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The Making of Medieval Studies in Slovakia

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THE MAKING OF MEDIEVAL STUDIES IN SLOVAKIA

Martin Homza

To understand the directions and trends in the field of Slovak medieval studies over the period of the past 20 years it is necessary to make a short review of its previous evolution. Similarly to the neighboring countries, medieval studies have developed to some extent in contrast to what was before 1989 or 1993 (Slovak independence). In the long term, however, this formation has been influenced by a number of particular factors.

It is no secret that the official, more or less accepted, doctrine of Slovak society has been a historical reduction of Štúr's mid-nineteenth century generation.¹ Štúr's generation was the Slovak early romantic intelligentsia of the Lutheran confession, about a fifth of them of noble descent. In the early autumn of the revolutionary year 1848, as heads of the Slovak uprising, they officially resigned from further coexistence with the Hungarians in one country – the Hungarian Kingdom. The prize for the Slovaks was a loss of history. Then, as a stopgap, the concept arose of a “nation in the future”, “the nation of the Holy Spirit”, or the “Spirit” only in the case of the Hegelians. It was logical and natural that this concept in particular served as a basis for the ideological designers of Slovak communism (Vladimír Mináč and others),² who started repainting and gently altering the significance of the structure itself from the 1960s. Instead of the “nation of the Spirit” they turned the Slovaks into the non-historical nation which still remembered its beginnings, the nation without the kings and nobility; in the words of Vladimír Mináč “the most plebeian nation in the world.” As such it was predestined to adopt communism. As a matter of fact, this mainstream Slovak thinking did not meet with full understanding, particularly among Catholic intellectuals; there were many reasons, which will not be analyzed in detail now, why such a concept was simply unacceptable to them. The destiny of the Roman Catholic priest Jonáš Záborský and his work, *The History of the Hungarian Kingdom from the Beginning to the Reign of Sigismund*,³ is typical; for ideological reasons it has remained in manuscript. Similarly, the text of a work by a Capuchin monk, Franko Vítazoslav Sasínek, *The History of the Hungarian*

¹ Ľudovít, Štúr *Slovanstvo a svet budúcnosti* [Slavdom and the World of Future] (Martin: Matica slovenská, 1993).

² Vladimír, Mináč *Súvislosti* [Connections] (Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1976).

³ See <http://zaborsky.blogspot.com>.

Kingdom,⁴ was published, but this led to its author falling into disfavor with Slovak intellectuals and contemporary Hungarian religious circles and finally he was forced to spend his last days in exile in Austria. The first Czechoslovak Republic was no more merciful to his work; because of its own existence and nation-state interest it was forced to reject all other than the official concepts of interpreting the national history of the Slovaks in the Carpathian Basin. The “correct” interpretation was found unexpectedly quickly by none other than the authority on Czech historiography, Prof. Václav Chaloupecký, in his work, *Old Slovakia*.⁵ The founder of the Department of Czechoslovak History at Comenius University, dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, and later the rector of Comenius University, Chaloupecký among many stimulating ideas clearly defined the direction the new “real, scholarly” historiography in Slovakia was to move in. Briefly, removing the Hungarian deposit from Slovak history was inevitable, it should be “de-Hungarianized” and repainted in the Czech way. There is no doubt that this “isolated” method of interpreting the medieval history of Slovakia led virtually all of his students, among them Daniel Rapant, František Hrušovský, and Branislav Varsík, to reject it. Along with the refusal of pre-conceptions in the historical debate, the historical circumstances had an impact; for a long time, with the exception of the wartime Slovak Republic of 1939-1945, they favored such an “isolated” interpretation of national and universal history and, by implication, the cultivation of only a few medieval themes. And if those restrictions were not enough, the communist power’s new interest in the class struggle was added to the nation-state interests of the renewed Czechoslovak Republic in 1948, for interpreting medieval history accurately – meaning in the Marxist manner. As a result, appropriate and inappropriate research themes and topics were defined from above. Among those long felt to be appropriate was the theme of Great Moravia, officially “the first free state of the Czechs and the Slovaks,” although Saints Constantine and Methodius became simply Constantine and Methodius and they were presented more as envoys of the Byzantine Empire than as the apostles of the Slavs. Moreover, Great Moravia was also suitable because its particular individual leaders (especially Rastislav/Rastislav, slightly less Swentibald/Svätópuk) embodied significant resistance against the East Frankish Empire, i.e., Western imperialism. Other appropriate themes, as in neighboring socialist

⁴ Franko Vítazoslav Sasinek, *Dejiny Královstva uhorského* [The History of the Kingdom of Hungary], vol. 1, (Banská Bystrica: Rýchlotiskom vdovy F. Macholda, 1869).

