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Praga

## REX IUSTUS at His Throne. Prague, Rome, and Jerusalem on the Eve of the Modern Era

### Abstract

The reigns of Vladislav II and Louis I, Czech kings of the Jagiellonian dynasty, were among the most controversial and dynamic periods in the history of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown. The country enjoyed a long period of peace, which enabled its broad flourishing after decades of Hussite wars. Part of this cultural flowering was the development of art and the creation of architectural and artistic works directly linked to the exercise of royal power. In 2017, in this context, I proposed an iconological reading of the portal to the Old Diet Hall in the Vladislav Hall of the Old Royal Palace at Prague Castle. In this article, I attempt to provide further evidence that the architecture of the portal may have been intended to emphasize the role of the king as the guarantor of justice – a new Solomon. This is primarily achieved through comparisons with the visual culture and literature of the period.

**Keywords:** Prague Castle, King Solomon, Vladislav Jagiello, Renaissance, royal power, justice

**Słowa kluczowe:** Zamek Praski, król Salomon, Władysław Jagiełło, renesans, władza królewska, sprawiedliwość

The reigns of Vladislav II and Louis I, Czech kings of the Jagiellonian dynasty of Polish-Lithuanian origin, were among the most controversial and dynamic periods in the history of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown. Researchers often focus on the nature of royal power at a time when, on the one hand, it was relatively weakened and there were dramatic conflicts between the towns and the nobility, or between Utraquists and Catholics, which brought the country to the brink of a latent civil war.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the country enjoyed a long period of peace,

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<sup>1</sup> See J. Macek, *Jagellonský věk v českých zemích (1471-1526) Vol. 1. Hospodářská základna a královská moc*, Academia, Praha 1992; B. Czechowicz, *Idea i państwo. Korona Królestwa Czech w latach 1457-1547. Vol. 4, Król i stany. Część 1, Siła słabości? Długie późne rządy Władysława II*, Quaestio, Wrocław, 2018.



Fig. 1. The portal to the Old Diet Hall in the Vladislav Hall of the Old Royal Palace at Prague Castle. Photo by Pavel Kalina



Fig. 2. Matthias Corvinus on throne, relief from the Ortenburg Castle in Bautzen (Budyšin), 1486. Photo © Hedwig Storch, under creative commons license. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bautzen,\\_Ortenburg,\\_Matthias\\_Corvinus\\_of\\_Hungary\\_3024.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bautzen,_Ortenburg,_Matthias_Corvinus_of_Hungary_3024.JPG)

which enabled its broad flourishing after decades of Hussite wars. Part of this cultural flowering was the development of art and the creation of architectural and artistic works directly linked to the exercise of supreme power.

In 2017, I proposed an iconological reading of the portal to the Old Diet Hall in the Vladislav Hall of the Old Royal Palace at Prague Castle (Fig. 1). Based on a comparison with the aedicule architecture of the relief from Ortenburg Castle in Bautzen, in which the statue of King Vladislav's former archenemy Matthias Corvinus is set (Budyšin, 1486, Fig. 2), I proposed interpreting the twisted pilasters and spiral half-columns of the Prague portal as architectural abbreviations of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> On the relief from Ortenburg Castle, a lion was placed at the feet of King Matthias, so it is practically clear that the king was shown here as the new Solomon. The spiral columns supporting the incomplete arch above his head can therefore be related to the iconography

<sup>2</sup> P. Kalina, *The New Solomon: Architecture as the Embodiment of State Ideology and Political Practice in Early Modern Prague*, "Umění" 2017, vol. 65, no. 1, pp. 26–36.

of the Temple of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> It would certainly be worthwhile to analyze the possible visual sources for the Bautzen relief. For comparison, the engraving *The Judgment of Solomon* by the Netherlandish Master FVB, dated to the late fifteenth century, shows both the lion and the hanging drapery motif (Fig. 3).<sup>4</sup> In particular, the motif of the lion, whose tradition dates back to both the biblical text and a number of medieval depictions of either King Solomon or the Virgin Mary standing on a lion, can be taken as proof that Matthias was depicted here as Solomon. My interpretation was immediately questioned by Michaela Ramešová: according to her, the portal to the Old Diet Hall did not necessarily have any significance, and the shape of



