

**From Protecting God's Law to Spreading Faith and Vengeance:
Human Agency and the Shift towards
Offensive Warfare in the Hussite Discourse**

By
Martin Pjecha

Submitted to
Central European University
History Department

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Supervisor: Dr. Matthias Riedl

Second Reader: Dr. György Szőnyi

Budapest, Hungary

2012

Copyright in the text of this thesis rests with the Author. Copies by any process, either in full or part, may be made only in accordance with the instructions given by the Author and lodged in the Central European Library. Details may be obtained from the librarian. This page must form a part of any such copies made. Further copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the written permission of the Author.

Abstract

In 1415, Jan Hus was burned as an unrepentant heretic at the Council of Constance. By the end of 1419, his followers in Prague controlled the country's intellectual seat of Prague University, the city government, and also included many towns and a portion of the nobility. In 1420 the King of Hungary and new King of Bohemia, Sigismund, launched a papally-supported crusade against the Hussites to crush their heresy and regain his throne. Under the leadership of the infamous military commander Jan Žižka and his successor Prokop Holý, the Hussites successfully defended themselves from five such crusades launched against them, the last of which they defeated in 1431.

The period of the Hussite wars has been well-researched in Hussite historiography, yet largely ignored or taken for granted is the shift in military strategy, from exclusively defensive to offensive, which took place after the ascension of Prokop Holý to military command in 1426. Starting in this year and building thereafter, the Hussite armies began to engage in “glorious rides”, attacking their enemies abroad and spreading their faith. By analyzing closely a variety of contemporary sources which include letters, military orders, speeches, and manifestos, the Hussite discourse and self-perception will be reconstructed to illustrate a drastic discontinuity between the defensive warfare under Žižka and the offensive one under Prokop.

It will be argued that the discourse of defensive warfare constructed by Jan Žižka and the Prague University masters in the early 1420s emphasized the necessity of gaining the favor of God through the purgation of internal dissidents and proper behavior. By the time of Prokop Holý's ascendance, however, God's favor had already been expressed to the Hussites by their countless victories, and it began to be taken for granted. The consequent inflation of Hussite

self-confidence created a new discourse which elevated the unique role of human agency in its participation with God, and called for the spreading of vengeance and the true faith abroad.

Acknowledgments

I must first thank my loving girlfriend Damara for her support and for staying strong during my stay abroad. The same must also be said of the rest of my family, my grandma and grandpa, great-grandma, and my mom especially who helped greatly and was very supportive. Next I must thank Dr. Matthias Riedl for seeing potential in me before he even met me, and for his innovative suggestions and patience with me over the year. I must also thank Dr. György Szőnyi for his suggestions and comments. Finally, I must thank all other friends, colleagues, and professors who supported and criticized my work; without all of you, this would not have been possible.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iv
List of Abbreviations	vi
Introduction	1
Theoretical Framework and Literature Review	6
Chapter 1: Gaining God's favor: The Defensive War of Jan Žižka and the Prague University masters	21
1.1 Arma spiritualia or carnalia bella?: The legitimization of Defensive Warfare	23
1.2 Jan Žižka, the "Severe Avenger": Gaining God's Favor through Purgative Violence.....	30
1.3 The "Warriors of God": Gaining God's Favor through the Morality of Discipline.....	37
1.4 Hussite Identity during the Defensive War.....	44
1.5 Conclusion	49
Chapter 2: Fulfilling God's will: Prokop Holý and the Offensive Shift	51
2.1 The Rise of Prokop Holý and the beginning of the Offensive Shift.....	53
2.2 Vaclav Koranda the "Fighting-Priest": The continuity of early Radicalism	57
2.3 "Our priests have drawn their swords": Communicating the Hussite mission at Bratislava, 1429... 61	
2.3.1 "Truth prevails over all": Hussite confidence and Identity in Peter Payne's speech.....	64
2.4 Spreading Faith and Vengeance in the "Glorious Campaign"	67
2.5 "Working in the field in the name of the Lord": Hussite Manifestos and "Glorious Rides"	70
2.6 An Invitation to the King's feast: Prokop at the Council of Basil	87
2.7 Re-invented Hussite identity during the Offensive War.....	91
2.8 Nicholas Pelhřimov and the Opposition to the Offensive Shift and to the new Hussite Identity	94
2.9 Conclusion	99
Final Conclusions	101
Appendix: Relevant Characters during the Hussite Wars	108
Bibliography	113

List of Abbreviations

- AČ* 3 Palacký, František, ed. *Archiv Český čili staré písemné památky české i morawské* [Czech Archives, or old written memories of Bohemia and Moravia], vol. 3. Prague: Kronberg and Riwnáče, 1844.
- AČ* 6 Palacký, František, ed. *Archiv Český čili staré písemné památky české i morawské* [Czech Archives, or old written memories of Bohemia and Moravia], vol. 6. Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1872.
- BRRP* *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice*, eds. David R. Holeton and Zdeněk V. David.
- CAHB* Fudge, Thomas A., ed. *The Crusade against the Heretics in Bohemia, 1418-1437: Sources and documents for the Hussite Crusades*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- DČ* Bartoš, František M. *Do čtyř pražských artykulů: z myšlenkových a ústavních zápasů let 1415-1420* [Towards the Four Articles of Prague: From the intellectual and institutional struggle of the years 1415-1420]. Prague: Blahoslavova společnost, 1940.
- FRA* 2 Höfler, Konstantin von, ed. "Geschichtschreiber der Husitischen Bewegung in Böhmen." In *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, vol. 2. Vienna: Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hof-und Staatsdruckerei, 1865.
- FRB* 5 Goll, Jaroslav, ed. *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 5. Prague: Nákladem nadání Františka Palackého, 1893.
- HHR* Kaminsky, Howard. *A History of the Hussite Revolution*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.
- HM* Molnár, Amadeo, ed. *Husitské Manifesty* [Hussite Manifestos]. Prague: Odeon, 1986.
- HR* Bartoš, František M. *The Hussite Revolution, 1424-1437*. Edited by John M. Klassen. Boulder: East European Monographs, 1986.
- Husitská Kronika* Vavřinec of Březová. *Husitská Kronika, Píseň o Vítězství u Domažlic* [Hussite Chronicle, the Song of the Victory at Domažlic]. Translated by František Heřmanský and Jan Blahoslav Čapek. Prague: Svoboda, 1979.
- JŽ* Heymann, Frederick G. *John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.

- KJBB* Macek, Josef, ed. *Ktož jsú Boží Bojovníci: Čtení o Táboře v Husitském Revolučním Hnutí*, [You Warriors of God: Readings about Tábor in the Hussite Revolutionary Movement] Prague: Melantrich, 1951.
- Listy Bratra* Bartoš, František M., ed. *Listy Bratra Jana a Kronika velmi pěkná o Janu Žižkovi* [Letters of Brother Jan and the Very Pretty Chronicle of Jan Žižka]. Prague: Blahoslav, 1949.
- MC 1* Palacký, František and Ernest Birk, eds. *Monumenta Conciliorum Generalium seculi Decimi Quinti*, vol. 1. Vienna: C. R. Officinae typographicae, 1857.
- Neun Texte* Reifferscheid, Alexander. *Neun Texte zur Geschichte der Religiösen Aufklärung in Deutschland während des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*. Greifswald: Festschrift der Universität Greifswald, 1905.
- RWE* Housley, Norman. *Religious Warfare in Europe: 1400-1536*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- SRB 3* Palacký, František, ed. *Staří letopisové čessti, od roku 1378 do 1527* [Old Czech annalists from 1378 to 1527]. In *Scriptorum Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 3. Prague: J. S. Pospissila, 1829.
- SRP 3* Hirsch, Theodor, Max Töppen, and Ernst Strehlke, eds. *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, vol. 3. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1866.
- SRS 6* Grünhagen, Colmar, ed. "Geschichtsquellen der Hussitenkriege." In *Scriptores Rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. 6. Breslau: Josef Max & Co., 1871.
- UB 2* Palacký, František, ed. *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Hussitenkrieges*, vol. 2. Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1873.

Introduction

On July 6 1415, after years of conflict with the Church and several excommunications, Jan Hus was burned alive at the Council of Constance as an unrepentant heretic. In the following year, his fellow reformer Jerome of Prague was also tried and burned. Hus and Jerome had been the most recent central figure of a Bohemian religious reform movement which stretched far back into the fourteenth century, but which had been more recently influenced by the theological writings of the English reformer John Wycliffe, and had enjoyed the support of the University of Prague, and initially even that of the Bohemian King Vaclav IV. Hus's intellectual role in the University was combined with his status as an immensely popular preacher in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, which had long since been the center of the Czech reform movement. His denunciation of indulgences, Church wealth, and his defense of certain Wycliffite heresies soon brought him into conflict with King Vaclav, the Archbishop of Prague, and the Papacies divided by the Great Schism.

The details of the aftermath of Constance in Bohemia are complicated and have been covered extensively elsewhere,¹ so the treatment they will receive here will be brief. Contrary to the Council's expectations, Hus's execution enflamed rather than abated tensions between the Church and the Bohemian monarchy on the one hand, and the reformers on the other. Opposed by King Vaclav, many of the so-called "Hussite" laity was forced to receive religious instruction and communion outside the cities, gathering in hilltop congregations, mostly in southern Bohemia, which quickly became associated with a more radical strain of reformist theology than that adhered to by the nobles and Prague University masters. The most infamous

¹ Still probably the best works on this early period of the Hussite revolution in English are those of Frederick G. Heymann (*JŽ*) and Howard Kaminsky (*HHR*).

of these outdoor communities quickly became Tábor, whose eschatological expectations and communistic experimentation soon alienated the more “moderate” Hussite elements in Prague and amongst the nobles. This was increasingly the case after the appearance of the zealously violent “Adamites” and heretical “Pikarts” in Tábor, and of Jan Želivský, an immensely popular preacher who enflamed eschatological anxieties and led a Prague mob to carry out a coup in the New Town of the city in July 1419.²

The death of King Vaclav in August 1419 and the subsequent failure of a last-minute attempt at reconciliation in May 1420 between the Praguers and the Hungarian King Sigismund, heir to the Bohemian throne, contributed to Prague’s decision to ally itself with Tábor and its ally towns.³ In 1420 the Hussite parties agreed to a joint program of reform, called the “Four Articles of Prague” or the “law of God” (*zákon božího, lex Dei*), to which they all subscribed throughout the wars; these mandated the seizure of Church wealth and poverty of the clergy, the punishment of all mortal sins, free preaching of the word of God, and utraquist communion⁴ for all the faithful. In addition, they refused to acknowledge Sigismund’s claim to the Bohemian throne.

For the next decade-and-a-half, the kingdom of Bohemia retained the status of religious pariah within Europe, and was in a state of constant warfare. Five crusades were launched by Sigismund and various Papal representatives against the Hussites, three between 1420-22, one

² David Holeton suggests that Želivský’s popularity trumped that of all previous Prague preachers including Hus himself. See David R. Holeton, “Revelation and Revolution in Late Medieval Bohemia,” *Communio Viatorum* 36 (1994): 37.

³ For a good discussion of both the practical and theological concerns raised at this meeting, see William R. Cook, “The Kutná Hora Meeting of May, 1420: A Last Attempt to Preserve Peace in Bohemia,” *Communio Viatorum* 17 (1974): 183-92. Cook challenges the historiographical assumption that utraquism (see n. 4) was the axis of the Hussite-Catholic theological disagreement at this early point, arguing that the problem revolved around the theory and practice of the eucharist more generally.

⁴ The lay chalice, or communion under both kinds (*sub utraque specie*) had first been administered by Jakoubek of Stříbro in 1414 after Hus’s imprisonment, but quickly became a central tenet in Hussite theology.

in 1427, and the last in 1431, all of them miraculously defeated under the legendary leadership of the blind general Jan Žižka and his successor, the priest Prokop Holý. Prokop's ascension to the leadership of the field armies in 1426, however, inaugurated a radical change in military policy; what had once been an exclusively defensive war for the "defense of God's law" under Žižka now became an offensive war in which Prokop and his captains led so-called "glorious rides"⁵ (*Spanilé jízdy*) – offensive attacks or raids – into surrounding territories, capturing important enemy positions and extolling large ransoms from their towns, but also spreading the Hussite message and faith by word and by sword.

But why the sudden change in strategy? Under Žižka, the Hussites had already defeated three crusades and won countless battles, a streak which showed no sign of abating after his death in 1424. The material benefits to be won abroad, both in the form of ransoms and strategic military positions, certainly played a role in the decision to shift from defense to offense, as did the heavy emotional burden of years of devastating warfare. Yet any explanation of the specific timing of the offensive shift, which only followed Žižka's death and the ascension of several priests to prominent military positions, is unconvincing if it does not address the specific religious and ideational context within which it occurred.

Thus it will be argued below that Prokop Holý's military command represented a distinct break from the previous religious and ideational motivations and goals which drove and were sought by Žižka's defensive war. The latter, along with the masters of Prague University – which had long been the intellectual and theological seat of the Hussite movement – worked to construct a highly moralized theory of armed resistance which emphasized the restrictive use of force, free of anger and hate, and only for the defense of God's law. Proper behavior in

⁵ Thus named in the Old Czech Chronicles, see *SRB* 3: 79. The term is variously translated into English by different authors as "magnificent", "noble", or "graceful rides".

battle was expected in order to win the favor of God which was required for military success, while human agency was generally perceived only as negative and corrupted, and thus dangerous for the war effort. By the time of Prokop's ascendance to military command, however, the countless Hussite victories allowed them to take God's favor for granted, and human agency was soon given the responsibility of spreading God's true faith, as well as his punishment, abroad. Morality and righteousness were no longer perceived as an external actions to be performed, but were now inherent in the Hussite identity itself, which was buoyed by the confidence of virtual invincibility in battle. This cooperation of human and divine agency, ignored by Hussite historiography, was the crucial precondition for the offensive military shift.

In Chapter 1, we will begin with the discussion of the legitimacy of armed defense which occupied the minds of both the Prague masters and the more radical Táborites alike. The moralistic language with which the masters reluctantly accepted defensive violence will then be linked with events which shaped and expressed Jan Žižka's personal contributions to the discourse of defensive warfare: the purgation of internal dissidents. These events included the debate surrounding the fourth Prague article on the eradication of sin, and its illustration in Žižka's righteous persecutions of Catholics and radical sectarians within the movement. Yet the purgation of improper religious beliefs from the movement was not sufficient to win God's favor, which also required the proper behavior of the Hussite armies themselves, a topic which will be discussed in reference especially to two revealing documents written by Žižka. Finally, an overview of the construction of Hussite identity under Žižka will conclude the chapter in order to establish a foundation against which later contrasts may be made.

Chapter 2 will begin with a brief overview of the state of military command following Žižka's death in 1424, and a historical background of Prokop Holý's ascendance in 1426 and the beginning of the offensive military shift. A case will be made for the continuity of earlier radicalism – once shunned and actively persecuted under Žižka – after the latter's death with the example of Vaclav Koranda, who played a role in the period of offensive war. Following this, Hussite self-confidence, along with redefined motivations and goals, will be introduced with a discussion of their meeting with Sigismund at Bratislava in 1429. These themes will be fundamental to explaining the “glorious rides” and the “Glorious Campaign” of late 1429-30, and were even more powerfully expressed in the several Hussite manifestos subsequently discussed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an analysis of the re-invented Hussite identity of the offensive period, including consideration of its opponents and contrasts with Hussite identity under Žižka.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The treatment of this shift, from defensive to offensive, has been uneven and often simplistic in much of Hussite historiography. Some of the most influential works on Hussite historiography in the twentieth century, like F. G. Heymann's *John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution* (1955) and Howard Kaminsky's *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (1967), have opted to avoid the issue altogether by closing their investigations in 1424, the year of Žižka's death. Others which did include the later Hussite wars, like F. Lützow's *The Hussite Wars* (1914), up to the modern works of Thomas A. Fudge's *The Magnificent Ride* (1998) and Norman Housley's *Religious Warfare in Europe* (2002), have taken the change in strategy for granted and rarely given it attention. Both of these approaches, of complete omission and inattentiveness, come from a basic assumption about the nature of the Hussite wars. That is, namely, that they were a series of events that were ideologically and discursively static throughout, that those same hopes, desires, and expectations present at the beginning were unchanged by the end, and thus a systematic analysis of change over time has been ignored.

When the change in military strategy in the mid 1420s *has* been commented upon by historians, it is usually presented as nothing more than either a practical necessity or a natural extension of Hussite ideology. Early in the century, Francis Lützow remarked that the “feeling in favor of an invasion of the neighboring countries *naturally* became stronger after a course of almost uninterrupted victories” and incited by the “rich booty” to be won abroad.⁶ Over half a century later, Frederick G. Heymann saw no reason to change this appraisal, only adding to it an ideological component: “The reasons [for the offensive shift] were obvious: in spite of the long series of victories over the invading armies of the crusaders the country of Bohemia had

⁶ Francis Lützow, *The Hussite Wars* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1914), 195-6. Italics mine.

suffered great damage” in terms of population, land, and productivity, and thus “it seemed to be most urgent to shift the theatre of war from the suffering lands of Bohemia to those of her hostile neighbors” to weaken their morale and in the hope of spreading their ideas abroad.⁷ Josef Macek repeated the points of spreading anti-Church propaganda and establishing international support, but as a Marxist he added the role of the Hussite raids in defending the poor and peasant populations in surrounding kingdoms.⁸ František M. Bartoš emphasized the possibility of unifying a splintered movement by “turning its combined forces against the enemy abroad ... against whom attack was the most effective defense”.⁹ Jiří Kejř agreed, and along with Macek and Bartoš illustrates that Czech historiography is not necessarily any more concerned with a deeper explanation of the offensive shift than its English or German counterparts; apparently, the internal divisions of the Hussites, which prevented them from mounting offensive campaigns, ceased to be an issue just after Žižka’s death, thus explaining the coincidence of events.¹⁰ More recently, Housley has reduced some of the so-called “glorious rides” to “expeditions solely for the purpose of collecting booty”,¹¹ and Fudge gave the entire tactical transition from defense to offence the attention of three sentences in his narrative of the wars, assuming their implicit coherence within the context of six years of purely domestic warfare: “From 1426 on, the Hussites did not hesitate to cross the frontier,

⁷ Frederick G. Heymann, “The Crusades against the Hussites,” in *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 3, ed. Harry W. Hazard (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 619-20.

⁸ Josef Macek, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*, trans. Vilem Fried and Ian Miller (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1965), 59-62.

⁹ *HR*, 12.

¹⁰ Jiří Kejř, *Husité* [The Hussites] (Prague: Panorama, 1984), 158.

¹¹ *RWE*, 166.

sword in hand to defend and propagate the Hussite gospel.”¹² In doing so, he has merely affirmed what has by now become a silence continually recreated in Hussite historiography.

This is not to say that the motives suggested by these historians are wrong, or played no part in the decision to change military tactics. Certainly, the collection of ransoms, the spreading of manifestos, and the strengthening of Bohemia’s borders were all important and well-documented. The problem, however, with the historiographical treatment of the issue is dual. First, it assumes a normative model in which defensive warfare will inevitably become offensive after repeated invasion. Often this is predicated on the assumption that material and emotional suffering translates into more aggressive tactics. Secondly, it ignores the changes in the Hussite discourse (of themselves, of the enemy, and of the wars) which accompanied and accommodated the change in their own expectations and desires. In other words, the questions not answered by the common narrative of events are: “Why did it take three crusades, six years of war, and the death of their general Jan Žižka, before a new military strategy was employed?”, and also “What was the Hussite discourse under Žižka and how was it adapted and changed to express and legitimize the new hopes and expectations of a different kind of war?”.

Several reasons may be offered to explain the unsatisfactory state of historiography on the offensive shift and why these questions have not been properly addressed, or even asked. Though not as popular as they once were, nationalist and Marxist interpretations of the Hussite wars still remain influential in normalizing the offensive military shift. Historiography which has interpreted the Hussite movement as a particularly and exclusively Czech or Slavic phenomenon, or “proletariat” one, has worked to crystallize a specific narrative of the

¹² Thomas A. Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 108.

revolution. Accordingly, the offensive shift was explained in these terms, either as an attempt to liberate the oppressed masses from the “enemy, the feudal exploiters” (*feudální vykořisťovatelé*),¹³ or an attempt to liberate Slavic populations in surrounding countries from German or Hungarian oppressors. It is not surprising that this narrative first found appeal in the period of national revival in the nineteenth-century, and originated with the romantic František Palacký (1798-1876). Though Palacký’s terminologies for the Germans, whom he called *Räubervölker*,¹⁴ have not survived into modern historiography, his basic dialectic of “otherness” has.

Yet a thorough investigation of the Hussite sources suggests few “nationalist” or ethnic motivations behind the movement. Moreover, even though the Hussite discourse had a clearly antagonistic view towards the enemy combatants and the clergy, the impermanence of the category of “other” is striking. Already present in the early wars but especially explicit later is the inclusive language that Hussites used to address enemies as potential converts. This contradicts much of the historiography which assumes Hussite self-perception maintained a strongly national character. Though Hussites commonly referred to each other with national or linguistic terminology, and to enemies as “alien”, “German”, or “those who destroy the Czech land”, this was more an observation than a tenet; the crusaders were foreigners, mostly Germans, and Hussitism hardly spread outside Bohemia and parts of Moravia. Yet some Hussites were also German, one of their key spokesmen and theologians, Peter Payne, was English,¹⁵ and some of their long-standing enemies were Czech. Though the dividing lines of

¹³ Josef Macek, *Husité na Baltu a ve Velkopolsku* [The Hussites in the Baltic and in Great Poland] (Prague: Nakladatelství Rovnost, 1952), 74.

¹⁴ Thomas A. Fudge, "The State of Hussite Historiography," *Mediaevistik* 7 (1994): 96-8.

¹⁵ Payne was a Lollard exile from England and thus, in many of the Czech sources, is called Peter Payne-Engliš.

language and ethnicity may have usually coincided with those of religion between the crusading forces and the Hussites, they hardly determined them.

Some modern historians have attempted to challenge the nationalist narrative by looking closely at the self-referential terminology which Hussite sources used. Most common here was the term “the faithful” (*věrní*, or *fides*) or alternately, “faithful Czechs” (*věrní Češi*, or *fideles Bohemi*). As František Šmahel has demonstrated, the qualification became more important once the appeal to the “Czechness” of Czechs was made ineffectual by the fact that some remained Catholic. Hussites so closely associated “faithful” and “Czech” that they often expressed their faith as a special gift from God, “*praecipue legitima Bohemicae gentis fides*”. This meant that the “Czechness” of Catholic Czechs was often denied, and they were referred to as “Romans” (*Římané*), expressing their “Roman” faith. Conversely, Catholics used the term “faithful Czechs” to exclude all Hussites, and some moderate Hussites used it against the more radical communities like Tábor.¹⁶

Nevertheless, it was faith, not nationality, which defined Hussitism. As early as Jerome of Prague, a true Czech was determined not exclusively by *lingua* but also by *fides*. In the years after Jerome, *fides* “gained predominance over all else, [and] patriotic, state or national arguments were its mere instruments”.¹⁷ Moreover, several historians have recognized the fact that all but the most conservative Hussites were reluctant to exploit certain well-established national symbols, such as that of the Bohemian patron St. Vaclav, who was much more commonly adapted in anti-Hussite propaganda.¹⁸ In addition, it was religious rather than

¹⁶ František Šmahel, *Idea Národa v Husitských Čechách* [The Idea of the Nation in Hussite Bohemia] (Prague: Argo, 2000), 165-6.

