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LITERARY INCARNATIONS OF HERKUS MONTE

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The historical figure of one of the leaders of the Prussian uprisings, Herkus Monte (Lithuanian: Herkus Mantas), is today largely a literary character. He owes his presence to three national literatures: German, Polish and Lithuanian renderings from Peter of Dusburg's Latin chronicle¹. The chronicle became the source text for later historical writers and authors of fiction. Dusburg made repeated mentions of Herkus Monte, mostly in unfavourable terms. Nevertheless, these fragmentary biographical references were later used by writers to create a wide variety of "lives" of Monte in all of the three aforementioned literary cultures. Monte, in the mask of Adam Mickiewicz's Konrad Wallenrod, is at the same time a traitor and a saviour who dies for the nation according to the romantic ideal of sacrificing life for the supreme good: the deliverance for the enslaved Motherland. In *Herkus Mantas*, the protagonist of the drama by a Lithuanian writer Juozas Grušas from the 1950s is almost a Lithuanian national hero, since Lithuanians – being Balts – to this day feel close affinity to Prussia². Historical ties between the Germans and Prussians, from whom the Germans took the name of one of the largest state administration institutions, are obvious. The 19th century, called the age of history, stimulated the interest of writers in the fate of the conquered nation, and especially its hero.

¹ Petri de Dusburg. *Chronicon terrae Prussiae*, hrsg. von M. Töppen, in: *Scriptores rerum prussicarum* (further: SRP), hrsg. von T. Hirsch, M. Töppen, E. Strehlke, Bd. I, Leipzig 1861, pp. 3–219. First medieval translation into German language: *Di Kronike von Pruzilant des Nicolaus v. Jeroschin*, hrsg. v. E. Strehlke, in: SRP IV, pp. 302–624.

² Juozas Grušas (1901–1986) – Lithuanian writer, linguist and essayist. In the post-war years, he became famous mainly as a author of historical dramas, („Herkus Mantas 1957; „Barbora Radvilaite“ 1972; „Švitrigaila“ 1976, „Unija“ 1977).

Numerous German historical novels and dramas tell the story of the tragic fate of Herkus Monte³.

The memory of Prussia, materialised in literature and other cultural texts, has become a three-dimensional genetical, historical and geographical image. This multifaceted image can be attributed to the divergent interests of the three cultures that inherited the Prussian legacy. In the study of the Prussian literary topos, it seems appropriate to apply postcolonial criticism and two different memory models: cultural and historical, since all three inheriting cultures (re)construct the memory of Prussia in different ways. Mostly by functionalising it, and – which is an indispensable condition for literature – by fictionalising it. The literary constructions of the memory of Prussia have served, and still serve, different purposes in history, but above all, they served the ideological and national purposes. It is of these constructions that the writers have drawn their inspiration, creating varying, but primarily national configurations of the most famous figure in Prussian history.

Dusburg's *Chronicle of the Prussian Land* (as well as its German translation by Nikolaus von Jeroschin), and later chronicles recreate the clashes of the heroic knights of the Teutonic Order with headstrong and backward pagans. Literature that glorified the German Order unwittingly turned against the Prussians, who, together with the Lithuanians, became the embodiment of evil and pagan ignorance. Udo Arnold in his paper "Prussian History of the German Teutonic Order in the German political tradition of the 19th and 20th centuries" in an outstanding way shows the historical background and the motives behind the revival of the chivalric spirit of the Order⁴. Its main driving force was the creation of a uniform Germany, a great power in Europe. Brandenburg-Prussia, which won the historic rivalry with the Habsburgs, played a significant role during this period. After winning the battle of the Nations at Leipzig in 1813, King Frederick William founded the Iron Cross. Arnold says of this telling event and the beginning of a new tradition as follows:

This tradition, ignoring the historical reality, integrated the medieval state consciousness of the Teutonic Order in Prussia with the state consciousness of the Kingdom of Prussia, which meant that the consciousness of a small Prussian state turned into a uniform German state consciousness⁵.

³ Authors of the stories about Herkus Monte in the German literature i.a.: Fr. Lubojatzky, A. Heinrich, O. V. Gomen (pseud.), A. J. Cüppers, H. Bauer, B. Graf von Keyserlingk, R. Lauckner. *Historisches Lexikon*, Bd. 3, Wien 1960, p. 512, and W. Pierson: *Hercus Monte. Bilder aus Preussens Vorzeit*, Berlin 1872; M. Springborn, *Herkus Monte. Eine Erzählung aus Altpreussens Vorzeit*, Berlin 1897.

⁴ Udo Arnold, *Prūsiškoji vokiečių ordino istorija XIX ir XX amžių Vokietijos politinėje tradicijoje*, in: *Senovės baltų kultūra. Prūsijos kultūra*, Vilnius 1994, pp. 235–258.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 239 (author's translation, as in the case of other quotations from German and Lithuanian).

This event had its consequences. Poets and writers responded to this appeal of the historical moment by means of relevant works. The 19th century is abundant with historical novels that recount the struggle of Teutonic Knights with pagans: Johannes Voigt publishes his monumental nine-volume work on the history of the Order in Prussia⁶. Audronė Barūnaitė-Willeke writes about the doings of the 19th-century historiography:

Although the German historians no longer saw the conquest of Prussia in terms of a religious objective, they were nevertheless willing to justify this deed in the name of cultural progress. The premise was that the Teutonic Knights were to bring the backward peoples the blessing of higher culture⁷.

Das Kreuz an der Ostsee [A Cross on the Baltic], a romantic drama by Zacharias Werner from 1806, is written in this very spirit. In the introduction, the author presents a brief history of the conquest of Prussia as well as the customs and myths of the tribe taken from modern chronicles (mainly Simon Grunau's) which become the canvas for the narrative:

(...) Vaydevut was apparently the first King of Prussia [...] He had reportedly twelve sons, of which ten were killed in various battles. The eleventh, Samo, gave his name to Sambia. The twelfth, Warmio, to Warmia, a land blessed by numerous pilgrimages. (...) Warmio married the daughter of Konrad I of Masovia, and was converted by her to the Christian faith, which led to the eradication of paganism in Prussia. Old Vaydevut, after eighty years of reign, divided the country between his son, moved alone to Romowe and became the chief priest (Kriwe), where he experienced a revelation in a dream that told him his gods could not oppose the Christian God⁸.

Victorious Christianity, the embodiment of the progress of civilization, is the guiding idea of the drama. Prussians themselves, at war with one another, in the end are not able to tell how their social order should be organised: some desire the return to the natural state, to the days when there were no gods, priests and authorities, to the nomadic way of life; others are in favour of maintaining the state of things of the day, and even want the strengthening of religious and moral discipline

⁶ Cf. J. Voigt, *Geschichte Preussens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergange der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens*, Königsberg 1827–1839.

