

between Poland-Lithuania, Sweden, and the Habsburgs, as well as Sigismund's efforts to strengthen the legitimacy of the young Vasa dynasty.

Part IV ("Konfessionelle Allianzen, konfessionelle Grenzen") contains articles by Henryk Litwin and Paweł Duda on the cooperation between the Warsaw and Viennese apostolic nunciature in 1629; Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg on the Vasa Catholics' contacts with Protestant Brandenburg-Prussia; and Anna Kalinowska on Andrzej Rey's mission in London. Bömelburg's and Kalinowska's articles exceed the chronological framework set by the editors, covering the entire period of the Vasa dynasty in Poland-Lithuania and the rule of Władysław IV, respectively. In this section, Bömelburg's article stands out by undertaking a discussion of the theses hitherto prevailing in historiography on the relations of the Polish-Lithuanian state with Brandenburg-Prussia and drawing attention to the benefits to each side of these contacts but also to the differences of interest between the king and his entourage and the Sejm regarding these contacts.

Within the subject proposed by the editors, the reader is provided with a very valuable and multidimensional analysis of various aspects of diplomacy, the center of which was the royal court. In addition to the very interesting factual layer, of particular value is the strong methodological component of the individual articles, particularly evident in parts I–III. As a result, this work can serve as a good starting point or reference for other researchers dealing with early modern European diplomacy. Although in the introduction the editors stipulate that the emphasis in the study of diplomacy on the role of the royal court is closer to the classical approach and stands somewhat in contrast to most recent research, referred to as the "new history of diplomacy" (pp. ix–x), the reader receives in this work a very modern approach to the subject, not focusing on definitions but showing the different circles of actors, extensively characterizing their not always obvious connections and activities.

The greatest weakness of the reviewed book is the narrowing of the analysis to only the perspective of the diplomatic contacts of the court of Sigismund III Vasa with the West European cultural circle. This was, of course, a conscious decision by the editors, justified by their desire for a systematic account of the phenomena analyzed. This approach is somewhat understandable, but the omission of the eastern direction (Moscow, the Ottoman Empire), as well as the northern (Sweden), in the analysis of the ways in which Sigismund's court conducted diplomacy results in a significant incompleteness of the overall picture. The editors were aware of this, as they stipulate in the introduction that the "systematic reflection" they undertake should not be understood as a full description of the relations of the Polish-Lithuanian state in all power constellations (p. xi), but the omission of these directions seems mistaken not so much from a factual as from a methodological point of view. There is also a lack of even a brief conclusion in which the editors would summarize the conclusions of the analyses contained in the various parts of the book. However, despite these shortcomings, the work in question is definitely worth recommending and, in line with the editors' intention, may provide an impulse for further research.

Lublin

Urszula Zachara-Związek

**Kees Teszelszky: The Holy Crown and the Hungarian Estates.** Constructing Early Modern Identity in the Kingdom of Hungary. (Refo500 Academic Studies, Bd. 92.) Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Göttingen 2023. 396 S. ISBN 978-3-525-57344-0. (€ 140,-.)

The Holy Crown of Hungary is one of the oldest royal insignia of Europe and it is also the one with the most fascinating implications for the political thought of the country where it was used. According to the Doctrine of the Holy Crown—described by legal scholars for the first time in the nineteenth century, but gaining particular importance in the interwar period in order to support claims for the territories of the pre-Trianon kingdom—the object had not only been a symbol of the Hungarian state throughout the centuries, but also an actual source of sovereignty in it. Accordingly, kings and privileged elites

involved in political decision-making (first only the nobility and the clergy, later on burghers, and after 1848 the entire nation) were members (*membra*) of the Crown, which can thus be regarded not only as a physical object, but also a mystical body, the embodiment of a system of public law. The primordialist assumptions of this doctrine were already questioned in the first half of the twentieth century in a thorough analysis by Ferenc Eckhart in 1941, and later on by László Péter.<sup>1</sup> Both concluded that the early–sixteenth-century summary of common law, István Werbőczy's *Tripartitum*, which served as a fundamental reference point for the doctrine, shows no traces of an organic concept of the state. Kees Teszelszky's work follows in their footsteps by giving a close analysis of the concept of the Holy Crown in the great upheavals of the early seventeenth century in Hungary, when due to various crises royal power and the weight of the Estates in making politics underwent important changes.

After a decade of anti-Ottoman war in the Hungarian territories, in 1604 a significant part of the Hungarian Estates turned against their king, Rudolph (as emperor, Rudolph II). Due to widespread discontent with the ruler's policies, as well as the support received from the sultan's representatives, this movement, led by István Bocskai, achieved major successes. The Peace of Vienna in 1606 secured hitherto unseen benefits for the Estates, and their position was further strengthened by the so-called *Bruderzwist*: in 1608 Archduke Matthias needed their support to remove his older brother, less and less capable to act as a monarch and prone to hard-to-explain political moves, from the thrones of Hungary and Moravia. A model seemed to have been created in which the Estates could exert a much more significant influence upon political decision-making than ever before. Parallel to this, a significant number of works were written in which the Holy Crown of Hungary gained new facets of interpretation; these are duly analyzed in T.'s monograph.

