



# ACTA HISTRIAE

23, 2015, 4



ISSN 1318-0185

UDK/UDC 94(05)

Letnik 23, leto 2015, številka 4

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Language Editor:**

Petra Berlot (angl., it., slo)

**Stavek/Composizione/  
Typesetting:**

Grafis trade d.o.o.

**Izdajatelj/Editore/  
Published by:**

Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko / Società storica del Litorale®

**Sedež/Sede/Address:**

Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko, SI-6000  
Koper-Capodistria, Kreljeva 3 / Via Krelj 3,  
tel.: +386 5 6273-296; fax: +386 5 6273-296;  
e-mail: actahistriae@gmail.com; www.zdjp.si

**Tisk/Stampa/Print:**

Grafis trade d.o.o.

**Naklada/Tiratura/Copies:**

300 izvodov/copie/copies

**Finančna podpora/  
Supporto finanziario/  
Financially supported by:**

Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije / Slovenian Research Agency

**Slika na naslovnici/  
Foto di copertina/  
Picture on the cover:**

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Redakcija te številke je bila zaključena 15. decembra 2015.

Revija Acta Histriae je vključena v naslednje podatkovne baze / Gli articoli pubblicati in questa rivista sono inclusi nei seguenti indici di citazione / Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in: Thomson Reuters: Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), Social Scisearch, Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI), Journal Citation Reports / Social Sciences Edition (USA); IBZ, Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur (GER); International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS) (UK); Referativnyi Zhurnal Viniti (RUS); European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH); Elsevier B. V.: SCOPUS (NL)

Vsi članki so prosto dostopni na spletni strani: <http://www.zdjp.si/> / All articles are freely available via website <http://www.zdjp.si/>.

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SLOVENIAN STYRIA IN THE  
NARRATIVE SOURCES OF 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY*Martin BELE*University in Maribor, Faculty of Arts, Department of History, Koroška cesta 160, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia  
e-mail: martin.bele@gmail.com*ABSTRACT*

*The paper addresses sources of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, that are considered to be important cultural monuments, or the information sources relating to the history of the Slovenian Styria. Its purpose is to highlight the narrative ones and to define them in terms of their usability for a today' historian. As the most important ones the Austrian Annales, Ulrich von Liechtenstein's Service of the Lady and the Austrian Rhyme Chronicle by Ottokar aus der Gaal may be highlighted. The works differ not only in style, but also in the scope and language. Due to its scope and reliability the Austrian Rhyme Chronicle was probably the most important narrative source for historians. »Service of the Lady« is written at the highest artistic level, whereas the Austrian Annales provide for a mere review of the most important events of the period.*

*Key words: narrative sources, today's Slovenian Styria, 13<sup>th</sup> century, Austrian Annales, Service of the Lady, Austrian Rhyme Chronicle*

LA STIRIA SLOVENA NELLE FONTI NARRATIVE  
DEL XIII SECOLO*SINTESI*

*L'articolo tratta le fonti del XIII secolo ritenute importanti come testimonianze culturali oppure fonti d'informazione per la storia della Stiria slovena. L'obiettivo è mettere in evidenza quelle narrative e definire la loro utilità per gli storici odierni. Tra le più importanti possiamo ritenere gli Annali austriaci, Il servizio delle dame di Ulrich von Liechtenstein e la Cronaca rimata austriaca di Ottokar aus der Gaal. Tra loro le opere differiscono sia per lo stile, che per il volume e la lingua. Per la sua mole e l'affidabilità potremmo ritenere la Cronaca rimata come la più importante per gli storici. Il Servizio delle dame ha un grande valore artistico, mentre Gli annali risultano solamente come una raccolta degli eventi più importanti del periodo.*

*Parole chiave: fonti narrative, Stiria slovena odierna, XIII secolo, Annali austriaci, Servizio delle dame, Cronaca austriaca rimata*

## INTRODUCTION

In this article the narrative sources of the 13<sup>th</sup> century will be reviewed and examined, which today can be seen as significant cultural monuments or relevant sources of information on the history of the Slovenian (and also of the Austrian) Styria. The sources to be discussed did not necessarily originate from the territory of today's Slovenian Styria. Some were also created in the wider territory of the Eastern Alps, in particular, in the territories of the present-day Austria and Germany.

Their authors were monks or lower nobles with very different educational backgrounds. The authors of nobility background, in particular, often travelled in the course of their political and military careers. They did not undertake journeys only across their home land (in this case, Styria), but often also to foreign countries, and more rarely (possibly in the company of the crowned heads) even to very remote European realms. In these places they, as pilgrims, adventurers, soldiers or diplomats, came into contact with (up to that time not known to them) European literature, and they were also witnesses to various important political events, which they later – each in their own style – described in their works. Other writers of that time frame did not visit foreign lands, but wrote at home about the ladies worth admiring and about their love to them.

The initial hypothesis is that the addressed sources shall differ enormously, both in terms of their style of writing and their reliability, as well as regarding the purposes of their creation in the first place. As the information sources, consequently, they shall have very different values for a historian. While a historian will be able to avail himself of one of the mentioned sources to provide reliable information on various political and military matters, the other source will be used only as an illustration of chivalric life, of the mode of thinking and of the ideals of that time. Also the authors of the mentioned sources shall differ among themselves. While the majority of them will most probably originate from clergy, there will be some nobles among them, too. The latter will be less educated compared to the clerics and their stories will probably still be written (or only dictated) in their native language. In contrast, the clerics will write in Latin.

While the Styrian (and wider) history of the 13<sup>th</sup> century can be reconstructed via administrative (land registers, feudal books, etc.) as well as legal (contracts, deeds, etc.) sources, in the present discussion only narrative sources shall be addressed. In terriers the recorded land tenure, real estates and income of ecclesiastical or secular lords in a particular contiguous territory are more or less accurate. The urbarial records were first formed in the Slovenian territory in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, whereas elsewhere in Europe (specifically in Italy and France) the very first terriers dated already from the period before the year 700 (UBŠ, 9; SUS I, VII; Hägermann, 2003, 1286–1287). For the time period addressed in the paper the publication titled *Die Landesfürstlichen Gesamturbare der Steiermark aus dem Mittelalter* would be most significant to consider, in which in 1910 its publisher Alfons Dopsch published terriers of the territorial dukes of the 13<sup>th</sup> century from the time periods of the ruling of the noble family of the House of Babenberg (approximately between 1220 and 1230), of King Otakar II Přemysl (between 1265 and 1267), and, of the Habsburg family (approximately between 1280 and 1296) (LFG, XIV, XXXVIII–XLVIII, 708).