⁷ A. Barūnaitė-Willeke, *Die Prussen in der deutschen Literatur seit der Romantik*, Lampertheim 1992, pp. 10–11.

⁸ [Zacharias Werner], *Historisches Vorbericht*, in: *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee. Ein Trauerspiel* (Erster Teil: *Die Brautnacht*), Berlin 1806, p. XII.

and maintaining the sedentary lifestyle and property rights. Werner presents the pre-Christian religion as worthless, bloodthirsty and unfair. Old myths are depicted from the Christian point of view, which becomes most prominent in the climax. As the Prussians try to liberate their leader Warmio, the Christian God comes miraculously to their help, sending them a missionary and martyr, Saint Adalbert. The love story is also marked by a religious fight. In captivity, Warmio falls in love with a daughter of Duke Konrad, pious Malgona, and is baptised in order to be able to marry her. She converts him to the true faith.

Another example of a 19th-century literary interpretation of a chronical figure in the spirit of an inevitable faith-promoting conquest was that of the leader of Sudovians, Skomand in William Obgartel's *Skomand, der Held Sudauens (Skomand, the hero of Sudovia)* from 1926. In a staging loosely related to Jeroschin's chronicle, the author describes the heroic life of Skomand, who throughout his life fought along with other Prussian tribes against the Order, and at the end his life became a Christian and turned against the Lithuanians:

Fifty-three years lasted the war of the Order with Prussia. And there he is, on the border with Lithuania [...]. The Lithuanians, whose language, religion and customs bore similarly to the Prussians, were even more savage and militant and lived in dark paganism⁹.

Skomand, Obgartel's positive protagonist dies as a zealous follower of Christ from wounds received in the battle of Grodno. His only desire before death is to make penance for the hostility that he had felt towards the new faith. Dusburg's intertext is very much visible in the novel. In part 224, "On Skomand's death", the first chronicler of the Order says:

Behold the miraculous conversion and transformation that passed thanks to the hand of the Almighty. The same Skomand who savagely persecuted the Church of God before, is now a defender of the faith, a great leader of the Christian people¹⁰.

From the 19th century, German writers paid particular attention to the figure of the leader of the Prussian uprising (1260–1275) – Herkus Monte. In these novels, Monte stands out as a courageous fighter for the independence of Prussia, who, however, in the end must die. Barūnaitė-Willeke compares this theme in the Ger-

⁹ W. Obgartel, *Skomand, der Held Sudauens. Eine Erzählung aus der Ordenszeit Altpreußens*, Berlin-Leipzig [1928], p. 114.

¹⁰ Piotr z Dusburga, *Kronika Ziemi Pruskiej*, translated by: S. Wyszomirski, Toruń 2005, p. 166.

man literature of the day to the 19th-century American novel about the conquest of Indians (James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*), in which the hero is "the last of the tribe"¹¹. In these novels, religious discourse gives way to another interpretation of the deeds of Herkus Monte: here, the fight for freedom and resistance to colonisation become the guiding themes. This change in perspective is indicated, for example, by A. Heinrich's novel *Herkus Monte. Aus Altpreussens Vergangenheit* from 1865. There is one thing that links all the stories about the Prussian hero: a certain respect for his determination and a final reflection, usually coinciding with the moment of Monte's death, whose significance tells of the inevitability of history. These nostalgic novel endings suggest that Monte permanently entered the history of the German culture and the memory of him remains alive. Heinrich ends his story in this manner:

They [the Prussians] did not know the graces of Christianity, but fought not against them. It was only to expel the invaders, who took their freedom and turned them into pathetic stooges. When a nation rises to struggle for its freedom, no man can cast a stone at them¹².

Franz Lubojatzky, born in Dresden, the author of numerous historical novels, in his novel *Herkus Monte* from 1840 unravels a postromantic tale about the life and adventures of the hero and his complex family relations. From the point of view of the discourse of power, the author tries to keep an objective eye at the inevitable historical processes: he sympathises with the Prussians and shows great empathy towards the main character, Monte. At the same time he presents the atrocities of war experienced both by the conquered as well as the victorious parties. Religious discourse is very prominent within the story, since it is religion that is the instrument of power: even Monte, a strong character, a hero of the war, must be subject to the laws of Romowe by agreeing to the bloody sacrifice in the form of a captive, his former friend and teacher – Hirzhals. Neither is he convinced to Christianity: the cross is for him a symbol of the fight for dominance.

Lubojatzky expands the threads related to Monte's family history known from Dusburg's and Jeroschin's chronicles, of which we know only that Herkus was abducted as a child and raised in Magdeburg to become a knight, was baptised and given the name of Heinrich, and after returning to the motherland he became a freedom fighter for his enslaved people. Lubojatzky draws an image of truly romance-like family and amorous adventures of the protagonist. At the beginning

¹¹ Cf. A. Barünaitė-Willeke, op. cit, p. 8.

¹² A. Heinrich, *Herkus Monte. Aus Altpreussens Vergangenheit*, Mohrungen 1865, p. 64.

of the novel Monte rides on horseback accompanied by Hirzhals and his Prussian squire Skomand (sic!) to Kulm. Tired of the journey, they stay in a forest mud hut inhabited by Brailam, a Prussian prophethess, banished by compatriots because of having been baptised. Brailam's new faith is only apparent, because in a corner of the hut Hirzhals sees a wooden statue of the god Pikollos, described as:

a statue of a grim old man with a white band on his bald head; at his feet lay the skulls of a man, a horse and a cow – it was the god Pikollos, the god of ghouls and the dark place – Hell [German Pekla], where the evil spirits receive their torment and suffering.

As Hirzhals destroys the statue, Brailam casts on him a curse of martyr's death by fire for the desecration of a deity. Pikollos' revenge soon materialises, as Hirzhals, strapped to his horse, is burned on a sacrificial stake.

Herkus' defiance is born in the Kulm castle when Walrad Mirabilis tells the story about the burning of the Prussian elders in the Lenzenberg castle. Herkus curses him, crying out to Perkun for a revenge, for which he is captured and thrown into the dungeon. In prison, he hears girls singing in Prussian, which reminds him of his homeland. Noble Hirzhals helps Herkus escape. Herkus also saves a daughter of the Bartian leader Divan, named Belisa, who becomes his fiancée, and, after the first victory over the knights of the Order, his wife. The description of a Prussian wedding includes many interesting ethnographic facts. Also, the religious rites of the Vaydelots and the Prussian struggles with the Order were described with a flair as well as a certain romantic poignancy. Lubojatzky tries to keep his narrative impartial, however, the interests of the fighting parties remain asymmetric: the Order fights in the name of Christ, the Prussians – in the name of freedom: “[Knights] looked straight in the eye of an imminent death and fought in the name of their faith; the Pagans, in the name of a longed-for freedom”¹³.

