

Representations of Space and "Restoring Order" in Peter Eschenloer's Wrocław Chronicle*

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The author analyses Peter Eschenloer's Wrocław Chronicle from the second half of the fifteenth century. His interpretations are based on the theory of the relationship between power, space and representation. The Wrocław chronicler simultaneously defended the denial of the city's obedience to the Bohemian king (who was in dispute with the pope) and condemned the riots provoked by the city's municipality. The key part of the German-language version of Eschenloer's chronicle takes place during a period when the town council faced a series of attacks to its authority. Eschenloer presents the reader with a "representation of (dis)order" in the form of the breakdown and disunity of the town and its consequences, laying groundwork that enables him to emphasize the legitimacy of the town councillors' actions and present the bounds of their authority as inclusive of all public space.

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Historians have been paying attention to the relationship between events/plots and the milieu in which they take place for several decades. The researches of urban topography by Susanne Rau and Gerd Swerhoff, which were based on the distinction between public and non-public spaces of the city, can be characterized as ground-breaking.¹ Among the more recent contributions, for example, a study by Belgian historian Hannah Serneels, published in 2021, which operates with the term "topography of rebellion" has gained attention. In it, the author draws attention to the change in the symbolic and real language of the opponents of the existing power in different parts of the town's built-up area. The change in spatial practices was primarily associated with the formation of a broad social coalition and the entry of disaffected people into public space. The leaders of the rebels had to choose a different way of communicating with the town councils and with their own followers than had been the case until then.²

Of course, the question arises as to whether medieval intellectuals also reflected on the connection between space and action presented in this way. In other words, did medieval authors use the distinction between public and non-public space in their literary works, or even associate different types of spaces with a certain type of plot? Thanks to the research of Hannah Serneels and other historians, we can answer these

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1 SCHWERHOFF, *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit*, 1–28.

2 SEERNEELS, *Making space for resistance*, 1–16; RAU, *Geschichten von Stadt*, 459–474.

questions in the affirmative and confirm the internalization of the hierarchy of various types of spaces in the ideas of the community. However, the majority of similar research is based on Western European sources, or from the urban Italian milieu. The lack of comparison with the situation in Central Europe can be explained by the significantly different state of preservation of the sources, and after all, by the less developed relationship to the written culture of the communities here. Nevertheless, even here we can find written monuments that, by their scope, structure and concept, enable us to join the discussion above.³

A unique example of an interpretatively rich source is the Wrocław Chronicle of the city scribe Peter Eschenloer from the third quarter of the fifteenth century. The chronicle was written at the direct request of the town council and was created first in Latin and later in a revised and more meaningful German language edition. Eschenloer's chronicle was written shortly after the events described and interprets the extremely complex situation that the town was going through.⁴

In the late Middle Ages, Wrocław was one of the most economically important cities of the Central European market network, with contacts from northern Italy through Nuremberg to the Baltic Sea. At the same time, it was a politically very active community with extensive diplomatic contacts, a permanent representation at the Papal See and ambassadors at a number of surrounding royal and ducal courts. Formally, both Wrocław and the Principality of Wrocław were subject to the Bohemian Crown. At the time of the Hussite wars, the town community stood unwaveringly on the side of Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg, and the costs associated with the war with the Hussites (apparently) led to the formation of strong anti-Hussite attitudes. The forced compromise with the Hussites guaranteed by the so-called "Basel Compacts" did not change the situation much. The Calixtines continued to be viewed as heretics by the town's preachers. The definitive clash occurred at the moment of the election of George of Poděbrady, a Hussite and a member of one of the most powerful Bohemian families, as king of Bohemia in 1458. For the urban community incited by the preachers, he was a heretic whose authority could not be accepted. The town council effectively rejected the choice. However, the council found itself under crossfire. The loss of ties to the royal power weakened its position vis-à-vis the urban community. We can say that the validity of the existing structure of power distribution represented by the councillor elite ended; now, the councillors had to negotiate with the urban community. Beyond the reach of the council's powers, an agile pressure group formed in the city, for which historians use the name the "Preachers' Party". It was headed by Nicolas Tempelfeld, who was the main preacher in the central parish town church of St Elizabeth. The goal of Peter Eschenloer's chronicle was thus, on the one hand, the defence of the town's "disobedience" to the elected Bohemian king and, at the same time, the rejection of the "disobedience" of a part of the urban community against the town council.⁵

In his work, the author of the town chronicle and the town scribe Peter Eschenloer proved that he was a very capable man of letters and skilfully worked with the urban

3 BILLEN, *Dire le Bien Commun*, 71–88; CRANG, *Spaces in Theory*, 249–266; SCHLÖGL, *Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden*, 9–60; GLEBA, *Sehen, Hören, Schmecken*, 135–153.

4 HONEMAN, *Lateinische und volkssprachliche*, 617–627.

5 PAUK – WÓŁKIEWICZ, *The administrative structure*, 65–91; ČAPSKÝ, *Zrození země*, 109–140; BOBKOVÁ, 7. 4. 1348. *Ustavení Koruny*; GOLINSKI, *Wrocław od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, 177–186; BAHLCKE, *Das Herzogtum Schlesien*, 27–55.

space, or different types of spaces in which he placed his narrative. Space, or the “hierarchical position attributed to it” became an important part of the characterization of the disruption of order. The town hall, or council meeting room, was on the highest symbolic level in the built-up area of the town. An incursion into this domain was perceived as a direct attack on the town council, even if the councillors themselves may not have been physically threatened. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we could find corners or parts of the suburbs not defined in more detail where conspirators used to be situated. Spaces had a special status, although not themselves necessarily associated with negative expectations; but thanks to the actors, actions took place in them which the chronicler presents as inappropriate. In the given case, this role was fulfilled by some churches in which the preachers incited the crowd against the town council.⁶ In Eschenloer’s *Chronicle*, we find a number of illustrations using this hierarchical scale. People were incited from the pulpits against conciliation with the “heretics”, and the councillors’ authority was reportedly defied in the streets, craft workshops and taverns. The excesses also affected Schweidnitzer Keller, a cellar located under the town hall, where the elite of Wrocław met and where the councillors had a permanently reserved table and a cask of wine. The town council was obviously losing control over this space that was perceived to be part of the town hall. Whoever drank and swore more in the cellar and other taverns was considered the cleverest, best and most Christian man, wrote the town chronicler, not without reproach. Even when describing the role of the preachers, the Wrocław scribe did not mince his words. According to him, whoever cursed and expounded dissenting views at the pulpit was seen as ideal: the people liked listening to such views, and they succeeded in turning the audience against the town council in matters which would have been unthinkable in recent years. In Eschenloer’s opinion, God Himself took the councillors under His wing and this was the only thing that prevented the unruly mob from becoming violent.⁷

Peter Eschenloer most often operated with the term order, which, according to his conception, represented compliance with written and unwritten norms, including a hierarchy of power and loyalty.⁸ The main reason for the clashes is much less directly reflected in the text, which was “power, or the struggle to obtain it”: the power to determine the political orientation of the town, the power to decide on the composition of the town council, the power to (violently) calm the crowd that was on the streets of Wrocław. Another term that we encounter again more at the level of ideas than that the chronicler would systematically operate with is the “common good” (*bonum commune*), used in reference to the town council.⁹ However, in the observed time, “the common good, on which the existing power and cultural order was built”, found itself under the pressure of another strong and mobilizing idea – acting from the

6 Different types of public spaces were associated with different types of “public”. SCRIBNER, *Mündliche Kommunikation*, 83–99; THUM, *Öffentlichkeit und Kommunikation*, 65–87.

