University of Pennsylvania
ScholarlyCommons

Henry Charles Lea Lectures | Penn Libraries' Lectures

2-27-2007

John Wyclif's Writings in Fifteenth-Century Bohemia and Poland

Pawel Kras
Catholic University of Lublin

A lecture presented on 27 February 2007 in Rosenwald Gallery of the Van-Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania (total time: 1:06:51).

- Introduction, by Edward M. Peters, University of Pennsylvania (0:00)
- Lecture, by Pawel Kras (5:05)
- Question and answer session (51:38)

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/lea/1
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

John Wyclif's Writings in Fifteenth-Century Bohemia and Poland

Abstract
Wyclif's position in the history of religious dissent in the late Middle Ages has already been well assessed. Although there is no direct evidence that Wyclif personally disseminated his ideas outside Oxford, his anticlerical concepts widely circulated throughout England and gave birth to the popular movement of Lollardy. Towards the end of the fourteenth century the ideas of *Doctor Evangelicus* attracted a number of Bohemian masters and students at Prague University. They were widely discussed and stimulated the emergence of the Hussite doctrine. Wyclif's first works, mainly logical, appeared in Prague in the last decade of the fourteenth century. The number of copies brought to Bohemia from England was enormous. The transmission and circulation of Wyclif's writings in Hussite Bohemia remains a fascinating phenomenon. Special missions were dispatched from Bohemia to England to collect and copy Wyclif's works. Close relations with English Wycliffites, both at Oxford and in the land estates of Lollard knights, enabled Bohemian emissaries to lay hands on nearly all Wyclif's works they were searching for. The important role in the transmission of Wyclif's writings from England to Bohemia was played by Peter Payne, who until 1413 had worked at Oxford, and after his escape to Bohemia became a leading Hussite theologian. Thanks to his assistance the Bohemian emissaries copied a number of Wyclif's theological treatises, among them *De veritate sacre scripture, De ecclesia, De dominio divino.* The catalogue of Wyclif's writings available at Prague around 1415 lists everything he ever wrote, except for about thirty minor works. Wyclif's works have survived to this day in about three hundred Bohemian manuscripts.

In contrast to the Hussite Bohemia, the spreading of Wyclif's ideas in the fifteenth century Poland was primarily limited to professors of Cracow University. His first works were brought to Poland by the Bohemian scholars. Despite a hostile attitude towards Wyclif, his writings, mostly logical, were copied and discussed at Cracow. After the condemnation of Wyclif and Hus in 1415 the ideas of the former became closely associated with the Hussite doctrine. Recent research has demonstrated that apart from Andrzej Gałka of Dobczyn, Cracow professor in 1429-1449, Wyclif's concepts found no followers in Poland. For at least ten years Gałka studied Wyclif's writings in secret, but after his clandestine activity became known in 1449, he was condemned by his university colleagues and prosecuted by Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnick of Cracow.

Comments
A lecture presented on 27 February 2007 in Rosenwald Gallery of the Van-Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania (total time: 1:06:51).

- Introduction, by Edward M. Peters, University of Pennsylvania (0:00)
- Lecture, by Pawel Kras (5:05)
- Question and answer session (51:38)

This presentation is available at ScholarlyCommons: http://repository.upenn.edu/lea/1

The Henry Charles Lea Lecture, 2007

JOHN WYCLIF'S WRITINGS IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BOHEMIA AND POLAND (abstract)

Paweł Kras
John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland

Wyclif's position in the history of religious dissent in the late Middle Ages has already been well assessed. Although there is no direct evidence that Wyclif personally disseminated his ideas outside Oxford, his anticlerical concepts widely circulated throughout England and gave birth to the popular movement of Lollardy. Towards the end of the fourteenth century the ideas of *Doctor Evangelicus* attracted a number of Bohemian masters and students at Prague University. They were widely discussed and stimulated the emergence of the Hussite doctrine. Wyclif's first works, mainly logical, appeared in Prague in the last decade of the fourteenth century. The number of copies brought to Bohemia from England was enormous. The transmission and circulation of Wyclif's writings in Hussite Bohemia remains a fascinating phenomenon. Special missions were dispatched from Bohemia to England to collect and copy Wyclif's works. Close relations with English Wycliffites, both at Oxford and in the land estates of Lollard knights, enabled Bohemian emissaries to lay hands on nearly all Wyclif's works they were searching for. The important role in the transmission of Wyclif's writings from England to Bohemia was played by Peter Payne, who until 1413 had worked at Oxford, and after his escape to Bohemia became a leading Hussite theologian. Thanks to his assistance the Bohemian emissaries copied a number of Wyclif's theological treatises, among them *De veritate sacre scripture, De ecclesia, De dominio divino*. The catalogue of Wyclif's writings available at Prague around 1415 lists everything he ever wrote, except for about thirty minor works. Wyclif''s works have survived to this day in about three hundred Bohemian manuscripts.

In contrast to the Hussite Bohemia, the spreading of Wyclif's ideas in the fifteenth century Poland was primarily limited to professors of Cracow University. His first works were brought to Poland by the Bohemian scholars. Despite a hostile attitude towards Wyclif, his writings, mostly logical, were copied and discussed at Cracow. After the condemnation of Wyclif and Hus in 1415 the ideas of the former became closely associated with the Hussite doctrine. Recent research has demonstrated that apart from Andrzej Gałka of Dobczyn, Cracow professor in 1429-1449, Wyclif's concepts found no followers in Poland. For at least ten years Gałka studied Wyclif's writings in secret, but after his clandestine activity became known in 1449, he was condemned by his university colleagues and prosecuted by Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnick of Cracow.