

DÁNIEL BAGI

Divisio Regni



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The territorial divisions, power struggles, and dynastic historiography of the Árpáds of 11th- and early 12th-century Hungary, with comparative studies of the Piasts of Poland and the Přemyslids of Bohemia

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The author

Pécs, January 2020

■ I. INTRODUCTION

I.1. Thematic framework

The 88th chapter of the Hungarian Chronicle Composition of the 14th century (hereafter, the *Hungarian Chronicle*) includes a story in which King Andrew I calls his brother Béla home from exile in Poland. According to this chronicle, “King Andrew, having lost one brother, sent a message to his other brother, Béla, in Poland, summoning him with great love, saying, ‘[As] we [...] were once companions in poverty and suffering, I ask you, my dearly beloved brother, to return to me without delay, so that we may be companions in joy as well, and with the pleasure of your personal presence, divide the goods of this kingdom between us. I have no successor, and no other brother but you, thus may you be my heir and succeed me as king.’ Béla was moved by these words, and returned to the king accompanied by his entire family. The king, when he saw his brother, rejoiced with great delight, as his brother’s power had now become a source of support for him as well. Soon thereafter, the king and his brother Béla took council and divided the Kingdom of Hungary into three parts, two of which remained in the possession – that is, under the authority – of his royal highness; the third part became the property of Duke Béla. This was the first division of the country, and thus the seeds of the strife and the wars between Hungary’s dukes and kings were sown.”¹

This portion of the chronicle (which was obviously recorded after the fact – in the final third of the 11th century, at the earliest) contains several similarly important accounts which will determine some of the chief objectives of the present work.

1 “Rex autem hic Andreas fratre orbatus misit in Poloniam ad alterum fratrem suum Belam cum magna dilectione vocans eum et dicens: ‘Nos qui quondam penurie participes fuimus et laborum, rogo te dilectissime frater, ut ad me non tardes venire, quatenus consortes simus gaudiorum et bonis regni corporali presentia gaudentes communicemus. Neque enim heredem habeo, nec germanum preter te. Tu sis michi heres, tu in regnum succedas.’ Post hec autem rex et frater eius Bela habito consilio diviserunt regnum in tres partes, quarum due in proprietatem regie maiestatis seu potestatis manserunt, tertia vero pars in proprietatem ducis est collata. Hec igitur prima regni huius divisio seminarium fuit discordie et guerrarum inter duces et reges Hungarie.” *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, SRH, vol. I, pp. 345.

My analysis will begin with the chronicle's final observation, wherein its anonymous author condemns the partitioning of the country and presents it as the source of the contention between Hungary's kings and dukes. In describing the event immortalized here, the chronicle's author uses two particular expressions (*divisio regni* and *discordia*, "the division of a kingdom" and "discord") which – in my view – make clear the attitude he wished to impart to his audience.

The concept of *divisio regni* was an important technical term in the political language of the Middle Ages, and was drawn directly from the text of the New Testament. According to a story presumably derived from the *logion*² and preserved in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, the Pharisees reproached Jesus for one of his miracles, saying that it was only with the help of Beelzebub that he had been able to cast a devil out of a sick woman,³ whereupon Jesus responded to them as follows: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."⁴ The primary discipline by means of which to interpret this story is thus theology, and within that framework, the metaphor of the house divided against itself is, above all, a response to those who doubted Jesus' miraculous powers. However, according to another, broader interpretation (one valid even unto the present day), the Pharisees' reaction was blasphemous – that is, insofar as Jesus' doubters openly questioned whether he was the Son of David and a divine prophet, they were committing one of the fundamentally unforgivable forms of sin against the Holy Spirit.⁵

The notion of *divisio regni* had already appeared in the political arena by the time of the establishment of the Germanic barbarian kingdoms and principalities of Europe; beginning with the Merovingian period, it would become a principle for organizing power in the Frankish empire.⁶ Among the customs of the Merovingians – and the Carolingians who took over from them in the 8th century – was the law of consanguinity, according to which every male descendant had an equal right to a share of his father's possessions, which could be accomplished in practice only if each of them were to inherit a roughly equal-sized portion of the kingdom.⁷ The origins of this custom, if we are to believe František Graus, are to be found not in Frankish sacrality, but in their pagan belief – which they are known to have maintained for a

2 Klein, *Lukasevangelium*, pp. 411–417.

3 "But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven." Lk. 11:15–16, in the King James translation.

4 Lk. 11:17–20.

5 Schnackenburg, *Kingdom*, pp. 251–260.

6 For a summary, see Kasten, *Königssöhne*, passim.

7 Ewig, *Merowinger*, pp. 80; Erkens, "Divisio legitima", pp. 423–485; Kasten, *Königssöhne*, pp. 9–10.

considerable period even after they had adopted the Catholic rite of baptism – that the strength of their dynasty was rooted in the fertility of its ruler, and thus the more legitimate male offspring who could rule in his place after his death, the more power the dynasty would have.⁸ In any case, whether we categorize the institution of *divisio regni* as a Germanic custom or a pagan tradition, we know from Gregory of Tours that after the death of Clovis I in 511, his sons divided his kingdom among themselves, and did so not according to their father’s last will and testament, but on the basis of an agreement of their own.⁹ The practice of *divisio regni* – that is, dividing a kingdom – was maintained in the Carolingian empire as well.¹⁰ However, this institution changed so much in comparison with the Merovingian period that by 806, Charlemagne wrote his last will and testament in conjunction with inheritance laws established while he was still alive, and thus the partitioning of his empire was carried out in accordance with these predetermined arrangements.¹¹ Even so, the practice of dividing kingdoms, which lasted all the way into the 10th century, was, as a consequence of the nature of such affairs, not without friction, and would become the source of numerous conflicts. For example, there were instances in which a child of a fallen monarch would attempt to take over part of a kingdom by unlawful means.¹² However, even if we disregard the aforementioned instances of flagrant illegality, the process of sharing power was accompanied by constant debates and disagreements, which primarily affected the relationships between fathers and their sons.¹³ The practice of *divisio regni* was finally abandoned in the 10th century, when the Saxon dynasty came to power and dropped this custom in the interest of imperial unity.¹⁴ After the fall of the Carolingians, the interpretation of the notion of *divisio regni*, which had been inherited from the Bible, was enriched by another connotation: starting at that time, this Biblical dictum was used synonymously with dissension,

8 Graus, “Treue”, pp. 6–45; Graus, “Herrschaft”, pp. 5–44.

9 “Defuncto igitur Clodovecho regi, quattuor filii eius ...regnum eius accipiunt et inter se aequa lantia dividunt”, *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis libri Historiarum X*, MGH SRM, vol. I/1, p. 97.

10 Kasten, *Königsöhne*, pp. 138–198.

11 For more on the emperor’s will, see *Capitularia regum Francorum*. MGH Capitularia, vol. I, no. 45, pp. 126–128; see also Trischler, “Divisio”, pp. 193–258.

12 “Chilpericus vero post patris funera thesaurus, qui in villa Brannacum ferant congregati, accepit et ad Francos utiliores petiit ipsiusque muneribus mollitus sibi subdidit. Et mox Parisius ingreditur sedemque Childeberthi regis occupat; sed non diu ei a hoc licuit possidere; nam coniuncti fratres eius eum exinde repulerunt, et sic inter se hii quattuor, id est Chariberthus, Gunthramnus, Chilpericus atque Sigiberthus, divisionem legitimam faciunt”, *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis libri Historiarum X*, MGH SRM, vol. I/1, p. 152–153.

13 Kasten, *Königsöhne*, pp. 11–13.

14 For more, see the famous coronation charter of King Henry I of Germany: *Conradi I. Heinrici I. et Ottonis I. Diplomata*, MGH DD, vol. I, no. 20, pp. 55–56; Hlawitschka, “Unteilbarkeit”, pp. 247–259.

opposition to the ruling dynasty, or a state of chaos in the kingdom;¹⁵ the 1356 Golden Bull of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV uses it in just this way.¹⁶

And though the aforementioned excerpt from the *Hungarian Chronicle* does not explicitly refer to its place in the Bible, there is nevertheless reason to suspect that the anonymous chronicler interpreted the concept of *divisio regni* from two different perspectives. The first is related to the sharing of power, and it is from this point of view that he narrates the establishment of the so-called royal duchy of the 11th century, known in Hungarian historiography as the *dukátus*. Though they will be described in greater detail below, it is worth noting here that Hungarian historiography has produced two fundamentally contradictory theories about the duchy. György Györffy's theory, the fundamental propositions of which he maintained throughout his later work, appeared in print in 1958 and 1959,¹⁷ while Gyula Kristó first elaborated his theory of the 11th-century royal duchy in 1974.¹⁸ These two eminent medievalists agreed on almost nothing connected to the 11th-century duchy, neither on its antecedents, its establishment, its extent, nor its function; and though their conceptions of it resemble one another inasmuch as they both regarded it as a phase in the evolution of the state, they approached this question from fundamentally different perspectives. We are therefore unavoidably obliged to begin the present endeavor with an account of the duchy's historical background, establishment, geographical extent, borders, and main centres, as well as the powers associated with it.

It would appear, however, that these political, economic, and territorial divisions of power were just a single aspect of the chronicler's assessment of the struggles for the throne which affected Hungary's kings and dukes. The chronicle's references to the relationship between the two Hungarian brothers, its description of King Andrew's request and promise, and its observation about the inheritance of the throne suggest that its author, who disapproved of Andrew and Béla, was at least as interested in *discordia* – in the evolution of conflict between feuding relatives, and thus in both the disputes themselves and the parties to them. It is clear that the dynastic power struggles of the Middle Ages were battles waged over concrete material advantages, and were thus above all the result of differences of opinion between people who were, with few exceptions, blood relatives, and whose confrontations often ended in real drama. This statement is true even though the Árpáds' dynastic politics – except during the reign of King Coloman – avoided the

15 For example, *Reginonis abbatis Prumiensis chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi*, MGH SRG, vol. L, p. 129; *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. IX, book VII, pp. 488–490.

16 *Bulla Aurea Karoli IV imperatoris anno MCCCLVI promulgata*, MGH LL vol. VII, FIGA vol. XI, pp. 44–45.

17 Györffy, “Nemzetség”, pp. 12–87 and pp. 565–615; Györffy, *Tanulmányok*, passim; *Magyarország története*, vol. I/1, p. 860.

18 Kristó, *Hercegség*, passim; he continued to defend the greater part of his conclusions in an unchanged form in a later monograph as well. See also Kristó, *Feudális széttagolódás*, pp. 9–83.

brutal conclusions typical of intrafamilial disputes; that is, they did not attempt to eliminate potential rivals by murdering them, locking them up in monasteries, or by any other means.¹⁹ Even so, leaving competitors alive and within reach of power would almost necessarily lead to strife, especially if family members proved incapable of cooperating.