⁵ Václav Chaloupecký, *Staré Slovensko* [Old Slovakia], (Bratislava: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Komenského, 1923).

countries, were the history of “the most oppressed masses,” that is, peasants and miners in particular as regards the Middle Ages, economic history, and the history of settlement in particular regions. Somewhat more dangerous was releasing the medieval sources. This was mainly due to the language of these sources – Latin – which, as they were not able to read it and so could not understand it, was in itself dangerous and therefore it gradually disappeared from grammar school curricula along with other humanities’ disciplines. The current political regime began to write history starting from the Great October Revolution or the Communist coup in Czecho-Slovakia in 1948. Despite all these absurd circumstances, to which must be added the practical isolation of the most talented Slovak medievalists in socialist Czechoslovakia, with their minimal opportunities to compare research with scholars abroad, a route was open to travel to Hungary or the German Democratic Republic, but it became increasingly difficult to go to Poland. Around the mid-1960s, at the time of a political thaw, many schools that focused on medieval history were set up around the future most significant scholars in Slovakia, in particular, Branislav Varsik, Matúš Kučera, and Alexander Avenarius at Comenius University in Bratislava and Peter Ratkoš and Richard Marsina at the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Ferdinand Uličný later laid the foundations for medieval studies at the University of Prešov in Prešov, then at the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik.⁶ Each of these in some way later contributed to the cultivation of important works of medieval historiography. Because of the characteristics of the individual personalities who later matured in this school, it is necessary to note their critical works.⁷ Ondrej R. Halaga worked alone; he lived and worked in

⁶ See <http://www.unipo.sk/ff/index.php?sekcia=katedry-fakulty&id=348&uroven=0>.

⁷ Branislav Varsik, *Osídlenie Košickej kotliny I.-III.* [The Settlement of the Košice Valley I-III] (Bratislava: Veda 1964-1977); Matúš Kučera, *Slovensko po páde Veľkej Moravy* [Slovakia after the Fall of Great Moravia] (Bratislava: Veda, 1974); Alexander Avenarius, *Die Awaren in Europa*, tr. Ursula Novakova (Amsterdam and Bratislava: A.M. Hakkert and Veda, 1974); Peter Ratkoš, *Povstanie baníkov na Slovensku 1525-1526* [The Miners’ Uprising in Slovakia, 1525–1526]. (Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied, 1963) and the collection of sources, idem, ed., *Dokumenty k dejinám baníckeho povstania (1525-1526)* [Documents on the History of the Mining Uprising (1525 - 1526)], ed. Peter Ratkoš (Bratislava: SAV 1957) and *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Slovaciae*, vol. 1-2, ed. Richard Marsina (Bratislava: SAV, 1974 and 1987). The remarkable achievement of Richard Marsina was the issue of the synthesized history of Slovakia: *Dejiny Slovenska* [The History of Slovakia], ed. Richard Marsina (Bratislava: Veda, 1986); Ferdinand Uličný, *Dejiny osídlenia Šariša* [The History of Settlement of Šariš] (Košice: Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1990); Idem, *Dejiny osídlenia Užskej župy* [The History of Settlement of Užh County] (Prešov: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity P. J. Šafárika v Košiciach, 1995); Idem, *Dejiny osídlenia Zemplínskej župy* [The History of Settlement of Zemplén County] (Michalovce: Zemplínska spoločnosť, 2001).

