

## THE ROAD TO FREEDOM? THE CONVERSION OF MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS TO PROTESTANTISM

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Recatholization in the lands of the Bohemian crown in the post-Baroque period is usually associated with the idea that the number of adherents of Catholicism gradually increased, and members of various non-Catholic denominations, unless they tried to secretly remain with their religion even under the new conditions, either more or less voluntarily expanded their ranks, or sooner or later chose to leave the country – either under various decrees (as Protestant priests and preachers did soon after the Battle of White Mountain, and the nobility did after the Renewed Land Ordinance), or illegally (as mainly serfs did). However, until recently, those in whose case such a procedure is surprising – namely members of various religious orders, i. e. Catholics, who also chose to leave the country and subsequently underwent conversion – remained unnoticed.

This phenomenon, which, however, did not reach massive proportions, was closely related to the situation of religious orders in general. Many monastic institutions in the Bohemian lands had already undergone an uneasy development in the Hussite and post-Hussite times, and then in the early modern period they experienced a deep crisis – many convents were closed down, the property of the orders was stolen, orders faced a shortage of novices, the discipline of the members of the orders declined, but also the control of the observance of the constitutions of the orders, religious vows and the pious life in general lagged behind. The Bohemian lands were not an exception in this respect, because under the influence of the Reformation, foreign monasteries also encountered similar problems in various orders.

One of them, for whom we have data from the Bohemian lands, was the Order of the Brothers of Preachers (*Ordo Fratrum Praedicatorum* or *Ordo Praedicatorum S. Dominici*), i. e. the Dominicans.<sup>1</sup> The number of its mem-

<sup>1</sup> See above all ČERNUŠÁK, Tomáš – PROKOP, Augustin – NĚMEC, Damián: *Historie dominikánů v českých zemích*. Praha 2001, pp. 105–106; ZOUHAR, Jakub: *Česká dominikánská provincie v raném novověku (1435–1790)*. Praha 2010; Id.: *Prameny k životu a kariéře členů české dominikánské provincie raného novověku*. *Folia Historica Bohemica* (forth FHB), 26, 2011, pp. 355–364; ČERNÝ, Karel: *Disciplína a další aspekty řádové organizace v české dominikánské provincii (podle zápisů provinciálů z let 1653–1721)*. FHB, 25, 2010, pp. 67–112, there pp. 67–68.

bers declined in the sixteenth century, some monasteries in the Bohemian lands were completely abandoned (e.g. České Budějovice, Litoměřice, Jihlava), some, including the monastery of St. Clement in Prague, were handed over to the Jesuits. Due to the very nature and organisation of the religious orders, many Dominican convents in the Bohemian lands, like others, had a distinctly international composition and brought together clerics from different countries, who, although they helped to resolve the unfavourable personnel situation, did not speak Czech, so they could not hold important positions, and also often pursued their own interests: in relation to the difficult control from the order's headquarters in Rome, some trouble-making individuals, especially from Italy, fled abroad, including to Bohemia or Moravia, in the period before the Battle of the White Mountain, so that some excesses occurred, although not only because of these persons.<sup>2</sup> Various problems are documented for the sixteenth century in different monasteries. In Brno, for example, in the second half of the sixteenth century, there was a prior, Jan Czaysler, who fled the monastery before 1566, then allegedly married and continued to work in the local parish church of St. James; another prior was an alcoholic, but the situation stabilized at the end of the sixteenth century. There is even an interesting report about the Pilsen Dominican monastery from 1526, when on 22 January Zdeněk Lev from Rožmitál addressed the town council in Pilsen with a request not to suffer "blasphemous sermons against the Christian orders", which were being preached in the "Black Monastery" [i.e. the Dominican monastery] by a certain "German preacher". According to a visitation carried out in 1572–1577, the prior in Pilsen, who was the only member of the convent, did not wear the habit and lived "somewhat more freely"; other similar reports are also documented.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Back in the time of Archbishop Brus of Mohelnice, two Italian Dominicans, who pretended to be visitors, came to the Franciscans monastery in Prague and demanded that the prior hand over the monastery treasure in such a way that the prior jumped out of the window and broke both his arms in the fall (PROKOP, Augustin: *Česká provincie v 15.–19. století*. In: ČERNUŠÁK, T. – PROKOP, A. – NĚMEC, D.: *Historie dominikánů v českých zemích*, pp. 102–114, there p. 105). In 1594, the wedding of Pavel Landtmann, the prior of the convent in Jablonné v Podještědí, was supposedly held in Česká Lípa (ČERNÝ, K.: *Disciplína a další aspekty řádové organizace v české dominikánské provincii*, p. 68), and irregularities also occurred at St. Agnes in Prague, where the Dominicans took refuge from St. Clement (see at least ZOUHAR, J.: *Česká dominikánská provincie v raném novověku (1435–1790)*, pp. 51–52).

