

Lipnice Bible Returns Home After 600 Years

by Ladislav Langpaul

In May 1421 a Latin copy of the bible was finished in secret and in hiding from the Hussite Army at the castle of Lipnice nad Sázavou. It later became known as the Lipnice Bible, *see back cover*.

The Association for the Rescue of the Birth House of Jan Zrzavý in the neighbouring village of Okrouhlice first learned of the manuscript in 2015 and decided to find out where the Lipnice Bible ended up. With the help of a specialist bookshop in Basel we traced it to the Museum of the Bible in Oklahoma City, later in Washington D.C. We got in touch with the director of the museum, Prof. David Trobisch, who was sufficiently intrigued by our interest to make a journey in 2016 from Washington to Lipnice to see where the manuscript originated. He came, he saw and said: "We are going to let you have the bible on loan in 2021. For free. And we shall cover the insurance costs too. You will have to take care of security and promotion."

The following years were spent trying to bring on board the Czech side – the only result, but very important one, was the enthusiasm of the property manager of Lipnice Castle, Mr. Mark Hanzlík. His superiors, as well as the bureaucrats of the Vysočina Region and elsewhere, were cautious. At the same time, on the recommendation of Prof. Petr Čornej, we approached the top specialist in manuscripts of the period, Doc. Lucie Doležalová PhD, who became very interested in the project and gathered a group of 17 authors, mostly from Charles University, to work on a collective monograph *The Lipnice Bible, a shield of faith in the turbulent times of the late Middle Ages (Lipnická bible, štít víry v neklidných časech)*. The book was finished in February this year with my own company then providing graphic design and production. We also produced twenty display panels accompanying the exhibition.

On 23rd June 2021 the Lipnice Bible left from the airport in Washington D.C. and a day later we unpacked the precious object at the castle in Lipnice. The exhibition opened on Saturday 26th June in the presence of the now former director of the Museum of the Bible, Prof. David Trobisch. The Czech side was represented by the deputy head

of Culture of the Vysočina Region, Mr. M. Fabeš. The following day an ecumenical Roman Catholic and Protestant service was held in the castle courtyard titled *The Chalice of Reconciliation*.

The new book, *Lipnická bible*, financed by crowdfunding and by our association, was launched at the opening of the exhibition.

The Lipnice Bible can be seen at Lipnice Castle until the end of August. From 1st to 15th September 2021 the Bible will be exhibited together with other period biblical manuscripts from the collections of the National Library in the Mirror Chapel of the Clementinum in Prague

The Lipnice Bible

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In May 1421 a Latin copy of the Bible was finished in secret at the Castle of Lipnice nad Sázavou, see right.

Left, the original medieval binding.

Below, a detail from the Gospel of St. John.

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