

Közép-Európa a hosszú 13. században: Magyarország, Csehország és Ausztria hatalmi és dinasztikus kapcsolatai 1196 és 1310 között [Central Europe in the long thirteenth century: Power and dynastic relations among Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria between 1196 and 1310]. By Veronika Rudolf. Budapest: HUN-REN Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2023. 904 pp.

The book under review is a revised version of Veronika Rudolf's doctoral dissertation "A Magyar Királyság cseh és osztrák kapcsolatai 1196 és 1310 között" [The Bohemian and Austrian relations of the Kingdom of Hungary between 1196 and 1310], which she submitted to Eötvös Loránd University in 2023 and successfully defended. Rudolf enjoyed the support of several grants while pursuing her research on this topic, but she had already been working on various narrower subjects related to the topic when she began her doctoral studies. The change of title seems fortuitous, since the new subtitle (*Power and Dynastic Relations among Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria between 1196 and 1310*) covers the subject of her book much more accurately than the previous title of her dissertation.

As the book is more than 900 pages, including the appendices, I refrain here from offering a detailed presentation of each chapter (Rudolf's own summary is 31 pages long) and focus instead on the primary merits of the monograph. The central power in the Holy Roman Empire weakened at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and thus almost all the princes of the empire were able to pursue independent foreign policies, including King Ottokar I of Bohemia and Duke of Austria Leo VI. Given the concentration of territorial power in the region, this formed the seed of a number of relationships and conflicts that might not have been possible before, and the history of these processes can be traced leading up to the dynastic changes of 1310. Rudolf is hardly the first in the Hungarian and international secondary literature to study this subject. Gyula Pauler and Jenő Szűcs examined the thirteenth-century history of the Árpád era, and Enikő Csukovits has researched the reign of Charles I and the Árpád-era antecedents to the dynasty. There has been no single thorough work, however, dealing with the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Hungary as a whole. Somewhat surprisingly, even in the international secondary literature one does not find a monograph on Austrian-Bohemian relations as a whole.

Rudolf made a boldly ambitious decision in her choice of subject matter, given the monumental scale of the topic, and she has also offered a systematic

treatment of the related secondary literature. She made a similarly bold decision in the selection of the source base. In addition to narrative sources, she has drawn on charters and correspondence books that are relevant from the perspective of political history and also on the surviving formulary books from the period. Furthermore, she has not limited her sources to a single country or even to the three countries under study. Rather, in addition to the Hungarian, Bohemian, and Austrian sources, she has also examined narrative sources from the Polish duchies, Halych, the Bavarian Duchy (or Duchies), Thuringia, and Carinthia, as well as imperial and papal documents and sources from Bavaria, Passau, Saxon, Brandenburg, and Meissen. These sources add a great deal of important contributions to our knowledge of the period. From a methodological point of view, it is also worth noting that Rudolf not only juxtaposes the narrative sources with one another, but also, where possible, checks the claims found in these sources against documentary data. Furthermore, she always works with texts as a whole, thus going beyond the catalogue offered by Ferenc Albin Gombos, and she has done this in relation to the three countries of the region.

In the main text (pp.20–603), which does not contain any summary or recapitulation, each chapter is structured around a central issue which is then explained in full. The events are put in a wider context, which often extends to the European, imperial, or even papal political arena. This is perhaps most fully illustrated in the chapter on the fall of Ottokar II (pp.285–374). The three previous chapters, titled “A Babenberg örökség [1246–1261]” (The Babenberg succession, 1246–1261), “Cseh–magyar szövetség [1261–1270]” (The Bohemian-Hungarian alliance, 1261–1270), and “V. István és II. Ottokár [1270–1272]” (Stephen V and Ottokar II, 1270–1272), trace the “rise” of Ottokar. This chapter begins with insights into the sudden change in the relationship between Ottokar and the Kingdom of Hungary following the accession of the child king László IV to the throne, while the second subchapter deals with imperial affairs. Rudolf offers a detailed explanation of how the imperial princes were burdened by the situation without an emperor, how diplomatic games led to Rudolf Habsburg’s accession to the imperial throne, and how Ottokar II gradually came into conflict with the Austrian and Styrian nobility, a conflict which Rudolf Habsburg used to confiscate Ottokar’s earlier holdings and acquire a share of them. With her nuanced presentation of the campaigns against Ottokar II and their background, she demonstrates that in warfare, good diplomacy and situational awareness are as dangerous, as weapons, as talent. These processes, furthermore, culminated in the Battle on the Marchfeld in 1278, which is hardly insignificant

