

# THE CANONS OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH IN PRAGUE. MEN IN THE SERVICE OF WOMEN

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Female convents, in contrast to male communities, could never be completely autonomous. Naturally, none of them could exist without the permanent presence of priests who regularly celebrated mass in their churches and provided the nuns with the sacraments, especially the sacrament of the eucharist and, at least in the later Middle Ages, the sacrament of penance.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the participation of a priest or bishop was necessary for various ceremonial occasions within the convent, including investitures of novices, consecrations of virgins, abbatial blessings, funerals, and requiem masses. The matter of the clergy of St. George's Church is more complex compared to other convents due to the church's longstanding usage prior to the arrival of the first Benedictine nuns in Bohemia. Evidence of the presence of several clergymen in the tenth century can be inferred from a passage in *Legenda Christiani*, which mentions prayers conducted on the first anniversary of St. Ludmila's (d. 921) burial in the church.<sup>2</sup> This raises the question of whether there was institutional continuity between the group of clerics presumed to have existed at St. George's as early as the time of Duke St. Wenceslas (d. 935) and the St. George's canons known from the abbey during the late Middle Ages.

## ORIGINS

The question of when the St. George's canons were established has a traditional answer claiming that St. George's Church was founded together with a collegiate chapter by its founder Duke Vratislav (d. 921).<sup>3</sup> This narrative is of medieval origins and can be traced back

- <sup>1</sup> It seems that until the early thirteenth century, abbesses commonly heard confessions of their nuns. See Gary MACY, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination. Female Clergy in the Medieval West*, Oxford 2007, p. 102; Jo Ann K. McNAMARA, *Sisters in Arms. Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia*, Cambridge MA 1996, p. 220.
- <sup>2</sup> *Legenda Christiani. Vita et passio sancti Wenceslai et sanctae Ludmille ave eius*, ed. by Jaroslav LUDVIKOVSKÝ, Prague 1978, p. 54: *Anniversario autem eius volvente die post translacionem ipsius glebe sacre [...] Nam ut moris est christiane religioni congregato clero memoriam talium agere, cum post oraciones ad refeccionem corporum una pariter residerent [...]*.
- <sup>3</sup> Joannes F. HAMMERSCHMIDT, *Historia in qua primaeva fundatio et institutio regionum ac antiquissimorum monasteriorum S. Georgii in castro Pragensi, S. Spiritus vulgo ad Misericordias Dei in antiqua Urbe Pragensi ordinis S. P. Benedicti Sancti-Monialium, cum omnibus tam Pontificiis, quam Caesareo-Regiis et Ducalibus privilegiis, exemptionibus, immunitatibus, concessionibus per distinctos paragraphos recensentur*, Prague 1715, p. 4; *ibid.*, *Prodromus gloriae Pragenae*, Prague 1723, p. 382.

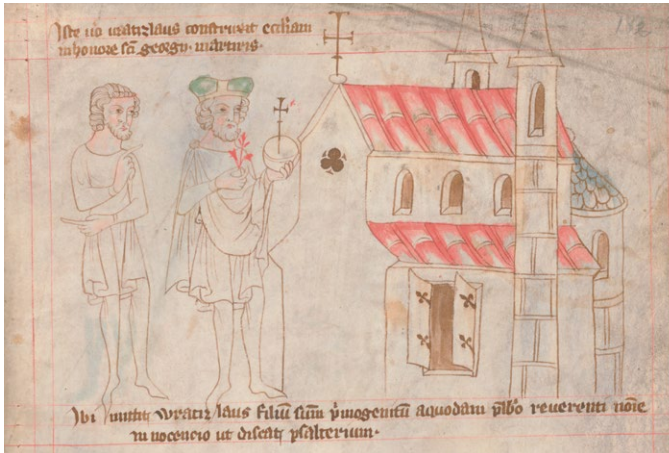


Fig. 1

Duke Vratislav as the Founder of St. George's Church in Velislav's Bible, c. 1340. Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, XXIII C 124, fol. 182r.

to the so called *Fragmentum praebendarum*, a memorial book of the St. George's canons. The main part of this manuscript was written shortly before 1357, likely by the canon Thomas Sýřec.<sup>4</sup> According to its contents, Duke Vratislav (Fig. 1) formed a chapter of nine clerics at the church, which existed until the author's present day. However, with the arrival of the nuns around 970, they lost their independence and became directly subordinate to the new abbess.<sup>5</sup>

Although this narrative was clearly used by the medieval canons themselves to legitimise their rights against the nuns and the archbishops of Prague,<sup>6</sup> in all likelihood the manuscript accurately reflects the presence of a larger number of clerics at St. George's Church in the tenth century. During that time, the church was one of the most prominent in Bohemia, and its significance remained largely unaffected even after the establishment of the female convent. It is plausible that the Church of St. George served as the seat of an arch-priest, meaning that prior to its transformation into an abbey church and the foundation of the bishopric in Prague in the 970s, it played a crucial role in the ecclesiastical administration of Bohemia as a part of the diocese of Regensburg.<sup>7</sup> However, in the Central European context, it would be an anachronism to refer to it as a chapter. If there was a group of priests,

4 Karel PACOVSKÝ, *Fragmentum praebendarum. Komentovaná kritická edice a překlad rukopisu svatojiřských kanovníků ze 14. století*, MA thesis, Univerzita Karlova, Prague 2018, pp. 32–33; IDEM., *Svatojiřský klášter v Praze očima pisatelů doby předhusitské*, Prague 2023, pp. 25–27, 32–36. See also the edition and Czech translation of the manuscript, *ibid.*, pp. 64–129.

5 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 4r–4v: [...] *per clarissimum olym ducem Bohemie Wratislaum [...] principaliter fundata. Clericos ibidem IX instituit [...] sic regimine et dominio ipsius ecclesie clerici per feminas sunt eieci, ut vulgariter dicitur. Vysunuchu je jako Radocha z člunu. Et suffragante seculari potencia verso ordine potestati feminee sunt subiecti [...]*.

6 Karel PACOVSKÝ, *Konflikt arcibiskupa Arnošta z Pardubic se svatojiřským klášterem v Praze*, *Historie – Otázky – Problémy* 14/1 (2022), pp. 56–71, at p. 69.

