

## LEVANTINE TRADE ROUTES AND EASTERN EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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It is the Hungarian aspects of the issue that I shall be concentrating on, in the hope that this will cast light on some questions relevant for all of Eastern Europe. The approach seems justified by the fact that for almost two centuries now historians have been debating the issue of whether or not the Levantine trade routes crossed mediaeval Hungary.

### 1

The decline of the Ottoman Empire revived interest in commercial expansion towards the East also in the "Danube Monarchy" of the Habsburgs. Endeavours to participate in the Levantine trade grew especially after the peace of Kutsuk Kainardzi (1774), when the "Eastern Question" came into the limelight of world politics. Earlier projects of this kind were adapted to the specific conditions of the Napoleonic era by a Hungarian economist, *G. Berzeviczy* who presented them as integral to world trade. In a work written in 1808 (and in a number of his later writings) he proposed an overland route for the long-haul trade between Asia and Europe. He gave historical backing for his proposal, too: he claimed that in the Middle Ages, before the circumnavigation of Africa, world trade was carried on mostly overland, and oriental goods reached the West from the Black Sea area via Transylvania and Hungary. Contemporary events seemed to be justifying Berzeviczy's thesis: when Napoleon's Continental System (1806) did, in fact, temporarily compel the trade from the East to find an overland route, the route taken crossed Hungary, too.

At about much the same time, a similar view was being voiced by German historians. Among them there had long been a debate on how Indian spices and other Far Eastern goods had got from the Levant to the south German cities before Venice and Genova had established their Levantine trade hegemony in the 13th century. *J. G. Meusel* (1780) put the trade route through Italy even for this early period; *C. F. Gemeiner* (1800) traced the path of the Eastern wares from Constantinople through Kiev to Germany; *J. Ch. Fischer* (1785), however, declared the trade route to have run from Kiev through Novgorod to the Baltic Sea. Quite different — and a departure from the theories they themselves had formerly subscribed to — was the view advanced by Prof. *A. L. Heeren* of Göttingen in a paper presented to the *Institut de France*, and by his younger colleague, *K. D. Hüllmann* in a paper he submitted for a com-

petition held by the *Societät der Wissenschaften* of Göttingen. They maintained that the main route of Levantine trade from the 8th to the 13th centuries led from Constantinople through Hungary, along, or on the Danube, to the south German cities. Both prize-winning works appeared in 1808. It was Napoleon's plan of establishing an overland route to the East to compete with the British-dominated sea route — a plan that was very much in the air between 1806 and 1808 — that served as the contemporary parallel, and inspired both Heeren and Hüllmann to work out their theory of a mediaeval overland trade-route to the East. (Cf. *F. Bastian*, 1929).

There was another alternative theory — one with quite a different contemporary relevance — which also had its rise among the scholars of Göttingen a bit earlier, namely, that during the 14th and 15th centuries, Levantine trade passed through the "Saxon" (German) towns of Transylvania. This thesis was first formulated by *A. L. Schlözer*, a historian of Europe-wide reknown, in a book written to give historical support to the Transylvanian Saxons' claims of keeping up their self-government, a book which appeared between 1795—97. It was this theory that the German-speaking Hungarian historian, *J. Ch. Engel*, took over and developed between 1807 and 1813.

The thesis of an early mediaeval Danubian route for the Levantine trade and the idea of its Transylvanian Saxon mediation in the Late Middle Ages (the 14th and 15th centuries) were combined, then, by the Hungarian *M. Horváth* in a book submitted for a competition held by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1835, and by *F. Hann*, a Transylvanian Saxon, whose dissertation appeared in 1848. For their authorities, both historians referred mainly to Heeren and Hüllmann for the period stretching to the 13th century, and to Schlözer and Engel for the 14th and 15th centuries. In addition, they quoted *G. Gülich* and *J. Hormayr*, who, however, had also used Hüllmann as their main authority.

