

## CHAPTER 7

# THE MAKING OF THE WENCESLAS BIBLE, WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF ITS GENESIS INITIAL

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The Wenceslas Bible (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2759–2764) is the most famous of the manuscripts prepared and lavishly illuminated for King Wenceslas IV of Bohemia (1361–1419). This vernacular Bible – preserving a German translation of Scripture and therefore considered by some a heretical threat – provides an important insight into the pressing problems of its time. To understand its historical significance and its unique pictorial programme, it is necessary to briefly recall the political and ecclesiastical circumstances at the time of the manuscript's creation, as well as the king's position within that context.

From 1376 until 1400, Wenceslas was King of the Romans, and in 1378 he succeeded his father, Emperor Charles IV (1316–78), on the throne. From the start of his reign, the Church was divided by the Great Papal Schism, and more and more voices within the clergy as well as the laity claimed that the Empire and the Church urgently needed reform. The priest and professor of theology at Prague University, Jan Hus (c. 1370–1415), a strong advocate of Church reform, soon became the leading representative of a movement in Bohemia known as Hussitism today. Like the Oxford

professor John Wyclif (c. 1330–84), whose treatises Hus had studied in depth, Hus advocated fundamental religious renewal and institutional reform of the Church.<sup>1</sup> According to his convictions, neither the clergy nor the pope, nor any dogmas, should be authoritative in matters of faith, only the Holy Scriptures themselves. Consequently, the Bible was the only *lex divina* that every believer should know.

With this claim, Hus picked up on a tendency that had already developed well before him: the translation of the Holy Scriptures into the vernacular languages, so that lay people could read and hear the true Word of God in their own language without any mediation by the priesthood. The oldest known translation of a full Bible into Czech, the so-called Dresden Bible, dates from around 1360.<sup>2</sup> The author of this translation was probably an Augustinian canon from Roudnice nad Labem/Raudnitz an der Elbe or a Dominican, since the manuscript itself was intended for the Dominican nuns of Prague.<sup>3</sup> Parallel to this, German-language translations of the Bible were also undertaken in the spirit of promoting contemporary forms of piety among lay believers.<sup>4</sup> The text that became the basis of

1 František Šmahel, *Jan Hus. Život a dílo* (Prague, 2013); František Šmahel, 'Was there a Bohemian Reformation?', in Kateřina Horníčková and Michal Šroněk (eds), *From Hus to Luther: Visual Culture in the Bohemian Reformation (1380–1620)* (Turnhout, 2016), 7–16, at 7–10; Franz Machilek, *Jan Hus (um 1372–1415): Prediger, Theologe, Reformator* (Münster, 2019).

2 The Dresden Bible was destroyed by fire in 1914; the first redaction of the Czech Bible nevertheless survives in two copies from the fifteenth century: the so-called Litoměřice-Třeboň Bible (dated 1411–14; Litoměřice, Státní oblastní archiv, BIF 3/2, BIF 3/1, and Třeboň, Státní oblastní archiv, A 2), prepared for Jan Hus' friend Peter of Zmrzlik ze Svojšína, and the Olomouc Bible (dat. 1417; Olomouc, Státní vědecká knihovna, M III 1); cf. Vladimír Kyas, *První český překlad Bible* (Prague, 1971); Pavel Spunar, 'The first Old-Czech translation of the Holy Script', in *The Bible in Cultural Context* (Brno, 1994), 321.

3 A collective Bible translation by Augustinians, Dominicans, and Franciscans at the cathedral school on Hradčany is also considered possible. See Vladimír Kyas (ed.), *Staročeská Bible drážďanská a olomoucká*, vols 1–3 (Prague, 1981–8); Hans Rothe and Reinhold Olesch (eds), *Staročeská Bible drážďanská a olomoucká*, vol. 4 (Leiden, 1996); Jaroslava Pečírková et al. (eds), *Staročeská Bible drážďanská a olomoucká*, vol. 5 (Prague, 2009); Jakub Sichálek, 'European Background: Czech Translations', in Elizabeth Solopova (ed.), *The Wycliffite Bible: Origin, History and Interpretation* (Leiden, 2017), 66–84, at 80–2.

4 Early examples of this are provided by the translations of the so-called 'Austrian Bible Translator' from the Duchy of Austria. In the first half of the fourteenth century, he translated the Old Testament, the Gospels, and the Commentary to the Psalms into German (his work is currently being investigated and edited at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences, <<https://bibeluebersetzer.badw.de/das-projekt.html>> [accessed 31 March 2023]). The oldest New Testament in the German language is the Augsburgur Bibelhandschrift from 1350 (Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 2°

the Wenceslas Bible, an (aspirational) full Bible translation financed by the royal mint master Martin Rotloew (d. 1392), must have been produced around 1380.<sup>5</sup> Towards the end of the fourteenth century, Jan Hus and the circles representing the Wyclif wing at Prague University are thought

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Cod. 3), followed by the Codex Teplensis (from Tepl Abbey near Cheb, in German: Eger, in Bohemia; Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, Teplá b 10), which was created at about the same time as the Wenceslas Bible; cf. Elke Donalies, *Die Augsburger Bibelhandschrift und ihre Überlieferung* (Münster and New York, 1992); Manja Vorbeck-Heyn, *Die deutschsprachige Evangelientradition im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert und ihre Textgliederungsprinzipien*, Berliner Sprachwissenschaftliche Studien, 11 (Berlin, 2008), 52–4 (siglum 'Te').

5 The German text of the Wenceslas Bible does not stem from a single source. Rather, it is based partly on a translation made for Martin Rotloew, and partly on additions and interpolations that were either written especially for the king or taken from other sources. It is possible that the original was never completed, although the preface implies this. Rotloew's commission survived in several copies and variants; scholars therefore speak of a 'Prague Rotloew branch' of the textual tradition. One manuscript copy (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB II 7, fol. 5v; dat. 1455) still proudly names him as follows: 'Her Mertein Rotleb der so saß zu Prage und der gepaut hat das collegium zu Prage und die Biblihu hat man im zu teusch gemacht' ['Mr Mertein Rotleb, who sat in Prague and who had built the College in Prague and the Bible was made in German for him']. Martin Rotloew was master of the mint of Kutná Hora/Kuttenberg from 1379, following the death of his father John, and one of the wealthiest citizens of Prague. The Stuttgart copy explicitly associates him with the (later) *collegium*, and thus intends to trace its translation back to learned university circles. In 1383, because of a dispute, Rotloew had to cede a house to the king, who then donated it to the university. Perhaps Wenceslas also took over the still unfinished translation of the Bible at that time, cf. Heimo Reinitzer, 'Die Wenzelsbibel', in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters, Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 10 (2010), coll. 869–75, at col. 871. In comparison to the Stuttgart copy, the Wenceslas Bible offers some derivations and interpolations, including the part of the prologue dedicated to Wenceslas as an addendum, for which reason Reinitzer and also Mentzel-Reuters dated its text a little later; cf. Arno Mentzel-Reuters, "'Oufsliesen deiner schrifte tor": Mitteldeutscher Biblizismus und die Wenzelsbibel', in Joachim Heinzle, L. Peter Johnson and Gisela Vollmann-Profe (eds), *Wolfram-Studien 13: Literatur im Umkreis des Prager Hofes der Luxemburger. Schweinfurter Kolloquium 1992* (Berlin, 1994), 174–206, esp. on the Wenceslas Bible and Hussitism at 178–80. Taking into account Rotloew's career, Hedwig Heger assumed that this translation was written around 1380; cf. Hedwig Heger, 'Philologischer Kommentar zur Wenzelsbibel', in *Die Wenzelsbibel. Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe der Codices Vindobonenses 2759–2764 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek Wien*, Codices Selecti, 70 (Graz, 1998), 51–123. Hana Hlaváčková, 'K dataci a emblematické Bible Václava IV / On the Dating and Emblematics of the King Wenceslaus IV's Bible', *ARS [Bratislava]* 51:1–2 (2018), 42–50, on the other hand, argues for a dating of the translation before 1376 (the year of Wenceslas' and Johanna's coronation as King and Queen of the Romans) and places the beginning of the actual work on King Wenceslas' illuminated Bible towards the end of the 1370s.

to have been involved in the second redaction of the Czech Bible. Among other achievements, the introduction of the diacritical marks into the written Czech language is connected to their efforts.

Translations of the Bible and of Bible commentaries were subject to the interpretive privilege of the official Church. Uncontrolled versions of the Bible, coupled with an increasing emancipation of the laity from the Church, were soon recognized as threats by the Church authorities. In 1369, Emperor Charles IV, at the request of Pope Urban V, therefore issued a ban on the distribution of vernacular bibles to non-theologians.<sup>6</sup> This was intended to prevent misinterpretations of the Holy Scriptures by lay persons. However, strict compliance with this imperial (not papal) restriction could hardly be controlled, was not prosecuted, and ultimately remained ineffectual. Nevertheless, the vernacular Bible remained a contested issue; this is shown by the circumstance that the ban issued by Charles IV was ostentatiously lifted by the commissioning of a large German Bible in the 1380s by his son Wenceslas IV, by virtue of his dignity as King of the Romans. This encouraged further translation campaigns in the two vernacular languages spoken in his kingdom, Czech and German – with the German branch being driven by a less radical spirit than the Czech one.<sup>7</sup> At the time Wenceslas apparently believed that he, as King of the Romans, could shape the reformation of the Church and of the Holy Roman Empire in line with his own views. Moreover, his German Bible, as we shall see in what follows, provides information about his attitude and self-perception.<sup>8</sup> He obviously could not imagine that he himself would soon be dethroned, nor how vehemently the question of ‘reform’ would be fought out some 20 years later.

After a brief introduction to the unfinished manuscript of the Wenceslas Bible, I look at its process of creation. We shall see – especially on the pages that were never illuminated – that the passages intended for illumination were originally provided with Latin instructions addressed to the illuminators. Paraphrasing the Vulgate, these instructions were not inserted by an artisan from an illuminators’ workshop, but by a

6 Johann F. Böhmer and Alfons Huber (eds), *Regesta Imperii. Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV. (1346–1348)*, vol. 8 (Innsbruck, 1889), no. 7287 (p. 759); Carl Mirbt, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des römischen Katholizismus* (Tübingen, 1924), at 226; Martin Leutzsch, ‘Bibelübersetzung als Skandal und Verbrechen’, in Rainer Dillmann (ed.), *Bibel-Impulse: Film, Kunst, Literatur, Musik, Theater, Theologie* (Berlin, 2006), 46–8.

7 Mentzel-Reuters, “‘Oufsliesen deiner schrifte tor’”, 181.

8 Tomáš Gaudek, ‘Reprezentace objednavatelů českých iluminovaných rukopisů doby Lucemburské’, in Kateřina Kubínová and Klára Benešová (eds), *Imago Imagines II. Výtvarné dílo a proměny jeho funkcí v českých zemích od 10. do první třetiny 16. století* (Prague, 2019), 416–17.



person (or two) with a sophisticated theological background, who took the role of *conceptor*, i.e., of a kind of artistic director responsible for the entire pictorial programme of the king's Bible. I trace the *conceptor's* intentions and intellectual horizon, additionally taking into account the fully illuminated pages and miniatures for which the instructions are no longer visible. I approach the underlying scholarly debates from the context established by the vivid theological discourse in Prague at a time marked by calls for a return to the early Church.

The illuminations of the Days of Creation provide particularly rich grounds for this kind of analysis. They reveal ideas that are extremely erudite: not only about space and time, and the creation of the angels and of the four elements, but also about the then much-discussed themes of sin and redemption, and the understanding of the crowned king himself as Adam's successor, as reflected in the miniatures of the first, second and sixth days of creation. Using texts by Ambrose, Aquinas, Pseudo-Methodius, and others discussed at Prague University in the late 1300s, as well as apocryphal texts and rabbinic literature, I sketch a milieu that included scholars from Prague University and the Prague Jewish community, with its chief rabbi Avigdor Kara. The intense scholarly discussions of late fourteenth-century Prague seem to have profoundly influenced the *conceptor* of the pictorial programme and, presumably, the royal commissioner himself, who seems to have shared the interest in the topical search for the roots of Christianity. In fact, Wenceslas himself was seeking to take a leading role in Church reform and – as we know from the prologue – intended to donate this vernacular Bible to *all* Christendom (meaning the Holy Roman Empire). While the conclusions, starting from visual evidence, must in the end remain conjectural, the iconological approach adopted in this study opens a new hermeneutic window on the creation of the Wenceslas Bible which we can now see as deeply embedded within the context of the cultural and theological milieus of Prague in the final years of the fourteenth century.

