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TRAVERSING THE LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL IN THE CATHOLIC

RENEWAL: Bedřich z Donín's pilgrimage to holy sites (1607-8)

ABSTRACT

Increasing numbers of educated Catholic travellers visited holy sites in Europe

during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though we are beginning to uncover

more about these holy sites in the context of 'local' religion, we know very little

about how educated travellers encountered them. These sacred places were also

places of mobility and exchange. This article explores the responses of an educated

traveller from Bohemia on a pilgrimage to Loreto and his encounters with holy sites

and religious materials along the way and what this reveals about Catholicism in

between the local and universal.

Keywords: Catholic Renewal, Bohemia, local, pilgrimage, material culture

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Renewal not only spanned a wide geographical area and time

period, but also embraced social, economic, political and cultural issues. It is now

understood as a plural and fractured movement influenced by numerous historical

actors and experienced in diverse ways. The idea of a hegemonic

confessionalization clearly laying the foundations for the modern state has been

broken down by two striking tensions that have come to characterize the Catholic

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story in this period: firstly, the push and pull of local religion versus a more 'universal' type of official religion, explored in a number of classic studies across Europe; secondly, a friction in the negotiation of power between the church authorities and the laity. It is a constant challenge to understand the dynamics of these elements and furthermore how they were experienced by people in this period. Finding a way to access the Catholic Renewal as a cultural phenomenon and Catholicism as a 'lived' religion is at the heart of this article.

Most studies of the methods and reception of Catholic Renewal that have crucially reshaped our understanding of local and lay perspectives have focused on localities and landscapes. The benchmarks in this area of research have been William Christian's study of New Castile and Marc Forster's work on the Bishopric of Speyer, as well as research into particular 'super shrines' like Gerhard Woeckel's study of Altötting and Floriano Grimaldi's studies of Loreto.⁴ Alexandra Walsham has been the proponent of how confession is lodged in sacred landscapes, such as at Holywell in Wales.⁵ Each of these studies takes location as the constant and accounts of people as the variable. This focus on Catholic Renewal at certain sites has told us much about local faith, but it now seems pertinent to turn our attention to what happens to perceptions of the Catholic Renewal when an individual is made the constant and location becomes a variable. In taking this perspective travellers take centre stage.

Firstly, who were the travellers to Catholic holy sites in this period?

Historians of early modern travel have been quick to identify a 'decline' of pilgrimage in the early modern period. Their attention has instead been drawn to the

emergence of the educated traveller. The new humanist focus was specifically on travel 'as' education rather than merely 'for' education in one of the many university towns that attracted young elites from across the continent. A developing discourse about new ways of observing, analysing and accounting for encounters was linked to this new form of educative travel. Parallel to this new practice it is evident that pilgrimage narratives continued to be produced. The idea that 'types' of traveller in this period were mutually exclusive needs modification; rather these coexisting developments culminated in a new kind of 'attentive' pilgrim.

More importantly for the story of the Catholic Renewal, we need to understand how these educated Catholic travellers encountered sites of renewal and how religious experience and understanding was mediated by them. Their experiences provide a particularly important insight into the successes and challenges of ecclesiastical efforts towards Catholic Renewal and I propose that a focus on the religious experiences of such travellers casts a raking light onto the issues of Catholic Renewal at local and universal levels. Here I use the case study of the Czech pilgrimage travelogue of a Bohemian nobleman to investigate these local and universal dynamics.

In the article I firstly locate Bedřich z Donín's 'Pilgrimage to Loreto' (*Loretanská Pouť*) in a Bohemian context, secondly I identify him as a new sort of educated Catholic traveller and thirdly I show how his case study flags up issues of the Catholic Renewal as it is experienced across different localities.

Methodologically I use evidence in the travelogue of how Donín encountered

material culture to draw focus towards lay response to and understanding of sites of Catholic Renewal. In the main body of the article I show how experience of holy sites, which were often officially regulated by the church, could be mediated by travellers and how far official religious ideas successfully penetrated pilgrimage experience. I argue that the traveller's identity and beliefs shift immensely in relation to locality and the relative cultural experience attached to those sites.

BEDŘICH Z DONÍN'S PILGRIMAGE TRAVELOGUE⁹

In 1608, as a Catholic, Donín belonged to a minority faith in Bohemia estimated at 10-15 percent of the population. Prague was the seat of the Holy Roman Empire under Emperor Rudolf II (r.1576-1612) and held within it a multiplicity of faiths. Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Bohemian Brethren and Utraquists together constituted a non-Catholic majority. They had emerged from the Hussite revolution (1419-36) and what Bohemians saw as the Protestants' 'Second Reformation' of the sixteenth century. These confessional groups all vied for acceptance and political power. Though the Protestant faiths were not accepted by Rudolf II they were largely tolerated and thus managed to gain power to the extent that in 1609 the Protestant estates forced Rudolf II to issue the Letter of Majesty, which granted the right to universal Protestant worship. Against this background of Protestant strength, the intense and seemingly successful recatholicization of Bohemia after 1620 seems surprising.

Historians have so far mainly focused on force and persuasion following the Battle of the White Mountain (1620), including a legal ban on non-Catholics and the persecution and exile of those that would not convert, in order to understand how recatholicization could have been so dominant in Bohemia. 13 Donín's account however provides an important Bohemian testimony for the undercurrents of Catholic continuity and 'renewal' on the eve of the White Mountain. A study of the Catholic population in Bohemia and their religious culture and beliefs before this decisive moment is still lacking as has been highlighted by Howard Louthan.¹⁴ Louthan himself has pointed to the importance of the nobility in supporting Catholicism in Prague in the early seventeenth century and therefore paving the way for later recatholicization. ¹⁵ Particularly pertinent is his study of the case of Vilém Slavata, who, after a four-year study tour to Italy, converted to Catholicism from the Bohemian Brethren because of its genuine confessional appeal. In letters to his father, Slavata claimed to convert because Catholicism offered a secure and unified spiritual and cultural tradition as opposed to the fractious Protestant religions; that older tradition was still clearly visible in the monasteries and churches that shaped the Bohemian landscape. Louthan uses this case to highlight the appeal of a cosmopolitan Catholic milieu and the promise of a broader cultural and confessional world that this brought with it. This element was clearly strengthened in Prague in this period by the presence of the Habsburg court under Rudolf II from 1583, but also by experiences that a large number of the nobility had whilst travelling.

