

*Rycerstwo Europy środkowo-wschodniej wobec idei krucjat (The Attitude of the Knights of Central-Eastern Europe Towards the Idea of Crusades)*, ed. Wojciech Peltz, Jarosław Dudek, Zielona Góra 2002, 166 pp., Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, Historia 5.

The set of articles under review is the aftermath of the session organized on November 8, 1999, by the Department of Ancient and Medieval History of the Higher Pedagogical School in Zielona Góra. About a half (6) of the thirteen articles deal with Poland, two with the Pomeranian lands, one with Bohemia (the crusades of John of Luxemburg), and three with Ruthenia, Byzantium and Bulgaria, that is Orthodox countries which shunned the Latin initiative aimed at the recovery of the Holy Land. All these texts have been provided with summaries in German, and the whole collection is preceded by an introduction written by Wojciech Peltz.

Polish issues are introduced by Karol Olejnik's article *Crusades in Medieval Polish Sources* (pp. 7–14), where on the basis of a group of selected written sources (the annals of Miechów, Lubin, the Cracow and Gniezno Chapters, Traska, Sędziwój, the Świątokrzyskie Region, and Little Poland; the chronicles — of Gallus, Kadłubek, Dzierzwa, and Great Poland; the diplomatic codes of Silesia and Great Poland, as well as *The Annals* by Jan Długosz), the author analyses what was written about the crusades. Unfortunately, both the selection of the sources and the systematic arrangement of information seem inadequate and arouse some doubt. In the first place the author uses no documents of Mazovia which were issued in connection with the Pruthenian mission, or any hagiographic sources, (e.g. the lives of Werner, the Bishop of Płock, or St. Stanislaus). Secondly, the division of information into direct (on the subject of the crusades) and indirect (the expositions inspired by the crusades) is not quite clear. Nevertheless we are convinced by the author's view that in Poland, quite understandably, there was more interest in the crusades to the lands of pagans and heretics (that is Pomeranians, Pruthenians, Lithuanians and Hussites) than to the Holy Land and that is why there is more information of the first type in the sources. We agree with the author that the selection and reception of the slogans concerned with the crusades, directed against the misbelievers and favouring the acquisition of material property and spiritual values, were similar both among the Western-European and Polish knights. The descriptions of the crusades — the author maintains — were also similar, although the Polish sources less frequently raised the moral, philosophical or theological questions. However, what strikes us in the scheme of the description of a crusade presented by K. Olejnik (mobilization — march — battle — ecstasy) is the term "ecstasy" used for the last stage of the expedition. The joy caused by success, expressed in thanksgiving prayers, singing and feasting, was certainly far from the dreamy raptures of visionary nature, forgetful of the current situation and reality, that is what is denoted by the term "ecstasy" in its literal sense.

Krzysztof Benyskiewicz's article has the title *The Attitude of the Polish Knights Towards the Pagans and Paganism in the 11th–13th Centuries* (p. 17–36). The author applies the term "pagans" both to the Polish peasants, the Christianization of whom was, naturally, not immediate, and the neighbouring tribes who did not yet adopt Christianity. However, the attitude of the Polish knights towards the pagans seems to be excessively isolated from the religious context. The author defines the relations between the knights and peasants as socio-political (24–25) and attributes the battles against the pagan neighbours to patriotism, just like those against Christians (p. 29). Nor can we agree with the thesis that Boleslaus

the Wrymouth was ignorant of the ideas of the crusades (p. 30), and that little was known in the Poland of his day of the crusaders' successes in the Levant (p. 28). The author must realise that Gallus was familiar with the ideas of the knights who fought against heathenry and that the Polish knights were even then ready to fight for their faith (for example when they made expeditions against the Pomeranians or Pruthenians). As regards the question of the Levant, one finds it difficult to accept that the appeals for help from the Holy Land, which throughout the first forty years of the 12th century constantly needed relief, did not reach Poland, which certainly belonged to the sphere of civilization which produced the crusade movement.

The reception of the crusade ideology by the Polish knights is also discussed in two contributory articles devoted to the selected individuals of the social upper stratum: a knight and a prince. Marek Cetwiński's *Andrzej of Morawica in the Pruthenian Labyrinth. Side-notes to "St. Stanislaus' Miracles"*, pp. 39–46, deals with the transformation of the knight and crusader Andrzej of Morawica, who in the first half of the 13th century took part in the crusade against the Pruthenians ("the enemies of the Cross"). By risking his life for the sake of Christ (p. 41) he wanted to do penance for his sins and recover his faith. The scene of this transformation was a desolate mansion of a rich Pruthenian, where this Polish knight, first setting the house on fire, wandered as if in a labyrinth, looking for the way out. St. Stanislaus, called upon to help him, saved him from distress, and the hero, waging an internal battle, underwent a transformation which — as the author says — consisted of the burning out of the old heathen within the soul of a Christian hero (p. 46). Although M. Cetwiński throws into relief the significance of the solitary hero's internal fight, there can be no doubt that his penance was his participation in the crusade and the knight must have been one of the "new kind" who fought both with the help of spiritual and material weapons. An interesting aspect of this story is the attempt to militarize the cult of St. Stanislaus.

