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The Transfigurations of Spacetime: The Concept of Tabor in the Hussite Revolution and its Implications for Philosophy of History[1]

In this paper, I aim to show how medieval political theology and contemporary philosophy of history can inform one another. To do so, I examine the concept of Tabor–a notion which emerges among the radical Hussites, known as the Taborites, during the Hussite revolution in medieval Bohemia. I believe that the politico-theological concept of Tabor puts into question modern philosophies which think of history in terms of time, by clearly showing the insufficiency of a purely temporal approach to historical ideas and experiences. To successfully articulate the Taborite concept, we must understand history as structured not only by time but also by space and ideology. Conversely, a historical study guided by the philosophical categories of ideology, space, and time can expand our understanding of Hussite political theology by revealing notions and experiences which cannot be identified by an exclusively ideological, or solely spatial or temporal, analysis.

Keywords: apocalypticism, heresy, Hussite revolution, ideology, medieval communism, philosophy of history, political theology, space, time

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In this paper, I aim to show how medieval political theology and contemporary philosophy of history can inform one another. To do so, I examine the concept of Tabor–a notion which emerges among the radical Hussites, known as the Taborites, during the Hussite revolution in medieval Bohemia.[2] I believe that the politico-theological concept of Tabor puts into question modern philosophies which think of history in terms of time, by clearly showing the insufficiency of a purely temporal approach to historical ideas and experiences. To successfully articulate the Taborite concept, we must understand history as structured not only by time but also by space and ideology. Conversely, a historical study guided by the philosophical categories of ideology, space, and time can expand our understanding of Hussite political theology by revealing notions and experiences which cannot be identified by an exclusively ideological, or solely spatial or temporal, analysis.

This paper has two parts. First, I trace the history of the concept of Tabor. Because the concept of Tabor reflects the changing situation of the radical Hussites, it is an invaluable resource for studying the religious, political, and geographical experiences of the Taborite community during the revolution. More specifically, the idea of Tabor attests to the fact that, based on their experiences, the Taborites developed a unique and effective political theology, which led to the establishment of an anti-feudal city outside the control of the Catholic Church.

The second part of this paper is concerned with two interrelated theoretical implications of the concept of Tabor. Firstly, the Taborite notion helps us to recognise the constitutive role of space, and its relation to time, in the formation of experiences and ideas. This means that spatial categories should complement their temporal counterparts in guiding our research into history. Secondly, the analysis of Tabor demonstrates that a spatiotemporal study of experiences and notions must be supplemented with a discussion of ideology, as without the category of ideology, we would be unable to account for the historically specific content of past lives and ideas. The articulation of the concept of Tabor,

2 There has been a debate over whether the terms "Hussite" and "revolution" are appropriate to describe the events in fifteenth-century Bohemia. In this paper, I continue to use these terms, agreeing with Fudge that, "Symbolically, Hus is the fountainhead of the revolution which followed his death" (2010, 147). I also second Kaminsky's opinion that though the Hussite movement was interested in reforms, these reforms were inseparable from the revolution, and that "the two lines of Hussite development [reform and revolution] progressed together, in mutually reinforcing resonance" (1967, 3). For a discussion of the reforms which preceded and followed the Hussite revolution, see Nodl (2016).

therefore, presupposes a philosophy of history which can ground and direct research into historical experiences and notions by conceiving of history as structured by space, time, and ideology.

1. The Concept of Tabor in the Hussite Revolution

In Czech literature on the Hussites, we can distinguish between two main approaches. The first one focuses on the relation between Hus, Hussitism, and Czech national identity (Palacký 2007; Šmahel 2015), while the second one offers a Marxist analysis of Hussitism as a revolutionary movement fighting for socio-economic reforms (Macek 1958; Kalivoda 2014). This latter strand of Hussite historiography, and especially Kalivoda's focus on the role of Hussite ideology, seems to have influenced the dominant approach in the Anglophone scholarship. For example, in his influential study of the Hussite revolution, Howard Kaminsky explicitly acknowledges his debt to both Macek and Kalivoda (1967, 4). The difference between the Marxist and Anglophone literature lies in their respective interpretations of religion. As Thomas Fudge points out, the Czech Marxist scholarship sees religion as a secondary factor which "serves only as a mask for the truly significant social issues" (1994, 101). Anglophone scholars, by contrast, supplement the socio-economic analysis with arguments which show the fundamental role of religion in the Hussite revolution (Kaminsky 1957; Lahey 2019; Fudge 2020).

Surprisingly, the Hussite revolution has received relatively little attention in the Anglophone world. Hussitism is often seen as one of many failed popular heretical movements found across medieval Europe. For instance, the American historian Martin Malia, despite devoting a whole chapter of one his books to the Hussites, writes in a rather disparaging fashion:

> the Hussites produced no new concepts, whether religious or political, no corpus of doctrine or treatise comparable in originality to those of such later religious revolutionaries (...). Similarly, even though they turned Bohemia upside down for twenty years, when the dust settled the realm had not broken out of the medieval Catholic and feudal mold (…). The Hussite overturn left no legacy or legend to the rest of Europe: for centuries it remained in the consciousness of Christendom largely as a "heresy" that was eventually defeated. (2008, 38–9)

The aim of this section is to demonstrate that the above view is mistaken. Hussites did produce new concepts, and they did–however

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briefly–manage to escape the Catholic and feudal moulds. To substantiate my claim, I will focus on the period of the Hussite revolution directly surrounding the emergence of the notion of Tabor. I will explore the history of the Taborites from pacifist hilltop congregations concerned with taking communion in the form of both bread and wine, through a militant group prepared to wage war and hasten the coming of the apocalypse, to a communist city. My goal is to demonstrate the originality of their political theology, as well as its effectiveness, attested to by the establishment of the Taborite city. In so doing, I continue the approach of Anglophone scholars who emphasise the importance not only of socio-economic questions, but also of religious ideology; in fact, I aim to demonstrate that in the Taborite political theology, it is impossible to clearly separate social, economic, and theological elements. However, where this paper differs from other approaches is in its emphasis on the importance of the experiences of space and time, which underlie the developments of the Hussite ideology. The spatiotemporal approach to Taborite political theology, in turn, explains how the religious, political, and geographical experiences of the radical Hussites produced a concept of Tabor, as well as how changes in this concept were able to continually transform the Taborite experience. The focus on space, time, and ideology, therefore, enables me to present a history of the notion of Tabor and its role in the Hussite revolution, which accounts for the emergence, transformation, and effects of the Taborite concept.

