

Origins of the Hussite Uprising: The Chronicle of Laurence of Březová (1414–1421).
Thomas Fudge.

Routledge Medieval Translations. Abingdon: Routledge, 2020. xiv + 284 pp. \$160.

A frequent complaint of anglophonic scholar/instructors of Central European history has been the lack of translated sources to share with students. The period of the Bohemian Reformation/Hussite Wars, in particular, has the drama and historic significance to captivate an audience with intrigue, politics, acts of violence and compassion, and a heroic underdog story. Anglophonic students at both the undergraduate and graduate level, however, often need translations to begin their research, as Czech and, increasingly, Latin are difficult to find within many school systems. Easily accessible translations, therefore, serve as a gateway into the larger and significant field of medieval Central Europe. Thomas Fudge takes a valuable and necessary step by offering students access to this history through his translation of *The Chronicle of Laurence of Březová*, easily one of the most significant accounts of the Hussite conflict in the early fifteenth century.

Laurence of Březová (ca. 1370–ca. 1437), a lesser Bohemian noble, absentee cleric, bureaucrat, and university instructor, was an author with a position to witness the early events of the Bohemian Reform movement. His account of events and ideas provides exceptional detail from the Council of Constance to Emperor Sigismund's 1421 campaign resulting in the battle of Kutná Hora. The chronicle covers the politics, theological arguments, and many of the events that marked the early years of the movement. Laurence definitely has a Prague bias, as he oscillates between praise and contempt for Taborites and other forces outside of the capital city. Usefully, he comments on the decisions of the major players of the era while giving remarkable detail on the debates he possibly witnessed firsthand. Considering Laurence's work in the much larger medieval context, the *Chronicle* serves as a detailed and engaging example of a late medieval chronicle that can serve well in any general medieval course.

Although Fudge has published significant works of translations before, with *The Crusade Against the Hussites* (2002) and some primary documents in his work *Jerome of Prague and the Foundation of the Hussite Movement* (2016), he seemingly took this project on with trepidation. As he admits, Fudge is not trained as a philologist and does not claim this as a critical edition (37). This means that the translation might not necessarily capture the complexity of the original Latin and Czech, as his choice has been to translate in an accessible manner. The downside of this approach is that he rarely addresses choices made in the translation process, meaning this work is effectively a version of the original. His notes, however, help in providing greater context for the occasionally obscure references that Laurence did not feel needed elaboration.

The work warrants some criticism for a few odd choices. For example, Fudge includes two paragraphs discussing the role of women in the Hussite context. This is

a necessary and valuable contribution, as women have been frequently ignored in the secondary literature. Where these paragraphs and much of the introduction are problematic is the lack of nuance that Fudge puts into his overview of the period. He states somewhat definitively that “in the unique Bohemian situation . . . women fought alongside the men.” Laurence describes this in the *Chronicle* (110), yet significant scholarship, including the outstanding work of Pavlina Rychterová (1999), argues that references to women in this source do not reflect real women at all but rather literary devices. Fudge cites Rychterová and mentions the disagreement in the notes but ignores the obvious implications for how a reader might use this perspective while reading the *Chronicle* (9). The type of student who might use this text, probably an early graduate student, needs to be made aware of historiographical debate concerning the reading of this source. The paragraphs on women also seem a bit disingenuous, after Fudge’s comment that at Tabor “all things were shared (save women) and all were equal” (6). Perhaps the author thought this was an amusing jest, but using one’s own words to imply women are things should probably have been edited out.

Overall, Fudge provides a text that will introduce many to the Hussite Wars and become a staple in student research.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2023.632

The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 2940 to 3141, Volume 21.

Desiderius Erasmus.

Ed. James M. Estes. Trans. Alexander Dalzell. *Collected Works of Erasmus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. xxx + 660 pp. \$263.

Volume 21 of the *Collected Works of Erasmus* completes the correspondence of the Dutch humanist, which began publication in 1974. It contains letters either written by Erasmus or addressed to him that cover the two years preceding Erasmus’s death on 12 July 1536 (letters 2940–3131), and ten more by distinguished friends or acquaintances mourning his death (letters 3132–3141). This volume also provides some supplementary materials: Erasmus’s last will (12 February 1536); a spurious letter to Pietro Corsi (9 January 1535); a letter to Petrus Paludanus that prefaced the *Formula* (1520–21?) and which Erasmus repeatedly stated to have never written; and the writing *Expositio fidelis* (ca. August 1535), a document instigated (but probably not written) by Erasmus, which narrates the trial and death of Thomas More and the execution of John Fisher. The “Addenda to Earlier Volumes” (620–25) translates three overlooked letters (856A, 1147A, 2518A) that belong to CWE 6, 10, and 18; a two-page corrigenda gives emendations for earlier volumes.