***Speculum mortis.* The Image of Death in Late Medieval Bohemian Painting**
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The book examines the topic so far almost ignored by the Czech research: The depiction and development of the personified Death in late medieval painting in Bohemia in broader context of the European "strategy of dying", liturgy and religious practice. Late medieval visual arts in general illustrate the period "culture of death" and allow us to better understand mentality and imagination of people living during the 14th and 15th century – during the period of growing and intensively experienced fear of death.

When considering the macabre iconography of the Late Middle Ages, Bohemia in the context of Central Europe represents a unique region for research. The Late Medieval Bohemian art presents macabre iconography in its complexity and is the only central European region with the whole range of macabre iconography. For this remarkable fact, I argue that we can mainly thank the Luxembourg dynasty as its Bohemian kings were perfectly familiar with French, Italian and German culture and were responsible for essential cultural and artistic transfers from the western regions to Central and Eastern Europe. Another important aspect was the traditional and intensive presence of the German speaking urban elites as well as intimate contact with the German cultural milieu as such, which mediated during the 14th and the 15th centuries "new" macabre themes and motifs such as the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, the Dance of Death and so called the transi-tombs. Acknowledging this fact, one cannot ignore the Benedictine order and its pastoral activities in Bohemia. In the 15th century Bohemia the pastoral and didactic macabre iconography of monastic origin as well as Jean Gerson's *ars moriendi* concept was grasped by Hussite theologians and twisted and absorbed by utraquist moral theology emphasizing the individual responsibility of salvation.

The study applies the most recent foreign research on medieval iconography of personified Death to the Bohemian visual material, methodically focusing on close interactions between the text and image and so called contextual/iconological interpretation. I argue that the use of shocking macabre "images" in period art, homiletics and religious practice (so called memento mori sujet) in general, in both catholic and utraquist environment, were used not only for pastoral education, but caused emotional involvement of the viewer/listener. The visual arts therefore played an inevitable part in medieval man's salvation based on disciplination and control of the individual believer.

Chapter 1 *Imago mortis* examines the pictorial development of personified Death and its transformation during the period from the early (from c. 9th century) to the late middle ages, providing broader theological and social-historical contexts for the macabre iconography and literature, focusing on both secular as well as monastic environment. It follows the significant shift in the macabre iconography from early images depicting Death as a devil-like creature/demon through Death as flying female demon with scythe to the 15th century skeleton/cadaver images, in fact the physical relic of human body free of any spiritual ergo God related entity. I argue that this major visual shift reflects the change of medieval mentality dramatically transformed

in the mid 14th century when Europe experiences the epidemic of Black Death and subsequently first anatomic experiments - dissections of human body. This transformation of macabre paradigm reflects the horror-like experience of the late medieval society, deeply imprinted in late medieval individual's mind. Furthermore it also follows the early 15th century social crisis and growing fear of heretics, leading to omnipresent anxiety of death and devil in the early modern ages in Europe. The separate section of the chapter is dedicated to the Apocalyptic Death.

Chapter 2 *Mors triumphans* focuses on the image of Triumph of Death in context of period funeral liturgy and theology. The chapter represents the first thorough analysis of the Broumov charnel house murals, uncovered in 2013. Paintings depict beside the Last Judgements scene and the Legend of the Three Dead and the Three Living, the Triumph of Death. Contextualizing the unusual dualistic depiction of Death demonstrates that this visual concept can only be found in Italy (Pisa and Subiaco) and it is obvious that the conceptor of the Broumov charnel house murals was well travelled and educated member of the local Benedictine community administering the Broumov parish. Broumov murals stresses moralizing visualization of royal power that may well reflect the problems of the Broumov Benedictines whose property was confiscated and pledged by the Bohemian king John of Luxembourg. The critic of royal power is also emphasized in the unusual iconography of the encounter of the Three Living and the Three Dead. The living kings in the Broumov Legend are depicted not only with usual crowns on their heads but also with swords. This is a unique motif within the European iconography stressing the political secular power as temporal, deadly and vanishing by all means. I argue that the general pastoral meaning of the Broumov murals strongly reflect the latest theology such as the papal dogma from 1336 of the double judgement of the human soul and therefore it is necessary to correct the execution of the cycle into the period between 1340 and 1350. The text further analyses a variety of images from Bohemian illuminated manuscripts in direct confrontation with German and Italian images and argue that Bohemain artists creatively combined both main iconographic types of the Triumph – Italian (Death riding a leaping horse) and German (Death standing with a scythe over dead bodies).

Chapter 3 *Memento mori* is dedicated to one of the most popular medieval visual sujets of macabre iconography: The Legend of the Three Dead and the Three Living. There are three examples of this iconography in Bohemian medieval art. In all of them the Legend represents a strong moral imperative – an allusion of corporal death as the "corporeal death of the world" as we can see in the oldest macabre image in Bohemian medieval art in the Church of St. Maurice in Mouřenec, visually linking the Last Judgement and the Legend with the Requiem Mass. I argue that the Mouřenec Legend is one of the oldest in central Europe (c. 1310) and its iconography was used in pastoral practice as a visual pendant of the Requiem mass providing further contexts. The poly-semantic potential of the Legend was fully utilized by mendicant orders and period homiletics demonstrated in the Dominican church in České Budějovice. The Legend is here placed within a broader pastoral visual narrative