7 Peter Eschenloer, 248–49. Here we may recall Jaroslav Miller’s reflections on the chronicler facing a dual choice: to pass over the disquiet in the town and so perpetuate an illusion of constancy and non-disturbance of order, or to narrate it as an exemplary case of the destructive potential of conflicts inside the urban community. See MILLER, *Urban Societies*, 121.

8 For greater detail see BODERICK – WALTER, *Introduction*, 1–42; DARTMANN, *Politische Interaktion*, 24.

9 “Bonum commune” or its contemporary reflection in recent years has become a topic for a number of historians across national historiographies. For the German cities of the empire, cf. ISENMANN, *The notion of the Common Good*, 107–148. Cf. also other texts in this volume. Most recently in Czech historiography based on manorial towns, see ŠIMŮNEK, *Dobrá vrchnost*, 12–82.

“will of God”. Wrocław, surrounded by enemies, began to identify itself with the idea of “God’s elected community”, which for centuries had faced the enemies of Christendom, thanks to the influence of the Party of Preachers. This idea combined the destruction of the town after the devastating invasion of the Mongols in 1241, the conflict with the Hussites in the 1520s and 1530s and, subsequently, the resistance against the penetration of the Ottoman Turks into Central Europe. The idea of anti-Turkish expeditions met with great support in the town.¹⁰ The terms “power”, “order” and “general good” occupied an ascending position in the hierarchy of values on which urban society stood. The town councils usually had tools for symbolic communication with which they represented order and thus their position by referring to the “common good”. However, in the middle of the fifteenth century in Wrocław, a competitive basic idea was promoted, i.e., actions fulfilling God’s will defended by theological arguments and pushed through media, on which the town council had only limited influence, i.e., the pulpits. In addition, the anti-Hussite communities of Dominicans and Franciscans were active in the town, with which the secular clergy competed for the attention of the town population. Peter Eschenloer’s chronicle was thus not “just” an extremely detailed report on the conflict between the town council and the guilds or the Bohemian king, but a well-thought-out literary work that turned against several opponents and used the hierarchy of town spaces to (re)consolidate the position of the town council.¹¹

Adversaries

Peter Eschenloer was not a Silesian native. He came from a Nuremberg merchant family. He received his education at Leipzig University, where he was promoted to a bachelor’s and, in 1448, to a master’s degree. He also spent a short time at the University of Erfurt. Given the circumstances of the establishment of Leipzig University, associated with the departure of a number of masters and students from Prague after 1409, it would be tempting to speculate about a possible anti-Hussite barb present at Leipzig University at the time of Eschenloer’s studies. Neither should we underestimate the memories he may have had of the Hussite forays into Meissen or the threats to the commercial interests of the Nuremberg merchants. However, these possible roots of the scribe’s later radical anti-Hussite attitudes cannot be satisfactorily substantiated, if only because in 1450 he started out as a teacher and later rector at the town school in Görlitz, which was heavily impacted by the Hussite wars. From Görlitz, the young intellectual was then called into the service of the Wrocław office. Peter Eschenloer’s arrival marked a major breakthrough in the manning of the office: from then on, all of its staff boasted academic credentials. Unlike Peter Eschenloer, who had graduated from the faculty of liberal arts, his followers all had formal legal education. In this aspect, too, we can see that bureaucratic shifts were already taking place within the town administration of Wrocław. Peter himself held the office of the first town scribe until his death in 1481.¹²

10 RÜTHER, *Region und Identität*; FILIP– BORCHARDT, *Schlesien, Georg von Podiebrad*; KOSTOWSKI, *Sztuka śląska wobec husytyzmu*, 29–59.

11 HESS, *Nigra crux mala crux*, 565–581.

12 Peter Eschenloer was not the first scribe to have obtained a comprehensive formal education: as early as 1299 a Master Peter is mentioned in the sources. However, he was the first scribe to have completed his studies for more than a century. Before he took office, more than twenty people worked as Wrocław scribes without academic degrees. Peter Eschenloer’s career has been summarized by a number of authors, including most recently studies by ROTH, *Der Stadtschreiber*, 15–46; IWAŃCZAK, *Piotr Eschenloer*, 160–70.

Like other scribes, Peter Eschenloer was also used as an interpreter. When the papal envoys arrived (and probably on the arrival of John of Capistrano as well), it was the town scribe who simultaneously interpreted for both sides. Likewise, he performed public readings of papal communications and other documents written in Latin. In so doing he was careful to avoid any accusations of misinterpreting the source texts. This was particularly dangerous for Eschenloer because his adversary, Nicolas Tempelfeld, had a similar intellectual background, having been rector of Krakow University, which lent his remonstrances toward the scribe extra weight. In addition, Peter took up office in 1455, when Tempelfeld had already been in Breslau for several years.¹³

The oaths taken by the Wrocław scribes when they entered the services of the municipality have only been preserved since the beginning of the early modern age, but we can assume that their guiding principles have not changed much since Eschenloer's times. The scribe was obliged to maintain loyalty to the municipality and its representatives, irrespective of changes in the composition of the town councils. He was to work for the benefit of the town, to be impartial and not influenced by favour, friendship, affection, resistance or fear. The key obligation was the promise of secrecy. The scribe attended council meetings, kept minutes, was in charge of the town's correspondence and was charged with delivering messages. His responsibilities also included keeping the town's books and archiving.¹⁴

The Wrocław councillors commissioned Eschenloer to translate *Bohemian History* by Eneas Sylvius into German.¹⁵ Sometime after the completion of this task, probably in the mid-1460s, Eschenloer also began to prepare his own work, which was consciously linked to this work. *Historia Wratislaviensis*, as its abridged title is sometimes given, covers the events of 1438–1471. In the first part of the chronicle, Eschenloer made use of Eneas's Latin source text, before focusing more on the period 1458–1460, and finally on events after 1464. At around the turn of the 1470s, the chronicler began to work on a German version of his work that would be linguistically more accessible to the burghers. It is not without interest that the council ordered that this version written in the vernacular was to be rewritten on parchment and left in the custody of the town hall. This suggests that it was not a translation of the original Latin chronicle, but an in-depth revision which more closely reflected the history of the town and better reflected the attitudes of the council as interpreted by the councillor/chronicler. Eschenloer extended the text of the chronicle up to 1479 and supplemented it with descriptions

13 WÓŁKIEWICZ, *Viri docti et secretorum conscii*, 28–29.

14 By the 1420s, the Wrocław councillors had decided to carry out a large-scale extension of the designated town office. One reason for this may have been an increase in the agenda related to the acquisition of the office of the Wrocław administration into their hands, but we should also note that a number of new city officials begin to be mentioned in the extant documents. Ewa Wólkiewicz's studies of Wrocław sources have shown that as early as the 1480s, the documents mention two town scribes and a further single scribe working for the town court. The next few decades saw the gradual emergence of scribes working at the municipal scales, slaughterhouses, malthouses, building office, lime works, debt obligations and prison service, plus six scribes serving at the city gates. These were soon joined by a scribe responsible for the control of the salt trade. At the turn of the sixteenth century, twenty people were working for the Wrocław town council, making Wrocław the leading Central European metropolis. For details see WÓŁKIEWICZ, *Viri docti et secretorum conscii*, 21–42.

