

The objective of the thesis

The present thesis is going to be a summary of the phases and turning points of Eberhard Windecke's career with special respect to his stay in Hungary, which belonged to the first stage of his career. In contrast with several former researches, we are going to frame Windecke's biography into the history of economics, instead of framing it into its interrelations with the history of politics. This is an approach that has not been carried out by any researchers so far. A further aim is to create a registry of the Eberhard Windecke records, which should incorporate the Hungarian sources related to Windecke's life unexplored by researchers on the one hand, and the documents collected by Wilhelm Altmann on the other hand. The use of the actualized biographical data provides an opportunity to make Eberhard Windecke's itinerary, which is going to be compared with the well-known itinerary of Sigismund of Luxemburg, in order to demonstrate when and where the life of the chronicler and the life of the king entwined, and, furthermore, to learn what kinds of events could the author of the memoirs have witnessed or heard of. We undertook to summarise the last stage of his career, from 1425 – as it was not in lack of early investigation – so as to provide a more complete essay.

1. Eberhard Windecke and his memoirs in the previous researches

Eberhard Windecke was not as well-educated as the other learned chroniclers of the age. As a burgher of

Mainz, being concerned with financial and trade issues, he observed different events – or at least viewed them from a different point of view – than the contemporary chroniclers. Despite of its queerness and imperfectness, the Windecke memoirs seem to have been regarded popular works, as – although the original, autographical manuscripts are still undiscovered – we have five different copies of them from the 15th century, two of them illustrated; and several further copies of them remained from the 16th and 17th centuries. The research of the manuscripts has not produced the stemma yet. Also, the investigation of the author's biography could not be regarded accurate enough so far, since the German researchers of the 19th century could have neither the Hungarian sources nor the complete sources in Germany at their disposal.

2. The Windecke family and the young Eberhard

The Windecke family belonged to the patricians of Mainz. In his memoirs Windecke claims to be in relationship with families like Issenecke and Schenkenberg, families with a great fame. In spite of his patrician origin, the Windecke family does not seem to be one of the most outstanding families. That is to say, they were not the members of the council of the city; their names do not turn up on the list of the burgomasters, and, on the contrary to other notable families, not any offices or land in fief were given to them either by the emperors or by the archbishops until 1422. In the second half of the 14th

century Konrad Windecke hired the goldweights from the town, which examined whether the golden coins were of full weight. There is an example to justify that his father also was interested in financial affairs. Leaving his father's house, the nearly thirteen-year-old young man headed towards the towns allied with Mainz. First, he went to Worms along the river Rhine, then he went to Frankfort, a town rivalling with Mainz in economy, along the river Main. However, the northern economic region of Nuremberg was his final destination. His third journey led him straight to Nuremberg, from where he soon moved along to Eger, which – along with Prague and the other west-bohemian towns – had been a destination for both business and settling, frequented by the Nurembergish, and later, by their followers, the southern German traders and investors since 1321. Here Windecke was employed as an apprentice by the Junkherr family, one of whose members had been the chamber count of Kremnica since 1426. On the basis of the memoirs it is supposed that Windecke might have entered into the service of Sigismund of Luxemburg, as early as his stay in Bohemia. In fact, his entering into service during his stay in Bohemia can only be understood in an indirect way. The traders, who were assisted by Windecke in his years of apprenticeship, supported the “royal court of Prague” financially, i.e. the ruler from the Luxemburg dynasty in power. Between 1395 and 1401 Windecke turned his former eastern journeys to Cologne, which was an important trading stopover of both the Northern-Southern route along the river Rhine, and the western-eastern route from Flanders, towards