Mikołaj Gładysz's paper (*The Jaćwież Expedition of Casimir the Just in Master Vincentius' Account. A Contribution to the Reception of Crusade Slogans in 12th Century Poland*, pp. 59–66) is devoted to Casimir the Just's expedition against Jaćwież (1192 or 1193), and more precisely to his posture as a crusader. The influence of crusade ideas visible in the terminology (the Holy War against the Saladinians), as well as in the behaviour of the Prince of Little Poland during the expedition (Holy Mass before the battle) did not reflect, as M. Gładysz maintains, the personal views of the author of this account (Master Vincentius Kadłubek), but the actual events, which he rendered in the language of his era (p. 64). However, the thesis that the Prince's obedience to crusade slogans was only the result of the pressure of the Papacy and crusade propaganda, seems to be too far gone. This would change Casimir into a "willy-nilly" crusader, which thesis would find support in his complete indifference to the missionary aims of this expedition (pp. 65–66). The author draws this conclusion, since Kadłubek keeps silent on this subject, probably not so much because there were no such missionary actions, as because the chronicler was against the dissemination of faith with the help of the sword, which at any rate, under Boleslaus the Curly turned out to be of no avail.

Urszula Świdarska-Włodarczyk's article entitled *The Influence of Crusade Ideas on the Personal Model of a Polish Nobleman-Knight at the End of Medieval and the Beginning of Modern Times* (pp. 47–57) is based on the records of the chronicles (among others by Gallus Anonymus, Master Vincentius Kadłubek, Jan Długosz, Maciej Strzykowski and Szymon Starowolski), political and philosophical writings (among others by Paweł Włodkowic, Stanisław of Skarbimierz and Andrzej F. Modrzewski), as well as poetic works (by Jan Kochanowski and Mikołaj Sep-Szarzyński). The author points out that the "crusade spirit" shaped among other things the posture of the Polish nobleman-knight — a pious defender of faith and his country who took special pride in fighting and risking his life for these values. This model was

probably shaped both by the crusade expeditions, and — it seems to us — by the wider influence of medieval spiritual tradition. To some extent, however, this model was an inseparable product of the new political situation of Poland, rendered at that time by the term “the bulwark of Christianity”.

The military-political aspect of the Polish crusades has been dealt with only in one study, Krystyna Zielińska-Melkowska's *The Polish Crusades to Pruthenia in the Second Half of the 12th and the First Half of the 13th Century Against the Background of Crusade Ideology* (pp. 69–89). The author discusses Polish expeditions against Pruthenians in the second half of the 12th and the first half of the 13th century in a synthetic way, although she largely refers to the Levantine crusades, their ideology and Polish participation in them (Henry of Sandomierz). Unfortunately, sometimes her uncritical attitude to the sources leads her to mistakes or risky hypotheses. New research has shown the incredibility of the information given by Jan Długosz on Boleslaus the Brave's expedition to Pruthenia in 1015. Nor can one go along with Kadłubek in the matter of the Pruthenian relief to Miecław, about which Gallus keeps silent. We can also treat only as a surmise (p. 70) her thesis that the real cause of the expedition against Pruthenians in 1107/1108 (rather in 1108) was a wish for revenge for the Pruthenian relief to Zbigniew. Finally, the earlier research by Andrzej F. Grab-ski and the latest by M. Gładysz make us renounce her view that crusade ideas reached Poland with much delay (in the middle of the 12th century), although one must admit that it was then that the activity of the Polish knights in this field was documented in the sources.

The next part of the collection consists of two articles devoted to the Pomeranian region. In the first, Joachim Zdrénka (*The Pilgrimages of the Pomeranian Princes to the Holy Land and Rome in the Years 1392/1393 and 1406/1407*, pp. 91–101) deals with the pilgrimages of Warcislaw VIII to Jerusalem and Rome (1392/1393, 1406/1407), inspired not so much by “the crusade spirit” as — in our opinion — by pure devotion. The author concentrates on the identification of the pilgrim and his companions, as well as the reconstruction of the course this pilgrimage took. It remains unclear whether Warcislaw during his first expedition (although he certainly reached Venice), succeeded in reaching Jerusalem. This seems doubtful, in our opinion, since he wanted to visit the Holy Land again. It seems that he took up the second journey, because the first one was a failure. Lucyna Turck-Kwiatkowska in her paper *Crusade Ideas in Pomeranian Historiography* (pp. 103–111) gives a synthetic treatment of the history of the Christianization of Western Pomerania in the first half of the 12th century — which, according to the author was a peaceful process or the effect of the German *Drang nach Osten*. She also characterizes briefly the attitude of the Pomeranian princes to the activity of the Teutonic Order on the Baltic coast. Her treatment is very general and presents many controversial opinions, beginning with the *Drang nach Osten* idea unjustly transferred to the 12th century and ending with her view of the Teutonic Knights as the first disseminators of the idea of “the fight for Jerusalem” in Pruthenia (p. 109). Her introduction concerning crusade ideology is also disputable.