15 Another translation commission from (probably) the city council was the history of the First Crusade *Historia Hierosolimitana* by Robert the Monk.

of a number of letters, as well as his personal observations from the experience gained during the negotiations with the Bohemian ruler and with the Party of Preachers.¹⁶

Peter Eschenloer's chronicle, or rather its German redaction, took on the role of the official urban memoir. In late medieval Wrocław, however, several other works were also written reflecting on the recent past. Their authors ranked among the town's prominent intellectuals, albeit, unlike the scribe, they had not chosen secular careers.

Brother Gabriel of the Dominican order wrote a short publication, apparently inspired by the excommunication of King George in 1466, which, through historical arguments, substantiated the invalidity of the royal election. In his tract, he levelled a number of allegations against George of Poděbrady – that he had exploited Ladislaus the Posthumous's young age in order to seize power in the kingdom, and that he had calculatedly planned his murder to take the throne. The Wrocław Dominican also recounted some other events, such as the capture of the papal legate Fantin Della Valle and, of course, the excommunication itself, which definitively confirmed the unlawful usurpation of the Bohemian throne. Given the active role played by the Wrocław Brothers in the resistance to the Calixtines, it can be assumed that many of these claims were among the arguments used by the preachers in their communications with Wrocław's assembled believers. We can assume the same in relation to the tracts penned by Nicolas Tempelfeld, who wrote the most comprehensive summary of the circumstances surrounding the illegitimate election of George of Poděbrady. Given his role as a preacher with free access to the Wrocław town hall during the town's disputes with the Bohemian king, and given his interference in the town's correspondence with the Holy See, his relationship with the first town scribe must be perceived as a clash between two intellectuals competing not only at the pulpit and at the scribe's desk, but moreover directly on the premises of the Wrocław office. Peter Eschenloer's adversary was a man who had graduated from a faculty of arts and held a degree in theology, had served as dean and then rector of Krakow University, and was able to put forward skilful historical arguments to defend Wrocław's resistance to the king branded as a heretic.¹⁷

Curiously, having spent four decades in Krakow where, among other things, he was the main preacher in the main town temple, Tempelfeld had then decided to relocate to Wrocław. In 1453 he was around sixty years old and, from a medieval perspective, must have been considered an old man. In Krakow, he had commanded attention with his eloquent sermons, pointing to the deadly sins in urban society, including pride and vanity. Apparently, in Wrocław his attention turned more to the question of Hussitism. To this day, three Tempelfeld tractates have been preserved, apparently in response to the election of George of Poděbrady as Bohemian king in 1458. Jan Drabina has pointed out some questions that the author asked himself before his readers/listeners, on which these tracts were based. In the first, shortest work he asked whether it was wise for Christians to accept somebody as their master who promises that he will let everyone practice their faith. The expected answer was obvious. Tempelfeld, however, backed it up with a number of theological arguments in which he asserted that having a heretic seated on the throne was unacceptable to true Christians. In the second tractate, the author asked whether it was possible to accept George of Poděbrady as

16 For more details of the two versions of the chronicle see MROZOWICZ, *Dziejopisarstwo średniowieczne*, 5–20; ROTH, *Schlesische Geschichte*, 49–69; ROTH, *Berichten, Bewerten*, 343–360; HONEMANN, *Lateinische und volkssprachliche Geschichtsschreibung*, 617–627.

17 See ROTH, *Wider die Anfechtung der Ketzler*, 209–254; DRABINA, *Rola argumentacji religijnej*, 35–47.

king and to pay him tribute. This time, he drew his conclusions along three lines. In the first, he questioned the legitimacy of the royal election, which had taken place under pressure and without the participation of all the electors. This argument resonated well in the Silesian environment, which had been caught off guard by the fact that the votes of the neighbouring Crown Lands were not taken into account during the election. In the second, Tempelfeld questioned the validity of the royal coronation, in which two Hungarian bishops not recognized by Rome acted as prelates on behalf of the Prague metropolitan bishop. Finally, the third polemic questioned the validity of the Compacts of Basel and went back to the times of the Council of Constance, where all of Hus's followers were excommunicated. The preacher concluded his reflections with a new general appeal to fight against the heretics.¹⁸

All three of Tempelfeld's tracts were created in direct response to the changes that took place on the Bohemian throne. Apart from the first and shortest polemic, they go beyond the framework of theological discussions and make extensive use of historical and legal arguments. It is not surprising, therefore, that some authors attribute to Nicolas Tempelfeld the pivotal role in formulating the arguments of Wrocław's councillors in their denial (partly under pressure from the community and the mob incited by the preachers) of the legitimacy of the election of George of Poděbrady.¹⁹

Eschenloer's chronicle in its German version, rewritten on parchment and properly decorated, became the town's new institutional memory and, at the same time, a polemic with the image created by the Party of Preachers led by Nicolas Tempelfeld. It became a paradigmatic narrative that steadfastly countered the competitive narrative and its creator. It was a work that associated the fates of the Wrocław community with the multi-pronged struggle for the restoration of order. Internally, the scribe defended the restoration of the town council hierarchy with the council's privileged position and the townspeople's obedience. This is how Eschenloer envisioned the municipality's unity. However, these notions of unity and order were being manifested externally. They were associated with nothing less than the restoration of unity within the Christian world. In this struggle the Wrocław burghers, as portrayed by their chronicler, played an instrumental role.

The historical background of Eschenloer's chronicle

The town scribe and chronicler noted in the second half of the fifteenth century that there was no place in the world where so many sermons were delivered as in Wrocław. Within or in the vicinity of the town walls there were 35 churches, whose clergy competed for the favour of the town's believers. At the main parish church of St Elisabeth, the mass was celebrated and sermons were given by 134 priests, and almost the same number was reported for the other parish church of Mary Magdalene. The number of monks in the monasteries exceeded several hundred. In the immediate vicinity of the town there was also a bishopric with chapters and other facilities for the religious and secular clergy. As early as the 1420s, burghers from Prague and other towns dominated by the Hussites migrated to the town, as did some monks from

18 An in-depth analysis of Tempelfeld's tractates based on manuscripts archived in Krakow and Wrocław was published by DRABINA, *Rola argumentacji religijnej*, 36–45.

