

THE CRUSADE OF NICOPOLIS IN 15TH CENTURY BAVARIAN HISTORICAL LITERATURE (1400–1450)¹



Milen Petrov, Doctoral Student

Institute of Balkan Studies &
Center of Thracology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
e-mil: milenkpetrov@gmail.com
ORCID iD: 0009-0008-6519-7867

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Abstract. *Bavarian, and other sources from the Holy Roman Empire concerning the battle of Nicopolis (1396) have not received as much attention in the recent scholarship on King Sigismund's ill-fated crusade, especially when compared to studies on the French, Ottoman or Byzantine texts. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on some chronicles, family histories, memoirs and other texts that originate from late medieval Bavaria and describe the Nicopolis campaign. Since this is the first part of a larger study and although a scheme of the connections and influences between the main Bavarian sources on the crusade (in the period c. 1400–c.1530) is proposed and presented in the text, the main focus is on the works of Andreas von Regensburg. A few of his chronicles contain information on the crusade, especially on the fate of the Wittelsbach crusader Ruprecht Pipan, son of the Count Palatine (and future King of the Romans) Ruprecht III. This can be a useful starting point for a discussion of the Wittelsbach participation in the later crusades and their representation in the narrative sources of the period. This is further examined by taking a closer look at the views that Andreas held concerning the crusades. This evaluation revealed that he tried to emphasize the Bavarian participation in the crusading movement as a whole and that the crusades appear in his text only when Bavaria is concerned. Furthermore, his works became the basis for later authors who rewrote, copied or adapted them well into the sixteenth century.*

Keywords: *Bavaria, Nicopolis, Wittelsbach, Holy Roman Empire, Andreas von Regensburg.*

Introduction

In 1180, after the imperial ban was placed on Duke Henry the Lion, Frederick Barbarossa enfeoffed his close associate Otto of Scheyern

with the confiscated duchy of Bavaria (Haverkamp, 1988, p. 232). In this way Count Palatine Otto became Duke Otto I, while Bavaria itself came in the possession of the Wittelsbach family and remained so until the end of the First world war. Three decades after this landmark event in Wittelsbach history, Emperor Frederick II transferred the Palatinate on the Rhine (*Pfalzgrafschaft bei Rhein*) to Duke Ludwig I of Bavaria in 1214, which meant that the family not only settled itself on the Rhine but also acquired one of the seven electoral votes (*Kurstimmen*),

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officially confirmed in the Golden Bull of 1356 (Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein, 1894, No. 1 p. 1; Schaab, 1988, pp. 69–73). At the time of the Golden Bull, the dynasty also held Brandenburg, acquired by Emperor Ludwig IV after the Askanier died out in 1319 and kept until Charles IV bought it after a brief military campaign in 1373. At the end of the fourteenth century, the Wittelsbachs, Dukes of Bavaria and Counts Palatine of the Rhine, were among the leading families in the Holy Roman Empire and were firmly involved in both regional and international politics. Although dynastic divisions of lands and property weren't unknown neither in the Holy Roman Empire nor in Europe as a whole (Bartlett, 2021, pp. 200–206), ever since Upper and Lower Bavaria were separated for the first time in 1255 (Heimann, 1993, pp. 29–35; Schaab, 1998, pp. 71–73), such partitions became a recurring event in Wittelsbach history. The Palatine and Bavarian branches were officially established by the treaty of Pavia in 1329 (MW II, 1861, No. 277, pp. 298–308; Heimann, 1993, pp. 93–99; Schaab, 1988, pp. 91–93). A few decades later, in November 1392, Upper Bavaria was divided between the sons of Duke Stephan II while the Southern parts of Lower Bavaria (that was divided between the dukes of Landshut and Straubing by the treaty of Regensburg in 1353) were confirmed to another one of his sons, Duke Frederick (MW II, 1861, No. 372 pp. 551–558). This meant that three new Wittelsbach lines were established, with seats in Munich, Landshut and Ingolstadt. Furthermore, since the middle of the fourteenth century, the rulers of Bavaria–Straubing controlled not only their hereditary lands in Lower Bavaria, but also four provinces in the Northwestern part of the Empire: Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Hainault (*Niederbayern–Straubing–Holland*), which were acquired through the marriage of Emperor Ludwig IV to Margaret II, Countess of Hainault (Straub, 1988, pp. 202–203). In this way the rulers of Bavaria–Straubing bordered the most important participant in the crusade of 1396, that being the duchy of Burgundy, which led to contacts between the two ruling families and, eventually, to the establishment of marriage ties.

A key element in the political strategies of the different Wittelsbach courts was the

practice of negotiating lucrative marriages with representatives of the largest European families – the Valois (both in France and in Burgundy), the Luxemburgs, the Habsburgs, the Visconti of Milan, etc. In 1385 the future crusader and duke of Burgundy John the Fearless (*Jean sans Peur*) married Margaret of Bavaria, while her brother, Wilhelm, married Jean's sister Margaret of Burgundy in the so-called Double wedding of Cambrai (Krenn & Wild, 2003, pp. 5–8; Van Loo, 2021, pp. 140–146). Furthermore, since the (in)famous Queen Isabella (Isabeau) was not only the wife of King Charles VI (1380–1422) but also the daughter of Duke Stephen III of Bavaria–Ingolstadt, another branch of the Wittelsbachs was related to the French royal court. Queen Sophia (Bavaria–Munich) was the wife of King Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia and the Holy Roman Empire, the half-brother of Sigismund. These marriage relations created links with other European families and increased the standing of the Wittelsbach in both regional and international politics but could also be the cause of friction, armed conflicts and the entanglement of the family in various disputes, such as the wars between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, the affairs of the Visconti or the constant struggles in the Low Countries where they both inherited old feuds (e.g. the Friso–Hollandic wars) and participated in new ones (the Hook and Cod wars or the clash with the dukes of Burgundy in the early 15th century). On the other hand, the fact that John the Fearless was connected to Bavaria meant that he could rely on the help of his in-laws and relatives during the organization of the crusade², just as he could rely on the assistance of the Habsburgs who also married into the Burgundian ducal family at the end of the fourteenth century.

In March 1396, the Franco-Burgundian army started its march from Dijon, then entered Alsace, crossed the Rhine around Freiburg and continued to its first major stop, the city of Regensburg (Froissart, 1967, pp. 220–221, 230–231). Their next stop was Straubing, the seat of John the Fearless's brother in law Albrecht, who was the second son of Duke Albrecht and governed the

² Andreas von Regensburg emphasizes the marriage ties between the Wittelsbachs and the Valois of Burgundy (Leidinger, 1903, p. 650).

Bavarian provinces until his death in 1397 (Krenn, 2003, p. 11). There the French knights were joined by the troops of the Wittelsbach prince Ruprecht Pipan of the Palatinate who would become the main subject of Bavarian chroniclers who wrote about the events (Leidinger, 1903, p. 650). The last major cities of the Empire that the army passed through were Passau, Linz and Vienna, after which the crusaders entered into Hungary and at the end of August they crossed into the Balkans.

Unfortunately, detailed information on the specific actions of Bavarian and other German crusaders during the sieges of Vidin, Oryahovo and Nicopolis is sorely lacking. According to the scheme of the battle, presented in Jörg Hoensch's biography of Emperor Sigismund, the contingent from the Holy Roman Empire was deployed alongside the Hungarians near Nicopolis itself, thus being separated from the advancing Franco-Burgundians (Hoensch, 1996, p. 85). This was probably true during the initial phase of the clash. According to Schiltberger, after Sigismund saw how the Burgundians attacked the Ottoman infantry, he ordered a general charge of the crusader army: *Und do der chönig hört, das der hertzog von Burguny hett die veind angeritten, do nam er das ander volck zu im und raytt mitt XII thauset [man die] fußgengel an, die [die] Türcken vor an hin hetten geschickt und die wurden all von im erschlagen und zertrett* (Hans Schiltberger, 1885, p. 4). The fate of this German contingent is difficult to assess: some of the crusaders were captured and executed (Hans Schiltberger, 1885, pp. 5–7), others drowned, a small number saved themselves with great difficulty by getting on the other side of the Danube, then traveled through Wallachia to Hungary and to the lands of the Empire (Liliencron, 1865, pp. 159–160, v. 164–213).

