

FORUM

## Global Catholicism in Seventeenth-Century Prague

Suzanna Ivanič

School of History, University of Kent, Kent, UK  
Email: [s.ivanic@kent.ac.uk](mailto:s.ivanic@kent.ac.uk)

### Abstract

The histories of early modern religion and trade have both benefited from the global turn in recent years. This article brings the two fields together through the study of religious objects in Prague in the seventeenth century and shows ways in which religion and religious practice were entangled with new commercial and artistic ventures that crossed regional and international borders. Among the possessions of seventeenth-century Prague burghers were religious objects that had come from exotic lands, such as a “coconut” rosary and a ruby and diamond “pelican in her piety” jewel. These objects were made in multiple locations and traded to satisfy a new demand for items that could aid and display devotion as well as act as markers of wealth and confessional identity. Through this study of religious objects, Central Europe is revealed to be an important locale to the global history of the early modern period.

**Keywords:** Prague; Bohemia; global; religion; material culture; Catholicism; trade; artisan

A large, deep blue lapis lazuli rosary with flecks of glinting pyrite, ninety-two cm long and with a medallion depicting Christ Our Savior’s head on one side and Our Lady of Sorrows on the other, is kept in the St. Vitus Treasury at Prague Castle.<sup>1</sup> It is a weighty object with large beads, designed not for regular personal devotional use but for a showy display of piety. The rosary was likely commissioned for Rudolf II, Habsburg Holy Roman emperor, in spite of his complicated relationship with Catholicism. Made in Prague in the first third of the seventeenth century by the workshop of Ottavio Miseroni (1567–1624), it encapsulates the extensive pan-European and global connections associated with Catholic religious practice and material culture in seventeenth-century Central Europe. The lapis lazuli sourced from Badakhshan in northeastern Afghanistan was worked into prayer beads by an Italian craftsman trained in the glyptic traditions of northern Italy.<sup>2</sup> Ottavio Miseroni came from a family of lapidaries from Milan and arrived in Prague in 1588 to work for Rudolf. There he set up a workshop at Bubeneč, just north of the castle, employing his family and other craftsmen. He was engaged with a further network of agents tasked by Rudolf to seek out fine specimens of precious and semiprecious gemstones.<sup>3</sup> This ostentatious rosary employed not only materials but also skills, techniques, and knowledge from different parts of Europe and the wider world. Its production in Prague fused different localities through its craftsmanship.

The lapis lazuli rosary is one of many religious objects owned and collected by Rudolf. During Rudolf’s lifetime, it was likely kept with the numerous other sacred objects in his *Kunstkammer*.<sup>4</sup> These personal collections reflected a similar armory of religious paraphernalia kept in St. Vitus

<sup>1</sup>Ivana Kyzourová, ed., *Svatovítský poklad: katalog stále výstavy v kapli sv. Kříže na Pražském hradě* (Prague, 2012), 114 (Cat. 76).

<sup>2</sup>Jean Wyart, Pierre Bariand, and Jean Filippi, “Lapis Lazuli from Sar-e-Sang, Badakhshan, Afghanistan,” *Gems & Gemology* 17, no. 4 (1981): 184–90; Jo Kirby, Susie Nash, and Joanna Cannon, eds., *Trade in Artists’ Materials: Markets and Commerce in Europe to 1700* (London, 2010).

<sup>3</sup>Rudolf Distelberger, “Thoughts on Rudolfine Art in the ‘Court Workshops’ in Prague,” in *Rudolf II and Prague: The Court and the City*, ed. Eliška Fučíková (London, 1997): 189–98, here p. 190; Oldřich Blažiček, *Škréta’s “Family Portrait of Dionysio Miseroni”* (London, 1966).

<sup>4</sup>On the sacred nature of the *Kunstkammer*, see Suzanna Ivanič, “Religious Materiality in the *Kunstkammer* of Rudolf II,” in *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World*, ed. Suzanna Ivanič, Mary Laven, and Andrew Morrall (Amsterdam, 2019), 177–91. A list of paternosters made from exotic precious stones are mentioned in the *Kunstkammer* inventories: Rotraud Bauer

Cathedral that harnessed material resources from across the world. Reliquaries, monstrances, vestments, and pectoral crosses were encrusted with sapphires from Sri Lanka, diamonds from India, emeralds from Egypt and Colombia, pearls from the Persian Gulf, as well as jasper, agate, diamonds, and garnets from local mines in Bohemia.<sup>5</sup> Though at the exceptional end of the scale, the rosary and these other objects now in the St. Vitus Treasury are indicative of a wider phenomenon whereby religion stimulated global webs of trade and the transmission of skills through the migration of artisans in the medieval and early modern periods.

Increasing wealth and a desire for status among burghers and a middling sort have been examined as explanations for driving global and transregional trade in this period.<sup>6</sup> The role of religion and religious change as agents of global trade in goods and materials has, however, so far been neglected. The transformation of Prague into a Catholic city over the seventeenth century provides an intriguing lens through which to examine this question. Its confessional plurality in the first decades of the century complicates this picture, but its status as a Catholic bastion by 1700 shows how far Catholic culture permeated society. Recatholicization in the city shaped the material experience of Prague's burghers over the course of the century. This article examines the material aspects of Catholic culture as it drew on a sense of universality among its believers to renew faith after the Reformation. This is set within an understanding of early modern Catholicism as a "global religion."

Studies in the last twenty years have emphasized the global nature of early modern Catholicism and have shifted away from the traditional Eurocentric, "unidirectional," center-periphery model of Catholic religious culture to examine the horizontal links between so-called peripheries.<sup>7</sup> The effects of Catholicism as the "planet's first world religion" are immediately apparent when looking at attractive examples from Manila, Macao, Japan, China, and Latin America, but what does this mean for the study of Catholic culture within a Central European urban locale in the seventeenth century? It is argued here that the global nature of Catholicism was in evidence among a small but important number of burghers in seventeenth-century Prague through engagement with objects. Perhaps more significantly, while the exotic nature of Catholicism was only immediately tangible in a minority of cases, the wider methodological advancements of a "global history" approach has broader consequences for our understanding of religion in Prague. The material connections of religion in the city reveal how devotional communities could experience both shared and individual piety simultaneously among the faithful.

Through the study of extant objects and inventories from across the seventeenth century from the Old Town, New Town, and Lesser Town of Prague, it is apparent how religious beliefs, practices, and identities were integrally tied to material culture.<sup>8</sup> Different faiths shared material cultures; families could shape religious belief and experience through possessions; and objects encoded religious and moral practice in everyday domestic life. Aside from these questions of everyday religious practice, the textual and material evidence reveals how devotional objects signaled faith that was connected to a larger landscape, both across a community of believers and through trade of natural materials. The textual record in the inventories provides an indication about the frequency of these objects among burgher possessions, how they were kept, and what they may have been kept with. Extant objects—often preserved for their exquisite materiality—also reveal the physical nature of the most

and Herbert Haupt, eds., "Rudolf II Inventar 1607–11," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Museums in Wien*, 72 (1976), 81 (F246); Jan Morávek, ed., *Nové objevený inventar rudolfinských sbírek na Hradě Pražském* (Prague, 1937), F9b.

