

in Kamenz, anschließend in dem Pseudoquerhaus des Breslauer Doms mit seinem Dreistrahlengewölbe, das bei A. früher als bei anderen Autoren datiert ist. Er entdeckt Schlesien für den westlichen Kunsthistoriker, denn in den neueren Kompendien zur Gotik findet es nur am Rande Erwähnung.<sup>5</sup> Gründe dafür sind die Diskontinuität der deutschen Forschung in der Nachkriegszeit, die Schwierigkeiten rein sprachlicher Natur, die zu dieser Zeit vorherrschende polnische (bzw. tschechische) Fachliteratur auszuwerten, sowie auch die vielleicht unbewusste Betrachtung der Gebiete östlich der Elbe als ein Territorium, das architektonische Inventionen aus dem Westen rezipiert habe und selbst wenig kreativ gewesen sei. Mit all dem bricht A., indem er in Schlesien künstlerische Phänomene erkennt, die parallel zu deren westeuropäischen Gegenparts entstanden. Aus diesem Grund erscheint es besonders notwendig, seine exzellente Publikation in eine der westlichen Sprachen zu übersetzen.

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<sup>5</sup> NORBERT NUSSBAUM: *Deutsche Kirchenbaukunst der Gotik. Entwicklung und Bauformen*, Köln 1985; MARC CAREL SCHURR: *Gotische Architektur im mittleren Europa 1220-1340. Von Metz bis Wien*, München – Berlin 2007.

**Zenonas Norkus: An Unproclaimed Empire.** The Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Viewpoint of Comparative Historical Sociology of Empires. Routledge. Abingdon 2018. XI, 414 S., Ill., Tab., Kt. ISBN 978-1-138-28154-7. (£ 39,99.)

This ambitious book, well translated from the Lithuanian version<sup>1</sup> by one of Lithuania's leading social scientists sets out to prove that the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an empire despite the fact that, apart from a throwaway line from one of its medieval rulers, nobody at the time seems to have regarded it as such. The intention is to add a case study to the modern social science literature on empires, to use it to critique current schools of thought in imperiology, and to provide a new understanding of medieval Lithuania.

Zenonas Norkus is not impressed by the current state of the historiography on the Grand Duchy. He admonishes historians not just for their failure to recognize that Lithuania was an empire, but for their neglect of social scientific theory. In particular, they are castigated for being "emic," rather than "etic," to apply a distinction utilized by cultural anthropologists: that is, they insist on applying concepts used by the historical actors they study, "disparagingly calling 'an anachronism' the description of ancient social life using later or contemporary vocabulary" (p. 73).

The historian might mischievously respond that the reason is that social scientists seem mostly to be interested in other social scientists, whose names populate the rebarbative Harvard system of notation, used here, which at times seems more like an exercise in performative name-dropping than a useful aid to the reader. No less than half the book is taken up with a critique of theories of imperialism. Benighted emic historians, cackling in Latin and reluctant to raise their noses from their dusty sources, are given a crash course in etic imperiology. They are instructed in realist and neo-realist schools of imperiological research; in internationalist, liberal, and idealist approaches; in hegemonic stability theory; in hologeistic analysis and crisp set theory. If this does not drive them back to their pipe rolls, they can digest cliometry and cliodynamics in their full glory, supported by graphs, tables and the magnificent Herfindahl-Hirschmann index ( $HH_a = \Sigma A_i^2 / A^2$ ), where A is the total area of dry land on Earth, and  $A_i$  is the area of an individual country, whatever that might be.

<sup>1</sup> ZENONAS NORKUS: *Nepasiskelbusioji imperija: Lietuvos Didžioji Kunigaikštija lyginamosios istorinės imperijų sociologijos požiūriu*, Vilnius 2009.

Seriously, however, this is an interesting and stimulating book. N. ranges widely, the critique of imperiology is lucid, and a major contribution of the book is its analysis of the cliometric approach of the American-Estonian political scientist Rein Taagepera and the work of the distinguished pre-war Lithuanian lawyer and statesman Mykolas Römeris (Michał Römer), which is probably less familiar to an international audience. Although historians are criticized for their Eurocentrism, postmodern and postcolonial approaches are not explored, since N., having established to his own satisfaction that medieval Lithuania was an empire, adopts a positive approach towards it as the forerunner of the modern, independent Lithuanian state, a position not exactly prominent in postcolonial studies.

There is much food for thought for historians in the second half of the book, where N. turns his imperiological arsenal on medieval Lithuania. He has read extensively in the historical literature, and his critiques of the scholarship are thoughtful and to the point. Yet a historian is entitled to wonder if a series of straw men are being erected. While historians certainly care about anachronism, as N. admits, very few—if any—are entirely emic in their approach. Likewise, few historians would have any problem in accepting that the fourteenth-century drive of the Gediminid dynasty to extend its control over much of what had been Kievan/Kyivan Rus' might usefully be termed "imperial," and Stephen Rowell's classic 1994 account<sup>2</sup>, copiously drawn on by N., was happy to call the Gediminid polity an empire.

Whether the elaborately explained categories of empire so punctiliously analyzed by the author, or his graphs, charts, and dazzling equations will tell the historian anything about *why* Lithuania rose, and why its imperial drive faltered, however, is another matter. While cliometrics can undoubtedly tell us something, the quality of the data that can be obtained from medieval Lithuanian sources is often poor—as N. admits—and much of the discussion is therefore highly schematic. One of the crucial criteria that N. uses for his definition of empire is size. On paper, the case seems unanswerable, and he uses maps that show Lithuania stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. This is problematic. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century historical cartographers were often highly political in their presentations of "states," portraying neat borders whose relationship to reality is questionable, in particular in the vast, thinly populated lands of medieval Eastern Europe. The fact that grand duke Vytautas once built a fort on the site of, or near to, modern Odessa, on the other side of the largely empty steppe, is hardly enough to justify the impressive map on p. 202 of Lithuania in 1450. After his crushing defeat by the Tatars on the Vorskla in 1399, Vytautas was in no position to exercise any control over much of the lands south of Kyiv, and to suggest that the Grand Duchy did so in 1450 is dubious at best, and retrospective fantasy at worst. A claim to territory did not imply control. It is data derived from this map, however, that feeds N.'s cliometric equations. An emic historian may be pardoned for a degree of skepticism about the results.

