

rather came later, and in fact drew on Hus's work.⁷⁹ Again, Sedlák supposed that Nicholas's treatise on Purgatory was a source for parts of Hus's sermon on the text, "Dixit Martha"; since the sermon was preached in 1411 and the *De purgatorio* was written in 1415, Sedlák had to conjecture that Hus used an earlier draft of Nicholas's work, now lost.⁸⁰ But his arguments in favor of Nicholas's originality in this case are quite unconvincing, and an examination of both works suggests that, as we might suppose from the dates, Nicholas drew on Hus.⁸¹ As for Jakoubek, there is really no reason to regard his radicalism as inspired by Nicholas, for the Czech had already reached some of his most extreme positions before Nicholas's appearance on the Prague literary scene; Jakoubek had been among those reformers who, more radical than Hus, had adopted Wyclif's doctrine of remanence, and he had not shown any noticeable caution in his appeals to the secular power to take over the church's property, in his attacks

⁷⁹ Bartoš, "Studie k Husovi a jeho době. 1. Hus a valdenství," *ČČM* 89 (1915): pp. 5 f.

⁸⁰ Sedlák, pp. 46-48.

⁸¹ This is Novotný's conclusion (*M. Jan. Hus, život a dílo* (Prague, 1921) 2: p. 20 n. 2, p. 22 n. 2), but he offers no demonstration to back it up. Some of the evidence for Nicholas's dependence on Hus, rather than *vice versa*, is brought out in the discussion of the *De purgatorio* below, and a few more items may be offered here, although a full-scale demonstration would require much more space than can be afforded in a footnote. First of all, it may be fairly said that Sedlák's literary arguments, turning on the alleged unity of Nicholas's work as opposed to alleged incongruities in Hus, are simply not convincing; but even if they were, it would not follow that the more unified work was the original—quite the opposite! Then there is the fact that Hus used his Lectures on the Sentences as a source. Thus the passage in Hus's sermon from ". . . oportet, ut purgandi hominis capacitas procedat ex propria dignitate" to ". . . que hic pro ipsis ab aliis fiunt" ("Dixit Martha," ed. A. Schmidtová, *Iohannes Hus . . . Positiones, recommendationes, sermones* (Prague, 1958), p. 165) is taken almost verbatim from his Lectures on the Sentences (*Super IV Sententiarum*, ed. V. Flajšhans (Prague, 1904), p. 716 f.; cf. Novotný, *op. cit.*, p. 496), which were composed in 1407-1409, well before Nicholas began his literary career. But parts of this passage are in Nicholas's *De purgatorio*, MS. Univ. Prag., III G 8, f. 36'. Finally, along with the passages compared in the text below, the following comparison may be adduced:

Hus, p. 159

Secundo nocent recipientibus sacerdotibus, quia propterea magis avaricie intendunt et simonie, et crapulosius pascuntur sicut corvi de cadaveribus. Et hinc dicitur: "De morbo medicum gaudet, de morte sacerdos," quia medicum morbus et sacerdotem cadaver pascit, suple occasionaliter.

Nicholas, f. 43'

Secundo nocent sacerdotibus recipientibus, quia propterea magis avaricie intendunt et symonie, sicut corvi, quia medicum morbus et sacerdotem cadaver pascit, suple occasionaliter.

Here Nicholas's text is obviously defective because of the omission of the italicized words; the verse in quotation marks appears in Nicholas on f. 42, and perhaps was therefore left out here, but in any case it cannot be supposed that Hus took his passage from Nicholas.

on the corrupt clergy as the Whore of Babylon, or in his identification of the Pope as the Great Antichrist.⁸² As early as 1410 Jakoubek was ready to reject the authority of the Roman institution because its way of life was in contradiction to evangelical poverty⁸³—and this attitude was perhaps the most fundamental element of the body of doctrine that Nicholas of Dresden was to begin developing two years later. In fact Jakoubek's two main sources, Wyclif and Matthew of Janov, are enough to account for every radical position he ever took, if we allow for the stimulating and crystallizing effect of political involvements, and it is impossible to demonstrate that Nicholas of Dresden's influence was decisive at any particular point. In certain issues, such as the condemnation of usury and of the cult of holy images, the literary work of the two was closely related, and their ideas were on the whole identical; in regard to the distinction between civil and evangelical possession, Nicholas's discussion was much the same as Jakoubek's, to whose work Nicholas referred his readers for additional authorities.⁸⁴ All of this suggests that it would be wrong to see Nicholas of Dresden as uniquely radical or uniquely original: he was one of many Hussite intellectuals, formed by the movement itself, and if he in fact went further to the left than anyone else around him, this development must itself be explained in terms of the history of Hussitism. Thus on the whole, Bartoš's view seems sounder than Sedlák's.

