

and their attempts to avoid being swallowed up by the Ottomans (or the Russians). Interpretation begins with the emergence of a national/Christian myth in the mid-nineteenth century, and from there Pippidi explains the changes in historiography over time that have recently made it possible to challenge the old framework of the territorial state in favor of a region of competition among princes, some with outside support from the Ottomans, and the flexible incorporation of the Wallachians into the Ottoman economic system. In the case of Moldavia, the article by Ștefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Szekely seeks to pinpoint the inception of the Ottoman-Moldavian relationship. Despite the political rhetoric of centuries, new sources permit the conclusion that the Moldavians were not ever subjects of the Ottoman Empire, but its tributaries; there was no Ottoman conquest of Moldavia.

The next chapter, by Dubravko Lovrenović, examines the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia through Franciscan chronicles and historiography. The stereotype holds that Bosnia fell due to its betrayal by the Bogomil (“Manichean”) population. Such stories arose centuries after the fact and represented the conquest as sudden, violent, and accompanied by demands for total conversion. The early twentieth century saw the introduction of the idea that the different groups of Christians (and Muslims?), rather than excoriating and betraying each other, might engage in dialogue. The war in Bosnia in the 1990s, however, revived old antagonisms, and the 530<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of Bosnia occasioned widespread feelings of national tragedy. The final chapter, by Ovidiu Cristea, steps outside the Balkan and Ottoman context to look at the role of Venice. Although Venetian sources came from outside, their view was disturbed by distance, prejudice, and deliberate Ottoman disinformation. Changes in Venetian priorities, which favored the Terraferma, and in Ottoman priorities, focusing on control of the Black Sea and the Aegean, saved Venice from being overwhelmed by Ottoman strength.

No conclusion is provided to this series of studies, since they are seen as a first step toward conclusions that can only be reached through difficult rethinking and research. Together, however, they raise worthwhile questions and inspire new efforts. It is a stimulating book, one that should be taken seriously by everyone concerned with “the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans.”

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***Transylvania in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century. The Rise of the Congregational System.*** By Tudor Salagean. East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, Vol. 37. Brill: Leiden, 2016. vi, 292 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Maps. \$162.00, hard bound.  
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The legacies of nineteenth-century Transylvanian historiography, namely the national division of the heterogeneous past, bequeathed numerous controversies. Romanian, Transylvanian Saxon, and Hungarian narratives construed the image of early medieval Transylvanian polity and the place of its composite population often in antagonistic terms. A case in point has been the “individual” or “separate” status of the province in the Medieval Hungarian Kingdom between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. Hungarian historians considered regional tendencies as symptoms of the weakness of the Kingdom in the wake of invasion from the pagan southeast. Romanian historiography saw in the same tendencies the promise of Transylvanian autonomy, a stepping stone towards future unification.

There have been signs of rapprochement in more recent historiography. Tudor Salagean's book offers a subtle interpretation of Transylvania's status on the fringes of the Christian world. It employs Hungarian, Romanian, German, and English literature and archival material about roughly fifty years of Transylvanian history during the Mongol invasions of 1241–42 and 1285, and their effects on local politics until the beginnings of Angevine rule.

The book discusses the circumstances in which provincial interests articulated themselves in contradistinction to Hungarian royal centralizing power. Did local nobles participate in making military, fiscal, and administrative decisions in the campaigns and afterwards? How was the Transylvanian military defense, what were its weak spots and how were these remedied? Which were the institutions and strategies that channeled local military and economic interests into politics? According to Salagean, after the first devastating Mongol invasion the rulers of the province sought to increase regional administrative autarchy to increase military self-defense. The evidence is to be found in the restructuring of the counties to integrate those rich in natural resources, the donation of royal fiefs to loyal supporters, and the marriage politics that sought mighty patrons who were all employed by the Arpad princes.

This was the case with Prince Stephen, fighting his father, King Béla IV (1235–70), naming Transylvania a duchy, which meant limited autonomy under princely jurisdiction. The failure to integrate the Saxon military province of Hermannstadt / Sibiu into the ducal system led to an alternative form of provincial governance, “based on the balance of aristocratic parties” (129) under Ladislaus the Cuman (King Ladislaus IV). Salagean considers this “legal community” the basis for the future Transylvanian regional governing body, the noble congregation. The adverted second Mongol invasion in 1285 further strengthened solidarity between the king and the lesser local nobility. This politics endorsed Cumans and Romanians to the detriment of aristocrats and it even came to a breach with the Holy See. The reign of Ladislaus IV ended, however, with his assassination, which put an end to nascent Transylvanian autarky. That the designation of the province changed into “regnum” under the next ruler, Ladislas Kan, should not be taken at face value, argues Salagean. The Transylvanian polity did not metamorphose into an autonomous state, as older Romanian historiography had it, but signified a “community of the privileged” that possessed some geographic and cultural individuality within the Hungarian Kingdom.

