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Towards a way of Reading Scenic Space in Dramatic Texts of the Czech Middle Ages

This article attempts to examine various possibilities for interpreting the reflections of space that appear in medieval dramatic texts of Bohemian origin; it focuses on some texts of Easter ceremonies and plays of the *Visitatio sepulchri* type, as well as Easter Czech-Latin plays of the *Three Mary* type, *The Resurrection Play* from the Clementinum Codex and *The Play of Merry* [sic] *Magdalene*. My argument focuses primarily on considerations *of stage (or performance) space* as it appears in surviving dramatic texts and rubrics. However, when examining the ways in which such performance space is reflected in rubrics and in medieval Bohemian plays, just as when looking for clues that enable hypothetical reconstruction of the physical uses to which such stage space was put, references to *dramatic (or mimetic and diegetic) space* and the interconnection of both types of space cannot be overlooked.

1 Stage (Performance) Space *versus* Dramatic (Mimetic and Diegetic) Space
Before approaching the actual 'decoding' of space using dramatic texts and rubrics, it is necessary to comment at least briefly on two of the relevant categories of theatre and performance space from a terminological point of view (following

Patrice Pavis and Michael Issacharoff's terminology and semiotic-oriented notions of space); and, at the same time, to suggest their main characteristics in relation to medieval drama and theatre:

One of the distinctive features of theatre (dramatic presentation) is the fact that it requires a particular physical space for its realisation. This space is usually called the *theatre space*. As Patrice Pavis states, this is: 'the space occupied by the audience and actors in the course of a performance' (PAVIS 1998: 344). In the context of medieval Czech theatre, this formulation of space can be represented for example by a church, or the area in front of the church, a market square, a meadow etc. (see KONIGSON 1975 for an extensive discussion of space). The *theatre space* therefore includes the so-called *stage space*, which Pavis defines as 'the actual space on stage in which the actors move, whether they confine themselves to the stage area *per se* or mix with the audience' (PAVIS 1998: 344). The implied notion of a normalising 'stage area *per se*' (and of a barrier – albeit an invisible one – between actors and audiences that is most of the time not crossed) is, however, rather misleading in the case of medieval theatre because, in the majority of cases, medieval liturgical (and even non-liturgical) plays did not dispose of a fixed stage that was concretely delineated so that it could be set aside from any space anticipated for the audience. On the contrary, the 'border' between stage and acting space was extremely flexible and permeable due to the frequent interaction of actors and spectators (see footnote 27). Another assertion made by Pavis in his definitions of space, however, is that *stage space* is delineated by the movements of actors (be they on stage or among spectators) and that such space is, for audiences, defined *through performance*; it is: 'given to us here and now *in the performance by the actors and their movements*' (PAVIS 1998: 360; emphasis mine). Such a conception seems to be much more appropriate from the perspective of medieval theatre.

It is logical that verbal reflections relating to any particular stage space in dramatic scripts, or in directorial or production notes, can only capture its basic characteristics, such as the allocation of individual scenic places (sites), or occasional suggestions of set design, decoration, stage properties and so on. Reconstruction of stage space based on a text (either dramatic or documentary) cannot therefore be exact or complete without some form of accompanying visual documentation – and even then such exercises are problematic. The situation with regards to medieval theatre is understandably even more complicated because we almost never know the exact original shape of the particular location in which a given play was performed (because a church, a monastery or a market place may no longer be extant, or we may know nothing of its original layout; see below and footnote 3). Moreover, the rubrics written down to accompany medieval drama vary greatly in their levels of

precision and detail; sometimes they comment on many particular components, at other times they describe only a very few of them. The reconstruction of medieval stage space is therefore in many cases virtually impossible. Even when a detailed description of stage space is available, when reconstructing the form and the space of performances of medieval plays, numerous obscurities and contradictory assertions frequently appear.[1]

Any information of a 'technical' kind in rubrics (i.e. evidence relating to the nature and dimensions of the physical space and to its components) can be considered as a set of precise references to the stage space. Such information can take the form of a concretisation of a particular part of the theatre space (in the case of a church environment this might be, for example: the altar, a chapel, a door of the church, some stairs etc.) and a description of the connection that this space might have with places of action, the entrances and exits of characters, and with any particular represented location. Such technical description further involves various references to parts of what one might call the 'set design' (for example to the particular arrangement of a stage site), or to the stage properties used in it (such as bread, clothing, liniment etc.). Latin expressions such as '*locus*' or '*sedes*' can also be considered general suggestions of individual sites, or places within the stage space or playing area. However, such expressions taken alone nearly always convey minimal meaning (in fact, they only point out the given site in the space or the starting position of the characters; see below). They must accordingly be approached through interpretative juxtaposition against a wider corpus of evidence, including play-texts, other rubrics, and an understanding of the spatial imaginary of the medieval mind, particularly in a theological context.

