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## Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae

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♦ *EARLY MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA:  
NEW TRENDS IN RESEARCH*

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♦ *EARLY MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA:  
NEW TRENDS IN RESEARCH*

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# I. EARLY MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA: NEW TRENDS IN RESEARCH

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(THE SECTION EDITED BY RUDOLF SIMEK)

RUDOLF SIMEK  
BONN

## BY WAY OF AN INTRODUCTION



The research on Medieval Scandinavia has a long tradition, but was long dominated by philologists and archaeologists: while the latter concentrated on the physical remains of the Viking Age (roughly the period from the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup>), the philologists investigated the Scandinavian, especially West Norse literature from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, much of which has the Scandinavian Viking Age history as its topic.

After over 200 years of research, it has become more and more obvious over the last few decades that only a cross-disciplinary approach can really help us to make an inroad into understanding the mentality, history, religion, customs and institutions of medieval Scandinavians. Thus, even the study of Old Norse mythology has progressed from the study of comparative religion and structuralist approaches to the critical analyses of our High Medieval texts, which themselves tried to make sense of stories of the far past from before the Christianization of Nordic countries in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Karen Bek-Pedersen's paper on Gefjon is a good example of this, as she is trying to show the manifold foreign patterns (in this case, Irish) that may have helped to form a story in Snorri Sturluson's Edda, which is still all too often taken literally as a genuine source of heathen lore. A critical approach to literature is also taken by Sirpa Aalto in dealing with *Jómsvíkinga saga*. This saga has, after intensive abuse by Nazi authors in the 1930s, who saw in it the embodiment of Nordic heroism, come to the center of academic attention, as is shown by a whole section on this saga alone at the 2018 Reykjavík Saga

Conference. While Aalto looks at the relevance of this saga for late medieval Icelanders and the reasons why it was copied and reworked repeatedly, Jakub Morawiec looks at the same text also from an interdisciplinary angle, but with a totally different purpose, namely to see what literary and pre-literary traditions were used by the author to recreate this 10<sup>th</sup> century about the relationship between Danes, Norwegians and Slavs. Two more papers deal with Viking Age history, namely the history of slavery, once as seen through the eyes of contemporary biographies in my own paper on *Undesirable Biographies*, the other time through the distribution of silver from the slave trade reaching Northern Europe in Dariusz Adamczyk's paper on *How and Why Did Dirhams Flow to Scandinavia during the 9<sup>th</sup> Century?* Coinage of a very different sort is the topic of Klaus Düwel's paper on Migration Age gold bracteates, in which he investigates the traditions to be found in their runic inscriptions and following them back into late antiquity.

The remaining two papers deal, at least to some extent, with the ecology of Medieval Scandinavia: Matthias Egeler in his paper on Egil Skallagrímsson's poem *Sonatorrek* attempts to correlate the manifold Iceland aetiological stories connected to place-names, which seem to form the core of poems and sagas alike, with this literary product. Alexandra Sanmark seeks to establish the meaning and role of the *þing*-places in early Medieval Scandinavia, using a plethora of sources from legal to literary to archaeological to establish the legal landscape of the North.

These very diverse topics and approaches can serve as a typical cross-section of Medieval Scandinavian Studies today, which has moved away both from literary studies concentrating on the Icelandic sagas, and mere archaeological investigations into the Early Mediaeval material culture and has given way to a transdisciplinary approach giving us a much better insight into life and thought of the Mediaeval North.

KAREN BEK-PEDERSEN  
ÅRHUS

## GEFJON, GYLFI AND SKJÖLDR: KINGSHIP AND LAND



The Old Norse goddess Gefjon does a number of things that are quite unusual for Old Norse goddesses and these aspects constitute the focus of the present article.<sup>1</sup>

Although she is mentioned in various literary sources from medieval Iceland, only one myth about Gefjon has been preserved – albeit in three versions – but this is sufficient to reveal her unusual facets. The intention with this article is to explore the Norse myth about Gefjon in light of Early Irish mythological traditions about a female deity who at one and the same time personifies sovereignty and the land.<sup>2</sup> In scholarship, this female figure is commonly known as Lady Sovereignty, and I am going to use that designation for her here. The idea of such a female figure refers to an ideological model of royal rule that the Celtic cultures shared with many other ancient cultures, and my central argument is that Gefjon is a Norse variant of Lady Sovereignty. She is by no means the only Norse expression of this idea, but Gefjon's is the only Norse case that will be explored in detail here.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more general discussions of Gefjon, see e.g. R. Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, Woodbridge 1993, pp. 101-103, and J. Lindow, *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs*, Oxford 2002, pp. 135-137.

<sup>2</sup> E.g.: M. Green, *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors, Virgins and Mothers*, London 1995, pp. 70-71, and J. Wood, *Celtic Goddesses: Myths and Mythology*, in: *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, ed. C. Larrington, London 1992, pp. 118-136, espec. pp. 129-131. For a discussion of the relationship between the literary representations and the historical practice of sovereignty, see M. Herbert, *Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland*, in: *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. L.O. Fradenburg, Edinburgh 1992, pp. 264-275.

<sup>3</sup> Another Norse example of sovereignty personified in female form is found in *Ynglingasaga* 3, where Óðinn's two brothers govern the realm in his absence. They also take Frigg as their wife, but when Óðinn returns he is said to reclaim his **wife**, but the implication is that he reclaims his whole **realm** (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Snorri Sturluson. Heimskringla* 1, Íslenzk Fornrit, XXVI, Reykjavík 1951: 12; English translation in L. Hollander, *Heimskringla: History of*



The comparisons that follow below fall in three parts: After introducing Gefjon in terms of her atypical traits, I will consider three Irish myths in relation to the two prose versions of the Norse myth. Then, I will compare a fourth Irish tale to the story about Gefjon, and lastly follows a comparison where the discrepancies between the first three Irish stories are set in relation to the discrepancies between the two prose versions of the Norse myth.

One highly unusual thing that Gefjon does is to have children with a *jötunn*. In Norse mythology as we know it, the *æsir*, who are the gods, and the *jötnar*, who are a different race of mythical beings, are clearly at odds with one another. While male *æsir* seem perfectly at ease with marrying and/or having children with female *jötnar*, the reverse appears to be utterly unthinkable, and a number of myths tell of how the *æsir* go to great lengths in order to prevent this sort of sexual union from happening.<sup>4</sup> But Gefjon does it. She has four sons by some unnamed *jötunn*, who appears to play no significant role beyond fathering her sons, all of whom are in the shape of oxen. However, this aspect of Gefjon, intriguing though it be, appears marginal in the present context.

The second unusual thing is that Gefjun is said to create and possess an area of land, which is easily identifiable in the human realm: the Danish island of Sjælland. Whether this is quite as remarkable for a Norse goddess as having children with a *jötunn* is hard to tell; at first glance, it is certainly rather less spectacular, but it is nonetheless interesting since hers is the only clear case of such close identification.

There are, of course, numerous instances of Norse deities being identified with places in the landscape. Commonly, theophoric place-names link

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the *Kings of Norway*, Austin 1964: 7). This shows that it is through marriage (or sexual access) to a specific woman that the male obtains sovereignty, because it seems that whichever of the three male figures has Frigg as his 'wife' is also by definition king (see also K. Bek-Pedersen, *Interpretations of Ynglingasaga and the Mabinogi: Some Norse-Celtic Correspondences*, in: *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions*, eds. A. Andrén, K. Jennbert, C. Raudvere, Lund 2006, pp. 331-335). Perhaps a similar notion lurks behind Saxo's portrayal of Hotherus and Balderus vying for the kingship of Denmark and the hand of Nanna in *Gesta Danorum* 3:1,1-3:3,7 (K. Friis-Jensen, *Saxo Grammaticus. Gesta Danorum. Danmarkshistorien I*, København 2005, pp. 190-203), almost as if these two things are inseparable and one is not really possible without the other. It has moreover been suggested that the late Norse conglomerate poem *Svipdagsmál* portrays an encounter between the goddess and the king-to-be (L. Motz, *The King and the Goddess: An Interpretation of the Svipdagsmál*, "Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi" XC (1975), pp. 133-150), and the myth about Óðinn and Gunnlöð has been interpreted along similar lines (Svava Jakobsdóttir, *Gunnlöð and the Precious Mead*, in: *The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology*, eds. P. Acker, C. Larrington, New York-London 2002, pp. 27-57 [first published in "Skírnir" CLXII (1988), pp. 215-245]).

<sup>4</sup> This aspect of the relationship between *æsir* and *jötnar* has been treated by e.g. M. Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes: Old Norse Myths in Medieval Northern Society*, Odense 1994, espec. pp. 103-143.

a deity's name to one or more contained landscape features, such as a lake, a hill or a grove.<sup>5</sup> But Gefjon's relationship to Själland seems different. One striking detail is that Själland is really rather large in comparison to other theophorically defined landscapes, while another conspicuous detail is that the island does not in any identifiable way carry the name of the deity who owns it, although a number of place-names in Själland might be named for her, such as Gentofte, Gevnø and Gevninge.<sup>6</sup> Yet, the myth about Gefjon unquestionably links her closely to this specific island. Gevninge, incidentally, is located close to Lejre (Hleiðra), the seat of King Skjöldr and his royal line.

The third unusual thing Gefjon does is to interact directly with two human kings: Gylfi in Sweden and Skjöldr in Denmark, more specifically Själland. This is a curious and little-discussed detail. It is not unique for Norse gods to appear among humans, but it is rare for any deity other than Óðinn to do so. Þórr does it once, in the myth about his journey to Útgarðaloki,<sup>7</sup> and Freyja likewise once, in the eddic poem *Hyndluljóð* where she interacts directly with the man Óttar. In the introductory prose to the eddic poem *Grímnismál*, Frigg takes a keen interest in the fate of two human kings, but when it comes to direct contact with them, she sends someone else.

There are obviously many other things to say about Gefjon, but in the present context, it is especially her relationship to Själland and her direct interaction with humans that are important. Before entering the discussion, the narrative material must be introduced. Since it is easier to establish the central issues to be discussed below by summarizing the Irish material, and since my intention is to hold Gefjon up against the Celtic tradition, I will start by introducing the Irish side of the first part of my comparative exercise.

5 See e.g. S. Brink, *Naming the Land*, in: *The Viking World*, eds. S. Brink, N. Price, London - New York 2008, pp. 57-66, espec. pp. 63-65.

6 A. Olrik, *Gefjon*, "Danske Studier" (1910), pp. 1-31, but see also J. Kousgård Sørensen, *Danske sø- og ånavne*, II, København 1973, p. 224, who suggests that these names come from the same root as the Norse verb *gefa*, 'to give', and refer to a quality attached to a body of water in the sense of 'the one that yields plenty (of fish)'. The meaning 'giving one, yielding one' is also commonly regarded as the root of the name Gefjon (also rendered Gefiun by Snorri); see e.g. A. Olrik, *Gefjon* and R. Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, but other interpretations have also been suggested, e.g. J. Lindow, *Norse Mythology...* and A. Sturtevant, *Regarding the Old Norse name Gefjon*, "Scandinavian Studies" XXIV (1952) 4, pp. 166-167.

7 This is told in *Gylfaginning* 44 (Snorri Sturluson: *Edda. Prologue and Gylfaginning*, ed. A. Faulkes, London 2005, pp. 36-37). The part of this myth where Þórr spends the night with a human family has certain parallels to the story about St. Germanus in *Historia Brittonum* 32; see e.g. M. Chesnutt, *The Beguiling of Þórr*, in: *Úr dölum til dala. Guðbrandur Vigfússon Centenary Essays*, eds. R. McTurk, A. Wawn, Leeds 1989, pp. 35-63, espec. pp. 38-39) who argues that this episode is a borrowing into the Norse myth.

The mythical theme in question is represented primarily in Irish literary evidence from about the 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards, but a number of Gaulish epigraphic and iconographic sources from ca. 500 BC to 400 AD may also reflect it. In the epigraphic evidence, the theme follows two common patterns; in one, the name of a Roman god is linked to that of a local, Celtic goddess; in the other pattern, both deities carry Celtic names. That is, while the male figure may be of foreign origins, the female is always native. There is no suggestion, however, that the female (or the male, for that matter) predominated in any of these instances.<sup>8</sup> It is, moreover, important to note that neither Irish nor Gaulish represents an unmediated tradition.<sup>9</sup> While the Gaulish artefacts and inscriptions belong to the period in which Gaul was strongly influenced by Rome,<sup>10</sup> the Irish literary material relating to the pagan past was written down by Christians from about the 7<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Although the literature obviously employs pre-Christian material, it tends to do so with thoroughly Christian aims in mind.<sup>11</sup> This, of course, does not disqualify such sources from an exploration of the underlying pre-Christian Celtic ideology, but we must not expect the material to lack contemporary manipulation and relevance.<sup>12</sup> In the following, only the Irish literary sources will be taken into account.

Lady Sovereignty appears in a number of Irish mythological tales and the present article does not portray any exhaustive overview of occurrences, since the limited scope here requires a more focused selection.<sup>13</sup> The three stories relevant to the first part of the discussion will be summarised each in turn before pursuing the argument further.

<sup>8</sup> It is generally difficult to relate the female sovereignty figure directly to iconography, see J. Wood, *Celtic Goddesses...*, p. 130. For a discussion of the relevant epigraphic and iconographic material, see M. Green, *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art*, London - New York 1992, pp. 45-73.

<sup>9</sup> M. Herbert, *Goddess and King...*, p. 265; cf. K. McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature*, Maynooth 1990, passim, espec. pp. 54-83.

<sup>10</sup> M. Herbert, *Goddess and King...*, p. 265; M. Green, *Symbol and Image...*, pp. 6-8; M. Green, *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors...*, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> K. McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present...* makes a very strong case for this view; cf. A. Eichhorn-Mulligan, *The Anatomy of Power and the Miracle of Kingship: The Female Body of Sovereignty in a Medieval Irish Kingship Tale*, "Speculum" LXXXI (2006) 4, pp. 1014-1054, espec. p. 1016.

<sup>12</sup> It is clear that the stories about Lady Sovereignty were invested with political ideology in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries when they were committed to writing (A. Eichhorn-Mulligan, *The Anatomy of Power...*, passim, espec. pp. 1017-1019).

<sup>13</sup> For a brief overview of the Irish theme, see V. Simmons, *Sovereignty Myth*, in: *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, IV, ed. J.T. Koch, Santa Barbara 2006, pp. 1621-1622; see also M. Egeler, *Some Thoughts on 'Goddess Medb' and Her Typological Context*, "Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie" LIX (2012), pp. 67-96.

In a probably 11<sup>th</sup>-century version of *Echtra Mac nEchach Muigmedóin*<sup>14</sup> (*The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Muigmedón*), the following story is told about Niall Noígiallach (Niall of the Nine Hostages):

Niall is the son of King Eochaid and a captured slave, Cairenn; his four half-brothers are the sons of King Eochaid and the queen, Mongfhind. Mongfhind treats Niall's mother extremely harshly, causing her to abandon her newborn son, who is then fostered by a poet. When Niall later rescues his mother, Mongfhind demands of Eochaid that he decides which of his sons shall be king after him. Eochaid consults a wizard, who prophesies that Niall will be king. Mongfhind dislikes this and sends all the brothers out hunting, telling her sons to basically get rid of Niall before returning home. At one point, the brothers lose their way, 'every side being closed against them', and they stop to eat. Then thirst comes upon them and one of them goes in search of water. He finds a well guarded by a loathsome old hag, who demands that he kiss her before she will give him water. He refuses. Now the other brothers in turn do the same, only Niall is willing to give her a kiss and offers, of his own accord, to sleep with her as well. No sooner does he 'throw himself down upon her' than she turns into a beautiful young woman. When he asks who she is, she replies: *is me in flaithius* – 'I am Sovereignty'. She tells him that he will become the ancestor of a long line of kings, adding that: 'As you have seen me loathsome as well as beautiful, so it is with sovereignty; seldom is it gained without battle and conflict, but at last it is beautiful and goodly.' Niall thus obtains kingship.<sup>15</sup>

The aspects considered relevant here appear mainly in the latter part of the story: kingship, the setting in a strange or unknown place, the hag who turns out to be Lady Sovereignty, the drink sought by the hero, the sexual intimacy offered by the goddess and, lastly, the royal descendants.

A very similar story is told in a 12<sup>th</sup>-century version of *Cóir Anmann*<sup>16</sup> (*The Fitness of Names*; CA2), 104, about Lugaid Laígde:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The earliest ms containing this story is the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>-century Rawlinson B 502 (CODECS: <https://vanhamel.nl/codecs/Home>). Niall was a historical king who, according to the *Annals of the Four Masters*, was king of Ireland AD 379-405 (<https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100005A/index.html>).

<sup>15</sup> Summarized from W. Stokes, *Echtra Mac Echach Muigmedóin – The Adventure of the Sons of Eochaid Muigmedón*, "Revue Celtique" XXIV (1903), pp. 190-203.

<sup>16</sup> The oldest mss containing this, the earliest, version of *Cóir Anmann* are the Book of Ballymote and the Book of Uí Maine, both from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century (S. Arbuthnot, *Cóir Anmann: A Late Middle Irish Treatise on Personal Names (Part 1)*, Irish Texts Society, LIX, Dublin 2005, p. 2), but various pieces of linguistic and other evidence suggests that this version attained its current form in the latter part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (S. Arbuthnot, *Cóir Anmann...*, p. 72).

<sup>17</sup> Another version of this story is found in the Dindshenchas-poem about Carn Máil (E. Gwynn, *The Metrical Dindshenchas (Part IV)*, Dublin 1924, pp. 134-143); here, the hag threatens to devour the brothers unless one of them sleeps with her. Lugaid Laígde does, she

It is prophesied that one of Dáire's sons will take the kingship of Ireland and that his name will be Lugaid. For this reason, Dáire names all of his five sons Lugaid. A druid says that the son who catches the golden fawn that comes into the assembly will be king after Dáire. A gold-coloured fawn appears and the five sons pursue it into a magical mist where Lugaid Laígde catches it. Then a heavy snow falls, one brother goes to look for shelter and comes upon a house with a big fire, plenty food and drink and a terrible old woman in a bed of white gold. She asks him to share her bed for the night, but he refuses. She explicitly tells him that he has forfeited sovereignty by rejecting her. One after the other, the brothers enter the house, but only Lugaid Laígde agrees to get into bed with her. The moment he does so, the woman turns into a beautiful, radiant and fragrant young woman and he has intercourse with her. She then says: 'I am Sovereignty and you will take the Sovereignty of Ireland.' He then receives food and drink. The next day, there is neither house nor fire there, just a level plain.<sup>18</sup>

This tale focuses on very similar aspects: kingship, the setting in a strange place – here mist and snow, the hag who is Lady Sovereignty, the drink and/or food sought by the hero, the sexual intimacy offered by the goddess, the hero's royal descendants.

My third example is the probably 9<sup>th</sup>-century *Baile in Scáil* ('The Phantom's Frenzy'),<sup>19</sup> chapters 1-10, which shows what is believed to be a later – probably Christian – interpretation of the relationship between the male ruler and the female personification of rule.<sup>20</sup> I will return to the issue of lateness below,

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is transformed into a beautiful young woman who says that Lugaid's son will be her consort and king.

<sup>18</sup> Summarized from S. Arbuthnot, *Cóir Anmann...*, pp. 101-104, 139-141.

<sup>19</sup> The story survives in two mss: Rawlinson B. 512, early 16<sup>th</sup> century, and Harley 5280, also early 16<sup>th</sup> century (K. Murray, *Baile in Scáil. 'The Phantom's Frenzy'*, Irish Texts Society, LVIII, Dublin 2004, pp. 1-2). It is, however, thought to originate in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and to have obtained its extant form in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (K. Murray, *Baile in Scáil...*, p. 4; M. Herbert, *Goddess and King...*, p. 273 note 4). *Baile in Scáil* is associated with the older *Baile Chuind Chétchathaig* (*The Frenzy of Conn of the Hundred Battles*), extant in two 16<sup>th</sup>-century mss. (Dublin Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10 and London British Library MS Egerton 88), but thought to stem from the 7<sup>th</sup> century (G. Murphy, *On the Dates of Two Sources used in Thurneysen's Heldensage, "Ériu" XVI* (1952), pp. 149-151). This is likewise a vision-story listing the kings of Tara who are descended from Conn and describing these kings as 'drinking the sovereignty', which is identified as female, but not personified. *Baile in Scáil* in many ways also resembles the story about Conall Corc told in *Senchas Fagbála Caisil* (*The Story of the Finding of Cashel*), extant in Dublin Trinity College MS 1336, of which the first part is probably from the 8<sup>th</sup> century (M. Dillon, *The Story of the Finding of Cashel, "Ériu" XVI* (1952), pp. 61-73, espec. pp. 63-64). This contains a vision-story about the future kings of Munster, but here, the female personification is replaced by an angel who dispenses the drink.

<sup>20</sup> M. Herbert, *Goddess and King...*, pp. 268-270; M. Green, *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors...*, p. 70.



but for now simply summarize the story about Conn Cétchathach (Conn of the Hundred Battles):

One morning before sunrise, Conn is on the ramparts of Tara. He leaps onto a stone that cries out under his feet, and his best poet later tells him that this stone is Fál and that the number of roars it uttered is equal to the number of Conn's descendants who will rule Ireland. A great fog now falls and a horseman arrives. Upon learning Conn's identity, the horseman brings him to a plain where they enter a magnificent house under a golden tree. Inside is a beautiful young girl in a crystal chair and with a golden cup in front of her. There is also a silver vat full of red ale. On the throne next to the girl is a beautiful phantom, who identifies himself as Lug Mac Ethnenn [i.e. Lugh, one of the major Irish gods] and says that he has come to relate to Conn the duration of his kingship and those of all of his descendants. The girl is identified as *flaith hÉrenn*, Sovereignty of Ireland, and as she dispenses ale from the vat, she asks to whom the cup of red ale (*derg-flaith*) shall be given.<sup>21</sup> Lug answers her by naming each of the descendants of Conn who will be king of Tara and by describing their reigns. The rest of the text is concerned with the details of Lug's prophecy.<sup>22</sup>

As is evident, these three tales have much in common and they are easily related to one another in coherent ways. Certain elements recur in all three: a focus on kingship, a vision-like element in the form of fog or a strange setting, a prophecy about future kings, a special drink and the woman identified as Sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> The stories about Niall and Lugaid also share the elements of the old hag who is transformed into a beautiful young girl when the hero has sex with her, and the brothers who reject the hag. These are absent from the story about Conn, which instead includes a male god, who is clearly more powerful than the goddess.

In all three stories, the woman who gives the hero a drink and, sometimes, sex is explicitly identified as Sovereignty personified and, especially in the instances involving sex and transformation, it is indicated that the hero earns his right to kingship by accepting the woman's invitation. The sexual

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<sup>21</sup> The notion of a drink symbolizing kingship is greatly aided in Irish due to the linguistic similarity in the terminology: *flaith* means 'lordship, sovereignty, rule' whereas *laith* means 'ale, liquor, intoxicating drink' (*Dictionary of the Irish Language*, ed. E.G. Quin, Dublin 1983, s.v. *flaith*; *laith*).

<sup>22</sup> Summarized from K. Murray, *Baile in Scáil...*, pp. 33-35, 50-51.

<sup>23</sup> The drink offered to and drunk by the rightful king is a frequent element in the Irish material relating to Lady Sovereignty; cf. Svava Jakobsdóttir, *Gunnlöð and the Precious Mead* who compares Óðinn's acquisition of the precious mead from Gunnlöð in the eddic poem *Hávamál* 104-110 to a Celtic inauguration ritual.

initiative, then, comes from the goddess and the male hero simply has to consent to it.

Before discussing the Irish stories any further, I will introduce the Norse story. There are, as mentioned, three versions of the myth about Gefjon and Gylfi – two separate prose versions, both of which draw on the same poetic stanza, which constitutes the third version. Especially the two prose versions are relevant to this part of the discussion, but before moving on to comparisons, it is important to note the relationship between all three.

The prose versions, *Gylfaginning* 1 and *Ynglingasaga* 5, appear in separate works, both of which are attributed to the same author: the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Icelander Snorri Sturluson. The fact that the two prose versions are nonetheless different shows that Snorri in both cases apparently included details that he considered contextually relevant while at the same time leaving out other details deemed unsuitable. Both contexts concern interactions between humans and gods in the North, but while *Ynglingasaga* goes on from mythical origins to discuss royal genealogies in legendary and historical times, *Gylfaginning* essentially concerns mythological knowledge. The latter thus remains within a mythical setting focusing on the pre-Christian understanding of the world and of the Norse deities, albeit clearly seen through the eyes of a Christian.<sup>24</sup>

The poetic version survives only because Snorri cites it in both his works; this is a skaldic stanza attributed to the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Norwegian skald Bragi gamli Boddason. The narrative focus of Bragi's stanza is, as I will discuss below, different from that (or those) of Snorri's two works; what is important to note here is that Snorri had either a more extensive knowledge of the myth about Gefjon and Gylfi or had other sources available, because his portrayals of the interaction between Gefjon and Gylfi (and between Gefjon and Skjöldr) could not have come exclusively from the stanza by Bragi.

In chapter 1 of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Gylfaginning* (*The Delusion of Gylfi*), which is part of the medieval Icelandic work known as *Snorra-Edda*,<sup>25</sup> the following story is told:

Gylfi is king of Sweden and is visited one day by a *farandi kona* ('travelling woman'; see further below). In reward for her entertainment, King Gylfi gives her a piece of land as big as what four oxen can plough in one day. The woman, who is Gefjon in disguise, now fetches four sons whom

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<sup>24</sup> On Snorri's Christian treatment of heathen mythology, see e.g. C. Abram, *Gylfaginning and Early Medieval Conversion Theory*, "Saga-Book" XXIII (2009), pp. 5-24, and H. Kure, *I begyndelsen var skriget*, København 2010, *passim*, espec. pp. 19-41.

<sup>25</sup> *Snorra-Edda* is extant in three 14<sup>th</sup>-century mss (Codex Regius, Codex Wormianus and Codex Upsaliensis), but was purportedly authored during the first decades of the 1200s (A. Faulkes in *Snorri Sturluson: Edda. Prologue...*, pp. xii-xv).

she has by a *jötunn* and who are all in the shape of oxen. She puts them in front of the plough, which cuts so deep that the land comes loose, and the oxen drag this land westward into the sea. Gefjon places her land here and calls it Sjælland. The shape of it is said to resemble Lake Mälaren in Sweden. After this, the stanza by Bragi gamli is cited.<sup>26</sup>

The other version is told in chapter 5 of the also 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Ynglingasaga* (*The Saga of the Ynglingar*), which is the opening of the medieval Icelandic collection of kings' sagas known as *Heimskringla*.<sup>27</sup>

Gefjon is sent by the euhemerized god Óðinn to find a piece of land where the *æsir* can settle down. She visits King Gylfi in Sweden and he gives her a ploughland. Afterwards, Gefjon goes away and has four sons by a *jötunn*, gives them the shape of oxen and then ploughs up her land, which the oxen drag westward into the sea. Here, Gefjon settles down and marries King Skjöldr of Hleiðra, a son of Óðinn, while Óðinn himself goes to Sweden and settles down around Uppsala. Following this, the same stanza by Bragi gamli is cited.<sup>28</sup>

In both prose versions, the goddess Gefjon interacts with a human, King Gylfi of Sweden, and the outcome is that she obtains a (specific?) piece of land, which she then gives to the Danish King Skjöldr. In this sense, land and the rule of land constitute an explicit theme, but it is clear that the two Norse variants in many respects differ a great deal from the Irish stories. Even so, there are overlaps: An encounter between a human king and a goddess who (in *Gylfaginning*) is initially unrecognizable, the goddess' possession of a specific piece of land, and (especially in *Ynglingasaga*) a concern with kingship. A sexual element is also present in *Gylfaginning*, although it is not made explicit, while in *Ynglingasaga* we encounter a male god, who is more powerful than the goddess.

Regarding the sexual element, Gefjon is described in *Gylfaginning* as a *farandi kona*, which literally means 'a woman who travels about', but the term was used in medieval times to designate a whore.<sup>29</sup> It thus seems safe

26 Summarized from A. Faulkes in: *Snorri Sturluson: Edda. Prologue...*, p. 7 (for an English translation, see A. Faulkes, *Snorri Sturluson – Edda*, London 1987, p. 7).

27 The oldest ms of *Heimskringla*, known as *Kringla*, from the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century was lost in the fire of Copenhagen in 1728, but there are extant copies of it. Of these, AM 35 fol. from ca. 1675-1700 is regarded as the one closest to the original (J.G. Jørgensen, *Ynglinga saga mellom fornaldersaga og kongesaga*, in: *Fornaldersagaerne: Myter og virkelighed*, eds. A. Ney, Ármann Jakobsson, A. Lassen, København 2009, pp. 49-59, espec. p. 56; L. Hollander, *Heimskringla: History...*, p. xxiv).

28 Summarized from Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Snorri Sturluson. Heimskringla*, pp. 14-16 (for an English translation, see L. Hollander, *Heimskringla: History...*, pp. 8-10).

29 K.F. Söderwall, *Ordbok öfver Svenska Medeltids-Språket*, I: A-L, Lund 1884-1918, p. 240, with references to 14<sup>th</sup>-century Swedish sources (*ibidem*, V and VI); cf. W. Heizmann, *Gefjon*.



to assume that the ‘entertainment’ with which she provided King Gylfi was of a sexual nature, although this has been somewhat subdued. This means that one version of the Norse myth portrays a human king having sex with a goddess whom he does not recognize for what she is, but whose true identity is subsequently revealed to him; the other Norse version portrays a clear focus on kingship and shows the goddess first interacting with one human king and subsequently marrying another (semi-)human king. Although the resemblances to the Irish stories about Niall, Lugaid and Conn are, at first glance, less than striking, the similarities just noted help to clarify that there are, indeed, parallels.

The essence of the Irish stories – to bestow a divinely given right to sovereignty upon a human – is absent from the Norse story. But although this is a significant discrepancy, it does not preclude comparisons, because it may be that part of the point of the Norse story is exactly the opposite – not to bestow the right to be king, but to take it away.<sup>30</sup> The fact that Gefjon takes Själland away from Gylfi, or that he willingly gives it to her, must mean that, when the story begins, Själland is part of his kingdom. Could it be that Gylfi has somehow wrongfully obtained sovereignty of a land to which he has no rightful claim or that he is for some other reason deemed unworthy of his royal title?<sup>31</sup> Since the loss of kingship (of a limited area) features strongly in both Norse variants, this is arguably the crux of King Gylfi’s encounter with the goddess: He loses power over Själland after engaging in sex with Gefjon. The Norse king has sex with the goddess, but she subsequently rejects him; in the Irish stories, the sex is a test, which the future king must pass in order to be accepted by the goddess.

My suggestion is that the Norse myth – most clearly the *Gylfaginning* variant – constitutes a version, which is reversed in comparison to the Irish myth – most clearly the variants about Niall and Lugaid:

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*Metamorphosen einer Göttin*, in: *Mythological Women: Studies in Memory of Lotte Motz*, eds. R. Simek, W. Heizmann, Wien 2002, pp. 197-255, espec. pp. 201-212, who notes similar designations found in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Middle Low German law book *Sachsenspiegel*.

<sup>30</sup> This seems to find an analogy in an episode from the Norse legendary tale *Hrólfs saga kraka* from ca. 1400. In ch. 11, King Helgi allows a tattered looking ‘something or someone’ to enter his bed and sleep beside him only to find that, during the night, the creature turns into a beautiful woman. He wants to have sex with her, she allows this, but places certain conditions regarding their future child on him afterwards; he then brings misfortune upon himself and his kingly descendant Hrólfr by not living up to these (J. Byock, *The Saga of King Hrolf Kraki*, London 1998, p. viii and pp. 21-23). The forfeiture of divine or at least supernatural favour is clearly present here.

<sup>31</sup> This is what happens to Conaire in the Irish tale *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* (*The Destruction of Da Derga’s Hostel*). The earliest version of *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* is found in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>-century MS 23 E 25, also known as *Lebor na hUidre* (*The Book of the Dun Cow*).

– In the Irish story, the human hero meets an otherworldly woman. In the Norse, an otherworldly woman visits the human king.

– In the Irish story, this woman does not look like her ‘real’ self.

In the Norse, she is in disguise.

– In the Irish story, the hero has to pass a test, which is to have sex with the woman.

In the Norse, the king has sex with the woman after which *she* seemingly has to pass a test (the ploughing).

– The sex (which **is** the test) reveals the Irish hero’s true identity: he is king, and it also reveals the woman’s identity: she is Lady Sovereignty.

In Norse, the test (but apparently not the sex) reveals the woman’s true identity: she is a powerful goddess, and it also reveals or alters the king’s identity: he is **not** king of her land.

– In the Irish story, the hero thus obtains kingship.

In the Norse story, the king loses (part of) his kingdom and the goddess marries another human, who becomes king of her land.

The two plotlines thus contain very similar elements, but whereas the Irish story is about obtaining rightful kingship, the Norse story is about losing kingship that may be perceived as somehow unsatisfactory or wrongful. This discrepancy necessarily affects the form of the stories in such a way that they are not exact parallels.

In the Irish stories about Niall and Lugaid, it is emphasized that the woman is initially physically repulsive and only becomes attractive during the sexual union. In the Norse story, nothing is said about the woman’s looks, but we can assume that the *farandi kona* did not, at least in Gylfi’s eyes, look like a goddess. One difference here is that Flaithius is actually transformed, whereas Gefjon merely uses disguise. As mentioned above, it is a feature in the Irish stories about Niall and Lugaid that the sexual initiative comes from the goddess and that the human hero obtains rightful kingship by accepting her invitation. This seems to be a fixed distribution of roles, which also matters in another Irish myth with close resemblances to the tale about Gefjon, and this is the second part of my comparisons. The story concerns the founding of Emain Macha extant in the *Dindshenchas* of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century *Lebor Laignech* (*Book of Leinster*).<sup>32</sup> The story goes thus:

Three kings reign over Ireland together: Dithorba, Aedh Ruadh and Cimbaeth. When Aedh dies, his only child, the daughter Macha Mong-

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<sup>32</sup> E. O’Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History, Delivered at the Catholic University of Ireland during the Sessions of 1855 and 1856*, Dublin 1861, p. 526; W. Stokes, *The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas*, “Revue Celtique” XV (1894), pp. 272-336, espec. pp. 272-273; CODECS: (<http://vanhamel.nl/codecs/Home>).

-Ruadh (Red-Haired Macha) demands her part of the kingship, but Dithorba and Cimbaeth refuse to give sovereignty to a woman. They fight a battle, which Macha wins. Later, Dithorba dies, leaving five sons who now claim a share of the kingship. Macha refuses to give them this and there is another battle, which she also wins and the sons of Dithorba are banished. Macha now 'takes Cimbaeth to be her husband' and gives him command of her soldiers. But she also wants to avenge herself on the sons of Dithorba. She disguises herself as a leprous woman and comes to them while they are camping in the wild. They give her food and desire to have sex with her. She lures them one by one into the woods, but instead of sleeping with them she overpowers them in order to enslave them and have them build the stronghold of Emain Macha for her.<sup>33</sup>

Also this tale shows close affiliation to the stories about Lady Sovereignty summarized above and, although the personification of Macha as Sovereignty is not brought to the surface, the themes of her story are very similar to the three other Irish stories: It has a focus on kingship, a female predominates over male kings and takes one of them as her husband (i.e. she chooses him, not the other way round), the apparently insignificant woman turns out to be extremely powerful, she is able to overcome the male protagonists, and perhaps the setting in the wild may correspond to the magical setting. Other elements also show similarities, but in a reversed manner: The brothers offer Macha food (instead of the goddess offering the hero drink), and they desire to have sex with her (instead of the initiative coming from her).

Especially the latter part of this story compares to Gylfi's encounter with Gefjon, albeit not in a straightforward manner. The elements that correspond to one another do not come together in parallel plotlines, but, again, this does not rule out comparison. The Irish story runs as follows:

- 1) Macha overcomes Dithorba in battle, claims kingship and takes Cimbaeth as her husband.
- 2) Disguised as a leper<sup>34</sup> (a woman of low status), she seeks out Dithorba's five sons in the wilderness in order to obtain revenge.
- 3) They desire to have sex with her.
- 4) She overpowers them.
- 5) Macha forces Dithorba's five sons to build her fortress, Emain Macha.

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<sup>33</sup> Summarized from E. O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript...*, pp. 526-528; cf. W. Stokes, *The Prose Tales in the Rennes Dindshenchas – Second Supplement: Extracts from the Book of Leinster*, "Revue Celtique" XVI (1895), pp. 269-312, espec. pp. 279-283.

<sup>34</sup> On the motif of leprosy, see A. Eichhorn-Mulligan, *The Anatomy of Power...*, passim, espec. pp. 1051-1053.

The Norse story in comparison runs as follows:

A) Disguised as a *farandi kona* (a woman of low status), Gefjon seeks out Gylfi.

B) He has sex with her and gives her land as a reward.

C) She overpowers him by taking much more land than he intended, with help from her four sons from the wilderness.

D) Gefjon thus forces Gylfi to give up land to her.

E) She claims possession of her land by taking Skjöldr as her husband; he becomes king.

The elements may be seen to correspond to each other as follows:

A-2, B-3, C-4 (and C-2), D-5 (and D-1) and, lastly, E-1.

A-2: Both Macha and Gefjon appear in the guise of women of low social status and, in both cases, this appears to be a deliberate ruse. Macha's intention is to take revenge; nothing is said about Gefjon's reasons for paying Gylfi a visit, but we may assume that her intention is to claim 'her' land.

B-3: In both stories, the relationship between land-giving and sex is reversed. Usually, Lady Sovereignty offers sex, and the man who accepts acquires land into the bargain. Here, the Irish brothers, who have already been deprived of kingship, want sex, but are unable to get it. Correspondingly, the Norse king gives the goddess land as a reward for sex, whereas it is supposed to be the other way round. This is either where Gylfi gets it all wrong or it is an indication that he, like the Irish brothers, has already got something wrong and is now being punished. The Norse evidence gives no clues as to who takes the sexual initiative, but it is Gylfi who wants to give payment afterwards and this seems to be exactly what Gefjon was expecting. It is clear that having sex with this woman *is* about land.

C-4: Macha overpowers the brothers before they even get into bed with her. Gefjon does not overpower Gylfi in bed, but she certainly does so afterwards by not only ploughing a much larger piece of land than he had imagined, but also dragging the land away, thus depriving him of his land in the most concrete manner.<sup>35</sup>

C-2: It seems a minor detail that both stories involve a number of sons whose father is (nominally) an adversary of the goddess – the enmity between Macha and Dithorba is clear, and enmity between Gefjon and a male *jötunn* would be expected – and who are placed in some sort of wilderness. I have

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<sup>35</sup> In *Gylfaginning* 1, it says that where the land was there is now a lake and that the shape of Själland corresponds to Lake Mälaren. However, some scholars, e.g. R. Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, pp. 101-102 and A. Olrik *Gefjon*, pp. 10-11, have suggested that Øresund was originally the ploughed furrow separating Själland from Sweden and that the likening to Mälaren is a later interpretation.

not found any greater significance to this, but since the correspondence is there, it merits a mention.

D-5: The goddess proceeds to humiliate her male host or 'hosts' – in Macha's case by forcing the brothers, over whom she now has power, to build a fortress for her, while the husband she has already chosen is in command of her army; in Gefjon's case by forcefully hauling Gylfi's land away from him while he is powerlessly watching, after which she marries another man.

D-1: Just like she overcomes the five brothers after gaining possession of 'her' land, Macha initially won over their father, Dithorba, on the battlefield. This, too, may be seen to correspond to Gefjon overpowering Gylfi, albeit she only does so in the field and not the battlefield.

E-1: The goddess claims possession of her land and chooses a husband. In Macha's case, it is said that she herself claims kingship and puts Cimbaeth, her husband, in charge of her soldiers; in Gefjon's case, she clearly claims possession of her land, but it is her husband, Skjöldr, who becomes king. In the Irish story, this happens early on, whereas in the Norse story, it constitutes the ending.

Thus, kingship, ownership of land and (unexpected) female predominance are all aspects that are crucial in both myths. The ruse employed by the female is entirely deliberate and it is intended to lure the male protagonist(s) to act in a manner, which is predictable to her: Macha is expecting the brothers to want sex and this allows her to overpower them at her own convenience; Gefjon is expecting Gylfi to give her a reward for sex and this allows her to take as much as she wants. The Norse indication of prostitution on the part of a goddess may be surprising, but Macha likewise seems quite content to be regarded momentarily as a prostitute, even if she does not actually have sex with the brothers. On the other hand, a figure like Lady Sovereignty would be expected to have consecutive husbands, which makes it easy to accuse her of prostitution, and the point may simply be that messing with a goddess has consequences, even if she looks like a whore. Furthermore, whereas the Irish legendary queen and/or goddess Medb, who is another manifestation of Lady Sovereignty, is known for her severe punishments of potential lovers who reject her advances,<sup>36</sup> this does not apply to Dithorba's sons or to Gylfi. None of them reject the goddess, and Dithorba's sons are punished for wrongs committed against Macha in an earlier part of the story. There may have been an earlier part also of the myth about Gefjon and Gylfi so that the story, as we now know it, is incomplete; however, we have no way of ascertaining whether this is the case.

The third and final part of my comparative exercise is to consider the significant discrepancies between the two Norse stories – *Gylfaginning* 1 and

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36 See e.g. M. Egeler, *Some Thoughts on 'Goddess Medb'...*

*Ynglingasaga* 5 – in light of the equally great differences between the two Irish plotlines of the myth – on the one hand the stories about Niall Noígiallach and Lugaid Laígde and on the other hand the story about Conn Cétchathach.

Whereas Niall and Lugaid encounter a hideous woman who becomes beautiful when they have sex with her, who gives them a drink and bestows kingship upon them and finally prophesies about their kingly descendants, Conn encounters a beautiful woman who is the handmaiden of the supreme god Lug, there is no sex, only a drink, and it is Lug who bestows kingship upon him and prophesies about future kings. The important development is that the details about transformation and sex disappear and, instead, we find a supreme male god who has the real power, while Lady Sovereignty is only acting on his behalf.

Likewise, in *Gylfaginning*, Gylfi encounters a *farandi kona* with whom he has sex upon which her identity as a goddess is revealed and he loses sovereignty over part of his kingdom to her; but in *Ynglingasaga*, Gylfi encounters the goddess Gefjon who has been sent by the supreme god Óðinn, there is no sex, Gylfi simply gives her the land she asks for (though he continues to compete with Óðinn), thus losing part of his kingdom, and Gefjon makes Skjöldr king of her land by marrying him. Also here, the details regarding hidden identity and sex disappear and, instead, we see a supreme male god who has the real power whereas the goddess is only acting on his behalf.

In other words, Irish and Norse tradition both preserve internally extremely similar developments in their treatment of Lady Sovereignty. As I will argue below, the myths in which Lady Sovereignty acts of her own accord constitute the older interpretation, while the myths in which she acts as the messenger or handmaiden of a more powerful male god constitute a younger interpretation. The introduction of a male god more powerful than and, indeed, in charge of the female goddess is generally considered a later adaptation of the Irish motif. As Máire Herbert says: “In the early centuries of Christian conversion, clerical writers sought to promote a Christian ideology of sovereignty in which the overseer and legitimator of royal power was not the goddess but the male god of Christianity”.<sup>37</sup> It is by no means unthinkable that a similar strategy may account for the changed status of Gefjon in *Ynglingasaga* 5 compared to *Gylfaginning* 1.

While the two Norse versions of the motif are contemporary, both being from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, this is not the case for the two Irish versions, and I would like now to argue in favour of the implied dating of the two different Irish versions. As noted above, it is believed that the 9<sup>th</sup>-century *Baile*

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<sup>37</sup> M. Herbert, *Goddess and King...*, p. 268; cf. K. McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present...*, pp. 138-145; G.Ó. Cruaíoch, *The Book of the Cailleach*, Cork 2003, pp. 38-52.



in *Scáil* preserves a later rendition of the interaction between the king and Lady Sovereignty than do the 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Echtra Mac nEchach Muigmedóin* and the 12<sup>th</sup>-century *Cóir Anmann*.<sup>38</sup> The idea that the motif of the female personification of the land, who bestows kingship upon a man by giving him a certain drink as well as sex, is the older version finds support in continental Celtic tradition, more specifically the legend about the founding of Marseilles. This was recorded in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century by the Greek author Athenaeus who refers, in his *Deipnosophistae* (Book 13.576a), to a now lost work by Aristotle called 'The Constitution of Massilia'. From this, he cites the following story:

The Phocaeans who inhabit Ionia were traders and founded Massilia. Euxenus of Phocaea was a guest-friend of King Nanos – which was actually his name. Euxenus happened to be visiting when this Nanos was celebrating his daughter's wedding, and he was invited to the feast. The wedding was organized as follows: After the meal, the girl had to come in and offer a bowl full of wine mixed with water to whichever suitor there she wanted, and whoever she gave it to would be her bridegroom. When the girl entered the room, she gave the bowl, either by accident or for some reason, to Euxenus; her name was Petta. After this happened, and her father decided that the gift had been made in accord with the god's will, so that he ought to have her, Euxenus married and set up housekeeping with her, although he changed her name to Aristoxene.<sup>39</sup> There is still a family in Massalia today descended from her and known as the Protiadae; because Protis was the son of Euxenus and Aristoxene.<sup>40</sup>

This, too, is clearly a story about kingship and land, both of which are personified in the shape of a woman, Petta, who offers drink – and marriage – to the man whom she selects as her husband and thus the rightful king of her land. Petta is presented as a human woman, but her choice of husband is interpreted by Nanos as a divine selection, and the notion that she is in some way a personification of the land seems also to be indicated by her name, which apparently means 'a portion [of land]'.<sup>41</sup> Like Niall Noígiallach, Euxenus may seem the least likely future king due to his foreign origins, but this is probably part of the motif.<sup>42</sup> The idea of a foreigner as king may also be

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<sup>38</sup> See note 19 above.

<sup>39</sup> The name Euxenus means 'hospitable' and Aristoxene means 'best host'; S.D. Olson, *Athenaeus: The Learned Banqueters VI. Books 12-13.594b*, Loeb Classical Library, CCCXXVII, Cambridge, Massachusetts - London, England 2010, p. 334f.

<sup>40</sup> Cited *ibidem*, pp. 332-335.

<sup>41</sup> D. ÓhÓgáin, *The Celts: A History*, Cork 2006, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> A version of the story about Niall seems also to appear in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Icelandic *Laxdæla saga*, where the powerful Icelandic chieftain Höskuldr has a son by his Irish slave

reflected in Gefjon's ultimate preference for Skjöldr above Gylfi, since rivalry between Denmark and Sweden is a theme in the Norse myth, and Gefjon effectively takes a chunk of Sweden and gives it to a Danish king.

The Irish-Celtic focus on a special drink offered to the prospective king goes well beyond the material presented here.<sup>43</sup> No such drink is mentioned in the Norse myth about Gefjon, but the notion of special drinks offered by extraordinary women to exceptional men does constitute a theme in Norse tradition more broadly.<sup>44</sup>

Aristotle, to whom Athenaeus attributes the legend about Petta and Euxenus, lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and the founding of Marseilles is historically dated to around 600 BC.<sup>45</sup> At that time, the area around Marseilles was inhabited by Ligurians rather than Celts, but the story probably made sense in Aristotle's time, because the area just north of Marseilles was by the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC under the control of Celtic tribes.<sup>46</sup> Athenaeus' account – and even more so Aristotle's – adds significant time depth to the Celtic motif about Lady Sovereignty.

Despite the many discrepancies between the Irish and Norse traditions discussed here, I believe it is now clear that there are also significant similarities and that these may help us to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the Old Norse goddess Gefjon and her close affinity to the Irish Lady Sovereignty. My suggestion is that we are dealing with different cultural expressions

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woman, Melkorka (L. Brady, *An Irish Sovereignty Motif in Laxdæla saga*, "Scandinavian Studies" LXXXVIII (2016) 1, pp. 60-76; see also W. Sayers, *Portraits of the Ruler: Óláfr Páir Höskuldsson and Cormac Mac Airt*, "The Journal of Indo-European Studies" XVII (1989), pp. 77-97). This son, Óláfr, turns out to be the foremost among Höskuldr's sons, and Melkorka turns out to be the daughter of the Irish king. When Óláfr goes to visit his royal Irish grandfather in ch. 21, he is offered the kingship of Ireland, but declines. To an extent, Óláfr and Niall's stories are parallel: son of a powerful man and a slave woman, jealousy from the legitimate spouse and eventually the unexpected offer of kingship. In Óláfr's case, the story pattern has been transposed into an entirely non-mythical setting, but a version of Lady Sovereignty may be present in the form of Melkorka's old nurse, whom Óláfr páir places on his lap – a gesture apparently indicating intimacy of a potentially sexual nature (see J. Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society*, Ithaca - London 1995, pp. 69-70). Moreover, unlike Niall, Óláfr declines the offer of kingship; whether the subsequent ill fate of his son Kjartan is to be seen in relation to this is a moot point. I am grateful to Matthias Egeler for brining this parallel to my attention.

<sup>43</sup> It is very clear also on the part of Medb of Connacht, another incarnation of Lady Sovereignty who bestows kingship upon the man who marries her (see e.g. M. Egeler, *Some Thoughts on 'Goddess Medb'...*, and J. Koch, *Medb and Ailill*, in: *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, IV, ed. J. Koch, Santa Barbara 2006, pp. 1282-1283). See also note 20 above.

<sup>44</sup> See e.g. M. Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age*, Dublin 1996.

<sup>45</sup> N. Chadwick, *The Celts*, London 1970, p. 35; M. Green, *Celtic Goddesses: Warriors...*, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> N. Chadwick, *The Celts*, pp. 54-56; D. ÓhÓgáin, *The Celts: A History*, p. 27.



that ultimately rest on similar ideological foundations, which are in no way exclusive to Celtic and Norse.<sup>47</sup> My argument is that sovereignty conceived in divine feminine guise is fundamental to all of the stories treated here and that the concept probably draws on ancient, shared ideology. This underlying ideological motif is clearly visible on the surface of the Irish material, but is rather more latent in the Norse. Even so, I believe this is one of the keys to the story about Gefjon and Gylfi: it is essentially a myth about kingship and land.

However, this is not the main focus of the Norse myth as it has come down to us. Instead, the emphasis is on Gejun's ploughing of the land with her four taurine sons, her use of devious methods to acquire land from Gylfi and a degree of rivalry between Sweden and Denmark – aspects that naturally attract much attention in scholarship, but which go beyond the scope of the present study.<sup>48</sup> The ploughing itself is the central image in Bragi gamli's skaldic stanza, but the names, Gefjon – a known deity, and Gylfi – a legendary king, reveal that also Bragi knew this as a myth about the interaction between goddess and king. The ideological frame I am arguing for is, then, implicitly present in the skaldic stanza, although the narrative focus is on the hard work carried out by the oxen, the fertility of the land and the power of the goddess – all of which are details that, incidentally, fit the Irish Lady Sovereignty beautifully.<sup>49</sup>

In short, this particular female figure and this particular ideological pattern is embedded in the Norse myth and cannot actually be separated from it – but

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47 The motif is found in numerous other traditions, within Europe for example the Bohemian legend about the ploughman Premysl who marries Libuse, ruler of the land (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, XXII, ed. H. Chisholm, Cambridge 1911, p. 279), but also outwith Europe, for example in ancient Near Eastern traditions about the Sumerian goddess Inanna, known in Babylonian as Ishtar (see e.g. M. Egeler, *Some Thoughts on 'Goddess Medb'...*). In *Gilgamesh* (SBV VI), Ishtar offers love and marriage to Gilgamesh, but he rejects her on account of how all her previous lovers have suffered. Upon this, Ishtar releases the Bull of Heaven in a revenge attack on Gilgamesh and Enkidu (S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, New York 2000, pp. 77-90).

48 M. Clunies Ross, *The Myth of Gefjon and Gylfi and Its Function in Snorra-Edda and Heimskringla*, "Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi" XCIII (1978), pp. 149-165, espec. pp. 162-165, suggests that Snorri Sturluson, who is thought to be behind both *Gylfaginning* and *Ynglingasaga*, saw similarities between the story about Gefjon and Gylfi on the one hand and on the other hand Vergil's portrayal of Dido deceptively obtaining land for the settlement of Carthage in his *Aeneid* I: 365-68 as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth's story of how Hengist obtains a piece of land from Vortigern by deceptive means in his *Historia Regum Britanniae*. According to Clunies Ross, Snorri may have regarded this Norse myth as a suitable opening to *Gylfaginning* because he saw it as analogous with these two founding myths.

49 The links between Lady Sovereignty and cattle merits a study in its own right; see e.g. A. Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain*, London 1974, p. 279, and T. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, Dublin 1971 (first published 1946), p. 3.

it takes an unusual form, because it is about taking away kingship (perhaps because it was envisaged as somehow wrongful), rather than bestowing rightful kingship.

As for the historical actuality of female predominance over a male ruler, I do not see any way of proving this. We are in all likelihood dealing with narratives that use an ancient mythological theme in order to validate contemporary historical reality.<sup>50</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

The article examines the Old Norse myth about Gefjun and Gylfi in light of three Old Irish narratives that deal with the notion of a female personification of sovereignty and of the land. The idea appears to be ancient to Celtic tradition, but especially the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>-century Irish tales of Niall Noígiallach and Lugaid Laígde as well as Conn Céthachach are central to the discussion. An exploration of the parallels in the fundamental structural components and ideological features shared by these Irish and Norse myths reveals much closer similarity that can be accounted for by coincidence. This comparative study concludes that the Old Norse myth about Gefjun constitutes a Norse version of the same basic storyline as the Old Irish tales and that it includes remnants of a similar idea of a divine female figure representing the land as well as sovereignty.

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<sup>50</sup> J. Wood, *Celtic Goddesses...*, p. 130; K. McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present...*, pp. 107-137; F. Biggs, *Chaucer's Decameron and the Origin of the Canterbury Tales*, Cambridge 2017, pp. 217-222.



KLAUS DÜWEL  
GÖTTINGEN

## THE INSCRIPTIONS ON GOLD-BRACTEATES AND THEIR RELATION TO LETTER AND ALPHABET MYSTICISM IN THE LATE ANTIQUE TRADITION<sup>1</sup>



More than 1000 gold-bracteates dating from the Migration Period (approximately from 450 until 550) were found mostly in Scandinavia but also on the Continent. There are steadily new finds of these gold pendants in hoards or as single pieces in the ground, especially by using metal detectors. There are only few grave finds, and all of them came from women graves, and mainly women seem to have worn bracteates. Gold-bracteates (fig. 1a-b) are round, thin plates of gold (2-3 cm diameter) which are pressed over a die of metal. The front sides (averses) show figures and symbols. Sometimes one can see Latin capital letters, mostly however imitations of them and more often runic signs. The prototypes are Roman golden medallions and coins decorated with a portrait of an emperor (averses) and a victoria (reverse) or other images. They were given by Roman emperors as gifts or tribute to Germanic chieftains. The bracteates were looped and could be worn as a necklace or attached to the clothes. The bracteates were thought to be amulets and a means for instance

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is an abridged English version of my article *Buchstabenmagie und Alphabetzauber. Zu den Inschriften der Goldbrakteaten und ihrer Funktion als Amulette*, which first appeared in the periodical "Frühmittelalterliche Studien" II (1988), pp. 70-110 and was reprinted in *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit – Auswertung und Neufunde*, Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde-Ergänzungsbände (henceforth: RGA-E), XL, ed. W. Heizmann, M. Axboe, Berlin - New York 2011, pp. 475-523. This volume contains the new finds up to IK 639 Trollhättan (II). A first version of a translation was made by Beate Mock (1986/1987) and checked by Marianne Kalinke and Elmer Antonsen. The present augmented translation was done by the author in collaboration with Louis Falkenstein and checked by Rudolf Simek. I want to thank all persons who were engaged to perfect this paper. Moreover I want to thank Morten Axboe and Magnus Källström for providing me with photos of some new finds.

to protect the bearer from evil spirits. Before going into detail, it is important to stress, that runic inscriptions are normally unique, original documents, but with bracteates and their inscriptions, however, one could produce seven copies and more from one die. This is the reason why the number of copies is mostly higher than the number of dies.

Looking at the imagery of the gold-bracteates, they can be grouped in this way: 1. Medallion imitations; 2. A-type bracteates representing a man's head in profile; 3. B-type bracteates representing mostly a human figure as a whole, sometimes accompanied by other figures; 4. C-type bracteates representing a man's head in profile above a quadruped (a horse); 5. D-type bracteates are characterised by the representation of fantasy-animals often dismembered.<sup>2</sup>

To illustrate the various types of bracteates and the inscriptions we look at the following examples:

1. Quite close to the Roman medallions are seventeen medallion-imitations found in Scandinavia and forming the M-type, e.g. IK<sup>3</sup> 268 Haram (Norway) which presents a correct Latin inscription on the avers: D(OMINVS) N(OSTER) CONSTANTIVS P(IVS) F(ELIX) AVG(VSTVS) "Our sovereign Constantius, pious and auspicious majesty" (fig. 2).

Most of the inscriptions of this group are capital imitations, e.g. IK 14 Aneby (Sweden) with a sequence of I and O, sometimes mixed with runes, e.g. IK 124 Mauland (Norway) with *d*- and *i*- (yew) runes.

2. The first group of type A-bracteates comprises all kinds of letters: from correct capital letters to runes, e.g. one of the 27 purely runic inscriptions, namely IK 189 Trollhättan (I)-A (Sweden; fig. 3) **tawo lapodu** which means "I make a citation", i.e. an invitation to helping spirits which appear in the shape of animals, mostly birds. The person speaking may be Odin who is depicted with a round object, probably a bracteate, in his right hand. This interpretation and others mentioned is based on Karl Hauck and his almost 70 studies in iconology and his edition entitled *The Gold-Bracteates of the Migration Period – Iconographic Catalogue*, abbreviated IK.<sup>4</sup>

3. The next group of B-type bracteates is somewhat smaller and contains only few inscriptions with mixed lettering, but also 28 pieces with runes only. Here we find the characteristic formulaic words *alu* meaning „defence“ (IK 24 Bjørnerud, Norway) and *laukar* meaning literally "leek" but metaphorically

<sup>2</sup> Total number of runic inscriptions for each type (in brackets the number of dies): M = 17 (17), A = 27 (20), B = 28 (17), C = 123 (80), D = 1 (1).

<sup>3</sup> "IK" refers to the object number in *Ikonomographischer Katalog. Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit, I-III*, eds. M. Axboe, U. Clavadetscher, K. Düwel, K. Hauck, L. von Padberg, München 1985-1989.

<sup>4</sup> For the original title see footnote 3.

“prosperity, health”, both on IK 166 Skrydstrup (Denmark; fig. 4). This formulaic word **laukar** appears in abbreviated form on a series of bracteates: **lāk**, **lāk**, **laur**, **lur**, **l** and finally **l** as on IK 128 Nebenstedt (I) (Germany) *Gliaugiŕ wīu r(ū)n(ō)r l(aukar)* “I, G. [i.e. bright-eyed] consecrate the runes – leek/prosperity”<sup>5</sup> (see fig. 1a).

4. The bulk of bracteates belongs to the C-type group where we find most of the runic inscriptions (total number 123). To illustrate this important group I refer to the following specimens:

a) IK 184 Tjurkö (I) (Sweden) presenting a metrical inscription (fig. 5).

*wurte rūnōr      an walha-kurnē  
Heldar Kunimundiu<sup>6</sup>*

„Heldar made the runes on the bracteate (the southern corn) for Kunimund”.

This is a very elaborate runic inscription and moreover a unique one because certain persons, namely Held and Kunimund, are named whilst all the other inscriptions are not individual ones but issues in series.

b) A new find and a really sensational one was made in 2009: a C-bracteate (IK 639) with a long inscription came to light in Trollhättan (fig. 6) and reads from right to left, starting under the loop:

**\*eēkrilar\*maripeubarhaite\*wraitalaþo.**

The first two parts are easily explained: *ek erilar* “I, the Eril” is a well-known formula on bracteates. Here the rune master, who fulfils other functions too, introduces himself with the title Eril. *Maripeubar haitē* renders his name which is a compound of the adjective *mārik* “famous” and the noun *peubar* “thief”. The last part of the inscription is more difficult especially the division of the sequence **wraitalaþo**. The following attempts were made:

(1) *wrait alaþō* “I wrote a powerful formula”

(2) *wraitā – laþō* “The writing – invitation (of helping spirits)”

(3) *wrait a laþō* “I wrote on (the bracteate) an invitation”

(4) *wraitā laþō* “I wrote an invitation”

(5) *wrait a(nsūr) laþō* “I wrote – I the Áss – an invitation”.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the clumsy syntax, this interpretation, using an ideographic rune (*Begriffsrunes*) is a plausible solution for the complicated sequence because all

5 W. Heizmann, *Die Formelwörter der Goldbrakteaten*, in: *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit...*, pp. 525-601.

6 The underlined letters mark the stave rhyme.

7 The preterite form *wrait* marks first and third person singular. Mostly – as is here – the first person is preferred. The Trollhättan (II) bracteate was published by M. Axboe, M. Källström, *Guldbrakteater fra Trollhättan – 1844 og 2009*, “Fornvännen” CVIII (2013), pp. 153-171. A discussion of all attempts at interpretation of the inscription is given by K. Düwel, *Innschriften auf Goldbrakteaten und Goldsolidi* (forthcoming).

other proposals involve further problems of grammar, syntax or semantics. For an overall understanding of this inscription it is necessary to know who is depicted on the C-type bracteate. Though there are several opinions, much however speaks in favour of Karl Hauck's interpretation as the god Óðinn. He is healing Baldr's horse which fell and hurt its leg. The position of the horse indicates an infraction. It is the god Óðinn who speaks the written words on the bracteate, he is the divine Eril and the master thief too who gained the mead of poetry in a very tricky way and moreover he wrote the invitation to helpful spirits.

5) A long time it seemed obvious that the hundreds of D-bracteates which show stylised monsters, very often dismembered, are without inscriptions. But in 2012 a new find from IK 649 Stavnsager in Jutland (Denmark) proved the contrary (fig. 7). There are five runes **aalul** which contain the formulaic word *alu* flanked by **a** and **l**, probably a degenerated palindrome **\*alula**, reading **alu** from left to right and right to left.<sup>8</sup>

There are only very few F-type bracteates and it is not worthwhile to mention them here.

It is important to stress that out of exactly 1063 bracteates only 185 bear inscriptions. But only approximately 60 of these can be totally or at least partly understood, separating out of a sequence of letters some of which form *alu*, an anagram *ula* or an abbreviation of *laukar* e.g. *lacr* or *lur*. That means: nearly 120 and more bracteate inscriptions can be read letter by letter, but we can't understand such sequences in any way. How can we explain this phenomenon? Answering this question it is reasonable to look at the function of bracteates and their antique prototypes, namely the golden medallions of late Roman antiquity. Both were worn as amulets either arranged to necklaces or attached to the clothes, as I already mentioned before. In preparation for this application, medallions and bracteates were looped, sometimes only perforated. The function of amulets of this kind is to prevent evil-doing spirits and demons from the bearer of such amulets.

Karl Hauck was convinced that gold bracteates of the Migration Period in the same way as their antique models functioned as amulets. In addition, these bracteates and the earlier medallions are also considered as jewellery. This is why they are often called ornamental bracteates. In principle, it is difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate between the functions as ornament and amulet. Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck (1966) have demonstrated this point in the

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<sup>8</sup> The Stavnsager bracteate was published by M. Axboe with a runological note by L. Imer, *Local Innovations and Far-reaching Connections: Gold Bracteates from North-East Zealand and East Jutland*, in: *Life on the Edge: Social, Political and Religious Frontiers in Early Medieval Europe*, Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung, VI, eds. S. Semple, L. Orsini, S. Mui, Braunschweig 2017, pp. 143-156, espec. 149ff., 153f.



case of precious stones: "The ambivalence between ornaments and amulets has always been present in the case of pendants. We have hardly any norms in this respect. Boundaries are hard to draw, because individual opinions differ and local, temporal and cultural facts are interpreted differently. What is magic protection for one person may be only decoration, souvenir, curiosity or a demonstration of wealth for the other and even this can change individually under different circumstances".<sup>9</sup>

In order to classify the majority of gold bracteates as amulets, the external and internal features must coincide, and, furthermore, in the case of all bracteates, especially those without inscriptions, the iconographical interpretation must also be considered, which, in addition to loops and the state of wear, is the only other criterion.

In state laws, church decrees, and in the criticism of ecclesiastical writers, one can find numerous references to late classical superstitious practices that are consistently forbidden or condemned. Amulets, which are known by the thousands, also play a role here.

Highly developed is the art of the amulet with Greek, Egyptian, Persian, Babylonian, Jewish, Christian names and symbols, correctly or incorrectly written, and intended to protect one against every air-, earth-, and underworld demon as well as against any harm through magic. The material ranges from clay shards and bits of papyrus to costly precious stones; the richness of forms is infinite.<sup>10</sup>

The use of inscribed amulets "rests on the belief in the magic power of letters".<sup>11</sup> The words formed out of them, namely names and formulas are transferred in the process of writing to the object, the amulet. The church defines this belief as superstition.<sup>12</sup> By this superstition Augustine understands a complex of certain signs based on convention that serve to communicate with the demons. These signs, words, and materials have the character of a code between magicians and demons, among whom Christian interpretation also counts heathen gods. The aim of this communication is the influence, indeed, the force brought to bear on gods and demons of all kinds in order to obtain protection or to

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<sup>9</sup> L. Hansmann, L. Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman. Erscheinungsform und Geschichte*, München 1966, p. 48 (translated by the author).

<sup>10</sup> C. Schneider, *Geistesgeschichte des antiken Christentums*, I, München 1954, p. 536 (translated by the author).

<sup>11</sup> Compare: F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*, in: *Stoicheia. Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Weltbildes und der griechischen Wissenschaft*, VII, Leipzig-Berlin 1922, 1925<sup>2</sup>; A. Bertholet, *Die Macht der Schrift in Glauben und Aberglauben*, Abhandlungen der deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Philosophisch.-Historische Klasse, I, Berlin 1949 [1948].

<sup>12</sup> The next sentences following D. Harmening, *Superstitio. Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters*, Berlin 1979, passim.



prevent evil. This is based on the idea that an essential relationship exists between the name and its bearer: whoever knows the name controls the god or demon. The decisive factor is to arrive at the right name. Using all obtainable secret and foreign names and cognomina as well as varying and multiplying the word leads best to the goal. Corresponding to the basic rules of name- and word-magic is the tendency to choose the obscuring and obscure word, the ἄσημα ὀνόματα and Ἐφέσια γράμματα and therefore also word variations and word sequences. What often appears as obscure, meaningless, incomprehensible or senseless to modern philological consideration, can – in connection with a communicative relationship to gods and demons – be done with the intention to make it incomprehensible to people. For a superstitious person, the mysterious power of magic formulas may lie in the fact that they are unintelligible. The new platonic Greek philosopher Iamblichos (4<sup>th</sup> century), who wrote *De mysteriis*, stated the following.

The so called ἄσημα ὀνόματα, i.e. meaningless expressions and names, are in reality in no respect meaningless. Though they seem meaningless for human people, they all have without exception their meaning but only for the gods naturally, namely a symbolic one. They are really more sublime, sacred, and venerable and therefore we people cannot grasp their meaning.<sup>13</sup>

This is very important for the scientific view on bracteate inscriptions: Though they cannot be understood by people, they have nevertheless a certain meaning for gods and demons.

The well-documented magic papyri, mostly from the third to the 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, 'gnostic' gems and amulets contain a great number of magic names and words. Theodor Hopfner, a specialist for the matter of papyri, characterises them as follows: mostly real word monsters... rude combinations of consonants and vowels, often terribly long.<sup>14</sup> It is quite clear: not even one of the best experts can present the matter without prejudice and value judgement.

Two conceptual realms may be in effect in magic words and magic names:

1. "The obscure word as an adequate 'comprehensible' form of what is not yet real, but desired", i.e. the search for the right word in a glossological process and

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<sup>13</sup> This is an analogous summarizing extract by T. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, 1, 2, in: *Studien zur Papyrusforschung und Papyruskunde*, XXI, XXIII, Leipzig 1921, 1924, here 1, §718 (translated by the author). The full text in Greek original and English translation: Iamblichos, *De Mysteriis*, trans. and eds. E.C. Clarke, J.M. Dillon, J.P. Hershbell, Society of Biblical Literature, IV, Leiden 2003, p. 296f.