What then are we to say about Nicholas's alleged Waldensianism? Again, we must agree with Bartoš

⁸² Reference is to the works listed in Bartoš's *Literární činnost M. Jakoubka ze Stříbra* (Prague, 1925), Nos. 1, 2, 19, 25; the last was composed in January 1412, the others earlier.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, No. 22.

⁸⁴ Nicholas of Dresden's *De usura* is "evidently a continuation of the similar tractate by Jakoubek," according to Bartoš, p. 137. Nicholas's discussion of evangelical possession and the like in the "Querite primum regnum dei," MS. IV G 15, f. 120-121, puts forth the same theory that we find in Jakoubek's works, and ends with: "Cetera et aliorum sanctorum dicta de ista materia vide in actu Magistri Jacobi quem fecit super isto articulo, utrum decime sunt pure elemosine"; ironically, this only reference to Jakoubek in Nicholas's work is incorrect, the article in question having been defended by Hus (Sedlák, p. 35 n. 1; of course we should not exclude the possibility that Nicholas was right and that Hus used as his own a work written by Jakoubek). Finally, on the question of images, Nicholas's position (in the "Querite," f. 129 sqq., and in his *De imaginibus* (see bibliography)) and Jakoubek's (*Činnost Jakoubka*, Nos. 58, 69) were not only close to each other in doctrine but were capable of being combined in a single work. MS. Prague Cathedral Chapter B 81, f. 175-263', contains an anonymous anti-Hussite treatise refuting an also anonymous radical-Hussite attack on the cult of images, the use of the kiss-of-peace plaque, and aspersion; fortunately large portions of the Hussite work are quoted, and the section on images contains whole passages identical with sections of Nicholas's and Jakoubek's works cited above. I would guess that the anonymous Hussite work was in fact written by Jakoubek, to guide the priests who were taking over churches from the Catholics in 1415/1417, and that he drew not only on his own material but on Nicholas's as well.

that this was a later development, although it would be wrong to draw any very clear lines between earlier and later stages. Bartoš's hypothesis assigning a decisive role to the advent of Peter Payne seems too external, for even before 1414, Nicholas had developed positions pointing toward Waldensianist heresy—the right of inspired laymen and women to preach, the invalidity of sacraments performed by simoniacs, etc.⁸⁵ Above all he had from the first worked out a conception of the antithesis between the Church of Christ and the Synagogue of Satan that set these two in opposition not as polar positions in theory but as actual bodies competing for men's allegiance; Hus and Jakoubek approached this point of view very nearly in the implicit presuppositions of their anti-Roman agitation, but they never went all the way—for them the Roman Church, however corrupted, was the body to be reformed, not a union of mere evil to be destroyed. But in at least one place Nicholas too takes this more conservative position—"recedere non intendo a romana ecclesia, inter cuius viscera nutritus sum"⁸⁶—backing it up by a reference to the *Decretum*, the canon "Non decet." The passage is of course to be understood in the light of the canonistic tradition that defined the Roman Church not as the corporation of offices and jurisdictions, but as the congregation of the faithful, a body perfect by definition.⁸⁷ But still we may observe that here as in his other canonistic constructions, Nicholas displayed a mode of thought that was in itself alien from that of the Waldensian heretics, who would hardly have thought it worth the trouble to build up a body of reform doctrine by manipulating the authorities of the Roman Church's law and tradition. Nor indeed would a Waldensian theoretician have called for the secular power to reform the church by taking away her property and disciplining her priests, as Nicholas did in the *Puncta* and *Querite*; to the Waldensians the secular power was part of the whole alien apparatus of corruption that they were opposed to.⁸⁸ If then we bear in mind Nicholas's

consistently and characteristically intellectual style of thought, and if we remember that the work of Wyclif and Matthew of Janov contained ideas of reform identical with many of the doctrines of the Waldensians, we will not find very much of that heresy in Nicholas's early work except possibly as one influence among many others; on the other hand, we can say that the direction of Nicholas's thought pointed towards an outright sectarianism that the pressure of conflict would inevitably bring to realization. Here—anticipating what will be said below—we may suppose that the decisive factor was Nicholas's role as an ideologue unfettered by the political responsibilities that kept his Czech colleagues from pushing reform beyond the point at which it ceased to be compatible with a church established in society.

