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**[REVIEW]:** TOMÁŠ HOMOL'A, *NA VZOSTUPE MOCI. ZAHRANIČNÁ POLITIKA MATEJAJA KORVINA V STREDOEURÓPSKOM PRIESTORE V ROKOCH 1458–1471*, HISTORICKÝ ÚSTAV SLOVENSKEJ AKADEMIE VIED, VEDA, VYDAVATELSTVO SLOVENSKEJ AKADEMIE VIED, BRATISLAVA 2019, PP. 192.

The figure of Matthias Corvinus, the 'national' monarch of Hungary (1458–1490) and an exceptional Central European politician of the late medieval period, has attracted the attention of contemporary scholars for some time. An attempt to reexamine his foreign policy in the initial stages of his reign was made by the Slovak medievalist Tomáš Homol'a in a monograph entitled *On the Rise of the Power: Foreign Policy of Matthias Corvinus in the Central European region in 1458–1471*.

The work under review includes "Introduction" (pp. 7–13), Chapter 1 ("The Sources and Literature on Matthias Corvinus," pp. 13–30), Chapter 2 ("First Years of Reign," pp. 31–55), Chapter 3 ("New Objectives of Hungarian Foreign Policy," pp. 56–71), Chapter 4 ("The Kingdom of Bohemia as a Crusade's Destination," pp. 72–82), Chapter 5 ("The Question of the Emperor's Title," pp. 83–90), Chapter 6 ("The War in the Kingdom of Bohemia," pp. 91–115), Chapter 7 ("A Change of Course," pp. 116–131), Chapter 8 ("Looking for Allies," pp. 116–131) and Chapter 9 ("The Diplomacy in the Times of Matthias Corvinus," pp. 132–156). The book ends with a brief concluding section (pp. 157–162), a summary in English (pp. 163–166), two maps (p. 167), genealogical charts of the House of Hunyadi, House of Poděbrad, House of Habsburg, House of Jagiellons, House of Wettin and House of Hohenzollern (pp. 168–174), a list of abbreviations (p. 175), a list of sources

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and literature (pp. 176–187), and an index of last names and place names (pp. 188–192). Thus, the monograph is generally a chronological account with only one element – the chapter on diplomacy in the late Middle Ages – being a discussion about a specific issue.

In the “Introduction,” T. Homol’a presents the aim of his work: “a review of the existing knowledge on the Central European policy of the King of Hungary Matthias Corvinus” in the early period of his reign (1458–1471) (p. 8). Pursuing this policy created a complex web of connections between the Hungarian ruler and the main dynasties of the region: the Houses of Poděbrad, Habsburgs, Jagiellons, Wettins and Hohenzollerns, with the Kingdom of Bohemia as the most important location of their confrontations. It is necessary to stress that the definition of the region used by the author (following the terminology of Hungarian scholar J. Szűcs), according to which the countries of the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Kingdom of Hungary, the Kingdom of Poland and the Holy Roman Empire (p. 8) were parts of it, does not seem appropriate considering the topic of the research. Casimir Jagiellon, one of the crucial partners and rivals of Matthias Corvinus at the time of his reign, was also a ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The exclusion of a significant portion of that state from the analysis of a Hungarian king’s policy seems to be an arbitrary choice as the objectives of Polish and Lithuanian foreign policy during the period under discussion were in line with each other as an outcome of the general aims of the Jagiellon dynasty, which ruled both states.<sup>1</sup> From a methodological standpoint, the exclusion of Moldova from Central Europe, which was another point of contention for Matthias and Casimir, seems to be unfounded as well. This perception of Central Europe (without Teutonic Prussia, too) does not seem adequate. Arguably, T. Homol’a suggests that the event marking the end of his discussion is the death of the Utraquist Bohemian ruler, George of Poděbrad (p. 8), while in fact he argues that these events are actually the election of Vladislaus Jagiellon as King of Bohemia in May 1471 (pp. 128, 130) and the death of Pope Paul II in

<sup>1</sup> For example, the cost of the campaign that resulted in Vladislaus II of Hungary being crowned as the King of Bohemia in August 1471 was partially covered by the Lithuanian treasury. See: *Rachunki królewskie z lat 1471–1472 i 1476–1478*, ed. Stanisław Gawęda, Zbigniew Perzanowski and Anna Strzelecka (Wrocław–Kraków: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich and Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1960), 11, 14.