7 Dušan TRÉŠTIK, *Počátky Přemyslovců. Vstup Čechů do dějin (530–935)*, Prague 1997, pp. 200, 409, 513.

it might have evolved into a proper collegiate chapter in later times.

The late medieval explanation of the early medieval origin of the canonical prebends at St. George's Church has been repeated even in recent historiography.<sup>8</sup> However, Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, who contributed significantly to modern research into the medieval history of St. George's Abbey, has called it into question. She noticed a passage in the memorial book of the church that suggested the memory of the canons did not extend beyond the time of Abbess Anna, Bishop Tobias, and Pope Celestine V, specifically, the year 1294 (Fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> Hledíková interpreted this passage to mean that Abbess Anna founded the group of St. George's canons in that very year.<sup>10</sup>

Hledíková, being a prominent church historian, was correct in asserting that it would be anachronistic to assume the existence of a collegiate chapter at St. George's Church in the tenth century.<sup>11</sup> We cannot expect that the clergy of St. George's Church would have been more organised than the clergy of the cathedral church. The chronicle of Cosmas of Prague (d. 1125) indicates that the Prague cathedral chapter obtained a solid structure only in the late eleventh century under Provost Marcus. At that time most of the canons were

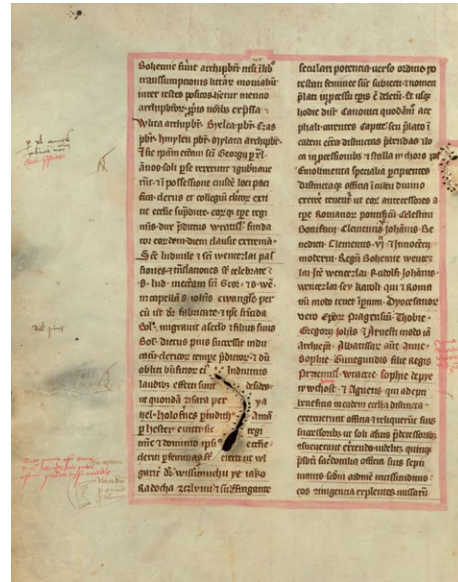


Fig. 2

Memorial Book of St. George's Canons (so-called *Fragmentum praebendarum*), written probably shortly after 1355 by Canon Thomas Sýřec (d. 1357). Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, XIII A 2, fol. 4v.

- 8 Ibid., p. 409; David KALHOUS, Záhadné počátky pražského biskupství, in: Evropa a Čechy na konci středověku: Sborník příspěvků věnovaných F. Šmahelovi k 70. narozeninám, ed. by Eva DOLEŽALOVÁ–Robert NOVOTNÝ–Pavel SOUKUP, Prague 2004, pp. 195–208, at p. 203.
- 9 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 4vb: *Emolimenta specialia percipientes distinctaque officia in cultu divino exercere tenentur, ut eorum antecessores a tempore Romanorum pontificum Celestini, Bonifacii, Clementis V, Iohannis, Benedicti, Clementis VI et Innocencii moderni, regum Bohemie Wenczelai, item Wenczelai, Rudolphi, Iohannis, Wenczelai seu Karoli, qui et Romanum modo tenet imperium, dyocesanorum vero episcoporum Pragensium Thobie, Gregorii, Iohannis et Arnesti modo iam archiepiscopi, abbatissarum autem Anne, Sophie, Gunegundis filie regis Przemisl, Wraccze, Sophie de Pyetywchoſt et Agnetis.*
- 10 Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, Poznámka ke svatojiřískému skriptoriu kolem roku 1300, *Documenta Pragensia* 10/1 (1990), pp. 31–49, at 38; IDEM., Lector Vitus, Berhel a Aldík, in: *Seminář a jeho hosté. Sborník prací k 60. narozeninám doc. dr. Rostislava Nového*, ed. by Zdeněk HOJDA–Jiří PEŠEK–Blanka ZILYNSKÁ, Prague 1992, pp. 45–52, at p. 46.
- 11 IDEM., Několik úvah o kapitulách v českém středověkém státě. *Documenta Pragensia Supplementa* 2 (2011), pp. 9–44, at p. 18.

still married men with their own families.<sup>12</sup> The earliest surviving evidence of the prebendal system in Bohemia dates to 1130 and is linked to the Vyšehrad chapter.<sup>13</sup> Concerning Prague Cathedral, the division of chapter property into prebends from the bishop's estates occurred sometime between the early twelfth century and the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

During that time, St. George's Church indeed had its own clergy, as confirmed by the sources. A charter from around the year 1200 indicates the presence of one priest (*presbyter*) and two chaplains (*capellani*) serving at the church, although they were not yet referred to as canons.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the privilege issued for the abbey in 1233 by Pope Gregory IX speaks only about chaplains of the nuns who are to be ordained by the bishops of Prague without any obstacles (*ordinationes capellanorum vestrorum*).<sup>16</sup> The title of canon in connection with St. George's Church is first found in a charter from 1275, which mentions a canon named Gregory, unknown to the mid-fourteenth-century author of the canons' memorial book.<sup>17</sup> A document from 1288 even speaks explicitly about canons having their prebends (specifically, the prebend in the village of Holousy is mentioned).<sup>18</sup> This alone clearly shows that the prebendary canons of St. George's Church were established before the mentioned year 1294 but after 1233, very likely during the second third of the thirteenth century. It was during this time that the original group of nuns' priests and chaplains was expanded, and they were provided with clearly defined benefices. After all, even in papal documents from the first half of the fourteenth century, the office of St. George's canons was referred to as the chaplaincy (*capellania*).<sup>19</sup>

According to the memorial book, there were a total of nine prebends assigned to nine canons in St. George's church. Among them, five were designated for priests, two for deacons, and two for subdeacons. At least in the first half of the fourteenth century, the villages of Holousy (including the revenues from Větší Ovenec, modern-day Bubeneč), Kněževés (including the revenues from Siřejovice), Statenice, Velké Přílepy (including the revenues

12 Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum, lib. II, c. 26, ed. by Bertold BRETHOLZ, MGH SS rer. Germ. N. S. 2, Berlin 1923, p. 119; Martina MAŘÍKOVÁ, Finance v životě pražské metropolitní kapituly. Hmotné zabezpečení kanovníků optikou účetních rejstříků z let 1358–1418, Prague 2018, p. 27.