When referring to the legal sources important for the history of the Eastern Alps in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, we have in mind in particular the most prominent and objectively written documents, the remainders of the public business activities. Their forms are much varied, because the documents differ in materials, fonts, signatures, artistic design, seals, and, most of all, in the internal structure of the texts. The documents were first examined for practical purposes, serving as the grounds for the justification of the ancient rights. Today documents are predominantly the main (and often the only) means of reconstructing the past. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Eastern Alps the majority of the documents referred to donations to ecclesiastical institutions, out of the care of souls. In many cases these institutions had good archives, in which (at least in the transcripts) the majority of the documentary material was preserved to the present day (Kos, 1994, 7, 18–19).

As far as narrative sources are concerned, which are the third largest group of medieval sources, the ones written in a narrative form, which in their description often try to provide the reader with the viewpoints and the opinions of the writer on the addressed topic, are referred to; these are historical sources, which, unlike the often tedious legal and administrative resources, have a literary value and belong to different literary genres. Such records are in any event subjective. The people mentioned in them are not only referred to by their names and surnames, but also by their personalities (Mlinar, 2005, 10). Historical narrative works include historical poetry, various chronicles, annales, biographies and histories of the peoples and hagiographies. In the Middle Ages these genres were not strictly separated from one another, but very often intertwined. Among the authors of the entire territory of the Eastern Alps of the 13<sup>th</sup> century especially the Viennese citizen named Jans(en) Enikel (*Weltchronik, Fürstenbuch*) and a nobleman of a lower rank Ottokar aus der Gaal (*Österreichische Reimchronik*) should be highlighted, whereas from a broader timeframe mainly Otto von Freising (*Gesta Friderici Imperatoris, Chronica de duabus civitatibus*) should be mentioned, who lived and wrote in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Grundmann, 2000, 3–14).

When evaluating these three types of sources in terms of their reliability and richness of contents, significant differences may be noticed among them. The basic purpose of administrative sources is primarily bureaucratic referencing of data, which, when a historian interlinks and compares them against each other, provide examples of development of a cultural landscape, of agriculture, of the bureaucratic apparatus, or the like. In view of the fact that they were created out of the desire for greater transparency and effectiveness of the administration, there is usually no reason to doubt their authenticity. On the other hand, the possibility of their falsification due to economic or legal disputes cannot be excluded, even in such sources. With regard to legal sources, the situation is different. Many notaries and scribes of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (and also in a broader period of time) resorted to the falsification of certain document parts, which at that time was not an unusual practice. The resulting falsifications were not necessarily linked to illegal activities, but to legitimizing the previous real actions that had not been documented precisely enough, or the previous documents had been lost. The falsifier, who may have tried to write a falsified document on the basis of a pre-existing one, was trying to capture the style of its issuer. Unfortunately, many suspicious documents from the area of the Eastern Alps are

preserved only in later copies, so the assessment of their originality is many a time not possible (Kos, 1994, 188). Given the fact that in this paper mainly narrative sources will be addressed, the administrative as well as legal sources shall be left side.

The narrative sources of the High Middle Ages differed a lot in the richness of their contents, reliability and topics. It was up to each author to decide what was worth telling to his readers; his main criterion was either the truth (*veritas*) as opposed to fiction or the acts worth remembering (*gesture memorabilia*). In the selection of the criteria the writer was driven by various motives, whereby he often found it difficult to hide his subjectivity (Grundmann, 2000, 3–4). The medieval historiography had a strong institutional character. Historians wrote either about some institution or for the very institution; these could be the royal or the ducal palace, the diocese, the monastery, but also increasingly the city. Limitations as to the topics were rather inconsistent; thus, the biographies of monastic abbots, e.g. addressed the histories of emperors and kings, too, as well as in the imperial annales many a time details of a local character could be found. First and foremost, medieval historians chose political and military history, as well as the history of the Church as their prime topics. It was rarely possible to separate the history of the Church from the political history, as the ecclesiastical and secular powers were intertwined in the Middle Ages (Grundmann, 2000, 4–5). As far as the three main examples of narrative sources from the territory of the Eastern Alps are concerned, which will be highlighted in this discussion (the *Austrian Annales*, the *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle*, and the *Service of the Lady*), they can be classified in the mainstream of the then literary creation (of course, each in its own sub-genre). The *Austrian Annales* are classical examples of monastic annales written for the use of the monastery or the assembly of canons, which lack the title, foreword or dedication, and are, in general, without any literary ambitions. Ulrich von Liechtenstein and his *Service of the Lady* can be placed in the time of the so called minnesingers of the late 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the time of classic German epic poets had already passed. The *Austrian Rhymed Chronicle* by Ottokar aus der Gaal is one of the provincial histories, which were in addition to the general papal-imperial chronicles typical of the late Middle Ages (Grundmann, 2000, 24, 40–41). The latter three works will be further discussed in more detail.

