

# Passionate Copying in Late Medieval Bohemia

## The Case of Crux de Telcz (1434–1504)

Lucie Doležalová  
with contributions  
by Michal Dragoun  
and Kimberly Rivers

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KAROLINUM PRESS

Karolinum Press is a publishing department of the Charles University  
[www.karolinum.cz](http://www.karolinum.cz)

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First edition

Designed by Filip Blažek, [designiq.cz](http://designiq.cz)

Set in the Czech Republic by Karolinum Press

Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available  
from the National Library of the Czech Republic

Research leading to this study was supported by the Czech Science Foundation through the project “Creative Copying: Miscellanies of Ulricus Crux de Telcz (d. 1504),” no. 17-06326S, which was carried out at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Prague.

The book was peer reviewed by Jeff Rider (Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.), Miri Rubin (Queen Mary University of London) and Farkas Gábor Kiss (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest).

ISBN 978-80-246-4665-7

ISBN 978-80-246-4686-2 (pdf)



Univerzita Karlova  
Nakladatelství Karolinum

[www.karolinum.cz](http://www.karolinum.cz)  
[ebooks@karolinum.cz](mailto:ebooks@karolinum.cz)



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## Acknowledgements

This volume would have been impossible without substantial support of my colleagues, especially Michal Dragoun who, besides contributing a chapter has also assisted with putting the whole together and provided numerous observations and corrections. I was also substantially helped by Adéla Eberssonová, Jeff Rider, Miri Rubin, Kateřina Voleková, Iva Adámková, Farkas Gábor Kiss, Rafał Wójcik, Marjorie Burghart, Eyal Poleg, Martin Haltrich, Francesco Stella, Jindřich Marek, Vladimír Urbánek, Tomáš Rataj, Martin Roček, Cecylia Linková, Jakub Kozák and many others. I am grateful to Laděna Plucarová from the Třeboň archives as well as Petra Hofbauerová, Veronika Procházková and Kamil Boldan from the National Library of the Czech Republic for allowing me and my team to study their manuscripts. The Czech Science Foundation is thanked for supporting the project.

## Editorial Note

Most of the results presented here have already been published in Czech, specifically in the collective monograph *Kříž z Telče (1434–1504): pisař, sběratel a autor* [Crux of Telč (1434–1504): scribe, collector and author], ed. Lucie Doležalová and Michal Dragoun (Prague: Scriptorium, 2020). All other published results are noted in the respective places.

Most of the manuscripts used are held in the National Library of the Czech Republic in Prague. In order to avoid excessive repetition, these manuscripts are referred to only by their shelf mark.

## Abbreviations

Kap	Praha, Archiv Pražského hradu, fond Knihovna Metropolitní kapituly u sv. Víta (Prague, Archives of the Prague Castle, Library of the Metropolitan Chapter at St. Vitus)
<i>Kříž z Telče</i>	<i>Kříž z Telče (1434–1504): písař, sběratel a autor</i> [Crux of Telč (1434–1504): scribe, collector and author], edited by Lucie Doležalová and Michal Dragoun (Prague: Scriptorium, 2020).
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina</i>
SOA T	Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň, fond Rukopisy Třeboň (State Regional Archives in Třeboň, Manuscripts of Třeboň Division)
Walther, <i>Initia</i>	Hans Walther, <i>Initia carminum ac versuum Medii Aevi posterioris Latinorum</i> (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959)
Walther, <i>Proverbia</i>	Hans Walther, <i>Proverbia sententiaeque latinitatis Medii Aevi</i> (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963–1969)



# I. Scribe as Author— Precautions

Qui me scribebat, Crux de Telcz nomen habebat.  
Qui pensat quanto constat scriptura labore,  
scriptorem tanto maiori tractat honore.

He who copied/wrote me was named Crux of Telč.  
Whoever considers how much work is involved in copying/writing  
holds the scribe/author in greater esteem.<sup>1</sup>  
(Crux of Telč in I A 38, fol. 311vb, fig. 1)

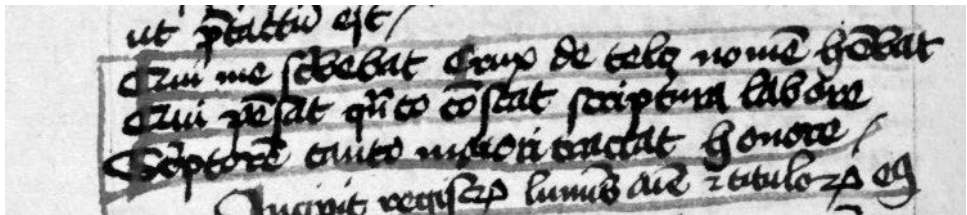


Fig. 1. Crux's note on copying/writing (I A 38, fol. 311vb).

1 All translations, unless noted otherwise, are mine.

The study of “material texts” has flourished in recent decades.<sup>2</sup> Medieval copies are often so fundamentally different from each other that it is difficult to decide whether they are variations of the same text or new creations. A medieval scribe is often something of a co-author, who interprets and so co-creates the text. Consequently, the borderline between the authorial version and the scribal one is blurred. Hence, in order to fully explore medieval texts, we must also consider their material transmission: individual variants, insertions, comments, additions and omissions, texts copied in vicinity, and texts bound together in the same volume.

This approach has some limitations, the most obvious being that only a fragment of the medieval cultural production has survived. The way a medieval scribe dealt with the model text—by adding, omitting or changing—can rarely be fully described since the original no longer exists. Scribes sometimes copied on the basis of dictation. If we do not know what the copyist saw or heard we can only analyse manuscript transmission of the specific text, and focus on variants unique to the particular copy by that particular copyist. The conclusions of such research are uncertain, the observations gained cannot be proven, only offered with care and in good faith.

In addition, many scribal interventions do not carry any specific meaning. Alongside the omnipresent spelling variants, such interventions may include a shift in word order; addition or omission of a single word, its replacement by a synonym, change of a pronoun, conjunction, preposition or prefix, change of tense, voice, mood, person or number with verbs or change of the case or number with nouns, adjectives and pronouns. Many of these are made by scribes with poor Latin grammar—e.g. the endings of deponent verbs are changed into grammatically wrong active forms, mood is changed in dependent clauses, or unusual pronouns are selected. Other shifts are the result of confusion with respect to abbreviations and letter forms (e.g. interchanging *mi*, *nu*, *ini*, *un* and *im*). Still other shifts are caused by habits arising from the scribe’s mother tongue. The fluidity and ambiguity of the texts copied in manuscripts are difficult to conceive exactly because even the tiniest intervention of the particular scribe—i.e. any of the above mentioned ones—may in fact reflect a specific intention.

2 E.g. Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012).

The manuscript culture of the late Middle Ages differs from that of earlier periods: manuscript codices were produced in great numbers and were disseminated widely. Late medieval paper codices often seem rather disorganised compared to older parchment ones. They seem less reader-friendly in spite of the fact that they use several types of paratexts, including table of contents, indices or inner system of references, which should facilitate the reader's orientation. Individual scribes also add colophons to their copies more frequently in paper volumes, and so many more particular scribes are known from this later period.