<sup>5</sup>See Jaroslav Hyršl, "Nejzajímavější kameny klenotnice," in *Svatovítský Poklad*, 22–23; see also Jaroslav Hyršl, "Safiry právě i nepravé," *Vesmír* 82, no. 1 (2003): 38–41.

<sup>6</sup>Janine Maegraith and Craig Muldrew, "Consumption and Material Life," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern History, 1350–1700*, vol. 1, *Peoples and Place*, ed. Hamish Scott (Oxford, 2015), 369–91.

<sup>7</sup>Simon Ditchfield, "Of Dancing Cardinals and Mestizo Madonnas: Reconfiguring the History of Roman Catholicism in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of Early Modern History* 2 (2004): 386–408, p. 408; Simon Ditchfield, "Decentering the Catholic Reformation: Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 101, no. 1 (2013): 186–208, p. 207; Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 6, *Reform and Expansion 1500–1660* (Cambridge, 2007), xv.

<sup>8</sup>For the principle findings from this research see Suzanna Ivanič, *Cosmos and Materiality in Early Modern Prague* (Oxford, 2021).

high-end of these objects. In the past decade, it has been well established how extant objects can reveal global material connections in the early modern period. These items are often assemblages brought into being along trade routes that formed global networks.<sup>9</sup> Evidence from inventories and objects provides unique insight into how regional, pan-European, and global cultural elements were locally taken up, transformed, and circulated by individuals operating within networks related to religious practice and culture.

While early modern global religion and global material culture have been the subjects of intense study in recent years, there is still a gap in our understanding about how religious practice explicitly drove global material cultures. The purpose of this article is to triangulate these topics and to show how early modern Prague, located in the heart of Central Europe, provides ample material for such a study. From the analysis of inventorial and material evidence, two particular findings emerge that will be investigated further here. They act as a starting point for further study. First, local and global networks of Catholicism were formed by pilgrimage sites and shrines embedded in a holy landscape and connected by well-trodden routes. This was memorialized in images and souvenirs with which devotees could engage repeatedly in the home. Second, certain styles and symbols circulated in Europe and acted as markers of pious identity. Analysis of devotional jewelry in particular reveals how such aesthetics and practices simultaneously provided a sense of shared community and individual experience. Additionally, physical materials used in devotional jewelry reveal how religious practices drew on both the local and exotic natural environment of God's world. Examining both extant objects and textual evidence of possessions affords a new perspective on everyday experiences of a connected Catholicism in seventeenth-century Prague, and how religious practice in Prague fostered global material flows. Before examining these two areas in more detail, a brief overview of the global status of seventeenth-century Prague sets the context.

### Global Connections in Seventeenth-Century Prague

It has been well-established that Rudolfine Prague—as imperial seat and home to a lavish court—was a vibrant cultural metropolis.<sup>10</sup> Lions, parrots, Turkish armor, and exotic stones from South America and the Far East all composed Rudolf II's collections, acting as a microcosm of the universe.<sup>11</sup> A wealth of diplomats, envoys, artists, artisans, and scientists seeking the emperor's patronage contributed to the dynamic cultural richness in the city between 1576 and 1612. According to the parameters for what constituted an early modern global city set by Annemarie Jordan-Gschwend and Kate Lowe, Rudolfine Prague ticks all the boxes: 1) it was an economic center of trade flows, 2) it had a mixed population, 3) it fostered a “global consciousness” and understanding of the wider world, 4) it was recognized by others as global, and 5) it was a center of new knowledge, technologies, and communications.<sup>12</sup>

But how far did this Rudolfine moment imprint Prague with global status? There is a sense that the city's cultural effervescence flattened after Rudolf's death with the movement of the court back to Vienna in 1612. From 1618 the Thirty Years' War ravaged the city, and population decline was drastic. It is estimated that the population fell from around 50,000 in 1618 to 26,400 in 1648.<sup>13</sup> Military

<sup>9</sup>Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds., *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London, 2015); Glenn Adamson, Giorgio Riello, and Sarah Teasley, eds., *Global Design History* (London, 2011); Daniela Bleichmar and Meredith Martin, eds., “Special Issue: Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World,” *Art History* 38, no. 4 (2015).

<sup>10</sup>Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago, 2004), 175–76; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Court, Cloister & City: The Art and Culture of Central Europe 1450–1800* (London, 1995).

<sup>11</sup>Robert J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World: A Study in Intellectual History, 1576–1612* (Oxford, 1973), 176–77; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *The Mastery of Nature: Aspects of Art, Science, and Humanism in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1993), 7; and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, “Remarks on the Collections of Rudolf II: The *Kunstammer* as a Form of *Representatio*,” *Art Journal* 38, no. 1 (Autumn, 1978): 22–28, here p. 24.

<sup>12</sup>Annemarie Jordan-Gschwend and Kate J. P. Lowe, eds., *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon* (London, 2015).

<sup>13</sup>Josef Janáček, *Dějiny Prahy* (Prague, 1964), 364.

occupation, coin debasement, and the plague all affected everyday life of burghers in the city.<sup>14</sup> According to traditional Czech historiography, the period after the Thirty Years' War to 1784 was a period of *temno* (darkness).<sup>15</sup> Historians asserted that the exile of Protestants had caused Bohemia to lose both its link to its heroic, revolutionary Hussite past and any prospects of developing its artistic and intellectual talent. Such studies argued that the country was firmly in the grip of Catholic, German Habsburg rule, and Bohemian identity had been suppressed by a dominant empire. Within this narrative, politically, Prague had lost its prominent place as the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, which it had held for a generation under Rudolf.

More recent Czech scholarship has, however, shown the vitality of the baroque flourishing in the later seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup> Cultural activity in the city reveals continuing vibrant artistic production against the backdrop of more widespread economic deprivation. Prague still held an important role in international cultural networks. The elites in particular fostered such activity. The Italian architect Pieroni worked for the imperial general Albrecht von Wallenstein in the 1620s, and the Miseroni family continued their glyptic business in the city.<sup>17</sup> In 1641, the workshop of Dionysius Miseroni (Ottavio's son) produced an emerald *unguentarium* for Ferdinand III (Holy Roman emperor, 1637–57) crafted from a single Colombian emerald crystal valued at 2,680 carats and measuring 10.9 × 7.2 cm. The rough gemstone had originally been acquired by Rudolf and remained in the collection at the Prague Castle until this commission, having somehow avoided being taken to Vienna after 1612, sold off by Habsburg princes, or looted by invading armies.<sup>18</sup>

In parallel to these ripples of influence from the Rudolfine moment, there is evidence of independent global trade continuing in the city throughout the seventeenth century. A tax record “Ungelt-buch” that survives from 1631 shows that trade had risen by 520 percent since the height of Rudolf's reign in 1597. Goods traded in Prague in 1631 included luxury products from western and southern Europe, including English and Dutch cloth, jewelry from Augsburg, silk and carpets from Venice, and Mediterranean wines and fruits. To the Prague market, trading links also brought oriental spices (70 percent more ginger, amounting to 7,260 pounds, and 175 percent more pepper, amounting to 17,307 pounds), as well as precious stones from the Near East and American dyes.<sup>19</sup>

Inventories of Prague burghers, merchants, and apothecaries reveal that some of the wealthier owned items that extended their domestic material worlds to distant lands. At the higher end, we find the occasional exquisite sounding items: a coconut shell cup, seashells mounted in silver, and a large ostrich egg in inventories from 1600, 1635, and 1697, respectively.<sup>20</sup> Such items may have been bought in the city's markets or come into burgher possession through the dispossession of Protestant nobles forced into exile from the 1620s and 1630s. More modest exotic objects and materials in burgher inventories across the century indicate that not only an extraordinarily rich elite but also those of middling wealth had enough to invest in one or two choice items of luxury goods from afar. Gemstones and oriental carpets, for example, occur in inventories throughout the century.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Hans Jessen, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg in Augenzeugenberichten* (Stuttgart, 2012), 352; Josef Polišínský, *The Thirty Years War*, trans. Robert Evans (London, 1974), 141; Gerhard Benecke, ed., *Germany in the Thirty Years' War* (London, 1978), 36.

