

Vorwort

Mühlen faszinieren. Die frühen Reibe- und Handmühlen mögen als alltägliche, kräftezehrende Haushaltsgeräte diese Faszination noch nicht ausgestrahlt haben; als aber Maschinen aufkamen, die sich anderer Energieressourcen bedienten als der menschlichen Muskelkraft – der, wie man es heute nennt, erneuerbaren Energien Wind und Wasser – werden sie dem Bewohner der ländlich geprägten Regionen Mitteleuropas als Wunderwerke erschienen sein, und er wird es kaum möglich gehalten haben, dass es in diesen klappernden und quietschenden hölzernen Konstruktionen mit rechten Dingen zugeht. Entsprechenden Respekt wird ihm der Müller eingeflößt haben, der diese Technik bediente und offenbar – mit wessen Hilfe auch immer – beherrschte. Die Wind- oder Wassermühle war in ihrer „Bedeutung eines technologischen Basis- oder Kernsystems“¹ ein besonderes Objekt in der agrarisch geprägten Siedlungslandschaft, ein früher Vorreiter der später rapide zunehmenden Technisierung der Lebenswelt.

Die Faszination setzte sich fort, als nicht nur „verwunschene“ Ruinen und pittoreske Landschaftsbilder, sondern auch oft abseits gelegene und, abgesehen von den produktionsbedingten Geräuschen, still anmutende Mühlen den Erwartungen der Romantiker entsprachen. In Liedern, Märchen und Sagen, seien sie dem Munde des Volkes entnommen, künstlerisch nachbereitet oder gänzlich dem Hirn des romantiksuchenden Poeten entsprungen, tauchten sie als beliebte Handlungsorte und Topoi auf. Dies bildete den Nährboden für eine Sicht auf die Mühle, die quasi den Kontrapunkt setzte zu dem, was sie schon immer gewesen ist. Denn eigentlich handelte es sich um ein technisches Instrument zur Nutzbarmachung des Landes und seiner Erträge, zur Verarbeitung seiner Produkte – beileibe nicht nur Getreide und Stammholz – sowie um ein Mittel zur Steigerung von Einkünften und Macht, wozu eine Hebung der Prosperität eines Landes mittels technischer Umgestaltungen letztlich führte. Dieser sehr prosaische Kontext könnte ebenfalls als Faszination apostrophiert werden, und zwar in einem Sinne, der heute Technikgläubigkeit genannt wird – die Vorstellung, dass mit technischen Maßnahmen alles verbessert und erreicht werden kann.

Dieser technikgläubigen Faszination, die wohl eine Kontinuande im Umgang mit Mühlen ist, wurde der genannte Kontrapunkt just in dem Moment gegenübergestellt, als sie sich anschickte, mehr als jemals zuvor in die Landschaft einzugreifen, als die Nutzung der Wasser- und Windkraft als nicht mehr ausreichend erschien und die mächtigen Kohlelagerstätten zunehmend erschlossen wurden, so dass bald eine Industrielandschaft entstanden war. In dieser musste die Wind- und Wassermühle, sofern sie nicht umgebaut, abgerissen oder in ruinösem Zustand missachtet wurde, tatsächlich den Anschein einer naturverbundenen, oasenartigen Idylle haben, ein Image, das der alten Mühle letztlich bis heute zukommt und von dem sie nunmehr im Kontext eines prosperierenden Ausflugs- und Tourismuswesens profitiert.

1 BAYERL, Günter: Technik in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit, Stuttgart 2013, S. 116.

Mit der Thematik des vorliegenden Bandes hat dies freilich nur wenig zu tun. Es wäre jedoch noch anzuschließen, dass auch in der Wissenschaft Mühlen für Faszination sorgen, ihre Erforschung allerdings auch mit Problemen verbunden ist. So ist die massenhafte Existenz von Wasser- und evtl. auch Windmühlen für die wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen der Siedlungslandschaften, wie sie im hohen Mittelalter in den Siedlungslandschaften Ostmitteleuropas aufgebaut wurden, strukturell unabdingbar. Tatsächlich finden sich diese Mühlen auch in der Nähe beinahe jedes Ortes, allerdings – und das ist die große Crux – auf den Meßtischblättern der modernen Landesvermessung, in der baulichen Gestalt der Neuzeit und frühestens in frühneuzeitlichen Quellen. Unmittelbar für das Mittelalter oder gar für die anzunehmende Entstehungszeit vom 12. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert bleiben die einschlägigen Quellen meist wortkarg. Auch die Archäologen sind hier in keiner vorteilhafteren Situation.