This book focuses on the scribal activity of a single person, Crux de Telcz (in Czech known as Kříž z Telče, 24 December 1434–25 March 1504), and tries, in spite of all the challenges involved, to grasp his intentions. Crux was active in various environments in different roles, but was always very interested in manuscripts, which he copied or acquired in various ways. He has received scholarly attention thanks especially to his unique copies of Old Czech and Latin texts, as well as for his scribal and collector's activities.<sup>3</sup> This book innovates by analysing Crux as a scribe within the manuscript culture of late medieval Bohemia. Nevertheless, as it will quickly become clear, Crux escapes simple categorisation. His case is extraordinary, yet it points us to the possibilities and limitations of the study of late medieval scribal culture.

Crux of Telč is unique for the intensity of his activity: he intervened in at least fifty-four surviving codices, wrote over 4,300 folia, and added his notes and glosses to at least twice as many. Thanks to his scribal activity, many Czech and Latin texts have been preserved. Crux was also a translator, author, glossator, editor, and collector of volumes. When intervening in texts, he probably did not have a single goal and did not follow a single strategy. In the few cases

3 Jaroslav Kadlec, "Oldřich Kříž z Telče" [Ulrich Crux de Telcz], *Listy filologické*, 79, no. 1 (1956): 91–102 and 79, no. 2 (1956): 234–238; František Mareš, "Literární působení kláštera Třeboňského" [Literary influence of the Třeboň convent], *Časopis Musea Království českého* 70 (1896): 521–547; Pavel Spunar, "Vývoj autografu Oldřicha Kříže z Telče" [The development of the autograph of Ulrich Crux of Telč], *Listy filologické* 81 (1958): 220–226, I–IV, and a number of other case studies, e.g. Miroslav Flodr, "Florilegium aus Werken römischer Klassiker in dem handschriftlichen Sammelwerk des Oldřich Kříž aus Telč," *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity, řada historická*, C 16/14 (1967): 133–140. Crux has been overlooked by international scholarship with the exception of Elisabetta Caldelli, "Copisti in casa," in *Du scriptorium à l'atelier. Copistes et enlumineurs dans la conception du livre manuscrit au Moyen Âge*, ed. Jean-Luc Deuffic, *Pecia* 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 199–249, who dedicates several paragraphs (p. 239–41) to him.

when his direct model has been identified, we can discern his approach, but usually we must understand his work by comparing variants within a complex manuscript tradition of a given text. The transmission itself is often mysterious: many texts in Crux's miscellanies are otherwise unknown. They are usually adaptations of common late medieval themes, which Crux is unlikely to have authored. Yet this cannot be proven without identifying his models. For example, for the text in I A 38, fols. 308ra–311vb, which Crux closed with the colophon cited at the beginning of this chapter, is an unidentified addition to the text *Lumen anime*. Similar additions appear in a variety of versions in many manuscripts.<sup>4</sup> Crux might have authored it, but it is more probable that he only modified his model.

Therefore, although the sources are unusually numerous in this case, their contextualisation and interpretation are difficult. I have undertaken this project aware that its conclusions will remain suggestions, but also trusting that this quite unique case will help us to understand the character of medieval textual production, readership and manuscript culture in general. The present study offers only selected insights: considering the amount of surviving information, a full picture would require much further research. At the same time, the selected cases are investigated in detail in order to assess the exact nature of the scribe's activities. The image of the scribe as an author is exciting, but—as it will quickly become clear—the manuscript evidence does not always make it easy to draw it.

Crux is not entirely unique. The Benedictine from Sankt Gallen Gallus Kemli († 1481),<sup>5</sup> the Augustinian canon from Żagań (Sagan) Andreas Ritter (1440–1480)<sup>6</sup> and several others were similarly active scribes. A comparison with the methods and practices of one of them, the Franciscan from Würz-

4 Cf. Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, "The Texts Called *Lumen anime*," *Archivum fratrum Praedicatorum* 41 (1971): 5–113.

5 Lucie Doležalová, "Multiple Copying and the Interpretability of Codex Contents: 'Memory Miscellanies' Compiled by Gallus Kemli (1417–1480/1) of Sankt Gallen," in *Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies: Composition, Authorship, Use*, ed. Lucie Doležalová and Kimberly Rivers, *Medium Aevum Quotidianum, Sonderband 31* (Krems: Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 2013), 139–165.

6 Volker Honemann, "Zu Leben und Werk des Saganer Augustinerchorherren Andreas Ritter," in *Deutschsprachige Literatur des Mittelalters im östlichen Europa*, ed. Ralf G. Päsler and Dietrich Schmidtke (Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 2006), 293–313.

burg Johannes Sintram († 1450),<sup>7</sup> made by Kimberly Rivers, is included in this volume.

## Caveats

After deliberation, all codices including any intervention by Crux will be considered here as “Crux’s.” The degree of Crux’s intervention differs widely: some of “his” codices are mostly in his hand, others only partly, still others include only his notes, table of contents, or corrections. His colophons are included in about half of the codices. One codex has only his *custodes* (i.e. numbering at the ends of quires), which show that Crux ordered the quires before binding. Such a corpus is thus very different in character from late medieval personal libraries, which can usually be defined on the basis of *ex libris* or the owner’s notes.<sup>8</sup> Crux’s “library” was not and could not have been a personal library: after entering the Třeboň convent, Crux had to surrender (at least formally) all his property; Augustinian canons were allowed to use the word “mine” only when referring to their parents or their guilt.<sup>9</sup> This leads to several caveats about the present corpus.

- 7 Kimberly Rivers, “Writing the Memory of the Virtues and Vices in Johannes Sintram’s (d. 1450) Preaching Aids,” in *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lucie Doležalová (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 31–48.
- 8 This is the case of e.g. the large library of a contemporary of Crux, the Utraquist Václav Koranda the Younger. Cf. Jindřich Marek, *Václav Koranda mladší. Utrakvistický administrátor a literát* [Wenceslas Koranda the Younger. Administrator of the Utraquist Church and writer] (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2017), 108–146.
- 9 Cf. Adéla Ebersonová, *Roudnická statuta. Zvyklostí kanonie řeholních kanovníků sv. Augustina v Roudnici nad Labem (komentovaná edice a překlad)* [The Statutes of Roudnice. The Consuetudines of the canons regular of the Augustinian convent in Roudnice nad Labem (a commented edition and translation)] (Prague: Scriptorium, in print).

