

Hus, a Polemicist and a Fighter

Magistri Iohannis Hus Constantiensia

Ediderunt Helena Krmíčková, Jana Nechutová, Amedeo Molnár (†), Dušan Coufal, Jana Fuksová, Lucie Mazalová, Petra Mutlová, Libor Švanda, Soňa Žáková (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis 274; Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera omnia, tomus XXIV), Turnhout, Brepols Publishers 2016, XCII+350pp. and a picture supplement

A collected edition of John Hus's writings is slowly but surely moving ahead. After two volumes which related to Hus only indirectly,¹ the Brno-based editing group succeeded in preparing a highly important volume XXIV, containing documents which Hus prepared for the anticipated disputation with Church representatives at the Constance council. The disputation he longed for never took place, but these texts attest to Hus's ideas regarding his role at the council. He wanted to greet the participants with a vision of Divine peace and go on to explain his ideas on sufficiency of Divine law and manifestations of faith. This volume also includes texts which Hus wrote in Constance for various other reasons: as replies to charges brought forth by the council or Hus's opponents (Pálež), or written summaries of his position on various issues which were requested by his friends (e.g. on the introduction of reception of wine by laity during the Holy Communion), eventually also by his prison guards. For understandable reasons, the volume does not include letters written in Constance and sent from there: these are to be included in a separate volume of the *Opera omnia*.

Preparation of this modern critical edition is the work of a group of eight editors led by Professor Jana Nechutová. They took as their starting point material prepared decades ago by Amedeo Molnár (†1990), who unfortunately could not finish his work. His materials were now freshly revised and further sources added. The volume is dedicated to the memory of Jiří Kejř.

In an extensive Introduction, the editors provide the requisite information pertaining to each edited volume, including an outline of the structure of the work and references to authorities on its subjects. Their exposition also described the state of preservation, dating, the manner of proving the authorship and ascertaining the circumstances under which each document was written, as well as an overview of previous editions, recent literature and eventual translations. The Introduction further also explains the editing principles adopted in the preparation and a list of sources and literature.

Within the volume, Hus's works are organised in several groups (absolute chronological ordering was not possible due to absence of date in many of the manuscripts). First, we find a group of three texts written still in Bohemia. These are all part of Hus's preparation for the council debate, where the preacher wanted to explain some issues he saw as forming the foundation of his theological position. These three works are supplemented by the so-called 'Viennese autograph', a hand-written manuscript of the abovementioned documents.

¹ Zuzana SILAGIOVÁ and František ŠMAHEL (eds.), *Catalogi librorum vetustissimi Universitatis Pragensis / Die ältesten Bücherkataloge der Prager Universität* (Corpus Christianorum – Continuatio Mediaevalis 271; Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera omnia..., tomus XXXVIIIB – Supplementum II), Turnhout, Brepols Publishers 2015 (reviewed in AUC-HUCP 56/2, 2016, p. 137–139); Gabriel SILAGI and František ŠMAHEL (eds.), *Hieronymus de Praga, Quaestiones, polemica, epistulae* (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis 222; Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera omnia..., Supplementum I), Turnhout 2010.

Before his imprisonment, Hus wrote in Constance an exposition of his view of lay reception of the Holy Communion in both kinds (wine and bread). He used biblical and theological references supplied at least in part by his friends and colleagues from Prague, who wrote to him to inquire about his position on this novel practice. In this text, Hus demonstrates his academic erudition and teaching practice: like in his *De sufficiencia legis Cristi*, he uses the form of *questio*. This text forms a somewhat separate unit.

The third group of texts consists of so-called ‘Constance tractates’, seven short exposition which Hus wrote while without access to specialised literature during the time he was held in prison by the Dominicans. In these texts, Hus offers a catechistic interpretation of the Paternoster, the Decalogue, the issue of mortal sins, knowledge of God, repentance, marriage, and finally also the meaning and manner of receiving the Holy Communion. These expositions were commissioned by his prison guards, three of whom he mentions in final dedications attached to three of these texts. Two of the guards moreover figure also in narrative sources (Report of Petr of Mladoňovice and Chronicle of Vavřinec of Březová). The guards were lower clergy and as such, had some knowledge of Latin and were interested in theological texts. A brief interpretation of the Paternoster is sometimes included in this group. In this volume, however, it is not included because a closer investigation revealed that it was written before Hus’s stay in Constance.

The last group of texts included in this volume consists of Hus’s responses to various charges, written at various points during the period covered in this volume. The earliest were written still in Prague and Hus took them with him to Constance as part of his defence preparations. His thoughts on Wycliff’s articles, selected by Štěpán Pálež from Hus’s treatise *De ecclesia*, were composed later, during his imprisonment at the Dominican monastery. The last reply was penned after his transportation from Gottlieben – where he was not able to write – back to Constance, to a Franciscan convent. In other words, Hus wrote this text shortly before his death.

