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**Review of the Book: Daniel Wojtucki,
Stanisław Zobniów, *Kamienne krzyże na
Śląsku, Górnych Łużycach i ziemi kłodzkiej*
(The Stone Crosses of Silesia, Upper Lusatia
and Kłodzko Land), Published by:
Wydawnictwo ATUT, Wrocław 2017, 712 pages.**

The latest publication on the topic popular among the enthusiast of mediaeval stone crosses was written by the renown experts in the field, Stanisław Zobniów and Daniel Wojtucki. The latter author seems to be particularly predisposed to create such a publication, considering that his previous works include: *Kat i jego warsztat pracy na Śląsku, Górnych Łużycach i w hrabstwie kłodzkim od początku XVI do połowy XIX wieku (The Hangman and His Workshop in Silesia, Upper Lusatia, and Kladsko County from the Beginning of the 16th to the Mid-19th Century)*, Warszawa 2014, or *Publiczne miejsca straceń na Dolnym Śląsku od XV do połowy XIX wieku (Public Execution Sites in Lower Silesia from the 15th to the Mid-19th Century)*, Chudów 2009.

There is no question about the geographical scope of the book, as it covers the area of mediaeval Silesia, Kłodzko Land and Upper Lusatia, which were incorporated into the Polish state after 1945. Obviously, we can argue that the study could have been expanded to cover the areas of Bohemian Silesia or the German part of Upper Lusatia, however, the material collected on the above mentioned areas is extensive enough.

The book is composed of an introduction, an analysis of the current state of research, three chapters, a conclusion, an appendix, a vast inventory of stone crosses, a bibliography, and summaries in German and Czech.

The first chapter is devoted to the matters of compensation for homicide, as well as specific acts of penance for it, such as pilgrimages, masses, donations and finally erecting stone monuments (crosses, shrines, column shrines and other structures). In the second chapter, the functions that the stone crosses had, be it that of a border marker, a symbol of protection, a memorial or a tombstone, are discussed. The last chapter focuses on the discoveries and archaeological excavations conducted in the vicinity of stone crosses. The results of the discussion on stone crosses are recapitulated in the concluding chapter, and the appendix features a Polish translation of the oldest Silesian dispute settlement agreement, issued by Duchess Beatrix of Brandenburg in 1305. It is followed by a lavishly illustrated catalogue of all the known stone crosses from the area of interest, both extant and lost in the wake of various historical events. The authors themselves hope that the list compiled by them will soon become outdated and many of the crosses that are now considered to be lost will be recovered, and many new monuments of this type will be discovered in the future (p. 181)¹

The book is written in a perfectly accessible language, and both history enthusiasts and specialists in the area will definitely enjoy it alike. It needs to be pointed out that the authors are determined to challenge the belief (particularly widely held among tourist guides) that each stone cross was an atonement cross. They managed to demonstrate that it is a complex and nuanced subject matter, supporting their claims with skilful arguments. The effort that the authors took to look through the local historical texts from the 19th and the first half of the 20th century needs to be highlighted, as such records are often undervalued by historians, despite being a source of information about the documents or monuments that were later lost. The archive records research conducted by the authors is also impressive.

However, a few minor comments pertaining to the texts can be made. First of all, when discussing the types of donations made for the intention of the salvation of a murdered person's soul, the term *Seelebade* is given cursory attention (p. 80). The authors neglected explaining this term (and we need to remember that the book may also attract non-specialist audience), they also should have made a reference to the latest studies on *Seelebade*

1. It did not take long for their wish to materialize, as new stone crosses were already discovered in 2018 – 2019 in Niwnice near Lwówek Śląski, Jarosłów, Piskorzów, see: <http://www.zjk.centrix.pl> (3.10.2019).

published by Rafał Kubicki in *Zapiski Historyczne*.² Other minor reservations concern the translation of legal texts. It was a commendable idea to introduce to a wider audience the translations of mediaeval dispute settlement agreements that came with a condition of erecting a stone cross. However, I am not convinced that the terms such as *Leichzeichen* (p. 66) or certain ways of dating (see below) should have been left without further explanation, e.g.: "It happened on Wednesday before Oculi, Anno Domini 1483" (p. 67); "Given by the hand of Konrad, the rector of the school in Strzegom, on the Nones of December, Anno Domini 1305" (p. 184). After all, not everybody is able to access a chronology handbook and decipher these dates. Pages 86 and 96 feature identical definitions of *column shrines*, with the ending and appendix to the dispute settlement agreement of 1305 repeated. Nevertheless, these are only minor editorial errors that do not affect the quality of the book as a whole. The largest amount of space has been devoted to the inventory of stone crosses, as it features both extant and lost monuments found in the region of Lower Silesian, Lubusz, Opole and Silesian Voivodeship. It is the most important part of the book, as it provides its readers with an opportunity to verify how many of the legal history are still extant. The inventory presents the state of research on individual crosses; their dimensions, material and other additional information are also provided. Obviously, it is a result of a long research conducted by both authors over many years.

Finally, it needs to be pointed out once again that the book has definitely earned a well-deserved place on the bookshelf of every enthusiast of legal history. It is certainly going to promote research in this field. I am looking forward to a similar inventory of stone court tables, the study of which has been very much neglected so far (and there are numerous objects of this kind to be found, e.g. in Strzelin, Kochanów or Stare Strącze). In the future, it would be worth considering to publish a full selection of Silesian dispute settlement agreements, which are an excellent source of information regarding the legal system of the time.³

2. R. Kubicki, *Seelbad (balnea animarum) – uwagi na temat praktyki stosowania pobożnej fundacji w Prusach Krzyżackich i Prusach Królewskich do początku XVI wieku*, "Zapiski Historyczne" 80 (1/2015), pp. 7–20.
3. The paper by D. Adamska, P. Nocuń, *Czu Troste und czu Hulffe des Zele. Późnośredniowieczne ugody kompozycyjne z terenu Śląska*, "Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny Sobótka" 59, (2/2004), pp. 111–139 presents the settlement agreements in a specific manner: they are shown in a table, with the manner of compensation listed accordingly. However, this method of presentation has its limitations, hence my suggestion to publish dispute settlement agreements in full.