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Heretics as devil's servants. The construction of religious otherness in Silesian historiographical sources from the late Middle Ages

The death of Wenceslas IV King of Bohemia in August 1419 and the subsequent outbreak of the Hussite revolution in Bohemia can without a greater doubt be considered an event that fundamentally transformed the space of the Silesian principalities of the late Middle Ages¹. At the time of the outbreak of the Hussite revolution, the Silesian principalities already belonged to the Bohemian Crown for several decades and they were connected to the actual Kingdom of Bohemia by a wide range of political, social, and economic ties. Despite these bonds, Silesian society did not manifest a more distinct interest in the reform teachings of Jan (John) Hus and his followers, and took a reserved stance towards Hussitism from the beginning, which after the radicalisation of the situation in Bohemia resulted in open resistance to the Bohemian Reformation. In the 1420s and 1430s, Silesia became the refuge for many exiles from Bohemia, whether clergymen or Catholic burghers. Several important tractates and polemic

1 For key information on the Hussite revolution, see: F. Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce*, vol. 1–4, Praha 1995–1996.

writings with Hussite teachings also come from the Silesian milieu, which testifies to the significant antipathy to the Hussites. The negative stance towards the Hussites was confirmed in 1420, when the papal legate declared the first crusade against the Hussites in Wrocław, the most important Silesian city and the informal centre of the Silesian principalities. All the Silesian dukes and princes sided with Sigismund of Luxembourg, the new King of Bohemia, whom they also supported militarily during the first crusade. Representatives of the Silesian dukes and princes also watched the hasty coronation of Sigismund of Luxembourg at Prague Castle in 1420, which was the only success of the first crusade, as it was defeated by the Hussites. In the following years, the Silesians also took active part in battles against the Hussites but, considering the situation in Bohemia and the gradual consolidation of the Hussite side, they were steadily forced into the defensive and themselves had to face the attacks of Hussite armies in Silesia in the second half of the 1420s. The military weakness of the Silesian dukes and princes fully manifested itself in 1428, when the Hussites undertook a large expedition against Silesian principalities. The local defensive structures could not withstand the pressure of the Hussite divisions, and the Hussites looted a large number of Silesian towns without much difficulty. The following Hussite expeditions pacified the Silesian dukes and, in the early 1430s, they already controlled majority of Silesian territory. The local dukes usually preferred to agree to armistices with Hussite armies. The situation only changed after the Battle of Lipany in 1434, where the radical wing of the Hussite armies was defeated, and some Silesian garrisons immediately withdrew to Bohemia. The remaining Hussite divisions in Silesia were paid off by the Silesian dukes and the town of Wrocław, and also left Silesia².

The repeated defeats of the Silesian troops by the Bohemian Hussites became etched into the local collective memory and became a cornerstone of Silesian identity for many decades, which in the 15th century stood firmly on the side of Roman orthodoxy and was completely opposed

2 For the reaction of the Silesian duchies to Hussitism and the Hussite Wars in Silesia, see: the earlier but still valuable today work – C. Grünhagen, *Die Hussitenkämpfe der Schlesier*, Breslau 1872, pp. 10–37. For a new perspective, see M. Čapský, D. Prix, *Slezsko v pozdním středověku (do roku 1490)*, in: *Slezsko v dějinách českého státu*, vol. 1: *Od pravěku do roku 1490*, ed. by Z. Jirásek, Praha 2012, pp. 338–367.

to the Bohemian Reformation³. Although earlier Polish historiography, mainly under the influence of Marxism, tried to prove the sympathy of at least part of the Silesian population for Hussitism, modern research has repeatedly demonstrated that there is no evidence for stronger sympathies, and the Silesian society had no understanding for the teachings of Jan Hus⁴. More reasons why that was the case can be found. First, Silesia was part of a different diocese than Bohemia and Moravia. The Diocese of Wrocław traditionally belonged to the Archdiocese of Gniezno, where the situation was quite unlike in the Archdiocese of Prague. Konrad of Oleśnica Bishop of Wrocław also played a key role, as he opposed the ideas of Jan Hus from the outset, and took a number of measures to prevent the spread of Hussite ideas in 1420. These measures turned out to be successful, and the Hussite idea of church reform was misunderstood in Silesian⁵. Undoubtedly, the differences between the economies of Silesia on the one hand, and Bohemia and Moravia as well as between the nations also played a role: Hussite ideas spread primarily among the Czech-speaking population, while Silesia was predominately the German-speaking⁶. The brunt of the Hussite Wars coupled with the fear of the Hussites had a strong influence in Silesia throughout the 15th century. The article attempts to explain how this fear was reflected in the Silesian historiography of the 15th century, and how the local chroniclers perceived Hussitism, and how they constructed the religious identity of the Hussites and their allies.