Nevertheless, the sources on the crusade of Nicopolis are numerous, both in terms of their various types and genres – administrative and financial documents, diplomatic correspondence, protocols, chronicles, family histories, travelogs, poems, etc. These texts are just as diverse when classified by their place of origin – French, Burgundian, Italian, Hungarian, Western– and South Slavic, Ottoman, Arabic and Byzantine texts. Among these texts, an important (although

underappreciated) place is occupied by works created in the Holy Roman Empire, which vary both in their regional differences (i. e. Bavarian, Franconian, Upper and Lower Rhenish, etc.) and in the various genres that they represent (world chronicles, regional and dynastic histories, poetry, etc.). Authors from all over the German lands of the Empire have created more or less detailed descriptions of the crusade. Unfortunately this rich literary heritage is still not well researched and systemized.

With all this in mind, it is curious how the participation of the German (and especially Bavarian) nobles and knights in the crusade of Nicopolis is often represented mainly through the already cited writings of the famous *knecht* Hans Schiltberger, even in works that are specifically dedicated to the relations between Hungary and Bavaria (Majoros & Rill, 1991, pp. 104–107) or dealing with Bulgaria and Bavaria in the Middle ages (Gyuzelev, 2021, p. 208). This is especially true for Bulgarian historiography where the text of Schiltberger in a way overshadows every other German source on the Nicopolis campaign³. In this way, key participants and the examination of other historical works – chronicles, family genealogies, etc. are omitted, while the political role of the Wittelsbach dynasty and how their

³ For example – Angelov, 2007, pp. 88–89; Gyuzelev, 2021, p. 208. This keen interest is due to the fact that Schiltberger mentions Bulgaria quite a few times and gives some intriguing information about the country (Hans Schiltberger, 1885, pp. 2–3, p. 16, p. 52, p. 97, p. 102). A full Bulgarian translation of his work was published in 1971. Although the volume is based on the manuscript from Munich–Nuremberg (München, Stadtbibliothek, Cod. L 1603, fol. 190r–249v), the original manuscript was not used during the preparation of the translation and it is based entirely on the 1885 printed edition of Valentin Langmantel. The 1859 German publication of the Heidelberg manuscript (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. germ. 216) by Karl Friedrich Neumann also wasn't consulted by the editors and this specific version of the *Reisebuch* remains rather unknown in Bulgarian historiography. Unfortunately, although excerpts from his memoirs are often used and cited in various studies and general textbooks on history, Bulgarian scholars have not shown much interest in researching the text itself. The most comprehensive examination of Schiltbergers' travels is without a doubt the unpublished dissertation of Friederike Wolpert – *Writing the Orient: Johannes Schiltberger's Reisebuch (1394–1427)*, University of Oxford, 2016.

participation is represented in late medieval historical literature, is overlooked. From another angle, Bavarian chronicles, such as those of Andreas von Regensburg, can give insight on well known topics connected with the Nicopolis campaign. To give an example, the works of Andreas could be added to the extensive catalog of examined sources in the otherwise broad and thorough study of Tünde Radek on the image of the Hungarians in medieval German chronicles (Tünde, 2008, pp. 33–37, pp. 93–104). The conclusions of the author about the the image of King Sigismund and his role for the failure of the 1396 crusade (Tünde, 2008, pp. 237–238) could possibly be further expanded with data from works such as the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum* that comment on the perceived negligence of the Hungarian monarch during the battle with the Ottomans (Leidinger, 1903, p. 117).

In recent years, much was done to further develop our understanding of the Nicopolis campaign in terms of literary history, the usage and interpretations of events by medieval authors and their strategies in representing various aspects of the clash between the Ottomans and their Christian adversaries. The ways in which the European knights and the Muslim troops were compared to one another in French sources have been carefully studied by Zeynep Çeçen, whose works have shown how the Ottoman soldiers were praised for their asceticism and prowess, while the Christian knights were often scolded for their frivolous behavior, especially during the siege of the Danubian fortress (Çeçen 2023). Overall, the French texts are probably the most studied group of sources on the crusade (Çeçen 2021; Çelik, 2023, pp. 232–237; Gardette 2000; Martenet 2015; Selaf 2018). In two recent studies, Siren Çelik and Vladimir Angelov made a much needed modern overview of the Byzantine sources and in this way brought to the forefront some lesser known and used chronicles and letters (Angelov, 2007, pp. 81–92; Çelik, 2023, pp. 221–231). Ottoman and Arabic sources have also been examined in the last decade (Çelik, 2023, pp. 237–242; Binbaş, 2014).

This article aims to analyze the works of some of the most prominent medieval Bavarian authors who wrote on the subject of the crusade

of Nicopolis during the fifteenth century and to study their narratives on the event. Since this article is only the first part of this study, the main focus will be on the chronicles of the well known monk and prolific writer Andreas von Regensburg, who wrote in the first half of the century. In the second part of this study, which will be published separately, the continuations and expanded version of the works of Andreas von Regensburg and some other sources will be further examined. Bavarian texts that are not specifically associated with or writing about the participation of the Wittelsbach dynasty in the crusade of Nicopolis will be mentioned briefly.

When reading some of the other main German sources on the crusade such as the poem of Peter von Retz (Liliencron, 1865, pp. 155–160), the *Magdeburger Schöppenchronik* (Janicke, 1869, p. 291), the *Chronicle of the Prussian land* of Johann Posilge / Johann of Reden (Hirsch & Töppen & Strehlke, 1866, pp. 207–209) or the famous chronicle of Jakob Twinger von Königshofen (Hegel, 1871, pp. 854–857), one can clearly observe that Bavaria often doesn't even appear in them. Hans Schiltberger, while listing a plethora of knights and lesser nobility (mainly from the region of Upper Bavaria), omits the Wittelsbach prince Ruprecht Pipan, whose role in this crusade is still rather obscure. Although he indeed was set out to be the future ruler of the Palatinate on the Rhine and thus an elector of the Empire (since he was the eldest son of Ruprecht III), he was also a member of the Wittelsbach dynasty and was considered as part of the Bavarian nobility and was thought as such by the medieval authors. After all, the counts palatine on the Rhine titled themselves as *dukes in Bavaria*⁴ and held territories in the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz), itself a part of Bavaria. On the other hand, the Bavarian Wittelsbachs also styled themselves as *Pfalzgrafen bei Rhein* and most of the chroniclers use both titles when referring to Ruprecht Pipan:

⁴ One of the ideas behind the treaty of Pavia (1329) was that the electoral vote would shift between the Palatine and Bavarian branches, hence both families would have similar titles but this arrangement was reversed by the Golden bull of 1356. The title on the coffin of Ruprecht Pipan reads *DOMINUS. RUPERT(U)S. PIPAN. COMES. PALATIN(U)S. RENI(QUE). UTR(I)USQUE). BAVARIAE. DUX* (Hubmann 1841, p. 13). The tomb of the Count Palatine is further researched in a recent study by Rainer Reihe Gimmel – Gimmel 2006.

inter quos Rupertus, filius Ruperti palatini Reni (Tractatus de scismatibus, 2004, p. 66); *Quem multi de nostratibus sequebantur, inter quos precipuus erat dux Rupertus filius Ruperti comitis palatini Reni, duci Bavarie, qui et postea rex Romanorum* (Leidinger, 1915, p. 258); *ubi Dux Burgundiae cum magna multitudine transivit per Bavariam quem sequebatur Dux Rupertus filius Ruperti Comitit Palatini Reni & Ducis Bavariae postea Rex Romanorum, sed male habuerunt* (Oefele, 1763a, p. 373); *Rupertus Comes Palatinus Rheni & dux Bauariae, primogenitus Ruperti regis Roman, qui dicebatur Pipan, zelo fidei armatus, fe contra Turcos non sine magnis expensis armauit.* (Johannis Trithemi, 1601, p. 117)

As already established, the main character in most of the Bavarian crusading narratives is the above-mentioned son of elector (1398–1410) and king (1400–1410) Rupprecht III/I. The heir to the Palatinate was born on the 20th of February 1375 in Amberg, one of the important centers of the *Kurpfalz* and the leading city of the Upper Palatinate. Not much is known about the young man's life and this lack of information is further exacerbated by the fact that he died at the age of 21 in January 1397. Four years after his birth, a betrothal was planned between him and Catharine, daughter of the French King Charles V (Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein, 1894, No. 4271 p. 255) but the plans fell through and in 1392 he married Elisabeth von Sponheim. The marriage was to bring the Wittelsbachs the lands of the bride's father: the county of Sponheim and Vianden, the lordships of Grymberg, Lunderscheid and Corroit (Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein, 1894, No. 5442–5444 pp. 324–325). Unfortunately, at the time of the crusade of Nicopolis, the couple still had no children, as the Bavarian chroniclers and later (mainly from the era of the Enlightenment) authors rarely fail to mention. (Colini, 1763, pp. 82–83; Oefele, 1763b, p. 576; Schannat, 1740, p. 22).

