

Crusading on the Edge. Ideas and Practice of Crusading in Iberia and the Baltic Region, 1100-1500. Hrsg. von Torben Kjersgaard Nielsen und Iben Fønnesberg-Schmidt. (Outremer. Studies in the Crusades and Latin East, Bd. 4.) Brepols. Turnhout 2016, XV, 409 S., Ill. ISBN 978-2-503-54881-4. (€ 123,99.)

It is not surprising that contemporary historiography is increasingly focusing on the ‘forgotten’ Crusades in the Baltic region, discussing not only the contexts of the Second Crusade, but also, in general, the entire movement of the Crusades. There is no exception with the collection of articles under review here.

The historiographical perception and context of the Crusades is discussed by Jonathan Riley-Smith, Anti Selart and Luis García-Guijarro Ramos. By acknowledging the authors’ research into the historiography of the Crusades and its problematic perception since the 19th c. to this day, it becomes clear that the Crusades were subject to ideological and politicized assessments of different political systems. This is especially to be said about Soviet and current Russian historiography, which seeks to establish a view of the “eternal” aggression between the Western Church and the Eastern Church. Selart’s most recent monograph shows just how necessary it is to be cautious when evaluating such historiographical statements.¹ It is evident that there was a different kind of ideology in play regarding the historiography of the *Reconquista*, perceived as a restoration of Christianity and Christian authority. Thus, this context raises the question of the relation between the terms “crusade” and “reconquista” at a time when society in the Iberian Peninsula demonized Islam and was vocal about *dilatatio christianitatis*. On this basis, the concept of Iberia being the Edge of Christianity was formed. In the Baltic region, this issue is beginning to focus on the relationship between the terms “crusade” and “peaceful missions”, which is not the same issue as that of the relationship between “crusade” and “reconquista”. All of these terms have their own historiography and cultural environment of use which were not (and are not) the same. The term issues are not an artificial problem, as it may seem at first glance. Utilization of a specific term has different connotations and different points of assessment for the same event: the Crusades. Therefore, the Crusades in the Iberian Peninsula and the Baltic region were never treated in the same way during the Middle Ages, and due to different cultural, political and ideological experiences, an homogeneous approach to the Crusades in the two areas is not advisable even now.

According to the articles in the second chapter (by Damian J. Smith, Barbara Bombi, and Alan Forey), even when assessing the role of the Pope in the movement of the Crusades in the Iberian Peninsula and the Baltic region, it is clear that historical sources cannot provide a single desired outcome. To what extent the Pope planned to endeavour and include both European regions remains overt. Therefore, the presentation of the early stages of the Crusades in the Baltic region is merely an attempt by historians to reconcile the concepts of “crusade” and “peaceful missions” as mentioned above. The same theory can be applied to the Pope’s preferences for the Crusades in Iberia and the Baltic region: their aim was to renovate the ecclesiastical structures in the Iberian Peninsula for smoother establishment of the Christian faith. And this means that the Pope himself, despite the similar rhetoric used at first glance, was assessing the significance and meaning of the Crusades in the Iberian and Baltic regions differently.

These differences are also present in the third section in the collection (Kurt Villads Jensen, Luís Adão da Fonseca, Alan V. Murray, Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński, Nicholas L. Paul, Manuel Rojas Gabriel). These authors were inspired not only by the similarly used rhetoric of the Crusades (which sounds like a paradox), but also by the local conditions in which the Crusades commenced. For example, the naming of pagans in the Baltic region as “saladanists”, or the use of “saracens” for *inimici Crucis*

¹ ANTI SELART: *Livonia, Rus’ and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century*, Leiden—Boston 2015.

