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NEW DATING OF THE TRIALS OF ASTROLOGER HENRY BOHEMUS

Abstract: This essay attempts to determine a new dating of the two trials of Henry the Bohemian, an astrologer acting at the court of Queen Zofia Holszańska. The above research project was made possible by putting together people who were mentioned in three main sources about the events in question: the legal opinions written by Stanisław of Skarbimierz, the sermon ending the trial delivered by Andrzej of Kokorzyn, and the verdict announced by Zbigniew Oleśnicki, Bishop of Cracow, and Jan the papal inquisitor. Until now, it has been assumed that the events concerning the court astrologer took place around 1429. However, the inquisitor in charge of both trials, Jan of Poland, and the witness, Magister Monald, both died in 1428. Another witness, the royal treasurer Henryk of Rogów, lost his life to a plague in 1425 or 1426. The vicar-general *in spiritualibus*, whose name is unknown, who took part in the first trial, was no longer in office a year later. Based on the list of known vicars general of the diocese of Cracow from that period, the trials of Henry of Bohemia can only be dated to between 1422 and 1424. The previous accepted chronology is upset by the shift in the dates of the events in question. Probably Henry was first put on trial as a heretic and given a life sentence. Soon after the verdict was pronounced the king released him and he subsequently became court astrologer to Queen Zofia.

Keywords: Henry Bohemus, Zofia Holszańska, medieval Inquisition, trial *in causa fidei*, diocese of Cracow

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Subject of research

Astrologer Henry, called Bohemus (Henricus Bohemus, Henry of Bohemia), was one of the more colourful and controversial figures to have passed through the Jagiellonian royal court. Although numerous independent sources have been preserved that make reference to him, he continues to be an enigmatic figure. The events in which he became the protagonist are replete with ambiguities, insinuations, and threads that the reader must connect. Since the nineteenth century, the Bohemian astrologer has drawn the attention of both artists¹ and scholars.² Aleksander Birkenmajer was the first author to devote an entire work to him.³ Furthermore, this publication served as the starting point for further research, despite the fact that many of its conclusions were later revised. Many biographies of Henry Bohemus have been written,⁴ but the older ones are no longer useful because in the 1970s Maria Kowalczyk found some important sources that allowed the earlier studies to be corrected with regard to the start of Bohemus' court career and what happened to him after he was sentenced.⁵ The most common context for discussing these events was astrological research⁶ or the history

¹ Aleksander Lesser placed him in the foreground of his 1854 oil painting titled 'Henry Bohemus, astrologer, divining the fate of the children of Queen Zofia, wife of Władysław Jagiello'. See W. Wielogłowski, *Sprawozdanie Dyrekcji Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Sztuk Pięknych w Krakowie z czynności w roku 1854/5*, Cracow 1855, 13. In turn, Józef Kraszewski mentioned him in the second volume of his novel entitled *Matka królów* (Mother of Kings) from 1883. See J. I. Kraszewski, *Matka królów*, Warsaw 1959, II, 194. In recent years, his character has appeared in the TVP television series *Korona królów. Jagiellonowie* (The Crown of the Kings: the Jagiellonians), season 5, 2024.

² K. Morawski, *Historia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, I: *Średnie wieki i odrodzenie*, Cracow 1900, 277; A. Karbowiak, *Dzieje wychowania i szkół w Polsce*, II.2: *od 1364 do 1432 roku*, Petersburg 1903, 215–16.

³ A. Birkenmajer, 'Sprawa magistra Henryka Czecha', *Collectanea Theologica*, 17.1–2 (1936), 207–24.

⁴ A. Birkenmajer 'Henryk Czech', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Cracow 1960, IX, 419–20; L. Hajdukiewicz, 'Henryk Czech', in *Historia Nauki Polskiej*, ed. by B. Suchodolski, Wrocław – Warsaw – Cracow – Gdańsk 1974, VI, 222–23; B. Czwojdrak, *Zofia Holszańska. Studium o dworze i roli królowej w późnośredniowiecznej Polsce*, Warsaw 2012, 127–28.

⁵ M. Kowalczyk, 'Przyczynki do biografii Henryka Czecha i Marcina Króla z Żurawicy', *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 21 (1971), 87–88.

⁶ M. Markowski, 'Stanowisko średniowiecznych przedstawicieli Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego wobec astrologii', *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 49 (1999), 95–96;

of black magic in medieval Poland.⁷ Historians have also analysed his trials before the bishop of Cracow and the papal inquisitor.⁸

The most relevant sources concerning Henry Bohemus' activities in Poland are as follows: 1) a note from the 1423 records of the Cracow judicial vicar (*officialis*) concerning his litigation with Marcin, the king's notary;⁹ 2) Jan Długosz's mention of the horoscopes Henry created for the births of King Ladislaus Jagiello's three sons;¹⁰ 3) three legal opinions issued by Stanisław of Skarbimierz during Henry's second trial;¹¹ 4) the verdict of Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki and papal inquisitor Jan in the second trial;¹² 5) a sermon by Andrzej of Kokorzyn at the end of the second trial;¹³ 6) two court records of the Cracow episcopal official in June 1440 in which Henry the Astronomer appears as one of the

S. Konarska-Zimnicka, 'Krytyka astrologii w świetle poglądów mistrzów krakowskich z XV wieku', *Almanach Historyczny*, 2 (2000), 29–32; S. C. Rowell, 'The Jagiellonians and the Stars. Dynasty-sponsored Astrology in the Fifteenth Century', *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, 7.1 (2002), 26.

