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THE COIN IN THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES. ON THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE BOHEMIAN DENIERS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

What were the ideas and motives that stood behind the selection of designs to be stamped on coins manufactured by moneyers on commission from both lay and ecclesiastical members of the medieval elite? Did the latter rely for that selection on the most popular iconographic motifs — some traditional *topoi* — originating in antiquity and typifying Western Christianity? Or, perhaps were they willing to shape their iconographic message in such a way that it remained in tune with the prevailing political situation? And if they found it well-advised to use coins as a vehicle with which to ‘recount’ political events, were they, then, drawing on some universal symbols and metaphors?¹ These are common problems facing specialists in the field of medieval numismatics. Coins, however, have only rarely been treated as primary sources by scholars involved in the exploration of other aspects of medieval history and culture. Few attempts have been made to analyse the role of medieval coinage in political life,² and whatever answers one might want to give to the questions posed above, there seems to be no doubt that coins in the Middle Ages served as the most widely used means of communication between

¹ Stanisław Suchodolski, ‘Czy wyobrażenia na monetach odzwierciedlają rzeczywistość, czy ją kreują. Przykład monety polskiej w średniowieczu’, in *Dzieło sztuki: źródło ikonograficzne czy coś więcej. Materiały Sympozjum XVII Powszechnego Zjazdu Historyków w Krakowie, 15–18 września 2004*, ed. Marcin Fabiański, Warsaw, 2005, pp. 45–66. For more on the problem of the *historical* versus the topical character of coin images see Witold Garbaczewski, ‘Topos na monetach średniowiecznych. Przykład czeski i morawski’, *Folia Numismatica (Supplementum Ad Acta Musei Moraviae, Scientie Sociales)*, 25, 2011, 2, pp. 77–97.

² Ryszard Kiersnowski, *Moneta w kulturze wieków średnich*, Warsaw, 1988.

the rulers and the ruled. As such, they were a very convenient tool employed in the dissemination of ‘propagandistic’ discourse which crystallized existing power relations.³ The frequent issuing of coins in the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries provided rulers with opportunities to modify ideological and political messages — transmitted as images on the coins — in a way which made it more consistent with the current political developments. There is also no denying that one’s ability to offer a sound and well-founded interpretation of monetary iconography depends on an extensive knowledge of the religious and political culture of the Middle Ages. A knowledge of medieval numismatics itself may not suffice for one to steer clear of dubious conclusions and obvious misinterpretations.

The collection of Bohemian and Moravian numismatic artifacts of the denier period stands out from other Central European collections. Rich in iconographic motifs, the coins of the period are of an extremely high artistic standard.⁴ So far, however, there has been no attempt to subject them to a thorough analysis.⁵ Historians whose interest does not lie specifically in the history of money have made only very limited use of the deniers in the study of other topics. The coinage of the twelfth century seems to provide an exceptional amount of historical evidence and an examination of these coins is likely to result in a greater understanding of certain aspects of the political and religious culture of the period — especially those bound up with the emblems of royal power.⁶

Many years ago Emanuela Nohejlová-Prátová, focusing her attention on some of the deniers analysed below, expressed the opinion that the

³ For comparison, see the felicitous remarks on the term ‘political propaganda’ in Peter Burke, *Fabrykacja Ludwika XIV*, Warsaw, 2011, pp. 17–19 (English edition: *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, Yale, 1992).

⁴ Throughout the paper I rely on a catalogue listing of the early medieval Bohemian coins prepared by František Cach, *Nejstarší české mince*, 3 vols, Prague 1970–74, vol. 2: *České a moravské denáry od mincovní reformy Břetislava I. do doby brakteátově*, 1972 (hereafter Cach); see also Jan Šmerda, *Denáry české a moravské. Katalog mincí českého státu od X. do počátku XIII. století*, Brno, 1996; the Moravian coinage has recently been analysed in a full-length book: Jan Videman and Josef Paukert, *Moravské denáry 11.–12. století*, Kroměříž, 2009.

⁵ On the problem of the Polish coinage in the period of feudal disintegration see Witold Garbaczewski, *Ikonomia monet piastowskich 1173–ok. 1280*, Warsaw and Lublin, 2007.

⁶ Stanisław Suchodolski, ‘Czy władcy polscy we wczesnym średniowieczu posługiwali się jabłkiem panowania?’, in *Kultura średniowieczna i staropolska. Studia ofiarowane Aleksandrowi Gieysztorowi w pięćdziesięciolecie pracy naukowej*, ed. Danuta Gawinowa et al., Warsaw, 1991, pp. 251–59; idem, ‘Włócznia świętego Stefana’, *KH*, 112, 2005, 3, pp. 91–110; Bogumiła Haczewska, ‘Insygnia koronacyjne na monetach polskich w okresie rozbitcia dzielnicowego’, in *Nummus et historia. Pieniądz Europy średniowiecznej*, ed. Stefan K. Kuczyński and Stanisław Suchodolski, Warsaw, 1985, pp. 119–29.

pioneers of Czech numismatics had been guilty of ascribing too close a relationship between the images on coins and the contemporary political conditions.⁷ With time, however, this tendency gave way to a view that linked the images that began to appear on deniers at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries with a more universal message — one replete with Christian symbolism.⁸ Despite the controversy which the discussion of the meaning of coin iconography is always certain to trigger and the caution one is advised to exercise in putting forward its interpretation, attempts at relating the iconography to specific events have continued. For example, a denier of Vladislaus I featuring a warrior holding a captive on a leather strap — an event described in the chronicle of Cosmas — has recently been interpreted by Luboš Polanský as commemorating the liberation of Christian slaves who had been bought out of Jewish slavery. In order to obtain the financial means needed to set these Christians free, the duke was to confiscate everything that had belonged to a Jewish ‘financier’ and apostate Jacob Apella.⁹ However, in pursuing this interpretation, the author failed to see that the slave, tied up with a leather strap wrapped around his neck and begging for mercy, has much more to do with a gesture of domination and submission than of liberation and deliverance. One is then tempted to answer the author in Horace’s phrase ‘*credit Iudaeus Apella, non ego*’, which in itself could serve here as a good point of departure for the discussion of the classical education Cosmas must have received. It is, then, only royal coins that one is justified in treating as connected with specific events. The coins were designed to symbolize the acquisition of the new insignia by the ruler. Even in this case, however, it remains open to debate whether the issue of new coins (like, for example, the ‘coronation’ deniers of Vratislaus II issued in 1086 or those minted in the name of Vladislaus II in 1158) were supposed to commemorate the coronation ceremony itself or — without implying that their issue is to be treated as inseparable from the sacred act of coronation — inform the subjects of a new status to which their

⁷ Emanuela Nohejlová-Prátová, ‘Příspěvek k tematice obrazů na českých denárech 12. století’, *Sborník Národního muzea v Praze*, ser. A — Historie, 31, 1967, p. 214; see also Jarmila Hásková, *Česká mince v době románské. Příspěvek k ikonografii českých denárů 10.-12. století*, Cheb, 1975, pp. 14–15.

⁸ Pavel Radoměřský, ‘Peníze Kosmova věku (1050–1125)’, *Numizmatický časopis*, 21, 1952, p. 37.

⁹ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. Berthold Bretholz, in *MGH SrG n.s.*, vol. 2, Berlin, 1923, book III/75, pp. 231–32; Luboš Polanský, ‘Kníže a otrok. K ikonografii denáru knížete Vladislava I’, in *Na prahu poznání českých dějin. Sborník prací k počtě Jiřího Slamy*, Prague, 2006, *Studia Mediaevalia Pragensia*, vol. 9, pp. 103–111; Garbaczewski also treats the concept sceptically, see ‘Topos na monetach’, p. 84.

ruler, now the king, had been elevated.¹⁰ Polanský also tried to interpret a denier of Soběslav I as representing a specific political event — the enthronement of the duke in Prague in 1125.¹¹ The difficult question which arises here is whether his installation as the new ruler went hand in hand with the substitution of new dies for those used by his predecessors and, therefore, with the minting of deniers with new images. It is also difficult to ascertain whether the deniers were issued only with a view to marking the inauguration of his reign. Cosmas explains that money was tossed out at the crowd to prevent it from pressing in on the duke-elect, but this is not evidence that the coins were struck specifically to mark the occasion, or that their iconography had anything to do with the event.¹² However, it seems that — *quod est demonstrandum* — by giving priority to ‘symbolic’ interpretation over its ‘historical’ counterpart, one runs the risk of throwing the baby out with the bath water.

As Stanisław Suchodolski rightly remarked,¹³ historians who are not experts in numismatics rarely turn to coins as iconographic sources. But in fact numismatic sources have an indisputably important role to play in the study of ideology of power, as well as the political and religious culture of the Middle Ages. The purpose of this paper is to offer a reinterpretation of the meaning of several Bohemian numismatic artifacts from the first half of the twelfth century. Each of them has been widely commented upon by

¹⁰ Cach, no. 355, 600, 601; Jarmila Hásková, ‘K ikonografii českých mincí Vratislava II.’, in *Královský Vyšehrad. Sborník příspěvků k 900. výročí úmrtí prvního českého krále Vratislava II. (1061–1092)*, Prague, 1992, pp. 59–68, especially pp. 65–67; Luboš Polanský and Michal Mašek, ‘Ikonografie ražeb a stručný přehled mincovnictví Vladislava II.’, in *Vladislav II., druhý král z Přemyslova rodu. K 850. výročí jeho korunovace*, ed. Michal Mašek, Petr Sommer and Josef Žemlička, Prague, 2009, pp. 116–24, especially pp. 119–20; Zdeněk Petrůň, ‘Denár Vladislava II z nápisy’, in *Pavel Radoměřský. Sborník numismatických studií k 75. výročí narození*, ed. Luboš Polanský, Prague, 2002, pp. 22–28; Zdeněk Petrůň and Michal Mašek, ‘Tzv. nápisový denár Vladislava II. v historických souvislostech’, in *Vladislav II., druhý král z Přemyslova rodu*, pp. 125–33.

¹¹ Luboš Polanský, ‘Nálezy mincí na Pražském hradě a počátky vlády Soběslava I. (1125–1140)’, in *Dějiny ve věku nejistot. Sborník k příležitosti 70. narozenin Dušana Třeštika*, ed. Jan Klapště, Eva Plešková, Josef Žemlička, Prague, 2003, pp. 220–30; I discuss the validity of this interpretation in a later part of this paper.

¹² *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book I/42, p. 78: ‘et sicut semper in electione ducis faciunt, per superioris aule cancellos decem milia nummorum aut plus per populum spargunt, ne ducem in solio comprimant, sed potius sparsos nummos rapiant’. A detailed account of the custom included in the chronicle appears to have a clearly rationalizing character, obscuring the sense of this distribution. At any rate, the chronicler’s account does not allow us to draw the conclusion that the coins used were those minted especially to mark the occasion, the view held for example by Petrůň and Mašek (‘Tzv. nápisový denár Vladislava II.’, p. 126). However, it is not impossible that the coins were in fact issued.

¹³ Suchodolski, ‘Czy wyobrażenia na monetach’, p. 45.

scholars. I will try to approach the subject from the perspective of political and religious ideology. Specifically, I shall try to shed some light on the meaning of the images on the coins in question by juxtaposing them with our knowledge of the cult of patron saints and the function it exercised, the significance which rulers' church foundation activities had for the creation of their public image, and the role that oaths and the conception of *mir* (peace) played in political communities.