<sup>15</sup>For example, as per Reginald Betts, “The Habsburg Lands,” in *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 5, *The Ascendancy of France, 1648–88*, ed. Francis L. Carsten (Cambridge, 1961), 494; Janáček, *Dějiny Prahy* (Prague, 1964), 359–408; see analysis in Jiří Pešek, “Prague, Wrocław, and Vienna: Center and Periphery in Baroque Culture?,” in *Embodiments of Power: Building Baroque Cities in Europe*, ed. Gary Cohen and Franz Szabo (Oxford, 2008), 80–96, here p. 80.

<sup>16</sup>Olga Fejtová et al., eds., *Barokní Praha—Barokní Čechie 1620–1740* (Prague, 2004).

<sup>17</sup>Pešek, “Prague, Wrocław, and Vienna,” 82; see also Evans, *Rudolf II*, 193–94, esp. n. 3.

<sup>18</sup>Colombian emerald *unguentarium* 2,680-carat, enameled gold, Prague, 1641, 10.9 × 7.2 cm, Weltliche Schatzkammer, KK Inv. No. 2048.

<sup>19</sup>Reference to SÚA rkp. 3424 in Miloš Dvořák, “Pražský obchod po Bílé Hoře,” *Folia Historica Bohemica* 8 (1985): 317–30, here pp. 319, 321–22, and 324.

<sup>20</sup>Mandlena Škodová (New Town Zderaz, 1600), Archiv Hlavního Města Prahy (Prague City Archives, hereafter AHMP), 1213, f. 180v: *kofflyk woržechu Indyánskeho w stržybrže/ ffasowany pozlaczony* kept amongst bedding and clothes in a chest; Dorota Lošelius (Old Town, 1635), AHMP 1776, f. 106r: *Conchy piekne moržske do stržibra pozlaczeneho / Fafšowane, gedna s pozlaczonym wjkem....2*; Antonin Čechelička z Rozenwald (Old Town, 1697), AHMP 1179, f. 374v: *I. Welika sstrošowoy wegcz.*

<sup>21</sup>For example, 42 percent of inventories in 1600 contain objects that have an identifiable connection with the wider world (such as gemstones, a Turkish spoon, oriental carpets) and 42 percent in 1610.

Apothecary and merchant inventories also attest to less extravagant items that constituted everyday material life. The apothecary Jan Platner's inventory in 1679 itemized tobacco and *materia medica* such as *mirabolani indici* (Indian cherry plum).<sup>22</sup> In 1695, Jan Stiffner's inventory listed Spanish tobacco and artists' colors including ultramarine (made from the same lapis lazuli from Afghanistan with which we started).<sup>23</sup> The merchant Christian Mehringer from the New Town in 1680 owned spices including cardamom (from Southern India), around 300 g of ginger and pepper (from Asia), "Spanish wax," and tobacco (from South America).<sup>24</sup> Pan-European and global connections that were growing in the early modern world were being experienced at a tangible, everyday level in Prague, both during Rudolf's reign and afterward. Burghers experienced what Beverly Lemire has termed "worldwide linkages" evident elsewhere in early modern Europe that "enabled a wider range of women and men routinely to access more diverse media."<sup>25</sup> Even if one could not afford such goods, they were part of everyday life through their presence in shops and markets, or the exotic odors of spices in cooking or remedies.

While the global turn in history has focused primarily on the lands around the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans, a fresh assessment of Central Europe through a global lens adds an important new dimension. It interlinks with wider debates about early modern Europe as a whole as a place of cultural exchange and connections.<sup>26</sup> Prague was an important node in the middle of continental Europe. A landlocked city, the Baltic Sea lies 500 km to its north and the Adriatic Sea 600 km to its south. In population terms it ranked as one of the larger "second category" cities in early modern Europe. Prague is estimated to have had between 53,600 and 70,000 inhabitants, similar in size to Amsterdam, Genoa, and Rouen.<sup>27</sup> In spite of a dip in the population owing to the loss of the court, economic turmoil brought about by the Thirty Years' War, and religious persecution in the middle of the century, by 1703 the population had started to rise again and is estimated to have been approximately between 39,495 and 44,000.<sup>28</sup> It thus retained its place among other important European cities in 1700 like Dresden (40,000), Cologne (42,000), and Nuremberg (40,000). In spite of its geographical and social importance, Prague is hardly ever mentioned in general histories of early modern Europe. Historians tend still to favor the super-cities of London and Paris that had more than 200,000 inhabitants in 1600, or the rising trading ports of Amsterdam, Lisbon, and Venice.<sup>29</sup>

In Czech scholarship, the regional and global connections of Prague (and Bohemia more widely) beyond the Rudolfine era have elicited occasional focus in research. At a regional level, Prague was part of a network of urban centers. Studies have examined its connections to Vienna, Krakow, Nuremberg, Augsburg, and Munich.<sup>30</sup> All these cities were vibrant multilingual, multicultural places in the early modern period. Connections further afield to the west and east have also drawn fragmentary attention. In the 1950s, Bohdan Chudoba examined Bohemian connections with Spain and its empire.<sup>31</sup> Bohemians also appear in early modern global trade records, such as Augustine Herman

<sup>22</sup>Jan Platner (Old Town, 1679–85), AHMP 1177, ff. 703v.

<sup>23</sup>Jan Stiffner (1695), AHMP 1179, ff. 348v and 349r.

<sup>24</sup>Christian Mehringer (New Town, 1680), AHMP 1196, ff. 189v, 190r and 191v.

<sup>25</sup>Beverly Lemire, *Global Trade and the Transformation of Consumer Cultures: The Material World Remade, c. 1500–1820* (Cambridge, 2018), 289; see also Jordan-Gschwend and Lowe, *The Global City*, 141.

<sup>26</sup>Robert Muchembled, ed., *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 2006–7).

<sup>27</sup>Jaroslav Miller, *Urban Societies in East-Central Europe, 1500–1700* (Aldershot, 2008), 7 and 26; Jan de Vries, *European Urbanization, 1500–1800* (London, 1984), 278.

<sup>28</sup>Miller, *Urban Societies*, 26; Jiří Pešek and Václav Ledvinka, *Praha* (Prague, 2000), 337 and 357; Pešek, "Prague, Wrocław, and Vienna," 83.

<sup>29</sup>Miller, *Urban Societies*, 1–2.

