Passionate Copying in Late Medieval Bohemia

The Case of Crux de Telcz (1434–1504)

Lucie Doležalová
with contributions
by Michal Dragoun
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Acknowledgements

Editorial Note

Most of the results presented here have already been published in Czech, specifically in the collective monograph *Kříž z Telče (1434–1504): písař, sběratel a autor* [Crux of Telč (1434–1504): scribe, collector and author], ed. Lucie Doležalová and Michal Dragoun (Prague: Scriptorium, 2020). All other published results are noted in the respective places.

Most of the manuscripts used are held in the National Library of the Czech Republic in Prague. In order to avoid excessive repetition, these manuscripts are referred to only by their shelf mark.

Abbreviations

Kap	Praha, Archiv Pražského hradu, fond Knihovna Metropolitní kapituly u sv. Víta (Prague, Archives of the Prague Castle, Library of the Metropolitan Chapter at St. Vitus)
Kříž z Telče	*Kříž z Telče (1434–1504): písař, sběratel a autor* [Crux of Telč (1434–1504): scribe, collector and author], edited by Lucie Doležalová and Michal Dragoun (Prague: Scriptorium, 2020).
PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina*
SOA T	Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň, fond Rukopisy Třeboň (State Regional Archives in Třeboň, Manuscripts of Třeboň Division)
Walther, *Initia*	Hans Walther, *Initia carminum ac versuum Medii Aevi posterioris Latinorum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959)
Walther, *Proverbia*	Hans Walther, *Proverbia sententiaeque latinitatis Medii Aevi* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963–1969)

I.
Scribe as Author—Precautions

Qui me scribebat, Crux de Telcz nomen habebat.
Qui pensat quanto constat scriptura labore,
scriptorem tanto maiori tractat honore.

He who copied/wrote me was named Crux of Telč.
Whoever considers how much work is involved in copying/writing
holds the scribe/author in greater esteem.[1]
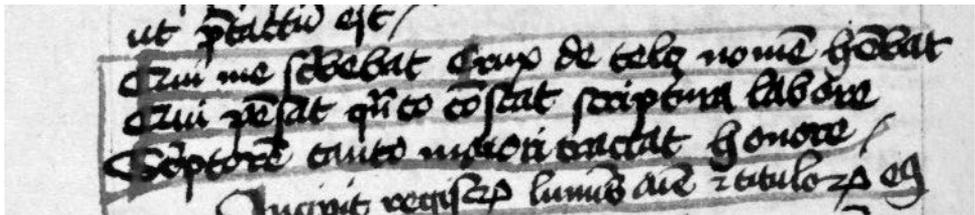(Crux of Telč in I A 38, fol. 311vb, fig. 1)

Fig. 1. **Crux's note on copying/writing (I A 38, fol. 311vb).**

1   All translations, unless noted otherwise, are mine.

The study of "material texts" has flourished in recent decades.[2] Medieval copies are often so fundamentally different from each other that it is difficult to decide whether they are variations of the same text or new creations. A medieval scribe is often something of a co-author, who interprets and so co-creates the text. Consequently, the borderline between the authorial version and the scribal one is blurred. Hence, in order to fully explore medieval texts, we must also consider their material transmission: individual variants, insertions, comments, additions and omissions, texts copied in vicinity, and texts bound together in the same volume.

This approach has some limitations, the most obvious being that only a fragment of the medieval cultural production has survived. The way a medieval scribe dealt with the model text—by adding, omitting or changing—can rarely be fully described since the original no longer exists. Scribes sometimes copied on the basis of dictation. If we do not know what the copyist saw or heard we can only analyse manuscript transmission of the specific text, and focus on variants unique to the particular copy by that particular copyist. The conclusions of such research are uncertain, the observations gained cannot be proven, only offered with care and in good faith.

In addition, many scribal interventions do not carry any specific meaning. Alongside the omnipresent spelling variants, such interventions may include a shift in word order; addition or omission of a single word, its replacement by a synonym, change of a pronoun, conjunction, preposition or prefix, change of tense, voice, mood, person or number with verbs or change of the case or number with nouns, adjectives and pronouns. Many of these are made by scribes with poor Latin grammar—e.g. the endings of deponent verbs are changed into grammatically wrong active forms, mood is changed in dependent clauses, or unusual pronouns are selected. Other shifts are the result of confusion with respect to abbreviations and letter forms (e.g. interchanging *mi, nu, ini, un* and *im*). Still other shifts are caused by habits arising from the scribe's mother tongue. The fluidity and ambiguity of the texts copied in manuscripts are difficult to conceive exactly because even the tiniest intervention of the particular scribe—i.e. any of the above mentioned ones—may in fact reflect a specific intention.