<sup>14</sup> T. Hopfner, *Griechisch-ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber*, 1, §706 (translated by the author).

2. "The obscure word as that which is the protecting, veiling element of the power working in magic", i.e. the tendency to make unclear as a formal principle deriving from the arcane character of magic.<sup>15</sup> This formal principle of impenetrability includes a number of formulation rules that apply in part also to the glossological process: among such formulation rules one can arrive at the following:

1) Acrostic, 2) alphabetic series, 3) anagram, 4) initial sound variation, 5) insertion of strange letters, 6) contraction, 7) notaricon, 8) palindrome, 9) square, 10) disappearance-pattern, 11) suspension, 12) transposition of syllables, 13) vocalic variation, 14) addition of initial, medial or final syllables.<sup>16</sup>

A closer analysis will show which of these formulation possibilities occur in the bracteate inscriptions. Without being able to take into account the entire material, I would first like to give some examples of the inscriptions corpus: 1) Acrostic and 11) suspension.

Acrostic is used here in a special sense that only the first letter of a word is written. This kind of abbreviation is comparable to the *modus operandi* of suspension. Suspension indicates a reduction of a word up to the first letter(s) only. There are a number of cases to be discussed in which the **alu** formula could be intentional, especially if there is a significant difference between the *l*- and *u*-rune (e.g. IK 289 Kjellers Mose-C). On the other hand, we have IK 58 Funen (I)-C (fig. 8); here the two branches of the final *u*-rune are barely differentiated, so that a reading **all** would be completely justified, one can then hardly interpret it as a correct **alu**-formula. The tripartite inscription starts with the name **houar** "the high one" and possibly ends with a suspension or an acrostic whose resolution would result in the partly repeated formula words: **alu**, **laukar**, **lapu**. This sequence in reverse and with the interpolation of the misplaced **gakar** appears on IK 149,1 Scania (I)-B and IK 149,2 UFo-B [unknown find place]. Also to be considered are the few certain examples for abbreviations like **f** for **fahi** "coloured, made" (IK 340 Sønderby-C) as well as the syntactically possible representation of a single rune by its rune-name or more likely as an abbreviation as in IK 128 Nebenstedt (I)-B **l** for **laukar**.

2) Alphabetic series.

The fupark-inscriptions (e.g. IK 377,1 Vadstena-C; fig. 9) belong to this group, and the fupark-citations should also be considered here. In this respect it is interesting to note that only six older fupark-inscriptions exist: five on bracteates and one on the Kylver stone. The function of the older futhark alone is not clear. Eventually the scope of the following anecdote fits here too:

<sup>15</sup> D. Harmening, *Superstitio...*, p. 77 (translated by the author).

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, pp. 77-79.

A soldier says every morning the alphabet instead of a prayer and he stated for doing so: "God the Lord knows best and he will take out the appropriate letters for a morning prayer".<sup>17</sup>

3) Anagram or 12) transposition of letters and syllables.

Anagram is a transposition of the letters of a word or sentence to form a new word or sentence. The new word or sentence so formed is for example *Galenus* which is an anagram of *angelus*.

Cases like IK 101 Kongsvad Å-A **foslau**, IK 182 Szatmár-C complex I **t̃ualeltl**,<sup>18</sup> IK 353 Tønder-B complex II **uldaul** instead of *alu* belong here. The sequence *slau* (compare IK 101 Kongsvad Å-A) perhaps instead of *salu* (compare IK 105 Lellinge-B) could fall under this rubric. In order to make these modes of transposition, respectively substitution reversible, knowledge of the untransposed original words and formulas is necessary.

4) Initial sound variation.

A good example was IK 377,1 Vadstena-C with **luwa tuwa**. But the new reading **tuwatuwa** rules it out.<sup>19</sup> Variations in initial vowels can perhaps also be determined. By way of analogy a final-sound variation can also be assumed, represented for example on IK 131 Norway-B (?): **ano ana**.

5) Interpolating strange letters (or symbols).

On IK 25 Bjørnsholm-C, the strange sign T (capital letter-imitation) in runerow II occurs in second position. See also the integration of a swastika in the rune sequence in IK 129,1 Nebenstedt (II)-B and IK 129,2 Darum (IV)-B. In this context, we also have to take the mixed inscriptions into account, especially those with the interplay of capital letters or their imitations, runes or rune-like signs and symbols.

6) Contraction.

A shortened form of a word or group of words.

The phenomenon of abbreviation is known from sacred names (*Nomina sacra*). But a formula-word like **laukar** could also appear as runic **lr** in contracted form, as on IK 147 Rynkebygaard-C. The separation from what follows could in this case be determined by **rk**, which normally appears only at the end of a word.

7) Notaricon.

Notaricon is a method of deriving a word, by using each of its initial or final letters to stand for another, to form a sentence or idea out of the words.

It is not attested in the corpus of bracteates or runic inscriptions at all.

<sup>17</sup> F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*, p. 78 (translated by the author).

<sup>18</sup> A dot under a letter marks uncertain reading.

<sup>19</sup> First noticed by E. Lundeby, H. Williams (1992), see K. Düwel, S. Nowak, *Die semantisch lesbaren Inschriften auf Goldbrakteaten*, in: *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit...*, pp. 375-473, espec. p. 460.

## 8) Palindrome.

Palindrome is a word, line, verse, etc., reading the same letters backward as forward.

Palindromes appear rarely in runic inscriptions,<sup>20</sup> but see the famous **sueus** probably meaning “horse” on the stone from KJ 1 Kylver<sup>21</sup>. A definite bracteate example is found on the avers of IK 286,1 Kälder-M with S V S V [reversed] I S I V S V S, similar on the reverse (fig. 10a-b) and the newly found bracteate from IK 649 Stavnsager (Jutland) **aalul**, perhaps a degeneration of the palindrome **alula** (see p. XX.).

## 9) Quadrate.

The older runic tradition does not provide any such example of a square.<sup>22</sup> The circular placement of the series of letters also belongs to the rendering of magic formulas “in definite geometrical forms”. The inscriptions that run around the edge have to be counted among these (e.g. IK 1 Ågedal-C or fig. 5-6, 9).

## 10) Disappearance-pattern.

I cannot provide a runic example that would correspond to any example known from magic associated with writing. One would have to determine whether the various fupark-abbreviations are to be interpreted as a disappearance-pattern. Its distribution among several inscriptions independent of each other would, however, be an obstacle. This also applies to the various comparable examples of the formula:

<b>l a u k a r</b>	(e.g. Års [II]-C)
<b>l a k r</b>	(IK 298 Lynge- Gyde-C)
<b>l k a r</b>	(e.g. IK 229 Denmark [I]-C)
<b>laur</b>	(e.g. IK 13,1 Allesø-B)
<b>lur</b>	(IK 75,1 Hesselagergårds Skov-C)
<b>lr</b>	(e.g. IK 147 Rynkebygård-C)
<b>l</b>	(IK 128 Nebenstedt [I]-B)

<sup>20</sup> The famous SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS written in runes is handed down several times, see K. Düwel, *Mittelalterliche Amulette aus Holz und Blei mit lateinischen und runischen Inschriften*, Ausgrabungen in Schleswig. Berichte und Studien, XV: Das archäologische Fundmaterial, II, ed. V. Vogel, 2001, pp. 227-302, espec. pp. 228-237. Reprinted in K. Düwel, *Runica minora. Ausgewählte kleine Schriften zur Runenkunde*, ed. R. Simek, Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia, XXV, Wien 2015, pp. 251-330, espec. pp. 252-262.

<sup>21</sup> KJ abbreviates W. Krause mit Beiträgen von H. Jankuhn, *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark*, I: Text, II: Tafeln, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 3. Folge, LXV, Göttingen 1966. Krause moreover deals with a series of bracteates. They will be mentioned with their respective IK number.

<sup>22</sup> The SATOR formula is arranged in the shape of a square only on a late medieval drinking-cup from Dune (Gotland), see K. Düwel, *Mittelalterliche Amulette...*, p. 232f. (p. 257f. in reprint).

In such a procedure a methodological principle developed by Dieter Harmening (1978)<sup>23</sup> might be applicable: not only the horizontal context, but also the vertical status of tradition can be applied in the interpretation.

11) Suspension and 12) transposition of letters and syllables were already mentioned above.

13) Vocalic variation.

Neither for a sequence like *pex pix pax pux*, there is no comparable correspondence nor for

14) Initial- and additional syllables in the sense of the *hokus-pokus*-formula.

Moreover I would like to refer to.

15) (Pure) writing of consonants.

This occurs only on IK 128 Nebenstedt (I)-B (fig. 1a): **rn̥r** instead of **runor**.

Among the numerous abbreviations of the **laukar**-formula there is no **lkr**.

Perhaps IK 353 Tønder-B **lp** (instead of **lapu**) could be taken into consideration, but **lp** is not clearly separated from the following runes. I include two phenomena which pertain more to a glossolalic mode of speaking: namely sequences of vowels and consonants.

a) Sequences of vowels.

In a consonantal context we have the sequence **...aaduaaliiux** on IK 58 Funen (I)-C (Fig. 8), interpreted as a kind of bird-language.<sup>24</sup> In the middle of the longer inscription on IK 70 Halsskov Overdrev-C we read **...iiaeiau...** One should also refer too IK 148 Sædding-B and IK 339 Småland (?)-(C) **...auuuuae**.

b) Sequences of consonants

also appear on IK 148 Sædding-B in a vocalic environment **...hhh...hwshx...rm̥lh̥p...** Moreover IK 249 Funen (II)-C with **netbllll** and the beginning of IK 251 Gammel Stenderup (?)-(C) **lallllt...** ought to be mentioned. Especially striking is the sequence with only one vowel on IK 300 Maglemose (III)-C, complex I: **tl̥pk̥lfhis** or IK 309 Nebenstedt (III)-F **l̥rll̥pe** as well as IK 353 Tønder-B, complex I: **lp̥dllu**. We find both in different parts of an amulet: IK 289 Kjellers Mose-C: I: **l̥lxx**, II: **iu̥alu** or IK 299 Maglemose (I)-A, complex III: **au̥alhr**.

A tentative survey of bracteate inscriptions with a view to such phenomena has as its result definite attestations for at least six items, whereas we can

<sup>23</sup> D. Harmening, *Zur Morphologie magischer Inschriften. Der Donauwörther Zauberring und Formkriterien für seine Interpretation*, "Jahrbuch für Volkskunde. Nova Series" I (1978), pp. 67-81, espec. p. 72.

<sup>24</sup> W. Heizmann, *Fenriswolf*, in: *Dämonen, Monster, Fabelwesen*, eds. U. Müller, W. Wunderlich, St. Gallen 1999, pp. 229-255, espec. 246. For the sequences of vowels and consonants in antique tradition cf. F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*; D. Harmening, *Superstitio...*, p. 71.

only make assumptions for more complex categories. In many respects the classification undertaken here corresponds to that already proposed in former runological research. But what appears to be arbitrary and unsystematic attains a much more stringent quality, if: a) the methods available to turn an inscription arcane are considered systematically within the context of related phenomena, and b) it is made clear that within the chronological horizon of bracteates we meet the same phenomena in late classical heathen and Christian magic and amulets, be it in actual attestations or as reflected in church criticism and polemics.

Certain prerequisites must be met, of course, before one of the above-mentioned types – alone or in combination with others – can be legitimately assumed to apply, i.e. there must be a suggestive factual basis in the positioning of the inscription and its segmentation by arrangement, or by other graphic devices. In the examples presented here, this is the case. Among the bracteates there are, however, some elaborated inscriptions as we have seen at the beginning. General opinion puts them at the beginning of a process of degeneration, at the end of which meaningless runic sequences occur. The extant bracteates, especially from the medallion-imitations to type A, B, and C, confirm, to the contrary, the following thesis that Dieter Harmening developed on the basis of medieval ring inscriptions:

From an originally meaningless, indefinite sequence of letters via 'etymologizing' assonances to a phonological approximation of a word assumed to be magically powerful similar in tone or ductus to a language, considered to have magic relevance.<sup>25</sup>

At the beginning of the tradition we do not find an elaborated text from which all other attestations were generated by way of corruption, but rather fixed blocks that were exchanged or shifted, so that the origin of magic inscriptions could be described as a process of shifting and connecting.

For the generation of inscriptions on bracteates, Gunter Müller (1986) comes to the conclusion:

that in the beginning there was not the complicated establishment in runes of a Germanic text, but rather one has to imagine the early phase of written runic elements on a low level of writing. The impressive examples of bracteate-inscriptions with naming of the rune-master and sacred names, with luck- and blessing formulas mark a high point in the adaptation process on the level of writing, not its beginning.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> D. Harmening, *Superstitio...*, p. 71 (translated by the author).

<sup>26</sup> G. Müller, *Runenzeichenfrequenz im älteren Futhark und die Überlieferungsbedingungen von Brakteateninschriften*, "Frühmittelalterliche Studien" XX (1986), pp. 452-467, espec. 466 (translated by the author).



In the serial production of bracteates, degenerative phenomena are also to be found but the mass of runic bracteates can hardly be characterised in this manner. The concept of the power of writing<sup>27</sup> is already expressed in the early stage of the A-type: *r(ūnōr) wrītu*, IK 156 Sievern-A (fig. 11)<sup>28</sup> characterises the bracteates with inscriptions, from the imitations of Roman capital letters to the inclusion and preference for runes in series of letters and formulaic- or word-like sequences that could also have a communicative function, especially for the communication with supernatural beings.

Knowledge and use of runic writing is, to judge from the tradition, an exclusive matter and therefore seems to have been reserved for a few people of the elite, whom we rightly call rune-masters. They might have acquired the ability to use script and inscriptions for magical purposes via contacts between people from Rome and the Roman provinces and the Northern region. At least the archaeological finds document a remarkable import of luxury goods into the North during the period of the Roman Empire. The background for the spread of literacy is indicated by the importance of a concentration of political power and cult-places referring mostly to the religious concept of Óðinn, and the Gudme-region on the island Funen seems to be such a centre.<sup>29</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

The bulk of runic inscriptions on bracteates from the Migration Period, mainly in Scandinavia, seems to be gibberish (Moltke). But looking at the antique magical papyri and temporaneous commentaries one notices that their texts are specifically addressed to gods and demons; for men, however, they are without any linguistic meaning. In this paper the runic bracteat inscriptions are considered in the light of this antique material and its peculiarities.

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27 A. Bertholet, *Die Macht der Schrift...*

28 According to Hauck's interpretation, the pictures represent Óðinn who speaks the inscribed words. "I write r(unes)" (cf. K. Düwel, *Runenkunde*, Sammlung Metzler, LXXII, Stuttgart-Weimar 2008<sup>4</sup>, p. 47), the runes which he himself received while hanging on a tree (stanza 138 of the Eddic *Hávamál*).

29 A. Pesch, *Netzwerke der Zentralplätze. Elitenkontakte und Zusammenarbeit frühmittelalterlicher Reichtumszentren im Spiegel der Goldbrakteaten*, in: *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit...*, pp. 231-277.



Fig. 1a. Bracteate IK 128 Nebenstedt (I)-B.



Fig. 1b. Bracteate IK 98 Raum Køge (Seeland II)-C.





Fig. 2. Medallion imitation IK 268 Haram-M (avertse).



Fig. 3. Bracteate IK 189 Trollhättan (I)-A.



Fig. 4. Bracteate IK 166 Skrydstrup-B.



Fig. 5. Bracteate IK 184 Tjurkö (I)-C.



Fig. 6. Bracteate IK 639 Trollhättan (II)-C.



Fig. 7. Bracteate IK 649 Stavnsager-D.



Fig. 8. Bracteate IK 58 Funen (I)-C.



Fig. 9. Bracteate IK 337,1 Vadstena-C.





Fig. 10a. Bracteate IK 286,1 Kälder-M (averse).



Fig. 10b. Bracteate IK 286,1 Kälder-M (reverse).



Fig. 11. Bracteate IK 156 Sievern-A.





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## THE MYTHOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE OF SONATORREK: AN EXPERIMENT IN CONTEXTUALISING POETIC EXPERIENCE<sup>1</sup>



One of the established methods of analysing Norse poetry is an analysis of its kennings and *heiti*.<sup>2</sup> The present essay will attempt something similar: it will discuss a number of kennings and poetic images used in Egill Skallagrímsson's poem *Sonatorrek*.<sup>3</sup> The kennings and poetic images to be discussed will be selected not primarily according to formal criteria, but rather according to thematic considerations: the focus will be put on poetic expressions that

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<sup>2</sup> For a recent example see J.G. Jørgensen, *Óláfr Haraldsson, King, Warrior and Saint: Presentations of King Óláfr Haraldsson the Saint in Medieval Poetry and Prose*, in: *Kings and Warriors in Early North-West Europe*, eds. J.E. Rekdal, C. Doherty, Dublin-Portland 2016, pp. 345-398, there pp. 364-398, espec. pp. 364-365.

<sup>3</sup> As the publication of the new edition of *Sonatorrek* by Margaret Clunies Ross in the projected vol. V of the *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* is still pending, the following discussion is based on the most recent available edition of the poem by Bjarni Einarsson in the context of his edition of *Egils saga* (Bjarni Einarsson, *Egils saga*, London 2003, pp. 146-154). See also the editions by Finnur Jónsson, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning A.1-2: Tekst efter håndskrifterne, B.1-2: Rettet tekst*, København-Kristiania 1908-1915, A.1, pp. 40-43; B.1, pp. 34-37; Jón Helgason, *Skjaldevers*, Nordisk filologi: Tekster og lærebøger til universitetsbrug, A. Tekster, XII,

have a distinctly environmental character, referring to the sea, forests, or the coastline.<sup>4</sup> The imagery employed in these passages, which in a sense is spatial and landscape-focused, will then be compared to Icelandic cultural and narrative attitudes to places and landscapes as expressed in Icelandic toponymy and, to a lesser degree, place-storytelling. By doing so, the essay will make an attempt to contextualise the way how this part of the poetic imagery of *Sonatorrek* might have been experienced by an Icelandic audience, grounding (quite literally) its poetic cosmos in the everyday environment in which it was composed. Thus, the intention of the following pages will **not** be to identify specific locations associated with *Sonatorrek*, but rather to attempt a general cultural contextualisation of the imagery employed in the poem.

Traditionally, *Sonatorrek* has been ascribed to the Icelandic poet Egill Skallagrímsson, who according to medieval Icelandic tradition lived ca. 900–983 and composed *Sonatorrek* in AD 960 or AD 961.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, however, it has sometimes been argued that the poem should be seen as the creation of a much later, Christian period, with only the writing of *Egils saga* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century as the *terminus ante quem*, as the poem is cited in this saga.<sup>6</sup> Yet about this point no agreement has been reached yet, and the question of whether the poem belongs to the Settlement Period or to the High Middle Ages must currently be seen as undecided. However, as similar problems of

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København-Oslo-Stockholm 1962, pp. 29–38; G. Turville-Petre, *The Sonatorrek*, in: *Iceland and the Mediaeval World. Studies in Honour of Ian Maxwell*, eds. G. Turville-Petre, J.S. Martin, Clayton 1974, pp. 33–55; E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry*, Oxford 1976, pp. 24–41; and the commentary by M. Olsen, *Commentarii Scaldici. I. Sonatorrek*, “Arkiv för nordisk filologi” LII (1938), pp. 209–255.

4 While focusing on the environment as described and filled with associations by the poetry, the following analysis will not be a classic ecocritical study. For an example of an application of an ecocritical paradigm to Old Norse-Icelandic literature see C. Phelpstead, *Ecocriticism and Eyrbyggja saga*, “Leeds Studies in English, n.s.” XLV (2014), pp. 1–18. Rather, its approach is loosely based on landscape theoretical considerations about the ‘meaning’ of places and their importance for a given culture as represented by C. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape. Places, Paths and Monuments*, Oxford-Providence 1994, or T. Cresswell, *Place. An Introduction*, Chichester 2015<sup>2</sup>, and in particular the potential importance of place-names as bearers of meaning as shown by K.H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places. Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*, Albuquerque 1996.

5 E.g.: Finnur Jónsson, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning...*, A.1, p. 40; in recent years see, for instance, J. Harris, ‘Myth to live by’ in *Sonatorrek*, in: *Laments for the Lost in Medieval Literature*, eds. J. Tolmie, M.J. Toswell, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe*, XIX, Turnhout 2010, pp. 149–171, there pp. 150, 152–153 (with further literature); J. Harris, *Homo necans borealis: Fatherhood and Sacrifice in Sonatorrek*, in: *Myth in Early Northwest Europe*, ed. S. Glosecki, *Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, XXI, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, CCCXX, Tempe 2007, pp. 153–173, pp. 153–154.

6 E.g., Torfi H. Tulinius, *The Conversion of Sonatorrek*, in: *Analecta Septentrionalia. Beiträge zur nordgermanischen Kultur- und Literaturgeschichte*, eds. W. Heizmann, K. Bödl, H. Beck, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, LXV, Berlin-New York 2009, pp. 701–714, with further literature.

dating apply, in one way or another, to virtually all the material discussed in this article, this uncertainty about the poem's date does not substantially affect the argument presented in the following pages. The literary culture of the Icelandic High Middle Ages was fundamentally characterised by a backward gaze directed at the Settlement Period in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the features of *Sonatorrek* that will be discussed in the following may just as well be a result of this backward gaze as they could be a reflex of attitudes that genuinely date to the time of the first settlement of Iceland.

*Sonatorrek* has often been held to be one of the most important works of Old Norse literature.<sup>7</sup> According to *Egils saga* (ch. 80),<sup>8</sup> Egill composed *Sonatorrek* after one of his sons was lost at sea, using the process of composing the poem as a means of coping with his grief. In line with this, *Sonatorrek* begins with a description of the poet's despair over the death of his son and his wrath at Odin and the supernatural powers of the sea. In the end, however, the ageing poet comes to accept what has occurred and makes his peace with Odin when he remembers the value of the gift of poetry that the god has bestowed on him. So in balance, he comes to feel, he has received more good than ill from the gods, and with this thought in his heart he is able to regain an inner equilibrium that allows him to face the short rest of his life without fear and too much anger. While all these thoughts unfold, the poetry repeatedly draws on a highly charged and multi-layered landscape imagery, especially imagery referring to the sea and the shoreline, the places where the central tragedy of the poem occurred.

## GIANTS AND DWARFS

The first occurrence of such landscape imagery is found in the second half of st. 3 (whose first half is unintelligible).<sup>9</sup> These verses introduce a landscape image drawing on both giants (*jǫtnar*) and dwarfs (ll. 5-8):

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<sup>7</sup> E.g., K. von See, *Sonatorrek und Hávamál*, "Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur" IC (1970), pp. 26-33, there p. 26. Correspondingly, the literature on *Sonatorrek* is extensive. As one of the very few extant skaldic poems that might (though this is debated) genuinely date to the pre-Christian period, and generally one of those held to be of the highest literary interest, it is touched upon in probably every major treatment of pre-Christian Norse religion as well as playing a core role in discussions of skaldic poetry. Some analyses specifically dedicated to this poem are J. Harris, 'Myth to live by' in *Sonatorrek*; Torfi H. Tulinius, *The Conversion of Sonatorrek*; J. Harris, *Homo necans borealis...*; J. Harris, *Sacrifice and Guilt in Sonatorrek*, in: *Studien zum Altgermanischen. Festschrift für Heinrich Beck*, ed. H. Uecker, *Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, XI, Berlin-New York 1994, pp. 173-196.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. by Bjarni Einarsson, *Egils saga*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 147; E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry...*, pp. 29-30; G. Turville-Petre, *The Sonatorrek*, pp. 43-44; Jón Helgason, *Skjaldevers*, p. 33 (*apparatus criticus*).

jötuns háls  
undir þjóta  
Náins niðr  
fyrir naustdyrum.

(The giant's neck-wounds roar in front of the boat-shed doors of Náinn.)

The image of the “roaring of the neck-wounds of the giant” in ll. 5-6 probably refers to the creation myth as later told in Snorri's *Gylfaginning* (ch. 8),<sup>10</sup> where the gods kill the primeval giant Ymir and create the sea from his blood. Thus, what is described in these verses is the roaring of a heavy sea. Lines 7-8 then specify that this heavy sea crashes against coastal rocks: Náinn is the name of a dwarf (*Gylfaginning* 14);<sup>11</sup> as dwarfs dwell in rocks (*búa í steinum*: *Gylfaginning* 14; cf. the episode about the disappearance of King Sveigðir in a dwarf-stone in *Ynglinga saga* 12<sup>12</sup>), their boat-sheds are most likely to be coastal cliffs or coastal rocks of some kind. Thus, in this half-stanza a violent sea rages against the dwarf-inhabited rocky shore.

The imagery developed here has multiple layers. On one layer, the half-stanza probably refers to the storm during which Egill's son was drowned at sea (even though this cannot be entirely certain, as the first half of the stanza is corrupt to the point of unintelligibility). On another level, this death is set into a cosmic context of death, as the sea which drowned Egill's son becomes a sea of blood, shed in the first, primordial slaying. Also the mentioning of rock-dwelling dwarfs ties into this imagery. According to Snorri (*Gylfaginning* 14), the dwarfs came into being as maggots in the flesh of the slain Ymir:

Dvergarnir hofðu skipazk fyrst ok tekit kviknun í holdi Ymis ok váru þá maðkar, en af atkvæði guðanna urðu þeir vitandi mannvits ok hofðu manns líki ok búa þó í jorðu ok í steinum.

(The dwarfs had first taken shape and come to life in the flesh of Ymir, and they were maggots then, and according to the decree of the gods they became conscious with human intelligence and had human form, and yet they live in the earth and in stones.)

Thus, in this half-stanza the image of a death by drowning meets the images of spilled blood and crawling maggots in a rotting corpse, while at the same

<sup>10</sup> Snorri Sturluson: *Edda. Prologue and Gylfaginning*, ed. A. Faulkes, [London] 2005<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Given the context in which this name is used here, it may be worth highlighting that this dwarf name may already by itself evoke death (see already E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry...*, p. 30; G. Turville-Petre, *The Sonatorrek*, p. 44): in the name Náinn, a speaker of Old Norse might well have heard echoes of *nár*, “a corpse”, or the underworld region of the “Corpse Beach” Náströnd: cf. Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson 1874, s.v. ‘nár’, ‘Ná-strönd’.

<sup>12</sup> *Heimskringla. Noregs konunga sögur af Snorri Sturluson 1*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, STUAGNL, XXIII/1-2, København 1893-1894, pp. 9-85.

time elevating the death treated in the poem to a cosmic scale and associating the accidental death at sea with a very conscious killing by superhuman beings (as Ymir was killed by the gods) – which anticipates that, as the poem unfolds, Egill accuses Ægir and Rán of having killed his son, turning maritime accident into supernatural personal guilt.

As the imagery developed in this half-stanza is presented as an (if enormously charged) landscape vignette, it may be interesting to compare the view of the landscape developed here with other interpretations of this same Icelandic landscape. Perhaps the one cultural interpretation of the landscape that is most closely attached to the land itself are place-names.<sup>13</sup> Icelandic place-names generally are semantically clear. Reykjavík means “Bay of Vapours”; the name makes a statement about the place, in this case a descriptive one which highlights the local geothermal activity. Many Icelandic place-names in this way are geographically descriptive. A number of rivers are called Jökulsá because they are “Glacier-Rivers”, as the name says, and others are called Laxá, “Salmon-River”, because of the good salmon fishing they offered when the name was coined. Another type of names

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13 In general on place-names as a medium of cultural meaning cf. C. Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape...*, pp. 18-19; K.H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places...*; T. Robinson, *Listening to the Landscape*, in: T. Robinson, *Setting Foot on the Shores of Connemara & Other Writings*, Dublin 1996, pp. 151-164; T. Cresswell, *Place...*, pp. 139-140. Specifically on Icelandic place-names and place-naming cf. for instance O. Bandle, *Die Ortsnamen der Landnámabók*, in: *Sjötiú ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20. júlí 1977*, eds. Einar G. Pétursson, Jónas Kristjánsson, I-II, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi, XII, Reykjavík 1977, I, pp. 47-67; Þórhallur Vilmundarson, Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, *Harðar saga / Bárðar saga / Þorskfirðinga saga / Flóamanna saga / Þórarins þáttir Neffjölfssonar / Þorsteins þáttir uxafóts / Egils þáttir Síðu-Hallssonar / Orms þáttir Stórolfssonar / Þorsteins þáttir tjaldstóðings / Þorsteins þáttir forvitna / Bergbúa þáttir / Kumlbúa þáttir / Stjörnu-Odda draumr*, Íslensk fornrit, XIII, Reykjavík 1991, pp. XXX-XLI, LXXIX-XCVIII, CXX-CXXVIII, CLV-CLVI; R. McTurk, [Review of] *Harðar saga*, edited by Þórhallur Vilmundarson, Bjarni Vilhjálmsson. Íslensk fornrit XIII. *Hið íslenska fornritafélag*. Reykjavík, 1991. ccxxviii + 528 pp., “Saga-Book” XXIV (1994-1997), pp. 164-172, there pp. 166-170; P. Hermann, *Founding Narratives and the Representation of Memory in Saga Literature*, “ARV Nordic Yearbook of Folklore” LXVI (2010), pp. 69-87, there pp. 76, 78-79; E.R. Barraclough, *Naming the Landscape in the Landnám Narratives of the Íslendingasögur and Landnámabók*, “Saga-Book” XXXVI (2012), pp. 79-101; E. Lethbridge, *The Icelandic Sagas and Saga Landscapes*, “Gripla” XXVII (2016), pp. 51-92; M. Egeler, *Constructing a Landscape in Eyrbyggja saga: The Case of Dritsker*, “Arkiv för nordisk filologi” CXXXII (2017), pp. 101-120; M. Egeler, *Atlantic Outlooks on Being at Home: Gaelic Place-Lore and the Construction of a Sense of Place in Medieval Iceland*, Folklore Fellows Communications, CCCIV, Helsinki 2018; M. Egeler, *The Narrative Uses of Toponyms in Harðar saga*, “NORDEUROPAforum” (2018), pp. 80-101. From a different angle, an important example for the importance of place-name semantics for our understanding of Old Norse-Icelandic literature is also J.E. Schnall, *Hömlubarði – ein ruderloses Schiff, auf Grund gesetzt. Zu Konungs skuggsjá, Barlaams saga ok Kosaphats und skandinavischen Ortsnamen*, in: *Namenwelten. Orts- und Personennamen in historischer Sicht*, eds. A. van Nahl, L. Elmevik, S. Brink, *Ergänzungsbande zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, XLIV, Berlin-New York 2004, pp. 277-291.



refers to persons who founded or at some point owned a place; here belongs in particular the large number of farmsteads and settlements that have names ending in *-staðir*, such as Egilsstaðir in eastern Iceland, which means “Egill’s-Steads”, “Egill’s Farm”. A third type of place-names, furthermore, is mythological or, more generally, religious in nature, so their semantics make reference to the contents of a mythological narrative, a mythological being, or a religious structure. According to *Landnámabók* (S343/H301),<sup>14</sup> for instance, Þórsmörk is called “Thor’s Forest” because its first settler dedicated this valley to this god, and the hills of Krosshólar, “Cross Hills”, were so called because the first settler in the area had crosses erected there to create a place of Christian worship (*Landnámabók* S97).<sup>15</sup> The farmstead of Hof, “Temple”, in the Vatnsdalur valley is said to have been given this name from the temple erected there by Ingimundr the Old (*Vatnsdæla saga* 15).<sup>16</sup>

Giants, *jötnar*, appear as part of the fabric of the land not only in *Sonatorrek*, where the blood of a giant fills the sea, but occasionally also in Icelandic toponymy. In modern toponymy, among others,<sup>17</sup> a mountain in Helgafellssveit is called Jötunsfell, “Giant’s Mountain”; a sea-stack belonging to the Westman Islands is simply called Jötunn; and two caves in the sea-cliffs of the Látrabjarg promontory are called Jötunsaugu, “Giant’s Eyes”. The last one of these names goes back to the 1880s at the latest, when it was mentioned in a travelogue,<sup>18</sup> but generally of course such modern names do not necessarily have to have a great age; an extreme example for a very young topographical name would be the island of Surtsey, “Surtr’s Island”, which is named after the *jötunn* Surtr but only came into being during a volcanic eruption that started in 1963.

In the present case, however, there is at least one pertinent toponym for which strong indications exist that its roots may go back all the way to the Settlement Period. In the 1770s, Eggert Olafsen in his description of Iceland mentioned the cave name Surtshellir, which is the name of a large lava tube in the lava field Hallmundarhraun in the western Icelandic highlands.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Íslendingabók. Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson, Íslenzk fornrit, I, Reykjavík 1968.

<sup>15</sup> On the latter cf. M. Egeler, *Atlantic Outlooks on Being at Home...*, pp. 156-168.

<sup>16</sup> *Vatnsdæla saga*, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit, VIII, Reykjavík 1939.

<sup>17</sup> See *Landmælingar Íslands* (<<http://ornefnasja.lmi.is/>>, last accessed 9 February 2018), s.v. ‘Jötun\*’.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, s.v. ‘Jötunsaugu’; Þorvaldur Thoroddsen, *Ferðasaga frá Vestfjörðum*, “Andvari” XIII (1887), pp. 99-203, there p. 111.

<sup>19</sup> E. Olafsen, *Des Vice-Lavmands Eggert Olafsens und des Landphysici Biarne Povelsens Reise durch Island, veranstaltet von der Königlichen Societät der Wissenschaften in Kopenhagen, aus dem Dänischen übersetzt*, I-II, Kopenhagen-Leipzig 1774-1775, I, §349-375; later cf. P.E.K. Kålund, *Bidrag til en historisk-topografisk Beskrivelse af Island*, I-II, Kjøbenhavn 1877-1882, I, p. 338.

This name simply means “Cave of Surtr”, Surtr being the giant (*jötunn*) who according to *Völuspá* (espec. st. 52)<sup>20</sup> and *Gylfaginning* (ch. 4) will at the end of the world kindle the blaze that will devour the whole cosmos. This toponym does not as such appear in the medieval textual sources. However, the place-name Surtshellir ultimately is nothing more than a compressed statement that this particular cave belongs to the giant Surtr, and this statement is found already in *Landnámabók*. *Landnámabók*, the “Book of Settlements”, presents a history of the first settlement of Iceland between ca. 870 and 930. The text is extant in several recensions, the oldest one of which, the *Sturlubók*-recension, was compiled ca. 1275-1280. This text contains a short anecdote about what seems to be Surtshellir (S208/H175):

Þorvaldr holbarki [...] kom um haust eitt á Þorvarðsstaði til Smiðkels ok dvalðisk þar um hríð. Þá fór hann upp til hellisins Surts ok færði þar drápu þá, er hann hafði ort um jötuninn í hellinum. Síðan fékk hann dóttur Smiðkels [...].

(Þorvaldr Hollow-Throat [...] came, one autumn, to Þorvarðsstaðr to Smiðkell and stayed there for a while. Then he went up to Surtr's cave and there recited the praise-poem which he had composed about the giant in the cave. Then he married Smiðkell's daughter [...].)

Here a man who (one may guess) at this point already has the intention of settling down nearby pays his respect to a cave in which the most fearful giant of Norse mythology is held to live: Surtr who at the end of time will burn the world. These events are set around the year 900, and if there is anything to this story, then apparently very early on in the time of the Settlement, the cave whose name later is attested as Surtshellir was imagined in an extremely concrete way to be the abode of the giant from which it is named. This ties in strikingly well with the local geological framework. The lava-field Hallmundarhraun where Surtshellir is located is a huge field more than 50 km in length and covering a total area of some 242 square kilometres; it was created by an eruption of highly liquid lava in the late 9<sup>th</sup> or early 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> The date of this eruption is important, as it occurred after Iceland was already settled. Most likely, therefore, it was witnessed by some of the early Icelanders. When the eruption was at its most intense, the lake of molten rock fifty kilometres in length must to any observer have looked like

<sup>20</sup> *Edda. Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern. 1. Text*, eds. G. Neckel, H. Kuhn, Heidelberg 1983<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Guðmundur Ólafsson, K.P. Smith, T. McGovern, *Surtshellir: A Fortified Outlaw Cave in West Iceland*, in: *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West. Papers from the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress, Cork, 18-27 August 2005*, eds. J. Sheehan, D.Ó Corráin, cooperation S. Lewis-Simpson, Dublin-Portland 2010, pp. 283-297, there pp. 292-293.

a rehearsal for the end of the world. That the name of a lava-tube which came into being when this lava-field slowly cooled down hearkens back to Surtr is most likely to be a direct reflex of this experience of a huge conflagration. In the present context this may be relevant, as in this lake of a giant's fire, the ocean of a giant's blood that is described in *Sonatorrek* finds a fitting counterpart. At the same time, the way the motif is treated in *Landnámabók* somehow seems to bring the image of cosmic destruction back down to earth: there, it features in the preparations for a proposal of marriage.

For the rock-inhabiting dwarfs, which constitute the second part of the half-stanza's imagery, the situation is similar. In Icelandic toponymy, dwarfs (*dvergar*) are fairly common:<sup>22</sup> leaving aside a multitude of modern house and street-names, there is a hill called Dvergabúi, "Abode of Dwarfs", in Skeiða- og Gnúpverjahreppur; a cave named Dverghús, "Dwarf-House", in Þingeyjarsveit; a hill Dverghóll, "Dwarf-Hill", in Þingvellir; or a "Slope of the Dwarfs" Dvergahvammur, by a "Stone of the Dwarfs" Dvergasteinn less than 15 km south-west of Surtshellir. Generally, boulders and rock formations feature prominently in dwarf-toponymy: there are at least nine boulders named Dvergasteinn,<sup>23</sup> as well as the Dverghamrar, "Dwarf-Rocks", in Skaftárhreppur. Not all these names are necessarily meant deeply seriously. The names Dvergalda, "Dwarf-Wave", for a very small mountain in Þingeyjarsveit and Dvergaspeni, "Teat of the Dwarfs", for a hill in Sveitarfélagið Skagafjörður rather seem to suggest a humorous undertone.

Also the appearance of dwarfs and dwarf-places in Icelandic storytelling tradition can have an apparently tongue-in-cheek element. In Jón Árnason's collection of *Icelandic Folk- and Fairy-Tales* from the 1860s, a story which seems humorous more than anything else is connected with the boulder Dvergasteinn on the northern coast of the Seyðisfjörður fjord in eastern Iceland.<sup>24</sup> At the time when the story was recorded, "Dvergasteinn" was the name not only of the boulder itself, but also of the church and church-farm located in its immediate vicinity, and the folk-tale provided an aetiology for why this name was applied to the church complex. The reason it gives is that, once upon a time, the church was located in a much less convenient location

<sup>22</sup> For the following see *Landmælingar Íslands*, s.v. 'dverg\*'.  
<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, s.v. 'Dvergasteinn' lists and locates eight; a ninth example is found on the northern shore of the Seyðisfjörður fjord: M. Egeler, *Icelandic Folklore, Landscape Theory, and Levity: The Seyðisfjörður Dwarf-Stone*, "RMN Newsletter" XII-XIII (double issue 2016-2017), pp. 8-18 (open access at <[https://www.helsinki.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/rmn\\_12-13\\_2016-2017.pdf](https://www.helsinki.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/rmn_12-13_2016-2017.pdf)>, accessed 22. November 2017).

<sup>24</sup> Jón Árnason, *Íslenzkar þjóðsögur og æfintýri* I-II, Leipzig 1862-1864, II, p. 67; idem, *Isländische Volkssagen, aus der Sammlung von Jón Arnason ausgewählt und aus dem Isländischen übersetzt von M. Lehmann-Filhés*, Neue Folge, Berlin 1891, p. 61.

on the southern or western side of the fjord. At that time, the Dvergasteinn was already located next to it. At some point, however, the local inhabitants decided that it would be much more practical for everybody if the church were located on the north coast, where it was in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when the story was recorded. So, the story goes, the old church was dismantled and rebuilt in its new location. The boulder by the old church, however, obviously was left where it was. Yet when the church building had been moved to the north coast and the reconstruction work was almost done, the men working on the church saw a house sailing across the fjord, which finally came ashore below the church. The dwarfs who inhabited the stone had so much missed living next to the church after it had been dismantled that they decided to move their stone-house and to follow the church. The human inhabitants of the area were so moved by this display of piety that they named the church and church-farm from the dwarf-house that was now again located next to it: Dvergasteinn.

This story of a boulder crossing the fjord seems at least a bit tongue-in-cheek, especially in a social context where living anything but close to the church was the rule rather than the exception; in this context, the ostentatious piety of the dwarfs probably would have been almost just as curious as their swimming boulder. What makes the Seyðisfjörður dwarf-stone interesting in the present context, however, are primarily its name and location. This stone is located immediately above a flat shingle beach at a small natural landing site that is protected by a spur of rock jutting out into the fjord (fig. 1). This kind of beach is particularly well-suited for landing small boats and pulling them ashore, and the location of the dwarf-stone is exactly where a Norse boat-house would be located. We do not know how old the name Dvergasteinn is or what its original story was. Clear is only that the story recorded by Jón Árnason cannot be the original story standing behind this place-name. Jón Árnason's story presupposes the presence of a church at the site, but that the church had the name Dvergasteinn implies that the stone was there first and its name transferred to the church when the latter was erected there. It is impossible to say how old the name Dvergasteinn is; but it must be older than the church, and whatever might have been its earlier story was completely superseded by the aetiological tale that later explained why the Christian church had the strikingly pagan-mythological name "Dwarf-Stone". So what we have here are narrative transformations of a rock that was a house of dwarfs, located just where a boat-house would be located, and connected with a toponym "Dwarf-Stone" of indeterminable age. Here, ll. 7-8 of our half-stanza of *Sonatorrek* about "the boat-shed doors of Náinn" find almost as fitting a counterpart as ll. 5-6 had in *Surtshellir*.

## FOREST WASTELANDS

Trees in *Sonatorrek* appear in a very conventional way in circumlocutions and images referring to men, particularly family members. Thus, in st. 21.5, Egill calls his dead son *ættar askr*, “ash of the family”. Only on one occasion is the image of the forest elaborated on a bit more: In st. 4.2-3, Egill in two verses whose transmission is highly corrupt<sup>25</sup> seems to describe his family as having come to an end:

hræbarnir  
sem hlynir marka  
(beaten to corpses  
like maple-trees of a forest).

Associations between the image of the forest and that of destruction in Icelandic toponymy are more present in the etymology of place-names than in their synchronous meanings. The common place-name element *holt* originally designated a wood or copsewood, but through the extreme Icelandic deforestation in common Icelandic usage it came to mean a rough stony hill or ridge.<sup>26</sup> So *holt*-names mirror the imagery of these lines quite closely (at least if their conjectural reconstruction by Bjarni Einarsson is correct), but the question is whether any medieval Icelanders would have had an awareness that the semantic development of *holt* as a place-name element reflects the large-scale destruction of the Icelandic forests. A toponymic hint of an association between forests and destructive, malevolent forces may, however, be encapsulated in the place-name Tröllaskógr, “Forest of the Trolls”. This place-name still exists, attached to a place in the lava-field of Skógshraun (“Forest’s Lava-Field”), and goes back at least to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, being attested in medieval literature in *Landnámabók* (S354/H312) and *Njáls saga* (ch. 76).<sup>27</sup> The attestation in *Landnámabók* perhaps is of particular importance for assuming an early date of the toponym, at least if Oskar Bandle was right to consider this text to present a basically accurate overall picture of the early Icelandic toponymy of the first two centuries after the beginning of the settlement of the island.<sup>28</sup>

So to some extent also the figurative association between forest and destruction in st. 4.2-3 is mirrored in Icelandic toponymy, though any

25 Bjarni Einarsson, *Egils saga*, p. 147; cf. E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry...*, p. 31; G. Turville-Petre, *The Sonatorrek*, pp. 44-45; Jón Helgason, *Skjaldevers*, p. 34 (*apparatus criticus*).

26 Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson 1874, s.v. ‘holt’.

27 *Brennu-Njáls Saga*, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslensk fornrit, XII, Reykjavík 1954.

28 O. Bandle, *Die Ortsnamen der Landnámabók*, p. 48.

correlation is limited both by the limited relevant toponymic evidence and by the highly problematic transmission of the verses in question.

### ÆGIR AND THE DESTRUCTIVE SEA

Ægir and his wife Rán are mentioned a number of times in *Sonatorrek*, generally as the unreachable targets of the revenge for the drowning of his son that Egill is dreaming of. Both function as images for the sea, identifying the core landscape feature of the poem with mythological persons and thus filling this landscape element with a specific meaning and cluster of associations. In the execution of this poetic technique, Egill's focus is firmly on Ægir. Rán seems to be simply identified with the sea (st. 7) or is described as "Ægir's wife" (*Ægis man*, st. 8.8), so she does not gain much if any character of her own, but merely seems to function as a poetic extension of Ægir. The treatment of Ægir himself is considerably more interesting, as it employs an elaborate imagery. In st. 8.3, he is called *qlsmið[r]*, "beer-brewer", which in st. 19.1, 3 is circumscribed with the more elaborated kenning *fens hrosta hilmir*, "chieftain of the fen of the beer-mash" = "chieftain of the beer" = "brewer, dispenser of beer".<sup>29</sup> The mythological background of this way of circumscribing Ægir is elaborated on in the Eddas, where he is not only the 'sea-giant' whose name can be used as a *heiti* for the sea and whose wife Rán catches the drowned in a net (*Skáldskaparmál* 33), but where Ægir repeatedly also appears as the host of the Æsir, providing the gods with a feast and brewing ale for them (introductory prose of *Lokasenna*; *Grímnismál* 45; *Hymiskviða*; *Skáldskaparmál* 33). That the imagery of *Sonatorrek* emphasises this aspect of Ægir as a beer-brewer of the gods is worth highlighting. Brewing beer and offering splendid hospitality, Ægir is a welcoming figure; the image of his hall with its freshly-brewed beer offers an invitation and a promise of comfort – or at least an image of the lure of the otherworld. Thus, the imagery of these verses forms a striking counterpoint to the death in a cold northern sea that is the central theme of *Sonatorrek*.

In medieval Icelandic toponymy, Ægir is attested in two place-names:<sup>30</sup> Ægissíða, "Ægir's Water-Side", in *Landnámabók* S175/H141, and Ægisdyrr,

<sup>29</sup> On the problems of the transmission of these verses cf. Jón Helgason, *Skjaldevers*, p. 37 (*apparatus criticus*).

<sup>30</sup> Rán is richly attested in modern-day Icelandic toponymy (see *Landmælingar Íslands*, s.v. 'Rán\*'), but almost exclusively in street names which as such clearly are of very recent date. The one occurrence of Rán in a topographical name which structurally might be old (referring to a geological formation rather than a recent man-made structure) is "Rán's Glen" Ránargil, a side-valley of the "Rich Man's Valley" Sælingsdalur in Dalabyggð, and a number of names in the immediate surroundings of this valley (Ránarskriða, Ránargilskvíslar, Ránargilsbunga).



“Ægir’s Door”, in *Landnámabók* H302.<sup>31</sup> The former may survive to this day as the name of the farm Ægissíða in Húnaþing vestra just above the shore of Sigríðarstaðavatn, a body of water which opens into Húnaþjörður; if this identification is correct, this would match the semantics of the name, which seems to constitute a reference to a stretch of shoreline. In fact, the name Ægissíða is rather common in the modern-day toponymy of Iceland, and all places of this name lie directly on the coast.<sup>32</sup> The second place, Ægisdyrr, “Ægir’s Door”, was located on the Westman Islands, but already *Landnámabók* (H302) mentions that this particular place was destroyed by a volcanic eruption, so it is not clear what kind of place it was; the semantics of its name, however, are suggestive of a harbour-entrance.<sup>33</sup> These uses of Ægir’s name in the toponymy of Iceland, and especially its usage for the probable harbour entrance of “Ægir’s Door”, are suggestive of a welcoming aspect: these names do not seem to emphasise the threat and danger of the sea, but the prospect of a coming-home from the sea, a return to the safe land (where maybe a warm hall is waiting, with a cauldron full of beer inside). Thus, they correspond to the predominant character of Ægir in the literary mythology as a host, but (like this mythology) stand in a marked tension to the drowning that is the subject matter of *Sonatorrek*. One wonders whether the literary function of this joint tension between Ægir in mythology and toponymy on the one hand and Ægir in *Sonatorrek* on the other is to underscore the feeling of betrayal that haunts the poet: a core feeling of the poem is one of having been betrayed by the gods, and this point is made particularly starkly if the very supernatural powers who are directly responsible for the drowning of Egill’s son are described in images that focus not on threat, but on a warm welcoming in a well-lit hall in which a rich feast is being served.

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If the name of this valley does indeed make reference to the wife of Ægir, it is not obvious in which sense it does so, as this valley, being located rather far inland, appears to lack maritime associations.

31 In Icelandic literature, a place called Ægisdyrr is also mentioned in *Jónsvíkinga saga* (*Jónsvíkinga saga eftir Arnarnagænska handskriften* N:o 291. 4: to i diplomatariskt aftryck, ed. C. af Petersens, København 1882, pp. 24, 26 [ch. 6]). This Ægisdyrr, however, is not a place in Iceland; Chambers has identified it with the Eider in northern Germany, see R.W. Chambers, *Widsith. A Study in Old English Heroic Legend*, Cambridge 2010 [original edition: 1912], p. 204.

32 *Landmælingar Íslands*, s.v. ‘Ægissíða’.

33 On this Ægisdyrr cf. P.E.K. Kålund, *Bidrag til en historisk-topografisk Beskrivelse...*, I, p. 280. Chambers interprets the name of the Ægisdyrr in northern Germany, where this name refers to the Eider, as designating “the mouth where the river opens on the dread sea” (R.W. Chambers, *Widsith...*, p. 204; see the note above). For lack of a local river, the Ægisdyrr on the Westman Islands must have meant something different. In the modern-day place-name of Dyrhólaey (“Island of the Door-Hills”) in Mýrdalshreppur, *dyrr* apparently refers to a huge ‘gate’ that the sea has eroded into a spur of rock jutting out into the ocean.

This being said, however, not the whole of the imagery that the poem employs for the sea has positive undertones, and its one more threatening poetic image is again mirrored by a piece of medieval place-lore. The relevant passage is found in st. 8.5, though again it has to be noted that the transmission of the passage is corrupt and its reconstruction problematic.<sup>34</sup> If the reading adopted by Bjarni Einarsson is correct, then Ægir is there called *hroða vágs bróðir*, the “brother of the buffeter of the bay”. On one level, this is a more or less straightforward kenning: the “buffeter of the bay” is the wind, and the possibility to connect Ægir and the wind is attested by Snorri’s *Skáldskaparmál* (ch. 27), which states that the wind can be paraphrased as the brother of Ægir.<sup>35</sup>

On another level, however, the image employed in st. 8.5 evokes an episode described in the *Hauksbók*-recension of *Landnámabók* (H63).<sup>36</sup> In this episode, Lón-Einarr is pursuing an enemy, and during the chase he passes the Drangar rock towers on the south coast of Snæfellsnes. Today, these rock towers have the name Lóndrangar; it seems that the story from *Landnámabók*, or a similar tale, has in modern toponymy been fossilised in a place-name.<sup>37</sup> Yet however that may be, according to the *Hauksbók*-recension of *Landnámabók*, the following occurred there:

Þá rann Einarr, sem hann mátti, en þá er hann kom hjá Dröngum, sá hann tröllkarl sitja þar á uppi ok láta róa fœtr, svá at þeir tóku brimit, ok skelldi þeim saman, svá at sjódrif varð af, ok kvað vísu:

Vask, þars fell af fjalli  
flóðkorn jötuns móður  
hám bergisa ór himni  
heiðins ána leiðar.  
Gerir fár jötunn fleiri  
fold í vinga moldu  
hømlu heiðar þumlu  
hamváta mér báta.

(Then Einarr ran as he could, and when he came past the Drangar Rock Towers, he saw a troll sitting up there and letting his feet swing, so that

<sup>34</sup> Bjarni Einarsson, *Egils saga*, pp. 148-149; E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry...*, pp. 32-33; G. Turville-Petre, *The Sonatorrek*, pp. 46-47; Jón Helgason, *Skjaldevers*, pp. 34-35 (*apparatus criticus*).

<sup>35</sup> Cf. also Torfi H. Tulinius, *The Conversion of Sonatorrek*, pp. 710-711, who compares Egill’s desire to take vengeance on the sea with the Persian emperor’s raging against the sea after the destruction of his fleet, which is mentioned elsewhere in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Icelandic literature.

<sup>36</sup> Recently on this episode cf. R. Simek, *Trolle. Ihre Geschichte von der nordischen Mythologie bis zum Internet*, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2018, p. 87.

<sup>37</sup> Incidentally, in modern folklore the Lóndrangur pinnacle can be thought to be a troll turned into stone, see file SÁM 91/2470 EF (recorded in 1972) in the Ísmús database: Ísmús, <<https://www.ismus.is/i/audio/id-1014482>> (accessed 14 February 2018).

they touched the surf, and he banged them together, so that it made the sea foam, and he spoke a stanza:

I was there, where fell from a mountain  
 a flood-grain of the giant's mother,  
 out of the high sky of the mountain-giants,  
 ...  
 The giant achieves that he makes  
 on the plain of the rowing bench  
 ...  
 more boats hull-soaked than I.

Flood-grain = cliff, rock. Sky of the mountain-giants = mountain. Plain of the rowing bench = the sea. Hull-soaked = by being swamped and sunk.)

While the stanza contains considerable unsolved problems,<sup>38</sup> the overall story is clear enough: Lón-Einarr passes the Drangar rock towers where he sees a troll sitting and churning up the sea, and hears him recite a stanza in which he reminisces about rock-falls caused by giants which sank boats, probably by the waves they created. This troll presents himself and his ilk as "buffeters of the bay" indeed, providing another closely parallel example (if a narrative rather than a toponymic one) of how the landscape imagery of *Sonatorrek* mirrors Icelandic place-lore.

#### HEL ON THE HEADLAND

The final stanza (25) of *Sonatorrek* describes the old poet, resigned to what has happened as well as to what is to come, awaiting the end of his life:

Nú er mér torvelt,  
 Tveggja bága  
 njörvanipt  
 á nesi stendr,  
 skal ek þó glaðr  
 með góðan vilja  
 ok óhryggr  
 heljar bíða.

(Now it is difficult for me,  
 Odin's enemy's  
 close sister  
 stands on the headland;

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38 See Jakob Benediktsson, *Íslendingabók. Landnámabók*, pp. 106-107 (note 2).

yet I shall be glad,  
with good will  
and not sad  
wait for Hel/death.)

This stanza as well is not without textual problems; in Bjarni Einarsson's reconstruction presented here, *nesi* is a conjecture for *nesin*.<sup>39</sup> If this captures the meaning originally intended, the stanza presents the old poet's expectation and acceptance of his own death in the image of Hel, the mistress of the netherworld, standing on a headland, waiting for him. The way how *Sonatorrek* here makes use of kennings places this image into a cosmic context: Hel is called the "sister of Odin's enemy", who is Fenrir,<sup>40</sup> the wolf who at the end of the world will devour Odin (*Völuspá* st. 53; *Gylfaginning* 51), and in this way the poem evokes not only the future personal death of the poet but also the destruction of the world itself.

Hel on the headland does not as such find a counterpart in toponymy (where Hel does not seem to appear) or place-lore. In north-eastern Iceland, however, there may be a place-name which could be based on a term for a demonic supernatural being derived from Hel. On the north-eastern point of Iceland, the headland of Langanes ("Long Peninsula") juts out into the North Atlantic. Exactly where this headland joins the mainland, the upland area of Helkunduheiði is located: "Helkunda's Heath". This place-name is attested already in *Landnámabók* (Helkunduheiðr in S264/H226), where it is mentioned as the border of the settlement area of a certain Gunnólfur *kroppa*. That it functioned as a boundary (and by implication might have been a liminal area) is also well-attested later on.<sup>41</sup> The first element of the place-name, *Helkunda*, is a *hapax legomenon* in Old Norse, so no direct and straightforward evidence is available to determine what exactly the toponym meant. However, Magnus Olsen has noted that etymologically, the element *Helkunda* could refer to a female being from Hel; a close Old English parallel is provided by the Old English word *helcund*, "stemming from hell".<sup>42</sup> Oskar

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<sup>39</sup> Bjarni Einarsson, *Egils saga*, p. 154. Cf. E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry...*, p. 41; G. Turville-Petre, *The Sonatorrek*, pp. 54-55; Jón Helgason, *Skjaldevers*, p. 38 (*apparatus criticus*). This stanza also plays a central role in the ongoing argument about the dating of *Sonatorrek*, as the acceptance of death and the hope for salvation expressed in it have been seen as reflecting High Medieval Christianity rather than Norse paganism: Torfi H. Tulinius, *The Conversion of Sonatorrek*, pp. 708-709. In contrast to this position, J. Harris, 'Myth to live by' in *Sonatorrek*, p. 169 views the imagery employed here as purely pagan.

<sup>40</sup> That Fenrir and Hel are siblings is stated in *Gylfaginning* 34.

<sup>41</sup> M. Olsen, *Helkunduheiðr*, "Namn och bygd" XXI (1933), pp. 12-27, there pp. 12-17.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem; cf. I. Særheim, *Sakrale stadnamn*, "Namn och bygd" C (2012), pp. 181-200, there p. 195; T. Schmidt, *Magnus Olsens bidrag til stedsnavnforskningen*, "Nytt om namn" L (2009), pp. 57-62, there p. 59.

Bandle accepted this interpretation of the name as probable,<sup>43</sup> and if it is indeed correct, then this toponym presents us if not with Hel herself, then at least with a close associate of hers standing on the shoulder of a headland and thus, again, mirroring the imagery of *Sonatorrek*.

#### PLACES AND THE POETIC EXPERIENCE

In the preceding pages, this essay has discussed a number of poetic images from Egill Skallagrímsson's *Sonatorrek*: the description of a stormy shore as a place where the blood of the primeval giant washes against coastal rocks inhabited by dwarf-maggots in st. 3.5-8; the forest turned into a wasteland in st. 4.2-3; various treatments of the sea in the image of the sea-giant Ægir in st. 8.3, 8.5, and 19.1, 3; and finally the haunting image, at the very end of the poem, of Hel waiting for the old poet out there on a headland in st. 25. Taken together, the imagery of these stanzas constitutes the lion's share, and in fact all central instances, of landscape imagery being used in *Sonatorrek*.<sup>44</sup> Each of these images and their constituent parts I have then compared with the imagery of Icelandic place-names as well as some narrative place-lore. For this, I drew particularly on *Landnámabók*, which covers the same potential chronological span as *Sonatorrek*: its oldest extant recension has been written down in the same century in which *Sonatorrek* is first quoted in *Egils saga* and it purports to speak about the same time – the Settlement Period – in which *Sonatorrek* purports to have been originally composed. The result of this comparison was that, on various levels, all core elements of the landscape imagery employed in *Sonatorrek* find counterparts in the imagery that is tied to the concrete Icelandic landscape through place-naming and place-storytelling (map 1). It is perhaps worthwhile reiterating that the intention of this study has not been to identify particular places associated with *Sonatorrek*, but a general grounding of the type of imagery that is employed in the poem. I am not attempting to place *Sonatorrek* in specific locations, but rather to highlight the extreme degree in which the environmental imagery employed in the poem is paralleled by the imagery that is tied to the concrete, everyday Icelandic landscape as illustrated by an ultimately random sample of examples of toponymic and narrative place-lore imagery. Furthermore, it might also be worthwhile highlighting that from this comparison no conclusions can be drawn about the age of any of the material discussed, let alone the dating of

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<sup>43</sup> O. Bandle, *Die Ortsnamen der Landnámabók*, p. 57.

<sup>44</sup> I have left aside only some plain mentionings of the sea/Rán and images with very indirect 'landscape' references: the very conventional kenning *randviðr*, "shield-tree", for "man" in st. 11.5 or *Elgjar gálgi*, "Odin's gallows", for "world tree" in st. 15.4.

*Sonatorrek* specifically: in virtually all cases, the medieval material cited could stem from or could have been reworked in the 13<sup>th</sup> century just as well as it could present us with a direct reflex of Settlement Period attitudes.

The imageries of *Sonatorrek* and of Icelandic place-lore and place-naming closely converge. On the one hand, the parallelism between poem and landscape is not particularly surprising, as both the poetic imagery of *Sonatorrek* and the clusters of associations connected with the Icelandic landscape are products of the same Old Norse-Icelandic culture. Nevertheless, studying this parallelism opens up a new perspective on *Sonatorrek*: it fundamentally grounds the poem. Comparing the landscape of *Sonatorrek* with the landscapes of Icelandic toponymy and place-lore highlights just to which extent the poem's poetic cosmos is rooted deeply not only in literary and mythological tradition, but in fact in the everyday environment in which it was composed. What is essential here is particularly the everyday character of this environment: in spite of the often cosmic scale of its imagery, the poem never loses the firm ground that is constituted by the everyday culture reflected in something as seemingly banal and everyday as toponyms. Perhaps the way how it manages to straddle the seeming tension between the cosmic and the everyday is one of the great achievements of the poem. And perhaps how the cosmic elements of *Sonatorrek*, if compared to the imagery of Icelandic place-names and place-stories, link back to the everyday landscape of medieval Iceland in which the poem's audience lived their daily lives even allows us a glimpse of an aspect of how the poem might have been experienced: as something related to and grounded in simple, everyday experience. Perhaps *Sonatorrek* was able to speak to its audience because it speaks not just about Egill as an individual but about an Icelandic Everyman in an Icelandic Everywhere.

#### ABSTRACT

Egill Skallagrímsson's poem *Sonatorrek*, traditionally held to have been composed ca. 960 AD and thus perhaps one of the very few genuinely pre-Christian skaldic poems that have been preserved, treats the grief of a father who has lost his son to the sea and his reckoning with the divine powers who have allowed this to happen. The poetic presentation of this emotional struggle repeatedly draws on a stylised and fundamentally mythologising imagery of the coastal landscape in which the central tragedy – the drowning of the poet's son – has occurred. The paper will analyse the poem's use of this landscape imagery, compare it with attitudes to the landscape that can be grasped through the everyday medium of place-names as well as through Icelandic place-storytelling, and contrast the implications of this comparison with the cosmic character of much of the mythological imagery employed in the poem. This will serve to contextualise the poetic technique of *Sonatorrek* and show how it harnesses the tension between the cosmic and the everyday as a means of poetic expression.





**Map 1.** Main places mentioned in the discussion, by M. Egeler.



**Fig. 1.** The boulder Dvergasteinn on the northern shore of the Seyðisfjörður fjord, located above a small natural landing site, just as a boat-house would be. Photo M. Egeler, 2014.



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## THE DEAD AS RESOURCES: THE UTILIZATION OF DEATH AND BURIAL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY AND LEGITIMACY IN VIKING AGE SCANDINAVIA<sup>1</sup>



### THE MODERN PERCEPTIONS OF ANCIENT RITES

In 2013 the story of the eccentric Brazilian billionaire Chiquinho Scarpa and his car burial spread via internet and newspapers. The businessman, famous for his luxurious and flamboyant lifestyle, announced that – being inspired by watching a TV documentary about Ancient Egypt and the rich burials of Egyptian Pharaohs – he planned to bury his \$500,000 luxury car – a black Bentley Flying Spur – so that he could drive it even after his death in the afterlife (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> The intense popular indignation that followed this announcement on social media, in blogs and comment sections of online newspapers, criticizing Scarpa as elitist, blasphemous, corrupted and downright insane, highlights very clearly our modern, western conception of burials, death and afterlife in contrast to burial rites in most societies in pre-history, where grave goods were commonly deposited as a sign of wealth and prosperity or as furniture for life in the afterworld, e.g. in ancient Egypt or of course in Viking Age Scandinavia.

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<sup>1</sup> The present article was prepared in the Collaborative Research Center SFB 1070 ResourceCultures, promoted by the German Research Foundation (DFG). For information about the SFB 1070 see: <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/research/core-research/collaborative-research-centers/sfb-1070/>. English revised by Jennifer Gechter-Jones.

<sup>2</sup> J. Tappin Coelho, *Brazilian Businessman Inspired by Egypt's Pharaohs Buries His £310,000 Bentley so He Can Use it in the Afterlife*, "Daily Mail Online" 23 September 2013. Available from: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2425452/Brazilian-businessman-buries-310-000-Bentley-use-afterlife.html> (accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018).

Actually, Scarpa's announcement was simply a brilliant PR-gag. He never really intended to bury the Bentley but wanted to illustrate that most humans are literally dumping unique and precious resources when being buried with their body intact instead of donating their organs to hospitals.<sup>3</sup> However, Scarpa's sage PR-gag illustrates impressively how far modern ideas of a proper burial and the belief (or better perhaps disbelief) about the otherworld have shifted away from the conceptions that dominated human life for millennia.

#### FUNERALS AS PUBLIC EVENTS

Scarpa's "Bentley burial" illustrates two important aspects of a funeral ceremony that must be reconsidered when dealing with Viking Age funerary customs. A funeral was not mainly a private event for the close relatives to mourn, to bid farewell and to perform the rites of passage, that were regarded as necessary within their specific culture/religion, as it is often the case in modern Western society, but it was a public event that took place in the midst of the local community. By this, every rite performed during the funeral ceremony was not solely an interaction between the relatives and the deceased or spiritual entities but rather a communication between the relatives and the local community with the deceased as a form of medium.<sup>4</sup> During this communication, the relatives could utilize the funeral ceremony for the exhibition (and finally often the elimination of parts) of their wealth. Both aspects are pivotal to the supposed intention of Scarpa's "Bentley burial"; the ostentatious destruction of precious goods in the form of the expensive car as an exhibition of wealth and status which needed a public orchestration via social media and (online) newspapers to be perceived as interaction between Scarpa and society and to gain benefit.

A similar situation is presented in the famous travelogue of the Arab traveler Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān, who attended the funeral of a Rus chieftain – East Scandinavian Vikings that travelled through Eastern Europe as traders and mercenaries – near the city of Bolghar on the Upper Volga (Russia) in 922 AD (fig. 2).<sup>5</sup> Being sent as an ambassador from the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad

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3 *Grotesque burying of Bentley proves winner at ad Oscars*, "The Irish Times" 23 June 2014. Available from: <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/media-and-marketing/grotesque-burying-of-bentley-proves-winner-at-ad-oscars-1.1842354> (accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018).

4 See S. Brather, *Kleidung, Bestattung, Ritual. Die Präsentation sozialer Rollen im frühen Mittelalter*, in: *Zwischen Antike und Spätmittelalter*, Archäologie des 4. bis 7. Jahrhunderts im Westen, Berlin-New York 2008, p. 256.

5 *Ibn Faḍlān and the Land of Darkness. Arab Travellers in the Far North*, eds. P. Lunde, C. Stone, London 2012.

to the khaganate of the Volgar Bulgars, he wrote in astonishing detail about all his observations during his voyage, which makes his travelogue – later entitled as “Risala” (Arabic for “letter”/“report”) – an inestimable precious and unique source especially for the funeral customs of the Scandinavian Rus. Ibn Faḍlān reports a funeral ceremony lasting several days, that was witnessed by the Rus community – and even by a stranger such as ibn Faḍlān himself – and which involved the destruction of extensive amounts of wealth and resources, with complex rituals and animal as well as human sacrifices.<sup>6</sup>

Even if most funerals in Viking Age society will have been less elaborate than the picture provided by ibn Faḍlān’s detailed eye-witness account – which astonishingly matches many elements of the famous ship burials at Oseberg, Gokstad or Ladby<sup>7</sup> – the overall conception is in principle the same. The burial takes place among relatives and members of the local community and by this public character the burial ceremony can be utilized as an ostentation of wealth and social status, affiliation or social identity,<sup>8</sup> which is defined by ethnical, religious and cultural aspects or by social status or function. Even the intended relinquishing of grave goods must be regarded as a presentation of specific ideas, mentalities or purposes.

#### WHAT ACTUALLY IS A BURIAL?

This interplay of interactions between the relatives and the dead or spiritual entities/deities and between the relatives and the local community illustrates the multidimensional functions of a burial ceremony. On an emotional level, it provides the opportunity for a last farewell, of coping with grief and loss for the bereaved. On a religious level, the funeral is the significant phase, in which the soul of the deceased would be transported from this world into the otherworld. Thus, the burial ceremony consists of an array of rites, the “rites de passages”, which should enable a comfortable and undisturbed transition for the soul of the deceased and which are defined by several religious and

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6 J. Staecker, M.S. Toplak, T. Schade, *Multimodalität in der Archäologie. Überlegungen zum Einbezug von Kommunikationstheorien in die Archäologie anhand von drei Fallbeispielen*, “IMAGE” XXVIII (2018), pp. 66-68.

