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Article

Matěj of Janov: *Corpus Mysticum, Communionem*, and the Lost Treatise of His *Regulae*

Stephen E. Lahey

Department of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0337, USA; slahey3@unl.edu

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Abstract: The Bohemian theologian Matěj of Janov (d.1393) is little known outside of Czech Hussite scholarship, yet his *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamentum* is arguably as important an influence on the genesis and development of Hussitism, as is the thought of John Wyclif. The chief Hussite theologian Jakoubek of Stříbro relied on his works, and his emphasis on the need for daily Eucharist for all Christians seems to have been central to the utraquist ideal central to Hussitism. This article describes the structure and content of Matěj's *Regulae*, a carefully constructed sustained argument of the threat of Antichrist facing the church, and the nature of the reforms needed to respond to them. The editions of Kybal (1908–1926) and Nechutová (1993) present the extant books of the *Regulae*, but Book Two treatise 2 appears to have been lost. Based on my argument for the overall structure of the *Regulae*, I attempt to reconstruct the contents of this book, which I will argue is directly related to Matěj's very high regard for his predecessor, the preacher Jan Milič of Kroměříž.

Keywords: Matěj of Janov; Jakoubek of Stříbro; Jan Milič; Eucharist; John Wyclif; Jan Hus; Antichrist; Hussites

1. Introduction

Bohemian reform did not begin with Jan Hus. While this seems reasonable, evidence for it is in fairly short supply in the contemporary Anglophone literature on the Hussite movement, but increasingly more plentiful in Czech.¹ Recent scholarship on Hus himself has flourished, thanks in part to the 600th anniversary of his death at Constance, and in larger part to the opening of the Czech Republic in 1989. In most cases, Hus's Bohemian precursors make a brief appearance in an opening chapter of his biography, with equal space given to John Wyclif and the arrival of his works at Prague in 1390. Three figures are always mentioned: Conrad Waldhauser and Jan Milič of Kroměříž, both famous preachers, and Matěj of Janov. Of the three, Matěj is the intellectual heavyweight. He studied theology at Paris, earning the sobriquet *Magister Parisiensis* when he returned to Prague. Thereafter, he was known as a preacher admired by royalty, famous for his indictment of clerical abuses, and ultimately, for his forced recantation before the Archbishop on 18 October 1389. More importantly, though, he is remembered for his *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamentum*, an extensive work describing the rules for Christian living as culled from Scripture. The *Regulae* is the first extensive analysis of the need

¹ The place to begin with Matěj of Janov, as with all figures associated with Hussite thought, is (Spunar 1985, p. 162), which includes a complete catalogue of the manuscripts of Matěj's works, their editions, and secondary resources. Of the sources listed here, see especially (Kybal 1905a, n. 3). See also (Valasek 1971; Lašek and Karel 2002). Kybal's discussion of Matěj is much abbreviated in (Kybal 1910). See also (Kaminsky 1968; Nechutová 1964, 1969). Nechutová has contributed numerous articles on Matěj in Czech, and has completed the edition of his *Regulae* in *Matěje* (1993). The best resource for Matěj in English is the collected volumes of the proceedings of *Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice (BRRP n.d.)* conferences. See (Nechutová 1998; Dekarli 2011; Kullerud 2014). See also Betts (1969).

for reform in the church in Bohemia, and the primary reform Matěj envisions is regular, even daily, participation in the Eucharist for all laity.

Perhaps the most fundamental idea associated with Hussitism is utraquism, the demand that the laity consume both consecrated elements of the Eucharist. The utraquist position is one of the four Articles of Prague that defined the Hussites, along with the divestment of the clergy, vernacular preaching, and public correction of morality. The natural assumption would be that Matěj was directly connected to the utraquist ideal, since several hundred pages of his *Regulae* are devoted to exhaustive, and repetitive, arguments for the centrality of the Eucharist in the Christian life. The general scholarly opinion about Matěj's relation to the utraquist position is that his work gives no direct evidence of a demand for lay consumption of consecrated wine, but following Jan Rokycana's assertion that Matěj was the first utraquist in Basel in 1433, there has long been an association.²

There is more to Matěj's relation to the Hussite movement. Vlastimil Kybal advised his readers to investigate the extant works of the dominant Hussite reformers, including Jakoubek Stříbro, Jan Přeboram, and Jan Rokycany, to uncover connections between Matěj and their ideology. At best, he felt it very likely that Matěj's *Regulae* was widely read and studied during the years leading up to the Hussite revolution, and was most important for Jakoubek.³ Jana Nechutová specified Jakoubek's iconoclasm as having a certain connection to the *Regulae*, and suggests that where Jakoubek departed from Hus, he tended to veer towards Matěj more than any other thinker.⁴ Further, she has argued convincingly that Hus owes at least as much to Matěj as he does to Wyclif in his description of the relation between the church as congregation of the faithful, and church as community of the saints.⁵ More recently, Pavel Soukup firmly established Jakoubek as reliant on Matěj's conception of the church as the gathering of the Holy distinct from the many churches now subject to the degradations of antichrist. Soukup argues that even before Jakoubek embraced Wyclif, he had already been captivated by the *Regulae*, incorporating entire paragraphs from Matěj's work into his sermons, and even defending Wyclif's *De Mandatis Divinis* with more quotations from Matěj than from Wyclif.⁶ Helena Krmíčková has argued that Jakoubek made use of Matěj's conception of the church in his critique of excommunication, which would become a part of the Hussite defense at the Council of Basel.⁷ Finally, Howard Kaminsky noted the connections between Nicholas of Dresden and Matěj in his 1965 edition of several of Nicholas's works.⁸ Kybal was almost certainly right to predict that an increase in familiarity with these presently lesser known but influential theologians will reveal the extent of the debt the Hussites owed to Matěj.

In the interest of continuing to develop a basis for exploring the relation of Matěj to the Hussites, this essay will address the structure and content of the *Regulae*, specifically the problem of the missing treatise of the second book. The organizational structure of the *Regulae* is not immediately discernible; it is not a collection of disputed questions, nor is it a *Summa*, or some other easily comprehensible

² Helena Krmíčková argued recently that it is premature to assume that because Matěj did not specify utraquism as such, it must follow that he did not advocate it. Her reading of Matěj equates frequent communion, *propter dualitatem utriusque speciei, panis et vini*, with *sub utraque*. See Krmíčková (2002). For an English version, see Krmíčková (2000). This has come to be known as the Janovite Theory of Utraquism: see Halama (2007). Jana Nechutová remains skeptical about this: see Nechutová (1998). For Rokycana's reference, see (Krmíčková 1997, p. 8), also (Halama 2007, p. 34).

³ Kybal (1905b). Jsem přesvědčen, že spisy učeného byly hojně a pilně čítány a studovány, a že myšlenky v nich obsažené působily v náležitém přizpůsobení na další vnitřní vývoj husitství, a zejména na předního představitele jeho, po smrti Husové, na M. Jakoubka ze Stříbra. Kybal's work remains the most thorough consideration of Matěj. Kybal showed how Jakoubek incorporated a section of Matěj's *De Antichristo* (III.5) into his *Tractatus Responsivus* in (Kybal 1905b) See also, Mag. Johannis Hus 1927, now generally agreed to be the work of Jakoubek. This also contains material first emphasized by Matěj.

⁴ Nechutová (1964). Paul De Voogt makes frequent reference to Jakoubek's debt to Matěj in De Vooght (1972): see especially pp. 102, 103.

⁵ (Nechutová 1972, pp. 97, 102).

⁶ (Soukup 2011, pp. 113, 206).

⁷ (Krmíčková 1997, pp. 61, 85). The passage in question can be found in *Tractatus de Responsivus* [TR], pp. 83.34–103.3, as discussed more thoroughly below.

