, NF 8 (1927): 205; Carl Heldmann, “Geschichte der Deutschordensballei Hessen nebst Beiträgen zur Geschichte der ländlichen Rechtsverhältnisse in den Deutschordenscommenden Marburg und Schiffenburg,” Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde, NF 20 (1895): 69; Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 94. Several relics of Elizabeth appear in the seventeenth-century Prague catalogs of St. Vitus and Karlstein, some of which some are said to have arrived in Prague as early as 1232 (Podlaha, Catalogi ss. reliquiarum, 71, 143, 147). The frame of the Karlstein painting of Elizabeth by Magister Theodoric, it should also be noted, contained a place for a relic of the saint (clearly visible in the photograph in Jiří Fajt, Jaromír Homolka, and Jan Royt, “Catalogue of the Panel Paintings in the Chapel of the Holy Cross,” in Magister Theodoricus, ed. Jiří Fajt, 339).
should have been legitimately denied the ruler of the world” (*dominatori Orbis*).³⁹ The abbot of St. Alban’s at Mainz similarly refers to the supplications of the “most victorious and serene prince, our most glorious ruler.”⁴⁰ The use of these official titles of honor underscore the authority and raw power behind the emperor’s pious and humble requests. However surprised by the audacity of the request or however reluctant to acquiesce an abbot, bishop, or chapter might be, none was able to mount an opposition to the overwhelming authority of the emperor and his entourage of secular and ecclesiastical lords.

For one group of relics, the connection between the imperial office and Charles IV’s possession was much closer. These were the so-called imperial relics or insignia that were closely associated with the emperor’s rule throughout the Middle Ages.⁴¹ In 1350, an agreement with Ludwig of Brandenburg, the son of Ludwig of Bavaria (d. 1347), brought from Munich to Prague the “sanctuaria imperii”—that collection of passion relics and other objects traditionally possessed by the Holy Roman Emperor.⁴² Even the son of Charles’s predecessor and former rival for the imperial throne, in other

³⁹ “. . . cum sibi de potestatis plenitudo licitum foret absque contradicetione cuiusque accipere, caput dicti martyris Victoris re et nomine sibi dari humiliter supplicavit. . . . Et quoniam caput huiusmodi tantis exoratur precibus et emptum devotionis precio non potuit sicut nec debuit dominatori Orbis merito denegari, cum consensu et assensu unanimi dilectorum in Christo filiorum decani et capituli ecclesiae Feltren. nobis metropolitico jure subiectae et per ipsos decanum et capitulum episcopali tunc sede vacante cum aplausu populi universi civitatis eiusdem traditum est principi antedicto” (CPSVP 42 n. 4).

⁴⁰ “ad instantiam precum multarum victoriissimi et serenissimi principis et domini nostri gloriosissimii, d. Caroli, Dei gratia Romanorum semper Augusti et Bohemiae regis excellentissimii” (CPSVP 24 n. 6).

⁴¹ For these and other medieval symbols of rule, see, e.g., Percy Ernst Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte vom dritten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, 3 vols., Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica 13 (Stuttgart, 1954-1956).

words, could not deny indefinitely the Luxemburg ruler’s legitimate claim to them. The collection included the holy lance, a nail from Christ’s crucifixion, the crown and the sword of Charlemagne, as well as the scepter, orb and other imperial symbols of power. Possession of the imperial insignia underscored the legitimacy of Charles VI as emperor (not yet crowned in Rome) and the continuity between the empire of Charlemagne and that of Charles IV. The establishment and design of Charles IV’s beloved Karlstein castle outside of Prague have often been directly linked with its reported use as a stronghold to contain these imperial relics.

As the undisputed heir of Charlemagne (and many other emperors), Charles IV was able to assert his right to oversee the imperial relics. But he also periodically invoked the same status to support his acquisition of other relics. He employed it, namely, to justify what otherwise might have been considered the spoliations of the empire’s great monasteries and churches. As emperor, obedience to his wishes was expected. But beyond that, Charles IV asserted that the relics gathered on his great 1353-1354 imperial tour had been donated to the various churches and monasteries by his predecessors. In his letter to the clerics, nobles, and people of Bohemia publicizing the content of his great reliquary acquisitions, he repeatedly drew attention to the ones originally distributed by Charlemagne or other emperors and empresses. Some of the abbots’ and bishops’ letters testifying to the authenticity of the relics confirmed this in

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43 Pirchan, “Karslstein,” esp. 56-64.
their description of the relics’ provenances.47 When writing to Pope Innocent VI about these relics, the emperor went a step further, suggesting that the many saintly remains he enumerated and others not mentioned were “donated to these churches and places by our predecessors, the kings of the Romans of blessed memory, just as their open letters attest, and they have been approved by popes.”48 The same sentiment was echoed in the pope’s response.49

The implication was that the numerous relics so collected, a number of which had been gifts of previous emperors, could justly be possessed by the current imperial office holder—just like the imperial insignia themselves. This was a rather shaky argument, not least because no imperial connection could be asserted for the majority of the relics. It is no surprise, then, that Charles IV seems to have reserved this as an *ex post facto* legitimizing argument; he never directly claimed that the relics already belonged to him, as the successor of their original donor. Indeed, his more general status as the ruler of the empire, combined with his ostentatious demonstrations of piety, proved more than sufficient for the purpose.

No one questioned—and no historian has seriously doubted—the emperor’s zealous personal devotion to saints and their relics. The piety of Charles IV in the presence of relics was remarkable and remarked upon, even when he did not attempt to

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47 e.g., CPSVP 23 n. 7, 24 n. 6.

48 “infra scripte reliquie sanctorum . . . et nonnulle alie nobis donate fuerunt, que eisdem ecclesiis et locis per divine memorie Romanorum reges, predecessores nostros, largite sunt, prout ipsorum patentes literes attestantur, et per Romanos pontifices existunt approbate” (MV 2.83). The final assertion, that the relics have received papal approval, offers a nod to the canonical prohibition to venerate saint not approved by the Roman church (X. 3.45.1). Canon law citations follow the scholarly convention, as summarized by James A. Brundate, *Medieval Canon Law* (London, 1995), 190-205.

49 CPSVP 27 n. 4; summary in MV 2.84.
take home pieces of the saint. On most occasions, however, the emperor did not leave empty handed. His public displays of emotional piety helped to insure this. The testimonies of abbots and clerical leaders reveal the persuasive effects of his pious demonstrations—the rituals and rhetoric by which Charles IV repeatedly obtained coveted relics. Inflamed with the passion of the holy spirit, Charles presented his requests with effective emotional force. In some cases, he also seems to have argued that giving him a piece of a treasured saint would benefit the donors, the recipient, and even the saint. In a self-conscious echo of the Gospels, the Patriarch of Aquilea explained that Charles IV wanted the head of St. Victor, “not in order that the light should be hidden under a bushel, but so that once such a bright and splendid flame has been spread by the pious king, the martyr may be venerated by foreign nations.” Likewise the abbot of St. Gall asserted that he had delivered relics of his two most treasured saints in part “so that the relics of St. Gall and St. Othmar might be venerated more by the Christian people.” There was certainly some consolation in this sentiment. Not only did the spread of a saint’s cult bring greater glory to the saint; long experience had demonstrated that widespread publicity and veneration could bring pilgrims back to

50 Neureither summarizes some of the accounts recorded by French chroniclers of the emperor’s devotion to relics in France (“Das Bild Karls IV.,” 184-90).

51 e.g., SÚA AZK 1234; CPSVP 38 n. 4; Abbot John of the Cistercian monastery of Paris at Kaiserburg refered to the “eximiae devotionis affectum, quem. . . Karolus, Romanorum rex. . . ad venerandas et sacratissimas sanctae Dominicae crucis reliquias, habere dinoscitur” (CPSVP 36 n. 1).

52 “non ut lumen hoc obtenebretur sub modio, sed ut sparsa per pium regem tanti fulgoris et luminis flamma, apud exteram idem martyr veneretur etiam nationes” (CPSVP 42 n. 4), with an allusion to Matthew 5:15, Mark 4:21 and Luke 11:33; cf. CPSVP 38 n. 4.

53 “. . . ut Reliquie dictorum sanctorum Galli et Othmari a populo christiano magis venerentur” (SÚA AZK 1234).
the fountainhead of a cult. Sharing a heavenly treasure, in other words, could in some cases increase its value.

Despite all of the emperor’s power and persuasion, treasured relics were not always handed over gladly. To give such a gift often required the opening of long-sealed and venerated tombs or altars. The high-water mark of relic redistribution was long past. Relics in the later Middle Ages were local treasures jealously guarded by their caretakers.

At the monastery of St. Martin at Pavia, the attendant local clergy and people—“reluctant and possessive of their relics”—grudgingly acceded to the bishops and high-ranking clerics who conveyed the emperor’s request for the relics of St. Vitus. Nevertheless, this removal of the “most precious treasure of the city and church of Pavia” (preciosissimum civitatis et ecclesiae Papiensis suumque thezaurum) was accompanied by an outpouring of citizens’ tears (lacrimarum profluvio). The emperor, too, could marshal emotions in his pleas for relics. His outpourings were generally much more successful.

A particularly clear description of the emperor’s modus operandi comes from Herman of Bonstetten, the noble abbot of the famous Benedictine monastery of St. Gall.

The original document—not previously discussed in accounts of Charles IV’s relic-related activity—still bears the wax seals of the abbot and of the monastery. The

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54 CPSVP 44 n. 3; Summa Cancellariae (Cancellaria Caroli IV.), ed. Ferdinand Tadra, Historický Archiv 6 (Prague, 1895), 35-6, n. 58; Pirchan, “Karlstein,” 68 n. 26.

55 e.g., at Aquilea on 17 October 1354, Charles’ successful supplication for several folios from the manuscript venerated as an autograph of St. Mark’s gospel was made “ferventis fidei zelo atque lacrimarum fluentium precio” (CPSVP 38 n. 4).


57 “In cuius donationis reliquiarum testimonium et certitudinem ampliorem praesentem licentiam dicto domino nostro regi dedimus sigillis nostris” (SÚA AZK 1235).
imperial visit took place near the beginning of an eleven-month journey (1353-1354) through southern German lands and the middle Rhine, a journey that has been described as a “raid for holy relics.”58 After beginning to list the relics obtained by Charles IV at that time, one chronicler quickly abandoned his survey and resorted to summary: “he received parts from all these and many other relics there and elsewhere with the intent of removing them to Bohemia.”59

Abbot Herman described the emperor’s impassioned petition for relics of the monastery’s most treasured saints. The request, nearly a demand, was made publicly before the city’s leading citizens as well as his entourage of nobles, the latter including the archbishop of Mainz, a bishop, a bishop-elect and several dukes.60 Such an entourage was bound to lend even more weight to any request made by the emperor. Particular notice was also drawn to the personal religious devotion that motivated the emperor’s petition: he was “greatly inflamed with the grace and zeal of the holy spirit.”61 There was

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60 “dominus Karolus . . . gratia et ardore spiritus sancti plurimum inflammatus ex intimis sui cordis penetrabilis et affectibus desideravit et in presentia multorum principium nobilium et seniorum civiae sancti Galli cum instantia et devotione suplicavit quod sibi de reliquis sancti Galli et sancti Othmari dare et impartiri curaremus . . . .” Later in the document, Abbot Herman listed the bishops and dukes by name (SÚA AZK 1234).

61 “. . . gratia et ardore spiritus sancti plurimum inflammatus” (SÚA AZK 1234).
no question of denying the emperor, though the abbot’s account hints that compliance may have come rather grudgingly.\(^{62}\)

The removal of relics from an altar, and especially the relics of a church’s patron saint from its main altar, was no casual matter.\(^{63}\) The one at St. Gall had not been opened within human memory.\(^{64}\) The emperor himself attested that it also took great physical effort to open the altar.\(^{65}\) The procedure was accompanied by “the appropriate ceremonies,” after which the upper part of the holy skull and two other bones were duly handed over.\(^{66}\) According to the monastery’s abbot, the second ceremonial translation later that day involved a rather unusual liturgical implement—a saw—to divide the *fortissimum* and *firma*ssimum head of St. Othmar. Again the upper part went to Charles IV, as did one of Othmar’s ribs.\(^{67}\)

The emperor then went on his way, taking with him significant portions of the relics of the two most treasured patrons of the monastery, the sixth-century Irish hermit

\(^{62}\) “Nos itaque qui non solum dicti domini viri regis petitionibus verum etiam mandatis omnibus obedire et parere tenemur . . .” (SÚA AZK 1234).

\(^{63}\) Cf. the opening of the tomb of St. Paulinus, first bishop of Lucca, at Lucca in the emperor’s presence in 1369 (Favreau-Lilie, “Von Lucca nach Luckau,” 911).


\(^{65}\) “altare sancti Galli non absque magno labore et fatiga multiplici apertura est” (SÚA AZK 1235).

\(^{66}\) “Hora quasi sexta aperimus cum debitis cerimoniis summum altare nostre ecclesie quod est sancti Galli et eodem aperto conspectisque sanctissimis reliquis medium caput dicti sancti Galli confessoris, videlicet superiorem partem capitis et duo ossa . . . dedimus” (SÚA AZK 1234).

who gave his name to the house and the eighth-century founder of the Benedictine monastery. Already his journey had occasioned the opening of several saints’ tombs and had added to his baggage part of St. Mark’s skull, St. Pelagius’ shoulder and various pieces from more than a dozen other saints. And that was only the beginning. As far as relics are concerned, the excursion reached its climax at Trier in February, where the recent deaths of Archbishop Baldwin and of the abbess of St. Irmina provided the emperor with a unique chance to walk away with a hoard of saintly treasures.

Predictably, Charles IV took advantage of the opportunity. More surprisingly, word of the emperor’s methods apparently had not preceded him; the city’s religious houses were reportedly taken aback that their honored visitor came “to possess their relics” (causa reliquiuarum habendarum), and not “just to see them” (ad videndum solummodo easdem).

These episodes recounted here reveal the impressive ability that Charles IV had developed to obtain such reliquary treasures, to build for himself an unparalleled collection of these powerful objects. His status as King of the Romans and his massive, noble retinues were capable of intimidating all but the most powerful of his hosts. His pleading and protestations of piety added to his persuasiveness. The element of surprise also contributed; the emperor purposely kept some acquisitions quiet, to keep from tipping off future hosts to his acquisitive intentions. Yet it should not be imagined that

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69 Charles IV provided an account in his letter of 17 February 1354 (CPSVP 31 n. 2).

70 CPSVP 31 n. 2.

71 The emperor’s request for secrecy was also motivated by his concern for the dangers that might befall his relic-bearing couriers on their way to Prague (CPSVP 31 n. 2).
the emperor failed to reciprocate. Gifts and privileges seem to have been the normal method of expressing thanks.

The various relevant documents do not normally associate the reception of relics explicitly with gifts or imperial privileges; such a quid pro quo might have been construed as the canonically prohibited purchase of relics. Nevertheless, it is possible in some cases to identify the tangible manifestations of the emperor’s thanks. During his stay in Marburg in 1357, for instance, Charles IV showered privileges upon the hospital and house of Teutonic knights to which the church of St. Mary containing the shrine of Elizabeth was attached. Conceding that the money donated by pilgrims was not enough to sustain the hospital, the emperor extended his protection not only to the house but specifically to its alms-collectors. More remarkably, the house’s prior was named a chaplain of the imperial household. The accompanying ruby ring was to be worn by the prior and his successors as a sign of their status as “nostri et imperii sacri speciales capellani domestici familiares.” A subsequent series of improvements and additions

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72 Canon 62 of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) prohibited the selling of relics, and was included in the Decretales of Gregory IX (Liber extra, promulgated in 1234), X. 3.45.2. This does not, of course, mean that money values were never again attached to relics. In 1238 Baldwin II, the impecunious (Latin) Byzantine emperor, famously pawned Christ’s crown of thorns for 13,134 Hyperion to the Venetians, from whom Louis IX (1214-70) obtained it shortly thereafter. Louis later built Sainte-Chapelle in Paris to house the dearly obtained relic (Schramm, Herrschaftszeichen und Staatsymbolik, 3.870). The documents detailing the transactions are printed or summarized in Paul Riant, Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae, 2.118-123.

73 Imperial privileges to monastic houses were by no means rare; these should be seen within the context of other privileges confirmed or granted by the emperor, and in particular of those granted to the Teutonic knights of the Marburg house, e.g., Hessisches Urkundenbuch, vol. 2, ed. Arthur Wyss (1884; reprint, Osnabrück, 1965) 605-6, 616. On the emperor’s relations with the order of Teutonic knights, see Udo Arnold, “Karl IV. und der Deutsche Orden,” in Kaiser Karl IV, ed. Seibt, 167-173.

74 Wyss, ed., Hessisches Urkundenbuch, 2.634-35.

75 Wyss, ed., Hessisches Urkundenbuch, 2.636-37.
associated with Elizabeth’s Marburg tomb may well have been funded by the largess of the visiting emperor.76

On the day of his arrival at St. Gall, the emperor gave to the monastery’s abbot market and toll privileges for the nearby town of Appenzell, strengthening the abbot’s influence and income in the area. Later in the same year Charles IV confirmed the abbot’s *de iure* power over the city of St. Gall, a power that the city’s increasing *de facto* independence from the monastery nevertheless prevented the abbot from effectively exercising.77 Similarly, on the same day that the emperor received relics from the Abbot of the monastery of Paris at Kaiserburg, he confirmed a privilege the house had received from Pope Alexander III.78 At Aquilea, Charles IV recognized the anguish being caused by his removal of several leaves from their treasured copy of St. Mark’s gospel—written, they believed, by St. Mark himself (in Latin). In recompense, the “most merciful” ruler had a perfect copy painstakingly created for them to keep.79 At Lucca, the 1369 reception of a long-desired imperial privilege releasing the city from the overlordship of

76 Küch, “Zur Geschichte der Reliquien der Heiligen Elisabeth,” 205. Duft *et al.*, “St. Gallen,” 1311. In favoring the abbot over the city, Charles IV perhaps was mindful of what Henry of Diessenhoven reported, namely that the city of St. Gall had been one of only four Swabian cities in 1348 to refuse to recognize him as king of the Romans (*Chronicon*, 64).

77 The abbot’s letter is printed in CPSVP 36 n. 1; for the privilege, see Böhmer, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV.*, 147 no. 1852.

79 CPSVP 38 n. 4.
Pisa was evidently part of a deal that brought the emperor both the relics of St. Paulinus and a considerable sum of cash.\textsuperscript{80}

None of these examples of imperial largess is explicitly connected in the sources with Charles IV’s reception of relics. Moreover, the giving of gifts and granting of (solicited) privileges was a regular aspect of the emperor’s patronage and traveling governance. These instances nevertheless demonstrate that the obtaining of relics often or always took place within a relationship of giving and receiving that benefited both parties. (The material burden of hosting the imperial entourage should also be remembered in this context). Reluctance to part with a treasured relic may well have been overcome not only by the undeniable power of the ruling emperor, but also by the memory or expectation of tangibly expressed imperial favor.

5.1.3. Investing Sacred Treasures

5.1.3.1. Redeploying relics

Charles IV amassed a remarkable assembly of saints’ relics, of sacred treasures, but to what end? There are admittedly elements of Charles’ gathering of relics (and of other rarities) that support his portrayal as first and foremost a collector. Yet the suggestion that he thus represents a forerunner to the Renaissance collectors whose private libraries and “cameræ raritatis” in turn provided the foundations of modern museums ignores at least one vital component of Charles’ relic-collecting: the emperor

gave away a massive amount of what he gathered. Relics were treasures, but it was in the dispersal rather than in the gathering of relics that they gained their real value for the ruler. And St. Vitus cathedral in Prague, the greatest recipient of the emperor’s reliquary donations, was hardly the private display chamber of Charles IV. Instead, its bulging endowment of bits of saints’ bones helped to make it the indisputable center of the sacred topography of Prague and Bohemia, and an increasingly important sacred landmark within all of Europe.

I have already argued that Charles IV’s relics functioned as treasures—as valuable and portable objects of sacred power. The masses of relics accumulated on Charles’ journeys accordingly provided the emperor with a kind of treasury of saints that bears comparison to the thesaurus ecclesiae described by Thomas Aquinas and enshrined by Clement VI in 1343 as official church doctrine. The pope, according to this teaching, could assign the overflow of the saints’ merits at will, in the form of indulgences. And if the papally administrated treasury of merits was effectively limitless, the emperor’s treasury of relics was only slightly less infinite. The accepted divisibility of relics—even a small piece of bone provided a physical connection to the saint—allowed Charles to

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81 Stejskal, “Karel jako sběratel,” 466; Stejskal, Umění na dvoře Karla IV, 98-100; Vojtěch Birnbaum makes the same argument even more strongly, not only depicting Charles as a type of early renaissance collector, but also asserting that he gathered many relics—namely those that previously had known special personal or dynastic significance to him—out of a pure collector’s interest untainted by religious or political motivations (“Karel IV. jako sběratel a Praha” [Charles as a collector and Prague], in Birnbaum, Listy z dějin umění [Prague, 1947], 146-147).

82 Rudolf II’s private collection of rare and precious objects in Prague Castle more than two centuries later was on an entirely different nature (Achatz von Müller, “Magie und Macht: Die Kunstmetropole Prag unter Rudolf II,” in Uwe Schultz, ed., Die Hauptstädte der Deutschen, 107). The nature of Karlstein, possibly a stronghold for protecting the imperial and Bohemian royal relics as well as Charles’ personal retreat, is more ambiguous (see below, n. 155).

83 Unigenitus (1343), Extrav. comm. 5.9.2; Gustav Adolf Benrath, “Ablaß,” Theologische Realenzyklopädie, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1977), 349-350. The Latin word “thesaurus” means both “treasure” and “treasury.”
leave parts of his acquisitions where he found them, to reserve a portion for himself, and still to donate valuable relics wherever he saw fit. Charles IV regularly drew upon this treasury of relics, redeploying them to arrange sacred geography and to serve his own purposes.

In several cases, this meant donating relics to churches or institutions outside Bohemia. Relics, Charles IV knew, made great gifts. They could forge or strengthen personal, dynastic, or political connections. This seems to have been his motivation in sending to the church of St. Mary and St. Nicholas in Luckau a reliquary containing part of the head of St. Paulinus (described as an *inestimabilis thesaurus*). Charles IV evidently deployed the relic to build connections with this region (Lower Lusatia), recently incorporated into the kingdom of Bohemia. The decision to send this particular relic from Prague, on the other hand, apparently stemmed from the emperor’s whimsical association of Luckau with the similarly-named Tuscan city of Lucca, the place he had obtained the relic. The public attention generated by the gift also clearly pleased the emperor, who expressed his delight that the relic, richly adorned and donated by him, generated miracles at Luckau and attracted pilgrims from a great distance.

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emperor’s reliquary gift had established Luckau as a religiously significant regional landmark.

The size of the emperor’s treasury also afforded him the luxury of relocating relics at will, to place them where they seemed (to him) to belong. From Lucca, for instance, he had also obtained the relics of St. Richard (d. 720), so-called “king of England.” Some of these he later sent to Eichstätt, to a church dedicated to two of Richard’s children, the local saints Walpurga and Willibald.88 Such gifts reveal not only the extent of the emperor’s treasury of relics, but also his considerable knowledge of the associated cults. Charles IV redeployed relics purposefully. In this case, the donation strengthened an existing, albeit modest, regional cult.

The emperor also donated relics from Bohemian patron saints in a clear attempt to spread their cults. Relics played an important role in the emperor’s wide-ranging activity in the foundation of altars, churches, and religious houses. He sent a (still extant) reliquary housing relics of St. Vitus to the Bavarian house of Augustinian canons at Herrieden.89 Charles likewise broadcast the cult of St. Wenceslas in part by dedicating altars to this most important Bohemian saint at Aachen, Nuremberg, and St. Peter’s cathedral in Rome.90 (Whether relics were included within these altars is not reported). These new centers of Wenceslas’s cult publicized the saint outside the territory of his


89 Stejskal, Umění na dvoře Karla IV, 86-89; Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen, ed. Seibt, 258, 259 fig. XVII.

90 Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 91; Reinhard Schneider, “Karls IV. Auffassung vom Herrscheramt” (see above, n. 16), 126-30.
traditional veneration while encouraging Bohemians to make pilgrimages to sites beyond
their own kingdom: the altars at Aachen and Rome were to be served by Czech-speaking
priests who could hear confession in the vernacular. At Ingelsheim, believed to be the
birth place of Charlemagne, Charles founded an oratory to the Virgin Mary, Wenceslas,
and Charlemagne—another of the saints particularly venerated by the emperor. The
connection between Wenceslas and Charlemagne was intentional. Their juxtaposition
encouraged the identification of the holy Bohemian ruler with the holy emperor,
unmistakably announcing the lofty goals Charles IV had for his kingdom and his
Luxemburg dynasty.