#### ANNALES OF THE MONASTERIES IN THE EASTERN ALPS

When it comes to the narrative sources of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which are (at least partly) related to the territory of today's Slovenian Styria, primarily annales should be mentioned, which were created in several Austrian monasteries. Annales are a specific historiographical genre, in which the author surveys events in a strictly chronological order. Before the *Austrian Annales* are adressed, the publication in which they were first published in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, will be mentioned. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe was letarally flooded with historical works. Although the writers of that time are very rarely read nowadays (except perhaps as an expression of the spirit of the then times), in that period new methods of studying the documents were being developed and then permanently used, namely the collection of documents and other records from the past

expanded greatly. In 1826 the German Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde started to issue the publication titled *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Luthar, 2006, 497–498; <http://www.mgh.de/geschichte/geschichte-allgemeines/>). In this publication the historian and philologist Wilhelm Wattenbach published the annales in 1851, which had been written between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century in all major Austrian monasteries, the first one obviously in the Benedictine Abbey in Melk. In Wattenbach's own words he gathered all the annales that he could find. In them the events of primarily local nature were recorded, but occasionally interesting data relating to the wider area of the Eastern Alps, including the today's Slovenian Styria, can also be found. All of the collected annales (with the common name of the *Annales Austriae*) were written in Latin. The authors would usually continue writing the existing annales, or summarize part of the text in their annales or copy the text from other annales, and then continue writing the text on their own. While some of their authors only summarily recorded the most important events of a year, the others went into more detail in their descriptions. ([http://www.dmgh.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb00000841\\_00006.html?sortIndex=010%3A050%3A0009%3A010%3A00%3A00&zoom=0.75](http://www.dmgh.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb00000841_00006.html?sortIndex=010%3A050%3A0009%3A010%3A00%3A00&zoom=0.75); Rodenberg, 1898, 439–443; <http://www.mgh.de/geschichte/portraitgalerie/wilhelm-wattenbach/>; Komac, 2006, 45).

Various nobles who lived in the area of the Duchy of Styria in that time (*Styrienses*) are repeatedly mentioned in the *Austrian Annales*, but only as a group, in which individuals are almost never exposed. They are often mentioned together with the nobles from (the Duchy) of Austria, with who they often collaborated throughout all of the addressed period, from 1192 onwards (Continuatio Garstensis ad a. 1253, MGH SS 9, 600; Continuatio Sancrucensis Secunda ad a. 1239, MGH SS 9, 639; Continuatio Florianensis ad a. 1278, MGH SS 9, 748; Continuatio Vindobonensis ad a. 1276, MGH SS 9, 708, 713). The attitude of the individuals living in today's Slovenian Styria to various nobles, that were ruling the area through the 13<sup>th</sup> century, cannot be inferred from the *Annales*; however, the *Annales* can be considered a relatively reliable source.

At this point the Latin poem to the glory of the (then already former) Austrian-Styrian Duke Leopold VI von Babenberg should be mentioned, which was written in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the monastery of Jurklošter (*Gesta ducis Leupoldi*). The poem was translated and published in the Review for History and Ethnography in 1976 by the philologist Kajetan Gantar. The author of this work, which could roughly be classified as a biography, was the monk Sigfrid (*Syferidus*), of Swabian origin, who lived in Jurklošter in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Sigfrid portrayed the Duke Leopold VI in a most positive manner, which was namely due to the fact that Leopold restored the monastery of Jurklošter, in which Sigfried lived and felt very well, in his own words. In addition, according to Sigfrid Leopold was a very honest and pious man, who was supposed to have done many good deeds (Gantar, 1976, 235–236). Sigfrid did not talk about the events and people in the Slovenian Styria. His work can, however, be considered relatively reliable historically, which is partly spoiled by his great nostalgia and disagreement with the subsequent conditions. More information thereto can be found in the further discussed sources (Rybář, 2000, 40–41; Gantar, 1976, 231–241).

## MINNESANG IN THE TERRITORY OF THE EASTERN ALPS

In addition to the Chronicles, which in the 13<sup>th</sup> century were created in the monasteries of today's Austria in our review the layman, Ulrich von Liechtenstein, is now to be addressed in more detail. Ulrich, originating from the lineage of an allegedly free lower nobility rank, was born sometime in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century and was named after the castle Liechtenstein, located in the upper flow of the river Mura (Mur) in Judenburg. In the sources he was mentioned between 1227 and 1274, when he was quite active politically and militarily, and was among the most influential Styrian noblemen of his time (Dopsch, 1977, 111; Müller, Spechtler, 2003; [http://www.geschichtsquellen.de/repPers\\_118625306.html](http://www.geschichtsquellen.de/repPers_118625306.html)). Ulrich, who in his own words could neither read nor write, created two large-scale epic poems titled *Service of the Lady* (*Vrouwen dienst*) and the *Book of the Lady* (*Der vrouwen puoch*). The poem *Service of the Lady* is important for us, in which Ulrich in the first person point of view tells the story of the knight, who in various ways tries to get closer to his very respected and beloved lady, and to this end, travels and fights in her honor.

Unlike the Latin colorful monastic chronicles, the *Service of the Lady* of the noble Ulrich von Liechtenstein was created in a folk, i.e. German language of that time, in its Bavarian dialect (Paul, 1966, 17, 20, a map – Abb. 1) Schriftdialekte and mittelhochdeutscher- (–1350) mittelniederdeutscher (–1600) Zeit-map at the end of the book, the page without a number mark). The language was the so-called Middle High German (*Mittelhochdeutsch*), which evolved from the Old High German (*Althochdeutsch*) and which was spoken in the German-speaking area about three centuries, from the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In a narrow sense this term denotes the German language of the time period when the Hohenstaufen Dynasty (1138–1254) reigned in the Holy Roman Empire, especially the period between 1190 and 1250 (Engels, 2003).<sup>1</sup> At the very time period the German language reached the literary level with the boom of court love poetry (*Minnesang*) for the first time. The German area had most probably got acquainted with the South French lyric poetry for the first time already during the Second Crusade (1147–1149), when the French army crossed Regensburg (Mertens, 2003; Pintarič, 1996, 189–190; Štih, Simoniti, 2009, 187). Many of the German lyrical poets or minnesingers (*Minnesänger*) were of a noble origin. In addition to the courts of Thuringia and Bavaria the Hohenstaufen imperial court became their most important centre. Mainly during the reign of the already mentioned Duke Leopold VI (1194–1230) (<http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848/0469?sid=36b02747b6b8b7518dd5b68d57672e25>; Mertens, 2003) the Babenberg court in Vienna was also very important as one of the minnesinger centres. These courts, in which poets could create under the auspices of the various local dukes,<sup>2</sup> were the first centres of German literary creation (Lechner, 1994, 261–265).<sup>3</sup>

1 Middle High German developed in the so called Early New High German in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (*Frühneuhochdeutsch*), and was spoken until the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Paul, 1966, 17).