Hormayr, Hann and Horváth alike believed that after the imminent dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Asian-European world trade would again be carried on overland, rather than by sea — just as it had in the Middle Ages prior to the fall of Constantinople and the discovery of the Cape-route to India. They wanted to give historical backing to the claims and aspirations, from the German, Transylvanian Saxon and Hungarian sides respectively, to play the greatest role possible in this world trade. Their scholarly argumentation, however, was based on few convincing documentary evidence. Hüllmann referred primarily to the customs tariffs of the late 12th and early 13th centuries of the Lower Austrian town of Stein, which did, in fact, list pepper and other Eastern produces among the goods transported on the Danube. The customs tariffs, however, said nothing of the direction from which these goods entered Stein. For further evidence, Hüllmann referred to the customs tariff of 1260 of the town of Győr in Western Hungary, which "listed pepper among the products going up the Danube". It is only cattle, however, that the document specifies as being taken out of the country (*superius deferunt*) by Germans and Hungarians; the context of the passage referring to pepper (*currus hospitum latinorum*) suggests more that it was being brought in by Italian merchants. We might add that the other references adduced by Hüllmann, Horváth, and later writers — for instance, the fact that Frederick Barbarossa's Crusade went along the

Danube to Belgrade, and that there were Hungarian traders in Constantinople and German ships in Alexandria around 1170, according to Benjamin of Tudela — permit me at best to conclude that Levantine goods reached Hungary from Constantinople now and then. They by no means, however, justify our speaking of an “old supply line from the Levant through the Danube” and of attributing to it a “prominent” role “in world economy” right to the end of the 13th century (a thesis that was to become generally accepted for about a half a century after another of Hüllmann’s works was published in 1826), nor even to the end of the 12th century (as we find done in Vol. II of *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* in the interesting chapter written by *R. S. Lopez*, 1952).

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*W. Heyd’s* great monograph of 1879 brought about, however, a marked turning-point in the historiographic “destiny” of the thesis in question. Most historians now rejected the idea both of a Danubian route and of the Transylvanian mediation. Henceforth there came to prevail the view of Levantine goods having reached mediaeval Hungary and Southern Germany exclusively through Italy or through Dalmatia (*cf. Csánki, Nitzsch, Götz, Inama-Sternegg, Meltzl*: 1880—1892; etc.)

This turn in historiography also had again something to do with factors lying outside scientific research. The hopes that had been entertained concerning the renewed preponderance of an overland trade route given the decline of the Ottoman Empire appeared, in the decades after the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), to have been too far-fetched. When the German author *J. Jastrow* gave expression to this realization (in 1887), he simultaneously declared the Danube route to have been just a byway even in the long-haul trade of the Middle Ages.

Sure enough, several attempts were made in the first decades of the 20th century to “rehabilitate” the Danube route. The aspirations of Germany’s policy-makers of the day — the “Berlin-Baghdad Railway Project”, etc. — found an echo in history writing, too, where we find resuscitated the idea of a Constantinople-Danube route in mediaeval world trade. (*cf. Zimmerer, Suppan, Grothe* etc: 1914—18). However, these views were soon antiquated by subsequent political developments and discredited by the Hungarian historian *S. Domanovszky* (1918) and the German medievalist *F. Bastian* (1929), who convincingly rounded off Heyd’s argumentation. And when, in the 1920s, *H. Pirenne* put forward his famous thesis of Islamic expansion having put an end to sea-borne trade on the Mediterranean between the Orient and the Occident from the 8th to the 11th century, he also alluded to the weakness of the “Danube-thesis”, in obvious agreement with Heyd.

On the other hand, Heyd was the authority referred to by those historians, too, who rejected the idea of a *Transylvanian* mediation. In fact, the German scholar had repudiated — and for good reason — the idea of an early mediaeval Danube route, but he had said nothing at all about the late-mediaeval Transylvania route. Therefore, the historians who took his critique to apply also to the latter claimed there was no reliable documentary evidence to confirm the role of Transylvanian towns in supplying Levantine goods from the Black Sea region. They

referred, rather, to patents of the Hungarian King Louis of Anjou which encouraged the Saxon merchants of the Transylvanian towns of Nagyszében (Hermannstadt, Sibiu) and of Brassó (Kronstadt, Braşov) to make trips to Dalmatia, notably to Zara (Jadra, Zadar), for the following stereotyped reason: “*ideo, ut regnum Hungariae rebus et bonis maritimis locupletetur.*” (1367, 1370) These documents, they argued, proved that Hungary obtained oriental commodities not from the Black Sea region through Transylvania, but from the Adriatic through Dalmatia, and also exported to other Eastern European countries some of the rich store of “maritime goods” coming from Dalmatia. (*Cf. Pleidell, Fekete Nagy*: 1925; etc.)

