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„WITH HONOUR AND WITHOUT ANY LOSS” —
JAN OF MICHALOVICE’S KNIGHTLY EXPEDITION TO PARIS

The following paper has been devoted to the discussion of the expedition brought up in the title, which is supposed to have taken place on the turn of the 13th century. However, our knowledge of the event derives neither from an account nor a historical reference. It is from literature that we learn of Jan of Michalovice’s achievement. Heinrich von Freiberg is the author of that German poem. Before we present some scraps of information about the author himself, it should be pointed out that Heinrich von Freiberg is one of the links of the whole chain of the German court poets who found their home and were given encouragement to write in Bohemia in the 13th century¹. Both the last members of the Premyslid dynasty and the outstanding representatives of aristocratic families used to be the Maecenases of German minnesngers. It was thanks to their hospitality and — which is still more important — generosity that a whole series of works, written by such poets as Reinmar von Zweter, Sigehar, Friedrich von Sonnenburg or Ulrich von Etzenbach, came into being. Naturally, in return, praising the patrons’ deeds became one of the main themes of this kind of literature.

The biographies of these poets are usually incomplete. Some scraps of information may be found in their own works. This is also the case with Heinrich von Freiberg².

¹ For further information cf. among the recent works: W. Iwańc z a k, *Tropem rycerskiej przygody. Wzorzec rycerski w piśmiennictwie czeskim XIV wieku*, Warsaw 1985, pp. 64 seq., 171 seq., 272 seqq., and H.-J. B e h r, *Literatur als Machtlegitimation: Studien zur Funktion der deutschsprachigen Dichtung am böhmischen Königshof im 13. Jahrhundert*, „Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur”, 9, München 1989.

² On the poet’s life and work cf. especially the early works, as the recent ones have not added much to our knowledge: W. T o i s c h e r, *Die Heimat Heinrichs von Freiberg*, „Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen”, 15, 1887, No. 2, pp. 149 seqq.; F. W i e g a n d t, *Heinrich von Freiberg und sein Verhältnis zu Eilhart und Ulrich*, Diss. Rostock 1879; R. W o l k a n, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in Böhmen*, Prague 1894, pp. 200 seqq.; M. L i e s k e, *Höfisches Leben und ritterliche Gesellschaft bei Heinrich von Freiberg*, Diss. Greisfald 1922; G. E h r i s m a n n, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, vol. 2, München 1935, pp. 68 seqq.; C. v o n K r a u s, *Studien zu Heinrich von Freiberg*, „Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften”, 1941; A. H i l b r i n k - B e c k m a n n, *Der weltanschauliche Gehalt in Heinrichs von Freiberg Tristan*, Diss. Marburg 1954.

He most probably came from Freiberg in Saxony and a few works have been attributed to him so far. Besides the account of Jan of Michalovice’s adventures, it is also «The Legend of the Holy Cross», based on the Latin original, and «Tristan», a continuation of the outstanding poet Gottfried von Strassburg’s unfinished work, that are meant here³. It is sometimes assumed that Heinrich von Freiberg is also the author of a short humorous work. The chronology of the appearance of his subsequent works is unclear and the researchers’ conclusions considerably diverge in this respect. The precise dating of «Ritterfahrt des Johann von Michelsberg»⁴ has

³ His biography is almost completely unknown (cf.: e.g. J. B u m k e, *Höfische Kultur, Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohem Mittelalter*, vol. 2, München 1987, 4th ed., p. 684: „...Gottfried von Strassburg, von dem nur das eine sicher ist, das er ein studierter Mann war, ein clericus par excellence”), however, many studies have been devoted to the analysis of his works: F. P i q u e t, *L’originalité de Gottfried de Strasbourg dans son poème de Tristan et Isolde*, Lille 1905; S. S a w i c k i, *Gottfried von Strassburg und die Poetik des Mittelalters*, „Germanische Studien”, 124, Berlin 1930 (reprint Nenden 1967); H. S c h a r s c h u c h, *Gottfried von Strassburg: Stilmittel — Stilästhetik*, „Germanische Studien”, 197, Berlin 1938 (reprint Nenden 1967); H. d e B o o r, *Die Grundauffassung von Gottfrieds „Tristan”*, „Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte”, 18, 1940, pp. 262-306; G. W e b e r, *Gottfried von Strassburg „Tristan” und die Krise des hochmittelalterlichen Weltbildes um 1200*, vol. I-II, Stuttgart 1953; R. G o l d s c h m i d t K u n z e r, *The „Tristan” of Gottfried von Strassburg. An Ironic Perspective*, Berkeley 1973; C. S. J a e g e r, *Medieval Humanism in Gottfried von Strassburg’s Tristan und Isolde*, Heidelberg, 1977; G. W e b e r, W. H o f f m a n n, *Gottfried von Strassburg*, 5th ed., Stuttgart 1981; R. G l e n d i n n i n g, *Gottfried von Strassburg and the School-Tradition*, „Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte”, 61, 1987, pp. 617-638; A. W o l f, *Gottfried von Strassburg und die Mythe von Tristan und Isolde*, Darmstadt 1989; R. G l e n d i n n i n g, *Eros, Agape, and Rhetoric Around 1200: Gervase of Melkley’s Ars poetica and Gottfried von Strassburg’s Tristan*, „Speculum”, 67, 1992, pp. 892-925.

