



***Generalprobe Burzenland. Neue Forschungen zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens in Siebenbürgen und im Banat*, hrsg. v. Konrad Gündisch (Siebenbürgisches Archiv. Archiv des Vereins für siebenbürgische Landeskunde, D.F., Bd. 42), Böhlau Verlag, Köln–Weimar–Wien 2013, 278 S., ISBN: 978-3-412-21094-6.**

In September 2011 a two-day conference was held in Braşov, Romania (known as Brassó in Hungarian and Kronstadt in German), organised by the *Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien*, marking the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the coming of the Teutonic Order to the area known as the Burzenland in Transylvania.

The conference was dedicated to the theme of the presence of the Teutonic Order in the region of the Eastern Carpathians from the 13th to the 15th centuries. As the area in question now belongs to different modern countries a number of medievalists and archaeologists from Hungary, Romania and Germany were invited to participate. The conference resulted in the publication of a collection of 15 articles (including 12 which are based on the papers presented at the conference), divided into five sections. The volume also includes an index of persons (pp. 264–268) and geographical locations (pp. 268–278) giving both German and modern placenames.

The first section ('The European Context') includes three articles presenting the activities of the Teutonic Order on the frontier of 13th-century Transylvania within the regional, Central Eastern European context. The opening article by Thomas Wunsch (Passau), 'Der Deutsche Orden als Wille und Vorstellung. Selbst- und Fremdkonstruktionen einer geistlich-weltlichen Korporation zwischen Ideologie und Politik' (pp. 11–27), only partially corresponds to the general theme of the volume as the author is mostly concerned with the social, mental and communication phenomena of the perception, understanding and presentation of the Teutonic Order within the discourse between the Teutonic Order and its antagonists in the 14th and 15th centuries. Wunsch makes the claim that in the Middle Ages, when concepts of legitimisation were dominated by metaphysical considerations, little can be said about the legitimisation of individual states. He argues that the Teutonic Order is the exception to this phenomenon (p. 11). For this reason his aim is to focus on the external perceptions of the Order (Ger. *Außenansicht*) and to confront these with the internal, self-perception within the

Order (Ger. *Innenansicht*). He makes the following preliminary assumptions: (a) the image of the Teutonic Order depended on the interests of the perceiver; (b) from the fourteenth century onwards the original distinction between 'friends' and 'enemies' of the Order ceased to function due to constantly changing coalitions and alliances; (c) 'public opinion' at that time was one of the dominant factors that shaped the Order's policy. On the basis of these, Wünsch formulates the following claims: (a) the self-representation (Ger. *Selbstdarstellung*) of the Teutonic Order depended to a large extent on public expectations; the definition of what the Order was supposed to be changed over time, and the Order had to act and react to these changing realities; (b) the notion of the threat to Poland and Lithuania posed by the Teutonic Order was construed for specific, political aims; (c) the images of the Order which were shaped by outsiders in the 14th and 15th centuries had secular undertones, which helped increase the Order's potential for long-term existence. Indeed, these images influenced the perception of the Teutonic Order in the 19th and 20th centuries (p. 13).

Throughout a large part of his discussion concerning the confrontation between the Teutonic Order and the elite of the Polish kingdom in the first half of the 15th century, Wünsch distinguishes between Polish polemical writings and Polish political actions. The polemics written by intellectuals from Cracow emphasised the religious nature of the Teutonic Order, while the policies of the Polish monarchs from the time of Władysław Łokietek onward emphasised the political character of the Order (p. 15). The author notes that the territories controlled by the Teutonic Order developed features characteristic of a dominion only in the 13th century, after the creation of its power-base in Prussia. He also stresses the significant tension between the Order's monastic vocation and its landholding and political activities, pointing out that this tension became a problem for the Order in the 1400s, when other states and political agents (especially the ruling elites of the Polish kingdom) began to perceive the Order only through its political role (p. 16–17). According to the author, the Teutonic Order answered the anachronistic polemics of the Polish side with equally anachronistic claims of legitimacy based on the 'founding myth' of the Order as a religious community pursuing its vocation of fighting pagans (pp. 17–18). Wünsch also points out (not quite consistently with his earlier claims) that the discourse between the Teutonic Order and the Polish ruling elites shifted from the religious to the ethical sphere in the first quarter of the 15th century. This discourse was no longer about what who practiced what religion, but rather about *how* religion was practiced and about how one should act (p. 19). It would be better to see this as an additional dimension of the original discourse, rather than a change of kind.