Lubojatzky builds further adventures of the protagonists on his own, since they are not recorded in the chronicles. On the day of the wedding of Herkus with Belisa of Livonia there comes the knight Alf von Tierberg. According to an old custom he is treated as a guest, however, a drunken Prussian wounds him with a mace. The injured knight stays in Herkus' house, and beautiful Belisa tends to his wounds. A fondness emerges between the married woman and the knight. Already cured, Alf leaves Herkus' house, goes to the sacred grove, to which the unwanted have no entrance, is captured and is to be burned alive at a sacrificial stake. Tempted by the knight's promises, Belisa helps him escape and Alf persuades her

¹³ Ibidem, p. 55.

to run away with him. Before then, Herkus attempts to free his guest by negotiating with Kriwe. He wishes to avoid a bloody spectacle, because an execution of a guest would be unacceptable for the Prussian tradition. Lubojatzky presents the Prussian religious fanaticism, the total power of the clergy over their moral attitude and over the pagans' secular behaviour. Monte appears as a defender of humanity who does not agree to the dominance of divine rights, regardless of religion. In a moment of doubt and pain after his beloved wife's escape, old Brailam appears and reveals a terrible secret: Her real name is Kora and she is a daughter of the noble Withmud [a reik]. She was the wife of Gawryla Monte, which meant that she is Herkus' mother. Kora was rejected by her husband because of a terrible ritual that she performed at the request of her dying father. She helped him leave this world by hitting him with a mace (as she was an only child and there was no male heir in the family). Gawryla Monte could not accept her as a woman and wife, so she turned against him and gave birth to an illegitimate son, whom she abandoned and moved away from home. Herkus is actually an illegitimate son of his father, but accepted by him. Another revenge of Kora on the former husband was bringing the Teutonic Knights to Natangian homes, the death of Gawryla and Herkus' abduction. Devastated Herkus, deprived of his identity granted by belonging to a family, throws himself into the fray. Murdered treacherously, he is killed at the hands of Alf von Tierberg. Alf becomes the commander of Christburg (Dzierzgoń) and rejects Belisa and her child because he does not want to lose his privileged position, which he owes to his being a clergyman. With the dead child in her arms, insane Belisa throws herself on the stake on which Herkus' body is burning. In the novel, determinism in history is intertwined with determinism of fate, where human curses and godly revenge are materialised, and the fate of man reflects the fate of nation. Franz Lubojatzky ends his novel in the spirit of national and Christian fervour:

The name of Herkus Monte now lives only in the books of history, but the memory of him will live as long as the German tongue exists. Peace to his ashes!¹⁴.

Today, the German 19th-century historical novels about Herkus Monte have fallen into oblivion. In the 20th century, the figure of Herkus Monte appears in two German dramas: Max Worgitzki's drama from 1916 and Rolf Lauckner's from 1937, as well as in a Lithuanian drama by Juozas Grušas from 1957¹⁵.

¹⁴ F. Lubojatzky, *Herkus Monte. Historische Erzählung aus der letzten Hälfte des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, Marburg 1840, p. 150.

¹⁵ M. Worgitzki, *Hercus Monte. Schauspiel in 3 Aufzügen*, Leipzig [1916].

Both in the German as well as Lithuanian dramas the main character is Herkus Monte aka Mantas, and the culmination is the scene with Hirzhals, a knight from Magdeburg, who after the battle of Pokarben goes into Prussian captivity. According to a Prussian custom, one of the hostages had to be burned at the sacrificial stake as a sign of gratitude to the gods for victory. Hirzhals was the educator and protector of Monte in Magdeburg, but now is at his mercy. Drawing straws twice, Hirzhals takes the unlucky ones. For the third time, as he draws a death sentence, he voluntarily goes on the stake and, tied to his horse, gets killed in the flames. This is the story taken from Dusburg's chronicle, however, the authors of the plays attempt to build tension and depict the figure of the hero and his dilemmas in a different manner.

The first – in chronological terms – is the German Masurian Max Worgitzki's drama written during the First World War, which undoubtedly had an impact on the conflict and the build-up of tension. Herkus Monte appears not as an enemy of the "German nation", however, clearly noticeable is the distance of the author to the protagonist, yet he is not devoid of sympathy. Herkus Monte is the leader elected at a Prussian rally by individual tribal chiefs. Among the few characters of the drama there are the nobility, whom Worgitzki calls by the name of "Princes": Glande represents Sambia, Glappo – Warmia, Auttunne – Pomesania, and Diwane is the Prince of Barts. Important figures are: Galbo the Kriwe, who, nota bene, had a daughter named Szupanana, and two Vaydelots named Torreto and Marango. In addition to knight Hirzhals there appears a commander [Polish *komtur*], and in the background – the knights and German and Prussian warriors. The action of the drama encompasses the events around the year 1260, during the war with the Order. The family ties of the main hero are only faintly outlined. At the very beginning, Herkus' mother appears and calls him a "hero" and "the hope of the nation", and also at the beginning Herkus reveals his complex identity and motives:

Do not call me a hero, mother! I am not yet a hero. But I feel that God, who lives in my breast, is leading me. Call him as you like, but it is the God who wants justice. This is what I promised to my dying father, and this promise I shall keep. Today the world needs to know that Herkus Monte is Prussian¹⁶.

Not only the aforementioned "God", but also Herkus' education and chivalric code make him host the knight Hirzhals at his house and treat him as a friend. Moreover, his mother thanks the guest for saving her son's life during his stay in the German city. The friends have not seen each other for six years, ever since Monte

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 7.

left the monastic school to return to his fatherland to say goodbye to his dying father. However, he never comes back to Germany. There is no turbulent story of kidnapping here, but Monte admits in a conversation with his friend that he felt like a prisoner in the German land. Hirzhals is not his teacher, but his peer and a school friend so close to him that he lets Herkus Monte meet his family. Hirzhals comes to Prussia as a Land Master's messenger and a member of the Teutonic Order. Thus, the old friends stand on the opposite sides of the barricade. Although Monte already knows the new God, and, once baptised, he is formally a Christian, yet he very deliberately starts the fight to defend his nation (*das Volk*) and homeland (*das Vaterland*). While in case of the hero these categories are achronical, Worgitzki translates them to the reality of the ongoing war. The explanation of the German knight's decision to go to war against pagans contains a revision of the world at that time: "Because we are guided by something that we can stop for a while, but we'll never be able to destroy it; it is an eternal thought. I don't want to call it Christianity, because it is something more. I call it culture." Monte thinks, however, that freedom is the foundation of every culture¹⁷.