Unlike the particular nature of stage space and theatre space, dramatic space has, according to Pavis, an abstract quality: the spectator (who might subsequently be a reader of the play-text) creates it on their own, in the imagination (PAVIS 1998: 117). This mind's-eye fiction is based on speech, the actions of characters, spatio-temporal data held within dialogue, and stage directions. It is thus a 'space' of one's own private imagining. As Pavis puts it: 'No staging need occur for this projection of the dramatic space to take place – a reading of the text suffices to give the reader a *spatial* image of the dramatic world' (PAVIS 1998: 118). Pavis, however, adds that this space only becomes visible and actual when the staging represents some of the spatial relations implied in the text.

1   Cf. VELTRUSKÁ 2006: 102-103. Veltruská discusses several examples of obscurities and interpretative discrepancies in terms of the stage (performance) area in plays with otherwise very detailed rubrics, for example the well-known twelfth-century *Le Jeu d'Adam*.

As a result of these ambiguities and contradictions, Michael Issacharoff perceives 'space' in drama as the least recordable, most ephemeral of entities; a space that can only be interpreted on the basis that a dramatic text (a script) prefigures the performance itself: for Issacharoff, therefore, it is firstly language that creates space in the theatre, or 'at least any space in a play that is *functional*' (ISSACHAROFF 1981: 215).[2] Issacharoff also distinguishes two types of dramatic space in a play: mimetic space and diegetic space. Whilst mimetic space is a space that is always represented (it is epitomised on stage because it is suggested by both stage directions and the discourse of the characters), diegetic space is *described*. It is space that characters refer to in their discourse but which is never actually represented on stage (the latter is typical in Classical Greek drama, for instance, in which events and locations that do not appear on stage are represented through mythological accounts, or in messenger speeches). In the context of medieval dramatic texts of liturgical origin (and their rubrics), mimetic space is considered predominantly; action most often happens in concrete physicalised locations, rather than being talked about as having transpired elsewhere (JONES 1988; cf. KONIGSON 1975: 290). Similarly to Pavis, Issacharoff considers stage space to be an actualisation of dramatic space, or of one type of dramatic space only: the mimetic. Both theorists also agree that the two spaces (mimetic type dramatic space and stage space) are interconnected. Pavis's statement that: '[a] given dramatic text requires a stage space that will serve it and enable it to exhibit its specificity' (PAVIS 1998: 118) can thus be applied to the medieval dramatic texts of liturgical origin that lie at the centre of my present study.

Much like time, dramatic space in plays of this sort is at first sight very changeable: it is derived from particular, often quickly changing biblical locations with which a medieval audience of the faithful were closely familiar (locations such as the Holy Sepulchre, Heaven, Hell, a Prince's Palace and so on). If knowledge relating to such places was not derived directly from the Bible, then it could come from sermons, liturgical chants and other aspects of church services; moreover, such locations always followed on logically from the action of the represented story and so they could be easily imagined in the context of performance. Due to the meticulousness nature of its presentation, and the frequent changes of dramatic location and stage

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2   According to Issacharoff, there are two forms of this language: auditory and non-auditory forms. The auditory form is created by the discourse of characters with references to the visible and references to what is not visible, e.g. space described but not shown on stage. The non-auditory form is represented by stage directions, a certain meta-discourse of the text whose main task is to refer exclusively to what is visible on stage.

space that were required by medieval drama, locations with common anachronisms in time were organised into groups of particular scenes and were located both physically adjacent to and temporally concurrent with one another within the non-illusive simultaneous scenic arrangement of the so-called mansion stage type. A quickly alternating, dynamic dramatic space therefore presumably best suited this type of non-illusive mansion stage, whose origins can be traced back to the Easter ceremonies and liturgical dramas of the earliest *Visitatio sepulchri* type.

2 Reflection of Stage Space in Medieval Rubrics

Let us now consider ways in which stage space is presented in the rubrics of selected medieval dramatic texts of Bohemian origin. As a preface, let me briefly remind readers that the interpretation or reconstruction of stage space is, in the case of medieval liturgical (and non-liturgical) theatre, in almost all cases completely dependent on preserved dramatic texts and their rubrics. This fact is caused by the non-existence of stage plans and limited knowledge of the original form of many churches, monasteries or other types of religious or non-religious theatre spaces in which medieval plays were performed – as well as by a lack of period documents relating to staging and performance practices.[3] Consequently, the form of the stage space, its layout, and any reconstructed performance information needs to be uncovered (as best it can be) on just the basis of medieval dramatic texts and their rubrics.

