

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Anglicans of Central Europe

“The Strange Fate of Czech Utraquism: The Second Century, 1517–1621” by Zdenek V. David,
in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (Oct. 1995), Robinson College,
Cambridge University CB3 9AN England.

Although derided by partisan historians and little known to the general public, the 16th-century Czech Utraquist Church deserves respect and even admiration “for its steadfastness, moderation, and patriotism” as it steered a middle course between Lutheranism and the Roman Catholic Church, argues David, the librarian of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

The Utraquist Church—which emerged after Bohemian religious reformer Jan Hus was convicted of heresy and burned at the stake in 1415—bears a strong resemblance to the Church of England, David says, in that it was a national church that preserved much of traditional religious orthodoxy without “the ultra-bureaucratic and imperial style” of the early modern Papacy. The name *Utraquist* derived from the Latin phrase *sub utraque specie* (under each of two kinds), referring to the church’s belief that the laity must receive the Eucharist in the form of both bread and wine (whereas Rome believed that the form of bread alone was sufficient). Utraquists also believed that communion should be given to all baptized members of the church, including young children and infants.

Unlike the extremist Taborites, who were also followers of Hus, the Utraquists were moderates who did not reject the Papacy in principle. Like the Anglican Church, David says, the Utraquist Church defended the Bible, Aristotelian rationalism (in its Christian form), and ecclesiastical tradition. Rome recognized the legitimacy of Utraquism in 1436

at the Council of Basel, but 26 years later, Pope Pius II—acting “on questionable grounds”—revoked the recognition, leaving relations in “a perpetually unsettled state,” David notes.

After Martin Luther issued his 95 theses in 1517, the Utraquist Church found itself, David says, in “double jeopardy”—on one side from the radical appeal of German Lutheranism, on the other from Rome and the Hapsburgs (who assumed the throne of Bohemia in 1526). “While rebuffing Lutheran overtures,” he writes, the Utraquist Church also fended off “schemes for an eventual direct and unconditional fusion with the Roman Church.”

In a way, David points out, the two opposing challengers to Utraquism checked each other, “because each side considered the continued existence of the Utraquist Church a ‘lesser evil’ than its absorption by the other side.” Utraquism remained popular in Bohemia into the 17th century. But after the Catholic League (of princes) vanquished Bohemian Protestants in the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620, during the Thirty Years’ War, the fate of Protestantism in Hapsburg lands was sealed. In 1621, the Utraquist Church “was summarily suppressed and unconditionally absorbed by the Roman Church.” Utraquism’s “judicious moderation” may live on, however, David says, in Czech political culture’s oft-noted tolerant liberalism.

A Philosophical Paternity Case

“Whose Idea Is It, Anyway? A Philosophers’ Feud” by Jim Holt, in *Lingua Franca* (Jan.-Feb. 1996),
22 W. 38th St., New York, N.Y. 10018.

The lectures that 29-year-old Saul A. Kripke gave at Princeton University in 1970 (published a decade later in *Naming and Necessity*) turned analytic philosophy upside down. They “gave rise to what came to be called the New Theory of Reference, revolutionizing the way philosophers of language thought about issues of meaning and truth,”

writes Holt, a book columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*. The talks also helped win Kripke, a professor at Princeton, a reputation as “a modern philosophical genius.” Now, however, it appears that Kripke and the (largely male) philosophical community may have slighted the contribution of a Yale professor named Ruth Barcan Marcus to his