19 RÜTHER, *Predigtstuhl, Zunftstube*, 141–166.

sacked and destroyed monasteries. They carried with them a negative image of the pro-reformation in Bohemia and Moravia.²⁰

The Wrocław town council secured information about the military campaigns in Bohemia even after the end of the Hussite wars. The town office received the news and forwarded some to other recipients. Particular attention was paid to George of Poděbrady's political plans. A new impulse for anti-Hussite sentiment was brought by John of Capistrano, an Italian Franciscan monk and preacher who appealed to the people he encountered on his mission to fight against heretics, Turks and also Jews. In Wrocław, he was received by the town council and numerous audiences. As a result of his appeals, the town council organized a pogrom, which took place after his departure.²¹

Capistrano's mission expanded the influence of the Wrocław Party of Preachers. The head of the "Party" was a native of the Lower Silesian town of Brzeg and former rector of the Krakow University, Nicolas Tempelfeld, who was invited to Wrocław by the town council. Harsh condemnations of the Calixtines were also issued from the pulpits of other churches, and the town community lent a willing ear to them.²² The preachers' increasing influence was behind the first clash between the municipality and the town council in the mid-1450s. The councillors had to choose between pledging obedience to the newly-accepted King of Bohemia, Ladislaus the Posthumous, as was expected of them, or listening to the town community's fears, roused by the preachers, who saw the acceptance of the sovereign as a sign of reconciliation with the newly-confirmed governor of Bohemia (Landesverweser), George of Poděbrady. In Eschenloer's chronicle we find valuable testimony to the different arguments that the councillors advanced to various audiences. The councillors presented the ruler's court with legitimistic arguments that effectively removed any trait of disobedience from their attitudes. Pointing to tradition (associated, in fact, with Albrecht of Habsburg's visit to Wrocław in 1438), they insisted that the representatives of the Silesian Principality should pledge a joint oath of allegiance to the new ruler, but that this should not take place anywhere but in Wrocław; only such an oath would be valid, they claimed.²³ For their domestic audience, the councillors acted as saviours of the king, who they presented as unhappily surrounded by heretics: a journey to Wrocław would be an opportunity for young Ladislaus to free himself from the influence of George of Poděbrady, who, in the eyes of the local burghers, posed a threat to his life and exposed his soul to the temptation of heresy.²⁴ Under these circumstances, the compromise proposed by the Prague court, whereby the sovereign's Catholic plenipotentiaries were to come to Wrocław to accept the oath of allegiance on behalf of the absent ruler, had no chance of succeeding. The preachers incited the populace against the town council and against the legal compromise solution and demanded that the king should come in person, for only then would it be possible to save him from the hands of the heretics.²⁵

20 More in DRABINA, *Osrodki kaznodziejskie Wroclawia*, 129–145; DRABINA, *Rola argumentacji religijnej 17–24*; GOLIŃSKI, *Wroclaw od polowy XIII do poczatków XVI wieku*, 193–194.

21 WAŚ, *Klasztory franciszkańskie*, 105–108.

22 For more details of the Wrocław preachers see DRABINA, *Rola argumentacji religijnej*, 17–24; GOLIŃSKI, *Wroclaw od polowy XIII do poczatków XVI wieku*, 193–194.

23 ČAPSKÝ, *Przestrzeń jako miejsce*, 3–14.

24 "Adir do dis prediger zu Breslow erfuren, uffstunden sie und schrien, das die Bressler mit nichte zu Prage hulden sulden, do jr konig bey den keczeren were." Compare Peter Eschenloer, 172.

25 Peter Eschenloer, 173.

In the end, the young ruler did travel to Silesia, where Wrocław greeted him enthusiastically. However, the town did not escape financial penalty for its resistance. According to Peter Eschenloer, the community did in the end place its vows into the hands of heretics, and the burghers had to let them into their homes, admit their presence in their own churches, and pay huge sums for the ceremonies as well as the fine. Why, asked the town scribe, when all the princes, knights and even the Bishop of Wrocław had themselves paid tribute to Prague, was this procedure refused by the Wrocław municipality? At least, it could have better protected the good reputation and the souls of its women and young girls. And who ended up reaping the most profit? George of Poděbrady, who bought land in Silesia with the collected money. Thus, Eschenloer once again placed the blame on the preachers who, by their incitement, had prevented the town council from exercising its office.²⁶

The sudden death of Ladislaus the Posthumous in 1457 confirmed the positions of the implacable enemies of the Calixtines. The mob in the Wrocław streets took a clear stance: The young king's assassin was George of Poděbrady, and the object of the "street's" enmity was everyone who had ever (even allegedly) advocated a settlement with the heretics. The preachers incited the populace against the town council, and new defamatory verses and ditties were circulated in the taverns. There was another dimension, however, to the disparagement of the councillors, who gradually relinquished their already weakened authority and no longer dared to voice publicly any opinions that contradicted the views of the mob. Many of their lives were under threat. Resistance against the heretics legitimated disobedience towards the town administration.²⁷

At the beginning of March 1458, the Diet of the Bohemian Kingdom elected George of Poděbrady as king. The initial defiance of the Silesian princes did not last long, and Wrocław soon stood alone with its uncompromising attitude. The councillors' considerations about whether to enter into negotiations with the new ruler were roundly rejected by the town community. Peter Eschenloer described an example of the functioning of the community principle, which Peter Blicke talks about in his works.²⁸ The community was not a passive receiver of the council's announcements and proposals. On the contrary, during one meeting, it managed to push the councillors onto the defensive. Spokespersons for the municipality began to act as a body superior to the council and asked the councillors directly whether they intended to maintain their loyalty to the municipality. Not even their affirmative answer could conceal the depth of the rupture. The renewal of a relationship based on power and loyalty could no longer be achieved by any mutually agreed and declared compromise, even one that was entered in the town's books. More effective mechanisms had to be triggered to consolidate community solidarity: oaths by all those concerned. This ritual, which was often documented in the Reich cities, was not alien to Silesia. One of the players was the town council and the other the community formed by representatives of the

26 Peter Eschenloer, 174–178. Even in this case, Eschenloer could not resist including in his chronicle a repeated thesis on the municipal which should be shaped in the town hall and not at the pulpits: "O breslich folk gedenckte, das dein regiment uff dem rathaws und nicht uffem predigstul sey!" Peter Eschenloer, 175–176.