Travel plays a somewhat incidental part in Louthan's account; however it should be investigated in its own right for what it can tell us about the formation of a Catholic identity at this fragile stage of the Catholic Renewal, especially in such culturally heterogeneous lands as Bohemia. Here Bedřich z Donín's account represents an ideal opportunity to study the educated Catholic traveller. Donín went on the pilgrimage to Italy to reinforce his Catholic identity rather than just as a study tour. He had already attended the Prague Jesuit College in 1587-8 and the Jesuit University at Ingolstadt in 1592-3 and thus represents the segment of nobility that were a product of the Jesuit educational institutions that Robert Evans has credited with playing a significant role in laying the foundations for the Bohemian Catholic Renewal prior to recatholicization. Donín maintained this link with the Jesuit community throughout his life and even undertook part of his travels to Loreto with a Jesuit guide and tutor, Petr Velcursius. The travelogue provides evidence for how Donín fused his educated Catholic outlook with a new type of educated travel.

Many of the descriptive sections in Donín's travelogue adhered to the new rational style of observing, measuring, categorizing and praising in formulaic ways that was expounded in *ars apodemica*, and which had been developed since the 1570s.¹⁷ For example, measurements were noted inside the Sibyl's cave near Pozzuoli where Donín recounted how they 'found a nice way under the ground like an alley carved in the rock ten feet in breadth, and likewise high and five hundred long.' This method of verifying by empiricism was used by travellers all over Europe as proof of visiting specific sites. Additionally, lists of what to describe

diagrams in *ars apodemica*, like Georgius Loysius, *G Loysii Curiovoitlandi*Pervigilium Mercurii, quo in agitur de praestantissimis Peregrinantis virtutibus

(Curiæ Variscorum, 1598). Treatises on travel like Bacon's essay Of Travel (1625)

developed this structure into the seventeenth century and noted that one should pay

attention to 'the churches and monasteries, with the monuments which are therein

extant'... the walls and fortifications of cities... and so the havens and harbours;

antiquities and ruins;... houses and gardens of state and pleasure...; and, to conclude,

whatsoever is memorable'. Observations of religious buildings thus remained an

integral part of the 'methods' alongside purely secular observations. Throughout

the travelogue Donín refers to all these items diligently.

Alongside 'what' to observe, ars apodemica also proposed schemes regarding 'how' to observe. Cities and countries were to be praised amongst other things for their 'strength', beauty, produce, the excellence and way of life of the people, the virtue of the rulers and their power, piety and constitution. Donín regularly employed this rhetoric throughout the travelogue. He specifically used the words 'cheerful' or 'happy' (veselý), 'fertile' (ourodný/urodný), 'strong' (pevný), 'great' or 'big' (velký), 'excellent' (výborný), 'pretty' or 'nice' (pěkný), and 'famous' (slavný) to denote his praise of places and the landscape. Donín's travelogue shows how the older focus of pilgrimage could now sit alongside new forms of educated travel and that holy sites were encountered within a secular landscape. Travelogues reflected these mixed interests.

Two questions present themselves prior to embarking on an analysis of the content of the travelogue: why did Donín undertake this expensive and dangerous pilgrimage and why did he subsequently produce such a lavish and richly decorated manuscript? Firstly, Donín's pilgrimage followed the death of his wife, so we might speculate that it was connected to his new independence and mourning. This may also explain why the focus of the pilgrimage was Loreto – a place suited to his current spiritual concerns regarding his wife in that it centred on Mary and aspects of femininity and family. The pilgrimage itself would have been a costly and dangerous one and it is perhaps a factor in why Donín died destitute. Secondly, it is tempting to assume that the lavishly decorated travelogue manuscript was intended as a presentation copy to impress Rudolf II, but there is no clear evidence of this. It is also unlikely that it was intended for publication as it is so richly decorated and in any case it would have been in strong competition with the pilgrimage account, Cesta, by Harant z Bedružice a Polžice, which had recently been published in 1608.

In light of work done on Polish travelogue manuscripts by Hanna

Dziechcińska we might alternatively propose that the likely purpose of the

manuscript was as a display of status amongst an elite circle and also as a personal

pious aide memoire.²⁵ The Czech text may indicate that it was intended for a Czechspeaking audience and that Donín wanted to identify himself as 'Bohemian'.²⁶ We do

know that it would have been costly to produce because of the amount of work and

time spent on its production by a number of specialists and the use of expensive

materials, especially the gold and silver paint, used for every illustration. Whatever

the unknown reasons for the pilgrimage and the production of the travelogue were, through this great investment of resources Donín must have sought to emerge as a Catholic nobleman hoping to impress his contemporary elites with a beautifully illustrated account of his encounter with the most distinguished Bavarian and Italian holy sites.

This article specifically explores how Donín responded to holy sites, with a focus on the materials that they contained – the relics used to glorify religious sites and the material 'evidence' used to authorize and explain stories of miracles – and further how these sites fitted into a sacred geography. ²⁷ I analyze how encounters with Catholic material culture during pilgrimage shaped the Catholic confessional identity of this Bohemian nobleman. By privileging material evidence, it is possible to reveal how objects functioned to connect local and universal aspects of Catholicism across Europe. The material strategy adopted by the wider Church acted as a safety net allowing minority Catholics even in Bohemia – one of the most divided faith communities in Europe at the time – to sustain and renew their religion.