With respect to the self-referential aspect of the Order's image, the author argues that in the 15th century the Teutonic Order faced a dilemma: either to remain a monastic institution but risk being transferred out of Prussia into a different area, or to pursue a new vocation and a new form of legitimisation as a secular state (p. 20). Wunsch places the imperial policy of Sigismund of Luxembourg, which aimed to transfer the Order to the border of the Hungarian kingdom in order to fight the Turks, squarely in this context (pp. 21–23). Sigismund's treatment of the Order in terms of secular politics was apparent in his actions towards Lithuania, which he wished to elevate to the rank of kingdom. This was a serious threat to the legitimisation of the Teutonic Order's rule in Prussia, and more so than the union between the Lithuania and the kingdom of Poland (pp. 23–24). Wunsch argues that although the plans to establish a kingdom of Lithuania did not come into effect, the Teutonic Order now risked the loss of respectability and credibility among policy makers elsewhere. It is not clear why the author attempts to extrapolate this phenomenon to the 19th and 20th centuries by pointing out its nationalistic context (pp. 25–26). He provides little argument for this interpretation and gives no examples of such views in the 17th and 18th centuries. Nevertheless, the thesis is interesting and is deserving of further research.

The article closes with some philosophical considerations concerning the ontological status of past realities, including the Teutonic Order. Following Arthur Schopenhauer, the author claims that the status of such past realities is only the product of imagination and 'the will and presentation' (p. 26). This section seems scarcely relevant to the main argument, which focuses on the image and self-perception of the Teutonic Order. Philosophical considerations concerning the purely representative reality of the past seem unnecessary here and create a sense of artificial mannerism.

The next article, 'Terra Borza et ultra montes nivium. (*Ein gescheiterter Kirchenstaat und sein Nachlaß*)' (pp. 30–38), by Şerbana Papacostei (Bucharest) is more directly relevant to the main topic of the volume. The author gives an overview of the fourteen-year presence of the Teutonic Order in the Burzenland and its fundamental role in the defeat of the Cuman state in the Danube region. Two of the author's claims, based on his previous research, are especially interesting. First, the donation of the Burzenland in the south-eastern part of the Carpathian mountains to the Teutonic Order's knights was the result of the active support of Andrew II, king of Hungary, in his crusading efforts against the Bulgarian Assenids who were in an alliance with the Cumans. They were a threat to the Latin Empire of Constantinople and thus curbing their political and military power was an important element in the crusading effort (pp. 31–32). The second issue discussed by Papacostei was the complete destruction of Cuman power by 1222, which allowed

the Teutonic Order and the Hungarian monarch room for extensive expansion. After the Teutonic Order's knights were transferred away from the Transylvanian-Cuman border in 1225, Andrew II and his successors used this opportunity for significant territorial gain up until the Mongol invasion of 1241–1242. The creation of a diocesan structure and the incorporation of Western Cumania into the political sphere of the Hungarian monarchy through the adoption of the title of *Rex Cumaniae* created a new space for the political aspirations of the king of Hungary and his successors. In the mid-14th century, Louis I the Great was the first Hungarian monarch to return to power in this region after over a century of Mongol hegemony (pp. 35–37).

The article 'Ungarn und Osteuropa zur Zeit des Königs Andreas II. (1205–1235)' (pp. 40–55) by Márta Front (Pécs) also concerns the presence of the Teutonic Order in the Burzenland. Front indicates the significance of Andrew II's long-term attempts to gain power in the principality of Galicia-Volhynia to his rule, showing how his policies were not only an expression of the aspirations of the Arpad dynasty, but also of the aspirations of the Hungarian nobility (pp. 44, 54). The activities in this region took place during the 30-year reign of Andrew II and were completed in a couple of phases during which the Hungarian King entered into alliances with rulers of the Piast and Rurik dynasties because of changing dynastic policy (pp. 48–54).

