
A Utraquist Church Treasure and Its Custodians: A few observations on the lay administration of Utraquist churches

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Students of fifteenth-century religious practice in Bohemia enter a difficult area when trying to evaluate the scope of growth and destruction of ecclesiastical treasures in Bohemian churches following the Hussite wars. Previous studies relied more on single chronicle accounts from which they drew stereotypes of large scale destruction of church interiors and buildings. Scholars gave comparatively less attention to those sources which give more accurate evidence about the development of ecclesiastical treasures in Bohemia from the fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century and clearly reveal an interesting phenomenon of their growth from before the mid-fifteenth century on.

The religious fervour of the Bohemian fourteenth century with its rising devotion gave impetus to greater lay participation in matters of religion. Practical manifestations of faith, such as frequent communion, processions, masses, pilgrimages and indulgences, increased lay liturgical activity and encouraged pious endowments. The laity received communion frequently, even daily,¹ participated in feasts, the public showing of relics, paid for indulgences, sang in morning masses and endowed altars and chapels. Parts of the Bible were translated into Czech and German to reach lay audiences and, in Prague, vernacular sermons criticised the immorality of the clergy and the bad state of religious affairs. Profound changes in religious life took place in royal towns. New parish churches, built in Bohemian towns during the fourteenth and early fifteenth century, reflected the high status, self-confidence, and wealth of burgher religious communities. Lay patrons interfered in the appointment of priests and had considerable influence in parish matters.

New parish churches in Jihlava, Plzeň, Prague and elsewhere were embellished and furnished around 1400 as a result of growing piety, filling them with altars and chapels.² Accordingly, private donations supplied church treasures. The process seems to have begun in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, as demonstrated in numerous altar erections and preserved church inventories from before 1420.³ Although differences in size and content of ecclesiastical treasures can be observed between Prague and the countryside,⁴ or between monasteries

¹ David R Holeton, "The Bohemian Eucharistic Movement in its European context," BRRP 1 (1996) 23-47, here 28-29.

² For example, twenty-one altars were founded in the Church of Our Lady before Týn in Prague between 1344 and 1405, and five chapels and nine altars between 1404 and 1446 in St. James's Church in Brno. K.V. Zap (quoting Hammerschmidt), Zbraslav, *Památky archeologické* 1 (1855) 11. Berthold Bretholz, *Die Pfarrkirche zu St. Jakob in Brunn* (Brno, 1901) 64-65.

³ E.g. church treasures of St. Gall in Prague, and the Church of the Holy Spirit in Hradec Králové. Klement Borový, *Libri erectionum archidieocesis Pragensis saeculo XIV. et XV*, IV, p.1, item 256; Carl Josef von Bienenberg, *Geschichte der Stadt Königgratz* (Prague, 1780) 1:239. A full list of preserved inventories will be available in my PhD thesis.

⁴ See *Protocollum visitationis archidiaconatus Pragensis annis 1379 - 1382 per Paulum de Janowicz archidiaconum pragensem factae, ediderunt Ivan Hlaváček et Zdenka Hladíková* (Prague, 1973).

and parish churches, we are undoubtedly in the formative period of liturgical treasure in Bohemia.

Keeping of ecclesiastical treasures after 1437

The restitution of treasures to churches after the Hussite wars resumed before the mid-fifteenth century. The number of lay donations soon reached pre-Hussite level, and showed an interesting pattern of dual donations to both Utraquist and Roman Catholic institutions in the period immediately following the Hussite wars.⁵ The Jagellonian period is marked by the constant effort of parishioners to embellish their churches with donations of liturgical utensils and garments, preferably monstrances,⁶ chalices and church textiles. For example, in Kutná Hora between 1467 and 1512, parishioners gave their three churches no fewer than thirty-six chalices.⁷

It is significant that although the donation of liturgical items increased, the number of new altar erections never reached pre-Hussite levels.⁸ At the end of the fifteenth century, due to the shortage of priests and the costs of a *beneficium*, keeping an altar priest became expensive and difficult to arrange. Communities reacted differently to such unfavourable situations; the Roman Catholic community of St. James in Brno amalgamated existing altar *beneficia* in order to provide financial support for a single priest.⁹ Some churches, however, were without a priest for several years.¹⁰

A reduced number of active *beneficia* and a certain mistrust of the clergy (which was the result of occasional theft of church treasure) led to a change in the management of ecclesiastical treasures. A significant number of church vessels ceased to be used frequently and there was no longer any need to keep them either in an aumbry near the altar or openly in the sacristy. Donations were put in a vault or other secure place under the supervision of a lay custodian/sacristan, although they remained under the patronage rights of the donor's family. Only after the patronage rights had passed to the town council and the community following the death of the patron or his legatees were they considered the common property of the

⁵ Bohdan Zilynskyj, "Postavení utrakvistické a katolické konfese na Novém Městě Pražském v letech 1436-1459," [The situation of utraquist and catholic confessions at Prague New Town in the years 1436 - 1459] *Documenta Pragensia* IX/II (Prague, 1991) 390-4.