Accounts of his life (as it will be examined) appeared in various medieval chronicles and he was mentioned in some documents of the Palatinate, but apart from this, there has been negligible academic interest in him. Two biographies appeared in the 1760s. One was written by the historian and librarian Georg Christian Crollius

(1726–1790) who was connected with the court of Palatinate–Zweibrücken and was a member of the Palatina Academy of Sciences (Crollius, 1763). The other biography was written by the Heidelberg historian Philipp Wilhelm Ludwig Fladt (1712–1786) who was associated with the government of the Electoral Palatinate (Fladt, 1762). Although both books contain valuable information on the life of Ruprecht Pipan⁵, they are obviously very much dated. Another biography was published in 1841 (Hubmann, 1841) and this was the last book dedicated specifically to Ruprecht Pipan. Although some recent studies on his tomb have been written (Gimmel, 2006), it appears that there is not much scholarly interest in him.

His participation in the campaign cannot be properly reconstructed (at least compared to that of other major nobles such as John the Fearless or Sigismund himself), and in all probability wasn't decisive for the overall course of events. It can certainly be established that he joined the army in Straubing and although no source states it directly, it can be assumed that he probably participated in the battle of Nicopolis itself. Older historiography has established that he was the leader of a perceived 'united' contingent of Bavarian knights and this idea appears even in some contemporary studies. Recently, Regina Cermann, in her excellent book on *Bellifortis* mentions that the young prince may have been the leader of the Bavarian knights during the crusade (Cermann 2013, pp. 12–13, note 29). As mentioned, this hypothesis is not new and its prevalence stems not from any information derived from the available sources, but rather from the authority of older studies such as those of Joseph Hammer (Hammer, 1834, p. 197) and Sigismund von Riezler (Riezler, 1889, p. 179). To illustrate this, we can turn our attention to the cited works in the above-mentioned book that testify to the leadership of Ruprecht. The first one is the classical study of Hammer–Purgstall on the Ottoman Empire and the two biographies from 1762 and 1841 (Cermann, 2013, pp. 12–13, note 29). While the idea that Ruprecht led

⁵ Crollius even included eight documents as an annex to his book (Crollius, 1762, pp. 31–43). Shortly after the book of Fladt was published, he wrote a continuation of his work (Fladt 1762b).

a united contingent of Bavarian knights is not implausible – he was a Wittelsbach prince and thus connected to Bavaria, plus the fact that his position as the heir to the Palatinate⁶ guaranteed him high enough rank, it needs to be handled with care.

It must be noted that Hammer only cites the memoirs of Hans Siltberger on this specific topic (which contain no such information) and he states that rather the whole German contingent was led by prince Ruprecht, the burgrave of Nuremberg and the count of Mömpelgard (Hammer, 1834, p. 197) but these are just the names of the most prominent German princes that participated in the crusade and there is not clear indication that they led the contingents from the various corners of the Empire that they represented (i.e. the burgrave of Nuremberg led the Franconian knights, etc.). Fladt cites a whole plethora of medieval sources and some of the most prominent early modern historians of the Palatinate. On the topic of the participation of Ruprecht Pipan and the leadership of the Bavarian knights he uses a 1627 edition of the Renaissance history of Bavaria by Johannes Aventinus (1477–1534) – the *Annalium Boiorum* (Fladt, 1762, p. 39, note C). Of course, Aventinus himself cited some of the most respectable sources when he created his own history of the duchy. The first part of his retelling of the Nicopolis crusade is borrowed from the traditions of late 15th century Hungarian historiography. This can be confirmed by his usage of certain toponyms from Antiquity and the argument that the Ottomans entered Europe because of the quarrels in the Byzantine Empire (Aventini, 1627, p. 494). This passage is borrowed and adapted either from the chronicle of Johannes de Thuróczy (Thuróczy, 1991, pp. 52–55) or Antonio Bonfini (who in turn borrowed it from Thuróczy)⁷. He also directly mentions Siltberger (Aventini, 1627, p. 495). In his narrative on Ruprecht Pipan he most probably

used the works of Andreas von Regensburg since his treatment of the young prince (Aventini, 1627, pp. 494–495) is similar to that in the Bavarian chronicle of Andreas (Leidinger, 1903, p. 650). Unfortunately, that work doesn't state that Ruprecht led a contingent of knights (not that it is unthinkable or implausible if Andreas didn't mention it). In his very short book, Hubmann also doesn't unquestionably state that the Wittelsbach prince was the leader of the Bavarian knights (Hubmann, 1841, pp. 5–12).

At first glance, an argument 'against' such an interpretation would be the circumstance that at the end of the 14th century, the various Wittelsbach courts were at constant odds with each other, especially on the question of the wardenship of the underage duke of Bavaria–Landshut which led to armed conflict between the dukes of Munich and Ingolstadt that lasted until the first half of 1395 (Straub, 1988, pp. 217–218). However, princely conflict should not be overestimated and hostilities cannot necessarily be seen as a symbol of deep enmity⁸. Alliances between the nobility were shifting constantly and although most families had what we may call diplomatic (or rather, dynastic) convictions, goals and sometimes even vaguely defined traditions in terms of decision making, these rarely took the form of firmly established norms of political behavior⁹. Although the rulers of Bavaria feuded with each other, they were reconciled (at least in theory) by the end of 1395, even promising

⁸ Good arguments against the overestimation of feuding and larger scale conflicts and a challenge to the view that they were more or less destabilizing factors are given by Duncan Hardy (Hardy, 2018, pp. 56–59). In his book on the late medieval associative political culture in Southern Germany, he argues that warfare and feuds were more or less regular means of conflict resolution in this period and should not be seen as a symbol of deep crisis since they often intertwined with diplomatic activities and were rarely marked by clear cut political positions or enmities. This argument is especially well illustrated by his treatment of the *Städtekrieg* of the late fourteenth century (Hardy, 2018, pp. 179–198).

⁹ A good example would be the relations between the Count Palatine Friedrich I the Victorious (1449–1476) and the archbishop of Mainz Diether von Isenburg (1459–1461; 1475–1482). During the so-called *Fürstenkrieg* (1459–1463) they fought bitterly with each other but reconciled and in 1462 allied themselves and fought together against Adolf of Nassau who was Pope Pius II's candidate for the archbishopric of Mainz (Schaab, 1988, pp. 178–181).

⁶ He was proclaimed as such in 1392 and again in the Rupertine Constitution of 1395 (Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein, No. 5445 p. 325; No. 5611 pp. 335–338; Schaab, 1988, 104).

⁷ The printed edition of the Thuróczy chronicle appeared in Brno and Augsburg in 1488 and was soon translated into German. Both chronicles have numerous printed editions from Southern Germany and were widely used in the early modern period.

to unite their holdings into one single Bavarian duchy (MW II, 1861, No. 377 pp. 569–573). By April of 1396 (MW II, 1861, No. 379 pp. 579–582) the dukes of Munich and Landshut confirmed their reconciliation and promised each other that they would remain in friendly relations (possibly in view of the coming crusade?).

