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Matilde e il tesoro dei Canossa: Tra castelli, monasteri e città (review)

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should be "Michahel"). A serious proofreading problem affects the entries for the Cross feast on September 14, which Rushforth renders in all twenty-seven calendars as "Exultation," rather than the expected "Exaltation." But of the calendars checked in Wormald's edition, only three actually have *Exultatio*; the rest have, more correctly, *Exaltatio*.

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Matilde e il tesoro dei Canossa: Tra castelli, monasteri e città. Edited by Arturo Calzona. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan: Silvana Editoriale. 2008. Pp. 607. €35,00 paperback. ISBN 978-8-836-61168-3.)

Three exhibitions on Matilda of Canossa were held in 2008 in Mantua, in Reggio Emilia, and at the monastery of San Benedetto Polirone. The volume under review is the catalog for the Reggio Emilia show, and it exemplifies both the strengths and weaknesses of the current culture of exhibiting in Italy. The opportunity to engage a broad public audience in an exploration of the medieval past is salutary, of course, and one must applaud the public entities and corporate sponsors that make such encounters possible. It seems, however, that one model of engagement has overcome all others: the big, blockbuster exhibition. Some topics and themes are well adapted to this model, but others are merely smothered by it.

The Reggio Emilia show is a case in point. At the core of this exhibition was an interesting collection of sculptural fragments, mosaics, and liturgical objects from the cathedral of Reggio Emilia and parish churches in the region. Other pieces were sensibly added—chiefly manuscripts, tomb reliefs, and inscriptions—to illustrate the patronage of the countess Matilda. This relatively modest assemblage offered an opportunity to reflect upon local ecclesiastical cultures and assess the impact of a figure such as Matilda whose cultural horizons and contacts were so much broader. An important interpretive question surfaces in several of the contributions to this volume that could have given it real coherence: Was there a distinctive culture of "reform"? The mini-mono-graph (more than 150 pages) by Massimo Mussini on ecclesiastical architecture in the countryside argues that Matilda's support for the adoption of the common life as a tool of reform is evident in the forms of rural churches. The evidence here is too tenuous to sustain the claim, but the systematic overview of surviving structures is valuable. Giacomo Baroffio's contribution on medieval musical notation and the diffusion of a Roman style in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is also tantalizing, even if the connection to reform is more suggestive than solid. Three more methodologically acute essays on this issue are Giuseppe Z. Zanichelli's intelligent analysis of Matilda's manuscript patronage as supporting reform but also memorializing her lineage, Dorothy Glass's nuanced reading of the Genesis frieze on the façade of the cathedral of Modena as a local articulation of reform concerns, and Peter Cornelius Claussen's incisive survey of the very different architectural and sculptural

styles evident in Rome across the “reform” era. Also extremely valuable are Tiziana Lazzari’s essay and maps charting the development of the family patrimony inherited by Matilda. The publication of these essays and objects makes a worthwhile contribution to our understanding of Matilda and reform.

A great deal of extraneous material was added, however, to make this a big exhibition and a huge catalog: objects with no apparent connection to Matilda or the “treasury” of the Canossa and equally tangential essays (e.g., on the First Crusade). One can understand the desire to avoid a focus on Canossa, since the place and event were treated in a 2006 exhibit in Paderborn, but the chosen conceit—of the “treasury” of the Canossa being the castles, churches, and monasteries of the territory around Reggio Emilia—seems ultimately to have been overwhelmed by the urge to aggrandize. While we can be grateful for the publication of several fine essays and numerous color photographs of medieval objects, we can also hope that the “grande pubblico” is addressed more coherently and directly in future exhibitions.

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The Chronicle of the Czechs, by Cosmas of Prague. Translated with an introduction and notes by Lisa Wolverton. [Medieval Texts in Translation.] (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press. 2009. Pp. xviii, 274. \$34.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0-813-21570-9.)

The Chronicle of the Czechs written by Cosmas, the dean of the Prague chapter (died 1125), is the first state-national chronicle and the oldest historical work in the Czech Lands in general. Its author described the mythical origin and the history of the Czech people up to the end of the first quarter of the twelfth century. It belongs to the same category of historical works as the chronicles by Gregory of Tours, the Venerable Bede, Paulus Diaconus, or Widukind of Corvey. This chronicle has been known—in addition to the Latin original—in modern Czech, German, Russian, and Polish translations. Now, Lisa Wolverton presented this work to the English speaking readers. In doing this, she could exploit her rich knowledge and experience acquired during her work on the monograph about the history of the medieval Czech Lands, *Hasting toward Prague: Power and Society in the Medieval Czech Lands* (Philadelphia, 2001), where the Cosmas Chronicle was one of her main sources and where she made the acquaintance of the Czech history of the period concerned.

In the introduction Wolverton informs readers about the author and his work and introduces them to Cosmas’s world. There she uses her good knowledge of the professional literature and her own research results. Further, she describes Cosmas’s style, introduces readers to the problems of the translation, and pays attention to the difficulties of the medieval Latin text and its translation into the modern vernacular language (such as the details of Cosmas’s language and interpretation of his terminology; the title of the chronicle).