27 Peter Eschenloer, 203.

28 BLICKLE, *Einführung*, 1–17.

merchant guild. Both took an oath of allegiance and so created an urban partnership.²⁹ In a second step, that partnership acted as a political entity superior to the council. An anti-Poděbrady pact between the councillors, oath-takers, merchant guild and the "whole municipality" was formed on 25 June 1458. Despite undertaking to keep the partnership confidential, which would have given the councillors more leeway to carry out political steps, the agreement was revealed in all the taverns and in the Sweidnitzer cellar.³⁰ Although the town clergy collective was not an official party to the deal, the pact enabled the preachers to gain an important institutional foundation. Nicholas Tempelfeld and his followers were enjoying a steadily growing share in the communications that took place in Wrocław's public space and the clergymen soon secured access to the council and the town court of law. The council's policies and contacts with Prague and Rome were discussed with the preachers. Nicholas Tempelfeld allegedly interfered in the preparation of letters from the town office on political affairs. We can surmise how the town scribe reacted to this moment from the tone with which Peter Eschenloer chooses to characterize the "preachers".³¹

On 24 August, a grand council was convened under the pretext of the new vacillation of the council regarding loyalty to George of Poděbrady. The session was initiated by the guilds and the preachers. The council had no interest in it. Two of the councillors who expected the crowd to direct its anger at them had fled the town the day before, but those who remained also feared an attack on the town hall. In the end, the municipality filled the two vacant posts with new councillors and forced a new confirmation of the agreement to remain in opposition to George of Poděbrady. It was the community itself, united by the oath, that became the body that made the decision. The council remained on the defensive throughout. Following the decision of the municipality, Wrocław, or rather the Principality of Wrocław, remained the last enclave of the Crown Lands that refused to accept the new king.³²

As George of Poděbrady did not succeed in conquering the town, the royal side had to resort to negotiations once again. On 1 October 1458 the town repelled an attack on one of the Oder Gates and that date entered urban history as a miraculous victory, enshrined in the community's memory with an annual festive mass. The municipality, refusing to obey Bishop of Wrocław Jošt, urged the king, the Silesian princes and the papal envoys to reconcile. By this time the preachers wielded such an influence that they successfully disputed the authenticity of the imperial and papal letters acknowledging the legitimacy of the reign of George of Poděbrady. The pontifical legates had to come to the town in person.³³ They encountered an unpredictable situation there. The preachers had ceased to pledge obedience to the Church hierarchy and so when the bishop called Nicolas Tempelfeld to Legnica, he refused to come. Other prelates

29 "Und al die gemeyne hatten vorstanden das nichtis gutis aws den tagsfarten bequome und fuleten, das sie alleyne würden bleiben, do erhub sich grossir ernst, also das die gemeine dem rate abfrogete, ap sie bey der gemeine wider Girsiken steen welden adir nicht. Der rate antwortet: "Yo, mit leib und gut getrewlichen." Cf. Peter Eschenloer, 232.

30 Peter Eschenloer, 233.

31 GOLIŃSKI, *Wrocław od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, 193.

32 GOLIŃSKI, *Wrocław od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, 193–194.

33 "Ydoch als die prediger uff den predigstul quomen, sagten sie nicht frid mit den keczeren were zuhalden, und ap der babst das hette geboten und geschriben, man sulde nicht folgen sunder seine hilikeit undirrichten, und sagten auch, das sulche briffe vom bobiste durch die keczere und ire gonnere were awsbrocht worden glichsam die ratmanne also bestalt hetten." See Peter Eschenloer, 257.

similarly attempted to guide the preachers to defuse the situation in the Wrocław streets, but the clergymen did not respond to their calls.³⁴ Likewise, the papal envoys resisted all attempts to declare a cease-fire. They even wanted to have Bartholomew Tempelfeld, namesake of the more famous Nicholas, arrested and judged in Rome for his utterances addressed to the legates.³⁵ Eventually, they managed to overcome the resistance to the recognition of George of Poděbrady as a legitimate ruler, although a three-year deadline was set for swearing allegiance. Eschenloer adds, however, that the Party of Preachers refused to put their seal of approval to the compromise. Thus, the legates (allegedly) could not resist reproaching them once again, and urged the town to realise that the town's political plans must be discussed at council meetings, and that it was not acceptable for the preachers to decide about them in the public space from their pulpits.³⁶

Two years later, the Holy See changed its mind about the composition of the anti-Turkish coalition in Central Europe, and with this came a turnaround in the policy applied to the Bohemian sovereign.³⁷ Breslau was relieved of its obligations to the kings and the influence that preacher Nicholas Tempelfeld held over the direction of Wrocław's policy further increased. His spiritual position was based on community support, and few people dared to protest publicly against his words. When Bishop Jošt advised cautious progress, Tempelfeld did not hesitate to brand him an even greater heretic than George of Poděbrady. The Bishop of Olomouc met the same fate. Tempelfeld was invited to meetings of the pontifical legation with the town council and repeatedly called for a confrontation with the Calixtines. He even offered to help with instigating preacher-led riots against the heretics in other towns. Nicolas Tempelfeld's goal was nothing less than the complete eradication of the Hussite movement in the Bohemian Lands.³⁸ He had the crowd's attention, and his threats of violence were enough to make some burghers leave and others declare their plans. The fear of heretics in the community was propitious for this strategy. Then Peter Eschenloer was himself accused of ingratiating himself with the heretics, and his name was repeatedly proclaimed at the church as well as during a town council meeting in the town hall. As he writes, he had to save his life by voluntarily joining the campaign against the Calixtines and accepting the cross. He also had to equip a mercenary for battle.³⁹ The town council took a number of steps to declare a strong anti-Hussite course, and its scribe took part in these enterprises. He was certainly no hidden Hussite supporter. As early as 1464, the councillors tasked Eschenloer with translating *Bohemian History* (*Historia Bohemica*) by Eneas Silvius Piccolomini from Latin into German in order to familiarize the whole council with it. The anti-Hussite slant of the text was well known. This was not his only

34 Peter Eschenloer, 264.

35 Peter Eschenloer, 301.

36 "Sehet liben fründe, wenn sie euch uffs höchstehetten vorheczet, so weren sie wegczogen, jn dürfften wein und kindere nicht nochfolgen, sehet und folget irer lere des ewangelij, sehet und folget dem ersamen rate, irer lere des gemeinen gutis, das man uff dem rathaws heimlich und nicht uffm predigstuhl offenlichen sal handilen und vorweshen." For details see Peter Eschenloer, 329.

37 ČORNEJ – BARTLOVÁ, *Velké dějiny*, 175–176.

38 "Diser doctor meynete nicht andirs, denn als er zu Breslow die gemeine vorheczet, gehartet und dem rate ungehorsam gemacht hatte, also und in andiren steten durch die prediger auch gescheen würde, dorumme er dem legato sagete, die sachen obiral in steten den predigeren zu behelfen, dem folk zuuorkundigen." Cf. Peter Eschenloer, 520–524.

