

MECERN Student Conference

Abstracts

Jakub Kurák (Jan Stanislav Institute of Slavistics SAS, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra)

Scandinavian Influence on Medieval Hungary during the Period of the First Árpadian Rulers: New Insights and Perspectives

The paper presents various interpretations and possible effects of the so-called “Scandinavian influence” on the Kingdom of Hungary. At the beginning of the 11th century, settlers, traders, and dynastic elites across the whole Scandinavian area used valuable global networks, such as trade routes on both land and sea. The growth of political relations with various realms and kingdoms caused the expansion of trade and the diversification of trading objects. This topic is already well-researched by several academics, however, until now, only a few historians focused on this relationship and various influences between Scandinavia and the Kingdom of Hungary. The end of the 10th and the middle of the 11th century is a period in the history of Medieval Hungary, in which the relations between various elites and dynasties were constantly changing and evolving. One of the many ways how to approach the topic of transfers between Scandinavia and the Kingdom of Hungary is the comparison of various Latin and Scandinavian sources. This influence might be visible, especially in the artistic styles of archaeological objects. Afterwards, this issue can be interpreted through various perspectives such as trade routes, matrimonial connections, politics, dynastic gifts, and different military aspects of the medieval elites. From today’s point of view, the issue of “ethnicity” causes a lot of difficulties on both sides. It is almost impossible to reconstruct what identity these medieval people had and how they expressed their own perception of this concept. Eventually, even in this topic, researchers can identify some analogies and influences around the medieval realm located in the landscape of Central Europe.

Leonid Pavlenko (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin)

The Elites of the Romanovichi State between East and West

The subject of my interest is the political activity of the Romanovich state elites in relation to their western neighbours in the second half of the 13th century. In my paper, I will try to analyse what the nature of the contacts of the elite of this state with the Catholic world was and compare

it with such relations in relation to other Ruthenian states. The source basis for my considerations will be the “Halych-Volyn Chronicle”. I am particularly interested in verifying the thesis of the old historiography that the world of the Ruthenian elite was as if closed in its own circle and was not interested in the affairs of the extra-Ruthenian areas.

Michal Augustovič (Comenius University in Bratislava)

Saint Ladislaus in Rus’: The Story of the Hungarian Holy King in Written Sources in Rus’

The subject of the research is the narrative of Saint Ladislaus, describing his victorious heroic struggle against a pagan warrior, in the perspective of written sources from the milieu of Rus’. The story is known in Russian literature as the Tale of the Killing of Batu and is still little reflected in Central European historiography. There are two main portrayals of Ladislaus as a saint, in the first case Saint Ladislaus is perceived as a confessor and in the second as a military saint. The present research approaches Ladislaus as a military saint and in this context examines the transmission of motifs from Hungarian sources to the sources of Rus’. In addition, the place of Saint Ladislaus in the context of military saints in Russia is another important issue that is emphasized.

Andrej Ondrejka (Comenius University in Bratislava)

Knightly Culture in Medieval Hungary: The Origins and Spread of Knightly Culture in the Kingdom of Hungary in the Context of Medieval Sources of the 11th-12th Centuries

The presented work traces the origins of chivalry and knightly culture in the area of Western Europe and the subsequent spread of chivalry into the Kingdom of Hungary. Slovak historiography has not offered a satisfactory view of the origins of the presence of chivalric culture in the Kingdom of Hungary yet. This research aims to contribute to filling in the gap and at the same time serves as a starting point for further research in the area. Due to the lack of contemporary medieval sources of Hungarian provenance, the research was also based on sources of foreign provenance. Based on the comparison and critical assessment of the data obtained from medieval narrative and diplomatic sources, it is possible to establish the presence of chivalry and knightly culture in the Kingdom of Hungary at the turn of the 11th and 12th

centuries. From this period on, chivalry continuously developed and reached its peak in Hungary in the 14th century, during the reign of the Angevin dynasty.

