

REVIEWS

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Jerzy Pysiak, *Król i korona cierniowa. Kult relikwii we Francji Kapetyngów* [The King and the Crown of Thorns: The cult of relics in Capetian-ruled France], Warszawa, 2012, Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 472 pp., bibliog., index, English sum.

The starting point for Jerzy Pysiak's research was the finding that the *Arma Christi* – the instruments of the Passion, with the Crown of Thorns at the fore – proved to be of enormous importance to the regal ideology of King Louis IX of France. The author is of opinion that the reconstruction of the course and ideological meaning of translations of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics to France, carried out by Louis in 1239–42, allows to speak of a “synthesis of two threads of extreme importance to ideological stances of the Capetian monarchy: the legendary translation by Charlemagne, and the religious ritual practice developed by the Capetians in the twelfth century with respect to relics” (p. 17). Analysis of the origins and development of these ‘two threads’, their placement in the context of the kings participating in the cult of relics (beginning with the Merovingians), and the said reconstruction of the course of King Louis's translations and ‘political theology’, form the book's content. The author's main research focus is relevant texts and their interrelations, enabling to grasp the development of the monarch's cult of relics and its institutionalisation.

Three sections, of comparable size, compose the book: ‘Pre-History of the Translation of the Crown of Thorns to France: Saint-Denis Abbey and the Carolingian Legend of the Translation of the Holy Crown of Thorns’, ‘Capetian Politics towards the Relics, Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries’, and, ‘Saint Louis and the Cult of Relics’, each containing three chapters and concluding with summarising remarks. These final conclusions much facilitate the otherwise tough reading that calls upon the reader's permanent attention. The volume invites us to plough through a thicket of texts and, not much sparser, forest of interpretations quoted or proposed by the author. Some paths already visited need being revisited many a time, whilst the argument, focused more on discussing the content of the sources than precisely formulated problems, hinders the grasping of the crucial issues, findings and conclusions.

The first section is on what has been the ‘founding text’ for the story of the translation of the Crown of Thorns from Constantinople to the Kingdom of Franks: the *Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus Clavum et Coronam a Constantinopoli Aquisgrani detulerit qualiterque Karolus Calvus haec ad Sanctum Dionysium retulerit*, written in Saint-Denis in the eleventh century, with its several versions known to date. The author traces the sources of consecutive narratives on Charlemagne’s legendary venture to the Holy Land and Constantinople (beginning with *Chronicon* by Benedict of San Andrea di Monte Soratte). Subsequently, the reception of *Descriptio qualiter* is reconstructed, up to Saint Louis’s time – or, putting it more strictly, the circulation of mentions of Passion relics, which might, at least indirectly, testify to the influences of the said work (Hugo of Fleury, lives of the saints, *chansons de geste*, and other poetic works with the narrative on Charlemagne’s *Iter Hierosolimitanum*; chronicles and *gesta* with variants of Pseudo-Turpin; *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, etc.). Objects of a different type are taken into account – the stained-glass features of Saint-Denis Abbey church and Chartres Cathedral, or the epitaph of Charles the Bold. This set of texts and iconographic sources, accompanied by extensive and detailed survey of research stances and a discussion with them, is meant to help determine the genesis of the cult of Passion relics at the Saint-Denis Abbey. In the summary concluding the first section, considered is the ‘ideological content of the historical myth of Charlemagne’s journey’ to the East and the interrelation of translation of the Crown of Thorns relics and the scrofula healing miracle. The findings and statements proposed by J. Pysiak, overwhelmed by overly detailed considerations (e.g. on where the relics actually came from, the Holy Land or Constantinople), are not particularly revealing: Charlemagne became the model pious ruler, credited with the translation of relics and doing homage to them; in the texts under analysis, the Aix-la-Chapelle to Saint-Denis ‘translation’ appears more important than Charlemagne’s expedition to the Holy Land. As regards the genesis of miraculous scrofula treatment, the author assumes, as the most probable version, that already the *Descriptio qualiter* contains a mention of a miracle ascribed to Charlemagne, which was accomplished owing to the might (*virtus*) of Passion relics. The transferor of the ‘thaumaturgical charism’ was, reportedly, the Saint-Denis Abbey, where the relics appropriated from Aix-la-Chapelle rested. Pysiak argues that it was only Saint Louis that rejected this interpretation, ascribing instead the power to heal scrofula by the French kings to the act of anointing. This new interpretation is seen by the author as a “manifestation of an extremely archaic idea of royalty, which is rooted in the traditional, almost primordial, model of monarchy, entirely antithetical to the post-Gregorian order of the world” (p. 118). The considerations which are critical toward Jacques Le Goff’s stance are founded upon *Descriptio qualiter*, *Iter Hierosolimitanum* and subsequent adaptations of these texts, and primarily aim at clarifying their reciprocal

contradictions as far as scrofula treatment is concerned. It is a pity that the findings of Philippe Buc and the sources he had used¹ have been neglected, and that the author shuns joining the discussion on the sacrality of power.