⁷ J. Zathej, 'Per la storia dell'ambiente magico-astrologico a Cracovia nel Quattrocento', in *Magia, astrologia e religione nel Rinascimento. Convegno polacco-italiano (Varsavia, 25–27 settembre 1972)*, ed. by L. Szczucki, Wrocław – Warsaw – Cracow – Gdańsk 1974, 105–06; B. Láng, 'Angels around the Cristal. The Prayer Book of King Wladislas and the Treasure Hunts of Henry the Bohemian', *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism*, 5.1 (2005), 1–32; B. Láng, *Unlocked Books. Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe*, Philadelphia 2008, 214–19; J. Adamczyk, 'Czary i magia w praktyce sądów kościelnych na ziemiach polskich w późnym średniowieczu (XV–połowa XVI wieku)', in *Karolińscy pokutnicy i polskie średniowieczne czarownice. Konfrontacja doktryny chrześcijańskiej z życiem społeczeństwa średniowiecznego*, ed. by M. Koczerska, Warsaw 2007, 143–44, 179, 197.

⁸ F. Bartoš, 'Proces krakovského husity', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae. Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, 12.1–2 (1972), 45–49; S. Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria contre l'astrologue Henri Bohemus (édition critique)', *Studia Medievalistyczne*, 25 (1988), 145–72; W. Świeboda, *Universitas contra haeresim. Działalność antyheretycka Stanisława ze Skarbimierza jako przedstawiciela Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego*, Cracow 2021, 158–72.

⁹ Cracow, Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej, *Acta Officialia Cracoviensia* 4, fol. 297^r.

¹⁰ Ioannes Długossius, *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, XI: 1413–1430, ed. by K. Baczkowski, S. A. Sroka et al., Warsaw 2000, 229.

¹¹ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 153–72.

¹² First edition: 'Formulae ad ius canonicum spectantes, ex actis Petri Wysz, episcopi Cracoviensis (1392–1412), maxima parte depromptae', ed. by B. Ulanowski, *Archiwum Komisji Historycznej*, 5 (1889), 341–42, No. 108; second edition: *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, ed. by A. Lewicki, Cracow 1891, II, 227–28, No. 176.

¹³ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fols 129^v–141^r and Ms 2513, fols 270^r–278^r.

parties in the litigation;¹⁴ 7) a note by Jan of Dobra about a story heard from Henry Bohemus in 1440.¹⁵ Additionally, the Jagiellonian Library preserves two copies of a horoscope arranged in 1427 on the occasion of the birth of Casimir Jagiellon, later grand duke of Lithuania and king of Poland. According to Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot, Henry was probably the author of this birth horoscope.¹⁶ A copy of a horoscope (*generale iudicium*) for the birth of Ladislaus III is also known.¹⁷

Following Anatol Lewicki, the publisher of the document containing the sentence handed down to Henry Bohemus, all subsequent scholars unreservedly accepted the dating of the second trial to around 1429. The editor justified his supposition by identifying two papal inquisitors named Jan in the sources: the first was a Cracow Dominican prior and inquisitor recorded in 1428, and the second was an inquisitor in Wrocław in 1429. For unknown reasons, Lewicki was inclined to identify the inquisitor *Joh. de P.* mentioned in the document with the second of the aforementioned Dominicans,¹⁸ despite the latter's area of activity being the Wrocław diocese and not the diocese of Cracow.

Additional arguments supporting Lewicki's proposal for dating Henry's case to around 1429 were provided by A. Birkenmajer. He assumed that, since according to Jan Długosz, the court astrologer attended the births of all three sons of King Ladislaus Jagiello and Queen Zofia Holszańska (called Sonka), the first trial against him could have taken place only after the birth of the youngest Jagiellonian prince, namely Casimir, on 29 November 1427. It is therefore most likely that the first trial happened in 1428 and the second in 1429,¹⁹ or possibly in 1429 and 1430, and certainly before 9 January 1431, the date of the death of Stanisław of Skarbimierz, who participated in the second trial.²⁰ The proposed time period seemed the most logical for the reconstruction

¹⁴ Cracow, Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej, Acta Officialia Cracoviensia 6, fols 16^v, 17^v.

¹⁵ Kowalczyk, 'Przyczynki do biografii Henryka Czecha', 88.

¹⁶ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 3225, pag. 1 and Ms 3227, pag. 1. See E. Śnieżyńska-Stolot, 'Horoskop Kazimierza Jagiellończyka – nowe źródło do treści ideowych wawelskiego nagrobka króla', *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 60 (2010), 8.

¹⁷ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 1963, fol. 256^v.

¹⁸ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227–28, No. 176.

¹⁹ Birkenmajer, 'Sprawa magistra Henryka Czecha', 222.

²⁰ Świeboda, *Universitas contra haeresim*, 159.

of Henry's biography, for whom an unfavourable verdict meant the end of his court career. However, in addition to the Cracovian doctor of law, the sources concerning this case include several other people to whom insufficient attention has been paid so far in attempts to sequence events chronologically. These include, in particular, the aforementioned papal inquisitor Jan, followed by the court treasurer Henryk mentioned by Andrzej of Kokorzyn, Magister Monaldus mentioned by Stanisław of Skarbimierz, and an unnamed Cracow vicar general *in spiritualibus* with the initials S. de K. When the dates of their deaths and the years in which they held the aforementioned functions are considered, it is evident that the dating proposed and established by previous scholars begins to raise serious doubts.

The aim of this paper is to present arguments for dating the trial of Henry of Bohemia to a date a few years earlier. New discoveries necessitate a distinct reinterpretation of the previously known events. The motivation for this research task was in particular the analysis of three opinions of Stanisław of Skarbimierz, which have been already edited and the sermon delivered by Andrzej of Kokorzyn at the end of the trial *in causa fidei*. Despite the fact that the content of the sermon is well-known to researchers,²¹ they have neglected to consider certain facts recalled by the Cracovian scholar, which contain information that is not available from other sources regarding the circumstances of the astrologer's interrogation. The following phases of the Bohemus' activity must be traced in order to gain a better understanding of what actually transpired in Cracow at that time.

