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A Neglected Eucharistic Controversy: The Afterlife of John Wyclif's Eucharistic Thought in Bohemia in the Early Fifteenth Century

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The renewed interest in John Wyclif (d. 1384) has brought this late medieval figure back into the spotlight of historians, giving rise to numerous studies evaluating his thought and its implications in the context of late fourteenth century England. However, it is not possible fully to appreciate Wyclif's importance in late medieval European culture without understanding the legacy of his ideas on the continent. According to the accepted narrative, John Wyclif's thought was mediated to the continent through the scholarly contacts between the universities in Oxford and in Prague, and re-emerged in the Latin writings of Jan Hus. This article argues that John Wyclif's thought, especially his critique of the church's doctrine of transubstantiation, found a larger audience among the rural clerics and laity in Bohemia, whom it reached through Peter Payne, who simplified and disseminated the works of the Oxford master. Wyclif's critique of transubstantiation sparked a nationwide debate about the nature of the Eucharist, generating numerous treatises, both in Latin and in the vernacular, on the subject of Christ's presence in the sacrament of the mass. This debate anticipated, a full century earlier, the famous debate between Luther and Zwingli and the Eucharistic debates of the sixteenth century Reformation more generally. The proliferation of vernacular Eucharistic tractates in Bohemia shows that Wyclif's critique of transubstantiation could be answered in a number of different ways that included both real presence (however defined) and figurative theologies—a fact, which, in turn, explains the doctrinal diversity among the Lollards in England.

I. Introduction

The renewed interest in John Wyclif (d. 1384) has given rise to numerous studies evaluating his thought and its implications in the context of late fourteenth-century England.[1] In England, the rise of Lollardy, a popular

[1]For recent collections or monographs on Wyclif, see, Ian Christopher Levy, ed. *A Companion to John Wyclif: Late Medieval Theologian* (Boston: Brill, 2006); Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks, eds. *From Ockham to Wyclif* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); Ian Christopher Levy, "A contextualized Wyclif: Magister Sacrae Paginae" in *Wycliffite Controversies,* eds. Mishtooni

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movement inspired by Wyclif's understanding of the sacraments and the Scripture, has been well studied, but Wyclif's influence on the continent during his life and after his death remains poorly understood. According to the accepted narrative, John Wyclif's thought was mediated to the continent through the scholarly contacts between the universities in Oxford and in Prague, and re-emerged in the Latin writings of Jan Hus, especially his *De Ecclesia*. This article corrects the accepted narrative in two important ways. It shows that John Wyclif's thought, especially his critique of the church's doctrine of transubstantiation, found a larger audience not at the university (as had been believed) but among the rural clerics and laity in Bohemia, whom it reached not through the writings of Jan Hus but through Peter Payne, and his simplifications of the Oxford master. Once in Bohemia, Wyclif's critique of transubstantiation spurred a lively theological debate, generating numerous treatises, both in Latin and in the vernacular, both learned and rudimentary, on the subject of the Eucharist. These debates anticipated, a full century earlier, the famous debate between Luther and Zwingli and the Eucharistic debates of the sixteenth century Reformation more generally. The main question revolved around the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament. A majority of the reformers in Bohemia agreed that Christ was really present in the sacrament, but each defined real presence differently.[2] The Utraquists or the Prague faction (and later Luther) explained it as real presence of a corporeal kind, whereas members of the radical commune at Tabor (and later Zwingli) believed in real presence of a spiritual kind. A small minority, that is, adherents to a group called the Pikarts (and later the Reformed tradition), saw the sacrament as a mere symbol. In Bohemia, this debate peaked in the 1420s but Wyclif's ideas continued to exert influence well into the 1500s. This article seeks to correct the prevailing view that the next Eucharistic controversy after Lateran IV was not until the sixteenth century,[3] to use the array of extant written responses to show the breadth of Eucharistic speculation (much of it deemed

Bose and J. Patrick Hornbeck II (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 33–57; Stephen Lahey, *Philosophy and Politics in the thought of John Wyclif* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Lahey, *John* Wyclif (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). See also Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Trial Procedures against Wyclif and Wycliffites in England and at the Council of Constance," *Huntington Library Quaterly* 61, no. 1 (1998): 1–28; and Katherine Walsh, "Wyclif's Legacy in Central Europe," in *From Ockham to Wyclif*, eds. Hudson and Wilks (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 397–417.

[2]Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 82.

[3]Wandel, *The Eucharist*, 22, claims that after Lateran IV, "[u]ntil the 16th century, there would not be another 'Eucharistic controversy' on the question of Christ's presence in the Eucharist even as individual theologians would grapple with the conundra of real presence." See also Peter Browe, *Die Eucharistischen Wunder des Mittelalters* (Breslau: Verlag Müller & Seiffert, 1938), 192ff.

heretical), and to illustrate how even conflicting views of the Eucharist (and, specifically, God's presence in the Eucharist) could arise from Wyclif's critique of the mass.

II. Wyclif and Hus

While all other aspects of Wyclif's thought and influence have recently received additional consideration and even reappraisal, the understanding of Wyclif's influence on the continent, specifically in Bohemia, remains essentially unchanged since the 1950s. According to this understanding, John Wyclif's most successful follower and the continuator of his work in Bohemia was Jan Hus and it was Hus, who popularized Wyclif there. Jan Hus (d. 1415) was a university master and a popular preacher in the vernacular, who galvanized large numbers of the laity in Prague and across Bohemia in favor of church reform. From his pulpit in Bethlehem chapel in Prague, Hus preached against clerical greed, simony and moral corruption, arguing that the laity did not have to obey those priests whom they believed to live immorally. Hus had a charismatic presence and drew skillfully on contemporary discontent with an institution that seemed to have lost its moral compass. It is no surprise that he encountered opposition from his fellow clergy and had to face a number of accusations of heresy and misconduct. What proved most damaging, however, was Hus's support of Wyclif against Prague's archbishop Zbyněk, who organized the burning of Wyclif's books in Prague in 1410. It was Hus's dedication to Wyclif's ideas, especially his vision of the church as *communitas praedestinatorum*, which led to his death sentence for heresy by the judges at Constance in July 1415. However, Hus never embraced Wyclif's critique of transubstantiation and never preached it.[4]

A number of studies, comparing the life, careers and beliefs of Hus and Wyclif, these two prominent late medieval reformers, seemed to confirm the impression that it was Hus, who popularized Wyclif in Bohemia. The first comparison between Wyclif and Hus appeared with Johann Loserth's

[4]In 1409, Hus was accused of having preached Wyclif's error (doctrine of remanence) as early as 1399. He denied the charge and his writings support him. From his discussion of the Eucharist in the fourth book of his *Commentary on the Sentences* to his final treatise on the subject, *De cena domini*, written in 1415 from his jail in Constance, Hus held to the orthodox position of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine. He was opposed by some of his colleagues (such as Stephen Páleč and Stanislav of Znojmo, leaders of the Wycliffite faction at the University until 1408), who only later recanted. Gordon Leff, "Wyclif and Hus: A Doctrinal Comparison," *John Rylands Library* 50, no. 2 (1967–1968): 387–410.

magisterial study *Huss und Wiclif*, published in 1884.[5] In it, Loserth undertook a painstaking comparison between Hus's and Wyclif's Latin works, taking passages from Hus and setting them side-by-side identical passages from Wyclif. Based on the frequency of such borrowing, he concluded that Hus was a plagiarist, completely unoriginal, and that his thought was completely derivative from Wyclif.[6] What is important here is the fact that Loserth's work, informed as it was by nationalistic sentiments, shifted the focus of the debate to questions of Hus's originality, with the notion that Hus had transmitted Wyclif becoming implicit in the very conversation.

A number of prominent historians weighed in on this question, but not in a way that questioned the original assumption. They essentially followed the same lines of inquiry, tallying up how much Hus had borrowed from Wyclif and then offering an interpretation of that borrowing. Jan Sedlák looked at both Latin and Czech texts by Hus and established, once and for all, that Hus had borrowed extensively from Wyclif in both his Latin and his Czech works.[7] None of the Czech scholars agreed with Loserth's reading of Hus as completely unoriginal in all respects, but rather argued that the same ideas had long before been present in the native reform (Novotný) or that drawing on Wyclif's works gave the native ideas more cache in the intellectual milieu of the time (Bartoš).[8] Some went even further, arguing that the Hussite reform had developed completely independently of Wyclif's writings, that it grew out of local reform tradition native to Bohemia. In the English-speaking scholarship, this view was championed by S. Harrison Thomson and his son Williell Thomson.[9] Other, more balanced, assessments that allowed Wyclif to have a role in the Hussite reform while affirming the importance of the native roots and traditions soon emerged as well.[10]

[5]Loserth, *Huss und Wiclif* (Prague and Leipzig, 1884), trans. M.J. Evans as *Wyclif and Hus* (London, 1884); 2nd ed., (Munich and Berlin, 1925).