<sup>30</sup>Marina Dmitrieva and Karen Lambrecht, eds., *Krakau, Prag und Wien: Funktionen von Metropolen im frühmodernen Staat* (Stuttgart, 2000). The following works examine urban connections, but still largely within the Rudolfine context: Beket Bukovinská and Lubomír Konečný, eds., *München - Prag um 1600* (Prague, 2009); on connections specifically between Nuremberg and Augsburg with Prague, see Berthold Beitz et al., *Prag um 1600: Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Rudolfs II* (Essen, 1988). Jaroslav Miller's work largely provides a comparative approach rather than examining the urban connections of the period (though pages 197–235 are helpful): Miller, *Urban Societies*.

<sup>31</sup>Exiled to Spain during the Soviet regime, Bohdan Chudoba wrote *Spain and the Empire, 1519–1643* (Chicago, 1952).

(1621–86) who was a fur trader and the first documented Bohemian settler in America.<sup>32</sup> More recently, Laura Lisy-Wagner has traced Ottoman and Islamic connections in Bohemia, particularly through the distinctive Habaner ceramic work of Protestant communities in eastern Moravia that incorporated Turkish motifs.<sup>33</sup> It is this material approach that indicates a new way forward in researching Prague's connections. Analyses of material life reveal Prague to be a connected and vibrant city wired into a global network of goods.<sup>34</sup> Inventories of possessions owned by burghers show how religion was integral to these early modern regional, pan-European, and global connections and trade, drawing on and driving an ever more connected global Catholic materiality.

### Pilgrimage Networks

Images and objects in the inventories relating to pilgrimage reveal how religion practiced at home linked into a Catholic landscape that spread far beyond Prague. Studies of pilgrimage often focus on the pilgrim's experience at the holy destination as revealed through travel journals or through the lens of the pilgrimage site. An explosion of pilgrimage books and pamphlets advertised these holy sites in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and records attest to scenes such as the bustling stalls selling rosaries in Loreto in Italy.<sup>35</sup> However, inventories reveal that items in the home could also provide a permanent link into this sacred landscape. Images and objects bought at the shrine and taken home could embed pilgrimage into daily devotional practice.

Prague was part of an extensive network of pilgrimage routes. The city held a number of religious sites that drew pilgrims. In particular, Prague's St. Vitus Cathedral contained the gem-studded, semi-precious stone-walled shrine of St. Wenceslas, the foremost patron saint of Bohemia, and the *peplum cruentatum*—a piece of Mary's clothes stained with Jesus's blood as he hung on the cross. Successive Habsburg rulers had added to the relic collection held in the castle area.<sup>36</sup> The nobility endowed local pilgrimage sites such as Stará Boleslav, which was located 25 km northeast of Prague. This site was dedicated to the Madonna and was also the place of the martyrdom of St. Wenceslas. A wider pilgrimage network extended into the neighboring regions—especially, into Catholic Bavaria to the southeast.<sup>37</sup> High-ranking Bohemian noblemen might also undertake more extensive pilgrimages and share their journeys through printed or manuscript travelogues. These include the famous Harant z Polžice, whose illustrated account of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem was printed and widely read in 1608, and Bedřich z Donína, who produced a lavishly hand-painted illustrated manuscript account of his pilgrimage to Loreto in Italy from the same year.<sup>38</sup>

The inventories indicate engagement with these pilgrimage sites by wealthier burghers, especially toward the end of the century. It is likely that less wealthy citizens also partook in the same material practices, but theirs perhaps involved ephemeral prints and small pilgrim badges made of base metal that did not make it into the inventories.<sup>39</sup> The extent of engagement among burghers of middle to

<sup>32</sup>Miloslav Rechciĝl Jr., *Encyclopedia of Bohemian and Czech-American Biography*, 3 vols. (Bloomington, 2016); Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America—the Conflict of Civilizations, 1600–1675* (New York, 2012), 227.

<sup>33</sup>Laura Lisy-Wagner, *Islam, Christianity and the Making of Czech Identity, 1453–1683* (Farnham, 2013).

<sup>34</sup>Ivanič, *Cosmos*.

<sup>35</sup>Floriano Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e Pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei Secoli XIV–XVIII* (Recanati, 2001); and Gerhard P. Woeckel, *Pietas Bavarica* (Wiessenhorn, 1992).

<sup>36</sup>A 1691 print, *Forma et Exemplar aliquarum S.S. Reliquiarum S. Metro. Eccles. Prag.*, listed the medieval relics that could be seen there. See Kyzourová, *Svatovítský poklad*, 99; see also Tomáš Pešina *Phosphorus Septicornis* (1673), 399–524; Jeffrey Hamburger, “Bloody Mary: Traces of the Peplum Cruentatum in Prague—and in Strasbourg?,” in *Image, Memory, and Devotion: liber amicorum*, *Studies in Gothic Art 2*, ed. Paul Crossley, Zoë Opačić, and Achim Timmermann (Turnhout, 2011), 1–33, here pp. 1–2.

<sup>37</sup>See, for example, Philip Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (London, 1993).

<sup>38</sup>Kryštof Harant z Polžic a Bedružic, *Cesta z království Českého do Benátek, odtud do zeme Svaté, zeme Judské a dále do Egypta, a potom na horu Oreb, Sinai a sv. Kateriny v pusté Arabii*, ed. Karel J. Erben (Prague, 1854; repr. Nabu Press); Bedřich z Donína, *Cestopis Bedřicha z Donína*, ed. Antonín Grund (Prague, 1940); Simona Binková and Josef Polišínský, *Česká touha cestovatelská: cestopisy, deníky a listy ze 17 století* (Prague, 1989).

<sup>39</sup>Extant ephemeral prints are catalogued in Jan Royt, *Obraz a kult v Čechách: 17. a 18. století* (Prague, 1999).

high wealth is apparent particularly in the ownership of images. Zdeněk Hojda's in-depth analysis of picture collections in the Old Town reveals that after 1670 the proportion of religious images explicitly listed rose above 32 percent, and that images of Christ were outstripped in popularity by depictions of Mary and of saints.<sup>40</sup> This Marian imagery was usually in the form of pilgrimage icons. Hojda's research shows that between 1627 and 1701 in the Old Town, out of a total of 225 pictures of Mary (5 percent of all pictures), there were forty-nine mentions of the Virgin of Passau (Pasovská/Mariahilf), ten of the Madonna of Klatovy, nine of the Madonna of Svatá Hora nad Příbram (Heiligenberg), and nine of the Madonna of Stará Boleslav (Alt Bunzl). Passau, Klatovy, and Svatá Hora nad Příbram formed a triangle of holy sites in southwest Bohemia straddling the border with Bavaria. The increase of these particular icons among inventory entries suggests that the network of pilgrimage sites in this region that connected to a further system of sites over the border in Bavaria attracted Prague burghers seeking divine intervention.