War serves as canvas for the drama, but it features only in the background in order to show the causes of the Prussian uprising. The Prussians themselves fear Herkus. His strong personality, leadership skills and successes in war raise suspicion that Herkus wants to subdue other tribes. They accuse him of being a Christian and of not listening to the will of gods, but above all, they are afraid of losing their tribal leadership privileges: the thing that could save the scattered tribes by uniting them becomes the source of an internal conflict, which is expressed by Auttunne's words: "You can call it pettiness, or stupidity, but one thing is clear: they [the other leaders, author's note] fear that Monte may desire to be master of all of us, and they do not want to have masters to reign them, not even of their own tribe." At the meeting in the presence of Kriwe, who is entitled to issue final judgments, there is talk about total war, in which five tribes were supposed to take part. As the potential leader, Herkus Monte kindles the desire of combat by telling the story of the burning of the Prussian elders at the Castle Lenzenburg:¹⁸ "We, the Princes of Sambia, Pogezenia, Warmia, Barcja and Natangia, we have decided to resist the enemy with the last ounce of our strength. No more disgrace! Victory or death!"¹⁹

In his drama, Worgitzki changes the course of events, seeing the Prussians' own guilt in their conquest. Apart from the concerns of the nobility, who saw in Monte a competitor, he introduces the thread of betrayal among the clergy: two

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 15.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 21.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 28.

vaydelots, Torreto and Marango prepare a plot to expose Herkus Monte in the presence of the Prussians, putting his religiosity and Prussian identity to the test. The knight Hirzhals appears again, this time as one of three prisoners of war, one of which has to die at the stake. Among the clergy there is a conviction that Monte's spirit has been poisoned by the enemy, because he lacks humility and devotion to the old gods. The devastated Monte is comforted by the treacherous Torreto. He tells him the story of King Waydewut, who was rescued from the deathly grip of a bear by a boy from an enemy tribe, who after the fight was said to have been taken by the Prussians and died at the sacrificial stake. However, the gods had other plans for him – he had a lucky draw and another prisoner died in the flames. He was pardoned and received lavish gifts from the king. Monte was in a similar situation, since he had to send a childhood friend to a martyr's death. Even Hirzhals's voluntary submission to the execution, who sees in this death his salvation and grace of the Virgin Mary, the patron saint of the Order, does not weaken Monte's remorse. Together with Szupana they invent a scheme to free their friend. However, Torreto discovers their plan, whereby he is killed by Herkus' sword. We are dealing here with murder with sudden passion: "I also am just a man," says Monte. Hirzhals is captured and Kriwe holds the last sacrifice in the holy grove, because after these events he wants to go to Romowe and die. He designates Marango as his successor. Herkus Monte is left alone and abandoned by everyone. Faithful Szupana commits suicide, and the voice of the people in the final scenes of the drama passes the death sentence on the yesterday's hero. Herkus commands his dearest warriors to submit to the will of the stronger party. With hands tied down like a common criminal, he falls in the hands of the commander, who is happy to have him as an easy prey. Yet Herkus Monte deals a deadly blow to himself. Before that, seeing the assault of the troops of the Teutonic Order, he pronounces words full of bitterness:

This is the end! [...] A strange, mocking twist of fate! Herkus Monte, a frightful and invincible prince of Prussia falls into the hands of the Germans, an easy prey, locked in chains by their own people, and to be hanged! A hero and a perjurious killer, a saviour and a traitor, in a word, a tightrope walker on a rope stretched over his own life, a buffoon. And that is all that the fuss is about!²⁰.

To sum up the literary incarnation of Herkus Monte presented by Max Worgitzki, it's hard overlook the retrospection of the inevitability of history governed by the law of the stronger. The weakness of the Prussians, their short-sightedness and insistence on customs where the only uniting factor is a bloody ritual, are

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 81.

the causes of defeat. Undoubtedly, Worgitzki justifies the conquest of Prussia, and his motto is a 19th-century message that promotes not so much a new and better religion, but, above all, higher culture. The figure of *Herkus Monte* itself, who is a man of high moral and cultural values, a seasoned warrior and a noble man who sacrifices himself for his people to liberate them, is tragic, because he does not fit into any social or religious group. The hybrid man, someone who we would call multicultural today, could be a mediator and peacemaker, however, in terms of an armed conflict, the weaker should yield to the stronger. Such is the law of war.

In Lauckner's and Grušas's dramas, the themes known from the chronicles become more exposed; for example, the murder by Volran Mirabilis, the Teutonic vogt of Lenzenburg over the Vistula Lagoon, of the Prussian elders invited to negotiations, which allegedly caused the Prussian uprising. Additionally, Grušas used the story of the blinding of twelve Prussian children in Elbing, in order to expose the cruelty and hypocrisy of the knights of the Order. Both dramas feature also the story of the siege of the castle of Königsberg. There appear characters documented in Dusburg's and Jeroschin's chronicles: Nomedas, Koltis, Glappo, Diwane, Autume and others.

The conflicts within the drama are constructed differently by each author. The love story belongs yet to literary fiction. In both dramas, Monte loves, with reciprocity, a German and Christian girl from his time in Magdeburg. In Lauckner's work, Maria is Herkus' childhood companion. Their love develops in the course of the drama. Grušas makes the love story more prominent, since Kristina is engaged to Herkus already in Magdeburg and as it turns out, they have a son.

The presentation of the main character differs between the works: Lauckner's Herkus is a hero, an unyielding leader who deliberately dies for the nation. Personal life does not play a greater role in his life, since a leader who in the drama resembles a *fürher* cannot afford it: love could dissuade him from his goal, so he devotes himself completely to the matter. Maria (who in Lauckner's work is Hirzhals's sister) enters a convent to repent for her love for a pagan and the killer of her brother. The Hirzhals's scene is also not devoid of tragic overtones; in the moment when the knight of Magdeburg for the third time draws the death sentence and Herkus wants to give his life for him on the sacrificial stake, Hirzhals refuses and even apologizes to Herkus – a hero who wins a moral victory, because his conscience is clean.

Grušas's Mantas is primarily a man. He feels no hatred for the enemy, does not want to kill his hostages, and would prefer to use them for ploughing, harvesting and other field works. He opposes the mindlessness and unfairness of sacrificial stakes. He loves Kristina truly and is not ashamed to keep reminding her of that. The fact that he can afford a private life makes him more human, as opposed to

the Lauckner's protagonist. Mantas is torn and does not consider himself a hero. He would like to fight for the happiness of people, which by no means is a sign of cowardice. In the conversation with Koltis he says:

MANTAS: I am a man, and you need heroes.

KOLTIS: You were willing to die for your fatherland. What are you doing now?

MANTAS: People also die for their happiness! [...] ²¹.