## THE BIBLE OF KING WENCESLAS AT A GLANCE

Although the Wenceslas Bible is one of the best-researched manuscripts of its period,<sup>9</sup> many fundamental questions still remain unanswered: we

9 Codicological benchmarks: Cod. 2759: 240 fols (according to court librarian Peter Lambeck [d. 1680]: 1–240; nineteenth century (before 1864): 1–239, skipped fol. 134, corrected as fol. 133\* in the twentieth century), 535 x 370 mm, one scribe (according to the philologist Hermann Menhardt [d. 1963]: hand 1); Cod. 2760: 182 fols (Lambeck: 241–422; twentieth century: 1–182), 535 x 370 mm, one scribe (Menhardt: hand 1); Cod. 2761: 144 fols (Lambeck: 1–144), 535 x 370 mm, three

do not know the identity of the translator of this German Bible, nor are we certain exactly when its translation was made. It is unknown when the scribes (*ingrossatores*) started copying the text. We cannot determine exactly how many scribes were involved, and how many persons illuminated the biblical text. Hermann Menhardt distinguished three scribal hands; art historians assume that at least nine illuminators and their assistants worked on the precious artistic decoration. The style of the illuminations suggests that the production of the Bible continued throughout the last decade of the fourteenth century, and perhaps longer.<sup>10</sup>

The prologue clearly indicates that the intention is not to present an abbreviated or revised version of the Bible, but a complete translation of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>11</sup> Its author emphasizes that he aims to provide

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scribes (Menhardt: hand 1 fols 1ra–6vb, 8ra–128vb, 137ra–144vb; hand 2 fols 129ra–131vb; hand 3 from 1447 fols 7ra–7vb, 132ra–136vb); Cod. 2762: 211 fols (according to Lambeck: 145–355), 535 x 370 mm, three scribes (Menhardt: hand 1 fols 148ra–211vb; hand 2 fols 11ra–146ra; hand 3 from 1447 fols 1ra–10va, 147va–147vb); Cod. 2763: 206 fols (Lambeck: 1–206), 535 x 370 mm, two scribes (Menhardt: hand 1 fols 2ra–186vb, 193ra–206vb; hand 3 from 1447 fols 1v, 187ra–192vb); Cod. 2764: 231 fols (according to Lambeck: 207–437; twentieth century: 1–231), 535 x 370 mm, three scribes (Menhardt: hand 1 fols 1ra–123vb, 131ra–138vb; hand 2 fols 153ra–224vb; hand 3 from 1447 fols 124ra–130vb, 139ra–152vb, 225ra–231ra). All volumes are written in *textura* on parchment, with the text laid out in two columns and 36 lines per page. The Bible was bound in three volumes in 1447 and divided into six volumes around 1790. In the course of the production of the facsimile edition during the 1980s, the Bible was split into eight parts, but its old shelfmarks were retained. Selection of art-historical literature: Julius von Schlosser, 'Die Bilderhandschriften Königs Wenzel I., ein Interimskommentar zur Faksimile-Ausgabe der Wenzelsbibel', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 14 (1893), 215–308; Karel Chytil, 'Bible Václava IV. a díla přibuzná', *Památky archeologické* 13 (1885), 205–18, 311–16; Hermann Menhardt, *Verzeichnis der altdeutschen literarischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, vol. 1, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für deutsche Sprache und Literatur. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 13 (Berlin, 1960), 266–8; Josef Krása, *Die Handschriften König Wenzels IV.* (Vienna, 1971); Gerhard Schmidt, 'Kunsthistorischer Kommentar', in *Die Wenzelsbibel*, 239–42; Hana Hlaváčková, 'Old Testament Scenes in the Bible of King Wenceslas IV', in *The Old Testament as Inspiration in Culture. International academic symposium Prague, September 1995* (Třebenice, 2001), 132–9; Gerhard Schmidt, 'Wenceslas IV's Books and Their Illuminators', in Barbara Drake Boehm and Jiří Fajt (eds), *Prague: The Crown of Bohemia 1347–1437* (New York, 2005), 220–4; Ulrike Jenni and Maria Theisen, *Mitteleuropäische Schulen IV (ca. 1380–1400). Hofwerkstätten König Wenzels IV. und deren Umkreis* (Vienna, 2014), 158–211 (with further literature). <<https://e-book.fwf.ac.at/o:571>> (text), <<https://e-book.fwf.ac.at/o:572>> (tables) [accessed 10 March 2023].

10 Jenni and Theisen, *Mitteleuropäische Schulen IV*, 158–211.

11 The books of Maccabees I and II, Daniel, the Minor Prophets and the New Testament are, however, missing. Cf. Reinitzer, 'Die Wenzelsbibel', col. 871.

direct access to the biblical text not only to clerics, but also to lay people. Therefore, he expressly gave priority to a translation that stays as close as possible to the original Latin text. We also know from the prologue that King Wenceslas and his wife intended to donate the Bible:

wer nu diser schrifte hort / wil lesen und ir suzen wort /  
der schol nu dancken dem vrumen / von dem dicz gestift  
ist kumen / dem hochgeborne kunig wenczlab vein / und  
der durchluchtigisten kuniginne sein / den dicz durch gotes  
wirdigkeit / frümet aller cristenheit / Got gebe in dorumbe czu  
lone / des edeln himelriches crone. / Amen.<sup>12</sup>

For unexplained reasons, however, the king's German Bible with its ambitious comprehensive pictorial programme was never finished.<sup>13</sup> The text, written and only partially illuminated up to the Book of Ezekiel, remained unbound during the lifetime of King Wenceslas. In the middle of the fifteenth century, under Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg (1415–93), the Bible was bound in three volumes. Around 1790, the bulky volumes had to be rebound and were divided into six parts. Two of these volumes contain no illuminations at all (2762 and 2764), and two others are not fully illuminated (2761 and 2763). All in all, a total of 19 historiated initials and 635 framed miniatures were completed; a further 900 were planned. Had the text been completed and illustrated in the same density, the king's Bible would have contained about 2000 miniatures: the largest project of its kind in Bohemia around 1400.

12 '[They] who now shall read this treasure of Scripture and its sweet words, let them give thanks to the pious one, to the high-born King Wenceslas and his most noble queen, by whom this [work] was donated, for through [adding to] God's dignity this benefits all Christendom. May God therefore give them [the donors] the crown of the noble Heavens as [their] reward' (translation by Karl Kügle). Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2759, fol. 2r; it remains unclear which of Wenceslas' two wives was meant by *kuniginne sein*. Wenceslas IV was married to Johanna of Bavaria-Straubing from 1376 to 1386, and to Sophia of Bavaria-Munich from 1389 to 1419, both Wittelsbach princesses.

13 The termination of the work is most probably connected with King Wenceslas' failed attempt to travel to Rome in 1402, which, despite his deposition, was intended to help him obtain the imperial crown. Since the entire picture programme of the Bible was oriented towards Wenceslas as King of the Holy Roman Empire, a continuation of the work on this costly Bible after 1402 must have become meaningless.

## A MAGNIFICENT GERMAN BIBLE FOR THE KING AS DEFENDER OF CHRISTENDOM

As King of Bohemia and of the Romans, Wenceslas 'by God's grace' saw himself in a key position between God and the Christian community: a position, particularly important at the time of the Papal Schism, which divided the Church and with it all European courts into two camps until 1417. It was also a time marked by various reform efforts. While Jan Hus advocated a Church in poverty, and Communion under the *species* of both bread and wine for all believers, a group of Augustinian canons in Bohemia proclaimed the necessity of adherence to strict observance in the monasteries, the improvement of worship and pastoral care, and the increased cultivation of the arts and sciences that man owed to Divine Creation. The starting point of this strong ecclesiastical reform movement in Bohemia was the Augustinian canonry in Roudnice, expressly recommended by the Archbishop of Prague as a model for other convents in 1398.<sup>14</sup> Wenceslas, however, sympathized more with Hus' fundamental criticism regarding the clergy and the demand for Church poverty. He could have made convenient use of Church properties to fill his own empty coffers after his father had spent more than was available and, besides increasing taxes, had transferred villages and land to the Church. In the climate of reform efforts, Wenceslas therefore hoped not only to expand his sphere of influence, but also to regain some of his income. The dispute with the Prague Archbishop John of Jenštejn over the rich abbey of Kladruby in 1393 (which resulted in the death of the archbishop's vicar-general John of Nepomuk and the archbishop's flight to Rome) provides some insight into this constellation of difficulties.<sup>15</sup> Here, Wenceslas' sense of reform inevitably took a very different shape from that of Hus, who ultimately undermined the authority of the king by his refusal to recognize the pope as the Head of the Church. The importance of the king as defender of the faith was severely challenged by these developments. Perhaps precisely for this reason royal authority is frequently asserted by royal emblems worked into the border decorations of his Bible and also

14 Franz Machilek, 'Die Augustiner Chorherren in Böhmen und Mähren', in *Archiv für Kirchengeschichte von Böhmen, Mähren, Schlesien* 4 (1976), 107–44; Franz Machilek, 'Kirchliche Reformen des 14./15. Jahrhunderts', in Winfried Eberhard and Franz Machilek (eds), *Kirchliche Reformimpulse des 14./15. Jahrhunderts in Ostmitteleuropa*, Forschungen und Quellen zur Kirchen- und Kulturgeschichte Ostdeutschlands (Köln – Weimar – Vienna, 2006), 26–8.

15 For details on the circumstances of this episode, including older literature, cf. Klara Hübner, 'Herrscher der Krise – die Krise des Herrschers: König Wenzel IV. als Projektionsfläche zeitgenössischer Propaganda', *Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej* 11 (2016), 294–320, at 307–11.

in some miniatures and initials in the text itself. Examples are found in the depiction of King Wenceslas himself, his emblems, and his coats of arms in the introductory initials of the Books of Kings,<sup>16</sup> or in a miniature depicting Wenceslas (in contemporary courtly dress, peeking out of a tent decorated with his *W* and *e* monograms) watching the collection of donations for the Tent of Revelation (Fig. 7.1).<sup>17</sup> Most of the images thus represent unique compositions, especially designed for the Bible of King Wenceslas.<sup>18</sup>

## PLANNING AN ILLUSTRATION PROGRAMME

As was common practice with extensive miniature cycles, a cohesive workflow between all persons involved had to be ensured by a coordinator or *conceptor*; Marcel Thomas once compared his function with that of an editor.<sup>19</sup> This person held a key position between patron, scribes, and illuminators. He was responsible for the storyline of the entire illustration programme and the correct insertion of the pictures. He communicated with the illuminators by giving written instructions on the margins next to each planned miniature (Fig. 7.2). These instructions were partially painted over or erased in the illuminated parts of the Wenceslas Bible, yet are still clearly legible in the non-illuminated parts. Thus, the fewer pictures were inserted, the more instructions remained visible; conversely,

16 Cod. 2760, fol. 33r (Regum I: King Wenceslas enthroned with insignia on the central letter bar. Behind him two Wild Men, who are holding the Luxembourg tournament helmet); Cod. 2760, fol. 74r (Regum II: King Wenceslas enthroned, with the imperial insignia, within the letter 'E'. Below, two bath attendants presenting the coat of arms of the Empire and the coat of arms of Bohemia, both connected with the king by a torque); Cod. 2760, fol. 108r (Regum III: Bath attendant with scroll 'thoho bzde thoho' and a kingfisher. At her feet, the imperial and the Bohemian coats of arms).

17 Unfortunately, the pictorial instructions at the bottom of the page were thoroughly erased before the artist painted over the respective area with tendrils. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2759, fol. 93r; Maria Theisen, 'Texte und Bilder einer Zeitenwende', in Sára Balász (ed.), *Quelle und Deutung, vol I.1* (Budapest, 2014), 105–45, at 132 (Fig. 7).

18 Only a few of them quote old models, such as Jacob's dream of the Ladder to Heaven (Cod. 2759, fol. 24r). This composition is almost identical to a composition from around 1360, which was handed down in the *Liber viaticus* (Prague, Knihovna Národního muzea, XIII A 12, fol. 289v) of the Litomyšl bishop and councillor of Emperor Charles IV, John of Neumarkt/Jan ze Středy (1310–1380).

