

Marina Dmitrieva, Karen Lambrecht, eds.. *Krakau, Prag und Wien: Funktionen von Metropolen im frühmodernen Staat*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000. 432 pp. DM 123.21, cloth, ISBN 978-3-515-07792-7.



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The Modest Early Modern Metropolis in East Central Europe: No Motor of Modernization

Hosted by the *Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas* (GWZO), an interdisciplinary research group headed by the historian Winfried Eberhard, over twenty scholars with academic affiliations in Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, and the United Kingdom assembled for a conference in a renovated factory building on the outskirts of Leipzig in late February, 1999. The conference was the impetus for almost all of the 22 articles assembled in this volume. (One of the articles, the contribution by the economic historian Jan Marian Malecki, was not a paper delivered at the conference.) The GWZO is the present-day successor to the earlier *Forschungsschwerpunkt* of the same name which was housed in Berlin from 1992-95. Over the course of the 1990's, the GWZO has sponsored comparative early modern urban research as part of an ongoing *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* project titled "Metropolen und Zentren. Ihre Entwicklung als Faktoren und Orte staatlicher Repräsentation sowie kultureller und

gesellschaftlicher Integration in Ostmitteleuropa (15./16. Jahrhundert)." [1]

Even though Vienna is mentioned in the title of the volume, the analysis of that city has clearly not been as much the topic of the research project as the analysis of the other two cities in the title: Cracow and Prague. For scholars interested in the lands ruled by the Habsburgs in the early modern period, some analysis of developments in Graz and Breslau is also to be found in this book. An earlier description of the project in the GWZO report of 1996 explained that the project's method consisted of a comparative analysis of two or three cities at a time, with Prague, Cracow, Gdansk, Buda and Vienna standing in the foreground and comparisons drawn with other cities such as Breslau, Olmuetz, Pressburg, Graz, and Koenigsberg. (p. 128) This 2000 volume also includes some discussion of Posen and Warsaw.

The book is divided into a number of rather general sections: "Metropole und Monarchie," "Residenzstadt und Wirtschaft," "Gesellschaftliche Pluralität," "Kommunikation und Repräsentation," and "Kulturtransfer." While many of the ar-

ticles indeed draw comparisons between the cities being analyzed, a substantial number of others are more limited and traditional in their approach, the authors choosing instead the more well-travelled path of local history. Approximately one half of the book's chapters concentrate on a single city, and some well-known themes resurface, particularly those associated with Prague as an important center of artistic production around 1600. The length of the chapters varies substantially, as does their reliance upon archival or other original sources. One general theme discussed in the conclusion is these metropolitan centers' relationships with the oft-disputed historiographic concept of "modernization." The editors prefer to underline these cities' roles as sites of communication and cultural transfer at the expense of their roles as motors of the modern economic or political systems. This emphasis is similarly reflected in many of the volume's chapters.

The volume's first contribution, by the German archivist Kurt Andermann, sketches the sacral functions of the residence cities of Cracow, Prague, and Vienna. Reviewing the secondary literature on the topic, Andermann underlines the similarities between the first two cities and their differences from Vienna. Both Cracow and Prague, he reminds his readers, began around castles and were the sites of episcopal rule for hundreds of years before Vienna became the seat of a bishop. The three cities' positions as burial sites for important rulers also served to illustrate the close ties between religious conceptions of authority and attitudes toward the dead. (In this regard, Andermann makes a series of comparisons with other European cities such as London, Paris, and Speyer.) The chapter performs the useful function of underlining that ideas concerning the sacred need to be incorporated into comparative urban analysis. (In fact, the concept "modernity," defined in secular terms, can be seen as limiting and distracting from this important aspect of late medieval and early modern history.)

The Austrian historian Arno Strohmeyer, a GWZO researcher, dedicated his article exclusively to the Habsburg hereditary lands and a comparison of the cities of Graz and Vienna. Strohmeyer chose to relate three institutions in each of the cities to the general historiographic concepts of confessionalization and state building, using a review of the recent literature to reveal how similar in many ways the institutional and political developments were in Graz and Vienna in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The three institutions chosen for comparison were the Habsburgs' court, the universities, and the bishopric (in Vienna) or nunciature (in Graz). In his article, Strohmeyer characterizes this triad as typical for east central European metropolitan centers. In her contribution, Karen Lambrecht of the GWZO also chooses to study the universities, this time in Cracow, Prague, and Vienna. She sees the Vienna university as not well anchored in the city or its region, and ties the universities to the general process of state building and information transfer between ecclesiastical, court, and civic institutions.