⁸ Kaminsky et al. (1965).

grouping of treatises. Matěj, like Wyclif, was one of the growing number of theologians who had shrugged off the standard academic models for argument in favor of a more free-form approach. The *Regulae* is a set of twelve treatises devoted to exploring the relation of a set of twelve rules contained within Scripture to the problems besetting the church of Matěj's day. The fifth treatise of the third book contains two works by other theologians Matěj admired: Distinction 10 of that treatise [III.5.x] is followed by William of St. Amour's *Tractatus de Periculis Novissimorum Temporum*, a famous indictment of the friars couched in the apocalyptic theology describing Matěj's thought, and following the next treatise [III.5.xi], Jan Milič of Kromeríž's *Libellus de Antichristo*, a treatise that had been very influential in Czech reform circles in the latter half of the fourteenth century.⁹

2. The Structure of the *Regulae*

The *Regulae* is an extended prophetic text, in that Matěj proclaims the thirteen rules God has given mankind to direct human life and to allow man to discern the spirit of prophets and teachers.¹⁰ It is not a restatement of either the Old or New Laws as they appear in Scripture, and is not intended to be a supplement to a life lived in *imitatio Christi*. Instead, it is presented as a set of books specifically for Christian leaders to guide them in recognizing the Holy Spirit when it is moving in someone that is claiming to preach God's truth. This in itself is a remarkable conceit, in that preaching was carefully regulated and assessed according to diocesan authority for secular priests, and according to regular authority for friars. In presenting his books as rules for assessing truly Christian preaching, he is presuming upon traditionally episcopal or regular authority. Two additional issues should be addressed: is the proper term *regula*, rule, or *lex*, law? Additionally, are there twelve or thirteen of them? I use the two terms interchangeably in what follows, largely because Matěj does so.¹¹ Furthermore, while Matěj enumerates twelve laws as he explores the Old and New Testaments, he also describes the First Law or Rule by which creation functions and from which the twelve biblical laws originate, as a separate entity. "The third book includes the most celebrated rule, which is the mother of all others, and for all the other preceding twelve, namely four from the first book and eight from the second book, is the most common and most perfect, which has itself in conformity with the other twelve as a law to the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament and just as most pious Jesus, the spiritual lord God of the universe in flesh, to the twelve apostles in the New Testament."¹²

Matěj explains that the work is organized entirely to allow the reader to recognize holiness in truth, in contrast to the simulated holiness rampant in the church of his day.

I have written these books from love and devotion to the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, in hopes of somehow promoting its honor and glory . . . I do not want to detract from that which from my youth I have tirelessly pursued in my reading of Scripture by sluggishness or carelessness . . . [F]or that reason I have used the Bible most of all, and its chirographs and the manner of speaking of the teachers, as much because the Bible promptly and regularly occurs to me in all thinking and writing, as because the holy truths it contains are clear and manifest as such and confirmed in all reasoning.¹³

⁹ See William of Saint-Amour (Geltner 2008). For Jan Milič, see Morée (1999).

¹⁰ III.i.proemium. The *Regulae* has been edited in 6 volumes. Vlastimil Kybal edited the first five volumes, containing Books I–IV: I, 1908; II, 1909; III, 1911; IV, 1913; V, 1926 (Matěje 1908, 1909, 1911, 1913, 1926). Jana Nechutová edited the final volume, containing Book V, in 1993, with assistance from Helena Krmičková. Kybal's volumes are available online at <http://147.231.53.91/src/index.php?s=v&cat=19>.

¹¹ E.g., "Et hec ipsa est regula communis, una omnium, brevis . . . infallibilis, et ipsa est perfecte libertatis." III, pp. 140.15–17. The term *statuta* is another, less frequently used, synonym. While other scholastic writers may have distinguished between the terms, Matěj does not.

¹² *Tercius liber includit unicam cleberrimam regulam, que omnium aliarum mater est, et omnibus aliis precedentibus duodecim, scilicet 4 ex libro primo et 8 ex libro secundo, communis est et perfectissima, que habet se conformiter ad alias XII velud lex ad XII tribus Ysrael in Veteri Testamento et sicut Piissimus Jhesus, dominus deus spirituum universe carnis, ad XII apostolos in Novo Testamento.* I, pp. 17.13–18.

¹³ I.Proemium c.ii, pp. 11–14.

I have included his own brief description of the contents of the books in an Appendix A.

Just as the Bible describes the foundational rules of truth in a variety of ways throughout its many books, so Matěj, in imitating its language and style, and eschewing the formality of the schools, intends to enlighten his readers. Yet he does not turn his back on his education. “I do not write stories for the unlettered here, but that which I have learned of late from my masters in Paris,” as well as from his years of careful study in Prague, which he develops for his fellow preachers “not something with exact wording, crafted in the articulate little ways of rhetoric, nor in the ordered arguments of logic, but supported by the simplicity of the Holy Scripture.”¹⁴

Vlastimil Kybal assayed the most detailed analysis of the structure of the *Regulae*.¹⁵ He perceives the work as carefully arranged, and illustrates this in his meticulously organized register for each volume of his edition. But the work is not organized according to scholastic form; while it centers on the twelve laws in Scripture and the fundamental, foundational thirteenth law, its purpose directs the sustained argument, which is to purify and enrich the Christian life in a church united in embodying the life and teachings of Christ. Kybal explains that the cluttered and repetitive style of the *Regulae* is intentional, intended to compel the reader to return again and again to this basic purpose. At times, Matěj devotes chapters at a time to criticisms of the abuses of his age, particularly the hypocrisy afflicting the church’s leadership, but when he is defending his own ideas, his prose is much tighter, more disciplined, and he employs a scholastically structured interpretation in his exposition. For Kybal, the strength of the *Regulae* lies not in its organization, but in its “richness of expression”, leading the reader time and again to the basic ideas articulated by the thirteen laws.¹⁶ Christo Gandev argued in 1937 for a reading of the *Regulae* as an articulation of Joachim of Fiore as applied to the Bohemian church, a position generally regarded as untenable by Howard Kaminsky and Jana Nechutová.¹⁷ Kaminsky himself reads the *Regulae* as an extended attempt to formalize Milič’s thought into a reform program, emphasizing the place of an idealized pietism into the extant, hierarchically structured church, absent a means whereby this could be practically realized.¹⁸ Rather than address questions of practicability or influence, I will concentrate instead on the treatise’s formal structure of argument.

While its structure is not immediately obvious, when it is recognizable, I believe Matěj’s presumption becomes more evident. The *Regulae* is not only a polemic against clerical hypocrisy, nor is it merely an extended argument for implementation of daily Eucharist for the laity, although it is both. It is not Scriptural exegesis, nor a homiletic guide, but it certainly sets out the proper means of doing both. While the *Regulae* consists of five books, it is neatly divisible into two parts. In the first, which extends half-way to Book 3, treatise 2 (III.2), Matěj provides an overview of the thirteen laws God has provided for the recognition of a true prophet, that is, a preacher of the truth. The second, running from III.3 to the end of the fifth book, is Matěj’s own prophetic message regarding the present state of the church. Had he begun with his own message, he could well have been regarded as simply having advocated a doctrinal opinion critical of the standard practice regarding the Eucharist. Instead, Matěj takes on for himself a greater authority by proving that daily Eucharist was the original practice of the early church (III.3), but also hinting in his second rule (I.1.ix) that he has received a divine

¹⁴ I.Proemium c.ii, p. 14; V.Proemium c.vii, pp. 18–20.

¹⁵ (Kybal 1905a, pp. 42–48). Valasek does not address the structure of the work, but begins with Matěj’s motivation for writing the work, moving swiftly to the main object of his study, Book 3; see Valasek, p. 61. Nechutová interprets Matěj’s rules as an introduction for the believer to the full Christian life, pointing past the human inventions of religion to the core truth of the Christian life, which is the direct relation with the crucified Christ. See Nechutová (1998). While her analysis of the content of Matěj’s fifth book in her edition is complete and accurate, she does not incorporate the fifth book into the overall structure of the *Regulae* in any way beyond describing the book’s general content. Petrů Ondřej O.P. comments that the *Regulae* is not a theological treatise, but “a spiritual reading of sorts”, in Ondřej (1946). Herold (2011) provides a brief overview, and devotes most attention to the place Matěj takes in relation to Milič, Joachim of Fiore, and others.

¹⁶ (Kybal 1905a, p. 46). Je to především *bohatost výrazu* [italics his].

¹⁷ Gandev (1937), see (Kaminsky 1968; Nechutová 1964).

¹⁸ Kaminsky (1968). He concludes that Matěj’s project was inevitably a failure, realizable only with the kind of forceful reformatory power Wyclif envisioned for the civil lord.

command to restore this practice. This latter element is what necessitates the carefully constructed first part, showing his words to be divine truth rather than simply human opinion.¹⁹

The internal organization of each half of the *Regulae* is carefully designed to complement the other half. The first half, including Books 1, 2, and the first two treatises of Book 3, summarizes the thirteen rules God has given mankind to perceive the truth. These thirteen laws were given in three periods, according to our ability to perceive truth. Initially, God's primary and perfectly reasonable Law was naturally evident to the human mind, but the Fall so clouded our understanding as to cause us to forget it. This is the Primary, Eternal law, the shape of which is Truth itself.²⁰ However, because we have forgotten this, Matěj reserves his description of this Law, the source of all laws in creation, to the first treatise of the third book. Instead, he begins in the first book with the eight laws based in the Old Testament, given to the children of Israel in the age of the prophets to assist in discerning a divinely ordained prophet from a false prophet ready to lead them astray. The second book shows how God revealed the second eight laws with the founding of the Church to provide Christians the ability to perceive hypocrisy in those who would use the identity of being a Christian to their own ends. Matěj's attention here is especially to those who would use their authority as preachers and teachers in the church for their own purposes, rather than to serve Christ. With the establishment of the church, the human mind is again able to comprehend the Primary Law, which is subject with which the third book begins.²¹

Each of the first two books are structured according to a particular problem and its solution. Four laws enable one to recognize a problem, and the other four laws reveal the solution, which has its basis securely in Scripture. The first book addresses the scourge of false prophets with four laws describing the symptoms by which one can quickly identify the motives of someone claiming the mantle of divine authority. The false prophet twists his message according to the needs of the moment, proudly announcing his privileged status as one who speaks God's truth, delighting in the trappings of man-made religion, and ignoring the moral instruction of the people to whom he preaches. The true prophet, on the other hand, conforms his entire life to the law he preaches, and the results of his preaching strengthen and enrich the faith lives of his audience. Nothing he says or does leads them away from divine commands or the sacraments, and he clearly identifies human inventions that can lead people to sin. In short, the true prophet speaks truth that nourishes the souls of his hearers, leads them to sacraments, and his life embodies these truths.