In short, the emperor’s relics—the sacred treasures gathered from many of
Europe’s holy places—provided him an important and flexible form of wealth, an
apparatus of power to be wielded wherever and however he pleased. A particularly
illustrative example comes from Nuremberg, a city cultivated by Charles IV as a kind of
second imperial capital. As with Prague, the emperor took a special interest in reshaping
the city’s sacred topography. To that end, he gave permission in November 1349 to the
Nuremberg city council to demolish a synagogue and certain Jewish houses near the
city’s center. A market square was to occupy that space, with the special provision that
the Nurembergers should subsequently build a Frauenkirche on the site of the
synagogue. (This privilege, together with others transferring to Nuremberg citizens

91 Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 90-91; Folz, Le Souvenir et la légende
de Charlemagne, 448-450. For the Aachen foundation document, see Pelzel, Kaiser Karl der Vierte: König


93 Böhmer, Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV., 95 no. 1192.
property belonging to the city’s Jews, ushered in the 5 December massacre of Jews.)\textsuperscript{94} In 1358, the church was complete. John of Marignola, Charles IV’s chronicler and titular bishop of Bisignano, consecrated the two side altars. The lists of relics provided for them by the emperor illustrates the vast reliquary wealth at his disposal: Wenceslas, Vincent, Vitus, the 10,000 martyrs, Mary Magdalene, Barbara, Margaret, Catharine, Helena, the 11,000 virgins, Nicolas, John the Evangelist, John the Baptist, the apostles Peter, Paul, and James the elder.\textsuperscript{95}

The emperor had special plans for Nuremberg and this new church. The relics that he had collected provided him one of the means by which he could carry them out.\textsuperscript{96} Suddenly the new church on the new market square boasted an impressive collection of relics in its own right. I argued in chapter 4 that Charles IV had ordered Prague’s most famous brothel demolished in part because of its inappropriately central location within the city’s new topography. It seems to me possible that a similar consideration motivated Charles IV to endorse the destruction of the synagogue and certain Jewish houses located near the center of Nuremberg—but not, notably, to countenance parallel actions against Jewish communities in Prague or elsewhere. (In Prague, the Jewish community was already conveniently concentrated in the low-lying area on the northwestern edge of Old

\textsuperscript{94} Willehad Paul Eckert, “Die Juden im Zeitalter Karls IV,” in Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen, ed. Seibt, 128-129.


\textsuperscript{96} Relics from all of these saints appear in the inventories of Prague’s cathedral or of Karlstein castle, and many of them in both. As was his normal practice, the emperor did not allow his donation of relics to deprive him of some remnant (Podlaha, Catalogi ss. reliquiarum 45-76; 143-149).
Town and, to a lesser extent, in a small and swampy section of New Town).\textsuperscript{97} The destruction of this Jewish area of Nuremberg, in other words, can be understood as an act of imperial city planning—but one with murderous consequences.\textsuperscript{98} In part through redeploying relics, Charles IV replaced the embarrassingly central community of Jews in Nuremberg with a suitably Christian, relic-rich landmark for the city’s sacred topography.

5.1.3.2. Adorning Prague with Sacred Treasures

Charles IV’s rich treasury of relics enabled him to reshape the sacred landscape of Europe by collecting and redeploying relics at will. He reserved the greatest hoard for Bohemia, for its capital city, and especially for the cathedral that occupied the sacred center of both. Even as he used political, ecclesiological, and architectural means to adorn Prague, the emperor lavished countless holy treasures upon his capital. Prague and its cathedral, he repeatedly asserted, were the primary intended beneficiaries of his policy of accumulating relics:


\textsuperscript{98} It was of course also relevant that the king, as the legal protector of the Jews of his realm, had more direct power over the Jews and their property than any other group. Hence it was arguably simpler and less controversial to displace them than any other group. No one, to my knowledge, has provided a better explanation for what otherwise seems to be Charles IV’s uncharacteristically harsh treatment of Jews in Nuremberg, though his reputation in this regard is decidedly mixed. On Charles IV and Jews, see Eckert, “Die Juden im Zeitalter Karls IV,” 123-30; Hana Karasová, “Židé v době Karla IV” (Jews in the time of Charles IV), in Otec vlasti 1316-1378, ed. Jaroslav Polc (Rome, 1980), 163-81; and the following articles from the conference volume edited by Ferdinand Seibt, Die Juden in den böhmischen Ländern (Munich, 1983): Wilhelm Hanisch, “Die Luxemburger und die Juden,” 27-35; Maria Tischler, “Böhmische Judengemeinden 1348-1519,” 37-56; and Wilfried Brosche, “Das Ghetto von Prag,” 87-122.
As we have received the aforementioned venerable relics by the inspiration of the divine will, we have resolutely commanded them to be bestowed generously upon our holy mother church of Prague, the head and mistress of other churches, for the comforting of the entire realm and the kingdom of Bohemia and for the salvation of our subjects.99

The presence of the saints whose relics Prague now possessed would undoubtedly benefit the realm and its people. And such was its due, as a new center of the empire. Prague is twice blessed, crowed the emperor in a letter announcing his acquisition of relics of St. Vitus: the city has been glorified by the innumerable relics collected from far and wide as well as honored that its royal ruler has been chosen emperor of the world.100

Throughout his reign, Charles IV continued to collect and dispatch relics, along with celebratory letters like those cited here, to Prague. The cathedral church of St. Vitus received the great majority of these reliquary gifts, which the emperor intended to benefit the entire kingdom. But if the cathedral with its holy riches was not Charles IV’s personal camera raritatis, neither could its aura of holiness be separated from Bohemia’s ruling dynasty, whose central castle literally enveloped the cathedral.101 The glory of the church belonged to its greatest benefactor as well. Kings were also wont to raid cathedral

99 “Susceptas igitur modo supradicto venerandas reliquias, animo deliberato, et sicut haec divini numinis inspiratione recepimus, ad consolationem totius regni et coronae Boemiae, in salutem subjecti nobis populi, sanctae matri nostrae Pragensis ecclesiae, velut aliarum capiti et magistrae, dignum duximus liberaliter erogandas” (Pešina, Phosphorus septicornis, 436-7).

100 “Nunc per nostrae vigilantiae regalis obsequium varia sacrata sanctorum corpora innumer abuse reliquias longe lateque per orbem collectas felix meruit Boemia possidere, felix nimium Boemia, quae talibus ac tantis divina elementa muneribus se praeditam gloriatur, felix utique, in cuius aula regali magnificam sedem sibi elegit excellens imperium orbis terrae . . . vigilat cor nostrum assidue in his, per quae status magnificus et exaltatio venerandae nostrae Pragensis ecclesiae producantur, quam venerabiles patroni et progenitores nostri dilecti conspersione sui rosei sanguinis consecrarunt, quaeque ecclesiarum omnium Regni nostri Boemiae domina esse dinoscurat et magistra” (CPSVP 44 n. 3).

treasuries in time of need; both Charles IV’s father and son did so. Gifts given to the cathedral remained in some sense within the ruler’s possession. Karlstein castle outside of Prague provided the king with a more private place for a personal stock of relics, but some of the relics broadcast by the emperor may have originated from the cathedral treasury. St. Vitus’ cathedral and the surrounding castle represented the pinnacle both of Prague’s sacred topography and of Charles IV’s imperial domain. Here, on the hill high above the Vltava, stones and bones together created a place of great power that was at once sacred and secular, religious and political.

Bare bones, however, did not content the emperor. Nor did he simply redistribute the crumbling bits of skulls, arms, and assorted holy objects that he acquired on his journeys. Instead, Charles IV actively organized the preservation of the relics and fostered their cults. His celebratory announcements of newly arrived relics also dictated how the gifts were to be received, adorned, and revered. The resources at his disposal—including money, authority, and good relations with the reigning popes—allowed Charles IV to enhance the value of his sacred treasures and increase their impact on Prague’s topography. Elaborate processions welcomed them, richly decorated reliquaries flattered saints and amazed onlookers, indulgences attracted pious visitors (and their alms), and new feast days drew pilgrims from throughout the region. Together they established the conditions for the vibrant cults that the emperor clearly desired to create, the cults that would help to cement Prague’s position as an important religious center.

First came the arrival of the relics. For the most important, the entire city was expected to extend its welcome. The 1348 advent of a portion of the tablecloth from the

102 Stejskal, “Karel jako sběratel,” 458.
Last Supper occasioned a grand procession. Visiting bishops, clerical and monastic dignitaries, and the emperor accompanied the archbishop as he transferred the relic to the church within Prague Castle.\textsuperscript{103} Charles IV probably arranged the procession himself; certainly he did so in subsequent cases. For the folia from St. Mark’s gospel, he not only ordered an *apparatum* of gold and pearls worth 2,000 florins to hold it, but also orchestrated its entry into Prague. The archbishop and the cathedral chapter were to ensure that they, “with all the clergy of the city and the suburbs of Prague, both exempt and not exempt,” met the arriving book and received it “with spiritual delight and joy.” And since it was normally the deacons’ role to read the gospel in church, the emperor thought it fitting that all deacons be present in their diaconal vestments.\textsuperscript{104} A second letter spelled out even more concretely the reception he intended: the “precious gem” was to be ushered to the church of Prague with singing in the most humble and honorable way possible. The ruler also laid out the subsequent role it was to play in the yearly Easter festivities.\textsuperscript{105}

The autograph of St. Mark’s gospel was a prize relic worthy of special consideration. Its reception, however, was not unique. Shortly after receiving the iron crown of the Lombards, Charles IV also obtained further relics of St. Vitus, the first saint to whom Prague’s cathedral was dedicated. Charles’s January 1355 letter commanded that the relic’s impending arrival in Prague be made known to “the clergy and people via the collegiate, monastic, and parochial churches of Prague and its suburbs.”\textsuperscript{106} For the

\textsuperscript{103} CPSVP 19; DMP 2.17-18.

\textsuperscript{104} CPSVP 39 n. 3; Böhmer, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV.*, 155 no. 1938.

\textsuperscript{105} CPSVP 41 n. 1; Böhmer, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV.*, 155 no. 1939.

\textsuperscript{106} CPSVP 44, n. 3; Böhmer, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV.*, 159 no. 1974.
great hoard of relics sent back from Mainz a year previously, he instructed his subjects to rejoice in the arrival and receive the relics with “worthy ceremonies and extraordinary praises.” In this case he underscored his earnestness by adding his own autograph to two copies of this letter, and a golden bull to one of them. The smallest details of some relics’ handling were specified. The fragment from the staff of St. Peter, for instance, was to be inserted into the Prague archbishop’s pastoral staff.

Through his detailed instructions, Charles IV retained control over the relics and the spaces they were to occupy within Prague. Such public welcomes also served to naturalize the saints in question, to establish them as protectors and benefactors of Prague by announcing their arrival and advertising their new situations. It was also usually necessary to provide distinctive new homes—namely, reliquaries—for the relics, most of which were small fragments removed from their original tombs and cases. Crystal monstrances, jewel-encrusted boxes, and even gilded sculptures of body parts paid honor to the saints while raising the worth of the relics themselves. In principle, the relic was by far the more valuable object. In practice, pilgrims encountered the relic only within its reliquary. Prague’s relic of St. George, for instance, could be distinguished from all others in Christendom not only by its location, but also by its distinctive holder: a gilded silver hand-reliquary, 56 centimeters tall, adorned with rubies, sapphires, and other

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108 Both copies are extant, though lacking the golden bull (APMK 223 XI 1, XI 2; Jaroslav Eršil and Jiří Pražák, eds., *Archiv pražské metropolitní kapituly* (Archive of the Prague metropolitan chapter), vol. 1., *Katalog listín a listů z doby předhustitské (-1419)* (Catalog of charters and letters from pre-Hussite times [to 1419]) (Prague, 1956), 80). Only two other examples of Charles IV’s handwriting are known to exist (CPSVP 26).

109 CPSVP 44 n. 3; Böhmer, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV.*, 142 no. 1783.
precious stones. New reliquaries, in other words, could give a local and particular character to newly introduced saints. Reliquaries like this also set the cathedral’s collection apart from the more modest relics that nearly every medieval parish church possessed. A well-decorated relic might also inspire a flattered saint to greater miraculous activity, or thank the same saint for deeds already performed. For most of the relics brought to Prague by Charles IV, the emperor himself commissioned reliquaries, providing important work for Bohemian artists and artisans. Scholars have noted Charles IV’s general interest in collecting a wide range of other objects, from semi-precious stones and natural curiosities to antique cameos and crystal. These accounts, however, tend to underemphasize the remarkable fact that most of these rarities were transformed into containers or ornamentation for the relics of saints.

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110 This reliquary may also have contained a relic of St. Ludmila, who is depicted in relief along with St. George, Christ, and Mary on the four sides of the reliquary’s church-shaped base (Podlaha and Šittler, Der Domschatz in Prag, 91-93 no. 75). The form of the hand reliquary, like that of most of the other reliquaries in Prague, could of course be found in many other places in Europe.

111 The inventory of the parish of St. Gall in Old Town, written by John of Nepomuk in 1390, provides an unusually detailed account of the numerous relics, most with reliquaries, possessed by a single parish church (LE 3.345-48 no. 485).

112 In 1371, Empress Elizabeth promised gold to St. Sigismund for a gilded bust if the emperor would be healed; she duly provided it once the emperor’s health returned (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.543-44); this seems to be the same bust first catalogued in the 1374 cathedral inventory as “imago sancti Zigismundi argentea deaurata cum corona et gemmis et sceptro et pomo, de quo crux decidit et habetur inferius, quam dns dedit noster imperator” (CPSVP XXIX).

113 Karel Stejskal, “Karel jako sběratel,” 458; Stejskal, Umění na dvoře Karla IV, 80-81. Many of these appear in the 1354, 1355 or later inventories of the Prague cathedral treasury, printed in CPSVP III-CII. Those that still survive are described in the same volume, esp. 204-49, as well as in Podlaha and Sittler, Der Domschatz in Prag.

114 Objects that might seem poorly suited to the cult of relics were not exempt: a Venetian jewelry box decorated with erotic scenes became a container for Sigismund’s relics in 1376 (Karel Stejskal, “Karel jako sběratel,” 456). The piece of coral cited as a leading example of the emperor’s interest in natural science ended up adorning the tomb of St. Wenceslas (Karel Stejskal, Umění na dvoře Karla IV, 97. Many other precious objects collected by Charles IV were used in the binding of ecclesiastical books of various kinds (Stejskal, “Karel jako sběratel,” 461, 464).
Even the minor gems of the emperor’s treasury of relics received his careful attention. One more example illustrates well the entire process of collecting, enhancing, and carefully deploying relics. It comes from St. Gall, the same Old Town parish that figured prominently in chapters 2 and 3. Letters preserved for centuries within the parish archive document both the acquisition of the relic from the Benedictine monastery of St. Gall and the emperor’s decision to give (part of) the saint’s skull to the eponymous parish in Prague. In his letter of donation, Charles IV instructed the parishioners to receive this “thezaurum” in a joyful spirit (letis mentibus) and to “open the depths of your hearts to the abounding delights of the solemn joys in the arrival of such an intercessor.”

More practically, he also commanded them to make for it a strong shrine or case (scrineum) with two locks and two separate keys, one to be kept by the parish priest and the other by a worthy (lay)man chosen by the common will. As portable objects of great value, relics were clearly susceptible to burglary. Especially so, when they were encased in valuable reliquaries like the one entered into the parish inventory: a gilded silver bust of St. Gall, complete with a silver bishop’s chasuble encrusted with pearls and precious stones. Charles IV arranged all of the details by which this saint found a new, carefully chosen, home within Prague; he was probably also responsible for the reliquary. Margaret of St. Gall and Conrad Waldhauser would have both known this

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115 For the acquisition of the relic, see above, p. 285.

116 “... ad celebres iocunditates gaudiorum sollemnpium in tanti intercessoris adventu intima vestrorum cordium aperite...” (SÚA AZK 1235).

117 “Decernimus etiam ut pro conservatione Reliquiarum huissmodi scrineum fiat, sufficienti firmitate munitum apposizione clausure duplicis ut duabus clavibus referetur. Quarum unam aput loci plebanium [plebanum?] aliam vero apud quemcumque virorum ydoneum quem communibus votis eligendum duxitis volumus permanere” (SÚA AZK 1235).
impressive head reliquary, the parish’s most treasured possession, as did the numerous other Prague inhabitants obliged to trudge to this church on St. Gall’s feast day with the semi-annual rents they owed to Prague’s parish priest.

5.1.3.3. Relics, Indulgences, and New Feasts

Prague’s new relics brought a host of new saints to Prague. By arranging elaborate processions of welcome and supplying beautiful reliquaries, the emperor endeavored to make their presence in Prague widely known. All that was lacking to make Prague a major pilgrimage center was the miracles. These, arguably, were not so easy for the emperor to manufacture (though St. Sigismund in particular, as I will relate, did oblige). Increasingly, however, indulgences had begun to replace, or at least augment, miracles as the spiritual core around which a cults and devotions could blossom. The later Middle Ages were an age of indulgences in Europe, as more and longer indulgences increasingly became attached to the places and practices of religious life. The plenary indulgence offered by the 1300 and 1350 Roman Jubilee years represented only the pinnacle of a vast mountain. Whereas absolution wiped away the guilt (culpa) of sin, indulgences took the place of penance, satisfying the penalty (poena) of sin.  

119 As the theology of indulgences developed, they came to be seen as the fruit of

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118 The inventory does not specify whether the emperor provided the reliquary or only the relic. The inventory also recorded a second relic of St. Gall in a hand-reliquary; the emperor’s gift seems to have relegated this relic, perhaps associated with the church from the time of its foundation, to second rank. These two are the first listed in the lengthy inventory of the parish’s relics: “Primo caput argenteum deauratum habens infulum Ep[isco]palem argenteam cum lapidibus et perlis ornatam, continens in se magnum partem capitis S. Galli, donatam per fel. recordat. Karolum, Roman. imperatorem et Boëmiae regem. . . . Item manus argentea deaurata, continens in se magnum partem reliquiarum de brachio S. Galli. . . . (LE 3.345 no. 485).

the *thesaurus ecclesiae*—the treasury of the overflowing merits of Christ and the saints at the disposal of the pope and, through him, of all bishops. Most offered a particular number of days’ worth of penance in exchange for visiting a certain church or participating in a particular devotional act. The length ranged from a standard “quarantine” of forty days to a combination of several years and several quarantines. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) set limits on the rapidly inflating indulgences; the power of bishops in particular was capped at forty-day indulgences.

Prague’s archbishops tended to exercise this right sparingly, at least until John of Jenstein (1378-95) fostered several of his pet pieties by issuing indulgences for them. The same could not be said for Charles IV, who barraged a succession of popes with his requests for lengthy indulgences. Not all were intended to benefit Prague; nor did the popes always accede to his appeals. Over the course of his reign, however, the emperor secured many important papal indulgences for particular Prague churches, especially Prague cathedral. Nearly all were granted on the basis of the presence of holy

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122 X. 5.38.14, from chapter 62 of the Fourth Lateran Council. Not all bishops abided by this, and periodically the longer indulgences established by them were challenged or annulled (Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses*, 2d. ed., 2.47-55).

123 These included kneeling and saying three Ave Marias at the sound of church bells, attending sermons, and the celebrating the newly instituted (1386) feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin (Jaroslav Polc, “Councils and Synods of Prague and their Statutes 1362-1395,” *Apollinaris* 52 [1979]: 517, 518; 53; [1980]: 166, 422, 432).

124 The emperor requested, e.g., an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines for those contributing to the renovation of a church in Litoměřice over the following decade; Clement VI, who gave precisely such an indulgence for those donating to St. Peter’s in Rome, instead offered one year and one quarantine (MV 1.672-4 nos. 1263, 1265; Paulus, *Geschichte des Ablasses*, 2d. ed., 2.17).
relics. Indulgences, in other words, provided the capstones for the relics he had carefully deployed in Prague. They invested the relic-holding churches with another level of religious significance, elevating their status within the European landscape of holy places.

Already in 1344 as Margrave of Moravia, Charles began to secure papal indulgences for Prague churches. Clement VI (1342-52), the former tutor and strong supporter of Charles IV, provided one year and forty days for all who visited the new chapel of All Saints within Prague Castle on All Saints’ Day, and one hundred days for those who visited within the octave of the feast day. The indulgence was predicated upon the possession by the chapel of a thorn from crown of thorns and “many other great relics” and granted for the purpose of attracting devout visitors. This privilege, received by the young Charles during or immediately after his stay at Avignon in 1344, paled in comparison with the one granted a few days earlier: the elevation of the bishopric of Prague to archiepiscopal status. Nevertheless, it illustrates Charles’s early interest in indulgences.

Two years later, Clement VI granted indulgences to the new cathedral church of St. Vitus, which reputedly contained the bodies of saints Vitus, Wenceslas, George, Adalbert, Giles, Ludmila, Stanislaus, and unnamed others. In order that the church “should be attended by the appropriate honors and that the faithful may be more inclined

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125 MV 1.239-40 nos. 372, 373; on the foundation of the royal chapel of All Saints, see Francis of Prague, Chronicon Francisci Pragensis, 181.

126 The indulgences are dated 3 May 1344, whereas the act elevating Prague to an archbishop came on 30 April (MV 1.209-211 no. 363). Henry of Diessenhoven reported that Charles left Avignon “after the feast of St. George” (23 April) (Chronicon, 45). It seems likely that he remained long enough to receive at least the earlier of these two privileges in person. On his known itinerary, see Jiří Spěváček, “Das Itinerar Karls IV. als Markgrafen von Mähren,” 124; cf. Ivan Hlaváček, “Zum Itinerar Karls IV. vor der Erlangung der Königswürde,” 115-21.
to come there to worship,” the pope granted an indulgence of one year and forty days to all penitent and confessed visitors present on the principal feasts of the Blessed Virgin and of Christ (four each), as well as on the feast days of the saints named above. The formulaic dual aim—the granting of due honor to worthy saints and the attraction of additional worshipers—appeared regularly in the papal concessions of such indulgences.

The length of this indulgence, one year and one quarantine, was not especially impressive for an archiepiscopal church at this time. The parish church of the village of Dubenec within the diocese of Prague, for example, had received as great an indulgence in 1343.

Nor was this indulgence one of the more generous provided by Clement VI, who granted some as long as seven years and seven quarantines. On the other hand, the concession was remarkable for the number of feast days (15) per year that this indulgence was available. Visitors on those days could expect to experience the cathedral’s space in its most sacred, and most beneficial, condition. Their monetary gifts, on the other hand,

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127 MV 1.384-385 no. 648, dated May 6, 1346; Podlaha and Šittler attribute the document to 1345, (CPSVP 18 n. 1).

128 MV 1.159 no. 261; on Dubenec, see Antonín Profous, Místní jména v Čechách: jejich vznik, původní význam a změny (Place names in Bohemia: their origin, original meaning, and changes). 5 vols. (Prague, 1949-1960), 1.431; August Sedláček, Místopisný slovník historický království českého (Historical topographical dictionary of the Bohemian kingdom) (1909; reprint, Prague, 1998), 176.


130 But even this was hardly unique: in 1359 the recently founded house of Poor Clares at Český Krumlov received an indulgence of one year and forty days for visitors on the each of the five principle feasts of Christ and the four of the Blessed Virgin, in addition to those of Corpus Christi, Pentecost, All Saints, John the Evangelist—a total of thirteen feasts—and the dedication of the monastery; the parish churches in Miličín and Malšice, as well as a chapel in Bošilec, received the same indulgence at the same time. All were requested by Peter of Rosenberg (MV 2.350-353 nos. 880, 881, 887, 889; cf. 2.517-18 no. 1298).
were always rewarded: Clement VI granted further indulgences to those contributing to the construction of the church.\footnote{MV 1.397 no. 670, dated to 1345 or 1346.}

These early indulgences secured by the emperor had been based upon the relics already possessed by the church. The old relics needed (and, as the papal bulls implied, deserved) new indulgences. But Charles IV was no less keen to obtain indulgences for the relics he had personally brought to Prague. At his request, the pope offered one year and forty days for all who came to St. Vitus cathedral on the Feast of the Last Supper (Maundy Thursday) to see the tablecloth at which Christ had broken bread on that day—raising again the number of days upon which indulgences were available at Prague’s leading church.\footnote{MV 1.658-9 no. 1226 (dated 3 February 1350); CPSVP 19 n. 3 (dated 3 February 1349).} In 1354 Innocent VI provided a further indulgence of the same value for all those hearing mass in the cathedral on the sixteen annual occasions when the archbishop was authorized to celebrate with the staff containing a relic from St. Peter’s pastoral staff (obtained by Charles IV in Trier).\footnote{MV 2.105-106 nos. 249-250.}

Popes granted relic-based indulgences for specific places. Unlike the relics themselves, however, indulgences were not normally portable. Thus when Charles IV took a stone tablet from a church altar near Pisa, he did not carry away the associated indulgence. The altar, reputedly established by St. Peter, drew flocks of indulgence-seeking pilgrims on the feast of St. Peter and on other holidays. The emperor did, however, use this precedent to petition the pope, successfully, to offer a new indulgence for visitors who attended special masses at the stone tablet within its new home at
Prague’s Vyšehrad.\textsuperscript{134} Without such indulgences, these papal and imperial documents imply, the relics gathered from distant lands would not receive fitting veneration in Prague.