39 Peter Eschenloer, 568.

translation. Besides continuing to write his chronicle and rework it into German, he also translated a chronicle of the First Crusade by Robert of Rheims in the mid-1460s. The commissioning of this latter translation also bore a clear political message.⁴⁰

Nicolas Tempelfeld silenced all the conciliatory voices by escalating coercion. At the time of the open rupture between the Holy See and the King of Bohemia, the preacher persuaded the town to embark on a military expedition against the Silesian property of Poděbrady. The mob was fired up with fighting enthusiasm. Tempelfeld and other preachers promised the expedition both earthly and heavenly help; they claimed that every Christian warrior would overcome ten heretics and that the mercenaries could rely on the help of the angels in their struggle. The heresy would be eradicated by fire and by the sword, they thundered from the pulpits. The first military achievements were in line with these ideas.⁴¹ In the spring, however, the Wrocław army and its allies were defeated in their attempt to conquer Frankenstein (Ząbkowice Śląskie). A number of prominent burghers were captured, and the king's son and the town armoury fell into their hands. Such a catastrophic defeat could not be left unanswered. In Wrocław, an outraged mob besieged the town hall and demanded the punishment of those guilty for the catastrophic defeat, and Nicolas Tempelfeld and the Party of Preachers immediately lost their credence. The captain of the defeated expedition hid in his house. A reconciliation between the assembly and the council was ultimately mediated by papal legate Rudolf of Rudesheim. Two of the councillors responsible for preparing the campaign resigned their offices, and the council guaranteed that it would redeem all the prisoners from captivity at the town's expense. Nicholas Tempelfeld, who bore the overall responsibility for the launch of the campaign, resigned his prebend in the parish church of St Elisabeth and withdrew under the protection of the chapter to the episcopal enclave on Tumski island. The Party of Preachers ceased to function as a power base on the local political scene. Paradoxically, in spite of the town's long tradition of resistance to the bishop's power, the papal legate and soon-to-be-appointed Bishop of Wrocław, Rudolf of Rudesheim, gained considerable influence over the direction of the town's political decisions. However, Wrocław did not play a significant political role in the network of anti-Poděbrady allies he created.⁴²

Stage and actors

In those days, the councillors simply did not like going to the town hall, writes Peter Eschenloer in his chronicle, because they feared for their lives. The Wrocław guilds held their congregations in malthouses and in secluded parts of the town. The artisans met in armour. Every hour there were new gatherings of people who brought nothing good, save for the preachers' benefit. They publicly smeared the council and declared that they owed it no loyalty. Some town gates remained open overnight, and letters appeared in which the town council allegedly urged George of Poděbrady to seize the town. God knows, writes the chronicler, nothing could be further from the truth. It was just a pretext for evil people who wanted to profit from the riots by running to the preachers with every rumour and lie. Many believed these when they listened to their

40 More details in HONEMANN, *Lateinische und volkssprachliche*, 612–627.

41 Peter Eschenloer, 602.

42 More details in GOLIŃSKI, *Wrocław od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, 195–196.

preaching. The preachers' course of action added more fuel to the fire and interfered with reconciliation and unity.⁴³

The town scribe constructed the official memory of past events by depicting discord and chaos. The violation of the community's integrity, the violation of the obedience principle, was to be the cause of the grave difficulties that Wrocław encountered through its persistently anti-Hussite attitude. In this turbulent environment, the usual rules for the performance of the council's administrative functions and for its decision-making ceased to apply. Forced publication of all political treaties and agreements and demands for a public debate on urban policy also affected the running of the town office. This fact was of great concern to the town's chief scribe, who complained that the lower ranks were ruling over the higher ones and the town was heading for a catastrophe of the sort that had stricken Prague. Why, there were as many councillors in the town as there were drunkards, gamblers and scoundrels ruling and exercising power in the town, and what they wanted had to be given to them. And these self-appointed guardians of public affairs were praised from the pulpits and labelled as honest, honourable and ideal Christians.⁴⁴

As we have already said, Peter Eschenloer was a man of letters working in the service of the town council. He represented the type of official town chronicler loyal to the institution, regardless of its personnel composition. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that in his chronicle he places the town council at the head of the bourgeois community and defends its decisions. At the same time, his writings pay valuable testimony to the functioning of inner-city politics in late medieval Wrocław, although, of course, he was himself criticized for the disruption of order. Perhaps a more important feature of the chronicler's narrative is his frequent localization of events. Eschenloer was well aware of the relationship between power and space, and he repeatedly delegitimizes the acts of the council's adversaries in his work by pointing to the fact that they took place outside the habitual places, whereas he consistently associates the steps taken by the council with the town hall. The town hall is the place where political decision-making is supposed to take place. The parish court, to which Nicolas Tempelfeld invited his party members, is not. The councils' fears of going to the town hall (fearing the violence of the mob) and an assembly outside the town hall that was not called by the town's leadership are both presented by the chronicler as clear evidence of repeated order violations, as is the mere functioning of alternative assembly points. Eschenloer always describes their role in a pejorative context. The chronicler recalls the wise decision of Zikmund of Luxembourg, who abolished the guilds' right to bear arms and instead ordered that they be stored in the town hall. The same ruler, also in response to the 1418 riots, banned guild meetings as such. The armed artisans' assembly is depicted as a precursor to the revolt against the town council. The guilds are depicted here as groups ready to disturb the peace. The subjects of their discussions are letters from George of Poděbrady, whose acceptance and consideration should come within the councillors' competence. Besides malthouses, unauthorized meeting places are reported as unspecified town corners ("andiren vil enden in der stat"), and by this Eschenloer arbitrarily multiplies the effect associated with such actions. The guilds are stigmatized for the readers of the chronicle by their connection with a certain space. When the town is under threat, the town's assembly place is the central square, and

43 Peter Eschenloer, 256.

44 Peter Eschenloer, 250.

not the edge of town, away from the council's attention and against its will. In addition, Eschenloer very conveniently uses a reference to the former Sigismund privilege. The gathering of guilds thus becomes a rebellion against the generally understood royal power, not just against George of Poděbrady himself. At the same time, the chronicler manages to portray the guilds' disobedience to the town council as a rebellion against the decision of the king (Sigismund of Luxembourg), whose life was associated with the fight against the Hussites.⁴⁵

Peter Eschenloer uses an even greater variety of means to call the guilds' actions into question by setting the events in the Wrocław taverns. Here, too, there was bargaining against the council and hatching of political plans. The scribe reveals that the reader can count on associating particular crafts with specific taverns. Some guilds meet at set times, their leaders sit at tables, comport themselves as if sitting in the town hall, and dare to present their suggestions to the council.⁴⁶ In a tavern, it is easy to mark the loudest critics as drunkards, gamblers and rogues, and Eschenloer does not hesitate to do this. At the same time, it appears that the taverns were a media outlet that the town council used to publish its resolutions but failed to control. Scornful verses and chants were to be heard at the tables. Amongst the rapid spread of rumours and half-truths, and at a time of tense expectations, these communication devices gained ground and contributed to the spread of unrest. Again, this was the role played by the town's transient publics. As Wrocław stood against the king, this was such a strong element that the town's politics "were talked about in all the pubs", and rumours about the council abounded. Criticism levelled at the councillors was also heard in the Sweidnitzer cellar, where the town elite met.⁴⁷