In the climactic scene of the drama *Herkus Mantas* meets his destiny face to face. Hirzhals is his friend and teacher. He learns about his new God thanks to him and, so to speak, gains an insight into the European culture of the day. Hirzhals is his link with the wider world that, observed from the forests and swamps of his homeland, seems to be a hostile and incomprehensible place. In this scene, Grušas's Herkus is torn. He rejects the Christian God but also does not understand the need of the bloody sacrifice for native gods. He is a "hybrid" character, a European living in wilderness. In fact, he is no longer a Christian, but at the same time cannot be a worshipper of the gods of his tribe: he becomes a humanist with no god. After Hirzhals's death on the stake, Mantas ruminates:

Here's one more meaningless sacrifice! And what a sacrifice it is! Who needed it? The gods? Who are the gods? Are they not our own worship of cruelty, slavery, fear?! Christians are killing us in the name of their God. We repay them with the same. Both pay too high a price for their faith. And if we toppled our gods from their thrones and altars? In whom would we believe? I believed in man. I believed in his mind and the work of his hands. How is he different from his gods? [...] Gods will die, others will be born, and the man will remain eternal. I put to death the one who deserves to be called a man. Did I not betray my faith? [...] What have I become? What do I believe in? [...] In my fatherland! My brothers! I believe in your freedom and your great future. In the name of freedom we shall live and die! [...] ²².

This speech of a man who rejects God and gods can make an erroneous impression that the drama, released in 1957 in Soviet Lithuania, is an apotheosis of the "Soviet man", an atheist overfilled with an urge to fight for the just cause. Such a label cannot be put on the hero of Grušas's tragedy since the author deliberately avoided praising the ruling Soviet ideology by fleeing into a historical drama. Herk-

²¹ J. Grušas, *Herkus Mantas*, Kaunas 1988, pp. 43–44.

²² J. Grušas, op.cit., p. 61.

us Mantas is a tragic figure. His overarching goal was freedom - and he devoted his life to it. It seems that Grušas' drama evokes some other historical event: the suppression in the early 1950s of the guerrilla uprising against the Soviet occupation in Lithuania. This fight was just as doomed to failure as the rise of Prussia against the colonisation of the Teutonic Order.

In the 1930s there appeared in Germany two literary works with Herkus Monte as the main protagonist. He is the title character of a drama by Rolf Lauckner *Herkus Monte and Knight Hirzhals* from 1937, and Count Botho von Keyserlingk's novel *Monte the Rebel. The Prussian Uprising in the Year ca. 1260* from 1936²³. Both dramas are different in terms of aesthetics and genre; however, they have a common feature: they both represent Herkus Monte as a brave man, a hero who sacrifices his life for his homeland. Keyserlingk goes even a step further: he sees in the historical figure of his protagonist an affinity with a hero of the ancient Germanic tribes, Hermann, a Cherusci chieftain also called Arminius by the Romans. In the 20th century the method of presenting Monte's figure clearly changes as compared with the 19th century ideas, which emphasised his love stories and family problems. In the romantic and postromantic visions, adventure and blind chance were important elements of the narrative. In the 20th century, the figure of Herkus Monte gains independence and a deeper reflection on the fate of the tribe and homeland. In this respect, the last two categories are tailored to the modern language and reality, as they speak of nation and homeland, which notions did not yet exist in the Middle Ages. Moreover, treating the members of the Teutonic Order as Germans may also cause objections from literary critics. Presenting Monte's figure as a self-confident person who is aware of his social role exposes the fact that authors assign it a wholly autonomous role: this historical figure became a symbol and a substitute for the annihilation of an entire nation. Thanks to Dusburg, who personalised his figure in the negative sense, Monte became the most popular Prussian in the history of this nation. Writers of different historical periods focused their attention on this very figure, seeing in it a warning and a universal appeal of sacrificing of the individual for the good of the community and the inevitability of history, when the weaker must yield to the stronger. The most mature text, bringing the complexity of "the last (or perhaps first) Prussian" to the foreground is the novel by Botho von Keyserlingk, in which the background is formed by a religious war. In this discourse, the central character is the eponymous rebel, Monte. What is of importance here is the presentation of the hero's life in Magdeburg, otherwise ignored. His religious and cultural conversion were fake, since being abducted as a child, baptised by the name of Heinrich, and brought up and knighted, Monte retained in his memory

²³ B. Graf von Keyserlingk, *Monte, der Rebell. Aufstand in Preußen um 1260*, Görlitz 1936.

the images of real life and his own roots. He knew that he was meant to become the mediator or helper of the coloniser in the colonised country, and this role did not suit him because his memory – let us call it a cultural memory – did not allow him to do so. Even his love for the beautiful daughter of the mayor of Magdeburg, Katharina Suzanna, could not overshadow the love for his homeland; the love flowing from the bottom of his heart. Heinrich could not forget that he was born Herkus. A comfortable and prosperous life, the prospect of recovering his family properties in Natangia and an important social role could not attract the hero. From the very beginning he knew the plans the Order had for him. With some concern, these were expressed by his teacher and educator, the knight Hirzhals, and became his self-fulfilling prophecy: “We dealt with you and your fellows as the ancient Romans did with Hermann of the Cherusci, who defeated the same Romans after he dutifully learned the art of war being an emperor’s knight. Perhaps we raised our equals, or even better opponents.”²⁴

Herkus Monte not only remembers images of his childhood, but being also the knight Heinrich, he is able to analyse the political situation in his enslaved homeland. He was not a romantic hero who throws himself into the fray carried by emotions; he was contemplating with full awareness the reasons that were bringing the knights from Western Europe to a small country on the edge of the Baltic Sea. Already in Magdeburg, questioned by Hirzhals if most of the Prussians do not feel converted, but only enslaved, Monte, like a learned sociologist from another era, provides an overview of the ongoing war and conquest:

[...] because the invasion of Christianity caused by the influence of clergy and the generosity of Christians is treated as a crusading expedition, the attacked must defend not only their land and belongings, but also their faith. The subdued imagine that only by means of the old faith can they regain their freedom, and that their original religion goes hand in hand with the freedom of their homeland; that this is not a regular fight for the worldly goods, but also for ideals. That is why all these wars are accompanied by an awful fanaticism. The fight would be more honest if the Order cried to us: We want to take this country by force. But they came with masks on their faces. They had land on their minds, and baptism on their lips. Believe me, Hirzhals, the Christian God brought misfortune to my people. When one sees all the things he did, these horrors and destruction, rewards for wickedness, looting and rape, one cannot but join the community of Christians only with anger and contempt²⁵.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 18.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 19–20.