The present treatise is thus above all an introduction to the throne disputes which characterized the Árpád dynasty during the 11th and early 12th centuries. Of course, historically speaking, political and dynastic conflicts have not been rare, and things were not otherwise in Hungary. In discussing the Árpád era, it is enough to mention the latter half of the 12th century and the memorable feud between King Béla IV and his son Stephen, which Attila Zsoldos has described in a modern monograph²⁰; nor were the later phases of the Middle Ages or the history of the renaissance lacking in similar episodes. However, the incidents like this which took place between the 8th and 12th centuries had one common characteristic: we know about them primarily through narrative sources and generally not from the pens of impartial authors. In addition to general difficulties arising from source criticism, though, we also have to take into account the fact that the politics of the Carolingian period – the fundamental institutions of which remained in place more or less unchanged until the Investiture Controversy of the late 11th century – were inseparable from theology. The anointing of kings and their almost divine authority were the bases of the Carolingians' ruling ideal, but similar syntheses of politics and theology were also present in their views of power, its acquisition, and its allocation. Likewise, the sources which have familiarized us with these debates about power-sharing necessarily explain these controversies using the linguistic and conceptual toolbox of the political theology of their era – and, moreover, were written for a very narrow public. And though their audience was numerically small, typically made up of bishops, it was, in political and cultural terms, a most influential elite, and thus the impact of the messages in these texts was inversely proportional to the size of their readership. It can thus be claimed, perhaps without exaggeration, that the narratives which recorded the dynastic and other power struggles of the Middle Ages were written in an idiom corresponding to the legal concepts and worldviews which this small but highly cultured and influential reading public would have understood, and that the content of these works offered recommendations for interpreting and resolving such conflicts in a form which would have been comprehensible to their patrons and readers. Thus, the narrative sources which describe the history of these conflicts and imparted it to us had to take some sort of stand with regard to these issues. The question is, how did they do so? That is, from what sort of perspective did they examine and evaluate these individual incidents?

¹⁹ Zsoldos, *Az Árpádok*, pp. 74–75.

²⁰ Zsoldos, *Családi ügy*, passim.

There is no need for a detailed explanation of the fact that medieval narrative sources include stories which romantic, historicist, and positivist historians have adopted almost word-for-word, using them to reconstruct the principal events of the medieval centuries of Hungary's national history. Twentieth-century schools of historiography, beginning with the appearance of Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833–1911) pioneering work of intellectual history, tried to deconstruct these sources and to re-evaluate them from new vantage points. In this respect, it was certainly the postmodern school, which appeared after WWII and became fashionable starting in the 1960s, which went furthest. With the help of a methodological approach called “new philosophy”, according to which texts were to be examined in and of themselves, without regard for their historical contexts, researchers who endorsed this postmodern methodology succeeded in blowing the narrative sources' stories to atomic bits, subtracting the history from them, stripping them of their socio-historical contexts, and regarding them as simple, independently existing, linguistic-structural phenomena.²¹ Independent of such gravely destructive approaches, which ultimately lead nowhere, methodological innovators who analyzed and interpreted sources with the help of genuinely new and constructive methods also came to the fore: historians of the post-war generations have been influenced significantly by the French *Annales* school, which famously studied socio-historical structures over the long term, using primary sources to demonstrate the changes in these structures. The post-war West German medievalist schools, starting with Helmut Beumann, focused their investigations on the historical outlooks of the authors of the narrative sources.²² Starting in the early 1990s, Gerd Althoff – along with several members of the so-called Münster school which he led – published studies with a new outlook based on two methodological foundations. The first made use of the results of the socio-historical research which had been underway in continental historical studies since the beginning of the 20th century. From the perspective of the present work, one of the most important contributions of this methodology was that it succeeded in demonstrating that the stories preserved in the narrative sources of the 9th to the 12th centuries were not mere jumbles, but precise reproductions of the conceptual repertoires which the literate elites of the period wished to record about the world around them and the systems that governed it.²³ It is a familiar fact, and needs no further explanation, that the legal concepts of the medieval period posited a fundamental distinction between the free and the unfree,²⁴ and with the help of

21 There is no room in the present study for a detailed introduction to the postmodern – or any other – approach, but for an unattractive, general example, see Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, passim.

22 For antecedents of this approach, see Spörl, *Grundformen*, passim. For more, see Beumann, *Widukind*, pp. 6–8; Beumann, “Historiographie”, pp. 451–453; Goetz, *Otto von Freising*, pp. 8–16; For a summary of the methodological approaches of modern medieval studies, see Goetz, *Mediävistik*, passim.

23 Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen*, passim; for these worldviews, see Goetz, “Vorstellungen”, pp. 3–18.

24 Bolla, *Jobbágyóság*, pp. 16–17; Jánosi, *Törvényalkotás*, pp. 67–130; Zsoldos, “Társadalom”, pp. 419–425; Solymosi, “Társadalom”, pp. 55–65.

these norms defined the legal status of the two dominant strata of medieval society – that is, of those who were categorized according to these differing concepts of liberty. In addition to this organizing principle, or rather independently of it, there existed a primarily theological conception which divided the world into three (or sometimes four) functional or vertical orders, differentiating the inhabitants of the Christian world according to the functions they served in it, such as *oratores* (leaders) *bellatores* (warriors), and *laboratores* (laborers, tillers of the soil). Beyond these two models, however, we are also familiar with a third conceptual order, which corresponded to these vertical rankings and regulated the relationships between free men. It distinguished three types of connections: blood ties, associations based on mutual interest, and legal relationships derived from one's position in the social hierarchy. These three categories were all influenced by the concept of *amicitia* or friendship, which was inherited from antiquity and bequeathed to the Middle Ages by the Christian church, then survived the Merovingian and Carolingian periods. *Amicitia* signified political, social, and emotional bonds,²⁵ and touched on almost every aspect of life. Gerd Althoff has rightfully called attention to the fact that as far back as the Carolingian period, social bonds had been based on equality,²⁶ the embodiment of which was friendship reinforced by oath.²⁷ By the latter half of the 11th century, this system was being transformed by continual crises; a new type of friendship-based relationship network then came into being, in which relatives and non-relatives were subordinated and hierarchical connections played the central role. Another of the merits of the Althoff school is that they subjected the process by which conflicts played out to serious examination, and from a range of new perspectives. In light of the novel conclusions which arose from such work, it seems likely that the conflicts the era were handled in accordance with a well defined script which prescribed a strict system of procedures and a modern sort of protocol for parties to a dispute. The goal was to restore the parties' original good relationship and to re-establish *amicitia* (in its broadest sense), which the adversaries hoped to do by establishing a consensus and reaching an agreement (*pactum*).²⁸ This settlement process necessarily included ritual and ceremonial elements, countless examples of which are reflected in the narrative sources of the 9th to the 12th centuries. These include arrival (*adventus*), reception (*receptio*), an oath (*iuramentum*), reconciliation (*reconciliatio*), submission or self-subjection (*editio or submissio*), an offer of satisfaction (*satisfactio*), an exchange of gifts (*munera*), and sometimes the humiliation of both parties (*humiliatio*).²⁹ Of course, the theatrical scenes presented in these

25 Epp, *Amicitia* pp. 35–36.

26 Althoff, *Verwandte*, pp. 89–91.

27 Fritze, "Schwurfreundschaft", pp. 144.

28 Althoff, "Königsherrschaft", pp. 265–290; Althoff, *Amicitiae*, passim.

29 It would be impossible to list the entire bibliography related to the "staging" of power, the ritual and ceremonial elements connected to the exercise of authority, and the historical implications of these

sources do not necessarily reflect events as they actually happened, but rather introduce them with the help of a particular argumentative strategy.³⁰

Research into these narrative sources has produced new results, opened up possibilities for taking new approaches to social history, and forced us to ask what played the central role in the conflicts on which the present work is focused: the spatial division of power? The system of relationships between the participants in these conflicts? Or changes in that system, of which the geographical division of authority was just one element? In order to arrive at an answer to this question, it will be necessary to use the second larger section of this book to conduct a detailed investigation of the personal aspects of these conflicts. First of all, it will require a thorough analysis of the “law” and “legal relationships” which bound the members of the Árpád dynasty together and organized them into a kind of relationship network over the course of the 11th century; it will also necessitate an exploration of the transformation of this system from one of equality to one of subjection, as well as a treatment of the problems surrounding the evolution of the concept of loyalty. However, the notion of the “relationship network” and its re-organization will not provide an answer to every question. There can be no doubt that the participants in these power struggles and throne feuds did not fight out of a sense of allegiance to any theoretical abstractions, but rather in order to seize control. However, the following questions were already the subjects of theoretical discourse in the sources which recorded these conflicts: on which principles could one base a claim to power? What did one need in order to acquire it? And what sorts of arguments could one invoke in a debate over the throne? It will thus also be necessary to investigate thoroughly those arguments which came up in the course of these throne feuds, whether for or against a particular candidate. Such analysis is important for two reasons. The first question is whether there existed any objective legal perspective to which to refer in these disputes, and which could have provided a valid basis for any sort of claim to power. This inquiry is warranted if only because one school of Hungarian historians has always treated these 11th-century battles for the throne as simple questions of succession,³¹ while others have regarded duchies as the residences of heirs to the throne and as a kind of geographical institution of the succession process,³² while yet others have considered succession to be important only insofar as it relates to these power struggles.³³ Furthermore, historical researchers have yet to arrive at a consensus about the existence in the Árpád era of a legal principle of succession which could be traced back to the beginnings of Hungary’s national

concepts. Among the most important works which include this field’s methodological foundations are Althoff’s *Rituale* (passim) and Garnier’s *Bitte* (passim).

30 Althoff, “Gedächtnis”, pp. 127–149.

31 See Bartoniek, “Az Árpádok”, pp. 785–841; Domanovszky, “Az Árpádok”, pp. 37–52.

32 R. Kiss, “Trónbetöltés”, p. 747; Györffy, “Nemzetség”, p. 51.

33 Kristó, *Hercegség*, pp. 67.

history and which would have provided a generally valid basis for a claim to the throne. In addition to *designatio* (the nomination of a candidate by the ruler himself) – which was capable of circumscribing the right of primogeniture, seniority, or any other real or imagined normative legal principle – and *consensus* (the consent of the governed), there was another concept of which we need to take account in the present work. One of the most interesting (and still lively) debates of 20th-century Hungarian medievalist research concerns the argumentative strategies of the sources which document these 11th-century conflicts – that is, the problems surrounding the excerpts of the chronicles written from the perspective of legitimacy or idoneity. The most important research into the arguments about legitimacy and suitability which were put forward by the author of the *Hungarian Chronicle* is based on a theory proposed by József Gerics in 1961, or on later responses to it, some of which were receptive to it, others critical of it, while yet others approached the question from a completely different vantage point.³⁴ Disregarding the relevant conclusions of Hungarian historians for now, as they will be discussed in detail later in this text, it should be emphasized here that these 11th-century disputes over the throne were subsequently explained by means of a variety of legitimation strategies, which the parties to these disputes used to affirm or reject the justice of each other's claims to power. The present work will include a thorough examination of three such maneuvers, which served, in one form or another, as the basis for such claims. All three argumentative strategies share one basic feature, which is that their authors strove to present the claims of the participants in a given conflict as “historically” justified – that is, the dynasty in question could trace the foundations of its legitimacy back to its worthy ancestors. One style of argumentation stressed genealogical relationships, trying to create legitimacy by referring to prestigious forebears, or to deny a rival's legitimacy by referring to his unsuitable ancestry. The second style focused on the fact of coronation and references to crowned ancestors, while the third concentrated on military capabilities and the expectation that a particular candidate would be able to repeat or even surpass the martial deeds (*gesta militaria*) of his ancestors.

