



Norbert Delestowicz. *Bracia zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach (1310–1351): studium prozopograficzne* [The brethren of the Teutonic Order in Prussia (1310–1351): a prosopographical study]. Wydawnictwo Avalon: Kraków, 2021. pp. 502. ISBN: 978-83-7730-450-1.

Norbert Delestowicz's book is another study in which prosopography was used to study the society of medieval Prussia. The publication is a direct continuation of an earlier study by Maciej Dorna, which focused on the brothers of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in the years 1228–1309.¹ The methodology and structure of the discussed work also refer to this book.

The study deals with the issue of brothers of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in the years 1310–1351. It was divided into two parts: descriptive and biographical, which corresponds to the classic arrangement of works of a prosopographical nature. Part I consists of three chapters. In the first, the Author presented the categories of members of the Order in Prussia and the methods of their recruitment. The second chapter, on the other hand, is an attempt to outline the social intersections of the studied community. This part of the work considers such intersections through an analysis of geographical, ethnic and social origins, which is characteristic of the prosopographical method. In the third chapter, the Author analyzed the brothers' careers.

The main content of the book is part II, which contains short biographies of 955 Teutonic Order's brothers in Prussia. In this catalogue, the Author separately presented the profiles of 642 knights, 159 priests and clergymen, and 154 people to whom he attributed the status of either knights or sergeants. The biographical part ends with the list of officials and members of the Teutonic Order's convents in the studied period.

The publication under review brings forth some minor comments and queries. For example, the chronological frameworks applied by the Author might be questionable, although it should be stated that the Author is aware of this. A more "natural" end point of this kind of study seems to be rather the year 1409, or even 1410, when some of the brother knights died at the Battle of Grunwald/Tannen-

¹ Maciej Dorna, *Bracia zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach w latach 1228–1309. Studium prozopograficzne* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2004). The book was also published in German: *Die Brüder des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen 1228–1309. Eine prosopographische Studie* (Wien–Köln–Weimar: Böhlau, 2012).

berg/Žalgiris. Increasing the scope of the study to a period of 100 years of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia would probably allow for better capturing of the processes taking place within the Order and facilitate the resolution of many unknowns. The decisive role in the decision to end the work in the mid-fourteenth century was, as the Author states, determined by the growth of the source base for the later period. If this timespan was increased to include another 50 years, this would significantly expand the research objectives (especially regarding unpublished materials). The choice of time frame allowed for the work to be completed in a timely manner, which is not without significance for the reader. Understanding the Author's arguments regarding chronological reduction, it is worth asking a more general question about the future of prosopographical research on the Teutonic Order. Perhaps, in the face of the enormity of the material, it would be worth composing a research team for subsequent time periods until 1525, which might allow for such a large body of material to be consulted.

With respect to the analysis of the careers of the clerical brothers, it would be worth paying attention to their possible activity in the Teutonic Order's convents even before they formally joined the Order. Later, the presence of secular clergy in the liturgy celebrated in castles is noticeable, which was sometimes a prelude to putting on the Teutonic Order's cloak.² This is also followed by the conclusion that not every chaplain of the commander was a Teutonic Order's brother. Therefore, the category of chaplains should not be automatically associated with membership in the Order.³ A similar observation may be made regarding the parsons of parishes under the patronage of the Teutonic Knights, which the Author rightly pointed out.

The need to elaborate on comprehensive biographies is an important element of prosopography.⁴ It should be added, however, that such an approach does not exhaust this research method. The creation of biographies and the analysis of the data contained in them should be supplemented with a broader context of the "liv-

² Marcin Sumowski, "Secular Clergymen in the Castles of the Teutonic Order in Prussia", *Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica. Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders* 23 (2018): 203–234.

³ *Ibid.*, 215–218.

⁴ Radosław Krajniak, "Around the Late Medieval Clergy of the Wieluń Region. Notes and Additions on the Margins of Tadeusz Nowak's Book, Duchowieństwo ziemi wieluńskiej w drugiej połowie XV i początku XVI wieku. Studium prozopograficzne, Wieluńskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, Wieluń 2017, pp. 177," *Res Historica* 50 (2020): 641: "[...] a classical prosopographic study needs to contain as comprehensive biographies as possible, which is something that cannot be replaced by any scattered biographical information".

ing environment” of the studied community.⁵ In the face of source deficiencies, this provides the chance for a better understanding of classical prosopographic data.

On a technical point, it seems that the treatment of the biographies of all categories of brothers together and assign each person a unique number, without dividing them into knights, clergymen, and sergeants, would result in a clearer treatment of the topic addressed by the book under review. This number could be referred to in the main text of the descriptive part. References to these numbers should also be included in the list of officials and members of convents, which would facilitate its use in conjunction with the catalogue of biographies.

The last comment is related to the Polish historiographic tradition, which translates German names appearing in sources into Polish. The Author follows this tradition. It seems, however, that it is worth considering a revision of this practice, especially in the study of communities about which there is no major doubt about the language they used. The first name, as a carrier of culture, is not without significance also for prosopographical studies.

Prosopographical studies require a lot of discipline and tedious – often fruitless – research in dispersed source material. Therefore, another study of this kind should be welcomed with appreciation. Minor review comments do not change the overall assessment of the discussed book as a valuable contribution to the study of the Teutonic Brothers. Of great importance is also the fact that the Author inscribed his research in the cycle started by Maciej Dorna, which gives hope for the continuation of prosopographical research on the Teutonic Order.

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⁵ See Enno Bünz and Klaus Joachim Lorenzen-Schmidt, “Zu den geistlichen Lebenswelten in Holstein, Lauenburg und Lübeck zwischen 1450 und 1550”, in *Geistliche Lebenswelten. Zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte der Geistlichen in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, hrsg. v. Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen (Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 2005), 11–57. A good example of the extension of the classical prosopographic query is the work on the clergy in Nysa: Ewa Wólkiewicz, *Proletariusze modlitwy? Drogi karier, finanse i kultura materialna niższego kleru w średniowiecznej Nysie* (Warszawa: Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii PAN, 2020).