

Between Lipany and White Mountain: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Modern Bohemian History in Modern Czech Scholarship. James R. Palmitessa, ed. *Studies in Central European Histories* 58. Leiden: Brill, 2014. xx + 366 pp. \$180.

In this volume, James Palmitessa has assembled and made available for the first time in English a series of articles, book chapters, and essays in a *Festschriften* that represent key contributions from recent Czech historians to late medieval and early modern Czech history. The contributions span in subject matter from the immediate aftermath of the Hussite Revolution to the experience of exile after the defeat at White Mountain, and in publication dates from just after the Prague Spring to the first decade of our century.

The stated purpose of the book is to provide an introduction to students and scholars who “are interested in beginning a research project in Bohemian history, pursuing comparative studies, or simply want to expand their knowledge of European history” (vii). Toward this end, the book starts with a brief outline of Czech history up to the Thirty Years’ War. It is a big jump from this short narrative to the specialized topics of the chapters, but the footnotes in the introduction suggest readings in both English and Czech that would help students make that jump more easily. The chapters that follow represent both important issues within the historiography of this period and important figures in its scholarship, grounding the reader in the current state of Czech historiography for this era.

That grounding represents the other main theme of the book: that it is important for historians outside of the Czech Republic to engage meaningfully with Czech-language historiography. The introduction contains a stern admonition against “tourist scholars” who “seek to capitalize and make a name for themselves through the superficial appropriation of others’ national histories or comparative studies which are too general” (16). Truly meaningful engagement on the level that Palmitessa prescribes would still require the ability to read Czech, but this volume provides an entry into that literature for English speakers.

As is true with every nation’s historiography, Czech writing about Czech history has been guided by developments in the history of the nation. The burgeoning nationalism of the National Awakening, the formation of the Czechoslovak state, decades of communism, the Prague Spring, and the Velvet Revolution all had their impacts on the writing of history in the Czech lands. One of the most valuable contributions in what is a well-conceived book overall is the insightful and systematic review Palmitessa provides of trends in the writing of Czech history from the nineteenth-century nationalist František Palacký to the varied subfields of today. The historiographical discussion would have set the reader up nicely for the chapters to be organized by publication date so that these trends could have been followed through the essays, but the decision to organize chronologically by subject matter makes more sense for readers who want an introduction to Czech history.

The volume brings together authors who have been recognized as leaders in their field for decades and authors who have emerged recently to take the field in new directions. All of the selections have been previously published and discussed in other contexts. Classic

contributions in the book include a chapter from František Šmahel's *The Idea of the Nation in Hussite Bohemia* and Josef Válka's article "Tolerance or Co-Existence? Relations between Religious Groups from the Fifteenth to Seventeenth Centuries," both of which are established must-reads for students of the Czech Reformation. Some of the interesting newer selections include Jiří Mikulec's essay on confraternities and confessionalization and the work of Lenka Bobková tracking Bohemian exiles abroad.

The translators Barbara Day and Christopher Hopkinson did an admirable job of rendering Czech into a clear and fluid English while retaining the nuance of the original, and Palmitessa's choices in selecting and framing chapters are excellent. Whenever a project chooses essays to represent a greater whole, it is always easy for the reader to find an absence to regret. This reader would have appreciated more cultural history, gender history, or urban history. There is also only one chapter that does not focus on Bohemia. But as a reflection of the state of the field and as an introduction to a rich historiography, *Between Lipany and White Mountain* delivers on its promise to open up the writings of Czech historians to new readers and to inspire them to responsibly approach the early modern history of the Czech lands.

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