NEW UNDERSTANDINGS OF CATHOLIC MATERIAL CULTURE

Well-known holy sites in Europe and the famous relics and icons that they contained continued to attract pilgrims in this age of Reformation. Their fame as sites allowing access to the divine at certain points in the landscape had been established in the medieval period and continued to shape the pilgrim's experience in the Catholic Renewal. Just like many other Catholics, Donín chose to undertake his

pilgrimage to some of the most famous sites including Altötting, Loreto and Rome. In particular, Rome had recently undergone numerous building projects initiated by a succession of post-Trent popes to renew the city as the ultimate example of the most sacred place on Earth. 28 Alongside the recent discovery and promotion of the catacombs in 1578, a major part of this effort was to highlight the number and importance of relics that Rome's churches contained.²⁹ Printed relic and city guides advertised such sites to pilgrims as worth visiting and Donín's account shows evidence that he was guided by this literature. In Rome his travelogue reflected relic guides through his somewhat laborious and attentive description of the churches. For example, within a lengthy section he notes 'the reed, which was put into the hand of Christ the Lord, the heads of St Peter and Paul,... Moses and Aaron's rod, the red robe of Christ the Lord' that he saw at the Church of St John Lateran. 30 Elsewhere it is evident that Donín also used such texts about Loreto to guide his eight-page account of the history of the transfer of the house of Loreto including a long passage regarding the 'miracles' and 'wonders' that took place there. In places his account is reminiscent of Orazio Torsellino's Lauretanae historiae libri quinque (Rome, 1597), Girolamo Angelita's L'historia della traslatione della S. Casa della Madonna a Loreto (Fermo, 1586) and he may also have used information from the marble plaques fixed onto pillars at the Loreto Church engraved with Pietro Teramano's 1472 account.

Highlighting the travelogue's intertextual connections might lead one to suspect that the travelogue merely represents a repetitive and simple account of the

materials at these holy sites copied from lists and guides and can therefore tell us little new. However, as I have shown in an analysis of the 'visual intertextuality' of the pictures in the manuscript, a closer look at copying reveals deeper layers of value and meaning embedded within the creative decisions.³¹ From closer analysis of the text it is evident that Donín's responses to the material culture and his choices of what to translate and relate are not only subtle and appreciative treatments of individual items, but they give us a glimpse into the early modern Catholic pilgrim's cultural world and value systems. It was particularly inside these holy sites that there was renewed pressure regarding the interpretation of material culture within the church. Protestants attacked the conceptual foundation of Catholic religious material culture from outside, but reformers within the Catholic Church also highlighted the need to define how religious objects should be used in worship and how they acted on the world around them. In 1563 these issues had been tackled in the Council of Trent's Twenty-Fifth Session 'On the invocation, veneration, and relics, of saints, and on sacred images.' Yet, responses by the Catholic population and changing understandings of material culture in the Counter-Reformation context are much harder to grasp. Experiences of contact with material culture during pilgrimage allow us exactly this opportunity to glimpse at response and understanding amongst a specific section of the laity. Pilgrimage itself allowed the Church an opportunity to shape and work out this revised understanding of the material world of Catholicism in the Catholic Renewal. A detailed reading of Donín's text reveals how closely he

stuck to the new Catholic orthodoxy and therefore how successful it had been in permeating the world-view of such a pilgrim and educated Catholic.

There was great concern about how miracles were connected with objects. The Twenty-Fifth Session stipulated that bishops 'especially instruct the faithful diligently concerning the intercession and invocation of saints; the honour (paid) to relics; and the legitimate use of images.'32 It was important to specify a particular understanding of the agency of space relating to relics and images. Throughout the text Donín uses a language of 'proximity' with great subtlety of understanding of this reformed concept. At Altötting, Donín specified the place through which miracles happen; 'Above the altar is an ancient picture of the celebrated Mary... in this place many miracles have taken place and people from the intercession of the gracious Mary have recovered from many types of ailments in the past, blind people, deaf people, lame people all came to regain their health.³³ Similarly in Milan 'by the grave [of Cardinal Charles Borromeo] many miracles have been caused as befits the Lord God';³⁴ at the Church of St Mary in Genoa there is 'a pious picture of Mary, by which some miracles have happened'; 35 and in Florence at the Church of the Virgin Mary Annunziata 'there is one picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary; by which many miracles happen'. 36 Proximity in terms of being 'in this place' or 'by' a relic or icon was essential to miracles taking place. Donín's text thus reveals how a discourse of space relating to those objects arose as he subtly tries to get around the issue of idolatry and the superstitious idea that power was worked by the pictures.

Donín's sensitivity to the dynamics of space within holy sites adhered strongly to the values of the Tridentine Church. When looking at his actual descriptions of religious material culture it is further evident just how deeply his understanding was embedded. Throughout the Church's history, the ecclesiastical authorities feared that people might start to worship religious materials in idolatry rather than use them for the intended purpose of veneration. Donín, no doubt well-educated in the Tridentine canon on such matters by his Jesuit tutors in Prague and Ingolstadt, showed an adept negotiation of this line in how he responded differently to the spiritual, aesthetic and financial values of items within these sites.

Firstly, Donín responded to material culture showing a sensitivity to the relative religious values of holy objects. At Seefeld Donín described that 'We also saw in this chapel a beautiful reliquary, amongst other things is a precious piece of the Lord's cross still bleeding.'³⁷ The reliquary was described in its aesthetic quality as 'beautiful', but the piece of the cross was 'precious', implying rather a spiritual value. The Church's glorification through expensive materials and highly worked craftsmanship was often set against the humble material of the relic. At Loreto, Donín described the contact relics of Mary's Holy House: 'they show two whole bowls and with great diligence they are looked after like the most expensive jewels'.³⁸ Donín's use of a simile to compare values revealed that the real worth of the bowls was far greater than the material that they were made from. Donín's account fits a value system set by the Church that distinguished between spiritual

value often embodied in humble materials and the value of objects created to glorify those relics.

Describing the art of churches around these holy objects, Donín continues to reveal a close understanding of values invested in these objects. From the perspective of studies of travel writing, travellers of this period have generally been criticized by historians, such as Antoni Maczak, for their 'stereotypical approach' to art. Maczak criticizes the over-emphasis on the 'material' value or financial worth of the object, rather than displaying an appreciation of 'aesthetic' in the skill of individual artists.³⁹ Similarly, Edward Chaney has criticized the inadequate 'aesthetic vocabulary' in the work of writers describing art and architecture on their travels to Italy. 40 These criticisms however are highly anachronistic and miss a vital opportunity to explore the cultural value systems of these travellers. Donín meticulously recorded 'artistic' objects surrounding relics, such as art, statues and architecture and his text allows us to investigate a more complex relationship between different values associated with these objects. His account of religious art and architecture did often foreground a 'material' aspect, but a closer reading reveals that this was part of an engagement with a structured value system that indicated that these objects connected their sites with a powerful and unified religious culture.