Still, there is a noticeable lack of information about an organized and centrally commanded Bavarian group of knights. Most of the crusaders that Hans Schiltberger mentions stem from either Upper Bavarian (Pienzenauer, Schmiechen, Greifen), Swabian (Bodman) or families connected with the archbishopric of Salzburg (Kuchler). Most of them had ties to the administration and/or courts of Bavaria and often their representatives would appear in Wittelsbach charters, mainly as witnesses (MW II, 1861, No. 197, p. 52; No. 233, p. 159; No. 319 p. 403; No. 344, pp. 466; No. 371, p. 548; No. 372 p. 557).

Unfortunately, there is no clear evidence that can confirm the participation of contingents from either the Palatinate or the Lower Bavarian lands of Straubing in the battle of Nicopolis. Jean Froissart even mentions that Duke Albrecht of Straubing (father in law to John the Fearless) was clearly opposed to the wishes of his son (Wilhelm of Ostervant, duke of Bavaria–Straubing from 1404 to 1417, it was he who married Marguerite de Bourgogne in 1385) who wanted to fight in the anti-Ottoman crusade. According to the French chronicler, when Albrecht was presented with this request, he answered that it would do Wilhelm and his knights no good to go to war with the infidel, since there was no reason to take up arms *sur gens et pays qui oncques riens ne nous fourfrent, ne num article de raison tu n'y as d'y aler, fors que pour la vayne gloire de ce monde* (Froissart, 1967, p. 227). Albrecht thought that such a deed would better suit *Jehan de Bourgoigne et nos cousins de France*, while it was more beneficial for Wilhelm to lead a campaign in Frisia, where the interests of his ducal house truly lay (Froissart, 1967, pp. 227–228). Eventually, Wilhelm was persuaded to stay in the Low Countries and he even barred the local knighthood from participating: *et fut mise sus une ordonnance et deffense sur tous chevalliers et escuiers haynnuyers que nul n'entrepresist voyage à faire, ne à widier le pays pour aler en Honguerie, ne ailleurs; car le conte d'Ostrevan les embesoingneroit*

pour celle saison et les envoyeroit en Frise (Froissart, 1967, p. 229). In the Dutch *Beyeren Armorial* (1405) a total of 404 coats of arms of those who participated in the campaign are presented, with there being knights from the Low Countries, France, Burgundy and England¹⁰ which excludes any personal participation by the father or brother in law of John the Fearless in the Nicopolis crusade. Bavarian knights also participated in this campaign (Burgers & Damien, 2018, p. 803), so it can be concluded that a part of the Lower Bavarian knights were in Frisia and could not participate in the crusade.

Although the Franco-Burgundian army presumably received a warm welcome in Straubing (Leidinger, 1903, p. 117; p. 630), it is not clear which knights from Lower Bavaria joined them in their march towards Hungary. Perhaps, since the French king and the duke of Burgundy aided the Frisian campaign of 1396 (Smet, 1859, p. 294; Froissart, 1967, pp. 280–281; p. 295), some of the Lower Bavarian nobility went with the Burgundians when they passed through the lands of Bavaria–Straubing, presumably those who did not go to fight in Frisia, although as already mentioned duke Albrecht was somewhat opposed to the crusade (according to Froissart). However, Andreas von Regensburg states that when the duke of Burgundy went to Bavaria, a lot of knights joined him during his stay in Straubing but doesn't specify which or from where exactly (Leidinger, 1903, p. 650). It is not a big stretch of the imagination to think that the local knights went with the Burgundians alongside those from Upper Bavaria. The only author that mentions some Lower Bavarian families is the Austrian historian Joseph Hormayr but he doesn't cite any sources to support his claim (Hormayr, 1842, p. 132). A more complex case is the complete lack of information on the participation of any knights or nobles from the Palatinate (neither from the Rhineland or the Upper Palatinate), who, in theory, would be the main component in the

¹⁰ *Jtem dit sijn die hertogen, die greuen, die borchgreuen, die bannerheren die ritderen, ende die knechten, die mit hertoge Aelbrecht van Beyeren greue van Henegouwen, van Hollant, van Zelant, ende heer van Vrieslant, waren ther Cwnre in Vrieslant jnt jair ons Heren dusent, driehondert, ende ses ende tnegentich* – KB 79 K 21, fol. 52v. All arms are presented on fol. 52v-57v, 36r-48v, 9r-13r. (the fol. numbers are presented in this order, since this is how they appear in the manuscript).

armed forces of Ruprecht Pipan and it makes little sense for the heir to one of the seven electorates to depart without sufficient forces. In this case, it cannot be answered with certainty whether or not he was the leader of a united Bavarian contingent or if there even was such an organized fighting force during the Nicopolis campaign, although this hypothesis is not impossible. At this point, the only definite information concerns almost exclusively nobles from Upper Bavaria but to think that forces from the Palatinate and Lower Bavaria weren't present would be wrong.

After the defeat of the Christian coalition the prince returned to the lands of the Palatinate, where he died in early 1397. There are many gaps concerning his involvement with the events of 1396 – where was he during the sieges of Vidin and Oryahovo, why wasn't he mentioned by Schiltberger, Peter von Retz or any of the other eyewitnesses of the crusade. For example, although he was connected to the Hohenzollerns through his mother Elizabeth (Schaab, 1989, p. 104) it is not known if he was in close relations with his uncle (Burgrave Johan III, younger brother to Elizabeth) who also participated in the crusade and their connection is mentioned only by Stromer (Hegel, 1862, p. 48). Unfortunately, it quickly becomes apparent that there is a clear lack of definitive data and most of these questions cannot be answered with certainty.

Bavarian Chronicles

Compared to the rather unclear data for Ruprecht Pipan, the Bavarian chronicles account for a very large, if not the largest share of German texts on the crusade. Among them, the earliest and most important works are those of the well known early fifteenth century monk and prolific chronicler Andreas of Regensburg. He was born with the name Andreas Müllner in Reichenbach during the late 1380s and got his education in Straubing. Around the age of 25, Andreas entered a monastery and became a member of the Augustinian order, serving as a canon of the church of St. Mang in Regensburg (Plechl, 1953, p. 283). His works include numerous chronicles in Latin and German which are of great importance for the development of history writing in late medieval Bavaria (Schneider,

2016, pp. 244–245). Notable among his texts are the *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern / Cronica de principibus terrae Bavarorum*, the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum*, *Concilium Constantiense*, *Cronica Husitarum*, *Dialogus de haeresi Bohemica*, etc. Some of these texts gained great popularity among Bavarian historians of the 15th century and were copied and printed many times between the 16th and the 18th centuries, especially the *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern* and the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum*. Some of his writings were published by the Bavarian archivist and librarian Andreas Felix von Oefele (1708–1780), but the most important critical edition was made by Georg Leidinger in 1903.

Judging by the titles alone, it quickly becomes apparent that Andreas von Regensburg was interested in the major events that were happening in his own times, such as the problems of the Western schism, the maze of European conflicts or the developments in the Holy Roman Empire, especially regarding the Hussite heresy and the wars in Bohemia during the 1420s and 1430s. Among these calamities and crises, the battle of Nicopolis takes a notable place since it appears in quite a few of his works and is even mentioned in his work notes. As per the analysis of Paul Srodecki, the failed crusade stirred a lot of attention from all kinds of writers and quickly became one of the most discussed topics in early 15th century European literature (Srodecki, 2013). The Christian defeat drew the attention of chroniclers and other writers, because it could be easily be exploited in various ways: to criticize knighthood and its flaws (Çeçen, 2021; Çeçen, 2023; Çelik, 2023, pp. 232–237), to enhance the status and chivalric prowess of the Burgundian ducal house (Calmette, 2017, p. 222) or just to lament the dead, as in the case of Eustache Deschamps (Bulat, 1927, pp. 106–109). With this in mind, it is no wonder that the battle near the Danubian fortress found its way in quite a few of the Regensburg monks' writings.