July of the same year (pp. 8, 130). At the same time, he ignores events that seem to be of equal importance: the coronation of Vladislaus Jagiellon in Prague (August 1471) and his brother's Casimir's campaign for the Hungarian crown in the autumn of 1471, which lasted until the beginning of 1472. We shall return to this issue later. Including a short overview of official documents and epistolary sources in this part of the monograph (pp. 11–12) seems to be another surprising decision, because it belongs to Chapter 1, as its title suggests.

In Chapter 1, T. Homol'a discusses narrative sources regarding the topic (pp. 13–20). This excerpt contains extensive information on the Hungarian, Bohemian and Polish chronicles of the late Middle Ages and early modern period that touch upon the reign of Matthias Corvinus. It is an interesting overview considering that some of this material is hardly known outside of the Hungarian and Polish national historiography. However, the author mostly uses their own contemporary translations into national languages rather than critical editions in the original languages, which can be considered a methodological mistake. This is the case with almost all of the Hungarian sources (translated into Slovak) and *Annales* by Jan Długosz (translated into Polish), even though a modern critical edition in Latin is available. Moreover, secondary sources were reviewed in detail in the section entitled "Sources" ("Pramene") while official documents and epistolary sources were briefly mentioned in the "Introduction," discussed above, which also seems incomprehensible. This may be a consequence of past methodological discussions regarding the definition of a historical source, during which the tendencies to solely consider secondary sources as full historical sources were presented (J. G. Droysen, E. Bernheim). However, it must be noted that the topic, which focuses on the late Middle Ages after all, has a rich source background, mostly thanks to official documents and epistolary sources, which renders such a strong reliance on secondary sources redundant. The discussion of (Hungarian, Czech, German and Polish) historiography on the subject of Matthias Corvinus's reign fills the remaining part of the chapter (pp. 20–30). Interestingly, according to T. Homol'a's findings, Slovak medieval studies have expressed the least interest in Corvinus, relatively speaking, which strongly justifies the need for conducting research on his foreign policy.

Chapter 2 focuses on the first period of Matthias's reign (1458–1464). Matthias was elected *in absentia* King of Hungary at an election assembly

in January 1458, after the untimely death of the King of Hungary and Bohemia, Ladislaus the Posthumous, the son of the King of the Romans, Albert of Habsburg. George of Poděbrad was in a similar situation: he was elected King of Bohemia in identical circumstances and became the second, so called, national monarch in Central Europe. The Habsburgs, the Jagiellons and the Wettins, the complacent Central European dynasties related to the late Ladislaus by blood or marriage, lost the race for the Bohemian and Hungarian throne to Matthias and George. The first two families did make the claim for the Bohemian and Hungarian crown, although it could not be exercised. Casimir Jagiellon, for instance, was involved in a long-running conflict with the Teutonic Order in Prussia which ended in 1466, even though *condottiero* John Jiskra, who controlled much of the northern parts of Hungary, encouraged him to be more active in pursuing the Hungarian throne, as early as in 1458. In the period under discussion, Frederick III, Holy Roman Emperor, may have had a better claim, as he was the holder of Hungarian regalia, including the Holy Crown of Hungary, an instrumental item in terms of legitimising Matthias as king. According to the image that T. Homol'a paints, the agreement with Frederick was Corvinus's greatest achievement, which led to reclaiming the regalia and to the coronation in 1464, even though its price was the promise that the throne passed to the Habsburgs. In the first six years of being king, Matthias also managed to release himself from the control of his uncle, Mihály Szilágyi, who became the regent of the Kingdom of Hungary in the first period of Matthias's reign. Corvinus also defeated the magnates' opposition to his rule. The young king was, at the time, closely allied with George of Poděbrad, who, after making a necessary agreement, set Corvinus free from Bohemia, where he was kept at the order of Ladislaus the Posthumous so that he might return to his homeland and become king. The political and military alliance of both national monarchs was fortified by the marriage between Matthias and Catherine of Poděbrad, George's daughter.

