



# MIRACLES AND DIVINE INTERVENTION DURING THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TEUTONIC ORDER AND LITHUANIA IN CHRISTIAN NARRATIVES FROM THE 14TH CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

More than a hundred years of fighting between the Teutonic Order and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania have left us with a considerable amount of narrative sources that allow researchers today to imagine the language of the Christians who fought against the pagans, and to understand their beliefs and propaganda measures. One little-studied question in this regard is how the Christian narrative tradition of the 14th century portrayed miracles and divine intervention during the struggle between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania. To address this question, the author of the article focuses on the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, which represented the idea of the Crusade to the Lithuanian lands, and therefore showed a strong need to emphasise the religious aspect of the whole military conflict. At the same time, however, she also draws on other surviving documents for comparison, including Lithuanian and Ruthenian narrative sources. The author argues that the accounts of miracles and divine intervention in sources from the Teutonic Order were influenced by the nature of the Order as a religious military corporation and the chroniclers' need to explain the campaigns to Lithuania as a holy war. It was this need that led them to place a great emphasis on the depiction of divine intervention in the campaigns of the crusaders to help them.

**KEYWORDS:** Christianisation, Teutonic Order, Lithuania, paganism, divine intervention, miracles, representation of God's will, holy war.

## ANOTACIJA

Daugiau kaip šimtą metų trukusios kovos tarp Vokiečių ordino ir Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės Ordino pusėje paliko nemažai pasakojamųjų šaltinių, šiandien leidžiančių tyrinėtojams įsivaizduoti to meto krikščionių, kovojusių su pagonimis, retoriką, spręsti apie jų įtikinimus ir propagandines priemones. Vienas mažai nagrinėtų klausimų šioje retorikoje, kaip XIV a. krikščioniška pasakojamoji tradicija pateikė stebuklus ir dieviškąjį įsikišimą Vokiečių ordino ir Lietuvos kovų metu. Nagrinėdama šį klausimą, straipsnio autorė daugiausia dėmesio skiria Vokiečių ordino kronikoms: jos reprezentavo kryžiaus žygių į lietuvių žemes idėją, todėl jose atsiskleidžia stiprus poreikis pabrėžti religinį viso karinio konflikto aspektą. Tačiau palyginimui ji pasitelkia ir kitus išlikusius dokumentus, įskaitant Lietuvos ir Rusijos pasakojamuosius šaltinius. Autorė teigia, kad Vokiečių ordino šaltiniuose pasakojimus apie stebuklus ir dieviškąjį įsikišimą lėmė Ordino, kaip religinės karinės korporacijos, pobūdis ir kronikininkų poreikis aiškinti žygius į Lietuvą kaip šventąjį karą. Vedami šio poreikio, didelį dėmesį jie skyrė pavaizduoti, kaip Dievas, siekdamas padėti kryžininkams, kišasi į jų žygius.

**PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** christianizacija, Vokiečių ordinas, Lietuva, pagonybė, dieviškasis įsikišimas, stebuklai, Dievo valios reprezentavimas, šventasis karas.

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'God on high has performed signs and miracles for me,  
so I will preach about the signs He has given, because they are mighty,  
and proclaim His miracles, because they are great.'<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

148

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania<sup>2</sup> was formed and developed over a long time. In the late 13th century it was characterised by an active military policy aimed at conquering new territories. This could have been for economic and political reasons related to the process of the formation of the state. The military and political interests of the Lithuanian rulers extended to neighbouring lands, including the former Rus'. These were lands with a long tradition of statehood and Christianity, which had been weakened by internal political and economic crises, fragmentation, and the Mongol invasion. But it was not only the Lithuanian rulers who wanted to extend their influence to neighbouring lands. The Livonian Order and later the Teutonic Order also tried to expand their territory and their sphere of influence. The lands of Lithuania, and later the entire Grand Duchy of Lithuania, looked extremely attractive in this respect. Thus, from the very beginning of the new state's existence, the Teutonic Order was its greatest enemy.<sup>3</sup> The character of the conflict became tenser in the

<sup>1</sup> *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190–1331* (Crusade Texts in Translation, 20). Transl. by Mary FISCHER. Farnham, 2010, p. 25. The quotation given is attributed by the chronicler to King Nebuchadnezzar when he ordered Daniel and his fellows to be thrown into the fiery furnace (Daniel 4, 7). According to Karl Helm and Walther Ziesemer (as cited by Mary Fischer), a 'vernacular translation associated with the order dates from around 1335'. See: HELM, Karl; ZIESEMER, Walther. *Die Literatur des deutschen Ritterordens*. Gießen, 1951, S. 100. In fact, Nicolaus von Jeroschin continues the idea of miracles, saying that the same words could have been said by Brother Dietrich von Altenburg, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, as the chief representative of the Order in Prussia: 'God on high has performed signs and miracles for me here in Prussia through the many events which have happened to the children of my order, the brothers. He has often performed a miracle to comfort them and rescue them from desperate hardship in the furnace of strict obedience, heated sevenfold with seven forms of wretchedness. In God's name they uncomplainingly endured heat, frost, hunger and thirst, wounds, chains and bitter death, so that their manly courage in the fires of martyrdom was never tainted by unbecoming behaviour (as you will hear shortly, if God wills that we reach the subject of these miracles). These great signs, these mighty wonders should not be lost under a cloak of oblivion. I intend to preach God's miracles and have them proclaimed through the mouthpiece of my chaplain; for God's miraculous deeds should not be forgotten.' Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Here and further, 'Lithuania', as it was the term used in references to the emerging Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the chronicles under review at that time. The author emphasises that this term does not refer only to Lithuanian ethnic lands, but to the territories of the emerging Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including those of former Rus'.

<sup>3</sup> ZAJĄCZKOWSKI, Stanisław. *Dzieje Zakonu Krzyżackiego*. Łódź, 1946; WŁODARSKI, Bronisław. Między Polska, Litwą a Zakonem Krzyżackim (sylwetka Wacława płockiego). *Zapiski Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu*, 1950, t. 16, Nr. 1–4, s. 5–21; ŁOWMIAŃSKI, Henryk. Agresja zakonu krzyżackiego na Litwę w wiekach XII–XV. *Przegląd Historyczny*, 1954, t. 45, Nr. 2/3, s. 338–371; ROWELL, S. C. *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East-Central Europe, 1295–1345*. Cambridge, 1994; JÓŻWIAK, Sławomir; KWIATKOWSKI,

13th century and transformed into a 'war' which started in 1283, according to Peter of Dusburg.<sup>4</sup> In fact, a sustained conflict began from the late 13th century, in which the participants and the character were constantly changing depending on the political circumstances.<sup>5</sup> But it was the Teutonic Order that initiated most of the battles and intensively attacked the lands of Lithuania as part of its attempts at a Crusade.<sup>6</sup>

From the very beginning of its development, namely from its establishment in 1189–1190 in Acre, the main aim of the Teutonic Order was to struggle against the enemies of Christianity and to convert pagan lands.<sup>7</sup> Later on, this idea was reflected in documents issued by the Order. The religious and political explanations for the

