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The Chivalric Traditions and Their Receptions in Galician-Volynian State (13th – 14th centuries)

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Abstract

The influence of chivalric culture on the life of Rus'ian (Old Ukrainian) society in the 13th – 14th centuries still remains an unexplored problem. Over a long period of time Ukrainian historians were dependent in their judgments on their Russian colleagues. Only after gaining independence in 1991 it became possible to pay attention to this issue. The purpose of the article is to analyze the specificities of the perception of chivalric traditions in the Galicia-Volynian state of the XIII–XIV centuries (in medieval texts it was also noted as Rus'), to supplement theories on the influence of European chivalric culture on the rus'ian military elite. The main historical sources for the study were the Galician-Volynian Chronicle (the third part of the Hypatian codex) and separate medieval documents. In the article, the connections of the Galicia-Volynian rulers with the Teutonic Order, and a powerful knightly congregation of the Baltic region are investigated. This made it possible to establish the duration of alliance relations and demonstrate the familiarity of the Rus'ian elite with the diplomatic practice of European “bellatores”. The Hungarian kingdom and the Polish principalities, as other ways of familiarization with the knightly “world” in the state of the Romanids (Galician-Volynian dynasty) are characterized. Using the excerpts from Rus'ian's chronicles the familiarity of Galician and Volynian medieval elites with the tournament culture and certain practices of the chivalric etiquette are shown. In the conclusion, the authors emphasize the importance of further research aimed at the discovery of new historical sources.

Keywords: Chivalric traditions, Galicia-Volynian state, Romanids, Teutonic Order, Rus', Tournament culture.

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Introduction

The history of Rus' is a unique part of the past of Central and Eastern Europe and an important component of the history of Ukraine. This field of knowledge has long been the subject of thorough research, but certain elements relating to cross-cultural contacts require further consideration. Borrowing elements of the chivalric culture deserve special attention, since "bellatores", as bearers of a powerful ideology, had a leading influence on the life of the elites of that time. Rus'ian boyars had their own standards of status, entertainment and etiquette, but the borrowing of European medieval practices still remains detail attention. The situation has developed due to research interests. Ukraine was a Russian colony for a long time, so its history was also viewed through the lens of Russian history (in some places even considering Rus' and Russia to be one). For this reason, contacts with the world of Western culture were rejected.

Medieval European authors made a weak distinction between relations in distant and fragmented Rus' – in the country of the Rurikids of the 13th and 14th centuries, where local branches of a single ruling dynasty were established in individual cities. Therefore, almost every prince in the historical sources was marked as "rex Rusciae", and his possessions were imagined as the whole of Rus'. The Galician and Volynian principalities were the elements of this general state. From the beginning of the 13th century they constituted a single state entity. In European historiography, it is known as the Galicia-Volynian Principality (or the Galicia-Volynian State), although in the sources it gradually began to be written as Rus' (Voloshchuk, 2021). Its formation was an important event in Ukrainian history. Around 1199, in Galich, the capital of the Galician land, the local Rostislavovids dynasty came to an end and in the same year prince Roman Mstyslavovych (c.1152–1205), ruler of Volodymyr of Volynian, conquered it. As a result, his descendants waged a long struggle for his heritage against other contenders for the Galician throne and for the expansion of their Volynian territories. This new formation was one of the largest among other Rus'ian principalities and had a favorable location at the intersection of several trade routes. Historians called the descendants of Prince Roman the Romanids. This dynasty ruled in the Galicia-Volynian state from 1199 to 1340.

The short period during which Prince Roman held supreme power became a starting point for chroniclers who documented the reign of his son Danylo (1201–1264, king of Rus' from 1253). Danylo was responsible for restoring the unity of the principality and for establishing, or possibly restoring, the tradition of chronicle writing in the area. Ironically, the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle, which Danylo began composing in the 1250s and which

remains incomplete today, omits the rule of Prince Roman Mstyslavovych, who it refers to as “the autocrat of all Rus’” (Plokhy, 2006).

