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**Expressivity and Emotionality of Polychrome Baroque Sculptures and Religious  
Imagination of the 17th and 18th Centuries in the Czech Lands**

The thesis attempts to comprehensively analyze the phenomenon of Baroque wooden polychrome sculpture. The research is not primarily focused on the traditional art historical evaluation of the studied works, but rather on their examination in the context of Baroque piety, especially contemporary religiosity (e.g. various manifestations of folk and religious piety) and religious imagination as such. The thesis aims to reinterpret this distinctive type of sacred carvings in the broader context of contemporary religious practice in the Czech lands in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the process of my research, I am trying to find answers regarding the form and function of these sculptures in relation to the viewer. The main questions are:

How the material of the sculpture influences its and final effect?

How viewers could relate to this type of sculpture?

Whether the sculptures are a priori expected to be theatrical or whether they are the result of a predetermined practice based on sources?

Due to the relatively wide focus of my research, I needed to choose an adequate methodology as well as a systematic way to categorize the numerous works of art. Namely, these are wooden polychrome sacred sculptures in the Czech lands in the 17th and 18th centuries, but the topic focuses on the area of present-day Poland as well as Italy and Spain, thanks to the comparative artworks. Since it is not possible to study such a volume of works individually in detail, it seems ideal to focus on the sub-themes that link the individual sculptures. I have therefore divided the sculptures into two major groups - sculptures according to the type of movement & intended mode of perception, and sculptures according to function & type of space. Both of these main chapters further have about six sub-chapters each, which treat the sculptures just according to the predefined parameters. This is where we get closer to the question of methodology because in this situation is choosing a single methodological approach almost impossible. And this is also

given the amount of information that we have preserved about individual works. Hence, I use different methodological approaches in the chapters. For example, in the chapter about those sculptures that require active movement of the audience (e.g., the sculptural decoration in Stations of the Cross and the pilgrimages held to them), I focus on working with contemporary liturgical manuals and the ideal of this devotion. On the other hand, in the case of statues as part of the decoration, I focus on the iconographic aspect together with archival sources.

For the reasons mentioned above, we can assume that there are more potential methodological problems. These include:

- The problem of selecting individual works of art
- The boundaries between art history and cultural history, the positives and negatives of an interdisciplinary approach
- Not to adapt works of art to methodology, but rather methodology to works of art

In my lecture, I would like to present how I try to avoid and prevent them. Whether it is the precise definition of terms or the importance of consulting with colleagues and experts. Last but not least, I would like to briefly outline the issue of research on Baroque sculpture in the pandemic-postcovid-war era in Central and Eastern Europe and open a discussion on the consequences of research and the challenges we have to face as young scholars.