



Anne Bysted, Carsten Selch Jensen, Kurt Villads Jensen, John H. Lind, *Jerusalem in the North: Denmark and the Baltic Crusades, 1100–1522* (Outremer: Studies in the Crusades and the Latin East, vol. 1), Brepols, Turnhout 2012, 393 pp. + 57 figures and 5 maps, ISBN: 978-2-503-52325-5.

This book is an English translation of a Danish work originally published in 2004 as part of a project funded by the University of Southern Denmark and the Danish Research Council for the Humanities. The goal of the authors is to discuss the role played by Danish rulers, nobility and church in the Baltic crusades between the 12th and 14th centuries. The scope of the book is wider than this, however, as it considers the Baltic crusades within the context of the general European crusade movement on the one hand, and Danish political and military expansion in the Baltic region on the other. The short introduction deals with the history of Danish research on the crusades, also considering how the idea of crusading in the Levant was received in medieval Denmark. The discussion of the chronology of the crusading movement in the Baltic region begins with chapters II and III, focusing on the missionary journeys in Pomerania and the crusades in the Wendish-Pomeranian area in the years 1120–1130 and 1147 respectively. The authors argue that the Wendish crusades were more than just a form of political expansion; they emphasise the missionary aspect of the Wendish crusades and claim that they were an element of a new trend in the crusading movement.

In the last part of chapter III the authors discuss Danish military activities against the princes of Pomerania in the years 1150–1180. Chapter IV considers the wider ideological, social and organisational aspects of the crusading movement, providing a discussion of crusading sermons, military aspects (such as equipment, weapons and fortifications), financing of the crusades, militarisation of towns, the role of the military orders, organisation of transport and crusader theology. Expeditions into the eastern parts of the Baltic region were the most important aspect of the Danish crusading movement, while the Danish church started to gain an interest in the organization of crusades to Estonia in the 1180s (chapter V). The authors argue that the first phases of the crusades against the Finns should be connected with plans to conquer Estonia. The Danish-Swedish confrontation in the Gulf of Finland gained momentum only in the latter half of the 13th century.

A large section of the book is devoted to the Livonian crusades. In comparison to the church, nobility and burgesses from the northern German lands, the Scandinavian countries played only a secondary role in the first expeditions to the area

around the river Dvina in the 1180s. Chapter VII includes an interesting analysis of the warfare between Christian and Pagan armies, based mostly on the chronicle of Henry of Livonia. In their description of the political situation in Livonia at the beginning of the 13th century, the authors also consider the attitudes of the Russian principalities towards the German and Scandinavian crusades (chapter VIII). Chapter IX describes the conquest of Estonia, which had been initiated by King Knud VI and continued by Valdemar II, as well as the activities of the Danish church in the Christianisation of Estonia. Support of the missions in Prussia (interrupted for a time by the king's capture in 1223) was an aspect of Valdemar II's policy in the Baltic region (chapter X). Chapter XI focuses on the crusades and missions to Prussia and on the character of the lordship of the Teutonic Order; this chapter extends beyond the general framework of the volume, but it is necessary for the understanding of the phenomenon of the Baltic crusades. In their analysis of the situation in Livonia in the years 1230–1240 (chapters XII and XIII) the authors emphasise the role of the papacy in coordinating the crusading movement. Much attention is also given to the relations with the Russian principalities, dealing with the 'Russian' Crusades as well as papal plans for a union with the Russian Orthodox Church, in which Denmark was to play an important role. The years 1250–1294 are described as a time of 'Danish Impotence' (chapter XIV). Due to internal conflicts, the Danish royal and church authorities took little part in the crusading movement in the mid- to late 13th century. The increase of interest in the crusading during the reign of Erik VI Menved, whose aim was to recreate the Baltic kingdom of Valdemar II, is discussed in chapter XV. The alliance of Denmark with Riga against the Teutonic Order and the treaty with Novgorod are examples of this new policy. The next chapter provides a discussion of the final phase of the Scandinavian crusades in the eastern Baltic region, dealing with the outbreak of the revolt in Estonia in 1343, the sale of Estonia to the Teutonic Order by Valdemar IV in 1346, and the campaign led by the Swedish king Magnus against Novgorod (1348–1350). The final two chapters are devoted to the continuation of the crusading idea after the sale of Estonia as well as Danish plans for expeditions to Greenland and India.

Overall the volume is a very valuable work. The authors formulate their own, original interpretations and evaluations, making direct use of the available sources. They are also knowledgeable about the current state of research. Due to the wide scope of the topic there is no survey of current research, but all the important scholarly literature in the Scandinavian languages, English, German, Polish and Russian can be found in the footnotes.

Roman Czaja (Toruń)

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