2 The most extensive manuscript collection of the German medieval poetry is the so called *Codex Manesse*, which was created in Zürich in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, among the authors of which Ulrich von Liechtenstein is also mentioned (Burdach, 1896).

3 The Babenberg Court of Vienna was one of the most important centres of the court culture in the Holy

In the last three or two decades of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in the German-speaking countries (even in today's Slovenian Styria) translations and modernizations of chivalry novels of the French author named Chrétien de Troyes appeared (Erec and Enide, Cligès, Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart, Yvain, the Knight of the Lion, Perceval, the Story of the Grail). Chrétien (around 1135–around 1190) who, unlike the Provençal troubadours, who wrote in the so called Old Occitan (*lenga d'òc*), wrote in the so called Old French (*langue d'oïl*). Some chivalry novels became so popular among the German nobility in that time, that they named their castles and children after the names from the novels. In *Parzival*, one of the most important German novels from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century (Kos, 2003, 159, 273–274; Kos, 2005, 341; Novak, 2009, 13, 24; Pintarič, 1996, 189–190), the author Wolfram von Eschenbach placed part of the events in the area of today's Slovenian Styria (the place of adventures of Parzival's uncle). At the turn of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century Wolfram, seemingly of Bavarian origin, entered the service of the Thuringian landgrave Herman I. (1190–1217), one of the main supporters of the German literaterary creation of his time. He obviously knew today's Slovenian territory well enough, so that in his poem he mentioned Celje, Rogatec and Hajdina, as well as duels with a multitude of brave Slavic (i.e. Slovenian) men. Strangely, however, he did not mention Ptuj at all, which was at that time one of the most prominent settlements, if not the most prominent settlement in what is Slovenia today, which was due to its exceptionally important transport position. Wolfram must have known of it (Eschenbach, 1994, 112–117, 9. book, stanzas 496–499; Eberhardt, 1969; Heinze, 2003; Kosi, 2009, 42, 44, 51–52; Štih, 1996, 537; Mertens, 2003; [http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/13Jh/Wolfram/wol\\_pa09.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/13Jh/Wolfram/wol_pa09.html); Štih, Simoniti, 2009, 185–187; Kos, 1997, 11–12).

In addition to the Middle High German being established as the language in which the minnesingers wrote poetry in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in the same century, and especially in the following one, it was being introduced in the prose, as well, which was mainly at the expense of Latin. Already in 1235 at the big Imperial Diet in Mainz the Peace of Mainz was created, which was, in addition to Latin, written in German, too. Moreover, at the same time (perhaps about ten years earlier), the so-called Saxon Mirror (*Sachsenspiegel*) was created, a collection of medieval German law, the first German (*Mittelniederdeutsch*) prose work at all. Already at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the territory of the Eastern Alps the home German language was increasingly used in the pulished documents (Brie, 1877; Lühr, 2003; Lieberwirth, 2003; Paul, 1966, map – Abb. 1: Schriftdialekte and mittelhochdeutscher- (–1350) mittelniederdeutscher (–1600) Zeit – map at the end of the book, the page without a numerical mark), and this trend continued and even increased in the course of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. With the exception of the documents issued for the ecclesiastical institutions, the imperial court office at the time of Louis IV the Bavarian (1314–1347) produced the documents in German (Lühr, 2003, 758–767).

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Roman Empire until the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, in which many minnesingers, epic poets and other masters were creating (Kürenberger, Ditmar von Ast, Reinmar von Hagenau, Walther von der Vogelweide, Neidhart von Reental, Tannhauser, Ulrich von Sachsendorf, Rudolf von Ems,...). In no other Germanic land (except in Iceland) such rich epic heritage is preserved as in Austria (Kos, 1997, 11).

While older historians viewed the poem of Ulrich von Liechtenstein as a reliable autobiographical work, today the widespread perception is that the majority of the events described therein were only imagined by him (Lexer, 1992, 31, 34, 357; Štih, Simoni, 2009, 186; [http://www.univie.ac.at/elib/index.php?title=Der\\_vrouwen\\_puoch\\_\(Ulrich\\_von\\_Liechtenstein\)&action=edit](http://www.univie.ac.at/elib/index.php?title=Der_vrouwen_puoch_(Ulrich_von_Liechtenstein)&action=edit); Gradivo V, No. 398; MDC IV/1, No. 1871). The description of the so called Friesacher Knights Tournament (since it supposedly took place in Friesach, Carinthia), which is only mentioned in his sources, is most interesting for us. At the tournament, according to Ulrich's words, more nobles of the area of today's Slovenian Styria participated, which were depicted as brave and famous men that fought well in the tournament. Irrespective of the fact whether the tournament did in reality take place, its description clearly demonstrates that the nobles of Slovenian Styria's were highly appreciated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and, like everyone else, were part of the high society of the territory of the Eastern Alps (Liechtenstein, 2000, 73–75, stanzas 186–194, 82, stanza 217, 84–85, stanzas 227–228, 509, stanza 1454, 655: *Der Roman–Gliederung*; Mlinar, 2005, 26–27, 195). In addition to these men who were truly Ulrich's contemporaries (Conrad I of Žovnek, Leopold II of Lemberg near Poljčane, Rainbert II of Mureck, Otto I of Kunšperk) the poet in some other part of his work also mentioned Nicholas of Lemberg near Dobrna, whose military capabilities he could not have praised more » [...] *he was praised for his efforts; I tell you the whole truth: there was not anybody better, he was afraid of no one on the battlefield and if he had to fight against the giants, he would have defeated them – this is how this noble man fought*« (Liechtenstein, 2000, 536, stanza 1551). Ulrich's style of writing shall be further discussed in detail.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the area of Slovenia three nowadays known minnesingers were active, all members of noble families, who were depicted in the above mentioned *Codex Manesse*. They wrote in Middle High German. The first singer was one of the liberal lords of Žovnek (*Der von Sounege*) maybe Conrad I († before 1255), or one of his sons (Gebhard III, Leopold III, Ulrich I or Conrad II). Three of his songs were preserved, in which he sings about unrequited love for an unnamed lady (*frouwe*), who ranked much higher in the then society than he (Kos, 2005, 260–261; Fugger Germadnik, 2006, 6–7; Janko, Henkel, 1997, 13–16, 29–35). He writes as follows: »*She is given all virtue– she is the woman of happiness, and beauty, who pushes me in the eternal concern, so that I do not know what is freedom, and as a faithful thrall without hope am dying under the armor of slavery. When she would only let me kiss her lips, I could regain my lost hope*« (Janko, Henkel, 1997, 32–33). The other minnesinger was obviously a knight from Gornji Grad (Upper Castle) or the surrounding area (*Der von Obernburg*), most probably a ministerial of the local Benedictine monastery, of who seven poems were preserved. As well as the Lord of Žovnek he also sings about his love to a worshiped woman (*wib*), which also remains unrequited (Janko, Henkel, 1997, 16–19, 36–51; <http://digi.ub.uni-eidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848/0680?sid=2a343c51e5b190f4b215077a442ae489>; Kos, 1997, 12).

