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THE DUAL IMAGE OF RICHARD I THE LIONHEART BY THE EVIDENCE ABOUT THE THIRD CRUSADE

(Summary)

Distorted memories were quite common in medieval society, as people perceived different events and figures influenced by specific ideology or view of life. Typical example of that is the interpretation of the narrative about the participation of Richard I the Lionheart in the Third Crusade. The number of medieval and modern stories, studies, and analyses, dedicated to this English monarch, is considerable, but all of them assess his actions in a romantic, strongly positive way. Nevertheless, the profound analysis of the texts reveals the English king as being rude, irritable, tactless, touchy, biased and cruel, but in the same time as charismatic leader with sense of honour and duty, constantly bestowing care of the army. The duality of his figure is evident in outlining both his positive and his negative characteristics as well as in the assessment of his decisions and their consequences in the course of the crusade. Moreover, even the image of the king as the ideal knight, patron of the faith, willing to sacrifice himself for negotium Christi, is quite contradictory and combines the admiration of Richard's deeds and the realization of the results of the crusade and the later fate of the ruler. Still, the English king served as God's means for the development of the yet another stage of the history preordained by the Almighty God and in this sense the omission or belittlement of some of his acts is natural and justifiable. That in its turn helps for an easier and complete development of his legendary image.