1. 'In amorem sancti Wenceslai'

Czech historiography relies on political interpretation for the elucidation of the meaning of an iconographic program inherent in three types of deniers from the first half of the twelfth century. The deniers show a figure proffering a cup to the king seated on the throne. The scene first appears on the reverse of a coin of Duke Svatopluk from 1107–09 (il. I.1). A figure standing on the right seems to be handing a goblet to the enthroned ruler. The latter is devoid of the insignia of royal power, with the exception of a long cane with a cross on top.¹⁴ Most scholars tend to link the image with political events: the seated figure is considered to represent King Henry V, while the person handing him the goblet is the Bohemian duke Svatopluk. The denier's iconographic programme is believed to be bound up with the act of conferring on Svatopluk the title of the Reich's Arch-Cupbearer.¹⁵ The duke was Henry V's closest ally during the conflicts with Poland and Hungary in the years 1108–09, but the confirmation of his appointment as Arch-Cupbearer is absent from the written sources. One is left with no other option but to accept the fact that the coin is possibly the only source of information about the event. However, in the accounts of some historians the elevation of Svatopluk to a position of imperial Cupbearer is not treated as a hypothesis only, but as a confirmed fact about which there can be no doubt, while the denier in question is, by extension, regarded as proof that coins were used for 'commenting' on the politics of the period.¹⁶ The performance of this honourable service in the Emperor's presence by a Bohemian ruler is mentioned in the so-called *Reichschronik* written at the beginning of the twelfth century, the anonymous author of which had been wrongly identified as the chronicler Ekkehard of Aura. However, the

¹⁴ Cach, no. 460; also Radoměřský, 'Peníze Kosmova věku', p. 93.

¹⁵ Nohejlová-Prátová, 'Příspěvek k tematice', pp. 216–17; eadem, *Krasa české mince*, Prague, 1955, pp. 62–63. Doubts concerning this interpretation have recently been raised by Vratislav Vaníček, *Soběslav I. Přemyslovci v kontextu evropských dějin v letech 1092–1140*, Prague and Litomyšl, 2007, p. 96.

¹⁶ See, for example, Petrání and Mašek, 'Tzv. nápisový denár Vladislava II.', pp. 125–26.

Bohemian ruler referred to in the chronicle is not Svatopluk but his direct successor Vladislaus I (1110–25). The Bohemian duke as *sumus pincerna* was to be entrusted with the task of serving Henry V at the table during the wedding feast organized to celebrate the latter's marriage to Matilda, the daughter of Henry I of England at Mainz in 1114.¹⁷ That the chronicler decided to mention this fact proves that the service rendered by the duke was the exception rather than the rule and that it was not a task he should be assumed to have carried out on a regular basis. Neighbouring rulers allied with the Reich, or considered to have an important role to play in furtherance of the Reich's interests were sometimes — provided they did not aspire to become equal in status to the Emperor — entrusted with the task of performing this honourable service at court. But it must have been as rare an occurrence for Vladislaus I to perform a ceremonial duty of offering drinks to Henry V as it was for Boleslaus the Wrymouth to serve as sword-bearer to the Emperor Lothar III at the Merseburg Convention in 1135.¹⁸

In two deniers minted later by Soběslaus (1125–40), the scene assumes a slightly different character (il. II). One no longer gets an impression that the standing figure is handing a goblet to the seated person. What one can see here is the raising of the goblet in an upward direction, which looks more like a toast than the act of proffering an object. Clad in a tunic, with a sword in the right hand and propped against the shoulder, the figure seated on the throne is raising his left hand in a blessing-like gesture.¹⁹ This scene, too, has been connected to the office of butler of the Reich.²⁰ Only Anežka Merhautová and Dušan Třeštík have advocated a different view; they have tried to identify the sitting person as St Wenceslaus and the man handing him the goblet as his servant Podiven.²¹

¹⁷ *Anonymi chronica imperatorum Heinrico V. dedicata*, in *Frutolfs und Ekkehards Chroniken und die Anonyme Kaiserchronik*, ed. Franz-Josef Schmale and Irene Schmale-Ott, Darmstadt, 1972, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Freiherr von Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe*, vol. 15, p. 262.

¹⁸ See Zbigniew Dalewski, 'Zjazd w Merseburgu w 1135 roku', in *Ludzie. Kościół. Wierzenia. Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej (średniowiecze — wczesna epoka nowożytna)*, ed. Wacław Iwańczak and Stefan K. Kuczyński, Warsaw, 2001, pp. 429–43, including a thorough analysis of the ideological significance of the ceremony of bearing the imperial sword in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries (also idem, "Lictor imperatoris". Kaiser Lothar III., Soběslav I. von Böhmen und Bolesław III. von Polen auf dem Hoftag in Merseburg im Jahre 1135', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung*, 50, 2001, pp. 317–36).

¹⁹ Cach, no. 570.

²⁰ Nohejlová-Prátová, 'Příspěvek k tematice', p. 216.

²¹ Anežka Merhautová and Dušan Třeštík, *Ideové proudy v českém umění 12. století*, Prague, 1985, p. 92.

There are many weaknesses to be found in attempts to link the deniers' iconographic program with the Reich's cupbearer. In the first place, this interpretation is hampered by serious doubts that can be raised as to whether the permanent office of imperial Cupbearer — to be hereditarily held by Bohemian rulers — could exist as early as the first half of the twelfth century. A semantic analysis of monetary images also makes this interpretation implausible. Scholars are often inclined to express serious objections to the view that the Reich's hereditary offices, whose holders reigned over particular territorial principalities and enjoyed the right to elect German kings, existed before the thirteenth century.²² Moreover, the fact that Czech narrative sources remain silent on this point seems to be no accident. One may also have some doubts about the way in which the deniers' images have so far been viewed, with the interpretation of the oldest of them, the denier of Svatopluk, being particularly dubious. This denier distinguishes itself by a small detail which has escaped scholars' attention or has simply failed to be recognized as having any importance for the interpretation of the whole image:²³ there is a third person to be discerned between the alleged Emperor and the Bohemian ruler (il. I.2). Standing near the shaft of the cross held by the Emperor, the person is much smaller than the two remaining figures. This third character is not trying to hold up the cross, as can be inferred from the depiction of the coin,²⁴ but is making a gesture which seems to be an imitation of the gesture made by the duke. He is raising a rectangular object in which I am

²² See especially Zdeněk Fiala, 'Vztah českého státu k Německé říši do počátku 13. století', *Sborník historický*, 6, 1959, p. 80; Ivan Hlaváček, 'Die böhmische Kurwürde in den Přemyslidenzeit', in *Königliche Tochterstämme, Königswähler und Kurfürsten*, ed. Armin Wolf, Frankfurt am Main, 2002, pp. 79–106; Hartmut Hoffmann, 'Böhmen und das Deutsche Reich im hohen Mittelalter', *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte des Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands*, 18, 1969, pp. 34–37. Recently Alexander Begert, ignoring justified doubts raised by Hartmut Hoffmann, and Czech scholars, has supported the view that Bohemian rulers held the office hereditarily as early as the beginning of the twelfth century: *Böhmen, die böhmische Kur und das Reich vom Hochmittelalter bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches. Studien zur Kurwürde und zur staatsrechtlichen Stellung Böhmens*, Husum, 2003, *Historische Studien*, vol. 475, pp. 62–63. On the office and title of Arch-Cupbearer in the twelfth century, but without any reference to numismatic evidence, see: Martin Wihoda, 'Česká knížata na dvorských sjezdech', in *Rituály, ceremonie a festivity ve Střední Evropě 14. a 15. století*, ed. Martin Nodl and František Šmahel, Prague, 2009, *Colloquia mediaevalia Pragensia*, vol. 12, pp. 197–98.

²³ See, for example, Hlaváček, 'Die böhmische Kurwürde', p. 85: 'Die bedeutend kleinere dritte Gestalt ist für die Szene belanglos, da sie nur das Bild ausfüllt bzw. die Lanze halten hilft'.

²⁴ This line of reasoning is followed, for example, by Radoměský, 'Peníze Kosmova věku', p. 93.

inclined to see a goblet or a cup.²⁵ This means, however, that the scene which is believed to be representing the performance of a ceremonial duty by a cup-bearer serving a drink to the Emperor is — in view of the third person ‘doubling’ the same ritual act — no longer understandable. The fact that the figures shown on the coin have different heights needs to be regarded as expressing a standard way in which different social ranks were represented in medieval iconography. The legend on the reverse of the coin is also at odds with the scene allegedly showing a cup-bearer performing his royal household duty.²⁶ The legend contains the inscription +VVENCEZLAVS. It is for this reason that the identification of the enthroned figure as St Wenceslaus appears to be convincing. However, the image is not a typical devotional scene. It is easy to see that the smaller figures — that is, the duke with a goblet in his hand raised towards the saint and his feast companion who, following the *pars pro toto* principle, is probably representing all the Bohemian nobles and who is also keeping his cup raised in a toast-like gesture — are shown just drinking a toast to the saint. The scene has even greater semantic clarity on Soběslav I’s deniers where there can be no doubt that the ruler, facing the saint, is raising a goblet in a toast gesture. But to further clarify the problem under discussion, it seems necessary to take a closer look at the ritual of toasting a saint as it existed in the religious and political culture of the Middle Ages.

There is much historical evidence available regarding the medieval rite of raising a toast in a saint’s honour.²⁷ The information about the rite dates back to Carolingian times and is bound up with feasting customs of guilds and *coniurationes* which the Church tried to eradicate and priests were strictly prohibited from taking part in.²⁸ In the tenth and

²⁵ Because of the small size of the figures involved, the shape can easily be recognized only in the well-preserved coins, see Nohejlová-Prátová, ‘Přispěvek k tematice’, tab. II.

²⁶ This has already been discerned by Nohejlová-Prátová (‘Přispěvek k tematice’, p. 215), although it needs to be said that the discrepancy between a coin image and its legend occurs quite often in the early medieval coinage. See Stanisław Suchodolski, ‘Obraz i słowo na monetach Europy Środkowej, Północnej i Wschodniej w X i XI wieku’, in idem, *Numizmatyka średniowieczna. Moneta źródłem archeologicznym, historycznym i ikonograficznym*, Warsaw, 2012, pp. 381–91.

²⁷ Ch. Zimmermann, ‘Minnetrinken’, in *Reallexicon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. Heinrich Beck et. al., 35 vols, Berlin and New York, 1970–2007, vol. 20, 2002, pp. 49–56. Typology of this kind of cult behavior including the form it took across the whole medieval Europe has competently been prepared by Hedwig Schommer, ‘Die Heiligenminne als kirchlicher und volkstümlicher Brauch’, *Rheinisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, 5, 1954, pp. 184–231.

²⁸ For example the bans contained in the Capitulary of Hinkmar of Reims: *MGH Capitula episcoporum*, vol. 2, ed. Rudolf Pokorny and Martina Stratmann, Hanover, 1995,

eleventh centuries the Church's unfavourable attitude towards the idea of toasting a saint gave way to its full acceptance by different social circles, including the clergy. The change is clearly attested to by the frequent mention of the rite in monastic historiography, hagiographic literature,²⁹ and even in books of monastic rules from Western Europe.³⁰ Vivid depictions of the custom *potus caritatis* are to be found in early medieval texts devoted to St Ulrich of Augsburg and St Emmeram of Regensburg. Given the fact that the Bohemian lands fell under the powerful influence of Christianity radiating from Bavaria, and because of the early dissemination of the cults of St Ulrich and St Emmeram within the Přemyslid state, the texts are worth closer examination. St Ulrich's hagiographer, Gerhard of Augsburg, writing an account of Ulrich's life and the miracles taking place right after the saint's death, devoted a much space to the liturgical services conducted by the bishop of Augsburg. After the celebration of the Easter liturgy the bishop, says the chronicler, used to feast with his guests — cathedral canons and collegiate convent of St Afra. In an atmosphere of joyful singing, the bishop, along with his feast companions, performed at each table the rite of drinking a toast *pro caritate*.³¹ When dealing with the saint's miracles, the hagiographer made several references to raising a toast in honour of the saint. The toast *pro amore* or *pro caritate sancti Uodalrici* was supposed to help one extricate oneself from all troubles. It was also supposed to ensure protection against any bodily harm.³² Refusal to perform the ritual would result in swift punishment, such as breaking one's leg, falling off a horse,

cap. 13, p. 41: 'Ut nullus presbiterorum, quando ad anniversariam diem vel tricesimam, tertiam vel septimam alicuius defuncti aut quacumque vocatione ad collectam presbyteri convenerint, se inebriare presumat nec precari in honore sanctorum vel ipsius animę bibere aut alios ad bibendum cogere'; Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Średniowieczne gildie: ich tożsamość oraz wkład w formowanie się struktur społecznych', in: idem, *Spółczesność średniowiecza. Mentalność — grupy społeczne — formy życia*, Toruń, 2000, pp. 75–97, especially pp. 84–85; Gerd Althoff, 'Der frieden-, bündnis- und gemeinschaftstiftende Charakter des Mahles im früheren Mittelalter', in *Essen und Trinken im Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. Irmgard Bitsch, Trude Ehlert and Xenja von Ertzdorff, Sigmaringen, 1987, pp. 17–19; M. Sierck, *Festtag und Politik. Studien zu Tagewahl karolingischer Herrscher*, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 1995, pp. 25–26.