Krzysztof; SZWEDA, Adam; SZYBKOWSKI, Sobiesław. *Wojna Polski i Litwy z Zakonem Krzyżackim w latach 1409–1411*. Malbork, 2010; EHLERS, Axel. *The Crusade of the Teutonic Knights against Lithuania Reconsidered*. In *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150–1500*. Ed. by Alan V. MURRAY. London, 2017, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> 'Explicit bellum Prussie. Incipit bellum Lethowinorum.' – PETER von Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae*. In *Scriptores rerum Prusicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Ordensherrschaft*. Hrsg. von Theodor HIRSCH, Max TÖPPEN, Ernst STREHLKE (hereafter *SRP*). Bd. 1. Leipzig, 1861, S. 146. Although some authors, including Reinhard Wittram, have claimed that the active military policy of the Teutonic Order in the region under study only started in 1309, it cannot be true. The late 13th century is characterised by constant battles between the two sides, although they were not always large-scale ones. – WITTRAM, Reinhard. *Geschichte der baltischen Deutschen: Grundzüge und Durchblicke*. Stuttgart, Berlin, 1939, S. 39. The main directions of military policy of the Teutonic Order in Lithuania and in the Baltic region in general, as well as its main aims there, are discussed in: LOHMEYER, Karl. *Geschichte von Ost- und Westpreussen*. Bd. 1: *Bis 1411*. 3. Aufl. Gotha, 1908, S. 148; ŁOWMIAŃSKI, H. *Agresja zakonu krzyżackiego...*, s. 342–345; GUDAVIČIUS, Edvardas. *Polityczny problem Królestwa Litewskiego w połowie XIII w.* In *Ekspansja niemieckich zakonów rycerskich w strefie Bałtyku od XIII do połowy XVI wieku. Materiały z konferencji historyków radzieckich i polskich w Toruniu z r. 1988*. Red. Marian BISKUP. Toruń, 1990, s. 61–84; ROWELL, S. C. *Op. cit.*; URBAN, William. *The Prussian Crusade*. Lanham, 1980; ŠČAVINSKAS, Marius. *Durbės mūšis ir jo atgarsiai Šventojo karo Baltijos regiono retorikoje: christianizacijos aspektas*. In *1260 metų Durbės mūšis: Šaltiniai ir istoriniai tyrimai* (Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis, t. 22). Sud. Vacys VAIVADA. Klaipėda, 2011, p. 69–84; KWIAŤKOWSKI, Krzysztof. *Zakon niemiecki jako „corporatio militaris”*. Cz. 1: *Korporacja i krąg przynależących do niej. Kulturowe i społeczne podstawy działalności militarnej zakonu w Prusach (do początku XV wieku)*. Toruń, 2012; SELART, Anti. *Livonia, Rus' and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century* (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, Vol. 29). Leiden, Boston, 2015; etc.

<sup>5</sup> GUDAVIČIUS, Edvardas. *Istoriia Litvy*. T. I: *S drevneishikh vremen do 1569 goda*. Perv. Georgii EFREMOV. Moskva, 2005, s. 77–78; PREKOP, Dariusz. *Wojna zakonu krzyżackiego z Litwą w latach 1283–1325*. Toruń, 2004; PETRAUSKAS, Rimvydas. *Litauen und der Deutsche Orden: Vom Freund zum Verbündeten*. In *Tannenberg–Grunwald–Žalgiris 1410: Krieg und Frieden im späten Mittelalter* (Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau. Quellen und Studien, Bd. 26). Hrsg. von Werner PARAVICINI, Rimvydas PETRAUSKAS, Grischa VERCAMER. Wiesbaden, 2012, S. 237–239; BARONAS, Darius. *The River Nemunas during the war between the Teutonic Order and Lithuanians: a border and a corridor (1283–1410)*. In *Homini, qui in honore fuit. Księga pamiątkowa poświęcona śp. Profesorowi Grzegorzowi Białuńskiemu*. Red. Alicja DOBROSIELSKA, Aleksander PLUSKOWSKI, Seweryn SZCZEPAŃSKI. Olsztyn, 2020, pp. 196–204, etc.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the issue of the Crusade by the Teutonic Order in the lands of Lithuania, see: NIKŽENTAITIS, Alvydas. *Litwa i zakon krzyżacki w końcu XIII i w pierwszej połowie XIV w. (1283–1345)*. In *Ekspansja niemieckich zakonów rycerskich...*, s. 127–142; RADOCH, Marek. *Walki zakonu krzyżackiego o Żmudź od połowy XIII wieku do 1411 roku*. Olsztyn, 2011; LEIGHTON, Gregory. *Ideology and Holy Landscape in the Baltic Crusades*. Leeds, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> KWIAŤKOWSKI, K. *Op. cit.*, s. 85. See also: MILITZER, Klaus. *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens*. Stuttgart, 2005. For more on the religious situation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the period under study, as well as controversial issues of its conversion, see: BARONAS, D.; ROWELL, S. C. *The Conversion of Lithuania. From Pagan Barbarians to Late Medieval Christians*. Vilnius, 2015.

Crusade by the Teutonic Order to the Lithuanian lands date from the charter issued by Friedrich II in Verona in June 1245, but the primary idea of crusading in the Baltic region was first presented in his act of 1226. According to this, the Teutonic Order had the right to take some lands, including Prussian lands, into its possession. This privilege was based on an earlier document issued in Catania in 1224, in which Caesar was appointed superior of those Balts who had not yet been baptised or had only recently been baptised. Although Lithuania was only mentioned in the document of 1245, the idea itself was not new, and the process of crusading to the lands mentioned was planned for a long time before the first campaigns took place.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the official documents issued by the Teutonic Order, the idea of crusading in Lithuania, as well as a description of events that took place during this military conflict, was presented in narrative sources from that period. Chronicles written by Livonian and Teutonic authors not only present the ideological background for the Crusade but also reflect the development of the religious thinking of a Medieval churchman and his understanding of the contradiction between Lithuania and the Teutonic Order, as well as between pagans and Christians in general.<sup>9</sup> Thus, most of these narratives contain not only strict data and descriptions of the course of the military campaigns, but also the chroniclers' explanations and interpretations of the events. One of the most effective ways of emphasising the role of God in this war was to focus on the 'miracles' that helped the brothers in their attempts to bring Christianity to the land of pagans.

Although the conflict between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania, and the religious and military policy of the brothers in the mentioned lands, have been discussed by historians to a different extent, the role and importance of the reflection of divine intervention and miracles in the battles against the pagans described in Christian narratives have been overlooked.<sup>10</sup> This is why the main aim of the article is to study the presentation of the miracles with respect to the conflict between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania presented in the Christian narrative tradition of the 14th century. This

<sup>8</sup> ŁOWMIAŃSKI, Henryk. *Prusy-Litwa-Krzyżacy*. Warszawa, 1989, s. 180–185. The primary sources on the issue: *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abteilung*. Bd. I: *Die Bildung des Ordensstaates*, 1. Hälfte. Hrsg. von Rudolf PHILIPPI. Königsberg, 1882, S. 38, 42; *Regesta Lithuaniae: ab origine usque ad Magni Ducatus cum Regno Poloniae unionem*. T. 1: *Tempora usque ad annum 1315 complectens*. Rec. Henricus PASZKIEWICZ. Varsoviae, 1930, p. 41, No. 207. For the debates on the interpretation of the term 'Lettia' as 'Lithuania' or 'Letgalia' in the early documents, see: ŁOWMIAŃSKI, H. *Prusy...*, s. 185; PASZKIEWICZ, Henryk. *Jagiellonowie a Moskwa*. T. 1: *Litwa a Moskwa w XIII i XIV wieku*. Warszawa, 1933, s. 94. See also: BARTLETT, Robert. *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350*. London, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> BARONAS, Darius. Christians in Late Pagan, and Pagans in Early Christian Lithuania: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, 2014, Vol. 19, pp. 51–52.

<sup>10</sup> CHODYŃSKI, Kazimierz. Próby zaprowadzenia chrześcijaństwa na Litwie przed r. 1386. *Przegląd historyczny*, 1914, t. 18, Nr. 2, s. 215–319; BEREND, Nora. Introduction. In *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900–1200*. Ed. by Nora BEREND. Cambridge, 2007, pp. 1–46; GIEDROYĆ, Michał. The Arrival of Christianity in Lithuania: Between Rome and Byzantium (1281–1341). *Oxford Slavonic Papers. New Series*, 1987, Vol. 20, pp. 1–33; BARONAS, D.; ROWELL, S. C. Op. cit., pp. 119–148.

chronological framework is explained by the deep contradictions between these two formations as representatives of Christian and pagan worlds in the so-called 'pagan' period of Lithuanian history. Most attention is paid to the chronicles of the Teutonic Order as representatives of the idea of the Crusade to the Lithuanian lands, and as a result the strong need for an emphasis on the religious component of their military activity. Nonetheless, the author considers it reasonable to refer to other narrative traditions, including Lithuanian and Russian ones, in terms of a comparative analysis.

