At a festive reception in the Museum of Art, Ferdinand Seibt read a chapter from Německo a Češi – dějiny sousedství uprostřed Evropy (Academia, 1996), the Czech edition of his Deutschland und die Tschechen, to an audience of about 200 persons. This was followed by an instrumental concert of early chamber music. Some participants in the next days visited Svatý Kopeček, a monumental Baroque church built on a height 10 km northeast of Olomouc and commanding a panoramic view of central Moravia to the south. The symposium’s sessions were graced by the presence of Prof. Dr. Josef Polišenský of Charles University, a native of the neighboring city of Prostějov and at age 81 the dean of active Czech historians. Arrangements for the participants at Historická Olomouc XI. were thoughtfully handled by Roman Zaoral and Libuše Hrabová, head of the history department in the university’s Philosophical Faculty.

Olomouc is an old city undergoing much needed reconstruction and modernization. The enthusiasm and commitment shown by the faculty, students, and administration of the Palacký University bode well for the city’s future.

Port Charlotte, Florida

Stanley B. Winters

GALA RECEPIONS FOR BOOK OF SETON-WATSON DOCUMENTS

Rarely has a book on the Czechs and Slovaks received a multinational welcome comparable to that accorded R. W. Seton-Watson and His Relations with the Czechs and Slovaks. Documents/Dokumenty 1906–1951 between September 1996 and January 1997. Its publication was celebrated at festive meetings in Prague, Bratislava, Martin, and London attended by Seton-Watson’s surviving son Christopher, the editors of its two volumes and well-wishers and dignitaries. This wide acclaim was primarily due to the long and trustworthy relationship between R. W. Seton-Watson (1879–1951), the Scottish historian, publicist, editor, and educator, and leading founders and officials of interwar Czechoslovakia such as T. G. Masaryk, Edvard Beneš, Milan Hodža, and Anton Štefánek. Then there is the book’s high quality. Its 228 carefully edited letters and other documents in volume I and the informative indexes of names and places in volume II show Seton-Watson’s intimate involvement with the political and nationality problems of the Czechs and Slovaks from their rule by Austria-Hungary until the communist takeover in 1948.

The book was the product of an impressive institutional and personal collaboration. It was jointly published by the Ústav T. G. Masaryk in Prague and the Matica slovenská in Martin, with financial support from the Czech Komerční banka and the French Fondation pour le progres de l’homme. Thomas D. Marzik of St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia and Jan Rychlík of the Ústav TGM were its editors, assisted by Miroslav Bielik of the Matica slovenská. Christopher Seton-Watson provided many of his father’s personal papers and wrote an introductory essay on his career.

The first of the four receptions or “launches” was held on 17 September at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in downtown Prague. It was cosponsored by
the Czech Academy, the British Embassy, and the Ústav TGM, with Václav Pačes, Vice President of the Academy, officiating. The speakers included His Excellency Sir Michael Burton, KCVO, CMG, the British Ambassador; Jaroslav Opat, Director of the Ústav TGM, and Christopher Seton-Watson, with remarks by Jan Rychlík and Thomas Marzik. The Ambassador quoted approvingly from the documents in the book as evidence of Great Britain's solicitude for the Czechs and Slovaks from early in this century — apart from the Munich Agreement — and into the Second World War and beyond.

After dining with Sir Michael at the British Embassy in Malá Strana, Dr. Rychlík and Professors Marzik and Seton-Watson motored to Slovakia. In Bratislava, they presented their book to the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences at a meeting chaired by Dušan Kováč, Director of the Institute. Present in the audience was Ondřej A. Halaga, archivist and historian from Košice, whose letter of 27 February 1951 to R.W. Seton-Watson is the last document to be reprinted in the book.

The travelers then went to Martin, where they were warmly greeted by their colleague Miroslav Bielik, Administrative Director of the Matica slovenská. On 19 September, he bestowed on each of them the “Památná medaila Maticie slovenskej.” There they met Mrs. Želmíra Bellušová, the daughter of Anton Štefánek, who had attended the prior reception in Prague. Ružomberok was the next stop, where they placed flowers at a bust of Seton-Watson, the only memorial to him in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. At Bystríčka, a village near Martin, they saw the house in which the family of T. G. Masaryk summered from the 1880s onward, and where Alice Masarykova had a small villa.

