

THE BRIEF OUTLINE
OF THE HISTORY OF
THE CZECH LANDS
IN THE MIDDLE
AGES

Jana Hrabcova

THE GREAT MORAVIA IN THE 9TH CENTURY



- ❑ the Slavic state in the 9th century situated mostly in Moravia
- ❑ cultural development resulted from the mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius

THE HOUSE OF PŘEMYSLIDS - FROM 9TH CENTURY TILL 1306

- ◉ the centre of the duchy in Bohemia
- ◉ Prague the capital city
- ◉ the Kingdom of Bohemia since the end of 12th century



THE HOUSE OF LUXEMBOURGS

- ◉ From 1310 till 1437
- ◉ **Charles IV**
- ◉ the king of Bohemia (1346-1378) and Holy Roman Emperor (1355-1378)
- ◉ the most important and the best known Bohemian king
- ◉ 1356 - The Golden Bull - the basic law of the Holy Roman Empire
- ◉ Prague became his capital, and he rebuilt the city on the model of Paris, establishing the New Town of Prague (Nové Město), Charles Bridge, and Charles Square, Karlštejn Castle etc.
- ◉ 1348 - he founded the University of Prague, later named after him, the first university in Central Europe



CHARLES IV

- ◉ *Readings:*

Charles IV
(autobiography), edited by
Balázs Nagy, Frank Schaer
(2001): *Autobiography of
Emperor Charles IV; And,
His Legend of St.
Wenceslas: Karoli IV
Imperatoris Romanorum
Vita Ab Eo Ipso
Conscripta; Et, Hystoria
Nova de Sancto Wenceslao
Martyre*, Published by
Central European
University Press.



THE HUSSITE REVOLUTION (1419 - 1436)

- ◉ religious struggles
- ◉ **Master Jan Hus** - became one of the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation
- ◉ clergyman, preacher and Professor of Prague University
- ◉ wanted to reform the Catholic Church
- ◉ he was protesting against clerical abuses, especially the sale of indulgences (paying for forgiveness of the sins during the confession)
- ◉ he also declared that the clergy should live according to the Bible, in poverty, without property and a secular power
- ◉ the mortal sins should be prohibited and punished
- ◉ he also proclaimed that the believers should understand the Holy Writ so it should be proclaimed in the national languages



MASTER JAN HUS

Master Jan Hus was sentenced to death and burnt to death in 1415 at the Council of Constance

THE HUSSITES

- ◉ the Bohemian people blamed Emperor Sigismund for Hus' death so they did not want him to become the king of Bohemia although he was Charles IV's son
- ◉ Hus' followers were called the Hussites; (Men of the Chalice - the symbol of Hussites movement)
- ◉ Sigismund organized five crusade campaigns against Hussites but all the campaigns were unsuccessful
- ◉ almost 15 years of religious struggles and wars - the country was destroyed and plundered
- ◉ the moderate Hussites wanted to finish the warfare so they united with Catholics and destroyed the radical Hussites at the **battle of Lipany in May 1434**
- ◉ after that both the religions - the Catholic and the Hussite became legal in Bohemia and two churches were formed
- ◉ 1436 - Sigismund was accepted as the King of Bohemia, but he died only one year after that

THE HUSSITES

- ◉ after Sigismund's death, a Bohemian nobleman and the leader of Hussites **George (Jiří) of Kunštát and Poděbrady (1458-1471)** was elected a king
- ◉ he suggested something what could be considered as a proposal of latter European Union
- ◉ he tried to prevent isolation of hussite Bohemia in catholic Europe, so he proposed a treaty among all Christian powers, the member states should pledge to settle all differences by exclusively peaceful means and fight altogether against Osman Turks who were threatening Central Europe
- *Readings:*
Doležalová, Eva - Pánek, Jaroslav (2011): Confession and nation in the era of reformations: Central Europe in comparative Perspective). Prague.

THE HOUSE OF HABSBURGS

- ◉ 1526 - 1918
- ◉ **Ferdinand I (1526-1564)**
- ◉ The key events during his reign were:
 - the contest with the Ottoman Empire, whose great advance into Central Europe began in the 1520s
 - the contest with the protestant Reformation, which resulted in several wars of religion
- ◉ The Habsburg rule brought the re-introduction of the Roman Catholic faith, centralization and the construction of a multi-national empire. The Habsburgs included the Crownlands of Bohemia in their monarchy, and they remained a part of the Habsburg empire until 1918