Von Keyserlingk's novel presents not only Herkus himself as equal to the enemy knights of the Order in the mental and military sense, but also his comrades-in-arms, who go to fight with full awareness of the situation. In this way, the German author restores the dignity of the hero and the nation which he defended to the very end. However, Monte's personality is hybrid, since it is shaped by two antagonistic cultures. His self-confidence and conscious leadership would be impossible were it not for his education, familiarity with the world of Western culture and universal humanism. Monte's friend Hirzhals' death sentence and execution on the sacrificial stake at the request of the tribesmen, who in this way put Monte's loyalty to the old gods to the test, engulfs Monte in a deep identity crisis: "... I am Prussian by birth, German by nurture, pagan by birth, Christian by nurture, yet by conviction, a Prussian who refuses to worship the gods of his homeland. Who am I in reality?" At the end of the novel, Monte dies. After losing the third uprising his disappointment reaches its zenith; he feels abandoned by God and the gods and utters an iconoclastic speech:²⁶ "Gods? Where are they? I am god. It's in my hands that the responsibility for the victory lies." The death of the leader anointed by the chief priest Kriwe meant giving up the fight and yielding of the whole nation²⁷. Keyserlingk created a hero of his times, a man pursuing his goal like the Germanic Hermann, a superhuman rejecting his gods. A strong personality that engages in a life-and-death struggle for the cause is more important than nationality.

The latest novel by Claudius Crönert *Die Herren der Schwerter* [The Lord of the Swords] from 2011 could be considered as a postscript to the German historical novels on Herkus Monte²⁸. Born in 1961 in Hamburg, this author of historical novels and crime fiction builds his story of the Prussian hero quite differently. His Monte is reticent, humble, devoted and fierce. The readers get to know him already as a teen in a monastery in Magdeburg, where he is subject to penalties by depraved friars (as befits a contemporary novel, there is room for a story of sexual abuse of Prussian boys by Brother Simon, a teacher of logic). Four boys run away, three of them get into the enslaved motherland on foot. Over five hundred pages of stories about the adventures of the protagonists is the first synthesis of the life of conquered tribes in literature. It tells of the birth of their resistance, submissive attitudes, bravado, observance or violation of rules, behaviours, habits and customs, stories of love and heroism that emerges due to the impossibility of living in constant humiliation. Without a doubt, this is the first panoramic postcolonial discourse in fiction. This novel cannot be categorised as trivial literature, which could be suggested by the genre itself, and although its reception is rather insignificant,

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 188.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 258.

²⁸ C. Crönert, *Die Herren der Schwerter. Historischer Roman*, Berlin 2011.

it is a novel that deserves special attention. The author deliberately avoids clichéd threads, but one cannot accuse him of lack of knowledge of the sources. However, he creates his own alternative source of historical truth by introducing a literate narrator, a companion of Herkus Monte, lame Norelis. It is him who writes down the hero's story. He is a participant in all the events and a literary denial of the basic historical truth: the Prussians did not create a story of their own, because they did not know writing:

I took three rolls of parchment, ink and quill from home. I wrote secretly only in the evenings [...] My mind was full of so many new things that I wanted to write them down. I thought constantly that if this is not recorded, it will fly away and never return.

Herkus sometimes made some comments: "Oh, you're writing again", or "I've started to worry because you haven't taken out your parchment", and once even: "You are a Christian, a scribe lost for the Prussians"²⁹.

Applying this method in this narrative, Crönert wrote an alternative history to the Prussians at the time of the conquest and uprisings. Its literary topography, religious customs of the Prussians, descriptions of Romowe, feasts, clashes with the colonisers, and even historical figures, such as Volrad Mirabilis or Skomand do not constitute a denial of the chronicles, but only their extension. The widely known terms of the Treaty of Christburg (Dzierzgoń) that set out the rights and responsibilities of the Prussians were broken mainly by the party that exercised power. The knights were aware of the fact that the Prussians were illiterate and would not assert their rights, as it is summed up by Herkus Monte's words:

Our people do not know how to read or write. [...] Even though this agreement was concluded in the manner adopted by the Christians, it was not sealed by hand and blood as the Prussians do. But when something has to be written down, the one who cannot write is just standing like a fool. Now tell me, did they not deprive us of our dignity?³⁰

At the end of the novel, Monte is not killed, but plans to escape to Lithuania with his beloved Zanna. Norelis hands him in a folder with his chronicles of literary events. Everything here differs from Dusburg's relation, in which Monte is killed in a shameful way, which was later echoed by many historical writers in more or less poignant tones.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 165.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 163.

In Polish literature, there is no novel or drama devoted to Herkus Monte in the literal sense. Jerzy Necio, following the chronicles and other written sources, created a synthetic biography of Monte. His historical narration bears resemblance to a literary narrative, and what is more, the whole of the literary background concerning the figure of Monte stems out of only a few threads in historical writings, yet it becomes an intertextual discourse in multinational literature. Necio writes about one of the key threads related to the hero's dilemmas:

The story of Monte and Hirzhals became an allegory of the cruelty of war. In times of turmoil, the demons of war lived by their own rules, not heeding the individual people's fate. It turned out that a difference in thinking, ideas, a different understanding of the world can become deadly. Man was only a blind tool of the forces he inadvertently brought to life. In addition to Hirzhals, in a certain sense Herkus Monte also becomes a victim on the stake at Pokarvis. It was a mental wound that soon was to be accompanied by a physical mutilation³¹.

The story of Herkus Monte, although hidden, also appears in the Polish literature of the romantic period. It was a literature where protagonists were (often defeated) heroes fighting with the Teutonic Knights, for it was the Order that became the epitome of violence, enslavement and partitions. Although the Polish-Lithuanian army dealt a blow to the Order at Grunwald, the largest Polish romanticist did not mention this historic victory. Two works by young Mickiewicz: *Grażyna* and *Konrad Wallenrod* return to the times of struggle with the Teutonic Knights. Duchess Grażyna gives a lesson of courage and valour to her resigned husband, Litawor, by dying heroically in a battle with the invaders. Another very ambiguous and complex character, Konrad Wallenrod, is split between the gods of his ancestors and the new enforced faith, between humility and betrayal, love and renunciation of personal happiness. He is left alone to fight with a machine stronger than the ideal he follows. For Mickiewicz, the highest value was his Homeland, which became sacrosanct, because it was worshipped like God and loved like a dearest thing:

Walter loved his wife, but had a noble soul;
No happiness he felt at home, because in his country there was nought³².

Maria Janion writes in *Życie pośmiertne Konrada Wallenroda*:

³¹ J. Necio, *Rycerz Herkus Monte wódz Natangów*, Lidzbark Warmiński 2000, p. XIX.

³² A. Mickiewicz, *Konrad Wallenrod. Powieść historyczna z dziejów litewskich i pruskich*, in: Adam Mickiewicz. *Dzieła*, t. II, Warszawa 1994, p. 109.

The thing that looked like a biased, 'exaggerated' romantic obsession, had of course its emotional background, but also a well calculated goal: never to forget the harm done, never to betray the dearest person, always to look in the face of the coming doom³³.