<sup>3</sup> STRNAD, Josef (ed.): *M. Šimona Plachého z Třebnice Paměti Plzeňské (Z rukopisů, uschovaných v městském muzeu Plzeňském a král. českém zemském muzeu v Praze)*. Plzeň 1883, pp. 116–122 (from 1516, 1580, 1594, 1596); BĚLOHLÁVEK, Miloslav (ed.): *Dějiny Plzně I. (do r. 1788)*. Plzeň 1965, pp. 167–168; ČERNUŠÁK, Tomáš: *Emerich Langenwalter – příběh jihlavského dominikána z 18. století*. In: ČERNUŠÁK, Tomáš – SEDLÁK, Tomáš (eds.): *Dominikáni v Jihlavě v proměnách*

The efforts to consolidate, renew and reform the religious life, started within the Bohemian Dominican province in the period before the Battle of the White Mountain, continued despite various problems even after the defeat of the Estates' uprising in the 1620s. The Dominicans were given the church of St. Egidius in Prague's Old Town with the adjacent former school (1625) as a replacement for the original monastery in Klementinum and in exchange for a temporary location in the monastery of St. Agnes, as well as during the Thirty Years' War and especially after its end. Even at this time, however, some chronic problems (financial and personnel situation, the arrival of foreigners and the resistance of the local members of the Order to them) and current problems (plague, natural elements) persisted or reappeared, and "there was a certain internal opposition to the tightening of religious life in the convents",<sup>4</sup> which also pointed to individual difficulties of the members of the Order, not related only to confessional issues.

Some members of the order had a problem with the observance of the monastic rules, especially in the 1650s, and some, especially the lay brothers, but not only them, decided for a radical solution and left the order, fled abroad, especially to Saxony, and there they chose to convert to Lutheranism. The Order's rules, or rather the acts of the Order's chapters, did not address the question how to treat fugitive individuals, and even less so of those who had fallen away from the Order; the rules just demanded the return of captured fugitives to their home provinces and convents.<sup>5</sup> This is the case, for example, of Michael Mayr, who first fled from the Convent of Augsburg and then from the Convent of Jihlava, taking with him a gold chain from the statue of the Virgin Mary, or the lay brother and tailor from the Convent of Pilsen, Christianus Aquila, who "abominably fell away on a wrong journey seduced by a Bertha"

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staletí. Jihlava 2012, pp. 23–29, there pp. 24–25; only a hint ZOUHAR, J.: *Česká dominikánská provincie v raném novověku (1435–1790)*, pp. 94–95.

<sup>4</sup> ČERNÝ, K.: *Disciplína a další aspekty řádové organizace v české dominikánské provincii*, p. 68. Many monks had a problem especially with the prohibition of leaving the convent – everyone had to be controlled, no one was allowed to leave the house unnecessarily and especially not at the time of devotion, the brothers were allowed to go out mostly only in pairs and were strictly forbidden to break up or change partners in pairs afterwards, the prohibition of eating and drinking outside the convent was repeated, i. e. to spend free time in the company of lay people.

<sup>5</sup> Archivum Generale Ordinis Praedicatorum Roma, Sign. XIII 81545, Provincia Bohemiae, "Acta Capituli Provincialis" 1628, 1649, 1651, 1661; in a similar way Sign. III.26, "Acta Cap[ituli] Gen[er]alis" ab anno 1642 ad annum 1686" (1644, 1647, 1656, 1670, 1686); Sign. VI.123/2, "De apostatis et eiectis ab Ordine". See too FRÜHWIRT, Andreas – REICHERT, Benedictus Maria: *Acta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum VII. (1629–1656)*. Romae 1902, pp. 39–42 (1629, Nr. 5), 87–89 (1642, Nr. 3); VIII. (1670–1721). Romae 1903.

and then also fled, taking with him 100 gold pieces belonging to the Convent of Litoměřice. "When we learned of this," said the provincial, "we pursued him as far as the Saxon frontier, but could go no further." In 1655, the provincial issued a warning that a certain Father Raphael Hagetius was moving about Bohemia, even carrying weapons, and ordered anyone who came across him to bring him to justice and then to the penitentiary; but this brother, too, ended up in Dresden instead.<sup>6</sup> There are not many sources dedicated to these offenders, but the efforts to prevent them from leaving the Order and the country in every way possible are evidenced, for example, by two isolated letters from 1668 found in the Vatican archives,<sup>7</sup> and similar efforts to win back the "stray sheep" especially through higher ecclesiastical and secular officials, are evident elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps sufficiently well known is the case of the Dominican Georg Holyk, who fled abroad in September 1666 (after a first unsuccessful attempt less than a year earlier), the reflection on his intention to "leave the papacy" having been triggered, according to his testimony, by his reading of non-Catholic books (in addition to reading the Scriptures), memories of his childhood and perhaps of his deceased non-Catholic mother, as well as his experiences during his time with the Dominicans, especially related to the punishment of offenders, which he later recounted more than vividly in his strongly anti-Catholic books (but which at the same time raise strong doubts as to whether they were not purposely exaggerated or even entirely fabricated). However, Holyk did not renounce his spiritual work; he left the border with the idea that he would be able to work as a preacher for Bohemian exiles in Zittau. This did not come true, but thanks to his conversion and the support

<sup>6</sup> See SCHUNKA, Alexander: *Transgressionen. Revokationspredigten von Konvertiten im mitteldeutschen Raum im 17. Jahrhundert*. In: LOTZ-HEUMANN, Ute – MISSEFELDER, Jan-Friedrich – POHLIG, Matthias (eds.): *Konversion und Konfession in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Gütersloh 2007, pp. 491–516. To the conversion of the members of the orders already at the beginning of reformation SCHILLING, Johannes: "*Konversionen*" in der frühen Reformationszeit. In: NIEWÖHNER, Friedrich – RÄDLE, Fidel (eds.): *Konversionen im Mittelalter und in der Frühneuzeit*. Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 1999, pp. 43–57.