Indulgences, in most cases tied to specific places and particular occasions, increased the attraction of Prague’s relics, old and new alike. But even they did not satisfy Charles IV’s drive to increase the local impact of his relics. With the cooperation of the archbishop and successive popes, the emperor also instituted two new relic-centered feast days, plus a new jubilee every seventh year. Each celebrated Prague, its ruling dynasty, and the new saints whose presence increasingly defined important elements of its sacred topography.

The first new feast day commemorated the extraordinary gift of relics (including the many obtained at Trier) announced by Charles IV from Mainz in a letter dated 2 January 1354. He instructed Archbishop Arnošt not only to arrange a suitable reception in Prague for the relics, but also to establish a mandatory kingdom-wide annual celebration, on a day of the archbishop’s choice. This new feast would celebrate the relics’ arrival by venerating the many saints involved. In return, hoped the emperor, the saints might intervene on his behalf at the Last Judgment.\textsuperscript{135} Shortly after writing these instructions, Charles IV petitioned the pope for this new feast day to be outfitted with indulgences for people who visited the Prague cathedral (\textit{aliquas indulgencias et}

\textsuperscript{134} MV 2.139-40 nos. 342-343.

\textsuperscript{135} “. . . atque sanctos eosdem reverenter suscipite, . . . diem celebritatis allationis reliquiarum hujusmodi sub certo anni tempore, sicut tibi archepiscopo visum fuerit, ob amorem nostri, et ut nostris satisfiat affectibus, statuendo, quem totus regni populus teneatur sub poenis debitis, quoties annali revolutione redierit, cum solemnitate debita venerari; ut ipsi nos in coelis dignetur suscipere, et diem extremiti examinis, apud districtum illum judicem, gratis orationibus misericorditer praevenire” (Pešina, \textit{Phosphorus septicornis}, 437).
peccatorum remissiones populis fidelibus. . . inibi concurrentibus). His request was granted. The advent of the relics and the anniversary day both received one year and forty days of indulgence. The archbishop seems to have chosen the date of the emperor’s letter (2 January) as the day of celebration. This major feast, with two offices, became one of the diocese’s mandatory annual holidays at the following October diocesan synod. From this point on, the extravagant reliquary donations of the emperor were enshrined in the liturgical year and celebrated throughout the diocese. The indulgences anchored the feast physically at the cathedral, magnifying yet again its centrality within the region’s sacred landscape.

The feast of the Arrival of the Relics took second place, however, to the other new feast instituted in 1355: the feast of the Holy Lance and Nail, or the Display of Relics (ostensio reliquarum). This feast, which developed over several years out of a series of papal indulgences, came to represent the grandest application of the emperor’s treasury of relics. The multiple meanings (and multiple names) of this April feast belie straightforward explanations of its practice and significance. It was at once a portable, imperial feast predicated upon the presence of the imperial relics, a Bohemian feast of the christological relics obtained for the kingdom, and a local feast glorifying the triumphant

136 MV 2.83-84 no. 196.

137 MV 2.84, no. 197; the full text of the papal letter is printed from the extant original by CPSVP 27 n. 4.

138 Rotislav Zelený, “Councils and Synods of Prague and their Statutes (1343-1361),” *Apollinaris* 45 (1972): 476, 732; Beneš Krabice of Weitmil reported the arrival in Prague of the many relics collected by Charles IV “in diversis ecclesiis kathedralibus, regularibus, monasteriis et aliis piis locis in partibus Gallie et Alemanie,” as well as the decision of the Archbishop, “de consensu cleri et populi” to celebrate this day “et sub duplici officio venerari” (*Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, FRB 4.522). The date of the actual arrival of the relics at Prague could not have been 2 January 1354 (the day the emperor wrote from Mainz), even though Beneš seems to assert this (CPSVP 27 n.1; DMP 2.28 n.53).

139 Zelený, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” 476.
new topography, and new saints, of Prague. On that day, St. Vitus cathedral and Karlstein castle sent forth their imperial, christological, and apostolic relics, together with numerous other rare and valuable relics, to be venerated publicly. Crowds flowed through Prague’s streets to glimpse these sacred treasures, which were revealed one-by-one at the middle of the new, massive market square laid out by Charles IV as the center of his capital city’s new topography.

This feast has a complicated history. First of all, the emperor’s intentions for it seem to have changed over time. Its eventual form took advantage of several different papal indulgences, granted for different relics under various circumstances. The arrival of the imperial relics from Munich in March 1350 provided the original impetus. Later that year Charles asked for an unusually large indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines for the lance and one of the nails from Christ’s cross, “and other relics of the Savior and of others of his saints, which are called ‘sanctuaria sacri Romani imperii.’” All were to be shown “to all the people on particular feast days.” The request was granted in August 1350, with the provision that the indulgence could be won only once per year.140 According to Francis of Prague, whose chronicle ends in 1353, the celebratory arrival of the imperial relics on Palm Sunday 1350 and their procession from Vyšehrad to the cathedral included a pause at the cattle market in New Town (now Charles’ square) for their public presentation. Francis made no mention of an annual feast, but instead recorded their presentation at “particular times” (certis temporibus), a formulation corresponding to the emperor’s indulgence request for their public display.

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140 MV 1.672-673 nos. 1263, 1264.
“certis diebus solemnibus.” The original vision, it seems, was for the imperial relics to attract the faithful to Prague several times yearly. Perhaps the pope’s limitation to one indulgence each year inspired the idea of a single annual feast.

This is precisely what the diocesan synod of 1355 instituted, following Innocent VI’s 1354 approval of the emperor’s second important request. Charles IV had petitioned for a new feast day to celebrate the Holy Lance and Nail. The proposed holiday would be celebrated throughout German and Bohemian lands and carry an indulgence of three years and three quarantines for those who visited “the church or chapel” in which the nail and lance were present on that day. Nothing stipulated that the church should be in Prague, or even Bohemia. Charles further requested one hundred days of indulgence for those who attended mass and all of the canonical hours that day in the presence of himself or his imperial successors, wherever they happened to be at the time. Innocent VI agreed, providing for a new feast day with its own office, to be designed by clerics and theologians (proprium festum cum speciali officio per aliquos praelatos catholicos et alios paginae divinae peritos). The pope assigned the annual celebration to “the sixth feria after the octave of Easter” (Friday after Quasimodo Sunday).

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141 “Mandavit autem dominus rex prefatus certis temporibus, ut dicte reliquie incolis sui regni monstrarentur, et harum devocione plurimi affecti eciam de aliis terris properabant” (Francis of Prague, Chronicon Francisci Pragensis, 211).

142 As Pirchan points out, Clement VI does not limit the frequency of the relics’ presentation, but rather the frequency that a penitent visitor can receive the indulgence annually (“Karlstein,” 63 n. 13).

143 MV 2.89 no. 209.

144 Charles IV asked that the feast take place on that Thursday; the pope offers no explanation for establishing it on Friday instead (MV 2.90 n. 210, 211). The original letter sent to the archbishop of Prague survives (CPSVP 29 n. 1).

145 MV 2.90 no. 211.
Prague itself did not figure directly into this exchange of letters. Both rulers agreed that this would be a permanent feast for the imperial lands north of the Alps. The pope accordingly sent copies of his letter of institution to the archbishops of Magdeburg, Prague, Cologne, Trier, Salzburg, Bremen and Riga. The primary indulgences were available wherever the Holy Lance and Nail, “which are among the relics commonly called imperial,” were currently housed. The more modest indulgence of one hundred days depended upon the presence of Charles IV or of his successor as “king or emperor of the Romans,” not his successor as king of Bohemia. The Luxemburg emperor undoubtedly hoped that his dynasty and his kingdom would retain its imperial office—he took pains, for instance, to have his son Wenceslas crowned King of the Romans even before his own death—but the feast envisioned here was imperial rather than royal or local.

How the imperial relics may have been displayed in Prague between 1350 and the establishment of the new feast in 1354 is not entirely clear. If the emperor proceeded with the plan outlined in his 1350 request for indulgences, they would have been shown multiple times. If he opted to show them only once annually to correspond to the single papal indulgence available each year, this may well have occurred on the Thursday after Quasimodo Sunday—the day he specified in his 1354 letter. We are better informed about the holiday’s celebration after 1354. Beneš Krabice of Weitmil’s account (ca.

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146 MV 2.89 no. 210; CPSVP 29 n. 1.

147 Both vitae of Pope Innocent VI considered the institution of this new feast significant enough to a wider audience to be worthy of mention (Vitae Paparum Avenionensium, ed. Étienne Baluze, 2d. ed., ed. Guillaume Mollat, vol. 1 [Paris, 1914], 315, 334).
1372-1374) ostensibly described the new feast as celebrated upon the relics’ 1350 arrival, but in fact provides a good witness of later practice:

Thus Charles, inspired by a special devotion, obtained from the papacy the institution of a particular day for the veneration of the imperial sanctuaria in Bohemian and German lands, to be celebrated each year for all time on the Friday after Quasimodo Sunday with a special office composed by Charles along with theologians. At the request of the king, the pope conceded great indulgences, contained clearly in his bulls, to everyone coming to Prague for this celebration and the display (ostensio) of these relics.¹⁴⁸

Although the 1354 bull (unlike that of 1350) specifically limited the celebration to the veneration of the Holy Lance and Nail to the exclusion of the remaining imperial relics, the evidence from Prague indicates that all of these relics, and many more, were presented together. Someone, presumably the emperor or the archbishop, seems to have willfully expanded the papally sanctioned Feast of the Holy Lance and Nail to become a general feast for Prague’s most celebrated relics. Two surviving texts list the many relics, in order, that were shown.¹⁴⁹ The lance and nail are there, as well as the crown and sword of Charlemagne and the other imperial relics. Also listed, though, are relics from some of Bohemia’s patron saints, as well as evangelists, apostles and holy popes. Assorted articles of clothing from Christ and the Blessed Virgin, together with the tablecloth from the Last Supper and further passion implements were likewise to be

¹⁴⁸ “Unde dictus Karolus, accensus speciali devocione, obtinuit a sede apostolica, ut specialis dies pro veneracione illarum in Boemie et Almanie partibus deputaretur, et solemniter sub speciali officio, quod idem dominus Karolus cum aliis theologis exposuit, celebraretur singulis annis perpetuis temporibus VI feria post dominicam Quasimodo geniti proxima. Et dominus papa ad instanciam domini regis predicti omnibus Pragam ad dictam solempnitatem et earundem reliquiarum ostensionem venientibus largitus est magnas indulgencias, que in bullis ipsius evidencius continentur” (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.519).

¹⁴⁹ Podlaha and Šittler printed a Czech translation of the text and some of the original Latin from a manuscript in Prague KMK, Cod. IX, (CPSVP 56-58).
displayed in an established order. The manuscripts do not preserve the entire liturgical office, but one version identifies the hymns to be sung during the display of each of the three or four groups of relics.

The Feast of the Holy Lance and Nail thus came to be celebrated in Prague as a general ostensio of the most treasured relics from the cathedral and Karlstein castle. For that single day, St. Vitus cathedral briefly transferred its status as the center of the sacred geography to New Town’s great square. The array of relics must have processed down from the castle hill, across Lesser Town, over the stone bridge into Old Town, and through the city walls into New Town. The goal, the new center of Prague, was a platform at the middle of the cattle market. From there the relics were presented to the crowds (turris reliquierum; turris ubi solitae sunt sanctae reliquiae ostendi) (see map 5.1). The emperor himself may have participated in this elaborate display when he was in Prague.151

The feast’s new indulgence of three years and three quarantines fell short of the one (seven years and seven quarantines) granted in 1350 for the showing of the imperial relics—or perhaps both were considered to be in force. In either case, this elaborate feast day of Prague’s holy relics still did not satisfy Charles IV. He continued to accrue indulgences for his relics and to magnify the new feast day as a celebration that associated Prague’s most treasured relics with his royal and his imperial reign. In 1357, for instance, the emperor described to the pope a new reliquary cross he had commissioned. It contained passion relics—parts from the cross, a thorn from the crown,

150 DMP 2.225.

151 He certainly took part in the public presentation of the imperial relics at Nuremberg in 1361 (See below, n. 170.
Map 5.1: The Presentation of Relics in Later Fourteenth-century Prague
and a piece of the sponge—as well as relics of John the Baptist and various other saints. The golden cross was kept at Karlstein, but Charles IV hoped to present it ceremonially once yearly (at an unspecified location) with an attendant indulgence of five years and five quarantines. The pope consented. Two years later the emperor wanted more, receiving this time seven years and seven quarantines for it. This new reliquary cross contained some of Charles IV’s most revered relics from Karlstein, providing (many have argued) a Bohemian royal counterpart to the imperial relics. More than sixty centimeters tall and encrusted with gems and antique cameos, the cross eventually became associated with the Bohemian crown jewels. The time and place of the cross’s display during Charles’s reign is a matter of speculation. A safe inference from later practice, attested by the inclusion of the cross in the (undated) list of relics shown at the Feast of the Holy Lance and Nail, points to the inclusion of the cross in this general display of relics at the cattle market in New Town. This great treasure, probably already

152 For a detailed description of the extant cross, see CPSVP 167-174; Podlaha and Sittler, Der Domschatz in Prag, 33-44; also Jaroslav Pešina, České umění gotické 1350–1450 (Bohemian Gothic art 1350-1450) (Prague, 1970), 339 no. 429, fig. 151; Stejskal, Umění na dvoře Karla IV., 84.; cf. Pirchan, “Karlstein,” 74 n. 41.

153 MV 2.273 no. 703.

154 Charles IV had in May 1357 already obtained an indulgence of four years and four quarantines for the presentation of these relics within the Karlstein chapel itself; this could be done once each year. He had initially asked for an indulgence of seven plus seven, and was apparently not content with the result, asking again several months later (MV 2.245 no. 617, 265 no. 674). The reliquary cross into which he inserted these same relics shortly thereafter seems always to have been intended for public display rather than only for presentation within Karlstein to select guests. This is made perfectly clear in the April 1359 letter granting the longer indulgence for those venerating the relics within the cross “dum eas [reliquias] ubicunque semel dumtaxat in anno, . . . devote porrexerint” (MV 2.357 no. 904).

155 Scholars have offered different accounts of which relics were preserved at Karlstein and of the intended purpose of the fortress: as a stronghold for the imperial relics, or for the Bohemian relics (and especially this reliquary cross), or for Charles IV’s personal collection of relics. On this, now see Kavka, “The Role and Function of Karlštejn Castle,” 15-28; Zdeňka Hledíková provides a convenient summary of the various positions in her article, “Fundace českých králů ve 14. století” ([Ecclesiastical] foundations of the Bohemian kings in the fourteenth century), Sborník historický 28 (1981): 29, 49 n. 215.
considered an emblem of the Bohemian kingdom, thus joined the imperial relics and Prague’s other greatest relics on this grand and indulgence-rich day.

The new feast of the Holy Lance and Nail had been instituted for all German and Bohemian lands and announced to the appropriate archbishops. It was certainly celebrated in at least some of these places,\(^\text{156}\) despite the testimony to the contrary of the chronicler Matthias of Neuenburg.\(^\text{157}\) Prague, however, remained the site of the primary celebration and the only place to seek great indulgences. There, according to a local chronicler, the crowds gathered.

In the times when these *insignia* were ceremoniously displayed, there came to Prague such a multitude of people from all parts of the world that no one would believe it unless he had seen it with his own eyes. On account of this, a second annual market was made and established at that time in New Town.\(^\text{158}\)

The new feast day, according to Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, was an unmitigated success. The relics that the emperor had gathered throughout the empire and adorned with precious reliquaries now in fact brought crowds to Prague to witness the city’s glory. As

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\(^\text{156}\) As a rough indication of the fourteenth-century practice, see Hermann Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 2 vols. in 3 (Hannover, 1891-1898), which uses primarily late fifteenth and sixteenth-century sources to catalogue the celebration of feasts in German dioceses. According to this, the feast of the Holy Lance and Nail is celebrated at the normal time in Mainz, Meissen, Speyer and Strauburg, and on 4 May (perhaps conflated with the feast of the crown of thorns) in Hamburg and Osnabrück. The calendar presented there for Prague, drawn from sixteenth-century sources, does not include either of these feasts (1.62; 2.2.88).

\(^\text{157}\) This chronicler claimed that the feast was not celebrated in German lands due to the lack of indulgences available there: “[Pope Innocent VI] magnam indulgenciam dedit celebrantibus et peragentibus ea in regno Bohemie, et ideo peragitur in eodem cum celebracione; secus in Alemannia, ubi indulgenciam non concessit, unde nec per ipsum festum celebratur” (*Chronica Mathiae de Nuwenburg*, 456-457).

\(^\text{158}\) “Et revera his temporibus, quando huiusmodi insignia in dicta solemnitate ostendebantur, conveniebat Pragam de omnibus mundi partibus tanta multitudine hominum, quod nullus crederet, nisi qui oculis suis videret. Propter hunc maximum concursum factum est et positum secundum annuale forum eo tempore in Nova civitate Pragensi” (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, FRB 4.519).
the chronicler also notes, the financial potential of the occasion was not lost upon Charles IV, who added a second annual market in New Town to coincide with the feast.\footnote{159}

If many visitors came for this annual holiday, even more visited during the special “year of indulgences” (\textit{annus gracie sive indulgenciarum}) established during the reign of Charles IV.\footnote{160} Again the origin was an indulgence obtained by the emperor for a relic he had acquired. In this case it was one third of the veil (\textit{peplum}) of the Blessed Virgin, taken from the monastery of St. Maximin in Trier. St. Helena, mother of Constantine, was said to have been the original source of the gift.\footnote{161} The veil, the emperor explained, was venerated publicly at St. Maximin every seventh year and enjoyed a papal indulgence. Likewise, other relics of the Virgin were displayed once every seven years in Aachen.\footnote{162} Citing these precedents, he requested the same indulgence for Prague. In May 1354, Innocent VI duly conceded “three years and three quarantines every seventh year when it is displayed.”\footnote{163}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[159] There had long been two annual markets in Prague, on the feasts of St. Vitus (15 June) and St. Wenceslas (28 September) or St. Michael (29 September). At the founding of New Town in 1348, the emperor had transferred the former to New Town (Jaromír Čelakovský, ed., \textit{Privilegia civitatum Pragensium}, Codex juris municipalis regnis Bohemiae 1 (Prague, 1886), 82 no. 49). With addition of the new market, Old Town and New Town together enjoyed three annual markets. According to Tomek, such markets likely lasted for one or two weeks (DMP 2.413).


\item[161] CPSVP 31 n. 2; On the surviving relic, see CPSVP 184-186; Podlaha and Šittler, \textit{Der Domschatz in Prag}, 68-71. Two pieces of material identified as the veil of the Virgin from the monastery of St. Maximin still survive (\textit{Die Männer- und Frauenklöster der Benediktiner in Rheinland-Pfalz und Saarland}, ed. Friedhelm Jürgensmeier with Regina Elisabeth Schwerdtfeger, Germania Benedictina 9 (Munich, 1999), 1062).

\item[162] At Aachen in the fourteenth century, the most significant relics were displayed every seven years, for a period of eight days before and eight days after the anniversary of the church’s dedication (Paulus, \textit{Geschichte des Ablasses}, 2d. ed., 2.258).

\item[163] MV 2.108 no. 259.
\end{footnotes}
Once again, however, the resulting practice in Prague was rather grander than the papal bull seems to have intended. The entire year was pronounced a “jubilee year,” beginning on the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (August 15) with the display of the Virgin’s veil. The first reports of Prague’s jubilee refer to August 1368 to August 1369, though it seems likely that 1354-55 and 1361-62 were likewise proclaimed years of jubilee. And although the indulgence was apparently only valid for those visiting St. Vitus cathedral on the day the veil was presented, nevertheless the crowds reportedly streamed to Prague throughout the year. Like the Bohemian reliquary cross, the veil was also woven into program for the annual feast of the Holy Lance and Nail (or the Presentation of Relics). During jubilee years, the effect on the crowds attending this feast was palpable:

In that year on the feast of the Presentation of Relics [April 13, 1369], there was such an assembly of people from foreign lands that the great square in New Town near Zderaz seemed to be utterly full of people. Everyone was saying that no one had ever seen so many people gathered together.

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164 The shorter of the two orders for the Feast of the Holy Lance and Nail was apparently intended for one of these jubilee years, as it ends with the following line: “Hic pronuncietur annus jubileus, qui hoc anno inchoabitur in festo Assumptionis sanctae Mariae, ubi ostendetur peplum beatae Virginis” (CPSVP 56 n. 3).

165 CPSVP 58 n. 2; DMP 2.60.

166 “... et qui die, quo huiusmodi peplum ostenditur, ecclesiam ob devocionem ingressi fuerint, habeant de indulgencis a sede apostolica tres annos et tres karenas. ... Unde factus est ad ecclesiam Pragensem maximus concursus popolorum per totum hunc annum, eciam de alienis partibus” (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.538).

167 “Eodem anno in festo Ostensionis reliquiarum tantus fuit concursus hominum de alienis partibus, ut illa placza magna in Nova civitate prope Zderazium videretur undique repleta hominibus. Talem populum in unum congregatum nullus unquam vidit hominum, ut communiter referebatur ab omnibus” (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.539).
Another massive crowd, this time at the cathedral, was reported for the days leading up to the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin in 1369, at the end of the same jubilee year.\textsuperscript{168}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure5_1.png}
\caption{Pilgrim Badge for the Feast of the Holy Lance and Nail (or the Presentation of Relics)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{168} “Eodem anno octo diebus ante festum Assumpcionis beate Virginis et in ipso festo iam exspirante anno gracie seu indulgenciarum tantus fuit concursus hominum ad ecclesiam Pragensem, qualem nulla meminit eas” (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, \textit{Cronica ecclesie Pragensis}, FRB 4.539).
These two new feast days and the jubilee year represented the culmination of Charles IV’s obsession with the relics of saints. The emperor’s great efforts to acquire, decorate, and deploy his reliquary treasures were matched by his assiduous applications for indulgences (and evidently his creative interpretations of the resulting papal bulls). The pilgrims who responded witnessed an unmistakable message: Prague, with its vast New Town under construction, had become a leading city of Christendom. Its sacred topography featured nearly unparalleled reliquary riches that were celebrated with unique feast days. Such were the appropriate accoutrements of the seat of the Emperor of the Romans. Should there have been any doubt, a pilgrim badge from the feast of the Holy Lance and Holy Nail reinforced these universal claims (Figure 5.1). The six-centimeter-tall pewter emblem, like the St. James cockle shell of Santiago, allowed individual pilgrims to commemorate a completed pilgrimage. The Prague badge portrays the pope (presumably Innocent VI) with Peter’s keys next to Charles IV holding the Holy Lance. Below them, the Bohemian coat of arms (right) accompany those of the Holy Roman Empire (center) and the pope (left).¹⁶⁹ This pilgrim badge represents pictorially the feast as it had developed under the guidance of Charles IV. Although instituted by the pope as an imperial holiday for two of the imperial relics, the feast of the Holy Lance and Nail as it was normally celebrated underscored the sacral connection between the universal emperor, the king of Bohemia, and his relic-rich city of Prague.¹⁷⁰ The crowds that crammed into medieval Europe’s largest square could hardly have missed the meaning.

¹⁶⁹ Stejskal, Umění na dvoře Karla IV., 81, 230.

¹⁷⁰ The feast remained somewhat flexible, however, and Charles IV seems also to have used it for the advantage of Nuremburg, always his second city. He arranged for his son and heir, Wenceslas, to be born there in 1361, then remained there for his son’s baptism and an eight-day celebration and meeting of the imperial electors and ecclesiastical dignitaries in April. The emperor had arranged for the imperial relics to be brought from Prague to Nuremburg for the occasion, and displayed them publicly there. An
The feast of the Holy Lance and Nail, or the Presentation of Relics, celebrated the presence in Prague of well-known, symbolically charged relics. Outfitted with significant papal indulgences, this feast in particular drew vast crowds from outside Prague. That, at least, is the testimony of the local chroniclers. The real number of pilgrims and their origins are impossible to judge from the extant sources. Surviving documents have instead allowed to come to light the emperor’s central role in establishing the conditions for a successful new feast day. Relics, I have argued, provided Charles IV with a powerful form of wealth, sacred treasures which he proved adept at collecting and deploying in service of his designs for his capital city. The new, relic-enhanced topography of Prague in turn became a showcase for his dynastic and political propaganda, his “politics of presentation.”

The second part this chapter employs a single case study to underscore the considerable power exercised by Charles IV to shape Prague’s sacred topography through relics. It also examines in greater detail the precise mechanisms by which he accomplished this. This unusually well-documented case also provides the opportunity to measure and characterize the public response to the emperor’s efforts. Ultimately it lay within the power of the people, not of the emperor, to confirm the new sacred landmark.

eyewitness reported that Pope Innocent VI had provided an indulgence for the display equal to that on offer at Rome on Maundy Thursday, perhaps referring to the 1350 or 1354 one already granted (Henry Taube of Selbach, Die Chronik Heinrichs Taube von Selbach, ed. Harry Bresslau, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum 1 [Berlin, 1922], 117-118). On the indulgence, see Paulus, Geschichte des Ablasses, 2d. ed., 3.130; 2.228-39. It should be noted that the baptism took place on Sunday, 11 April. The Feast of the Holy Lance and Nail fell that year on Friday, 9 April. The presentation of relics may in fact have been made on the feast day itself, in perfect accordance with the papal bull. There is unfortunately no evidence as to whether the Ostensio reliquiarum was celebrated in Prague that year; if it was, it was performed without the imperial relics.

