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ARTICLE

Rustics as instruments of God's wrath. News about the battle of "Posada" in the *Ordensland* of Prussia

Florin Curta and Gregory Leighton

Returning from a four-month tour in America, the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga (1871–1940) stopped for a few days in Switzerland, on his way home. On May 7, 1930, he gave a lecture in Bern on medieval peasants and their struggle for freedom in the 14th century. Peasants against feudal armies inspired memories from America. However, Iorga, who was at the time preoccupied with questions of world history and comparative research, did not simply associate the War of Independence with the victory of the Swiss "peasants" at Sempach against Duke Leopold III of Tyrol.[1] He drew a parallel between the military success of the *Eidgenossen* of 1386 and the defeat inflicted 56 years earlier upon the king of Hungary, Charles I, by Romanian peasants. The battle, on the 600th anniversary of which Iorga delivered his lecture, was illustrated in the Hungarian *Illuminated Chronicle*. The Romanian historian was convinced that the illustrator had been an eyewitness or, at least, somebody informed by a participant.[2] There is no mention of peasants in the text of the *Chronicle*, but on the basis of the last illuminations in the manuscript, Iorga thought he could recognize the dress of the Romanian peasants of his own time: the woolen hat (*căciulă*, a sort of Phrygian cap); the long, braided hair; the leather jacket doubled with wool; the leggings; and the leather sandals (*opinci*).[3] The Romanians fought like peasants as well: they cut trees in the forest, which they then pushed over King Charles and his heavy cavalry.[4] Iorga did not find this detail either in the text or in the illuminations of the Hungarian *Chronicle*. He got it from the *Chronicle of the Prussian Land* by Peter of Dusburg, although that source is not mentioned in the lecture.[5]

Iorga was most likely aware that Peter of Dusburg had explicitly called "peasants" (*rustici*) those who had obtained the victory in 1330 against King Charles I of Hungary and his men. However, his 1930 interpretation of the battle was very influential, and most Romanian historians of later generations were encouraged to imagine that the Hungarians had been

[1] Nicolae Iorga, *Deux conférences en Suisse* (Bern: no publisher, 1930), p. 8: "On trouve aussi un cas correspondant dans l'histoire américaine. La première victoire a été gagnée de cette manière par les rebelles américains contre les soldats allemands à la solde du roi d'Angleterre." For Iorga's American tour, see Gheorghe Buzatu, "Nicolae Iorga și America," *Hierasus* 3 (1980), 13–18. At that time, Iorga was working on his two-volume study of Romanians in world history; see his *La place des Roumains dans l'histoire universelle* (Bucharest: Editions de l'Institut d'études byzantines, 1935). In 1937, Iorga established the Institute for the Study of World History, which in 1965 became the "Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History in Bucharest.

[2] Iorga, *Deux conférences*, p. 5.

[3] Iorga, *Deux conférences*, p. 6: "A ce point de vue aussi la miniature de 1330 correspond parfaitement aux costume actuel du paysan roumain... Le paysan roumain est représenté de la façon la plus véridique, correspondant le plus à la verité." Although the ruler of Wallachia does not appear in any of the *Chronicle*'s illuminations, Iorga believed that even Prince Basarab must have been dressed as a peasant. He was a peasant richer than others, so he was most likely dressed up better (Iorga, *Deux conférences*, p. 7).

[4] Iorga, *Deux conférences*, p. 9.

[5] The indirect citation of Peter of Dusburg makes Iorga's lecture the first use of the *Chronicle of the Prussian Land* in the Romanian historiography. It may well be at Iorga's initiative that the young Emil Lăzărescu later published the Latin text along with the Middle German translation of Nicolaus of Jeroschin: Emil C. Lăzărescu, "Despre lupta din 1330 a lui Basarab Voevod cu Carol-Robert," *Revista istorică* 21 (1935), nos. 7–9, 241–46.

defeated by an army of peasants, largely on the basis of the illuminations in the *Chronicle*.[6] Only recently has that idea been linked to the continuator of Peter of Dusburg and his intention to attribute the defeat of the Hungarians to God's punishment for their arrogance. The idea that those winning over the proud knights were peasants must therefore have originated in Hungary, as an explanation for the battle of 1330, which must have accompanied the news reaching the shore of the Baltic Sea.[7] The information in the *Chronicle of the Land of Prussia* thus gained an even greater significance, since that source is some 40 years earlier than the *Illuminated Chronicle*. Because of the extraordinary influence of Iorga, to this day, no Romanian historian has explicitly acknowledged that the *Chronicle of the Land of Prussia* is in fact the earliest narrative source to refer to the battle of 1330. If victory in that battle was won by peasants, as Iorga had it, then it is the *Chronicle of the Land of Prussia* that needs scrutiny, not only the *Illuminated Chronicle*. Did the information in the former source originate in Hungary? If so, how did it reach Prussia within a very short time? What exactly was the point about making the successful adversaries of King Charles I look like peasants? In this paper, we will attempt to provide some plausible answers to those questions. In doing so, we intend to approach the deeper meaning of a curious theme that appears in 13th- to early 15th-century, Latin sources of Central Europe: armed peasants.

"God took revenge on the Hungarians": Peter of Dusburg, his continuator, and Nicolaus of Jeroschin

Peter of Dusburg was a priest and chronicler of the Order of the Teutonic Knights, a military monastic order founded in the Holy Land in 1190 at the Siege of Acre.[8] He composed the *Chronicle of the Prussian Land* (*Chronica terrae Prussiae*) in 1326, the definitive historical account of the conquest of the lands in the present-day territory of northeastern Poland and the Kaliningrad exclave of Lithuania.[9] There is no manuscript of this text that could be dated before 1550.[10] Christoph Hartnoch produced the first edition in 1679, based on a manuscript still kept in Toruń.[11] The intended audience of the chronicle remains a matter of much debate. Most scholars agree that the use of Latin excludes the brothers of the Order, who primarily spoke Middle High German. Because of that, the *Chronicle* was composed to reflect a culture of reform within the Order to outside audiences in Europe, Rome, or perhaps even to (some) priests working in Prussia.[12]

[6] Lăzărescu, "Despre lupta din 1330," p. 246; Paul Ioan Cruceană, "Puncte de vedere privind localizarea Posadei," *Revista de istorie* 33 (1980), no. 10, 1971–79, here 1975; Nicolae Stoicescu and Florian Tucă, "Semnificația istorică a bătăliei de la Posada," *Revista de istorie* 33 (1980), no. 10, 1857–73, here 1864 and 1869; Constantin Rezachevici, "Localizarea bătăliei dintre Basarab I și Carol Robert (1330): în Banatul de Severin (I)," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"* 21 (1984), 70–87, here 75; Constantin Rezachevici, "Localizarea bătăliei dintre Basarab I și Carol Robert (1330): în Banatul de Severin (II)," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"* 22 (1985), 391–407, here 402 with n. 154. See also Constantin Rezachevici, "Caracterul bătăliei din 1300 între Basarab I și Carol Robert: țărani neînarmați sau cavaleri de tip apusean?" *Argesis* 13 (2004), 167–75, here 167–68.

[7] Rezachevici, "Caracterul bătăliei," p. 171. See also Nicolae Edroiu, "Lupta de la Posada (nov. 1330) și implicațiile ei în istoria românilor," *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Historia* 25 (1980), no. 2, 3–7, here 6.

[8] Nicholas Morton, *The Military Orders 1120–1314* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 54–6, for the foundation of the Order.

[9] Marcus Wüst, "Peter von Dusburg: Chronik des Preußenlandes – eine programmatisch-politische Schrift für die Kurie," *Mrągowskie Studia Humanistyczne* 10 (2014), 108–16.

[10] Arno Mentzel-Reuters, "Deutschordenshistoriographie," in *Handbuch Chroniken des Mittelalters*, eds. Gerhard Wolf and Norbert H. Ott (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 301–36, here 302. The earliest manuscript of the chronicle was copied in 1568 and is now kept in Toruń, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka III/26.

[11] State Archives of Toruń, Kat. II, XIII, 1. The manuscript is dated to the 17th century. See Jarosław Wenta, *Studien über die Ordensgeschichtsschreibung am Beispiel Preußens* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2001), p. 205.

[12] Marcus Wüst, *Studien zum Selbstverständnis des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2013), pp. 69–72; Gregory Leighton, 'Did the Teutonic Order create a sacred landscape in

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In light of the importance of his text as a historical source, it is surprising how little is in fact known about Dusburg himself. Based on his name, scholars have proposed two possible places of origin. The first is Duisburg, in the Duchy of Cleve, about 70 km north of Cologne (i.e., in the Rhineland). This idea was favored by such 19th-century Prussian historians as Johannes Voigt (1786–1863) and Max Pollux Töppen (1822–1893). It was Töppen, in fact, who edited the *Chronicle* and published it in 1861.[13] Later scholars argued that Peter came from Doesburg, about 90 km east of Utrecht (where the Teutonic Order had a bailiwick from 1270). The most detailed study of Dusburg's life and the first to connect him to the Netherlands is that of Marzena Pollakówna (1926–1971).[14] Klaus Schulz and Dieter Wojtecki, who edited and translated Dusburg's chronicle in 1984, reached a similar conclusion, and this continues to be the accepted view concerning Peter and his origins.[15]

In the first few sentences of the chronicle, the author calls himself "brother Peter von Dusburg, a priest and brother of the Order."[16] Some believe that he wrote the chronicle in Marienburg (Pol. Malbork), the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights from 1309 until 1466.[17] Others prefer Königsberg (Rus. Kaliningrad), the seat of the marshals of the Order and the point of departure for *Litauerreisen* – seasonal crusades led by the Order against the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from 1304 to 1422.[18] If Dusburg was chaplain to the Grand Master, then he resided in Marienburg. Because his chronicle includes several incidents that point to a familiarity with affairs in and around Königsberg, Peter must have stayed in that region for a considerable time, if not permanently.[19] For example, he recounts a series of stories about the brothers and commanders living in Königsberg, including digressions on their piety and accounts of miraculous visions of the Virgin Mary (the Order's patron saint).[20]

Dusburg wrote his chronicle at the request of the Grand Master Werner of Orseln (1324–1330). His purpose was to show "the signs and wonders of God," carried out by the brothers of the Teutonic House in Prussia, immediately linking the Order's presence in the region to a Biblical passage.[21] Dusburg's chronicle has traditionally been treated as an important record of an entire century in the history of Prussia, from the arrival of the

thirteenth-century Prussia?' *Journal of Medieval History* 44 (2018), no. 4, 457–83, here 460. For a detailed study of the chronicle as an aide for preachers, see Jarosław Wenta, "Kazanie i historyczne egzemplum w późnośredniowiecznym Chełmnie," in *Ecclesia et civitas. Kościół i życie religijne w mieście średniowiecznym*, eds. Halina Manikowska and Hanna Zaremska (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, 2002), pp. 473–82, here 478–81.