[6]For a thoughtful contextualization of Loserth's work and an incisive critique of his argument, see R.R. Betts, "English and Čech Influences on the Hussite Movement," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., 21 (1939): 71–102.

[7]Jan Sedlák, *Studie a Texty k Náboženským Dějinám Českým*, vols. 1–2 (Prague: Nákl. Matice Cyrilometodějské, 1914, 1915).

[8]Václav Novotný, *Mistr Jan Hus: Život a Dílo*, 2 vols. (Prague: Laichter, 1919–21), and also F.M. Bartoš, "Hus a Viklef" in *Husitství a Cizina* (Prague: Čin, 1931). See also Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 36fn109.

[9]S. Harrison Thomson, "Pre-Hussite Heresy in Bohemia," *English Historical Review* 48 (January 1933): 24–42, and, more recently, S. Harrison Thomson, "Learning at the Court of Charles IV," *Speculum* 25, no. 1 (1950): 1–20.

[10]See, for example, Josef Macek, *Die Hussitenbewegung in Böhmen* (Prague: Orbis, 1965); František Seibt, *Bohemica. Probleme und Literatur seit 1945*, HZ Sonderheft 4 (München: W. Kienast, 1970), 73–99. More recent works acknowledge the similarity of thought between Hus and Wyclif while affirming important differences, for example Hus's rejection of Wyclif's view of the Eucharist. See, for example, Leff, "Wyclif and Hus," 387–410; M. J. Wilks, "*Reformatio*

This is not to suggest that the degree of Hus's indebtedness to Wyclif is not an important debate. However, these debates against Loserth, which were very heated especially in the decades around the creation of independent Czechoslovakia, have led scholars off track in one important respect: by solidifying the assumption that Jan Hus served as the main vehicle of Wyclif's thought in Bohemia. This assumption has also found its way into the work of Gordon Leff, an important scholar of late medieval heresy, who concluded that "[h]owever remotely Wyclif may have inspired the reformers of the 16th century, there can be no doubt that his main influence was upon Hus and the formation of the Hussite movement."[11] It is a red herring of the modern scholarship on late medieval heresy and needs to be dislodged. This can be accomplished by bringing attention to a new set of Eucharistic treatises, some of them unpublished, written, mostly in the vernacular, in response to Wyclif's writings and circulated among the rural clergy and laity by the efforts of another man, the English Wycliffite Peter Payne.[12] This, previously unexamined, fifteenth-century vernacular conversation about the Eucharist that anticipated the Eucharistic disagreements among the sixteenth-century reformers is the subject of this article. In the larger picture, this article begins to trace a new understanding of Wyclif's impact on the Bohemian reformation, one that does not take Hus as its starting point.

III. Wyclif Divides The University In Prague

John Wyclif's thought, especially his critique of the church's doctrine of transubstantiation, found a larger audience among the rural clerics and laity in Bohemia than at the university, and it reached them not through the writings of Jan Hus but through Peter Payne, and his simplifications of Wyclif's works. The story of Wyclif in Bohemia begins at the usual place, the university of Prague, but with the important caveat that it did not end there. In fact, because the masters in Prague never managed to agree about Wyclif, or even to agree to disagree about him, the arguments eventually spilled into the vernacular, with different masters writing against Wyclif or in support of him.

With the scholars at the university in Prague, Wyclif's teaching enjoyed a relationship that can only be described as complicated. Wyclif's works first

Regni: Wyclif and Hus as leaders of religious protest movements," in *Wyclif: Political Ideas and Practice* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2000), 63–84.

[11]Leff, "Wyclif and Hus, 389.

[12]Six of the Latin tractates have been edited in Josef Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické: Texty* (Brno: Otisk z Hlídky, 1918), but the vernacular ones remain unedited.

arrived in Prague in the 1380s, reaching a critical mass in the 1390s, and the reception was a complicated and strife-ridden affair. But the scholarly exchange was nothing unusual. England and Bohemia had been enjoying a period of rich cultural and religious cross-pollination that started with the outbreak of the Great Schism in 1378, which diverted Czech students from Paris (obedient to the Avignonese popes) to England (which, like Bohemia, remained loyal to the popes in Rome). This new affinity intensified in the wake of Richard II's marriage to Anne of Bohemia in 1382. The universities in Prague and Oxford benefited from this new connection, with numerous academic exchanges of students as well as books and with a new scholarship for Czech students studying at Oxford.[13] Brought back from England by Jerome of Prague, Wyclif's tractates, such as *Dialogus*, *Trialogus* and two unspecified Eucharistic tractates (possibly *De Eucharistia* and *De Apostasia*), began to circulate around the university launching a serious study and discussion of Wyclif's ideas there, especially of his teaching about the nature of the church.[14] Wyclif's teachings, in particular his philosophy of extreme Realism, found an eager and accepting audience among the Czech masters at the university in Prague.[15] Since then, it not only gave a unifying program to the pro-reform masters at the University (answering many of their questions that were already in the air but that had stumped the Czech-speaking

[13]Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 195.

[14]Hudson thinks that Jerome brought with him *De Eucharistia* and *De Apostasia* or two shorter tractates, Anne Hudson, "From Oxford to Prague: The Writings of John Wyclif and his followers in Bohemia," *Slavonic and East European Review* 75, No. 4 (1997), 642–57, 646. See also Michael Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia: Heresy and Communication in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 69–70; František Šmahel, "Wyclif's Fortunes in Hussite Bohemia," in *The Charles University in the Middle Ages*, ed. František Šmahel (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 472. Elsewhere, Šmahel speculates that Jerome made another trip to England, see František Šmahel, "Leben und Werk des Magisters Hieronymus von Prag," *Historica* 13 (1966): 81–111, 89.

[15]Herold put the entire discourse about Wyclif into context at the Prague university, looking at debates and tractates written about Wyclif's *De Ideis* by Czech masters. He found that they all wrote about *De Ideis*, and their tractates show that the influence of Wyclif was not unique. Vilém Herold, *Pražská Univerzita a Wyclif* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1985), 267. See also Vilém Herold, "Zum Prager Philosophischen Wyclifismus," in *Häresie und Vorzeitige Reformation im Spätmittelalter*, ed. František Šmahel and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (München: Oldenbourg, 1998), 133–146. For a detailed, chronological account of Wyclif's reception at the Prague university, see Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution* II, 788–831; and Šmahel, "Husitská univerzita" in *Stručné dějiny university Karlovy* (Prague, 1964), 44–76. See also Kaminsky, *A Hussite Revolution*, 23–35; and Katherine Walsh, "Vom Wegestreit zur Häresie: Zur Auseinandersetzung um die Lehre John Wyclifs in Wien und Prag an der Wende zum 15. Jahrhundert," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 94 (1986), 25–47. For a list of manuscripts of Wyclif's philosophical works that are of Czech provenance, see Šmahel, *Verzeichnis der Quellen zum Prager Universalienstreit 1348–1500* (Wroclaw, 1980), 10–17, and Williell Thomson, *The Latin Writings of John Wyclyf: An Annotated Catalog* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983).

reformers), but also became intertwined with the Czech-German antagonism at the university, giving a distinct voice to the Czech minority there over and against the prevailing philosophy of nominalism among their German colleagues.[16]

But the university masters in Prague never managed to reach a consensus about Wyclif back in the 1380s and 1390s. The question of the role that Wyclif's teachings ought to play in the reform in Bohemia had been discussed numerous times: the university debated the question in different ways ranging from official quodlibeta to informal conversations but no agreement was reached.[17] The failure to agree about Wyclif, and even to present a unified front regarding his teachings would come to haunt the masters in subsequent decades as the disagreements moved with the masters from the university into the reform leadership and later among the laity.