The pilgrims who participated in this new cult, a product of Charles’s dynastic propaganda, did not come to Prague seeking the presence of a well-known saint or even the comfort of papal indulgences. They came looking for miracles.
Figure 5.2 Panel Painting of the Bohemian Patron Saints (1370s)
At his summer palace in Roudnice in 1371, Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim (1364-78) consecrated a new chapel to the Blessed Virgin and the patron saints of Prague’s cathedral. A famous votive panel commissioned by the same archbishop seems to have been designed to adorn this chapel’s main altar (Figure 5.2). Dated to the early or middle 1370s, this large painted panel (181 cm x 96 cm) depicts on the lower register the kneeling donor himself, flanked on the left by saints Procopius and Adalbert, and on the right by saints Vitus and Ludmila. Directly above him sit the Madonna and child. To the right kneels the royal heir Wenceslas with an emblem of the Bohemian lion. Standing behind him, St. Wenceslas rests his saintly hand on his namesake’s shoulder. On the left appears the kneeling Emperor Charles IV, at whose feet rests the imperial eagle. In a parallel stance to St. Wenceslas, occupying (arguably) the most privileged position of all the depicted patron saints, stands another royal figure with his hands on Charles IV’s shoulders: St. Sigismund of Burgundy (d. 523/4).

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172 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil described this new dedication immediately following his account of the emperor’s healing. Of the patron saints he named only Vitus, Wenceslas, Adalbert and Sigismund, but the painted panel suggests that the dedication was to all six of the patrons and included Procopius and Ludmilla (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.544).


174 Attempts to date the image vary from ca. 1371 to 1371-1375 and 1371-1380; Pešina, České umění gotické 1350 – 1450, 221-222 no. 304; Bertalan Kéry, Kaiser Sigismund: Ikonografie (Vienna, 1972), 26; Matějček, Česká malba gotická, 77; Emanuel Vlček, “Tělesné vlastnosti Karla IV” (The physical characteristics of Charles IV), in Karolus Quartus, ed. Vaněček, 473.

175 Sigismund’s placement may plausibly result from a simple attempt to associate the figures with saints of the appropriate rank. The pairing of Wenceslas with his holy namesake seems straightforward; Wenceslas, heir to the throne, enjoys the support of Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia. (Bohemia was not yet a kingdom at the time of his rule). Likewise the close relationship between the archbishop and Adalbert, his predecessor on Prague’s episcopal throne, is fitting. That leaves four saints, of whom the holy Burgundian king is perhaps the best match for the pious emperor. Considered in isolation, the painting therefore does
The archbishop’s altarpiece offers (in the words of Gábor Klaniczay) “a fine sense of the ever-widening circle of Bohemian national/dynastic saints.”\(^{176}\) In particular, its inclusion of Sigismund confirms the naturalization of a royal saint who had no Bohemian following whatsoever a decade before. For this reason, the panel painting has rightly been regarded as a piece of dynastic propaganda, one of several featuring Sigismund among Bohemia’s patron saints. Few have noted, on the other hand, Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim’s seminal role in developing this new cult, which was anchored at Sigismund’s new shrine in St. Vitus cathedral. No one, to my knowledge, has connected this painted panel with the archbishop’s claim to have been healed by St. Sigismund. In other words, John Očko of Vlašim (like the emperor, as we will see) was both an architect and an adherent of Sigismund’s Bohemian cult, both a producer and a consumer of the political propaganda. His panel painting thus becomes an emblem not only of Bohemian dynastic politics, but also a witness to the religious and cultural impact of St. Sigismund’s relics on the sacred landscape of Bohemia. As such, it also provides a fitting symbol for the second part of this chapter.

5.2.1. Seeking Sigismund

This story begins at Einsiedeln in 1354, where Charles IV is first known to have encountered Sigismund’s relics. He had stopped at the Benedictine monastery there on

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the return leg of a journey notorious for the relics it yielded.\textsuperscript{177} According to the monastery's treasury-keeper and librarian, the emperor took away “a great portion of our relics.”\textsuperscript{178} These included part of the skull of Sigismund and a piece of the arm of St. Maurice, both of which likely came to Einsiedeln directly or indirectly from the monastery where these two saints were buried: Saint-Maurice d’Agaune.\textsuperscript{179} Like so many other relics, those taken from Einsiedeln ended up in Prague. A gilded head reliquary for Sigismund appeared a year later in the cathedral inventory (1355),\textsuperscript{180} but there seems to have been no special celebration or veneration offered for either of these saints. They merely contributed to the mass of relics funneled to Prague in these years. Nor is there any evidence of pre-existing devotion to Sigismund in Bohemia, and very little even after the arrival of his relic in 1354. No churches or chapels are known to have

\textsuperscript{177} On this journey, see above, p. 286. This visit took place between 20 and 25 April 1354 (P. Gabriel Meier, \textit{Heinrich von Ligerz, Bibliothekar von Einsiedeln im 14. Jahrhundert} (1896; reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1968), 24-25. The Bollandists, following the Einsiedeln chronicler Christopher Hartmann, erroneously date the visit to 1353 (AASS May, 1.93E).

\textsuperscript{178} Henry of Ligerz reported that Charles IV “magnam partem reliquiarum nostrarum secum detulit” (cited in Robert Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige,” 338).


\textsuperscript{180} Reference to the head of Sigismund appears for the first time in the 1355 inventory of St. Vitus, both in a gilded reliquary as “Caput sancti Zygmundi martyr, regis Burgundiae, argenteum deauratum” and undecorated as “caput sancti Zygmundi regis Burgundiae et martyris.” Both entries seem to refer to a single relic; the second, included among the relics “nondum ornat[ae] auro et argento,” does not appear in the subsequent inventories (CPSVP XII no. 23, XIV no. 80, n. 7). Already the 1354 inventory included a “manus sancti Mauritii cum paucis gemmis,” but it was not among the new arrivals to the church and may refer to a relic previously in the church's possession (CPSVP IV no. 38; XIII no. 32).
been dedicated to him.\textsuperscript{181} I can identify only two Sigismund altars in Bohemia: one founded in 1364 and the other sometime before 1362. In both cases, the lowly Sigismund shared the altar’s dedication with two other saints.\textsuperscript{182}

In short, nothing distinguished Sigismund’s relic from the countless others arriving in Prague in these years. Nothing, that is, until Charles IV had himself crowned at Arles in 1365 as the king of Burgundy, making him a successor of the sixth-century King Sigismund of Burgundy. This was Charles’ sixth and final coronation, a symbolic element of his attempt to consolidate imperial power in the region. With this coronation, the emperor briefly resurrected a long-dead tradition—Barbarossa had been the last to don the Burgundian crown nearly two hundred years before (1178).\textsuperscript{183} The entire journey had to that point been one of high diplomatic significance; at Avignon Charles had met with Pope Urban V and discussed, among other things, the return of the papal curia to Rome.\textsuperscript{184} Once crowned, Charles IV acted to reinvigorate the weakened cult of his royal predecessor. Passing through Savoy in the company of his vassal, Count Amadeus VI

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\textsuperscript{181} e.g., Zdeněk Boháč, “Patrocinia románských kostelů v Čechách” (The patronages of Romanesque churches in Bohemia),\textit{ Historická geografie} 8 (1972): 31-51.

\textsuperscript{182} The 1354 translation of part of Sigismund’s skull and various other relics from Einsiedeln (Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 94) seems not to have initiated a strong cult, to judge from dedications of altars, chapels, masses and other ecclesiastical foundations within Prague’s archidiocese recorded in the\textit{ Libri erectionum}. In the period from 1358, when such foundations began to be recorded systematically, until the arrival of the new Sigismund relics in 1365, only a single new altar was dedicated to Sigismund (in 1364). Moreover, the patronage of this altar, in a parish church in České Budějovice (Budweis), was shared with saints Oswald and Brictius (LE 1.47 no. 91). Another altar was founded sometime before 1362; in that year, a new priest was named to the “altare S. Martini, Marchi et Zygmundi” in Čáslav, upon the death of the previous altar priest (LC 1.2.190).

\textsuperscript{183} Peter Hilsch, “Die Krönungen Karls IV.,” in\textit{ Kaiser Karl IV. Staatsmann und Mäzen}, ed. Seibt, 111; On the wider significance of the coronation within Charles IV’s political aims, see Heinz Stoob,\textit{ Kaiser Karl IV. und seine Zeit} (Graz, 1990), 207-213; Ferdinand Seibt,\textit{ Karl IV.}, 350-360; Laetitia Boehm,\textit{ Geschichte Burgunds} (Stuttgart, 1979), 162-165.


\end{flushright}
Charles IV suggested a detour, one that brought him and his noble entourage to the monastery of Saint-Maurice d’Agaune along the Rhone, south of Lake Geneva. His goal was the center point of the cult of St. Maurice and his fellow Theban soldiers: namely, the monastic house that King Sigismund had dedicated to these martyrs in 515.

The Augustinian canons of Saint-Maurice had long experience with pilgrims, even royal ones; Maurice’s cult had widespread adherents and strong imperial associations. The canons were not accustomed, however, to handing out bits of their patron saint. More than a century before, an abbot had pointedly called an end to the prodigal dispersal of his remains. (During a spate of earlier transmissions, a relic had even reached Prague Castle in 1212.) This important medieval cult greatly overshadowed that of Sigismund both locally and throughout Europe. Though a king, Sigismund had never risen to the status of national patron enjoyed, for instance, by St. Savoy.

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185 Savoy had originally been part of the kingdom of Burgundy (by this time known as the kingdom of Arles and Vienne), but since 1361 the count had been an immediate vassal of the emperor.


188 A piece from Maurice’s arm and several other relics were the gift of Jindřich Vladislav, Margrave of Moravia, in 1212 (CPSVP 7, IV).

Denis in France or St. Wenceslas in Bohemia, a fact related in part to the status of the kingdom Burgundy itself.  

A modest and predominately regional cult nevertheless persisted, one of a host of devotions cultivated side-by-side in Europe during the Middle Ages. According to Sigismund’s *vita*, the return of his body to Saint-Maurice d’Agaune (together with the remains of his wife and two sons) had prompted a series of sixth-century miracles. Soon he came to be associated especially with the healing of fever. Further miracles occurred at the well into which the bodies of the royal family had been thrown. Gregory of Tours lauded the Burgundian king as an aid for fever, and a seventh- or eighth-century Bobbio sacramentary confirmed that reputation. From the eleventh-

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191 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 67-68; Frederick S. Paxton, “Power and the Power to Heal: The Cult of St. Sigismund in Burgundy,” *Early Medieval Europe* 2 (1993): 95-110. Paxton attributes more strength to the cult of Sigismund over the centuries than I do, in part, it seems, due to his use of Charles IV’s late medieval interest in Sigismund’s cult as evidence for a continuous veneration of Sigismund “in the German lands and in Eastern Europe” over the centuries (97). I argue here, on the other hand, that the agency of Charles IV was crucial in spreading the cult to a region where it previously had few or no adherents.

192 “Passio sancti Sigismundi regis,” in *Fredegarii et aliorum Chronica: Vitae sanctorum*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum 2 (Hannover, 1888), 339-40, which mentions quartan fever in particular; Gregory of Tours, “Liber in Gloria Martyrum,” in *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis miracula et opera minora*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum 1.2 (Hannover, 1885), 87-89. More miracles centered upon the well into which the murdered bodies of the royal family had been thrown. AASS May, 1.87. Most scholars have connected the specialization in fever to Sigismund’s own reported healing from fever by the cloak of St. Apollinaris (d. 520) (Robert Folz, *Les saints rois du moyen âge en occident (Vie-XIIIe siècles)* (Brussels, 1984), 129; for the miracle, see the life of Apollinaris, bishop of Valence, in AASS October, 3.59). Frederick S. Paxton, however, has now offered a persuasive argument that Sigismund’s connection with fever may have resulted from other factors unrelated to Apollinaris, including the existence at Agaune of a spring and a Roman pagan sanctuary that may have enjoyed a reputation for healing long before the monastery was founded. The life of St. Apollinaris, attested only from Carolingian times, may in fact have been written after the connection between Sigismund and fevers was established (“Power and the Power to Heal,” 97-106).

193 AASS May, 1.87.

century, Sigismund’s cult spread modestly through the geographical distribution of his relics. One reached as far as Bamberg cathedral, but the overall impact remained overwhelmingly local and regional. By the fourteenth-century, even such reliquary gifts seem to have ceased. Eight centuries after his death, Sigismund’s memory and cult were cultivated primarily at the places of his death and burial, together with the handful of churches and monasteries that possessed his relics.

Notwithstanding the relative weakness of Sigismund’s cult, Charles IV traveled to Agaune in 1365 specifically to seek the Burgundian martyr-king. Obtaining further relics of St. Maurice was little more than an afterthought. This is certainly the picture painted by the Chronique de Savoie, the chronicle penned in French half a century later (1417-1419) by Jean (Cabaret) d’Orville in celebration of Emperor Sigismund’s elevation of Savoy from county to duchy. Its account offers one of the more colorful depictions of the great relic-hunter in action. Unfortunately, some of its details also point to the report’s untrustworthiness. Similar inaccuracies and errors characterize the entire Chroniques de Savoie, which sought to lionize the duchy’s past rather than represent it accurately. Nor does Jean d’Orville mention his sources, which likely included oral traditions. The chronicler described the emperor’s search for his “ancestor”—Sigismund, king of


196 The only edition of the chronicle, part of a 1989 Ph.D. dissertation by Daniel Chaubet, was inaccessible to me. I have used Chaubet’s translation of his edition into modern French (Jean d'Orville, dit Cabaret, La chronique de Savoie de Jean d'Orville, trans. Daniel Chaubet [Le Marches, 1995]) as well as the edition of the later chronicle published as Chroniques de Savoye, in Historiae patriae monumenta, vol. 3, ed. D. Muratore, Scriptorum 1 (Turin, 1840), 5-382. Previously thought to be the work of d’Orville, this second text is rather a 1464-66 adaptation of d'Orville's chronicle by Jean Servion (Chaubet, L'Historiographie Savoyarde, vol. 1, Moyen Age et Renaissance, Cahiers de civilisation alpine 12 (Turin, 1994), 93-98). The two accounts are nearly identical, though the latter is more verbose in a few places, adding for instance that the chapel in which Sigismund was found was underground. On the unpublished edition of d'Orville's chronicle, see La chronique de Savoie, trans. Chaubet, 11; Chaubet, L'Historiographie Savoyarde, 1.80.
Burgundy and fighter for the Christian faith—whom he knew to be buried there along
with two of his children. According to d’Orville, Charles IV desired to pray at the king’s
tomb and perhaps obtain some relics to take back to Prague. The count was willing, but
the abbot and canons at the monastery proved less helpful. After bringing the count and
the emperor to St. Sigismund’s burial church (a parish church associated with the
monastery), they pled ignorance of the location of the saint’s tomb. In response, Charles
IV dramatically produced from his bags an old chronicle that purportedly revealed both
the life of the martyr and his precise burial place. Led by the book-wielding emperor,
the group together entered a chapel carrying torches. Charles IV pointed to a spot on the
wall for the canons to break through. The saint’s lost tomb stood within. Charles,
d’Orville continued, took away the saint’s holy head; the remaining bones were placed in
a reliquary on the church’s main altar. Only at that point did the emperor, always
thorough, petition for some of the more famous relics of St. Maurice. Here the Green
Count reportedly put his foot down, refusing to allow the dismemberment of the great
saint of Thebes. Instead, he sent his liege lord away with Maurice’s axe. 197

Not all of the details of d’Orville’s story hold up under scrutiny. An apparent
twelfth-century rededication of the burial church, from St. John to St. Sigismund,
suggests that the local cult of the Burgundian king was alive and well at that time. 198 If
this was the case, was it likely that the keepers of the burial church of St. Sigismund had

197 Chaubet, La chronique de Savoie, 235-236; Chroniques de Savoye, ed. D. Muratore, cols. 336-
337.

198 Eugen Gruber, Die Stiftungsheiligen der Diözese Sitten im Mittelalter (Freiburg, 1935), 35,
cited in Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige,” 339 n. 89. It seems possible, though, that this church like
many others had more than one patron saint and was referred to variously in different documents. The
preface to the later fourteenth-century Miracula sancti Sigismundi still refers to it as the parish church of
St. John the Evangelist.
lost track of saint’s tomb over the intervening centuries?\(^{199}\) Of course, the abbot’s silence may have reflected not ignorance but rather reluctance to share a treasured relic with a famed relic-collector. Manifestly false, on the other hand, is the proud refusal of the count to countenance the dismemberment of the intact skeleton of Maurice. The count may have been unwilling, but the saint’s body was by no means still complete. Not only do other sources report that Charles IV came away with an arm bone of the Theban saint, but ample evidence confirms that the monastery had long before broken apart its patron saint for distribution.\(^{200}\)

Other elements of d’Orville’s account are more plausible. The emperor may well have learned the general location, if not the exact position, of Sigismund’s burial from an old \textit{vita}. The edited version of one surviving life reports (apparently accurately) that the saint’s body had been “delivered to the monastery at Agaune for a most worthy burial with the singing of psalms within the church of St. John, apostle and evangelist.”\(^{201}\) The new reliquary for the bones of Sigismund can also be identified. It was in fact donated by Charles IV, presumably some time after this visit. Emperor Sigismund (Charles IV’s son) saw the reliquary when he visited the monastery decades later.\(^{202}\) It remains there to this day, a sterling example of the reciprocation provided by the emperor when he

\(^{199}\) Neureither suggests that this undermines the authority of the chronicle’s account (“Das Bild Karls IV.,” 197 n. 1).

\(^{200}\) See above, n. 187.


obtained relics. The reliquary may not have been relocated to the church’s main altar immediately—this act is attributed to Edward of Savoy, the bishop of Sitten from 1378-1388—but it was certainly there in plenty of time for d’Orville or his source to see.

One can imagine that the anecdote preserved by d’Orville may have grown out of local, oral histories told to visitors as they admired the reliquary that had been an emperor’s gift.

Jean d’Orville’s account can now be tested against a more trustworthy witness, one never before discussed in this context. This monastery’s abbot penned this document on the day of emperor’s visit. Now it survives in the archive of the Prague cathedral chapter. The abbot of Saint-Maurice d’Agaune does contradict the fifteenth-century chronicle on some details, in part by revealing the true extent of Charles IV’s acquisitions. According to this letter, the emperor did take away the axe (achia) of St. Maurice’s martyrdom, but also one of the saint’s bones. The Burgundian chronicle, it seems, similarly understated the extent of the sacred treasures taken from Sigismund’s tomb. The abbot, whose letter accompanied the relics to Prague as an authenticating document, carefully attested that Charles IV removed both the saintly skull and half the body—the greater part, in other words, of Sigismund’s relics.

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203 Seibt, ed., Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen, 258 fig. xx.
205 APMK 309; cf. the description of the document by Jaroslav Eršil and Jiří Pražák, Archiv pražské metropolitní Kapituly, 1.106 no. 367.
206 APMK 309. Cf. Hausmann, “L’abbaye de Saint-Maurice 1128-1500,” 310; Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 94. This unprinted letter authoritatively answers the question of precisely which part or parts of Sigismund Charles IV took back to Prague. Beneš Krabice of Weitmil described it as the “corpus” of the saint (Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.533), as did the “Miracula sancti Sigismondi” (462), but most modern scholars agree that Charles obtained a second piece of the saint’s skull (e.g., Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige,” 338; Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 94).
entirely one-sided, however; Abbot John also recorded the emperor’s promise to exalt (or lift-up) Sigismund’s remaining bones at Agaune.\(^{207}\) The Sigismund reliquary given by Charles IV for the church’s main altar presumably fulfilled this promise. Through this gift and by his keen interest in Sigismund, the emperor boosted the prestige of a local cult that had long languished in the shadow of the Theban martyrs. And that was only the beginning of his plans for St. Sigismund.

5.2.2. Introducing a New Saint

Next, and more importantly for this study, Charles IV began to establish Sigismund’s cult in Bohemia. The relics arrived in Prague at an exciting time, only months after Conrad Waldhauser’s charismatic sermons had begun attracting large crowds and stirring up public controversy. Sigismund’s relics were hardly the first to reach Prague through the agency of Charles IV, but they received one of its warmest welcomes. As I argued above, the cult of the Burgundian king had very few adherents in Bohemia before the translation of relics from Agaune.\(^{208}\) Yet the impressive public introduction of the new relics quickly began to change that. Charles IV brought Sigismund’s relics (along with numerous others) back with him when he returned to Prague. There a procession ushered them to their resting place in a new chapel dedicated to the saint within the partly-built cathedral. The date of the arrival and the procession is somewhat unclear, as various witnesses reported two different dates. Beneš Krabice of Weitmil testified that the “corpus sancti Zigismundi” was brought by Charles IV to

\(^{207}\) The Latin word is “relevare” (APMK 309). But note that the *Miracula sancti Sigismondi* (MsS f. 1r [p. 462]) seems to indicate that the relics were kept on the main altar already when Charles IV arrived.

\(^{208}\) See above, n.182.
Prague and “carried processionally in the Prague church on the day of St. Augustine” (August 28).209 Others pointed to the vigil of St. Wenceslas (September 27) as the date upon which the relics were invested in a new, eponymous chapel in the cathedral.210 The contradictory accounts may in fact have fused two different events, ignoring the delay between a late August arrival and a late September ceremony situating the relic in its new chapel.211

Whatever the date, the relics of St. Sigismund enjoyed a grand entry into the society of Prague saints. His bones were welcomed into a prominently located chapel that looked across the choir to the most hallowed part of the entire cathedral—the chapel of St. Wenceslas (see figure 5.3). The St. Sigismund chapel seems to have been architecturally complete three years previously, but only dedicated (or rededicated) upon the arrival of the new relics.212 Only Charles IV, likely in concert with the archbishop,  

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209 “. . . suspexit est processionaliter in ecclesia Pragensi in die beati Augustini” (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.533). A charter issued by Charles IV from Prague on August 23, 1365, however, seems to demonstrate his presence there already several days earlier (Böhmer, Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV, 343; J. Pavel, “Studie k itineráři,” 71).

210 The Miracula sancti Sigismundi relates that the “corpus sancti Sigismundi. . . in dicta Pragensi ecclesia eodem anno in vigilia sancti wenceslai martyris, quae fuit xxvii mensis septembris, in capella nova ejusdem ecclesiae, sub nomine et vocabulo dicti sancti martyris tunc intitulata, honorifice collectum. . . [est],” 462-463, Paris BN N.A. 1510, f. 1r. The Chronicon Pragense and the Chronicon Lipsiense likewise date the arrival to the vigil of St. Wenceslas (Karl Adolf Constantin Höfler, Geschichtsschreiber der husitischen bewegung in Böhmen, 3 vols. [1865, reprint; Graz, 1969] 4, 7).

211 Jaroslav Polc, “Svatý Zikmund,” in Bohemia sancta, ed. Kadlec, 192; see also DMP 2.54, where Tomek suggested (apparently without knowledge of the text of the Miracula sancti Sigismundi) that the relics arrived on 27 August but that perhaps there was another kind of celebration on 27 September. It seems in fact that the celebration involved the dedication of a new chapel to Sigismund, for which the preparation may well have required the delay. This contradicts the suggestion by Bertalan Kéry that the chapel to St. Sigismund already existed in 1362 (Kaiser Sigismund: Ikonografie [Vienna, 1972], 42).

212 In 1362 an altar to Saints Urban and Cecelia was established where later the chapel of St. Sigismund was located (LE 1.40-41 no. 76), suggesting that the construction of this chapel was complete by this time (Dobroslav Libal and Pavel Zahradník, Katedrála svatého Vita na pražském hradě [The cathedral of St. Vitus within Prague castle] [Prague, 1999], 127. Cf. Jaroslav Pešina, ed., České umění gotické, 1350-1420, 78. Tomek refers to it as the chapel of Saint Urban, opining that its dedication was likely changed shortly after the 1365 arrival of Sigismund’s relics (DMP 2.87). The account in the Miracula sancti Sigismundi gives evidence for such a 1365 dedication or rededication to Sigismund,
had the power to carve out of Bohemia’s most sacred church such a prominent space for a little-known saint.²¹³ It proved the pivotal act in an extraordinary attempt to establish the cult of Sigismund in Prague.

Figure 5.3 The Cathedral of St. Vitus in Prague
(Extent completed during the later fourteenth century)²¹⁴

explaining that the relic was deposited “in capella nova ejusdem ecclesiae, sub nomine et vocabulo dicti sancti martyris tunc intitulata,” (463; f. 1r).

²¹³ According to the archbishop in a 1365 synodal statute, Charles IV was behind the order for Sigismund’s body to be laid in the cathedral (Polec, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” 504).