Fortunately, the process of 'decoding' production space as it is recorded in the rubrics of medieval plays of liturgical origin is simpler than can be considered the case with dramatic scripts or certain other recordings (often incomplete) of stage realisation. Medieval dramatic texts were from their beginnings undoubtedly exclusively accessible to spectators through performance (i.e. through their repeated staging). Accordingly, they did not come into existence primarily as literary texts designated for reading, or as documentary texts designed for the transmission

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3   In many cases, the actual church, shrine or monastery where the given play was staged is unknown. The sources preserving the play do not have to contain a single indication of the actual monastery, church or other place of the performance. That is, unfortunately, the case with most Easter plays of Bohemian origin, for example the Czech-Latin plays of the *Three Mary* type, some texts of the *Visitatio sepulchri* type, *The Resurrection Play* from the Clementinum Codex (*Ludus de resurrectione Domini*) and others. However, even in the case of texts staged in a particular church or monastery, a form of the original architectonic space different to that which survives today needs always to be considered. In the case of some texts, such as *Mastičkář* (The Apothecary) or *The Play of Merry* [sic] *Magdalene*, even the type of theatre space is unknown. See also footnote 6.

of information relating to performance; rather they were performed in front of a preponderantly non-literate audience in a particular space and time, now long gone.[4] Rubrics, on the other hand, exist as supplementary materials that were written precisely in order to aid in the on-going practicalities of staging particular dramas. They give details relating to the location and nature of specific elements of the performance and they constitute a set of instructions, or practical 'blueprints' for the staging of subsequent productions of the theatrical event in question. Consequently, the texts that best record the dramatic presentation of medieval drama, and above all its performance and use of space, are rubrics.

Although the status or function of medieval rubrics is by no means given or strictly demarcated, in the case of liturgical drama, most of them seem to be of non-literary origin and of practical, directorial purpose. Rubrics can specify – although not even remotely fully – individual components of a performance taking place in a particular named space. They can in this sense be compared to directorial or production notes. However, as is the case with other components (for example the action and movement of characters, their gestures and so on), rubrics are not usually exact or consistent in evoking the form of the stage space, nor the allocation of the activities it contained, nor even the exits and entrances of its characters. Rubrics in many texts do not record at all the physical actions of characters, or they only very briefly mention certain key positions, such as entrances and exits for selected characters, while the location of others is entirely omitted. Sometimes a minimum number of references to the production itself, or to the stage space, are recorded. Such observations can occasionally be limited to the significance of a speaker before his utterance, and, in extreme cases, they are missing entirely.[5] In such cases of textual silence, we need also to consider other rubrics relating to dramatic texts originating from the same source base (see, for example, the group of the *Visitatio sepulchri* plays of St George Monastery in Prague) or from related types or lines of plays (for example related texts from the tradition of Czech-Latin *Three Mary* plays).

Rubrics of Bohemian dramatic sources that discuss stage space, usually refer exclusively to the placement and positioning of characters within the sacred

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4   Similarly, various forms of medieval literature, such as biographies of the Saints, heroic and chivalric epic and court lyric, were primarily mediated to the audience through singing or recitation. Cf. JONES 1988: 102.
5   See, for example, a single-episode ceremony of St George Monastery from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century including only the Marys' visit to the sepulchre (*Národní knihovna Praha*, XIII C 7, vyd). MÁCHAL 1906: 14-15.

church space. It is logical that the environment of a shrine, church or monastery represented a dominant space, a space in which liturgical or para-liturgical plays were performed. This type of theatre space clearly follows the rubrics of Latin Easter ceremonies and plays of the *Visitatio sepulchri* type, as well as most other Easter plays (such as Czech-Latin *Three Mary* plays, and *The Resurrection Play* from the Clementinum Codex).[6]

3 Latin Easter Dramatic Ceremonies and Plays of the *Visitatio Sepulchri* Type

Let us now consider Easter texts of the *Visitatio sepulchri* (Visit to the Sepulchre) type, whose rubrics provide a number of scenic references to the sacred space in question. Such stage spaces are usually formed by individual architectonic elements of a particular shrine or church, such as the altar as a central point of stage action in most Easter plays (the representation of the Holy Sepulchre is nearly always assumed to be placed directly on this feature of church architecture, or nearby), or the chapel, side altars, stairs, the sacrarium etc. The most frequently mentioned place of action for most characters in rubrics of Easter texts of the *Visitatio sepulchri* type is logically the Sepulchre, the place of Jesus's Resurrection. This central dramatic location is surrounded by the stage action of almost all characters in Easter ceremonies and plays.[7] Rubrics in sources of Bohemian provenance usually refer to this place as *sepulchrum* (the tomb) without specifying where exactly it is. This fact could be related to the stable position of the Sepulchre during Easter ceremonies and plays taking place in the shrine space (for example on the main altar).[8] The Sepulchre, however, did not have to occupy one single and defined location in each and every sacred space in which an Easter play was performed. The *sepulchrum*

6   On the contrary, rubrics in some plays such as the old Czech *Mastičkář* (The Apothecary) or *The Play of Merry* [sic] *Magdalene* do not provide a single indication leading to the sacred space. With regards to their more profane subject matter, another, non-sacred type of space can be considered (for example in case of *The Apothecary*, a market place). Cf. VELTRUSKÁ 2006: 106-107.

7   Not only the rubrics, but also the text itself imply that the sepulchre is represented by a stable position created by the Angel and Mary performing together in the introductory scene (in simple versions of the *Visitatio sepulchri* it is the only one). The Sepulchre also represents the principal and often the only position for most of the characters whose roles in the play are connected to this place. The characters of the Apostles Peter and John run to the Sepulchre to take the holy garment and show it to the others as direct proof of Christ's Resurrection. There are soldiers guarding the place on Pilate's command. The Sepulchre is also the central place for the scene when Christ meets Mary Magdalene.