Inside the reform leadership, opinions about Wyclif were deeply divided and the pro-reform university masters parted ways over the question of Wyclif's ideas, particularly his teaching about the Eucharist, soon after the death of John Hus in 1415. The arrival of Wyclif's follower Peter Payne (also called Peter English, Petrus Anglicus or Petrus Clericus) in Prague in 1414 exacerbated the divisions. Payne, a Wycliffite master of arts from Oxford, quickly established himself inside the reform leadership.[18] Owing to the fact that he was an outsider, who never learned the vernacular, Payne was from the very start (and especially between 1420 and 1433) employed as a diplomat and arranged negotiations on all levels (with theologians, with crusade leaders, and with king Sigismund).[19] Payne quickly rose to the top leadership of the Utraquist faction, enjoying the friendship and trust of leaders like Jakoubek of Stříbro and John of Rokycany, even acting as the

[16]Šmahel, "Wyclif's Fortunes," 472 and 482; Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movement from Bogomil to Hus* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 318.

[17]Howard Kaminsky, "The University of Prague in the Hussite Revolution: the Role of the Masters," in *Universities in Politics: Case Studies from the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period*, ed. John Baldwin and Richard Goldthwaite (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 79–106, 82; Howard Kaminsky, *A Hussite Revolution*, 239.

[18]Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia*, 70–75; William R. Cook, "Peter Payne: Theologian and Diplomat of the Hussite Revolution" (PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1971), main biographical details summarized in Rita Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals, and Dissent in the Later Middle Ages: Lollardy and Ideas of Learning* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); J.V. Polišenský, ed., *Addresses and Essays in Commemoration of the Life and Works of the English Hussite Peter-Payne-Engliš 1456–1956* (Prague: Charles University, 1957); F.M. Bartoš, *M. Petr Payne Diplomat Husitské Revoluce* (Prague: Kalich, 1956). See also R. R. Betts, "Peter Payne in England," *Essays in Czech History* (London: Athlone Press, 1969), 236–246, 238. On Payne's Oxford career, see also A.B. Emden, *An Oxford Hall in Medieval Times* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), and more recently David R. Holeton, "Wyclif's Bohemian Fate: A Reflection on the Contextualization of Wyclif in Bohemia," *Communio Viatorum* 32 (1989): 209–222.

[19]Bartoš, *M. Petr Payne*, 22.

faction's official representative at the Council of Basel, where he defended one of the four Prague articles, on secular property of clergy, drawing, naturally, on Wyclif in his defense.[20] Payne's allegiance to the Oxford reformer re-opened the old battle about Wyclif inside the reform leadership, but this time the disagreements would not remain confined to the learned circles.

To his university colleagues' great chagrin, Payne worked toward popularizing Wyclif's teachings among non-academics, and the disagreements that were previously confined to Latin (and to the university milieu) soon trickled into the vernacular.[21] Within a few years of Hus's death, several separate pro-reform communities arose: there were the Utraquists (also called the Prague party), who were connected to the university and the pro-reform nobility, the Taborites, who founded their own commune called Tabor in Southern Bohemia, and the Pikarts, a small but defiant faction inside the Tabor. Each of these groups followed a different blueprint for reform, with the Eucharist quickly becoming the most divisive issue.[22] These doctrinal divisions corresponded to some extent, though not entirely, to the formal divisions among the reformers in Bohemia: the Utraquist leaders in Prague tended to adhere to the church's understanding of the Eucharist (though insisted that the chalice be served also to the laity) whereas most leaders at the newly formed commune at Tabor openly professed and defended a Wycliffite understanding of the Eucharist (only to watch their own commune be torn asunder by a vocal minority called the Pikarts, who would later see the Eucharist merely as a symbol.)[23]

Bohemia in the early 1420s epitomized the dangers regarding Wyclif's Eucharistic teachings that anti-Wycliffite writers in England, such as Thomas Netter (a Carmelite priest and a prominent polemicist and participant in anti-Wycliffite debates and heresy trials and, in his own view, a defender of the true religion) had warned about decades earlier when describing the situation

[20]Bartoš, *M. Petr Payne*, 31.

[21]For a complete list of Payne's works, see F.M. Bartoš, *Literární Činnost M. Jana Rokycana, M. Jana Příbrama, M. Petra Payne* (Prague, 1928).

[22]On medieval mass, see the following seminal works: John Bossy, "The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200–1700," *Past and Present* 100 (August 1983): 29–61; Henri de Lubac, *Corpus mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'eglise au moyen âge* (Paris: Aubier, 1949); Gary Macy, "The 'Dogma of Transubstantiation' in the Middle Ages," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 45, no. 1 (1994): 11–41; James F. McCue, "The Doctrine of Transubstantiation from Berengar through Trent," *Harvard Theological Review* 61, no. 3 (1968): 385–430; Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[23]For information on the commune at Tabor, see Howard Kaminsky, "The Religion of Hussite Tabor," in *The Czechoslovak Contribution to World Culture*, ed. M. Rechcígl (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), 210–223; Kaminsky, "Hussite Radicalism and the Origins of Tabor, 1415–1418," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 10 (1956): 102–30; František Šmahel, *Die Hussitische Revolution*, vol. II (Hannover: Hahn, 2002, 1007–1366; Šmahel et al., *Dějiny Tábora: do Roku 1421* (České Budějovice, 1988); and Šmahel et al., *Dějiny Tábora: 1422–1452* (České Budějovice, 1990).

in England.[24] The fierce debates about the nature of the Eucharist that raged among the Utraquist university masters and the fierce vernacular campaign that followed confirmed that "sacramental disputes had ecclesiological ramifications and, in a polity where the church was so pervasive, political implications."[25]

IV. Peter Payne: Wyclif's Tireless Popularizer

Wyclif's thought, or at least an awareness of Wyclif, trickled outside of the university even before Peter Payne's arrival in Prague. The question of Wyclif ceased to be an exclusively university affair as early as 1410, in part thanks to the archbishop's efforts to eradicate the Oxford master's teaching from the university. Few things stir up urban audiences like a public book burning, and so when archbishop Zbyněk in Prague decided to humiliate Wyclif's teaching in this particular way, he inadvertently popularized Wyclif's name with the urban crowd. The burning of Wyclif's books on June 16, 1410 in Prague radicalized the university masters as well: they did not hand over all of Wyclif's books, and, in a gesture of open defiance, they convened for what would be the first major disputation of Wyclif at the university soon after the book burning, thus making it clear that they, unlike the archbishop, thought that Wyclif's teachings were worth engaging with on the highest intellectual level.[26]

The laity could hardly ignore such a public spectacle, and the pro-Wyclif masters soon learned how to egg them on, composing vernacular songs mocking the archbishop Zbyněk, who had presided over the proceedings.[27] They used the occasion of the book burning to smear the archbishop with songs such as this one: "Zbyněk, bishop ABCD/ burned the books, and didn't know/what was written in them." The composition, most likely sung, mocks Zbyněk's illiteracy, calling him "abeceda" [alphabet] suggesting that

[24]David Aers, *Sanctifying Signs: Making Christian Tradition in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 2–3. For more information about Netter, see Johan Bergstrom-Alenn and Richard Copsey, ed. *Thomas Netter of Walden: Carmelite, Diplomat and Theologian* (Faversham: St. Albert's Press, 2009).

[25]Aers, *Sanctifying Signs*, 4.

[26]For a list of books that got burned (a fraction of all Wyclif's books in Prague), see Václav Flajšhans, "Spálení Knih Viklefových r. 1410," *Český časopis historický* 42 (1936): 77–88. See also Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia*, 63.