Four of them can be classified as constituting the first group of Bavarian sources on the Nicopolis crusade: the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum*, *Cronica de principibus terrae Bavarorum*, *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern* and the so called *Chronicon, Breve, a.*

1396–1418, also styled as *Anonymi Bavari Breve Chronicon*. Since all of these chronicles were written in the 1420s, this group of texts can be seen as the earliest and to some extent, as containing the most reliable Bavarian narrative sources on the events of 1396. Although the information presented in them is not all that detailed, they offer valuable insight on the representation of the crusade in works created (more or less) shortly after the events. Furthermore, the chronicles of Andreas von Regensburg were very influential in the 15th century developments of history writing in Bavaria as the major study of Jean-Marie Moeglin has shown (Moeglin, 1985, pp. 106–131; pp. 135–141) and were a staple for later authors who either copied or were influenced by them.

of the battle of Nicopolis in the works of such ‘court’ historians can be observed in the cases of Ulrich Fuetrer who worked for the court of Duke Albrecht IV (Bavaria–Munich) and Hans Ebran von Wildenberg who resided in Landshut and later at Burghausen (Lorenz, 1886, p. 226). The analysis of these chronicles can help to better understand the diffusion of information on the crusade of Nicopolis in the span of a roughly hundred years. On the other hand, the pool of available sources increased with the advent of printing and the diffusion of Hungarian chronicles in the Holy Roman Empire (such as that of Johannes de Thurócz, printed in Augsburg in 1488). This allows us to observe what writing strategies later authors used when they had to describe a specific event, especially if they had

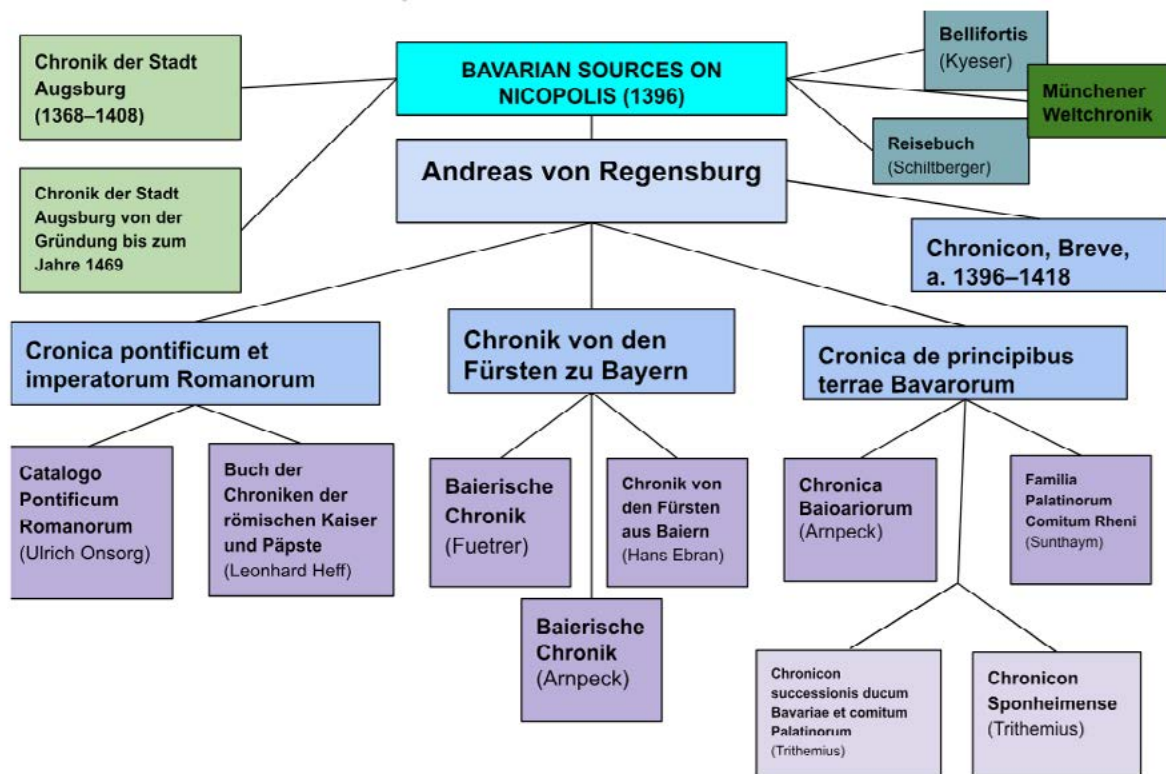


Fig. I. The Bavarian sources for the crusade of Nicopolis.

The second group includes texts made by later, mainly 15th century chroniclers who used, translated or copied his works¹¹. During the second half of the century, the number of artists and authors directly connected and patronized by various German princely families (including the Wittelsbachs) started to increase. The presence

¹¹ Jean-Marie Moeglin fittingly calls these authors *les héritiers d'André de Ratisbonne* (Moeglin, 1985, p. 142).

access to multiple sources and had to choose how to use or even combine them.

Furthermore, although not directly connected to the crusade of Nicopolis, the examination of these works can show the developments in historiographic thought in late medieval Germany since most of the cited chronicles were not only dedicated to or connected with the various Wittelsbach courts, but also represented a step in

the evolution of writing local history. As per the studies of Jean Marie-Moeglin (Moeglin, 1997; Moeglin, 1983), Rolf Sprandel (Sprandel, 1994) and Joachim Schneider (Schneider 2016), we can conclude that the 14th and 15th centuries were characterized by significant developments in the writing of history in the Empire. City chronicles (*Städtechroniken*), local (*Landeschroniken*) and dynastic histories started to coexist with the universal chronicles (*Weltchroniken*) and monastic histories. Most of the examined texts combine elements from these genres, with some of them being dedicated to the nobility, while others were commissioned by city councils, such as in the case of Leonhard Heff, who translated the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum* of Andreas von Regensburg from Latin into German. That being said, none of these texts are specifically dedicated either to Nicopolis or the crusading movement as a whole and the events of 1396 are inserted between other narratives. As it was already mentioned, the Bavarian authors concentrated primarily on the Wittelsbachs and this is why other key participants from the Empire (such as the Hohenzollern Burgraves of Nuremberg or the Counts of Cilli) are missing in their works.

The main Bavarian sources on the crusade of Nicopolis and their connections are presented in the table above. Despite the fact that the imperial city of Augsburg is located in the region in Swabia, its close connection with Bavaria is the reason that two of its city chronicles are put on this list. They are only given as reference material and won't be discussed in this paper, since their information is rather vague: the continuation of the *Chronik der Stadt Augsburg 1368–1408* (Frensdorff, 1865, p. 115) gives only a very brief outline of the events while the anonymous *Chronik der Stadt Augsburg von der Gründung bis zum Jahre 1469* just mentions the crusade in one sentence (Frensdorff, 1865, p. 316). Although Franconia shares similar closeness with Bavaria, Franconian sources (all originating from Nuremberg), such as the *Püchel von mein geslecht und von abentewr* (Ulman Stromer), the *Breve Chronicon Noribergense* (Oefele, 1763a, pp. 330–331), possibly written by Hartmann Schedel and the *Chronik aus Kaiser Sigmunds Zeit bis 1434* (Hegel, 1862, p. 359) deserve their own study and are also not discussed

in this paper. The same statement stands true for the famous *Bellifortis* of Konrad Kyser (especially Göttingen, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, 2° Cod. Ms. philos. 63) and the *Reisebuch* of Hans Schiltberger which are some of the most studied works on this list. Since neither these two texts, nor the Franconian or the Augsburg sources give information on the Wittelsbach participation in the crusade of 1396, they will be not be examined in detail¹². It was already stated that this article will focus only on what was proposed as the first group of Bavarian sources on the Nicopolis campaign, that being the chronicles of Andreas von Regensburg. The purple texts represent the continuations and rewritings of his works, done in the period until the end of the 15th century.

The *Münchener Weltchronik* (1273/94–1473), a compilation of five continuations to *Flores Temporum* that was published by Rolf Sprandel in his study on late medieval history writing in the Holy Roman Empire (Sprandel, 1994, pp. 1*–63*), contains two mentions of the Nicopolis crusade. One is just a brief mention in the *Papstchronik* section of the compilation: *MCCCLXXXIII. jar zoch dii ritterschaft gen Ungern und ward erschlagen* (Sprandel, 1994, p. 33*). The second one, contained in the *Kaiserchronik* section of the chronicle, is a bit longer and includes more information, mentioning the duke of Burgundy and King Sigismund (Sprandel, 1994, p. 41). As Sprandel notes, on the side of the manuscript another sentence is added that sheds light on the difficulties concerning the ransom of the Burgundian duke and the fact that the Bavarian knight Stephan Schmiehen (*Stephanus dictus Schmiecher*) returned to Bavaria after the debacle (Sprandel, 1994, p. 41*). Stephan Schmiehen is an interesting character who appears in the *Reisebuch* as well as in the notes of Andreas von Regensburg (BSB Clm 903, fol. 22v; Oefele, 1763a, p. 611) and in the Latin version of the Bavarian chronicle of Veit Arnpeck (Leidinger, 1915, p. 258).