⁶ Originally (in: "Libri Erectionis," Klement Borový ed., *Libri erectionum archidieocesis Pragensis saeculo XIV. et XV*, 4:346) a small glass or crystal container through which a relic or the consecrated host could be seen (*ostensorium*). The term was used in the fifteenth century for any elaborate container with a transparent repository for the host or a relic; they were small, large, and even life-size. Today the term is more specific and is generally used for a liturgical vessel (often of gold) used to display the host to the faithful.

⁷ Josef Šimek, *Kutná Hora v XV. A XVI. století* (Kutná Hora, 1907) 53.

⁸ Altars were founded in Roman Catholic and Utraquist churches where the community was wealthy enough and pursued political gains in manifesting their confession e.g. five altars were erected between 1478 and 1491 in St. James's in Brno. Berthold Bretholz, *Die Pfarrkirche zu St. Jakob in Brünn* [Brno, 1901] 72. However, there were comparatively fewer new altars than before the Hussite wars.

⁹ Bretholz, *Die Pfarrkirche zu St. Jakob* 73.

¹⁰ Zikmund Winter, *Život církevní v Čechách* [Church life in Bohemia] (Praha, 1896) 2:505.

community. Such items were brought from their place of safe-keeping only when needed for memorial masses or feasts.

With this influx of textiles, images, and vessels from pious donations, the community tried to exercise as much influence over the administration of “their” treasure¹¹ as possible. By the mid-fifteenth century, due to transfers of patronage and a weakening clerical administration, the town council held responsibility for the preservation, maintenance and safe-keeping of the parish treasure and its contents – such as chalices, altar cloths, candlesticks, and books. This development is common to both Utraquists and Roman Catholics, although the Roman Catholic priests formally kept the maintenance of *preciosa* as their responsibility.¹² Considerably weaker in its influence in parish matters, the Utraquist consistory limited its attention in this matter only to the provision of sacred oils.¹³

In comparison to Utraquists who did not include relics among the objects itemised in their church treasure and rarely referred to images, Roman Catholics inventoried them both. When St. James’s in Brno had its treasure inventoried in 1487 it itemised, among its rich collection of silver and gold liturgical vessels,¹⁴ one plate with relics made of silver gilt, as well as four silver and gold images of saints,¹⁵ and three pyxes (*pyxides*) for the host. Due to the ambiguous meaning of the term *monstrance* in contemporary sources, it is possible, even likely, that at least some of the twelve *monstrances* were, in fact, reliquaries. Another distinguishing feature of Roman Catholic treasuries was a larger number of liturgical vestments decorated with precious stones, gold and silver.

Church treasure under Utraquists administration

The majority of town parishes in Bohemia in the fifteenth century adhered more-or-less to conservative Utraquism. Next to the lay chalice, they promoted children’s communion, which was criticised by the adversaries of the Bohemian Reformation ever since the Utraquist theologians restored the practice in 1417. Compared to the radical resistance towards catholic tradition by the Unity of Brethren and Calvinists, these might seem rather minor changes; however these Utraquist practices were highly regarded by their communities as manifestations of their confessional, national and local identity, and were proudly illustrated in church choral books belonging to a community or to a brotherhood such as in the St. Michael’s Gradual [Fig. 1].

¹¹ On lay sacristans and the safe-keeping of liturgical utensils by the laity see the “Protocolum visitationis Arcidioecesi Pragensis,” 62, 91. On the rise of their influence and differentiation between administrators, and sacristans see Winter, *Život církevní* 2:534-5.

¹² Beda Dudík, *Statuten der Diöcese Olmütz von Jahre 1568*, (Brno, 1870) 87.

¹³ Klement Borový, *Jednání a dopisy konsistoře katolické i utrakvistické*, [Acts and correspondence of catholic and utraquist consistory]: Akta konsistoře utrakvistické (Prague, 1868) 297.

¹⁴ The inventory lists twenty-eight gilt chalices and six of silver, twenty-five gold or gilt patens and five of silver, two gilt *ampullae*, a thurible, five gilt crosses (two with precious stones) and twelve monstrances.

¹⁵ Two of the Virgin Mary, one of St. James and one of St. Sebastian. B. Bretholz, *Pfarrkirche zu St. Jakob in Brunn* 73-74.

Utraquist religious practice comprised various social, theological and cultural aspects. In places, Utraquism included results of reforms, such as lay participation, practical approach to liturgy by theologians, accentuated biblical authority over religious matters, and the use of the vernacular in parts of the liturgy. As much as Utraquist theologians debated the use of liturgical vestments during the mass and limited the number of feasts and monetary collections, religious practice varied locally and was dependent on local traditions.¹⁶ Conservative and traditional Utraquist parish communities emerged as a significant factor in designing Utraquist religious practices from the course of the mass to the use of vessels, vestments, bells and candles. Town councils or local nobility regulated what should be used in services and set rules concerning liturgical practice. These regulations allowed, for example, only a certain number of candles or candlesticks, and ordered singing or the use of chalices with spouts.¹⁷ Directions for the priest's activities during services and sacraments were written down in contracts with priests, in account books or in Orders for the Mass. Local tradition functioned as a unifying and mobilizing force securing broad support and a favourable position for Utraquism through the social spectrum of the town.