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2   E.g. Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2012).

The manuscript culture of the late Middle Ages differs from that of earlier periods: manuscript codices were produced in great numbers and were disseminated widely. Late medieval paper codices often seem rather disorganised compared to older parchment ones. They seem less reader-friendly in spite of the fact that they use several types of paratexts, including table of contents, indices or inner system of references, which should facilitate the reader's orientation. Individual scribes also add colophons to their copies more frequently in paper volumes, and so many more particular scribes are known from this later period.

This book focuses on the scribal activity of a single person, Crux de Telcz (in Czech known as Kříž z Telče, 24 December 1434–25 March 1504), and tries, in spite of all the challenges involved, to grasp his intentions. Crux was active in various environments in different roles, but was always very interested in manuscripts, which he copied or acquired in various ways. He has received scholarly attention thanks especially to his unique copies of Old Czech and Latin texts, as well as for his scribal and collector's activities.[3] This book innovates by analysing Crux as a scribe within the manuscript culture of late medieval Bohemia. Nevertheless, as it will quickly become clear, Crux escapes simple categorisation. His case is extraordinary, yet it points us to the possibilities and limitations of the study of late medieval scribal culture.

Crux of Telč is unique for the intensity of his activity: he intervened in at least fifty-four surviving codices, wrote over 4,300 folia, and added his notes and glosses to at least twice as many. Thanks to his scribal activity, many Czech and Latin texts have been preserved. Crux was also a translator, author, glossator, editor, and collector of volumes. When intervening in texts, he probably did not have a single goal and did not follow a single strategy. In the few cases

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3   Jaroslav Kadlec, "Oldřich Kříž z Telče" [Ulrich Crux de Telcz], *Listy filologické*, 79, no. 1 (1956): 91–102 and 79, no. 2 (1956): 234–238; František Mareš, "Literární působení kláštera Třeboňského" [Literary influence of the Třeboň convent], *Časopis Musea Království českého* 70 (1896): 521–547; Pavel Spunar, "Vývoj autografu Oldřicha Kříže z Telče" [The development of the autograph of Ulrich Crux of Telč], *Listy filologické* 81 (1958): 220–226, I–IV, and a number of other case studies, e.g. Miroslav Flodr, "Florilegium aus Werken römischer Klassiker in dem handschriftlichen Sammelwerk des Oldřich Kříž aus Telč," *Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity, řada historická*, C 16/14 (1967): 133–140. Crux has been overlooked by international scholarship with the exception of Elisabetta Caldelli, "Copisti in casa," in *Du scriptorium à l'atelier. Copistes et enlumineurs dans la conception du livre manuscript au Moyen Âge*, ed. Jean-Luc Deuffic, Pecia 13 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 199–249, who dedicates several paragraphs (p. 239–41) to him.

when his direct model has been identified, we can discern his approach, but usually we must understand his work by comparing variants within a complex manuscript tradition of a given text. The transmission itself is often mysterious: many texts in Crux's miscellanies are otherwise unknown. They are usually adaptations of common late medieval themes, which Crux is unlikely to have authored. Yet this cannot be proven without identifying his models. For example, for the text in I A 38, fols. 308ra–311vb, which Crux closed with the colophon cited at the beginning of this chapter, is an unidentified addition to the text *Lumen anime*. Similar additions appear in a variety of versions in many manuscripts.[4] Crux might have authored it, but it is more probable that he only modified his model.

Therefore, although the sources are unusually numerous in this case, their contextualisation and interpretation are difficult. I have undertaken this project aware that its conclusions will remain suggestions, but also trusting that this quite unique case will help us to understand the character of medieval textual production, readership and manuscript culture in general. The present study offers only selected insights: considering the amount of surviving information, a full picture would require much further research. At the same time, the selected cases are investigated in detail in order to assess the exact nature of the scribe's activities. The image of the scribe as an author is exciting, but—as it will quickly become clear—the manuscript evidence does not always make it easy to draw it.

