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THE CASTLE IN MEDIEVAL CZECH HISTORIOGRAPHY

“We found the kingdom was so badly plundered that there was not a single free castle left with the king’s possessions, so we had nowhere to stay and had to lodge in townspeople’s houses, like the other men did. The Castle in Prague was plundered, ruined and demolished. It had leant towards the ground since the time of Premysl Ottokar II of Bohemia. We ordered a large and beautiful palace to be built in this place. The palace is very expensive and every passer-by can see this¹.” Charles IV of Luxembourg’s above reflections on the condition of the Czech state were written down on his return from France, where he had been staying for a long time. This quotation introduces us to the very gist of the subject matter of the present paper. For Charles, the castle was a central point as well as an indispensable tool of ruling. This is why its reconstruction became one of the first tasks undertaken by the young monarch. The aim of this paper is simple. Using Czech historiography as an example, we would like to show some selected functions, contexts and roles ascribed to castles in the Middle Ages². Of course, one cannot assume a

priori that the Czech lands were specific or unique in any way. The phenomena in question are similar and related throughout Europe and outside the Continent. However, if one examines the issue in a particular place at a particular time, some peculiarities will be discovered.

It is a well-known fact that the concept of “castle” is not unambiguous and that it changes with time. The Czech language uses two terms: “hrad” and “zámek”. In the relevant literature the former is often associated with the seat of a nobleman-warrior while the latter denotes a Renaissance building, where a landed gentleman, a busi-

most recent European publications include: U. Albrecht, *Von den Burg zum Schloss. Französische Schlossbaukunst im Spätmittelalter*, Worms 1986; *Die Burgen im Spätmittelalter*, [in:] “Castrum Bene”, 2, hg. von J. Caballo, Budapest 1992; *Burgen und Schlösser in Deutschland*, hg. von K. Merten, P. Marton, München 1995; *Burgenbau im späten Mittelalter*, [in:] “Forschungen zu Burgen und Schlössern”, 2, ed. H. Hofrichter, G. U. Grossmann, München 1996; *Château et pouvoir*, Bordeaux 1996; *Autour du château médiéval. Actes des Rencontres Historiques et Archéologiques de l’Orne tenues à Alençon le 5 avril 1997*, [in:] “Mémoires et documents”, 1, ed. B. Fajal, Alençon 1998; *Burgen im Spiegel der historischen Überlieferung*, hg. von H. Ehner, Sigmaringen 1998; *Burgen in Mitteleuropa. Ein Handbuch*, Band 1-2, hg. von H. W. Böhme u.a., Stuttgart-Darinstadt 1998/1999; *Château et Imaginaire. Actes des Rencontres d’Archéologie et d’Histoire en Périgord les 29, 30 septembre et 1er octobre 2000*, ed. A. M. Cocula, M. Combet, Pessac 2001; T. Biller, G. U. Grossmann, *Burg und Schloss. Der Adelsitz im deutschsprachigen Raum*, Darinstadt 2002; *Château et ville. Actes des Rencontres d’Archéologie et d’Histoire en Périgord les 28, 29 et 30 septembre 2001*, ed. A. M. Cocula, M. Combet, Paris 2002; *Le Château et la Ville. Conjonction, Opposition, Juxtaposition (XI^e-XVIII^e siècle)*, ed. G. Blicck, P. Contamine, N. Faucherre, J. Mesqui, Paris 2002; O. H. Creighton, *Castles and landscapes*, Dulles 2002; *Zamki i przestrzeń społeczna w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej*, ed. M. Antoniewicz, Warszawa 2002; C. Coulson, *Castles in medieval society. Fortresses in England, France, and Ireland in the Central Middle Ages*, Oxford 2003.

¹ *Vita Karoli Quarti*, Praha 1978, p. 70: „Quod regnum invenimus ita desolatum, quod nec unum castrum invenimus liberum, quod non esset obligatum cum omnibus bonis regalibus, ita quod non habebamus ubi manere, nisi in domibus civitatum sicut alter civis. Castrum vero Pragense ita desolatum, destructum ac comminutum, quod a tempore Ottogari regis totum prostratum fuit usque ad terram. Ubi de novo palacium magnum et pulchrum cum magnis sumptibus edificari procuravimus, prout hodierna die apparet inventibus.”