Christi both express how pagans in medieval society were generally perceived by the Church. However, such descriptions do not provide any further information about the actual differences between pagans and Muslims as perceived at the local level of interpersonal communication. Images of pagans were shaped not only according to the principles of *interpretatio christiana/romana*, but also according to certain altering images that were recognized by medieval society *per se*. More precisely, the terminology of the medieval Crusades, or the similar images of the pagans and Muslims, show not only that the Pope or society in general had the same conception of the crusaders in the Iberian and Baltic regions. Such images also reflect the traditional perception of pagans in medieval society as well as the asymmetric perception of pagans² (as demonstrated by the findings of Murray). For this reason, all who are bound by the will of God are converted to paganism, and the impious ones are urged to be moralized and punished.

How much of this “punishment” is a religious “cartoon” remains an open question. Jensen’s, Fonseca’s and Güttner-Sporzyński’s research clearly demonstrates that the local rulers of the Iberian and Baltic regions, seeking to expand their territories, shaped their positive image through chronologists who justified their actions through the ideology of the Crusades. Society, affected by the aforementioned perceived figurative asymmetry of the pagans, was inclined to accept such actions. It must be discussed whether such actions can be considered religious wars that developed into the Crusades. First of all, it is unclear whether the Crusades *per se* were motivated by religious wars. Secondly, it appears that the rulers of Iberia, and even more so the leaders of the Baltic region, sought to expand their dominions, so the Crusades were a form of warfare, and not a way of spreading the Christian religion. In order to justify their actions, these rulers used the rhetoric of the Crusades and other mechanisms besides pagan asymmetry. We should continue to discuss the formation of such a rhetoric tradition and the memory of the Crusades, as shown by Paul. In the case of the Iberian region it is still possible to discuss the desire of rulers in Aragón or Castile to regain some of the land belonging to Christian Western Goths; this cannot be said about the Baltic region. Therefore, the “recovery” of the pagan lands in the Baltic region was anachronistic, covered by the general rhetoric of the Crusades, the acquisition of holy relics, the “transfer” of Jerusalem’s image, conquered territories provided to Holy Mary, etc. At that time, the “recovery” of the lost lands on the Iberian Peninsula was based on a certain historical tradition of the once Christian-dominated lands, conquered by the Muslims. All these nuances must be taken into account when reading and evaluating the studies of the third chapter.

Another important issue argued in the collection of articles concerns the cultural and mental alterations caused by the Crusades in the Iberian and Baltic regions. These are the aspects Jerrilynn D. Dodds’, Kersti Markus’ and Marek Tamm’s articles deal with. The first two examine how the architecture of the Umayyad Caliphate spread into the Cordoba Caliphate and how this influenced Christian architecture and culture as the Christians seized certain territories in the time of *Reconquista* and (second) what ecclesiastical architecture there was in the periphery of the Baltic region (on the island of Gotland and in Livonia). The author of the third article once again returns to the Cistercian narrative tradition in the medieval *exemplum* provided facts about the Livonian Crusades.

In conclusion, it should be noted that in order to perceive the general picture of the Crusades in the Baltic region in the context of the Crusades (both realized and unfulfilled), the actions of the Teutonic Order in Prussia cannot be ignored. Unfortunately, not enough

² More about this in STEPHANIE SEIDL, JULIA ZIMMERMANN: *Jenseits des Kategorischen: Konzeptionen des „Heidnischen“ in volkssprachigen literarischen und chronikalischen Texten des 13. Jahrhunderts*, in: MICHAEL BORGOLTE, JULIA DÜCKER et al. (eds.): *Integration und Desintegration der Kulturen im europäischen Mittelalter*, Berlin 2011, pp. 325-381, here pp. 331-333.

attention is paid to those actions here. Nevertheless, the author's thoughts and insights indicate that many questions remain unanswered regarding the problems of the Crusades in the edges of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. We can only congratulate the authors' contributions to solving the issues.

Klaipėda

Marius Ščavinskas

Cordelia Hess: The Absent Jews. Kurt Forstreuter and the Historiography of Medieval Prussia. Berghahn Books. New York – Oxford 2017. IX, 323 S. ISBN 978-1-78533-492-4. (\$ 120,-.)

