

extensive archival work and unearthed significant to-date unknown or neglected texts, including novels, short stories, and advice literature, as well as unpublished correspondence and diaries. In Chapter 2, she uses these original texts, and especially letters, to shed new light on the central role that women's friendships with other women played in nourishing their lives and in sustaining their community-building activities.

While the focus of Frančíková's book remains on the Czech setting, the author also makes consistent efforts to place the achievements and challenges faced by earlier nineteenth-century Czech women within the broader central European and Euro-American context. For instance, Chapters 4 and 5, which explore the topic of the Czech community members' health and fitness, especially focusing on the popularity of hydrotherapy, compare some of the Czech nation-building discursive strategies with those deployed in other national settings at the time. These chapters work to place what was happening in the Czech setting within the broader context of the pre-Darwinian biopower, as it was emerging as a new technology of power throughout Europe at the time.

Neither in these two last chapters nor in the rest of the book do issues of whiteness come up. This is unfortunate, considering that the topic of biopower, explored in the book's final chapters, would seem to lend itself particularly well to the exploration of the extent to which non-whiteness was (or was not) a category used to exclude some of those who lived in the Czech lands from membership in the fledgling national community. This question remains unaddressed in the book. But Frančíková does make some interesting observations concerning the linguistic and national pedigree of several of the female members of the Czech nation-building project. From today's perspective, it is intriguing to ponder that Rajscká, the perhaps most renowned of the early nineteenth-century Czech women nation builders, was born to a German family that had moved to Prague. And another prominent community member, Honorata Zapová, was Polish, although married to a Czech. The power of language to construct Czechness is well explored in the book, although it would perhaps have been fitting to also examine the extent to which whiteness was (or was not) emerging as a relevant category in the Czech community at the time.

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***The Czech and Slovak Republics: Twenty Years of Independence, 1993–2013.* Ed.**

M. Mark Stolarik. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016. xiv, 364 pp.

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Growing out of a conference held at the University of Ottawa in 2013, M. Mark Stolarik's edited volume brings together the work of scholars from North America and the Czech and Slovak Republics. The conference and subsequent publication had two main goals: to reevaluate the "Velvet Divorce," the peaceful agreement that led to Czechoslovakia's split, and to compare the post-divorce trajectories of the two independent states. Stolarik's comprehensive introduction names the "debate over issues of individual agency and deeper political structures" as the most striking theme of the volume. The authors analyze the split's main causes and question its inevitability by exploring the emergence of nationalism and national identity, cultural and economic factors, political elites, and public opinion. The chapters represent a wide array of disciplinary approaches, including history, economics, political science,

sociology, and law. In addition, two politicians contributed their plenary addresses from the Ottawa conference: Josef Moravčík, a Slovak lawyer, professor, and 1989 activist, and Petr Pithart, a Czech dissident, Charter '77 signatory, and Prime Minister of the Czech Republic from 1990 to 1992 while Czechoslovakia was still a federal state.

The book is arranged into four main sections of between four and six chapters: Part I focuses on the "Dissolution of Czechoslovakia," while Parts II, III, and IV respectively investigate political, economic, and social developments after 1993. While many of the individual chapters are excellent and thought-provoking, the organization of the sections is odd. The chapters by the Czech and Slovak scholars are original analyses, while the chapters by the North American scholars are written as responses or critiques of the preceding chapter. According to Stolarik, the topics discussed in the volume "have received little comparative scholarly attention within the two republics," whereas, "without emotional and political restraints, western scholars quickly seized upon the causes of the split and the subsequent paths taken by the two new independent republics" (1). While Stolarik may be correct that Czech and Slovak scholars "opted to focus on other questions," the book's structure surprisingly reifies a west-east hierarchy more than two decades since communism's demise.

For example, Stolarik remarks that Stanley Kirschbaum "takes the authors to task" in his response to Jozef Žatkuliak and Adam Hudek's "The Dissolution of Czechoslovakia: the Slovak Perspective" (8). In their analysis, Žatkuliak and Hudek focus on political elites' hasty decisions in the years immediately following the Velvet Revolution. They contrast divergent visions for a new state, with Slovak leaders favoring strengthened individual republics and a weakened federal state and Czechs preferring the opposite. Kirschbaum's response criticizes Žatkuliak and Hudek for a weak and incomplete historical analysis. He writes of the 1992 decision to dissolve Czechoslovakia: "If the Slovak elites who made the decision to opt for independence felt that it was the best option . . . they did so because they knew it was not only a possible option but also a viable one" (82). Kirschbaum cites the Slovak Republic of 1939–45 as evidence that Slovaks had "run their own state . . . successfully for six years" (83). Rather than explain that Slovakia declared independence following the fascist priest Josef Tiso's Munich meeting with Adolph Hitler, Kirschbaum vaguely writes of the "unexpected, exceptional, and dangerous external circumstances and pressures" of 1939 (83). Not acknowledging the Slovak Republic's allegiance to Nazi Germany is irresponsible and alarming.