Donín's attention to aesthetic value and appreciation of the skills involved in making religious objects are evident in how he noted the 'beauty, mastery and craftwork' of the marble wall surrounding the Holy House at Loreto. 41 Elsewhere Donín referred to the 'masterfully' built and decorated churches, such as the Church

of St John the Baptist in Florence, whose gilding was 'beautiful and masterfully done'. ⁴² Architectural furnishings such as arches, vaults, columns and gables were noted, as were the 'masterful carvings' of the marble in Il Domo in Milan. ⁴³ These were not subtle or nuanced descriptions, but they nevertheless reveal an important consciousness of the aesthetic of holy sites.

In many places Donín adheres to what might be called descriptions of 'material' value that Maczak so highly criticized. He identified churches by the amount of marble they contained and its quality and colour, for example at St Peter in the Vatican 'stood twenty-four very beautiful marble pillars of different colours'.⁴⁴ Other distinguishing materials came in the form of silver candle holders, such as the 'twelve very big silver candle holders in the sacristy' in Lucca, 45 gold in the form of gilt, such as the very 'expensive gilt' of the Church of St John Lateran in Rome, 46 or the 'pure gold' of the tablet above the altar in St Mark's in Venice, ⁴⁷ and even at Altötting pictures that were made with 'Arabian gold'. 48 Gold was also the material for chalices, such as that donated to the Loreto chapel by the Archduke Maximilian,⁴⁹ and crosses such as the 'six gold crosses with precious stones' that Donín recorded at St Mark's in Venice. 50 These examples display the range of material description, from colour, size, form (gilt or pure gold), and even type of material ('Arabian' gold). Rather than indicating mere copying or obsession with financial worth, the words reveal many nuances and sensitivities in the description of the actual 'material' of religious architectures and their furnishings.

As a pilgrim concerned mainly with religious experience rather than with art appreciation, Donín's attention to financial value fits within a transnational frame of reference employed across Catholic culture. Donín refers to the 'bishop's pearl crown with many precious stones and one stone of sapphire worth 500 gold pieces' in the sacristy of Altötting.'51 At Loreto, he notes the 'gilt silver cross worth forty liber from Pope Julius II' donated to the Loreto chapel, and the 'gold ring with a big diamond attached, costing two thousand crowns' donated to the Loreto Chapel by Cardinal Sfondrata.⁵² As these examples show, the financial value of items was often written in precise amounts referring to 'gold pieces', 'liber' and 'crowns', highlighting the connection between physical material and financial worth. Furthermore, what these quotes crucially highlight for the religious aspect is that provenance was an important factor in establishing an awareness of a network of Catholic religious patronage across Europe. The value of an object consisted not only of being made from precious materials, beautifully crafted and being worth a certain amount of money, but also of being attributed to a member of a powerful elite. Provenance was communicated by ecclesiastical authorities to the laity by labelling objects and printing guides to gifts in churches. This created a durable message of lineage to pilgrims. As Donín's travelogue shows through his own repetition of this knowledge, this strategy was highly successful.

Donín's many and careful references to the provenance of gifts at the religious sites he visited indicates his attentiveness to and regard for the network of elites that these objects materialized. For example, Donín related a four-page account

of the gifts at Loreto painstakingly including the material, financial worth and provenance of many gifts that one could see in the sacristy or holy chapel;

Candles... bows, arrows, and also a sum of money from Corcuta, a highly esteemed Turkish pasha... an emerald and gold cross embellished with rubies donated by Albrecht, prince of Bavaria, that is valued at twelve thousand gold pieces... a cross of nine large diamonds and three large pearls as big as cherries, worth four thousand gold crowns, from Count Antonin Martinenga and his daughter the Countess Caratae, which is donated together with a cross to the Holy Mother.⁵³

The detail testifies to the importance of making the patronage connections known and is likely to have been influenced by a text like Orazio Torsellino's *Lauretanae historiae*, which included some of the gifts recently donated to the Chapel. Many of the donors listed were recent members of the elite of Catholic Europe, such as Albrecht, Duke of Bavaria (duke, 1550-1579) who donated gifts to the shrines at both Altötting and Loreto. ⁵⁴ This material gift practice bound elite patrons into a network of shared religious identity centred on the localities of certain relics as a way of establishing powerful dynasties, and had been a conscious strategy of power building since the medieval period. ⁵⁵

Material culture such as those items related in Donín's passage that were donated by elite patrons staged both dynastic political hierarchies and also spiritual hierarchies. Clear information about the financial worth of these donated objects inevitably created a ranking of patrons. The display and labelling of these gifts at holy sites clearly conveyed this to pilgrims like Donín, but also worked to relate a

message that Catholicism maintained a powerful and extensive elite patronage across Europe. Finally, we should note that pilgrimage itself acted to reinforce this idea of the network of Catholicism by encouraging transnational travel for the purpose of visiting holy sites and then by displaying these transnational connections of patronage materially within those sites. This strategy was important in attracting new believers, but also, for pilgrims like Donín, in renewing Catholicism's strength as a unified and cosmopolitan religion.

Donín's mix of aesthetic appreciation and Catholic outlook in response to the material culture of pilgrimage sites is thrown into higher relief when we compare an account of the same sites by Fynes Moryson, a Protestant reformed traveller from England. In particular, if we take their responses to an aesthetic of darkness that was in specific contention at the time, we find the two observers sticking to their respective lines. In 1554 Pier Paolo Vergerio had attacked Catholicism for the dark interiors of its churches, using it as a metaphor of the darkness or 'tenebre' of the faith. In *Della camera, et statua della Madonna chiamata di Loretto* (Tübingen, 1554), Vergerio claimed that Loreto was the ultimate example of idolatry and that this blocked the 'light' of true Christianity. ⁵⁶ These travel accounts show that this metaphor was not just a literary frill but pervaded and affected the travellers' experiences. From the Protestant perspective, Fynes Moryson interprets this view in his reading of Loreto; 'My selfe and two Dutch-men my consorts, abhorring from this superstition, by leaue entred the inner Chappell, where we did see the Virgins picture, adorned with pretious Iewels, and the place (to increase religious horror)

being darke, yet the Iewels shined by the light of wax candles.'⁵⁷ Similarly, at St Mark's in Venice he commented 'The roofe in forme of a Globe, lies open at the very top, where the light comes in; for the Church hath no windowes, and the Papist Churches being commonly darke, to cause a religious horror, or to make their candles shew better, this is more darke then the rest.'⁵⁸