⁴ Editions: Jan z Michalovic. *Nemeck bsen tintho veku*, ed. A. K r a u s, Prague 1888; *Heinrich von Freiberg. Mit Einleitungen über Stil, Sprache, Metrik, Quellen und die Persönlichkeit des Dichters*, ed. A. B e r n t, Halle 1906, pp. 239-248.

also been questioned. If one accepts the turn of the 13th century as the possible date of the poem's appearance, the work must have been written between the 80s of the 13th century⁵ and the year 1319⁶, i.e. the differences in dating will be as big as forty years. The poem's literary evaluation is also inconsistent, as both critical and highly positive opinions concerning its poetic value can be referred to⁷.

The situation is much less complicated as far as the poem's protagonist, Jan of Michalovice's biography is concerned. He came from one of the distinguished Czech families, the Markwartice. The first mention about this family could be found in the source material as early as in the first half of the 12th century⁸. The knights of Michalovice are mentioned among other branches of the family. References to Jan of Michalovice appear from 1283 to 1306. A document of 1283 presents Jan as a member of the elite of the contemporary nobility, rallied to young King Venceslas II, who enjoyed considerable advantages and privileges in return for their genuine or alleged services to the King. The document of 28th August, 1283 states that Jan of Michalovice transfers three villages and some vague rights to the estate of Děčín to the King and pays back a debt of 800 monetary units on the appointed time and acquires 4 vast estates and the castles of Velešín, Vitějovice, Ostré and Děvín from the ruler. The pledge of his future faithful service to the King is meant to compensate for the inequality of this exchange. The information that the King's generosity was a result of Jan of Michalovice's friends' entreaties can also be found in the document. The names of some of the knight's friends are mentioned, too. Granting Velešín to Jan became the main cause of the unfavourable reaction on the part of the members of the Vítkovci family, as the castle was surrounded on many sides by the estates belonging to this powerful South-Czech family¹⁰. The bonds between Jan

of Michalovice and the court made it possible for the knight to hold the office of the King's highest cupbearer from 1289 onwards¹¹. He married Johanka of Rožmberk and they had a couple of children¹². Before his death, in 1306, he bequeathed quite big property to his son¹³.

It is also important to note that the castle of Michalovice was built in the middle of the 13th century, 3 km from the old royal castle in Mladá Boleslav. It was named after the patron of the church erected at the same time in its suburbium, i.e. Archangel Michael, the patron of knights. At the beginning, according to the fashion of using German versions of local names and surnames, the castle was called Michelsberg. The location of the castle seemed to be excellent. Situated on the right bank of the Iser River, it was an inaccessible fortress. The ruins of the castle with fragments of its defensive walls and a powerful round tower over 11 m in diameter have been preserved there up to now. The fact that the construction of the castle was supervised by a Cistercian-Burgundian workshop, which erected also some other buildings in the neighbourhood, points to some international relations. Henryk Kruhlaty was the last representative of the Michalovice branch of the Markwartice family. He died in 1468 and not before long the castle was abandoned¹⁴.

Jan of Michalovice's biography is especially interesting for us, as the knight performs a dual function. He appears to be a historical character and a literary protagonist. The castle of Michalovice, in turn, may have been the hypothetical place of Jan of Michalovice's meeting with Heinrich von Freiberg. The lord of Michalovice was one of the patrons of German poets, therefore the possibility that he was the initiator of the poem devoted to praising his virtues cannot be excluded. Among other aristocrats, the patrons of minnesingers, Oldřich of Hradec¹⁵ and Rajmund of Lichtenburg, who made Heinrich von Freiberg undertake the difficult task of writing a continuation of Gottfried von Strassburg's «Tristan», could be mentioned¹⁶.

Before we set about considering the place of the poem presenting Jan of Michalovice's expedition

schichte der Deutschen in Böhmen", 22, 1883/1884, pp. 185-220, 330-372; J. Š u s t a, *České dějiny*, vol. II, part 1, Prague 1935, pp. 337 seqq.

