



Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński, *Poland, Holy War and the Piast Monarchy, 1100–1230* (Europa Sacra 14), Brepols, Turnhout 2014, XII + 294 pp. + maps, ISBN: 978–2–503–54794–7.

In his study, Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński, a historian of Polish origin who works at the University of Melbourne, discusses the penetration into Poland of the ideology and attitudes characteristic of the Crusades. This issue has been studied – though by far not exhausted – by Polish historians in the first decades of the twentieth century (*inter alia*, by Stanisław Zakrzewski, Roman Grodecki, Stanisław Bystroń¹) and, more recently, by Stanisław Kościałkowski, Stanisław Korwin-Pawłowski, Andrzej Feliks Grabski, Mikołaj Gładysz, and by the author of the present review.² Güttner-Sporzyński sets out to prove that the idea of crusading or, more broadly speaking, of the Holy War was convergent with the policies pursued by the Piast dynasty ever since the beginning of their reign and was therefore readily adopted in Poland. This proposition is reminiscent of the view expressed by Stanisław Zakrzewski that the crusading ideology ascribed to the struggle waged by the Polish rulers against their pagan neighbours in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was but a superficial covering of the political aspirations that had been present in the Piasts' policies ever since their state was founded.³ However, as Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński demonstrates, the reception of the concept of the Holy War in Poland was much more profound than claimed by Zakrzewski, and that the assimilation of this concept was one of the factors that contributed to the inculcation in Poland of the European civilisation.

¹ S. Zakrzewski, *Wschód i Zachód w historii Polski*, in: idem, *Zagadnienia historyczne*, Lwów 1908, pp. 137–138; R. Grodecki, *Polska wobec idei wypraw krzyżowych*, *Przegląd Współczesny* 2 (1923), pp. 103–116; S. Bystroń, *Polacy w Ziemi Świętej, Syrii i Egipcie 1147–1914*, Kraków 1930, pp. 1–9.

² S. Kościałkowski, *Polacy a Liban i Syria w toku dziejowym*, Bejrut 1949, pp. 3–4; S. A. Korwin-[Pawłowski], *Stosunki Polski z Ziemią Świętą*, Warszawa 1958; A. F. Grabski, *Polska wobec idei wypraw krzyżowych na przełomie XI i XII wieku*. „Duch krzyżowy” *Anonima Galla*, *Zapiski Historyczne* 26 (1961), 4, pp. 37–63; M. Gładysz, *Zapomniani krzyżowcy. Polska wobec ruchu krucjatowego w XII-XIII wieku*, Warszawa 2002; in English: *The Forgotten Crusaders: Poland and the Crusader Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, transl. by P. Barford, Boston 2012; M. Starnawska, *Między Jerozolimą a Łukowem. Zakony krzyżowe na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu*, Warszawa 1999, especially pp. 157–203.

³ Zakrzewski (as n. 1) p. 137.

The territorial scope of the study appropriately covers the ecclesiastical metropolis of Gniezno, because, during the period in which the reception of the idea of the Holy War can be traced in Poland, the area of the Gniezno ecclesiastical province coincided with the area of the Piast state. As declared in title of the book and elsewhere, the study covers a period of time stretching from the year 1100 to 1230. The year 1100 is taken by convention as the starting point, since it follows the First Crusade and precedes the reign of Bolesław the Wrymouth, whose policy Gallus Anonymus presents as an implementation of the idea of the Holy War. The closing point – by convention – corresponds to the commencement of the Prussian campaign of the Teutonic Order, which ultimately resulted in the expulsion of the Piast dukes from Prussia. As we see, the chronological dividing lines are well justified. It has to be noted, however, that the main body of the study is preceded by a fairly extensive section dedicated to the ‘expansion’ of the Piast monarchy between 960 and 1100.

The well thought-out structure of the book is subordinated to the desired objective. In the first chapter, Güttner-Sporzyński discusses the territorial expansion of the Piast state in the years 960–1100, that is in the period preceding the chronological range covered by the main body of his study. The second chapter is dedicated to the prerequisites to the assimilation of the concept of the Holy War in Poland, *viz.* the activity of papal legates and bishops of foreign extraction who had been involved in the crusades, and the active cult of St. Adalbert. In subsequent chapters, the author discusses the policies of the Piast dynasty that may be seen as an implementation of the idea of the Holy War: the conquest of the pagan Pomerania by Bolesław the Wrymouth; the policies of his eldest son Władysław and of the Junior Dukes towards their pagan neighbours; the pilgrimage of Henry Duke of Sandomierz to Jerusalem, followed by wars against Prussia and the Baltic mission. The order of presentation reflects the alleged political programme of the Piasts pursued from the tenth century onwards, as reconstructed by the author on the basis of the *Chronicles* by Gallus Anonymus. The programme was supposedly aimed at the unification of the state, its territorial expansion into the adjacent areas, and the Christianisation of its pagan neighbours.