Kováč Szilárd (ELTE Budapest)

The Image of Břetislav I in the Chronicle of Přebík Pulkava

Without doubt, Břetislav I (1005-1055) was one of the most important dukes of early Přemyslid history. The earliest Czech chronicler, Cosmas of Prague, not only attributes outstanding successes and reforms to him in his narrative, but Břetislav I is also seen as the savior of the Přemyslid dynasty, and the embodiment of the virtues attributed to rulers. It was therefore only natural that almost three hundred years later, when Charles IV commissioned the ‘official’ Czech court chronicle of the Luxembourgs, Břetislav I was not absent from those who had to be mentioned in that. However, the narratives of the 14th-century chronicles show a surprising and radical departure from Cosmas, whose chronicle was certainly their main source. In my research, I compare the narrative of Cosmas with that of Přebík Pulkava, the most successful and important author of Charles IV’s large-scale historiographical project, as well as with the chronicle of the so-called Dalimil, a chronicle written outside the court culture in Old-Czech language. In my presentation, I will discuss a case study of this comparative research, the 1039 Polish campaign of Břetislav I. The final moment of the Polish campaign of Břetislav I in 1039 was the capture of Gniezno, one of the most important centers of medieval Poland. According to Cosmas, the aim of the campaign, apart from gaining territory and booty, was to capture the relics of St. Adalbert. By doing so, Břetislav sought to establish the long-standing desire of the princes of Prague for the creation of an independent Czech archbishopric. Although failed, as a successful campaign of one of the most important figures in the early Přemyslid history, the event figured prominently in the grand historiographical project of Charles IV. However, Pulkava gives a completely different account of the capture of Gniezno. In the presentation, I discuss these deliberate changes, their causes, and its possible sources.

Botond Sütő (ELTE Budapest)

Royal Testaments and Chronicle Writing in Medieval East-Central Europe: The Testament of Boleslaw III

My research explores the historical significance of the testament of the Polish prince, Bolesław III. This statute is one of the most important and influential sources in the medieval history of Poland, responsible for the partition of the country in 1138 and for the so-called ‘period of territorial fragmentation’ that followed. The text, however, has not survived in its original form. This is one of the reasons why various debates have arisen about the content, authenticity, and significance of the will in historiography. In my presentation, I will briefly summarise the main views and opinions expressed in historiography through two problems: the order of succession and the division of territory. I will analyse the corpus of the will with other sources and place it in a Western European and East-Central European context. I will conclude by describing the early Polish history behind the creation of the alleged testament and the patterns of succession at that time, and then the impact of the will on the political events that followed. My results relate to the changes in succession orders used in Poland in the 10th–14th centuries, the conflict between the principles of *senioratus* and *primogenitura*, and its resolution with the testament and the concept of *idoneitas*. I will also place the statute, which survives in the Chronicle of Wincenty Kadłubek, among its East-Central European counterparts, thereby highlighting its general and individual features.

Magdaléna Kováčová (Comenius University in Bratislava)

Formulary of Queen Kunhuta: Reinventing the Queenly Position

This study centers around 13th-century Czech queen Kunhuta, mostly known as the wife of King Přemysl Otakar II and the mother of later king Wenceslas II, and a 13th-century manuscript containing formularies attributed to the said queen. In a new approach, the research around these documents tries to recreate a network of queen’s relations as well as to bring forth political subjects she engaged herself in during her rule. These are compared with current political events of the second half of the 13th century as well as other primary sources of various provenience. The sources are used to illustrate the difference between the portrayal of the king and the queen, and the amount of information mediated to a reader by a medieval writer. Besides the formulary collection, sources of both narrative and diplomatic character are taken into account in order to recreate a biography of Queen Kunhuta, proving the importance of her position in the medieval

Kingdom of Bohemia, as opposed to an ongoing presentation of her as a queen-mother and later lustful widow.

Tomasz Walczak (Institute of Polish Academy of Sciences, Section for the Historical-Geographical Dictionary of Lesser Poland, The Anthropos Doctoral School)

The Forgotten Historiographical Collection from the State Archive in Wrocław (sign. 82/28/0/1/6). Medieval History of Central Europe