Andrea Langer of the GWZO concentrated more on the activities (particularly in the artistic realms) of the Polish queens Bona Sforza and Anna Jagiellonka, and to a lesser extent Elizabeth of Habsburg, the widow of Casimir IV. The complex relationships between the public or semi-public activities of these queens and their residences, Langer argues, helped constitute political and dynastic authority in sixteenth-century Poland-Lithuania. Their choice of residence, for example, deserves analysis and attention. (Their burial places deserve attention as well, as discussed above in connection with Andermann's contribution. For example, Queen Elizabeth of Habsburg, King Sigismund August's first wife, who died in 1545, was buried in Vilnius, reflecting the importance of that residence city to the Polish rulers of the mid-sixteenth century. As Jan Malecki points out in his later article, Sigismund Au-

gust's third wife, Katharina of Habsburg, on the other hand, lived in Cracow.)

Other contributions in this volume also point to the importance of the various public and semi-public court festivals and ceremonies which were held in Vienna, Prague, and Cracow. Zbigniew Dalweski's short piece (the volume's only chapter in English), for example, concentrates on royal ceremonies such as coronations in late medieval Cracow. Dalweski, of the Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, emphasizes the dynamic nature of these ceremonies, which change and reflect the changes in the political and dynastic structures of Poland in the period. Lars Olof Larsson of the University of Kiel provides a rather brief overview of court spectacles in Vienna under the archduke and later emperor Maximilian (II) and the contrasting rarity of such spectacles in Prague under his successor and son, Rudolf II. On the other hand, Rudolf institutionalized much of the artistic production related to the court in a much more elaborate way than his father. Larsson also contrasts the role of the famous Vladislav Hall in the Prague Castle, the site of contact between representatives of the court, the city, the royal and imperial administrations, and artists, with the lack of such a space in Vienna and its Hofburg.

Related issues are addressed in Beket Bukovinska's article on the relations between Prague artists at the court of Rudolf II and the city of Prague. (Bukovinska is at the Art History Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences.) On a broader scale, Juergen Zimmer of the art library of the *Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz* in Berlin discusses the general exchange of artistic styles related to the court of Rudolf II at Prague. While the direction of this exchange was normally to Prague and not in the other direction, Zimmer does point to some examples of Prague art followed or copied elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire. Other issues of stylistic exchange and modeling are to be found in the articles by Moni-

ka Brunner of the GWZO with her discussion of architectural facades in Rudolfine Prague and Matthias Mueller of the University of Greifswald's intriguing article about the possible reception in places such as Aschaffenburg and Dresden of architectural features drawn from Vienna's Hofburg.

Of course, any discussion of urban history in the early modern period must include economic issues, even in this post-socialist world, and two of the volume's contributions are grouped together under the rubric "Residenzstadt und Wirtschaft." Georg Michels of the GWZO provides a comparison of trade and artisanal production in Cracow and Vienna and Jan Malecki, an emeritus professor from the Cracow economics university, provides a brief sketch of the economic influence of the court in sixteenth-century Cracow. Michels' comparison shows that Vienna's increased economic role came later than Cracow's: while the latter played a role much more similar to south German cities such as Augsburg and Nuremberg, due partly to local natural resources, the former only achieved metropolitan economic status after 1683. Vienna, Michels explains, was tied more to trade than production in the earlier period, and suffered from repeated and serious internal conflicts. Michels does a good job of underlining the roles of the princes resident in the two cities in establishing the juridical mechanisms necessary for their economic development. Again, the residence status of these east central European cities is seen as central to their historical experiences.

Heidemarie Peterson of the GWZO discusses the Jewish community of Cracow's 1595 community regulations (*Taqanot Qraqa*) in her article. She analyzes this normative source to argue that the Jewish residents of the Cracow suburb of Kazimierz saw themselves as part of the Cracow community, but a part whose goals included coexistence with the Christians of the city, not integration.

Karin Friedrich of the University of London places the Cracow burghers between civic patriotism and the "national" pluralism of the city's population. (She prefers to avoid the use of the modern term "ethnic" in her analysis). In Friedrich's study of the sixteenth-century city population, Friedrich sees Cracow as an attractive economic center which housed a diverse population, a population whose conflicts more often broke out along religious than "ethnic" lines. Marriage was the key step on the road to integration for all members of the various Christian social strata.

