

Markus Osterrieder, *Das wehrhafte Friedensreich. Bilder von Krieg und Frieden in Polen-Litauen (1505–1595)*, Wiesbaden 2005, Reichert Verlag, Imagines Medii Aevi. Interdisziplinäre Beiträge zur Mittelalterforschung, Bd. 20, 330 pp., Bibl., Personenregister.

As the author says, this is a revised version of the PhD dissertation which he presented at Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich in 2003 (his supervisor was Professor Edgar Hösch). The dissertation was part of a collective research project which was to analyse how the image of war and peace changed in European mentality during the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern era. It is explained in the preface (pp. 3–21) that the author has chosen the Polish-Lithuanian state in 1505–1595 for his analysis as a territory which has not yet been examined from the point of view foreseen in the research project. This, however, seems to be a controversial assertion; the chronological frame of work (the *Nihil Novi* constitution and the Union of Brest concluded in 1596, not in 1595) seems to be arbitrary for it is but loosely connected with the subject and is in fact embedded rather in Poland's general history than in the history of changes in social mentality. The sources on which the author has based his book and his characterisation of the state of research also give rise to doubts. Among the sources used by him are military treatises, anti-Turkish treaties, chronicles, descriptions of the country, some legal sources (mainly parliamentary acts), political writings, theological and philosophical treatises, polemical religious

writings, literary works, folk epics, easy to use because they are all printed sources. What is missing is archival sources, in particular such important materials as the records of dietines, which show mental attitudes of the nobility. As far as literature is concerned, both the *Preface* and the *Bibliography* at the end of the book (pp. 266–321) contain dozens of accidental, frequently very general items (e.g. Norman Davies, *God's Playground*, Oxford 1985–86), works of a popular character (e.g. M. Kosman, *Królowa Bona / Queen Bona /*, Warszawa 1971) as well as works unconnected with the subject (e.g. W. Czaplinski, *The Historical Atlas of Poland*, Wrocław 1986, R. J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II*, Graz-Wien-Köln 1980). The titles and names of authors abound in mistakes (e.g. Samosonowicz instead of Samsonowicz on p. 44, fn. 26, Vera Zimnyj instead of Vera Zimanyi on p. 321, etc.), and so do the quotations, especially those in Polish. Were they not proof of slovenliness, some distortions would even be funny. It would take too much space to mention all of them. In the *Bibliography* some items are repeated twice (*Merisalo-Sarasti, Mare Balticum* on p. 299). On the other hand the over-expanded list does not include many important books. I have in mind works by E. Opaliński (*Kultura polityczna szlachty polskiej / The Political Culture of the Polish Nobility /*, Warszawa 1995), J. Pirożyński (*Z dziejów informacji w Europie XVI w. Nowiny z Polski w kolekcji Jana Jakuba Wicka w Zurichu z lat 1560–1587 / On the History of Information in 16th Century Europe. News from Poland from 1560–1587 in the Collection of Jan Jakub Wick in Zurich /*, Kraków 1995), W. Zientara (*Sarmatia Europaea or Sarmatia Asiana?*, Toruń 2001) as well as my own studies (*Obraz Polski i Polakow na przełomie XVI i XVII w. czyli między przedmurzem chrześcijaństwa a Antychrystem / The Picture of Poland and Polish People at the Turn of the 16th Century or Between the Bulwark of Christianity and the Antichrist /*, in: *Christianitas et cultura Europae*, Lublin 1998; *O jedności i podziałach Europy nowożytnej (On Unity and the Divisions of Modern Europe)*, "Barok", 1996, N° 1; *Missgeburt im türkischen Hut. Beitrag zur Psychose "Feind aus dem Osten" an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit*, "Acta Poloniae Historica", vol. 73, 1996; they are much more connected with the subject than *Staropolskie obyczaje (Old Polish Customs)*, Warszawa 1994, quoted, however, by the author.

The author deals exclusively with the Polish nobility, ignoring townsmen and their ideas about the enemy and war, though it would be interesting to consider what sources produced for instance in Gdańsk and Toruń say about this question. Osterrieder concentrates on the Commonwealth's eastern problems (the wars against Moscow, Turkey and the Tartars) which were the dominant, though not the only, military problem of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The struggle against the Order of Teutonic Knights went on at the beginning of the 16th century, in the middle of the 16th century a conflict broke out over *dominium maris Baltici*—the control over the Baltic Sea and Polish large maritime operations were in progress in which Denmark and Sweden also took part. The 16th century witnessed the beginning of quite intensive Polish-Swedish contacts, leading to the formation of a stereotype of the Swede in Poland, in addition to the old stereotypes of the German, the Muscovite and the Turk. The literature on this subject is quite abundant (K. Lepszy, E. Kotarski) but the author seems not to know it.

In analysing the way in which foreigners were viewed, an interesting question raised in Chapter I (*Die Wahrnehmung des Fremden*, pp. 23–38), the author surprisingly concentrates on the Poles' peregrinations to foreign universities, repeating what has already been established in literature (but no mention is made of M. Pawlak's studies on the journeys made by young people from Royal Prussia or of D. Zołądz-Strzelczyk's fundamental monograph *Peregrinatio academica. Studia młodości polskiej z Korony i Litwy na akademiach i uniwersytetach niemieckich w XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII w. (Peregrinatio academica. Students from Poland and Lithuania at German Academies and Universities in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries)*, Poznań 1986. Next the author discusses some individual foreigners' journeys to Poland (also repeating things which are well known from

literature), but he makes no mention at all of the mass 16th century migrations to Poland caused by religious wars in the West (has he failed to notice them?) and of the development of the multiethnic character of Polish towns. Not a word is said about stereotypes and about the way in which the "aliens" and the local people living together viewed each other, that is a question which should be the core of reflections on *die Wahrnehmung des Fremden*.

Chapter II (*Krieg und Statsraison*, pp. 39–70) is not very original and as a matter of fact the author's data concerning the demographic, social and political structures of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th century can be found in any handbook. The author's theories about the influence of Machiavelli and Erasmus on Polish political thought do not add much new to what has already been known. It is obvious that the author has not studied the available sources thoroughly enough to be able to say something new and innovative. Unfortunately, the same can be said about the next chapters: Chapter III (*Krieg und Frieden in Mythos*, pp. 71–114) and Chapter IV (*Sprache und Buchdruck*, pp. 115–136).

The last three chapters do not bring many more interesting thoughts either. Chapter V (*Feindbilder von Heiden und Schismatikern*, pp. 137–191) opens with an attempt to reconstruct the mental picture of 16th century Europe. Unfortunately, the author, although he profusely quotes J. Tazbir, does not know his work which is indispensable as regards this issue, namely, *Europa, pojęcie i świadomość wspólnoty w dobie Odrodzenia (Europe, the Concept and Community Spirit during the Renaissance)*, in: J. Żarnowski (ed.), *Dziesięć wieków Europy (Ten Centuries of Europe)*, Warszawa 1983. Tazbir's old study tells the reader much more than this recently published book which, however, should mark a step forward in research. Chapter VI (*Krieg und Frieden im Reich Gottes*, pp. 192–219) and Chapter VII (*Antemurale christianitatis*, pp. 220–257) also lack innovative contributions.

The book pretends to be systematic but contrary to appearances, it is rather chaotic. It abounds in issues which have little to do with the main subject, it is full of redundant information or information that can be found in a handbook while the really essential questions are not discussed. The choice of issues is very poor. The subject presented as the title of the book is still waiting for research. Let us hope that this first unsuccessful attempt will not discourage the author from continuing his studies on the history of Poland.

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