

# **The Monastery and Library of St. George's in Prague: Liturgy, Music, Art and Manuscripts in their European Setting**

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**Sunday, July 17 Arrival**

**Monday, July 18**

**8:00–9:00 Breakfast for Participants staying at Villa Lana**

**9:00–9:45 Introduction I: Context and Historical Foundations**

Jiří Fajt (Berlin/Prague) [jiri.fajt@t-online.de](mailto:jiri.fajt@t-online.de): **The Monastery of St. George's in its Bohemian Context**

**9:45–10:15 Coffee**

**10:15–11:45 Introduction II**

Renata Modroková (Prague) [Renata.Modrakova@nkp.cz](mailto:Renata.Modrakova@nkp.cz): ***Bibliotheca et scriptorium monasterii sancti Georgii in castro Pragensi***

The Benedictine St. George's Convent at the Prague Castle has owned interesting manuscripts and printed artefacts during the eight hundred years of its existence. The unique collection of St. George's manuscripts preserved especially in the historical collections of the National Library of the Czech Republic presents the culturally interesting and rich life of this leading Bohemian convent. As part of an extent research, the St. George's Library was reconstructed, focusing mainly on medieval manuscripts. Knowledge of the scriptorium, which was active in this monastery from the eighties of the thirteenth century until the second half of the following century, also continuously deepened. This time, the famous so-called Passional of Abbess Kunhuta will be left out and attention will be paid to other key manuscripts and personalities who participated in their creation.

Karel Pacovsky (Prague) [karel.pacovsky@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:karel.pacovsky@ff.cuni.cz): **The Canons of St. George's Abbey at Prague Castle**

Benedictine nuns were not the sole users of the church of St. George at Prague Castle. In the later Middle Ages, the liturgical life of the conventual church was also governed by a group of nine clerics, the so-called St. George's canons. Although they shared many features with members of "standard" collegiate chapters, others made them very different, e. g. no other canons in Bohemia were subordinated to a woman (in this case to the abbess of St. George's convent). The beginnings as well as the decline of this organized group of clerics were not yet clearly clarified. A memorial book of the canons written in the 1350s (Czech National Library, XIII A 2) is the only surviving source describing their activities in detail. Although it deepens our knowledge about their role in the daily life of the abbey, it also raises new questions. The manuscript reflects certain changes in the position of St. George's canons in the mid-14th century and together with other sources, it shows that their tasks were not always the same.

**12:00–1:00 Lunch** **CAN WE HAVE LUNCH THIS EARLY?**

**1:00–2:30 Liturgy & Music at the Convent of St. George's in Prague I**

**David Eben (Prague)** [david.eben@ff.cuni.cz](mailto:david.eben@ff.cuni.cz): *Siehe, so leuchtet der Morgenstern: Die Offizien der heiligen Ludmilla im mittelalterlichen Böhmen* Der Kult eines Heiligen entfaltet sich in der Regel am intensivsten an seinem Grab. Der Fall der heiligen Ludmila bildet in diesem Sinne keine Ausnahme. Das Prager St. Georgskloster, wo die Heilige im Jahr 925 nach ihrer Überführung aus Tetín feierlich bestattet wurde, spielt eine zentrale Rolle in dieser Entwicklung. Die Benediktinerinnen von St. Georg fühlten sich mit Recht als Hüter dieser wertvollen Reliquien und es ist sicher weitgehend ihr Verdienst, dass Ludmila schliesslich im 14. Jahrhundert ihren festen Platz im Böhmischem Pantheon einnahm. In der bisherigen musikwissenschaftlichen Forschung ist das Offizium der hl. Ludmila nicht unbekannt. Die Geschichte des Repertoires ist aber relativ kompliziert, und viele Fragen sind nach wie vor offen, insbesondere die der Datierung und des Ursprungs des Offiziums. In diesem Beitrag möchte ich die einzelnen Schichten des Repertoires unterscheiden und mit einigen neuen Erkenntnissen zur aktuellen Diskussion beitragen.