² It is worth mentioning here that „castellology” is very popular in European historiography. The achievements of the extremely active Residenzen-Kommission headed by Werner Paravicini in Kiel are particularly important. Some references to Czech works on the subjects can be found, among others, in T. Durdík’s numerous publications. The

nessman, whose interests and needs were quite different from those of the ancient feudal knight, lived. Indeed, if one takes into consideration a source where the two terms appear side-by-side, significant chronological differences can be observed. Undoubtedly, the word “hrad” appears in older sources and the word “zámek” is characteristic of the fifteenth century, although it had existed in the Czech language as early as the second half of the fourteenth century. A few years ago, Josef Macek, an outstanding expert on Czech historical semantics, made an analysis of the two terms, which showed the changes in meaning occurring with the passage of time and how the meanings evolved³. His explanation did not, however, dispel all doubts and the issue was discussed anew by Robert Novotný⁴. The source examples quoted by Novotný seem to suggest that Macek’s assumption that the terms “hrad” and “zámek” were synonymous would be difficult to prove. The latter term seems to have a broader semantic field. The word “hrad” is used in the sources to denote a building, a material, or a physical structure. What is more the term “hrad” means a building in itself and its owner is only mentioned in the second place. By contrast the word “zámek” performs a more synthetic and general function. Consequently, the latter term can also denote a town or any other structure with a gate with a lock, which can be closed and bolted. One cannot, however, prove that the appearance of the new term “zámek” is linked to the development of feudal residences of this new type. Where does, then, the unexpected and sudden increase in the use of the new term in fifteenth century sources come from? Novotný suggests that the situation was in no way connected with contemporary changes in architecture, but was a result of the unease, lack of security and all sorts of danger characteristic of the epoch of the Hussite Revolution. This attitude resulted in the creation of a new, single term denoting a fortified seat. Thus the word “zámek” would have been derived for functional purposes.

The discussion summed up above has not yet come to a close. It should, however, be borne

in mind that it concerns mainly the sources written in the Czech language while the author of the present paper is mostly interested in Latin historiography. We would like to focus on presenting the political, cultural and, to some extent, also military role played by castles while putting aside analyses of their architectural development.

The castle, as a place from which a country was ruled, played its role at different levels. Castles were the seats of monarchs and lords. They were also knights’ or noblemen’s simple defensive towers and thus clear signs of their domination over a given territory. Obviously, most information found in medieval historiography concerns the upper classes. However, if one assumes that some cultural and social models were copied by the lower classes, one can come to the conclusion that there existed analogous mechanisms at various levels of the Christian community. Before the year 1099, Pulkava, a chronicler from Charles IV’s circles, wrote that, “At the castle of Žatec, Bretislav was advised by his commanders and his lords to appoint one of his relatives or the nephew Polish duke Boleslaw sword-bearer of the Kingdom of Bohemia. The latter was to be paid 10 marks of gold and 100 marks of silver for his services or for holding the office. The money was to come from the yearly payment or tribute which his father Wladislaw and the other Polish dukes were obliged to pay to the kingdom of Bohemia.”⁵ The well-known fact of appointing Boleslaw the Wrymouthed sword-bearer of the Kingdom of Bohemia took place at a castle, which made the ceremony still more significant. In addition, the chronicler stresses the fact that Poland was dependent on Bohemia, which made it possible for the Czech ruler to appoint a Polish duke sword-bearer. He also mentions Boleslaw the Wrymouthed’s pay, which enriches the context

⁵ *Przibiconis de Radenin dicti Pulkava Chronicon Bohemiae*, [in:] “*Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*”, 5, ed. J. Emler, Praha 1893, p. 64: „Eodem eiam anno circa festum Nativitatis Domini idem Brzetislaus in urbe Zacensi Boleslaum affinem sive sororium suum, ducem Polonie, de consilio comitum et baronum suorum ensiferum regni Boemie constituit, donans sibi pro administracione eiusdem officii de censu seu tributo annuo, quo Wladislaus, pater suus, et alii duces ibidem regno Boemie annis singulis tenebantur obnoxii, decem marcas auri et centum marcas argenti in recognitionem ministerii seu officii supradicti.”