²⁹ See, for example, *Miracles of St Benedict by monks of Fleury — Les Miracles de Saint Benoît*, ed. Eugène de Certain, Paris, 1858, book III, p. 139.

³⁰ For more on the issue of drinking *pro caritate* in monastic circles see Jörg Sonntag, *Klosterleben im Spiegel des Zeichenhaften*, Berlin, 2008, pp. 327–34.

³¹ Gerhard von Augsburg, *Vita Sancti Uodalrici. Die älteste Lebensbeschreibung des Heiligen Ulrich*, ed. Walter Berschin and Angelika Häse, Heidelberg, 1993, book I/4, pp. 134–36 (I wish to thank Professor Roman Michałowski for letting me have the newest edition of the source).

³² *Ibid.*, book II/10–11, pp. 352–56.

or even having one's voice turned into a dog's bark.³³ The dissemination of the rite in Bavaria is illustrated by a colourful story included in a book of St Emmeram's miracles written by Arnold of St Emmeram. The book is in fact a kind of monastic chronicle. It also explains a punishment to be inflicted on those who ventured to treat the custom with disregard and mockery. The hagiographer gives an account of Emperor Otto I's stay at the Abbey of St Emmeram in whose honour the bishop of Regensburg and St Emmeram's abbot, Michael, gave a dinner. At the end of the feast the Emperor Otto supposedly stated that eating St Emmeram's food required a toast in his honour: 'Invigorated by food and in high spirits, people attending the dinner were addressed by the Emperor who said: he who drinks somebody's wine should also sing his song. We have eaten St Emmeram's food and we have drunk his wine. Now it is only right and proper for us to raise a toast in his honour'.³⁴ Then, at the Emperor's order, cup-bearers filled the guests' cups so that they could drink a toast to honour the saint, and embrace one another with the holy kiss. One of those in attendance, however, who had already become drunk, refused to raise a toast saying that his stomach was already full of food and drink. The blasphemer was instantaneously punished. Even though he sat leaning against the wall, the offended saint hit him so hard that he flew right into the middle of the room.³⁵ Impressed by the miracle, the Emperor Otto, in the company of the clergymen and nobles, went to the church to say a prayer to the patron of the monastery. The toast raised in the martyr's honour was referred to by the chronicler as *potum caritatis*. The chronicler stressed the fact that it was the ruler himself who initiated the toast and that it was this toast that ended the feast. It is clear that the Otto's conduct was similar to that of bishop Udalric during the Easter celebration. In addition to raising a toast, both the laity and clergy honoured a saint by singing.³⁶ Sometimes they also

³³ *Ibid.*, book II/12–13, pp. 356–60.

³⁴ 'Cumque ritu epulantium pene forent confirmati et laetati, imperator saxonizans dicit: Siceram cuius quis bibit, huius et carmen canat. Beati Emmerammi bona manducavimus ac bibimus, inde mihi videtur aequum, karitate eius finiri convivium'.

³⁵ *Ex Arnoldi libris de S. Emmerammo*, ed. Georg Waitz, in *MGH SS*, vol. 4, Hanover, 1841, book I, p. 552.

³⁶ Probably of Aquitanian origin, inserted in the tenth century into the codex kept presently in the Vatican Library, the so-called *Carmina Potatoria* are a special testimony to the performance of such songs. This is also where one can find a song in Archangel Michael's honour: *MGH Poetae latini aevi Carolini*, vol. 4, fasc. 1, ed. Paulus von Winterfeld, Berlin, 1899, pp. 350–53. See also Bernhard Bischoff, 'Caritas — Lieder', in *idem, Mittelalterliche Studien*, 3 vols, Stuttgart, 1966–81, vol. 2, 1967, pp. 56–77, and Wolfgang Haubrichs, 'Heiligenfest und Heiligenlieder im frühen Mittelalter. Zur Genese mündlicher und literarischer Formen in einer Kontaktzone laikaler und klerikaler

gave each other the kiss of peace. By refusing to perform the rite, which amounted to turning one's back on one's own community and disavowing the patron's sacred power, one ran the risk of insulting the saint and suffering the consequences of one's misconduct.³⁷

This quasi-liturgical form of veneration of a saint was also known in the Bohemian lands. A famous motif found in the oldest Latin version of the Life of St Wenceslaus³⁸ can be adduced here in support of this opinion. The motif also appears in a version of the legend *Crescente fide*³⁹ which is now known to scholars. It was presented in greatest detail by Gumpold, the bishop of Mantua,⁴⁰ and its abbreviated form was also included in the

Kultur', in *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter*, ed. Detlef Altenburg, Jörg Jarnut, Hans Hugo Steinhoff, Sigmaringen, 1991, pp. 133–143.

³⁷ The same motif is also present in the nineteenth-century *Miracula sancti Columbani* (ed. H. Bresslau, in *MGH SS*, vol. 30, part 2, Leipzig, 1934, cap. 21, pp. 1007–08), where Italian lords illegally occupying the land owned by the monastery of Bobbio were forced in the presence of King Hugo to drink a liquor from the cup of St Columbanus provided by the abbot of the monastery. The gesture can be interpreted as the expression of peace concluded by the lords with the Monastery and the ruler, or as a formal surrender of illegally held property. However, the two main culprits — Guy, the bishop of Piacenza, and his brother Reiner — refused to drink, surreptitiously abandoning the party, 'obliti sunt enim foedus, quod pepigerant regi'. The second of them soon fell off a horse, which was the punishment he had to suffer for his refusal to drink the liquor. The same source also mentioned the healing effect of drinking from the cup of St Columbanus. (I wish to thank Professor Jacek Banaszkiwicz for drawing my attention to this text).

³⁸ See: Joanna Sobiesiak, 'Książę Waclaw na uczcie — książę Waclaw gospodarz', in *Persona, gestus, habitusque insignium. Zachowania i atrybuty jako wyznacznik tożsamości społecznej jednostki w średniowieczu*, ed. Jacek Banaszkiwicz, Jacek Maciejewski and Joanna Sobiesiak, Lublin, 2009, pp. 47–56. On the problem of the chronology of the oldest version of the Life of St Wenceslaus see Dušan Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců. Vstup Čechů do dějin (530–935)*, Prague, 1997; recently the problem has also been dealt with by Agnieszka Kuźmiuk-Ciekanowska, *Święty i historia. Dynastia Przemyslidów i jej bohaterowie w dziele mnicha Krystiana*, Kraków, 2007; Joanna Nastalska-Wiśnicka, *Rex martyr. Studium źródłoznawcze nad legendą hagiograficzną św. Wacława (X–XIV w.)*, Lublin, 2010, pp. 23–65.

³⁹ *Crescente fide české recense. Legenda o sv. Václavu z polovice X. století*, ed. Václav Chaloupecký, in *Prameny X. století legendy Kristiánovy o svatém Václavu a svaté Ludmile*, ed. Karel Guth et al., Prague, 1939, *Svatováclavský sborník*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 500: 'Accipiensque calicem intrepidus coram omnibus alta voce ait: "In nomine beati Michaelis archangeli bibemus calicem istum precantes, ut introducat animas nostras in pacem exultationis perpetue, amen!"'

⁴⁰ *Gumpoldi Mantuani episcopi passio sancti Venceslai martyris*, ed. Josef Emler, in *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, 8 vols, Prague, 1873–1935, vol. 1, p. 159: 'Et paulo post amota mensa surgit, impletaque vino patera, modestae salutationis dicto, omnes huiusmodi alloquitur: "Salutet vos salus omnium Christus! Calicem, quem manu teneo, in sancti archangeli Michaelis amorem ebibere, unumquemque nostrum ne pigeat, hoc amore spiritualitatis eius altitudinem pro posse venerantes, ut quacumque hora lex naturae ad extrema nos deduxerit, animarum nostrarum paratus susceptor clemensque in paradisi voluptates dignetur fieri subvector, cordium imis precemur!". Statimque post

so-called *Christian's legend*.⁴¹ Duke Wenceslaus, attending the feast to which he was invited by his brother Boleslaus the Cruel, raised a goblet and drank from it 'in amorem sancti archangeli Michaelis' — whose eve was celebrated on the anniversary of the duke-martyr's death — exchanging with others the kiss of peace. The ritual's purpose, as the duke himself explained in a short speech, was to secure St Michael's favour. Upon the duke's death the saint was to speak in his defence in Heaven. However, placed within the framework of the hagiographic narrative, the motif was used to announce the swift fulfillment of the future martyr's fate⁴². It also dramatized the circumstances in which the royal saint died; for his brother, through ordering his assassination, brutally violated *mir* implied in a common feast, in a toast to the Archangel, and in the exchange of the kiss of peace. The scene representing a toast in St Michael's honour constituted so important an element in the structure of the hagiographic narrative that its pictorial version appeared in a famous illuminated manuscript of the Gumpold Legend from the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The manuscript was probably prepared on a commission from the princess Emma, Boleslaus II's wife. It is now kept in the Herzog August Bibliothek at Wolfenbüttel (il. III).⁴³

According to Petr Sommer, who relies on older literature, the legends of St Wenceslaus need to be seen as manifesting a Christianized rite which

verbum laetus ebibit, singillatim omnibus eodem amore singulos scyphos ebibendos blandissimo propinat osculo. Intrepidus aute, sumptis tam honeste epulis, uti divino iussu res differtur, domum inlaesus revisit'.

⁴¹ *Legenda Christiani. Vita et passio sancti Wenceslai et sancte Ludmille ave eius*, ed. Jaroslav Ludvíkovský, Prague, 1978, p. 66: 'Cui nec ad punctum acquiescens, rursus locum convivii petens, calice accepto, precaria coram omnibus potans, alta profatur voce: "In nomine beati archangeli Michaelis bibamus hunc calicem, orantes et deprecantes, animas quo nostras introducere dignetur nunc in pacem exultationis perpetue." Cui cum quique fideles respondissent: amen, hausto potu universos deosculans, hospicium repetit et membra delicatissima quieti indulgens ac Deo teste precibus et psalmodiis diu insistens, tandem fessus quievit'.

⁴² For more on the problem see Petr Sommer, *Začátky křesťanství v Čechách. Kapitoly z dějin raně středověké duchovní kultury*, Prague, 2001, pp. 35–36; Some general remarks on the question of the cult of St Michael in medieval Bohemia can be found in Hana Pátková, 'Le Culte de saint Michel en Bohême et Pologne au Moyen Âge. Bilan des recherches', in *Culto e santuari di san Michele nell'Europa medievale*, ed. Pierre Bouet, Giorgio Otranto and André Vauchez, Bari, 2007, pp. 57–61. The motif of drinking to a saint and exchanging the kiss of peace in the legends of St Wenceslaus has recently been traced by Tomáš Velímský, *Rituál usmíření a nejstarší svatováclavské legendy*, in: *Rituál smíření. Konflikt a jeho řešení ve středověku*, ed. Martin Nodl and Martin Wihoda, Brno, 2008, pp. 31–41. Contrary to what is suggested by the title, the place which the described ritual occupied in the plot structure of the Life of St Wenceslaus was not bound up with the idea of ending the conflict between the brothers.