1.2. The necessity of comparative analysis

As is suggested by the subtitle of the present undertaking, it is my intention to examine the feuds of the Árpád dynasty by comparing them with similar affairs among the Piasts of Poland and the Přemyslids of Bohemia. Of course, the starting point will be Hungarian historiography and historical culture, which is justified not only by the identity of the author of this book, but also by the fact that the questions

³⁴ Gerics, *Gesta-szerkesztéseink*, pp. 100–115; Kristó, “Legitimitás”, pp. 585–619; Gerics, “Koronafogalom”, pp. 131–140; Bollók, “Szent Imre”, pp. 61–75; Szovák, “Szent László”, pp. 116–118; Veszprémy, “Királykép”, pp. 37–52.

raised by Hungarian historiography will serve as a worthy foundation for this sort of comparative analysis.

The use of comparative methods is almost obligatory, for several reasons. The subject itself cries out for at least a regional comparison, given that it would be easy to head down one or another blind alley and treat these dynastic conflicts as something specifically Hungarian. To do so, however (in my opinion, at least), would be misleading. Another of the justifications for this comparison is by now almost a cliché: even though they sometimes diverged in their details, the fundamental characteristics of the Árpáds', Piasts', and Přemyslids' systems of rule were similar. This insight is one of the reasons that much of the research into international and Hungarian history which has been published in recent decades has used the methodological fundamentals of comparative analysis to study a variety of themes; here I should mention a monograph by Christian Lübke³⁵ as well as the work of Márta Font.³⁶ And while Lübke and Font's monographs allow us to trace the processes by which the power of dynasties was built up (including that of the Kievan Rus', which they both incorporated into their analyses), other scholars, like Anna Adamska, Norbert Kersken, and László Veszprémy, have focused their research on the historiography – and, more broadly speaking, the written culture – of the East-Central European region.³⁷ The use of comparative methods is also recommended by the fact that some Hungarian historians have sought the template for the duchy of the 11th century in analogous entities in East-Central Europe and in (Frankish) Western Europe.³⁸ This in itself raises an interesting question: was the Árpáds' early system of power-sharing comparable to neighboring, especially East-Central European models? And if so, how similar were they? Thus in order to achieve the goals of the present undertaking, the application of comparative methodology will be both interesting and useful. It is, however, not merely a need to adapt to European research trends, or the requirements which logically arise from the character of the present work, or the questions posed and conclusions drawn by earlier generations of Hungarian scholars which necessitate at least a regional comparison; the paucity of source materials, which problem will be discussed in detail below, has also created a need for comparative analysis.

The comparisons in this book will thus be limited to the geographical borders of the region generally described by historians as East-Central Europe. Even so, the notion of East-Central Europe is itself a historically recent conceptual category, and

35 Lübke, *Europa*, passim.

36 Font, *Nagyhatalmak*, passim; Font, *Dinasztia*, passim.

37 Adamska, "Introduction", pp. 165–190; Adamska, "Memory", pp. 83–100; Adamska, "Literacy", pp. 13–47; Kersken, *Nationes*, passim; Kersken, "Die Anfänge", pp. 863–867; Kersken, "National-geschichtsschreibung", pp. 147–170; Kersken, "Geschichtsentwürfe", pp. 127–128; Veszprémy, *Történetírás*, passim.

38 Kristó, *Hercegség*, pp. 11–39.

thus for the purposes of the present work, it will be necessary to clarify the essence of this term before moving on.

“Central Europe”, as a political and historical expression, is unquestionably a product of the modern age³⁹; its proliferation and popularity are due, above all, to the work of Friedrich List⁴⁰ (1789–1846) and Friedrich Naumann (1860–1919). Trained in Lutheran theology, Naumann published his book *Mitteleuropa* in 1915⁴¹; the popularity of this volume is indicated by the fact that even during the Great War it was translated into several languages including Hungarian. Naumann’s concept of *Mitteleuropa* bore the stamp of Germany’s military objectives. Its central premises – among them the notion that a political and economic entity known as Central Europe had formed around the Central Powers (*Mittelmächte*), meaning Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire – make sense only in this context. It is no wonder that after the end of the war and the emergence of a new balance of power, this notion was emptied of its content and rendered a mere theory. Even so, the conceptual system of Naumann’s book confirms that European historical scholarship features two basic theories about Central Europe: the first type relies on individual nations’ historiography and historical culture – that is, wherein the concept of Central Europe has been formed under the influence of individual nations’ historical traditions and experiences.⁴² Among the most important accounts of this sort is a work of historical philosophy by Oskar Halecki. Halecki, who eventually emigrated to the West after WWII, structured his concept of Central Europe in accordance with the *antemurale* (bulwark) theory, which has been cultivated by Polish historians since the 16th and 17th centuries. This line of reasoning holds that Central Europe was Roman Catholicism’s last bastion of defense against Russian Orthodoxy; accordingly, this renowned historian places the birth of Central Europe at the turn of the first millennium and defines it geographically as Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia.⁴³ Though it continues to influence Polish historiography to this day, Halecki’s theory is generally opposed by Czech historians, who tend to link the rise of Central Europe to the Great Moravian Empire of the 9th century.⁴⁴ According to this view, Central Europe is rooted in the ancestors of the Czechs who lived in greater Moravia, and originated not at the time of the Ottonian dynasty, but in the Carolingian era.

In contrast, a second approach includes attempts to determine the essence of Central Europe by circumventing the limitations of national historiography and

39 For a multifaceted summary of this issue, see Klaniczay, “Közép-Kelet-Európából”, pp. 1291–1321.

40 List, *Ackerverfassung*, passim.

41 Naumann, *Mitteleuropa*, passim.

42 Such accounts of Polish and Czech history include, but are not limited to, Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, passim; Třeštk, *Počátky*, passim.

43 Halecki, *Grenzraum*, passim.

44 Třeštk, *Počátky*, passim; for an example of the acceptance, adoption, and use of Třeštk’s work about the dawn of Polish history, see Urbańczyk, *Mieszko Pierwszy*, pp. 142–143.

posing scholarly questions about problems of more general interest. One such historian is František Graus, who originally worked in Prague and emigrated to West Germany after the Soviet invasion of 1968; he was investigating the origins of the states of Central Europe as far back as the 1960s.⁴⁵ Jenő Szűcs should also be mentioned here; his epochal study, which has had an incontrovertibly fundamental influence on Hungarian historical scholarship, demonstrated that the basic elements of the medieval Western European concept of freedom were valid in East-Central Europe as well.⁴⁶ The writings of Christan Lübke also belong here, especially his 2004 monograph *Östliches Europa* (Eastern Europe),⁴⁷ the value of which, as its title suggests, is his classification of Kievan Rus' as part of East-Central Europe, and his characterization of its basic political institutions as essentially Western up to the 12th century.⁴⁸ Márta Font has used similar principles in evaluating the concept of East-Central Europe; her 2005 doctoral dissertation (published in German in 2008) was a structuralist examination of the history of Eastern and East-Central Europe in the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries.⁴⁹ Finally, Karol Modzelewski, a well-known critic of the communist regime, published a massive monograph focused on barbarian Europe in 2004; this survey describes and explains the rise of East-Central Europe as a result of the decline of barbarian Europe.⁵⁰

It should also be noted here that the concept of East-Central Europe, as employed in the present investigation, will not be based on the theories of any particular national school of historiography. Instead, if only because these dynastic conflicts were not typically national in character, I will model my methods on those of the Hungarian and European historians who have examined the history of East-Central Europe using a balanced, structuralist approach. Geographically speaking, I will construe this region to include only the territories ruled by the Árpáds, the Piasts, and the Přemyslids. The primary reason for doing so – even though the scholars who assert that Kievan Rus' was at least initially a part of Central Europe are unquestionably correct – is the fact that the power structures institutionalized by the Árpáds, the Piasts, and the Přemyslids were political and linguistic legacies of the Carolingian and Ottonian dynasties, while those of Kievan Rus' were not. Nevertheless, the complexity of the issues under investigation here will occasionally require mentioning examples involving the Rus'.

45 Graus, "Entstehung", pp. 5–65.

46 Szűcs, "Historical Regions", pp. 131–184.

47 Lübke, *Europa*, passim.

48 Lübke, *Europa*, pp. 23–34.

49 Font, *Nagybatalmak*, passim.

50 Modzelewski, *Europa*, pp. 433–435.

I.3. Chronological scope

The chronological limits of this evaluation will also require some explanation. As I have alluded to before, the dynastic conflicts of the era and historical region under discussion differ from those of contemporaneous Western Europe inasmuch as the 11th century was a period of crisis for these three East-Central European dynasties. Here, of course, the term “crisis” connotes more than just those phenomena associated with the pagan insurrections which broke out across the region or its almost daily military conflicts. Insofar as their organization of authority and their political systems were inseparable from these dynasties’ rise to power, the rules of their political games had to be created out of practically nothing, which necessarily led to a variety of crisis phenomena. This is another factor which has compelled me to begin this investigation by linking the ascent and ultimate rise to power of the Árpáds, the Piasts, and the Přemyslids. This connection is also justified by – in addition to the assertions below – the fact that it will be necessary to spend the first large section of the present work clarifying in detail the following questions about these geographical divisions of power: did they precede the rise of these ruling families? Were the two phenomena simultaneous? Or did such power-sharing agreements evolve as a consequence of their rule? The questions discussed in the present work will be drawn to a timely close by the period between 1106 and 1115. In 1106, King Coloman the Learned of Hungary vanquished his brother Duke Álmos, which necessarily put an end to the Duke’s ability to exercise independent authority and decisively changed the relationship between the two. In the end, Coloman eliminated all the powers of the royal duke, ultimately blinding both his brother Álmos and Álmos’s son and heir Béla. These chronological limits are also applicable to the affairs of the Piasts and the Přemyslids. Though the latter dynasty’s rise to power can be dated to second half of the 9th century, the consolidation of their rule began in the second half of the 10th century, after the death of Saint Wenceslaus I. The Piast ruler Mieszko I, also known from the primary sources, came to power in 966. The closing dates of the present study are also well suited to the events of Polish and Bohemian history. Bolesław III (Wrymouth) issued his famous succession statute in 1138, thereby dividing Poland’s territory among his descendants. Though this document, referred to in the specialized literature as a last will and testament, is marked by numerous unsolved problems (only a few of which will be discussed in this volume), the year 1138 continues to serve as a turning point both in Poles’ own historical chronologies and in general textbooks, and thus matches the Hungarian calendar fairly well. In the case of the Czechs, up to the period of Duke Vladislav I, around 1112–1113, events must be followed with careful attention. Such care is necessary because of Vladislav’s “re-evaluation” of the 1055 statute issued by his ancestor Duke Břetislav I, who brooked no dissent during his attempts to eliminate the powers of the Moravian duchy, which had never been particularly

broad. Thus, the chronological scope of the present work will be limited to a period of roughly 150 years. One might justifiably object to the periodization sketched by asking whether or not Coloman's reign over Hungary put an end to the transformation of power relations within the Árpád dynasty. Given the events of the 12th and even 13th centuries, the answer to this question must be that it did not. However, the use of a broader chronological framework would make a thorough comparative analysis more complicated, if not impossible.