Crux is not entirely unique. The Benedictine from Sankt Gallen Gallus Kemli († 1481),[5] the Augustinian canon from Żagań (Sagan) Andreas Ritter (1440–1480)[6] and several others were similarly active scribes. A comparison with the methods and practices of one of them, the Franciscan from Würz-

4   Cf. Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, "The Texts Called Lumen anime," *Archivum fratrum Praedicatorum* 41 (1971): 5–113.

5   Lucie Doležalová, "Multiple Copying and the Interpretability of Codex Contents: 'Memory Miscellanies' Compiled by Gallus Kemli (1417–1480/1) of Sankt Gallen," in *Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies: Composition, Authorship, Use*, ed. Lucie Doležalová and Kimberly Rivers, Medium Aevum Quotidianum, Sonderband 31 (Krems: Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 2013), 139–165.

6   Volker Honemann, "Zu Leben und Werk des Saganer Augustinerchorherren Andreas Ritter," in *Deutschsprachige Literatur des Mittelalters im östlichen Europa*, ed. Ralf G. Päsler and Dietrich Schmidtke (Heidelberg: Winter Verlag, 2006), 293–313.

burg Johannes Sintram († 1450),[7] made by Kimberly Rivers, is included in this volume.

Caveats

After deliberation, all codices including any intervention by Crux will be considered here as "Crux's." The degree of Crux's intervention differs widely: some of "his" codices are mostly in his hand, others only partly, still others include only his notes, table of contents, or corrections. His colophons are included in about half of the codices. One codex has only his *custodes* (i.e. numbering at the ends of quires), which show that Crux ordered the quires before binding. Such a corpus is thus very different in character from late medieval personal libraries, which can usually be defined on the basis of *ex libris* or the owner's notes.[8] Crux's "library" was not and could not have been a personal library: after entering the Třeboň convent, Crux had to surrender (at least formally) all his property; Augustinian canons were allowed to use the word "mine" only when referring to their parents or their guilt.[9] This leads to several caveats about the present corpus.

7   Kimberly Rivers, "Writing the Memory of the Virtues and Vices in Johannes Sintram's (d. 1450) Preaching Aids," in *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lucie Doležalová (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 31–48.

8   This is the case of e.g. the large library of a contemporary of Crux, the Utraquist Václav Koranda the Younger. Cf. Jindřich Marek, *Václav Koranda mladší. Utrakvistický administrátor a literát* [Wenceslas Koranda the Younger. Administrator of the Utraquist Church and writer] (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2017), 108–146.

9   Cf. Adéla Ebersonová, *Roudnická statuta. Zvyklosti kanonie řeholních kanovníků sv. Augustina v Roudnici nad Labem (komentovaná edice a překlad)* [The Statutes of Roudnice. The Consuetudines of the canons regular of the Augustinian convent in Roudnice nad Labem (a commented edition and translation)] (Prague: Scriptorium, in print).

Incomplete Corpus

It is fairly certain that more codices featuring Crux's hand are yet to be found. While previous research has identified primarily the codices in which Crux's hand is prominent, sixteen additional manuscript volumes were discovered during our recent careful scrutiny of the medieval libraries of the Třeboň and Borovany houses.[10] Nevertheless, Crux travelled widely and surely not all the codices in which he ever intervened ended up in Třeboň. It is especially the library of the Metropolitan Chapter of St Vitus Cathedral in Prague that must be explored in more detail: there is very little evidence for the time Crux spent at the chapter at Prague Castle, but he was there for several years and there is no reason to assume that he did not copy a great deal there. In this library Michal Dragoun made a chance find of another manuscript by Crux, Kap, O XLVII, and it is likely that there are more of his manuscripts there, because the rich holdings of the Metropolitan Chapter Library have not as yet been much researched. Other chance finds include an independent piece of paper with Crux's writing inserted in a Třeboň incunable, three charters and a quire from the Třeboň canonry with Crux's brief content summaries. Clearly, Crux's hand may still be hidden in many other codices and separate sheets in many other places. Therefore, the corpus of "Crux's codices" presented here is almost surely still incomplete.