Fig. 3. Master FVB, *The Judgment of Solomon*, ca. 1480. Engraving on laid paper, sheet (trimmed to plate mark): 25.6 × 21.3 cm (10 1/16 × 8 3/8 in.). Accession Number 1943.3.197. © National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., Rosenwald Collection. Object in public domain.

its columns was simply based on graphic designs.<sup>5</sup> According to the author, inspiration may have come not only from full-scale aedicule portals, but also from the architecture of smaller tabernacles, which were often designed with an aedicule frame. However, Ramešová did not find any specific model for the shape of the portal, and she herself added that the spiral columns of the tabernacles may have been inspired by the Solomonic tradition.

At the same time, Eric Fernie emphasized that the spiral columns of medieval art and architecture may not have been associated with Solomon's Temple. According to him, the identification of spiral columns with the Temple was not widespread until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary,

<sup>3</sup> S. Papp, *Das Denkmal des Königs Matthias Corvinus und die St Georgskapelle in der Bautzener Ortenburg*, [in:] *Die Kunst im Markgraftum Oberlausitz während der Jagiellonenherrschaft*, eds. T. Torbus, M. Hörsch, Thorbecke, Ostfildern 2006, pp. 103–104.

<sup>4</sup> Lehrs 2, B 2-II (81). The engraving inspired the illumination in the Hours of Charles d'Angoulême, see A. Matthews, *The Use of Prints in the Hours of Charles d'Angoulême*, "Print Quarterly" 1986, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 4–18.

<sup>5</sup> M. Ramešová, *Portál do Staré sněmovny. K původu a povaze vzorů all'antica v huti, Benedikta Rieda*, "Umění" 2018, vol. 66, no. 3, pp. 158–174.

<sup>6</sup> E. Fernie, *Spiral Columns and the Temple of Solomon*, [in:] *Tomb and Temple. Re-imagining the sacred buildings of Jerusalem*, eds. R. Griffith-Jones, E. Fernie, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge 2018, pp. 159–163.

the unequivocal identification of spiral columns with the Temple was rather exceptional. I do not wish to take these reservations lightly. In this article, however, I would like to ask again whether it is possible to assume that the portal to the Old Diet Hall was a bearer of meaning, and whether this significance can be related to the idea of the Czech king as a modern Solomon, given the context of the time.

It must be admitted that the motif of spiral columns was quite common in late Gothic architecture. Thus, the iconology of the portal cannot and probably never will be easily “proven.” It is, however, possible to form an idea of it on the basis of indirect evidence, by reading the context. This is, of course, made more difficult by the fact that the portal is not dated and could have been created in a relatively wide time span from the completion of Vladislav Hall (1502), or even earlier, to 1518, when the sacristy portal in the Church of St. Anne in Annaberg (Saxony), which is based on the model of the Prague portal, was created.<sup>7</sup> The authorship of the Prague portal is also uncertain, although there is general agreement that it was designed by the royal architect Benedikt Ried.

As for Fernie’s basic objection, it can be argued that the connection between the spiral columns in St. Peter’s Church in Rome and Solomon’s Temple was known in Central Europe, but the question is how well. Logically, the use of this motif would make sense in scenes that Scripture or widely read texts such as the *Legenda aurea* explicitly situate in the Temple of Jerusalem, especially scenes from the childhood and youth of Mary and Christ, such as The Presentation of the Virgin or Christ Among the Doctors. These include the famous painting *The Betrothal of the Virgin* by Robert Campin, created in the 1420s (Fig. 4).<sup>8</sup> In the twentieth century, the painting became the subject of interpretation by leading historians of Flemish painting, who pointed to the significant contrast between “Romanesque” and “Gothic” architecture in the picture. In reality, the architecture of the circular temple in the (from the viewer’s perspective) left half of the painting cannot be described as simply “Romanesque.” The columns visible here do not refer to any “Romanesque” church, but to an imaginary church in Jerusalem with fantastic columns, including a spiral one. On the contrary, the realistically depicted church por-