The reasons why the Hussites became so significantly inscribed into the collective memory of Silesia cannot be explained solely by military developments that affected Silesian territory in the latter half of the 1420s and in the early 1430s. In the Silesian history but also generally in the history of the lands of the Bohemian Crown, Hussitism is a unique event

- 3 The question of Silesian identity in the monitored period was recently dealt with by W. Mrozowicz, *Regional identity in Silesia (until 1526)*, in: *The Long Formation of the Region Silesia (c. 1000–1526)*, ed. by P. Wiszewski, Wrocław 2013, pp. 215–237.
- 4 An overview of the Polish historiography was summarised by W. Iwańczak, *Táborité v polské historiografii 19. a začátku 20. století*, “Husitský Tábor” 12 (1999), pp. 69–75.
- 5 See B. Zilynská, *Synodální opatření proti husitům v diecézích širší střední Evropy*, in: *Ve znamení Koruny české. Sborník k šedesátým narozeninám prof. PhDr. Lenky Bobkové*, CSc., eds. L. Březina, J. Konvičná, J. Zdichynec, Praha 2006, pp. 265–288.
- 6 R. Žerelik, *Dzieje Śląska do 1526 roku*, in: *Historia Śląska*, ed. by M. Czapliński, Wrocław 2007, pp. 98–101.

that has no parallel in the centuries leading up to it. Hussitism was mainly the first significant encounter with religious otherness, or – to use its contemporary term – with heresy. Although reports on the existence of Waldensian communities in Bohemia and Beguines in Silesia already in the 14th century exist, the influence of such groups was marginal, and they were severely persecuted by the Inquisition. A study of Silesian narrative sources from the time returns hardly any reflection on or reaction to them. The existence of these communities is only known thanks to several preserved sources on the activity of the Inquisition⁷. The impact of Hussitism on Silesian society is also corroborated by the influence of Hussitism and the military events associated with it on most of the Silesian narrative and 15th-century historiographical sources, including the most diverse minor annals kept in the Silesian monasteries. The Racibórz Chronicle, a minor annal written in the second half of the 15th century in Racibórz in Upper Silesia mainly depicting events in the town can serve as an example. However, its unknown author considered it important to record that the “arch-heretics” (*archiheretici*) Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague were burnt at the stake in 1415⁸.

Although the direct threat to Silesia from the Hussites ceased in the mid-1430s, as their radical wing was defeated at the Battle of Lipany and the remaining groups focused on consolidation in Bohemia rather than incorporating lands of the Bohemian Crown, the fear and resistance to Hussitism in Silesia continued and even intensified. This fact is also proved by the narrative sources from the second half of the 15th century. For instance, browsing through the chronicle of Peter Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, that is the history of Wrocław, you discover that although the chronicle describes the events from 1439 to 1479, its main axis is the struggle against the Hussites, personified particularly by the figure of the Bohemian king George of Poděbrady. As explained

7 On the persecution of heretics in the 14th century in the Czech lands, see: A. Patčowsky, *Bludiště pravé víry: Sektáři, kacíři a reformátoři ve středověkých Čechách*, Praha 2018, pp. 33–73. Inquisition sources were edited, see *Proces beginek świdnickich w 1332 roku. Studia historyczne i edycja łacińsko-polska*, ed. by P. Kras, T. Gałuszka OP, A. Poznanski, Lublin 2017. See also J. Szymański, *Ruchy heretyckie na Śląsku w XIII i XIV wieku*, Katowice–Kraków 2007.

8 *Ratiborer Chronik* (ed. by A. Weltzel), “Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens” 4 (1862), p. 116. Jerome was in fact burnt at the stake a year later, in 1416, see: F. Šmahel, *Život a dílo Jeronýma Pražského*, Praha 2010, pp. 85–91.

below, other contemporary Silesian chronicles were also written in the same fashion, to mention Caspar Borgen's "Annales Glogovienses"⁹ and Johannes Froben's Chronicle of Namysłów ("Annales Namslavienses").