The following chapter of the monograph, like the previous one, is organised chronologically. The author discusses a relatively short period from the beginning of the 1460s when the troubles in the south of Hungary were settled and Corvinus became free to engage in Central European politics on his own accord as a result of the victory in the war with Turkey between 1493 and 1464. John Jiskra was neutralised

not much earlier, even though the conflict between Corvinus and the rebellious mercenaries (so-called *bratríci*), in what is now Slovakia, lasted until 1467. The death of his wife Catherine of Poděbrad in 1464 opened new possibilities for political alliances. However, his attempts to court a representative from the most notable European dynasties (the Hohenzollerns, the Sforzas and the Aragons) proved unsuccessful due to his low birth. Even though his father was John Hunyadi, a famous warrior and the governor of the Kingdom of Hungary, his grandfather and great-grandfather were only regular Transylvanian knights. What is more, the great-grandfather, Serbe, a rather irrelevant figure who died before 1409, marks the extent of possible investigations into the king's ancestry. After George of Poděbrad daughter's death his ties with the Hungarian monarch started to loosen. Matthias started developing closer relations with Emperor Frederick III and the princes of the Holy Roman Empire. Moreover, he strengthened his relationship with the Pope, whose conflict with the Utraquist King of Bohemia increased, which ultimately led to George's excommunication in 1466. Pope Paul II started to see the King of Hungary as the enforcer of the papal policy against George after Casimir Jagiellon refused to take a stand against the Bohemian monarch, who was his ally. The Pope considered Corvinus a future leader of a crusade against the Turks as well, which was the reason why he provided the King of Hungary with significant financial support.

Chapter 4 concerns the King of Hungary joining the crusade against George of Poděbrad pushed by Pope Paul II after 1468, when the attempts to convince Frederick II, the Margrave of Brandenburg, to lead it proved unsuccessful. It happened despite the alliance between the King of Bohemia and the Jagiellons. It is important to note that Casimir Jagiellon, the King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania, was becoming more and more vocal in stressing the dynastic claims of his sons to the Bohemian thrones, based on the fact that their mother, Elizabeth of Austria, was a sister of the monarch of Bohemia and Hungary, Ladislaus the Posthumous of the House of Habsburg, who died without issue. For Corvinus, his good relationship and alliance with the Catholic opposition to George's rule was an important advantage: the oppositionists argued for removing an Utraquist king from a Bohemian throne and replacing him with a good Catholic, Matthias, who was fully supported by the Holy See.

In Chapter 5, Homol'a considers the question of Matthias Corvinus's candidacy for the imperial throne after Frederick III. According to the epistolary sources, this possibility was discussed by the princes of the Holy Roman Empire at the beginning of 1469 (Charles the Bold, the Duke of Burgundy, who had stronger support, was seen as an alternative). Interestingly, the King of Hungary did not make an imperial claim himself, although an ideological rationale for making the Hungarian monarch an emperor could be found in works by people closely attached to his court as early as in 1467. The war with George of Poděbrad for the Kingdom of Bohemia, which had already begun in 1469, justified Matthias's imperial ambitions from the institutional point of view, since if Corvinus had been a Bohemian monarch, he would have become an elector of the Holy Roman Empire, which might have made his election as emperor easier. The concluding section of the chapter focuses on the earlier (1460–1461) determined attempts of George of Poděbrad to follow Frederick III on the imperial throne; however, this section seems to be added arbitrarily with the point of this discussion being unclear.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the actual struggle for the Kingdom of Bohemia. Corvinus started it on 31 March 1468 by attacking Moravia. He was provoked by Viktorin of Poděbrad, the son of King George, who challenged Frederick III. As a result of the armed conflict and the support that most of the Catholic opposition granted him, the King of Hungary controlled Moravia, Silesia, Lusatia and other lands of the Bohemian crown until the beginning of 1469. Despite the military success, Matthias continued his efforts to resolve the conflict diplomatically (the talks between Matthias and George as well as their diplomats were conducted in Olomouc and Šternberk in April 1469). Since there was no consensus, Matthias's Bohemian supporters elected him King of Bohemia in Olomouc (3 May 1469). The Polish representatives, who were also present at the election assembly in Olomouc, expressed their strong objection to that move.