19 Marcel Thomas and Gerhard Schmidt, *Die Bibel des Königs Wenzel: Mit 32 Miniaturen im Originalformat nach der Handschrift aus der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Graz, 1989), at 92.



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vnd zu dem heiligen gewante  
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guldene vas zu gabe vnserm  
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vnd rotes zwir geveler vnd  
pfelle vnd zigen har vnd ge  
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nisch geveler heute. Silber  
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ches zu samen zu legen. Alle  
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cher wurden die werck. die  
vnsere herre geheissen hatte  
durch die hant moysi. Alle  
kinder von israhel willich  
chen weichten das vnsern si  
ren. Vnd moyses sprach zu  
den kindern von israhel. Seht  
vnsere herre hat geruft mit  
namen befelel dem syne vri  
des synes vr von dem geslech  
te iuda. Vnd hat si erfulet  
mit dem geiste gotis mit weis  
heit vnd mit kunst vnd mit  
vornunft vnd mit aller lere  
zu betachten vnd zu mach  
en werck in golde vnd in sil  
ber vnd ere. Vnd steme zu  
ergraben vnd in zimmer  
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Fig. 7.1. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2759, fol. 93r – Wenceslas watching the collection of donations for the Tent of Revelation.





Fig. 7.2. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2760, fol. 180r – faded seven-line painters' instruction in the right-hand margin.



the more pictures were inserted, the fewer instructions are preserved.<sup>20</sup> The instructions vary in their level of detail and also in the way they are formulated (some address the illuminators in the present tense, some relate the episodes – like the biblical texts – in the past tense). We can therefore assume that two people conceived the picture programme in the course of the approximately ten to 15 years it may have taken to produce this Bible. Nevertheless, we can say with certainty that the instructions do not contain information about the exact placement of the figures or the colouring, but rather follow the text of the Vulgate. As an example, let us take a closer look at the instruction for a miniature in Cod. 2761, fol. 137r, which should have shown Tobias and the fish (Fig. 7.3). The instruction reads:

hic ponas postquam recessisset Thobias, insecutus est cum cane et mansit iuxta aquam Tygris et Thobias exivit ad flumen ad lavandum pedes et ecce piscis horribilis exivit de aqua, volens devorare eum; mox Thobias clamavit voce magna ad angelum et Thobias arripuit piscem et traxit eum ad litus et evisceravit et assavit eum igni.<sup>21</sup>

In comparison, the Bible (Tobias 6:1–3) reads as follows:

1 profectusque est Tobias et canis secutus est eum et mansit prima mansione iuxta fluvium Tigris  
2 et exivit ut lavaret pedes suos et ecce piscis inmanis exivit ad devorandum eum  
3 quem expavescens clamavit voce magna dicens Domine invadet me!<sup>22</sup>

The *conceptor* first freely followed the Vulgate, and in the second part of his account summarized the essential points of the whole episode as a series of actions. A mere instruction for illuminators could have been

20 Still legible instructions were published by Julius von Schlosser, 'Die Bilderhandschriften Königs Wenzel I', as early as 1893; see also Stanko Kokole, "'Hic ponas". Hierher setze das Bild', *Imagination* 10:2 (1995), 7–10.

21 'Put here when Tobias went forward, followed by his dog, and he stayed near the waters of the Tigris, and Tobias went to the river to wash his feet, and, behold, a monstrous fish leaped out of the water, wanting to devour him; then Tobias cried out with a loud voice unto the angel, and he took hold of the fish, and drew it to the shore, and gutted it, and roasted it upon the fire' (transl. by the author).

22 'And Tobias went forward and the dog followed him and he lodged the first night by the river of Tigris. And he went out to wash his feet and, behold, a monstrous fish came up to devour him. And Tobias being afraid of him cried out with a loud voice, saying: Sir, he cometh upon me! (...)' This and the following Bible citations in English are quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version, Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam* [English-Latin Bible] (London, 2008).



much simpler: 'Paint the angel and Tobias here with a big fish on the bank of a river.' In view of this, we may conclude that this instruction was most likely not given by an artist, but by a theologian.

In order to ensure that the images illustrated the German text correctly, and to avoid the risk of heretical interpretations, the *conceptor* turned to the illuminators in Latin, with the help of quotations from the Vulgate and lengthy explanations. From this, we may conclude that he was highly interested in representing the true Word of God. Consequently, he (or they) also gave cross-references and further facts, metaphors, indirect speech, and sometimes information about different spatial environments. A good example for indirect speech is Cod. 2762, fol. 181r (the corresponding miniature was not realized):

hic ponas Job, quomodo Dominus plagat eum cum maligno spiritu Sathan, qui eum cruciat ulceribus plenum, et Job sedit et deponit saniem et immundiciam de corpore cum una testa figuli. Videns autem hec uxor eius inquit: adhuc tu permanes in simplicitate tua et ipse ad uxorem ait: una de stultis mulieribus es et sic in hunc modum contendunt. Job vero dicit uxori: si bona suscepimus de manu domini, mala autem etc.<sup>23</sup>

In this case, the *conceptor* assumed that the illuminator was familiar with this scene and ended the dialogue with an 'etc.', probably noticing at the point where he placed the 'etc.' that a miniature can depict a dialogue scene in general, but not its specific content.

Despite these complicated instructions, the illuminators seldom made mistakes. They often divided their image fields into two or three zones in order to depict several scenes showing the main character in various environments and actions within one frame. In this way, they were able to tell a continuous story in images – called a *maeren hort* ('a wealth of stories') in the prologue. In some cases, they used banners with Latin inscriptions as additional aids inside the miniatures, e.g., in Cod. 2760, fol. 40v: 'Samuel inter civitatem Masphat et Bethcar ponit lapidem et vocat nomen loci illius lapis adiutoris quia victoria ibi facta est per Judeos et Filisteos.'<sup>24</sup> This repeats almost verbatim 1 Samuel 7:12: 'tulit

23 'Here put Job, how the Lord tormented him with the malicious spirit of Satan, who tortures him, full with ulcers, and Job sat down and scraped the pus and dirt from his body with a shard of clay. When his wife saw this, she asked him: do you still hold fast (to faith) in your simplicity? And he answered his wife: you are one of the foolish wives, and in this way they contended. Verily Job said to his wife: If we accept from God the good, then also the bad, etc.' (transl. by the author).

24 'Samuel took a stone and laid it between Masphat and Bethcar and he called the place the Stone of the Helper, where victory was gained by the Jews and (!) the Philistines' (transl. by the author).

autem Samuhel lapidem unum et posuit eum inter Masphat et inter Sen et vocavit nomen eius lapis Adiutorii dixitque hucusque auxiliatus est nobis Dominus.<sup>25</sup> Only rarely were the banners inside the miniatures in German, e.g., in Cod. 2760, fol. 30r, showing Ruth and Boas, the latter with a banner saying: 'kum unde is mit myr'.<sup>26</sup> The German translation of the Bible itself was cited as authoritative for the illuminators only in very exceptional cases, for example in the Psalter, Cod. 2763, fol. 31v: 'hic ponas quod pagani circumvallant civitatem, que dicitur Ceyla; cum David audisset, accessit ad eos cum exercitu magno et processit a civitate, prout in rubrica clarius continetur; quod restet illuminandum, lege rubricam'.<sup>27</sup> Similarly on fol. 48r: 'hic ponas quod filii Israel captivantur et Salmanasar, rex Assirie, captivavit decem tribus et duxit eas captivas. Eodem tempore Asaph compilavit hunc psalmum; legas in rubrica et plenies invenies'.<sup>28</sup> The content was thus stated; exactly how the illuminator was to portray the Assyrians and the Jews or even Asaph in concrete terms was obviously no longer a concern of the *conceptor*. Hana Hlaváčková argued that precisely because the miniatures are so closely related to the text, not much interest in exegetical interpretation can be observed.<sup>29</sup> And yet it is remarkable that the explanations in the margins are far more concerned with the text than with telling the illuminators how to 'translate' it into pictorial compositions.

25 'And Samuel took a stone, and laid it between Masphath and Sen: and he called the place, the Stone of help. And he said: Thus far the Lord hath helped us' (quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*).

26 'Come and eat with me' (transl. by the author). The two miniatures were designed by different illuminators, the so-called Simson Master (Latin banner) and the Ruth Master (German banner).

27 'Put here, as the heathens besiege the city that is called Ceyla; when David heard about this, he attacked them with a strong army, and advanced to the city, as is clearly written in the [German] rubric; what is yet to be illuminated, read in the [German] rubric' (transl. by the author).

28 'Put here how the sons of Israel were captured, and Salmanasar, king of Assyria, took ten tribes captive and led them into captivity. It was during this time that Asaph wrote this Psalm; read [about it] in the [German] rubric and make up the rest' (transl. by the author). Concerning the authorship of these painter's instructions, the possibility that this section was prepared by a second *conceptor* is tantalizing. A precise analysis of the scribes' hands is still pending. In addition, the switch from Latin to German provides evidence that the illuminators were not just literate, but capable of working with painter's instructions in Latin as well as German-language rubrics. I only briefly mention in this context the depiction of the Altar of Incense by court illuminator Frana (Cod. 2759, fol. 86v), who obviously kept to the German text; more on this in Theisen, 'Texte und Bilder', 126 (Abb. 6), 127.

29 Hlaváčková, 'Old Testament Scenes', 132–9; also Reinitzer, 'Die Wenzelsbibel', col. 874.

Having said this, it would be particularly interesting to know the instruction next to the unconventional miniature on fol. 175r in today's Cod. 2763, which was intended to illustrate Jesus Sirach 24 (Fig. 7.4). For what we see here is Mary, the Mother of God, enthroned with the Jesus Child and surrounded by seven virgins. According to Jesus Sirach, Wisdom – God's daughter from Solomon's Book of Proverbs – took up residence among the people of Israel in Jerusalem. Wisdom was interpreted by Jesus Sirach as the testament between God and the people of Israel, and was therefore seen in rabbinical Judaism as a messenger of God in the form of a book, namely the Book of the Torah. John the Evangelist, by commencing his Gospel with a well-known verse alluding to Genesis, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word', drew this line to Jesus, the incarnated Logos and Divine Wisdom. Solomon thus embodied in the Old Testament a part of what Christ embodied in the New Testament, namely the aspect of Wisdom that dwells in a human being and comes from God himself. This idea has been introduced into Mariological literature, prayers, and iconography, in which Mary is considered the personified vessel of Divine Wisdom, a thought that was clearly expressed in the Lauretanian Litany ('sedes sapientiae, ora pro nobis'), and in artistic depictions of Mary and Child in the so-called 'sedes sapientiae' type. The inscription on the base of the throne of the Madonna, now in Berlin but sculpted in central Italy by Presbyter Martinus at some time during the twelfth century, leaves no doubt about its meaning: 'In gremio matris fulget sapientia patris.'<sup>30</sup> The seven virgins in our miniature probably stand for the seven characteristics of Divine Wisdom as described in Proverbs 8. This miniature, as one of the last to be completed, proves that the concept of the pictorial programme of this Bible was indeed theologically quite sophisticated.<sup>31</sup>

30 'In the womb of the Mother shines the wisdom of the Father' (transl. by the author); Berlin, Bodemuseum, Ident. Nr. 29.

31 Although the Lauretanian Litany received its name after the Italian pilgrimage site of Loreto only in the sixteenth century, its roots can be traced back to the Greek *Hymnos Akathystos* of the ninth century. Latin versions have come down to us from France (Île-de-France) from the twelfth century onwards. The text experienced its golden age in the late Middle Ages and early modern period. On the history of the Marian resp. Lauretanian Litany, cf. Walter Dürig (ed.), *Die Lauretansche Litanei: Entstehung, Verfasser, Aufbau und mariologischer Inhalt* (Sankt Ottilien, 1990), 9–11, 13–14 (Walter Dürig on the early Latin versions); Balthasar Fischer, 'Litanei. I.3 Anrufungslitaneien', in Walter Kasper (ed.), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 6 (Freiburg/Breisgau, 1997), col. 955; on the cult of the Virgin Mary promoted in Bohemia by Emperor Charles IV and the Prague Archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice, their French connections and strong relations to the Eastern Orthodox Church in Slavic countries, and the establishment of a *Collegium mansionarium* (or *speciales ministri Beatae Mariae Virginis*) at the Metropolitan Chapter in 1343, cf. Tomáš





Fig. 7.4. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2763, fol. 175r – Madonna and Child enthroned, surrounded by seven virgins.