²¹⁴ The gothic nave of the cathedral was not built until the nineteenth century.
The effort paid off. Almost immediately the saint came to be associated with wonders and miracles. The morning after Sigismund’s arrival, on the feast of St. Wenceslas, a great light shone down upon Prague. It illuminated especially the cathedral perched high above the banks of the Vltava, pouring out its supernatural light upon the worshippers gathered there for the office of matins. Those present interpreted the glow as a symbol of the saint’s merits and as a sign of events to come.215 Three days later, a man with a broken foot and a crippled woman were both healed at the saint’s tomb (sepulcrum sancti martyris Sigismondi). A wave of miracles followed, including three the following week. News spread quickly. Over the next several months, more visitors made their way to the cathedral of Prague to request, receive, and announce the miraculous interventions of the Burgundian king.

The publicity was primarily word-of-mouth, but not without official direction. The dedication of the chapel to Sigismund had only been the first stage of an impressive propaganda campaign. Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim, for instance, took advantage of the upcoming diocesan synod (17 October 1365) to publicize the new arrival and encourage the cult:216

215 “Nuper siquidem in die festi sancti Wenczeslai, xxviii dicti mensis, dum matutina in ipsa Pragensi ecclesia agerentur officia, lux magna de caelo resplenduit et descendit, quae quasi totam terram Boemiae et nonnullas alias provincias ei vicinas, sicuti sufficienti testimonio sumus edocti, et signanter Pragensem ecclesiam, illuminavit more mirabili atque magno, ut hii qui ibi tunc aderant aperte cognoscerent eam lucem descendisse per merita hujus sancti, et ut cognoscerentur mystica futurorum praenuntia ac praesaga nec non relevatrix meritorum sancti Sigismondi praefati” (MsS, p. 463).

216 The dated synodal statutes from 1365 indicate that the synod that year took place on the vigil of St. Luke’s day (Friday, 17 October) instead of the feast day itself (18 October). Diocesan synods normally took place in Prague twice annually, on the day after the feast of St. Vitus (16 June) and on the feast of St. Luke (18 October) (Polc, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” 504; cf. 201 n. 3). This practice more or less accorded with the general custom of holding diocesan synods around Easter and on the feast of Saint Luke (Odette Pontal, Les statuts synodaux, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 11 [Turnhout, 1975], 29). Such gatherings brought together higher clergy and representatives from religious orders from throughout the diocese and likely a significant number of lower clergy from the immediate vicinity (Polc, “Councils and Synods of Prague, 202).
...our most exalted emperor, among the other examples of his good deeds, ardently desiring our Prague church to be exalted and our entire province and all the residents of the kingdom of Bohemia to be comforted by a special gift of grace, brought the body of the most holy martyr Sigismund, king of the Burgundians, to our Prague church in pious devotion. Having obtained it by his supplication from the monastery of Saint Maurice in the city of Agaune, he reverently transported it and ordered it to be laid solemnly in the church of Prague. There many instances of miraculous aid [accomplished] by his merits have thus far been revealed and continue to be revealed daily to the weak and infirm who approach his tomb. Therefore, not wanting to be ungrateful for these works, we command in the name of holy obedience and under the threat of eternal cursing, that after you return to your churches, you are to gather together the people subject to you and ensure that you faithfully proclaim this translation of the saint’s body as well as its good works. You should earnestly command that God himself should thus be honored through his saints and that we should worship God who is worthy with our praises, so that we may deserve consolation in the present life as well as achieve eternal life with his saints in the life to come.217

With this pronouncement, the archbishop arranged the diocese-wide proclamation of the advent of St. Sigismund’s relics. His commands and threats combined to ensure that every parishioner would quickly learn about the emperor’s praiseworthy translation, the saint’s new home within the cathedral of Prague, and the miracles that had been performed around the holy tomb.

217 “Cum autem gloriosus et mirabilis in sanctis suis nunccietur a fidelibus deus et tanto sanctorum merita et ipsorum miracula devociioni populi sint necessario intimanda, quanto per ipsorum suffragia humane necessitati consultur et de remedio supernaturaliter a postulantibus gloriose providetur, nuper siquidem serenissimus et dominus noster dominus imperator predictus inter cetera bonorum actuum suorum insignia cupiens desiderio exaltari nostram Pragensem ecclesiam ac totam nostram provinciam omnesque incolas regni Bohemie speciali anthidote gracia consolari, sanctissimi martiris Sygismundi, regis Burgundiorum, corpus pia devocione ductus ad ecclesiam nostram predictam Pragensem, quod a monasterio sancti Mauricii in civitate Aganencium precibus obtentum reverenter transtulit et in dicta nostra Pragensi ecclesia sollemniter collocari ordinavit, ubi ad ipsius tumbam devote accedentibus multa beneficiorum gesta eius meritis circa debiles et infirmos miraculose actenus sunt ostensa etcottidie ostenduntur. Nolentes igitur ingrati esse beneficiis supradictis, in virtute sancte obediencie et sub interminacione malediicenis eterni preciario mandamus, ut cum ad veistra ecclesias accesseritis, populo vobis subiecto convocato predictam sancti corporis allacionem et ipsius beneficia fideliter nunnciare curetis seriore iniuungentes, quatenus ipse deus sic in sanctis suis honore et dignis ipse laudibus a nobis preconizetur, ut in presenti vita consolationem, in futura autem cum ipsis sanctis consequi mereamur vitam eternam” (Polc, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” 504).
One year later, the archbishop again used the diocesan synod to promote Sigismund’s cult. Concerned by reports that some of the faithful were working on obligatory feast days, John Očko of Vlašim ordered the clergy to enforce the celebration of the holidays that had been stipulated in the 1349 archdiocesan statutes. He also added two more mandatory holidays: the dedication of the Prague cathedral and the feast of St. Sigismund. 218 The synodal statute even allocated to Sigismund a new holy day, unique to the Prague diocese (2 May instead of his traditional 1 May). That way, he would not have to share the feast with the apostles Philip and James. By that time or soon after, Sigismund even came to be considered one of the patron saints of the Bohemian kingdom. As the late fourteenth-century martyrology of Prague explained, St. Sigismund “was added to the other patron saints of the Prague cathedral and the kingdom of Bohemia on account of his great and glorious miracles.” Under these circumstances, it was only fitting to assign Sigismund his own, private feast day. 219

From that time Sigismund’s star in Prague continued to rise higher and higher. The strong support of the archbishop and the emperor drove forward the cult of Bohemia’s newest patron saint. Yet according to an important contemporary source, Sigismund had an even more crucial advantage. The royal saint from Burgundy, it

218 Some manuscript copies of Arnošt of Pardubice’s 1349 archdiocesan statutes add St. Sigismund’s feast to the original list of obligatory feasts outlined in these statutes (Zelený, “Councils and Synods,” 529, [textual variants in footnotes]).

219 “propter preclara et grandia miracula annotatus est cum aliis patronis ecclesie Pragensis et Regni Boemie. . . Huius festi fit specialis in dyocesi Pragensi tam in officio quam in celebracione memoria die sequenti post Philippi et Jacobi quia cum per miraculorum magnitudinem sit factus patronus Boemie decens fuit ut specialem pro sua festiuitate habeat diem” (Prague KMK, Cod. C 5, f. 64v; cf. Prague KMK, Cod. N 30, f. 7v).
seems, had a local advocate whose power outstripped even that of the emperor: Bohemia’s own St. Wenceslas.

5.2.3. Royal Saints, Holy Companions

Among the most delightful survivals of Charles IV’s monumental propaganda is the mosaic of the Last Judgment that crowns the “Golden portal” of St. Vitus cathedral’s southern façade (figure 5.4). Installed in 1370-71, its shimmering elements shone down on pilgrims filling the square below—as they do today, after a series of modern restorations, on gawking tourists. From street level, an observer can just make out the names of the six patrons who appear in postures of supplication below the judging Christ: Procopius, Sigismund, Vitus, Wenceslas, Ludmilla and Adalbert. Scenes of resurrection and of souls being ushered towards salvation or damnation reminded medieval viewers of what was at stake. The message was plain: the patron saints of the cathedral and of the realm interceded for them (and for the emperor) in the presence of God himself. Through this mosaic, Prague’s cathedral boldly announced its status as the topographical focal point for the Bohemian cult of saints. After all, its vaulted roof sheltered the bones of all six patrons.

Barely six years after the ceremonial arrival of his relics, Sigismund stood shoulder-to-shoulder in this mosaic with the ancient patrons of the realm. Despite his complete lack of local ties, the newcomer had been warmly received among the august

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Figure 5.4 Mosaic of the Last Judgment, south porch of St. Vitus Cathedral (1370-71)
protectors of Bohemia. From the distance of centuries, the reason for this appears obvious. Sigismund was a royal saint. Charles IV had long cultivated an association with his two name-saints and ruling predecessors, Wenceslas and Charlemagne. It is no surprise, therefore, that he adopted St. Sigismund shortly after claiming the Burgundian crown. Sigismund, properly presented, became another jewel in Charles IV’s crown of holy forbearers. An elevated walkway provided direct access between the royal palace and the cathedral, binding the Luxemburg dynasty closely to Sigismund’s cult and the cults of Bohemia’s other patron saints (see above, figure 5.2). In one sense, the very obscurity of Sigismund had eased his adoption as a Bohemian saint. (Co-opting France’s St. Denis or Hungary’s St. Stephen as a patron saint of the Bohemian lands would have been quite out of the question, even aside from the political unlikelihood of Charles obtaining either crown; nor did Charles IV attempt to induct Charlemagne into this company). Prague cathedral now housed the greater part of the Burgundian saint’s relics. For Central Europe at least, Prague even displaced Agaune as the center of Sigismund’s international cult.

As other scholars have argued, Sigismund came to occupy an important place within Charles IV’s dynastic politics and its representation in Prague’s art and architecture.\(^{221}\) The mosaic of the Last Judgment is only one of several examples. This analysis can be sharpened, however, with the help of an important rhetorical counterpart to these monumental images: namely, the account of Sigismund’s miracles written at the cathedral around 1366. This text, preserved in a single manuscript (discussed at greater length below), presented an official interpretation of the saint’s supernatural deeds. Its

\(^{221}\) Most recently, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 327-31; Crossley, “The Politics of Presentation,” esp. 159-60.
preface carefully explicates the new saint’s introduction to Prague and, crucially, the translation of his relics into Prague cathedral on the vigil of St. Wenceslas’s feast. The first miracle—a bright light shining beaming into the Prague church—occurred the next day, during the morning office on the Bohemian saint’s feast day:

Recently on the feast day of St. Wenceslas, the 28th of that month [September], while the offices of matins were being performed in the church of Prague, a great light shone and descended from heaven, illuminating in a wondrous and great manner almost the entire land of Bohemia as well as other neighboring provinces, as we are informed by worthy testimony. But it especially illuminated the church of Prague, so that those who were present should recognize that the light had descended through the merits of this saint (hujus sancti), and that they might perceive the mystical foretellings and presages as well as the relevatrix of the future merits of the aforementioned saint Sigismund.\(^{222}\)

The miraculous light, argued the author, should be attributed to the merits of the saint. But which saint? Grammatically, his identity within the text is ambiguous. “Hic sanctus” at first seems to finger “sanctus Wenczeslaus,” whose feast day it was. But it may also reasonably refer to “sanctus Sigismondi,” the subject of the entire preface to this point.

The author may not have intentionally clouded the saint’s identity here, but he certainly meant to strengthen the connection between the Wenceslas and Sigismund. If any doubt remained, the passage labeled “third miracle” swept it away. Whereas the second miracle involved the healing of an injured foot, this miracle at first seems to have

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\(^{222}\) “Nuper siquidem in die festi sancti Wenczeslai, xxviii dicti mensis, dum matutina in ipsa Pragensi ecclesia agerentur officia, lux magna de caelo resplenduit et descendit, quae quasi totam terram Boemiae et nonnullas alias provincias ei vicinas, sicuti sufficienti testimonio sumus edociti, et signanter Pragensem ecclesiam, illuminavit more mirabili atque magno, ut hii qui ibi tunc aderant aperte cognoscerent eam lucem descendisse per merita hujus sancti, et ut cognoscerentur mystica futurorum praenuntia ac praesaga nec non relevatrix meritorum sancti Sigismondi praefati” (MsS, f. 1v [p. 463]).
been no miracle at all—until one learns the miraculous nature of the translation of Saint Sigismund itself. This is the passage with which I began this chapter:

Oh, what a venerable, precious and indescribable gift, the aid for every infirmity, is the body of St. Sigismund! Who would doubt that our most holy patron Wenceslas—who while still alive secured for himself a holy abode—now in the presence of God obtained for himself St. Sigismund as a companion. Oh, what a holy and faithful fellowship, which no rivalry could break and which in unity makes up for the corporal and mental faults of the people. Oh, happy and holy church of Prague, that you have deserved to possess so much in the precious treasures of so many saints. Rejoice also, happy Bohemia, that in affliction you have more intercessors for you before God.223

More a prayer than a miracle, this passage binds together Sigismund and Wenceslas while defusing any concerns that the new saint might somehow detract from the glory of the old. It also implicitly justifies the entire process of relic-collecting undertaken by the emperor. Each new saint ushered into the holy fellowship at Prague’s cathedral would multiply the intercessory efficacy for Bohemia’s inhabitants.

The concern manifested here to associate the holy Burgundian king with the holy Bohemian duke is not limited to this miracle collection.224 Nor is it the result of an accidental conjuncture of Sigismund’s translation and the feast of Wenceslas. Rather, it is far more likely that the official translation was purposefully scheduled to coincide with the major Bohemian feast, long considered a propitious day to schedule important

223 MsS f. 2r [p. 463]).
events.\textsuperscript{225} This would explain the apparent month-long gap between new relics’ arrival in Prague and of their official translation. Wenceslas’s late September feast marked one of the high points in Prague’s liturgical and economic calendar, for the feast day of Bohemia’s most revered patron saint also marked the opening of one of the city’s annual markets.\textsuperscript{226} Sigismund’s relics were installed at their prominent new location at a time when the city was full of merchants and visitors. Surely it was also no accident that the chapel chosen for St. Sigismund faced across the cathedral choir to the glorious chapel then being prepared for St. Wenceslas. The spatial arrangement recreated and reinforced the spiritual bond that, according to the cathedral’s miracle collection, linked the two.

The portrayal of Sigismund as the saintly companion of Wenceslas facilitated the domestication of what was for most Bohemians an obscure foreign cult. There may have been another aim as well—one reflected in the miracle collection’s apparent attribution to Wenceslas of the shining omen and its assertion that Wenceslas had somehow brought about the arrival of the new saint. Wenceslas, as I have noted, enjoyed the status of the premier Bohemian patron saint. Under the reign of Charles IV, new feast days were created for him; indulgences were offered to anyone singing a Czech vernacular hymn in his honor; periodic miracles at his tomb were recorded by chroniclers.\textsuperscript{227} Charles IV himself even composed a \textit{vita} of the saint. The emperor’s generosity further ensured that his ancestor’s holy tomb was second to none.

\textsuperscript{225} Graus, “St. Adalbert und St. Wenzel,” 218.

\textsuperscript{226} See above, n. 159.

Despite all of this, however, disturbing hints of the cult’s weakness persisted. One of the miracles attributed to the Přemyslid duke points to a widespread lack of respect for the Slavic saint. In 1338, on the vigil of Wenceslas’s translation, an artisan scathingly expressed his disinterest in observing the feast of such a yokel (*rusticus*). Immediately struck dumb, his comrades brought him to the tomb of Wenceslas (located on the same site within the previous cathedral of Prague). There he received back his voice and confessed his blasphemy. The result, claimed the chronicler Francis of Prague, was that “Germans thereafter had greater reverence for our patron, as the aforementioned man came from this stock.”

The artisan may have been a foreigner, but was more likely one of the many German-speaking inhabitants of Prague. In either case, the chronicler explicitly connected his contempt for the Bohemian saint to his German identity. The new respect engendered by the miracle was likewise generalized to all Germans. By implication, the antecedent lack of respect had also been common among Germans. Furthermore, despite the chronicler’s optimism, there seems little doubt that even a well-publicized miracle of this type failed to eradicate German prejudices against the saintly Slavic duke. Subsequent testimony confirms this. Decades later, despite the sustained efforts of Charles IV to strengthen his ancestor’s cult, Beneš Krabice of Weitmil complained that the observance of the feast of St. Wenceslas was so meager and

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228 “Nam cum quidam viri in arte mechanica eruditi inter se conferrent, quod festum translacionis sancti Wenceslai esset celebrandum, quidam vero ex ipsis ait, quod illius rustici festum nollent celebrare, adiungens varia enormia, que quasi blasphemiament sapiebant. Qui mox mutus est effectus, in aliisque sensibus extitit ebatatus. Consortes vero sui in crastino ipsum ad sepulchrum sancti prefati adduxerunt, ipsum admodum crucis prostraverunt precesque pro eo fundentes et oblaciones offerentes. Cumque caput sancti Wenceslai allatum super caput ipsius positum fuisse, mox vocem magnam emissit, acsi gravi vulnere foret sauciatus, et illico pristine sanitati et loquele fuit restitutus, gracias agens Deo et suo martiri glorioso, reatumque suum coram omnibus confessus, veram penitencial agens pro delicto prefato. Deinceps Theutonici patronum nostrum in maiori reverencia habuerunt, nam prefatus vir de eorum propagine fuit oriundus” (Francis of Prague, *Chronicon Francisci Pragensis*, 168).
devotion to him so cold that God had allowed the inhabitants of Bohemia to be chastised by a devastating pestilence in 1370. These complaints hint at the cult’s relative weakness in Bohemia and illustrate the possible disjunction between official sanction and popular enthusiasm. Moreover, although the second instance did not connect the lack of piety to ethnic identity, the first case undeniably highlights the link between ethnicity and the cult of saints in Bohemia.

The translation of Sigismund’s relics and the text recording miracles at his tomb may have been intended to bolster the Wenceslas’s cult even as they eased the introduction of a foreign saint. The attempts to associate Sigismund and Wenceslas compare closely to the well-attested efforts of Charles IV to link the cults of Wenceslas and Charlemagne in order to spread the Bohemian patron saint’s cult beyond the kingdom’s borders. There had also been earlier attempts to link the cults of Wenceslas and Adalbert in Bohemia. Concern for the weak cult of Wenceslas was not necessarily the primary motivation for Sigismund’s grand introduction in Prague. It certainly was not the only one. Yet Charles IV repeatedly proved himself adept at exploiting the potential of particular relics to serve multiple purposes. There is good reason to believe that the emperor’s plans for Sigismund included the strengthening of the cult of Wenceslas.

In 1368, Charles IV’s third son was baptized Sigismund. (His older brothers, the first of whom had died in infancy, had both been named Wenceslas). On that occasion,


230 On Charlemagne, see above, p. 295; on Adalbert, see above, n. 224.
the emperor donated one thousand florins to Sigismund’s altar, which he had previously adorned with silver and gold. More than anyone else, Charles IV had been responsible for establishing Sigismund within Prague—for arranging the conditions, in other words, for a vibrant local cult to emerge. The Burgundian’s political and dynastic significance clearly appealed to him, but there was more as well. In the later years of his reign, Sigismund also seems to have become the emperor’s personal favorite saint. Like Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim, Charles IV both designed and participated in the cult of St. Sigismund. He turned to the martyr of Burgundy in his own illness, and recommended him to others as a healer. For an emperor, private and public piety were inseparable: his public veneration of Sigismund inevitably promoted the political agenda entwined with the cult of this royal saint. The same did not hold for most of the other worshippers who increasingly made their way to Sigismund’s gilded tomb. Ultimately, they proved the measure of the cult’s success and its identification with Bohemia’s most sacred church.

5.2.4. The Tomb, the Devout, and their Miracles

Charles IV had given the new Bohemian devotion to Sigismund firm spatial roots. The presence of the saint’s body within his chapel made it the focal point for his cult. Miracle-seekers arrived in greater and greater numbers as news of the wonder-working

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231 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, *Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, FRB 4.536-7. Charles IV’s first son (who died in infancy) and second son were both named Wenceslas.

232 One can identify several “favorite” saints of the emperor at different times. Examples include Catherine of Alexandria, to whom he attributed major battlefield victories in Italy, Wenceslas, the ancestor from whom he received his baptismal name, and Charlemagne, his second name-saint and precursor as Holy Roman Emperor (Autobiography, 42-43; Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 88; Reinhard Schneider, “Karolus, qui est Wenceslaus,” in *Festschrift für Helmut Beumann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke and Reinhard Wenskus [Sigmaringen, 1977], 365-87).
saint spread. Others arrived from great distances to share their own stories of the saint’s wondrous deeds. Worshippers and workmen mingled in a cathedral that remained under construction, like a vast number of others in Europe at any given time. Cathedral building took time, and the foundation stone of this Gothic church had only been laid in 1344. The cathedral choir was finally completed and dedicated in 1385. Seven years later the nave was begun. Stonemasons and laborers were as common a sight as canons for decades, as the previous basilica was pulled down and the new one built in its place. Yet this did not keep the devoted away. They must have frequented Sigismund’s tomb as much as or even more than any other part of the cathedral, at least until the construction of Wenceslas’s chapel was officially completed in 1366, precisely one year after Sigismund’s translation.

Sigismund’s chapel was the westernmost on the northern side of the cathedral choir. The chapel floor was paved, and a railing or grate (cancellum) separated it from the choir. Paintings, presumably involving the saint, adorned the chapel. Marble covered its altar, while the tomb itself had been decorated in gold and silver. The chapel also contained a head-reliquary of Sigismund’s queen; apparently Charles IV had collected her relics as well. This no doubt sat alongside the gilded head-reliquary of Sigismund

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233 A convenient summary of the various stages of the cathedral’s construction appears in Klára Benešovská and Ivo Hlobil, eds., Peter Parler & St. Vitus’s Cathedral 1356-1399, trans. Derek Paton (Prague, 1999), 162-165.

234 Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.534.

described in the 1355 inventory of the cathedral treasury; it contained the piece of Sigismund’s skull from Einsiedeln. As the miracles multiplied, so did the chapel’s adornment. The archbishop contributed a great candle. A gem-encrusted crown and a similarly decorated brooch augmented the impressive head reliquary. Silver and gilded figures of the saint added to the menagerie, as did a reliquary of pure gold donated by the empress herself. The more humble devout left candles in celebration or expectation of miraculous intervention. Gifts of this kind were common at shrines, signaling and celebrating the miracles worked there.

Visitors seeking St. Sigismund would have often found his chapel crowded with worshippers. At a given time both “upstanding matrons” (honestae matronae) and hungry beggars could be seen praying around the tomb. Beggars like these were fixtures at cathedrals. They often sat outside the great doors and hoped to attract the munificence of passers-by. On certain days they could expect the institutionalized largesse established over the years by wealthy benefactors concerned for their own souls. Some, like a blind woman healed by Sigismund, periodically ventured in to

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236 CPSVP XII no. 23; cf. IX no. 307.
237 MsS f. 6r (p. 469).
238 CPSVP XXVII no. 23.
239 CPSVP XXIX, no. IV; XXXI no. 21.
240 E.g. MsS f. 4v (p. 467).
241 MsS f. 2v (p. 464).
242 In 1362, for example, the dean of Prague arranged for specific sums of money to be distributed to the various office-holders and functionaries of the cathedral annually after his death on the octave of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. Three Prague groschen were reserved for the “beggars sitting outside the doors of the church” (LE 1.40 no. 76).
pray with the pilgrims at the tomb.\textsuperscript{243} Their presence, along with that of the local devout, ensured an audience for the stream of announcements that began to publicize the new saint’s miracles.

Proclamation of miracles at the shrine before witnesses was, after all, an essential and public element in the process, and one that continually reinforced the importance of the physical space of the chapel for the cult. Some of the miracles happened right there. Katherine of Čáslav, “known to many,” had suffered from crippling paralysis for many years. At the saint’s tomb, she poured forth prayers with her tears until she received healing. She demonstrated her new health by walking around “in the presence of all the people.”\textsuperscript{244} Such public miracles could verge on public spectacles. This was likely the case for the demon-possessed woman who was brought to the tomb for a successful exorcism.\textsuperscript{245}

On other occasions, the saint intervened at a distance. Even then, though, the recipients of his miracles were expected to pay him homage in person. Beneficiaries came to trumpet their good news, loudly praising God and St. Sigismund.\textsuperscript{246} Around the tomb, the grateful narrated their experiences with full emotion.\textsuperscript{247} Indeed, the public announcement of the saint’s miracles was a moral duty not lightly to be ignored. One unfortunate miracle-recipient made precisely this mistake: “the ungrateful woman did not

\textsuperscript{243} MsS f. 2v-34 (p. 464-465).

\textsuperscript{244} MsS f. 2v (p. 464).

\textsuperscript{245} MsS f. 2v (p. 464).

\textsuperscript{246} E.g., Henslinus, who after receiving healing, “glorificabat Deum magnis vocibus et sanctum martyrum Sigis mondum, per quem tanta miracula operari dignatus est” (MsS f. 4r [p. 466]).