¹¹ *Regesta diplomatica...*, vol. 2, p. 630.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 615.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 904.

¹⁴ On the castle see: D. M e n c l o v á, *České hrady*, vol. I, pp. 133 seqq.; *Umělecké památky Čech*, ed. E. P o c h e, vol. II, Prague 1978, p. 378.

¹⁵ Cf.: W. I w a ŋ c z a k, *Tropem ...*, pp. 177 seqq.

¹⁶ L. S c h l e s i n g e r, *Die deutsche Sprachinsel von Iglau*, „Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen", 23, 1884, pp. 329 seqq.; M. Š v a b, *Zu den deutsch-tschechischen Literaturbeziehungen und deren Spezifität um 1300*, [in:] *Serta Slavica. In memoriam Aloisii Schmaus. Gedenkschrift*

⁵ D. M e n c l o v á, *České hrady*, vol. I, Prague 1976, p. 285, thinks that Jan of Michalovice's expedition took place in 1281.

⁶ A. W a l l n e r, *Reinhartfragen*, „Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum und Deutsche Literatur", 63, 1926, pp. 191 seqq., thought that the poem had been prepared to be performed in Prague in 1319.

⁷ E.g.: R. W o l k a n, *Geschichte ...*, p. 201, thinks that the work is not the apogee of the poet's literary output, and in: *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexicon*, ed. W. S t a m m l e r, vol. II, Berlin-Leipzig 1936, col. 265, the poem is considered to be an important literary work.

⁸ M. K o l á ř, A. S e d l á č e k, *Českomoravská heraldika*, vol. II, Prague 1925, p. 14; V. N o v o t n ý, *České dějiny*, vol. I, part 4, Prague 1937, p. 437; B. W a l d s t e i n - W a r t e n b e r g, *Die Markwartinger. Geschichte einer böhmischen Familie im Zeitalter der Premysliden*, Gräffelfig bei München 1966.

⁹ *Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae*, vol. II, ed. J. E m l e r, Prague 1882, p. 560; cf.: V. N o v o t n ý, *op. cit.*, pp. 415 seqq.

¹⁰ See: J. M. K l i m e s c h, *Die Herren von Michelsberg als Besitzer von Weleschin*, „Mitteilungen des Vereins für Ge-

to Paris in the developmentalline of chivalric and court literature and culture, the plot itself should briefly be presented. The poet introduces and presents his protagonist by saying that there lives a knight in Bohemia who surpasses all other knights in every respect. As the author is not in a position to describe all his numerous deeds, he will limit himself to describing one of the knight's achievements, which made him famous all over the world. While looking for adventures in the famous city of Paris, our hero appears in the King's garden and finds the ruler having his breakfast accompanied by beautiful ladies and a couple of friends. Jan of Michalovice, who unofficially represents the King of Bohemia, hands his sovereign's gifts to the French monarch and then steps on a carpet, where gorgeous armour and robes are put on him. Then, holding a shield with his coat of arms on it, he mounts his stallion and approaches the King. The latter nods to his two most outstanding knights telling them to get ready for the fight. Neither Anschōrant of Belole nor Grinet of Normandy endured the long encounter with Jan of Michalovice. They were both unsaddled and unhorsed. The noble winner, however, enjoying his success, returned their horses to them. This deed was highly appreciated by many beautiful ladies and the knight was given a beautiful steed and numerous jewels by the King. Finally, the author promises to tell us more stories about his hero's deeds.

It seems convenient to quote a fragment of the knight from Styria Ulrich von Lichtenstein's «Frauendienst», of which work we shall say more below. Five reasons for the knight's participation in a joust are enumerated there: out of the sheer love of tournaments, in the hope of winning the prize, to be in the service of the ladies, for military practice and to win honour¹⁷. This almost classic listing generally refers to poems depicting knightly tournaments. Probably all, or at least most of the reasons mentioned, could be found in the account of Jan of Michalovice expedition.

Therefore the following question may be asked: What image of the joust¹⁸, in terms of the governing rules, organization, and symbols, was presented in our poem? The position of the protagonist, placed

against the background of the famous Knights of the Round Table and other knights from Arthurian legends, seems to be of vital importance¹⁹. Therefore we come across Perceval, the unhappy hero stained with the murder of his mother, who after a long quest and numerous encounters finds redemption and becomes the King of the Holy Grail. There is Yvain, the one who saved a lion from a dragon and had been called the knight with a lion ever since (the animal would accompany him and help him in battle). Sir Gawain, present in almost all Arthurian romances, a model knight, who never became a leading character, also appears in the poem. Erec, Gamuret, Wigalois, Lancelot, Titurel, as well as St. William, Margrave of Aquitania, are mentioned. The ancient ruler King Alexander, who was clad in medieval knightly costume in numerous works, is not missing, either²⁰. The fact that Sir Tristram cannot be found among these outstanding warriors may be surprising, as Heinrich von Freiberg was the author of a poem devoted to this knight²¹. This absence may confirm the supposition that Jan of Michalovice's story had been written before the poet received Raimund of Lichtenburg's order to write a continuation of Gottfried von Strassburg's story.