The relation of the Bohemian Reformation to treasures and church decoration comprises a spectrum of opinion from the rejection of devotion to decoration, relics and images close to Roman Catholic practice. However, a few common factors in various reformers' approaches to treasure in the specific context of more-or-less conservative religious communities can be seen: local patriotism and adherence to local tradition, as well as the use of the treasure for building a common Utraquist identity inside the community and, more importantly, towards the outside world.

In the fifteenth century, among other issues, the use of chasubles and vestments during the mass was debated and was occasionally the cause of revolt. In an attempt to reconcile the differences, the Lower Consistory ruled that the use of vestments was not optional pending the agreement of the community. When vestments were not used, they were to be kept in treasuries and were not to be destroyed. Following the Consistory's decision, the clergy lost the final word in the vestment controversy; local communities required the priest to agree to local custom, which often led to disputes between the community and more radical priests.

Images and relics are rarely mentioned in Utraquist churches although they existed and were venerated. Rather an interesting example of religious co-existence comes from the Bethlehem Chapel [Chapel of the Holy Innocents] that was held in high esteem among the reformers in Bohemia as the place where Jan Hus had preached. The Chapel kept its relic of the body of one of the Holy Innocents throughout both Utraquist and Brethren administrations. Its symbolic value made it open to all confessions and the interior was kept for reasons of memory and piety as well as for practical use.

¹⁶ Borový, *Jednání a dopisy konsistoře* 1:20, for Prague, 1526. Proper liturgical vestments were ordered in Prague and elsewhere by the consistory, *ibid.* 12 (1525), 23, 136 (1539).

¹⁷ Utraquistický řád služeb božích Jana Rudolfa Trčky z Lípy z roku 1616 [Jan Rudolf Trčka of Lípa's Utraquist order of worship from the year 1616], Alois Sassmann ed., http://alois-sassmann.wz.cz/rad_utrak.htm (accessed 18.7.2006) transcribed from the memorial book of Opočno parish of held in the SOA depository in Rychnově nad Kněžnou –Opočno deanery collection – book no. 214. Transcribed by Mgr. Alois Sassmann – January 2001; Winter, *Život církevní* 2:855.

The Treasure at St. Nicholas in the Old Town of Prague

One of the best documents of an Utraquist ecclesiastical treasure is the Book of Sacristans of St. Nicholas in the Old Town of Prague – presently in the Archive of the City of Prague (AHMP, inv. no. 1665). From 1497, the sacristans kept detailed accounts of the church in the book, listing the expenses and income of the church, interest on rented property, agreements for the buying and selling of personal furnishings in the church interior, such as family stalls,¹⁸ and other matters related to the treasury. Among them, accounts include details of textile donations, lights, weight of utensils in pounds (*hřivna*), and notes about purchased or re-made objects.

In the pre-Utraquist period, the church of St. Nicholas, founded under Přemysl Otakar I, was a well-regarded parish church of Old Town German burghers.¹⁹ It had sixteen altars, among them altars of the Holy Cross, the Holy Martyrs, St. Procop, two altars of the Virgin Mary, St. Lawrence, and an altar of St. John the Baptist, all funded and kept by their German founders. The importance of the church is demonstrated by its famous preachers, such as Milíč of Kroměříž, Mikuláš Puchník and, in the sixteenth century, the Utraquist priest Jan Mystopol. On 18 July 1419, Hussite riots took place here, as a consequence of which the priest was decapitated for his keen defence of the church treasure savaged by the Hussites. It is beyond doubt that, unfortunately, the church was widely known for the riches contained in its vaults.

The first donations to St. Nicholas after the Hussite pillage were recorded in 1450 and 1471.²⁰ The Utraquist community of St. Nicholas can be characterised as consisting of the conservative Czech urban middle classes with a substantial proportion of craftsmen and merchants, who maintained the historic “catholic” religious practices of the Prague diocese. The administration of the endowments of St. Nicholas’s, the treasury and church furnishing, was firmly in hands of the community through the town council, who looked after the treasury through elected lay sacristans. The office of church sacristan was an honourable service to the community and was assured by its well-esteemed members. The institution of sacristans followed a written rule, firmly established and written in the town hall registers.²¹ The rule was re-entered in the Sacristan’s Book to ensure that the institutional procedure would be followed. In the case of St. Nicholas, two elder burghers and two younger ones were always elected to the office.²²

The sacristans were responsible for the maintenance and safe-keeping of the treasury and, together with councillors, had keys to the treasure chamber (chamber-

¹⁸ AHMP, 1665, f. 33r.

¹⁹ First mentioning of the church is from 1273. The parish priest was named by Olbramowicz family.

²⁰ Josef Teige, *Základy starého místopisu pražského* [A primer in the old topography of Prague] (Prague, 1915) 1:96-97.

²¹ In 1553, they needed to renew the written rule of St. Nicholas’s sacristans after the negligence of previous holders of the office.

²² AHMP, 1665, f. 15, transcribed in 1531 from town registers.

vault, *sklep*), which was separate from the sacristy.²³ On occasion, the priest still accepted donations to the church, however, he notified the sacristans of each contribution and they then approved the receipt. Later, donations were handed over directly to the treasury's main administrator. In 1555, the rules for the sacristan were written down in a church Order where the obligations of all lay people serving in the church were recorded and defined.