## Incomplete Corpus

It is fairly certain that more codices featuring Crux's hand are yet to be found. While previous research has identified primarily the codices in which Crux's hand is prominent, sixteen additional manuscript volumes were discovered during our recent careful scrutiny of the medieval libraries of the Třeboň and Borovany houses.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Crux travelled widely and surely not all the codices in which he ever intervened ended up in Třeboň. It is especially the library of the Metropolitan Chapter of St Vitus Cathedral in Prague that must be explored in more detail: there is very little evidence for the time Crux spent at the chapter at Prague Castle, but he was there for several years and there is no reason to assume that he did not copy a great deal there. In this library Michal Dragoun made a chance find of another manuscript by Crux, Kap, O XLVII, and it is likely that there are more of his manuscripts there, because the rich holdings of the Metropolitan Chapter Library have not as yet been much researched. Other chance finds include an independent piece of paper with Crux's writing inserted in a Třeboň incunable, three charters and a quire from the Třeboň canonry with Crux's brief content summaries. Clearly, Crux's hand may still be hidden in many other codices and separate sheets in many other places. Therefore, the corpus of "Crux's codices" presented here is almost surely still incomplete.

## Wrongly Included or Excluded Manuscripts

The codices in their current state of preservation might not reflect their appearance in the Middle Ages. Some may have been bound only later, and many of their quires could have been originally transmitted independently. The proximity of the texts within a codex may indicate that they were considered by the compiler to belong together, that they had a similar function, but it can also be the result of a quite random decision made at the time of binding.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> This detailed catalogue covering over 300 codices is: Michal Dragoun, Adéla Ebersonová and Lucie Doležalová, *Středověké knihovny augustiniánských kanonií v Třeboni a Borovanech* [Medieval Libraries of Augustinian Canonries in Třeboň and Borovany], 3 vols. (Praha: Scriptorium, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Cf., for example, Lucie Doležalová and Kimberly Rivers, eds. *Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies: Composition, Authorship, Use* (Krems: Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 2013).

For example, Crux’s miscellanies, the present-day codices I G 11a, I G 11b and I G 11c, originally all formed one volume. Although the present codex I G 11b does not feature Crux’s hand at all, it was included in the corpus because in the Middle Ages it was part of a volume that included Crux’s writing. Clearly, we may lack this sort of information in other cases and hence omit from the corpus codices that should have been included, or wrongly include texts that were bound together with Crux’s quires only later.

## Did Crux Choose Which Copies of Other Scribes to Include in “His” Codices?

Crux had some copies made for himself, and he often seems to have been in charge of a collective copying. There is plentiful evidence for this. For instance, he bought copies of texts from other scribes and included them in his miscellany (fig. 2):

Ego, frater Crux de Telcz, conscripsi hos manu propria sermones in seculo existens, et quos solus non potui, appreciavi et aliquos sexternos ab aliis habui datos.<sup>12</sup>

I, brother Crux of Telč, have written these sermons in my own hand while I was still in the world; and I bought those that I could not [copy] and received some sexterns [i.e. quires] from others.

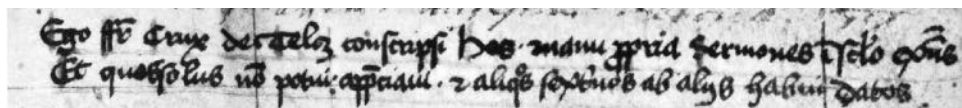


Fig. 2. Crux’s note on purchasing copies by other scribes (I E 37, fol. 1r).

Furthermore, he e.g. copied in collaboration with two other scribes (fig. 3):

<sup>12</sup> I E 37, fol. 1r.

Et sic est finis huius libelli scriptus per tres: primus principium Iacobus de Fulnek, post medium Venceslaus Trczkonis, filius sutoris de Manietina, finem tercius ego, Crux de Telcz, plebanus in Nepomuk continuavi et finivi anno Domini 1474 in octava sancte Margarethe in domo habitacionis mee circa ecclesiam sancti Iacobi et Clementis.<sup>13</sup>

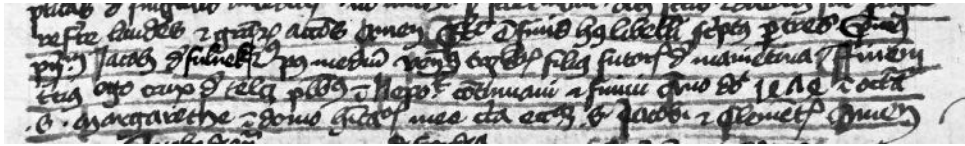


Fig. 3. Crux's note on collaborating with other scribes (XIV E 31, fol. 216r).

And this is the end of this little book written by three: the beginning by the first [scribe], Jacob of Fulnek, then the middle by Wenceslas, son of Trčka, son of a shoemaker from Manětín, the end the third [scribe], I, Crux of Telč, priest in Nepomuk continued and finished in 1474 in the octave of St Margaret [20 July 1474] in the house of my residence by the church of Saints Jacob and Clement.

Or he finished a copy by other scribes (fig. 4):

Finitus et suppletus anno Domini M<sup>o</sup> CCCC<sup>o</sup> LXXXIII<sup>o</sup> feria sexta proxima post Divisionem apostolorum in sillaba illa “post”. Licet per alium sit totus sexternus quendam fratrem scriptus, sicut et alii in exilio quando fuerunt a monasterio Trzebonensi exclusi tempore Zizkonis et postea sunt revocati, hec Crux de Telcz.<sup>14</sup>

Finished and rendered in the year 1484, on the closest Friday after the Dispersion of the Apostles, in the syllable “post” [16 July 1484]. Although the whole sextern [i.e. quire] was written by some other brother just as the other ones when they were expelled from the

13 XIV E 31, fol. 216r, at the end of *Summa penitenciarum*.

14 XI C 1, fol. 362v.



Třeboň monastery at the time of Žižka,<sup>15</sup> and afterwards they were called back, this [part was written by] Crux of Telč.

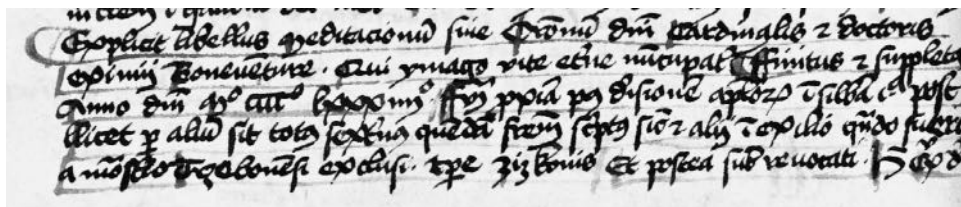


Fig. 4. Crux's note on finishing a copy begun by other scribes (XI C 1, fol. 362v).

However, in the second case, it is not clear whether Crux was leading the group of scribes or whether they were all working on someone else's order. Similarly, in the third case, it is possible that Crux acquired the text himself, but neither can it be excluded that he came across it by chance or that he was asked by someone else to finish the copying. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that it was Crux's choice to include in his miscellanies all the texts that are not in his hand. They might have been bound together later, without Crux's will or knowledge. Even when Crux added a table of contents to "his" codex, it is not certain that he himself selected the codex contents.