7 N. Price, *Passing into Poetry. Viking-Age Mortuary Drama and the Origins of Norse Mythology*, “Medieval Archaeology” LIV (2010), p. 133.

8 “Social identity” is defined after Goffmann as sum of those social categories which an individual belongs to or is regarded as belonging to. By this, “social identity” acts as a categorization of an individual within different reference groups (amongst others ethnically, religious, cultural, geographical, or defined by status, function or profession) for the orientation within society and the perception of and by other individuals. See E. Goffmann, *Stigma. Über Techniken der Bewältigung beschädigter Identität*, Frankfurt a. M. 1972, pp. 255-256.



cultic aspects such as ideas about the afterlife, veneration of the dead or apotropaic provisions.

But as a public event, the funeral fulfills social functions as well. The death of a member of the local community might lead to a vacancy within the social, political or religious structure, so that it becomes necessary to reconstruct the social organization through symbolic actions. This might happen e.g. by handing over symbols of status to the successor of the deceased or – on the contrary – by burying specific artifacts with the deceased to withdraw them from further (symbolic) usage.

However, the most important aspect for the understanding of burials is the opportunity for the relatives to utilize the funeral as a social statement, to negotiate or manipulate by presenting an advantageous and idealized picture of the social reality via prestigious or precious objects as grave goods.

#### THE “DISTURBING MIRRORS OF LIFE”. ABSENT BLACKSMITHS AND INFANT WARRIORS

While for a long time it was common in tradition of the New Archaeology to regard burials as being “mirrors of life”<sup>9</sup> that reflect an unadulterated picture of the social reality in which the deceased lived, this view has been challenged by an increasingly growing number of burials that present a “mise en scène” of the deceased which hardly matches with reality.

The classical examples are male burials with weapons from the Viking Age which today are still often regarded as inevitably being the graves of warriors, even if no indications of an actual role in active warfare are present or even if the deceased was obviously not able to handle these weapons in a combat situation, e.g. when young boys were buried with weapons.<sup>10</sup> A good example of this is the grave of a boy of approximately 10-12 years of age from the Viking Age cemetery of Ire, Hellvi parish, on Gotland.<sup>11</sup> The boy was equipped with a sword, two spears, riding equipment and a dog as well

<sup>9</sup> H. Härke, *The Nature of Burial Data*, in: *Burial and Society. The Chronological and Social Analysis of Archaeological Burial Data*, Aarhus 1997, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> A.-S. Gräslund, *A Princely Child in Birka*, in: *Studien zur Archäologie des Ostseeraumes. Von der Eisenzeit zum Mittelalter. Festschrift für Michael Müller-Wille*, Neumünster 1998; J. Staecker, *Geschlecht, Alter und materielle Kultur. Das Beispiel Birka*, in: *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde. Festschrift für Heiko Steuer zum 70. Geburtstag*, Berlin 2009, p. 485; M.S. Toplak, *Burial Archaeology and Embodiment. Der tote Körper im “Zerrspiegel des Lebens”*, *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters* XLV (2017), p. 131.

<sup>11</sup> M. Stenberger, *En ryttagrav på Ihrefältet*, *“Gotländskt arkiv”* XIV (1942), p. ...; M. Stenberger, *Das Gräberfeld bei Ihre im Kirchspiel Hellei auf Gotland. Der wikingerzeitliche Abschnitt*, *“Acta archaeologica”* XXXII (1961), pp. 122-123; L. Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands. III:2 – Text*, Stockholm 2006, pp. 600-608.

as a horse (fig. 3), so the whole arrangement of this burial presents this boy as a mounted warrior, the high-ranking manly ideal of the Vendel and Early Viking Age society and member of the social elite. But when comparing the size of this boy and the measurements of the sword, it is obvious that this boy would not have been able to swing this weapon and was certainly no warrior fighting in battle. This burial provides no glimpse of a first-hand past reality, but it presents an intentionally constructed picture, that should (re)construct or manipulate the social reality in favor of the relatives.

The same can be said, when certain individuals were buried with special tools that are interpreted as signs of the profession of the deceased, e.g. blacksmithing tools or equipment for trading activities. The distribution of burials with blacksmithing tools from Viking Age Scandinavia and the combination of tools in these graves indicate rather clearly that some of these graves might actually be the burials of blacksmiths. In contrast working as a blacksmith during the lifetime of the dead is not inevitably reflected in the grave goods, as the lack of blacksmithing graves in eastern Scandinavia shows.<sup>12</sup> It seems to be more plausible that blacksmithing tools – which occur most often not as a functional kit in the graves but as single tools<sup>13</sup> – must be regarded as symbols of status and power,<sup>14</sup> which are perhaps associated with the social importance of the blacksmith, being vital for the functionality of the society.

Equally symbolic functions as tokens of status seem to be present in the inclusion of trading equipment such as weights for scales or touchstones for testing the value of metals. Both artifact groups appear in the burials of males as well as in the burials of females, or even infants,<sup>15</sup> who were clearly not working as professional traders or metallurgists. The appearance of these artifacts in graves – either of adult males or infants – does not depict the life

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12 M. Müller-Wille, *Der Schmied im Spiegel archäologischer Quellen. Zur Aussage von Schmiedegräbern der Wikingerzeit*, in: *Das Handwerk in vor- und frühgeschichtlicher Zeit*, II: *Archäologische und philologische Beiträge*, Göttingen 1983, p. 249.

13 M. Müller-Wille, *Der Schmied im Spiegel...*, p. 251.

14 M. Ježek, *Archaeology of Touchstones. An Introduction Based on Finds from Birka, Sweden*, Leiden 2017, p. 59.

15 For the distribution of weights in the burials of females and infants at the case study of Birka see A.-S. Gräslund, *Barn i Birka*, "Tor. Tidskrift för nordisk fornrunskap" 1972-1973 (1973), p. 174; O. Kyhlberg, *Vikt och värde. Arkeologiska studier i värdemätning, betalningsmedel och metrologi under yngre järnålder*, 1: *Helgö*, 2: *Birka*, Stockholm 1980, pp. 204-210; A. Stalsberg, *Women as Actors in North European Viking Age Trade*, in: *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, Glasgow 1991, pp. 77-79; I. Gustin, *Mellan gåva och marknad. Handel, tillit och materiell kultur under vikingatid*, Stockholm 2004, pp. 229-230; J. Staecker, J. Staecker, *Geschlecht, Alter und materielle Kultur...*, pp. 488-489. For the distribution of touchstones in Birka see M. Ježek, *Archaeology of Touchstones...*, p. 83.

reality of those individuals but were deposited to communicate a certain statement.

#### THE “SOCIAL” AND THE “SYMBOLIC CAPITAL”. DEATH AND BURIAL AS RESOURCES

These obvious examples show that through the deposition of specific grave goods, the overall investment of resources, wealth and labor during the funeral ceremony as well as through the construction of the grave itself, the people responsible for the burial – normally the closest relatives – could utilize the funeral ceremony within a socio-political competition. Doing so, they can present their deceased and with them their whole family in a favorable perspective – which does not necessarily have to match reality – in order to legitimize their status or to claim a new socio-political function or position. By burying e.g. their infant son with a full complement of weapons according to the ideal of a mounted warrior, the family of this boy ascribes itself to a certain social group – in this case some kind of warrior elite, which uses weapons and riding equipment as tokens of power. The affiliation to this social group provides credit and prestige, and offers social connections and other advantages. Pierre Bourdieu defines the benefit of belonging to a certain group as the “social capital”, one of three forms of capital beside the “economic capital” (actual valuables) and the “cultural capital” (knowledge, education, habitus).<sup>16</sup> These three categories accumulate in a fourth form, the “symbolic capital”, which is the prestige or reputation that results from possessing aspects from the three basic forms of capital.

So, burials can be used as media to create symbolic capital by constructing affiliations to certain groups which are regarded as influential, reputable or at least widely networked, and thereby to negotiate or to manipulate the social reality according to the interests of particular groups (e.g. the close relatives).

The potential character of a burial ceremony – the recollection of this act and even of the grave itself – as an expression of a (constructed or factual) social capital offers a methodological approach to interpret death and burial as a form of resource for past societies. This approach follows a new conceptualization of the definition of resources that has been established by the Collaborative Research Center SFB 1070 ResourceCultures at the University of Tübingen, and which rejects the classical definition of solely material resources such as precious metals or fertile soil but specifies resources

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<sup>16</sup> P. Bourdieu, *Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital*, in: *Soziale Ungleichheiten*, Göttingen 1983, pp. 183-198.

as every material or immaterial media that can be used by human actors to negotiate or manipulate social reality:

Resources are defined as the tangible or intangible means by which actors create, sustain or alter social relations, units or identities. This definition abolishes the opposition between “natural” and “cultural” resources because even raw materials extracted from natural environments are subjected to cultural constructions.<sup>17</sup>

#### CASE STUDIES. WHERE HAVE ALL THE CHILDREN GONE? MISSING INFANT BURIALS IN VIKING AGE SCANDINAVIA

A general problem within the archaeology of Viking Age Scandinavia is the lack of infant burials in most excavated cemeteries. Based on the investigations of Caroline Arcini at the late Viking Age/early Medieval churchyard in Lund, Sweden,<sup>18</sup> the mortality rate for children lies at around 20% for neonates and 40% for children and teenagers (age groups *infans I/II* to *juvenilis*<sup>19</sup>).<sup>20</sup> This leads to an expected average proportion of sub-adult burials between 25-30%<sup>21</sup> and 40-45%,<sup>22</sup> even if far higher proportions might occasionally occur in some Medieval cemeteries.<sup>23</sup> However, on most cemeteries in Viking Age Scandinavia the proportion of infant burials is far below the percentage of around 25-40% (fig. 4) and sub-adults seem to be highly underrepresented in the skeleton material e.g. in Denmark or Norway.<sup>24</sup>

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17 *Resource Cultures. Sociocultural Dynamics and the Use of Resources – Theories, Methods, Perspectives*, eds. A. Scholz, M. Bartelheim, R. Hardenberg, J. Staecker, Tübingen 2017, p. 7.

18 C. Arcini, *Health and Disease in Early Lund*, Lund 1999.

19 Classification of age groups: Infant: 0-1 year; Neonatal: 0-1 month; Postneonatal: 1-12 month; *Infans Ia*: 0-2 years; *Infans Ib*: 2-7 years; *Infans II*: 7-14 years; *Juvenilis*: 12/14-17/19 years. Based on L. Scheuer, S.M. Black, *Developmental Juvenile Osteology*, San Diego 2000, pp. 468-469; extended by B.J. Sellevold, U.L. Hansen, J.B. Jørgensen, *Iron Age Man in Denmark*, Copenhagen 1984, p. 32.

20 C. Arcini, B. Jacobsson, *Vikingarna från Vannhög*, “*Ale. Historisk tidskrift för Skåneland*” I (2008), p. 6.

21 H. Helmuth, *Anthropologische Untersuchungen an menschlichen Skelettresten der frühmittelalterlichen Siedlung Haithabu (Ausgrabungen 1966-1969)*, in: *Untersuchungen zur Anthropologie, Botanik und Dendrochronologie*, Neumünster 1977, p. 47; C. Arcini, B. Jacobsson, *Vikingarna från Vannhög*, p. 6.

22 G. Ascádi, J. Nemeskéri, *History of Human Life Span and Mortality*, Budapest 1970, pp. 236-251; M. Rundkvist, *Barshalder 2. Studies in late Iron Age Gotland*, Stockholm 2003, pp. 79-80.

23 See e.g. B.J. Sellevold, U.L. Hansen, J.B. Jørgensen, *Iron Age Man in Denmark*, p. 210, table 9-2-1.

24 *Ibidem*, p. 212; F.-A. Stylegar, *The Kaupang Cemeteries Revisited*, in: *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, Aarhus 2007, p. 86.

Several explanations have been put forward for this situation; the poor preservation of fragile children's bones in contrast to the skeleton material of full-grown individuals, incomplete excavations of cemeteries, by which the smaller children's graves simply were overlooked or shallow grave pits for infants that were prone to being ploughed away or disturbed by erosion or other surface factors, or the practice of burying children together with adults.<sup>25</sup> While it is possible to identify the burials of infants even in cases of bad bone preservation through their shorter grave pits,<sup>26</sup> the identification of juvenile and almost full-grown individuals requires sufficient preserved bone material for anthropological analysis.<sup>27</sup> Missing or merely perfunctory anthropological investigations would therefore presumably distort the final ratio of sub-adults.<sup>28</sup> But even when taking into consideration the methodological and source-critical objections, the proportion of sub-adult burials – and especially infant burials – in many well excavated cemeteries is that low that the only valid explanation must be that not all children were buried in the “regular” cemeteries.<sup>29</sup>

As in some cemeteries, especially in early proto-urban settlements, the proportion of children's burials correlates with or is higher than the expected ratio of around 25% – e.g. in Sigtuna in the early phase between 970-1100 AD or in several churchyards in early Lund or in the Viking Age section of the cemetery at Ire, Hellvi parish, on Gotland – the lack or low ratio of infant burials in most cemeteries might be due a special function of the associated settlement and a different population structure. Typical examples would be early trading places with a high proportion of non-native traders that stayed only seasonally, or for a limited time and left their families at home,

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<sup>25</sup> See e.g. A.-S. Gräslund, *The Burial Customs. A Study of the Graves on Björkö, Birka IV*, Stockholm 1980, p. 82; B.J. Sellevold, U.L. Hansen, J.B. Jørgensen, *Iron Age Man in Denmark*, pp. 208-210.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. A.-S. Gräslund, *The Burial Customs...*, pp. 8-9; O. Kyhlberg, *Vikt och värde...*, pp. 204-210; U. Arents, S. Eisenschmidt, *Die Gräber von Haithabu, Die Ausgrabungen in Haithabu*, XV, Neumünster 2010, pp. 272-275. However, the length of the grave pit does not necessarily need to reflect the size of the interred individuum, as crouched adult burials in short grave pits illustrate, see A.-S. Gräslund, *Barn i Birka*, p. 164; L. Mejsholm, *Gränsland. Konstruktion av tidig barndom och begravningsritual vid tiden för kristnandet i Skandinavien*, Uppsala 2009, pp. 172-173, fig. 8.3.

<sup>27</sup> M.S. Toplak, *Das wikingerzeitliche Gräberfeld von Kopparsvik auf Gotland. Studien zu neuen Konzepten sozialer Identitäten am Übergang zum christlichen Mittelalter*, Tübingen 2016, p. 184.

<sup>28</sup> It has to be taken into consideration that the modern differentiation between juveniles and adults – based on medical aspects – does not necessarily conform with the perception of adulthood in past societies. By this, the separation between juveniles and adults might be an artificial construct that had nothing to do with life reality in Viking Age Scandinavia. For the situation on Gotland according to the medieval law collection “Gutalagen” see L. Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands...*, p. 427.

<sup>29</sup> B.J. Sellevold, U.L. Hansen, J.B. Jørgensen, *Iron Age Man in Denmark*, p. 213.

as reflected in an overrepresentation of males as at Kopparsvik on Gotland with a dominance of male burials (68%)<sup>30</sup> and the absence of infant burials. A high number of non-natives in the burials of cemetery 116 on Helgö was also mentioned as a potential explanation for the lack of infant graves,<sup>31</sup> even if the number of sexed skeletons was too small to prove a dominance of male burials.<sup>32</sup> In these cases, the lack of infant graves is simply due to a mainly adult population and reflects the reality of these societies.

But as many cemeteries belonging to settlements without evidence of trading activities or the presence of a larger non-native population exhibit a low ratio of children's burials – e.g. cemeteries as Havor, Barshalder or Broa on Gotland – it has to be assumed that a divergent treatment of deceased infants was common practice among many communities in Viking Age Scandinavia.

Based on the historical accounts of the pagan tradition of infant exposure in Viking Age society – e.g. in the *Íslendingabók* (chapter 7) and later law collections as the *Grágás*<sup>33</sup> but also in contemporary historical sources such as the travel account of the 10<sup>th</sup> century Jewish merchant Ibrāhīm ibn Ya'qūb, who reported on the practice of child exposure in Haithabu (Schleswig)<sup>34</sup> – the low ratio of infant burials might result from the exposure of newborn or younger children. In the same way, this practice can be taken as an indication, that for some children – perhaps especially for younger infants – proper burials were not regarded as being necessary.<sup>35</sup> The infants were buried according to a rite which leaves no traces in the archaeological record – e.g. through cremation or disposal in the sea as ibn Ya'qūb mentioned – or were at least buried apart from the regular cemeteries as settlement burials.<sup>36</sup> Evidence for this explanation could be found at Haithabu, where several neonates were buried within the settlement area, e.g. under the hearth.<sup>37</sup>

Another explanation is offered by the small Viking Age cemetery of Triberga on Öland, Sweden. Only three out of the 24 burials were the graves of adults, the rest (87,5%) were the burials of individuals younger

30 M.S. Toplak, *Das wikingerzeitliche Gräberfeld*, Tübingen 2016, p. 65.

31 B. Sander, R. Jonsson, *Excavations at Helgö XIII. Cemetery 116*, Stockholm 1997, p. 97.

32 Ibidem, pp. 92-94.

33 G. Kreutzer, *Schwangerschaft, Geburt und früheste Kindheit in der altnordischen Literatur*, habilitation thesis, Kiel 1982, pp. 206-213.

34 *Ibn Fadlān and the Land of Darkness...*, p. 163.

35 See the analysis of grave goods in infant burials at Fjälkinge in L. Meijsholm, *Gränsland...*, p. 200.

36 I. Beilke-Voigt, *Das "Opfer" im archäologischen Befund. Studien zu den sog. Bauopfern, kultischen Niederlegungen und Bestattungen in ur- und frühgeschichtlichen Siedlungen Norddeutschlands und Dänemarks*, Rahden 2007, pp. 186-187.

37 U. Arents, S. Eisenschmidt, *Die Gräber von Haithabu*, p. 275.



than two years old (Infans Ia) and in one grave younger than seven years old (Infans Ib).<sup>38</sup> A similar situation appertains to the larger Viking Age cemetery of Fjälkinge in Scania.<sup>39</sup> More than half (60,8%) of the 125 graves<sup>40</sup> contained young individuals of up to three years of age (Infans Ia), most of them (86,8%) died within the first year of life (age group Infant), while older children and teenagers were absent.<sup>41</sup> Given the circumstance, that the high number of children's burials was not conditioned by some epidemic or plague,<sup>42</sup> these two cemeteries might represent separate areas<sup>43</sup> or special burial places for larger communities that were intended mainly for the interment of children, which were not allowed (or able) to be buried in the regular cemeteries.

However, it is axiomatic, that there existed some form of separation between the deceased infants in Viking Age Scandinavia and that not all sub-adults were buried in the regular cemeteries among their adult family members.

As all sub-adult age groups are represented and roughly equal in many cemeteries, this separation seems not to be a matter of age. Instead a likely reason might be the social status of the particular family,<sup>44</sup> which seems especially obvious with regard to the "princely" warrior burials of young boys.<sup>45</sup> While the situation at Birka is much more ambivalent with some exceptionally rich infant burials (e.g. Bj 758, Bj 977, Bj 846) and a larger number of sub-adult graves with no or only few grave goods – especially coffin burials – a social separation is evident at the cemetery at Ire, Hellvi parish, on Gotland. A closer investigation of the 24 burials of sub-adults from Ire which are registered by Thunmark-Nylén<sup>46</sup> shows, that nearly all individuals from the age group Infans Ia/b for boys and the age group Infans

38 A. Ingvarsson-Sundström, *Osteologisk analys. Skelettgravar från Triberga Raä 73, Hulterstad sn, Öland, SAU Rapport 2005:14*, "Arkeologiska Enheten, Rapport 2006:2, Kalmar Läns Museum" (2006), p. 6, fig. 1.

39 C. Arcini, *Osteologisk Rapport av skeletten från gravarna i Fjälkinge*, in: *Rapport – Arkeologisk undersökning 1990*, Kristianstad 1990; C. Arcini, B. Helgesson, *A Major Burial Ground Discovered at Fjälkinge. Reflections of Life in a Scanian Village*, "Lund Archaeological Review" II (1996); F. Svanberg, *Decolonizing the Viking Age. Death Rituals in South-East Scandinavia 900-1000*, Stockholm 2003, pp. 301-306; L. Mejsholm, *Gränsland...*, pp. 165-201.

40 Kjellström provides slightly different data with 128 graves in total and among these 67,1% burials of individuals in the age group Infans I as well as single older sub-adults (0,8% Infans II and 2,3% juveniles), see A. Kjellström, *The Urban Farmer. Osteoarchaeological Analysis of Skeletons from Medieval Sigtuna Interpreted in a Socioeconomic Perspective*, Stockholm 2005, p. 42, table 4.8.

41 L. Mejsholm, *Gränsland...*, p. 167, table 8.1.

42 See C. Arcini, B. Jacobsson, *Vikingarna från Vannhög*, p. 5.

43 See e.g. L. Mejsholm, *Gränsland...*, p. 168 for Fjälkinge.

44 B.J. Sellevold, U.L. Hansen, J.B. Jørgensen, *Iron Age Man in Denmark*, p. 210.

45 A.-S. Gräslund, *A Princely Child*, Neumünster 1998.

46 L. Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands...*, pp. 429-430.

II onwards for girls<sup>47</sup> were buried with typical adult grave goods, including weapons and rich jewelry.<sup>48</sup> According to the burials of sub-adults at Ire, the boundary concerning grave goods lies not between infants and adults<sup>49</sup> but between neonates and infants. This leads to the assumption, that the sub-adults which were buried at Ire must be regarded as belonging to the higher social strata.

Even with the ratio of around 21% of burials of sub-adults among the inhumation graves at Ire, these graves do not reflect the total infant population. It can be hypothesized that up to one half of the deceased sub-adults were not buried among the adult population in the regular cemetery but either disposed of without a regular grave or buried at a separate location.

The distribution of infant burials reflects an intentional decision by the relatives or the local community, that a child should be buried according to the burial rites for adults and within the adult sphere in a regular cemetery<sup>50</sup> or that it should be buried together with other children at a separate burial spot, or be deposited in a specific way, which leaves no archaeological traces. According to the case study of the cemetery at Ire, the social status of the particular family seems to have been the relevant factor.

Following the classic concept of resources, children are a typical future-orientated resource for their family and society, which loses its primary value with the child's premature death. Through the presentation of infants in the burial ritual or through the decision for a regular burial among the adult members of society, a social status or the affiliation to a certain social elite ("social capital") can be presented or constructed, so that the death and burial of an infant can act once more as a resource. This function of infant burials as media of social representation becomes evident when children were not only buried with adult dress attire, but even with grave goods as status symbols

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47 The current boundaries between the single age groups are fluent, presumably due to the low sample of burials, inaccurate age determinations as well as the inadequacy of the age group-classification as modern scientific construction, which does not necessarily match with life reality.

48 In contrast to the burials at Birka, where young girls were normally not buried with the full dress of an adult female as oval brooches are missing in the burials of most sub-adult girls (see A.-S. Gräslund, *A Princely Child*, p. 285), the sub-adult females at Ire were buried with full dress attire.

49 An interesting observation can be mentioned with the fact that in at least three burials of boys at Ire (233, 380, 505) elements were found that are normally related to the female sphere, as a higher number of glass beads, L-shaped keys (*Hakenschlüssel*), dress pins or a grave orb. This might relate to the idea that children in general were associated with the female sphere, see A.-S. Gräslund, *A Princely Child*, p. 287; L. Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands...*, p. 428.

50 See even C. Hedenstierna-Jonson, *She Came from Another Place. On the Burial of a Young Girl in Birka*, in: *Viking Worlds*, Oxford 2015, p. 97; L. Meijsholm, *Gränsland...*, p. 255.

that relate to a social role, that could hardly be fulfilled by infants during their life time. The classical examples are the burials of “infant warriors” as in Birka or Ire, graves of young boys – often on the border between the age groups infans I/II – that were buried with rich furniture, including weapons, riding equipment and horses. Through this presentation of the infants, the burial ceremony was used as a(n) (immaterial) resource by the relatives to gain social prestige and to legitimize or to secure an actual or a desired social position. The weapon equipment was intended to show the military and socio-political position and function which the boy – and with him his relatives – would have possessed in the future, if he had survived until adulthood.

#### INTEGRATION IN DEATH. OTHERNESS AS A RESOURCE

Another example for the shift in the use and function of (human) resources can be observed in a recently discussed phenomenon of body modifications in Viking Age Scandinavia.<sup>51</sup> Three females with deliberately deformed skulls were found in Viking Age cemeteries on Gotland, buried according to the local funerary customs within the local community and equipped with the attire which was typical of the female dress on Gotland (fig. 5). The custom of artificial cranial deformation – an intentional distorting of the growth of a child’s skull using tapes that were wrapped around the soft skull bones in the first years of life – is usually associated with nomadic tribes from Central Asia and the Eurasian steppe<sup>52</sup> and appeared also in Central and Western Europe between 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century AD, especially under the influence of the Hun Empire<sup>53</sup> in the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>54</sup> In contrast to the eastern

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<sup>51</sup> M.S. Toplak, *Körpermodifikationen als Embodiment von sozialer Identität und als sozio-kulturelle Ressource. Das Fallbeispiel der artifiziellen Schädeldeformationen in der skandinavischen Wikingerzeit. Mit einem Beitrag zur Kranimetrie von Valerie Palmowski* (2019, in preparation).

<sup>52</sup> S. Hakenbeck, *Infant Head Shaping in Eurasia in the First Millennium AD*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Childhood*, Oxford 2018, pp. 485-486.

<sup>53</sup> See also P. Mayall, V. Pilbrow, L. Bitadze, *Migrating Huns and Modified Heads. Eigenshape Analysis Comparing Intentionally Modified Crania from Hungary and Georgia in the Migration Period of Europe*, “PloS one” XII (2017) 2, p.....

<sup>54</sup> K.W. Alt, *Die artifizielle Schädeldeformation bei den Westgermanen*, in: *Искусственная деформация головы человека в прошлом Евразии*, Moskau 2006, p....; S. Hakenbeck, “Hunnish” Modified Skulls. *Physical Appearance, Identity and the Transformative Nature of Migrations*, in: *Mortuary Practices and Social Identities in the Middle Ages*, Exeter 2009, p....; B. Tobias, K. Wiltshcke-Schrotta, M. Binder, *Das langobardenzeitliche Gräberfeld von Wien-Mariahilfer Gürtel. Mit einem Beitrag zur künstlichen Schädeldeformation im westlichen Karpatenbecken*, “Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums” LVII (2010), pp. 296- 301; B. Trautmann, B. Haas-Gebhard, A. Boos, A. Rott, M. Groß, J. Burger, M. Harbeck, *Eine Reevaluation artifiziell deformierter Schädel des Frühen Mittelalters aus Bayern*, “Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt” XLVII (2017) 2, p.....

regions from Central Asia to Eastern and Central Europe, artificial skull deformation in Western Europe was almost exclusively limited to females, which were buried in several Migration Period cemeteries in southern and southwestern Germany, Switzerland and southern France.<sup>55</sup> Although these females were buried according to local burial customs and furnished with the characteristic dress attire,<sup>56</sup> analyses of aDNA,<sup>57</sup> stable strontium and carbon isotopes<sup>58</sup> suggest, that they were of non-local origin and came to Western Europe as adults, presumably in the context of exogamy.<sup>59</sup>

Even if no scientific analyses of these three skulls from Gotland are available to date, it can be assumed that these females did not grow up locally as all three roughly date to the same period – around the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD – and no indication could be found that these females passed on this custom to their descendants.<sup>60</sup> Based on the current state of research, it seems to be most likely that these individuals came to Gotland as juveniles or adults from Southeastern Europe or maybe even Central Asia, having their heads been deformed in early childhood. They

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55 See S. Hakenbeck, “Hunnish” Modified Skulls..., p. 73; eadem, *Infant Head Shaping...*, p. 487 for a detailed survey.

56 S. Hakenbeck, “Hunnish” Modified Skulls..., pp. 74-75.

57 K.R. Veeramah, A. Rott, M. Groß, L. van Dorp, S. López, K. Kirsanow, C. Sell, J. Blöcher, D. Wegmann, V. Link, Z. Hofmanová, J. Peters, B. Trautmann, A. Gairhos, J. Haberstroh, B. Paffgen, G. Hellenthal, B. Haas-Gebhard, M. Harbeck, J. Burger, *Population Genomic Analysis of Elongated Skulls Reveals Extensive Female-Biased Immigration in Early Medieval Bavaria*, “Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America” CXV (13) (2018) 13, p....

58 M.M. Schweissing, G. Grupe, *Local or Nonlocal? A Research of Strontium Isotope Ratios of Teeth and Bones on Skeletal Remains with Artificial Deformed Skulls*, “Anthropologischer Anzeiger” LVIII (2000) 1; idem, *Stable Strontium Isotopes in Human Teeth and Bone. A Key to Migration Events in the Late Roman Period in Bavaria*, “Journal of Archaeological Science” XXX (2003) 11, p. 1377; S. Hakenbeck, E. McManus, H. Geisler, G. Grupe, T. O’Connell, *Diet and Mobility in Early Medieval Bavaria. A Study of Carbon and Nitrogen Stable Isotopes*, “American Journal of Physical Anthropology” CXLIII (2010), pp. 244-247; A. Wisnowsky, R. Schleuder, S. Wilde, G. Grupe, J. Burger, M. Harbeck, “Fremde” Sitten im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern. Kulturtransfer oder Migration?, in: *Archäometrie und Denkmalpflege 2010*, Bochum 2010, pp. 190-191; O. Heinrich-Tamaska, M.M. Schweissing, *Strontiumisotopen- und Radiokarbonuntersuchungen am anthropologischen Fundmaterial von Keszthely-Fenekpuszta. Ihr Aussagepotenzial zur Frage der Migration und Chronologie*, in: *Keszthely-Fenekpuszta im Kontext spätantiker Kontinuitätsforschung zwischen Noricum und Moesia (Castellum Pannonicum Pelsonense)*, Rahden 2011, p. 466; M.A. Vohberger, “Lokal oder eingewandert? Interpretationsmöglichkeiten und Grenzen der lokalen Strontium- und Sauerstoffisotopensignaturen am Beispiel der Altgrabung in Wenigumstadt”, PhD thesis, München 2011, pp. 195-196; B. Trautmann, B. Haas-Gebhard, A. Boos, A. Rott, M. Groß, J. Burger, M. Harbeck, *Eine Reevaluation artifiziell deformierter Schädel des Frühen Mittelalters aus Bayern*, “Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt” XLVII (2017) 2, p. 274.

59 S. Hakenbeck, “Hunnish” modified skulls, pp. 77-78; eadem, *Infant Head Shaping...*, pp. 491-492.

60 M.S. Toplak, *Körpermodifikationen...*

were integrated into the local community, presumably by marriage, but were not allowed or able to transmit the custom of artificial cranial deformation within their new environment, even if they had female offspring.

Artificial cranial deformation was intended as a marker of identity, as a token of affiliation to a certain social group in the original homelands of the three females from Gotland. Therefor it must be interpreted as a resource, as it constructed and presented a social identity – being part of a group of people and gaining benefit from social connections and group prestige – and by this social capital. In their new community on Gotland, this resource – the apparent affiliation to a social group – lost its value, presumably as this special identity was unknown on Gotland.

Instead, the perception of the cranial deformation and its exploitation as a resource shifted from the resource “membership” to the resource “otherness” and from the three females to the surrounding society. Through the burial according to local funerary customs and furnished with typical Gotlandic dress attire such as animal head brooches, the three females were ultimately and ostentatiously assimilated into the local community, although they were distinctly marked as foreign. It can be assumed, that the “otherness” of these females, manifested by their deformed heads, was utilized as a resource by the surrounding community, perhaps to demonstrate their far-reaching trading connections. This assimilation is especially significant in the case of one individual who was not only buried with the typical Gotlandic dress but with an exaggerated set of brooches which is an almost unique example on Gotland and was intended to conspicuously emphasize her new affiliation to the Gotlandic society. Thus, the females with their distinctly foreign appearance were instrumentalized in the same way as exotic and foreign artifacts were utilized as status symbols, as a resource of “otherness” (or “foreignness”) which must be regarded as important social capital within a society dominated by trading and far-reaching travel.

#### TO BURY YOUR FAMILY INTO HISTORY. BURIALS AS A CLAIM TO LAND AND LEADERSHIP

Turning from the actual orchestration of the burial ceremony to the grave itself, it is obvious that those famous grave monuments at Oseberg, Gokstad or the Anundshög at Västerås were intended as explicit statements about political claims and lordship and thus constitute resources in a situation of social competitions.<sup>61</sup> But even in average rural cemeteries as distinct from

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<sup>61</sup> See e.g. O. Sundqvist, *An Arena for Higher Powers. Ceremonial Buildings and Religious Strategies for Rulership in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*, Leiden 2016, pp. 433-475.



the centers of power, the location and construction of graves might have been affected by the attempt to manipulate the social reality.<sup>62</sup>

A good example for this concept is the cemetery of Havor in Hablingbo parish on Gotland.<sup>63</sup> The oldest of nearly 400 preserved graves date to the early Iron Age (younger La Tène) from around 400 BC<sup>64</sup> and the cemetery was in use almost continuously until the late Viking Age for around 1500 years, with only one interruption between older Vendel Period and later Viking Age (fig. 6).<sup>65</sup> The cemetery developed linearly from east to west with the oldest graves lying in the east and some of the ca. 70 graves from late Viking Age in the western area of the cemetery. However, many of the youngest graves from late Viking Age were lying in two separate clusters in the central area of the cemetery between the older graves from the late Iron Age and the Migration Period as so called regression graves. More than a dozen of them were even dug into older burial mounds from the late Iron Age.<sup>66</sup> This must be seen as an intended rite, as the area of the cemetery was not limited towards west, so there was enough space for more graves in accordance with the linear development of the cemetery. The burials from the late Viking Age were mostly placed exactly in older graves, e.g. on the cremation layer or in stone cists (fig. 7).

The intention behind these frequent secondary burials remains unknown – perhaps some cultic or religious ideas existed connected to the veneration of remote ancestors or the dead in general – but at least familiar relations between the late Iron Age and the Viking Age population can be ruled out because of the enormous chronological discrepancies.<sup>67</sup> A likely explanation however might be the intended construction of continuity. By burying the deceased next to or even in older graves, the relatives wanted to display their pretended descent from the local Iron Age population and thereby writing (or digging in the very sense of the word) themselves into the local traditions of this place. This constructed descent and continuity should grant them legitimacy in their claim to land or rulership as distinct from other social groups, that buried (or had to bury) their deceased in the western area of

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<sup>62</sup> See e.g. F. Fahlander, *The Materiality of the Ancient Dead. Post-burial Practices and Ontologies of Death in Southern Sweden AD 800-1200*, "Current Swedish Archaeology" XXIV (2016).

<sup>63</sup> E. Nylén, *Die jüngere vorrömische Eisenzeit Gotlands. Funde, Chronologie, Formenkunde*, Uppsala 1955, pp. 61-65; L. Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands...*, pp. 619-621; J. Staecker, M.S. Toplak, *Die spätwikingerzeitlichen Bestattungen auf dem Gräberfeld von Havor, Hablingbo sn* (2019, in preparation).

<sup>64</sup> E. Nylén, *Die jüngere vorrömische...*, p. 61.

<sup>65</sup> L. Thunmark-Nylén, *Die Wikingerzeit Gotlands...*, p. 595.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, p. 619.

<sup>67</sup> E. Nylén, *Die jüngere vorrömische...*, p. 64.



the cemetery away from the older graves. So, even the location of graves can reflect explicit socio-political agendas and might be utilized as a resource to construct or to illustrate certain claims.

A distinct religious aspect in the construction or presentation of certain claims to leadership by re-using older burial monuments is visible in one of the oldest burial mounds at the cemetery at Valsta, Uppland, in Sweden. The cemetery, which was in use for around 350 years between the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century AD<sup>68</sup> represents a transitional phase between the traditional pre-Christian cult – as seen in cremation graves or amulets such as thorshammerrings or single thorshammer pendants<sup>69</sup> – and the up-and-coming Christian faith.<sup>70</sup> One of the oldest burials and probably the foundation grave was the burial mound A1, which lay in the center of the northern area of the cemetery surrounded by later graves and which can be dated to the pre-Christian period in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century. The excavator G. Andersson considered the mound A1 as the manifestation of an “Odal mentality”,<sup>71</sup> that would illustrate or construct claims to land or rulership. During the time of Christianization in the later phase of the cemetery around 1100 AD, the burial mound was reopened and re-used in an exceptional way. The primary cremation grave was destroyed, and three stone cists were erected inside the mound, together forming a large cross (fig. 8).<sup>72</sup> This symbolic action must be regarded as an ostentatious statement on several levels. Based on Andersson’s convincing interpretation of the burial mound as a socio-political statement of a leading family or group, the re-use might be interpreted as an occupation by another party, as the older cremation burial was destroyed (intentionally or carelessly),<sup>73</sup> so that a closer lineage between the person in the primary burial and the deceased in the cross-shaped burial pits seems to be unlikely. Furthermore, the “Christianization” of the burial mound as a central monument of an “Odal mentality” at Valsta is an explicit affirmation of the legitimacy of leadership. The claim to sovereignty is no longer based merely on local traditions and inheritance, but in addition also on the religious (and the increasing political) authority of Christianity. And – with this cumulative political claim to power

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<sup>68</sup> G. Andersson, *Gravspråk som religiös strategi. Valsta och Skälby i Attundaland under vikingatid och tidig medeltid*, Stockholm 2005, p. 44.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, pp. 67-71.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, p. 100.

<sup>71</sup> G. Andersson, *Valsta gravfält, Arkeologisk undersökning, Arlandabanan, Uppland, Norrsunda socken RAÄ 59. UV Stockholm Rapport 1997:9/1(2)*, Stockholm 1997, p. 53.

<sup>72</sup> See also S. Tesch, *A Lost World? Religious Identity and Burial Practices during the Introduction of Christianity in the Mälaren Region, Sweden*, in: *Dying Gods – Religious Beliefs in Northern and Eastern Europe in the Time of Christianisation*, Stuttgart 2015, p. 198; F. Fahlander, *The Materiality...*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>73</sup> F. Fahlander, *The Materiality...*, pp. 144.

of the early Christian church in mind – the demonstration of the affiliation with the Christian community by this public funeral might be an attempt by a leading family to present their faith and their claim as spokespersons within the early Christian community. The graves at Havor and the central burial mound A1 at Valsta and their use as burial spot provide a socio-political statement which illustrates the potential and the importance of funerals and graves as a resource within the social competition for prestige, leadership and authority.

#### TO ENGRAVE MEMORY. COMMEMORATION AS RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL PRESTIGE AND INHERITANCE CLAIMS

The custom of raising rune stones in memory of deceased relatives or close companions is the main expression of literacy ("runacy" as Bianchi calls it)<sup>74</sup> in Viking Age society and provides a direct approach towards a mentality and ideas of commemoration. While the first rune stones, written in the older futhark, date back to the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>75</sup> the classical period of the more than 3.000 currently known rune stones lies in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in Denmark, Norway and southern Sweden.<sup>76</sup> On Bornholm and in Uppland in East Middle Sweden – with more than 1.300 examples<sup>77</sup> the hot spot of rune stones – most rune stones were erected in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and partly even in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>78</sup>

Most rune stones exhibit a laconic and standardized inscription, mentioning the donator in first place, followed by the name of the commemorated and their relationship with the donator (father, son, brother, companion, husband), occasionally supplemented by further information about the deeds of the deceased or the circumstances of death and Christian blessings. On the one hand, rune stones were certainly intended as a memorial,<sup>79</sup> especially in the

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<sup>74</sup> M. Bianchi, *Runor som resurs. Vikingatida skriftkultur i Uppland och Södermanland*, Uppsala 2010, p. 25.

<sup>75</sup> B. Sawyer, *The Viking-Age Rune-Stones. Custom and Commemoration in Early Medieval Scandinavia*, Oxford 2000, p. 7-8; L. Klos, *Runensteine in Schweden. Studien zu Aufstellungsort und Funktion*, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde, LXIV, Berlin-New York 2009, p. 36.

<sup>76</sup> B. Sawyer, *The Viking-Age Rune-Stones...*, p. 10.

<sup>77</sup> B. Sawyer, *The Viking-Age Rune-Stones...*, p. 7; L. Klos, *Runensteine in Schweden...*, p. 41, tab. 1.

<sup>78</sup> A.-S. Gräslund, *Runstenar – om ornamentik och datering*, "Tor. Tidskrift för nordisk fornkunskap" XXIII (1991); eadem, *Runstenar – om ornamentik och datering*, "Tor. Tidskrift för nordisk fornkunskap" XXIV (1992); L. Klos, *Runensteine in Schweden...*, pp. 138-143.

<sup>79</sup> I.-M. Back Danielsson, *Walking Down Memory Lane. Rune-Stones as Mnemonic Agents in the Landscapes of Late Viking-Age Scandinavia*, in: *Medieval Stone Monuments*, Woodbridge 2015.

context of the process of Christianization.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, based on the location of most rune stones at important and frequented places such as roads or bridges,<sup>81</sup> and the fact, that every inscription starts with the name of the donator,<sup>82</sup> even the standardized rune stones must be regarded as a medium of propaganda for the donator, and as a resource in social competition. This becomes particularly apparent in regard to the enormous number of rune stones in Uppland, where more than 1.300 rune stones were erected in a maximum of four or five generations. Donating a rune stone for a deceased relative seems to have been a social convention among the local elite and indispensable in terms of social prestige and political ambitions.<sup>83</sup> Thus, the death and memory of a relative served as capital for social prestige and the affiliation to a certain social elite.<sup>84</sup>

This is illustrated in an outstanding manner on a rune stone from Bornholm.

: asualdi : risti : stein : þinsa : iftR : alfar : brupur : sin : drinr : koþr | | :  
trebin u:syni : auk : skogi : suek : saklausan :<sup>85</sup>

The first half of the inscription from the rune stone Vestermarie V (DR 387) follows the classical schema, mentioning the donator Ásvaldi, raising a rune stone for his brother Alfarr. In contrast, the second part of the inscription is unique, accusing against a man called Skógi, who was said to have betrayed – and perhaps even killed – the commemorated Alfarr. This interesting aspect of the inscription leads to the question, why Ásvaldi invested resources

<sup>80</sup> L. Klos, *Runensteine in Schweden...*, pp. 338-339; M. Bianchi, *Runor som resurs*, Uppsala 2010, pp. 29-31.

<sup>81</sup> For an analysis of the material from Sweden see L. Klos, *Runensteine in Schweden...*, pp. 65-134.

<sup>82</sup> An interesting question is the stability of the mnemonic aspect of rune stones as neither patronyms nor concrete affiliations to certain families or farms were mentioned. Was there some form of oral transmission, that passed down the central mnemonic aspect in addition to the rune stones for several generations, thereby securing a definite attribution to certain individuals? Or were the rune stones simply not intended for a longer lasting transmission, so that their value and utilization as a resource was bound only to the donator and became obsolete after his death? Given this possibility, the propagandistic aspect of rune stones as a resource might have been assumed by later individuals without any relation to the original donator in the same way as it can be detected in the case of re-used burials.

<sup>83</sup> See e.g. M. Ozawa, *Rune Stones Create a Political Landscape. Towards a Methodology for the Application of Runology to Scandinavian Political History in the Late Viking Age, Part 1*, "Herasetec: Journal of Hermeneutic Study and Education of Textual Configuration" I (2007); M. Bianchi, *Runstenen som socialt medium*, "Studier i svensk språkhistoria" 13 (2016).

<sup>84</sup> See also Bianchi and his interpretation of use and function of rune stones in the period of religious transition in M. Bianchi, *Runor som resurs...*

<sup>85</sup> "Ásvaldi raised this stone in memory of Alfarr, his brother, a good valiant man, shamefully killed, and Skógi betrayed the guiltless one." (Citation and translation after Projektet Samnordisk runtextdatabas).

to manifest this accusation. A potential explanation might be the function of rune stones as a medium of propaganda, e.g. to proclaim or secure inheritance claims.<sup>86</sup> Alfarr, the deceased, and the accused Skógi must have been related to each other in some way, possibly as trading partners with common property (Old Norse *félag*<sup>87</sup>). According to the testimony of some runic inscriptions concerning the rules of inheritance for trading partners in a *félag*, the surviving partner – Skógi in this example – might have had the claim to his partner's share of their common property.<sup>88</sup> The accusation of being a traitor – and perhaps even a murderer or at least being guilty of the death of Alfarr – could be regarded as an attempt by Ásvaldi to refuse Skógi his (or even also Alfarr's) part of the common property due to his deeds, while at the same time referring to his own inheritance claims as brother of the deceased.

This example – even if one of the more dramatic ones – illustrates, how the death of an individual and the commemoration in form of a runic monument could be utilized as some form of resource to manipulate the social reality.

#### A TRANSMISSION TO LITERATURE. SOME REMARKS ON THE FUNCTION OF DEATH AND BURIAL IN OLD NORSE SAGA LITERATURE

Death is one of the main subjects in Old Norse saga literature and the concern with this central element of human life characterizes the deeds of most protagonists, last but not least in form of the dominating blood feuds. So, it is not surprising that the death – and in several interesting cases also the burial – of one of the protagonists appears to be utilized as some form of resource within the narrative of Old Norse literature, that fulfills specific functions at different levels.

The first example is a short citation from chapter 17 in *Laxdála saga* about the burial of a man called Víga-Hrapp, who is denoted as a troublemaker and potential revenant<sup>89</sup> by his byname “Víga” (eng. killer) from his first appearance onwards. Hrapp demanded to be buried in a standing position beneath the door of his house, so that he might control his household even in

<sup>86</sup> B. Sawyer, *The Viking-Age Rune-Stones...*, pp. 47-91; L. Klos, *Runensteine in Schweden...*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>87</sup> See J. Jesch, *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age. The Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verse*, Woodbridge 2001, pp. 232-235.

<sup>88</sup> B. Sawyer, *The Viking-Age Rune-Stones...*, p. 63.

<sup>89</sup> For the concept of revenants in Old Norse literature see Vésteinn Ólason, *The Un/Grateful Dead – from Baldr to Bægifótr*, in: *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society*, Viborg 2003; K. Bödl, *Eigi einhamr. Beiträge zum Weltbild der Eyrbyggja und anderer Isländersagas*, *Ergänzungsbande zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, IIL, Berlin-New York 2005.

death: “En þá at ek em andaðr, þá vil ek mér láta grøf grafa í eldhúsdurum, ok skal mik niðr setja standanda þar í durunum. Má ek þá enn vendiligar sjá yfir hýbýli mín”.<sup>90</sup> This passage illustrates the general concept of death and burial as a resource on two levels. On the one side, in a cultural interpretation, this specific form of burial serves as a resource for Hrapp himself to express his claim to ownership of his farmstead even beyond death. His standing position with the line of sight directed over his property can be interpreted as a non-acceptance of death in contrast to the classical lying position in burials which denotes eternal sleep. Even if no burials in such a vertical position are known from Viking Age Scandinavia, the idea of a posthumous “eternal” watch, that might be intended as a claim to possession, control or rulership seems to have existed in Viking Age mentality and can be detected in some burials. Examples are three chamber graves from Birka, in which the weapon-bearing deceased was buried – possibly even in a seated position as can be documented in some chamber graves from the Birka cemeteries<sup>91</sup> – facing the settlement area and the harbor in contrast to most of the other burials, that were directed away from the settlement towards the center of the island of Björkö<sup>92</sup>. On the other narrative level, this form of burial is the precondition for the inevitable return of Hrapp as a revenant and serves as a resource for the inner logic of the narration. Through not accepting his death and his separation from the world of the living, emphasized by his demanded form of burial, his return as a “dangerous dead”<sup>93</sup> is of a structural necessity for the further development of the saga.

The next example is last chapter of the *Hálfðanar saga svarta* from Snorri Sturlusons *Heimskringla*, reporting the death and burial of beloved king Hálfðan<sup>94</sup>.

Svá mikit gerðu menn sér um hann, at þá er þat spurðisk, at hann var dauðr, ok lík hans var flutt á Hringaríki ok var þar til graptar ætlat, þa fóru ríkismenn af Raumaríki ok af Vestfold ok Heiðmörk ok beiddusk allir at hafa líkit með sér ok heygja í sínz fylki, ok þótti þat vera árvænt,

<sup>90</sup> “Now, when I am dead, I wish my grave to be dug in the doorway of my fire hall, and that I be put thereinto, standing there in the doorway; then I shall be able to keep a more searching eye on my dwelling”, *Laxdála saga*, chapter 17, in *Laxdála saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit, V, Reykjavík 1934, p. 39.

<sup>91</sup> N. Price, *The Viking Way. Religion and War in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*, Uppsala 2002, p. 133.

<sup>92</sup> M.S. Toplak, *Burial Archaeology...*, pp. 136-138.

<sup>93</sup> For the “dangerous dead” in Old Norse saga literature see M.S. Toplak, *Das wikingergezeitliche Gräberfeld*, Tübingen 2016, pp. 269-271.

<sup>94</sup> O. Sundqvist, *An Arena for Higher Powers...*, pp. 462-465. For the archaeological context of non-normative “deviant” burial rites see L. Gardela, *Worshipping the Dead. Viking Age Cemeteries as Cult Sites?*, in: *Germanische Kultorte*, München 2016, pp. 174-175; M.S. Toplak, *Burial Archaeology...*, p. 141.

þeir er næði. En þeir sættusk svá, at líkinu var skipt í fjóra staði, ok var hofuðit lagit í haug at Steini á Hringaríki, en hverir fluttu heim sinn hluta ok heygðu, ok eru þat alt kallaðir Hálfðanar-haugar.<sup>95</sup>

The local rulers from the different parts of the kingdom asked to bury king Hálfðan in their realm as the dead body of the king has turned into a resource of power. Through the burial of the king a particular region would – on the one hand – have highlighted it as an important center of the kingdom by housing the burial of the king, and would have strengthened the political position of the particular chieftain. On the other hand, and according to the narration in the *Heimskringla*, the remains of the king were explicitly perceived as being sacred, giving prosperity and some form of spiritual salvation to the country, an idea which resembles Christian beliefs of the holiness and thaumaturgy of relics, but might stem from older, pagan traditions of the veneration of deceased rulers<sup>96</sup>. On a narrative level, the story about the dismemberment of king Hálfðan acts as an explanation for the tradition of the Hálfðanar-haugar, burial mounds that are associated in folklore with the burial of king Hálfðan. Thus, the outstanding form of the burial of king Hálfðan serves as a resource for the reliability of the whole story as it is linked with and embedded into local folklore<sup>97</sup>.

A third example comes from the second to last chapter from *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, which tells of the discovery of Egil's bones on a churchyard.

Grímr at Mosfelli var skírðr þá er kristni var í lög leidd á Íslandi. Hann lét þar kirkju gera, en þat er sögn manna at Þórdís hafi látit flytja Egil til kirkju ok er þat til jartegna, at síðan er kirkja var gøt at Mosfelli, en ofan tekin at Hrísbú sú kirkja er Grímr hafði gera látit, þá var þar grafinn kirkjugarðr. En undir altarisstaðnum þá fundusk mannabein. Þau váru miklu stærri en annarra manna bein. Þikjask menn þat vita af sögn gamalla manna at mundi verit hafa bein Egils.<sup>98</sup>

95 "People thought so much of him that when it became known that he was dead and his body was taken to Hringaríki and was going to be buried there, then the rulers came from Raumaríki and from Vestfold and Heiðmörk and all asked to take the body with them and bury it in a mound in their own district, and it was considered a promise of prosperity for whoever got it. And they came to this agreement that the body was divided into four parts, and the head was laid in a mound at Steinn in Hringaríki, and they each took back with them their own share and buried it, and these are all known as Hálfðan's mounds", *Hálfðanar saga svarta*, chapter 9, in *Heimskringla I*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, XXVI, Reykjavík 1941, pp. 92-93.

96 O. Sundqvist, *An Arena for Higher Powers...*, pp. 464-465.

97 See M. Egeler, *Constructing a Landscape in Eyrbyggja saga. The Case of Dritsker*, "Arkiv för nordisk filologi" CXXXII (2017), pp. 108-109.

98 "Grim of Mossfell was baptized when Christianity was established by law in Iceland. He had a church built there, and this is common report that Thordis had Egil moved to the



As in the two previous examples, the burial fulfills again two functions on two levels in this narration. On the one hand, the alleged burial of Egill in the churchyard of one of the first churches of Iceland attests to the social position and importance of Grímr of Mossfell and his descendants, as one of the great heroes of the Landnám was buried next to his church. The transmission of Egil's bones and his later burial in this churchyard – the saga tells, that Egill was originally buried in a burial mound according to pagan burial rites<sup>99</sup> – serves as a resource for the social standing of a certain group of people. On the other hand – as in the example of king Hálfðan – the description of the finding of these enormous bones which were assigned to Egill proves the reliability of the saga accounts and the local tradition concerning Egill.

#### THE USE OF DEATH AND BURIAL AS RESOURCES. AN OPPORTUNISTIC APPROACH

Even if the death and burial of a beloved person was in the first place an emotional matter – presumably even in Viking Age Scandinavia – archaeological as well as historical and literary evidence illustrate rather clearly, that the memory of the deceased, their funeral ceremonies and graves were sometimes utilized as means for the negotiation or manipulation of the social reality. This demonstrates, that even death and burial – as well as most other aspects of human behavior – should not be underestimated in their multidimensional functions and their potential as resources in social competition. Therefore, a much more skeptical view of the settings and intentions behind every single burial seems to be of paramount importance for the understanding of the social reality. Archaeology needs to scrutinize the general perception of burials as being completely normed disposals of human bodies, characterized by religious or cultic aspects which are typical for the particular cultural group. First of all, burials must be regarded as social statements, in which every aspect of the funeral ceremony and the grave was deliberately designed and in which the deceased functions as a medium and a resource, closely interwoven with the social and political situation, and with the intentions, claims and aims of their relatives.

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church. And this proof there is thereof, that later on, when a church was built at Mossfell, and that church which Grim had built at Hrísbú taken down, the churchyard was dug over, and under the altar-place were found human bones. They were much larger than the bones of other men. From the tales of old people it is thought pretty sure that these were Egil's bones", *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, chapter 86, in *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*, ed. Sigurður Nordal, Íslensk fornrit, II, Reykjavík 1933, pp. 298-299.

<sup>99</sup> *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar*..., chapter 87.

## ABSTRACT

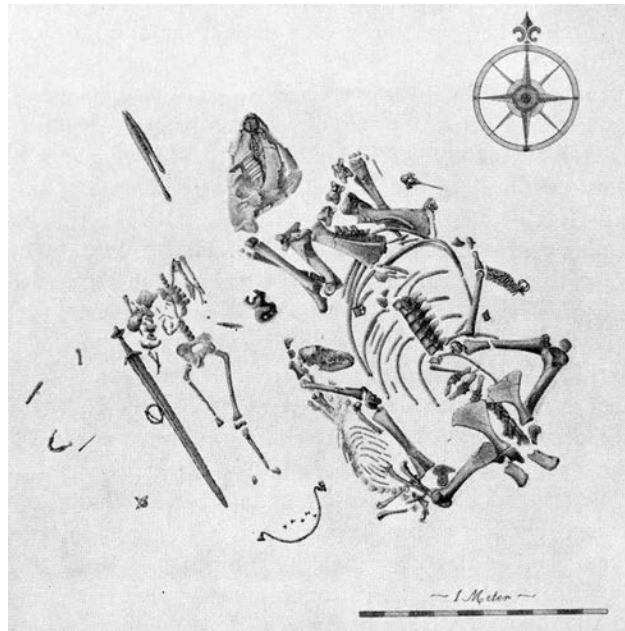
Beside the aspect of the technical removal of a dead body, a burial is mainly a public ritual within the local community which fulfils several religious, cultic but also social and political functions. As other public feasts like weddings, the highly dynamic burial ceremony allows a negotiation or manipulation of the social reality through grave goods, the outer form of the grave or the position of the dead body itself. By this, death and burial can serve as an immaterial resources for the bereaved to reconstruct, legitimize or secure their social position or political claim, which will be analyzed within the research project "SFB 1070 ResourceCultures B06 – Humans and Resources in Viking Age".



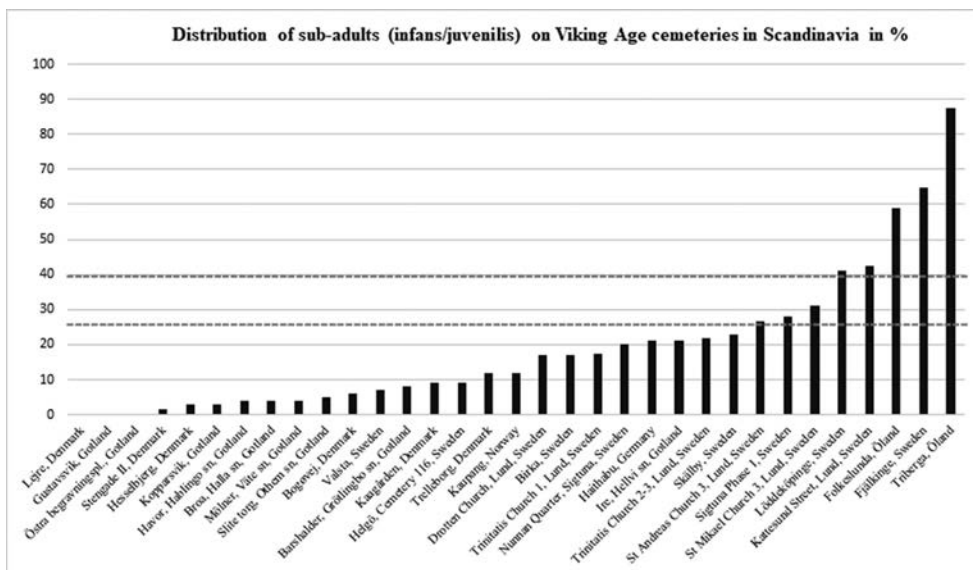
**Fig. 1.** The Brazilian millionaire C. Scarpa during the alleged funeral ceremony for his Bentley. Picture taken from "Daily Mail Online"; 21 September 2018. By C. Scarpa.



**Fig. 2.** Interpretation of the funeral of a Rus chieftain, based on ibn Fadlan's travelogue. Painting by Henryk Siemiradzki, 1883.



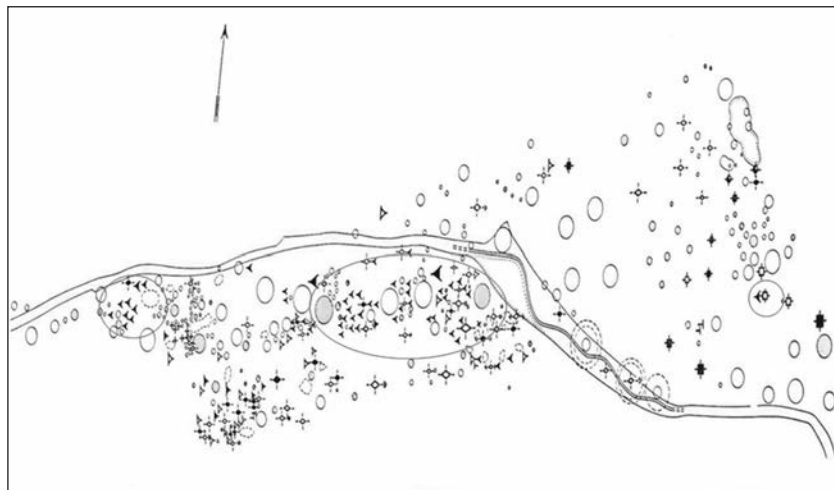
**Fig. 3.** Drawing of the burial of a young boy with sword, spears, riding equipment and a horse in the Viking Age cemetery of Ire on Gotland. Taken from M. Stenberger, *En ryttagravn på Irefältet*, "Gotländskt arkiv" XIV (1942), p. 29.



**Fig. 4.** Chart with the distribution of the burials of sub-adults (infans/juvenilis) in Viking Age cemeteries in Scandinavia in percent. The expected proportion of infant burials between 25-40% is marked. By M. Toplak.

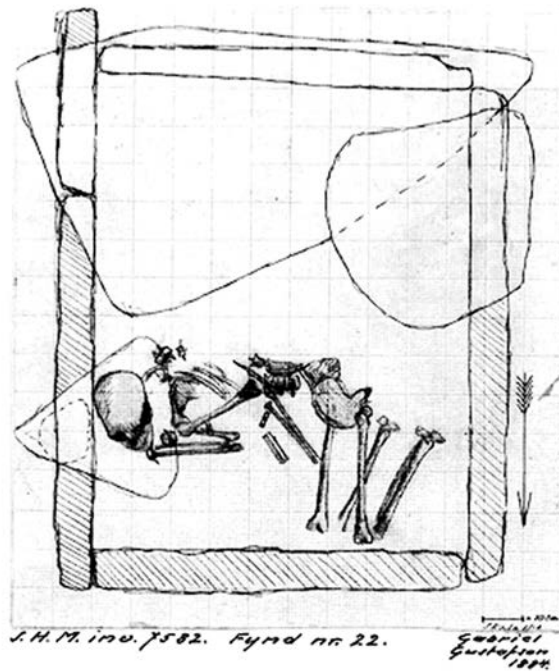


**Fig. 5.** Drawing of the burial of a female with an artificially deformed skull, equipped with typical Gotlandic dress attire, from the cemetery of Havor, Hablingbo sn, on Gotland. Drawing by G. Gustafson 1886 (RAÄ/ATA, Stockholm), modified by M. Toplak.

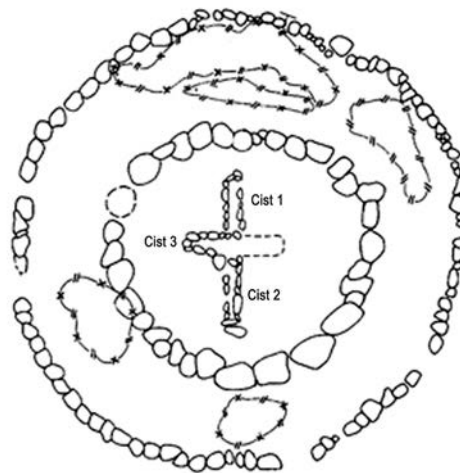


**Fig. 6.** Plan of the cemetery of Havor, Hablingbo sn, on Gotland, with clusters of late Viking Age burials (marked as triangle) among older Iron Age graves. Drawing by G. Gustafson 1887 (RAÄ/ATA, Stockholm), modified by M. Toplak.





**Fig. 7.** Drawing of a late Viking Age burial in an older Iron Age stone cist. Drawing by G. Gustafson 1884 (RAÄ/ATA, Stockholm), modified by M. Toplak.



**Fig. 8.** Drawing of the central burial mound from Valsta, Uppland, with a cross-shaped burial pit.

Taken from F. Fahlander, *The Materiality of the Ancient Dead. Post-burial Practices and Ontologies of Death in Southern Sweden AD 800-1200*, "Current Swedish Archaeology" XXIV (2016), p. 143, fig. 3, modified by M. Toplak.





SIRPA AALTO  
OULU

## CONTEXTUALISING *JÓMSVÍKINGA SAGA*



"Augljóst er að sagan er sett saman mönnum til skemmtunar, en þar með er þó ekki sagt að höfundurinn hafi ekki sjálfur trúað að minnsta kosti sumu af sögu sinni."<sup>1</sup>

As Ólafur Halldórsson's statement shows, *Jónsbók* *saga*'s entertaining side is strong, although the saga has its background in historical events and characters. The saga's role in Old Norse historiography and development has been dealt with in earlier research.<sup>2</sup> In this article I will concentrate on investigating the context of *Jónsbók* *saga*: What kind of meaning did *Jónsbók* *saga* have in the environment where it was produced but also preserved for centuries? I will approach this question from two different angles: on the one hand, by contextualising the saga's relationship to Old Norse historiography and on the other hand, by using two of the oldest manuscripts of the saga. In the end, this investigation adds to what we can say about the role of *Jónsbók* *saga* in Old Norse historiography, its reception and meaning on a local level, and, eventually, what the next steps are in this investigation.

The research question intertwines with the discussion of saga genres, and the genre in the case of *Jónsbók* *saga* is related to the question of Old Norse historiography. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, scholars have categorised sagas on the basis of what they themselves think defines a genre. This, of course, is problematic because it is typical for a saga to combine features that define

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<sup>1</sup> "It is clear that the saga is written to amuse people, but it does not exclude the possibility that the author himself would not have believed in at least part of the saga [to be true]." (my translation) Ólafur Halldórsson, *Jónsbók* *saga*, Formáli, Reykjavík 1969, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Sirpa Aalto, *Jónsbók* *saga* as a Part of Old Norse Historiography, "Scripta Islandica" LXV (2014), pp. 33-58.

at least two, maybe three genres. Therefore, some sagas such as *Jómsvíkinga saga* have been difficult to categorise under one saga genre.<sup>3</sup>

*Jómsvíkinga saga's* supposed early date of writing (around 1200 AD) raises questions such as what the author or authors wanted to convey to the saga audience: a history, just a good story, or a mix of these. Why is it important to define *Jómsvíkinga saga's* relationship to Old Norse historiography? The saga itself is partly based on historical characters and events. The core of the saga is embedded in such compendia as *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*, and it is to be found in *Flateyjarbók* as well. As has been pointed out earlier, *Jómsvíkinga saga* may have shifted from historiography to entertainment in later centuries, which means that its role in Old Norse historiography has not been self-evident.<sup>4</sup>

*Jómsvíkinga saga* is divided according to the stemma that we now have, in two different versions, which are named Primary Version I and Primary Version II. The first one, Primary Version I, is presented in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*. Primary Version II consists of AM 291 4to (from now on AM 291) and *Flateyjarbók*. The shortened redaction of this is to be found in the manuscript Stock Perg 4:o nr 7 (from now on Stock Perg). *Jómsvíkinga saga* is also preserved in AM 510 4to (from the 16<sup>th</sup> century), but this and the Latin translation of the saga from the 16<sup>th</sup> century made by scholar Arngrímur Jónsson, are considered to be hybrid versions of Primary Versions I and II.<sup>5</sup> I will concentrate in this article on AM 291 and Stock Perg because they are the oldest extant manuscripts and their preservation history is known to us. The provenance and context of these manuscripts are thus in the focus of investigation.

#### BACKGROUND: HOW TO DEFINE OLD NORSE HISTORIOGRAPHY?

To begin with, I should define what I mean by Old Norse historiography in the context of this article. Many sagas deal with past events, but not all of them are considered to be historiography. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, historiography is the “writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands

3 A. Finlay, *Jómsvíkinga saga and genre*, “Scripta Islandica” LXV (2014), pp. 63-80.

4 Sirpa Aalto, *Jómsvíkinga saga*, pp. 33-58.

5 Þórdís E. Jóhannesdóttir, Veturlíði Óskarsson, *The Manuscripts of Jómsvíkinga saga*, “Scripta Islandica” LXV (2014), pp. 10-11. On *Jómsvíkinga saga's* stemma see also J. Megaard, *Studier i Jómsvíkinga sagas stemma. Jómsvíkinga sagas fem redaktioner sammenlignet med versjonene i Fagrskinna, Jómsvíkingadrápa, Heimskringla og Saxo*, “Arkiv för nordisk filologi” CXV (2000), pp. 125-182.

the test of critical examination".<sup>6</sup> This is how we define historiography today, but obviously the concept does not apply as such to the writing of history before the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the rise of professional, critical historical writing. In the Middle Ages, history was just one genre among other literature, but I would like to stress that despite sometimes obscure lines between "history" and "fiction" in the medieval context, writing history already had its own goals then. If chronicles were written down in order to praise and confirm the status of a ruler or church institution (e.g., bishoprics), in a similar way certain sagas did this too.