The activities of Henry the Bohemian before the trial

The period preceding Henry Bohemus appearance in the Kingdom of Poland is quite mysterious and it seems that even for his contemporaries the facts from his past were not widely known. His place of origin remains unclear. The name of the town appears only in the verdict of Bishop Oleśnicki and inquisitor Jan: *Henricus de Brega vocatus*. Although

²¹ Birkenmajer, 'Sprawa magistra Henryka Czecha', 217–22; M. Markowski, 'Poglądy filozoficzne Andrzeja z Kokorzyna', *Studia Mediewistyczne*, 6 (1964), 77–79; Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 151–52; Świeboda, *Universitas contra haeresim*, 163–64.

the bishop did not add what nationality Henry was, other sources clearly emphasize that he was a Bohemian. This is what Jan Długosz wrote about him (*magister Henricus genere Bohemus*),²² as well as Jan of Dobra (*Henricus astronomus Bohemus*),²³ Stanisław of Skarbimierz (*quia Bohemus*)²⁴ and the scribe of the acts of the Judicial Vicars (*Officialatus*) of Cracow (*Henricus Bohemus astronomus*).²⁵ It is therefore clear that this *Brega* cannot be identified with any Polish village or town named Brzeg in Silesia. Although Silesia at that time remained part of the Kingdom of Bohemia, no one from that area was called *Bohemus* in Poland. An example is the most famous resident of Brzeg – Franciszek, doctor of theology at the University of Cracow. It was a misunderstanding to try to identify Henry with a master (of arts) of the same name from Kłobuk near Częstochowa. Henry the Bohemian and Henryk from Kłobuck (correctly: from Kłobuk) were mentioned by Jan Fijałek in his work on the Faculty of Theology.²⁶ In no way, however, did he suggest that they could be referring to the same person. It seems that František Bartoš, referring to Fijałek, misunderstood his argument and then, following this line of thought, proposed to identify the village with a couple of villages called Klobouki in Bohemia and Moravia.²⁷ Some researchers have accepted this identification as correct.²⁸ However, Antoni Karbowski's hypothesis to identify Henry with Henryk Alman, a master of arts from Prague in 1399 and later a bachelor of medicine,²⁹ has not been accepted in the literature. A. Birkenmajer mentioned another astrologer, Henryk Brodaty, recorded in 1441 by the participants of the Council in Basel as a Hussite.³⁰ However, the records do not provide any other information that would allow determining Brodaty's origins;³¹

²² Długossius, *Annales*, XI, 229.

²³ Kowalczyk, 'Przyczynki do biografii Henryka Czecha', 88.

²⁴ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 165.

²⁵ Cracow, Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej, *Acta Officialia Cracoviensia* 6, fol. 16^v.

²⁶ J. Fijałek, 'Studia do dziejów uniwersytetu krakowskiego i jego wydziału teologicznego w XV wieku', *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Filologiczny*, II, 14 (1898), 55–56.

²⁷ Bartoš, 'Proces krakovského husity', 49.

²⁸ Długossius, *Annales*, XI, 401.

²⁹ Karbowski, *Dzieje wychowania i szkół*, II.2, 215–16.

³⁰ Birkenmajer, *Henryk Czech*, 420.

³¹ *Concilium Basiliense. Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte des Concils von Basel*, VII: *Die Protokolle des Concils 1440–1443*, ed. by H. Herre, Basel 1910, 454.

hence at this stage of research it seems pointless to put forward any hypotheses linking these two people.

Much more supporters have the hypothesis of A. Birkenmajer that the name of the place in the manuscript form³² was spoiled and it was actually Prague (*de Praga*).³³ According to the records of Charles University, in 1404, one *Henricus de Praga* earned a bachelor of Liberal Arts degree under the guidance of Štěpán Pálec.³⁴ This certificate would confirm that Henry studied in Prague and obtained his degree there. Zbigniew Oleśnicki and Jan Długosz described him as a *magister*.³⁵ Stanisław of Skarbimierz, on the other hand, claimed that although Henry considered himself a *magister*, because of the reprehensible errors he preached, it should be doubted whether he actually was one.³⁶ This does not change the fact that he was an educated person and knowledgeable in astronomy and astrology. Moreover, the bishop of Cracow, in his verdict, made it clear that the convict belonged to the secular state.³⁷

According to information disclosed by Andrzej of Kokorzyn, while Henry was still in the Kingdom of Bohemia, he participated in debates at heretical schools in Prague.³⁸ The Cracovian scholar probably considered the University of Prague to be heretical after the Decree of Kutná Hora in 1409, when it was largely in the hands of supporters of the Bohemian Reform movement.³⁹ In later years, the accused maintained correspondence with the Prague Hussites. During the trial, letters addressed to Henry were sent to Cracow, but he did not unseal them. From their contents, it is known that he was in friendly contact with his relatives.⁴⁰ According to the testimonies of witnesses, the Bohemian

³² Włocławek, Biblioteka Seminarium Duchownego im. Księży Chodyńskich, Ms 35, fol. 232^v. See *Biblioteka Kapituły Włocławskiej*, ed. S. Chodyński, S. Librowski, Włocławek 1949, 84.

³³ Birkenmajer, 'Sprawa magistra Henryka Czecha', 223.

³⁴ *Liber decanorum facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Pragensis ab anno Christi 1367 usque ad annum 1585*, I, Prague 1830, 380.

³⁵ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227; Ioannes Długossius, *Annales*, XI, 229.

³⁶ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 165.

³⁷ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227.

³⁸ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fol. 136^r; Ms 2513, fol. 275^v.

³⁹ For more detailed information about the consequence of the Decree of Kutná Hora see M. Nodl, *Dekret kutnohorský*, Prague 2010.

⁴⁰ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227; Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 163.

astrologer also stayed in Wrocław, where he allegedly made statements contrary to the teaching of the Church. For this reason, he was accused of heterodox faith.⁴¹ He may have left Silesia because he was afraid of being put on trial.