A) Utraquism, camps, and hilltops

One of the controversial debates which preoccupied the inhabitants of Bohemia in advance of the rise of Hussitism was the question of communion "in both kinds" (*sub utraque specie*)–that is to say, in the form of both bread and wine. While the official position of the Catholic Church restricted communion in both kinds to clergy, allowing the laity to take communion only in the form of bread, the Utraquists–as the proponents of communion *sub utraque specie* came to be known–argued for lifting the official restrictions and allowing for "lay chalice," i.e. for the laity's access to communion in the form of wine as well as bread. The reason why the issue of communion in both kinds was so controversial is that it put into question the hierarchical separation between clergy, who enjoyed the privilege of communing by wine and bread, and laity, who, by communing only in one of the two possible ways, were deprived of the privileges of the priests. As Malia observes, denying the

chalice to lay members of the church, "had the long-term effect of emphasizing the separation between the sacerdotal priesthood and the body of the faithful. Returning the cup to the laity thus meant narrowing that gap and democratizing the church" (2008, 46). The democratising tendency of the Utraquists was further expressed in the demand to extend communion to women and children, and to take it daily.[3] Thomas Fudge notes that one of the precursors of Hus, Matěj of Janov,

> made it abundantly clear that the medieval assumption(…) that a priest may commune on behalf of the faithful was not tenable. Matěj explicitly argued there were priests who regarded themselves more important than the laity and had no desire to allow common people to be equated with them through the practice of frequent communion(…) While underscoring disputes over the practice Matěj advocated for it concluding men and women should commune frequently(…) In this sense Matěj regarded the eucharist as a social leveller (2010, 152–3).

The democratising demands of Utraquists were met with opposition from the Catholic Church. In 1415, the Council of Constance forbade the practice of Utraquism and threatened to punish those who disobeyed the ruling. As Fudge observes, "At the Council it had been argued that if a layman allowed consecrated wine to wet his beard, he ought to be burned along with his beard" (2010, 158).

It is at this point that the concept of Tabor begins to germinate. Those Utraquists who, due to the official ban, were unable to take communion in both kinds in churches sought alternative spaces. These were offered on the tops of Bohemian hills and mountains. The hilltop meetings where people communed *sub utraque specie* soon become mass events marking a separation from the official church.

There are at least two reasons why we can speak of the gathering on hilltops as connected to the figure of Hus, and thus as constituting a phase of Hussitism. Firstly, as Fudge observes, towards the end of his life Hus became an advocate of Utraquism–a conviction which only became more radical with the official ban (2010, 156). Secondly, the gatherings in the open air were a continuation of a practice started by Hus himself.[4] J.K. Zeman remarks that, threatened by the official authorities in 1412,

3 For a discussion of the role of women in the Hussite revolution, see Klassen (1981).

4 To see how Hus's life and work compare to those of earlier European "heretics," cf. Frassetto (2007). For an exploration of how Hus influences later religious movements, see Haberkern (2016).

Hus left Prague and moved to the countryside, where he "preached to large outdoor assemblies of common people." Importantly, Zeman notes that these mass meetings, which continued after Hus's death, were called camps–or *Tabory* in Czech (1979, 17).[5] The use of the vernacular word *Tabor* to refer to the early Hussites' gatherings attests to the popular character of the meetings, which, as makeshift camps, stood in stark contrast to the *ecclesia*, which gathered in stone buildings of the Latin church.[6]

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Importantly for our purposes, Howard Kaminsky notes that one of the hills "near Bechyně castle" where the Utraquists gathered was "renamed 'Mt. Tabor'(...) The congregants themselves became known as Taborites" (1957, 44–5). It is likely that homonymity led to the naming of one of the hilltops where a *Tabor* was set up as Mount Tabor. However, there are also symbolic and conceptual reasons for the name. In the Christian tradition, Mount Tabor is associated with the transfiguration of Jesus–an event during which Jesus reveals his divine nature to three of his disciples by becoming radiant with light and appearing alongside Moses and Elijah (Matt., 17:1–3). The Biblical account of transfiguration could explain the choice of the name for the Bohemian mountaintop: Mount Tabor is a privileged space insofar as it is both a site of revelation (it is *there* where Jesus shows himself to be Christ to a group of chosen disciples who climbed the mountain with him) and a site of the transformation of Jesus's human form (it is *there* where Jesus becomes radiant with divine light). To name the hilltop Mount Tabor, therefore, is to conceptualise it as a space where one learns the truth about Christ, and where one witnesses the divinely inspired metamorphosis of the human form on the condition that one is willing to walk up the mountain and join the camp. In other words, the name Tabor affirms that the correct teaching of the Gospel and genuine spiritual metamorphosis can no longer happen in the official churches but only on a hilltop. This sentiment is confirmed by Jakoubek of Stříbro, a Hussite preacher who writes:

5 The word *tabor* is only one of the examples which illustrate the importance attached to the vernacular among the Hussites. Brušák, for instance, discusses Hussite poetry written in the vernacular (1998). Interestingly, as Rychterová argues, the usage of the vernacular in the Hussite movement led to "an acceleration in the process of the vernacularization of written culture that decisively influenced the subsequent development of literary culture and intellectual life in Bohemia" (2020, 297).

6 The fact that the meetings had a popular character does not imply that Hussitism was exclusively a peasant movement. As Klassen notes, the appeal of Hussitism cut across social classes (1990).