Section 2 tackles the problem of the position of cult of relics in the French rulers' 'political theology', and its (inter)relation to the cult of St Dionysius. Contemplated is also the role played in its expansion by Suger, the abbot at Saint-Denis, along with Louis VI and Louis VII; discussed is the influence of the Crusades on the cult of Passion relics and its setting. According to the author, Robert II the Pious was the one who worshipped the relics of saints most intensely among the first Capetians: hence, a meticulous analysis of all the events (and texts) related to the cult and falling on the period of his rule. Even more painstaking approach is seen when it comes to gaining by the Saint-Denis Abbey a central role in the monarch's cult of relics and to the genesis and development of the *ostensio* of the Passion relics as practised there. This multithread analysis, which extends to instances of healing of French rulers thanks to the Saint-Denis relics (St Dionysius and the Crown of Thorns), recorded in the twelfth and thirteenth century, is founded on a variety of texts: from those authored by Suger, through royal diplomas, chronicles of the Abbey's friars Rigord and Primat, up to the lives of St Dionysius. Special place has been reserved for the proposed reconstruction of the translation of St Dionysius's relics carried out at the Abbey in 1144 (in connection with the consecration of the new chancel at the cloister church) with the crucial, overwhelming participation of Louis VII. J. Pysiak fishes out the fragments of Suger's description of the celebration and the royal diploma testifying, to his mind, to the conviction that king is the *imago Christi* on earth, as well as to St Dionysius's patronage over France and the monarch's particular legitimation and privilege not only to exercise custody of the cult of relics but also to lead the cult. Lastly, polemics is taken up against Jürgen Petersohn's stance with regards to the reception in England and in the Empire of the Capetian model of relics cult, with Saint-Denis as the central hub.² Let it be remarked straight ahead that Pysiak's considerations, mainly based, as they are, on the recent studies of Geoffrey Koziol, Edina Bozóky, Nicholas Vincent and Hartmut Kühne, do not result in calling Petersohn's hypothesis into question: the Polish author complements and enriches them with certain nuances, most of all.

This section is concluded with a subchapter being a stepping stone to the following part where a reconstruction is proposed of Saint Louis's

¹ Philippe Buc, 'David's Adultery with Bathsheba and the Healing Power of the Capetian Kings', *Viator*, 24 (1993), 101–20.

² Jürgen Petersohn, 'Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, xxxi (1975), 420–54.

translation of the Crown of Thorns. Discussed is the reliquary of Saint-Denis, called the 'holy crown' (*Sancta Corona*), and Philip IV the Fair's contribution to the development of the Crown of Thorns cult. An attempt is made on this occasion, without much success, to unknot the tangle of contradictions and obscurities created by the texts and objects (reliquaries, jewels, royal crowns) related to presence of the Crown of Thorns relics and reliquary at the Abbey, before the famous translation from Constantinople to Paris. The author deems plausible the hypothesis whereby the stylistic similarity of the coronation crowns manufactured on order of Philip Augustus to the 'holy crown' may attest that the latter was also made on commission of this ruler and purposefully made resemble the royal insignia (Crown of Thorns as a regalia). The cult of relics, primarily, Passion relics, in the time of the ruler's reign (Crusades-related rituals at Saint-Denis; recovery of the king and of the prince royal; *ostensiones reliquiarum* held at the Abbey in 1190–2; translation of the relics from Constantinople to Saint-Denis in 1205), are subsequently partly resumed.

Part 3 proposes a reconstruction, yet another one in the literature, of Saint Louis's translations of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics. Based on extremely abundant source material, including unpublished, this exercise does not, however, aim at painting one more – more complete and pronounced – image of the event. The author is entirely preoccupied by juxtaposing and confronting the sources, copiously quoted and summarised. Hence, the argument on the 'historic context' of the 1239 translation, which is virtually reduced to the circumstances of the arrangement concluded by the king of France and Baldwin II, transforms into a clash of the stories on this arrangement, compiled by Gautier Le Cornu (Cornut) and Gerard de Saint-Quentin, hagiographic accounts and chronicle sources, especially by Alberic of Trois-Fontaines. Pysiak confronts his own analyses with the findings of Chiara Mercuri. The main clues in the considerations on the historic circumstances of the transferral of the Crown of Thorns to France focus around the operation's financial aspect and the assistance granted to the Latin Empire: whether, and to what extent, the ideological aspect of the latter referred to the legendary translation executed by Charlemagne.

The way the Crown of Thorns made from Constantinople to Paris is detailed, but only in its last stage, to which Louis IX made his contribution. A similar type of analysis and exposition concerns the second phase of the translation of Passion relics (1241–2), for which the author's basic informers are Gerard de Saint-Quentin and Matthew Paris, the latter particularly with respect to liturgy. As for the latter source, Pysiak supposes that all the three translations were integrated there into a single story; it may be that an image of the later ritual of Good-Friday *ostensio*, initiated by Saint Louis, has overlapped with that entirety. The first chapter in the section under discussion is concluded with a study on the feast day of the Crown of Thorns and other

celebrations in honour of the Passion relics imported by Louis IX. This time, the author refers to liturgical books, particularly those from Sainte-Chapelle. The question of a feast day commemorating Saint Louis, whose celebration date has not been determined with certainty, remains open.

Chapter 2 in this section, dealing with Louis IX's ideology of power, could have been a real exploratory challenge, given the enormity of related studies. Yet, the challenge has not been met. A rather narrowly encircled analysis concerning the place and ideological functions of translation of Passion relics, especially the Crown of Thorns, is spun around the source texts (Cornut, Gerard de Saint-Quentin, Matthew Paris, liturgical texts). Without penetrating the rhetorical techniques and nuances, the topic present in them is reconstructed (France as a new Promised Land; Louis as a new David, or Emperor Heraclius; Crown of Thorns as the *titulus Imperii*). Following Chiara Mercuri, presented is the elevation of Paris to the rank of the Kingdom's religious capital. In the conclusion of this section, we receive a list (expanded by addition of factual details) of celebrations of translations of other relics, attended or otherwise contributed to by Louis IX. The author looks closer at the translation of Theban Legion relics in Senlis, 1262, and of St Anianus's relics in Orléans, 1259. The former occurrence and its related ceremonial liturgy are quite an important argument, Pysiak believes, in favour of a regalistic interpretation of the cult of Passion instruments, whilst the latter is used to show the differences in comprehending the cult of relics of saints by Louis and Robert the Pious.

The closing section (titled 'The Translation and the Cult of the Crown of Thorns under Saint Louis against the Capetian Cult of Relics') is not a classical recapitulation of the considerations, with emphasis on the author's major arguments and findings. As many as four (of five) of its chapters concern the ideology of power or authority during the reign of Saint Louis (himself as a *rex imago Christi* and a new Charlemagne; the foundation of Sainte-Chapelle, its ideological and artistic programme; 'translation' of Jerusalem, Holy Land and Chosen People to Paris and Gaul/France). The author has failed to propose his own, original concept in this long-cultivated research field. His considerations add, at best, small corrections to the findings of other scholars and essentially indispensably complement the picture by adding wider ideological matters.