13 Karin PÁTROVÁ, Od servicii k denním podílům: Vývoj podělování kanovníků v českých středověkých kolegiálních kapitulách. *Documenta Pragensia Supplementa* 2 (2011), pp. 75–100, at p. 79.

14 MAŘÍKOVÁ, Finance (2018), p. 29.

15 Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris regni Bohemiae II, ed. by Gustav FRIEDRICH, Prague 1912, no. 15, p. 11: *Sdzizlaus presbyter, Mathias capellanus, Alexander capellanus*.

16 Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris regni Bohemiae III/1, ed. by Gustav FRIEDRICH, Prague 1942, no. 40, pp. 39–40.

17 Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae II, ed. by Josef EMLER, Prague 1882, no. 956, p. 398: *domino vero Gregorio, canonico S. Georgii*.

18 Nově nalezený zlomek formuláře biskupa Tobiáše z Bechyně (1279–1296), ed. by Eduard ŠEBESTA, Prague 1905, no. 19, p. 37.

19 Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia, tomus prodromus, ed. by Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, Prague 2003, no. 897, p. 493: in *S. Georgii in castro Pragensi prebendam seu perpetuam capellaniam*: Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia I, ed. by Ladislav KLÍČMAN, Prague 1903, no. 239, p. 147: in *ecclesia sancti Georgii in castro Pragensi canonicatum sive prebendam aut capellaniam*.

from Chorušice and Větší Ovenec), and Bohnice (including the revenues from Lichoceves) belonged to the five priest prebends. One deacon received income from Postřižín, while the other obtained tithes from Bořanovice and held a meadow in Otovice. The village of Dublovice (including income from Úpohlavý and Panenské Břežany) belonged to the first subdeacon prebend, and the village of Bořanovice originally belonged to the second, which was later replaced by Opatovice (including income from Panenské Břežany and Vrutice) under Abbess Sophie of Pětichvost (d. 1345). Since most of these villages were part of the core possessions of the abbey in the early thirteenth century, it is likely that they were set aside to provide for the clerics serving in the convent church. This allocation would have been made by an abbess who held the sole right to manage the abbey's property in this manner.

By providing clergy with prebends in the mid-thirteenth century, St. George's Abbey kept pace with the general development in the administration of important churches. This change was very likely inspired by the above-mentioned cathedral chapter, where the same process happened a few decades earlier. St. Vitus' Cathedral must have served as a natural model for St. George's Church. The neighbouring churches had strong mutual interactions. In the thirteenth century, they were connected by a roofed corridor that was used during liturgical processions on important Sundays (Fig. 3). In addition, the (arch)bishops of Prague celebrated a pontifical mass in the church five times a year.<sup>20</sup> There were also personal connections between the members of both institutions – for example, St. George's canon Master Matthias served as the rector of the cathedral school in the late thirteenth century, and Bušek Leonardi of Braškov (d. c. 1372), the brother of Abbess Elizabeth (she held her office briefly in 1363) who supervised the construction of the new Gothic cathedral, served as a



Fig. 3

Liturgical Procession in the Pontifical of Albrecht of Sternberg, Bishop of Litomyšl, c. 1376. Prague, Strahovská knihovna, DG I 19, fol. 60v.

<sup>20</sup> Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 10v; Statuta metropolitanae ecclesiae Pragensis anno 1350 conscripta, ed. by Antonín PODLAHA, Prague 1905, p. 5. For the corridor see Jana MAŘIKOVÁ-KUBKOVÁ–DAVID EBEN, Organizace liturgického prostoru v bazilice sv. Víta. *Castrum Pragense* 2 (1999), pp. 227–238, at pp. 235–236; Jana MAŘIKOVÁ-KUBKOVÁ et al., Katedrála viditelná i neviditelná: Průvodce tisíciletou historií katedrály sv. Víta, Václava, Vojtěcha a Panny Marie na Pražském hradě, Prague 2019, p. 96.

Fig. 4

Bušek Leonardi of Braškov, Canon of both St. Vitus' Cathedral and St. George's Church. Bust in the Triforium of Prague Cathedral, Parler's workshop, c. 1380.



canon in both churches (Fig. 4).<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that the church could have adopted some organisational models from the cathedral chapter.

The influence of the Prague Cathedral's model can also be observed in other aspects of life at St. George's Abbey. Notably, both churches had their respective matrons (*matronae*), a group of elderly women who resided together as beguines within the castle premises and provided practical assistance to the canons.<sup>22</sup> According to the statutes of the cathedral chapter from 1350, they were responsible for mending and repairing damaged liturgical vestments and textiles, they were to guard the relics of saints when they were displayed on the church altars, and to care for the sick and dying clerics and remain in their vicinity until their burial.<sup>23</sup> In return, they were provided with not only the aforementioned housing but also meals. Their service allowed them to participate in the daily services of an important religious institution and live in community with other pious women who, due to their lower social status and inadequate education, did not have the opportunity to enter established and significantly more prestigious monastic communities. Due to the sources mentioning the matrons solely in relation to the church clergy and not the Benedictine convent, it appears that these elderly women primarily assisted the canons and had only limited contact with the nuns.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae VII/5, ed. by Bedřich MENDL–Milena LINHARTOVÁ, Prague 1964, no. 1528, p. 918; Antonín PODLAHA, Series praepositorum, decanorum, archidiaconorum aliorumque prelatorum s. metropolitanae ecclesiae Pragensis a primordiis usque ad praesentia tempora, Prague 1912, pp. 29–30; Karel PACOVSKÝ, Život v pražském klášteře sv. Jiří ve středověku, Ph.D. dissertation, Univerzita Karlova, Prague 2022, pp. 149–150.

<sup>22</sup> Karel PACOVSKÝ, Staré ženy v pražském klášteře svatého Jiří, in: Staré baby. Ženy a čas ve středověké Evropě, ed. by Vojtěch BAZANT–Jiří DYNDA–David ŠIMEČEK–Martin ŠORM, Prague 2020, pp. 141–153, at pp. 150–152.

<sup>23</sup> PODLAHA, Statuta (1905), pp. 42–43.

<sup>24</sup> PACOVSKÝ, Staré ženy (2020), p. 152.