The increased attention paid to the Hussites resulted from the developments that took place in Silesia in the early 1450s. After long years of anarchy in the interregnum after the death of Albert II of Habsburg (d. 1439), the lands of the Bohemian Crown only had a new king, Albert's son Ladislaus the Posthumous, in 1453. Nevertheless, the main figure of Bohemian politics was George of Poděbrady, a Calixtine aristocrat and leading representative of the Utraquist Party. Thanks to his clever policies, he could rely on the support of some Catholic nobility. After the untimely death of Ladislaus the Posthumous (d. 1457), it was none other but George of Poděbrady who was elected King of Bohemia¹⁰. The new king won recognition in Bohemia and Moravia without major opposition, yet he encountered strong opposition in Silesia not only from the Wrocław burghers but also from the dukes, who had significant reservations against a "heretic" on the throne. After several months of negotiations, George of Poděbrady reached agreements with most of the Silesian dukes, who subsequently recognised him their sovereign. In spite of the above, the city of Wrocław posed a problem, and George of Poděbrady was unable to force it to pay homage even through military campaigns waged against the proud city since 1459. Conciliatory arrangements allowing Wrocław burghers to postpone paying homage for three years were only made thanks to the mediation of the Papal Curia. Yet several years later, Pope Pius II (d. 1464) changed his position on the Bohemian sovereign, which also found reflection in Silesia because subsequent to the change of the papal policy Wrocław stopped paying its homage. On the contrary, the proud city on the Odra River welcomed the formation of an opposition against George of Poděbrady (Confederacy of Zelena Hora) in Bohemia, and in the late 1460s stood firmly on the side of the challengers of the

9 Caspar Borgen was determined to be the author of the "Annales Glogovienses" by P. Knoetel, *Der Verfasser der "Annales Glogovienses"*, "Zeitschrift des Vereins für Geschichte und Alterthum Schlesiens" 22 (1888), pp. 94–109.

10 The circumstances accompanying the election of George of Poděbrady have been described, see: R. Urbánek, *Věk poděbradský*, vol. 3, Praha 1930, pp. 223–280; P. Čornej, M. Bartlová, *Velké dějiny země Koruny české*, vol. 6: 1437–1526, Praha–Litomyšl 2007, pp. 152–162; V. Filip, K. Borchardt, *Schlesien, Georg von Podiebrad und die römische Kurie*, Würzburg 2005, pp. 81–99.

Bohemian monarch¹¹. There are no greater doubts that the main reason behind the apathy of Wrocław burghers was the confession of the Bohemian king, which they considered heretical while their king could not be “a heretic”. Peter Eschenloer, in his history of the city of Wrocław, repeatedly emphasised the fact that the king had to profess Roman orthodoxy, because only that could ensure the necessary legitimacy of his rule. After the outbreak of the Second Hussite War and the start of conflict between the Hungarian monarch Matthias Corvinus with the Czech lands, Wrocław immediately took the side of the Hungarian ruler and recognised him its sovereign even prior to his election as King of Bohemia in 1469. The resistance to the Bohemian heretics did not change even with the death of George of Poděbrady in 1471 and the accession of Vladislaus II to the Bohemian throne. Only late in the 15th century, after Matthias Corvinus died (1490), did the tension between Wrocław and the Bohemian milieu lessen¹².

A look into the Silesian life and institutions clearly demonstrates that various religious confession could cause significant fear in the late Middle Ages. That fear was fuelled in the Silesian metropolis by radical preachers, among others the famous John of Capistrano, who preached in Wrocław in 1453, the main topic of his sermons unsurprisingly being the Bohemian Hussitism coupled with the promotion of the war against the Turks and alongside sermons aimed against the Jews, which led to an widespread pogrom of the local Jewish community. Other preachers dominating the Wrocław pulpits in the 1450s included Nicholas Tempelfeld and Bartholomew Tempelfeld¹³.

It is not necessary to demonstrate more clearly that the rigidly anti-Hussite position of a part of Silesian society resulted from the fear of religious otherness. The deeper roots of the fear were closely connected to the importance of what the medieval society recognised as heresy. For the medieval society, heresy, or religious otherness, represented

11 V. Filip, K. Borchartt, *Schlesien, Georg von Podiebrad*, pp. 81–99.

12 Other than the aforementioned works, on the history of Silesia see also: R. Žerelik, *Dzieje Śląska do 1526 roku*, pp. 98–118.

13 M. Čapský, *Město pod vládou kazatelů. Charizmatičtí náboženští vůdci ve střetu s městskou radou v pozdně středověkých českých korunních zemích*, Praha 2015, pp. 79–104. See also: G. Roth, ‘Wider die Anfechtungen der Ketzer’. Nikolaus Tempelfelds Traktat *Ordo nature et racionis in der Übersetzung durch Peter Eschenloer. Edition und Erläuterungen*, “Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung” 69 (2020), pp. 209–254.

a fundamental threat, because it was considered a threat to Christian values that played an essential role in the thinking of the contemporary people. Heretics had been considered enemies of Christ and members of the *civitas diaboli* standing in opposition to Augustine's *civitas dei* already in the days of St Augustine. Although the heresy contemporary to St Augustine was in many regards different from the heretical movements of the late Middle Ages, his conclusions on the subject remained valid at the close of the Middle Ages, when they were considered the fundamental starting point for interpretations. Above all, the saint's claim that heretics belong to the *civitas diaboli* played a significant role in the minds of late medieval intellectuals¹⁴. Augustine's reflections on the nature of heresy was also a strong inspiration for the Bohemian reformer Jan Hus, who, paradoxically, was considered a heretic by the Catholic Church¹⁵.