The narrative in *Catalogo Pontificum Romanorum* (Oefele, 1763a, p. 372) by Ulrich Onsorg closely follows *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum*, while the *Buch der*

¹² Only the *Püchel von mein geslecht und von abentewr* mentions *in passim* the presence of the young prince Ruprecht Pipan (Hegel 1862, p. 48).

Chroniken der römischen Kaiser und Päpste (BSB Cgm 6240, fol. 237r) by Leonhard Heff is a direct translation of the Latin original of Andreas von Regensburg. In any case, the text of Heff can be useful when researching the translating strategies and methods that he used.

Although Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) was active in Sponheim and Würzburg, his *Chronicon successionis ducum Bavariae et comitum Palatinorum* (Trithemii, 1601, p. 117) and *Chronicon Sponheimense* (Würzburg, M.ch.f. 126, fol. 69v) bear close resemblance to either the original works of Andreas von Regensburg or one of the reworkings by his continuators. Therefore, he is included in the table since his chronicles clearly illustrate the strong influence of Andreas and the narrative that he created. The same stands true for Ladislaus Sunthaym. His *Familia Palatinorum Comitum Rhein* (Oefele, 1762b, p. 576) is, in all probability, also similarly inspired by the *Cronica de principibus terrae Bavarorum*.

Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern. As already mentioned, the most important and most copied work of Andreas von Regensburg is the *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern*. The text was originally composed in Latin around 1428 and was soon translated into German (Moeglin 1985, pp. 106–108). In the prologue, the author states that he wishes to dedicate his text to Duke Ludwig VII of Bavaria–Ingolstadt: *Dem grosmächtigen und hochgeboren herren Ludweig, pfalzgraff bey Rein, herczog in Bayren und graff zu Mortain... Durchleuchtigster fürst und herr, nachdem und ich von gottes gaben dy chroniken von päbsten und römischen kaysern durch nucz wegen der gegewurtigen und auch der chunftigen hab ausgeplümet und zesamgetragen, so hab ich darnach von einer frischen gedächtnüss wegen und lob der hochwirdigen und lobsamen in der fürsten sipp zu Bayren, als Karoli, der genamt ist Magnus, das als vil gesprochen ist sam der gross, und des heyligen sand Heinrich, dy bayd römisch kayser gewesen sein, und der andern, auch willen gehabt, von fürsten zu Bayren ein cronik zesamtragen* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 591). As Joachin Schneider notes, this is a clear example of the growing role that history played in the courts of the German princes and the desire of the Bavarian duchies to assert themselves, while the fact that it was written in German is

a sign for the widening audience of historical texts (Schneider, 2016, pp. 244–245). The two versions of the chronicle are preserved in a total of 30 manuscripts, with most of them being from the 15th and 16th centuries, although it must be noted that some copies are incomplete¹³. 23 of these manuscripts are kept in Munich, 2 are in the Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, while the rest are preserved in Vienna, Wolfenbüttel, Kassel, Hamburg and Pommersfelden¹⁴.

The chronicle begins with a commentary on the legendary ancient roots of both Bavaria and Regensburg (Leidinger, 1903, pp. 592–593), and ends with another dedication to Duke Ludwig VII of Bavaria–Ingolstadt (Leidinger, 1903, pp. 654–655). Thus, the emphasis of the text is placed not only on the Wittelsbach dynasty itself, but also on the Bavarian duchy in a wider context. Furthermore, this shows how the literary genre of dynastic history intertwines with the *Landesgeschichte*. This also reflects the aim of most late medieval Bavarian authors to show the connections of the Wittelsbachs with earlier Bavarian (pre–1180) history (Schneider 2016, p. 233)¹⁵ – a clearly identifiable trend in the works of Andreas von Regensburg, especially when he describes the earlier history of the duchy (before 1180).

¹³ For example BSB Cgm 5559, BSB Clm 14969 and BSB Cgm 5853.

¹⁴ <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/154> – For the German manuscripts (01.10.2024). <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/153> – For the Latin manuscripts (01.10.2024).

¹⁵ This can clearly be seen in his description of the fateful events of 1180. As already mentioned, Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa confiscated Bavaria from the Saxon duke Henry the Lion and transferred the dukedom to Otto von Wittelsbach (Haverkamp, 1988, p. 232). In the chronicle of Andreas von Regensburg this is described not as a reward for the services of Otto, but rather as the rightful return of the Wittelsbach/Scheyern family to their ancestral Bavarian ducal title – *Zu den grafen von Scheyren ist wider komen das herzogtum in Bayren. In den zeiten und kayser Friedreich der rest regniret, da ward graf Otton von Scheyren aus dem chünn Karolorum, als man aus den obengeschriben hat, da man zalt 1180 jar, hercyog in Bayren gesezt* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 636). This trend is visible in the dynastic strategies of other great families such as the Habsburgs who wished to present themselves as the heirs of both Caesar (through the famous *Privilegium maius*) and the earlier house of Babenberg. Of course, such fictional genealogies were common for the medieval period and were an integral part of the various foundation legend models (Bartlett, 2021, pp. 379–384).

The chapter dedicated to the battle of Nicopolis is named *Von dem passagi wider dy Türken* and is situated between an account of the great fire in Straubing in 1393 and the elevation of Rupprecht III of the Palatinate, the father of Ruprecht Pipan, as King of the Romans in 1400 (Leidinger, 1903, p. 650). When telling the story of the crusade, Andreas von Regensburg first describes the movement of the Franco-Burgundian troops through Germany and the large number of additional German knights who joined them, including the Wittelsbach prince Ruprecht Pipan. He then directly proceeds to tell the story of how the crusaders were defeated and the pitiful return of the young prince, who died in Amberg soon afterwards, without mentioning any of the other battles, that being the clashes in Vidin and Oryahovo. The differences between the German and Latin (Leidinger, 1903, pp. 558–559) versions of the chronicle are rather cosmetic (at least with regard to the crusade of Nicopolis), with no drastic changes in content.

The narrative that Andreas von Regensburg established was copied, rewritten and expanded by later Bavarian authors such as Ulrich Fuetrer (Spiller, 1909, pp. 183–184), Veit Arnpeck (Leidinger, 1915, p. 258; pp. 534–535; p. 790) and Hans Ebran von Wildenberg (Roth, 1905, p. 147). Their texts, while (again) not specifically centered on the crusade, follow similar patterns in their retelling of the original chronicles of Andreas von Regensburg and (again) emphasize, or at least mention, the role of Ruprecht Pipan.

Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum. The narrative on the crusade of Nicopolis in the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 117) follows a similar pattern as the one in *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern/Cronica de principibus terrae Bavarorum*. This chronicle was also created in the 1420s and presents a chronological account of the reigns of the Roman popes and emperors, beginning with the time of Julius Caesar and ending with the age of Sigismund of Luxemburg (Leidinger, 1903, pp. 1–159). In total, 23 manuscripts and copies have been preserved. These are kept in Bamberg, Hamburg, Göttingen, Klosterneuburg, Munich,

Seebarn, Stuttgart, Vienna and Wolfenbüttel¹⁶, with most of them being from the 15th century. As already mentioned, this version of the narrative on the crusade of 1396 is similar to the one in *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern* but it also includes an additional section on the fate and captivity of *Johannes dux Burgundie* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 117). Andreas von Regensburg further expands the reasons for the defeat, putting the blame largely on the shoulders of the Burgundian prince and the overconfidence of the crusaders, especially the French knights: *Causam autem intericionis huius magni exercitus Christianorum quidam dicebant esse peccatum Francorum propter lubricam et inordinatam vitam ipsorum, cum terras nostras pertransirent* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 117). These criticisms fall in line with most contemporary (especially French) texts dealing with the crusade and have been extensively studied in the cited works of Zeynep Çeçen and Siren Çelik. After the tale of the crusade, Andreas von Regensburg expands of the life of John the Fearless, explaining how he returned to Burgundy but was murdered by an unnamed Dauphin: *Dux vero Burgundie reservatur et paulo post a captivitate solutus in Burgundiam revertitur, ubi multis annis postea dominatur et postremo a telphino occiditur* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 117). This, of course, refers to the murder of John the Fearless by the Dauphin (the future king Charles VII) on the bridge at Montereau on the 10th of September 1419 (Calmette, 2017, pp. 170–172; Van Loo, 2021, pp. 258–260). In all likelihood, this expanded section was not included in the German and Latin versions of the *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern* due to the fact that they were created for the court of Duke Ludwig VII and concentrated mainly on the history of Bavaria, while the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum* presented much more varied information on different topics.