Such an organisation of clergy in a female convent was unprecedented in the Crown of Bohemia. The presence of nine canons (who increasingly employed vicars during the fourteenth century, resulting in a standard count of eighteen clerics at the abbey) was noteworthy. However, the existence of canons in female convents is known in other regions. For instance, it is reported that the Benedictine nuns at Messines in Belgium had twelve canons in their church, led by a dean.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, during the High Middle Ages, double monasteries were also very popular, in which nuns were provided with the sacraments by ordained monks of the adjacent monastery.<sup>26</sup>

Although in relation to St. George's Abbey, the title of provost (*prepositus*) appears in certain sources, it is important to note that the presence of the provost title does not necessarily imply that one of the canons held the position of provost as the head of their chapter, as some literature suggests.<sup>27</sup> The memorial book of the canons explicitly states that they did not have a provost, and this is further supported by all their official documents.<sup>28</sup> Instead, the canons were directly subordinate to the abbess. Still, the title 'provost of the convent' (*prepositus monasterii*) was used by some of the canons, and there is a possibility that a married layman named Albert also held this title.<sup>29</sup> It is plausible that the provost's title, as at other nunneries, denoted an administrator responsible for overseeing the convent's properties. However, it seems that the use of this title ceased after the conflict between the convent and the Archbishop of Prague in the 1350s.<sup>30</sup>

## LIFE AND DUTIES OF THE CANONS

Apparently, the main duty of the canons was to ensure the liturgy of St. George's Church in those aspects that required the involvement of men with higher ordination. Already during the early medieval period, it became standard practice to celebrate mass daily in monastic churches. The canons followed a weekly rotation system for their service, ensuring

25 Philibert SCHMITZ, *Histoire de l'Ordre de Saint-Benoît 7. Les Moniales*, Maredsous 1956, p. 230.

26 See, e.g., Christiane U. KURZ, *Ubi et est habitatio sororum et mansio fratrum. Doppelklöster und ähnliche Klostersgemeinschaften im mittelalterlichen Österreich (Diözese Passau in den Ausdehnungen des 13. Jahrhunderts)*, Kiel 2015.

27 E.g., Václav V. TOMEK, *Dějepis města Prahy I*, Prague 1855, p. 445; Klára BENEŠOVSKÁ, *A Royal Marriage. Elisabeth Premyslid and John of Luxembourg – 1310*, Prague 2011, p. 483; Petr ULČINÝ, *Prostor a rituál: Velikonoční slavnosti v bazilice sv. Jiří na Pražském hradě*, *Studia mediaevalia Bohemica* 4 (2012), pp. 7–33, at p. 27.

28 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 4vb: [...] *usque hodie dicuntur canonici quodammodo acephali carentes capite seu prelato*.

29 Prague, Národní archiv, Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., inv. no. 224, 230, 238; Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 9v.

30 During this conflict, the title of convent's provost was documented for the last time, see Cancellaria Arnesti: *Formelbuch des ersten Prager Erzbischofs Arnest von Pardubic*, ed. by Ferdinand TADRA, Vienna 1880, no. 31, p. 345; cf. PACOVSKÝ, *Konflikt* (2022), p. 64.

that one of them was always responsible for conducting the services based on his level of ordination, whether as a priest, deacon, or subdeacon. The weekly services of the canons were organised in a way that guaranteed the presence of at least one priest, one deacon, and one subdeacon each day in St. George's Church. Additionally, another priest and either a deacon or a subdeacon were assigned to the daily service in St. Mary's Chapel, which was attached to the nuns' cloister (Fig. 5).<sup>31</sup> This division suggests that at least two sung masses were celebrated daily in the abbey, and in the case of the mass at the high altar of St. George, it was a solemn mass as the required number of clerics for its celebration were present.

However, it is evident from the bequests made in favour of the church that the canons were expected to participate in various other church services beyond their regular weekly duties, especially those related to commemorating the deceased. Canons who fulfilled these additional responsibilities were entitled to receive special compensation from the bequests. A passage from their memorial book emphasises the significance of funeral masses for the financial stability of the canons in the fourteenth century. According to the passage, the canons were expected to diligently fulfil the last wills of benefactors who, in their testaments, specified and financially supported posthumous rites for their own souls. It was believed that the conscientious execution of these rites would attract other potential pious donors, to the piety of the church and its canons' so that they would willingly, recommend themselves to their common prayers'.<sup>32</sup>

The clerics were expected, like canons in traditional chapters, to convene daily for the common prayers of the canonical hours, which, however, were shorter than the monastic office to which the Benedictine nuns were subject. The choir of the canons was situated in



Fig. 5

St. Mary's Chapel attached to the Cloister. Following its Baroque restoration in the seventeenth century when its large Gothic windows were walled-up to create a stricter enclosure of the nuns, it was dedicated to St. Anne. The well-preserved Gothic window arch in the eastern end dates to the chapel's expansion in the fourteenth century. In the Middle Ages, mass was celebrated in the chapel daily by one priest with the assistance of a deacon or a subdeacon.

<sup>31</sup> Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 7v–8r.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 9r: [...] *ut et ad devocionem ecclesie et collegii fideles pia opera facientes per exempla executionum ultimarum voluntatum diligenter affectuosius attracti se oracionibus communium recommendent.*



the east end of St. George's Church, consisting of two rows of choir stalls. Along the north wall of the presbytery, there were five seats specifically assigned to the priests, while the south side accommodated four seats for the remaining clergy.<sup>33</sup>

Although mass was celebrated daily in the abbey, the nuns did not receive communion very frequently. In general, Benedictine nuns received communion only on major feasts, although over time this practice gradually increased to a monthly frequency. Cistercian nuns typically received communion seven times a year.<sup>34</sup> According to the memorial book from the 1350s, the nuns received communion eight times a year, and lay people were also allowed to receive communion with them. This took place on important feasts, namely, Christmas, the Annunciation, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, the Assumption, and All Saints' Day.<sup>35</sup> Later, around 1410, Martin of Vyšehrad, a Benedictine monk from Ostrov Abbey, wrote to the nuns as their confessor, stating that according to the decree of Pope Gregory IX, it was customary for all the nuns to receive communion on the first Sunday of each month and on all feasts dedicated to Christ, his mother, and the convent's patrons.<sup>36</sup> It is unclear whether he was describing the practice at St. George's Abbey or whether he intended to regulate it through this statement. Elsewhere, he recommended the nuns to partake in communion at least every Sunday,<sup>37</sup> which may reflect a typical demand of the Prague reform movement of that period.<sup>38</sup>

The canon priests were responsible for providing the convent and its servants with various sacraments and sacramentals. They performed baptisms and conducted funeral rites in the church, as well as administered the last rites. Until the mid-fourteenth century, one of the canons served as the confessor for the other canons, nuns, and abbey's servants.<sup>39</sup> However, this changed in the mid-fourteenth century due to the reform initiatives of the Prague Archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice (1343–1364). Arnošt (Fig. 6) was dedicated to establishing a solid organisational structure for the newly formed independent Czech ecclesiastical province (1344) and enforcing stricter discipline within the church institutions under his authority including St. George's Abbey.<sup>40</sup> However, his endeavours encountered opposition and resistance from Abbess Agnes and her nuns. The archbishop tried to break their

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., fol. 5va.