³ J. M a c e k, *Hrad a zámek. Studie historicko – sémantická*, “*Český Časopis Historický*” 90, 1992, pp. 1-16.

⁴ R. N o v o t n ý, *K Mackově pojetí hradu a zámku*, “*Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica*”, 7, 2000, pp. 191-201.

and makes the whole account more concrete and reliable. Pulkava, who was not an original chronicler and while writing down the history of the Czech lands, he would frequently make use of some earlier works, quote the so-called document of Prague of 1086 and mentions, among other places, the city of Kraków and all the lands belonging to this castle⁶. This is a clear reference to the part the castle played in the system of ruling a country. The chronicler wanted to stress its administrative function and its role in the creation of some rules of behaviour in a dependent territory. In 1336, another fourteenth century chronicler, Francis of Prague, mentions the ancient conflict between the Luxembourgs and the Wittelsbachs: "One day Louis of Bavaria sent his envoys to the king of Bohemia. They were to threaten him and demand that the town of Cheb and the castles associated with it be returned to the German state⁷." The mission was a failure as the envoys "were given the appropriate answer and came back home empty-handed⁸." It should be noted that there was a subtle link between the town of Cheb, which had its own castle, and the nearby castles. This example seems to be analogues with the above analysis of the word "zámek" used in the Czech language (the term could mean both a structure and a fortified city). The fact that the emperor demanded that John of Luxemburg give him the town and the castles was undoubtedly connected with an attempt to make a display of power and above all to demonstrate the right hierarchy of the Christian world, where the emperor has the greatest power and the castles become unquestionable signs of his authority. Sometimes international conflicts were much more violent and castles frequently played the leading part in them. According to Pulkava's account, copied from his predecessors, in 1038, Bretislav invaded

Poland. "The brave conqueror, among other things, seized the magnificent Polish castle in Kraków, which he destroyed so that only the foundations remained intact⁹." The chronicler stresses the connection between the impressiveness of the castle and the highest honours he received for his achievement. The destruction of the castle was also perceived as an act of eradication of the visible symbols of foreign and hostile rule over this territory.

In the epoch when there were no regular prisons, castles performed yet another important function. They served as prisons for criminals and all sorts of crooks who had broken the law and other social rules as well as jails for political prisoners. They were used during power struggles when political opponents and unwanted candidates for the throne had to be instantly isolated. When after Premysl Ottokar II's death, the country was in disorder, the margrave of Brandenburg, who had been appointed guardian of the Kingdom of Bohemia, had Kunegunda, the widow, and the young prince Wenceslas shipped off from the Prague castle to the castle in Bezd. Pulkava says that the margrave dismissed all her Czech servants and brought Saxon servants, who were told to guard the queen carefully. She was not allowed to leave the castle without the burgrave's permission and made to live a modest life, which was well below her social status¹⁰. According to various sources, the rules of keeping prisoners in jail were determined by the requirements of hierarchy and prestige. In 1319, after a victorious battle, John of Luxembourg took the Austrian prince Henry captive and kept him at the castle of Krivoklat in a place "worthy" of

⁶ Ibidem, p. 56: „Inde ad orientem hos fluvios habet et terminos: Bug scilicet et Ztir cum Cracova civitate provinciae, cui Wag nomen est, cum omnibus regionibus ad predictam urbem pertinentibus, que Cracova est”.

⁷ *Chronicon Francisci Pragensis*, [in:] "Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, Series nova", 1, ed. J. Zachová, Praha 1997, p. 162: „Hiis diebus Ludvicus Bavarus ad regem Boemie misit suos legatos, per quos Egram civitatem castra quoque eidem coniuncta reddi imperio minis apertis requisivit.”

