

**Wojciech Kozłowski: The Thirteenth-Century Inter-Lordly System.** Lordly Identity and the Origins of the Angevin-Piast Dynastic Alliance. Solivagus Verlag, Kiel 2020. 439 S. ISBN 978-3-943025-61-3. (€ 70,-.)

This monograph addresses the context and origin of the dynastic marriage alliance in 1320 between the Angevin Charles I of Hungary and Elisabeth, the daughter of Władysław Łokietek of Poland. This marriage paved the way for the king of Hungary, Louis the Great, to succeed as the king of Poland when Kazimierz the Great died in 1370, creating a short-lived dual monarchy. Beyond providing a detailed case study, Wojciech Kozłowski's work also has the stated aim of injecting new life into medieval political history through the use of international relations theories taken from political science.

The first chapter is dedicated to theoretical concepts and terminology. K. draws on international relations theories to analyze the relations between lords and determine the values and principles that motivated political behavior. He argues that applying such theories borrowed from political science to medieval sources will provide empirical evidence of medieval lords' political interests. Because personal contacts rather than relations between states formed the backbone of medieval European relations, K. substitutes the term "inter-lordly" for "international." Building on Thomas N. Bisson's arguments, K. discusses how lordly identities determined the value system and interests that are the context for the dynastic marriage between the Angevins and Piasts.

The second chapter depicts the characteristics of the thirteenth-century political system, arguing for the coexistence of "system-level anarchy" (p. 68), that is, the lack of a monopoly of coercive power, with hierarchical ordering. It highlights the impact of a common political culture on behavior. A shared concept of order and instruments to enable such order—notably oaths and bonds of fealty—meant that, even without a center exercising the monopoly of violence, relations between lords did not descend into complete anarchy. The necessity to cooperate in order to survive and be able to pursue their interests compelled lords to resort to such a system.

Lengthy chapters next investigate the family history and political strategies of the two protagonists of the book, Władysław Łokietek and Charles I. Here K. draws on the theory of inter-subjective identities, acquired through interaction with others. He distinguishes between individuality and identity, maintaining that the latter can be captured at the level of behavior without having access to the psychology of historical actors. The fundamental motivation of these rulers was to "remain a lord" (p. 293), to secure their elite standing and pass it down to their heirs. In addition, an analysis of the competition for the Hungarian throne after the end of the local Árpádian dynasty's direct male line, a struggle from which Charles I emerged victorious, shows the significance of papal backing against rival claimants. A very thorough review of German, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish scholarship demonstrates the many different motivations historians have attributed to the main protagonists, as well as the constraints of national history writing. K. shows that Charles and Władysław had separate, unrelated political agendas; they were not natural allies, nor did they need to resolve any controversies. It was family politics where their interests coincided: the marriage alliance raised the aging Władysław's hopes that Charles would provide Casimir, his young son and heir, with aid after his death. From Charles' perspective, the marriage to Elisabeth was somewhat accidental, as she (and the Piasts) had not been his first choice, but his quest for an heir and the acceptable nature of a marriage tie to one of the local dynasties, coupled with the traditionally good relations between Hungarian and Polish rulers can explain the final outcome.

As the most thorough examination of the Angevin-Piast marriage alliance available, this book will be indispensable for those interested in the topic. It will also be more generally thought-provoking for historians of medieval politics. The author could have considered the significance of the nobility in more detail: instead of examining rulers within the context of the social elite of their realms, who played important roles in medieval political life, the book tends to focus on the individual rulers. Moreover, parts of the model derived

from political science methodology are unconvincing. While medieval history can benefit from judicious borrowing from the social sciences, including political science, the explanatory value of constructs based on unfounded assumptions is doubtful.

In particular, this monograph assigns too much agency to Christian “culture,” for instance, when it claims that: “To a certain level he [Władysław] identified himself with other lords by participation in the cultural project of Latin Christendom. He, therefore, acknowledged certain values and principles that would govern his inter-lordly behaviors and recognized the hierarchical order imposed by this culture” (p. 294). Medievalists should always be careful with their assumptions about medieval (political) culture. There are many examples—such as the diverse interpretations of calls for crusades, warfare within Europe, or the manipulative uses of claims to defend Christendom—that signal that, in fact, there was no common unifying Christian culture. Political expediency could override alleged Christian commonality, even making use of a supposed unity for particularistic purposes. Therefore, “participation in the cultural project of Latin Christendom” did not mean one particular type of behavior, nor did it entail the same values and principles for each actor. While rulers would hardly have presented themselves as acting against the interests of Christendom, their actual actions ranged widely, including, for example, in striking alliances with Muslims. There is therefore no direct link between any particular type of political behavior and a self-professed belonging to Latin Christendom. While it is possible to infer which values and principles dictated Władysław’s behavior from his actions, these cannot be directly deduced from an assumed common culture.

This volume will doubtless inspire other medievalists to engage with the methods and theories of political science. The most valuable aspect of the book, however, is K.’s meticulous analysis of the birth and context of the Angevin-Piast alliance.

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**Baltisch-deutsche Kulturbeziehungen vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert.** Medien – Institutionen – Akteure. Band 2: Zwischen Aufklärung und nationalem Erwachen. Hrsg. von Raivis Bičevskis, Jost Eickmeyer, Andris Levans, Anu Schaper, Björn Spiekermann und Inga Walter. (Akademiekonferenzen, Bd. 29.) Universitätsverlag Winter. Heidelberg 2019. 588 S., Ill., Kt. ISBN 978-3-8253-6881-4. (€ 52,-.)

Niemand wird den Nutzen wissenschaftlicher Konferenzen bestreiten wollen, selbst wenn man meinen kann, dass es bisweilen zu viele davon gibt. Auch wird niemand den Sinn einer Publikation von Konferenzbeiträgen in Abrede stellen wollen, selbst wenn es Vorträge geben mag, die nachzulesen kein Gewinn ist. Und doch konnte sich der Rezensent der ketzerischen Frage nicht erwehren, ob die Veröffentlichung des vorliegenden Konferenzbandes in dieser Form als gelungen zu betrachten ist.

Das liegt – das sei vorweg gesagt – sicherlich nicht an der Qualität der einzelnen Beiträge, die sich auf fachlich hohem Niveau bewegen. Aber genau dieses Problem erwähnte der estnische Historiker Mati Laur in seiner Rezension zum ersten Band *Baltisch-deutsche Kulturbeziehungen*, der 2017 erschienen ist<sup>1</sup> und die Beiträge einer Konferenz von 2014 versammelt, wenn er sich einen „Leser, der sich hinsichtlich seiner Expertise für mehr als nur einen Aufsatz des besprochenen Sammelbandes interessieren könnte“,<sup>2</sup> vorzustellen versucht. Den findet er dann in einer Person, die sich für „religiöse Feindseligkeiten in Riga in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts und zu Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts“ interessiere, weil sich vier Beiträge des Bandes mit dieser Periode befassen. Laur wiederholt hier in höflicher Form seine Kritik vom Anfang der Rezension, wo er die gemeinsame Be-

<sup>1</sup> RAIVIS BIČEVSKIS, JOST EICKMEYER u. a. (Hrsg.): *Baltisch-deutsche Kulturbeziehungen vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert. Medien – Institutionen – Akteure.* Bd. 1: Zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung, Heidelberg 2017.

<sup>2</sup> *Forschungen zur Baltischen Geschichte* 13 (2018), S. 203–207, hier S. 204.