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MERCENARY WARRIORS — AN EXAMPLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF CZECH LANDS

A discussion on mercenary warriors naturally imposes upon a researcher an international perspective. The Czech State, being an active participant of the European political life of the Middle Ages, seems to constitute an interesting subject of investigation in this respect.

As far as the mercenary army as a certain form of organization of warriors is concerned the same general features and tendencies as known from West-European countries may also be noticed in Czech lands. It does not mean, however, that the territory observed here is not characterized by its own, particular, local colour and chronological rhythm imposed, especially in the 15th century, by the uniqueness of its development determined by the Hussite revolution.

To begin with, it should be stressed that the output of the researches concerning different aspects of Czech military science can still be improved and it is only the Hussite period that has recently been the subject of a few detailed studies¹. However, some serious gaps have not been filled yet. Therefore many of the former studies have preserved their importance and value up to now².

The beginnings of Czech mercenary service are not clear enough yet, though certain references to paid military service appear quite early. The term "mercede conducti" is already used in the 11th century in reference to some Czech troops allied with the Serbians³, though it is not an individual payment made to warriors that is meant here. Later pieces of information pointing to the existence of some forms similar to those used in a mercenary army date back to the second half of the 11th century. In 1081 A.D. 300 armed Czech warriors set out for Italy with Emperor Henry IV⁴, and in 1082 A.D. Vratislav II hired a troop of armed men belonging to the Bishop of Regensburg and paid them for their service⁵. However, it is extremely difficult to state on the basis of a one-sentence mention what the details of this contract were and to what extent only the habitual fief or other sovereignty relations were thus being realized.

The appearance of mercenary warriors as a professional group of specialists in the art of war in Western Europe is associated with the 12th century⁶. In Bohemia the above mentioned phenomenon takes place a little la-

³ P. Choc, *Smečem ...*, p. 81.

⁴ *Annales Pegavienses*, [in:] *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, S. Scriptores*, vol. 16, pp. 236 seqq.; I. Krogger, *Geschichte Böhmens*, Leipzig 1880, p. 64; J. Kalousek, *České státní právo, second edition*, Prague 1892, pp. 7 seqq.

⁵ *Kronika Pulkavova*, [in:] *Fontes Rerum Bohemiarum*, vol. 5, ed. J. Emleer, Prague 1893, p. 53; [Vratislav] validum et fortem congregat exercitum, et eciam multis militibus et armigeris suis de Alamanie partibus conductis stipendiis intrat Moraviam; cf.: *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. B. Bretholz, [in:] *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, S. Scriptores*, Nova Series, vol. 2, Berlin 1923, pp. 131 seqq.; A. Bachmann, *Geschichte Böhmens*, vol. 1, Gotha 1899, pp. 266 seqq.; *Vojenské dějiny Československa*, ed. Z. Procházková, vol. 1, Prague 1985, p. 62.

⁶ H. Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, vol. 3, *Das Mittelalter*, Berlin 1907, pp. 324 seqq.; E. von Frisch, *Der Übergang vom Lehndienst zum Soldatendienst in Österreich*, Vienna 1907; P. Schmittner, *Das freie Söldnertum im abendländischen Imperium des Mittelalters*, "Münchener Historische Abhandlungen", 1934, Reihe 2, Heft 2; by the same author, *Lehnkriegswesen und Söldnertum im abendländischen Imperium des Mittelalters*, "Historische Zeitschrift", vol. 150, 1934, pp. 229-267; H. Grundmann, *Söldnerheere in der Stauferzeit*, "Forschungen und Fortschritte", vol. 18, 1942, pp. 303-305; Ch. W. C. Oman, *The Art of War in the Middle Ages*, rev. by J. H. Beeler, New York 1968, pp. 65 seqq.; T. Wise, *Medieval Warfare*, London 1976, pp. 7 seqq.

¹ Cf.: P. Klučina, *Vojenská činnost Jana Žižky z Trocnova v letech 1423 až 1424*, "Sešity příspěvků k sociálně, politické a historické problematice vojenství a armády", vol. 5, 1976, pp. 5-22; P. Čornej, *Žižkova bitva u Malešova 7. června 1424*, "Jihočeský Sborník Historický", vol. 49, 1980, pp. 152-164; M. Konečný, *Příspěvky k chronologii a topografii husitské výpravy na Spiš roku 1433*, "Husitský Tábor", vol. 5, 1982, pp. 177-208; P. Čornej, *Bitva na Vitkově a zhroucení Zikmundovy křížové výpravy v létě 1420*, "Husitský Tábor", vol. 9, 1986/1987, pp. 101-152; J. Kejř, *Boje u Vyšehradu na podzim roku 1420*, [in:] *Documenta Pragensia*, vol. 6, 1, Prague 1986, pp. 47-74; R. Tecl, *Tábor a bitva u Křeče, v roce 1435*, "Husitský Tábor", vol. 9, 1986/1987, pp. 153-190.

² See the following selected works: F. Palacký, *O válečném umění Čechů v XV století*, "Časopis Českého Muzea", vol. 2, Prague 1828, pp. 3-28; H. Tomán, *Husitské válečnictví za doby Žižkovy a Prokopovy*, Prague 1898; A. Bouček, *Staré české válečnictví*, Prague 1915; J. Kpraš, *Z dějin českého zřízení vojenského*, Prague 1922; E. Kurfürst, *Válečné dějiny československé*, Prague 1937; O. Frankenberg, *Pod orlici, lve a kalichem*, vol. 1; *Válečnictví rytířské od nejstarších dob do počátku válek husitských*, Prague 1938; V. M. Skorpil, *O vojácích, jezdcích a dragounech do sklonku 18. věku*, "Vojensko-Historický Sborník", vol. 6, 1, 1947; O. Frankenberg, *Husitské válečnictví po Lipanech*, Prague 1960; P. Choc, *Smečem i štítem. České raně feudální vojenství*, Prague 1967.

ter, but in the 13th century mercenary warriors constitute an important part of the King's army⁷. Economic transformations, which introduce more money into circulation, are connected with a greater influx of precious metals into the Czech State. Since the middle of the 13th century the amount of silver obtained from the mines situated in the vicinity of Jihlava in Moravia and Havlíčkův Brod grows and since the end of the 13th century considerable quantities of silver are provided by the mine in Kutná Hora⁸. Not without a reason the wealth of the last rulers of the Premislids dynasty and especially of Přemysl Otakar II is stressed by numerous chronicle writers⁹. It was Přemysl Otakar II who started to "import" mercenary warriors from Germany, which at that time suffered from a territorial dispersion. These warriors guaranteed high quality services needed by this combative monarch and could counterbalance the increasing strength of the potentates. German troops constituted a part of Přemysl Otakar II's army in his numerous campaigns, especially the Hungarian ones¹⁰. The monarch used to bring light horse warriors from Poland to be in his pay. In the year 1278, during the preparations for the battle of Durnkrut, Prince Henry of Lower Bavaria offered Přemysl 200 mounted warriors in heavy armour, 200 light armoured ones and 100 bowmen. Three thousand silver monetary units were to be the equivalent for this help¹¹.