including St. Christopher, a Pietà and St. George and the dragon with 10,000 martyrs. The iconography of the murals corresponds well with a popular period prayer *Obsecro te*, often used as a general plea for salvation, protection against mortal sin. In Bohemia, the Budějovice Legend uniquely presents the living kings as horse-riding hunters as first depicted in Campo Santo in Pisa or in the luxurious Psalter of Bonne of Luxembourg. Such a presentation of the legend could perhaps have been a commemoration of the death of the Holy Roman Emperor and Bohemian king Charles IV who died after suffering a tragic illness in 1378. The Dominican mural paintings can be dated to the 1380's and were probably commissioned by the emperor's son and Bohemian king Wenceslaus IV. The last representation of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead can be found in the memorial church of St. Bartholomew in Kočí. The mural painting representing the legend is sadly preserved only as a fragment depicting one cadaver holding a scythe. It can be dated after the year 1499 when the church was heavily reconstructed and repainted. The legend scene was possibly a part of the Last Judgement and documents the fact that such a macabre theme was also known and used by the Hussites as the church in Kočí came under the jurisdiction of the utraquist Chrudim parish.

Chaper 4 *Ars moriendi* and symmetry of sin deals with an unique pastoral handbook called the Krumlov miscellanea. The luxurious manuscript was probably commissioned by Oldřich of Rosenberg in 1417, contains various verancular texts that appear, from their careful selection, to have served for pastoral care, performed perhaps by the Krumlov Minor friars targeting the laity as well as being usable for *cura monialium* performed in the neighbouring convent of the Poor Clares and in the Beguine community. The textual composition of the manuscript shows not only the division of texts used in monastic as well as in lay pastoral practice but also gives us a clue as to how such a manuscript was practically used. The last two tract are of Czech origin and while the first one deals with mortal sin and how to recognize it, the second (titled *Books on the death of a lush Youth*) is a copy of Thomas of Štítný's last chapter *On Death* from his famous *Six Books on General Christians Matters*.The first anonymous tract dedicated to mortal sin is formulated more as a catalogue of all known sins rather than being a deep theological reflection of individual sins, serving as a guideline for their recognition and contemplation. The tract together with the illuminations represents a unique visual complex of moral iconography commenting on the official structure of the period confession, symmetrically structures sins into groups beginning with offences against the Decalogue, through the various types of sins listed according the numeral sequence: Nine Sins of Another (*peccata aliena*), offences against the Eight Beatitudes, the Seven Deadly Sins, sins against the Seven Sacraments, the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, offences against the Six Acts of Mercy and sins of the five senses. The Seven Deadly Sins are, moreover, illustrated by a unique set of illuminations accompanying each mortal offence using the image of a seated couple, their "deadly" sinful act supported by Death himself. Furthermore, the second tract, that by Štítný, is commented on by fifteen illuminations always placed above the direct speech of either the dying Youth or his friend.

Chaper V *Danse macabre* is dedicated to two unique illuminations of the Dance of Death, both illuminated by the same illuminator, however in two different manuscripts. The older one (so called the Bible of a Hussite priest, from 1441) served in utraquist environment, the second manuscript, also the Bible, from 1447 was owned by a catholic priest. The Hussite Bible is unique and rare example of utraquist pastoral compendium containing the complete biblical text, various ethical tracts and their fragments while emphasizing the early church authorities. The codex's uniqueness arises from its original set of illuminations depicting the Last Judgment; a sinful couple kneeling before a large chalice and suffering Christ and original version of the *danse macabre*. I argue that the "Hussite" dance of death unites two fundamental aspects of the medieval understanding of death. Corporeal and spiritual (eschatological) death (eternal damnation) are presented here as a single entity. This is a result of the utraquist strategy of "art of dying well". The controversy of purgatory as well as the emphasis on life lasting personal ethics surely inspired the "unification" of the duality of death. The skeletons in dances of death usually signify the corporeal death of man, while in the Hussite bible we can see a rotting body representing Death itself (as is obvious from its speech) as well as the *alter egos* of the living. Another "innovation" here is the strong moral accent, as the individual figures identify themselves as sinners. Death in the Hussite bible is understood as one of the Four Last Things with a new-found strong moral accent typical for the Bohemian Reformation.

Chaper VI focuses on the specific aspect of the iconography of personified Death in the Late Medieval and early modern Europe. There are many examples in the late medieval art depicting Death as a imitator of the leisure activities of humans or being their alter ego – a mirror of their vanishing social and individual identity. The chapter also places the macabre iconography into gender perspective focusing on lascivious or even sexually violent images when Death always represents the male individual. This is an important shift in early modern Death iconography as medieval Death had rather no gender identity or was female. The chapter also analysis the image of Death as a parody and travesty.

Numberless loss of visual objects prevents us from gaining a more complex picture of macabre visuals in Late Medieval Bohemia. However it is certain that the visual culture related to the *memento mori* or *ars moriendi* was as in the other parts of Europe, an integral part of the pastoral education of the laity. The Dance of Death, in particular, represented the pastoral image par excellence directly related to funeral preaching. For this reason too, the visualized personified Death (not only in Bohemia) is almost always part of the wider narrative reflecting period homiletics, and not an isolated scene or image. The moral and soteriological aspect of such images was vital as they were considered to be part of the antagonistic world – the battlefield between good and bad, life and death.