Košice and devoted his endeavors to economic history and especially the history of the town of Košice itself; however, he had no successors.⁸ A premature death in 1996 ended the promising evolving work of Ján Beňko.⁹ Despite the political thaw of the late sixties, historians researching in the field of ecclesiastical history still remained isolated, especially historians who were Roman Catholic priests, such as Jozef Kútnik-Šmálov¹⁰ and Jozef Špirko.¹¹ Virtually isolated from developments in communist Czechoslovakia, Slovak medieval studies were developing abroad. The most significant figures were František Hrušovský¹² and Michal Lacko.¹³

As is clear from the above, there was no practical social order for cultivating medieval studies as an integral part of historiography as a scientific discipline in Slovakia in the period from 1918 to 1989, although it can be said that some of the figures noted above managed to establish their own schools. Branislav Varsik raised the important first generation of Slovak professional archivists, led by Jozef Novák.¹⁴ Matúš Kučera, thanks to a link with the Czech school of František Graus, close friendship with Dušan Třeštík, and establishing the Marxist view of acceptable current trends of the French Annales school or the Polish left-wing historians (Karol Modzelewski), moved to exploring the history of Great Moravia and the beginnings of the Hungarian Kingdom from the politico-ideological viewpoint of history to the

⁸ Ondrej R. Halaga, *Košice-Balt: Výroba a obchod v styku východoslovenských miest s Pruskom 1275-1526* [Kosice-Balt: Production and Trade in the Contact Points with East Prussia from 1275 to 1526] (Košice: Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1975), and Idem, *Počiatky Košíc a vznik metropoly* [The Origin of Košice and the Emergence of a Metropolis] (Košice: Mesto Košice, 1992). The number of texts issued, particularly, in German, of which the most important is the Casovian City Paper: "*Acta iudiciaria civitatis Cassoviensis* 1393-1405: das älteste Kaschauer Stadtbuch," ed. Ondrej R. Halaga (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1994).

⁹ Ján Beňko, *Osídlenie severného Slovenska* [The Settlement of Northern Slovakia] (Košice: Východoslovenské vydavateľstvo, 1985) and Idem, *Starý Turiec* [Old Turiec] (Martin: Osveta, 1996).

¹⁰ Jozef Kútnik-Šmálov, *Kresťanský stredovek Slovenska* [The Christian Middle Ages of Slovakia], ed. Julius Paštéka (Trnava: Lúč, 2005).

¹¹ Jozef Špirko, *Dejiny a umenie očami historika* [History and Art through the Eyes of a Historian] (Bratislava: Lúč, 2001).

¹² Mark M. Stolarik, "Slovak Historians in Exile in North America: 1945-1992," *Human Affairs* 1996, No. 1: 34-44.

¹³ He was a co-founder of the Slovak Institute of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rome; Michal Lacko, *Gréckokatolíkom: Výber z diela* [To the Greek Catholics] (Košice: Byzant, 1992); about him, see Michal Lacko, *Život a dielo: Zborník referátov na vedeckej konferencii v Košiciach 19.-20. 3. 1992* [Life and Works, a Collection of Papers from the Scholarly Conference in Košice], ed. Michal Potemra (Košice: Slovenský katolícky kruh, 1992).

¹⁴ He researched heraldry in particular, Jozef Novák, *Pečate miest a obcí na Slovensku*, vol. 1, [The Seals of Towns and Villages in Slovakia, vol. 1] (Bratislava: Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, 2008).

history of the emergence of different economic and social structures and mechanisms. The students of Professor Matúš Kučera are now a strong middle generation of historian-medievalists working at Comenius University in Bratislava (Pozsony) (Ján Lukačka, Vincent Múcska, and Juraj Šedivý, and also myself). Others to be noted here are Rastislav Kožiak, also a graduate of Comenius University, now the head of the Department of History at the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica (Besztercebánya), then also a range of younger historian-medievalists working at the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Science in Bratislava (hereafter: SAS) in the department of early history (Ján Steinhübel, Daniela Dvořáková, Blanka Brezováková, and others).¹⁵ The greatest happiness for Slovak medieval studies is the good health of Professor Richard Marsina, who left the Historical Institute of SAS in Bratislava in 1993 and found fertile ground at the University of Trnava (Nagyszombat), where, together with Imrich Sedlák (d. 2009),¹⁶ they established their own school of history (Vladimír Rábik,¹⁷ Miloš Marek,¹⁸ and others). Jaroslav Nemeš also came from the “workshop” of Professor Richard Marsina, and is now the leader of medieval research at the Catholic University in Ružomberok (Rózsáhegy). The premature death of Professor Alexander Avenarius, a founder of Byzantinology at the Historical Institute of the SAS as well being in the Department of History of the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University was a loss, although he left worthy successors (Martin Hurbanič, Martin Štefánik, Marek Meško, and others).