## Holy War, Miracles and the Baltic Crusade

To start with, we should point out that the content of the chronicles of the Teutonic Order was greatly influenced by the status of the Order's warriors, who were members of a religious organisation and enacted God's will.<sup>11</sup> The fact that God (even if invisibly) was one of the participants in those military campaigns led to the sacralisation of warfare.<sup>12</sup> This is why a great emphasis was put on divine sanction of the war against pagan Lithuania. This was achieved by interpreting military events in terms of divine intervention on behalf of the Order.<sup>13</sup>

It seems obvious that the importance of the sacred component of warfare was not typical only of the Crusade to Lithuania. The first attempts at the sacralisation of warfare go back to the epoch of the First Crusade. In describing the reasons and the main course of events, chroniclers tended to emphasise the sacral nature of the campaign. According to Elizabeth Lapina, this was achieved in two ways. Firstly, Medieval narrators focused their attention on miracles relating to such campaigns. Secondly, they put the First Crusade in the framework of sacred history.<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith was one of the first to emphasise the role that the demonstration of the 'miraculous enterprise' played in creating the ideological background in the

<sup>11</sup> FISCHER, Mary Christie. *The Idea of Christian Chivalry in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order*. PhD thesis. St Andrews, 1984, pp. 95–96.

<sup>12</sup> LE GOFF, Jacques. Mentalités, sensibilités, attitudes (X<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles). In LE GOFF, Jacques. *La civilisation de l'Occident médiéval*. Paris, 1964, p. 124. The mechanisms of the sacralisation of warfare (including those used during the struggle between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania) were discussed to a great extent by the Lithuanian historian Gintaras Beresnevičius: BERESNEVIČIUS, Gintaras. Sakralinis karo matmuo (karas ir šventenybė Šiaurės Vidurio Europoje nuo ankstyvųjų viduramžių iki mūsų dienų). *Kultūros istorijos tyrinėjimai*, 1997, t. 3, p. 12–63. The study on the just war and the phenomenon of a holy war in the Middle Ages by Frederick H. Russell is of great importance too: RUSSELL, Frederick H. *The Just War in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, 1975.

<sup>13</sup> KWIATKOWSKI, K. Op. cit. The idea of the presentation of God's will in the narrative tradition of the Crusade and the mechanisms of this demonstration are discussed in the following book: *Writing the Early Crusades: Text, Transmission, and Memory*. Ed. by Marcus BULL, Damien KEMPF. Woodbridge, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> LAPINA, Elizabeth. *Warfare and the Miraculous in the Chronicles of the First Crusade*. University Park, PA, 2015, p. 3. See also: SMITH, Katherine Allen. *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion, Vol. 37). Woodbridge, 2011.

chronicles of crusading.<sup>15</sup> But it was typical not only of the epoch of the Crusade. The tradition of sacralising warfare goes back to even earlier times, and was important in Byzantium as well as in the Western narrative tradition in the context of resistance to the Vikings.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the cultural and religious foundations of the idea could be found in the earliest Christian texts, the Old and the New Testament.

Miracles that occurred during the Crusade are considered the most vivid evidence of God's involvement in the process and his will. One of the most effective methods for achieving this was the presentation of a sort of divine or supernatural being (God himself, a saint, an angel, etc) appeared on the battlefield and protected the Christians in the fight against the pagans.<sup>17</sup> This kind of appearance demonstrated the spiritual nature of crusading warfare and made the nature of the war sacred. What is more, such miracles were often presented as being seen by participants in the events or by eyewitnesses. In some ways, it also reflects the world-view of Medieval man, for whom only events in which he took part himself were worthy of belief. Elizabeth Lapina goes even further in her explanation of the importance of the real participation of a narrator in the miracles, appealing to *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville. The author of this work claimed that historians had to be eyewitnesses and describe and evaluate only the events they took part in.<sup>18</sup> But were all chroniclers real participants in the events, and could everyone be a witness to miracles? In the New Testament, it was the Apostles who testified to seeing Jesus before and after the Resurrection. But not all people, but only blessed ones, could be witnesses to that sacred event. As St Augustine pointed out, the Apostles testified to this because the Holy Spirit revealed the truth to them.<sup>19</sup> Of course, we cannot compare the narrators of the Teutonic Order with the Apostles. At the same time, they were chosen members of a religious institution, of which the main goal was to protect and spread the

<sup>15</sup> RILEY-SMITH, Jonathan. *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*. Philadelphia, 1986, pp. 135–150.

<sup>16</sup> LAPINA, E. Op. cit., pp. 6–11. The first examples of miracles of war as evidence of the Lord's intervention in the mission of the Christians can be found in the chronicles written by participants in the First Crusade, for instance, in *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, and the chronicles by Raymond of Aguilers and Fulcher of Chartres. – *Anonima Dzieje pierwszej krucjaty albo czyny Franków i pielgrzymów jerozolimskich*. Przetł., wstępem i objaśnieniami opatrł. Karol ESTREICHER. Warszawa, Kraków, 1984; PACKARD, Barbara. Raymond of Aguilers. In *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*. Vol. 3: 1050–1200. Ed. by David THOMAS, Alex MALLETT. Leiden, Boston, 2011, pp. 297–300; FULCHER of Chartres. *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095–1127*. Transl. by Francis Rita RYAN, ed. with an introduction by Harold S. FINK. Knoxville, 1969. The earliest sources for the ideology of the Teutonic Order presented in its chronicles are analysed in: TRUPINDA, Janusz. *Ideologia krucjatowa w kronice Piotra z Dusburga*. Gdańsk, 1999, s. 36–39, 65–89.

<sup>17</sup> The idea of miracles as an influential tool of the authors of crusading narratives which is able to convey divine agency and will is shown in: SPACEY, Beth C. *The Miraculous and the Writing of Crusade Narrative*. Woodbridge, 2020, pp. 15–39. See also: JENSEN, Kurt Villads. Holy War – Holy Wrath: Baltic Wars between Regulated Warfare and Total Annihilation around 1200. In *Church and Belief in the Middle Ages. Popes, Saints, and Crusaders*. Ed. by Kirsi SALONEN, Sari KATAJALA-PELTOMAA. Amsterdam, 2016, pp. 229, 238.

<sup>18</sup> LAPINA, E. Op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. Acts 10:39–41: 'And we are witnesses of all that he did ...'

faith. That is why we can consider it reasonable to assume that they had full rights to testify not only to have seen miracles in the battles against the pagans themselves, but to retell the most important cases of such divine intervention to a wider audience, in this respect being transmitters of God's will.

## Miracles and divine intervention in battles between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania

It seems obvious that the ideological framework for crusading in Lithuania was analogous to the Order's Crusade in general, and that the miracles appeared not only in the battles between the knights of the Teutonic Order and the Lithuanians, but also between the Christian knights and other pagans, including the Prussians. That is why the author considers it reasonable to analyse the representation of the conflict between the Order and Lithuania reflected in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order against the wider historical and cultural background.

An analysis of the chronicles makes it possible to differentiate the following categories of miracle that are described with reference to the battles between the warriors of the Teutonic Order and those of Lithuania: apparitions by saints and angels (and other symbolic creatures that are well known in Christianity) during, after or before battles; divine help for the knights in their attacks (divine will); divine intervention that influences natural agents in order to mislead or conquer the enemy.