Fig. 7.5. Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2759, fol. 2v – Genesis initial depicting God's work of creation within an architecturally designed frame.



As it is not possible to discuss all miniatures of the Bible in this study, we will now concentrate on the large initial of the Genesis as an example of the *conceptor's* interpretative work (Fig. 7.5). The Genesis initial represents the actual beginning of the Holy Scriptures and was therefore traditionally given prominence. The initial here extends over the entire left-hand column of the text and shows God's work of creation within an architecturally designed frame.<sup>32</sup> Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles (often only distinguished by the attribute of a book as wise men and authors of the Old and the New Testament)<sup>33</sup> are sitting in the niches of this frame and either converse with each other or draw the viewer's attention to the scenes of Divine Creation in their midst. Colourful acanthus tendrils emanate from the frame, held by winged angels, and are furthermore decorated with the emblems and coats of arms of King Wenceslas and the Queen. Due to the abundance of ornaments and figures presented here, more than one glance is needed to realize that this is actually the initial letter 'I' of the Holy Scriptures. No painting instructions for this lavish initial have survived, providing all the more reason to take a closer look at the illustrations and their sources.

## THE ICONOGRAPHIC DESIGN OF THE GENESIS INITIAL

'In principio creavit deus cælum et terram' are the first words of the Vulgate. In illuminated bibles the first letter 'I[n]' traditionally formed the frame for the representation of God's Creation by the 'Word of the Lord' as sung

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Slavický, 'Czech Rorate Chants, Missa Rorate, and Charles IV's Foundation of Votive Officium in Prague Cathedral: The Testament of Choral Melodies to the Long-Term Retention of Repertoire', *Hudební věda* 55 (2018), 239–64, at 244–5. This knowledge was, among other things, reflected in corresponding Marian iconography, which also included the depiction of the Virgin Mary as 'sedes sapientiae' as known from the Lauretanian Litany, for example in the panel painting of Our Lady, which Arnošt of Pardubice donated to the Augustinian canons of Kłodzko around 1350 – here, with seven angels, cf. Jan Royt, 'Maria', in Stefan Samerski (ed.), *Die Landespatrone der böhmischen Länder: Geschichte, Verehrung, Gegenwart* (Paderborn and Munich, 2008), 180.

32 The structure of the initial as a multi-storey building with niches and windows, in which its earthly witnesses appear, follows Italian models such as those known from Bologna. See, for example, Albenga, Biblioteca capitolare, ms. 6 (written and illuminated in Bologna towards the end of the thirteenth century).

33 From their attributes as seen in Fig. 7.5, we can identify Peter (with key) and Paul (with sword), as well as John the Evangelist (with chalice), the Apostle Philip (with cross), and the two alleged cousins of Jesus, the Apostles Simon Zelotes (with saw) and Judas Thaddeus (with club).

in David's Psalm 33.<sup>34</sup> Early examples of 'I[n]' initials, filled with scenes of God's Divine Creation, date from the last quarter of the eleventh century. The initial type had its heyday in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries – 'oscillating between text, image and diagram'<sup>35</sup> – and remained the most widespread until the late fifteenth century. Countless variations depicted the works of God's Creation or, in larger concepts, referred to the Old and the New Testament, to the Fall and to Redemption, as well as to possible donors or to the then current history, which was understood as a continuation of the history of salvation.

According to Genesis, Heaven, the world, and all life on it are the work of Almighty God, who created everything in six days. On the seventh day God rested and 'saw that it was good'. But how can this Creation be imagined in concrete terms? Did God create everything in the beginning and then leave it to further development? Or was everything already precisely predefined? After all, the *creatio ex nihilo* – God's Creation from nothing – is difficult to understand. The question of the Divine Creation and its nature thus shaped theological and scientific discourse throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>36</sup> Not least, the great variety of images accompanying the first famous verses of Genesis in illuminated bibles are (as are the countless exegetical texts) eloquent witnesses of a lively search for answers to the basic questions of human existence, the divine origin of mind and body. Illustrations therefore do not necessarily follow the text word by word, but seek out its deeper meaning. The design of this first initial as realized in a particular milieu in late fourteenth-century Prague depended partly on the templates used; it also depended on the layout and space dedicated to illumination. But beyond that and above all, it was contingent on the theological discourse.

## THE FIRST DAY

*In aneenge schepfte got himel und erde. Die erde was aber unnucz und lere und vinsternisse warn auf der gestalt der abegrund und gotes geist wart gefurt auf den wassern. Und got sprach. Es werde ein liecht. Und es wart ein liecht. Und got sach*

34 'Verbo Domini cæli firmati sunt, et spiritu oris ejus omnis virtus eorum' ('By the word of the Lord the Heavens were established; and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth', Psalm 33:6).

35 Andrea Worm, 'Das illuminierte Wort: Bildprogramme und Erzählstrukturen historisierter Initialen zur Genesis', in Susanne Ehrich and Julia Ricker (eds), *Mittelalterliche Weltdeutung in Text und Bild* (Weimar, 2008), 99–132, with regard to the Bible of King Wenceslas IV at 107.

36 Andrew J. Brown, *The Days of Creation: A History of Christian Interpretation of Genesis 1:1–2:3* (Blandford Forum, 2014).

*das liecht das es gut was und schid das liecht von der vinsternisse  
und nante das liecht tack und die vinsternisse nacht. Und wart  
gemacht abent und morgen. Ein tag. (Cod. 2759, fol. 2v)<sup>37</sup>*

The Creator appears with two planets in his hands, the sun and the moon, although according to the Bible the creation of these two heavenly bodies should be depicted in the fourth medallion. If we do not want to assume that the *conceptor* misunderstood the text, we can suggest that sun and moon should be interpreted as symbols of light and darkness, as is written in the first lines of Genesis (Genesis 1:5): ‘God called the light day and the darkness night.’

In order to communicate this idea, other, earlier images show the Creator with two spheres, symbolizing the separation of light and darkness. In the mosaic at the west narthex of the Basilica di San Marco in Venice, dating from around 1220, for example, we see the separation of light and darkness represented by a red and a blue disc or sphere – an idea taken from the late-antique Cotton Genesis.<sup>38</sup> Johannes Zahlten substantiated this interpretation with an interesting reference to an eleventh-century ivory showing the Creator with the Dove above the waters on the first day. Next to the Dove there are two discs, one of which is inscribed ‘LUX’ and the other ‘TEN[ebrae]’. As a further example, Zahlten mentioned an ivory altar from Salerno, made in the twelfth century. The two circular discs there are inscribed ‘LUX’ and ‘NOX’.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the identifications of ‘Nox’ with a personified ‘Luna’ and ‘Dies’ with ‘Sol’ were well-known models from antiquity – adopted by the illustrators of the Velislav Bible in Prague around 1340.<sup>40</sup> From this we can conclude with some certainty

37 ‘In the beginning God created heaven, and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters. And God said: Be light made. And light was made. And God saw the light that it was good; and he divided the light from the darkness. And he called the light Day, and the darkness Night; and there was evening and morning one day.’ (Gen 1:1–5, quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*.) The transcription and modern edition of the text of the Wenceslas Bible are still pending. The project ‘The Wenceslas Bible – Digital Edition and Analysis’, started in February 2022 at Salzburg’s Paris Lodron University in cooperation with the Austrian National Library and the Austrian Academy of Sciences, is currently dedicated to this task. See <<https://www.plus.ac.at/germanistik/forschung/forschungsprojekt-die-wenzelsbibel-digitale-edition-und-analyse/>> [accessed 10 March 2023].

38 Kurt Weitzmann and Herbert L. Kessler, *The Cotton Genesis: British Library, Codex Cotton Otho B VI* (Princeton, 1986).

39 Johannes Zahlten, *Creatio Mundi: Darstellungen der sechs Schöpfungstage und naturwissenschaftliches Weltbild im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1979), 119–22, at 121.

40 Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, XXIII C 124 (Genesis: fols 1r–52v); Karel Stejskal (ed.), *Velislav Biblia picta* (Prague, 1970); Hana Hlaváčková, ‘Druhý den stvoření. Personifikace v českém středověkém umění’, in Milena Bartlová (ed.),

that the *conceptor* of King Wenceslas' Bible was also familiar with the principle of the ancient 'Luna-Sol concept' for the first day of Creation.

The cycles of sun and moon are ultimately decisive for our perception of light and darkness, of day and night, of growth and decay. God holds both in his hands and is therefore the Lord of Time – with which everything began and with which everything will end. Another aim of this image, therefore, was to convey the concept of time, which for some authors began with the first day of Creation.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, since antiquity the sun (god Sol) and the moon (goddess Luna) stood for the male and female principle, for the interplay of reason and feeling.<sup>42</sup> The joint representation of these two heavenly bodies therefore also symbolized the all-encompassing power of a good ruler. In Christian art, they were associated with God, particularly with depictions of Christ on the Cross, who sacrificed himself in order to atone for Original Sin and who reopened the door to Paradise and eternal life in the presence of God (i.e., leading mankind through darkness into light).<sup>43</sup> In this interpretation, the sun stands for salvation and the moon for damnation. Both were darkened and mourned for the Saviour at the death of Jesus, and according to Revelation 6:12, these two heavenly bodies will again be darkened at the announcement of the Last Judgement, i.e., the end of time.<sup>44</sup>

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*Dějiny umění v české společnosti: otázky, problémy, výzvy. Příspěvky přednesené na Prvním sjezdu českých historiků umění* (Prague, 2004), 91–5; Zdeněk Uhlíř, *Velislavova bible* (Prague, 2007); Lenka Panušková, 'Die Velislav-Bibel in neuem Licht', *Umění* 56 (2008), 106–18, at 110f.

41 This opinion was expressed, e.g., by Rabbi Yehuda's son Simon (called 'Rabbi Simon' in the Jerusalem Talmud and Midrash, which were originally handed down orally, and in written form from c. 70 AD onwards); cf. Moritz Eisler, *Vorlesungen über die jüdischen Philosophen* (Vienna, 1876), 73. The sun and moon are also depicted in the first medallion of the Latin Bible of Andrew of Austria, painted in 1391 by a court illuminator of King Wenceslas IV (New York, The Metropolitan Library, MS M 833, fol. 5r), see <<https://www.themorgan.org/manuscript/158986>> [accessed 10 March 2023]. However, the addition of stars alludes to the creation of the heavenly bodies in general here, whereas in the Wenceslas Bible the focus on the sun and moon appearing by God's power allows further exegetical interpretation.

42 *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 4 (Freiburg, 1994/2004), coll. 178–80.

43 'Ego sum lux mundi: qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris, sed habebit lumen vitæ' ('I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life', John 8:12).

44 Such a depiction of God as Lord of Time must have been the first choice particularly in Prague, which during the reign of King Wenceslas IV had developed into a centre of astronomy, astrology and clockmaking. A well-known example of this is the clock of Prague's Old Town Hall, whose hands are provided with a sun and a moon disc, and which was originally designed by the mathematician and astronomer Jan Šindel (c. 1375–between 1455 and 1458). See Alena Hadravová, 'Jan Šindel a jeho traktát Pravidla pro výpočet zatmění Slunce a Měsíce / Jan Šindel

The Psalms reveal yet another aspect of the first day of Creation, namely the creation of the Heavens and the heavenly bodies – such as sun and moon – by divine intellectual power, i.e., the Word of God: ‘By the word of the Lord the Heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth’ (Ps 33:6).<sup>45</sup> This thought is also expressed by the beginning of John’s Gospel, which again emphasized the power of the divine Word or Logos: ‘In the beginning was the Word’ (incarnated in Christ). In this way, our *conceptor* wanted to show nothing less than an immaterial, spiritual primeval state, which already encompassed everything that followed. In order to visualize this thought he was prepared to transfer the two symbols of infinite divine power, the sun and the moon, from the fourth to the first scene. ‘And the Spirit of the Lord hovers over the waters’: Water here is invoked as an essence that gives life without having its own form, but will be formed by the power of God’s Spirit. We see this famous verse depicted almost literally in the small white dove – the symbol of the Holy Spirit – above the waters (underneath the sun), making the scene unmistakably recognizable as ‘the first day’. God the Father looks towards the sun and at the same time towards St Peter on the left-hand side of the viewer, reminding us of Christ’s words ‘upon this rock I will build my Church’ (Matthew 16:18), with Peter identified through his attribute, the key to Heaven. His counterpart is St Paul in the right niche, also marked by his attribute, the sword. The two apostolic prefects of the New Testament are thus assigned a particularly privileged position in this composition.