## Do the Texts in Crux's Miscellanies That Are in His Hand Reflect His Particular Interests?

There is evidence that Crux was sometimes paid to copy. For example, his codex I A 41 contains a colophon (fig. 5):

Explicit Ecclesiastica hystoria ab Epiphanio conscripta ex Socrate  
Sozomeno et Theodorico in unum collecte et nuper de Greco in  
Latinum translate in libris numero duodecim per me Crucem de  
Telcz scripta pro precio venerabili domino Thobie, predicatori

<sup>15</sup> Johannes Žižka of Trocnov (d. 1424) was a famous leader of the radical Hussite troops.

in Nova Plzna, anno Domini M° CCCC° LXXII° feria secunda ante Galli.<sup>16</sup>

Here ends the Ecclesiastical History written by Epiphanius based on Socrates [Scholasticus] Sozomen and Theodoret [of Cyrrhus], collected into one and earlier translated from Greek to Latin in twelve books, by me, Crux of Telcz written for money for the honourable man Thobias, preacher in New Plzeň, in the year of the Lord 1472, the Monday before St Gallus [12 October 1472].

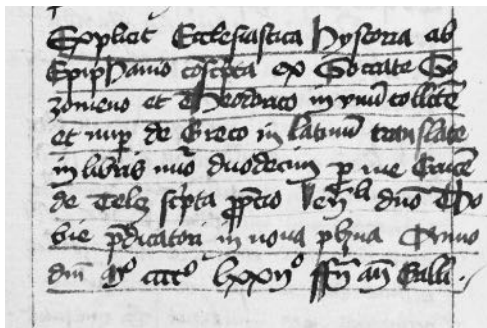


Fig. 5. Crux's colophon stating Crux was paid for the copy (I A 41, fol. 152vb).

Since this copy still ended up in Crux's miscellany, it is likely that some of his other copies were originally meant for others, and thus were also ordered and chosen by others.

In addition, since Crux copied so many different texts, it is hard to know whether he followed a specific interest or simply copied everything he came across. At least the instances in which he copied a particular text more than once seem to indicate an interest.<sup>17</sup> Yet even such texts must be dealt with carefully: Crux might have made each copy for a different person or for a different purpose, might have lost the first copy or forgotten about it. Especially repeated copying of brief texts should not be overinterpreted. For example, Crux once highlighted with a manicule and once copied himself a quote from

<sup>16</sup> Fol. 152vb.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Doležalová, *Multiple Copying*.

Bernard of Clairvaux's letter: *Experto crede, amplius aliquid invenies in silvis quam in libris, ligna et lapides docebunt te, quod a magistris audire non possumus*<sup>18</sup> ("Trust the expert, you will find more in the woods than in books, trees and stones will teach you what we cannot hear from the masters," fig. 6, 7).<sup>19</sup> Crux in fact copied a longer passage (fol. 43r-43v) from XI C 8 (into fols. 276v-277r of his I F 18) but the manicule suggests he considered this part interesting. (It is, however, certain that Crux did not apply this idea in his life.) Crux copied numerous Latin proverbs several times, most of them appear in his mss. SOA T, A 4 and A 7. Within A 4 itself, there is a great deal of overlap—many proverbs are included twice or more, in some cases in slightly different versions.<sup>20</sup>

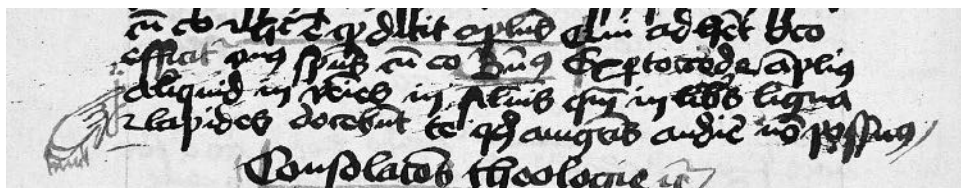


Fig. 6. A copy of a quotation from a letter by Bernard of Clairvaux by another scribe, in Crux's miscellany. Crux highlighted it with a manicule (XI C 8, fol. 43v).

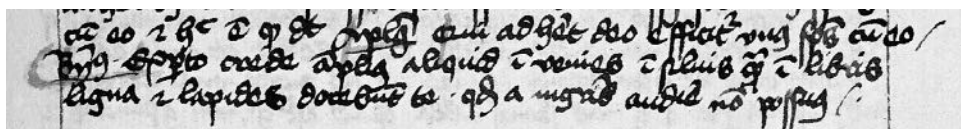


Fig. 7. Crux's copy of the same quote by Bernard of Clairvaux (I F 18, fol. 277r).

18 Bernardus Claraevallensis, *Epistola 106 ad magistrum Henricum Murdach*, in *PL* 182, col. 242B.

19 In XI C 8, fol. 43v and I F 18, fol. 277v.

20 A special subchapter is dedicated to Crux's proverbs here, see p. 131-137.

## When Crux Used the First Person Singular, Did He Write about Himself?

Crux refers to himself in the note about his own birth (*ego natus*)<sup>21</sup> as well as in other personal comments in colophons. He even seems to be drawn to the first person singular: for example, when explaining that he bought one of the codices, he moves from the third person to the first one (fig. 8):

... frater Crux de Telcz attulit secum istum ad monasterium Trzebo-  
niense anno 1478, quem emi in scolis rector existens a Iohanne pres-  
bytero de Manietina et persolvi propria pecunia.<sup>22</sup>

... brother Crux de Telč brought [this book] with him to the Třeboň  
monastery in 1478, which I bought while I was a school headmaster  
from John, a priest of Manětín,<sup>23</sup> and I paid with my own money.

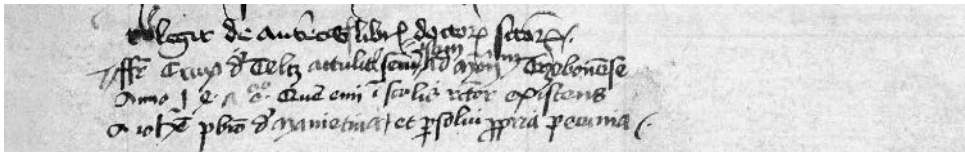


Fig. 8. Crux's note on the purchase of the codex from Iohannes of Manětín (I B 33, fol. 256va).

As was common in medieval manuscript culture, even Crux sometimes copied an original colophon together with the model text. Crux thus wrote in his hand e.g. a colophon to excerpts of Cassiodorus's *Historia tripartita*:

Magister Nicolaus de Horzepnik vestram complevi iussionem finem  
faciens Historie excerptendo anno Domini M° CCCC LXV° etc.<sup>24</sup>

21 I E 38, fol. 264r.

22 I B 33, fol. 256va.

23 A small town ca 30 km northwest of Plzeň.

24 XIV D 24, fol. 39v.

I, master Mikuláš (Nicholas) of Hořepník, [have] fulfilled your order, finishing excerpting from the History in the year 1465 etc.