Already Jean Delumeau, who introduced the issue of fear into historiography, drew attention to the fact that an increased fear of the devil, according to the contemporary, intervening significantly with events in this world, can be observed in the late Middle Ages. According to Delumeau, the transformation was undoubtedly related to the plague that affected Europe in the 14th century and to a great extent altered the Europeans' mental world¹⁶. Although the lands of the Bohemian Crown lay on the edges of the plague epidemic and, at least in the first years of the plague in Europe, were not more seriously affected, the situation changed in the second half of the 14th century as the plague also infested the lands of the Bohemian Crown. In the following years, it kept returning but in gentler forms. For instance, the reports from 1452 speak of the spread of the plague in Upper Silesia, more specifically in the principality of Racibórz, and in the Silesian-Polish borderland. It cannot be ruled out that also Nicholas V Duke of Racibórz died of the plague¹⁷. In the eyes of late me-

14 C. Bruschi, P. Biller, *Text and the Repression of medieval Heresy: Introduction*, in: *Text and the Repression of medieval Heresy*, ed. by C. Bruschi, P. Biller, York 2002, pp. 4–5.

15 Jan Hus, *Knížky o svatokupectví*, ed. by J. Hrabák, Praha 1954, pp. 20–22.

16 Delumeau, *Strach na západě ve 14. – 18. století*, part 2: *Obležená obec*, Praha 1999, pp. 54–79.

17 Reports on the plague and the death of Nicholas V can be found in the Ratibor Annals: *Ratiborer Chronik* (ed. by A. Weltzel), p. 118. It must be added that the chronicler mentioned the two events separately, so it is not certain whether Nicholas V really died of the plague.

dieval people, the plague was certainly God's way of punishing mankind for their sins, and for many of the contemporaries it was an irrefutable proof of devil's work.

The plague was not the only proof of the devil's activity in the world, and a number of examples to the contrary can be found in late medieval sources. In sources associated with Hussitism, whether sermons, theological treatises, or other literature, you find the topic of the devil returning very frequently, and Hussite intellectuals were firmly convinced about his influence on contemporary events. To Hussite scholars, irrefutable evidence for the devil meddling in the affairs of this world were the papal schism and the state of the Church as such early in the 15th century. A typical example comes in the works of Jan Hus, who did not doubt the devil's influence on the contemporary Church, and the society at large. According to Hus, one of the greatest transgressions of the late medieval Church was the sales of indulgences, which he addressed extensively in his sermons. He also dealt thoroughly with the subject in his later work, written at a time when he could no longer preach in the Bethlehem Chapel and lived in exile outside of Prague. His text suggests that the main cause of selling indulgences was the devil, who spread the practice among the people who, according to Hus, will in turn spread it until the end of the world¹⁸. Another example comes in Jan Želivský, a radical Prague preacher, whose preserved sermons allow to find frequent references to the devil and his works in the contemporary world. Želivský naturally found his proofs mainly in the activity and functioning of the Church¹⁹.

Catholic authors quite obviously shared the conviction of the devil's work in the world, yet in their opinion these were the heretics, notably Hussites, who served the devil. It was precisely Hussitism they considered the proof of the devil's activity. The conviction was shared not only by the authors of theological tractates, who argued against Hus and his followers, to mention Ludolf von Sagan an abbot from Silesia, but it was adopted also by authors of contemporary chronicles who were not necessarily part of the ecclesiastical milieu²⁰. In Silesia, their number includes

18 Jan Hus, *Knižky o svatokupectví*, p. 57. On Hus's activity in exile in the country, see: P. Soukup, *Jan Hus. Život a smrt kazatele*, Praha 2015, pp. 149–159.

19 *Výzva Jana Želivského. Výbor z kázání*, ed. by A. Molnár, Praha 1954, pp. 28–29.

20 On Ludolf von Sagan, see the extensive work by F. Machilek, *Ludolf von Sagan und seine Stellung in der Auseinandersetzung um Konziliarismus und Hussitismus*, München 1967.