¹⁷ František Šmahel, “The Idea of the ‘Nation’ in Hussite Bohemia” I, *Historica* 16 (1969): 176, 178.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 185-6; Franz Machilek and Margarita Machilek, “St. Wenceslas: Cult and Iconography,” in *Europe's Centre Around AD 1000*, eds. Alfried Wiczorek and Hans-Martin Hinz (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2000), 593.

national motivations which pushed for the vernacular liturgy; only if the “common language” was used could the “common believer” achieve a closer communication with God, with minimal priestly mediation. Still less did nationalism inform the fatalistic chiliasm of Tábor, for whom the kingdom's seat in Prague was identified as the new Babylon, and for whom Christ's Kingdom would have nothing in common with the Czech nation or Bohemian kingdom.¹⁹ Even during the wars, no evidence can be found for ideological justification of a priori persecution of non-Czechs, and care was still taken to distinguish between those Germans who were “defamers, slanderers, murderers, traitors” (*hánce, tupitelé, vrazi, zrádce*) of the Czechs, and those who were “of good repute, and steadfast in God's Law” (*zachovalí, a v zákoně Božském stáli*).²⁰

Another assumption made by Hussite historians which has simplified the strategic shift from defensive to offensive warfare is that of the continuity of Hussite identity from Hus's execution until the end of the Hussite wars three decades later, and consequently the necessary link between Hussite theology and the formation of an aggressive and militaristic identity, as expressed by both the violent chiliast sectarians and Žižka's soldiers, the “Warriors of God”.²¹ Fudge argues that “the unity of Hussitism rested upon the cult of the chalice and the person of Jan Hus” and the evolving “Hussite myth” from Hus's execution onwards had a basic framework which remained constant “until 1437 and beyond”.²² Speaking about the chiliasts of Tábor, Fudge cites their transition from pacifism to “extreme violence and blood-thirstiness” as a “psychological enigma” partially explained by “the dashing of eschatological hopes and the

¹⁹ Šmahel, “The Idea” I, 200, 202.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 241, 243.

²¹ The term appears often in Hussite sources, but perhaps earliest in the song “Ye who are the Warriors of God” (*Ktož jsú boží bojovníci*), likely composed by the radical priest Jan Čapek in 1420 to inspire the Hussite soldiers before battle. Translated in *CAHB*, 66-8.

²² Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 125, 176 respectively.

deepening anxiety of the apocalyptic tension present in the radical Hussite mentality”. He argues that the implications of these were clear: “an independent church ... standing field armies – the ‘warriors of God’ – a Hussite king, a Hussite archbishop, ... and the social order turned upside down”.²³ The standing field armies in particular were a “direct by-product of the Hussite myth”.²⁴

This assumption, however, which links eschatological movements to outbursts of violence, both in Hussite and wider medieval historiography, is a dated one. It both comes from and contributes to the loose and undefined usage of terminology like “apocalyptic”, “millenarian”, and “chiliast”. Some time ago, Norman Cohn influentially argued for a “revolutionary millenarianism”: “Chiliastically-minded movements are ruthless not simply in order to safeguard or further specific interests but also - and above all - in an effort to clear the way for the Millennium”.²⁵ More recently some historians tend to distinguish between the pacifist and violent typologies of apocalyptic movements, but continue to use the terminology in a confused and undefined manner. Referring to the suppression of the violent Adamite sect in Tábor, for example, Housley has commented that “[i]n the early 1420s there was a danger [in Tábor] that emphasizing *eschatology* would revive the *chiliasm* which had been painfully laid to rest.”²⁶

Both of these approaches, the lack of a pacifist-violent distinction and the use of a muddled and imprecise one, should be avoided, and some consideration should be given to a proper definition. In the strict sense, both “millennialism” (from Latin *millennia*) and

²³ Thomas A. Fudge, “The Night of Antichrist: Popular Culture, Judgment and Revolution in Fifteenth-Century Bohemia,” *Communio Viatorum* 37 (1995): 43-4.

²⁴ Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 170.

²⁵ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New Jersey: Fairlawn, 1957), 310.

²⁶ *RWE*, 39. Emphasis mine.

"chiliasm" (from Greek *chilia*) are synonymous terms, referring to Christ's thousand-year kingdom after the destruction of all worldly empires. "Apocalypticism" has a long history in the Jewish tradition, when Jewish self-understanding as God's chosen people was challenged by the political reality of their subjugation and exile. The revelation (*apokalypsis*) of the Beyond seemed to offer a solution to their crisis. Finally, the creation and popularization of "eschatology" since the seventeenth-century is a modern label for the last days (*eschata*), which dealt with the Christian doctrines on death and things after death, namely resurrection, the last judgment, and the Beyond. Eschatology was reinvented by the writings of Joachim of Fiore in the twelfth-century, who "immanentized" the expectation of the third and final age which would anticipate the perfect order of the Beyond.²⁷

Eschatological beliefs were in no way inherently violent. On the contrary, the just believers, who were to be saved by God, must demonstrate their election by abstaining from worldly political and military struggles and suffering persecution until the world's annihilation.²⁸ As Robert E. Lerner has observed, Cohn's association of "millenarian" with "revolutionary" was only possible by assuming a false similarity between millenarians and non-millenarians and assuming a normative millenarian behavior based on sixteenth-century examples, especially the cases of Thomas Müntzer and Münster. For the middle ages, however, the pacifistic millenarian movement was most common, as "prophecies of dramatic eschatological change usually were meant to be consolatory rather than hortatory".²⁹

²⁷ Matthias Riedl, "Eschatology," in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Maryanne Cline Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), 708-10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 709.

²⁹ Robert E. Lerner, "Medieval Millenarianism and Violence," in *Pace e Guerra Nel Basso Medioevo* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano Di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, 2004), 38-9.

Nor was the militarization of Hussite self-perception, or the violence called for by sectarians like the Adamites to make way for Christ's return, in continuity with the Hussite movement prior to 1420. Calls to arms by Hus were always metaphorical, and Jakoubek of Stříbro – a prominent Prague University master, theologian, originator of utraquist communion, and Hus's successor at the Bethlehem Chapel – explained the nature of their enemy in 1410: “our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places”. Moreover, the persecution of Hussites by King Vaclav did not lead to armed resistance but rather their flight to the hilltop congregations of southern Bohemia; as one Táborite song put it, “Do not resist evil but go out to the mountain and here learn Truth”,³⁰ and in the escalating anxiety before Sigismund's crusade another Táborite warned to “depart from the wicked” and paraphrased St. John: “get away from these things my people and do not partake in this sin for their sins have come up even unto heaven”.³¹

Thus, to explain the transition from spiritual warfare to physical warfare, internal theological factors are insufficient. Instead, we must look to the announcement and the launch of the first crusade, an event which inspired so much hostility and anxiety within the Hussite movement that it forced a reconsideration and subsequent militarization of Hussite identity. Acknowledging this phenomenon, the aim of the first chapter will be to contextualize and explain the emergence of a highly militant Hussite discourse which, during the early crusades, evolved alongside Žižka's defensive strategy of warfare. Though the militarization of the community was certainly legitimized in theological terms, the defense of the realm and faith initially formed one of the strongest bonds for Hussites, even stronger than Hus himself. As

³⁰ *RWE*, 36.

³¹ *CAHB*, 32.

such, Hussite identity was not simply a cultural construct which evolved naturally from theology or even the social structure, and the field armies were not simply implicit in the “radical Hussite mentality”, but both were undeniably necessitated by the demands of war. Similar considerations must be made in reference to the Adamites, for it is not a simple coincidence that emperor Sigismund’s announcement of the first crusade against Bohemia on 1 March 1420 coincided with the escalation of the sect’s purgative violence after their dashed apocalyptic predictions for the previous month.³²

The failure of Hussite historiography to properly distinguish between the self-perceptions and intentions of defensive and offensive warfare are also partially due to the imposition of modern theoretical apparatus’ and narratives on the Hussite movement, including modern concepts of the meaning of warfare, religion, and nationality. In this respect, offensive warfare coincides fairly well with modern ideas of how and why wars should be fought. This is mainly in reference to the materialistic and ideological-propagandistic aims that most modern wars, at least since the Napoleonic period (but especially the two World Wars and the Cold War, when most modern Hussite historiography was written), are assumed to be fought for. These modern assumptions have contributed to a normative model of warfare which has normalized the offensive shift in the Hussite wars, and have offered simplistic materialistic or ideological explanations which are taken for granted in modern warfare. As a result, more nuanced and complex explanations, which are necessary to explain the offensive shift within the medieval context, have not been required, as the relevant questions have not been asked.

Certain basic historical and theoretical assumptions have worked to encourage a normative model of offensive warfare. One modern assumption which has led to the basic

³² Fudge, “Night of Antichrist”, 42-3.

misinterpretation of the offensive shift is that violence and warfare are inherently offensive, and that the motivations and discourse of the Hussite wars remained static throughout. Thus, speaking of the national assembly of Čáslav in 1421, Heymann has argued that the Hussites “knew quite well that it would be difficult if not impossible to enforce this point of view [that they, not the King, were the legitimate representatives of the Kingdom] without a war of conquest, an undertaking which so far was certainly beyond their power”.³³ As will be argued in chapter one, the Hussite motivations and discourse under Žižka's defensive warfare are essentially those of a resistance theory, heavily restrained by the moral-theological concerns shared by Žižka and the Prague University masters which gave their reluctant assent to the use of violence. Only after Žižka's death, and the subsequent rise in military importance of a priestly leadership in determining and legitimizing the Hussite war effort, was the offensive shift possible and appealing.

Thus, my second chapter will discuss both the changes and continuities which accompanied Prokop's offensive military policy, focusing on the Hussite discourse of self-perception. One of the important innovations in this period is the large-scale propaganda effort by the Hussites by which they sought to convince audiences across Europe of the righteousness of their cause. This they usually did with reference to concrete examples of clerical and papal corruption and sinfulness, but also by use of scripture to defend the Four Prague Articles. Moreover, the discourse of the movement hereafter saw a greater role of human agency in fulfilling God's will. This was greatly restrained under Žižka, who saw himself as personally responsible for eradicating the chiliast extremists at Tábor who had called for the enactment of God's will by humans. Moreover, Žižka used virtually no Biblical references in his militant

³³ Frederick G. Heymann, “The National Assembly of Čáslav,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 8 (1954): 33.

correspondences, and shared anxieties concerning the role of human agency with both the Prague Masters and Tábor's bishop Nicholas of Pelhřimov. Thus the continuous and repeated horrors of crusade, but also the Hussite victories over them – both of which showed no sign of abating – and the new military leadership of Táborite and Orebite priests (particularly Prokop, but also figures such as Prokůpek, Ambrož of Hradec, and Vaclav Koranda) and rogue commanders such as Jan Čapek of Sany, contributed to responses which involved a heightened role for human initiative.

My main primary sources for the period following the offensive shift will be several Hussite manifestos that were addressed either to the Bohemian people or to an international audience. These were usually co-authored by several significant military leaders, most of whom were also priests and religious leaders, including Prokop Holý, the Orebite priest Prokůpek, and the Táborite priest Vaclav Koranda. Typically these documents argued the authority of the Hussite message in historical and theological terms, but also commented on recent events and constructed a Hussite narrative of recent history. As such, they often reveal and are explicit about an evolving identity, the identity which they ascribe to their enemies, and the purposes which they strive to fulfill.

Though the contemporary propagandistic role of the manifestos, both at home and abroad, is taken for granted, this does not detract from their value. Nor should it imply the sufficiency of a superficial or cursory reading as “simply propaganda”, as some modern historiography is content with. Again citing Fudge's recent work, out of the ninety-six page chapter titled “Paint, poetry, and pamphlets: the politics of reformation”, a mere eight pages are dedicated to the section “Manifestos as Hussite literary propaganda” in which two decades of manifestos are summarized. Another modern study on Hussite discourse, though otherwise

very useful, dedicates a slim six pages to the section “*Husitství v ofenzivě, Basilej, Lipany*” (Hussites on the offensive, in Basil, at Lipany).³⁴ Though these two examples cannot be taken as representative of all Hussite historiography, they are nevertheless two of the most modern self-conscious treatments of Hussite discourse and self-interpretation.

An important part of the self-referential terminology and symbolism which is virtually omitted from examinations of the Hussite discourse are perhaps those most widely used and arguably most important, namely, the references and symbolism of the Bible. Unfortunately, the Biblical passages are usually regarded as simple footnotes or as a literary and stylistic choice which is somehow peripheral to the (for us) more recognizable language of praise or vitriol which accompany them. Of course, this approach is a modern one which hierarchically arranges certain symbols above others based on modern ideas on the subservient role of religion to “proper” politics. As Clifford Geertz recognized some time ago, with the choice to reify some cultural expressions and reduce others to a “brute pattern of behavioral events”, we dignify some with disproportionate meaning, and empty others of meaning altogether. In doing so, we miss what is actually “getting said”.³⁵

By neglecting the discursive value of Biblical passages, which the manifesto authors clearly took pains to reference and interpret, historians forget that all elements of language are not “a mere epiphenomenon”, but actually *social practice*, used by people “to *do* things” either explicitly or implicitly.³⁶ Biblical passages offered more than a simple legitimation of events or desires, but informed, shaped, and explained them as well. As Eric Voegelin observed, “man

³⁴ The respective sections are from Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 258-66, and Šmahel, *Idea Národa*, 169-75.

³⁵ Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 10-11.

³⁶ Rosalind Gill, “Discourse Analysis,” in *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*, eds. M. Bauer and G. Gaskell (London: Sage, 2000), 175.

does not wait for [political] science to have his life explained to him, and when the theorist approaches social reality he finds the field pre-empted by what may be called the self-interpretation of society”.³⁷ The fact that many of these self-interpretations are Biblically-inspired, or direct Biblical references, does not mean that the fiction created is “false” as such, because it has an important role in constructing reality;³⁸ these passages were part of the “pre-existing linguistic resources” from which the Hussite authors built their meaning, and thus were as real to them as any of the other linguistic materials used.³⁹

Occasionally we find the value of the Biblical citations and terminology expressed explicitly by the Hussites themselves. One manifesto from 1431 directly asks “those who copy and re-write (*rescribunt*) the present letter not to alter or change the words (*non transmutent nec mutant verba*), nor the names of the books or the numbers of the chapters”. It continues, instructing to those illiterate in Latin – “those who cannot read or understand these things” (*istas legere nesciat aut non intelligat*) – to read it in the German original.⁴⁰ Certainly the authors would not have found it necessary to include such instructions if they did not attach a significant importance to the terminology and exact Biblical references used throughout the manifesto. It may also be speculated that the suggestion for those illiterate in Latin to read the German version (which is itself explained in Latin) may have been an attempt to promote a more personalized reading of the text; in other words, instead of the Latin text being read aloud, or translated by the reader into German, German-speakers were encouraged to read the text itself to appreciate the significance of the Biblical quotations and terminology, and thus better

³⁷ Eric Voegelin, *The Collected works of Eric Voegelin. Volume 5: Modernity Without Restraint*, trans. Virginia Ann Schildhauer (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 109.

³⁸ Gill, 175; Geertz, “Thick Description”, 14.

³⁹ Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, “Unfolding Discourse Analysis,” in *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, eds. Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, and Simeon J. Yates (London: Sage, 2001), 199.

⁴⁰ MC 1: 170. Translations mine. The original, likely written in German, is no longer extant, and the document only exists in a Latin translation. See n. 187 below.

appreciate the Hussite message. By misunderstanding or ignoring symbols of Hussite self-representation – especially those such as Biblical references, which their compilers took particular care in referencing, adopting, and interpreting – or by imposing modern economic, national, and ideological ones onto the past, modern historians necessarily fail to recognize the important motivations which made sense within their cultural-historical context.

Of course, the source base for any historical analysis may always be expanded, and this work is no exception. Though many translated and original documents, both in English and Czech, have been closely examined below, additional resources could still be drawn from untranslated documents – especially Hussite manifestos – mostly written in Latin and German, which are both languages I still intend to work on in the future. Further research into this literature would surely offer more evidence to strengthen the arguments made below, and would also potentially suggest additional avenues of argumentation as well. Nevertheless, I believe this work constitutes an important contribution to Hussite and medieval historiography more generally, as one of its goals is to take seriously the language and discourse, often religious and Biblical, used by contemporaries to explain their goals, motivations, and expectations for the future.

Chapter 1:
Gaining God's favor: The Defensive War of Jan Žižka
and the Prague University masters

The war of defense which was led by the Hussite military leader Jan Žižka may have been accepted as a matter of practical necessity for the survival of the Hussite faith, but the shape that it took cannot be taken for granted. Before the launching of the first crusade by the legitimate heir to the Bohemian throne, King Sigismund of Hungary, the Hussite movement was largely split on the legitimacy of armed defence, and the conditions under which physical warfare – *carnalia bella* – may be properly waged. There were extremists on both sides, pacifists and heretical war-mongers, though in the ensuing debate the greatest influence was held by the traditional seat of Hussite intellectualism: Prague University. The University masters reluctantly came to allow the use of violence in defense of the faith, though only in a highly restricted manner which was stipulated by the peaceful and forgiving example of Christ and the New Testament.

Žižka mostly accepted the decision of the masters, though he adapted it to his own personal emphasis on the elimination of sin to win the favor of God in their struggle. For Žižka, defense of God's law necessarily meant not only defeating its foreign enemies who were invading Bohemia, but also purifying it of its internal enemies. Thus, sometimes to the chagrin of the University masters, Žižka led his armies against all manner of enemies in Bohemia, from foreign crusaders and Czech Catholics to Hussite radicals and heretical sects. Moreover, he sought to eliminate sin from within the Hussite armies themselves by mandating and enforcing strict discipline which not only made it a better fighting force but also made it pleasing to God. Žižka's unique sense of morality legitimized both the massacre of non-Hussites – Catholics and

sectarians alike – and also the execution of his soldiers who plundered for personal gain, as offenders of God.⁴¹

By the time of his death in 1424, Žižka and the University masters had worked to shape a Hussite identity which adhered closely to the discourse of defensive and “moral” warfare. They often emphasized the continuity of the Hussite movement with previous history and religious thought, and insisted on proper human behavior upon which the favor of God was contingent. Žižka’s experiences with radical heretics and warmongers had made him wary of the role of human agency in conducting a righteous war; obviously he saw himself as a righteous judge, but like the Prague masters and many religious leaders he saw human corruption as too widespread in Bohemia to entertain the thought of a foreseeable future alternative to the defensive-style of warfare being waged.

⁴¹ Thomas A. Fudge, “‘More Glory than Blood’: Murder and Martyrdom in the Hussite Crusades,” *BRRP* vol. 5 (1) (Prague: Main Library, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2004): 126.

1.1
Arma spiritualia or carnalia bella?:
The legitimization of Defensive Warfare

Even before the crusades were formally announced by Sigismund in March 1420, the Hussites had long had reason to believe that they would soon encounter violent persecution from the Hungarian King. Over two years earlier, in December 1417, he had written to King Vaclav, his half-brother, that “we cannot regard you as our brother if you do not, in the manner of our forebears, exterminate all heretics ... let every Czech, German and Latin person be aware that I can scarcely wait for the day to come when I shall drown every Wycliffite and Hussite”.⁴² Several months later, on 22 April 1418, Sigismund had received full authorization from Pope Martin V to take action against the Hussites. A Czech notary arrived from Constance bringing the news that “if those accused [of heresy] refuse to abjure (*si desinere noluerint*), they will be apprehended by the emperor through the secular arm and burned to death.”⁴³ The decision of the Council and local prejudices also contributed to the ongoing massacre of utraquists at the Bohemian mining town of Kutná Hora. The city offered rewards for captured heretics, whom they executed and threw down mine shafts, one of which they coined “Tábor” for its popularity for this purpose.⁴⁴ The first military engagement had also occurred prior to the formal crusades, when Hussite pilgrims on their way to Prague were ambushed near the town of Živohošť in November 1419.⁴⁵

The anxiety caused from such events led to a debate concerning the legitimacy of armed defense to protect the law of God. The ensuing rationalizations were important for defining the

⁴² *FRA* 2, 252-4. Translated in *CAHB*, 50.

⁴³ František Palacký, ed., *Documenta Mag. Joannis Hus vitam, doctrinam, causam in constantiensi concilio actam et controversias de religione in Bohemia annis 1403-1418 motas illustrantia* (Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1869), 676-7. Translated in *CAHB*, 20-1.

⁴⁴ One of our most important sources for the period, the Hussite chronicler Vavřinec of Březová, estimated that over 1,600 Hussites suffered this fate in 1419 alone. See *CAHB*, 40-1.

⁴⁵ For an English translation of a contemporary account, see *ibid.*, 29- 32.

Hussite military discourse at least until Žižka's death in 1424, but would also carry implications throughout the Hussite wars. Nevertheless, the question of armed defense at this early stage was still a contentious one. For moderate Hussites, the task of reconciling their royalism with their faith was more difficult after King Vaclav's death in August 1419 than during even the most reactionary periods before it. Before his death, the Prague New Town had offered to "humble itself" to Vaclav in exchange for his recognition of its new Hussite magistrates who were installed after the July coup, and a similar arrangement was offered to Sigismund. At this point, legitimation of the reform was still sought from above by the Prague masters and burghers, while officials and nobles were anxious for their own positions which also relied on royal authority.⁴⁶ Despite the opposition of Želivský and his supporters there, Prague accepted Sigismund's proposal of Hussite-Catholic coexistence in the city until his arrival, when he would consider appealing their case to the Papacy.

Those for armed resistance had a significant voice in the movement, especially as the discourse shifted towards eschatological expectations. One Tábórite prophet complained that "many are now aggrieved against Christ's commands, supposing that it is not necessary to carry on a regular fight with a physical sword against evils and abominations, against errors and heresy".⁴⁷ In a manifesto issued by the Tábórite congregation meeting on Bzí Hora (south Bohemia) in September 1419 to the entire kingdom, the radical preacher Vaclav Koranda cited 1 Maccabees 2:50-64 in defense of the "word of God" (*slova božieho*) and the "freedom of the law of God" (*o svobodu zákona božieho*) against Sigismund the Antichrist: "now my sons, be zealous for the law and give your lives for the covenant made by your fathers..., all who have

⁴⁶ *HHR*, 296-304.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 320.

hoped in the Lord have never died. Do not fear the threats of the wicked.”⁴⁸ For such radicals and their followers, who variously referred to Sigismund as “Antichrist” (*antikrista*), or “the lion [who] has emerged from his den and the heathen destroyer [who] has come against God and the law of God”,⁴⁹ it was clear that he could never be a Hussite king, and thus had hardly any dilemma reconciling their loyalties.⁵⁰

The resulting disputes in late 1419 and early 1420 were part of an extended debate. One surviving document is the record of mediation of a dispute between two priests by two Prague masters, Jakoubek of Stříbro and Christian of Prachatice, representing the moderate and radical wings respectively. Kaminsky dates it to late January or early February of 1420. The issues of dispute most relevant for us addressed the legitimacy of the defense of the “evangelical Truth” by secular lords, or by “faithful subject communities” if the lords were unwilling or unable to do so. The answer of the masters was for the affirmative, though heavily qualified.⁵¹ They must be moved “to defend Gospel truth (*ewangelica veritas*)... provided they keep order and do so according to Christ’s law (*lex Cristi*). And what moves them must be divine inspiration (*divinus instinctus*) or a certain revelation (*certa revelacio*), or at least evidence which is quite unmistakable”.⁵²

Another revealing document is authored by the Prague masters as a ruling on whether priests may lawfully use force, and under what conditions the laity may do so, as requested by Žižka and Lord Břeněk Švihovský of Skála, dated to February 17, 1420. In their answer, several details are important to observe. Any degree of legitimate violence is strictly attached to

⁴⁸ *KJBB*, 43-5. Translated in *CAHB*, 25-6.

⁴⁹ “*lew z lože swého a lúpežník pohanský pozdwihl sě jest točž proti bohu a proti zákonu jeho*”. *AČ* 6, 44. Translated in *CAHB*, 32.

⁵⁰ *HHR*, 296.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 323-7.