Detailed examination of two inventories from this period further reveal the character of this engagement. In 1664 Catharina Krieger of the Old Town owned two pilgrimage icons. Catharina appears to have been a wealthy widow owning relatively large quantities of jewelry, paintings, and books. While she owned numerous religious images, there were few devotional books (they focused rather on scientific topics, including an atlas and herbarium) and her jewelry collection was more for ostentation than devotion, suggesting that her devotional practice was largely characterized by visual engagement. One of the pilgrimage icons owned by Catharina was a picture of "Our Dear Lady in Poland" (possibly the Black Madonna of Częstochowa in southern Poland) and the other was a "torn picture of Our Dear Lady of Heiligenberg" (the Madonna of Svatá Hora nad Příbram).<sup>41</sup> The pilgrimage site of Our Lady of Svatá Hora was a relatively recently established devotion located just 60 km southwest of Prague. It dates from after 1620—likely around 1647—following the miraculous healing of a blind beggar.<sup>42</sup> The presence of these images in Catharina's inventory reveals a bond with local forms of Marian culture (in the case of Svatá Hora, probably less than seventeen years old) and an engagement with pilgrimage inside the home. The torn image may suggest an image well-used in prayer. It is possible that either Catharina or a family member traveled to these sites and brought back these icons for the Krieger home. They sit within a list of other religious images, including an "Old Saint Catherine" (Saint Catherine of Alexandria), Saint Anthony of Padua, Lazarus, the Virgin Mary and Child, and the Canon of Olomouc, indicating how Catharina might have viewed them within a constellation of religious figures to be called upon and remembered in prayer and devotional practice.

An inventory from 1700 of the property of Veronika Dirixová indicates the variety of material strategies through which connections to pilgrimage sites could be maintained. Veronika was a rich citizen of the Old Town. Her inventory listed the contents of her house next to the Old Town Hall.<sup>43</sup> Veronika's possessions provide a window into the life of a wealthy Catholic family at the end of the seventeenth century. A number of entries in the inventory indicate that she or a member of her family had been on pilgrimages across Central Europe and beyond. In the bedroom, where she had an altar and crucifixes, there was a black paperboard writing desk or "cabinet."<sup>44</sup> Inside this, there was an old gold table clock and money, and a pilgrimage coin with the image of the Madonna of Stará Boleslav.<sup>45</sup> Three images also kept in the bedroom specified Marian imagery relating to pilgrimage icons. Two were of the Madonna of Passau (one of these was painted on glass) and one of Madonna of

<sup>40</sup>Zdeněk Hojda, "Výtvarna díla v domech staroměstských měšťanů v letech 1627–1740. Příspěvek k dějinám kultury barokní Prahy I," *Pražský Sborník Historický* 26 (1993), 38–102, esp. pp. 82, 84, and 89–90.

<sup>41</sup>Catharina Krieger (Old Town, 1664), AHMP 1176, f.575v: *Bildt, unser Lieben Frauen in Pohlen, f.576r: Unser Lieben Frauen zúm heiligen Berg/ zerrissenes bildt.*

<sup>42</sup>Or earlier in 1632, see Marie-Elizabeth Ducreux, "Několik úvah o barokní zbožnosti a o rekatolizace Čech," *Folia Historica Bohemica* 22 (2006), 143–77, here p. 155.

<sup>43</sup>Hojda suggests that Veronika Dirixová is the widow of a doctor, in Hojda, "Výtvarná díla," 93.

<sup>44</sup>Veronika Dirixová (Old Town, 1700/01), AHMP 1179, f.403r: *Im Schlaffgewölbe der Gottferl: Frawen/ Ein Aufgerichtetes alterl, darin bildnús Christi des/ herrn am Creutz, Maria únd St: Joannis Evangel/ Ein kleines Crucifix von helffenbein/ Ein Crucifix von holtz außgeschnitzt.*

<sup>45</sup>AHMP 1179, f.395v: *In einem schwartz gebatzten Schreib-/tisch, f.396r: Ein gedachtnús pfennig daraúf bild-/nús Maria Von Altbúntzl.*

“Glottau” (Głotowo in northern Poland).<sup>46</sup> The three sites were located far apart in different directions from Prague, suggesting separate journeys. Stará Boleslav (mentioned previously) was close to Prague. Popular with the nobility, Veronika may have visited the shrine and brought back the coin. Passau in Bavaria was 220 km southeast of Prague. It could have been visited conveniently in conjunction with travel to Vienna, where the family also appears to have had links. The two images of the Madonna of Passau suggest the particular importance of this shrine for the family. The painting on glass was likely to have been expensive and precious, indicating this Madonna’s elevated meaning. Finally, Głotowo was 680 km to the northeast of Prague, located near Gdańsk and the Baltic Sea. This connection to Poland (as with Catharina’s) is interesting and suggests that while Bavaria offered a local network of shrines, Poland’s holy sites also drew Prague burghers in the opposite direction across the continent.

One further object points to pilgrimage links even further afield. In a cupboard in Veronika’s bedroom is listed a “coconut rosary.”<sup>47</sup> Of the many prayer beads listed in burgher inventories over the century, only a few explicitly detailed their materials. The coconut rosary in 1700 is a rare example and offers one of the most exotic fusions of global trade and religious devotion to be found in the inventories. It may have been made from coconut shell or coconut palm wood. Coconut shell was used to craft vessels since antiquity, and it was thought to protect against poisons. A collection of coconut shell cups in Rudolf’s *Kunstkammer* inventory is indicative of the renewed interest in the material and increased power of acquisition around 1600 bolstered by trade.<sup>48</sup> Coconut shell cups were occasionally mentioned in the burgher inventories, such as in Mandalena Škodová’s inventory in 1600 that listed a coconut shell cup set in silver gilt.<sup>49</sup> However, there is also another possible explanation for Veronika’s rosary beyond a fashion for the material’s exotic and powerful properties. A coconut palm wood paternoster from the sixteenth century in the collections of the German National Museum has been identified as having once belonged to Stephan III Praun (1544–91). Praun was a member of the Nuremberg Patriciate who was part of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II’s embassy to Constantinople in 1569 and was famed for his pilgrimages. These extant prayer beads are thought to have been acquired by Praun on pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1585.<sup>50</sup> It is possible that Veronika’s coconut rosary may have similarly been acquired in the Middle East on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Rosaries were often brought back from pilgrimage sites along with images and other devotional objects to act as souvenirs and devotional tools. The nobleman traveler and pilgrim Bedřich z Donína mentions bringing back rosaries as well as silver crosses and medallions from Loreto in his manuscript pilgrimage travelogue.<sup>51</sup> Even innocuous objects such as “silver crosses” that might go unnoticed in an analysis of an inventory might therefore still hold important international significance for the owner. Such objects allowed the pilgrim to engage with the event of the pilgrimage repeatedly at home. Having been to these sites, often offering gifts and ex-votos to the shrines, they could once again reconnect to the holy place at home through these small portable objects.<sup>52</sup> At pilgrimage sites displays

<sup>46</sup>AHMP 1179, f.403r: *Im Schlaffgewölb der Gottferl: Frawen/ Ein kleines Bildl Jesu et Maria gemahlt/ Bildnús S:te Maria Magdalena in duplo...2 stúckl/ 2. gleiche bildnús Jesu et Maria... 2/ Annuntiatio B:a Virginis...1/ Bildnús S:te Veronica...1/ B: Virgo Passaviensis...1/ Beaty Joannes Nepomuceng...1/ Bildnús Ecce Homo...1/B:a Virginis Maria...1/ bildnús Maria von Glottaw...1/ Abel et Cain...1/ B: Virgo Passaviensis aúfglas gemahlt...1/ Ite S : Anna deto gemahlt...1/ Nomen Jesu gestickt úntrem glas/ in schwartgebatzten Rahml...1.*

<sup>47</sup>AMP1179, f.393v: *Im Schlaff gewölb der Gottferl: Frawl; in/ der mittlem allmen befindet sich, f.394v Ein Ehr Ring der Gottferl: Frawen/ ... / Ein silbernes Reliquiariú/ Ein Rosenkrantz von kokes.*

<sup>48</sup>Bauer and Haupt, “Rudolf II Inventar,” fol. 33. On the prophylactic material properties of coconut shell, see Suzanna Ivanič, “Early Modern Religious Objects and Materialities of Belief,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Tara Hamling, Catherine Richardson, and David Gaimster (Abingdon, 2016), 322–37.