[13] Johannes Voigt, *Die Geschichte Preußens von den ältesten Zeit bis zum Untergange der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens*, vol. 3 (Königsberg: Bornträger, 1828), p. 604; Max Töppen, *Geschichte der preußischen Historiographie von P. v. Dusburg bis auf K. Schütz* (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1853), pp. 1–2.

[14] Marzena Pollakówna, *Kronika Piotra z Dusburga* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1968).

[15] Peter von Dusburg, *Chronik des Preußenlandes*, edited and translated by Klaus Schulz and Deiter Wojtecki (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), pp. 3–30.

[16] Peter of Dusburg, *Chronica terrae Prussiae*, eds. Jarosław Wenta and Sławomir Wysyomirski. Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Nova series. 13 (Cracow: Nakładem Polskiej Akademie Umejętnośći, 2007), p. 3 (*frater Petrus de Dusburgk ejusdem sacre professionis sacerdos*); English translation by Gregory Leighton. Hereafter, this source is abbreviated PD.

[17] Pollakówna, *Kronika*, pp. 203–7. For an overview of the state of research on Dusburg and his origins, see Sławomir Wyszomirski, "Die Werkstatt Peters von Dusburg," in *Mittelalterliche Kultur und Literatur im Deutschordensstaat in Preußen*, eds. Jarosław Wenta Giesla Vollmann-Profe, and Sieglinde Hartmann (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013), pp. 501–11, here 502–3.

[18] Werner Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen des europäischen Adels*, 3 vols. (Sigmaringen/Göttingen: J. Thorbecke/V&R Unipress, 1989–2020).

[19] Grischa Vercamer, "Zeit in Peters von Dusburg *Chronica terre Prussie* (1326). Chronologische Ordnung oder Mittel zum Zweck?" *Zapiski historyczne* 76 (2011), no. 4, 7–23, here 8–9; Sławomir Zonenberg, „Kto był autor Epitome gestorum Prussie?" *Zapiski historyczne* 78 (2013), no. 4, 85–102, here 86–8.

[20] For the Marian patronage of the Order, see Udo Arnold, "Maria als Patronin des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter," in *Terra Sanctae Mariae. Mittelalterliche Bildwerke der Marienverehrung im Deutschordensland Preußen*, ed. Gerhard Eimer (Bonn: Kulturstiftung der Deutschen Vertriebenen, 2009), pp. 29–56; Gregory Leighton, *Ideology and Holy Landscape in the Baltic Crusades* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2022), pp. 17–30.

[21] PD, p. 4 ; the passage in question is from Daniel 3:99 (*signa et mirabilia fecit apud me Deus excelsus*).

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Teutonic Knights in 1230 up to 1330. It is thus a crucial source for examining the ways in which the Teutonic Order understood itself and, particularly in the wake of the loss of Acre in 1291, how it justified its existence to *Christianitas* in the wake of several internal and external crises.[22] In other words, his chronicle is a product of reform.

Four books comprise the *Chronica terrae Prussiae*. The first narrates the foundation of the Order in the Holy Land and lists the Grand Masters of the Order beginning with Hermann von Salza (1210–1239).[23] Book Two concerns the arrival of the brothers in Prussia, beginning with an account of the Prussian raids on the Kulmlerland (*De vastacione terre Culmensis per Pruthenos*).[24] It describes the papal confirmation of the Teutonic Knights' wars in Prussia, before proceeding to an allegory of the "new war" (*novum bellum*) waged by the Knights.[25] Book Three is the longest of all and may be compared to a war report (*Kriegsbericht*).[26] Made up of 362 chapters, the book describes the establishment of the Order's early castles and towns, and the continual struggles between the Teutonic Order and the Prussians. The book concludes with the conquest of the Prussians in 1283 and the wars against Lithuania to 1326. Throughout the chronicle, in the margins are "happenings" (*incidentia*) highlighting the elections and death of kings and Holy Roman Emperors, natural phenomena such as earthquakes and comets, as well as a lament for the Holy Land following the loss of Acre in 1291.[27] These comprise Book Four.

Appended to the chronicle is a supplement (*Supplementum*), which narrates events in Prussia between 1326 and the death of Werner of Orseln in November 1330.[28] When exactly was this supplement written, and by whom? Some believe that it must have been after Dusburg's own death.[29] Others pointed out that the supplement is closely associated with Nicolaus of Jeroschin's translation and could have been written during Dusburg's lifetime.[30] If so, the supplement was written by another churchman active in Sambia. The text begins with Werner of Orseln's addition of the *in principio erat verbum* to the daily prayers of the Order and proceeds to list the castles at Morungen (Pol. Morąg), Christmemel (Lit. Skiersemune) and a few others in Lithuania. The supplement also describes the conflict between the Teutonic Knights in Livonia and the citizens of Riga.[31] Then comes the account of how the King of Poland, Władysław Łokietek, invaded the Kulmerland in 1330 with the help of mercenaries (*milites stipendarii*) from Hungary.[32]

[22] See Gisela Vollmann-Profe, "Ein Glücksfall in der Geschichte der preußischen Ordenschronistik: Nikolaus von Jeroschin übersetzt Peter von Dusburg," in *Forschungen zur deutschen Literatur des Spätmittelalters. Festschrift für Johannes Janota*, eds. Horst Brunner and Werner Williams-Krapp (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2003), pp. 125–40, here 126; Mary Fischer, "The Books of the Maccabees and the chronicles of the Teutonic Order," *Crusades* 4 (2005), 59–72; Wüst, *Studien*, p. 67; Leighton, *Ideology*, pp. 7–16 and 22–3.

[23] PD, pp. 11–21 (1.1–1.5).

[24] PD, pp. 22–48 (2.1–2.13).

[25] PD, pp. 32–45 (2.7–2.9).

[26] PD, pp. 49–263 (3.1–3.362).

[27] Jarosław Wenta, "Bemerkungen über die Funktion eines mittelalterlichen historiographischen Textes: die Chronik des Peter von Dusburg," in De litteris, manuscriptis, inscriptionibus...*Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Walter Koch*, ed. Theo Kölzer (Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), pp. 675–85, here 676.

[28] PD, pp. 268–276. For the assassination of Werner of Orseln, the last event mentioned in the chronicle, see also "Canonici Sambiensis Epitome gestorum Prussiae," ed. Max Töppen, in *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der preußischen Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordenherrschaft*, eds. Theodor Hirsch, Max Töppen, and Ernst Strehlke, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1861), pp. 287–88. This source will be hereafter cited as SRP.

[29] Dusburg died after 1326, but before 1330. See Wüst, "Peter von Dusburg," p. 111.

[30] PD, p. xxv. Indeed, the supplement is included in some of the earliest manuscripts of Jeroschin's chronicle, dated to the 14th century, such as Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, Cod. HB V 95, fol. 186v-187r, dated to the second quarter of the 14th century; and Toruń, Bibliotecka Uniwersytecka, Rps 54/III (formerly Königsberg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Hs. 1547), dated to the mid- or late 14th century.

[31] Manfred Hellmann, "Der Deutsche Orden und der Stadt Riga," in *Stadt und Orden. Das Verhältnis des Deutschen Ordens zu den Städten Livland, Preußen und im Deutschen Reich*, ed. Udo Arnold (Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1993), 1–33.

[32] Łokietek had first requested military aid from Hungary in 1300, and he found support within the faction of Hungarian magnates who supported Charles Robert of Anjou's claim to the throne. One of those magnates,

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At this point in the text, the Virgin Mary appears to a "captain" of the Hungarian troops named William. She admonishes him for the destruction of her "land, planted with the blood of so many Christians."[33] She also warns William that if he does not cease from destroying her land, he will soon "die a terrible death."[34] Following that, the author of the supplement introduces an episode entitled "the vengeance of the Lord" (*de vindicta Domini*):

> At the same time as the Hungarians were destroying the Kulmerland, the King of Hungary went out with a great army against a certain king who was subordinate to him. While he invaded that kingdom, the peasants (*rustici*) of the region sawed in half the trees of the forest through which the Hungarians would be forced to return, so that when one of them would fall, by means of striking the other, the remainder would fall in succession. And so it came to pass that when the Hungarians entered the forest on their way back, the peasants pushed the trees, one striking the other, and so coming down on both sides they fell upon a great multitude of Hungarians. Behold how the nature of God is good, mild and merciful.[35] He is gracious and compassionate, as in the words of prophet Nahum: *The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies*.[36] How was the Lord able to endure in patience and mercy as the King of Hungary released his men for the destruction of the land of Christ, of His mother, and of the brothers living there, who were prepared every day to put their possessions and bodies at risk[37] so that they might avenge the injury done to the crucified Christ?[38] Surely the Lord was not able to permit this to happen without retribution.[39]

Amadeus of Kassa, provided the troops with which Łokietek returned to Poland in 1303 and regained power. Following the conquest of Gdańsk in 1308, the Teutonic Knights took over Pomerania over the next three years. When Łokietek was crowned king in 1320, his daughter, Elizabeth went to Hungary to marry Charles Robert. Łokietek received military support from Charles Robert for his campaign in Halych-Volhynia (1320–1325). Meanwhile, the Teutonic Knights allied themselves with John of Luxembourg, the king of Bohemia, who led his troops against Łokietek. Defeated in battle by his Czech and Teutonic adversaries, the Polish king again requested military assistance from Hungary (1329). The Hungarian troops sent to Poland in 1330 helped Łokietek invade the Teutonic territory. At the truce (October 18, 1330), both sides agreed to submit any future dispute to King John of Bohemia and to Charles Robert. See Paul W. Knoll, *The Rise of the Polish Monarchy. Piast Poland in East Central Europe, 1320–1370* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 23, 24–25, 31, 45, 54, and 55; *Państwo Zakonu Krzyżackiego w Prusach: Władza I społczeństwo*, eds. Marian Biskup and Roman Czaja (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008), 110–12; Paul Milliman, *The Slippery Memory of Men. The Place of Pomerania in the Medieval Kingdom of Poland* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 94–139; Aleksander Pluskowski, *The Archaeology of the Prussian Crusade. Holy War and Colonisation*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2022), 147–52.