The second book is similarly structured, but this time specifically directed to clergy and those who would instruct the faithful in the truths of the gospels. Such people claim the benefit of being followers of Christ, but they reek of hypocrisy. The hypocrite, Matěj explains, puts himself and his interests before Christ, and hungers to accept offices, honors, and praise to boost himself up. He loves temporal goods, and seeks them as supposedly necessary for the enhanced life of studying the Christian truth he has elected to pursue. Such can be divided into a wide range of species, and they differ little or not at all from the scribes and pharisees of old. They lead the people away from what is spiritually nourishing in favor of what benefits them. The remedy to this is to turn to the preacher who has dedicated himself to the truth of the Gospels. The true preacher has embraced *kenosis*, and has surrendered the whole of his life and goods to Christ. He has voluntarily chosen Christ and His example, and constantly prays on the Passion and devotes himself to an imitation of Christ, practicing a gentle but consistent contempt for the world. All his actions begin in love of Christ, and end there.

¹⁹ I.1.ix *Doctor catholicus, quicquid occulte in aura sibi instinctum revelatumque accepit, mox illud cum lege divina et dei preceptis comportat, quia illa est regula infallibilis et prima secundum dicta superius solemniter, patenter ac publice per deum et eius probatissimos nuncios tradita et vulgata.* pp. 42.29–43.3.

²⁰ Dekarli's article referenced above effectively describes the Neoplatonic structure Matěj employs to describe how eternal Truth is the basis for the primary rule common to all beings, by which they are directed, and provides form to each creature.

²¹ See the overview, included here as Appendix B.

Following the third book's opening treatise on Eternal truth, Matěj recounts the life of the true preacher and reformer of the church in the third book's second treatise. At first blush, II.2 and III.2 seem to be about the same thing, namely the ideal preacher of the gospel. That II.2 is missing from all manuscripts complicates matters. Happily, Matěj provided an outline of all eight laws of the second book in II.2.ii, giving us the form, if not the content, of the missing treatise.²² I believe the content can be reassembled using material available in the other five books, and in Matěj's encomium of Jan Milič, as I will show below. The difference between II.2 and III.2 lies in the purpose of the Rules Matěj describes. The subject of II.2 is the rules that allow recognition that someone is capable of being a vessel of God's truth. The laws themselves describe a Christian who has renounced the self and embraced a recognizable *kenosis* as the basis for his life in Christ. The subject of III.2 is not such a person's spiritual life, but his deeds. Here Matěj presents a catalogue of the actions of a holy speaker and embodiment of the Gospel truth. He never speaks of himself, and never uses cheap gimmicks and tricks to enliven his sermons. They are not threatened by the actions of those who are threatened by the truth they preach, and reject praise and adulation. So, the two treatises are connected, in that the II.2 describes the preacher's spiritual life, while III.2 describes his actions.

The second half of the *Regulae* has the same problem-solution structure. Matěj presents two sets of problems and their solutions in III.4, and presents two more sets of problems in III.5 and III.6. Books four and five are each devoted to resolving one of these problems. The four problems are centered on the present divided church, the threats of antichrist, and the widespread hypocrisy that infects the Christian world, and Matěj's solutions include a call for reform of the structure of the church, and implementation of daily celebration of Eucharist for all Christians. III.4, entitled *De Ecclesia*, has received considerable attention from scholars, who rightly connect Matěj's definition of the church as the holy elect, as opposed to the earthly church claiming ecclesiastical authority, with the definitions of Wyclif and Hus.

It is unlikely, though, that Matěj's analysis of the composition of the church was directly relevant to Hus. Matěj devotes the first eight chapters of III.5 to sorting between means of understanding unions, and means of understanding differences within a given set. In distinguishing between two groups, we can identify one in which its members have selected a quality that enables them to unite together as a demonstrable union, and another in which its members are *de facto* united because of a choice they have made on their own, which union has come about because of a mechanism that arises apart from the action of any of the set's members. The former is a man-made organization, while the latter is the pattern for the mystical body of Christ. Next, he explains how members of a group or set are distinct from one another. In one case, members are heterogenous yet unified by a factor providing unity despite the widespread disparity in the natures of the members. In the other, the union is initially homogenous, but divisible by outside factors for either good or ill. The former is the mystic body of Christ, while the latter is a man-made organization. This allows Matěj to emphasize the binding power of the Eternal Rule that unites the church as a body defined by the choice of its members to submit themselves to the embodiment of the Rule's Truth, Christ. This group is naturally heterogenous, but indivisible by virtue of its binding force. The other group consists of members who select membership in the group according to criteria invented by people, the result of which is a group that is easily divisible by other criteria invented by people. Throughout, Matěj refers to the church as the mystical body, like the body of a human being, the soul of which—Christ—unites the heterogenous parts.

Hus begins his *De Ecclesia* with a similar disquisition on forces that unify and divide, but his description is different. He describes unifying forces that bind parts together united by a soul, other unifying forces that organize the parts to work in the interests of the whole, and a unity in which dignity of office or lack thereof plays no part. Each of these rest on body metaphors, and no mention is

²² See pp. 181–82 of vol. 1.

made of the distinction between the man-made and the mystically formed bodies. It is the same for distinctions within parts of a body. In one sense, body parts are disposed by grace to their position; in another, a member or part may have several duties; and in a third sense, the parts each have their functions and powers flowing from the soul. Hus adds the important distinguishing characteristic as an afterthought: some apparent parts of the body are not really body parts after all, but organic substances contained within the body, as with body secretions, feces, and so forth. Hus ends this discussion with an enthusiastic warning that the apparent Christians who wrongfully claim membership in the mystical body of Christ will most certainly be excreted from the body like so much ordure.²³ Wyclif uses this same analogy in his *De Ecclesia*, albeit perhaps with less directly scatological zeal.²⁴ While Matěj occasionally makes similar comments, the means by which he distinguishes between different kinds of members of a body does not appear in Hus's *De Ecclesia*.²⁵

Regulae III.4 has received the most attention from scholars interested in understanding Matěj's critique of the church. As mentioned, Matěj perceives two interconnected problems, the schism and the widespread division within the clerical hierarchy. The schism is an issue arising from the clerical desire for secular power, while the division within the clergy arises from the proliferation of individual rules, orders, and the interposition of tradition and regional distinctions into the clerical offices instituted by God. He moves back and forth between the two issues, beginning with the proliferation of monks and friars, who claim a communal ownership based in the apostolic model of Acts, but rely upon their founders' rules rather than the laws of the New Testament.²⁶ The multiplication of societies and fraternal orders encourage division in the laity. Just as kings lead nations against other kings, so do these divisions within the church lead inevitably to schism.²⁷ The great evil the schism has brought to the church has one benefit, though: the time of tribulation foretold in Scripture is at hand, and the redemption of the church will surely follow.²⁸

The clerical hierarchy is not intrinsically wrong; just as the body has three parts that preserve it: namely, the heart, which preserves heat; the head, the place of the spirit; and the kidneys, for strength; so, the church has the offices of pope, bishop, and priest. When they do their duties, they contribute to the health of the body, but when they fail, the danger is especially serious.²⁹ Matěj continues to explore the organological model and the means by which powers and duties are distributed throughout the mystical body, and his vision of the balance of the distribution of power within the church emerges as the ideal for the mystical body's healthy functioning.³⁰

This organological model is useful to describe the second part of the ongoing problem afflicting the church, which is the competition within the leadership for power. Here, the analogy is to the two hands by which the body realizes its will. The clergy is the right hand, while the secular hand is the left. The presumption the clergy shows in grasping for what is in the left hand indicates how it is stricken with sin, which allows the left hand to go unrestrained, free to follow its carnal inclinations.³¹

This internal competition can only be stopped by recognizing that the laws of the church have been multiplied beyond all necessity. Matěj readily admits that some additional body of law is necessary for the direction of such a vast community, and champions the Decretals. This body of canon law was revealed to the church for its guidance, and it suffices for the solution of every problem so long

²³ (Hus 1956, pp. 13–15.)

²⁴ (Wyclif 1886, pp. 61–62).