At any rate the case for Nicholas's Waldensianism does not rest on his early works, which, without the later ones, would hardly have prompted scholars to make such a case at all. But with the treatises composed by Nicholas in the second half of 1415, his radicalism took on a shape that, as we have seen, even Professor Bartoš has labeled Waldensian. The absolute condemnation of all oath-taking, all killing, and of the doctrine of Purgatory—these are radical ideas not easily derivable from Wyclif or Matthew of Janov, and they function as a kind of tracer group, allowing us to distinguish the extreme points of University radicalism from sectarian heresy still further to the left; all are Waldensian tenets, so characteristically indeed that those refusing to swear oaths were regarded as Waldensians *ipso facto*, while the denial of Purgatory was frequently branded in the same way, as one of the Waldensian errors.⁸⁹ And yet even here the case is not so simple: Jakoubek matched Nicholas's condemnation of oath-taking with a condemnation of his own, from which he exempted only what were not properly oaths at all but mere promises of future good behavior, like

⁸⁵ In the *De quadruplici missione*, the *Puncta*, and the Fifth Table of the *Tabule*.

⁸⁶ Sermon on "Nisi manducaveritis," MS. IV G 15, f. 199'.

⁸⁷ See the discussion by Brian Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 36-46.

⁸⁸ *Puncta*, MS. IV G 15, f. 15' sq. Cf. also the *Querite*, MS. IV G 15, f. 111'-112 (canonistic texts to show that the laity and the secular powers can reject or depose priests in mortal sin); and f. 123' sq.: after citing the texts that show simony to be a heresy, Nicholas writes, "Et ideo domini temporales iuste et catholice auferrant et auferrent ab huius[modi] anticristis et maximis hereticis possessiones temporales, et in usus pauperum et defensionem legis dei converterent." The formulation here points us towards one of the forty-five articles of Wyclif: "...omni temporales possunt ad arbitrium suum auferre bona temporalia ab ecclesiasticis habitualiter delinquentibus" (Palacký, *Documenta Mag. Joannis Hus . . .* (Prague, 1869), p. 329). The Waldensians might conceivably have supported such a position, but their whole mode of thought pointed in another direction, towards an absolute alienation from the state power: see, e.g., the "Errores haereticorum Waldensium," ed.

J. Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters* (Munich, 1890) 2: p. 338: "Item dicunt, papam esse caput omnium heresiarcharum et ex eo ipso cardinales, archiepiscopos, episcopos, imperatorem, reges, principes, duces et omnes iudices, tam spirituales quam seculares una cum omnibus presbyteris, esse damnandos."

⁸⁹ John Hus, defending a priest who in 1408 refused to swear an oath, observed, "Ecce vos vultis istum sacerdotem condemnare, dicentes eum tenere errorem Waldensium" (*Documenta*, p. 185; cited by Sedlák, *Studie a texty* 1: p. 75). The Prague Hussite chronicler, Master Laurence of Březová, referring to the Taborite rejection of Purgatory, wrote, "Item purgatorium animarum esse post hanc vitam cum Valdensibus negabant . . ." ("Kronika husitská," ed. J. Goll, *Fontes rerum bohemicarum* (Prague, 1893) 5: p. 411). These are only two examples, immediately pertinent to the present context; others could be added not only from the sources for Hussitism but from the anti-Waldensian sources generally: see, e.g., the discussion of the canonistic texts prescribing that those refusing to swear an oath were to be regarded as *ipso facto* heretical, in Nicholas of Dresden's *De iuramento*, ed. Sedlák, *Studie a texty* 1: p. 91.

marriage vows and vows of feudal fidelity.⁹⁰ Moreover, although Jakoubek was eventually to sanction Hussite warfare, he did so with the greatest reluctance, as a concession to the needs of the time—the true Christian path was that of suffering, of non-resistance even to mortal enemies—and in his discussion of whether Christian magistrates might inflict the death-penalty, he at one point came very close to an outright negative—only a special revelation could justify such killing.⁹¹ Thus even Jakoubek took more or less Waldensian positions on these key questions, and we are not unduly surprised to find him referring at this time to the Waldensians as holy people, “fideles Christi,” nor will we refuse to believe Peter Chelčický’s later testimony, that Jakoubek’s belief in Purgatory went hand in hand with a refusal to declare such belief obligatory as an article of faith.⁹² If then we find that Nicholas of Dresden’s movement towards a Waldensian position in the second half of 1415 caused a break between himself and Jakoubek, we shall not suppose that this break was essentially a difference of opinion about this or that doctrine, or that it represented some sort of psychological difference between a true radical and a crypto-conservative.