Having situated the regal cult of relics in the ideology of power, the author identifies four stages of the cult's development, since the beginning of the reign of the House of Capet. The first would have taken place between the late tenth century and the end of Robert the Pious's reign. It is described as an attempt at imitating the forms of Carolingian devotion toward relics and saints: forms not as much inherited (after Charles the Bald, the last Carolingians were not quite active in this field) as taken over from territorial princes or from the Ottonian model, which was based on the Carolingian

forms. J. Pysiak considers it plausible, after Geoffrey Koziol, that the Hugh Capet's intent was to 'overbid' St Theodoric's translation carried out by King Lothar (in person) in Reims in 976 (which means, let us notice, that the Capet monarch referred to the Carolingian ruler pattern). Hugh's translations of St Valery's and St Richarius's relics are perceived by this scholar as the founding act of the Capetian monarchy (enriched by the king's reform of the monasteries of Saint-Riquier and Saint-Valéry), modelled after the Ottonian pattern. Of unique importance to the development of the monarch's cult of relics were the actions taken by Robert the Pious – above all, his personal participation in the translations and his physical contact with the holy relics being translated; the attempt at creating a sacral centre of the kingdom in Orléans; the Holy Cross relics brought from Constantinople; and, last but not least, the launch of (afterwards discontinued) ritual of 'reunion of the Saints' (reliquaries) accompanying the peace synod.

The subsequent stage was related to the period in which the royal authority was reinforced (Louis VI, Louis VII) and Abbot Suger developed his activities. On the wave of a 'renaissance of the Carolingian past', reconstruction of that golden epoch, and fascination with the figure of Charlemagne – an element of which was Charles's journey to the East to bring the relics – the Capetian rulers expand the regal cult of relics. This is testified e.g. by: the elevation and re-inhumation of St Dionysius's relics by Louis VI at Saint-Denis in 1124; the king's participation in the elevation of St Vigor's relics at the royal collegiate church of Saint-Frambourg in Senlis, 1135; Louis VII's 1177 proclamation summoning the faithful to take part in the celebration of exposure of St Frambold's relics at that same church. The Crown of Thorns relic, the author argues, becomes one of the Kingdom's central sanctities. The ritual of exposure of St Dionysius's relics, which once gained importance due to military endangerment (Emperor Henry V's invasion of 1124), began in the late twelfth century giving way to the ritual of exposure of St Dionysius's and Passion relics kept at Saint-Denis, and even touching the sick with them, in conjunction with the king's or prince's illness. Thus, the twelfth century witnessed the anchoring of St Dionysius's cult as one that built the identity of the kingdom of France; the development of the cult of the Crown of Thorns and of the legend of Carolingian translation; a great resumption by the Carolingian tradition of the ruler's personal participation (and leadership) in relic cult rituals; and, emergence of new forms of this cult, including the monarch's ostentatious role in it.

This development was obviously crowned by the reign of Saint Louis, as the one who granted the relic cult a unique status in political theology and rituals of power, primarily with respect to Passion relics. Summing up his arguments, J. Pysiak emphasises a few issues of this new quality added to the cult of relics by the Capet rulers: (i) the reference made by Saint Louis to the Carolingian tradition, which enabled him to represent himself as an

imitator of, and heir to, Charlemagne, whilst also resuming the Louis VII's model of ostentatious piety toward the relics and the monarch's lead in their cult; (ii) turning Paris into the religious centre of France, which allowed Saint Louis to render the royal cult of relics independent of the Saint-Denis Abbey; (iii) Louis's conviction whereby "the Kingdom of France is an earthly effigy of the Heavenly Kingdom"; moreover, "by worshiping the saints [being God's *familiares*, whose role by God's side is analogous to that of royal councillors], Saint Louis situates himself as a subject in his own kingdom; however, he is thus an image of God on earth within it". (p. 380)

The uniqueness of the Capetian model of monarchic cult of relics is strongly emphasised: it was based upon the sacral authority of the king as the 'lord [i.e. proprietor] of the relics' and manifested in its ideological significance – the intrinsic value ascribed to royal rituals related to the cult of relics and their importance in the creation of imagery of royal authority.

Jerzy Pysiak's book is, primarily, an exhaustive compendium of a variety of texts, including: texts dealing with various instances of bringing Passion relics to France; those commencing and unfolding the legend of Charlemagne's expedition to the Middle East; and, sources documenting the emergence and evolution of the monarchal model of relic cult and showing the ruler as the organiser of liturgies. As the author has deemed the stories of Charlemagne's legendary translation of the Lord's relics to be a major foundation of the model's development, and has consequently striven, through detailed analysis of sources, for a complete reconstruction of the Capetian (and not only) monarchs' participation in the cult of relics and of the related practice pursued by such monarchs, he chiefly focuses on these sources and their existing interpretations. As a result, several pretty basic questions have receded into the background: the development of monarchal ideology, viewed in more general terms; the sacred nature of power; the cult of saints and relics (including Passion relics); the enormous significance of the Passion cult in the twelfth/thirteenth century – as if the monarchal cult of relics developed 'by itself', without the stimuli from the Church, culture, *etc.* The quest for the sources and the genesis of modifications introduced in this cult has, quite obviously, many a time caused deviations from the timeframe and research area announced in the title – i.e. France under the House of Capet. Section 2 opens a discourse cursorily discussing the Constantinian origins of the model of monarch's translation of relics, and of the model of ruler as the founder of churches and organiser of liturgy. The subsequent fragment discussing the presence of relic cult in the Merovingian monarchy appears similar. The author takes a closer look at the contribution of Carolingian rulers in translations of relics, analysing minutely the doings of Charles the Bald (the translation of St Germanus's remains in Auxerre in 860, executed by the king in person, and his attendance at the other translations) and emphasising the change that took place at the time. The ruler expressed his belief

regarding a particular predisposition of anointed monarch for physical contact with the “sacrum present in the relics” (p. 132). The argument concerning the participation of Liudolfing and Salian rulers in the rituals related to the cult of relics and the procurement of relics by them, outlined as a comparative background, virtually boils down to illustrating the statement, not discussed at length, that relics were harnessed to manifestation and legitimisation of the monarchical authority and power.