Whilst the darkness for Fynes Moryson created an atmosphere of 'religious horror', for Donín the black and gold of religious sites provoked awe. He did not explicitly (i.e. textually) engage with this debate, but it is clear from the image of Altötting included in the travelogue that he revered this aesthetic. The picture of the church and chapel at Altötting (Fig. 1) carefully depicted the wood of the screen as beautifully sculpted into curved shapes in an intertwining pattern, with the darkness and the gold of the Church's interior emphasized. This reflected a positive sense of mystery where possibilities of transformation and the miraculous could emerge out of the contrasting dark like the glimmering and luminous gold paintings.

These different responses show how identity and the cultural frame of reference of the person encountering the distinctive aesthetic of Catholicism (in this case, black and gold) were crucial to whether they interpreted it favourably or negatively. Though Donín's travelogue demonstrates that transnational cultural exchange within Catholicism was diverse, it also highlights the limits of transconfessional cultural exchange.

The divisive issue of miracles encountered on the Catholic pilgrimage route – either through experiencing one, seeing others experience them, or learning of

historic miracles – split confessional travellers even further. As Donín did not experience any miracles directly I shall focus here on the third group of historic miracles. Though the stories of relics and their miracles that were printed and circulated in Europe were familiar to even those that did not travel, the added element for the religious traveller was to see the actual material evidence of miracles. Across the Catholic lands the Church used actual material 'evidence' to establish the truth of claims regarding miracles and to encourage pilgrims and worshippers to believe in miracles that often pertained to the Middle Ages. Displaying material evidence created a 'memory' of the miracle and a permanent reminder of a wellestablished divine power. Donín encountered material evidence of the miraculous throughout his journey. At Seefeld, for example, he was shown marks in stone as evidence of a miracle. He further disseminated the miracle story by writing in his travelogue that 'In Seefeld there is a monastery and church, in which we have seen great miracles.' Although Donín did not actually witness a new miracle here himself, by writing that in the church 'we have seen great miracles', he associated with a collective memory of a Catholic community.⁵⁹ He continued:

In the year 1384, 223 years ago, one knight called Osvald Mulcer... wanted not a little host, but a big one, like a priest before Mass for Holy Communion. This man to whom the priest consented and handed the majestic sacrament, fell through the earth, and he fell to his hands and knees on the stone altar, and he grasped the altar, and transformed into stone, his fingers and hands were imprinted; and even now one sees the mark of his fingers, and also the hole in the ground through which he fell.⁶⁰

This miracle was concerned with teaching the laity against abusing 'majestic' sacraments. The story survived because of its materiality. The marks of the fingers and hole in the stone were a material manifestation of its memory.

In Lucca in the Church of St Fidriana, Donín was shown material evidence of another miracle. After a boy lost everything playing dice, he accosted a picture of the Holy Mary. Donín recounts that 'he beat its arms and chest from which blood immediately flowed in abundance... I saw that the picture still bleeds, indeed it is here a miracle, which befell, that remains until now and until the end of time, as was shown to us and proved.'61 For Donín sight verified the truth of the miracle. The last sentence is particularly revealing: the 'miracle' was 'shown' to him and acted as 'proof'. It remained 'until the end of time' suggesting that this material evidence represented a permanent proof and a permanent collective Catholic memory. This veridical vision is also evident in the account of Seefeld where Donín stressed that one could still 'see' the finger marks and hole in the ground. Furthermore, in describing Mulcer's still-bleeding host at Seefeld, he noted that 'when I came this way, I saw it with my own eyes'. 62 The Church used materials to act as evidence of past events and, in the case of the contentious bleeding sacraments, of current transformative miracles. It was both evidence and justification for a divine past and a divine present. On a wider scale these objects reinforced not only local religious identity, but also integrated the local into the transnational. Knowledge of these local

phenomena were disseminated by material information networks in the form of printed miracle accounts or pilgrim's travel accounts like Donín's travelogue.

CONFESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS: THE LOCAL AND THE UNIVERSAL

We need to ask how we can understand the dynamics of transnational cultural exchanges in this pilgrimage context. Two final examples from Donín's travelogue suggest a way forward that emphasises the traveller as an actor in his experience.

What is important here is to establish an understanding of 'local' and 'universal' in relation to how these concepts affected the traveller's perception of what he came across on his travels. It has been shown that communities often developed their own local devotion in the landscape, whereas the Church attempted to direct this local devotion to central super-shrines. This is further layered by passages in Michel de Montaigne's *Journal* (1580–81) describing how local communities viewed official pilgrimage sites in their vicinity. Montaigne commented that those living near Loreto 'rarely go there on a pilgrimage' and that the healing baths of Lucca were for 'the benefit of foreigners and those who live far away.' Although the Church's attempt to direct devotion to these controlled sites only had limited success amongst local communities 'at home', Donín's account suggests that the clergy might well have achieved their goals with educated pilgrims from abroad.

For Donín, in foreign countries, sacred geography was mainly located in the controlled spaces of the church and the city. These were places that were consciously

that inscribed religiosity into that space. The idea that the landscape could be linked to God outside these controlled spaces was even mocked by Donín in the travelogue. In his description of Lake Avernus in the Bay of Pozzuoli he commented that 'Ancient pagans believed that this was the way to hell.'65 He himself did not believe that the landscape was physically intertwined with the divine like those 'ancient pagans' and was more concerned to give an empirical geographical description of the site; '[the lake was] about two hundred and fifty paces deep, around it are hills, the water is salty and because of the great depth it is black'.66 In this passage Donín implies that he thought holy sites were specific and they were linked directly with the material of relics, rather than seeing the divine metaphorically in the landscape.