Sacristans were to keep the items under close scrutiny, to order chalices or other needed items, to weigh and inventory them, and were even to hand the priest the vessels needed for the liturgy. Similar practice is known from the parish church in Církvice, where the priest had to ask the sacristan before the service to issue him the needed vestments.²⁴ Sacristans were also entitled to buy new vestments or liturgical textiles for the treasury when needed – such as new cloth bought in 1528 for collecting money at the altar of (Corpus) Christi.²⁵

Any donation to the church was carefully recorded, often with details about its purpose, weight, and location. The donation by Kateřina Swatkowa in 1509 of a white curtain to be drawn over the front of the altar, an altar-cloth with crosses and two brass candlesticks was written down with a note presenting the wish of the donor that, if this altar *beneficium* should cease to exist, her donation would go to the altar of the Holy Cross “so that the grace would not be lost.”²⁶ Her concern reflects a situation typical around 1500 when many endowments were lost either due to a lack of financial means or the absence of a priest.

Large *monstrances* were standard possessions of Utraquist town churches,²⁷ reflecting both the wealth and piety of the parish community [Fig. 2]. Parishioners were proud of such large goldsmithery and manifested their patriotic feelings by showing them to distinguished visitors. In Kutná Hora, the council and burghers were well aware of the riches they had bestowed on St. Barbara's Church and they showed them proudly to the members of the Bohemian Chancellery when they visited in 1569²⁸ showing them the large *monstrance* and other jewels, along with the town archive.²⁹

In the account of 1514, the sacristans of St. Nicholas weighed and recorded two items in their treasure: a large, silver *monstrance* (weighing over 39 *hřivna* or 9.9

²³ AHMP, 1665, f. 34v, makes a difference between “upstairs,” apparently a chamber in the tower, where the treasury was kept, and “downstairs,” probably referring to the sacristy.

²⁴ Winter, *Život církevní v Čechách* 2:515.

²⁵ In 1528 “*na Co(la)tur(u)*”, f. 21v-22r. Collected money from all altars went to the community, as was recorded in the royal privilege of Vladislav of Jagello, transcribed on f. 22v.

²⁶ AHMP, 1665, f. 21r. In 1509: “Mrs. Katherine Svátková gave a riddle curtain and four fair linens with crosses and two brass candelabra with which she generously endowed the chapel (and if the *fabrica ecclesiae* were abolished...then) an altar would be constructed for the divine cross...we are concerned that generosity be not frustrated. Item the wife of Mr. Thomas... also donated one brass candelabra for the same...”

²⁷ Two of them were in St. Nicholas, Teige, *Základy* 107 – smaller brass monstrance. Z. Winter, *Život církevní* 2:857, 864. Josef Šimek, *Kutná Hora v XV. A XVI. století* (Kutná Hora, 1907) 14-15, 47, 48, 51.

²⁸ Josef Šimek, *Kutná Hora v XV. A XVI. století* 14-15.

²⁹ The monstrance could have been the large monstrance for Corpus Christi processions which the sources mention elsewhere, *Kutná Hora* ed. Helena Štroblová and Blanka Altová [Dějiny českých měst] (Prague, 2000) esp. 352 and 359.

kg³⁰), and a small silver gilt cross attached to it, weighting less than two *lot* (1.75 *lot*, that is 27.7 g).³¹ The latter used to be placed on the Sepulchre (at the end of processions and during Easter?).³² The monstrance may have been the same type as the monstrances preserved in Mělník or Sedlec (with spires and a glass container for the Host?). Besides references in the inventories, both pieces were mentioned as recipients of financial endowments.

St. Nicholas's treasure was inventoried several times; the first inventory preserved in the Book is from 1497. The development of its content can be traced from the inventories recorded in 1497, 1525, 1553 and 1590 along with their corrections. Inventoried objects belonged to "endowments for the salvation of the soul" (*záduší*) and were handled as community property.³³

The first inventory of 1497 has one silver monstrance with crystal,³⁴ nine chalices (one made of copper!), two chalices veils, seven pyxes for the host, seven burses, one gilt cross in a burse, and twenty-nine various pieces of altar frontals or other hangings. It included an image of the Virgin embroidered with pearls. As for liturgical vestments, fifteen chasubles, twelve dalmatics, and twelve copes were recorded. Although partly damaged, this number exceeds the number of vestments from later inventory of 1525.³⁵ From the treasury, only a portion of the vessels was handed over to the bell-ringer by the sacristans for use in the liturgy; the rest was kept in a locked, vaulted treasure chamber.

The inventory of 1525 begins with the large monstrance and the cross.³⁶ Then the inventory includes fifteen silver chalices with patens.³⁷ Chalices bear various goldsmiths marks copied in the Book and weigh from over a pound to over three

³⁰ An account from Kutná Hora mentions a large monstrance weighing 121 *hřivna* or 30,63 kg (1 *hřivna* is 253,17 g and consists of 16 *lot*). The monstrance preserved in Mělník weighs 26 *hřivna* and is 112 cm high. Through comparison we may assume that the St. Nicholas monstrance was about life-size. This is supported by a reference in the first inventory of 1497 of an iron support for carrying the monstrance in processions, which means that it was carried by parishioners and not priest himself. See Antonin Baum, "Ze 'zápisní knihy kostelníků' chrámu sv. Mikuláše na Starém městě pražském," [From the "Notebook of sacristians" of St. Nicholas church in the Old Town of Prague] *Method 3* (1877) 53. Teige, *Základy starého místopisu pražského* 101.