Chapter 7 describes the search for allies in the struggle for Bohemia by both parties of the conflict. King George may have boasted more significant accomplishments on that front, as he strengthened his alliance with Casimir Jagiellon by promising that Vladislaus II of Hungary be the successor to the Bohemian throne (which was confirmed by the Bohemian parliament in 1469). Meanwhile, Matthias Corvinus's robust diplomatic moves focused on the princes of the Holy Roman Empire,

which resulted solely in an alliance with the Wittelsbachs of Bavaria. His further efforts to marry into the Hohenzollerns came to nought. So did his resumed courting of the daughter of Casimir Jagiellon, who refused him any aid due to his alliance with George. Military losses to the Bohemian king at Moravia in 1469 added to the negative balance of Corvinus's political activity.

In the next chapter, T. Homol'a presents Matthias's attempts to work towards closer cooperation with Frederick III, from whom Corvinus expected financial support in the war with George of Poděbrad. The discussions took place in October 1469 as well as in February and March 1470 and failed to provide the desired result, which was partly caused by the support given by the Hungarian king to the leaders of Austrian knights who opposed Frederick II. Finally, an alliance between the Habsburgs and the Jagiellons was forged in 1470. Despite the constant political support of the pope, the international situation was not favourable to Hungary. This and the military stalemate led to negotiations between Bohemia and Hungary between 1470 and 1471. Corvinus's representatives proposed that King George should keep the Bohemian throne until his death and name Corvinus his successor. This was not accepted, partly because of the intervention of Casimir Jagiellon's deputies in the Bohemian parliament. George died soon after that (on 22 March 1471), which gave new possibilities to Matthias. However, the Bohemians respected the agreement with the late Casimir Jagiellon and elected Vladislaus Jagiellon the King of Bohemia in Kutná Hora on 27 May 1471.

The final chapter of the book differs from the others, as it is devoted to diplomacy during Matthias Corvinus's reign. It is divided into three sections. The first one discusses the 'theory' of medieval diplomacy. T. Homol'a widely reviews two fifteenth-century 'handbooks' on diplomacy (*Ambaxiatores brevilogium* and *De officio legati*). However, both sources are Western European (French and Italian) and thus their influence on diplomatic relations in Central Europe is unknown. The author does not present any proof of their impact in Central Europe either. This chapter also includes a more interesting part, which is a discussion on different types of representatives/deputies/ambassadors and also remarks regarding technical questions of diplomatic activity. However, the latter is brief and limited to the matter of representation. This segment might have been more captivating if it had not been based on



almost exclusively Anglophone literature, whose authors drew mostly on sources and examples from England, France and Italy. A very short reference to how Hungarian diplomacy was organised and to the people responsible for it during Matthias's reign is wholly insufficient, even though T. Homol'a mentioned the royal chancery and a separate secret chancery of the monarch and its leaders. However, any medievalist concerned with Central Europe in the late Middle Ages could deduce this without reading these laconic comments. The author enlists two consecutive Hungarian chancellors (Dénes Széchényi and István Várdai), three 'secret' chancellors, Janus Pannonius and the Olomouc bishop Protassius of Boskovice (who served Corvinus after he seized a part of the Kingdom of Hungary). However, three other diplomats of the Hungarian king (Albrecht Kostka of Postupice, Jan of Rabštejn and Jan Filipiec), as well as other foreigners (Georg Schönberg and Gabriele Rangone) were listed only in a footnote. Such short descriptions of statesmen and diplomats are to be considered insufficient, and it is worth noting that the last five are not described at all. A very short section (pp. 144–146) on symbolic communication ought to be considered a theoretical introduction to the topic since only a brief mention of Matthias's royal entry to Brno in 1469 refers to his international policy. The final section (pp. 146–156) is devoted to the diplomatic talks and the ceremonies with which they were conducted, the extravagance of power, feasts, gifts, processions, monarchs and representatives. It is not very extensive, which is justified by the scarcity of sources. There is a detailed list of foods consumed by the Hungarian representatives during their visit to the court of Frederick III, but it dates back to 1487, which is beyond the period analysed in the monograph.