At this point, the timeline does not seem to raise many questions. In Cracow, Henry's fate is entirely distinct. The first confirmed date to refer to him appears in the files of the episcopal official of Cracow. Under the date of 6 March 1423, it was documented that Marcin, a royal notary, appointed proxies in a case he was conducting against the astronomer Henry of Cracow.⁴² It is not clear from this record alone that this is Henry, but since the name *Bohemus*⁴³ was added to other records about the astronomer Henry, it is likely that this is the same person. It is also crucial to note that his arrival in the Kingdom of Poland occurred prior to the issuance of an edict issued by King Władysław Jagiełło in Wieluń on 9 April 1424.⁴⁴ This document required the detention and interrogation of all individuals entering or exiting Bohemia to ascertain their religious beliefs. In 1423 Henry might come to Cracow lawfully without disclosing his pro-Hussite views.

The next piece of information about him comes from Jan Długosz, who *sub anno* 1427 mentioned Magister Henry Bohemus, who composed horoscopes for the birth of three sons of the royal couple. Astronomical events surrounding Casimir IV Jagiellon's birth were supposed to portend numerous misfortunes for the Kingdom of Poland,⁴⁵ but given Jan Długosz's disapproving attitude toward the ruler, it is unlikely that the prophecy actually sounded that dire.⁴⁶ The facts recalled by the Polish historian would allow us to date Henry's activity as a court astrologer to the years 1424–1427. However, even then he must have engaged in

⁴¹ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 164.

⁴² Cracow, Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej, Acta Officialia Cracoviensia 4, fol. 297^r. Marcin of Goworzyn was a royal notary from 1418, then a secretary of the royal chancellery from 1424, and also a canon of Kielce, Cracow, Przemyśl, Poznań and Gniezno. See M. Czyżak, *Kapituła katedralna w Gnieźnie w świetle metryki z lat 1408–1448*, Poznań 2003, 357–58.

⁴³ Cracow, Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej, Acta Officialia Cracoviensia 6, fol. 16^v; Kowalczyk, 'Przyczynki do biografii Henryka Czecha', 88.

⁴⁴ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 61; P. Kras, 'Edykt wieluński z 1424 roku i udział *brachium saeculare* w walce z husytyzmem w XV-wiecznej Polsce', *Summarium*, 26–27 (1997/1998), 65–66.

⁴⁵ Ioannes Dlugossius, *Annales*, XI, 229.

⁴⁶ Rowell, 'The Jagiellonians and the Stars', 32; Czwojdrak, *Zofia Holszańska*, 32.

magical practices in order to find buried treasures, as well as expressing opinions contrary to the teachings of the Church. According to the current research, his affairs took a drastic turn, and he nearly lost his life at the stake as a hardened heretic.

From accusation to verdict

The procedural records of the astrologer's trial are not known to us. The reconstruction of the course of both trials is possible due to extant sources which are connected with the court, namely the form of the verdict, legal opinions voiced by Stanisław of Skarbimierz, and the *sermo generalis* of Andrzej of Kokorzyn.

It is not certain in what circumstances Henry Bohemus was brought to trial for heresy, but certain formulations in the sources indicate that his statements concerning the truths of faith and practices related to occultism were not a secret. The verdict of Bishop Zbigniew Oleśnicki and inquisitor Jan of Poland refers to common opinion (*fama publica*).⁴⁷ This was enough to initiate the procedure *in causa fidei* aimed at clarifying whether these rumours were true and whether the accused admitted the charges brought against him.⁴⁸ As Urszula Borkowska rightly noted, Henry was brought to trial not because of his involvement in astrology, but primarily because of his attitude and dissemination of views contrary to the teaching of the Church.⁴⁹ This applied equally to summoning demons, undermining Christian tradition, opposing the Church orders and defending the Hussites.

Papal inquisitor Jan and the vicar general *in spiritualibus* were appointed to conduct the proceedings.⁵⁰ Based on the examination of witnesses and the accused himself, a total of eight charges were formulated against Henry. Four of them were listed in the verdict issued

⁴⁷ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227.

⁴⁸ Adamczyk, 'Czary i magia w praktyce sądów kościelnych', 143–44.

⁴⁹ U. Borkowska, 'Prodigia i myślenie zrationalizowane w *Rocznikach* Jana Długosza', in *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. by B. Gremek, Wrocław – Warsaw – Cracow – Gdańsk 1978, 238.

⁵⁰ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227.

in the second trial,⁵¹ and all of them were articulated by Andrzej of Kokorzyn in a sermon. In order, they were:

1. claiming that the Blessed Virgin Mary is not to be worshipped;
2. claiming that the institutional Church was never established;
3. claiming that the Articles of Faith are not twelve and that they were not established by the Twelve Apostles;
4. calling for Holy Communion to be given to the laity under both kinds;
5. taking part several times in disputes in heretical schools in Prague without the authority of the Church;
6. claiming that it is possible to search for buried treasures without any sin by resorting to astrological knowledge, and in particular by divination from the stars;
7. claiming that the Church authorises recourse to divination practices from the stars;
8. possession of cards and contributions with texts containing heresies, errors and descriptions of forbidden astronomical practices.⁵²

The list of errors presented above does not coincide with those listed in the bishop's sentence. The document mentions the first and third charges, and two more were added: the claim that the Hussites had good faith like the Catholics and the possession of letters from the Bohemian Hussites showing that the accused had friendly relations with them.⁵³ The above-mentioned two additional points, according to Andrzej of Kokorzyn, emerged only during the second trial, which seems to be closer to the truth. Stanisław of Skarbimierz, in one of his opinions, wrote that the accused did not manage to open the letters sent from Bohemia because of his imprisonment.⁵⁴ It is evident from the available sources, that this occurred in the subsequent proceedings. Consequently, the account of Andrzej of Kokorzyn should be regarded as more reliable than the general wording of the bishop's document, despite the fact that his work is replete with legal cases, quotations from *auctoritates*, and rhetorical embellishments.

