



Der Deutsche Orden auf dem Konstanzer Konzil. Pläne – Strategien – Erwartungen. Herausgegeben von Helmut Flachenecker unter Mitarbeit von Tobias Baus und Katharina Kemmer. Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 84, Veröffentlichungen der Forschungsstelle Deutscher Orden an der Universität Würzburg 3. Ilmtal-Weinstraße: 2020. 180+XII pp. ISBN: 978-3-89739-944-0.

The year 2018 marked the 600 year anniversary of the end of the Council of Constance. In connection with this anniversary, a conference in Würzburg took place on 11–12 July 2018, which was organized by the “Forschungsstelle Deutscher Orden” operating at the University of Würzburg. The papers presented there constitute the bigger part of the content of the discussed volume, published in the renowned series of studies on the history of the Teutonic Order (“Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens”). The book was dedicated to honorary members of the Order, professors Dieter Salch and Udo Arnold in connection with their eightieth birthdays.

The Council of Constance was one of the most important events in late medieval Europe. Its significance stems from the number and importance of the problems addressed, which were discussed by the participants of the assembly. The primary issue was obviously the elimination of the Western Schism, which was finally achieved by the election of a new universally recognized pope, Martin V. Another crucial issue was the heresy of Jan Hus and the judgement of this clergyman as well as his supporter – Jerome of Prague. The Council of Constance was also a forum where the dispute of the Teutonic Order with Poland and Lithuania was discussed. This subject has been undertaken many times by a large group of researchers over the years, but lately it has been overshadowed by research on other subjects. In addition to the problems mentioned here, other issues were for example, symbols and political communication within urban space (for example the entry of Pope John XXIII to Constance), the reception of the Council, or a personality of the chronicler Ulrich Richental, who himself was an inhabitant of Constance. Mats Homann presented a valuable overview of the latest research on the Council at the beginning of his article (pp. 55–58).

The discussed volume begins with a preface by its editor – Helmut Flachenecker (pp. IX–XII), who briefly presented its content and thanked the people involved in the organization of the conference.

The collection of articles is preceded by a text by Andrzej Radzimiński from Nicolaus-Copernicus-University in Toruń (“Der Deutsche Orden in Europa am Vorabend des Konzils von Konstanz,” pp. 1–13). The author starts with the statement that the whole of Europe at the turn of the fifteenth century experienced a deep crisis, but especially in its central and eastern parts. For the Teutonic Order, it had many aspects, of course, after the Battle of Grunwald. As a result of it, as well as losing the entire war, the Order suffered many serious losses in population. Prussia was devastated, and the economic crisis deepened due to the necessity to pay king Władysław Jagiełło compensation for the redemption of prisoners. The political position of the Order also weakened, which is analyzed by the author in the light of mediatory activities of the Roman and Hungarian king, Sigismund of Luxembourg. The very fact that he undertook arbitration after the agreement with Poland in Lublau on 15 March 1412 was a step to further weaken the Teutonic Order as it paved the way to revise the conditions of the First Peace of Thorn. This could not be changed by very strong verbal declarations of Sigismund in favor of the Order. Radzimiński emphasized in conclusions that in this difficult situation, the commencing Council in Constance, to which the Polish-Teutonic dispute was supposed to be transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Brodnica, was the only hope for the Teutonic Order for favorable solutions.

The following chapter is that of Paul Srodecki (“Mediating Actors in the Conflict between the Teutonic Order and the Kingdom of Poland in the Early Fifteenth Century,” pp. 15–33). According to the author’s information at the very beginning, this article is to a high extent based on his previous publications concerning this topic, modified and developed here. It is about the appropriate chapter from Srodecki’s *opus magnum* – the book “Antemurale Christianitatis” and one more article¹. Each of these publications is twice as large as the text in the discussed book, so we are rather dealing here with a summary of topics of interest to the author. Srodecki’s article was clearly divided into subchapters, which facilitates reading. The first part is an outline of the background of the Polish-Teutonic conflict and a reminder of most important facts concerning this conflict, it is not a coincidence that it is titled “Krew i następstwa” [“Krew and its aftermath”]. Part two: “From a warmonger to a peacemaker” was devoted to Sigismund of Luxembourg and his role in Polish-Teutonic relations. The author draws attention to

¹ Paul Srodecki, *Antemurale Christianitatis. Zur Genese der Bollwerksrhetorik im östlichen Mitteleuropa an der Schwelle vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit*, Historische Studien 508 (Husum: Matthiesen Verlag, 2015), 105–147; id., “Quia inter vos stabilita concordia est valde opportuna. Zu den vermittelnden Kräften im Konflikt zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und dem Königreich Polen in frühen 15. Jahrhundert,” *Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej* 11 (2016): 321–358.