<sup>7</sup> G. Fehr, *Benedikt Ried. Ein deutscher Baumeister zwischen Gotik und Renaissance in Böhmen*, G.D.W. Callwey, München 1961, p. 30, fig. 18. Fehr dated the portal to around 1500; P. Kalina, *Benedikt Ried a počátky záalpské gotiky*, Academia, Praha 2009, p. 178. L. Helten, *Mitteldeutschland – eine Kulturregion von europäischen Rang am Vorabend des Bauernkrieges*, [in:] *Frührenaissance in Mitteldeutschland. Macht. Repräsentation. Frömmigkeit*, eds. C. Philipsen, T. Bauer-Friedrich, P. Jahn, Seemann Henschel, Halle a. d. Saale 2024, pp. 10–21.

<sup>8</sup> E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting. Its Origins and Character*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1971, pp. 136–137; G. Smith, *The Betrothal of the Virgin by the Master of Flémalle*, “Pantheon” 1972, vol. 30, pp. 115–132; C. Harbison, *Realism and Symbolism in Early Flemish Painting*, “The Art Bulletin” 1984, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 588–602.; *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden*, eds. S. Kemperdick, J. Sander, H. Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern 2009, cat. no. 9, pp. 224–233; J. J. Pérez Preciado, *Fifteenth-Century Netherlandish Painting at the Museo Nacional del Prado. Catalogue raisonné*, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 2024, pp. 174–184.



Fig. 4. Robert Campin, *The Betrothal of the Virgin*, 1420–1430. Grisaille, oil on oak panel, 77 cm × 88 cm. © Madrid, Museo del Prado, inventory number P001887.

tal on the right side of the painting (from the viewer's perspective) refers to contemporary architecture, as well as to the medieval tradition of betrothal in front of a church portal.<sup>9</sup> The painting thus represents a hybrid whole, combining different planes of reality into a single whole. In contrast, other artists in a similar context chose what we would now consider an anachronistic setting in contemporary architecture, which was intended to lead the viewer to imagine the events depicted as if they were taking place not only in the past and in distant Jerusalem, but in his own time and in his own city (Fig. 5).

However, improved image-making techniques, together with the complex conceptual work of painters and graphic artists, enabled the creation of even more complex pictorial compositions. For example, in Hans Burgkmair's painting *St. Peter's Basilica*, from the series *Seven Roman Basilicas* (originally in the Augsburg convent of Franciscan nuns), of 1501, a spiral column can

<sup>9</sup> F. Zoepfl, *Brauttüre*, [in:] *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 2, J.B. Metzler/Alfred Druckenmüller Verlag, Stuttgart 1947, pp. 1134–1137.



Fig. 5. Israel van Meckenem after Hans Holbein the Elder, *The Marriage of the Virgin*, c. 1490–1500. engraving on laid paper, sheet: 26.5 × 18.2 cm. Accession Number 1943.3.107. © National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., Rosenwald Collection. Object in public domain.



Fig. 6. Hans Burgkmair, *St. Peter's Basilica* from the series of *Seven Roman Basilicas* (originally Augsburg, convent of Franciscan nuns) from 1501. © Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie Augsburg. Panel painting, 204.5 cm × 115 cm. Object in public domain.

be seen through a half-open door (Fig. 6).<sup>10</sup> It is undoubtedly the *Colonna Sancta* from St. Peter's church, a free-standing column, which in 1438 was fitted with a protective wall bearing an inscription that explicitly mentioned its origin from Solomon's Temple.<sup>11</sup> The depiction of the church's Porta Aurea in this painting clearly relates to the Holy Year ceremonies, as evidenced by the inscription on the lintel of the portal: ALEXANDE BORGIA PPA VI PONT MAX ANNO JUBEL, auctoritate ap[osto]lica dimitto vob[is] om[n]ia p[er]c[us]ta. In this context, it is interesting to note that the date 1500 can be seen on the eastern wall of Vladislav Hall, which does not necessarily refer directly to the construction of the hall, which was probably not completed until 1502.