THE HOUSE OF HABSBURGS

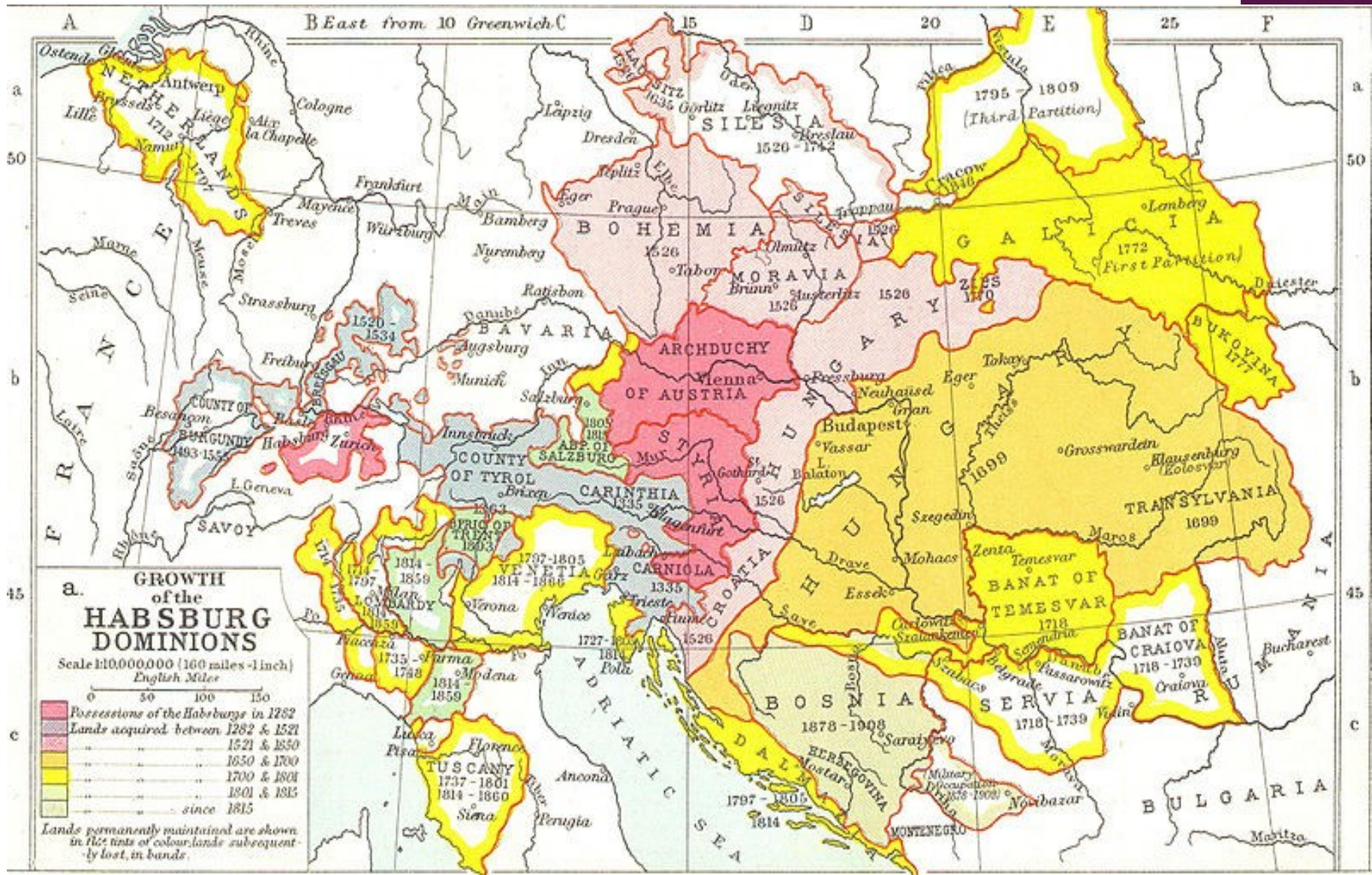


Ferdinand I



Anne of Hungary and Bohemia

THE HABSBURG MONARCHY



RUDOLPH II (1576-1611)

- ◉ left Vienna for Prague, Bohemian capital grew into an important center of European culture
- ◉ The Czech Estates forced Rudolph II to issue a decree - so called "Maiestatus" - proclaiming freedom of religious confession
- ◉ due to many artist and scientist and the development of culture and natural sciences it was called „*the Golden Prague*“
- ◉ Rudolph also supported natural philosophers such as the the astronomers *Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler*, also *Giordanno Bruno* spent some time in Prague when he was on the run from the inquisition
- ◉ Rudolph also patronated *occult sciences*, many alchemists stayed in Prague during his reign
- *Interesting web site:*
<http://english.habsburger.net/>



RUDOLPH II

Rudolph loved collecting paintings and was also patron of many contemporary artists - e.g. *Giuseppe Arcimboldo*, *Bartolomeus Spranger*, *Hans von Aachen*, *Adrian de Vries* and many others

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR (1618-1648)

- The Emperor **Ferdinand II** tried to limit the freedom of religious confession and his efforts sparked a civil war between the Estates and the Catholic Emperor which later spread into Europe under the name of the Thirty Years' War
- 1618 - The so-called **Defenestration of Prague** - the unpopular king's representatives in Bohemia (the governors) were thrown out of a window of the Prague Castle



THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR (1618-1648)

- ◉ The Czechs elected an independent king Frederick V.
- ◉ The Estates were defeated in 1620 at the Battle of the White Mountain and the Kingdom of Bohemia lost its independence for the following almost 300 years
- ◉ the Catholic faith was declared to be the only permitted creed in the country
- ◉ The period of the Thirty Years' War brought political disorder and economic devastation to Bohemia which had far-reaching consequences on the future development of the country.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR (1618-1648)

- ◉ The throne of Bohemia became hereditary in the Habsburg dynasty and the most important offices were transferred permanently to Vienna
- ◉ Ferdinand II issued an edict, which ordered all non-Catholic noblemen to convert or to emigrate - so the large wave of emigration succeeded
- ◉ the hussite or protestant inhabitants were often violently forced to convert
- ◉ tightening of serfdom
- ◉ German soon became the first language of the country

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR (1618-1648)



Unsuccessful siege of
Brno by Swedish
army in 1645

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR (1618-1648)

- ◉ all European states participated on the Thirty Years' War - directly or indirectly
- ◉ **the Peace of Westphalia** finished The Thirty Years' War - series of peace treaties signed between May and October of 1648

Readings:

- *Grafton, Anthony(2001): Thirty Years War. New York Review of Books.*
- *Duchhardt, Heinz : Münster/Osnabrück as a Short-Lived Peace System. In: Goudoever, Albert P. van (ed.) (1993): Great Peace Congresses in History 1648-1990. Utrecht. Pp 13-19.*