**Anna Žáková (Prague)** [annazak@hotmail.fr](mailto:annazak@hotmail.fr): *Liber Ordinarius – the Mirror of Liturgical Life* The library of Saint-George's monastery includes several dozen liturgical books. These contain liturgical repertory in either notated or written form. The *Liber Ordinarius* (XIII E 14d), a codex copied around 1350 that I would like to present is, however, particular. It offers an overview of the entire liturgical life of the monastery within one liturgical year. This is due to the composition of the manuscript, which includes not only the incipits of most of the repertory (chants, psalms, readings, and prayers) but also directions on how to organize the celebrations, especially if these are specific for a particular feast. This enables us to learn about the liturgical

habits and, above all, some of the rituals conducted in the Prague convent as well as to list the entire musical repertory of its liturgical life. This means that the manuscript's principal documentary interest is liturgical and musicological in nature. The manuscript's composition and the way in which it is written indicate the importance of some feasts as well as the emphasis put on particular celebrations, which in turn allow one to distinguish the spiritual focus of the nuns. Study of its Sanctorale permits one to identify which feasts were subsequently added to the celebration. Analysis of script forms permits observation of some specific features of performance. Moreover, it will be proposed that the manuscript is possibly related to a group of southern German *libri ordinarii*. The presentation reflects work in progress.

### **2:30–3:00 Coffee**

### **3:00–5:15 Liturgy & Music at the Convent of St. George's in Prague II**

**Lucie Trnková (Prague) and Samuel Škoviera (Prague): Das Offiziumsrepertoire des St. Georgsklosters: Der Herbst-Teil des Sanktorale** Im ausgehenden 13. Jahrhundert wurde das Repertoire des St. Georgsklosters in einer Serie von Kodizes niedergeschrieben. Das Offizium des gesamten Kirchenjahres wurde in drei Abschnitte, bzw. Bände unterteilt. Für den letzten Abschnitt – von Pfingsten bis zum Abschluss des Kirchenjahres – haben wir sogar drei Handschriften zur Verfügung, die grösstenteils parallel sind. Alle drei wurden bereits in der Datei Fontes Cantus Bohemiae inventarisiert. In diesem Beitrag möchten wir uns auf die Aussage dieser drei Handschriften konzentrieren, mit besonderem Fokus auf das Sanktorale. Weitere Fragen betreffen die Beziehungen zwischen den drei Handschriften: wir können ihre relative Chronologie und auch bestimmte Tendenzen in der Entwicklung des Repertoires feststellen, die sich in diesen Quellen abzeichnet.

**Margot Fassler (Notre Dame, In) [margot.fassler@nd.edu](mailto:margot.fassler@nd.edu): The Magdalene at St. George's**  
The presentation examines the Magdalene in the office books from St. George's in the context of the saints' dramatic appearances. In conclusion, I will speculate about what regional sequences would have likely been sung at the monastery.

**Hana Vlhová-Wörner (Prague/Basel) [vlhova@mua.cas.cz](mailto:vlhova@mua.cas.cz): Tropes to the *Benedicamus domino* at St. George's**

Within the rich spectrum of music documents coming from medieval Bohemia, the corpus of tropes that survived in manuscripts from St George's convent at the Prague Castle stands today as the most important collection. Forty-two tropes to the *Benedicamus domino* appear in manuscripts from the monastery, most of them compiled at the end of the thirteenth and the

first decades of the fourteenth century. Regarding chants origins, there are pieces that were circulating in the wider Central European territory, tropes that had their origins in the West, and quite a number of the chants survived only in St George's manuscripts and might have originated here or in its closer milieu. The use of tropes to *Benedicamus domino* is documented also in books with private prayers, indicating that complementary chants also had educational purpose.

