Iohannes Hus, *Constantiensia*, ed. Helena Krmíčková, Dušan Coufal, Jana Fuksová, Lucie Mazalová, Petra Mutlová, Jana Nechutová, and Libor Švanda. Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, 274. Turnhout: Brepols, 2016, xcii, 350 pp., 15. color ill.

Before his immolation, the Bohemian theologian Jan Hus spent the final 242 days of his life as a prisoner in the lakeside imperial city of Constance. That was 1415. More recently, and partially in anticipation of the sixth centenary of his execution at the Council of Constance, the past decade has seen a marked increase in attention, popular and scholarly alike, paid to all things Hus and Hussite. Jan Hus, one could say, is 'hot.' This relative uptick in Hus's visibility is not, however, simply commemorative; it has as much to do with trends in the study of the later Middle Ages as it does with public history. Much like his contemporary Jean Gerson, Hus left behind an extraordinary written corpus that exemplifies the world in which he lived, and scholars have made a concerted effort to resituate Hus within the complexities of European society during the Great Western Schism. Instead of repeating the narrative of Hus as the forerunner of a Reformation to come, some of the most compelling studies on the Hussite milieu have focused on an increasingly wide range of topics: the history of political thought, literary networks and communication, book history, vernacular preaching and literature, and even the notoriously under-studied wilderness of late-medieval canon law. And yet regardless of the path one takes to get to Hus, and wherever one thinks that path may take them, all roads lead to Constance in one way or another, to his trial, his death, and to its aftermath in the decades and centuries that followed.

Hus and the Council of Constance are in fact so tightly wound together in our historical imagination that the one is hardly legible without the other. But one would be wrong to assume that historians have long since closed the book on this watershed moment in European history. Far from it: sources dating from after his death dominate our understanding of Hus to an extraordinary degree, despite his prolific authorship in the final years of his life. This has made it all the more frustrating that the body of works Hus composed in Prague explicitly in preparation for the council, and those that he wrote while in Constance, have not yet been available to scholars in a text-critical collection.

With fifteen new editions, this volume of Jan Hus's *Constantiensia* goes a long way to amending that situation. Whereas Hus's correspondence and his formal responses to the accusations made during his trial are well known and widely referenced through the editions of František Palacký (1869) and Václav Novotný (1920), gaining a fuller sense of Hus's literary activity in the final months of his life typically requires a foray into unreliable sixteenth-century print collections such as those of Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1558) and Johannes Agricola (1537). The publication of CCCM 274 thus fulfills a major scholarly desideratum and has the potential to represent a major contribution to the study of Jan Hus, the Council of Constance, and the later Middle Ages more generally.

This collection did not come together overnight. The genesis of the project goes back nearly seven decades when the church historian Amadeo Molnár began gathering the materials that would eventually form the core of these editions as part of his work at the Czechoslovakian Academy of Science in the 1950s, at which time the *Constantien-*

sia were planned as volume 24 of the *Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera Omnia* (MIHOO), a project that has since found a new home in a special subseries of the *Continuatio Mediaevalis* of the *Corpus Christianorum*. Although to the best of my knowledge Brepols has not yet integrated the texts edited here into its online databases, one can only hope that they will do so and make it easier for scholars of various stripes to find connections between Hus and the broader contexts of the later Middle Ages.

The fifteen texts under consideration fall neatly into three distinct groupings. The first gives us insight into how Jan Hus hoped to style himself before the council, in tone as much as in substance, and represent something of a crash-course in the thought of Jan Hus. It comprises four short texts that Hus wrote before arriving in Constance: his *Sermo de Pace* in two variants (ed. Jana Nechutová on the basis of Molnár's working drafts), *De sufficientia legis Cristi* (ed. Jana Fuksová and Nechutová) likewise in two variants, *De fidei sue elucidacione* (ed. Petra Mutlová), and *De sumpcione sangwinis Iesu Cristi sub specie vini* (ed. Helena Krmíčková). The editors have also included a particularly fascinating text held in MS 4902 of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, an autograph sketch of ideas and drafts that Hus wrote while preparing the four works that form his "pre-Constance" corpus.