Will man also zur Gewässernutzung im Mittelalter forschen, wie es am GWZO mit der Projektgruppe „Usus aquarum: Mühlenbau, Wasser und Verkehr im hochmittelalterlichen Landesausbau Ostmitteleuropas“ in den Jahren 2011–2013 getan wurde (und in einem nachfolgenden Projekt 2014–2016 auch weiterhin getan wird), lässt sich nicht einfach in eine üppige Fülle der Quellenüberlieferung eintauchen; vielmehr muss zwar nicht gerade nach der Nadel im Heuhaufen, aber nach aussagekräftigen Dokumenten und Befunden gesucht werden. Diese sind durchaus zu finden, aber sie bedürfen der Einordnung in einen umfassenderen wissenschaftlichen Kontext, was wir mit der Tagung, welcher die Beiträge dieses Bandes entsprungen sind², versucht haben. Hierfür durften wir am 12. und 13. April des Jahres 2013 eine größere Zahl von Wissenschaftlern im GWZO als Vortragende und Diskutanten begrüßen. Dass sich insgesamt beinahe 50 Personen an der Veranstaltung beteiligten, zeigt, dass es sich um eine Thematik handelt, die nicht nur einen kleinen Kreis akademischer Forscher anspricht, sondern eben immer noch fasziniert. Für ihre Redebeiträge, von denen die überwiegende Zahl hier zum Druck kommt³ und für die anregenden Diskussionen ist allen Beteiligten herzlich zu danken.

Es lag dabei in der Natur der Sache, dass die Beiträge den ursprünglich beabsichtigten Fokus auf Böhmen und Mähren weit überschreiten, ja sogar nicht einmal innerhalb des ostmitteleuropäischen und mittelalterlichen Rahmens blieben. Hierbei ist nicht zu vergessen, dass es nicht ausschließlich um Mühlen, sondern allgemein um die Wassernutzung geht. Gerade diese Grenzüberschreitungen machen aber aus unserer Sicht die vorliegende Sammelschrift besonders wertvoll, weil sie die relativ wenigen aussagekräftigen, dabei aber sehr vielgestaltigen Quellen und Befunde aus dem östlichen und dem westlichen Mitteleuropa zusammenführen und miteinander in Beziehung setzen. In diesem Sinne wurde einer thematisch orien-

2 Die Beiträge von Lenka Panušková und Jaroslava Škudrnová gehen auf Projektvorträge am 5.6.2013 bzw. 10.7.2013 im GWZO zurück. Wir haben sie aufgrund ihrer thematischen Affinität hier mit aufgenommen.

3 Der Vortrag von Matthias Hardt mit dem Titel „Wasservirtschaft des Klosters Broda“ wird im Rahmen der in Vorbereitung befindlichen Publikation der interdisziplinären Tagung „Klöster und Stifte in Mecklenburg“ (Rostock, 14.–16.10.2010) erscheinen.

tierten Anordnung der Beiträge – so knifflig und diskussionswürdig sie im Detail oft sein mag – der Vorzug gegenüber einer alphabetischen Reihenfolge gegeben.

