

Abstracts of Articles and Studies of the Year 2011, Nr. 2

Tomáš KLIMEK, Orientation in space through determining directions in the texts of the Bohemian Middle Ages pp. 213–229

The article is devoted to the ways of determining the directions in the texts from the Czech lands written between the 12th and 14th centuries and focuses on an analysis of two types of texts of different character and purpose – chronicles and charters. It first describes the symbolic meaning of the cardinal directions in medieval culture and traces its reflection in the texts from the Czech milieu. It follows the loss of the symbolic meaning of the cardinal directions in the later period and vulgarisation of the usage of their titles, which is manifested in the function of the descriptions of detailed situations dealing with everyday life. The author further deals with the other ways of marking certain directions, the most natural of which is perhaps marking according to the right and left hands.

Keywords: orientation in space, cardinal directions, chronicles, chartres

Wojciech KOZŁOWSKI, Developing the Concept of “Succession Crisis”: New Questions to Social and Political Circumstances of Łokietek’s Rise to Power, 1304–1306 pp. 231–248

The working definition of a “succession crisis” is based on the presumption that stability is a critical factor in a political system. The system becomes vulnerable if something deprives it of its steadiness and pushes it out of balance. A monarch in the medieval political system played the role of the stability factor which was supposed to harmonize contrary interests of different groups and circles in a kingdom. A “succession crisis” erupts when there is no political agreement regarding who should step into the role of a deceased monarch, i.e., who shows the most promise in achieving the goals of stability, harmony and a balance of power. The thrones in Central Europe were emptied nearly simultaneously at the turn of the fourteenth century. Since politics cannot bear a vacuum, these unexpected vacancies opened the field for new candidates to the throne(s).

The paper reflects on three subjects. First, it raises the question of a “succession crisis” as a methodological tool for studying politics in the Middle Ages. Secondly, it outlines the stances of the modern Polish historiography on Łokietek’s coming back to power between 1305 and 1314 and his puzzling popularity among the nobility of Little Poland. It also reveals recent opinions of Polish historians about the Bohemian rule in Poland in the turn of the fourteenth century. Finally, the paper applies the concept of “succession crisis” and switch the focus of Łokietek’s attempts for the throne from a political microhistory to a picture of greater regional range.

Keywords: succession crisis, Poland, Władysław Łokietek

Milena BARTLOVÁ, 'Prout lucide apparet in tabulis et picturis ipsorum.' The communicative role of pictures and texts at the beginnings of Hussitism pp. 249–274

The relation between the image and the text in the 15th century is one of the important topical streams of the study of the history of depictions, because the advancement of printing transformed significantly the communicative strategy and way of thinking. The study endeavours to employ these recent approaches for new research and verification of the question of what was on the walls of Bethlehem Chapel. Were they pictures and which pictures? Or were they inscriptions? And what functions could they have had if they had remained unreadable for the absolute majority of the local public? The study also includes research of the nature of the depictions in the Jena Codex, made possible by the issuance of its annotated reproduction (2010).

Keywords: Bethlehem Chapel, Jena Codex, Hussitism, image and text

Lenka HLÁVKOVÁ MRÁČKOVÁ, Neighing horses, cackling hens, heavy-footed vessel and barrel traders... Everyday life of a late medieval town through the eyes and ears of musicians pp. 275–285

The manuscript collection of polyphonic compositions, a so-called Codex Speciálník (Prague, ca. 1485–1500), is presented in the study as a possible starting point for an investigation of the everyday life of a late medieval town. The centre of attention is primarily the alphabetically arranged index of the compositions, which was to facilitate orientation in the musical contents of the codex. The majority of the compositions were copied into the manuscript without the name of the author; therefore the textual incipits were used in the index for the identification of the anonymous songs and motets.

Keywords: Codex Speciálník, polyphony, Lesser Town

Olga KOTKOVÁ, Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Law and Grace*: Luther, or Erasmus? pp. 287–295

The article is devoted to two images with the theme of *Law and Grace*, which are associated with the name of Lucas Cranach the Elder (both in the National Gallery in Prague). The first is dated to 1529 and does not have the original format, which plays a fundamental role for the interpretation of the iconography, because in the past there was a secondary reduction of the image, during which a band with biblical citations was removed. Other passages from the Bible were placed also on the surface of the image, but these were removed as nonoriginal during a restoration in 1971–1972. According to the literature so far, the panel of *Law and Grace* conveys one of the bases of Luther's teaching on justification through faith.

This was called into question by Matthias Weniger, according to whom the concept of the work is drawn from Erasmianism; he demonstrated his observations i.a. on the biblical citations in Cranach's original. The inscriptions from the image were removed, so Weniger was working with inscription preserved on a copy of this composition. It is, however, not possible to consider it as such a trustworthy source for us to amend the so-far accepted interpretation of Cranach's original from 1529.

Keywords: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Luther, Erasmus, panel painting