

JAN ZIZKA OF TROCNOV AND THE GOBLET (1360? - 1424)

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JAN ZIZKA OF TROCNOV AND THE GOBLET WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JAN ZIZKA

One of the most significant and best remembered figures of Czech national history was a man of mystery, a character of many myths, a man of many guises. He was a yeoman of Trocnov, a royal servant, a member of the brotherhood of combat, mercenary and Hussite leader. He is best known for this last role. It proved that Jan Zizka had a great talent as a military leader. He knew how to inspire and lead his fellow combatants, who loved him like a father.

Jan Zizka was born into a family of non-wealthy nobleman on a farm in the South Bohemian village of Trocnov. His childhood and youth remain a mystery due to a lack of written history of those days. As a man, he tried farming his land legacy, and joined the royal court of the Rosenbergs. However, this didn't go well and he found himself among Matěj Vůdce's group of highwaymen. Zizka was not only a common highwayman, he also preferred to seek his livelihood by the sword. He set up acquaintance with the noble mercenary captains of the Moravian borderland, especially with the famous Jan „Divoky Sokol“ of Lamberka. In the year 1409 he received a pardon from all acts of violence from the king and the following year he went to war in Poland. Under the command of



The Lamberks he participated in the Battle of Grunwald with the Teutonic Knights. On his return he settled in Prague, where Václav IV. ranked him among the family of his court.

In 1419 Zizka again found himself in the middle of a great historical chapter. Influenced by the ideas of Jan Hus (whose sermons in Bethlehem Chapel he attended) Zizka joined the followers of the reformation of the Church and society. In the autumn of

1419 Zizka left Prague in search of a place for a truly fair and just Hussite community of brothers and sisters. He found it in Tabor, where he arrived in late March 1420, this is the time of the birth of the Hussite town. He was one of four governors of Tabor and commander of its armed forces, which he himself created. Leading his warriors from the front he defended the freedom of Tabor against all enemies. Although he left Tabor in 1423, he achieved his victories with the support of the East Bohemian Hussite Union, he is still rightly considered as one of the founders of the city.

A walk through Tabor touches places connected with the life of Jan Zizka especially at the time of the Tabor district office. Note the important monuments, which show that the Tabor governor has a firm place in the historical memory of past and present generations.





ZIZKA'S MONUMENT IN ZIZKA SQUARE

2



This is the most visible reminder of the history of the town and the destiny of the former Trocnov yeoman. Originally the town of Tabor ordered a bronze statue by Josef Vaclav Myslbek. Frantisek Palacký - an esteemed historian and leading figure in Czech society in the mid-19th century - also participated in its preparation. Myslbek's statue of Zizka was unveiled in the main square with a great fanfare in August 1877. Due to production defects, the statue had to be removed within a year. A new statue was commissioned by the town, this time by Josef Strachovský who worked with a professional consultant, historian Vaclav Vladivoj Tomka - the author of the very popular biography of Zizka Zizka. The new statue was carved in sandstone and placed in the square in 1884, but this time without the public fanfare.

THE MASARYK'S HOUSE

1



It can be found in Smetana street. The side is decorated with two large reliefs by Frantisek Bilek in the years 1932 to 1936. Here you'll find opposites placed next to each other: Jan Zizka, the tough and uncompromising warrior, leader of the revolution and Petr Chelčický (about 1390-1460), a philosopher who rejected violence even if used to promote fair ideals.

ZIZKA'S BASTION - PIKARTS IN KLOKOTY

4

5

The city walls were intensively built and improved in the first few decades after the founding of the Hussites Tabor. Builders built on the preserved fortifications of the Premysl's Fort where they added artillery bastions and towers. The defenders expected that they would have to face the enemy heavily-armed and carrying firearms. One of the bastions was symbolically named after the Tabor Governor. Zizka was also represented on the walls elsewhere. There was a painting of the governor as a blind man on horseback on the Prague Gate. The painting as well as the gate itself were not preserved, but Zizka's bastion at Holeček's park has remained to this day. There is a good view across the valley of Tisemnického creek to Klokoty where Jan Zizka bloodily settled up with the radical sectarians among the citizens of Tabor town. In the spring of 1421 Jan Zizka let 50 pikarts burn at the parish in Klokoty. Their death is commemorated by a stone in Klokoty, embossed by Frantisek Bilek.



OLD TOWN HALL

3



It represents a link between Tabor and Jan Zizka for several reasons. Apparently the military headquarters were located on the premises of today's old town hall. The Hussite Museum is exclusively dedicated to the life and forms of Jan Zizka. A copy of the famous Caslavská calva can be found here as well as an original part of Myslbek's broken statue of Jan Zizka. In the town hall palace we can admire the original plaster equestrian statue of Zizka, which was a model for the statue at Vitkov memorial. The model of the sculpture was created by Bohumil Kafka in the 1930's. The building of the model as well as the memorial itself were plagued with trouble.