

Summary

The present dissertation is devoted to Teresa, Countess of Portugal (ca. 1079-1130), mother of Afonso Henriques, the first King of Portugal (1109?-1185). The countess ruled over the County of Portugal after the death of her spouse, Henry of the House of Burgundy, and due to minority of his only male successor. The County of Portugal was established by Alfonso VI (1040-1109) towards the end of 11th century out of the territories of Castile and León and so constituted a nucleus of what later developed into Portugal. Topic of the work corresponds with the research of ‘origins’ of Portugal and concerns to an equal extent a phenomenon of historiography – narratives telling origins of a state community. Given the character of Teresa’s images in Portuguese chronicles, historic treaties, speculum literature and epic, the dissertation is thematically entwined with the research of images of women in European literature and historiography along the timeline of cornerstones set in the Middle Ages and modern era.

The dissertation foregrounds the empowered role of Teresa in building up Portuguese independence and centres on issues related to countess’s political activity. Texts telling the ‘origins’ of Portugal have been subjects of deepened analysis and interpretation. The texts include: *Livro de Linhagens do Conde D. Pedro* by Pedro Afonso, Count of Barcelos, *Crónica de El-Rei D. Affonso Henriques* by Duarte Galvão, as well as *Flores de Espanha, excelencias de Portugal* by António de Sousa de Macedo. A more comprehensive context has been accomplished, in turn, thanks to investigating into Teresa’s images in more than twenty other texts. The analysed sources came into being in times of first three houses of Portugal – the House of Burgundy, the House of Avis and the House of Habsburg, respectively.

Teresa’s images present in the analysed sources make up either a black or a white legend, and are embedded in a broader cultural context. The analysis proves that the countess’s images recorded in the ‘origins’ narratives are no impartial for once they serve as a tool in political disputes, another time as a Portuguese kings’ legitimation vehicle, yet another – as a parenthesis building block. The work illustrates the endeavours of authors who reiterate Teresa’s negative and positive evaluations and, more specifically, how they draw to a repertoire of topic-related means in shaping Teresa’s role and respective image components to match a virtuous or an evil ruler. Thus, the countess–evil ruler is subject to criticism not only for how she acts in the political arena, but also how she behaves in the private sphere – as a woman and a mother. The countess–virtuous ruler is, by contrast, told highly of in each and every of the said areas – she happens to be a good wife, a resourceful woman, such that is

of assistance to her husband and son, and, above all, orchestrates her county with ability and skill.

The work has been approached in a comparative manner. Comparison involves other female figures who exhibit common points with Teresa's historiographic-chronicle portrayal. As recurring characteristics and findings of other researchers had been acknowledged, it was possible to reconstruct a set of vices of an evil ruler, and, in parallel, a set of virtues of a virtuous one. Another juxtaposition came in for 'origins' narratives, however, as concluded, they manifest a similar structure irrespective of their mother-cultures. The Portuguese solutions were compared to a topics of 'origins' in medieval Polish chronicling. Findings of Jacek Banaszekiewicz and 'adventures of the hero' by Joseph Campbell proved to be of use, too.

The image of Teresa is incorporated in a broad political context. The dissertation shows to what extent an ad hoc 'raison d'etat' or interests of different houses, the need to create role models as well as the need to adapt substance to a narrative form all co-affected the way mother of the first king of Portugal was perceived. Shedding light on complexity of Teresa's historic portrait, with ambiguities it demonstrates, made it possible to see how elusive our knowledge of the past inherently is. Furthermore, the work has pointed to the issue of putting a source material at service of different political interests on the one hand, and literary (also topic-related) implications of historiographic work on the other.

The work has appendices with photos and translations of selected source texts fragments with a study.

Key-words

Countess Teresa, history of women, 'origins' narratives of Portugal, Portuguese historiography, role models