²⁵ E.g., III.4.iv, p. 187, "The nature of things teaches that the worst kinds of humours in the body ascend from it, especially like a cud from the gut, to the head, to corrupt it, and so is thrown forth easily, befouling the whole body and its members." Here, Matěj is speaking not of the eventual purgation of the church, but of the reasons for the schism, which he equates to an internal sickness that has already been manifested in the election of two popes.

²⁶ III.4.ix xiii. The strong ties between Matěj and William of St. Amour are most evident in this section.

²⁷ III.4.xv.

²⁸ III.4.xvi. This is the topic of III.6, with particular attention to the Abomination of the desolation.

²⁹ III.4.xviii.

³⁰ III.4.xviii–xxi.

³¹ III.4.xxv–xxviii.

as it is interpreted according to the teachings of Scripture.³² The problem is that custom, tradition, and invented teachings proliferate without any regard for the restraint provided by a just regulating mechanism. A return to the right ordering of the Decretals and Scripture, accompanied by a well regulated clergy, will be the restoration to unity the church so badly needs.

3. Matěj's Solution—A Revived *Corpus Mysticum* Argument

On the face of it, the term *corpus mysticum* promises a definition that will overstep rational boundaries. In this case, the term refers to a ritual act, a sacrament which, when performed, results in the spiritual nourishment of the participant, and, according to Matěj, an improvement to the internal health of the church. If the church were simply a corporation, it would be a contracted fiction constructed to unite its members the way a club or corporation is set up. That way, the sense of this *corpus mysticum* would simply be like what is expressed in “Our company is a healthy company because every employee exercises daily, eats a healthy diet, and avoids unhealthy activities”. The company itself is nothing more than a legal fiction uniting the members according to a mission, goal, or continuing project, and health cannot be one of its attributes, because it is not something alive. In this sense, *corpus mysticum* is an analogical construct.

Henri De Lubac's *Corpus Mysticum* traces the development of a concept of the church as something much more than a man-made corporation. In the ninth century, Latin theologians developed a much closer identification of the church with the being of the Incarnate Christ, resulting in an understanding of there being three bodies united in the church: the physical human body of Christ ascended into heaven, the physical bodies of all the Church's members, and the physical body of the consecrated host of the Eucharist. De Lubac cites Candidus of Fulda's description as especially descriptive.

‘Take and eat’ That is, Gentiles, make up my body, which you already are. This is the body which is given for you. What he took from that mass of the human race, he broke by his passion, and raised up after the breaking. Therefore what he took from us he handed over for us. You are to ‘eat’, that is, perfect the body of the church, so that, whole and perfect, she may become the one bread, with Christ as its head . . . Bread, therefore, is the body of Christ, which he took from the body, his church.³³

De Lubac describes how the term *corpus mysticum* developed over three centuries, from referring to both church and sacrament to the church alone, with the introduction of *corpus verum* serving for the consecrated, transubstantiated, host. The debates he recounts are tangled, and reveal a tension within Christian theology that scholasticism managed to relieve with its measured and careful attention to how terms function in theological discourse. By the time Peter Lombard compiled his *Sentences*, the consecrated elements of the Eucharist are *verum corpus*, and the sacrament is instituted not to perfect the body of the church, but to augment love in Christians, and as a daily medicine for weakness.³⁴ Theological attention had shifted to the relation of the real, ascended body of Christ to the consecrated host, which relation served as the basis for a spiritual reality of Christ within the bread that became the subject of later medieval Eucharistic theology.

The conception of the church as a living body able to be recognized as composed of parts with differing roles and responsibilities, the “organological model”, was associated with the development of that model to describe the secular state in the twelfth century. John of Salisbury famously described the different classes of people as being the hands, feet, and limbs of the state in his *Policraticus*, where he envisions the various classes working together for the common interest of the whole. Shortly after

³² III.4.xxix–xxxi.

³³ De Lubac (2006), from *De Passione Domini*, c.5, PL 106 (*Epistola Candidi, Monachi Fuldensis*), pp. 68–69 and c. 6, p. 71.

³⁴ *Sententiae in IV Libros, Lib.IV, D.10, c.2; D.12, c.6.*

John wrote, Christian theologians adopted the model to describe the church, and by the time Aquinas appropriated it for his ecclesiology, it was widely accepted and used.³⁵

4. Matěj's Understanding of the Relation of Church and Sacrament

Matěj's description of the Rules of the Old and New Testaments rests on his argument that there is one fundamental Rule that determines the whole of reality. This fundamental Rule is the basis for the truth of all that is true, akin to the Neoplatonic *logos* that provides order and structure to everything in the universe. This Rule is contained within the second person of the Trinity, and makes God the Son the form or immutable and eternal idea for every creature (III.1.i). Through the form of the thing contained within God the Son, every creature has its proper strengths and natural motives; its organizing force is what the ancient philosophers called natural law (III.1.ii). When human beings use reason to recognize the truth about some creature, we understand the eternal truth within God the Son that the creature expresses through its being (III.1.iii). When we express those truths using words and sentences, truth as such finds another means of expression, leading Matěj to create a Porphyrian tree of Truth: There are Uncreated and Created Truths, and of Created Truths there are True Essences and True Propositions, and of True Propositions there are Truths of life and True mental propositions, and of True mental propositions there are True spoken truths and True written truths (III.1.iv). The least clear of these is Truths of life, which Matěj describes as being an adequation of conversation or behavior to a truth of the mind or a proposal formed by the mind that is in accord with the First Truth.

Kybal and Velasek recognize that Matěj's description of the relation of kinds of truth to the fundamental First Truth evokes the Christian Neoplatonism of Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius.³⁶ Matěj was not the first late fourteenth-century theologian to turn to Christian Neoplatonism for a metaphysical foundation; Walter Burley, Thomas Bradwardine, and John Wyclif all turned to the realist philosophical structure that defined the scholasticism preceding the introduction of Aristotelian metaphysics into the schools. Unlike these figures, though, Matěj avoids framing his thought in terms of the Aristotelian categories and their Porphyrian interpretation that late medieval realists used to define their philosophical programs. Instead, Matěj addresses nothing beyond the process of truth from its fullest expression in the First Rule as applied to true creatures and to the human understanding of these.

Within this process of truth from God the Son into creation, there is the standard by which human beings can understand right willing, and so, right living (III.1.ix). Those who fail to live according to the fundamental truth put themselves and personal goods before the good of all human beings. Among these are the modern clergy who use their office for personal advancement rather than to assist the laity in gaining salvation (III.1.x). They are, in effect, lying by denying the truth manifest in the being of all people, and redefining their office to promote their own wisdom through vain preaching, rather than promoting universal salvation through administration of the Eucharist.

This transition from the foundational truth of the First Rule to ethical behavior to an indictment of the clergy takes place within two chapters of III.1. Matěj moves from talk of truth in its most abstract sense to his purpose, the reform of the church and championing the Eucharist, without traditional scholastic progress through human nature, human society as such, and the place of religion in public and private life, as an Aristotelian would reason, but instead moves directly from God to the church and its sacraments. This is the approach of Hugh of St. Victor in *De Sacramentis*, as Matěj notes, and he means for us to understand that his debt is to Hugh rather than to the *Summae* of the Aristotelian synthesists who define thirteenth-century scholasticism. This does not mean that there is no underlying theological structure to his understanding of the relation of the church to the sacrament. The structure rests on the concept of health and soundness of a living entity. We are required to engage in daily care

³⁵ See (Kantorowicz 1957, pp. 180–220).

³⁶ (Kybal 1905a, pp. 82–85; Valasek 1971, pp. 131–36).

for our physical health as well as our spiritual health to maintain a sound body and soul. Just as we must eat and drink the food that nourishes our bodies, so we must consume the consecrated bread and wine of the sacrament to sustain our spiritual health (III.1.xii).

Soundness of constitution, proper operation of a body's systems, and health as such are all organized and supervised by the First Rule of Truth. The three versions in which this Rule can be understood, namely the law of nature, written truth, and the movement of grace in creation, are the basis for how the world functions, and how we understand its functioning (III.1.vi). In his theoretical analysis of the composition of bodies, Matěj addresses soundness and health as functions of the elements that compose a body (III.4.i–ix). The concord of the law of the Gospels establishes the foundational unity and sound constitution that defined the early church, and is the direct tie between the First Rule and the rules of the New Testament. This may not be immediately clear, because the laws of the New Testament Matěj provides are for the detection of hypocrites. It is only when we recognize that hypocrisy is the result of a substitution of the good of the self for the good of the many, and the dishonesty that results, that the principle behind the destruction of soundness of constitution and health becomes clear. Denying the truth of the First Rule leads directly to putting the self before others, which is the source of division and disease within the body. Just as a hypocritical priesthood causes division within the body of Christ, so does a self-deceiving will put the goods of the body before those of the spirit.

