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Internal Affair: The First Crusade Against the Hussites

In March 1420 during the meeting of the Imperial Diet in Wroclaw, the papal nuncio and bishop of Lugo Fernando read the papal bull *omnium plasmatoris domini*, which promulgated a crusade against the Bohemian Wycliffites, Hussites, and other heretics. The organization and leadership of the military campaign fell to King Sigismund, who sought to use this opportunity not only to eradicate the heresy but also to claim rightfully his patrimony after the death of his brother Wenceslas IV. Rather than leading to a quick victory, bishop Fernando's proclamation of the Cross initiated a fourteen-year period of five ultimately unsuccessful campaigns to defeat and extirpate Utraquism from the lands of St. Wenceslas' crown.

The discussion of the Crusades against Bohemia has formed an integral part of numerous studies on the history of the Hussite revolution and on the reign and rule of King Sigismund. While the former analyses concentrated on the military aspects of the campaigns, the latter usually examined the Crusades as a part of Sigismund's broader political goals. In contrast, this paper will examine the organization of the first Crusade against the Hussites in order to argue that it was an internal conflict within East Central Europe paralleling the Albigensian campaigns in the West.