1.4. Sources and literature

Without question, the success or failure of this sort of undertaking will depend on the quantity, quality, and nature of the available data. By itself, the quantity of source material on this subject would seem to prophesy a spectacular shipwreck. As László Veszprémy has recently pointed out, the source materials we would need for a complete study and a better understanding of Hungary's early centuries have been lost forever over the turbulent course of Hungarian history, and thus we are unable to do more than reconstruct this period of its national past by using the scanty and fragmentary data available to us.⁵¹ This firm and realistic assertion is even more valid of the sources related to the medieval history of the Czechs and Poles. As I mentioned earlier, the history of the dynastic conflicts of the Middle Ages has been derived primarily from narrative sources, which are not always objective accounts of the events they describe; nevertheless, depending on their authors' levels of education and the interests of their patrons, they may still provide us with detailed information.

However, the number of these sorts of texts, generally known as chronicles or *gesta* (Latin for "deeds"), is vanishingly small in the East-Central European region. In the second decade of the 12th century, under the influence of their ruling dynasties, the Czechs and the Poles each produced a significant historical summary: the chronicles, or *gesta*, of Gallus Anonymus and Cosmas of Prague.⁵² The *gesta* attributed to Gallus Anonymus features a single succession crisis, the power struggle between Bolesław III (Wrymouth) and his half-brother Zbigniew, while Cosmas of Prague's chronicle is built around an annalistic framework which traces the history of the Czechs from its mythical beginnings up to the year 1125 and, accordingly, registers a great deal of historical detail which will serve as useful evidence in the present study. I will also make use of 12th- and 13th-century narrative sources, the accounts of which rely partly or wholly on the aforementioned chronicles, of which they may be regarded as continuations or sequels.⁵³

51 Veszprémy, *Történetírás*, p. 21; see also Kristó, *Történeti irodalom*, passim; Kristó, *Historiográfia*, passim.

52 *Galli Anonymi chronicae et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, MPH n. s., vol. II; *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II.

53 *Magistri Vincentii dicti Kadlubek Chronica Polonorum*, MPH n. s., vol. XI; *Chronicon Poloniae Maioris*, MPH n. s., vol. VIII; *Staročeska kronika tak řečeneho Dalimila; Chronica Hungarico-Polonica*, AUSZ AH, vol. XXVI; *Kanonik Vyšehradský*, FRB vol. II, pp. 201–237.

In comparison with the narrative sources which record the histories of the Piasts and the Přemyslids, however, those concerning the Hungarians are considerably more complicated. Hungarian scholars of the Middle Ages are at an enormous loss insofar as the surviving text of the *Hungarian Chronicle* which describes the events of their earliest history is the legacy of two separate compilations assembled in the 14th century. Starting in the latter half of the 11th century, the source materials on which these two text families were based have been continually expanded and distorted, marred by many interpolations and retrospective alterations, and mutilated in every other imaginable way.⁵⁴ Over the course of the 20th century, Hungarian medievalists have made significant advances in identifying the redactional layers within the texts of these chronicles.⁵⁵ The most interesting question in this field has always been when the earliest version of the *gesta* was produced. Four major theoretical approaches have tied the production of the first *gesta* or chronicle to the reigns of Andrew I (1046–1060), Solomon (1063–1074), King Ladislaus I (1077–1095), and Coloman the Learned (1095–1116). As of now, only two of these possibilities seem likely: either a Solomon-era or a Coloman-era origin. This investigation is not – nor should it be – an attempt to determine when the first version of the *Deeds of the Hungarians* was written. To do so would be impossible, if only because – as József Gerics and László Veszprémy have pointed out – there is no reason to exclude the possibility that historical records existed even in that early period, and that they were edited together into a chronicle only later, possibly during Coloman's reign.⁵⁶ Moreover, theoretical debates persist about what, from the perspectives of form and content, may be regarded as a chronicle or *gesta*.⁵⁷

It is important to note, however, that almost every researcher who has investigated these texts agrees that some sort of chronicle was composed during Coloman's reign, the central theme of which was the rivalry between King Solomon and his cousins, Dukes Géza and Ladislaus.⁵⁸ And insofar as it relates to the objectives of the present work, this consensus allows us to proceed from the following cautiously optimistic assumption: in Coloman's era, the king and his peers seem to have concerned themselves with the disputes between the members of the Árpád dynasty, which had not abated since the days of Andrew I and Béla I, and traces of which can be found in the text of the chronicle. This seems probable if only because the feud between Coloman and his brother Álmos cast a shadow over Coloman's entire reign, evidence of which can be found in textual fragments (possibly dating from Coloman's era, but more likely written during the reign of Stephen II, i.e.,

54 *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, SRH, vol. I, pp. 219–505.

55 Gerics, *Gesta-szerkesztéseink*, passim; *Commentarii I–II* passim; Kristó, *Történeti irodalom*, pp. 8–22; Szovák–Veszprémy, *Utószó*. SRH, vol. II, pp. 750–761; Kornél Szovák in *Képes Krónika*, pp. 239–254; and most recently, Thoroczkay, “Krónikairodalom”, pp. 23–34.

56 Veszprémy, “Megjegyzések”, p. 347. For more on historical records, see Adamska, “Memory”, p. 86.

57 Schmale, *Funktion*, pp. 35–67.

58 See Kornél Szovák in *Képes Krónika*, p. 242.

between 1116 and 1131) which support the views of Coloman's branch of the dynasty, and in passages (written after 1131) which reflect the interests of Duke Álmos's branch. Given the nature of the *Hungarian Chronicle*, it is impossible to offer an unconditional endorsement of the methodology used for evaluating the texts of the surviving chronicles concerning the Czechs and Poles; in each of these cases, one should pay serious attention to the conclusions of Hungarian researchers' largely philological work on the 14th-century chronicle text.

In addition to the extremely limited number of chronicles and *gesta*, there are also very few surviving annals from this period. This literature includes the *Annales Posonienses*,⁵⁹ which Hungarian historians first associated with the city of Pannonhalma, and later with Székesfehérvár.⁶⁰ The first annals known to have been recorded in the Bohemian lands date back to the end of the 12th century.⁶¹ Cosmas' chronicle, however, may have been based on the so-called *Lost Annals of Prague*.⁶² There is a relative wealth of Polish annalistic literature; by the late medieval period, the Poles were producing mounds of text on a regular basis. These annals can be divided into two great families, those of Greater and Lesser Poland, the common ancestor of which must certainly have been the so-called *Oldest Cracovian Annals*.⁶³ Its text has not survived, and thus it continues to pose an insoluble problem for researchers: did Gallus Anonymus make use of the information in this yearbook, or did it, like later annals, draw on the text of his *gesta*?⁶⁴ In any case, the small number of Hungarian and Czech annals, along with the uncertain provenance of – and limited amount of genuinely medieval data in – the Polish annals, has circumscribed the possibilities for using them in preparing the present study.

Hagiographical literature presents similar problems. Hungary is at the top of the list for this sort of biography, given that at least four such legends appeared there over the course of the 11th century, and more of these sorts of compositions were created throughout the 12th century.⁶⁵ In comparison with the hagiographic literature of Hungary, the Czech lands produced a substantially smaller number of similar texts. Their legendary literature was thematically limited to Saint Wenceslaus I and his family, as well as the hermit saint Procopius of Sázava, though the earliest

59 *Annales Posonienses*, SRH, vol. I, pp. 121–127.

60 Kristó, *Történeti irodalom*, pp. 125–126; see also Kristó in *ÁKIF*, p. 354.

61 *Letopisy České*, FRB, vol. II, pp. 282–302.

62 *Letopisy Pražské*, FRB, vol. II, pp. 376–379; Třeštík, *Počátky*, pp. 1–37.

63 For the annals of Lesser Poland, see Drelicharz, *Annalistyka*, passim; see also Labuda, “Najdawniejsze”, pp. 79–97. For the origins of the annals of Greater Poland, see Jasiński, “Początki”, pp. 129–146; Labuda, “Linie”, pp. 804–837.

64 In connection with this subject, and with a review of the older literature, see Wiszewski, *Domus*, pp. 112–113.

65 *Legenda Sancti Stephani regis maior et minor, atque legenda ab Hartvico episcopo conscripta*, SRH, vol. II, pp. 370–440; *Legenda sancti Gerardi episcopi*, SRH, vol. II, pp. 481–506; *Legenda sancti Emerici ducis*, SRH, vol. II, pp. 440–460; *Vita sanctorum heremitarum Zoerardi confessoris et Benedicti martiris a beato Mauro episcopo Quinquecclesiastensi descripta*, SRH, vol. II, pp. 347–362; *Legenda sancti Ladislai regis*, SRH, vol. II, pp. 509–527; see also Kristó, *Historiográfia*, pp. 18–27.

surviving account of the latter's life dates back to the end of the 12th century.⁶⁶ This field is most barren in Poland, where the origins of hagiographic literature can be traced back only as far as the 13th century; the biographical writings even of this period are limited to accounts of Saint Stanislaus the Martyr, a bishop murdered in the 11th century and written about twice in the mid-13th century by Wincenty of Kielcza (also spelled Kielce), who produced two different editions of Stanislaus's life.⁶⁷

The first wave of biographies of Saint Adalbert of Prague, which appeared in the late 10th and 11th centuries, raise a separate issue. We know that this Bishop of Prague (and monk) was murdered in 997 and that at least two biographies were written immediately after his death. Most researchers consider his fellow monk John Canaparius to have been the author of the *Vita prior*,⁶⁸ and thus the site of its composition is usually assumed to be the Benedictine monastery in Rome dedicated to the saints Alexius and Boniface.⁶⁹ Investigations conducted in the last decade, however, have suggested that this text was written in Liège or Aachen;⁷⁰ they have identified its author as Notker, the bishop of Liège.⁷¹ In my view, the question remains open,⁷² though to the best of our current knowledge, the traditional account of its origin seems more likely, while the notion of Notker's authorship is objectively untenable (for instance, the author of the *Vita prior* refers to Notker in the third-person singular).⁷³ The authorship of the biography of Saint Adalbert of Prague known as the *Vita altera*, two versions of which have survived,⁷⁴ is more certainly attributable to Bruno of Querfurt, one of Adalbert's fellow hermits. In contrast with the optimistic tone of the *Vita prior*, these texts reflect conditions which had already begun to change by the year 1002.⁷⁵ Finally, I should also mention Saint Adalbert's lost *passio*, an abbreviated form of which is now commonly known to scholars by the

66 *Passio s. Vencezlai incipiens verbis Crescente fide Christiana: Recensio Bavarica*, FRB, vol. I, pp. 183–190; *Legenda Christiani. Vita et passio sancti Wencleslai et sancte Ludmille ave eius*, passim; *Gumpoldi Mantuani episcopi Passio Vencezlai martyris*, FRB, vol. I, pp. 146–166.