8   In the context of the church (not in the dramatic one), the altar moreover often symbolised Christ's Sepulchre.

could hold different positions (and various forms) according to the layout of any given shrine space[9] – including any stable architectonic element of the church (in the form of a niche, or an individual unchanging construction symbolising the Holy Sepulchre). This place was sometimes called the *monumentum,* a performance space entered by the characters of the Marys and of the Apostles during the play (VELTRUSKÁ 2006: 113).[10]

Within Czech sources one only finds a single text – the *Visitatio sepulchri* play of St George Monastery in an edition by Abbess Kunhuta[11] (also including a quack doctor scene) – whose rubrics comment on the scenic form of the *sepulchrum* in greater detail. According to these rubrics, upon introduction of the chant of the Apostles '*Cernitis, o socii*' (Look, O Companions): '*duo presbyteri accipientes lintheum vadunt in medium ecclesie ante sepulchrum ferreum stantes*' (two presbyters take the gravecloth and walk to the centre of the church, standing in front of an iron Sepulchre). This comment leads one to presume that the Sepulchre could have been in this case represented by an iron container, such as a repository or a chest (located either on the altar or nearby), which vessel could presumably have been opened – as is suggested by a rubric appearing earlier in the document, featuring the chant of the angel '*Venite et videte locum*' (Come and See the Place), who asks the Marys to look into the empty Sepulchre and opens it so that they may do so: '*item angelus aperto sepulchro*' (then the angel opens the Sepulchre).

Let us consider at least partial reflection of the stage space and movement of the characters in this space as it is recorded in rubrics similar to the *Visitatio sepulchri* play of St George Monastery, coming from elsewhere in the collation of texts edited

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9   Cf. OGDEN 2002: 39, who mentions the following forms of the Sepulchre: it could be a vessel covered with a piece of cloth placed on the main altar, or the altar itself covered by curtains. A chest or a box also sometimes symbolised the Sepulchre. Sometimes, a special temporary construction was built, or the Sepulchre was situated in the shrine of a chapel, or in the crypt of a Saint etc. On possible forms of the Holy Sepulchre in Czech churches, see also Petr Uličný's article in this volume.

10   Veltruská also suggests that the term *monumentum* could sometimes signify a construction with the Holy Sepulchre (of the Jerusalem rotunda *Anastasis* type). This term is used in rubrics of the so-called *Extended Play of the Three Marys*. First, this place is defined as '*locus Monumenti*' (the place of the Sepulchre). Later, it is mentioned in rubrics before the Apostles scene: Peter and John, according to the rubrics, walk to the Sepulchre and take the cloth away: '*illi ad monumentum gradiuntur et accipientes lintiamina canunt*' (they walk to the Sepulchre singing and take the liniments away). It apparently was not an individual construction in the church, because the characters do not walk directly into the Sepulchre.

11   *Národní knihovna Praha*, VII G 16, f. 95b-101b, edited by PLOCEK 1989: 811-822.

by Abbess Kunhuta.[12] The play is presumably opened by a procession led out of the monastery by the abbess, followed by the actor playing Mary Magdalene, the actors playing the remaining two Marys, as well as members of the choir of elders.[13] Mary Magdalene, walking to the Sepulchre, leaves this procession as the antiphon '*Dum transisset sabatum*' (When the Sabbath was past) is sung. On their way to the Sepulchre, the women stop at the sales place of a quack Apothecary, who provides them with the liniment they will require to tend to Christ's body. Unlike the version cited above, in which the Apothecary speaks out, in this play, he stays '*persona muta*' (a silent person), who merely passes the liniment to the Marys. In both versions, his physical presence is only suggested without any particular localisation in space. One may presume, however, that this was a pre-designated, neutral *locus* (place) near the Sepulchre (such as, for example, by the side altar), because after taking the liniments from the Apothecary, the Marys step nearer the Sepulchre, because the rubric informs us: '[…] *quibus acceptis accedant ad sepulchrum*' ([…] which having taken, they approach the Sepulchre). The Sepulchre itself is not actualised in the play; it is accordingly possible that it took the form of an iron container (possibly a chest), as is suggested by the above-mentioned rubric from a related version of the performance.