Wrongly Included or Excluded Manuscripts

The codices in their current state of preservation might not reflect their appearance in the Middle Ages. Some may have been bound only later, and many of their quires could have been originally transmitted independently. The proximity of the texts within a codex may indicate that they were considered by the compiler to belong together, that they had a similar function, but it can also be the result of a quite random decision made at the time of binding.[11]

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10   This detailed catalogue covering over 300 codices is: Michal Dragoun, Adéla Ebersonová and Lucie Doležalová, *Středověké knihovny augustiniánských kanonií v Třeboni a Borovanech* [Medieval Libraries of Augustinian Canonries in Třeboň and Borovany], 3 vols. (Praha: Scriptorium, 2021).

11   Cf., for example, Lucie Doležalová and Kimberly Rivers, eds. *Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies: Composition, Authorship, Use* (Krems: Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit, 2013).

For example, Crux's miscellanies, the present-day codices I G 11a, I G 11b and I G 11c, originally all formed one volume. Although the present codex I G 11b does not feature Crux's hand at all, it was included in the corpus because in the Middle Ages it was part of a volume that included Crux's writing. Clearly, we may lack this sort of information in other cases and hence omit from the corpus codices that should have been included, or wrongly include texts that were bound together with Crux's quires only later.

Did Crux Choose Which Copies of Other Scribes to Include in "His" Codices?

Crux had some copies made for himself, and he often seems to have been in charge of a collective copying. There is plentiful evidence for this. For instance, he bought copies of texts from other scribes and included them in his miscellany (fig. 2):

> Ego, frater Crux de Telcz, conscripsi hos manu propria sermones in seculo existens, et quos solus non potui, appreciavi et aliquos sexternos ab aliis habui datos.[12]

> I, brother Crux of Telč, have written these sermons in my own hand while I was still in the world; and I bought those that I could not [copy] and received some sexterns [i.e. quires] from others.
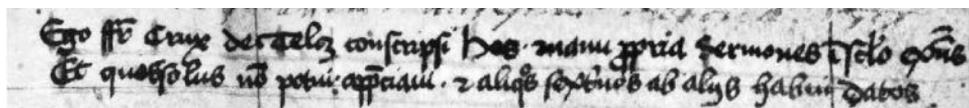

Fig. 2. Crux's note on purchasing copies by other scribes (I E 37, fol. 1r).

Furthermore, he e.g. copied in collaboration with two other scribes (fig. 3):

12   I E 37, fol. 1r.

Et sic est finis huius libelli scriptus per tres: primus principium Iacobus de Fulnek, post medium Venceslaus Trczkonis, filius sutoris de Manietina, finem tercius ego, Crux de Telcz, plebanus in Nepomuk continuavi et finivi anno Domini 1474 in octava sancte Margarethe in domo habitacionis mee circa ecclesiam sancti Iacobi et Clementis.[13]
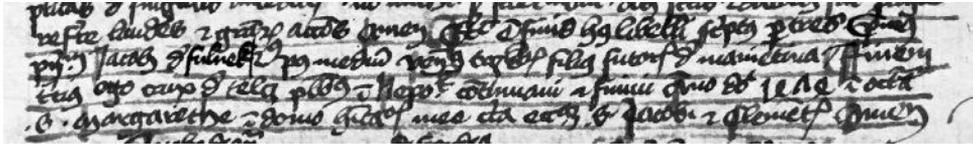

Fig. 3. **Crux's note on collaborating with other scribes (XIV E 31, fol. 216r).**

And this is the end of this little book written by three: the beginning by the first [scribe], Jacob of Fulnek, then the middle by Wenceslas, son of Trčka, son of a shoemaker from Manětín, the end the third [scribe], I, Crux of Telč, priest in Nepomuk continued and finished in 1474 in the octave of St Margaret [20 July 1474] in the house of my residence by the church of Saints Jacob and Clement.