the circumstances already noticed by Radziwiński, namely that the Roman king pursued his aims, and was flexible in relation to the Order. During the war 1409–1411 he was its ally, and from 1412 he acted as an arbiter, which was not beneficial for the Order in and of itself. When it comes to declarations, he had always been a supporter. The following part of the article was titled “Dukes of the Reich as advocates of the Teutonic Order.” It was the electors of the Reich and other rulers from its area who were the group supporting the Teutonic Order on the political scene and promoting the mission of the Order as the “bulwark of Christianity.” The author cites a wide variety of evidence, such as a letter from 1413 by Ludwig VII, Bavarian duke, to the Roman king calling for help for the Order against the king of Poland and his cousin – Grand Duke of Lithuania Vytautas (p. 25), or another letter addressed to the same person from 1419 by five electors: the archbishops of Mainz, Cologne, Trier, the duke of the Palatinate and the margrave of Brandenburg, calling for restoration of peace between the Order and Poland. The letter raised mainly the merits of the Order for the Christian world, and it was indicated that the peace with Poland would allow the knights of Prussia to participate in the battles against the Turks (p. 27). The pope’s reaction to the pressures of the dukes to more support the Order more enthusiastically was also presented in an interesting way. Martin V showed restraint in this respect and balanced the arguments of both parties. The last part of Srodecki’s article concerns the peace concluded at Melno in 1422. Its long-lasting effects as well as the role of Sigismund of Luxembourg and his flexible politics are emphasized here. The author rightly notices that after a few years there was another turn in this situation, and Sigismund became a “warmonger” once again. His actions regarding the crown for Vytautas destabilized the Polish-Lithuanian union (p. 33).

Přemysl Bar (Masaryk University in Brno) authors the following paper: “Eine (un)genutzte Gelegenheit? Die Polnisch-litauische Union und der Deutsche Orden auf dem Konstanzer Konzil (1414–1418)” (pp. 35–54). The work is based on his latest monograph, whose main theses are recalled². The author analyzes the essential elements of perception of the medieval diplomacy from his point of view applicable in the Polish-Teutonic dispute: legations, amicable proceedings, and propaganda. Especially the latter aspect was better used by the Polish-Lithuanian side, which – as rightly noticed by Bar – quickly noticed that “the council is not only talks in committees within ‘nation’ and at the plenary hall, but also a specific public space where people from all over Europe can express their opinions” (pp. 53–54). In this aspect, regardless of the formal effects, which were not that

² Přemysl Bar, *Diplomacie, právo a propaganda v pozdním středověku. Polsko-litevská unie a Řád německých rytířů na kostnickém koncilu (1414–1418)* (Brno: Masarykova univerzita Brno, 2017).

spectacular, Władysław Jagiełło and Aleksander Witold made better use of the possibilities offered by the council deliberations.

The subsequent chapter is that of Mats Homann (“Der Blick des Deutschen Ordens auf das Konstanzer Konzil. Die Briefe des Generalprokurators Peter von Wormditt und des Hochmeisters Michael Kuchmeisters”, pp. 55–88). Based on the well-known source edition, i.e. on the accounts of the Order’s representative in the Curia, Peter von Wormditt,³ Homann outlines Peter’s attitude towards the challenges that he encountered, such as polemics with the theses proclaimed by Paweł Włodkowic. The Order’s procurator skillfully emphasized his role and the significance of his actions. Moreover, his efforts to win favor for the Teutonic Order’s cause among the largest number of people were also described. On the other hand, the author notices that Michael Kuchmeister, Grand Master of the Order, did not have a clear concept as to what goals of the Order’s politics could be achieved at the Council. What was more important for him were the events in Prussia, which were constantly threatened by the war with Poland and Lithuania in the reality peace treaties extended from year to year. This might have been the reason why Peter von Wormditt thought that the head of the Order is not sufficiently committed to supporting his activities.

László Pószán, is the author of the next paper in the volume (“Die politischen Bestrebungen und Ziele Polen-Litauens auf dem Konstanzer Konzil”, pp. 89–105). It was not the first time when the author touched upon the problematics of the Council of Constance⁴. Pószán’s paper rightly emphasizes that for the Polish-Lithuanian side, the main issues were not current politics, such as border issues, but imposing their own narrative on fundamental matters – the sense of the further mission of the Teutonic Order at the Baltic region and the validity of all actions of the Order towards Poland and recently converted Lithuania. Hence, such importance was attached to the activities of Paweł Włodkowic and arguments put forward by him.

