In 1969, right after the Prague Spring, František Kavka and Anna Skýbová published the seminal work *The Hussite Epilogue at the Council of Trent and the Original Conception of the Habsburg Recatholization of Bohemia*, which openly addressed the themes of Catholics and the Habsburgs, which were two taboo subjects in communist Czechoslovakia. In this work they examine specifically the renewal of the archbishopric of Prague in 1561, which had been vacant since the beginning of the Hussite Revolution. In this excerpt Kavka and Skýbová show that the impetus to renew the archbishopric took place within the general climate of the Council of Trent and a change in Habsburg policy following the failed Bohemian Uprising during the Schmalkaldic War, which moved religious affairs from the background to the forefront of the Habsburgs’ program of centralization. Moreover, the renewal of the archbishopric touched upon the problematic and complicated issue of the status of ecclesiastical properties which had been secularized during the Hussite Revolution.


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The Compacts of Basel plunged the Bohemian political scene into the web of complex international relations that had been created by the conflict between the papacy and the conciliar movement. In a sense the Compacts were a form of concordat—though they were concluded by the Council rather than the Pope—and they were soon followed by a series of papal concordats through which the Roman Pontiffs eventually managed to defeat their opponents in the Council of Basel. The Compacts clearly had no chance of obtaining papal sanction. However, their annulment by Pope Pius II did not make the Pontiff’s position any easier—in fact, quite the opposite. Conciliarism had suffered a major setback, but it had not been completely vanquished. Only if we bear this in mind can we fully understand the situation in which the Bohemian monarchs from Vladislav Jagiellon onwards—despite their Catholic faith—continued to recognize the validity of the Jihlava agreement, including the additional undertakings made by Sigismund. This document—the bane of the Roman Curia—remained encoded in Bohemian law, forcing the Catholic Bohemian monarchs to make repeated attempts to have it re-legalized, either by the Pope or by the new Council. The undertaking first given by Vladislav on June 16, 1471, and repeated by subsequent monarchs, affirmed that the monarch would respect the Compacts, and would appoint a new Archbishop of Prague. The post had become vacant upon the death of Archbishop Jan Rokycana, who had been elected to the see yet whose appointment had never been officially confirmed.

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1 [39] AČ 4, 451–455. These and the following lines deal only with broadly sketching out a framework for the further discussion on the basis of scholarship up until now: [František] Palacký, [Václav Vladivoj] Tomek, [Ernest] Denis, [Berthold] Bretholz, and others, which are not cited here because they are standard works. [See bibliography of this volume for a selection of works by these authors.] If authors took a different stance, a specialist would recognize it