Or he finished a copy by other scribes (fig. 4):

Finitus et suppletus anno Domini M° CCCC° LXXXIIII° feria sexta proxima post Divisionem apostolorum in sillaba illa "post". Licet per alium sit totus sexternus quendam fratrem scriptus, sicut et alii in exilio quando fuerunt a monasterio Trzebonensi exclusi tempore Zizkonis et postea sunt revocati, hec Crux de Telcz.[14]

Finished and rendered in the year 1484, on the closest Friday after the Dispersion of the Apostles, in the syllable "post" [16 July 1484]. Although the whole sextern [i.e. quire] was written by some other brother just as the other ones when they were expelled from the

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13   XIV E 31, fol. 216r, at the end of *Summa penitenciarum*.
14   XI C 1, fol. 362v.

Třeboň monastery at the time of Žižka,[15] and afterwards they were called back, this [part was written by] Crux of Telč.
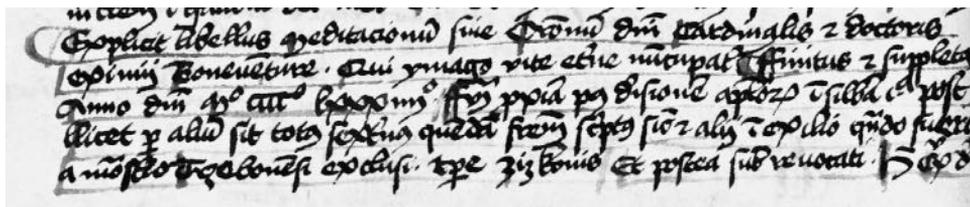

Fig. 4. Crux's note on finishing a copy begun by other scribes (XI C 1, fol. 362v).

However, in the second case, it is not clear whether Crux was leading the group of scribes or whether they were all working on someone else's order. Similarly, in the third case, it is possible that Crux acquired the text himself, but neither can it be excluded that he came across it by chance or that he was asked by someone else to finish the copying. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that it was Crux's choice to include in his miscellanies all the texts that are not in his hand. They might have been bound together later, without Crux's will or knowledge. Even when Crux added a table of contents to "his" codex, it is not certain that he himself selected the codex contents.

Do the Texts in Crux's Miscellanies That Are in His Hand Reflect His Particular Interests?

There is evidence that Crux was sometimes paid to copy. For example, his codex I A 41 contains a colophon (fig. 5):

> Explicit Ecclesiastica hystoria ab Epiphanio conscripta ex Socrate Sozomeno et Theodorico in unum collecte et nuper de Greco in Latinum translate in libris numero duodecim per me Crucem de Telcz scripta pro precio venerabili domino Thobie, predicatori

15   Johannes Žižka of Trocnov (d. 1424) was a famous leader of the radical Hussite troops.

in Nova Plzna, anno Domini M° CCCC° LXXII° feria secunda ante Galli.[16]

Here ends the Ecclesiastical History written by Epiphanius based on Socrates [Scholasticus] Sozomen and Theodoret [of Cyrrhus], collected into one and earlier translated from Greek to Latin in twelve books, by me, Crux of Telcz written for money for the honourable man Thobias, preacher in New Plzeň, in the year of the Lord 1472, the Monday before St Gallus [12 October 1472].
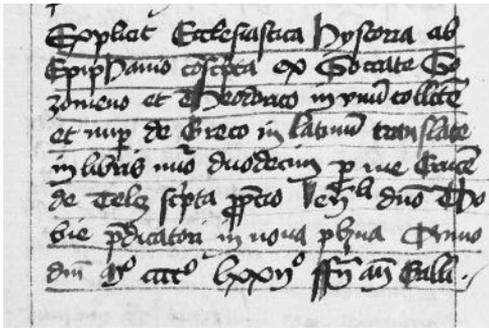

Fig. 5. Crux's colophon stating Crux was paid for the copy (I A 41, fol. 152vb).

Since this copy still ended up in Crux's miscellany, it is likely that some of his other copies were originally meant for others, and thus were also ordered and chosen by others.