> In the year 1419 there took place a congregation of the laity on a certain mountain and in an open place near the village of Chrástan in the region of Písek and Bechyně, to which place people came from many other towns and regions of Bohemia and Moravia, to hear and obey the word of God and to take communion freely, with their children too, in the glorious sacrament of the body and blood of Lord Jesus. There they recognized, through the gift of the Holy Spirit and of the word of God, how far they had been led away and seduced by the foolish and deceitful clergy from the Christian faith and from their salvation; and they learned that the faithful priests could not preach the Scriptures and the Christian doctrine in the churches. And they did not wish to remain in that seduction. (McGinn 1979, 263)

I believe that by 1419 the concept of Tabor crystalises in its earliest form, as a notion which expresses the spatial and ideological experience of the radical Hussites. More specifically, the concept of Tabor captures the space that the Taborites occupied in a threefold opposition to the Catholic Church: Firstly, as makeshift popular camps, Tabor undermines the role of churches as centres of preaching; secondly, as gatherings on mountaintops, Tabor effectively claims space from the control of the Catholic Church; lastly, as a symbolic successor to the Biblical site of transfiguration, Tabor provides a conceptual justification for the Utraquist deviation from the official Catholic practices, as well as for the privileged position of hilltop camps over churches. In the second part of this paper, I will return to the theme of space in Taborite political theology to examine how it bears on contemporary philosophy of history.

B) Five cities of refuge

Soon, the Taborites faced opposition. Kaminsky observes that a truce between Prague–a centre of Hussite reforms–and the feudal powers loyal to the Catholic Church, which took place on November 13, 1419, "was the signal for a savage persecution of non-royalist Hussites throughout Bohemia" (1957, 45). The attendees of hilltop gatherings became victims of violent attacks. A chronicle from the time notes a horrific purge carried out by an anti-Taborite group of inhabitants of Kutná Hora, who, "inhumanly threw them–some alive, some first decapitated–into deep mine shafts, especially into the mine shaft near the Church of St. Martin." The incident in Kutná Hora, while demonstrating the bloody character of the persecution of the rebelling Utraquists, also attests to the circulation of the concept of Tabor among the enemies of the Tabo-

rites. The chronicler remarks that the mine shaft and a mass grave–an *inverse* of a mountain of transfiguration–was mockingly "called 'Tabor'" (in Kaminsky 1957, 46).

The violent opposition to both the Taborites and the idea of Tabor forced the radical Hussites to change their tactic and revise and expand their conceptual self-understanding. These changes can be grouped into two categories, corresponding to a shift in the experience of space and an emergence of a new experience of time.[7] On the one hand, we witness a transition from organising in makeshift camps on mountaintops to permanently moving to walled cities sympathetic to the Taborite cause. On the other hand, we can observe that the experience of persecution sparked an apocalyptic understanding of the world as nearing its end. These two "spatiotemporal" developments among the Taborites are confirmed by a moderate Hussite, Lawrence of Březová:

> To the extent that they desired to be saved from the wrath of Almighty God that they said was ready to come upon the whole world each and all should move from the cities, fortresses, villages, and towns to the five cities of refuge, as Lot left Sodom. These were their names–Plzeň, which they called the city of the sun, Zatec, Louny, Slany, and Klatovy. Almighty God wished to destroy the whole world with the sole exception of those people who fled to the five cities. (McGinn 1979, 264–5)

The pragmatic decision to move to cities–most likely motivated by the fact that a walled city provides better protection from one's enemies than a camp–was accompanied by conceptual developments attested to by Lawrence, who notes that the Taborites' towns were understood as the five cities of refuge. The latter concept is, in fact, an amalgamation of two Old Testament notions: the five cities in the book of Isaiah, and the cities of refuge. The five cities appear in Isaiah 19:18–an apocalyptic chapter which prophesies the destruction of Egypt and the survival of five Hebrew cities–and one of them is named the "City of the Sun" or the "City of Destruction" (a title apparently given to Plzeň). Because Isaiah's prophecy almost perfectly explains the situation in Bohemia, it is understandable why the Biblical five cities would warrant the identification with the

7 It is unclear whether Hus's views on temporality influenced the Taborite experience of time. Although it is possible that Hus's writings on the subject had *some* impact on the radical Hussites, the Taborites' notion of time, as I show below, can be successfully explained in terms of more likely sources: Biblical narratives and the experience of violent struggles. For a discussion of Hus's ideas on time and eternity, see Matula (2003).

Taborite cities. The conflict between the people and the enemies of God (i.e. the radical Hussites and the forces allied with the Egypt-like Catholic Church) will be resolved by an imminent apocalypse which will destroy the land loyal to the Catholics but will save the walled cities of radical Hussites. One should, therefore, relocate to the five Taborite cities which, as has been prophesied, survive the apocalypse. As Lawrence of Březová puts it: "At this time some of the priests of Tabor were preaching a new coming of Christ to the people. In this advent all the evil and those who envied truth would perish and be exterminated; at least the good would be preserved in the five cities" (McGinn 1979, 264).

Malia notes: "On the basis of astrological calculations" the radical Hussites "had expected the end of the world between the eleventh and fourteenth of February 1420" (2008, 48). Interestingly, the fact that the world continued to exist as normal and that the enemies of God were not destroyed after this date did not deter the Taborites. Instead of giving up on their apocalyptic expectations, they re-interpreted them–the apocalypse and the destruction of one's enemies are not to be simply awaited; rather, they are to be brought about by the effort of the faithful.[8] More specifically, the apocalypse was to be hastened by a violent struggle against the forces of the Anti-Christ, i.e. the armies loyal to the official church.[9] In effect, the shift from passive to active apocalypticism was equivalent to an embrace and justification of violence.[10] John of Příbram, critical of the Taborites, writes:

8 As Bartlová observes, one of the ways in which the Hussites fought their enemies was through "the destruction of precious objects connected to religion and the social elites" (2016, 58). "In a wider anthropological sense," Bartlová suggests, "we may diagnose this aspect of Hussite iconoclasm as an attack on the sources of the enemy's symbolic power" (2016, 65).