In 1470–1471, under the direction of the Regensburg city treasurer Erasmus from the Trayner family, the scribe Leonhard Heff translated the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum* from Latin into German (Studt, 2014, pp. 758–759). The author added a bilingual preface and expanded the original with information from other contemporary texts

¹⁶ <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/156> – 01.10.2024.

that Leonhard had access to. The chronology of the text is stretched to 1471 by the addition of a short *Kaiserchronik* (only 3 pages – BSB Cgm 6240, fol. 312v–313v). His translation is preserved in four manuscripts – three of them are stored in the Bavarian State Library in Munich and one is in the Hamburg State and University Library¹⁷. It has never been published in a modern scholarly edition. One of the manuscripts, *Codex germanicus monacensis 6240* (stored in Munich) can be accessed digitally and was used for the purposes of this article¹⁸. The original text of Andreas of Regensburg on the Nicopolis crusade has been almost verbatim translated by Leonhard Heff (BSB Cgm 6240, fol. 237r–237v), without him making any significant changes to its structure. While this version of the text is not by any means ‘groundbreaking’, it offers valuable insight on the diffusion of the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum* and the ways in which translations from Latin into German were done.

Anonymi Bavari Breve Chronicon. A fairly different narrative can be observed in the so-called *Anonymi Bavari Breve Chronicon*. This short chronicle is preserved in a manuscript containing various texts by Andreas von Regensburg (BSB Clm 903, fol. 21r–22r), but its first (and only) printed edition classifies it as an ‘anonymous’ work (Oefele, 1763a, pp. 611–613). However, according to Georg Leidinger, it should not be seen as a chronicle, but rather as a collection of various work notes written by Andreas von Regensburg himself, which are not connected in any particular narrative, but are rather used as the basis for his other writings (Leidinger, 1903, pp. LIX–LX). Even the chronological order that is presented in the printed edition is done by the publisher and not Andreas himself (Leidinger, 1903, p. LIX), since the manuscript doesn’t start with the crusade of Nicopolis (as it appears in the printed edition) but with the opening of the Council of Pisa in 1409: *Anno Domini MCCCCIX. Celebratum est Concilium Pisanum...* (BSB Clm 903, fol. 21r). These work

notes, although not connected chronologically, cover the period from the Nicopolis campaign to the dealings concerning the marriage of Duke Ludwig of Bavaria–Ingolstadt (1413)¹⁹, and describe some of the most important events in both Europe and Asia such as the Battle of Ankara (1402), the Teutonic defeat at Grünwald (1410), the endless problems surrounding the Papal Schism and the election of Sigismund of Luxemburg as King of the Romans (1410–1411). In the original manuscript, the battle of Nicopolis is placed between the accounts of Tannenberg and the second imprisonment of King Wenceslaus in 1402 (BSB Clm 903, fol. 21r–22v).

When writing on the crusade Andreas von Regensburg doesn’t mention the participation of Ruprecht Pipan. This is the only one of his Nicopolis accounts where he omits this information. On the other hand, this is also the only instance where he mentions the Bavarian crusader Stephan Schmieher/Schmiechen (Upper Bavaria), who was knighted during the campaign but got captured in the fighting: *Dux cum aliquibus per magnam pecuniam liberatus est, inter quos fuit Stephanu Schmiechär in eodem praelio miles factus & per eundem Ducem liberatus* (Oefele, 1763a, pp. 611; Riezler 1889, p. 180). Another difference is the correct dating of the crusade. For comparison, in the *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern* the author states that *Als man zalt 1394, da kom herczog Johans von Burgundi der herczog Albrechten, dy zeit zu Strawbing, swestersun was, mit grossem volkch durch Bayren wider dy Türken*. His ‘usual’ misdating matches other texts from the period, such as Shittleberger’s *Reisebuch* (Hans Schiltberger, 1885, pp. 1–2), the *Catalogus abbatum Saganensium* (Stenzel, 1835, p. 279) or the continuators of the Augsburg Chronicle (1368–1408) who consider 1409 to be the year of the battle: *1409. Item desselben herbst do zugen der küng von Ungern und der*

¹⁹ As Georg Leidinger explains, the final event in the printed edition is wrongly dated, as it actually deals with the campaign of John the Fearless against Liège in 1408 and not in 1418 as it appears in the book of Oefele (Leidinger, 1903, p. LIX). The duke of Burgundy undertook this military endeavor in help of his brother-in-law Johann III the Pitiless (*Obnegnade*), who was the prince-bishop of Liège between 1389 and 1419. In the battle of Othée (23 September 1408) John the Fearless defeated the rebellious citizens of Liège (Calmette, 2017, pp. 126–130; Van Loo, 2021, pp. 241–244).

¹⁷ <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/2624> – 01.10.2024.

¹⁸ A link to the digitized manuscripts in the BSB is given in the bibliography.

burggrauf von Nürenberg und groß herschaft an die heidenschaft und stritten do mit den haiden, da wurden vil der haiden erschlagen und der cristen. Das geschach umb sant Michaelistag (Frensdorff, 1865, p. 115).

From the texts analyzed so far, it can be concluded that Andreas von Regensburg did not write specifically on the subject of the crusades, let alone the crusade of Nicopolis, and it should be noted the war with the ‘infidel’ wasn’t a major theme in his works. The only notable exception relating to the defense of Christianity is his interest in the Hussite heresy in Bohemia, to which he pays considerable attention in his *Chonica Husitarum* (Leidinger, 1903, pp. 343–461) and the *Dialogus de haeresi bohemica* (Leidinger, 1903, pp. 657–693). In *Chronik von den Fürsten zu Bayern* he mentions the First (Leidinger, 1903, pp. 625–626), Second (Leidinger, 1903, p. 631) and Sixth (Leidinger, 1903, p. 627; p. 637) crusades, but mainly in the context of Wittelsbach and Bavarian regional history which can explain why he concentrated so much on Ruprecht Pipan when describing the crusade of Nicopolis. This pattern can, for example, be clearly seen in his treatment of the First Crusade. Andreas mentions Pope Urban II and Godfrey of Bouillon²⁰, but then draws attention to the death of Duke Welf I of Bavaria, who passed away on the island of Cyprus in 1101, as well as to the unfortunate fate of Archbishop Thiemo of Salzburg, who was killed by the ‘heathens’ and thus made a martyr: *Zu den selben zeiten zogt herczog Welfo zu Bayren gein Jerusalem und starb in Cipro... Under in was Tiemo, bischof zu Salczburg, der zum ersten münich ist gewesen zu Nidern Altach. Der ward von den hayden mit manigerlay pen als ein martirär gekrönt* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 625)²¹.