When it comes to particular sources of the investigation, we may consider *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* by Peter of Dusburg as the most informative. At the same time, *The Chronicle of Prussia* by Nicolaus von Jeroschin is of great importance specifically in respect to this study. Although the author used mainly data from the chronicle by Peter of Dusburg, he evaluated the events himself, emphasising and presenting those which were noteworthy from his point of view in a wider and more detailed way. This refers, among other issues, to the description of miracles and explanations of the warfare. We should also point out *Die Aeltere Chronik von Oliva*, *Chronica nova Prutenica* by Wigand of Marburg, and *Chronicon Livoniae* by Hermann von Wartberge, and other sources.<sup>20</sup>

The textual and contextual analysis of the chronicles has shown that divine intervention, as well as the emphasis on miracles during the military campaigns organised by the Teutonic Order to the neighbouring 'pagan' lands, was actively used by nar-

<sup>20</sup> Die ältere Chronik von Oliva. In *SRP*. Bd. 5. Leipzig, 1874, S. 591–624; PETER von Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae*. In *SRP*. Bd. 1, S. 3–219; Hermanni de Wartberge *Chronicon Livoniae*. In *SRP*. Bd. 2. Leipzig, 1863, S. 429–662; WIGAND von Marburg. *Nowa kronika pruska*. Oprac. Sławomir ZONENBERG, Krzysztof KWIATKOWSKI. Toruń, 2017.

rators for the sacralisation of the brothers' religious mission in these territories. The announcement of the Baltic Crusade as a war in the name of God aiming at the conversion of the pagan lands made it possible for the brothers to present themselves as agents of the Lord's will.<sup>21</sup> This blessing made them not just regular knights fighting on the battlefield, but outstanding warriors blessed by God. As Gintaras Beresnevičius pointed out in his study, the holy war made it possible for warriors to be closer to the Lord, and as a result to be capable of incredible feats.<sup>22</sup> During battles in the name of the faith, God provided the knights not only with a feeling of blessedness, but with his direct assistance, which was possible due to his direct participation in the fighting or its observation, despite being invisible to other people.<sup>23</sup> In this respect, the presentation of the miraculous as evidence of his presence was of extremely great ideological importance.

154

The most effective, but at the same time rare, miracles presented in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order with respect to the battles against the Lithuanians were apparitions of saints or angels. What is more, this was often connected with the death of knights in battles against the pagans as a specifically sacred sign of their blessedness. Thus the Virgin Mary appeared to the brother Hermann Sarrazin before his departure for battle in Curonia: '[...] Dear friend, I invite you to my Son's table, where you will rejoice with us in eternal blessedness.' So when he was ready to ride off, he said these kind words to some of the brothers: 'My dear brothers, may God take care of you and bless you in all eternity. You will never see me alive again because I have been invited by the dear Mother of God to leave here and share eternal joy. May God grant my dearest wish, that you and I meet again in the kingdom of heaven.'<sup>24</sup>

It should be pointed out that such visions could be seen not only by brothers participating in the battles against the pagans but also by other people. Thus, a good-natured and God-fearing farmer saw the brothers 'valiantly fighting against the Lithuanians'.<sup>25</sup> But it was not their victory seen by the farmer but them being killed by a more numerous enemy: 'What a terrible disaster. I can see the brothers and their followers being killed. Now I can see Mary, who bore Jesus Christ, and crowds of angels and virgins leading their souls joyfully to the kingdom of heaven.' At the same time, it was not just the death of the knights but the emphasis that they were pure and fought for the faith, and that is why their souls were taken to heaven. Moreover, a kind of admonition was given by the

<sup>21</sup> For more information on the ideology of the Baltic Crusades (including the war between the Teutonic Order and Lithuania) and their presentation as a holy war in the name of God, see, for example: CHRISTIANSEN, Eric. *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier, 1100–1525*. Minneapolis, 1980; URBAN, William. *The Baltic Crusade*. Chicago, 1994; HARDWICK, Paul. The Knightly Class of Europe and the Lithuanian Crusades. *Medieval Life*, 1997, No. 6, pp. 26–29; EHLERS, A. Op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> BERESNEVIČIUS, G. Op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin...*, p. 133.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

chronicler: 'We should take note that those who died at this time received the reward of heaven for their toils, and those who survived and were in danger became more and more strongly attached to their faith and silenced the unbelievers in battle; because the strength of faith is often endangered when it is safe, and it is more secure when it is in danger.'<sup>26</sup> In fact, we can see a vivid presentation of the ideology of the Crusade explaining the need to fight against the pagans on behalf of the Lord, and pointing out the sacred nature of death occurring in such a battle.

Nonetheless, it was not only a knight's death in battle against the pagans that meant a vision seen by Christians appeared in the chronicles. Such appearances could also be observed by pure and true brothers who devoted their life to the service to God.

As well as saints and angels, there could be appearances by symbolic creatures that were well known and respected as sacred in the Christian context. Among the more picturesque examples, we can point to the appearance of two snow-white doves above the body of brother Gundam, who fought courageously against the Lithuanians and killed many of them, but was badly injured and died. Women following his body to his place of burial in Christburg insisted that they saw 'two snow-white doves hovering, visible to everyone, above the body, stopping when it stopped, staying above the dead man, and flying over it wherever it was taken'.<sup>27</sup> The choice of this particular bird appearing above the body of the brother was not occasional. A dove was commonly used in the Middle Ages as a symbol of the Holy Ghost.<sup>28</sup> Here we should emphasise that it was of great importance to the Order's chroniclers to use widespread and well-known Christian symbols. This not only highlighted the miraculous in the course of the struggle against paganism, but gave it a sacred background.

The divinely ordained nature of the war was also emphasised by constant references to divine intervention in nature and the assistance of the latter to the warriors of Christ. Natural phenomena are often explained as direct divine intervention. For instance, a thunderstorm saves some brothers from certain death, or a wind blows the Order's ships into position for battle.<sup>29</sup> A textual analysis of the chronicles shows that when it comes to divine intervention influencing natural agents in order to affect the enemy, water and its power is considered one of the most common elements in this respect. For instance, in *Die Altere Chronik von Oliva* it was thanks to the intercession of the Virgin Mary that the campaign by the Order in the Lithuanian lands in 1348 was accomplished successfully. Due to this, the pagans suffered a well-deserved heavenly punishment, plunged into the cold waters of a river, while the brothers managed to

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 244–245. The description is similar to those presented earlier by PETER von Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae...*, S. 167.

<sup>28</sup> FISCHER, M. C. *Op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 100–101.

cross the thin ice of the river unharmed and win the battle, killing thousands of pagans.<sup>30</sup> A similar case was described by Peter of Dusburg, who described the brothers crossing the River Memel in 1294 as a miracle. According to the chronicler, the army of the Order was able to cross the river, while the ice was extremely thin and broke as soon as the warriors were on the opposite side of the water barrier.<sup>31</sup> What is even more important in this paragraph is that the author refers to the miracle in the Old Testament when the Lord saved the Israelites by helping them go through the sea on dry ground, with walls of water on their right and their left.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the author makes an analogy between the Israelites led by their Lord to safety and the knights of the Order who were guided by God across a river in the same way.<sup>33</sup>

In fact, such a miracle was mentioned in the chronicle by Peter of Dusburg not only once. A miracle associated with crossing a water barrier was also described in 1302, when the Order's troops invaded the Carsovia lands. The ice on the **Curonian Lagoon** was extremely thin, and it was rising and falling, but the warriors were able to cross it, which was considered by the chronicler to be a real miracle.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, the most common miracle described in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order is divine blessing and God's invisible help to knights in battle. Thus Peter of Dusburg connects the saving of a small detachment at the castle of Junigeda and

