

sole group and its attributes, but are related to a vision of power and privilege that affected everyone' (p. 96). *Cities of Strangers* offers an extremely useful survey, encompassing an admirably decentred geographical coverage, which will be of particular use for those new to the subject, especially undergraduates. It also offers an excellent opportunity for researchers more familiar with the subject to frame local and regional studies in a broader and comparative perspective. It is sure to be the key starting point in the subject for years to come.

### Justin Colson

Institute of Historical Research, University of London

**Peter Csendes and Ferdinand Opll**, *Wien im Mittelalter. Zeitzeugnisse und Analysen*. Vienna and Cologne: Böhlau, 2021. 520pp. 48 figures. Bibliography. €45.00 hbk.

doi:10.1017/S0963926822000207

Medieval Vienna has been treated well by its historians. Ferdinand Opll and Peter Csendes, director and vice-director of the Vienna Municipal Archives until 2010 and 2004, respectively, have been the most prolific researchers of the medieval city in the last 50 years. They had joined forces to edit a three-volume urban biography of Vienna (*Wien. Geschichte einer Stadt*, 2001–06) and were among the key authors of a brand-new English-language *Companion to Medieval Vienna* (2021). Beside dozens of articles and book chapters, Csendes has edited the most important legal sources of Vienna (1986–87) and Opll has written a lively monograph on life in medieval Vienna (1998). The present volume, published on the 800th anniversary of the first ducal charter of privilege granted to Vienna (1221), offers a fresh summary of the two prominent authors' research.

Having put down so many important works on the table, the greatest challenge for the authors was to find a new format that allows them to avoid repeating earlier overviews. To this end, the story of Vienna unfolds here as a thickly woven cloth, the warp and weft being the two terms in the book's subtitle: 'witnesses of the times' and 'analyses'. The warp revives the old chronological tradition, summarizing the most important events year by year. After a summary of the archaeological data on the ninth to eleventh centuries, the first concrete date in the row is 1137, the famous exchange treaty of Mautern between the margraves of Austria and the bishop of Passau on the patronage of the Viennese parishes and the foundation of St Stephen's, the later iconic Stephansdom. This first testimony of an important settlement in the making is followed in the next century sporadically, and from 1244 indeed yearly by new entries. One can only be grateful for the survival of the archival material that allows for this dense flow of events.

Within their chronological section, the authors' intention was to show not only the most decisive happenings, but also the variety of data available for Vienna. This method reminded me of the chronicles painted on the walls of some urban parish churches in Transylvania and Spiš (parts of medieval Hungary, now in Romania

and Slovakia, respectively) in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The most frequently occurring types of information also show some overlap with those wall chronicles. Beside the visits of various monarchs and the military events connected to them, natural and man-made catastrophes: floods, storms, fires and diseases appear in gruesome abundance. As the types of sources multiply later in the chronology, more details are included about the internal life of the city, its church foundations, self-governance and the deeds and misdeeds of its inhabitants. In more troublesome times, particularly in the fifteenth century, the yearly entries extend to three or four pages, but business very quickly returns to its usual course. The longest entry is dedicated to the closing year of 1529, when the reader leaves the city that barely survived the Ottoman siege in ruins, but with a promise of new beginnings.

The web, interlacing with the chronological lines drawn up in the first part, consists of thematic analyses on eight topics that are central to our understanding of how any pre-modern city works. These are (1) 'The sources of our knowledge' – the archival and narrative sources plus town plans and views; (2) 'Urban space' – the topographical development of Vienna (an overview map would have been helpful to accompany this part); (3) 'Technical and social infrastructure' – from city walls to education; (4) 'The town and its overlord' – connections to the respective archdukes of Austria; (5) 'All the rights and good customs' – the legal basis of urban life and civic governance; (6) 'The Viennese' – from burghers and burgesses to the disreputable inhabitants; (7) 'Urban economy' – agriculture, trade and handicraft, with special emphasis on long-distance trade and wine-growing as Vienna's most marketable product; (8) 'City life' – from time perception through sensory experiences to festive culture.

My personal favourite is the fourth section 'The town and its overlord', which pulls together the long lines of history, and dispels the myth of the autonomous city as imagined by the victorious nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. Instead, the authors present a city whose destiny was dominated by the dynasties residing first in the Pfalz Am Hof, and later in the Hofburg, where the later imperial palace complex stands. As these dynasties, namely the Babenbergs, the Přemyslids and the Habsburgs, rose to prominence on a European scale, so Vienna's strength and importance followed suit. The thematic chapters are relatively short, 20 to 30 pages each, but provide concise overviews and good bases for further inquiries. The last section, by way of a conclusion, depicts Viennese society as vulnerable and endangered in many ways, not least by the commands and claims of its overlords, but one that was constantly ready to experience the joys of life.

The bipartite structure is bound together by cross-references, the confident and reliable handling of the sources that provide the basis for both parts and an unusually but helpfully detailed index more than 100 pages long. The volume also includes a 30-page bibliography concentrating on basic and most recent publications, and a set of carefully selected images reproduced in full colour. The style of the German text is eminently readable for the general public and offers new insights for the academic readership as well. I am curious to see if other authors of city monographs will be tempted to take its new structure as a model.

**Katalin Szende**

Central European University, Budapest and Vienna