The author summarises his findings on a few pages, which are in fact a very brief summary of those chapters of the book that focus on foreign policy. There are no references to how the diplomacy of the Kingdom of Hungary was organised during Matthias Corvinus's reign, nor to the most relevant enforcers of his foreign policy, nor to the ceremonial discussions described in the last chapter.

The brief overview of T. Homol'a's monograph shows that the author comprehensively presents Matthias Corvinus's foreign policy in the first period of his reign. The key moments of his activity and their circumstances are presented relatively exhaustively. As mentioned before, a more thorough evaluation of how Hungarian diplomacy was



organised under Corvinus is missing, since the comments in chapter 9 are insufficient. As a result, the monograph seems to be a biography of the Hungarian monarch limited to a particular topic – Corvinus is portrayed as the main inspirer and enforcer of diplomatic enterprises. However, this approach does not seem to be correct. The monograph would be much improved by expanding the issue of the organisation and techniques of the Kingdom of Hungary's diplomacy regarding decision centres, its key and minor enforcers (it was not just the king who participated in achieving the set aims, after all), types of meetings and diplomatic missions as well as their funding. A. Szweda's work on the organisation and techniques of Polish diplomacy in its relationship with the Teutonic State in Prussia in the years 1386–1454<sup>2</sup> could be a great inspiration to T. Homol'a.

Moreover, it does not seem accurate to conclude the monograph with the death of George of Poděbrad and the election of Vladislaus Jagiellon in Kutná Hora. As indicated previously, the years 1471 and 1472 seem to be a better closing point, as that was the time when a very important stage of the rivalry between the Jagiellons and Matthias Corvinus ended in the context of both the Bohemian and the Hungarian thrones. This is because Vladislaus Jagiellon began his reign in Bohemia in the second half of 1471. Accompanied by substantial armed forces, he reached Prague, where he was crowned the King of Bohemia in August without much protest from the Hungarian king. In the autumn of that year, another Polish military excursion was launched, this time to take over the Hungarian throne by another Jagiellon prince, Casimir (later canonised), which might have led to Matthias's complete political demise. Another important point was that Casimir IV's younger son was invited to take the Hungarian throne by the home opposition to Matthias's reign, led by his former influential collaborators (e.g. Janos Vitéz and Janos Pannonius), who opposed the direction of the king's foreign policy. It seems that quelling this extremely serious crisis, which manifested itself on the levels of military operations, foreign policy and internal affairs, marks the first period of Matthias's Corvinus's reign.

The work would also benefit from adding a chapter devoted to Matthias's attempts to enter into a dynastic marriage presented against the

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<sup>2</sup> Adam Szweda, *Organizacja i technika dyplomacji polskiej w stosunkach z zakonem krzyżackim w Prusach w latach 1386–1454* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, 2009).

background of a comprehensive description of the political situation. These pursuits, which Matthias engaged in after Catherine of Poděbrad's death, are scattered across a few chapters, which makes this aspect of Corvinus's foreign policy hard to follow. Another issue not sufficiently stressed in the monograph is the fact that his failure on this field was caused by his humble origins, which discouraged Central European dynasties from marrying their daughters off to him. The Hohenzollerns were the only family that seriously considered marriage with Matthias (pp. 59, 60, 107–110). However, it is important to note that Frederick I, the father of the two then-leaders of the dynasty, Frederick II and Albrecht Achilles, became the Elector of Brandenburg only in 1417, so the Hohenzollerns did not yet hold a firm position among the elite ensemble of German monarchs. Before that, Frederick I and his ancestors, as the Burgraves of Nuremberg, were minor leaders of the Holy Roman Empire's lesser territories who were no match to the Luxembourgs, Wettins, Habsburgs or Wittelsbachs.