During the reign of Wenceslas II the use of mercenary warriors became a widespread phenomenon¹². Similarly, like in the times of his predecessor, the German countries served this ruler as a reservoir of warriors. The German princes were not exceptions in this respect. In 1300 the King of Bohemia employed Prince Henry of Bavaria together with one hundred heavy armoured mounted warriors for 5000 silver monetary units¹³. Five years later Prince Otton of Bavaria and his brother Stephen were in the service of King Wenceslas II. The same monarch is said to have offered 100 000 silver monetary units to the warriors he wanted to hire from King Philip

IV the Fair of France¹⁴. It does not mean, however, that all the difficulties could be overcome by means of money. In 1304, during the war with the Roman King, Albrecht, the Czech ruler became anathematized by German states, which to a considerable extent limited Wenceslas's chances to obtain warriors from Germany. It was only Rupert von Nassau who made such an agreement with the Czechs. He wanted, however, to avenge on Albrecht his father's death in the battle of Gillheim¹⁵. This example seems to illustrate in a very vivid way the international aspect of mercenary armies.

The privileges for the noblemen issued in the years 1310-1311 on the occasion of Johannes of Luxembourg's accession to the throne reflect the acceptance of the new structure of the army¹⁶. The postulates connected with the organization of war expeditions constituted one of the four main points of the noblemen's demands. The obligation of the Czech and Moravian nobility to offer military help to the King was then restricted to the cases where the defence of the country against an external attack was needed. As far as foreign expeditions were concerned the noblemen's participation was to be a resultant of their good will and the King's special request. The King, however, did not possess the right to exert any pressure on his subjects. All the expenses connected with foreign campaigns were to be covered by the King and the noblemen received regular pays in return for their services as mercenary warriors. Johannes of Luxembourg despite some insistent demands of the noblemen's representatives did not accept this rule as an ancient one, but treated it as a "particular favour" on his part. An interesting controversy resulted also from an attempt to establish the territorial extent of the lands where the noblemen were obliged to assist the King militarily. The representatives of the nobility opted for the term "terra Bohemiae et Moraviae", which made it possible to limit the area to Bohemia and Moravia leaving out the territories belonging to the Kingdom of Bohemia. Johannes of Luxembourg introduced the terms: "regnum Bohemiae" and "marchionatus Moraviae", which imposed on the nobility the duty of participation in all the wars fought on the territories covered by the broader terms: "kingdom" and "margraviate".

In this situation the appearance of people of initiative who started to play a role similar to that of Italian condottieres, who, what is interesting, did not have to come down from noble families, was only a matter of time. Franklin Jakubov coming from the townspeople,

⁷ Cf.: P. K l u č i n a, *Organizace vojska českého státu za posledních Přemyslovců*, "Historie a Vojenství", vol. 33, 1, 1984, pp. 92 seqq.

⁸ See: E. L e m i n g e r, *Královská mincovna v Kutné Hoře*, Prague 1912; B. M e n d l, *České stříbro*, [in:] *Co daly naše země Evropě a lidstvu*, Prague 1940, pp. 37-44; J. J a n á č e k, *Stříbro a ekonomika českých zemí ve 13. století*, "Československý Časopis Historický", vol. 20, 1972, pp. 875-906; by the same author, *L'argent tcheque et la Méditerranée (XIVe et XVe siècles)*, [in:] *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel*, vol. 1, Toulouse 1973, pp. 245-261; R. N o v ý, *Organizace a vývoj českého mincovnictví v 13. století do měnové reformy Václava II.*, "Sborník Archívnických Prací", vol. 24, 1974, pp. 366-425; J. P o š v á r, *Mincovní právo v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku do roku 1526*, "Numismatické Listy", vol. 32, 1977, pp. 97-109.

⁹ J. R o t t, *Přemysl Otakar II. a veřejné mínění jeho doby*, "Český Časopis Historický", vol. 2, 1895, p. 306.

¹⁰ *Annales Sancti Georgii*, [in:] *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, S. Scriptores, vol. 17, p. 298.

¹¹ O. L o r e n t z, *Deutsche Geschichte im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2, Vienna 1866, p. 213.

¹² See: J. K a p r a s, *Z dějin ...*, p. 13.

¹³ *Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae*, ed. J. E m l e r, vol. 2, Prague 1882, No. 2776.

¹⁴ P. C h o c, *S mečem ...*, p. 263.

¹⁵ J. Š u s t a, *České dějiny*, vol. 2, part 1, Prague 1935, p. 642.

¹⁶ See: V. H r u b ý, *Inaugurační diplom krále Jana Lucemburského*, "Český Časopis Historický", vol. 16, 1910, pp. 298-305; R. K o s s, *Zur Kritik der ältesten böhmisch-mährischen Landesprivilegien*, [in:] *Prager Studien aus dem Gebiete der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Prague 1910, pp. 49-51; V. C h a l o u p e c k ý, *Privilegium krále Jana Čechům a Moravanům z roku 1310*, "Český Časopis Historický", vol. 15, 1909, pp. 52-59; by the same author, *O privilegiu, vydaném Čechům a Moravanům při nastoupení krále Jana Lucemburského*, *ibidem*, vol. 16, 1910, pp. 407-411; by the same author, *Inaugurační diplom krále Jana z roku 1310 a 1311*, *ibidem*, vol. 50, 1949, pp. 69-102.

who in the 1320s possessed his own troop of knights and hired it out to both Johannes of Luxembourg and his son-in-law, the Prince of Lower Bavaria, may serve as an example here¹⁷. The years of the reign of the first ruler on the Czech throne coming from the Luxembourg dynasty brought about a further growth in the importance of mercenary armies. The numerous expeditions undertaken by this ruler to different parts of Europe must have contributed to this increase. However, the question of obtaining sufficient financial means to cover the costs of these expensive undertakings became a considerable problem for this monarch. Therefore the Czech State was the object of an intensive financial drainage on his part.

Lack of money constituted a bar which frequently hindered other kings' or princes' military activities. Wenceslas IV's brother, Jan Zgorzelecki (Johann von Görlitz), experienced this kind of limitations himself when in the 1390s a struggle between the King and the so called "the potentates' unity", representing the interests of the rich potentates, took place. Jan Zgorzelecki, who wanted to support his brother, issued an ardent manifesto¹⁸ on 7th June 1394. He promised to do everything that was possible to release his brother from his temporary arrest. In order to achieve this goal he proclaimed an enlistment to the army promising each of the knights who stood with a spear a pay as well as a special payment covering the losses sustained. The costs of the campaign organized against the forces of "the potentates' unity" and its allies such as the Austrian Prince, Albrecht III Habsburg, appeared to be higher than it had been expected. In order to maintain the great army, Jan Zgorzelecki undertook a dramatic attempt to obtain more money. On 1st July 1394 he ordered to open the coffin of Saint Wenceslas in Saint Vit's Cathedral in Prague and appropriated all the jewels that were found there to pledge them as security for loans. The affair was soon discovered and it evoked considerable rumours in the capital. In this situation the Prince had to change his original plans. He decided to display the jewels in public and then put them back in place¹⁹. Jan Zgorzelecki's financial situation deteriorated as the promised payments of great sums of money to mercenary warriors had been made, which made him fall into considerable debts. Eventually, in October 1394, he did not have enough money to pay for his stay in an inn in Luckau, Lower Lusatia, and was forced to take a loan from the town's fund²⁰. The story ended with the Prince's bankruptcy, when the promised pay was to be made. However, it should be added that "the potentates' unity", in which Wenceslas IV's cousin, Jodok, the Margrave of Moravia, occupied a key position, was also reinforced by mercenary knights. Among others, the document of

20th September 1395 in which Jodok together with Henry of Rožmberk, Břeňek of Skála and Buško of Švamberk promised a considerable sum of money to six Austrian knights who fought on their side with 68 spearmen and 68 gunners as the pay for their services may serve as an example here²¹.