Saxony. In the 14th and 15th centuries the role of the Colognes traders was taken over by the Nurembergish traders, who were given a custom immunity on the whole territory of Flanders from 1362. They were permanently present by their representatives in the Flemish towns, which were acknowledged as the seats of the textile industry in the Medieval Europe. Passing through Flanders Windecke got to Paris, where he spent three years. There were only few Nurembergish wholesalers who had some interests in the seat of the French kingdom. Hans Rappold, one of them, is of great interest, since it is ensured that he was a member of the Kraft-v. Locheim-Stark company up to 1413, and his business concerns bound him to Paris so much that when, searching for support of king Ruprecht in Paris, in 1400, he entrusted Hans Rappold with gathering certain amounts of money as deposits for him. All this is significant on the one hand, because the task carried out by Rappold is miraculously similar to the mission that Windecke had to carry out later, during the European journey of king Sigismund. Besides, Louis III. of Bavaria-Ingolstadt was accompanied by Eberhard Windecke, among others in 1400, as it is known. It cannot be disclosed that Eberhard Windecke was working for Rappold from Nuremberg during the three years of his stay in Paris. It is curiously significant that it was Windecke's first step forward to the royal courts of the princes, leaving the business area controlled by burghers, and entering into the Prince's service. He may have reached the circle of the Prince by his experiences in Paris, or he may have been recommended to the Prince by Hans Rappold. As

we know that he visited Prince Stephen due to an unsettled debt in 1402, we can assume that the young man of Mainz was one of those who financed his journey. Windecke arrived in Vienna on the *via Regensburg* in 1402, where he entered into the service of Laurentz Groland, who had been in family relation with the best-established enterprising family in Nuremberg – known all over Europe – by his mother; besides, he was a partowner of the Stromer company with a continent-wide network. At the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries Laurentz functioned as the representative of the Stromer company in Vienna, his relatives, as the representatives of the company in Buda, were elected the members of the council of the city. Supposedly, Windecke had been to Hungary several times until 1406, and leaving Vienna in 1406, he moved to Buda. This date coincides with the arrival of Ulrich Vorchtel at Buda, who became the new representative for the Stromer company. Vorchtel – whose father-in-law, Ulrich Kamerer was a comes urburae and tricesimarum in Hungary 1394-1397, and a comes tricesimarum from 1411 again; and one of his sons-in-law, Peter Reichel was the chamber count of Kremnica 1425-28; his other son-in-law, Budai Farkas László was the judge of the city Buda – was in the service of Sigismund as a financial proctor. In this way it can be assumed that Eberhard Windecke got into Sigismund's milieu due to Vorchtel. The relationship between Windecke and Vorchtel can be justified, as it is exactly known that one of the reasons why he went to Venice in 1408 was to deliver a certain amount of money in the court of Nuremberg on behalf of him – which is

likely to match the *Nürnberger Tafeln*, established within the walls of Fondaco dei Tedeschi, and it is justifiable on the basis of written sources from the end of the 15th century.

3. Eberhard Windecke, the burgher of Pozsony

The *via Regensburg* was not only one of the main routes of trading, but it was the so called “marriage market of the Danube” route as well, which spread from the southern German areas up to Buda. It was called so because the German speaking population often strengthened their business contracts with family relationships. Eberhard Windecke also chose a wife for himself from Pozsony (today: Bratislava in Slovakia), and a document dated in October 1409 refers to him as a burgher of Pozsony, due to his wife's fortune. It was the point when he felt the time to have come for him to establish his own business as a trader, using his experiences gathered during the years, and his wife's money. Ten mortgage bonds and entries of the property given in pledge remained from the period 1409-1415, which can be connected to the trading businesses made by Eberhard Windecke and his wife. From these it turns out that the couple undertook the importation of cloth especially, which is not exceptional, regarding the Hungarian–German trading relations in the 15th century. Knowing the measures of the credit items until 1413, it can be traced that the couple made only major businesses that exceeded the amount of 300 goldgulden. As regards their business partners, with the only exception of a trader from

Dinkelsbühl, they all belonged to the most important trading centres of the Holy Roman Empire – bound to Cologne and Nuremberg mainly, with which the Kingdom of Hungary had vigorous economic relationships that time. Examining the Windeckes' property status, we can rely on three accounts of taxes remained, beside the mortgage bonds mentioned above. Concerning the deed mortgages and the property tax assigned, we can state that the married couple with their two housing estates at least, their three vineyards, and their livestock were wealthier than the best-established craftsmen of the town, however they fell slightly behind the average property status of the burghers who were elected the members of the council of the city. In the literature, Eberhard Windecke staying in Pozsony is linked to Ulrich Rauchenwarter, the judge of the city Pozsony, and there is a view that they could have been business partners. On the mortgage bonds justifying Windecke's business activity, his wife's name can be found as the debtor, in all cases. We can never see the words *gesellschaft*, nor *geselle* next to his name; nor there is a single example – regardless of his wife – of his commitment, not even with other burghers in any credit transactions. Rauchenwarter's name turns up in two of the documents remained, he put his seal on one of them as the judge of the city, another time as the judge of the Jews, with the clause that he could not be the subject of any losses from the contract. The significance of this clause is that it excludes the obligation of the witness identified by his seal, i.e. the witness cannot be regarded as a bondman. That is to say, the assumption that the judge and the