⁵² “The Treatises of MS O 13 on Adventism, Chiliasm, and Warfare: The Latin Texts,” [Hereafter “Treatises”] in *HHR*, 545-6. Parts are translated into English by *RWE*, 46-51 *passim*.

highly qualifying language, which appeals exclusively to New Testament quotations. Contrary to Koranda and other radical priests, the masters used Scripture as a *restrictive* authority, not a facilitating one, and were anxious of any degree of human agency, which was easily corrupted. They begin by distinguishing between the two typologies of fighting, that of the “material sword” (*gladius materialis*) and that of patient endurance which “Christ practiced patiently all of his life” and which was “safer and better and less dangerous”. Many New Testament citations follow, expounding the righteousness of Christ-like pacifism: John 3:17 “God did not send God’s son into the world to judge with coercive power but to save the world through himself through patience and death” and Romans 12:19 “Do not defend yourselves, ... and do not make any provision for anger” summarize the tone quite well.⁵³

For the sake of practical necessity, however, the masters were forced to recognize the legitimacy of the alternate way of fighting with secular force for the laity, but only did so in a highly qualified manner. This form “is dangerous for the body and also for the soul”, but is occasionally permissible, again based on the New Testament, specifically Christ’s forceful expulsion of buyers and sellers from the temple (John 2:15). Violence can only be legitimated by its necessity coupled with its command by a recognized authority. The authority of Romans 13:1-5 is cited here and elsewhere as a means to escape the trap of the New Testament’s pacifistic tone and its exclusive emphasis on *arma spiritualia*; as the Prague master Jakoubek of Stříbro put it, the *arma carnalia* may be used by the “greater secular powers ... for the punishment of the wicked”.⁵⁴ These passages from Romans 13 also emphasize the distinction between just war and illegitimate rebellion, because “whoever serves God does not carry the

⁵³ “*non vosmet ipsos defendentes, ... sed date locum ire*”. DČ, 97-8. Translated in CAHB, 34.

⁵⁴ “*Sublimioribus potestatibus secularibus ... ad vindictam malorum.*” This is from his refutation of Adventist prophecies, dated early 1420. See “Treatises”, 521-2.

sword without cause and they have it not only from necessity but also by command” (*veluti ministris dei, qui non sine causa gladium portant, quibus nedum necessitate subdi, sed reddi precipit et tributa*), echoed by Augustine: “It is not right for anyone to take up the sword unjustly or arm themselves for bloodshed without permission or command from a superior and legitimate power”. The medieval body metaphor is also employed, as the eyes and feet control and direct the fight, but a higher authority directs them both. Similarly, the right to fight with the material sword can only come from “higher authorities and not from priests, the lower powers or their dependants”.⁵⁵ There can be little doubt that this last comment refers to the priests and community of Tábor, where violent chiliasm was quite pronounced and whose destruction of Catholic churches and monasteries was infamous.

Further conditions are also enumerated for the legitimate practice of violence: “that it is for the cause of God, truth or justice (*causa dei, veritatis et iusticie*). Second with the right intent and that there is love for one’s opponents (*intencio recta cum caritate ad adversarium*). Third that the impulse comes from God (*quod instinctu divino provocetur*) and Fourth that it is essential to go to war (*quod sit tanta bellandi necessitas*)” because non-violent means have been exhausted.⁵⁶ Perhaps the most conservative of the Hussite ideologists, Jan Přebor, echoed these conditions in a tract named *Bellandi materiam concernit infrascriptum* in mid 1420: “just vindication” (*iusta vindicacio*), “licit authorization” (*licita auctorizacio*) and most importantly, “right intention” (*intencio recta*), “which principally and finally makes a [war] legitimate” (*rectificat bellum*).⁵⁷ As Erasmus would later put it, one should “kill the Turk and

⁵⁵ *DČ*, 98-9. Translated in *CAHB*, 35; Augustine, "Against the Manicheans," book 22, chapter 74.

⁵⁶ *DČ*, 99. Translated in *CAHB*, 35. Alterations mine.

⁵⁷ “Treatises”, 547. Translated from *RWE*, 50. Alterations mine.

not the man”.⁵⁸ Those things to be avoided, again referring to Augustine, are “the desire to harm, the cruelty of vengeance, the insatiable rage of rebellion, [and] the lust for domination”. In another clear reference to the radical communities, the masters emphasize that this does not give license, “as some will undoubtedly think, to break down the walls of monasteries, churches or alters, to plunder or abuse priests or anyone else”.⁵⁹

What this response of the Prague masters exemplifies is a deep distrust of human agency and anxiety of its ability to properly adhere to the highly moralistic demands of just war. Their apprehensively restrictive legitimization of warfare is, as will be seen, characteristic of its defensive orientation under Žižka and shared by his moralistic contemporaries and antecessors. This sentiment was echoed a decade later by Tábor’s bishop Nicholas Pelhřimov, for whom Housley correctly identified that “it was painful to entrust a holy cause to men who would certainly be woefully deficient as its agents”,⁶⁰ and under Žižka this was still the dominant position.

Thus, the Prague masters essentially constructed and used a discourse of resistance theory which was explicitly defensive, moralistic, and drew legitimation almost exclusively from the New Testament. Jakoubek and his colleagues walked the tightrope between a highly moralized just war and outright pacifism. Justification from the Old Testament was thoroughly employed to support eschatological flight to the five cities and then the purgative violence of the Adamites (discussed below), but for the masters its message was only valid insofar as it coincided with that of the New Testament. Jakoubek himself tried hard to counter the insistence of the Táborite priests on the Old Testament, particularly Maccabees. He argued that the

⁵⁸ *RWE*, 165.

⁵⁹ *DČ*, 99. Translated in *CAHB*, 35.

⁶⁰ *RWE*, 188.

carnalia bella of the Maccabees was only figuratively related to the contemporary situation; to follow it literally would lead to “anger, sedition, and violent acts” as people avenged their own injuries “under the pretext of God’s cause and God’s injury”.⁶¹ He doubted the mandate to war by the direct revelation of the Old Testament: “such wars [in the Old Testament] were fought in common and by certain revelation (*certa revelacio*), which nowadays is not accustomed to happen; it can come about, but it is unusual”, and so nobody should “audaciously presume that he possesses a divine inspiration (*instinctus divinus*) to wage war in this way just because of erroneous and counterfeit fantasies”.⁶² He called the Táborite priests, who argued that Maccabees should be read aloud for encouragement, “men of violence” (*percussores*), and as if to confound their reliance on the book he cited it to exemplify the fate of priests who went to battle: “On that day some priests, who wished to do a brave deed, fell in battle, for they went out to battle unwisely” (1 Macc. 5:67).⁶³

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶² “Treatises”, 522, 528.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 527.

1.2
Jan Žižka, the “Severe Avenger”:
Gaining God’s Favor through Purgative Violence

The fact that Žižka agreed with the Prague masters regarding the moralistic and authorized restraints on violence is observable in the punishment and penance he mandated for the breach of these rules, which will be discussed in section 1.3 below. As a military leader, however, morality for him was not a goal in itself, but a means to achieving victory through God’s favor. This meant that all acts could be morally-legitimate insofar as they strove for this goal, a sentiment which occasionally manifested violence which went beyond what the masters themselves would have sanctioned. Nevertheless, Žižka took it upon himself not only to fight a moral war, but also to personally enforce morality upon all of Bohemia, by eliminating the sins of Catholics and Hussites alike.

One indication of Žižka’s self-righteous morality was the change in the wording of the Four Articles, particularly the fourth, a process in which he played a key role. The earlier version appears at the end of a document authored in April 1420 on behalf of the Bohemian nobility, principally by the burgrave Čeněk of Vartenberk and the baron Oldřich of Rožmberk, which expressed their solidarity with the Hussite cause. This version of the Four Articles does not differ substantially from previous versions in charters which are traceable back to 1417.⁶⁴ The Fourth Article here is primarily concerned with the “Czech language and kingdom”, which must “be cleansed from all harmful rumors and slander (*zlé a křivé powěsti*) for the common benefit of our kingdom and language of Bohemia (*králowstwie a jazyka našeho Českého*)”.⁶⁵

Several months later, however, in late June 1420, Žižka worked with his fellow Tábor representatives to demand the first significant change in the articulation of the articles. This

⁶⁴ *JŽ*, 148-9.

⁶⁵ *AC* 3: 212. Translated in *CAHB*, 63.

new emphasis of the Fourth Article was now directed at the punishment and extirpation of mortal sins, and as would become typical of Žižka's discourse, it did not rely on explicit Scriptural support as the other three did. In addition to the April version, it mandated that "all mortal sins and especially those that are committed publicly, as well as other disorders offending against the Law of God, shall be properly and sensibly prohibited and punished in each estate by those who have the authority to do so (*jenž úřad k tomu mají*)". A list of such sins follows; those of the laity involved criminality and moral errors, those of the clergy were even longer and more sensitive to practices, attitudes, and behaviors commonly associated with their Catholic counterparts. All those guilty, or even found approving, of such sins deserve death. The article is summarized "All these, each true servant of Christ and true son of the Church should prohibit in himself and in others, and should hate and despise such sins as the devil".⁶⁶

As one of Žižka's modern biographers has argued, the final wording of the Fourth Article indicates that there was some resistance of the moderate University masters. Anxious of the public repercussions of the article's implementation, they insisted on the inclusion of the qualification which limited the prohibition and punishment of sins "in each estate *by those who have the authority*".⁶⁷ That Žižka himself did not agree with this qualification, and did not see himself in any way bound by it, is evident from his own articulations of the Fourth Article elsewhere. Two letters, both written by Žižka in November of 1420 to real or potential enemies within Bohemia, and both excluding the agent of implementation when citing the article, instead using the passive voice; that "all serious sins shall be eliminated (*aby stavoval*)"⁶⁸ or

⁶⁶ *DC*, 215-6. Translated in *JŽ*, 154-5.

⁶⁷ *JŽ*, 156.

⁶⁸ *CAHB*, 98.

“that all manifest sins be driven out, be it of kings or lords, of squires or priests, of people ecclesiastical or secular”.⁶⁹ In an address to the Czechs, also in November, he assigns the authority to destroy sin to any true Christian, “by king or lords, squires or priests, or ecclesiastical or secular people”.⁷⁰ In his later military rule of mid-1423, he made it clear that he himself was a legitimate judge and executioner: “that we suppress, put and end to, and exterminate (*abychme stavovali, rušili a kazili*) all sins, both mortal and venial (*hříchy smrtné i všední*), first in ourselves (*napřed v sobě*), after this in kings, princes, barons ... and all other people”.⁷¹

As the “severe avenger”,⁷² Žižka took the extirpation of all sins “first in ourselves” seriously, a doctrine which guided his personal, often violent, morality. In late 1420, before besieging the town of Prachatice held by Sigismund’s allies, Žižka “addressed the people calmly: ‘Open the gates and let us come in with the blessed sacrament of the body of Christ ... We promise that neither you nor your belongings will be harmed.’” After receiving a negative response from the defenders, he threatened “I confess in the name of God that if I conquer you ... I will not forgive and I shall order that everyone be killed”. And so he did, his soldiers killing many “like calves in all of the streets ... They went to every house, ... capturing those trying to hide and either killed them or brought them to Žižka”. Though he spared the women and children, the rest he ordered locked in the church, which he had burned. The chronicler notes “they begged him in the name of God to forgive them and give them the chance to do

⁶⁹ “Appendix II” in *JŽ*, 486.

⁷⁰ *CAHB*, 99.

⁷¹ *KJBB*, 149. Translated in *CAHB*, 168. Alterations mine.

⁷² As coined by Žižka’s biographer Heymann, in *JŽ*, 155.

penance ... [and] follow the Hussites” but to no avail; “[t]he Táborites behaved as though they were deaf”.⁷³

In other instances, Žižka had the opportunity to express his infamous hatred of the Catholic clergy. In April 1420 he sacked and burned Rábí Castle, sparing many prisoners except for seven monks whom he had burned alive. In 1423 he personally crushed a captured priest’s head with his battle club,⁷⁴ and a certain Abbot Ludolf claims that Žižka offered a bounty for captured Catholic authorities, who were burned alive unless they refuted Catholicism and defended the Four Articles.⁷⁵

Yet crucial for understanding both the role violence came to play within the movement at this early stage, first as defensive but then internally purgative, and also the shaping and expression of Žižka’s anxiety of the role of human agency in the battle with the Antichrist, was the eradication of the so-called “Adamite” and “Pikart” sects. This episode illustrates the close connection between defensive warfare, morality, and violence, and helps explain Žižka’s distrustful attitude toward radicals and priests, whom he actively hoped to marginalize in the Hussite movement.

The Táborite Pikarts were represented by a radical priest named Martin Húska, who held certain heretical views regarding the eucharist and denied that it held any divine presence. His influential status may be noted from his presence at a disputation between the Hussite moderates and the Táborites in December of 1420, where he defended Tábor against accusations of heresy. Lawrence of Březová described him as “the principal disseminator of all Táborite errors”. It is interesting to note Žižka’s silence at this dispute while the Táborites were

⁷³ CAHB, 95-6.

⁷⁴ Thomas A. Fudge, “Žižka’s Drum: The Political Uses of Popular Religion,” *Central European History* Vol. 36, No. 4 (2003): 554.

⁷⁵ CAHB, 127.

accused of various heresies, which has been interpreted as evidence for his moderate leanings and acquiescence for purging sinful radical beliefs from the movement.⁷⁶

Húska's influence would not last; the pressure against his eucharistic program soon forced him from Tábor and he was subsequently imprisoned as a heretic along with several followers. While tortured, they were entreated to return to the "unity of the church", to which they smilingly replied "Not we but you are in error, seduced by the erring clergy into kneeling before a created thing – the bread of the sacrament". After attempts to force Húska and his followers to recant had failed, Žižka personally ordered their execution by burning which took place in August 1421. When urged to ask the onlookers to pray for them, Húska replied "Let those who need their prayers ask for them; we do not".⁷⁷

We can again observe Žižka's purgative violence against another Táborite heresy, the Adamites, which had its roots in the escapist ideology and apocalyptic theology of the late 1410s and early 1420s, but also drew inspiration from the Pikarts.⁷⁸ As the prophesized date of the *eschata*, set for mid February 1420, came and went, Tábor's clergy began to slowly abandon the eschatology from which the community was born. This process had begun by the spring of that year, and was all but complete by the year's end.⁷⁹ Yet the fear, anxiety, and rage which accompanied Sigismund's announcement of a crusade in March emboldened some in Tábor to assert that Christ actually did come on the prophesized date, but this was a "secret advent"; they called on the human agency of the faithful to destroy their enemies and fulfill the requirements for the "real" advent. This was "the time of vengeance" and required Christ's

⁷⁶ *JŽ*, 196-7. Heymann suggested that Žižka's silence in such a situation, given his leadership role at Tábor, is further evidence of his weariness of the sinful teachings of priests, not just Catholic but Táborite as well.

⁷⁷ *HHR*, 431-2.

⁷⁸ For good overviews of these two movements and their overlaps, see *JŽ*, 258-64, and *HHR*, 418-33.

⁷⁹ *RWE*, 37, and *HHR*, 343.

faithful to imitate him not in “meekness, mildness, and mercy”, but rather in “zeal, fury, cruelty, and just retribution”. As “the army sent by God into the whole world to execute all the plagues of the time of vengeance”, any among them “who holds his sword back from the blood of the adversaries of Christ’s Law, from personally pouring it out” were accursed. “Rather, each of the faithful ought to wash his hands in the blood of Christ’s enemies”.⁸⁰ The Hussite moderates, such as Březová, saw such unrestrained and merciless violence as “heresy and tyrannical cruelty”, and lamented Bohemia’s position between the extremes of the crusaders and the radical chiliasts of Tábor: “King Sigismund was an overt persecutor of the truth, but for their part the Táborites were more cruel: between them they lit the fires which reduced almost to nothing the noble and bountiful land of Bohemia”.⁸¹

Eventually the same spirit of persecution which befell the Pikarts also forced this chiliastic sect into exile in the woods and the countryside, where they pillaged for survival. Here they believed that they regained the state of innocence of Adam and Eve and earned the name “Adamites”; believing that they lived in Paradise, they discarded all clothing, had no sexual inhibitions, and some thought themselves immortal. After attempts to destroy them had failed, Žižka himself led an attack – or rather massacre – some two months after his execution of Húska in 1421.⁸²

In all of these cases of Žižka’s exterminations – from the Catholic priests, allies of Sigismund, and Pikart and Adamite heretics – we observe an important transition from the exclusively defensive violence of the masters, to internally-purgative violence which was in accord with his abovementioned conception of morality and the extermination of sin. As will

⁸⁰ Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 267.

⁸¹ *RWE*, 38.

⁸² *JŽ*, 261-4.

be seen, Žižka saw the success of the Hussite war effort as primarily contingent on God's favor, which was in turn dependant on proper behavior including the enforcement of the restrictive opinions of the Prague masters. Yet proper behavior was also defined by correct faith, and so deviants or heretics of any kind, whether Catholics or Pikarts, could not be accepted. Purging sinfulness "first within ourselves" meant that Sigismund was not the only enemy, but all "knaves of the Antichrist", false Christians and "hypocrites" (*pokritci*).

As the Hussite cause was that of God, Žižka had no compunction for the atrocities he committed against his enemies.⁸³ Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that such violence was only acceptable insofar as it was moral, serving God's cause and destroying those who put the favorable status of the Hussites in jeopardy. In other words, the success and righteousness of the Hussites did not justify their actions apart from those that drew motivation from God, as stipulated by the Prague masters in the debate of early 1420. This was a view which was explicitly expressed by Žižka some time later when he attempted to keep the favor of God by mandating penance and enforcing a moral discipline upon the Hussite armies.

⁸³ Fudge, "Žižka's Drum", 553.

1.3
The “Warriors of God”:
Gaining God’s Favor through the Morality of Discipline

Žižka’s restrictive and virtuous violence was confirmed by the favor of God as expressed time and time again by his victories over three crusades between the years 1420-22. Žižka himself was invincible in battle and never faced defeat even after suffering complete blindness in the summer of 1421. Yet the flipside of the same coin was also expressed; improper behavior in warfare was punished by God. At Most in August 1421, Hussite forces led by the radical populist preacher Jan Želivský were massacred. Březová reported the response of the Prague priests to this calamity:

When we fought with compassion and humility in defense of his most sacred truth, God helped us and everything fell into our laps. But now our brethren have embraced wicked ways, and they fight not for the truth but for spoils, mercilessly seizing the belongings of the poor, and killing their fellow-humans more cruelly than the heathens. So the Lord in his anger has permitted us to be afflicted.⁸⁴

This event not only confirmed to Žižka and others the destructiveness of radicals for the Hussite cause, but also affirmed the necessity of moralistic warfare to win God’s highly contingent favor. Such favor not only required the morally-driven violence directed at the enemies of God’s law, but also the moral disciplining of the “Warriors of God” themselves.

An important document which expresses Žižka’s highly disciplined warfare, both militarily and morally, was his call for penance of the Hussite army on 1 April, 1423. The document was issued after a rare breach of discipline of the army at the battle of Německý Brod the previous year. Accusing his soldiers, he recalls “we engaged in pillage and greed and undisciplined arrogance as well as betrayal (*v lakomství, v lúpeže, v pýchu a v nevěru dali sem*

⁸⁴ RWE, 162.

se)".⁸⁵ One contemporary Hussite source recalls the soldiers' actions upon taking the city: "they invaded the town and they killed several hundred people, throwing many down from the town hall onto swords, lances and pikes. There are still indications of this to be seen to this day because blood splattered all over the walls. The town was laid waste for seven years and wolves and dogs ate the dead bodies"⁸⁶. Additionally we hear from the German chronicler and Sigismund's biographer, Eberhard Windecke, that "[the Hussites] burned it [the town] down and beat to death many men, women and children, both young and old and thus caused great grief and suffering to the Christian German people there"⁸⁷, and from a Polish chronicler "he [Žižka] set fire to the town of Německý Brod and it remained desolate for fourteen years".⁸⁸ Although we know that Žižka did not in fact order the city's destruction, and the estimated times of the city's abandonment in two of the accounts are exaggerations, these reports still express the deep shock at the destruction unleashed on the city, one which was shared by Hussites and their enemies alike.

What is emphasized by Žižka in his call for penance is the overriding role of God's will in determining the fate of Hussite military affairs, and the role of proper behavior in ensuring God's favor. God fought alongside the Hussites: Žižka notes that "God fought on our side" and "aided us considerably". But even more emphasized was the overriding agency of God, a deterministic discourse which eliminated all the importance of human agency in military matters. So God "has assisted and liberated us (*nám pomáhal í osvobožoval*) from strong enemies, for example at Německý Brod where God overpowered those enemies". This was a "beneficial favor", a "great and wonderful gift which was given to us by our most gracious

⁸⁵ *Listy Bratra*, 17. Translated in *CAHB*, 165.

⁸⁶ *CAHB*, 147.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 142.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 144-5.

father despite the fact that we were surely not worthy”, because God “sets free all those who put their trust in him”. As “we did not acknowledge this assistance with proper thanksgiving and neither did we on that occasion properly praise God”, “we angered our God considerably”. Without such gifts of divine intervention, Žižka emphasized, there was no hope, exemplified by the fact that “Ever since that time [i.e. the battle of Německý Brod] we have accomplished very little of note. Hence, our Lord God justly punishes us.” All that his armies could do to ensure God’s favor was to repent and act with righteousness in the future. “At the precise place where we committed sin we shall undertake repentance and penance. Following this, we shall offer up thanksgiving to the Lord God”.⁸⁹

Even more revealing than the call for penance is Žižka’s famous “military rule” (*vojenský řád*), mandating twelve strict disciplinary protocols and punishments for their breach touching several different circumstances, from marching protocols to soldier morality. It is likely not coincidental that the rule was issued only months after the call for penance at Německý Brod. Dating it to July 1423, which would have removed Žižka from his campaigning in Moravia, emphasizes the importance which such a document was supposed to have on the Hussite military and reveals the urgency he attached to the matter’s rectification.⁹⁰ The document is explicitly defensive in its goals, “to keep, defend and preserve” its articles, though the spread of the faith across the world is stated as a future but secondary objective. As already noted, the fourth Prague Article mandated that all sins were to be exterminated, “in ourselves in the first instance, after this in kings, princes, barons, townspeople, artisans,

⁸⁹ “...kdež sme zhřešili, abychme na témž místě pokání učinili, svých hříchův želejíc, Pánu bohu pokěkovali z toho daru velikého a nesmírného”, *Listy Bratra*, 17. Translated in *CAHB*, 165. Alterations mine.

⁹⁰ Though historiography is not settled on the dating of the document, Heymann argues the case for its July issuing quite convincingly, ruling out both the Spring and Fall datings of other historians with reference to an examination of the document’s signatories. See *JŽ*, 374-5 n. 2. At any rate, its dating is not of critical importance to my argumentation which follows.

peasants and all other people”. Membership in the Hussite community was defined as those desiring to “protect and defend” the Four Articles, and those unwilling were not tolerated “without any consideration of who they are ...in any place without exception”.⁹¹ Žižka urged “all dearly beloved communities from all places, all princes, barons, knights ... people from all ranks, but first and especially faithful Czechs (*zvláště napřed všech věrných Čechův*), to join with us in this salutary struggle”. Their goals included the exaltation of the saints “to aid the faithful everywhere in the blessed church (*církví svaté*) especially ... Czech and Slav language (*jazyka českého i slovenského*), but also throughout Christendom in order that the faithful might be lifted up” and disgrace brought to the “stubborn heretics, hypocrites and workers of iniquity”.⁹²

As in April, Žižka associated all recent disappointments and failures to human agency: “Through disobedience (*neposlušensství*) and improper disorders (*neřádné výtržky*) we have sustained great loss both in terms of the life of our brothers and also in goods (*bratřích i na statcích*)”.⁹³ Human carelessness is the cause of any lapse of God’s protection, and will be appropriately punished: “if God does not protect us so that we suffer harm through the carelessness or negligence (*neopatrnosti a zmeškání*) of the military captains ... those responsible shall be punished by beheading (*k hrdlům popravit*) and loss of possessions” regardless of rank.⁹⁴ Similar treatment was mandated for immorality and breaches in discipline. The eighth article mandates against any fighting or rioting among the soldiers, and the ninth explains the punishment due for any who “should hit, wound[,] cripple (*ochromit*), or kill that person”, which will be “in accordance with the law of God (*zákona božího*), and as the Lord

⁹¹ CAHB, 168.

⁹² KJBB, 153. Translated in CAHB, 171. Alterations mine.

⁹³ KJBB, 150. Translated in CAHB, 168. Alterations mine.

