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**[Rev.:] *Passio altensteigensis XIV effigies Jesu in domicilio senum anuumque et debiliun et dementium. Kleine Altensteiger Passion 14 Bilder Jesu aus einem Altenpflegeheim. Cum preafatione Caeciliae Koch (Mit einem Vorwort von Cecilie Koch), Opole 2012, 37 p.***

At the end of 2012, a volume of extremely interesting and thought-provoking Latin-German poems (bilingual edition), written by Anna Elissa Radke, was released in the Holy Cross Publishing House (Wydawnictwo Świętego Krzyża) in Opole by the Foundation for Culture and Science in Silesia (Fundacja Nauki i Kultury na Śląsku). Anna, called 'Sappho from Marburg', composes primarily in Latin as well as in German and Polish, which she has been learning for many years and of which she is a great enthusiast. This poetess is known and admired particularly for Latin pieces and partly because of her occupation – she is a classical philologist, philosopher and Lutheran theologian. She uses Latin not only as a research and scholarly tool for philological, philosophical or theological references, but also as a still living material, which can convey the most subtle feelings and states of mind of modern world inhabitants. It's impossible to 'trap' this poetry in some stiff evaluative frames because these are both Latin drama arts dedicated to famous historical figures (In Poland the authoress was beguiled by the characters of Saint John and Saint Jadwiga, the Silesian duchess) as well as short poems made for favourite animals, referring to Neoterics and Hellenistic poets' tradition, especially to Catullus. Anna Elisa Radke draws from different traditions, tinges them with her own unique sense of world and expressed in lively Latin language. It's worth mentioning that Miss Radke is very active member of International Association of People Speaking Latin: 'L.U.P.A.' (*Latinitati Vivae Provehendae Associatio*).

Recently published by her Opolian friends, the volume titled; *Passio altensteigensis XIV effigies Jesu in domicilio senum anuumque et debiliun et dementium. Kleine Altensteiger Passion 14 Bilder Jesu aus einem Altenpflegeheim* touches on social problems: of the elderly, ex-

cluded from the society because of illness, disability or origin, in the context of the Passion – Christ’s Agony. These fourteen poems are like the fourteen Stations of the Cross and fourteen “portraits of Jesus” according to the expression used in the title. As Cecilie Koch has written in the introduction (*Praefatio*), it is ‘dying Christ, miserable, mocked, abandoned by friends’, seen through the prism of fates of the people expecting near death in the nursing home, through the prism of the sick, like in the case of a woman forgotten by her ten own children for whom she had formerly dedicated her life or through the fate of a kind nurse from the nursing home, a Turk, neglected and used by the rest of the staff.

Unusual artistry of these exceptional poems is tied up with metrics as well. The profile of an old farmer forced to abandon his beloved ground and household, so similar to Virgilio Melibeus, the poetess is describing by means of hexametres. When, in turn, she comes to the “closed, isolated” from the mobile part of the society, she uses iambic trimetre or Asclepiades metre, bigger or smaller, ending suddenly in the middle of a verse. In every poem there’s a huge respect emerging from the pages for the elderly, mentally disabled and vulnerable and hence being more a subject for those who care for them than independent people with human dignity. These poems are acutely moving for the reader, no matter what is their religion.

There are fourteen figures depicting Stations of Cross as an exquisite addendum to the volume of poetry, made by Malgorzata Pientka, who based her artistic design on the sculptures of the most famous Silesian Way of the Cross: Stations of the Cross from St Ann’s Mountain (Góra św. Anny). This detail is not meaningless – it underlines the perennial fascination of Anna Elisa Radke with Silesia, particularly with its still so little known neo-Latin literature. *Passio Altensteigensis* is hence a multidimensional reading, over-national, over-confessional and original, enabling to understand the structures and forms of expression of one of the most important European languages – the Latin language.

### **Bibliography:**

Anna Elissa Radke, *Passio altensteigensis XIV effigies Jesu in domicilio senum anuumque et debiliū et dementium. Kleine Altensteiger Passion 14 Bilder Jesu aus einem Altenpflegeheim. Cum preafatione Caeciliae Koch (Mit einem Vorwort von Cecilie Koch)*, published by Wydawnictwo Św. Krzyża, released by Fundacja Nauki i Kultury na Śląsku, Opole 2012, ss. 37.