⁸ Ibidem, „...qui congruo responso accepto a rege sine fine sunt reversi in regionem suam.”

⁹ *Przibiconis de Radenin ...*, pp. 40 seqq.: „Anno Domini MXXXVIII Brzeczislaus patrati quondam sceleris in avum suum Boleslaum per Meskonem, ducem Polonie, non immemor, congregato exercitu suo intrat Poloniam, camque devastat et destruit, Krakow, insigniorem urbem Polonie, strenuus victor acquirit et funditus subvertit...”

¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 167 seqq: „Preterea prefatus marchio Brandenburgensis, tutor regis et regni Boemie, Kuncgundem reginam cum rege juvene Wenceslao de castro Pragensi noctis tempore deduci fecit in castrum Bezdziec et hi ibidem Boemis singulis suis familiaribus ab eadem regina depulsis Saxones preficiens mandavit cam unacum filio diligentius custodiri et inhibens sibi a dicto castro sine consensu burgravi ibidem exeundi licenciam, satis parce et minus decenter ipsam in necessariis sumptibus procuravit.”

such a guest¹¹. Executions were another manifestation of the repressive character of authority. Zaviš of Falkenštejn was executed near the castle of Hluboká, which he was said to have refused to give up to the ruler¹². Beheading a man who was a menace to the monarch outside and not inside the castle must have been deliberate. Written sources do not provide any relevant information, but an execution-taking place outside the castle might have been more public in character as more onlookers could gather to watch it. Consequently, the event had a greater didactic value.

Castles also played an important political and military role. They offered support to political opponents and gave them shelter and frequently became the scene of all sorts of dreadful incidents. According to the chronicle of Zbraslav, considered to be one of the most interesting fourteenth century Czech sources, John of Luxembourg often had to fight the inner opposition, inspired by all sorts of phenomena and above all the fact that the king came from a foreign dynasty. The ruler had a lot of problems with Frederick of Linava, who owned many castles, including the castle at Račice, a pearl among castles. The chronicler claims that no projectile throwing machines could be a menace to it. Finally, the attackers found a way to seize the fortress. They paid some miners extracting precious stones to dig some passages under the castle's rampart, as a result of which a large section of the wall as well as the flanking towers fell to the ground. When Frederick saw what was happening, he sent his emissaries to the king and asked the monarch to have mercy on him. As the whole event took

place in 1312, when as a new ruler John of Luxembourg wanted to drum up support for his actions and was very eager to earn the approval of the local lords, he showed mercy and made Frederick of Linava swear that he would make up for his mistakes through loyal service in the future. Frederick of Linava promised to pull down his castle at Drahotuš. Račice, weakened by the miners, was demolished and only the foundations were left on the site¹³.

In order to strengthen his success, the winner in a conflict always wanted to take control of his opponent's castles or destroy them. Charles IV of Luxembourg did so in 1339. An interesting account can be found in the ruler's autobiography: "I set out to lay siege to the castle of Potštejn, because it rebelled against me and the king of Bohemia and many robberies were carried out from it. Although it was said that the castle could not be seized, I took it in nine weeks, pulled down the tower where the owner of the castle was hiding and demolished the fortifications and the castle