A few rulers, most of them suffering from lack of money and difficulties connected with the realization of payments, tried to solve their problems in different ways. Among the commanders of Sigismund of Luxembourg's army who conducted an anti-Hussite crusade there was the famous condottiere Erking of Seinsheim. Erking had a big troop of 300 mounted warriors remaining in Sigismund's service. The ruler suffering from chronic want of money was unable to meet the obligation. Therefore he offered Erking his royal castles of Žebrak and Točnik as well as the town of Beroun as a pledge²². It was also the insolvency of the Teutonic Knights' Order that eventually led to the sale of Malbork to the Poles by the mercenary armies during the Thirteen Years' War. The delicacy of financial matters resulted in some very strict regulations: the warriors' services were evaluated according to the kind of troops and the length of their service. On the turn of the Middle Ages and the beginning of Modern Times the prices for this kind of services in Bohemia were similar to those in Germany, though a little lower²³.

On Czech territories a gradual professionalization of warriors and their job led to the development of certain forms characteristic of mercenary warriors. Entrepreneurs possessing a licence to recruit new warriors issued by a monarch or town were becoming more and more numerous. This role is quite often played by famous commanders. For example, in the year 1477 Jan of Cimburk recruited warriors for King Vladislav, while it was Děpold of Lobkovice who formed the infantry troops for Bohuslav of Švamberk²⁴. Jiří of Podiebrady, who collaborated with the Teutonic Knights supplying them with considerable reinforcements, received high payments for his help. He was considered the Order's patron and received 4000 Hungarian guilders as his annual pay²⁵.

In the post-Hussite period the Czech warriors are among the most desired warriors in Europe²⁶. They, for

²¹ *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Moraviae*, vol. 12, No. 233.

The following Austrian knights are mentioned in the document: Johann, Georg, Ulrich and Johann Hohenfelder, Johann of Wiesen and Johann of Sensensengger.

²² Cf.: Z. Hleđiková, *Erking z Seinsheimu a husitské Čechy*, [in:] *Soudce smluveny v Chebu*, Prague 1984, pp. 79 seqq.

²³ *Vojenské dějiny Československa*, p. 278.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ W. Rautenberg, *Einwirkungen Böhmens auf die Geschichte des Ordenslandes Preussen im späten Mittelalter*, "Zeitschrift für Ostforschung", vol. 22, 1973, p. 679.

²⁶ Cf. the opinion of the German diplomat Martin Mair, Jiří of Podiebrady's associate and adviser, who in his letter of 12th February 1467 A.D. wrote that the Czechs were: "in re militari expertissimi et armis potentes multi sunt et ceterae militares opes ab eis quasi rivuli a fonte per plurimas terras derivantur" (*Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte*, vol. 12, 1832, p. 331); Mair's similar statement may be found in the draft of King George's letter to the Pope of 1465 A.D. Tomáš Jan Pešina z Čechorodu, *Mars Moravicus*, Prague 1677, p. 748.

¹⁷ J. Šusta, *České dějiny*, vol. 2, part 3, Prague 1946 p. 98.

¹⁸ The text of the manifesto in: *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Moraviae*, ed. V. Brandl, vol. 12, Brünn 1890, No. 205.

¹⁹ See: J. Špěvák, *Václav IV. 1361-1419*, Prague 1986, pp. 237 seqq.

²⁰ R. Gelebe, *Herzog Johann von Görlitz*, "Neues Lausitzisches Magazin", vol. 59, 1883, pp. 124 seqq.

example, constitute the core of Mathias Korvin's army.

The above presentation of certain structural changes which took place in the Czech army allows us to consider the geographical range of Czech mercenary warriors' activities as well as to determine the directions of the influx of foreign warriors into the Czech State.

The Premislids period, considered to be the moment of true crystallization of mercenary armies on Czech territories, was characterized by numerous expeditions to Alpine countries, Poland and Hungary. Johannes of Luxembourg, who used to travel tirelessly over vast territories of Europe in quest of his knight's laurels of victory, visited with his troops Italy, Germany, France and Tirol among others. In 1337 in Monbuisson-les-Pontoises he made an agreement with Philip VI, the King of France, in which he promised to serve him together with his 500 armed men in the King's war with England. He received a considerable advance payment from the French ruler²⁷. His son, Charles IV, and the latter's brother, John Henry, were for a period of time condottieres in Italy. In 1337, during the war between the Italian towns, Charles, a young Moravian margrave at that time, and the above mentioned John Henry were receiving money from the rich league of towns headed by Venice for supporting a troop of 300 men. Charles, however, soon gave up this kind of activity and appointed Jan of Lipa and, after Jan's death, Zbyněk Zajíc of Valdek his "capitano della guerra"²⁸.

France was one of the countries which traditionally maintained good relations with Bohemia, especially in the times of the Luxembourg dynasty. Before the dramatic battle of Crecy Johannes of Luxembourg with 500 Czech knights came as reinforcements to Paris in order to help the French in their struggle with the English. In the French capital they were met with a warm reception prepared without any feeling of the impending tragedy. Later, in 1353 A.D., the next group of Czech warriors set out to assist the King of France. Unfortunately, they never reached their place of destination. On their way across German countries they were attacked by Gerlach of Schoneck's army, robbed and imprisoned. It was only after the intervention of Charles IV's Uncle Baldwin, the Archbishop of Trier, that the knights were let off²⁹.

The wedding of Charles IV and Elizabeth of Pomerania's daughter, Ann, and King Richard in 1382 became an opportunity to establish good relations with England. After the ceremony a part of Ann's attendants returned to Bohemia and the other part remained at the English court. The queen and "her Czechs" are frequently mentioned in English chronicles. Besides some court functions the latter might have served as mercenary

²⁷ J. S p ě v á ě k, *Král diplomat (Jan Luxemburský 1296-1346)*, Prague 1982, p. 229.

²⁸ Cf.: J. Š u s t a, *České dějiny*, vol. 2, part 3, p. 273. About Johannes of Luxembourg's and Charles IV's Italian campaigns see: C. Dumontel, *L'impresa italiana di Giovanni di Lussemburgo re di Boemia*, Torino 1952. Charles IV's autobiography, *Vita Caroli IV imperatoris*, ed. J. E m l e r, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 3, Prague 1882, seems to be very interesting, too.