Taking into account the abundance of research problems touched upon, the author’s conceptualisations of the major issues or his interpretative contributions prove disappointing. Preoccupied with presenting the sources (not in each case used directly or conscientiously enough) and with extracting a *historic reality* from them, Jerzy Pysiak has failed to enter in-depth discussion with recent-current research on manifestations and rituals of power. The book’s central advantage is that it forms a single body of an enormous number of dispersed texts, many of them neglected in research and many not printed so far, representing all the types or genres of literature – from royal diploma to liturgical texts (the bibliography of sources runs 24 pages). Extensive summaries and quotations are generously cited, each embedded with a detailed account of related research.

trans. Tristan Korecki

Halina Manikowska

Ute Raßloff (ed.), *Wellenschläge. Kulturelle Interferenzen im östlichen Mitteleuropa des langen 20. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, 2013, Franz Steiner Verlag, 460 pp., series: Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Mitteleuropa, 41

This voluminous publication, compiled by the German Slavicist Ute Raßloff, is one among the outcomes of a research project carried out in Leipzig in 2007–10 under the auspices of the Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas (GWZO). This ambitious venture was accompanied by a cycle of linked cultural and scientific events based on the subject-matter of cultural interferences, as mentioned in the title (by reference to the better-known term, such interferences ought probably be described as ‘cultural borderland’). The book under review has maintained elements of the project’s original diversity. Its authors represent several scholarly areas (literary studies, history, ethnology, cultural studies) and academic milieus (German, along with Slovak, Czech, Italian, and Hungarian). These differences have made a footprint on the form and content of the articles collected in this book; they draw upon at least a few methodological traditions. The editor’s concept was that the said interferences extended not

only to the topics of research but also the authors' research workshops. The dynamism of this large project has also had a bearing on the rather startling chronological framework proposed. The 'long twentieth century' ought to be understood not quite in terms of polemicising with the title of Eric Hobsbawm's synthetic study but rather in terms of rigid chronological caesuras being discretely quit. A few studies contained in this volume encompass, after all, a period much longer than the twentieth century, however it would be defined (one of the record-breakers being Borbála-Zsuzsanna Török, with her analysis of the interferences of literature and the Transylvanian *Landeskunde* starting in the late 18th century and extending to our day). Perhaps a concept whereby the timelines would be quit and the published studies set within a territorial framework of Central-Eastern Europe only would have been more appropriate.

The book contains two clearly separated parts. The first, introductory section comprises two essays. In the first, Andreas R. Hofmann and Ute Raßloff consider the relevant terminology. Although they vow that by introducing the term 'interferences', it is not their ambition to alter the research paradigm, there is much to indicate that the converse is true. If a convenient metaphor was the point, the rather extensive considerations of the relations between the notion drawn from natural sciences on the one hand and the social reality and history of culture on the other should be considered irrelevant. The serious approach to the title category is also attested by its comparison against the akin notions: cultural transfer and hybridisation.¹ In favour of 'interference' speaks, according to Hofmann and Raßloff, the fact that they are 'relatively unbiased' or 'unladen' (in contrast to transfer and hybridisation). Leaving aside the content-related value of this argument, it ought effectively to be considered as confirming the importance of the terms used in this book. The second in the opening section is Winfried Eberhard's essay on Central-Eastern Europe as a space that is particularly prone to intercultural interferences, due to its ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.

Case studies form the subsequent, much ampler, part of the book. Let us note that these articles are rather longish (running up to fifty pages in fine print) and quite diverse, topic-wise and methodologically. In her historical and culture-related study on Austrian Galicia, Anna-Veronika Wendland describes the interpenetration of cultures, so characteristic to the region, in a timescale beyond 1945. She points out that interference directly stem from increased social mobility in the nineteenth and twentieth century. What it means with respect to the issue researched by this author, the post-war ruralisation of the towns of the Soviet West Ukraine resulted in no lesser a clash of cultures,

¹ For more on this thread, see Moritz Csáky, 'Memory – Recollection – Difference: Plurality and Heterogeneity as the Signature of Central Europe', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 106 (2012), 127–54.

lifestyles, and even languages, than the multiethnic mosaic of pre-war East Galicia. Wendland thereby in a smart and convincing way polemises against the stereotypic opposition between colourful and diverse Eastern Galicia and grey-coloured uniformed Soviet Ukraine.

The article by Lenka Řezníková also assumes a polemic stance. The Czech historian criticises the vision of Prague as a Bohemian-German-Jewish *tripolis*, quite en-vogue in the last decades. Řezníková's interesting and well-documented argument shows in what ways the originally insignificant ethnic differences were growing important in the nineteenth century, while the earlier, much more significant social splits: German-Czech upper strata vs. Czech-German proletariat, were losing in importance. Thereby, the acute national division (the *válka Čechů s Němci* – 'Czechs' combat against Germans', of which Emanuel Rádl wrote) became 'historicised'. Řezníková presents it not as an eternal state but as a relatively recent phenomenon, with origins dating back to the nineteenth century. It could even, in a sense, be recognised as a myth, similar in many respects to the myth of multicultural *tripolis*.