⁹⁴ KJBB, 151-2. Translated in CAHB, 169. Alterations mine.

our God allows (*jako pán Buoh dopustí*).⁹⁵ Similarly, there was no toleration for “any faithless person (*nevěrný*), disobedient one, liar, thief, gambler, robber, plunderer, drunkard, blasphemer, lecher, adulterer, prostitute, fornicator, or other definite sinners, either men or women.”⁹⁶

Deserters and plunderers were particularly offensive to God and deserved punishments reflecting this. Article ten stipulates that any deserter will suffer decapitation and seizure of goods “on the grounds that he is worse than an unfaithful robber (*nad zlodějem nevěrným*) who has crept away from the Lord’s battle (*od pře boží*) and away from the faithful brethren of the army”. Article seven stipulates that any loot (*vzatek*) of any amount gained “whenever the Lord God *permits* us to conquer and defeat our enemies (*jest-li žeby kde Pán Buoh dal nepřátely přemoci a poraziti*)” will be divided by chosen elders “among rich and poor in a just and proper fashion”. Any person deviating from this rule by plundering for personal gain will “have vengeance taken out upon him” by death (either by decapitation or “some other means”) and his goods will be seized without exception of status, “on the grounds that he has robbed God and the community (*zloději božímu a obecnému*)”. Notably, this point includes the document’s sole scriptural reference to Achan’s fate in Joshua 7: 19-26.⁹⁷

As before, God’s providence is to be gained by proper behavior and morality. The fourth article of the rule mandates that, before moving “from any place” into “some aspect of war”, the soldiers are expected to

⁹⁵ *KJBB*, 152. Translated in *CAHB*, 170. Alterations mine.

⁹⁶ *KJBB*, 152. Translated in *CAHB*, 170.

⁹⁷ *KJBB*, 152. Translated in *CAHB*, 169-70; *Listy Bratra*, 22. Italics and alterations mine. A similar sentiment is expressed in the popular Hussite song “Ye Warriors of God” which was meant to inspire the soldiers to battle but also proper behavior. It warns: “na duše pomněte, / pro lakomství a lúpeže / životův netraťte / a na kořistech se nezastavňte” (“Remember your souls / That you do not forfeit life / Trough greed or theft / Never be tempted by plunder”). Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Dějiny Husitského Zpěvu za Válek Husitských* [History of Hussite Songs in the Hussite Wars] (Prague, 1913), 911. Translated in *CAHB*, 67.

...pray to the Lord God kneeling and dropping (*kleknúc a padnúc*) before the body of the Lord and the face of God (*před tváří boží*). Whenever they leave the camp or a town, they should pray that God, the almighty Lord might give help in order that war might be waged to the praise of his holy name for the glory of this aid and for the salvation and betterment of all the faithful (*věrný*).⁹⁸

Faithfulness to these rules meant that “the Lord God shall be with us in grace and aid. It is fitting that we behave in God’s fight (*boji božímu*) in this way”. All success came from God, so God’s order was to be loved, his wrath feared, and “faith for all needs and requirements and hope in God our Lord”, “have not doubt but expect an eternal reward (*věčné odplaty*) from God.”⁹⁹

The clear message of the military rule was that God only gave victory to the righteous, and the harsh punishments for disciplinary or moral infractions were not only to ensure secular order for the future, but as a means of deflecting God’s anger for the past. Particularly revealing is the single Biblical reference in the military rule which refers to the fate of Achan, who took for himself some plunder. This caused terrible defeat for Joshua’s army, as the Lord told him: “Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant ... That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.” (Joshua 7: 11-12). When Achan admits his sin to Joshua, the latter replies ““Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today.’ Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them ... Then the Lord turned from his fierce anger.” (Joshua 7:25-6).

⁹⁸ *KJBB*, 151. Translated in *CAHB*, 169. Alterations mine.

⁹⁹ *KJBB*, 153. Translated in *CAHB*, 170.

For Žižka, therefore, capital punishment was not simply a secular tool to maintain discipline, but a spiritual tool to maintain God's favor.¹⁰⁰ Just as the Israelites, the Hussites would not be able to stand against their enemies without the aid of God. Thus, the strict punishment of the sinful fit into the more general strategy of sanctified violence which sought to purge improper behavior not only from those perceived enemies of the Hussite movement – radical sectarians and Catholics – but also from within the ranks of the movement itself. Soldiers who offended God were just as dangerous as heretics, and should be punished as such, since both put in jeopardy God's favor and thus the outcome of the war itself.

\

¹⁰⁰ The religious importance of the military rule is a point which is often ignored in Hussite historiography. Thus Josef Pekař long ago stressed that the document “is concerned only with obedience and order in the camp and in the field, and about the division of booty”, and recently Jiří Kejř agreed, stating that the discipline and strict punishment mandated by the military rule had the “security of the army [as] the overriding objective”. See Jiří Kejř, “The Death Penalty during the Bohemian Wars of Religion,” *BRRP* vol. 6 (Prague: Main Library, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2007): 153, n. 53; Thomas A. Fudge has recently acknowledged some religious significance to the document, but still does not tie it to a broader attempt to win the favor of God. See his “Crime, Punishment, and Pacifism in the Thought of Bishop Mikuláš of Pelhřimov, 1420-1452,” *BRRP* 3 (2000): 78-9.

1.4 Hussite Identity during the Defensive War

We have observed the use of Biblical citations serving a predominantly restrictive function in qualifying the legitimacy of violence to a moralized and defensive type of warfare. As we have seen, the Prague masters relied on the New Testament to qualify and dispute the use of Old Testament books like Maccabees by radical priests, and Žižka rarely used Biblical references at all, and then also in a restrictive manner. The care taken by the University masters to avoid those specific Biblical references which legitimized more radical violence meant that the dominant themes in the defensive military discourse would emphasize Czech-nationhood and its special relationship to God, as well as historic, religious, legal, and social continuity, all of which were related to Žižka's "moral warfare" as discussed above.

Some early patriotic element may be already observable in Čenek's earlier formulation of the fourth article in a manifesto from Prague to the Bohemian kingdom in early April of 1420, just weeks after Sigismund's announcement of the first crusade. As much as a religious struggle, defense against the crusade is posed as a national struggle of the "golden and most Christian kingdom" (*zlaté a naizkřest'anilejšie králowstwie*) of Bohemia with "our natural enemies, the Germans" (*nepřátely nasse přirozené, Niemce*) who "are always antagonistic to our language especially on the Rhine, in Meißen and in Prussia, from where we have been expelled. They wish for us to settle in exile (*miesta wyhnanców*)". The church, that "most cruel snake has given birth to a malignant offspring, born of an evil report" in the form of a crusade, raising "the cruel cross ... with bloody hands" and announced "through corrupted mouth and

venomous lips” in order to take “the truth of God ... away from us like the godless”. This has made the unthinkable necessary:

Being full of tolerance and God’s goodness (*dobrotý boží*), we cannot even prepare for war, for weapons, against that which we honour and will always honour ... [but] we appeal to your wisdom and consistent defense of our language, with love and justice that you might be prepared to stand up to resist all of our enemies ...

Moreover, the ensuing battle is not cast in Biblical, or even religious, but rather national and historic imagery, that “like brave knights (*iako stateční rytíři*), may you remember our fathers, the old Czechs, fervent lovers of their country (*otce naše Čechy staré, za swogi vlast milovníky horliwé*), and stand up willingly against this evil”. In the closing of the document St. Vaclav “our patron”, “our entire realm (*wšie vlasti naše*), and the kingdom of Bohemia” are all invoked.¹⁰¹

The narrative presented here is one of a peaceful yet brave national and linguistic community systematically forced out of distant lands by an enemy nation, which now hopes to completely exile them by means of a crusade. The conflict is primarily a territorial and linguistic one, with religion serving a secondary role. This theme of Czech innocence is an important one, as it emphasizes their victimization and their own religious and historic continuity. It gave their cause a legitimacy which as yet could not be undisputedly demonstrated as it later would be by the invincibility of the Hussite armies, and turned the Catholic accusations of “heresy” on their head. The assertion that the Czech language, which was once extant as far as the Rhine, Meißen and Prussia, was now under threat of complete exile was an appeal to a national narrative of history.

¹⁰¹ Karel Hruza, “Die hussitischen Manifeste vom April 1420,” *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 53 (1997): 162-66. Translated in *CAHB*, 58-60. Alterations mine.

In this vein, the legality, or lack thereof, of Sigismund's crusade is also highlighted. Thus, in a manifesto of the New and Old Towns of Prague, Sigismund is accused of "shedding innocent blood" (*sanguis innocens*) in "our faithful and innocent kingdom" (*fideles et innocentes regnum*), driving Bohemia's "natural enemies" (*naturaliter inimicae*) "like Gog and Magog" "against the small lamb of Joseph, completely harmless and defenseless, not knowing the art of war or warfare (*nudam penitus et sontem, bellorum et armorum prorsus nesciam*)".¹⁰² Again in the April manifesto, the crusade's departure from legal tradition is noted; contrasted with the Czechs, who are full of "God's goodness", Sigismund has launched an "unjust war" without "admonishment, trial, nor an audience (*ani napomenuwši nás, ani pohnawši, ani slyšenie žádného dawši*)", but only a "shameful denunciation (*hanebné narčení*)".¹⁰³ Two weeks later, the legalistic language is reiterated in another manifesto: the process of enacting a crusade against Bohemia was one "which is contrary both to law and the right ordering of Christendom (*proti všemu řádu a práwu křesťanskému*)".¹⁰⁴ This was not only an appeal to legal "just war" theory, but to religious morality and continuity as well.

Nor did the Hussites neglect the social continuities which they made sure to inherit from previous medieval Bohemian society. The Hussite chronicler Lawrence of Březová, a key spokesman for the Hussite centrists, lamented the fall of the "flower of Moravian chivalry" which had sided with Sigismund at the battle of Vyšehrad in 1420. The embracement of medieval social norms by the Hussites is also expressed by Lawrence's description of the eve of battle in 1421, when "following a short address by priests[,] everybody sank to the earth and

¹⁰² UB 2: 489.

¹⁰³ Hruza, 163. Translated in CAHB, 59.

¹⁰⁴ RWE, 41-2; Hruza 170.

offered up devout prayers to God; rising from prayer, they created a number of new knights, to inspire them to be bolder in defending the truth”.¹⁰⁵

As has already been noted, Prague had not originally intended to overthrow Sigismund, but on the contrary, hoped that their religious gains might be consolidated by his acquiescence. Yet perhaps the most explicit expression of the lingering desire for royal acceptance after the rejection of Sigismund, by moderate Hussites and Žižka himself, is their attempt to give the Bohemian crown to Prince Zigmunt Korybut, nephew of the Grand Duke of Lithuania. This was part of the task of the 1421 national assembly of Čáslav, which rejected Sigismund’s claim to the throne and created a provisional government until the new king would arrive. In the following year, Žižka himself addressed the kingdom, hoping others would follow his example:

we support and accept his Highness the prince as our helper and as supreme regent in this country ... We intend to gladly obey his Highness and will faithfully assist him (*chceme jeho milosti rádi poslouchati... a radni býti věrně*) We ask that all of you likewise obey him just as you have committed to do so before God (*jakož jste slíbili před Pánem Bohem*).¹⁰⁶

Korybut eventually came to Prague in 1422, accepted the Four Articles, and received utraquist communion, but his rule was fraught with difficulties: he was soon forced to return north by the Polish king Władisław. Korybut remained a devoted utraquist and subsequently returned to Bohemia in 1424, taking temporary command of the Hussite armies after Žižka’s death in that year, but was overthrown three years later after it was discovered that he plotted to return Bohemia to the Catholic fold.¹⁰⁷

The Hussite emphasis on their own continuity with the past and the good are intricately tied to Žižka’s own fairly conservative conception of human nature. As has been argued above,

¹⁰⁵ *RWE*, 44-5.

¹⁰⁶ *Listy Bratra*, 12.

¹⁰⁷ For a further discussion of Korybut’s fall, see section 2.1 below.

he saw sin all around him as well as in the enemy, and was anxious to exterminate it “first in ourselves”. Moreover, the construction of an identity of Hussite innocence and continuity was key to the discourse of moral warfare constructed by Žižka and the Prague masters. Violence corrupted innocence, and was permissible only if it was absolutely necessary and was directed by the right intent; that is, if it disturbed authoritative patterns of moral, legal, social, and historical continuity as little as possible.

1.5 Conclusion

In general, it may be said that at least in rhetoric Žižka did plan to abolish sins outside Bohemia by offensive means “in kings, princes, [and] barons”, but the fact that he never tried to do so after four years of warfare and three crusades is telling. It has been speculated by historians that a certain threshold of emotional aggravation, economic destitution, or strategic foresight had not yet been reached, though the abundant evidence of both emotional and material ravages seem to make “weighing” their influence in regards to Žižka’s military strategy a highly dubious affair. Moreover, given his recognized military prowess, it is unlikely that Žižka would have restricted himself to a domestic and defensive strategy of warfare if he sincerely believed that crossing the kingdom’s borders would reap considerable advantages to the defense of God’s law.

Such a strategy did have its supporters, and opportunities for legitimate offensive warfare had arisen. In June of 1421, for example, after the betrayal of a prominent Hussite magnate who forbade his troops from attacking a fleeing Silesian army across the Bohemian border, the Orebite priest Ambrož of Hradec became enraged and petitioned Žižka. Ambrož charged the magnate with treason, argued that capturing Silesia would eliminate the threat of northern invasions, and became the spokesman for many in Prague who agreed with him.¹⁰⁸

Žižka's unwillingness to cede to such arguments, despite his obvious disdain for the enemies abroad, reveals his ideological commitment to the decisions of the University masters

¹⁰⁸ *JŽ*, 241-2.

and the incompatibility of offensive warfare with his emphasis on restrictive violence. Heymann rightly argues that Žižka's adherence to a defensive strategy reveals that he shared the opinion of the University masters, especially Jakoubek, on the matters of the requirements for just warfare.¹⁰⁹ Žižka's strategy was easily justifiable along the lines of the masters' requirements from February of 1420, that war be for the "cause of God, that there is love for one's opponents ... that the impulse comes from God and ... that it is essential".¹¹⁰ For Žižka, defending God's truth (synonymous with *causa Dei*), which was under attack from the forces of the Antichrist, by definition fulfilled the requirements of necessity and divine motivation. Moreover, despite Žižka's documented violence against his enemies, the fact that he regularly offered the opportunity of conversion to his enemies indicates that, at least ostensibly, he tried to maintain "love for one's opponents", killing "the Turk and not the man". The fact that he saw indiscriminate violence, even against his enemies, as offensive to God is clear from his response to the Německý Brod incident and from his military rule of 1423. Žižka had led a moral crusade to gain the favor of God, but the permanent success of this crusade was only generally acknowledged after his death.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 242, n. 3.

¹¹⁰ *CAHB*, 35. See n. 56 above.

Chapter 2:
Fulfilling God's will: Prokop Holý and the Offensive Shift

In October 1424, Jan Žižka died of plague while besieging the castle of Přebyslav. The event shook the entire Hussite movement, as the man “whom no mortal hand could destroy was extinguished by the finger of God”. The memory of the invincible warrior lived on in many forms: the Orebite brotherhood, to which Žižka had grown close after his break with Tábor, “took up the name Orphans for themselves as though they had lost their father”. Aeneas Sylvius, the future Pope and proclaimed enemy of Hussitism, wrote that Žižka commanded that after death “his body be flayed, the flesh discarded for the birds and animals, and a drum be fashioned from his skin. With this drum in the lead they should go to war. The enemies would turn to flight as soon as they heard its sound.”¹¹¹ The people of Hradec Králové mandated that “Žižka be painted upon their banner, sitting on his white horse, in the armour of a knight, holding his battle club just as he looked when he was alive. Whenever [they] went into battle with this banner they were invincible”.¹¹²

Žižka's death, however, did not immediately precipitate an end to his defensive and moralistic warfare, the legacy of which remained influential even following the offensive shift. The Hussite military leadership continued to identify with the “Warriors of God”, and hoped to behave as such. One Hussite manifesto of May 1430 asserted that “if it happens that someone of our community perpetrates some injury or vice (*křivdy nebo neřesti*) we declare that it has been done against our will. Our intention is to eliminate all vices and suppress them (*všecky neřesti odstraňovat a bránit jim*)”.¹¹³ Moreover, Prokop himself addressed the evils which arose from the wars at the Council of Basil in 1433, saying “we detest the abuses committed

¹¹¹ *CAHB*, 182-3.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 190.

¹¹³ *HM*, 145-6. Translated in *CAHB*, 295. See n. 161 below for a note on language.

during the conduct of military operations, however they happen; we heartily regret them, and we shall not cease pursuing those guilty of them”.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, the discourse of Žižka’s highly moralistic and restrictive use of violence did wane after his death. The once-enthusiastic reform synods, called three times under Žižka by Táborite priests to restrain the abuses of war, became irrelevant after the last one in Klatovy in the year of Žižka’s death.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the Hussite victories over three crusades and at the battle of Ústi in 1426 worked to inflate their self-confidence to an unprecedented extent. Finally it seemed that God’s favor, which under Žižka was highly contingent and impermanent, could now be taken for granted, as had been demonstrated by one victory after another.

This animated self-confidence soon found ideological expression in the change of Hussite self-perception. It worked to raise the role of human agency to an extent which had never been possible under Žižka ; no longer were the “Warriors of God” to simply act in moral accordance with God’s will and defend it, but they were now in partnership with God and called upon to *fulfill* his will. Beginning in late-1426 Hussite armies crossed the Bohemian borders on “glorious rides” into surrounding territories, while their manifestos and speeches by their leaders expressed a re-invented identity and worked to create a narrative of the Hussite wars which legitimized the spread of God’s message and punishment by human and divine agency abroad. Such themes had long been advocated and propagated by radical priests such as Vaclav Koranda, but only after changes in military leadership and more generally in Hussite self-perception could they enter into the mainstream discourse.

¹¹⁴ *RWE*, 168.

¹¹⁵ The two previous synods were held in Písek in 1422 and Tábor in 1424. “Appendix II” in *HHR*, 500.

2.1 The Rise of Prokop Holý and the beginning of the Offensive Shift

The vacuum of authority left by Žižka's death in 1424 was filled by several commanders before the ascendancy of Prokop Holý in 1426. First, it was King Zigmunt Korybut who assumed command, but this would not last; the Táborites made two more transitions in command before Prokop finally assumed effective control. In 1427 the Orebite priest Prokůpek assumed command of the Orebite (or "Orphan") forces, and this organization would remain effective until the death of both men at the battle of Lipany in 1434. Still, it took three years after Žižka's death for the defensive warfare favored by himself and the University masters to be superseded by the offensive warfare which was fought by Prokop Holý and his captains. The shift was a gradual one, and was accompanied by both changes in political affairs and the ideational discourse of the war and the Hussites themselves.

Prokop himself is a man who has not received due attention in Hussite historiography.¹¹⁶ He was born in the 1370s and it is known that he travelled widely outside Bohemia in his youth before he took holy orders and spent some time in a Bohemian Minorite house. As a recent Táborite brother in 1423, he worked to bridge the divide among Hussite parties in the debate regarding the matter of canonical vestments,¹¹⁷ but the moderate Lawrence of Březová wrote of him that he was "under suspicion of the Pikart heresy" in his early career.¹¹⁸ One of Žižka's modern biographers has contrasted him with Prokop by noting that the latter was at least twenty years Žižka's junior, was better educated as a priest and a townsman, was the first among the Táborite clergy who made use of their sanction of marriage,

¹¹⁶ Though he has received considerable attention in the form of short articles or chapters, to date he is the subject of only one monograph known to me, Josef Macek's *Prokop Veliký* [Prokop the Great] (Prague: Naše Vojsko, 1953). Though well-researched, it is in many respects in need of revision.

¹¹⁷ *HR*, 2.

¹¹⁸ *Husitská Kronika*, 243.

and generally “had still an open mind on issues on which Žižka’s judgment had become final and rigid”.¹¹⁹

Prokop most notably gained authority in the Hussite military leadership after his role as captain of the Táborite forces in the battle of Ústí in north Bohemia. This city, along with several others, had been pledged by Sigismund to Frederick of Wettin, the elector of Saxony, but in 1426 a strong Hussite army led by Korybut attempted to recapture it. Though the battle of Ústí was not technically a part of the anti-Hussite crusades, it was clearly more than a simple territorial conflict; within the context of the recent religious violence its importance was elevated and it became the bloodiest battle between Czechs and Germans to date.¹²⁰

After the Hussite victory, Prokop urged the commanders to follow the enemy into Saxony to reduce its future military capability;¹²¹ the fact that he failed to convince them partially reveals the extent to which Žižka’s legacy of defensive warfare still controlled the military strategy of the captains, but also the lack of central authority in the hands of Prokop himself. Nevertheless, this would soon change; in April 1427 Korybut was overthrown and many of his followers – including the influential University master Jan Příbram – were exiled after a secret plot was uncovered by which the king had hoped to return Bohemia to the Catholic fold. This has often been explained in historiography as the catalyst for the subsequent strategy of offensive warfare, as the expulsion of the divisive conservatives in Prague stabilized the relations between the Prague moderates under Jan Rokycana and the military brotherhoods of Tábor and Oreb,¹²² who had long been at odds with Příbram. As one historian has explained,

¹¹⁹ *JŽ*, 458.

¹²⁰ Both Heymann and Fudge are skeptical about the contemporary German chroniclers who cite their losses from 10,000 to 15,000, but the crushing nature of the defeat at Ústí remains. See Heymann, “The Crusades”, 612, and *CAHB*, 200-01.

¹²¹ Heymann, “The Crusades”, 612.

¹²² *HR*, 27.

this had a “liberating effect upon the whole foreign and military policy of the standard-bearers of the revolution”, who could now freely abandon the purely defensive strategy of the University masters.¹²³

Yet there are several reasons why the fall of Korybut only partially explains the change in military strategy. Firstly, the offensive shift preceded Korybut’s arrest by half a year. In the winter of 1426-27, the Hussites participated in several invasions into Silesia and Austria, and in March 1427 Prokop himself scored a victory over an Austrian army at Zwettl.¹²⁴ Secondly, it is inaccurate to characterize the defensive military strategy as dictated by the conservative University masters. As has been discussed above it was not only the masters who had maintained the defensive strategy, but also the military leadership and Žižka himself. Also, it is clear by the participation of Prague and many of its moderate Hussite allies in future expeditions abroad that even University masters who supported Žižka’s defensiveness could be convinced to support Prokop’s offensiveness.

As has already been noted, this military shift is typically explained by a variety of material, ideological, political, and military-strategic factors. Some have even suggested that “there was essentially no difference in the political conceptions of Prokop and Žižka”, but that the former enjoyed a stronger and better-organized military and so simply enacted the offensive policy which Žižka could not yet achieve.¹²⁵ Needless to say, all of these played important roles in the decision to alter the military strategy; the fall of Korybut did eliminate a significant faction of conservative Hussites who preferred reconciliation with Rome, elevated Prokop’s position in the military hierarchy, and harmonized the relations of Prague with the more radical

¹²³ Heymann, “The Crusades”, 619.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 612.

¹²⁵ Macek, *Prokop*, 37, 65.

brotherhoods, all of which allowed a less-restrictive foreign policy; the lure of foreign booty was surely tempting at a time of material devastation, and the destruction of key enemy rallying-points abroad offered an alleviation of future attacks; the spread of propaganda and the Hussite faith, and the possibility of fostering relations with potential allies abroad were also crucial to the strategic shift.

The question which all these explanations ignore, however, is why the shift happened when it did, and not under Žižka. Above we have argued that Žižka, as much as the Prague masters, was concerned with leading a righteous and highly moralistic war which would gain the Hussites the favor of God. By the time of Prokop's ascendance to military command, the favor of God had already been proven by the victory over three crusades and, perhaps most impressive, by the immense victory won at Ústi, in which he played an important role. Below it will be argued that this Hussite invincibility (Žižka had never lost a single battle) not only convinced Prokop and his commanders of their divine election, but also lent confidence to the role of human agency in the discourse of the future Hussite wars. The restrictive and moralistic warfare fought by Žižka had achieved its goal: God was clearly on the side of the Hussites, a fact proved time and again over the years. This confidence, combined with the prior radical leanings of several of Prokop's commanders, meant that the meaning of the war was re-evaluated, and the spread of the faith – which had been a distant desire even for Žižka – was now finally attainable.