Ein besonderer Dank gilt Lucie Galusová, die als Dritte im Bunde unserer Projektgruppe einen großen Anteil an der Organisation und Durchführung der Tagung hatte, aber nach dem Auslaufen des Projekts aufgrund anderer Verpflichtungen an der Drucklegung leider nur in geringem Maße mitwirken konnte. Im Kontext der Tagung ist zu danken Helmut Notzke vom Arbeitskreis Mühlen Sachsen-Anhalt e. V., Katrin Reschke von der Dölitzer Wassermühle, Petra Mücke und Dagmar Sommer von der Landesschule Pforte sowie der Familie Schäfer als Eigentümer und Betreiber der Mühle Zeddenbach bei Freyburg/Unstrut. Sie alle haben dafür gesorgt, dass die Tagung nicht nur aus wissenschaftlichen Vorträgen bestand, sondern auch eine praktische Komponente erhielt, indem sie uns Mühlen vom Mittelalter bis zur industriellen Zeit nahebrachten. Später dann unterstützte uns Doris Wollenberg maßgeblich bei der Redaktion der eintreffenden Manuskripte. Im Grunde trug sie die Hauptlast dieses Arbeitsschrittes und versah dies mit großer Umsicht, mit Konsequenz und Geduld. Auch Christoph Mielzarek nahm an der Fertigstellung des Bandes tatkräftigen Anteil. Schließlich danken wir Sarah-Vanessa Schäfer vom Verlag Franz Steiner für die reibungslose und professionelle Bearbeitung des Satzes.

Dass das GWZO Publikationen dieser Art ermöglicht, ist nicht selbstverständlich hinzunehmen, sondern beruht auf dem stetigen Einsatz seines Direktors, Prof. Dr. Christian Lübke, des zuständigen Fachkoordinators für mittelalterliche Geschichte und Archäologie, Prof. Dr. Matthias Hardt, den Mitarbeiterinnen der Verwaltung des GWZO und den Verantwortlichen der geldgebenden Gremien, in diesem Falle des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung, das die Herstellung und Drucklegung dieses Bandes finanzierte.

Im Sommer 2014

Martina Maříková und Christian Zschieschang

Wassernutzung im Mittelalter

Tomáš Klimek

The Perception of Rivers and other Watercourses in the Czech Middle Ages

Preliminary Insight

“They are approaching the river Adda, which is extremely rapid. They find there bridges that have been torn down and a countless number of people from the area of Milan, preventing them from crossing the river [...]. Meanwhile Odolen, son of Stříž, a valiant knight, accompanied by two of his warriors, is trying to find a ford; and when he cannot find it, he plunges into the waves, followed by only one of the two companions. They saw them rolling amidst the waves such that it seemed as if they were turning on the horses and then the horses above them. Finally, with God’s help, they reached the other side unharmed; the third of them, however, either because he had a weak horse or a weak heart, returned to the bank. When this is announced to the king of Bohemia, namely that these two knights have found a ford, tables are thrown aside and a war sign is struck on the drum; warriors are being armed, and when King of Bohemia Vladislaus himself, as a brave and famous knight, rides before them, they spur their steeds to go into the wild waves, and thus they, under the protection of God’s mercy, overcome those bad, wild waves, although many warriors drown to death. [...] The emperor’s army [...] raise their joyful voices to Heaven and wonder how they could have overcome such wild waves.”¹

Vincentius’ description of the crossing of the swollen river Adda during Barbarossa’s campaign against Milan in 1158 provides an idea of people’s past encounter with watercourses. The aim of the following study is to outline how watercourses were perceived by the inhabitants of the Czech lands between the 12th century and the beginning of the 16th century. It will focus on the main attributes ascribed to watercourses, be they deducible from texts coming from the respective period or from material artefacts related to the watercourses. Mentions in texts will be analysed in more detail with an attempt to distinguish literary clichés, which always have to be dealt with in medieval texts in such a type of analyses, from a reflection and depiction of period views. To provide a better understanding of subtle nuances in the meaning, some of the key terms used in reference to watercourses will be subjected to a semantic analysis.