The State Archive in Wrocław, under the signature 82/28/0/1/6, hides the handwritten collection of historiographical sources. The collection was created in its fundamental framework in the early 16th century. It is the codex forgotten by modern historiography, although as late as 1730 it was used by F.W. Sommersberg in the second volume of *Silesiacarum rerum scriptores*. The monuments included in the collection present the medieval and early modern history of East Central Europe from the point of view of the countries that formed that region – Silesia, the Kingdom of Bohemia and the Kingdom of Hungary. Silesian history is represented by the *Annales magistratus Wratislaviensis* (the oldest copy known today) and two catalogues of the bishops of Wrocław (including one so far unknown). Czech history is represented by the *Historia Bohemica, Polonica et Silesiaca* (so far known only from one copy) and the catalogue of the kings of the Kingdom of Bohemia (this is a copy of the catalogue accompanying the gallery of Bohemian rulers painted in the Prague castle on the order of Władysław Jagiellon around 1502). The history of Hungary is represented by a catalogue of Hungarian kings. A catalogue of Roman emperors, a description of the coronation of Ferdinand I Habsburg as King of Bohemia in Prague in 1527, and minor monuments of diplomatic nature are important additions to the aforementioned historiographical works. The purpose of the presentation is to introduce the codex (its codicological structure, history) and show its relevance to source and textological research on the mentioned historiographical works.

Anton Lisjak (Comenius University in Bratislava)

Slavic Cultural Identity in the Narrative Sources of the 14th-16th Centuries

The concept of cultural identity is very close in meaning to the concept of ethnic identity and in many respects, it coincides with it. This type of cultural identity, as used in the following study, is defined as the awareness of oneself as a member of a group of people that perceives itself as different from other groups of people according to one or more elements, i.e.,

determinants. Such elements can be consciousness or belief of common origin (be it real or fictitious), a common language, a common cult, similar customs, collective memory or collective myth and most importantly the name by which one group is designated in order to differ from other groups. The cultural identity of the group of people that this paper aims to deal with, is that of Slavs as described in the narrative sources written from the 14th to 16th century, mainly written by the Slavic authors themselves or written amidst Slavs. The paper aims to give an overview of how different groups of Slavs perceived themselves as well as how outsiders perceived Slavs and by what elements were they defined as Slavs.

Pavel Kotau (Palacký University Olomouc)

Non-Catholics of Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Czech Lands in Diplomatic Rhetoric in the Late Middle Ages

In the 15th century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Czech Lands were parts of the Latin West with a large population of Non-Catholic Christians (Orthodox believers and Utraquists). As a result, the rulers of these lands could have been represented as enemies of West Christianity by their adversaries. Grand Dukes of Lithuania and Bohemian kings had to respond to these accusations and find a way to reconcile the fact that a vast amount of their subjects were non-Catholics with the image of a good Christian king. In my presentation, I focus on these ways. Based on sources related to the diplomatic activities of Lithuanian and Bohemian rulers three main strategies could be defined. The first one is presenting the perspective of conversion of the non-Catholics in the near future, the second is pointing to peace as a main Christian value, and the third one is an appeal to the need for Christian Unity in the face of the Ottoman menace. These discursive strategies show us how in Europe before the Reformation multi-confessional reality of the Czech Lands and Grand Duchy of Lithuania could be integrated with the ideal of Unity in Roman Orthodoxy.

Bence K. Rác (ELTE Budapest)

Genres – Daily Challenges – Intercessors: Preliminary Observations of 16th-century Hungarian Verbal Charms

Late medieval and early modern stories of healing are marginal fields of Hungarian historiography. Only a very few historians of medicine were focusing on the topic, and only a few, quite heterogenous research topics (e.g., medieval religious and peregrination studies)

covered the same questions in Hungary. Therefore, this paper focuses on sources which previously were mostly discussed by folklorists: on prayers used as verbal charms in late medieval lay culture, preserved in 16th-century vernacular codices. Firstly, I present the framework of “medical marketplace”, the term which is frequently used in Anglo-Saxon historiography but remains quite unconventional in Hungary, leaving thus the social nature of the history of healing rather neglected. I also introduce the “functional approach” practiced by users of the presented texts. By showing the method how prayers were used for healing in late medieval culture of healthcare my aim is to illustrate the complex nature of these texts. I also survey those daily challenges – particularly illnesses and injuries – these remedies were used for. Finally, I analyse the presence of saints and late medieval cult elements used as intercessors in these prayers and diagnose a sort of specialization in the charisma in some of them. In this paper, with classifying illnesses and intercessors and adapting the framework of medical marketplace I intend to emphasize this fruitful concept in the analysis of the functional change of prayers and the place of these texts in the history of healing.