²⁹ F. T a d r a, *Kulturní styky Čech s cizinou až do válek husitských*, Prague 1897, p. 187.

warriors, too³⁰.

The war theatre of the Hussite revolution spread over vast territories. The glorious Hussite expeditions reached Austria, Silesia, Poland, Bavaria, Franconia, Saxony, Lusatia, a part of Prussia and Brandenburg. The national specification of the colourful mosaic of Sigismund of Luxembourg's army seems to be still more impressive. Sigismund led a great army of warriors in order to humiliate the Hussite Czechs. The army consisted of Hungarians, Croats, Russians, Bulgarians, Wallachians, Serbs, Dalmatians, Slovenians, as well as knights from the Netherlands, Brabant, Meiss, Thuringia, Austria and many other countries³¹. The above list, made by the Hussite chronicle writers proud of the victory won over the army consisting of the representatives of so many nations, was also enriched by the armies arriving from France, England, Italy, Spain and Aragon. However, as far as the latter countries are concerned, those were not the whole troops, but only Church officials and single men remaining in the King's service, lay potentates and clergymen from the Empire that fought in Sigismund's army. Therefore the above mentioned additions are only partly true. The Italian condottiere Pippo Spano, who had been collaborating with Sigismund for a long time and did not arrive especially in order to take part in the first anti-Hussite expedition, may be quoted as an example here³².

Of course, it must be remembered that the representatives of the same nation quite frequently fought on two opposite sides. Numerous Czech warriors³³ taking part in battles fought with the Turks, among others, served in Sigismund of Luxembourg's army.

The fact that numerous Czech warriors actively fought as mercenary ones in different parts of Europe and served with different countries' colours makes an even brief discussion of the campaigns they contributed to practically impossible in this paper. I would like to present only one example here. The Czechs' campaign undertaken to seize the town of Soest in Westphalia in 1447³⁴ is a lens-campaign which focuses the most char-

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 165; R. U r b á n e k, *Žižka a husitské válečnictví*, [in:] R. U r b á n e k, *Z husitského věku*, Prague 1957, p. 73.

³¹ Cf.: Eberhard Windeck's *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds*, ed. W. A l t m a n n, Berlin 1893, pp. 110 passim; *Kronika Vavřince z Březové*, ed. J. G o l l, [in:] *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 5, Prague 1893, p. 384; *Husitské skladby Budyšínského rukopisu*, ed. J. D a ň h e l k a, Prague 1952, pp. 38 seqq., p. 177.

³² See: *Dějiny Tábora*, vol. 1, part 2, Prague 1990, p. 338.

³³ Cf.: P. Č o r n e j, *Bitva na Vitkově*, p. 117, where the author refers to F. K a v k a's unpublished publication, *Strana Zikmundova v husitské revoluci*, Prague 1947.

³⁴ See: A. B a c h m a n n, *Herzog Wilhelm von Sachsen und sein böhmisches Söldnerheer auf dem Zuge vor Soest*, "Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde", vol. 2, 1881, pp. 97-128; J. H a n s e n, *Westphalen und Rheinland im 15. Jahrhundert*, "Publicationen aus dem Preussischen Staatlichen Archiv", vol. 34, 1888, pp. 104 seqq.; E. K r o k e r, *Sachsen und Hussitenkriege*, "Neues Archiv für Sächsische Geschichte und Altertumskunde", vol. 21, 1900, pp. 1 seqq.; H. K o c h, *Der Sächsische Bruderkrieg. (1446-1451)*, "Jahrbücher der Königlichen Akademie Gemeinnützigen Wissenschaften zu Erfurt", Neue Folge, vol. 35, 1909, pp. 1 seqq.; R. U r b á n e k, *České dějiny*, vol. 3, part 3, Prague 1930, pp. 188 seqq.; E. K u r f ü r s t, *Válečné dějiny*, p. 174.

acteristic features of the wars and military science of the late Middle Ages.

The campaign results from an argument between the Prince of Saxony, Frederick, and his brother William. In January 1447 the Prince came to Bohemia and made an agreement with some Czech lords. He wanted to hire 795 mounted warriors and 1760 infantry ones. Before long his representative, Opl of Fictum, arrived and hired numerous warriors, some of them for one term only. As Jiří of Podiebrady and Oldřich of Rožmberk were in conflict then, the followers of Oldřich enlisted for Frederick's army, while the supporters of Jiří offered their services to William. Shortly after the organization of the Czech army, Frederick and William of Saxony came to terms with each other. Therefore a problem concerning mercenary warriors, who demanded to be paid, arose. It was eventually decided to direct the army to Westphalia and attack Soest, with which town the Archbishop of Köln, Dietrich of Mors, was in conflict. In case the action appeared to be successful, they were also thinking about attacking Luxembourg. The venture was an ill-started one because William of Saxony, who was the commander-in-chief of the army, neither paid the warriors nor provided for their alimentation. Not before long a moral disintegration took place in the Czech and German army and its commanders lost control of the situation. The general dismay in Germany being a consequence of recent Hussite war expeditions led to the accusation of Archbishop Dietrich of being the Heretics' ally. On 19th July 1447 an unsuccessful attack on the town of Soest, followed by the demands for money made by the furious Czechs, took place. The Archbishop escaped, while William of Saxony set back on his way home protected by his own army. The expedition ended on 4th August in Cheb. The warriors did not receive their pays and the altercations for money continued for more than a dozen years. William of Saxony argued that the failure of the expedition was a result of the Czechs' demands for pay and their threats of return. In Bohemia, on the other hand, the impression was a profound one and the defeat was seen as a result of the Germans' betrayal and their unwillingness to perform their duty. An annalist in connection with this event wrote down: "Let the devil trust the Germans"³⁵. The above mentioned example illustrates the way we have gone since the times when chivalry, though understood in a different way, was the only determinant of the knights' conduct.

The service in a mercenary army was often a stepping stone on one's way to an interesting career and many Czechs may boast of their colourful and complex life stories.

Otto of Bergovo was one of the first mercenary warriors who are familiar to us³⁶. He maintained very close relations with Johannes of Luxembourg and was in command of about 500 spears in the battle of Plowce.

³⁵ *Starší letopisové čeští od roku 1378 do 1527*, ed. F. Pa la c k ý, Prague 1829, pp. 147 seqq.

³⁶ J. G o l l, *Čechy a Prusy ve středověku*, Prague 1897, pp. 118 seqq.; W. R a u t e n b e r g, *Einwirkungen ...*, pp. 644 seqq.

Each of the spears consisted of a knight and two or three helpers. All these people were recruited from the territories of Bohemia, Silesia and Lusatia. Otto was also highly estimated by the Teutonic Knights. In 1333 A.D. the Great Master sent him with a diplomatic mission to Prague to inform Johannes of Luxembourg that the truce between the Order and Poland had just been broken up³⁷. The mission was successful and, according to Wilhelm Rautenberg, Otto was the first mercenary knight to serve as a political mediator between the Order and the King of Bohemia³⁸. Later the practice of saddling Italian condottieres or the commanders of mercenary warriors in Bohemia or Prussia with diplomatic missions became very common.