<sup>7</sup> Archivio Apostolico Vaticano Roma, Domenicani II, Fascicolo miscellaneo di lettere e documenti, Sign. 28 (two letters of 7 July 1668, trying to dissuade the Polish brother Franciscus Joan de Beczno or Leczna from leaving the order).

<sup>8</sup> E. g. WEINBERGER, Johannes: *Epitaphium positum, Per Curatorem Ecclesiae S[ancti] Walrici Ratisbonae. Anno M DC LXXXIIX. contra Johannem Baptistam Ferdinandum Franciscum Weinberger, de Hemmersdorff. ad S[anctam] fidem Evangelicam Neo-Convertum unā cum suo Anti-Epitaphio Autore Ejusdem De Hemmersdorff. Das ist: Grab-Schrifft, welche der Curat- oder Pastor zu S[anct] Walrich in Regensburg gemacht hat Anno 1688. wider Johann Baptist Ferdinand Frantz Weinberger von Hemmersdorff, zu Evangelischer Religion Neubekehrten samt Selbiger Widerlegung*. Leipzig (Wittigau) 1688 (Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel – forth HAB, Sign. Xb 125 (3); VD17 3:007252W).

of Prince August von Sachsen-Weissenfels, he gained a position as a preacher for the Bohemian exile community in Barby and Wespen near Magdeburg, which he soon lost due to his failure to fulfil his duties, and eventually settled in Riga and became famous as a publisher of gardening books. As one of the aforesaid punished delinquents, he recounted in his books the sufferings of one P. Dietel, who in the beginning of 1657 unsuccessfully attempted also to go to Saxony, but was detained and severely punished;<sup>9</sup> however, as the surviving records have shown, the reality did not correspond to Holyk's account (except that it did not correspond to Holyk's own punishment as he recounted it after his own failed attempt to escape), especially as regards the motives for the departure (Holyk omitted any mention of a certain "evil person named Veronika" with whom P. Dietel tried to run away), but also about the further fate of the Dominican in question, who later received a pardon (four years later he was appointed procurator for the entire Moravian province of the Order and later became prior of several Dominican convents). Another person, whose punishment G. Holyk described even more drastically, could not be traced at all.<sup>10</sup> These facts alone suggest that sources of this kind require increased criticism and caution.

However, departures from the Order abroad with subsequent conversion are also documented for members of other Orders from other countries, who can then be found among the authors of the so-called Revocation sermons (Revocations-Predigte, sometimes also Wiederrufs-Prediges), i. e. sermons in which their authors publicly recanted their Catholic confession and subscribed to the Protestant faith; the sermons also contain, albeit to varying degrees and extents, autobiographical elements or outright biographical details, the pur-

<sup>9</sup> HOLYK, Georg: *Päbstliche Geißel, Das ist Eine kurtze und warhafftige, aber betruete und traurige Erzehlung der vier erbaerrmlichen Plagen*. Wittenberg (Michael Meyer Wittib) 1673, f. 16v: "Als Ich allbereit schon in der *Dominicaner* oder *Prediger* Orden, in der Alten Stadt Prage lebete, und allda *Theologiam* studirte in *S[ancti] Aegidii Convent*, trug sich zu, dass ein Gelehrter Mann und Priester aus diesen *Prediger* Orden, welcher schon zum *Prior* in dem *Convent* Budweiss erwehlet war, davon gieng, dessen Nahme war *P[ate]r Dietel*. Dieser reisete gegen Sachsen zu, und war allbereit in der Stadt Bela, zwey Meilen von Leutmeritz, da hielt Er sich ein wenig auf, wurde aber durch Verrätherey von den Botten, die nachgeschicket waren, daselbst gefunden, erken[n]et, in die Hafft genommen, und nach Leutmeritz gefänglich eingebracht; Von dannen aber ward Er nach Prage geführt, und in das Gefängniß des obgenanten *S[ancti] Aegidii Convents*, als ein verlauffener von der Römisch-Catholischen Kirchen und seines Ordens, geworffen, welches man Ihn leichtlich erweisen kante daher, weil Er seine Reise nach Lutherischer Seiten und Landes zu genommen hette."