[33] PD, p. 274 (English translation by Gregory Leighton).

[34] PD, p. 274 (*mala morte*; English translation by Gregory Leighton).

[35] Joel 2:13: "et convertimini ad Dominum Deum vestrum, *quia benignus et misericors est, patiens et multae misericordiae*, et praestabilis super malitia."

[36] Nahum 1:2: "Deus aemulator, et ulciscens Dominus: ulciscens Dominus, et habens furorem: ulciscens Dominus in hostes suos, et irascens ipse inimicis suis."

[37] This language is strikingly similar to some crusader calls in 13th-century Prussia. See *Preußisches Urkundenbuch. Politische Abteilung*, ed. August Seraphim, Vol. 1, Part 2 (Königsberg: Hartnungs Verlag, 1909), p. 28 (Nr. 33) and 303 (Nr. 473).

[38] Christoph T. Maier, *Crusade Propaganda and Ideology. Model Sermons for the Preaching of the Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 113.

[39] PD, p. 257: "Medio tempore, quo Vngari terram Colmensem destruerent, rex Vngarie cum maximo exercitu processit contra regem quondam subditum suum. Dum regnum illius invaderet, rustici illius regionis arbores sylvae, per quam oportebat Vngaros redeundeo transire, serris praesciderunt per medium, ut dum una caderet, tangendo aliam deprimeret, et sic deinceps. Unde factum est, ut dum in reditu intrassent Vngari dictam silvam et rustici praedicti moverent arbores, cecidit una super aliam, et sic cadentes omnes ex utaque parte oppresserunt magnam multitudinem Vngarorum. Ecce licet Deus natura sit bonus, placidus et misericors, patiens et multae misericordiae, tamen secundum prophetam Naum est etiam ulciscens Dominus et habens furorem, ulciscens Dominus in hostes suos et irascens ipse inimicis suis. Quomodo ergo poterat Dominus in patentia et misericordia tolerare, quod iste rex Vngariae gentem suam miserat ad destruendam terram Christi et matris suae et fratrum inibi habitantium, qui

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Although Charles Robert's adversary is not named, "a certain king" is most likely the ruler of Wallachia at that time, Basarab I (ca. 1320–1351/2). This is implied by the previous account of the alliance between Łokietek, the enemy of the Order, and Charles Robert. The chronology is quite clear: although the attack on Basarab took place at the same time as Łokietek's invasion of Kulmerland, the defeat of the Hungarians took place after the destruction inflicted upon the lands of the Teutonic Knights, because the former is presented as the retribution for the latter. However, Basarab does not seem to be responsible for the defeat of the Hungarians. Instead, those responding to the invasion of Wallachia were local peasants, who, instead of engaging in battle, cut the trees in the forest, but left them in place, in order to topple their trunks unto the Hungarian soldiers, once they would enter the forest. A great number of Hungarians is said to have died, but the exact location of those events is not mentioned; it is simply a forest like many others. However, the fact that the trees came down upon the enemy forces suggests that they had grown on slopes on both sides of the road on which the troops of Charles Robert returned home. Much more remarkable is how this episode is framed by two Biblical quotes, one being a call to repentance (Joel 2:13), the other a prophecy regarding the fall of Niniveh (Nahum 1:2). Both quotes are very much in line with other *exempla* in Dusburg's chronicle and clearly show that his continuator (the author of the supplement) used the defeat of the Hungarian troops in Wallachia as God's punishment for the Hungarian king harming the Order's land and the brothers therein, who gave their lives and goods for its protection. The defeat at the hands of the (Wallachian) peasants is retribution for the destruction inflicted upon "the land of Christ, of His mother, and of the brothers living there." In other words, the peasants (*rustici*) are an instrument of God's wrath. To quote Prophet Nahum, in this case, the Lord took vengeance but chose peasants to drive out His enemies.

Not long after the supplement was written, the *Chronicle of the Land of Prussia* was translated into Middle High German by another author. Nicolaus of Jeroschin, who was a chaplain of the Order, wrote his *Kronike von Pruzinlant* between 1331 and 1341, on commission from the Grand Master Luder of Braunschweig (1331–1335).[40] Unlike Peter of Dusburg, Nicolaus of Jeroschin was writing for the brothers of the Order.[41] With that audience in mind, he manipulated the original text, which he sometimes abbreviated and at other times expanded; he also omitted parts of the Latin text, especially details of religious and ecclesiastical nature.[42] The episode of the "divine vengeance" is a good illustration of Jeroschin's narrative strategy:

> While these Hungarians were laying waste to the Kulmerland, the king of Hungary himself set off with his army on a campaign against a king who owed him allegiance. The Hungarians had to travel across high mountains and along narrow tracks to enter the king's land because there was no way of going round them. When the Hungarians arrived to wage war and moved around, ransacking the country at will, the local peasants became aware of them and were very angry. They fled to the hills with all their households and wherever they came across big trees near the paths they cut them through the middle. Afterwards, when the Hungarians decided to return home, and had reached the mountains, the peasants chose their moment to push over the trees on both sides of the paths. Crashing down, they toppled one after the other and fell onto the army. They could not defend themselves and most of them were killed. So God took revenge on the Hungarians for the anguish they had inflicted on His Mother's land, sending his people there to take it out of the control of the Teutonic

quotidie parati sunt exponere res et corpus, ut vindicent iniuriam Domini crucifixi? Utique sine ultione non poterat Dominus pertransire" (English translation by Gregory Leighton).

[40] Jeroschin must have finished the translation under Grand Master Dietrich of Altenburg (1335–1341).

[41] Mary Fischer, "Introduction," in *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin. A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190–1331*, translated by Mary Fischer (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 5.

[42] Walther Ziesemer, *Nicolaus von Jeroschin und seine Quelle* (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1907), pp. 26–79.

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> Brethren, who are brave enough to risk life and possessions to protect Christians against the Lithuanians, in praise of the Virgin, pure as crystal, who gave birth to Christ, our true bright sun.[43]

Jeroschin gives many more details about landscape and geography than Dusburg had in his account of the ambush. Dusburg has only a forest and its trees (*arbores sylvae*), while Jeroschin has "high mountains" and "narrow paths" (*ein gebirge daz was ho / vil enge wege in daz lant*), in addition to hills. While neither mountains, nor hills could have meant much to the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, narrow paths and forests were major logistical issues for crusading armies in the Baltic.[44] Equally significant in that respect is the addition that Jeroschin made to Dusburg's account. Once they get to Wallachia, the Hungarians begin to move around and ransack the country at will, a direct parallel to the Hungarian troops laying waste to the Kulmerland, as mentioned in the beginning. Moreover, Jeroschin's peasants (*lantgebûr*) are not simply getting into action. Before that, they show emotions, for their anger at the Hungarians is explicitly mentioned (*want di waren sûre*). Jeroschin then describes a general withdrawal to the hills, men "with all their households." Instead of a particular place where the peasants cut the trees, they do that along every path that the Hungarians could have followed to return home. They also cut the trees through the middle, a detail absent from Dusburg. Very interesting is also another detail that Jeroschin added, namely that the Hungarians could not defend themselves against the attackers, implying that at least in principle, this was a battle, not just an ambush. Perhaps the mention of the Lithuanians as the enemies of the Teutonic Knights is meant to give precision to the story, since those suffering at the hands of the Hungarians troops allied with Łokietek were protectors of Christians. The final part of the passage reminds one that Jeroschin's text was not written in prose, but in rhyming couplets (as opposed to prose). He had a metrical format within which to fit the content of Dusburg's chronicle, and that had a significant impact upon his choice of words.[45]

The Illuminated Chronicle: text and image

One of the most important sources for the history of medieval Hungary, the *Illuminated Chronicle* (*Chronicon Pictum*) was composed in 1358 or shortly after that, at the court of King Louis I (1342–1382). This was a compilation of earlier chronicles, many of which are now lost. To that compilation, the unknown author added a section that brought the narrative to 1330, even though the text is interrupted in the middle of a sentence. The probable redactor of the compilation, as well as author of the last section, is Mark of Kalt, a Franscican friar who was canon of the cathedral in Székesfehérvár at the time he wrote the *Chronicle*.[46] The text was accompanied by illuminations, the last of which were most likely finished at some point between 1370 and 1373.[47] Both text and illuminations show that the audience

[43] *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, pp. 292–93. For the Middle High German text, see Nicolaus von Jeroschin, *Di Kronike von Pruzinlant*, ed. Ernst Strehlke, in SRP 1, pp. 303–624, here p. 621.

[44] See Paravicini, *Preußenreisen*, Vol. 2 (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1995), pp. 91–2; Torben K. Nielsen, "Henry of Livonia on Woods and Wilderness," in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, eds. Marek Tamm, Linda Kaljundi and Carsten Selch Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 157–78.

[45] This also applies to the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* (*Livländische Reimchronik*), written around 1290 by an anonymous author affiliated with the Order. See Alan V. Murray, "Formulaic language in the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle: set phrases and discourse markers in Middle High German history writing," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 79 (2019), 86–105.

[46] János M. Bak and Ryszard Grzesik," The text of the Chronicle of the Deeds of the Hungarians," in *Studies on the Illuminated Chronicle,* eds. János M. Bak and László Veszprémy. Central European Medieval Texts, Subsidia 1 (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018), pp. 5–24, here 6–7. For a different identification of the compiler, see László Holler, "Ki állította össze a Képes Krónikát Egy új hipotézis," *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 107 (2003), nos. 2–3, 210–42.

[47] Under the assumption that text and illustrations were done simultaneously, Rezachevici, "Caracterul bătăliei," 168 wrongly assumes that the last chapter of the Chronicles was written between 1367 and 1370.

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of the *Chronicle* was the king himself, as well as the members of the highest echelon of the Hungarian aristocracy, who surrounded the king. It is therefore surprising to note that the portrait of King Louis's father, Charles I (Charles Robert), who is the last king of Hungary mentioned in the *Chronicle*, is not entirely positive.[48] No other episode illustrates that ambiguity better than the account of King Charles's campaign against Basarab I, the prince of Wallachia, which constitutes chapter 209, the last in the *Chronicle*.