## THE SECOND DAY

*Und got sprach. Es werde ein vestenunge in der mitte der wasser und teilte die wasser von den wassern. Und got machte ein firmament und schied die wasser die do waren unter dem firmament von den die do waren auf dem firmament. Und es geschach also. Und got nante das firmament himel und wart gemacht abent und morgen, der ander tag. (Cod. 2759, fol. 2v)<sup>46</sup>*

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and his Treatise *Canones pro eclipsibus Solis et Lune*, in *Astronomie ve středověké vzdělanosti / Astronomy in Medieval Learning*, Scripta Astronomica 10 (Prague, 2003), 53–70; Alena Šolcová, ‘Mistr Jan Šindel – pravděpodobný tvůrce matematického modelu pražského orloje’, *Pokroky matematiky, fyziky a astronomie* 54:4 (2009), 307–17.

<sup>45</sup> This meaning is inherent in the language, as demonstrated by the Greek word *pneuma*, which can be translated both as ‘spirit’ and as ‘breath’.

<sup>46</sup> ‘And God said: Let there be a firmament made amidst the waters: and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament, from those that were above the firmament, and it was so. And God called the firmament, Heaven; and the evening and morning

Since the biblical text speaks of the Firmament of Heaven and the waters below and above the Firmament, the discrepancy between text and image seems to be even greater in the second medallion than in the first one. Instead of a depiction of 'waters', we see God the Father standing in blessing in front of two small figures with halos. A little disc divided into four segments appears at their feet; each segment is painted differently (starting from the top left, clockwise): a beige surface (air), a grey stone formation (earth), red flames (fire), and olive-green waves (water). Undoubtedly, this is the representation of the four elements, and we may well assume again that the *conceptor* brought his knowledge of other texts about God's Creation into this picture.

Certainly, the Book of Wisdom was one of these texts: 'These [four elements] are so closely connected that no element can exist separately from another. They hold together so firmly that they are called the Firmament' (Sap 19:18). This is why, according to our Prague *conceptor*, the four elements had to be placed exactly at this point, because God used these elements in order to create the Firmament.<sup>47</sup> The four-element doctrine supported and explained the notion that all beings and all things consisted of these basic elements.

The depiction was based on doctrines that had already been developed by the Greek philosopher and naturalist Empedocles in the fifth century BC, and which had subsequently become more and more differentiated. Empedocles' contemporary, Zenon of Ela, attributed four qualities to the four elements: heat, cold, humidity and dryness. At the same time, Hippocrates developed his theory of temperaments, which he connected with the four elements as well. About a century later, Plato argued that everything emerged from one eternal *materia prima*, and saw four divine causes as the origin of things. He explained that the working cause is God himself, the formal cause is the Wisdom of God, the purpose is his Goodness, and as material cause, he set the four elements.<sup>48</sup> He then

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were the second day' (Gen 1:6–8, quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*).

47 Zahlten does not give any explanation for the unusual fact that the disc of four elements is depicted in the second medallion in the Wenceslas Bible. According to Zahlten, the motif of the disc appears mostly in images of the first or the third day of creation; cf. Zahlten, *Creatio Mundi*, at 135.

48 Quoted and translated after Gregor Maurach and Adolf Walter (comm. and eds), 'Daniel of Morley's (c. 1140–c. 1210) *Philosophia*', *Abhandlungen der Braunschweigischen Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft* 44 (1993), 187–232, at 202. Another popular reading was Plato's *Timaios*, a fictitious argument between Plato's teacher Socrates, Timaios, and Hermokrates, in which the question was explored as to whether God had executed Creation abruptly or successively; Otto Apelt (ed.), 'Timaios und Kritias, Sophistes, Politikos, Briefe', in *Platon: Sämtliche Dialoge, unveränderter Abdruck der Ausgabe Hamburg 1922*, vol. VI (Hamburg, 2004), 29–187,



explained how God placed these four elements: '(...) God placed water and air in the middle between fire and earth (...)’ (Plato, *Timaios* 7).<sup>49</sup>

The four-elements doctrine of Greek natural philosophy played an important role for Judeo-Christian commentaries on the Bible. In Hellenistic Judaism in particular, Greek and Jewish traditions merged and connected theology with the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, by giving these elements a spiritual meaning. The same applies to early Christian commentaries. Church Father Ambrose of Milan (339–97) propagated the four-elements doctrine in his *Hexameron* (itself based on Bishop Basil’s preachings, d. 379), by saying that God, at the moment when he decided to bring into existence the non-existent, also created the corresponding matter together with form. He formed fire, water, and air as he wished, and made things come into being.<sup>50</sup> The *Hexameron* by St Ambrose was compulsory reading for every theologian in the late Middle Ages. (Lavishly illuminated copies of this text have been preserved from Bohemia, e.g., the *Exameron Ambrosii* of Prague Cathedral chapter, the illumination of which even provided the name for its anonymous artist.)<sup>51</sup> Augustine (354–430), who assumed that Plato might have even known the writings of the Jewish prophets, went into detail about Plato’s *Timaios*. In his *De civitate dei*, he pointed out that the four elements must have already been laid out in their primordial form on the first day of Creation.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, he attributed

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at 49–50; a fundamental study concerning Platonic influences in the design of medieval Genesis initials is Harry Bober, ‘In principio: Creation Before Time’, in Millard Meiss (ed.), *De artibus opuscula XL: Essays in Honour of Erwin Panofsky*, vol. 1 (New York, 1961), 13–28.

49 Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *Aristoteles: Physics*, translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye in Oxford 1930 (Princeton, 1984); Wolfgang Class, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics: A Philological Commentary*, 4 vols (Saldenburg, 2014–18).

50 Carl Schenkl (ed.), *Ambrosius Mediolanensis: Hexameron, Opera 1*, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, 32:1 (Vienna, 1897); on the possible influence of the *Exameron Ambrosii*, especially on the emblematic programme in the margins of King Wenceslas’ Bible, cf. Hana Hlaváčková, ‘Courtly Body in the Bible of Wenceslas IV’, in *Künstlerischer Austausch: Akten des 28. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte* (Berlin, 1993), 371–82; Hlaváčková, ‘Old Testament Scenes’, 132–9, at 135.

51 Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly, Sign. A CXXXI; Antonín Podlaha, *Die Bibliothek des Metropolitankapitels* (Prague, 1904), 133–5; Robert Suckale, ‘Die Buchmalwerkstatt des Prager Hexameron. Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Prager Buchmalerei um 1400–1440’, *Umění* 38 (1990), 401–18.

52 Augustinus, *De civitate dei*, liber VIII, chapter 11; cf. Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb (eds), *Sancti Augustini Opera, De civitate dei, Pars 14, I, Libri I–IX*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina, 47 (Turnhout, 1955), at 227f.; Raymond Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition during the Middle Ages* (London, 1939 and Munich, 1981); Therese Fuhrer, ‘Die Platoniker und die Civitas Dei (Buch VIII–X)’, in Christoph Horn (ed.), *Augustinus Civitate Dei* (Berlin, 1997), 87–108.



spiritual significance to the elements by interpreting them according to their allegorical content.<sup>53</sup> Augustine continued to influence the work of many early medieval authors. In particular, John Scotus (c. 815–77), like Augustine, made a significant contribution to the cultural transfer between Greek philosophy and Latin Christianity. He combined his idea of Creation with the teaching of the four elements and an underlying quintessence according to Aristotle. In addition, John took up the idea of *pneuma*, understood by the Stoics as a kind of ‘fiery breath of air’ that penetrates everything and thus complements the four elements as a cosmic force.

The Benedictine monk Honorius Augustodunensis (c. 1080–1150), whose texts were widely read in late medieval Bohemia, explained in his *Elucidarium* that the creation of the elements took place in the first three days, whereas in the following three days, all things and living beings that consist of these elements were created.<sup>54</sup> Peter Lombard (1095–1160), the director of the cathedral school of Paris, added: ‘On those days the four elements of the world were distinguished and classified by their places, on the following three days they were decorated.’<sup>55</sup> This view was shared by Peter Comestor (c. 1100–78), who together with Peter Lombard and Stephan Langton was one of the three masters of the Paris School. Peter owed his epithet “Comestor” (the “Devourer”) to the fact that he processed all the sources available to him, from antiquity, Judaism, and the Church Fathers to his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. His *Historia scholastica*, completed between 1169 and 1173 and approved by the pope during the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215,<sup>56</sup> was a paraphrase of the biblical story, commented on and supplemented by the wealth of sources known to Peter.<sup>57</sup> It became the most widespread complementary

53 Helen Bergin, ‘Searching out the Holy Spirit via Earth’s Elements’, *New Blackfriars* 83:973 (March 2002), 136–47; Ludwig Fladerer, *Augustinus als Exeget. Zu seinen Kommentaren des Galaterbriefes und der Genesis* (Vienna, 2010).

54 On the dissemination of this text in Bohemia and its translation into Czech, see Jaroslav Svátek, ‘Les manuscrits de l’*Elucidarium* originaires de Bohême: un nouveau recensement’, *Scriptorium* 73 (2019), 126–43; the author traces 36 manuscripts of the *Elucidarium* written in Bohemia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Four of those belonged to the Czech College library of Prague University, cf. 131.

55 ‘Quatuor ergo mundi elementa illis diebus, suis locis distincta sunt et ordinata. Tribus autem sequentibus diebus ornata sunt illa quatuor elementa.’ Cf. Petrus Lombardus, ‘De rerum corporalium et spiritualium creatione’, in Jean Aleaume (ed.), *Petri Lombardi Novariensis, cognomine Magistri Sententiarum, episcopi Parisiensis, Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* (Paris, 1841), coll. 171, Liber secundus, Dist. XIV.

56 James H. Morray, ‘Petrus Comestor: Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible’, *Speculum* 68:1 (1993), 6–35.

57 Brown, *Days of Creation*, 70; Louis H. Feldman, *Studies in Hellenistic Judaism* (Leiden – New York – Cologne, 1996), 317–50 (‘The Jewish Sources of Peter

reading to the biblical text, recommended for every student, and translated into French, Italian, English, German, and Czech during the fourteenth century.<sup>58</sup> Peter Abelard (1079–1142), who taught theology at the Church of Saint-Hilaire in Paris, also studied the theory of the elements and assigned the two light elements, air and fire, to the Heavens, the heavier elements to the earth.<sup>59</sup> The same ideas lived on in medieval cosmographies or *Imago Mundi* schemes, for which Honorius' *Imago Mundi* treatise, written around 1120, was an important precursor. The most widespread astronomical-cosmological manuscript of the Middle Ages was certainly the treatise *Liber de sphaera* (or *De sphaera mundi*) written around 1250 by the Parisian university professor Johannes de Sacrobosco (1195–1256), a work that was also used in teaching at Prague University.<sup>60</sup>

There is much to suggest that the *conceptor* took into account yet another text, namely an exegetical, apocryphal text originally called *mārrat gazzê* ('Cave of Treasures'). This is a biblical retelling reaching from Creation to Pentecost and written in the fourth century by an author who called himself 'Ephrem the Syrian'.<sup>61</sup> He added some further aspects to the

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Comestor's Commentary on Genesis in his *Historia Scholastica*' at 317).

58 The earliest Czech translation of the *Historia scholastica* was probably written in the Slavonic monastery in Prague (in Glagolitic and Old Czech) at the end of the fourteenth century; cf. Ludmila Pacnerová (ed.), *Staročeský hlaholský Comestor* (Prague, 2002); Síchálek, 'European Background: Czech Translations', 81.

