



Paweł Karp. *Polsko-husycka wyprawa zbrojna przeciw Zakonowi Krzyżackiemu w roku 1433* [The Polish-Hussite War Expedition against the Teutonic Order in 1433]. Zielona Góra: Wydawnictwo Eternum, 2017. 383 pp. ISBN: 978-83-65716-05-7.

In the course of the 15th century, the Teutonic Order fought numerous wars against the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. These conflicts were the result of a very aggressive expansion policy by which the Teutonic Knights extended their territory at the expense of Poland and Lithuania. However, not all of these clashes have received sufficient attention from scholars, and there are still many aspects of this prolonged struggle that require more research. Thus far, the most thoroughly analysed conflict is the war of 1409–1411, while the later wars of 1414–1422 and 1431–1435 are mostly overlooked in favour of the Thirteen Years' War (1453–1466), which changed the entire balance of power in the region. It is often forgotten that the Order's collapse and the mutiny of the Prussian Estates in 1453 had its roots in the destructive war of 1431–1435, which left the Teutonic Knights in debt and their lands in the Neumark and Pomerania devastated during the joint Polish-Hussite raid of 1433, forcing the grand master to make peace. This war has been the subject of academic research before, but the works of A. Lewicki, J. Goll, O. Odložilik, J. Macek, and more recently M. Biskup, E. Rymar, and D. Papajík are mostly based on narrative sources and documents edited and published during the 19th century.¹ All of these scholars did not pay enough attention to the very rich source of documents and letters provided by the *Ordensbriefarchiv* (OBA) in the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. Therefore it is commendable that Paweł Karp decided to analyse these

¹ See: Anatol Lewicki, *Powstanie Świdrygiełły. Ustęp z dziejów Litwy z Koroną*, Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności-Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny 29 (Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1892); Jaroslav Goll, *Čechy a Prusy ve středověku* (Praha: Bursík & Kohout, 1897); Otokar Odložilik, "Husyci na brzegu Bałtyku w 1433 roku," *Rocznik Gdański* 7 (1933): 81–125; Jodef Macek, *Husité na Baltu a ve Velkopolsku* (Praha: Rovnost, 1952) [Polish edition: *Husyci na Pomorzu i w Wielkopolsce*, ed. Ewa Maleczyńska, trans. Danuta Reychman, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1955]; Marian Biskup, *Wojny Polski z Zakonem Krzyżackim 1308–1521* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo „Marpress”, 1993); Edward Rymar, "Polsko-czeska wyprawa zbrojna do Nowej Marchii w 1433 roku," *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* 37 (1993): 31–56; David Papajík, "Udział wojsk husyckich pod dowództwem Jana Čapka w wyprawie przeciw Zakonowi Krzyżackiemu w 1433 roku," *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne* 139 (2012): 29–43.

sources in order to reveal the background and course of the Orphans' (i.e., Hussites') raid on the Order's lands in 1433, which reached the Baltic shores.

In the "Introduction", the author informs the reader that, because of the rich material provided by the Teutonic Order's archival sources, he decided to discuss the atmosphere of incoming danger that can be seen in letters long before the campaign of 1433. He adds only few remarks concerning Hussite warfare, because the latter "is not the main topic of this work." (p. 11). This decision seems plausible given the uncertainty surrounding many aspects of the Hussites and their armies. After a brief review of the main characteristics, Karp focuses on the main sources and literature used in his book. In all, the introduction provides a thorough insight into the style and composition of the whole work.

The first chapter deals with the background of the Polish-Hussite agreement to cooperate against the Teutonic Order. Surprisingly, the author mainly focuses on the ascension of Švitrigaila as the new grand duke of Lithuania after Vytautas's death (27 October 1430), as well as his alliance with the Grand Master Paul von Rusdorf, which ultimately led to the Polish contacts with the Hussites in 1431 and 1432. Therefore, he leaves out the earlier diplomatic and political contacts between Władysław II Jagiełło and the Hussites since 1420, and focuses on the events leading to the war between Lithuania and Poland, as well as the Teutonic Knights' attack on the Kingdom of Poland in 1431. Isolation had led the Polish king and his council to consider an alliance with the Hussites and to establish diplomatic contact with the Taborites and Orphans under the guise of bringing them back to the fold. These events are being reconstructed with the use of letters and documents sent by the officials of the Teutonic Order.

The next chapter deals thoroughly with the conclusion of the alliance in Pabianice (1432) between the Kingdom of Poland and the two main commanders of the Taborite and Orphan field armies, Otík z Lozy and Jan Čapek ze Sán. Karp focuses mainly on the planned joint campaign against the Teutonic Order, analysing the plans and their possibilities, although he also gives details on Teutonic Order's contribution to the fight against the Hussites in Lusitania (1427), as well as their participation in the last crusade of 1431, which could have had some influence on the Hussites' decision to turn against the brothers. Karp discusses the further negotiations between the Kingdom of Poland and the Hussites, the diplomatic struggle in Europe, as well as correspondence between the Order's officials concerning the impending danger.