By contrast, Bernhart Jähnig’s text “Johannes von Wallenrode und das Konstanzer Konzil” (pp. 107–125) is based – understandably – to a large extent on

³ *Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie*, vol. II, *Peter von Wormditt (1403–1419)*, ed. Hans Koeppen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960). The author rightly emphasizes (pp. 63–64) that apart from the letters constituting strictly the accounts of the sense, the edition also includes a number of other sources illuminating the wider context of the procurator’s activities.

⁴ László Pószán, “Der Konflikt zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und dem polnisch-litauischen Staat auf dem Konstanzer Konzil,” in id., *Der Deutsche Orden und das Königreich Ungarn im Mittelalter* (Toruń: Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, 2019), 102–119; and lately from the Hungarian perspective, id., *Hungary and the Teutonic Order in the Middle Ages* (Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, 2021), 232–245.

the excellent monograph by this author, devoted to the archbishop of Riga⁵. The author is not only focused on Johannes von Wallendrode's activities during the Council, but also presents his activities in the years preceding the Council. Jähnig rightly emphasizes the fact that the archbishop of Riga was not only the Grand Master's envoy in Constance, but also an adviser to Roman king, Sigismund of Luxembourg, which largely determined his activity.

Two articles supplementing the discussed volume concern a different topic. Firstly, Sławomir Józwiak and Janusz Trupinda dealt with topography and the spatial order of the Kaliningrad castle in the light of written sources – “Zur Topographie und Raumordnung der Ordensburg Königsberg als Sitz der Komture, Obersten Marschälle und Hochmeister im Licht der mittelalterlichen Schriftquellen” (pp. 127–155). The authors, who have extensive experience in such profiled research⁶, relying on records and accounting sources, critically relate to the concept of the former subject literature. The case of Königsberg is particularly intriguing and delicate – the local high castle ceased to exist as early as at the beginning of the seventeenth century, all of the other remains, after the war damage, were finally liquidated in 1969. The authors presented their own concept of the reconstruction of the high castle's appearance and the outer bailey, which was very important from the perspective of the functioning of the entire complex. Orientation in these arrangements is facilitated by the graphic diagram (p. 155). It should be emphasized that the future of the research on the Teutonic Order's castles will depend, however, on finding a common language by historians relying on written sources, art historians and archeologists.

Nicholas W. Youmans from the university of Würzburg is the author of the final paper, “Seelenheil und Ritterehre. Vorstellungen eines Forschungsprojekts zur Identität des Deutschen Ordens im Spiegel seiner Symbolhandlungen” (pp. 157–175). The chapter addresses the assumptions of the project implemented under “Forschungsstelle Deutscher Orden” at the University of Würzburg. It concerns an incredibly interesting problem – a certain tension between the monastic aspect of the Teutonic Knights and their participation in the courtly-chivalric sphere of medieval European culture. These are not new issues, of which the author is fully aware, and the greatest merits in this field should

⁵ Bernhart Jähnig, *Johann von Wallenrode O. T. Erzbischof von Riga, Königlicher Rat, Deutschordensdiplomant und Bischof von Lüttich im Zeitalter des Schismas und des Konstanzer Konzils (um 1370 – 1419)*, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 24 (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Verlag Wissenschaftliches Archiv, 1970).

⁶ For example, Sławomir Józwiak and Janusz Trupinda, *Krzyżackie zamki komture w Prusach. Topografia i układ przestrzenny na podstawie średniowiecznych źródeł pisanych* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2012).

definitely be given to Werner Paravicini. However, there is no doubt that there remains much to do. The author clearly presents the state of the research and moves to the main assumptions of the project. The draft hypothesis is the statement that the symbolic activities by the Order contributed to the achievement of internal harmony between the mentioned opposing spheres. The remaining question is to what extent the patterns of behavior, self-image and methods of acting, deriving from the monastic and courtly-chivalric spheres, created a symbiosis and contributed to building a new already integrated and collective identity. The author also presents the assumptions of the methodology he used and examples of symbolic actions from both key spheres. Here it is worth paying attention Youman's observations regarding the Grand Master's table of honor during the raids on Lithuania. The reader is left waiting intently intently for more specific and extensive effects of this fascinating project. The volume ends with the local and personal index (pp. 176–180).

The book under review creates a useful reminder and summary of the research on different aspects of the presence of the Teutonic Order at the Council of Constance. The article by Mats Homann, which is based on the previously unpublished effects of research on the sources, should be mentioned here. Both publications, apart from the Council topics, are also interesting, with particular emphasis on the presentation of Nicholas W. Youmans's project.

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