In Bohemia, Donín's interpretation of the divine in the landscape was more open. Donín's travels were perhaps not directed by official handbooks and guides in Bohemia but rather by 'local' knowledge. He recounted at the Monastery of Zlatá Koruna on the Vltava that on the branches 'between two big lime trees, from which Jan Žižka, enemy of God and the monasteries, had hung the monks who were situated there... the leaves grow in the shape of monks' caps.'⁶⁷ Žižka was a Hussite warrior from the fifteenth century and the memory of his actions across Bohemia were divisive – he was a hero for the non-Catholic population, but for Catholics he was, as Donín describes, an 'enemy of God'. For Catholics like Donín the miraculous way that God showed his support for the monks through exerting his divine power through nature sustained a memory of heresy and showed the error of

the Hussites. This local knowledge suggests a divide for the pilgrim: in his homeland he was aware of older traditions and memories in the landscape and open to the idea of the divine within it, but abroad he was constrained to the controlled sites of the church and city through more 'official' ecclesiastically-directed and controlled guides. His experience was formed not only by texts in the form of guides, the objects and material impact of the sites, or intellectual influences on his observational skills, but also by who he was and what 'home' culture he brought with him to these places.

CONCLUSION

Donín's account reveals a Catholic culture that traversed borders in the landscape, but was simultaneously rooted to local sites through material culture. Exploiting the practice of pilgrimage, the Church formed a strategy of displaying a unified Catholic culture at pilgrimage sites, which could simultaneously connect the local and specific with the universal and cosmopolitan. The international audience at those sites translated this experience back home and reinforced networks with this idea of a cosmopolitan yet unified and shared Catholic culture. Pilgrimages formed a cultural experience that actively shaped the traveller's beliefs and religious identity.

The way in which Donín responded to religious objects with awe and reverence shows that he identified and engaged with this material culture of Catholicism away from 'home'. Whilst Tridentine Catholicism has been seen as slow to take hold within localities where there was a greater impetus for renewal of a more

'traditional' Catholicism, the testimony of educated travellers supports the idea of a quicker, though still piecemeal, acceptance of reformed Catholicism. ⁶⁹ Donín's specific understanding of the new values of religious material culture marked him out as a determined adherent to Tridentine Catholicism. His story supports the argument that the Catholic Renewal diversifies immensely when we focus on different actors.

Donín's account further layers this argument by showing a contrast between how sacred geography was experienced 'at home' and 'abroad'. In Bavaria and Italy Donín represents the divine as being contained and structured in the controlled spaces of the churches and adheres to a Tridentine value system. However in his account of the leaves of trees at Zlatá Koruna he describes a very local and particular Catholic culture. The travelogue shows therefore that the 'local' and 'universal' are relative values dependent on actors. For Donín local Catholicism is experienced 'at home' in Bohemia, but universal Catholicism is experienced abroad. Furthermore, this shows how pilgrimage experiences and contact with this more universal Catholicism abroad amongst the educated Catholic travellers strengthened reformed Catholicism in this period and played a part in recatholicization in territories such as Bohemia.

This significant case study makes a start in bringing research into educated travellers together with research into sites of Catholic Renewal. Donín's travelogue allows us a glimpse into what it meant to be an educated Catholic traveller, but his case was not just an isolated example. The number of Bohemian noblemen travelling

to Italy in the early modern period was great. Indeed, as is evident from the abundant

alba amicorum from Bohemian lands, young men of all faiths were travelling

extensively across Europe. 70 Further study could reveal what that meant for cultural

experience, encounter and exchange. Whilst a focus on Catholic Renewal at certain

sites still has much to tell us about local faith, we must not forget that religious

influences and impulses were travelling within mobile groups including an educated

nobility, ultimately shaping religious ideas and cultures back in their homelands.

WORD COUNT: (8,645 incl. endnotes)

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ENDNOTES

¹ Mary Laven, 'Introduction' in A. Bamji, G. Janssen and M. Laven (eds.), *The Ashgate research* companion to the Counter-Reformation (Farnham, 2013), p.8

² For example, see William A. Christian, Jr., *Local religion in sixteenth-century Spain* (Princeton, 1981); Marc Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the villages: religion and reform in the Bishopric of Speyer*, *1560-1720* (Ithaca, 1992), pp.6–8; David Gentilcore, "Adapt Yourselves to the People's Capabilities': Missionary strategies, methods and impact in the Kingdom of Naples, 1600–1800', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 45 (1994), 269–96 (p.270); and Susan Verdi Webster, *Art and ritual in golden-Age Spain: Sevillian confraternities and the processional sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton, 1998)

³ In particular, see Christian, *Local religion*; and Forster, *The Counter-Reformation*

⁴ Christian, Local religion; Forster, The Counter-Reformation; Gerhard Woeckel, Pietas Bavarica: Wallfahrt, Prozession und Ex voto-Gabe im Hause Wittelsbach in Ettal, Wessobrunn, Altötting und der Landeshauptstadt München von der Gegenreformation bis zur Säkularisation und der "Renovatio Ecclesiae" (Weissenhorn, 1992); and Floriano Grimaldi, Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei secoli XIV- XVIII, Supplement No. 2 of the Bollettino Storico della Città di Foligno (Foligno, 2001)

⁵ Alexandra Walsham, 'Holywell: Contesting sacred space in post-Reformation Wales', in Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (eds.), Sacred space in early modern Europe (Cambridge, 2005), pp.211–36

⁶ Justin Stagl, A history of curiosity: the theory of travel 1550–1800 (Studies in Anthropology and History, Vol. 13. London, 1995; repr. 2006), pp. 47, 57–65, 70–90; Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Travel writing and ethnography' in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds.), The Cambridge companion to travel writing (Cambridge, 2002), p.243; Edward Chaney, The evolution of the grand tour: Anglo-Italian cultural relations since the Renaissance (London, 1998), pp.59, 61; Antoni Mączak, Travel in early modern Europe (Cambridge, 1995), p.270; and Jaś Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés (eds.), Voyages and visions: towards a cultural history of travel (London, 1999), pp.8, 46, 49