Old Norse historiography could be said to cover at least the Kings' sagas, a category which itself may include more than just sagas concerning the kings of Norway and Denmark.<sup>7</sup> The Old Norse historiography could be defined thus in various ways. One way of doing this is to establish the difference between indigenous and foreign-influenced historiography. The former covers the saga material that dealt with Icelandic past. It includes histories about the Icelanders' forefathers (*Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók*). We may also suspect that *Íslendingasögur* (Sagas of Icelanders) also served partly the function of conveying history, because the sagas deal with Icelanders and probably at least some in the audience could recognise in these sagas familiar characters, places or even their own forefathers. The second line would be histories that were adaptations of foreign histories such as *Veraldar saga*. As Sverrir Jakobsson has argued, Icelanders had solid knowledge about Latin authors since the days of Ari Þorgilsson.<sup>8</sup> This division is, however, too rigid. We know that Latin models and the ecclesiastical literature affected secular saga writing such as the Kings' sagas, so how should they be labelled? The Kings' sagas and some others, such as *Jómsvíkinga saga*, fall into a diffuse category in this case. Placing the historiographical sagas into genres is not in the focus of this article, but rather how to contextualise *Jómsvíkinga saga's* meaning for Icelanders through centuries.

The meaning of Kings' sagas to the Icelandic audience has been investigated.<sup>9</sup> The Kings' sagas anchored Icelanders to the past, which they shared with Norwegians. In general, those sagas that deal with past characters

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<sup>6</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/historiography> (accessed 7 December 2018).

<sup>7</sup> J.E. Knirk, *Konungasögur*, in: *Medieval Scandinavia. An Encyclopedia*, New York-London 1993, pp. 362-366; M. Clunies Ross, *The Conservation and Reinterpretation of Myth in Medieval Icelandic Writings*, in: *Old Icelandic Literature and Society*, Cambridge 2009, p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> Sverrir Jakobsson, *Iceland, Norway and the World. The Works of Ari Þorgilsson*, "Arkiv för nordisk filologi" CXXXII (2017), pp. 75-99.

<sup>9</sup> Ármann Jakobsson, *Í leit að konungi. Konungsmynd íslenskra konungasagna*, Reykjavík 1997.

and events that had relevance for the Icelandic audience can be seen as an anchoring device for the (Norse-)Icelandic culture. Cultures need different anchoring devices with which they build their group identity, history being one of the most important of these devices. Icelanders anchored their past on the first settlers, the Christianisation process and the history of the Norwegian kings.<sup>10</sup>

As it is impossible to make a standard definition for Old Norse historiography, the starting point for a definition could be practical and text-based, which would include various sagas dealing with past characters and events that can also be attested to elsewhere. They contain features that we would connect to medieval historiography in general such as reconstruction or even creation of a history for a family/ruler/significant historical character/group.<sup>11</sup> Starting with this very broad definition, I will next elaborate briefly on how *Jómsvíkinga saga* relates to concepts of legend, folktale and myth, which all have been discussed in connection with sagas.

#### *JÓMSVÍKINGA SAGA* – LEGEND, FOLKTALE OR MYTH?

Daniel Sävborg has suggested that when investigating saga genres we could compare them with folkloristic theory, which makes a distinction between a legend and a folktale (in German *Sagen* and *Märchen*). The difference between these two is that a legend was regarded as fundamentally true whereas a folktale is considered to be entertainment, that is, not history. Legends are often tied to locations in the vicinity of the narrator, but folktales are often set in a diffuse location. Sävborg concludes that *Jómsvíkinga saga* “is generically closer to the *Sage*”, placing it in the category of legends.<sup>12</sup> This does not place *Jómsvíkinga saga* immediately among historical works. As research has shown, the saga’s plot is based on historical characters and events, while also containing elements that can be labeled as “fictional” such as the involvement of Earl Hákon’s protecting goddess Þorgerðr and her sister Irpa.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> When speaking broadly about Norse-Icelandic historiography, we should not forget the contemporary Latin texts such as *Antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* or *Historia Norwegiae*, which were written by Scandinavians and which probably affected the saga texts and vice versa. However, they can also be labelled as part of Latin foreign histories.

<sup>11</sup> Sirpa. Aalto, K. Kanerva, *Aikalaissaagat ja annaalit*, in: *Johdatus saagakirjallisuuteen*, Rovaniemi (in press 2019).

<sup>12</sup> D. Sävborg, *Búi the Dragon: Some Intertexts of Jómsvíkinga saga*, “*Scripta Islandica*” LXV (2014), p. 114.

<sup>13</sup> J. Morawiec, *Vikings among the Slavs. Jomsborg and the Jomsvikings in Old Norse Tradition*, Vienna 2009; Sirpa Aalto, *Band of Brothers – the Case of the Jómsvíkings*, “*Średniowiecze Polskie i Powszechnie*” I (V) (2009), pp. 80-99.

If we take Sävborg's conclusion as a starting point, one criterion is problematic, namely that *Jómsvíkinga saga* is not set in the "vicinity of the narrator". However, I am inclined to think that despite the fact that *Jómsvíkinga saga* is set in distant places such as Wendland, Denmark and Norway, the saga setting was not necessarily thought to be far away from Icelanders. The saga's description of place names shows that the authors of different manuscripts, who were supposedly Icelanders, could easily describe places and routes in Denmark and Norway. In the Icelandic mindscape and collective memory, place names were solid building blocks of a saga. This also covers places outside of Iceland that were commonly referred to in the sagas.<sup>14</sup>

The Jómsvikings themselves have become one sort of myth. Torfi Tulinius has summed up the relationship between a myth and a saga in the following way:

If sagas are myth in the sense that they are the product of a particular group of humans' need to make sense of who they are and what is going on around them, they are also history because they try to find this meaning within a Christian world-view based on a linear conception of time.<sup>15</sup>

Tulinius points to five principles to organise the saga as a myth: genealogy, geography, religion, relation to the supernatural and social status of the protagonists.

If we apply these principles to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, we can point out the following: The saga creates a genealogy to Danish kings even if we may assume that the saga author is actually mocking the royal family by referring, for instance, to incest in the royal family in the past and by questioning the masculinity of some of its members, such as King Harald Bluetooth. The saga does not create a relationship to a certain geographical area, although Wendland and the stronghold of the Jómsvikings there have a role to play. The saga does not involve direct religious tones either, though an indirect religious tone could be that the character of heathen Earl Hákon is reprehensible. The protagonists of the saga are the leaders of the Jómsvikings and a few others. It is difficult to see how the saga would be related to the social status of the protagonists. One possibility could be that one of the protagonists – maybe Vagn Ákason – was related to important families. It is quite possible that some Icelandic or Norwegian families saw him as their forefather, which would then be in the interest of these families to share this tradition. The real interest

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<sup>14</sup> Sirpa Aalto, *Toponymer som representationer av kollektivt och kulturellt minne inom sagaforskningen*, "Historisk Tidskrift för Finland" I (2016), pp. 4-25.

<sup>15</sup> Torfi Tulinius, *Saga as a Myth*, 11<sup>th</sup> International Saga Conference Preprints [http://www.sagaconference.org/SC11/SC11\\_Torfi.pdf](http://www.sagaconference.org/SC11/SC11_Torfi.pdf).



behind the saga may have actually been in those minor Icelandic characters that the saga presents.

*Jómsvíkinga saga* does not directly fall into Tulinus' principles of how to organize the saga as a myth. However, I believe that *Jómsvíkinga saga* was in fact something of a legend, myth and anchoring story for Icelanders. When considering *Jómsvíkinga saga's* meaning for Icelanders, we can make a comparison to the Sagas of Icelanders. Chris Callow has argued that understanding of social memory, which in the case of Sagas of Icelanders is shaped by genealogy and geography, may be the key to understanding the interrelations between the images of the past in the Sagas of Icelanders and contemporary sagas.<sup>16</sup> While *Jómsvíkinga saga* does not have an interrelation to contemporary sagas, it has an interrelation to Kings' sagas and especially to the tradition concerning King Ólafur Tryggvason. This can be converted to the following premise: understanding the historiographical meaning of *Jómsvíkinga saga* to Icelanders requires that we consider the meaning of the saga for the audience and in different time periods.

In order to examine this, we need to ask the following questions: Whom did the saga interest? It was preserved in manuscripts that were held (and most probably written) by Icelanders. I am inclined to see connections between those Icelanders that were fighting on Earl Hákon's side in the battle of Hjörungavágr and the oldest extant manuscripts. I will elaborate on this idea further in the following chapters. First, I would like to draw attention to *Jómsvíkinga saga* as an immanent saga in Old Norse historiography and then to the possible place(s) for writing and preserving the saga manuscripts. These can, in my opinion, reveal, why the saga may have had relevance for Icelanders.

#### THE IMMANENT *JÓMSVÍKINGA SAGA*

It is obvious that story behind *Jómsvíkinga saga* must have existed at least in oral tradition by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The following evidence points to this direction. *Jómsvíkingadrápa*, which must have been the precursor of the written saga, was composed by Bishop Bjarni of the Orkneys at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. However, it seems that Bishop Bjarni did not choose the Jómsvikings as his topic because he wanted to convey a historical saga in a poetic form to the audience, but he may have wanted just to compose a love poem in an "Ovidian style".<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the poem itself concentrates on one

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<sup>16</sup> C. Callow, *Reconstructing the Past in Medieval Iceland*, "Early Medieval Europe" XIV (2006) 3, pp. 297-324.

<sup>17</sup> J. Wellendorf, *No Need for Mead*, "North-Western European Language Evolution" LXIX (2016) 2, pp. 130-154.

of the protagonists, Vagn Ákason, and his quest for getting Ingibjörg as his wife. Even though the saga and the *drápa* have different emphasis when it comes to the content, Bishop Bjarni hardly made up the story himself, but there was already an existing lore or tradition related to the Jómsvíkings. Bishop Bjarni's case shows that *Jómsvíkinga saga* was known in Norway and the Orkneys at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The content of the saga has a strong connection to Denmark, but probably the poetical tradition linked to the Jómsvíkings (*Hákonardrápa*, *Eiríksdrápa*, *Búadrápa* and *Jómsvíkingadrápa*) has its origins in Norway. Judith Jesch has also suggested that the Danish material of the saga may also have its origin in Orkney, where there was interest in Danish legends in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup>

What can we say about the Danish content of the saga? How do the nearly contemporary Danish authors represent the same events? Saxo Grammaticus was aware of the Jómsvíkings when he wrote his *Gesta Danorum* around 1200. There is no question that Saxo considered the Jómsvíkings as historical characters. Different speculations have been presented about Saxo's sources. All we know is that he apparently had Icelandic informants.<sup>19</sup> Because *Jómsvíkinga saga* also deals with the history of the Danish kings, it could be possible that there was Danish tradition about them that was circulating, but this is impossible to prove. As Bjørn Bandlien has suggested, the laws of the Jómsvíkings may imitate laws of different Danish "orders" which were active in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the Wendish attacks were a constant threat in Denmark.<sup>20</sup>

The supposed time of writing of *Jómsvíkinga saga* is contemporary with Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, which may indicate that Oddr interpolated his saga with the already existing *Jómsvíkinga saga*. It shows that *Jómsvíkinga saga* was very closely interwoven with King Óláfr Tryggvason's history, and this is further confirmed by the fact that *Jómsvíkinga saga* is integrated in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*. These two texts do this in a manner in which the authors seemed to expect that the audience knew there was an immanent<sup>21</sup> *Jómsvíkinga*

18 J. Jesch, *Jómsvíkinga Sögur and Jómsvíkinga Drápur: Texts, Contexts and Intertexts*, "Scripta Islandica" LXV (2014), pp. 97-98.

19 Jonas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 2007, p. 163; R. Simek, Hermann Pálsson, *Lexikon der altnordischen Literatur*, Stuttgart 2007, 111-112; A. Lassen, *Origines Gentium and the Learned Origin of Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, in: *The Legendary Sagas. Origins and Development*, Reykjavík 2012, pp. 38-41, 45-46; On Saxo and possible connection to *Skjöldunga saga*, see Gotttskálkur Jensson, *Were the Earliest fornaldarsögur written in Latin?*, in: *Fornaldarsagaerne: Myter og virkelighed*, København 2009, pp. 88-90.

20 B. Bandlien, *A New Norse Knighthood? The Impact of the Templars in Late Twelfth-Century Norway*, in: *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology*, Helsinki 2005, pp. 175-184.

21 On the concept of immanent saga, see C. Clover, *The Long Prose Form*, "Arkiv för nordisk filologi" CI (1986), pp. 34-36. Cf. S. Ranković, *The Temporality of the (Immanent) Saga. Tinkering with Formulas*, in: *Dating the Sagas. Reviews and Revisions*, Copenhagen 2013, pp. 149-194.

saga. The existence of an immanent *Jómsvíkinga saga* in these two compendia does not, of course, prove that the saga was considered to be historical, but it shows that it played a role in historiography: both compendia mentioned above and individual sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason show that *Jómsvíkinga saga* was considered to be part of the lore of Óláfr Tryggvason. *Jómsvíkinga saga* also seems to have been one source for *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*.<sup>22</sup> The immanent *Jómsvíkinga saga* is present in the sagas of the Danish kings. For instance, when *Knýtlinga saga* refers to Svein Forkbeard's youth and to his foster-father Pálma-Tóki, it is said in the saga: "...sem segir i sögu Jómsvíkinga." ("...as it is said in the saga of the Jómsvikings.")<sup>23</sup> We can understand this as a reference to an existing tradition about the Jómsvikings.

*Jómsvíkinga saga* also has connections to sagas outside of Kings' sagas. Interestingly, *Eyrbyggja saga*, which has been given *terminus post quem* between 1244 and 1248, mentions Björn Breiðvíkingakappi, who was in the service of the first leader of the Jómsvikings.<sup>24</sup> This evidence presented briefly here points to the direction that *Jómsvíkinga saga* or its tradition existed in Iceland – and also outside of it – by the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. The reference to *Jómsvíkinga saga* is rather indirect in *Eyrbyggja saga*, but even this one short passage reveals that the information concerning the Jómsvikings was circulating outside of the Kings' sagas. Therefore, we should not limit the examination of *Jómsvíkinga saga* tradition just to sagas concerning King Óláfr Tryggvason, but to consider what meanings and importance the saga may have had for Icelanders locally.

## PLACE OF PRESERVING THE SAGA

Bringing *Eyrbyggja saga* into the investigation of *Jómsvíkinga saga* made me wonder who would actually want to preserve *Jómsvíkinga saga* tradition in Iceland. Could there be families, who had some connection to the saga characters? *Jómsvíkinga saga* mentions following Icelanders, who were with Earl Hákon in the battle of Hjörungavágr: skald Einarr skálaglamm, Vígfús Víga-Glúmsson, Þorleifr skuma Þorkelsson and a certain Þorð (who was probably Þorleifr's brother, according to the saga).<sup>25</sup> The end part of AM 291

<sup>22</sup> Jonas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 2007 [1988], pp. 157-159; Ólafur Halldórsson, *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, in: *Medieval Scandinavia. An Encyclopedia*, New York 1993, pp. 448-449.

<sup>23</sup> *Danakonunga sögur*, Íslensk fornrit, XXXV, Reykjavík 1982, p. 96.

<sup>24</sup> B. McCreesh, *Eyrbyggja saga*, in: *Medieval Scandinavia. An Encyclopedia*, pp. 174-175; *Eyrbyggja saga*, Íslensk fornrit, IV, Reykjavík 1935, p. 80.

<sup>25</sup> *Jómsvíkinga saga*, efter Arnamagnæanska handskriften N:o 291. 4:to i diplomatariskt aftryck, Köpenhamn 1882, pp. 110-111; G. Cederschiöld, *Jómsvíkinga saga*, efter skinnboken 7, 4to å Kungl. Biblioteket i Stockholm, Lund 1875, p. 28.

is damaged and has lacunae, but the *Jómsvíkinga saga* in *Flateyjarbók* mentions that the saga came to Iceland via skald Einarr, who told about the events. He had also composed poems to Earl Hákon and Earl Sigvaldi. The saga recounts that Einar skálaglamm met his death later in Breiðafjörður, where he drowned.<sup>26</sup> We have thus at least two characters (Björn Breiðvíkingakappi and Einarr skálaglamm) that have connection both to the Jómsvikings and the Breiðafjörður area, which may indicate that the tradition concerning Jómsvikings was well known in the Breiðafjörður area. For instance, it has been suggested that the author of *Eyrbyggja saga* may have been living in the area, because he is well acquainted with the topography.<sup>27</sup> Although the author did not include any of the actual events from *Jómsvíkinga saga*, he chose to make a reference to Björn's participation in the battle of Fyrisvall with the Jómsvikings.

Vigfús Víga-Glúmsson's destiny is not told in *Jómsvíkinga saga*, but based on the *Víga-Glúms saga* we can say that he returned to northern Iceland. Þorleifr Þorkelsson, on the other hand, died in the battle of Hjörungavágr, but his supposed brother Þorð returned to their farm in Dýra, Alviðra, in northwestern Iceland and he later took it over after their father.<sup>28</sup> These small details show that Icelanders who were connected to *Jómsvíkinga saga* were, broadly speaking, either from the west, north-west, or north of Iceland.<sup>29</sup> If Einarr skálaglamm brought the story to Iceland, his family members could have passed it on. Let us make a brief survey to the family tree of skald Einarr skálaglamm. His niece was Guðrun Ósvífsdóttir – a remarkable character herself – and her grandson was skald Stufr inn blindi, who visited King Harald Hardruler's court. Stufr was born around 1025, so maybe the legacy of the Jómsvikings was still living oral tradition when he was young. Nothing, of course, connects Stufr to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, but it is important to note that there were skalds in Einarr's family. After all, skalds, such as Stufr, may have been those who kept the family tradition alive. Also, for those locals in the north-west and north of Iceland, who were maybe not directly related to Icelanders mentioned in *Jómsvíkinga saga*, this kind of proud history that

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<sup>26</sup> *Flateyjarbók*, I, Christiania 1860, p. 203; *Jómsvíkinga saga*, efter *Arnarnagnæanska handskriften* N:o 291. 4:to i diplomatariskt aftryck, p. 127. This part is lacking from Stock Perg too. Ólafur Halldórsson has used *Flateyjarbók*'s version to complete his modern Icelandic version of *Jómsvíkinga saga*.

<sup>27</sup> B. McCreesh, *Eyrbyggja saga*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>28</sup> *Flateyjarbók*, I, p. 203.

<sup>29</sup> Another small detail in AM 291, which connects the saga indirectly to Icelanders is the passage which tells about the conflict between Icelanders and King Harald Gormsson. A Kings' bailiff had confiscated an Icelandic ship that was ship-wrecked. Icelanders were mad about this and Eyjólfur Valgerðarson composed a *nið*-poem about King Harald. This poem is also cited in *Heimskringla*, but for example Stock Perg omits it.

connected them to local famous men may have been important. When looking at the provenance of the manuscripts, we should be aware of two sides of it: on the one hand, we can investigate the manuscripts themselves (scribal hand, marginalia, etc.), which can give hints about where the manuscript was produced and when. However, this is not the focus of this article. On the other hand, we can investigate the provenance of the manuscript if the owners are known. We know the histories of AM 291 and Stock Perg, when Árni Magnússon got them. When Árni Magnússon was collecting manuscripts in Iceland, he got AM 291 from Sveinn klaustruhaldari Torfason in Munkaþverá, located in northern Iceland. As Sveinn's nickname points out, Munkaþverá had been a place for a monastery in the Middle Ages, and he was the intendant of the farm from 1695 until his death. Another detail also points to the manuscript's origin in northern Iceland: a *marginalium* mentioning a certain personal name. Ólafur Halldórsson connects this name to two charters from the last decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which were written in central northern Iceland.<sup>30</sup>

The second oldest manuscript, Stock Perg, was owned by Magnús Ólafsson in Laufás in Eyjafjörður around the year 1633. So, both of the oldest manuscripts were still in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the north of Iceland, in the vicinity of old monasteries. Stock Perg contains a personal name that can be found in a charter from 1486, which was written in northern Iceland. It confirms the northern Icelandic whereabouts of the manuscript.<sup>31</sup> AM 291 and Stock Perg can be traced to northern Iceland, whereas the later manuscript AM 510 4to from the 16<sup>th</sup> century has a connection to eastern Iceland. It was in Iceland until it came into the possession of Árni Magnússon, who got it from Bishop Jón Vídalín, who had got it from Ingibjörg Pálsdóttir in Eyri in Seyðisfjörður.<sup>32</sup>

The provenance of the oldest manuscripts in the north of Iceland is not strange when we look at the background of the Icelanders mentioned in *Jómsvíkinga saga*, who had their roots in these areas. My hypothesis is that families who had forefathers mentioned in *Jómsvíkinga saga* may have had the interest of preserving the saga, because the characters were part of the myth or lore of the family. These kinds of stories concerning remarkable deeds of relatives play an important role in creating shared identities at different levels in society. Families have their own myths concerning origins and characteristics that help their members make sense of who **they** are. Historical and cultural myths containing heroes and heroines present us with elements

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30 Ólafur Halldórsson, *Jómsvíkinga saga*, p. 8.

31 Þórdís E. Jóhannesdóttir, Veturliði Óskarsson, *The Manuscripts of Jómsvíkinga saga*, p. 18.

32 Ibidem, p. 19 and references.



from which to create our own identities. To quote Rosamund Billington, "History, then, can be defined as a shared mythology that helps us to link our family and individual biographies to those of the wider community or nation."<sup>33</sup> As my argumentations point out, the saga could have had relevance for certain northern Icelandic families and the saga was anchoring their history to a wider context.

Connection between *Jómsvíkinga saga*'s oldest manuscripts and local families remains, of course, a speculation so far. One problem which I have not touched upon and which makes it difficult to assess the provenance of the manuscript is the paleographical evidence. As Stefan Karlsson has pointed out, scribes were mobile and charters written in the same hand do not mean that they were written within the same area.<sup>34</sup> Yet I argue that when looking at the later preservation of the oldest manuscripts of *Jómsvíkinga saga* in northern Iceland, the question of the scribal hand(s) is not pivotal. A further study on the family tree of Sveinn klaustruhaldari and Magnús Ólafsson of Laufás could cast light on just what the connection is between the manuscripts and local families. Would there be ancestors who could have been priests (interested in preserving the saga) or even direct ancestors who had connections to the above-mentioned saga characters? A broader study that could combine information from several manuscripts (author/scribe, provenance/owner) that are somehow related to *Jómsvíkinga saga* through content could cast light on this matter.

## MANUSCRIPT CONTEXT

*Jómsvíkinga saga* seems not to have been very popular in Iceland, because there are not many manuscript copies of the saga. It has been suggested that this is due to the fact that Icelanders do not play a major role in the saga.<sup>35</sup> I would still call into question whether this is actually the whole truth. As I argued in the previous chapter, the saga may have had local interest although the Icelandic characters in the saga had only minor roles. In addition, *Jómsvíkinga saga* is used in two post-reformation *rímur*, which shows that the tradition had continuity after the Middle Ages.<sup>36</sup> *Rímur*-tradition may be one expression of the change in reception of the saga, but this would require more in-depth

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<sup>33</sup> R. Billington, J. Hockey, S. Strawbridge, *Exploring Self and Society*, London 1998, p. 184.

<sup>34</sup> Stefán Karlsson, *The Localisation and Dating of Medieval Icelandic Manuscripts*, "Saga-Book" XXV (1998-2001), pp. 138-158.

<sup>35</sup> Þórdís E. Jóhannesdóttir, Veturliði Óskarsson, *The Manuscripts of Jómsvíkinga saga*, p. 26.

<sup>36</sup> Sirpa Aalto, *Jómsvíkinga saga as a Part...*



study. Post-Reformation study of the saga's reception would be interesting, for instance, in the connection of Danish historiography. We know that Arngrímur Jónsson's Latin translation of the saga was meant for the Danish historian Arild Huitfeldt.<sup>37</sup>

As has been previously suggested, it seems that *Jómsvíkinga saga* became, during the centuries after its being writing down, more entertainment than history.<sup>38</sup> It means that the reception of the saga changed and this is perceivable in the manuscript context. If we look at the manuscript context, we can say that AM 291 contains only *Jómsvíkinga saga*, whereas Stock Perg contains the following sagas:

- *Konráðs saga keisarasonar* (indigenous *riddarasaga*)
- *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar* (*fornaldarsaga*)
- *Jómsvíkinga saga*
- *Ásmundar saga kappabana* (*fornaldarsaga*)
- *Örvar-Odds saga* (*fornaldarsaga*)
- *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* (family saga, fragmentary)

In addition, this manuscript was an earlier part of AM 580 4to, which contains:

- *Elís saga og Rósamundu* (translated *riddarasaga*, fragmentary)
- *Bærings saga* (indigenous *riddarasaga*)
- *Flóvents saga* (translated *riddarasaga*, fragmentary)
- *Mágus saga* (indigenous *riddarasaga*, fragmentary)

These sagas are all legendary sagas, indigenous and translated *riddarasögur*, and only *Egils saga* does not fall into these genres. When looking at the context of Stock Perg, it seems as if *Jómsvíkinga saga* would have been included there because of its entertaining features. Otherwise it is difficult to explain why the saga is included among the above listed sagas. Yet the author of Stock Perg appeals to the audience that *Jómsvíkinga saga* is believable and trustworthy. For instance, when Gull-Harald is killed, the following sentence is used in the saga: *sem segir i konunga bók* ("as it is said in the Kings' book" [~ kings' saga?]), and when the saga depicts Earl Hákon's death, there is again reference to the Kings' sagas: *sem segir i konunga saugum* ("As it is told in the Kings' sagas").<sup>39</sup> These sentences show that the author of Stock Perg clearly had an intertextual reference, which further strengthens the idea that *Jómsvíkinga saga* had close connection to the Kings' sagas. Otherwise, the author could not have referred to a 'konunga bók' or 'konunga sögur'.

<sup>37</sup> Jakob Benediktsson, *Arngrimi Jonae Opera Latine Conscripita*, IV, Copenhagen 1957, p. 171.

<sup>38</sup> Sirpa Aalto, *Jómsvíkinga saga as a Part...*

<sup>39</sup> G. Cederschiöld, *Jómsvíkinga saga efter skinnboken 7, 4to å Kungl. Biblioteket...*, pp. 6, 35.

Although AM 291 and Stock Perg have received more scholarly attention because they are the oldest manuscripts of *Jómsvíkinga saga*, we should not forget later manuscripts either. AM 510, which is from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, contains the following sagas:

- *Viglundar saga* (family saga, post-classical)
- *Bósa saga (fornaldarsaga)*
- *Jarlmanns saga og Hermanns* (indigenous *riddarasaga*)
- *Þorsteins þáttur bæjarmagns (fornaldarsaga)*
- *Jómsvíkinga saga*
- *Finnboga saga ramma* (family saga, post-classical)
- *Drauma-Jóns saga* (indigenous *riddarasaga*)
- *Friðþjófs saga (fornaldarsaga)*

The manuscript context of AM 510 is similar to Stock Perg: *Jómsvíkinga saga* is placed among indigenous *riddarasögur* and *fornaldarsögur*. The difference is that Stock Perg has only one family saga – *Egils saga* – whereas AM 510 also contains two post-classical family sagas. Again, the manuscript context does not show in any way that *Jómsvíkinga saga* would have been perceived as history by the audience. Yet, the context may not reveal the whole truth. As Þórðís Jóhannesdóttir has pointed out, *Jómsvíkinga saga* in AM 510 contains a reference to Sæmundr fróði.<sup>40</sup> This, again, could be interpreted as a sign that the author was appealing to Sæmundr in order to give more credibility to the saga. Why would it be important if the saga was otherwise considered to be merely entertainment?

I argue that *Jómsvíkinga saga* retained some of that historicity even when placed among other, more entertaining sagas in the manuscripts, because in it we can find those references to the Kings' sagas. But does a reference to the Kings' sagas give prestige and trustworthiness to the saga? It possibly could, but it could also be a reminder to the audience that they may have heard the story in another context. Understanding *Jómsvíkinga saga*'s context requires that the audience was aware of the history of the Danish and Norwegian kings/earls in the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. References to the Kings' sagas was thus communication that the author or scribe made between *Jómsvíkinga saga* and already existing Kings' sagas or immanent, oral stories about kings.<sup>41</sup> Manuscript context may, of course, give hints about the reception of the saga, but as the case of *Jómsvíkinga saga* reveals, it should not be the only criterion. The question the reception of the saga is much more complex.

<sup>40</sup> Þórðís E. Jóhannesdóttir, *Þrjár gerðir Jómsvíkingu sögu, "Gripla" XXVIII* (2017), pp. 73–102.

<sup>41</sup> H. Bagerius, U. Lagerlöf Nilsson, P. Lundqvist, *Skönlitteraturen i historievetenskapen – några metodologiska reflektioner, "Historisk tidskrift" CXXXIII* (2013) 3, pp. 384–410, here p. 386.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

It seems that the historical context of *Jómsvíkinga saga* disappeared gradually during the centuries, which concerns many other sagas as well.<sup>42</sup> This is apparent when we look at the manuscript context and the fact that the *Jómsvíkinga saga* continued its existence in two *rímur* that stem from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which shows the tradition to continue to live but in an alternate form.

However, the following points support the historiographical side that the saga originally had:

- It was mentioned as an integral part of early versions of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* by Gunnlaugr Leifsson and Oddr Snorrason as well as in *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla*.
- The saga is strongly connected to the history of the Danish kings: It was known and used by Saxo Grammaticus, which means that the saga had a wider audience or readers than just Icelanders. In addition, the saga is intertwined in the sagas about the Danish kings.

This supports, in my opinion, that the saga has a strong connection to the Kings' sagas. *Jómsvíkinga saga* combines modes from different saga genres, which is more of a problem to scholars than it was for the medieval audience. As the statement by Ólafur Háldórsson quoted in the beginning of the article shows that while the author wanted to amuse people, it does not exclude the possibility that the author himself would not have believed in at least part of the saga to be true.

It is worth considering what the preservation of the saga manuscripts reveals about the reception of the saga. I would be inclined to think that *Jómsvíkinga saga* was preserved in northern Iceland – both in AM 291 and Stock Perg – because the saga had some relevance for the locals. Because the Icelandic characters appearing in the saga were at least partly from north and northwest of Iceland, I suggest that *Jómsvíkinga saga* may have been of interest for those Icelandic families who considered that the characters were related to them. For them, the saga may have presented part of the family history, which anchored them to broader history and was something that they could be proud of. This is a topic for a forthcoming study in which it would be necessary to more closely investigate the family trees of the owners of the manuscripts, which could possibly show connections to *Jómsvíkinga saga*'s Icelandic characters and in that way reveal personal interests of families to preserve the saga. Therefore, we should not underestimate the saga's hidden meanings for people who may have derived their family roots from these

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42 T. Andersson, *Growth of the Medieval Icelandic sagas (1180-1280)*, Ithaca (NY) 2006, p. 7.

local heroes that once participated in the most intriguing and epic battles of the Viking Age.

*Jómsvíkinga saga*, hovering between historical, fascinating, and even supernatural events, may not have been one of the most read sagas by Icelanders. The investigation of the post-medieval reception of the saga could give us clues to how the saga itself was developed – not to mention, how it was perceived and used in later historiography. Was it a path that could be called “there and back again” – from history to entertainment and back to historiography?<sup>43</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

In the article the author investigates the context of *Jómsvíkinga saga*: What kind of meaning did *Jómsvíkinga saga* have in the environment where it was produced but also preserved for centuries? Two of the oldest extant manuscripts – AM 291 4to and Stock. Perg 4:o No 7 – are the focus of the investigation. The preservation of these manuscripts in northern Iceland could imply that the saga had relevance for people living there. *Jómsvíkinga saga* mentions four Icelanders who participated in the battle of Hjörungavágr, and who were originally from northwestern or northern Iceland. Therefore, the saga may have been an anchoring story for local families who were related to the characters mentioned in the saga. Earlier research has shown how *Jómsvíkinga saga* is positioned among the saga genres but contextualisation of this saga in the Icelandic environment helps understand why Icelanders were interested in it. A further investigation of the family trees of the owners of the manuscripts could cast light on this matter, and it could possibly add to what we know about the post-medieval use and reception of the saga.

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<sup>43</sup> Many thanks to Þórðis Edda Jóhannesdóttir who assisted with the initial investigation of the manuscript owners' family trees.



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BONN

## UNDESIRABLE BIOGRAPHIES

### VICTIMS OF VIKING SLAVERY AND RANSOM PAYMENTS



Most studies dealing with slavery in ancient or medieval times concentrate either on the social aspect of slavery<sup>1</sup> or else on the political side of it. However, the sources for both these perspectives tend to come from the ruling classes who were neither very interested in the slaves as members of the human race themselves, nor in any discussion about their social, economical or political role. Hence, the sources are sparse and dominated by the interests of the social elite. Nevertheless, it is certainly not true what Niels Skyum-Nielsen claimed about Nordic slavery four decades ago, namely that “The chief sources are the early Nordic laws” and “The laws are and must remain the principle source”.<sup>2</sup> This opinion is of course the point of view of historiography written “from above”, but although the laws are highly informative about the rights of (or lack of) slaves, they tell us virtually nothing about the circumstances of enslavement, the conditions in which slaves lived and worked, social attitudes towards slavery and, most importantly, the possibilities there were to end slavery. In this article my interest is in the attitudes and mentalities of those unfortunate enough to fall prey to Viking slavery, and I shall try to throw some light on these by looking at just four of the ever-increasing number of biographies about Early Medieval slaves.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Wilde-Stockmeyer, *Sklaverei auf Island. Untersuchungen zur rechtlich-Sozialen Situation und literarischen Darstellung der Sklaven im skandinavischen Mittelalter*, Heidelberg 1978; R.M. Karras, *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia*, New Have-London 1988; D. Wyatt, *Slaves and Warriors in Medieval Britain and Irelands, 800-1200*, Leiden-Boston 2009; S. Brink, *Vikingarnas slavar*, Stockholm 2012.

<sup>2</sup> N. Skyum-Nielsen, *Nordic Slavery in an International Setting*, “Medieval Scandinavia” XI (1978-1979), pp. 126-148, here pp. 128-129.



With the advent of Christianity a theoretical change in attitude started to take place among the converted peoples, but this did not keep Christian rulers, including bishops from all over North-Western Europe, from keeping slaves themselves right into the High Middle Ages. When the change in mentality started to set in from around the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards, some bishops ostensibly started to free their slaves as an outward sign of this change. The theoretical rejection of slavery by Christian authors, however, goes back much further in time and is reflected in various anecdotes contained in the lives of early medieval saints as part of their hagiography, where the *manumission* of slaves is shown as exemplary Christian behaviour. It has recently been pointed out<sup>3</sup> that the moral demands of Christianity played a much larger role in the medieval abolition of slavery than other factors frequently quoted, such as semantics, natural demography, class struggle, and economics. Especially the latter is quite rightly ridiculed as an anachronistic stance adopted by modern scholars: "The 'explanation' sees slavery as somehow uneconomical and therefore even almost unnatural [... It] can only be ascribed to a mad free-market capitalist mentality that says that people only work hard if working for themselves".<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was actually slavery itself that was seen as natural, and the frequent enslaving of prisoners of war was considered to be a normal procedure of warfare, whether the prisoners were ransomed, sold on, or kept as personal slaves.

However, the rejection of slavery by church authorities seems to have mainly concerned the enslavement of Christians by other Christians, so that the enslavement of heathens in the course of early medieval warfare seems to have caused little moral or social stir, if any at all. The rejection of slavery also does not seem to have affected penal slavery and debt slavery, as these were practised during much of the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup> The real outrage was, as the words of Saint Ansgar show (see below), when Christians recaptured other Christians to sell them into the hands of pagans.

When dealing with Viking slavery in the British Isles, the canonical beginning seems to be to deal with Ireland, and then the starting point is usually the biography of Saint Patrick, ever popular patron saint of the Emerald Isle. As a young man Patrick was abducted by Irish raiders, not by Scandinavian ones, from his home in Britain. It was only later in his life (from

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3 R. Samson, *The End of Early Medieval Slavery, The Work of Work. Servitude, Slavery and Labor in Medieval England*, eds. A. Frantzen, D. Moffat, Glasgow 1994, pp. 95-124.

4 R. Samson, *Slavish Nonsense or the Talking Tool*, in: *Theoretical Roman Archaeology and Architecture: The Third Conference Proceedings*, ed. A. Leslie, Glasgow 1999, pp. 122-140, here p. 138.

5 For various types of slavery, especially in Britain and Ireland, see D. Wyatt, *Slaves...*, pp. 23-36.

ca. 432 onward) that he became the famed apostle to the Irish. In St. Patrick's time, there was no talk of Vikings, nor even any other Germanic raiders, such as the Angles, Saxons, or Jutes. But although it was Irish pirates who abducted the young Patrick, his slavery still created a pattern for many subsequent Irish hagiographies involving abduction and slavery.

The following paper shall, however, not only trace the literary patterns in the biographies of slaves and slavery, but also try and show the wide variety of slaves' biographies that have come down to us from the early Middle Ages, thus opening a window onto the manifold relationships between Ireland, the British Isles, Scandinavia and the Continent during the Viking Age, when slave-making, slave-trading and ransoming were common facts of everyday life.

I shall be dealing with various social and ethnic groups, as the following four biographies involve an Irish chieftain's son, an Irish poet, a nun of undetermined origins and a young boy from Northern Germany. The sources, and this is also one of my topics, belong to the genres of autobiography, hagiography, a (hagio-)biography and a satirical poem; all these texts which refer to occurrences of the late 9<sup>th</sup> to early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries are in Latin, which is hardly surprising given the scarcity of vernacular texts anywhere in Europe, apart from Ireland, during that period. My aim is two-fold: firstly, on a textual level, to see what can be gleaned from such texts about slave-taking, slave trading and ransoming of the Viking Age Scandinavians in the Early Medieval Western Europe. Secondly, I am interested in the role of genre in the transmittance of information on slaves and slavery.

The first of these texts, a remarkably detailed one, is the *Life of Saint Findan* (*Vita Findani*) written in Rheinau on the Upper Rhine (today's Switzerland) in around 900 and most likely taken down from the saint's own words. Although the text is in Latin, it contains some sentences in Old Irish which suggests the author might well have been one of Findan's Irish co-fraters. The role of this text for the history of 9<sup>th</sup> century Hiberno-Scandinavian relations has been most recently dealt with in detail by Colman Etchingham<sup>6</sup> and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh<sup>7</sup> who have commented on the obvious hagiographic elements in this biography but also noted how "the hagiographer almost incidentally gives us a valuable insight into Viking-Irish relationships".<sup>8</sup> Several of the

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6 C. Etchingham, *Uita Findani: A Hiberno-German Window on the Early Viking Age*, in: *Between the Islands – and the Continent. Papers on Hiberno-Scandinavian-Continental Relations in the Early Middle Age*, eds. R. Simek, A. Ivanova, Vienna 2013, pp. 55-82.

7 M. Ní Mhaonaigh, *Friend and Foe: Vikings in Ninth- and Tenth-century Irish Literature*, in: *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age*, eds. H.B. Clarke et al., Dublin 1998, pp. 381-402.

8 Ibidem, p. 394.

details throw an interesting light on the practice of Viking slave-making in Ireland as the text speaks of three incidents of slavery, all of which different in their character but each involving both Irish and Vikings.

The first instance concerns Findan's sister whose name is not told in the text but whose abduction by Scandinavians is described:

[...] gentiles qui Nordmanni uocantur, plurima Scottiae insulae quae et Hibernia dicitur loca uastantes, inter alias feminas adduxere captiuam.<sup>9</sup>

([...] heathens who are called Northmen, when laying waste many places in the Gaelic island that is called Ireland, brought her away a captive, along with other women.)

It is noteworthy that the author, in keeping with the place of writing, is using the term *Nordmanni* for the Vikings, not any Irish term, so that he was possibly thinking also of his predominantly Carolingian audience.

Her father sends young Findan together with companions and an interpreter after her with money (*pecunia*) to ransom his sister; it is silently assumed that such a way of freeing the slaves was acceptable and possibly even normal procedure, as we shall see below. However, as a second incident of slavery, the Vikings also seize Findan himself and put him into chains (his companions are no longer mentioned) and leave him on one of their ships on the shore for a day and a night without food and drink, until one Viking leader points out that it is not good practice to capture the carriers of ransom and thus Findan is set free. His sister is no longer mentioned, because she plays no real role in the hagiographic narrative, but we might assume that she and/or the other women would have been allowed to return home under the ransom agreement. The place of this incident within the hagiographic framework is of no great relevance here, but the details are worth mentioning: a group of women is enslaved by Scandinavian pirates, who hang around long enough at their beached ships to negotiate ransom payments, and also keep these and other prisoners in chains on these ships. In the internal discussions of the Vikings, the ransom payments are considered of higher priority than the slaves themselves.

The third incident again concerns Findan himself. Later in his biography, Findan is captured in a war between rival groups of Leinstermen, in which both his father and his brother are killed.<sup>10</sup> Despite compensation payments made for these killings, his adversaries obviously want to preclude any blood

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9 Here and hereafter, the text is that of *Vita Findani*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores*, XV, 1, Hanover 1887, pp. 502-506, here p. 503 (here lines 15-18), while the translation is my own.

10 C. Etchingam, *Uita...*, p. 63.

feud by getting rid of Findan, and at a fake feast betray him and have him captured by Vikings. The first Viking leader, planning to stay in Ireland, sells him to a second, and so on, until finally his fourth owner finally takes him and other slaves away (“in captivitatem duxit”) from Ireland, where firstly, there does not have seemed to be a market for slaves, and secondly, Findan’s Irish enemies desired him to be taken abroad instead of asking for ransom, and thirdly, a whole shipload of slaves seems to have been collected. Actually, there may have been more than one ship with slaves, as the text mentions a whole fleet leaving Ireland for Orkney, where the Vikings stop to re-provisioning.

At that stage, Findan, freed of his chains (supposedly as a result of fighting for his new owner, *domino suo* in a sea battle against other Vikings [?]), manages to escape from the Vikings. We own the whole story to this escape which was written down after he had first spent two years with a local bishop in Pictish lands, then undertaken a pilgrimage to Rome, spent five years as a monk and finally twenty-two more as a walled-in hermit, an *inclusus*. All this was undertaken in gratitude for his escape from Viking slavery.

The rest of his journey from Scotland via Rome to Switzerland is of little relevance for my topic, although it includes an exciting description of his hiding in the Orkneys, but this seemingly somewhat excessive gratitude for divine providence highlights the drastic unlikelihood of escaping the fate of slavery once ransom was no longer an option and the slave removed from his closer surroundings.

Findan’s story may be unique in its details and the autobiographic touch it has, but the basic facts fit in very well both with Hiberno-Scandinavian relations during the 9<sup>th</sup> century as well as with our scant knowledge of Early Medieval slavery.

The second story concerns St Ansgar (801-865) who came from a Frankish family from the area of Amiens and who was archbishop of Hamburg from 831. He undertook several missionary journeys to Denmark (826) and Sweden (829-831, 844-845, 851/852 and 853) and is often acclaimed as “Apostle of the North”, even though his missionary activities had very little lasting effect. He established a church in Haithabu, a central trading centre in Southern Scandinavia (whose bell is still extant), but none in Sweden. He was soon venerated as a saint, for which his biography, written by his pupil and successor Rimbert in ca. 875, served as promulgation. Rimbert’s *Vita Anskarii* is clearly pure hagiography, as clearly seen by Rimbert’s attempt to show his life among the heathen and barbarian Scandinavians as a life-long martyrdom despite the fact that Ansgar died a peaceful death in 865. Furthermore, in chapters 35-40 the *Vita* contains a long enumeration of Ansgar’s kind works and good deeds, obviously listed to illustrate his saintly character. It is in this section, notably in chapter 35 – and, somewhat surprisingly, not during the

narration about his last journey to Sweden in 852 much earlier (chapter 26) – that there is a short sentence about how Ansgar ransomed a slave in Sweden in order to give him back to his mother in his homeland:

Et ut misericordiae ac pietatis eius viscera exemplis approbemus, vidimus quondam, cum inter multos alios cuiusdam viduae filium in longinqua regione captivum abductum, in Sueonum videlicet, pretio redemptum, ipse secum at patriam reduxisset, et cum ipso mater sua gaudens videret reversum, sicut mos est feminarum, prae gaudio in conspectus eius astans lacrimata fuisset, ipse quoque episcopus compunctus non minus flere coeperit. Statimque ipsum viduae filium matri reddidit domumque gaudentes ire permisit.<sup>11</sup>

(And so that we may prove his deep compassion and piety with an example, we can see from it that he bought for a sum the son of a widow, who, with many others, had been abducted as a prisoner into those far-off regions, that is, Sweden, and took him with himself into his homeland. And when the mother saw the returned one again, overjoyed, she broke into tears, as women do, for joy of seeing him again, the bishop was no less moved to tears himself. Immediately, after giving him his freedom, he returned him to his mother and let them both happily go home.)

However short and terse this report may be, there is actually a lot that we can learn about Viking slavery from it. Firstly, we learn that there were many slaves (*inter multos alios*) be found in Birka and the surrounding area (The Mälars lake region was then as now the most densely populated area in Sweden). Secondly, we hear how Christian Franks or Saxons from North Germany were by no means safe from being enslaved by the Vikings despite being inhabitants of the most powerful empire in Europa at the time. Thirdly, it seems that freeing a slave by paying a ransom for him seems to have been a possibility even a long way from home, and fourthly, that the boy was by no means freed initially by the act of ransoming but was rather transferred into the property of the missionary. It is clearly stated that he is only given his freedom by manumission (*libertate donatum*) when the cleric is moved to tears by the weeping mother. It is possible to assume that the freed slave, who was undoubtedly German, had been enslaved in the disastrous Viking raid on Hamburg approximately seven years before in 845, which had led bishop Ansgar himself to flee to Bremen, is possible, but this is somewhat overstretching the likelihood, however tantalising.

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<sup>11</sup> *Magister Adam Bremensis: Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, ed. W. Trillmich, *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*. Freiherr vom Stein – Gedächtnisausgabe, XI, Darmstadt 1978<sup>5</sup>, pp. 16-133, here pp. 114f.

This is by no means the only instance that Christian North Germans were taken as slaves by both Vikings and Slavs. However, while Thietmar of Merseburg's *Chronicle* is full of tales of Viking incursions (*Chronicon* I, 17; II, 23; III, 6; IV, 23-2; VII, 36)<sup>12</sup> into North Germany which comes as no surprise, Rimbert also tells us about the abominable behaviour (in his opinion) of some of his compatriots who even sell their own countrymen as slaves despite the illegality of trading Christian slaves for Christians: When some poor Christian slaves ("nonnulli miseri captivi, qui de christianis terris raptis et ad barbarorum terras perducti") had suffered badly abroad, they escaped to the Christians of Nordelbia (i.e. German Schleswig), because they live closest to the heathens. But the Christian inhabitants captured and tied the escaped slaves again without comiseration: Some they sold back to the heathens, others they kept for themselves, others they sold on to other Christians.<sup>13</sup>

Here, we have in one short passage, three of the possibilities of dealing with slaves: Selling them abroad, selling them at a local level, or keeping them as labourers. Ransoming is not mentioned here as a possibility, perhaps because these were recaptured slaves and thus spatially and temporally long removed from their own kin.

The third biography offers a very different glimpse. It is from an episode in the *Vita Rimberti*, the (anonymous) biography of Rimbert, yet another hagio-biographical text. Rimbert's sainthood is somewhat doubtful, and he is and was venerated as a saint only in Frisia; hence, the text cannot be properly called hagiographical even though it certainly had hagiographical aspirations. Rimbert hailed from Turnhout in Flanders, accompanied Ansgar on some of his journeys and became his biographer. After Ansgar's death in 865, Rimbert became his successor as archbishop of the diocese of Hamburg-Bremen and in this function may even have forged the grant ostensibly signed by emperor Louis that established the double diocese of Hamburg-Bremen<sup>14</sup>. The text tells of how on one of Rimbert's visits to Haithabu, the site of a church established there by Ansgar in 849 (the text has Sliaswich, today's Schleswig, in the immediate neighbourhood), he saw a large number of Christians being led into slavery ("multitudinem christianorum catenatam trahi captive").<sup>15</sup> Among that slave train he saw a nun (*una sanctimonialis*), who

12 Thietmari *Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, eds. R. Holtzmann, W. Trillmich, *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*. Freiherr vom Stein – Gedächtnisausgabe, IX, Darmstadt 1957, pp. 20, 58, 90, 138-142, 392.

13 Cf. Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, in: *Magister Adam Bremensis: Gesta Hammaburgensis ...*, pp. 16-133, here pp. 120f.

14 Cf. E. Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert and the Forged Foundations of Hamburg-Bremen*, Farnham 2011.

15 Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii auctore Rimberto accedit vita Rimberti*, ed. G. Waitz, in: *Monumenta Germanica Historica, Scriptores in usum scholarum*, LV, Hanover 1884, pp. 95f.



signalled through genuflections and inclinations of her head her reverence for the bishop (who must have been identifiable as such by his appearance, clothing and/or entourage) and also started singing psalms to make him realize that she was a Christian. Through his prayers alone, her chains burst open and she was free of bonds, but still the heathens would not give her up. The bishop tried to buy her off by several precious items (“*plura diversis genera precia*”), but such payment was not accepted, and finally he had to give up his fully saddled horse (“*equo et cum omni quam ipse ad eum habuit paratura*”) to get her free. Although we are neither told the name of the nun nor her provenience, we are later told that on his way back to Hamburg he was followed by a large group of freed Christians.

The fact that the nun was not set free for less than a fully equipped horse seems to reflect the Irish rather than the continental or the Scandinavian system of payment. In the Carolingian empire, a monetary system was already in operation, and in Scandinavia, silver of predominantly oriental origin was weighed and chopped up to obtain the correct values. In Ireland, however, the standard unit was that of a female slave, OIR. *cumal* (cf. Old Cymric *aghell*, from Lat. *ancilla*). Within this system, a slave girl was equivalent to ten cows or five horses or one carriage.<sup>16</sup> Assuming this (theoretical) equation was still valid in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the nun was actually bought under value, even though the bishop seems to have been reluctant at first to give up his mount.

The episode offers otherwise little enough biographical background, but goes to show that despite the early Christian presence in Haithabu from the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century onwards, slave trading there included Christian slaves and even members of monastic orders. However, seeing that monastic establishments within the reach of Viking activities could only be found within the Carolingian Empire, England and Ireland, it follows that the nun (and her Christian fellow prisoners) must have originated from one of these areas and was thus destined to be transported further east via Haithabu. The fact that the freed slaves followed Rimbert on his journey back to Hamburg is of little relevance as they would obviously try to reach Christian countries by the shortest route, in this case the relatively short 250 km to Bremen.

We may, however, learn something from the behaviour of the nun herself. To make herself conspicuous, she sang psalms and genuflected (which she presumably did when in the vicinity of Bishop Rimbert). It is clear that, she did not speak any language which Rimbert must have been familiar with – Latin, German, Frisian, or even his native Flemish which suggests that she was Irish, although it is theoretically possible that she was English.

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16 H. Birkhan, *Kelten*, Wien 1997, pp. 264, 989.

The fourth and last biography to be mentioned here comes from a very different source and is also a good century younger than the three texts mentioned so far. It is not found in a hagiographic prose text, but rather in a Latin poem of Norman origin which was obviously composed before 1017 as it is dedicated to the archbishop of Rouen and the brother of Duke Richard II, Robert, who died that same year. It also mentions Robert's and Richard's mother Gunnor (ca. 950-1031)<sup>17</sup>, although not by name. The poet, Garnerius Rothomagensis (or Garnier de Rouen, Warner of Rouen), composed his Latin poem as an invective against an Irishman called Moriuhth (OI. Murchad) who had just escaped Viking slavery and was asking for help at the Norman court in Rouen in order to free his wife and his daughter from slavery in "Rudoil" (= Vaudreuil?) in Normandy. After receiving such financial help from the duke's mother and freeing his relatives, he was apparently trying to express his gratitude in poetical form. Court poetry was common practice both in Scandinavia and in Ireland so it would have been a befitting form of gratitude for the penniless foreigner, even if we may query the communicational accessibility of such poetry. Whatever the form or language of his composition, he received scorn and abuse from the Norman poet Warner in the shape of the Latin poem now bearing his name, *Moriuhth*. It was rather too politely termed a satirical poem<sup>18</sup>, but it goes far beyond it and has been justifiedly called a "character assassination"<sup>19</sup> and in terms of Old Norse genre belongs to the *níð*-poetry: heavily slandering, ritualized poetry with strong sexual overtones and repeated accusations of practised homophilia.<sup>20</sup> Sadly, there is not the space in this article to analyse the truly amazing number of insults heaped upon him (persistently called "the goat") and his wife (here called Glycerium, after the famous curtisan, *meretrix*, in Terence) nor to examine in detail the insulting sexual references given in the course of just 498 Latin hexameters. Our interest here is primarily to look at what the poem has to say about the fate of Moriuhth.

Moriuhth's (OI. Murchad) and his wife had been enslaved by Vikings in Ireland:

Scottorum fines inuadunt, pro dolore, hostes,  
Femina mox capitur ducitur et Moriuhth.

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<sup>17</sup> For her manifold prowesses, cf. R. Simek, *Geschichte der Normannen. Von Wikingerhåuptlingen zu Königen Siziliens*, Stuttgart 2018, pp. 51-54.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the first edition: *Satire de Garnier de Rouen contre le poète Moriuhth (X<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ed. H. Omont, Paris 1895.

<sup>19</sup> D. Wyatt, *Slaves...*, p. 230.

<sup>20</sup> For a more detailed description of Old Norse *níð*-poetry, cf. R. Simek, Hermann Pálsson, *Lexikon der altnordischen Literatur*, Stuttgart 2007<sup>2</sup>, pp. 276-277 (s.v. *Níðdichtung*), P. Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, Odense 1983.

(Foreigners invade the territory of the Iris – the pain of it!  
Next, Moriuh't's wife is seized and taken away.)<sup>21</sup>

When Moriuh't is also captured, he is separated from his wife, denigrated, raped anally, and beaten. He has to serve the Vikings sexually, and is finally sold separately to nuns at-Corbridge/Northumbria, again as a sex-slave. He escapes in a boat down the river Tyne, but is recaptured by Vikings and this time sold to a widow on the continent "in Saxony", whom he is yet again supposed to serve sexually, but this time he earns his freedom by doing so. Following two bloody sacrifices to the heather gods (which are totally unlikely for an Christian Irishman to have committed and tell us more about the fantasies of the Norman poet than about the story of Moriuh't), he has a vision about where his wife is. Meanwhile, his wife has been taken further afield, sold as a slave to a Viking/Norman widow in Normandy and works there as a prostitute. When Moriuh't gets his freedom, he searches for his wife, as far afield as the Rhine, and finally finds her in Normandy and asks for help for freeing her at the court of the archbishop on Rouen. His wife Glycerium is, interestingly enough, not freed through the political influence of Gunnor, but by the ransom money provided by her, including that for a young daughter Moriuh't did not even know about.

Without going into that sordid biography in any more detail<sup>22</sup> it may be stressed that Warner's poem, for all its exaggerations, tendentiousness and jealousy of one poem towards another, is a first hand document close to the practises of Viking Age slavery, and thus the route taken by Moriuh't as a slave is probably not too far from the truth, otherwise the poem might have been called (doubly) offensive to the archbishop and his court. The fact that Moriuh't is sold by Vikings to an Anglo-Saxon nunnery in North-Eastern (and thus, Scandinavian-ruled) England early in the 11<sup>th</sup> century is yet another piece of evidence that Christian rejection of slavery was not very wide-spread, to say the least.

Despite the insulting character of the poem, it tells us quite a lot about the life as a slave of Vikings or other slave traders. The first insight of this biography is that the aim of the Vikings was not primarily to keep slaves for themselves, but to sell them on as soon as possible, which they did in Moriuh't's case in the Viking kingdom of Northumbria. This in turn stresses the fact that there was a functioning slave market in York and possibly

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<sup>21</sup> Moriuh't: *A Norman Latin Poem from the Early Eleventh Century* / Warner of Rouen: *Text, Translation, Commentary and Introduction*, ed. Ch.J. McDonough, Toronto 1995, p. 76, with translation p. 77.

<sup>22</sup> For which cf. Ch.J. McDonough, *Moriuh't...*, passim, as well as the detailed discussion in D. Wyatt, *Slaves...*, pp. 229-237; cf. also C. Chaplin, *Baghdad to Rouen: Warner's Cosmopolitan Literary Ambition*, <https://www.purplemotes.net/2014/07/06/baghdad-rouen-warner> (accessed 12 December 2018).

also in Lincoln<sup>23</sup>, although Corbridge is over 100 miles from York. It seems actually more likely that the Vikings would have got rid of some slaves via the Tyne estuary, seeing that Gateshead, which is just 20 miles downriver from Corbridge, was a popular place for pillaging. According to the poem, Corbridge is even described as being a port itself, but it is uncertain whether it was indeed navigable in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite the fact that slaves were a commodity intended for resale, that did not prevent the Vikings from torturing and degrading the slaves in all sorts of ways, and the fact that even men were not safe from sexual assaults is repeatedly and gleefully emphasised in the poem. How long each phase of the enslavement lasts is not specified: The length of the captivity either with the Vikings or the nuns or the Saxon widow is not clearly referred to, but the suggestion is that enough time had passed for "Glycerium" to become pregnant and give birth to a child who is also then kept as a slave by the widow and thus the poem insinuates a duration of several years.

To sum up the common denominators of these four biographies, which could be supplemented both from Latin Carolingian chronicles as well as from Irish texts of the Early Middle Ages, we find that there is much which contradicts or at least transcends the dogmas of historical research on Viking Age slavery, which tends to concentrate on the legal status and also of the length of the slave status.<sup>24</sup> For one thing, escape from slavers or slavery was possibly not as rare as previously assumed: in both Findan's and Moriut's cases, the escape is in some ways due to personal prowess (whether military or sexual), and at least in Findan's case the escape was difficult, but successful. The second point to be stressed is the effect of ransom: this seems to be the prevalent goal of slavers, as it reduces costs and risks for the merchandise. Both ransom money and its collection were apparently well worth waiting for: ransoming was a system that worked well for both sides and was carefully upheld, as the case of the first Viking chieftain in Findan's biography goes to show. If direct ransom could not be achieved, a sale of the slaves as soon as possible (even if at a lower price) was aimed at. Thus it seems that the overall aim of Viking enslavement in Ireland, Britain and Western Europe was not predominantly to supply the Near Eastern markets despite the lure of the silver dirhems, but to obtain ready cash by ransom or a quick sale. Therefore it is not surprising that the stream of Eastern silver money which can be traced from the Near East over Russia and the Baltic to Gotland and Sweden quickly dwindles the further further west we get.<sup>25</sup>

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23 Cf. *The Vikings in England*, eds. E. Roesdahl et al., London 1981, p. 98.

24 Cf. the summary of scholarship on that latter topic in D. Wyatt, *Slaves...*, pp. 10-52.

25 Cf. map 1 published in this paper, after H. Steuer, *Principles of Trade and Exchange: Trade Goods and Merchants*, eds. A. Engler, Athena Trakadas, *Wulfstan's Voyage: The Baltic Sea*

But this in turn has another consequence: dirhems alone cannot be used to establish the intensity of Viking slave-making, as ransom money would of course be paid in local currency, hack silver, or even in goods, like Rimbert's fully rigged horse. Therefore, the intensity of slave-making and slave trade also has to be measured by other means than the amount of Near Eastern coins found in Western Europe. Up to now, also no wider-reaching attempts have been made to establish the provenience of the silver used in Scandinavian and Western European Viking Age objects like jewellery, hack silver or ingots: such a study would greatly increase our knowledge about long distance or middle distance slave trade, by the amount of silver coins melted down on the way west.

The detailed information from these biographies also shows that slavery may have been practised far more widely (even in only recently christianized areas) than previously assumed. Everybody in Western Europe could fall prey to Viking slavery: Irish, English, French, Frisians, Germans, as well as Eastern Europeans, independently of the status as Christians or pagans. The long-assumed dwindling of slave numbers during the course of the Early Middle Ages due to a decrease in warfare among more stable Western European kingdoms may thus well be an illusion: Vikings did not go predominantly for prisoners of war, but made use of any chance for taking slaves. Warring parties at a local level, especially in Christian Ireland, seem to have been eager suppliers for the heathen slave traders from Scandinavia. But even in the proud Carolingian empire of Charlemagne and his sons and grandsons, Germans and Slavs alike seem to have had no problems joining forces with Viking slavers or at least profiting from them.

Viking Age slave making and slave trading, even outside the well-worn waterways of the Baltic and the Russian rivers, was apparently a far more powerful market force than previously assumed.

#### ABSTRACT

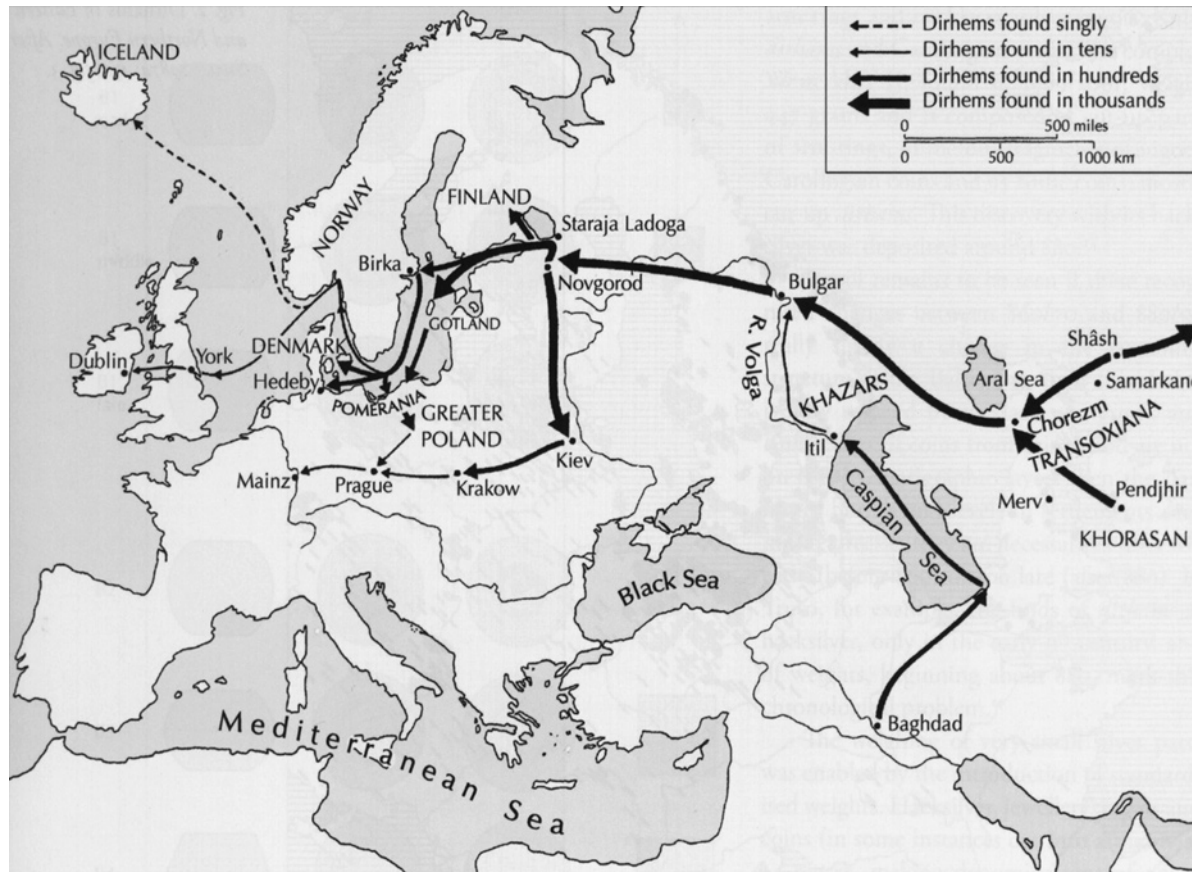
The present article tries to throw light on Viking Age slavery by looking at several biographies of slaves, such looking at slavery from below, instead of looking at normative texts regarding the legal status of slaves. These biographies of course normally regard those who regained their freedom again, whether transmitted by themselves (as in the case of Findan or Moriuht) or by those procuring their release (Ansgar, Rimbert). They throw light on various aspects of slave-making and slave-trading, especially on the dominant role the payment of ransom for prisoners played especially in Western Europe. This may have had to do with

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*Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard*, Roskilde 2009, pp. 294-308, here p. 295; cf. also D. Adamczyk, *Silber und Macht: Fernhandel, Tribute und die piastische Herrschaftsbildung in nordosteuropäischer Perspektive (800-1100)*, Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau, XXVIII, Wiesbaden 2014.

the problems involved by transporting slaves over large distances, their chance to escape (as in the case of Findan), but it also explains the scarcity of silver in the form of dirhems west of Sweden. A side issue, and one for future research, is the question of genre, in which such biographies tend to be found, and where hagiography plays a large role.





**Map. 1.** Silver-trade routes, reconstructed from the scale of hoards of dirhams, from H. Steuer, *Principles of Trade and Exchange: Trade Goods and Merchants*, eds. A. Engler, Athena Trakadas, *Wulfstan's Voyage: the Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard*, Roskilde 2009, pp. 294-308, here p. 295.

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KATOWICE

## INTERDISCIPLINARITY OF RESEARCH ON THE JÓMSBORG LEGEND



### INTRODUCTION

It is definitely a truism to state that the widely defined interdisciplinarity is an undisputed and essential element of Old Norse studies. Almost any research on cultural, social and political developments of medieval Scandinavia is both supposed and forced to land at the crossroads of various disciplines: history, archaeology, linguistics, literary and legal studies to name only the few most prominent ones. Such a situation, on a one hand, makes the subject even more intriguing, on the other, even more demanding. Despite potential and obvious difficulties, such a junction of various points of view and ways of interpretation of historical data seems to provide a chance for better understanding of various phenomena being a part of medieval past of the North.

The legend of Jóm sborg seems to be a good example in this case. Due to its specific historical subject and structure, state of preservation and numerous references to literary and material culture, the story of the infamous warrior band, reveals from the very first glance its complexity that requires the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach. The aim of this paper is to point at the main disciplines (history, literary studies and archaeology) which, providing different perspectives on the subject, treated jointly, are able to push us further in the research struggle to a better understanding of the legend, its origins and its development.

### THE LEGEND

The legend of Jóm sborg and the Vikings located there, therefore known as Jóm svikings, has its literary incarnation and is preserved, in various forms, within the Old Norse/Icelandic literary corpus.

The *Jómsvíkinga saga* is the main literary embodiment of the legend. There are several redactions of the saga, all of them of medieval origin, preserved in various manuscripts. The oldest one, produced in Iceland and known today as AM 291 4to, is said to have been completed in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The manuscript contains the fullest version of the story, although the state of preservation of the ms suggests it is not complete<sup>1</sup>. The same version of the saga is to be found in *Flateyjarbók*, dated to the 1380s<sup>2</sup>. Another manuscript, known as *Codex Holmianus* 7 4to, was completed in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century and contains a condensed and shortened version of the whole story<sup>3</sup>. Another manuscript, AM 510 4to, dated to the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, features only the second part of the story that starts with the establishment of the Jónsborg<sup>4</sup>. Finally, Arngrimur Jónsson, the Icelandic scholar and antiquarian, completed a Latin translation of the saga in 1592-1593. His redaction is supposed to be based on another medieval, now lost, manuscript, different from the preserved and manuscripts listed above<sup>5</sup>. Despite the relatively late chronology of manuscripts containing redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga*, the narrative itself is considered to be composed relatively early, around 1200<sup>6</sup>.

More or less developed references to the legend can be found also in other medieval Scandinavian narratives. Summaries of the plot, with especial emphasis on the battle of Hjörungavágr, are inserted in narratives of several kings' sagas: *Fagrskinna*, *Heimskringla*, *Knýtlinga saga* and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*<sup>7</sup>. The oldest one in the group, *Fagrskinna*, seems to be specially intriguing here. The saga features a separate and coherent chapter, exclusively devoted to the Jónsborg legend. It contains several elements that distinguish it visibly from the preserved redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga*, pointing at the existence of a separate and supposedly older version of the story<sup>8</sup>. The case of the founder of Jónsborg is a good example for it. Contrary

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1 *Jómsvíkinga saga efter Arnamagnæska handskriften N:o 291 4:to i diplomatariskt aftryck*, ed. C. af Petersens, København 1882.

2 *Flateyjarbók. En samling af norske konge-sagær*, I-III, Christiania 1860-1862.

3 *Jómsvíkinga saga efter skinnboken 7. 4to å Kungl. Biblioteket i Stockholm*, ed. G. Cederschiöld, Lund 1875.

4 *Jómsvíkinga saga* (efter cod. AM 510 4:to), ed. C. af Petersens, Lund 1879.