[27]For a discussion of ways in which polemical songs were used by leaders of the Hussite movement, see Marcela K. Perett, "Vernacular Songs as 'Oral Pamphlets:' The Hussites and their Propaganda Campaign," *Viator* 42, no. 2 (2011): 371–391. Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia*, 63–85. Van Dussen argues that "the popularization of Wyclif in Prague went hand-in-hand with continued Bohemian communication with English Lollards" (65). This is possible, though to me it seems more like a result of a thought-out, targeted campaign.

he barely knew his ABCs yet insisted on burning books whose content he could not possibly understand.[28] Ironically, it was thanks to the archbishop's attempt to be rid of Wyclif's books once and for all that the name of Wyclif entered on the radar screen of the laity in Prague. The book burning also exacerbated the existing divisions in the society, with some openly supporting the decision of the archbishop and others siding with reform-minded, pro-Wyclif, clerics.[29]

By 1420, many of Wyclif's works were translated into the vernacular and spread outside the immediate orbit of the Prague university. Between 1415 and 1416, Jakoubek, an Utraquist leader, translated Wyclif's *Dialogus*, with translations of *Trialogus* and *De dominio civili* following shortly after.[30] The first two were especially important, as they had become collections of Wyclif's thought on many different subjects, both popular and academic.[31]

But it was Peter Payne, who arrived in Prague in 1414 and quickly established himself in the reform leadership there, whose written works served to defend and popularize Wyclif. Not much is known about Payne's early life other than that he was born sometime between 1380 and 1390 in Hough near Stamford in Lincolnshire and came to the University of Oxford in 1398 or 1399 and took the degree of Master of Arts, eventually becoming the principal of St. Edmund's Hall.[32] He left England just as heretical trials against Wycliffites intensified and the university could no longer hold out against the interference from Archbishop Arundel, wishing to eradicate Wycliffism in 1411. Arundel reserved special vengeance for Payne, who was at that time suspected of having advised John Oldham, the leading Lollard laymen, to lead an armed insurrection. The details of Payne's departure from England are hazy, but it seems that Payne left just after the archbishop cited him to appear to answer charges of heresy and treason in September of 1413.[33] His prominence among the Wycliffites at Oxford as well as his prior contacts with Czech pro-reform masters and students (Jerome of Prague,

[28]"Sbyněk biskup abeceda/ spálil kniehy, a nevěda, co je v nich napsáno." Daňhelka, ed., *Husitské písně* (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1952), 131–132; see also Zdeněk Nejedlý, *Počátky Husitského Zpěvu*, 419–20.

[29]Šimek and Kaňák, *Staré Letopisy České z Rukopisu Křížovnického* (Prague: Státní nakl. Krásné lit., hudby a umění, 1959), 42: "O to byla veliká bauřka a ruoznice. Někteří pravili, že jest mnoho jiných kněh spáleno nežli Viglefových, a proto se lidé búřili v ty časy, a najviece královi dvořané, na kanovníky a na kněží, a s nimi obecně všickni lidé v Praze, neb jedni drželi s kanovníky, a druzí s mistrem Husí, takže mezi sebú písně hančivé skládali jedni o druhých. A od té chvíle veliká nechut mezi lidmi vzrostla." Cited in Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia*, 172–173.

[30]Šmahel, "Wyclif's Fortunes," 478–481.

[31]Hudson, "From Oxford to Prague," 646. See also Hudson, "The Survival of Wyclif's Works in England and Bohemia," in *Studies in the Transmission of Wyclif's Writings*, ed. Anne Hudson (Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 7.

[32]Matthew Spinka, "Paul Kravař and the Lollard-Hussite Relations," *Church History* 25, no. 1 (1956): 17.

[33]Betts, "Peter Payne," 242–43.

Mikuláš Faulfiš, Jiří of Kněhyně) no doubt gave him adequate credentials to start over in Bohemia.[34] But it was not all easy. Although he was a Master of Arts (as of 1406), Payne had difficulty joining the university in Prague (which had in 1412 condemned 45 articles of Wyclif and had no place for Wycliffite masters) and did not succeed until February 1417.[35]

Upon his arrival in Prague, Payne helped Jakoubek, the recognized successor of Jan Hus at the helm of the reform movement, by writing a defense of the lay chalice in February 1415.[36] The practice of lay chalice, that is offering communion in both kinds, bread and wine, to the laity, was not related to Wyclif's critique of transubstantiation, but it was the signature practice of the Czech reform movement. Jakoubek began offering the chalice to the laity after Hus had left for Constance in the fall of 1414, and in doing so drew on the domestic reform tradition, whose representatives (such as Matthew of Janov) had advocated for frequent communion since the end of the fourteenth century. The practice was approved by both the ecclesiastical synod and the archbishop of Prague and, by the early fifteenth century, frequent communion was widespread across Bohemia.[37] By writing on behalf of the lay chalice, Payne had proven useful to the Utraquist party (from *sub utraque specie*, communion under both kinds) even though after his initial defense of the lay chalice, he wrote almost exclusively in defense of Wyclif.

Payne explained, glossed and simplified Wyclif's teachings for an extra-university audience in Bohemia. He also wrote a number of registers, a kind of present-day concordances with short entries, ordered alphabetically, followed by references taken from Wyclif's works.[38] A manuscript held by

[34]Based on Emden, *An Oxford Hall*.

[35]Bartoš, *M. Petr Payne*, 19.

[36]Ibid., 17–18.

[37]Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen Westerfield Tucker, eds. *The Oxford history of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 313–25; Paul De Vooght, *Jacobellus de Stribro: Premier Théologien du Hussitisme* (Louvain, 1972); Zdeněk V. David, *Finding the Middle Way: The Utraquists' Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); David Holeton, "The Bohemian Eucharistic Movement in its European context," *Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 1 (1996): 32–47; Helena Krmíčková, "The 15th Century Origins of Lay Communion *Sub Utraque* in Bohemia," *Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 2 (1997): 57–65.

[38]Šmahel is of the opinion that Payne did not start working on the registers until sometime in 1426, a view that strikes me as untenable. Šmahel, "Wyclif's Fortunes," 486–489. In contrast, Cook argues that Payne was involved in the development of Taborite theology from the early 1420s, which also supports my hypothesis that Payne brought them with him from England. Cook, "John Wyclif," 338. On indexes of Wyclif's works in general, see Anne Hudson, "Contributions to a History of Wycliffite Writings," in *Lollards and their Books*, ed. Anne Hudson (London: Hambledon Press, 1985). Indexes, covering all the major theological writings of Wyclif and two philosophical tracts survive in Bohemian manuscripts, with some of them attributed to Peter Payne.

the National Library in Prague (X.E.11) contains nineteen registers of Wyclif's treatises, all of them quite extensive.[39] For example, the register of Wyclif's *Decalogus* (*De Mandatis Divinis*), which is also the longest one in this particular manuscript (206r-230v), contains about 2,115 entries, each referring to specific chapter and subchapter in a collection of Wyclif's works.[40] It would, therefore, have been useless without access to the complete works of Wyclif, organized and divided up in an identical way. The scope of the enterprise and its complexity suggest that Payne had brought the registers with him when he came from England (along with some works by Wyclif),[41] which in turn suggests that he had intended to spread Wyclif's thought all along; one can hardly imagine that such a detailed, erudite and painstaking work could be undertaken after his arrival in Prague as had been suggested.[42] But the effort paid off. Payne was elevated to the role of Wyclif's chief interpreter in Bohemia, much to the dislike of Wyclif's opponents at the university there. John Příbram, an Utraquist master who detested Wyclif's rising influence, of whose efforts to combat Wyclif's influence more will be said in the following section, summed up Payne's role in this way: "Wherever Wyclif was obscure or incomplete, Payne explained him."[43] In fact, Payne's registers were so well accepted that Wyclif's entire treatises were almost unknown in some places, for example in the commune at Tabor.[44]

Of Wyclif's extensive *oeuvre*, it was Payne's popularization of Wyclif's critique of the Eucharist that gave rise to extensive Eucharistic debates in Bohemia in the course of the 1420s and beyond. Payne's arrival pre-dates the Eucharistic debates in Bohemia. And although some reformers, such as Stephen Páleč and Stanislav of Znojmo, who led the Wycliffite faction at the University until 1408, preached the Wycliffite doctrine of remanence, these were isolated incidents – nothing like a public debate. It was Wyclif—through Payne—who instigated these debates by identifying philosophical weak points inherent in the doctrine of transubstantiation, which cleared the way for new attempts to define Christ's presence in the sacrament. However,

[39]The attribution to Payne occurs in Prague University Library, X.E.11, which consists entirely of Wyclif's indexes, attributed to Payne by name. Other manuscripts containing registers of Wyclif's work are: Prague Cathedral Library, C. 118; Vienna National Library, MSS 3933 and 4514; Vienna National Library, MSS 4536.

[40]This register is printed in John Wyclif, *De Mandatis and De Statu Innocencie*, eds. Johann Loserth and F.D. Matthews (London, 1922), 537–67. Cook, "John Wyclif," 339fn25.

[41]See also Betts, "Peter Payne," 245.

[42]Cook, "John Wyclif," 340; and, by implication, Šmahel, "Wyclif's Fortunes," 486–89.

[43]"que Wiclef obscure posuit, iste explanavit et que ille refusis verborum sentenciis protulit, iste breviatis proposicionum compendiis sumavit." *Articuli heretici . . . M. Petri Dicti Anglici*, Prague Cathedral Library MS D. 49, f. 170a, quoted in Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 15.

[44]Jan Sedlák, "O Táborských Traktátech Eucharistických," *Hlídka* 30 (1913): 200–201.