The third singer was one of the Lords of Svibno (*Der von Scharpfenberg*) maybe Leopold I († 1279), a political opponent of Ulrich von Liechtenstein, the most important Styrian poet of his time. Unlike Ulrich von Liechtenstein the Lord of Svibno no longer praised the so called High Love (*hohe minne*) of an unfortunate knight serving his beloved

lady and at the same time desperately (but all too often in vain) trying hard to win her love and gratitude. Instead, he preferred to follow the Bavarian minnesinger Neidhart von Reuenthal, who was active in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Dopsch, 1999, 202; Kos, 2003, 192–193, 390–391; Kühnel, 1999). Neidhart introduced everyday, village, often rough and comical themes in his poems (*höfische Dorfpoesie*).<sup>4</sup> Following his example the Lord of Svibno wrote about a daughter (probably of a quite low status) who is being persuaded by her mother in vain, not to give in to her lover, and about the girls who are sharing their love problems. The poetic skills of the Lord of Svibno, whose only two songs are preserved, were far below those of the Lord of Žovnek and of the Lord of Gornji Grad (Janko, Henkel, 1997, 19–21, 52–60; <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848/0403?sid=2a343c51e5b190f4b215077a442ae489>; <http://www.retrobibliothek.de/retrobib/seite.html?id=111796#Neidhart%20von%20Reuenthal>; Kos, 1997, 12; Kos, 2005, 223; Kühnel, 1999, 44–45).

## THE LAND BOOK OF AUSTRIA AND STYRIA

After the introduction of the development of the German lyric poetry of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in which also the nobles of the territory of today's Slovenian Styria are mentioned, let us briefly address another, yet not so important work, written in the Middle High German, i.e. the so-called Land Book of Austria and Styria (*Landbuch von Österreich und Steier*) (Das Landbuch von Österreich und Steirer, MGH Dt. Chron. 3, 706). It was created in Vienna sometime between 1276 and 1281, at a time when the King Rudolf I von Habsburg lived there. Rudolf was in preparations to take over for his family the so called former Babenberg lands, particularly the Duchies of Austria and Styria.

As early as at the end of 1276 he was given consent from the state counts according to which the future Duke of Austria should acquire all former Babenberg lands, provided that the Babenbergs had acquired them in a lawful manner. It was necessary, therefore, to individually establish that those former Dukes of Austria and Styria had lawfully obtained their many lands and rights (even in today's Slovenian Styria). A special committee was nominated thereto, which by drawing up the Land Book provided the ruler with the necessary evidence; this was a heritage inventory, which stretched in time to the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the circumstances in which it was created and as it comprised a lot of inaccuracies the Land Book is a rather problematic source, e.g. claiming that »*Count Bernhard of Maribor left the border Count Otokar of Styria the Maribor Castle and the borough with everything pertaining to it*« (Das Landbuch von Österreich und Steier, MGH Dt. Chron. 3, 708). Today we know that in 1147, in the period which the said passage describes, the Maribor Castle very likely had not been built yet, and that the district (if it had already

4 It is possible that Neidhart von Reuenthal and Leopold I (?) of Svibno had also got personally acquainted. Although a native Bavarian, Neidhart obviously lived in Austria (after 1230), where the Austrian and Styrian Duke Frederik II, the Quarrellsome, the last Austrian Duke from the House of Babenberg, was his patron (Lechner, 1994, 296, Stammtafel der Babenberger, genealogical table at the end of the book, a page without a number mark; <http://www.retrobibliothek.de/retrobib/seite.html?id=111796#Neidhart%20von%20Reuenthal>).

existed) had not yet had borough rights. Based on the Land Book misconceptions prevailed in historiography for a very long period of time. Consequently, it is of a low value as an independent historical source (Štih, 2006, 244–248; Ravnikar, 2014, 25–29).

#### THE AUSTRIAN RHYME CHRONICLE

The author of the last narrative source, which will be mentioned in our discussion, was a man named Ottokar aus der Gaal (Gaal, northwest of Knittelfeld in Styria). Ottokar (*Otacher ouz der Geul*) was born around 1265 in the family of the Strettweg ministerials, who held in fief the possessions of the Dukes of Liechtenstein and of the Bishops of Seckau. In 1297 he was probably present at the coronation of Vaclav II (son of Otakar II Přemysl) for the King of Bohemia. Seven years later he was again in the Czech territory with the Habsburg army. In 1313 he travelled to the Aragonese court as a member of the delegation of the Duke Frederick III von Habsburg and returned home via the Rhineland, Flanders and Thuringia only in May 1317. In January 1322 he was already deceased (Mlinar, 2005, 27–28; Liebertz-Grün, 2003; Štih, Simoniti, 2009, 187). As the poet Ulrich von Liechtenstein before him, Ottokar aus der Gaal was also a layman and wrote in Middle High German. He may have remembered Ulrich from his childhood, and later he was closely connected with his son Otto II; in his court he may have got educated (among other things he knew Latin). It is even possible that Ottokar is identical with the Styrian with the same name, who was registered in 1291 in the matrixes of the Bologna University. Among other things he knew the court poetry of that time. He mentioned master Conrad of Rotenberg as his teacher, once active in the court of the Sicilian King Manfred († 1266) (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, lines 323–326, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, XCIV, CI, 5; Štih, Simoniti, 2009, 187; Uehli, 1997, 221–223; Stelzer, 1955; Görich, 2006, 117–118).