The second group of texts all derive from Hus's first period of incarceration at the lakeside Dominican monastery in Constance. While imprisoned, so the story goes, Hus penned a number of short texts on various topics at the request of his guards, who provided him with the basic stationary necessary for working as an author in an otherwise oppressive environment: *De mandatis Dei et de Oracione Domini* (ed. Fuksová), *De peccato morali*, *De cognicione Dei* (ed. Dušan Coufal and Fuksová),*De tribus hostibus hominis* (ed. Lucie Mazalová and Libor Švanda), *De penitencia* (ed. Mazalová), *De matrimonio* (ed. Coufal), and *De sacramento corporis et saguinis* (sic) *Domini* (ed. Krmičková). These lesser-studied, at times deeply personal texts speak to the gravity of Hus's own imprisonment and promise to be especially fruitful for future research.

The final group of texts gather four sets of responses that Hus wrote to the accusations leveled at him in Prague and during his trial in Constance, the last of which was finished some two weeks before his execution. These *Responsiones ad deposiciones testitum contra M. Iohannem Hus* (ed. Švanda), *de articulos Wyclef* (ed. Coufal), *de articulos Paleč* (ed. Coufal), and the *Responsiones breves ad articulos ultimos* (ed. Mazalová) have all previously appeared in some form, but the editors have made vast improvements to the previously available editions that one finds in Höfler (1837), Palacký (1869), and others. They have also introduced a few typographical novelties that are especially welcome. Hus's legal responses form a web of multiple voices that are not clearly marked as such in manuscript copies, which can make it difficult to keep the logic and internal structure of the texts, not to mention which words are attributed to whom, in order. The editors have mostly solved this problem by presenting these various textual layers with distinct visual markers like brackets, alternating font size, and italicized text, conveying in a useable edition all the complexities of these legal responses. Hus's texts always appear in the largest print, the allegations against him in smaller print, and his commentary on selected words in Latin and/or Czech directly follows the main text containing the head words, placed in smaller print between brackets with Hus's commentary in larger print directly to the right of those brackets.

This formatting ultimately makes it easier to read the text and also helps highlight Hus's working methods as he prepared for his own defense.

The edition under review adheres to the standards that one has come to expect from the Corpus Christianorum: a stout binding, extensive bibliographies, several handsome images in full color, as well as a handful of useful indices. But while the editors of each individual edition have produced internally coherent texts that will likely remain the standard reference editions for the foreseeable future, the *Constantiensia* as a collection suffer from issues of usability, which in turn raises a number of questions about the constraints scholars might face when approaching Hus's final works. Some of these issues are less pressing than others but confusing nonetheless. The style of textual criticism here is not strictly stemmatic in a Lachmannian sense, but neither have the editors taken an eclectic or diplomatic approach. While each edition is critical insofar as it selectively amends the texts and contains a particularly helpful source apparatus, the editors have also tasked themselves with reproducing the graphic layout of the lead manuscript for each text, marking various breaks, for example, with a vertical bar. The orthography of the editions follows a sort of hybrid model, where the editor expands abbreviations that might involve assimilation in a prefix by taking that assimilated form, whereas the same prefix, if the scribe wrote it out without abbreviations in the manuscript, will appear in its unassimilated form. In a single edition, then, one can find forms like *imperat* and *impudenter* (19.511–12) as well as *inpacientissimus* (20.550), though it is never clear how exactly future readers will benefit from this. To pose the question another way: what do we lose by *not* approaching the orthography and layout of the manuscripts in this way? And is this not the sort of detail that perhaps belongs in an apparatus? An editor could have any number of reasons for following this sort of system, but these are reasons that deserve to be fleshed out more than they are here. Future editions of the MIHOO could benefit enormously from including at least a cursory discussion of this system's genesis and purpose.