9 For a discussion of the role of the Anti-Christ in the Hussite political theology, see Cermanová (2020) and Buck (2011).

10 Interestingly, attempts to justify violence can also be found among the reformist wing of the Hussites. Kaminsky points out that the moderates tried to develop a "doctrine of legitimate revolution"–a doctrine which was immediately limited and in effect neutralised (1957, 52). Malia observes that the justification of violence was also implicit in the articles of Prague on which all Hussites agreed: "the final article was the most radical of the four. It decreed that 'all mortal sins' and 'other disorders offending against the Law of God shall be (...) prohibited and punished (...) by those who have the authority to do so.' In other words, the church should be forcibly purged and revolutionized by the temporal authorities, that is, the Hussite nobility, the urban communes, and such armed confraternities of true believers as the Taborites" (2008, 51). This suggests that the Taborite justification of violence was simply a radicalisation of Hussite beliefs, and not a doctrine which would separate them from the wider Hussite movement. For a more detailed discussion of the articles of Prague, see Christianson (2012).

> At this point the false seducers thought up a new lie somehow to console the people, and they said that the whole Christian Church was to be reformed in such a way that all the sinners and evil people were to perish completely, and that only God's elect were to remain on earth (…) And they said that the elect of God would rule in the world for a thousand years with Christ, visibly and tangibly (…) Then the seducers, wanting to bring the people to that freedom and somehow to substantiate their lies, began to preach enormous cruelty, unheard-of violence, and injustice to man. They said that now was the time of vengeance, the time of destruction of all sinners and the time of God's wrath (...) in which all the evil and sinful ones were to perish by sudden death, on one day. (...) And when this did not happen and God did not bring about what they had preached, then they themselves knew how to bring it about, and again thought up new and most evil cruelties. (...) And again those cruel beasts (…) preached that it was no longer the time of mercy but the time of vengeance, so that the people should strike and kill all sinners… (McGinn 1979, 265–6)

The embrace of militant apocalypticism can explain the introduction of the notion of the cities of refuge and its conceptual merger with the five cities of Isaiah. The cities of refuge in the Old Testament are places where someone guilty of manslaughter can be protected from vengeance allowed by law outside of the city walls. To refer to the Taborite cities as the cities of refuge, therefore, is to endow them with a power to suspend the punishment for bloodshed. The protection from punishment provided by the Taborite cities of refuge can be understood in two ways at once: physically and spiritually. On the one hand, the defensive qualities of the walled cities made it more difficult for the enemies to retaliate; the cities thus provided a refuge from the physical consequences of warfare. On the other hand, belonging to the cities and engaging in their defence was presented as protecting the Taborites from damnation, i.e. the spiritual consequences of violent acts. Interestingly, the imagery used at the time seemed to symbolically link violence against enemies to the practice of Utraquism, and specifically, to the communion in the form of wine. As Fudge points out, for the Utraquists, "The bread facilitated union with Christ while the blood washed sins away" (Fudge 2010, 153). Over time, however, the absolving or "cleansing" effects of the blood of Christ received passively as wine seem to have been extended to the blood of the enemies shed actively on the battlefield. An apocalyptic letter states that "the just (...) will now rejoice, seeing vengeance and washing their hands in the blood of the sinners" (Kaminsky 1957, 68). Similarly, an anti-Taborite article admonishes the radical Hussite belief "that in this time of vengeance any one of the faithful is

accursed who holds his sword back from the blood of the adversaries of Christ's Law from personally pouring it out. Rather, each of the faithful ought to wash his hands in the blood of Christ's enemies, because blessed are all who return vengeance to the woeful daughter [i.e. the Catholic Church], just as she has done to us" (McGinn 1979, 267).

By the early months of 1420, the initial idea of Tabor was revised. Recall that in 1419 the concept of Tabor designated a popular camp on a mountaintop, which peacefully claimed space from the control of the Catholic Church and which perceived itself as a site of transfiguration effected by Utraquist practices. However, the experience of persecution, combined with the strategic choice to effectively fight against the enemies by exploiting the defensive features of cities and the offensive qualities of an organised militia, led to clear conceptual developments and revisions. Tabor became identified with the five cities of refuge–a notion which connected the antagonistic experience of space, apocalyptic expectation, and justification of violence. In the revised idea of Tabor, the space was claimed from the Catholic Church through warfare, and the transfiguration of the faithful was a result of bloody violence which hastened the end of times.[11] In the second part of this paper, I will examine how the particular spatiotemporal experience of the radical Hussites captured by the transformed concept of Tabor can influence our philosophical approach to history.

C) The city of Tabor

The concept of Tabor, as we have examined it so far, was used primarily as a weapon in a struggle against the Catholic Church. Around the year 1419, the Taborite community undermined the official church by moving to hilltops in order to practice Utraquism; at the beginning of 1420, fuelled by apocalyptic fervour, the Taborites violently resisted the forces they deemed loyal to the Catholic Church. Interestingly, during 1420, the antagonism towards the official church was extended–now the Taborites fought not only the dominant religious structures but also Bohemia's economic and social organisation. In short, Tabor became both an anti-Catholic and an anti-feudal concept. This expanded notion of Tabor manifested itself inside a city named, appropriately, Tabor. For a brief period, the economic, social, and religious relations in the city

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11 For a discussion of how Hussite apocalypticism relates to the medieval apocalyptic tradition, see Lerner (1982).

neutralised the traditional feudal hierarchies and division. The radicality of Tabor's organisation led some contemporary commentators to call the city communist (Kaminsky 1957, 54; Fudge 1998) or even "avowedly anarchic" (Bookchin 1982, 202).