In the next article, 'Zur Siedlungstopographie des Burzenlandes in der Deutschordezeit' (pp. 58–76) Paul Niedermaier (Sibiu) presents the results of analyses of the settlements in the Burzenland, complemented by studies of the changes in the natural environment of the region from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern period. He emphasises the importance of irrigation works aimed at draining wetland regions which were numerous in the region until the 18th century. On the basis of geo-environmental data, and combined with historical information, the author attempts to outline the boundaries of the region in the first quarter of the 13th century, paying special attention to the central role of rivers as boundary markers (pp. 60–68). He also indicates the close links between the castles of Marienburg (Rom. Feldioara), *Brassovia* (Ger. Kronstadt, Rom. Braşov) and Rosenau (Rom. Râşnov) which, according to him, were constructed by the Teutonic Order, with pre-existing nearby settlements (p. 72). He then examines the particular factors on which the construction of *Cruceburg* i Ručar-Burg depended. Niedermaier claims that these structures played a defensive role, guarding the passageway through the Southern Carpathian mountains in the 13th century (p. 76).

In 'Die Burgen des Deutschen Ordens im Burzenland. Zu hohe Erwartungen an eine Forschungsfrage?' (pp. 79–94), Adrian A. Rusu (Cluj-Napoca) considers the problem of the Teutonic Order's construction of castles in Burzenland and

the south-eastern Carpathian regions. He emphasises the meagre written source material about the (possibly) five fortified strongholds constructed by the Order, three of which were probably located in the Burzenland region while two were perhaps already located 'on the other side of the mountains', meaning either east or south of the Carpathians (pp. 79–80). There is significant controversy concerning the identification and localisation of most of these strongholds. Archaeology has been only partly successful in helping verify some of the current hypotheses, since methods of dating structures rarely have the capacity to achieve accuracy to within 20 years, which is how long the Teutonic Order stayed in the Burzenland region. In this context the dating was based on the recovered distinctive weapons and coins (p. 86).

The potential for identification is also not increased by analyses of the military functions of the stronghold (pp. 86–87). The author is correct to treat the presence of traces of castle chapels as a strong indication that the stronghold was used by members of the Teutonic Order (p. 88). However, it should be remembered that by the late Middle Ages religious structures were common also in the castles of lay nobility. Connecting a specific chapel with the Teutonic Order's construction still requires dating of the whole structure. The author is also mistaken to treat the term *haus* as meaning 'convent' (p. 88), since *haus* in the 13th century usually referred to any building of the order which permanently housed members of the order, but which was not necessarily a convent. Rusu rightly points out that considering the late appearance of castles of the 'Kastellburg/Konventburgen' type in the Baltic region, it is unlikely that there was any typical morphology of the Order's defensive structures in the Burzenland (p. 91). He also stresses that there is little evidence that the strongholds abandoned by the Teutonic Order in 1225 were then used by the Arpad dynasty (pp. 93–94). Rusu agrees with the hypothesis about the location of *Cruceburg* in modern Teliu (Ger. Thell) (p. 82), but points out that recent Romanian publications about Marienburg Castle (*Castrum Sanctae Mariae*) do not add to the existing body of knowledge concerning this stronghold in any significant way. He argues that the existence of an earlier wooden stronghold (perhaps dating from the prehistoric period) near the Order's castle is very likely (pp. 84–85), arguing that there is considerable support in the sources for the hypothesis that a stronghold of the Order was located in Braşov (later *Brassoviaburg*, Ger. Kronstadt). However, he does not consider the question of where the other strongholds were located in any detail.

The last article of the second section, entitled 'Kronstadt – eine Gründung des Deutschen Ordens?' (pp. 99–105) is by Harald Roth (Potsdam), who makes a convincing argument that Braşov was not founded by the Teutonic Order, but

rather, that its construction in the 1200s is linked to the activities of the Premonstratensians in this region.

The third section, 'Forschungsergebnisse der Archäologie' begins with an article by Adrian Joniță (Bucharest) entitled 'Die Besiedlung des Burzenlandes im 12.–13. Jahrhundert im Lichte der Archäologie' (pp. 107–120), which presents the current state of archaeological research concerning settlement and colonisation of the Burzenland region in the 12th and 13th centuries. The archaeological sources clearly indicate that one should not link the origin of settlement in this region with the activities of the Teutonic Order in the 13th century because the first colonists from German-speaking regions began to settle in the mid-12th century. Intensive colonisation continued in the first quarter of the 13th century but this was slowed down (though not stopped entirely), by the Mongol invasions of 1241.