On the face of it, this is reasonable, and if Matěj had followed a more conventional scholastic approach, he might have organized his treatises differently: first, by the Eternal Truth of the first Rule; next, by the realization of that truth in the health and soundness of individual creatures; next, by the realization of that truth in the church; and finally, by the tie between physical nourishment of the corporeal body and spiritual nourishment of the spiritual body. Instead, Matěj begins with rules for recognizing prophets of the truth, continues with rules for recognizing hypocrisy, and only gets to the First Rule and its relation to the church in the lengthy third book. This is because he did not see his treatises as having the status of a scholastic exercise, but as a prophetic witness to the First Rule (III.1.vii).

For we hold unbendingly that as from one alone, the multiplicity of all things, and all sciences, is derived. Therefore, the same way is necessary, as all things move to one. And this will be to the highest One, the simplest principle, and in its highest simplicity and unity every essence, virtue, and action of the whole multitude is contained ... And this one highest Truth I hold to be the one rule of the whole conversation and life of any man. And this is God and our Lord Christ.³⁷

Had Matěj been a more philosophically inclined thinker, he would likely have described the relation of church to sacrament as being one of equivalent instantiations of the First Rule. The primary realization of the First Rule in creation is the incarnation, whereby the basis for both mystic bodies, the church, and the consecrated host is established. Christ's sacrifice of Himself as propitiation for human sin, His subsequent resurrection, ascension, and the day of Pentecost provided the basis for the ongoing life of Christ's body on earth, the church. The church is thus an instantiation of the Incarnation, the commonly recognized *corpus mysticum* of medieval thought. Like most conservative theologians of the anti-*Moderni* school, Matěj regarded the true church to be the body of the Elect, a subset of the self-declared earthly church. The point of the first two books of the *Regulae* is to provide two sets of laws whereby an honest priest is able to recognize false prophets and hypocrites within the church. This makes the true church to be more easily perceivable than many other theologians would have admitted possible, but still, it is not certain who among the laity, at least, who are members of the Elect and who are not. The other instantiation of the Incarnation is the *verum corpus*, the consecrated bread

³⁷ III.1.vii, p. 18.

and wine of the Eucharist. Just as with the *corpus mysticum*, the true Christ is not immediately evident to the senses, but there is no sense in which the consecrated host is any less a true instantiation of Christ than the church.

The two instantiations, the church and the consecrated host, function together according to the organization of the First Rule. Just as each part of a physical body demands physical nutriment for its proper function, and the whole needs it to maintain health, so the spiritual body of the church demands spiritual nutrition for its health and soundness, and each member of the spiritual body requires it to function properly within the church. Priests who would restrict the spiritual nutrition of the Eucharist to the laity are impeding the right operation of the whole body, which leads to division and opposition within it. Priests who provide the sacrament daily to the laity open the salvific power it provides to everyone, and strengthen the membership of the Elect within the *corpus mysticum*. If these two equivalent instantiations of Christ were functioning properly, the church would not be divided by schism, hypocrites would not run riot within the clergy, and Matěj would not have had to write his book.

But Matěj recognized the symptoms as indicative of the coming Apocalypse. The *corpus mysticum* is beset by the church of antichrist, who constantly moves to overtake Christ's body on earth and use it for evil ends. The number of the Elect are engaged in constant spiritual combat with antichrist and his forces within the church, and are in constant need of reinforcement and sustenance. Ideally, the consecrated host provides exactly that, and a plentiful, daily offering of the sacrament would allow victory over the false church in time, because of the sustenance it would provide to reverse division within the church. However, false prophets and hypocrites work constantly to lure the faithful away from the Eucharist with empty preaching, the useless mummery of images and false celebrations, and superstitious nonsense. They cooperate to break the mystic connection of the church to the Eucharist, which will lead to the victory of antichrist over the *corpus mysticum* through its being starved of the *corpus verum*. Hence, the sure means of saving the church is to institute daily Eucharist for all the laity.

It is difficult to overstate the emphasis Matěj places on the immediacy of the need for restoring the church. The fifth treatise of the third book, *De Antichristo*, and the accompanying sixth treatise, *De Abominatione Desolationis*, are challenging reading for anyone used to the measured reasoning of the schools, because they form the prophetic core of the *Regulae*.³⁸ Antichrist's place in history, its organological structure, its mighty powers, and the inconstancy of its members all receive loving attention, as do the prophecies in Scripture foretelling its coming. In the same manner, the Abomination of the Desolation is identified with the division within the priesthood, which leads to false religion, rejection of Eucharist, and separation from Christ. III.6 falls into two sections. The first 22 chapters cover the Abomination as just described, but cc. 23–80 is a departure from the normally measured tones of the *Regulae*. The reader is immediately aware of something new because of the obvious interposition of several chapters (cc. 23–24) on how Jan Hus has been called by God to restoring the church in the face of the terrible threats being described in the treatise. Kybal avoids saying whether Matěj wrote these two chapters, observing only that the anger in the following chapters suggests that Matěj composed this after having been compelled to recant in October 1389, but before his death in 1393, likely just prior to his second trial in ecclesiastical court, on 14 July 1392.³⁹ At the time, Hus was an undergraduate, barely out of his teens, making Matěj's authorship of them unlikely at best. The rest of the treatise deserves closer analysis, both for its indictment of contemporary clergy, the papacy, and for its use of Ezekiel and Revelations to interpret late fourteenth-century events. Assessments of Matěj that fail to take these two treatises into account present an anodyne version of the *Regulae* that likely fail to capture its appeal to the first generation of Hussite thinkers.

³⁸ The author is preparing a translation of *De Antichristo* for use in a monograph.

³⁹ (Kybal 1905b, p. iv).

Among the many voices calling for reform of the church in the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-centuries, Matěj's is alone in emphasizing the need for universal lay daily reception of the Eucharist. It is one of only a few to eschew Aristotelian conceptions of the state, the church, and the just use of power in favor of a mystical language of three hundred years earlier, when scholasticism was young. However, like the theological vision that Hugh of St. Victor's *De Sacramentis* provides, it is coherently organized and argued with a tireless willingness to repeat arguments wherever and whenever they are needed. The solution to the sickness infecting the church is for all Christians to receive the Eucharist every day. Books four and five are structured as formal *quaestiones*, each explained through analysis of distinctions or articles associated with the questions, but while the form is scholastic, the content is not. The topic of Book Four is "Whether each and every Christian should commune daily, that is, eat the body and blood of Christ sacramentally." This is addressed through analysis of eight articles. The Fifth Book is entitled, "A Treatise on the Body of Christ, calling and convincing all Christians to eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus crucified in communion, either daily, or on the Lord's day, or some other frequent use." This is followed by twelve distinctions. On the face of it, this looks like two books with the same subject. The Fourth Book is a development of III.3's collection of theological authorities Matěj has assembled on this issue, and has a distinctly theoretical air. He defines his terms, surveys the standard objections against frequent lay communion, and finally makes his own formal and extensive case for daily Eucharist for the laity. The Fifth Book leaves formal argument behind and assumes a hortatory tone. Here, Matěj addresses questions regarding the nature of the Christian receiving the sacrament, questions of recipient worth, potential and real impediments to daily communion, and the effect of the sacrament on daily life. Further, he takes up questions of liturgy and iconography, comparing the sacrificial rites of the Jews to the sacramental liturgy, and examines the place of images in the worship space.

As mentioned above in Note 2, the question of whether Matěj advocates lay access to the chalice remains open. Matěj had offered Jan Milič's thought on the spiritual need for the body and blood of Christ in III.3, whose sermon is worth closer reading. Matěj reports Milič as having said that frequent consumption of the sacrament connects the communicant to Christ, "just as a river is said to live because it continuously flows from its source . . . just as raindrops entering into the river or its source are incorporated therein and made one water with them, so for us, when we are incorporated into Christ, retaining our good substance in us, are led through him into participation with the deity. So drops of love entering the river of the source lose their bitterness and take on the sweetness of the divine not by their nature but by participating in grace . . ." ⁴⁰ Milič's sermon continues with a sustained analysis of John 6:57: "Whatever I say about the blood, I say the same of the bread or the body of Christ under the appearance of this bread, one consumes it with blood because the body of Christ does not exist without blood, but it lives with the blood. Again, he who drinks the blood from the chalice consumes it with the body because the blood of Christ is the whole of Christ." ⁴¹ This may seem unequivocally in favor of lay access to the chalice given the direction of the sermon thus far, but Milič warns, "The laity consume at once with the bread both the body and blood of Christ. Beyond this the sacrament of the chalice is not given to them, lest it be with a multitude and the blood of Christ is easily available to them. So this bread without wine because dead it lives ought be consumed by one who is in any mortal sin . . ." ⁴² The door is open to utraquism here, but by no means does this make Milič a utraquist. The same is true for Matěj, who seems to have been profoundly influenced by Milič's sermon, as is evident in V.7.xiii: "Here I say that by eating and drinking with all

⁴⁰ III.3.x, p. 100.