The beginning of the city of Tabor can be traced to the early spring of 1420, when several radical Hussites captured a town called Ústí-nad-Lužnicí. Kaminsky observes: "A few days later these Taborites took possession of the nearby abandoned fortress of Hradiště, on a much stronger site, and they began to move there, renaming it Tabor." By March 25, the Taborites stationed in Plzeň left the City of the Sun and moved to Tabor. Soon, "Tabor emerged as *the* chiliast city of the realm, the heir of all the previous congregations and communities, and the main center of attraction for new adherents to the chiliast revolution" (Kaminsky 1957, 54–5).

The Taborites living in the city believed in common ownership of goods. Kaminsky notes that inside the city walls, the Taborites established the practice of a common chest–a system in which individual citizens of Tabor waived their right to own goods privately by allowing their property to be held in common (Kaminsky 1957, 54, 66). "Just as at Tabor there is nothing mine and nothing yours, but everything in the community is possessed equally, so everything should always be in common for all, and no one may have anything privately; if he does, he sins mortally" (Kaminsky 1957, 58) In addition, the Taborites advocated for the reappropriation of property and land in the vicinity of the city from the hands of feudal owners. Angered, John of Příbram complains that the radical Hussites "preached to the people, 'Now you will not pay rents to your lords any more, nor be subject to them, but will freely and undisturbedly possess their villages, fish-ponds, meadows, forests, and all their domains'" (McGinn 1979, 265).

The radical economic policies which covered the space inside and outside the city walls had radical consequences–by neutralising the power of property and land, the policies in effect eliminated the economic causes of social inequality. The common ownership of goods and the reappropriation of land destroyed the traditional hierarchy between feudal property owners and those who must serve or pay in order to enjoy the property that others possessed. "In that time there will be no kingship or dominion on the earth, nor any subjection. All rents and dues will cease. No one will compel another to do anything, but all will be equal brothers and sisters…" (Kaminsky 1957, 58)

The final levelling policy targeted the privileged position of the preachers. The Taborites embraced apocalyptic antinomianism, which, by

advocating for the transformation of humanity and the eventual supersession of religious law, in effect denied the need for priests as elite interpreters of the Scripture and its commandments.[12] An anti-Taborite article notes that for the radical Hussites, "the written Law of God will cease in the Restored Kingdom of the Church Militant and written Bibles will be destroyed because the Law of Christ will be written in the hearts of all and there will be no need of a teacher" (McGinn 1979, 268). Interestingly, the antinomian attack on the division between clergy and laity seems to have been simply a radicalisation of the democratising Utraquist postulates, which argued for the extension of the communion in both kinds to non-priests.

The economic, social, and religious policies of the city of Tabor attracted an array of various heretical groups who hoped to escape both the Catholic Church and the feudal relations of medieval Bohemia. Interestingly, the non-Taborite heretics were welcomed and allowed to settle in the city. As Malia observes, the city of Tabor soon became a pluralist community where groups of differing views co-existed:

> In the enthusiasm of the first months of the new Tabor's existence, underground heretics who had long existed in Bohemia flocked to the community. There were Waldensians drawn by the prospect of apostolic poverty. There was also a representative of Europe's newest heresy, Wyclifism, the Englishman Peter Payne, who learned Czech and became an important spokesman of the movement. There were Pikards, or Brethren of the Free Spirit, who expected the imminent coming of the Final Days (…) Finally, there were antinomian Adamites who believed that the world's impending end authorized a return to the innocence of Eden, sexual liberation, and the community of wives. (2008, 49)

To sum up, during 1420, we can identify an expansion of the concept of Tabor along three interrelated lines. Firstly, the privileged status of the five cities of refuge, grounded in their role in the coming apocalypse, became concentrated in the one city of Tabor. Secondly, the city was a space which escaped and resisted not only the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church but also the economic, social, and religious hierarchies of feudal Bohemia. Thirdly, Tabor ceased to designate a community united solely by its radical Hussitism; instead, it denoted a pluralist society open to various expressions of anti-Catholic and anti-feudal views. We could, therefore, conclude that during 1420 the notion of transfiguration–intimately tied to the

12 The Taborites' antinomianism can be contrasted with the concern for legal justification found among the less radical Hussites. For a discussion of the latter, see Grant (2015).

concept of Tabor from its very inception–can be reconceived as involving a spiritual metamorphosis *with a material basis* in the city's radical organisation. As Kaminsky aptly puts it:

> The peasant or artisan who abandoned his land or sold his property, who burnt his home and left his friends and family, and who then made his way to (…) chiliast Tabor, was truly passing from one world into another, in which neither the first principles nor the practical arrangements of the old order had validity. In actual fact, the (…) vision of the chiliast prophets, who included almost all the Taborite priests in 1420, had set the Taborites free from the feudal order. They could now build their own society. (1957, 62)

I will come back to the significance of the Taborite city for philosophy history in the next part of the paper. To conclude this section, we should note that the radicality of Tabor was short-lived. The city soon re-established a feudal relationship with the villages and peasants under its control, becoming "economically similar to most of the royal towns of Bohemia" (Kaminsky 1957, 62). The equality between clergy and laity was effectively denied by an election of a bishop in September 1420. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the above changes were coupled with a shift in the theological orientation–apocalypticism ceased to play a central role and soon was replaced by less radical doctrines. "In the mid-twenties a leading Taborite… wrote: 'We do not consider as true that story which some tell, that a good age is coming, in which there will be no evil doers, and that they will not suffer at all but will be filled with ineffable joy'" (Kaminsky 1957, 63). Furthermore, towards the end of 1420, the Taborites expelled and slaughtered the members of the more radical heretical groups.[13]

2. The Implications of the Concept of Tabor for Philosophy of History

I believe that the concept of Tabor, in addition to being truly fascinating from a historical point of view, allows us to draw some interesting theoretical consequences bearing on philosophy of history, and with it, on the conditions of historical research. Firstly, the specific way in which