   In addition, since Crux copied so many different texts, it is hard to know whether he followed a specific interest or simply copied everything he came across. At least the instances in which he copied a particular text more than once seem to indicate an interest.[17] Yet even such texts must be dealt with carefully: Crux might have made each copy for a different person or for a different purpose, might have lost the first copy or forgotten about it. Especially repeated copying of brief texts should not be overinterpreted. For example, Crux once highlighted with a manicule and once copied himself a quote from

16   Fol. 152vb.
17   Cf. Doležalová, *Multiple Copying.*

Bernard of Clairvaux's letter: *Experto crede, amplius aliquid invenies in silvis quam in libris, ligna et lapides docebunt te, quod a magistris audire non possumus*[18] ("Trust the expert, you will find more in the woods than in books, trees and stones will teach you what we cannot hear from the masters," fig. 6, 7).[19] Crux in fact copied a longer passage (fol. 43r-43v) from XI C 8 (into fols. 276v-277r of his I F 18) but the manicule suggests he considered this part interesting. (It is, however, certain that Crux did not apply this idea in his life.) Crux copied numerous Latin proverbs several times, most of them appear in his mss. SOA T, A 4 and A 7. Within A 4 itself, there is a great deal of overlap—many proverbs are included twice or more, in some cases in slightly different versions.[20]
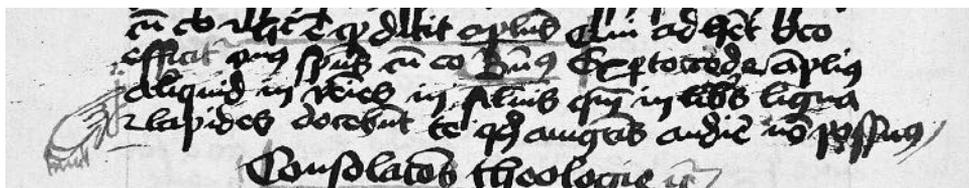

Fig. 6. A copy of a quotation from a letter by Bernard of Clairvaux by another scribe, in Crux's miscellany. Crux highlighted it with a manicule (XI C 8, fol. 43v).
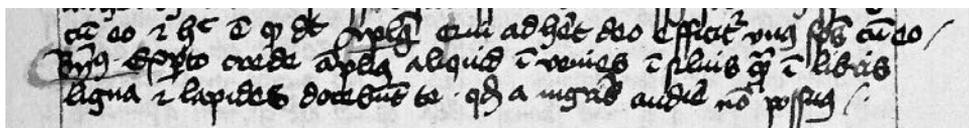

Fig. 7. Crux's copy of the same quote by Bernard of Clairvaux (I F 18, fol. 277r).

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18   Bernardus Claraevallensis, *Epistola 106 ad magistrum Henricum Murdach*, in *PL* 182, col. 242B.
19   In XI C 8, fol. 43v and I F 18, fol. 277v.
20   A special subchapter is dedicated to Crux's proverbs here, see p. 131-137.

When Crux Used the First Person Singular, Did He Write about Himself?

Crux refers to himself in the note about his own birth (*ego natus*)[21] as well as in other personal comments in colophons. He even seems to be drawn to the first person singular: for example, when explaining that he bought one of the codices, he moves from the third person to the first one (fig. 8):

> ...frater Crux de Telcz attulit secum istum ad monasterium Trzeboniense anno 1478, quem emi in scolis rector existens a Iohanne presbytero de Manietina et persolvi propria pecunia.[22]

> ...brother Crux de Telč brought [this book] with him to the Třeboň monastery in 1478, which I bought while I was a school headmaster from John, a priest of Manětín,[23] and I paid with my own money.
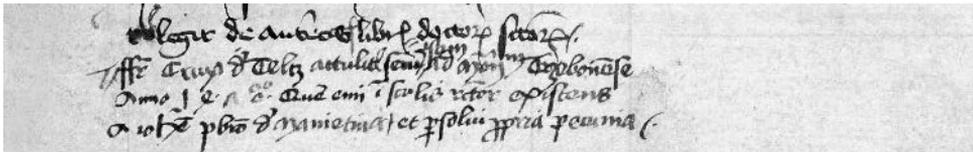

Fig. 8. Crux's note on the purchase of the codex from Iohannes of Manětín (I B 33, fol. 256va).

As was common in medieval manuscript culture, even Crux sometimes copied an original colophon together with the model text. Crux thus wrote in his hand e.g. a colophon to excerpts of Cassiodorus's *Historia tripartita*:

> Magister Nicolaus de Horzepnik vestram complevi iussionem finem faciens Historie excerpendo anno Domini M° CCCC LXV° etc.[24]

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21   I E 38, fol. 264r.
22   I B 33, fol. 256va.
23   A small town ca 30 km northwest of Plzeň.
24   XIV D 24, fol. 39v.