**19:30: Dinner at Fiat 21** **HAVE WE MADE A RESERVATION? FOR HOW MANY?**

**Tuesday, July 19**

**8:00–9:00 Breakfast for Participants staying at Villa Lana**

**9:00–10:30 Case Studies from Other Monasteries in Bohemia and Beyond**

**Maria Theisen (Vienna)** [Maria.Theisen@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:Maria.Theisen@oeaw.ac.at): **Three Illuminated Breviaries for an Abbess of St. George's Monastery on Hradcany** Kunhuta (before 1350-1401) from the noble family of Kolovrat - her grandfather had been in the service of the Bohemian queen - was to pursue a monastic career. She lived in the convent of the Sisters of St George together with her aunt Agnes and Anna, one of her cousins. Agnes presumably took over the supervision of her two nieces, who were trained for their life as future nuns already at an early age at the convent school. Kunhuta (Kunka) is mentioned as member of the convent as early as 1367 and was elected their abbess in 1386. Her presence and active role at the coronation ceremony for King Wenceslas IV's second wife Sophie of Bavaria in March 1400 – according to Charles' IV coronation ordo – was certainly another highlight of her life. Kunka died in December 1401, after living in the convent for about 35 years. An unusually large number of manuscripts, namely three illuminated Latin codices can still be attributed to Kunka's personal possession today. They all show her with her coat of arms worshipping the Mother of God. Interestingly, these three valuable codices are grouped chronologically around the years 1386-1390, when she was installed as abbess against the opposition of her predecessor Catherine of Lipoltic (died 1390 in Rome): A breviary very probably written for her shortly before 1386 (NK, XIII E 14a), another breviary written around 1386 but before the introduction of the "Visitatio Mariae" as a feast day in the same year (NK, XIII E 1), and an old psalmodia (with breviary and German additions) from Regensburg, which must have been adapted for the abbess after 1386 (Vienna, Cod. 1939). On the basis of these manuscripts and their illuminations, an attempt will be made to shed light on Kunka's time in the monastery of St. George - a monastic institution of noble women with close ties to the royal court, the Archbishop of Prague and the Pope.

**Juliette Calvarin (Berlin) [jcalvarin@g.harvard.edu](mailto:jcalvarin@g.harvard.edu): The Marian Chasuble from Rokycany, the Library of the Augustinian Canons, and the Question of the “devotio moderna”**

The Marian chasuble from Rokycany has previously been discussed in connection with the so-called Bohemian *devotio moderna*. The apparently naturalistic image of the naked Christ child fits traditional art-historical models for art of this movement, and the Augustinian canons of the Roudnice reform, to which Rokycany belonged, have been seen as key protagonists of its Bohemian development. Recent historical work, however, has changed the way that this movement is perceived (Gerwing 2004, Hledíková 2006, Machilek 2006), providing accounts independent of the Netherlandish *devotio*. It is thus necessary to reconsider Rokycany – both the community and the chasuble – in light of this new understanding. Apart from the chasuble, Rokycany’s most well-known work of art, the primary other witness to the community is its library. Some 56 codices of this library survive, likely a fourth to a third of the total. From those codices emerges an image of an intellectual and spiritual life close to what might expect from Hledíková's work. On the one hand, the Augustinian canons' library included some devotional monastic literature, with a significant focus on the Victorine school. On the other, they included a great deal of preaching material, both in the form of sermons and of mnemonic catechitical texts, some of it in the Czech vernacular. Notes added to flyleaves and the ends of quires further testify to the community's active engagement with pastoral care, as well as with practical liturgical questions. This apparently dual picture does seem to correspond to "new devotion" of the fourteenth century. In this paper, I shall provide case studies of exemplary codices from the Rokycany library, focusing especially on collections and marginalia, to reach a view of the community’s religious and pastoral preoccupations; in closing I will suggest how this can provide a re-contextualization for the chasuble.