13 Interestingly, Fudge identifies, as one of the reasons for the end of the Taborite experiment, the fact that the city was not *communist enough*: "the Taborite experiment was limited to consumption communism, not production communism" (1998, 39). As a consequence, the non-communist production could not sustain the communist consumption of the goods produced.

the concept of Tabor expresses the spatiotemporal experiences of the radical Hussites enables us to rethink the role that space and time play in structuring history and forming historical notions. The concept of Tabor was concerned primarily with *spaces*: mountaintops, cities of refuge, sites of transfiguration, etc. The primacy of space found in the concept of Tabor suggests a revision of the view of history conceived as primarily a concatenation of temporal phases and with its supplementation with a model of history involving a constitutive spatial dimension.[14] Furthermore, and following from the previous point, the spatial model of history calls for an expansion of our approach to the reconstruction of historical concepts, which can no longer limit itself to a simply temporal analysis but, instead, should also recognise the spatiality inherent in historical notions. I will explore these points below with the help of the works of Reinhart Koselleck and Edmund Husserl.

Interestingly, the concept of Tabor allows us also to problematise the spatiotemporal model of history and historical analysis suggested above. From its inception, the concept of Tabor has expressed the antagonistic relation of the Taborites to the dominant religious practices and institutions in terms of religious imagery. This is visible in the example of the five cities of refuge–a notion which employs Biblical terms to capture the antagonistic experience of space and the apocalyptic experience of time. However, a study of historical concepts which operates solely within the categories of space and time cannot explain why the Taborites framed their spatiotemporal experiences in religious terms. In other words, because space and time are formal structures of history, they are necessary yet insufficient to account for the *specific* ways in which a given society articulates spacetime. For instance, a spatiotemporal reading of the five cities of refuge can disclose an antagonistic experience of space and an apocalyptic experience of time, yet this type of reading cannot account for why the Catholic forces persecuted the Taborites, as well as for why this persecution led to the expectation of the end of times. Similarly, while a spatiotemporal interpretation can capture the role of mountaintops in the formation of the concept of Tabor, it cannot offer the reasons why these mountaintops became the sites of transfiguration. As I will demonstrate below with the help of Louis Althusser, the questions that the spatiotemporal reading leaves unanswered can be addressed by recourse to the *religious ideology* of the medieval Bohemian

14 In addition to Koselleck's approach discussed in this paper, time seems fundamental for other modern philosophies of history, whether they are hermeneutical (Gadamer 2013), archaeological (Agamben 2017), or deconstructive (Kleinberg 2017).

society. As a consequence, I believe that the philosophy which conceives of history as being structured by time and space should incorporate ideological analysis, as it the latter can account for the specific ways in which spacetime is realised in a given society. The overall aim of this section is, therefore, to demonstrate that it is the tripartite structure of time, space, and ideology which enables us to capture historical periods and which guides our analysis of the periods' concepts.

For Koselleck, the twentieth-century German thinker who pioneered conceptual history, "all histories, wherever they are to be found, are always concerned with time" (2004, 245). This is because, according to Koselleck, history cannot be conceived without two inherently temporal categories of *experience* and *expectation*. Whereas experience is "present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered," expectation "is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed" (Koselleck 2004, 259). It is the interaction between the past presents found in experience and the future presents found in expectation which generates historical time. Experience and expectation, therefore, "indicate an anthropological condition without which history is neither possible nor conceivable." (Koselleck 2004, 257).

Koselleck's anthropological philosophy of history, in turn, is directly related to his account of historical research. Experience and expectation are "formal determinants" which can guide our study of a particular historical period and its notions. As Koselleck puts it, the "conditions of possibility of real history are, at the same time, conditions of its cognition" (2004, 258). Experience and expectation offer the "index of temporality" which can help us reconstruct and analyse concepts operative in a given epoch. For instance, the developments in Taborite apocalypticism can be partly explained by a shifting relation between experience and expectation. In its initial stage, the experience of persecution led to a "passive" expectation of the end of times sometime in February 1420, while in its later phase, the apocalyptic expectation became "active" as a result of the experience of the failed prophecy.

However, as we have seen, the concept of Tabor, as well as presupposing temporal categories, consists of a range of elements which explicitly relate to space. The congregations on mountaintops, the five cities of refuge, and the policy of reappropriating land surrounding the city of Tabor–all of them, in addition to the "index of temporality" recognised by Koselleck, seem to involve an "index of spatiality." Interestingly, Koselleck thinks of space as a metaphor for temporal experiences of the past, thus reducing spatiality to a figurative expression of time (2004,

260). Although it might be possible to reframe the spatial notions operative in the concept of Tabor in terms of temporal categories of experience and expectation, doing so would essentially miss the specific spatial character of these experiences. For instance, it is unclear what the benefit would be of conceptualising the mountaintops as structured by experience and exception without recognising them as, simply, *spaces*. The concept of Tabor, with its irreducible spatial dimension, therefore, seems to disclose a limit of both the purely temporal understanding of history and the solely temporal analysis of historical notions.[15]

I believe that Koselleck's philosophy of history can be expanded by another twentieth-century thinker, the founder of phenomenology, Husserl, whose writings on space can help us account for the possibility of research into primarily spatial historical concepts, such as the concept of Tabor. Husserl offers an extensive treatment of space in one of his later essays (with the rather lengthy title of "The Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature"). There, Husserl examines how we experience the Earth. For Husserl, the Earth possesses two meanings: On the one hand, it refers to a body examined by science–a planet in the shape of a globe subject to physical laws; on the other hand, the Earth is not a body but, rather, a *condition* which makes possible the experience of bodies in space (Husserl 1981). The Earth as a condition of experience has two interrelated functions. Firstly, it is a "ground" or a "base" in relation to which we can determine the rest and motion of other bodies. For instance, the movement of the car and the rest of my table are both relative to the same ground: the Earth conceived as a base.[16] Secondly, the Earth as a condition of experience accounts for the location in which bodies move–the bird is flying over *there*, while my coffee cup stands over *here*. "We have surrounding space as a system of places–i.e. as a system of possible terminations of motions of bodies. In that system all earthly bodies (…) have their particular 'loci'" (Husserl 1981, 225). In short, for Husserl, the Earth is a universal structure which makes spatial experience possible by enabling us to determine the movement and location of bodies.