The year 1989 or the year 1993, when the independent Slovak Republic was established, meant not only multiplying the number of historians, medievalists, and workplaces where individual medievalists gather, but also a kind of new beginning in terms of expanding the range of research topics. Quite logically, long neglected

¹⁵ See <http://www.history.sav.sk/profil.htm>.

¹⁶ The most significant work is *Regesta diplomatica nec non epistularia Slovaciae*, vol. 1-2, ed. Vincent Sedlák (Bratislava: Academia scientiarum Slovaciae, 1980-1987).

¹⁷ Vladimír Rábik, *Nemecké osídlenie na území východného Slovenska v stredoveku* [German Settlement in the Territory of Eastern Slovakia in the Middle Ages]. (Bratislava: Slovenské národné múzeum – Múzeum kultúry Karpatských Nemcov 2006); Idem, *Mestská kniha príjmov Trnavskej farnosti sv. Mikuláša z roku 1495* [Trnava Parish, St. Nicholas' Town Book of Incomes from 1495]. (Trnava: Filozofická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity 2006); Idem, *Diplomatarium Sancto-Adalbertinum: Stredoveké listiny v Literárnom archíve Spolku sv. Vojtecha (1181) 1214-1543* [Diplomatarium Sancto-Adalbertinum. Medieval Charters in the Literary Archives of the St. Adalbert Association in Trnava (1181) 1214-1543] (Martin: Slovenská genealogicko-heraldická spoločnosť, 2008); Idem, *Mestská kniha Trnavy (1392/1393) 1394-1530* [The Trnava Town Book (1392/1393) 1394-1530]. (Trnava: Filozofická fakulta Trnavskej univerzity v Trnave, 2008).

¹⁸ Miloš Marek, *Cudzie etniká na stredovekom Slovensku* [Foreign Ethnic Groups in Medieval Slovakia] (Martin: Vydavateľstvo Matice slovenskej, 2006).

themes from ecclesiastical history finally appeared. There was a breakthrough conference at the renewed University of Trnava in 1993 dedicated to the history of religious communities.¹⁹ In the subsequent period, the University of Trnava has kept on dealing with the ecclesiastical history, and the Slovak Institute in Rome was established here, specializing in publishing Vatican historical sources on the history of Slovakia.²⁰ A bridge in the continuity of research on ecclesiastical history was laid by Michal Slivka and a circle of young historians grouped around the archaeological research and subsequent revitalization of the extinct Carthusian monastery on the Rock of Refuge, in the land registry (*urbarium*) of the village of Letanovce.²¹ Vincent Múcska from the Department of History of the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava produced a monograph devoted to religious reforms in the Hungarian Kingdom in the tenth and eleventh centuries.²² Vincent Múcska, in cooperation with the Department of History of the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica, also released a breakthrough collection of papers on religious orders and monasteries in the Middle Ages.²³ Since the establishment of the Catholic University in Ružomberok in 2002 further systematic work in the field of ecclesiastical history is being shifted there and the Centre for the Study of Christianity has been formed, publishing collections of papers, monographs, and a series of historical source editions²⁴ as well as a textual analysis of the *Codex Nitriensis* by Jaroslav Nemeš.²⁵

¹⁹ *Dejiny a kultúra rehoľných komunit: Príspevky na II. sympóziu o cirkevných dejinách Slovenska na Trnavskej univerzite 15.-16. októbra 1993* [The History and Culture of Monastic Communities. Contributions to the II. Symposium on the Church History of Slovakia, Trnava University, 15th-16 October 1993], ed. Jozef Šimončík (Trnava: Trnavská univerzita, 1994).