⁷ Chaney, *The evolution of the grand tour*, chapter 3

⁸ As noted by Wes Williams, Pilgrimage and narrative in the French Renaissance: the undiscovered country (Oxford, 1998), p.28 and passim; Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis (eds.), Under Eastern eyes: a comparative introduction to East European travel writing on Europe (Budapest, 2008); and A. Stannek, 'Les pèlerins allemands à Rome et à Lorette à la fin du XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècle' in P. Boutry and D. Julia (eds.), Pelerins et pelerinages dans l'Europe moderne: actes de la table ronde organisee par le Departement d'histoire et civilisation de l'Institut universitaire europeen de Florence et l'Ecole française de Rome (Rome, 4-5 juin 1993) (Rome, 2000), pp.327-54 ⁹ Bedřich z Donín's *Loretanská Pout'* (Pilgrimage to Loreto) is the last of four travels covered in the manuscript travelogue (the others cover Cesta do Rakous a Uher, Cesta do Bavor and Cesta do Vlach). The Pilgrimage to Loreto chronicles and illustrates Donín's journey from Prague via holy sites in Bavaria to Rome, Venice and Loreto during the years 1607-8. The manuscript is held in Prague at the Královská kanonie premonstrátů na Strahově: DG IV 23. I am extremely grateful to Královská kanonie premonstrátů na Strahově and in particular to Dr. Jan Pařez for allowing access to the manuscript. Subsequent references will take the form DG IV 23. The manuscript is also published in a modernized Czech text-only edition in Bedřich z Donín, Cestopis Bedřicha z Donína, ed. Antonín Grund (Prague, 1940). In this article Czech text in the endnotes is taken from this edition, but page number references for the text and analysis of visual and material aspects of the travelogue refer to the original manuscript DG IV 23. All Czech translations into English are mine throughout the article. ¹⁰ Howard Louthan, Converting Bohemia: force and persuasion in the Catholic Reformation (Cambridge, 2009), pp.4–5, 185

¹¹ František Kavka, 'Bohemia' in Bob Scribner, Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds.), *The Reformation in national context* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.131, 150

¹² Robert Evans, *The making of the Habsburg monarchy 1550–1700: an interpretation* (Oxford, 1979; repr.1984), p.52

¹³ Ibid, p.320; Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, The world of Catholic renewal, 1540–1770 (2nd edn. Cambridge, 2005), p.79

- ¹⁷ Ars apodemica were developed initially by a Protestant group in the 1570s in Switzerland involving Jerome Turler, Theodor Zwinger and Hilarius Pyrckmair; see Stagl, *A history of curiosity*, pp.75–6; Wes Williams, "Rubbing up against others': Montaigne on pilgrimage' in Elsner and Rubiés (eds.), *Voyages and visions*, p.108; Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Instructions for travellers: teaching the eye to see', *History and anthropology*, Vol. 9, No.s 2–3 (1996) 139-190 (p.141)
- ¹⁸ DG IV 23, p.203: 'pod zemí pěknou cestu jako ulici v skále vytesanou desíti noh zšíři, tolikéž zvejši a pět set zdýli'
- ¹⁹ Measurements of Loreto, see DG IV 23, p.142; on medieval measuring, see David S. Areford, 'The passion measured: a late-medieval diagram of the body of Christ' in A. A. MacDonald, H. N. B. Ridderbos, and R. M. Schlusemann (eds.), *The broken body: passion devotion in late-medieval culture* (Groningen, 1998), pp. 211–38

- ²³ Grund, 'Úvod' in Donín (ed. Grund), *Cestopis*, pp.13–14; Mączak, *Travel in early modern Europe*, pp.72–94, 158–82
- ²⁴ Kryštof Harant, [Putowánj, aneb cesta z Kralowstwj Cżeskeho do města Benátek: Odtud po moŕi do Země Swaté, země Jüdské, a dále do Egypta ... potom na horu Oreb, Synai a swaté Panny Kateŕiny ... na dwa dilj rozdělená (Prague, 1608); see also Marie Koldinská, Kryštof Harant z Polžic a Bezdružic : cesta intelektuála k popravišti (Prague, 2004)
- ²⁵ Hanna Dziechcińska, "'Podróż" w druku i rękopisie' in Hanna Dziechcińska (ed.), *Staropolska kultura rękopisu: praca zbiorowa pod redakcją* (Warsaw, 1990), pp.113–122

¹⁴ Acknowledged in Evans, *The making*, p.61; and Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*, p.184

¹⁵ Louthan, Converting Bohemia, pp.52–6

¹⁶ Evans, *The making*, pp.3–11

²⁰ Francis Bacon, Complete essays, (London, 1906; repub. 2008), p.54

²¹ Stagl, A history of curiosity, p.75

²² Ibid.

²⁶ Jaroslav Pánek, 'Nation and confession in the Czech lands in the pre-White Mountain period' in Eva Doležalová and Jaroslav Pánek (eds.), *Confession and nation in the era of reformations: central Europe in comparative perspective* (Prague, 2011), pp.139–53

²⁷ Concept of 'sacred geography' as per Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the landscape: Religion, identity, and memory in early modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2011)

- ²⁹ Simon Ditchfield, 'Reading Rome as a sacred landscape, c. 1586–1635' in Coster and Spicer, *Sacred space*, p.169
- ³⁰ DG IV 23, p.169: 'trest', která byla do rukou Kristu Pánu dána, hlavy svatého Petra a Pavla... hůl Mojžíšova a Aronova, roucho červené Krista Pána.'
- ³¹ [Author], 'The construction of identity through visual intertextuality in a Bohemian early modern travelogue' in *Visual Communication Journal* (forthcoming)
- ³² J. Waterworth (ed. and trans.), *The canons and decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent* (London, 1848), pp.233–4
- ³³ DG IV 23, pp.78–9: 'Na oltáři jest starodávní obraz též blahoslavené Panny…v kterémžto místě velicí divové se dějí a lidé přímluvou blahoslavené Panny Marie od všelijakých neduhův bejvají uzdravováni, slepí, hluší, kulhaví k svýmu zdraví přicházejí'
- ³⁴ DG IV 23, p.103: 'při jehožto hrobě mnohé divy Pán Bůh působiti ráčí.'
- ³⁵ DG IV 23, p.119: 'jest pobožný obraz Panny Marie, při kterém se mnozí divové dějí'
- ³⁶ DG IV 23, p.207: 'tam jest jeden obraz blahoslavené Panny Marie; při kterémž se mnozí divové stávají.'
- ³⁷ DG IV 23, p.81: 'Viděli sme také v též kapličce pěkný reliquiarium, mezi jinejmi věcmi jest drahný kus Božího kříže ještě krvavý...'
- ³⁸ DG IV 23, p.139 : 'se ještě dvě celé misky ukazují a s velikou pilností jako nejdražší klínot chovají.'