The Hungarian king is said to have marched with a large army, but "not all his forces, for he had sent many warriors on divers expeditions against enemies on the frontiers of the realm."[49] Charles's intention was to drive out Basarab from his land or to grant that land to one of the instigators of the expedition – either Thomas, the voivode of Translyvania, or Denis, son of Nicholas, the master of the butlers.[50] After the king took Severin and gave it to Denis (who was now *ban*), Basarab dispatched envoys to Charles promising to recompense the king for his efforts with 7,000 marks of silver. He also promised to hand over Severin "in peace" (*pacifice*), with all that belonged to it, even though Charles had taken that into his hands "by force" (*pro potentiam*).[51] Moreover, Basarab promised to pay faithfully (*fideliter*) every year the tribute due to Charles's crown, and to send one of his sons to serve at the king's court at Basarab's charge and expense.[52] In exchange, he asked the king to return home in peace (*in pace*), which would keep him and his men safe from danger. To that, Basarab did not hesitate to add a threat: "if you come farther, you shall not escape dangers."[53] Stung by the threat, Charles was roused (*elata mente*) and told the envoy: "Say this to Basarab: he is the shepherd of my sheep, and I will drag him by his beard from his lair."[54] The count of Zólyom and Liptó, a nobleman named Dancs Zólyomi, told Charles that Basarab had addressed him through his envoy with "great humility and respect" (*cum magna humilitate vobis et ad honorem vestrum*). However, the angry king repeated the proud and threatening words (*verbum superbie et commminationis*) that he had already uttered.[55]

Soon after that, realizing that he could not accomplish his initial goal, Charles made a truce with Basarab. The Wallachian prince "pledged his word that he would obey the king," would show him the way back home and would secure the safety of the royal army. At this point, the chronicler intervenes again in the narrative to place a judgment on Charles: he erred again, because he trusted someone who was nothing but a "perfidious schismatic" (*confidens de fide perfidi scismatici*).[56] Forewarning his audience about Basarab's true intentions, the chronicler then describes the battle which took place in a "defile where the road was surrounded on either side by steep slopes; and ahead where it broadened out, the way was blocked by strong barriers, which the Vlachs had set up at

[48] For the portrait of King Charles in the *Illuminated Chronicle*, see Tünde Wehli, "Károly Róbert ábrázolása a Képes Krónikában," in *Károly Róbert és Székesfehérvár*, eds. Trézia Kerny and András Smohaly (Székesfehérvár: Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum, 2011), pp. 111–26.

[49] *Chronicle of the Deeds of the Hungarians from the Fourteenth-Century Illuminated Codex*, edited and translated by János M. Bak and László Veszprémy. Central European Medieval Texts, 9 (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018), pp. 370–71 (the enemy is explicitly identified as Basarab, the voivode of the Vlachs). Hereafter abbreviated to IC. The cause of the war between Charles and Basarab was the latter's occupation, ca. 1327, of the Banate (border province) of Severin. When attacking Basarab, Charles may have taken advantage of Basarab's losses in the battle of Velbăzhd (July 28, 1330), in which Basarab sided with Michael Shishman, who was defeated by Stephen III Uroš. See Alexandru Madgearu, "Bătălia dintre Basarab I și Carol Robert de Anjou (9–12 noiembrie 1330)," in *100 de mari bătălii din istoria României*, ed. Petru Otu (Bucharest: Orizonturi, 2009), pp. 44–47, here 44.

[50] IC, pp. 372–73.

[51] IC, pp. 372–73.

[52] IC, pp. 372–73 (*cum meis pecuniis et expensis*).

[53] IC, pp. 372–73 (*quia si veneritis ulteriius, periculum minime evadetis*).

[54] IC, 372–73: *Sic dicite Bazarad: ipse est pastor ovium mearum, de suis latilibus per barbas suas extraham*.

[55] IC, pp. 372–73.

[56] IC, pp. 373–74. The pun on *fides* is meant to highlight both the notion of trust, in general, and the fealty of the king's vassals.

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many points."[57] Meanwhile, the Vlachs, in great numbers (*Vlachorum multitude innumerabilis*), were running back and forth, hurling down missiles (*discurrendo iacula iacientes*) upon the royal army.[58] For a second time, the chronicler intervenes in the narrative to help his audience imagine the scene: the road was like "the narrow hold of a ship, in which fighting men and strong horses were so pressed against each other that everywhere they fell to the ground."[59] Because of that, the king's men could not go up the cliffs against the Vlachs. Nor was it possible to move forward, in order to escape, because of the barriers set up (*propter indagines ibi factas*) at the point of exit. A third intervention follows, by means of another comparison: if the royal army as a whole was like the narrow hold of a ship, the soldiers in that army were "like fishes trapped in a weir or caught in a net" (*errant omnino sicut pisces in gurgustio vel in rethe comprehensi*). The strongest warriors were helplessly thrown one against the other, like babies rocked in a cradle or reeds trembling in the wind.[60] That the soldiers are compared to fish, babies, or reeds is more than a literary figure: the meaning of this triple comparison is that they were all powerless, stripped of all their abilities to defend themselves, at the mercy of their enemies. Indeed, the chronicler mentions immediately after that the great number of Hungarian prisoners, both wounded and uninjured. Moreover, the Vlachs took from the bodies of those killed many weapons, precious raiment, "money in silver and gold, costly vessels and baldrics, many purses heavy with coins, and many horses and bridles."[61] All of that was taken to Basarab, but what exactly the Wallachian prince did with the booty after the battle remains unknown.

Returning to the battle scene, the chronicler, having described the soldiers in the royal army as fish, now compares the Vlachs to "a pack of dogs" set upon the "Christian people," falling around the army "like flies spoiling the sweetness of the ointment."[62] That dogs and flies serve to describe the Vlachs is only a way to prepare yet another intervention of the chronicler: "How many Vlachs were there killed by the Hungarians is known only to the subtle keeper of the reckoning in hell."[63] Far from being an attempt to avoid acknowledging ignorance in terms of the number of casualties, this intervention is meant to suggest that the souls of the Vlachs who died in the battle went straight to Hell. Moreover, this is not just a post-factum smear campaign. The chronicler explains that the disaster he described befell the Hungarians, "lest their many victories might make them proud, or *rather in order that having become proud, they should be chastised, so that they might learn and teach*

[57] IC, pp. 373–374: *quondam via cum toto exercitu, que via erat in circuitu et in utraque parte ripis prominentibus circumclusa et ante, unde erat dicta via patentior, indaginibus in pluribus locis fortiter fuerat circumsepta per Vlachos*. What happened between Basarab's embassy to Charles and the battle transpires from a number of royal charters, and only partially from the *Chronicle*. The Hungarian army moved to (Curtea de) Argeș, Basarab's residence, which was put under siege. Since the royal army was starving, the king agreed to the truce mentioned in the *Chronicle*. However, reinforcements coming from Transylvania across the mountains under a nobleman named Bakó attacked Argeș in direct violation of the truce. That prompted Basarab to ambush the king's army on its way back to Hungary (Madgearu, "Bătălia," p. 44).

[58] IC, pp. 373–74. The exact meaning of *iacula* can be a matter of dispute – lances, spears, or arrows? At any rate, *iaculum* (the original meaning of which was "dart, javelin") cannot be a rock or a stone.

[59] IC, pp. 373–74: *quasi navis stricta, ubi propter pressuram c<a>debant dextrarii fortissimi cum militibus circumquaque*.

[60] IC, pp. 373–74: *collidebantur invicem milites electi, sicut in cunis moventur et agitantur infantes, vel sicut arundines, que vento moventur*.

[61] IC, pp. 376–77: *arma vestesque pretiosas omnium elisorum, pecuniamque in auro et argento, in vasis pretiosis et baltheis et multa marsupia latorum grossorum et equos multos cum sellis et frenis*.

[62] IC, pp. 376–77: *cadebant etiam in circuitu exercitus undique de canina multitudine Vlachorum quasi musce, que perdiderunt suavitatem unguenti cum Christianum populum et unctos Christi sacerdotes immisericorditer percusserunt*. The mention of flies spoiling the oil is a citation from *Ecclesiastes* 10:1 ("Dead flies will corrupt the preparation of seasoned olive oil"). Although the chronicle's flies are not dead, the implication is that many Vlachs are killed by the king's men. On the other hand, the mention of the ointment (*unguentum*) is meant to signal by means of alliteration that the Vlachs attacked not only Christians, but also those anointed (*uncti*) to serve Christ, an indication of the presence of churchmen in the Hungarian army.

[63] IC, pp. 376–77 and 379: *Quorum Vlachorum numerum ibi per Hungaros occisorum subtilis solummodo infernalis conpotista collegit*.

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humility" (emphasis added).[64] Given that the first mention in chapter 209 of *superbia* was about the king, it is likely that the last comments that the chronicler made in that chapter must be understood in reference to Charles, and not only to Hungarians in general. In the chronicle, *superbia* is also a characteristic of an enemy of the Hungarians – Osul, the leader of the Cumans defeated by Solomon at Chiraleș.[65] That Basarab, another enemy of the Hungarians is by contrast characterized by *magna humilitas* is remarkable, the more so that the battle in chapter 209 is similar in many respects to the battle scene in chapter 102. Like the Vlachs, the Cumans are shooting down arrows at the Hungarians from the top of the mountain. However, unlike the soldiers in the army of King Charles, who are like fish trapped in a weir, "King Solomon was possessed with an audacity of fury, and by an ascent so steep that he had almost to crawl he climbed up with his men towards the pagans."[66]

The Vlachs are mentioned earlier in the text of the *Chronicle*. First in chapter 22, Szeklers are said to have moved "among the mountains on the border with the Vlachs." They learned how to use and adopted the writing of the Vlachs, with whom they mingled.[67] The Vlachs are then mentioned in chapter 23, along with Slavs, Greeks, German newcomers and Moravians, as inhabitants of Pannonia before the arrival of the Magyars.[68] Basarab, the Vlach ruler, never appears in the narrative, although he speaks through his envoy, as well as, indirectly, when making a truce with King Charles. He is given such qualities as great humility, even though Charles calls him a shepherd, which is undoubtedly meant to be an insult. The Vlachs, on the other hand, are not his, but Charles's sheep. In the eyes of the chronicler, however, the Vlachs are like dogs. Similarly, besides being a shepherd, Basarab is described as "perfidious schismatic," perhaps in an attempt to explain his supposed lack of fealty by means of heresy. Therefore, one cannot trust him, and the king should have known better. Basarab promises many things and pledges his word, but none of those things actually happens. His name is last mentioned as recipient of the booty collected by the Vlachs. There is however no actual description of the Vlachs, either collectively or of particular individuals. However, unlike Basarab, the Vlachs are visible: one can see them up on the cliffs, even if one cannot climb to fight them, and they hurl missiles upon the Hungarians from above. They also set up barriers to block the access of the enemy. They come in great numbers, but they fall (dead) like flies when approaching the royal army. Nonetheless, they are somehow able to take prisoners and to plunder the bodies of the dead Hungarians, before taking all that booty to their ruler.