Peter Eschenloer, the municipal scribe in Wrocław, and Johannes Froben, a municipal scribe in Namysłów. The conviction that religious otherness, or, to use the terms used at the time “heresy”, was firmly linked to the devil was shared by most medieval people, while the fact that heresy originated from the devil was one of the fundamental stereotypes linked to religious differences. It has already been pointed out many times that the descriptions of heretics in medieval chronicles hardly ever depict the contemporary reality as they are often based on *topoi* and stereotypes that the medieval society attributed to heretics²¹. As stated above, one of the basic stereotypes was to seek the origin of heresy with the devil, a source from which other alleged traits of heretics were also derived. A typical sign was hubris and stubbornness: attributes traditionally associated with the devil. Another popular stereotype was the question of sexual morality, as contemporary authors often spoke of the intensified sexuality of heretics, which allegedly deviated from norms. Other stereotypes worth mentioning include insidiousness, treachery, and other negative qualities. In general, the authors from period attributed to heretics a wide range of transgressions against contemporary conventions and morals²².

How then did Silesian chroniclers construct the heretics of their time and what narrative means did they use? The Silesian historiography of the 15th century comprises mainly minor chronicles and annals, which predominantly served to capture the events of the time, and their authors did not follow any elaborated concepts. This claim mainly applies to the chroniclers whose works cover the Hussite Wars, that is the first decades of the 15th century. One of them is the chronicle of Sigmund Rosicz, a Wrocław clergyman, who most likely died in 1470 and left several autobiographical notes on the pages of his work. It is generally assumed that he was between sixty and seventy years of age at the time of his death, which means that he lived his whole adult life in the shadow of the Hussite threat. Yet, his chronicle holds no major description of the Hussite heresy. In his eyes, the Hussites were the enemy, and he referred to them mainly

21 For more detail, see: H. Grundmann, *Der Typus des Ketzers in mittelalterlicher Anschauung*, in: *Kultur- und Universalgeschichte: Walter Goetz zu seinem 60. Geburtstage*, Leipzig–Berlin 1927, pp. 91–107.

22 See also: E. Potkowski, *Stereotyp heretyka-innowiercy w piśmiennictwie kaznodziejskim*, in: *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. by B. Geremek, Wrocław 1978, pp. 121–135.

as heretics²³. The image of the Hussites in the work of Sigmund's contemporary, Martin of Bolkenheim, is constructed in a similar manner, as he perceived the Hussites as enemies and heretics²⁴. The already mentioned *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau* by Peter Eschenloer is a work of a different type. Its author wrote his chronicle not only to capture the past events but he started from a clearly stated concept justifying the steps taken by Wrocław against George of Poděbrady. His chronicle played a crucial role in the town's collective memory, which is proved by the fact that a special copy of the chronicle was deposited at the Wrocław Townhall to serve as a reminder of Wrocław's resistance against the heretic king²⁵. The main tenet of the chronicle is the explanation of the position taken by the Wrocław burghers, who refused to recognise George of Poděbrady as their monarch. According to Peter Eschenloer, they were right because, in his eyes, George of Poděbrady was a heretic and thus lost the right to exercise power, and for this reason was incompetent to receive homage²⁶. Speaking of George, he mainly emphasised his pride and obstinacy. The stress on the two traits is characteristic, because medieval scholarship traditionally connected the two with heresy and the devil. Already Lucifer, the first fallen angel, was considered proud and stubborn, which made him unable to escape his delusions. In a similar way, in their pride and obstinacy, medieval heretics were also unable to abandon their misguided and flawed convictions. For example, Peter Eschenloer literally states that George of Poděbrady "...starb auch in seynir keczerey vorstockt"²⁷.

George of Poděbrady was often described through comparisons to animals. Animal symbolism played a significant role in medieval thought, which is also true about the stereotypes and topoi used to describe heretics.

23 *Sigismundi Rosiczii chronica et numerus episcoporum Wratislaviensium itemque gesta diversa transactis temporibus facta in Silesia et alibi. Ab anno C. 1051 usque 1470*, in: *Geschichtschreiber Schlesiens des XV. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by F. Wachter, Breslau 1883, pp. 50–86 (*Scriptores Rerum Silesiacarum*, 12).

24 *Chronik des Martin von Bolkenheim*, in: *Geschichtschreiber Schlesiens des XV. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 1–18.

25 See: e.g., W. Iwańczak, *Piotr Eschenloer – świadek epoki*, in: *Tysiącletnie dziedzictwo kulturowe diecezji wrocławskiej*, ed. by A. Barciak, Katowice 2000, pp. 160–170.

26 For more detail, see J. Drabina, *Rola argumentacji religijnej w walce politycznej w późnośredniowiecznym Wrocławiu*, Kraków 1984, pp. 57–71.