from the point of view of Hungarian history. Rudolf's ability to reconstruct the events in greater detail than ever before offers eloquent testimony to her extensive study of the sources. Her thorough method thus not only provides a new picture of the situation in the region in the thirteenth-century from the perspectives of politics, diplomacy, and dynastic relations but also offers a detailed mapping of the European networks of relations of the period which includes not only the rulers but also the nobility and the ministerial bodies of the countries under study. One finds clear examples of this, for instance, in the lengthy sections devoted to the Austrian and Styrian ministerial bodies, the Vítkovcis of Bohemia, and the Kőszegi family (which is given a whole chapter). By choosing to cover a long period (1196–1310), Rudolf also shows how the death of a single person can cause a series of dynastic relationships to fall like a house of cards. Another advantage of her discussion of a wide web of relationships is that, in the context of the events of the period, even a marriage previously considered meaningless or misinterpreted can take on a new meaning that fits better into the whole, as Rudolf clearly shows, for instance, in the case of the marriage of Charles I. In addition to her presentation of the networks of relationships from a broad perspective, Rudolf has made many other significant achievements. She has offered, for instance, the most detailed description to date of Hungarian rule in Styria and the role played by the relationship between Béla IV and Ottokár II in the fact that, after the Mongol invasion, the results of Béla's fortress-building policy were seen not on the eastern but on the western border of the country, and how the 1271 peace treaty between István V and Ottokar II, along with the establishment of committees to address border disputes, continued to have an impact during the Angevin era.

With regards to the appendices (pp.635–903), in addition to a thorough treatment of a monumental subject, the reader is provided with databases containing as much information as one might expect to find in several handbooks. The first appendix offers lists of those involved in the main military events, with the Hungarian, Czech, and Austrian participants listed in separate tables, thus making this resource particularly user-friendly. In each case, the sources or literature attesting to the presence of the person in question are indicated, and in the commentary, the given person's achievements and losses are also given, as well as information concerning his ties to his closest confidantes. Thus, readers with an interest in military history will undoubtedly be avid users of Rudolf's lists, as will those studying the society of the time. The next appendix is a list of the main narrative sources, which essentially amounts to a catalogue of relevant

sources for the period under discussion, which, in addition to brief descriptions of the sources, lists the most important pieces of philological literature that provide critical editions and further information. Given the length of the main text and the inevitable jumps in time and place, the chronology that Rudolf provides is also useful and interesting, and it often makes her overviews of her findings easier to follow and retrace in order to date certain events. The genealogical tables present the order of descent and the kinship ties of the ruling families of the period, again going beyond the dynasties of the three countries presented. The tables are made comparatively transparent and approachable by the fact, while the tables of the Árpád, Přemyslid, and Babenberg dynasties are exhaustive, the other ruling families are essentially limited to those individuals who are mentioned in the main text. As for the maps at the end of the volume, they provide immensely useful illustrations of the routes of the campaigns discussed in the main text. With regard to the usefulness of the appendices, it worth noting Rudolf's thoroughness in indicating throughout the main text which charts, tables, or maps are helpful in tracing a particular event, campaign, or dynastic relationship.

Given the importance of this book, it should definitely be published in good translation, and I would also add two subjective critical remarks. First, from time to time, I felt that some discussion of Hungarian internal political processes before the Tatar invasion might have been useful. The absence of any such discussion from the book is not a dire problem, given the rich footnotes and the general knowledge of the Hungarian readership, but in a foreign language edition, it might be important to offer a more detailed description of the processes in Hungary. My other critical remark is simply that, in order to make it easier for an international readership to identify the individuals in question, it would be worthwhile to standardize their names. Rudolf is inconsistent from time to time. For example, in the case of Gergely, the elected Archbishop of Esztergom (1298–1303), we find “Botond fia Gergely” (or Gergely, son of Botond) and also “Bicskei Gergely” (or Gergely of Bicske).

These few critical remarks notwithstanding, Veronika Rudolf's book is a significant contribution to the secondary literature which will prove indispensable to historians of the period. It offers a thorough presentation the historical processes of the region in a well-chosen European context.

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