The vitality of crusade ideas in the Bohemian lands still in the 14th century is shown by Wojciech Iwańczak's article *John of Luxemburg's Crusades* (pp. 113–121). It presents the expeditions of John of Luxemburg against Lithuanian Samogitia (1328/1329, 1336/1337, 1344/1345) as the continuation of the crusades to the Holy Land (the first expedition) and as an enterprise which was meant to get him out of a difficult political situation (the second and third expeditions). In the case of Hungary, on the contrary, the difficult internal situation made it impossible for the rulers of that country to take an active part in the crusades to the Holy Land (12th c.) (Ilona Czamańska's article *The Aspects of the Crusade Movement in Hungary in the 11th–15th Century*, pp. 131–138). Due to the pragmatic approach of Hungarians, who had no major interests in the Levant, although in comparison to other countries of their region

showed considerable interest in these expeditions, the territory they chose for the implementation of crusade slogans — as in other countries of Central-Eastern Europe — turned out to be the area bordering on the pagans, heretics and schismatists (13th–14th cc.). The revival of the crusade idea towards the end of the 14th century was here — just as in Poland — bound up with the growing external menace (Turkey).

An interesting complement to this collection consists of three articles devoted to the attitude of Orthodox countries towards the Latin idea of crusades. W. Peltz (*The Crusaders in North-Eastern Europe*, pp. 123–129), while enumerating the causes (social, economic, political, and in the first place, religious) of Ruthenia's disapproval of the crusade movement, points out that its ideology was relatively early directed against the Slavic (Orthodox) schismatists. The confrontation of the adherents of the Latin with those of the Orthodox Church in Ruthenia was bound up with the missionary work among the Baltic and Finnish population and basically, until the famous battle of Peipus (1242) had been inspired by crusade spirit. Zdzisław Peńtek (*The Consolidation of the Bulgarian State During the Third Crusade. Frederick Barbarossa and the Knights of Central-Eastern Europe in the Balkans*, pp. 159–163) supposes that the march of Barbarossa's troops through the Byzantine territory during the third crusade diverted Byzantium's attention from Bulgaria so much, that the latter was able to consolidate its recently regained independence. This is quite probable, although one must bear in mind that Bulgaria was established due to its own resources and even before this crusade was able to resist the Byzantine Empire. On the other hand, Jarosław Dudek's article *The Attitude of the Byzantine Aristocracy Towards the Idea of Crusades in the Second Half of the 11th Century* (pp. 139–158) explains the reason why the provincial aristocracy was hostile towards this movement. In contrast to the "metropolitan" aristocracy, that of the eastern provinces saw the arrival of foreign knights as a menace to their own interests. This threat, somewhat later, materialized in the rise of the position of Alexius Comnenus and the adherents of the Latin Church in this area. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of the crusades in itself should not be perceived as something foreign to Byzantium or having nothing in common with its territory, since it was precisely from there that the first expeditions inspired by the idea of "the Holy War" departed (7th century) and Alexius Comnenus was one of the "fathers" of the first crusade.

To sum up the review of this collection, it has to be stated that its main body consists of deliberations on the participation of the Polish knights in the crusade movement. The articles making up this part, discussing this problem both in longer and shorter periods of time, raise the issue of the crusades themselves (their military-political aspect) and crusade ideology as well as their effect on the later generations. Although there is no separate discussion of the Polish participation in the crusades to the Holy Land, this part of the book must be considered the most comprehensive and extensive. Other articles are rather of a contributory character. With the exception of works on Ruthenia and Hungary, they discuss selected, individual questions, which certainly add new information, but do not give us an overall view of the attitude of those countries to the crusade movement. This may give us an impression of a haphazard choice of their subjects. On the other hand, it must be considered a great asset of the book that it includes works dealing with the Orthodox countries, which did not approve of the Latin crusade idea. This proves that the participants in the session saw the issue in a wide context, although it may seem that the article about the Byzantine aristocracy is rather out of place in a book dealing with Central-Eastern Europe.

The studies under discussion show that under the influence of "the crusade spirit" in Central-Eastern Europe a local crusade front was shaped directed against the neighbouring pagans, schismatists and heretics. There were at least a few reasons for such an attitude, however of a decisive character seem to be precisely the closeness of these countries and the pragmatic posture of the local rulers (the example of Hungary seems to be the most eloquent). Although the local

realities differed from those in the Middle-East “the ideological motives and emotions they created in everyday life sprang from the same roots in Central and Eastern Europe as those that inspired the imagination and devotion of the defenders of the Holy Sepulchre” — says W. Peltz (p. 5). However, in our region of Europe an inseparable part of those motives had always been patriotic slogans, since the local rulers had always been directly threatened by the communities against which the crusades were directed.

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