Importantly, because space is a universal structure, it is necessarily found at work in history. Because all historical events involve bodies

15 A similar critique of the purely temporal analysis of history has been made by Hagen Schulz-Forberg (2013). Although I share his conclusions, my approach differs from his. While Schulz-Forberg is interested in global history, my starting point is a specific historical community.

16 One of the consequences of Husserl's view is that the movements of the Earth as a physical body are determined on the basis of the Earth as a ground.

and locations, any possible history presupposes the Earth as a condition which determines its spatial character. As Husserl puts it:

> every people and their historicity (…) are themselves ultimately made at home, naturally, on the 'earth.' All developments, all relative histories have to that extent a single primitive history of which they are episodes (…) they all exist for one another in open, undetermined horizons of earth-space. (1981, 228)

The Husserlian category of the Earth, therefore, enables us to account for the spatiality inherent in the concept of Tabor. The latter comprises spatial elements because the experience of the Taborites it captures was necessarily structured by spatial determinations of bodies and locations. Consequently, because the experience of the Taborites was spatial, the concepts which articulate their experiences would involve an index of spatiality. Moreover, because any historical experience must be spatial, it would follow that any historical notion related to experience must possess some spatial elements.[17]

Of course, the Husserlian category of space does not invalidate Koselleck's temporal notions of experience and expectation. The concept of Tabor expresses an *intertwining* of space and time, which demonstrates that Husserl's and Koselleck's respective models of history are, in fact, complementary. This is recognised by Husserl, who identifies time and space as the "universal historical a priori" (1989, 180)–categories which structure history and, in so doing, provide the ground for the analysis of specific historical epochs or events. However, we should also recognise that space and time do not necessarily play equal roles in constituting history. The apocalyptic experience of time which develops amongst the Taborites in response to the persecution was, in fact, anchored in a more complex articulation of space, divided between areas and cities sympathetic to the Taborites and those loyal to the Catholic forces. This is particularly visible in the notion of the five cities of refuge, where apocalypticism becomes superimposed on the defensive and offensive roles of particular cities, i.e. specific walled spaces. Thus, though we can

17 The importance of space to the constitution of social and political experiences has recently been explored by Marchart and Massey. While Marchart, drawing on the writings of Ernesto Laclau, views space as essentially antagonistic (2014), Massey thinks of space as a process "always under construction" (2005, 9). For both, space is a universal structure which makes possible human experience. My analysis in this section aims to supplement their view by demonstrating that space as a formal structure is insufficient to account for its own antagonistic and ever-changing character, and that these properties of space are grounded in specific ideology and ideological conflict.

conclude that history is structured by both space and time, we should also recognise that one of them might play a more significant role than the other.

We can now introduce the third term which I believe is essential for a philosophical understanding of history and, consequently, for a study of historical concepts: ideology. As Koselleck himself admits, the temporal notions of experience and expectation "are merely formal categories" which tell us nothing about factual history. As he puts it, "there is no history which could be constituted independently of the experiences and expectations of active human agents. With this, however, nothing is yet said about a given concrete past, present, or future history" (2004, 256). Analogous claim can be made with regards to the Husserlian category of space–while the latter offers a formal outline of possible historical events, it does not, by itself, provide any information about the historical specificity of the events under investigation. In short, what our spatiotemporal philosophy of history allows us to say is *that* particular historical subjects experience their world in terms of time and space, as well as *that* their concepts involve a spatiotemporal index. However, what this philosophy seems to be lacking is the account of *how* particular historical subjects experience spacetime, as well as *how* their concepts capture and express their spatiotemporal world. In the case of the concept of Tabor, the recognition of the constitutive role of space and time makes us attentive to how the mountainous landscape of Bohemia played a role in articulating the Taborite experience; however, what we seem unable to derive from our spatiotemporal categories is that the mountaintops were sites of transfiguration based on Utraquist practice, in direct opposition to the Catholic Church. For our analysis to access the specifically religious syntax of the concept of Tabor, as well as its function as a weapon against the dominant institutions, we should recognise the role of ideology in the constitution of history.

Althusser, the French Marxist active in the second part of the last century, defines ideology as "a certain '*representation of the world*' which relates men and women to their conditions of existence":

> Ideological *representations* concern nature and society, the very world in which men live; they concern the life of men, their relations to nature, to society, to the social order, to other men and to their own activities, including economic and political practice. (Althusser 1990, 24)

Defined this way, ideology emerges as "a structure essential to the historical life of societies" (Althusser 1969, 232). The set of ideological

representations which relates humans to their environment makes people equipped to navigate, use, and transform the natural and social world around them (Althusser 1969, 235).

Although ideology is an essential historical structure, it should not be confused with the "universal historical a priori" of time and space. Spacetime constitutes an empty formal structure of every possible world, which, as Koselleck recognises, says nothing about the specificity of a given historical period. By contrast, ideology has a historical content which, on my reading, "fills" the empty spatiotemporal form. More specifically, I believe that ideology assigns to space and time a particular set of representations, which results in a specific spatiotemporal experience–as Althusser puts it, in ideology, members of society "*become conscious* of their place in the world and in history" (1969, 233). This means that insofar as we experience the spatiotemporal world, this experience is necessarily mediated by ideology; or, to put it more precisely, ideology *is* our world, as none of its elements can be experienced outside ideological representations. As Althusser puts it, people "'live' their ideologies (…) as their '*world' itself*" (1969, 233). On my reading, therefore, we can represent the relationship between spacetime, ideology, and concrete experiences as three distinct yet interrelated "levels": universal categories of space and time determine the form of all possible experience; ideological representations actualise or represent these universal categories in a historically specific way, producing an experience proper to a given historical society; and, finally, concrete individuals and collectives live their ideology and, in it, they live the ideologically mediated universal form of experience–or spacetime.[18] In the case of the radical Hussites, it is ideology which allows us to understand why the spatiotemporal elements of the concept of Tabor were expressed in Biblical terms. Tabor weaves together spatial, temporal, and Biblical elements because it captures and informs an ideologically mediated spatiotemporal experience. For the Taborites, because the categories of religious ideology mediated both space and time, they experienced their spatiotemporal world as structured by a specific set of Biblical representations.