As far as mercenary warriors' behaviour and their way of fighting are concerned they did not differ from robbers and members of plundering bands. Moreover, many outstanding mercenary knights started their careers in such gangs. The most dramatic events took place on the Moravian-Austrian borderland at the beginning of the 15th century³⁹. This was partly a result of the uncertain situation in the Czech State torn by the struggles between the potentates and Wenceslas IV. Many members of noble families started to enlist for Prokop, the margrave of Moravia's army. Consequently, many talented commanders emerged. Jan Sokol of Lamberk, Hynek of Kunštat, called "Suchý Čert", and not before long Nicholas of Hus could be noticed among others. Continuous robberies committed by these commanders on Austrian territories made the Austrian Prince, Albrecht, and Sigismund, the King of Hungary, attack Znojmo. Despite the reluctant attitude of the townspeople, Sokol of Lamberk and Hynek of Kunštat defended the town. After Margrave Prokop's death Sokol, serving in Jodok, the margrave of Moravia's army, continued his attacks on Austrian territories. These raids led to the payment of a large ransom by the people of Austria in 1407. In the following year a struggle between the representatives of the Habsburg family began. The Czech and Moravian nobility willingly took part in the conflict as mercenary warriors. Sokol served in Leopold IV's army, while Nicholas of Hus, later one of the leading commanders of the Hussite revolution, found himself on the opposite side of the barricade — in Reinprecht of Walsee's service⁴⁰. The participation in the battle of

³⁷ M. E m m e l m a n n, *Die Beziehungen des Deutschen Ordens zu König Johann von Böhmen und Karl IV*, Halle 1910, p. 14.

³⁸ W. R a u t e n b e r g, *Einwirkungen ...*, p. 645.

³⁹ Cf.: F. H o f f m a n n, *K povaze drobné války, záští a násilných činů před husitskou revolucí*, [in:] *Počta Akademiku Václavu Vaněčkovi k 70. narozeninám*, Prague 1975, pp. 55-75; W. R a u t e n b e r g, *Ritter und Rotten. Zur begrifflichen und funktionalen Unterscheidung des geworbenen Kriegsvolks im Hochmittelalter*, "Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte", vol. 76, 1978, pp. 87-121; M. P o l i v k a, *Mikuláš z Husi a nižší šlechta v počátcích husitské revoluce*, "Rozpravy Československé Akademie Věd", Rada Společenských Věd, vol. 92, 1, Prague 1982, pp. 20 seqq.

⁴⁰ The pay receipt for Nicholas of Hus and other representatives of the South-Czech nobility of 14th October 1408 in: J. S t ü l z, *Zur Geschichte der Grafen von Schauenburg im Lande ob der Enns*, "Notizenblatt", vol. 1, Vienna 1851, pp. 7 seqq.; cf.: F. X. P r i t z, *Geschichte des Landes ob der Enns*, vol. 2, Linz 1847, p. 88 passim.

Grunwald was the crowning achievement of Sokol's career. František Michálek Bartoš claimed at one time⁴¹ that Sokol was in command of the whole army fighting on the Polish-Lithuanian side. His knowledge was derived from the Bychowiec chronicle, namely the short mention saying that Sokol was the supreme hetman of the Polish army⁴². Sokol did not play such a role in the battle of Grunwald, but his achievements were noticeable enough for the King to appoint him commander of the Radzyń castle⁴³. Sokol did not enjoy this new function for long as he was poisoned and died shortly after the nomination. The grateful King took care of his family and Sokol's sons were educated in Cracow⁴⁴. This impressive career is in fact a typical one. It demonstrates how close to each other different kinds of fighting were in those times and how similar the mechanisms of robbers' and mercenary warriors' activities used to be. It was very difficult to mark out a border between them. The illusive character of such a border is further confirmed by e.g. the Hungarian chronicle writer Janos Thuróczi's opinion about the outstanding commander and Czech politician Jan Giskra [Jiskra] of Brandys, who we shall say more about beneath. Thuróczi claimed that Giskra was "a Czech skillful in wielding weapons and greedy for loots"⁴⁵.

To keep a balance, let us quote the life story of Jan Sokol's alter ego, an Austrian who lived at the same time and place. We can become familiar with some fragments of Peter Hechtel's biography thanks to the Austrian theologian and chronicle writer Thomas Ebendorfer and the record he made in his work *Chronica Austriae*⁴⁶. Peter Hechtel's role is not clear enough to us. In 1404, after Prince Albrecht IV's death, his participation in mutual relations between the Austrian princes and Sigismund of Luxembourg is mentioned. Although Ebendorfer considers him as "a robber" we cannot exclude the possibility that he was in Sigismund's service then. Later he is given the title of "capitaneus". Hechtel's participation in the first anti-Hussite crusade led by Sigismund of Luxembourg became the last stage of his career as a mercenary commander. Hechtel died in the battle of Prague in 1420.

The Czech knights found in the Pope's service seem to constitute an interesting subject of discussion. In the

⁴¹ F. M. Bartoš, *Žižkových mladých let*, "Časopis Společnosti přátel Starožitností", vol. 30, 1922, pp. 25 seqq.; by the same author, *Čechy v době Husové 1378-1415*, Prague 1947, pp. 340 seqq.

⁴² *Polnoe Sobranie Russkich Letopisei*, vol. 17, Petersburg 1907, p. 522: "The Czech warrior Sokol was the highest hetman in Jagieho's army". As it is commonly known, the Bychowiec Chronicle contains numerous mistakes and untrue statements.

⁴³ *Joannis Dlugossii Opera Omnia*, ed. A. Przeździecki, vol. 13, Cracow 1877, p. 92.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

⁴⁵ *Joannis de Thwrociz Chronica Hungarorum*, ed. J.G. Schwanndtner, [in:] *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*, vol. 1, Vindobonae 1766, p. 308, that Giskra [Jiskra] was "homo bohemus et arma flectere doctus rapinaeque avidus".

⁴⁶ *Thomas Ebendorfers Chronica Austriae*, ed. A. Lhotský, [in:] *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, S. Scriptores, Nova Series, vol. 13, Berlin-Zürich 1967, p. 326; E. Scherbaum, *Das hussitische Böhmen bei Thomas Ebendorfer*, "Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur", vol. 17, 3, 1973, p. 147.

second half of the 14th century the names of Johannes de Bohemia, Ancelmus de Bohemia or Nicolaus de Bohemia start to appear in the written sources⁴⁷. They all served in the Pope's army, but the pay problems already discussed in connection with the lay armies were present in the Church armies, too. Jakub Boch was a Czech mercenary warrior who was faced with greatest difficulties connected with obtaining his due pay. He came from the diocese of Prague and hired out his services and his 22 men to the Pope. In January 1377 he was already in Italy and in June 1377 the Pope's treasury owed 800 florins to him. The payment, however, had not been made for a long time despite the knight's efforts to receive the money. Eventually the dean of St. Apolinar's church in Prague, who collected fees for the curia of Rome, received an order from the Pope's court telling him to discharge the sum demanded by Jakub from the money raised in Bohemia exclusively. The question concerning the realization of this order cannot be answered⁴⁸.