The enumeration of the names of such distinguished characters was certainly meant to stress the virtues of Jan of Michalovice, who surpasses all the knights in many respects. The fact that Jan of Michal-

Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen — und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums, ed. J. Fleckenstein, Göttingen 1986; J. Macek, *Das Turnier im mittelalterlichen Böhmen*, *ibid.*, pp.371-389; W. Iwańczak, *Le tournoi chevaleresque dans le Royaume de Bohême. Essai d'analyse culturelle*, „*Studi Medievali*”, 28, 1987, 2, pp. 751-773; R. Barber, J. Barker, *Tournaments, Jousts, Chivalry and Pageant in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge 1989.

¹⁹ On the reception of French court romance (romance of chivalry) in Germany cf.: W. Kellermann, *Altdeutsche und altfranzösische Literatur*, „*Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*”, 11, 1923, pp. 217-225, 278-288; P. Tilvis, *Über die unmittelbaren Vorlagen von Hartmanns Erec und Iwein, Ulrichs Lanzelet und Wolframs Parzival*, „*Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*” 60, 1959, pp. 29-65, 129-144; M. Huby, *L'adaptation des romans courtois en Allemagne au XII^e et au XIII^e siècle*, Paris 1968; J. Fourquet, *Les adaptations allemandes de romans chevaleresque français. Changement de fonction et changement de vision*, „*Etudes germaniques*”, 33, 1977, pp. 97-107; R. Péréneec, *Recherches sur le roman arthurien en vers en Allemagne aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, vol. I-II, Paris 1984.

²⁰ See: P. Meyer, *Alexandre de Grand dans la littérature française du moyen âge*, vol. I-II, Paris 1886; J. S. Westlake, *The Prose Life of Alexander*, London 1913; K. Burdach, *Nachleben des Griechisch-römischen Altertums in der mittelalterlichen Dichtung und Kunst*, Halle 1925; G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, Cambridge 1956; D. J. A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus. A Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature*, „*Warburg Institute Surveys*”, 1, London 1963.

²¹ Heinrich von Freiberg, *Tristan*, ed. A. Bernt, Halle 1906, pp. 1-211.

für Alois Schmaus, ed. W. Gese mann and others, München 1971, p. 698; J. Bumke, *Höfische Kultur*, vol. II, p. 675.

¹⁷ Ulrich von Lichtenstein, *Frauendienst*, ed. R. Bechstein, vol. II, Leipzig 1888, p. 210: „durch hohen muot”, „umb daz guot”, „durch diu wip”, „durch lernen”, „durch priß”.

¹⁸ Among the numerous literary works devoted to the medieval tournament see: F. Niedner, *Das deutsche Turnier im XII und XIII. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1881; F. H. Cripps - Day, *The History of the Tournament in England and in France*, London 1918; R. Colman Clephan, *The Tournament. Its Periods and Phases*, London 1919; N. Denholm - Young, *The Tournament in the Thirteenth Century*, [in:] *Studies in Medieval History*. Presentd to F. M. Powicke, Oxford 1948 (reprint 1969), pp. 240-268; *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter*.

lovice came from Bohemia is emphasised by the author. The terminology used in the poem is varied. The knight is referred to as „recke”, „wigant” or „helt”. All the terms denote a „hero”. The world of medieval legends seems to be a usual point of reference. To praise the knight the author states that the poem's protagonist is a „new Perceval”²².

The presence of King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table leads us towards a new kind of tournament, in which the characters present different events from Arthurian legends and where other para-theatrical imitations of stories taken from literature may be observed²³. This type of tournament had flourished from the thirties of the 13th century onwards. Some unsuccessful attempts to organise tournaments of the Round Table in Bohemia were made by Johannes of Luxembourg²⁵.