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Additionally, ideology–and, more precisely, the notion of "ideological struggle"–can help us account for the essentially antagonistic character of the concept of Tabor, as well as for the need to establish the Taborite city. For Althusser, a given society's ideology is never uniform; rather,

18 The differences in ideologically mediated spatiotemporal experiences enable us to distinguish between different historical societies. The ideological world of medieval Bohemia, for instance, can be distinguished from the ideological world of ancient Rome or communist Russia.

the ideological structure is always differentiated. Ideology can be divided according to specific regions and tendencies, some of which exert a more powerful influence on society than others (Althusser 1990, 26; 30). Furthermore, Althusser notes that the internal hierarchies which structure ideological regions and tendencies generate an ideological struggle–an antagonism between the dominant and the subordinate ideological elements (1990, 38). Importantly, though ideological struggle involves concepts, it should not be understood as simply a conflict between sets of ideas. Because ideology structures spatiotemporal experiences, "ideological struggle embraces the totality of human activities" including the conscious and unconscious "representation people have of their world, their place, their role, their condition and their future" (Althusser 1990, 36). It follows, then, that a defence of, or an attack on, a particular ideological concept is, in fact, a defence of, or an attack on, a particular spatiotemporal experience captured and informed by the concept–that is to say, a particular way of representing and relating to the world.

By articulating a distinctive spatiotemporal experience, the concept of Tabor is, by definition, differentiated from other types of ideologically mediated experiences found in medieval Bohemia. Furthermore, because ideological differentiation is necessarily hierarchical and antagonistic, the birth of the notion of Tabor is simultaneously a beginning of an ideological conflict between the dominant ideology of the Catholic Church and the subordinate, Utraquist tendency. This is why, from its very inception, the concept of Tabor has marked an antagonism towards the official Church, which eventually leads to a theological justification of violence. Moreover, because ideological struggle is essentially a war over possible experiences, it raises the question of material conditions which could secure and further develop a particular way of relating to the world. For the Taborites, these material conditions were initially constituted by the mountaintops but over time – and in response to the increased persecution which aimed to suppress the Taborite way of representing the world (recall how the inhabitants of Kutná Hora attempted to undermine the notion of Tabor by linking it to the mass grave of the Hussites they murdered)–they were replaced by walled cities and, ultimately, the city of Tabor. The creation of the Taborite city, therefore, was not a contingent fact but a material necessity determined by ideological struggle.

This section aimed to reconstruct a philosophy of history presupposed by the analysis of the concept of Tabor. As I have shown, history is structured not only by time but also by space. However, as I have also suggested, solely spatiotemporal analysis is insufficient to capture histo-

rically specific content. To account for the latter, we must rely on ideological analysis. Consequently, as the concept of Tabor makes clear, research into historical experiences and concepts should recognise the constitutive role of three structures of history: time, space, and ideology.

Conclusion

In this paper, relying on the categories of space, time, and ideology, I have demonstrated that the years 1419–1420 in Bohemia witnessed a process of intense conceptual production which resulted in the emergence and development of a unique political theology reflected in the notion of Tabor. This concept eventually led to the establishment of the city, which, however briefly, escaped both Catholicism and feudalism. I have also offered a sketch of a philosophy of history which accounted for the possibility of articulating the concept of Tabor. By situating the Taborite political theology in the context of contemporary philosophies of Koselleck, Husserl, and Althusser, I have shown how time, space, and ideology structure history, producing notions which express the spatio-temporal experiences of historical communities. This philosophy of history, in turn, secured the conclusion that a historical analysis of experiences and concepts is grounded in, and should be guided by, temporal, spatial, and ideological categories. In so doing, I hope to have shown how medieval political theology and philosophy of history can inform one another.

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Autor: Jakub Kowalewski
Tytuł: Transfiguracje czasoprzestrzeni. Pojęcie Tabor w rewolucji husyckiej i jego implikacje dla filozofii historii
Abstrakt: Ten artykuł ma za zadanie ukazać sposób w jaki średniowieczna teologia polityczna i współczesna filozofia historii są w stanie wzajemnie się uzupełniać. W tym celu przedstawiam koncept „Taboru" – pojęcia które wyłoniło się wśród radyklanych husytów, zwanych taborytami, w trakcie rewolucji husyckiej na terenie średniowiecznych Czech i Moraw. Moim zdaniem teologiczno-polityczny koncept Taboru stawia pod znakiem zapytania współczesne filozofie, które traktują historię w pojęciach czasu, poprzez ukazanie niewystarczalności czysto „czasowego" podejścia do historycznych idei i doświadczeń. Aby z powodzeniem nakreślić koncept Taboru, powinniśmy rozumieć historię jako strukturę nie tylko czasową, ale również przestrzenną i ideologiczną. Równocześnie studium historyczne kierujące się filozoficznymi kategoriami ideologii, przestrzeni i czasu pozwala na rozbudowanie naszego rozumienia husyckiej teologii politycznej poprzez uwidocznienie pojęć i doświadczeń, które pozostają niezidentyfikowane czy to w analizach wyłącznie ideologicznych, jedynie przestrzennych lub czysto czasowych.
Słowa kluczowe: apokaliptycyzm, czas, filozofia historii, herezja, ideologia, przestrzeń, rewolucja husycka, średniowieczny komunizm, teologia polityczna