

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

groundbreaking achievement.

The New Theory of Reference draws on “modal logic, the formal study of the different modes of truth—necessity and possibility—that a statement can possess,” Holt explains. First pondered by Aristotle, and a significant concern of medieval scholars, modal logic was largely neglected by later thinkers. In the 1940s, Marcus, then a graduate student, “added new formal features” to modal logic, “greatly enlarging its philosophical implications,” Holt says. A decade later, teenage prodigy Kripke “supplied it with something it had hitherto lacked: an interpretation, a semantics.” Taking the German philosopher Leibniz’s conceit that the actual world is just one of a large number of possible ones, Kripke “characterized a proposition as “*necessarily* true if it holds in every possible world, and *possibly* true if it holds in some possible world.”

In 1962, Kripke attended a talk by Marcus in which she defended modal logic and expatiated upon the relationship between a proper name and the object to which it refers. The traditional theory was that every proper name (e.g., “Aristotle”) was associated with a cluster of descriptions (“teacher of Alexander the Great,” “author of the *Metaphysics*,” etc.), and these constituted its meaning. Marcus, however, argued that whereas a statement such as “Aristotle is Aristotle” is necessarily true, the statement “Aristotle is the author of the *Metaphysics*” is not, since it is possible to imagine circumstances in which the historical Aristotle did not become a philosopher.

“Marcus’ use of modal reasoning to undermine the traditional theory of the meaning of names,” Holt notes, “was a step toward the New Theory of Reference—a theory that emerged full-blown from Kripke’s Princeton lectures a decade later.” This theory holds that proper names are what he calls “rigid designators” (referring to the same individual in every possible world); that many common nouns, such as “gold” and “tiger,” are “natural kind” terms that work in the same way as proper names; and that terms such as “Aristotle” and “gold” are connected to the things to which they refer, not by the meanings in people’s heads but by “causal chains” stretching back to the first application of the term to the object.

In late 1994, Quentin Smith, a professor at Western Michigan University, stirred up a ruckus among philosophers that has still not died down, Holt reports. Smith concedes that the “natural kind” and “causal chains” features of Kripke’s theory were “genuinely new,” but contends that the concept behind Kripke’s term “rigid designator” was really Marcus’s. Kripke responds that some of the ideas he later developed “were present . . . in a sketchy way” in Marcus’s 1962 talk, “but there was a real paucity of argumentation on natural language. Almost everything she was saying [then] was already familiar to me at the time.” Marcus has declined to discuss the matter.

“It is easy to tell when someone has borrowed the prose of another,” Holt comments, but ideas “are rather trickier to identify.”

Onward, Christian Soldiers

“Reinterpreting the Crusades: Religious Warriors” by Jonathan Riley-Smith, in *The Economist* (Dec. 23, 1995–Jan. 5, 1996), 25 St. James’s St., London SW1A 1HG, England.

The Christian crusades are scorched in the modern mind as repulsive adventures in brutality and bigotry. Historians since the late 19th century have argued that it was greed, in one form or another, that motivated the crusaders. Lately, however, writes Riley-Smith, a professor of ecclesiastical history at Cambridge University, an older interpretation has been gaining favor.

The crusades were not, as many historians have maintained, a venture in imperialism, he says. The First Crusade, launched by Pope Urban II in 1095, “certainly began the

process of European conquest and settlement in the eastern Mediterranean,” but that was not the original intent. “The Christian knights assumed they would be joining a larger force that would drive back Muslim Turks who had recently invaded Asia Minor, and restore Jerusalem, lost for 350 years, to the Byzantine empire.” It was only after Byzantine Greeks failed to join in with much enthusiasm that the knights struck out on their own.

More recent economic interpretations of the crusades hold up no better, Riley-Smith