More close examination, however, does not support this conclusion, not even for the half century following the Treaty of Zara of 1358, when the Dalmatian towns were under the sovereignty not of Venice, but of the Hungarian Crown. The sources (especially those edited by *Fejér, Wenzel, Zimmermann-Werner, Ljubić, Thakčić*) indicate that far from there already existing a Zara-line whence Hungary got her “plenitude of maritime goods”, Louis of Anjou was merely urging the opening up of a theretofore unfrequented trade route when he tried to encourage Transylvanian and Hungarian merchants — and even his allies against Venice, the Genoese — to get used to trips to Zara (*quod iidem in ipsa via Jadrensi procedere assuescant*). Moreover, it had always been a chief element of Venice’s Dalmatian policy to ensure that Levantine goods “*non possint deferri Jadram vel districtum aliunde quam de Venetiis*”, and to make sure of this, Venice used her maritime power to put stringent regulations into effect even after 1358. King Louis’ attempts to initiate Hungarian-Dalmatian trade relations independently of Venice, defying Venice, was a far-sighted, but short-lived experiment, one that lost its relevance even before the Dalmatian coast went back under Venetian sovereignty. The charters of King Louis favouring the Zara trade of Transylvanian Saxon burghers were still renewed by King Sigismund of Luxemburg in 1395 and 1406 for the last time, and never again.

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Mediaeval Hungary did get a great many of her Levantine goods via the Adriatic, indeed, but these came not from Dalmatia, but overwhelmingly from *Venice*. Two “direct” routes led from there to Hungary: the Senj-Zagreb, and the Gorizia-Ljubljana-Ptuj lines, but the spices imported from Venice usually reached the country less directly, through the famous *Venezianerstrasse*: Tarvisio — Judenburg — Semmering — Vienna. From Vienna, most of the goods went to Western Hungary’s trade center and chief customs station: Pozsony (Pressburg, Bratislava); it was from there that they went on to the capital of Hungary, Buda. Characteristically enough, at the same time as he had issued his patents encouraging trade with Dalmatia, Louis of Anjou gave decrees forbidding the Hungarian toll collectors on the Danube to take from the Viennese merchants “*de eorum rebus et mercibus diversa munera, piper scilicet*” (1366, 1380—81). Between Vienna and Buda, then, pepper was shipped not upstream, as Hüllmann had thought, but downstream. The sources disprove Hüllmann also on the point that the pepper bought in 1438 in Buda by some Breslau (Wrocław) traders “came without a doubt from

Constantinople". The customs tariffs of Buda from the year 1436 makes it probable that a part of the pepper came there from Venice; while the "thirtieth book" (customs book) of Pozsony for the fiscal year 1457—58 indicates that a lot of the merchants of Buda bought their pepper in Pozsony.

The Pozsony customs book gives us information also on the quantity of the spices imported. For the 1457—58 fiscal year — when Western-Hungary's foreign trade was booming — we find the following as the chief item of the spices imported through Pozsony: pepper, in a volume of  $166 \frac{2}{3}$  centners, which was valued at roughly 5 000 florins. The centner in question was probably equal to 58.8 kg; thus, the pepper that entered Hungary along her chief trade route of "Adriatic" pepper in the above-mentioned year came to 98 metric quintals in all. (*F. Kováts*: 1903).

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Let us now turn from the *Adriatic* to look at the *Black Sea*. We ought to do so all the more as — the supporters of the "Dalmatian-thesis" notwithstanding — there is no doubt at all of there having been a Transylvanian supply route of oriental goods, and an important one at that. (For the documents, see mainly the sources edited by *Fejér, Teleki, Hurmuzaki, Bogdan, Gündisch, Mátyusz*; for a recent study, see *R. Manolescu*.)