¹³ *Chronicon Aulae regiae*, [in:] "Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum", 4, ed. J. Emler, p. 179: „Cumque Fridericus de Linavia in fortitudine castrorum et munitionum suarum confideret, gracionque regis non tanta, ut debuit, diligencia querceret nec a maleficiis suis desisteret, omnes quoque Moravie incolas igne et gladio lederet exacerbavit rex Johannes sermone suos, convocat ad se Moravos, cives eciam Brunnenses iubet esse paratos. Nec mora omnes ad preliandum parati sunt, voci quoque regis pariter obediunt. Mittit itaque rex copiosum exercitum armis bellicis expeditum ad circumvallandum et impugnandum castrum, quod Recycz dicitur, quod forcius inter alias munitiones Friderici de Linavia putabatur. Erat namque hoc castrum adeo firinum, quod suis defensoribus liberum dabat exitum et introitum eciam aspicientibus omnibus, qui obsederant ipsum; quid machina iacere poterat, huius castri firmitas pro nichilo reputabat. Cum vero omnes impugnacionis modi parum proficerent, modum alium excogitant. Advocaverunt namque, qui castrum acquirere satagunt, homines quosdam fossores, qui pro minera in montanis fodere consueverant, et hii accepto precio factis subterraneis meatibus murum castri diebus pluribus suffoderunt, ita quod simul una hora cum parte muri quedam menia ceciderunt. Videns autem Fridericus de Linavia, quia robur sue fortitudinis minaretur ruinam, eo quod castrum Recicz partem perdidisset aliquam per machinacionem occultam, missis nunccis imprecatur regis gracionem. Permisit autem rex, ut idem, qui postulat, ad regalem perveniat presenciam. Adiutus igitur amicorum suorum auxilio Fridericus de Linavia gracionem regis obtinuit, et quod fideli suo servicio errorem suum emendare ad regis velit arbitrium, sub iuramento promisit; fregit eciam iubente rege Fridericus aliud forte castrum, quod Drahaus vocatum fuit, istud quoque castrum Recicz funditus exstirpavit, sicut regi placuit.”

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 201.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 171: „Princeps vero Boemie...dictum baronem Zawissium ad se vocatum in castro Pragensi fere per biennium tenuit vinculatun. Cumque nullius humiliacionis signa princeps in eo perpenderet, ipsum iussit duci ad castrum Hluboka alias Froburg, ut illud principi redderetur. Quod cum facere recusaret, ante castrum predictum pena capitis est cum assere peremptus et abinde ductus in Wysserobrod monasterium ordinis Cisterciensis, quod ipse fundaverat; *ibidem* traditur sepulture”; Similarly, *Benesz of Weitmile: Chronicon Benessii de Weitmil*, [in:] "Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum", 4, ed. J. Emler, Praha 1884, p. 459: „...princeps Boemie...dictum militem Zawissium regie maiestati utique obnoxium cepit et detinuit et ante castrum regium dictum Hluboka alias Froburk, quod principi reddere noluit, decollari fecit eundem.”

itself¹⁴. Political opposition and robbery often went hand in hand and it was often very difficult to tell one from the other. Mostly radical and cruel methods were often employed, but they seem to have been a reflection of the reality of contemporary life. When in 1312, John of Luxembourg set out to restore order and put down the riots in Moravia, he found himself in front of Ungersperk Castle, which was the seat of a band of robbers. According to the Zbraslav chronicle, the fortress was attacked without any preparations and seized after a short fight. Eighteen robbers were taken captive and by order of the king beheaded instantly. One of them, however, did not complain or pity himself, but asked to be executed by being hanged on the branches of a green tree growing nearby and his request was fulfilled¹⁵.

Of course in many cases the situation was quite different and the defence of a castle became a manifestation of the knight's key quality, that is to say, loyalty to his sovereign. In 1246, the people of Moravia entered a war with Austria, which they lost. They consequently did not obey the orders of the winners and refused to give up the castles belonging to the Czech king, which were under their control. They did not give in even when despite the hard frost some naked people were carried in front of these castles. A lord called Crh kept refusing to surrender Maidberk Castle. He was ready to die defending the property

of his ruler and he finally had his left eye put out¹⁶.

It should be noted that the terminology used in historiographic accounts is conventional in character. The sources often contain information about strong or very strong castles, which cannot be seized or other analogous expressions are used. Of course, the rules imposed by medieval erudition required that the good hero took these unconquerable fortresses. The problems he had had to deal with and the effort he had made added to his merits.

The castle used to be the venue for diplomatic meetings, as well as open and secret talks and debates. Castles were also sometimes presented by one ruler to another. All sorts of ceremonies and social events, such as weddings, were held at castles and numerous mentions of such occasions are to be found in written sources. The interesting thing is that the castle is still considered to be an appropriate place for a marriage. The castles at Krivoklat and Karlštejn often perform this function in the Czech Republic nowadays.