<sup>34</sup> SCHMITZ, *Histoire* (1956), pp. 280–284.

<sup>35</sup> Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 5ra.

<sup>36</sup> Prague, Národní knihovna, I F 29, fol. 109v: *Consuetudo tamen est in ordine sancti Benedicti, ad quam tenentur omnes religiose, prima dominica mensis communicare secundum statuta domini Gregorii pape IX. et in omnibus festivitibus Christi et matris eius gloriose et in die patronorum ecclesie.*

<sup>37</sup> Prague, Národní knihovna, I F 29, fol. 25r: *Ad communionem corporis Christi sepe accede ad minus omni dominica.*

<sup>38</sup> For the request for frequent communion see David R. HOLETON, *The Bohemian Eucharistic Movement in its European Context, The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice 1* (1994), pp. 23–47; Zdeněk V. DAVID, *Finding the Middle Way. The Utraquists' Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther*, Baltimore 2003, pp. 20–21.

<sup>39</sup> Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 7r.

<sup>40</sup> Jan Kapistran VYSKOČIL, *Arnošt z Pardubic a jeho doba*, Prague 1947, pp. 371–374.

Fig. 6

Arnošt of Pardubice, the first Archbishop of Prague, who strengthened the bishop's authority over the convent.

Bust in the Triforium of Prague Cathedral, Parler's Workshop, c. 1380.



disobedience by excommunicating them and imposing an interdict on the abbey. The tense situation lasted for more than four years until Emperor Charles IV personally intervened in 1355, facilitating a reconciliation between the two parties.<sup>41</sup> As part of the compromise, the abbess could retain her position, and the nuns did not have to follow any of the reform statutes that Arnošt attempted to impose on them. However, the archbishop's authority over the convent was affirmed, and it is likely that the interdependence between the nuns and their canons was loosened.<sup>42</sup>

The St. George's canons were deprived of the authority to hear confessions and administer some other sacraments, at least the anointing of the sick. The right to administer the sacraments in the area of Prague Castle was granted exclusively to one of the canons of St. Vitus' Cathedral. In the future, the nuns were not permitted to choose their own confessor. Instead, their confessors were to be assigned annually from the Benedictine monasteries.<sup>43</sup> This arrangement, implemented by the Archbishop of Prague, appears to align with the reformist ideals promoted in other female convents all over Europe at the time. Among the Cistercians, for instance, there was a clear emphasis on separating the roles of the nuns' chaplains and confessors, with the confessor being exclusively a monk of the same order.<sup>44</sup>

It is probable that Arnošt's interventions remained in effect until the outbreak of the Hussite wars, as evidenced by the fact that the canons of St. George were no longer referred to as chaplains and the known confessor of nuns, Martin of Vyšehrad, in the early fifteenth

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- 41 Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae VI, ed. by Bedřich MENDL, Prague 1928, no. 156, pp. 90–91.
- 42 Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, Arnošt z Pardubic: Arcibiskup, zakladatel, rádce, Prague 2008, pp. 86–89; PACOVSKÝ, Konflikt (2022), pp. 56–71.
- 43 PACOVSKÝ, Konflikt (2022), pp. 62, 67–69; cf. Josef EMLER, Opravy a doplňky statutů kostela Pražského, učiněné od arcibiskupa Wolframa, *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk* (1889), pp. 293–310, at p. 302.
- 44 Nomasticon Cisterciense seu antiquiores ordinis Cisterciensis constitutiones, ed. by Jules PARIS–Hugo SÉJALON, Solesmes 1892, pp. 469, 533.



Fig. 7  
Consecration of the Virgins in the Pontifical of Albrecht of Sternberg, c. 1376. Prague, Strahovská knihovna, DG I 19, fol. 153v.

century, was from the Benedictine order.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the increasing authority of the Prague archbishopric over the abbey is also evident in the field of liturgical chant, as the older monastic notation was replaced with a type found in cathedral manuscripts.<sup>46</sup>

It is highly probable that the memorial book of St. George's canons was written shortly after the reconciliation with the archbishop. The exact motivation behind its creation remains unknown. The book does not include any official statutes, but it is the earliest and only recorded detailed documentation of the customs of St. George's clergy in the Middle Ages. It is plausible that by compiling this manuscript, the canons or rather its probable author, Thomas Sýřec, aimed to secure their positions in anticipation of future conflicts.

The canons were required to be present at important ceremonies of consecrated life associated with the celebration of the mass, such as the vesting and the consecration of nuns (Fig. 7), as well as the abbatial blessing (Fig. 8), the latter two ceremonies being directly conducted by the bishop. In return for their service at the altar during these ceremonies, the canons received more generous rewards from the newly admitted nuns or appointed abbesses compared to other days. It is unclear whether the *refectio* mentioned in the sources, which they were supposed to receive on such occasions, was meant as a distinctive provision or if they actually sat down to enjoy a feast.<sup>47</sup> Unlike the other ceremonies, the act of taking religious vows (*professio*) did not occur during the mass but was considered an internal matter within the monastic community and likely took place in the west choir of the nuns.<sup>48</sup> However, the canons were also invited to attend it,

45 Karel PACOVSKÝ, *Elzka legit et relegit. A Benedictine Nun in Early Fifteenth-Century Prague as a Reader and a Librarian*, in: *Monastic Libraries in East Central and Eastern Europe between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment*, ed. by Jakub ZOUHAR, Brno–St. Pölten 2020, pp. 135–158, at p. 136; see Prague, Knihovna Národního muzea, XVI C 8, fol. 195rb.