A quite specific task was given to Jan of Chlum, who served in Sigismund of Luxembourg's army during the war with Venice. He must have enjoyed the ruler's considerable confidence as he was granted a special document allowing him to seize the Venetians' property. He was on his way home after the Venetian campaign when he was saddled with a new important mission by Sigismund. He became a member of the safeguard which was to accompany John Hus summoned to Constance and called into account in front of the Ecclesiastical Council. It might have been thanks to his personal contact with the Prague theologian that Jan of Chlum accepted Hus's ideas. It is known from some other sources that Jan was an ardent follower of Hussite concepts⁴⁹.

The list of the outstanding Czech mercenary warriors, especially the commanders of mercenary and hired armies, is much longer. Wilhelm Kostka of Postupice⁵⁰, who besides the above mentioned Moravian knight Jan Sokol of Lamberk distinguished himself in the battle of

⁴⁷ Cf.: K. H. Schaffer, *Deutsche Ritter und Edelknechte in Italien während des 14. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2, Paderborn 1911, pp. 59, 87, 119, 127, 136; the author of this otherwise solid work usually refers to the Czech warriors as "the Germans".

⁴⁸ The documents providing information about this event found in: *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia*, ed. K. Stloukal, vol. 4, Prague 1949-1953, pp. 655-657, 663, 683; cf.: F. Tadra, *Kulturní styky ...*, p. 112.

⁴⁹ Cf.: J. Kalousek, *Záští ve východních Čechách (1402-1414) a přepadení kláštera Opatovického (1415)*, "Časopis Musea Království Českého", vol. 7, 1903, p. 270. Jan of Chlum's interests did not influence his collaboration with Johannes of Luxembourg, e.g. he used to lend money to the King — the extract from the document confirming the King's debt in: A. Haas, *Archiv Koruny České*, vol. 5, Katalog listin z let 1378-1437, Prague 1947, p. 171.

⁵⁰ An attempt at evaluating the Czechs and Moravians' participation in the wars between the Poles and the Teutonic Knights in: E. Barborová, *Češi a Moravané jako účastníci válek Polska s řádem německých rytířů v letech 1410 a 1414*, "Sborník Matice Moravské", vol. 86, 1967, pp. 191-201; cf. also: J. Dřimál, *Česká pomoc Polsku v bitvě u Grunwaldu r. 1410 a veřejné slyšení M. Jana Husa na koncilu kostnickém*, [in:] *Tisíc let česko-polské vzájemnosti*, vol. 1, Opava 1966, pp. 175-179; S. M. Kuczyński, *Wielka Wojna z Zakonem Krzyżackim w latach 1409-1411*, fifth edition, Warsaw 1987, especially p. 206 passim.

Grunwald, Jan Kolda of Žampach or Jan of Valdštejn and Malá Skála, commonly known as Skalski⁵¹, who gained merits in the Thirteen Years' War, may be mentioned here. Jan Giskra of Brandys' brilliant career constitutes a separate chapter⁵². Jan Giskra represented the type of condottiere. Although considered to be a Hussite, he was a Catholic and for 21 years the suzerain of a great part of Upper Hungary, where he represented the interests of the Habsburgs. Thanks to his political indifference, he was able to remain "on top" for many years despite the frequently changing situation of the 40s and 50s of the 15th century. Giskra's fame on the European scale was further confirmed by including his biography, as the only Czech's, into Eneas Silvius Piccolomini's work *De viris illustribus*.

Mercenary warriors as a group, which was to a great extent separated from the main stem of the so called chivalry and ideas determining the knights' identity as a specific chosen community, may, however, be subjected to some axiological procedure.

Mercenary warriors were frequently perceived with reluctance and criticism. Opinions of that kind often reach the form of topos. Some motives, however, are more pragmatic in character. Fear of foreigners and potential rivals may be mentioned here. Johannes of Luxembourg was probably the Czech ruler to the greatest extent surrounded by mercenary warriors. He would be severely criticised for these practices. In 1318 the endangered Czech nobility started to circulate rumours that the ruler had summoned so many mercenary warriors in order to expel all Czechs from the country. A similar note may be heard in Dalimil's chronicle, also written at the beginning of the 14th century. Its anonymous author is astonished by the Czech knight Plichta of Žrotin's courage and valour. The knight is referred to as a hero who has brought great honour to his family by inflicting

considerable losses on the German Emperor⁵³. Plichta gained his fame in battles and tournaments fought in numerous countries, e.g. Plichta's merits gained during his service for Edward II, the King of England⁵⁴, are also mentioned in Dalimil's chronicle. Unfortunately, the details of his activities are not confirmed by other sources. Plichta died on 28th September 1322 in the battle of Mühldorf on the Inn. In this battle the united forces of the Roman King, Louis of Bavaria, and Johannes of Luxembourg won a victory over Frederick the Fair Habsburg's army⁵⁵. This victory was dearly paid for by the Czechs and their allies. The chronicle writer Peter of Zittau estimates the losses at 1100 deaths⁵⁶. Frederick the Fair's brother, Henry, was one of the captives of the defeated party. He was handed over to Johannes of Luxembourg and imprisoned in the castle of Křivoklát. Two Czech chronicle writers, the above mentioned Peter of Zittau and Pulkava, scrupulously wrote down that those were the Czechs and not their allies who had taken such important prisoners of war⁵⁷. Dalimil, praising Plichta of Žrotin's talents and merits, cannot restrain himself from a biting remark: "A knight like him praised by every nation has not been born for 200 years. But he cannot be so highly estimated by a Czech chronicle as he did not want to fight in defence of the Czech land's honour"⁵⁸. The manifestations of the Czechs' reluctant attitude towards Czech warriors hiring themselves out to foreign armies while there is so much to be done in their own country sometimes assume the form of concrete resolutions. In 1402, for example, the Czechs fighting abroad as mercenary warriors are ordered to return home⁵⁹. The fear of losses which might be inflicted by mercenary armies made rulers look for some guarantee of security. The already mentioned Wenceslas IV's brother, Jan Zgorzelecki, made such a deal with the hetmans of foreign mercenary forces. They agreed to leave the country without any robberies. If this promise had not been fulfilled, an appropriate sum of money would have been deducted from their pay⁶⁰.

The same rules function in both directions. Therefore it is difficult to judge whether the estimation of the Czechs was high or low as compared with the estimation of other nations. Opinions concerning Czech war-

⁵¹ W. Rautenberg's treatise *Böhmische soldner in Ordensland Preussen*, vol. 1-2, Diss., Hamburg 1953, is a basic study of Czech mercenary warriors' participation in the 13 Years' War. See also: G. Bujacik, *Das Söldnerwesen des deutschen Ordensstaates in Preussen bis 1466*, "Zeitschrift für Preussische Geschichte und Landeskunde", vol. 6, 1869, pp. 717-736; J. Goll, *Čechy ...*; E. Kutowski, *Zur Geschichte der Söldner in den Heeren des Deutschordensstaates in Preussen*, "Oberländische Geschichtsblätter", vol. 14, Osterode [Ostróda] 1912; V. Jeřek, *Koldové ze Žampachu*, "Hradecký kraj", vol. 3, Hradec Králové, 1959, p. 99 seqq. Among the source editions cf.: *Księga Theudenkusa*, ed. L. Koczny, Toruń 1937; *Księga żołdu Związku Pruskiego z okresu wojny trzynastoletniej 1454-1466*, ed. A. Czacharowski, Toruń 1969.