This scene is followed by another in which the Marys 'stand in front of the Sepulchre' (*stantes ante sepulchrum*) and engage in vocal dialogue with the angels. The place of the Marys' entrances and exits is perhaps another, apparently pre-designated, stage point placed within the playing area. Mary Magdalene, who meets Christ[14] in the following scene, presumably entered from the same (again unspecified) place (*locus*). The place of Jesus's entrance is not specified either: the rubric only suggests that 'after looking into the Sepulchre, [Mary] turns to see Jesus' (*inspecto sepulchrum convertat se ad Ihesum*), which character had most likely been standing behind her. It is possible that the actor playing Christ came out of the space of the side chapel or the vestry, as is implied by rubrics of another Czech-Latin *Three Mary* play that uses expressions such as '*de capella*' (from the chapel) and '*ad capellam*' (to the chapel): for instance, according to the rubric to the *Third Play of the Three Marys*, after his revelation to Mary, 'Jesus goes to the chapel'

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12 *Národní knihovna Praha*, VI G 3b, fol. 83. Edited by MÁCHAL 1906: 21-22.
13 *Domina abbatissa precedet, Maria Magdalena sequitur eam, tres Marie sequeuntur eam cum senioribus* (the Lady Abbess proceeds, Mary Magdalene follows her, the three Marys follow [the Abbess], accompanied by the elders).
14 '*Maria Magdalena procedente de loco*' (Mary Magdalene proceeds out of the place).

(*Jesus vadit ad capellam*), singing '*Ascendo ad patrem*' (I Ascend to the Father).[15] References to the chapel as a place of exits and entrances of this sort for characters can be found for example in the so-called *Extended Play of the Three Marys* (see below). Another possible place that the character of Jesus and others could have used for exits is the space behind the altar. According to rubrics in the *First Play of the Three Marys*, Mary Magdalene sends the other Marys away and the women leave towards the altar singing the antiphon '*Ad monumentum venimus*' (We Came to the Tomb). The rubric here states: '*prima et secunda persona transeant sucessive retro altare cantantes ant*' (the first and second person pass sucessively behind the altar, singing the Ant[iphon]).[16] Conflation between the mimetic 'Sepulchre' and the real 'altar' is accordingly clear in this instance.

After the scene of Christ's revelation to Mary, the action moves towards the final apostolic scene. The rubrics here are unfortunately silent again about the location from which the Apostles enter; but it is clear that they move towards the Sepulchre, in which place some of their number take the Holy Shroud and show it to the other Apostles (as well as the congregated audience) as a proof of Christ's Resurrection: according to the rubric, they carry the shroud to a 'platform' (*ad gradum*). This was apparently a step by the altar. Analysis of the supplementary text relating to the above-mentioned play shows that rubrics do not by any means comment on all stage positions, or every component of the stage space. In particular, the places of entrances and exits must frequently be deduced on the basis of rubrics from other, preferably related, *Visitatio sepulchri* texts, or from the bilingual *Three Mary* plays mentioned above. This 'inconsistency' between rubrics can doubtless be related to the fixed conventions and stage practices that were employed in staging repeated events in a particular place: because it is logical that it was unnecessary to record and specify each and every stage position used, and especially not the pre-determined nodal centres of certain scenes (such as the precise position of Christ's Sepulchre and so on; see above). This is most probably why rubrics refer to the Sepulchre

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15   Even in the introduction to *The Third Play of the Three Marys* from the Clementinum Codex (ed. MÁCHAL 1908: 149-175), the characters of the Marys walk out of the chapel while the response is sung ([…] *persone egrediuntur de capella et canunt versum ultimum responsorii*) and continue towards the Sepulchre (*procedunt versus sepulchrum*). Jesus's entrance (or his revelation) to Mary or later to the Apostles is not specified but it was probably again to the chapel that Jesus later returns.

16   *The First Play of the Three Marys* was published by MÁCHAL 1908: 98-105. The space behind the altar could also be used for entrances by the character of Jesus in the scene of the revelation to Mary Magdalene in the same play and Jesus could also return here when he was going to his Heavenly Father's Kingdom.

only by means of the expression '*sepulchrum*' or '*monumentum*'. In doing this, they refer to the mimetic space without actualising it within the stage space simply because everyone involved in the production knew exactly the location of such key performance environments. Moreover, the rubrics tell us only slightly more about the movements of characters in the stage space – information that must accordingly be verified by the story itself, where evidence can be based on deictic utterances within dramatic speeches, or similar indications in characters' chants.

In the context of Easter texts of the *Visitatio sepulchri* type (all of which are closely associated with Church-calendarial ceremony and liturgy), one should not omit rubrics that specify movements or the turning of characters towards the eastern (sacred) and western (profane) part of church space. These instructions originate in the architectonic conception of the medieval church (shrine) within which the prime axis of the building was laid out along an East-West alignment, with the main body of the church oriented towards the East (the altar) and the West (the entrance to the church) (cf. OGDEN 2002: 25-26). References in rubrics to performances in which the orientation of characters towards eastern and western parts of the church space accordingly carry significant religious symbolism. At the same time, they show a clear relation between religious drama and liturgical ceremony. One may consider such interventions as references to two kinds of symbolic space; the action of liturgical (one might term it geo- and theo-architecturally 'eastern') drama takes place in between these two locations: it is thus poised between a sacred, divine space and a profane, human space.