<sup>49</sup>Mandalena Škodová (New Town Zderaz, 1600), AHMP 1213, f.180v: *kofflyk woržechu Indyánskeho w stržybrže/ ffasowany pozlaczony kept amongst bedding and clothes in a chest.*

<sup>50</sup>Paternoster of Stephan III Praun (1544–91) (Rosenkranz), Jerusalem?, coconut palm wood and brass, 160 cm, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, KG303.

<sup>51</sup>*Cestopis Bedřicha z Donína*, c. 1608–11, Královská kanonie premonstrátů na Strahově, Prague, DG IV 23, p. 240: *...v Loretu z nakoupených páteřův, stříbrných křížkův a medailí.*

<sup>52</sup>See examples of this also in Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 2018).



of ex-voto gifts from individuals and families from across Europe created a sense of a shared Catholic network within a fixed place.<sup>53</sup> Images, coins, and devotional tools associated with the shrines and sold there allowed pilgrims to take home this feeling of a community of devotees who had made the same journey and petitioned the same saint for miraculous intervention. In a domestic setting, these items allowed the pilgrim and his or her family to reconnect with this transregional Catholic community in an everyday context.

Through pilgrimages to local Central European shrines, and beyond to northern Poland, the Mediterranean, and Jerusalem, there were opportunities for individuals to tap into shared material cultures—a Catholic world that extended out and reflected back. Pilgrimage could shape a sense of transregional Catholic community and landscape even to the extent that it enabled and furthered contact with materials from the New World and the East adopted for religious purposes.<sup>54</sup> The objects, images, and stories that were encountered and brought home by individual pilgrims on their travels not only secured a memory of an individual journey but also opened a permanent artery to a community of worshippers connected through shared experiences of a sacred place in the landscape. Pilgrimage thus bound together individuals, families, and communities in seventeenth-century Central Europe and beyond. While the journeys revealed the cultural diversity of Christendom, they also offered a sense of unity with a Catholic community that was mobile and growing across the globe.<sup>55</sup>

### Catholic Devotional Jewelry

While pilgrimage reveals the immense physical reach of wealthier Prague burghers and allowed them to experience a shared Catholic community across borders, devotional jewelry provides evidence of the existence of more mundane material networks and affinity groups that were accessible to a broader range of burghers. Objects available to purchase and handed down through the family or given as gifts encapsulated the simultaneous individual and shared experience of Catholic devotion. Such objects were at once tied into a universal Catholic community that engaged in shared usage of certain types of objects and aesthetics and was also embedded in local and individual contexts. Devotional jewelry allowed devotees to establish a cultural affinity with others that owned these items. The attraction of this shared culture was great: to own an object that signified affinity with a religious group was a strategy to implant oneself in a universal community of believers. Such a message was especially poignant at a time of religious flux. Catholicism's universal breadth and heritage had particular appeal in Bohemian society. James Van Horn Melton and Howard Louthan have identified Catholic cosmopolitanism as particularly attractive to the nobility, in contrast to the restricted "conventions and customs of surrounding Utraquist, Lutheran or Brethren communities" that narrowed rather than broadened horizons.<sup>56</sup> The ownership of devotional jewelry as a strategy to create membership to a cosmopolitan Catholic society may indicate this phenomenon at a burgher level.

Two object types are of particular interest here: cross pendants and pelican in her piety pendants. Extant items provide insight into how these objects might have been used and experienced. Both of these small objects could be worn on a necklace or pinned to clothing not only as markers of religious identity but also as portable aids to devotion. They could range from simple pieces made from inexpensive material to items encrusted with lavish jewels. It must be noted that these did not uniquely signal a Catholic aesthetic. Protestants, especially in the early seventeenth century, might also own cross pendants

<sup>53</sup>Suzanna Ivanič, "Traversing the Local and Universal in the Catholic Renewal: Bedřich z Donín's Pilgrimage to Holy Sites (1607–8)," *Cultural and Social History* 12, no. 2 (2015): 161–77.

<sup>54</sup>Research on domestic devotional tools in Naples reveals that one might have come across rosaries made from exotic materials such as amber, coral, ebony, and "osso de Spagna"—the seed of a so-called paternoster tree found in Haiti; see Irene Galandra Cooper, "The Materiality of Domestic Devotion in Sixteenth-Century Naples" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2017), ch. 5; and written about in Ramusio's *Delle navigazioni e di viaggi*, published in Venice in 1565.

<sup>55</sup>These findings relating to the connection between local and universal are also reflected in Ivanič, "Traversing the Local."

<sup>56</sup>Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge, 2009), 55; James Van Horn Melton, "The Nobility in the Bohemian and Austrian Lands, 1620–1780," in *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Hamish M. Scott (2nd ed., Basingstoke, 2007), vol. 2, 171–208, here pp. 119–21.

and pelican in her piety jewelry.<sup>57</sup> However, the individual inventory entries listed here indicate that they started to become markers of Catholic identity over the course of the seventeenth century.

Cross pendants occurred in 10 percent of Prague burgher inventories across the seventeenth century. Examples of the more lavish crosses owned by burghers include a gilt and ruby cross and a cross with a pearl and silver pomander in 1600, a diamond and pearl cross in 1620, another diamond and pearl cross in 1635, a ruby cross with a pearl in 1670, a silver and garnet cross in 1680, a silver cross with “red” rubies in 1690, a cross filled with nine garnets in 1697, and, in 1700, a cross made from gold and pearl.<sup>58</sup> Jewelry with pelican in her piety imagery is less common, occurring in only 2 percent of inventories. Two entries in the inventories are rich in detail, describing a “silver pelican with a big pearl” kept in its own box belonging to Jeroným Reyczer in 1600 and a “gold piece of jewelry with a pelican with table-cut diamonds and 12 rubies” belonging to Kateřina Kutnáurová z Alberndorff in 1610.<sup>59</sup> Again, while it is not possible to identify without doubt that these entries related to “Catholic” owners, especially in the first half of the century, other objects among the possessions, such as *agnus dei*, images of Mary, or prayer beads, suggest Catholic devotional practices were part of the spiritual life of the household.

Extant items show how these objects played on the theme of the pure white color of pearls and enamel or the bright clarity of diamonds representing Christ’s body and purity. This visual effect was set in contrast to red rubies or garnets symbolizing and manifesting the sacrificial blood of Christ. A pelican pin in the collections of the Decorative Arts Museum, Prague, (Figure 1) shows how these materials were crafted to augment the object’s significance.<sup>60</sup> A gold pelican with outstretched wings bends her head over her breast. The body and wings have white enameling. A garnet is placed in the center of the breast of the pelican. It represents the bloody breast set against white enameled goldwork to draw attention to the central symbolic meaning of the imagery. The pelican in her piety represented Christ and his sacrifice. Its iconography usually consisted of the pelican feeding its young with blood from its own chest as a parallel to Christ’s sacrificial blood shed for mankind. Here, two small pelican chicks at the bottom of the composition eagerly flap their wings, waiting to be fed. An emerald adorns the very top of the jewel and a pearl hangs from the bottom of the openwork, further referring to the symbolic purity of Christ. While this jewel is a luxurious object incorporating a ruby and an emerald most likely from the Far East and South America, respectively, it is still simpler than the one listed in Kateřina’s inventory, which had been set with special “table-cut” diamonds and no fewer than twelve rubies. These examples represent not just “another” piece of devotional jewelry but rather unique and personal items (as in the case of the identifiable gold clasp in Anna Parker’s piece in this forum). Intimate knowledge of the materiality was key to their use and devotional meanings.