<sup>10</sup> RYANTOVÁ, Marie: *Zločin a trest dominikána Christophora Dietla v letech 1656 až 1660 – příklad dění v řeholní instituci a svědectví o něm v konfesijně rozděleném světě*. In: JORDÁNKOVÁ, Hana (ed.): *Alis volat propriis*. Sborník příspěvků k životnímu jubileu Ludmily Sulitkové. Brno 2016, pp. 354–370, 673–674.

pose of which (in addition to recounting various doubts) was to support the final decision to convert.<sup>11</sup> The sermons cover the period from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the first third of the eighteenth century, were most often delivered in Wittenberg and Leipzig, but also in other cities, and were published in print. Their existence reflects both the attractiveness of the Saxon area for exiles, not only from among non-Catholics, and its interest in them, and especially in clergymen, whose attraction for the evangelical authorities undoubtedly laid in the fact that they had already received a theological education (albeit an “unsuitable” one), while at the same time their conversion took on an additional, propagandistic significance and became an important part of the confessional struggles and polemics of the time. The sermons in question were thus delivered before large congregations (as is sometimes stated – although the figures are undoubtedly exaggerated), often contained various highly expressive expressions, and also lasted for quite a long time (the sermons are usually of considerable length, which raises doubts as to whether they were delivered in their complete form, but one of them explicitly states that it was held “Nachmittags, von 1. biss 4. Uhren”, and even in February).<sup>12</sup> It was thus essentially a staged public conversion. Among the authors of the conversion sermons we find Capuchins, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites,

<sup>11</sup> SCHUNKA, A.: *Transgressionen. Revokationspredigten von Konvertiten im mitteldeutschen Raum im 17. Jahrhundert*; RYANTOVÁ, Marie: *Raně novověká revokační kázání konvertitů k protestantismu*. Český časopis historický (forth ČČH), 113, 2015, Nr. 3, pp. 669–713.

<sup>12</sup> RUMMERSKIRCHEN, Theodor: *Vinea Deperdita, Das ist: Verderbter Weinberg, In einer Revocations-Predigt beschrieben, und in der löblichen Stadt Bielefeld, der Graffschafft Ravensberg, in grosser Versammlung Christlicher Gemein daselbst fürgetragen Von Theodoro Rummerskirchen, gewesenen Prediger- oder Dominicaner Münch. Rinteln (Lucius) 1655* (HAB Wolfenbüttel, Sign. J 301.4° Helmst. (15), VD17 23:272117H); the print of the sermon, which was delivered on 9 February 1655 (in winter!) in Bielefeld, is 108 pages long. Very interesting in this respect is the introduction to the reader in the print of the sermon of the former Cistercian Johann Martin Möller, delivered on 18 November 1731 in Old Hanover, where the author explicitly states that he wanted to convey in print in more detail what “due to the shortness of time” he could not deliver orally: “Ich habe demselben hiermit meine geringe Arbeit, als welche ich wegen kürze der Zeit nach allen Umständen nicht habe mündlich vortragen können, zum wenigsten im Druck etwas weitläufftiger communiciren und mittheilen wollen.” (p. 2). This sermon, however, already represents a kind of reverberation of earlier sermons and especially prints and has different features, lacking, for example, an opening dedication or benediction and especially a closing confession or appeal. See MÖLLER, Johannes Martinus: *Christi Weissagung so wohl von dem Gruel, als auch von dem Gericht Des Antichrists zeigte In einer christlichen Revocations-Predigt, An dem 26. Sonntage nach Trinitatis aus dem Matth. 24. und 25. 1731. In der Haupt-Kirche St. Georgii und Jacobi der Alten-Stadt Hannover Bey volck-reicher Versammlung und bey Gegenwart vieler Zuhörer Johannes Martinus Möller, vorzeiten Cistercienser-Ordens gewesener Professus. Hannover (Nicolaus Försten & Sohn) [1731]* (HAB, Sign. M: QuN 166.4 (14); VD18 11681764).

but also Jesuits or Cistercians, as well as other Catholic clergy, coming from various areas in the Empire, including Vienna and the Bohemian lands. It is to the examples of a few religious from the Bohemian lands that I would now like to focus my attention.