67 *Vita sancti Stanislai episcopi Cracoviensis (vita maior) auctore fratre Vincentio de ordine fratrum praedicatorum*, MPH, vol. IV, pp. 319–438; *Vita sancti Stanislai episcopi Cracoviensis (vita minor)*, MPH, vol. IV, pp. 238–284.

68 *Sancti Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris Vita prior*, MPH n. s., vol. IV/1, passim.

69 Labuda, "W sprawie", pp. 115–130.

70 Hoffmann, *Vita Adalberti*, passim.

71 Fried, "Gnesen", p. 252.

72 See, for example, Jerzy Strzelczyk's appreciative review of Jürgen Hoffman's monograph: Strzelczyk, "Vita Adalberti", pp. 116–117. For a rejection of the theory that it originated in Liège, see Labuda, "W sprawie", p. 121.

73 "Ergo multis lacrimis fratrum dulce monasterium linquens, cum summe discrecionis viro Notkerio episcopo ultra Alpes proficiscitur", *Sancti Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris Vita prior*, MPH n. s., vol. IV/1, c. 22, p. 16. See also Bagi, *Królowie*, p. 77.

74 *Sancti Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris vita altera auctore Brunone Querfurtensi*, MPH n. s., vol. IV/2, passim; *Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum (seu) vita vel passio Benedicti et Jobannis sociorumque suorum auctore Brunone Querfurtensi*, MPH n. s., vol. IV/3, passim.

75 See Wenskus, *Brun*, passim; Labuda, "Św. Wojciech", pp. 212–228; Drelicharz, *Idea*, pp. 45–66.

name *Liber de passione martyris* (Book of the Passion of the Martyr). Earlier scholars considered Bruno of Querfurt to have been the author of these passion stories;⁷⁶ however, in the mid-20th century, Reinhard Wenskus succeeded in clarifying that this volume, the tone of which recalls the optimism of the *Vita prior*, might have been the creation of an independent author writing in Saxony or at the court of Bolesław I (the Brave).⁷⁷ And though these biographies of Adalbert stand out, insofar as they do not seem to have originated in any of the three dynastic territories under discussion here, the geographical way stations along their central character's career path makes them indispensable to a better understanding of the East-Central Europe of that era.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning the *Admonitions of King Saint Stephen*, which Jenő Szűcs has called the first exemplar of a theory of the state written in Hungary.⁷⁸ The *Admonitions* are unique among the creative endeavors associated with the early history of the ruling houses of East-Central Europe: neither of the writing cultures which evolved around the Piasts and the Přemyslids produced anything like this text, though if they had, any similarly thoughtful work would be of great benefit to me in responding to the questions raised in the second section of this book.

The situation with diplomatic and other non-narrative sources is not much better. Nevertheless, it should be noted that historians of 11th-century Hungary are familiar with a volume of public and private letters that is orders of magnitude larger⁷⁹ than the quantity available for scholarly reconstructions of events among the Poles and Bohemians. The problems start with the fact that some of the documents concerning the Piasts and the Přemyslids survive only within the texts of narrative sources. This is the case, for example, with the papal bull issued in the year 1000 and attributed to Pope Sylvester II, with which we are familiar only through the *gesta* of Gallus Anonymus,⁸⁰ as well as the alleged document listing the possessions of the diocese of Prague, which is recorded only in the chronicle of Cosmas of Prague.⁸¹ Likewise, it is only from an appendix to Cosmas' chronicle that we know about the letter which established and provided the land for the Benedictine monastery in the Moravian town of Třebíč in 1101.⁸² This supposed document has survived only in the so-called Brno or Třebíč manuscript of Cosmas' chronicle, which was composed

76 Labuda, *Studia*, vol. I, p. 251.

77 Wenskus, *Brun*, pp. 202–247.

78 *Libellus de institutione morum*, SRH, vol. II, pp. 613–627. See also Szűcs, “Szent István Intelmei”, pp. 271–829.

79 DHA, vol. I.

80 *Galli Anonymi chronicae et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, MPH n. s., vol. II, book I, c. 6, p. 20; see also *Repertorium polskich dokumentów doby piastowskiej*, no. 1.

81 *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II, book II, c. 37, pp. 136–139; see also DHA, vol. I, no. 83, pp. 244–246.

82 *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II, book III, pp. 258–259.

around the year 1485.⁸³ For this reason, one school of Czech historiography has always regarded the letter which established the monastery in Třebíč as a forgery,⁸⁴ though others have argued that this chronicle reflects the conditions of an earlier period, around 1150.⁸⁵ Moreover, it is also possible that this letter was based on a borrowing from an early Moravian Benedictine chronicle.⁸⁶ The letter in which Duke Břetislav I granted the land for the monastery in Sázava belongs in this same category, as it has been handed down to us only by a 12th-century follower of Cosmas of Prague who continued his work.⁸⁷ Perhaps strikingly, we know of only two independently preserved 11th-century documents concerning Polish history. The first, known as the *Dagome Iudex*, is a highly dubious, vigorously studied fragment of a registry,⁸⁸ possibly compiled around the year 1090, though the events it records happened in the late 10th century. The other such document recorded Duke Władysław Herman's returning of certain treasures which had disappeared from Bamberg Cathedral and turned up in Poland.

With regard to the earliest period of Bohemian history, the situation is similar. If we omit the significantly older documents which confirm the existence of the Great Moravian Empire (which earlier publications have classified as pertinent to Czech history),⁸⁹ the number of relevant documents which had actually appeared by the end of the 10th century is quite small, while a large portion of the documents attributed to the 11th century are in fact later forgeries.⁹⁰ These include the document issued by Duke Boleslav III (the Red) to the Benedictine monastery in Ostrov, about which we know only through a later transcription.⁹¹ The founding charter of the monastery in Stará Boleslav is also considered to be an early modern forgery,⁹² although its content seems to reflect conditions consistent with its purported date; likewise, the founding charter of the Benedictine monastery in Opatovice, issued by Duke Vratislaus II in 1073, is known only through a 12th-century forgery;⁹³ this list could also include several other documents which are known to us primarily through later transcriptions, or which scholars consider to be forgeries.

The legal codes which were written in this period present a similar picture. Only in the case of Hungary have legal texts survived. In addition to the legal codes

83 Bretholz, "Handschrift", pp. 692–704.

84 Most recently, see Blahová, "Funkce", pp. 97–112, especially pp. 107–109.

85 Fišer, "K počatům", pp. 85–96.

86 For this contention, see Wihoda, *Morava*, p. 71 and notes 169–171.

87 CDB, vol. I, no. 48, pp. 50–51; see also *Kanonik Vyšehradský*, FRB, vol. II, p. 244.

88 For its text and the literature related to it, see Kürbis, "Dagome Iudex", pp. 362–423; Sikorski, *Kościół*, pp. 202–275; Nowak, "Dagome Iudex", pp. 75–94.

89 CDB, vol. I, no. 131–134.

90 CDM, vol. I.

91 CDB, vol. I, no. 40, pp. 45–47.

92 CDB, vol. I, no. 382, pp. 358–362.

93 CDB, vol. I, no. 386, pp. 368–371.

of King Saint Stephen, King Ladislaus I, and Coloman the Learned⁹⁴ (among which only the date of the earliest collection of decrees attributed to King Ladislaus I is still debated⁹⁵), several other 11th-century rulers, including King Péter Orseolo, Samuel Aba, Andrew I, and Béla I, are likely to have legislated or issued legal codes,⁹⁶ though we know about the latter texts only indirectly. For instance, the *Annals of Altaich* attribute the nullification of King Péter Orseolo's legal code to Sámuel Aba,⁹⁷ while the *Hungarian Chronicle* preserves evidence of laws issued by Béla I, Andrew I, and possibly Solomon.⁹⁸

And though it would be helpful for the purposes of the present work to be able to supplement the legal codes issued in Hungary starting during the reign of King Saint Stephen with similar Bohemian and Polish legal texts, unfortunately no such documents are available. Cosmas of Prague reports that after sacking Gniezno in 1039, Duke Břetislav I of Bohemia, in the presence of the Bishop of Prague and other dignitaries there in Gniezno, issued a series of decrees which thoroughly regulated the legal lives of his subjects.⁹⁹ Researchers generally consider these decrees to have been Břetislav's legal code, though no separate text of it has survived.¹⁰⁰ Even so, there is some doubt about the credibility of the decrees issued in Gniezno. Cosmas of Prague clearly associates these decrees with the occupation of Gniezno and depicts their announcement as having taken place within the context of a synod. However, this assertion casts suspicion over the whole affair. Břetislav I is known to have been unable to convoke a synod in the period in question. The reasons for this have yet to be clarified: it has emerged that the Holy Roman Emperor Otto III originally wanted to establish an archdiocese for *Sclavinia* in Prague; however, when the death of Boleslav II made the situation in Prague uncertain, he decided on Gniezno,¹⁰¹ and Břetislav I wanted to make up for this slight by conquering Gniezno. Thus, one cannot exclude the possibility that Cosmas of Prague knowingly presented these events as if Břetislav I had intended to give his nation laws in conjunction with his occupation and destruction of Gniezno.

Even more suspicious is Thietmar of Merseburg's note suggesting that a diversity of strict but at least partly praiseworthy laws (*leges*) existed during the reign of Bolesław I (the Brave) of Poland. For instance, Thietmar claimed that anyone who ate meat after *Septuagesima* Sunday would have his teeth pulled out, while anyone

94 For the publication history of these texts, see Závodszy, *passim*.

95 Jánosi, *Törvényalkotás*, p. 109.

96 Jánosi, *Törvényalkotás*, p. 119; for a summary, see Font, *Nagybatalmak*, pp. 67–68.

97 “Igitur rex idem, habito sinodico concilio, cum communi episcoporum et principum consilio omnia decreta rescindi statuit, quae Petrus iniuste secundum libitum suum disposuit...”, *Annales Altahenses Maiores*, MGH SRG, vol. IV, a. A. 1041, p. 26.

98 *Chronici Hungarici compositio saeculi XIV*, SRH, vol. I, pp. 344, 358, 362.

99 *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II, book II, c. 4, pp. 86–88.