Pelican in her piety jewels were present throughout early modern Europe. Examples in museums across the globe are attributed to Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, and Transylvania.<sup>61</sup> Question marks in museum catalogues, however, frequently indicate uncertainty over provenance. Early modern records, especially entries in inventories, note that pelican in her piety jewels were owned in Bohemia, France, Italy, and

<sup>57</sup>On the complexity of identifying faith, see Ivanič, *Cosmos*; note also the famous Elizabeth I “The Pelican Portrait” attributed to Nicholas Hilliard, oil on panel, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

<sup>58</sup>Barbora Seydlhuberová (Old Town, 1600), AHMP 1174, f. 106r: *Cruczyffix strzibrny pozlaczony s rubinky*; Dorothea Armpachová (Old Town, 1600), AHMP 1174, f. 111r: *Kržíček perlowey na konzých s zialudky strzibrnym pozlaczonym*; Adam Wolf (Old Town, 1620), AHMP 1175, f. 174v: *kržíček s dyamanty a perlaú*; Dorothea Loselius (Town, 1635), AHMP 1176, f. 107v: *Kržíček zlaty w trzemj perlami, dyamanty wysazowany*; Maria Alžběta Elzheimová (Old Town, 1670), AHMP 1177, f. 165v: *Ein kreützl mit rúbinku außgefacht/ Und einer darem hägendy perly*; Antonio Biatov (New Town, 1680), AHMP PPL IV-14452, f. 2v: *1 silbernes kreützel mit granatey*; Tomáš Hlavov (Old Town, 1690), AHMP, f. 130v: *Strzibrnym a tyž kržíček s czerwonyma rú-/ Binkamy wykladany*; Antonin Čečelička z Rozenwald (Old Town, 1697), AHMP 1179, f. 375r: *Kržíček s 9. granatky obsazeny*; Adam Kúlik (Old Town, 1700), AHMP 1179, f. 388r: *zlaty kržíček s perlicžkaú*.

<sup>59</sup>Jeroným Reyczer (Old Town, 1600), AHMP 1174, f. 117v: *W jine sskatulge pelykan strzybrny sperlaú welkaú*; Kateřina Kutnáurová z Alberndorff (Lesser Town, 1610/15), AHMP 2135, f. A5r: *Item 1 klynot zlaty s Pelikanem s tabúlkowým dyamantem a 12 Rúbinkami w prostřed kaminek syrotek ržeczeny wažj... 5 ¼ korún*.

<sup>60</sup>See also: pendant in shape of pelican; gold, crystal underlaid in red, diamonds, pearls, enamel; late sixteenth century, Národní Muzea, H2-17 681, referenced in Fučíková, *Rudolf II and Prague*, 739, Cat. V. 475.

<sup>61</sup>Objects identified as Spanish: Met Museum, 1982.60.387; Royal Collections Trust, RCIN 65255; Victoria & Albert Museum, O72012. Objects identified as German: Victoria & Albert Museum, 4212-1855; Cleveland Museum of Art, inv. no. 1959.336. Object identified as French/Belgian: British Museum, AF.2767. Object identified as Italian: British Museum, AF.2859. Object identified as Transylvanian: Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest, inv. no. 13697.



**Figure 1.** Pelican jewel, gold, enameling, emerald, pearl, and ruby, Central Europe, Renaissance (attached to a nineteenth-century pin), Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague (UPM 67594).

Germany, dating from 1400 to 1800.<sup>62</sup> Extant pendant crosses are similarly challenging to place. They, perhaps unsurprisingly, often have similar physical and aesthetic characteristics as gemstones set within silver and silver gilt, sometimes with enameling.<sup>63</sup> The design is relatively stable regardless of provenance across the period, although differences can be noted in the metalwork, with some employing more elaborate openwork. The recognizable trope reveals a shared aesthetic and practice across Europe and tied devotees to a long, pan-European symbolism and materiality. Goldsmiths making such pendants across Europe shared their skills and practices. These items show the duality of such objects: how it was important to signal membership to a shared culture through material belongings while also asserting an individual pious identity by flaunting a precious, unique piece of jewelry. The object allowed the devotee to create a personal relationship with a “group identity.” Such items strongly bound individuals to a collective whole.

It is not yet known how these devotional items circulated, but it seems possible that some of them were traded across Europe as whole objects rather than being made individually and locally. Museum cataloguing focuses on provenance, but items might not have stayed in one place. Indeed, inventories made on the death of an individual record the transitional moment at which an object lost its connection to its deceased owner. These objects were also part of a consumer market. Images from the period, such as Ambrogio Brambilla’s *Those who go selling and working around Rome* (first published in 1582), show peddlers selling rosaries and other devotional objects on the streets.<sup>64</sup> The mobility of these items allowed a shared culture to permeate across borders among Catholic communities.

<sup>62</sup>See Yvonne Hackenbroch, *Renaissance Jewellery* (London, 1979) and *Princely Magnificence: Court Jewels of the Renaissance, 1500–1630*, exhibition catalogue, Victoria and Albert Museum (London, 1980).

<sup>63</sup>For more in-depth discussion of devotional cross pendants, see Ivanič, *Cosmos*.

<sup>64</sup>Vicky Avery, Melissa Calaresu, and Mary Laven, eds., *Treasured Possessions from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (London, 2015), 48.

The materiality of small devotional jewelry also reveals how religion drove trade in raw materials such as precious stones and metals. While plain materials are prevalent in devotional jewelry in the inventories, the most common “gems” listed in inventories were diamonds (both specified as oriental and Bohemian), pearls, turquoise, garnets (sometimes specified as Bohemian), and rubies (sometimes specified as oriental). More rarely mentioned were amber, jasper, crystal, hyacinth, malachite, carnelian, and coral and the exotic emerald, amethyst, sapphire, and “coconut” (shell or palm wood, as in Veronika’s inventory). Devotional jewelry drew on a vast array of materiality from across the globe.