2.2
Vaclav Koranda the “Fighting-Priest”:
The continuity of early Radicalism

It should be noted that the elevation of human agency to a role which shared responsibility with God for the fulfillment of his will, a phenomenon which was crucial for the enactment and the legitimization of the offensive military shift under Prokop, was not entirely new. As we have observed, a similar conviction motivated the chiliastic violence of the Adamites, who were sent by God “to execute all the plagues of the time of vengeance”. In less extreme but more influential cases, certain individuals illustrated a continuity between the sectarian radicalism of the early 1420s and the offensive shift under Prokop. Perhaps the best such example is that of Vaclav Koranda, who had not only been an apocalyptic radical priest who periodically expressed the function of human agency in vanquishing the enemy, but under Prokop enjoyed the position of military commander and also fulfilled the role of co-author of some Hussite manifestos.

We have already encountered Vaclav Koranda in 1419. Here he maintained the urgency of physical warfare and used scripture not as a prohibitive reference to violence, as the Prague masters would, but as a permissive and even an instigative one. In the manifesto of the Bzí Hora congregation in September, he cites Mattathias from 1 Maccabees 2: 50, “But now my sons, be zealous for the law and give you lives (*dajte žiwoty waše*) for the covenant made by your fathers”, and continues with an apocalyptic immanence from verses 62-4, “Do not fear the threats of the wicked. Today he may be exalted, but tomorrow there may be no trace of him because he will have returned to the dust”. He closes by inviting the congregation to meet again “At the Crosses” (*Na Křížkách*) to unite the realm “in order to defend the freedom of the law of

God”, and that the “blatant abuses, scandals and conflicts (*úrazowé a pohoršenie zjewná a rozdielowé*)” be “abolished and punished (*staweni a kaženi*)”.¹²⁶

This rhetoric has been characterized as “apocalyptic but not yet chiliastic”.¹²⁷ This is confirmed by much of what we learn about Koranda from Příbram in his “Life of Táborite priests” (*Život kněží táborských*). While still in Plzeň, he assured his followers that “one day we will get up and find all the others lying dead, with their noses sticking up in the air, and on that day there will be more houses in Plzeň than evil people still alive”,¹²⁸ and that “after all of these sufferings” (*po těchto ranách*), “those of God’s elect (*těm voleným božím*) who remain... will not have need for any written books because they will all be taught by God (*učeni od Boha*)”.¹²⁹

At Bzí Hora and elsewhere, however, Koranda abandoned the pacifist apocalypticism and clearly saw human agency as crucial for the protection and fulfillment of God’s will. Shortly after the Bzí Hora meeting, aware of the advance of Sigismund’s men into Bohemia, he commanded pilgrims on their way to Prague to arm themselves: “Brothers! The vineyard of the Lord is flourishing in a wonderful way but goats are coming now who wish to eat the grapes. The time has come when wandering around with the staff is over. Now we march with swords in hand (*nechodtež s holmi, al s branj*).”¹³⁰ Moreover, his direct involvement in acts of violence also offers some insight into his aggressive ideas of human agency. In an incident in 1420, when he and other Hussite prisoners escaped from imprisonment after being captured by the crusaders, Koranda killed a man, perhaps in self-defense. Though he seems to have taken the

¹²⁶ *AČ* 3: 206. Translated in *CAHB*, 25-6.

¹²⁷ *HHR*, 300.

¹²⁸ *KJBB*, 266. Translated in *HHR*, 330. Alterations mine.

¹²⁹ *KJBB*, 275. Translations mine.

¹³⁰ *SRB* 3: 30. Translated in *CAHB*, 29.

matter seriously,¹³¹ Koranda had no compunction about permitting the drowning of Hermann – the Catholic bishop of Nikopolis whom the Hussites had previously forced to ordain their priests – though the latter begged and promised to convert.¹³² Moreover on August 10, Koranda led the siege of Zbraslav, a monastery which was the burial place of kings. The men under his command raided the monastery’s wine cellar, got drunk, disinterred the body of the late King Vaclav IV, and propped him up with a straw crown to drink with them. The embarrassing episode ended with the destruction of the buildings and the abandonment of the king’s corpse among the ruins.¹³³ Also revealing is Koranda’s friendship with Martin Húska, leader of the radical Pikart sect at Tábor, who was burned as a heretic in August 1421 upon Žižka’s orders. According to Příbram, Koranda was highly sympathetic to Pikart teachings, and after Húska’s execution carried with him a list of the latter’s articles which he showed “to the misguided and unfaithful” (*bludným a nevěrným*), saying “Behold, it is for this that the brave Martin [Húska] died”.¹³⁴ The chronicler Lawrence of Březová also corroborated the connection between the two.¹³⁵

Koranda’s often uncouth radicalism and his friendship with Húska contributed to the growing divide between Žižka and the priests of Tábor. Žižka’s effort to minimize the role of priests in lay affairs was general, but his attitude toward Koranda was more personal: “For this reason [affection towards “Pikards and heretics” (*Pikardy a kacieře*)] brother Žižka hated some of the Táborite priests, and especially Koranda (*a zvláště Korandy*)”, and the feeling was

¹³¹ The chronicler notes: “Thinking he may have killed someone, he did not permit himself to officiate at mass, but preached only.” *CAHB*, 97.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 96-7.

¹³³ František Svejkský, ed., *Staročeské vojenské řády* [Old Czech military ordinances] (Prague: Orbis, 1952), 31. The “Very Pretty Chronicle of Jan Žižka” incorrectly attributes command of the troops to Žižka himself. See *CAHB*, 187 n. 25, and *JŽ*, 168, n. 11. The episode is also treated by Lawrence of Březová, see *Husitská Kronika*, 103-4.

¹³⁴ *KJBB*, 294. Translations mine.

¹³⁵ *Husitská Kronika*, 123-4.

mutual: “And for that reason Koranda shunned (*vystřiehal*) him for two years”,¹³⁶ and he even openly condemned Žižka for the executions of Húska and his adherents.¹³⁷

Yet that same radicalism which created such enmity with Žižka was not unappealing for Prokop. Though it is speculation to ascribe to Koranda a direct influence in Prokop’s offensive military strategy, he would play the role of military captain and also co-authored Hussite manifestos. He certainly was not a restrictive force when it came to violence; indeed, it seems likely that Koranda’s long history of reformist zeal and his military experience made him a “fighting priest”¹³⁸ which Prokop, himself a priest, could appreciate the spiritual and military significance of.

¹³⁶ *KJBB*, 294. Translations mine.

¹³⁷ *HR*, 2.

¹³⁸ So characterized by Heymann, see *JŽ*, 355.

2.3
“Our priests have drawn their swords”:
Communicating the Hussite mission at Bratislava, 1429

The most important early expression of the fully-fledged self-confidence of the Hussite leadership, aside from the “glorious rides” themselves, was at the diplomatic summit of Bratislava in April, 1429. It was not the first attempt at face-to-face diplomacy; after leading a failed crusade against them in 1427, the English Cardinal Henry Beaufort agreed to a disputation with Hussite theologians at Žebrák, whose spokesmen included Peter Payne. Pope Martin V’s opposition to the conference, and its ultimate failure, did not dash the hopes of peaceful debate; in the following year, a Hussite nobleman made contact with Sigismund and convinced him to agree to the Bratislava summit.¹³⁹

It is not important to re-create the detailed layers of the summit’s complexity here, as it is available elsewhere and is not all pertinent to our discussion.¹⁴⁰ In brief, the Hussites, represented by Prokop and Payne, demanded an opportunity to defend the Four Articles before a lay public, where Scripture and the early Church doctors would have supreme authority; Sigismund wanted the Hussites to agree to an *a priori* acceptance of the findings of the next Church Council, which was to be held in Basil within two years time; and the royalist Czechs, led by Ulrich of Rožmberk, sought a truce with the Hussites until the Basil Council, hoping to cease the constant attacks on their Bohemian estates. The summit ended in a deadlock: the Catholic theologians insisted that only an ecclesiastical, not a public, forum was appropriate for such a debate, and rejected the supremacy of Scripture over dogma; for their part, the Hussites

¹³⁹ William R. Cook, “Negotiations between the Hussites, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the Roman Church, 1427-36,” *East Central Europe* 5, Pt. 1 (1978): 92-3.

¹⁴⁰ The Bratislava summit has been given attention by several scholars, perhaps most closely by František M. Bartoš. See his “Z bratislavské schůzky krále Zikmunda s husitskými vůdci r. 1429,” [From the Bratislava meeting of King Sigismund with the Hussite leaders in 1429] *Časopis Matice Moravské* 49 (1925): 171-95, and more recently in *HR*, 41-3.

rejected any *a priori* acceptance of the likely detrimental findings of the Basil Council, and insisted on consulting with the Bohemian diet before any truce could be arranged.¹⁴¹

Some measure of the Hussite self-confidence and righteousness comes through in the record of one of Sigismund's secretaries. The secretary records that Sigismund spoke, requesting "that they [the Hussites] should follow up the peace and consent to it until the next council", that Crown and Church properties be returned, and that "[n]o one was to be forced into another faith for the time being but must be tolerated". In response, "The Hussites answered that they wished to have peace with no one except those who were of like faith since they had the true faith (*den rechten gelauben*). They would answer to God with their conscience if they did nothing against such impious matters (*vngelaubigen sachen*)."¹⁴² If we compare this response to Žižka's plan of 1423, which maintained "that we suppress, put and end to, and exterminate all sins, both mortal and venial, first in ourselves (*napřed ... v sobě*), *after this* in kings, princes, barons ... and all other people",¹⁴³ the difference is clear; for Žižka, a year before his death, the extermination of sins beyond the kingdom of Bohemia and Moravia was still a task for the indeterminate future. Yet for the Hussite delegation at Bratislava, it was indisputably a task not only for the present, but one which they themselves must undertake, answering directly to God if they "did nothing against such impious matters".

The grand international designs of the confident Hussite delegation continued and became even more pronounced. It is worth quoting at length another part of their answer to the invitation to Basil:

They [the Hussites] replied that they would be glad to be heard before the council. When all ecclesiastical and secular princes and all other people were reformed

¹⁴¹ *HR*, 42.

¹⁴² *UB* 2: 24. Translated in *CAHB*, 257-8.

¹⁴³ *KJBB*, 149. Translated in *CAHB*, 168. Alterations and italics mine.

(*gereformiret*), they will also be reformed. In the meantime they will remain in their faith. They can do this only for a short time since there is no one who can rest *until the whole world* is reformed (*bis all dy werlt gereformiret werde*).¹⁴⁴

Moreover, the militant medium of carrying out such reform was not to be lost on the audience: “Our priests lead in this matter [i.e. the decision to fight the impious] and have already drawn their swords in defense of the faith and they will not put them back *until all have been brought to the faith* (*bis daz sye yedenman vnder Iren gelauben pringen*)”. The scribe records this statement twice in the short record with very slight variation in wording to note the emphasis placed on it by the Hussite delegates.¹⁴⁵ Again, the immediacy of, and personal identification with, the task of international reform by peaceful debate but also by violent means must be distinguished from the measured self-reform emphasized by Žižka.

¹⁴⁴ UB 2: 24. Translated in *CAHB*, 257. Italics mine.

¹⁴⁵ UB 2: 25. Translated in *CAHB*, 258. Italics mine.

2.3.1

“Truth prevails over all”:

Hussite confidence and Identity in Peter Payne’s speech

The chief speaker and undisputedly the star of the Bratislava summit was Peter Payne, who gave a thundering speech which enraged Sigismund. The theme of his speech was the Hussite motto “Truth prevails over all” (1 Esdras 3:12), and it most clearly demonstrates the profound self-confidence of the Hussites, of their elect status with God, and of their assured victory. He begins by identifying Christ himself as a Hussite warrior: “Our Lord Jesus Christ is a most invincible soldier and Prague warrior (*invictissimo milite et bellatore Pragensi*)”. He continues with Scriptural citations meant to expound his theme, including 1 Maccabees 3:19: “It is not on the size of the army that victory in battle depends, but strength comes from Heaven”,¹⁴⁶ and then proceeds to frame the Hussite wars within an Old Testament context. That same divine and invincible truth – “*triumphatrix serenissima*” – which had aided Jonathan against the Philistines (1 Sam. 14: 13-16), Gideon against the Midianites (Judges 7: 21-4), David against Goliath (1 Sam. 17), and Judith against Holofernes, was now on the side of the Hussites, and their full international scope is aided by it: “*victrix felicissima in eiusque beatis apostolis contra universum mundum pugnacissima*”.¹⁴⁷

The election of the Hussites by God, under Žižka still contingent on moral behavior and proper restrictions on violence, was now easily taken for granted. Payne directly addressed Sigismund as “O king of Israel”, asking “have you not been astounded that your armies, ten times more numerous and much better equipped have been on numerous occasions overcome, thrashed, and put to flight by a bunch of peasants (*a pauco percussore rustico*)?”, and further

¹⁴⁶ “Řeč husitského mluvčího v Bratislavě” in Bartoš, “Z bratislavské schůzky”, 179. Translated in *CAHB*, 259.

¹⁴⁷ “Řeč husitského mluvčího”, 179-85.

noted, referring to the emperor's victories over the Turks: "For behold, when you were with God, you triumphed over pagans, but when God leaves you (*sed cum deum relinquisti*), you are defeated by villagers (*a villanis*). An unheard of miracle, o king".¹⁴⁸ And further still: "I declare to you that one single spark of truth for which we fight you, is more powerful than all kings, princes, popes, legates and masters".¹⁴⁹ Speaking of the building self-assuredness of the Hussite discourse, one historian has argued that "[j]ust as the success of the First Crusade in capturing Jerusalem in 1099 confirmed the crusading message, so the series of Hussite victories confirmed their religious war: this was their *Deus vult*".¹⁵⁰

It is of no small significance that the pre-Davidic Old Testament books form such an important core of Payne's speech and of the later manifestos sent throughout Bohemia and Christendom. Since the fall of King Korybut two years earlier, most had given up on the possibility of a Hussite king; the new political and military leadership would not be held by kings and nobles, and would not be made up of the army of saints as Žižka and his supporters would have wanted, but rather would be made up of charismatic priest-warriors like Prokop, Koranda, and the Orphan priest Prokůpek. As one historian has noted, "the Hussites are the new Israelites, their champions the new Gideons".¹⁵¹ Thus, figures like Gideon and Joshua are important Biblical parallels, not kings but charismatic military leaders who slay the enemies of Israel. Payne makes this explicit when he explains "I am not like Jether, the eldest of Gideon, who did not yet have the strength of a man, not daring to unsheathe the sword against Zebah

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 187. Translated in *CAHB*, 260-1 and *RWE*, 51, respectively.

¹⁴⁹ *HR*, 42.

¹⁵⁰ *RWE*, 51.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 52-3.

and Zalmunna, but [rather] like Jonathan, who in the faith and virtue of God earned legions *to invade and to fill acres and fields only with dead enemies*".¹⁵²

Thus, not only is Payne's speech important to understanding the profound self-confidence of the Hussite soldiers, but also to understanding the group self-perception which is linked to the offensive shift. Here, self-identification with Jonathan is relevant as a pre-Davidic parallel, still before the permanent kingship and unification is established, but while enemies were still surrounding Israel; how Payne could find parallels with Hussite Bohemia need not be dwelled upon. Moreover though, "manly strength" (*robur hominis*) depended on the willingness to slay one's enemy, but it was man's cooperation with God which gave power, not just to defend but to invade (*invadere*) and exterminate the enemy abroad. This orientation of the contemporary Hussite conflict within specific Old Testament frames of reference not only explained the past – the Hussite victories – but, strengthened by Biblical parallels, it also mandated the future responsibility of the Hussites: attack.

¹⁵² "...ne sim velud Geter, Gedeonis primogenitus, qui nondum existens circa robur hominis, non audebat gladium eximere in Zebee et Salmana [Judges 8: 20-1], sed velud Jonatas, qui in fide et virtute dei meruit legiones invadere et solus cum altero replere mortuis iugera atque campos." "Řeč husitského mluvčího", 179-80. Translations mine.

2.4 Spreading Faith and Vengeance in the “Glorious Campaign”

The intense self-confidence gained from the virtual invincibility of an out-numbered field army of mostly peasant soldiers carrying little more than flails and pikes cannot be overestimated. Obviously, the military leadership, mostly priests, took this as a sign of divine election and it fed a growing sense of value attributed to the human partnership with God in fulfilling his plan and spreading the faith. Soon after the Bratislava summit, this sentiment found its greatest expression in what has been called the “Glorious Campaign”, a united expedition of all Hussite forces, including the Táborite and Orebite brotherhoods, the Bohemian and Moravian nobles, and the armies of Prague and its allies. In late September and October of 1429 smaller campaigns were led into Lower Lusatia and Silesia by the brotherhoods, but the main target would be Saxony, and in mid-December all Hussite forces united under the explicit slogan “retaliation for 1426”, or the events at Ústi.¹⁵³ Mostly unimpeded, their forces reached Franconia within a month, and by 11 February the elector Frederick of Hohenzollern and his allies were forced to sign a peace treaty at Beheimstein castle.

Understandably, many of the local German chroniclers were cynical about the motivations of the Hussite armies, often emphasizing economic and material concerns. After documenting the destruction that the armies left in their wake in Meißen and “almost the entire land beyond the Elbe River”, one chronicler concludes that the Hussites “were able to obtain free passage as they willed through all the land of Meißen and Thuringia. They came without hindrance as far as Bamberg and from there they returned to Bohemia with a very great plunder

¹⁵³ *HR*, 49-51.

(*cum preda maxima*)”.¹⁵⁴ Another notes that economic motivations trumped that of glory. After receiving a ransom of “several thousand gulden”, they returned to Bohemia: “Had their intention been simply to obtain glory, in the manner of their predecessors, they could have marched all the way to the Rhine and utterly conquered numerous nations. But having accomplished their purpose, they returned to Bohemia”. Even here, though, the motivation of revenge is not lost on the chroniclers, though ascribed to a curious grudge, perhaps confusing the more distant and more recent past: “In ... 1430 ... many Czechs and Moravians gathered together in great force and marched as warriors toward Meißen to avenge the dear ones murdered by the Misnians during the reign of King Václav in the forest before Prague”.¹⁵⁵

Yet the motivations which appear as primary based on a closer look at events and the Hussite sources are clearly not only vengeance, but also the spreading of the faith. Shortly before the peace at Beheimstein in February, the towns of Bamberg, Scheßlitz, and Hollfeld offered a ransom to the Hussite armies in an effort to avert their path of devastation. In his response, Prokop offered to waive the ransom completely if the towns would agree to

return to the truth of the gospel (*veritates evangelicas*). For these truths they [the Hussite armies] have been leading a daily struggle up until the present time (*pugnam cottidianam hucusque deducunt*). If you agree to this, then the plunders will cease immediately and they will under no circumstances extort money from you. They would rather defend you from those who would assault you than plunder you in the manner of war (*magis vellent vos contra impugnantes defendere quam modis bellicosis devastare*).¹⁵⁶

A similar clause with the hope of spreading the faith was held to be the chief victory of the entire Glorious Campaign.¹⁵⁷ With the rapid advances of the Hussite armies threatening

¹⁵⁴ SRP 3: 492. Translated in CAHB, 281.

¹⁵⁵ CAHB, 279-81.

¹⁵⁶ František M. Bartoš, "Nový list Prokopa Holého," *Jihočeský Sborník Historický* VII (1934): 10. Translated in CAHB, 282.

¹⁵⁷ HR, 55.

Nuremberg and many other Hohenzollern lands, Frederick gained a temporary peace by agreeing to hold a public dispute of the Four Articles in Nuremberg in late April. Also in the Beheimstein agreement, the Hussites were again prepared to waive the ransom of the towns they had conquered if they agreed to adopt the Hussite faith. Finally, it seemed that the repeated demands of the Hussites made over years of warfare, most recently at Bratislava, would be met, and the armies were joyfully received upon their return to Prague on 21 February.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 52-4.

2.5
“Working in the field in the name of the Lord”:
Hussite Manifestos and “Glorious Rides”

By May 1430 it had become clear that the promised Nuremberg disputes were not to be. Despite Frederick's efforts to make good on his word, the opposition of Sigismund and the Church to the public disputes with the Hussites made them untenable.¹⁵⁹ To some extent this failure hurt Prokop's personal prestige and deprived the Hussites of what has been considered by historians as the principal gain of the Glorious Campaign.¹⁶⁰ Consequently and almost simultaneously, the Hussite parties wrote and distributed several new manifestos which are perhaps the most powerful of their written expressions of offensive, even aggressive, intent.

The first of these manifestos, co-authored by five of the Tábor captains including Vaclav Koranda and Prokop Holý, continued the self-confident sentiment of Payne's speech at Bratislava. It was probably originally written in German¹⁶¹ and was addressed to the “venerable and worthy lords, together with the whole community, both rich and poor” of the Empire. In addition to the Four Prague Articles, it expounds sixteen points of contention with the Roman Church, which focus on clerical hypocrisy and selfishness in performing their duties. It concludes with a warning concerning the upcoming Council at Basil, that it will not be a “holy gathering” (*congregacio sancta*) but rather a “satanic and devilish one” (*sathane et diaboli*) like

¹⁵⁹ Cook, “Negotiations”, 94 n. 15;

¹⁶⁰ *HR*, 54-5; Jaroslav Prokeš, “Táborské manifesty z r. 1430 a 1431. Příspěvek k politice Prokopa Velikého,” [Táborite manifestos from the years 1430 and 1431. A contribution to the politics of Prokop the Great], *Časopis Matice Moravské* 52 (1928): 18; Rudolf Urbánek, *Lipany a Konec Polních Vojsk* [Lipany and the End of the Field Armies] (Prague: Melantrich A. S., 1934), 105.

¹⁶¹ There exist one German and two Latin copies of this document, each a variance on the others. For details on the sources, see *HM*, 259. I use the English translation from *CAHB*, 285-94, and the Czech translation from *HM*, 156-70, which utilize two of the extant versions (one German, one Latin) in *Neun Texte*, 12-23 and 1-11 respectively.

Constance, where the clergy will intend only to “hide and cover up their secret blasphemy and error” (*occulta blasphemias et heresim* [sic]).¹⁶²

The manifesto’s significance for our purposes is both the self-confidence it portrays, and the inclusive language used, confident in the ability to spread the Hussite message abroad. Just after the failure of the Nuremberg debates, we still find here the hope for one in the future:

if the pope and the entire clergy have truth, there is no doubt they will be superior to us and will defeat us with the word of God. However, if they are on the side of lies, it will be impossible to prove their conviction and intention. For this reason, beloved and sincere people and lords, ... we exhort you ... to come to a written agreement ... for a day of negotiation ... [where your bishops and our scholars] will do battle using the word of God[.] ... [If] your doctors and bishops are the ones defeated ..., then in that case you will repent and unite with us and remain with us.

Yet, if debate is rejected and only new wars are launched,

then we wish to protect and defend the truth with the help of God until death. We do not fear the threats or excommunications of the pope, his cardinals and bishops. We know well that the pope is not God no matter how much he behaves as though he were ... God has not failed to help us. May all thanks be given to God’s grace.¹⁶³

More than ever before and starting with Bratislava, the Hussites were so confident in their military ability that they insisted on disputations, believing they could win the peace on their own terms. “God has not failed to help us”, and it could safely be assumed that he would not, meaning that “threats or excommunications” could hold for them no fear. This was a novelty; attempts at negotiations had never gone far under Žižka, who had believed that God’s help could not be taken for granted and had to be constantly earned.

Though the self-confident tone ran through all the May manifestos, the inviting and inclusive language did not. In another manifesto, written on 25 May probably in German,¹⁶⁴ the

¹⁶² *Neun Texte*, 11. Translated in *CAHB*, 285, 294.

¹⁶³ *CAHB*, 287-8.

¹⁶⁴ Translated into Czech in *HM*, 128-46. As I was unable to obtain access to the 1524 German reproduction of the original, all quotations are my own translations from the Czech, unless otherwise noted.