59 Furthermore, texts by William of Conches (c. 1085–after 1154), Peter's contemporary and an early representative of the School of Chartres who had studied Plato's *Timaios* in depth and sought to interpret Creation with the help of *ratio*, become tangible in Prague. A sumptuously illuminated edition of his *Dragmaticon Philosophiae* is now kept at the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid. Its illuminations point to a commissioner from the immediate circle of King Wenceslas IV (Madrid, BNE, Ms. Res. 28, dat. 1402); Italo Ronca and Josep Pujol (eds), *Guillelmi de Conchis Dragmaticon Philosophiae*, vol. 1: *Summa de Philosophia in Vulgari*, Corpus Christianorum, 62 (Turnhout, 1997). For more on William of Conches, see Eric M. Ramírez-Weaver, 'William of Conches, Philosophical Continuous Narration, and the Limited Worlds of Medieval Diagrams', *Studies in Iconography* 20 (2009), 1–41; Petra Aigner, 'Wilhelm von Conches (Guilelmus de Conchis)', *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* 41 (Hamm, 2020), coll. 1539–54.

60 Petr Hadrava and Alena Hadravová, *Sféra Iohanna de Sacrobosco – středověká učebnice základů astronomie Iohannes de Sacrobosco* (Prague, 2019). The schematic representation of the four elements and heavenly spheres in King Wenceslas' Munich astrological manuscript follows this tradition (BSB, Clm 826, fol. 1v); Maria Theisen, *Kunsthistorischer Kommentar zur Faksimile-Edition der Handschrift der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek (Clm 826): Astronomisch-astrologischer Codex Königs Wenzels* (Stuttgart, 2017), 41–4.

61 Therefore, Alexander Toepel placed this book among the genre of the 'rewritten Bible'-literature. See Alexander Toepel, *Die Adam- und Seth-Legenden im syrischen*

respective sections of God's daily works, and explained the nature of the Firmament and its individual layers as follows: 'And on the Second Day God made the Lower Heaven, and called it REKI`A [that is to say, 'what is solid and fixed,' or 'firmament']. This He did that He might make known that the Lower Heaven doth not possess the nature of the heaven which is above it, (...) for the heaven above it is of fire. And that second heaven is NŪHRA (i.e., Light), and this lower heaven is DARPITĪŌN (...) it hath the dense nature of water (...) and the ascent of these waters which were above Heaven took place on the Second Day.'<sup>62</sup>

Albrecht Götze was able to prove that the *Cave of Treasures* became particularly popular in the Middle Ages due to the writings of Pseudo-Methodius: 'The *Revelationes* were one of the most widely read books of the Middle Ages (...). Pseudo-Methodius is the channel through which the legends from the beginning of the Syrian Cave of Treasures found their way into the history bibles of Western countries and also into the chronographies.'<sup>63</sup> The *Revelationes*, as tradition shows, were also among the literature considered fundamental by theologians in Bohemia.<sup>64</sup>

Prague had long been a centre of arts, literature, and sciences thanks to the court of the Přemyslid kings. Since the foundation of Prague University by Emperor Charles IV in 1348, and especially during the reign of his son, King Wenceslas IV, Prague turned into an important centre for the study of theology and natural sciences, such as mathematics, cosmology and astronomy/astrology, geography, medicine, and pharmacy. The University

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*Buch der Schatzhöhle: eine quellenkritische Untersuchung* (2006), at 3f. On the author's identity, Sergey Minov, 'The Cave of Treasures and Formation of Syriac Christian Identity in Late Antique Mesopotamia: Between Tradition and Innovation', in Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Lorenzo Perrone (eds), *Between Personal and Institutional Religion* (Turnhout, 2013), 155–94, at 158f.

62 *The Cave of Treasures of St. Ephrem the Syrian*, trans. from the Syriac by E. A. Wallis Budge (London, 1927) <<https://archive.org/details/stephrembookofthecaveoftreasure/>> [accessed 10 March 2023].

63 Quoted and translated after Albrecht Götze, 'Die Nachwirkungen der Schatzhöhle', *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete* 2 (1923), at 55; Willem J. Aerts and Georg Arnold A. Kortekaas (eds), *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen* (Leuven, 1998), at 6, 12, 19, 57; Benjamin Garstad (ed.), *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius / An Alexandrian World Chronicle* (Cambridge, MA, 2012).

64 See, for example, the manuscripts Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, I C 14; XIII G 18; XV E 4; XIX B 26; Prague, Knihovna Metropolitní kapituly, B XXVIII; Třeboň, Státní oblastní archiv, A 16. Marc Laureis and Daniel Verhelst, 'Pseudo-Methodius, Revelationes: Textgeschichte und kritische Edition. Ein Leuven–Groninger Forschungsprojekt', in Werner Verbeke, Daniel Verhelst and Andries Welkenhuysen (eds), *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 112–36. I thank Michal Dragoun for this reference.

of Prague attracted scholars from all over Europe, and they ensured the mediation and public disputation of the most important texts of ancient scientific, medical, and philosophical treatises, for which Arabic texts in Latin translation often formed the starting point.<sup>65</sup> Most scholars in the field of astronomy were theologians, such as canon Nicholas from St Vitus Cathedral on the Hradčín,<sup>66</sup> Jan Hus, and Conrad of Vechta (c. 1370–1431), a close friend to King Wenceslas IV and Archbishop of Prague after the resignation of Sigismund Albicus (Czech: Zikmund Albík z Uničova, c. 1359–1427). Albicus, the personal physician of the king, was also very well-versed in astrology.<sup>67</sup>

There is no doubt that the *conceptor* of the Genesis initial for the king's Bible had studied ancient literature, also regarding the four-elements doctrine and the related theological discourses. The second medallion of the Genesis initial shows God the Father, who created the four elements in order to create the Firmament. The same idea underlies, for example,

65 Marie Bláhová discussed, as one of many examples, the *disputatio* of 1411, organized by Jan Hus on works by Abenragel (Abu l-Hasan, d. c. 1040), Alkabitiūs (al-Qabīṣī, d. 967) and Averroës (Abū l-Walīd, d. 1198); cf. Marie Bláhová, 'Spuren des arabischen Wissens im mittelalterlichen Böhmen', in Andreas Speer and Lydia Wegener (eds), *Wissen über Grenzen: Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Berlin, 2006), 133–42, at 139; concerning readings and quodlibets on Aristotle, Zeno, Plato and other ancient philosophers at Prague University, cf. František Šmahel, *Charles University in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies* (Leiden and Boston, 2007). Famous graduates and then professors of Charles University whose research was devoted to mathematical astronomy included Křišťan z Prachatic (Christian of Prachatic) (d. 1439), teacher of Jan Hus, Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Rector of Charles University, who is today known to a wider public mainly through his treatise on the construction of astrolabes, and the younger Jan Šindel (d. between 1455 and 1458), who was also the king's personal physician. Šindel is generally associated with the construction of the astrological clock for Prague's Old Town Hall. However, he was better known to Prague and Viennese students of the fifteenth century through his lectures on Claudius Ptolemy. See Pavel Spunar, *Repertorium auctorum bohemosum provecum idearum post universitatem Pragensem conditam illustrans*, vol. 1 (Wrocław, 1985), 97–150, at 103–40.

66 He was the scribe of the astronomical manuscript Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 2378, an immediate predecessor manuscript to Cod. 2352, prepared for King Wenceslas IV. Cf. Jenni and Theisen, *Mitteuropäische Schulen IV*, 69–89 and 89–122 (with further literature).

67 Milada Studničková, 'An den Rändern der Bibel des Konrad von Vechta', in Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Maria Theisen (eds), *Unter Druck: Mitteleuropäische Buchmalerei im 15. Jahrhundert*, Tagungsband zum internationalen Kolloquium in Wien, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 13.1.–17.1.2016 (Petersberg, 2018), 12–21, at 14; Lenka Panušková, 'Die Vorliebe König Wenzels IV. für Astronomie und Astrologie: Was steht hinter den Diagrammen des Codex Clm 826?', in Milada Studničková and Maria Theisen (eds), *Art in an Unsettled Time. Bohemian Book Illumination before Gutenberg* (Prague, 2018), 82–97.

the corresponding representation in the Paris Fécamp Bible.<sup>68</sup> There, however, God stands within the elements, whereas in the Wenceslas Bible, his figure was placed firmly outside, communicating that his existence is not connected to any element or matter. The same is true of the two little figures who rise in front of him and who most probably represent spiritual beings.<sup>69</sup> These two figures, together with the four elements, lead us back to the ideas connected with the creation of all being from ‘matter’.

Like Plato, Aristotle proposed that everything originates from a formless primordial substance (*materia prima*) from which all matter emerges. Only in metaphysics, pure existence itself is conceivable without matter and without any certain form (the quintessence). The work of Aristotle was of fundamental importance for generations of Jewish, Arabic, and Catholic philosophers and theologians.<sup>70</sup> Augustine (354–430) explained that the primordial substance contains the potency to all things.<sup>71</sup> Also, according to Solomon Ibn Gebirol from Málaga (eleventh century) and Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe from Córdoba, 1138–1204), God created matter, and matter emanating from God is present in the spiritual world: everything is based on a *materia universalis*, except the deity (as depicted in the second medallion).<sup>72</sup> The Parisian scholastics took up these ideas. Albertus Magnus (1200–80), who edited and commented on the works of Aristotle and thereby supported the integration of antique philosophers into the Catholic school of philosophy, explained: ‘Materia est primum

68 London, British Library, Yates Thompson 1, fol. 4v (third quarter of the thirteenth century).

69 These are also mentioned by Johannes Zahlten, but unfortunately remained unexplained; cf. Zahlten, *Creatio Mundi*, at 135. The Morgan Bible undoubtedly shows two angels (with wings) in the second medallion, but does not emphasize their importance in the process of Creation, since God does not explicitly turn to them. Moreover, angelic figures are shown in the backgrounds of all seven medallions within this Genesis initial (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M 833, fol. 5r). Therefore, it is precisely the reduction of the figures shown in the respective medallion of the Wenceslas Bible that reveals which aspects were particularly important to its *conceptor*.

70 Sven Müller, *Naturgemäße Ortsbewegung: Aristoteles’ Physik und ihre Rezeption bis Newton* (Tübingen, 2006); also see manuscripts written at Charles University, e.g., *Jenko Wenceslai de Praga, Expositiones super libros Aristotelis* (Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, VIII G 30, c. 1375); Anonymous, *Miscellany of medical and astronomical treatises*, Charles University, with texts by Euclid, Abu al-Hasan ben Ridvan, Hippocrates, Abu Zakaria Yuhana Ibn Masawaih, Theophilus Philaretus and others (Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, VIII G 27, c. 1400/25).

71 *Confessiones* XII, 8; 40; *De civitate dei* XXII, 2; Christoph Horn (ed.), *Augustinus, De civitate dei* (Berlin, second edition, 2015).

72 Moritz Eisler, *Vorlesungen über die jüdischen Philosophen*, vol. 1 (Vienna, 1876), 62ff.

subiectum eius quod est', i.e., 'matter is the basis of all beings and things.' The primordial matter is *potentia inchoationis formae*,<sup>73</sup> it carries all form within itself. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–74) distinguished between different matter from which different beings – including spiritual beings such as angels – emerge. In his *Summa theologiae* he also mentioned a 'materia sensibilis and intelligibilis'.<sup>74</sup> Bonaventura (1221–74) believed that spiritual beings are pure *materia prima*.<sup>75</sup> Although the creation of angels is not mentioned in Genesis, it seemed clear from the Scriptures that they were God's creatures, created from *materia* before Adam, but the question remained: on which day?

Ephrem the Syrian<sup>76</sup> and Augustine were convinced that angels were created from a primordial substance on the first day and interpreted the famous words 'Fiat Lux!' as the creation of the spirit (enlightenment). In his *Confessiones*, Augustine speaks of 'spiritualis et intellectualis creatura' on the first day of Creation: 'it is light'.<sup>77</sup> In Ephrem's *Cave of Treasures*, we read:

At the beginning, on the First Day, which was the holy First Day of the Week, the chief and firstborn of all the days, God created the heavens, and the earth, and the waters, and the air, and the fire, and the hosts which are invisible (that is to say, the Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Lords, Principalities, Powers, Cherubim and Seraphim), and all the ranks and companies of spiritual beings, and the light, and the night, and the day-time, and the gentle winds and the strong winds. All these were created on the First Day. And on the First Day of the Week

73 Albertus Magnus, 'Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia dei II, Q. 4'; Henryk Anzulewicz, 'Summa theologiae sive de mirabili scientia dei, libri 1–2', in Michael Eckert, Eilert Herms, Bernd Jochen Hilberath and Eberhard Jüngel (eds), *Lexikon der theologischen Werke* (Stuttgart, 2003), 681f.