Or, for example, his copy of the three prerequisites for being a good astronomer, namely firmness of intention, aptness of disposition, and renunciation of earthly possessions,<sup>25</sup> closes with the note: *Sed ista [tercia] condicio non placet multis nec eciam michi* (“But this [third] condition is disliked by many, including me”), which sounds quite personal, but was in fact an inherent part of the text.<sup>26</sup> The “voice” of the model may thus be taken over by the scribe even outside the colophons, and the appearance of the first person singular simply cannot be taken as Crux’s “voice” and as an expression of his opinion or emotions.

## Did Crux Believe What He Copied?

Crux lived at unsettled times: the Hussite movement dramatically transformed Czech lands, the fight between Catholics and various groups of Utraquists defined and influenced all aspects of life. Since Crux copied much from both sides of the religious controversy, he could not have held all the opinions expressed in the texts he copied. His belief in the contents of the copied texts cannot be assumed even in the case of scientific writings. For instance, Crux comments on an astrological text:

*Omnia ista sunt falsissima, quia dicunt verissimi astronomi, quod ista dicta non sunt fundata supra aliquam rationem naturalem, ergo etc. Sed scripsi ut scirem et intelligerem non tenerem.*<sup>27</sup>

All these [points] are completely false because most trustworthy astronomers say that these are not founded on some natural reason,

25 *Tres condiciones vel proprietates debet habere astronomus secundum quas tria genera hominum ab astronomia repelluntur. Prima stabilitas intencionis, secunda habilitas disposicionis, tercia abdicacio terrene possessionis* (I G 6, fol. 101 bis r).

26 Ed. *Alcabitii Ad magisterium iudiciorum astrorum isagoge* (Paris, 1521), fols. 30v–31r.

27 I G 6, fol. 199 bis r.

thus etc. But I copied [them] in order to know and understand, not to maintain [them].

Or, for example, Crux accompanied his copy of a brief manual on how to find a treasure (*Ad inveniendum thesaurum*) by the note: *puto superstitiosum* (“I find it superstitious”) (fig. 9).<sup>28</sup> Crux thus seems to have been interested in a variety of curiosities without necessarily taking everything he copied to heart.

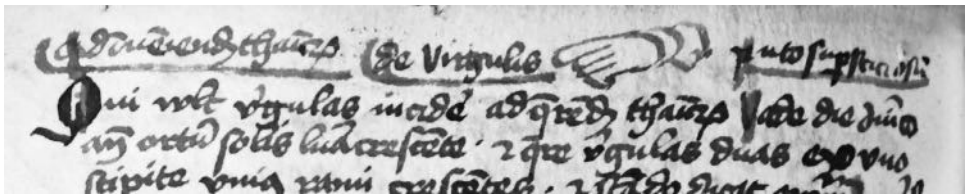


Fig. 9. Crux’s note on the unreliability of a text (SOA T, A 7, fol. 229v).

## Did Crux Understand What He Wrote?

Crux states in the preceding quote that his aim was understanding, and this is not an isolated instance when his curiosity manifests itself. It would be useful to assume that he understood what he copied. Unfortunately, this cannot be taken for granted either. For example, Crux provided an alternative version to a computistic text, and added (fig. 10): *In alio sic habetur, nescio in quo melius et correctius quia non probavi nec intelligo* (“In another [version], it is like this; I do not know if it is better or more correct because I have neither tried it out, nor do I understand”).<sup>29</sup> This is, of course, an extreme case dependent on a specific context: it was difficult to check the correctness of computistic tables. Nevertheless, this gloss points also to the fact that the corpus that is analysed here is truly varied and little can be stated about it with certainty.

<sup>28</sup> SOA T, A 7, fol. 229v.

<sup>29</sup> I G 6, fol. 76 bis r.

c. 173 alio sic habet . . .

Quorū itaq; d' gūarū ad eūandū p longū hūc spānū . . .

dm. 136 A. Hec tabla . . .

et alijs h'ois r m'is . . .

et sub h'ois . . .

a radice am . . .

1	1223	16	0	4	28	radice pmi am nich magni s' s' d' h'ois . . .
2	1419	142	0	11	34	a radice q' h' am sub sequit' usq; ad 16 annos
3	1494	228	0	11	23	nich magni r' q' h'ois
4	1824	380	1	2	48	Opus quadrānū . . .
5	1822	246	1	10	26	Opus ut dicit' d' gūarū . . .
11	1899	432	1	16	32	Opus ut dicit' d' gūarū . . .
8	1914	608	1	22	22	Opus ut dicit' d' gūarū . . .
9	2041	684	2	2	10	Opus ut dicit' d' gūarū . . .

Fig. 10. Crux's note on the upper right margin of a smaller leaf bound into the codex stating that he did not understand the text he copied (I G 6, fol. 76 bis r).





# II. Biography

## A) The Name

There is a curious mistake linked to Crux of Telč. In modern Czech research, he is always referred to as “Oldřich Kříž z Telče,” or as “Ulricus de Telcz” or “Udalricus Crux de Telcz.” Yet he never calls himself so; in all of his colophons and notes, he is only *Crux de Telcz* (sometimes he draws a cross instead of the word *Crux*). Moreover, none of the other sources on him includes the name *Ulricus* (“Oldřich”): in the Czech testament of Kateřina (Catherine) of Křínov, he appears as “kněz farář Kříž nepomucký” (“parish priest Crux of Nepomuk”).<sup>30</sup> The now-lost piece of paper with the mention of his death (perhaps a fragment of the necrology of the Třeboň convent) also only mentioned the name *Crux*.<sup>31</sup> In the necrology of St Pölten, he is recorded as *Crux de Witignaw*.<sup>32</sup>

30 XIV E 31, fol. 323v, the transliteration was published by Josef Truhlář, “Paběrky z rukopisů klementinských LXII. Oldřich Kříž farářem v Nepomuku r. 1474” [Various findings from the Clementinum manuscripts LXII. Ulricus Crux as parish priest in Nepomuk in 1474], *Český časopis historický* 8 (1902): 322–325, on pp. 324–325. Catherine was a noble woman. Her husband, Milota of Běšiny, is evidenced in 1473 as a regional councillor at Zelená Hora.

31 It was originally kept as Třeboň, Státní oblastní archive (State Regional Archive), Historica division No. 3453a. It was first reported by František Mareš, “Hlídka literární. Památky staré literatury české vydávané Maticí českou. Číslo 9. – Nová rada. Báseň pana Smila Flašky z Pardubic. K tisku připravil a výklady opatřil dr. Jan Gebauer,” *Časopis Musea Království českého* 51 (1877), note to p. 191; cf. also Mareš, “Literární působení,” 534: *Item obiit dominus Crux in Trzebon in die Annunciationis Marie 1504*.