156

<sup>30</sup> Die ältere Chronik von Oliva..., S. 724: '*Et in conflict beata Maria protexit visibiliter Christianos ... Et in hoc potissime auxilium beatae Virginis potuit perpendi, quod glacies in quodam fluvio Strawa profundo rupta fuit sub Paganis, et submersae fuerunt tot inimici crucis, quod Christiani supra eorum cadaver sicco pede transierunt et per glaciem aliquovis cum impetus transiverunt, eiusdem tamen fluvii glacie integra permanente.*'

<sup>31</sup> PETER von Dusburg. Chronicon terrae Prussiae..., S. 158: '*De eventu mirabilis in hoc bello. Notandum, quod quando motevur bellum, exercitus dividitur in diversas vias, ut posit ordinate et sine pressure procedere. Tamen sepe contingit ex vario eventu, quod pretermissa debita ordinatione convenient in glacie centum equites, vel cc vel mille, ad unum locum. Qualiter autem glacies tam grave onus posit sustenere sine fractura, nescio, dues scit. Unde in multis bellis hyemalibus et maxime in isto, de quo jam dictum est, posset mira res et ammiracione digna considerari, I quis vellet diligencius intueri, quia exercitus iste in fine hyemis, quando glacies solis calore superveniente supra, et aque fluxu infra consumitur, in media nocte armatus transivit glaciem Memele, et dum transiisset sine omni periculo, dissolute fuit et confracta, sic quod mane facto non apparebant vestigial glaciei. Quis hec facere poterat, nisi ille solus, qui imperavit mari, ut tanquam murus staret a dextris et a sinistris, et sicco pede Israeliticus populous pertransiret.*'

<sup>32</sup> Exodus 14:21–29.

<sup>33</sup> *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin...*, p. 226: 'When it was returning home, the ice on the Memel was thin and rotten because the sun had melted much of the surface and it was also breaking up as a result of the movement of the water below it, so it was extremely weak. In spite of this the army with all its heavy weapons was able to cross it unharmed. This was at midnight, and in the morning at daybreak there was nothing but waves. This proves that God performed a miracle. This is the same strong God whose mighty command led the Israelite army through the Red Sea on the flight from Egypt without getting their feet wet. The water was like a wall on either side until they had crossed and then it closed over again. In the same way God led His troop across this river.' The similar explanation and connotation was given by Mary Fisher in: FISHER, M. C. Op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>34</sup> PETER von Dusburg. Chronicon terrae Prussiae..., S. 169: '*Tandem cum transiret cum exercitu glaciem per stagnum Curoniense, miranda res ibi apparuit. Tante teneritudinis fuit glacies, quod elevabatur et deprimebatur, sicut aqua nunc ascendit glaciem, quasi montem, postea descendit, ut in vallem, ita tamen quod nullus homo ibi submersus fuit domino protegente.*'

the victory of the Christians over a huge pagan army with the help of God, who blessed them during the fight.<sup>35</sup> God's help also helped the Teutonic knights to break into the castle at Gardinas (Garten, Grodno) in 1284: 'But at last, when God ordained it was time, He helped His warriors to break into the castle and conquer it.'<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the help of God was emphasised by Nicolaus von Jeroschin during the battle at Junigeda in 1294. When the brothers from Ragnit attacked the Lithuanian castle, they found out that there was a big garrison there. The knights wanted to turn back, but their commander encouraged them to continue the attack by appealing for help from God. And the latter really helped the Order's troops, and they killed most of the enemy army without any resistance: 'So God in His constancy performed a miracle by which the smaller troop snatched victory from the bigger one without coming to any harm. May He always be praised.'<sup>37</sup> Wigand of Marburg also emphasised the divine assistance that helped the brothers to win a battle against Vytenis on the battlefield at Papelauken: '*Deum glorificantes, a quo victoriam obtinuerunt ...*'<sup>38</sup>

In some cases, God not only helped the knights of the Order but influenced their enemies by some invisible force, which led to their loss. The most illustrative example of this can be found in the extract relating to Vytenis' reign and his military campaign to the Barten land in 1311. During this attack, the Grand Duke of Lithuania captured a lot of Christians and spoke about their faith in a cynical way, asking why their God had not helped them. The next day something strange happened. When Heinrich von Plotzke came to help the Order's troops, the pagans felt a strange fear, their hearts were so weak that the Lithuanians were not able to fight any more, and they ran away. Some of them were caught and killed, the rest were drowned, hanged or died of hunger in a virgin forest.<sup>39</sup> A similar interpretation, but with much more detail and a dramatised demonstration of Vytenis' insult against the faith and even sacrilege, was given by Nicolaus von Jeroschin.<sup>40</sup> In fact, he devotes an entire passage to a description of the mocking of the faith and divine retribution: 'The Good Lord

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., S. 157: '*Ecce quomodo unus persequebatur mille et duo fugabant decem milia. Nonne ideo, quia deus suus vendidit eos, et dominus conclusit eos?*'

<sup>36</sup> *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin...*, p. 209.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>38</sup> WIGAND von Marburg. *Nowa kronika pruska...*, s. 132.

<sup>39</sup> PETER von Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae...*, S. 176–177: '*Et ecce rex iste blasphemus nominis Jesu Cristi, dum venire in solitudinem ad terram Barthensem in campum dictum Woyploc, mente effrenatus gloriabatur, quasi potens in potencia exercitus sui, nunquam recogitans potestatem dei, et sit ad Christianos captos, qui ligati astiterunt ibi: ubi est deus vester? Quare non adjuvat vos, sicut dii nostril auxiliati sunt nobis nunc et altera vice? Christiani ingemiscentes tacuerunt. Sequenti die i.e. VIII idus Aprilis frater Henricus de Ploczke magnus commendator et fratres cum multo populo advenerunt et invenerunt regem et suum exercitum undique indagibus vallatum, et in primo congressu Lethowini viros cristianos interfecerunt; sed dum viderent fratres cum suo vexillo et multitudinem copiosam armatorum sequentem, irruit super eos pavor et adeo emarcuit cor eorum, quod non habebant ultra virtutem resistendi; unde quasi in ictu oculi rejectis armis omnes terga verterunt. Extunc fratres cum suis insequentes, percusserunt eos plaga magna, sic quod rex cum paucis vix evasit, alii gladio trucidati sunt, quidam submersi, ceteri in solitudine consumpti inedia vel pre dolore se suspendentes perierunt.*'

<sup>40</sup> *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin...*, pp. 257–259.

slaughtered them ferociously with the rod of His wrath, robbing them of life, persecuting them with righteous revenge. The Christians continued the slaughter and the pursuit all day and all night until they had put to death all the Lithuanians. Many of them died by drowning; some hanged themselves or died from despair.<sup>41</sup>

A similar invisible force affected negatively Lithuanian warriors in other battles, namely in 1290. When the Lithuanians were close to attacking the smaller army of the Order something miraculous happened. According to the author, 'When they were close to the spot where the ambush had been set, I do not know if a bird flew towards them or if the devil caught the leading Lithuanian's attention, but he wanted to see how the dice would fall, and they fell so badly for him that he immediately shouted to the people around him: "Woe on us all, we are all going to die."' The Lithuanian captain did not believe his warriors and continued the attack. As a result, most of the Lithuanians were killed or miraculously died: 'Many of them suffered such great privations in that wilderness that they hanged themselves; others became lost in the desolate country and died of hunger on the long road, so nearly all of them perished.'<sup>42</sup>

158

Here, we should emphasise that God's punishment was an important element in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order and the initial idea of Medieval man's world-view. God was one of the most influential and powerful beings that could intervene in people's lives, show his approval or disapproval to the inhabitants, and even their rulers, and punish them in the event of disrespect or offence. Thus divine blessing and, what is more important, divine retribution were the main regulative mechanisms that controlled society. According to Kurt Villads Jensen, the theme of God punishing the pagans or apostates was incorporated into crusading ideology, becoming one of its main elements.<sup>43</sup> Shown as outside the Christian circle, they brought destruction and death to Christian people, and disturbed the established state of affairs. Since the main regulatory force in society was religion, it is logical that it was God who was supposed to punish them for their crimes, if not with his own hands, then with the help of real people.<sup>44</sup> So the vivid descriptions of divine retribution befalling the pagan Lithuanians for their attacks against the Order or crimes committed in the Christian lands are one of the key feature of these narrative sources.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>43</sup> JENSEN, K. V. Op. cit., pp. 243–244.