The decision to erect a castle had not only practical significance but it was also a way to immortalize the founder's name by placing it in the collective memory of the community. There are many examples of such practices and the very names of fortresses are clear evidence of the builders' intentions. Both the so-called second continuation by Kosmas and the above-quoted Pulka-va mention the foundation of Królewiec (Königsberg) in 1255. The event took place during the crusade organized by Premysl Ottokar II to Prussia and Lithuania. It is also worth mentioning that John of Luxembourg was still more enthusiastic about organizing expeditions to the last non-Christian corner of Europe and set off on three crusades

¹⁴ *Vita Karoli ...*, p. 126: „...processi in obsidionem castris Potnsteyn, quod contra me et regem Boemie rebellaverat et spolia multa de eo committentur. Et licet esset inaccessibile, infra novem tamen septimanas ipsum acquisivi turrinque cum barone, cuius castrum erat, in terrain deieci; muros quoque cum toto castro solotenus prostravi.”

¹⁵ *Chronicon Aulae ...*, p. 179: „Incole igitur Moraviae, qui mala a malis paciebantur, regi insinuant et regale presidium deprecantur, nec surda aure dissimulat gemitum rex iustus Moravorum, sed mittit convocatque exercitum Bohemorum. Mense igitur Julio adventus sui anno tercio – ipse est annus Domini MCCCXII^o – rex Johannes de Praga exivit, subsidiumque Moravis allaturus procedit. Habuit autem Yngramus de Boschowicz, hostis Moraviae, prope claustrum Trebecz unum castrum, quod Ungersperch vocabatur; hoc quia in via regis fuerat, exercitus regis pugne modo aggressus, ipsuinque viriliter impugnat et expugnat. Capti autem fuerunt in eodem castro latrunculi decem et octo, qui omnes ex iussu regis capitibus cesis trucidati fuerant in momento. Unus tamen inter ipsos fuit, sicut michi Herlinus, marschalcus regis, retulit, qui non dolens et plangens, sed volens et gaudens in ramis unius vircentibus arboris, que ibi stetit et floruit, suspendium elegit et obtinuit, quod petivit.”

¹⁶ *Przibiconis de Radenin ...*, pp. 140 scqq: „Illi (Moravians)...qui captivi fuerant ex eis, nonnulli, ne de cetero Austriam invadant, nasus et auribus sunt truncati. Res quoque Moravorum ducis Austriae milites potiti victoria diviserunt. Quidam eciam nobiles de Moravia pecunia duci data carceres evaserunt. Sed castra regis Boemie, que tunc possidebant, nollentes tradere, quamvis in maximo frigore portarentur, nudi ante castra predicta, ymmo fuit cuidam domino Czirgoni oculus sinister erutus, eo quod castrum Madberg tradere recusaret, potius mori cupiens quam perfidiam circa bona domini sui perpetrare”.

to Lithuania¹⁷. An account of the expedition of 1255 says that “the famous Czech ruler marched on along the Priegola River until he arrived on a hill where Premysl founded a castle and a town in his honour and he named the place Königsberg, which reflected his social rank and dignity. As the town was erected thanks to the power and authority of Premysl, when Königsberg together with the whole province of Sambia went on an expedition against the heathens, the Marshal of Prussia and the men of Königsberg faced the enemy in the first rank carrying the Czech royal colours to commemorate the event mentioned above¹⁸.”

Premysl wanted to stress his royal dignity by founding the castle and the town. In ancient times, a man called Vlastislav adopted a more pragmatic approach. According to Pulkava, Vlastislav had a castle built on the borderland in the vicinity of the town of Žatec, founded later. The fortress was surrounded by a rampart and strong fortifications and named after the founder. Vlastislav wanted to subjugate the Czechs and employed an unusual method of mobilizing his own army. He ordered that all his subjects who were taller than the length of a sword and did not want to take part in battle be beheaded¹⁹. Another chro-

ni-cleer who was a contemporary of Charles IV was a patrician of Florence and a traveler, Jan Marignola. On his return from Asia, he mysteriously appeared at the court in Prague. In his opinion, Vlastislav, whose name was quite meaningful as the word “vlast” means a homeland in Czech, was driven to conquer Bohemia by his pride²⁰.