The third text contained in this section of the book is the aforementioned article by Borbála Török. This excellent expert in history of science and social elites of the late eighteenth century researches into influence of scholarly works on Transylvania's geographical, historical and ethnographical relations on the belles-lettres works set in the same spatial context. A long time horizon enables her to illustrate pan-European cultural changes with a rather little-known German-, Hungarian-, and Romanian-language material. Török mostly focuses on the influence of the Enlightenment climatic theory on the hierarchy of nationalities (in both scholarly and fiction works) and the idea of race, as reflected in early-twentieth-century publications on Transylvania.

Common to all the aforementioned studies is their clear striving for illustrating cultural interference phenomena with use of possibly diverse sources and interdisciplinary research tools. The subsequent five texts that complete the book either do not make such attempt or, if so, do it to quite a limited degree. Such is the case of e.g. the otherwise quite reliably evidenced ethnographic dissertation by Gabriela Kiliánová, which discusses representations of death in Slovak and German folklore on the basis of testimonies from the past, scholarly literature and the author's own field research done at the locality of Medzev. Cultural interference is manifested there in, for instance, the differing concepts of the 'gender' of death (*death* being a masculine noun in German, feminine in Slovak; Hungarian has principally no grammatical gender).

The study by Andreas R. Hofmann is almost entirely based on abundant literature on Polish-German stereotypes. Although the subject-matter could not be expected to become momentous in the humanities, this author has managed to enrich the legacy knowledge with several interesting observations. One of them is the statement claiming that visual stereotypes prove secondary to those well-rooted in the language. The term 'meta-stereotype'

proposed by Hofmann to denote the phenomenon's 'revolving' nature, its being composed of self- and hetero-stereotypes, is not quite convincing, for a change. Contrary to what he states, it would be much more natural (and well solidified in the research tradition across scholarly disciplines) to use instead, in such contexts, the word 'stereotype' without a prefix.

Ute Raßloff's study, which closes the volume, represents yet another research current. Its focus is Juraj Jánošík, the legend-shrouded Slovak highland robber from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Raßloff offers a classical analysis of a site of memory that gains diverse meanings with time and with the regions of its appearance (not only Slovakia and Poland but also Bohemia is taken note of). In line with the now more-than-thirty-year descriptive tradition with respect to sites of memory, the author has drawn upon diverse sources, offered by high culture as well as folk culture. Again, the chronological framework much exceeds the 'long twentieth century' indicated in the book's title, as it spreads from the eighteenth into twenty-first century. The attachment to the methodology of research into sites of memory implies e.g. an ignoring of other directions of research, which operate with no less adequate instruments for analysing the *topoi* such as the Carpathian robber. Standing out in the Raßloff text is, for instance, complete absence of semioticians, with Vladimír Macura at the head. It is obviously the good right of a scholar to take the liberty of choosing the analytical tools; yet, with a volume dealing with not only cultural but also methodological interferences, it would have certainly been appropriate to take into account the relevant alternative methods.

Viewed against the hitherto covered essays, which, in spite of their generally minor deficiencies, have touched upon a number of threadbare subjects, all of them impressive with reliable knowledge of relevant sources and studies, two texts written in a completely different manner stand out as not-quite-expedient. The first, authored by Laura Hegedűs, concerns three literary texts that are more or less literally set in the historical realities of the Hungarian-Austrian borderland in Burgenland.² A typical, information-scant literature-specialist analysis is preceded by not-quite-orderly remarks on the semiotics of border spaces, appearing rather vaguely associated with the matter of this essay. In each of the literary instances analysed by Hegedűs, probably more useful than general remarks would be a historical context. Lack of such context is a symptom of unsatisfactory interdisciplinarity or, referring to the term used in the book under review, of the author's staying closed to methodological interferences.

² The reference is to the novels: Helene Flöss, *Brüchige Ufer. Roman* (Innsbruck and Vienna, 2005) and Agota Kristof, *Notebook; The Proof; The Third Lie: Three Novels* (New York, 1997), and Terézia Mora's short-story collection *Seltsame Materie: Erzählungen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1999).

The manner which in Hegedús's case is a little irritating but not disqualifying for the essay, turns so acute in the subsequent article that one may become doubtful as to the text's cognitive quality. In his essay on the Slovene-Italian borderland, Matteo Colombi applies a comparative analysis of individual texts – literary, historiographical, as well as popular guides. The method that is justifiable for analysis of literary works not necessarily proves useful when applied with other cultural texts, completely missing the point when it comes to scholarly writing output. Having read an article on interpretative methods applied with cultural interferences occurring in the Karst region, the reader may rightfully expect that the relevant tradition and state-of-the-art in research be presented. Yet, the subchapter on historiography is confined to comparing three (!) texts.³ Neither Italian nor Slovenian historical science taking up the issue have deserved a reduction like this. Enough to remind that it was Slovenia that in the interwar period became one of the hubs for methodologically innovative interdisciplinary studies combining history, geography and ethnology. A considerable portion of the output of scholars as outstanding as Fran Zwitter concerned Karst.⁴ An analysis of utterances on Karst confined like this could make sense if the frugal material had served to justify some interesting arguments or propositions. This is nowise the case with Colombi's article. Instead of making use of the texts under analysis, the author assigns his assessments, positively evaluating those which emphasise the transnational (hybrid, to evoke the term used by Moritz Csáky) character of the region and rebuking those approaching Slovenians and Italians as separate, completely established ethnic groups. This schematism, which Colombi applies to the historical and literary works under analysis as well as to pieces of information devised for tourists, takes on at times an odd countenance, keenly remindful of the practices applied once-upon-a-time in Marxist-Leninist historiographies. Interculturality and transculturality is treated in the essay under discussion analogously to Stalinist 'progressivity criteria': Colombi appraises the positions assumed by the specified authors as 'fair' or 'unfair', while losing sight of the other aspects of their arguments.