It was in 1358 that Louis of Anjou, and in 1368 that Vladislav, Voivod of Wallachia (Țara Românească) gave the burghers of Brassó (Kronstadt, Braşov) special privileges to carry on the "Transalpine" (i.e. Transcarpathian) trade. Patents issued by Stibor, Voivod of Transylvania, in 1412, and by Mircea cel Bătrîn, Prince of Wallachia, in 1413 (the latter are extant in Slavo-Român and Latin) indicate that the Transylvanian traders exported mainly broadcloth originating from Flanders, Italy, Cologne, and Silesia, just as ironware; and imported, besides Wallachian agricultural products such as fish, cattle, hides, wax and honey, goods that had come from farther afield: pepper, saffron, ginger, cloves, goat's wool, camelhair, cotton, and "other goods which come from the sea", and which "*per Sarracenos asportantur*" to the sea-side. The patent issued in 1368 obliged them to pay the *tributum* in Cimpulung on all goods sold and bought within Wallachia; however, if they crossed Wallachia on their way to another country, they also had to pay the *tricesima* — one "thirtieth" if they went via Brăila and two "thirtieths" if they went some other way: one on their way out in Cimpulung, and the other on their way back at the Danube. The regulations for 1412—13 obliged the Transylvanian traders to pay taxes at Rucăr (near Cimpulung), at Dimbovița, Tîrgoviște, Tîrgușor and at Brăila within Wallachia itself; if they went beyond Wallachia, they had to pay the thirtieth tax on crossing the Danube, and "on their way back from the sea-side or the areas across the Danube" (*venientes de marinis partibus seu trans Danubium*). Later Wallachian charters, too (Radul Praznaglava: 1421—22; Dan II: 1424, 1431; Vlad Dracul: 1437, 1444; etc.) also stipulated that the Transylvanian Saxon merchants using the "Brassó route to Brăila", and then going "up to the sea", "to the great sea", had to pay the thirtieth tax on "pepper, saffron, cotton, camelhair, goat's wool, and other goods which came from the sea". Once they had got beyond Brăila, their nearest access to the Black Sea was Chilia which

lay in the Danube delta (near what had formerly been Licostomo). Here, Genoese colonists already were to be found from the 1360s on, and soon had lively contacts with their other Pontic settlements, too: with Moncastro (Maurocastro, Cetatea Albă, Akkerman, Belgorod Dniestrovski), a settlement established at about that time at the mouth of the Dniester, and primarily with that great emporium of Levantine trade, Caffa (Theodosia, Feodosia), the most important Genoese colony on the Black Sea, and one which had stood on the Crimean Peninsula for around a century. (Cf. *Heyd, Iorga, Brătianu*). The spices and other "maritime goods" which the Transylvanian traders bought in Wallachia and Moldavia must have got there mainly through this supply route. It was this route "*a regione Cathan (=Cathay) in Caffam et ad portum Kylliae et demum ab illinc versus partes istas (=Hungariam)*" — that Sigismund of Luxemburg had in mind when he allied with the Genoese to try to break Venetian hegemony over Levantine trade, not only as Louis of Anjou had tried to do, in the Adriatic area, but primarily through the Black Sea region (1412, 1418). And it was along this route that Vladislav II, Voivod of Wallachia, tried to have arms brought from Brassó "*ad curiam nostram in Tergovistia, ab hinc ad Braillam, ab hinc vero usque Kyllie*" (1453—54).

We must, however, also note that a lot of Wallachian charters, as mentioned above, stipulate that if the traders from Brassó continued their journey not through Brăila but some other way and notably if they "crossed the Danube with their wares at Dirstor or Giurgiu or Nikopol" they were obliged to pay two thirtieths in tax. This indicates that Transylvanian Saxon merchants carried on trade also in the area south of the Danube. Some of their "maritime goods" might well have come from here, among others from Calliacra (on the Black Sea coast, north of Odessus = Varna) a place mentioned in Sigismund's patent of 1402, in such a context, and which also had connections with the other Pontic settlements of the Genoese. Finally, we must also take into consideration the direct routes leading from the Black Sea coast through Moldavia to Transylvania. It was in March of 1475, a few months before Caffa was taken by the Turks, that the Genoese government demanded that the Transylvanian town of Beszterce (Nösen, Bistrița) pay compensation to a merchant from Caffa, who "*servas quatuordecim ad usum nostrorum civium conducebat*", and was robbed in the mountains around Beszterce on his way to Genoa. (*Iorga; cf. Verlinden*).