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Wyclif's critique also opened the door to the very same kinds of speculation that transubstantiation was supposed to squash,[45] namely questions such as that posed by Berengar of Tours in the eleventh century, who argued that if Christ had died and was seated at the right hand of the Father, then his body and blood could not actually be present at the altar.[46] Transubstantiation was later supposed to resolve Berengar's dilemma about Christ's location and explain why Christ's body still looked and tasted like a wheaten host.[47] However, with the doctrine of transubstantiation out of the way, the same doubts emerged again in the early fifteenth century, with the priests at Tabor asking exactly the same questions that Berengar had posed four centuries previously.

Wyclif's critique proved enormously influential because it could be boiled down to a couple of questions, which Payne's work made intelligible to wider audiences and which the different authors then attempted to answer on their own. The conversation as reflected in these extant tractates revolved around two seemingly simple queries: In what way is Christ present in the sacrament? Where is Christ located? (Or, put more specifically, is he to be found on the altar or in heaven, and, if both, how can he be located in more than one place at once?) Different answers to these questions, answers based on different kinds of authorities, gave rise to the spectrum of Eucharistic beliefs present in Bohemia in the 1420s—from transubstantiation to the sacrament as a symbol.

It was Wyclif's critique of the church's teaching on transubstantiation—or, more specifically, the set of questions that it generated—that drove the Eucharistic discourse in Bohemia.[48] While affirming that Christ's body was truly present in the sacrament, the disagreement turned on the way in which that body was present: physically and corporeally (according to Utraquists and later Luther) or spiritually and sacramentally (according to Taborites and later Zwingli). However, according to the church's official teaching, at the

[45]On the debates that preceded Lateran IV, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 184–204.

[46]Gary Macy, "The Theological Fate of Berengar's Oath of 1059: Interpreting Blunder Become Tradition," in *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 20–35.

[47]Wandel, *The Eucharist*, 22.

[48]This analysis of Wyclif's contribution is based on the following recent works on Wyclif: Stephen Lahey, *John Wyclif* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), ch. 3; Lahey, "Late Medieval Eucharistic Theology" in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages*, ed. Ian Christopher Levy (Brill, 2011), 499–538; J. Patrick Hornbeck II, *What is a Lollard?: Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 70–101, where he summarizes Wyclif's *Confessio*. For an English summary of Wyclif's *De Eucharistia*, see Aers, *Sanctifying Signs*, 53–65. For a Latin edition, see *De Eucharistia: De eucharistia tractatus maior*, ed. J. Loserth (London: Wyclif Society, 1892).

moment of consecration, the Eucharistic species of bread and wine turn into the body and blood of Christ.[49] Their appearance remains, because—as Aquinas explained using Aristotelian categories—the accidents of the bread remain but "they cease to inhere in any substance, since they cannot continue to be related to the bread, which has substantially changed to become body."[50] This explanation of how the substance of the bread changes into the substance of Christ's body while retaining its original appearance proved insurmountable to Wyclif. For complicated reasons that have been adequately discussed elsewhere, Wyclif could not accept Aquinas's teaching of what happens at consecration, especially the suggestion that one substance (Christ's body) completely replaces another (bread).[51] In Wyclif's view, to teach that "the Eucharist consists of accidents without a subject, even if such thing is philosophically possible, is to debase and dishonor the body of Christ."[52] He thought such a view was both unscriptural and metaphysically impossible. Instead, he argued that the material bread (and its substance) remained in the sacrament and were, in fact, simultaneously present with the body of Christ.[53] The nature of this union was something that Wyclif tried hard to define. He developed a position that fit somewhere between a substantial kind of presence and the notion of Christ's presence as merely symbolic, but such nuance would be lost on many of Wyclif's subsequent interpreters, especially those working in the vernacular.[54]

Payne's simplification generated many responses and these tractates transformed Bohemia's countryside into a battleground about Eucharistic theology. They circulated in the context of public synods and disputations that aimed to bring the different factions together and get them to iron out their

[49]Explaining the way in which the transformation takes place occupied the best minds of the high and late medieval period. For a detailed discussion, see Gary Macy, "Theology of the Eucharist in the High Middle Ages," in *A Companion to John Wyclif: Late Medieval Theologian*, ed. Ian Christopher Levy (Boston: Brill, 2006), 366–398. For a discussion of Wyclif's view of the Eucharist, see Stephen Penn, "Wyclif and the Sacraments" in *A Companion to John Wyclif*, 249–272; Ian Christopher Levy analyzes the history of the medieval debate about the Eucharist in his *John Wyclif: Scriptural Logic, Real Presence and the Parameters of Orthodoxy* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 2003), 123–215.

[50]Lahey, *John Wyclif*, 107.

[51]For a discussion of the history of Eucharistic teaching in late Middle Ages, see Gabriel N. Buescher, *The Eucharistic Teaching of William Ockham* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of American Press, 1950); David Burr, "Scottus and Transubstantiation," *Medieval Studies* 34 (1972): 336–360; Marilyn McCord Adams, "Aristotle and the Sacrament of the Altar: A Crisis in Medieval Aristotelianism," in *Aristotle and his Medieval Interpreters*, ed. Richard Bosley and Martin Tweedale (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991), 195–249.

[52]Hornbeck, *What is a Lollard?*, 76.

[53]Lahey, *John Wyclif*, 123.

[54]In Wyclif's view, "the union between the bread and body finds its most appropriate parallel in the doctrine of the incarnation; just as two natures are there joined in a single person, so also through the words of institution are the substances of Christ's body and bread present in the consecrated host." Hornbeck, *What is a Lollard?*, 75.

differences. Incidentally, the synods and disputations also served as distribution points for vernacular tractates and treatises written about the subject.[55] Only a fraction of the written disagreements survive, with those deemed heretical having been destroyed by heresy hunters later in the century. But his contemporaries hint at the extent of the circulation. For example, John Příbram, an Utraquist master and a dedicated opponent of Wyclif, reported that after an important synod in Klatovy in November of 1424, the Taborite clergy sent out "many tractates in Latin and in Czech across the whole land, especially about the nature of the sacrament [arguing] that the bread remains the same after consecration as before."[56] Elsewhere, he lamented, "These tractates corrupted and fomented many a simple heart with error and heresy."[57] Even allowing for some exaggeration on the part of Wyclif-hating Příbram, it is clear that tractates about the Eucharist did circulate among the laity.

The audience is difficult to determine, but the proliferation of vernacular translations suggest that ordinary clergy and laity were the target audience for these writings. The extent of vernacular literacy among the laity in late medieval Bohemia is, as elsewhere, difficult to determine and any real numbers are elusive, but the set of tractates under discussion here serves to suggest that at least some portion of the laity was able to engage with theological ideas, evaluating them and making up their minds about them. Here it is helpful to invoke the concept of "intellectual literacy," defined as the "ability not merely to read but to bring what one reads, or indeed hears read—for instance the textual products of various authoritative religious discourses—an attitude of intellectual questioning, of informed criticism."[58] Judging by the tractates that circulated among them, Bohemia offers an example of laity, capable of expressing doubts, asking questions and deciding for themselves what kind of theological explanations made sense to them.

[55]Little of Tabor's vernacular writing remains extant as much of that literature disappeared with the demise of Tabor. See, Amedeo Molnár, "O Táborském Písemnictví," *Husitský Tábor* 2 (1979): 17–31. What remains are Peter Payne's summaries of Wyclif's tractates, which, according to Cook, must have circulated widely. Cook, "John Wyclif," 340.

[56]" . . . latině i česky po zemi lidu rozepsali a zvláště o tělu božiem tatkto jsú vydali, že v té svátosti po posvěcení chléb chlebem zuostává týmž jako před posvěcením." Jaroslav Boubín, ed., *Jan z Příbramě, Život Kněží Táborských* (Příbram: Státní okresní archiv et al, 2000), 82. Also, see F.M. Bartoš, "Klatovská Synoda Táborských Kněží z 11. Listopadu 1424," *Jihočeský Sborník Historický* 8 (1935): 4–10, which includes the text of the Latin and Czech reports that had circulated across the realm.

[57]"A tiem jsú přemnohá srdce sprostná bludy a kacieřstvím naprznili a nakvasili." Boubín, ed., *Jan z Příbramě, Život*, 79.

[58]Kantik Ghosh, "Bishop Reginald Pecock and the Idea of Lollardy," in *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale: Essays in Honor of Anne Hudson*, ed. Helen Barr and Ann Hutchinson (Brepols: Turnhout, 2005), 264.

