

ARTYKUŁY RECENZYJNE I RECENZJE REVIEWS

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Dagmara Adamska, *Wieś – miasteczko – miasto. Średniowieczne osadnictwo w dorzeczu górnej i środkowej Oławy* [Village – Town – City. Medieval settlements in the upper and middle Oława River basin], Łomianki: LTW, 2019, 565 pp.

Dagmara Adamska's choice of the not very popular theme of the history of settlements as a subject for monographic studies should be regarded as highly appropriate, because – with regard to Silesia – there is a considerable shortage of such studies. The existing studies by 20th-century Polish and German historians are often burdened with the impact of previously prevailing ideologies on their interpretation of sources and formulation of conclusions. Nowadays, laborious historical and settlement studies are rarely undertaken, which is probably due to the vastness of the source base, as well as the lack of basic works, such as the regional historical and geographical dictionary. The necessity for the researcher to meet the technical requirements specific to historical-settlement research is also a very important aspect. Undoubtedly, D. Adamska has shown a good mastery of them.

As the goal of her work, she chose “a study of the settlement landscape” (p. 9). However, the study area of the upper and middle Oława River basin seems to be somewhat artificially singled out, as the area is physiographically diverse and did not constitute an independent political entity in the Middle Ages (and later). Nevertheless, D. Adamska's research made it possible to identify the specificity of this area and as such, it constitutes an important contribution to the knowledge of settlement processes on a general Silesian scale. The chronological and problematic structure of the work corresponds well with the formulated objective, which reflects the Author's own model of historical and settlement research, in my

opinion successful. The interdisciplinary approach and the ability to interpret various categories of sources – from written, through archaeological, onomastic, cartographic – to sources specific to art history, is essential to it.

D. Adamska's monograph consists of 9 chapters, which are divided into issue-based subchapters. In the introductory Chapter 1 the natural conditions of the study area are characterised. The next four Chapters, from 2nd to 5th, discuss the medieval settlement processes. The Author arranged them chronologically in three stages: early medieval (from the tribal times to the 12th century), intensive colonisation (in the 13th century) and settlement stabilisation (in the 14th–15th centuries). The Author describes particularly carefully the 13th century colonisation, because, as she emphasises, thanks to the policy of Silesian Henryks, and later Duke Bolko I the Strict, as well as the involvement of church institutions and knighthood, the settlement network, which had previously had only an isolated character, was completed in the analysed basin. She does not consider the Mongol invasion of 1241 as an important caesura for the development of settlement, and believes that it was rather “a catalyst for colonisation, associated with the need to rebuild the destroyed and depopulated country” (p. 91). The analysis of church divisions, in turn, allowed for noticing a correlation between the progress of colonisation and the formation of the parish network in this period. Whereas, in the last of the distinguished periods – settlement stabilisation – the Author considered the first half of the 15th century to be particularly important. It was then that the studied area, as well as the whole Silesia, was severely affected by the Hussite invasions, which caused a social and economic crisis, noticeable also on the overall Silesian scale. It was aggravated by climatic changes caused by the arrival of the so-called Little Ice Age and changes in the natural environment caused by humans (deforestation, erosion and soil depletion). The crisis manifested itself in the depopulation of villages and their abandonment, whilst the weakening of control by the princely authority led to an increase in the importance of the nobility, especially the noble family of Czirn, and to growing anarchy in internal affairs.

Chapter 6, the first of four “issue-based” chapters on settlements in the upper and middle Oława River basin, was devoted to the ownership structure of estates. The Author distinguished the church property and knightly property, emphasizing the special importance of the property of the Cistercian monastery in Henryków. In Chapter 7 she analysed the morphology of rural settlements, demonstrating the popularity of Rundling villages and, in the southern part of the study area, Waldhufendorf villages. Linear villages and tiny settlements were less frequent. In

Chapter 8, devoted to local site names, D. Adamska made use of very extensive toponomastic material, including a catalogue of so-called field names, with about 75,000 entries, compiled by Ernst Maetschke and Arthur Zobel. Although the Author noticed a significant research potential in this material, she limited her conclusions to stating that since the majority of settlements in the studied river basin have names of Slavic origin, they may date back to pre-colonisation times.

