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The Chronicle of the Czechs, by Cosmas of Prague (review)

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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).

The translation adequately expresses the content and style of Cosmas's chronicle, as well as the characteristics of the period and milieu. (It was not possible to convey Cosmas's rhymed prose in the translation.) Wolverton translates the proper names according to the ethnicity of persons. The place names should be given according to modern usage (see p. 23), which are inconsistent. For example, for Zbečno Wolverton created the nonexistent—and for Czechs unpronounceable—name *Ztibečná*, and the Saxon Dohna is translated by the Czech name *Donín*. Readers might be unable to locate the mentioned places and other geographical items. The adjoining map might provide some help, but it lacks a commentary (e.g., Mt. Osek in the central Vltava river region, which has not been pinpointed to date, needs some explication).

The notes refer to the words and phrases borrowed from ancient authorities; to Cosmas's wordplay, which generally cannot be translated into modern languages; to his mistakes; and to the interpretation of some terms.

For a better understanding of the chronicle and its context, the book supplies maps; a genealogy of the Czech ruler dynasty, the Přemyslids; a list of the Přemyslid dukes and kings (which unfortunately, because of its scope, does not encompass the eleventh-century Polish rulers Wladiwoy and Boleslaw Chrobry); lists of the bishops of Prague and Olomouc; a list of works cited in the notes; and an index.

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Peter Abelard after Marriage. The Spiritual Direction of Heloise and Her Nuns through Liturgical Song. By Thomas J. Bell. [Cistercian Studies Series, No. 211.] (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2007. Pp. xxxviii, 346. \$39.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0-879-07311-4.)

In recent years much interest has been shown in the spiritual writings that Peter Abelard composed for the nuns of the convent of the Paraclete after 1129 when they came to their new house in Champagne. Abelard's wife, Heloise, was abbess, and she persuaded Peter, himself an abbot, to provide new works, including hymns and sequences, that would be suitable for use in the chapel and for reading in the refectory over the full course of the liturgical year. Bell is here chiefly concerned with two liturgical sequences that he considers, upon extensive inquiry, to form a part of these original compositions. Both were inspired by the Song of Songs, and they are known from their opening words as *Virgines castae* and *Epithalamica*. They were listed by their *incipits* in the Paraclete Ordinary and Breviary and set to be sung at Eastertide and on the feasts of saints who were virgins. Mention of them there, along with numerous other musical, liturgical, and homiletic items taken from a wide range of sources, does not necessarily mean that Abelard composed them. But the oldest extant copies are found, with musical notation, in a late-twelfth-century manuscript from Nevers (Paris, BnF, nouvelle acquisition latine 3126)