Christoph Luitpold Frommel compared Burgkmair's portal with the portals in the Appartamento Borgia in the Vatican Palace and with Pinturicchio's painted portals. In modern scholarship, however, the prevailing view is that

<sup>10</sup> J. E. Weis-Libersdorf, *Das Jubeljahr 1500 in der Augsburger Kunst*, Allgemeine Verlagsgesellschaft, München 1901, pp. 1–10; C. L. Frommel, *La Porta Santa di Alessandro VI e di Clemente VII e un'opera sconosciuta di Baldassarre Peruzzi a S. Pietro*, [in:] *Roma di fronte all'Europa al tempo di Alessandro VI: atti del Convegno*, (Città del Vaticano, Roma, 1–4 dicembre 1999), vol. 2, eds. M. Chiabò et al., Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, Roma 2001, pp. 571–592.

<sup>11</sup> S. Tuzzi, *Le Colonne e il Tempio di Salomone. La storia, la legenda, la fortuna*, Gangemi, Roma 2002, pp. 92–93.

Burgkmair was not personally present in Rome.<sup>12</sup> It seems likely that Burgkmair must have had access to a drawing such as the later drawing by Giacomo Grimaldi, showing the inner front of St. Peter's Basilica, where the arch supported by two spiral columns is clearly visible. If Burgkmair knew of such drawings, other painters or architects in Central Europe may have had access to them as well. The person who commissioned Burgkmair's painting was the Poor Clare nun Anna Riedler.<sup>13</sup> The entire series of paintings may have been created in response to the fact that the Augsburg Poor Clares had recently been forbidden to leave the cloister and were therefore unable to visit Rome during the Jubilee year 1500. In this context, it is interesting to note that an old copy of Burgkmair's painting *Basilica Santa Croce*, probably dating from the sixteenth century, is located in the convent church of St. George at Prague Castle, literally a stone's throw from the Old Royal Palace. However, it is not clear when it was placed there. The Benedictine Convent of St. George was dissolved in 1782, and the painting is not mentioned in a relatively detailed description of the church's furnishings from 1883.<sup>14</sup> The fact that it was also a convent could have been significant for the creation of the painting.

It could certainly be argued that not everyone would have been aware of the Jerusalem associations of the spiral columns from St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. However, the connection between the spiral column motif and Solomon's Temple, and thus with Solomon himself, could have been reinforced by images such as the depiction of Jerusalem in Schedel's *World Chronicle*, in the center of which one can see the colonnaded arcade of the Temple.<sup>15</sup> This is despite the fact that what may appear to be a spiral twist is most likely an indication of shading – we are dealing with a period in which such effects were by no means legible to every viewer.

Other elements of the portal could also be associated with the biblical Solomon. The arch above the cornice is a common feature of fifteenth-century Italian portal architecture. At the same time, it was also associated with Solomon's throne. The otherwise little-known Pier Francesco Foschi shows the motif of an

<sup>12</sup> J. Weis-Liebersdorf, *Das Jubeljahr 1500...*, p. 1. It is highly improbable that Burgkmair could have depicted the basilica on the basis of information from "a good informant", see C. Frommel, *La Porta Santa di Alessandro VI...*, p. 574.

<sup>13</sup> P. F. Cuneo, *The Basilica Cycle of Saint Katherine's Convent: Art and Female Community in Early-Renaissance Augsburg*, "Woman's Art Journal" 1998, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 21–25; M. Gärtner, *Römische Basiliken in Augsburg. Nonnenfrömmigkeit und Malerei um 1500*, Wißner, Augsburg 2002; M.-L. Ehrenscheidtner, *Virtual Pilgrimages? Enclosure and the Practice of Piety at St Katherine's Convent, Augsburg*, "The Journal of Ecclesiastical History" 2009, vol. 60, no. 1, pp. 45–73.