27 P. Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, part 1: *Chronik bis 1466*, part 2: *Chronik ab 1467*, ed. by G. Roth, New York–München–Berlin 2003, p. 824.

This is how Caspar Borgen, the author of “*Annales Glogovienses*”, spoke of George of Poděbrady:

A.d. 1468 dominus legatus excommunicavit quasdam duces in Slesia quinque, scilicet Przemislaum Wentzeslaum duces superioris, Conradum Album et Conradum Nigrum et Fridericum de Legnitz duces inferiores, quia invocavit eos ut subsidium deberent praestare Wratislaviensibus et aliis principibus et civitatibus contra venenosum draconem Jirsigk.

He recognised the Bohemian king a “tyrannical dragon”, extending the label to the children of the Bohemian king as well. The designation of the Bohemian king as a dragon was highly symbolic. As Michel Pastoureau demonstrated, the dragon was perceived by the medieval people as a symbol of evil and as a diabolical creature²⁸. It is no coincidence that dragons also appeared in the prophecies proclaiming the apocalypse and the coming of the Antichrist. Thus, labelling George of Poděbrady as a “tyrannical dragon”, Caspar Borgen unambiguously indicates that the Bohemian king is one of the devil’s minions, which is also proved by the next sentence “Unus autem exterminare voluit ordinem beatae virginis Mariae, alter omnipotentis dei [ecclesiam] traditam s. Petro”. The author believes that George’s purpose was to destroy the Church of the Almighty God entrusted to St Peter and his successors²⁹.

The belief in the connection between George of Poděbrady and the devil was also shared by Johannes Froben, another Silesian chronicler of the late Middle Ages. At the moment of the king’s death, he wrote a brief note that is telling in many ways:

Georgius von Podebradt, bemisscher ketzzerisscher konig, vnnd N. Rockitczianus, seyn bisschoff zcu Pragaw, jn irsten teyle deszes jares zcu Pragaw gestorben seyn, von der heyligen cristlichen kirchen bey irem leben, auch noch dem tode vordamnt, wurdenn begraben yn der hellenn³⁰.

28 M. Pastoreau, *Dějiny symbolů v kultuře středověkého západu*, Praha 2018, p. 22.

29 All quotes from the “*Annales Glogovienses*”, see *Annales Glogovienses bis z. J. 1493. Nebst urkundlichen Beilagen*, ed. by H. Markgraf, Breslau 1877, pp. 15–16 (*Scriptores Rerum Silesiacarum*, 10).

30 I quote after R. Czarnecki, *Kronika Namysłówa autorstwa Johannes Frobena jako utwór dziejopisarstwa miejskiego*, Warszawa 2015, p. 160. See also the extensive analysis of Froben’s chronicle.

Froben pointed out the fact that George died in the same year as the elected archbishop of Prague Jan Rokycana, a representative of the moderate Calixtines, whose position of the archbishop of Prague was never confirmed by the pope, and who was only recognised by the Hussites. Froben did not forget to mention that both were excommunicated from the Holy Church and both would be buried in hell. The mention of burial in hell is characteristic, and the author clearly points to the heretic being a servant of the devil.

Similar descriptions of Bohemians can relatively often be encountered in late medieval chronicles, although most attention was as a rule paid to prominent figures of the Hussite movement, notably Jan Hus and, in the later period, George of Poděbrady and the above-mentioned bishop Rokycana. Medieval authors often perceived heresy as a specific infection that could be contracted like other diseases. Although most of them found it unthinkable that anyone from Silesia, known for its orthodoxy, could become infected with heresy, there were exceptions. A reason for the Silesian chroniclers to pay them much more attention.

A typical example can be the Bolko V Duke of Opole, who lived in approximately in 1400–1460 and already in his life was infamous for his alliance with the Hussite troops that attacked Silesian principalities. Although the cooperation was intermittent and did not even last three years, Silesian chroniclers never forgave Bolko V and therefore the Duke of Opole was always described as a diehard heretic. In the later years of his life, the Duke of Opole most likely never maintained any contacts with the Bohemian Hussites until the coronation of George of Poděbrady as King of Bohemia. He was one of few Silesian dukes and princes supporting the Hussite's election, and advocated for his recognition in Silesia as well. It is unknown whether he did so for religious reasons or perhaps his steps had a different motivation, but modern researches on the life of Bolko seems to confirm that the Duke of Opole was not a Hussite and the Calixtine creed was never part of his faith. More likely, he opted for an alliance with the Hussites, notably supporting George of Poděbrady, for selfish reasons³¹.