²⁸ Jean Delumeau, *Rome au XVIe siecle* (Paris, 1975)

³⁹ Maczak, *Travel*, pp.206, 208

⁴⁰ Chaney, *The evolution of the grand tour*, pp.154–5

⁴¹ DG IV 23, p.138: 'pěkná, mistrovská a řemeslně udělaná'

⁴² DG IV 23, p.213: 'jest pěkně a mistrovsky udělaná'

⁴³ DG IV 23, p.103: 'mramorovými obrazy s velikým mistrovstvím vytesanými jest ozdoben'

⁴⁴ DG IV 23, p.169: 'stál na dvadceti čtyrech přepěkných mramorových sloupích rozličných barev'

⁴⁵ DG IV 23, p.125: 'dvanácte svícnů stříbrných velmi velikých'

⁴⁶ DG IV 23, p.169: 'draze pozlacený'

⁴⁷ DG IV 23, p.247: 'Na oltáři jest tabule z čistého zlata'

⁴⁸ DG IV 23, p.79: 'mnohé obrazy z arabského zlata'

⁴⁹ DG IV 23, p.152

⁵⁰ DG IV 23, p.247: 'šest zlatých křížův s drahým kamením'

⁵¹ DG IV 23, p.79: 'koruna biskupská perlová s mnohým drahým kamením, jeden samej kámen zafir 500 zlatých šacují'

⁵² DG IV 23, p.150: 'Stříbrný kříž pozlacený čtyrydceti liberní od Julia toho jména Druhého papeže';p.152: 'Prsten zlatý, v něm diamant velikosti nechtu na prstu, za dva tisíce korun koupený'

⁵³ DG IV 23, pp.150–2: 'Svíce... luk, šipky a jistá suma peněz od Corcuta, bašete tureckého vejš dotčeného... Kříž smaragdový zlatem a rubíny okrášlený od Albrechta, knížete bavorského, darovaný, že jest dvanácte tisíc zlatých šacovaný, praví... Kříž z devíti velkých diamantův a tří velkých perel velikosti třešní, čtyři tisíce korun zlatých šacovaný, od hraběte Antonína Martinenga a dcery markraběte Caratae, s kterou soud o ten křížek měl, společně Panně Marii darovaný.

⁵⁴ Philip Soergel, *Wondrous in his saints: Counter-reformation propaganda in Bavaria* (London, 1993), pp.159–60

⁵⁵ Julia Smith, 'Rulers and relics, c.750-c.950: 'treasure on earth, treasure in heaven' in Alexandra Walsham (ed.), *Relics and remains* (Past and Present supplements, Vol. 5, Oxford, 2010), 73–96; and Rublack, 'Grapho-relics' in Walsham (ed.), *Relics and remains*, p.147

⁵⁶ Robert A. Pierce, *Pier Paolo Vergerio the propagandist* (Rome, 2003), pp.143–4

⁵⁷ Fynes Moryson, An itinerary written by Fynes Moryson Gent. (London, 1617), p.100

- ⁶⁰ DG IV 23, pp.80–81: 'léta 1384 před 223 lety zeman jeden Osvald Mulcer jmenovaný... malou hostii jako jiní lidé přijíti nechtěl, ale velkou, jako kněží při mši přijímají, žádal. Kterémuž když kněz přivolil a jemu velebnou svátost podal, země postoupila a on se až po kolena propádl a rukama oltáře kamenného se chytivši na oltáři, na kamenu přetvrdém, prsty a ruka jeho se vytiskla; a až posavad to znamení prstův jeho se vidí, též i ta díra v zemi, v kterou se propadl.'
- ⁶¹ DG IV 23, p.125: 'v rameno neb v prsy uhodil, z kteréhož krev hned v hojnosti tekla... ten obraz ještě krvavý sem viděl, ano i tu díru, kterou se propadl, kteráž až posavad zůstává a konce se jí neví, jakož nám ukazujíc ji pravili.'
- 62 DG IV 23, p.81: 'když sem tudy jel, svýma očima viděl.'
- ⁶³ David Gentilcore, "Adapt Yourselves to the People's Capabilities': Missionary strategies, methods and impact in the Kingdom of Naples, 1600–1800', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 45 (1994), 269-296 (p.270); Forster, *The Counter-Reformation*, pp.6–8
- ⁶⁴ Quoted in Williams, "Rubbing up against others", p.102
- 65 DG IV 23, p.198: 'Staří pohané se domnívali, že se tudy do pekla chodí.'
- ⁶⁶ DG IV 23, p.198: 'okolo dvou set a padesáti krokův hluboké, vůkol něho vršky jsou, voda v něm slaná a pro velikou hlubokost černá.'
- ⁶⁷ DG IV 23, p.76: 'jsou mezi jinejmi dvě veliké lípy, na kterýchž Jan Žižka, nepřítel Boží a klášterův, mnichy, kteří se tam nacházeli, zvěšeti dal... na kterých ti mniši viseli, listy rostou vlastně na způsob mnichovských kápí.'
- ⁶⁸ This is in contrast to the conscious seeking-out of unorthodox holy sites as mentioned in Alexandra Walsham, 'The sacred landscape' in A. Bamji, G. H. Janssen and M. Laven, *The Ashgate research companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham, 2013), p.212

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p.79

⁵⁹ See also idea of 'communitas' in Tuner and Turner, *Image and pilgrimage*, p.13

⁶⁹ Hsia, Catholic renewal, p.76

⁷⁰ See *alba amicorum* listed in Wolfgang Klose, *Corpus alborum amicorum : CAAC : beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Stammbücher des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1988), esp. Prague collections, p.348; also see Evans, *The making*, pp.29–31