²⁰ *Monumenta Vaticana Slovaciae*, ed. Vincentius Sedlák, vol. 1 (Trnava a Rím: Typis Universitas Trnaviensis, 2008). The others are about to be published, see <http://www.truni.sk/slovensky-historicky-ustav-rim>.

²¹ See <http://www.klastorisko.sk/>

²² Vincent Múcska, *Uhorsko a cirkevné reformy 10. a 11. storočia* [The Kingdom of Hungary and the Religious Reforms of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries] (Bratislava: Stimul, 2004).

²³ *Rehole a kláštory v stredoveku* [Religious Orders and Monasteries in the Middle Ages], ed. Rastislav Kožíak and Vincent Múcska (Banská Bystrica and Bratislava: Chronos, 2002).

²⁴ Gabriel Hunčaga, *Historické štúdie k dejinám dominikánov* [Historical Studies on the History of the Dominicans] (Bratislava: Chronos, 2008); *Svätec a jeho funkcie v spoločnosti* [The Saint and His Function in Society], vol. 1-2, ed. Rastislav Kožíak and Jaroslav Nemeš (Bratislava: Chronos, 2006); *Miscellanea Ecclesiastica Nitriensis*, vol. 1: *Quellen zur Geschichte des Bistums Neutra*, ed. Marek Ďurčo and Jaroslav Nemeš (Cracow: Wydawnictwo i Drukarnia Towarzystwo Słowaków w Polsce, 2007); *Pohanstvo a kresťanstvo*. Zborník z konferencie usporiadanej 5.-6. 2. 2003 v Banskej Bystrici [Paganism and Christianity: Collection of Papers from the 5th conference held in Banská Bystrica from 5 to 6 February 2003], ed. Rastislav Kožíak and Jaroslav Nemeš (Bratislava: Chronos, 2004).

²⁵ Jaroslav Nemeš, ed., *Kodex von Neutra. Geistige Erbschaft der italienisch-griechischen Mönche und ihrer*

The theme of ecclesiastical history and Christian religious orders has also been pursued by a non-profit (non-governmental) organization called Kláštorisko, which, since its establishment in 2001, has issued annual interdisciplinary volumes, *Studia Archeologica Slovaca Medievalia*, on topics such as: “Man – Sacrum – Environment”²⁶ and “The Church as a Centre of the Settlement Unit.”²⁷ In the context of presenting their own research, the organization hosted a conference on “Central European Charterhouses in the Family of the Carthusian Order” in 2007. The papers from the conference were published in a collected volume, *Analecta Cartusiana*, which was released as part of the same series.²⁸ Within the scholarly activities of the organization a web version of the translation of a *Chronicle of an Anonymous Carthusian*, written on the Rock of Refuge at the beginning of the sixteenth century, has been issued.²⁹ By far the most important activities of this organization, however, cover work on the regional history of the former Scepusian County (Spišská župa), focusing on its cultural and historical significance as one of the major counties of the former Hungarian Kingdom. In 2003, the organization, together with its Polish partner, issued a collection, *Terra Scepusiensis*,³⁰ which has contributed to the success of the first part of a monumental Slovak-Polish project on the history of Scepusia: *Historia Scepusii: Dejiny Spiša do roku 1526* (*Historia Scepusii: The History of Spiš to 1526*).³¹ It is being prepared by the Kláštorisko organization and the Department of Slovak History of Comenius University, Bratislava in cooperation with the Institute of History of the Jagellonian University in Cracow.

Regional history is a rather peculiar topic in Slovak medieval studies. After 1989, like mushrooms after the rain, a number of regional, urban, and village monographs

Nachfolger von Aachen, (Győr: Palatia Nyomda és Kiadó, 2007).

²⁶ *Studia archeologica Slovaca medievalia*, vol. 5, ed. Michal Slivka and Martin Homza (Levoča: Kláštorisko, 2006).

²⁷ *Studia archeologica Slovaca medievalia*, vol. 6, ed. Michal Slivka (Levoča: Kláštorisko, 2007).