The joust in which Jan of Michalovice takes part is characterized by a few elements which seem to be typical of widespread contemporary tournament practice. Tying the helmet denoted readiness for battle, while untying it meant the end of the fight²⁶. The direct encounter of the opponents used to be preceded by music. The whole spectacle takes place in the

atmosphere of „courtesy”, referred to as „kurteis”, which means the appearance of one of the crucial terms of court culture. Other similar terms, like e.g. „aventure” i.e. „adventure”, which has in *chivalric romances* a very concrete connotation, can also be found in the poem²⁷. The term „aventure” denotes an incident which culminates in a confrontation, a fight, and becomes a specific challenge. The satisfactory result allows an individual hero to strengthen his attachment to the ethos of a chosen group. The performance, which takes place in the presence of ladies, includes and displays the well-defined elements of the so called courtly love²⁸. The „minnenlicher habedanc”²⁹, the knight's thanks to the ladies for service, the practice which was meant to honour all the representatives of the fair sex, may be quoted here. During the tournament Jan of Michalovice was clad in „Waffenkleit”, a beautiful garment which was said to have been embroidered by his mistress³⁰.

As it is explicitly stated in the poem, the protagonist represents the noble King of Bohemia³¹. Hence the fact that his opponents in the joust are chosen by the French ruler himself is not surprising. Therefore a fairly well-known motif coming from the circle of chivalric culture is found here: the chosen contestants fight on behalf of their rulers. The importance of the victorious duels fought by the Czech knight is therefore deliberately stressed by the author³².

It should also be pointed out that the behaviour governed by official rules, i.e. conventional or symbolic conduct, is often accompanied by quite different prosaic actions. In the courtly poem Jetřich Berúnřký (adapted from the German language), one can read, among others,

«Já tobě, Vitku, radím lépe,
vstav helm na hlavu, at' se neklepe!»³³

Therefore it appears that despite the fact that, as has already been said, tying or untying the helmet

²² Jan z Michalovic, ed. A. Kraus, p. 109.

²³ L. H. Loomis, *Arthur's Round Table*, „Publications of the Modern Language Association”, 41, 1926, pp. 771-784; idem, *The Round Table Again*, „Modern Language Notes”, 44, 1929, pp. 511-519; R. S. Loomis, *Chivalric and Dramatic Imitations of Arthurian Romance*, [in:] *Medieval Studies in Memory of A. K. Porter*, vol. 1, Cambridge Mass. 1939, pp. 79-97; E. Sandoz, *Tourneys in the Arthurian Tradition*, „Speculum”, 19, 1944, pp. 389-420; R. H. Cline, *The Influence of Romances on Tournaments of the Middle Ages*, *ibid.* 20, 1945, pp. 204-211; U. Peters, *Frauendienst. Untersuchungen zu Ulrich von Lichtenstein und zum Wirklichkeitsgehalt der Minnedichtung*, Berlin 1971, pp. 173 seqq.; P. Czerniński, *Die Schlacht und Turnierdarstellungen in den deutschen höfischen Romanen des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1975, pp. 201 seqq.

²⁴ The oldest recorded tournament of the Round Table took place on Cyprus in A.D. 1223, when Jean d'Ibelin celebrated raising his son to the rank of knight and „buhordé, et contrefait les aventures de Bretagne et de la Table ronde” — Philippe de Novare, *Mémoires*, 1218-43, ed. C. Kohler, Paris 1913, p. 7.

²⁵ The *Zbroslav Chronicle*, [in:] *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. IV, ed. J. Emler, Prague 1884, p. 252.

²⁶ Cf.: similar situations depicted in other works belonging to the Old Czech knightly literature:

Alexandreida, ed. V. Vážný, Prague 1963, p. 111:

„Což mu třeba, vše rozkázav,
vzdviže sě, svůj helm zavázav”,
in *Tandariáš a Floribella*, [in:] *Rytřské srdce majíce*.

Česká rytřská epika 14. století, ed. Petrů, Prague 1984, p. 267:

„Tu sě s nim ihned potkaje,
podvázavše na sě helmy,
hnasta na sě prudce velmi”.

ibid., p. 303:

„Tandarius sě vypravi
s tovařii, helm svůj vsavi,
podvázaje jej...”.

See: San Marte (A. Schulz), *Zur Waffenkunde des älteren deutschen Mittelalters*, Quedlinburg - Leipzig 1867, p. 68:

„Den Helm strucken, verbinden, üfbinden heisst: sich zum kampf rüsten, streitfertig machen ... Wenn Ritter sich mit aufgebundenem Helm begegneten, so galt es Kampf; der abgenommene Helm ist Friedenszeichen”.

²⁷ E. Köhler, *Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der höfischen Epik. Studien zur Form der frühen Artus — und Graldichtung*, Tübingen 1970 (second edition).

²⁸ Cf.: J. Bumke, *Höfische Kultur*, vol. II, pp. 503 seqq., *ibid.* bibliography.

²⁹ Jan z Michalovic, p. 113.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 105 seq.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 103 seq.