<sup>14</sup> F. Ekert, *Posvátná místa král. hl. města Prahy. Dějiny a popsání chrámů, kaplí, posvátných soch, klášterů i jiných pomníků katolické víry a nábožnosti v hlavním městě království Českého*, Dědictví sv. Jana Nepomuckého, Praha 1883, pp. 88–94.

<sup>15</sup> A. Wilson, J. L. Wilson, *The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle*, Nico Israel, Amsterdam 1976. *Die Schedelsche Weltchronik*, ed. R. Pörtlner, Harenberg, Dortmund 1978; *Welten des Wissens. Die Bibliothek und die Weltchronik des Nürnberger Arztes Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514)*, ed. B. Wagner, Allitera, München 2014.



Fig. 7. Pier Francesco Foschi, *The Judgment of Solomon*, after 1500. Panel painting, 65 cm × 49.5 cm. © Galleria Borghese, Rome, inventory number 329.

arch above Solomon's throne in his painting *The Judgment of Solomon* (Fig. 7, today Galleria Borghese, Rome, after 1500).<sup>16</sup> This motif was soon adopted by

<sup>16</sup> A. Iommelli, *The Judgement of Solomon*, Attributed to Foschi Pier Francesco, inv. 329, Rome: Galleria Borghese, <https://www.collezione.galleriaborghese.it/en/opere/the-judgement->



Fig. 8. The Judgment of Solomon and Esther before Ahasuerus. Stained glass window designed by an artist from the entourage of Dirk Vellert, c. 1530. Overall size 69.3 cm × 46.4 cm. © The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund 1968.188.

artists north of the Alps, as shown by a stained-glass window designed by an artist from the entourage of Dirk Vellert (Fig. 8, today The Cleveland Museum of Art, c. 1530).<sup>17</sup> The motif is based directly on the text of Scripture, specifically on the description of Solomon's throne in the *Liber Malachim* (III Rg 10, 19): "The top of the throne was rounded in the back part."<sup>18</sup>

The location of the portal further supports its connection to King Solomon. The Old Diet Hall was the seat of the Land Court. Perhaps it can be identified as the courtroom in which a banquet was held when King Louis I granted fiefs to Louis, Count Palatine of the Rhine, and Albrecht, Margrave of Meissen, in December 1509 and January 1510.<sup>19</sup> At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Land Court was in the hands of the Catholic aristocracy. The unique shape of its main portal may therefore have been an attempt to emphasize ties

of-solomon (access: 16.07.2025). However, the painter's monograph (C. Hollberg, E. Altiero, N. Damiano, S. Giordani, *Pier Francesco Foschi (1502–1567). Pittore fiorentino*, Silvana Editoriale, Cinisello Balsamo, Milano 2023) does not include this painting.

<sup>17</sup> E. Konowitz, *The Star of Persia: A painted-glass window of Esther before Ahasuerus from the circle of Dirk Vellert*, "Oud Holland" 1996, vol. 110, no. 3-4, pp. 105–112.

<sup>18</sup> In Latin „Summitas throni rotunda erat in parte posteriori.“ *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. R. Weber, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 3rd edition 1983, p. 477.

<sup>19</sup> *Ze starých letopisů českých*, ed. J. Porák, Svoboda, Praha 1980, pp. 330, 331.

to Rome. Members of the Land Court such as Půta Švihovský of Rýzmbek (1450/1452–1504) and Jindřich IV of Hradec (1442–1507) were important patrons and builders. Půta visited Rome in 1487 and saw the Palazzo Venezia there, one of the first examples of Renaissance architecture in the heart of the Eternal City. His tomb in the Franciscan church in Horažďovice is characterized by complex iconography that presupposes a relatively educated viewer.<sup>20</sup> At Henry IV's castle in Jindřichův Hradec in Southern Bohemia, spiral columns were even used in the arcade.<sup>21</sup> Around the same time, the wall painting *The Assembly of Birds* was created there, depicting a provincial court session presided over by the king, who appears in its lower part. Jindřich IV of Hradec served as the highest chamberlain of the Kingdom of Bohemia and the highest burgrave of Prague Castle under Vladislav Jagiello. Another important Catholic nobleman and patron of the arts who also served as the highest burgrave, Zdeněk Lev of Rožmitál, eventually became the most powerful figure in the country.<sup>22</sup> After 1508, the highest burgrave was to reside at Prague Castle, and the castle governor was to be subordinate to him.<sup>23</sup> Holding this office was therefore ideal for influencing the construction of the Castle, including the royal palace, and possibly also its decoration.

