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"Bitwa na Kosowym Polu 1389 [Battle of Kosovo 1389]", Ilona Czamańska, Jan Leśny, Poznań 2015 : [recenzja]

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**ILONA CZAMAŃSKA, JAN LEŚNY, *Bitwa na Kosowym Polu 1389 [Battle of Kosovo 1389]* Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2015, pp. 245.**

The battle of Kosovo, June 1389, is one of the more important events in the history of struggle of Christians from Balkan Peninsula with the Turkish aggression. It did, and still does, occupy a special place in the historical consciousness of the Serbs (and others). Militarily, one might argue, it was indecisive. It did not bring a radical change to the contemporary balance of power, or to the mediaeval art of war. What made it stand out, and became the basis for the myths and legends surrounding it, were the deaths of the chief commanders of both of the sides. Lazar Hrebeljanović, the ruler of Serbia, and Murad I, the Turkish sultan, both perished. In the mythology of the battle of Kosovo we find multiple threads: of willing sacrifice, martyrdom and betrayal.

Our knowledge of the battle of Kosovo is not particularly broad, and what is known is uncertain. It was extricated by generations of scholars from sources that not so much describe its course, but rather the majority of them are but elements that create and perpetuate the Kosovan myth. All the more so one should appreciate the effort undertaken by the authors of the work discussed here. They are renowned scholars of the Balkan history – Ilona Czamańska and Jan Leśny (the latter died in 1994). It needs to be noted that the dominant input into the creation of the book came from Ilona Czamańska, who aside from authoring large parts of it also edited and fundamentally supplemented the fragments written in the early 1990s by Jan Leśny.

The work is divided into nine chapters. In the first one: *Źródła i historiografia [Sources and historiography]*, p. 5–32], the sources relating to the battle of Kosovo, of both Christian and Turkish origin, were thoroughly characterised. Chapter II: *Balkany między bitwą nad Maricą (1371) a bitwą na Kosowym Polu (1389) [Balkans between the battle of Marica (1371) and the battle of Kosovo (1389)]*, p. 33–71] is devoted to presenting the situation in the Balkans during the period after the battle of Marica,

where the Serbs were defeated, with a brief presentation of the Turkish expansion since 1352, up to the time preceding the battle of Osman relations.

In chapter III, *Bezpośrednie przyczyny wojny z 1389 roku i koalicje zaangażowane w wojnie [Direct causes of the war of 1389 and coalitions participating in the war]*, p. 73–100], the reasons for the campaign of 1389 and the shape of the Turkish and Serbian coalitions are discussed. It is worth noting the interesting conclusion that Murad's expedition was most likely directed not so much against Lazar, but against Vuk Branković, who ruled Kosovo.

The following chapter IV: *Sztuka wojenna głównych rywali [The art of war of the chief rivals]*, p. 101–121] characterises the methods of conducting warfare, the shape of the military forces and armament of both of the sides.

Chapter V: *Koncentracja wojsk i szlaki marszu [Concentration of the armies and marching routes]*, p. 123–131] is devoted to establishing the places where both armies gathered, and to attempts of establishing their routes to Kosove Polje.

In chapter VI: *Lokalizacja pola bitwy [Location of the battlefield]*, p. 133–142] there are considerations on the place where the battle took place. Aside from the references in the sources, prof. I. Czamańska conducted investigation *in situ*, who concluded the battle took place over a stretch of about 20 km.

Chapter VII: *Przebieg bitwy [Course of the battle]*, p. 143–155] is devoted to the progress of the battle, and ends in a point of essential importance: that its outcome has to be considered indecisive. The following chapter VIII: *Skutki bitwy kosowskiej [The consequences of the battle of Kosovo]*, p. 157–165] includes an important conclusion that the battle did not have major effects on the Serbian side, and the peace concluded in 1390 did not make it a Turkish vassal.

The final chapter VIII: *Tradycja i mitologia bitwy na Kosowym Polu [Tradition and my-*

*thology of the battle of Kosovo*, p. 167–196] is an interesting study of the birth and development of the Kosovan myth, perhaps the most important repercussion of the battle of Kosovo, strongly present in the consciousness of the contemporaries.

The work is supplemented by maps (p. 197–200), illustrations (p. 201–214), bibliography (p. 215–228), index of geographical (p. 229–234) and personal (p. 235–243) names, and a table of contents (p. 245–246). The book was prepared on the basis of the complete body of sources, with the use of vast secondary literature<sup>1</sup>. It is an original work that gives a full,

<sup>1</sup> The work might be considered somewhat lacking due to omission of certain Bulgarian works (e.g. П. ПАВЛОВ, И. ТЮТЮНДЖИЕВ, *Османските турци и краят на средновековна България*, Велико Търново 1991; ИДЕМ, *Българите и османското завоевание (краят на XIII–средата на XV в.)*, Велико Търново 1995; or Polish (e.g. M. SALAMON, *Bizancjum i Bułgaria wobec ekspansji tureckiej*

multi-faceted picture of both the battle itself, and its significance. It was written in a clear and concise manner, in a way that is going to attract both professionals and a wider circle of readers.

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*Translated by Michał Zytka*

*w dobie bitwy na Kosowym Polu* [in:] *600–lecie bitwy na Kosowym Polu*, ed. K. BACZKOWSKI, Kraków 1992, p. 29–43; K. MARINOW, *Problem zdobycia Tyrnowa przez Turków Osmańskich w literaturze naukowej oraz w świetle źródeł pisanych i archeologicznych*, Mars 17, 2004, p. 3–23; ИДЕМ, *Wybrane problemy upadku Tyrnowa*, AUL.FH 80, 2005, p. 39–160). These works could have enriched not so much the image of the battle itself, but of certain threads examined in the book (e.g. Bulgarian-Turkish relations, the reasons why no serious anti-Turkish coalition emerged in the 14<sup>th</sup> century).

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**ПРЕДРАГ КОМАТИНА, Црквена политика Византије од краја иконоборства до смрти цара Василија I [Church Policy of Byzantium from the End of Iconoclasm to the Death of Emperor Basil I], Византолошки институт Српске академије наука и уметности, Посебна издања, књига 43, Београд 2014, pp. 382.**

The book by Predrag Komatina, a Serbian scholar of the young generation, is devoted to the Byzantine religious policy during the time between its final departure from iconoclasm (843) and the death of Emperor Basil I (886). This period of over forty years is characterised by many interesting and significant phenomena in both the internal life of the Byzantine Church, and its relations with the outside world. It is worth reminding here that this is the time when the mission of Constantine and Methodius to the Great Moravia happened, and the time when Bulgaria was Christianised.

The book is divided into three main parts. In the first one: *Поново устоличено православје [Orthodoxy Re-enthroned] (843–856)*, p. 27–102 the author describes the situation of the Byzantine Church during a difficult pe-

riod of resolving the situation with iconoclasm, and bringing stability to the new, Orthodox order. Part two: *Експанзија византијске цркве [The Expansion of the Byzantine Church] (856–867)*, p. 103–224, is devoted to the functioning of the Byzantine Church during the reign of Emperor Michael III. Throughout the most of this period a considerable role in ecclesiastical affairs was played by the patriarch of Constantinople, Photius. It was Michael III and Photius who were behind sending the mission to the Great Moravia and the beginning of Christianisation of Bulgaria. In the third part of the book: *Царева црква [The Emperor's Church] (867–886)*, p. 225–354, the author presents the Byzantine ecclesiastical policy during the reign of Basil I. The patriarchs at the time were first Photius, followed by Ignatius, and