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[REVIEW]: Jan Biskupiec, *Tractatus contra sacra concilia*, ed. by W. Zega, M. Zdanek, trans. by S. Sneddon, Folia Jagiellonica. Fontes, 26, Societas Vistulana, Cracow 2024, pp. LII + 118.

Late medieval disputes over power in the Church between the papacy and the conciliar movement continue to attract the interest of medievalists. This is illustrated, for example, by recent publications such as companions to the councils of Constance and Basel as well as the latest works by the French historian Joëlle Rollo-Koster. In this context, the publication of a primary source, previously known only through a few summaries, deserves particular recognition. It sheds new light on Poland's stance towards papal supremacy.

Volume 26 of the *Folia Jagiellonica. Fontes* series features a critical edition of a treatise by the Dominican bishop of Chełm, Jan Biskupiec of Opatowiec (d. 1452), concerning the deposition of Pope Eugene IV by the Council of Basel. The edition, long awaited by scholars, was prepared by two Cracow medievalists, Włodzimierz Zega and Maciej Zdanek. Their scholarly credentials guarantee the high-quality editorial standards of the publication. Zega specializes in fifteenth-century philosophy and theology and has also conducted research on and edited Latin medieval manuscripts. Zdanek, however, is a historian whose research has focused on the intellectual milieu of the Dominican priory of the Holy Trinity in Cracow, where Jan Biskupiec lived for many years.

The book is divided into three main sections. The first is the introduction, which, drawing on the most recent research papers, presents Poland's

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stance towards the Council of Basel, a biography of Jan Biskupiec, the title and dating of the edited work, a summary of its contents, and a description of the manuscript in which the treatise has been preserved (pp. V–LII). The second section comprises a critical edition of the treatise. The Latin text is aligned with a parallel Polish translation (pp. 1–57). The final section contains an English translation of the treatise, prepared by Shelagh Sneddon, an experienced medieval Latin translator (pp. 59–83). The volume is supplemented by a list of abbreviations, a comprehensive bibliography, and indexes of cited works and names, both personal and geographical, all of which offer a helpful research tool (pp. 85–115).

The only known copy of Jan Biskupiec's treatise is preserved in a book that belonged to the Castilian theologian Juan de Segovia (d. 1458), who played a prominent role at the Council of Basel. The manuscript is currently held in the Library of the University of Salamanca under the reference number Ms 2504. It is worth emphasizing that the manuscript has been made available through the Digital Library of the GREDOS system (Gestión del Repositorio Documental de la Universidad de Salamanca – gredos.usal.es), which provides open online access to the collections of the University of Salamanca. Researchers are now in the favourable position of being able to consult the original source directly and compare it with the critical edition.

The editors have retained the title of 'treatise' which was only written by the medieval scribe in the copy: *A Treatise Against the Holy Councils*. On the one hand, such a title probably does not come from Jan Biskupiec himself and does not accurately reflect the content of his work, as it suggests a general condemnation of councils, whereas the author focused entirely on the Basel Schism. In his work, Jan Biskupiec emerged as a papal apologist whose aim was primarily to defend Pope Eugene IV. He concentrated on refuting the accusations brought against the pope by conciliarists, including issues related to the transfer of the council, the alleged misappropriation of Church property, simony, and rivalry over union with the Greeks. On the other hand, there are compelling reasons to preserve the title as found in the copy: it is the only title known from the time the treatise was composed, and it has already been accepted in historiography. The editors' decision should therefore be viewed positively. A similarly favourable assessment can be given to the editorial choice to divide the text into titled sections. The

original treatise contains no such structural divisions. This intervention helps bring order to Jan Biskupiec's rather inaccessible exposition, which combines doctrinal argumentation with personal and almost emotional commentary.

Contrary to earlier scholarly opinions – and even the doubts expressed by the scribe himself – the editors have concluded that the treatise is complete. However, it seems premature to settle this question definitively, as it is difficult to dispel the impression that the text breaks off abruptly. The absence of clear and comprehensive conclusions raises doubts as to whether the ending expresses what Jan Biskupiec intended.

The parallel presentation of the Latin text alongside its Polish translation allows Polish-speaking scholars to understand more complex passages of the original better, and, more importantly, to follow how the editors themselves interpreted the text. It is, however, regrettable that the English translation is placed in a separate section, particularly as this choice has resulted in the omission of both philological and contextual annotations in that part of the volume. The editors might have considered the model provided by Ludwik Ehrlich's edition of the works of another Polish intellectual, Paulus Vladimiri (Pol. Paweł Włodkowic). In that book, the Latin text was printed on the verso page, with parallel Polish and English translations presented in two columns on the facing recto. While this method can admittedly complicate navigation of the text – requiring readers to constantly align corresponding sections of the original and two translations – it would have been a solution worth considering for the sake of editorial consistency and scholarly utility. However, the decision to include an English translation of the treatise in the publication should be regarded as a highly commendable editorial choice. It significantly enhances the accessibility of this important source for medieval ecclesiology. Providing an English translation of the introduction would have offered a similar benefit.

Despite a commendable effort involving detailed analysis of internal textual clues, the editors were unable to determine the precise date of the treatise's composition. They propose a timeframe between spring (April–May) 1440 and early summer (May–June, before August) 1441, though they suggest the earlier date is more likely. As a result, they interpret Jan Biskupiec's treatise as a contribution to the contemporary debate in Poland concerning the choice of ecclesiastical obedience. Two synods held in Łęczyca, in April 1440 and May 1441, are identified

as key moments in this context. During the same period, between the summer–autumn of 1440 and the spring of 1441, five professors of the University of Cracow composed treatises intended to provide theoretical justification for the decisions made by the Polish political and ecclesiastical elites. All of these works share a common feature: a marked sympathy for conciliar doctrine. Jan Biskupiec's work may thus be understood as a *votum separatum* expressed by the ageing bishop of Chełm, who, however, was widely known as a former royal confessor of King Władysław II Jagiełło (1386–1434). One should add that Jan Biskupiec returned to the royal court during King Władysław III's efforts to obtain the Hungarian crown in the spring of 1440. Around this time, he also met twice with the papal legate, Cardinal Isidore of Kiev, likely hosting him in Chełm in July 1440. In turn, between August 1440 and May 1441 he convened a synod of his diocese, at which he issued a small treatise against the Hussite practices of receiving Holy Communion, which, as is known, was the subject of an agreement between the Hussites and the Council of Basel in 1433. All these events may have emboldened Jan Biskupiec to voice dissent against the prevailing sentiments within the Cracow intellectual milieu, which had supporters among the Polish episcopate. Although this information does not allow us to determine the date of the treatise with greater precision, it does suggest that it may well have been composed in 1440. More importantly, it offers valuable insight into the context in which the Dominican undertook the writing of his work.

The critical edition of Jan Biskupiec's treatise, prepared with great care by W. Zega and M. Zdanek, has made an important source available for the study of the fifteenth-century ecclesiology. The text of the treatise offers insight into the distinctive personality and views of its author, shaped by multiple formative influences: his career as a member of the Order of Preachers; pastoral work in a diocese inhabited mainly by Orthodox Ruthenians; political experience at the court; and a personal inclination toward documenting the events of his time. There is no doubt that this important witness to the influence of late medieval thought on the Church will attract scholarly attention and become the subject of further analysis and in-depth study. This book has been awaited by scholars researching the history of the Dominicans in the Middle Ages, as well as by historians focused on the intellectual milieu of the early Jagiellonian realm and the history of the Council of Basel.