The third chapter deals with war preparations on both sides and discusses further negotiations with the Hussites, the proposed pay and incurred costs, as well as the number of Hussite troops available for hiring after the withdrawal of the Taborites from the planned war. The author describes the efforts of Grand Master

Paul von Rusdorf to hire mercenaries (along with a valuable analysis of the pay offered by the Teutonic Order's officials and the financial state of the Order as a whole) and seek help from the Empire after the arrival of the document from the Bohemian Parliament, which threatened war on the Order. Karp also mentions the preparations of war conducted by the commanderies of Pomerania and Prussia in 1432 and the first half of 1433.

The fourth chapter reconstructs the raid of Orphan and Polish forces on the Neumark, primarily based on the Teutonic Order's sources, as well as correspondence between its officials and the grand master. Karp uses the rich OBA letters and documents to correct some mistakes made by previous scholars writing about the raid. He also analyses the losses incurred in the lands of the Neumark and the actions of the Teutonic Order's forces in this region, which proved mostly ineffective. Most of blame goes to unpaid mercenaries who were not strong enough and did not want to fight the enemy, although some of the garrisons were able to hold out under certain circumstances (e.g., Landsberg (today: Gorzów Wielkopolski)).

The fifth chapter deals with the invasion of the Polish-Orphan army into the Order's land in Pomerania, which began in July 1433, just after the Neumark had been plundered. The main topic is the advance of the invasion forces, although the moves of the Teutonic Order's forces are also discussed on the basis of letters sent between certain commanders, as well as the Order's grand marshall and grand master. The main event at this stage of the campaign was the long and unsuccessful siege of Konitz (Chojnice). The author also mentions the arrival of the main Polish army, commanded by Mikołaj z Michałowa, and the attempts to take the town during the long siege. There is also the question of the mysterious concentration of the Teutonic Order's forces during the siege, which, according to the sources, consisted of several thousand cavalry. Ultimately, Karp concludes, the six-week-long siege was a failure.

The sixth chapter analyses the military situation of both sides after the siege, as well as the further march of the Polish-Hussite forces into Pomerania. The author focuses on the negotiations proposed at this time by Jan Čapek at Schwetz (Świecie), while the allied forces continued their march in the direction of Danzig (Gdańsk). In the meantime, the Teutonic Knights tried to hire more mercenaries and strengthen their army. The Hussite soldiers' cruelty is also discussed with incidents of murdering the captives after the fall of Dirschau (Tczew). The main narrative concerns itself with the events after the arrival of Polish and Hussite forces near Danzig and the actions of the Teutonic Order's forces, namely, watching the enemy from the other bank of the river. The chapter ends with the signing of the truce and the departure of the Orphans' army southwards.

The next chapter assesses the raid's impact on the Teutonic Order. Karp analyses all the aspects of this raid, combining the propaganda spread by the Order's diplomacy with the information in the sources. He compares the devastation and losses suffered in the Teutonic Order's lands in 1433 with the earlier Polish and Lithuanian campaigns of 1414 and 1422. He also attempts to judge the Order's military preparations and the activities of its armed forces during the whole campaign. There is also the question of the formal nature of the cooperation between the Kingdom of Poland and the Orphans, which in Karp's opinion cannot be clearly determined (p. 305), although he opposes the conclusions of J. Macek (1952) who saw the campaign as an alliance. However, the impact of the campaign was surely felt by the Prussian Estates which pressed the Order into peace negotiations with the Kingdom of Poland.

In the "Conclusion," Karp summarises his previous analysis, acknowledging the ultimate success of the Polish side in the war and the failure of the Teutonic Order to prepare for and counteract the enemy's advance. Karp does not see any precise strategic plan on the Order's part, which "dramatically manifests the weakness of the Teutonic Order as well as the Lithuanian ally" (p. 318), who were unable to act independently without help from Sigismund von Luxemburg and the Holy Roman Empire. This war shows the mounting opposition of the Prussian cities and nobility who were not willing to suffer the losses caused by the grand master's policy towards the Kingdom of Poland.

The publication's appendix contains six letters, edited in their original languages (German or Latin) and translated into Polish (three of them from the OBA), which are important sources for the whole raid. These editions are among the main attractions of this work and provide scholars with valuable source material. Karp used a wide range of sources and scholarship in preparing his work, and they are listed in the "Bibliography" section. There is also an index of the names of the main persons mentioned in the work. The last part of the publication consists of 17 illustrations, and the only weak part of the whole book is its lack of maps. This is surprising, given the many corrections the author proposes to the course of the whole campaign in the Neumark and Pomerania. Nonetheless, the book is a valuable step towards a better understanding of the actual role of this raid in the conflicts between the Teutonic Order and the Kingdom of Poland.

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