The work for which Ottokar aus der Gaal is known is written in verse and called the *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle* (known also under the name of *Styrian Rhyme Chronicle* or *Steirische Reimchronik*). As regards the timeframe it covers the period between the death of Emperor Frederick II in 1250 and the year 1309, when in the middle of the description of the resistance of the Lower Austrian nobles against Duke Frederick III it suddenly ends. In the work mainly the history of various dukes and nobility is presented. In addition to the events in the territory of the Eastern Alps (Mlinar, 2005, 27–28), further developments in the Holy Land, France, Flanders, Italy, Hungary, in the Czech territory and elsewhere are depicted. Ottokar, as opposed to other persons writing in verse of that time, managed to raise his native German language to such a high level that it was possible to start using it also in historiography in Styria and Austria (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/2, 1417–1437; Liebertz-Grün, 2003). It also appears that he not only wrote the mentioned *Chronicle*, but also the work lost for us, which covered the period »from the Assyrians until the Emperor Frederick II«. In addition, his intention was to write the history of the Popes, too. The obvious success of his first work and the early literary influence by the Liechtenstein family certainly encouraged him to start writing the respective *Chronicle* (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, lines 14–32, 48931–48933, 80450–80452, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, 5/2, CXXIII, 1, 646, 1055; Mlinar, 2005, 28–29).

The *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle* (nearly 100,000 verses) was being created over a longer period of time. The German literature expert, Joseph Seemüller, who in 1890 published its critical edition, concluded, that Ottokar began to write the Chronicle in the middle of the first decade of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and perhaps finished it only at the end of the second decade of the same century (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, vrstice 98595–98598, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, 5/2, I–CXXV, 1–1277; Liebertz-Grün, 2003; [http://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1\\_S/Seemueller\\_Joseph\\_1855\\_1920.xml](http://www.biographien.ac.at/oeb1/oeb1_S/Seemueller_Joseph_1855_1920.xml)). We listed the *Chronicle* among our addressed narrative sources despite the fact that it was obviously created slightly after the end of the considered timeframe. This was done for several reasons; namely, Ottokar was not someone who would describe the events a century or more centuries after they had occurred. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century he had already spent most of his life and he knew the then events and their many important actors firsthand. He started writing his *Chronicle* probably shortly after the year 1300 when his memory was still fresh. Due to the large amount of information, which he had as a young nobleman with good connections and education, he is virtually an indispensable resource for the history of the territory of Eastern Alps in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The linguistic analysis of Ottokar's *Rhyme Chronicle* was conducted by the Austrian linguist Eberhard Kranzmayer in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ([http://austria-forum.org/af/AEIOU/Kranzmayer,\\_Eberhard](http://austria-forum.org/af/AEIOU/Kranzmayer,_Eberhard)). In the text he made four caesuras (in the verses 7,000, 25,000, 49,000 and 96,000), which correspond to both, the substantive analysis, as well as to the events in the author's life. The caesura around the verse 7,000 was presumably made in 1304 during the Ottokar's stay in Prague for the second time, whereas the caesura in the verse 49,000 supposed to be the result of his trip to the Iberian Peninsula. The sources, on which Ottokar drew, can be divided in three groups (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, LVIII–LXXV; Mlinar, 2005, 28–29; Kranzmayer, 1950, 21, 116). The first source was poetic works. Among others he mentioned the poets such as Wolfram von Eschenbach and Hartmann von Aue, as well as Ulrich von Liechtenstein and the aforementioned Conrad von Rotenberg. He also knew Friderick von Sonnenberg, Henry and Ulrich von dem Türlin, Jans Enikel, the famous Franciscan preacher Berthold von Regensburg, and some others. Apparently he was familiar with at least some of the popular heroic epics (e.g. The Song of the Nibelungs) (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, lines 89745–89757, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/2, 1168; Rosenfeld, 1955; Mlinar, 2005, 28–29; Kranzmayer, 1950, 13–19, 107; Haider, 1974). The second group is represented by the historical works. Joseph Seemüller managed to prove that Ottokar availed himself of a whole range of the Salzburg and the *Austrian annales* (written in Latin), in addition, he may have been acquainted with the sources of Alsace, Erfurt and the Czech territory. The third group of Ottokar's resources is represented by the data which he obtained from his trustees and friends, to whom he repeatedly refers in the text of the Chronicle (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, lines 6118–6123, 96006–96011, 98465–98467, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, 5/2, LIX–LXI, 81, 1245, 1275). These were mostly the Styrian ministerials and Ottokar's acquaintances among the aristocracy of the territory of the Eastern Alps. We do not know whether all of the data was collected in person (we should keep in mind his extensive travels), or he was assisted thereto. Given that the

collection of large amounts of data was definitely associated with significant funding, it is not unlikely that he was supported by various donors (perhaps by Otto II von Liechtenstein). Ottokar addressed the collected sources very differently; sometimes he followed the main source, yet at other times he drew on numerous reports (Mlinar, 2005, 29–30).

## REVIEW AND COMPARISON

After three most important narrative sources for the Slovenian Styria of the 13<sup>th</sup> century were highlighted, it is time to compare them in more detail against each other, and to expose the differences between them. Apart from the obvious and the already mentioned difference in the language the first thing worth mentioning is the authorship of the addressed works. The authors of the *Annales* are anonymous clerics. They write in the third person and in a concise manner, but they do not pay attention to details. The reader can with great certainty conclude that they did not themselves witness the events they describe. On the other hand, the authorship of the poem *Service of the Lady* and of the Austrian *Rhyme Chronicles* is known. In particular, the work of the noble Ulrich von Liechtenstein is completely autobiographical and the author certainly has no intention to conceal his identity. Almost immediately at the beginning (and later) he mentions both his first name as an epithet, and across the poem some of his relatives, friends, acquaintances and the home castle (Liechtenstein, 2000, 14, verse 36, 16, verse 44, 19, verse 52, 21, verse 61, 72, verse 181, 101, verse 289, 112, Brief b, 138, verse 397), as well.