⁴¹ Narodni Knihovna XII.D.1, 23v Quidquid autem dico de sanguine, hoc dico de pane sive carne Christi. Quicumque vero suscipit corpus Christi sub specie panis ille sumit cum sanguine quia corpus Christi non est sine sanguine, sed vivit cum sanguine. Item qui bibit sanguine de calice sumit illum cum corpore quia sanguis Christe est totus Christi.

⁴² Narodni Knihovna XII.D.1, 23v "Layci ergo sumunt simul cum corpore et in corpore Christi sanguinem eius. Praeter hoc vero non datur eis sacramentum de calice ne cum multitudo communicat et facili aliquid de Christi sanguine effundatur. Hic ergo panis sine sanguine quia mortuus vivificat sumundus est ab eis qui in quecumque mortali peccato rei sit . . .".

our soul one appropriates and assumes for oneself the power of this our sacrament, and just as a drop of water mixed into a large amount of wine is more nobly and strongly absorbed into the wine, so one leaves behind one's empty being and moves wholly in the properties of the wine taking the water and the pure wine, so our soul and spirit through the commingling of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in this sacrament continually empties itself of vacuity and evil, denying its own being and transmigrating into the being of Christ, thereby continually clothing itself in the Lord Jesus Christ."⁴³ This tie between Milič and Matěj regarding the commingling of water and wine and its similarity to the commingling of the self with Christ is as far as either goes regarding the consecrated wine's function in the sacrament, but Matěj does not echo Milič in ruling out lay access to this element.

Matěj has no qualms about repetition and reiteration in these two books. He lays out theoretical arguments briefly in IV.Art.6 cc.iv–ix, which correspond to more detailed analysis of their practical application in V.Dist.5–7, thereby connecting the two books in a *theoria-praxis* framework. His purpose is not to convince theologians, but to recover the true Christianity of the early church for all faithful Christians, so he actively avoids using scholastic language wherever possible.

I have not used the appropriate vocabulary of the teachers in my writing, but the wording appropriate to the Bible. While I could have included the reasoning and truths of many teachers, yet I have not followed their arguments closely in this book. The words and teachings of the holy doctors have their place in many books, and whoever wishes to read them can find them there. Yet, all the multitude of doctors and all their books in the church of God cannot contain the whole world in their covers, as can easily be seen by their authors. Our lives in this age are brief and full of sorrows in labor and a penitence scarce anyone wants to embrace, especially the poor, for whom philosophizing either in custom or faculty or in books cannot succeed. Of this number I confess myself to be a part in the works of my youth. So, after much prayer and bible study, I am writing this, or have written other things, in which I have included what I have learned, after contemplation and study of what goes on in the modern age in comparison with ancient times.⁴⁴

5. The Missing Treatise: Recovering the Argument of *De Veritate Distincta* II.2

The manuscripts remaining do not contain the second treatise of the second book of the *Regulae*.⁴⁵ Kybal notes that it is conceivable that it had never been written, but reflects that there are several places throughout the rest of the work where Matěj indicates otherwise.⁴⁶ Matěj helpfully provides a list of the four rules that form the basis for the missing treatise in II.1.ii, which is a reasonable place to begin a reconstruction of the argument of the missing treatise.

The rules showing a Christian not to be a hypocrite are these:

The first is: Wholly to abandon oneself to hatred of the soul for Jesus Christ.

The second is: To apply oneself completely to Christ and to give oneself to Him for delight of Him alone.

The third is: Perfectly to love Christ crucified and the ignominy of His passion, and to imitate it through life.

⁴³ V.7.xii, p. 114.

⁴⁴ I.Pr.ii, pp. 13.29–14.14.

⁴⁵ Two mss contain the whole of the *Regulae*, Olomouc 211 and Prague D 55; two more contain all but the last book, Bautzen 8.7 and Prague XIII E 13; Spunar lists twelve more that contain at least three treatises, and another 17 that contain III.3, 6 containing IV, and 7 containing V. XIII E 13, dating to no later than 1420, has two folia pages left blank where II.2 should be. That the treatise is absent from this otherwise complete manuscript this early in the history of the work leads me to suspect that Matěj either never completed it or that it was not lost but purposefully destroyed. Given the generally orthodox outline I have deduced from what remains of his thought, Matěj may have included expressly problematic opinions about contemporaries in it, or someone after him appropriated it for their own use, or both.

⁴⁶ (Kybal 1905a, p. 57); see II.1.vii, "I have made special rules for assessing wicked and false Christians, and others for recognizing holy and just ones." pp. 204.4–9, also II.1.x, p. 219.23.

The fourth is: All that one does, and that one has done, is to begin from love of Christ, and to have its end in the same.

Or more briefly:

First: To spurn oneself to the end because of God.

Second: To choose only Christ Jesus and His unified good.

Third: To imitate and love the humility and contempt and sorrow of the cross of Christ.

Fourth: To do all things for love of Jesus.⁴⁷

Matěj's comments regarding how to obey these laws are sprinkled throughout II.1, because one of his favorite means of explication is to juxtapose opposites. He is not ready to be caught out by readers that are intent on applying a philosophical analysis of his comments, though. The wicked, hypocritical Christians use the same books as do the just and true Christians, and it is certainly possible to take up the latter's interpretations and reverse them, the way logicians do. "Yet I, as I have said, because of the greater vividness of the work now being undertaken, and because of the great overgrowth of writings that will certainly follow, I posit special rules for identifying the wicked and false Christians, and others for knowing holy and just ones, insofar as the day pours forth speech today, and the night declares knowledge to the night."⁴⁸ With this warning, and armed with the rules for identifying the Christian who is not a hypocrite, we can assay a sketch of what II.2 would contain.

Matěj devotes much of II.1 to the origin and characteristics of the four rules by which one can identify a hypocrite, which are reliant upon four generally hypocritical properties: Pride, Greed, Impropropriety, and Carnality. These sound remarkably like four of the seven capital sins, and Matěj recognizes the ease with which a reader might be tempted to juxtapose vices with contrasting virtues. But the damage is done not simply to the individual Christian, but to her relation to God. Pride destroys the strength by which Jesus leads His flock, Greed extinguishes the prudence of the Holy Spirit, Lust lays waste to the temperance of the blessed, and improbity about the faith, or hypocrisy, despoils the justice of Christ. Beyond this, though, Matěj advises the reader to consult the many prophets, saints, and holy doctors who have written at length about the relation of virtues and vices; his purpose is simply to articulate the Bible's rules by which to identify hypocrisy.⁴⁹

In his treatise on the Rule as such, Matěj makes clear the identity of Eternal Truth with the laws by which God intends creation to unfold (III.1.ii). Any given creature has a right direction in which to move and act, defined for it by its form, and ordained by God. Creatures capable of understanding can recognize this connection of form, truth, and divine rule, which leads naturally to a perception of moral value (III.1.iii). When an intelligent creature willingly turns away from this understanding, as the first angels did, and as the first man did, it instantly transgresses against this order, and becomes disordered and incapable of recognizing truth on its own. Christ's interposition allows Christians to recover this cognition of the right ordering of creation, but only if they freely deny their own apparent autonomy and voluntarily subject themselves to God (III.1.vi). At this point, Christians can recognize that nature is governed by a set of laws, from which the laws based in human reason (laws of Reason), and those taught in Scripture (laws of Grace) originate.

At the base of all these is one, all-encompassing truth, which is naturally inscribed in the human soul, namely that all one wills done to one, one ought do to others, and what one would not have done to oneself, one ought not do to others. Sin obliterated the clarity of this law in man, which is why Christ summarizes the first set of laws given to the Jews as to love God and one's neighbor; doing the first leads naturally to doing the second. The Incarnation inaugurates the completion of the laws of Grace through the institution of the sacraments and the church. The Christian law is "the most perfect

⁴⁷ II.1.ii, pp. 181–82.

⁴⁸ II.1.vii, pp. 204.4–9, see Psalm 19:3.

⁴⁹ II.1.Regula 2, Proem. p. 245.

and sufficient law for living; it suits for the examination and understanding of all justice, for avoiding every wickedness; when understood man can grasp all justice and injustice, as well as the faith and lack thereof of a prophet, and indeed [knowledge] of the spirit, whether it is from God or not . . . ”⁵⁰

The effect of the conversion of the soul to a life in Christ is the realization of the first two rules Matěj lists in II.2, namely renunciation of self in favor of Christ, and choosing Christ’s rules as the basis for life. “Every Christian man loving the law of the gospel and the rule of the Christian religion with zeal, freely embraces the whole Christian law and always endeavors to implement it.”⁵¹ To those faithful to the Christian life, it is not difficult to perceive when someone is a faithful witness to its truth, and when someone is not. Matěj points to the popular story of wolves who wear the wool of their prey. Sheep naturally grow the wool that they wear, but their predator must put effort into making a woolen garment, and must suffer the discomfort of wearing it when on the hunt. A sheep, when shorn, grows its wool naturally, but when a wolf loses his sheepskin, he must go to considerable trouble to gain another (III.2.ii). It is the same for those who witness the truth, by whom Matěj specifically means preachers. The true witnesses never speak of themselves or their own authority, even to the point of caring not for their own personal safety. When they encounter opposition, instead of shrinking from the challenge, they thrive on it, proclaiming the truth most zealously in the face of death (III.2.iii). In their teaching, they do not use fables, inexplicable questions, dreams, or other venues by which the world’s wisdom might be presented. Instead, they preach only with the words and principles of Scripture. The false preacher, on the other hand, magnifies human doctrines, savoring the wisdom of the present age, seeking the approval of the world’s powers, and elevating themselves above all others (III.2.iv). When a true preacher converts others, he takes no praise for this conversion, simply recognizing the natural appeal of truth to the awakened mind (III.2.vi).