Roman clergy are no longer rational enemies capable of seeing their errors, but rather a global infectious heresy. Explaining the sinfulness of the priests, Jeremiah's prophecy is cited: "both a prophet and a priest are polluted, and I have found their dishonesty in my house, says the Lord" (23:11),¹⁶⁵ and Jerome's interpretation, that "one sinner defiles all people, just as a mangy sheep infects the entire herd".¹⁶⁶ This is connected to the failure of the crusades: "kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the regions of the world have not believed that the enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem on account of the sins of the prophets and the iniquity of the priests" (Lamentations 4: 12-13). Moreover, divine punishment is promised: "Therefore the Lord is telling the prophets, look, I will feed them wormwood and make them drink gall, because the pollution comes from Jerusalem into the whole earth" (Jeremiah 23:15).¹⁶⁷

One novelty observed here, but also elsewhere in this series of manifestos, which were heavily influenced by the priestly leadership, is the effort which has gone into citing Biblical, and specifically Old Testament, parallels and likenesses to the Hussite struggle, and the departure this takes from the previous discourse of defensive resistance. We have already noted the virtual lack of Biblical attention in Žižka's own literature, and its highly restrictive nature in that of the Prague masters; the terms of self-reference are typically "the faithful" (*věrný*) or "good Christians" (*dobří křesťané*), and when parallels are used they are typically historical or national, like "our fathers the old Czechs (*Čechy stare*), fervent lovers of their country".

Now, however, the terms of self-reference are explicitly Old Testament, referencing an inspired mission to spread the faith which also guarantees the Hussites' own salvation. This is expressed in their use of Ezekiel 3:17-18, where the Lord says "I have appointed you a

¹⁶⁵ CAHB, 294-5.

¹⁶⁶ HM, 140. Translations mine.

¹⁶⁷ CAHB, 294-5. Alterations mine.

watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, warn them from me. When I say to the godless, ‘You, the godless, will surely die,’ and you do not speak out to redirect him from his wicked way, that godless man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will find on your hand.”¹⁶⁸ Implied here is also the next passage: “Yet if you have warned the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself”. Moreover, “the true Apostle” is quoted, with Gregory the Great's commentary following: “‘Clean are my hands from all of your blood, because I did not in the slightest miss any opportunity to herald to you the entire will of God’. His hands would not have been clean of their blood”, Gregory explains, “if he had not wished to herald the will of God to them. A shepherd, who is reluctant to censure transgressors, clearly kills with his silence”.¹⁶⁹ The manifesto's authors emphasize in their own words that “[by] fulfilling this preaching mission, which is clearly according to Christ's teaching, people were lead to repentance”.¹⁷⁰

The eschatological implications of the Hussite mission, both in success and failure, were also not to be lost on the manifesto's audience. The Lord was sending a message “through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people” (2 Chronicles 36: 15) but, as the authors cited, “they mocked God's messengers and despised their words, until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy” (16). This was a warning, as those places that did not heed their message were damned: “Truly I tell you, it will be more

¹⁶⁸ *HM*, 135.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 136. Translations mine.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 138. Translations mine.

bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town” (Matthew 10: 14-15).¹⁷¹

At this point, the discourse again shifts its focus on divine punishment in the end of days to the aggressive role of human punishment in the present. Thus Jeremiah 6:10-11 “Lo, they joke about the words of the Lord and have no affection for them. For this reason I am full of the Lord's anger and am sorely *getting even with them*”, Job 36:12 “But if they do not listen, they will perish *by the sword* and die in tribulation”, and Numbers 25:4, where the Lord orders “Take all the princes of the people and hang them on the gallows against the sun, that my rage may be turned away from Israel”. “And thus”, the authors summarize, “are all kings, judges or priests who allowed evil and did not guard against it according to their ability, forever punished in Holy Scripture”.¹⁷²

Several points are worth emphasizing from this brief overview, some of which will be recurring themes in the other manifestos as well. Firstly is that of human agency and responsibility, both in attaining salvation and in punishing sins. Divine punishment is an ever-present theme throughout the Hussite discourse, but now we see it accompanied by, and even enacted through, human action. Not only were the Hussites “watchmen” and “messengers” spreading God's word, but they also became vengeful expressions of his anger when that word was not heeded. No longer is exclusive adherence to Žižka's “inward” elimination of sin within Bohemia – “first in ourselves” – acceptable, since the elimination of their own sin could largely be taken for granted, and salvation was no longer contingent on it. As “watchmen”, the Hussites now needed to take every opportunity “to herald the entire will of God”; their salvation did not necessarily depend on their success, but the fulfillment of their role, and only

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 137-40. Translations and emphases mine.

this would ensure that their hands would be “clean of their [the enemy’s] blood”. Violence, or the threat of it, was also a legitimate means of spreading God’s word, as it made examples out of those who rejected it.

Even more interesting for our purposes is another manifesto, written in Prague. It begins by explaining that the Hussites have decided to adhere to those “most holy truths” (*sacratissimae veritates*, i.e. the Four Articles) so as not to appear “ungrateful” (*ingratus*) for such “generous gifts” (*munerum munificencia*), and “to fulfill his revealed will” (*voluntatem eius agnitam implere*). This they were doing by spreading his message to “all of God’s Church” (*tota Dei ecclesia*). The example of the Maccabees is given to legitimize violence, lest the “law of the Lord” (*lex Domini*) should be exterminated from “our stupid indifference” (*nostra insulsa paciencia*).¹⁷³

Moving on, the manifesto explains the shift from defensive to offensive warfare in explicit terms, and is worth quoting at length. Noting the example of the Maccabees, the text continues:

... and because of this we realized that all laws and all rights (*omnes leges et omnia iura*) allow force to counter force (*vim vi repellere*)... so with the help of the Lord ... we have resisted the enemy of both God’s law and of us (*legis Dei et nostris adversarii*), and chased them past our borders.... More than once did we courageously show them the spirit of the *law of retaliation* (*talio legis animose*) when we, confiding in the help of the Almighty and armed with the zeal of the faithful Mattathias (*fidelis Mathadie zelo armati*), attacked them as fraudulent defectors of the Christian faith (*christiane religionis prevaricatores et apostatae*) and profane enemies of the revealed truth (*veritatisque agniti impugnatores notorios et blasvemos*).

Continuing, the narrative recalls the battle at Ústí against the Margrave of Meißen, Frederick I, who

¹⁷³ František M. Bartoš, *Manifesty města Prahy z doby Husitské* [Manifestos of the city of Prague in the Hussite period] (Prague, 1932), 302-3. Italics mine.

against these manifest truths ... raided the Bohemian kingdom as a robber (*per predam in regno Boemie more latronum patratam*) and spread his criminal infection (*scelus contaminatus*) to neighboring lands. After numerous disastrous attacks against us (*dampnosi facti insulti*), we launched a completely proportionate *attack of punishment* (*conveximus castigantes condignum*).

When they reached the lands of Frederick of Brandenburg, he asked them the reason for their incursion, they responded:

we, with other faithful people (*cum populo fidelium*) are working and fighting for the *glorification of those four evangelic truths* (*pro clarificatione quator veritatum evangelicarum*) and to *avenge the hostilities raised against us and our kingdom* (*pro vindicata inimiciarum, nobis et regno nostro illatarum*). ... We do not hide in caves or in corners like heretics, ... but rather preach our true faith from the rooftops, fields, mountains, villages, castles, and cities.¹⁷⁴

This account is revealing in several aspects. Firstly, it offers a historiography of the recent events of the Hussite wars to date which are given several meanings. It is interesting to note that at this particular moment in time, the offensive shift is considered a natural step in the course of events. “Fulfilling” the will of God was being accomplished by spreading his message, and also by protecting it by violence. Those same “laws and rights” which legitimized this defensive violence, however – “force to counter force” – legitimized the offensive shift, or the “law of retaliation”. The crimes of the enemy were so heinous – against God’s law and Christianity itself – that they required divine punishment, of which the Hussites “with the help of the Almighty” were the carriers. This punishment, though it is legitimized as naturally as that against any other crime, was not legalistic, technical, or impersonal; rather it was the highly emotional and personal punishment in which pleasure is taken: *vengeance*. This is not the measured resistance theory of the University masters in 1420, nor is it that of Žižka’s disciplined rules of war in 1423, but rather it is the unrestrained expression of the *human will*.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 303-4. Italics mine.

The choice of Maccabees as a Biblical parallel is significant, firstly because it works to normalize and naturalize the shift from defense to offense by altering the historical discourse of the war, imposing the contemporary discourse onto the past. As we have seen, the masters were reluctant to grant the use of violence at all, and ultimately settled on a restrictive doctrine which mandated several preconditions for legitimate violence, among them that it be carried out with “love for one’s opponents”; though the practical applicability of such a restriction may be doubted even for the period of Žižka’s military leadership, the fact that it is now so explicitly discarded by the discourse of war which espoused to “avenge” enemy hostilities is evidence of how far it had changed since 1420. The restrictive doctrine of the masters relied foremost on Romans 13, and was in direct *opposition* to those Taborite priests – “men of violence” – who used the arguments from Maccabees in favor of less-restrained violence. Yet now, in 1430, it is Maccabees which is considered the example upon which the Hussites had always referred to. It established a much-desired continuity of self-identity throughout the wars, not just to the enemy but to themselves as well.

No longer was it important to carefully distinguish between illegitimate rebellion and just war, as it had been in 1420; by referring to the example of the Maccabees, the Hussites expressed a unique self-identity, a rebellion of a few of God’s faithful against a corrupted and blasphemous majority. Yet Maccabees was also important for expressing the highly militarized self-perception of the Hussites. Rebellion was inherently both defensive and offensive, protecting something under threat but also attacking so as to end that threat and return to something “better”. Thus, the “glorious rides” were both an end in and of themselves (for vengeance), but more importantly they also were the means to another end, that is the “glorification” of the law of God. It was “with the zeal of the faithful Mattathias” that the

Hussites gained their inspiration for this task, and the choice of precedent was no accident. Mattathias had initiated the Maccabee uprising, refusing to perform the pagan sacrifices demanded by King Antiochus. When another Jew came to perform the sacrifice, we are told that Mattathias was

inflamed with zeal, and his reins trembled, neither could he forbear to show his anger according to judgment: wherefore he ran, and slew him upon the altar. Also the king's commissioner, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at the same time, and the altar he pulled down. Thus dealt he zealously for the law of God... And Mattathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me." (1 Maccabees 2: 23-27)

Mattathias was the perfect Biblical parallel, in that he could not “forbear to show his anger *according to judgment*”; it was not legalistic and impersonal punishment but full of emotion and hostility. Simultaneously though, his human rage and the ensuing uprising protected a divine prerogative, the “law of God”, and inspired other faithful to his cause. As such, his example demonstrated the same cooperation between human and divine agency which the Hussites’ “glorious rides” exemplified, a balance between human retaliation and the glorification of the law of God.

Several months later, in August of 1430, the Hussite armies regrouped from their various excursions abroad as a renewed crusade against Bohemia seemed likely. Once this threat had abated, though, Prokop used the opportunity to lead a new campaign into Silesia which reached Lusatia as well before the end of the year. In late November, Prokop and several other captains issued a short communication to the community of Namysłów which the armies had recently been plundering. In it, the authors express their disquiet that “you stubbornly neglect to avoid these damages ... and that you do not inquire as to why this damage and plunder (*dampna et desolationes*) happens to you.” They emphasize that “such damages to you and the surrounding communities, which you seem not to be too concerned about (*non vultis*

compati)[.] causes us pain (*doleamus*)”, and “[s]ince we intend good for you (*vestrum bonum desideramus*), we desire to meet with you ... so that we could notify you in kindness ... of what we plunder.” Promised here is a guarantee of safe-conduct, followed by the threat that “if you do not wish to do this, your damages will be increased”.¹⁷⁵

Obviously, this is an attempt to recover some legitimacy in the eyes of their enemies, and perhaps, as was the case in the Glorious Campaign earlier in the year, offer peace in exchange for conversion. The Hussites were not simply “warriors of the Táborite armies”, but also “working in the field in the name of the Lord” (*milites belli exercitum Táboritarum in campis pro nomine dei laborantes*).¹⁷⁶ As such, the ends justified the means, but nevertheless it was important to them to try to win new adherents to their cause. This was not only for material support, but also, recalling the inclusivist message of Prokop’s manifesto in May, because “we intend good for you”.

In December, the campaign in Lusatia was cut short by an offer of neutral Poland-Lithuania to host a disputation with the Hussites in the following spring. Held in Cracow from March to April of 1431, the summit again included Prokop himself who helped to defend the Four Articles against Polish theologians. The event was disrupted by the local bishop who, offended by the presence of the heretic delegation, threatened to halt Holy Week services in the city. The bishop’s actions, combined with those of Sigismund, who proclaimed a new crusade against Bohemia in late March, ensured that the Cracow talks ended in failure. As another peace attempt at Cheb failed in early May, crusader and Hussite forces assembled from May to late July, and in this context another Hussite manifesto was written.

¹⁷⁵ SRS 6, 99. Translated in *CAHB*, 296.

¹⁷⁶ SRS 6: 99. For more on this self-referential terminology, see section 2.7 below.

Addressed to all of Christendom, it begins by enumerating the Four Articles, which “[in] accordance with the measure of our strength (*iuxta virium nostrarum modulum*) we have followed ... carefully and intend to follow ... as long as life remains”. Then follows a brief historiographical explanation of the stages of the Hussite wars: “even from the beginning we have constantly desired their faithful recognition, love and observance, [and] now we intend for all God’s people to come more fully to them (*ad illarum acuracius omnem populum dei affectamus venire*)”.¹⁷⁷ Though the desire for the “faithful recognition” of the Four Articles was never absent, it was now time for this desire to be realized “more fully” than before. Even though the tone of this manifesto is certainly more measured than some others, here we still find the fundamental novelty which distinguished the new offensive military policy: the human enaction of a desire previously held by both themselves and by God. The legitimacy of this enaction is of divine origin, since the goal is ultimately other-worldly; the elimination of sin to ensure salvation. Yet the agent of enaction is clearly a human-divine partnership, especially in battle but also in debate.

This is precisely why the July 1431 manifesto has such a measured tone: it desires not to berate the enemy but to convince them of Hussite righteousness by juxtaposing it with the stubbornness and corruption of the Church. To bring all of Christendom “more fully” to the Four Articles, “we have spared no expense, work or cost in transmitting many letters over several regions”, and the several attempts for peaceful debate are cited, including the recent Cheb, Cracow, and Bratislava summits, and the stillborn Nuremberg one. In contrast to the “righteous equality” offered them, the Roman Church instead follow the “proudest Satan” (*superbissimus Satana*), becoming “mute dogs” and “false prophets”, as they raise the cross to

¹⁷⁷ UB 2: 228-31. Translated in CAHB, 308-09. Alterations mine.

incite “the secular arm to murder the faithful” (*seculare brachium in occisionem fidelium*). If attacked, the Hussites warn, “we will defend ourselves with force as is permitted by all laws and rights”, and the manifesto closes by entreating the enemy as potential allies: “would you, intelligent and noble men, expose your souls and bodies to death in the dangers of warfare with the help of those criminal clergymen ... [who are] opposed to the righteous cause ... which we repeatedly offer you (*per nos vobis crebro oblatas*)?”.¹⁷⁸ Here again the human role in spreading the faith is emphasized – “we have spared no expense” – and the use of force is taken for granted – “permitted by all laws and rights” – that is, by the Scriptural sources previously used also to legitimize offense.

The consequent fifth and final crusade entered Bohemia in August and was over in two short weeks, after a crushing crusader defeat at the battle of Domažlice on 14 August. Though German chroniclers estimated the crusading forces variously from 100,000 to over 130,000 men, they were routed virtually without a battle,¹⁷⁹ leading some within their leadership to even suspect treason.¹⁸⁰ One Hussite chronicler commented with astonishment: “when they [the crusaders] saw that our army was pressing near, ... they fled in different directions with their troops. We captured ... nearly all of their wagons ... I would estimate them to be more than our own armies have. ... The King above kings and Lord above lords defends his own, rescues them, saves them, fights for them and wins (*swé zachowáwaje brání, retuje i za ně bojuje i wítězí*)”.¹⁸¹ An exhilarated thanksgiving festival was held in Prague the following month, where enemy standards were proudly displayed in the Old Town square and immense crowds marched in procession to the castle. Lawrence of Březová, a symbolic figure of the Hussite

¹⁷⁸ UB 2: 230-1. Translated in CAHB, 309-11. Alterations mine.

¹⁷⁹ CAHB, 321; FRB 5: 604.

¹⁸⁰ CAHB, 316.

¹⁸¹ AČ 6: 424.

center, and the same man who in the early 1420s had decried Bohemia's status as a "lonely and orphaned" widow begging for God's help, now expressed his jubilant confidence and optimism in his 1,630 verse "Song of the Victory at Domažlice", which was sung in the festival and circulated in Latin abroad.¹⁸²

Now, my Czech people (*gens mea Bohemorum*)
Celebrate before the Lord
So that songs may gloriously sound ...
Oh, powerful King!
May you never leave me in these treacherous times¹⁸³

As the Lord is the "shield" of his Czech servants, Lawrence imagines the fearful words of the margrave Frederick to Sigismund:

Let's retreat, fast and safe
From this field together
Before the weapons are aimed at us
By the furious, schismatic peasants (*rustici desperate scismtici*)
Before we lose our valiant
Christian people ...
After all, your injured people are afraid (*vestri populi timent*)
And like children before fire (*ut ignem parvuli*)
They flee Bohemia
As the greatest plague (*veluti pestem maximam*)¹⁸⁴

Finally, the song ends after appealing to a utopian vision, only now realizable:

The swords will turn to ploughshares
The spears to sickles (Isaiah 2:4)
Weapons shall be made into bells ...
No longer shall nations raise swords (*Gens gladium non levabit*)
In war against their neighbors
And inhabitants of the world shall rejoice (*gaudebunt terre incole*)
In the beauty of peace. (*pacis pulchritudine*) (Isaiah 32)¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² CAHB, 320.

¹⁸³ FRB 5: 561-2 Translated into Czech in Šmahel, *Idea Národa*, 171. Alterations mine.

¹⁸⁴ FRB 5: 555. Translated into Czech in Šmahel, *Idea Národa*, 171. Alterations mine.

¹⁸⁵ FRB 5: 561. Translated in CAHB, 320-1. Alterations mine.

Again, in the height of passion and zeal and assured of their divine electedness, the Hussite armies launched a new series of raids on the surrounding territories. Yet here, significantly, the bursting fervor proved too much even for Prokop to adequately control. In September he led the Tábórite armies into Silesia, while two fellow Orphan commanders – the priest Prokůpek and Jan Čapek of Sány – left for Moravia to meet the Tábórites in northern Hungary. After accepting the promise of conversion from the prince of Opava in Lusatia, Prokop's forces joined the Orphans in raiding Hungary. By the end of September Prokop urged the Orphans to turn back before the autumn rains, yet the Orphan forces continued their raids until November, when unfavorable conditions resulted in “one of the most disastrous defeats a Hussite army had ever suffered”. To save face, Čapek blamed Prokop for the embarrassment, damaging both the Orphan-Tábórite partnership and Prokop's own prestige within the movement.¹⁸⁶

Yet the internal divisions and the disaster in Hungary did nothing to damage the Hussites' confidence in their divine prerogative and consequent invincibility. Simultaneously, a new manifesto¹⁸⁷ – perhaps the longest to date – was written, a reissuing of the previous May's manifesto by the Tábórite captains. Though the exact authorship is unknown, it is clear that the document continues in the vein of its predecessor with several significant alterations; the list of grievances with the Church is increased from 16 to 20, the order of the Four Articles is changed, and most significantly, the language and Biblical citations reveal a heightened and unapologetic radicalism, since enflamed by the last crusade.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ *HR*, 74-5.

¹⁸⁷ The original was likely German, but only the Latin translation survives. See *MC* 1: 153-70 for the text.

¹⁸⁸ Jaroslav Prokeš, together with Palacký, argued that this manifesto is from the pen of Prokop himself. I disagree with Prokeš's supposition that the manifesto's additions and Biblical citations, which are meant to deter further crusades, necessarily express the moderating influence of Jan Rokycana or others, as will be argued below. See Prokeš, “Táborské manifesty”, 15, 34.

The opening words of the manifesto, which in the 1430 version were simply “We desire that the almighty Father ... would illuminate your hearts with divine justice (*erluchte die herzen mit dem liecht seiner gotlichen gerechtikeit*)”,¹⁸⁹ are now preceeded by the bold exclamation “Christ rules, Antichrist will be destroyed!” (*Christus regnat, Antichristus destruetur*). Moreover, pronouns and adjectives attributed to the Pope, virtually absent in the original version, now include “evident heretic, prince of hypocrisy and the highest Antichrist” (*manifestum haereticus et princeps hypocrisis et sic supremus Antichristus*) and “pope-crucifier” (*crucefigator papa*).¹⁹⁰

Recent history, especially the overwhelming victory of the Hussites at Domažlice, won virtually before any actual fighting, had once again proved their divine election, this time prophesized by Deuteronomy 28:7: “The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven”, and in God’s promise to Israel in Exodus 14. Not only was the invading enemy damned, but also those who faced the Hussites in the neighboring lands: “You will *pursue your enemies*, and they will fall by the sword before you. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you” (Leviticus 26: 7-8), and consequently the enemy would shudder at the very thought of them, even on their own native soil: “As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them” (Leviticus 26:36). “For this reason the servants of God (*famuli dei*) could not

¹⁸⁹ *Neun Texte*, 12.

¹⁹⁰ *MC* 1: 153-4.

be defeated”, it explains, “because the more they are punished (*puniuntur*), the more they are enflamed and strengthened (*accenduntur et confortantur*)”.¹⁹¹

In March and April 1432, after Prokop had been cleared of blame for the Orphan disaster in Hungary, a new campaign was launched into Silesia and Lusatia. This pressured the Council’s delegates, who met in May with Hussite delegates at Cheb, to discuss the terms of the latter’s invitation to the Church Council in Basil the following year. The resulting agreement, the so-called “Cheb judge”, was a significant victory for the Hussites: after years of insistence, they were finally able to gain Church acceptance of the primacy and moderating role of Scripture, rather than Church dogma, in a religious dispute. This was to take place at the Council of Basil the following year.

Meanwhile, Hussite armies continued their campaigns abroad, now in Poland and Prussia, called by the Poles to assist in their struggle against the Teutonic Order. As such, this campaign, perhaps more than others, shared a pragmatic military-strategic motivation with religious ones, as the Hussites hoped to gain Polish support for future military purposes. Nevertheless, the confidence and elation buoyed by Domažlice and recent campaigns abroad found new reinforcement. Chroniclers lamented that armies “dispersed [before the Hussites] like the movement of the grass and retreated”, and that the Hussite armies were unstoppable: “there is no one in the world who can impede and resist them”. Nor did they neglect their religious mission as they spared neither “priests or the monks or the nuns or the hermits”. The Hussites’ self-assurance was so great that the enemy no longer posed any obstacle to their military might, but only nature itself, as Jan Čapek of Saný expressed “in a great show of wagging his proud head” once they reached the waters of the Baltic sea: “Behold! I say

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 156.

brethren, I proclaim to you that having reached the end of the earth at this point (*hic in fines terre pertingens*) I cannot proceed any farther because of the hindering waters of the sea". The Chronicler continues: "At the same place he filled some flasks with sea water which he said he would take to Bohemia in order that a great celebration [might be carried out]".¹⁹²

¹⁹² *SRP* 3: 502. Translated in *CAHB*, 360.

