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DEFENCE OF THE POLISH WESTERN FRONTIERS DURING THE PERIOD OF EARLY FEUDALISM IN THE LIGHT OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

The article is concerned with military problems of the Polish western frontier during the early feudal period. It discusses the state of research on the restoration of this problem in Polish and German reference literature, as well as the methods of studies.

The first part consists of a critical analysis of historiographic literature on military problems of the Polish western boundary until 1939. The second part is concerned with the development of studies on this question in People's Poland, wherein there has ensued an increased interest in the military history of the Polish western frontier during the period since the Xth until the middle of the XIIth century. The present paper is a result of studies carried out in cooperation by representatives of many scientific fields. Most of the relevant findings were contributed by geographers who restored the geographical surroundings of the western boundary; by archaeologists who made excavations at different fortified sites along the border; and finally by historians who studied the problem from various aspects.

The outcome of research in all these realms has rendered possible a detailed report on the history and defence value of the system of fortifications erected on the western frontier in the early feudal era. Findings have revealed the association between fortifications and defence properties of the geographical environment of the western boundary, as well as the means of its protection by the Polish state.

The topic in question was presented in a monograph by the same author, issued in 1961, under the following heading: "Studies on the defence of Polish western frontier during the early-feudal period" (Poznań, 1961). The present article has complemented the work by recent five years' findings and made it possible for the reader to assume an attitude towards these problems. Moreover, it has afforded an opportunity to revise some of the former conclusions. By doing so, it has broadened the author's investigations on the defence of the Polish western frontier during the early feudal era.

MARIAN BISKUP

TEUTONIC ORDER AND 1ST STATE BORDERING THE BAL- TIC SEA IN POLAND'S HISTORY

The author affords a presentation of the problem in the light of recent ideas prevailing in Polish historiography, which contradict many of the doctrines of West-German historiography. Founding of the Teutonic state in Prussia, in the years 1226—1230, is considered from the aspect of its tendencies to carry out armed colonization missions, and of German social knightly elements, as well as from the viewpoint of its rivalry with the Mazovian duke, Conrad, who introduced the Teutonic order and became its founder in the Polish district of Chełmno. Emphasis is given to the fact of a deceitful — in respect to duke Conrad — assurance by Hermann von Salza, the grand Teutonic master, of an imperial privilege issued in 1226, and permitting him to establish in Prussia a state independent from Poland and associated with the empire only by an indeterminate relation of a protection. Further emphasis is given to the falsification of duke Conrad's privilege (the so called Kruszwica prerogative), issued in 1230 (actually in 1234), supposedly re-

nunciating all the gains in Prussia to the benefit of the Teutonic order; this created grounds for the papacy to assume formal sovereignty over Prussia, granted the Teutons as a feud in 1243. The Teutonic state, established in Prussia in 1230—1283, failed to serve the purpose of spreading Christianity among Baltic Prussians; rather, it strengthened the supremacy of German Teutonic brothers who exploited the Prussian population in their superficial action of introducing Christianity, and who immigrated German settlers into towns and villages.

In the years 1308—1309, the Teutonic order annexed a Polish province, namely Pomerania near Gdańsk, tearing it out of the Polish Kingdom and thus contributing to its own worldly, territorial and political interests. From then onwards, the Teutonic order became the principal enemy of the Polish state for a century and a half, endangering its economic and political sovereignty by attempts to conquer Lithuania and Russian territories. The joint effort of Poland and Lithuania at Grunwald, on the 15th of July, 1410, broke down the Teutonic expansivity, especially in respect to Lithuania, yet failed to restore Poland to the mouth of river Vistula. In the middle of the XVth century, the Teutonic state became the chief natural obstacle against Poland's free communication with Baltic coastal areas; and at the same time a hindrance to the tendencies of its own citizens of a different ethnic membership to contract increasingly close, economic and social relations with the Polish state and community. These mutual relations and the conflict between Prussian states and the Teutonic order resulted in an insurrection of the so called Prussian Alliance and its surrender to Poland, in 1454. Following the thirteen years' war (1454—1466), the Teutonic order was forced to make restitution — on grounds of the Toruń truce — of Pomerania and the district of Chełmno, as well as of the shores of the Vistula with Malbork and Warmia (termed henceforth the Royal Prussia), and to become vassals of the remainder of Prussia. Impaired sovereignty of the Teutonic state proved irreversible and finally ended, in 1525, in a secularization of Prussia, established a lay feud of Poland under the authority of prince Albrecht Hohenzollern.

In spite of this, so called Royal Prussia, represented a social, political and territorial heritage adverse to Poland; the main opponents consisted of *junkers* and — since the beginning of the XVIIth century — of Brandenburg Hohenzollerns. In time, they disposed of Poland's feudal sovereignty to establish a Prussian Kingdom (1701) and brought about in 1772 the 1st partition of Poland annexing Royal Prussia. In the XIXth century there took place in Prussia a reversion towards the ideological tradition of the Teutonic order regarded as the precursor of the Prussian state. The enclave of German Eastern Prussia instituted in 1919—1920, likewise represented a Teutonic heritage which became the immediate cause of World War II.

Obviously enough, in Polish history, the Teutonic state in Prussia and its social and political heritage played an essentially negative and even tragic role, threatening Poland's existence and impeding the process of a natural unification of Polish territories with the Baltic Sea.