Jesus constantly taught the Truth until His death, and was willing to face death because Truth time and again had faced death. Its witnesses were broken by terrors and twisted by torture, yet did not turn from it. Jesus did the same, but not meekly and passively; He excoriated Truth’s enemies, tirelessly rebuking the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy even as they plotted His death. So it was for the first Christians, who because they refused to turn from Truth, were impervious to pain and death. The more Truth’s enemies worked to destroy Christianity, the stronger was their zeal, and the more fruitful their fortitude (III.2.iii). The same is true today, Matěj concludes: the true witnesses of the truth will not flag in the face of opposition, but will continue to endure more and more as living witnesses to the Truth. Their lives, and in the end their deaths, will demonstrate their witness to Truth.

Matěj provides the reader with an example of such a faithful witness to Truth in III.5.Dist.11. Jan Milič exemplifies the process outlined in the four rules of II.2. Matěj’s biography of Milič is one of two available to us; Matěj’s is included in the *Regulae* as an example of the kind of preacher he had in mind for his program of reform, while the second, *Vita venerabilis presbyteri Milicii praelati ecclesiae Pragensis*, is somewhat more extended, but does not contradict Matěj’s hagiographic approach.⁵² This narrative illustrates the four rules that reveal the life of a true preacher of the gospel. Milič is described as having begun in a place of comfort, as a curial priest in the royal court. Because of his thirst for a life lived in gospel truth, he turned away from this comfort and gave himself over to a life devoted to Christ’s service. This life involved regular preaching and ministry to the poor, to which he devoted himself, presenting his life as an offering to the poor in Christ. His dedication to their well-being led him to worry for their spiritual constancy, the uncertainty of which caused him much distress and internal suffering. His life soon came to resemble the life Christ exemplified, directed completely to the welfare of his charges. He angered church authorities and overturned the social order, and ultimately

⁵⁰ III.1.6, pp. 16.5–14.

⁵¹ III.1.xiv, pp. 37.14–17.

⁵² Matěj’s *Vita* appears in *Regulae* III.5.Dist.11, cc. vii–viii, pp. 358–436, and in (Höfler 1856, pp. 40–46; Emler 1873, pp. 431–36). All can be found online at <http://147.231.53.91/src/index.php>. For an overview of Matěj’s life of Milič, see Morée (1999); https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/2158247/34627_UBA003000056_017.pdf.

was sent into captivity in Avignon, where he died. His main accomplishment, described in the *vita* appended to this article, was the conversion of a large number of prostitutes in a section of Prague's old town known as "Venice". He converted the section into something like a beguinage, renaming the place "Jerusalem". There he cared for the women, finding ways by which they could survive other than by selling themselves. In that same area, a chapel was founded in 1391 for the express purpose of teaching and preaching in Czech. This chapel, Bethlehem chapel, would become the venue from which Jan Hus would gain his name as a preacher, and in which his successor, Jakoubek Stříbro, would preach the *utraquism* that gave rise to the Hussite movement.

6. Conclusions: *Regulae* II.2 and the Hussite Movement

While it would be premature to assert ties between a treatise that is lost and the Hussite movement, it is still possible to identify connections between Matěj's description of the true preacher of the gospels and the Hussite ideal. Jakoubek preached a sermon on Matthew 5:10 sometime after 1417 at Bethlehem chapel that amounted to a eulogy for Hus and Jerome, now entitled *In Memoriam novorum martyrum M. Joannis Hus et M. Hieronymi*. Amedeo Molnar noticed that Jakoubek's encomium for Hus borrows heavily from Matěj's life of Milič, particularly in his description of his ministry to the poor.

He showed himself as another Elijah in all things, for in fasting, sackcloth, and ashes [Lk 10:13] he adorned his body in endless austerity, and he labored ceaselessly to save people—so much so that according to many who saw him, they perceived his labors to have surpassed human ability and physical strength. He continued in hearing confession, visiting the sick and the prisoners, consoling the sorrowful, and converting sinners.⁵³

De Vooght notes that the cult of Hus as "a good angel of God sent by Christ" has its roots in Jakoubek's writings and preaching. His use of Matěj's description of Milič suggests that Jakoubek had the *Regulae* before him as he did so, even if his copy lacks, as do all the others, II.2.⁵⁴

While Czech scholarship has acquainted Czech-speaking readers with Matěj's importance for the period before Hus, Kybal's call to search for his mark in the thought of Jakoubek, Jan Přebíram, and others remains an invitation for scholars interested in the roots of Hussite reform. With the availability of Kybal's edition online, accepting his invitation is all the easier.

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Appendix A. Matěj's Description of the Argument

I have entitled this book *The Rules* or *The Rule of the Old and New Testament* because it is ordered by and for them. First four rules given by God to the people for recognizing various spirits in prophets taken from the Old Testament will be treated. This first book contains two treatises and eight distinctions, namely the four distinctions of the rules in themselves, and four about the Blessed Sacrament. The Second book contains eight rules collected from the canon of the New Testament, four for judgment and knowledge of false Christians, and the knowledge of the saints in Truth, and of singular truths about preachers and teachers. Also this book contains two treatises and eight distinctions, four about the false appearance of sanctity, and the four following of truths.

The third book includes the most famous rule, which is the mother of all the others, and of all the preceding twelve, that is, the four from the first book and the eight from the second. It is the most common and perfect, and is in conformity with the other twelve, whether law to the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament or like the blessed Christ to the twelve apostles of the New Testament.

⁵³ Amedeo Molnar, transl. in *Výbor z české literatury I* 1968, p. 238; see also (De Vooght 1972, pp. 76–78).

⁵⁴ ÖNB 3971 appears to have been Jakoubek's copy of Matěj's *Regulae*. It contains all but the last two books, and Jakoubek's marginal notes. These notes represent an energetic engagement with the argument of the *Regulae*, which is well worth further study.

This third book contains six treatises, each of which contains many distinctions. In the first treatise, the rule is discussed in itself, and in the second it is applied to the apostles and the prophets, and in the third the same is applied to communication in the church in the holy sacrament of the body of Christ. In the fourth treatise, it is adequated for the beauty of the universe and the distinction of the Catholic Church, and in the fifth treatise, the oft-discussed reign of antichrist is pursued through the same rule and its body and age are revealed. In the sixth treatise, the abomination of the desolation is shown through the same public rule, and fornication is uncovered, as are the secret parts of the great whore who is seated over many waters. Additionally, all of this is in the third book, along with the comparison of the primitive church to the modern church.

In the fourth book, said rule is applied singularly to the communion when it is rarely available for the laity. Additionally, because this book is constructed along the lines of a set of questions, it contains eight articles that may be read in order. In the fifth book the same approach holds, chiefly to the dispensors and ministers in the church of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. This fifth book is divided into twelve distinctions enumerated at the outset.⁵⁵

Appendix B. Matěj of Janov *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti*: A Structural Overview

Appendix B.1. *The Preacher/Prophet and the Bible's Rules for Their Works*

Book I: Eight Rules from the Old Testament.

Treatise 1—The Problem: False Prophets.

Treatise 2—The Solution: Eucharist as Realization of Ritual Sacrifice.

Book II: Eight Rules from the New Testament.

Treatise 1—The Problem: Hypocrisy in the Church.

Treatise 2—The Solution: The Spiritual Life of the True Preacher (Lost).

Book III: The Church in History.

Treatise 1—The Primary Eternal Law of God.

Treatise 2—The Actions of the Preacher Who Understands the Laws.

Appendix B.2. *The Present Age of Antichrist*

Book III continued

Treatise 3—The Historical Authority for Daily Consumption of Sacrament, see esp. c.10: Jan Milič.

Treatise 4—The State of the Church.

- a. Problem 1: Schism.
- b. Problem 2: Clerical division widespread.
- c. Solution 1: Recognize truth of the Organological model of church.
- d. Solution 2: Recognize the Universal Nature of the Church under Christ.

Treatise 5—Problem 3: The Threat of Antichrist (includes William of St. Amour, *De Periculis Novissimorum Temporum* and Milič, *Libellum de Anticristo*).