³² It must be added that plans to avoid bloodshed and settle the outcomes of battles by means of duels fought between the rulers had frequently been made. Such attempts, however, usually failed, cf.: W. Golz, *Über Fürstzenweikämpfe im Spätmittelalter*, „Archiv für Kulturgeschichte”, 49, 1967, pp. 135-163; W. Iwaniczak, *Tropem ...*, pp. 78 seqq.

³³ *Rytřské srdce*, p. 207.

was a commonly understood signal³⁴ denoting readiness for the fight or its end, a piece of advice to fix the helmet so as to prevent it from disturbing in battle can also be found in poetry.

The account of Jan of Michalovice's expedition is also a valuable relic providing information about the knight's dress and armour. The author celebrates the knight's preparation for jousting and precisely describes particular parts of his attire³⁵ and armour³⁶. He starts with the leg harness, the poleyns, the „spaldenier“, i.e. a robe made of silk and worn under a knight's armour, and finishes with the chain-mail, i.e. the „halsberc“, the main part of armour, made of small metal rings and covering the knight's body down to his knees. The impressive, richly embroidered, presumably by a beautiful woman, outer robe covering the „halsberc“, called „Waffenkleit“, has already been mentioned. The preparation of such a beautiful garment for her «friend» by a woman was a widespread practice in the world of chivalry and courtly romance. Such a habit is also known from Wolfram von Eschenbach „Willehalm“³⁷. Finally, the horse itself was dressed in an impressive covering (the housing), consisting of two parts. The helmet had a crown with two vulture's feathers fixed to it. It was decorated with mantling, a yellow cloth denoting „Minne“³⁸, i.e. secret love, symbolizing the knight's service to a chosen lady.

The author of the present paper is especially interested in the issues connected with the coat of

arms. The discussed work may also be considered one of the heraldic poems. The hero boasts of his badge displayed in the escutcheon and representing a white lion with an opened mouth. The lion is made of ermine and it is placed on a field of red made of martens³⁹. At first the coat of arms was depicted only on the shield. Later it was also placed on other parts of the knight's equipment. In the present poem the badge appears on the shield, the pennon held by the knight and on the housing. Fragments of attire, the knight's equipment, may successfully be reconstructed on the basis of horse seals. In Bohemia, among others, Premisl Ottokar II's and Johannes of Luxembourg's as well as other Czech lords' seals have been preserved. Jan of Michalovice's equestrian seal of 1298⁴⁰ has been preserved in the National Archives in Prague. The details depicted to a considerable extent confirm the truthfulness of Heinrich von Freiberg's description.

The circumstances connected with granting a given coat of arms may be found in heraldic accounts. In Czech tradition a knight's achievements in battle or tournaments are frequently referred to. A bit later the so called Dalimil chronicle describes such circumstances. One of the stories deals with the election of the Roman King, accompanied by different ceremonies and amusements. Three Czech lords were given coats of arms then, two of them honoured in return for their bravery in a joust⁴¹. All the three knights are historical characters, mentioned by names. Whereas the event described may have been the election of Alphons of Castile, held on 1st April 1257.

Jan of Michalovice was not the first knight to be commemorated in German literature. According to „Biterolf und Dietleib“⁴², a German work dated at the first part of the 13th century, the knights from the territories on the Rhine, the Saxons and the knights from Thuringia are characterized by great skill in battle, whereas the Czechs can be identified by the fact that they do not use lances but swords. In the above

³⁴ The importance of tying and untying, as well as closing and opening in popular culture stressed in: J. G. F r a z e r, *Złota Galaz*, Warsaw 1962 (First English edition 1890); A. v a n G e n n e p, *Les rites de passage*, Paris 1909; L. S t o m m a, *Stońce rodzi się 13 grudnia*, Warsaw 1981, pp. 24 seqq.

³⁵ On the history of dress in the Middle Ages, for further literature, see: E. T h i e l, *Geschichte des Kostüms. Die europäische Mode von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, (fifth edition), Berlin 1980; on dress in courtly poetry: E. B e r t e l t, *Gewandschilderungen in der erzählenden höfischen Dichtung des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts*, Diss. Münster 1936; Czech lands presented in: Č. Z i b r t, *Dějiny kroje v zemích českých od dob nejstarších až po války husitské*, vol. I, parts 1-3, Prague 1891-1892; Z. D r o b n á, J. D u r d í k, E. W a g n e r, *Kroje, zbroj a zbraně doby předhusitské a husitské*, Prague 1956.

³⁶ The history of arms and armour in: C. B l a i r, *European Armour circa 1066 to circa 1700*, London 1958; C. G a i e r, *Les armes*, Turnhout 1979; R. E. O a k e s h o t t, *European Weapons and Armour*, London 1980; on the names of parts of arms and armour see: F. D o u b e k, *Studien zu den Waffennamen in der höfischen Epik*, „Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie“, 59, 1935, pp. 313-353; P. C z e r w i Ń s k i, *Die Schlacht*, pp. 58 seq.