All of the texts' contents make it abundantly evident that the accused acknowledged his errors and stated his desire to have them withdrawn.

⁵¹ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227.

⁵² Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fols 132^r–137^v; Ms 2513, fols 272^r–277^r.

⁵³ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227.

⁵⁴ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 163–64.

The verdict passed in the first trial was suspended due to the various doubts raised by certain people, thanks to which Bohemus could still enjoy his freedom. Interestingly, two other suspects were also tried along with Henry and sentenced to burning at the stake.⁵⁵ According to sources, Henry, probably having the protection of influential people, treated the entire trial in a disrespectful manner and continued to repeat the same errors he had previously denied. In addition, he participated in at least two spiritualistic séances with the necromancer Stanisław – once in Kazimierz, the second time in Zwierzyniec – during which they tried to summon demons together to obtain information from them about the location of buried treasures. When rumours of the above practices reached the bishop's curia, Henry was excommunicated by inquisitor Jan. At the same time, he and the vicar-general *in spiritualibus* proclaimed a general order to report all known heretics, necromancers, sorcerers, astrologers, diviners, soothsayers and holders of heretical books. Soon Bishop Oleśnicki issued a lawsuit and ordered the imprisonment of the astrologer, and then instructed the inquisitor to carry out further procedural steps on the charge of reverting to heresy.⁵⁶

Inquisitor Jan was again appointed to conduct the proceedings, but we have no information about the participation of the vicar-general *in spiritualibus*. An important role was played by the often mentioned Andrzej of Kokorzyn, who participated in the interrogation of the accused, and in the final stage was responsible for delivering the general sermon (*sermo generalis*) on the case.

During the course of the investigation, Henry Bohemus was again charged with eight errors, several of which were identical to those in the first trial.

1. reasserting that superstitious astronomy is a true art and that the Church permits its use; likewise, one can search for buried treasures without sin by appealing to it;

⁵⁵ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fol. 140^r: *Et propter hec omnia supradicta tu fuisti iudicatus, lapsus et relapsus et ergo cum aliis duobus nuper crematis sentenciatus fuisti, sed quia aliqui habuerunt dubium an fuisses lapsus, ideo pro inquisitione veritatis et ad tollendum omne dubium fuit quo ad te iudicium suspensum.*

⁵⁶ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 228; Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 153, 163; Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fols 138^r, 139^v; Ms 2513, fol. 278^r.

2. participating in magical practices consisting of calling upon a demon in order to find buried treasures;
3. claiming that one can search for hidden treasures without sin by calling upon demons;
4. failing to reveal the necromancers he knew personally, as well as failing to hand over books and sheets of paper containing Hussite heresies and spells;
5. arguing that Holy Scripture and ancient custom permit the administration of Holy Communion to lay persons under both kinds, as well as supporting this practice;
6. claiming that the Hussites are not heretics and were wrongly excommunicated, because their faith is as good as that of the Christians;
7. inciting noblemen and other lay people against the clergy in order to gain profit and wealth;
8. failure to respond to accusations of falling into heresy.⁵⁷

Henry must have enjoyed the affection of at least some of the inhabitants of Cracow, since once again some people expressed doubts as to whether summoning demons could be classified as heresy, as well as whether Bohemus could be considered a notorious heretic because he practised magic, despite renouncing his errors. In order to resolve these and other uncertainties, it was determined to consult Stanisław of Skarbimierz, a respected doctor of decrees, to issue a legal opinion in the matter. The jurist prepared three legal answers in which he confirmed that the defendant's guilt was evident and the canon law provides for an unambiguous punishment for returning to heresy. In accordance with standard inquisitorial procedure, if the above charges had been proven, the accused should have been sentenced to death at the stake.⁵⁸ Conversely, if there is a substantial likelihood that the death penalty could incite unrest among Henry's protectors and supporters and subsequently result in riots in the city, it is permissible to forgo its imposition and stipulate a life sentence as an exception.⁵⁹ And this was the final verdict handed down in the trial.

⁵⁷ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fols 138^r–140^r; Ms 2513, fols 277^r–278^r.

⁵⁸ P. Kras, *Ad abolendam diversarum haeresium pravitatem. System inkwizycyjny w średniowiecznej Europie*, Lublin 2006, 398–401.

⁵⁹ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 228; Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 172.

Dating

One significant determination we have is that the second proceedings against Henry were initiated a year after he had renounced his errors, as reported by Andrzej of Kokorzyn.⁶⁰ In order for the person conducting the proceedings to examine the accused and the witnesses, the court procedure had to last anywhere from a few weeks to even a few months. Therefore, while the second trial could have begun approximately a year after the first one ended, the verdict ending the second proceedings could have been issued somewhat later. Since the sources regarding the inquisitorial trials in question do not provide any historical information that would enable the course of events to be more precisely defined chronologically, the persons participating in the trials or listed as having contact with the accused serve as points of reference.

Bishop of Cracow Zbigniew Oleśnicki issued a verdict in the second trial. He received episcopal consecration on 19 December 1423, which is a very significant date, as it is the earliest possible caesura for the end of the second trial. Since we do not know whether this bishop also started the first case, we can consider the possibility of dating the first trial to the rule of Oleśnicki's predecessor in the diocese of Cracow, Wojciech Jastrzębiec, who was later transferred to the archbishopric of Gniezno. Oleśnicki died in 1455, long after the death of other people involved in the events discussed here.⁶¹

At the very end of the second trial, Stanisław of Skarbimierz prepared three legal opinions, which were taken into account by the bishop and the inquisitor when issuing the verdict. The doctor of canon law was a person of great authority in Cracow, he was elected the first rector of University of Cracow in 1400 and second time in 1413. In the past he had also been involved in cases related to heresy. The fact that he died on 9 January 1431 is most pertinent to the current case,⁶² as well as the fact that he held the office of vicar general *in spiritualibus* of

⁶⁰ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fol. 132^v: *sed post unum annum quasi elapsam ipsam excogitasti iudicio apprehensus.*

⁶¹ M. Koczerska, 'Oleśnicki Zbigniew', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Cracow 1978, XXIII, 776–84.

