

REVIEWS AND ANNOTATIONS

Vratislav Vaníček, Jan Kotous et al.: Posunuté jubileum. 1050. let od založení pražského biskupství [Millenium Postponed. 1050th Anniversary of Prague Bishopric]. Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2024, 500 pp.

Two years after a conference on 1050th Anniversary of Prague Bishopric, a voluminous monograph on this event emerged. The authors wanted to analyze not only the birth of Prague's bishopric in 973 but also to describe his further development, elevation to an archbishopric in 1344 but least but not last to explain the timing of celebrations on 2023 instead on 1973. In 1973, in communist Czechoslovakia it was not possible to return to the jubilee and to focus comprehensively on the origins and development of Prague bishopric. A chapter by Michal Pehr returns to the preparations for the celebrations of the Prague bishopric in 1973 in the domestic and foreign political context of the situation in Czechoslovakia five years after Russian occupation of 1968. On the basis of archive material, the author describes the activities of later archbishop of Prague František cardinal Tomášek. In 1967, he started to prepare a plan of festivities, which were not favored by the communist regime and were conceived by state authorities as an internal affair of the Catholic Church. This was in sharp contrast to the activities abroad, which saw the founding of the Prague bishopric as a significant event in a pan-European context.

Historic development of Prague bishopric is opened by Vratislav Vaníček who describes the bishopric's medieval history. He points out that the Prague bishopric was not created in isolation, solely for the need of the Czech state, nor as a project of the missionary "Slavic-policy", but as a part of the cultural rise of Bohemia, with Prague and the Premyslid dynasty playing a central role, in connection with contemporary elites of Central Europe. In an extraordinary European framework, there was also the episcopate of Adalbert (Vojtěch) of the Slavník clan, which was somewhat distorted by hagiographers into the biblical shorthand of "bishop versus stubborn people". The church continued to expand in the second half of the 11th century under Duke (King) Vratislav II. The profile analysis of Prague and Moravian bishops in David Kalhous's chapter confirms the alternation of bishops of domestic and foreign origin in the 12th century. Although traditionally the bishops at the time are attributed the weak positions of chaplains, in the matter of fact they were an independent force within the state system and often supported the ruler's policy. Their connection with the empire, although limited to symbolic succession rituals, reinforced their exclusive standing in society.

At the beginning of the 13th century, Bishop Ondřej attempted to push through the reforms associated with the Fourth Lateran Council, but, as Robert Antonín shows in his chapter, he encountered resistance due to pragmatism of the prelates, who were linked by their lifestyle and often their origins to the secular elite. Moreover, throughout the bishopric period of Prague there was some controversy over the extent of the dependence of the monasteries on the episcopate, which allowed the monarchs to extend their protection over the monasteries (immunities, monastic exemptions) and to draw them into their influence as tributaries of the royal chamber. David Trojan analyses the period when the bishopric becomes a true administrative center. The turning point occurs in the middle of 13th century. With the development of towns and education, reformist practices also take hold. The bishop moved his seat from Prague Castle to a manor in the Lesser Town. After the Battle on the Marchfeld (1278), the bishops who came from the ranks of the upper and lower nobility, became the spokesman of the country in the absence of a king. The last bishop and first archbishop, Arnošt of Pardubice, was a close collaborator of Charles IV.

From the point of view of juridical science, the most valuable chapter is that by Jan Kotous – legal scholar and historian. He describes a collapse of cooperation between the Emperor Wenceslas IV

and his Archbishop Jan of Jenštejn. The aim of Wenceslas IV and his council was to turn the church into an instrument of government (*instrumentum regni*). The King and his entourage treated any manifestations of independent decision-making that did not correspond to their intention as a crime of treason (*crimen laise maiestatis*). The monograph is dealing as well with such a conflict of competence and power in the case of vicar general John of Pomuk, later the main Baroque saint John of Nepomuk.

Worth noting is a chapter by Tomáš Parma concerning development of relations between Prague and Olomouc religious centers. It covers the period from the foundation of the Prague bishopric until 1777, when Olomouc became the seat of archbishop – the Moravian metropolitan. The author points to the Great Moravian roots of the church organization and suggests that Olomouc was also among the suffragans of the Moravian archbishop. After the dissolution of Great Moravia, the bishopric of Olomouc was restored in 1063. During the Hussite Wars, it gained considerable influence. With his elevation to an archbishopric in 1777, it also achieved a formal independent status.

From the point of view of our contemporary history the last two chapters seem to be most interesting, moving back to the context of 20th century. Michal Pehr discusses the role position and the role of the Catholic Church from the beginning of the 20th century and the collapse of the monarchy in 1918 until the communist takeover in 1948. The Catholic Church, like the whole Czech society, underwent a turbulent development, at that time. Despite many conflicts at various levels and differences of opinion, a “*modus vivendi*” was found and the basis for later cooperation was laid. The author has tried to illustrate this fact by the example of the archbishops of Prague in the period of the “Third Republic” (1945 – 1948). The period of communist dictatorship (1948–1989) is summarized by Martin Weiss. He is documenting various types of oppression of the Catholic Church by the communist regime. Starting from political trials, through internment of archbishops and bishops, to replacement of church hierarchy by individuals who had sold out to the state, the surveillance of clergy by secret police, church secretaries and their informants. To this were added various forms of ideological warfare – misuse of pilgrimage sites and figures of saints for communist propaganda, restriction of religious instruction and creation of pressure on ordinary believers to leave the church. Fabricated show-trials were to be the reason for liquidation of the church intelligentsia. The brief period of “Prague Spring” in 1968 brought a short time recovery of our society before totalitarian restalinization at the beginning of 1970’. It was not until the mid of 1980’, a period of certain thawing, which manifested itself in 1985 on the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of the death of the Saint Methodius in a memorable pilgrimage to Velehrad.

The book *Millenium Postponed* is undoubtedly of a big value from the point of view of legal history. Another aspect of its value is its artistic elaboration. It contains a series of reproductions depicting history of Prague bishopric and archbishopric. Speaking about photographs, the book brings an information about probable face of Saint Adalbert (956–997). Brazilian researcher Cicero Moraes and his team created a digital image of St. Adalbert based on the skull of the saint from the St. Vitus Treasure. It is a relatively detailed three-dimensional documentation. For reconstruction, Moraes uses software intended mainly for surgeons who, for example, plan operations in it. The reviewer warmly recommends *Millenium Postponed* to everybody interested in Czech and European Legal and General History.

Michal Tomášek*

* Professor JUDr. PhDr. mult. Michal Tomášek, DrSc. Vice-Dean and Head of the Department of European Law of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, Vice President of Science Council of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Head of the Editorial Board of The Lawyer Quarterly. ORCID: 0000-0001-7732-2540. The present book review was created under the *Cooperatio* Research Project of Charles University, research area Law.