Chapter 9, devoted to Transformations of the Settlement Landscape, is to some extent a concluding chapter. In a synthetic manner, the Author discussed the dynamics of settlement processes, from the formation of an urban network (including Ziębice, Strzelin, Wiązów, and possibly Przeworno) to the formation of suburban settlements ("suburbs"), referring also to the transformations of the rural landscape. She briefly discussed the importance of selected economic facilities – watermills, fulling houses and windmills, but she did not pay any attention to inns mentioned in this context, nor to fairs or centres of glass and iron production. However, the presentation at the end of this chapter of the communication network in the area of the upper and middle Oława River, both within its area and its connections with routes all over Silesia and beyond the region, well completes the picture of settlements in the studied area.

Relatively little consideration has been given by D. Adamska to the issue of ethnic affiliation of the participants of colonisation activities. While for the earliest period she indicates that the studied area was settled by the Ślężanie tribe, in reference to the 13th century she only mentions that it was a period of "dynamic colonisation under German law and with the participation of German colonists" (p. 90). However, it is not clear from the present work what this participation consisted of and how it related to the participation of other ethnic groups in colonisation undertakings. Compared to the former historiography, the Author was very cautious in her analysis of the topo- and anthroponomastic material, limiting herself to the conclusion that the preserved "names say little about the former 'ethnicity', but testify to the contacts of both groups and to the participation of Poles and Germans in colonisation". Since "the mechanisms of name formation and their relationship to the ethnic factor are neither simple nor obvious" (p. 324), she is not convinced "whether we are dealing with a reflection of the language of the inhabitants or of the chancelleries" (p. 331). There is also a certain lack of emphasis (precisely in Chapter 9) on legal issues, for which the area of the Oława River basin provides a great source material (e.g. the Book of Henryków), reflecting the clash between local legal traditions and innovations brought by the colonists.

There are just a few weak points of D. Adamska's monograph, but one can raise doubts about part of the title of the book, in which the phrase "Village – town – city" appears. It is not clear what justifies such a gradation, since what is discussed in the work are towns, suburbs and villages as settlement units. However, the second part of the title already unambiguously characterises the content of the book. There are some mistakes in the work, which are incidental, but out of my duty as a reviewer I will nevertheless point out some of them. These include: incorrect identification of the protagonist of the poem about a crusade – it is not Emperor Louis I the Pious (as in the index), but the Landgrave of Thuringia, Louis III the Pious; and an inexperienced shortening of a source quotation (in the presentation of Prince Bolko II of Ziębice from the chronicle of Janek of Czarńków, p. 202); spelling errors in names (e.g. Schulc instead of Szulc, vier Hofe instead of Viehhöfel); it is unclear whether the Summary, which begins on p. 402, refers to the whole book (as the table of contents suggests), or Chapter 9 (as the typography suggests).

Although the literature on the subject used in the book is impressive (see the list on pp. 461–514) and the Author draws extensively on the achievements of German historiography, there are certain, sometimes significant, omissions, both of pre- and post-war works by German authors, e.g. Victor Seidel (*Der Beginn der deutschen Besiedlung Schlesiens*, 1913), Friedrich Schilling (*Ursprung und Frühzeit des Deutschtums in Schlesien...*, 1938), or Josef Joachim Menzel (*Die schlesischen Lokationsurkunden des 13. Jahrhunderts*, 1977; *Iura ducalia...*, 1964).

The work of D. Adamska are well complemented by illustrations, including maps, sometimes specially prepared for the book. However, some of the illustrations are quite difficult to read, due to the poor quality of the reproductions, which are devoid of colour and often small in size. The list of references to settlements in written sources and the list of medieval churches and village chapels, placed at the end of the book, are also useful.

D. Adamska undertook a difficult task and, in my opinion, successfully achieved her objectives. Her monograph provides a comprehensive description of phenomena related to the formation of settlement landscape in the upper and middle Oława River basin from the early Middle Ages to the end of this epoch. Although the area investigated by D. Adamska's research covers a relatively small territory (ca. 3% of the area of historical Silesia), yet the findings concerning the processes that took place there can be well applied for research on the history of settlement in the overall Silesian dimension.