The most impressive description of Bolko V was left by Caspar Borgeni on the pages of the “*Annales Glogovienses*”. His work contains a relatively unique description with a similarly extensive description, which, moreover, hints at multiple topoi associated with the medieval view of heretical movements, which cannot be found in his chronicle. Bolko V is drawn

31 See D. Radek, *Bolek V. Opolský. Život a legenda (okolo 1400–1460)*, Opava 2018.

as a typical heretic, with all the signs proper for ones like him in the period context. Especially the description of Bolko's death, which depicts the Duke of Opole as a proud and stubborn heretic, is significant:

Demum infirmabatur et debuit finem suum concludere iuxta dictum commune: Qualis vita, talis finis etc. Misit sellare et praeparare optimum equum duem secum in curia habuit et fecit eum adduci, et dixit se non velle ad infernum invare pedestre, sicut et alii latrones, sed equitare, ut decet dominum. Et sic in illa fantasia mortuus est anno uts...³²

According to the chronicler, at the moment of his death he ordered horses to be brought because he wanted to go to hell on horseback, as befits a lord. We can assume that this remark is not an end in itself, and it was not a chance but the symbolic meaning of the horse that made Caspar Borgenii choose it. It was not only a symbol of Bolko's social status, as the horse in the medieval thought could be considered as an animal with a devilish essence and therefore associated with the devil, so it was quite distinctive for the Duke of Opole to be taken to hell on horseback. This short example also demonstrates another stereotype associated with heretics, widespread and already mentioned above: hubris or obstinacy. According to Caspar Borgenii, the Duke of Opole could not manage to be humble even on his deathbed, which apparently reflected the fact that he was a diehard heretic.

Caspar Borgenii proved the connection with dark forces, or with the devil himself, also in other parts of the text while referring to the developments following the death of the Duke of Opole:

Sepelieruntque eum fratres minores honorifice in ecclesia eorum non curando de excommunicatione, quia quod diabolus abhorret hoc monachus ausus est facere. Sed monachi nullam requiem habuerunt die noctuque. Percipiensque hoc episcopus Wratislaviensis praecepit eum extumulare et eum in loco sibi competenti sepelire, ut decet excommunicatum sepelire. Quod factum est, et sic monachi habuerunt pacem et requiem³³.

The Głogów chronicler stated that Bolko V had been buried by the Franciscans in Głogówek, where he lived. However, considering the character

32 *Annales Glogovienses bis z. J. 1493*, pp. 26–27.

33 *Annales Glogovienses bis z. J. 1493*, pp. 26–27.

of the Duke of Opole, it was not a good step and the restless spirit of Bolko returned to the world of the living and frightened the local friars. The situation was not resolved until the arrival of the bishop of Wrocław, who had Bolko's body exhumed and buried in unconsecrated ground, as befits a heretic.

The motifs of the alliance of the Duke of Opole with the devil and dark powers was also used by the Wrocław chronicler Peter Eschenloer. This is how he described the monarch's death:

Am dinstag vor Pfingsten was ein grawsam gewitter öbir die gancz Slesia, es filen steine als die gense eyr, als die enten eyr, diser hagil tat grossen schaden am getreide. Nymant gedocht grawsamer erschrecklichen gewitters, es werete vom morgen bis an andiren tag, dorynnen herczuge Bolko der grosse keczere star und vorczweifelte an seinen ende³⁴.

According to Peter Eschenloer, when the Duke of Opole was dying, all of Silesia was struck by a large storm, accompanied by hail with hailstones the size of duck eggs falling and causing significant damage to the crops. The storm quietened down once Bolko the "great heretic" had died. The narrative strategy of Peter Eschenloer was not as direct as Caspar Borgen's, yet the tenor of his text was still obvious to his contemporary readers. The author apparently considered Bolko V to be a man who had succumbed to heresy and thus became part of the *civitatis diaboli*. The connection with the devil was also proved by the unnatural natural phenomena that accompanied his death. Eschenloer demonstrated the heresy of the Duke of Opole also elsewhere, where he stated that Bolko V did not believe in the afterlife:

Do Girsik vff Mittfaste zu Glacz was, hulte jm der herczog Bulke von Oppuln. Diser gloubete nicht noch disem leben ein andir leben. Er hatte vormols keinem kunig zu Behemen gehult, sunder diser was jm eben gloübig³⁵.

Here, too, the meaning of the author's words is evident – by questioning a fundamental part of the Christian faith, the Duke of Opole became a heretic in the eyes of a contemporary reader. The author's remark hides yet another level linked to his dislike of George of Poděbrady. As indicated

34 P. Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, part 1: *Chronik bis 1466*, part 2: *Chronik ab 1467*, p. 349.