The close connection between the person of the king and the ideal of Justice was analyzed by Ernst Kantorowicz in his seminal book on the theological-political theory of royal power in the Middle Ages.<sup>24</sup> For the Czech context, Robert Antonín demonstrated this in a monograph devoted to the ideal form of a Czech ruler.<sup>25</sup> The connection was expressed, e.g., in the privilege issued by King Wenceslas I for the town of Brno in 1243, which presented the king as a peacemaker and protector, thus defining the ideological implications of good governance.<sup>26</sup> But what was the model of ruler with which the ruling aristoc-

<sup>20</sup> J. Chlábec, *Náhrobek Půty Švihovského a jeho symbolika v kontextu pozdně gotické náhrobní plastiky, "Umění"* 1983, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 27–33.

<sup>21</sup> R. Lavička, *Pozdně středověká architektura v Jindřichově Hradci za vlády Jindřicha IV. z Hradce (\*1463–†1507)*, "Jihočeský sborník historický" 2017, vol. 86, pp. 28–59.

<sup>22</sup> P. Kováč, *Zdeněk Lev von Rožmitál, der Goldschmied Honzlis von der Prager Burg, der Altar des Monogrammistens IP und der Franziskaner – Observanten von Horažďovice*, [in:] *Das Expressive in der Kunst 1500–1550*, eds. J. Fajt, S. Jaeger, Deutscher Kunstverlag, Berlin, München 2018, pp. 352–361. For the original unabridged Czech version cf. <http://www.stavitelekatedral.cz/peter-kovac-zdenek-lev-z-rozmitalu-zlatnik-honzlis-z-prazskeho-hradu-oltar-svate-anny-samatreti-monogramisty-ip-a-frantiskani-%E2%80%93-observanti-z-horazdovic/> (access: 16.07.2025).

<sup>23</sup> *Vladislavské zřízení zemské a počátky ústavního zřízení v Českých zemích (1500–1619)*, eds. K. Malý, J. Pánek, Historický ústav Akademie věd České republiky, Ústav právních dějin Právnické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy, Praha 2001, p. 65.

<sup>24</sup> E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1957, pp. 97–163.

<sup>25</sup> R. Antonín, *Ideal ruler in medieval Bohemia*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, Mass. 2017, pp. 269–279.

<sup>26</sup> R. Antonín, *Pater et filius iustitiae. The Ideal of Sovereign's Rule*, [in:] *Processes of Cultural Exchange in Central Europe, 1200–1800*, eds. V. Čapková, R. Antonín, M. Čapský, Silesian University, Opava 2014, pp. 277–314.

racy and, where applicable, other ruling social classes identified at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? The concept of justice, which occurs both in the context of Greek and Roman thought and in the context of Scripture, was not as dominant in the codifications of provincial law as one might expect today.<sup>27</sup> However, the idea of justice as vested in the person of the king is clearly present in texts of the period. This is demonstrated, for example, by the text of a period chronicle. On February 4, 1510, at the New Town Hall in Prague, the highest burgrave, Zdeněk Lev of Rožmitál, acting on behalf of the king, declared that individuals and legal entities should turn to the king, who would ensure justice for everyone, in cases where officials wronged them.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the Latin allegorical poem entitled *Theribulia* (published in 1520), which the Bishop of Olomouc, Jan Dubravius, dedicated to the young King Louis Jagiello, who ascended the throne after the death of his father in 1516, speaks in its introduction of the “incredible justice” of the king’s uncle, Polish King Sigismund (“*ipsius vero Sigismundi patruī incredibilem iustitiam adaeques.*”<sup>29</sup>). Among the speaking animals in the poem, the elephant urges the king to be seen as a just ruler, *rex iustus*.<sup>30</sup>