32 Under the date of his death, 25 March, there is the entry: *frater Crux de Witignaw presb. et confr. n.*, cf. Theodor Wiedemann, ed., *Das Nekrologium des ehemaligen Augustiner-Chorher-*

Where did the idea that his name was Ulricus come from? In the Třeboň convent, there was, in the same period, also a certain *Ulricus vel Odalricus de Telcz*, whose death is recorded in the necrological notes of Třeboň (fig. 11):

Frater Ulricus vel Odalricus de Telcz Czeponis dicti Andreas sutor obiit anno Domini M° CCCC° LXXXVII° feria IIII post Annunciationem et feria V sepultus est.<sup>33</sup>

Brother Ulricus or Odalricus of Telč, son of Čep, who was called Andreas the shoemaker, died in 1487, on Wednesday after the Annunciation [28 March] and he was buried on Thursday.

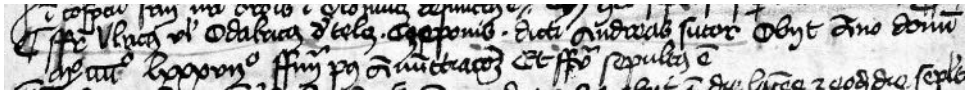


Fig. 11. A note on the death of “Ulricus vel Odalricus de Telcz” written in Crux’s hand (I G 11c, fol. 59v).

It is, however, certain that this person was not Crux of Telč: Crux died only in 1504 and, in addition, this entry was written in his own hand. This note does not explain the error; František Mareš knew it and warned that these two canons (“Ulricus Crux of Telcz” and “Ulricus of Telcz, son of Čep”) should not be confused.<sup>34</sup>

The confusion seems to have originated as early as the 18th century from a different document: a contract of confraternity from 25 June 1492, issued by Dominicus de Runcho, general visitator of the hospital of the Holy Spirit in Rome. Dominicus accepts the Třeboň convent into the confraternity and provides it with other graces.<sup>35</sup> The charter lists all the Třeboň canons of the time,

*renstiftes St. Pölten*, *Fontes rerum Austriacarum, Diplomataria et acta 20* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1860), 495.

33 I G 11c, fol. 59v.

34 Mareš, “Literární působení,” 533.

35 Cf. Jiří Pražák, Karel Beránek, and František Beneš, *Listiny českých zrušených klášterů 1115–1784, Inventář SÚA* [Documents from Czech Dissolved Monasteries from 1115–1784, Inventory of the State Central Archives], Prague 1961 (unpublished inventory).

including a certain *Ulricus* immediately followed by *Crux de Telcz*. These two persons are divided by a comma (fig. 12): *Ulrico, Cruci de Telcz*.<sup>36</sup>

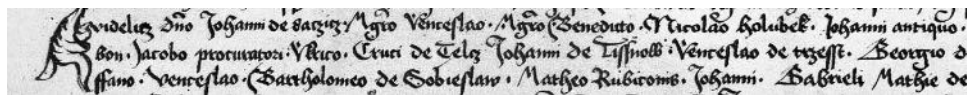


Fig. 12. A contract of confraternity from the year 1492, in which *Ulricus* and *Crux de Telcz* are listed one after the other, Praha, Národní archiv, fond Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., sign. 173.

This document was known and used in Třeboň chronicles already in the 18th century; when the chronicles mention the canons, they enumerate them in the order in which they are listed in this charter, but omit the dividing comma.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, *Crux de Telcz* becomes *Ulricus Crux de Telcz*.<sup>38</sup> Since there are several manuscript chronicles in Třeboň, it is impossible to state when and where exactly this mistake appeared for the first time. Besides, it is a type of mistake that could easily have been made by two people independently: *Crux* is not so frequent as a first name, it is much more usual as a surname, so the fact that the canon mentioned before him was only *Ulricus* without further specification of his origin contributed to the merging of the two people into

36 Praha, Národní archiv, fond Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., sign. 173. The document is freely accessible through [monasterium.net](https://www.monasterium.net/mom/CZ-NA/AZK%7CTrebon/173/charter), <https://www.monasterium.net/mom/CZ-NA/AZK%7CTrebon/173/charter>, accessed on 25 January 2021.

37 E.g. the chronicle *Rosa Trebonea*, today SOA T, A 28, fol. 5r. There are more Třeboň chronicles of the same title, cf. Filip Hradil, “*Rosa Trebonea*: Raně novověký kvítek z knihovny třeboňského kláštera” [*Rosa Trebonea*: an early modern flower from the library of the Třeboň convent], *Folia historica Bohemica* 31 (2016): 67–83.

38 Cf. also e.g. the chronicle of the Augustinian canon Aquilin Hrdlička from 1798, *Liber memorabiliorum parochiae Trebonensis*, in which *Crux* is mentioned three times: twice as *Crux de Telcz* (*De bibliotheca canoniae*, vol. 1, part 2, chap. 8, pp. 157 and 159), once as *Udalricus Crux de Telcz* (*Series superiorum canoniae Trebonensis*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 244), and once as *Ulricus Crux de Telcz* (*Catalogus eorum qui a prima fundatione in canoniam professi sunt*, vol. 1, part 3, chap. 1, p. 265). This two-volume chronicle is still kept in the Třeboň parish. For the possibility to consult it, I am grateful to Father Kalaš. With the exception of selected passages, it has not been edited yet, cf. Josef Kalousek, “O Hrdličkově rukopisné kronice kláštera Třeboňského” [On Hrdlička’s manuscript chronicle of the Třeboň convent], *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk* 8 (1893): 1–7. Jaroslav Kadlec, *Klášter augustiniánských kanovníků v Třeboni* [The monastery of Augustinian canons in Třeboň] (Prague: Karolinum, 2004).

one. In the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, Crux was not yet unanimously considered Ulricus, but following the detailed study of Jaroslav Kadlec from 1956, Crux of Telč was firmly, albeit wrongly, codified as Ulricus Crux de Telcz (“Oldřich Kříž z Telče”).

## B) Times

Crux lived during a period of Czech history when the whole Europe looked on the region, and the word *Bohemus* was synonymous with *hereticus*. When reformer Jan Hus was burnt at the stake as a heretic at the Council of Constance on 6 July, 1415, no one expected that a movement as potent as the Hussite revolution would follow. The Hussites were disillusioned with the papacy and religious authorities in general, and claimed the primacy of personal conscience in religious matters. The chalice became their symbol—hence they are often called Calixtines—referring to communion in both kinds—*sub utraque specie*—for all, which gave them another name: Utraquists. They soon inspired artisans, women, poor people, students and many other followers. In 1420, the city of Tábor was founded—an attempt at an ideal community without personal property. Several crusades were led against the Hussites who fought back and attacked and destroyed many places. Some areas favoured the Hussites, others the Catholics, yet others switched sides several times. Some areas were badly destroyed in the wars while others were preserved.