³¹ AHMP, 1665. f. 35r.

³² Ibid. f. 21r. "in 1514 ... a large monstrance of the house of God of St. Nicholas weighs [forty?] talents and the cross which is usually on the grave...weighs 39 talents and 2.5 [lotu?]." F. 34r in 1525 „...Item a large silver monstrance and a cross which is usually on the grave according to the weighing of the previous year has the weight of 39 talents 2.5 [lots?]." On laying monstrances on the Sepulchre see: Winter, *Život církevní* 863.

³³ Furniture and vessels for everyday use in the parsonage were also under the care of the community. They belonged to the *beneficium* and not to the priest himself and were only lent to him. In 1531 St. Nicholas's sacristans inventoried and recorded in the Book eight large bowls from the parsonage, six tin plates, three large ewers, a candlestick, a bucket, a table with the tablecloth and included even a tin washbasin on the wall.

³⁴ Baum, "Ze 'zápisní knihy kostelníků' chrámu sv. Mikuláše na Starém Městě pražském z XV. a XVI. věku," *Method 3* (1877) 51-2.

³⁵ In the year 1555 there were reported to be two priests (Šimon the rector and a young curate) along with a a sacristan all of whom wore the vestments of their office. The re-making of old vestments to altar cloth occurs as well.

³⁶ Ibid. f. 34r, dated 1515 (corrections later, still in 1539).

³⁷ Four of them gilt and one decorated with images of the four Evangelists.

pounds.³⁸ The list continues with two pyxes for the host with a gold spoon, two silver *ampullae*, and another tin (!) pyx for everyday use. Textiles include eleven chasubles and large number of other pieces.³⁹ Other items include books, incense burners, candlesticks, banners, ribbons (fanons) to decorate the monstrance, sepulchre covers and containers for sacred oils.⁴⁰ In the same year, 1525, St. Nicholas's church was bequeathed a printed and illuminated Bible in the Czech language by the priest Procop, which was given to Master Jan of Kolín, the new parish priest.⁴¹

Among treasury acquisitions in the mid-1530s, textiles are the most prominent. They were ordered by parishioners to decorate the interior of the church anew, as were two large green banners donated in 1535. A year later, four laymen ordered new Easter decorations: a green velvet garment, a thurible, two new chasubles, three stoles, two small green banners, and two silver spoons to communicate children; they also repaired the choir stalls.⁴² Another donation came in 1537 from Václav Šetelka, who held the patronage of the altar of Corpus Christi where the Sepulchre with the above mentioned gilt cross stood during Easter. For the Easter ceremony, he bought a new *palla* (frontal) for the altar, a fair linen, and a candlestick for the feast of the Holy Trinity.⁴³

In 1553, a thorough inventory of St. Nicholas's archive and treasure was written. They were kept in three large chests containing charters with seals, contracts of endowments, and extracts from testaments.⁴⁴ The second chest held jewels with another long silver spoon for communicating children.⁴⁵

From the inventories of St. Nicholas it may seem that Utraquist church interiors were almost identical with Roman Catholic ones, including the same utensils, decoration and images. There were altars that could have existed in a Roman Catholic church as well, such as the main altar of (Corpus?) Christi, and another dedicated to the Virgin, which were in use around 1500; at least two other

³⁸ Another chalice is described as "kalich stříbrný s patenou w mrzizjczce pozlatite" (a silver chalice and paten in a gilt grill). The latter generally refers to a tabernacle (in a form of a tower or a box); this could possibly be a device for reserving the sacrament under both species.

³⁹ Two single chasuble crosses, ten corporals and six burses, one with an image of the Virgin Mary made of pearls. Following that there were, ten dalmatics, five copes, a humeral with pearl flowers, five large and thirty small altar-cloths, two pendants (*pendilia*), and thirty-eight fair linens.

⁴⁰ They were followed by books (five manuscript missals and one printed, two antiphonaries, a gradual), a tin baptistery, four large tin candlesticks, fourteen smaller, twenty-four brass ones and three iron ones (fifty-two altogether), two tin ewers, twelve *ampullae*, two thuribles, a brass lavabo, four bells and an organ, a mould for baking hosts and a two pairs of compasses for cutting them (one for the priests and the other for the laity), eight large candlesticks (with candles) (*postavníkuov*), eight small banners, two altar curtains, two ribbons for the *monstrance*, a fanon for covering or holding it, and a green and a grey tuft covers for the sepulchre.

⁴¹ Teige, *Základy* 1:100.

⁴² Ibid. f. 42v. Several entries acknowledge active exchange of stalls. Ff. 31v-33r, 33v. They stood by the chancel screen, preacher's pulpit or singers' choir.