1 *Annales Bohemorum Vincentii Pragensis. Letopis Vincentia, kanovníka kostela pražského (hereinafter as Vincentius) [The Annals of Vincentius, Canon of the Prague Cathedral]. In: Fontes rerum Bohemicarum (hereinafter as FRB). Ed. by Josef EMLER et al. Vol. 1–8. Praha 1873–1932, here vol. 2, 430–431; cf. Výpisky z Vincentia, Gerlacha (Jarlocha) a jiných starších letopisů českých [Excerpts from Vincentius, Gerlach and Other Earlier Czech Annals]. In: FRB 2, 276.*

Both imagination and literary cliché always build on particular realistic experience; the second part of the study will hence try to outline some aspects of the everyday practical encounter with watercourses. This issue will not be covered in every detail; attention will be paid to all that could have created and shaped the perception of watercourses.

Long-distance routes in the Middle Ages took advantage of the watershed, and their greatest obstacle was water. They came to the immediate vicinity of watercourses only when there was no other way, hence most often when they crossed them, which was the most difficult part of the whole journey.² Therefore the first meaning that will logically be attributed to rivers and their place in medieval imagination must be ‘an obstacle’. And indeed, if we summarise the mentions of rivers in narrative texts from the Czech milieu, we read in most cases about overcoming a river and its difficulties; in the Central European milieu we hear much less about a voyage or another transportation use of a watercourse.

In the imagination a watercourse was such a significant obstacle that the legends of St Wenceslas consider the crossing of the swollen brook Rokytká as a miracle. It occurred when the saint’s body was being transported to Prague. The brook was too deep for a cart, the bridge collapsed in a flood and timber for its repair could not be found anywhere; there was no boat or ferry. Nevertheless, the cart suddenly reached the other bank.³ The river becomes a symbol of something difficult to cross. It is similarly important and typical that the crossing of a river is used to describe, or rather to specify, the difficulty of the journey undertaken; it is frequently the case that this single place or event characterises the entire route.⁴

Another appellation connected with watercourses and their form in medieval thought is ‘the boundary’ – both imaginary and factual. This is how watercourses are referred to chiefly in the texts of charters, in particular those resolving a situation concerning immovable property. The identification of a river with the boundary

- 2 This is expressed in an interesting way by the legendist in his description of the foundation of the Sázava monastery: “They approach a river,/ this river is called Sázava,/ which runs below the monastery even now./ Reluctant to cross the river,/ they gather at a rock.” – *Legenda veršovaná o sv. Prokopu* (hereinafter as: *Legenda veršovaná o sv. Prokopu*) [The Versified Legend of St Procopius]. In: FRB (cf. n. 1) vol. 1, 350.
- 3 *Crescente fide christiana. Život sv. Václava* [The Life of Saint Wenceslas]. In: FRB (cf. n. 1) vol. 1, 187–188; *Vita Venceslai. Gumpoldův život Václava knížete českého* (hereinafter as Gumpold) [Gumpold’s Life of Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia]. In: FRB 1, 162; cf. *Legenda Christiani, Kristiánova legenda* (hereinafter as *Legenda Christiani*) [Christianus’ Legend]. Ed. by Jaroslav LUDVÍKOVSKÝ. Praha 41999 [1978], 86 and *Druhá staroslověnská legenda o sv. Václavu* (hereinafter as *Druhá staroslověnská*) [The Second Old Church Slavonic Legend of Saint Wenceslas]. In: *Na úsvitu křesťanství. Z naší literární tvorby doby románské v století IX.–XIII.* [At the Dawn of Christianity. From Our Literary Production of the Romanesque Period in the 9th–13th Centuries]. Ed. by Václav CHALOUPECKÝ et al. Praha 1942, 134–152, 148.
- 4 *Annales Gerlaci Milovicensis. Letopis Jarlocha, opata kláštera milevského* (hereinafter as Jarloch) [The Annals of Gerlach, Abbot of Milevsko]. In: FRB (cf. n. 1) vol. 2, 516; *Staročeská kronika tak řečeného Dalimila* (hereinafter as *Staročeská kronika tak řečeného Dalimila*) [The Old Czech Chronicle of the So-Called Dalimil]. Ed. by Jiří DAŇHELKA et al. Vol. 1–2. Praha 1988, here vol. 2, 496; *Zbraslavská kronika. Chronicon Aulae Regiae* (hereinafter as *Chronicon Aulae Regiae*) [The Zbraslav Chronicle]. In: FRB 4, 194–195.