One of the earliest authors of these sermons was Gottfried (Godefridus) Rabe, a former Augustinian at St. Thomas in Prague, originally of German origin, who left his country for Würzburg. In 1582, at the age of about eighteen, he entered an Augustinian monastery, took his vows in May 1584, was ordained a priest in Freising three years later, and then celebrated his first Mass in Munich. In 1593 he became a preacher and a few years later came to Prague. However, according to his own words, he recognized the fallacy of the papal doctrine through his reading of the Scriptures, and when he found that he no longer wanted to endure the fallibility of the papacy, he decided to go to the Protestants, via Dresden to Wittenberg, where he went to the Evangelicals. In the presence of many university students and townspeople, he delivered a sermon on 26 April 1601 (*“Am Sontag Misericordias Domini”*) in which he critically attacked monastic vows, confession, the invocation of the saints, and the performance of Catholic services. In this case, as in the case of other converts, the real motives for leaving the order and converting remain hidden, but the rhetoric is repeated in subsequent sermons. Rabe’s sermon – forty pages long, with a foreword by the dean and the doctors of the Wittenberg theological faculty – was published in print in Wittenberg (separately and together with another Rabe’s sermon, no longer a revocation sermon, which was delivered on 18 May in the castle church there, but which also included *“anti-papal”* reservations),<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> RABE, Godefridus: *Christliche Revocation Predigt. Des Ehrwürdigen Godefridi Raben, Gewesenen Augustiner Münchs, und Predigers zu Prage bey S. Thomas auff der kleinen Seiten: In welcher er dem Römischen Bapstumb urlaub gegeben, desselben Abgöttereyen und Antichristischen geweltn, darin er zuvor gesteckt freywillig und öffentlichen widerrufen, und sich zu den Evangelischen Kirchen der Augspurgischen Confession bekennt hat; Gehalten in der Pfarrkirchen zu Wittemberg. Am Sontage Misericordias Domini, Anno 1601. Itzo ... in öffentlichen Druck verfertigt, mit einer Vorreden der Theologischen Facultet daselbst.* Wittenberg (Zacharias Lehmann) 1601 (HAB, Sign. A: 202.59 Quod. (11), H: J 12.4° Helmst. (8), H 222.4° Helmst. (10); VD17 23:249384N, VD17 23:262001X; dále i VD17 3:307192Y, VD17 3:308626Q, VD17 1:076273L, VD17 12:623938U, VD17 32:628950T, VD17 14:679321U); <https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/22863/3/0/> [cit. 31. 10. 2021]. Another separate edition in 1601 by Lehmann and Helwich (VD17 14:679321U, VD17 12:623938U); *Zwo Christliche Revocation Predigten ... in welcher er dem Römischen Bapstumb urlaub gegeben, ... des ... Godefridi Raben.* Wittenberg (Zacharias Lehmann) 1601 (HAB, Sign. H: T 341.4° Helmst. (3), VD17 23:331956E); RABE, Godefridus: *Eine Christliche Predigt, Vom Gebet, Vber das Euangelium am Sontage Vocem Iucunditatis, Johann. am 16. Gehalten in der Schloßkirchen zu Wittemberg, ... den 18. Maii, Anno 1601. Durch Herrn Gottfried Raben, gewesen Augustiner Münch zu Prage.* Wittenberg (M. Georg Müller) [1601] (HAB, Sign. H: T 341.4° Helmst. (3), VD17 23:331956E, VD17 23:249374F).

but then in the same year in Lauingen,<sup>14</sup> Magdeburg,<sup>15</sup> Erfurt,<sup>16</sup> Mühlhausen,<sup>17</sup> Nuremberg,<sup>18</sup> Hildesheim,<sup>19</sup> Stuttgart<sup>20</sup> and Leipzig<sup>21</sup> (the VD17 database lists 29 titles!). The propagandistic use of Rabe's case is thus more than obvious, and was challenged by the author of the polemical essay, respectively. The author of the pamphlet was the alleged theology student Theodor Cycneus (or Cygnaeus), in fact Valentin Leucht (1550–1619), at that time already a canon and parish priest in Frankfurt am Main.<sup>22</sup> He did not spare the theologians of Wittenberg, who, according to him, “caught an excellent bird” (Rabe = raven, rook), called him noble and blessed, gave him books to read, had him deliver a sermon and then ordered them to be printed in every possible place, “damit

<sup>14</sup> RABE, Godefridus: *Christliche Revocation Predigt, des Ehrwürdigen Godefridi Raben, Gewessnen Augustiner Münchs, vnnd Predigers zu Prag bey S. Thomas auff der kleinen Seiten. In welcher er dem Römischen Bapstumb vrlaub gegeben, desselben Abgöttereyen vnd Antichristischen Greweln, darinn er zuuor gesteckt, freywillig vnd öffentlich widerruffen, vnnd sich zu der Evangelischen Kirchen der Augspurgischen Confession bekannt hat: Gehalten in der Pfarrkirchen zu Wittenberg, Am Sontag Misericordias Domini, Anno 1601. Jetzo ... inn öffentlichen Druck verfertigt, mit einer Vorred der Theologischen Facultet daselbst. Lauingen 1601 (Gedruckt erstlich zu Wittemberg, bey Zacharias Lehman: setz wider nachgedruckt zu Laugingen in der Pfaltzgräuischen Druckerey, Anno M.DCI.) (HAB, Sign. A: 466.47 Theol. (3), A: 435.13 Theol. (10), A: 230.49 Theol. (6), A: 511.57 Theol. (11), A: 128.15 Theol. (14), A: 202.59 Quod. (10), H: H 222.4° Helmst. (10), H: J 12.4° Helmst. (7); VD17 23:634156F, VD17 23:631741F, VD17 23:328437Z, VD17 23:323724Q).*

<sup>15</sup> Magdeburg (Johan Francke) 1601 (HAB, Sign. M: Tm Kapsel 4 (28), H: S 65.4° Helmst. (9); VD17 3:315392D, VD17 3:304062L).

<sup>16</sup> Erfurt (Wittel) 1601 (VD17 547:689805S).

<sup>17</sup> Mühlhausen (Spieß) 1601 (HAB, Sign. M: QuN 1122 (3), A: 236.3 Theol. (10); VD17 23:330495S).

<sup>18</sup> Nürnberg (Wagenmann) 1601 (HAB, Sign. A: 500 Theol. (25), 128.15 Theol. (13); VD17 12:113317B, VD17 39:136118T; dále VD17 12:206628U, VD17 3:613831G, VD17 1:076307A), other edition from the same year by Knorr (VD17 14:083836E).