⁴³ Loc. cit.

⁴⁴ The inventory mentions five keys from a vaulted chapel above the singers' choir, where the archive and jewels were kept.

⁴⁵ Teige, *Základy* 1:106. Altogether the church kept twenty chalices, from which number the sacristans were given five to be kept in the sacristy for use in the liturgy, the remaining twelve chalices were locked upstairs in a treasury, together with a silver gilt *pyx*. The second *pyx* was given to the sacristans for the liturgy. One of these chalices was borrowed.

altars were founded during the Utraquist period.⁴⁶ To support this view, in the Old Bohemian Annals of 1509, there is also a written evidence for a panel altar at St. Nicholas. The main panel altar of St. Nicholas was damaged by the Hungarians in the company of King Vladislaus II. Jagello.⁴⁷ This would suggest, however, that the Hungarians were incited to such barbarous behaviour by an “inappropriate” altar image, such as that of Master John Hus.

Unique features of Utraquist treasures

In 1534, the most important acquisition for St. Nicholas treasury occurred: three chalices were replaced by one large chalice of ten pounds (approximately five times bigger than the average of the rest) made by the goldsmith Nicholas of Kanský Trh (Horse Market). This large chalice is itemised three times in the Book: a later entry reads that it has a spout.⁴⁸ There is only one known preserved chalice with a spout (in Czech called *řepice*, or *kalich s řápkem*), the Utraquist chalice from Kadaň from around 1520.⁴⁹ [Fig. 3]

This type of chalice, an invention original to Utraquism, served to communicate the laity under the second species. During communion, the chalice was closed with a tight-fitting lid which could be opened when wine was poured into it. The chalice is shown in use at the Eucharist in a woodcut from Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini's *Historia Bohemica* from around 1510, now held in the Strahov Monastery Library [Fig. 2]. The priest holds a large chalice in both hands and communicates a knight from a small spout attached to the lip of the chalice. The second figure, in pontifical vestments (kneeling?) in front of the altar with a smaller chalice (Consecration chalice?) is Jan Rokycana, the Utraquist archbishop.

An interesting source hinting to where the idea of a chalice with a straw could have come from is the report by Utraquist delegation to the pope in Rome in 1462. There the delegat reported that the Pope mentioned large chalices with a spout for pouring wine into small chalices as early Christian Practice.⁵⁰

Reportedly, such large chalices have been found in Rome. The Communion practice is reversed in the report, when compared to Piccolomini's chronicle: the spouted chalice was reported to be the Consecration chalice, from which the

⁴⁶ Both of them were private donations from women; in fact, women prevail in pious endowments - there are ten women and seven men among the largest donors. AHMP 1665 12r, 25rv.

⁴⁷ *Starší letopisové čeští* 312, no. 47/ 1509.

⁴⁸ AHMP 1665, f.34, 1538. The chalice was made of three former chalices which had been melted down and weighed 10 talents 14,5 lots.

⁴⁹ Now in possession of the Diocese of Litoměřice, *Z pokladů litoměřické diecéze* III, [From the treasures of the Litoměřice diocese III] [exhibition catalogue] (Litoměřice, 1997) no. 146 (entry by Dana Stehlíková).

⁵⁰ „Relace poselství do Říma, 1462,“ in: *Výbor z české literatury doby husitské* [Anthology of Czech literature from Hussite times], Bohuslav Havránek, Josef Hrabák, Jiří Daňhelka *et al.* edd. (Prague, 1964) 248. „During the time of St. Peter communion in the primitive church was in two kinds during the major holidays and feasts, and there are still large chalices in which the blood of God was consecrated for the people. and those chalices had taps and spouts through which the blood was poured into smaller chalices...“

consecrated Blood was poured into other small chalices for lay Communion.⁵¹ Chalices with a straw became more common in Bohemia after 1500 and they were apparently still in use at the beginning of the seventeenth century when children communicating from such a chalice were mentioned in Slavata's Memoirs.

A few other objects were also "adjusted" for Utraquist church use. In St. Nicholas, there were also copper and brass chalices and a tin pyx for the host. Other than being made of cheaper material, Utraquist pyxes did not differ from the Roman Catholic ones. The pyx from the second half of the fifteenth century preserved in Hradec Králové has always been attributed as Utraquist in origin [Fig. 4].⁵² It is a large cylindrical silver piece decorated with acanthus ornaments decorated with pearls and with a depiction of the *Agnus Dei* engraved on the inside of its cover. It was kept in the town hall treasury and has the town symbol – a lion – on its closure which suggests that it belonged to the council's town hall chapel as a special vessel used for Utraquist council members.