There is evidence for the continuance of the spice supply from Wallachia to Transylvania in the second half of the 15th century, too, that is after the fall not only of Constantinople, but even of Caffa, of Chilia, and of Cetatea Albă (in 1484). All this tends to support the view that the expansion of the Ottoman Turks did not block the traditional Levantine trade routes. (Cf. *Lybyer, Musso, Inaléik*). And the traders of Wallachia played an ever greater role in mediating the spice imports that were coming through, towards Transylvania. While earlier documents mentioned practically only merchants from Brassó journeying to Wallachia, the charters issued from the middle of the century on refer with increasing frequency to Wallachian traders making the trip to Transylvania. This latter group soon grew to be competition for the Transylvanian Saxon merchants, and

received considerable support from the Wallachian princes. Vlad Țepeș passed a number of economic regulations ("skala", "borderland fairs": about 1458) as well as other measures to restrict the trade activities of the Brassó merchants in Wallachia. Radul cel Frumos wanted to make the permission for them to trade there on condition that the Wallachians being able similarly "to go freely anywhere in the country of the royal lord (=the King of Hungary) even as far as Várad (Oradea)" (1470). (We find similar stipulations by Basarab Laiotă, 1474: *Bogdan*, or by Neagoe Basarab, 1517: *Manolescu*). The Brassó merchants endeavoured to retain their active role in the trade beyond the Carpathians; the Wallachians, in their turn, were striving to take this into their own hands, and even to make their way into the Transylvanian market.

The situation that had developed by the turn of the century is well indicated by the Brassó customs book ("twentieth diary") of 1503. We find that traders from Transylvania and from the Romanian Principalities were taking part in the export trade going from Brassó to Wallachia in about equal proportions; the Saxon traders still carried on most of the import trade in agricultural products going from Wallachia to Transylvania, but they had already been compelled to give up the bulk of the most valuable import branch, the spice trade. Only one group of Brassó wholesale traders, especially the *societas magna*, continued to be active in this field: their main line was the export of broadcloth and knives, and the import of spices. The latter, however, accounted for but 14.1% of all the spicery imported to Brassó; 82.1% was carried on by Wallachians, the rest by Moldavians. On the other hand, the Wallachians were still unable to corner any of the Transylvanian market, and continued to be debarred from themselves trading their goods beyond Brassó.

As a matter of fact, the sources we have available for the late 15th and the early 16th centuries enable us to trace the route taken by the spice traders beyond this point, too. The documents of the toll litigations of Nagyvárad (Oradea), going on from the 1470s to the early 1490s, as well as the register of the toll stations of County Bihar, made in 1520 for the purpose of putting an end to abuses that "were of long standing", both indicate that beyond the border towns of Southern Transylvania, it was Saxon traders who conveyed the valuable shipments of spices to the interior of Transylvania and Hungary: through Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca) or Arad, mainly to the famous fairs of Nagyvárad. Here, and partly at Debrecen, the goods again changed hands, to continue their way farther north to Kassa (Kaschau, Košice) — as it emerges from the documents of 1502—3 of the *Handelsgesellschaft* of Kassa. This society of Kassa traders — somewhat similarly to the *societas magna* of Brassó — bought broad-cloth in Cracow (sometimes exporting in return a little wine), selling most of it in Nagyvárad and in Debrecen to merchants from Brassó and other Transylvanian towns, from whom they bought pepper in return. We find the names of a number of the Brassó burghers doing business in Nagyvárad and Debrecen — merchants who at times paid the price of the broadcloth they bought from the Kassa traders in pepper — among those of the pepper importers listed by name in the Brassó customs book for 1503.

All this indicates that the spices going from the Black Sea region to the southern border towns of Transylvania largely continued their journey to the important town east of the river Tisza: to Nagyvárad (Oradea),

and from thence to the centre of Upper Hungary (Eastern Slovakia): Kassa (Košice). Wallachian merchants had no part in the trade going on at this stage of the journey: the valuable spices were conveyed as far as Nagyvárad mostly by Transylvanian traders, and from then on, by merchants from Kassa.