⁴³ *Legenda Wolfenbüttelského rukopisu*, ed. Jana Zachová, Prague, 2010; Pavel Spunar, *Kultura českého středověku*, Prague, 1987, pp. 33–36.

originated in the pre-Christian era and which existed in the early medieval period in the Bohemian lands. However, it is significant that the motif of drinking to St Michael remained unknown to the author of the Old-Slavic legend of St Wenceslaus. It was in *Crescente fide* that it appeared for the first time, and the creation of *Crescente fide* is thought of as connected to Bavarian monks from St Emmeram's monastery in Regensburg.⁴⁴ In dealing with the question of an allegedly pagan origin of the rite of drinking a toast to a saint, Otto Gerhard Oexle stressed the fact that the suggestion of a pagan background of the rite was connected with the allegations made use of by Carolingian writers who usually viewed the activities of guild organizations negatively. That is why some restraint is advisable in advancing the interpretation which links the emergence of the rite with the pre-Christian era. Of course, no one can deny the fact that collective feasting was a major factor in fostering the identity and stability of all traditional societies.⁴⁵ However, as far as the Bohemian lands are concerned, the problem seems more complicated. The view that we are dealing here with a Christianized pagan holiday — with the Christianization process affecting all aspects of traditional cult behaviour — seems to corroborate the opinion held by scholars who argue for the connection between the date of the celebration of the holiday held in honour of Archangel Michael (29 September) and St Wenceslaus (28 September) and the date of the celebration of the pre-Christian harvest festival. The latter is known for having as its indispensable element an uninhibited consumption of food and alcohol.⁴⁶ What really matters here is the fact that neither the authors of the legends of St Wenceslaus nor the Regensburg monks in the eleventh century thought that drinking to a saint deserved — because of its pagan character — condemnation or disapproval. Cosmas, too, wrote about celebrations held in St Wenceslaus's honour that lasted three days, and found no fault with the custom.

⁴⁴ On the controversy see Schommer, 'Die Heiligenminne', pp. 192–93. For more on the problem of dating and the origin of the legend *Crescente fide* see Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*, pp. 155–75.

⁴⁵ On the controversy surrounding the problem of the origin of the rite, see Zimmermann, 'Minnetrinken', pp. 54–55.

⁴⁶ See Zdeněk Fiala, 'Dva kritické příspěvky ke starým dějinám českým', *Sborník historický*, 9, 1962, pp. 36–37 and note 164. The absence of the motif of drinking in St Michael's honour in the Old-Slavic legends is accounted for by the fact that the liturgical calendar of the Byzantine Church set a different date for celebrating his holiday. It did not coincide with the Slavic harvest festival taking place at the end of September. See also Dušan Třeštík, *Mýty kmene Čechů (7.–10. století). Tři studie k 'starým pověstem českým'*, Prague, 2003, pp. 10–13.

The motif of drinking *pro caritate* found in all writings devoted to St Wenceslaus may have exerted some influence upon extra-liturgical forms of veneration offered to a patron saint during the celebrations of his day in Prague in September. This holiday provided the duke, as well as the lay and ecclesiastical lords, with an opportunity to gather together in the capital where the ruler would hold a feast. In giving an account of the inauguration of Břetislaus II's reign, Cosmas also made a reference to nobles attending a three-day long celebration organized by the new ruler. It was during these festivities that Břetislaus issued a statute prohibiting people from cultivating pagan traditions.⁴⁷ Even more noteworthy is the event recorded under the year 1110. The chronicler writes about Duke Vladislaus and Bohemian lords participating in a feast given in celebration of St Wenceslaus's holiday. During the feast, says the chronicler, there arrives a messenger to break the news that the duke's brother Soběslaus, allied with the Polish ruler, has just entered Bohemian territory, ravaging the country and carrying its people away into captivity. The *mir* necessary to celebrate the holiday in a proper way had thus been definitely shattered.⁴⁸ People 'celebrating in a joyful [...] and peaceful atmosphere'⁴⁹ had been forced to interrupt their feast and to ready themselves for a campaign against the enemy. 'Shut up your pantries and give up your feasting' pleaded Cosmas's messenger,⁵⁰ thus indicating the carnivalesque character of the interrupted celebrations, clearly bound up with the motif of the plenitude of food and drink.

The collective experience of feasting, and especially the role it played in cementing and consolidating traditional communities, has already been investigated by a number of scholars. There is, therefore, no need to go into greater detail here.⁵¹ The September celebrations held in St Wenceslaus's honour, as described above, were certainly designed to serve the same purpose. The whole political community of

⁴⁷ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book III/1, pp. 160–61.

⁴⁸ For more on the concept of earthly peace in the ideology of ducal and royal power in the twelfth-century Bohemia see Dušan Třeštík, 'Mír a dobrý rok. Státní ideologie raného přemyslovského státu mezi křesťanstvím a "pohanstvím"', *Folia Historica Bohemica*, 12, 1988, pp. 23–41, in this paper the author abandoned most of his former scepticism concerning the functioning of the concept of *mir* in the early Middle Ages in the whole political *oikumene* of the Bohemian people.

⁴⁹ 'cum iocunditate et leticia, [...] in tranquillitate et securitate'.

⁵⁰ 'Iam claudite vestra promptuaria, linquite convivia', *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book III/35, p. 206.

⁵¹ See Althoff, 'Der frieden-', pp. 13–25; idem, 'Fest und Bündnis', in *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter*, pp. 29–38; Jacek Banaszkiewicz, 'Trzy razy uczta', in *Spoleczeństwo Polski średniowiecznej. Zbiór studiów*, Warsaw, 1981–, vol. 5, ed. Stefan K. Kuczyński, 1992, pp. 95–108.

the Bohemian people, led by their duke and by their bishop, gathered cyclically at the grave of St Wenceslaus, a duke and a martyr, in order to reaffirm their allegiance to the saint and show their commitment to peace. It is probably this idea of earthly peace — established within the *comunitas terre* and perpetuated during joyful celebrations — to which Dalimil, the fourteenth-century chronicler, alluded, reminiscing with nostalgia the good old days: ‘Lords once came here in September and spent a joyful time together. They also held a council, making peace with the land’.⁵² Of course, Czech chroniclers were familiar with the symbolic meaning of collective meals.⁵³ None of the narrative sources, however, tried to elucidate a ritual aspect of these celebrations, namely the raising of a toast in St Wenceslaus’s honour, coupled with the exchanging of the kiss of peace. The reinterpretation of the coin images allows us to add one significant detail to our knowledge of Bohemian political culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, namely a quasi-liturgical rite which — probably in keeping with Europe-wide practice — crowned an annual feast held in Prague Castle and attended by Bohemia’s ruler and lords, which cemented the Czech political community to be ruled for ever by St Wenceslaus.

⁵² ‘dřieve páni na řiji se sjezdiechu / a v hromadě v utěšení přebudiechu / a tu za obyčej v radě sediechu / a pokoj veliký zemi činiechu’, *Staročeská kronika tak řečeného Dalimila: Vydání textu a veškerého textového materiálu*, 3 vols, Prague 1988–95, vol. 2, ed. Jiří Daňhelka et al., 1988, chapter 75, paragraph 35–38, p. 284. The fact that St Wenceslaus’s holiday lost much of its religious significance in the late Middle Ages is attested to by remarks made by a chronicler of the Prague Church, Beneš Krabice, pertaining to the year 1370: ‘Eodem anno ad festivitatem sancti Wenceslai paucissimi convenerant homines; karitas enim et devocio refriguerant, et homines dati deliciis Deum et sanctos eius, ut sic dicam, minus venerabantur. Unde permissione divina maxima pestilencia fuit in omnibus partibus et finibus Boemie’, *Chronicon Benesii de Weitmil*, ed. Josef Emler, in *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 4, 1884, p. 542.

⁵³ That it was the function exercised by the feast is seen in Cosmas’s known account concerning the political fall of Komes Bilina Mstiš (see *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book II/19, p. 111), recorded under the year 1061. Duke Vratislaus II, who arrived in the Castle invited by Mstiš with a view to participating in the consecration of the church founded by the latter, refused, unlike the bishop, to share a table with Mstiš and decided to dine in the garden. The lord could hold out no hope for the duke’s favour over whose wife he had once been supposed to keep watch during her captivity and whom he had then failed to show the respect she deserved. In Cosmas’s narrative this refusal to dine with the Nobleman prepared the ground for future developments; for it was still during the feast that Mstiš had been informed of the duke’s plan to divest him of the administration of the Bilina estate. The lord had to escape in order to avoid torture. The motif of separate feasting — the duke in the garden and the Komes in his manor — needs to be seen here through the prism of the role it plays in the narrative structure, and cannot be seriously treated as a source of information about the nature of ducal and private property in the eleventh century.

2. Princeps fundator — princeps praedator

Devotional images commonly appeared on coins manufactured in Central Europe in the eleventh century. A scene which represents the incumbent ruler requesting a patron saint for protection is certainly among the most numerous examples. It is to be found in Boleslaus the Wrymouth's widely known brakteate (a thin coin which had an image on one side only) with an image of St Adalbert. It can also be seen on a number of coins minted in the name of many of Boleslaus's successors. Attempts have been made to link the issue of the first coin with the political event of the period. At first, the coin image was interpreted as representing the ruler's public penance for blinding his brother in 1113, with the pilgrimage to the saint's grave in Gniezno being the high point of the ruler's attempt to expiate his sins. Then — after dismissing this theory on the grounds that the coin had probably not been struck in 1113 — it came to be regarded as connected to the efforts to defend Gniezno's metropolitan status against the claims made by the Norbert, the archbishop of Magdeburg, in the early 1130s.⁵⁴ However, a coin depicting a saint giving his blessing to a ruler carries a universal meaning and thus cannot be regarded as saying anything about the political circumstances in which it was minted.

Coin images with a ruler cast in the role of a church founder are only rarely found in coin iconography, even though the motif was extensively used in visual arts of the Middle Ages. For this reason, three Bohemian deniers from the first half of the twelfth century — the issue of which is connected to the names of three dukes, Svatopluk, Vladislaus I and Soběslaus I, that is, to one generation of the Přemyslid rulers, grandsons of Břetislaus I — constitute an interesting exception. The coin issued in the name of Svatopluk of Moravia and dated to the period of his rule in Prague (1107–09), which was interpreted above, (il. 1) is the oldest of these examples.⁵⁵ On the obverse of the coin there is a half-figure image of a ruler turned to the right and holding in his hands a model of a towered temple with a cross on top. The identity of the founder is revealed by the legend which gives the name of the duke: SVATOPVLC. The reverse side of Vladislaus I's denier represents a very similar icono-

⁵⁴ Ryszard Kiersnowski, 'O brakteatach z czasów Bolesława Krzywoustego i roli kultu św. Wojciecha w Polsce', in *Święty Wojciech w polskiej tradycji historiograficznej. Antologia tekstów*, ed. Gerard Labuda, Warsaw, 1997, pp. 321–22 (first printed in *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne*, 3, 1959), also Stanisław Suchodolski, 'Kult svatého Václava a svatého Vojtěcha prizmatem raně středověkých polských mincí', *Numismatický sborník*, 20, 2005, pp. 29–41.