100 See Procházka, “Burgen”, p. 617; for more on Břetislav's decrees, see Font, *Nagybatalmak*, pp. 67.

101 Most recently, see Wihoda, “Arcibiskupství”, pp. 205–218, especially p. 208.

who committed adultery with another man's wife would be nailed up by his scrotum, with a knife hung beside him so that he could cut himself down if he wished.¹⁰² Several aspects of Thietmar's presentation, however, are doubtful. Of the two major textual traditions derived from his chronicle, only one set preserves the word *leges*; the other set uses the term *consuetudines* (customs).¹⁰³ This in itself should make us wonder whether the practices described here were actually written regulations or whether they were existing customs which would have appealed to (or been unacceptable to) Christians. On the other hand, it cannot be forgotten that Thietmar produced his entire chronicle on the occasion of Bolesław I's marriage to Oda, which – according to him – would also have fallen between *Septuagesima* Sunday and Easter, and thus would have required the permission of the church. It is thus rather more likely that Thietmar wanted to connect Bolesław I's draconian punitive measures to a form of Christianity which incorporated pagan elements familiar to his recently baptized subjects. It is not a coincidence that Thietmar follows this section with an account of the rather imperfect Christianity of King Saint Stephen and Grand Prince Géza.¹⁰⁴ The danger here is the possibility that our understanding of Bolesław I's legal decrees might be clouded by Thietmar's opinions about his recently converted eastern neighbors. Another later source suggests that in all probability no written legal code existed at the time of the creation of the Piast dynasty: Gallus Anonymus's chronicle includes a detailed account of Bolesław I's legal decrees and judicial powers, but everything he describes there is based on a mere sketch of themes which might have been adapted from the *Admonitions of King Saint Stephen*.¹⁰⁵

The situation is much the same with regard to the wills and other agreements of a legal nature which were created primarily to avoid or put an end to the dynastic conflicts in question. These include the 1138 last will and testament of Bolesław III (Wrymouth) of Poland, which survives only in the text of the chronicle written by Wincenty Kadłubek in the early 13th century.¹⁰⁶ Here I should also mention the statute issued by Břetislav I of Bohemia, which regulated succession to his throne, even though its text survives only in the chronicle of Cosmas of Prague.¹⁰⁷ It is impossible to know whether these last two documents ever existed in written form,

102 "In huius sponsi regno sunt multae consuetudines variae/multae et variae leges; et quamvis dirae, tamen sunt interdum laudabiles [...] Si quis in hoc alienis abuti uxoribus vel sic fornicari presumat, hanc vindictae subsequentis poenam protinus sentit. In pontem mercati is ductus per follem testiculi clavo affigitur et novacula prope posita hic moriendi sive de hiis absolvendi dura electio sibi datur. Et quicumque post LXX. carnem manducasse invenitur, abcisus dentibus graviter punitur", *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. IX, book VIII, c. 2, p. 494.

103 *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. IX, book VIII, c. 2, p. 495.

104 *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. IX, book VIII, c. 4, pp. 496–498.

105 *Galli Anonymi chronicae et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, MPH n. s., vol. II, book I, c. 10–15, pp. 28–35; see also Bagi, *Królowie*, pp. 167–168.

106 *Magistri Vincentii dicti Kadlubek Chronica Polonorum*, MPH n. s., vol. XI, book III, c. 26.17, p. 118.

107 *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II, book II, c. 12, p. 102.

or were simply transcribed into the aforementioned chronicles on the basis of oral tradition. It will be necessary to return to this question below, with a particular focus on the similar accord which has survived in the 88th chapter of the *Hungarian Chronicle*, the example with which I began this introduction.

Given the quantity, distribution, and condition of these sources, it follows that the investigation of the central theme of this book will require the use of a volume of specialized literature which is substantially larger than the quantity of sources on which this secondary literature is based. Thus the nature, quantity, and quality of relevant material has required me to explore and evaluate this small number of sources simultaneously, side-by-side, in hopes of analyzing individual issues by putting the materials related to Hungarian, Polish, and Czech history – and the Latin-language literature of medieval Europe – into conversation with one another. The latter will include the monastic historiography of the Saxons and Salian Franks, Saxon and Bavarian annals, and the masterpieces of Saxon and Salian Frankish chronicle literature.¹⁰⁸ Most of these authors, such as the writer of the *Annals of Altaich*, which evinces a significant familiarity with Hungarian history, exhibit a profound awareness of the eastern neighbors of the Holy Roman Empire, whether they were discussing the Poles, the Bohemians, or the Hungarians. Moreover, most of them left behind detailed accounts of the Piasts', Přemyslids', and Árpáds' succession crises and dynastic disputes. In addition to these crucial Saxon, Salian Frankish, and Bavarian sources, any evaluation of the dynastic conflicts of East-Central Europe will also – depending on the subject matter – inevitably require attention to other indirectly related, primarily Western European sources from the Carolingian era or later. As has already been brought up, this is so because the dynastic conflicts which arose in this era cannot be regarded as simply “national affairs,” and thus elements of certain questions will prompt examinations of the broader stock of literature in the Latin language.

Finally, I would like offer a note on the professional literature concerning this subject. The present study is based on the relevant Hungarian, Polish, Czech, and Slovak scholarship, as well as German and English studies which touch on these themes. This book features a large number of Eastern European names, which I have generally spelled as they are commonly used in English. In addition, because of the large number of Piast and Přemyslid rulers with similar or identical names, I have included an appendix of genealogical tables, maps of territorial divisions, and illustrations in order to clarify their relationships and lineages.

¹⁰⁸ For example, *Widukindi monachi Corbeiensis Rerum gestarum Saxonicarum libri III*, MGH SRG, vol. LX; *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. IX; *Wiponis opera*, MGH SRG, vol. LXI; *Lamperti Monachi Hersfeldensis opera*, MGH SRG, vol. XXXVIII; *Annales Magdeburgenses*, MGH SS, vol. XVI, pp. 105–196; and the *Annales Corbeienses*, MGH SS, vol. III, pp. 1–18.

■ II. THE TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY

II.1. Theories about the antecedents, establishment, function, geographical extent, and decline of the royal duchy

The 88th chapter of the *Hungarian Chronicle* clearly asserts that King Andrew I and his brother Duke Béla divided the kingdom of Hungary between them; this statement will serve as the centre of gravity for the questions to be addressed in the following section of the present undertaking. The issues surrounding the background, evolution, territorial extent, political organization, and power structure of the duchy will be subjected to a thorough investigation below; in order to do so convincingly, it will be necessary to begin with a detailed discussion of the theories of the royal duchy formulated by György Györffy and Gyula Kristó.

II.1.1. GYÖRFFY AND KRISTÓ'S THEORIES OF THE ROYAL DUCHY

György Györffy's rather long-winded study of the origins of the Hungarian state was first printed in the journal *Századok* in 1958.¹ A year later, his views on the subject were published in monographic form;² his most important findings were issued first in his classic monograph about King Saint Stephen,³ and then in one of the great undertakings of Hungarian scholarship, the still unfinished 10-volume synopsis known as *The History of Hungary*.⁴

Györffy's ideas about the duchy include the following: the duchy was essentially two intersecting structures, one a contiguous set of territorial entities and the other a system of landholdings scattered across the entire country.⁵ Györffy based this

1 Györffy, "Nemzetség", pp. 12–87 and pp. 565–615.

2 Györffy, *Tanulmányok*, passim.

3 Györffy, *István király*, 374–376.

4 *Magyarország története*, vol. I/1, pp. 831–832 and 862–865.

5 Györffy, "Nemzetség", p. 48.

assertion on one of King Coloman's laws, which makes clear that there were ducal servants who lived in counties belonging to the king, and (vice versa) royal subjects who could be found in counties belonging to the duke.⁶ Also on the basis of Coloman's legal code, Györffy concluded that the phrase *mega ducis* (of the duke) was a reference to the duchy.⁷ Of these two aspects of the duchy (contiguous territory and system of landholding), Györffy considered the former to be the more archaic, given that when the duchy disappeared around 1115, the latter, more modern system of landholding did not.⁸

According to Györffy, both aspects of the royal duchy – territorial unit and landholding system – originated in Hungary's 10th-century history. He traced the traditional territorial organization of the duchy back to the regions which had accommodated the allied peoples who had joined the Hungarian tribal federation; that is, he regarded the innovation of a territorially defined duchy as being simultaneous with the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian basin.⁹ In Györffy's view, the function of the royal duchy was border protection, as the monarchy concentrated roughly a third of its military and economic resources there.¹⁰ Concerning the duchy's territorial extent, Györffy concluded that the royal duchy consisted of three larger masses: the centre of the first was Nyitra (now Nyitra, Slovakia); the second included the counties of Bihar (part of which is now Bihar, Romania) and Szabolcs, as well as the Nyírség region; the third was located near Krassóvár (now Caraşova, Romania) in the southern borderland which encompassed parts of present-day Croatia, Romania, and Serbia.¹¹ Györffy believed the latter area affirmed the duchy's value as a border-protection zone when its soldiers performed admirably in the 1071 war against Byzantium.¹² Ultimately, the duchy incorporated the territory of several counties including Nyitra, Hont, Zemplén, Nógrád, Ung, Borsova, Békés, Zaránd, Krassó, and Szerém.¹³

Gyula Kristó, on the other hand, reached a completely different set of conclusions which cannot be reconciled with the particulars of Györffy's theory. Kristó's views can be summarized as follows: the 11th-century royal duchy did not incorporate two fundamentally different structures, as Györffy claimed, but was rather a single territorial unit.¹⁴ According to Kristó, the origin of the duchy was not to be traced back to the time of the Hungarian conquest (that is, its development

6 "Ducis ministri, qui in mega regis sunt, et regis, qui in mega sunt ducis, ante comitem et iudicem, minores vero ante iudicem delitigent", *Závodszyky*, p. 187.

7 Györffy, "Nemzetség", p. 29.

8 Györffy, "Nemzetség", pp. 48–49.

9 Györffy, "Nemzetség", p. 29.

10 Györffy, "Nemzetség", p. 29.

11 Györffy, "Nemzetség", pp. 50–51.

12 Györffy, "Nemzetség", pp. 51–52.

13 Györffy, "Nemzetség", p. 51.

14 Kristó, *Hercegség*, p. 46.

was not simultaneous with the organization of the Hungarian state), but rather to the 1040s, as a result of the agreement reached by King Andrew I and his brother Béla; it then ceased to function as territorial unit and seat of power during the reign of King Coloman (1095–1116).¹⁵ Unlike Györffy, Kristó located the origins of the duchy not in Hungarian history, but in earlier and contemporaneous European phenomena, such as the Frankish (Merovingian and Carolingian), Polish, and Bohemian versions of the royal duchy.¹⁶ Moreover, he summarized his ideas about the royal duchy in a book he later dedicated to the subject of feudal territorial fragmentation. In this work, he classified these “duchies” into three separate groups, thus differentiating three forms of so-called “overlapping partial government”: the possessions of members of a ruling dynasty, subdivided territories controlled by private owners, and combinations of the two.¹⁷

While Györffy saw the royal duchy as a border-protection zone, Kristó considered the duchy to have been a set of peripheral, almost uninhabited districts along the border. In the latter’s opinion, over the course of the creation and 11th-century consolidation of the Hungarian “feudal state”, these regions became zones of settlement for social elements whose status as free people induced them to flee and elude “feudal authority”. In Kristó’s words, this tension brought the *regnum* and the *ducatus* into continual conflict over the course of the 11th century, given that the *regnum* – that is, the king – aspired to subjugate the peoples who were living freely in the duchy, having escaped his feudal authority.¹⁸ With regard to the territorial extent of the duchy, Kristó – again contradicting Györffy’s findings – believed that this duchy consisted of two parts, the centres of which were probably Nyitra and Bihar.¹⁹ Furthermore, Kristó also refuted the views of earlier, primarily pre-war Hungarian historians by suggesting that the establishment of the duchy had not been a dynastic affair; instead, he saw its inception and evolution as the results of general social principles and emphasized the role that various powerful interest groups played in these conflicts between Hungary’s kings and dukes.