Altars, wall-paintings, and carvings and inscriptions on church furniture were another manifestation of Utraquist identity. They bore explicit "non-canonical" imagery, such as altars with John Hus as a saint (the altars of Roudníky, and Vliněves, frescoes in St. Wenceslaus in Písek, and, possibly, the high altar in St. Nicholas) which created a specific Utraquist church space. Altars and tabernacles with angels adoring the niche with the chalice occur frequently in Utraquist churches [Fig. 1]. Examples of furniture adopted for Utraquist use include an aumbry/tabernacle (*pastoforium*) from Hradec Králové [Fig. 5], and the tin baptismal font from Tábor with a frieze with chalices [Fig. 6].⁵³

The communion of children was a controversial issue of Utraquist religious practice. In the Christian West, only in Bohemia were infants brought to communion by their mothers and served with a spoon [Figs. 7a, 7b]. One of the excesses related to the use of a spoon in communion is recorded in the study of Zikmund Winter: the priest slapped a miller's daughter on the face and hurt her mouth while she was communicating from a spoon.⁵⁴ This feature distinguishes the inventories of Utraquist churches, where silver spoons for the communion of children are often listed. Two silver spoons are mentioned in the Sacristans' Account Book of St. Nicholas in 1536,⁵⁵ and several in the churches of Kutná Hora. One pair of communion spoons is preserved in Hradec Králové⁵⁶ [Fig. 8]; they belonged to a communion set along with a Utraquist pyx and a chalice which is now lost.

Utraquist parish churches in cities such as Prague or Kutná Hora were no poorer than their Roman Catholic counterparts. Utraquist religious practice closely followed that of Roman Catholics in their use of liturgical vessels and vestments

⁵¹ This practice is also described by Winter, *Život církevní* II:858. From small chalices, communion was given either with a spoon or directly from the cup.

⁵² Muzeum východních Čech v Hradci Králové, č.inv. 17612 a.

⁵³ Rudolf Tecl, "Církevní správa a náboženské poměry v Táboře během 2. pol. 15. a počátku 16. století," [Church administration and religious relations in Tabor during second half of fifteenth and beginning of sixteenth century] *Táborský Archiv* 10 (2001) 213-79.

⁵⁴ Z. Winter, *Život církevní v Čechách* 913.

⁵⁵ AHMP, 1669, 41v. Dwie liziczky strbrny pro ditky...

⁵⁶ Muzeum východních Čech v Hradci Králové, č.inv. 17612 b, c.

while a few objects were exclusive to Utraquism: such as spouted chalices,⁵⁷ “non-canonical” imagery used on altars and church furniture, and spoons for communion. In details, the liturgy followed local traditions, such as the use of vestments and candles, although the Consistory attempted to codify the practice. The use of precious material, mainly silver, is prevalent, while, only exceptionally, copper or brass is used.

Utraquist church treasures focus on practical liturgical and decorative functions, as well as the community representation. However close to Roman Catholic practice Utraquism was, in places it seems to be somewhat more suspicious of Roman Catholic excesses in decoration, as revealed in disputes over the use of vestments, and lack of images and reliquaries in inventories of Utraquist churches. In the complicated confessional situation of Bohemia, church space with its painted altars, epitaphs, furniture, silverware, decorative textiles, and illuminated choral books with Utraquist imagery could accentuate the community’s confessional and local identity, as well as express lay piety in an appropriate, albeit more moderate way. This was manifested in Utraquists’ self-representation as true Christians, followers of Early Christian tradition, faithful to the church catholic and the historic (apostolic) succession, but refraining from clerical excesses and misdeeds.

Seen from a different point of view, the early introduction of a reformation in Bohemia acted as a catalyst for several new trends in religious practices. First, church administration in Utraquist Bohemia fell into lay hands already in the fifteenth century. Secondly, lay participation in the liturgy and interest in religious matters led to lay attempts to influence practical forms of religion. Lay administration embraced new practices, such as the spouted chalice, and made the clergy respect local traditions, which contributed to the establishment of the community’s religious identity and local patriotism.

⁵⁷ Z pokladů litoměřické diecéze. Umělecké řemeslo 13.-19.století, Galerie výtvarného umění v Litoměřicích, 25. září–30. listopadu 1997, J. Macek ed. (Litoměřice, 1997) inv. č. 146.



Fig. 1
St. Michael's in the Old Town – 1587
Písňe chval božských – Prague, MS. KNM I A 15 f. 218b



Fig. 2

Jan Rokycana presides at the Eucharist. On the altar are both a large monstrance and a spouted chalice.

Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica* c. 1510-20.



Fig. 3
The Spouted Chalice from Kadaň c. 1520.
Collection of the Diocesan Museum, Litoměřice.



Fig. 4

The Hradec Králové pyx with two communion spoons.
Museum of Eastern Bohemia, Hradec Králové, č.inv. 17612 a,b,c.