Despite the unevenness of the volume, there are important contributions, including the perspectives of politicians who oversaw or witnessed the Velvet Divorce. Pithart's essay laments the disappearance of the multinational Czechoslovak state and the Czech Republic's inward focus as it embraces Euro-skepticism and seldom grants asylum to refugees. Pithart believes the Slovak Republic made the most of its independence, once the authoritarian-leaning leader Vladimír Mečiar lost his office in 1998. "Nationalism in Slovakia is fading, while Slovak self-confidence is growing" (102). On the other hand, Pithart believes that the Czech Republic did not find anything positive from the split. Moravčík also cites his regrets about the split and the five years of uncertainty during Mečiar's rule. However, the pro-democratic forces that eventually won out allowed Moravčík to announce that his conscience over the breakup was finally clear (93). Moravčík takes a historical perspective to understand the breakup but unlike Kirschbaum, he dismisses any positive lessons from the World War II era: "Conditions in both the Czech Lands and in Slovakia were strongly deformed during this period and cannot be taken at face value" (86).

Contributors introduce many important issues, all of which cannot be mentioned in this review. Kevin Deegan-Krause importantly places developments in the Czech and Slovak Republics in context of the larger region, including Poland and Hungary,

as well as the former Soviet Republics of Belarus and Ukraine. He cites the treatment of minorities, authoritarian tendencies, and proliferation of political parties as causes for concern throughout the former Soviet bloc. Oldrich Tůma reminds us to look for the continuities in the “post-Communist” Czech Republic, where many communist elites emerged as business leaders. Zora Bútorová and Martin Bútorá focus on public opinion polls to gauge the Slovak population’s concerns about topics, including unemployment, the standard of living, and health care. Several authors point to discrimination of the Roma populations as an issue that must be addressed in both states.

In sum, despite the puzzling structure of the volume, graduate students and scholars of the region will find much of this collection useful. Each chapter includes extensive references, and there is a thorough bibliography at the end. Some of the most important North American and European scholars have weighed in on the many significant topics facing the Czech and Slovak Republics today.

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***The Monumental Nation: Magyar Nationalism and Symbolic Politics in Fin-de-siècle Hungary.*** By Bálint Varga. Austrian and Habsburg Studies. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016. xii, 286 pp. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Tables. Maps. \$130.00, hard bound.  
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Bálint Varga’s study of Magyar nationalism and symbolic politics in fin-de-siècle Hungary examines how the Hungarian state beginning in the 1860s implemented a project of cultural assimilation. The state used Millennial celebrations and monuments to glorify the medieval conquest and encourage a unified, national identity. Varga investigates how the historical narrative was used to reframe the identity of Hungarians, especially in light of the tension between urban and rural landscapes as well as between different nationalities. The book is about how the history of Prince Árpád and the conquest—the way it was imagined, told, and memorialized—was received, digested, and conceptualized by different Hungarians in seven provincial localities during the millennial year.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part serves as an introduction and provides historical and historiographical context for the analysis in parts two and three. Varga does an excellent job presenting the conditions in Hungary in the nineteenth century, and how a commemorative culture, which had become popular throughout Europe, reached Hungary in the mid-nineteenth century, initially with an interest in the Catholic cult of St. Stephen. By the late nineteenth century a growing interest in commemorating Árpád—the conqueror and founder of the homeland—was growing. It is this story and how Árpád became one of the most important national heroes in late nineteenth-century Hungary that is the subject of *The Monumental Nation*.

Before the Millennial celebrations and the building of monuments to the conquest, little was known for certain about either Árpád or the conquest. The twelfth-century *Gesta Hungarorum* provides a chronicle that explains how Árpád’s Magyars conquered the homeland and fought various indigenous groups, but agreement on what this meant was lacking. Some inhabitants of Hungary did not appreciate the emphasis that the ethnic Hungarian leadership alone created the unified Christian state. Catholic leaders also worried about a focus on Árpád—a pagan figure. To present a unified history and to emphasize the goals of the Hungarian nation state that