Wyclif's critique proved enormously influential because it could be boiled down to a couple of questions, which the different authors then attempted to answer on their own. These questions gave rise to a wide-ranging debate about the nature of the Eucharist, both in Latin and in the vernacular, which engulfed Bohemia in the 1420s and continued unabated for better parts of two decades.

V. Wyclif's Teachings and the Diversity of Eucharistic Belief

It is important for Lollard studies to ascertain that all the different answers responded to Wyclif's particular set of doubts about transubstantiation. The fact that adherents to Lollardy in England (a decentralized popular religious movement based on the teachings of John Wyclif that saw the church as hopelessly corrupted by its involvement in temporal affairs) professed different views of the Eucharist, views that were irreconcilable with each other (both figurative and remanence theologies), has sometimes puzzled scholars and seemed to necessitate the question whether we can group such diverse views under a single group label.[59] But the example of Bohemia shows that this kind of doctrinal diversity could easily have emerged from writers addressing Wyclif's questions about the Eucharist but answering them differently, with some agreeing with the doctrine of transubstantiation, others rejecting transubstantiation but arguing that Christ was indeed present in the consecrated host in some spiritual way or others denying Christ's presence in the consecrated host altogether. The Utraquists in Prague supported the idea that Christ was physically and corporeally present in the host, with most of them upholding the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, whereas many priests at Tabor, the more radical reform group that chose to separate physically from the rest of the reformers, did not. Of the Taborites, some defended the doctrine of real presence in accordance with Wyclif's definition (according to which Christ is present, figuratively and sacramentally, in the bread and wine after consecration) while others argued against Christ's real presence in the sacrament, claiming that it was a mere symbol.[60]

[59]The problem is encapsulated in a recent study by Andrew E. Larsen, "Are all Lollards Lollards?" in *Lollards and Their Influence in Late Medieval England*, ed. Fiona Somerset, Jill C. Havens and Derek Pitard (Woodbrige: Boydell, 2003). Larsen rejects rigid conceptions of what constitutes Lollardy but concludes by defining it as a set of eleven doctrines. For a response, see the introduction to Hornbeck's *What is a Lollard?*, 1–14. Hornbeck draws on Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance to account for the fact that some Lollards simply did not believe in real presence of Christ in the sacrament, as Wyclif had taught.

[60]On the doctrinal disunity within Tabor's own ranks, see Kaminsky, *A Hussite Revolution*, 460–481. For discussion of different theological formulations, see Cook, "John Wyclif," 341–342. For a

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The Eucharist was central to the ritual life of all the different factions, but each celebrated it in a way that corresponded to their beliefs about it. And while all factions embraced the lay chalice (without any discussion, interestingly, about the way in which Christ was or was not present in the sacramental wine), that is where the similarity ended. For example, the Taborite Mass (like the Reformed Mass a century later) was a minimalist ceremony, stripped of all elements that were not contained in the Scriptures, with the priests deliberately using commonplace materials: clay chalice and paten, simple altar placed outside when possible, no vestments. Utraquist Mass (like Luther's), on the other hand, followed the Roman model, except that chalice was offered to the laity.[61] What one believed about the sacrament also had practical implications for what, if any, veneration one offered to the consecrated host: different beliefs translated into different actions, which further divided the reformers. In their churches, Utraquists venerated the sacrament, organized Corpus Christi processions, while Taborites rejected such practices as idolatrous and their attacks against monasteries sometimes involved desecrations of the reserved sacrament as way of showing their rejection of what they considered idolatry. These differences in how one approached and esteemed the Eucharist were real, lived and had far-reaching consequences.

Many contemporary authors tried to answer those questions that had so troubled Wyclif, but few of them could equal Wyclif's mastery of complex argumentation. The level of learning available for Eucharistic speculation varied, and some treatises seemed especially simplistic, perhaps intentionally so, in order to address the doubts and questions that some laity might have voiced about the nature of the Eucharist. The extant tractates show that those who denied that Christ was present in the Eucharist at all (called Pikarts) seemed to have little patience (or talent) for theological nuance, offering their followers simple and unequivocal answers to their questions: Where is Christ and his body? How can Christ be in the sacrament if he is in heaven? Is there enough of Christ's body or will the faithful run out of it at some point? The last question, especially, brings a kind of common sense attitude to the Eucharistic questioning: it is conceivable that a thinking layperson might have feared that Christ's body might exist only in a limited amount and that the supply might, some day, run out completely. It is not difficult

brief summary, see Thomas Fudge, "Hussite Theology and the Law of God," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed., David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 24. When speaking about "conservation," Fudge undoubtedly means "consecration."

[61] Wandel, *The Eucharist*, 261–262.

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further to imagine how such fears would have posed a stumbling block to the belief that Christ's body was truly present in the Eucharist.

This common sense attitude to understanding the Eucharist proved a slippery slope, leading one eventually to deny that Christ was present in the sacrament at all. The Pikart leaders, Martin Húska called Loquis (or, in the vernacular, Mluvka, meaning "the Chatterer") and Peter Kániš, capitalized on such fears among the laity, arguing for a simple dichotomy, either Christ could be present in his Galilean body or not at all, and suggesting that Christ's body that existed on earth was not in any way present in the sacrament.[62] In contrast, Wyclif argued against all attempts to make the sacrament into merely a sign or figure of an absent Christ and constructed an elaborate schema of different kinds of Christ's presence to safeguard it, positing that Christ has several modes of presence in the Eucharist. This, in turn, allowed him to argue that Christ was really present in the sacrament without insisting (as the supporters of transubstantiation did) that he was present with the exactly same body that he had in heaven. It also meant that, according to Wyclif, Christ is not present in the host in the same way that he is present in heaven. In heaven he is present substantially, corporeally and dimensionally (*substantialiter, corporaliter et dimensionaliter*) whereas in the sacrament he is present spiritually and sacramentally (*spiritualis, et sacramentalis*).[63] However, this nuance was lost on many, and the simple dichotomy of "real presence" versus "no presence (and, therefore, symbol)" persisted. This is why, for example, the Taborite priests, who professed that Christ was really present in the sacrament spiritually and sacramentally (but not physically and corporeally), were accused of denying real presence in the sacrament both by their contemporaries and by modern scholars.[64]

Although Wyclif himself never expressed doubt that Christ was present in the consecrated host, his insistence that the substance of the bread is also present in the consecrated host opened the door to all kinds of Eucharistic speculation. It was Wyclif's apparent validation of the senses—that is, admitting that what looked like bread was, indeed, bread—that wreaked the most havoc among self-appointed theologians. Wyclif based his argument that the substance of the bread remained (and co-existed with Christ's body) even after consecration on a very complex and nuanced philosophical argument (which had to do with Wyclif's rejection that a substance could be entirely annihilated and was based on his ultra-realism and his understanding

[62]Antonín Frinta, "Kněze Petra Kányše Vyznání Víry a Večere Páně z r. 1421," *Jihočeský sborník historický* 1 (1928): 2–12. For a discussion, see Erhard Peschke, *Die Theologie der Böhmischen Brüder in ihrer Frühzeit*, vol. I: *Das Abendmahl: Texte* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1940), 1, 96ff.

[63]Hornbeck, *What is a Lollard?*, 74.

[64]For example, Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 692, 701.

of time and matter).[65] However, the laity knew nothing of the philosophical underpinnings of Wyclif's argument and, evidently, took it as an affirmation of the common sense: what looks, feels and smells like bread remains bread. It is not a surprise, therefore, that some would take that insight to its logical conclusion: the consecrated host looked like bread and, therefore, was bread, only bread and nothing more.

This common sense kind of argumentation that the Pikarts, led by Kániš and Loquis, offered about the Eucharist gained them a small but determined following. They managed to persuade some laity living in the commune at Tabor that it did not make sense for God to be present in any way in the sacrament. They persisted in their belief even when leaders of Tabor began accusing them of heresy.[66] In 1421, Taborite leaders ordered that the deniers of real presence be herded into a fire right outside the walls of Tabor and burned to death, a strong signal to all potential future dissenters. The reaction of the Taborite priests also shows that they saw themselves as believing in the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, quite distinct from sacrament as a symbol. This uninspiring episode from the annals of Tabor incidentally illustrates the point made by Thomas Netter, namely that a community that disagreed about the nature of the Eucharist could not hold together as one.