The Hussite Wars lasted until 1436, when Compacts (*Compactata*) were signed in Basel, allowing the communion *sub utraque specie* for all Calixtines, but refusing the other three of the Four articles of Prague that the Calixtines aimed to promote, namely free preaching of God’s word (the Bible), punishment of mortal sins for laypeople and priests alike, and the limitation of church ownership of property. In this way, Bohemia became a country with two official faiths. In 1462, pope Pius II refused to confirm the Compacts, but the king of Bohemia, George of Poděbrady, revolted. He was excommunicated from the Catholic church, but remained the leader of the “kingdom of two peoples.” The tension persisted with the Catholic nobility organized in the Unity of Zelená Hora against George in 1465. In 1468 a crusade was launched against Bohemia led by the King of Hungary, Matthias Corvinus, who sought the Czech throne. The crusade failed, but Matthias, with the help of Czech Catholics, was declared

king in 1469. When George of Poděbrady died in 1471, the country split: the more Utraquist Bohemia was ruled by Vladislaus II (Władysław Jagiełło), while Catholic Moravia and Silesia were ruled by Matthias Corvinus. When Corvinus died in 1490 without heirs, Ladislaus Jagiello became the king of the whole country. The year 1471 marked the beginning of a new era, the Jagiellonian period.

During the second half of the fifteenth century, Crux' active years, religious controversy still persisted though the Hussite Wars were over. There were two faiths, two parallel church administrations, and two competing religious practices; the political situation as well as private life were dynamic and unsettled.<sup>39</sup> Most sources from that time are affected in some way by the split. Unlike some who went into exile,<sup>40</sup> or shifted sides in an opportunistic manner, there is no trace of Crux ever questioning his Catholic stance.

## C) Life

There are few administrative sources to inform us about Crux of Telč's life: he is mentioned as a witness in a testament from 1473–1476, as one of the Augustinian canons in Třeboň in 1492, and as a deceased Třeboň canon in 1504. Nevertheless, Crux's biography can still be put together from the abundant autobiographical information in his colophons and in the margins of his manuscripts. There are over 150 such remarks included in 28 of Crux's manuscripts, all listed in the Appendix.

Crux's colophons include various types of information. There are 137 colophons which can be included in a timeline (nos. 1–137), eight more that lack date (nos. 138–45), seven ownership notes (nos. 146–52), and five other notes

39 Not many sources are available in English. See e.g. Michael Van Dussen and Pavel Soukup, *A Companion to the Hussites* (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Howard Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004); John Klassen, "Hus, the Hussites, and Bohemia," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. Christopher Allmand (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7:367–391; Otakar Odložilík, *The Hussite King: Bohemia in European Affairs, 1440–1471* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1965).

40 In the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, exile was a less frequent choice than during the Hussite wars, cf. Ondřej Vodička, *Exil českého a moravského duchovenstva za husitských válek* [Exile of the Czech and Moravian clergy during the Hussite wars] (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2020).

(nos. 153–57). For dating, Crux seems to freely alternate Roman and Arabic numerals. He refers to *cisioianus* feasts, as was usual, and some of his colophons also include a reference to *cisioanus*.<sup>41</sup> While mentioning the location, Crux also often includes his particular role (e.g. nos. 11, 56, 59, 98, 110). Some locations are curious, e.g. *in domo Petri sutoris* (“at the house of Peter, the shoemaker,” no. 70), or *circa hospitam meam dominam Mauchovissam* (“by my host, Mrs. Mouchová, no. 104).<sup>42</sup> In the colophons from Třeboň, he usually mentions the abbot (nos. 123–26, 133–35). Other times he refers to other scribes (e.g. no. 22), the way in which he acquired the copy (e.g. nos. 37, 116), the origin of the model copy (e.g. no. 127), or the political circumstances of the time of copying (e.g. nos. 105, 121). Yet other times he comments on the copied text or its author (e.g. nos. 55, 61, 65), sometimes with much detail (e.g. nos. 9, 131). He rarely adds an unrelated note, e.g. against women (no. 4) or a riddle (no. 78).

Although not all the colophons provide both time and place,<sup>43</sup> they still offer an unprecedented amount of information on the life and whereabouts of a medieval canon.<sup>44</sup> Together, they form a rough itinerary of his career, though a true biography—i.e., information on his family, friends, motivations, and emotions is harder to discern.

### 1. Birth and schools (24 December 1434–1458)—22 colophons

Mareš assumed that Crux was born in 1405 or 1406.<sup>45</sup> This mistake was based on a mention in Crux’s letter to Tobias in Tábora: *ego tempore combuscionis sue [sc. Iohannis Hus] fui pusillus IX vel X annorum* (“at the time of his burning, I was a boy of nine or ten years”). However, this sentence is not uttered by Crux himself, but by an Utraquist Crux was visiting. Although the mistake was noticed and pointed out by Bartoš and Kadlec, it is still sometimes repeated

41 Nos. 22, 24, 41, 47, 62, 121, 125, 158, 159.

42 See also Caldelli, “Copisti in casa,” 199–249, esp. 239–241, who notes only a few of Crux’s colophons but includes a useful discussion about the reference to “house” in medieval colophons.

43 E.g. a colophon from Ústí nad Labem (Aussig an der Elbe) lacks year identification; therefore, it is not included in the biography below (XI C 8, fol. 271r: *Et sic est finis huius in Ustie super Albea in die sancti Iohannis Baptiste* [24 June]).

44 So far, Crux’s biography has been presented in most detail by František Mareš (“Literární působení”) and Jaroslav Kadlec (“Oldřich”). They were not aware of many of his codices; on the other hand, they linked to him other codices that are actually not connected to him, and made several other mistakes.

45 Mareš, “Literární působení,” 528.

in scholarship. Kadlec, on the other hand, has suggested that Crux had been born between 1435 and 1440.<sup>46</sup> He was mistaken by only a few days: Michal Dragoun has recently found a marginal note in which Crux himself mentions the date of his birth (fig. 13), in December 1434:

Anno Domini M° CCCC° XXXIII° fratres sunt prostrati et ego natus in fine anni eiusdem feria sexta ante Nativitatem Domini.<sup>47</sup>

In the year 1434, the Brethren were defeated and I was born at the end of that year on Friday before the Birth of the Lord [24 December].

The exact date of Crux's birth is thus known, but there is no information on the first 19 years of his life. The earliest two colophons are from March and April 1454, from Telč.<sup>48</sup> In July and August<sup>49</sup> of that year, Crux stayed in Žďár—Kadlec assumes that it was Žďár nad Sázavou and Crux was in the Cistercian school there, but this is not certain.<sup>50</sup> Seven further colophons come from Soběslav between October 1455 and July 1456.<sup>51</sup> One of them states that Crux was there at school,<sup>52</sup> another that he was there as an assistant teacher (*pro socio*).<sup>53</sup> In January 1457, Crux was in Roudnice nad Labem (Raudnitz).<sup>54</sup> Sometime during 1457, he returned to Telč, where he, together with Petrus de Gubina, copied Pseudo-Albert's *De secretis mulierum*.<sup>55</sup> Not much is known about lower schools of the time in Bohemia and Moravia, and so it is not easy

46 Kadlec, "Oldřich," 92, note 4.

47 I E 38, fol. 264r.

48 SOA T, A 7, fols. 64r a 74v.

49 SOA T, A 6, fols. 18v a 42r. In addition, A 6 also contains colophons from 18 July 1454 (fol. 91r), 1 June 1455 (fol. 130v) and from the year 1456 (fol. 135r), but there is no indication of place.