74 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, Q. 44; online edition <[http://www.logicmuseum.com/wiki/Authors/Thomas\\_Aquinas/Summa\\_Theologiae/Part\\_I/Q44](http://www.logicmuseum.com/wiki/Authors/Thomas_Aquinas/Summa_Theologiae/Part_I/Q44)> [accessed 10 March 2023].

75 Bonaventura, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* II, D. 3; online edition <<https://franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/sent.html>> [accessed 10 March 2023].

76 In his extended description of the creation of Adam, Ephrem the Syrian once again refers to the existence of the previously created angels and to the meaning of the four elements.

77 Augustine, *Confessiones*, Liber XIII, chapter 2, 3; Jacques-Paul Migne (ed.), 'Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Hipponensis episcopi, Confessiones', *Patrologia Latina* 32 (Paris, 1861); James J. O'Donnell (ed.), *The Confessions of Augustine* (Oxford, 1992), electronic edition: <<https://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/conf/>> [accessed 10 March 2023].



the Spirit of Holiness, one of the Persons of the Trinity, hovered over the waters (...).<sup>78</sup>

Accordingly, Peter Comestor reckoned that the creation of the angels, just like the four elements, took place on the first day.<sup>79</sup>

The problem was of course also discussed by Jewish theologians, and some rabbis believed that the angels were not created on the first, but on the second day. Rabbi Jochanan (Jerusalem, d. c. 80)<sup>80</sup>, for example, was convinced that the angels were created on the second day, by quoting Psalm 103:4: 'Who makest thy angels spirits: and thy ministers a burning fire.' Rabbi Hanina (Galilee, d. c. 75)<sup>81</sup>, however, by comparing Genesis 1:20 to Isaiah 40:26, said that the angels must have been created on the fifth day.<sup>82</sup> There also existed the kabbalistic idea that God created angels every day, but only the angels created on the second day would live on forever. Angels created on other days would 'perish, like those created on the fifth day who sang their anthem to God's praise, then ceased to be.'<sup>83</sup> It is, therefore, very likely that the two figures in the second medallion of our Genesis initial are such never-ceasing holy angels, who were created before the actual creation of the world, according to Rabbi Jochanan, on the second day. The two figures in our medallion could possibly refer to the

78 *The Cave of Treasures of St. Ephrem the Syrian, trans. from the Syriac by E. A. Wallis Budge* (London, 1927) <<https://archive.org/details/stephrembookofthecaveoftreasure>> [accessed 10 March 2023].

79 'In principio creavit deus celum et terram. (...) id est celum empyreum et angelica natura. terram vero materiam omnium corporum id est quatuor elementa (...).' ('In the beginning God created heaven and earth [...], that is, the empyrean heaven which is of angel-like nature, and the earth which is the matter of which consist all physical objects, in other words the four elements [...]'; translation by Karl Kügle); cf. Georg Husner (impr.), *Scholastica historia Magistri Petri Comestoris seriem brevem nimis et obscuram elucidans* (Strasbourg, 1500), a3.

80 Rabbi Jochanan (ben Zakkai – the Wise) is considered the head of the Jews after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD and the founder of the House of Teachings in Jabne. The anachronistic title Rabban was a sign of the reverence and respect that later generations felt for him, since rabbinic law, rabbinic worship, and even the role of the rabbi in Jewish life can be traced back to him. Cf. Jacob Neusner, *A life of Yohanan ben Zakkai, ca.1–80 C.E.* (Leiden, 1970).

81 Rabbi Hanina (also 'Chanina', ben Dosa) was a disciple of Jochanan. His title is likewise an honorary title; cf. Jonathan Kaplan, 'Hanina ben Dosa', in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* 11 (Boston, 2015), coll. 229–31.

82 Bereishit Rabbah 1; cf. digital edition <[https://www.sefaria.org/Bereishit\\_Rabbah.1.3?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Bereishit_Rabbah.1.3?lang=bi)> [accessed 10 March 2023]; *Midrash Rabbah*, trans. Rabbi Dr H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, with a foreword by Rabbi Dr I. Epstein (London, third edition, 1961), at 5.

83 Herbert Lockyer, *All the Angels in the Bible: A Complete Exploration of the Nature and Ministry of Angels* (Peabody, MA, 1995), 11–15, at 13f.



two archangels Michael – who defended the Heavens – and Lucifer – who, later on, was damned to Hell and led Adam and Eve to break God's law: they are both God's creatures and define the further fate of mankind.<sup>84</sup> Peter Comestor, who says that, 'according to the Hebrew tradition', Lucifer was created on the second day, gives a hint at this interpretation.<sup>85</sup> The two wingless figures are archetypes of angels and correspond to the first biblical accounts in which angels appear as men or young men. They are quite different from those winged angels who are described in the younger writings of the Tanakh (especially those of the Babylonian Exile – such angels are shown in the frame of the initial, and thus belong to a different sphere of time).

How could King Wenceslas' *conceptor*, however, know of such rabbinical considerations? The king himself is said to have frequently granted audiences to Avigdor Kara ben Isaac (d. 1439),<sup>86</sup> the chief rabbi of the Prague community, and to have had extensive discussions with him on religious matters. Avigdor Kara impressed with his excellent knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; he was known as a Kabbalist, author of theological writings, and a poet. There is no concrete evidence that he was in the service of King Wenceslas, as was assumed by Jacob Moellin (c. 1360–1427)<sup>87</sup>, but there is no doubt that he was willing to discuss theological issues in detail with the king and dignitaries of the Catholic Church. This way, rabbinical considerations also proved to be particularly influential for the newly formed group of Church critics around the theologian Jan Hus, who searched for the roots of the Christian faith. Thus, the creation of the holy angels on the second day may indeed have been a view impressed by Avigdor Kara, Jacob Moellin, or other contemporary Jewish authorities on the *conceptor* of the king's Bible. Many other miniatures

84 Maria Bettetini, 'Die Wahl der Engel: Übel, Materie und Willensfreiheit', in Christoph Horn (ed.), *Augustinus, De civitate dei*, Klassiker Auslegen, 11 (Berlin, second edition, 2015), 131–56.

85 (...) *tradunt enim hebrei: que hac die angelus factus est diabolus sathanael. id est lucifer*; cf. Husner, *Scholastica historia Magistri Petri Comestoris* (Strasbourg, 1503), a4.

86 He was the son of Isaac Kara, who died in the synagogue during the Easter pogrom of 1389. In memory of the dead of the pogrom, Avigdor wrote the elegy *Et Kol ha-Tela'ah asher Meza'atnu*. Milan Žonca, 'Několik poznámek k intelektuálnímu profilu Avigdora Kary', in Daniel Boušek, Magdalena Křížová and Pavel Sládek (eds), *Dvarim meatim: Studie pro Jiřínu Šedinovou* (Prague, 2016), 35–56; his possible connections to the court and courtiers are discussed at 45–7.

87 Jacob ben Moses Moellin (c. 1360–1427) was head of the Jewish communities in Germany, Austria, and Bohemia; Sidney Steiman, *Custom and Survival: A Study of the Life and Work of R. Jacob Molin* (New York, 1963); Martin Przybilski, *Kulturtransfer zwischen Juden und Christen in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Berlin and New York, 2010).

of the Wenceslas Bible also show remarkably good knowledge of Jewish liturgical utensils like chalices, bowls, and censers,<sup>88</sup> which goes far beyond other contemporaneous representations as known, for example, from the Commentary on the Bible by Nicholas of Lyra.<sup>89</sup> This proves that Hana Hlaváčková was justified when she noted that the influence of the Jewish community on intellectual life, not least mirrored by the Wenceslas Bible, is investigated far too little.<sup>90</sup>

## THE THIRD DAY

*Got vorwar sprach. Die wasser die under dem himel sind sammen sich an ein stat und erscheine die trucken und es geschach also. Und got name die trucken erde und die sammenunge der wasser nante her die mer. Und got sach das es gut was und sprach. Gebere die erde grunende wurcze und machende samen und ein opfeltragendes holcz und mache frucht noch seinem geslechte des same in im selbir sei auf der erden. Und es geschach allso. Und furbrachte die erde grundende wurcze die samen trug noch irem geslechte und holcz das do machte frucht und hette samen ein yetliches noch seinem geslechte. (...) (Cod. 2759, fols 2v/3r)*<sup>91</sup>

In this medallion, the representation focuses on the very detailed biblical account of the creation of the plants, following the previous separation

88 It is perhaps no coincidence that most of these miniatures were created by court illuminator Frana, who in the late nineties of the fourteenth century ran a workshop right at the entrance to Prague's Jewish town; Václav Vladivoj Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy*, vol. 2 (Prague, 1871), at 218; vol. 3 (1875), at 22; vol. 5 (1881), at 55; Maria Theisen, 'Picturing Frana', in Zoë Opačić and Achim Timmermann (eds), *Image, Memory and Devotion. Studies in Gothic Art* (London, 2010), 103–12.

89 King Wenceslas also seems to have owned volumes of this biblical commentary. Unfortunately, only one volume of the complete set has survived: the commentary on the Psalter. It was written at the same time as the Wenceslas Bible and contains a classical psalter illustration cycle with small historiated initials at the beginning of the major psalms (Salzburg, University Library, M III 20); cf. Theisen, 'Texte und Bilder', 105–45, at 135–9 (Fig. 79, 10).

90 Hlaváčková particularly remarked on the Hebrew inscriptions in some miniatures – to examine those more closely remains a desideratum; cf. Hlaváčková, 'Old Testament Scenes', 132–9, at 136 and 138.

91 'God also said: Let the waters that are under the heaven, be gathered together into one place: and let the dry land appear. And it was so done. And God called the dry land, Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And he said: Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which may have seed in itself upon the earth (...)' (Gen 1:9–12, quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*).

of water and land.<sup>92</sup> The miniature corresponds to Genesis 1:11 (and thus also to Petrus Comestor's *Historia scholastica*), saying: 'Produxit enim de terra herbam virentem, et facientem semen', and to the last verse of the description of the third day in the *Cave of Treasures*: 'And on this third day God commanded the earth, and it brought forth herbs and vegetables, and it gave birth in its midst to trees and seeds and plants and roots.'

## THE FOURTH DAY

*Got aber sprach. Es werde liecht an dem firmament des himels und teilen tag und nacht (...) und erleuchten die erde und es geschach also. Und got machte czwei grose liecht (...) und stern und saczte sie an des himels firmament so das sie leuchten auf der erden (...) und got sach das es gut was und wart gemacht abend und morgen der vierde tag. (Cod. 2759, fol. 3r)<sup>93</sup>*

Instead of showing the creation of the sun and the moon on this day, which, as we have already seen, was placed into the first medallion because of their symbolic value, the depiction now concentrates on the creation of the animals living on land and in the forests. This logically follows the preparatory creation of meadows and woods the day before.

## THE FIFTH DAY

*Auch sprach got fürbringen die wasser krichende tyr lebendiges geistes und gevogel uf der erden under dem firmament des himels. Und got schepfte grose walvische und alle lebendige sele und bewegliche die do fürbrachten die wasser in irr gestalt. Und alles gevogel noch seinem geslechte. Und got sach das es gut was und geseget in und sprach. Wachset und meret euch und erfüllet die wasser des meres und die vogel sullen sich meren uf der erden. Und wart gemacht abent und morgen der funfte tag. (Cod. 2759, fol. 3r)<sup>94</sup>*

92 Franz Unterkircher, *König Wenzels Bibelbilder: Die Miniaturen zur Genesis aus der Wenzelsbibel* (Graz, 1983), at 40.

93 'And God said: Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and the night, (...) to give light upon the earth. And it was so done. And God made two great lights: (...) and the stars. And he set them in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth. (...) And God saw that it was good. And the evening and morning were the fourth day.' (Gen 1:14–19, quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*).

94 'God also said: Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature having life, and the fowl that may fly over the earth under the firmament of heaven. And God

With this representation, the *conceptor* once more smoothly took up the rhythm established by the Genesis text and showed the creation of those animals that live in the air and in the water.