trader co-operated in business, cannot be defended, however, the confidentiality of their relationship is undoubted. As the commitment between the judge and Sigismund, the Hungarian king is well-known and justified by several documents, we can suppose that the king's attention could have been drawn to his close friend, Eberhard Windecke by Ulrich Rauchenwarter, the loyalist judge of the city Pozsony, beloved by the ruler. Windecke's first known and justifiable service to the king's court is likely to fall on his stay in Pozsony, which was on 2nd march, 1410. On this day the Teutonic order gave over 40,000 Hungarian and Lübeckien lilled goldgulden to king Sigismund, the counting of which was assisted by Eberhard Windecke. We reconstructed the trading and business journeys of 1410-1413, and the dates he spent with the king and the time he spent in Pozsony with the help of the memoirs and other sources from Pozsony. Beside them, we used a record from December 1429 to investigate Windecke's last months in Pozsony, when his name was re-connected with Rauchenwarter. So far the view that Windecke and the judge, taking advantage of his power, were partners in fraudulent misuses of the town's money, has been unquestionable. According to sources that have recently been examined, it seems that the burghers of Pozsony themselves did not hold their indebtedness against Windecke; they merely referred to his name in connection with blowing of a riot – which is also likely to be bound to Rauchenwarter, in April 1413. First, Windecke escaped to the king in Cremona in order to avoid being accused; and when he recognised that his

return to Pozsony was impossible, he left for the iron cellar of Krakow via Szepes county. This fact ensures the assumption that Windecke could have been in contact with Nurembergish traders who were interested in businesses along the mine districts of the North-Carpathians. Windecke's betrayal of Konrad Hohnut, a burgher of Buda is related to his stay in Hungary, the date of which can only be deduced, in the same way as his cause of the court about the inheritance of Jorig Kuntzelman, a trader from Dinkelsbühl which lasted until 1432.

4. Eberhard Windecke's life on the halfway (1414-1418)

Eberhard Windecke, who had been working in the economic sphere of Nuremberg since the beginning of his wandering years, arrived at the twin cities – i.e. Berlin and Cölln – on the bank of Spree at the end of June 1414. The traders of Nuremberg had no concerns with the area, and, despite the position of the master-miller given to him by king Sigismund – which included all the mills around Berlin, providing the most important incomes of the margrave of Brandenburg –, Windecke did not seem to accommodate himself to his new surroundings. Accordingly, in the spring of 1415 he left the Margraviate of Brandenburg to go to Constance, where he joined king Sigismund's escort on his way to Aragon, France, and England. During the journey in January 1416, at Sigismund's request, utilizing his earlier commercial relations, Windecke went to Geneva to borrow money from the town that had

been famous for its markets; obviously with the purpose of covering the expenses of the king's further journeys. In the march of the same year, when Sigismund went to Paris, Windecke was sent to Flanders, the area which had the most developed economy of Europe, to ask for more money to support his journey to England. When the king returned to the continent in October, 1416, he immediately sent Windecke off Bruges, the centre of trading, in order to put the presents given to him by the king of England in pledge. When the mortgage bond came to its termination, urged by Windecke, Sigismund sent Eberhard to Lübeck to get further loans, with the help of which he wanted to get back the treasures bonded. In order that the treasures recaptured could be taken to Constance safely, Windecke placed them in the hands of three merchants from Nuremberg confidentially; Klaus Rummel was one of them, the representative of the Nurembergish trading and banking company in Cologne which had close relations to the Medici family. This is another evidence to justify that Windecke, the burgher of Mainz had the closest relationship with the Nurembergish traders. In the spring of 1418 Sigismund gave him the new task to enter into negotiations with the Rhenish city league. After the synod he stayed with the king, as he was present when Sigismund and Frederick IV., Duke of Austria made an agreement in Basel, May 1418, in which they stated that the allowance assigned to the king should be paid to Windecke. In October the king charged his servant with another mission in Pavia to the freshly elected Pope Martin V., which mission probably included a visit to the margrave of

Montferrat as well as the Duke of Savoy. That is to say, Windecke accomplished diplomatic services as well for king Sigismund.