\textsuperscript{247} Two miracle recipients, e.g., “veniunt quoque ad sanctorum liminia [sic], gratiarum actiones cum lacrimis referentes,” another “quae praescripta sunt plene et fideliter narravit” (MsS f. 3r [p. 465]).
make sure to publicize the grace given to her in the person of her [healed] son.”

Needless to say, her son’s illness returned with a vengeance. The distraught mother turned again to Sigismund, vowing the second time “to ensure that the miracle and gift of health would be made public to the praise and glory of God and the holy martyr and to bring the boy to the tomb with offerings.” Even this negligent woman knew that the saint demanded public praise and shrine-centered devotion. Happily, the longsuffering (yet suspicious) saint again healed her son—but only after she had brought the boy and presumably the offerings to his chapel.

Such oral proclamations were by their nature transitory. The cathedral canons therefore took it upon themselves to create a written record. The result was a little book (libellus) of miracle stories that they preserved, according to the chronicler and cathedral canon Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, in the sacristy. That book has been lost, but an incomplete copy (or perhaps a derivative text) survives in a single manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The Bollandists printed most of its legible portion in 1893 as the “Miracula sancti Sigismondi martyris, per ipsum in sanctam Pragensem ecclesiam

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248 “. . . ingrata gratiam sibi in puero factam publicare non curavit” (MsS f. 4r-5v [p. 468]).

249 “eadem mulier dictum puerum recommendavit secundario beato martyri Sigismondo, et vovit ut, si sanaretur, hoc miraculum et beneficium sanitatis procuraret et faceret ad laudem et gloriam Dei et beati martyris publicari, ac puerum cum oblationibus deferre ad liminia sancti martyris ejusdem” (MsS f. 5v [p. 468]).

250 The lesson was plain to the recorder of the miracles and apparently to other supplicants as well. Two weeks later, a man received healing for a digestive ailment (colica) at the shrine. He immediately began to spread the news of his healing, anxious, the writer explained, to avoid being guilty of ingratitude—“like the woman we described above”: “Timensque ne ingratitudinis vitio, ut mulier illa de qua supra diximus, notaretur, petivit instantissime sibi impensum fideliter publicari” (MsS, f. 5v [p. 468]).

251 “Et de hiis miraculis sancti Zigismundi habetur specialis tractatus vel libellus in sacristia Pragensi” (Beneš Krabice of Weitmil, Cronica ecclesie Pragensis, FRB 4.533-534).

252 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouvelles acquisitions Latins, Cod. 1510.
manifeste demonstrata.” Since then, the fascinating source has remained almost entirely un tapped.\textsuperscript{253} The Paris manuscript is itself manifestly incomplete. Written in a fifteenth-century gothic book hand, the surviving six-folio manuscript breaks off in the middle of the text. Bound to the end of the gathering is a seventeenth-century charter that suggests the manuscript’s presence in that century at or near Saint-Maurice d’Agaune.\textsuperscript{254} News of the Sigismund cult in Bohemia, it seems, may have returned to the saint’s first home to reinforce his veneration there.

The text of the miracle collection contains a preface recounting the arrival of the relic in Prague (discussed above), followed by brief accounts of thirty-five miracles

\textsuperscript{253} “Miracula sancti Sigismondi martyris, per ipsum in sanctam Pragensem ecclesiam manifeste demonstrata,” in \textit{Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum latinorum antiquorum saeculo XVI qui asservantur in Bibliotheca Nationali Parisiensi}, vol. 3 (Brussels, 1893), 462-69. A few scholars have made brief reference to the text, but I know of no analysis of the text of the miracles themselves (e.g., Neureither, \textit{Das Bild Kaiser Karls IV.}, 197, n. 2; Polc, “Councils and Synods of Prague,” \textit{Apollinaris} 52 (1979): 213, nn. 53-54; apparently Polc did not yet know of the text when he published an article on St. Sigismund, “Zapomenutý Český Patron,” 131. Likewise the leading authority on royal saints, Robert Folz, does not make use of this text in his analysis of miracles attributed to Sigismund and other royal saints (\textit{Les saints rois}, 117-135).

\textsuperscript{254} This charter contains a copy of an earlier charter (1636) relating to the transfer of a house in Monthey, near Agaune in Valais. It was copied in accordance with a commission ordered by Adrian V of Riedmatten, bishop of Sion (1672-1701) after a fire in Agaune. In other words, this fifteenth-century copy of the Prague miracles of St. Sigismund was almost certainly at or near the burial church of Sigismund in Saint-Maurice d’Agaune at the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth centuries. How it came there is unknown. It may have arrived from Bohemia through the agency of Emperor Sigismund, who visited the church of St. Sigismund at Saint-Maurice d’Agaune and obtained relics of his name-saint from the reliquary his father had donated. The only report I know of this visit appears in a seventeenth-century manuscript preserved at the monastery of Saint-Maurice (Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige,” 338, n. 87). From his known itinerary, it seems that Sigismund must have at least passed quite near to the monastery on his journey in late June and early July 1414 from northern Italy, over the Great St. Bernard Pass, and along the Rhone valley (where St. Maurice is located) to Lake Geneva and on to Romont and then Bern. On Sigismund’s itinerary, see Jörg K. Hoensch, ed., \textit{Itinerar König und Kaiser Sigismund von Luxemburg 1368-1437}, Studien zu den Luxemburgern und ihrer Zeit 6 (Warendorf, 1995), 157; Jörg K. Hoensch, \textit{Kaiser Sigismund: Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit 1368-1437} (Munich, 1996), 624; Johann Friedrich Böhmer, \textit{Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigismunds (1410-1437)}, 2 vols in 1, Regesta imperii 11 (Innsbruck, 1896-1900), 57-58; Joseph von Aschbach, \textit{Geschichte Kaiser Sigismunds}, 4 vols. (1838-45; reprint, Aalen, 1964), 1.387.
performed over a period of four months. Then the text breaks off. The unknown author no doubt belonged to the community of canons and clerics associated with the cathedral of Prague. The *libellus* provided an official record of the miracles of the saint—a written counterpart to the public pronouncements in the cathedral made by those receiving healing or other miraculous benefits. Those enrolling the miracles were concerned with authenticity and trustworthiness. This resulted in the careful dating of the miracles and naming of the beneficiaries, as well as in the further investigation of miracles considered dubious. Safe within the cathedral, the little book preserved the memory of the saint’s beneficent deeds for the cathedral community and its visitors. It may have been read periodically to interested visitors or on the feast of St. Sigismund. There is no evidence that it was widely copied, or ever intended as a piece of propaganda for dissemination.

The Sigismund miracle collection furthermore provided for the miracles an official and theologically correct interpretation. Repeatedly, for instance, it identified God as the ultimate force behind the miracles; the saint’s role was strictly limited to that of an intercessor. As I argued above, the account of the early miracles affirmed the existence of a friendly relationship of mutual admiration between St. Wenceslas and St. Sigismund. No one should think the worse of Wenceslas, it implied, simply because

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255 Most, but not all of the miracles are numbered in the text, which breaks off in the middle of the miracle numbered 33. Folio 6v is badly rubbed and many words are illegible even with the aid of ultraviolet light. Thus the printed edition ends with the rubric announcing miracle 31.

256 For the clerics known to be associated with Prague’s cathedral, see DMP 5.135-77 and Antonín Podlaha, *Series praepositorum, decanorum, archidiaconorum aliorumque praelatorum et canonorum s. metropolitanae ecclesiae Pragensis a primordiis usque ad praesentia tempora*, Editiones archivii et bibliothecae s. f. metropolitani capituli pragensis 10 (Prague, 1912). Possible authors of this text include but are not limited to: Nicholas, canon and schoolmaster (1361-1369), Buzek the sacristan (from 1363) and Beneš Krabice of Weitmil himself (canon 1359-1375), although the latter makes no claim to the authorship in his chronicle (*Cronica ecclesie Pragensis*, 39-41).
Sigismund had taken over from Wenceslas the role of the cathedral’s principal miracle-worker.

One miracle in particular also provides otherwise unrecorded evidence of the involvement of the archbishop and emperor in the new cult, both as promoters and as adherents. At the end of January in 1365, with more than thirty miracles already having been entered into the official record, Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim announced yet another miracle at vespers. The archbishop, who three months earlier had publicized the new saint’s arrival at the synodal conference, testified that day to his own miraculous recovery from fever. In response, he publicly presented a large candle in thanksgiving. The personal testimony of such a powerful man, delivered at a time when an audience in the cathedral was guaranteed, unquestionably boosted what had already become a lively cult. The massive candle provided a costly and relatively long-lasting testimonial for the tomb. What the archbishop revealed of the circumstances of his personal miracle leant even more weight to the cult:

Coming to the tomb of St. Sigismund, . . . [and] offering a large candle there, he attested in a loud voice [*publica voce*], by his conscience and by the purity of his faith, that he had recently had a very serious fever from which he was in danger of death, but that immediately after he had commended himself to St. Sigismund *upon the advice of our ruler the emperor* and had voiced a vow to visit his tomb [*liminia*], his fever broke and he began to regain his health. This he obtained and kept through the mercy of God and the intercession of this holy martyr (emphasis mine).

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257 “Item die xxix mensis januarii, hora vesperarum, veniens ad sepulcrum beati Sigismundi reverendus in Christo pater et dominus dominus Johannes, sanctae Pragensis ecclesiae archiepiscopus, apostolicae legatus primus, offerens ibidem grandem candelam, rettulit publica voce per suam conscientiam et suae fidei puritatem quod, cum ipse nuperrime gravissimam febrem haberet, in qua quasi usque ad mortem periclitatur, statim postquam ad consilium domini nostri imperatoris praefati se beato Sigismondo recommendasset et votum visitandi ipsius liminia emitteret, calor ipsum febrilis dimisit et incepit sanitatem recuperare, et eam per Dei misericordiam et dicti sancti martyris intercessionem obtinuit atque habet” (MsS f. 6r [p. 469]).
The sequence of illness, vow, and miraculous healing is common to many of the miracles in the collection. That the archbishop himself had experienced this healing, and that the emperor had recommended St. Sigismund to him, underscores what other evidence has made manifest: the cult of St. Sigismund enjoyed the personal and official support of Charles IV and Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim.

These two men were simultaneously among the best informed about Sigismund’s tradition. This may explain why the archbishop was one of only two people to be healed from fever, the special province of the Burgundian king. The other miracles, on the other hand, testify to the breadth of petitions brought to the saint (see Appendix 3 for a list of the miracles and their recipients). The blind, the crippled, and the injured came and received healing. Evil spirits were expelled, as were bugs infesting one petitioner’s house. Those suffering from assorted bodily pains reported restored health. Prisoners miraculously escaped and dead infants came back to life. The devout welcomed St. Sigismund as a generalist rather than a specialist, bringing to him all manner of sufferings. Most of the claimed miracles followed well-known models. Several mimicked miracles attributed to Wenceslas, miracles that were widely known through liturgy, sermons, oral tradition, and numerous *vitae*. These several means of

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258 Folz, who did not take this miracle collection into account, notices the same tendency among the posthumous miracles of other royal saints (*Les saints rois*, 129).

259 Sigismund, for example, once rescued a falsely accused knight from captivity (MsS, f. 3r-3v [p. 465]). Freeing prisoners, both guilty and innocent, was an activity common to royal saints but especially characteristic of Wenceslas (Folz, *Les saints rois*, 131-133). The Bohemian duke set enough prisoners free for it to be considered one of his particular specialties (along with healing and battlefield aid) (e.g., AASS, September, vol. 7, 777-78; 781-83; cf. Paul Devos, “Le Dossier de S. Wenceslas dans un manuscrit du XIIIe siècle,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 82 (1964): 120-125).

260 For an exhaustive survey of the scores of hagiographic, liturgical, sermonic and other texts, mostly unprinted, associated with the cult of Wenceslas, see Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Literární prameny svatováclavského kultu a úcty ve vrcholném a pozdním středověku* (Literary sources of the St. Wenceslas cult and veneration in the High and Late Middle Ages) (Prague, 1996).
communication provided the mechanisms by which people learned what sort of problems they could expect saints to solve.

Conventional miracles functioned in another manner as well. Miracles were expected to fall into certain categories, categories which in turn shaped the official textual retelling of the miracles. Tales not conforming to the standard models raised the suspicions of the cathedral canons. Claims that a young girl was resurrected just long enough to be baptized were familiar and thus readily accepted. Yet the story of another resurrected child was met with strong skepticism. This eight-day-old had been sleeping in a bed with his father. The father, exhausted from brewing beer all day, unintentionally smothered the child. Upon discovery of the accident, the distraught man and his wife prayed to Bohemia’s patron saints as well as to the newly arrived saint (Sigismund) whose name they did not know. After an hour, the child returned to life. They traveled to Prague to spread the news, but were met there with incredulity: “the dean and chapter of Prague did not at first want to lend credence to this new miracle, [of a type] previously unheard of in these parts.” Only after a clerical inquisition into the matter confirmed the story was it accepted. Other tales of miracles may not have made the cut.

None of the other miracles included in the collection so challenged the preconceptions of Prague cathedral’s clerical leaders and strained their credulity. A shared body of common expectations about miracles taught petitioners and witnesses alike what one could expect of a saint. Unavoidably, the recipients of miracles would tend to follow traditional models as they expressed their experiences. The cleric or

261 “Sed quia huic miraculo novo et prius in nostris partibus non audito decanus et capitulum Pragensi fidem protinus noluerunt adhibere, sed commiserunt inquisitionem super veritate facti decano Lyppii et duobus aliis presbyteris, qui postea rescripserunt quod, facta inquisitione diligenti ac fidelci, ita ut praescribitur invenerunt” (MsS f. 3r [p. 465]).
clerics who heard these testimonies, even more well-versed in the canon of regional miracles, would likewise draw upon their own knowledge of miracles as they recorded these new experiences in writing. There is no evidence to justify the further step of considering the miracles stories to be merely derivative literary creations. Nevertheless, the accounts of these miracles were undeniably told and subsequently written by individuals whose own understandings of supernatural mechanics inevitably shaped their form.

Many aspects of the miracles stories contained in the “Miracula sancti Sigismondi” were traditional, even formulaic. Yet the collection is undeniably a local artifact. First of all, the nature and number of miracles reported over a short period of time demonstrate the rapid acceptance in Prague of Sigismund as a general-purpose worker of wonders. The invested efforts of emperor and archbishop seem to have paid quick dividends, just as the new feast of the Holy Lance and Nail reportedly attracted massive crowds. For that relic-centered holy day, I offered provisional and indirect evidence that its celebration extended beyond Bohemia and magnified Prague’s role as a central place. The collection of Sigismund miracle stories allows me to provide a much more precise account on the geographical impact of a newly introduced relic. Included with the miracles are the names and geographical origins of their recipients. This prosopographical data offers a glimpse of some of medieval history’s most elusive subjects, people whose activities only rarely left marks on paper. These names of people and places allow a map of the cult’s initial spread to be plotted. The result represents an important measure of the cult’s regional impact. Charles IV could transform the space of Prague’s cathedral to create a new tomb, but only the response of the people could
enshrine the space as a landmark of the sacred geography. This remarkable miracle collection tells their stories.

The devout who visited Sigismund’s tomb came from all strata of society: at one end was the archbishop, at the other a blind beggar woman (see Appendix 3). Three represented the upper strata of secular society: two knights (milites) and a lord (dominus). Several stemmed from the more modest ranks of the famuli or clientes, terms which can refer to servants, helpers, vassals (including lower nobles) or more broadly to members of the lower social ranks.262 Among those described as “famuli” were a baker (pannifex) and a wall-builder (murator). A blacksmith (faber) and two cobblers (sutores) also appear; one of the latter was specifically described as poor. There was also a simple priest (presbyter) and a man identified only as a citizen (civis) of Prague’s Lesser Town. The status and profession of the women were less precisely recorded in most cases. In addition to their personal names, a few were identified by the names of their husbands, one as the wife of a cloth-shearer (pannitonsor). Several others are characterized only as “a certain woman” (quaedam mulier), although the same imprecision applies to some of the men (vir quidam, homo quidam). Men outnumbered women by almost two-to-one (22 to 12) among the identifiable individuals who reported miracles that they (or in one case, that the woman’s son) had experienced.

The widely varying occupations and ranks of those announcing miracles testify to the broad social appeal of Sigismund’s cult. The adherents included male and female, secular and clerical, and those from both the lower and upper strata of society. Still

262 “Cliens” in particular often refers to a member of the lower nobility. For specific examples, see the entries for both of these terms in Latinitatis Medii Aevi lexicon Bohemorum (Slovník středověké latiny v českých zemích), ed. Ladislav Varcl and Karl Ernst Georges (Prague, 1977-).
more, though, can be gleaned about those whose public testimonies caused their miracles to be included in this collection. The writer maintained an unusual precision, almost always recording, for instance the date of the miracle. When combined with names and places, the result is a surprisingly full picture. Thus we know not only that a “certain woman” announced her healing from chronic and serious fevers on 24 January 1365, but also that she was named Petra and came from the parish of St. Henry in Prague’s New Town.

Nothing more can be determined about Petra. The names of a few others, however, can be traced in other sources and their stories thereby augmented. At one extreme is the archbishop of Prague, John Očko of Vlašim, of whom much is known. He was a longtime member of Charles IV’s inner circle and holder of several important benefices. A 1344 papal dispensation for his illegitimate birth and a physical defect paved the way for higher offices, which included elevation in 1352 to the bishopric of Olomouc and eventually his 1364 election to Prague’s archbishopric. Another devoted cleric was “Jehlinus, parish priest (presbyter plebanus) in Odolena Voda.” He may well be identifiable with “Johannes,” the parish priest of this Bohemian village north of Prague who eight months earlier (April 1365) was present at the confirmation of a fellow priest to a new parish. If so, it seems likely that Jehlinus remained the parish priest

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263 The recording of precisely dated miracles are quite unusual, as attested by Folz’s study of royal saints (Les saints rois, 122).

264 MsS f. 5v (p. 468).


266 LC 1.2.74.
there for about five more years, until Martin, the next known parish priest, took over the benefice. The text provides stronger footing in the case of Nicholas, “called Turnovic,” “a certain blacksmith (faber) from the city of Prague.” His paralyzed hand had threatened his livelihood before Sigismund’s intercession brought about its healing. From another source it appears that Nicholas was relatively successful; he bought a house in the same year on the marketplace of St. Gall in Old Town.268

The last identifiable person from the “Miracula sancti Sigismondi” is “dominus Hincho Hrussina,” who publicly related the miracle involving himself and a certain Belco, “in oppido Nechonicz.”269 Hinco Krušina of Lichtenburg (Lichnice) belonged to the noble Lichtenburg family.270 Together with his father and uncle, he (or more likely his eponymous father) had been involved in the power struggles preceding the introduction of the Luxemburg dynasty in 1310. This Hinco was the first of the subsidiary line of Krušinas of Lichtenburg.271 The family’s property was concentrated in eastern Bohemia, where Nechanice, the town (oppidum) referred to in the Miracula

267 This claim is admittedly speculative. The archdiocesan visitation records that in 1380 Martin was the village’s parish priest and had been for “nine years or more”—that is, from about 1371 (PV 269-270). Unfortunately, the Libri confirmationum are by no means comprehensive in recording the naming of priests to new benefices. In fact, during the eighty years covered by this source, only one other parish priest from the village appears (in 1394, again as a witness) (LC 5.186).

268 Old Town city records refer to this house “in novo foro” which in 1365 “Mikechs [a variant spelling of Nicholas] Turnowicz faber emit erga Eligast sutorem” (ZSMP 1.238).

269 MsS ff. 3r-3v (p. 465).


271 Peter of Zittau. Chronicon Aulae Regiae, FRB 4.112 nn. 6-7; 172; cf. DMP 487.
sancti Sigismondi, is located. Hinco had purchased Nechanice in 1341. His rights over the town included the prerogative to name the parish priest, which he did in 1358. He likewise named priests to parishes in several other eastern Bohemian villages, exercising a power that normally coincided with ownership of the village. This recipient of St. Sigismund’s beneficence was clearly a powerful lord from an important Bohemian noble family.

The author of the Miracula sancti Sigismondi strove to authenticate the miracles by identifying those who offered public testimony about miracles they had experienced. The information thus recorded now serves to confirm the authenticity of the text itself. The supernatural events it relates were without a doubt reported at Prague’s cathedral by historical individuals in the years 1365 and 1366. Not surprisingly, only those with significant property or high position left any other record of their lives. That the group even included such people underscore the fact that the worshippers of St. Sigismund came from all social strata, including the uppermost.

Although nothing further can be said about the majority of miracle-recipients as individuals, nearly all of them were also identified by geographical origin. From this a map of the devout can emerge, providing insight into the places and distances from which people came to seek or announce miracles. Some, sadly, are impossible to read in a manuscript that is badly rubbed in particular parts. Moreover, abstracting geographical places of origin from medieval surnames is admittedly problematic, and has in the past

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272 Profous, Místní jména v Čechách, 3.193-93; Sedláček, Místopisný slovník, 636. Profous.

273 LC 1.1.68, where he is referred to as “Hinco dictus Crussina de Myliczin.”

274 LC 1.1.73 (1358); 1.1.141 (1360); 1.2.33 (1363); 1.2.48 (1364); 1.2.107 (1368). Hinco seems not to be the same person as “Czenco dictus Krussina de Lichtemburk,” who was most likely a close relative (LC 1.1.87 (1359); 1.2.51 (1364); 2.75 (1372); 3-4.74 (1377)).
been the occasion of pointed debate.  Fortunately, in many cases we do not have to rely on surnames.  “Katherine of Čáslav, known to many,” (no. 4 in Appendix 3) and “a certain man, Nicholas of Kutná Hora” (no. 14) may possibly have been residents of Prague whose names reflected previous residences or family origins.  But it seems to me safe to assume that “a certain man from the village of Lhota near Řevnice” (no. 18) and “Stanek from the oppidum of Mníšek” (no. 22) did in fact hail from those places. Nearly two-thirds of the thirty-six named individuals can reasonably be associated with a particular geographical location.  Irregular spellings and numerous villages that share a single name unfortunately make it impossible to pinpoint all of these places.

Nevertheless, the following map (Map 5.2) offers a general picture of their geographical distribution.

Pride of place belongs to Prague, from which fourteen people are known to have come.  Of these, three lived in Old Town, five in New Town, and two in Lesser Town. No specific Prague city can be identified for four others Prague inhabitants. Of these fourteen, five are known to have lived within a particular Prague parish.  In all, more

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276 This includes Nicholas, called Turnovic, who is described as “faber quidam de civitate Pragensi,” but who is known to have owned a house in Old Town (MsS f. 6r [p. 469]); on the house, see above, n. 268.

277 I include among these Archbishop John Očko of Vlašim. The archbishop’s palace was located in Lesser Town, and his archiepiscopal seat within Prague Castle (Zdeňka Hledíková, “(Arci)biskupský dvůr v Praze do doby husitské” (The (arch)bishop’s court in Prague up to the Hussites times), *Documenta Pragensia* 9 (1991): 341-60).

278 The last of these appears on MsS f. 6v, and the name of the parish is so badly rubbed as not to be legible (p. 469).
Map 5.2: The Cult of St. Sigismund in Bohemia: October 1365 - February 1366
than forty percent of those reporting miracles came from Prague. Not surprisingly, the cult for which Prague had become a new center found many of its early adherents within the city itself.

Most of the others arrived from Bohemian towns and villages within 100 kilometers of the capital city; many were much closer. Only two cases suggest a hint of foreign interest. One involves Henslinus, “filius Octonis pellificis de Wienna” (no. 10); whether he or his furrier father hailed from Vienna is not clear. The other also refers to Vienna. The hand of a certain knight, “Hrocho miles de Preszilucz,” was struck with paralysis “while he was in Vienna” (no. 17). He received healing soon after making a vow to visit Sigismund’s tomb, presumably before leaving Vienna. Despite the location of the miracle, however, he should probably be associated primarily with his Bohemian place of origin, which seems to have been the village of Přelíč (spelled Przielicz, Prselucz, Przieliczi and Przieliczie in contemporary sources).²⁷⁹

From the majority of these places, Prague was within relatively easy travel distance. This can be illustrated quite concretely, if anecdotally. In 1379, the priest of the same village of Přelíč was reported to have two illegitimate sons. One worked as a shoemaker in Prague but often visited Slaný, a regional city only a few kilometers from Přelíč.²⁸⁰ The same visitation records indirectly confirms how closely knit the village of Odolena Voda (no. 21) was to Prague. In 1380, the village elders accused the parish priest—Martin, a successor to the parish priest whose health had been restored by St. Sigismund fifteen years earlier—of keeping his housekeeper as a concubine. The

²⁷⁹ Profous, Místní jména v Čechách, 3.465; Sedláček, Místopisný slovník, 728.

²⁸⁰ PV 226.
alleged concubine Dorothy had recently moved to New Town in Prague, where the priest visited “often.” Such a journey was evidently entirely commonplace for an inhabitant of Odoleňa Voda. Not only did the priest evidently find his way there regularly (though he himself denied knowledge of the precise residence of his former housekeeper), but the four village elders knew Prague well enough to identify the house as that of “Crux the brewer, on the street near the square across from Rotleb’s house.”