Only a few of those descriptive elements appear in the accompanying illuminations.[69] There are in fact two illuminations showing the defeat of the Hungarians at the hands of

[64] IC, pp. 378–79: *istud tamen eis accidit, ne propter victoria<ru>m frequentiam superbirent, vel certe post superbiam precedentem corriperentur, et humilitatem discerent et docerent*.

[65] IC, p. 194.

[66] IC, p. 195. It is perhaps important to note that according to IC, p. 377, there were many Cumans among those who died on the Hungarian side. Cumans are also mentioned in later sources, along with the Hungarian troops sent to Poland in that same year (*Annalista Thorunensis*, ed. Ernst Strehlke, in SRP 3, p. 68; the edition was prepared by Strehlke with a version of Detmar of Lübeck's chronicle alongside it). According to István Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars. Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 155, there must have been Cumans among those who assisted the Vlachs. Similarly, Attila Bárány, "The Hungarian Angevins and the Crusade: King Charles I (1301–342)," in *Zwischen Ostsee und Adria. Ostmitteleuropa im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit. Politische-, wirtschaftliche-, religiösische- und wissenschaftliche Beziehungen*, eds. Attila Bárány, Roman Czaja, and László Pósán, Memoria Hungariae, 14 (Debrecen: Universität Debrecen Forschungsgruppe "Ungarn im mittelalterlichen Europa", 2023), 54 sees "Asian elements in the Vlachs' army." The "braided hair strands" on the back of the Vlach archers in the IC illuminations, as well as their "Mongoloid faces" are viewed as something else than "orientalising historicism" and an indication of the presence of Tatars in Basarab's army.

[67] IC, pp. 56–57 (*Unde Vlachis conmixti litteris ipsorum uti perhibentur*).

[68] IC, pp. 56–57.

[69] For the relation between text and illumination in the *Chronicle*, see Krisztina Fügedi, "Modifications of the narrative? The message of image and text in the fourteenth-century *Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle*," in *The Development*

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Basarab's Vlachs (Figs. 1–2).[70] Because the tenth quire of the manuscript was the last, and the text was interrupted in the middle of a sentence, a decision was taken to have a closing picture after the unfinished sentence. That is why the illustrator repeated the illumination of the defeat.[71] Although there is no explicit mention of mountains in the text, the illustrator chose a rocky landscape, which is simpler in the first illumination, with three types of trees. Those on the left upper corner are shown against a dark background, which is probably meant to render the darkness of the forest. Their leaves are clusters of red and white dots. By contrast, the trees on the rocks have bunches of leaves. Finally, there is a tall tree with long branches behind the hidden Vlachs. In the second illumination, there is only one kind of trees, namely the ones with bunches of leaves. Moreover, there is an additional mountain at the horizon. Much more interesting is the treatment of the frame in both illustrations, as if the landscape spilled over the page. In the first illumination, there is a Vlach wearing a long, pointed hat and hurling a rock. His head, hat, raised arms, and the rock are all painted onto the frame, much like the heads of the horses running to the right in the second illumination, a way to signal the escape from the enclosed space (not just of the gorge, but of the picture as well).[72]

There has been no systematic study of the landscape in any of those illuminations, but their influence upon the historiography has been considerable. The implicit interpretation of the landscape in both illuminations is that the battle took place in a mountain pass, even though no mention of that is made in the text. Moreover, the trees depicted against a darker background in the first illumination are believed to be the deep forests of the Carpathian Mountains. However, trees depicted against a dark background with leaves rendered as clusters of red and green dots appear also in the illumination at the beginning of chapter 104.[73]

The first illumination has eleven Vlachs, three of them on the rocks, and the others hiding behind them. Only one of those Vlachs is an archer: his hair is braided under a hat and he wears a long shirt, the sleeves of which are decorated with red ornament, as well as a woolen tunic with long, split sleeves hanging from the left hand holding the bow. Another, mustachioed Vlach holding a rock is dressed similarly. He too wears a white (linen?) shirt underneath, with sleeves decorated with a red ornament, while his collarless tunic reaches to his knees. The split, long sleeves of that tunic may be seen on the left arm. A third Vlach is dressed in a red tunic with a belt at the waist. He wears a pointed hat, much like that of another Vlach hiding behind the rocks, with a beard.[74] In front of him is another Vlach wearing a white shirt with sleeves decorated with red ornament and a woolen tunic on top. Although there is no mention in the text of rocks or stones hurled against the royal

of Literate Mentalities in East Central Europe, eds. Anna Adamska and Marco Mostert. Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 469–96.

[70] A facsimile of the *Chronicle* manuscript (now in the National Széchény Library in Budapest) is available in a CD-ROM format at the back of IC and online at https://web.archive.org/web/20120304111134/http://konyv-e.hu/pdf/Chronica_Picta.pdf (visit of December 5, 2023).

[71] Ernő Marosi, "The illuminations of the Chronicle," in *Studies on the Illuminated Chronicle*, pp. 25–110, here 53. There are conspicuous similarities – the archer is shown in the same position, and so is the Vlach behind him, throwing a rock. On the other hand, in the original illustration, the self-sacrifice of Dezső Szécsi (who changed clothes with the king, to allow Charles to escape unscathed) appears in the center. The dead man wears the ostrich-feathered helmet of the king and the shield with the double cross. In the second illumination, instead of that, there is a pile of corpses shown in a foreshortening perspective, with the addition of a current of blood flowing out of the gorge.

[72] Marosi, "The illuminations," p. 53. It is worth noting that the Vlach's hat is pointier and longer in the first illumination, stretching way beyond the frame, while that frame cuts off the horses of the fleeing king's group.

[73] Manuscript page 105, reproduction of the illumination at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e5/K%C3%A9pes_kr%C3%B3nika_-_105.oldal_-_A_csóri_vadászat.jpg (visit of August 8, 2024).

[74] Matei Cazacu and Dan Ioan Mureşan, *Ioan Basarab, un domn român la începuturile Ţării Româneşti* (Chişinău: Cartier, 2013), pp. 15–16 think that that Vlach was no other than Basarab. More wishful thinking than scholarly sound, this interpretation is based on the pointed hat, which is supposedly unique, as well as a power symbol.

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Figure 1. *Chronicon Pictum*, 14th-century illuminated manuscript now in the National Széchény Library in Budapest, page 143, with illumination showing the battle between the Hungarian army of King Charles I and the Vlachs (1330). Source: Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository.

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Figure 2. *Chronicon Pictum*, illumination on page 146 showing the battle between the Hungarian army of King Charles I and the Vlachs (1330). Source: Wikimedia repository.

army, this Vlach is shown throwing a rock.[75] Another bearded Vlach is behind the one with the pointed hat and he wears the same woolen tunic. Farther in the background is another Vlach dressed in a red tunic, like the rock-hurling Vlach on the mountain. The head of yet another bearded Vlach peeks from behind the rocks.

In the second illumination there are only nine Vlachs, two of them archers. The one at the center of the upper part imitates the archer of the first illumination, but has multiple braids on the back, and no linen shirt, as if wearing his woolen tunic directly on the skin. Only one part of the split sleeves is shown. The other archer is dressed in a green tunic

[75] There are six rocks in the first illuminations, three of which appear as falling in the valley, and another three about to be thrown by the Vlachs.

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with a belt at the waist. He has no hat. Behind him is another Vlach dressed also in a green tunic hurling a rock.[76] This man has a hat, but the other rock-hurling Vlach next to him, dressed in the woolen tunic, is without a hat. The rock-thrower at the top still wears a red, long-sleeved tunic, as well as a hat. A character below him may be another similarly dressed Vlach, but his hat looks very much like a bishop's miter. Two more Vlachs appear to the left of the rock-thrower at the top. Both wear red tunics, and one of them has a hat.

Much like the landscape, the dress of the Vlachs in the two illuminations has never been studied systematically. Nonetheless, those illuminations formed the basis for Iorga's influential suggestion that those who defeated King Charles I in 1330 were peasants. Iorga interpreted the pointed hats as *căciuli*, and therefore believed to have recognized in the *Illuminated Chronicle* the Romanian peasants of his age. However, as Ernő Marosi has long noted, to claim that costumes in the *Illuminated Chronicle* represent reality is a hypothesis built upon *petitio principii*.[77] Few have noted, for example, that the miter-looking hat of the Vlach below the rock-thrower in the second illumination is very much like the miter of the "archbishop of the Arians" in Ravenna, who is mentioned in chapter 17.[78] Moreover, the hair braided on the back, like that of the Vlach in the first illumination also appears in another picture at the beginning of chapter 25, in the central scene of Árpád tasting the water of the Danube.[79] The character in question (probably a Magyar) is shown in blue tunic, to the right of the man holding the flask for Árpád. Long, split sleeves like those of several Vlachs in the first illumination typically appear with female costumes, for example at the center of the illumination at the beginning of chapter 66 (which deals with St. Stephen's victory over Kean).[80] Finally, the woolen hats of the Vlachs look very much like those worn by four soldiers shown behind the Hungarian archer in a battle scene (Menfő, 1044) at the beginning of chapter 75.[81] Such hats are also depicted on the heads of those in attendance in the scene of King Andrew I's coronation at the beginning of chapter 86.[82] The same type of hat appears also on the head of the Hungarian archer at the front of the army chasing the Cumans in the illumination at the beginning of chapter 102.[83] Finally, the *Rutheni* coming to submit to King Ladislas in the illumination at the beginning of chapter 138 wear hats like those of the Vlachs in the last two illuminations of the *Chronicle*.[84] As Hugo Buchthal has demonstrated, such hats are in fact a misinterpretation of Phrygian

[76] Unlike the first illumination, there are seven rocks in the picture, four of which are falling onto the king's men killed in the valley. Three more appear in the hands of the Vlachs.