Evidence of such geographical and theological awareness of divine space can be found in a number of rubrics. One such example comes in the profoundly liturgical ceremony of St Vitus. Here, during the most sacred moments of the action (such as that in which Christ's Resurrection is announced)[17] the rubrics instruct characters

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17   Rubrics of the Easter ceremony from St Vitus Cathedral (*Národní knihovna Praha*, XV A 10, edited by MÁCHAL 1980: 12-13), assign the gesture of turning to the East when announcing the Resurrection to more characters. After the Angel tells the Marys that Christ had been resurrected, the Marys, according to the rubrics, turn to the choir and tell everyone about their meeting with the Angel at the Holy Sepulchre (*tunc vice mulieres reverse ad chorum versis vultibus ad orientem cantant*). The apostles Peter and John are supposed to stand towards the East after approaching the choir from the sepulchre and showing the cloth from the Holy Sepulchre while singing '*Cernitis, o socii*': '*duo de fratribus* […] *vadunt ad sepulchrum et acceptis duobus lintheaminibus reversi ad chorum stantes ad orientem cantant* […]' (two of the Apostles go to the grave, and having both taken hold of the gravecloths they return to the choir, singing and facing towards the East). The end of the ceremony itself is also highly ceremonial in character. After the cloth had been put on the altar: '*prelatus portans cereum progreditur in medium chori versoque*

to turn their faces to the East. Accordingly, the actors face the 'divine' side of the church – towards the altar with the representation of the Holy Sepulchre – which was usually situated nearby.[18] On the other hand, the introductory rubric of the same ceremony assigns the choir to turn – after the conclusion of the introductory response – to the western, thus the 'human' or profane, side, towards the sitting audience.[19] Although direct references of this sort do not occur in most Easter ceremonies or Easter plays of Bohemian origin, one may assume that the scenic symbolism of eastern and western sides of any church was alive and that it was codified by ceremonial principle that extended to the stage conventions relevant to staging most of the liturgical plays that took place inside church spaces.

4 Other Dramatic Sources of Bohemian Origin

Unlike the rubrics in Easter texts of the *Visitatio sepulchri* type (which relate most characters' actions to a central site, the Holy Sepulchre, and to possible points in its surroundings – such as the Apothecary's shop), the rubrics of more developed Easter plays (such as, in the Czech-Latin tradition of *Three Mary* plays and *The Resurrection Play*) extend the original story of the *Visitatio sepulchri* play to include other scenes. With these additional elements, they record new locations of other sites utilised in the wider stage space. The specification of such spaces is, however, usually limited to the expression '*locus*' (place). One accordingly finds numerous references to unspecified *loci* mentioned in relation to characters' actions undertaken in steady, pre-designated[20] or prepared positions within the playing

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vultu ad orientem cum trina genuflexione cantet' (the prelate proceeds with a candle in his hands to the centre of the sacrarium and, with his face turned to the East – towards the middle of the choir – he genuflects three times and sings out [that Christ had been resurrected]).

18   On various forms of the Holy Sepulchre and its placement in the church space, see footnote 10. On the probable location of the Holy Sepulchre and the original altar in St Vitus Cathedral, see Petr Uličný's article in this volume.

19   Cf. the rubrics: *ibique responsorio* […] *finito, choro ad occidentem verso* (at which point, the response being finished, the Choir turn to the West). The door in the western portal as the main entrance to the church logically served in liturgical plays as the beginning of the procession headed towards the main altar. As OGDEN 2002: 98 states, this is the place where the Apothecary episode could be situated as in the Easter Play from Tours, the beginning of the pilgrimage in the texts.

20   Compare the rubrics '*Deinde Pilatus procedat cum militibus* […] *usque ad locum deputatum*' (Then let Pilate come forward with soldiers […] to the designated place) from *The Resurrection Play* from the Clementinum Codex, published in Máchal, 1908: 186-215. Jesus and the Angel (after the scene of Jesus's revelation to the soldiers) guarding the Sepulchre are also supposed

area. In the context of simultaneous, non-illusionistic medieval staging, these pre-designated (and apparently pre-arranged) spaces were located close to one another, and they probably stayed as a focal point for the audience throughout the play.

The expression '*locus*' can appear in connection either with the position of a particular character or group, or with a given location of action in the stage space. Let us take as an example the so-called *Extended Play of the Three Marys* from the Clementinum Codex. Here, the introductory rubric requires the Apostles to walk out of the chapel 'to the pre-arranged place' (*ad locum paratum*).[21] This 'place' is several scenes later suggested as the '*locus apostolorum*' (the place of the Apostles). A separate site represents the place in which the Marys meet the Apothecary, on their way to the Sepulchre. This second place is then again suggested in the following rubric: '*cum in loco fuerint, unus barbaratus fulcitus ad morem medici cuiusdam venit dicens in obviam* […]' (when [the Marys] have arrived, a bearded man, dressed as an Apothecary shall welcome them saying…). According to the next rubric, the Marys leave the Apothecary's site (his ownership of that space has been implied by his act of welcome) in order to move 'towards the place of the Tomb' (*ad locum Monumenti*), where their dialogue with the Angel takes place (see footnote 10). After the scene of Christ's revelation to Mary Magdalene, the Apostles come to Mary in order to question her regarding what she had seen at the Sepulchre. Mary then 'returns to the chapel' (*in capellam revertitur*), which in this play (and also the *Third Play of the Three Marys*) represents a point of entrance and an exit for probably all of the characters in the drama.[22] The apostles Peter and John, according to the next rubric, walk towards the Sepulchre, which they leave with Christ's robe, singing '*Cernitis, o socii*' (Look, O Companions) and moving 'towards the place where the other Apostles [are standing]' (*ad locum appostolorum* [sic]). Here the grammatical imperative and vocative of the chant 'Look, O Companions' reveals the necessary presence of further Apostles, who must logically be waiting for news in this subsequent location (indicated by movement *towards* it).