One of the unquestionable advantages of the work under review is that its main issue is presented in a broad comparative context. Güttner-Sporzyński treats the reception of the crusading idea as an element of the assimilation by Poland of the European culture and identifies numerous routes by which the idea penetrated into Poland. He stresses the role played by papal legates, including Galo, who came to Poland a few years after the completion of the First Crusade, and Gilo of Tourcy, the author of a book about the First Crusade, who reorganised the Polish church in the third decade of the twelfth century following the conquest of Po-

merania, which had been pagan up to that time. The dissemination of ideas that were popular in Europe was also facilitated by the constant presence in Poland of numerous foreign clergy. In this connection, the author points to the special role played by Alexander of Malonne, Bishop of Płock. Malonne was located in the diocese of Liège in Lower Lorraine, where the idea of crusades had thrived ever since the times of Godfrey and Baldwin. That diocese had previously influenced Poland in more than one way. For example, the ceremony during which Władysław Herman knighted Bolesław the Wrymouth was supposedly modelled on the knighting of the future emperor Henry V in Liège.

By means of a thorough analysis, Güttner-Sporzyński identifies numerous similarities between the literary convention adopted by Gallus Anonymus in his *Chronicles* and the chronicles of the crusades written by Guibert of Nogent, Robert the Monk, Fulcher of Chartres, and Raymond of Aguilers as well as the depiction of battles against the Muslims in the *Song of Roland*. The author of the oldest Polish chronicles, even if he did not originate from Provence, as convincingly argued by Tomasz Jasiński in a recent work, must have had something in common with the Abbey of Saint-Gilles, located in the domain of Raymond of Toulouse. In his book, Güttner-Sporzyński points out that, due to the courtly character of Gallus' *Chronicles*, commissioned by the ducal court and the influential clan of Awdańcy, the ideological contents of the chronicles could quickly spread among the Polish elite in the first half of the twelfth century.

The main proposition of the book – namely, that Piasts' policies towards their pagan neighbours converged with the gradually assimilated concept of the Holy War – is correct, if obvious, given the fact that much of Poland's border was with non-Christian peoples. In order to provide an in-depth justification of his point, the author presents an analysis of a whole number of events from the Polish history before the second half of the thirteenth century, revealing their relationship with the policy of expansion and with the gradual assimilation of the concept of the Holy War. However, sometimes, in an attempt to prove his point, the author jumps to conclusions.

The first chapter, which has about twenty pages, is dedicated to 'the expansion of the Piast monarchy between 960 and 1100.' It is basically a summary of the Polish history during that period. However, one cannot possibly regard all of the phenomena discussed in this chapter as manifestations of expansion. The term 'expansion' is applicable to the Piast state during the reign of Mieszko I and Bolesław the Brave (*ante* 963 – 1025). However, after what is known as the crisis of the first Piast monarchy, it would be more appropriate to talk of restoration of a previously destroyed state.

Güttner-Sporzyński puts proper emphasis on the degree to which the veneration of St. Adalbert and the memory of his martyrdom in Prussia shaped Poland's attitude towards its pagan neighbours and on the involvement in the Pomeranian mission of the Pałukowie clan, who considered themselves to be descendants of St. Adalbert's brother. On the other hand, the author takes it for granted that Adalbert, first Bishop of Pomerania, belonged to the Pałukowie clan, although there is no evidence in support of this claim, except for his name.⁴ Nor is it certain that Jacob of Żnin, who also was involved in the Pomeranian mission and who later became Archbishop of Gniezno, belonged to the said clan. There is also uncertainty as to his studies under Ivo of Chartres in Laon and his authorship of the life of St. Adalbert so called *Tempore illo*.⁵

In our opinion, the author overestimates the difference in attitude towards the pagans between High Duke Władysław II and his younger brothers. According to him, Władysław II, influenced, among others, by his mother, Duchess Zbyslava of Kiev, was a supporter of a peaceful mission, in keeping with the pacifist attitude of the Eastern Church. His brothers, on the other hand, are supposed to have been ardent adherents of a military confrontation with the infidels. Correspondingly, the author sees the civil war that ended in 1146 with Władysław's deposition and banishment by the Junior Dukes as a struggle over the proper way of dealing with the pagan neighbours. A positive conclusion of this kind is hardly justified; in fact, it can be seen as an oversimplification. Duchess Zbyslava died when Władysław was just nine years old.⁶ For this reason, it is unlikely that she influenced her son's attitude, even if one assumes that she herself held definite views on the matter. The struggle of his father against the Pomeranian pagans, witnessed by Władysław as a child and a young man, is a much more likely influence.

Władysław's pacifist attitude towards the pagan Prussia is supposedly evidenced by his support for the failed missionary expedition to Prussia undertaken by Henry Zdík, Bishop of Olomouc, while his half-brother, Bolesław the Curly, starting from the year 1147, led several military expeditions against the Prussians. One has to realise, however, that the two stances are not directly comparable. It is quite possible that, during the eight years between the death of his father and his

⁴ W. Dziewulski, *Biskup pomorski Wojciech (próba charakterystyki)*, *Zapiski Historyczne* 23 (1957), 4, pp. 9–14; R. Marciniak, *Wojciech*, in: *Słownik starożytności słowiański*, vol. 6, part 2, ed. G. Labuda, Z. Stieber, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1977, p. 550.