5 *Jómsvíkinga saga. Latinsk oversættelse af Arngrimur Jónsson*, ed. A. Gjessing, Kristianssand 1877.

6 A. Finlay, *Jómsvíkinga saga and Genre*, "Scripta Islandica" LXV (2014), pp. 65-66; Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir, *Jómsvíkinga saga. Sérstaða, varðveisla og viðtökur*, PhD dissertation, the University of Iceland, Reykjavík 2016, pp. 28-29. See also, Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir, Veturlíði Óskarsson, *The Manuscripts of Jómsvíkinga saga. A Survey*, "Scripta Islandica" LXV (2014), pp. 9-29.

7 A. Finlay, *Jómsvíkinga saga and Genre*, pp. 65-77.

8 *Fagrskinna. Noregs kononga tal*, red. Finnur Jónsson, København 1902-1903, pp. 80-107. See also J. Meegard, *Studier i Jómsvíkinga sagas stemma. Jómsvíkinga sagas fem redaksjoner sammenlignet*

to the *Jómsvíkinga saga* account, it labels Harald Gormsson as the one who established the warrior band in a recently built fortress. In this respect, the author of *Fagrskinna* is followed by Óláfr Þórðarson, the supposed author of *Knýtlinga saga*. Moreover, the Danish king as the founder of the stronghold is also noted by Saxo Grammaticus in his *Gesta Danorum*<sup>9</sup>.

Connections with Jómsborg and Jómsvikings were important elements of profiles of various saga heroes. It seems enough to mention both the Swedish prince Styrbjörn Ólafsson and the Icelander Björn Asbrandsson. The former, a protagonist of a separate *þáttr*, managed to engage the Jómsvikings in his conflict with his uncle and king, Eiríkr, and ended up with the battle of Fyrisevellir. The latter, one of the main characters of *Eyrbyggja saga*, was said to spend some time in Jómsborg, presumably as one of the members of the band<sup>10</sup>.

According to the author of *Fagrskinna*, the battle of Hjörungavágr and all its circumstances had been remembered thanks to a group of Icelanders who not only took part in the strife but also preserved it in their poetry and other narratives<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, there is set of skaldic poetry connected with the legend of Jómsborg. It can be divided into two groups. The first one contains either whole poems or *lausavísur* which mainly, or sometimes even exclusively, refer to the encounter at Hjörungavágr. One can list Tindr Hallkelson's *Hákonardrápa*, parts of Þórðr Kolbeinsson's *Eiríksdrápa* and separate stanzas attributed to Vigfúss Víga-Glúmsson, Einarr Helgason, Eyjolfur Valgerðarson and Þorleifr skúma Þorkelsson, as the main representatives of this group<sup>12</sup>.

The second group consists of poems that narrate the legend from the perspective of its particular characters. One can list two poems here: Þórkell Gíslason's *Búadrápa* and Bjarni Kolbeinsson's *Jómsvíkingadrápa*. The former, generally dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, presents Búi digri, one of the leaders of Jómsvikings. There are twelve stanzas of the poem preserved. They all refer to Búi's part in the battle of Hjörungavágr. Still, the poem is believed to be originally longer and cover also other elements of Búi's career. The latter

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med versjone i *Fagrskinna*. *Jómsvíkingadrápa*, *Heimskringla* og Saxo, "Arkiv for Nordisk Filologi" CXV (2000), pp. 175-182; J. Morawiec, *Vikings among the Slavs. Jomsborg and the Jomsvikings in Old Norse Tradition*, Vienna 2009, pp. 41-51.

<sup>9</sup> *Fagrskinna*, p. 80; *Knýtlinga saga*, *Danakonunga sǫgur*, ed. Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenzk fornrit, XXXV, Reykjavík 1982, p. 93; *Saxonis Grammatici Gesta Danorum*, eds. J. Olrik, H. Reader, København 1931, pp. 271-272.

<sup>10</sup> *Eyrbyggja saga*, eds. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, Matthías Þórðarson, Íslenzk fornrit, IV, Reykjavík 1935, p. 80; *Flateyjarbók. En samling af norske konge-sagæer*, II, Kristania 1862, pp. 70-73. See also J. Morawiec, *Vikings among the Slavs...*, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> *Fagrskinna*, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1. From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. D. Whaley, *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*, I, Turnhout 2012 for the latest edition of this poems and stanzas.

poem, composed in late 12<sup>th</sup> century, recapitulates the whole legend from the perspective of Vágn Ákason, the youngest of the band leaders<sup>13</sup>.

Stanzas from both groups appear in redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* as well as in other Old Norse narratives that feature references to the legend. It especially refers to the first group and is a consequence of the prominence of the battle of Hjørungavåg for narratives on jarl Hákon's reign. Most of the redactions of the saga use skaldic stanzas either to corroborate the prose narrative or fulfil needs of its prosimetrum. Intriguingly, none of the preserved redactions of *Jómsvíkinga saga* recalls even a single stanza from the supposedly 45-verse piece, namely Bjarni Kolbeinsson's *Jómsvíkingadrápa*. Only the author of AM 510 4to version admitted he knew the poem but even he did not decide it to use it in his narrative<sup>14</sup>.

The accounts of *Fagrskinna*, *Jómsvíkinga saga* and Bjarni's *drápa* make one believe that the legend consisted of two main parts. The first one concentrated on 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century Danish kings. This part is dominated by the story of Harald Gormsson's reign, his main political and military encounters concluded by the rebellion of his son Sveinn. This part of the saga ends with the exile of Palnatoki who had killed Harald to make room for Sveinn, whom he had fostered.

The second part of the legend concentrated on the establishment of Jómsborg and the development of the warrior band by Palnatoki. He became the jarl of Jómsborg, appointed by king Burisleifr of Vindland. Palnatoki not only finished works on the stronghold but also defined the organization of his warriors, establishing the law of the Jómsvikings. After his death, Sigvaldi became the jarl but was not as respected and charismatic as his predecessor. Sigvaldi's ambition is a source of intrigue that after the capture of Sveinn Forkbeard leads to the final destiny of the warrior band. The Jómsvikings, tricked by the Danish king who desperately wanted to avenge a dishonour he faced during the capture, were forced to attack Norway and jarl Hákon, its ruler, on behalf of Sveinn. It was a direct consequence of heavy drinking at a feast Sveinn organized to commemorate his father, and of the reckless vows of the leaders of the band. The attack, despite first successes, ended up with defeat at Hjørungavåg. Most of the Jómsvikings were killed. Some, including Sigvaldi and his brother Þorkell, fled. Those who survived the battle were taken captive and executed, one by one, by Þorkell leira, the jarl's follower. It was only Vágn who managed to trick Þorkell and save his own life and eventually kill the executioner. The battle meant the end of Jómsvikings.

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<sup>13</sup> *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas...*, I, pp. 941-999.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. J. Jesch, *Jómsvíkinga sögur and Jómsvíkinga drápur. Texts, Contexts and Intertexts*, "Scripta Islandica" LXV (2014), pp. 81-100.



The legend consists of a whole set of prominent figures: monarchs, jarls, renown warriors and supernatural figures. Some of them are historical ones and I will return to them little bit later. Supernatural ones are represented by Þorgerdr Hölgabruðr and her sister Irpa. The former, known also from other accounts, is presented in the legend as a personal goddess of jarl Hákon, could have originally been a local deity, revered especially in Trøndelag and Halogaland. Although both deities appear incidentally, their role is crucial when it comes to the final battle of Hjörungavåg. Their intervention is decisive of the jarl's victory over Jómsvikings.

Vast portions of the description of the characters waver between history and fiction. Although both the jarls Véseti of Bornholm and Strut-Haraldr of Zeeland seem to be rather fictional, it is very likely they both had historical counterparts. Burisleifr, the king of Wends, is also a fictional figure. However, his profile of a powerful and, at the same time, marginal monarch, thus attractive as potential father-in-law, seems to result from a complex memory of Polish rulers of the Piast dynasty, Mieszko I, his son Bolesław the Brave (Śmiały) and Bolesław the Wrymouth (Krzywousty).

Finally, the characters of some of the most prominent Jómsvikings seem to be based on historical figures. This is particularly true for Þorkell the Tall. Although the saga narrative keeps him rather in the shadow of his brother Sigvaldi, his presence is noted at all the most crucial moments in the history of the band (the vows, the final battle). On one hand, there is no doubt that Þorkell the Jómsviking is identical with the Danish *jarl*, famous for his military and political achievements in early 11<sup>th</sup> century England. On the other hand, one can't be sure how and to what extent the memory of this very person had influenced the process of creation of his literary counterpart. The same seems to go for both Sigvaldi and Bui. Contemporary skaldic poems on the battle of Hjörungavåg point at those two as leaders of the Danish army that invaded Norway. Again, it is very difficult, if at all possible, to decide to what extent those two Jómsvikings, when it comes to their family background, mentality and political status, reflect historical reality and not only much later and historically ignorant human imagination.

Even if *Jómsvikinga saga*, the main literary embodiment of the legend, does not belong to the most popular and thoroughly studied Old Norse texts, the subject has its own state of research. As it has been very recently summarized by Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir<sup>15</sup>, I will only briefly recall the most important works on the legend in general and the saga in particular. It would be hard not to mention Johannes Steenstrup, a Danish historian, who, in his monumental monograph entitled *Venderne og de Danske før Valdemar den Stores*, tried to

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15 Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir, *Jómsvikinga saga*, passim.



contextualize the Jónsborg legend within the history of 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century political encounters between Scandinavians and Slavs. Despite a relatively critical approach to saga narratives as reliable historical sources, he found Jónsborg and Vikings residing there important elements of contemporary politics in the Baltic zone<sup>16</sup>. His views found critics, for example Sofus Larsen, who claimed that sagas do not deliver reliable accounts on Jónsborg and the history of the stronghold<sup>17</sup>. Such a view, originating from a famous utterance by Lauritz Weibull, put the legend into the extreme margins of any further historical studies, limiting it to an issue of identification of Jónsborg with Wolin<sup>18</sup>.

Such a tendency did not affect literary studies on *Jónsvíkinga saga*. Its complex and sophisticated style both attracted and discouraged generations of scholars. Regarded as a relatively early composed narrative, it had been temporarily labelled as a "political saga"<sup>19</sup>. Very recent voices tend to avoid such definitions focusing on the hybridity of the saga, considering it as link between various standard saga subgenres<sup>20</sup>. One also has to mention separate studies on both skaldic poetry in the saga and the possible stemma of its manuscripts<sup>21</sup>. Such an approach, developed by Torfi Tulinius and, very recently by Þórdís Edda Johannesdóttir, consider *Jónsvíkinga saga* to be the fruit of an intellectual milieu of late 12<sup>th</sup> century Iceland, where there was a big interest in preserving the Scandinavian past with the help of new literary tools coming from the continent<sup>22</sup>.

The location of the legend between history and fiction seems to be supported by alternative approaches. One has to mention ongoing studies on the development of early medieval Wolin, not seen any more as an equivalent of literary Jónsborg but as a special place of intense and influential interactions between Scandinavians and Slavs<sup>23</sup>. It also refers to new historical studies

16 J. Steenstrup, *Venderne og de Danske før Valdemar den Stores tid*, København 1900.

17 S. Larsen, *Jónsborg, den belliggende og historie*, København 1932.

18 L. Weibull, *Kritiska undersökningar i Nordens historia omkring år 1000*, Lund 1911. The same approach on Polish ground was adopted by G. Labuda, *Saga o Styrbjörnie, jarlu Jónsborga*, "Slavia Antiqua" IV (1953). On the scholarly attempts to identify Jónsborg see R. Kiersnowski, *Legenda Winety*, Kraków 1950.

19 J. Jesch, *History in the 'political sagas'*, "Medium Ævum" LXII (1993), pp. 210-220.

20 A. Finlay, *Jónsvíkinga saga and Genre*; Sirpa Aalto, *Jónsvíkinga saga as a Part of Old Norse Hitoriorgraphy*, "Scripta Islandica" LXV (2014), pp. 33-58.

21 J. Megaard, *Studier i Jónsvíkinga sagas stemma. Jónsvíkinga sagas fem redaktioner sammenlignet med versionene i Fagrskinna, Jónsvíkingadrápa, Heimskringla og Saxo*, "Arkiv för nordisk filologi" CXV (2000), pp. 125-182.

22 Torfi H. Tulinius, *The Matter of the North. The rise of literary fiction in thirteenth-century Iceland*, Odense 2002; Þórdís Edda Johannesdóttir, *Jónsvíkinga saga*, passim.

23 W. Duczko, *Obecność skandynawska na Pomorzu i słowiańska w Skandynawii we wczesnym średniowieczu*, in: *Salsa Cholbergensis. Kołobrzeg w średniowieczu*, eds. L. Leciejewicz, M. Rębkowski,

on the subject, focused mainly on elements both contemporary to events described in the saga and later that could have influenced the development of the legend in the form it is known today<sup>24</sup>.

The legend of Jónsborg, perhaps as any other motif known from medieval Scandinavian tradition, has for a long time attracted different points of view, represented by different disciplines. Its complexity however seems to evoke a need for an even stronger joint interdisciplinary approach that provides a chance for better understanding the origins and development of the legend. Obvious limitations make me limit this presentation to the main three ones: history, literary studies and archaeology.

## HISTORY

Despite of the heavy criticism of *Jónsvíkinga saga* as a historical source, it is difficult to ignore the fact that its narrative is heavily based on historical data featuring prominent events and figures. Moreover, particular encounters, mainly of a military nature not only provide a convenient background for the main plot, but rather directly stimulate it. The audience of the saga has no chance to forget that the lives and actions of the main characters, both royals and others, are set against high level politics where conditions of single individuals affect conditions of whole kingdoms.

One has to agree with a claim that this historical background of the saga played an important role already for the 13<sup>th</sup> century (perhaps even earlier) audience and served not only to memorize history of that exclusive and extravagant warrior band but also of the history of prestigious political encounters aiming at dominance in the whole region that had both old origins and ongoing impact<sup>25</sup>.

The legend of Jónsborg provides an exclusive insight into Norwegian-Danish rivalry that features elements one knows from other sources: the Danish will to hegemonize politics in Norway, Danish attempts to withstand similar attempts made by the Ottonian Empire, Danish, Saxon and Polish interests in the Oder estuary, a process of centralization of power in both Denmark and Norway. A focus on the following battles: at Limfjord, at Danevirke, at Hjørungavåg not only set a convenient chain of events that hold the whole narrative in a perfect grasp. It also underlines an importance

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Kołobrzeg 2000; B.M. Stanisławski, *Obecność skandynawska w Wolinie a kwestia Jónsborga*, „Wędrowiec Zachodniopomorski” XV (2005).

<sup>24</sup> L.P. Słupecki, *Jónsvíkingalog, Jónsvíkings, Jónsborg/Wolin and Danish Circular Strongholds*, in: *The Neighbours of Poland in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. P. Urbańczyk, Warszawa 2000; J. Morawiec, *Vikings among the Slavs...*, passim.

<sup>25</sup> Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir, *Jónsvíkinga saga*, pp. 88-91.

of these events, and their consequences, for those who had been interested in keeping and developing memory of the legend among contemporaries.

Despite the fact that the action of the saga takes place in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, the history it provides was definitely relevant for a period when the legend was about to get its literary shape. Complex relations on the Scandinavian/Saxon/Slavonic borders, a visible crisis of royal power in both Denmark and Norway, and a rivalry in the Baltic Zone during the 12<sup>th</sup> century made the legend in general and the saga in particular a credible point of reference<sup>26</sup>.

Danish activity in Vindland, whether represented by Harald Gormsson or Palnatoki, encounters and negotiations with Burisleifr, and the Jónsborg labelled in some of accounts as a Danish *jarldom*, seem to reflex analogous processes that can be observed during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. It refers mainly to both the advances of Waldemar I and his son Knútr VI in Pomerania and the so-called Northern Crusades in Pomerania and other parts of the Baltic Zone<sup>27</sup>.

The latter problem, crusades in the Baltic Zone, could have influenced the narrative of the saga, namely through a motif of controversy between prominent fathers and sons, visible in both main parts of the saga. Although these aspects still require further studies, it is still possible to hint at a general view of a crusading movement among youngsters of contemporary elites as a chance for political and social advancement. Histories of royal dynasties in both France and England during the Crusades seem to be relevant in this respect. To mention only the most distinguished ones, Sveinn Forkbeard, jarl Eiríkr of Hlaðir, Vágn Ákason, as depicted in the saga, fit this profile very well. Their political ambitions to gain and execute the power they dream of are opposed by those who already are in charge. This scheme triggers many motifs in the saga, not only a rebellion of Sveinn, the most obvious example, but also Vágn's controversies with both jarl Sigvaldi and Þorkell leira, to name but one example. It all shows the saga can and perhaps should be read in the context of political and social developments in both Scandinavia and the Baltic Zone during 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Despite a relatively large gap between events described in the saga and the postulated date of its composition, one cannot forget about elements that point at continuous development of the legend with its roots in late 10<sup>th</sup> century. The one I shall refer to later is skaldic poetry dedicated to jarl Hákon of Hlaðir praising him for his victory over the Danes at Hjörungavåg. The other one is the motif of the capture of Sveinn Forkbeard, seized by Sigvaldi, taken to Jónsborg and made to reconcile with king Burisleifr. The motif in question

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<sup>26</sup> See J. Morawiec, *Vikings among the Slavs...*, pp. 75-87.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem.

is important for the whole plot. The humiliated Sveinn took vengeance on Sigvaldi and the rest of the Jómssvikings by inviting them to a feast where they carelessly, but provoked by the king, vowed to attack Norway and jarl Hákon. One thing seems certain, the saga author(s) did not invent the story. It appears in older accounts, in Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, Sveinn Aggesen's *Historia brevum* and, oldest of all, in Thietmar's *Chronicon*. All authors decided to include it describing the very turbulent beginnings of Svein's reign in Denmark. As one can date an origin of this very motif to the late 10<sup>th</sup> century it seems possible to suggest that it was the complex political situation in Denmark at that time (namely the rapid falls of both Harald Gormsson and Sveinn Forkbeard) that stimulated the creation and circulation of stories that presented both kings in a very negative light. Stories of this kind, due to their character and content were too attractive to be forgotten and probably very easily and naturally found their place within the Jómsborg legend<sup>28</sup>.

#### LITERATURE

*Jómssvíkinga saga*, the main medium of the legend, belongs to the most sophisticated and distinguished pieces of Scandinavian medieval literacy. Its popularity can be measured not only by the number of preserved redactions but also by numerous references one can find in other narratives<sup>29</sup>. This postulated popularity was an effect of not only what and who the legend is about, but also, perhaps even more importantly, how it was arranged and formulated. That's why it is so important to remember that the saga, on one hand, documents the process of adaptation of various cultural influences coming from the Continent and, on its part, fulfils the needs of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century Icelanders to preserve their own cultural legacy, "The matter of the North", as Torfi Tulinius named it, by using new and much more effective and sophisticated tools<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand, despite relying with its plot on serious royal politics and prestigious military encounters, the saga provides its audience with a large amount of irony, humour and passion which are, then and today, an excellent piece of entertainment.

A literary approach to the legend in general and the saga in particular, reminds all interested in the subject that historical accuracy and reliability were not the main driving forces motivating people to preserve this story. All

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<sup>28</sup> See J. Morawiec, *Sveinn Forkbeard – the Captured King of Denmark*, in: *Aspects of Royal Power in Medieval North*, eds. J. Morawiec, B. Boryśławski, Katowice 2018, pp. 27-42.

<sup>29</sup> See Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir, *Jómssvíkinga saga*, pp. 29-102.

<sup>30</sup> Torfi H. Tulinius, *The Matter of the North...*, pp. 191-216.

historical background one can find in the saga, featuring prominent figures and events, so important and crucial for the plot, is affected and twisted in order to both entertain and meet all the expectations I referred to above.

The image of royal power in the saga is a good example of this trend. Danish monarchs who play a prominent role in this case, despite their royal status, are presented in an extremely negative way. Even the fact of the tribute paid by Burisleifr cannot overshadow a list of vices that are characteristic for the kings of Denmark. They are perplexed as weak cowards, unable to direct initiatives and rapid reactions that could build up a sort of respect among their subjects. How can one respect a king who allows himself to be kidnapped despite a whole retinue at his side? How can one respect a king who has to face a rebellion of his own son and dies in an extremely shameful way? How can one respect a king who thinks that the only way to regain lost honour is to humiliate, in the same way, those who mocked him? The image of royal power is extreme and one-sided<sup>31</sup>. One has to remember that a key to understand this image does not lie in an attempt to decide about its authenticity. There are other factors that should be taken into consideration here.

The complex, sometimes called hybrid, style of the saga both fascinates and puzzles scholars. It makes *Jómsvíkinga saga* special, different and it seems that nowadays it is possible to say that it is its advantage that it cannot be so easily classified in one of the saga subgenres<sup>32</sup>. We do not know any authors of the story. Even Bjarni Kolbeinsson and Þórkell Gíslason should be seen rather as transmitters of the legend, not their creators. Still, the literary aspect of the subject makes one look at those who made it up and preserved it for us as great and talented writers. They managed to complete the story that is intriguing both as a whole, but also when one focuses on its separate motifs. To list only a few of them: Vágn challenging Sigvaldi, jarl Hakon sacrificing his own son, the tragedy of the Jómsvíking's awareness of the consequences of their vows, or the intervention of Þorgerðr and Irpa during the battle of Hjörungavåg. Taken alone they can keep the attention of an audience with their lively and dramatic plot featuring distinctive, both negatively and positively, figures. Taken together, skilfully bound, they end up as the big and outstanding narrative. This, together with the ability to balance between various subgenres, makes one label the saga as a very prominent piece of literature.

Despite numerous studies on the saga, there are still aspects that remain uncertain and are awaiting explanation. Even if one assumes that the origins of the legend go back to the late 10<sup>th</sup> century, the process of composition of

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<sup>31</sup> J. Morawiec, *Danish Kings and the Foundation of Jómsborg*, "Scripta Islandica" LXV (2014), pp. 125-142.

<sup>32</sup> See note 20.

the saga and addition of particular motifs remain unknown. Both *Búadrápa* and *Jómsvíkingadrápa* make one believe that the legend could, and indeed was, presented from a perspective of a single hero. Does it mean there were other alternative ways in usage? If so, what shape did they take? Is the redaction of the saga preserved in AM 510 4to, missing the first part of the saga, such an alternative version? Relations between particular redactions are more and more clear for us today. Still, one would like to know more what influenced the preparations of either the condensed (*Codex Holmianus* 7 4to) or changed (Arngrímur Jónsson's translation) versions of the saga.

As was already mentioned several times, all redactions of the saga feature skaldic stanzas in their narratives<sup>33</sup>. The majority of these verses refer to the battle of Hjörungavåg, and the way they are used suggest they were treated as "authentic insight" into the past corroborating the prose content. It can be a result of the fact that at least some of these stanzas, first of all Tindr Hallkelson's *Hákonardrápa* and Þórðr Kolbeinsson's *Eirískdrápa*, are to be found in other kings' sagas. Poetic corroboration of the final battle of Jómsvikings contrasts visibly with the rest of the saga that features several instances of poetry. Very few of them could be defined as an integral part of the prosimetrum of the saga. This refers mainly to both stanzas attributed to Vágn Ákason that express his negative emotions toward jarl Sigvaldi. One can only wonder why none of redactions of the saga feature Bjarni's *Jómsvíkingadrápa*. Does the fact that the poem is mentioned (but not used) in AM 510 4to mean that authors of other redactions did not know Bjarni's composition? Or were perhaps all of them aware of the relatively late chronology of the poem and found it to be an unreliable source of information?

#### ARCHEOLOGY

Elsewhere I tried to argue that an insight into the territories of the Slavs (Vindland) in Scandinavian medieval literature is schematically limited to Jómsborg<sup>34</sup>. *Jómsvíkinga saga* and other texts that refer to the legend follow this trend. Two things seem to be obvious. Firstly, the stronghold of Jómsborg should be treated as a pure literary creation and searching for its material remnants makes no sense. Secondly, Scandinavians used the name Jómsborg to designate early medieval Wolin. This makes the results of archaeological excavations in the early medieval urban complex a very important supplement for the study of the legend of Jómsborg.

<sup>33</sup> See note 14.

<sup>34</sup> J. Morawiec, *Slavs and their Lands in Old Norse Literature*, in: *Scandinavian Culture in Medieval Poland*, eds. S. Moździoch, B. Stanisławski, P. Wiszewski, Wrocław 2013, pp. 53-64.



Contrary to previous and rightly questioned views, Scandinavians were present on the southern shores of the Baltic since the very beginning of the Viking Age, as soon as perspectives of prestigious and lucrative trade appeared. Excavations in Größ Strömkendorf (probably Reric), Menzlin, Świelubie, Bardy, Truso and Wiskiauten, to name only the most important and most thoroughly studied places, confirm the presence of Scandinavian traders and craftsmen settling in newly established ports-of-trade since the early 8<sup>th</sup> century. This activity can be traced through various phenomena: funerary customs, artefacts both imported from the North and those brought by Scandinavians from other regions (e.g. Russia, Western Europe), like Arabic silver. This ongoing presence was an effect of conviction that local resources can be used for the far trade linking the Baltic both with the rest of the so-called Viking diaspora.

These processes couldn't omit Wolin. Despite its relatively early origins, dated to the turn of the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, the presence and activity of Scandinavians at Dziwna river are exclusively dated to the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. Importantly, it is the time of the biggest prosperity of the town, its biggest development and political status. Impressive investments in a defence system (ramparts), shipyards and internal arrangement of the complex, point to potent and effective elites that did not hide their political ambitions.

Thus it seems important to return again to studies undertaken by Władysław Duczko and Błażej Stanisławski on the Scandinavian presence in Wolin<sup>35</sup>. Both scholars took a relatively rich set of artefacts as a starting point, featuring hilts and mounts, pendants, needles, combs and comb cases, spoons and other utensils made of wood, amber and antler. Many of these objects were decorated in the Borre, Mammen and Ringerike styles. Special attention, in the context of the Jónsborg legend, should be paid to the first of them. The Borre style is associated with Danish political and military elites and the prominence of this very style among artefacts from Wolin is both striking and rather not accidental. Moreover, both scholars point to a local production of many of these objects. They argue that there was at least one workshop in Wolin, probably operated by a Scandinavian craftsman, in which objects decorated in the Viking art were made. Those responsible for the production of these objects are also said to have been inspired by similar decorative techniques one can observe among Scandinavian enclaves in the British Isles. That's why both Duczko and Stanisławski, stressing the quality and distinction of both the workshop and its products, do not hesitate to label

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<sup>35</sup> See B.M. Stanisławski, *Norse Culture in Wolin-Jónsborg*, in: *Scandinavian Culture in Medieval Poland*, pp. 193-246.

it as the best representative of so called “Pomeranian school of Scandinavian-Insular Art”<sup>36</sup>.

What seems to be especially important for studies on the Jónsborg legend is the fact that sets of artefacts in question point at the presence of high-level military and political elites of Scandinavian origin. Moreover, the postulated (and in many cases confirmed) chronology of these objects points to the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries as the time of its occurrence. It means a significant presence of Scandinavian warriors and/or nobles in Wolin in times when the town was at its political and economic climax. It is hard not to connect this presence with Danish attempts, very visible at least during the reign of Harald Gormsson but also possibly during the reign of his son Sveinn, to take control of the very prominent and strategic Oder estuary.

These Northern influences, which probably ended with the destruction of Wolin in 1043 by Magnus the Good, could have been one of the factors that influenced the legend of Jónsborg. It especially refers to the decision to locate the warrior band exactly in Vindland and connect its establishment with this very turbulent time in Danish politics in the late 10<sup>th</sup> and early 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The more we know about the character and scope of the Scandinavian presence in Wolin, the more we know about the legend of Jónsborg.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The considerations presented above are aimed to underline the complex nature of the Jónsborg legend and of *Jónsvíkinga saga* – its main literary embodiment. Although taken from a perspective of three different disciplines, they are meant to be treated jointly. It would be hard to find them comprehensive, but they arguably prove the necessity of interdisciplinary approach to both the legend and the saga.

This interdisciplinary approach is not an easy task. It requires mutual understanding and respect for different disciplines that look at the very same subject but quite often are attracted by its totally different features. However, it seems to be the only way to the better understanding of texts that transmit the legend but also of an awareness of the fact that it originated and developed under influence of many, different and independent factors.

Such an approach seems to be natural for the story of the Jónsvíkings, clinched between history and fiction. But in fact this is the nature of the whole literary corpus produced by the medieval North. Thus, the better one understands the Jónsborg legend and *Jónsvíkinga saga*, the more one knows about Old Norse/Icelandic literature in general.

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<sup>36</sup> See note 23.

## ABSTRACT

Widely defined interdisciplinarity is an undisputed and essential element of Old Norse studies. Almost any research on cultural, social and political developments of medieval Scandinavia is both supposed and forced to land at the crossroads of various disciplines: history, archeology, linguistics, literary and legal studies to name only these few most prominent ones. Such a situation, on a one hand, makes the subject even more intriguing, on the other, even more demanding. Despite potential and obvious difficulties, such a junction of various points of view and ways of interpretation of historical data, seems to provide a chance for better understanding of various phenomena being a part of medieval past of the North.

The legend of Jónsborg seems to be a good example in this case. Due to its specific historical subject and structure, state of preservation and numerous references to literary and material culture, the story of infamous warrior band, from the very first glance, reveals its complexity that requires necessity of interdisciplinary approach. The aim of this paper is to point at the main disciplines (history, literary studies and archeology) that, providing different perspectives on the subject, treated jointly, are able to push us further in research struggles to better understanding of the legend, its origins and its development.

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WARSZAWA

## HOW AND WHY DID DIRHAMS FLOW TO SCANDINAVIA DURING THE 9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY?



In the course of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries several thousand Arabic coins, so-called dirhams, flowed to Scandinavia, particularly to Gotland. Numerous pieces of jewellery and ingots made at least partly from melted dirhams have also been discovered in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

This raises several questions. Why did such large quantities of dirhams make their way to the North? How did the different waves of silver inflow affect economic and political developments in Viking Age Scandinavia and how did these developments, in turn, change the channels by which dirhams were distributed? And last but not least, who circulated the silver? Were these people with commercial interests – traders or those who put precious metal hoards to creative use (for example, jewellers) – or people whose interests were predatory or tributary (for example, slavers, chieftains and warlords)? Or were both interests in play?

Some of those questions have already been addressed by several scholars. However, numismatists and archaeologists like T.S. Noonan, B. Hoven, K. Jonsson or I. Gustin<sup>1</sup> seem to be basically interested in the chronological and geographical composition of dirhams in Scandinavian hoards, less in the political and social structures affected by silver flows. On the other hand, at the

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<sup>1</sup> T.S. Noonan, *When Did Dirham Imports into Tenth-Century Sweden Decline?*, "Numismatiska Meddelanden" XXXVII (1989), pp. 295-301; B. Hoven, *Ninth Century Dirham Hoards from Sweden*, "Journal of Baltic Studies" XIII (1982), pp. 202-219; K. Jonsson, *Sweden in the Tenth Century: A Monetary Economy?*, in: *Silver Economies, Monetisation and Society in Scandinavia AD 800-1100*, ed. J. Graham-Campbell, S.M. Sindbæk, G. Williams, Aarhus 2011, pp. 245-257; I. Gustin, *Coin Stock and Coin Circulation in Birka*, *ibidem*, pp. 227-244.

latest since Aaron Gurevich's masterly article *Wealth and Gift-Bestowal among the Ancient Scandinavians*<sup>2</sup> a number of historians have tried to put the handling of silver in Norse societies into an anthropological perspective – however barely contextualizing the question how silver was acquired und circulated. Thus, a systematic study combining those two elements is missing.

Subsequently, the focus of my presentation lies on two aspects of the aforementioned phenomenon. First of all, we have to ask how the Vikings started to penetrate Russia to gain silver and which goods or “services” they offered to obtain dirhams. Secondly, the domestic use of coins and precious metals shall be discussed. Consequently, I shall firstly present the numismatic evidence and the chronological patterns of dirham flows. In the second section I shall try to respond to the question how the Vikings acquired dirhams, and last but not least, I shall try to explain why they wanted to obtain silver.

Let me start with the numismatic evidence. Because of the huge material at our disposal I am going to focus only on Scandinavian finds dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

#### NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE AND CHRONOLOGICAL PATTERNS

The quantity of dirham hoards in Scandinavia (Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark) is illustrated by table 1.

Table 1. Number of dirham hoards with at least 10 coins in ninth century Scandinavia (according to the last coin)<sup>3</sup>

812/813-825/826	5 (4 Gotland; 1 Swedish mainland)
833/834-846/847	11 (7 Gotland; 1 Swedish mainland)
850/851-857/858	9 (1 Gotland; 4 Swedish mainland)
859/860-877/878	20 (13 Gotland; 5 Swedish mainland)
880/881-896/897	10 (7 Gotland; 2 Swedish mainland)

It can therefore be concluded that the inflow of dirhams to Scandinavia was cyclical. Judging by the number of finds, after a slow start in the first quarter of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (just nearly one hoard every three years) a strong increase occurred by the 830s/840s and could more or less be kept up during

<sup>2</sup> A. Gurevich, *Wealth and Gift-Bestowal among the Ancient Scandinavians*, “Scandinavica” VII (1968) 2, pp. 126-138.

<sup>3</sup> After tables 38 and 42 in D. Adamczyk, *Silber und Macht. Fernhandel, Tribute und die piastische Herrschaftsbildung in nordosteuropäischer Perspektive*, Wiesbaden 2018, pp. 81-82 and 102-104; supplemented by new finds.

the 850s. The absolute peak seems to have been reached in the 860s/870s. In the last two decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century a decline to the level of the 830s/850s took place. Additionally, 58 percent of all the Scandinavian 9<sup>th</sup>-century hoards originate from Gotland, just 24 percent from the Swedish mainland.

Let us now look at a comparison of numismatic evidence between Scandinavia and the southern shores of the Baltic Sea.

Table 2. Silver hoards with at least 10 coins from the southern shores of the Baltic Sea and Scandinavia<sup>4</sup>

Hoards according to the last coin	Southern Baltic	Scandinavia
803-828/829	11 (among 7 in Truso and its hinterland)	5
831/832-846/847	4	11
849/850-857/858	1	9
859/860-877/878	5	20
880/881-896/897	1	10

It is striking that in the 800s/820s most dirham hoards from the Baltic Sea area come from the emporium at Janów Pomorski/Truso, near Elbląg, and its hinterland. I should add that also more than 1,000 stray finds of coins, most of them dirhams, are known from Janów Pomorski. The chronological composition of single finds confirms the chronological structure of hoards in Truso's hinterland: just 2-3 percent of them were struck after 830. Moreover, at this time the emporium was controlled and inhabited mainly by Norsemen who originated, judging by their artefacts, from various parts of Scandinavia, above all Gotland and perhaps Denmark. Consequently, the settlers of Truso did dominate the circulation of dirhams within the Baltic Sea during the early 9<sup>th</sup> century.

What does a comparison between Scandinavia and northern Russia show?

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4 Ibidem; supplemented by new finds.



Table 3. Number of silver hoards with at least 10 coins from northern Russia and Scandinavia<sup>5</sup>

Hoard according to the last coin	Northern Russia	Scandinavia
786/787-831/832	9	5
833/834-846/847	6	11
849/850-857/858	2	9
859/860-877/878	9	20
880/881-896/897	1	10

Here we can observe the same evidence as on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea. In the late eight and first three decades of the 9<sup>th</sup> century more hoards appeared in northern Russia than in Scandinavia. The situation changed remarkably from the 830s/840s onwards. Like in Truso, Scandinavian settlers played a key role in the silver trade also in northern Russia. They used a settlement along the river Volhov known as Staraia Ladoga to control the dirham flow between the East-European interior and northern Russia. Thus, in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, coin redistribution networks between Ladoga and Truso were established. Numismatic evidence strongly suggests that the Norsemen from Gotland and Uppland replaced these networks from the 830s/840s onwards. But how and why did it occur?

#### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION I: HOW TO ACQUIRE DIRHAMS

The systematic and constant inflow of dirhams to Scandinavia, at first to Gotland, began in the 810s/820s, roughly a decade later than to northern Russia. However, the oldest hoards contained only few coins: Ockes (812/813) 11 dirhams, Visby (816/817) 21, Norrgarda-Norrby I (818/819) 27, and last but not least Prästgarden (824/825) 65. They may show that small groupings of smiths and craftsmen from Gotland resided in Staraia Ladoga and acquired dirhams by producing ironware, glass beads, antler and manufacturing amber.<sup>6</sup> The increasing number of dirham hoards in Scandinavia by the 830s/840s does coincide with a change of their size: the hoard from Väsby (Uppland), buried between 825/826 and 832/833, contained at least 128 Arabic

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, after tables 36, 38, 40 and 42, pp. 65-66, 81-82, 93-94 and 102-104; supplemented by new finds.

<sup>6</sup> H. Vierck, *Ein Schmiedepflicht aus Alt-Ladoga und der präurbane Handel zur Ostsee vor der Wikingerzeit. Zur frühmittelalterlichen Betriebseinheit von Produktion und Absatz im Metallhandwerk, "Münstersche Beiträge zur Antiken Handelsgeschichte" II* (1983), 2, pp. 3-64.

coins; the hoards from Sundveda in Uppland (837/838) and Ocksarve in Gotland (840/841) included respectively 471 and 437 dirhams.<sup>7</sup> How can we explain this growth?

According to the *Annales Bertiniani* under the year 839 a groupe of people who belonged to the Swedes ("comperit eos gentis esse Sueonum") was called *Rhos* and ruled by the *chacanus*.<sup>8</sup> There is much to be said for northern Russia as centre of these *Rhos*. Unfortunately, we do not have further information about the fiscal, economic and political structures of their organisation. The Persian geographer Ibn Khurradadbiḥ may shed light on the latter. He reports by c. 846/847, probable based on some older sources, as follows:

The Rus' living among the Saqlab [Slavs as well as Finno-Ugric and Baltic people] come from the most remote regions of the country of the Saqlab to the Sea of Rum [the Black Sea], and sell there the skins of the beaver and the black fox as well as swords. The Emperor of Rum collects 10 percent tithes of their commodities [...] Or they travel along the river of Saqlab [Volga or perhaps Don], and come to the city of Itil, capital of the Khazars where the ruler of country collects 10 percent tithes from them. Then they go to the sea of Jurjan [Caspian Sea] and visit there any market they wish [...] From Jurjan they sometimes carry their goods by camels to Baghdad.<sup>9</sup>

Ibn Khurradadbiḥ's account shows that the Rus' carry furs and swords to several markets in the Khazar Khaganate, the Caspian Sea area and even Baghdad. From the archaeological excavations we know that Norsemen penetrated northern Russia already in the 750s.<sup>10</sup> From ca. 800 onward (perhaps since their permanent residence in Ladoga) people called the Rus' may have undertaken the long journeys as described by Ibn Khordadbiḥ. I should add that the distance between Staraia Ladoga, from where the Rus' probably started their journeys, to Baghdad, where they sometimes ended, was ca. 4,000 km. We should also take into consideration that the Rus' had to initiate from time to time long mercantile expeditions into the interior of Northern Russia to procure the furs they could exchange for silver coins. Glass beads of Scandinavian and oriental origin along the route to the fur-rich lands on the rivers Mologa and Sheksna or near the lake Galich illustrate this. There is no doubt that a few glass beads were also produced in Ladoga – the first glassmaking workshop dated from ca. 780 to ca. 810. The second one was constructed in the same location after the fire in ca. 811-815. Among

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<sup>7</sup> D. Adamczyk, *Silber und Macht...*, tables 38 and 42.

<sup>8</sup> *Jahrbücher von St. Bertin*, in: *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte 2. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe*, ed. R. Rau, Darmstadt 1992, pp. 1-287, here pp. 44-45.

<sup>9</sup> *Źródła arabskie do dziejów Słowiańszczyzny*, ed. T. Lewicki, I, Wrocław 1956, pp. 76-77.

<sup>10</sup> H. Vierck, *Ein Schmiederplatz...*

others, more than 150 glass beads and 153 amber pieces were discovered in the dwelling. In a neighboring complex several hundred pieces of glass slag, pieces of crucibles, and melted as well as half-worked beads were unearthed. This workshop appeared to operate until the 830s, and it seems that after 840 the glass production in Ladoga basically decreased.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, several goods such as swords or beaver pelts could have come to Ladoga through trade connections with societies of the Baltic Sea region. The geography of dirham finds from the emporium at Janów Pomorski/Truso in Prussia or on Gotland confirms this assumption.

Thus, Ibn Khurradadbiḥ's account indicates that people called *Rhos/Rus'* established in northern Russia a trading "colony", apparently ruled by a chieftain called *chacanus*, which from the early 9<sup>th</sup> century onwards served them to develop a cross-continental north-south commerce going across the borders of the Khazar Khaganate. The Rus' had to undertake long journeys because they disposed of only few goods they had to gain by long trade expeditions in northern Russia or by trade connections in the Baltic Sea region. Therefore, they tried to sell furs and swords (but also certainly slaves) at the best possible price by getting direct contacts with customers in the Caliphate – without the Khazar middlemen.

This situation changed remarkably during the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, especially by the 860s/870s. The chronology of hoards suggests a significant shift of the geography of silver hoards to Northern Russia/upper Volga and above all to Sweden, primarily Gotland. Now strong networks of Rus' and Svear appeared – also indicated by the number of trade centers with Scandinavian finds in Northern Russia and on the upper Volga as well as the size of hoards (Vyshegsha I 841/842: 1,274 dirhams; Baevo/Sobolevo 862/863: ca. 2,000; Timerevo I 865: 2,761; Timerevo II 869: 1,500; Shumilovo 870/871: 1,326; Liubyni 873/874: 2,361).<sup>12</sup> In the Russian interior, the commerce and power center at the Rurikovo hill-fort (near the later Novgorod) and the trading place at Timerevo (near Iaroslav on the upper Volga) played a particularly important role. It is no coincidence that between 850 and 880, especially in the 860s/870s, not only the geographical extension of hoarding in Scandinavia (Västergötland, Gästrikland, Östergötland, Småland, Södermanland, Öland and southern Norway) increased, but also the size of finds. The hoard from Eskedalen in Småland (864/865) contained 2,001 dirhams, and the two hoards from Spillings near Slite in Gotland (867 and 870/871) comprised 14,300 coins,

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11 R.K. Kovalev, *The Development and Diffusion of Glassmaking in Pre-Mongol Russia*, in: *The Prehistory and History of Glassmaking Technology*, ed. P. McCray, W.D. Kingery, Ceramics and Civilization, VIII, Westerville (OH) 1998, pp. 293-314, here pp. 298, 296.

12 D. Adamczyk, *Silber und Macht...*, table 40, pp. 81-82.

mainly dirhams, along with 486 bangles, 80 ingots, 25 finger-rings and several pieces of hack-silver. We should add 20 kg of jewellery made of bronze.<sup>13</sup>

How can we explain this change? Let us consult the Persian geographer Ibn Rustah, who wrote shortly after 900, but probably used some older sources written in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century:

The Rus' raid the Saqlabs [Slavic, Finno-Ugric and/or Baltic communities] on ships and seize people from among the Saqlabs; they make them slaves and take to the Khazars and Bulgars to sell them there. They do not till field, having crops what they plunder from the Saqlabs [...]. They sell also grey squirrels, sable and other furs [...]. They want only silver coins.<sup>14</sup>

The differences between Ibn Rustah's account and that of Ibn Khurradadbih could not be bigger. Ibn Rustah does not give any hints about long journeys of the Rus' to the Caspian Sea and Baghdad. Slave trade takes a central role in his description (while Ibn Khurradadbih only mentions furs of the beaver and the fox as well as swords). And last but not least, Ibn Rustah emphasizes a huge hierarchy between the people called Rus' and the indigenous Slavs, Finno-Ugrians and Baltic groupings from northern Russia. His account suggests a significant shift in the logic of the political economy of silver transfer indicated by numismatic and archaeological evidence and suggests a transformation from the cross-continental long-distance trade in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century described by Ibn Khurradadbih into a hierarchical tributary-predatory Rus' network-system in the second half of the same century.

Thus, the Rus' established an efficient tributary and predatory system in northern Russia between 850 and 870, so they may have sold more attractive furs, among others of grey squirrel and sable, and slaves. In this way they reduced the cost of obtaining goods which could be exchanged for Arabic silver. Therefore, unlike the Rus' in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, they did not need to undertake long journeys to the markets in the Caspian Sea area and in Baghdad to make a profit. This may also explain why Rus' commerce expeditions in the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century became shorter.

However, we have to distinguish between Norsemen who had settled in northern Russia and those who came from Scandinavia. The composition of hoards from northern Russia and Sweden from the 870s clearly shows parallels between both regions. The Swedish finds from the 880s and 890s, in contrast, contain more new dirhams than Russian hoards.<sup>15</sup> This indicates

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<sup>13</sup> *The Spillings Hoard – Gotlands Role in Viking Age World Trade*, ed. A.-M. Pettersson, Lund 2009.

<sup>14</sup> *Źródła arabskie...*, II, pp. 41-43.

<sup>15</sup> T.S. Noonan, *Ninth Century Dirham Hoards from European Russia. A Preliminary Analysis*, in: *Viking-Age Coinage in Northern Lands. The Sixth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary*

that Vikings must have acquired dirhams directly on Khazar markets and brought them to Scandinavia. As just one hoard from northern Russia dated to the 880s/890s is known, we may assume that the Norsemen obtained furs and slaves by raiding and levying tribute somewhere in northern Russia. Furs and slaves obtained in this way they then exchanged for silver. Consequently, the activities of Rus', Scandinavian settlers in Russia, and Norsemen, who came directly from Sweden, were two sides of the same coin.

Let me turn to the Baltic Sea. We have some evidence of Viking raids on the southern Baltic in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century from the *Vita Anskarii*. Rimbert reports that bands of Danes, dissatisfied with the tribute they had just collected at the emporium of Birka, attacked a Slavic stronghold in 845 or 849 and seized 'loot and many treasures' ("captis in ea spoliis ac thesauris multis").<sup>16</sup> And in 852 Danes tried to plunder the Curonians (in what is today Latvia and Lithuania), but were vanquished. Shortly after, the Swedish King Olof raided the same Curonians, but unlike the Danes he was able to defeat them. According to the *Vita Anskarii*, Olof forced them to pay a tribute in the form of 7,500 pounds of silver, equivalent to about 500,000 dirhams.<sup>17</sup> Although we cannot take the amounts mentioned at face value, these stories nevertheless illustrate Scandinavian pillaging of the Slavic and Baltic communities and extorting from them, among other things, silver. This could explain why only a very few hoards from the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century have been found in Pomerania and Prussia.

Tributes imposed by various groups of Vikings are reflected also in the *Guta Saga*:

Sixty marks of silver in respect of each year is the Gotlanders' tax, divided so that the king of Sweden should have forty marks of silver out of the sixty, and the jarl twenty marks of silver [...] In this way, the Gotlanders submitted to the king of Sweden, of their own free will, in order that they might travel everywhere in Sweden free and unhindered, exempt from toll and all other charges. Similarly the Swedes also have the right to visit Gotland, without ban against trade in corn, or other prohibitions. The king was obliged to give the Gotlanders protection and assistance, if they should need it and request it. In addition the king, and likewise the jarl, should send messengers to the Gotlanders' general assembly and arrange for their tax to be collected there. The messengers in question have a duty to proclaim the freedom of Gotlanders to visit

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*History 1*, ed. M.A.S. Blackburn, D.M. Metcalf, Oxford 1981, pp. 47-117, tab. D, p. 73; B. Hoven, *Ninth Century Dirham...*

<sup>16</sup> Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, in: *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe XI*, ed. R. Buchner, W. Trillmich, Darmstadt 1973, pp. 15-133, here pp. 62-63.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 94-99.

all places overseas that belong to the king in Uppsala and, similarly, to such as have the right to travel here from that side.<sup>18</sup>

We do not know whether the Gotland tribute mentioned in the *Guta Saga* refers to events during the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, this quotation strongly illustrates how silver could be obtained and transferred within Scandinavia.

Moreover, we should not forget that Vikings also plundered in Western Europe. Between 834 and 892 they extorted around 50,000 pounds in the Carolingian empire, equivalent to about 12 million coins, 20 t silver. However, from the 9<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavian hoards, just a few western deniers are known. This strongly indicates that they were melted down or spent on the Continent and British Isles.<sup>19</sup>

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION II: WHY TO OBTAIN SILVER

Stray finds of coins, scales and weights serve as a good indicator of using silver as money. Such accumulations occur in 9<sup>th</sup> century contexts only at trading places, nodal points of commerce such as Birka, Kaupang, Hedeby, Paviken, and at the central place Uppåkra in Skania.<sup>20</sup>

However, precious metals as means of payment fulfilled in my opinion just secondary functions in comparison with the political and social one. We have to think about the using of silver in Viking Age societies in terms of landed relations, concepts of ownership and property, structures of inheritance and power relationships within and between families and gender identities.<sup>21</sup> The appearance of ring ornaments imitating snakes in shapes and ornamentation may emphasize their symbolic and protective meaning as the hoard's guardians. The snake/dragon seems to reflect hoarding and wealth in the poetic expressions in Old Norse skaldic poetry. According to Christoph Kilger „the resemblance with serpent animals may also show a morphological search for a bodily manifestation channeling and reinforcing up earlier but still current concepts of value.”<sup>22</sup> Crucibles and casting moulds excavated,

18 *Guta Saga. The History of the Gotlanders*, ed. C. Peel, London 1999, pp. 7.

19 D. Adamczyk, *Handel fryzysko-frankoński, ekspansja wikingów a kwestia napływu kruszców do strefy bałtyckiej w IX wieku*, „Średniowiecze Polskie i Powszechnie” II (2010) 6, pp. 67-81.

20 M. Blackburn, *The Coin-Finds*, in: *Means of Exchange. Dealing with Silver in the Viking Age (Kaupang Excavation Project)*, ed. D. Skre, Aarhus 2008, II, pp. 29-74, espec. pp. 48.

21 See for example C. Kilger, *Hoards and Sinuous Snakes. Significance and Meaning of Ring Ornaments in Early Viking Age Hoards from Gotland*, in: *Small Things – Wide Horizons. Studies in Honour of Birgitta Hårdh*, ed. L. Larsson, F. Ekengren, B. Helgesson, B. Döderberg, Oxford 2015, pp. 35-42; M. Burström, *Silver as Bridewealth: an Interpretation of Viking Age Silver Hoards on Gotland, Sweden*, „Current Swedish Archaeology” I (1993), pp. 33-37.

22 C. Kilger, *Hoards and Sinuous Snakes...*, pp. 41.



for example, at a workshop in the Viking Age harbour of Fröjel, confirm the existence of Gotlandic silver jewellery.<sup>23</sup>

The emergence of a jewellery industry in Scandinavia was a concomitant of social structures. It is an open secret that precious metals played a significant role in Old Norse societies. The redistribution of valuable goods was one of the major social principles and allowed an intensification of relations by circulation of silver within members of kinships and between them. The gift-giving accumulated social prestige and created bonds between people. The gifts from treasuries served warlords, chieftains and kings to intensify the social ties with their retinue, helping in this way to create a symbolic capital necessary for the reproduction of power. Rulers who possessed silver demonstrated leadership ability and may have strengthened their political situation towards rivals and competitors for power. By the redistribution of precious metals prestige and authority could be consolidated.<sup>24</sup>

Mats Burström has tried to explain why so many silver hoards, especially on farms, have been found on Gotland. According to him they constituted a kind of symbolic capital used as bride-wealth. For this reason it was not desirable to convert luxury goods from a prestige sphere into some other field of activity because such a revision of value could have caused a serious loss of prestige. Consequently, "a farmer that had to use bridewealth silver to buy domestic products may have experienced a drastic decline in social respect. It was thus the possession – or for the bridegroom the acquisition – of silver that was important, not the circulation of it".<sup>25</sup> In this way "the silver best fulfilled its prestige function, and its symbolic value was kept intact".<sup>26</sup>

On the political level, the culture and symbolism of displaying luxury goods are illustrated by these fragments of Old Norse sources that show the ruler as „a lord of rings“ – such as in the *Laxdoela saga* where King Hákon took off a gold-ring worth one mark from his arm and gave it Höskuld who belonged to his loyal followers.<sup>27</sup> The terms *baugbroti* and *menbrjótr* denote „ring breakers and necklaces breakers“. <sup>28</sup> The Edda-poem *Rígspula* depicts

<sup>23</sup> M. Östergren, *Spillings – The Largest Viking Age Silver Hoard in the World*, in: *The Spillings Hoard...*, pp. 11-40, here pp. 25.

<sup>24</sup> A. Gurevich, *Wealth and Gift-Bestowal...*

<sup>25</sup> M. Burström, *Silver as Bridewealth...*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 37.

<sup>27</sup> *Laxdoela saga*. *Die Geschichte von den Leuten aus dem Lachswassertal*, in: *Island Sagas. Erzählkunst*, ed. H.M. Heinrich, A. Heusler, G. Neckel, F. Ranke, K. Reichardt, München 1995, pp. 75-269, here p. 91.

<sup>28</sup> *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. J. Hoops, K.J. Trübner, Straßburg 1911-1919, I, pp. 180. Both terms appear for example in the *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*: H. Seelow, *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka*, in: *Poetry in fornaldarsögur. Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 8*, ed. M. Clunies Ross, Turnhout 2017, pp. 303-366, here pp. 330, 328. However, the term

how one of them “ruled over eighteen farms, distributed treasures, bestowing jewellery, bracelets and horses. He gave rings, cut clasps”.<sup>29</sup> A ruler’s generosity was scrupulously observed not only by his followers, but also by potential clients. Thus, kings and jarls had to be lavish in order to establish and to keep up alliances.

## CONCLUSIONS

The dirham flow to Sweden began in the 810s/820s. However, at this time most of the Arabic coins actually circulated in northern Russia and at the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, above all in the emporium at Truso. Small groups of Scandinavian peripatetic craftsmen and traders settled in northern Russia who used dirhams and brought them to Gotland and Uppland.

The dirham flow to Sweden increased apparently from the 830s onwards and culminated in the 860s/870s. Bands of mainly Upplandic and Gotlandic Vikings penetrated now northern Russia participating in levying tribute and raiding. Warlords and traders brought furs and seized Slavs and other indigenous people to Khazar markets where they sold them for silver.

In Scandinavia itself the gifts from treasures served warlords, chieftains and kings to intensify the social ties with their retinue, helping in this way to create a symbolic capital necessary for the reproduction of power. Rulers who possessed silver demonstrated leadership. Consequently, the primary function of using silver was not the demand for currency but the necessity of having precious metal at one’s disposal to regulate social and political hierarchies.

## ABSTRACT

The article contextualizes the inflow of Arabic silver coins, the so-called dirhams, to Scandinavia. The first stream began in the 810s/820s. However, at this time most Arabic coins circulated in northern Russia and on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, above all in the emporium of Truso. In northern Russia settled small groupings of Scandinavian peripatetic craftsmen and traders who used dirhams and brought them to Gotland and Uppland.

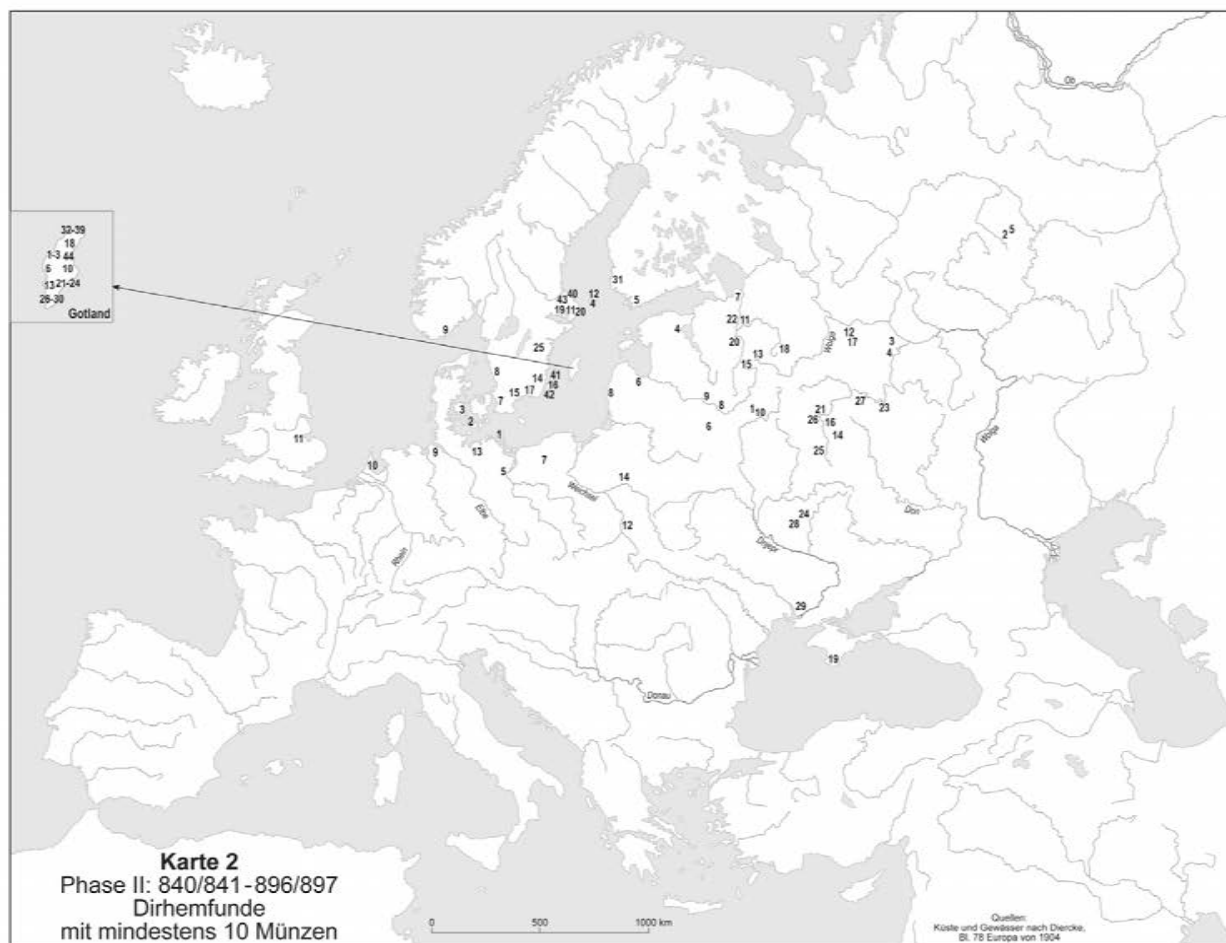
The dirham flow to Scandinavia increased apparently from the 830e onwards and culminated in the 860s/870s. Bands of mainly Upplandic and Gotlandic Vikings penetrated northern Russia participating in levying tribute and raiding. Furs and seized Slavs or other indigenous people Norse warlords and traders brought to Khazar markets where they sold them for silver.

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“Ringbruchstücke” could also mean “devaluated silver”. See *Bandamanna saga*, in: *Island Sagas...*, pp. 303-343, here pp. 337.

<sup>29</sup> *Die Edda. Göttersagen, Heldensagen und Spruchweisheiten der Germanen*, ed. H. Günther, trans. K. Simrock, Wiesbaden 1987, pp. 127.

In Scandinavia itself the gifts from treasury served warlords, chieftains and kings to intensify the social ties with their retinue, helping in this way to create a symbolic capital necessary for reproduction of power. Rulers, who possessed silver, demonstrated leadership. Consequently, the primary function of using silver was not the demand for currency but the necessity of having precious metal to regulate social and political hierarchies.



**Map. 1.** Dirham hoards with at least 10 coins in eastern and northern Europe, 840/841-896/897 (after Adamczyk 2014, p. 95).



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## ASSEMBLY ORGANISATION IN THE *LONGUE DURÉE*: THE SCANDINAVIAN *THING* INSTITUTION IN ITS EUROPEAN CONTEXT



The aim of this paper is to examine the main traits of the Scandinavian *þing* (*thing*, assembly) institution, which was in place from the Viking Age onwards, and to demonstrate that this system was not unique, but rather fits into the longstanding assembly traditions identified in both preliterate and literate Germanic societies in Mainland Europe. Even though the written sources are sparse and at times rather problematic, it is demonstrated that the assembly as a form of early government, conflict resolution and court system existed across a wide geographical region and time span. This in itself is not surprising, as the significance of law and conflict resolution for functioning societies has been highlighted by anthropologists since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> It is the case, however, that the nature of the Germanic assembly organisation, and in particular the assembly itself, has received limited scholarly attention.<sup>2</sup> This paper addresses this lacuna by drawing together extant research on both Scandinavia and Mainland Europe, and by examining these areas side by side, it is demonstrated that these assembly organisations share a number of key features. The following eight features have been identified and examined for Scandinavia in the Norse period (ca. 790-1300/1350 AD) and “Germania” (ca. 100-800 AD):

1. Administrative divisions in place
2. *Althings* and/or representative assemblies in place
3. A hierarchical assembly organisation in place

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. B. Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*, Totowa 1926; A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order. Places and Rituals of Assembly in the Medieval North*, Edinburgh 2017.

<sup>2</sup> But see e.g. many publications by Katherine Fischer Drew which this paper draws on.



4. Traditions concerning fixed assembly-sites
5. Assemblies served as parliaments and/or courts
6. Assembly meetings held at set times of the year and after specific incidents
7. Elite-driven assembly organisation
8. Varied means of legal resolution in use.

This study of the assembly organisation will begin by examining Scandinavian assemblies and then move onto Mainland Europe, starting with the evidence from preliterate Germanic society, followed by an investigation into the assembly organisation in early medieval royal law.

The nature of the Scandinavian *thing* organisation has been examined through regulations surrounding assembly organisation in the earliest surviving laws. The most informative are the earliest Norwegian laws of the Gulathing and the Frostathing, although some material is drawn from the Swedish and Danish provincial laws. In general, the manuscripts of the Scandinavian provincial laws start from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, but individual regulations within these are clearly older, going back to the Viking Age.<sup>3</sup> The existence of an assembly organisation long before the surviving laws is supported by the fact that the Old Norse word *þing*, which is found in all Germanic languages (e.g. Old Saxon *thing*, Lombardic *thingx* and maybe also Gothic *þeihs*) goes very far back in time and may even date to the beginning of the first millennium AD.<sup>4</sup>

The oldest complete version of the Law of the Gulathing, the *Codex Rantzovianus*, dates from c. 1250.<sup>5</sup> The Law of the Frostathing has survived in a number of manuscripts from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but is clearly based on an older version, possibly of 12<sup>th</sup>-century date.<sup>6</sup> A new law was issued by King Magnus the Lawmender, a great legal reformer, in the middle of the 1270s. This law was issued in four editions, one for each of the law provinces, but with essentially the same content. The oldest surviving manuscript dates

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3 K. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, Leikanger 2001, pp. 11-13, 17-20; J.R. Hagland, J. Sandnes, *Frostatingslova*, Oslo 1994, pp. IX-XI, XXXXIII-XLI; *Runes in Sweden*, trans. P. Foote, Stockholm 1987; A. Sanmark, *Power and Conversion. A Comparative Study of Christianization in Scandinavia*. OPIA, Uppsala 2004, pp. 133-146; A.I. Riisøy, *Komparativt blick på "verdslig" rett i Eldre Borgartings kristenrett*, in: Østfold og Viken i yngre jernalder og middelalder, eds. J.V. Sigurðsson, P. Norseng, Oslo 2003, s. 168; Brink 2002, 99; Brink 2003, 76; M. Stein-Wilckshuis, "Scandinavian Law in a Tenth-century Rus" – Greek Commercial Treaty, *The Community, the Family and the Saint. Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, in: *Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress University of Leeds 4-7 July 1994, 10-13 July 1995*, Leeds 1998, pp. 311-322.

4 E. Hellquist, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok*, Lund 1980<sup>3</sup>, p. 1187; H. Bjorvand, F.O. Lindemann, *Våre arveord. Etymologisk ordbok*, Oslo 2000, p. 940.

5 K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 11-13.

6 J. R. Hagland, J. Sandnes, *Frostatingslova...*, pp. IX-XI, XXXXIII-XLI.

from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with further manuscripts from the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

In Sweden, the oldest surviving law is the *Older Law of Västergötland* (*Äldre Västgötalagen*), written down in the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the earliest manuscript from 1281. This, together with the Law of Gotland are seen to contain some particularly old traits,<sup>8</sup> although on the whole the Swedish laws seem to represent a slightly later phase than the earliest Norwegian counterparts. This is also the case with the three Danish provincial laws, although they were probably written down in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> In Sweden, a new law was brought in by King Magnus Eriksson in the 1350s.<sup>10</sup> The increasing royal control of the assembly organisation is clearly seen in this law and also in the Norwegian Law of Magnus the Lawmender.

For the examination of the early assembly systems of the European Mainland, a wider range of written sources, which are very different in nature and of varying source value, have been employed. This approach has been necessary in order to provide insight into the *longue durée*, going back to the period prior to the issuing of written law. The Germanic assembly organisation is first evidenced in Roman texts, most importantly Tacitus' *Germania* from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>11</sup> Another significant source to preliterate Germania is the *Life of St Lebuin* (*Vita Lebuini antiqua*), written between 840 and 930 AD, which describes an assembly in Saxony in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> In order to examine how the assembly organisation changed with increasing royal power, four major laws of early medieval date have been examined: the Burgundian Code (*Lex Burgondium*), the Laws of the Salian Franks (*Lex Salica*), the Laws of the Ripuarian Franks (*Lex Ribuaria*) and the Lombard Code (*Leges Langobardorum*). These laws are similar to the Scandinavian ones in the sense that they represent

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7 K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 11, 155-156; A. Bøe, *Magnus Lagabøtes landslov*, in: *Kulturhistorisk leksikon för nordisk medeltid från vikingatid till reformationstid*, I-XXII, Malmö 1956-1978 (henceforth KLNLM), here: XI, col. 231-237.

8 S. Brink, *Oral Fragments in the Earliest Old Swedish Laws?*, in: *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages*, eds. M. Mostert, P.S. Barnwell, Turnhout 2011, p. 147; T. Lindkvist, *The Land, Men, and Law of Västergötland*, in: *New Approaches to Early Law in Scandinavia*, eds. S. Brink, L. Collinson, Turnhout 2014, pp. 89-99.

9 D. Tamm, *Lærebog i dansk retshistorie*, Copenhagen 1989, p. 19.

10 Magnus Erikssons landslag. *Skrifter utgivna av Institutet för rättshistorisk forskning, grundat av Gustav och Carin Olin. Serien 1*, eds. Å. Holmbäck, E. Wessén, Rättshistoriskt bibliotek, VI, Stockholm 1962.

11 H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany: a New Transl. of the "Agricola" and the "Germania"*, Harmondsworth 1948.

12 A. Hofmeister, *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, XXX/2, Hannover 1976 [1926-1934]; *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany. Being the Lives of Ss. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, and Lebuin, Together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a Selection from the Correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. C.H. Talbot and tr., London 1954.

collections of law produced over time, and contain a mixture of regulations from a variety of sources, customary and Roman. Of these four collections of law, the Burgundian Code from the late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 6<sup>th</sup> century is the earliest, followed by the two Frankish laws, first issued in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and then finally the – in Germanic terms – rather late Lombard Code from the first half of 7<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> Before turning to the situation in these sources, an overview of the eight features of the Scandinavian assembly organisation is offered.

### Administrative division

The late medieval laws show that all three Scandinavian countries were divided into law provinces, using different terminology. In Norway there were four law provinces: the Gulathing, the Frostathing, the Borgarthing and the Eidsivathing, while in Denmark there were three: Jutland, Zealand and Skåne. The larger kingdom of Sweden was divided into at least thirteen different law provinces although laws have not survived from all of these.<sup>14</sup> There were also local assembly districts in all three kingdoms. These, which for the sake of simplicity are referred to as “hundred” units, are named *häräd* in modern Sweden and *herred* in modern Norway and Denmark. *Häräd/herred* is derived from *herað*. In the Svealand region of Sweden, the local administrative unit was instead called *hundari*. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century, *häräd* became more and more common and was eventually adopted across Sweden. The origins of both arguably lies in collectives relating to military organisation.<sup>15</sup> *Hundari* is seen to be related to military bands of one hundred warriors.<sup>16</sup> In the coastal areas of Norway and Sweden, the local districts instead bore names relating to ships, such as the *skipreiður* in Norway or the *skiplagh* found along the Swedish east coast. These units too presumably go back to military organisation as each unit should most likely provide a ship for the levy fleet (*leiðangr*), or in later times pay the tax equivalent to the cost of a ship.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> K.F. Drew, *The Burgundian Code: Book of Constitutions or Law of Gundobad, Additional Enactments*, Philadelphia 1972; K.F. Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, Philadelphia 1993; T.J. Rivers, *Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, New York 1987; K.F. Drew, E. Peters, *The Lombard Laws*, Philadelphia 1974.