⁵² Both the person and the period of his activity are the subjects of numerous historiographic works. Cf.: S. Kwiatkowski, *Jan Giskra z Brandysa. Rys biograficzny z XV w.*, [in:] *Sprawozdanie Głównego Urzędu Ochrony Państwa z 1937 r.*, Lwów 1886; R. Urbánek, *K 500 výročí českých polních rot na Slovensku*, "Vojensko-Historický Sborník", vol. 1, 1936, pp. 73-138; J. Špírk, *Husiti, jiskrovci a bratřici v dejinách Spiša*, Levoča 1937; R. Urbánek, *K historii doby Jiskrovy na Slovensku a ve východní Moravě*, "Věstník Královské České Společnosti Nauk", vol. 2, 1939; M. Vach, *Jan Giskra z Brandysa a politický zápas Habsburků s Jagellovci o Uhry v letech 1440-1442*, "Historické Studie", vol. 3, 1957, pp. 172-227; A. Gacsová, *Boje Mateja I. proti Jiskrovi z Brandysa a bratřikom v letech 1458-1467*, "Historický časopis", vol. 25, 1977, pp. 187-216; P. Kartous, *Habsbursko-jagellovské dvojládí v Uhorsku v letech 1440-1444 (Začiatky Jiskrovej vojenskej činnosti na území Slovenska)*, "Historické Studie", vol. 24, 1980, pp. 225-263.

⁵³ *Nejstarší česká rýmovaná kronika tak řečeného Dalimila*, ed. B. Havránek, J. Daňhelka, Prague 1957, p. 160.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 175.

⁵⁵ See: O. Dobensker, *Die Schlacht bei Mühldorf und über das Fragment einer österreichischen Chronik*, [in:] *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, vol. 1, Ergänzungsband, 1885, pp. 163-219.

⁵⁶ *Kronika zbraslavská*, ed. J. Emler, [in:] *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 4, Prague 1884, p. 386: "1100, ut dicitur, occisi viti in loco prelii mortui sunt inventi, inter quos inventus est Plichta Bohemus strenuus et famosus, equorum tria milia sunt occisi". About the participation of the Czechs in the battle cf.: J. Teige, *Účast Čechů v bitvě Mühldorfské dne 28. září 1322*, "Památky Archeologické a Místopisné", vol. 12, 1882, pp. 135-138.

⁵⁷ *Kronika Pulkarova*, p. 201.

⁵⁸ *Nejstarší česká rýmovaná kronika*, p. 175.

⁵⁹ F. Palacký, *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě*, vol. 2, third edition, Prague 1876, pp. 362 seqq.

⁶⁰ Cf.: D. Měnclová, *České hrady*, vol. 2, Prague 1976, p. 203.

rriors are relatively numerous, but the number of Czechs in European armies was quite big, especially in the 15th century. In 1459, for example, many small Czech troops ravaged the region of Silesia winning the nickname of the "bad army"⁶¹. In the year 1465 the Pope was informed in a letter sent by his legate Rudolf that the Czechs had invaded Austria and "more Bohemico" seized the churches and robbed whatever they could⁶². However, the conclusion that the Czechs were notorious for such typical of them behaviour would be an exaggeration. We can state with some certainty that the warriors coming from other countries acted in a similar way.

Among the negative features ascribed to Czech mercenary warriors greed and disloyalty could also be found. Their greed is mentioned by e.g. Albrecht of Brandenburg, who in his letter of 1463 sent to his representatives in Prague asks them not to reveal the existence of the pay agreement made by him with some Czech lords. He argues that as soon as the other lords have learned that Albrecht offers something, they will turn up in full force⁶³. Greed for money in a more drastic form was presented by the outstanding theologian and preacher, the utraquist clergyman Jan Rokycana. His words are as follows: "Alas, were it to be the devil from hot Hell arriving to enlist warriors for war, there would be Czechs ready to fight if only good pays for their services were promised"⁶⁴.

There also appear some accusations concerning disloyalty and failures to meet the obligations. Zbigniew Oleśnicki, however ill-disposed towards the Czechs, wrote in his letter to Jan Kapistran that the King had dismissed all Czech mercenary warriors as they were "ambiguæ fidei homines"⁶⁵. The sale of Malbork to the Poles by the Czech and German armies during the Thirteen Years' War caused by the Teutonic Knights' failure to meet their financial obligations⁶⁶ was commonly considered an obvious betrayal. This opinion became so widespread that the terms "the Malbork traitor" or sim-

ply "the Malbork man" started to be treated as insults. A new term "Marburčiti" denoting committing of a crime appeared in the Czech language⁶⁷.

However, the positive opinions about mercenary warriors should not be omitted if one wants to present the truth objectively. The Czech warriors' courage had been appreciated for a long time then, e.g. in the 12th century Helmold says: "Bohemia habet regem et viros bellicosos"⁶⁸. The virtues of the Czech lord Wilhelm Zajic of Valdek⁶⁹ are praised by the above mentioned Dalimil. Zajic, also a mercenary warrior in a foreign service, brings honour and splendour to his country. He is one of the leading personages of the Czech political scene at the beginning of the 14th century. He is the King's Chamberlain, the supreme marshal and guardian of little Wenceslas, later Emperor Charles IV, as well as the head of the anti-royal opposition directed against Johannes of Luxembourg, of which organization Elizabeth Premislid, the King's wife, is also a member. A failed attempt at organizing a coup d'état in Prague made Wilhelm Zajic readily accept the Roman King, Louis of Bavaria's offer. The Roman King recruited Czech warriors in order to fight against his enemies in the Empire, who were Frederick the Fair's allies. Therefore, having Johannes of Luxembourg's consent, Wilhelm Zajic enlisted for this army. Here, however, his good luck ended. He soon died in a brawl which took place between two different troops of Louis of Bavaria's army. Shot by an accidental arrow, he died within eight days. Dalimil cannot find appropriate words to render the distress and gloom spreading in Bohemia after Zajic's death. The epitaph written in his honour says that he was "the sword of the Czech land", "the main gurdian of the Czechs" and "a man respected by all the Czechs"⁷⁰.

During the period following the Hussite revolution both the Czech lands and their inhabitants used to be perceived in a specific perspective. Although a strong repugnance towards the heretics appeared, it did not completely dominate the foreigners' attitude towards the Czechs. However suspected of more or less obvious heresy, Czech warriors became a "commodity" needed in the whole of Europe. The widespread demand for them was a result of their experience and high qualifications gained in many years' campaigns. Even Eneas Silvius Piccolomini, who was very prejudiced against the Czechs, admits that the Czechs are "all loyal"⁷¹. The clergymen are not afraid of employing them in their ar-

⁶¹ P. Eschenloer, *Geschichten der Stadt Breslau*, vol. 1, ed. J. G. Kunisch, Breslau 1827, pp. 115 seqq.; by the same author, *Historia Wratislaviensis*, [in:] *Scriptores Rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. 7, ed. H. Markgraf, Breslau 1872, pp. 61 seqq.; S. Rosicz *Chronica et numerus episcoporum Wratislaviensium itemque gesta diversa transactis temporibus facta in Silesia et alibi 1051-1470*, ibidem, vol. 12, ed. F. Wächter, Breslau 1883, p. 75.