But how can we specifically link the idea of justice with the motif of Solomon? The fact that Solomon is still associated not only with wisdom but also with justice does not, of course, mean that this has always been the case. We find references to the connection between the Czech king and Solomon in medieval Czech chronicles.<sup>31</sup> It is important to note that the image of the king as a new Solomon seems to be captured in Klaudyán’s map of Bohemia from 1518.<sup>32</sup> This idea is not stated explicitly. However, it is clearly implied that the author of the illustration accompanying the map understood the king in this way.

King Louis is depicted here not simply as a ruler, but as an executor of judicial and executive justice. Below the ruler, there is an allegorical depiction of Justice, represented by scales set upon a trapezoidal structure, on either side of which six pairs of Czech heraldic lions hold unrolled parchment scrolls. However, these scrolls can also be read as steps leading to Louis’ throne. There are six of them, corresponding exactly to the description of Solomon’s throne in the *Liber Malachim* (III Rg 10, 19).<sup>33</sup> The scrolls/steps list various types of justice. On both sides, there are rectangular images accompanied by citations

<sup>27</sup> K. Adamová, *Obecné dobré a idea spravedlnosti v českých zemských zřízeních doby předbělohorské (se zaměřením na 16. století)*, [in:] Vladislavské zřízení zemské..., pp. 101–112.

<sup>28</sup> *Ze starých letopisů českých*, Praha 1980, p. 332.

<sup>29</sup> *Theribulia. Rada zvířat*, eds. M. Horna, E. Petrů, Academia, Praha 1983, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 81; See A. Lis, *Rex iustus – model władcy w średniowiecznej Polsce (na przykładzie Kroniki polskiej mistrza Wincentego)*, “Przegląd prawnno-ekonomiczny” 2012, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 26–49.

<sup>31</sup> R. Antonín, *Ideal ruler...*, pp. 153–166.

<sup>32</sup> J. Kolár, *Takzvaná mapa Čech Mikuláše Klaudiána: pokus o významovou interpretaci*, “Strahovská knihovna. Sborník Památníku národního písemnictví” 1980, vol. 14, pp. 49–73; L. Mucha, *Mikuláš Klaudyán a jeho mapa Čech z r. 1518*, “Geografické rozhledy” 1992, vol. 1, no. 2/3, pp. 33–34.

<sup>33</sup> *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem...*, p. 477.

from Scripture. They are preceded by the inscription “The Law is the highest right,” which means that Scripture is the highest standard of righteous conduct for people in private and in public. Although the lions are depicted as Czech heraldic lions (they have split tails and crowns on their heads), it is impossible to avoid associating them with the lions of Solomon’s throne. A significant portion of the quotations accompanying this unique illustration is drawn from the biblical Book of Proverbs, whose author was considered to be Solomon.<sup>34</sup>

We can therefore conclude that, despite the impossibility of proving conclusively that the portal to the Old Diet Hall in the Old Royal Palace at Prague Castle was designed to convey a specific meaning, and that this meaning could be specifically intended to emphasize the role of the Czech king as a modern Solomon, there are indirect indications that make it rather unlikely that the twisted pilasters and spiral half-columns were used purely at random. I continue to regard the depiction of King Matthias from Ortenburg Castle in Bautzen as the key to interpreting the portal. This comparison is complemented by a topological analysis of the location, the function of the Old Diet Hall as a courtroom and a venue for banquets during extraordinary events, the role of the king as the guarantor of justice, and the connection between the idea of justice and the person of King Solomon in the visual culture of the time. Prague Castle was to be transformed into a New Rome or New Jerusalem, a seat of justice embodied in the person of the king. It cannot be ruled out that part of the effort to present King Vladislav as a new Solomon was the contemporaneous attempt to complete the construction of St. Vitus Cathedral at Prague Castle, which may have been part of the effort to present the king as the builder of the new Temple.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Biblia sacra...*, p. 957–958.

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