## THE SIXTH DAY

(...) und got sach das es gut was und sprach. Mache wir einen menschen noch unserm bilde und noch unserem gleichnisse das er vorwese den vischen des meres und den gevogeln des himels und den wilden der erden und aller erden und allen krichenden das sich ruret in der erden. Und got schepfte einen menschen czu seinem bilde czu gotes bilde schepfte er in man und wip schepfte er sie. Und got gesegent in und sprach. Wachset und meret euch und erfullet die erden (...) (Cod. 2759, fol. 3r)<sup>95</sup>

In Ephrem's text, we read about angels again and about the meaning of the four elements: 'And the angels saw that when these four weak materials were placed in the palm of his right hand, that is, cold and heat and dryness and humidity, God formed Adam.' Ephrem continues: 'The crown of glory was placed on his [Adam's] head, there he was made king and priest and prophet, there God made him sit on his honorary throne, and there, God gave him dominion over all creatures and things.'<sup>96</sup> This passage, when compared to the Wenceslas Bible, suggests that the Prague *conceptor* actually knew Ephrem's *Cave of Treasures* or Pseudo-Methodius' *Revelationes*. He chose to accompany precisely this sixth medallion (showing the creation of the primordial couple Adam and Eve) with the figure of King Wenceslas, because the king was perceived as the successor of Adam, the first king by God's grace. In order to regain the

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created the great whales, and every living and moving creature, which the waters brought forth, according to their kinds, and every winged fowl according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And he blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea: and let the birds be multiplied upon the earth. And the evening and morning were the fifth day.' (Gen 1:20–3, quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*).

95 '(...) And God saw that it was good. And he said: Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth (...) ' (Gen 1:25–8, quoted according to *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version*).

96 *The Cave of Treasures of St. Ephrem the Syrian, trans. from the Syriac by E. A. Wallis Budge* (London, 1927) <<https://archive.org/details/stephrembookofthecaveoftreasure>> [accessed 10 March 2023].

purity of Adam in Paradise, Wenceslas, like every Christian king, had to undergo a ritual (spiritual) bath before his coronation. The bath attendant has at least two meanings in this context, since emblems are by nature ambivalent and multilayered in their meanings: on the one hand, she is Adam's partner (her tuft of leaves resembles those of Adam and Eve at the expulsion from Paradise), and on the other hand, as the bath attendant, she is responsible for the royal bath.<sup>97</sup> After the ritual bath, the king, in the coronation sequence, took an oath to God and the crown: he married 'Lady Crown', as Laurentius of Březová put it.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, we see the king constrained by means of the crowned letter *e*, which symbolizes the *vinculum iugale* here. The letter *e* itself can be read as a complete Middle-High-German word – *Ehe* – and meant 'marriage', 'union'. The crown with cross, bow and mitre represents the crown of the Empire, even though it is not a realistic depiction of the original (and even though Wenceslas was never crowned Emperor by the pope). Above it, we see a torque as a symbol of union and a kingfisher that stands for eternal conjugal love, union, and rebirth – both belong to the king's emblematic repertoire.<sup>99</sup> The kingfisher embodies an allegory, which reaches back to the ancient story of Alcyone from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, we may see here again the influence of St Ambrose's *Hexameron*. Ambrose, and after him also Isidor of Seville, Hrabanus Maurus and many others, celebrated this bird as one of the first animals created by the Lord; moreover, it is considered a symbol of robust fertility.<sup>101</sup> On the first page of the Genesis in King Wenceslas' Bible, the emblems are furthermore

97 Since Julius von Schlosser, 'Die Bilderhandschriften Königs Wenzel I', countless attempts have been made to interpret the emblems of King Wenceslas IV. An overview of the history and the interpretations in circulation is provided by Maria Theisen, in Jenni and Theisen, *Mitteeuropäische Schulen IV*, 5–12. <<https://e-book.fwf.ac.at/o:571> (text) [accessed 10 March 2023].

98 Karel Hruza, 'Audite Celi! Ein satirischer hussitischer Propagandatext gegen König Sigismund', in *Propaganda, Kommunikation und Öffentlichkeit*, Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, 6 (Vienna, 2002), 129–51.

99 Maria Theisen, 'The Emblem of the Torque and its Use in the Willehalm Manuscript of King Wenceslas IV of Bohemia', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 171:1 (2018), 131–53.

100 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XI, vv. 410–748; Ernst Carl Christian Bach, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoseon Libri XV. Mit kritischen und erläuternden Anmerkungen, zweiter Band, VIII–XV* (Hannover, 1836), 220–45; Schlosser, 'Die Bilderhandschriften Königs Wenzel I', 283; Edmund W. Braun, 'Ceyx und Alcyone', in *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte* 3 (Munich, 1954), coll. 403–5.

101 Cf. Hana Hlaváčková, 'Courtly Body in the Bible of Wenceslas IV', 371–82. Hlaváčková also sees an allegory of fertility in all other emblems of the king, and suggests interpretation of the 'e' as 'Erde' [(mother) earth], the letter 'W' as 'Welt' [world]; cf. Hlaváčková, 'K dataci a emblematic Bible Václava IV / On the Dating

associated with the imperial coat of arms. Opposite we see a Bavarian coat of arms painted over in white.<sup>102</sup> It stands for one of his wives (both were from the house of Wittelsbach in Bavaria). The Bohemian coat of arms and the royal insignia at the right margin form the third vertical row of illuminations on this page. All these elements clearly connect the king with God's Creation and the history of Salvation, as testified by the angels, Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles within the architectural framework of this initial.

## CONCLUSION

The above observations provide new insights into the conceptual work underlying the pictorial programme of the Wenceslas Bible. They highlight the role played by Latin paraphrases of the Vulgate to direct the craftsmen creating illuminations for a German text suspected of heresy. The Genesis initial in particular reveals more than any other the spiritual and scholarly hothouse atmosphere of Prague around 1400. With its pronounced exegetical function, it provides a link between the past as reflected in the texts of Holy Scripture, and the king's present. Its programme echoes the

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and Emblematism of the King Wenceslaus IV's Bible', 46–8. See also the contribution by Gia Toussaint in this volume.

102 Ulrike Bodemann suggested that this painting-over took place under the reign of Emperor Sigismund or Emperor Frederick III: 'Bibeln. Handschrift Nr. 14.0.20', in *Katalog der deutschsprachigen illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters, begonnen von Hella Frühmorgen-Voss, fortgeführt von Norbert H. Ott zusammen mit Ulrike Bodemann*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1996), 170–4. It is remarkable, however, that the Bavarian coat of arms does not appear in any other Wenceslas manuscript. Therefore, the possibility must be considered that King Wenceslas IV decided to reorganize and focus the pictorial programme of the Bible more exclusively on Bohemia and the Empire; this probably occurred after the death of his first wife Johanna on New Year's Eve 1386 (the black torques in the first quires of the Willehalm trilogy, Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. Ser. n. 2643, may have been an expression of grief over her death). This assumption would support Hlaváčková's conviction that the queen depicted in the prologue is indeed Johanna, while Schmidt, 'Kunsthistorischer Kommentar', had declared himself in favour of Queen Sophia, who had married Wenceslas in 1389; regarding this problem cf. Jenni and Theisen, *Mitteleuropäische Schulen IV*, 210. Whether we can necessarily conclude from this that the Wenceslas Bible was commissioned ten years earlier than the Willehalm manuscript for King Wenceslas IV, dated 1387, as Hlaváčková argues ('K dataci a emblematice Bible Václava IV / On the Dating and Emblematism of the King Wenceslaus IV's Bible'), must be left open; cf. Hana Hlaváčková, 'Knižní malba v době krále Václava IV', in Jiří Kuthan and Jakub Šenovský (eds), *Římský a český král Václav IV. a počátky husitské revoluce* (Prague, 2019), 131–53. Both are possible from the art historian's point of view; further in-depth analysis of the text might bring more clarity.



thoughts of the most prominent theological circles at Prague University and their proto-reformatory ideas, as well as the input from the Prague Jewish community represented by their chief rabbi, Avigdor Kara. Close readings of the medallions of the Genesis initial revealed that their *conceptor* worked together with, or was himself, an expert theologian who had internalized not only the verses of the Bible but also texts written by authors such as Ambrose, Thomas Aquinas, John of Sacrobosco, and Peter Comestor. In addition, he was familiar with apocryphal texts such as Ephrem's *Cave of Treasures* and with rabbinic literature linked to ancient scientific and philosophical sources. The whole project was closely linked to the representation of Wenceslas IV as King of Bohemia and King of the Romans (and eventually-to-be-crowned Holy Roman Emperor) through an equally learned emblematic programme and heraldic devices. Didactically laid out for their royal patron, all recipients were to look, read and learn by interpreting these images, which had been beautifully painted in praise of God – and of Wenceslas, his worldly representative.<sup>103</sup>

103 The writing of this essay was supported by the Czech research grant project 'The Construction of the Other in Medieval Europe' of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Ostrava (IRP 201820, Director: PhDr. Daniela Rywiková, PhD). This project is dedicated to questions of social, religious and cultural interaction, cooperation, co-existence and demarcation in medieval and early modern Europe. I thank Sammie A. Cunningham (Cambridge) for her great help in translating my article into English. My thanks also go to Karl Kügle, Ingrid Ciulisová and Václav Žůrek for their continuous and invaluable support during the editing process.

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# Luxembourg Court Cultures in the Long Fourteenth Century

Performing Empire,  
Celebrating Kingship

EDITED BY KARL KÜGLE,  
INGRID CIULISOVÁ, VÁCLAV ŽUREK

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# CONTENTS

|                                     |      |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| <i>List of Illustrations</i>        | vii  |
| <i>Preface and Acknowledgements</i> | xiii |
| <i>List of Contributors</i>         | xv   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Introduction: The ‘Long Luxembourg Century’ (1308–1437):<br>Courtly Networks, Cultural Politics, Dynastic Legacy | 1 |
| <i>Karl Kügle, Ingrid Ciulisová, Václav Žůrek</i>  |   |

## **PART I: John the Blind and his Progeny in France**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1 The ‘Luxembourgness’ of Things: Machaut C, Glazier 52, and<br>Dynastic Presence in Early Fourteenth-Century France | 21  |
| <i>Uri Smilansky</i>   |     |
| 2 Guillaume de Machaut at the Court of John of Luxembourg:<br>Defining a Social Milieu                               | 57  |
| <i>Jana Fantysová Matějková</i>  |     |
| 3 The Vyšší Brod Cycle and its Anonymous Painter: French<br>and Bohemian Court Circles in the 1340s                  | 105 |
| <i>Lenka Panušková</i>   |     |

## **PART II: Marvellous Objects and Culture at the Court of Charles IV**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 4 Charles of Luxembourg and his Reliquary Cross: The<br>Significance of Precious Stones | 137 |
| <i>Ingrid Ciulisová</i>   |     |
| 5 Charles IV and the Patronage of Multilingual Literature at<br>his Court and Beyond    | 174 |
| <i>Václav Žůrek</i>   |     |

- 6 Miraculous Objects and Foundational Sins: Verbal and Material Reality in the *Dalimil Chronicle*, the Chronicle of Přibík Pulkava of Radenín, and Charles IV's Autobiography 203  
*Matouš Jaluška*

### **PART III: Wenceslas and Sigismund: Art, Politics, and Diplomacy**

- 7 The Making of the Wenceslas Bible, with Special Consideration of the Theological Concept of its Genesis Initial 243  
*Maria Theisen*
- 8 The Naked King: Representing Wenceslas in his Illuminated Bible 282  
*Gia Toussaint*
- 9 Dealing with the Luxembourg Court: Ellwangen Abbey and their Imperial Overlord 321  
*Mark Whelan*
- 10 Assessing the Luxembourgs: The Image of Wenceslas and Sigismund in the Correspondence of Italian Ambassadors 343  
*Ondřej Schmidt*

### **PART IV: Studying the Luxembourgs: What has been Neglected**

- 11 Heiresses, Regents, and Patrons: Female Rulers in the Age of the Luxembourgs 375  
*Julia Burkhardt*
- 12 Image-making, Image-breaking, and the Luxembourg Monarchy 404  
*Len Scales*
- 13 The Absent Present: Luxembourg Courts, their Sonic Cultures, and Music Histor(iograph)y 429  
*Karl Kügle*
- Select Bibliography* 466
- Index* 486