

CONFLICTING POPULAR CULTURE –
POPULISM AND PUBLIC HISTORY

Vlastimil Vondruška and the Instrumentalization of the Middle Ages

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The article highlights the success of the populist presentation of the Middle Ages associated in contemporary Czech culture with the political extreme right. On the example of the texts by Vlastimil Vondruška, the author considers options for an adequate response from the academia. He sees habitual corrections, distance or ridicule as a rather unfortunate internalization of the populist narrative about elites and the people that Vondruška promotes. As a productive reaction of the academia the author considers instead the consistent presentation of historical science in the spirit of reconstructivism, with an emphasis on memory, methodological, conceptual and value-oriented transparency, inclusive multi-perspectivity and the collective nature of science. The shortcomings of professional historians in the face of disinformers do not lie in poor knowledge or inadequate presentation skills, but in creat-

ing unattainable expectations and thus paving the way for simplifying, monologic and toxic communication of the past.