50 Kadlec, "Oldřich," 92.

51 I F 25, fol. 224v (11 October 1455); SOA T, A 7, fol. 218r (the year 1455, and another colophon without year or place on fol. 214v); XIII G 18, fols. 42r (s.d.), 105r (s.d.), 107r (1456), 114v (8 March 1456), 205r (15 March 1456), 118v (22 June 1456), 144v (5 July 1456, and another one in the same ms. without place or date on fols. 173v, 177v, 275ra); SOA T, A 4, fol. 126r (s.d.).

52 XIII G 18, fol. 144v: *finitum in scola Sobieslawiensi*.

53 XIII G 18, fol. 42r.

54 SOA T, A 4, fol. 253v: *in Rudnicz existenti in scola*.

55 SOA T, A 4, fols. 327r–373v.





to determine whether Crux's moving from one school to another was typical or exceptional (and a sign of his restlessness, dissatisfaction, or personal problems at the individual schools).

During these years, Crux copied primarily SOA T, A 6, A 7 and A 4, which contain a large number of school texts—a selection of ancient authors, texts on language and a great number of excerpts, proverbs, brief verses and notes—as well as secular Czech poetry and religious songs. There are also drafts of five speeches of the school headmaster, probably authored by Crux himself.<sup>56</sup> These manuscripts are of smaller size and suggest that Crux made them for his own use. They are not very reader-friendly: the texts are brief, their beginnings and ends are frequently not marked, and they seem to be ordered *ad hoc* with no regard for links between their contents. It was at this time that Crux also copied the majority of XIII G 18 and parts of I F 25, codices that seem better arranged, although that is primarily because they contain longer texts.

Crux next moved to Prague, to the school at Vyšehrad.<sup>57</sup> Only a few days after Crux arrived to Vyšehrad at the end of November 1457, he seems to have been locked in conflict with a certain Michal, headmaster of the school at the church of St Stephen's. Michal wanted to prohibit the students of Vyšehrad from gathering alms in Podskalí. Crux writes that he would have rather died than given up, that the Lord gave him endurance, and that finally master Jerome of Prague, called Šibal (Prankster), came to his aid. Crux describes the story at length, no other event in his life is recounted with such detail.<sup>58</sup> Since Crux signed as *frater Crux*, and also because of his late hand, he must have written it more than twenty years after the event. The conflict must have mattered greatly to him.

56 See Chapter VIII.A and the Appendix I.3.

57 I F 25, fol. 246r.

58 Kadlec, "Oldřich," 93; I F 25, note on fol. 104r: *Anno Domini 1457 in die Presentacionis beate Marie virginis feria II [21 November 1457] ingressus sum ad habitandum Wissegradum existente magna nive. Et post dominico post Katherine in illa sillaba "ri" vel in die Lyni [26 or 27 November 1457] venerunt scolares cum rectore ad nos a sancto Stephano de Nowa civitate baccalarius Michka tempore Iohannis candule dicti plebani cum scolaribus prohibentes nostros mendicos mendicare in Podskale et terrere volentes. Sed Dominus dedit mihi constanciam. Nam pocius mortem subiissem quam recessissem. Et post magister Ieronimus de Praga dictus Šibal post socerum suum qui sororem eius habuit venit et canonicus effectus confortavit me cum meis, qui fuit plebanus prius in Przeseka, et post in Lithomierzicz. Hec frater Crux.*

2. *King Wenceslas College at Prague University (1459)—26 colophons*

Crux's whereabouts between February 1458 and March 1459 are not known. Yet between April and November 1459, he must have been studying at Prague University, in King Wenceslas College. Prague university had lost its prominence after the Decree of Kutná Hora (1409) basically expelled foreign teachers and students; it then went into decline because of the Hussite wars and their aftermath—it stopped working in the 1420s only gradually reopening in 1430s. From 1448, when George of Poděbrady seized Prague, bigger conflicts developed. From 1458, all the graduates had to swear on the Compacts, and from 1459, only those keeping the Compacts were to be admitted to the Charles's college. Final dispute was one between the university and Hilarius of Litoměřice and Wenceslas of Křižanov at the beginning of 1460s.<sup>59</sup> Thus, in late 1450s, the environment did not favour Catholics.

Twenty-six colophons in three codices date from these seven months: 28 April–1 August in I E 38, 3 and 17 August as well as two undated colophons in SOA T, A 4, and 12 October–29 November in I F 25. The codices I E 38 and I F 25 contain the commentaries on Aristotle by Jean Versor, which were brought to Prague by Václav z Vrbna (Wenceslas of Vrbno) and were quickly copied by several scribes in Prague during the 1450s.<sup>60</sup> They are Crux's most homogenous codices as far as their contents are concerned. Because of the number of colophons in I E 38, we can map the pace of his copying in some detail. It is, however, uneven: on average, Crux copied three folios per day, but e.g. on 23 June, he finished his copy of the second book of the *Meteora*,<sup>61</sup> after which he continued to copy and finished the next seven folios on the same day at the 23rd hour.<sup>62</sup> Crux may have stayed at the university longer—the next secure mention of his activity is from 1463, but he is not mentioned in any of

59 Martin Nodl, *Das Kuttener Dekret von 1409: Von der Eintracht zum Konflikt der Prager Universitätsnationen* (Köln: Böhlau, 2017), Petr Hlaváček et al., eds., *Kacířská univerzita. Osobnosti pražské utrakvistické univerzity 1417–1622* [The heretical university. Personalities of the Prague Utraquist university 1417–1622] (Prague: Togga, 2013).

60 Cf. František Šmahel, "Paris und Prag um 1450: Johannes Versor und seine böhmischen Schüler," *Studia zřodloznawcze* 25 (1980): 65–77.

61 Fol. 256v: *Et hec de secundo Metheteorum sabbato in vigilia Iohannis Baptiste.*

62 Fol. 263r: *Finitum sabbato in vigilia Iohannis Baptiste hora 23<sup>a</sup>.* For a more detailed analysis, see Lucie Doležalová, "Personal Multiple-Text Manuscripts in Late Medieval Central Europe: The 'Library' of Crux de Telcz (1434–1504)," in *The Emergence of Multiple-Text Manuscripts*, ed. Alessandro Bausi, Michael Friedrich, and Marilena Maniaci, *Studies in Manuscript Cultures* 17 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 145–170.