Cracow, Friedrich explains, saw continued immigration from the Holy Roman Empire well into the sixteenth century, from areas such as the upper Rhineland, Switzerland, Alsace, the Palatinate, and (especially) Silesia. Students of early modern central European cities will not be surprised that one could also find in Cracow a very influential Italian community, a group of people in the city who had particular concentration in long distance trade.

Another subset of these cities' populations, besides the clerics, princes and princesses, and burghers, was the sizable noble population who resided within the cities' walls. The GWZO's Leszek Belzyt's contribution focuses on this group in Prague and Cracow around 1600. He relates that an estimated ten percent of each city's population was of noble status in this period. His study, which is based on archival research in the Prague City Archive and published evidence from Cracow, concludes that, at least among the court nobility, Prague was more diverse, with nobles from the Bohemian lands and a variety of places across Europe, particularly the German-speaking parts of the Holy Roman Empire. Dominating the scene in Cracow was the Polish nobility. In both cities, influential Italian nobles were to be found. Prague was a residence for nobles from Spain, France and the Netherlands as well; Cracow was a residence for small numbers of nobles from places such as Scotland, Hungary, Sweden, and France.

Jaroslava Hausenblasova similarly explores the composition of the noble urban population around 1600. From the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Hausenblasova concentrates on Prague and relates her contribution to the massive recent literature related to the court of the emperor Rudolf II. As the imperial residence during the last decades of this emperor's reign, Prague had a particular attraction to large numbers of nobles. Hausenblasova chooses to discuss the Bohemian nobility and its changing role in the city as well as the role of the more cosmopolitan imperial court nobility. Using, among other sources, the recently published edition of the diary of the Bohemian noble Adam von Waldstein, the younger, from 1602-1633, Hausenblasova underlines the increasing international contacts available to the Bohemian nobility, contacts which helped remove them from the provincial isolation which had characterized their positions previously (particularly before the period of the governorship of the Habsburg archduke Ferdinand in the 1540's through 1560's).

A useful contribution of Hausenblasova's chapter is her discussion of the important role of the courtiers and retinues of various foreign embassies, particularly those of Spain and the papacy, in the city. Additionally, representatives of and visitors from a wide variety of European lands made appearances in Prague during these decades. These included people from places such as Venice, Modena, Bavaria, England, France, Moscow, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire.

Because of the variety and number of offerings in this volume, it is impossible to discuss them all in the space of this review. Not surprisingly, given the mandated interest of the GWZO as the sponsoring institution, the volume leans heavily in the direction of art historical and (broadly defined) cultural history, and relatively lightly in the direction of conflicts, poverty, crime, plague, and other themes often associated with urban social history. A reading of this volume's contents

will provide a complex set of images of various selected aspects of urban life in some of the cities of east central Europe from about the late fourteenth through the mid-seventeenth centuries. It is refreshing to see that a structuralizing, generalizing approach which seeks to relate the varied histories of these cities and their diverse populations to broad themes such as "state building," "the rise of capitalism," or others, has to a large extent been avoided. Early Modern cities such as Vienna, Prague, and Cracow were much more than (simply) motors of modernization.

Note:

[1]. For further volumes of articles dealing with various aspects of the histories of east central European cities resulting from some type of sponsorship associated with this project, see Eva-maria Engel, Karen Lambrecht and Hanna Nogosseck, eds., *Metropolen im Wandel. Zentralitaet in Ostmitteleuropa an der Wende vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit* (Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur des oestlichen Mitteleuropa 3, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1995) and the section titled "Herrschaftszentren und fruehe Metropolen: Politische Funktion, ethnische und gesellschaftliche Integration, kulturelle Ausstrahlung" in *Berichte und Beitraege des Geisteswissenschaftlichen Zentrums Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas* 4 (1999). The editors of the volume under review, Marina Dmitrieva and Karen Lambrecht, two long-time members of the research project, also have published related articles in Frank Hadler, editor, *Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas in vergleichender Absicht* (Comparativ 8.5, Leipzig: Leipziger Universitaets-Verlag, 1998): See, for example, Lambrecht's contribution, "Zentrum und Kommunikation - Ostmitteleuropaeische Metropolen im Vergleich (ca. 1450-1550)."

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