³⁷ Ed. in: *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, ed. K. L a c h m a n n (Sixth edition), Berlin-Leipzig 1926 (reprint Berlin 1965), pp. 423-640; cf.: J. B u m k e, *Wolframs Willehalm. Studien zur Epenstruktur und zum Heiligkeitsbegriff der ausgehenden Blütezeit*, Heidelberg 1959.

³⁸ Among the recent works cf.: R. S c h n e l l, *Hohe und niedere Minne*, „Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie“, 98, 1979, pp. 19-52.

³⁹ Cf.: K o l á ř, A. S e d l á č e k, *Českomoravská heraldika*, vol. I, Prague 1902, pp. 140, 173, 316; on the change of the lords of Michalovice's coat of arms about the year 1340 see: *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 15.

⁴⁰ D. M e n c l o v á, *České hrady*, vol. I, p. 134.

⁴¹ *Najstarsí česká rýmovaná kronika tak řečeného Dalimila*, ed. B. H a v r á n e k, J. D a ň h e l k a, Prague 1957, p. 145; cf.: J. J i r e č e k, *Štity starých rodů českých a moravských dle kroniky Dalimilovy*, „Památky archeologické a místopisné“, 10, 1876, pp. 633-642; A. G o r d z i e j e w s k i, *Heraldyczna ornamentyka literacka średniowiecznej kroniki czeskiej tzw. Dalimila*, „Pamiętnik Słowiański“, XXXI, 1981, pp. 63-82.

⁴² *Biterolf und Dietleib*, ed. O. J ä n i c k e, [in:] *Deutsches Heldenbuch*, vol. I, Berlin 1866, lines 8966 seqq. and 8443-8458 (reprint Berlin-Zürich 1963); see: V. N o v o t n ý, *České dějiny*, vol. I, part 3, Prague 1928, p. 991; M. C u r s c h m a n n, *Biterolf und Dietleib: A Play upon Heroic Themes*, [in:] *Germanic Studies in Honor of Otto Springer*, ed. S. J. K a p l o w i t t, London 1978, pp. 83 seqq.

mentioned poem dating back to the end of the first part of the 13th century written by the knight from Styria Ulrich von Lichtenstein⁴³ with the title „Frauendienst” the duels fought by a wandering hero disguised as Venus or King Arthur with Czech knights in South-Czech Krumlov and Wiener Neustadt⁴⁴ are referred to.

The question about Heinrich von Freiberg’s possible prototypes can now be answered. This type of poetry is characterized by some recurring motifs, tricks and situations. In German literature a few poems written from a similar perspective can be found. Ulrich von Lichtenstein’s „Frauendienst” and, to a greater extent, Konrad von Würzburg’s „Das Turnier von Nantes”⁴⁵ may be quoted here. In the third quarter of the 13th century Konrad von Würzburg, a professional poet coming from townspeople, described the tournament of Nantes in which the French and the English kings took part. The competition which took place in Nantes, however, was very different to the encounter fought by Jan of Michalovice, as it involved a large number of contestants. The authors’ heraldic interests are the characteristic shared by all the three poems. The account of Jan of Michalovice’s expedition is also similar to the expedition, mentioned in the 15th century Chronicle of Thuringia, organized by the knight from Styria Waltman von Setilstet in 1226. Waltman von Setilstet is said to have been accompanied only by a lady, a dog and a sparrow-hawk. He would challenge three knights every day and each defeated knight was supposed to give his ring to the lady⁴⁶. In this poem, like in the case of Jan of Michalovice’s expedition, the protagonist acts single-handedly, while Ulrich von Lichtenstein is usually accompanied by a train of attendants when he sets off on his venturesome journeys.

⁴³ Among the recent works see: O. Höfler, *Ulrichs von Lichtenstein Venus — und Artusfahrt*, [in:] *Studien zur deutschen Philologie des Mittelalters. Friedrich Panzer zum 80. Geburtstag*, Heidelberg 1950, pp. 131-152; A. H. Toubert, *Der literarische Charakter von Ulrich von Lichtensteins "Frauendienst"*, „Neophilologus”, 51, 1967, pp. 253-262; B. Thum, *Ulrichs von Lichtenstein "Frauendienst"*. *Höfisches Ethos und soziale Realität*, Phil. Diss. Heidelberg 1968; U. Peters, *Frauendienst...*; H. Dopsch, *Der Dichter Ulrich von Lichtenstein und die Herkunft seiner Familie (Festschrift F. Hausmann)*, Graz 1977, pp. 93 seqq.