<sup>14</sup> S.J. Semple, A. Sanmark, N. Mehler, F. Iversen, with A.T. Skinner, H. Hobæk, M. Ødegaard, *Negotiating the North: Meeting Places in the Middle Ages*, The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series, Abingdon (in press), ch. 4.

<sup>15</sup> P. Rasmussen, *Herred*, in: KLNLM, VI, col. 488-491; S. Bauge Sogner, *Herred*, in: KLNLM, VI, cols. 492-494; G. Hafström, *Herred*, in: KLNLM, VI, col. 491-492; idem, *Hundare*, in: KLNLM, VII, col. 74-78.

<sup>16</sup> T. Andersson, *Hundare*, “Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde” XV (2000), pp. 233-238.

<sup>17</sup> H. Bjørkvik, *Skipreide*, in: KLNLM, XV, col. 546-551; G. Hafström, *Skeppslag*, in: KLNLM, XV, col. 471-472.

### *Althings* and representative assemblies

An *althing* is defined as an assembly which all the *thingmen* (s. *þingmaðr*, pl. *þingmenn*) were required to attend. Representative assemblies, on the other hand, were *thing* meetings that only a select number of representatives (s. *lögréttumaðr*) were obliged to attend. The whole of the population also had the right to attend the assemblies, should they wish to. In Norway local and regional *things* were *althings*, while the top-level assemblies were representative assemblies.<sup>18</sup> In Sweden the sources are less clear. It would be surprising if no representative assemblies were in place, but this is not specifically stated, apart from assemblies gathered for royal elections.<sup>19</sup>

### Assembly hierarchy

In each law province there was a hierarchy of assemblies, which varied slightly between and within kingdoms in terms of terminology and the number of levels.<sup>20</sup> In general, each law province had its top-level assembly site. The greatest variation in terminology is found in Sweden, with terms such as *folklandstthing*, *lawthing* and “the *thing* of all Geats”.<sup>21</sup> Despite these variations in terminology, the overall *thing* organisation was in essence the same across the kingdom. By the time of Magnus Eriksson’s Law, all these assemblies seem to have gone under the name of *landzþing* (“*thing* of the land”).<sup>22</sup> The same term applied to the top-level assemblies in Denmark, while in Norway, the term *lawthing* (*lögthing*) was used.<sup>23</sup>

This was not a legal hierarchy in the modern sense of the word. The top-level assembly was not necessarily supreme in every respect, as the different types of *thing* to some extent worked in parallel to each other within an integrated framework. The *thing* that covered the largest area had the highest dignity. This means, in simple terms, that the more people involved, the more powerful the assembly.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the assembly organisation was rather

18 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws, Being the Gulathing Law and the Frostathing Law*, New York 1935, G 35, 131, 266; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, p. 76; J.R. Hagland, J. Sandnes, *Frostatingslova...*, pp. XV–XVII; A. Bøe, *Lagting*, in: KLNLM, X, col. 178–184.

19 O. Sundqvist, *Features of Pre-Christian Inauguration Rituals in the Medieval Swedish Laws*, in: *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Anders Hultgård zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 23.12.2001*, ed. M. Stausberg, Berlin–New York 2001, pp. 620–650, espec. pp. 623–624; *Magnus Erikssons landslag...*, Kg SSGL; A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order...*

20 A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order...*, tables 2.1, 2.2.

21 S.J. Semple et al., *Negotiating the North...*, ch 4.

22 *Magnus Erikssons landslag...*, 1:1.

23 K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 30–32.

24 *Svenska Landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, femte serien: Äldre Västgötalagen, Yngre Västgötalagen, Smålandslagens kyrkobalk och Bjärkörätten*, eds. Å. Holmbäck,

fluid, meaning that the sites defined as top-level assemblies in late medieval sources may well have been lower down in the hierarchy before, and vice versa.<sup>25</sup> On the local level in Norway, Denmark and Sweden the hundreds, *skipreiður* and *skiplagh* all had their own assemblies.<sup>26</sup>

### Fixed assembly sites

Many of the Swedish provincial laws contain regulations stating that there should only be one *thing* site in each district and meetings should be held at “the correct *thing* site” (*a rættum thingstadh*).<sup>27</sup> This idea is also seen in Norway: in the Law of Magnus the Lawmender, the four *lawthing* sites of the Gula-, Frosta-, Eidsiva- and Borgarthing are labelled as the correct assemblies. Another example, from medieval documents, is the charter from 1411, issued at *Twneime a rettum þinghstad* “at the correct *thing*-site at Tønjum” (in Lærdal, Norway).<sup>28</sup> Study of court documents from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries from Norway and Sweden demonstrate that these regulations were followed at least to some extent, although with a lot of variation between provinces.<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that *thing* sites always remained in the same place for a long time. The “correct” assembly could be moved to a more suitable location when this was deemed necessary.<sup>30</sup>

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E. Wessén, Stockholm 1946, ÄVG VLII; J. Rosén, *Landsting*, in: KLNLM, X, col. 294; A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order...*, pp. 23-24; S.J. Semple et al., *Negotiating the North...*

<sup>25</sup> A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order...*, pp. 77.

<sup>26</sup> K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, p. 97; L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 35, 266; A. Taranger, *Alting og lagting*, “Historisk tidsskrift utgitt av den Norske Historiske Forening” V (1924), p. 20.

<sup>27</sup> This is seen in documents from the provinces of Svealand, Småland, Östergötland, but not Västergötland. F. Wildte, *Västergötlands medeltida tingsställen*, “Rig” XIV (1931), pp. 174-184; O. Ahlberg, *Tingsplatser i Södermanland och Närke före tillkomsten av 1734 års lagar*, “Rig” XXIX (1946), pp. 97-98; S. Turén, *Om “rätt tingsplats” enl. Västmannalagen*, “Västmanlands fornminnesförenings årsskrift” XXVII (1939), pp. 6-7; F. Wildte, *Tingsplatserna i Sverige under förhistorisk tid och medeltid*, “Fornvännen” XXI (1926), pp. 211-230, espec. pp. 219-220.

<sup>28</sup> *Norges gamle love indtil 1387*, II, *Lovgivningen under Kong Magnus Haakonssøns regjeringstid fra 1263 til 1280, tilligemed et supplement till Bd I*, eds. R. Keyser, P.A. Munch, Christiania 1848, NgL II:10; NgL X:3; *Diplomatarium Norvegicum: Oldbreve til kundskab om Norges indre og ydre forhold, sprog, slægter, sæder, lovgivning og rettergang i middelalderen*, I/2, Christiania 1849, p. 617; H. Hobæk, *Tracing Medieval Administrative Systems: Hardanger, Western Norway*, “Journal of the North Atlantic”, special volume V (2013), pp. 64-75; S.J. Semple et al., *Negotiating the North...*, ch. 5.

<sup>29</sup> S.J. Semple et al., *Negotiating the North...*, ch. 4, 5.

<sup>30</sup> A. Sanmark, *Assembly Organisation and State Formation. A Case Study of Assembly Sites in Viking and Medieval Södermanland, Sweden*, “Medieval Archaeology” LIII (2009), pp. 222-223; O. Ahlberg, *Tingsplatser i Södermanland...*, p. 97.



### Meetings at set times of the year and after specific incidents

Top-level *things* were held at set times of the year, often specified in the sources.<sup>31</sup> In the medieval laws, the assemblies were held in line with the Christian calendar, but further back in time, evidence suggests that assemblies were held in accordance with the sun and the moon.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, time seems to have been the very essence of the *thing* concept, as the meaning of *þing* was “a gathering of people which takes place at set times”.<sup>33</sup> This also explains the Old Swedish expression *affkiännnuping* “extraordinary assembly”, meaning assemblies not held at the correct time and place.<sup>34</sup> *Affkiännnuping* included for example *thing* meetings held at someone’s house, royal assemblies that were held at other sites than the correct *thing* site<sup>35</sup>, and probably also those called after specific incidents, such as murder. Medieval documents suggest that “extraordinary assemblies” were not uncommon.<sup>36</sup> In terms of local *thing* meetings, little is known, but Swedish laws state that they should not take place more frequently than once a week.<sup>37</sup>

### Parliaments and courts

The sources demonstrate that the Viking-Age *thing* served multiple functions, above all as early forms of parliaments and courts. The parliamentary function of the *thing* is demonstrated for example by the visit of the Frankish missionary Ansgar to Birka in the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, described in the *Life of Ansgar* (*Vita Ansgari*). The people held at this time rather negative attitudes towards Christianity and the king decided that question whether Ansgar should be given permission to preach must be put to the gods and also the people at a *thing* (*placito*). The assent of the gods was first achieved, and after a long

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31 *Svenska landskapslagar: tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, första serien, Östgötalagen och Upplandslagen...*, Stockholm 1933, e.g. XXVIII; Snorri Sturlusson, *Heimskringla. History of the Kings of Norway*, ed. L.M. Hollander, Austin 1964, p. 315.

32 A. Nordberg, *Jul, disting och förkyrklig tideräkning. Kalendrar och kalendariska riter i det förkristna Norden*, Uppsala 2006, pp. 107-112.

33 E. Hellquist, *Svensk etymologisk ordbok*, Lund 1980, p. 974; A. Sanmark, *At the Assembly: A Study of Ritual Space*, in: *Power of Practice. Rituals and Politics in Northern Europe c. 650-1350*, eds. W. Jezierski, L. Hermanson, H.J. Orning, T. Småberg, Turnhout 2015, pp. 79-112.

34 *Svenska landskapslagar: tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, första serien, Östgötalagen och Upplandslagen...*, Stockholm 1933, XXXVIII, 207, fn 8a, 209, fn 36; *Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, andra serien, Dalalagen och Västmannalagen...*, Stockholm 1936, VLDL R 12:4.

35 F. Wildte, *Västergötlands medeltida tingsställen...*, p. 178; *Svenska landskapslagar: tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, första serien, Östgötalagen och Upplandslagen...*, Stockholm 1933, UL, 209, fn 36.

36 A. Sanmark, *Assembly Organisation and State Formation...*, pp. 222-223.

37 *Svenska landskapslagar: tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, första serien, Östgötalagen och Upplandslagen...*, Stockholm 1933, ÖG R I pr, XXXVIII.



discussion at the assembly, also the people agreed.<sup>38</sup> The *Life of Ansgar* was written by Rimbert, Ansgar's successor as Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, around ca. 875.<sup>39</sup>

With time, as central power grew stronger, the king, his close supporters and the Church took control over the assemblies and, as part of this process the *things* lost most of their political role (as is also demonstrated in the increasing power of the lawman discussed below). By the time of the medieval laws therefore the assemblies mainly functioned as arenas for courts and conflict resolution. Matters should only be taken to the *thing* if no other solution could be found. This is seen for example in Norwegian laws, where it was stated that disagreements should ideally be resolved through dooms, "private" tribunals, which involved some very complex procedures.<sup>40</sup> *Sætt* or *sátt* is another term for *settlement*, *peace* or *agreement* which occurs frequently in sagas, seemingly not in connection to *thing* meetings.<sup>41</sup> The *thing* also served as an arena for law making and legally binding transactions carried out in front of witnesses.<sup>42</sup>

### Elite-driven assemblies

Although everyone had the right to attend the meetings of the *thing*, their entitlement to take part varied. This can be most usefully investigated through a distinction between "assembly participation" and "assembly attendance". Assembly attendance involved simply watching the proceedings and perhaps approving a decision or verdict by shouting consent or maybe "brandishing weapons" (*vápnatak*). Assembly attendance was open to all members of society. Active assembly participation, on the other hand, involved voting, reaching verdicts, making claims, or being a witness and was only open to certain people, above all landowners, i.e. the *thingmen*.<sup>43</sup>

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38 V. Anskarii, E. Odelman, *In Boken om Ansgar*, Stockholm 1986, ch. 27; S. Norr, A. Sanmark, *Tingsplatser, makt och landskap*, in: *Hem till Jarlabanke. Jord, makt och evigt liv i östra Mälardalen under järnålder och medeltid*, ed. M. Olausson, Stockholm 2004, pp. 277-394.

39 J. Jesch, *Women in the Viking Age*, Woodbridge 1991, p. 89.

40 A. Sanmark, *The Communal Nature of the Judicial System in Early Medieval Norway*, "Collegium Medievale" XIX (2006), pp. 31-64; L.M. Larson, *Witnesses and Oath Helpers in Old Norwegian Law*, in: *Anniversary Essays in Medieval History by Students of Charles Homer Haskins*, Boston 1929, pp. 133-156.

41 R. Cleasby, G. Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, Oxford 1874, pp. 518, 619.

42 M. Rindahl, *Dei Norske mellomalderloverne. Alder, overlevering, utgåver*, "Skriftlege kjelder til kunnskap om nordisk mellomalder, KULTs skriftserie" XXXVIII (1995), p. 8; L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 10, 15, 17; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 17-20; M. Stein-Wilckshuis, *"Scandinavian Law..."*, pp. 313-314; A. Sanmark, *The Communal Nature of the Judicial System...*, p. 35.

43 A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order...*, pp. 78.

According to the earliest Norwegian laws, the *thingmen* (s. *þingmaðr*, pl. *þingmenn*) were required (or encouraged, depending on the type of meeting) to attend local and regional assemblies. A *thingman* was defined as a landowning freeman (*bóndi*) over fifteen years of age with at least one worker. For the representative top-level *things*, select *thingmen* from each law province should attend.<sup>44</sup> The regulations for who could become a representative at the *lawthing* seem to have been the same as for the *thingmen*.<sup>45</sup> These representatives had the right to vote at the meetings, while at local and regional meetings verdicts were settled by the *thingmen* from the area.<sup>46</sup> The men with less power and status men were not always able to participate in the assembly, however. The early Norwegian laws stated that “lone workers”, “slaves”, and the “dishonoured” (such as outlaws) were not entitled to participate in the *thing* meetings<sup>47</sup> and men who were “not able bodied” – the old, sick and disabled – were not required to attend the assembly.<sup>48</sup>

Women also had assembly rights, as they all could attend the assembly and at least some could actively participate in the meetings.<sup>49</sup> In the earliest Norwegian laws, five groups of women had the right to do so: widows, “ring women” (s. *baugrýgr*), unmarried women without close male relatives, who could therefore inherit “both odal (land holdings) and movables (goods)”<sup>50</sup>, women who were in disputes with other women, “women who maintain a household” (this classification may have included not only widows, but also women whose husbands were unwell or away from home), and female

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44 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 35, 131, 266; *Norges gamle love indtil 1387...*, NgL II:10-11; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 76-81; J.R. Hagland, J. Sandnes, *Frostatingslova...*, pp. XV-XVII; A. Bøe, *Lagting*, col. 178.

45 *Norges gamle love indtil 1387...*, NgL II:10-11; L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 131.

46 A. Sanmark, *The Communal Nature of the Judicial System...*, pp. 22; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, p. 72.

47 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 131; F I.

48 Ibidem, G 131; F I.

49 A. Sanmark, *Women at the Thing*, in: *Kvinner i vikingtid. Vikingatidens kvinner*, eds. N. Coleman, N.L. Løkke, Oslo, pp. 85-100; E. Mundal, *Kvinner som vitne i norske og islandske lover i mellomalderen*, in: *Sagnaping: Helgað Jónasi Kristjánssyni*, eds. Gisli Sigurðsson, Guðrun Kvaran, S. Steingrímsson, Reykjavík 1995, pp. 593-602; E. Mundal, *The Double Impact of Christianization for Women in Old Norse Culture*, in: *Gender and Religion/Genre et Religion*, eds. K.E. Børresen, S. Cabibbo, E. Specht, Rome 2001, pp. 237-253; K. Venås, *Kvinne og mann i Gulatingslova. Etter ein idé av Lis Jacobsen*, in: *Festskrift til Finn Hødnebo*, eds. B. Eithun, E. Fjell Halvorsen, M. Rindal, E. Simensen, Oslo 1989, pp. 258-303.

50 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 275; 411; E. Mundal, *The Double Impact...*, pp. 249-250.

witnesses.<sup>51</sup> In most cases – but not all – these women could choose to be represented by a male relation, if they so wished.<sup>52</sup>

In view of its membership, there can be little doubt that the wealthier had the most ability to participate and influence the proceedings. However, in the early period, the *things* were not under royal leadership. There was not a single judge and decisions and verdicts were instead communal. This is most clearly seen in the Norwegian laws and can be examined through the role of the lawman. In the earliest phase, the lawman appears to have represented the farmers, rather than any higher authority. His role was to give *órskurðr*, which involved explaining the stance of the law regarding matters brought to the *thing*, just as the law speaker known from the sagas.<sup>53</sup> After this, at local and regional *things*, the verdicts were settled by the people attending, who rattled or brandished their weapons.<sup>54</sup> At these levels, the verdicts were communal decisions taken by large numbers of people. This was the case also at the *lawthings*, where verdicts were most likely settled by 36 people.<sup>55</sup> Over time, the king increased his power and moved towards a system of more individual decision-making. By the time of the Laws of Magnus the Lawmender the lawman had been given power to act as a single judge, and furthermore, the king could now overturn all verdicts as he “is above the law”.<sup>56</sup>

There were also other royal officials with assembly duties. In the early Norwegian laws, the *ármaðr* and the *lendr maðr* should for example call the *thing* meetings, attend them as the king’s representatives, name the *lawthing* representatives, as well as overseeing executions and corporal punishments.<sup>57</sup> The *ármaðr* was purely a royal servant, while the *lendr maðr* was a local magnate

51 E. Mundal, *The Double Impact...*, pp. 249-250; A. Sanmark, *Women at the Thing...*, pp. 369-370; L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 275; G 275, F VI:4, F VII 8.

52 A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order...*, p. 45; L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 131; F I; E. Mundal, *The Double Impact...*, p. 242. In Sweden, the regulations are less detailed, but at least according to the Law of Uppland widows could represent themselves in all cases (UL R 11).

53 T. Tobiassen, *Lagman*, in: KLNLM, X, col. 154-155; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 74-75; K. Robberstad, *Rettsoga I*, Oslo-Bergen-Trondheim, p. 143.

54 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 267, 279, 292; F XII 2, XII 4 and XIV 4; *Norges gamle love indtil 1387...*, NgL II:16-17; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 72-74.

55 For a full discussion, see A. Sanmark, *The Communal Nature of the Judicial System...*, p. 9; L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, F I 2; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 71-72; J.R. Hagland, J. Sandnes, *Frostatingslova...*, pp. XXVII- XXVIII.

56 *Norges gamle love indtil 1387...*, NgL II:21; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 155-156.

57 According to the Olav-text in the Law of the Gulathing, both the *lendr maðr* and the *ármaðr* had *thing* duty. In the Magnus-text, it is stated that some of the *lendr maðr* should stay at home to look after the property of those who were away. See L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 3; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 67, 71, 155; P.A. Andersen, *Sysselmenn*, in: KLNLM, XVII, col. 651-652; P.A. Andersen, *Ármann*, in: KLNLM, XX, col. 446-450.

with his own powerbase, who had presumably received land from the king in exchange for his service. Since these two officials had almost the same assembly duties, it seems that the *lendr maðr* acted as a stand-in, if no *ármaðr* was available.<sup>58</sup> It is important to note that in the provincial laws it was made it clear that these official should not take part in the actual *thing* proceedings. According to the Law of the Frostathing, the *lendr maðr* must not “appear in the law court”, unless he had received permission from the *thingmen*, and neither should he “be present at a five-day moot... unless he has a suit to prosecute or to defend”.<sup>59</sup> These officials were moreover prohibited from taking part in the private dooms: a *lendr maðr* should not “come to a doom or to a farm where a doom is sitting, except he is travelling on the highway; but if he does come, let them both go forth, plaintiff and defendant, and order him to leave”.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, anyone who appointed a *lendr maðr* or an *ármaðr* to a doom would lose by default.<sup>61</sup>

In the early laws, it is moreover stated that royal officials who exceeded their duties could be taken to the *thing* by the *thingmen*. If an *ármaðr* was found guilty, his fine should be paid to the farmer community. Also a *lendr maðr* could be taken to the *thing*. His fines should however be split between the king and the people, which demonstrates his position between the two.<sup>62</sup>

During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the royal *ármaðr* gradually disappeared, and his duties were transferred to the *sýslumaðr*, who seems to have been of rather high social standing. Documents from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century suggest that the *sýslumaðr* was the king’s local representative in the new administrative districts called the *sýsla* and he was in this way the prime mover within a stronger and more efficient local rule.<sup>63</sup> This transfer of power to the *sýslumaðr* clearly show the strengthening of royal power, and as a consequence, the reduction of the influence of the *thingmen* on the judicial proceedings.

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58 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 3, 152; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 149-152; A. Bøe, *Lendmann*, in: KLMN, X, col. 498-505; P.A. Andersen, *Ármann*, in: KLMN, XX, col. 448-449.

59 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, F 1 2, X 16; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 154-155. The Frostathinglaw added that “no man who is not appointed to the law court shall have a seat within the enclosure” (ibidem, F I 2).

60 Ibidem, F X 16.

61 Ibidem, G 37; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 154-155. According to L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 37, the *lendr maðr* and the *ármaðr* should “not be allowed to approach so near the doom that their voices can be heard”.

62 L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 71, 141, 152, 253; A. Bøe, *Lendmann*, col. 502; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 150-151.

63 K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 150-152; P.A. Andersen, *Sysselman...*, col. 651-656.

## Legal resolution

Fines were by far the most common form of punishment. Outlawry is mentioned in the Scandinavian laws, and although this concept most likely goes far back in time, it was used as punishment for only a small number of very serious crimes. It was increasingly used by medieval kings and clerics, as is seen for example in chapter 32 of the *Law of the Gulathing*, issued after 1163/1164, where the number of crimes for which the punishment was permanent outlawry was greatly increased.<sup>64</sup> The use of outlawry as punishment was further increased during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, for example in the Law of King Magnus the Lawmender.<sup>65</sup> Capital punishment was also rare in the early laws, but occurred above all for crimes that involved “breaking the peace”. These were serious offences, such as murders at the *thing* and breaking into someone’s house. On these occasions, the guilty party was to be killed on the spot.<sup>66</sup>

So far, a short summary of the main traits of the Scandinavian assembly organisation has been presented. What this material clearly shows is that in the oldest laws, the freemen and some free women had the possibility to participate in the court and parliamentary proceedings, although these opportunities were gradually reduced as the assembly came under tighter royal control.

## ASSEMBLY IN MAINLAND EUROPE: FROM TACITUS TO CHARLEMAGNE

The assembly organisation in preliterate Germanic society in Mainland Europe is rather unknown and information can only be gleaned from a number of disparate sources. One of the earliest references is found in Julius Caesar’s (100–44 BC) work on the Gallic wars, where he stated that the Germanic tribe “the Suebi” held an assembly (*concilium*) “according to their custom”.<sup>67</sup> “Suebi” is a collective term referring to a host of Germanic tribes, including e.g. the Quadi, the Semonerians and the Lombards. Tacitus’s *Germania* also mentions Germanic assemblies. In chapter 39 he referred to the Semonerians, a people who resided between the rivers Elbe and Oder. Tacitus stated that “at a stated time, all the people of the same lineage assemble by their delegates in

<sup>64</sup> L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 32; K. Helle, *Gulatinget...*, pp. 99–101.

<sup>65</sup> A. Bøe, *Magnus Lagabøtes landslov...*, col. 602; *Norges gamle love indtil 1387...*, NgL II:51.

<sup>66</sup> The others were serious crimes, such as killings, injuries and sexual offences against close kinswomen. See M. Stein-Wilkeshuis, “*Scandinavian Law...*”, pp. 315, 318–319; L.M. Larson, *The Earliest Norwegian Laws...*, G 143, 160.

<sup>67</sup> W.A. McDevitte, W.S. Bohn trs, *Caesar’s Gallic War*, New York 1896, 4.19; F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus*” – *Revisiting the Early Germanic Thing System of Northern Europe*, “*Journal of the North Atlantic*”, special volume V (2013), p. 11.



a wood, consecrated by the auguries of their forefathers and ancient terror".<sup>68</sup> Tacitus's work also contains the well-known account of an assembly meeting among the Germans:

On matters of minor importance only the chiefs deliberate, on major affairs, the whole community; but, even where the commons have the decision, the case is carefully considered in advance by the chiefs. Except in case of accident or emergency they assemble on fixed days... When the mass so decide, they take their seats fully armed. Silence is then demanded by the priests, who on that occasion have also power to enforce obedience. Then such hearing is given to the king or chief, as age, rank, military distinction or eloquence can secure; but it is rather their prestige as counsellors than their authority that tells. If a proposal displeases them, the people roar out their dissent; if they approve, they clash their spears. No form of approval can carry more honour than praise expressed by arms.<sup>69</sup>

Caesar's and Tacitus's texts are challenging in the sense that they constitute outsiders' views on early Germanic society and apply Latin vocabulary to native terms and traditions. The *Germania* in particular has been heavily criticised and scholars no longer accept Tacitus's descriptions as accurate.<sup>70</sup> That said, it has been shown that his discussion of the assembly organisation bears some very strong resemblances to later systems described in Frankish, Frisian and Scandinavian sources, and must therefore be examined here.<sup>71</sup>

Another important source in this context is the anonymous *Life of St Lebuin*, which contains some detail on the Saxon assembly system encountered by Lebuin (died ca. 775), an Anglo-Saxon missionary active in Frisia and Saxony in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The most well-known *Life of St Lebuin*, the *Vita Lebuini II*, was written by Hucbald of St Amand in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but it has now been shown Hucbald based this on an earlier account, most likely written by Anglo-Saxon missionaries familiar with the Saxons and their society.<sup>72</sup> Views on this text (*The Vita Lebuini Antiqua*) are varied, as some scholars have expressed severe scepticism while others have been more positive.<sup>73</sup> One of

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<sup>68</sup> H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany...*, ch. 39; F. Iversen, "Concilium and Pagus...", p. 9.

<sup>69</sup> H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany...*, ch. 11, pp. 109-110.

<sup>70</sup> *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Germania des Tacitus*, Teil 2. Bericht über die Kolloquien der Kommission für die Altertumskunde Nord- und Mitteleuropas im Jahr 1986 und 1987, eds. G. Neumann, H. Seemann, Göttingen 1992.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. F. Iversen, "Concilium and Pagus...", p. 22.

<sup>72</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries...*, pp. 228-234; M. Springer, *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, in: *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, XXXII, Berlin-New York 2006, pp. 454-458.

<sup>73</sup> C. Ehlers, *Between Marklo and Merseburg: Assemblies and Their Sites in Saxony from the Beginning of Christianization to the Time of the Ottonian Kings*, "Journal of the North Atlantic",



the problems highlighted by e.g. Caspar Ehlers is that parts of the text are derived from elsewhere, such as from the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, produced by the Anglo-Saxon monk Bede (672/673-735 AD), while other parallels are found in the Bible.<sup>74</sup> Despite his doubts about the reliability of this account, Ehlers does not question the existence of a Saxon assembly organisation.<sup>75</sup> Just as the *Germania*, the description in the *Life of St Lebuin* of the Saxon assembly organisation fits in well with evidence from other areas and time periods, from which the source material is more reliable. It is important to note that no model text for the actual assembly description has so far been identified, and the *Life* must therefore be included in this investigation. The most interesting section reads as follows:

In olden times the Saxons had no king but appointed rulers over each village (*pagus*); and their custom was to hold a general meeting once a year in the centre of Saxony near the river *Wisura* [Weser] at a place called Marklo (*in media Saxonia iuxta fluvium Wisuram ad locum qui dicitur Marclo*). There all the leaders used to gather together and they were joined by twelve noblemen from each village with as many freedmen and serfs. There they confirmed the laws, gave judgment on outstanding cases and by common consent drew up plans for the coming year on which they could act either in peace or war.<sup>76</sup>

Through close reading of the texts referred to above, a number of assembly features of preliterate Saxony can be teased out, which shares some strong traits with the Scandinavian situation set out above, and can therefore be examined using the same headings.

### Administrative divisions

According to Tacitus, administrative units named *pagus* (s.) were in place. The *Life of Lebuin* also referred to units named *pagus* (translated by Talbot as “village”).<sup>77</sup> Tacitus added that the “chieftains” (*principes*) should have one hundred followers, together forming a *centena*,<sup>78</sup> which has been interpreted as

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special volume VIII (2016), pp. 134-140; M. Springer, *Die Sachsen*, Stuttgart 2004, pp. 135-152.

<sup>74</sup> A.M. Sellar, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of England. A Revised Translation with Introduction, Life, and Notes by Late Vice-Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford*, London 1907; C. Ehlers, *Between Marklo and Merseburg...*, pp. 134-140; M. Springer, *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, pp. 456-457; I.N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400-1050*, Harlow: England, New York 2001, p. 115-117.

<sup>75</sup> C. Ehlers, *Between Marklo and Merseburg...*

<sup>76</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries...*, pp. 230-232.

<sup>77</sup> A. Hofmeister, *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, p. 793; *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries...*, pp. 230-231.

<sup>78</sup> A.M. Burrill, *A New Law Dictionary and Glossary*, New York 1850-1851, p. 193; H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany...*, ch. 12.

an early form of the “hundred” units found in Scandinavia, although the link between the number “hundred” and these units are now seriously doubted.<sup>79</sup> The existence of these units, however, together with the *pagus*, may imply an early form of assembly system.

### *Althings* and representative assemblies

Tacitus stated that the assembly was attended by “the whole community”, which suggests this was an *althing*, which everyone had the right to attend, while his reference to the “delegates” (*legationes*) of the Semonerians suggest a representative assembly.<sup>80</sup> The assembly at *Marklo* is also described as a representative meeting, where “all the leaders... were joined by twelve noblemen from each village (*pagus*) with as many freedmen and serfs”.<sup>81</sup> Altogether, the most plausible scenario is one where everyone had the right to attend the assemblies, and a few select people were required to, along the same lines demonstrated for Scandinavia above.

### Assembly hierarchy

*Marklo* is presented as the assembly for all the Saxons, suggesting this was the top-level assembly for this area. The references in the *Germania* and the *Life of Lebuin* to the *pagi* suggest that assemblies existed also on the local level.

### Meetings held at set times of the year and after specific incidents

According to Tacitus, the assemblies were held “on certain fixed days, either at new or full moon”. If needed (“in the case of a sudden emergency”), meetings could be called for specific purposes.<sup>82</sup> The assembly among the Semonerians also seems to have taken place at a fixed times.<sup>83</sup> The *Marklo* assembly is said to have been held “once a year”, which also suggests regular meeting times.<sup>84</sup> Tacitus’s statement about meetings timed by the moon could be viewed with great suspicion, but as shown above this was the case in early Scandinavia too. Calendars and monuments aligned to solstices and equinoxes and thus ritual gatherings at set times of the year are known from

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<sup>79</sup> H. Jänichen, *Baar und Huntari*, in: *Grundfragen der alamannischen Geschichte: Mainauvorträge* 1952, ed. Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte, Sigmaringen 1976, pp. 83-148, 179-239.

<sup>80</sup> H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany...*, ch. 39; F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”, p. 9.

<sup>81</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries...*, pp. 230-232.

<sup>82</sup> H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany...*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, ch. 39; F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”, p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries...*, p. 232.

as early as the Mesolithic and above all the Neolithic period.<sup>85</sup> The gatherings and assemblies in Saxony and Scandinavia thus fit into traditions that seem to have been in place for thousands of years. Indeed, in the absence of mass communications, fixed gatherings is the only way of coordinating meetings of large groups of people.

#### Fixed assembly sites

According to the *Life of Lebuin*, Saxons held their annual assembly at *Marklo*.<sup>86</sup> Scholars remain sceptical as this place-name is not mentioned in any other source and the location has not been identified.<sup>87</sup> Assemblies can be, but are not necessarily, located at places that later become important administrative centres. In view of the political changes in Saxony in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the Frankish conquest and prohibition of traditional assemblies, changes in the administrative pattern should not surprise us, but rather be expected. It has already been stressed that no model text have yet been found for the section of the *Life* describing the assembly-meeting at *Marklo* and in the text, this site indeed has some strong assembly characteristics: it was situated “in the centre of Saxony” on a major river, which was a key location for communication and travel for the people from the whole area. The place-name *Marklo* may, moreover, derive from “light forest” or “clearing in the border forest”.<sup>88</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that Tacitus stated that the Semonerians met by a sacred grove, and also in Scandinavia did groves feature as meeting places. Old Norse *lundr*, “grove”, is attested in Scandinavian assembly locations, such as Lunda in Sweden and Lunde by Tjølling in Norway. In addition, a location on a boundary is common for assembly sites used by people of more than one territory, which makes sense as this assembly is said to be for all the Saxons. Altogether, *Marklo* as described is fully in line with practices recorded in Scandinavia.<sup>89</sup>

#### Courts and political arenas

At *Marklo*, laws were confirmed, “outstanding” court cases decided, and plans agreed on for the coming year, suggesting that this was both a parliament

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<sup>85</sup> A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order*..., pp. 55.

<sup>86</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries*..., pp. 230-232; M. Becher, “*Marklohe/Marklo*”. *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, XIX, Berlin-New York 2001, pp. 289-290.

<sup>87</sup> C. Ehlers, *Between Marklo and Merseburg*..., pp. 44.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 134-140; M. Becher, “*Marklohe/Marklo*”..., p. 298; A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order*...

<sup>89</sup> H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany*..., ch. 39; F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus*...”, p. 9; A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order*..., pp. 77.

and court.<sup>90</sup> *The Germania* plainly stated that “major affairs” were debated at the assembly, which could be interpreted in the same way.<sup>91</sup>

### Elite-driven assemblies

Tacitus stated that the “chieftains” (*principes*) were the most influential at the assembly, but added that the people gathered had the right to accept proposals by “shouting their dissent” or reject them by “brandishing their weapons”, which reminds of ON *vápnatak* discussed above.<sup>92</sup> The *Life of Lebuin* moreover stressed the presence of “leaders” (*satrapes*) and “noblemen” (*electi nobiles*), albeit with “freedmen” (*liberi*) and “serfs” (*lati*).<sup>93</sup> It is of course not surprising to find written sources emphasising the elite contribution, but these statements do agree with later sources.

### Legal resolution

According to Tacitus, cases were resolved by the payment of fines to the injured party, although one share should go to “the king” (*rex*) or the community. In extreme cases only, capital punishment seems to have been practised.<sup>94</sup> Little else is known about this aspect and *The Life of Lebuin* provides no information on this.

This overview has shown that, although the sources are far and few between, they form a rather coherent picture, and thus shines a small light onto the early Germanic assembly institution. The development of the assembly system over time will now be examined through detailed study of the four early medieval laws selected for this study.

## EARLY MEDIEVAL ASSEMBLY ORGANISATION IN ROYAL LAW

Detailed study of the early medieval laws from the European Mainland is crucial as these texts provide insight into the assembly organisation of various people as well as the first discernible royal reforms of customary law. The Burgundian Code is a compilation issued by King Gundobald (474-516), intended for conflict resolution within the Burgundian community as well as between Burgundians and Romans. Although based on customary law, this code is heavily influenced by Roman law, which was already firmly

<sup>90</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries...*, p. 232.

<sup>91</sup> H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany...*, p. 109.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 110.

<sup>93</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries...*, p. 232.

<sup>94</sup> H. Mattingly, *Tacitus on Britain and Germany...*, ch. 12; F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”, p. 8.

established when the Burgundians settled in Gaul in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Some clear diversions from customary law observed in the Burgundian Code include the omission of the popular assembly and the replacement of the blood feud with fines and compositions, although similar changes are also found in the other Germanic laws included in this study.<sup>95</sup> The Laws of the Salian and the Ripuarian Franks constitute another two important sets of law. The Salian Franks ruled parts of the Low Countries and northern France, while the Ripuarian Franks inhabited the area east of the Rhine.<sup>96</sup> The first Salic law was issued by King Clovis I (481-509) after 507, and a second redaction was issued by King Pippin III in 763-764, but no major revisions were made until the *Lex Salica Emendata* in 798, which was the product of Charlemagne (died 814). The *Lex Ribuaria*, the Law of the Ripuarian Franks, dates from around 630, with the earliest surviving manuscripts from the time of Charlemagne. Both the laws the Salian and the Ripuarian Franks contain much customary law with relatively little Roman influence.<sup>97</sup> In the words of Kathryn Fisher Drew, these laws provide the most information on “the Germanic elements in the early medieval administration of justice than any other barbarian code”.<sup>98</sup> Finally, the Lombard Code, which was issued in 643 by King Rothair (*Edictum Rothari*), and added to over time, for use among the Lombards living on the Italian peninsula. This law, although rather late in production, is also based on customary law, with relatively little Roman influence.<sup>99</sup> All these laws bear strong similarities with the system glimpsed in preliterate Saxony and can therefore be examined using the same headings. This is interesting in view of the significant parallels between the structure and function of the Frankish and the Norse judicial systems that have been pointed out in recent research.<sup>100</sup>

### Administrative divisions

The laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks refer to administrative divisions on two levels: the regional unit of the *pagus* and local *centena* (“hundreds”) divisions. These administrative units have been traced from at least the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and are clearly evidenced from the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Austrasia, Frisia and Saxony. By this time, the *centena* described by Tacitus had been

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<sup>95</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, in: *Law and Society in Early Medieval Europe*, London 1988, pp. 4-8.

<sup>96</sup> P. Friedland, *Seeing Justice Done: The Age of Spectacular Capital Punishment in France*, Oxford 2012, pp. 24-28, 32.

<sup>97</sup> T.J. Rivers, *Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, pp. 1-7.

<sup>98</sup> K.F. Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, p. 33.

<sup>99</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, p. VII.

<sup>100</sup> F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”

transformed from a personal allegiance into a territorial unit.<sup>101</sup> Among the Lombards, the regional units were termed *civitas* or *iudicaria*, depending on the context. These were subdivided into smaller units, the term for which is unknown, although as the official in charge was the *sculdahis*, the name *sculdascia* has been put forward. Similarly for the local level, as one of the assembly officials bore the title of *centius*, Drew suggested a “hundred” organisation was in place.<sup>102</sup> The Burgundian administrative divisions seems to have consisted of *civitas* and *pagus* at the regional level, as the most high ranking judicial officials were termed *comites civitatum* and *comites pagorum*. A lower administrative level must have existed as there were lesser officials termed *judices*, although the unit name has not been preserved.<sup>103</sup>

### *Althings* and representative assemblies

According to the laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks, the assembly for the *pagus* was named *mallus*. There is little information on who should attend this assembly and the *mallus* may have been a representative assembly before being taken into royal hands and transformed into a court. This is suggested by the presence of freemen with duties in the court proceedings, such as the *thunginus* and the *cenetarius*.<sup>104</sup> The term *mallus* is related to the OHG term *mahal* “assembly”, documented between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, but is most likely of older origin.<sup>105</sup> As Tacitus and Caesar did not provide any local terminology it is not known if this term was in use in the times they were describing. The Lombard system, on the other hand, was rather Roman in composition, as the freemen do not seem to have a major role in the proceedings. If they did attend the court session, it would have been as an *auditor*, oath taker or surety.<sup>106</sup> The situation among the Burgundians was probably similar.

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<sup>101</sup> T.J. Rivers, *Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, pp. 12; F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”, p. 11.

<sup>102</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>103</sup> K.F. Drew, *The Burgundian Code...*, p. 13.

<sup>104</sup> F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”, p. 14; K.F. Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, p. 12.

<sup>105</sup> M. Hensch, *Territory, Power and Settlement. Observations on the Origins of Settlement around the Early Medieval Power Sites of Lauterhofen and Sulzbach in the Upper Palatinate*, in: *Frühgeschichtliche Zentralorte in Mitteleuropa*, eds. J. Henning, A. Leubeund, F. Biermann, Studien zur Archäologie Europas, Bonn 2011, pp. 438-439; M. Hensch, E. Michl, *Der locus Lindinlog bei Thietmar von Merseburg – Ein archäologisch-historischer Beitrag zur politischen Raumgliederung in Nordbayern während karolingisch-ottonischer Zeit*, “Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung” LXXII (2013), pp. 37-66.

<sup>106</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, pp. 4-5.



### Assembly hierarchy

The Frankish laws show a hierarchical structure with the *mallus* was the top-level assembly for the *pagus*, below which was the court for the *centena*.<sup>107</sup> The Lombards had a clear system too, as indicated by their administrative division, and assemblies were held at all three levels, i.e. the *civitas/iudicaria*, *sculdascia* and the “hundred”.<sup>108</sup> The Burgundian system followed a similar pattern, with courts for the *pagus* and *civitas*, and probably also one for the local level.<sup>109</sup>

### Fixed assembly sites

In Salic Law, assembly (*mallus*) sites are at times referred to as *mallobergus/mallobergo/malberg* “the meeting mountain”. Such “*mallobergo* meetings” are also recorded in early medieval documents (507, 772, 775, 973 AD).<sup>110</sup> Place-names containing OHG *mahal* have been used to identify such assembly sites, for example Mahlberg in Oberpfalz, Amberg-Sulzbach, Bavaria, Germany. Even though these place-names are recorded late, the *mahal* element suggests that the sites have deep roots.<sup>111</sup> A similar pattern of assembly sites has been observed in Scandinavia, where sites with roots as far back as the Early Iron Age (ca. 0 AD) were used as assemblies until the Late Middle Ages.<sup>112</sup>

### Courts

The *mallus* as well as the courts of the Burgundians and the Lombards were different from the assemblies of preliterate Saxony as it did not function as a parliament. A main function of these assemblies was as a court for both “criminal” and “civil” matters.<sup>113</sup> The *mallus*, just as the *thing*, was not the primary means of resolving disputes. According to Salic law, anyone with a legal complaint should first inform their neighbours and then take an oath before the local judicial leaders. Only those cases for which the officials called *rachinburgii*, believed that doubt existed should be referred to the assembly.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> P. Barnwell, *The Early Frankish Mallus: Its Nature, Participants and Practices*, in: *Assembly Places and Practices in Medieval Europe*, eds. A. Pantos, S.J. Semple, Dublin 2004, pp. 234-235; F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”, p. 11-14.

<sup>108</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>109</sup> K.F. Drew, *The Burgundian Code...*, p. 13.

<sup>110</sup> *Das Deutsche Rechtswörterbuch*, <http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~cd2/drw/e/ma/llob/ergu/mallobergus.htm> (accessed 18 January 2019).

<sup>111</sup> M. Hensch, *Territory...*, pp. 438-439; M. Hensch, E. Michl, *Der locus Lindinlog...*, pp. 37-66.

<sup>112</sup> A. Sanmark, *Viking Law and Order...*

<sup>113</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, p. 3; idem, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, p. 33.

<sup>114</sup> P. Barnwell, *The Early Frankish Mallus...*, pp. 233-246.

The *mallus* was also a forum for witnessing and recording transactions; in this way, the legitimacy of transactions was ensured, and in the event of a subsequent dispute, witnesses to the event could be brought forward. This practice stemmed from the time when no documents of legal proceedings were produced, which has been observed in other areas too, such as early medieval Spain and Scandinavia. This idea is supported by evidence from the 6<sup>th</sup>-century Roman east where, Justinian, who promoted the use of written law, explicitly recognised that there were (predominantly rural) places where there were no literate people and where various forms of “custom” should be used, safeguarded by the provision of a sufficient number of witnesses rather than by documents.<sup>115</sup> The wide range of activities pertaining to the *mallus* is supported by the various meanings of *mahal*, which include court, meeting and contract.<sup>116</sup>

#### Meetings at set times of the year

Meetings of the *mallus* were held twice a year, with lesser meetings in-between. It is possible that the latter were introduced by Charlemagne.<sup>117</sup> The Lombard assembly organisation seems to have been rather different as assemblies of the *civitas* or *iudicaria* were held daily.<sup>118</sup>

#### Elite-driven assemblies

The *mallus* was controlled by the king in the sense that a count (*grafio*), or his viscount, presided over the meetings. Later on, the *grafio* assumed the title of *comes*.<sup>119</sup> Below the counts were two judicial officials: the *thunginus* and the *cenetarius*, both officials of the “hundred”. It is important to note that these officials were representatives of the people, not the king. According to Salic law, both types of official had the right to convene assemblies for property transactions.<sup>120</sup> In court they were assisted by seven “jurors”, the *rachinburgii* (in the Carolingian Period known as *boni homines*). Their presence goes back to the concept that all freemen had the right to attend the assembly. From these freemen the *rachinburgi* were selected, thus making this a representative assembly. It was the duty of the *rachinburgii* to give the stance of the law and then verdict was pronounced by the *grafio*, *cenetarius*

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<sup>115</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>116</sup> G. Köbler, *Lateinisch-Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, Göttinger Studien zur Rechtsgeschichte, Sonderband 12, Göttingen-Zürich-Frankfurt 1971, p. 80.

<sup>117</sup> K.F. Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, p. 229, note 26.

<sup>118</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, p. 5.

<sup>119</sup> T.J. Rivers, *Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, p. 12.

<sup>120</sup> F. Iversen, “*Concilium and Pagus...*”, pp. 12-13; K.F. Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, pp. 108, 110.

or *thunginus*, who could not do this without the aid of the *rachinburgii*.<sup>121</sup> The role of these men can be compared to that of the lawmen in Norway in the time of Magnus the Lawmender. The Lombard assemblies were also run by a number of royal officials, which followed a clear hierarchical structure, as indicated above. Below the king himself, there was the *iudex*, the leader of the court of the *civitas* or *iudicaria*. Then followed the *sculdahis*, and beneath this official was the *centinus/deganus/locopositus* (these seem to have been almost interchangeable).<sup>122</sup> The Burgundian system followed a similar pattern, as the chief judicial officials were the “counts of the cities” (*comites civitatum*) and the “counts of the villages” (*comites pagorum*). Below these, there was a number of officials entitled *judices*, although very little is known about their duties. In addition, at the very top level, in the kings’ council, nobles known as *optimates* were in attendance, and at least some of these seem to have had judicial duties.<sup>123</sup> In addition, all these laws specified that additional meetings were held after incidents, such as murder or disagreements.

### Legal resolution

Punishment was above all in the form of fines or compensation to the injured party, and in some cases outlawry. In cases involving disputes between two parties, the plaintiff should summon the defendant to a *mallus*. Proof was provided by oath-taking or the ordeal.<sup>124</sup> Capital punishment occurred very occasionally in the Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks, although it seems to have been increasingly used over time, as evidenced in amendments to the Salic law.<sup>125</sup> The Burgundian law above all relied on fines and composition, but along the same lines as the Scandinavian laws, capital punishment was prescribed for “breaking the peace”, such as robbery and burglary.<sup>126</sup>

### CONCLUSION

This review of the various assembly systems referred to in written sources, from across a large geographical area and time span, shows that the Scandinavian assembly system fits into a wider legal framework. This is not to say that assembly organisations systems were identical across time and place, or necessarily that the Scandinavian laws were fully derived from earlier

<sup>121</sup> T.J. Rivers, *Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, p. 12.

<sup>122</sup> K.F. Drew, *Notes on Lombard Institutions*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>123</sup> K.F. Drew, *The Burgundian Code...*, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> P. Barnwell, *The Early Frankish Mallus...*, pp. 233-246.

<sup>125</sup> P. Friedland, *Seeing Justice Done...*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>126</sup> K.F. Drew, *The Burgundian Code...*, p. 44, XXIX.

continental sources. The most important point to make is that a number of major traits were present across the Germanic areas of northern Europe, which yet again makes the point that assemblies are not only a feature of literate societies. This is in line with the view of legal scholars who now agree that law and norms form part of all societies, literate or not, and that they all have means of conflict resolution and enactment of law.

In all the sources examined in this study, versions of the same eight key assembly features were found, although clear transitions are seen between the preliterate societies and the Christian medieval kingdoms. As the kings grew more powerful, the “popular” assembly, which functioned both as parliament and court was gradually changed into two separate arenas, both controlled by the king: the king’s council, run by the king himself with his select men, and the court system, run by royal officials, with the king as the ultimate judge. In this way, power at the local level was being reduced and placed in the hands of fewer people, and finally the king himself. This is not to argue that the assembly of preliterate society was a fully democratic institution, and indeed, such ideas have been largely abandoned in research. As shown in this study, active assembly participation was restricted to parts of the population, yet some of the ideas of a democratic society were in fact present, as the *thingmen* seem to have been rather influential at the assembly prior to the royal takeover. The kings knew the power of the assembly and by taking this into their control, they strengthened their own position further.

### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the main traits of the Scandinavian *þing* (*thing*, assembly) institution, which was in place from the Viking Age onwards, and demonstrates that this system was not unique, but rather fits into the longstanding assembly traditions identified in both preliterate and literate Germanic societies in Mainland Europe. Even though the written sources are sparse and at times rather problematic, it is clear that the assembly as a form of early government, conflict resolution and court system existed across a wide geographical region and time span. The nature of the Scandinavian *thing* organisation is examined through regulations surrounding assembly organisation in the earliest surviving laws, above all the Norwegian laws of the Gulathing and the Frostathing. For the analysis of the early assembly systems of the European Mainland, a wider variety of written sources, ranging from Tacitus’ *Germania*, saints’ lives to a collections of early medieval laws including The Burgundian Code and The Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks have been employed. Through this comparative approach, it is demonstrated that these different assembly organisations share a number of key features, despite being diving by time and geography.



# XI<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

(CONTINUATION; THE SECTION EDITED BY KRZYSZTOF SKWIERCZYŃSKI)

KRZYSZTOF SKWIERCZYŃSKI  
WARSZAWA

## LONG XI<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY



Once again, "Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae" will feature essays in the section entitled "XI<sup>th</sup> Century; one should note, however, that this title is not intended merely to indicate the chronological order of problems studied by the authors, but to emphasize the historical significance of the beginning of the second millennium for the shaping of the European civilization. Of course, we could identify numerous critical and sometimes revolutionary periods in the history of our continent; another such impactful time in the thousand-year long Medieval era was, for example, the so-called Carolingian Renaissance, or the Renaissance of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. However, if we wanted to pinpoint the period when our world and its numerous institutions were shaped, it would be the turn of the millennia and the titular "Long 11<sup>th</sup> Century".

The period in question seems especially important for the history of the Catholic Church (a term that is almost synonymous with Western-European civilization as a whole). This was the period when the process took place that is often described by reference to the name of Pope Gregory VII as the Gregorian Reform, but increasingly more often substituted by the term "Gregorian Revolution", or – to emphasize the complexity of the problem and duration of the series of reforms that began before the pontificate of Gregory VII and came to a close a long time thereafter – the "great reform of the Church".<sup>1</sup> However,

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. essays published in volumes: *Il secolo XI: una svolta?*, ed. C. Violante, J. Fried, "Annali dell'istituto storico italo-germanico" XXXV, Bologna 1993; *Riforma o restaurazione? La cristianità nel passaggio dal primo al secondo millennio: persistenze e novità*, Negarine di S. Pietro in Cariano (Verona) 2006.



changes of Church institutions – their revival, reform and restoration – would not be possible without the numerous social, economic, political, religious and mental transformations. It seems that the key to answering the question that has lingered in historiography for decades – why the earlier attempts to repair and reform the Church were unsuccessful, while the actions of Gregory VII and his fellows enjoyed a spectacular success – is the series of comprehensive changes and revolutions that took place in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

In the literature, the 11<sup>th</sup> century is being increasingly more often referred to as the “century of beginnings”, and many of the phenomena and processes that took place at that time are seen as key for understanding the subsequent periods. When taking the so-called Renaissance of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century as our frame of reference,<sup>2</sup> we often forget the significant and often crucial role played by the changes, the new ideas and the “revolutions” of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in laying the foundations for the 12<sup>th</sup>-century reality. Here, one should mention both the fundamental political phenomena, such as the initiatives to organize and define the relations between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, as well as economic ones – namely, the broadly-understood Feudal Transformation, economic and legal detachment of towns from other regions, and the shaping of communes. Equally fundamental were the social changes, which include – for instance – clergy evolving into a separate social class, or the “individualization” of people and growth of the (self-)awareness that every person is special and distinct from others, because everyone is created in the image of God. No less important were the attempts to overcome anarchy (introduction of the *Pax Dei*) and to solve the post-Carolingian administrative crisis. As for the social changes, one should mention, for example, the gradual departure of the Church and society from the Manichean traditions on corporality and sexuality, acceptance of bodily pleasures (of course, only within a legal marriage!), and a belief that erotic pleasure is also a gift from God. Areas connected with Medieval religiousness and piety saw equally fundamental phenomena and changes – one need only mention the changes in the cult of the Holy Virgin Mary and the Man Jesus Christ. One should not forget about the changing approach to the Canon Law, attempts to codify it and eliminate spurious and contradictory laws, which, in the subsequent century, led to both the rebirth of Roman law and unification of Church law. These observations, which we only skimmed over, require adding one important remark: despite the stereotypes that remain prevalent in historiography, the 11<sup>th</sup> century was – in its essence – a time of intellectuals.

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2 However, cf. T.N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century. Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government*, Princeton 2009, who sees the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a time of overload and crisis.

All of the transformations described above are tightly linked with an important fact: the 11<sup>th</sup> century was also the time when the Medieval society underwent another significant transformation – the move from oral to written culture, to put it in a nutshell. For example, this transformation played an momentous role during the so-called Investiture Controversy between the imperial and papal authorities – a long-term, difficult and complicated process of redefining the relations between church and state. To put it briefly, before the Gregorian Reform, parties to conflicts of various kinds settled their disputes through negotiations and rivalry between opposing views. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, various treatises, political letters, collections of canons, open letters and, in general, written references to the so-called public opinion started to gain greater relevance. Strong stances taken during debate and recorded in writing impeded negotiations, led to the exacerbation of conflicts and striving for resolutions that strongly favoured one of the parties.<sup>3</sup> The situation was similar in relation to other matters, often neither political nor contentious, such as e.g. the attitude towards people of different faith, heretics, and people exhibiting any non-standard behaviour, e.g. social or sexual. Texts that referred to a given subject matter became foundational for normative, generalized rules for treating groups whose conduct violated the norms that were generally accepted by the Church and Christian society.

In other words, the discussed period was the time when, on the one hand, various aspects of human life were defined, named and judged, a time when – as part of *christianitas* – various social groups became increasingly more independent and established their boundaries, and on the other hand – due to the centralization and growing status of the Church – Western Christian societies began to consolidate in opposition to Muslims, Jews and all other foreigners and aliens; society also started to become increasingly repressive.<sup>4</sup>

The self-awareness of the reformers with respect to the transformations and phenomena that were ongoing at the time is fascinating; of course, the changes in process were recognized by the contemporaries, and the need of

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3 Among various works, see in particular M. Suchan, *Königsherrschaft im Streit. Konfliktaustragung in der Regierungszeit Heinrichs IV. zwischen Gewalt, Gespräch und Schriftlichkeit*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters, XLII, Stuttgart 1997; L. Melve, *Inventing the Public Sphere. The Public Debate during the Investiture Contest (c. 1030-1122)*, I-II, Leiden-Boston 2007; *Brief und Kommunikation im Wandel. Medien, Autoren und Kontexte in den Debatten des Investiturstreits*, ed. F. Hartmann, Papsttum im mittelalterlichen Europa, V, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2016.

4 See K.G. Cushing, *Reform and Papacy in the Eleventh Century. Spirituality and Social Change*, Manchester 2005; R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society. Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, Malden 2007.

Church institutions to form their stance toward the changes was among the causes of the great Church reform that took place in the period. We are going to sidestep another important research problem – determining the degree to which the changes influenced the reform, and the degree to which they were the result of the melioration that took place in the Church. Some regarded the discussed phenomena as new, while others perceived them as attempts to reinstate the former greatness that had been lost. Pope Gregory VII often emphasized that his policies were aimed at reinstating the status of Scripture, returning to the times of the apostles and Fathers of the Church, and that he was not intending to introduce any innovations. On the other hand, many of his opponents saw the matters differently, accusing the Pope of attempting to introduce novel changes. A similar pattern can be observed in the case of ideas promoted by other reformers, e.g. Peter Damian, who was accused of pushing forward unheard-of, downright heretical innovations, while the Eremite deflected those charges, claiming to be doing nothing more than merely drawing upon the traditions of the Fathers of the Church.

In 1075, a German archbishop called Pope Gregory VII a “dangerous man” (*periculosus homo*), who illegally took the throne of St Peter, wreaked havoc in the Church and stripped dissenting clerics of their titles. It was that “dangerous man” who most assuredly was in the centre of the great transformations that took place in the Church and world in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century and early 12<sup>th</sup> century. Of course, while those revolutions had begun before the papal throne was taken by Hildebrand, whose pontifical name – Gregory VII – became the namesake of the transformations, his policies shook up the existing order of the Christian world. However – and this must be clearly emphasized – the ideas of moral reformation of the Church had appeared earlier, and Gregory simply carried out the proposals of his predecessors in the Holy See and of other reformers – such as Leo IX, Peter Damian, Humbert of Silva Candida, Nicolas II, Alexander II and Anselm of Lucca – just to name a few leading figures.

But the question remains as to why the previous attempts to improve the moral situation inside the Church and the initiatives to strengthen its political position failed, while the activity of Gregory VII turned out successful. It seems that the answer is simple: it was the first time that matters truly escalated, with both sides of the conflict becoming entrenched in their positions and using treatises and polemical writings as their main weapons. It is rather likely that the serious political conflict between the Pope and German ruler Henry IV was unintended, because – and there is a general consensus on this in historiography – the reforms were initially aimed at the internal flaws of the Church, such as moral corruption, sexual deviancy and simony – selling church offices and roles – not just for money, but also for favours and commitments. Gregory VII realized that he could only fight

those aberrations effectively if full power became consolidated in the hands of the Pope. It was this process of centralization that provoked resistance from local Church officials, especially within the empire, leading to the conflict between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*. In other words, Gregory VII was successful – as opposed to his predecessors – because he led to a serious conflict. Both of the leading figures in the dispute were dethroned and excommunicated, and although Hildebrand died in exile and Henry IV managed to obtain imperial consecration and the crown, the Church was victorious and emerged stronger from the struggle. It took over the initiative, and the first spectacular effects of this shift were the crusades that began soon after the death of Gregory VII<sup>5</sup>.

Indisputably, the Church reform was a key process in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, central to that period, although – as I have remarked – mediaevalists struggle to find a consensus as to the name and nature of this phenomenon. In 1965, one of the leading Italian mediaevalists, Ovidio Capitani, posed a provocative question in a title of his essay – whether we really can talk about a “Gregorian” period in Medieval Church history. The historian’s reply to this question can be summarized in a few words: yes and that period took place exactly between 1073 and 1085, during the pontificate of Gregory VII.<sup>6</sup> One of the authors featured in this section – “XI<sup>th</sup> Century”, Glauco Maria Cantarella, begins his most recent book – biography of Gregory VII<sup>7</sup> – with an analysis of the question posed by Capitani. The Bolognese historian believes (and the author of the present paper wholeheartedly agrees) that the 12-year-long pontificate of Gregory, between 1073 and 1085, revolutionized both the Church and the entire western-Christian world. The sheer degree to which the pontificate of Hildebrand/Gregory was revolutionary is most clearly visible in comparison to the activity of other popes of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, especially those who came before the first great reformer, Leo IX (1049-1054). In this issue of “Quaestiones”, we are publishing a paper by Cantarelli devoted to one of the predecessors of the great reformers, Sergius IV (1009-1012), known as the “Pig Snout” (*os porci*) who was completely dependent on the powerful Roman Crescentii clan (“I due Sergi? Nota su papa Sergio IV”).

While Pope Gregory VII indisputably appears as a central figure in the 11<sup>th</sup>-century transformations, the most stimulating political and social phenomenon for contemporary researchers (especially in Germany) seems to be the so-called Investiture Controversy. The matters of Henry IV’s excommunication and humiliation in Canossa completely dominated

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5 See K. Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich w Polsce do początku XIII wieku*, Toruń 2016<sup>2</sup>.

6 O. Capitani, *Esiste un’ „età gregoriana”? Considerazioni sulle tendenze di una storiografia medievistica*, “Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa” I (1965) 3, pp. 454-481.

7 G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, Roma 2018.

German historiography of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but equating the Gregorian reform with *Investiturstreit* creates terminological confusion. In fact, the matter of investiture carried out by secular rulers appeared in Gregory VII's politics rather late, in the period between 1077 and 1080. This dispute – the fight between secular and religious authorities on how the ceremony of consecration of bishops should be performed – was not the root cause of the fundamental conflict between those two leading European powers, but rather a corollary and effect of the dispute. Roman Church addressed the problem of investiture as late as in 1077, when, during the synod of Autun, papal legate Hugo of Die announced a ban on investiture in France. One year later, in Rome, a decree was issued against accepting investiture from secular authorities; in addition, the Lent synod of 1080 upheld this ban, also extending it to those who granted investiture. Up until recently, the view was prevalent that the overarching goal of Gregory VII was to deprive secular authorities of influence on the Church. According to this belief, the policy of the Holy See in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century was mainly concentrated on obtaining *libertas ecclesiae*, although it is known that the term is not meant to negate this influence, but to include secular authorities in the undertaking of the reform. As a matter of fact, the reformers were not seeking to establish clear separation between religious and secular realms, but to redefine the relationship between these two powers and strengthen the position of the Holy See in the Christian World. In contrast to simony and Nicolaitism – opposed by many predecessors of Gregory VII, the idea to ban rulers from granting investiture emerged gradually, during the pope's pontificate. Some aspects of the fundamental problem of the ban on investiture are discussed in a paper by Enrico Veneziani (*Between Rome and Montecassino. Re-thinking the Investiture Controversy in the First Half of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century*).

A phenomenon that is remarkably important in the context of the conflict between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* is the dynamic development of various types of the aforementioned polemical writings. Arguments used as ammunition in this “war of words” that was – to a significant degree – the Gregorian Reform – are discussed below in the paper by Nicolangelo D’Acunto (*Argomenti di natura giuridica e strumenti della comunicazione pubblica durante la lotta per le investiture*). It is certain that the treatises, sermons, lives of saints and letters – both private and public – played an important role in the first public debate of medieval Europe that was the 11<sup>th</sup>-century battle over Church reform. Authors active in the dispute learned how to formulate arguments in the public domain and how to unite and persuade public opinion. With its prevalent use of thoughtful arguments, often of legal nature, the fierce and often dramatic conflict created the intellectual climate for the 12<sup>th</sup> century renaissance. Various aspects of this problem – i.e. the impact of the conflict on the development of science and scholarship in the 11<sup>th</sup> century – are discussed

in the 21<sup>st</sup> volume of “Quaestiones” by Glauco Maria Cantarella, in the paper entitled *Le bruissement du temps: rhétorique, dialectique, mathématique, philosophie entre XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*.

I am strongly convinced that the papers featured both in the “Quaestiones” in the 2016 edition and in the present issue are just the beginning of a discussion of the fascinating phenomena that took place in the long 11<sup>th</sup> century; I also hope that these papers are the next step to understanding the phenomenon of the fundamental transformations of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

translated by Piotr Gumola





ENRICO VENEZIANI  
ST ANDREWS

## BETWEEN ROME AND MONTECASSINO

### RE-THINKING THE INVESTITURE CONTROVERSY IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY



“In eadem etiam synodo [Pope Gregory VII] constituit, ut, si quis a laico ecclesie investituram acciperet, dans et accipiens anathemate plecteretur”.<sup>1</sup>

This is how the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis* describes the allegedly most revolutionary – and problematic – event of the 11<sup>th</sup>-century reforms: the prohibition of the investiture. Two meagre lines are dedicated to Gregory’s decision in chapter 42, while the remaining thirty focus on concessions of properties to Montecassino – what really mattered to the chronicler. This mention in passing typified the attitude of the chronicle towards the so-called “Investiture contest”, most of the time considered by the Cassinese chroniclers only when it intersected with the history and interests of the Benedictine monastery.

The aim of this essay is to illustrate how the Investiture contest was depicted in the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*. It will be argued that the *ex post facto* context in which this source was produced (first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century) had a considerable influence on the way the struggle between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* was presented and how the struggle was re-thought, even changing and adapting the account to accentuate the role of Montecassino in the events. This exaggeration of the abbey’s involvement may be part of a strategy to protect the autonomy of the monastery from papal interference. This choice was completely different from the one adopted at Cluny, where, according to Cluniac sources, nothing worth mentioning was happening, and there was no Investiture contest. The article will consider only the period from

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<sup>1</sup> *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, ed. H. Hoffmann, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (henceforth MGH), *Scriptores*, XXXIV, Hanover 1980, p. 420.

the election of Gregory VII (1073) to his death in 1085. The choice of this time frame is dictated by its coincidence with the "Golden Age of Montecassino" – the time of maximum splendour and prosperity of the cloister, but a period that is also marked by the highest involvement of the monastery with the 11<sup>th</sup>-century reform that culminated in the election of abbot Desiderius as pope Victor III.<sup>2</sup>

Before going on any further, a methodological and historiographical discussion is necessary. There has not yet been a comprehensive study of this topic. However, some of the passages considered here have been analysed in works on Montecassino and the 11<sup>th</sup>-century papacy, especially on the pontificate of Victor III.

The most important study is Herbert Cowdrey's *The Age of Abbot Desiderius*. For his work on Desiderius as abbot and then pontiff (1058-1087), the scholar extensively relied on the *Chronica*, and many of his considerations, in particular concerning the production of this source, are still valid today. However, even though he considered various passages concerning the Investiture contest, Cowdrey's work sometimes did not read them in light of the context in which they were produced. Moreover, he could not take into account any of the progress made by historiography in the past thirty years towards a better comprehension of the 11<sup>th</sup>-century reform.

Similar issues affect Herbert Bloch's *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*.<sup>3</sup> Although still fundamental for every study on Montecassino, Bloch's adoption of the old historiographical model of an "Old Gregorian reform" which was replaced by a "new more spiritual reform" in the 12<sup>th</sup> century jeopardised his conclusions about some of the excerpts of the *Chronica* which were written in the same period as when this supposed new reform took place.

Graham Loud's *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino and the Gregorian Papacy and Church and Society in the Norman Principality of Capua* deal with some of the same material considered here.<sup>4</sup> He was the first to raise again the topic of Desiderius/Victor III and to propose the idea that the chapters of the *Chronica* dealing with his election as pope were parts of different redactions and contradict themselves.<sup>5</sup> However, he gives too much credit to a letter

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2 The expression "Golden Age of Montecassino" is borrowed from H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius. Montecassino, the Papacy and the Normans in Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries*, Oxford 1983, pp. 1-45.

3 H. Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*, I-III, Cambridge 1986.

4 G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino and the Gregorian Papacy*, "The Journal of Ecclesiastical History" XXX (1979), pp. 305-326; idem, *Church and Society in the Norman Principality of Capua, 1058-1197*, Oxford 1985, pp. 80-85; more recently Loud has returned to this topic in idem, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy*, Cambridge 2007.

5 Among the first works on Desiderius/Victor III at least it is necessary to quote F. Hirsch, *Desiderius von Monte Cassino als Papst Victor III.*, "Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte"

discrediting Victor III that was actually written *ex post facto* by one of his opponents, although the scholar recognises the propagandistic aim of this source.

Quite recently, Daniela De Rosa, in her work on the papacy of Victor, has argued that the chapters of the chronicle of Montecassino on the pope's election are only apparently in contrast and can be read all together.<sup>6</sup> She has also considered further excerpts of this source, giving a good picture of the historiography surrounding them and accepting previous ideas, but again failing to contextualise them properly.

The main source for my analysis is the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*. Today, scholars tend to attribute the chronicle to three different authors. Leo Marsicanus received in 1099 the task of writing the history of abbot Desiderius and chose to extend his work and write the history of the abbey from its origin. His work was continued by Guido in the 1120s and then finished by Peter the Deacon between 1130s and 1140s, who incorporated Guido's work.<sup>7</sup> The *Chronica* presents two types of problems. First, the nature of the work itself calls for special attention when dealing with it: the chronicle was the official history of Montecassino and was written to celebrate the abbey and its abbots and to claim its properties. Moreover, the passages this article will consider are affected by a second problem regarding their authorship, since they belonged to the work of both Guido and Peter the Deacon, but the sections written by the former are no longer recognisable – or at least very hardly recognisable, as we will see. Scholars, therefore, usually ascribe all work to Peter, who has, however, often been labelled as a forger and therefore as not trustworthy. However, quite recently, his “bad” reputation has been downgraded and it has been shown how he may have turned to official documents of the Roman Church when writing his part of the chronicle.<sup>8</sup>

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VII (1867), pp. 1-112 and A. Fliche, *Le pontificat de Victor III*, “Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique” XX (1924), pp. 387-412.