The next two articles present the results of studies of the church in Tartlau (Rom. Prejmer) which is one of the most magnificent examples of Gothic architecture in Transylvania. Radu Heitel argued in 1964 ('Zur Datierung der evangelischen Kirche in Tartlau', pp. 125–129) that the construction of the first church in Tartlau should be dated to the first quarter of the 13th century. The major construction works probably took place after 1241 and were probably carried out by the Cistercians. In her article 'Neue Erkenntnisse zu den Anfängen der Tartlauer Kirche' (pp. 132–152), D. Marcu Istrate develops this argument and presents the results of a detailed analysis of material acquired during fieldwork and architectural analysis conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. This confirms the construction of the church (which followed the plan of a Greek cross) shortly after 1240, while coin finds provide a strong basis for dating the first settlement activities in Tartlau to the beginning of the 13th century.

The last of the archaeological articles, entitled 'Ein unveröffentlichtes mittelalterliches Schwert aus den Sammlungen des Kronstädter Museums für Geschichte' (pp. 154–158) by Florian Moței (Brașov), is a detailed analysis of one of the three swords kept in the History Museum in Brașov which was found in Codlea (Ger. Zeiden) (inventory number 958 IM). Following recent typological description by Zeno-Karl Pintera, the author dates the sword to the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries. He is correct to assume that the weapon should be linked to the Teutonic Order, given the symbol of the cross inscribed into a crest engraved at the top of the blade, as well as the spatial context and chronology of the find.

The fourth section, 'Nachspiel im Banat von Severin', contains three studies concerning the presence of the Teutonic Order in the Banat of Severin in the second quarter of the 15th century. Virgil Ciociltan (Bucharest) considers the issue of the transfer of the Prussian branch of the Teutonic Order to the Danube basin in his

article 'Sigismund von Luxemburg und die Frage der Verpflanzung des Deutschen Ordens an die untere Donau in den Jahren 1412–1420' (pp. 160–174), arguing that Sigismund of Luxembourg agreed to the liquidation of the Teutonic Order's Prussian possessions during his peace talks with the Polish king Władysław II in Lublau in the spring of 1412, in return for obtaining sovereign power over the Moldavian voivode, who was at the time a vassal of the king of Poland. The Prussian branch of the order was to be transferred to the lower Danube where it was to become an important element of the military effort against the Ottoman Turks (pp. 164–166). This element of the agreement between the two rulers was purely verbal, and is mentioned by only one source, Jan Długosz. The reality of the event has been denied by many historians, but Ciociltan argues not only that it took place but also that it was an important element of Sigismund's plans until the start of the Hussite rebellion in 1420 which reduced the significance of the Turkish issue (p. 174).

Viorel Achim (Bucharest) considers the actual transfer of some members of the Teutonic Order to the the Banat of Severin which took place ten years later, in his article entitled 'Der Stellenwert des Deutschen Ordens in der Geschichte des Banats von Severin' (pp. 177–186). He argues that in 1429, when the Prussian expedition settled on the banks of the Danube, the district was not administered by any representative of royal power. Between 1427 and 1429 Sigismund of Luxembourg reorganised the regions east of the lower Cisa River, so that the regions located to the south-east of the Carpathian Mountains with the main stronghold in Severin (Rom. Drobeta-Turnu Severin) became one of the three districts of the Hungarian-Wallachian border. Nikolaus von Redewitz, the superior of the brothers sent from Prussia, was nominated first as captain, then as Ban of Severin (1430) by Sigismund during these reforms. In this way, the Teutonic Order became a part of the newly created administrative structure on the south-eastern borders of the Hungarian kingdom (pp. 182–186), continuing in this role till 1435. Achim's arguments regarding the extent of the Teutonic Order brother's authority and his claim that the Order did not have dominion power over the region raise certain doubts. No doubt the brother's autonomy was more limited than it had been in Prussia, but the real extent of Nikolaus von Redewitz's power as Ban depended solely on his relations with Sigismund and inspections by the king's envoys. Nikolaus's attempt to subject the ruler (*knez*) of Almás (Ger. *Almasch*, Rom. *Almaş*) to his rule, a fact which Achim mentions (p. 186), suggests that the Teutonic Order tried to exercise the authority of a ruler in the region.