For a historian of this period, there is far too much talk of "states," which are treated as actors, to enable International Relations approaches to be applied. It is not individuals who act, it is "states," though on what basis "Lithuania" is deemed to be a political actor is never made clear. N. is aware of the problem, and at times prefers, sensibly, to use "polity" in place of "state," but the problem remains. The book is about Lithuania, but Lithuanians are curiously absent from its pages, except as statistics, and except for rulers, whose actions are judged without any attempt to understand the mental world of the late medieval period. There is no consideration of the nature of lordship, which is far more relevant to the strategies of Lithuania's rulers than the anachronistic modern notion of indivisible sovereignty. To end with a *tu quoque*, there is no attempt to engage with the frameworks in which historians have attempted to explain the policies of late medieval and early modern

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<sup>2</sup> STEPHEN ROWELL: *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East Central Europe, 1295-1345*, Cambridge et al. 1994.

rulers. The classic work of Susan Reynolds and many others on the nature of royal power and political community in medieval Europe is ignored, as is the influential concept of composite monarchy developed by John Elliott and Helmut G. Koenigsberger,<sup>3</sup> which takes far more account than Norkus does of the messy reality of politics in an age in which dynasty was more important than nation. Scholarship cannot, of course, be directed solely by the mental world of the past, but it must take account of it.

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<sup>3</sup> SUSAN REYNOLDS: *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300*, 2nd ed. Oxford 1997; J. H. ELLIOTT: *A Europe of Composite Monarchies*, in: *Past & Present* 137 (1992), pp. 48-71; H. G. KOENIGSBERGER: "Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum et Regale:" *Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe*, in: *IDEM: Politicians and Virtuosi: Essays in Early Modern History*, London 1986, pp. 1-25.

**Klaus Garber: Der Reformator und Aufklärer Martin Opitz.** Ein Humanist im Zeitalter der Krisis. De Gruyter. Berlin 2018. XXI, 846 S. ISBN 978-3-11-055004-7. (€ 79,95.)

Klaus Garber ist ein ausgewiesener Opitz-Kenner und Spezialist nicht nur für die Literatur des 17. Jh., sondern der gesamten Frühen Neuzeit. Die Zahl seiner (und der im Institut für Kulturgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit der Universität Oldenburg angeregten) einschlägigen Publikationen muss nicht hervorgehoben werden, sie sind weitestgehend den Fußnoten des vorliegenden Bandes zu entnehmen (der Bibliothekskatalog des Rezensenten weist im Schnellzugang schon über 50 einschlägige Titel aus). Gewidmet hat G. das Werk Richard Alewyn (1902-1979), dessen Schüler er war und bei dem er in Bonn seine Dissertation vorbereitete; er dankt ihm für zahllose Anregungen und Prägungen.

Im Vorwort wirft G. zahlreiche Fragestellungen auf, deren angemessene Würdigung den zulässigen Umfang der Rezension schon sprengen könnte. Hervorgehoben wird nicht nur, dass Opitz-Forschungen immer wieder das akademische Leben G.s prägten, fast scheint er es zu bedauern, sich überhaupt mit anderen Zeiträumen befasst zu haben.

„Die deutsche Literatur des ‚langen 17. Jahrhunderts‘ zwischen 1560/70 und 1730/40 ist – von Ausnahmen abgesehen – der Erinnerung entschwunden. Und wenn Fachleute bestätigen, daß eine lesenswerte Dichtung in Deutschland überhaupt erst mit Lessing beginne, dann ist ein ohnehin allfälliger Sachverhalt auch von vermeintlich kompetenter Seite sanktioniert.

Ein Verfasser, der gerne über die verschiedenen Medien ein breiteres Publikum erreicht, operiert also mit einem umfänglichen Buch über einen sog. ‚Barockdichter‘ in der Hand auf verlorenem Posten. Durch Wort und Tat möchte er zeigen, daß es sich immer noch lohnt, zu einem Autor wie Opitz oder einem seiner Weggefährten zu greifen.“ (S. XV)

Diese Zeilen können als Programm für das gesamte Buch gelten – und die Kritik an der Zunft, die sich vom Sujet abgewandt hat, ist deutlich zu spüren.

Weiter wird deutlich, wie viele Parallelen die Wirkungsorte G.s mit Opitzens Stationen aufweisen. Die Trias von „Dichter, Kulturpolitiker, Diplomat“ prägt sämtliche Studien zu Opitzens Leben auf den folgenden rund 800 Seiten. Dass nicht alle Textteile gänzlich neu sind, fällt nicht nur dem „Garber-Leser“ auf, es wird auch – naheliegend – im einleitenden Text hervorgehoben, indem die Motivation für die Abhandlung präsentiert wird. „So war es an der Zeit, lange zurückliegende Opitz-Studien wieder aufzunehmen und nach Maßgabe des Möglichen zum Abschluss zu führen. Ein dem Verfasser bislang unbekanntes Verfahren wurde beobachtet. Wo Studien aus eigener Feder vorlagen, wurde wiederholt auf sie zurückgegriffen. Fast immer wurde das vorgefundene Material einer durchgehenden Bearbeitung unterzogen und zugleich entweder erweitert oder gekürzt. [...] Darüber