⁵ A. Gąsiorowski, *Jakub tzw. ze Żnina*, in: *Słownik starożytności słowiański*, vol. 2, ed. W. Kowalenko, G. Labuda, T. Lehr-Splawiński, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1964, p. 310; K. R. Prokop, *Arcybiskupi gnieźnieńscy w tysiącleciu*, Kraków 2000, pp. 39–41; G. Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup – męczennik, patron Polski, Czech i Węgier*, Wrocław 2000, pp. 282–284.

⁶ K. Jasiński, *Rodowód pierwszych Piastów*, Warszawa–Wrocław [1992], pp. 190, 204.

own exile, Władysław, whose personal domain included Silesia and the Senioral Province, did not enter into a direct confrontation with the Prussians – unlike Bolesław the Curly, whose Duchy of Mazovia bordered on Prussia. Bishop Henry Zdík, whose mission in Prussia was endorsed by Władysław, was not opposed to armed confrontations with the infidels, which is evidenced by his two pilgrimages to the Holy Land and his participation in the Wendish Crusade of 1147.⁷ A conflict between the High Duke and Junior Dukes was perfectly natural, and any possible differences in their attitudes towards the pagans were of marginal significance. In view of the complex political situation, one cannot assume that Jacob of Žnin, Archbishop of Gniezno, previously a supporter of the Pomeranian mission, took a side with the Junior Dukes because of their supposedly greater willingness to enter into a military confrontation with the Prussians.

It is also difficult to see how Władysław's alleged reluctance to get involved into an armed confrontation with the infidels can be reconciled with his likely participation in the Second Crusade. Here I would like to reiterate my opinion that the young Henry Duke of Sandomierz could not have been referred to as 'the king of Poles'⁸ by the Byzantine chronicler Kinnamos. Therefore, the Polish participant of the expedition must have been either Władysław himself or his son, Bolesław the Tall. If this is correct, then Władysław's attitude to the pagans was not quite so different from that of his younger brothers as Güttner-Sporzyński suggests.

One also finds it hard to accept that the carving on the floor of the collegiate church in Wiślica is a manifestation of the reception of the concept of the Holy War. The carving supposedly depicts Henry Duke of Sandomierz, who was killed in a battle with the Prussians, a clergyman, and Casimir the Just, along with his wife and minor children in the orans posture. Güttner-Sporzyński assumes that the carving was made after Henry's death and during Casimir's lifetime. Casimir, who is depicted in the bottom part of the carving, looks up towards his elder brother, shown in the upper part, declaring an intention to continue his brother's struggle with the pagans. It is true that the youngest son of Bolesław the Wry-mouth led a military expedition against the Sudovians, whom the blessed Vincent calls *Saladinistae* in his chronicles of Poland. It should be noted, however, that there is no certainty as to the identity of the figures depicted in the carving. The supposed dukes are depicted without any attributes of knighthood, such as swords

⁷ W. Iwańczak, *Udział Czechów w krucjatach do Ziemi Świętej*, in: *Peregrinationes. Pielgrzymki w kulturze dawnej Europy*, ed. H. Manikowska, H. Zaremska, Warszawa 1995, p. 119.

⁸ M. Starnawska, *The Hospitallers in Medieval Poland*, in: *The Orders of St. John and Their Ties with Polish Territories*, ed. P. Deles, P. Mrozowski, Warszawa 2014, p. 113.

or spears, and their robes bear no crosses. The presence of a woman (a duchess?) and two children also weighs against the assumption that the people depicted in the carving are crusaders; rather, it implies a group of people associated with the foundation of the collegiate church.

There are some other minor lapses in the book. The fact that Ibrahim ibn Yaqub referred to Mieszko I as 'the king of the North' could not have contributed to later papal bulls, in which the northward location of Poland's pagan neighbours is emphasised, for the reason that popes were not aware of ibn Yaqub's account. The facts of the conflict between Bolesław II the Bold and Bishop Stanislaus are presented in a way that is definitely oversimplified. As a matter of fact, the story of the conflict is not relevant to a discussion of the reception of the crusading idea in the Piast state. There is no evidence of a kinship between Jaxa and the Piasts.

A great advantage of the book is that it includes maps as well as genealogical and chronological tables. This is especially helpful to foreign readers who may not be sufficiently familiar with the mediaeval history of Poland. Although some of the events discussed by the author are not pertinent to his line of argument, they provide foreign readers with an opportunity to get a wider picture of the history of Poland.

Despite the said shortcomings and some debatable conclusions, the book constitutes a significant contribution to the discussion of the reception of the crusading idea Poland in abroad international perspective.

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