**10:30–11:00 Coffee**

**11:00–11:45 Mercedes Perez Vidal (Oviedo) [mercedespvidal@gmail.com](mailto:mercedespvidal@gmail.com): From East to West: Travelling Relics, Texts and Images in Late Medieval Iberia”**

I will deal here with two objects. Both of them contain relics, both of them come from a Cistercian nunnery in the Iberian Peninsula, and both of them are multi-layered artefacts which remain intriguing in many regards. The first is an unnoticed reliquary diptych preserved at the Cistercian monastery of las Huelgas (Burgos), the second a portable altar now at the Museu Nacional de Machado de Castro (Coimbra). The diptych is a hybrid object, with some illuminated fragments attached to a wooden structure, whose origin and chronology are still matter of controversy. It has been considered a donation of Violant of Aragon (1236-1301), queen of Castile, and daughter of James I of Aragon and Yolande of Hungary. However, the iconography and style indicate that at least the illuminated fragment is clearly later, and it seems obvious that was not made for Las Huelgas but more likely for a Dominican female

foundation in the context of the Observant reform. Indeed, among the Dominican saints depicted we find Helen of Hungary, with the *stigmata*, whose devotion seem to have been promoted in the context of the Observant reform at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and not before. The earliest known copies of the life of Helen were copied together with the *Legenda maior* of Catherine of Siena at the *scriptorium* of Tommaso da Siena in Venice. Typologically the reliquary shares some similarities with other objects such as the so-called diptych of Andrew III made around 1290–1296, probably in Venice. This was donated by queen Agnes of Hungary to Königsfelden, and the object now at Las Huelgas could have been as well a gift by a female benefactor of this monastery. However, their material features and chronology clearly differ. A deeper analysis of Las Huelgas diptych would be necessary to offer more precise conclusions about its origin, about the multilevel network through which it came to this royal Cistercian abbey. Moreover, it will contribute to the debate on the circulation of manuscript copies of the *Legenda maior* in the Iberian Peninsula in the 15<sup>th</sup> century before the printed versions of the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The second artefact, the portable altar, comes from another Cistercian aristocratic foundation, Santa María de Lorvão in Portugal. In this case, we know the commissioner or donor, the abbess Catarina d’Eça (c. 1471–1521), as stated by an inscription that runs through all the sides of the altar. The same inscription lists all the pieces donated by this abbess to Lorvão in 1514, among which an important relic of the Lignum Crucis and several *ornamenta ecclesiae* are included. These objects were key elements in the liturgical performances in this monastery and theoretically reserved for priestly manipulation. Although in this case the origin of this object seems to be clearer, we know little about the circumstances of its production and circulation. The analysis of its own material features, in combination with other liturgical items and written sources commissioned or made during Catarina de Eça’s leadership, can shed light into these matters as well as on the use of this artefact. An important point is that to read the complete dedicatory inscription, the altar needed to be held and manipulated. Both the diptych and the portable altar raise questions related to their use and display, to their audience, to the nuns’ sensorial interaction with them (through sight, touch, and smell). Thus, this paper aims to explore not only the origin and pathways of portability of these objects, but also their function and sensorial nature, i.e., the way they were seen, held, and touched.

**12:00–1:00 Lunch**

**1:00–1:30 Transfer to Clementinum** **HAVE WE CHECKED THAT THIS TIME IS OK WITH RENATA?**

**1:30–15:30 Presentation of Library of St. George’s I**

**15:30–16:00 Coffee at Clementinum** **DOES THIS NEED TO BE ARRANGED?**

**16:00–17:00 Presentation of Library of St. George's II**

**18:00: Departure from library; no organized dinner**

**Wednesday, July 20**

**8:00–9:00 Breakfast for Participants staying at Villa Lana**

**9:00–10:30 The Visual Culture of the Convent**

**Jan Dienstbier (Prague) [dienstbier@udu.cas.cz](mailto:dienstbier@udu.cas.cz): Romanesque Wall-paintings in the Churches of St. George and Their Functions**