<sup>19</sup> Hildesheim (Hantzsch) 1601 (HAB, Sign. Xb 10048; VD17 23:732107Z); <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/xb-10048/start.htm> [cit. 31. 10. 2021].

<sup>20</sup> Stuttgart (Fürster) 1601 (VD17 12:623965R).

<sup>21</sup> Leipzig (Gaubisch) 1601 (HAB, Sign. A: 435.10 Theol. (8), A: 110 Quod. (7); VD17 23:000431N; dále VD17 3:303836L, VD17 32:693224S).

<sup>22</sup> CYCNEUS, Theodor: *Kurtzer doch Gründtlicher Gegenbericht, auff dess Gottfrid Raben, eines aussgesprungenen Augustiner Münchs Reuocation Predigt. Mit welchem die wittenbergische Theologi so hoch prangen, alss ob sie einen vortrefflichen Vogel gefangen, und herrlichen Mann bekommen hetten. In welchem so wol dess Raben, als der Wittenbergischen Theologen grewel unnd bawfellige sachen für die Augen gestelt werden. Jetzo allen guthertzigen Christen zur besserer Nachrichtung in öffentlichen Druck verfertigt. Durch Theodorum Cycneum Theol[ogie] Studio-sum. Mainz [Frankfurt/Main] (Stein) 1601 (HAB, Sign. 466.47 Theol. (5), VD17 12:110638A; also VD17 547:682859Z, VD17 12:112053B). To the author LThK 6, 1997, col. 861 – already from 1593/94 the author cooperated with the Imperial and Apostolic Book Commission at the Frankfurt Fair and from 1597 was its head.*



ja alle Landt und Leut erfahren, und männiglich wissen möge, was für ein grosses wunderwerck sich zu Wittemberg begeben unnd zugetragen." Cycneus/Leucht also commented on Rabe's origins and earlier behavior, especially in the Augustinian monastery in Würzburg, where Rabe was said to have had a secret liaison with a certain maiden (a popular *topoi* heard on both sides), i. e. Rabe is said to have molested two young maids and then run away with the daughter of the court drabant. The dispute continued and other authors, one allegedly from Prague, became involved, but as in other cases, the fate of G. Rabe is unknown.

Another of the clergymen who had left Bohemia for the frontier also delivered his sermon in Wittenberg. This was the former Franciscan and preacher in Pilsen Raimund(us) Rzimsky, who has recently been the subject of Prof. Václav Bok's research,<sup>23</sup> but we do not have much information about him either. Judging by his surname and the fact that he preached in the Týn Cathedral in 1631 (at the time of the Saxon invasion), he was probably a Bohemian, unlike G. Rabe, and he knew Czech, although he could have preached in German as well; however, he was certainly bilingual in Pilsen, which is evidenced by the quality of his German. He entered the Franciscan Order perhaps in the second decade of the seventeenth century in Jindřichův Hradec, where he also seems to have participated – at least according to his own words – in the persecution of non-Catholics. After that he spent some time in Rome and probably sometime in the first half of the 1620s he came to Pilsen, where he left between 1628 and 1630 from. In 1628 he apparently experienced a general visitation of the Bohemian Franciscan province, carried out by the papal commissioner Ambrosius a Galbiato, which revealed various evils, so that the Franciscans themselves protested against it, but the intervention of the monarch eventually led to an agreement; for R. Rzimsky himself, however, the conclusions of the visitation may have been the decisive impetus for his departure. His fate thereafter was similar to that of the other escaped religious: he won the favour of one of the rulers, the Margrave of Brandenburg, Christian von Brandenburg-Kulmbach (1603–1655), and through him also of the Elector of Saxony, John George, after which he became an Electoral Alumnus at Wittenberg, where he studied for about a year and delivered his revocation sermon on 27 April 1631. This had been published in print before (with a dedication to the Elector of Saxony dated 17 April),<sup>24</sup> and again in

<sup>23</sup> Bok, Václav: *Raimund Římský, plzeňský františkán a luterský konvertita*. In: LINDA, Jaromír – JANEČKOVÁ, Jitka – JELEN, Jiří – BENDO VÁ, Lenka (eds.): *Habent sua fata bibliothecarii*. Věnováno PhDr. Ilovi Šedovi. Plzeň 2019, pp. 49–63.

<sup>24</sup> RZIMSKY, Raimundus: *Sanctitas Papae-Monastica. Raimundi Rzimsky, Gewesenen Franciscanern Münchs, im Kloster zu Pilsen in Böhmen, Christliche Revocation-Predigt: darinnen er dem Antichristlichen Bapsthumb Uhrlaub gegeben, und sich zu der Uhalten, Apostolischen, Catholischen*

1634 and 1649.<sup>25</sup> Thanks to these and other prints, at least some additional information is available in this case: after the departure of the Saxon troops, R. Rzimsky was in Dresden in 1639 (where he published another writing), and from 1646 he was a preacher in the infantry regiment of the Swedish general Johann Christoph Königsmark, although he probably did not go to Prague with him, but stayed in northern Germany, where his trace ends precisely in connection with the third edition of his 1649 sermon in Rinteln. The sermon of Rzimski also shows typical features of the genre: it contains criticism of the Catholic interpretation of the Bible, the violation of the commandments by monks (with special emphasis on the sixth commandment), the veneration of the Virgin Mary and the saints, the veneration of their images, the popes, etc., it is critical of various religious issues, and it supplements the text with a considerable number of quotations from Scripture and various literature. There were, of course, no polemical reactions to Rzimsky's sermons (this was no longer common in later times), but even this time the text raises doubts about the credibility of the information presented, or – as the preface by the Wittenberg theologian Johann Hülsemann suggests – it did raise them at the time of its composition, even on the Protestant side.