²⁸ *Central European Charterhouses in the Family of the Carthusian Order*, ed. Martin Homza, Veronika Kucharská, Stanislava Kuzmová and Naďa Rácová, *Analecta Cartusiana*, Vol. 254 (Levoča and Salzburg: Kláštorisko, n.o. and Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 2008). See also <http://analectacartusiana.blogspot.com/>

²⁹ See <http://klastorisko.sk/klastor/dejiny/kronika.php>.

³⁰ *Terra Scepusiensis: Stav bádania o dejinách Spiša* [Terra Scepusiensis: The Status of Research on the History of Spiš], ed. Ryszard Gładkiewicz and Martin Homza (Levoča and Wrocław: Lúč, 2003); see also <http://scepus.org>.

³¹ *Historia Scepusii*, vol. 1: *Dejiny Spiša do roku 1526* [The History of Spiš to 1526], ed. Martin Homza and Stanisław A. Sroka (Levoča and Cracow: Etc., 2008).

appeared, sometimes more, sometimes less successful. Within this field two regions reign in principle – Scepusia and Bratislava. As regards Scepusia, the tradition of earlier Scepusian historiography, evolving practically since the Middle Ages, has recently been successfully linked with the Scepusian historical society under the leadership of Ivan Chalupický with his regular bulletin *Z minulosti Spiša*.³²

Since 1989, medieval historical source editions and their translations have been published on a large scale in Slovakia. Issuing medieval sources originally fell within the purview of the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences; currently, however, historical sources have been released by virtually every center of medieval studies in the Slovak Republic. Rak, in Bratislava and Budmerice, directed by Pavel Dvořák, is among the most significant publishers. It is issuing a series of popular translations of medieval texts known as *Pramene k dejinám Slovenska a Slovákov* (Sources on the History of Slovakia and the Slovaks).³³ In this series of sources, significant translations of Hungarian chronicles by other major authors as Richard Marsina,³⁴ Július Sopko,³⁵ Vincent Múcska,³⁶ and Daniela Dvořáková,³⁷ have been released. Among the other notable achievements of this publishing house are also a number of historical monographs with medieval themes which otherwise would not be found on the Slovak book market. A book by Daniela Dvořáková on Ctibor of Ctiborice – *Rytier a jeho kráľ* (The Knight and His King)³⁸ has been a success; it is perhaps the only history-focused title currently to have been translated into

³² See <http://www.spisiaci.sk>.

³³ *Pramene k dejinám Slovenska a Slovákov* [Sources on the History of Slovakia and the Slovaks], vol. 1-7 (Bratislava and Budmerice: Rak, 1998-2005). For more information, see <http://www.vydavatelstvorak.sk/en>.

³⁴ The collection of the most significant texts on the Mongol invasion of the Kingdom of Hungary, excluding the Chronicle of Thomas of Split, *Tatársky vpád* [Mongolian Invasion], tr. and ed. Richard Marsina and Miloš Marek. (Budmerice: Rak, 2008). The medieval lives of the most important saints connected to the territory of today's Slovakia – *Legends stredovekého Slovenska: Ideály stredovekého človeka očami cirkevných spisovateľov* [Legends of Medieval Slovakia: Ideals of Medieval Man through the Eyes of Ecclesiastical Writers] (Budmerice: Rak, 1997).

³⁵ The translations of the most important chronicles of the Kingdom of Hungary pertaining to the territory of today's Slovakia – *Kroniky stredovekého Slovenska: Stredoveké Slovensko očami kráľovských a mestských kronikárov* [Chronicles of Medieval Slovakia: Medieval Slovakia through the Eyes of Royal and Urban Chroniclers]. (Budmerice: Rak, 1995) and *Kronika uhorských kráľov zvaná Dubnická* [Chronicle of the Hungarian Kings Called Dubnická], tr. and ed. Július Sopko (Budmerice: Rak, 2004).

³⁶ *Kronika anonymného notára kráľa Bela: Gesta Hungarorum* [Chronicle of an Anonymous Notary of King Bela: Gesta Hungarorum], tr. and ed. Vincent Múcska (Budmerice: Rak, 2000).

