



**Rafał Simiński. *Konflikt – pojednanie – współpraca. Studia nad polityką książąt zachodniopomorskich i biskupów kamieńskich wobec Zakonu Krzyżackiego w Prusach w latach 1320–1423*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Chronicon, 2019. 725 pp. ISBN: 978-83-950-4030-6.**

The reviewed book presents the results of many years of research on the relations between the Teutonic Order in Prussia and the rulers of Pomerania. The author from the traditional understanding of external politics as the work of rulers and tries to include more in his research the role of knighthood and Pomeranian burghers in shaping the contacts with the Teutonic Order. In this context lies the main research question of the book about the centers for creating external politics at the courts of Pomeranian rulers. Searching for the answers, the author takes into account two groups of research problems. The first of these groups includes the questions regarding the key issues of relations between the rulers of Pomerania and the Teutonic Order: establishing the borderline, trials, alliances, and financial contacts. The other research perspective takes into account internal premises of foreign policy, mainly the social background and financial problems. The structure of the book by R. Simiński consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusion and bibliography, indexes and a summary in German. In the “introduction”, the reader will find the characteristics of material, chronological, and territorial framework, a comprehensive overview of the state of research and the source base.

In the first chapter, the author presents research on two different problems. Presenting them in two separate chapters seems justified. The first of them is about border disputes and defining the borderline, the other is about duke of Stolp Bogusław VIII’s participation in trials of Poland and Lithuania with the Teutonic Order.

On the basis of written sources and modern cartographic sources, the author carefully reconstructs the border between Pomerelia, the Duchy of Wolgast-Stolp, and the dominion of bishops of Cammin. It should be emphasized that Simiński treats the border as a dynamic phenomenon whose importance in the political discourse between the parties depended mainly on the colonial and economic processes.

In the context of these conditions, the author also tries to analyze border disputes. He points to their relations with the development of settlement and administrative structures of territorial authorities, both on the Pomeranian and the

Order's sides. On the basis of the analyses of border disputes and the procedures of resolving them, Simiński provides a well-documented conclusion about the high degree of effectiveness of Pomeranian diplomacy as a counterweight against the expansive territorial politics of the Teutonic Order. In the second part of this chapter, focusing on the example of participation of Bogusław VIII, duke of Stolp, in the amicable trials of Poland and Lithuania with the Teutonic Order in Prussia, Simiński presents the external policy in a broader context of political arrangements of the Baltic region. In addition to the political and legal aspects, the subject of the analysis is also testimonies of Pomeranian witnesses from trials 1412–1414.

The second chapter considers the role of society in the politics of the Pomeranian dukes and bishops of Cammin towards the Teutonic Order. The author begins his deliberations by presenting the social background of the territorial authorities. He rightly notices that for the formation of the social background of the authority, new organization of the court and the creation of *curia regis* at the end of the thirteenth century, to which, apart from knights and clergy representatives, townspeople were also appointed, were of crucial importance. The analysis of the participation of the Pomeranian states representatives in the agreements of Pomeranian rulers with the Teutonic Order is of key importance for this part of the work. It was preceded by an extensive discussion of 20 treaties. The author indicated two premises which play an important role in including knights, the clergy, and burghers into the group of witnesses and guarantors of the treaties: the affiliation to the ruler's immediate environment and the territorial origin, corresponding to the material scope of the treaty. In the second part of the chapter, the author presented problems connected to the financial situation of Pomeranian rulers, namely their debts towards the Teutonic Order, to their own subjects, as well as financial relations between the knights and burghers from Pomeranian kingdoms and the Teutonic Order in Prussia.

The role of loans as an instrument of external politics has been well documented based on the example of the relations between Pomerania and Prussia. One of the most interesting fragments of the second chapter is the analysis of an expert diplomatic staff used by the Pomeranian rulers in the relations with the Teutonic Order. The author points to the process of professionalization, marking from the end of the fourteenth century, of the group of diplomats and negotiators, which due to their professional qualifications was composed of knights, clergy and burghers representatives.

In the last chapter, Simiński presents the tools used by Pomeranian rulers in conducting external politics. These include institutional tools (conventions, negotiations, prognoses), giftgiving practices, and pragmatic literacy (correspondence and documents) were taken into account. The author also developed systematics

of the meetings of Pomeranian rulers with the Teutonic Order, among them he emphasized the role of the meetings with the participation of Pomeranian dukes in the Teutonic Order territories and the meetings taking place on the borders. Due to the condition of the available source material, not much was said about the presents given by the Pomeranian rulers, and the vast majority of considerations devoted to this topic concerns the gifts handed by the Teutonic Order officials. Due to the richness of the collected material and the substantive and chronological scope of the research, the subchapters devoted to pragmatic literacy could constitute a separate study. The considerations about the correspondence present the history of a letter in Western Pomerania from the thirteenth century and significantly go beyond the topic of the book. This remark may also be applied to other forms of literacy analyzed in this essay.

Summing up the abovementioned remarks, it should be emphasized that the reviewed work constitutes an example of a modern approach towards political history, which was considered in the context of tools used for exercising territorial power as well as social and economic relations.

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