⁵⁵ Cach, no. 460.

graphic type. The similarities to be found in the figure of the founder are strong enough to suggest that its dies may have been based on those used for striking the coins of Svatopluk (il. IV).⁵⁶ The third of the artifacts dealt with here — the denier of Soběslav I — has different characteristics. It shows a full-figure image of a seated ruler with his legs crossed and a model of a two-towered church in his hands (il. V). The image of the duke is accompanied by the legend: +DVX SOBE(slaus).⁵⁷

The ideological message which these images are supposed to convey has no need of explication here. Church foundations constitute one of the most important elements of the representation of royal power in the Middle Ages. Founding churches was act targeted at celestial powers with a view to securing salvation in Heaven, but also with a view to obtaining assistance in the exercise of power on earth. It was also aimed at the subjects who were to be convinced that their ruler enjoyed divine favour by the erection of new churches.⁵⁸ Coins, however, were very rarely relied on for the dissemination of such ideas. It is only a German denier, struck by the Speyer mint and dated to the 1180s, that can be considered analogous to the Bohemian artifacts under discussion. The denier contains an image of a ruler identified as Henry IV. The ruler is holding a model of a two-towered temple. The model represents Speyer Cathedral, which was the Salian dynasty's most important church foundation.⁵⁹ The use of this motif on the coin from the reign of Frederick Barbarossa can be explained by the significant role which Speyer Cathedral continued to play in the ideology of imperial power. Later, in the time of the Staufen dynasty, the cathedral remained as the burial site for German emperors. Harking back to the Salian tradition was probably motivated by a desire to enhance the legitimacy of imperial power and it may have been commemorative reasons that determined the choice of iconography.⁶⁰ In relation to the Bohemian

⁵⁶ Cach, no. 557.

⁵⁷ Cach, no. 573.

⁵⁸ See especially Roman Michałowski, *Princeps fundator. Studium z dziejów kultury politycznej w Polsce piastowskiej X–XIII wieku*, Warsaw, 1993; on the iconographic analysis of foundation images from late antiquity to the late Middle Ages see Emanuel S. Klinkenberg, *Compressed Meanings. The Donor's Model in Medieval Art to around 1300: Origin, Spread and Significance of an Architectural Image in the Realm of Tension between Tradition and Likeness*, Turnhout, 2009, *Architectura Medii Aevi*, vol. 2.

⁵⁹ Percy Ernst Schramm, *Die deutschen Kaiser und Könige in Bildern ihrer Zeit 751–1190*, Munich, 1983, p. 243, no. 80, tab. no. 171/80; also Klinkenberg, *Compressed Meanings*, pp. 150–52.

⁶⁰ Caspar Ehlers, *Metropolis Germaniae. Studien zur Bedeutung Speyers für das Königtum (751–1250)*, Göttingen, 1996, pp. 172–83; Odilo Engels, 'Der Dom zu Speyer im Spiegel des salischen und staufischen Selbstverständnisses', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 32, 1980, pp. 27–40.

lands, the oldest foundation scene is to be found in the St Catherine Rotunda in Znojmo which is from the same period as the coins that concern us. The church's arcade opens out its apse onto a nave and is flanked by images of the founders — Conrad II with a temple model in his hands, and his wife holding a goblet. The goblet is a gift. An image of Christ fills the concha of the apse, and it is probably Christ himself who is going to be the recipient of the gifts brought by the ducal couple.⁶¹ The same iconographic convention appeared about a century later on a tympanum — dated around the year of 1240 — of the Cistercian convent of Porta Coeli in Tišnov. The tympanum represents the founder of the convent, Queen Constance of Hungary, and her late husband King Přemysl Otakar I, in a gesture of laying a church model at the feet of the enthroned Christ.⁶² The Bohemian coin images dealt with here differ from their chronologically and geographically closest iconographic parallels — that is, from the Polish tympana bound up with the activity of Palatine Piotr Włostowic and his family, and from other Western European artifacts of this type — in one important detail, namely in lacking a patron saint to whom a temple model is to be given.⁶³ It must have stemmed, at least in part, from technical and compositional reasons: the figure of the ruler-founder was contrasted with an enlarged figure of a saint. Such a difference in size between the two figures followed the existing tradition; indeed the ruler was likely to be dwarfed by the saint to the point where his figure became hard to see clearly. What may have been involved here was an attempt to universalize the message. A figure holding a model of a temple may have been used as a symbol of the munificence that the ruler was prepared to show not only towards a particular institution and its patron saint but towards the whole Church. However, this does not change the essence of the ideological message that the image was supposed to disseminate, or the way in which it was expected to affect its users. Is it then possible that the use of a conventional image of the ruler-founder was connected with the act of a specific church foundation?⁶⁴ It is hard to give definitive answer to this question. There is strong evidence to suggest such a con-

⁶¹ Anežka Merhautová, 'Znojmská rotunda a její nástěnné malby', in Barbara Krzemińska, Anežka Merhautová and Dušan Třeštík, *Moravští Přemyslovci ve znojmské rotundě*, Prague, 2000, pp. 62–63.

⁶² Jiří Kuthan, *Česká architektura v době posledních Přemyslovců. Města — hrady — kláštery — kostely*, Vimperk, 1994, pp. 404–406.

⁶³ Krystyna Mączewska-Pilch, *Tympanon fundacyjny z Olbina na tle przedstawień o charakterze donacyjnym*, Wrocław, 1973; Przemysław Mrozowski, 'Fundator i jego postawa w ikonografii zachodniej IX–XII wieku', *Sprawozdania PTPN. Wydział Nauk o Sztuce*, 105, 1989, pp. 20–26.

⁶⁴ Witold Garbaczewski has recently leaned towards resolving this dilemma in

nection with regards to Vladislaus I and Soběslaus, as their foundation activities left traces in both diplomatic and narrative sources. It is different, however, with the pioneer of this type of deniers — Svatopluk.

Svatopluk's deniers are distinguished by iconographic programmes which remain absent from previous Bohemian coinage. In addition to the foundation scene mentioned above, five types of coins minted in the name of Svatopluk include an image of a ruler kneeling in front of the altar in a praying pose.⁶⁵ The frequent use of devotional elements in coin iconography during the short period of Svatopluk's rule in Prague is significant and probably not accidental. Nevertheless, in contrast to his numerous predecessors, Svatopluk did not become famous for founding any church. Attempts to link him with the foundation of a Benedictine monastery in Postoloptry are nothing but a supposition for which there is no clear evidence. A historiographic portrait of Svatopluk painted by Cosmas suggests that he behaved in the opposite manner. When imprisoned by King Henry V, he strove to have himself released from captivity by promising to pay so large an amount of money to King Henry that he was left with no option but to steal from Bohemian subjects and churches — including the Prague Cathedral — whatever treasures they had. As Cosmas writes: 'Certainly, no abbot, provost, or clergyman had managed to avoid making some of his coffers' contents over to the duke';⁶⁶ the bishop of Prague, Herman, was forced to provide the duke with as much as 70 pounds of gold and 500 pounds of silver. To make the payment, Herman mortgaged all church chattels to secure a loan from the Jews of Regensburg.⁶⁷ It needs to be remembered, of course, that the Prague chronicler cast Svatopluk as the main villain of his work, 'endowing' him with a violent and tyrannical personality. However, Cosmas — who served already as member of the chapter and was thus an eyewitness to the events he wrote about — gave such a detailed account of the events that there is little doubt about the reliability of his writing.

The way in which the duke treated Bohemian churches, taking possession of their valuables, did not deter him from striking coins whose iconography presented him as a pious and church-founding ruler. Was

favour of a symbolic interpretation of these representations. Garbaczewski, 'Topos na monetach', pp. 81–82.

⁶⁵ Cach, nos. 461–65; for the analysis of this ruler's coinage from the metrological viewpoint see: Radoměský, 'Peníze Kosmova věku', pp. 92–95. Ryszard Kiersnowski also stressed an untypical character of the iconographic programme present on Svatopluk's coins (*Moneta w kulturze*, p. 266 — the book devotes a much space to discussing devotional motifs in European coinage).

⁶⁶ 'certe non abbas, non prepositus, non clericus [...] fuit, qui non conferret invitus aliquid duci de sua apotheca'.

⁶⁷ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book III/21, p. 188.

the duke's resort to an innovative iconographic programme, to be carried out by coins issued in his name, an attempt to expunge from his subjects' memory the abuse of church property during the early part of his reign? It is not possible to answer the question unequivocally, but such an interpretation seems entirely plausible.

The same motifs found in deniers of Svatopluk's successors can rightly be interpreted as connected to actual and well-known foundation activities. Maintaining close relations with Benedictine monastery situated at Zwiefalten in Swabia, Duke Vladislaus I and his wife Salomea of Berg set up in Kladruby (Western Bohemia) the Benedictine convent whose members were to observe the Cluniac version of the Benedictine rule.⁶⁸ The couple had transferred the convent from Zwiefalten, and that the Kladruby convent came to enjoy great prestige is attested to by the fact that it was the ducal couple's preferred final resting place.⁶⁹ The burial of Vladislaus I thus became an unprecedented event. It was the first burial of a Bohemian duke to take place outside Prague, the traditional centre of Přemyslid power. In this context all the attempts aimed at spreading the image of a pious ruler known for his generosity towards the church appear to be easy to understand.

It also seems that in the case of Soběslaus I, an ideological message disseminated through coin iconography was connected to actual events. One may presume that there was a connection between the issue of Soběslaus's deniers and a magnificent donation he made at the turn of 1229 and 1230 to his father's foundation, the Basilica of St Peter and St Paul. As a matter of fact, Soběslaus's effort amounted here to a re-founding of the collegiate church which had decayed, as indicated in the duke's document, through the negligence of other dukes and provosts. This is how the ruler's actions were understood by an anonymous contin-

⁶⁸ On the contacts between the Přemyslids and a familial abbey of the House of Berg see Kateřina Horníčková, 'Pražský biskup Meinhard a umělecký patronát ve 12. století', in *Čechy jsou plné kostelů — Bohemia plena est ecclesii. Kniha k počtě PhDr. Anežky Merhautové, DrSc.*, ed. Milada Studničková, Prague, 2010, pp. 245–49, however, the paper does not take into account remarks crucial for the understanding of the problem made by Szymon Wieczorek in 'Zwiefalten i Polska w pierwszej połowie XII wieku', *KH*, 103, 1996, 4, pp. 23–54.