The route leading from the Black Sea region through Wallachia into Transylvania and Hungary may be paralleled to the route leading from the Black Sea coast through Moldavia into Poland. (Cf. *Kutrzeba*, *Panaiteescu*, *Matowist*). Hungary, like Poland, had an overland trade route, too, leading to the Levant in the late Middle Ages; she got her spice imports not only from the western, but also from the eastern direction.

## 6

But how much of the spice imports was negotiated from each of these directions? In the case of Hungary, we can give some approximate answers to this question.

As mentioned above, the customs book of Pozsony (Pressburg, Bratislava) for the 1457—58 fiscal year gives us an idea of the volume of spices that entered the country at this chief customs station of imports from the West. (98 metric quintals of pepper). The customs books ("twentieth diaries") of Nagyszeben (Hermannstadt, Sibiu) for 1500, and of Brassó (Kronstadt, Braşov) for 1503 provide the basis on which we can calculate the volume of spices that entered the country at the main eastern customs stations.

The statistical analysis of the entries of the latter shows that in 1500,  $105\frac{3}{4}$  *kanthners* of pepper were imported through Nagyszeben, at a customs value of  $4120\frac{1}{2}$  florins. This quantity, however, seems insignificant next to the import coming through Brassó, which reached a total of  $719\frac{1}{4}$  *kanthners* in 1503, at a customs value of  $32084\frac{4}{5}$  florins. In view of the fact that neither the quantity nor the ratio of the customs duties collected in Nagyszeben and in Brassó changed much during the years in question, we are entitled to collate the two data. The quantity of pepper coming into Transylvania from Wallachia through these two customs stations at the very beginning of the 16th century came, then to 825 *kanthners* altogether, at a customs value of more than 36200 forints. Since the *kanthner* in use here was probably the equivalent of 56.2—56.7 kg, the annual pepper import of Brassó and Nagyszeben together at the very beginning of the 16th century came to about 463—468 metric quintals. Accordingly, the volume of pepper imported from the direction of the Black Sea — more precisely, the annual quantity that entered Transylvania through the major eastern customs stations at the turn of the 16th century — was practically five times as much as the yearly volume imported from the direction of the Adriatic — more precisely, five times as much as came into Hungary in the mid-15th century at the chief western customs station Pozsony. In this sense, then there was "a lot" of spices coming from the Black Sea region, and the part it played in supplying the Transylvanian and Hungarian market was significant indeed.

But how did this spice trade compare to that carried on through the chief route of Levantine trade? the maritime spice imports of Venice? *F. C. Lane, F. Braudel* and *E. Ashtor* estimate that at the turn of the 16th century — before the Portuguese opened the direct sea route to India more precisely, before this had a perceptible effect on international spice trade — the Venetian galleys brought home 1,150,000 lbs English, that is 5125.25 metric quintals of pepper per year from Alexandria, their main supply port in the Levant. The South-Transylvanian import was, thus, 8.9–9% of the import coming into Venice from Alexandria. If, besides Alexandria, the other important spice supply mart, Beyrouth is also included the authors above mentioned find the average annual Venetian pepper import at the time in question to come to between 1,400,000 and 1,750,000 lbs English, that is a volume of between 6349 and 7936 metric quintals. With this as the basis of comparison for the overland trade route we have been talking about, we get a ratio of only between 5.84 and 7.38%. In this sense, then, — at a time when the city of St. Mark *already* and *as yet* practically monopolized the trade in Eastern spices going to Western and West Central Europe — the pepper coming through Brassó and Nagyszében was but a “small” quantity. More precisely, it was a quantity that well reflected the place and role of the Transylvanian route in the entire system of Levantine trade routes of the late mediaeval Europe.

For a more detailed discussion of the above issue by the present author, see :

*La route du poivre vers la Hongrie médiévale.* In : *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel*, Toulouse, 1973, II, pp. 449–458. ; *La politica commerciale di Luigi d'Angio e il traffico delle "mercanzie marittime" dopo la pace di Zara.* In : *Rapporti veneto-ungheresi all'epoca del Rinascimento*, Budapest, 1975, pp. 105–119. ; *Le commerce du Levant et la Hongrie au Moyen Age*, Annales ESC, 1976, no. 6, pp. 1176–1194. ; *Zur Geschichte des levantinischen Pfefferhandels um 1500.* In : *Wirtschaftskräfte und Wirtschaftswege, Festschrift für Hermann Kellenbenz*, Nürnberg, 1978, I, pp. 521–529. ; *Levantine Trade and Hungary in the 16th–17th Centuries.* In : *Venezia e Ungheria nel contesto del barocco europeo*, Firenze, 1979, pp. 72–84.