Mickiewicz scholars have tried for decades to solve the secret of Wallenrod. Hence so many completely divergent interpretations, varying from the traitor to the saviour of the nation. Wallenrod is rather a figure that embodies two values at once, a peculiar *Verräter-Retter* (a saviour-traitor). Since Konrad Wallenrod leads a post-mortem life that opens up a wide space for interpretation, I will risk a statement: Konrad Wallenrod *vel* Walter Alf is an incarnation or a mask of a character who, as a historical figure, leads its separate and independent life. He is a mythical leader of the Prussians tribes, a Natangian, Herkus Mantas *vel* Heinrich Monte.

What similarity is there, therefore, between the brave Natangian and Walter Alf *vel* Konrad Wallenrod? The intertext of Mickiewicz's reference lies in the explanation of the poet himself:

The years of childhood floated by, I lived among the Germans as a German,
I had the name of Walter, and the surname Alf they gave me;
The name was German, the soul remained Lithuanian [...]³⁴.

Mickiewicz writes:

Walter von Stadion, a German knight, taken into captivity by the Lithuanians, married a daughter of Kiejstut and secretly fled Lithuania with her. Oft it happened that the Prussians and Lithuanians, kidnapped and brought up in Germany, returned to their homeland and became the fiercest German enemies. Such was Herkus Monte, long remembered in the history of the Order³⁵.

Mickiewicz used the German historiography, mainly the work *Preussens Geschichte. Belege und Erläuterungen* by August von Kotzebue. He also knew Christoph Hartknoch and other historical writers, however, he interpreted the historical sources freely, which is reflected, for example, in his interpretation of Wallenrod's failure at war³⁶. Mickiewicz thus writes of his attitude towards the background

³³ M. Janion, *Życie pośmiertne Konrada Wallenroda*, Warszawa 1990, p. 13.

³⁴ A. Mickiewicz, op. cit., p. 105.

³⁵ A. Mickiewicz, *Konrad Wallenrod. Objaśnienia poety*, op. cit., p. 142.

³⁶ In footnotes of „Grażyna” poem Mickiewicz quoted Augustyn von Kotzebue work: „Toż samo o Krzyżakach powiada i w szczegółach opisuje ich okrutne i nieprawe postępowanie z Prusakami i Litwą pisarz niemiecki August Kotzebue, jakkolwiek sam nieprzyjazny Litwinóm i Polakóm, w dziele dla historii litewskiej bardzo waż-

sources: “The chronicles of the old days are broken into partial lists, sometimes only guessed and completed by means of conjectures in order to create a historical whole”³⁷. In the subtitle, Mickiewicz defines his narrative poem as a “historical novel from the history of the Lithuanian and Prussian peoples”. In the “Preface” he adds the following clarification of the concept of the Lithuanian nation:

The Lithuanian people, consisting of generations of Lithuanians, Prussians and Letts, were few, settled in a small infertile land, and strangers in Europe for a long time. Around the 13th century the invasion of neighbours challenged them to start more effective action³⁸.

It would appear that the author of *Konrad Wallenrod* treated the Lithuanians and Prussians as one community which he called a “nation”.

Since the Lithuanians of his times were a living nation, they used their own Baltic language, and the history of Lithuania was so amazingly romantic and interesting that Mickiewicz appropriated the history of the Balts and transferred it into the Lithuanian culture. The literary portrait of the old *vaydelot* makes one aware that Mickiewicz equates these two ethnic groups: “A Prussian or a Lithuanian, as you can see from the costumes” (line 63), or in another place: “In the right hand he held an old Prussian lute”. When speaking to revellers in a Teutonic castle, he says: “I sang to the Prussians and Lithuania in the old days” (line 72).

Halban calls himself the last *vaydelot* in Lithuania who hums the last Lithuanian song. Surrounded by knights, he sings it to Wallenrod. The protagonist of his story is Walter Alf, a Christian with a pagan soul seeking revenge for the suffering of his homeland. In the “*Vaydelots’ story*” the first biography of the hero is recounted, for Alf-Wallenrod had three biographies. The first one is short; the protagonist cannot remember his name:

I do not know – says the young man – what my family and name is,
Because as a child I was captured by the Germans.

nym: Preussens ältere Geschichte v.[on] August v. Kotzebue, 1808. Riga, 4 Bde. Ob. tom drugi, kar. 115: Schilderung der Ordensbrüder in diesem Zeitraum (r. 1312) i kar. 108. Tom drugi, k. 60: Schilderung von Preussen nach geendigtem Kriege (r. 1240). Tom trzeci, k. 275: Schilderung der Gräuel im Orden während dieses Zeitraums (r. 1436). Nie można bez wzdygnięcia czytać okrucieństw, jakich się Krzyżacy dopuszczali nad nieszczęśliwym narodem; przytoczymy jeden tylko szczegół. Na końcu jeszcze czternastego wieku, kiedy Prusy całkiem podbite i uspokojone były, mistrz krzyżacki Konrad Wallenrod, zagniewany na biskupa kumerlandzkiego, kazał wszystkim chłopom z jego diecezji prawe ręce poucinać. O czym świadczą: Leo, Treter i Łukasz Dawid”. A. Mickiewicz, *Grażyna. Przypisy historyczne*, op. cit. pp. 53–54. During his work on the poem „Konrad Wallenrod“, Mickiewicz also used German historiographical literature: „Kroniki przywodziliśmy po większej części z dzieła Kotzebue Preussens Geschichte, «Belege und Erläuterungen». Hartknoch, nazywając Wallenroda «unsinnig», bardzo krótką daje o nim wiadomość”. A. Mickiewicz, *Konrad Wallenrod. Objaśnienia poety*, op. cit., p. 145.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 143.

³⁸ A. Mickiewicz, *Konrad Wallenrod. Przedmowa*, op. cit. p. 69.

I can only remember that somewhere in Lithuania in a great city
There stood my parents' house; the city was wooden [...] ³⁹.

Further consideration should be given to Mickiewicz's clarification mentioned above:

Of it happened that the Prussians and Lithuanians kidnapped and brought up in Germany, returned to their homeland and became the fiercest German enemies. Such was Herkus Monte, long remembered in the history of the Order.

If one realises that Mickiewicz treats Lithuanians and Prussians as belonging to the same Baltic ethnos, then the story of a nameless young man recreates the life of Herkus. Similarities in the lives of Walter Alf and Herkus Monte are also surprising: Walter is fostered by Winnrich von Knipprode, the Grand Master of the Order himself; and Herkus-Heinrich was brought up and educated in Magdeburg by knight Hirzhals, which is mentioned by Peter of Duisburg in his chronicle.

A faith similar to that of Herkus Monte (in Grušas) is professed by Konrad Wallenrod, who believes in the homeland, and, like Herkus Monte, sacrifices all his life, including personal happiness, on its altar. Konrad abandons his loving wife, Aldona; Herkus loses his German beloved (in Grušas's drama – his fiancée Kristina, in the screenplay of Saulius Šaltenis's film from 1972 – his wife Catherine), who dies in Romowe on the sacrificial stake.

