

*Causa unionis, causa fidei, causa reformationis in capite et membris.*  
Tanulmányok a konstanzi zsinat 600. évfordulója alkalmából [*Causa unionis, causa fidei, causa reformationis in capite et membris. Essays on the Occasion of the 600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Council of Constance*].  
Edited by Attila Bárány and László Pószán. Debrecen, 2014. 454 pp.

The Council of Constance was one of the decisive events in Europe in the Middle Ages, and it had a significant influence on the future of the continent. On November 5–7 2014, a major conference was held by the Institute of History of the University of Debrecen focusing on this event on the occasion of its 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The conference and the papers that were read were in part the fruit of work that has been underway at the University of Debrecen for years on the era of the reign of King Sigismund of Luxembourg. The organizers also sought to contribute to a German research project on the Council (“Das Konzilsjubiläum 2014–2018. 600 Jahre Konstanzer Konzil”). Editors Attila Bárány and László Pószán have organized the 31 essays in the book into four thematic groups. The first and longest (consisting of 11 essays) addresses political power relations in Europe at the time and the complex relationships in diplomacy and Church politics. The second section deals with the decisions that were made at the Council. In particular, the essays examine the consequences that these decisions had for the Kingdom of Hungary and the religious and Church processes that were underway within the Kingdom of Hungary. The third part consists of five essays on the political, social, and economic relationships in Hungary. It is followed by the second-longest and perhaps most colorful section, which deals with cultural trends and tendencies, including heraldry, Humanist literature, and pilgrimages to destinations beyond the borders of Hungary, but biographic and genealogic studies were also included in this part of the volume. The last section of the book contains essays on the military history of the era, more specifically two essays on the Hussite Wars and one on the struggles against the Ottoman Turks. It is quite clear on the basis of the topics addressed in the essays that the book covers many of the important aspects of the Council. The goal of the conference organizers was to draw as wide a range of scholars on the era of the Council as possible into the conference and the published collection of papers from the conference. Given the breadth of the book and limitations of space, I can only touch on a few of the essays in this review.

The history of the sixteenth general council was shaped to a large extent by the political constellation in Europe at the time. The essay by Attila Bárány focuses on the efforts of King Sigismund to bring an end to the Hundred Years' War and the ways in which he attempted, ultimately unsuccessfully, to act as an intermediary first between the French leagues and then between England and France. Bárány examines the complex relationships between the Luxembourgs on the one hand and France, England, and Burgundy on the other, and he persuasively demonstrates that Sigismund always sought to remain neutral, though he also sought to ensure that Brabant and Luxembourg not end up under the control of Burgundy and that England not gain strength in the Netherlands.

The other major armed conflict at the time of the Council was taking place in the northeastern corner of Europe between the allied Kingdom of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania on one side and the Order of the Teutonic Knights on the other. Pósan focuses on this struggle. After peace negotiations in Buda and the delegation led by Benedek Makrai in 1412–1413 failed to yield results, the issue was taken before the Council. The Order accused Ladislaus II and Witold, grand duke of Lithuania, of being Christians in appearance only, and they claimed to have a just cause for war. The Polish diplomats, of course, dismissed these contentions. They offered the Teutonic Knights first Podolia and then Cyprus, and they were prepared to submit to Sigismund's decision. Ultimately, the issue was decided by the appointment of Pope Martin V, with which the Poles lost all of the privileges that Pope John XXIII had granted them. Ladislaus II and Witold both withdrew. According to Pósan, while the conflict remained unsettled, with the moral victory of Ladislaus II the debate came to a close in Constance.

Sigismund achieved a remarkable triumph in 1411, when he was chosen to serve as king of Germany. The essay by Márta Kondor examines the development of the imperial chancellery and the makeup of the royal council. Drawing on analyses of the chancellery notes, she concludes that the imperial chancellery began to become active in the middle of 1411. It may have functioned under the organization of Johannes Kirchen, though there may also have been a division of labor. Kirchen used the imperial seal to certify legal documents, while High Chancellor János Kanizsai (or his deputy), as secretary to the king, used a secret seal. With regards to the council, Kondor has determined that alongside the imperial council, there was also a Hungarian council, though the king summoned the members of the council only as a function of the importance of the issue at hand. He discussed problems of governance with a narrower "operative body."

From the perspective of Hungary, one of the important decisions of the Council concerned the question of taxes on Church benefices. As of 1417, at least in principle no taxes had to be paid to the papal treasury on the appointment of people who had been suggested for office by the Hungarian king. In his essay, Tamás Fedeles examines the extent to which this matter of principle was also a matter of practice under Popes Martin V and Eugene IV. Fedeles examines an item-by-item summary of the taxes that were paid into the papal treasury and the treasury records and analyzes 58 promissory notes of Hungarian origin from the period in question. Thus, he has determined that the idea of more modest taxes on archbishops and tax exemptions allegedly offered by the pope remained on paper only (in this case mostly because the archbishop of Esztergom and for example the bishop of Zagreb promised to pay higher taxes to the papal court), and barely half of the sum that had been agreed upon actually was paid into the apostolic treasury (*Camera Apostolica*) from the whole clergy of Hungary. According to Fedeles, the explanation for this lies in the fact that, as the king of Hungary, Sigismund was better situated to enforce his will, in particular with regards to the upper layers of the clergy. The papacy was willing to overlook this because of the threats posed by the Hussites and, more importantly, the Ottomans.