The Romanids had Byzantine origins (Prince Roman Mstyslavovych was a descendant of the Monomachos family), and were related to representatives of European dynasties. So, they were active participants in the political life of Central-Eastern Europe in the 13th-14th centuries. At the same time, the Byzantine Empire was a multinational state: it was also a country that influenced on the development of a number of other medieval cultures – the Italian, the Turkish, the Armenian, the Egyptian, the Syrian, the Slavic, etc. However, it is wrong to believe that the states of the “Byzantine commonwealth” were a closed world and did not interact with other nationalities at all. Medieval countries located on the border of the Orthodox and Catholic worlds became rather specific contact zones where different ethnic groups met (Parshyn & Mereniuk, 2022). The cultural and political interrelationships between them require additional research.

The example of the Galicia-Volynian state showed that cross-cultural ties are underestimated. The limited evidence of chroniclers makes it possible to trace certain elements of the chivalric culture of the European medieval world, which were adopted and used in the state of the Romanids. The purpose of the article is to analyze the peculiarities of the perception of chivalric traditions in the Galicia-Volynian state of the XIII–XIV centuries (in medieval texts it was also noted as Rus’), to supplement theories about the influence of European chivalric culture on the rus’ian military elite.

The Galicia-Volynian state and the Teutonic Order: The alliance of the Rus’ian rulers with the country of Knights

The Romanids had close friendly contacts with the great masters of the Teutonic Order during the 13th – 14th centuries. Mentions about this alliance are fragmentary, so the investigation needs special methods. It is necessary to use a retrospective analysis – to start from the writing sources of the 14th century and when research the eldest ones. This will make it possible to find the basis of political combinations of the last Romanids.

The letters of princes Andriy and Lev (both died before May 1323) and their nephew and heir Yuriy-Boleslav (†1340) to the masters of the Teutonic Order are well known. The famous Ukrainian historian Oleg Kupchynskyi certified the authenticity of these documents, compared various editions with the originals, which are available today in the Prussian Secret

State Archive in Berlin (germ. Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz) (Kupchynskyi, 2004).

After the defeat in the Holy Land, the German chivalric congregation settled in the Baltic region, where it was tasked with fighting the local Prussian pagans. Aggressive conquests during the first half of the 13th century led to the fact that in the next century the Teutonic Order turned into a powerful secular state with a clear military-administrative system (Urban, 2006). Prince Yuriy-Boleslav by his letters to the Masters of the German Order listed his predecessors, whose diplomatic traditions he supported. The charter dated October 20, 1335, which the prince issued in Volynian Volodymyr, is valuable for this reason. In the document, which was preserved in the original Latin, he listed all the most influential Romanids: “reges et principes, videlicet Romanum, Danielelem, Leonem, Georgium et Andream” (“kings and dukes, namely Roman, Danylo, Lev, Yuriy, Andriy”) (Kupchynskyi, 2004, p. 185). The preservation of old copies in the princely office indicated the importance of these agreements, which were also inherited by Yuriy-Boleslav.

The point of such an alliance was directed against the Golden Horde and the Prussian pagans, in particular, the Yotvingians. The charter of princes Andriy and Lev to the Master of Teutonic Order is known from the original (Kupchynskyi, 2004, p. 145–152). The other documents have not survived. The person of the ruler Yuriy (†1308), for example, is almost unknown in the sources (Parshyn, 2012). It was indicated, that Prince Danylo was an ally of the chivalric Order. His agreement from 1254, which was concluded in Raciąż, has been preserved in original (Bałtoszewicz, 1858). According to the terms of this treaty, the lands of the Yotvingians became divided among the participants of the military campaign. King Danylo (in the text – “Danieli primo regi Ruthenorum” – “Danylo, the first king of Rus’ians”) (Bałtoszewicz, 1858, Nr. 30) undertook to further help the Order in the fight against Prussian pagans. The grand master of the chivalric State promised to send help in the event of a conflict with the Yotvingians. He also did not object to Teutonic knights being hired to serve in Danylo’s army to fight other wars. The hired knights did not have the right to turn back home before the war ends. For the Romanids this meant the possibility of using chivalry troops against the Mongols. Researchers almost did not consider this option. For example, in one of the popular summary studies on Ukrainian history about the influence of King Danylo, it is noticed: “He conducted a skillful foreign policy, playing off the Poles and Hungarians in the west against the Mongols in the east and becoming the only Rus’ prince who dared to engage the Mongols

militarily after 1240” (Plokhy, 2006, p. 51). In fact, the son of Roman Mstyslavovych united not only Hungarians and Poles.