The trip to Slovakia became a sentimental journey for Christopher Seton-Watson. He revisited places he had seen as a lad, when traveling to them in 1929 with his parents and brother Hugh. In Topoľčianky, he met a young woman whose grandfather had been Masaryk's butler. He recalled having sat next to Masaryk at the president's country retreat in Topoľčianky during a screening of a Russian film about Cossacks. The grandnephew of Vávro Šrobár treated him and his two companions to a tour of the local château. Going on to Bradlo, they paid their respects to Milan Rastislav Štefánik at his memorial monument.

The final reception was held at Senate House, the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, on 10 January 1997. It was sponsored by Michael Branch, Director of the School, and chaired by Robert B. Pynsent, Professor of Czech and Slovak Literature. Jan Dömök, Chargé d'Affaires of the Slovak Embassy, and Milan Jakobec, Minister-Counsellor of the Czech Embassy, extended greetings and congratulations to those responsible for the book. Christopher Seton-Watson described the effect of him of retracing his father's steps. Along with the three editors and guests, those attending included Mrs. Mary R. Seton-Watson, Hugh's widow; her two daughters-in-law and a son-in-law.

Dr. Rychlík and Prof. Marzik used the occasion to explain how their enterprise began and the shoals they had to navigate so as to finance it, arrange its delicate bina national aegis, gather and edit the documents, monitor the proofreading and printing, and stay in close contact despite the ocean, the continents, and the time zones bet-
ween them. Prof. Marzik observed the appropriateness of their meeting at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, with its connections to Seton-Watson, Masaryk, and the interwar republic that had endowed the Masaryk Chair of Central European History, of which Seton-Watson was the first occupant.

This concluded a fascinating chapter not only in Slavic-Anglo-American cooperation, to which Seton-Watson had devoted his life, but also in the recent history of scholarly book publishing.

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FRANTIŠEK ŠMAHEL HONORED BY THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The American Historical Association has elected František Šmahel to be an Honorary Foreign Member. He becomes the second member of Collegium Carolinum to receive this distinction; the late Karl Bosl was the first in 1990. The AHA announced its choice of Šmahel on 3 January 1997 during its 111th Annual Meeting held 2–5 January in New York City. It established the category of Honorary Foreign Member in 1885, when it elected Leopold von Ranke as its initial honoree. Šmahel is the 81st historian to be elected, the first Czech and the third from a predominantly Slavic country. The other two were Mikhail N. Tikhomirov (USSR, 1963) and P. A. Zaionchkovskii (USSR, 1967). The only other East European elected was David Prodan (Romania, 1986).

Šmahel’s election was announced by incoming AHA president Prof. Joyce Appleby (University of California, Los Angeles) in a ceremony attended by about 250 persons at the Association’s General Meeting in the New York Hilton. She cited Šmahel’s contributions to Hussite and Reformation studies, his roles in directing the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak and Czech Academies of Science since 1989 and in opening Czech historiography to world influences, and his help to and recognition of American scholars conducting research in his country. She quoted from letters endorsing Šmahel’s candidacy written by specialists in medieval and early modern history in the United States, Germany, Great Britain, France, and Switzerland as testimony to his international reputation. Šmahel’s curriculum vitae lists over 900 published items, including numerous monographs, books, and articles in journals and collaborative works.

In addition to directing the Historical Institute, Šmahel serves as Professor and Head of the Seminar on Czech Medieval History at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University; Editor-in-Chief of Český časopis historický, Chairman of the František Palacký Foundation, and member of the International Commission of the History of Universities, among others. In 1994, he won the Forschungspreis der Stiftung Historisches Kolleg München, and in 1996 the Hans-Sigrist-Preis of the University of Bern for outstanding service to and research on the history of East Central Europe.

Prof. Šmahel was unable to come to New York for the ceremony. Its only mishap occurred when Prof. Appleby forgot to ask the representative from the Permanent