2.6
An Invitation to the King's feast:
Prokop at the Council of Basil

In early 1433, the Hussite delegation reached Basil to significant fanfare. The main speakers for the Hussite delegation were Prokop Holý, Jan Rokycana, Nicholas Pelhřimov, Peter Payne, Petr of Žatec, and Ulrich of Znojmo, among a delegation of about thirty.¹⁹³ They entered the city with a contingency of priests who walked in procession and sang hymns, and later Prokop said a prayer for peace. Aeneas Sylvius observed the excitement, and recorded that “citizens of the city climbed the walls ... [w]omen, children, and young girls crowded in the windows and on roofs [to see] the delegates of this truly courageous and equally famous country”.¹⁹⁴ The solemnity of the opening of the proceedings, however, was counter-balanced by controversy; Pope Eugenius IV still rejected any negotiations with the heretics, Sigismund wavered between supporting the Pope and the Council, and Jan Rokycana had to deny rumors that the Hussites had thrown snowballs at a crucifix.¹⁹⁵

The proceedings of the Council, at which the Hussite delegation remained until mid-April 1433, are a complicated and nuanced story which has been told in detail elsewhere.¹⁹⁶ For our purposes, it is sufficient to highlight several of Prokop's speeches which express his perception of the Hussite group identity. On 19 January, following Rokycana's defense of the chalice and an emboldened speech which put all blame for the recent wars on the Church, Prokop rose and reiterated some of these points in his own words. He warned the Council, using Biblical metaphors, not to scorn the invitations to God's feast, which they received from

¹⁹³ Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 110.

¹⁹⁴ *CAHB*, 350-1.

¹⁹⁵ Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 110-11.

¹⁹⁶ Most recently, see Thomas A. Fudge, “Prokop in the Bath: Some Observations on the *Liber diurnus de gestis Bohemorum in Concilio Basileensi*,” *BRRP* vol. 7 (Prague: Main Library, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2009): 139-55, but also E. F. Jacob, “The Bohemians at the Council of Basel,” in *Prague Essays*, ed. R. W. Seton-Watson (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1949), 81-123.

him through the Hussites. This metaphor is in reference to Jesus' parable of the king preparing a wedding banquet for his son, which represents the kingdom of heaven; "He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come" (Matthew 22: 3). Instead, they ignored the king's servants or "seized [them], mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city" (6-7). After filling the banquet with all kinds of people from the streets, "bad as well as the good", the king noticed a man without proper wedding clothes and ordered his servants: "Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are invited, but few are chosen" (9-14).¹⁹⁷

This sentiment may be compared to Prokop's later June speech to the delegates of the Council who had come to Prague to continue negotiations, and is worth quoting at length. Here, after berating the delegates for having begun the wars by raising "the bloody cross (*cruentus crux*) against us", he admits that

Despite the fact that these years of war were cruel many spiritual benefits (*spirituales germinauere*) have arisen out of them and may we hope that by the will of God they will produce even more. Quite a number of those cruel enemies of the saving truth of the Four Articles were forced to give assent to them verbally (*ore profiteri*). Afterwards they accepted them voluntarily (*vltronee agniti*) and became ardent defenders until death (*sunt tutores ac obseruatores ad exicium*). Likewise a great number of people have faithfully held to these truths and so have been protected from hostility and brutality. Was this not so[,] they might have been moved by fear and become unfaithful to the Holy Ghost. ... [T]hese storms of war and vice have been used by God to turn many to the truth (*moueunt mentes ad ipsarum veritatum*) which is a great victory for the militant church. Notwithstanding this, it is our opinion that before these storms can come to an end (*cessabunt illi tumultus*), these holy truths must be accepted and followed faithfully (*fideliter acceptate*) by each member of the church. ... We only tolerate the burdens of war so that we can establish these truths in their rightful place within the church and thereby lay hold upon the blessed peace which, with the help of God, would cause the unity of the church (*ecclesie vnitas*).¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Urbánek, 100.

¹⁹⁸ MC 1: 419-20. Translated in CAHB, 351-2.

These two passages express several sentiments in line with those already observed in the Hussite manifestos. The parable of the wedding feast presents a religious narrative of the Hussite wars; those invited by God to the kingdom of heaven refused, and the servants sent by God – in this context possibly Hus himself and others like Jerome of Prague – were ignored, seized, and killed. “Enraged”, God sent his army against the murderers to destroy them and burn their city. This supports the narrative proposed by the manifestos; the Hussites were the “watchmen” who earned their salvation by alerting the godless of God’s warning. When these representatives of God were attacked and killed, however, then the Hussite armies, in the spirit of the “law of retaliation”, became just agents of both divine and human retribution, leading an “attack of punishment”.

Yet to the Council and their delegates, Prokop presents this divine vengeance as instructive and disciplinary in nature; God has used the wars “to turn many to the truth”, and indeed many “spiritual benefits” have come from them as people have been forced to assent to the Four Articles. But in doing so, like children being disciplined by a parent, they have been saved, have remained faithful to the Holy Ghost, and have returned to the wedding feast. Recognizing their redeeming quality, these converted enemies are now “ardent defenders” of the Four Articles. Not only does this legitimize the offensive strategy of spreading the faith abroad, but it also warns the Council delegates of the future; God will not accept unbelievers in the kingdom of heaven, but instead will throw them into hell “where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”. Nor will God accept unbelievers on earth, for the “storms of war” will continue until the “holy truths” are “accepted and followed faithfully” by all. Thusly, these passages echo the sentiments of the earlier manifestos; the Hussites are confident in their divine

role, and in their capabilities in fulfilling it, and they present a historiography which legitimizes the offensive shift as both punitive and corrective.

2.7 Re-invented Hussite identity during the Offensive War

Recent history certainly seemed to confirm this sentiment. At the battle of Ústi in 1426, where Prokop had first gained significant military authority, the chroniclers recorded thousands of casualties on the side of the crusaders, while Hussite sources reported a death toll of a mere thirty men.¹⁹⁹ In the raids into Silesia in 1428, as in the Glorious Campaign of 1430, Hussite armies often found deserted towns, sometimes intentionally destroyed, and had enemies flee before them in the field.²⁰⁰ In late 1431, a Church delegate to the Basil Council was informed that in the German lands surrounding Bohemia “there is an exceeding fear of Czech attacks”, and so the nobles and cities “one after another” are entering into agreements with them. Aeneas Sylvius described Prokop upon his arrival to Basil in 1433 as a man “feared by his foes as well as his own countrymen for he was the undefeated, brave and fearless leader who had shown himself invincible in the face of every test and terror”.²⁰¹ Nor were Hussite attempts to instigate rebellions abroad fruitless. In early 1432, the leader of the crusading army at Domažlice, Cardinal Cesarini, wrote an anxious letter to Pope Eugenius IV, linking recent disturbances with the Hussite agitation:

The laypeople will arise just as the Hussites in similar manner and exterminate us ... [believing] that such action is pleasing to God. In the recent past, people in Magdeburg have driven the archbishop and priests out of the town. In the manner of the Hussites they surrounded themselves with fortified wagons and it is rumored that they have asked the Hussites for a captain. ... [I]n other places nearby ... many of the towns have entered into agreements with them. Similarly, the citizens of Passau expelled their bishop and laid siege to him in a castle. Both of these towns are close to Bohemia and should they be able to create an alliance with the Czechs, ... they will then gather together considerable help as well as disciples.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ *CAHB*, 201; also see n. 120 above.

²⁰⁰ *SRB* 3: 78-9; Urbánek, 107-8 and n. 65-7.

²⁰¹ *CAHB*, 351.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 346-7.

These successes played an important role in inspiring a specific type of militarized identity which emphasized the human role in fulfilling God's will. Already in March 1428, we begin to see the first wave of Hussite manifestos sent abroad which explain the cause for which the Hussite soldiers were fighting there. Though they were signed by the captains of both the Táborigite and Orebitite brotherhoods, it has been suggested that one of the spiritual leaders, Prokop or the Orphan priest Prokúpek, initiated this.²⁰³ Noteworthy here is a new formula which became almost standardized, explaining the purpose of their excursions, but also stressing the dimension of human sacrifice involved therein: "the armies of Tábor and the Orphans fighting and dying in the fields for the law of God" (*exercitus Táborum atque Orphanorum lege pro divina in campo jacentes pro eaque decertantes*).²⁰⁴ The wording will change slightly depending on authorship and time: in Austria in April of the following year, the subject was rather the "captains, barons, soldiers, and clients" (*capitanei, barones, milites et clientes*) who were "dying in the fields of Austria for the liberation of the law of God" (*pro liberatione legis dei iacentes*).²⁰⁵ On occasion, perhaps when facing minimal opposition or perhaps as a euphemism, the aspect of human sacrifice was dropped, the task was normalized, and the goal was broadened: instead of "fighting and dying for the law of God" they were "working in the fields for the name of God" (*pro nomine dei laborantes; arbeytinde in dem felde; we gmeno bozy pol'm praczu'e*).²⁰⁶ Still in other instances, especially into the 1430s, the righteousness of human agents or the divine cause were emphasized: "the armies of the Orphans and of Tábor, continually fighting in the field for the growth of the freedom of the divine truths" (*continue in campo ob ampliacionem libertatis veritatum divinarum decertantes*),

²⁰³ HR, 34.

²⁰⁴ UB 1: 602. Translations mine.

²⁰⁵ Urbánek, 193 n. 69. Translations mine.

²⁰⁶ UB 2: 175; UB 2: 332; AČ 6: 428. Translations mine.

or “the brave warriors continually working in the field for the truth of God’s law” (*stateční bojovníky o pravdy zákona božieho ... ustavičně polem pracujícími*).²⁰⁷

These new formulae, together with the sentiments and Biblical parallels expressed in the manifestos, suggest an increasingly militant self-perception which by now had the character of a movement. The Hussites had long been the “Warriors of God”, but now were a powerful force for change which did not require authorization from human authorities, University masters or kings, because they, like Mattathias and the Maccabees, had direct legitimacy from God himself. The Hussites’ own experiences with treacherous kings – Vaclav, Sigismund, and Korybut – had convinced them that they could not be relied upon to reform their own realms, and so it was the responsibility of God’s agents to spread “the freedom of the divine truths” and “liberate the law of God” abroad.

Moreover, the near-invincibility of the Hussite armies in Bohemia and abroad gradually confirmed a re-interpretation of morality. No longer was it an action to be performed to win God’s favor, as it had been under Žižka, but it was now an implicit quality inherent to Hussite identity itself. They no longer required constant disciplining and confirmation of their status in the form of military rules, calls for large-scale penance, or frequent reform synods, since God himself had already expressed to them his favor by assisting them in countless victories, and since Christ himself was not only a “most invincible soldier”, but also a “Prague warrior”.

²⁰⁷ UB 2: 289-90; AČ 6: 425. Translations mine.

2.8
Nicholas Pelhřimov and the Opposition to the
 Offensive Shift and to the new Hussite Identity

The Hussite military offensive shift was not without its critics, the most important and vehement of which were from the earlier generation of the movement. Of course, there had always been those Hussite pacifists who had denounced physical warfare – *arma carnalia* – from the beginning. The most central of these figures was Peter Chelčický, who had already responded to the debate on legitimate warfare with his 1421 treatise “On Spiritual Warfare”, in which he made clear his position:

[W]hen [the Táborites] march up [to a fortress] with their war-machines, seeking to smash down the walls within which the Devil dwells among the evil people who have shut themselves up there, the Devil doesn’t care. When the attackers smash down the walls and mercilessly destroy the evil people, the Devil goes out from those walls and into *them*, and he will dwell in their cruel and loveless hearts... And so no physical power or strength will destroy him.²⁰⁸

Yet there were also those who had originally supported Žižka’s restrictive and defensive warfare, but after his death lamented the moral downturn that the struggle had taken. Jakoubek of Stříbro, for instance, in a 1426 sermon deplored the destruction, greed, robbery, and murder of the war on both sides, and elsewhere similarly complained of the state of the Hussite resistance effort, which ended in “greed, savagery, murder, hatred and plunder”.²⁰⁹ Jan Rokycana, by this time the head of the Prague clergy, in his 1431 *De septem culpis Thaboritarum* (“On the seven faults of the Táborites”) of 1431 specifically addressed the offensive shift: “it is inadmissible for Czechs to fight, returning evil for evil (*reddendo malum*

²⁰⁸ Howard Kaminsky, “Peter Chelčický: Treatises on Christianity and the Social Order,” in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, vol. 1, ed. William M. Bowsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 119.

²⁰⁹ Fudge, ““More Glory than Blood””, 134.

pro malo), as Czechs say with their own mouths: ‘Because the Germans invaded our kingdom, we in turn will repay them by invading their kingdom’”.²¹⁰

Yet perhaps the most nuanced and mixed opposition would come from the bishop of Tábor, Nicholas Pelhřimov. Pelhřimov clearly saw the Czechs as a privileged vanguard who God was sending to fight evil, as he had previously sent Jonah to Nineveh and others to Judah and Israel: “so God has done unto us today, sending faithful preachers to the people in Bohemia, who summon sinners to repent”,²¹¹ and so “we strongly believe that people of other countries will recognize the insatiable greed of clergymen, and will be removed from them, by those whom God send against them [the clergy]”.²¹² Yet, this divine election was still, as with Žižka, highly contingent on proper behavior. Pelhřimov explained: “Let us be specific about exactly why the conflict is to be sanctified (*propter quod sanctificandum est prelium*), when, and against whom. Just as restless (*inquietus*) David was unworthy to build the Temple, while his peaceful (*pacificus*) son Solomon was, so cruel and restless men (*homines crudeles et inquieti*) will not be able to restore (*instaurare*) the Temple”.²¹³

Thus, beginning in 1430, he anxiously expressed the fear that the Czechs were always in danger of losing God’s favor: “if we depart from him, he will abandon us”, and “if we Czechs are arrogant he will give his gifts and this great honor and glory to some other people,

²¹⁰ “...*Quia Theutunici nostrum regnum invaserunt, et nos vicem rependentes, illorum invadimus regna*”. Prokeš, “Táborské manifesty”, 2 n. 3. Czech translation in Šmahel, *Idea Národa*, 169-70.

²¹¹ Howard Kaminsky, “Nicholas of Pelhřimov’s Tábor: an Adventure into the Eschaton,” in *Eschatologie und Hussitismus*, ed. Alexander Patschovsky and František Šmahel (Prague: Historický Ústav, 1996), 147.

²¹² “*Et fideliter credimus ... quod eciam in aliis terries cognoscentes sacerdotum insaciabilem avariciam, auferent ab eis hii, quos misit (deus) contra illos*”. František M. Bartoš, “Táborské Bratrstvo let 1425-1426 na Soudě Svého Biskupa Mikuláše z Pelhřimova,” *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností českých v Praze* 29 (1921): 119. Czech translation in Šmahel, *Idea Národa*, 170. Bartoš here misdated this Postil to 1425-6, but later redated it to ca. 1430. See Kaminsky, “Nicholas”, 142 n. 8.

²¹³ Bartoš, “Táborské Bratrstvo”, 114. Translated in *RWE*, 168-9.

[who are] now last but will then become first”.²¹⁴ In the realm of crime, he suggested that human offenses against one another, such as theft, should be punished more leniently than those against God, like blasphemy and heresy, for which he considered capital punishment appropriate.²¹⁵ Moreover, even though he recognized the legitimacy of Žižka’s defensive war, which was “set in motion with great care and in accordance with the rulings of the virtuous warriors of ancient times (*regulas antiquorum bonorum bellatorum roboratum*), as confirmed and set out in detail by the said Masters of Prague and the priests of the kingdom”, he decried the great abuses (*deordinationes*) which resulted from those who fought “in fraudulent fashion with quite other intentions. They worked against the will and intention of the faithful, who opposed them in faithful and catholic fashion in defense of the good”.²¹⁶ Echoing the instructions of the University masters, he stressed that “to fight for the law of God is to fight with charity, because the goal of that law is charity”.²¹⁷

Though it was a Gordian-knot dilemma to insist that those who battled the Antichrist be of a worthy moral quality, Pelhřimov never abandoned the assertion of the legitimacy of warfare, defensive or offensive. Just as the devil would not “spare us or leave us be”, but would “keep on with his war right down to the last of the elect (*ultimum electum*) at the end of the world”²¹⁸, so too must the faithful “wage war all through their lives (*per totum vitam gerit bella*)”.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ “*Et si nos Bohemi superbi extiterimus, ut predixi, dabit hec dona et gloriam magnam hanc et honorem alicui genti et populo, qui nunc novissimus est, ut fiat primus*”. Kaminsky, “Nicholas”, 147, n. 24.

²¹⁵ Kejř, “Death Penalty”, 149.

²¹⁶ “...qui se ipsis fraudulenter cum aliis applicarunt intentionibus, in magnas versum erat deordinationes semper contra propositum atque intentionem fidelium, qui pro illo dicto bono se fideliter ac catholice opposuerunt”. FRA 2: 481. Translated in RWE, 164.

²¹⁷ “...bellare pro lege dei est bellare cum caritate, cum finis legis est caritas”. Bartoš, “Táborské Bratrstvo”, 114. Translated in RWE, 168. Alterations mine.

²¹⁸ Kaminsky, “Nicholas”, 153, n. 52.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 151, n. 45.

Just as a strong warrior attacking a weaker one does not stop pursuing him until he vanquishes him and takes him prisoner, in order to take his domains and possess them, so the Lord God, the unconquerable warrior, will not stop *launching his troops against the Ancient Enemy* until he achieves a final victory.²²⁰

These troops of God were the Hussites, who not only resisted evil but were sent by God against it.

Thus Pelhřimov did not outright challenge the legitimacy of offensive warfare, only certain *deordinationes* attributed to it, such as press-ganging and extorting money from the poor, which were neither just nor “expedient for the winning of beatitude”.²²¹ Even looting as such was not unredeemable if it targeted the enemy, for Pelhřimov complained that the Hussite warriors wrongly plundered both the “just and the enemy” (*iustum et adversarium*), rather than “only those who do not have the sign of God on their faces (*signum dei in frontibus suis*)”.²²² He also admitted that sinful means could be legitimized by a legitimate end, as they had in Bohemia: “The secular powers in Bohemia have benefitted the clergy by expropriating them, and one hopes the same will happen elsewhere – it does not matter if they do it out of greed (*fecerunt ex appetitu avaro*), it still benefits the church (*eque tamen prosunt*)”.²²³ Nor did Pelhřimov reject the importance of human agency in cooperation with God in this struggle. We have already cited the importance which he ascribed to the Czechs, whom God sent to remove “people of other countries ... from the insatiable greed of clergymen”, but man had a much grander role to play in the battle: “The inhabitants of heaven rejoice because the inhabitants of

²²⁰ “*Sicud enim armatus fortis contra debiliorem incedens non cessat illum fugientem persequi donec convincat illum et comprehendat, ut regnum eius accipiat et possideat, sic dominus deus bellator invictissimus cum suis agminibus contra antiquum hostem non quiescet, donec ad victoriam non perveniet finalem*”. *Ibid.*, 153, n. 51. Italics mine.

²²¹ *RWE*, 165-6.

²²² Kaminsky, “Nicholas”, 165 n. 102. Translations mine.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 152, n. 49.

the earth conquer Satan (*habitantes in terris vincunt Sathanam*), and for this reason are worthy of tasting the body and blood of the Lord”.²²⁴

Pelhřimov gives us a unique perspective of a first-generation Hussite who was now thrust into the confusion of the late Hussite wars. As an energetic militarist but an anxious moralist like Žižka himself, the bishop of Tábor was forced to draw a thin line and nuanced distinctions between forms of warfare and violence. The numerous Hussite victories did convince him, like Prokop and others, of their elect status, but this status was always one which remained contingent and could not be taken for granted. Jonah the prophet, sent by God to warn Nineveh, along with the “peaceful” Solomon who restored the Temple, are identified as appropriate Biblical parallels, but not the “restless” David, who is rather a parallel for the “cruel and restless” men. Yet Pelhřimov was not a moral absolutist; crimes like looting and sins like greed were surely destructive, but could still play a legitimate role in reforming the Church and battling evil. Nor could he ignore the fact that the offensive military strategy was largely to thank for extending Hussite influence and spreading their message, which allowed him to ordain a number of foreign priests.²²⁵ If Pelhřimov was anxious about the longevity and legitimacy of the Hussites’ elect status, his opinion on how this status was earned and retained was still much more nuanced than that of the University masters.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 154 n. 56. Translations mine.

²²⁵ Urbánek, 109.

2.9 Conclusion

It is clear that the legacy of Žižka's moralistic warfare stretched into the period of offensive warfare under the command of Prokop Holý; the "Warriors of God" continued to think of themselves as a disciplined fighting force, and received criticism from spiritual and secular leaders for perceived lapses in the proper code of conduct. What has been observed as crucial for the offensive military shift, however, is that stringent adherence to such a code, which placed restrictions on the motivation and the purpose of violence, no longer determined the victory or defeat on the battlefield. "Morality" was not abandoned or denigrated as such, but rather the cause of the Hussites had been so often proven to be identical with that of God by victory after victory and virtual invincibility, that morality was no longer an action to be performed, but an inherent part of their identity. In other words, as God's favor was taken for granted by the new military leadership of Prokop and his commanders, so too was the morality of their actions.

This had an important facilitating role for the offensive shift in military strategy. Coinciding with the explosion of self-confidence which followed the countless Hussite victories was another change in self-perception, which came to see an elevated role for human agency; since the Hussites could take the morality of their actions for granted, which obviously adhered to God's will, it was only a small step to assume that they were also granted the power and authority to fulfill that will. Thus they were in a cooperative and reciprocal relationship with God, as they not only spread the pure faith abroad to attain salvation, but also worked to bring vengeance and punishment, both human and divine, upon their enemies.

Despite the critiques from influential personalities across the spectrum of Hussite parties, the repeated victories of the field armies abroad in the “glorious rides” worked to confirm the righteousness of their mission. The speeches of Peter Payne and Prokop Holý, the reckless enthusiasm of Jan Čapek of Sány, and the tone of the Hussite manifestos all bear witness to this. Moreover, specific Biblical references emphasized recurring themes in the reinvented Hussite identity; the role of the elect to spread the law of God in Ezekiel 3 and Matthew 22, the vengeance and punishment directed at those who reject the law of God in Job 36 and Jeremiah 6, the prophesized invincibility of the armies of the elect in Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, and the community definition and legitimation of divinely-inspired violence as carried out by charismatic military leaders such as Jonathan, Gideon, and in Maccabees. All these themes were somehow in contradiction to those present in Žižka’s discourse of defensive warfare, and illustrate the size of the divide which distinguished the offensive shift from anything before.

Final Conclusions

As Hussite historiography has argued, a variety of motivations were certainly responsible for the decision to change the military strategy from an exclusively defensive to an offensive one. The economic, material, and emotional burdens placed on Bohemia year after year, as well as the strategic and ideological benefits to be gained from an offensive strategy, were undeniable factors contributing to such a shift. Moreover, the fall of the regent king Korybut and the expulsion of the most influential and divisive conservative faction from Prague helped to centralize political power in the hands of those who had already proven themselves militarily capable and enthusiastic for a change from the exclusively defensive military strategy.

Yet such arguments are incomplete for explaining the offensive military shift insofar as they do not address the question of why it had taken six years of warfare, three defeated crusades, countless battles and casualties, and a change in military leadership before its enactment. This is because they largely ignore, take for granted, or downplay the importance of the deeply religious discourse and motivations which enabled and shaped the use of both defensive and offensive violence, and also assume a false continuity between early Hussite theology and the forms that violence manifested itself in throughout the Hussite wars: defensive, internally purgative, and then offensive.

The diversity of the Hussite movement before 1420, from its core of educated University masters and theologians, to its mass adherents of eschatological escapists, cannot be linked to a “natural” or inherent drive towards violence, as some historians have argued, nor was the shape that the defensive strategy of warfare came to take under Jan Žižka in continuity with the movement prior to 1420. It was the anxiety caused by persecution, and especially the

announcement of the first crusade, which necessitated the debate on the appropriateness of violence in 1419-20.

Moreover, the highly restrictive and moralistic violence which was consequently advocated, with great reluctance, by the Prague University masters in 1420 was adapted by Žižka for the ends which he thought most crucial for victory. For Žižka, a victorious war necessarily required the favor of God, which in turn required appropriate behavior. Thus, in addition to the invading crusaders, those dissidents within Bohemia who acted inappropriately in the eyes of God – whether Catholics, radical sectarians, or Hussite soldiers themselves – posed a threat to the success of the movement and needed to be purged or punished. This was the purpose of the perfect “Warriors of God”, who not only defended the law of God from external menaces, but also from internal ones. Hence, by the time of Žižka’s death in 1424, the Hussites had constructed an identity which stressed their theological and historical continuity with the past, but typically shied away from drawing parallels with Old Testament figures, or Biblical figures at all; when they did, they instead emphasized the restrictive role of scripture, and adherence to the patience and discipline of the New Testament parallels of Christ and the Apostles.