⁶² R. M. Zawadzki, 'Stanisław ze Skarbimierza', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Warsaw – Cracow 2003–2004, XLII, 76–80.

the bishop of Cracow in 1422 and briefly in 1426, replacing the absent vicar at the time.⁶³

Andrzej of Kokorzyn, the author of the sermon concluding the second trial, was a professor at the University of Cracow, elected rector three times – in the semesters of 1408/1409, 1426 and 1429. The exact date when he obtained the degree of doctor of theology is unknown (he is mentioned with this degree in 1426). He earned the degree of bachelor-*sententiarius* in 1413 or 1414, and was mentioned with the degree of bachelor-*formatus* in February 1425. Among the important state and Church offices that he held, it is worth mentioning that of treasurer of Queen Zofia in 1422, and then chancellor of the queen in 1424. From 1428 he worked in the bishop's curia as an archdeacon. He died around 1435.⁶⁴ The content of his sermon shows that the testimonies of the witnesses and the accused himself were well known to him.

The papal inquisitor, recorded in one place as *Joh. de P.*, and in another as *frater Johannes*, was appointed to conduct both trials. He can be easily identified with Jan Grzymała from Poland, prior of the Cracow Dominican priory in 1416, a papal inquisitor mentioned in sources in the years 1422–1427.⁶⁵ In the *Necrographia* of the Dominican Fathers, written in 1615 by Walery Litwiniec, his name is noted together with the information that he died on 20 April 1428.⁶⁶ I previously considered this date to be an author's error, as it contradicts the findings of A. Lewicki and A. Birkenmajer.⁶⁷ In light of additional evidence, it now emerges that the record in question is not necessarily inaccurate.

According to the bishop's verdict, Henry's act of revocation, that is his abjuration of his errors, took place before the inquisitor Jan and *Magister P.*⁶⁸ The latter was probably the same as the *Magister Paulus*, mentioned by Stanisław of Skarbimierz in one of his legal opinions.

⁶³ E. Knappek, *Akta oficjalatu i wikariatu generalnego krakowskiego do połowy XVI wieku*, Cracow 2010, 205.

⁶⁴ M. Markowski, 'Poglądy filozoficzne Andrzeja z Kokorzyna', 68–70; Czwojdrak, *Zofia Holszańska*, 120–21; *Corpus Academicum Cracoviense* (online database) <www.cac.historia.uj.edu.pl> [accessed 13 June 2025].

⁶⁵ M. Zdanek, 'Inkwizytorzy dominikańscy w diecezji krakowskiej w średniowieczu', in *Inkwizycja papieska w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, ed. by P. Kras, Cracow 2010, 230; *Słownik Biograficzny Polskich Mendykantów w Średniowieczu*, I: *Dominikanie*, No. 997 <<https://sop.dominikanie.pl>> (online database) [accessed 10 June 2025].

⁶⁶ Cracow, Archiwum Prowincji oo. Dominikanów, Ms Pp 78, fol. 28^v.

⁶⁷ Świeboda, *Universitas contra haeresim*, 162.

⁶⁸ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, II, 227–28.

Henry was to admit to him that his revocation was a ruse to gain an advantage and did not accurately reflect his true thoughts.⁶⁹ Since Paweł had been appointed to participate in a very important stage of the trial, he must have been a person closely associated with the bishop of Cracow. It would appear that this pertains to Paweł of Zator,⁷⁰ who in the 1420s participated in the work of the bishop's curia; before 1419 he taught at the cathedral school, of which he later became rector, and from 1423 he served as preacher at Wawel Cathedral church. He became a master at the University of Cracow in 1415 and studied canon law in the 1420s.⁷¹ The other facts of his life already relate to later years. His participation in the trials may have resulted from his teaching and preaching ministry at Wawel Cathedral church.

In his sermon, Andrzej of Kokorzyn mentioned a royal treasurer named Henryk, whom Bohemus is purported to have informed that the clergy would be persecuted in the current year due to tithes. It can be assumed that this occurred after the first trial.⁷² The treasurer can be identified as Henryk of Rogów, who was first recorded in the above-mentioned office on 4 July 1419 and last on 4 November 1424.⁷³ According to the findings of Bożena Czwojdrak, he died in 1425 or at the beginning of 1426 as a result of a plague.⁷⁴

The necromancer mentioned in the sermon, Stanisław, together with Henry, was supposed to have summoned demons in Kazimierz and Zwierzyniec. He used the youth as a medium between the world of spirits and the temporal world, and also used a crystal to strengthen the power of spells.⁷⁵ Jerzy Zathey tried to identify him with Stanisław,

⁶⁹ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 162.

⁷⁰ Świeboda, *Universitas contra haeresim*, 161–62.

⁷¹ J. Wolny, 'Paweł z Zatora', in *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Wrocław 1980, XXV, 401–03; K. Ożóg, 'Paweł z Zatora – kaznodzieja i profesor Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego', in *Osiem wieków historii i kultury miasta Zatora i regionu*, ed. by T. Gąsowski, P. Stanko, Cracow 2006, 7–25.

⁷² Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fol. 140^r. In the manuscript 2513 this passage is missing.

⁷³ *Urzędnicy centralni i nadworni Polski XIV–XVIII wieku*, ed. by A. Gąsiorowski, K. Chłapowski, Kórnik 1992, 122, No. 733.

⁷⁴ Czwojdrak, *Rogowscy herbu Działosza, podskarbiowie królewscy. Studium z dziejów możnowładztwa w drugiej połowie XIV i w XV wieku*, Katowice 2002, 194.