Petre Beşliu Munteanu and Claudiu Munteanu (Sibiu) also consider this issue in their article 'Numismatische und Schriftquellen über die Rolle von Hermannstadt in der Osmanenabwehr Sigismunds von Luxemburg' (pp. 189–194). They demonstrate the significance of the mint which was transferred from Buda (Ger.

Ofen) to Hermannstadt (Rom. Sibiu) in order to finance the reorganisation of the Danube frontier region at the end of the 1420s. Placing the office of higher *Kammergraf* (responsible for administration of the mint) into the hands of Nikolaus von Redewitz was another important element of the reforms of Sigismund. The golden florins minted in Hermannstadt under the management of Nikolaus von Redewitz were to ensure the necessary finances for a renewed military effort against the Turks which the Teutonic Order's brothers were to lead.

The last section of the volume comprises of two articles concerning the history of the Teutonic Order in Hungary. The first, 'Der Deutsche Orden in der Geschichtsschreibung' (pp. 196–208), by Harald Zimmermann (Tübingen), outlines the main studies on this topic since the end of the 18th century and describes the leading researchers in this field. The article is somewhat chaotic, dealing with both the Teutonic Order and the Transylvanian Saxons. It points out the limited presence of Transylvanian issues in the historiography of the Order, even in recent works (pp. 202–203). It also emphasises the significance of studies concerning the authenticity of the privileges given to the Order by Andrew II, king of Hungary, which has been repeatedly challenged until recently (pp. 206–208). Zimmermann criticises 'mainstream' historiography of the Teutonic Order for the lack of intensive interest in this element of the Order's past, but he himself often makes use of dated interpretations which originated in the time when historical writing was dominated by nationalisms (pp. 207, 208) and thus appears to have incomplete knowledge of recent research concerning the Teutonic Order in the 13th century.

'Der Deutsche Orden in der Bildenden Kunst Siebenbürgens 1900–1944' (pp. 210–257) by Timo Hagen (Heidelberg) is a thorough study of the depictions of the Teutonic Order in the visual art of Transylvania in the 20th century, considering architecture, painting, sculpture and illumination to show that the Order was progressively included in the historical narratives of the Transylvanian Saxons, especially after the First World War. The Transylvanian Saxons increasingly interpreted their history and culture as part of the history of Germany, and the Teutonic Order was a side element of these narratives.

All in all, the volume contains a very interesting collection of studies concerning the presence of the Teutonic Order in the Hungarian region in the late Middle Ages. The historiographical material is well linked with the archaeological studies. The analysis is additionally supplemented by considerations of issues related to the perception of the past in relation to the Order in Hungary. However the title of the volume, *Generalprobe Burzenland* (this phrase is used, not for the first time, by Konrad Gündisch, for example on p. 7), is not well chosen. It suggests that the Burzenland was a sort of experimental region where the Teutonic Order first tried out methods of state creation, which were then applied successfully in Prussia in

the 1230s. This implication is made by both the editor of the volume as well as by Adrian Rusu in his considerations of the Order's supposed plans to create in Burzenland its own set of strongholds that would be independent from the defensive system managed by the Hungarian monarchy. Rusu assumes the existence of such a system in Prussia and suggests that the Teutonic Order 'rehearsed' the creation of such defence systems in the Burzenland (p. 87). Such interpretations are based purely on *ex post* reasoning. By accepting the Hungarian king's donations and taking up military activity in the south-eastern Carpathians, the leaders of the Teutonic Order could not have treated this as a test, experiment or rehearsal. This unlikely interpretation treats the presence of the Teutonic Order in the Burzenland region as one stage within a linear 'development' of a corporation, in which Prussia formed the next stage of the Order's development. Yet at the same time the Teutonic Order also possessed castles in Armenia and possibly in the Peloponnese, as well as landholdings in Palestine. The Burzenland region should not be seen as a 'stage' or 'phase' in the history of the Order, but rather as just another region, like the others, where it tried to fulfill its vocation, which for contemporaries meant fighting pagans and other enemies of Christendom and the Roman Church.

Krzysztof Kwiatkowski (Toruń)

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