Pope Innocent IV (1190–1254) was an important ally of king Danylo. He sent the royal crown to the elder son of Roman, also the Pope asked him to notify the master of the Teutonic Order in the event of a Mongol attack. In 1253 the pontiff called on “bellatores” from Poland, the Czech Kingdom, Serbia and Pomerania to organize a Crusade against the Mongols (Welykyj, 1953). The ruler of Rus’ was supposed to lead the campaign, but the declared forces were not enough to oppose a powerful opponent, and the campaign did not take place. Perhaps the failure in the organization of the expedition influenced the fact that king Danylo sought to attract the support of more reliable allies from the German chivalric state.

The alliance with the Teutonic Order had an older origin. During the 1230s, The Order of Dobrzyń (Fratres de Dobrin) broke away from the German chivalric state. With the support of some Polish princes, this chivalric community became independent and captured the Volynian city of Dorohochyn. Among the Teutonic knights, the “younger” brothers-in-arms were perceived as apostates. However, in 1237, Prince Danylo organized a campaign against the people of Dobzhyn. The chronicler allegedly recorded his words: “It is not right for our patrimony to be in the hands of the Templar [Knights] renowned as Solomon’s [warriors]...” (Perfecky, 1973, p. 44). Direct speech in medieval texts is an uncertain object for research. However, in this case, the chronicler knew what he wrote about. The Knights of the Dobzhyn Order did not have their own charter, but used the compilation of the rules of the Templar congregation. The appearance of the entry about “Solomon’s [warriors]” indicates the full name of the Templar Order – Milites Templi Salomonis. So, Rus’ian chroniclers had deep knowledge about these small details. Unfortunately, some closer relations were not reflected in the historical sources.

Prince Danylo walloped the Fratres de Dobrin near Dorohochyn. Their master Bruno was captured along with other knights (Perfecky, 1973, p. 44). Apparently, the renegades were handed over to the Teutonic Order, since the last news about Bruno and other warriors was related to the Teutonic knights.

Diplomatic agreements with the Teutonic Order were so important that Rus’ian chancellors exaggerated them. For example, until 1205, when Prince Roman Mstyslavovych died, the warriors of this Order were not yet in Central-Eastern Europe. It was extremely difficult to establish full-fledged political contacts with them at that time. In general, it is

believed that Agafia Svyatoslavivna (1187–1247), the wife of the Masovian prince Konrad († after 1248), was one of the initiators of the grant of lands to the Teutonic Order in the Baltic region.

However, in 1335, Prince Yuriy-Boleslav was probably not mistaken when he listed the founder of the Romanids among the allies of this military structure. It is known from European sources about the political contacts between Prince Roman Mstyslavovych and the contender for the German imperial crown Philip of Swabia (1178–1208). Some European chroniclers even recorded that Prince Roman died on the way to Saxony (Parshyn, 2018, p. 40–47). Perhaps by that time, ruler of Rus' had met Herman of Salza (1165–1239), one of the most famous grand masters of the Teutonic Order. Such an assumption will require additional research.