More troubling is the way the manuscripts have been handled. Certain quibbles are mostly stylistic in nature but still strange. Given that the lengthy introduction is written in modern German and that enough fifteenth-century Czech and German terms appear throughout the editions to warrant their own index, it seems puzzling that names of the repositories for every manuscript in the *Conspectus siglorum* preceding each edition have been rendered into Latin. Earlier editions like the *Polemica* edited by Jarsolav Eršil and reprinted as CCCM 238 also did this, from the relatively familiar *Bibliotheca Nationalis Vindobonesis* for the *Österreichische Nationalbibliothek* to the hopelessly obscure *Bibliotheca Civitatis Budissenensis* for the *Stadtbibliothek Bautzen* in Saxony. But the introduction to that volume was also written in Latin and is the product of a distinct generation and scholarly culture that has long since changed. For an edition published in 2015, this can come across as slightly theatrical when even the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* have done away with Latin introductions and manuscript shelf-marks.

Other issues are graver. For each text, editors have chosen a leading manuscript on the basis of “best readings,” and each of these leading manuscripts have been assigned the Roman siglum *A*. Following that lead siglum are alphabetically arranged sigla corresponding to the rest of the manuscripts consulted for variant readings. This process is then reapplied to every text, each having a separate lead manuscript that

nevertheless remains *A* in the apparatus. By constructing the various apparatus in this way, the editors implicitly assume that the reader, insofar as they are interested in the details of textual transmission, will remember to recalibrate each time they consult the apparatus of a new text. Siglum *C*, to choose one arbitrarily, might, depending on the edition it appears in, refer to one of no less than 12 discrete manuscripts: MS 50 in the Anhaltische Landesbücherei in Dessau; MSS 4296 or 4511 of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna; MSS II G 8, III G 16, or IV F 25 of the Národní knihovna České republiky in Prague; MSS D 109.2 or D 50 from the Knihovna pražské metropolitní kapituly in Prague; MSS Mk 108 or Mk 110 from the Moravská zemská knihovna in Brno; and finally MSS 8° 6 or 4° 24 from the Stadtbibliothek in Bautzen. If, conversely, one were interested in ÖNB MS 4296, one would have to remember that it could appear in the various apparatus with one of four sigla: *A*, *C*, *F*, or *K*.

The collection thereby runs the risk of introducing serious scholarly errors in the future that could easily be prevented with the more parsimonious rule of a single siglum for each manuscript, applied uniformly in every apparatus throughout. Without such uniformity the *Constantiensia* collection seems to make two intertwined assumptions about how the edition will be used: that readers will pay attention to variants and text-critical decisions only within a single text and not across the Constance corpus as a whole, which in turn implies that the contents of the text – what Hus says in each of his writings – takes primacy over how, when, and in what context he says it. Transmission, in other words, is secondary to the message itself.

That is not necessarily the conclusion that most historians working in or around the Council of Constance, its background or reception, and its cultural contexts would come to nowadays. Some of the most influential studies on the manuscript cultures in and around the Great Western Schism, like those of Jürgen Miethke and Daniel Hobbins, have relied precisely on these codicological and transmission-oriented features to approach long-standing historical problems with novel sources. That is not to say that critical editions of texts from the fifteenth century ought to do all of that analytical heavy lifting, but not putting more of the tools at future scholars' disposal misses a great opportunity for potentially fascinating developments in the function of critical editions for an historical period defined largely by its overwhelming mass of written material. The *Constantiensia* here would have therefore also benefited from a more systematic inclusion of manuscript descriptions in its otherwise excellent introduction.

With these reservations in mind, CCCM 274 represents a great leap forward for research on Hus and the Council of Constance and will be widely cited in the decades to come. Even in its shortcomings, these editions can help us to think more broadly about how we approach textual editing for the fifteenth century and the extent to which the codices housing the texts we edit might themselves inform that process. If recent studies of late medieval religious and textual culture are of any indication, the answer is most likely: "greatly." How exactly this will play out in the case of Hus remains to be seen, but the edition under review will nevertheless have a central role to play in all such future lines of inquiry.

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