But even with the Pikart commune eliminated, all efforts to reach an agreement between Taborites and Utraquists ended in failure. The intensity of the Eucharistic debates eased only in 1434 when the Taborite commune was militarily defeated in the battle of Lipany fought between Tabor and a joint army of Catholics and Utraquists. This military victory came on the heels of the first set of negotiations at the Council of Basel, which welcomed representatives from Bohemia (including Peter Payne, John Příbram, Nicholas of Biskupec, John of Rokycany) in January 1433. However, no agreement was then reached. It was only Tabor's defeat in May of the following year that allowed the Utraquists to formulate their demands, unhindered by the more radical Taborites, and have them accepted by the Church of Rome in 1436. Regarding the Mass, the agreement, known as the Basel Compactates, had little to say, stating only that the sacrament be offered under both kinds and, implicitly, upholding the doctrine of transubstantiation.

[65]Katherine Walsh, "Wyclif's Legacy in Central Europe," in *From Ockham to Wyclif*, ed. Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 403.

[66]The followers were, in Latin, called *Picardi* (Pikarts), but their origin remains unclear. Rudolf Holinka, "Počátky Táborského Pikartství" *Bratislava* 6 (1932): 187–195; F.M. Bartoš, "Konec Táborských Pikartů," *Jihočeský Sborník Historický* 41 (1972): 41–44; Kaminsky, *A Hussite Revolution*, 353–360.

But back in the 1420s, all debates between the Utraquist masters in Prague and the priests at Tabor (and the tractates that those debates generated) make it clear that the error of regarding the Eucharist as merely a symbol persisted, outliving the physical existence of the Pikarts. For example, later that year, Jan Němec, a prominent Taborite writer, found it necessary in his tractate on the Eucharist (written in 1421) to warn the laity against it. Drawing on works of Peter Payne,[67] he conceded that the Pikart objections were valid ones, and agreed with what seemed to be the lay consensus that Christ could not be in more than one place at once (as common sense dictated), but, like most Taborites, insisted that the nature of his presence was spiritual.[68] When it came to theology, Tabor placed a high premium on intelligibility, wishing to present the faithful with doctrine that they could believe without engaging in excessive mental gymnastics.

Němec's writing also shows that Tabor did not hesitate to capitalize on the continual threat of fragmentation by presenting their belief as centrist—in between transubstantiation and the Eucharist as a mere symbol. Two errors must be avoided, Němec argued: "Those who say that sacrament is no longer bread but becomes the actual body of Christ and those who say that it is the same as regular bread."[69] His writing suggests that some people at Tabor still professed that Christ was not present in the Eucharist or were at least confused about it. But it is also possible that the threat came in handy rhetorically, as it allowed him to present Tabor's belief about the Eucharist as a kind of middle ground, one that avoided the folly of extremes and of theological radicalism.

The Taborite argumentation against the doctrine of transubstantiation relied on well-known moments from the New Testament, interpreted in a common sense way. The combined authority of reason and the Scriptures would yield, according to Taborite leaders, the correct doctrine, in this case the understanding that Christ is spiritually present in the sacrament. Němec used the example of Christ presiding over the last supper and saying, "This is my body." In his view, Christ did not mean to suggest that the bread that he was holding in his hand was identical with his body, because that would not make sense. Indeed, Němec was part of a larger tradition of interpretation at Tabor, according to which substantial corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament was impossible as it would upset the correct order of the history

[67]Murray Wagner, *Petr Chelčický: A Radical Separatist in Hussite Bohemia* (Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1983), 104.

[68]Joannis de Zacz, "Tractatulus [De Eucharistia]" in *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texty*, 1–20; Wagner, *Chelčický*, 101. For discussion of Mikuláš's concept of real presence, see also Kaminsky, *A Hussite Revolution*, 462–464; and Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 5–19.

[69]"... sic contingit circa hoc sacramentum dupliciter errare: ..." Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 19.

of salvation, defined by crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.[70] In order for this order to be maintained, Christ's actual body had to reside at the right hand of the Father in heaven, which is why he could not be physically or corporeally present in the sacrament. For that reason, Němec argued that Christ's words needed to be interpreted figuratively. In this view, bread remains bread according to its nature and is Christ's body "*secundum figuram et significationem*."[71] In order to bolster his point, Němec couched his argument in a lengthy discussion of figurative language in the Old and New Testaments and the manner of its exegesis.

In popularizing their doctrine, the radicals at Tabor re-defined and democratized the practice of theology. They urged their followers to use their own—albeit untrained—reason "based on faith and the Scriptures" in evaluating matters of theological doctrine, as in the treatise against transubstantiation by Jan Němec, written in 1421. In it, he insisted that they must not be led astray by saying that "[transubstantiation] is what the church teaches and so it must be accepted and all other speculation must be abandoned."[72] In other words, the faithful ought not to believe transubstantiation (or any other doctrine, for that matter) simply because they were told to do so. Instead, he encouraged the faithful to ponder and reflect on their faith, saying that "the more one meditates on the faith, the more brilliantly it shines. That is why a Christian ought not believe anything about the Eucharist other than what the Scriptures or reason say."[73] The latter part of Němec's statement is especially important: the faithful ought to be guided in their religious reflections by the Scriptures and their own reason.

This faith in untrained reason (or common sense) sharply distinguished the pro-reform radicals at Tabor from most of the Utraquist leaders in Prague, whose treatises were more likely to draw on external authorities, such as the Church fathers, in order to make their point.

The Utraquists in Prague were also divided on the subject of the Eucharist. Although they defined real presence as substantial or corporeal (not sacramental or figurative) presence, they did not agree about the precise way in which to describe this presence: While the conservative party, led by John

[70]Petr Kolář, "Petr Chelčický's Defense of Sacramental Communion: Response to Mikuláš Biskupec of Tábor," *Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 6 (2007): 135.

[71]"Sensus autem catholicus est, quod ille panis est corpus Christi sacramentaliter aut figurative i. e. id quod in natura sua manet panis materialis, licet iam sanctificatus, illud est corpus Christi secundum figuram et significacionem. Figurat enim, quod caro Christi et eius sanquis pro nobis in cruce pacienter oblata sunt." Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 5.

[72]"Primo ergo caveat fidelis hunc fortissimum antichristi laqueum, quo suos involvit dicendo: Sic tenet Romana ecclesia et tota universitas de hoc puncto, ergo securissimum est tibi quiescere in illo et periculosissimum est amplius scrutari." Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 2.

[73]"Fides enim christiana est tam firma et infringibilis, quod de quanto plus modeste teratur, de tanto eius rutilans et micans fulgor fidelibus claresci t . . . Nulla ergo alia christianus credit circa hoc venerabile sacramentum, nisi que scriptura sacra vel racio dans fidem ipsum informat." Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 3.

Příbram, clung to the doctrine of transubstantiation, its more moderate masters like Jakoubek held a view that has later been described as consubstantiation, "in the consecrated host, Christ's physical body is made substantially present in the Eucharist, is coessential with the elements but does not replace them."[74] But, based on the extant treatises, it was the conservative masters, who were more proactive in disputing Tabor's ideals and transubstantiation remained the official position of the Utraquists.

The conservative masters mounted a vigorous counter-offensive against any understanding of the mass that smacked of Wyclif, but they were hampered in their efforts in two important ways: they were expressly unwilling to disseminate theological learning in the vernacular, and they proved unable to defend transubstantiation in a way that was both appealing and intelligible. Scholasticism simply did not fare well when exposed to the searching gaze of eager but untrained laymen. Transubstantiation could hardly be explained to uneducated laity, and, for that reason, its proponents had to rely on external authorities (other than the Scripture and reason) to make their point. Tabor's main opponent was John Příbram (d. 1448), one of the leaders of the Utraquist faction. He defended the practice of the lay chalice alongside Jakoubek, but became increasingly worried about the prominence accorded to Wyclif's thought in the Utraquist circles. In his view, any alliance with the teaching of a convicted heretic undermined Bohemia's chances of winning diplomatic victories and being allowed to practice its reformed version of Christianity. In order to neutralize Wyclif's influence in Prague and in Bohemia, Příbram led an effort inside the reform circles that attempted to have Wyclif declared a heretic and his thought eradicated from the Hussite movement,[75] and he also took part in public disputations against Peter Payne, the most famous one in October 1429.[76] Příbram's aversion to Wyclif sometimes led him to take desperate measures: for example, he conducted secret negotiations with councilmen at Basel in an effort to bring about a reunification of the Hussite reformers with the official church. For that reason, he was expelled from the capital on more than one occasion with his credibility tarnished, which must have undermined the success of his work against Wyclif. Příbram also participated in the hearings at the Council of Basel, alongside Peter Payne, and subsequently, with his theological views mellowing out and with the reform leaders becoming more theologically conservative, he was appointed the administrator of the Lower Consistory

[74]Wagner, *Chelčický*, 100–101. For a thorough analysis, see Wilks, "*Reformatio Regni*," 66–68.
[75]Cook, "John Wyclif," 340.
[76]For analysis of the disputation, see Blanka Zilynská, *Husitské Synody v Čechách 1418–1440* (Prague: Charles University, 1985), 63–68.