Contacts with the Teutonic Order may not be the only connections with chivalric congregations. Alforov (2021) recently published several seals from Galich and Volodymyr that belonged to knights Hospitaliers. The possible appeals of the knights to the Galician and Volhynian military elites to participate in the Crusade movement are poorly studied. Traditionally, historians believed that after the capture of Constantinople in 1204, “bellatores” from Orthodox countries (in particular, Rus’ian lands) negatively perceived the idea of the Crusades (Gordon, 1973). For example, the Galician chronicler wrote about the famous Hungarian crusader king Andrew II (1175–1235): “He himself did not dare go to Galich, because Hungarian magicians had told him that if he were to see the city, he would not remain alive. He believed the magicians and that is the reason why he would not venture to move on to Galich...” (Perfecky, 1973, p. 32). A negative, anti-Christian characteristic for the famous warrior could be a consequence of his participation in the Crusades. At the same time, an important discovery made by Alforov (2021) demonstrates an underexplored issue for further research.

European chivalric habits at the courts of the Galician and Volynian elites

The Hungarian kingdom and the Polish principalities were another ways of familiarization Rus' with “world” of knights. Many adoptions of chivalric manners and ceremonial practices are associated with these medieval lands (Voloshchuk, 2021). In 1252, during the Rus’ian and Polish invasion of the Bohemian king’s possessions, the Czech knight Herbert sent Prince Danylo his sword as a sign of surrender. The chronicler clearly recorded this episode and conveyed its meaning – voluntary surrender (Perfecky, 1973, p. 67). As in

chivalric literature the chronicler compared Danylo's actions to those of Rurikid princes such as Sviatoslav the Brave and Volodymyr the Great. The chronicler's goal was to assert that Danylo was the first prince in Rus' Land to engage in battle against the Czechs. But the real meaning of the "chivalric episode" was established clearly. For example, the Austrian Duke Frederick III of Habsburg (1289–1330) acted according to a similar scenario when he lost the battle at Mühldorf in 1322 and sent his sword to the Burgrave of Nuremberg (Afflerbach & Strachan, 2012). He preferred to become his prisoner than fall into the hands of other enemies.

One of the key identifiers of chivalric culture is the holding of tournament competitions. For example, Veszprémy (2019) wrote: "The development of tournaments in Central European kingdoms was slightly different. The courtly feasts and tournaments were essential representation spheres for the upper layers, they were sure to take place regularly, but – contrary to Western Europe – are very sporadically mentioned in the sources. In Hungary they were much more often recorded in the 13th century than in the 14th". A vivid example of the influence of Hungarian knightly tournament traditions on Rus' is the duel of 1245, which was arranged by Prince Rostyslav Mykhailovych (1219–1262) from the dynasty of Chernihiv. In the Hypatian codex, the author called this skirmish "game" ("игра"). The Latin counterpart to the Rus'ian "game" is "ludus", from which comes the term "hastiludium" or "hastilude" – a tournament fight with spears. These terms were widespread in European medieval chronicles and were used to describe individual or mass spectacular chivalric fights.

The prerequisites of this "game" were usual for European tournament games. Prince Rostyslav was an influential opponent of the Romanids in the struggle for the Principality of Galicia, because he did not recognize the rights of Roman Mstyslavovych to rule in Galich. After marrying the Hungarian princess Anna in 1242 (or 1244), Rostyslav received military support and conducted active military operations to seize Galicia. The culmination of this policy was the Battle near Yaroslav in 1245. However, having penetrated the Galician territory with the allied Hungarian troops, Prince Rostyslav could not capture the heavily fortified cities of Przemyśl and Yaroslav. In fact, he was just wasting time. The chronicler reported that Prince Rostyslav Mykhailovych managed to arrange a "hastiludium" under the fortress walls. He took part in one of the duels, where he crossed spears with the Hungarian knight Vorsh. We find a detailed description of this battle: "... To keep his men from being injured by [the Jaroslavlians], he ordered them to draw back until the catapults were set up. Then he began to boast before his soldiers: "If I only knew where Danylo and Vasylo were, I'd attack them [immediately]. Even if I had [only] ten soldiers [at my disposal], I would still attack them". He

continued boasting in this manner and then held a tournament outside the city [to pass the time of the siege.] As he jousting with Vorsh, his horse fell beneath him, and he sprained his shoulder. And this forebode ill for him ...” (Perfecky, 1973, p. 55).