⁶⁹ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book III/58, p. 236; it is worth stressing that Cosmas generally made no mention of monastic foundations by Bohemian dukes. Chattels which the monastery possessed at the moment of the foundation are mentioned in a forged document drafted in the name of Duke Vladislaus during the latter half of the thirteenth century, but the forger certainly drew material from twelfth-century sources, see *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Regni Bohemiae*, Prague, 1904–, vol. 1, ed. Gustav Friedrich, 1904–07, no. 111 (hereafter CDB).

uator of Cosmas's chronicle who wrote almost contemporaneously with the events discussed here. The church acquired then a new porch, decorative floor, and a roof covering. It was adorned with polychromies and fitted out with precious chattels — there was a *corona* type chandelier hanging down from the ceiling, and there were new crosses, altar covers, and liturgical manuscripts.⁷⁰ The chronicler's account is clearly in tune with Soběslaus I's document dated to 1130. The duke, just as his father had done, used the untypical title of 'monarch of all the Bohemians by the grace of God' (*dei gratia Boemorum monarcha*), doubled the dean's stipend, founded three additional prebends for canons, and ordered the compilation of an inventory of the church's chattels. The purpose of the donation was to increase the number of those who were willing to pray for the duke's salvation. The financial resources needed to celebrate the memorial of the recently deceased Queen Svatava — the mother of the duke and of his two brothers, Boleslaus and Břetislaus II, who were buried in the church — were also increased. The document mentioned above was issued in 1130. It includes a number of statements which indicate the multiple layers of ideological message involved in the Vyšehrad foundation of Soběslaus I. Moreover, the use of the ducal seal for authenticating the document provided a further opportunity to manifest the ruler's piety and to show the scale of his generosity towards the church, for the sealing of the document took place in front of the main altar of the collegiate church, just next to the relics of its patron saints, the apostles Peter and Paul, and in company of both bishops — the bishop of Prague and the bishop of Olomouc. The title Soběslaus used to mark the date of the issue of the document was also symbolic. He introduced himself as *monarcha Boemorum christianissimus dux*, the son of King Vratislaus II and the nineteenth in the line of Christian rulers of Bohemia. The document expressed the opinion that the poor condition of Vratislaus II's foundation

⁷⁰ A detailed listing of donated chattels and the information concerning the renovation work can be found in *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio Cosmae*, ed. Josef Emler, in *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 2, 1874, p. 207, under the year 1129: 'Sobieslaus, ut diximus, renovavit, et renovatam in melius auxit, quia parietes depingi fecit, coronam auream in ea suspendit, quae ponderat XII marcas auri, argenti vero LXXX, aes et ferrum sine numero, pavimentum pollitis lapidibus exornavit, porticus in circuitu addidit, laquearia in lateribus duobus affixit, tegulis summitatem totam cum tectis cooperuit, claustrum et omnes officinas cooperiri iussit; insuper et canonicos eiusdem ecclesiae multiplicavit, stipendiis, praediis, aliisque bonis augmentavit'. On the meaning of *corona* type candleholder and the extent to which Vyšehrad drew its inspiration from Hildesheim see Vladimír Denkstein, 'Někdejší vyšehradský lustr z r. 1129. První středověký korunovační lustr zvaný "koruna"', in *Královský Vyšehrad. Sborník příspěvků*, pp. 83–91.

was due to the negligence shown by Soběslaus's predecessors, including his brothers and church administrators. An intention, kept by the duke 'in secreto cordis', to renew and grace the church founded by his father — which was also the final resting place of his parents and of his two brothers — and the subsequent fulfillment of it served clearly as proof that it was Soběslaus I who deserved to be recognized as the most worthy successor of Vratislaus I. The special status of the collegiate church clearly seen in its independence from the authority of the bishop of Prague, in its operation under the direct authority of the pope, in the exercise of liturgical services by its clergymen in a way similar to that of the Council of Cardinals, and in its performance of the function *capellae specialis* of the ducal court requires no further discussion, although it is certainly worth mentioning here.⁷¹

Considering what has already been said, there is no doubt that the religious foundation was intended to enhance the legitimization of ducal power. The politico-ideological message of the foundation made itself seen in the face of the lords' conspiracy directed against the duke, for it was revealed soon after the renovation of the church, and the conspirators were to be tried by an assembly which the ruler decided to hold in Vyšehrad.⁷² The whole matter also seems to have had something to do with the rivalry between the duke and the bishop of Prague, Meinhard, who owed his elevation to the rank of bishop to Soběslaus's predecessor and who remained in opposition to the incumbent ruler. The hierarch responded to the restoration of the glory of the institution competing with his cathedral by embellishing St Adalbert's grave with precious metals and crystals.⁷³ This rivalry would soon become much more dramatic.

3. The duke, the bishop, and St Wenceslaus's peace

The third coin to be examined here in terms of connections between its iconographic programme and the contemporary political events is a denier whose three copies were found separately during the excava-

⁷¹ It is a little known, but significant fact that it was not the bishopric, but the Vyšehrad church and, to a lesser degree, other ducal foundations from the eleventh century that received the tithe which the ruler paid to the Church. This was probably one more way in which these institutions were strictly connected to the ducal court. For more on the problem of the extra-material meaning of tithe see: Marcin Rafał Pauk, 'Plenariae decimationes świętego Wojciecha. O ideowych funkcjach dziesięciny monarszej w Polsce i na Węgrzech w XI–XII wieku', in *Gnieźnieńskie koronacje królewskie i ich środkowoeuropejskie konteksty*, ed. Józef Dobosz, Gniezno, 2011, pp. 187–212.

⁷² More information on these events follows below.

⁷³ *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio*, p. 207.

tion works carried out in Prague Castle in the second half of the twentieth century (il. VI).⁷⁴ The question concerns three numismatic artifacts produced using three different dies. Contrary to the reservations that were once held about the origin of the denier, it has been convincingly identified as being minted in the name of Soběslaus I. The coin shows an enthroned figure in an *en face* position, situated in the centre of its obverse side and wielding a spear with a pennant in his left hand. The right hand is raised in a blessing-like gesture over a much smaller person found on the right side of the coin. The latter person, bareheaded and clad in a short tunic, is making a gesture that can be interpreted as a gesture of prayer, as he is reaching his hands forward towards the seated person. The scene is analogous to that found in Soběslaus's other coin that we encountered above in which a tribute-paying orant is kneeling on one knee.⁷⁵ According to Polanský it is the scene of a tribute paid by the lords and the common people to a new ruler, that is — Soběslaus I, right after his acclamation.⁷⁶ Since Prague Castle was the only archeological site where the coins in question were excavated, it was concluded that the deniers, quite in accordance with Cosmas's account, must have been thrown to the people gathered at the ceremony of the new ruler's enthronement. This interpretation, however, which links the coin with the events of 1125, is not the only possible explanation that can be offered here.

In terms of any ideological message attached to the coin, it is the reverse side of it that appears to be more intriguing. It shows two figures kneeling in a praying pose in front of a vertical object located in the centre which has a triangular top crowned with a finial or stylized cross. On the bottom part of the coin there are some folds to be seen, resembling a draped fabric. The fabric covers the plinth on which the vertical object rests. With a mitre on his head, dressed in pontifical robes, and a crosier in his left hand, the praying figure on the right can easily be identified as a bishop. The figure on the left side of the object with a cross is, just like the orant paying tribute on the obverse side of the coin, dressed in a shorter tunic.

Establishing the identity of the vertical object on which both kneeling figures are concentrating is of crucial importance for the correct interpretation of the whole image. Scholarly literature offers various interpretations of the object, seeing in it as a tower or a sacral building

⁷⁴ Cach, no. 571.

⁷⁵ Cach, no. 570 — the obverse contains the above discussed scene of the duke drinking to St Wenceslaus.

⁷⁶ Polanský, 'Nálezy mincí', pp. 225–26.

which symbolizes Heavenly Jerusalem.⁷⁷ It is also regarded as representing an altar. There has been little or no disagreement among scholars about the identification of both figures. They are considered to represent patron saints, St Wenceslaus and St Adalbert, whose appearance on Bohemian deniers dates back to the beginning of the twelfth century.⁷⁸ Polanský has recently analysed the denier's iconographic programme and endorses the view, once subscribed to more widely by scholars, that the coin shows both saints engrossed in intercessory prayer before the altar. Nevertheless, it is difficult to share his opinion that the object represents an altar slab. The object's vertical and elongated shape is clearly out of keeping with an altar. Altars in the form of a flat mensa with orants kneeling in front of it and a chalice standing on it appear on several types of deniers minted in the name of Svatopluk. It is, therefore, clear that the object bears no resemblance to an altar.⁷⁹ In my opinion the object is an example of a reliquary chest, which were so popular in Western Europe in the twelfth century. Among the twelfth-century artifacts one needs to mention those found in Cologne and the Rhine area: the Three Magi reliquary (Cathedral 1181) (il. VII.1), St Maurinus reliquary (St Pantaleon about 1170) and St Albinus reliquary from Cologne (St Pantaleon about 1183/86), St Heribert reliquary from Deutz (1160/70), St Anno reliquary from Siegburg (1181/83) (il. VII.2) known only from the engraving of St Remaclus of Stavelot or St Charles the Great of Aachen (the end of the twelfth century).⁸⁰

The identification of the object as a reliquary makes it possible to offer a convincing interpretation of the two figures kneeling beside it. Their hands, held out in an oath-gesture, are almost touching the chest (this pertains especially to the lay person on the left). We are dealing here with an act of swearing an oath on the relics of a saint. It is the act of *sacramentum*. Such an oath played a significant role in the political culture of the Middle Ages and the fact that depictions of this ceremony were included in Bohemian sources of the twelfth century clearly shows its significance. The scene described here has its closest parallel in the part of the Bayeux Tapestry which represents Harold taking an oath of allegiance to William the Conqueror (il. VIII). The Anglo-Saxon earl is

⁷⁷ Merhautová and Třeštík, *Ideové proudy*, pp. 73–74.

⁷⁸ Pavel Radoměrský and Václav Ryněš, 'Společná učta sv. Václava a Vojtěcha zvláště na českých mincích a její historický význam', *Numismatické listy*, 13, 1958, pp. 35–48.

⁷⁹ See above, note 64.

⁸⁰ Kinga Szczepkowska-Naliwajek, *Relikwiarze średniowiecznej Europy od IV do początku XVI wieku. Geneza, treść, styl i techniki wykonania*, Warsaw, 1996, pp. 133–146; Anton Legner, Albert and Irmgard Hirmer, *Romanische Kunst in Deutschland*, Munich, 1999, pp. 88–104.

shown standing between two reliquary chests, each of which lies on a plinth or, rather, a sedan chair draped in fabric. Harold is holding out both hands, laying his palms on the reliquaries.⁸¹ The only difference between those reliquaries and that which can be found on Soběslaus I's coin is that the latter has its top panel turned towards the viewer, which makes its triangular flower or cross finial, so typical of reliquary chests of the twelfth century, clearly visible.

The problem of the role of oath-taking ceremonies in the legal or political culture of medieval Bohemia has attracted the interest of many scholars. Such ceremonies were usually held in the highest echelons of power to sanction important decisions which affected the whole political community: the acclamation of a new ruler, the settlement of the problem of succession, the arrangement of alliances, the conclusion of peace treaties, and the like.⁸² Keeping pledges made on various occasions was to be ensured by sacred powers whose authority was invoked in the very act of swearing an oath. The violation of the oath was certain to result in the exaction of vengeance by an offended deity. The price to be paid for violating an oath is made particularly clear in the texts of Russo-Byzantine treaties inserted in Nestor's chronicle (also known as *the Tale of Bygone Years*) which invoke the authority of pagan deities, Weles and Perun.⁸³ The use of St Wenceslaus's relics with the aim of reinforcing an oath is attested to relatively late. The Zbraslav chronicle tells the story of a dying King Wenceslaus II who demanded a reliquary with a skull of a saint and told his son to swear an oath on the saint's relic. The oath the son was required to take bound him to settle all the debts incurred during his father's reign while the

⁸¹ Wolfgang Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry. Monument of a Norman Triumph*, Munich and New York, 1994, p. 117; William Richard Lethaby, 'Perjury in Bayeux', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson, Woodbridge, 1997, pp. 19–20.

⁸² Josef Žemlička, 'Sacramenta v politickém životě přemyslovských Čech', in *Ve znamení zemí Koruny české. Sborník k šedesátým narozeninám Prof. PhDr. Lenky Bobkové, CSc.*, ed. Luděk Březina, Jana Konvičná and Jan Zdichynec, Prague, 2006, pp. 17–25; see also in the context inter-ethnic relations Nora Berend, 'Oath-taking in Hungary. A Window on Medieval Social Interaction', in: *Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages: A Cultural History. Essays in Honour of Paul W. Knoll*, ed. Piotr Górecki and Nancy van Deusen, London, 2009, pp. 42–49; on the role of oaths and their language in political culture of Carolingian epoch see also: Matthias Becher, *Eid und Herrschaft. Untersuchungen zum Herrscherethos Karls des Grossen*, Sigmaringen, 1993, *Vorträge und Forschungen*, Sonderband 39, pp. 94–110; Patrick J. Geary, 'Oathtaking and Conflict Management in the Ninth Century', in *Rechtsverständnis und Konfliktbewältigung. Gerichtliche und außgerichtliche Strategien im Mittelalter*, ed. Stefan Esders, Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2007, pp. 239–53.