[77] Ernő Marosi, "Zur Frage des Quellenwertes mittelalterlicher Darstellungen. 'Orientalismus' in der Ungarischen Bilderchronik," in *Alltag und materielle Kultur im mittelalterlichen Ungarn*, eds. András Kubinyi and József Lászlovszky (Krems: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 1991), pp. 74–107, here 78.

[78] Manuscript page 16, reproduction of the illumination at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronicon_Pictum#/media/File:Chronicon_Pictum_P016_Attila_és_Leó_pápa.JPG (visit of August 8, 2024).

[79] Manuscript page 21, reproduction of the illumination at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronicon_Pictum#/media/File:László_Gyula_-_Árpád_népe-page-031.jpg (visit of August 8, 2024).

[80] Manuscript page 32, reproduction of the illumination at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/03/Cumans_in_Hungary.jpg (visit of August 8, 2024). Similarly dressed women appear in the illumination at the beginning of chapter 182, which deals with the second coming of the Tatars. See manuscript page 128, reproduction of the illumination at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/93/MongolsInHungary1285.jpg (visit of August 8, 2024).

[81] Manuscript page 50, reproduction of the illumination at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Chronicon_Pictum_P050_A_ménfői_csata.JPG (visit of August 8, 2024).

[82] Manuscript page 60, reproduction of the illumination at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chronicon_Pictum#/media/File:Képes_krónika_-_60.oldal_-_András_király_megkoronázása.jpg (visit of August 8, 2024).

[83] Manuscript page 72, reproduction of the illumination at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/ba/Képes_krónika_-_72.oldal_-_László_herceg_birokra_kél_a_leányrabló_kunnal_%284%29.jpg (visit of August 8, 2024).

[84] Manuscript page 98, reproduction of the illumination at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bb/Képes_krónika_-_98.oldal_-_A_ruténok_hűséget_fogadnak_László_királynak.jpg (visit of August 8, 2024). See also Marosi, "Zur Frage," p. 79. According to Marosi, "The illuminations," p. 67, it is not difficult to distinguish between "Romanians in great fur coats and Astrakhan caps" and "Ruthenians in similar costumes named in a caption." However, no Vlachs wear fur coats and their hats can hardly be associated with Astrakhan caps.

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hats going back to an illustrated manuscript of Vergil.[85] Iorga was right about the hats of the Vlachs being like the Phrygian caps, but not in the way he meant it. All in all, there is absolutely nothing in those two pictures that could indicate that the illustrator's intention was to depict the Vlachs as peasants. In reality, as in other cases in the *Chronicle*, the costumes in the last two illuminations are meant to create a distance from the past, which may be best described as an incipient historical awareness.[86] The Vlachs as enemies appear as dogs and (dead) flies in the text, and as a combination of historical characters known to illustrators at that time. To regard them as peasants is not only a form of wishful thinking, but also a gross mistake, for such an interpretation ignores the subtlety of the visual language employed by the illustrator.[87]

Where did the chronicler find his information about the war between Charles I and Basarab? The mention of Thomas, the voivode of Transylvania, and of Denis, who became ban of Severin, suggests that Mark of Kalt had access to royal charters and perhaps oral information from survivors. However, the information of the surviving charters does not match the account in the *Illuminated Chronicle*.[88] Nowhere is that more apparent than in the description of the landscape in which the battle took place.

The location

One of the earliest sources to refer to the war between Charles I and Basarab is a royal charter of November 2, 1332 for Count Nicholas, son of Urbanus of Perveyn, in which the battle is described as happening in a place that was "dark and wooded" (*in quodam loco nemoroso et silvoso*), closed by several barriers (*indaginumque densitate firmato*).[89] Two months later, in a charter for Master Mark, vice-castellan of Unguraș and for Thomas, his brother, the place is described as narrow and dark (*in quodam loco condenso et obscuro*).[90] "Narrow," "wooded," and "(surrounded by) barriers" are also the main descriptors in the royal charter of May 19, 1333 for Master Thomas, the castellan of Chokaw (*in quibusdam locis districtis et silvosis... indaginibusque firmis*).[91] Maria Holban's detailed analysis of the language employed by the royal charters showed that the initial insistence upon a dark and forested landscape, combined with the presence of barriers blocking the exit, was later reduced to only two traits – dark and narrow.[92] The latter is the link to the description in the *Chronicle*, where the adjective applies to the ship used for comparison, not to the landscape. The barriers also appear in the *Chronicle*, along with such new traits as steep slopes and cliffs.[93]

[85] Hugo Buchthal, Historia Troiana. *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Secular Illustration* (London/Leiden: Wasrburg Institute, 1971), p. 41. Pointed-cone-shaped hats like those of the Vlachs appear in a manuscript of the *Historia destructionis Troiae* of Guido delle Colonne, which is now in the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana in Geneva and may be dated ca. 1370. See Marosi, "Zur Frage," pp. 106 fig. 19 and 107 fig. 20; Marosi, "The illuminations," p. 66.

[86] Marosi, "Zur Frage," p. 87.

[87] Rezachevici, "Localizarea bătăliei" (1985), 402 with n. 154 still believed that the only original element of the two illuminations is the dress and general aspect of the Vlachs, who look like peasants in order to match the chronicler's idea that King Charles was punished by God who allowed *rustici* with rocks and bows to defeat the royal army. There are no *rustici* in the text, and no rocks either.

[88] László Veszprémy, "A 'Posadai' csata. Károly Róbert 1330-as Havasföldi hadjárata," in *Elfeledett háborúk. Középkori csaták és várostromok (6–16. század)*, eds. László Posán and László Veszprémy (Budapest: Zrinyi Kiadó, 2016), pp. 232–46, here 236.

[89] *Relații între Țările Române (1222–1456)*, eds. Ștefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru, Konrad G. Gündisch, Damaschin Mioc, and Viorica Pervain. Documenta Romaniae Historica, seria D (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1977), p. 48.

[90] *Relații*, p. 53 (charter of January 2, 1333); *Anjou-kori oklevéltár XVII. 1333*, ed. Gyula Kristó (Budapest/Szeged: Agapé Ny, 2002), p. 9.

[91] *Relații*, p. 57. See also Vasile Mărculeț and Ioan Mărculeț, "Considerații asupra localizării confruntării munteano-maghiare din 9–12 noiembrie 1300," *Anuarul Muzeului Marinei Române* 15 (2012), 111–25, here 111. The barriers are also mentioned in another charter of December 13, 1335, for which see V. Motogna, "Iarăși lupta de la Posada," *Revista istorică* 9 (1923), 81–85.

[92] Maria Holban, *Din cronica relațiilor româno-ungare în secolele XIII-XIV* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1981), p. 109.

[93] Mărculeț and Mărculeț, "Considerații," p. 112; Sergiu Iosipescu, "Românii din Carpații Meridionali la Dunărea de Jos de la invazia mongolă (1241–1243) până la consolidarea domniei a toată Țara Românească. Războiul victorios

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The vagueness of all those descriptors explains why the location of the battle between Charles I and Basarab has long been the subject of much debate in the Romanian historiography. Most historians agree that Basarab ambushed the Hungarian army while King Charles was crossing the Carpathian Mountains from Wallachia, but exactly where the battle took place is still a matter of dispute. There are three possible routes, from west to east: along the valley of the river Cerna, along the valley of the river Olt, and through the Rucăr-Bran pass.[94] No source mentions the location, but on the basis of an analogy with another battle between Sigismund of Luxembourg and Vlad I, which took place in 1395 in a mountain pass called Pazata, Nicolae Iorga decided that the 1330 battle also happened at Posada.[95] In Romanian, the word *posadă* is a common noun and refers to a mountain pass or to a river ford.[96] No evidence exists that a place named Posada existed in 1330 either at the location "chosen" by Iorga or anywhere else.

Others have advanced the idea of the Perișani-Pripoare pass on the road from Curtea de Argeș (Basarab's residence) to the valley of the river Olt.[97] If Curtea de Argeș is the only firm basis for narrowing down the whereabouts of the royal army before returning to Hungary, there is no indication that the battle took place in a mountain pass, even though the *Chronicle* has the Vlachs on a position on the cliffs that was not accessible to the soldiers in the royal army. More often than not, historians forget that the illuminations in the *Chronicle* are not based on first-hand reports from participants but are in fact free interpretations of the text. Few acknowledge the apparent contradiction between the accounts of the battle in the supplement to the chronicle of Peter of Dusburg and in the *Illuminated Chronicle*, respectively. Because of its richness of detail, the latter is always preferred and forms the basis of any modern account of the war between Charles I and Basarab. Romanian historians have used Peter of Dusburg only sporadically, and then only for details. Some believe that the trees that the peasants cut, according to Peter of Dusburg, were used to build the barriers mentioned in the *Illuminated Chronicle*.[98] Others link the role of the woods in Dusburg's account to other military victories obtained by Romanians in the Middle Ages, none of which took place in the mountains.[99]

Rustici and a shepherd

A few have noted that the unknown continuator of Dusburg drew a sharp contrast between the large royal army (*maximus exercitus*) and the "peasants of that country" (*rustici illius regionis*).[100] Even fewer have noted that the background of the account in the supplement

purtat la 1300 împotriva cotropirii ungare," in *Constituirea statelor feudale românești*, ed. Nicolae Stoicescu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1980), pp. 41–96, here 87.

[94] Madgearu, "Bătălia," pp. 44–45. The valley of the Cerna valley is most likely the route that the Hungarian army used to enter Wallachia, as King Charles is specifically said to have taken (Turnu) Severin.

[95] Nicolae Iorga, "Carpații în luptele dintre români și unguri," in *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice* 38 (1915–1916), 79–106, here 85. In his *Geschichte des rumänischen Volkes im Rahmen seines Staatsbildungen* (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1905), p. 290, Iorga placed Posada in the Prahova district of early 20th-century Romania.

[96] Madgearu, "Bătălia," p. 45.