⁷⁵ Cracow, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Ms 2014, fol. 138^r.

the son of Jan of Kazimierz, a student at the University of Cracow in 1408. However, he did not support his hypothesis with any evidence.⁷⁶

Members of the household of Master Mikołaj Hinczowic were among the witnesses at the trial.⁷⁷ This scholar, who came from a wealthy bourgeois family from Kazimierz, was a well-known figure in Cracow circles. In 1412, he was elected rector of the University of Cracow, and in 1422 he received a doctorate in canon law. In the years 1411–1427, he served first as custodian of the royal treasury, and in the years 1429–1430 as crown treasurer. From 1413, he sat on the Cracow cathedral chapter. He was trusted by both Zbigniew Oleśnicki and Bishop Wojciech Jastrzębiec. Although some researchers claim that he was fascinated by magic or connected to Henry Bohemus, there is no evidence to confirm this thesis.⁷⁸

In addition to Mikołaj Hinczowic's household, Master Monaldus was also a witness in the case. This undoubtedly refers to Monaldus of Lucca, an Italian scholar who was listed among the professors of medicine at the University of Cracow.⁷⁹ He was the author of several medical treatises preserved in the Jagiellonian Library. Traces of his activity in Cracow are noted in sources in the years 1411–1422, and he was mentioned as deceased on 20 February 1428. Although historians identify him with Monaldus, a master of the royal mint from the late fourteenth century, expelled from Cracow in 1398,⁸⁰ there is no evidence, apart from a rare name, to connect these people.

According to the knowledge of Stanisław of Skarbimierz, Henry possessed the spells of a certain necromancer named Maciej.⁸¹ J. Zathey associated him with an astrologer of the same name, who was a servant of Bishop Oleśnicki in 1449 and who made astronomical drawings for

⁷⁶ Zathey, 'Per la storia dell'ambiente magico-astrologico', 106.

⁷⁷ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 166.

⁷⁸ *Urzędnicy centralni i nadworni Polski*, 122, No. 734; D. Wójcik-Zega, 'Mikołaj syn Hinczy (Hinczowic) z Kazimierza', in *Profesorowie Wydziału Prawa Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, I: 1364–1780, ed. by W. Uruszczak, Cracow 2015, 286–88.

⁷⁹ M. Markowski, 'Les manuscrits des listes de docteurs en médecine a l'Université de Cracovie entre 1400 et 1611', *Mediaevalia Philosophica Polonorum*, 20 (1974), 137.

⁸⁰ M. Kowalczyk, 'Pomniejsze średniowieczne teksty *De peste* z kręgu Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego', *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 30 (1980), 7; Láng, 'Angels around the Cristal', 25.

⁸¹ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 154.

his patron.⁸² The above hypothesis should be firmly rejected. The mere fact of his being involved in astronomy cannot constitute a basis for identifying the bishop's servant with an author of heretical spells from over two decades earlier.

Of the above-mentioned individuals, three died before 1429: the Dominican Jan Grzymała from Poland on 20 April 1428, Master Monald of Lucca before 20 February 1428, and the royal treasurer, Henryk, in 1425 or 1426. These facts alone require the unequivocal rejection of the dating of the trials accepted in historiography. Analysis of further source data allows for even more precise determinations.

It is not known which of the vicars general *in spiritualibus* of the bishop of Cracow is hiding behind the initials *S. de K.* They do not match any known officials performing this function in the fifteenth century; hence it was commonly assumed that the initials in the verdict form were copied incorrectly. It was usually indicated that it could have been Stanisław of Skarbimierz.⁸³ In my recent monography I questioned this hypothesis, pointing out that in the second trial this scholar could not have conducted the proceedings together with the papal inquisitor, because he acted as an independent expert issuing legal opinions on issues that were difficult to resolve.⁸⁴ Additionally, it is uncertain whether this pertains to Andrzej of Kokorzyn,⁸⁵ as he was only the archdeacon of Cracow from 1428, and never served as vicar general *in spiritualibus*. An inconspicuous entry in the bishop's judgment may provide some clue. In that document, when writing about the vicar-general, the adverb *tunc* was added, which means 'at that time'. This would mean that this person held the indicated function only during the first trial, but not the second. Moreover, during the second inquisitory proceedings, none of the sources mention the presence of this official. The most recent of his actions was a declaration to report all known heretical books during or soon after the first trial. In the 1420s, the following dignitaries are known to hold this position: 12 May 1420 – Kielcza of Książ and Suchodół; 29 August 1421 – Jakub of Zaborów; from 6 February to

⁸² Zathey, 'Per la storia dell'ambiente magico-astrologico', 105; Láng, 'Angels around the Cristal', 26.

⁸³ Wielgus, 'Consilia de Stanislas de Scarbimiria', 146; Zawadzki, 'Stanisław ze Skarbimierza', 78.

⁸⁴ Świeboda, *Universitas contra haeresim*, 160–61.

⁸⁵ Świeboda, *Universitas contra haeresim*, 161.

19 June 1422 – Stanisław of Skarbimierz (and once again on 12 August 1426, replacing the absent vicar); and from 11 February 1424 to 18 June 1430 – Andrzej Myszka of Nieprzeźnia.⁸⁶

It is worth summarizing the most important findings. Firstly, more or less a year passed between the two trials, secondly, the vicar general *in spiritualibus* conducting the first proceedings ceased to perform the aforementioned function, and thirdly, the final verdict was issued by Bishop Oleśnicki. Taking these three circumstances into account, Kielcza of Książ and Suchodoł and Jakub of Zaborów should be excluded from the group of vicars general (because Wojciech Jastrzębiec was still bishop one year after the end of their offices), as well as Andrzej Myszka (because he had remained vicar general continuously from 1424). This leaves only Stanisław of Skarbimierz, attested in 1422. In fact, he could not participate in the second trial as a prosecutor, because he appears as a legal expert who advises the tribunal what kind of sentence should be passed. However, this does not exclude his participation in the first trial as a general-vicar who conducts the process. No vicar general is listed under 1423, which can be explained in four ways: 1) Stanisław of Skarbimierz was still vicar general, but no sources are known to attest to this; 2) Andrzej Myszka was already vicar, and the reason is the same as above; 3) there was a vacancy in the position of vicar general at that time; it is possible, considering the fact that it was the time of the Bishop Jastrzębiec was transferring to the archdiocese of Gniezno and the Oleśnicki's was expected of being installed as bishop of Cracow; 4) the vicar was someone else, possibly the aforementioned *S. de K.*, but he is not listed in the sources and therefore his name remains unknown to us. Regardless of the final resolution of this conundrum, it may be noted that the only possible time frame for Henry Bohemus' first trial is between circa 1422 and 1423, and for the second trial between circa 1423 and 1424.