5. The 2nd stage of Eberhard Windecke's life (1419-1440)

In the autumn of 1419 Windecke got back to Hungary to join the king who set off to Boroszló at the end of the year. He had accompanied Sigismund until November, 1420, i.e. between the imperial diet in Wrocław and the battle of Vyšehrad, however, it is not known what kind of tasks he took over. He can be found by the king in Regensburg in 1422, and it was the first time that a land had been given to him in fief. In the spring of 1423 he visited the Hungarian king twice, first at Kassa (today: Košice in Slovakia), then at Csepreg at the end of the year. The aim of his first journey was to reinforce his fief. On his second journey he carried out a mission given to him by Konrad, the archbishop-elect of Mainz, who asked him to intercede with the Roman king for the Duke of Guelder who wanted to obtain the province of Jülich. Windecke's successful mission was awarded: the Rhenish custom-office was given him in fief. After closing his "years of wandering" Eberhard Windecke returned to Mainz, his mother town. There he obtained a clear estate on the area of the town to provide him with regular incomes; and besides, as it seems, he went on pursuing his earlier trade, he provided the royal courts with money, at least as regards the Archbishop of Mainz. In the last decade of his life he even took part in the municipal administration of

Mainz. As the representative of the craftsmen guilds in 1428 he became one of the ten members of the committee which should have helped the municipal management overcome the financial difficulties by their recommendations and advice. The committee of the tens lost their influence in 1430 due to the opposing ancestries, but the hostility between Windecke and his personal adversary, Peter zum Jungen – who first made a complaint at the court of Sigismund of Luxemburg, then he started a prosecution against Windecke at the court of the Archbishop of Mainz, did not fade with the death of Eberhard. The private war between the Windecks and the zum Jungens came to an end not earlier than in 1453.

6. Eberhard Windecke's personality and education

Meanwhile Windecke immortalizes the reign of king Sigismund, he never ignores his own interest. Beside Sigismund, he almost becomes the main character of his memoirs, taking on his name, his personality and his views. The author seems to have a complex personality, he fascinated the king by his mathematical skills, however, he was in lack of a statistical capacity, which was not a common skill at his age, nor was the sense of time. On the contrary of the traditions of the age, Windecke does not begin his work at the genesis, despite of it, the typical Medieval views of history and time appear in his work, which can be characterised by a certain lack of sensitivity to the specific features of the historical

eras. At his twilight, the once ambitious, assertive and time-to-time deceitful young adventurer is proud to acknowledge himself as a wealthy and experienced burgher, into which he managed to turn from a poor merchant, surviving extraordinary times. He advises the young to leave their fatherland and visit foreign countries and farther royal courts to promote the prosperity of their offsprings, their relatives and themselves. Saying this, Windecke obviously asserts that for him a fruitful life gains its award in earthly welfare.

The results of the thesis

We examined Eberhard Windecke's career in the light of the history of economics. In this way we came to the conclusion that this merchant of Mainz was working by traders, companies and banks of Nuremberg from the beginning of his "wandering years". Living in Pozsony he started his own business, however, he kept a good contact with the burghers of Nuremberg even that time, and he was able to utilize these relations at the time of his services to the king. He undertook diplomatic services for the king as well as other princes after 1418. His participation in trading and banking transactions can be taken into account during the first stage of his career, which was underlined in the present thesis. While examining his stay in Hungary, we attempted to collect and investigate all records in the town-books, the mortgage-bonds, the letters and other documents made in the area of the Medieval

Hungarian Kingdom, which can be related to Eberhard Windecke. Not only we have embedded these documents into Windecke's biography that was drawn mainly on the basis of the records from his memoirs, but also in each necessary case we corrected the dates denoted by Windecke, based on the records remained to us. Also, we had the chance to find the links between the records from Hungary and some of the well-known documents originated from the territory of the Holy Roman Empire. As it was intended, we have established the Windecke records to include the Hungarian docket of all old and newly known documents related to the Windeckes. We have prepared Eberhard Windecke's itinerary, with the help of which we managed to justify or deny the presence of the chronicler at the most prominent events.