⁶² *Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens und seiner Nachbarländer im Zeitalter Georgs von Podiebrad 1450-1471*, ed. F. Palacký, [in:] *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, vol. 20, Vienna 1860, pp. 350 seqq.

⁶³ Cf.: R. Urbánek, *České dějiny*, vol. 3, part 1, Prague 1915, p. 76, ref. 4.

⁶⁴ Quoted after: J. Kłoczowski, *Europa słowiańska w XIV-XV wieku*, Warsaw 1984, p. 145.

⁶⁵ *Annales Minorum seu Trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum auctore A. R. P. Luca Waddingo Hiberno*, vol. 12, Quaracchi 1932, pp. 230 seqq.

⁶⁶ Cf.: G. Klein, *Der Verkauf der Marienburg. Philologische Dissertationen*, Königsberg 1922; E. Weise, *Eine Dokumentensammlung zum Verkauf der Marienburg vom Jahre 1457*, "Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands", vol. 9-10, 1961; W. Rautenber, *Der Verkauf der Marienburg 1454-1457*, [in:] *Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes, Festschrift für Erich Keyser*, Marburg 1963, pp. 119-150; M. Biskup, *Trzynastoletnia wojna z Zakonem Krzyżackim 1454-1466*, Warsaw 1967, pp. 424 seqq.

⁶⁷ J. Gebauer, *Slovník staročeský*, vol. 2, second edition, Prague 1970, p. 313; cf.: P. Eschenloer, *Geschichten ...*, vol. 2, Breslau 1828, p. 98 — it is believed that in 1467 A.D. Kasper Nostitz said that the inhabitants of Šwidnica had taken money from Jiří of Podiebrady "als die Margeburger"; in 1466 A.D. during the conflict between the Hussite King, Jiří of Podiebrady, and Catholic Plzeň "the traitors who were at Malbork and betrayed their lords" are excluded from fighting (*Archiv Český čili Staré písemné památky české i moravské*, ed. F. Palacký, vol. 4, Prague 1846, p. 127).

⁶⁸ *Helmoldi presbyteri Bosoviensis Chronica Slavorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler, Hannover 1937, lib. 1, cap. 1.

⁶⁹ See: J. Šusta, *Vilém z Valdeka*, [in:] *Úvahy a drobné spisy historické Josefa Šusty*, vol. 1, Prague 1934, pp. 299-313.

⁷⁰ *Nejstarší Česká rýmovaná kronika*, pp. 177 seqq.

⁷¹ *Archiv Český*, ed. A. Patera, vol. 8, Prague 1888, p. 337.

mies. Johannes II, the Bishop of Würzburg, was the first one to have the courage to do it in 1435, thus winning the nickname of "ein Prager Student"⁷². The practice of enlisting Czech warriors by Dietrich, the Archbishop of Köln, for his expedition against the town of Soest in Westphalia has already been mentioned. Pope Nicholas II's consent to use the schismatics', namely the Czechs', help whenever in need, being a result of Emperor Frederick's demand of 1452, may serve as another interesting example here⁷³. The purely military skills were, as it may be seen, highly estimated. Besides them, however, a couple of very honorable deeds performed by Czech warriors can also be quoted, e.g. after the defeat in the battle of Schönberg in 1504, all the Czech captives were dismissed at the word of honour and then turned up as "good people" in the agreed place and on time. The above described event is found in old Czech chronicles⁷⁴.

To round up this evaluating part of our discussion two other opinions may be referred to. They both appreciate the advantages resulting from the use of mercenary armies in a quite perverse and unusual way. According to Dlugossius, during the council of war preceding the war with the Teutonic Knights which took place in the years 1409-1411 Sbigneus of Brzezie presented his opinion concerning the use of mercenary warriors. Sbigneus of Brzezie is believed to have said that the superiority of the mercenary army over the native one lied in the fact that in case of the victory, the pay expenses would be covered by the loots, while in case of the defeat, "there would be nobody to ask for pay and there would be nobody to pay it"⁷⁵. Later, in 1612, the bachelor thesis written at the University of Prague by Knobliius or Knobli may be found, where this problem, namely which of the two warriors, the native or the mercenary one, should be more valued is discussed. The mercenary warriors are severely criticized with the help of such authorities as Tacitus or Salustius. They are said to have always been characterized by cruelty bigger than Neron's and treated as cowards, thieves and robbers. On the contrary, a native warrior is believed to fight in the name of his homeland. When compared with foreign mercenary warriors, resembling those who destroyed Constantinople, how brilliant, according to Knobli, the Taborites and their deeds are. Eventually, however, our candidate for the bachelor's degree admits that mercenary warriors are good out of necessity⁷⁶.

If one assumes that mercenary warriors as sui generis professional warriors should be characterized by political indifference and impartiality and concerned only

with the competent performance of their tasks, the Czechs do not fit into this framework easily. It is clearly seen in the 15th century, when also the military affairs are strongly influenced by Hussitism. In the Thirteen Years' War, for instance, Czech warriors fight in principle according to the religious attitudes they represent⁷⁷. The old Catholic Czech nobility found itself in the Teutonic camp; the Czech Utraquists, led by Albrecht Kostka of Postupice, fought on the side of the country and Prussian towns; the Taborites, commanded by the priest Jan of Zampach and Nachod, joined under the colours of the Polish King. There were, however, some exceptions to this rule. According to the expectations, Jan Skalski with his Taborites served in the Polish King's army, but his brother Nicholas fought on the side of the Prussian Union from the spring of 1454 onwards.

In fact, during the whole Middle Ages Czech lands constitute a vivid link in the chain of economic, political and cultural international relations. Knights, especially the mercenary ones, become an important element in this system of communication. They enable and facilitate the flow of multifarious ideas, values and meanings.

Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra

⁷² R. U r b á n e k, *České dějiny*, vol. 3, part 1, p. 17, ref. 1.

⁷³ *Diplomatarium Habsburgense saeculi XV. Urkunden, Briefe und Actenstücke zur Geschichte ... von König Ladislaus Posthumus, Erzherzog Albrecht VI. und Herzog Sigmund 1443-1473*, ed. J. C h m e l, [in:] *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum*, vol. 2, Vienna 1850, No 2804.

⁷⁴ *Starší letopisové ...*, p. 270.

⁷⁵ *Ioannis Dlugossii Opera ...*, vol. 13, pp. 12, 9.

⁷⁶ Z. W i n t e r, *O životě na vysokých školách pražských knihy dvoje. Kulturní obraz XV. a XVI. století*, Prague 1899, pp. 507 seqq.

⁷⁷ Cf.: W. R a u t e n b e r g, *Einwirkungen ...*, p. 684.