⁸³ For more on the problem see Karol Modzelewski, *Barbarzyńska Europa*, Warsaw, 2004, pp. 154–58.

lords, in whose company he met with his father, were themselves pledged to make sure that the dying man's last wish would be fulfilled.⁸⁴ One may presume that the reliquaries of patron saints of the land, St Wenceslaus and St Adalbert, had already before been used during public confirmation of various ducal decrees and public agreements.⁸⁵

The role of St Adalbert in the enactment of new laws by the ruler is best illustrated by the proclamation of the so-called statutes of Břetislav I, as mentioned by Cosmas. According to the chronicler, the act took place in Gniezno during the ruler's campaign against Poland. Břetislav I's decrees, sanctioned by the spiritual authority of the Prague bishop, Sewer, were devised to spread the norms of Christian morality among the Bohemian people, to eradicate remnants of paganism, and to combat sin with all means available. The political community represented by the lay and ecclesiastical lords of Bohemia, gathered at the grave of St Adalbert confirmed the decrees with an oath sworn on the martyr's relics.⁸⁶ Cosmas's vivid account of the event leaves us in no doubt that St Adalbert was supposed to use his supernatural powers to ensure the fulfillment of the obligation incurred at his grave. The saint's consent to open his tomb and transfer his relics to Prague was a sign of the favour and benevolence which he was prepared to show the Bohemian people for repenting their sins and promising to mend their ways.⁸⁷

In Cosmas's ideology, which can be regarded as reflecting views held by members of the Bohemian elite at the beginning of the twelfth century, St Wenceslaus and St Adalbert performed the role of custodians of Bohemia's internal order and of peace (*mir*). The idea found its fullest expression in an account of the intervention of both patron saints in the conflict between King Vratislav II and his oldest son Břetislav in 1091. Imprisoned by the ruler, supporters of the prince were set free after St Wenceslaus and St Adalbert broke down the prison's gates with

⁸⁴ *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*, ed. Josef Emler, in *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 4, book 1/74, p. 94.

⁸⁵ For more on the custom of swearing an oath on the relics of a saint in medieval Poland see Maria Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu. Relikwie w kulturze religijnej na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu*, Warsaw, 2008, pp. 405–14. The information about the papal legate, Gvido, lifting the excommunication imposed on Moravian dukes for their involvement in a coup against the bishop Henry Zdik is chronologically close to the times dealt with here. Under the legate's pressure the dukes swore to make up for the evil they had done 'sacrosanctis ewangeliis, sanctorum reliquiis tactis perfece-runt' — CDB, vol. 1, no. 135.

⁸⁶ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book II/4, pp. 84–88.

⁸⁷ See the generally felicitous remarks by Petr Kopal, 'Smíření Čechů se svatým Vojtěchem. Struktura jednoho obrazu v Kosmově kronice', in *Rituál smíření*, pp. 45–55.

their own hands and unchained the prisoners. Then, both saints told the freed prisoners to publicize the fact that *mir* had been brought by the saints to the Bohemian people: ‘Now that you are assured of God’s grace, you should hurry to the church and proclaim that we, that is, St Wenceslaus and St Adalbert had liberated you and brought you *mir*’.⁸⁸ At the same time, Conrad, a Moravian duke and the King’s brother, mediated in a peace between father and son. The function of a peace-giver exercised by St Wenceslaus was strictly related to the grand assemblies held in Prague each year on 28 September, often coupled — just as at the outset of the reign of Břetislav II — with the enactment of new laws by the ruler.⁸⁹

In the Hungarian hagiography of Cosmas’s era the cult of St Stephen as a patron of earthly peace manifested itself in a similar way. The ceremonies which King Vladislaus I was preparing in 1083 for the canonization of the saint-king simply could not be celebrated because of the conflict which tormented the Arpád dynasty and the continuous imprisonment of the King Salomon. The saint was supposed to show his anger by refusing to agree to the opening of his tomb and elevating of his relics.

It was only after lay and ecclesiastical lords, including the king, had fasted for three days and after Salomon had been released from prison that liturgical ceremonies could be performed.⁹⁰ The part played by St Adalbert — a patron saint of the Polish political community in the eleventh and twelfth centuries — in preserving internal peace was not given so vivid a treatment in any Polish source, but it was at least indirectly referred to in the chronicle by Gallus Anonymus. The consecration of Gniezno Cathedral in 1097, dedicated to St Adalbert, could be effected only on condition that the duke’s rebellious son, Zbigniew, was released from prison. This must have been the attitude taken by the bishops who successfully promoted Zbigniew’s reconciliation with his father, Duke Vladislaus Herman. Boleslaus the Wrymouth’s public penance for blinding his brother ended with a solemn pilgrimage to the martyr’s grave in Gniezno, accompanied by the founding of a new reliquary, in which St Adalbert’s remains, as well as huge

⁸⁸ ‘Quare iam certi de misericordia Dei exurgite, ad ecclesiam properate nosque nominatim sanctum Wencezlaum et sanctum Adalbertum vos absolvisse et pacem apportasse omnibus nunciate’, *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book II/47, p. 154.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, book III/1, pp. 160–61.

⁹⁰ *Vita s. Stephani regis ab Hartvico episcopo conscripta*, ed. Emma Bartoniek, in *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, ed. Imre Szentpétery, 2 vols, Budapest, 1937–38, vol. 2, chapter 24, p. 434; on the political significance of St Stephen’s canonization ceremony in 1083 see Gabor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 123–34; idem, ‘Rex iustus: The Saintly Institutor of Christian Kingship’, *Hungarian Quarterly*, 41, 2000, pp. 14–31.

grants to the clergy, were to be deposited. What is more, it seems — and this is of some importance here — that Boleslaus did not perform his penance for cruelly blinding his brother, but instead did so for having violated the oath which guaranteed his brother's safety. The oath that Boleslaus broke is highly likely to have been sworn on the relics of the bishop of Prague.⁹¹

The identification of the object located in the middle of the coin as a reliquary, combined with the knowledge of the role of oaths sworn on relics in the political culture of the Middle Ages clearly leads us to the conclusion that the figures on the coin cannot be regarded as representing patron saints of the Czech lands. Instead they are the duke of Prague and the bishop of Prague involved in performing their respective roles in important political and religious events. This opens the way for a historical interpretation of the scenes illustrated on the denier. Both scenes fit the context of the events from the years 1130–31, the actual or alleged conspiracy against Duke Soběslav I. It is this conspiracy which was then used as a pretext for suppressing the opposition during the hastily arranged trial in Vyšehrad.⁹² A brief summary of these well-known events suffices here. According to the so-called Canon of Vyšehrad, an eyewitness to the events, the conspirators were to be led by members of the Vršovcy family.⁹³ The bishop of Prague,

⁹¹ It is Cosmas who points to a violation of oath as Boleslaus's main offence with regard to his brother (*Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, book III/34, p. 205). Gallus Anonymus passes over the issue in silence. On the last conflict see Zbigniew Dalewski, *Rytuał i polityka. Opowieść Galla Anonima o konflikcie Bolesława Krzywoustego ze Zbigniewem*, Warsaw, 2005.

⁹² For an extensive account of the events see: *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio*, pp. 207–12; see also works focusing on the political aspect of the conflict: Josef Žemlička, 'Vyšehrad 1130: soud, nebo inscenace? (K "nekosmovskému" pojetí českých dějin)', in *Husitství — Renesance — Reformace. Sborník k 60. narozeninám Františka Šmahela*, ed. Jaroslav Pánek et al., 3 vols, Prague, 1994, vol. 1, pp. 47–68, in whose opinion the charge of conspiracy was spurious and put forward with a view to justifying repression against the main rival, the bishop of Prague; Zdenek Dragoun's thesis ('Konflikt knížete Soběslava s biskupem Menhartem a jeho líčení tzv. Kanovníkem Vyšehradským', *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica*, 4, 1995, pp. 69–78) that the conflict between the bishop and the duke continued until after 1131 is a mixture of arbitrary interpretation of sources and his own speculations. Karel Malý also failed to shed much light on the problem, see: 'K počátkům crimen laese maiestatis v Čechách — vyšehradský proces z roku 1130', in *Královský Vyšehrad. 3. Sborník příspěvků ze semináře 'Vyšehrad a Přemyslovci'*, ed. Bořivoj Nechvátal et al., Kostelní Vydří, 2007, pp. 103–11.

⁹³ On Cosmas's 'black' picture of the Wroszwczy family portrayed as made up of confirmed enemies of the dynasty, see Petr Kopal, 'Kosmovi ďáblové. Vršovsko-přemyslovský antagonismus ve světle biblických a legendárních citátů, motivů a symbolů', *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica*, 8, 2001, pp. 7–41; on the family and its political role in the eleventh and twelfth centuries see also idem, 'Neznámý známý rod. Pokus o genealogii Vršovců', *Sborník archivních prací*, 51, 2001, pp. 3–83.

Meinhard, was one of those who had joined the conspiracy whose goal was to assassinate the ruler and elevate his nephew Břetislaus to the Bohemian throne. However, they were foiled in their attempt to carry out this coup. Soběslaus succeeded in catching all those concerned in the plot against him, except for the bishop who had gone on pilgrimage to Jerusalem shortly before the conspiracy was revealed. Then, the ruler, on his arrival in Prague, entered the castle barefoot and, clad in penitential garments, went to the grave of St Wenceslaus, praying incessantly.

Soběslaus's next move was to order a trial to be held in Vyšehrad of those who were accused of attempting to assassinate him. The trial was one by ordeal. There ensued bloody executions of the conspirators, with the most serious candidate to take Soběslaus's place being blinded. Following here the convincing interpretation offered by Andrzej Pleszczyński, the first thing to be noted is the function of the ritual of public penance done by the Bohemian ruler in front of St Wenceslaus's relics.⁹⁴ The performance of the ritual by Soběslaus should be interpreted as being aimed at propitiating the patron saint on behalf of the whole community in connection with the sin committed by the bishop and a group of lords. It should not be understood as a manifestation of gratitude on the part of the duke clearly glad of escaping his assassins. Besides, we may also presume — although there is no explicit evidence for it — that the enthronement rite in the twelfth-century Bohemia involved the swearing of an oath of allegiance to a new ruler on the relics of St Wenceslaus.⁹⁵ In the act of taking this oath a throne made of stone was used and the whole ceremony took place not far from the martyr's grave situated in St Vitus's Cathedral.⁹⁶ Thus those involved in the conspiracy against the duke were automatically guilty of turning on the patron saint, the guarantor of the most important element of political order, that is, the allegiance which the lords owed to the ruler.

⁹⁴ Andrzej Pleszczyński, 'Sobiesław I — rex Ninivitarum. Książę czeski w walce z ordynariuszem praskim Meinhardem, biskupem Rzeszy', in *Monarchia w średniowieczu — władza nad ludźmi, władza nad terytorium*, ed. Jerzy Pysiak, Aneta Pieniądz-Skrzypczak and Marcin Rafał Pauk, Warsaw and Kraków, 2002, pp. 125–38.

⁹⁵ In 1139 Soběslaus himself decided to use an oath by the relics of a saint as a way of securing his succession order given in favour of his little son Vladislaus; similarly Meinhard was to administer an oath by a saint's relics to those who conspired against Soběslaus ('duos digitos super reliquias sanctorum posuit') — *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio*, pp. 229, 211.

⁹⁶ On the Christianization of the place of election and enthronement of Bohemian rulers because of St Wenceslaus himself and in connection with the erection of a rotunda in which St Vitus's relics were held see Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*, pp. 408–11.