Der Titel des Buches verspricht ein interessantes Thema und suggeriert zugleich ein Versäumnis in der Geschichtsforschung zum Deutschordensstaat, nämlich der Frage nach der Präsenz von Juden in der Region nicht nachgegangen zu sein. Nun könnte man darauf entgegnen, dass es für ihre Anwesenheit unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens kaum Belege gebe, die Hypothese von Cordelia Hess ist jedoch eine andere: Die Tatsache, dass die Juden in der Historiografie zum Deutschordensstaat nicht auftauchen, resultiere nicht aus ihrer faktischen Abwesenheit, sondern aus der Shoah und der Vernichtung jüdischer Quellen. Diese drei Stränge sieht die Vf. im Wirken des Königsberger Archivars Kurt Forstreuter gebündelt: Er sei der einzige gewesen, der sich mit jüdischer Geschichte im Deutschordensland Preußen befasst habe, zudem sei er während des Zweiten Weltkriegs an der Vernichtung jüdischer Archivbestände sowie an der Vorbereitung von Deportationslisten beteiligt gewesen (S. 101).

Dieses argumentative Gebäude, man kann es nicht anders sagen, steht auf unsicherem Grund: Das wissenschaftliche Œuvre zur jüdischen Geschichte Forstreuters besteht aus drei kürzeren Texten, von denen H. sich auf einen 7-seitigen Aufsatz von 1937 und seine posthum veröffentlichte Überarbeitung in den 1970er Jahren konzentriert. Zu den anderen beiden Punkten, die im Kontext der bereits breit diskutierten Mitwirkung von Ostforschern an der NS-Besatzungsherrschaft und Vernichtungspolitik stehen, gibt es bereits eine ausführliche Diskussion. Im vorliegenden Buch wird nicht klar, welchen Erkenntnisgewinn die Biografie Forstreuters bietet, den die Vf. – gewiss nicht zu Unrecht – selbst als Randfigur im Kontext der Nord- und Ostdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft und obendrein als „schlechten Historiker“ (S. 38) betrachtet. Zwar kann sie aus seinen Reisenotizen zitieren, aber das Bild seiner Tätigkeit als Archivar im besetzten Polen während des Krieges bleibt doch unschärfer als in der umfassenden Betrachtung des „Osteinsatzes“ deutscher Archivare durch Stefan Lehr.¹

Ähnliches gilt für die Betrachtung des gesamten wissenschaftlichen Werkes: H. erkennt bei Forstreuter eine „obsession for ethnicities and boundaries“ (S. 58), erfasst aber die Problematik der Siedlungsgeschichte Kleinlitauens nur teilweise. Im Norden Ostpreußens war aufgrund der frühneuzeitlichen litauischen Siedlung die dominierende Volksbodentheorie im Kontext der deutschen Ostforschung politisch dysfunktional. Forstreuter griff daher, im Gegensatz zu Hans und Gertrud Mortensen, die anfangs volksgeschichtlich argumentierten, auf ein traditionelles, borussisches Erklärungsmuster zurück, das letztlich für die Begründung deutscher Gebietsansprüche nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg kompatibler war.

Zwar führt die Vf. die zentrale Literatur zur Ostforschung an, sie scheint sie aber nur cursorisch zur Kenntnis genommen zu haben, sonst hätte sie vielleicht bemerkt, dass – anders als von ihr behauptet – wichtige Beiträge nicht zuletzt von deutschen und polnischen Mediävisten vorgelegt wurden.

Der zweite Teil der Studie beschäftigt sich mit der Präsenz von Juden in der Historiografie zum Deutschordensstaat von Peter von Dusburg bis in die Gegenwart; es geht der

¹ STEFAN LEHR: Ein fast vergessener „Osteinsatz“. Deutsche Archivare im Generalgouvernement und im Reichskommissariat Ukraine, Düsseldorf 2007.