<sup>44</sup> MAŽEIKA, Rasa. Violent Victims? Surprising Aspects of the Just War Theory in the Chronicle of Peter von Dusburg. In *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*. Ed. by Alan V. MURRAY. Aldershot, 2009, pp. 123–137.

<sup>45</sup> For more details on the presentation of God's punishment befalling the pagan Lithuanians in their attacks against the Teutonic Order, see: RYIER, Yanina. To the issue of the phenomenon of "God's punishment" of pagans of Lithuania for their attacks on the Christian lands of the Teutonic Order in the Order's chronicles of the 14th century. *Rocznik Przemyski. Historia*, 2020, t. 56, z. 1 (25), pp. 13–23. See also: TRUPINDA, J. Op. cit., s. 40–41, 129–130. On God's punishment in the ideology of crusading, see: THROOP, Susanna A. *Crusading as an Act of Vengeance, 1095–1216*. Abington, 2011, pp. 74–75.

God helped the Christians not only to win the battle against the pagans but also to avoid danger and return home unharmed.<sup>46</sup> The victory of a small group of brothers over a larger Lithuanian army was also often explained as the intervention of divine will and God's assistance.<sup>47</sup>

What is more, in some cases, God gave the brothers something more than escape from danger or victory. He gave them satisfaction. As was said in the chronicle by Nicolaus von Jeroschin, the knightly troops went to a castle in Lithuania to capture its people and loot it, but found the fort empty. They were so disappointed by this and were about to go back, but the Lord found a way to satisfy them.<sup>48</sup> When they came across the strongly fortified castle of Kymel on the Memel, which they could not have captured before, they felt that day that it was possible, and took the opportunity. They 'fearlessly ran at the castle gates before the heathens in the castle knew they were coming. The unwanted guests ferociously attacked the host and his household and murdered all of them. Then they set the castle on fire and razed it to the ground.'<sup>49</sup> On one hand, it seems to be an ordinary attack by the Teutonic troops on the Lithuanian lands. On the other hand, the previously numerous unsuccessful attempts by the brothers to capture the castle were emphasised by the author of the chronicle, as well as his presentation of this occasion as a miracle, a gift from God to the brothers for their service.

Similar data concerning booty obtained by the brothers as a gift from God can be found in other chronicles, including the one by Wigand of Marburg: '*Unde fraters cum infinita rapina ipsis a Deo data festinant in Kalis.*'<sup>50</sup> This correlates with the general idea of the Teutonic mission in the Baltic lands, which first of all aimed at religious goals, but took into account the material benefits to the knights too.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, we should point out that although in most cases connected with miracles during battles waged by the Teutonic knights against the Lithuanians it was the brothers who received divine help, there are some examples of assistance to the pagans. This was explained by the iniquity of the brothers and referred to as a punishment for their misbehaviour or their crimes against the faith and their brothers.

<sup>46</sup> PETER von Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae...*, S. 156: '*... sicque fraters salvi dei gracia sunt reversi. Ecce quomodo angustie fratribus errant undique, sed dues, qui in se sperantes non derelinquit, ipsos de hujusmodi interneconibus misericorditer liberavit.*' A similar situation is described in *Die aeltere Chronik von Oliva*, p. 710: '*Qui de tanta prosperita te confisus rediit iterate, et congregata magna praeda hominum dum abiret, insecuti fuerunt eum demine cum fidelibus Christianis et occiderunt paene totune exercitum ejus, et ipse cum paucis vix evasit; Christiani vero, per gratiam Dei omnes salvi, cum laudibus et gratiarum actionibus captives omnes reduxerunt,*' as well as in *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin...*, p. 223: 'So by the grace of God the brothers were able to reach home unharmed.'

<sup>47</sup> *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin...*, p. 194.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> WIGAND von Marburg. *Nowa kronika pruska...*, s. 174.

<sup>51</sup> TRUPINDA, J. *Op. cit.*, s. 100–101.

The most horrible crime in this respect was apostasy, which was immediately punished by divine will. As a rule, such episodes are characterised by extremely strong symbolism, and could be perceived as a warning and an exhortation. Thus, Peter of Dusburg tells an extremely symbolic story of a man who ran away after his apostasy, was captured, killed, and torn to pieces by a dog, which ate his heart, known for its betrayal and insidiousness: *'Quem sic interfectum canis ejus diris morsibus est aggressus, et aperiens latus ejus sinistrum, core jus, quod tot prodicionum et fraudum conscium fuit, de corpora extraxit, et in presencia Cristianorum plurium devoravit.'*<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, conversion, or at least recognition by God, could cause a divine miracle and blessing. Nicolaus von Jeroschin explains in such a way the case of a Lithuanian prisoner who had been accused of a serious matter by his ruler. According to the author, a Ruthenian who was with him in the same cage suggested he offer some wax to God and the Virgin Mary to get their help. As soon as he made this offering, 'His chains fell from him and the prison door opened. He escaped with the help of God and later fulfilled his oath at Ragnit.'<sup>53</sup> It is worth pointing out that the baptism of pagans was considered to be an extremely important event in the perception of a Medieval cleric, associated with the direct aim of the Order, and that is why it was emphasised by chroniclers. And a miracle was one of the most illustrative ways to highlight the sacred nature of such a transformation.

160

### Miracles in battles against the pagans in the general context of the Christian narrative tradition: chronicles of the Teutonic Order versus Russian and Lithuanian annals

The miracle was typical not only of the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, which depicted battles against the pagan Lithuanians. We can claim that the depiction of the intervention of divine or supernatural forces in everyday life in general, and war in particular, is characteristic of the Medieval Christian world-view. This leads to the assumption that it is possible to find similar descriptions in other narrative traditions. Russian and Lithuanian annals and chronicles are of great importance in the current study. Due to their direct connection with the history of the formation and development of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, they can be considered a valuable source for the internal perception of the Lithuanians and other barbarians in the course of the wars. What is more, a comparative analysis of the image of the Lithuanians and other pagans presented in the chronicles from different narrative traditions can be carried out. It is not possible to conduct a fully fledged analysis of Russian and Lithuanian

<sup>52</sup> PETER von Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae...*, S. 147.

<sup>53</sup> *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin...*, p. 252.

chronicles in the context of the present study, as it has a different main focus. Nonetheless, the author considers it reasonable to refer to the most vivid examples relating to miracles in the battles against the barbarians in the annals mentioned, so that it is possible to trace analogies in presenting miracles in different Christian narrative traditions, and emphasise the importance of miracles in the world-view of Medieval Christians. The author takes into account the fact that there are no original Lithuanian sources from the period under study that have survived to the present day. At the same time, we can conclude that it is possible and even necessary to analyse later Lithuanian sources, namely chronicles from the 15th and 16th centuries, as reflecting the tradition of depicting the pagans from a chronological perspective.