46 David EBEN–Susan RANKIN, *Using the Past as Model. Musical Scripts in Books of the Prague Diocese, in: Sounding the Past. Music as History and Memory*, ed. by Karl KÜGLE, Turnhout 2020, pp. 75–100, at p. 92.

47 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 9r.

48 This is evidenced at least for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the surviving Czech-written prescriptions: Prague, Národní archiv, Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., inv. no. 2571, no. 215; Prague, Národní knihovna, XVII G 31, no. 8.

which was a source of concern for the reform-minded confessor of the nuns in the early fifteenth century.<sup>49</sup>

The contacts between the nuns and the canons must have been quite intense. The Church of St. George served as a shared liturgical space, accommodating both of them simultaneously, as expressed by the authentication from the tomb of Duke Vratislav, dated 1 July 1379, which attributes the initiative for the renovation of the church's founder's tomb to Catherine of Lipoltice, abbess of St. George of the order of St. Benedict, and the community of both sexes, namely canons and nuns, of the same church<sup>50</sup>. Their joint celebration of Easter Sunday, which is well-known in literature, further highlights their collaboration. During this feast, representatives from both groups came together to perform a liturgical drama. The nuns took on the roles of the women visiting Jesus' tomb, while the canons played the male roles. The priest portrayed Christ, the deacon played the ointment seller and the angel, and the deacon and subdeacon jointly portrayed the apostles Peter and John.<sup>51</sup>

The liturgical collaboration was not limited to that occasion, however. The last wills of the benefactors who established their liturgical memory in the church expected the active participation of both canons and nuns in funeral rites. The *Liber Ordinarius* of St. George's Abbey from the mid-fourteenth century provides explicit evidence of the intertwining of voices between these men and women.<sup>52</sup> Although this source has not been extensively explored, it is clear that, at least on certain days, the nuns took turns singing with the clerics during the main mass. In the abbey church, a captivating musical effect was created with male voices



Fig. 8

Blessing of a New Abbess performed by a Bishop in the Pontifical of Albrecht of Sternberg, c. 1376. Praha, Strahovská knihovna, DG I 19, fol. 148r.

49 Prague, Národní knihovna, I F 29, fol. 145v: *Non iubet hic beatus Benedictus ad professionem monacharum canonicos advocare, ut faciunt apud sanctum Georgium in castro Pragensi.*

50 Viktor KOTRBA, Tumba knížete Vratislava v bazilice sv. Jiří na Pražském hradě, in: Sborník k sedmdesátinám Jana Květa, Prague 1965, pp. 123–132, at p. 124, note 8: [...] *ad ordinationem et petitionem venerabilis et religiose domine, domine Katherine, sancti Georgii castri Pragensis abbatisse ordinis sancti Benedicti, et collegii utriusque sexus canonicorum videlicet et sanctimonialium ecclesie eiusdem [...].*

51 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 8r–8v; cf. ULIČNÝ, Prostor a rituál (2012), p. 27.

52 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII E 14d, ff. 72v–73r: [...] *sacerdotes [...] cantant "Popule meus", in cuius fine due cantrices stantes ante pulpitum imponent "Agyos", domini vero hoc ipsum "Agyos" submissa voce cantant, chorus subiungit "Sanctus". Ibid., fol. 84r: Conventus autem cantet missam usque ad offertorium. Clerici autem proficiant ad finem misse.*

emanating from the elevated east choir (presbytery) and female voices from the raised west choir of nuns.<sup>53</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that the nuns were encouraged to select skilled singers from their convent to perform on special feast days when a large congregation of lay people gathered in the nave of the church between the two choirs.<sup>54</sup>

It is likely that one of the canons usually held the office of *propitialis*, although it is not clear what it entailed. Sometimes, he was specifically named in pious bequests in favour of the church (as evidenced in 1345 and 1368).<sup>55</sup> It seems that this function was related to the administration of the chapel of St. John the Baptist, situated east of the monastery on its premises. This is indicated by the reference to its chaplain Martin in 1367, who was alternatively known as *propitialis*.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, no information regarding the specific duties of this chaplain has been preserved. It is believed, however, that there may have been a hospital located near the chapel on the abbey grounds prior to the Hussite period.<sup>57</sup> This is suggested by a reference from 1491, indicating that the area east of St. George's Abbey was referred to as 'the hospital grounds' (*na špitále*).<sup>58</sup> Since there are no mentions of St. John's Chapel or the hospital in any other abbey manuscripts or documents, it is likely that it did not play a significant role in the abbey's affairs. The hospital, along with the chapel, likely ceased to exist due to the Hussite wars and was not reinstated, although Canon Jan Mladoch was still referred to as *propitialis* in 1464.<sup>59</sup>

Some of the clerics at St. George's Church also served as scribes at the abbey, as evidenced from the latter half of the thirteenth century. Under Bishop Tobias of Benešov (1279–1296), a certain Víttek, scribe to the esteemed Lady Abbess and canon of St. George's Church<sup>60</sup> was mentioned. At the same time, the canonical prebend in Bořanovice was granted to Subdeacon Lawrence Kočka, who, according to later accounts, copied an epistolary for use in St. George's Church.<sup>61</sup> His younger colleague, Canon Beneš, who held the priest prebend in

53 A similar effect has been documented during the Christmas mass at St. Vitus' Cathedral, where the singers in the eastern St. Vitus' choir and western Marian choir took turns responding to each other, see MAŘIKOVÁ-KUBKOVÁ–EBEN, *Organizace* (1999), p. 231; cf. MAŘIKOVÁ-KUBKOVÁ, *Katedrála* (2019), p. 62. A similar dialogue between the celebrants of the mass and the choir of monks was very common in male monasteries, although the distance between the altar and the choir was typically smaller in such settings, see James G. CLARK, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge 2011, p. 98–99.

54 Prague, Národní knihovna, I F 29, fol. 109 bis r.

55 Prague, Národní archiv, Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., inv. no. 235, 265.

56 *Registra decimarum papalium*, ed. by Václav V. TOMEK, Prague 1873, p. 27: *Martinus rector capellae S. Johannis baptistae infra septa monasterii alias propitialis*.