This gradually began to change after the ascendance of Prokop Holý to the Hussite military leadership after the battle of Ústi in 1426. The combined self-confidence built over three anti-crusade victories added to that gained at Ústi, perhaps the greatest victory to date, and inspired an inflated sense of invincibility which no longer had to give credit exclusively to the leadership of Jan Žižka. The moralism of Žižka and the University masters, which stressed moral actions and behaviors to be performed to win the favor of God, would always have its place within the movement, but now lacking the restrictiveness of the late military leader, the

buoyed self-confidence of the Hussites was allowed an important role in influencing military strategy, which consequently shifted to the offense. This was especially the case once increasing military command was given to the priests of Tábor and Oreb, and to rogue commanders such as Jan Čapek of Sány.

The discourse which expressed the Hussite identity also illustrated and defined this change. Vengeance and punishment, both human and divine, became emphasized and legitimized the "glorious rides", even though such motivations had been expressly condemned by both the University masters who mandated that war be fought with "love for one's opponents", and Žižka's defensive discourse of war which punished and sought penance for similar perceived breaches in moral discipline. Yet even more important in influencing the offensive military shift was the elevation of the role of human agency to a point where it was perceived as in cooperation with that of God in fulfilling his will. The growth of self-confidence accompanied by the virtual invincibility of the Hussite field armies meant that morality and the favor of God were decreasingly identified as contingent on appropriate behavior and performed actions, but were rather increasingly identified as inherent to the Hussite identity itself. As the distinction between righteous actions – those approved and mandated by God – and their own shrank, so too did adherence to a strictly defensive war make less sense; the expansion of God's law had always been longed for by the Hussites, even though Žižka had given priority to the extermination of sins "first in ourselves". By the time of Prokop's ascendance, however, all the victories of the Hussite armies had proven that Žižka's strategy had been successful, and that God's favor could finally be taken for granted. Thus the timing was appropriate, not only for the unleashing of righteous punishment and vengeance, but for spreading God's law abroad, acting in cooperation with him to fulfill his will. The

narrative of the wars and the self-perception of the Hussites was increasingly expressed in Biblical, and specifically Old Testament, terms; they were the community of the elect, led by charismatic military leaders and prophesized to crush their enemies and chase them abroad, righteously punishing and spreading God's law as they went.

This offensive military discourse continued until the battle of Lipany in 1434, when the field armies of the Orphans and Tábórites were destroyed by the combined forces of moderate Hussites and their Catholic allies after the former were promised re-entry into the Church with the permission to continue utraquist communion. The offensive military phase constituted a distinct stage in the Hussite revolution, and arguably in medieval religious history more generally. Never before had virtually an entire kingdom achieved such a status of religious pariah within Europe, while simultaneously thoroughly convinced of its divine election and its unique role in spreading a faith contemporarily understood as heretical and godless. As one historian has recognized, this is what distinguished the Hussites from earlier crusades into the Holy Land: “The Jerusalem of the Crusaders was far indeed from the preoccupations of the Tábórites, so far that they never aspired to organize a crusade ... Instead the kingdom of those fighting against the Antichrist was converted into a new Palestine”.²²⁶ Theirs were not “counter-crusades” meant to re-capture some religiously significant territory, but rather opposite to anything of the like, instead spreading vengeance and the true faith from that “golden and most Christian kingdom” abroad.

After the battle of Lipany, the moderate Hussites returned to the Catholic Church, which allowed them to continue their practice of utraquist communion. The terms of their return were enumerated in the 1436 Compacts of Jihlava, a document which also acknowledged

²²⁶ A. Millhou cited in *RWE*, 60.

Sigismund's claim to the Bohemian throne. In the following year the last traces of radical resistance, led by Žižka's old ally Jan Roháč of Dubá, were defeated with the fall of their stronghold, Sión castle. Thereafter, radical adherents survived only in the community of Tábor until its fall to the utraquist King George of Poděbrady in 1452, and in the pacifistic sect of the *Unitas Fratrum*, founded officially in 1457, which drew inspiration from the theology of Peter Chelčický.

Thus, the clearest parallels to the pre-Lipany Taborite offensive religious warfare were present neither in Bohemia nor in the earlier crusades to the Holy Land, but in Germany a century after the end of the Hussite wars. This parallel was not in the form of Martin Luther, though he certainly acknowledged his own debt to Hus's theology, but was rather illustrated by Thomas Müntzer.²²⁷ Just as the Hussites had looked to the Old Testament for role models, so too would Müntzer, in his infamous "Sermon to the Princes", call for "a new Daniel [to] arise and interpret your revelation for you". The purpose of these role models, as with the Hussites, was to lead an army in offensive violence – potentially on a universal scale – not out of kindness, but vengeance:

this same Daniel must go forth ... at the head of the troops. He must reconcile the anger of the princes and that of the enraged people. For if you were truly to experience the shame of Christendom and the deception of the false clergy ... then no one could imagine how enraged at them you would become.

And again: "I know for sure that you would hold yourselves back from exercising the power of the sword only with great effort". This vengeance was not only human, but also divine: as God commanded through Moses "You are a holy people. You shall not have pity on the idolatrous. Break up their altars. Smash their images and burn them so that I am not angry with you". The

²²⁷ These and other parallels have been explored by Reinhard Schwarz in his *Die apokalyptische Theologie Thomas Müntzers und der Taboriten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1977).

faith in human agency which had taken years of victorious warfare for the Hussites to express was already taken for granted by Müntzer, but the message of punishment and salvation of God's servants was similar: "But what should one do with these false spiritual leaders? Nothing but what is done with evildoers who obstruct the gospel: put them away and cut them off, if you do not want to be servants of the devil but servants of God".²²⁸

Despite the theological and discursive similarities, both of Luther with Hus and of Müntzer with the Hussite field armies, however, the Hussites must not be regarded as a simple "premature" reformation, or a precursor of things to come a century later in Germany. As has been observed, the offensive military shift and the change in discourse which accompanied and motivated it were anything but "natural" developments, but rather depended on several necessary preconditions which were unique to Hussite history. These included a heretical faith adopted by virtually an entire kingdom – from peasants and clerics to nobles and University masters, who were largely defined linguistically as well as religiously – and the repeated and successful defense of that faith against the armies of the legitimate representatives of both Christianity and the Bohemian kingdom, the Church and King Sigismund respectively. Though Luther and Müntzer certainly drew inspiration from the Hussite revolution, the conditions under which they operated were drastically different from those of early-fifteenth century Bohemia, and continuities between the Hussite and German reformations were minimal. Thus, claims that the Hussite reformation was a "premature" one, or a precursor to something grander to come, neglect the profound significance which it had in the context of late-medieval Europe, and take for granted the important local conditions which were crucial for the revolution itself,

²²⁸ Thomas Müntzer, "Sermon to the Princes (or An Exposition of the Second Chapter of Daniel)," in *The Radical Reformation*, ed. and trans. Michael G. Baylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 26-7, 29.

its legitimization of violence, and the offensive shift by which it spread the Hussite faith and vengeance abroad.

Appendix:
Relevant Characters during the Hussite Wars

Jan Žižka (c. 1360- 1424): A lesser-nobleman by birth, he was the Hussite military commander from 1420-24. He had a large role in the military organization of the radical community of Tábor in south Bohemia, though he soon moved to a similar community at Oreb in the east after prolonged differences with local influential personalities. He gained prominence for his innovative military tactics of the “wagon-fortress” and for his invincibility in the field of battle, where he defeated three crusades launched against Bohemia and never faced defeat himself. In 1424 he died of the plague while besieging the castle of Přebyslav, but his military legacy survived long after his death.

Prokop Holý (c. 1370s- 1434): Born and educated in Prague, he became a priest and joined the Táborite brotherhood in the early 1420s. He rose to military command after at the battle of Ústí in 1426, and gained central authority of the Hussite armies after the fall of King Korybut the following year. He changed the military strategy of the Hussites from an exclusively defensive to an offensive one, leading Hussite armies across the borders of Bohemia to attack their enemies abroad. He died in 1434 at the battle of Lipany, where the Hussite field armies were defeated by a combined force of moderate Hussites and their Catholic allies.

King Sigismund of Hungary (1368-1437): He enters Hussite history as the issuer of Jan Hus’s safe-conduct decree to the Council of Constance, where the latter was arrested and eventually burned as a heretic in 1415. As half-brother of King Vaclav IV, Sigismund inherited the

Bohemian throne after the former's death in 1419. Given his hostile attitude to the Hussite faith, his claim was not recognized by the realm, though he was able to stage a hasty coronation ceremony in Prague in 1420 as his soldiers fought to take the city. Over the following fourteen years, he led or supported repeated efforts to regain the kingdom by military force, and was repeatedly defeated. He was eventually convinced to attempt peaceful negotiation with the Hussites, as exemplified by the summit at Bratislava in 1429, though the failure of these negotiations convinced him to continue to seek his goals by violent means. After the defeat of his most outspoken Hussite opponents at the battle of Lipany in 1434, he was finally recognized as King of Bohemia in 1436, a year before his death.

Jakoubek of Střibro (after 1370- 1429): A friend of Jan Hus and a prominent Prague University master from 1397, Jakoubek became the foremost theologian of the Hussite movement. He succeeded Hus as the priest of Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, and is commonly credited for originating utraquist communion in 1414 – communion *sub utraque specie*, or under both kinds – which quickly became a central tenet of Hussite theology though it was condemned by the Council of Constance. Throughout the Hussite wars he was among the most influential of moderate Hussite figures, arguing against the radicalism of Tábor and the conservatism of masters such as Jan Přebor.

Jan Přebor (d. 1448): A University master from 1413, Přebor soon became the foremost theologian of the conservative wing of the Hussite movement. Though he supported Jakoubek's utraquist communion, he attacked many other Hussites from both the moderate and radical wings on political and theological matters. He was also a divisive character during the Hussite

wars, working to ideologically distance Prague from the radical communities of Tábor and Oreb. He came to advocate unity with the Catholic Church, and was expelled from Prague in 1427 for his support for King Korybut's plot to realize these hopes. He was soon allowed to return and participated in theological debates, though in a somewhat diminished capacity of influence.

Nicholas of Pelhřimov (1385- 1452): Graduating with a Bachelor's degree from Prague University, he was elected bishop of Tábor in 1420, a position he would hold until the destruction of the community in 1452. He was a friend of Jan Žižka and assisted him in ridding Tábor of the radical Pikart elements in the early 1420s. He remained a prominent voice of Hussite radicalism throughout the wars, acting as a delegate to the Council of Basel in 1433 and writing posthumous history of the movement after 1434. Though Pelhřimov supported the war effort throughout, he became increasingly anxious of the movement's divine election as the abuses of war grew.

Zigmunt Korybut (c. 1395-1435): As the Hussite movement sought royal legitimacy in the early 1420s, it hoped to attach itself to a sympathetic but powerful European dynasty. The Hussites offered the Bohemian crown first to the Jagiellon King of Poland, Władisław II, and then to the Lithuanian Grand Duke Witold after the former declined. Witold reluctantly accepted and sent his nephew, Zigmunt Korybut, to act as regent in his stead. Zigmunt arrived in Prague in 1422 and was initially supported by Žižka and an influential segment of the Hussite movement, but his popularity waned after the latter's death. Moreover, the opposition of the Papacy to Witold's claim to the Bohemian throne worked to weaken Zigmunt's

authority. Finally, in 1427 he was expelled from the country after it was revealed that he plotted to re-unite Bohemia with the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, he held no grudge against the Czechs and remained a devoted utraquist until his death.

Vaclav Koranda (d. 1453): A radical Hussite priest from the Catholic stronghold of Plzeň in western Bohemia, he was forced to flee the city in 1419 and he eventually arrived at Tábor the following year. Here he preached eschatological prophecies and was a vehement supporter of armed conflict with the Hussites' enemies. His friendship with the sectarian Pikart Martin Húska, his extremist theological views, and his often uncouth behavior gained him the disdain of several influential personalities, including Jan Žižka himself. Nevertheless, after the latter's death Koranda was eventually given a military and ideational role within the movement under Prokop Holý, where he led a military force and co-authored Hussite manifestos.

Peter Payne (1380-1456): Born in Lincolnshire, England, Payne was educated at Oxford and soon became an adherent of the late reformer and denounced heretic John Wycliffe. To escape persecution he fled to Prague in 1415 where he gained influence as a radical theologian. This is the role he played throughout the life of the movement, and was often a chief delegate of the Hussite community in disputes and negotiations with their enemies. At Bratislava in 1429 he berated King Sigismund with a speech which expressed the confidence of the Hussites in their divine role, and also served as a delegate at the Council of Basil several years later.

Jan Rokycana (1396-1471): In his youth he entered into the Augustinian monastic order, but then left to Prague where he earned his Bachelor's degree in 1415. Though never gaining the

status of Archbishop, Rokycana rose through the ecclesiastic ranks and in 1429 became the acting representative of the Prague clergy. In theological disputes he typically sought a middle course between the radicals and the conservatives, and was politically instrumental in uncovering King Korybut's plot to re-unite Bohemia with the Catholic Church in 1427. He was a chief Hussite delegate at the Council of Basil in 1433, and retained his central status even after the defeat of the radical wing in 1434.

Martin Húska (d. 1421): He was among the founding clergymen of the radical community of Tábor, and soon became the leader of the Pikart movement there. As such, he and his followers held radically unconventional views on the eucharist, and generally denied it any divine presence. His influential status at Tábor is partially illustrated by his role as one of their representatives at a debate with Hussite moderates in December 1420, where he defended the Táborite clergy from charges of heresy. Despite this, the building pressure against his teachings from both Jan Žižka and the Táborite bishop, Nicholas of Pelhřimov, drove him out of Tábor. In an attempt to flee to his native Moravia, Húska was captured by a nobleman loyal to Žižka. Húska was subsequently tortured in an attempt to force him to recant his heresy. In August 1421, having refused to recant, he was burned to death upon the command of Žižka himself. After his execution, his friend and fellow-clergyman Vaclav Koranda apparently continued to spread his teachings, and the event generally contributed to the souring relations between Žižka and the radical clergy at Tábor.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

- Bartoš, František M., ed. *Listy Bratra Jana a Kronika velmi pěkná o Janu Žižkovi* [Letters of Brother Jan and the Very Pretty Chronicle of Jan Žižka]. Prague: Blahoslav, 1949.
- Fudge, Thomas A., ed. *The Crusade against the Heretics in Bohemia, 1418-1437: Sources and documents for the Hussite Crusades*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- Goll, Jaroslav, ed. *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 5. Prague: Nákladem nadání Františka Palackého, 1893.
- Grünhagen, Colmar, ed. "Geschichtsquellen der Hussitenkriege." In *Scriptores Rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. 6. Breslau: Josef Max & Co., 1871.
- Hirsch, Theodor, Max Töppen, and Ernst Strehlke, eds. *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, vol. 3. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1866.
- Höfler, Konstantin von, ed. "Geschichtschreiber der Husitischen Bewegung in Böhmen." In *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, vol. 2. Vienna: Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hof-und Staatsdruckerei, 1865.
- Macek, Josef, ed. *Ktož jsú Boží Bojovníci: Čtení o Táboře v Husitském Revolučním Hnutí*, [You Warriors of God: Readings about Tábor in the Hussite Revolutionary Movement] Prague: Melantrich, 1951.
- McGinn, Bernard. *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- Molnár, Amadeo, ed. *Husitské Manifesty* [Hussite Manifestos]. Prague: Odeon, 1986.
- Müntzer, Thomas. "Sermon to the Princes (or An Exposition of the Second Chapter of Daniel)." In *The Radical Reformation*. Edited and translated by Michael G. Baylor, 11-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Nejedlý, Zdeněk. *Dějiny Husitského Zpěvu za Válek Husitských* [History of Hussite Songs in the Hussite Wars]. Prague, 1913.
- Palacký, František, ed. *Archiv Český čili staré písemné památky české i moravské* [Czech Archives, or old written memories of Bohemia and Moravia], vol. 3. Prague: Kronberg and Riwnáče, 1844.

- _____, ed. *Archiv Český čili staré písemné památky české i moravské* [Czech Archives, or old written memories of Bohemia and Moravia], vol. 6. Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1872.
- _____, ed. *Documenta Mag. Joannis Hus vitam, doctrinam, causam in constantiensi concilio actam et controversias de religione in Bohemia annis 1403-1418 motas illustrantia*. Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1869.
- _____, ed. *Staří letopisové čessti, od roku 1378 do 1527* [Old Czech annalists from 1378 to 1527]. In *Scriptorum Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 3. Prague: J. S. Pospissila, 1829.
- _____, ed. *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte des Hussitenkrieges*, vol. 2. Prague: Friedrich Tempsky, 1873.
- _____, and Ernest Birk, eds. *Monumenta Conciliorum Generalium seculi Decimi Quinti*, vol. 1. Vienna: C. R. Officinae typographicae, 1857.
- Svejkovský, František, ed. *Staročeské vojenské řády* [Old Czech military ordinances]. Prague: Orbis, 1952.
- Vavřinec of Březová. *Husitská Kronika, Píseň o Vítězství u Domažlic* [Hussite Chronicle, the Song of the Victory at Domažlic]. Translated by František Heřmanský and Jan Blahoslav Čapek. Prague: Svoboda, 1979.

Secondary Sources:

- Bartoš, František M. *Do čtyř pražských artykulů: z myšlenkových a ústavních zápasů let 1415-1420* [Towards the Four Articles of Prague: From the intellectual and institutional struggle of the years 1415-1420]. Prague: Blahoslavova společnost, 1940.
- _____. *Manifesty města Prahy z doby Husitské* [Manifestos of the city of Prague in the Hussite period]. Prague, 1932.
- _____. “Nový list Prokopa Holého” [A new letter of Prokop Holý]. *Jihočeský Sborník Historický* VII (1934): 8-10.
- _____. “Táborské Bratrstvo let 1425-1426 na Soudě Svého Biskupa Mikuláše z Pelhřimova” [The Táborite Brotherhood in the years 1425-1426 in the Judgment of its Bishop Mikuláš of Pelhřimov]. *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností českých v Praze* 29 (1921): 102-22.

- _____. *The Hussite Revolution, 1424-1437*. Edited by John M. Klassen. Boulder: East European Monographs, 1986.
- _____. "Z bratislavské schůzky krále Zikmunda s husitskými vůdci r. 1429" [From the Bratislava meeting of King Sigismund with the Hussite leaders in 1429]. *Časopis Matice Moravské*, 49, (1925): 171-95.
- Cohn, Norman. *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. New Jersey: Fairlawn, 1957.
- Cook, William R. "Negotiations between the Hussites, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the Roman Church, 1427-36." *East Central Europe* 5, pt. 1 (1978): 90-104.
- _____. "The Kutná Hora Meeting of May, 1420: A Last Attempt to Preserve Peace in Bohemia." *Communio Viatorum* 17 (1974): 183-92.
- Fudge, Thomas A. "Crime, Punishment, and Pacifism in the Thought of Bishop Mikulaš of Pelhřimov, 1420-1452." In *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice*, vol. 3. Edited by Zdeněk V. David and David R. Holeton, 69-103. Prague: Main Library, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2000.
- _____. "'More Glory than Blood': Murder and Martyrdom in the Hussite Crusades." In *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice*, vol. 5 (1). Edited by Zdeněk V. David and David R. Holeton, 117-37. Prague: Main Library, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2004.
- _____. "Prokop in the Bath: Some Observations on the Liber diurnus de gestis Bohemorum in Concilio Basileensi." in *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice*, vol. 7. Edited by Zdeněk V. David and David R. Holeton, 139-55. Prague: Main Library, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2009.
- _____. *The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998.
- _____. "The Night of the Antichrist: Popular Culture, Judgment and Revolution in Fifteenth-Century Bohemia." *Communio Viatorum* 37 (1995): 33-45.
- _____. "The State of Hussite Historiography." *Mediaevistik* 7 (1994), 93-117.
- _____. "Žižka's Drum: The Political Uses of Popular Religion." *Central European History*, vol. 36, no. 4 (2003): 546-69.
- Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. 3-30. London: Fontana Press, 1993.

- Gill, Rosalind. "Discourse Analysis." In *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. Edited by M. Bauer and G. Gaskell, 172-89. London: Sage, 2000.
- Heymann, Frederick G. *John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.
- _____. "The National Assembly of Čáslav." *Medievalia et Humanistica* 8 (1954): 32-55.
- Holeton, David R. "Revelation and Revolution in Late Medieval Bohemia." *Communio Viatorum* 36 (1994): 29-45.
- Housley, Norman. *Religious Warfare in Europe: 1400-1536*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Hruza, Karel. "Die hussitischen Manifeste vom April 1420." *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 53 (1997): 119-77.
- Jacob, E. F. "The Bohemians at the Council of Basel." In *Prague Essays*. Edited by R. W. Seton-Watson, 81-123. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1949.
- Kaminsky, Howard. *A History of the Hussite Revolution*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967.
- _____. "Nicholas of Pelhřimov's Tábor: an Adventure into the Eschaton." In *Eschatologie und Hussitismus*. Edited by Alexander Patschovsky and František Šmahel, 139-67. Prague: Historický Ústav, 1996.
- _____. "Peter Chelčický: Treatises on Christianity and the Social Order." In *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, vol. 1. Edited by William M. Bowsky, 105-79. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.
- _____. "The Crusades against the Hussites." In *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 3. Edited by Harry W. Hazard, 585-647. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975.
- Kejř, Jiří. *Husité* [The Hussites]. Prague: Panorama, 1984.
- _____. "The Death Penalty during the Bohemian Wars of Religion." Translated by Zdeněk V. David. In *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice*, vol. 6. Edited by Zdeněk V. David and David R. Holeton, 143-63. Prague: Main Library, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 2007.
- Lerner, Robert E. "Medieval Millenarianism and Violence." In *Pace e Guerra Nel Basso Medioevo*. 37-52. Spoleto: Fondazione Centro Italiano Di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo, 2004.

- Lützow, Francis. *The Hussite Wars*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1914.
- Macek, Josef. *Husité na Baltu a ve Velkopolsku* [The Hussites in the Baltic and in Great Poland]. Prague: Nakladatelství Rovnost, 1952.
- _____. *Prokop Veliký* [Prokop the Great]. Prague: Naše Vojsko, 1953.
- _____. *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*. Translated by Vilem Fried and Ian Miller. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1965.
- Machilek, Franz, and Margarita Machilek. "St. Wenceslas: Cult and Iconography." In *Europe's Center Around AD 1000*. Edited by Alfried Wiczorek and Hans-Martin Hinz, 589-93. Stuttgart: Theiss, 2000.
- Potter, Jonathan, and Margaret Wetherell. "Unfolding Discourse Analysis." In *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*. Edited by Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor, and Simeon J. Yates, 198-209. London: Sage, 2001.
- Prokeš, Jaroslav. "Táborské manifesty z r. 1430 a 1431. Příspěvek k politice Prokopa Velikého." [Taborite manifestos from the years 1430 and 1431. A contribution to the politics of Prokop the Great]. *Časopis Matice Moravské* 52 (1928): 1-38.
- Reifferscheid, Alexander. *Neun Texte zur Geschichte der Religiösen Aufklärung in Deutschland während des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*. Greifswald: Festschrift der Universität Greifswald, 1905.
- Riedl, Matthias. "Eschatology." In *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. Edited by Maryanne Cline Horowitz, 708-10. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005.
- Šmahel, František. *Idea Národa v Husitských Čechách* [The Idea of the Nation in Hussite Bohemia]. Prague: Argo, 2000.
- _____. "The Idea of the 'Nation' in Hussite Bohemia" vol. 1. *Historica* 16 (1969): 143-247.
- Schwarz, Reinhard. *Die apokalyptische Theologie Thomas Müntzers und der Taboriten*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr / Paul Siebeck, 1977.
- Urbánek, Rudolf. *Lipany a Konec Polních Vojsk* [Lipany and the End of the Field Armies]. Prague: Melantrich A. S., 1934.
- Voegelin, Eric. *The Collected works of Eric Voegelin. Volume 5: Modernity Without Restraint*. Translated by Virginia Ann Schildhauer. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000.