⁴⁴ Cf.: V. Novotný, *op. cit.*, p. 992; J. Macek, *Das Turnier*, pp. 371 seq.

⁴⁵ Ed. in: *Konrad von Würzburg, Kleinere Dichtungen*, ed. E. Schröder, vol. II, ed. 4, Dublin-Zürich 1968, pp. 42-75; see: G. Ehrismann, *Geschichte ...*, pp. 35 seq., 53 seq.; H. Brunner, *Das Turnier von Nantes. Konrad von Würzburg, Richard von Cornwall und die deutschen Fürsten*, [in:] *De poetis aevi mediæ quæstiones*, „Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik”, 335, Göppingen 1981, pp. 105 seqq.

⁴⁶ Johann Rothe, *Thüringische Chronik*, ed. R. von Liliencron, Jena 1859, pp. 356 seq.; U. Peters, *Frauendienst ...*, p. 218.

In the course of research carried out in connection with these works two attitudes have clearly been distinguished. While trying to explore the literary contents of the poems on the one hand, one wants to find some connections with contemporary historical reality on the other. The source verification of the events presented is considered to be a success. In the case of Jan of Michalovice’s account one has to do with a similar situation. The researchers can be divided into two groups, characterized by the above mentioned attitudes. A desire to trace a source mention confirming the fact of organizing such a tournament in Paris has existed for a long time. Alois Bernt’s studies of the French material appeared to be a failure. No such tournament was held in Paris on the turn of the 13th century. A tournament took place in Compiègne in 1297⁴⁷. A supposition that the expedition described by Heinrich von Freiberg, as well as the tournament itself, constituted a kind of costume or camouflage meant to hide the true reason of the mission has also been made. Dobroslava Menclová suggested, for example, that Jan of Michalovice had been sent on an important political mission to Paris, where he had acted on behalf of 10 years old Wenceslas II⁴⁸. Consequently, the expedition was to have taken place in 1281. This attempt to date the event precisely, however, is only a controversial hypothesis if we take into consideration the fact that Jan of Michalovice’s name was first mentioned in the diplomatic material in 1283⁴⁹. A mention in the later Dalimil Chronicle referring to Jan of Michalovice’s successes in tournaments, according to the chronicle held between 1293 and 1296, may be regarded as another argument in favour of the «historical» character of the expedition. Dalimil writes, «Sir Jan of Michalovice had fought in tournaments in the Rhineland (the Rhineland) and then arrived in Paris, where he entered the lists rightly and with honour and then returned by the same route to Bohemia»⁵⁰. It is interesting that in the German translation of the so called Dalimil Chronicle made in prose at the end of the first half of the 14th century the event that interests us here is dated at the year 1297. The chronicle says, «At that time the lord of Michalovice set off on his knightly expedition to Paris and then returned by the same route with honour and without any loss»⁵¹.

⁴⁷ *Heinrich von Freiberg*, ed. A. Bernt, pp. 189 seq; A. Kraus, *Das grosse Turnier von Paris*, „Germanoslavica”, 2, 1932-1933, p. 545.

⁴⁸ D. Menclová, *České hrady*, vol. I, p. 286.

⁴⁹ Cf.: ref. 9.

⁵⁰ *Nejstarší česká rýmovaná kronika*, p. 155:

„Tehdy pan Jan z Michalovic kole po Rynu, až do Paříže jide,

tu tñě a právě kláv, tůž cestů se čstí do Čech i přijide”.

⁵¹ *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. III, ed. J. Jireček, Prague 1878. p. 293: „Dieselben czeyt her Jan von Michelspergk czog nach ritterschaft pis gen Parys, und kom denselben wegk her wider mit eren und an schaden”.

Firstly, however, this par excellence literary work could hardly be considered to be the source of accurate information, secondly the author of the so called Dalimil Chronicle (the Czech and the German versions) may have made this record after he had read Heinrich von Freiberg's piece of writing.

The story of Jan of Michalovice's expedition is a typical product of courtly culture belonging to the Minnesang tradition. It not only explores the world of universal values and the ethics of the chosen knights' community but also provides interesting information about the organization, attire, armour and the rules according to which knightly tournaments were held. It is not an accurate reflection of knightly reality and the actual conditions of knights and noblemen's life. This could scarcely be possible. The poem is, however, a genuine picture of their self-consciousness. The author's fascination with knightly tournaments, which are known to have had the magic power to attract attention, must also be stressed. It was only at the beginning of the 15th century that John Hus sincerely regretted that the painters preferred to present knightly encounters rather than depict Christ's Crucifixion⁵².

Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra

⁵² *Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera Omnia*, vol. I, ed. A. Molnár, Prague 1975, p. 156.