was however far from being limited only to practical descriptions of estate borders. This conception passed into the actual perception of space. Larger watercourses formed the only indisputable landmark in a broader landscape segment and were used to determine the direction of long-distance routes.⁵ Similarly medieval authors utilised watercourses for an imaginary division of a larger area and for putting an event or a place in a wider space.⁶ The boundary function of rivers was enhanced by the fact that their banks, as a neutral border ground, were usually used as a meeting place of the rulers of the neighbouring lands.⁷

Since a place in Aristotelian terms is a boundary, the size of the boundary implies the size of the place itself. In Cosmas' Chronicle there are several territorial demarcations, always with a unit that is powerful already in its nature – the land of the Bohemians, the Prague bishopric, Prague itself and Slavník's domain as the domain of the biggest rival of the victorious Přemyslids. Both factually and symbolically, the areas of the important boundaries in these descriptions are formed mainly by two natural elements – mountains and rivers. In texts their significance with respect to the overall layout of the landscape is exaggerated. This is quite clear in Cosmas' definition of the area of the city of Prague. Its southern border Petřín is 'extremely rocky and rises above everything'; from the north the city is enclosed only by the brook Brusnice, in whose case however the chronicler emphasises at least the depth of the valley; and the most important border, mentioned in the first place, is the river Vltava, delimiting the original place in the forest by its waves (*terminat undis*), which figuratively mean a large river.⁸ Similarly, the grandeur of the capital city of the Slavník domain is expressed by a mention of the confluence

- 5 "They proceeded towards the Chamb and, having left Regensburg on the left, they continued up the Danube all the way to the town in Swabia that is called Ulm." – Jarloch (cf. n. 4), 468; "[...] on the same day down the Berounka all the way to Radotín and back to Prague." – Chronicon Aulæ Regiæ (cf. n. 4), 47.
- 6 Peter of Zittau wrote about a troop "moving from the other side of the Rhine"; on the knights "residing beyond the Rhine"; on the king's order given to "all the dukes and counts before the Rhine"; on the army that the king left "before the Danube" – Chronicon Aulæ Regiæ (cf. n. 4), 181, 153, 154, 311. According to Heinrich von Heimburg, Přemysl Otakar II plundered "the land terribly on both this and the other side of the Danube" – Letopisy Jindřicha Heimburského. Annales Heinrici Heimburgensis (hereinafter as Annales Heinrici Heimburgensis) [The Annals of Heinrich von Heimburg]. In: FRB (cf. n. 1) vol. 3, 315; "[...] instead, he came to like the place between the rivers Sázava and Polná, at the very border between the narrow land of Moravia and wide Bohemia, which however both belong to one lord, the king of the Bohemians" – Chronicon Domus Sarensis. Letopisy žďárské – Letopis větší [The Žďár Annals – The Greater Annal]. In: FRB 2, 529; "[...] because the domains under his rule stretched from the Danube, the major river of the Kingdom of Hungary, all the way to the Saale, the Saxon river near Halle, and from Kiev, the capital city of Russia, all the way to the mountains of Carinthia." – Zázraky sv. Vojtěcha mučedníka (Post mortem) [The Miracles of Saint Adalbert the Martyr]. In: FRB 1, 312.
- 7 O králi Janovi [On King John]. In: FRB (cf. n. 1) vol. 3, 229; Annales Heinrici Heimburgensis (cf. n. 6), 316; cf. FUHRMANN, Horst: Überall ist Mittelalter. München 1996, 17–39; Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Bohemorum (hereinafter as Cosmas). Ed. by Berthold BRETHOLZ. Berlin 1923 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum germanicarum. Nova series. Tomus 2), 214.
- 8 Cosmas (cf. n. 7), 18–19.

of the Cidlina and the Elbe, which demarcates the city. Here Cosmas chooses a poetic expression – the *metropolis* lies “where the Cidlina loses its name, flowing into the bigger river Elbe.”⁹

