

one prince; and *HVL*'s землю ракоушкоу as *ziemię rakuszka* becomes "Land of Rakushkaia" (never identified), not Austria (117). Do such minor defects negate the book's overall value for researchers? Hardly. But pedagogues need such alerting if advising students who may consult this most excellent contribution to our scholarship on medieval Rus'.

DAVID GOLDFRANK  
*Georgetown University*

***Prague: Belonging in the Modern City.*** By Chad Bryant. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2021. 332 pp. Notes. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$29.95, hard bound.  
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In this creative, lively history of Prague accessible to non-specialists, Chad Bryant walks in the shoes of five historical actors who called it home over the course of two centuries. Each of the Pragues that emerges—German City, Czech City, Revolution City, Communist City, and Global City—makes up a distinct chapter. Unlike a traditional academic monograph, the book invites the reader to reminisce on the experiences of travel, belonging, alienation, politicking and people-watching, while simultaneously touching on key themes in modern Czech history. Its hybrid qualities call to mind the works of historian and travel writer Jan Morris (writing on Trieste) and Claudio Magris' classic *Danube*.

Each chapter comprises a sort of historical walking tour. The first follows the life of Karel Zap, who published the first tour guide of Prague written in Czech (rather than German) in 1847. In it, Prague becomes "a Slavic city, a Czech city" (38). Zap waxed that, "Prague is the fruit of Czech history, the fruit of the thousand-year spiritual and bodily activities of the whole nation," and his primary bodily activity of interest was *strolling*. Throughout the century, leisure walking became a form of sociability that the middle classes were borrowing and adapting from the nobility. Bryant notes that seeing the city "while on foot . . . was crucial to imagining Prague as the capital, sanctum, and mecca of the nation" (44). In turn, Zap cautioned his upstanding readers on the dangers of visiting the industrial districts, and barely mentioned the Jewish Town; Jews and Germans brought an unwelcome "cosmopolitanism," he asserted, that detracted from the city's "purely Slavic essence" (54).

Half a century later, the German-speaking Jewish Prager Egon Erwin Kisch offered vignettes from a very different side of Czech Prague. The city had undergone a Czechification, with the erection of the National Museum, establishment of Czech-owned businesses and banks, and the disappearance of German-speakers from the city council. The old Jewish Town was subjected to "slum clearance" in the name of scientific and technological progress. But Kisch was less drawn to modern, shiny Prague; in his popular weekly column "Prague Forays" in the newspaper *Bohemia*, he sought out the marginalized in late night visits to dive pubs and seedy locales. He explored soup kitchens, prisons, homeless shelters; he wrote on panhandlers and on the local dogcatcher. To do so, Kisch "learned the Czech slang on the street" (78). Bryant posits that as the German identity of Prague diminished, Kisch's focus on these marginalized characters revealed "a struggle to forge a sense of place in a city increasingly imagined as 'golden, Slavic Prague'" (104). Wandering and writing, his encounters allowed him to form an "alternative way of belonging," to create relationships, however fleeting, among himself, his subjects and his readers.

One thing all five of Bryant's ordinary Praguers have in common is that they left extensive written records of their lives in the city. This was certainly true of Vojtech Berger, a cynical, curmudgeonly Habsburg war veteran, self-described Bolshevik, and active member of the interwar Czechoslovak Communist Party. Berger's lifeworld in radical Prague runs counter to the mythical picture of President Thomas Masaryk's haven of liberal democracy. He found belonging in the associational life of the party and in politics of the street demonstrations, both of which he meticulously documented over several decades. The archival haul for this ordinary Prager consists of sixty-five volumes of material now housed at the city's archive. He also serves as a bridge figure in the book between early twentieth century leftist politics and the emergence of Communist Party rule after World War II.

Communist-era Prague, with its statues of Stalin erected and then torn down, and the later blossoming of mass-produced *paneláky* apartment complexes, was a complicated place to "belong" for the actress Hana Frejková. She was the daughter of German-speaking Jewish members of the Communist Party who spoke only Czech to their daughter to avoid the postwar stigma of Germanness. After her father was executed following a Stalinist show trial, she and her mother were expelled from Prague, only to return following destalinization. Unlike the stories of Zap, Kisch and Berger, Frejkova's search for belonging in the Prague of rationalized central planning does not play out in the streets but rather in the world of the theater where she and her colleagues "pursued small-scale, creative projects that forged their own notions of community and place" (157). Here Bryant taps into the scholarship on meaning-making in everyday life under repressive regimes.

Bryant carries this study of belonging in Prague into the digital era with a final chapter on Duong Nguyen, a university student and blogger born to Vietnamese parents who, like other second-generation migrants elsewhere in Europe, "struggled with a sense of belonging in a nation-state that implied a national homogeneity that was racially coded. Nguyen's very presence, combined with her native Czech, her knowledge of Czech history and culture, and her 'Czech' mannerisms," raise fundamental questions about national identity" (205). Bryant uses Nguyen's blog posts and those from other members of Prague's Vietnamese diaspora community to explore Prague of the twenty-first century. These Praguers' lives play out in and around Sapa, a large open air Vietnamese market on the periphery of the city; business bustles, associational life takes shape, a youth club operates, and nosy "aunties" gossip and make life difficult for young people navigating their hybrid Czech-Vietnamese lives. More intrusive was the 2008 government raid on Sapa and more dangerous are the racist and xenophobic comments that surface in chat threads. Although differently scaled, Bryant notes the commonalities between the internet and the city, where communities "of diverse individuals can find each other" (242). Reflecting back on the raid, Nguyen calls Sapa more than a market; it is a place where one can feel "at home" (241). This sense of *u nás*—translated variously as "at home," "among us," "in our culture," or "in our town" (9)—encompasses the synergy of place and community at the heart of all five iterations of Prague in this book.

In Bryant's hands, Prague's history is history alive. It is as though we are looking at a historical sepia postcard depicting a famous Prague site (think Old Town, Josefov, bridge, castle, Wenceslas Square), and all of a sudden, the image becomes 3-D and we enter a busy, colored portal of the city inhabited in time. In some cases, Bryant is able to chart his five Praguers walking the very same cobblestones, creating a sense of simultaneity and connection between them and his readers. This is a delightful book, a bold and inventive ode to a place.

MAUREEN HEALY  
Lewis & Clark College