³⁷ *Spomienky Heleny Kottannerovej* [Memoirs of Helena Kottanner], tr. and ed. Daniela Dvořáková and Mária Papsonová (Budmerice: Rak, 2008).

³⁸ Daniela Dvořáková, *Rytier a jeho kráľ* [A Knight and His King] (Budmerice: Rak, 2003).

Hungarian. Another major title by Daniela Dvořáková is a book with a very unusual, at least for Slovak historiography, theme of the horse in the medieval Kingdom of Hungary.³⁹ In a co-edition with the publishing house Veda, the publishing house Rak released a monograph by Ján Steinhübel devoted to the principality of Nitra.⁴⁰ In terms of a new concept of the medieval history of today's Slovakia, it was undoubtedly a primary topic, although its reception has lagged behind its significance. As regards the variability of themes cherished in Slovak medieval studies, it has been significantly enriched by the Department of Slovak History of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Comenius University in Bratislava.⁴¹ For example, the current head of the department, Ján Lukačka, has been publishing his research results on the theme of medieval nobility in the territory of present-day Slovakia since the 1990s.⁴² Martin Homza, with his book on dynastic female saints in Central Europe, published in the series of *Libri historiae Slovaciae*, has brought a new hagiographic topic into Slovak medieval studies.⁴³ Homza, a graduate of Medieval Studies at CEU Budapest, has long been devoted to research on the foreign policy of the Arpads, particularly as regards their relations with Poland and Kievan Rus'.⁴⁴ His students from the Comenius University in Bratislava regularly continue their studies at CEU, among them Marek Klatý, Stanislava Kuzmová, and Tomáš Gábris. Stanislava Kuzmová, with her series of articles on Saint Bishop Stanislas/Stanišlaw of Cracow, has been linking Slovak medieval studies with the current trends in world medieval studies.⁴⁵ At the Departments of

³⁹ Daniela Dvořáková, *Kôň a človek v stredoveku: K spolužitiu človeka a kôňa v Uhorskom kráľovstve* [Horse and Man in the Middle Ages: The Coexistence of Man and Horse in the Kingdom of Hungary] (Budmerice: Rak, 2007).

⁴⁰ Ján Steinhübel, *Nitrianske kniežatstvo* [The Principality of Nitra] (Bratislava: Rak and Veda, 2004).

⁴¹ See <http://www.fphil.uniba.sk/index.php?id=ksd>.

⁴² In brief, Ján Lukačka, *Formovanie vyššej šľachty na západnom Slovensku* [Formation of the Higher Nobility in Western Slovakia] (Bratislava: Minor, 2002).

⁴³ Martin Homza, *Mulieres suadentes: Presvedčajúce ženy: Štúdie z dejín ženskej panovníckej svätosti v strednej a vo východnej Európe v 10.-13. storočí* [*Mulieres suadentes: Persuading Women: Studies of the History of Female Ruler Holiness in Central and Eastern Europe in the Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries*] (Bratislava: Lúč, 2002). Works on lesser-known saints of the Slovak Middle Ages were issued in the same series: Ľubomír Bosák and Patrik Kýška, *Svätý Gorazd: Učený muž našej zeme* [Saint Gorazd: An Erudite Man of Our Land] (Bratislava, Lúč, 2004) and Bystrík Bugan, *Svätý Bystrík* [Saint Bistricus] (Bratislava: Lúč, 2007).

⁴⁴ Martin Homza, "Politické dejiny Spiša do začiatku 14. storočia" [The Political History of Scepsia up to the beginning of the Fourteenth Century] *Historia Scepusii* 1, 126-174.

⁴⁵ Stanislava Kuzmová, "Preaching on Martyr Bishops in the Later Middle Ages: St. Stanislaus of Cracow and St. Thomas Becket," *Britain and Poland-Lithuania from the Middle Ages to 1795: Contact and Comparison* (collected volume from the conference in Cracow, September 2005 (Leiden: Brill Publishers, in press); Idem, "Stanislaus, Saint (1030?-1079): Bishop of Cracow." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed.