The author adheres to the definition of Central Europe which excludes Moldova from this historical region of the continent, which resulted in the question of Moldova being almost completely omitted in the analysis of Matthias's policy – this is another imperfection of the author's initial assumptions. Both Hungarian and Polish monarchs claimed sovereignty over Moldova in the years 1457–1471, and this rivalry influenced also the overall Polish-Hungarian relations at that time. These issues were comprehensively analysed long ago by I. Czamańska, yet T. Homol'a does not refer to this important publication.<sup>3</sup>

It must be emphasised that the author does not demonstrate adequate knowledge of Polish historiography on the topic in question. Even though the findings of relevant Polish research are briefly reviewed in chapter 1, T. Homol'a did not put enough effort into looking for Polish publications on political relations in Europe between 1458 and 1471, since he listed obsolete works by J. Sutowicz and F. Papée<sup>4</sup> as examples. The more recent research he mentioned is one monograph by K. Baczkowski on the rivalry between the Jagiellons and Matthias

<sup>3</sup> Ilona Czamańska, *Mołdawia i Wołoszczyzna wobec Polski, Węgier i Turcji w XIV i XV wieku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1996), 104–134.

<sup>4</sup> Julian Sutowicz, *Walka Kazimierza Jagiellończyka z Maciejem Korwinem o koronę czeską* (Kraków: Czcionkami Drukarni „Czasu”, 1876); Fryderyk Papée, *Studia i szkice z czasów Kazimierza Jagiellończyka* (Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolff, 1907).

Corvinus over Bohemia in the years 1471–1479, a collection of articles by M. Biskup and K. Górski on Casimir Jagiellon, an article by M. Biskup on the dynastic politics of the Jagiellons, published in German, and a monograph by J. Smółucha focusing on the political strategy of Pope Pius II regarding Bohemia and its neighbours.<sup>5</sup> However, there are more Polish resources worth referring to. First of all, he should acknowledge the second, revised edition of the previously mentioned monograph by K. Baczkowski (published in 2014),<sup>6</sup> as well as his shorter pieces of research on the Jagiellon's politics, the situation in the Kingdom of Bohemia during the reign of George of Poděbrad and his relations with Corvinus and the Habsburgs.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the author is not familiar with

<sup>5</sup> Krzysztof Baczkowski, *Walka Jagiellonów z Maciejem Korwinem o koronę czeską w latach 1471–1479* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1980); Marian Biskup and Karol Górski, *Kazimierz Jagiellończyk. Zbiór studiów o Polsce drugiej połowy XV wieku* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1987); Marian Biskup, "Die dynastische Politik der Jagiellonen um das Jahr 1475 und ihre Ergebnisse," *Österreichische Osthefte* 19 (1976): 5–19; Janusz Smółucha, *Polityka kurii rzymskiej za pontyfikatu Piusa II (1458–1464) wobec Czech i krajów sąsiednich. Z dziejów dyplomacji papieskiej XV wieku* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Krzysztof Baczkowski, *Między czeskim utrakwizmem a rzymską ortodoksją, czyli walka Jagiellonów z Maciejem Korwinem o koronę czeską w latach 1471–1479* (Oświęcim: Wydawnictwo Napoleon V, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Krzysztof Baczkowski, "O rzekomym kongresie w Villach w lipcu 1470 r.," *Studia Historyczne* 22 (1980): 115–119; Idem, "Europäische Politik der Jagiellonen," in *Polen in Zeitalter der Jagiellonen 1386–1572* (Schallaburg: Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, 1986), 56–65; Idem, "Z polsko-saskich powiązań politycznych w XV w.," in *Niemcy-Polska w średniowieczu*, ed. Jerzy Strzelczyk (Poznań: Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, 1986), 303–312; Idem, "Wokół projektów mariaży dynastycznych Jagiellonów w końcu XV w.," *Studia Historyczne* 32 (1983): 347–368; Idem, "Stanowisko kurii rzymskiej wobec jagiellońskiej ekspektatywy na tron czeski po Jerzym z Podiebradów," *Nasza Przyszłość* 76 (1991): 107–140; Idem, "Einige Bemerkungen über polnischen Gesandtschaften nach Deutschland in der Regierungszeit von Kasimir Jagiellończyk (1447–1492)," *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 52 (1992): 321–328; Idem, "Idea jagiellońska a stosunki polsko-węgierskie w XV w.," in *Polska i Węgry w kulturze i cywilizacji europejskiej*, ed. Jerzy Wyrozumski (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury w Krakowie, 1997), 57–72; Idem, "Maciej Korwin, król Węgier (1458–1490) w opinii historiografii staropolskiej," in *Aetas media, aetas moderna*, ed. Halina Manikowska, Agnieszka Bartoszewicz and Wojciech Fałkowski (Warszawa: Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2000), 363–374; Idem, "Polacy i Czesi w okresie rywalizacji habsbursko-jagiellońskiej 1437–1526 w opinii austriackiej," in *Polaków i Czechów wizerunek wzajemny (X–XVII w.)*, ed. Wojciech Iwańczak and Ryszard Gładkiewicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Historii PAN, 2004), 141–154; Idem, "Komunikacja dyplomatyczna między Polską a Czechami w dobie jagiellońskiej – jej formy i sposoby realizacji," in *Rola komunikacji i przestrzeni*