Even the places further from Prague tended to have relatively strong connections with the city. The city of Čáslav (no. 4), for instance, lay along the long-established road leading from Vienna to central Bohemia and Prague.

To judge from the origin of its most vocal adherents, the cult of St. Sigismund in Prague remained focused almost exclusively upon the city and its surrounding region. And without a doubt, all or nearly all of those making vows to Sigismund had been encouraged in their veneration to this saint by the official publicity: the prominent new chapel, the order for all parish priests to announce the translation, and his adoption as a new Bohemian patron saint. In light of the almost complete lack of evidence for the cult of Sigismund in Bohemia before this time, the claim by the first miracle recipient that he had long been devoted to the Burgundian saint rings somewhat hollow.

Word did spread swiftly, though. One man relates that he commended his dead infant son to the Bohemian patron saints Vitus, Wenceslas, and Adalbert, “as well as to St. Sigismund, of whom he knew and for whom he had devotion even though he did not know his name, for

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281 PV 269-70.

282 On the history of this route, see Ivan Vávra, “Haberská cesta” (The Habr path), Historická geografie 3 (1969): 8-32. 283 “...[Sigismundus] cuius famulatibus prius exstitet devotus” (MsS f. Iv [p. 463]).
he had recently heard that his body had been brought and that he was performing many miracles.284 The sketchy rumor of the new saint had reached this brewer from New City (Jezvě) remarkably quickly (no. 8); the celebrated translation had taken place only twenty-five days before this miracle (22 October). Indeed, he almost certainly learned of the new saint’s arrival before his own parish priest would have had time to implement the archbishop’s order to announce the translation, delivered at the diocesan synod on Saturday, 18 October.

The cult of Sigismund at Prague drew most of its early identifiable adherents from the immediate region. Yet the incompleteness of the surviving manuscript of “Miracula sancti Sigismondi” leaves open the possibility that later recipients of miracles came from further afield. The miracles from the surviving six folios took place within the first five months of the translation. The passage of more time may well have allowed the news of the translation and subsequent miracles to spread more widely and attract foreign pilgrims as well. There is some evidence for this in the record of gifts made at the tomb. The 1374 cathedral inventory includes three gilded and silver statues (imagines) of Sigismund that may well have been offerings of thanksgiving from the saint’s beneficiaries. One of these treasures came from the emperor himself, the other two from “a certain noble from Hungary” and the duke of Masovia (in the kingdom of Poland).285 Only extremely valuable gifts like these were registered in the inventory. These few

284 “clamantes voce lamentabili, dictum puerum sanctis martyribus Vito, Wenczeslao, Adalberto, necnon sancto Sigismondo, quem licet nominare nescirent, tamen quia ipsius corpus audierant noviter ablatum [sic, for allatum?] et ipsum multa miracula facientem, in mente ac devotione habebant, devotius commendarunt” (MsS f. 3r [p. 465]).

285 These objects accrued to the cathedral between the inventories of 1368 and that of 1374 (CPSVP XXIX). For further evidence for the cult of St. Sigismund in Hungary, see Pole, “Zapomenutý český patron,” 130.
object may, however, signal the continuing strength of the cult and its extension to include foreign as well as regional adherents. Sigismund’s cult also spread from Prague via the relics of the saint distributed by Charles IV. These gifts served to establish new and ancillary centers of the cult in neighboring lands, however, and did not necessarily draw pilgrims to the Prague shrine.286

5.2.5. Conclusion

The “Miracula sancti Sigismondi” reveals the immediate success of the officially promulgated cult of St. Sigismund in and around Prague. This record makes Sigismund’s cult the best-documented example of the local impact of Charles IV’s massive redistribution of holy relics. The bones he brought from Agaune and installed in Prague’s cathedral became, with the archbishop’s help, the center point of a new devotion in Bohemia. Yet the cult’s success ultimately depended upon pilgrims, who indeed came to seek or proclaim the saint’s miraculous intervention. Stories, spread by rumor and sermon alike, offered divine intervention for pilgrims to Prague and the new chapel

286 The most celebrated of these gifts was to King Kasimir the Great of Poland, who in turn gave the relic and the still extant ornate head reliquary to the cathedral at Plock in 1370 (Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige,” 338; Schramm, Herrschaftszeichen und Staatsymbolik, 3.76-78, figure 28). Relics also reached the Freising cathedral, where Sigismund was a patron saint in the fourteenth century, likely through Charles IV. An altar to the saint existed in 1367 and indirect evidence suggests that it may have existed already in 1359. Based on the coincidence that the bishop there from 1349 to 1359 was a relative of the emperor, Stephan Randlinger argued for the likelihood that some of the relics obtained by Charles IV from Einsiedeln in 1354 arrived as a gift at Freising before 1359 (“Die Verehrung des heiligen Sigismund, des zweiten Diözesanpatrons, in Freising,” in Joseph Schlecht, ed., Wissenschaftliche Festgabe zum zwölfhundertjährigen Jubiläum des heiligen Korbinian (Munich, 1924), 353-54; 362). This very reasonable suggestion has been repeated with increasing certainty by several subsequent scholars (e.g., Joseph Staber, Volksfrömmigkeit und Wallfahrtswesen des Spätmittelalters im Bistum Freising, Beiträge zur altbayerischen Kirchengeschichte 20.1 (Munich, 1955), 44; Folz, “Zur Frage der heiligen Könige,” 339 n. 95; Machilek, “Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit,” 99). Such a gift would be have been completely in character for Charles IV if the recipient church previously had some connection with the saint. This seems to have been precisely the case for Freiburg and St. Sigismund (Kéry, Kaiser Sigismund, 41-42; Kéry implies however that the donated relics came from those the emperor acquired in 1365). Charles IV also distributed relics of saints whose cults he particularly supported, but there is no direct evidence that this was the case for St. Sigismund’s cult before 1365.
within St. Vitus cathedral. The incomplete text of the miracle collection unfortunately obscures the true extent and duration of devotion to Sigismund, but there is no doubt that it represented a vibrant and exciting element of Prague’s religious culture for at least several months in 1365 and 1366. At the same time, it confirmed the emperor’s reshaping of the local sacred topography. Sigismund’s tomb became a holy landmark in its own right. Strikingly, there is no evidence that Charles IV sought papal indulgences for Sigismund’s cult. Perhaps the immediate and continued occurrence of miracles obviated the need, in the emperor’s mind, to further bolster the cult with indulgences.  

Charles IV continued to manifest his devotion to the Burgundian saint in the following years, not just by baptizing his son (later Emperor Sigismund) with his name. In the summer of 1371, Charles IV himself needed supernatural aid. While at Karlstein castle, he became so ill that his doctors abandoned hope of his recovery. As Beneš Krabice of Weitmil recounted, the empress Elizabeth appealed on her husband’s behalf to St. Sigismund, vowing to walk the approximately twenty-five kilometers from Karlstein to the saint’s tomb at Prague cathedral. She also promised eight scutellas (or twenty-three marks) of pure gold—the equivalent of 1,650 gold florins—for decorating the saint’s skull. Once she had fulfilled this vow, the emperor’s health was restored. A head-reliquary made from the empress’s gold appears first in the cathedral’s 1387 inventory.

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287 This seems to me an important issue that deserves further research. Did indulgences in the later Middle Ages, for instance, spread as an alternative to miracles for attracting pilgrims? Or did the sites of the most famous miracle-working saints also tend to be associated with the most extensive miracles?


289 CPSVP XXXI no. 21. The royal family’s generosity towards the saint neither began nor ended with the occasion of the emperor’s healing. The cathedral inventory of 1368 includes a crown given to the
Of all the holy treasures Charles had collected, the relics of St. Sigismund must have been among his most cherished. Together with hundreds of others, these bits of bones provided the emperor a powerful form of capital that he carefully invested to reshape and enhance the sacred topography of Prague. Much of the art and architecture of the associated propaganda program have survived, to the delight of increasing crowds of tourists. Sigismund’s chapel likewise remained after the emperor’s death, but it quickly lost its significance within Bohemia’s geography of holy places. The miracle-producing cult did not long outlive its founder and greatest supporter. Within a few generations, the foreign saint introduced by a pious emperor had become “the forgotten Bohemian patron saint.”

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CONCLUSION

When the seventeen-year-old Charles of Luxemburg returned to Bohemia in 1333 after an absence of more than a decade, he found that he had entirely forgotten the Czech language. The young Margrave of Moravia quickly relearned the Bohemian vernacular, which he later claimed to speak, write, and read as well as he could French, Italian (“Lombard”), German, and Latin.\(^1\) Charles IV’s horizon never stopped at the borders of his kingdom, but unlike his Luxemburg father he chose to root his imperial and dynastic power firmly within the ancient soil of Bohemia. He immediately set about redeeming mortgaged royal properties throughout the kingdom, for instance, but especially concentrated his energies on Prague, the undisputed seat of his mother’s Přemysl dynasty.\(^2\) First in line was the hilltop Prague Castle, where the sacred and secular symbols of his power converged. Even before laying the new cathedral’s foundation stone, he attended to the moldering royal palace that shared the space of the castle hill:

Even the castle in Prague was desolate, in ruins, and reduced from the times of King Otakar [II] so that it had crumbled almost to the ground. Here we raised up at great expense the great, new, and beautiful palace the way it appears to those who look on it today.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Autobiography 66-69.

\(^2\) For the long-term status of Prague as Bohemia’s capital, see esp. Franz Machilek, “Praga caput regni: Zur Entwicklung und Bedeutung Prags im Mittelalter,” in *Stadt und Landschaft im deutschen Osten und in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. Friedhelm Berthold Kaiser and Bernhard Stasiewski (Cologne, 1982), 67-125.

\(^3\) Autobiography 68-71. Přemysl Otakar II died in 1278.
Backed by the riches of the Bohemian silver mines (not to mention increasingly burdensome taxes levied on Bohemian and German imperial cities alike), Charles IV rebuilt and reshaped Prague even as he extended the boundaries of Bohemia’s crown lands northward and westward.

By the end of his reign, Emperor Charles IV had dramatically transformed the physical topography of Prague, making it one of Europe’s largest cities. Its new layout and architecture embodied the glory of his reign and the hopes of his dynasty. In remaking Prague, Charles IV influenced nearly every aspect of local life. Prague’s religious culture was no exception. Accordingly, each chapter of this study of religion and topography in medieval Prague has confronted the impact, great or small, of the proactive emperor. Most immediate was the effect of the treasury of relics that Charles painstakingly accumulated throughout Europe and brought to St. Vitus cathedral. Relics of saints had for many centuries provided a central pillar of the Christian religion. Charles IV fostered and developed this tradition to Prague’s benefit by enlisting a host of indulgences and even new feast days to celebrate Prague’s old and new patron saints. The emperor deployed relics to manipulate and enhance Prague’s geography of sacred spaces; nothing better illustrates the ramifications for local religion than the vibrant, albeit short-lived, Bohemian cult of St. Sigismund.

Equally dramatic was Charles IV’s introduction of several new religious houses and two new parish churches to fill the new intramural space of New Town. Other, less monumental manifestations of the emperor’s power over Prague’s sacred space included his right to name priests to a handful of urban parishes, not to mention his informal ability to influence appointments he did not technically control. In some cases, the
results may not have entirely met with Charles’s own approval. Conrad Waldhauser made Prague his home at the emperor’s invitation, lured in part by a royally administered benefice (outside of Prague). Waldhauser’s later appointment to the position at Týn church may likewise have resulted from royal pressure on the parish patron. Yet Charles, who decades before had played the peacemaker between Prague’s mendicant friars and secular priests, hardly intended for his Austrian protégé to rekindle that antagonism once again. Nor, assuredly, did he expect the brothel property he re-assigned to Milič and his followers to become a flashpoint in a local ecclesiastical turf war. (He remedied the problem, I have suggested, by reassigning the same space to the Cistercians after only two years.)

The emperor, in short, could not completely control the effects of his interventions in the local topography. Nor, of course, was his power over the physical space of the city absolute. This dissertation has therefore focused on some of the other people who inhabited Prague’s geography, asking how they lived and practiced their religion within the geography of the newly remodeled city, and also how they themselves shaped and controlled (or sought to control) urban spaces. The testament of a dying and possibly repentant old bawd, for instance, first brought Milič and his reformed prostitutes to Venice street. Likewise Milič, though aided by the emperor’s gift of land, was himself responsible for attracting the followers and supporters with whom he established the community that so scandalized its neighbors. Conrad Waldhauser, equally charismatic, vigorously pushed the mendicant friars out of Prague’s public spaces—and they pushed him back.
Both Milič of Kroměříž and Conrad Waldhauser are well-known to historians of medieval Bohemia, yet new questions and new evidence has allowed me to tell their stories (or parts of their stories) rather differently. John Steglitz and his daughter Margaret, in contrast, have had no place within the histories of religion in fourteenth-century Prague. Although known to their Old Town neighbors and social equals, they never attracted the attention of later scholars (with the exception of Tomek, who left very little out of his enormous history of Prague). I have used their relatively well-documented activities to illuminate important but overlooked aspects of parish religion in Prague: the exercise of parish patronage by urban laity, the increasing expression of public piety through private altars, and the growing use of rents to support the parish economy. Rents in particular represented a crucial, even indispensable, economic mechanism with significant ramifications for the social and religious topography of Prague. Finally, I have drawn attention to the miracle-seekers who embraced the new cult of St. Sigismund introduced to Prague by Charles IV. Whereas the cult’s dynastic propaganda can be traced in the architecture and the Last Judgment mosaic of Prague cathedral, their miracle accounts reveal what the tourist-friendly monuments cannot: the responses of the medieval faithful who accepted Sigismund and his new tomb into the sacred geography of Bohemia.

These elements existed simultaneously, combining with others to form the multifaceted religious culture of Prague’s inhabitants. This culture was not static, but rather was animated by the new energies of particular individuals and shaped by a complex of social, political, and economic changes within the local urban environment. Prague itself experienced a remarkable transformation during the decades of Charles IV’s
rule—and not at all the kind that the dominant model of late medieval “crisis” would predict. Prague’s increasing political prestige, expanding topography, booming population, innumerable construction projects and, not least, its flourishing religious culture belie the rhetoric of decay and downfall normally associated with the fourteenth century. Prague and the Bohemian kingdom seem to represent a late-medieval exception, a statistical outlier from the normal distribution that medieval historians have come to expect from their northern- and western-European samples. For this reason, the city that became an emperor’s capital, gave the region its first university, and expanded its borders at precisely the time when many other urban centers were ravaged by the Black Death undoubtedly deserves more attention. Furthermore, the situation of fourteenth-century Prague lends support to those voices that have begun to call for a new model for later medieval Europe, or at the least for rejection of old models. Scholars like Peter Schuster and Howard Kaminsky have recently offered incisive historiographical critiques that prepare the way for richer, more diverse pictures of the realities of the fourteenth century.

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4 Scholars have occasionally recognized the exceptional situation of Bohemia and other parts of Central Europe. Ferdinand Seibt, for instance, pointed out that the “crisis of the fourteenth century” often invoked by historians of France, Italy, and England corresponded with flourishing expansion in some of Europe’s more peripheral areas. Seibt nevertheless continued to accept the existence of a deeper structural crisis in medieval society that the peaceful and prosperous reign of Charles IV was only temporarily able to hold back (“Probleme eines Profils,” in Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen, ed. Seibt (Munich, 1978), esp. 19-20, 29-30).

5 Both Kaminsky and Schuster have begun to dismantle the entire interpretive model, particularly its tendency to characterize a century or an entire “age” as one of fundamental crisis: see Howard Kaminsky, “From Lateness to Waning to Crisis: The Burden of the Later Middle Ages,” Journal of Early Modern History 4 (2000): 85-125; Peter Schuster, "Die Krise des Spätmittelalters: Zur Evidenz eines sozial- und wirtschaftsgeschichtlichen Paradigmas in der Geschichtsschreibung des 20. Jahrhunderts," Historische Zeitschrift 269 (1999): 19-55. A different, recent approach, focused on England, accepts the reality of the various crises but rejects the concomitant decline of culture, preferring the language of transformation to decline and celebrating “the story of men and women who faced a daunting and fearful series of crises but faced them squarely, carrying on with their lives and proving remarkably resilient in the process” (John Aberth, From the Brink of the Apocalypse: Confronting Famine, War, Plague, and Death in the Later Middle Ages [New York, 2001], 7).
and Reformation, new and more variegated accounts may emerge that are better able than Huizinga’s autumnal imagery to embrace the multiplicity inherent in the century of Petrarch and Chaucer, of Geert Grote and Catherine of Siena, of French-English wars, Avignon popes, plague-ridden rats—and Charles IV’s city of Prague.6

I had not intended for this dissertation to confront the general paradigms that have long governed the study of fourteenth-century Europe. Yet the more I have studied the Prague of Charles IV, the less satisfied I have become with the narratives of late medieval crisis. From the very beginning of my research, on the other hand, I have carefully avoided the standard models of late medieval religion in Bohemia. This study has tracked numerous changes within Prague’s religion and topography during Charles IV’s reign: a flood of new saints’ bones, increasing numbers of private altars and attendant rents, new churches and monasteries, and the intoxicating religious energies injected by charismatic leaders. Throughout, however, I have studiously avoided the language of Reformation and even of reform (except, notably, in reference to the reformed prostitutes who inhabited Milič’s Jerusalem, a community marked both by traditional impulses and experimental form). Similarly, the shadow of the fifteenth-century Hussites has hardly darkened these pages. By refusing to trace the thread of later reform back through the fourteenth-century, I have worked to recover forgotten elements, the ones that lack obvious connections with the better-known events of later centuries.

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Reform is undoubtedly there to be found in Charles’s Prague—just as it is, as Gerhard Ladner demonstrated, throughout earlier periods of Christendom’s history. Nor would I deny that Jan Hus and his followers sought and found inspiration among the inhabitants of fourteenth-century Prague. Furthermore, there are undoubtedly fruitful comparisons to be made between the Prague of Charles IV and the Prague of Jan Hus (d. 1415). Just over four decades separated the death of the Luxemburg emperor (1378) from the outbreak of the Hussite revolution (usually dated to 1419). How one construes the connection depends to a great extent upon the rubric used to categorize the entire Hussite movement: heresy, Reformation, or revolution. Heresy was the name by which the Council of Constance knew the Hussites, and a stream of (mainly Catholic) historians followed that model for centuries. To them, Mílič and Conrad Waldhauser represented faithful Bohemian reformers of morals, from whose pious model Hus and his followers had heretically deviated. Their Protestant counterparts, on the other hand, tended to lump these fourteenth-century figures together with the Hussites as Reformers and proto-Protestants. More recently, “the Bohemian Reformation” (or even “the first Reformation”) has emerged as many scholars’ favored term for the entire period. This language of Reformation has appealed alike to nationalists eager to highlight Czech primacy over the German Reformation, historians (especially Czech historians) wanting to intone the spiritual motivations of the movement, and both local and international scholars interested in drawing the attention of the larger community of religious

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historians to the importance of the understudied Hussites. Revolution, on the other hand, has been preferred by scholars more concerned with the economic, social, and political dimensions of the movement (and not just Marxists). Even among this scholarship, however, the fourteenth-century Prague preachers normally retain their status as precursors who somehow prepared the way for the Hussites. All three models and all three terms—heresy, Reformation, and revolution—continue in scholarly use. Very often they coexist within the same study.

By taking as my starting point the religion and topography of Charles IV’s Prague, however, I have set aside (at least for the moment) all three models and their

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8 František Loskot called Milič of Kroměříž the “Father of the Bohemian Reformation,” and his three early twentieth-century biographies of Milič, Waldhauser, and Matthias of Janov were the first volumes of a series entitled “Great Men of the Bohemian Reformation” [Milič z Kroměříže: Otec české reformace (Milič of Kroměříž: Father of the Bohemian Reformation) (Prague, 1911); Konrad Waldhauser: Reholní kanovník sv. Augustina, předchůdce Mistra Jana Husa (Conrad Waldhauser: Augustinian canon, forerunner of Master Jan Hus) (Prague, 1909); M. Matěj z Janova (Master Matthias of Janov) (Prague, 1912)]. On Amadeo Molnár’s distinction between the “first” and the “second” reformation, see František Šmahel, Husitská revoluce (The Hussite revolution), 4 vols. (Prague, 1993), 1.44-45. Thomas A. Fudge has adopted the same terminology for his book: The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia (Aldershot, 1998). The biennial Prague conference of international scholars organized by David R. Holeton and Zdeněk V. David, in which I have gladly participated, publishes its proceedings under the title: The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice. Four volumes (Prague, 1996-2002) have appeared to date.


10 Šmahel is one of many to employ the language of revolution and reformation (see above, n. 9). Thomas Fudge refers variably to the Hussite movement as reformation, revolution, and heresy—though he seems to apply the latter term, it should be noted, more as a badge of honor than a term of opprobrium (The Magnificent Ride [see above, n. 8]). Howard Kaminsky, on the other hand, has presented a strong and well-argued case for historians to abandon both “Heresy” and “The Reformation” as categories of historical analysis (“The Problematics of ‘Heresy’ and ‘the Reformation,’” in Härseie und vorzeitige Reformation im Spätmittelalter, ed. František Šmahel [Munich, 1998], 1-22).
accompanying categories for the relationships between fourteenth- and fifteenth-century religious leaders: reformers of morals/heretics, forerunners/Reformers, and precursors/revolutionaries. When topography becomes the focus, the relationship between Caroline Prague and Hussite Prague instead becomes one of making and unmaking. For in many ways the Hussites unraveled the city that Charles IV had carefully composed. None of the elements I have discussed here remained untouched by the upheaval. Decades of Hussite wars wrecked parish churches and pillaged monasteries. Urban mobs, riled up by Hussite preachers (whose strict policies of public morality might be characterized as “social discipline”), eradicated authorized prostitution by taking torch to brothel. No houses for repentant prostitutes took their places.\footnote{On the events of the Hussite wars, see Šmahel, \textit{Husitská revoluce}, esp. vol. 3; on the effects on ecclesiastical property, esp. 4.54-72. On the Hussites’ response to prostitution, see Wojciech Iwańczak, “Prostytucja w późnośredniowiecznej Pradze” (Prostitution in late medieval Prague), in \textit{Biedni i Bogaci: studia z dziejów społeczeństwa i kultury ofiarowane Bronisławowi Geremkowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin}, ed. Maurice Aymard et al. (Warsaw, 1992), 102-104. On the concept of social discipline as applied to Early Modern Europe, see, e.g., R. Po-Chia Hsia, \textit{Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550-1750} (New York, 1989).}

Parish life also changed dramatically, and not merely through the introduction in some churches of lay communion in both kinds (\textit{sub utraque specie}). The ethnic divisions that had long run through most Prague parishes broke out into open conflict along “national” lines. Furthermore, repeated efforts were made to outlaw the perpetual rents that supported so much of parish devotion, rendering existing ecclesiastical rent contracts null and void. In a stroke, the liturgical memory of John Steglitz and generations of others was erased from the community consciousness. And then there was the cult of saints, the life-long obsession of the emperor. Jan Hus himself famously rejected the same papal indulgences that Charles IV had so assiduously pursued for Prague’s relics. Most later Hussites were skeptical or outright dismissive of the entire
cult of saints, and especially the veneration of relics. The newly implanted cult of Sigismund in particular never recovered.\textsuperscript{12}

While it has not been my aim to explain the advent of the Hussite movement or to write a pre-history of fifteenth-century Prague, there remains an important and intriguing question: why, a half-century after the height of Charles IV’s reign, did the Hussites emerge within the same urban space? Their impact on Prague was even greater than that of Charles, with results that would have horrified the pious emperor. I have deliberately avoided tracing lines back from the Hussites to fourteenth-century Prague. If I were, however, to trace a single line forward from the death of Charles IV to the rise of the Hussites, from the making to the unmaking of Caroline Prague’s religion and topography, then I would point to an event that occurred in Prague in the year 1389. At that time, ecclesiastical discipline silenced the public expression of some shocking opinions, opinions that threatened the foundations of the religious culture upon which Charles IV had based his transformation of Prague. For that reason, it seems to me, the results of this 1389 judgment provide a fitting way to conclude this study.

At the October diocesan synod in that year, the Paris-educated priest Matthias of Janov (d. 1394) and two of his associates recanted the erroneous and heretical views they had been espousing in Prague.\textsuperscript{13} These included, for example, the claim that images of

\textsuperscript{12} The series of laws passed to outlaw rents nevertheless did not completely end their use in Prague. On rents in Hussite Prague, see Bedřich Mendl, “Z hospodářských dějin středověké Prahy” (On the economic history of medieval Prague), \textit{Sborník příspěvků k dějinám hlavního města Prahy} 5.2 (1932): 164-66; 269-73. On the growing awareness of “national” identity, see František Šmahel, \textit{Idea národa v husitských Čechách} (The idea of nation in Hussite Bohemia) (Prague, 2000). For the Hussite responses to the cult of saints, see Ota Halama, \textit{Otázka svatých v české reformace} (The issue of saints in the Bohemian Reformation) (Brno, 2002).