Here the controversy over the doctrine of Purgatory is most instructive. Bartoš has argued that Jakoubek opposed Nicholas on the matter of Purgatory because of a conviction that the early church had believed in it; but if Jakoubek had wanted to come to the opposite conviction, he could have found plenty of texts to back

⁹⁰ Jakoubek, *De iuramento*, MS. Vienna Nationalbibliothek 4936, f. 185: “. . . iuramentum primo modo dicitur analogice confessio promissi ad aliquid bonum prosequendum fugiendumve malum”—such as baptismal oaths, vows of marriage or chastity, “aut dum inferiores subditi suis superioribus, officiales dominis suis, et omogiales regibus spondent fidelitatem”; “hoc modo iuramentum sumendo . . . non est prohibendum.” The second kind of oath, also licit, was that sanctioned by special revelation or divine inspiration. The third kind was prohibited (f. 185 sq.): “Aliud est iuramentum tercio modo sumptum quo iam utuntur cristiani communiter in iudiciis vel in quibuscumque factis aliis. Et est invocacio dei vel creature in testimonium alicuius cum supraposicione in crucifixo, ewangelio, vel gladio duorum digitorum et observancia forme, ac verbis ad hoc in iuramento institutis. . . . De isto iuramento . . . pono conclusionem istam: In policia bene recta non est licitum iurare.”

⁹¹ For Jakoubek’s attitude to warfare in 1420 see my “Chiliasm and the Hussite Revolution, *Church History* (1957) 26: p. 48 ff. His strictures on the death-penalty are quoted by Bartoš, “Jakoubkův Výklad Desatera,” *Věstník české akademie* (1942) 51: p. 94. In his “Studie o Žižkovi a jeho době,” *ČČM* (1925) 99: pp. 18–22, Bartoš publishes a tract “De bellis” which he assigns to Jakoubek and dates in June 1414 (see his *Činmost Jakoubka*, No. 52); it is a scholastic set-piece, defining the conditions under which Christians might legitimately fight, and showing none of the hesitation of Jakoubek’s later discussions—if it was really written by him, in 1414, it would have to be taken as evidence that he had not yet begun to think seriously about the problem. Indeed, in 1414, the issue of whether a *Hussite* might fight, for God’s cause, had not yet been raised.

⁹² Bartoš, p. 138 n. 75; p. 140 n. 80.

him up there too⁹³—no one who has worked his way through any good amount of medieval theological polemic will suppose that basic positions were arrived at through the agency of pure, disinterested reason. That the two former allies found themselves in opposition on the question of Purgatory shows us that this question involved issues that could not be suppressed; such issues must have touched the very heart of the reform movement. To define exactly what the issues were, we shall have to study the pertinent sources, above all Nicholas’s *De purgatorio*, in which we shall find very little further information about the question of Waldensianism, but a great deal about the meaning of Hussitism. Whether Nicholas took his views from the Waldensians, whether he in fact was one, or whether he simply picked up heresies that were in the air and supplied his own argumentation, these possibilities cannot be clarified in the present condition of the sources, and it may very well be that his doctrine should be called not Waldensian but Waldensianist—similar in kind to but not necessarily derived from the actual heretical movement. What is clear is that heretical configurations have an inner logical consistency, and that a given point of view will, if worked out in sufficient amplitude, necessarily produce doctrinal positions characteristic of itself. Thus the controversy between Nicholas and Jakoubek over the “Waldensian” doctrines can be read as a struggle over basic points of view about the meaning of evangelical reform: as we shall see, the issue was one of sociology rather than, in essence, doctrine.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Nicholas of Dresden’s *Dialogus de purgatorio* is its deliberately Hussite formulation, in which the rejection of Purgatory appears as nothing but the inevitable consequence of positions long and solidly established by Hus and his associates. Nicholas was above all a reformer, not a speculative theologian, and if he addressed himself to the question of dogma, does Purgatory exist? he was primarily interested in the practical issue: are prayers for the dead of any use? The work opens with a

⁹³ Bartoš’s opinion is put forth on p. 140 n. 79. But in Jakoubek’s sermon on Purgatory (below, n. 126) there are more biblical and patristic texts quoted for the negative position than for the positive, and of the Fathers, Cyprian, Chrysostome, and Jerome were older than Augustine and Gregory, quoted in favor of Purgatory. Nor can it be said that the former group were less directly to the point than the latter. It is a great merit of the scholastic form of argument that it reveals the true character of every theological determination, as an act of the will; this is particularly evident in the clean-up section, where the authorities *in oppositum* are taken care of. In Jakoubek’s sermon the only argument used for this purpose consists of a long quotation of almost the whole of ch. 26, Bk. xxi, of Augustine’s *The City of God*, where several interpretations of the fire that proves men’s works (I Cor. iii, 12–16) are canvassed: of the interpretation corresponding to Purgatory, Augustine says only, “this I do not contradict, because possibly it is true.” He attaches no such reservation to the interpretations—the fire of suffering and persecution in this world, the fire of the day of tribulation—that Nicholas of Dresden was to follow.