³ Branko Marušič, 'Na Krasu od konca antike do današnjih dni', in Andrej Kranic (ed.), *Kras. Pokrajna, življenje, ljudje* (Ljubljana, 1999); Marta Verginella, 'La campagna triestina', in Giacomo Borruso, Roberto Finzi, and Giovanni Panjek (eds.), *Storia economica e sociale di Trieste, ii: La città dei traffici (1719–1918)* (Trieste, 2003), 461–82; *Slovene-Italian Relations 1880–1956: Report of the Slovene-Italian Historical and Cultural Commission* (Ljubljana, 2001).

⁴ See Oto Luthar, 'Between Reinterpretation and Revisionism: Rethinking Slovenian Historiography of the 1990s', in Ulf Brunnbauer (ed.), *(Re)Writing History: Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism* (Studies on South East Europe, 4, Münster, 2004), 333–50.

With all these deserved objections, the strong point about Colombi's article is that it highlights the negative as well as positive aspects of such approach to cultural borderland studies as manifested by the book's editor. *Wellenschläge ...* is a book important enough to make the issues worth of being discussed at more length. To begin with strong points, let it be admitted that the focus on an amorphous quality of the limits between social groups and ethnic communities, to the sometimes astonishing directions and paths along which the *topoi*, narratives and symbols wander, is valuable as it enables to take a fresh look on phenomena so deeply investigated as multicultural-ity of Prague or Polish-German conflict. Especially when these observations are accompanied with thorough knowledge of the subject-matter, as is the case with most of the volume's texts. It is even better when sensitivity to interferences does not stop at the choice of the issue to be discussed but informs the selection of the sources and research tools. There is no coincidence in the fact that the most interesting texts contributing to this book (those by A.V. Wendland, L. Řezníková, and B. Török) exceed the limits of scholarly disciplines. One might grumble that the editor's verve in dealing with terms and notions leads to their unnecessary multiplication. None of the essays explains what it is, apart from being a novelty, that would testify to a superiority of interference over cultural transfer or hybridity; likewise, there is nothing to justify the argument that meta-stereotype is a notion that fills some important gap or enriches in any way the reflection on ethnic or cultural stereotypes. Admittedly, the editor does not hold that the interferences, first mentioned in the book's title, bring about a turning point or new paradigm in the humanities. Using such a metaphor to describe the already-known phenomena is the author's good right.

The perspective assumed by the authors thus inclines the reader or critic to take a somewhat more flexible stance. They apply the ethnical and social categories carefully and thoughtfully, as opposed to many older historical studies which tended to evoke them thoughtlessly. The sensitiveness to specific content hidden under the all-too-carelessly used words is especially clearly visible in two essays that call into question the popular stereotype of Central-Eastern Europe as a place stigmatised in some special way by ethnic and cultural diversity. Lenka Řezníková undermines the image of Prague as a site dominated by ethnic split. This stance is even clearer in Anna-Veronika Wendland's article. Paradoxically enough, sensitivity to a naive essentialism of notions as expressed in the latter text implies a contestation of certain assumptions of the entire project, whose outcome is the publication being reviewed.

In her discussion of the multicultural and multiethnic Eastern Galicia, Wendland remarks that in spite of what Winfried Eberhard states in his introductory essay, the said traits have nowise been distinctive to the region – not only in CEE terms but across the continent too:

When the Prussian military-men and engineers were shaping their own landscape and monumental edifices on the marshy meadows and wetlands around what was to become Wilhelmshaven, and superimposed their own rights, language, and military-economic obligations upon the locals, this attested to cultural interferences at work, to an extent no lesser than the installation of Austrian and subsequently Polish, thereafter Soviet, administrative structures and economic regimes in East-Galician countryside. (p. 72)

Approaching the multiculturalism and multiethnicity of Eastern Galicia, and of the entire Central-Eastern Europe, as a specific trait rendering the area completely different from the rest of the continent is, exactly, a symptom of notional essentialism against which the concept of cultural interferences was supposed to protect. It is a paradox, which the editor can identify (as testified by the brief mention in the introduction), whilst making no use of this observation. To ascertain this does not imply seeing it as an objection, as the 'uniqueness' of Central-Eastern Europe is not a condition that makes one research into cultural interferences using this particular region as the example. It has to be noted, however, that the project's geographic framework is no less dubious than its controversial chronology (as discussed above).

Lastly, back with Matteo Colombi's essay, it befits that one more problem be touched upon, with respect to the differences between a transcultural and intercultural perspective. As has been mentioned, Colombi attaches contrary valuation to these categories, condemning intercultural concepts and highly valuing those modelled according to a transcultural view. On the margin of his considerations – probably, completely unaware of it – this author mentions the scholarly tradition which allows us to see the aforementioned differentiation in a somewhat different light. Namely, in the introduction to his considerations of karst, Colombi mentions Jovan Cvijić's pioneering study from the end of the nineteenth century on the relief of the Dinaric Alps and karst features. Although, contrary to Colombi's belief, Cvijić was not an Austro-Hungarian geographer but one of the most outstanding scientists in the history of independent Serbia (and, patron of the Institute of Geography, Serbian Academy of Sciences), his best-known works, focused on anthropogeography of the Balkans, may indeed be a fascinating extra to considerations of fluctuating identities and ethnic borderlands. Using the categories evoked in the book under review, one could say that Cvijić was able to identify, to a significant extent, the transitional, blended, hybrid nature of national identities. Characteristic in this respect is his stance towards the Slavonic population of Macedonia and western Bulgaria.⁵ The Serbian anthropogeographer did not attach to it any specific ethnic identity (he would

⁵ See Jovan Cvijić, *Remarks on the Ethnography of the Macedonian Slavs*, London, 1906, *passim*.

not acknowledge a Macedonian nationality, like a crushing majority of his contemporaries) but treated these people as a transitory group, 'ethnographical mass' that under a Bulgarian dominance would easily turn into Bulgarians, otherwise becoming Serbians in the Serbian state. In line with Colombi's logic, a stance of this kind could ensure Cvijić a predicate of methodological modernity and moral legitimacy. The point is, the recognition of Macedonia as an area of ethnic and cultural interference concealed a programme of Serbian territorial expansion. If the local populace's identity is liquid, Cvijić reasoned, why, then, not to forge it into 'real' Serbs? Enough to impose the Serbian language and culture on it, and out of what is the raw material, the final product will come: Serbs endowed with a national identity, within a matter of a few generations. A similar logic was put at the service of other political expansion agendas, too. There were Polish ethnographers and geographers talking of Byelorussians as an 'ethnographic mass'.⁶ In all these cases, transcultural approach is linked, with no evident contradictions, with the ideology of mature nationalism. Such antecedences of modern research conceptions are worth being borne in mind as well. This is particularly relevant when a paternalistic attitude tends to be assumed towards the colleagues who are less sensitive to phenomena of cultural interference – as is the case with some essays in the volume under discussion.