The third monk who worked in the Bohemian lands before his departure, namely in Český Krumlov and Kladsko/Glatz, was Walther Busch, a Franciscan monk, “der H[eiligen] Schrift Doctor und gewesener Lector”, who, however, came from Münster and is therefore again evidence of the international composition of religious orders. He delivered his evocation sermon on 28 May 1649 in Leipzig, speaking of Lazarus and justifying the poverty of those who

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*Evangelischen Kirchen, Augspurgischer Confession, begeben. Gehalten im Jahr 1631. Am Sontage Quasimodogeniti ... in der Pfarrkirch zu Wittenberg. Sampt einer Vorrede Johannis Hülsemanni, der H. Schrift Doctoris und Professoris publici. Wittenberg (Hake) 1631 (VD17 1:077050T); [https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN605622582&PHYSID=PHYS\\_0005&DMDID](https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN605622582&PHYSID=PHYS_0005&DMDID) [cit. 31. 10. 2021].*

<sup>25</sup> RZIMSKY, Raimundus: *Thesaurus Nominis Jesu preciosissimus. Das ist, Das aller-Edelste thewreste Kleinod des allerwürdigsten und hoch-heiligsten Namens Jesu: aus der unergründlichen un[d] unerforschlichen Schatz-Kam[m]er, der Liebe, Gnade und Barmhertzigkeit Gottes des himmlischen Vaters, heraus genom[m]en, und in demselben hoch-heiligsten Nahmen, allen recht-gläubigen Evangelischen Herten, zu einem Newen Jahrs Geschenk verehret. Durch Raimundum Rzimsky, des hochlöbliche[n] ihr Exc. Herrn General Leutenambts von Königsmarck Regiments zu Fuß bestallte[n] Feld-Predigern un[d] Seelsorgern. Hamburg (Rebenlein) 1646 (VD17 19:739082P); Id.: *Christliche Motiven oder Ursachen, Warumb Raimundus Rzimsky, gewesener Papistischer Prediger zu Pilsen im Kloster, Das Geistliche Babylon, Oder Abgöttische Pabstthumb, dero falsche Lehre, durch die Gnade Gottes verlassen, und sich zu der uhralten Catholisch- und Apostolischen Kirchen begeben: Durch eine Widerruffs-Predigt zu Wittenbergk bey ansehnlich- und volkreicher Gemeine, geprediget und vorgetragen. Sampt einer Vorrede ... Johannis Hülsemanni, SS. Th. D. & P. P. Rintheln an der Weser (Lucius) 1649 (VD17 23:326305A).**

had chosen the true faith, so that they had to take on material deprivation as part of this.<sup>26</sup> The reference to poverty was not accidental: Busch also referred to the situation of would-be converts and converts in Saxony, who had to give up their possessions and depend largely on Saxon care for the poor, or it was their demand for alms that he wanted to justify their emigration and conversion.<sup>27</sup>

In their sermons, the above-mentioned monks mostly justified their departure to Protestant areas and the associated abandonment of their orders and subsequent conversion mainly by their reservations towards the Catholic confession. Efforts to break away from the rules of the order, which were perceived as binding, undoubtedly played a role, and it was not uncommon to hear reservations about celibacy (and the perversity thereof) in revocation sermons, and early marriage was not an exception (although some stressed that the reason for their conversion was not the desire to marry, or strongly objected to such accusations). Conversion to Protestantism could thus be not only a liberation from the “wrong” denomination, but also a personal liberation, which, however, had its limits even in the new conditions. However, the real motives for the departure and conversion of the original religious, and even more so their experience of it, remain hidden. Most of the time, the further fate of the converts is not well known, nor is it known how they were integrated into their new environment or how they were accepted by it, etc. However, despite their specificity, the revocation sermons are one of the few sources from which information can be obtained about the more detailed circumstances surrounding the change of religion, or about the personal reasons that led to it or contributed to it, or at least how they were declared.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> BUSCH, Waltherus: *Clypeus Veritatis Evangelicae, Das ist: Erleuchtung- und Revocations-Predigt, Nach dem der Author Waltherus Busch, gewesener Franciscaner Münch, in die dreyzehnen Jahr, der H[eiligen] Schrift Doctor und gewesener Lector: Prediger zu Crumaw in Böhmen, und Glatz, beneben auch Gwardian daselbst, durch sonderliche Gnade und Erleuchtung des H[eiligen] Geistes, sich aus dem Pöbstischen Irrweg zum Liecht des heiligen Evangelii funden hat. Zu Leipzig in Meissen, in Gegenwart und grosser Frequentz so wol in- als ausländischer Personen gehalten, und Diesem nach in öffentlichen Druck zu männigliches Wissenschaft an Tage gegeben. Gehalten den Montag nach dem ersten Sontag Trinitatis, welcher war der 28. Mäy, veteris styli des laufenden Jahrs 1649. Leipzig (Scheibe) – Freiberg (Beuther) 1649 (HAB, Sign. A: 280.19 Theol. (4), J 323.4° Helmst. (11), VD17 23:272560K); Leipzig (Scheibe – Köler) 1649 (HAB, Sign. 177.10 Theol. (2); VD17 23:324538V). See also the digital copy: <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/280-19-theol-4s/start.htm> [cit. 31. 10. 2021].*

<sup>27</sup> SCHUNKA, A.: *Transgressionen. Revokationspredigten von Konvertiten*, p. 500.