Treatise 6—Problem 4: Hypocrisy as Abomination of the Desolation.

Book IV: Why Daily Eucharist is the means of destroying the hold of Antichrist, and must be restored into common use.

Book V: Daily Eucharist is the means of eliminating hypocrisy in daily Christian Life.

⁵⁵ *Regulae Proemium 2*, (Kybal 1905a, vol. 1, pp. 16.26–18.9).

Appendix C. Life of Milič

I will now return to an account of the most honorable Milič. I have seen in this man Milič, whose name transposed into Latin means dearest,⁵⁶ all love, compassion, and sympathy [Phil.2:1] strike all men, even his enemies, so that there was no one with whom he could not have spoken or dealt from whom he could not elicit love, grace, and a smooth spirit [Prov.12:2], save perhaps antichrist. No one left him unconsolated. He showed himself as another Elijah in all things, for in fasting, sackcloth, and ashes [Lk 10:13] he adorned his body in endless austerity, and he labored ceaselessly to save people—so much so that, according to many who saw him, they perceived his labors to have surpassed human ability and physical strength. He continued in hearing confession, visiting the sick and the prisoners, consoling the sorrowful, and converting sinners.

He was dismissed from the curia of Charles IV, in which he was especially beloved and valued, continuing to follow Christ Jesus beyond all others who held that office, and the other benefits and honest duties of the Prague cathedral, choosing to bear the dishonor of Christ crucified by leaving the castle [Heb.13:13] and being expelled from his master's home rather than remaining in the tabernacles of sinners for riches and glory of the sons of the pharaohs [Ps.83:11]. So, he devoted himself to all and exhausted himself in the salvation of souls [2 Cor. 12:15], and was prepared to give himself wholly and freely as an offering to the poor of Christ, preaching the word of God. This was amazing and unheard of by secular standards. He gave himself in this way to Christ, and soon led prostitutes to penitence, converting the notorious, and taking in sinners of both sexes who thereafter would become penitent. There were numberless unmarried women and maidens who were instilled with an immediate desire to spread the fire of the love of Jesus throughout the whole of Bohemia.

This same Milič, the son and image of our lord Christ and a likeness of the apostles in appearance and expression, moved the aforesaid prostitutes to penitence for their sins, rescuing them from the great sin of fornication, and as a father with the sweetest and fullest mercy of the Lord, assumed their care for himself, feeding, clothing, teaching, and nurturing them as a hen does her chicks [Matt.23:37] and like an eagle, teaching them to fly as he soared over them [Deut. 32:11]. He wept so, with such great piety and concern lest they slide back, laboring mightily to make them turn from the path of falling back into sin. His mercy flowed out to them with great patience and compassion for their weakness [Heb.3:15] and bore them up with works of mercy so manifold that one cannot tell their worth in writing [Eccl.18:3].

I admit that I am not even a tenth part able to speak of them, which for the briefest time I perceived with my own eyes, heard with my own ears, and encountered with my own hands, so here it is best for me to give witness in the people's tongue, because I am so limited in my ability to write of the virtues of Milič.

I have seen that he possessed absolutely nothing, because as has already been said, he left all things because of Christ [Matt.19:27] and ministered to the needs of two hundred penitent women in his care, daily providing their food, clothing, and all necessities. To pay for this he sold all the books that he had for teaching the poor, and then borrowing from the wealthy, exposing himself to great indignities and frequent opposition, he exhausted himself by procuring what would satisfy the needs of the poor and the sick. So, without resentment and with the sweetest demeanor, yet inwardly suffering every day, he labored for many years, accepting an increasingly heavy number of people for whom he felt responsible to Christ, enduring until his death.

With this zeal of Elijah this priest was worthy in God for the law of Jesus and His truth and virtue, for which he tirelessly and without ceasing he contended with a host of pseudoprophets, religious, priests skillful in other laws, and endless clergy, on a daily basis in deathly crises, constituted for the truth. He vigorously indicted the highest priests, archbishops, and bishops for the matters in which they had gone astray, and, putting on the breastplate of righteousness [Wisdom 5:18], he angrily

⁵⁶ Milič is linked to the czech *nejmilejší*, or most beloved, from *milovat*, to love, thereby translating to *carrisimus*.

pointed at the Emperor himself before everyone and said that he could well be the great antichrist for which he was put in prison for some time. He courageously proclaimed the pope and his cardinals as antichrists raging in the temple of God, for which he was again and again cast away, derided, and gnawed by the teeth of Behemoth and antichrist.

He entered the imperial city of Prague, then extremely evil and a spiritual Babylon, which worshipped the dragon as a god [Dan.14:22], and he angrily attacked it, and the great whore mother, the scarlet beast who reigned there, and opposed her constantly until a great multitude of the guilty blushed and turned away from their terrible crimes because of his zeal and Christlike demeanor, unflaggingly convincing, rebuking, and encouraging them, whether the time was favorable or unfavorable. [2 Tim. 4:2] O, how many vices and how much wickedness departed, stumbling away defeated, which, had not Milič come, had he not cried out unto heaven, there is no doubt that we would have become a second Sodom, and perished like a second Gomorrah. Now through Christ's merit and Milič's labors, Sodom has returned to its ancient dignity, and Prague was made into a Jerusalem, abundant in the words and saving teachings of Christ. With the terrible vices—especially the public ones—rooted out and cast away, the virtues of Christ Jesus now thrive in the people's souls, and their heads are held high and daily become healthier in number and degree, gloriously increasing before Christ Jesus [I Cor.3:6].

The witness of this great and glorious victory in Bohemia and its widespread health is the conversion of the multitude of prostitutes, showing that Milič did not come by chance, but under the guidance of Christ Jesus. He fought and redeemed with the word of Christ, destroying the ancient and notorious whore to her foundations in Prague, namely the place of the worst and most horrific vice, which was then called Venice—dedicated to Venice and “Benatky” in the Bohemian tongue—and making it into a school, a temple, a place founded in all grace and virtue, which was called Jerusalem in accord with the life of Jesus. It is known even now by that name in Bohemia, and is famous in Prague, showing that the lord Jesus had made, through Milič, a Jerusalem of Prague from a confused and polluted Babylon of a city, a shining city built on a mountain [Matt.5:14]. It was made by the most blessed Lord and faithful God, although as mentioned above, incrementally, through His omnipotent spirit by preachers, whose spirits were enriched by the most loving preacher Milič.

Who would not wonder at Milič's abundant teaching and writing? When he was a simple priest and scribe with the main curia, as he thirsted for visitation from the spirit of Jesus, he was so accomplished in wisdom and rich in all the words of doctrine [I Cor.1:5] that he could easily preach five times in one day, first in Latin, then in German, and then in Czech, here publicly with loud cries and great zeal [Heb. 5:7], there individually with young and old [Matt.13:52], offering his treasures in the best order, weight, and measure [Wis.11:21] so that he could be coaxed to pass the whole day in preaching, crying, and working.

He normally preached two or three times every day, and always at least once a day. When he preached to the greatest crowd of people possible, never once was he wanting for writings from the bible and the teachers, but what far exceeds the way of men is that he was able to produce any scriptural or doctrinal authority with simplicity when speaking whenever the necessity arose that he refer to a given text, and he would normally use two or three more when only one was needed.

However, this should be thought of as nothing when one thinks that with his manifold priestly labors, confessions, acts of care, and great hospitality, along with his indefatigable preaching, he carried great books with him, and wrote, to a multitude of clergy, twenty to thirty letters in his own hand every day. All that he wrote was copied by a multitude of scribes, which meant that he was always followed by priests and scribes, and their books contain many sermons, which he, in his humility, called *Abortivuum* [Job 3:16], and a postilla of all the gospels for the whole of the church year, which he called “Grace of God.”

Anyone reading these postillas and sermons will be able to see that it is not his sense that predominates [Rom.14:5] but instead that of Holy Scripture, the bible, and the doctors. These books

are so useful for preachers to the faithful and to their audiences that I want to commend these books and those cited in them more than the sermons themselves.

So, with these good works and many others that I have already said that I am not able to describe here, which the dearest Milič effected in Prague, he was met only with endless opprobrium, vituperation, and continuous persecution from his fellows, all the way to ejection from the synagogue [John 12:42] through various methods, anathematizations, and finally expulsion from the country into exile. He died in Avignon. They persecuted him even to his death and added to his sorrowful injuries, largely with efforts launched against him by religious orders, and priests, along with the masters of the temple [Luke 22:52], having no cause against him [Luke 23:4] beyond the good works already described that he had been able to accomplish. His thirst for the gospel of Christ Jesus was slaked, where it is said in Matthew 23 “Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You build the white washed tombs of prophets and ornate monuments to the just. And you say, “If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been in the company of those who shed the blood of the prophets” [Matt.23:29–30]. Then, further, “Therefore send your prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, so that upon you may come all the righteous blood, etc.” [Matt.24:35].

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