important works by R. Heck on the topic.<sup>8</sup> Only a German translation of his short article is referred to (yet, it is not mentioned in the overview of Polish historiography – was the author confused by the language of the publication and the German-sounding name?).<sup>9</sup> H. Łowmiański's posthumous publication on the Jagiellons' politics, which describes their relations with Matthias Corvinus in the years 1458–1471, should be recognised, too.<sup>10</sup> A biography of Jakub of Dębno by F. Kiryk should be included – as one of the examples of older Polish publications on this subject. It covers a comprehensive analysis of Polish foreign policy of 1458–1471, in which the protagonist was strongly engaged.<sup>11</sup> Two monographs by B. Czechowicz on the history of Bohemia under George of Poděbrad and Matthias Corvinus should also be considered relevant to the topic.<sup>12</sup> This omission, however, could be justified by the fact that they both were published in 2017 – two years before T. Homol'a's book was released. The Latin edition of the last book of *Annales* by Jan Długosz with extensive critical annotations is a good guide to the Polish historiography on the relations between Casimir Jagiellon and Matthias Corvinus.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the author didn't go further than using Polish translation of this work. Moreover, T. Homol'a is unaware

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*w średniowiecznych i wczesnonowożytnych dziejach Czech i Polski*, ed. Anna Paner and Wojciech Iwańczak (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2008), 176–190.

- <sup>8</sup> Roman Heck, "Elekcja kutnohorska. W pięćsetlecie objęcia przez Jagiellonów rządów Królestwa Czeskiego," *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka* 32 (1971): 193–235; Roman Heck, *Zjazd głogowski w 1462 r.*, 2nd ed. (Głogów: Towarzystwo Ziemi Głogowskiej, 2012).
- <sup>9</sup> Roman Heck, "Polen und das Friedensprojekte Georgs von Podiebrad," in *Cultus pacis. Études et documents du Symposium Pragense Cultus pacis 1464–1964*, ed. Václav Vaněček (Prague: Académie Éditions de l'Académie Tchèque des Sciences, 1966), 97–107.
- <sup>10</sup> Henryk Łowmiański, *Polityka Jagiellonów* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1999), 276–284.
- <sup>11</sup> Feliks Kiryk, *Jakub z Dębna na tle wewnętrznej i zagranicznej polityki Kazimierza Jagiellończyka* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1967), 87–133.
- <sup>12</sup> Bogusław Czechowicz, *Idea i państwo. Korona Królestwa Czech w latach 1457–1547*, vol. 2 (Wrocław: Quaestio, 2017); Idem, *Idea i państwo. Korona Królestwa Czech w latach 1457–1547*, vol. 3 (Wrocław: Quaestio, 2017).
- <sup>13</sup> *Joannis Dlugossii Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, vol. 12, pars 1–2 (Cracoviae: Polska Akademia Umiejętności and Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2003–2005).

of a critical analysis of *Annales* which offers useful aid in interpreting Długosz's narrative.<sup>14</sup>