Eckhart and Péter claimed that the most important element of the doctrine, which was missing in the medieval period, was to see the Crown not only as a symbol of royal power, but also as a political body which would have also included the privileged elites. Although the *corona* gained a spatial meaning and any territorial losses were routinely referred to as injuries to the Crown, the Estates were not yet regarded as members of its body politic in the sixteenth century. The turning point came with the Bocskai uprising that produced several texts in which the vindications of the Estates' rights were expressed through repeated references to the Holy Crown. As argued by T., Johannes Bocatius, the Lusatian-born judge of Kassa (Košice) and an extremely prolific author of pamphlets, played an outstanding role in this process, especially through his recently discovered *Hungaroteutomachia*.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the Holy Crown received competition in the form of the coronation jewel granted to Bocskai by the sultan must have also contributed to the process of attributing a growing amount of importance to the traditional insignia.

After the 1606 peace settlement and its codification in 1608, the return of the Holy Crown from Vienna was one of the most important symbols of the compromise reached between the Habsburg dynasty and the Hungarian Estates, and various authors discussed by T. (such as István Illésházy, Elias Berger or János Jessenius) added new aspects to the Holy Crown's interpretation in their works. The most important author was, nevertheless, Péter Révay, elected one of the two "Guardians of the Crown" in 1608. Apart from experiencing many vicissitudes in this function, he also wrote the first treatise specifically dedi-

1 FERENC ECKHART: A szentkorona-eszme története [History of the Idea of the Holy Crown], Budapest 1941; LÁSZLÓ PÉTER: The Antecedents of the Nineteenth Century Hungarian State Concept: A Historical Analysis. The Background of the Creation of the Doctrine of the Holy Crown, PhD Diss., Oxford University, 1966.

2 JOHANNES BOCATIUS: Hungaroteutomachia vel colloquium de bello nunc inter Caesares et Hungaros excitato / Magyarnémetharc, avagy beszélgetés a császáriak és a magyarok között most fellángolt háborúról, ed. by KEES TESZELSZKY and GERGELY TÓTH, Budapest 2014.

cated to the royal insignia in 1613. He not only created the first detailed (albeit imprecise) description of the object, but also a narrative in which the Holy Crown had guarded over Hungary under the country's troubled history. He also suggested that concord between the ruler and the Hungarian Estates, the most important fruit of the arrangements in 1608, could best be reached through a common respect for its symbol, the Crown. His work, according to T., was much more decisive for the further developments of the Holy Crown's interpretation in political thought, than that of Werbőczy, as had traditionally been assumed.

In his work, T. introduces a variety of hitherto little studied sources in the debate concerning the most important political symbol of Hungary and perhaps the most peculiar element of Hungarian political thought. Discovering their relevance to the debate around the doctrine helps us take an important step forward, and, as he also points out, further interesting results could be expected from similar studies concerning critical periods in the relationship between the rulers and the Estates in Hungary.

Budapest

Gábor Kármán

**Denise von Weymarn-Goldschmidt: Von Konkurrenten und Lieblingen.** Geschwisterbeziehungen im deutschbaltischen Adel des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. (Veröffentlichungen des Nordost-Instituts, Bd. 28.) Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2022. 219 S., Ill. ISBN 978-3-447-11865-1. (€ 35,-.)

The history of the Baltic Germans is usually studied within what, in the absence of a better term, can be called "Baltic Sea area studies." Denise von Weymarn-Goldschmidt's very interesting book on sibling relationships among the Baltic German nobility during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, has a somewhat different point of departure. Instead of the Baltic region being the primary focus, the *raison d'être* and the primary context for the study are family studies and nobility studies, as well as, to some extent, gender history and autobiographical research ("Selbstzeugnisforschung"). After an introduction and a chapter discussing memoirs ("Lebenserinnerungen") as source material, there are seven thematic chapters focusing on different aspects of how siblings refer to one another and their relationships in childhood as well as later in life. The book then concludes with a short summary. The empirical chapters differ somewhat in character, however. Whilst chapters three through six present the basic aspects of sibling relationships, who belonged to the sibling group, what terminology was used and how siblings formed relationships in childhood and as adults, chapters seven through nine are more problematizing as they discuss the issue of incest and marriages between related persons, the aspect of nobility habitus and gender, as well as the role of aunts and uncles, i.e. the siblings of one's parents.

The book has a rather slow start as the first empirical chapter does not present itself until page 64. Part of the reason for this is that W.-G. provides an in-depth presentation of previous research, methodology, and the sources, as well as a good introduction to and description of who the Baltic Germans were and the role they played in the Baltic region. The wait is well worth it but also a bit frustrating at times, especially if one comes to the book from the vantage point of being a scholar of Baltic German history or the history of the Baltic region. Once the empirical chapters commence, however, one is immediately fascinated by the results presented. From the outset, the author convincingly shows in these chapters the advantages of using network analysis since, among other things, it allows one to capture complex family systems that include full, half and step siblings, as well as both legitimate and illegitimate children and their sibling relationships. Getting this complete picture is also a necessity in this case, since it was quite common among male members of the Baltic German nobility not only to have numerous children (according to W.-G., seven on average) but also to have children from several marriages and, in some cases, outside of marriage. One of the more fascinating results presented is that the Baltic