Wellenschläge ... is one of those books that prove hard to be appraised in unambiguous terms. To venture at balancing the approvals and critical remarks, one should, on the one hand, appreciate the volume's central idea (whilst considerately neglecting the exaggerated attachment to neologies) and, at least, a few of its consistent realisations in some of the essays. On the other hand, inconsistent application of the title category and failure at intellectually exploiting all the effects of its use is the book's weak point. This might sound paradoxically, though: there is at times no mention of interference where one ought to pay a closer attention to it; otherwise, the category appears an enormous deal in the book. A critical view on the depth of ethnic, social and cultural splits ought to be accompanied by no less sensitive afterthought on the stereotypical picture of the region being examined. It would be worthwhile to enrich the consideration of the deficiencies of intercultural approach with thoughts on the consequences possibly borne by a transcultural perspective. It would also be of advantage if a greater number of the book's authors have approached the notion of interference not only as a guideline in selecting the subject-matter but also as an incentive for interdisciplinarity (although trans-disciplinarity should rather be mentioned in this context).

trans. *Tristan Korecki*

Maciej Górny

⁶ For the assimilation policy exercised by Poland with respect to the Belarussian people, see Piotr Cichoracki's article in the following issue of *APH* (109).

Marek Żebrowski, *Jerzy Giedroyc: życie przed 'Kulturą'* [Jerzy Giedroyc: His life before *Kultura*], Kraków, 2012, Wydawnictwo Literackie, 522 pp., bibliog., index

Marek Żebrowski is a political scientist dealing with public relations; some time ago, he proved himself to be an expert in the biography of Jerzy Giedroyc and the history of the Paris-based Institut Littéraire (one of his earlier works being *Dzieje sporu. 'Kultura' w emigracyjnej debacie publicznej 1947–1956* [A history of a controversy: *Kultura* in the Polish émigré public debate, 1947–56], 2007). Now, his most recent book recounts J. Giedroyc's youth years. The study has won considerable acclaim, not only among those who are interested in the life of the founder and editor-in-chief of *Kultura*, the major Polish émigré periodical. Let us observe straight away, though, that although very interesting and certainly skilfully written, this book would not cause the views on Giedroyc to be significantly revised. True, the author watches the youth of the one who later was to become 'the Prince of [Maisons-]Laffitte' with a detective's passion, and the resulting study contains some rather unknown facts. Apart from one chapter, which was previously published in *Zeszyty Historyczne* quarterly, no. 171, the body of information provided by this book is new to the readers. All the same, it is not a momentous publication, as far as the image of *Kultura* and the one who created this cultural-political monthly is concerned.

The value of this book lies in the first place in its documentary quality, based on a reliable and, quite importantly, comprehensive query. M. Żebrowski has made use of dozen-or-so periodical titles, revised the archives of Vilna's Nobility Deputation (an electable committee set up in each *guberniya* in the Russian Partition territory to adjudicate the noble status), manifold documents collected at the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw. Like not too many before him, the author no doubt thoroughly researched the Institut Littéraire archive (Giedroyc having been one of the founders of this émigré-circle institute), which included the abysmal collection of Giedroyc's correspondence, records and dossiers from the Capital-City-of-Warsaw Archive and the Registrar-of-Vital-Statistics Office Archive. He has gained access to Jerzy Giedroyc documentation at the University-of-Warsaw Library. Added to these have been the extensive and meticulously revised collections of Leon Janta-Polczyński, Stanisław Kot, or the Tarnowski family of Dzików, as well as of the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London. The Resource of the Central Polish Committee for Aiding Polish Refugees in Romania, known only to a narrow circle of experts, was Żebrowski's reference as well. The result of this query is clearly visible in the voluminous study in question.

The first four chapters speak of Jerzy Giedroyc's childhood and early adolescent years. Evoked is, among other things, the dramatic way the character

made from the revolutionary Moscow to Minsk. Some of the episodes are strongly controversial: as a teenager, Giedroyc was an addict smoker and entered into contact with other stimulants, primarily by experimenting with drugs. He would often be at odds with school. The subsequent sections of this book follow his private and social life over the two decades between the World Wars and in WWII years. This sometimes makes an impression of almost a nobleman's tale, which might partly be owed to the diligence with which this author has reconstructed the character's connections among landowners and aristocrats. This train of stories, episodes and, at times, *facetae* finally brings the reader to the Maisons-Laffitte biographic chapter.

The author has revealed a battery of details of the hitherto-unknown life of Giedroyc, some of its aspects having been concealed from public opinion. Described and characterised have been his closest and dearest people; entire biographical fragments have been reconstructed in detail, with inclination to verify each factual inaccuracy. In some cases, the narration goes as far as quoting the menus of meals served; ample source materials are quoted *in extenso* in order to disambiguate the detail in question. Thus, the reader is taken on a journey to his character's private and social life, with some trivial details and traces from Jerzy's biography being collected along the way – and confronted with the pieces of information previously in circulation.