Although it is unspecified in the rubric, there is also a completely new setting in the

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to stand in 'a designated place' (*Iesus cum angelo in aliquo loco deputato*). See also the next footnote.

21   '*apostoli* […] *ad locum paratum venientes*' in *The Extended Play of the Three Marys*, published by MÁCHAL 1908: 175-186.

22   In the introduction to the play, after the Speaker's performance, first eleven Apostles come out of the chapel during the chants of the response (*primum XI Apostoli canentes* […] *de capella exeunt*). The Apostles return to the chapel, according to the rubric, during the play – cf. the rubric after the apostle Andrew's scene '*et in capellam it*' (he walks to the chapel). Here the chapel is again the place for which Jesus departs, at the conclusion of the scene of revelation to Mary.

play within a newly included scene: *Peregrinus* (The Pilgrim) – a scene that relates the story of Christ's appearance to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. The dialogue of the disciples in this scene evokes the characters' movement and their direction on stage towards a certain point that is mentioned in the commentary only through the directional reference: '*in Emmaus*' (*into* Emmaus). The travels of the disciples end, according to the subsequent rubric, in an inn: '*vadunt ad diversorium*' (they go towards a tavern); where, during supper, they recognise Christ as their fellow Pilgrim. The reference to two dramatic spaces in the rubrics: (i) the town of Emmaus and (ii) one of its taverns, as well as the scenic location in which at least one section of *Peregrinus* takes place and the implication of movement towards it, suggests the existence of such a physical site in the overall stage space. It is therefore highly likely that this was a discrete space that was entered by actors. Based on other rubrics, for instance mentioning bread as a necessary stage property and also based on the dialogue of the scene itself, we may additionally assume that this site was suggested scenographically by a table (or its representation in the form of a more simple board), at which the disciples sit to break bread with Christ the Pilgrim – as is evidenced by the rubrics: '*tunc exponunt panes*' (here he lays out the bread) and '*postquam refregit panem*' (then he breaks the bread). A similar evocation of stage space of this sort can moreover be found in rubrics of different texts of the *Peregrinus* type.[23]

Similar references to dramatic (or more precisely to mimetic) space without explicit reference to the method of stage actualisation can also be found in the rubrics of other dramatic texts of Bohemian provenance. For comparison, one may use yet another example: the introductory part of the Czech-Latin play (from the Clementinum Codex) is set in Hell, where devils take sinful human souls at Lucifer's command. This place is in the rubric called *infernum* (Hell). Its form, however, is not further specified; only the rubric in the final scene, usually called '*Descensus Christi ad Inferos*' (the Descent of Christ into Hell), refers to its probable stage disposition in the church space. According to the introductory rubrics, Jesus and the Angel head towards Hell singing '*Cum rex glorie* [*Christus infernum debellaturus intraret*]' (When [Christ] the King of Glory Entered Hell, Ready for the Fight). Subsequently, according to the rubric *Angelus cantens, tangens ad hostias*, the Angel shall 'touch the gates' (he possibly knocks on them, or forces them open, and enters) singing the chant '*Tollite portas, principes, vestras*' (Remove, O princes, your gates). The gates of Hell and their forcing are not only

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23   See, for example, the rubric from the play *Peregrinus* from the Cathedral in Rouen (published in YOUNG 1962: 461-462), suggesting that everyone 'sat down at the prepared table' (*ad mensam ibi paratam sederint*).

mentioned in the Angel's chant in Latin; it also appears in its Czech paraphrase at lines 821-824: '*Otevřte se pekelná vrata*' (Open up, infernal gates), a phrase that is subsequently pronounced by Jesus. It also appears in the utterances of Satan and his helper Beelzebub (at l. 837-845), who both get upset over the fact that somebody is knocking on their gate. According to later rubrics, Jesus 'opens [the gates of] Hell' (*apperiat infernum*). Such rubrics and the dialogue of characters relating to the action they describe thus suggest that the scene involved a door in the church space symbolising the infernal gates (which could have been the door to the chapel, or the church door, or a representation of a door temporarily located somewhere in the space especially for this dramatic purpose). After all, a similar stage disposition of this location has been identified in medieval drama as early as in the oldest surviving liturgical ceremonies representing the scene of Jesus Christ descending into Hell within the ceremony for sanctification of a church,[24] and in numerous Palm Sunday processions.[25]