57 Milada VILÍMKOVÁ–František KAŠIČKA, *Poloha kostela sv. Jana Křtitele na Pražském hradě a jeho rekonstrukce, Památková péče* 31 (1971), pp. 42–47; Anežka MERHAUTOVÁ–Karel STEJSKAL, *St.-Georgs-Stift auf der Prager Burg*, Prague 1991, p. 33.

58 Prague, Národní archiv, Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., inv. no. 348.

59 Prague, Archiv Pražského hradu, Archiv Metropolitní kapituly u sv. Víta, Cod. VI/6, p. 129.

60 ŠEBESTA, *Nově nalezený zlomek* (1905), no. 19, p. 37: *Vitkonis notarii venerabilis domine abbatisse et canonici ecclesie sancti Georgii*.

61 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 7v: *Laurencius dictus Koczka [...], qui scripsit epistolarium*.

Přílepy, gained renown through his scribal work on the preserved Passional of Abbess Kunigunde (*Kunhuta*).<sup>62</sup> His handwriting can be recognised in other surviving liturgical manuscripts, particularly the processional and antiphoner, which he wrote for the Benedictine convent.<sup>63</sup> He also added new texts to an old gradual, which was still being used by the canons in the 1350s, when it was mentioned in the canons' memorial book.<sup>64</sup> This book itself was probably written by another canon, namely Thomas Sýřec (d. 1357), who held the priest prebend in Kněževes.<sup>65</sup>

It is possible that scribal skills played a role in the selection of a candidate for a prebend during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries because skilled scribes among the canons occasionally allowed the abbey to copy the required books. The term 'scriptorium' is sometimes used to refer to the book production associated with the abbey of that time (or more specifically the church, as it primarily involved the canons).<sup>66</sup> It is important, however, to note that there is no explicit evidence of a well-organised and continuous workshop in the written records of the abbey. Therefore, the question of a scriptorium at St. George's church requires further research, particularly in the fields of codicology and palaeography.

From the second half of the fourteenth century, there is evidence that the position of the scribe for the convent, or more specifically, the abbess, was no longer associated with the prebendaries.<sup>67</sup> In 1386, a priest named Wenceslas served as a scribe for the abbess without holding any of the St. George's prebends.<sup>68</sup> When he later became a canon, possibly due to the favour of Abbess Kunigunde (*Kunhuta*) of Kolowrat, he was called the 'former scribe of

62 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIV A 17.

63 Prague, Národní knihovna, VII G 16; XIV G 46; see MERHAUTOVÁ–STEJSKAL, *St.-Georgs-Stift* (1991), p. 42. HLEDÍKOVÁ also suggests his scribal contribution in the manuscript Prague, Národní knihovna, VI G 16b, see Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Kalendáře rukopisů kláštera sv. Jiří, Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Philosophica et Historica 2 = Z pomocných věd historických 8* (1988), pp. 35–78, at p. 53. Other contributions are suggested by Renáta MODRÁKOVÁ, *Knížní kultura kláštera benediktinek u sv. Jiří na Pražském hradě*, Prague 2022, p. 185.

64 Prague, Národní knihovna, XIII A 2, fol. 6v: [...] *ipse Benessius manu propria ea, que sunt in antiquo gradwali, nova scripta scripsit.*

65 PACOVSKÝ, *Svatojiřský klášter* (2023), pp. 34, 90; the same scribal hand can be recognised in the psalter, Prague, *Knihovna Národního muzea*, XVI A 18 and in the breviary, Prague, Národní knihovna, XXIII D 155, see MODRÁKOVÁ, *Knížní kultura* (2022), p. 186.

66 Zdeňka HLEDÍKOVÁ, *Poznámka ke svatojiřskému skriptoriu kolem roku 1300, Documenta Pragensia 10/1* (1990), pp. 31–49; Václav PLOCEK, *Svatojiřské skriptorium, Documenta Pragensia 10/1* (1990), pp. 23–29; MODRÁKOVÁ, *Knížní kultura* (2022), pp. 182–188.

67 E.g., in May 1407, a certain Stephen, the scribe of the books of St. George's abbess, was mentioned (*Stephano scriptori cathedrali abbatisse S. Georgii*). *Acta judiciaria consistorii Pragensis V*, ed. by Ferdinand TADRA, Prague 1899, no. 534, p. 442.

68 *Acta judiciaria consistorii Pragensis II*, ed. by Ferdinand TADRA, Prague 1893, no. 273, pp. 405–406: [...] *obiecit dom. Wenceslao notario dom. abbatisse S. Georgii in castro Prag., quod ipse confecit instrumenta publica existens presbyter.*

the abbess'.<sup>69</sup> It seems that among the canons, there may have been individuals with artistic skills as well, like Canon Nicolas, who was referred to as *Nicolaus dictus Pictor* in 1399.<sup>70</sup>

## DECLINE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The flourishing life of the abbey did not endure into the early modern period, but the exact point of its collapse remains unknown. According to the sole contemporary account by chronicler Lawrence of Březová (d. c. 1437), the turning point occurred on 21 June 1421. On that day, the radical Hussites, incited by their leader, preacher Jan Želivský (d. 1422), compelled the Benedictine nuns to abandon the abbey. The fate of the canons, as well as other details regarding the subsequent usage of St. George's Church, remain unknown. During the Hussite wars, the prebends continued to be officially held by the canons, and new titular prebendaries were assigned by the officials of the Prague archdiocese, who were in exile in Zittau.<sup>71</sup>

The end of the wars and the acceptance of Emperor Sigismund as King of Bohemia did not result in a complete restoration of the pre-war conditions. The abbey suffered greatly from the expropriation of its estates, which the emperor authorised through pledge deeds in 1436–1437.<sup>72</sup> These property losses severely weakened the abbey's economy, making it unable to sustain as many nuns and clerics as it had before the Hussite wars. Among the mortgaged estates were also those that belonged to the canons' prebends (Dublovice, Lichoceves, Ovenec, Siřejovice, Úpohlavy, and Vrutice).<sup>73</sup> In the case of some other villages, from which the canons also received income, the practice of pledging is documented, but not explicitly for the estates of St. George's Abbey (Holousy, Kněževs, Otvovice, Přílepy, and Statenice).<sup>74</sup>

Not many prebends survived the troubled period, and only a few of them are mentioned in later sources. In the confirmation of the new abbess Anna of Kotopeky in October 1464, Jan Mladoch and Henry of Litoměřice are listed among the witnesses as prebended canons in the Church of St. George'.<sup>75</sup> There is no further information available about Henry in relation to the abbey. The prebend of Jan Mladoch is mentioned in 1466. Although it was

69 Acta judiciaria consistorii Pragensis III, ed. by Ferdinand TADRA, Prague 1896, no. 205, p. 219: *Wenceslaus canonicus ecclesie S. Georgi in castro Prag., olim notarius d. abbatisse ecclesie predictae* [...].