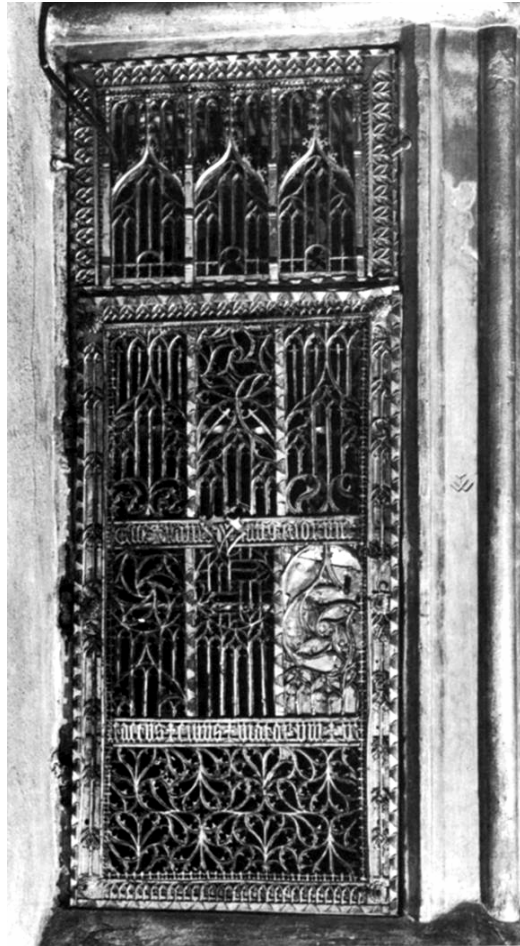


Fig. 5
The Hradec Králové aumbry/tabernacle (*pastoforium*).



Fig. 6
The tin baptismal font from Tábor with a frieze with chalices.

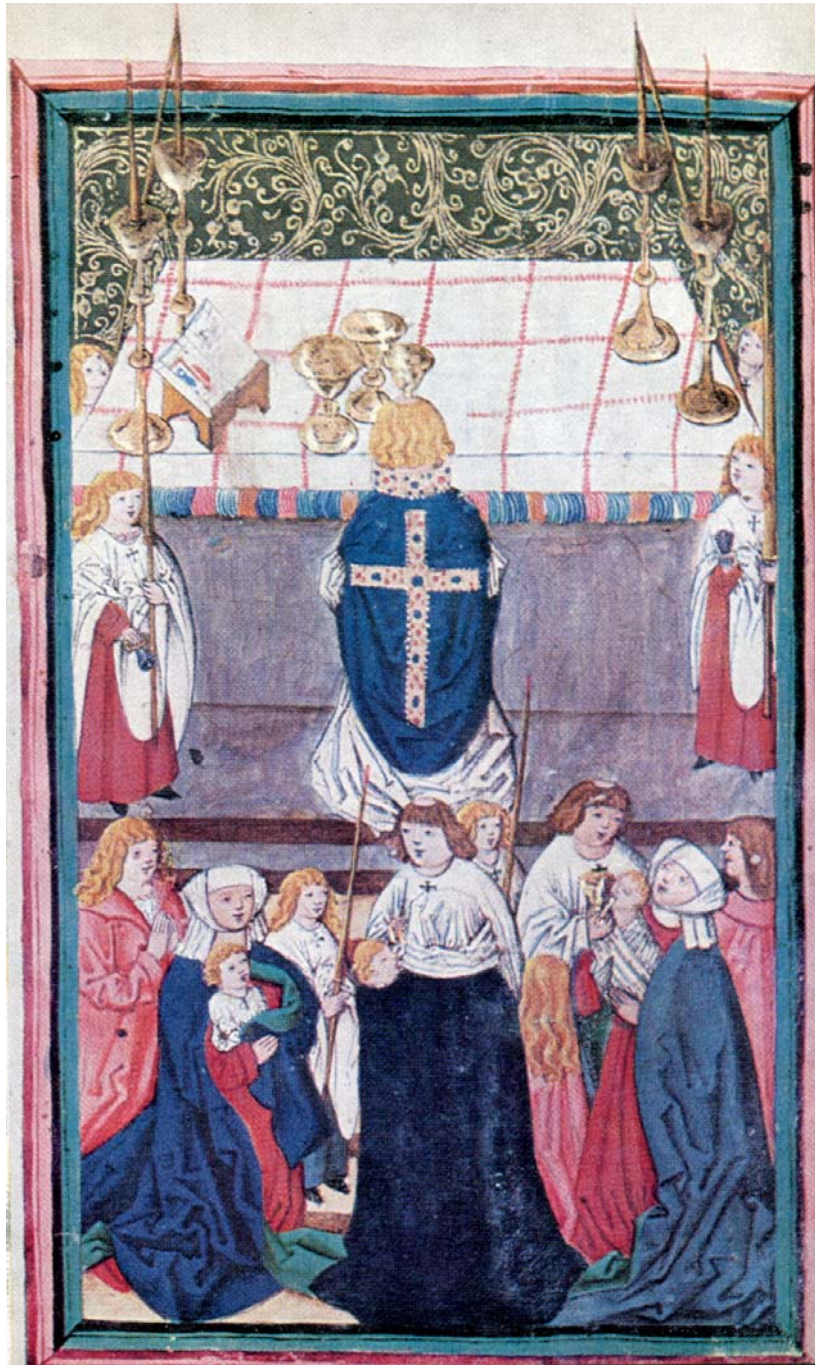


Fig. 7a

The moment of communion at the Utraquist Eucharist.
Three infants are being presented for communion by their mothers.
The Jena Codex: Prague, MS. KNM IV B 24 f.55b.



Fig. 7b
An infant receiving communion from the chalice with a spoon.
The Jena Codex: Prague, MS. KNM IV B 24 f.55b (detail).



Fig. 8

Two communion spoons in front of the Hradec Králové pyx.
Museum of Eastern Bohemia, Hradec Králové, č.inv. 17612 a, b, c.