<sup>28</sup> ULMER, Bernd: *Konversionserzählungen als rekonstruktive Gattung, Erzählerische Mittel und Strategien bei der Rekonstruktion eines Bekehrungserlebnisses*. Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 17, 1988, pp. 19–33; Id.: *Die autobiographische Plausibilität von Konventionserzählungen*. In: SPARN, Walter (ed.): *Wer schreibt meine Lebensgeschichte? Biographie, Autobiographie, Hagiographie*

However, even in this case, or even more so, it is true that “one must allow for (auto)biographical stylization in the personal testimonies of converts”, and it must be remembered that “the sum total of the real motives for changing religion ... were rarely identical to those that were consciously captured or applied” (T. Winkelbauer).<sup>29</sup> In addition to the already mentioned propaganda function of the revocation sermons, it is necessary to take into account not only the individual differences of the converts (and the different degrees of acceptance of the new denomination and, in particular, the different degrees of detachment from the original denomination), but also their difficult personal situation, leading to emergency action or directly to the application of a form of “survival strategy”.

## SUMMARY

### *THE ROAD TO FREEDOM?*

#### *THE CONVERSION OF MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS TO PROTESTANTISM*

The contribution draws attention to members of ecclesiastical orders who left the Bohemian Lands after White Mountain and consequently underwent conversion. The situation of ecclesiastical orders in general was closely linked with this phenomenon, which did not in the end achieve too widespread expansion. Many monastic institutions in the Bohemian Lands met with difficult developments in the Hussite and post-Hussite period and consequently experienced a deep crisis in the Early Modern Period. This also concerned the Order of Preachers, in other words, the Dominicans. One of the renegade members of this order was Jiří Holík, who fled over the border in September of the year 1666, and even obtained the position of preacher to the Bohemian exile community, which he, however, quickly lost due to failure to meet his

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und ihre Entstehungszusammenhänge. Gütersloh 1990, pp. 287–295; BREMER, Kai: *Conversus, confirma fratres tuos. Zum “Ich” in Konversionsberichten in den ersten Jahrzehnten nach der Reformation*. *Zeitenblicke*, 1, 2002, Nr. 2, <http://www.zeitenblicke.de/2002/02/bremer/index.html> [cit. 31. 10. 2021]; generally to Ego-documents SCHULZE, Winfried: *Ego-Dokumente. Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*. Berlin 1996 (Selbstzeugnisse der Neuzeit 2).

<sup>29</sup> WINKELBAUER, Thomas: *Konfese a konverze. Šlechtické proměny vyznání v českých a rakouských zemích od sklonku 16. do poloviny 17. století*. ČČH, 98, 2000, pp. 476–541, there p. 493. Similarly SCHUNKA, A.: *Transgressionen. Revokationspredigten von Konvertiten*, p. 507: “Die inneren Antriebe, die zu einem Übertritt von einer Konfession in die andere führen, lassen sich abseits rhetorischer Formalia und äußerer Selbstdarstellung in letzter Konsequenz nicht erhellen. Dies kann den Leser von Konversionsberichten mitunter ebenso ratlos zurücklassen wie manche Zeitgenossen.”

duties. He published a range of non-Catholic books and finally settled in Riga and achieved fame as the author of books dedicated to gardening.

Departures across the border from Church orders, with consequent conversion, are also attested to for members of other orders, who can later be found among the authors of so-called revocation preaching (Revocations-Predigte, sometimes also Wiederrufs-Predigte), in other words, preaching in which the authors publicly renounced their Catholic faith and declared their conversion to the Evangelical confession. The study presents three of them: the former Prague Augustinian Gottfried (Godefridus) Rabe, the Franciscan and preacher in Plzeň Raimund(us) Rzimsky and the Český Krumlov functioning Franciscan Walther Busch. These clergymen mostly later justified their departure to the Protestant regions and the related abandonment of their relevant order and conversion by objections to the Catholic confession. A role could have undoubtedly been played, however, by attempts to avoid the rules of the order, understood as being of a binding nature. Conversion to Protestantism could therefore be not only a liberation from 'incorrect' confessions, but also a personal liberation, which of course had its limits under the new conditions. The actual motives for the departure and conversion of the original monastics and their actual experiences have remained, however, hidden.

**Keywords:** Church Orders, Exiles, Apostates, Conversion, Dominicans, Revocation Preaching, Augustinians, Franciscans, Jiří Holík, Godefridus Rabe, Raimundus Rzimsky, Walther Busch

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