35 P. Eschenloer, *Geschichte der Stadt Breslau*, p. 243.

above, the basic idea of Eschenloer's work was that it is impossible to pay homage to a heretical king, whom his distinct religious views stripped of legitimacy and the right to rule. The heresy of Bolko V is confirmed precisely by the fact that he dared to take a feudal oath to a heretical king, by which he was made equal to the Bohemian heretics.

The construction of religious otherness on the pages of Silesian chronicles arose to a great extent from the fear that engulfed Silesia during the Hussite Wars and also reflected the general tendency of the late Middle Ages, as it was explained by Jean Delumeau and Robert Muchembled, who drew attention to the boom in the fear of the devil, which spread throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages, mainly as a result of the plague that repeatedly visited European lands³⁶. In the late Middle Ages, the conviction about devil's involvement in the world can be traced throughout the lands of the Bohemian Crown. The devil was a frequent subject both in the treatises of Hussite scholars and of their opponents on the Catholic side. Yet the examples from Silesia clearly demonstrate that proofs of the activity of the devil that were drawn in this way belonged not only to the ecclesiastical milieu and the medieval polemicists, but were a society-wide issue affecting more or less all the social classes.

In the late Middle Ages, Silesians were convinced that the devil was the root of the Hussite heresies and that the Hussites were devil's servants or allies, as the examples analysed above demonstrate. Considering the nature of Silesian historiography of the late Middle Ages, which, with a few exceptions mentioned above, was dominated by briefer annals and not very extensive chronicles, you, unfortunately, have to base your reflections on just three narrative sources, whose authors considered the question of heresy deeper. In their chronicles, Peter Eschenloer, Johannes Froben, and Caspar Borgen presented a colourful picture of Bohemian heretics, built of topoi and period stereotypes that were traditionally associated with heresy in the Middle Ages. The authors of this paper placed particular emphasis on the question of the devilish origin of heresy and the connection between the devil and the heretics themselves: the tendencies manifested most pronouncedly in the descriptions of George of Poděbrady and his followers, and of Bolko V of Opole, a temporary ally of the radical Hussites in the 1430s. Both magnates were perceived as enemies of the Silesians, hardened heretics, and above all servants of the devil.

36 R. Muchembled, *Dějiny ďábla*, Praha 2008, pp. 48–53.

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Abstract

David Radek

Heretics as devil's servants. The construction of religious otherness in Silesian historiographical sources from the late Middle Ages

Since the times of St Augustine, the medieval society was firmly convinced about the connection between heresy and the devil, and heretics were often considered members of the *civitas diaboli*. In the Silesian milieu, a similarly constructed religious identity can be more often encountered in the late Middle Ages, when the society was facing the threat of Hussitism. This was reflected in the works of contemporary chroniclers (e.g., Peter Eschenloer, Caspar Borgen, Johannes Froben, etc.). The descriptions of heretics were created in accordance with the already existing Christian tradition and predominantly consisted of stereotypes and topoi associated with heresy. The paper focuses on the analysis of narrative strategies used by Silesian chroniclers and endeavours to explain how the image of heretics was created, with an emphasis on the role the devil played in these descriptions, therefore it analyses the relationship between heretics and the devil.

Keywords:

heresy, narrative sources, Silesia, Hussitism, Jan Hus

Abstrakt

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Heretycy jako studzy diabła. Konstrukcja religijnej odmienności w śląskich źródłach historiograficznych późnego średniowiecza

Już od czasów św. Augustyna społeczeństwo średniowieczne było głęboko przekonane o związku herezji z diabłem, a heretyków często uważano za członków *civitatis diaboli*. W środowisku śląskim z podobnie skonstruowaną tożsamością religijną częściej można się spotkać w późnym średniowieczu, kiedy społeczeństwo śląskie stanęło w obliczu zagrożenia husytyzmem. Powyższe znalazło odzwierciedlenie w pracach ówczesnych kronikarzy (np. Petera Eschenloera, Caspara Borgeniego, Johanna Frobenusa i innych). Opisy heretyków tworzone były zgodnie z istniejącą już tradycją chrześcijańską i w przeważającej mierze składały się ze stereotypów i toposów związanych z herezją. Artykuł skupia się na analizie strategii narracyjnych stosowanych przez śląskich kronikarzy i stara się wyjaśnić, w jaki sposób kreowali oni obraz heretyków, z naciskiem na rolę, jaką w tych opisach odgrywał diabeł.

Słowa kluczowe:

herezja, Śląsk, husytyzm, źródła narracyjne, Jan Hus