## JOHANNES DLUGOSZ (1415–1480) ALS GESCHICHTSSCHREIBER POLENS UND DER LÄNDER VOM ÖSTLICHEN MITTELEUROPA

MARIAN BISKUP

(Pologne)

### I

In der polnischen Geschichtsschreibung des späten Mittelalters spielt eine wichtige Rolle das große, chronikalische Werk von Johannes Dlugosz (Johannes Longinus), das in der handschriftlichen Fassung „*Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae* (abgekürzt „*Annales Poloniae*“) betitelt wurde und welches früher auch „*Historiae Polonicae libri XII*“ genannt wurde. Das Werk umfaßt zwar die Geschichte des polnischen Volkes bis 1480, doch im Kontext der Weltgeschichte dargestellt, besonders aber der Geschichte des östlichen Mitteleuropas<sup>1</sup>. Von der Bedeutung des Werkes des Johannes Dlugosz zeugt die vielsprachige, oft polemische Literatur, die von der Mitte des 19. Jhs. entstanden ist, wie auch die kritischen und auch polemischen Kommentare zu dem ganzen Text<sup>2</sup>. Der Platz des Werkes von Dlugosz in der Geschichtsschreibung vom östlichen Mitteleuropa ist aber bis jetzt nicht speziell untersucht worden. Auch das Werk selbst ist nicht immer genügend verstanden und anerkannt worden.

Der im Jagiellonen-Polen im Jahre 1415 in Brzeznicza (südlich von Krakau) als Sohn einer kinderreichen Adelsfamilie geborene Johannes Dlugosz (genannt der Ältere) wurde dem geistlichen Stand vorbestimmt und studierte in der Zeit von 1428 bis 1431 an der berühmten Krakauer Universität<sup>3</sup>. Das Studium der artes liberales, mit scholastischer Methode belastet, hatte Dlugosz nur teilweise absolviert. Er kam aber in dieser Zeit in Kontakt mit den intellektuellen Kreisen von Krakau, in denen eine gewisse Rolle auch die Interessen für Geschichte spielten, betrieben in Form gebildeter Heuristik, die ihren Ausdruck vor allem im Sammeln und Kommentieren der kronikalischen Quellen fanden. Weitere wichtige

<sup>1</sup> *Joannis Dlugosii seu Longini canonici Cracoviensis Historiae Polonicae libri XII*, ed. Al. Przedziecki, Cracoviae 1873–1878 [Opera Omnia, Bd. X–XIV]; *Ioannis Dlugosii Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, Bd. I–V [Liber primus-nonus], Varsaviae 1964–1978 [Edition noch nicht beendet, umfaßt die Zeit bis 1370].

<sup>2</sup> A. Semkowicz, *Krytyczny rozbiór Dziejów polskich Jana Dlugosza* [Eine kritische Analyse der Geschichte Polens von Johann Dlugosz (bis 1384)], Kraków 1887; *Rozbiór krytyczny Annalium Poloniae Jana Dlugosza z lat 1385–1480* [Eine kritische Analyse der Annales Poloniae von Johann Dlugosz von den Jahren 1385–1480], Bd. 1–2, unter Leitung von Jan Dąbrowski, Wrocław-Warszawa–Kraków 1961–1965; vgl. auch *Lata wojny trzynastoletniej w „Rocznikach czyli Kronikach” inaczej „Historii polskiej Jana Dlugosza” [1454–1466]* [Die Zeit des dreizehnjährigen Krieges in den „Jahrbüchern oder Chroniken“ anders in der „Geschichte Polens von Johannes Dlugosz“]. Kritisches Kommentar, bearb. von S. M. Kuczyński und anderen, Łódź, 1964–1965.

<sup>3</sup> Die wichtigsten Angaben enthalten die früheren Arbeiten von H. Zeissberg, *Die polnische Geschichtsschreibung des Mittelalters*, Leipzig 1873, S. 197 f.; M. Bobrzyński, S. Smolka,