A remarkable share of this information allows indeed for complementing the image of Jerzy Giedroyc as once shaped by the famous *Autobiografia na cztery ręce* – a 'four-handed' autobiography, written together with Krzysztof Pomian, or by the Editor's (as he was customarily called) interview written in 1980s by Barbara Toruńczyk but published only in 2006. Although the effort put in filling in the biographical gaps calls for high estimation, one cannot resist the impression that the proportion between the number of details and annalistic records and the analytic-and-interpretative passages have remained imbalanced. The conclusions one may draw from the author's painstaking work would get arranged into quite an incomplete profile of the character. Above all, the author has failed to use the opportunity of giving, on any of the several hundred running pages of his book, any new reply to the fascinating question about how the stance assumed by Giedroyc, the outstanding figure as he was, possibly translated into the political situation in Poland. Thus, not much has been added to the picture of Poland's political situation in the pre-war period. It would not become clear, once you have read the book, what it was in specific that became the motive power for Giedroyc's very intensive activity in his early years. Was it patriotism, sometimes perhaps even too fierce but typical to his generation? Or, the memory of the Russian revolution, perceived as an end put to a certain universe? Or, perhaps, the assassination of President Narutowicz? (Żebrowski argues that the two latter events, occurring in Giedroyc's youth years, proved especially haunting to him.) Or, was it the idea of Poland as a power, the one which had intellectually shaped the

circles of *Bunt Młodych* and *Polityka* – the two important periodicals Giedroyc edited? And, how about the role of the death of Józef Piłsudski, an event that forever remained shocking to the first generation of the Marshall's supporters (so-called Piłsudski-ites)? Has each of these elements reinforced this figure's identity- and worldview-related identifications, or was there an occurrence of special import among them that had a special bearing on them?

As it seems, Edward Rydz-Śmigły was the man who symbolically focused the argument that dramatically partitioned the *Sanacja* camp in the last years of the Second Polish Republic, juxtaposing and confronting two visions of the country: authoritarian and nationalistic versus the opposite option, i.e. Poland as part of the liberal West. Although Giedroyc distanced himself from the establishment of the late *Sanacja* years, he would agree with certain forms of police state being imposed. And, he fully embraced the anti-modernist current of resistance against democratic order, liberal culture, and rules of modern society.

Another blank is, as it seems, the young Giedroyc's attitude to the nationality question of the Second Republic. As becomes evident from Żebrowski's book, insofar as Giedroyc himself and his circle assumed a comprehending stance toward the aspirations of Slavic minorities, it would be hard to see in him, in the interwar period, one of the future protagonists in Polish-Jewish reconciliation. Let us evoke, by means of example, the notorious *Polityka* editorial entitled 'Żądamy polskiego "hitleryzmu"' [We demand a Polish 'Hitlerism'] (25 Feb. 1939). This fact is only perfunctorily mentioned by Żebrowski, as if he assumed that the thing is not worth of considerable attention. Such journalism does not add glory to either the periodical's milieu or the editor. The reader has the right to demand from a biographer an explanation of Giedroyc's position of the time. However, the author did not take such effort – not only at this one point – satisfying himself instead with a fragmentary or exiguous message. As a result, the passages concerning Giedroyc's political evolution and individual views are not quite impressive. For instance, quoted is a precise record of his personal contacts, whilst in fact the man's political activity is reduced to an absolute minimum at that very time. Admittedly, Giedroyc is shown as having been free of the juvenescent fascination with radical nationalism, which affected so many of his generation – including his little-younger brother Henryk. Why, though, he did not recognise the phenomenon's nature and potential, we would not learn from Żebrowski. It could be said, in general, that this author has failed to show his character in the context of doctrinal and environmental nuances of the late *Sanacja* period.

One of the many virtues of Giedroyc's experience as editor, which he had gained in running several periodicals – *Bunt Młodych* and *Polityka* in particular – was his skill in making use of his knowledge as well as political contacts in quite a politically diverse milieu. Still before the war, the young editor proved capable of reconciling and harmonising a number of contradicting interests

and mutually conflicted groups. One may guess that the main determinant of his political and cultural orientation was a strong sense of political realities as well as resentment, if not, at times, hostility toward ideological phraseologies. What was such a stance rooted in? The impression one gets when having finished reading the book is that Giedroyc has once again successfully stole away from his biographer.

The study by Żebrowski makes the reader conclude that Giedroyc's greatness was exactly expressed in the fact that he has not remained confined within the limits of an emotional vision of the history of Poland, which was close to the milieu he rubbed shoulders with in his young days. He proved capable not only of thinking that vision over but also of overcoming it. Possibly, it was the Second Republic experience that made some compromise with all the political camps necessary, so as to integrate the community, even though such reconciliation would at times be burdened with social costs. It was perhaps on the ground of observations made at that time that Giedroyc's desire for a more solidarity-founded and righteous Poland evolved; this might also be true for his assent, if not, periodically, approval, for Poland ruled by communists. It may be assumed that the similar sources ought to be identified for Giedroyc's increasingly clearer distance towards the Catholic Church. Regrettably, all these problems have remained understated, if ever vocalised, in Żebrowski's book.

Obviously, given all these objections, the book does portray the magnitude of Jerzy Giedroyc as a figure in Polish culture. A charismatic personality, strong and resolute character, appears in front of the reader's eyes. Even if Giedroyc would every now and then make pragmatic choices, his temper remained radical as in his youth days. Can the experiences gathered in the Second Republic period be regarded as the key to understanding the unique phenomenon of *Kultura* and Jerzy Giedroyc himself, in other respects as well? It is not easy to give a clear-cut answer, having read Żebrowski. In the author's perspective, interwar Poland is not a simulacrum or caricature, but its picture does not offer much beyond what we already know. In a number of moments of essential importance, no unambiguous statements are proposed: instead, problems of essential importance are just mentioned with some perfunctory phrases; otherwise, the author would not even bother himself to ask such questions, leaving the issues open. Once this book has been read, the impression remains that, having said a lot about the character, the author has said almost nothing new about his time.