\textsuperscript{13} The amount of research devoted to this fascinating figure is surprisingly small, especially considering that his most important text has been edited: RVNT; the standard study remains Vlastimil Kybal, \textit{M. Matěj z Janova: jeho život, spisy a učení} (Prague, 1905; rpt. Brno, 2000). For a survey of the
Christ and the saints gave rise to idolatry. Historians have noticed particularly Janov’s condemned support of daily communion for the laity, and have associated his doctrine with the later Hussite demand for communion in both kinds. Yet on that day, Janov was also compelled to assert publicly his belief—despite what he may have said previously—in the validity of the cult of saints and the worship of their relics. The record of his mandatory public profession reveals the precise character of the teachings for which he was censured:

On what should be believed about saints, living and in heaven [in via et in patria], I say that celestial and living saints as well as their bones and other holy objects or relics [sancta vel sanctuaria]—like the clothing and treasures of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints—are to be venerated here on earth. Also, these saints in heaven are more beneficial and more able to be beneficial to us through their merits and intercessions than are living saints. If my words have given occasion for someone to believe the opposite of any of these things, that person is in error, as am I and whoever leads or has led him into this error.14

Janov, the most prominent of the three offenders, suffered the mildest penalty and was permitted to make the most face-saving retraction. Yet his attack on the fundamental underpinnings of the cult of relics was unambiguous. Of the several “errors or heresies” he recanted, this one would have caused his contemporaries the greatest scandal. Called into question were both the practice of venerating relics and the underlying premise that

remaining scholarship, see Jana Nechutová, “M. Matěj z Janova v odborné literatuře” (Master Matthias of Janov in the scholarly literature), Sborník prací filosofické fakulty brněnské univerzity E 17 (1972): 119-32.

saints in heaven can aid those on earth. Janov’s less powerful companions had to admit more bluntly to their similar teachings: that the Blessed Virgin cannot assist us in anything, that saints in heaven cannot help us, that the bones and relics of saints should not be ornamented or venerated, that it would not matter if someone were to burn them or crush them under foot, and that no one should fast because of devotion or a vow to a saint.15

The specific origins of these ideas are unclear (John Wyclif’s writings, for instance, are not believed to have reached Bohemia by this time).16 Yet their implication for Prague’s recently renovated sacred topography is unmistakable. Only eleven years after the death of the emperor who had brought scores of new relics to Prague, his entire project and the beliefs upon which it depended were being denounced by three Prague priests. The feast of the Holy Lance and Nail (the Presentation of Relics), the miracles of St. Sigismund, and even the value of the relics themselves—these shaping elements of Prague’s sacred topography were undermined in this radically new preaching. In 1389, these three priests still represented a dissenting opinion. All, moreover, officially recanted their positions. Yet their attacks on the cult of relics nevertheless signaled a sea-change to come.


16 Halama, Otázka svatých v české reformace, 12-14.
APPENDIX 1

RECKONING PRAGUE PARISHES

Václav V. Tomek made a careful and painstaking account of Prague’s parishes, tallying forty parishes in and around Prague before 1348 (not including Prague Castle and Vyšehrad) and forty-four in Prague under Charles IV. Both numbers, but especially the latter, have been repeated by other scholars, usually without reference to the particular parish churches included within these numbers. Nevertheless, the many references to the number of Prague parishes leave a muddled and sometimes contradictory picture.

1 DMP 1.401-402; 3.25-27. The discrepancy between Tomek’s own two figures stemmed in part from the two new parishes founded in New Town and in part to his inclusion in the larger count of the parishes at Prague’s cathedral and St. Adalbert in Pohořelec just outside Hradčany. One other change did not affect the count: the parish rights of St. Cosmas and St. Damian were transferred to St. Nicholas in Podskalí after the former church was incorporated into the newly founded (1347/1348) Slavonic-rite Benedictine monastery in New Town (P-B 118; František Ekert, Posvátná místa král. hl. města Prahy (Most holy sites of the royal capital city of Prague), 2 vols., (1883-1884; reprint, with an epilogue by Jiří Reinsberg, Prague, 1996, 2.497-499).

2 Ivan Hlaváček, "Zum Urkunden- und Geschäftsgut der Pfarreien,” in Grundwissenschaften und Geschichte: Festschrift für Peter Acht, ed. Waldemar Schlögl and Peter Herde (Kallmünz, 1976), 245 n. 9, reports forty parishes in and around Prague; Zdeňka Hledíková cites Tomek’s forty-four parishes, "K otázkám vztahu duchovní a světské moci v Čechách ve druhé polovině 14. století,” ČČH24 (1976): 261-2; Petitova-Bénoliel also counts forty-four parishes for the city deanery of Prague for the period between 1351 and the Hussite revolution (P-B 51, 54); John Klassen counts 2,084 parishes for all of Bohemia, of which forty-four were in Prague (Klassen uses the same number, it seems, for the city deanery and for the city of Prague). Klassen bases his number on records of papal tithes and "other sources,” of which he cites only Kalousek’s historical map of Bohemia; unlike Tomek and Petitova-Bénoliel, he does not include St. Vitus cathedral within these forty-four parishes (The Nobility and the Making of the Hussite Revolution (Boulder, CO, 1978), 35, 38; cf. Josef Kalousek, Výklad k historické mapě Čech (Historical map of Prague with explanation), 2d. ed. (Prague, 1894). Unfortunately for purposes of comparison, only Petitova-Bénoliel (following Tomek) lists the parishes individually. Tomek, however, did not consider these forty-four Prague parishes to represent all the parishes in the city deanery (DMP 3.226). Somewhat perplexingly, Jan Vlk, ed., Dějiny Prahy, vol. 1 of 2. Od nejstarších dob do sloučení pražských měst (1784) (History of Prague: From oldest times to the unification of the Prague cities [1784]) (Prague, 1997), 160, claims that Tomek counted 34 (not 40) parishes in the “historical area of Prague,” excluding Vyšehrad and Prague.
Clarification demands a new interrogation of the particulars. The following, rather
detailed, discussion of the various ways to count the city’s parishes provides this critical
look at Prague’s parish network. At the same time, it raises more general questions about
how a medieval city constructed its identity about the relationship between urban and
suburban settlements.

The walls encircling Prague’s cities provide one obvious and convenient urban
boundary. This system of stone fortifications and gates emphatically divided inner from
outer. Medieval city laws and privileges also normally applied only to intramural areas
and inhabitants. Yet even Charles IV’s new fortifications on both sides of the Vltava left
at least three of Tomek’s forty-four parishes outside the walls. Other extramural
parishes, like those in the villages of Podolí and Krušina near Vyšehrad or at the more
distant monastery of Břevnov, do not make Tomek’s list. We could choose instead to
count Prague’s parishes according to its ecclesiastical rather than its civic boundaries—
namely those of the deanery of the city of Prague. This was how the Archdeacon of
Prague approached the matter when he conducted an official visitation of this and the
other nine deaneries of Prague’s archdeaconry between 1379 and 1382. He visited forty-

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3 The churches of St. John the Baptist in Újezd and of St. Philip and St. Jacob are both on the left
bank of the Vltava; the location of St. Peter on the island of St. Peter is in question, but in any case was not
strictly speaking within the walls (see below, n. 12; cf. P-B 84-87). Whether St. Adalbert in Pohořelec fell
within city’s fortifications depends on the precise location of the city walls.

4 Among the various scholars who agree that Prague had forty-four parishes, some consider this
number to represent all parishes within the city deanery of Prague, others count only those in and
immediately surrounding the city, and some do not distinguish between the ecclesiastical and civic
boundaries. Maps of the archdeaconry of Prague make perfectly clear that the city deanery’s boundaries are
much larger than those of the city walls (PV 9; Kalousek, Výklad k historické map Čech).

5 The surviving visitation records have been edited (PV). See also Zdeňka Hledíková, “Die
five churches within the Prague city deanery. Two of these were clearly not parishes.\[^6\] Also among those he visited were the three extramural parishes not counted by Tomek: Podolí, Krušina, and Břevnov. A sixth visited church does not make Tomek’s list despite its location within the new walls surrounding Lesser Town: the church at the Premonstratensian monastery of Strahov. To be sure, the abbot of Strahov challenged the archdeacon’s right of visitation there, but there is no doubt that the monastery’s church functioned as a parish. Before the abbot’s interruption, the archdeacon was happily interrogating four “parishioners of the church and monastery of Strahov.” They had some complaint about the way funerals were being handled there recently, but reported that things were generally good in the parish (\textit{dicunt per iuramentum, quod plebs ipsorum bene stat}).\[^7\] Strahov should certainly be counted among Prague’s parishes, and an argument could be made for the inclusion of Podolí, Krušina, and Břevnov as well—swelling the number of parishes from Tomek’s forty-four to forty-eight.

Unfortunately, this does not yet exhaust the complications. The visitation records of 1379-82 (the visitation of Prague itself was carried out in 1379-80) do not include all known parishes of the archdeaconry, presumably in many cases because the parishes were never visited.\[^8\] Among those missing are two parishes in villages just outside

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\[^6\] Namely, the chapel or hospital of the citizen, Peslinus Bohuslai, and the church of the Holy Spirit at the house of Benedictine nuns, both in Old Town (PV 97-98).

\[^7\] PV 127-128.

\[^8\] PV 22-23.
Prague, villages that fall within the city deanery.9 Also absent from the visitation record are five of the parishes that Tomek did include on his list of Prague parishes.10 Why these churches in particular were not visited remains unclear. In the case of St. John at the Battlefield, it is worth questioning whether the church, a twelfth-century chapel, was in fact indeed a parish church at that time.11 Another, the church of St. Peter on the island (of St. Peter), undoubtedly enjoyed parochial rights, but difficulty identifying its location has sometimes led to its (apparently erroneous) division into multiple medieval churches.12 Finally, the existence of a cemetery (the prerogative of a parish church) at

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9 Namely, Bubny and Bubeneč (Ovenec), which fell within the Prague deanery (DMP 3.226). Both are known to have been parishes, but neither appears in the visitation records. For both villages, see August Sedláček, Místopisný slovník historický království českého (Prague, 1908, rpt. 1998), 74; DMP 2.264-65. For Bubny (Buben), see also, e.g. LC 1.1.53, 109; 2.139.

10 Namely, the cathedral of St. Vitus, St. Anthony (also called St. Andrew) in Podskali, St. Peter on the island of St. Peter, St. Procopius in Lesser Town and St. John of the Battlefield (both controlled by the Hospitallers of St. John).

11 This twelfth-century chapel just within the expanded New Town walls was given to the Hospitallers of St. John in 1183 and eventually destroyed during the Hussite revolution. Apparently the only evidence Tomek could find for its status as a parish church comes from a reference to the “domus plebani St. Johannis in Bogissczt,” which he tentatively dates to 1403 (ZSMP 2.160, no. 464). Almost uniquely for Prague parish churches, no notice of its parish priests survive, nor does it appear in the Libri confirmationum (LC) or Libri erectionum (LE). It is also absent from the visitation records and from the various lists of parishes paying papal tithes (DMP 3.82 n.130). In light of this, its status as a parish church under the reign of Charles IV seems at the very least questionable (cf. Ekert. Posvátná místa, 2.489-90, P-B 117; Vilém Lorenc, Nové město pražské [Prague, 1973], 26).

12 Tomek gathered the references to this parish, which is identified variously as the “ecclesia S. Petri in insula,” the “ecclesia in insula S. Petri,” the “ecclesia parochialis S. Petri in insula Pragensi,” and even the “ecclesia S. Petri in insula sub ponte Pragensi” (ZSMP 3.69-70). After serious hesitation, Tomek rejected the obvious theory that this church of St. Peter stood on the island spanned by the stone bridge (now Kampa island), and decided instead to identify it with the church of Saints Peter and Paul in Rybáře, a parish church known from the sixteenth century and situated downstream on a part of the bank that according to Tomek had once been an island (DMP 2.130 n. 45). Ekert distinguishes the two churches and identifies (probably correctly) only St. Peter on Kampa Island as undoubtedly a medieval parish. He also points out that some fourteenth-century sources refer to Kampa island itself as “insula sancti Petri,” further evidence for the existence there of a church dedicated to St. Peter (Posvátná místa, 2.341; cf. ZSMP 3.69-70 no. 42). Petitova-Běnoliel follows Tomek (P-B 86). So, evidently, does Dobroslav Libal for his maps of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Prague, which include the “church of Saints Peter and Paul in Rybáře” (in Praha středověká:Architektura, sochařství, malířství, umělecké řemeslo (Medieval Prague: architecture, sculpture, painting, artistic crafts), vol. 1 of Čtvero Knih o Praze (Four books about Prague), ed. Emanuel Poche (Prague, 1983), 12-14, 18-21; 75). Jan Vlk, ed., Dějiny Prahy, on the other hand, the list of monasteries, churches, and chapels in Prague throughout the reign of Charles IV contains both the church
the church of St. Peter “on the stream” in New Town suggests that it too may have enjoyed parochial rights at some point. By the time it appears in written sources, however, it seems not be a parish.13

Where does this leave us? One could count as few as forty parishes (by adopting the city fortifications as a strict limit) or as many as fifty or fifty-one (by including all parishes within the city deanery), allowing a little additional variation for the ambiguous status of one or two parishes. I would propose forty-five parishes as a defensible and reasonable count. This includes all those counted by Tomek for Prague under Charles IV (giving the benefit of the doubt for the moment to St. John of the Battlefield), and adds the parish at Strahov. A strong argument could be made for the extramural parishes of St. Michael at Podolí and St. Pancras at Krušina, both quite near the castle of Vyšehrad that anchored New Town’s southern point. The slightly more distant Břevnov, Bubny, and Ovenec fell within the city deanery but were more clearly separate from the city settlements.

13 In 1379 a citizen of New Town sold a rent (census) “super domo mea et cimentaria inter Franae Terkler et ecclesiam S. Petri,” suggesting that the (former?) cemetery was under his private control at that time (LE 2.195 no. 340; cf. ZSMP 2.115 no. 220b; DMP 3.26). The cemetery seems to have fallen out of use by 1386, when it is described as “deserted”; “area deserta penes ecclesiam S. Petri in ruo retro cimentiburnam desertam” (ZSMP 2.114, no. 227).
My solution represents a compromise, rejecting the more straightforward option of strictly following either the civic or ecclesiastical boundaries. As such, it echoes the practice of many scholars who have counted parishes in other cities.\textsuperscript{14} It also raises the question of how one construes a medieval city’s identity and its relation to its suburbs. City walls clearly demarcated the urban area itself, but how does one precisely mark the limits of the surrounding \textit{suburbes} whose inhabitants lived from and for the city? Certainly those living within the walls enjoyed certain legal and financial privileges not extended to those outside them. Yet suburban inhabitants participated in many aspects of the city’s activities. Indeed, suburban residents dependent upon Prague’s markets sometimes shared the same financial duties, if not all the privileges, of the intramural inhabitants.\textsuperscript{15} The problem of defining a city is magnified for Prague, not only because it was composed of four separate towns, but also because it witnessed the dramatic and swift urbanization of many of its suburbs (and suburban parishes) by means of ambitious fortification projects on both sides of the river. A medieval city’s topography, I would argue, did not end at its walls. The fortifications above it, the river running through it, and the settlements which surrounded it also contributed to Prague’s urban geography. Its boundaries should not be mapped with solid lines following its fortifications, but


\textsuperscript{15} Two examples come from the reign of King John the Blind (1310-1346), both extending the obligatory participation in various taxes to suburban inhabitants of Lesser Town. In 1330, he stipulated that “omnes opifices siue mechanici fores ciuitatem habitantes, quorumcumque sint subditi, onera siue contribuciones seu collectas quascunque cum ipsis ciuibus perferre et contribuere debeant et eciam teneantur. . . .” In 1337, King John explicitly included in the tax burden of Lesser Town “omnes et singuli homines, cuiuscunque status aut condicionis existant, aut quorumcunque sint homines, domos et inhabitaciones extra sepedicatam ciuitatem habentes et forum in ciuitate cum ipsorum rebus et mercibus frequentantes. . . .” (Jaromír Čelakovský, ed., \textit{Privilegia civitatum Pragensium}, Codex Juris Municipalis Regni Bohemiae 1 (Prague, 1886), 35 no. 18; 48 no. 28).
rather with dashed and moveable ones that respect the encompassing flexibility of its identity.
## APPENDIX 2

### FOURTEENTH-CENTURY SIDE ALTARS OF THE ST. GALL PARISH CHURCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Bibliography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Simon and Jude (and John Evangelist) (with chapel and perpetual lamp)</td>
<td>1344</td>
<td>Jacob (Jekla) de Turri</td>
<td>LE 2.128 no. 239; 2.134-6 no. 250; LC 1.1.183; 1.2.19; 1.2.56; LC 3-4.124-25; LC 5.16-17; LC 5.259-60; LC 7.31; LC 7.140; PV 108; SA 2.225-26 no. 155; SA 3.398-9 no. 246; SÚA AZK 1232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bartholomew and Thomas Canterbury</td>
<td>1353</td>
<td>Elizabeth mother of Barta Pillungi</td>
<td>SÚA AZK 1233; cf. ZSMP 1.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Blessed Virgin (or: Annunciation of the Virgin)</td>
<td>1362</td>
<td>Borzuta iudex</td>
<td>LE 1.38 no. 72; LE 4.347 no. 485; LC 1.1.181; LC 1.2.46; LC 3-4.55-56; LC 3-4.207; LC 5.73; LC 6.172; LC 7.70-71; LC 7.289; PV 107-8; PV 111; SA 2.171; SA 2.408 no. 281; SÚA AZK 1246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Catherine and Dorothy (with chapel)</td>
<td>1365 and 1396</td>
<td>Menhart of Dubeč, of Welfl family</td>
<td>LE 1.50 no. 100; LE 1.115 no. 236; LE 4.452-3 no. 625; LC 1.2.60; LC 3-4.209; LC 5.280-1; LC 6.20; LC 6.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. S. Patrons (Vitus, Wenceslas, Vojtech, etc.)</td>
<td>1369 [1368]</td>
<td>John Steglitz</td>
<td>LE 1.72 no. 149; LC 2.2; LC 5.27; LC 6.52; LC 6.165; LC 6.270-721; PV 108; SA 2.91-92 no. 96; ZSMP 1.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. St Anne (with chapel)</td>
<td>1375 [1358?]</td>
<td>Henry Cigler, his wife Gedruda, and son Thomlin</td>
<td>LE 1.109-10 nos.226, 227; LC 3-4.45; LC 7.142; LC 7.209; LC 7.293; LC 8-10.113; SA 1.250 no. 25; SA 1.253 no. 47; SA 2.295-6 no. 262; SA 2.404 no. 268; SÚA AZK 1236, 1237, 1238, 1240, 1241, 1245</td>
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(continued)
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<th>Dedication</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Bibliography</th>
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<tr>
<td>7. Twelve apostles</td>
<td>1388 and</td>
<td>widows &amp; daughter of confraternity of merchants</td>
<td>LE 3.283–4 no. 423; LC 3-4.199; LC 5.36-7; LC 5.211-212; LC 6.153; LC 6.155-156; LC 7.290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. St John Baptist (with chapel)</td>
<td>1392</td>
<td>Leonard (parish priest)</td>
<td>LE 4.371-2 no. 518; LC 5.109; LC 7.140; SÚA AZK 1250</td>
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<td>9. St. Erasmus</td>
<td>1392</td>
<td>Martin Rotlew of Kolodej</td>
<td>LE 4.386-7 no. 539; LC 5.134-5; LC 5.173; LC 5.214; LC 6.87; LC 6.146-7; LC 6.156-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. altar of Corpus Christi</td>
<td>1386</td>
<td>Kristina, widow of Ulrich Payer</td>
<td>LE 2.236 no. 392; LC 5.188; LC 6.24</td>
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## APPENDIX 3

### THE BOHEMIAN MIRACLES OF ST. SIGISMUND:

**SEPTEMBER 1365 TO FEBRUARY 1366**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Miracle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28 Sept</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>great light shining in cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Oct</td>
<td>quidam famulus nomine Nicholaus bene cognitus in civitate Pragensi</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>healed foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>praise offered to Sigismund &amp; Wenceslas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Oct</td>
<td>quaedam mulier Katherina de Czaslauiia nota a multis</td>
<td>Čáslav? Prague?</td>
<td>crippled &amp; paralyzed woman walks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2, 7 Oct</td>
<td>Mulier alia Gertrudis de Netyss</td>
<td>Mnetěš? Prague?</td>
<td>evil spirits expelled twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 Oct</td>
<td>alia mulier nomine Kulka de Drustcez</td>
<td>Družec? Prague?</td>
<td>evil spirits expelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 Oct</td>
<td>quaedam mulier nomine Janka de Knyn pauper et caeca</td>
<td>Knín? Prague?</td>
<td>blind beggar sees vision, receives sight and gold coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>22 Oct</td>
<td>accidit in Nova Civitate oppido prope Lipam vir quidam Nicholas Franus</td>
<td>Nova civitas (Jezvě)</td>
<td>resurrection of infant son who had been smothered in bed at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>22 Oct</td>
<td>accidit quod dominus Hincho Hrussina hominem quendam nomine Belconem in oppido Nechonicz</td>
<td>Nechanice</td>
<td>condemned prisoner freed during night before arrival of itinerant executioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30 Oct</td>
<td>Henslinus filius Octonis pellifercis de Vienna</td>
<td>Prague? Vienna?</td>
<td>injured hand healed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>31 Oct</td>
<td>quidam famulus de Ponnlz murator Ulricus nomine</td>
<td>Poplze?</td>
<td>sight returned after two years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Miracle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2 Nov</td>
<td>Quidam miles nomine Peter de Zelen</td>
<td>Želín? (cannot identify)</td>
<td>falsely accused man released, his accusers punished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2 Nov</td>
<td>mulier quaedam Milka nomine uxor Blahmuncionis de Nova Civitate</td>
<td>Nové Městecko?</td>
<td>painful eyes healed after more than three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>20 Nov</td>
<td>vir quidam Nicholaus de Montibus</td>
<td>Kutná Hora? Prague?</td>
<td>blindness healed after five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>24 Nov</td>
<td>famulus quidam Petrus pannifex de Koctuz</td>
<td>Kokovice? (cannot identify)</td>
<td>blindness healed after five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>30 Nov</td>
<td>Henslinus quidam de villa Eliita</td>
<td>Lhota? (many villages by this name)</td>
<td>unspecified infirmities healed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>30 Nov</td>
<td>Hrocho miles de Preszilucz, dum esset in Vienna</td>
<td>Přelíc and Vienna</td>
<td>healed of paralysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>8 Dec</td>
<td>vir quidam de Nova Civitate Pragensi .... nomine</td>
<td>Prague (New Town)</td>
<td>cicada infestation of house ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>8 Dec</td>
<td>Jehlinus presbyter plebanus in Odoleno Nawoda</td>
<td>Odolena Voda</td>
<td>healed from deadly illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>4, 31 Dec</td>
<td>Stanek de oppido Mnissek et Waczawa uxor ejus</td>
<td>Mnišek</td>
<td>dead child revived for baptism before dying again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>31 Dec</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>cross visible on the moon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>2 Jan 1366</td>
<td>quidam pauper homo nomine Duchon de villa Solincz prope Skuhicw</td>
<td>Solnice near Skuhrov nad Bělou</td>
<td>healed from muteness caused by injury inflicted by robbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>3 Jan</td>
<td>vir quidam alias sutor de plebe Sanctorum Philippi et Jacobi civitatis Pragensis</td>
<td>Prague (Old Town)</td>
<td>healed of being mute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>12, 24 Jan</td>
<td>Hedwigs mulier in plebe Sancti Michaelis Novae Civitatis Pragensis</td>
<td>Prague (New Town)</td>
<td>baby healed from “stone” [calculus]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>24 Jan</td>
<td>quaedam mulier Petra nomine de plebe Sancti Henrici Novae Civitatis Pragensis</td>
<td>Prague (New Town)</td>
<td>healed from years of fever</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Miracle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>26 Jan</td>
<td>quidam cliens nomine Petrus de plebe Sanctae Mariae ante Laetam curiam in civitate Pragensi bene notus</td>
<td>Prague (Old Town)</td>
<td>healed from colic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>24 Dec 1365</td>
<td>mulier quaedam Katherina uxor cujusdam pannitonsoris de civitate Pragensi</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>year-long paralysis healed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>28 Jan 1366</td>
<td>faber quidam de civitate Pragensi Nicholaus dictus Turnowecz</td>
<td>Prague (Old Town)</td>
<td>paralyzed hand healed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>29 Jan</td>
<td>Johannes sanctae Pragensis ecclesiae archiepiscopus apostolicae legatus primus</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>fever healed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>29 Jan</td>
<td>Beshuslaus civis minoris civitatis Pragensis</td>
<td>Prague (Lesser Town)</td>
<td>inflamed throat healed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>1 Feb</td>
<td>vir quidam Ulricus de plebe ... civitatis Pragensis</td>
<td>Prague</td>
<td>pain in head healed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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