

# Helene Kottannerin. Queen Elizabeth's Lady-in-Waiting Who Stole the Hungarian Crown. A Book Project

**October 19, 2022**  
**5:40 p.m. CET**

**Room A-211, Quellenstrasse 51, Vienna**

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&

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Early in 1440, the recently widowed Hungarian queen Elisabeth of Luxembourg was about to give birth to a child. She hoped for a son and heir to the Hungarian throne after her late husband Albert's II death and was anxious about his succession. Hence, she sent her lady-in-waiting Helene Kottannerin to the castle of Visegrad, where the kingdom's Holy Crown was safely stored, to get this important symbol of royal legitimation for her unborn child's later coronation. Helene, who originated from the small town of Sopron/Ödenburg on the border between Hungary and the Austrian lands, not only successfully mastered the adventure, but later composed one of the most amazing ego-documents written in late medieval Central Europe. Our book presents the first published translation into modern German of Helene's spectacular account, which covers the "crown-adventure" itself, but also provides various insights into Elisabeth's court and family life, the critical political and military situation vis-à-vis the Ottoman threat, the Hungarian opposition to the queen's dynastic plans, and

thus Elisabeth and Helene's agency in managing these challenges. In our presentation, we will lay out our motives for translating the text, the structure of our own scholarly account that frames Helene's text and the ways we hope to share the text's attraction with students, academics and a wider audience.



*Julia Burkhardt is Professor for Medieval Studies at the University of Munich. She is a PI on the project "Monasteries in the High Middle Ages" (Heidelberg Academy of Sciences), where she is currently preparing an edition of Caesarius of Heisterbach's "Miracle Books" (with Isabel Kimpel). Her research interests cover political, cultural and gender history in Central Europe, esp. in Germany, Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. Her main research fields are: history of representative assemblies, dynastic history, monasteries and monastic text production.*

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