Far more interesting is the question of how Ruprecht Pipan returned to Germany and what caused his subsequent death. Most authors from

this period point out that the other German princes who took part in the campaign, that being the Burgrave Johann III of Nuremberg and Count Hermann of Cilli, escaped together with King Sigismund by boarding a ship (Hans Schiltberger 1885, pp. 5–7; Hegel 1862, p. 48; Janicke, 1869, p. 291). In any case, all these chroniclers fail to mention Ruprecht Pipan in a similar context, so it is unlikely that he escaped with the king and his entourage. This is further confirmed by study of Károly Kranzieritz on the retinue of the king during his escape via the Danube. He states that the monarch was accompanied by the abovementioned Count Hermann von Cilli, the Croatian Ban Miklós Garai, the burgrave of Nuremberg, István Kanizsai, Archbishop János Kanizsai and the Hospitaller Grand Master Philibert de Naillac (Kranzieritz, 2022, p. 40, table 2). Andreas von Regensburg only mentions the difficulties that the Wittelsbach prince faced on his way back, but does not shed light on the route itself. In all probability, the return followed the same pattern as the one described in the poem of Peter von Retz – across the Danube, through Wallachia and into Hungary and then to the lands of the Holy Roman Empire (Liliencron, 1865, pp. 159–160, v. 164–213). The untimely death of the Wittelsbach prince appears to have been caused by some unspecified illness or wound that was probably made worse during the hardships of traveling back to the Palatinate. Andreas von Regensburg states that he returned *cum magna penuria* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 559) / *mit grosser armuet* (Leidinger, 1903, p. 650), which corresponds to Peter von Retz’s account of the difficulties of those returning through Wallachia – *es wät wind uznd regent vil, / wir müsten waten wasfer groß, / maniger mensch dahin floß. / Si wurfen vor uns ab di steg, / durich hochs gepirig di prosen weg / über stöch und über stain / müst wir laufen all gemain, / große veld und leten wild, / ist das nicht ein unpild?* (Liliencron, 1865, p. 160 v. 170–189)²².

Conclusions and observations. When analyzing these chronicles, it quickly becomes apparent that they cannot give answer to some

²⁰ *Ich mayn, daz dy yczunt genant sachh, das man daz heylig land gewonnen hat, sey geschechen under kayser Heinrich dem vierden, do Urbanus der ander pabst was und herczog Godefrid zu Lotharingia gewan Jerusalem, von dem ze latein vers sein: Anno milleno centeno, sed minus uno / Virginis a partu, peperit que gaudia mundo / Urbem tunc Franci capiunt virtute potenti* (Leidinger 1903, p. 625).

²¹ Although, it should be noted that he describes these same events in a similar way in his *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum*.

²² Interestingly enough, his brother, Elector Ludwig III (1410–1436), also contracted an unspecified illness after traveling to the Holy Land in 1427 and although he didn’t die, he remained unable to govern his lands until the end of his life and a regency was established (Schaab, 1988, p. 171).

of the questions that concern the participation of the Bavarian nobility in the crusade of Nicopolis. For example, Andreas von Regensburg mentions only two participants – the Wittelsbach prince Ruprecht Pipan and the knight Stephan Schmiehen. Even other Bavarian sources don't shed much light on this topic. The often quoted Hans Schiltberger mentions the Klammensteiner, Pientzenauer, Kuchler, Schmiehen and Greiffen. Veit Arnpeck, one of Andreas von Regensburgs continuators, adds the Fraunhofen and Fraunberger to the list (Leidinger, 1915, p. 258). In any case, these are not some unknown and obscure families of lowly knights. The Fraunberger, Fraunhofen and Pienzenauer were some of the most prominent representatives of the nobility in Upper Bavaria (Weithmann, 1999, p. 13). The Kuchler were not only some of the richest ministerials in the region (at least in the beginning of the century) but also the hereditary marshals of Salzburg who managed to increase their standing since the middle of the 13th century (Freed, 1995, p. 140; Freed, 1987, p. 603; Hübner, 1793, p. 255). If we believe that Schiltberger really was a scion of the extinct marshals of Schiltberg (which Weithmann openly doubts – Weithmann, 1999, p. 92), that would mean that he was a member of an important ministerial family that served the Wittelsbach dukes of Bavaria. Even Stefan Schmiechen, who is mentioned in quite a few sources, was close to the French court through the ties of his wife to Queen Isabeau of France (Adams, 2010, p. 244).

Although sources for the late 14th century are more abundant than the available data for the High Middle Ages, it is still difficult to peer through the upper layer of the nobility and make meaningful conclusions for the participation of the lower strata of aristocratic society in the later crusades. This, of course, reflects on the composition of the Christian coalition of 1396. In all probability the Fraunhofen, Kuchler, Pienzenauer, etc. each had their own retinues and led some other men in battle. For comparison, the anonymous author of the *Chronik der Stadt Augsburg 1368–1408* mentions that during the *Städtekrieg* of the late 14th century, Warmund Pienzenauer (cousin to Werner Pienzenauer, who was killed in the battle of Nicopolis) brought with him 20 men and they burned and pillaged the area near Augsburg

(Frensdorff, 1865, pp. 89–90)²³. Again, we have information about the upper echelon of the non-princely nobility but don't have much data on the common soldiers – were they mercenaries or part of the nobles' retinues? And what was the role of Ruprecht Pipan in the crusade and the battle of Nicopolis? It is obvious that he led some knights but we have no concrete data on them. Andreas von Regensburg also mentions virtually nothing about the Balkans, Byzantium or the Ottomans and their conquests. He notes that the events took place at Nicopolis but doesn't state that the city is located in or connected with Bulgaria²⁴, a fact that is well known in French and Hungarian texts. Later 15th and early 16th century Bavarian historians also don't refer to Bulgaria. Even Aventinus, who is well informed and clearly used some Hungarian sources, only talks about Moesia (Aventini, 1627, p. 494), which was the typical name for Bulgaria in Renaissance historical and geographical texts²⁵.

On the other hand, Andreas von Regensburg and his continuators give a more Wittelsbach and Bavarian oriented look on the events, however brief it may be. Although most other German eyewitness accounts also come from the Austro-Bavarian region – Schiltberger, Peter von Retz and Konrad Kyeser, Andreas himself did not participate in the crusade and how he obtained his information is up to debate. Since his tale of the battle is rather vague, it is not impossible that it was based on common knowledge of the events that circulated among more educated people in Regensburg. In any case, he created a model for the representation of the Nicopolis campaign that was used by later 15th century writers such as Veit Arnpeck, Hans Ebran von Wildenberg, Ulrich Fuetrer and one that appears even in the humanist history of Bavaria by Aventinus. Authors outside Bavaria were also inspired by him and copied (or adapted) his works. The chapter on the crusade of Nicopolis in the already

²³ Warmund and his father Otto were among the nobles who witnessed, signed and participated in the partition of Upper Bavaria in 1392 – MW II, No. 372, 557.

²⁴ It was, after all, the last residence of the medieval Bulgarian rulers, not that this was of any interest to Bavarian authors.

²⁵ The *Chronica Hungarorum* states that Sultan Bayezid also savagely attacked the Mysians, whom we call Bulgarians... (Thuróczy, 1991, pp. 55).

quoted *Tractatus de scismatibus* by the Austrian theologian Thomas Ebendorfer (1388–1464) is a clear reworking of the *Cronica pontificum et imperatorum Romanorum* but certain words like *Bavarian* were changed to *Austrian*: *Hec obscura, quis aperire sufficit, qui vitam istius patris et per eum gesta et suis diebus ignorat, nescio, nisi quod eius temporibus anno Domini MCCCLXXXV. Sigismundus, iuvenis rex Ungarie, fecit denunciari passagium in Teucros, cui auxilio per Austriam, venit Johannes dux Burgundie, quem multi Theutonici, qui usque non comparuerunt, sunt secuti, inter quos Rupertus, filius Ruperti palatini Reni* (*Tractatus de scismatibus*, 2004, pp. 65–66). In any case, the table of Bavarian sources that is presented in this article could possibly be expanded with other works that are not known to the author of the present study. Furthermore, the creation of another table that expands on the interconnections between Bavarian, Austrian and other German sources would be beneficial.

The strong influence of Andreas von Regensburg on later 15th century and early 16th century historians in Bavaria (in terms of the Nicopolis crusade narratives) needs to be and will be the subject of a separate study. Compared to other contemporary sources on Nicopolis, his works are neither the most detailed nor the most influential in terms of contemporary academic interest in them. This lack of interest notwithstanding, it seems that his own contemporaries and their successors were deeply influenced by his works and used them even during the era of the Enlightenment, either through some of his continuators (such as Aventinus) or directly, via the publishing of his works that had started in the early sixteenth century and continued through the eighteenth.

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