II.1.2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF GYÖRFFY AND KRISTÓ’S THEORIES

In using the theories outlined by Györffy and Kristó to address issues surrounding the 11th-century duchy, Hungarian historical scholars have taken two fundamentally different approaches in attempting to answer questions about its origins, evaluating them from the perspectives of the state, the evolution of the state, and the origin of

¹⁵ Kristó, *Hercegség*, p. 46.

¹⁶ Kristó, *Hercegség*, pp. 11–30.

¹⁷ Kristó, *Feudális széttagolódás*, p. 23.

¹⁸ Kristó, *Hercegség*, pp. 82–86.

¹⁹ Kristó, *Hercegség*, pp. 91–92.

the state. It should also be added that neither of these theories can be dissociated from the Marxist-Leninist ideology which dominated the eastern half of Europe in the latter half of the 20th century. The Eastern and East-Central European variety of Marxism, also known as Marxism-Leninism, evolved into two major schools starting in the 1950s. The first was tightly bound up with the romantic nationalism of 19th-century historicism – that is, the exemplary periods, events, and heroes of a nation's history were considered part of the Marxist progressive tradition and thus fit for discussion. Adherents of the second approach, meanwhile, attempted to omit nationalist narratives from their nations' histories, which they tried to examine and evaluate by means of an unadulteratedly Marxist-Leninist socio-historical structuralism.²⁰ The situation is made even more complicated by the fact that the communist dictatorships of East-Central Europe, without exception, came into being within the Soviet Union's sphere of political, economic, and military influence. This almost necessarily means that the Marxist-Leninist ideology of Eastern and East-Central Europe cannot be understood without first accounting for some basic features of the traditionally Russian historical perspective which were incorporated into the Soviets' Marxist-Leninist historical scholarship starting during Stalin's reign.²¹ These were embodied primarily in a revival of the 18th- and 19th-century conflicts and debates between the Slavophiles and Westernizers: the discourse concerned with feudalism re-intensified during the Stalinist era, as did hostility to the (Latin) West (a particular legacy of the traditional Russian conception of history²²), as did an almost panicked fear that centralized authority would break down and leave the nation to be dismembered.

As a result of all this, in dealing with the questions surrounding the power-sharing arrangements of early East-Central Europe such as the royal duchy, historians who discount nationalist narratives in the course of their investigations typically evaluate these throne disputes and the separate territories they produced as anarchic disruptions of the “state system”.²³ In contrast, members of the other camp – including historians who were not necessarily Marxists, but were nevertheless unable to extricate themselves from the framework of conditions dictated by that ideology – regarded “duchies” as a developmental phase of a “national state” which they presumed to have existed since ancient times.²⁴

20 See Kosáry, “Történelem”, pp. 484–512; most recently, see Romsics, *Clio*, pp. 327–375.

21 For more on traditional Russian conceptions of history and their connections with Bolshevism, see Berdyaev, *Origin*, passim.

22 Sashalmi, “Polonophobia”, pp. 163–174, see pp. 164–165.

23 Elekes, *Magyar állam*, p. 75; Léderer, *Magyarország története*, pp. 36–37; among Polish historians, see in particular Łowmiański, *Historia Polski*, vol. I, p. 217; Bardach, *Historia państwa*, p. 151 and p. 167; Grudziński, “O akcie”, pp. 35–62; Borawska, *Kryzys*, pp. 5–7; Adamus, *O monarchii*, pp. 99–134; Czech and Slovak accounts include Fiala, *Čechy*, pp. 13–16; Fiala, “Přispěvky”, pp. 5–65.

24 In addition to Györfy's relevant work, see also (among others): Labuda, *Studia*, vol. I–II, passim; Poulik, *Großmähren*, passim.

This situation is further complicated by the fact that Russian, Czech, and Polish intellectual elites were almost unanimous in experiencing the outcome of the World Wars, especially the second, as a historical victory of the Slavic peoples over the Germans.²⁵ Accordingly, within the framework of Marxism-Leninism, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Soviets' acquisition of territory at Germany's expense both led to a positive re-appraisal of certain earlier notions which now served as historical proof for particular theories of antiquity, thereby validating the content of certain studies which had examined the roots and origins of the nation-state. Of course, (if one omits works written about Russian history) all this was most notable in evaluations of Czech and Slovak history, especially in theories which posited continuity between the Great Moravian Empire and Přemyslid Bohemia. Such views were certainly not novel, having appeared even in medieval Czech dynastic historiography. In his chronicle, Cosmas of Prague recorded the story of the decline of Svatopluk's Great Moravian Empire,²⁶ the essence of which was the notion that the Moravian empire had been inherited partly by the Bohemians, and partly by the Poles and Hungarians. This theory of the transfer of the kingdom (*translatio regni*), originally dreamed up by Cosmas, survived in a twisted and expanded form into the Bohemian historical traditions of the late Middle Ages. The 14th-century chronicles of Dalimil and of Pulkava not only adopted the idea that the Bohemians had inherited the Moravian empire, but augmented the story to include the notion that the Moravian crown had been passed down to them as well.²⁷ This theory, an intellectual wellspring of the narratives preserved in the historiography of the Bohemian court, is by now well known,²⁸ and it is clear that Cosmas' account has served to legitimize the notion that Moravia was "annexed" at the beginning of the 11th century.²⁹ Likewise, these ideas have unquestionably and decisively influenced modern Czech historiography

25 L. Curta, *Slavs*, pp. 6–14; for the peculiar link between Stalinism and Panslavism, see p. 11.

26 "Eodem anno Zuatopluk rex Moravie, sicut vulgo dicitur, in medio exercitu suorum delituit et nusquam comparuit. Sed re vera tum in se ipsum reversus, cum recognovisset, quod contra dominum suum imperatorem et compatrem Arnolfum iniuste et quasi inmemor beneficii arma movisset qui sibi non solum Boemiam, verum etiam alias regiones hinc usque ad flumen Odram et inde versus Ungariam usque ad fluvium a Gron subiugarat penitentia ductus medie noctis per opaca nemine sentiente ascendit equum et transiens sua castra fugit ad locum in latere montis Zober situm, ubi olim tres heremite inter magnam et inaccessibilem hominibus silvam eius ope et auxilio edificaverant ecclesiam. Quo ubi pervenit, ipsius silve in abdito loco equum interfecit et gladium suum humi condidit et, ut lucescente die ad heremitas accessit, quis sit illis ignorantibus, est tonsuratus et heremitico habitu indutus et quamdiu vixit, omnibus incognitus mansit, nisi cum iam mori cognovisset, monachis semetipsum quis sit innotuit et statim obiit. Cuius regnum filii eius pauco tempore, sed minus feliciter tenuerunt, partim Ungaris illud diripientibus, partim Teutonicis orientalibus, partim Poloniensibus solo tenus hostiliter depopulantibus", *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II, book I, c. 14, pp. 32–33.

27 *Staročeska kronika tak řečeneho Dalimila*, c. 24, p. 47; *Kronika Pulkavova*, FRB, vol. V, pp. 15–17.

28 For more on the nature of this chronicle, see Graus, "Velkomoravská Riše", p. 291; Blahová, "Koruna", pp. 165–166.

29 See Wihoda, "Vratislav", p. 372.

– otherwise written from explicitly state-centred, constitutionalist perspectives – and have thus become an indelible part of the Czechs’ and Slovaks’ national self-images, as well as the Czechoslovakist national identity of the interwar and communist eras.³⁰ By the latter half of the 20th century, scholars began trying to deconstruct these theories about the origins and continuity of the Old Moravia,³¹ though none has succeeded in producing any breakthroughs. In fact, it would seem that post-communist Czech historians have been only partially willing to modify this notion, typically in the interest of incorporating it into other continuity theories. Thus, for example, David Kalhous, who has at least partially embraced the theories about the continuity of the Great Moravian state which were espoused by the previous generation of Czechoslovakian medievalists,³² has surmised that with the baptism of Bořivoj I and their adoption of Slavic liturgy, the Přemyslids – at least initially – continued to preserve and to remember the traditions of the Old Moravia, which in his opinion, can be deduced from the so-called Christian legend of Saint Wenceslaus I.³³

Other, more complicated theories which might be considered innovations within the framework of Czech historiography have been introduced most recently by Martin Wihoda³⁴ of Masaryk University in Brno.³⁵ For the most part, Wihoda accepts the theory of Great Moravian continuity, though he has also created another such theory. According to him, after 907 (that is, after the Hungarians’ decisive conquest of the region), the people of the remnants of Old Moravia – that is, in the territories which we traditionally call Moravia – preserved the local structures, including at least a fragmentary ecclesiastical structure, which continued to function at the lower levels of society even in the absence of royal or princely authority. Lacking other sources, he supports this claim by invoking (of course) the chronicle of Cosmas of Prague. It will be necessary in the course of the present work to return to the fact that in his last will and testament, Břetislav I forbade his sons from dividing the Bohemian lands among themselves; in return he made it possible for the male family members who were thus denied a share of the authority exercised in Prague to rule in Moravia instead. Cosmas himself writes that Bohemian princes engaged in negotiations with the nobles and dignitaries (*primates terrae*) of the

30 Such accounts include: Palacky, *Dějiny*, vol. I, passim; Bretholz, *Mähren*, vol. I, pp. 1–120; Poulik, *Großmähren*, passim; see also the preface to P. Ratkoš’s *Pramene k dějinám Velké Moravy*, pp. 9–21; Třeštík, *Počátky*, passim; Třeštík, “Eine große Stadt”, pp. 93–138; for a summary of scholars’ perspectives on early Bohemian statehood, see Kalhous, *Duchy*, pp. 11–45.

31 See Graus, “Velkomorávská rise”, pp. 296–297; Graus “Entstehung”, pp. 5–65.

32 Kalhous, *Duchy*, pp. 263–264.

33 Kalhous, *Duchy*, pp. 193–262 and 265–266.

34 Wihoda, *Morava*, passim.

35 See Karel Hruza’s review of Wihoda’s *Morava v době knížecí 906–1197*. Prague 2010, in *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 07.09.2011, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2011-3-143>. For a Hungarian-language review of this work, see Bagi, “Morvaország”, pp. 233–249.