Since Sigismund was in general far from Hungary during the Council, he had to ensure that he had suitable people in power to tend to the various issues that came up during his absence. Norbert C. Tóth examines the administrative tasks of the royal vicars in the period between 1413 and 1419. Drawing on chancellery notes, the “itinerary” of the great seal, and the queen’s charters, C. Tóth endeavors to determine as precisely as possible who the vicars were and what they did. The only two people that Sigismund made vicars were Miklós Garai and the aforementioned János Kanizsai, but both Garai and Kanizsai joined him in Western Europe, and this confused affairs. In the time period under discussion, four people served as lieutenant governors of the king. The first was Queen Barbara of Cilli (Sigismund’s wife), followed by Garai for the better part of 1414. There is evidence to suggest that Pál Özdögei Besenyő served as vicar between 1416 and 1417. He may have served in this position until Garai’s return to Hungary. While Kanizsai officially began to keep accounts as vicar in 1417, the king only returned to Hungary in 1419. Thus, in all likelihood, Garai tended to the tasks of the position following the archbishop’s death in 1418.

László Veszprémy examines King Sigismund's responses to the Hussite wars, the outbreak of which was prompted by the decisions of the Council, to determine his aptitude as a military leader and diplomat. According to a view that has gained widespread currency in the secondary literature, Sigismund regarded the Hussitism as a pan-European problem and sought to put an end to it with military action. Taking into consideration the king's troop movements and diplomatic endeavors, Veszprémy comes to the conclusion that Sigismund would have preferred to address the situation simply by weakening and dividing the opposition and then using diplomacy. After he was made king of Bohemia in 1419, it was obviously problematic for him to order the occupation of a region over which he had just been made ruler. Veszprémy examines the struggles between Sigismund and Žižka and concludes that the two sides were fighting two completely different wars. Sigismund did not want to destroy the Hussites with a rapid assault and devastating blows. Rather, as Eberhard Windecke, the chronicler of the king has also contended, he sought to use political strategies. Put simply, it was not the military conflict so much as the search for a political resolution that lasted almost two decades.

In his essay, János Véber examines the only surviving work by Miklós Barius, a speech addressed to Ladislaus V of Hungary. Véber also considers the various ways in which this speech was preserved over time. One copy was kept as part of a book of formulae, in the compilation of which Barius himself may have played a role. Gábor Kiss Farkas discusses a similar topic, namely the influence of Humanist epistolary books, by comparing the writings of Pier Paolo Vergerio, János Vitéz, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, and Johannes Tröster. The essay by Enikő Csukovits also bears thematic affinities with these two contributions. Csukovits draws attention to the function of the Council as a scholarly forum by examining the geographical works of Pierre d'Ailly and Guillaume Fillastre. The Council had easy access to texts that were indispensable to the works that they compiled. For instance, the work of Ptolemy spread across Europe again in large part due to the role of the Council as intermediary. Regrettably, because of the nature of the Hungarian sources, we do not really know how interesting the "book market," which was remarkably broad in its scope, was to the Hungarians who took part in the Council.

Along with the flood of new ideas, new religious movements also came to Hungary in the period under discussion. In her contribution to the collection, Beatrix Romhányi argues persuasively that Franciscan religious ideas and practices arrived not from the south, as has been suggested in the secondary literature,

but rather from the West. Pope Martin V, who supported the Franciscans, may have played a significant role in this. Romhányi compares the circumstances of the foundation of Franciscan monasteries and demonstrates that, in contrast with the fourteenth century, during the reign of King Sigismund the wishes of patrons were decisive factors in the process, as was the call for the monasteries to play representative functions.

The examples on which I have drawn within the framework of this brief review suffice to illustrate that the essays in this collection meet very high standards of scholarship and offer a great deal of new, important information and insights that will be of considerable interest to scholars on the Middle Ages. Perhaps one of the greatest merits of the book is that it clearly demonstrates the extent to which Hungary's history was inseparable from the history of the rest of Europe at the time. The essays offer numerous examples of ways in which the Council and the events that took place at the time of the Council influenced events in Hungary. In other words, they offer ample testimony to the fact that the Kingdom of Hungary was an integral part of Europe. The essays offer excellent presentations of these complex interrelationships, actions, and reactions, and they will undoubtedly encourage further research on the subject.