The conception of rivers and other watercourses as obstacles and boundaries is shown by their specific significance for the orientation in the landscape as well. This was reflected not only in localisation based on the upper and lower river reaches and the frequent utilisation of rivers for determining borders, but also in the specific importance of prepositions marking the proximity of a site and a watercourse. In Cosmas’ Chronicle, the position of the region is determined by the watercourse running through it. The localisation of a region or a part of the world by means of a river is known from the Bible – four rivers spring in the biblical Garden of Eden, flowing towards the four cardinal directions (Gen 2:10–14). Eden hence lies in the middle of the world and becomes the symbol of the cosmic whole. The spring is thus not only the symbol of birth but also of the paradise. In medieval chronicles, a gurgling stream and water itself symbolise health and nature as opposed to the civilisation and the urban world.¹⁰

Both attributes, the boundary and the obstacle, were closely related to the importance of rivers in cult and religious beliefs, whose genesis naturally goes much further back. Since time immemorial a boundary symbolised the transition from one world to another, hence also the death. Overcoming an obstacle in the form of a watercourse posed a mortal danger, and gods were given offerings to avert the danger.¹¹ Votive offerings cast into water have been known from archaeological finds since the Neolithic; their number reached its climax in the Bronze Age, chiefly in its later part with tens of thousands of finds. These included mainly weapons and armour; in southern Germany for instance forty percent of this material comes from watercourses. A frequent votive offering in this region was, both in archaeological sites at mountains and in riverbeds, an axe, connected with Madrisa – a friendly alpine fairy and the goddess of plenty. The offering was very often put in conspicuous or unusual places in a watercourse – fords, confluences, rapids, sections where the river flows through the rocks, places where water has an unusual colour.

In the tradition of the Roman and Greek cultures already the river itself was divine; its entire course was thus the addressee of an offering, or an offering might have formed a symbol of the transition from one bank to the other.¹² Besides watercourses and their springs, another body of water with a devotional function are swamps; nevertheless, whereas finds from rivers have been catalogued, those from

9 Ibid., 49.

10 Cf. Alexandreida (hereinafter as Alexandreida). Ed. by Václav VAŽNÝ, Praha 1965, 68 – “Jest tu bliz Eufrates river,/ jež, slyši, z ráje vytieká” [Nearby is the river Euphrates,/ which, as I have heard, flows from Eden]. According to John of Marignola, the first Slavs ate acorns and drank wealthy stream water – Johannis de Marignola Chronicon. Kronika Jana z Marignoly [The Chronicle of John of Marignola]. In: FRB (cf. n. 1) vol. 3, 521 and 523.

11 On the importance of the border, cf. contributions published in Proceedings from the 35th Conference of Medieval Archaeologists of the Czech and Slovak Republics with the Main Focus on the Boundary in the Life of the Medieval Man – *Archaeologia historica* 29 (2004).

12 Gaben an die Götter. Schätze der Bronzezeit Europas. Ed. by Alix und Bernhard HÄNSEL. Berlin 1997.

swamps have not been; a relevant comparison is thus lacking and we may say only that a substantial difference recorded so far is that swords have not been found in swamps yet.¹³

The interpretation of archaeological finds from rivers and their surroundings is quite complicated. Prehistoric finds, in Bohemia mainly from the Elbe valley, are known from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age; most of them come from the Bronze Age. They include mainly weapons, in particular remains of bronze swords, axes, but also bracelets. In individual cases it is almost impossible to determine whether these were accidental losses, remains of a shipwreck or votive gifts. Neither is it in most cases possible to say whether the river or its immediate vicinity were also the original location where the object had been placed or lost; the object could have been washed from the surrounding soil, moved downstream etc. It could have likewise been brought into the river in connection with a change in its course, which in some cases may run through an originally settlement area.¹⁴ In contrast to dry land, it is also necessary to count with different conditions, decisive for the preservation and finding of objects – after some time, ceramics as well as other materials decay; coins are too small to make it possible to find more than a mere fragment of them in the river mud.