When attempting to map Eschenloer's ideas about the relationship between power and space, one cannot miss another aspect. The pubs, malthouses and various town nooks are simultaneously depicted as a solid part of the guild microcosm. While the guilds are depicted in a dictum of disobedience, they are not a priori denied the right to participate in the running of the town. The chronicler does not see the guilds as the principal adversary; that role is taken by the Party of Preachers and the mob it controlled, or the populace ("gemeine folk"), as the chronicler most often calls it, separating it explicitly in several passages from the "community", which is a traditional political entity.⁴⁸ Eschenloer assigns the disobedient populace to a different space: usually he lets it demonstrate in the streets, but he does not often localize its manifestations within the urban topography. Given its close ties to the preachers, we can assume that the location was often one of the churches. When Bishop of Wrocław Peter II Nowak (1447–1456) decided to pledge allegiance to King Ladislaus the Posthumous in Prague, the preachers in Wrocław incited the populace against the clergy following the bishop's authority.⁴⁹ Tempelfeld and others proceeded in the same way when the king's envoys were to come to take an oath of loyalty on behalf of the king. On that

45 Peter Eschenloer, 246, 256, 524.

46 Peter Eschenloer, 256. For more details of the suppression of the guilds' power politics in the early 1420s see GOLIŃSKI, *Wrocław od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, 178–180.

47 Peter Eschenloer, 234, 532.

48 "Etliche ratlewe ...zu grossem vordechnis und ungunst des folkis und der gemeyne quomen." Compare Peter Eschenloer, 203.

49 "Glichwol die prediger ire weise triben und das einfeltig folk anhilden, nydert denn zu Bresslow zuhulden doruß wider die geistlichkeit, adir sie konden is wol von jn schiben." Cf. Peter Eschenloer, 172.

occasion the preachers also raised the people against a compromise that had already been agreed upon.⁵⁰ A third example is the royal envoys' journey to Wrocław during the reign of George of Poděbrady, when the preachers incited the mob to attack the houses where the envoys were staying.⁵¹

The mob remains in Eschenloer's chronicle a socially, professionally and spatially nonspecific unit. It is an entity located outside the usual power field. The scribe therefore avoids any connection between the mob and the councillors. The councillors negotiate with the municipality, not with the mob. The mob may consist of believers attending masses or of people in the streets and squares. However, the municipality has a much clearer definition in the political thinking of the Wrocław chronicler. He regards the municipality (in rare cases) as the whole town, but most often he refers to the Wrocław guilds.⁵² Among them, the leading position was held by the merchant guild, which Eschenloer sometimes refers to as a separate entity. Mateusz Goliński pointed this out, showing how the council invited representatives of the merchant guild and sometimes the trade guilds to participate in preparing internal standards governing urban conditions.⁵³ The pact against George of Poděbrady, which was concluded in June 1458, was thus petrified by the common will of the councillors, the sworn town court, the elders of the merchant guild and the guild masters ("wir ratmanne, scheppen und eldisten der kawffmann und alle geswornen der ganczen gemeyne").⁵⁴ In the town hall, the council met in session with the merchants and the council ("Die gemeine mit dem kawffmann was gesammelt und harreten").⁵⁵ A meeting in Lobin, where the princes of Lower Silesia met to discuss the further direction of the anti-Poděbrady pact, was attended by representatives of the council, the merchant guild and the municipality.⁵⁶ In other cases, Eschenloer did not think it necessary to precisely specify the individual components of the political spectrum, and he and his readers considered it sufficiently comprehensible when he wrote "rate und gemeynde". In addition to legal sources, the structure of the Wrocław power spectrum is evidenced by the chronicler's account of how the royal will was reported on the arrival of an envoy from Ladislaus the Posthumous calling for a campaign against the Turks. The town council read the contents of the letter in its meeting. Subsequently, the letter was read to the assembled community in the town hall, and the councillors asked the preachers to issue an appeal for the campaign from the pulpits. Apparently, this was a way of reaching out to the widest audience. This procedure was also used on other occasions. A papal epistle recognizing the legitimacy of the election of George of Poděbrady was read out to all abbots, prelates, orderly and secular priesthood, to the municipality, and also to the nobility of the Principality of Wrocław. The town scribes played a substantial role in this event, not only reading out the letters but also interpreting them simultaneously into the common tongue (as they did for speeches

50 Peter Eschenloer, 173.

51 Peter Eschenloer, 251.

52 Peter Eschenloer, 265.

53 GOLIŃSKI, *Wrocław od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, 176.

54 Peter Eschenloer, 233.

55 Peter Eschenloer, 266.

56 Peter Eschenloer, 234. Similarly, "Die von Breslow santen dohin czwene aws ratmannen, czwen aws scheppen, czwen aws koufmanne und czwen aws der gemeyne mit LXX pferden." Cf. Peter Eschenloer, 241.

by the Latin-speaking papal envoys), in this case into German. For this reason, they may have aroused suspicions of misinterpreting the texts.⁵⁷

For Peter Eschenloer, the space in which discussions between the town council and the municipality took place was the town hall. Even within its walls the different spaces within the building denoted different types of meetings with regard to the represented parties. In meetings with the community, the council met with those assembled in the hall. The council sessions were held in the council hall, and that is also where the councillors summoned the preachers to when they wanted to put an end to the campaign against George of Poděbrady. The meeting took place at a time when both the emperor and the pope recognized the validity of the election of the King of Bohemia. The preachers claimed that the pope's letter sent from Mantua was a forgery and therefore refused to respect the council's appeal, whose urgency was stressed by the choice of the town hall for the meeting. The council room in which the talks would take place predetermined the role of the parties: the councillors bore the delegated power and expected obedience from the counterparty in response, which the preachers refused to pledge as a result of their radical stance.⁵⁸

The weakening of the consistency of the community, which the chronicler associates with the weakening of the council's position, was also reflected in the loss of control over such an important area of the town administration as the town hall. When convening the municipality (and the merchant guild) the councillors could not be sure that the municipality gathered in the hall would not turn against them. In an attempt to convince Wrocław to accept George of Poděbrady's government, the council called on the burghers to gather in the hall. However, the appeal to negotiate the procedure in the talks with the king fell flat. It only led to indignation and the voicing of disagreement. The municipality was only calmed by merchant Antoni Horning, who stood up in the hall and delivered a three-hour speech. According to the chronicler, he made such bitter accusations and complaints about the council that Eschenloer feared that the council would be assaulted and assassinated. Horning, on behalf of the municipality, demanded the punishment of two "publicly known" supporters of reconciliation with the king and the re-composition of the council. He held that this was the only way to restore peace and harmony in the municipality. By this point, he was speaking his concluding words in the name of the municipality, having been authorized by the councillors. Two councillors who had been branded by the town's preachers as traitors to the town had already fled. Their seats on the council were taken by new burghers, one of whom was the same Antoni Horning, who agreed with the views of the preachers. The resulting change in the ratio of votes in the council intimidated the advocates of a compromise with the king and restored the peace between the council and the municipality. The disputes between the two entities then ceased for eight years.⁵⁹ In this first phase of the clashes over the political direction of Wrocław, the guilds (municipality) and the town council played the decisive roles. The preachers were agitated, but the chronicler does not interpret them as an independent power entity, despite the alleged statements by the papal envoys that politics should not be continued at the pulpit, but in the town hall. The municipality (guilds and merchants) and the council had negotiated in the hall. When Nicolas Tempelfeld wished to sour his relationship with the Calixtines,