Only these last-named texts,, written by Hus in response to various forms of accusations, had been made available by modern historiography previously, albeit only in less than perfect editions of Konstantin von Höfler and František Palacký, while the *Sermo de pace* appeared more recently in Amedeo Molnár and František Mrázek Dobiáš’s edition (1963). So far, therefore, most documents published in this volume were accessible only in sixteenth-century prints. This makes the current publication all the more important. The new edition takes into account all known manuscripts, observes all standard rules of edition of old texts, and has been prepared with utmost attention to detail. Attached to it is a pictorial supplement which includes fifteen reproductions from several manuscripts used in the edition.

Publication of this volume of Hus’s writings is a most laudable achievement, especially given their importance within the context of Hus’s final struggle with the Church. It is also a satisfying milestone for all the editors who have been working on the publication of Hus’s *Opera omnia* because the road to these results was long and arduous.

On the margins of this report we ought to mention a smaller publication, which appeared in Brno. It is a popularising booklet which also includes ‘constantiensia’, though in a translation, making them accessible to broader public.² Hus as a polemicist and busily writing

² Jana NECHUTOVÁ and Jana MALÁ (eds.), *Mistr Jan Hus v polemice a v žaláři. Překlady, komentáře a poznámky...* [Master John Hus in Polemics and in Prison. Translations, Commentaries, and Notes...], Brno 2019 (Opera Facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Masarykianae 491).

prisoner of the Church council is presented here by several polemical writings (e.g. against a preacher from Pilsen) as well as some shorter texts he wrote in the Constance prison. This publication includes a tractate ‘against the French singing’, that is, a criticism of polyphony in singing during Church services, where Hus’s authorship is not certain. These texts are accompanied by translations of several poems written in Hus’s honour in the sixteenth century, which in the supplement appear also in their original version. This booklet follows up on a similar publication dedicated to Hus’s teaching activities and polemics he engaged in during his tenure at the Prague university.³

Both of the reviewed volumes, that is, both the critical edition and translations which aim at reaching a broader public, within their intended sphere of readership constitute an important contribution to Hus historiography.

Blanka Zilynská

doi: 10.14712/23365730.2020.34

Mlada Holá, *Studentské koleje pražské univerzity v pozdním středověku a raném novověku. Dějiny – správa – úřední písemnosti (do roku 1622)*

[*Student Colleges of the Prague University in Late Medieval and Early Modern Era. History – Administration – Official Documents (up to 1622)*], Karolinum, Praha 2017, 432 pp., ISBN 978-80-246-3109-7.

In the medieval and Early Modern Era, colleges were within universities a basic type of establishment which provided both accommodation and teaching space. Funding for material provision for teachers and student stipend holders was likewise attached to colleges, which is why a number of scholars studied colleges in detail. In connection with the Prague university, we should note at least the contribution of Rostislav Nový,¹ František Šmahel, Karel Beránek, and Michal Svatoš. Even so, Mlada Holá chose a large subject and dealt with it successfully.² She carefully reviewed many often cited sources and drew from them new information. For instance, she added further details to digests from various documents (e.g. in note no. 659). She drew mainly on source materials: secondary literature forms but a small part of the book’s bibliography. Nevertheless, reports regarding student colleges are for the medieval era so incomplete that even her careful revision did not manage to remove some doubts and lacunae, as in the case on houses in the Fruit Market (p. 72–74). For more recent times, sources are more plentiful and reliable, and the author brings to light many new facts.

³ Jana NECHUTOVÁ and Jana FUKSOVÁ (eds.), *Mistr Jan Hus v polemice a za katedrou. Překlady, komentáře a poznámky...* [Master John Hus in Polemics and Behind the Lectern. Translations, Commentaries, and Notes...], Brno 2015 (Opera Facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Masarykianae 431).

¹ Rostislav Nový, *Koleje mistrů pražské univerzity do roku 1409* [Colleges of Masters of the Prague University Until 1409], AUC-PhH 2, 1959, p. 83–90 (the title is not cited in the book).

² The author had previously published partial studies on the subject; cf. Mlada HOLÁ, *Studentské koleje pražské univerzity a staroměstský měšťan Kříž* [Student Colleges of the Prague University and Kříž, Burgher of the Old Town of Prague], *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica* 18/2, 2015, p. 95–132; EADEM, *Nazaretská kolej pražské univerzity v pozdním středověku* [The Nazareth College of the Prague University in Late Middle Ages], in: Eva Doležalová and Petr Sommer (eds.), *Středověký kaleidoskop pro muže s hůlkou: věnováno Františku Šmahelovi k životnímu jubileu*, Praha 2016, p. 511–521; EADEM, *Alumni koleje Českého národa na pražské univerzitě v letech 1542–1611* [Alumni of the College of the Bohemian Nation in 1542–1611], AUC-HUCP 53/2, 2013 [publ. 2015], p. 41–80.