From sites all over Europe a very widespread practice of throwing coins into a watercourse is documented. For instance at the river Vilaine near Rennes, 30.000 coins were discovered, coming from periods beginning with Augustus and ending with Valentinian II.¹⁵ In the Czech Republic one of the hoard sites connected with water which is of European importance is the so-called Porta Bohemica (Bohemian Gate). Considering the monumentality of this river gorge, it is more than understandable.¹⁶

It is assumed that for the Middle Ages, unlike for prehistory, the objects found in rivers included more lost items (shipbuilding tools, or e. g. someone's weapons thrown into a river by someone else, etc.) than deliberately thrown artefacts with cult significance. In the river near Roudnice nad Labem (Litoměřice district) for example numerous tools were found in the river, coming from the construction of the local Gothic bridge: chisels, axes, stonemasons' hammers, iron setting poles, also compasses, a rafting hook and a hoe. Near Velké Žernoseky (Litoměřice dis-

13 HANSEN, Svend: Studien zu den Metalldeponierungen während der älteren Urnenfelderzeit zwischen Rhônetal und Karpatenbecken 1–2. Bonn 1994 (Universitätsforschungen zur prähistorischen Archäologie Bd. 21), here Bd. 2, 179–181.

14 DRESLEROVÁ, Dagmar / BŘÍZOVÁ, Eva: Holocene environmental processes and alluvial archaeology in the middle Labe (Elbe) valley. In: Ancient Landscape, Settlement Dynamics and Non-Destructive Archaeology. Czech Research Project 1997–2002. Ed. by Martin GOJDA. Praha 2004, 121–170; Studien zu den Metalldeponierungen (cf. n. 13), 179–181; ZÁPOTOCKÝ, Milan: K významu Labe jako spojovací a dopravní cesty [On the Importance of the Elbe as Communication and Traffic Route]. In: Památky archeologické 60/2 (1969), 277–366, here 310–312.

15 TODD, Malcolm: Germáni [The Germanic Peoples]. Praha 1999, 90.

16 Studien zu den Metalldeponierungen (cf. n. 13), 179–181.

trict), 15 quern stones from the quarries in the area were found, which provides evidence for their transportation by water.¹⁷

If we focus our attention on the evidence of the worship of watercourses in the Czech Middle Ages, a particularly interesting source will be Cosmas, who recorded the memory of surviving pagan cults. Apart from the worship of fire, forests, trees, rocks and mountains, he also mentioned the veneration of springs. He wrote that still at the end of the 11th century, always on Pentecost Tuesday or Wednesday at springs, people would sacrifice to evil spirits (*demonēs*), which was not put an end to until Duke Břetislav II.¹⁸ Similar accounts are available for the Early Middle Ages and for the Slavic area also with Procopius, Thietmar, Helmold and Nestor. It is known from their texts that besides water springs magical rituals were performed at pools or water reservoirs as well. The worship of the daemons of rivers and fire, mountains and trees is referred to also by the Homiliary of the Opatovice Monastery from the first half of the 12th century, the earliest preserved book of preaching demonstrably written in the Czech lands, which also prohibited the bringing of offerings.¹⁹

In medieval imagination rivers may be attributed still further and not insignificant characteristics. Apart from their being a natural symbol of passing time and forming a significant obstacle to travelling in the landscape and hence a natural border as well, an important role in their veneration must have been played by the shimmer created by the reflection of sunlight on the water surface – this is essentially impossible to encounter elsewhere in nature, perhaps with the exception of some stone crystals. The importance of the shine and sparkle of the water surface in the veneration of watercourses is shown by some mystic medieval texts, in which the river is perceived as the symbol of the divine light and which use even the figurative expression “the river of light”.²⁰ Furthermore, water has a cleansing function; it washes clean but does not need be washed off (cf. the symbol of baptism).