[97] Madgearu, "Bătălia," p. 46. This location was rejected by Mărculeț and Mărculeț, "Considerații," p. 118, who instead proposed the long and narrow valley of the river Topolog. For Curtea de Argeș as Basarab's residence, see Alexandru Madgearu, "Castrum Argyas: Poenari sau Curtea de Argeș?" in *Studia varia in honorem Ștefan Ștefănescu octogenarii*, eds. Cristian Luca, Ionel Cândea and Vasile V. Muntean (Bucharest/Brăila: Editura Academiei Române/Istros, 2009), pp. 203–15.

[98] Rezachevici, "Caracterul bătăliei," p. 169; Madgearu, "Bătălia," p. 46; Mărculeț and Mărculeț, "Considerații," p. 119–20. Like all Romanian historians, those authors typically cite the text in Dusburg's *Chronicle of the Land of Prussia* from Lăzărescu, "Despre lupta din 1330," and not from Strehlke's edition.

[99] Rezachevici, "Localizarea bătăliei" (1984), p. 75. Iosipescu, "Românii," p. 86 and 88 thinks that the cut trees could only inflict losses on an enemy that was trapped in a mountain gorge. Pushing the envelope, Sergiu Iosipescu, "Bătălia de la Posada (9–12 noiembrie 1330). O contribuție la critica izvoarelor istoriei de început a principatului Țării Românești, *Revista istorică* 19 (2008), nos. 1–2, 59–82, here 68, claims that in order for the operation of cutting trees to be effective, those trees had to be on mountain slopes.

[100] PD, p. 275. See Stoicescu and Tucă, "Semnificația," p. 1869; Rezavechici, "Caracterul bătăliei," p. 171.

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to Dusburg's chronicle is confirmed by contemporary sources from Hungary. Dusburg claims that the battle of 1330 was a form of divine vengeance for the military support that the Hungarians had given to Władysław Łokietek against the Teutonic Knights. The Virgin Mary appeared in a dream to a Hungarian captain, threatening him with a terrible death. This man also appears in Nicolaus of Jeroschin's translation. That an army of 8,000 men was sent from Hungary to assist Władysław Łokietek against the Teutonic Knights during the Polish-Teutonic war for Pomerelia (1326–1332) results from the royal charter of November 29, 1330 for Michael, the provost of the Premonstratensian house in Jasov (now in eastern Slovakia), which mentions the participation of noblemen of the Abaúj county in the expedition.[101] The commander of the Hungarian troops was the count of Újvár and Szepes, a man named William Druget(h). This strongly suggests that the troops were recruited in northeastern Hungary.[102]

Count William may have been a participant in the negotiations that led to a temporary peace between the Teutonic Knights and Władysław Łokietek in 1330. This was confirmed at the castle of Leipe (Pol. Lipienek) on October 30, after Łokietek unsuccessfully attempted to take the Dobrin (Pol. Dobrzyń) and Kulm (Pol. Chełmno) lands.[103] However, he could not have been the one who brought to Prussia the news about the defeat of the Hungarians in Wallachia, for he returned to Hungary after the truce at Leipe, at about the same time as events were unfolding in Wallachia. On the other hand, news of those events had already reached Prussia by the time the supplement to Peter of Dusburg's chronicle was finished. Since that supplement appears together with the chronicle of Nicolaus of Jeroschin in a manuscript from the Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart (Cod. HB V 95), which is dated to the second quarter of the 14th century, the short continuation of Peter of Dusburg's work must have been written at some point between 1330 and 1350, most likely in the late 1330s or in the 1340s. If so, information about the defeat of the Hungarians in Wallachia may have reached Prussia after the death of King Władysław Łokietek in 1333 or even that of King Charles I in 1342. In other words, the circumstances in which the news about the disastrous war between King Charles and Basarab reached Prussia may have been the equally disastrous expedition against the Lithuanians that was organized in 1344 by King John of Bohemia in cooperation with the Teutonic Knights and the new king of Hungary, Louis I.[104] This could help explain a number of surprising parallels between the accounts of the events of 1330 in the supplement to Dusburg's chronicle and in Nicolaus of Jeroschin, on one hand, and the Hungarian charters. The latter insist on the narrow and densely forested environment of the ambush. The supplement mentions the forest, and Jeroschin the narrow tracks. Narrow is also the ship used for comparison in the *Illuminated Chronicle*. Because both the supplement and Jeroschin refer to Charles's enemy as a king that owed him allegiance, one is tempted to attribute the concomitant absence of Basarab from the account of the supplement and the emphasis placed on peasants in Jeroschin to a pro-royal version of events meant to justify the defeat. However, there is absolutely no evidence in any sources that either in 1330 or later anyone in Hungary was

[101] *Anjoukori okmánytár*, ed. Imre Nagy, vol. 2 (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1881), p. 517 (*contra cruciferos prutenorum provincie*); *Anjou-kori oklevéltár XIV. 1330*, eds. Tibor Almési and Tamás Kőfalvi (Budapest/Szeged: Agapé Ny, 2004), pp. 342–43.

[102] Iospiescu, "Românii," p. 77; Veszprémy, "A 'Posadai' csata," p. 240. A Neapolitan-born baron who came to Hungary in 1327 at the invitation of King Charles, Druget owned large properties in the northeastern parts of the kingdom, over which he ruled from the Šariš Castle (near Veľký Šariš in Slovakia). See Đura Hardi, *Drugeti, povest o usponu I padu porodice pratilaca anžuskih kraljeva* (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, 2012), pp. 314–17; Filip Vanko, "Itinerár župana a palatína Viliama Drugeta v rokoch 1328–1342," *Kultúrne dejiny* 6 (2015), no. 2, 243–55, here 244, who places William's presence in Prussia between September and October 1330.

[103] For a general overview: Marian Biskup and Gerard Labuda, *Dzieje Zakonu Krzyżackiego w Prusach. Gospodarka – Społczeństwo – Państwo – Ideologia* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1986), pp. 345–8. For an overview in English, see William Urban, *The Samogitian Crusade* (Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, 1989), pp. 76–104, here 82–5.

[104] Norman Housley, "King Louis the Great of Hungary and the Crusades, 1342–1382," *Slavonic and East European Review* 62 (1984), no. 2, 192–208, here 194.

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thinking of placing the blame of the military disaster on the *peasants* of Wallachia. It is more likely that it was in Prussia that peasants became the agents of divine vengeance.

The account provided in the supplement and translated by Jeroschin contains a number of details that cannot be found anywhere else. The supplement has peasants sawing trees in half, while Jeroschin's peasants flee to the hills with all their households. To be sure, *rustici* appear two more times in the *Chronicle of the Land of Prussia*. One of those instances is also related to a vision of the Virgin Mary on the eve of the battle of Durbe (July 13, 1260). In a vision, a thresher (*rusticus triturator*) who is a righteous and God-fearing man, sees in the sky the Teutonic Knights and the Lithuanians engaged in battle, and calls his family to witness it as well. He also sees the Virgin Mary, as well as holy virgins and angels taking the souls of the fallen brethren with them to heaven.[105] Elsewhere, *rustici* of uncertain origin plot to rise against the Knights at the same time as the Sambians.[106] They were bent to kill their nobles, just as the peasants angry at the sight of Hungarians ransacking the country are bent on taking revenge. The angry peasants of 1330 withdraw to the hills and begin cutting trees through the middle along the route of the royal army returning from Wallachia. Those were not trees felled to provide timber for barriers, but instead heavy trunks that the peasants then pushed onto the royal army, once it got closer.

It is therefore wrong to associate the account in the supplement to Dusburg, translated and enriched by Jeroschin, with the Vlachs of the *Illuminated Chronicle* supposedly dressed like peasants. In the *Chronicle*, King Charles tells Basarab, through his envoy, that he is the shepherd of the king's sheep. He also promises to drag him by his beard out of his lair. Could the Vlachs wearing woolen tunics in the last two illuminations of the *Chronicle* be interpreted as shepherds, perhaps in an attempt to develop the pastoral theme in the text? In our opinion, the answer must be negative, for the illustrator must have been aware of the very different meaning of the words that the chronicler put in King Charles's mouth. To say that Basarab was the king's shepherd was to say that his job was to feed the king's sheep, which hints at John 21:17 (*pasce oves meas*). Much like Peter was expected to love the Lord and obey Him, so was Basarab expected to be loyal to Charles. In other words, he ruled over the Vlachs only because he had been entrusted with that job by Charles – he was Charles's shepherd. However, since he had not been loyal, Charles was now about to drag him out of the place where he was hiding, and to do so by pulling his beard. The latter detail is meant to emphasize a direct violation of Basarab's honor, as pulling a man's beard was a great insult. There is therefore no one-to-one connection between the angry answer that King Charles gave to Basarab's envoy and the Vlachs dressed in woolen tunics in the illuminations accompanying the text. Why then did the Teutonic sources turn the Vlachs into peasants?

Rustics as instruments of God's wrath

"Sancho Panza, exemplar of the rustic amusingly and unsuitably thrust into adventure, has an extensive ancestry."[107] Armed peasants were feared in the 13th and 14th century. For Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, who wrote at some point between 1232 and 1241, Alfonso VIII, King of Castile, oppressed the nobles when arming peasants (*rusticos armis induebant*) and preferring them to soldiers.[108] King Christopher I of Denmark waged war in 1258 against peasants, who were presumably armed.[109] The Ghibelline Annals of Piacenza (which were finished in 1284 or shortly thereafter) mention that in 1267, a Veronese army returning

[105] PD, p. 98.

[106] PD, p. 161.

[107] Paul Freedman, *Images of the Medieval Peasant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 179.

[108] Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *Chronica*, ed. P. Scheffer-Boichorst, MGH SS rer. Germ. 23 (Hannover: Hahn, 1874), p. 872.

[109] *Annales Ryenses*, s.a. 1258, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Germ. 16 (Hannover: Hahn, 1859), p. 91. In the Annals of Essenbaek, King Erik VI Menved of Denmark is said to have marched in 1313 *contra rusticos*; see *Annales Essenbecenses*, s.a. 1313, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Germ. 29 (Hannover: Hahn, 1892), p. 228.