Although not to such an extent as in the case of the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, we can find highly symbolic images which are connotative with the idea of divine intervention in Russian and Lithuanian annals. Obviously, the perspective of God's presence and the agents of his help or punishment are different, but the strategy of the presentation, as well as religious and ethical constructs used by the chroniclers, are similar. The author assumes that the methodological approaches used by the creators of these sources in relation to the pagan Lithuanians are similar to those they used in relation to other barbarian enemies, namely the Cumans, the Pechenegs, and others. What is more, the author suggests that the methodological techniques of the presentation of the pagans in annals can be compared with the techniques analysed above, and can be viewed as an element of the general Christian perception of the pagans, although with differences explained by the historical and cultural traditions of Rus' and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

It is important to point out that Russian annals also emphasise the cruelty of the pagans attacking their lands, and often evaluate the victory over them as divine will or a miracle by God to protect the Christians and punish the barbarians for their crimes. For instance, it was God's intervention (God's anger, as cited in the text) that helped the princes of Rus' to win battles against the pagan Cumans (one of the strongest enemies of the principalities of Rus') and kill many of the pagan enemies: 'и Половецъ безбожныхъ множество избиша. а инѣхъ загнаша. и тако измроша оубиваѣми гнѣвомъ Бжѣимъ. и прчстыѣ юго Мтѣре. много бо зла створиша ти шканнии Половци Руской земли. того ради всемлствыи Бжѣ хота погубити. и наказати безбожныхъ снѣы Измаиловы Куманы. æко да ѡмьстятъ кровь хрсѣяньску.'<sup>54</sup> It is important to point out that this punishment and victory over the barbarians is shown in the same way as the victory by the Teutonic Knights over the pagan Lithuanians, revenge for the blood of the Christians.

<sup>54</sup> *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (hereafter PSRL). T. 1: *Lavrent'evskaia letopis'*. Vyp. 2: *Suzdal'skaia letopis' po lavrent'evskomu spisku*. Red. Evfimii KARSKII. 2-e izd. Moskva, 1927, st. 446, l. 153.

The highly symbolic description of divine intervention, somehow similar to those of Vytenis' punishment for his sacrilege in front of the captured Christians, is presented in the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*,<sup>55</sup> but in a different context, referring to the Hungarian attack against the principality of Halych. According to the author of the chronicle, divine retribution (the angel's punishment as cited in the text of the chronicle) fell on the Hungarian army for their crimes in the lands of Rus' in the form of an unknown and horrible epidemic, which caused the enemy a lot of suffering: 'Проутоу Бъ̀ бо попоустиль бѣшеть рану ангѣль бѣшеть ихъ. сице оумирающимъ. инии же изъ подъшевь въстоупахутъ акы ис чрева. Инии же во конѣ влѣзъше. изомроша. инии же школо шгна Б солѣзъшеса. и масть ко оустомъ. придевоше. оумирахоу многими же ранами. разными оумирахоу. хлаби бо нбснѣи шдинако топахутъ и оушедшю же емоу за невѣръство боѣръ.'<sup>56</sup>

162

As far as we can remember from the previous part, God not only punished the pagans but also assisted the Christians in their war. We can consider God's help as a crucial element in both Teutonic and Russian chronicles. Thus, it was God's assistance that helped the Novgorodians in their resistance against the joint troops of the Germans, Lithuanians and Lib' as described in the *Novgorod First Chronicle*: 'Том же лѣтѣ иде князь Всеволодъ съ новгородѣци къ Пертуеву, и устретоша стороже Нѣмьци, Литва, Либь, и бишася; и пособи богъ новгородѣцемъ ...'<sup>57</sup>

What is more, the Lithuanian chronicles from the later period, namely those from the 15th and 16th centuries, explain the important victories of their rulers (including pagan ones) in a similar way. Thus, according to the author of the *Bychowiec Chronicle*, it was God's assistance that helped Gediminas to win a battle against the knights of the Teutonic Order: '*Y pomoże boh wielkomu kniaziui Gidyminu, iż nemcow wsich nahołowu poraził, a żemoyt ot nemcow odstąpiła y przystąpiła ko gospodaru swojemu pryżożonomu Gidyminu, iż nemcow wsich nahołowu poraził, y pobili wse woysko nemeckoie.*'<sup>58</sup> And it does not matter in this context that Gediminas was a pagan ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and worshiped ancient Baltic deities. The creator of the chronicle perceived the story from the perspective of his Christian world-view. That is why it was God who helped the Lithuanian grand duke in his resistance. Similar ideas can be found in relation to the reigns of other rulers (especially Vytautas) in other Lithuanian chronicles, for instance the *Slutsk Chronicle*: 'Божиею силою ту немало

<sup>55</sup> Although in this case the main participants in the battle were the Ruthenian princes and the Cumans, the analogy of presenting divine assistance to the Christians in their struggle against the cruel pagans seems to be quite obvious.

<sup>56</sup> *Kronika halicko-wołyńska (Kronika Romanowiczów)*. Tłum., wstęp i komentarze Dariusz DAJBROWSKI, Adrian JUSUPOVIĆ. Kraków, Warszawa, 2017, s. 152–153.

<sup>57</sup> *Novgorodskaia pervaiia letopis' starshago i mladshago izvodov*. Red. i avtor predisl. Arsenii NASONOV. Moskva, Leningrad, 1950, l. 92–92 ob.

<sup>58</sup> *Khronika Bykhovtsa*. In *PSRL*. T. 32: *Khroniki: Litovskaia i Zhmoitskaia, i Bykhovtsa. Letopisi: Barkulabovskaia, Averki i Pantsyrnogo*. Sost. i red. Nikolai ULASHCHIK. Moskva, 1975, str. 26–27.

чудо створися, избито бысть вои много множество, князеи и бояр.<sup>59</sup> These examples are presented in order to demonstrate that divine intervention and miracles on the battlefield were presented not only in the chronicles of the Teutonic Order. Extracts from Russian and Lithuanian narratives demonstrate a similarity in the methodology used by Christian chroniclers in depicting pagan enemies and evaluating the war against them, with the authors' emphasis on miracles and the divine in battles.

## Conclusions

To conclude, the nature of the Teutonic Order as a religious military organisation and its need to explain the campaigns against Lithuania as a holy war determined features of its chronicles in the 14th century. To achieve the goal of presenting the war against Lithuania as a holy war, the chroniclers put great emphasis on divine intervention in the brothers' campaigns. Since the military campaigns organised to the lands of Lithuania (and other pagan lands, including Prussia) were explained as God's will and the protection of the Christian faith, a great emphasis was put on divine sanction of the war against pagan Lithuania. This was achieved by interpreting military events in terms of divine intervention in order to assist the brothers of the Order. Miracles that occurred during the Crusade were considered as the clearest evidence of God's involvement in the process and the exercise of his will. One of the most effective ways of achieving this goal was the apparition of a divine being (God himself, a saint, an angel, etc) that appeared on the battlefield and protected the Christians in their fight against the pagans. This kind of apparition demonstrated the spiritual nature of crusading warfare, and made it a holy war. Apart from the miraculous appearance of saints and angels, the following categories of miracles described in reference to battles between the warriors of the Teutonic Order and those of Lithuania can be differentiated: apparitions of symbolic creatures which are well known in Christianity during, after or before battles; divine help for the knights in their attacks (divine will); God's help in avoiding danger; divine intervention that influences natural agents in order to mislead or conquer the enemy. God's punishment befalling the pagans as a symbol of divine justice was of great importance too.

It seems obvious that the ideological framework of crusading in Lithuania was similar to the Order's Crusade in general, and that miracles appeared not only in battles between the knights of the Teutonic Order and the Lithuanians, but also between Christian knights and other pagans, including the Prussians. The author claims that the same constructs were used in other Christian narrative traditions. That is why a

<sup>59</sup> *Slutskaia letopis'*. In *PSRL*. T. 35: *Letopisi belorussko-litovskie*. Sost. i avtor predisl. Nikolai ULASHCHIK. Moskva, 1980, s. 70, l. 18 ob.

brief comparison of the presentation of miracles during the war against the pagans in Teutonic chronicles and Russian and Lithuanian annals was conducted. The analysis of the latter narratives has shown that the methodological approaches used by their creators were similar to those of the Teutonic Order. What is more, this referred not only to the emphasis on miracles in battles against the pagan Lithuanians, but also to the way of describing the barbarian enemies. That is why the author suggests that the methodological technique of the presentation of miracles and the emphasis on its major role in the war against the pagans was typical not only of the chronicles of the Teutonic Order, but of the Medieval Christian world-view in general.