On the other hand, in the Czech *Play of Merry* [sic] *Magdalene* neither the rubrics nor the dialogue of the characters itself suggest any form of 'Hell'[26] to which Lucifer is thrown from Heaven and in which his devilish helpers take sinful human souls. Not only Hell but also two other locations – Heaven (in the introduction) and the quotidian world of the sinners and of Mary Magdalene – are not mentioned in the rubrics (in the sense of mimetic space); they are, however, implied in the dialogues of characters. However, reconstruction of the stage space of this play is practically impossible. Except for three liturgical chants (that possibly function as a certain mocking antipode to the salacious songs of Mary Magdalene; cf. Kolár 1992: 45), the text does not involve a single suggestion of the church environment. Moreover, there are no references to stage space or any of its components. The scene of the sinful souls only suggests that devils choose souls from among the audience (lines 40-45). A certain interaction with spectators is thus implied, which is a rather frequent phenomenon among bilingual and vernacular plays of liturgical origin.[27] Following the three types of mimetic space created (i.e. the three imagined

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24   See, for example, the well-known ceremony of church sanctification executed by Bishop Amalarios. For the text, see YOUNG 1962: 103-104 and BEVINGTON 1975: 12-13 (with English translation).

25   See for example the procession on Palm Sunday documented in the Mozarabic *Missale Mixtum* from the sixteenth century (the text of the procession itself dates back to the seventh century). For transcription of the rubrics, see HARDISON 1963: 113-114.

26   The rubric only mentions: '*trudant demonem infra*' (they throw the Devil down).

27   The interaction between actors and spectators, and thus the diffusion of stage and audience space, appears both in devil scenes (see *The Resurrection Play*) and in scenes of the Speaker. All

locations of the play), which correspond with the triadic principle of the drama, one may assume that there were three sites. However, these could easily only have been suggested symbolically through the appearance of figurative stage properties or small scenic items, because the play requires in general only a rather minimalist stage and set design. In Kolár's opinion, the text of this very compact and cyclically hermetic play could accordingly have been staged virtually anywhere.[28]

A similar uncertainty in terms of theatre space, the location of staging and its form is associated with even the most frequently-discussed piece of Czech medieval drama: *Mastičkář* (The Apothecary). However, an analysis of the reflection of stage space in this play needs to be omitted from my present study for several reasons: both surviving versions of *Mastičkář* require individual studies relating to their reflection of space and spatial relations and such extended analysis lies outside of the scope of my present study. Moreover, the texts relating to this play differ greatly from the rest of the preserved drama of Bohemian origin; not only as a result of their profane subject matter (which is reflected in their language and style), but above all also for their semantic complexity, as well as for the number of stage directions implied by their dialogue. For a full analysis of probable stage forms for both fragments of this drama, I accordingly refer readers to the impressive study by Jarmila F. Veltruská, who interprets also the issue of their representation of dramatic and stage space (VELTRUSKÁ 2006: 99-140 and VELTRUSKÁ 1985).

Even though my present article does not by any means attempt to cover every case in which rubrics reflect stage space and theatrical practice in liturgical and para-liturgical drama during the period in question (for the reasons outlined above, the issue of the spatial implications of dialogues in *Mastičkář* has been specifically excluded), let us hope that using the textual sources cited above, the methodology propounded here can help to suggest some of the ways in which space may be understood to be reflected in the rubrics of the plays, as well as how scholars might proceed when interpreting the various spatial references they contain. It is logical that when the interpretation of stage space is based on combined analysis of rubrics,

three Czech-Latin Easter plays from the Clementinum Codex are introduced by a scene of the Speaker (*praecursor*), who prompts the audience to get out of the actors' way (in the Czech-Latin *Resurrection Play* from the Clementinum Codex, he even threatens them with a beating if they do not). The Speaker's performance involves frequent comic allusions to old hags or to students sitting among the audience, as well as various local and topical allusions. The permanent interaction between the actors and the audience is implied from the texts of both versions of the *Mastičkář*, as VELTRUSKÁ 2006: 107-140 reveals in a complex manner.

28   KOLÁR 1992: 47-48 further pronounces his hypothesis about the joculatory origin of the play (i.e. that the play was performed by professional joculators).

dramatic texts and generic knowledge relating to the architectural environments in which medieval drama took place, references to the dramatic (or mimetic) space implied in both the main texts and their descriptive rubrics needs to be considered. Rubrics often discuss this kind of space without any further specification (expressions such as *infernum* – 'Hell', *Emaus* – 'Emmaus', *Sepulchrum* – Tomb etc. seem at first to be deceptively opaque). As I hope to have shown, however, such expressions can nevertheless be taken as references to individual (usually steady) sites within a concrete stage space that have their more specific form revealed in subsequent rubrics, or in utterances from characters who appear elsewhere in the surviving dramatic texts. In any case, it is necessary always to interpret the rubrics of a given ceremony not individually, but as part of an intertextual nexus of documents drawn from a wider corpus of related (or thematically-cognate) dramatic texts and rubrics.

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