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from a campaign against Cremona was ambushed at the crossing of a river and 200 soldiers were captured *a rusticis Brixie et Mantue*.[110] *Chronica de gestis principum*, which was written in 1327 or 1328 by a monk of the Cistercian abbey of Fürstenfeld, notes that in 1320, on the eve of a battle against Frederick the Fair, King Louis IV refused to dismount his men and confront an army of pedestrians, who fought like peasants.[111] John of Winterthur, who stopped writing in his chronicle when he died in 1348, tells the story of how robbers descended upon Nuremberg in 1346.[112] A soldier gathered a large number of armed peasants and stormed the robbers' den, seizing them all and presenting them as prisoners to the citizens of Nuremberg. In the conflict with Berthold II of Buchock, the princes of Alsace allied themselves in 1338 with the peasants. As the army of the bishop came to a narrow place, the knights attacked it with arrows and lances, while peasants hurled stones from the top of the mountains.[113] Peasants are urged to return to the plow cheerfully in a 14th-century allegorical interpretation of the Book of Daniel composed in Prussia. If they return, they will go to heaven:

> O buman, wider wiche,
> vrolichen zu dem pluge,
> so wirt dir rechet vuge
> gegeben und ein crone
> von Gote dort zu lone!

A 16th-century composition celebrating the victory that the Forest Cantons and Lucerne obtained against the Habsburgs at Sempach (1386) – the battle that Iorga compared to the war between Charles I and Basarab – mocks the Austrians for their arrogance in believing that they could easily quell peasants.[114]

There is therefore clear evidence that, far from being isolated, the emphasis on peasants in the account of the Hungarian campaign in Wallachia echoes a certain preoccupation with peasant uprisings and armed peasantry, which seems to be a characteristic of the late 13th- and 14th-century sources in Central Europe.[115] It is perhaps not an accident that Jeroschin directs his audience's attention towards the *anger* of the peasants: they are not afraid of the royal army, they are angry because of it.[116] It is also important to note that Jeroschin's peasants do not simply flee to the mountains, together with their households. They are able to predict what the royal army would do and what route it would use to return home. Certain trees on the side of that road are therefore chosen for being cut through the middle, to be pushed at a later moment over King Charles's men. In other words, unlike the *Illuminated Chronicle*, Jeroschin depicts the adversary of the Hungarian king not as sub-human (dogs, flies), but as capable of emotions (anger) and calculations (preparations for the ambush). In that respect, his account is very similar to that of John of Winterthur.

[110] *Annales Placentini Gibellini*, s.a. 1267, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Germ. 18 (Hannover: Hahn, 1863), p. 522.

[111] *Chronicla de gestis principum*, in *Bayerische Chroniken des XIV. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Georg Leidinger, MGH SS rer. Germ. 19 (Hannover/Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1918), p. 90. The same story may also be found in Matthias of Neuenburg, *Chronica*, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, MGH SS rer. Germ. N. S. 4 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1940), p. 110.

[112] John of Winterthur, *Chronica*, ed. Friedrich Baethgen. MGH SS, N. S., 3 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1924), p. 264.

[113] Matthias of Neuenburg, *Chronica*, p. 183. Matthias was writing shortly before the middle of the 14th century.

[114] Freedman, *Images*, p. 197.

[115] For similar concerns in 12th- and 13th-century Norway, see Ian Peter Grohse, "Bonde og borgerkrig: lokalkonflikter og de norske innbyrdesstridene," *Collegium Medievale* 32 (2019), no. 2, 151–70. For anxiety about armed peasants in 14th-century England, see Britton J. Harwood, "Anxious over peasants: textual disorder in *Winner and Waster*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 36 (2006), no. 2, 291–319.

[116] For peasant anger in the late medieval literature, see Paul Freedman, "Peasant anger in the late Middle Ages," in *Anger's Past. The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 171–88.

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Morgarten and Posada: a German pattern?

Little can be established with certainty about the final battle in the war between Charles I and Basarab. The exact location, the number of troops on both sides, the number of casualties, the participation of other allies on Basarab's side, and the weapons or armor used by both sides – all those aspects are still a matter of scholarly debate. However, exactly the same aspects are also in dispute among historians dealing with another battle that took place in the Swiss Alps 15 years earlier. On November 15, 1315, the men of Schwyz, together with their allies from Uri and Unterwalden, inflicted a disastrous defeat upon the Austrian army of Duke Leopold I of Austria.[117] One of the earliest sources to describe the battle is the chronicle that John, Abbot of Viktring, wrote in 1340–1341 and which he dedicated to Albert II of Austria. He is the first author to locate the battle at Morgarten (on the southeastern shore of Lake Ägeri, not far from Einsiedeln) in a valley, although later sources moved it to a mountain pass or on a mountain slope. According to John, the Swiss were mountain people, who hurled stones and thus killed many in the Austrian army.[118] Even more interesting is the account of John of Winterthur, a Franciscan who wrote a chronicle in the 1340s in the Abbey of Lindau. He opposed the *superbia* of Duke Leopold to the *humilitas* of the Swiss, much in the same way as Mark of Kalt put King Charles's *superbia* in contrast to Basarab's *magna humilitas*. Moreover, the Swiss descended from their lair to attack the duke, just as Charles wanted to drag Basarab out of his hiding place. Nonetheless, the Austrians were caught like fish in a net and killed without being able to resist their enemies. Both the language and the situation described by John of Winterthur are strikingly similar to those of the *Illuminated Chronicle*.[119] Neither John of Viktring, nor John of Winterthur mentions anything about peasants.[120] The Swiss are compared to the ibex because of residing in the mountains, and in order to explain why their weapons of choice were rocks hurled from the top of the mountain onto the Austrian duke's army. There is also no association made between the victors at Morgarten and the woods. It was only the chronicle of Eberhard Wüest, written between 1442 and 1444, that mentioned tree trunks being rolled over the Austrians from the mountain top, along with stones.[121]

It is important to note that mountains appear both in the chronicle of Nicolaus of Jeroschin and the illuminations of the Hungarian *Chronicle*. While it is tempting to explain them by means of a common source, it is quite clear that the images have nothing to do with the text of the Chronicle, and much more with the conventional representation of a "wild" landscape. However, it is perhaps not an accident that in the case of both battles – "Morgarten" and "Posada" – mountains are added to the account only in relatively later sources. That a regular army is caught in a narrow passage – be that through the forest, in a valley or in a mountain pass – is also the main theme of the accounts for both battles. If Jeroschin brought the mountains into the account of the events of 1330 from a source

[117] Pierre Streit and Olivier Meuwly, *Morgarten, entre mythe et histoire, 1315-2015* (Bière : Cabédita, 2015); Hans Rudolf Fuhrer, "Schlacht am Morgarten 1315 – aus militärhistorischer Sicht: Freiheitsschlacht oder Fehdekrieg?" *Der Geschichtsfreund* 168 (2015), 151–73, here 154.

[118] John of Viktring, *Liber certarum historiarum*, ed. Fedor Schneider, vol. 2 (Hannover: Hahn, 1910), p. 70 (*lapidum ictibus ab eis ab ybicibus in montibus scadentibus clare milicie populus interiit copiosus*); Rudolf Gamper, "Die Schlacht von Morgarten in den chronikalischen Erzählungen," *Der Geschichtsfreund* 168 (2015), 59–94, here 64.

[119] John of Winterthur, *Chronica*, p. 79: "Prescientes autem Switenses per revelacionem comitis memorati se in illa parte aggrediendos et recognoscentes impedimentum et obstaculum eorum propter difficultatem accesus ad terram ipsorum animati et valde cordati contra eos descendunt *de latilibus suis* et quos *quasi pisces in sagena* conclusos iinvadunt et sine omni Resistencia occident" (emphasis added).

[120] For the historiographic myth of the Swiss peasants defending their fatherland at Morgarten, see Roger Sablonier, *Grüdungszeit ohne Eidgenossen. Politik und Gesellschaft in der Innerschweiy um 1300*, 2nd edition (Baden: Hier & Jetzt, 2008), p. 17; Stefan Sonderegger, "Switzerland – a 'peasant state'?" in *Peasants, Lords, and State. Comparing Peasant Conditions in Scandinavia and the Eastern Alpine Region, 1000-1750*, eds. Tore Iversen, John Ragnar Myking, and Stefan Sonderegger. The Northern World, 89 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020), pp. 248–66.

[121] Gamper, "Die Schlacht," p. 74.

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written in the German lands shortly before or after 1300, then he must have done so because he wrote in vernacular for an audience of German speakers. Drawing from John of Viktring or John of Winterthur is also impossible, because of chronological reasons. The remarkable parallels between those texts can only be explained in terms of the stories possibly circulating about the events of 1315. In the 1340s, the memory of those events must have been still quite fresh, which is why tropes could be transferred from one story to another, as needed.

Conclusion

Far from being an illustration of the struggle for freedom in the 14th century, the earliest accounts of the military events taking place in Wallachia in 1330 to be found in the supplement to the chronicle of Peter of Dusburg and in its translation by Nicolaus of Jeroschin highlight an unusual chain of communication between the *Ordensland* in Prussia and the Kingdom of Hungary, which predates the coronation of the Hungarian king Louis I as king of Poland by a few decades. The news about the defeat suffered by Louis's father, Charles I, at the hands of the Vlachs may have reached Prussia through aristocratic, if not royal mediation, which explains such details as the name of the Hungarian captain to whom the Virgin Mary appeared in a vision. On the other hand, the received news was recast in a version that put to good work some of the main themes in the current-event reports at that time. Particularly important in that respect is the attempt to explain the defeat as resulting from tactics used by unworthy combatants – peasants – who preferred an ambush in a narrow place to a pitched battle in a field. The theme of the angry and armed peasants was one more time adapted to a moral story, for the one defeated in Wallachia was the enemy of the Teutonic Knights. Iorga's intuition was right, insofar as images of peasants defeating "feudal armies" could be turned into useful material for the nationalist imagination of the modern era. However, he was wrong about the attention that late medieval sources paid to such images. Peter of Dusburg and Nicolaus of Jeroschin's contemporaries in the *Ordensland* did not care about Phrygian caps or braided hair. To them the disaster inflicted upon a haughty king by angry peasants was simply a sign that God chose the latter to teach humility to the former. As instruments of God's wrath, peasants may have an impact upon historical events. However, it was dangerous to allow them to be armed or to contemplate behaving like soldiers. Against Leopold I of Austria or Charles I of Hungary peasants do not act like an army, and cannot fight by regular means. It is only when cutting trees through the middle or hurling stones from mountain tops that they can be accepted as agents of divine wrath.

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