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164

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## STEBUKLAI IR DIEVIŠKASIS ĮSIKIŠIMAS VOKIEČIŲ ORDINO IR LIETUVOS KOVŲ METU XIV AMŽIAUS KRIKŠČIONIŠKUOSIUOSE PASAKOJIMUOSE

Yanina Ryier

Santrauka

XIV amžius buvo nuožmių kovų tarp Vokiečių ordino ir Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės (trumpiau tariant, Lietuvos) laikotarpis. Vokiečių ordino pagrindinis tikslas nuo pat įkūrimo buvo kova su krikščionybės priešais ir pagonių žemių atvertimas. Ši idėja atsispindėjo Vokiečių ordino kanceliarijos dokumentuose, o vėliau ir krikščionių dvasininkų rašytose kronikose. Šie autoriai ne tik perteikė ideologinį Kryžiaus karo kontekstą, bet ir atspindėjo Viduramžių dvasininkų mąstymo raidą ir tai, kaip jie suvokė Lietuvos ir Vokiečių ordino, pagonių ir krikščionių priešpriešą. Milžinišką įtaką Vokiečių ordino kronikų turiniui turėjo Ordino karių, priklausiusių religinei organizacijai ir veikusių Dievo vardu, statusas. Faktas, kad Dievas (kad ir nematomas) buvo laikomas vienu iš karinių žygių dalyvių, lėmė karo su pagonimis sakralizaciją. Štai kodėl didelis dėmesys skirtas karo su pagoniška Lietuva dieviškajai sankcijai. Kronikose siekta kovą su pagonimis perteikti taip, kad būtų matomas Dievo įsikišimas į karinius veiksmus, jo parama krikščionių riteriams atlikti jiems patikėtą misiją.

Akivaizdu, kad karo sakralizavimas nebuvo būdingas tik kryžiaus žygiams prieš Lietuvą. Pirmieji karo sakralizacijos bandymai siekia pirmojo kryžiaus žygio epochą. Stebuklai, įvykę kryžiaus žygių metu, buvo laikomi ryškiausiais Dievo dalyvavimo kovose ir jo valios vykdymo įrodymais. Vienas veiksmingiausių būdų parodyti dvasinį (sakralizuotą) kryžiaus žygio pobūdį buvo papasakoti apie tam tikros dieviškos ar antgamtinės jėgos (Dievo, šventųjų, angelų) pasirodymą mūšio lauke, jos indėlį apsaugant krikščionis nuo pagonių. Negana to, tokie stebuklai dažnai būdavo pateikiami įvykių dalyvių ar jų liudininkų akimis. Tam tikra prasme tai atspindi ir Viduramžių žmonių pasaulėžiūrą, kai pasitikėjimo verti buvo tie įvykiai, apie kuriuos pasakota dalyvių akimis.

Kronikų analizė leido išskirti tam tikras stebuklų, kurie aptinkami Vokiečių ordino brolių ir jų mūšių su lietuviais aprašymuose, rūšis. Tai 1) angelų (taip pat kitų simbolinių būtybių) apsireiškimas per mūšį su pagonimis, prieš jį arba po jo; 2) dieviškoji pagalba riteriams puolant pagonis (dieviškoji valia); 3) dieviškasis įsikišimas, darantis įtaką gamtos veiksniams, kurie galėjo suklaidinti ir / arba padėti užkariauti priešininkus.

Veiksmingiausias, bet kartu ir labai retas stebuklas, pateiktas kovų su lietuviais aprašymuose, buvo šventųjų ir angelų apsireiškimai. Šie apsireiškimai dažniausiai įvykdavo

riteriams žuvus mūšių su pagoniais metu ir turėjo parodyti sakralų riterių palaiminimą. Tačiau tokius apsimetimus galėjo stebėti ir tyri ar tikri broliai, kurie savo gyvenimą buvo pašventę tarnystei Dievui. Be angelų ir šventųjų, apsimetsti galėjo ir kitos simbolinės būtybės, kurios krikščionims buvo gerai žinomos ir vertinamos kaip šventos, pavyzdžiui, balandis – Šventosios Dvasios simbolis.

Faktą, kad karo pobūdį yra nulėmęs Dievas, taip pat pabrėžė dieviškojo įsikišimo į gamtą ir šios pagalbą Kristaus kariams paminėjimai. Gamtos reiškiniai dažnai aiškinti kaip tiesioginis dieviškasis įsikišimas. Vanduo ar su juo susiję neįprasti gamtos reiškiniai šiuo atveju buvo labiausiai paplitę kronikų siužetų elementai.

Dažniausias stebuklas, minėtas Vokiečių ordino kronikose, buvo dieviškasis palaiminimas ir nematoma Dievo pagalba riteriams, lemianti jų pergalę mūšiuose arba neigiamai paveikianti priešus ir juos susilpninanti. Dievas taip pat padėdavo krikščionims išvengti pavojų arba sugrįžti iš karo žygio nesužeistiems. Netikėtos materialinės naudos gavimas iš žygių, plėšikavimas taip pat dažnai buvo pristatomas kaip stebuklinga Dievo dovana broliams už jų tarnystę.

Taip pat pabrėžtina, kad Vokiečių ordino kronikose didelis dėmesys skirtas dieviškajam atpildui arba Dievo bausmei, – viduramžiškai to meto žmogaus pasaulėžiūrai tai buvo svarbu. Vienas svarbiausių šių pasakojimų bruožų buvo ryškūs dieviškojo atpildo pagonims lietuviams už jų išpuolius prieš Vokiečių ordino brolius ar už jų krikščioniškuose kraštuose padarytus nusikaltimus aprašymai, kuriuos kronikininkai pateikdavo kaip prigimtinio teisingumo reguliuojantįjį mechanizmą. Kartu pažymėtina, kad nors daugeliu atvejų, susijusių su stebuklais Vokiečių riterių kovose su lietuviais, dieviškosios pagalbos sulaukdavo Vokiečių ordino broliai, pasitaikydavo ir tokios pagalbos pagonims pavyzdžių. Tai buvo aiškinama brolių nedorybėmis ir vaizduojama kaip bausmė už jų netinkamą elgesį ar nusikaltimus tikėjimui ir broliams. Pats baisiausias nusikaltimas šiuo atveju buvo apostazė, už kurią dieviškoji valia bausdavo iškart. Paprastai tokie epizodai pasižymėjo itin stipria simbolika ir galėjo būti suvokiami kaip įspėjimas arba raginimas. Tuo tarpu atsivertimas arba bent jau Dievo pripažinimas galėjo sukelti dieviškąjį stebuklą ir palaiminimą.

Suprantama, stebuklai buvo būdingi ne tik Vokiečių ordino kronikoms. Galime teigti, kad įvykių, susijusių su dieviškųjų ir antgamtinių jėgų įsikišimu, pateikimas kronikose apskritai išreiškė Viduramžių pasaulėžiūrą. Todėl panašių aprašymų galima aptikti ir kitose pasakojamosiose tradicijose, pavyzdžiui, Rusios ar Lietuvos metraščiuose. Tai įgalina daryti prielaidą, kad stebuklingas ir dieviškasis įsikišimas buvo svarbus Vokiečių ordino kryžiaus žygių Lietuvoje ideologijos elementas. Kartu jis buvo analogiškas ankstyvųjų Vokiečių ordino kryžiaus žygių pasakojamam kontekstui, o jo pagrindai glūdėjo platesnėje Viduramžių krikščioniškosios pasaulėžiūros perspektyvoje.