CHAPTER 4

The Hussite Revolution: The Confluence of Religious, Political, and Legal Beliefs

the law needs a good spouse

milostného choti potřebuje zákon

—“The Grievance of the Czech Crown to God against the Hungarian King and the Council of Constance,” June 1420

a dishonor does not generate honor just as a sin does not generate virtue

ohyzda cti jakožto i zlost ctnosti neplodí

—“The Czech Crown’s Rebuke of the Hungarian King,” August or September 1420

all laws and all rights allow one to ward off force with force

všechny zákony a všechna práva dovolují odrazit násilí násilím

—“Hussite Manifesto to the World,” May 1430

The best guess puts Lord Ondřej z Dubé’s death in 1412, squarely in the middle of the reformation in Bohemia. He is listed as one of the barons presiding over the land court on February 27, 1412, a witness in another document from July 12, 1412, and then he disappears from the records. The kingdom was changing

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3 Daňhelka, 33.

4 Amedeo Molnár, ed. Husitské Manifesty, [Hussite Manifestos], (Prague: Odeon, 1980), 123.

5 Čáda, Nejvyššího sudího království českého Ondřeje z Dubé: práva zemská česká, 4.

6 Josef Emler, ed. Pozůstatky desk zemských království českého r. 1541 pohorelých, Reliquiae Tabularum Terrae Regni Bohemiae Anno MDXL Iigne Consumptarum, vol. 2 (Prague: Knihtiskárna J. Otto, 1872), 86. Čáda narrows the year of his death to between 1411 and 1413 because he finds records of Ondřej in the dispute between archbishop Zbyněk and Prague university of July
around him as a result of the expanding religious reform movement. The University of Prague had adjusted to the 1409 Kutná Hora decree, by which the Czechs gained the majority in student and faculty representation in university administration over the Germans and Poles. Many of the German faculty and students transferred to the University of Leipzig, founded in the same year, 1409. In the summer of 1412, Prague was engulfed in protests sparked by Hus's many controversial writings including a disputation about Pope John XXIII's bulls for indulgences and *De Ecclesia*. Especially after the first Hussite martyrs were created on July 10, 1412, the city was delicately balanced between public uproar and tempered peace. The city teetered back and forth in this delicate balance throughout the Hussite Revolution. In 1412, too, Jan Hus was excommunicated and Prague was threatened with interdict; he retreated to Kozí Hrádek in southern Bohemia for safe-keeping. The lay chalice became one of the important symbols of the movement only in 1414, when two preachers following Hus's teachings, Jakoubek of Stříbro and Nicholas of Dresden, introduced utraquism in Prague and Hus endorsed it. It, however, had not yet become the symbol for the reform movement while Ondřej was still alive in 1412.

Three years later, on July 6, 1415, Hus was burned as a heretic following his trial and condemnation by the Council of Constance. Emperor-elect Sigismund had guaranteed him safe-conduct. While in his opinion the safe-conduct was only to the Council, in the opinion of many nobles in Bohemia and Moravia the safe-conduct was to the Council and back to the safety of Bohemian land. Hus was not the only one to die for his beliefs in the presence of Sigismund; later others were killed in Bohemian and Moravian towns, most notably Jan Krása, a Prague merchant executed in Wrocław in March 1420. The unrest in Prague rose steadily with the chiliastic preaching of Jan Želivský, the radical Hussite priest at the church of the Virgin Mary of the Snows in Prague's New Town. King Václav IV, Sigismund's half brother, died in 1419, and Sigismund was the hereditary successor. By March 1, 1420, when a papal legate formally declared in Wrocław the crusade against the Hussites, the line in the sand had already