The unknown author of the Galician-Volynian Chronicle was a typical representative of the European ethos. He portrayed Prince Rostyslav Mykhailovych, who organized the “sinful” tournament, as a proud and arrogant warrior. At the same time, the author of the chronicle emphasized the piety of the Romanids, who in a difficult time turned to higher forces with prayer: “When Danylo and Vasylo learned that he had come to wage war, they prayed to God and began assembling their troops...” (Perfecky, 1973, p. 55). Based on the example of a typical European knight plot “God aided Danylo and Vasylo, for victory is won not with mortal but with Divine help...” (Perfecky, 1973, p. 55). The irony of the Rus’ian writer had a dualistic meaning. On the one hand, the chronicler noted the exceptional arrogance of Rostyslav, on the other – the piety of the Romanovids. While Rostislav was having fun, princes Danylo and his brother Vasylo (1204–1269) found out about the preparations for the storming of the city and opposed it themselves. However, following the victory of the Romanids led by Yaroslav against the combined forces of Hungary and Poland, reinforced by hostile units of Galician boyars, and with the return of Prince Danylo from his voyage to Mongol Khan Batu († 1255/56) in 1246 and increased communication with Pope Innocent IV, the famous titles of both Romanids underwent a significant change. Correspondence with the Pontiff since 1246 indicates a particularly intricate identification of Danylo as “Illuster Rex Russiae” and his brother Vasylo as “Lodomerie Rex” or “Laudemerie Rex” (king of Volynia) (Voloschuk, 2021). The defeat at the sinful entertainment turned into a failure for the Chernihiv prince in the real battle near Yaroslav and in the struggle for all Galician land.

A less well-known confirmation of the close connection with medieval Western European military traditions was the report of the chronicler in 1252. At that time, there was a struggle between the Lithuanian princes, in which the Galician-Volynian Romanids joined. Accordingly, the chronicler depicted one of these battles through the “tournament” prism: “The next day the Germans rode out [of the city] with their crossbows, but the Rus’ians and Polovcians showered them with arrows and the Jatvingians attacked them with their spears. [Lithuanian forces] pursued [the Germans] through the field [of battle] as in a tournament...” (Perfecky, 1973, p. 63). The phrase “honiszasia na poli podbono ihre” (“to compete like a tournament”) is also mentioned in the Bychowiec Chronicle, which was collected in the 16th century. An unknown author also symbolically told about this event, using, apparently, the

Hypatian codex. Therefore, the chroniclers had a disapproving attitude to military entertainment, particularly tournaments (Merenuk, 2021). They mentioned them in rare cases: when the “*hastiludium*” was clearly connected with the described historical events. Chroniclers of Western Europe did the same. For example, the most famous Jean Froissart in his “*Chronicle*” selectively describes some competitions, while remaining silent about others (Merenuk, 2022). References to Froissart’s “*hastilude*” were clearly woven into the great campaigns of European kings. Similarly, tournaments in Rus’ were mentioned in the context of military actions of princes.

Conclusions

During the 13th – 14th centuries the familiarization with chivalric ideas and practices into the environment of the Galician and Volynian elites took place in several ways. First of all, diplomatic contacts with representatives of the Teutonic Order were important. The Romanids actively supported these connections in the 14th century. Accordingly, certain elements of chivalric ceremonies (in particular, diplomatic correspondents) became an integral part of this political vector. At the same time, relations with other chivalric congregations will require further consideration.

The Hungarian kingdom and the Polish principalities became another medieval countries from where chivalric rituals reached by Rus’ians. One of the most famous cases of a tournament duel is connected with Hungarian influences: in 1245 Prince Rostyslav arranged chivalric competitions under the walls of the city of Yaroslav. Other cases of holding tournaments are less well known. The chroniclers described them selectively. At the same time, even a few references are enough to determine the clear ideas of the Galician-Volynian military elite about the norms of chivalric entertainment and behavior.

The search for additional sources will make it possible to analyze the issue of the influence of chivalric culture on the Galicia-Volynian state more thoroughly. An updated interpretation of already known historical material will also bring additional information to this problem.

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