Making unequivocal assertions about the provenance of gems and materials listed in inventories is rarely possible. Some inventories specify “Bohemian” or “oriental” gems. Anna Mary Sartellová, for example, in 1650 owned five rings with “oriental garnets,” whereas Judýt Bilynová in 1640 owned a ring with a “Bohemian diamond.”<sup>65</sup> As Anna Parker has shown, such descriptions are open to interpretation, with “oriental” in some cases pertaining to quality rather than provenance.<sup>66</sup> While inventory scribes demonstrate impressive identification skills, it is also possible that mistakes were made. The group of gemstones that were regularly used in devotional jewelry could have come from a number of local or distant mines. Bohemian mountains produced garnets and diamonds, but rubies and larger diamonds often came from Asia. The regional availability of garnets and diamonds from Bohemian mines in the Erzgebirge may have influenced a specifically local devotional material culture in the making of items like cross pendants set with stones. The combination of Bohemian garnets and diamonds would have reflected a more exotically connected aesthetic of red and white gemstones and would have been more accessible to less wealthy burghers. Indeed, garnets, pearls, and diamonds outweigh the other materials in the 1625 inventory of Hendrych Becker, a goldsmith in the New Town. Becker owned ten “small and large garnets” to one ruby, for example.<sup>67</sup>

Objects like Kateřina’s pelican in her piety with twelve rubies, or the extant pelican jewel in [Figure 1](#) exploited the characteristics of natural gemstones to heighten devotion. The devotee was encouraged to meditate on Christ’s sacrifice through the visual stimulus of the glittering and deep blood-red gemstones. While analysis of extant objects reveals the individuality of devotional jewelry, these objects played on a distinctive, symbolically charged, and shared global Catholic aesthetic that was not only visual but also material. Scientific analysis of the materials used in these items would provide insight into how a seemingly distinctive use of red and white gemstones—garnets, rubies, diamonds, and pearls—may have been influenced by the available regional and global resources and trade networks. Furthermore, it would begin to establish how Catholic demand for these materials that augmented devotional experience drove the exploitation of natural resources around the world and reinforced the need for specific trade connections across local, transregional, and global networks.

## Conclusion

In Prague, the famous case of the *Jezulátko*, a miraculous Jesus doll, shows how Catholic objects could both be transcultural and appropriated as a local Bohemian devotion.<sup>68</sup> The *Jezulátko* was a wood and wax Jesus doll made in Spain in the late sixteenth century and acquired by Polyxena von Lobkovic (1566–1642), who married the supreme chancellor Zdeněk Vojtěch Lobkovic in 1603. In 1628 she gave the *Jezulátko* to the Discalced Carmelites in the Lesser Town. In 1631, the convent, which was adjacent to the Church of Our Lady Victorious in the Lesser Town, was plundered during the

<sup>65</sup>Anna Mary Sartellová (Old Town, 1650), AHMP 1176, f. 342r: *Paty prsten s Orientalským kranatem ssaczowan 4 ½ R*; Judýt Bilynová (Old Town 1640), AHMP 1176, f. 193v: [in a list of rings] *Item Czeským dyamentem*; also see Anna Kutovcová (New Town, St. Peter, 1600), AHMP 1208, f. 129v.

<sup>66</sup>Anna Parker, “The Matter and Meaning of Jewellery in Prague’s Old Town, 1576–1618” (MPhil diss., University of Cambridge, 2017), 16; see also Michael Bycroft, “Boethius de Boodt and the Emergence of the Oriental/Occidental Distinction in European Mineralogy,” in *Gems in the Early Modern World: Materials, Knowledge and Global Trade, 1450–1800*, ed. Michael Bycroft and Sven Dupré (Basingstoke, 2019), 149–72.

<sup>67</sup>Hendrych Becker, Goldsmith (New Town, 1625): In a small black chest, ... 18 pearls; 43 small and large pearls / Hyacinth, emerald / Oriental diamond in gold setting / Rough diamond not set / Small and large garnets 10 / Black beads 18 / Silver hand in hand ring, silver heart / Ring with 6 diamonds / 1 sapphire, 1 ruby.

<sup>68</sup>This section is based on Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*, 61–62.

Lutheran Saxon attack on Prague and the figure was discarded. In 1637 it was rediscovered. According to an eighteenth-century history of the statue, the figurine miraculously spoke to advise that the fortunes of the convent and church would be restored if it received special devotions. It was returned and was claimed by the Bohemian nobility as a local cult. In particular, it became a favored devotional focus for Prague noblewomen, who dressed it according to the liturgical seasons, provided it with a crown, and made donations to the church. This originally Spanish family devotional object had become miraculous in Prague and created a local form of devotion.<sup>69</sup> As Louthan has argued, what can be observed through the *Jezulátko* and other Catholic material culture in Prague was not just the imposition of a “uniform baroque style” but rather a culture that incorporated “native Bohemian elements.”<sup>70</sup> Catholicism in Bohemia, while tying into a network of shared religious material culture on an international scale, had a particular “local” identity. Local religious cultures are often studied to access the variety of beliefs and forms of Catholicism in Catholic lands, particularly in terms of lay religion.<sup>71</sup> However, an example like this reveals that while local religious culture is often seen in opposition to a universal form of Catholicism, directed by the Church and by territorial authorities, objects allowed people to look both ways.<sup>72</sup> Images and objects used in the home for devotional practice allowed men and women of all social strata to engage in this dual strategy. As such, “Bohemian” religious culture was often tied into a larger network.

Global Catholicism—in the sense of a shared Catholic culture that crossed borders and connected individuals—has as much relevance to Central Europe as it does to Asia and the Americas in this period. Catholicism in Central Europe was a hybrid Catholicism. The examples in this article reveal how Catholic culture in Prague was cross-pollinated with Catholic culture in places including Bavaria, Poland, Italy, Spain, and beyond to Jerusalem. At the high end, burghers’ religious objects might be made from “exotic” materials and influenced by non-European styles. Veronika’s coconut rosary is an example of such apparently “reverse” consumption of Catholic goods from outside of Europe. A coconut shell liturgical cup incorporating a bezoar stone and a rhinoceros horn handle entered Rudolf’s collection around 1600. It was thought to have been carved in Goa and presents an even more opulent example of integrated global Catholic material culture.<sup>73</sup> These are extreme cases demonstrating the reach of the wealthiest inhabitants in the city. More accessible cross pendants and pelican in her piety pendants set with gems from near and far reveal the different overlapping networks of communities across Europe and beyond with which individuals could associate. Individual items among domestic possessions provided ways to understand concretely and tangibly how a universal religion newly drawing on global connections played a role in the formation of strong, locally rooted individual confessional identities.

**Suzanna Ivanič** is Lecturer in Early Modern European History at the University of Kent. Her research focuses on religion and material culture in Central Europe. Publications include articles on pilgrimage travelogues and amulets. Her monograph *Cosmos and Materiality in Early Modern Prague* (2021) examines—through the study of objects such as cross pendants, spoons, and glass beakers—how the spiritual worlds of Prague burghers were embedded in their natural environment and social relations as much as, if not more than, in confessional identity.

<sup>69</sup>Jesus dolls were popular in Spain, Italy, and Germany, especially for nuns: see Ulinka Rublack, “Female Spirituality and the Infant Jesus in Late Medieval Dominican Convents,” *Gender & History* 6, no. 1 (April, 1994): 37–57; and Maya Corry, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, eds., *Madonnas and Miracles: The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2017), 92–93.

<sup>70</sup>Gary Cohen and Franz Szabo, “Introduction: Embodiments of Power: Building Baroque Cities in Austria and Europe,” in Cohen and Szabo, *Embodiments of Power*, 1–8, here p. 5.

<sup>71</sup>William Christian Jr., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1981).

<sup>72</sup>The term “glocal” is usefully applied here. See Dagmar Freist, “Lost in Time and Space? Glocal Memoryscapes in the Early Modern World,” in *Memory before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Erika Kuijpers et al. (Leiden, 2013), 203–21.

<sup>73</sup>See case study of the coconut shell liturgical cup in Ivanič, “Early Modern Religious Objects,” 331–32.