70 Libri erectionum archidioecesis Pragensis VI, ed. by Antonín PODLAHA, Prague 1927, no. 58, p. 107.

71 Ondřej VODIČKA, *Exil českého a moravského duchovenstva za husitských válek*, Prague 2019, pp. 183, 191–192, 201.

72 Stanislav BĀRTA, *Zástavní listiny Zikmunda Lucemburského na církevní statky (1420–1437)*, Brno 2016, p. 137.

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 215–216, 234.

74 *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 167–168, 190, 200, 205, 207, 216, 238.

75 Prague, Archiv Pražského hradu, Archiv Metropolitní kapituly u sv. Víta, Cod. VI/6, p. 129: *Iohanne Mladoch propiciali Henrico de Lithomerzicz canonicis prebendatis in ecclesia sancti Georgii*.



Fig. 9

Outer Side of the Wings of the Main Altar of St. George's Church from c. 1470 depicting an Abbess (maybe Anna of Kotopeky) and a Canon (maybe Jan Mladoch). They are accompanied by Saints Wenceslas, George, Philip, Simon, and Andrew. Prague, Národní galerie Praha, inv. no. VO 1268–1269 (property of the Metropolitan Chapter of St. Vitus in Prague).



mortgaged, along with a significant part of the abbey's properties, the pledge holder Wolfgang Stecher of Lantbach decided to pay Jan Mladoch a portion of the profits, amounting to two schock groschen per year, for the rest of his life.<sup>76</sup> The same 'priest, Jan called Mladoch, a canon of the Prague cathedral and our chaplain' was mentioned by the nuns on 12 March 1476.<sup>77</sup> It is likely that this canon is depicted alongside the abbess, possibly Anna of Kotopeky (d. after 1477), as the donor on the famous St. George's altar from the 1460s or rather 1470s (Fig. 9),<sup>78</sup> which likely served as the main altar of the abbey church until 1688.<sup>79</sup> We have no documented evidence of any other cleric from that period having such a close relationship with the convent.

Due to economic and personnel crises, however, the prebended clergy of the abbey church with benefices (prebendaries) gradually disappeared. As late as 1520, the chaplain James is said to have served in the convent.<sup>80</sup> In 1550, during a visitation of the abbey conducted by royal commissioners following the death of Abbess Barbora of Schellenberg, no priest serving at the church was noted.<sup>81</sup> After all, in the middle of the sixteenth century, even the number of nuns in the convent reached a critically low level.<sup>82</sup> Although the situation of the convent improved at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the abbess's attempts to secure a permanent chaplain were unsuccessful due to the shortage of Roman Catholic clergy in Bohemia. In the 1620s, a chaplain finally started to serve permanently in the abbey, conducting daily morning mass and regularly administering the sacraments to the convent. From 1635 onwards, a special confessor served in the convent, and starting in 1669, there were two confessors, primarily from the Jesuit order.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, the clergy of St. George's Church could never regain the numbers comparable to those before the Hussite wars, which comprised eighteen clerics (nine canons and their vicars) apart from the Benedictine confessors who visited the convent only occasionally.

76 Prague, Národní archiv, Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., inv. no. 340: [...] *tvrz v Statevnicích se vším příslušenstvím, jenž přísluší k kanovníctvu kostela a kláštera svatého Jiří na Hradě pražském, kteréhož jest kněz Jan Mladoch v držení*. See Jaroslav ERŠIL–Jiří PRAŽÁK, *Archiv pražské metropolitní kapituly 2. Katalog listin a listů z let 1420–1561*, Prague 1986, no. 227, p. 83.

77 Prague, Národní archiv, Archivy českých klášterů zrušených za Josefa II., inv. no. 342; *Archiv český, čili Staré písemné památky české i moravské, sebrané z archivů domácích i cizích 7*, ed. by Josef KALOUSEK, Prague 1887, p. 677; see PODLAHA, *Series* (1912), p. 108.

78 Štěpánka CHLUMSKÁ–Jiří FAJT, *Bohemia & Central Europe 1200–1550. The Permanent Exhibition of the Collection of Old Masters of the National Gallery in Prague at the Convent of St Agnes of Bohemia*, Prague 2006, pp. 79–81; Emanuel POCHE et al., *Praha středověká*, Prague 1983, pp. 617–619.

79 Prague, Archiv hlavního města Prahy, Sbirka rukopisů, sign. 7875, p. 35: *Léta 1688 jest oltář velký v kostele sv. Jiří celý nový udělaný, koštoval okolo 1200 fl.*

80 Václav Vladivoj Tomek, *Dějepis města Prahy IX*, Prague 1893, p. 353.

81 Prague, Národní archiv, České oddělení dvorské komory IV, box 187, no. 7.

82 Jan ZDICHYNEC, Ferdinand I. a kláštery v Praze, *Historie – Otázky – Problémy 7/2* (2015), pp. 98–110, at 106.

83 Jindřich KOLDA, *Benediktinky u sv. Jiří na Pražském hradě v raném novověku*, Ph.D. dissertation, Univerzita Hradec Králové, Hradec Králové 2019, pp. 224–230.

In considering St. George's Convent during the later Middle Ages, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant role played by the St. George's canons in shaping the daily life of the abbey church. The church served as a shared liturgical space for both the male and female communities. However, it is important to note that the canons did not constitute a conventional collegiate chapter and did not possess independent ecclesiastical authority. Rather, the prebendaries were directly subordinate to the abbesses who established the prebends, very likely during the thirteenth century, in their efforts to enhance the abbey's liturgy. Although the first canons were likely recruited from the original chaplains of the convent, their involvement in the pastoral care of the nuns was notably restricted in the mid-fourteenth century as a result of interventions by Prague Archbishop Arnošt of Pardubice. The canons ceased to exist during the late fifteenth century, primarily due to the loss of the abbey's estates during the Hussite wars. Consequently, their books and charters became an integral part of the nuns' archive and library.

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