In the early Middle Ages, building castles was the king’s monopoly. Later, when the law became less strict in this respect, possessing a castle or a fortified tower remained an object of dreams and ambition. Lords of high social position as well as people who belonged to the lower ranks of society were very eager to become owners of fortresses. An interesting example of such a situation can be found in the Zbraslav chronicle. Berthold Pirkner living in Kutna Hora, who was raised above the status of a townsman by his riches, that is to say, silver extracted at nearby mines, had a castle built between Kutna Hora and a monastery at Sedlec, in the southern part of the valley. The castle was called Pirchinstein and its owner used to visit it quite often not because he needed to but because he wanted to do something unusual and extraordinary²¹. It can be assumed that Pirkner was attracted by the lifestyle typical of a castle as courtly culture is known to have had a magic impact on the lower ranks of society.

Of course not only did the castle perform a number of lay functions, it also played important religious and sacred roles. While discussing various episodes from the history of the Polab Slavs, Pulkava notices a clear contrast. In 1154, Stodoran prince Przybyslav, who had inherited Brandenburg Castle and the surrounding lands from his

bellum contra Boemos et inter suos tale statutum fecit, ut quicumque de suis gentibus habens in statura ultra longitudinem gladii et iussus non veniret ad pugnam, capite truncaretur²².

²⁰ *Johannis de Marignola Chronicon*, [in:] “Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum”, 3, ed. J. Emler, Praha 1882, p. 527: „...Wratlslaw /Vlastislav/...elatus spiritu superbie omnem Boeniam proponit suo dominio subjugare”.

²¹ *Chronicon Aulae ...*, p. 163: „Bertholdus namque dictus Pirchneri montanus, quem pecuniae copia de subterraneis foveis extracta ultra metas civilis condicionis in sublimem extulerat, inter Montem et claustrum Sedlicense ad meridiam plagam in valle dictum Pirchinstein castellum construxerat, ubi plus curiositate, quam necessitate saepius manebat.”

¹⁷ Cf. the most recent works: W. I w a ń c z a k, *Krucjaty Jana Luksemburskiego*, [in:] *Rycerstwo Europy środkowo-wschodniej wobec idei krucjat*, ed. W. Peltz, J. Dudek, Zielona Góra 2002, pp. 113-123, where further literature.

¹⁸ *Przibiconis de Radenin ...*, p. 147: „...usque ad quendam montem ultra ripam fluminis Pregor, in quo rex Przemysl castrum et civitatem et in ea ecclesiam cathedralem in honore dei et sancti Adalberti martyris, patroni Boemie et secundi Pragensis episcopi, qui in eadem provincia pro Christo martyrium a Prutenis subierat, devote construxit, nominans eius diocesim Zambiensem; civitati vero et castro, in quibus eadem ecclesia sita in sui memoriam nomen inposuit Kunsperg, quod Mons Regius dicitur. Et ex eo, quod Przemysl, rex Boemie, manu potenti primus hoc fecerat, prefata civitas Kunigsberg quociens cum tota Zambienensi provincia adversus christianos sive paganos progreditur, tociens unacum marescallo Prussie regalem Boemie banderiam defert et sub ea primam tenet tocius exercitus aciem contra hostes in premissorum testimonium hodiernum”; earlier on the same subject: *Druga Kontynuacja Kosmasa*, [in:] “Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum”, 2, ed. J. Einler, Praha 1874, pp. 292 seqq.