57 Peter Eschenloer, 186, 248.

58 Peter Eschenloer, 259.

59 Peter Eschenloer, 266–268; GOLIŃSKI, *Wrocław od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, 193–195.

he turned to some of the councillors who were in sympathy with him. The preachers asked for protection from the community and the guilds, who also promised to defend themselves at the cost of their own lives.⁶⁰

After the papal rejection of the Compacts of Basel and the subsequent excommunication of George of Poděbrady in 1466, Wrocław's power spectrum was completely transformed. The municipality and the guilds did not play such a decisive role, but the Party of Preachers became much more prominent. Peter Eschenloer remarks that Nicolas Tempelfeld intimidated the burghers, who feared the preacher would incite the people against them, such that no one dared to protest against his intentions. The preacher of the town church was no longer dependent on the application of indirect influence, the formation and manipulation of occasional publics, but became an indispensable part of all major political negotiations. When the papal legate communicated with the town council and with the prelates, the opposite party was the preachers, represented by Tempelfeld.⁶¹ Part of the strengthening of the preachers' power was their constant ostracism of their real and imagined adversaries. Alongside the rumours of the Calixtine campaigns, finding an inner enemy was an important element in building Nicholas's charismatic dominion. The town scribe protested indignantly against the clergy, who in turn denounced him in sermons read in the parish church and in a temple belonging to the newly established Franciscan monastery as an ally of the Hussites. In consequence, his life was put in serious danger. At a meeting in the town hall he was even pointed to as a heretic. He then had to prove his loyalty to the community and to the true believers by participating in the campaign against the Calixtines.⁶²

Generally speaking, Nicolas Tempelfeld and his Party of Preachers managed to gain control through communication with the churches and to impose their interpretation of events on conversations conducted in the town's taverns and streets. Although they were only one of the parties in the town hall, they maintained their influence through Tempelfeld's personal performance and by enlisting support from the guilds, the merchant guild and the councillors. By that time, the Saint Elisabeth preacher was no longer dependent on manipulating the crowd, and managed to retain his followers across the social spectrum of late medieval Wrocław, enjoying the support of a loyal group of townspeople, including well-placed burgher wives.⁶³ This is reflected in Eschenloer's description of a failure in the traditional means used by the town administration. As early as the 1450s, the municipality enforced public debates on important political issues. The chronicler presents to the reader the implications of this demand: every decision made by the council was debated in the guild taverns and instantly leaked to the enemies of the town. This breached the principle of secrecy, which each of the town's officials and councillors had to pledge to uphold when taking office. Such a betrayal of secrecy meant a betrayal of the town's interests. Quite apart from being a punishable offence, sometimes carrying the death penalty, this was at least sufficient reason for the person involved to be excluded from the town's affairs.

60 Peter Eschenloer, 264.

61 Peter Eschenloer, 512.

62 Peter Eschenloer, 568.

63 When Nicolas Tempelfeld was active in Krakow as a preacher in the main church, he was part of a vision: a local burgher's wife, Veronica, saw him in her dream among a host of those chosen by God and patrons of the kingdom. When he left for Wrocław in 1453, she followed him. Cf. *Jana Długosza Roczniki*, 214–220.

However, violation of the confidentiality obligation was also part of a more widely perceived complex of behaviours known as disobedience, and the town council had to respond to demands for openness by communicating more frequently with the municipality outside the town hall.

Concluding remarks

The Wrocław scribe Peter Eschenloer wrote a chronicle that ranks among the earliest monuments of urban historiography in Central Europe. The main actor of the chronicle is not the ruling dynasty but the town itself, to which Eschenloer owes his loyalty. The main line of the chronicle follows the restoration of "order" after the turbulence caused by the "Party of Preachers" led by the town preacher Nicolas Tempelfeld, who promoted a more radical attitude of the town towards the Bohemian Hussites. For some time, the preachers managed to control the town council over the so-called public spaces of the town and through manipulation of the crowd to promote the rejection of a compromise with the Bohemian Hussites. This attitude increased after the election of George of Poděbrady as the Bohemian king in 1458. There were also several military clashes, which ended with the defeat of the town's units. Peter Eschenloer removes the blame for the defeat and forced payment of high compensation from the town council. He presents the town council as a moderate decision-making body that does not bear the blame for the collapse of the town's politics. To legitimize the decisions of the town council, Eschenloer skilfully uses the hierarchization of "spaces" in the town's built-up area. Susanne Rau and Gerd Schwerhoff in their introduction to the presented works write about the four basic types of urban public spaces "town hall", "square", "pub" and "church". Public spaces were characterized by multi-layered communication and also combined multiple functions (economic, religious, administrative, etc.). Inspection of these public spaces, or the political communication taking place there, was one of the important political and administrative tasks of the town councils. From a number of regulations in various towns (including in Wrocław), we know, for example, limitations on how many people can sit at one table in a pub, that there should be no uncontrolled gathering of guilds and so on. These regulations limited the possibilities of assembly and thus the creation of an internally linked opposition. But what does Peter Eschenloer write? In the pubs, there was open intrigue against the town council, insulting of it and public disclosure of information from the council's internal meetings. Groups of (not-full-fledged) residents of the town roamed the streets with impunity, threatening the council and conspiring to attack the town hall. Preachers came arbitrarily to the town hall and interfered with the proceedings. Town politics were publicly discussed in the churches. In his treatment of space, the chronicler also included non-public spaces, generally described as "corners of the town". Narratives of secret meetings of the conspirators were used by the scribe to delegitimize opponents of the town council. It turns out that the scribe skilfully handled the hierarchy of urban spaces, which was (apparently) well known to his contemporaries, and the very placement of a certain event in a specific space determined its (il)legitimacy.

In addition to this conscious work with space, Peter Eschenloer left a testimony that is also important for us with regard to the discussion regarding the "topography of the rebellion" mentioned at the beginning of this study. The scribe repeatedly mentions the connection between pubs and guilds, the street and the crowd, the town hall and the burghers, different corners of the city and craftsmen, etc. He shows the relationship between the social space and the actors and, above all, that the condition for the

creation of a broad social coalition necessary to start pressure on the town council was the need for changes in political communication in several public spaces at the same time. A significant tendency of the politics of the late medieval town councils was therefore the effort to extend control even in the non-public sphere, in houses, or in districts not subject to town law.⁶⁴

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⁶⁴ A range of examples of the deliberate extension of interventions by the town council to private spaces, including a summary of the current state of research, were recently presented by SULITKOVÁ, *Právní normy*, 146–198.

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