Old cult ideas always lasted long and enjoyed great respect. Medieval authors at least tried to recast them in a Christian pot. An example is Cosmas’ story of Henry II, Holy Roman Emperor, who gave a chalice to a hermit travelling to the Holy Land to immerse it three times in the water of the river Jordan in the place where John had baptised Jesus. This chalice immersed in the sacred water then saves the emperor when his soul is being judged, at least in the pilgrim’s dream, when daemons have already almost tipped the scales of deeds in favour of sin, but the indignant Virgin Mary throws this holy cup against the wall of the church, its handle breaks, and at this sound the infernal crowd disperses.²¹

17 ZÁPOTOCKÝ (cf. n. 14), 310–312.

18 Cosmas (cf. n. 7), 9–13 and 161.

19 Národní knihovna České republiky, Sign. III.F.6, Homiliář opatovický [Homiliary of the Opatovice Monastery], fol. 6v; an edition accessible from: <http://www.manuscriptorum.com> – “[colebant] alii flumina et ignes, alii montes et arbores, sicut et adhuc pagani multi faciunt et plurimi etiam in hac terra nostra adorant daemonia; aut ad arbores, vel ad fontes aut alicubi nisi ad Deum et sanctos eius et ad sanctam matrem ecclesiam Dei auxilia quaerere”; cf. KALANDRA, Závěš: České pohanství [Czech Paganism] 1–2. Praha 1947, here vol. 2, 307–312.

20 CURTIUS, Ernst Robert: *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. London 1979, 121.

21 Cosmas (cf. n. 7), 66.

Watercourses in Texts – a Semantic Analysis

Already in the Middle Ages we encounter the still-surviving perception of large rivers as a symbol of the land through which they run, mainly as a symbol of homeland. This conception may be found especially in Cosmas' Chronicle, from whose text it is clear that it was not a mere geographical demarcation. This is clearly expressed by the member of the king's retinue Aleš, reminding King Vratislaus not to put himself in danger by imprudently bathing in the river in the enemy territory of the Saxons. He addresses him with these words: "It is not *your* Vltava or Ohře [*in Wlitava aut in Ogra tua*] that you are bathing in."²² In his speech, the Vltava and Ohře represent the Czech land; elsewhere in the chronicle, Cosmas mentions *our* Vltava [*noster ille fluvius Wlitava*].²³ At the same time the chronicle Cosmas noticed that all the watercourses spring in our territory and the Czech land "does not accept any foreign river."²⁴ Consequently all the rivers are genuinely domestic and bring a certain character to the lands where they flow. Marignola, paraphrasing after more than two hundred years Cosmas' text, refers to the Czech land as "large for its springs and rivers."²⁵

If we compare the information on watercourses in Cosmas' Chronicle and in later texts, we find a substantial and extremely interesting difference. In the later period there are more and more descriptions of floods, which Cosmas does not give nearly as much space as his followers and if he mentions them at all, he comments on them, unlike on other types of events (e. g. gale), mostly very laconically. Only a single mention of the September flood of 1118 is more explicit; we find here such expressions as *erumpere* [to burst forth], *suo impetu* [with its surge], *praeceps* [abruptly].²⁶

In the 14th century, on the other hand, the authors describe the raging of the water element very vividly while using a whole range of expressive phrases. Peter of Zittau both captures the extent of the destruction by expressing the number of the things affected or the amount of rising water (*copiosa* [copious], *habundantia* [abundant/swollen/overflowing]; *locis pluribus* [in several places], *maxima* [enormous]) and uses many verbs for the depiction of the enormity of the damage (*destruxit* [destroyed], *rapuit* [grabbed/pulled down], *deduxit* [flushed away]).²⁷ Not even Francis of Prague lagged behind. He lends colour to the power of the surging river by using an even greater variety of verbs than his predecessor. The swollen Elbe *takes* with it [*evulsit* – literally uproots] meadows and watermills; in the battle, bridges collapse and the water devours [*absorbuit*] some of them; further the flood sweeps away buildings, walls and ramparts (*subvertit*); the river has risen [*excrevit*] so much that it erases [*delevit*] villages, and whatever the flood grabs [*rapuit*], it

22 Ibid., 142.

23 Ibid., 219.

24 Ibid., 6.

25 Marignola (cf. n. 10), 523.

26 Cosmas (cf. n. 7), 219.

27 Chronicon Aulae Regiae (cf. n. 4), 232 and 264.