¹⁹ *Przibiconis de Radenin ...*, p. 14: „Illis preluit dux nomine Wlastislaus, vir bellicosus ac in consiliis multum dolosus. Hic condidit urbem, quam appellavit nomine suo Wlastislav, inter duos montes Mednecz et Przipek in confinio duarum provinciarum, videlicet Bycline et Leutomirzicz, quam precinxit muro et firmavit valde. Hic movit

father, converted to Christianity, though the people at the castle still worshipped a terrifying, three-headed fetish²². The chronicle of the bishopric of Brandenburg says that eleven years later in Brandenburg, bishop Wilmar made his seat much more powerful and wanted to protect Brandenburg Castle against the intrigues of the heathen. In order to do that, he consulted Margrave Albrecht Niedźwiedz and moved the canons of the Premonstraten Order, who had lived in St Gotard's Church in a borough of Brandenburg, to a building belonging to the castle²³. Both the clergymen and the laymen participated in the procession. The manifestations of the cult of saints visible at castles are evidence of the importance attached to these structures. Benesz of Weitmile says that in 1351, Charles, King of Rome and Bohemia, had solid fortifications built at Stara Boleslav on the Elbe River. Then the king ordered that from that day onwards Mass be sung and celebrated at the tomb of Saint Wenceslas in the church crypt every day, because it was there that the famous martyr Wenceslas was crowned with the crown of martyrdom by his brother Boleslav the Cruel. Ernest, Archbishop of Prague, confirmed the king's decision and proclaimed it in an open letter²⁴. It is worth mentioning that Charles was an eager worshipper of Saint Wenceslas and showed his attitude in a variety of ways. Consequently, his

decision seems to have been well justified. Charles was also a well-known propagator of the cult of St Catherine, which manifested itself in, among other things, the foundation of St Catherine's chapel at Karlštejn Castle, built on the ruler's initiative. An account written by Benesz said that, "the emperor had an amazing castle erected. It had very strong fortifications, which can still be seen today, and there was a large chapel in the upper tower. The chapel walls were faced with pure gold and rare stones. The interior was equipped with relics of saints as well as chasubles for the dean and for the chapter or the college, which he also founded. The chapel was ornamented with valuable paintings. No other chapel or castle with such splendid interior can be found in the whole world, which is hardly surprising as the emperor has all the regalia and the treasure of the whole kingdom stored there²⁵."

The above brief discussion of Czech historiography focuses on various, selected aspects of the role played by the medieval castle. It deals with both its real, practical functions and possibly to an even greater extent, the more numerous ones, which resulted from the contemporaries' expectations or postulates. To sum up: Castles and other buildings of this type meant to their inhabitants a great improvement in the quality of life and only this single reason makes them worth discussing.

Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra

²² *Przibiconis de Radenin ...*, p. 89: „In illis diebus fuit quidam Henricus rex, Przibislaus, slawonice nominatus, urbis Brandenburgensis et terrarum adiacencium, sicut Brandenburgensis testatur cronica, ex succssione paterna obtinens principatum. Hic dum adhuc gens esset ibi permixta Slawonica et Saxonica deserviens ritibus paganorum, et in urbe Brandenburgensi ydolum tribus capitibus inhonestum ab incolis coleretur...”

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 110.

²⁴ *Chronicon Benessii ...*, p. 520: „Eodem anno dominus Karolus, Romanorum et Boemie rex, Bolesslawian antiquam super Albean munivit muris fortissimis, et quia in eodem loco gloriosus martir sanctus Wenceslaus a fratre suo sevo Boleslao coronatus est martirio, ob cuius passionis memoriam dominus rex predictus ibidem ordinavit et dotavit

missam cantandam ad tumbam sancti viri sub crypta perpetuis temporibus singulis diebus. Quam ordinacionem et dispositionem dicti regis dominus Arnustus, primus archiepiscopus Pragensis, auctorisavit et suis litteris patentibus approbavit.”

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 533: „Construxerat enim imperator castrum hoc de miro opere et firmissimis muris, prout hactenus cernitur, et fecit in superiori turri unam magnam capellam, cuius parietes circumdedit auro puro et gemmis preciosis et decoravit illam tam reliquiis sanctorum, quam ornatibus pro decano et capitulo seu collegio, quod ibidem instituit, et ornavit picturis multum preciosis. In diffuso orbe terrarum non est castrum, neque capella de tam precioso (opere), et merito, quia in eodem conservabat insignia imperialia et totius regni sui thesaurum.”