<sup>6</sup> D. De Rosa, *Il pontificato di Vittore III. Un riesame critico*, Roma 2008, p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> See H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, pp. VII-I; H. Houben, *Malfattori e benefattori, protettori e sfruttatori: i Normanni e Montecassino*, in: *L'età dell'abate Desiderio: storia arte e cultura. Atti del IV convegno di studi sul Medioevo Meridionale*, (Montecassino – Cassino, 4-8 ottobre 1987), eds. F. Avagliano, O. Pecere, Montecassino 1992, p. 137; H. Bloch, *Montecassino in the Middle Ages*, I, p. 116; M. Dell'Omo, *Pietro Diacono*, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, LXXXIII, Roma 2015, pp. 470-473; Peter the Deacon, *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, eds. J.-M. Martin, P. Chastang, E. Cuzzo et al., I-IV, Roma 2016, IV, pp. 1731-1732.

<sup>8</sup> On these problems see E. Veneziani, *Uno sguardo da lontano: il terremoto del 1117 visto da Montecassino*, in: *Terremoto in Val Padana: 1117 la terra sconvolse e sprofonda. Atti del Convegno di Mantova 20-22 settembre 2017*, eds. A. Calzona, G.M. Cantarella, G. Milanese, Verona 2018, pp. 399-409. For Peter the Deacon and his reputation as a forger, see the classic E. Caspar, *Echte und gefälschte Karolingerurkunden für Monte Cassino*, “Neues Archiv” XXXIII (1908), pp. 53-

Therefore, it is no longer possible to disregard the *Chronica* as a source for the Investiture contest, the context in which it was written, and how the struggle between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* was perceived and re-thought in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

A first episode which is worth mentioning is the election of Gregory VII in 1073: “defuncto autem eodem pontifice [Alexander II] clerus populusque Romanus in unum conveniunt Hildebrandumque sedis apostolice archidiaconum eligentes Gregorium appellari decernunt”.<sup>9</sup> According to the chronicle, the election of the pope was carried out by the *clerus et populus*. This, however, was the ancient electoral procedure, which was replaced by Nicholas II with the *Decretum in electione papae* in 1059.<sup>10</sup> According to the decree, the election of the pontiff was entrusted to the cardinal-bishops, and it affirmed “the principle of communication to the imperial court” of the newly elected.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the *Decretum* also considered all possible exceptions an emergency situation could require – the ones followed by Gregory’s election and all elections after 1059. Moreover, during his pontificate, the 1059 procedures may have been reconsidered, as attested by a reference to three days of fasting and prayers in Gregory’s letter addressed to archbishop Wibert of Ravenna on 23 April 1073, which could be regarded as an attempt to return to the ancient modality of election.<sup>12</sup> An explicit attack is found in the dedicatory epistle of Deusdedit’s *Collectio canonum*, a canonical collection dedicated to Victor III (who, as Desiderius, was among the subscribers of the *Decretum*), which started during the last years of Gregory’s papacy.<sup>13</sup> Was Deusdedit justifying the way the new pope was elected, whose election was

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-73; idem, *Petrus Diaconus und die Monte Cassineser Fälschungen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des italienischen Geisteslebens im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1909. For a new interpretation of the figure of Peter, see Peter the Deacon, *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, pp. 1769-1782; 1802-1808: 1807.

<sup>9</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 413.

<sup>10</sup> On the *Decretum*, see the bibliography in O. Capitani, *Problematica della Disceptatio Synodalis*, in: O. Capitani, *Tradizione ed interpretazione: dialettiche ecclesiologiche del sec. XI*, Roma 1990, pp. 49-50 and 81-83. It is worth mentioning the classic works of H.-G. Krause, *Das Papstwahldekret von 1059 und seine Rolle im Investiturstreit*, Rom 1960; J. Detlev, *Das Papstwahldekret von 1059. Überlieferung und Textgestalt*, Sigmaringen 1986; W. Stürner, *Das Papstwahldekret von 1059 und seine Verfälschung. Gedanken zu einem neuen Buch*, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica. München, 16.-19. September 1986*, I-IV, Hannover 1988, II, pp. 157-190.

<sup>11</sup> G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, Roma 2018, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> G.M. Cantarella, *Manuale della fine del mondo. Il travaglio dell’Europa medievale*, Torino 2015, pp. 100-101.

<sup>13</sup> *Die Kanonessammlung von Kardinals Deusdedit*, ed. V.W. Von Glanvell, Paderborn 1905. Deusdedit argued against the *Decretum* also in his *Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquos scismaticos*, see Deusdedit, *Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquos scismaticos*, ed. E. Sackur, in: *MGH, Libelli*, II, Hannoverae 1892, pp. 309-313.

not in accordance with the *Decretum* either? Indeed, Deusdedit's *Collectio canonum* seems to be a description of Victor's election.<sup>14</sup> Was the cardinal also dissociating himself from Gregory's centralisation of all prerogatives in the figure of the Roman pontiff, hoping that a new pope such as Desiderius – well-known for his ability to negotiate and for his moderation – could have re-established the harmony between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*?<sup>15</sup> Or was he trying to “dictate the agenda” to the pontiff, who may have partially disregarded Deusdedit's expectations since there is no evidence suggesting Victor's rejection of Gregory's ecclesiological ideas?<sup>16</sup> One may even speculate that Deusdedit was proposing himself as candidate for the succession to Victor: a seasoned cardinal from the time of Alexander II, entrusted with an important legation in 1084/85, and with deep knowledge of canon law...

That this was one of the arguments that could damage Gregory is shown by its use by anti-Gregorian propaganda, especially in Beno's *Gesta Romanae Ecclesiae contra Hildebrandum*, written between 1095 and the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> As Cantarella has recently pointed out, this work is a repertoire of themes to the detriment of Gregory which could be also used in preaching.<sup>18</sup> He asserted that Ildebrand “a suis militibus sine assensu cleri et populi est intronizatus, timens, ne alius moram eligeretur. Ad quem cum venire abbas Cassinensis, ait ipse Hildebrandus: ‘Frater, nimium tardasti’. Respondit abbas: ‘Et tu, Hildebrande, nimium festinasti, qui nondum sepulto domino tuo papa, sedem apostolicam contra canones usurpasti’”.<sup>19</sup> The plausibility of this passage has already been questioned by Cowdrey.<sup>20</sup> The excerpt has a clear intent to delegitimise Gregory's election – this is the reason for both mentioning the election *per clerum et populum* and any other possible way, i.e. the *Decretum* – and to isolate the pope, who appears to not have enjoyed any kind of support, despite his *milites*. Moreover, Beno suggested some sort of hostility between the pontiff and Desiderius (already dead as pope Victor III at the time the *Gesta* were written) and, as a reflection, between Urban II, pope at the time Beno was writing, and Montecassino, a fundamental ally for each faction in the struggle with its enormous resources and its contacts with the

14 H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 188-190; E. Veneziani, *Problemi dell'elezione di Vittore III (1086-1087)*, “*Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*” CXVIII (2016), pp. 149-151.

15 G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, pp. 266-267; E. Veneziani, *Problemi dell'elezione di Vittore...*, pp. 144-145.

16 E. Veneziani, *Alla ricerca dell'ecclesiologia perduta di Vittore III (1086-1087) – Looking for Victor III's Lost Ecclesiology (1086-1087)*, “*Memoria Europae*” II (2016) 3, pp. 9-37.

17 R. Somerville, *Pope Urban II's Council of Piacenza*, Oxford 2011, p. 18.

18 G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, p. 60.

19 Beno, *Gesta Romanae Ecclesiae contra Hildebrandum*, in: MGH, *Libelli*, II, p. 380.

20 H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 66-67.



Normans. Was Beno somehow trying to establish some kind of contact with Montecassino for the imperial party?

As Cowdrey pointed out, besides the historicity of Desiderius's statement, Beno's text shows how the procedures of papal election were discussed at Montecassino (here represented by its most famous abbot), since every propaganda text needs a seed of truth to be deemed plausible.<sup>21</sup> Further texts show how this matter was debated in the monastery not only during the Investiture contest, but also in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The *Chronica* deals with the *Decretum* twice: there is a first neutral mention by Leo Marsicanus, while a more interesting view was expressed by Guido or Peter the Deacon during the meeting of Albano (which will be discussed below).<sup>22</sup> Finally, according to Cowdrey, Amatus of Montecassino's *Historia Normannorum* might hint at it in very hostile terms.<sup>23</sup> The description of Gregory's election which opened this paragraph may have been another indirect reference to this debate, which could have influenced the author of this passage of the chronicle.

The majority of scholars has always considered Gregory's prohibition of investitures as the main event of the entire Investiture contest – the trigger which initiated the struggle – which indeed owes its name from this prohibition but which was instead triggered by the pontiff's conflict with the bishops of the *Reichskirche*. In chapter 42 book 3 the *Chronica* notes that Gregory VII "in eadem etiam sinodo [1078 Lenten synod] constituit, ut, si quis a laico ecclesie investituram acciperet, dans et accipiens anathemate plecteretur".<sup>24</sup> It does not seem to be a verbatim quotation of the record included in the register of the pontiff. According to Gregory's official decree, acknowledging that the investiture was "contra statuta sanctorum patrum" forbade every cleric from accepting the investiture at the hands of any lay person under penalty of excommunication.<sup>25</sup> In 1078, the pope's act was explicitly against the recipient of the investiture, and there is no mention of a condemnation of the person granting it.<sup>26</sup> The excerpt of the chronicle may have been a summary of the canon passed in 1078 and of the decree issued in the 1075 Lenten synod: the alleged first decree of prohibition of investiture, which is not mentioned in the Cassinese text. The lack of the latter decree

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<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> For Leo's mention see H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 374.

<sup>23</sup> Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de' Normanni volgarizzata in antico francese*, ed. V. De Bartholomeis, Roma 1935, p. 177.

<sup>24</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 420.

<sup>25</sup> Gregory VII, *Das Register Gregors VII.*, ed. E. Caspar, II, Berlin 1923, p. 403.

<sup>26</sup> On Gregory's attitude towards investiture, see H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII 1073-1085*, Oxford, 1998, pp. 546-550.

prevents, however, any possible comparison. Moreover, the very existence of such a source has been questioned, since it is only mentioned in an almost contemporary chronicle, the *Liber gestorum recentium* written by Arnulf of Milan, while the pope's letters did not make any reference to it.<sup>27</sup>

The reference to the prohibition of investiture is definitely not the most important passage of the chapter. It is only mentioned in passing, and the *Chronica* is more interested in referring to the claims that were raised by Leo Marsicanus, which opened chapter 42, at the same synod about the abbey of St Sophia of Benevento.<sup>28</sup> The same section ends with another demand, this time on the monastery of Sant'Angelo in Formis near Capua.<sup>29</sup> The claims on these two abbeys, which frame the reference to the prohibition of the investiture, are the real core of the chapter because they had direct consequences for Montecassino. One of the aims of writing the *Chronica* was indeed claiming and defending the Cassinese properties, up to the point of inserting false documents to support the monastery's claims. According to the chronicle, the investiture seems not to have any impact on the abbey; its prohibition did not have any consequences, and it is merely an "everyday" act that should be recorded but is not worthy of any special consideration. It did not mark the beginning of a struggle.

The conflict between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* is the core of various sections of the *Chronica* starting from chapter 49 book 3. There are problems with the main source, however, which need to be pointed out. First of all, the manuscript lacks a folio, which can be partially replaced with the 15<sup>th</sup>-century works of Ambrogio Traversari and Agostino Patrizi and the 17<sup>th</sup>-century edition of Matthaeus Lauretus Hispanus.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Cowdrey noticed how certain chapters may have been part of a single source to which the author resorted when composing this part of the chronicle – up to the account of the election of Urban II in chapter 2 of book 4. The scholar pointed out how the sections he identified share certain characteristics and similarities in the language used. Some of the main characters are portrayed in a constant way throughout the account: Desiderius, for example, is a "strong, active, diplomatic, and resourceful leader", while his enemy Wibert is the exact opposite. Moreover, they show a good knowledge of the city of Rome and its

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27 Arnulf of Milan, *Liber gestorum recentium*, ed. C. Zey, in: MGH, *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, LXVII, Hannover 1994, pp. 211-212; G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, pp. 143-146.

28 H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 420; on Montecassino's claims, see G.A. Loud, *A Lombard Abbey in Norman world. St Sophia, Benevento, 1050-1200*, in: G.A. Loud, *Montecassino and Benevento in the Middle Ages*, Aldershot 2000, pp. 273-306, espec. p. 279.

29 See the privilege included in the Register of Peter the Deacon, which is recorded also in the *Chronica*, Peter the Deacon, *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, I, pp. 160-162.

30 H. Hoffmann, *Studien zur Chronik von Montecassino*, "Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters" XXIX (1973), p. 142.

environs and shared similar views to that of Deusdedit's *Collectio Canonum* and *Libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquos scismaticos*.<sup>31</sup>

Noticing the confusion of some chapters, Loud has already concluded that there may have been a third author between Leo and Guido.<sup>32</sup> Cowdrey went even further and hypothesised the existence of the source. This source, a work concerning "the Emperor Henry IV's attacks on the Roman church and the manner of electing a Roman pontiff", may have been the work of a Cassinese monk who was writing at Montecassino, and had a good knowledge of Rome. He therefore suggested Alberic as its author, especially his lost *Contra Heinricum imperatorem De electione Romani pontificis*.<sup>33</sup>

Cowdrey's proposition is tempting, and some of the characteristics shared by these chapters are correct and should be taken into consideration when dealing with them. There are indeed several elements in common between these sections. If the recourse to this source is true, this means that its view would also be shared in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century up to the point of being presented as the official position of Montecassino on the Investiture contest. However, it is difficult to distinguish between what originally belonged to this source and what was added by later authors of the *Chronica*. Some elements can be more appropriately ascribed to the period of activity of Guido and Peter than to prior periods. Therefore, it is necessary to proceed very carefully and evaluate it on a case-by-case basis.

Anno autem dominicae incarnationis millesimo septuagesimo nono [sic!] Matilda comitissa Liguria et Tusciae letali zelo Gothfridum virum suum persequens sedentem in secessu per servum suum toxicata sagicta per secreta naturae transfixit et interemit. Id cum ad aures Heinrici quarti imperatoris pervenisset, nimium de acerbissima viri nece dolens, cuncta illi, quae intra Cisalpina loca possederat, auferens metuentem induxit, ut, quicquid sibi ex suo patrimonio intra Liguriam et Tusciam inerat, per manus Gregorii papae Romanae ecclesiae offerret. Haec ergo imprimis causa seminandi inter pontificem et imperatorem odii initium fuit. Quapropter pontifex oportunitatem nactus eundem imperatorem, quod sibi iura usurparet ecclesiae, communione privavit. Caesar autem cum optimatibus imperii consilio habito transmissis Alpibus, ut cum pontifice pacisceretur, intravit Ytaliā. Triduo autem ante pontificis curiam, qui tunc in unam Matildae [sic!] munitissimam arcem se contulerat, idem augustus discalciatus persistens pacem exposcebat. Hoc per se, hoc per imperii principes, hoc per apostolici familiares

31 H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 239-244.

32 G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino...*, pp. 324-325.

33 H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 240; 243-244, the scholar noticed how numerous works which dealt with the struggle between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* are lost today, see *ibidem*, pp. 72-73.

postulabat. Pacis autem iste tenor erat, ut, si quid utrinque fuisset admissum, solveretur demumque caesar Romano pontifici fidelitatem iuraret. Cumque negotium effectui mandatum esset, pontifex Matildae consiliis versutiisque deceptus quendam ex suis ultra montes dirigens ex Rodulfo duci coronam imperii mittens adversus augustum rebellare suasit. Quod ubi caesari in Ytalia renuntiatum est, evestigio Gallias transiens anno dominicae incarnationis millesimo octogesimo primo contra ducem ipsum iniit bellum. In quo primo conflictu superatus, dein victor evadens ducem ipsum cum exercitu Romam advenit, sed obsistentibus cum pontifice ipso Romanis sine effectu reversus est.<sup>34</sup>

The first episode mentioned in chapter 49 of the *Chronica* is the death of Godfrey the Hunchback, who was killed on 26 February 1076. The duke's death deprived Henry of one of his best allies who less than a month before had distinguished himself in Worms, when the bishops of the *regnum* condemned Gregory VII.<sup>35</sup> Some chronicles hostile to Gregory – such as Landulf Senior's *Historia Mediolanensis*, who finished his work between 1075 and 1085 – accused Matilda of the murder of her husband.<sup>36</sup> The Cassinese monks follows this denigrating tradition, which would not be totally implausible. The *Chronica* thus depicts Matilda in a very bad light, charging her of being a murderer. However, the source does not stop here, and the alleged homicide triggered a domino effect. Henry IV, identified as emperor even if he was not at that time, a title which will always be attributed to him in the *Chronica*, decided to occupy the lands of Matilda in Northern Italy – perhaps a reference to Henry's decision to appoint his own two-year-old son Conrad as duke of Lower Lotharingia, since Godfrey died childless.<sup>37</sup>

The countess therefore decided to give her properties in Tuscany and Liguria (i.e. Lombardy) to the Roman church. The *Chronica* explicitly identifies this as the trigger for the conflict between the pontiff and the emperor: the infamous and tricky donation of the Matildine lands ("omnia bona [...] que ex hac parte montis habebam, quam illa, que in ultramontanis partibus ad me pertinere videbantur") to St Peter.<sup>38</sup> The concession has raised some doubts, because it is known only from a later document issued by the same Matilda

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<sup>34</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, pp. 427-429. This is Traversari's version of the lost folio, the longest one. I shall point out when Lauretus and Patrizi's accounts differ from it.

<sup>35</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII...*, p. 142; G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>36</sup> Landulf Senior, *Historia Mediolanensis*, in: MGH, *Scriptores*, eds. L. Bethmann, W. Wattenbach, VIII, Hannoverae 1848, pp. 97-98, who mentioned an agreement between Matilda and Ildebrand and her help in obtaining the papacy. On Landulf, see P. Chiesa, *Landolfo Seniore*, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, LXIII (2004), pp. ....

<sup>37</sup> I.S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056-1106*, Cambridge 1999, p. 148.

<sup>38</sup> *Die Urkunden und Briefe der Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien*, eds. E. Goetz, W. Goetz, in: MGH, *Diplomata MT*, Hannover 1998, pp. 213-217.

in 1102, for which we have only a late 12<sup>th</sup>-century transcription in the *Liber censuum* and some lapidary fragments from the church of Santa Maria in Turri.<sup>39</sup> Due to these problems, Golinelli has argued that the donation may have been a forgery produced in 1130s.<sup>40</sup> More recently, Cantarella has pointed out the plausibility of a donation in the early 1080s (perhaps 1081) as an emergency measure and has argued that a letter written by Gregory VII in this period might indirectly confirm the alleged concession.<sup>41</sup> Why, then, does the Cassinese chronicle blame the donation as the reason for the conflict? The answer to this question might be found in the time the source was written. The Apostolic See and the Empire continued to claim possession of the Matildine lands for an extended period, even continuing to do so at the time of Frederick II in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> As shown by Robinson, this matter became a priority again during the 1120s and 1130s, especially when used as bargaining chip in the recognition of Innocent II as legitimate pope by Lothar III and the subsequent imperial coronation of the German king.<sup>43</sup> A privilege issued by this pope on 8 June 1133 to Lothar invested him “per anulum” with the “allodium bone memorie comitis Matilde”.<sup>44</sup> It was a compromise, and everybody was satisfied by the agreement.<sup>45</sup> The question however, may have also already been raised during the papacy of Honorius II, since the (anti)king Conrad of Staufen may have attempted to resort to the *Terra Mathildis* as his base.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, having examined different charters, Groß has argued that between 1128 and 1134, these lands were administered by a certain Adalbert who may have enjoyed an initial approval from Honorius.<sup>47</sup> All these references are evidence for renewed claims and negotiations concerning the Matildine lands in the first half of the

39 G.M. Cantarella, *Manuale della fine del mondo...*, pp. 183-185.

40 P. Golinelli, *Le origini del mito di Matilde e la fortuna di Donizone*, in: *Matilde di Canossa nelle culture europee del secondo millennio. Dalla storia al mito. Atti del convegno* (Reggio Emilia, Canossa, Quattro Castella, 25-27 settembre 1997), ed. P. Golinelli, Bologna 1999, pp. 29-51; idem, *Matilde di Canossa*, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani* LXXVIII (2008), p. ....

41 G.M. Cantarella, *Il Sole e la luna. La rivoluzione di Gregorio VII papa 1073-1085*, Bari 2005, pp. 239-241.

42 For an overview of the claims for the Matildine lands, see P. Partner, *The Lands of St Peter. The Papal State in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, London 1972; I.S. Robinson, *The Papacy 1073-1198. Continuity and Innovation*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 246-248.

43 I.S. Robinson, *Innocent II and the Empire*, in: *Pope Innocent II (1130-43). The World vs the City*, eds. J. Doran, D.J. Smith, London - New York 2016, pp. 62-64.

44 *Innocentii II privilegium de terra Mathildis*, ed. L. Weiland, in: *MGH, Leges, Const.*, I, Hannover 1893, pp. 169-170. The document is known for its inclusion in the *Digesta pauperis scholaris Albini* of Cardinal Albinus of Albano and in the *Liber censuum*. It is worth remembering that this latter source also included Matilda's 1102 donation.

45 G.M. Cantarella, *Manuale della fine del mondo...*, p. 291.

46 I.S. Robinson, *Innocent II and the Empire*, p. 63.

47 Th. Groß, *Lothar III. und die Mathildischen Güter*, Frankfurt/M. 1990, pp. 44-46, 285-287.



12<sup>th</sup> century, right when this part of the *Chronica* was written (either by Guido or by Peter the Deacon). The possession of these lands was seen as a locus of conflict between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* – especially in a time of fragile peace between them. For a 12<sup>th</sup>-century monk this may have been a plausible cause of struggle between the pope and the emperor even in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Was there also a certain reluctance in mentioning the investitures, since the Concordat of Worms was still very recent and it would be never renegotiated? The stress on Matilda's donation might be an example of how the context in which the chronicle was written had a significant impact in re-shaping the account of the Investiture contest.

The following excommunication of Henry IV seems to be linked with the hatred caused by the donation, as attested by the *quapropter*. According to Traversari's version, the decision was taken because the emperor usurped the *iura ecclesiae*, without specifying how or in what the *iura* consisted. Patrizi's version is more explicit and explained the excommunication on account of Henry's attempt to seize the Matildine lands ("nam dum Matildis oppida Ecclesiae iam iuris facta ille occupare nititur, a Pontifice a fidelium communion privatur"). Lauretus, on the contrary, justified the sentence "ob investituram Ecclesiarum".<sup>48</sup> However, this latter explanation is not very convincing considering how the topic of investitures has been considered so far by the Cassinese source. The lack of the original folio, however, does not permit scholars to answer this question. It is worth mentioning that neither justification appeared in the condemnation included in the *registrum* of the pope.<sup>49</sup>

There is no mention of any offensive by Henry and the bishops of the *Reichskirche*, such as the assembly at Worms on 24 January 1076 and the deposition of Ildebrand as pope. The *Chronica* moves on to the account of the meeting at Canossa and the absolution of Henry, again identified as Emperor or Caesar.<sup>50</sup> The positive – or at least neutral – depiction of the king of Germany continues: in his initiative to seek peace with the pope, he had the support of the nobles (*optimates*) of the *regnum*. If, on one hand, this may have been a reference to the large endorsement the king enjoyed among the

48 H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 428.

49 Gregory VII, *Das Register Gregors VII*, I, pp. 252-254.

50 On the meeting at Canossa the bibliography is endless. For an overview see O. Capitani, *Canossa: una lezione da meditare*, "Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia" XXXII (1978), pp. 359-381; M.S. De Matteis, *La riconciliazione di Canossa: tra "Dictatus Papae" e "Auctoritates Apostolicae Sedis"*, "Studi medievali" XIX (1978), pp. 681-770; H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII...*, pp. 129-167; I.S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany...*, pp. 143-170; U.-R. Blumenthal, *Gregor VII. Papst zwischen Canossa und Kirchenreform*, Darmstadt 2001, pp. 172-178, 290-298; P. Golinelli, *Canossa 1077: "pausa oggettiva" o "Erschütterung der Welt"?*, in: *Orientamenti e tematiche della storiografia di Ovidio Capitani. Atti del convegno di studio, Bologna 15-17 marzo 2013*, eds. M.C. De Matteis, B. Pio, Spoleto 2013, pp. 95-114; G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, pp. 173-197.



ecclesiastics of the Empire (which Gregory did not foresee), there is, on the other hand, no mention of the opposition Henry was facing, and the entirety of the *regnum* is presented as backing his king.<sup>51</sup> Even some of the *apostolici familiares* were asking the pope to grant Henry the peace, which, together with the mention of the *imperii principes*, may have been a reference to the negotiations which took place long before the actual penitence ritual in Canossa.<sup>52</sup> The Cassinese source describes the clauses of the peace as quite simple, wiping the slate clean of the relations between pope and emperor. The agreement ends with Henry swearing an oath of fidelity to the pope. However, even in the pope's *registrum*, there is no mention of such a vow, which the king would have certainly refused to take. According to this source, Henry "de murmuracione et dissensione [...] aut iustitiam secundum iudicium eius [Gregory VII] aut concordiam secundum consilium eius faciam, nisi certum impedimentum mihi vel sibi obstiterit".<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the king committed to guaranteeing Gregory's security if he wanted to cross the Alps – in order to resolve the issue concerning the kingdom of Germany in a synod. As pointed out by Cantarella, the document was the result of negotiations between the two parties, and it was imbued with *Realpolitik*, as attested by the provisions concerning the ability of the king to exercise his power.<sup>54</sup>

Mentioning an oath of fidelity may have been a precise narrative strategy of the chronicler in order to stress what followed in the narrative. Gregory, deceived by Matilda, sent an envoy to duke Rudolf of Swabia, together with the imperial crown, to persuade him to rebel against Henry. After defeating his rival, Henry moved to Italy and inconclusively besieged Gregory.

In a few lines, the *Chronica* summarises and re-frames events occurred between 1077 and 1081. Firstly, it is worth noticing that the election of Rudolf as (anti)king, which occurred at Forchheim in 1077 at the hands of faction of the aristocracy that had rebelled against Henry, is presented as provoked by the pope, who actually only recognised him as king in 1080, after the renewed conflict with Henry. The description seems to follow the *topoi* of the imperial propaganda during the Investiture contest. There is a certain similarity with the account of Sigebert of Gembloux, especially in the mention of the crown which the pontiff would have sent to Rudolf – the duke was crowned with a crown created at the abbey of Ebersheimmünster by Sigfrid, archbishop of Mainz.<sup>55</sup> The *Chronica* once again shows its hostility towards Matilda.

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51 G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, p. 152.

52 Ibidem, pp. 178-179.

53 Gregory VII, *Das Register Gregors VII*, I, pp. 314-315.

54 G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, pp. 173-181.

55 *Sigeberti Gemblacensis Chronica*, ed. L. Bethmann, in: *MGH, Scriptores*, VI, Hannoverae 1844, pp. 363-364; G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, p. 183.

After having accused her of triggering the conflict between the pope and the emperor, she is now accused of having deceived the former, who thus started again a fight against Henry. While the pontiff stands out as a simple puppet, Matilda is the real *dea ex machina*, the one that led the pope to break the peace.<sup>56</sup> How can we account for this depiction of the Countess? There is no definite answer to this question. Was it a delayed revenge of the Cassinese official history for her initial opposition to Desiderius as successor of Gregory, preferring her own candidate Anselm of Lucca? On the contrary, the emperor is once again presented in a positive light, only reacting to betrayals. Is this part based on an older account which supported Henry? Or was it just a consequence of the climate of renewed peace between the *regnum* and *sacerdotium* of the 1120s and 1130s?

Starting from chapter 50, there is a shift in the tone of the *Chronica* concerning some of the views mentioned above and the way certain characters were depicted. The account now presents a better view of the papacy, although the claim to autonomy for Montecassino becomes more explicit. This positive attitude also involves the figure of Matilda, who is no longer depicted as the puppet master pushing for war against Henry IV. On the contrary, the emperor is presented in a bad light, although always depicted with a certain respect, without full hostility; he, after having been corrupted, followed the orders of Wibert/Clement III. The (anti)pope steals the spotlight and is addressed with all kinds of *topoi*. He is seen as the real enemy bringing war to the legitimate papacy.

Wibert's first mention is at the beginning of chapter 50: "Heinricus interea sequenti anno exercitum congregans Romam advenit et porticum sancti Petri per vim cepit magnaue ex parte destruxit. Archiepiscopumque Ravennatem apostolicae sedis invasorem absque consilio et voluntate Romanae ecclesiae totius instituit".<sup>57</sup>

According to Cowdrey, these first lines in all three versions of Traversari, Lauretus, and Patrizi belonged to the year 1083.<sup>58</sup> However, they may have been the union of different events, since Wibert was elected pope in 1080 and

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<sup>56</sup> Lauretus's version is different, see H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 429. In his account, the pope was warned by Matilda of Henry's attempt to capture him. There is also the mention of the second excommunication of the king. However, his account does not agree with the general depiction of the characters.

<sup>57</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 430. On Wibert see J. Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna. Der Gegenpapst Clemens III. (1084-1100)*, Stuttgart 1982; I. Heidrich, *Ravenna unter Erzbischof Wibert (1073-1100). Untersuchungen zur Stellung des Erzbischofs und Gegenpapstes Clemens III. in seiner Metropole*, Sigmaringen 1984; *Framing Clement III, (Anti)Pope, 1080-1100*, U. Longo, L. Yawn, "Reti Medievali-Rivista" XIII (2012), 1, pp. 114-208; G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, p. 230.

<sup>58</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, p. 239.

only enthroned in 1084. It is interesting to note that the chronicler considered Wibert an *invador* because he was not approved by the entirety of the Roman church. He could not (or did not) hide the fact that Clement III enjoyed the support of some of the Roman clerics.

Following Cowdrey's hypothesis, the chapter continues with the account of events which took place in 1082. It describes the reactions to Henry's descent among the Lombards of the Southern Italy.<sup>59</sup> According to the *Chronica*, "fere istarum partium homines" decided to join the emperor against the Normans. The narration focuses now on the Normans: "Hoc illi explorato perterriti consilium invicem ineunt, ut cum imperatore fedus quoquo pacto componant, ne, si Roma ille potiretur, adiunctis illi Romanis et omnibus per circuitum gentibus ipsi sedibus suis pellerentur".<sup>60</sup> There is no confirmation of this but this kind of negotiations is not unlikely, since Henry's military campaigns in Italy were dangerous for the Normans as well. The main problem here is that the *Chronica* describes a united Norman front, while there were actually different leaders following their own agendas. Was the Cassinese work referring to Jordan of Capua, who sided with the emperor in 1082 and who is among the main characters of the following episode, the meeting of Albano?<sup>61</sup>

The rest of the chapter seems to confirm the hypothesis of Jordan of Capua.<sup>62</sup>

Quod postquam tractatum inter eos et positum est et nuntii eorum ad imperatorem ob hoc ierant et redierant, demum vocaverunt patrem Desiderium, et quoniam neminem alium in his partibus invenire poterant, in quo confidere potuissent, et de eo satis fideliter presumebant, omnia ei, que consiliati fuerant, crediderunt secumque eum ad imperatorem ire ortati sunt. Et licet propter securitatem suam finem cum imperatore componerent, eo tamen animo veniebant, ut causa fidelitatis Romane ecclesie de pace inter pontificem et imperatorem satagerent. Hoc ubi Gregorio pape nuntiatum est, supradictum imperatorem cum omnibus suis sequacibus a liminibus ecclesie separavit. Hoc ubi Normanni persenserunt, omnes, qui predictum pontificem antea sinceriter ac fideliter diligebant, extunc ab eo corpore et animo recesserunt.<sup>63</sup>

Messengers were sent to the emperor, a reference to negotiations between factions. Only later did the Normans involve Desiderius, asking him to go

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<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, pp. 154-155.

<sup>60</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 430.

<sup>61</sup> On relations between the princes of Capua and the papacy during Gregory's papacy, see G.A. Loud, *Church and Society...*, pp. 55-65.

<sup>62</sup> From this point onwards, the account of the chronicle starts again and we are not forced to rely on later versions.

<sup>63</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 431.

with them to Henry since they wanted to put an end to the conflict between pope and emperor, a justification which may have been in line with the abbot's policy, as shown by the following meeting of Albano. It is worth noting that the *Chronica* only mentions the second excommunication of Henry and his supporters here as a consequence of the Normans's attempt to secure peace with the king. The sentence passed is also the justification for Jordan's change of front. There is no direct mention of the prince of Capua so far just the use of a general label, "the Normans", who are almost supported in their choice by the chronicler.

The rest of the chapters consists of an account of the meeting of Albano between Desiderius and Henry IV.<sup>64</sup> This is a well-known episode which has been studied by many scholars.<sup>65</sup> The main problem with these analyses is that in general, the meeting has been seen as evidence for evaluating the degree of support of Desiderius and Montecassino of the "Gregorian cause", only considering the level of truthfulness of the episode and its consequences for the abbot's election as Victor III, and not the *ex post facto* time in which the account was actually written, the 1120s/1130s.<sup>66</sup> Although the intent to present the Cassinese abbot in the best possible way is undeniable, his behaviour cannot be described merely as more or less "Gregorian", it is more in line with his attitude as pope, who pursued a policy of moderation and mediation towards the *regnum* – without denying any of the assertions of Gregory's pontificate.<sup>67</sup>

There are some elements which make the account plausible to a reader. The first part of the narrative describes how both the Normans – i.e. Jordan of Capua – and Henry pressured Desiderius into meeting with the latter. If the abbot's continuous refusals were a *topos*, the pressures had a seed of truth. While Loud has pointed out the importance to Montecassino of preserving good relations with Jordan – both for its own prosperity but also because of his military strength – Cowdrey highlighted the potential threat to the abbey from Henry's presence near Rome.<sup>68</sup> Albano, where the meeting took place, is almost 120 km from Montecassino, a distance which can be quite easily

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<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, pp. 431-433.

<sup>65</sup> See for example T. Leccisotti, *L'incontro di Desiderio di Montecassino col re Enrico IV ad Albano*, "Studi gregoriani. Per la storia della Libertas Ecclesiae" I (1946), pp. 363-375; H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 154-164; G. Picasso, *Montecassino e il papato nell'età di Desiderio*, in: *L'età dell'abate Desiderio...*, pp. 59-68; G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino...*, pp. 316-326. For an overview of the different interpretations given to the episode of Albano, see D. De Rosa, *Il pontificato di Vittore III...*, pp. 26-47.

<sup>66</sup> E. Veneziani, *Problemi dell'elezione di Vittore...*, p. 151, note 31.

<sup>67</sup> E. Veneziani, *Alla ricerca dell'ecclesiologia perduta di Vittore III...*, pp. 9-37.

<sup>68</sup> G.A. Loud, *Church and Society...*, pp. 80-84; H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 155-156.

covered, especially by horse, and Henry had already shown his ability to travel fast if necessary, as in the case of the meeting at Canossa.

Some scholars have considered the meeting as part of negotiations which may have taken place in 1082 to solve the ongoing conflict. As Loud has pointed out, there are no sources mentioning discussions in this year, as they are all dated to 1083.<sup>69</sup> Henry's manifesto to the Romans is dated to 1082, although Loud considers this only as a piece of propaganda which could not be the basis for negotiations. On the contrary, Cantarella has recently shown how this second manifesto was more than mere propaganda: it was addressed to the growing opposition among the Romans, even among the same cardinals who had supported the pope until then, as attested by the meeting of prelates who had to decide whether the use of ecclesiastic properties in the war against Wibert was canonical.<sup>70</sup> Considering these premises, Robinson's suggestion that Henry was trying to negotiate with Gregory using Desiderius as an intermediary becomes more credible.<sup>71</sup>

Even negotiations without Gregory's consent cannot be excluded. Montecassino, as Cluny, always pursued its own independent policy, even when they clashed with that of the Apostolic See. This should not be particularly surprising, as attested by Desiderius's relations with the Normans, which most of the time were contrary to the interests of the papacy. Only the historiographical model of a unique and linear "Gregorian reform" would justify this view, entailing the idea that monastic institutions such as Cluny and Montecassino should have supported and worked for the "Gregorian papacy".<sup>72</sup> Following this problematic model, Loud has interpreted the entire passage on Albano as a propagandistic piece, carefully tailored to avoid offending Gregorian sympathies, and Desiderius would have been depicted as a defender of the Gregorian principles.<sup>73</sup> However, this vision has proven incorrect, because it tends to oversimplify complex phenomena.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>69</sup> G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino...*, pp. 317-318.

<sup>70</sup> G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, pp. 259-268.

<sup>71</sup> I.S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany...*, p. 220.

<sup>72</sup> On this view see the classic A. Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne*, I-III, Louvain-Paris 1924-1937; E. Amann, A. Dumans, *L'église au pouvoir des laïques (888-1057)*, in: *Histoire de l'église depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours*, eds. A. Fliche, V. Martin, Paris 1940, vii.

<sup>73</sup> G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino...*, pp. 316-317.

<sup>74</sup> See for example O. Capitani, *Esiste un'età gregoriana? Considerazioni sulle tendenze di una storiografia medievistica*, "Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa" I (1965), pp. 454-481; C. Violante, *La riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI come progressiva sintesi di contrastanti idee e strutture*, in: *Sant'Anselmo vescovo di Lucca (1073-1086) nel quadro delle trasformazioni sociali e della riforma ecclesiastica*, ed. C. Violante, Roma 1992, pp. 1-15; N. D'Acunto, *La Riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI: rinnovamento o restaurazione?*, in: *Riforma o Restaurazione? La cristianità nel passaggio dal primo al secondo millennio: persistenze e novità. Atti del XXVI Convegno del Centro*

As mentioned above, even among the so-called “Gregorians”, there were differences in their attitude towards Roman primacy and the conflict with the *regnum*. The same Gregory VII did not leave a complete ecclesiology behind, but his claims were most of the time dictated by the context and the need to raise the stakes. Desiderius, an exponent of a moderate faction as attested by his papal election, was thus privileging and safeguarding the interests of his own institution and therefore could have worked towards finding a solution to the ongoing conflict – or at least this is the image that emerges from the *Chronica*. Indeed, the search for a compromise is a key element in the account, rather than a Cassinese need to present Desiderius as a “true Gregorian”. The abbot replied to Henry’s letters saying that he could not meet him “propter Normannos [...], sed si forte cum Romano pontifice vellet pacem facere, inveniret aliquam occasionem illum adire; et ad ultimum, ut illum ad pacem animaret, scripsit neque regnum neque sacerdotium in tanto discidio incolume posse consistere”.<sup>75</sup> Desiderius’s promise to help Henry “de corona imperiali acquirenda [...] salvo tamen ordine suo” and his answer to the request “ut virgam abbacie ab ipso [Henry] reciperet” that “quia, cum Romani imperii coronam eum habere vidisset, tunc si sibi videretur, abbatiam ab ipso reciperet, si vero nollet, dimitteret” seem to go in the same direction.<sup>76</sup> It is worth mentioning one last part of the account:

Idem abbas fratres convocans dixit ad eos: “Angustie michi sunt undique; si enim ad imperatorem non iero, imminet periculum et eversio monasterii; si autem iero et voluntatem eius implevero, incurram periculum anime; si vero iero et voluntatem eius non facero, imminet periculum corporis mei, simulque timeo, ne iratus imperator ita Normannis monasterium istud, quod sub tutela et defensione eius est, sicut et totum principatum concedat; pergam tamen ad eum tradens me morti et periculo, neque enim faciam animam meam pretiosorem quam patrem sanctissimum Benedictum; nam et pro vestra communi salute animarum et corporum locique istius incolumitate, si aliter fieri non potest, opto a Christo anathema esse. Si enim milies occidar, nullus me separabit a dilectione loci istius; nam non dico imperatori, qui christianus est, sed etiam alicui pagano sive tyranno occurrere non recuso, dummodo res monasterii valeam ab eius barbarie liberare. Nam

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*Studi Avellaniti, Fonte Avellana 29-30 agosto 2004*, ed. N. D’Acunto, Verona 2006, pp. 13-28; G.M. Cantarella, *Il papato e la riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI*, ibidem, pp. 29-52; U. Longo, *La Riforma della Chiesa tra Pier Damiani e Bernardo di Chiaravalle. Un concetto da declinare al plurale*, in: M. Bottazzi, P. Buffo, C. Ciccopiedi, L. Furbetta, Th. Granier, *La società monastica nei secoli VI-XII. Sentieri di ricerca. Atelier jeunes chercheurs sur le monachisme médiéval: Roma, 12-13 giugno 2014*, Trieste 2016, pp. 113-132.

<sup>75</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 431.

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, p. 432.



et Leo papa ut civitatem Romanam a devastatione et incendio liberaret, Genserico regi Arrianno occurrit, et Savinus Canosinus Totilam eque Arrianum ad convivium invitavit et de manu eius calicem accepit et bibit, et pater Benedictus Zallam similiter perfidie Arriane hominem etiam in oratione suscepit, ut eum afflictione rustici mitigaret». Hec cum dixisset patri Benedicto se commendans iter arripuit.<sup>77</sup>

This passage reveals once more the difficulty in interpreting the description of the meeting as an alleged Gregorian propagandistic piece. While the celebrative intent is undeniable, Desiderius's alleged speech goes against Gregory's policy and justifies the abbot's decision to meet Henry by putting the interests of Montecassino first even at the cost of papal excommunication. What actually emerges from this excerpt is the claim to a Cassinese independent policy.

This last observation reveals a wider problem: the context in which the whole episode was written. The chapter is an *ex-post facto* account, written during the 1120s by Guido, and in which Peter the Deacon may have played a considerable part in revising. We should remember that it is almost impossible to identify the parts written by Guido in Peter's final version.<sup>78</sup> The context is particularly significant to interpreting the conclusion of this chapter: the discussion between Desiderius and Odo, cardinal-bishop of Ostia (and future Urban II), concerning the *Decretum*. Cowdrey pointed out that the debate heavily relied on Deusdedit's *Libellus* and *Collectio canonum*.<sup>79</sup> This debate portrayed Odo in a bad light, as a supporter of Henry IV and of the imperial version of the *Decretum*, while Desiderius reflects Deusdedit's position.<sup>80</sup> As mentioned above, the papal electoral procedures were widely discussed at Montecassino, and Deusdedit may have been mentioned as an *auctoritas*.<sup>81</sup> The representation of Odo as an imperialist has been interpreted in different ways: Loud has proposed that it was a delayed revenge of the Cassinese source against the Cluniac for his opposition to the election of Desiderius during the council of Capua in 1087.<sup>82</sup> However, this hostility may have been a sign of the early 12<sup>th</sup>-century dispute with the Cluniacs, especially concerning the title of *abbas abbatum*.<sup>83</sup> In the *Chronica*, the claims to the title are always mentioned in polemic with Cluny and with the acknowledgement of the superiority of Montecassino. Leo is the first to record the arrival of

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77 Ibidem, pp. 431-432.

78 G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino...*, p. 325.

79 H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, p. 160.

80 E. Veneziani, *Problemi dell'elezione di Vittore...*, pp. 152-153.

81 Ibidem, p. 154.

82 G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino...*, pp. 318-319.

83 E. Veneziani, *Problemi dell'elezione di Vittore...*, pp. 153-155.

abbot Odilo to the Cassinese monastery and his desire to kiss the feet of the monks:

Postero die festivitatis beati Benedicti multis ab eodem abbate nostro precibus invitatus missarum sollennia celebrare nullomodo cogi potuit eo presente missas publicas agere. Dehinc cum iam paratis ad procedendum fratribus pastorem baculum idem noster abbas reverenter eis manui obtulisset, longe humiliter ille refugit dicens neququam dignum esse se in magnitudinis eius presentia huiusmodi virgam gestare, nimis profecto indecens et contra omne ius esse percensens vel se vel quempiam abbatum manu pastorem virgam preferre, ubicumque Benedicti vicarium cunctorum scilicet abbatis abbatum presente adesse contingeret.<sup>84</sup>

Peter the Deacon attributed the same title to abbot Rainaldus in his dedicatory epistle ("superni Regis clementia constituit currum et aurigam spiritualis Iherusalem, Benedicti vicarium atque abbatum abbatem").<sup>85</sup> Lastly, a significant episode is described again by Peter, this time involving the Roman church:

Quo etiam tempore dum Pontius Cluniacensis cenobii abbas ad synodum veniens se abbatem abbatum esse iactaret, interrogatus a Iohanne cancellario, si Casinenses accepissent regulam a Cluniacensibus an Cluniacenses a Casinensibus, Pontius respondit, quod non solum Cluniacenses, verum etiam omnes monachi in orbe Romano degentes regulam patris Benedicti a Casinensi cenobio acceperunt. Tum cancellarius: "ergo si ex Casinensi cenobio tamquam a vivo fonte monastice religionis norma manavit, iure ac merito Casinensi abbati hec prerogativa a Romanis pontificibus concessa est, ut ipse solus, qui Benedicti legislatoris est vicarius, abbas abbatum vocetur".<sup>86</sup>

All three references show how the claim to a preeminent role among all abbots was fundamental to a Cassinese ecclesiological discourse. The rivalry with Cluny is stressed by the fact that in the two episodes described in the *Chronica's* account, the Cluniacs were the one that challenged Montecassino but were forced to renounce it. Rome, through the voice of John of Gaeta (the future Gelasius II and a Cassinese monk), sealed the exclusive use of the title by the abbot of the Southern Italy monastery.

This may not have been the only area of conflict between the two monastic institutions. Cantarella has shown how Cluny, in the *Vita* of abbot Hugh of Semur written by Aegidius of Tusculum in the early 1120s, is represented

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<sup>84</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, pp. 266-268.

<sup>85</sup> Ibidem, p. 461.

<sup>86</sup> Ibidem, p. 523.

as an *aula imperialis*, provided with an imperial dimension which started during the time of Odilo and reached its peak with Hugh, who claimed for the monastery a salvific role.<sup>87</sup> Less than ten years later, Peter the Deacon may have claimed a similar dimension for Montecassino. Four times the abbey is called *Romani imperii camera*.<sup>88</sup> While in the Cluniac case, the *Vita* produced at Cluny – an internal source – was supporting this claim, for Montecassino, Peter the Deacon mentioned imperial privileges which substantiated the image, thus resorting to external documents – which may have also had some kind of legal value in line with the growing legal climate. In particular, he forged a privilege issued by Charlemagne granting this role to the abbey, which is included in the *Epitome chronicorum Casinensium*, a composite work usually attributed to Peter but which seems to include excerpts of other authorships. The charter is also mentioned in the *Chronica*.<sup>89</sup>

This way of representing the dispute between Montecassino and Cluny in the chronicle is exemplified by the depiction of Pontius's visit to the Cassinese abbey on his way to the Holy Land after his alleged resignation from the office of the Cluniac abbot:

Tunc etiam domnus Pontius Cluniacensis cenobii abbas ob maxime devotionis reverentiam, quam patri Benedicto habebat, cum duodecim sue ecclesie fratribus hoc Casinense cenobium petiit abbatisque nostri Gerardi vestigiis provolutus, officinas monasterii dum perlustrasset, dixit: "Mallem prius esse decanus Casinensisi quam abbas Cluniacensis". Demum vero fratrum vestigiis provolutus illorumque se orationibus commendans Ierusalimam petiit beato Benedicto spondens post suum regressum pastorem curam relinquere et Deo attentius in hoc sancto Casinensi cenobio deservire.<sup>90</sup>

Pontius explicitly recognises the superiority of the Cassinese monastic life over the Cluniac as the best way to serve God. It would be interesting to investigate why the author chose the contradictory figure of Pontius to express this view. Was it because of previous depictions of him in the *Chronica* as a strenuous defender of Cluniac superiority? Or was it because the text was written before

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<sup>87</sup> G.M. Cantarella, *Manuale della fine del mondo...*, pp. 130-131, 204, 210-213.

<sup>88</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, pp. 572; 580-582.

<sup>89</sup> The classic study attributing the *Epitome* to Peter is E. Caspar, *Petrus Diaconus und die Monte Cassineser Fälschungen. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des italienischen Geisteslebens im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1909, pp. 111-121. However, the paternity of the work (or parts of the work) has been contested. For the different positions and for a new hypothesis, see E. Manarini, *Sex, Denigration and Violence: A Representation of Political Competition between Two Aristocratic Families in 9<sup>th</sup> Century Italy*, forthcoming. See also Peter the Deacon, *Registrum Petri Diaconi*, IV, p. 1794, 1821.

<sup>90</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 541.

the sack of Cluny and the trial of Pontius in Rome, right after (or before) his return from the Holy Land, where he obtained a fame of sanctity – a fame which is mentioned also in Peter of Poitiers's *Panegyricum*, the first official Cluniac version of the events concerning Pontius's fall and which tells us of the wide support he enjoyed even at the time of his trial in Rome?<sup>91</sup>

If this was the climate in which the chronicle was written, the representation of Odo as an imperialist during the meeting at Albano may have been a further representation intended to actually damage the monastic institution to which he belonged.

There might also be a second addressee for some of the claims mentioned in the chapter: Rome. Loud perceived, in the episode of Albano and especially in one particular sentence, the answer of an Anacletan supporter to the Innocentians during the 1130 schism. However, this idea is grounded on the old historiographical model that considered Anacletus as the spiritual heir to Gregory VII.<sup>92</sup> If the connection is therefore not entirely convincing, the time frame – the 1130s with the addition of the 1120s – as the context which one should investigate to understand further how the episode (and others) was created and to whom it was addressed seems correct. This was a period in which the Apostolic See started exercising a growing pressure on the *libertas* of monasteries such as Montecassino. Once again, this was not a predetermined strategy, and most of the time Rome benefitted from on-going situations of crisis in the monastic institutions.<sup>93</sup> This is why several monasteries produced instruments that were helpful in supporting their autonomy, such as the *Registrum Petri Diaconi* and the *Chronica* itself. The latter not only asserted the Cassinese *libertas* through documents such as privileges which had a legal value, but it may also have created an ecclesiology to support it. Some episodes introduce the various pieces of the Cassinese ecclesiological puzzle, which even mirrored some aspects of the Roman ecclesiological discourse. A first claim was asserted by Calixtus II during the First Lateran council in 1123, when Montecassino was attacked by some bishops because of its exemption. The pope stated that “Casinensis ecclesia non ab hominibus neque per hominem, sed per Iesum Christum fundata est, cuius imperio pater Benedictus ad eundem locum deveniens illumque ab idolorum sordibus emundans sancte regule descriptione et miraculorum prodigiis et sui corporis sepultura toto

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91 F. Dolveck, *Pierre le Vénérable, Poèmes avec le Panégyrique de Pierre de Poitiers*, Paris 2014, pp. 39-43. See G.M. Cantarella, *Ponzio e Pietro di Poitiers. 1125-1133* (forthcoming, pp. 16-17); E. Veneziani, *La caduta di Ponzio, dramatis personae*, forthcoming.

92 G.A. Loud, *Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino...*, pp. 325-326.

93 E. Veneziani, *The Ecclesiology of the Papacy of Honorius II (1124-1130)*, with a Preliminary Calendar of Letters, supervisor prof. Frances Andrews, PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 2017.

orbi spectabilem reddidit et totius monastici ordinis caput effecit".<sup>94</sup> Although the second part of the pope's speech reminds everybody that the monastery enjoyed the protection of the Roman church – thus asserting the primacy of the Apostolic See – the first claim seems to echo the elements of Roman primacy, in particular the "Petrinity", since Rome always claimed to be the only church founded by God through St Peter.<sup>95</sup> Avoiding any possible undesired rivalry might be the reason why the speech is attributed to Gregory, cardinal-priest of the SS. Apostoli, in 1126, stressed that it is only the Roman church that was founded by God, while monasteries were founded only by men; he also highlighted the subordination of Montecassino to the Apostolic See.<sup>96</sup> Directly depending on this element was the pope's claim to be the vicar of Peter, provided with the same prerogatives as the Prince of the Apostles.<sup>97</sup> Again, a parallel statement seems to have been made in the *Chronica* when the abbot of Montecassino is called *vicarius Benedicti*, therefore again claiming the prerogatives of the saint. The title indeed entailed the claim to be the *abbas abbatum*, therefore a primacy over all monasteries, which may have had also practical consequences because, as emerged in the discourse of John of Gaeta, Benedict is depicted as a *legislator*. The implicit consequence may have been that interpretations of the Benedictine Rule or behaviour notwithstanding it were decided by the Cassinese monastery.

The reference to Montecassino as *camera imperialis* may have also been part of this ecclesiological vision mirroring Rome. The first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century was indeed the time when the Apostolic See was claiming an imperial dimension through the *imitatio imperii*.<sup>98</sup> The *Chronica* may have contended this imperial rank not only to Cluny but also to Rome: most of the time, the expression appears when the abbey is resisting Roman pressures.

An episode which might support the idea of the creation of an ecclesiology to counterweight the Roman primacy is narrated in chapter 69:

Eo itidem tempore dum quidam peregrini orationis gratia ad beatum Benedictum venirent, obuius illis quidam vir canonicus factus est. Quem, quis esset, interrogantes, Petrum apostolum se esse respondit. Et illi: "Quo tendis?" et sanctus aspotolus: "Vado ad fratrem Benedictum, ut cum illo passionis mee diem celebrem, nam Rome consistere non valeo, variis enim procellis ecclesia mea deprimitur". Quod dum fratribus viri illi postmodum reserassent, ad succedentium memoriam constituerunt

<sup>94</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 543.

<sup>95</sup> See the classic Matthew 16.18-19 and Luke 22.32.

<sup>96</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, pp. 550-551.

<sup>97</sup> See the classic M. Maccarrone, "Vicarius Christi". *Storia del titolo papale*, Roma 1952.

<sup>98</sup> I. Herklotz, *Gli eredi di Costantino: Il papato, il Laterano e la propaganda visiva nel XII secolo*, Roma 2000.

ita tanti apostoli festivitatem sicut et patris Benedicti cum maxima devotione sollemniter celebrare.<sup>99</sup>

Apparently, this is only a legend. Cowdrey, who thought this was an interpolation possibly from Peter the Deacon, saw this as evidence of Montecassino's growing commitment to Gregory VII's cause.<sup>100</sup> However, a closer analysis reveals how this episode may have had a different double meaning. On one hand, this may have been a representation of how chroniclers considered the struggle between Victor III and Clement III in 1087, in particular, the battle to celebrate the mass at St Peter on the feast of the Apostles, the account of which precedes that of the miracle of the saint. The two saints may have represented the bond between Rome and Montecassino: as we have seen, if Peter was considered the founder of the Roman church, so was Benedict of Montecassino and therefore of the western monasticism. Again, the monk is put on the same level as the apostle. Peter's transfer to his brother Benedict may have hinted at the claim that the monastery was the real repository of the original values, of the ancient costumes of the Church, and of the true papacy, because the first bishop of Rome went there and not to Ravenna, the seat of the Antichrist Wibert. The episode therefore might be a representation of the on-going struggle between pope and (anti)pope, where the true pontiff was Victor, to whom the prince of the Apostles was symbolically transferring. On the other hand, the equivalence between Peter and Benedict may have been a further sign of the creation of an ecclesiology opposing the growing pressure coming from Rome. The consequence of the arrival of the saint to the monastery was the celebration of the feast of Peter that Cowdrey described as "as solemnly as was Benedict".<sup>101</sup>

All these elements seem to be part of a strategy to claim the autonomy and the *libertas* of the monastery in a time when this was threatened. This attempt, which involved the writing of the *Chronica* itself and the creation of the *Registrum*, did not exhaust itself with literary work and involved other instruments as well, such as the remake of the bronze doors of the abbey's church during the abbacy of Oderisius II and the building of the new church during the abbacy of Desiderius, which imitated the style of the churches in Rome, especially of the Lateran.<sup>102</sup> The same account of the meeting at Albano from which we started may have been part of this attempt of claiming the

99 H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, pp. 451-452.

100 H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, p. 79, 239.

101 Ibidem., p. 79.

102 E. Veneziani, *Uno sguardo da lontano...*, pp. 403-405; on the new church at Montecassino see G.A. Loud, *The Latin Church...*, p. 129; H. Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*, I, pp. 40-71, 122-126; D. Kinney, *Rome in the twelfth century: Urbs fracta and renovatio*, "Gesta" XLV (2006) 2, pp. 201-203.



autonomy of the monastery from Rome. Desiderius's speech to his monks which explained his decision to meet with Henry might refer to the possibility of leading an autonomous politic. Moreover, the highlighted link with the Empire throughout the account of Albano may have been a further way to remind everybody (Rome?) that the monastery could count on protectors and allies other than the Apostolic See, as pointed out by Desiderius's return to Montecassino after the meeting with a "preceptum aurea bulla bullatum", which again Cowdrey identified as an interpolation by Peter the Deacon.<sup>103</sup> The next significant excerpt concerning the Investiture contest is the 1084 siege and capture of Rome by Henry IV:

Alio pretera anno Eynricus imperator Romam cum exercitu venit et supradictum papam Gregorium, qui in arce sancti Angeli se contra eum munierat, cum diversis bellorum machinis oppugnare modis omnibus cepit. Hoc ubi Robberto duci, qui ea tempestate Constantinopolitanum imperatorem expugnabat, relatum est, Boamundum filium suum in ipsa expeditione relinquens Italiam citissime rediit ac immensum valde exercitum congregans ob pape liberationem contra imperatorem ire disponit. Quod ubi Desiderio nuntiatum est, nuntium Rome ilico destinavit, qui et pape liberationem et imperatori adventum ducis nuntiaret. Tunc imperator urbe egrediens ob id scilicet, quia sine militum presidio erat, civitatem Castellanam ingressus est. Robbertus autem dux Rome cum exercitu ad ecclesiam sanctorum Quattuor Coronatorum intempeste noctis silentio dum advenisset, ex consilio Cencii Romanorum consulis ignem in urbem immisit. Romani igitur re inopinata perculsi hac in igne exstinguendo dum essent intenti, dux confestim cum exerxit ad arcem sancti Angeli properans pontificemque inde abstrahens, Romam sine mora egressus papam Gregorium ad hoc monasterium usque deduxit; quem apostolicum noster abbas usque ad ipsius exitum cum episcopis et cardinalibus, qui eum secuti fuerant, sustentativt.<sup>104</sup>

According to Cowdrey, this chapter belonged to the source from which the authors of the *Chronica* derived information for their account.<sup>105</sup> The fight is described with a certain distance until the intervention of the Normans and the direct involvement of Montecassino. There is no mention of either the intronization of Wibert as Clement III or the coronation of Henry as emperor. Was it because these events were two points of no return which an account not entirely hostile to Henry may have found difficult to explain and justify?

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<sup>103</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, p. 433; H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>104</sup> H. Hoffmann, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, pp. 434-435.

<sup>105</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, p. 239.

Moreover, the source has always considered the Salian king as emperor, and therefore the mention of an imperial coronation would have undermined its entire discourse. In the second half of the excerpt, the Normans become the main figures. Desiderius's decision to send a messenger to both the pope and the emperor to warn them of Robert Guiscard's approach to the city may have been part of the strategy of both factions to avoid battle, thus leaving the door open for negotiations.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, the Cassinese chronicle tried to exonerate the Normans from the devastations following the capture of the city. There is no mention of the sack by Robert's men and the idea of setting a fire as a diversion is attributed to Cencius Frangipane – who thus appear to have played a central role, similar to the one played in the description of Victor's election, although he also could have been blamed for the idea – and is justified in order to free Gregory VII. Even the *Chronica*, however, could not completely hide the consequences of the Normans's sack and the impossibility of the pope to remaining in Rome, as hinted by the way in which Gregory left the city, "sine mora".

Apparently, the struggle between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* during the golden age of Montecassino ends here, because from this point onwards, the main figure in the narrative is Victor III, and the interests of the abbey and that of the papacy overlapped. There is, however, one last chapter to consider: a re-interpretation of the fight between Gregory and Henry, in particular, during the 1080s.<sup>107</sup> As pointed out by Cowdrey, the chronology of the events depicted in chapter 70 is intentionally wrong. The struggle is ascribed to the papacy of Victor III and became a fight between himself and Clement III.<sup>108</sup> The beginning of the excerpt exemplified this tendency:

Guibertus interea eresiarca, qui post preestita domino suo beate memorie Gregorio septimo pape fidelitatis sacramenta et obedientiam novem annis exhibitam apostolicum thronum invaserat, cernens Victorem papam ab omnibus in maxima veneratione haberi, Hynricum imperatorem solvens ab observatione iuramenti, quod apud Canusiam Tuscie oppidum olim pape Gregorio fecerat, Romam attraxit et cum eo expugnare catholicam ecclesiam cepit.

As in other sections, the *Chronica* blames Wibert for triggering the clash, assigning a minor role to Henry – who again is called emperor. The (anti) pope is identified with classic negative figures, such as Simon Magus, while Victor is identified with Peter – a *topos* in the Cassinese literature, as shown

<sup>106</sup> On the attempt to avoid battle between Henry and Robert, see G.M. Cantarella, *Gregorio VII*, p. 289.

<sup>107</sup> On this chapter of the *Chronica* see E. Veneziani, *Alla ricerca dell'ecclesiologia perduta di Vittore III...*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>108</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, p. 257.

by Cowdrey, and quite frequent in several works of that time.<sup>109</sup> The attack against Clement continues with the allusion to simony, even when mentioning his fortress Argenta with wordplay on *argentum*, silver.<sup>110</sup> Cowdrey pointed out how the whole chapter is based on chapters 11 and 12 of Deusdedit's *Libellus*.<sup>111</sup> There are, however, some significant changes, such as the accentuation of the role of Wibert, a minor role attributed to Henry, and the depiction of Victor as the main figure of the entirety of the account. While Cowdrey identified a tendency to praise the role of the Cassinese pope in the events, some of the variations in the text might be in line with his papal policy of moderation and mediation.<sup>112</sup>

The excerpt examined above concludes my analysis of how the beginning of the Investiture contest was seen *ex post facto* at Montecassino during its Golden Age. From this point onwards, with the election of Desiderius as Pope Victor III, there was an enormous change, and the interests of the abbey briefly coincided with those of the papacy (Victor kept his office as abbot during his short pontificate). The account of the *Chronica* is inevitably affected by this change and tends to emphasise the role of "its" pontiff.

This essay has pointed out how the Investiture contest was re-thought and adapted to the needs of the abbey and its strategy. Various episodes were re-interpreted in order to emphasise the role played by the monastery. The *ex post facto* context in which the chronicle was produced therefore played a fundamental part as topics and events which were deemed significant for the Casinese monastic institution, such as the procedures for the election of the pontiff, the clash with Cluny, an almost positive attitude towards Henry, and a certain hostility towards Matilda of Tuscany, which shaped the way in which entire episodes are re-interpreted. On different occasions, the chroniclers based their work on previous sources which, however, are not

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<sup>109</sup> See, for example, the poem *Liber in honore beati Petri apostoli* written by Amatus of Montecassino between 1077-1079 and dedicated to Gregory VII, A. Lentini, *Il poema di Amato su S. Pietro apostolo*, "Miscellanea Cassinese", XXX-XXXI (1958-1959); cf. H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 83-87. Similar language can also be found in Gregory VII's *Registrum*, Gregory VII, *Das Register Gregors VII*, II, pp. 521-523.

<sup>110</sup> E. Veneziani, *Alla ricerca dell'ecclesiologia perduta di Vittore III...*, p. 26. I would like to point out a tricky expression in Hoffmann's edition to which no scholar has yet paid attention. In describing the actions of Henry, the Cassinese author said that *huius rei causa et ecclesie pene totius Romani imperii desolate et cristiana religio propemodum dissipata et viginti milia hominum et eo amplius in diversis regionibus beato papa Guiberto* [the emphasis is mine] *cooperante cesa sunt*. Did the *Chronica* recognise Wibert as a legitimate pope? The editor's note offers an alternative version, *katopapa*, based on the 17<sup>th</sup>-century edition by Angelus De Nuce (the same adopted by Wattenbach), and identified this expression with the Greek words *kakos papa*. The problem seems to have no solution and both hypotheses of interpretation have their problems.

<sup>111</sup> H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius...*, pp. 257-260.

<sup>112</sup> E. Veneziani, *Alla ricerca dell'ecclesiologia perduta di Vittore III...*, pp. 25-26.

always recognisable. When they are, they have been modified to represent the interests of the abbey in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, the necessity of protecting the *libertas* of Montecassino from the attacks coming from Rome heavily influenced the entire composition of the *Chronica*, to the point of creating a Cassinese ecclesiology which sometimes echoed and counterweighted the Roman claims of primacy.

The account of the Investiture contest at Montecassino therefore tells us not only about the events of the 1080s, but also about the context in which it was written. If, as mentioned above, Cluny removed this dispute from its official history, the Cassinese monastery bended it to its interests, depicting the monastic institution as a centre fully immersed into the world.

#### ABSTRACT

This essay illustrates how the Investiture contest was depicted in the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, the official history of Montecassino. It argues that the *ex post facto* context in which this source was produced (the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century) had a considerable influence on the way the struggle between *regnum* and *sacerdotium* was presented and how it was re-thought, even changing and adapting the account to accentuate the role of Montecassino in the events. This exaggeration of the abbey's involvement may be part of a strategy to protect the autonomy of the monastery from papal interference. The article considers only the period from the election of Gregory VII (1073) to his death in 1085. The choice of this time frame is dictated by its coincidence with the 'Golden Age of Montecassino' – the time of maximum splendour and prosperity of the cloister, but a period that is also marked by the highest involvement of the monastery with the 11<sup>th</sup>-century reform, culminating in the election of abbot Desiderius as pope Victor III.



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## I DUE SERGI?

### NOTA SU PAPA SERGIO IV



Sergio IV: *Os porci*. Non è un nome granché lusinghiero per un papa... Cioè, non sarebbe lusinghiero per nessuno, ma per un papa sembra proprio una condanna senza appello. Era così grasso? Così inguardabile? Si esprimeva in modo eccessivamente triviale? O con la bocca faceva cose inconfessabili sebbene

a Roma note a tutti?<sup>1</sup>

Sergio IV, 1009-1012. Il suo regno coincide con gli ultimi anni del principato di Giovanni, figlio di quel Crescenzo *senator* che aveva ispirato e guidato la ribellione del 997-998 tanto duramente repressa da Ottone III e che per questo era stato punito con la pena capitale e la spoliazione di tutti i beni secondo il principio del *crimen maiestatis*. Giovanni resse l'Urbe con i titoli di *patricius urbis* o *patricius senatus* o *patricius Romanorum* fino alla sua morte (1012), a lui dovettero la loro elezione i papi che si succedettero dopo Silvestro II, Giovanni XVII detto *Sicco* (16 maggio - 6 novembre 1003), Giovanni XVIII detto *il Cappone*, un nomignolo non solo curioso ma assai intrigante (1003-1009), e appunto Sergio IV.<sup>2</sup>

Chissà se un secolo più tardi Eutimio Zigabeno, Giovanni di Gerusalemme, Pietro III di Antiochia e il Niceta di Santa Sofia erano a conoscenza della graziosa onomastica di quei papi... Probabilmente no, o è presumibile che non avrebbero lasciato perdere un'occasione tanto ghiotta per esercitarsi in

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. G.M. Cantarella, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości? Papieżstwo początków XI stulecia – A la recherche d'une identité? La papauté du premier XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, trad. J. Kujawinski, Wykłady XI, Poznań 2011, pp. 23-28.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. G.M. Cantarella, *Imprevisti e altre catastrofi. Perché la storia è andata come è andata*, Torino 2017, pp. 17-23; C. Wickham, *Roma medievale. Crisi e stabilità di una città, 900-1150*, Roma 2013, p. 51.



qualche forma di satira, seppur severa per il tipo dei loro scritti e per riguardo alla loro dignità «grondante di tradizione».

E probabilmente no, perché non avevano accesso, né l'avevano cercato, alle fonti ufficiali romane come il *Liber Pontificalis*: il cosiddetto *scisma dei due Sergi* che evocarono (sia pure in forma talmente vaga da mettere in difficoltà la storiografia) riguardava il problema dell'addizione del *Filioque* che suscitava la disapprovazione teologica ed ecclesiologica della Chiesa d'Oriente, ciò che era più che sufficiente; dunque che necessità avrebbero avuto di informarsi sui papi implicati a qualche titolo?