The theme of the hero and traitor is the basis for Mickiewicz's poem. Halban instructs Walter:

You are a slave, and the slave's only weapon is deceit.
Stay for a while and learn the art of war from the Germans,
Try to gain their trust. Then we shall see what to do ⁴⁰.

Herkus Mantas also acted deceitfully. The German language and the martial art acquired in Magdeburg gave him a huge advantage. Peter of Duisburg describes in his chronicle:

Herkus Monte, the leader of the Natangians, and many other Prussians who from boyhood were raised by the friars, did a lot of evil to Christian people at the time of this persecution, because very often it happened that, when the infidel army passed the borders of the friars, the Christian population that failed to

³⁹ A. Mickiewicz, *Konrad Wallenrod*, op. cit. p. 104.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 106.

take refuge in castles hid in the forests, bushes and swamps. The aforementioned Henry noticed it, and he took many an armed man and went to these places about which he had suspicions, and spoke to them insidiously in German: "If there is anyone here, let him come out without fear, because the pagan army is already gone." When the Christians gave faith his words and discovered themselves, he and his people assaulted them and captured all or killed them⁴¹.

The present overview shows the wandering motif of the figure of Herkus Monte, a Prussian hero, in three national literatures. The cultural memory associated with his figure takes its origin in Peter of Dusburg's *Chronicle of the Prussian Land*. This colonial discourse gave rise to its multinational variations in literature, becoming a strictly postcolonial discourse. The latest Lithuanian edition of the Dusburg's chronicle shows that the so called historical sources – in the national editions – become discourses equally postcolonial as the texts of fiction⁴². The book has three other authors apart from Dusburg: Leonas Valkūnas translated it from Latin, Romas Batūra was the editor and the author of introduction and historical comments, Alyvydas Každailis enriched the edition with sixty-five engravings depicting everyday life, customs, and the conquest of the Prussians. The Lithuanian historian's narration and the iconographic story are nothing other than a postcolonial revision of the historical and cultural memory. The proof for that is the book's motto: "In memory of our brothers Prussians, Herkus Monte and Sudovians-Yotvingians."⁴³

Alina Kuzborska, *Literackie wcielenia Herkusa Monte*

Streszczenie

Herkus Monte, przywódca Prusów, jest postacią historyczną, lecz jednocześnie bohaterem utworów literackich. Monte wielokrotnie został wymieniony w łacińskiej *Kronice Ziemi Pruskiej* Piotra z Dusburga już na początku XIII wieku. Te zapiski kronikarza Zakonu Niemieckiego zapoczątkowały żywotne motywy literackie pruskiego bohatera w literaturze niemieckiej, polskiej i litewskiej, w szczególności w powieści historycznej i dramacie historycznym XIX – pierwszej połowy XX w. W niniejszym artykule zostały omówione wybrane utwory literackie poświęcone postaci najsłynniejszego Prusa w historii: od powieści Franza Lubojatzkiego z 1840 roku po najnowszą powieść Claudiusa Crönerta z 2011 roku. Również dramat historyczny różnorodnie konstruował postać Montego, np. w dramacie Maxa Worgitzkiego z 1916 roku Monte jawi się jako heros wojny, którego odwaga i determinacja budzą obawy samych Prusów, a ich porażka jest traktowana jako nieuniknioność historii, gdzie słabszy ulega silniejszemu. Podobny wydźwięk miał dramat Rolfa Laucknera z 1937 roku. W dramacie litewskiego dramaturga Juozasa Grušasa Monte jest humanistą bez Boga i bogów, który walczy w imię wolności, co można odczytać jako nierówną walkę powojennej litewskiej partyzantki z władzą komunistyczną. Powieść Botho hrabie-

⁴¹ Piotr z Dusburga, op. cit, pp. 137–138.

⁴² Petras Dusburgietis, *Prūsijos žemės kronika*, ed. by: R. Batūra, transl. from Latin L. Valkūnas, illustr. A. Každailis, Vilnius 2005.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 5.

go von Keyserlingka z 1937 roku przedstawia Montego jako szlachetnego człowieka, ukształtowanego przez dwie antagonistyczne wobec siebie kultury. Jest postacią hybrydyczną, która przeżywa podobny dylemat jak bohater Germanów – Hermann *vel* Arminius lub Walter Alf *vel* Konrad Wallenrod w poemacie Adama Mickiewicza. Faktem jest, że fikcyjalny charakter opowieści o pruskim bohaterze często służył interesom literatur narodowych.

Tłumaczenie Alina Kuzborska

Alina Kuzborska, *Literarisches Leben von Herkus Monte*

Zusammenfassung

Der Anführer der Prußen, Herkus Monte, ist eine historische und zugleich aber auch eine literarische Figur. Monte wurde bereits Anfang des 13. Jh. im lateinischen *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* von Peter von Dusburg erwähnt. Die Aufzeichnungen des Chronisten des Deutschen Ordens gaben den Anstoß für Entstehung von festen literarischen Motiven des preußischen Helden in der deutschen, polnischen und litauischen Literatur, insbesondere im historischen Roman und im historischen Drama des 19. – der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jh. Im vorliegenden Beitrag wurden ausgewählte literarische Werke besprochen, die der Figur des bekanntesten Prußen in der Geschichte gewidmet wurden: vom Roman von Franz Lubojatzky aus dem Jahr 1840 bis zum letzten Roman von Claudius Crönert aus dem Jahr 2011. Auch im historischen Drama wurde Montes Figur verschiedenartig konstruiert, z. B. im Drama von Max Worgitzki aus dem Jahr 1916 erscheint er als Kriegsheros, dessen Mut und Entschlossenheit selbst die Prußen verunsicherte, ihre Niederlage wurde aber als Unausweichlichkeit der Geschichte betrachtet, wobei der Schwache dem Starken unterliegen muss. Ähnlich geprägt wurde auch das Monte-Drama von Rolf Lauckner aus dem Jahr 1937. Im Drama des litauischen Autors Juozas Grušas ist Herkus Monte ein Humanist ohne Gott und Götter, der um die Freiheit seines Landes kämpft, was man als einen ungleichen Kampf der litauischen Partisanen gegen das kommunistische Regime in der Nachkriegswirklichkeit ablesen kann. Im Roman von Botho Graf von Keyserlingk aus dem Jahr 1937 wurde Monte als ein edler Mensch dargestellt, der von zwei antagonistischen Kulturen geprägt wurde. Er ist eine hybride Persönlichkeit, er hat ähnliche Dilemmas wie der Held der Germanen – Hermann *vel* Arminius oder Walter Alf *vel* Konrad Wallenrod in der Dichtung von Adam Mickiewicz. Es ist klar, dass der fiktionale Charakter der Erzählungen vom preußischen Helden oft den Interessen verschiedener Nationalliteraturen diene.

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