In Ottokar aus der Gaal's work the situation is somewhat different. Throughout his long poem Ottokar reveals his identity only once, and even then only with his baptismal name.<sup>5</sup> As in his introduction to the publication of the Austrian *Rhyme Chronicle* Joseph Seemüller wrote, without this one and only mentioning today we would not even know the name of the man who had written the *Chronicle*. It is obviously not Ottokar's intent to praise his own adventures and high chivalric love in the *Chronicle*, but above all, to depict the history and glorious deeds and personalities of the area of the Eastern Alps, and in particular of Styria – his homeland (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, LXXXVIII).

As it seems, the biggest difference between the narrative sources is in details. As mentioned above, the authors of *Annales* do not pay attention to details. The Styrians are treated as a group and rarely an individual is singled out if he is not the Pope, (Arch) bishop, Abbot, Emperor, King, Duke or Margrave (Continuatio Zwetlensis Altera ad a. 1180, MGH SS 9, 541; Continuatio Admuntensis ad a. 1207, MGH SS 9, 591; Continuatio Zwetlensis Tertia ad a. 1254, 1260, MGH SS 9, 655).<sup>6</sup> It has to be acknowledged, too,

5 Ottokar reveals his name in conversation with the so called Madam Love (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, lines 18169–18187, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, 5/2, 241, 1298 (Register), 1421).

6 A typical record in any of them thus reads as follows: »1212. The Emperor Otto died and the son of the Emperor Henry, the Naepolitan King Frederick, was elected in his place. In the same year the Hungarian Queen and the daughter of the Duke of Merania was killed« (Continuatio Lambacensis ad a. 1212, MGH SS 9, 558).

that chroniclers are repeatedly mistaken for a year or two, and are not always accurate with the titles, but their works are nonetheless very useful.

The situation is totally different in the works of Ulrich von Liechtenstein and Ottokar aus der Gaal. They both describe the events often in detail, they pay more attention to describing the individuals, and at the same time they do not deal exclusively with the members of the highest social classes (of course, they both mention them). There are also big differences between them. Ottokar neither cherishes any personal relationships with many of the described people nor meets them in person. It happens that he does not provide for the judgement of their virtues in any way, but only reports on their activities (Mlinar, 2005, 31). Ulrich von Liechtenstein is, as regards the latter, in Ottokar's direct opposition. He can also afford such a stanza, because he does not provide his audiences primarily with a historical account, but his purpose is mainly to describe his love and noble deeds. His work has a more literary than historical value. As a typical representative of his poetic orientation Ulrich always includes a lot of emotions and personal opinions in his narrations. His diction is consequently full of ornamental attributes. With few exceptions, he is on friendly terms with the various people he meets during his amorous adventures, and often describes them with great enthusiasm.<sup>7</sup> Many local nobles, who he meets on his travels, are great heroes in his eyes, in a chivalrous outfit, of noble behaviour, they are great fighters, and, in general, worthy of every admiration.<sup>8</sup>

Among the depicted individuals in the works of Ulrich and Ottokar, as already said, the people of the area of today's Slovenian Styria are found, too. Ulrich, faithful to his style, describes them as excellent fighters, and this is often all we can learn from him. As a historical source he is, therefore, useful only in rare cases. Above all, his poem could be used as a list of locally important nobility of the territory of the Eastern Alps, whereas there are no data about concrete political actions of the outlined nobles in it. These can be found in Ottokar's work, who presents the noblemen of today's Slovenian Styria in the context of the then military and political developments, in which they are themselves involved. Otherwise Ottokar picturesquely describes various festive events, but he does not care only for noble behavior and great knight's outfit of the participants. He is interested

7 We find out from Ulrich's poem that on one of his trips he was disguised in Venus (*Venusfahrt*). He travelled from the vicinity of Venice to Bohemia with his companions and on the way he challenged locals to duels. Among them there was only one monk, with whom Ulrich refused to fight, because that did not befit him as a knight. When the monk would not want to give up, Ulrich, although very angry, finally accepted the challenge. He then hit the monk with a strong blow, and he consequently fell off the horse and remained unconscious lying on the ground. As somebody who Ulrich is extremely resentful towards, the monk in the addressed poem is a major exception (Liechtenstein, 2000, 219, stanzas 618–619, 220, stanza 620, 222, stanzas 629–630, 224–225, stanzas 636–641).

8 Ulrich speaks of the nobles that he encounters, as follows, e.g.: »Henry and the noble Cholo from Trixen, who actually came, further, I could also see the noble Otto from Graz, his brother used many spears there, the name of the man was the noble Ortoľ, he was familiar with his knighthood. A hero came from Wolkenstein, who knew a lot about knighthood. The noble Gundaker came from Steyr, and so did his brother Dietmar; the noble Eckerhart came from Tann, who always kept himself safe from injuries, the noble Gundaker from Starkenberg, who performed chivalrous acts under his armor, the noble Albrecht came from Nußberg, a capable knight as it befits« (Liechtenstein, 2000, 76, stanzas 195–196).

also in their participation in various political alliances or battles (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, lines 5651–5675, 5712–5713, 5814–5841, 6099–6129, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, 75–77, 81). He is trying to provide for a consistent historical report.

The political maneuvers of the Hungarian King Bela IV, who was trying to gain control of Styria in the early fifties of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, are described as follows:

*It was his will to ride soon to the King Bela, in order to get his aid and advice. The Duke did not stall, he was ready for the journey very quickly, and with him the one from Weißennegg set off in a carefree manner. There, at Székesfehérvár, he met the King his brother-in law. Leopard had never been seen in such a colorful fur with so many colors, except when he had to disclose his thoughts to the King. When he began his narration, his thoughts began to wander. When the King heard the report, he thought that if he was to subordinate Styria with his power, he would have to suffer a lot. What he should repay the loyalty of his brother-in law with? And he thought to himself wisely, he should adopt this oath in good faith, and should be really careful, so that before he would start, he would see how the situation would be like in terms of the profit. Then the King gave to the noble Dietmar from Weißennegg so much wealth in advance, because he was so courageous, that he had come to tell to the King of his plea so devotedly and wanted to fulfill his wish, in poverty or wealth. Also, the rich King sent via him a great fortune to be distributed to the nobles according to the King's will. And, because he did not want to stay any longer, he asked him to perform his work among the the nobles. And, that, when it would please him, he would return to the country. I'll tell you who he called: he was gladly accepted by the Frederick of Ptuj, and he did not leave out the Lord of Wildon. And also Wulfing von Stubenberg agreed that the matter should be carried out, and so did the Count Henry von Pfannberg. Cholo, who was trusted, also came to him from places beyond the river Drava, from Vuzenica. Also the Lord of Marenberg came; also Siegfrid von Kranichberg agreed with the matter and so did the bartender from Rabenstein. All these nobles, that I mentioned, were given each his share (depending on their rank) from the wealth sent by the King, by the noble Ditmar, so that they would, at their own will, choose the King Bela as the ruler (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, lines 2044–2123, MGH Dt. Chron. 5/1, 27–29).<sup>9</sup>*

In his descriptions Ottokar aus der Gaal, frankly speaking, is often somewhat biased, yet still precise enough. For a historian his work is a much richer, more comprehensive and reliable source, while his artistic level is below Ulrich's, as Ottokar fails to reach the beauty of Ulrich's language, which rich in attributes.

## CONCLUSION

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the territory of the Eastern Alps experienced great changes, both in a political and literary sense. The said areas were deeply penetrated by the medieval knight's

9 I would like to thank Jan Vrhovski for the above translation.

lyric and epic, written in the native language. In this territory, too, literary works began to be created, whose authors no longer originated only from the ranks of the clergy, but also from among the local nobles. At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century more and more official documents were being written in the German language of the time, and the process continued in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Also in the area of today's Slovenian Styria, in addition to Latin, one started to write only in German, even though a considerable part of the upper strata of the population understood also the Slovenian language of the time. Much of the nobility was at least bilingual and even trilingual in Istria and on the border with Friuli. The German language prevailed in discussions, and was gaining in importance in writing, too (Štih, Simoniti, 2009, 152).

In summary of the above mentioned facts among the (for the history of the Slovenian Styria) basic narrative sources of the 13<sup>th</sup> century mainly the *Austrian Annales*, the *Service of the Lady* by Ulrich von Liechtenstein and the *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle* by Ottkar aus der Gaal may be highlighted. The works differ among themselves in style, in the scope and in the language in which they are written. The *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle* may be highlighted as by far the most important source for a political historian, both because of its scope and the amount of the provided information, as well as due to the fact that it is a largely reliable historical source. A big advantage of that work is the fact that its author was, at least in terms of education and travel, high above the average of the people of his time (also as regards the people of his rank).

The *Service of the Lady* is written at the highest artistic level, but at the same time it is almost useless, and sometimes even misleading for a political historian, because few real historical events are mixed with a large number of the fictional ones. On the other hand, it allows the reader an excellent insight into the way of life and thinking of the nobility of the Eastern Alps in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Much information regarding the latter can also be found in the *Austrian Rhyme Chronicles*, but the *Service of the Lady* surpasses it in this respect. The *Austrian Annales* do not provide for an insight into the everyday life of that time at all, and are limited to concise reports on the most important political events. Their great advantage is especially their transparency, as the reader gets to know exactly which event happened in which year.

Clear chronology, that distinguishes the *Annales*, is problematic in both the *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle*, as well as in the *Service of the Lady*. If the reader wants to place the events in chronological order in the *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle*, he would be best advised with the so called Table of contents of the *Rhyme Chronicle* (Übersicht über den Inhalt der Reimchronik), which was created by its publisher Joseph Seemüller (Ottokars Österreichische Reimchronik, MGH Dt. Chron. 01/05, 1417–1437: Übersicht über den Inhalt der Reimchronik). In the *Service of the Lady* the placement of events in a chronological order is even a greater problem; yet, the majority of the mentioned events in this work are the result of the author's imagination, anyway. Each of these three narrative sources has its (bigger or smaller) advantages and disadvantages. The *Austrian Rhyme Chronicle* was already exposed as the core source of all of them. However, in conclusion it should be acknowledged that each source separately does not provide for all possible information about the period it describes. A much more complete picture of the then events, of the manner of thinking and of overall situation can only be obtained with the knowledge of all three of them.

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NARATIVNIH VIRIH 13. STOLETJA*Martin BELE*

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## POVZETEK

*Pri narativnih virih gre za vire napisane v pripovedni obliki. Ko je govora o narativnih virih 13. stoletja, ki se tičejo prostora današnje slovenske Štajerske, je v prvi vrsti treba omeniti anale, ki so nastali v avstrijskih samostanih. Beležili so dogajanje lokalnega značaja, občasno pa najdemo v njih tudi podatke v zvezi s širšim vzhodnoalpskim prostorom. Vsi so bili pisani v latinščini. Plemiči, ki so v obravnavanem času spadali v okvir štajerske vojvodine se v njih omenjajo le kot skupina. Poleg kronik, je treba obravnavati laika Ulrika Liechtensteinskega, rojenega v začetku 13. stoletja. Za nas je pomembna njegova epska pesnitev Služba dami (nastala v nemškem jeziku tedanjega časa), v kateri Ulrik v prvi osebi pripoveduje zgodbo viteza, ki se poskuša približati svoji dami. Danes prevladuje mnenje, da gre pri večini opisanih dogodkov za plod domišljije. Ulrik v svojem delu opiše tudi več plemičev s področja slovenske Štajerske. Avtor zadnjega pomembnejšega narativnega vira (imenovanega Avstrijska rimana kronika) je Otokar iz Geule. Kronika obsega obdobje med smrtjo cesarja Friderika II. leta 1250 in letom 1309. Je predvsem zgodovina raznih knezov in plemstva. Poleg dogodkov v vzhodnoalpskem prostoru, opisuje še dogajanje v Sveti deželi in drugod po Evropi. Zaradi velike količine informacij je za zgodovino vzhodnoalpskega prostora v 13. stoletja nepogrešljiv vir.*

*Ključne besede: narativni viri, današnja slovenska Štajerska, 13. stoletje, Avstrijski anali, Služba dami, Avstrijska rimana kronika*

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