It is still necessary to cite Jan Długosz's report that the astrologer created horoscopes for the three sons born to the royal couple. The oldest of them, Ladislaus III, was born on 31 October 1424, and the youngest, Casimir IV Jagiellon, on 29 November 1427. Although it is impossible to accuse the historian of fabricating this information, it is possible that there was an error, for instance in assigning one horoscope

⁸⁶ Knappek, *Akta oficjalatu i wikariatu generalnego krakowskiego*, 205.

to three individuals. It is known that Długosz's accounts of past events are often retrospective and frequently tendentious. Since we cannot confirm the accuracy of this information, we should treat the events described as though they really had already happened. Therefore, on the day of the birth of Prince Ladislaus on 31 October 1424, Henry Bohemus must have been free.

Reconstruction of events

Given the analysis of the sources presented regarding the two trials of Henry Bohemus, Queen Zofia's court astrologer, it is absolutely necessary to modify the previously approximate dating of the events described from the year around 1429 to the years 1422–1424. The initial objective was to determine the time of death of numerous individuals mentioned in the sources related to the case. It was equally crucial to emphasize the role of the vicar general *in spiritualibus*, who had only participated in the initial trial and was absent from the subsequent one, which occurred one year later. From Jan Długosz's chronicle we know that Bohemus was present when Queen Zofia gave birth to her first son on 31 October 1424 and if not, then definitely on 29 November 1427. The change of the date of Bohemus' trials simultaneously entails a new interpretation of events. Namely, it appears that the Bohemian astrologer first became an object of interest to the Inquisition and only later became active at the royal court. Additionally, the chronology of the events indicates that Queen Zofia utilised Henry's astrological expertise to ascertain the fate of her first-born son shortly after the astrologer was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment or at the latest in 1427.

The scandal concerning Bohemus must have commenced during the tenure of Wojciech Jastrzębiec as bishop of Cracow, regardless of the precise date we identify as its inception (1422 or 1423). When the head of the diocese learned of the astrologer's dubious claims and actions, he appointed the vicar general *in spiritualibus* and inquisitor Jan of Poland to start the investigation *in causa fidei*. It is possible that this vicar was Stanisław of Skarbimierz or his successor, whose identity is unknown. During the interrogation of the accused and witnesses, Henry was shown to have pro-Hussite beliefs and occult fascinations.

His guilt was evident to the Inquisition; however, due to the fact that this was his first offence against the Catholic Faith and he consented to revise his errors and submit to the Church, he was granted a relatively lenient sentence. He probably submitted his abjuration to Master Paweł of Zator, then a preacher and rector of the cathedral school. However, the sentence was suspended under pressure from certain influential people. It is likely that after these events Henry came into conflict with the royal notary Marcin. We find information about this in the files of the Cracow judicial vicar (*officialis*) under the date of 6 March 1423.⁸⁷

Approximately a year later, it was discovered that Henry, who had been found guilty of heresy, had not only abandoned his Hussite beliefs, but had also persisted in using magic, claiming that the Church approved of it. He had participated in demon-summoning rituals at least twice in order to find buried treasures. He also admitted that his renunciation of his errors was insincere, which in the eyes of the court made him a perjurer and a recidivist heretic. Bohemus was captured and imprisoned by the bishop. In order to prevent outrage, despite the fact that such crimes were punishable by death according to Canon law, Bishop Oleśnicki and inquisitor Jan issued a sentence of life imprisonment, which was required to be executed no earlier than 19 December 1423 (the date of Oleśnicki's ingress). Stanisław of Skarbimierz, to the extent that he potentially participated in the initial trial as vicar general *in spiritualibus*, now served as an independent legal expert. Andrzej of Kokorzyn also played an important role presumably as the queen's chancellor. He participated in interrogating the accused and preached the sermon at the end of the trial.

Another fact from Henry's life is quite surprising. Unexpectedly, he is mentioned as being present at the birth of the king's first son on October 31, 1424. Even if Jan Długosz confused the king's offspring, the fact that he was released remains indisputable. It means that he did not spend much time in captivity. We do not know how the convict was released from prison. It is not possible that this happened without the king's intervention. Queen Zofia's involvement is also very likely, since in the following years she used the astrologer's knowledge and skills for her service. From that moment forward, the royal couple became patrons of astrological practices, which were to be used to advance the

⁸⁷ Cracow, Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej, Acta Officialia Cracoviensia 4, fol. 297^r.

interests of the state.⁸⁸ In this light, it becomes more understandable why the case of the royal astrologer did not cause any high-profile scandal, which Jan Długosz, who was hostile towards Queen Zofia, would certainly not have failed to ignore. Since Henry insinuated himself into the favour of the ruling family, he no longer gave any more cause for public disgrace, and Ladislaus Jagiello, not for the first time, showed himself to be a merciful ruler who preferred to give another chance even to a notorious sinner. There are no sources which would explain how the royal decision to reprieve a convicted heretic affected the king's relationship with the Church authorities. These events could also have been the reason for Andrzej of Kokorzyn leaving the royal court, since after 1424 he no longer appears in any role at the queen's side. The case of Henry Bohemus, in turn, would be the first documented investigation carried out by Bishop Oleśnicki acting in defence of the Faith against heresy.

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