Not only would making a better use of Polish historiography enrich the findings, but it would also keep the author from misinterpretations. He mentions the 1470 congress in Villach, where important agreements regarding alliance between Casimir Jagiellon and Frederick III were to be made (pp. 121, 127). However, according to K. Baczkowski's article published in 1980, the emperor and the Polish diplomats never met there.<sup>15</sup> Insufficient knowledge of the late medieval history of diplomacy in northern Central European countries results for example in T. Homol'a's uncritical acceptance of claims found in Western European literature on the modernisation of diplomacy at that time. The presence of the Prince of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, at the court of Sigismund of Luxembourg in the years 1425–1432 is used by the author as an example of forming permanent diplomatic representations (p. 137), the presence of general prosecutors (Generalprokurator) as permanent representatives of the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order at the papal court would be a much earlier and arguably a better one.<sup>16</sup>

The book contains also some minor flaws. For example, it seems that the author does not recognise the significance of Casimir Jagiellon's possible acting behind the scenes to destabilise the situation in Hungary at the beginning of Matthias's reign. It is known that there were some Polish subjects among the military leaders of rebellious mercenaries in the territory of present-day Slovakia in 1460. One of them was Gotard Bystram of Radlin,<sup>17</sup> a trusted rittmaster of Casimir Jagiellon's mercenaries, who

<sup>14</sup> *Rozbiór krytyczny Annalium Poloniae Jana Długosza z lat 1445–1480*, ed. Stanisław Gawęda, Krystyna Pieradzka and Julia Radziszewska (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1965).

<sup>15</sup> Baczkowski, "O rzekomym kongresie w Villach w lipcu 1470 r.," 115–119.

<sup>16</sup> Jan E. Beuttel, *Der Generalprokurator des Deutschen Ordens an der römischen Kurie. Amt, Funktionen, personelles Umfeld und Finanzierung* (Marburg: Elwert Verlag, 1999).

<sup>17</sup> Szczęśny Morawski, *Sądcecczyzna za Jagiellonów z miast spiskimi i księstwem oświęcimskim*, vol. 2 (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1865), 228; Jozef Špirko, *Husiti, jiskrovci a bratřici v dejinách Spiša (1431–1462)* (Levoča: Spišský dejepisný spolok v Levoči, 1937), 107; Ladislav Hoffmann, *Bratřici. Slavní protifeudální bojovníci 15. století. Příspěvek k dějinám husitství na Slovensku* (Praha: Naše vojsko, 1959), 44–45.

fought before and after that time in Prussia in the war with the Teutonic Order.<sup>18</sup> This does not seem to be a coincidence.

Finally, a Polish delegate of the 1460s, named by the author as Jan ‘Ostrogorský’ (p. 74) is most definitely Jan Ostroróg (z Ostroroga), a magnate from Greater Poland, a well-educated doctor of both laws, who would end his career as voivode of Poznań and an influential royal advisor.<sup>19</sup>

Undoubtedly, the monograph in question covers the most important facts regarding Matthias Corvinus’s foreign policy at the beginning of his reign and shows their context. It is certainly the first such comprehensive monograph on this monarch written by a Slovak medievalist. These are obvious advantages of this work. However, there are also some methodological imperfections. The most important one is insufficient knowledge of Polish historiography regarding the relationship between the Central European states in the years 1458–1471. This makes it questionable whether T. Homol’a actually achieved his goal, which was, as he claimed, “a review of the existing knowledge on the Central European policy of the King of Hungary Matthias Corvinus” (p. 8).

<sup>18</sup> See: Beata Możejko, “Gotard z Radlina – działalność w Prusach Królewskich,” in *Spółeczeństwo Polski średniowiecznej*, vol. 10, ed. Stefan K. Kuczyński (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2004), 229–253; Sobieślawn Szybowski, “Starostowie z Korony w Prusach Królewskich,” in *Jagiellonowie i ich świat. Centrum a peryferie w systemie władzy Jagiellonów*, ed. Bożena Czwojdrak, Jerzy Sperka and Piotr Węcowski (Kraków: Towarzystwo Naukowe Societas Vistulana, 2018), 78–79.

<sup>19</sup> See: *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 24 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskich, 1974), 502–505.