Moravian territories,³⁶ which Wihoda takes as evidence that after 1023 (or 1055), the Bohemian princes established their rule on the intermediate-level social structures which they inherited from Old Moravia, thus initiating a new phase of cooperation between the residents of this region and the Přemyslids who now exercised princely authority.³⁷ To summarize these views, the Moravia which was finally taken over by the Bohemians in the 11th century was a legacy of Old Moravia, so much so that it was not the “statehood” of the Great Moravian Empire that was bequeathed to the Bohemians, but rather the power structures of Great Moravia, which had been preserved and had continued to function within this territory since the end of the 9th century even in the absence of a dynastic ruling authority. In other words, after surviving the disintegration of Svatopluk’s empire, the elites of this region then served as the basis on which the Poles (at some point after 999) and later the Přemyslids (starting in the 11th century) established themselves. Had the Přemyslids not wanted to “Czechify” Moravia, these local elites might have served as the cornerstone for a new sort of cooperation between royal authorities and the local society. This “Czechification” ultimately succeeded around 1110, when Duke Vladislav I of Bohemia declared that Moravia would thenceforth and forever be ruled by the princes of Prague, in accordance with the last will and testament of Břetislav I.³⁸

The methodological foundations of Wihoda’s book, however, were new only within the microcosm of Bohemian and Czech historiography; his most important conclusions follow in the footsteps of German social historians, as his theory can be traced back to a social-history model which Otto Brunner developed in 1939 and modified slightly after the war. In his book *Land und Herrschaft*,³⁹ Brunner confronted the old, 19th-century German legal-historical approach which regarded the medieval development of the German state from the perspective of the empire which had evolved out of the Kingdom of Prussia; he judged the evolution of the *Länder* (states or provinces) to be a result of the deterioration of centralized authority following the failure of the reforms which the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa attempted to implement. He thus regarded the *Länder* as products of the 12th-century disintegration of the state and as the fundamental territorial units of Germany’s historical development; up until the 19th-century expansion of the Kingdom of Prussia, these units were the only model for – or most representative embodiment of – the development of the German state. According to the old school,

36 Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft*, passim.

37 Wihoda, *Morava*, pp. 113–170.

38 “Ego autem nolo cum fratre meo perpetuas inire discordias, sed volo castigare eum, ut castigatus resipiscat et cognoscat atque sui posterii discant, quod terra Moravia et eius dominatores semper Boemorum principis sint sub potestate, sicut avus noster pie memorie Bracizlaus ordinavit, qui eam primus dominio suo subiugavit”, *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II, book III, c. 34, p. 205.

39 Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft*, passim.

the *Länder* consisted of three components, and could be examined only on the basis of these three criteria: their territory, the systems of authoritarian rule which manifested themselves in the hierarchies which developed in these territories, and the systems of legal institutions which were established on the basis of these hierarchies. In contrast, Brunner took the position that a *Land* was not simply a territory ruled by a particular person, but was itself the bearer of the law; the territory and the people who lived there (*Land und Leute*) were inseparable from one another, and thus the inhabitants of the *Länder* were linked by particular sets of bonds, preserved in small communities of interest, law, and authority. Brunner's other novel assertion was that the *Land* took precedence over territorial lordship (*Landesherrschaft*); that is, the *Länder* always existed, independent of the disintegration of the medieval Holy Roman Empire, and regardless of the power structures which evolved in them, they were able to survive all the way up to the end of the 19th century thanks to the social, legal, and other types of symbioses between these territories and the people who lived there. He sought to justify his conclusions primarily by examining feuds (*Fehden*), a system of private wars which takes up most of the first chapter of his book; according to Brunner, feuds compelled local communities to participate in wars and observe armistices – that is, a feud itself created a kind of legal community (*Rechtsgemeinschaft* or *Gewaltgemeinschaft*) which functioned independently of other territorial power structures.

Brunner's hypotheses had a profound effect on German, and later European, research into the social history of the Middle Ages, especially on the feud-related research which proliferated in the 1960s and is even now revealing new power relationships and legal communities within the societies of the Middle Ages.⁴⁰ One cannot forget, however, that German historians, especially legal historians, subjected Brunner's claims to serious criticism at the time of their publication. The basis of these critiques – and here we return to the Bohemians – was that Brunner worked from exclusively Austrian and southern German sources, and as Walter Schlesinger, for example, has pointed out, it would be impossible to produce similar results using materials from more northerly regions of Germany.⁴¹ The applicability of Brunner's theses is also complicated by an even larger problem: his research was based primarily on post-1300 source materials, and thus it is not a coincidence that his influence has been most notable on research into the late medieval and early modern periods. It is therefore questionable whether his conclusions can be used in an examination of the history of the early centuries of the Přemyslid-era Bohemians.⁴²

40 For example, Reinle, "Fehdeführung", pp. 84–124; Reinle, "Fehden", pp. 173–194.

41 Schlesinger, "Landesherrschaft", p. 21.

42 Brunner regarded the *Land* as a primarily German phenomenon, but more recent researchers have succeeded in refuting this contention. See Seibt, "Land", pp. 301–305. It is true that Seibt – like earlier Czech legal historians – considered Brunner's theories applicable to Bohemian historical structures, though he typically cited 13th-century examples in supporting this contention.

Returning to Györffy's theory of the duchy, it should be noted here that subsequent researchers have generally considered the model he developed to be fundamentally Marxist.⁴³ I do not wish to take a position on this issue; in my opinion, this preeminent Hungarian medievalist, who worked primarily within the framework of the post-1956 relaxation of the constraints of the one-party state, wanted to make Hungarian history competitive with that of the Czechs, and thus created his own particular, nativist theory of the duchy which posited that it developed simultaneously with the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian basin.

It is worth noting that the methodological foundations of Gyula Kristó's theory can also be traced back to Czech and Slovak historiography. In the introduction to this book, I alluded briefly to the evolution of the concept of East-Central Europe, which some historical scholars developed by dispensing with nationalist narratives and focusing on structural characteristics. This task was initially assumed by representatives of Marxist-Leninist historiography; their work was based on the so-called East-Central European model of the medieval state, which was formulated largely by Czech, Slovak, and Polish historians. Although František Graus had already dealt with a similar notion of the emergence and development of East-Central Europe in the Middle Ages,⁴⁴ the essence of the theory developed by Dušan Třeštík and his Polish-born wife Barbara Krzemieńska was that the authority of the sovereign, which was based primarily on fortresses and the heavily armed forces that went with them, extended to *everyone* and *everything* (with the exception of the possessions of the church), and thus made it practically impossible for other independent power structures to come into existence. According to Třeštík and Krzemieńska's understanding of princely authority (and thus according to the East-Central European model of sovereignty), rulers used a special provisioning system and its beneficiaries (*beneficiarii*) to keep their territories and fortresses under control; the chief source of their power was the slave trade which flourished in the region in the 11th century.⁴⁵ Třeštík has even tried to prove that by paying taxes (*tributum*), taxpayers effectively became the property of the prince (*ius utendi, ius abutendi*).⁴⁶ As support for the plausibility of his theory, however, he is unable to offer more than yet another passage from the chronicle of Cosmas of Prague, in this case the legend of Princess Libuše, an embodiment of matriarchy whose authority was challenged by loutish Czechs who wanted to elect a new prince. Libuše herself explained the rights of a sovereign before sending for her chosen prince, Přemysl:

"O, what a pitiable people, who cannot live free and would deliberately give up that freedom which a good person would never lose, or lose only with his life. Your

43 See Dienes, "Szabolcs-Szatmár megye", p. 92; likewise, Kristó, *Magyar állam*, p. 27.

44 Graus, "Entstehung", pp. 8–11.

45 Třeštík, "K socialní struktuře", pp. 537–564; Třeštík–Krzemieńska, *Zaklady*, pp. 113–130; Třeštík–Žemlička, "O modelech", pp. 122–163.

46 Třeštík, "K socialní struktuře", pp. 538–539 and 555.

necks, unaccustomed to servitude, you willingly submit to the yoke. Alas! You will later regret it, and repent in vain, like frogs being smothered by the water snake they made their king. If you do not understand the rights of a sovereign, I will try to explain them to you in a few words. At the beginning, it is easy to choose a ruler, but it is difficult to depose one you have already chosen; even if you make a prince of one who was under your power, once you have chosen him, will not all of you come under his power? If you see him, your mouths will go dry and your tongues will stick; if you hear his voice, your knees will tremble. And in this great trembling, you will stutter as you answer him, 'Yes, my lord, yes, my lord.' And then, according to his will alone, without inquiring of you, will he call this one a criminal, and slay that one, and throw this one in jail, and hang that one. You – and if it pleases him, your families, too – shall be made slaves; others, peasants and taxpayers and overseers; yet others, executioners and town criers, chefs or fishermen or millers. From among you, he will choose tribunes, centurions, farmers, vine dressers and ploughmen, harvesters, armorers, and tanners of hides. Your sons and daughters will be employed as his servants. Your oxen and horses and cows will be at his disposal. He will make use of all your goods, in the meadows and on the battlegrounds, in the fields and pastures and vineyards."⁴⁷

In following these notions through Czech and Slovak scholarship, one finds that this same model has been applied to Moravia since the beginning of the 11th century. Continually, step by step, those at the centre of power (Prague) brought all of Moravia – which they considered their periphery – under their control, thereby limiting and ultimately almost eliminating the freedoms of its inhabitants, including even their property rights.⁴⁸ The authority of the princes continually expanded to incorporate *every* fortified territory, which made private landholdings – and even private property itself – almost impossible. The most recent generation of Czech medievalists has only partially drawn this assertion into question; they generally do

⁴⁷ "O plebs miseranda nimis, que libera vivere nescit, et quam nemo bonus nisi cum vita amittit, illam vos non inviti libertatem fugitis et insuete servituti colla sponte submittitis. Heu tarde frustra vos penitebit, sicut ranas penituit, cum ydrus, quem sibi fecerant regem, eas necare cepit. Aut si nescitis, que sint iura ducis, temptabo vobis ea verbis dicere paucis. Inprimis facile est ducem ponere, sed difficile est positum deponere; nam qui modo est sub vestra potestate, utrum eum constituatis ducem an non, postquam vero constitutus fuerit, vos et omnia vestra erunt eius in potestate. Huius in conspectu vestra febricitabunt genua, et muta sicco palato adhaerebit lingua. Ad cuius vocem pre nimio pavore vix respondebitis: 'Ita domine, ita domine', cum ipse solo suo nutu sine vestro preiudicio hunc dampnabit et hunc obruncabit, istum in carcerem mitti, illum precipiet in patibulo suspendi. Vos ipsos et ex vobis, quos sibi libet, alios servos, alios rusticos, alios tributarios, alios exactores, alios tortores, alios precones, alios cocos seu pistores aut molendinarios faciet. Constituet etiam sibi tribunos, centuriones, villicos, cultores vinearum simul et agrorum, messorum segetum, fabros armorum, sutores pellium diversarum et coriorum. Filios vestros et filias in obsequiis suis ponet; de bubus etiam et equis sive equabus seu peccoribus vestris optima queque ad suum placitum tollet. Omnia vestra, que sunt potiora in villis, in campis, in agris, in pratis, in vineis, auferet et in usus suos rediget", *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, MGH SRG N. S., vol. II, book I, c. 5, p. 14.

⁴⁸ For the application of these same ideas to conditions in Poland, see Modzelewski, *Organizacja*, pp. 34–78.