The canon of Vyšehrad tells us that Meinhard, who was on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land when the crackdown against the rest of the plotters was taking place, upon returning from his trip, turned himself in to the ruler and lords *ad omnia iudicia* in the hope of exonerating himself from the charge of treason.⁹⁷ He was supposed to be tried by the ‘secular’ court, even though two bishops — Adalbert, the archbishop of Mainz, and Otto, the bishop of Bamberg — were to play a significant role in trying him. Not long afterwards, as can be inferred from the account of the chronicler, Meinhard was publicly exonerated of any blame. The examination of his case reached its climax on St Wenceslaus’s Day — 28 September 1131: ‘The bishops of Bamberg and of Olomouc, assisted by seven Bohemian abbots, in the presence of Duke Soběslaus, the Bohemian people and clergy, took off their stoles, thus clearing Meinhard — the bishop of the holy church of Prague — of all charges that had been laid against him. They stated publicly that he was not involved in scheming against Soběslaus, trying only to find a way of freeing Břetislaus from prison’.⁹⁸ Here, too, one needs to subscribe to the view expressed by Pleszczyński who maintained that a stole-removing ritual allowed these two high-ranking clergymen to act as oath-helpers for the bishop of Prague during the trial held in the ducal court, and thus take part in judicial proceedings proper to secular courts.⁹⁹ The two bishops and seven abbots did not appear in court in their capacity as clergymen. They served as guarantors of the oath to be taken by the bishop, performing the role usually reserved for relatives of the defendant. As a foreigner, Meinhard probably could not produce a sufficient number of his relatives. The procedure applied was a normal exoneration procedure provided for in customary law which, however, had already in the ninth century found its way into canon law. It provided the accused with an opportunity to prove his case by bringing a sufficient number of men equal to his standing to swear that they believed his oath.¹⁰⁰ The procedure applied in 1131

⁹⁷ *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio*, p. 213.

⁹⁸ ‘IV Kal. Octobris praesul Bamberiensis et antistes Olomucensis cum septem Bohemiensibus abbatibus, astante duce Sobieslao, cum populo et clero Meynhardum, sanctae Pragensis ecclesiae episcopum, ab omni culpa, quae prius illata sibi fuerat, per depositionem suarum stolarum expurgaverunt, profitendo videlicet Meynhardum episcopum nihil adversi duci Sobieslao cogitasse, nisi ad hoc solummodo elaborasse, quomodo Bracizlaus a vinculis possit liberari’.

⁹⁹ Pleszczyński, ‘Sobiesław I — rex Ninivitarum’, pp. 137–38.

¹⁰⁰ See Stefan Esders, ‘Der Reinigungseid mit Helfern. Individuelle und kollektive Rechtsvorstellungen in der Wahrnehmung und Darstellung frühmittelalterlicher Konflikte’, in *Rechtsverständnis und Konfliktbewältigung*, pp. 55–77, esp. pp. 70–71; also Gerhard Schmitz, *De presbiteris criminosis. Ein Memorandum Erzbischof Hincmars von Reims über straffällige Kleriker*, Hanover, 2004, *MGH Schriften und Texte*, vol. 34, pp. 13–14.

during the Prague meeting of notables satisfied these requirements. The great number of high-ranking compurgators — there were as many as nine of them — attested to the importance of both the case and the defendant.

Let us return to the iconography of the denier discussed here. First of all, the scene on the coin does not relate to the procedure described above — the bishop is accompanied by only one person who is his equal. The Vyšehrad chronicler, to be sure, did not mention anything about a separate ceremony of reconciliation between the bishop and the ruler, but it must have taken place very soon after Meinhard took an oath that cleansed him of the charge of treason.¹⁰¹ It is the image stamped on the coin, minted in the name of Soběslaus, that justifies drawing such a conclusion. The reconciliation and restoration of peace between the two current leaders of the Bohemian people — the duke and the bishop of Prague — took place in front of the relics of the patron saint of the whole political community, St Wenceslaus, during a religious holiday celebrated in his honour. The celebration of the holiday, as we have already seen, was designed to renew and sustain a bond between the ruler and the elite of the country.

The small image that appears on the coin was thus intended to convey an important political and ideological message. It can even be considered to have served as a tool used for announcing the restoration of order and stability within the Bohemian community. With the ducal coins in circulation, the promulgation of this fact was made possible. The coin iconography must have been easy to understand for a great number of coin users. After all, it was *omnes Boemi — milites primi et secundi ordinis* who were given an opportunity to see and worship the reliquary containing the remains of the patron saint of the Bohemian people when they arrived in Prague each September to take part — along with the duke, lords, and higher clergy — in the mass meetings talked about here. The image on Soběslaus's coin is, then, an important link which allows us to reconstruct important events from 1130–31. This reconstruction also helps us to better understand, or even bring to light, an important aspect of the political culture of the twelfth century.

It remains to discuss the scene to be found on the obverse side of the coin which is the focus of our interest here and in which Luboš Polanský wanted to see a tribute paid to the ruler in the beginning of

¹⁰¹ Cf. Žemlička, 'Vyšehrad 1130', p. 60. The relations between the duke and the bishop, as can be inferred from the account of the Canon of Vyšehrad, were no longer hostile but certainly there was not too much trust between the two men.

his reign by one of the lords representing *pars pro toto* the whole political community.¹⁰² This interpretation, when put in the context of the events from the years 1130–31, is not convincing. The enthroned figure holding a spear in his left hand and raising his right hand in a blessing gesture needs to be identified as St Wenceslaus — which is in keeping with the Czech iconographic tradition — while the person paying him tribute is to be identified as Soběslav I. The scene, then, can be treated as an illustration of the account — included in the chronicle by the Canon of Vyšehrad — of Soběslav's penitent pilgrimage to the relics of the saint in Prague Cathedral. Such a pilgrimage was made with a view to expressing gratitude for having one's life saved and to offering an apology to the saint for having the country's internal peace disrupted by conspirators who had sacrilegiously attempted to assassinate his earthly vicar. An iconographic motif that had already been made use of on a variety of occasions could now be exploited in close relation to the current political events. In fact, the obverse of the coin demonstrated the ruler's victory and asserted his supremacy in the whole political community, which manifested itself in him liaising between the sacred 'eternal' duke of the Bohemian people and the whole *communitas*. The idea would soon find as clear an expression in legends of ducal and royal seals of Soběslav's successor, Vladislaus II, where the Bohemian ruler is depicted as the saint's vicar and the custodian of the peace the saint had established.¹⁰³ The reverse side of the coin, in turn, was designed to inform subjects of the peaceful relationship between the most important leaders of political community.

In conclusion, it should be said that the analysis of coin images and their uses by rulers presented above justifies the opinion that contemporary political events and considerations influenced the selection of iconographic representations displayed on coins. It also proves that rulers used coins to promote their own positive self image, regardless of whether this

¹⁰² Polanský, 'Nálezy mincí', p. 224.

¹⁰³ Duke Vladislaus's seal from the years of 1146/48 showing an image of St Wenceslaus was equipped with the following legend: PAX SCI WACEZLAI IN MANU DUCIS VADISLAVZ (CDB, vol. 1, no. 157); used after the coronation and known from a few imprints from the years 1160–69, two-sided seal with a majestic image of the king and St Wenceslaus has on the latter's side a similar legend, but containing a significant reversal of roles: PAX REGIS WLADISLAI IN MANU SCI WENCES/// (CDB, vol. 1, nos. 210, 247). The meaning of the reversal is not quite clear (cf. Merhautová and Třeštíř, *Ideové proudy*, pp. 95–96). One needs to pay attention here to an ambiguity that appears in the interpretation of Bohemian coin images of the twelfth century, since the enthroned figure with a spear can be identified both as St Wenceslaus and as the present ruler of the Přemyslid dynasty, see: Polanský and Mašek, 'Ikonografie', p. 120.

image had anything to do with their actual conduct. In trying to answer the question posed by Stanisław Suchodolski, which asked whether or not coin images reflected or created political reality, one — given the artifacts analysed here — needs to subscribe to the second option. However, it does not change the fact that the selection of a coin's message may have been occasionally determined by present political conditions. But even in the latter case, the ideological message — which is clearly present in the scene of the duke and bishop swearing an oath on the relics of the saint — appeals to universal categories and ideas: the scene just mentioned expresses the restoration of sacred order in the whole political community. The deniers representing a ducal toast also refer to a specific and real event — annual celebrations held in honour of a patron saint. Their goal was not to illustrate a rite with which members of the Bohemian elite, and probably most Bohemian subjects, were well-acquainted. They served the purpose of cementing the image of the ruler as the custodian of the sacred order and as a liaison between the political community and its patron saint.

(Translated by Artur MękarSKI)

Summary

The article is composed of three separate parts for which the common denominator is the use of the iconography of Bohemian deniers from the first half of the twelfth century. The images featured on the coins of Duke Svatopluk (1107–09), Vladislaus I (1110–25) and Soběslaus I (1125–40) constitute a point of departure for reflections on the essential components of the political culture of the Early and High Middle Ages.

In contrast to existing Czech literature the author interpreted the scenes presented on the deniers of Svatopluk and Soběslaus I (Cach nos. 460, 570) as an illustration of a ritual toast raised by the duke in honour of St Wenceslaus. It probably constituted a heretofore-unknown element of an annual celebration of the martyrdom of the saint (28 September), which entailed a convention and a three-day feast attended by the ruler and the lay and ecclesiastical lords.

Reflections in the second part focus on the depictions of Svatopluk, Vladislaus I and Soběslaus I (Cach nos. 460, 557, 573) in foundation scenes. The author examines the degree to which the application of a likeness of a ruler holding a model of a church reflected an actual religious foundation or the universal idea of the generosity towards the clergy. In the case of Vladislaus I and Soběslaus I the sources contain information about imposing ducal foundations, but in the case of Svatopluk there is no such correlation while the episode described by Cosmas and concerning the seizure of Church property by the duke for political reasons compels us to assume that the portrait of the ruler-founder on the coin was to obliterate the unfavourable impression produced by his conduct.

The third fragment is a new interpretation of a scene featured on a denier of Soběslaus I, earlier associated with the inauguration of his reign in 1125 (Cach no. 571). In this case, the author noticed a reference to current political events from 1130–31 (chiefly the conflict involving Soběslaus and Meinhard, the bishop of Prague). The scene showing two men praying in front of a centrally located object is interpreted as an act of swearing an oath by both antagonists on the relics of St Wenceslaus, probably after the bishop was cleared of an accusation of treason during the celebrations of the day of St Wenceslaus on 28 September 1131.

(Translated by Aleksandra Rodzińska-Chojnowska)



I.1

Duke Svatopluk's denier (1107-09)

Type: Cach, no. 460

Obverse: + SVATOPVLC

Reverse: + VVENCEZLAVS

Collections: Moravské Zemské Museum in Brno, Inventory No. 16968



I.2



II.

Soběslaus I's denier (1125–40)

Type: Cach, no. 570

Obverse: + DVX SOBESLAV /

Reverse: SCS VVENCESLAVS

Collections: Moravské Zemské Museum in Brno, Inventory No. 205697



III.
Gumpold's Legend
The so-called Codex of Emma (fragm. F.20v)
Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel
Cod. Guelf. 11,2



IV.
Vladislaus I's denier (1100–25)
Type: Cach, no. 557
Obverse: + DVX VLADIZLAVS
Reverse: + SCS VVENCEZLAVS
Collections: Moravské Zemské Museum in Brno, Inventory No. 16989



V.

Soběslaus I's denier (1125–40)

Type: Cach, no. 573

Obverse: +DVX SOBE/////

Reverse: +S/////ZLAVS

Collections: Moravské Zemské Museum in Brno, Inventory No. 208979



VI.

Soběslaus I's denier (1135–40)

Type: Cach, no. 571

Obverse: +/S/B/ESLAV//

Reverse: +/AN//VVENCE/////

Collections: Moravské Zemské Museum in Brno, Inventory No. 17066



VII.1

The Three Kings reliquary
The Cologne Cathedral (after 1167)



VII.2
St Anno reliquary
Nicolaus of Verdun, around 1183
The Siegburg Monastery





VIII.

Bayeux Tapestry, around 1080
The scene of Harold swearing an oath on the relics