(an institution governing the Utraquist church in Bohemia) between 1439 and his death in 1448.[77]

To battle against the influence of Wyclif's thought, Příbram wrote a number of tractates against Peter Payne and prominent Taborite priests, such as Jan Němec and Nicholas of Biskupec. In his 1423 tractate "Surge domine et dissipentur inimici tui," for example, Příbram targeted the twelve errors of the Taborites, arguing that Christ is really present in the sacrament because (1) Christ said so, and (2) the glosses and holy fathers said so. He argued that the bread and wine are on the altar transformed into body and blood of Christ, which is made possible by the word of God, because, after all, to God all is possible. Příbram tackled the Taborite misconceptions head on, claiming that it is, in fact, possible for the same body of Christ to be present simultaneously in several places, a question that was much debated in the Taborite circles and often put forth as a proof that the sacrament simply could not be Christ's actual body. Příbram offered seven theses in order to show that Christ could be present in different places and in different communion wafers at once.[78] However, Příbram did not circulate his treatises in the vernacular (he wrote his first vernacular treatise in 1426, after much hesitation and lost time), and so their effect was limited to the small circle of Latin educated clerics at Tabor. Moreover, Příbram repeatedly warned that no one should mention his arguments in front of the people, because they could not understand it and could be led astray.[79] His attitude changed only gradually and much too late to make any significant difference.

Příbram's critique did not gain sufficient traction because it was primarily delivered in Latin, but there was another kind of unhelpful critique: saying that the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament was a mystery and that it was unnecessary to try to unravel it as Peter Chelčický did also in the 1420s. A self-educated layman from Southern Bohemia whose writings would become foundational for a new religious sect called the Unity of Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*), he thought that no one was right and rejected the Catholic, Utraquist and Taborite definitions of the sacrament, because, in his view, they either falsified Christ's explanation or added extensive theoretical additions, thus denying its true meaning.[80] Christians should simply accept Jesus's words spoken at the Last Supper, he insisted, believing that the fact

[77]Thomas Fudge, "Václav the Anonymous and Jan Příbram: Textual Laments on the Fate of Religion in Bohemia (1424–1429)," *Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 8 (2011): 117–119.

[78]Mgri Joannis de Příbram, *Tractatus de venerabili eukaristia contra Nicolaum falsum episcopum Taboritatum* in Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 56–106. The seven theses enumerated on pages 84–87.

[79]Sedlák, *Traktáty Eucharistické*: *Texts*, 39.

[80]Jaroslav Boubín, *Petr Chelčický: Myslitel a Reformátor* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 2005), 86.

that the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament was a mystery was deliberate and that faith was all that was needed for a Christian.

Chelčický reserved the worst criticism for Tabor, especially Nicholas's treatise *Ad sacramenti eucharisti in veritate magnificacionem*,[81] written prior to the Utraquist-Taborite disputation at Konopiště in June 1423, which he considered to be wishy-washy. It is true that in the treatise Nicholas presented an especially vague formulation for how the divine Christ was present in the sacrament in an effort to come up with a wording that would unite the greatest number of people from different factions. Chelčický had no patience for what se saw as politicking, but what is worse he grossly misunderstood Nicholas. In his answer, entitled "Reply to Nicholas"[82] written in 1424, Chelčický refused to admit that there was any distinction between Nicholas's real presence of the spiritual kind and the Pikart view of the sacrament as a symbol. In his view, spiritual presence was not a "real" presence, which—incidentally—put him in agreement with the Roman Church, the Utraquists and many contemporary scholars. At the same time, he also looked with suspicion upon the Utraquist idea of Christ's corporeal, substantial presence, because, in his view, it led to excessive veneration and idolatry. Here, Chelčický's reasoning seems hopelessly confused; he is unable to see that either Christ is really present and his presence ought to be venerated or he is not. Chelčický's other treatises have been hailed as original and incisive, but his folksy moralizing and insistence that the scriptural formulation was all the information one needed proved counterproductive in the effort to arrive at a workable Eucharistic understanding.

Chelčický's confusion stemmed from misinterpreting Wyclif. He expressed great admiration for the Oxford master, arguing that "none of the other doctors, early or contemporary, spoke against the poison in the holy church."[83] He was especially taken with Wyclif's continual warnings against excessive veneration of the host, but he misunderstood Wyclif when he thought that he affirmed Christ's substantial, physical presence in the Eucharist and rejected spiritual and sacramental presence. In fact, Wyclif's language seems to have been closer to the Taborite priests, Jan Němec and Nicholas, than to Chelčický.[84] It is possible that the exigencies of the Eucharistic debates, especially the fatal divisions caused by the Pikarts, colored Chelčický's reading of Wyclif: convinced that the Oxford master was right about everything, he could not

[81]Wagner, *Petr Chelčický*, 103–4; the tractate does not survive in its original text. The Czech translation has been published by Vojtěch Sokol, ed. "Traktát o zvelebení v pravdě svátosti těla a krve Pána našeho Jezukrista," *Jihočeský sborník historický* 2 (1939): Supplement, 1–14.

[82]Petr Chelčický, *Replika proti Mikuláši Biskupci Táborskému*, Josef Straka, ed. (Tábor, 1930), 17–80.

[83]Boubín, *Petr Chelčický*, 22.

[84]Wagner, *Chelčický*, 110.

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accept that he had, in fact, held the Taborite view, a view that Chelčický had (mistakenly) assumed to be identical with that of the hated Pikarts.

To the Unity of Brethren, founded in 1467, Chelčický bequeathed his high esteem for Wyclif as well as a suspicion of excessive theologizing. The Unity's early leaders believed, like Chelčický, that the simple words of Scripture adequately expressed the mystery of the Eucharist, wanting to "leave up to God the question of whether the bread changed or remained bread."[85] The next generation of Unity's theologians, under the leadership of Luke of Prague (d. 1528), returned to Wyclif's (and Tabor's) understanding of the sacrament and affirmed that Christ was really present in it, in a spiritual and sacramental way rather than physically or corporeally. Moreover, like Wyclif and like the Taborites, members of the Unity also did not venerate the sacrament by bowing or kneeling before it.[86]

Wyclif's critique of the Eucharist, which identified what Wyclif saw as the weak points in the church's doctrine of transubstantiation, sparked a wide array of different responses among reform-minded writers in Bohemia and continued to influence the theology of separatist religious groups well into the sixteenth century and beyond.

VI. Conclusion

In Bohemia, Wyclif's writings reached a large audience outside of the university thanks to explanations and simplifications of his writings by Peter Payne. The fact that Wyclif's critique of transubstantiation could be boiled down to a couple of simple questions helped, but it was Peter Payne, Wyclif's follower from Oxford, who was instrumental in bringing Wyclif's thought to clerics outside of the university in Prague and, through them, to laity. Within a few years of Payne's arrival in Prague, the questions that Wyclif had posed about the Eucharist resonated across Bohemia. The conversation revolved around two fundamental questions: In what way is Christ present in the sacrament? Where is Christ located? These questions gave rise to an array of different views of the Eucharist, ranging from doctrines that safeguarded Christ's real presence in the sacrament to others that denied it completely and saw Eucharist merely as a symbol. The proliferation of Eucharistic tractates in Bohemia explains the doctrinal diversity among the Lollards in England by suggesting that Wyclif's critique of transubstantiation could be answered in a number of different ways that

[85]Joseph Müller, *Geschichte der Böhmischen Brüder*, vol. I (Herrnhut: Verlag der Missionbuchhandlung, 1922–31), 209, 211.

[86]Craig Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 180, 230.

included both real presence (however defined) and figurative theologies. In fifteenth century Bohemia as well as in England, Wyclif's doubts about transubstantiation seem to have connected with those of the laity with an explosive effect, giving rise to large-scale popular movements that looked for its own ways to define the church's ritual and modes of governance.[87]

[87]The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for valuable comments and suggestions that helped improve the final version of this article.