

Isabel Sovitzky, Spices in the Runtinger trade with Prague. Bachelor thesis. Prague, FHS UK 2020, 54 p., 9 tables, 3 maps, 1 image.

Opposition report

The bachelor theses deals with Runtinger family (settled in Regensburg) trade with Prague. The Bohemian long-distance trade in the 14th and at the beginning of the 15th century has already been analyzed by Frantisek Graus and Martin Musilek who interpreted domestic sources, which consist of only several fragments. On the other hand, *das Runtinger Buch* (1383-1407) constitutes an unusually complete source of information covering a period of twenty-four years. These information have been already analyzed in connection with economic and civic life in Southern Germany, but it has not yet been studied from the perspective of the Bohemian economy. Isabel Sovitzky clearly explains her research goals and provides the reader with research questions concerning Bohemian market in connection with *das Runtingerbuch*.

She combines quantitative and qualitative research methods while her data comes from Franz Bastian's edition of *das Runtingerbuch*. She focuses on spices as they were the most profitable, they were readily divided into subtypes (such as pepper, ginger, and cloves) and they were bought and sold frequently both in Regensburg and in Prague.

Before the actual analysis of *das Runtingerbuch*, the author provides the reader with the historical context of the Runtingers' trade which is based on secondary literature. It is important that she reads it critically and provides its overview in a separate chapter. Her work rests here heavily on English and German literature. She admits that she is not linguistically skilled enough to deal with Czech texts but it is not a major problem as the most relevant studies of Czech historiography were published in German or English (esp. Graus 1956; Zaoral 2011).

Her proper analysis shows that the profitability of spices was higher and more stable than other goods in Prague, but not in Regensburg. She offers interpretations or explanations of these trends claiming that Pragers could pay more because of the silver mines. Prague (with a population at around 37,500) therefore became a consumption market with customers willing and able to pay much higher prices for the prestigious spices. On the other hand, Regensburg was home to merchants and craftsmen, with a population estimated around 10,000-11,000. The Runtingers competed here with other Regensburgers for a much smaller, less wealthy population. Obviously, these conclusions are questionable. How do we know that the population in Regensburg was less wealthy than in Prague? What sources do we have for these conclusions?

The text contains only a few typing errors concerning missing pages in references (p. 35 note 138) or incomplete numbers (p. 36).

Based on the above-mentioned facts I suggest grade A (=1).

21th of June 2020, Prague

Mgr. Marek Suchý, Ph.D.