The book is an intriguing read, full of adventurous and dramatic turns. The author narrates the consecutive princely policies pursued by the princes and Ladislaus Kan, *voievode* of Transylvania, with great erudition. The reader plunges into medieval Transylvanian politics caught between the Christian and Mongol worlds, and nothing embodies this conflict better than the troubled reign of the half-Cuman, half-Christian King, Ladislas IV. The book describes in vivid details the military ambushes, the papal and European imperial schemes targeting Transylvania and Hungary, and renders impressively the volatile status of contemporary border regions in Christian Europe. What one party builds up is undone by the successors. The historical details assemble into short narratives about alternating patterns of local and royal control that mutually neutralized each other. This factuality itself is a contestation of the thesis of contemporary autonomous Transylvanian statehood, which Salagean rejects.

The impressive rendering of events has the disadvantage that it allows little space for reflection on the central topic of the book, the congregational system. More comparative analysis into the concept of the “duchy,” “regnum,” and the reality of the congregational system in the east-central and southeastern European context could

have also been helpful. These shortcomings notwithstanding, the monograph is a fascinating study about medieval Christian border regions and their political dynamics.

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***Medieval East Central Europe in a Comparative Perspective: From Frontier Zones to Lands in Focus.*** Ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Katalin Szende. London: Routledge, 2016. xiv, 265 pp. Tables. Figures. Illustrations. \$49.95, paper; \$145.00, hard bound.

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As Nora Berend subtly alludes to in her opening chapter to this welcome book, Europe, especially its eastern part—eastern, east central, or now central—today finds itself at a difficult historical juncture. Hence the importance of sustaining the interest in its inclusion into general medieval history and historiography, which was dramatically accelerated by the great breakthrough of 1989. This book is a marker in that project. Edited by two senior colleagues from Central European University, Gerhard Jaritz and Katalin Szende, it consists of fifteen revised conference papers originally presented at CEU in 2014, bracketed by an introduction and a final comment, authored by Jaritz and János Bak, respectively. The chapters are arranged into five parts. Part 1 is conceptual, titled “What is East Central Europe?” Parts 2–5 are thematic. Two chapters concern politics, three each address religion and towns, and four are grouped as “art and literature.”

Each of the seventeen pieces is succinct—an outcome accentuated by the inclusion of detailed reference matter and an excellent bibliography. The decision to squeeze a large amount of matter into a small space is the key to the good aim of the book, and the source of one serious flaw in the attainment of that aim. Each article provides a point of entry into a major subject pertinent to east central Europe. Each operates, or at least begins, at a high level of generality, pointing the reader toward big conceptual issues concerning the subject and its direction. Above all, each is resolutely comparative—within east central Europe, with other outlying regions of Europe, with Europe’s notional cores (the west and Byzantium), plus, occasionally, the globe. The articles are quite uneven, in quality and execution, in their descent from the general into the specific. As a result, some of the parts, and the whole, can be read as work in progress, rather than as complete—within their intended scope, finished—contributions. The effect is enhanced by occasional reference to collective ongoing research projects, of which we are presented here with a tentative moment.

Five authors are distinctly effective in attaining the complex aims of this book. József Laszlovszky presents an excellent, continent-wide picture of one aspect of ecclesiastical space—the norms and practices relating to burial in Cistercian churches—and situates in that picture their regional variations, and, as a case study, the gravesite of one specific Hungarian queen. Beatrix Romhányi interrelates the expansions of the population and of the mendicant network throughout the region, and so nicely complicates the intersection between demography, the Orders, and urbanization—within implications for Europe in general. Michaela Antonín Malaníková offers a textured study of a key aspect of the later medieval urban economy—trading by women—in Moravia, likewise in a broad context of the same phenomenon elsewhere. Julia Verkholtantsev caps her subject—eponymous derivations of the names of large political units (dynasties or kingdoms), made by medieval narrators—with an excellent analysis of conceptions of language and