History of Comenius University Bratislava, which besides the Department of Slovak History includes the Department of Archival and Auxiliary Historical Sciences⁴⁶ and the Department of General History,⁴⁷ a number of up-and-coming medievalists also work and research, among them: Leon Sokolovský, Juraj Šedivý, Vincent Múcska, and Martin Hurbanič. Leon Sokolovský follows in the tradition of economic history research;⁴⁸ Juraj Šedivý researches in the field of palaeography, epigraphy, and codicology.⁴⁹ Among the most remarkable achievements of the Department of General History is the publication of *European Medieval History* (*Dejiny európskeho stredoveku*).⁵⁰ The Departments of History of Comenius University release the oldest annual in Slovakia focused on history, *Historica*.⁵¹ Besides *Historický časopis* (Historical Journal) it is one of the most significant historical periodicals in Slovakia. Further, the Department of General History also publishes an annual, *Acta Historica Posoniensia*.⁵² Last but not least, the Departments of History publish *Medea*, a journal for students and young medievalists.⁵³

As is clear from the above, after 1993 there was a significant qualitative and quantitative increase in Slovak medieval studies and its output. I consider the organizational and thematic fragmentation symptomatic, for the moment not allowing for the systematic discussion of important topics, such as the place of the territory of today's Slovakia in the Kingdom of Hungary and the relations of the Slovak elites with other countries of the Hungarian Kingdom. There is also a noticeable absence of close links in the research of the history of culture and religious history with research trends in Western Europe in particular. Exceptions notwithstanding, the publication of historical sources has not yet reached adequate quality and a modern level. Historical positivism still persists in Slovak medieval studies as the main working method.

Robert E. Bjork. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), etc.

⁴⁶ See <http://www.fphil.uniba.sk/index.php?id=kapvh>.

⁴⁷ See <http://www.fphil.uniba.sk/index.php?id=kvd>.

⁴⁸ Leon Sokolovský, *Správa stredovekej dediny na Slovensku* [Medieval Village Administration in Slovakia] (Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press, 2002) and Idem, *Stručné dejiny Malohontu do roku 1803* [A Brief History of Malohont until 1803] (Martin: Gradus, 1997).

⁴⁹ Juraj Šedivý, *Mittelalterliche Schriftkultur im Pressburger Kollegiatkapitel* (Bratislava: Chronos, 2007).

⁵⁰ *Dejiny európskeho stredoveku*, vol. 1: *Raný stredovek od 5. do polovice 11. storočia* [European Medieval History, vol. 1: The Early Middle Ages from the Fifth to the Mid-eleventh Century] (Prešov: Michal Vaško, 2006).

⁵¹ Last *Historica* 47, ed. Peter Tišliar, (Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2008).

⁵² As far as the Middle Ages is concerned, the following was released – *East Central Europe at the Turn of the 1st and 2nd Millenia*, *Acta Historica Posoniensia*, vol. 2 (Bratislava, 2002).

⁵³ See <http://imedeia.szm.sk>.

In contrast to the above, however, the most contributory feature of the period in the Slovak historiography discussed here is the fact that Slovak medieval studies is currently represented by the middle and younger generation of specialists, some of whom received their education at the major institutions and centers for medieval studies in Europe. Slovakia, however, has not had the luck of the neighboring Czech Republic, where an institutionalized workplace was established to ensure systematic work across the medieval disciplines.⁵⁴ Another positive feature of the medieval studies research organization is to be found in the high degree of organization of the archive administration and protection of historical archives and collections. Gradually, the digitalization of the particular archives is being launched. Generally speaking, in the survival of Štúr's a-historical paradigm as the main ideological structure of self-reflection, in the present Slovak political elites in particular, as well as in the atmosphere of the constant underestimation of the social sciences, the state of Slovak medieval studies is nothing but a miracle.

⁵⁴ Ivan Varšo, "Slovenské medievistické stredisko – perspektíva alebo utópia?" [The Slovak Medieval Centre – Perspective or Utopia?], *Studia archeologica Slovaca medievalia* 5 (2006): 405-413.