The paper focuses on the iconography, stylistic features, and functions of the wall paintings in the Church of St. George at Prague Castle. The fragmentarily preserved murals, largely neglected in the English-language literature, were created in several stages from the mid-12th century, when the monastery church was extensively rebuilt after the devastating fire of 1141, to the first half of the 13th century. The paintings seem to be related to the liturgy in the monastery, which holds especially for the images of the heavenly Jerusalem in the vaults of the eastern choir and in the south chapel. Both Jerusalems probably coincide with the church's function as a burial place of the ruling family and the prayers for the dead performed by the nuns. Even some other murals in the church, such as the large scene of St. Christopher with an unusually placed scene from the life of St. Blaise, suggests their relation to nuns and their spiritual needs. However, is there some evidence for these hypotheses? I will seek answers to this question in the incomplete data about the daily service of the nuns surviving in the manuscript of the *Liber ordinarius* from the 14th century.

**Lenka Panušková (Prague): Passionale [lenka.panuskova@gmail.com](mailto:lenka.panuskova@gmail.com): Picturing the Passion: Devotional Strategies in the Passional of the Abbess Cunigonde**

The Passional of the Abbess Cunigonde, an early 14th-century Bohemian manuscript, is a highly decorated book with strong connections among its texts and the illuminations. It comprises various texts on the Passion of Christ and the history of salvation compiled by a Dominican friar Colda of Coldice. Thus, it is not a passional in the proper meaning of the term; rather, the manuscript presents a devotional book that originated for the Benedictine nunnery at the Prague Castle. Apart from the illuminations adjacent to the text columns, the codex includes two full-page depictions of the *Arma Christi* that are central to my talk. The first one, announced by a titulus (*Hic este clipeus. Arma insignia invictissimi militis qui cognominatus est*

*victor cum quinque vulneribus. Fultus lancea decoratusque corona*), presents a shield dominated by Christ's cross, which bears all the five wounds of the Savior and is decorated by the crown of thorns. In contrast to the symbolical value of the opening illumination, in the second image, the bodily suffering of Christ is shown in a powerful way. In the center, the Man of Sorrows rather levitating in front of the cross immediately attracts viewer's attention. Above Christ's right hand, the side wound is depicted to stimulate deeper meditation of his sufferings. The wornness of the parchment attests to the fact that the wound as well as Christ's torso were touched and kissed, as it has been already noted by several researchers. Moreover, each of the arms is provided by an inscription in Latin. Some of them were later bestowed with old Czech equivalents. In my paper, I discuss both the images from the devotional point of view. More particularly, I am concerned with the second picture since the text on the previous folio finishes abruptly in the middle of a sentence. Gia Toussaint suggested the missing part can be reconstructed on the basis of the German translation of the manuscript's texts that was produced at the beginning of the 18th century. However, the poem as transcribed by Toussaint seems to be longer than one quire of 8 pages. Therefore, I aim to analyse the binding and the order of the quires as well in the light of manuscript's description by Gelasius Dobner. My question is whether the full-page image of the *arma Christi* might have served as an individual devotional object that could stand at the altar or somewhere else in the convent for the communal worship.

**10:30 Departure for Clementinum**

**11:00–1:00 Clementinum (Treasures) OK WITH RENATA?**

**1:00–1:30 Departure for St. Agnes Convent**

**1:30–2:30 Lunch at St. Agnes Convent RESERVATION NEEDED?**

**2:30–4:30 St. Agnes Convent & National Gallery**

### **Participants**

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**Thursday, July 21**

**8:30–9:30 Breakfast for participants staying at Villa Lana**

**9:30–10:00 Departure for Hradschin DO WE NEED TO ARRANGE ACCESS TO ST GEORGE'S FOR SO LARGE A GROUP?**

**10:00–12:30 Hradschin**

**12:30–14:00 Lunch**

**14:00 End of Workshop – Departure**