Del resto, per quel che può valere, è da notare che la storiografia sul regno-impero, davvero *come in uno specchio*, non si cura affatto della questione, tant'è che il Weinfurter non cita nemmeno una volta Bernone di Reichenau. Bernone, "testimone oculare dell'incoronazione romana" di Enrico II (14 febbraio 1014) riferisce che l'imperatore volle inserire la clausola del *Filioque* nella liturgia eucaristica romana "nonostante l'opposizione del clero locale che vi vedeva sminuita l'indefettibilità nella fede della chesa di Roma". E' opportuno vedere quanto scrive:

Romani usque ad haec tempora divae memoriae Henrici imperatoris nullo modo cecinerunt [...] Audivi eos hujusmodi responsum reddere, videlicet, quod Romana Ecclesia non fuisset aliquando ulla haereseos faece infecta, sed secundum sancti Petri doctrinam in soliditate catholicae fidei permaneret inconcussa: et ideo magis his necessarium esse illud symbolum cantando frequentare, qui aliquando ulla haeresi potuerunt maculari. At dominus imperator non antea desiit quam omnium consensu id domino Benedicto apostolico persuasit, ut ad publicam missam illud decantarent. Sed utrum hanc consuetudinem servant adhuc affirmare non possumus [*sic*, ma sarà *possumus*], quia certum non tenemus.<sup>3</sup>

Dunque, a sentire Bernone, Benedetto VIII cedette alle insistenze di Enrico II di cui aveva bisogno tanto quanto il nuovo imperatore aveva bisogno di lui: era il primo dei Tuscolani e doveva all'appoggio di Enrico se si era insediato come papa, così come Enrico non poteva prescindere dal papa per cingere la corona imperiale. Ma Enrico doveva ai suoi grandi ecclesiastici se era re: e non si limitò a riconoscere l'inevitabile, cioè il ruolo centrale del suo episcopato, ma impersonò un ruolo di *coepiscopus* che gli garantì non solo la

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<sup>3</sup> Un sintetico ma efficace punto della questione in E. Morini, *E' vicina l'unità tra cattolici e ortodossi?*, Magnano 2016, pp. 11-15; la citazione a p. 14. N. Naccari, *Tra Roma e Costantinopoli? Pietro III d'Antiochia e la sua ecclesiologia nello scontro del 1054*, in "Bizantinistica. Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi" Serie Seconda XVII (2016), p. 65. *Bernonis abbatiss Augiensis Libellus de quibusdam rebus ad missae officium pertinentibus*, in: *Patrologia Latina* (citata infra come PL), 142, coll. 1060D-1061A.

possibilità partecipare alle sinodi ma anche di presiederle con il consenso dei suoi prelati, nell'impegno al rispetto dei sistemi di regole che si erano date e continuavano a darsi le Chiese del regno; il re riconosceva che la vita delle Chiese del regno era a fondamento del suo regno, le Chiese riconoscevano che il re era la garanzia della loro vita e delle regole che si erano date. Di conseguenza Enrico *non poteva evitare* di rappresentarne anche le posizioni teologiche, se erano sentite come essenziali.<sup>4</sup> E Benedetto non poteva evitare di cedere, se voleva poter continuare a contare sul sostegno di Enrico anche *dopo* l'incoronazione imperiale.

Ma con grande sobrietà e altrettanto acume politico Bernone ammette di non essere certo che dopo la morte dell'imperatore (1024) a Roma avessero conservato quell'uso; insomma, avrebbe benissimo potuto essere solo un cedimento occasionale, dettato dalla necessità e della contingenza. Come dice in maniera ineguagliabile l'antico e saggissimo adagio, *passata la festa, gabbato lu santu* ... E allora, vista questa professione di serietà priva di qualunque orpello retorico, dovremmo dargli credito quando dice che fino ai tempi di Enrico II a Roma non c'era stato nulla del genere perché "*secundum sancti Petri doctrinam in soliditate catholicae fidei permanserat inconcussa*": cioè Roma non poteva aderire a usi che, visti secondo il riferimento di san Pietro, potevano suonare come *eresie*. Teniamo presente questo punto, perché non solo ci assicura che Sergio IV difficilmente poté essere protagonista di uno *scisma* del genere (e quindi il problema non dovrebbe porsi) ma ci aiuta a entrare nell'ecclesiologia romana di inizio XI secolo; e tanto più ci aiuta in quanto è l'espressione di una *view from afar*, uno sguardo *da lontano*, pacato nell'espressione e senza la minima intonazione polemica: insomma, uno sguardo prezioso, che *riconosce* le particolarità romane e può introdurci a riconoscerle a nostra volta.

Sergio IV. Solo tre anni di pontificato e solo qualche documento superstiti. Qualunque tentativo di capire come vedesse il mondo e il ruolo della Chiesa che presiedeva non può essere altro che una estrapolazione. Al più, un'indicazione di lineamenti.

I documenti di Sergio IV editi nella *Patrologia Latina* hanno una particolarità: nella maggioranza dei casi gli *incipit* compaiono per la prima volta (9 su 15, cioè il 60%) e non di rado (4 su 9, cioè il 44,44%; o il 26,67% del totale) sembrano all'origine di una tradizione. Si tratta di: *Congruum valde, Manifestum est, Congruum atque utillimum, Apostolatus nostri, Si domus, Quoniam divina, Nobis clamor, Nostra cura, Quia mens humana*.

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<sup>4</sup> Cfr. G.M. Cantarella, *Manuale della fine del mondo. Il travaglio dell'Europa medievale*, Torino 2015, pp. 43-48; S. Weinfurter, *Heinrich II.(1002-1024), Herrscher am Ende der Zeiten*, Regensburg 2002<sup>3</sup>.

*Congruum valde*, *Si domus*, *Nobis clamor*, *Nostra cura*, *Quia mens humana* non ricorreranno mai più. *Congruum atque utillimum* si ritroverà nel 1086 in un documento di Clemente III (Wiberto) (JL 5323); *Manifestum est* in un privilegio di Alessandro III (JL 10724: 1162), si tratta di un caso di un certo interesse e vedremo subito di cosa si tratta; *Quoniam divina* in Alessandro II (JL 4476: 1062).

*Cum constet* è inaugurato da Benedetto VII, si ritrova una volta in Giovanni XV, è usato con Benedetto VIII e ripreso due volte un secolo e mezzo dopo da Alessandro III (JL 12969: 1160-1178; JL 13559: 1071-1080). Anche *Tunc summae* è usato con parsimonia, da Agapito II (JL 3635: cc. 946) e da Leone IX (JL 4172: 1049); *Cum magna nobis* è molto più frequente, parte con Stefano IV (JL 2544: 817), arriva a Nicola II (JL 4461: 1061) e comunque si trova nel *Liber Diurnus Romanorum pontificum* (LXXXIX); *Notum esse volumus* prende avvio con Giovanni VIII (JL 3242: 879) e arriva fino a Gregorio VII (JL 5155: 1080); *Quia vestri accepti* ha un solo precedente (JL 3852: 994, Giovanni XV) e si ritrova in Benedetto VIII (JL 4011: 1016; J 4032: 1012-1021).

Quanto questi numeri possano essere indicativi di qualcosa, non sappiamo e non potremo mai sapere; si tratta delle rimanenze di un *Registrum* che verosimilmente era molto più corposo.

Sembra paradossale e scontato e inutile dirlo, ma bisogna ricordare che la concessione dei privilegi aveva un costo, se non altro (a parte un “tariffario” non-ufficiale ma noto a tutti, almeno nel secolo successivo) quello del viaggio fino a Roma per ottenerli; e non ci si muoveva certo dalle regioni lontane come l’alta Catalogna e la Guascogna se non si fosse stati convinti dell’utilità, se non dell’efficacia, del privilegio apostolico. Da quell’area negli anni di Sergio IV si rivolsero a Roma il grande abate Oliva (forse conte di Conflent e Berguedà, garante della tutela e della diffusione dei costumi cluniacensi nell’alta Penisola iberica che erano stati introdotti nel 965 da un suo zio, il conte di Cerdanya e Besalù, e che nel 1017 divenne vescovo di Vic, sede strategica e prestigiosa illustrata dalla presenza di Gerberto d’Aurillac, papa come Silvestro II) per i monasteri di Cuixà e Ripoll (JL 3974, 3975, 1011),<sup>5</sup> e il *dominus* di *Castrum Scuria*, ora Lescure-d’Albigeois (JL 3967, 1010). Un caso molto interessante, quest’ultimo, per diversi motivi.

*Castrum Scuria* era stato donato “regia munificentia” a san Pietro proprio nell’età di Silvestro II da Vediano, che ne aveva ricevuto “per manus ejusdem” il godimento “sub censu annuo docem (sic: ma *decem*) solidorum Raimundensis monetæ” (cioè dei conti di Tolosa). Lescure si trovava nella diocesi di Albi, come alla fine del secolo XII registrano prima i *Digesta pauperis scholari Albini* e subito dopo (e ripetutamente) il *Liber Censuum Romanae Ecclesiae*,

5 Cfr. G.M. Cantarella, *I monaci di Cluny*, Torino 2010<sup>6</sup>, pp. 142-143.

opera monumentale in tutti i sensi redatta a partire dall'ultimo decennio del secolo e che riporta anche il giuramento di fedeltà prestato al papa nel 1214 dai *milites* e tutti i *probi homines* del castello;<sup>6</sup> nel *Liber Censuum* in successione troviamo il documento di Sergio IV e quello di Alessandro III, un altro passaggio ribadisce il medesimo censo, mentre altri appaiono come passaggi successivi e hanno tutta l'aria di essere degli aggiornamenti o adeguamenti proprio del censo: due onces d'argento per Albino, che nel secolo XIII diventeranno due marche d'argento *sterling*.

Ovviamente non è il caso di seguire qui le stratificazioni di quell'opera complessa e che è stata oggetto di una recentissima ricerca, ma si tratta di prendere nota della costanza delle registrazioni *nel lungo periodo*.<sup>7</sup> Quella regione non era particolarmente "sensibile" solo nell'età di Innocenzo III e nei decenni successivi, ma lo era sempre stata per via degli equilibri delicati e mobili, le diverse aristocrazie, le contrastanti egemonie in quell'area di sutura fra la penisola iberica e il continente. Tutto poteva consigliare di mettere in salvo qualcosa della patrimonialità donandolo al *Patrimonium beati Petri* e tutelandolo con la protezione apostolica: e benché non sia Sergio IV a dirlo esplicitamente ma Alessandro III a chiare lettere, in questo caso (come lo sarà nel 1085 per la contea di Melguelh, donata a San Pietro dal padre di colui che sarebbe stato uno dei maggiori abati di Cluny, Ponzio) il problema era costituito nientemeno che dalla potentissima casata dei conti di Tolosa che estendeva a sua ombra a nord fino in Alvernia, a est fino a Nîmes. Il documento di Sergio IV, è detto esplicitamente ("sicut ex inspectione litterarum antecessoris nostri sanctae recordationis Sergii papae cognovimus"), fu esibito di fronte ad Alessandro III; il quale, pur nelle assai più elaborate forme cancelleresche della seconda metà del sec. XII, non solo ne riprende l'*incipit* ma anche alcuni passaggi (magari lo stesso era accaduto nell'età di Callisto II e Innocenzo II, come ricorda il medesimo privilegio: ma non possediamo i documenti e Alessandro si limita a menzionarli). Insomma, ad Alessandro dev'essere stato presentato tutto il *dossier* che era nelle mani dei *domini* del castello, e il papa ne ha riconosciuto e garantito l'autenticità; del resto si trovava a Montpellier e i *domini* di Lescure non dovevano fare troppa strada per presentarsi.<sup>8</sup> Non c'è nulla di Silvestro II: ma notiamo che neppure Sergio IV

6 Cfr. *Le Liber Censuum de l'Eglise Romaine*, edd. P. Fabre, L. Duchesne, Paris 1901, II, p. 119; I, LXX, p. 344.

7 *Le Liber Censuum de l'Eglise Romaine*, I, CLXXVI-CLXXVII, pp. 203, 245, 430-431; per Albino cfr. II, loc. cit.; E. Dumas, *Il Liber Censuum: creazione della memoria e rivoluzione amministrativa del papato tra XII e XIII secolo*, Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, Dottorato di Ricerca in Storia, ciclo XXVIII, 2017; E. Dumas, *Il Liber Censuum Romanae Ecclesiae come strumento per la politica pontificia (XIII secolo)*, "Memoria Europae" II (2016) 3, pp. 39-58.

8 JL 10724 (Montpellier, 1162 maggio 29) = *Alexandri III papae Epistolae et privilegia*, PL 200, n° 76, coll. 150CD-151B: "Manitestum est castrum quod Scuria dicitur, temporibus beati Syl-

il 30 marzo del 1010 al Laterano aveva avuto in mano il documento del suo predecessore bensì una *relatio* (“ut etiam vestra relatione comperimus”), e ciò nonostante aveva aderito alla richiesta per la quale gli interessati avevano affrontato l’impresa del viaggio *ad limina*. Una richiesta pressante, visto il peso (in tutti i sensi, anche o soprattutto economici) di quel viaggio.

Il caso di Lescure appare particolarmente interessante perché è una delle testimonianze di quanto quell’area fosse presente nell’orizzonte dei papi della seconda metà del secolo X e dell’inizio del secolo XI. E, come si sa, lo sarà sempre di più. E anche di quanto Roma fosse presente nell’orizzonte di quella regione lontana, e lo sarà sempre di più.

E perché, com’è noto e si è appena ricordato, Silvestro II proveniva dall’Alvernia dove si era formato ad Aurillac, ed aveva approfondito la sua formazione nell’alta Catalogna sotto la protezione del conte di Barcellona e del vescovo di Vic, al seguito del quale era giunto a Roma: dunque poteva avere tutte le conoscenze necessarie per intervenire (o accettare di farlo) in quell’area; e questa combinazione di circostanze difficilmente poteva essere ignota a Sergio IV, che oltretutto sottolineò sempre la propria continuità con Silvestro II, come si dirà brevemente dopo.<sup>9</sup>

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vestri, sicut ex inspectione litterarum antecessoris nostri sanctae recordationis Sergii papae cognovimus, regia liberalitate per manus ejusdem beato Petro quondam fuisse collatum, et a Vediano quondam ejusdem castri domino, memorato praedecessori nostro papae Sergio, per innovationem sub annuo censu decem solidorum Raimundensis monetae fuisse recognitum et oblatum [...] praefatum castrum sub beati Petri et nostra protectione suscipimus [...] statuantes ut neque comiti neque alicui personae facultas sit castrum ipsum auferre, minuere, infestare, vel suis usibus vindicare, sed quietum vobis, sicut a jam dictis praedecessoribus nostri et nobis concessum est, et integrum sub beati Petri jure ac defensione consistat [...] Si quis igitur clericus sive laicus temere (quod absit!) adversus ista venire tentaverit, secundo tertiove communitus, si non congrua satisfactione emendaverit, honoris et officii sui periculum patiat, aut excommunicationis ultione plectatur. Qui vero conservator exstiterit, gratiam omnipotentis Dei, et beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli obtineat”. JL 3967 (1010) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, PL 139, n° 2, coll. 1501D-1502A: “Manifestum est castrum quod dicitur Scuria temporibus beatae memoriae praedecessoris nostri papae Sylvestri ut etiam vestra relatione comperimus, regia munificentia quondam per manus ejusdem beato Petro fuisse collatum, et a te nunc per innovationem sub censu annuo decem solidorum Raimundensis monetae oblatum [...] et idem protectione sedis apostolicae communimus. Statuimus enim ut nulli omnino ecclesiasticae saecularisve personae facultas sit idem castrum minuere, infestare vel suis usibus vindicare, sed quietum tibi, sicut a nobis concessum est, et integrum conservetur. Si qua igitur icclesiastica saecularisve persona temere, uod absit!, adversus ita praesumpserit, secundo tertiove commonita si non satisfactione congrua emendaverit, honoris et officii sui periculum patiat, aut excommunicationis ultione plectatur. Qui vero conservator exstiterit, omnipotentis Dei et apostolorum ejus Petri et Pauli gratiam misericorditer consequatur”. Cfr. *Le Liber Censuum de l’Eglise Romaine*, pp. 430-431. Cfr. G.M. Cantarella, “Come in uno specchio”? Di nuovo su Ponzio di Cluny (1109-1122/26), “*Bullettino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*” CXVI (2014), pp. 62-64.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. G.M. Cantarella, *Una sera dell’anno Mille. Scene di Medioevo*, Milano 2004<sup>2</sup>, pp. 175-179.



Ma, detto di questa *emergenza della memoria*, ritorniamo al problema generale. Dato che anche con la ricerca storica accade come con la vita, e dobbiamo ragionare e lavorare sul materiale che abbiamo e non su quello che vorremmo avere e sappiamo che non potremo avere mai, l'unica cosa che si possa sommessamente suggerire dai pochi pezzi superstiti è che il pontificato di Sergio IV si staglia con una discreta nettezza, una discreta consapevolezza; chiaramente espressa da Benedetto notaio, estensore dei documenti, ovviamente esperto del *Liber Diurnus* e a maggior ragione consapevole nelle innovazioni e nei distacchi dalla tradizione recente e passata: per esempio è il caso della formula "Ideo quia Christo distribuite Petri principis apostolorum vicem gestamus, hoc quod fecimus inconvulsum manere volumus", che evoca formule come "statuentes beati Petri principis apostolorum auctoritate, cuius nos etsi impares meritis divina tamen gratia suffragante vices gerimus [...] haec quae a nobis compassione modo decreta sunt [...] firma stabilitate inconvulsa perpetuis permanere temporibus definimus"; o dell'elaboratissima *damnatio* che si ritrova in un paio di casi, nell'ultimo dei quali si rinviene anche un'altra citazione quasi *ad litteram*, segno inequivocabile della padronanza di Benedetto.<sup>10</sup> E allora, le innovazioni apportate con Sergio IV e che con lui si spengono o vengono riprese solo dopo moltissimi anni (e sarebbe interessante chiedersene il perché), segnalano una personalità spiccata, diciamo così, o l'intenzione di rendere evidente come innovativo quel pontificato. E il fatto che non siano state riprese rende abbastanza chiaro che quelle innovazioni non furono ritenute ricevibili – vennero confinate nell'esperienza solo di *quel* papa. Un *incipit*, come si sa, dice molte cose... molte più di quante non ne introduca procedendo nel corso del documento: la *forma*, in questi casi, è davvero *sostanza*. Qualora poi ad un *incipit* innovativo come *Si domus* fa seguito un complesso di frasi e affermazioni che solo uno sguardo frettoloso può

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<sup>10</sup> Cfr. JL 3976 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 7, col. 1516B (*Liber Diurnus Romanorum pontificum*, ed. Th.E. von Sickel, Wien 1889, XC, p. 119); JL 3975 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 6, col. 1515D (*Liber Diurnus Romanorum pontificum*, LXXXVI, p. 113; CI, p. 135): "Si quis autem, quod non optamus, nefario ausu praesumpserit haec quae a nobis pro stabilitate jam dicti monasterii statuta sunt, refragare, aut in quoquam praesumpserit transgredi, sciat se nostri anathematis vinculo innodatum, et cum diabolo, et ejus atrocissimis pompis atque Juda traditore Domini nostri Jesu Christi aeterni incendii supplicio concremandum. At vero qui pio intuitu observator in omnibus exstiterit, custodiens hujus nostri privilegii statuta, benedictionis gratiam a misericordissimo Domino Deo nostro multipliciter consequatur et vitae aeternae effici mereatur particeps in saecula saeculorum"; cfr. JL 3985 (1012 febbraio 25) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 13, col. 1524C; alla col. 1524A "ut dictum est tam pacis quam barbarici temporis firma stabilitate decernimus sub jurisdictione sanctae Ecclesiae nostrae permanendum"; *Liber Diurnus Romanorum pontificum*, LXXXVI, p. 112: "ut dictum est, pacis quam barbarico tempore firma stabilitate decernimus sub iurisdictione sanctae nostrae ecclesiae permanendum". Si tratta delle parti risalenti alla fine del sec. VIII.



considerare come scontate, allora bisogna prendere atto del fatto che Sergio IV aveva una *densa* consapevolezza del proprio ruolo di pontefice romano:

Si domus excellentissimae speculationis sanctissimae matris nostrae Ecclesiae impellimur curam satagere, et ob studium divini cultus pro religione sacrorum locorum promovemur praecogitare illorum sublimitatem atque stabilitatem, ut soli Deo servitium valeant habitantes in ea impendere; hoc nobis decet pio labore assuescere, ut animae Christo dicatae, quae se in diebus vitae illorum servituti contradiderunt, perseverent, sub ejus militia imperturbatae, nec non et illa illic maneant per auctoritatem nostrae sedis apostolicae, auctoritate nobis concessa, sub ejus videlicet, cujus nos fruimur vice, fide tenus firma, quae votive a Christianis in Dei laudibus contradita sunt.<sup>11</sup>

Giacché cosa c'è di non convenzionale in questo passaggio? O meglio: cosa manca? Il riferimento al beato Pietro. E' implicito, si dirà: ma appunto, è *implicito*; perché *in explicito* vengono nominati *Dio* e *Cristo*. Naturalmente non è affatto il caso di azzardare conclusioni che sarebbero soltanto estrapolazioni: anche perché, come vedremo subito, quest'assenza della menzione di Pietro appare come un *apax*. E tuttavia non si può non prenderne atto. Come non si può non prendere atto del fatto che in Sergio IV compaia un'espressione che sembra, se mi si passa l'espressione, *profumare di futuro*: "*nos tuis justis (etenim sicut sunt a nobis adjudicatae, nam justae sunt) annuentes precibus*". Si tratta di un'espressione che, salvo errore, pur facendo seguito al *Cum constet* inaugurato da Benedetto VII, è una innovazione di Sergio IV, ricorre altre due volte in Benedetto VIII (ma si tratta di un unico episodio, il 26 gennaio 1017), poi scompare. E non avrebbe senso cercare l'evoluzione in Alessandro III centosessant'anni più tardi, perché nel frattempo c'è stata la grande rivoluzione della Chiesa romana... E allora prendiamo atto del fatto che le decisioni del papa (*nos*) sono giuste solo per il fatto di provenire da tale fonte, e *giustificano* le richieste fatte al papa *in quanto affidate alla decisione del papa*.<sup>12</sup> Del resto è lo stesso pontefice che inaugura un *incipit*, "*Apostolatus nostri*", e scrive che l'abate di Nonantola "*nostram deprecatus est magnificentiam*": Benedetto VIII non solo modificherà l'*incipit*, ma non userà quell'espressione.<sup>13</sup>

E ancora, seppure non si voglia sopravvalutarlo, non sarà solo un caso che il notaio Benedetto nel 1012 si renda protagonista di un altro *unicum*:

11 JL 3975 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 6, col. 1514CD.

12 JL 3974 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 5, col. 1510A. JL 4018 (1017 gennaio 26) = *Benedicti VIII papae Epistolae et privilegia*, PL 139, n° 19, col. 1608D; JL 4019 (1017 gennaio 26) = *Benedicti VIII papae Epistolae et privilegia*, n° 20, col. 1613C.; cfr. JL 3800 (979 dicembre 4) = *Benedicti VII papae Epistolae et privilegia*, PL 137, n° 15, coll. 334B-335C.

13 JL 3971 (1011 maggio 27) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 3, col. 1502D; JL 3993 (1012 dicembre 1) = *Benedicti VIII papae Epistolae et privilegia*, n° 3, coll. 1582A-1584D.

“pontificatus domini nostri Sergii sanctissimi IV papae”.<sup>14</sup> Che non ricorrerà più nei suoi documenti rogati con il papa successivo. Si tratta di una sottolineatura fortissima della figura del pontefice, talmente forte che si potrebbe quasi pensarla come eccessivamente esclamativa se non finisse per risultare abbastanza coerente.

Però non dimentichiamolo mai, non lo si sottolineerà mai abbastanza: ci troviamo di fronte ad avanzi, reliquie, relitti, frammenti sparsi di un universo di discorso. Saranno indicativi? Ma, alla fin dei conti, siamo pressoché obbligati a pensare che lo siano, visto che altrimenti non possiamo parlarne: insomma, dobbiamo comportarci come archeologi... Certo, più indicativo sarà il fatto che la menzione di Giustiniano ricorra due volte in così poco spazio, e sempre in processi verbali (la prima in riferimento a un processo verbale dell'età di Silvestro II, la seconda nel 1012), perché rende coerente questa testimonianza con l'insistenza giuridica del suo tempo.<sup>15</sup> In ogni modo non siamo autorizzati a sopravvalutare l'incidenza di quanto troviamo scritto.

Al più, possiamo porci qualche domanda.

Necessità di ribadire il primato, o meglio l'inattaccabile solidità dottrinale della Chiesa di Roma nella figura del suo pontefice, sia pure nell'ovvia condizione di collegialità ecumenica? Notiamo la pregnanza di un'espressione del 1012 nel privilegio in favore del monastero di Beaulieu: “ipsi sint ex auctoritate Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti, et S. Petri apostolorum principis cui a Christo collata est potestas ligandi atque solvendi, omniumque sanctorum, et ex nostra auctoritate, omniumque episcoporum atque archiepiscoporum sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, excommunicati atque anathematizati, sive maledicti”; il papa *si occulta e si manifesta* nella collegialità totale, la sua autorità si esprime in forza della “sinfonica concezione” che collega cielo e terra, la Gerusalemme Celeste e Roma. 1012, anno di sottolineature evidentemente, di toni più calcati. Quello è il suo penultimo documento, il 1012 fu il suo ultimo anno di vita.<sup>16</sup> A quei toni si era arrivati gradatamente, senza strappi, senza forzature, quietamente ma inesorabilmente.

Non c'era, a quanto si sappia, una necessità particolare di ribadire l'ovvio. Il patronato superiore degli apostoli Pietro e Paolo e la conseguente centralità di Roma non erano messi in discussione.

<sup>14</sup> JL 3985 (1012, febbraio 25) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 13, col. 1524D.

<sup>15</sup> JL 3966 (1010, marzo) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 1, col. 1501AB; JL 3986 (1012 aprile 14) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 14, col. 1526A. Cfr. G.M. Cantarella, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości? Papiestwo początków XI stulecia - A la recherche d'une identité?...*, p. 33; idem, *Otton III et la “Renovatio Imperii Romanorum”*, “Przegląd Historyczny” CV (2014), pp. 1-20.

<sup>16</sup> JL 3987 (1012 aprile 14) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 15, col. 1527D. Riprendo l'espressione da N. Naccari, *Tra Roma e Costantinopoli?...*, p. 59.

Non si trattò né poteva trattarsi di una peculiarità dei papi crescenziiani o dei successivi papi Tuscolani. Se Giovanni XVIII aveva scritto: “Sancta apostolica sedes, Romana scilicet Ecclesia, quia a beatissimo principe apostolorum capite Petro obtinet Ecclesiarum sua sanctae auctoritatis robore ligandi solvendique potestate” (1004-1009), Sergio IV scrive (1011): “Tunc summae apostolicae dignitatis apex in hoc divini prospectus nitore dignoscitur prae-fulgere [...] cum solo apostolo Petro legamus, omnium tam clericorum quam laicorum esse curam divinitus a Domino concessam, illius vicariam sua vice praesenti saeculi dispositione [...] Nos ergo qui ejus, quamvis immeriti, vicem gerimus”.<sup>17</sup> L’autorità di san Pietro si trasmette alla Chiesa romana. Sergio IV lo sottolinea sempre nel 1011, come abbiamo già visto: “**quia** Christo distribuite Petri principis apostolorum vicem gestamus”.<sup>18</sup> Tutto viene reiterato nelle formule di *corroboratio* e *damnatio*: “sciat se auctoritate domini nostri apostolorumque principis Petri anathematis vinculo innodatum”; “ex auctoritate omnipotentis Dei, qui beato Petro apostolorum primo claves regni coelorum tradidit, et ejusdem primi pastoris ac nostra ipsius vice quamvis indigne gerentibus”; “sub tuitione ac patrocinio sanctae universalis cui Deo auctore deservimus Ecclesiae” (Giovanni XVIII, 1005, 1006); “de parte Dei omnipotentis sanctique ejus apostoli Petri, et nostra, qui ejus fungimur vicem” (Sergio IV, 1011); Benedetto VIII (1016-1020/23): “salutationem et benedictionem ex parte Dei omnipotentis et beati Petri apostolorum principis, et mea qui praesulatum, licet indignus, tenere videor apostolicae sedis”, “ex parte Dei et sancti Petri, et nostra, vocamus ad resipiscendum [...] Quod si fecerint, habeant gratiam, et benedictionem, et absolutionem Dei et sancti Petri, et nostram”. Nel 1027 Giovanni XIX: “hujus sanctae sedis decreta pia fide a filiis matris Ecclesiae accipienda sunt, et veneranda, ut tanquam regulae canonum ab eisdem absque ullo scrupulo admittantur, utpote quae de omni Ecclesiae fas habeat judicandi”.<sup>19</sup>

San Pietro, primo degli apostoli, e attraverso san Pietro, come in uno specchio, Dio, ricorreva in maniera monotona, che si potrebbe anche dire ossessiva. Non perché in quel quarto di secolo ci fosse una necessità speciale

<sup>17</sup> JL 3962 (1004-1009) = *Joannis XVIII papae Epistolae et diplomata*, PL 139, n° 13, col. 1491C. JL 3977 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 8, col. 1517CD.

<sup>18</sup> JL 3976 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 7, col. 1516B.

<sup>19</sup> JL 3946 (1005, luglio 21) = *Joannis XVIII papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 5, col. 1482C; JL 3950 (1005 dicembre. 2) = *Joannis XVIII papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 8, coll. 1486A, 1485B. JL 3973 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 4, col. 1509; JL 3976 (1011, novembre) = *Sergii IV papae Epistolae et diplomata*, n° 7, col. 1517A. JL 4013 (1016, settembre; ma cfr D. Méhu, *Paix et communautés autour de l'abbaye de Cluny (X<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Lyon 2001, pp. 57, 68: vers 1021-1023; p. 237: vers 1020) = *Benedicti VIII papae Epistolae et privilegia*, n° 16, coll. 1601B, 1606AB. JL 4081 (1027 marzo 28) = *Joannis XIX papae Epistolae et diplomata*, PL 141, n° 11, col. 1148CD.

di metterla in evidenza: nessuno contestava la posizione del pontefice romano, semplicemente perché nessuno poteva mettere in dubbio che di chiunque si trattasse e comunque si comportasse fosse il successore dei principi degli apostoli. Lo scrive il Glabro: "il pontefice della Chiesa di Roma è ritenuto degno di considerazione più d'ogni altro in tutto il mondo per l'autorità della sede apostolica"; lo mette in chiaro l'eminente canonista Burcardo di Worms (1015-1020) nell'elenco dei capitoli del primo libro della sua opera: "I. Quod in Novo Testamento post Christum Dominum nostrum a Petro sacerdotalis coeperit ordo. II. De privilegio beato Petro Domini vice solummodo commissio, et de discretione potestatis, quae inter apostolos fuit".

Per cui, che quei papi fossero *aridi, capponi, con la bocca da porco o affamati di denaro*, insomma in qualche modo deformi e comunque indegni fisicamente o moralmente (come scrisse ancora il Glabro e si raccontò a Cluny e ripeterà Pier Damiani), tutto ciò non invalidava in nessun modo i loro atti: "Giacché... l'autorità di legare e sciogliere in terra e in cielo spetta per concessione inviolabile alla cattedra di Pietro", scrisse Guglielmo da Volpiano a Giovanni XIX.<sup>20</sup> E' comunque da notare che Sergio IV, a parte il nomignolo del *Liber Pontificalis* romano, non fu mai chiamato in causa in questa serie di memorie infamanti. E, già che si è fatta menzione di Cluny, è anche da notare che a Sergio IV non venne mai chiesto di confermare i privilegi dell'abbazia: e certo non perché l'abate Odilone si tenesse fuori dai giochi, visto il suo stretto rapporto prima con Ottone III e Silvestro II e subito con Enrico II, e i suoi frequenti passaggi in Italia; semplicemente, pare che Cluny non sia interessata a stringere relazioni particolari con questo papa che del resto da parte sua, per quanto ne sappiamo, ben si guarda dall'avvicinarsi al mondo cluniacense (e questo non dipende dal naufragio degli atti di Sergio IV, ma dal fatto che non ce n'è memoria a Cluny); Cluny non ebbe bisogno di Roma, a giudicare dal fatto che il privilegio ottenuto nel 998 fu rafforzato solo nel 1024, per essere messo in discussione subito nel 1025 (e nel 1027 Giovanni XIX chiuse la questione).<sup>21</sup> Se Odilone fu presente all'incoronazione imperiale di Enrico II, negli anni di Sergio IV Roma e Cluny furono lontane. Comunque si voglia considerare la cosa, siamo forse al germoglio delle prime estraneità (se non già diffidenze) reciproche, quelle che esploderanno per la prima volta durante il pontificato di Gregorio VII.

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20 Rodolfo il Glabro, *Cronache dell'anno Mille (Storie)*, a cura di G. Cavallo, G. Orlandi, Milano 1898, IV.7, p. 75 (modifico marginalmente la traduzione per renderla più aderente al testo latino); Burchardi Wormaciensis ep. *Decretorum libri XX*, PL 140: *Index capitulorum libri primi*, col. 541BC; e ancora Rodolfo il Glabro, *Cronache dell'anno Mille (Storie)*, II.6, p. 73; IV.2, p. 199; IV.3, p. 201. Per gli altri riferimenti e quanto precede rinvio ancora a G.M. Cantarella, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości? Papiestwo początków XI stulecia - A la recherche d'une identité?...*, pp. 28-39.

21 Cfr. ancora G.M. Cantarella, *I monaci di Cluny*, pp. 141, 146-147.

All'inizio del secolo XI la cattedra di Pietro sembrerebbe già mettere al riparo dalle debolezze e dalle turpitudini degli uomini che vi siedono sopra. Le sue prerogative sono fuor di dubbio. Il che non autorizzava quei papi a comportarsi in maniera dominativa, non perché non avessero coscienza del proprio ruolo ma semplicemente perché questo non era *ancora* previsto. E' importante sottolinearlo, perché solo così si potranno apprezzare i veri e fondamentali punti di cambiamento nel governo di Gregorio VII e capire perché il suo regno costituì un punto di svolta *epocale*.<sup>22</sup>

E allora torniamo a Bernone di Reichenau e alla sua testimonianza.

Come avrebbe potuto Sergio IV aderire a ciò che a Roma era considerata una *eresia*, anche se lui stesso era alla ricerca di un rapporto di stretta vicinanza con Enrico II e magari era pronto a proporgli l'incoronazione imperiale? La ripetuta sottolineatura di continuità con l'operato del suo predecessore Silvestro II, e la conseguente necessità di rendersi garante della *continuità nell'ortodossia*, non gliene avrebbe neppure lasciato lo spazio. Appena eletto aveva commissionato il monumento funebre di Silvestro II, in Laterano: in questo modo, se ferita sanguinosa c'era stata (come c'era stata, e sanguinosissima) veniva sanata, nessuna frattura nella recente storia di Roma, continuità assoluta *nel governo e nel magistero*, che nel vicario del principe degli apostoli si identificano. Se anche il pontefice crescenziiano avesse voluto continuare a blandire i risentimenti familiari del *princeps* Giovanni nei confronti del defunto Ottone III, la realtà gli imponeva di non trascurare buoni rapporti con il re attuale e di tentare di intrattenerli senza farsi condizionare troppo come era accaduto al suo predecessore.<sup>23</sup> Dunque perché non pensare che quei toni tanto acuti nel 1012 si dovessero piuttosto a una sottolineatura del ruolo del pontefice romano nei confronti del *princeps* più che del mondo ecclesiastico ecumenico (anche se naturalmente questo non può essere escluso per principio: sarebbe frutto di pregiudizio tanto escluderlo quanto affermarlo, la sospensione del giudizio è abbastanza inevitabile e adeguata)? Il fatto è che nel giro di un paio di mesi lasciarono entrambi la vita, il mondo e Roma... Sergio IV, interprete e garante dell'inattaccabilità dottrinale di Roma.

Allora no, non poté esserci uno *scisma dei due Sergi*. Non solo perché è *improbabile* (cioè *non può essere provato*) ma anche perché è ragionevolmente *inverosimile*.

Si potrebbe pensare magari che la memoria della Chiesa orientale si sia appiattita sul presente (l'"ossimoro storico", come è stato recentemente

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<sup>22</sup> Cfr. ancora G.M. Cantarella, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości? Papieżstwo początków XI stulecia - A la recherche d'une identité?...*, pp. 31-33, 36-39. E ora idem, *Gregorio VII*, Roma 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Rimando ai brevi ma ottimi profili di T. di Carpegna Falconieri, *Giovanni di Crescenzo*, in: *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, LVI, Roma 2001, pp. 1-4; A. Sennis, *Sergio IV*, in: *Enciclopedia dei papi*, I, Roma 2000, pp. 128-130.

e felicemente definito) della fine del secolo XI e inizio del XII, proiettandone al passato i problemi; non si tratterebbe di una cosa inedita nella storia ed è anzi, come sappiamo, tutt'altro che infrequente (per così dire...).

Ma non pare il caso che la storiografia scientifica vi si appiattisca a sua volta.<sup>24</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century some Byzantine sources started to mention (vaguely and uncertainly) the so-called 'schism of the two Sergii': the dispute concerned the adoption of the *Filioque*, which the Eastern Church condemned theologically and ecclesiologically. This essay considers whether the conditions for such a schism were actually present during the papacy of Sergius IV (1009-1012) or not.

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<sup>24</sup> Cfr. N. Naccari, *Tra Roma e Costantinopoli?...*, pp. 75-76, cui rinvio per le pregnanti e acute considerazioni.





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## ARGOMENTI DI NATURA GIURIDICA E STRUMENTI DELLA COMUNICAZIONE PUBBLICA DURANTE LA LOTTA PER LE INVESTITURE



### 1. UNA GUERRA DI PAROLE SCRITTE E PRONUNCIATE

Si deve a Ian Stuart Robinson la felice definizione della lotta per le investiture come *war of words*<sup>1</sup>. In questa sede ci chiediamo preliminarmente se le parole con le quali e per le quali questa guerra fu combattuta a sud delle Alpi fossero parole scritte o eventualmente anche proclamate oralmente e in quale misura il rapporto tra oralità e scrittura, nonché la scelta degli strumenti della comunicazione pubblica, volessero e potessero veicolare argomenti di natura giuridica e, infine, con quali modalità questi contenuti a loro volta condizionassero la scelta delle forme della comunicazione. Dal punto di vista degli studi mi sembra che manchi non solo uno specifico contributo che metta a tema queste problematiche, ma anche un lavoro d'insieme sulla predicazione nell'ambito della cosiddetta lotta per le investiture, che oggi preferiamo definire riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI<sup>2</sup>.

Veniamo a un problema metodologico sotteso al nostro questionario: i tre volumi dei *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum*, che raccolgono una sorta di canone delle fonti appunto libellistiche, ci restituiscono un'immagine della lotta per le investiture come una guerra di parole scritte. Eppure è evidente che anche quelle parole meditate e affidate alla pergamena spesso dovettero

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<sup>1</sup> I.S. Robinson, *Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Contest: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century*, Manchester 1978.

<sup>2</sup> *Riforma o restaurazione? La cristianità nel passaggio dal primo al secondo millennio: persistenze e novità. Atti del XXVI Convegno del Centro Studi Avellaniti (Fonte Avellana 2004)*, S. Pietro in Cariano (VR) 2006.

servire a preparare le idee da esporre in scontri di natura puramente verbale oppure di quegli stessi scontri dovevano registrare il burrascoso andamento, costituendone una sorta di precipitato testuale. È, quest'ultimo, il caso della lettera 65 di Pier Damiani che contiene gli *Actus Mediolani*, ove è appunto riprodotto il discorso tenuto dall'eremita e cardinale nel corso della sua legazione milanese del 1059<sup>3</sup>. Un *sermo* – sia detto per inciso – interamente intessuto di riferimenti canonistici, che conserva una delle più lucide e precoci teorizzazioni del primato petrino<sup>4</sup>. Se poi cerchiamo il processo inverso, dalla scrittura all'oralità, varrà l'esempio della *Disceptatio synodalis*, una finzione dialogica a tema *naturaliter* giuridico, che lo stesso Pier Damiani scrisse in vista di un concilio, destinato, nelle sue intenzioni, a ricomporre lo scisma di Cadalo e a chiarire i rapporti tra Impero e Sede Apostolica<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. L'IMPENETRABILITÀ DEGLI OMELIARI LITURGICI ALLE TEMATICHE RIFORMATRICI

Inutilmente cercheremmo invece delle tematiche *tipicamente riformatrici* nell'omeliario del Damiani. Basta, a titolo di esempio, una semplice incursione nelle concordanze verbali dei suoi scritti, per scoprire che per un lemma come simonia, con tutti i suoi derivati, non si trova nessuna attestazione nei *sermones*, a fronte di decine di occorrenze nell'epistolario<sup>6</sup>. Si arriva qui a una prima ipotesi di lavoro, provvisoria e ovviamente, in quanto tale, meritevole di qualche supplemento di indagine, dato che io ho limitato la mia verifica ai pur importanti *sermones* di Pier Damiani: le tematiche a sfondo giuridico

3 *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 2: (nr. 41-90), ed. K. Reindel, München 1988, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (come MGH), *Epistolae*, II; IV, nr. 65, pp. 228-247.

4 Per le implicazioni di carattere teologico e dottrinale si veda M. Maccarrone, *La teologia del primato romano del secolo XI*, in: *Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche della "societas christiana" dei secoli XI-XII: papato, cardinalato ed episcopato. Atti della quinta Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 26-31 agosto 1971*, Miscellanea del centro di studi medioevali, VII, Milano 1974, pp. 21-122; ora anche in M. Maccarrone, *Romana ecclesia cathedra Petri*, a cura di P. Zerbi, R. Volpini, A. Galuzzi, Roma 1991, pp. 541-670. Sulle fonti relative alla legazione milanese di Pier Damiani mi sono soffermato in N. D'Acunto, *I laici nella Chiesa e nella società secondo Pier Damiani. Ceti dominanti e riforma ecclesiastica nel secolo XI*, Roma 1999, pp. 142-154.

5 *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 2, nr. 89, pp. 531-572. Ancora attuale l'interpretazione fornita da O. Capitani, *Problematica della «Disceptatio Synodalis»*, in: *Studi gregoriani*, X, Roma 1975, pp. 143-147; ristampato anche in Capitani, *Tradizione e interpretazione: dialettiche ecclesio-logiche del sec. XI*, Roma 1990, pp. 49-83. Sul contesto G.M. Cantarella, *Pier Damiani e lo scisma di Cadalo*, in: *Pier Damiani: l'eremita, il teologo, il riformatore (1007-2007). Atti del 29. Convegno del Centro studi e ricerche per l'Antica provincia ecclesiastica ravennate: Faenza-Ravenna, 20-23 settembre 2007*, a cura di M. Tagliaferri, Bologna 2009, pp. 233-257.

6 *Thesaurus Petri Damiani: enumeratio formarum, index formarum a tergo ordinarum, tabulae frequentiarum, index formarum secundum orthographiae normam collatarum, concordantia formarum*, curante Centre traditio litterarum Occidentalium, moderante P. Tombeur, Corpus christianorum. Thesaurus patrum latinorum. Series A. Formae, Turnhout 2004.

tipicamente riformatrici, come la lotta alla simonia, al nicolaismo e all'investitura laica, quasi non trovarono posto alcuno negli omeliari liturgici del secolo XI, governati da regole di genere talmente ferree e conservative da non consentire nessuna eccezione rispetto al canone dei contenuti e dei metodi, che privilegiava in misura quasi esclusiva il mero esercizio di esegesi scritturale. Alla totale inesistenza di argomentazioni giuridiche si aggiungono solo rari rinvii alle pericopi bibliche potenzialmente foriere di agganci diretti con il tema della simonia, come per esempio all'episodio di Simon Mago narrato in At 8, 9-10, oppure a Mt 21, 10 (la cacciata dei mercanti dal tempio) e al buon pastore di Gv 10, 1, per il quale esiste il sondaggio effettuato da Joseph Benz nell'epistolario di Gregorio VII<sup>7</sup>. Questi ultimi due passi biblici sono utilizzati da Bruno di Segni per una fugace, e proprio per questo particolarmente significativa, tirata antisimoniaca, la cui profondità giuridica è solo implicita<sup>8</sup>. Un bell'esempio, questo, ma purtroppo isolato, di esegesi "riformatrice" e per giunta utilizzato in un'omelia.

### 3. UN QUADRO DIVERSO: STRUMENTALIZZAZIONI CANONISTICHE FRA ORALITÀ E SCRITTURA NELLA "PREDICAZIONE RIFORMATRICE"

Se tuttavia dai testi effettivamente pervenuti in forma scritta attraverso i canali abituali della tradizione omiletica ci spostiamo verso le notizie relative alla

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<sup>7</sup> K.J. Benz, *Joh. 10, 1-14 in der theologischen Argumentation Gregors VII. gegen Simonie und Laieninvestitur*, in: *Aus Archiven und Bibliotheken. Festschrift für Raymund Kottje zum 65. Geburtstag*, a cura di H. Mordek, Frankfurt a. M. 1992, pp. 239-270; K.J. Benz, *Noch einmal: "Joh. 10,1-14 in der theologischen Argumentation Gregors VII. gegen Simonie und Laieninvestitur"*, *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* XLIX (1993), pp. 201-206.

<sup>8</sup> *Brunonis Astensis episcopi Sigiensis Homiliae*, in *Patrologia Latina*, J.P. Migne, CLXV, coll. 785-787, in particolare col. 785: *Et intravit Jesus in templum Dei, et ejecit omnes vendentes et ementes in templo, et mensas nummulariorum, et cathedras vendentium columbas evertit. Audite haec, Simoniaci, audite nefandi negotiatores; aut cessate a negotiis, aut exite de templo. Non enim unum, vel duos, sed indifferenter omnes et vendentes, et ementes Dominus templi ejecit de templo. Ipse et mensas nummulariorum, et cathedras vendentium columbas evertit. Vos nummularii estis, vos columbas venditis, vos sine nummo et pretio nihil agitis. Columbas enim vendunt, qui vel Ecclesias, vel sancti Spiritus gratias pretio largiuntur: horum autem cathedras Dominus evertit, ut per hoc eos non esse episcopos intelligamus. Et dicit eis: Scriptum est: Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur; vos autem fecistis eam speluncam latronum. Latrones enim vos estis: "Qui enim non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium, fur est et latro" (Joan. X, 1). Ostium enim Christus est, qui, quoniam per eum non intrastis, vestras cathedras evertit; per hoc enim ostium illi intrant, qui secundum canonum instituta constituuntur. Exite igitur de domo orationis, quae, quoniam vos in ea inhabitatis, facta est spelunca latronum. Per Bruno dei Segni, in assenza di una bibliografia recente, si veda ancora R. Grégoire, *Bruno de Segni. Exégète médiéval et théologien monastique*, Spoleto 1965. In particolare sulle sue posizioni in materia di simonia L. Melve, *Intentional Ethics and Hermeneutics in the Libellus de symoniacis: Bruno of Segni as a Papal Polemicist*, *Journal of Medieval History* XXXV (2009), pp. 77-96.*

predicazione contenute in altre tipologie di fonti, il bottino risulta ben più cospicuo, a segno di una proporzione tra parola scritta e parola declamata ben diversa da quella consegnataci dai discorsi effettivamente pervenuti attraverso gli omeliari.

Il conservatorismo dell'omiletica e la conseguente sua resistenza alla penetrazione delle istanze riformatrici risultano tanto più significativi, se solo si consideri quanto in quello stesso contesto l'agiografia, la storiografia, l'epistolografia, la canonistica e persino la prosa rigidamente formalizzata di diplomi e privilegi fossero stati piegati e modificati per corrispondere alle esigenze delle multiformi battaglie delle quali si compose quella guerra di parole, fino a diventare veri e propri strumenti di lotta politica e religiosa<sup>9</sup>. Sono, questi, gli scritti nei quali con maggiore frequenza e inequivocabile chiarezza si verifica quella che Ovidio Capitani definiva l'interpretazione pubblicistica dei canoni<sup>10</sup>. In effetti, quando di argomentazioni giuridiche si tratta, occorre rilevare l'assoluta quanto naturale preponderanza del dato canonistico, sebbene proprio autori come Pier Damiani mostrino una grande dimestichezza anche con il *Corpus iuris civilis*; fenomeno, questo, già studiato da Nino Tamassia in un libro del 1930<sup>11</sup>. Esemplare, al riguardo, la disputa tenutasi a Ravenna nel 1046 sui gradi di parentela che dovevano intercorrere tra i coniugi<sup>12</sup>. Nella lettera 19 al vescovo di Cesena Giovanni e ad Amelrico, arcidiacono di Ravenna, Pier Damiani riferisce che i *sapientes civitatis* ravenna-

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9 Per la storiografia O. Capitani, *Storiografia e riforma della Chiesa in Italia* (Arnolfo e Landolfo Seniore di Milano), in: *La storiografia altomedievale*, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, XVII, Spoleto 1970, pp. 557-629. Qualche osservazione sul peso delle esigenze pubblicistiche sulla produzione epistolografica e la diplomatistica imperiale N. D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza. Papato, impero e poteri locali nel secolo XI*, Napoli 2007, pp. 231-234.

10 O. Capitani, *L'interpretazione «pubblicistica» dei canoni come momento della definizione di istituti ecclesiastici* (secc. XI-XII), in: *Fonti medievali e problematica storiografica. Atti del congresso internazionale tenuto in occasione del 90° anniversario della fondazione dell'Istituto Storico italiano, 1883-1973* (Roma 22-27 ottobre 1973), I, Roma 1976, pp. 253-283, ristampato in Capitani, *Tradizione e interpretazione. Dialectiche ecclesiologiche del secolo XI*, Roma 1990, pp. 151-183, da cui cito per mia comodità.

11 N. Tamassia, *Le opere di San Pier Damiano. Note per la storia giuridica del secolo XI*, "Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti" LXII (1902-1903), pp. 881-908, ora anche in N. Tamassia, *Scritti di storia giuridica*, II, Padova 1967, pp. 649-670. Più in generale sulla dimensione giuridica nell'opera damiana si veda la bibliografia raccolta da U. Facchini, *Pier Damiani, un Padre del secondo millennio. Bibliografia 1007-2007*, Roma 2007, pp. ----. Per gli studi successivi N. D'Acunto, *Prospettive sulla figura e sull'opera di Pier Damiani nelle pubblicazioni per il millenario della sua nascita*, "Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia" LXIV (2010), pp. 538-549.

12 *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 1: (nr. 1-40), ed. K. Reindel, I, München 1983, in: MGH, *Epistolae*: II; IV, nr. 19, pp. 179-199. La vicenda meriterebbe maggiore attenzione in sede storiografica. Solo qualche osservazione in D. Levesley d'Avray, *Peter Damian, Consanguinity and Church Property*, in: *Intellectual life in the Middle Ages*, a cura di L. Smith, B. Ward, Woodbridge 1992, pp. 71-80.

ti, sollecitati da non meglio precisati emissari provenienti da Firenze, avevano esposto per iscritto (“rescripserint”) il proprio punto di vista, a cui egli racconta di avere resistito “nudis verbis”, contrastando l’insorgere di quella che per lui poteva addirittura essere definita come una “emergentem heresim”. Il circolo tra oralità e scrittura si chiudeva appunto con la lettera, che doveva fornire un compendio in risposta non ai pochi partecipanti alla disputa ma a tutti coloro i quali in futuro avessero sostenuto le tesi dei giuristi ravennati<sup>13</sup>. Il particolare clima politico che fa da sfondo a questa disputa, a pochi mesi dal sinodo di Sutri del 1046 che avrebbe sancito il pieno controllo dell’Impero sul papato, colloca queste rare discussioni liminari tra diritto canonico e diritto civile in un momento nel quale la collaborazione tra le potestà universali non lasciava certo presagire i successivi sviluppi della lotta per le investiture. Infatti Enrico III, principale sostenitore di Pier Damiani e responsabile della sua proiezione sulla grande scena politico-ecclesiastica della curia pontificia, rifletteva in sé l’immagine più compiuta di una cristianità a guida imperiale, che nel diritto romano si apprestava a trovare nuovi (per quanto antichi!) strumenti normativi. In un quadro siffatto un esperto giurista come Pier Damiani offriva una sorta di ponte verso la tradizione canonistica e metteva le proprie doti oratorie al servizio di un dibattito che si svolgeva all’interno degli ambienti ecclesiastici integrati nella *Reichskirche*.

Questo quadro sostanzialmente unitario cadde in frantumi sotto i colpi della lotta per le investiture, quando il gruppo dirigente della Chiesa romana, con lo scisma di Cadalo, prese sempre più le distanze dalla corte imperiale. In questo mutato contesto risultava molto significativa l’equivalenza tra la *Publizistik* e le *Streitschriften* della lotta per le investiture, appunto tra pubblicistica e libellistica, per effetto della già più volte evocata qualità delle nostre fonti, ma direi anche di una programmatica sottovalutazione della dimensione dell’oralità. Eppure, se solo per un attimo si squarci quel velo di Maia, riesce più agevole di capire come proprio nella dimensione dell’oralità risalta più vivacemente “il nesso che si stabilisce tra l’assunzione a livello di istituto, di definizione di concetto, di un certo determinato materiale canonistico e l’argomentazione polemica”. In altri termini, se insieme con Ovidio Capitani ci chiediamo “quanto *sia* stata coartata o costretta la sensibilità dei canonisti alla strumentalizzazione pubblicistica”<sup>14</sup>, occorre certamente fare riferimento anche alla produzione di opere storiche del periodo, come lo stesso studioso fece nell’analizzare la storiografia milanese sulla pataria, ma

13 *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 1, nr. 19, pp. 179-180: *nudis verbis ista dogmatizantibus restiti ac prout in expeditione licuerat emergentem, ut ita fatear, heresim canonicae testimoniis auctoritatis attrivi [...] Quo tamen vos minime contenti dignum esse decrevistis, ut quod ore protuleram, apicibus traderem, atque ita non paucis sed omnibus hoc errore nutantibus facili compendio responderem.*

14 O. Capitani, *Tradizione e interpretazione...*, pp. 155-158.



non si deve trascurare nell'analisi delle opere storiche<sup>15</sup> e delle fonti scritte di altra natura il fatto che la strumentalizzazione pubblicistica è contestuale molto spesso a pratiche discorsive e di pensiero chiaramente radicate entro il perimetro dell'oralità, a riprova di quanto osservavamo poc'anzi a proposito dell'importanza rivestita nel secolo XI da forme della comunicazione come le dispute pubbliche, le prediche e le esortazioni individuali e del loro, tutto sommato, limitato (almeno rispetto alla loro effettiva rilevanza) rispecchiamento nelle nostre fonti. Tale attenzione verso il nesso scrittura – oralità potrà, infatti, offrire un punto di vista nuovo e forse non prescindibile sulla libellistica, sulle modalità della sua sedimentazione e sulla sua capacità di cristallizzare e diffondere le più svariate idee e interpretazioni delle tematiche di volta in volta strumentalmente utilizzate nei più diversi contesti polemici, i quali erano – lo ripetiamo – connotati da una fortissima preponderanza dell'oralità.

Capitani non mancava di mettere in evidenza molti episodi emblematici della strumentalizzazione del diritto canonico nella pubblicistica del secolo XI, sebbene il risultato più significativo di tutto questo multiforme movimento fosse rappresentato, secondo lo studioso, proprio dal processo di armonizzazione dei canoni, al fine di pervenire alla costituzione di un sistema, pur attraverso "i mille dibattiti sugli aspetti pratici della lotta per le investiture"<sup>16</sup>. Tuttavia – ci chiediamo noi – ci può essere un diritto non strumentalizzato e costruito a prescindere dalle esigenze pratiche, solo nel nome di astratte esigenze di razionalizzazione del sistema stesso? Quando parliamo – come fanno gli estensori della griglia problematica sottesa ai lavori del convegno e al presente volume di atti che ne ha tratto origine – della "juridicisation du christianisme par la réforme ou plutôt la «révolution pontificale»" rischiamo inconsapevolmente di accettare uno schema secondo il quale la modernità si identifica con la progressiva affermazione di quello che con Max Weber definiamo lo stato burocratico, costruito su un sistema razionale di norme e di pratiche di governo. A mio sommo avviso invece la riforma del secolo XI dimostra al contrario che aveva qualche ragione Pierre Bourdieu, quando affermava che "ceux qui, comme Max Weber, ont opposé au droit magique ou charismatique du serment collectif ou de l'ordalie, un droit rationnel fondé sur la calculabilité et la prévisibilité, oublient que le droit le plus rigoureusement rationalisé n'est jamais qu'un acte de magie sociale qui réussit"<sup>17</sup>.

Se da questo piano generale veniamo al nostro tema specifico, allora osserviamo che la predicazione e le diverse forme di comunicazione pub-

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15 O. Capitani, *Storiografia e riforma della Chiesa in Italia...*

16 O. Capitani, *Tradizione e interpretazione...*

17 P. Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique*, Paris 2001, pp. 65-66.

blica messe al servizio dell'una o dell'altra causa attingevano le proprie argomentazioni al discorso giuridico, poiché "toutes les théologies religieuses et toutes les théodicées politiques ont tiré parti du faits que les capacités génératives de la langue peuvent excéder les limites de l'intuition ou de la vérification empirique pour produire des discours *formellement* corrects mais sémantiquement vides". Proprio per colmare questo "vuoto di realtà", esse fanno ricorso al diritto, che, invece, è "une parole créatrice, qui fait exister ce qu'elle énonce. Elle est la limite vers laquelle prétendent tous les énoncés performatifs [...] parole divine, de droit divin, qui [...] fait surgir à l'existence ce qu'elle énonce, à l'opposé de tous les énoncés dérivés, constatifs, simples enregistrements d'un donné préexistant"<sup>18</sup>. Da qui derivano sia le continue interferenze tra teologia e canonistica rilevabili anche nei discorsi in vario modo riportati nei *Libelli de lite*<sup>19</sup>, sia la sostanziale indifferenza delle collezioni canoniche pregrazianee verso tale distinzione<sup>20</sup>.

Nelle collezioni canoniche pregrazianee degli ultimi decenni del secolo XI avvennero grandi recuperi di materiale patristico, al punto che per la collezione in 74 titoli e quella in 183 titoli edita da Giuseppe Motta Giorgio Picasso ha evocato il paradosso che "non si tratti più di collezioni canoniche, bensì di florilegi patristici, se ci si ferma al titolo": *Diversorum patrum sententiae*. Lo stesso studioso ha poi osservato che i Padri in quel contesto "sono visti innanzi tutto – come ribadisce Graziano – quali interpreti, esegeti della sacra pagina"<sup>21</sup>. Da queste concomitanti esigenze di natura pratica e culturale trae origine l'intricato tessuto di fonti patristiche, argomentazioni giuridiche e citazioni bibliche che sostanzia la comunicazione pubblica in vario modo legata alla riforma.

#### 4. LE FORME DELLA STRUMENTALIZZAZIONE CANONISTICA NELLA LOTTA DELLA PATARIA MILANESE

A giudicare dai discorsi tenuti in una *querelle* come quella milanese già ricordata, oppure dall'eco lasciata dalle numerose dispute sostenute da Pier Damiani sui più svariati problemi giuridici che componevano l'agenda

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> O. Capitani, *Tradizione e interpretazione...*, p. 164.

<sup>20</sup> G. Picasso, *Fonti patristiche tra teologia e diritto canonico nella prima metà del secolo XII*, in: *L'Europa dei secoli XI e XII fra novità e tradizione. Atti della decima Settimana internazionale di studio* (Mendola, 25-29 agosto 1986), Milano 1989, pp. 21-35, ristampato in G. Picasso, *Sacri canones et monastica regula. Disciplina canonica e vita monastica nella società medievale*, Milano 2006, pp. 85-102 (da cui cito). Ancora utile il repertorio approntato da L. Kery, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages, ca. 400-1140: A Biographical Guide to the Manuscripts and Literature*, Washington D.C. 1999.

<sup>21</sup> G. Picasso, *Fonti patristiche tra teologia e diritto canonico...*, p. 91.

politico-ecclesiastica dei decenni centrali del secolo XI, colpisce sul piano prettamente metodologico la povertà degli espedienti retorici ed esegetici utilizzati: l'isolamento dal contesto di una stringa di testo utile a sostenere la propria posizione, evitando accuratamente i segmenti contermini e potenzialmente scomodi, oppure – sebbene meno di frequente – il vero e proprio stravolgimento del significato del testo attraverso sapienti, mirate e del tutto consapevoli alterazioni delle fonti. Ciò avviene sia per le fonti bibliche sia, e in misura maggiore, per quelle canonistiche e patristiche, categorie, queste ultime, che si identificano almeno dal punto di vista “materiale” nel senso chiarito dal Ryan, essendo noti gli *excerpta patrum* in massima parte attraverso le collezioni canoniche<sup>22</sup>. Insomma, accanto a un indubbio lavoro di riorganizzazione del magmatico patrimonio normativo su base sempre più razionale, che pure preludeva alla silloge graziana e alla successiva nascita di una vera e propria scienza canonistica, l'interpretazione pubblicistica dei canoni fiorita nelle dispute del secolo XI era condizionata da strategie comunicative rispondenti a esigenze prima di tutto retoriche, poiché quelle discussioni non venivano combattute nel chiuso di una biblioteca, ove la disponibilità di testi e la calma necessaria per interpretarli avrebbe consentito procedimenti di analisi razionale ben altrimenti elaborati.

Discorso teologico e argomentazioni giuridiche si sorreggono vicendevolmente, poiché alla fonte remota tanto dell'uno quanto delle altre, la Bibbia, viene riconosciuto un enorme potenziale normativo. Lo dimostra a sufficienza l'esame delle *auctoritates* (le lettere di san Paolo e i Padri, in *primis* Ambrogio) citate nella disputa tra i patarini Arialdo e Landolfo e i rappresentanti del clero milanese uxurato, di cui Landolfo Seniore fornisce quasi un resoconto stenografico<sup>23</sup>. Infatti nella *Historia Mediolanensis* il cronista, ispirato da una profondissima consapevolezza delle prerogative della Chiesa ambrosiana e della specificità del suo clero uxurato<sup>24</sup>, riferisce che per ordine di Erlembaldo era stato convocato un incontro nel quale i rappresentanti di entrambe le parti, purché ecclesiastici “*natura et scientia maiores*”, potessero esporre le ragioni dei patarini e dei loro avversari ricorrendo a “*capitulis et sententiis*” e usando le sentenze dell'apostolo Paolo e dei canoni (“*apostoli Pauli et canonum*”), così da pervenire a una soluzione del conflitto<sup>25</sup>.

22 J.J. Ryan, *Saint Peter Damiani and His Canonical Sources. A Preliminary Study in the Antecedents of the Gregorian Reform*, Toronto 1956.

23 Landulphus Senior, *Historia Mediolanensis*, edd. L.C. Bethmann, W. Wattenbach, in: MGH, *Scriptores*, VIII, Hannoverae 1848, pp. 89-94.

24 G. Rossetti, *Il matrimonio del clero nella società altomedievale*, in: *Il matrimonio nella società altomedievale*, Spoleto 1977, pp. 473-554; C. Alzati, *Ambrosiana ecclesia. Studi su la chiesa milanese e l'ecumene cristiana fra tarda antichità e medioevo*, Milano 1993.

25 Landulphus Senior, *Historia Mediolanensis*, p. 89: *Interea aliquantis transactis diebus, jubente tamen ipso Herlembaldo, convenerunt in secretario utriusque partis ordinis tantum ecclesiastici*

L'apertura del dibattito spettò ad Arialdo e a Landolfo, i quali esordirono richiamandosi a 2 Cor. 5, 17 ("Vetera transierunt, et facta sunt omnia nova") per ricavarne un principio di fondamentale importanza: "Quod olim in primitiva ecclesia a patribus sanctis concessum est, modo indubitanter prohibetur"<sup>26</sup>. Il riferimento implicito è ovviamente alla disciplina che regolava il matrimonio del clero, ma ora importa rilevare come nel *sermo* dei capi patarini la *forma Ecclesiae primitivae* perda del tutto la sua carica di esemplarità vincolante per l'attualità, perfettamente in linea con una concezione del moderno tipica dei riformatori radicali e che avrebbe trovato in Gregorio VII la sua più lucida tematizzazione, laddove le fonti di parte imperiale insistevano sulla continuità (in primis su quella giuridico-istituzionale!) quale cardine delle strategie di autolegittimazione del potere regio<sup>27</sup>.

La stessa linea, quest'ultima, che sorregge gli argomenti dei tradizionalisti ambrosiani, le cui ragioni troviamo illustrate nel *sermo* di Guiberto, arcidiacono della Chiesa milanese, "utriusque linguae magister", esperto, cioè, di greco e di latino. Nella sua orazione-sermone egli difende il matrimonio del clero ricorrendo a una rigorosa ecclesiologia di comunione: "omnes tamen laici et clerici, quicunque sunt filii Ecclesiae, sacerdotes sunt [...] Ungimur enim in sacerdotium sanctum, offerentes nosmetipsos Deo hostias spirituales". La dottrina del sacerdozio comune dei fedeli consentiva, infatti, di stemperare le differenze tra chierici e laici, configurando un *Priesterbild* che i patarini contrastavano per sostituirlo con un'immagine del sacerdote più vicina al modello monastico<sup>28</sup>. Ne conseguiva per gli antipatarini il divieto di troncare i legittimi matrimoni dei chierici, poiché "qui dimittit uxorem, carnem suam scindit, dividit corpus"<sup>29</sup>.

Motivazioni non dissimili si ritrovano nell'intervento del diacono Ambrogio, fiero difensore delle ragioni del clero milanese, che ribadisce il valore normativo della Bibbia e dei Padri a proposito della netta distinzione tra verginità e condizione chiericale<sup>30</sup>. Proprio su questo aspetto si appuntano le critiche di Arialdo e di Landolfo, i quali sostengono le ragioni della purezza rituale quale presupposto del mantenimento dello stato sacerdotale. Interessa da vicino il tema di questo contributo il confronto tra le molte *auctoritates* citate

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*natura et scientia majores, quatenus super hoc negotium capitulis et sententiis alterutrum rimarentur, et quaecumque pars ratione convinceretur, alteri subjacens obediret.*

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>27</sup> Su questo tema si veda *Il moderno nel medioevo*, a cura di A. De Vincentiis, Roma 2010, in particolare G.M. Cantarella, *La modernità in Gregorio VII*, pp. 33-46 e N. D'Acunto, *Il moderno negato: terminologia della modernità e concetti temporali nelle fonti di parte imperiale...*, pp. 47-60.

<sup>28</sup> J. Laudage, *Priesterbild und Reformpapsttum im 11. Jahrhundert*, Köln-Wien 1984.

<sup>29</sup> Landulphus Senior, *Historia Mediolanensis*, p. 90.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, pp. 90-91.

con precisione dagli antipatarini (in primis Ambrogio, Agostino e Girolamo, i cui canoni ebbero larghissima diffusione attraverso le collezioni canoniche) e la vaghezza del riferimento addotto da Arialdo e Landolfo: "Ita quid sancti canones dicant scitis, maxime cum dicit *in quodam loco*: «Sacerdotes qui duxerunt uxorem, deponantur»"<sup>31</sup>, a segno della difficoltà per i patarini di trovare nella tradizione i documenti a sostegno della loro rivoluzionaria concezione della Chiesa e del sacerdozio.

Questa specie di accerchiamento dei patarini viene completato dal prete decumano Andrea, che muove un'accusa precisa ai suoi avversari: quella di avere provocato una guerra civile nella Chiesa milanese che da lungo tempo il clero reggeva "pacifice et caste", aprendo così le porte con la loro intransigenza al disordine morale del clero: "Enim et nos multis cum temporibus et ordinem nostrum pacifice ac caste degentes regebamus. Vituperando nos grave bellum civile nunc excitasti [...] Vetando unam et propriam uxorem, centum fornicatrices ac adulteria multa concedis".

Il chierico milanese si dice d'accordo con l'affermazione di Arialdo per la quale il sacerdote che si sia sposato merita la deposizione, ma lo stesso non vale per un uomo coniugato che riceva l'ordinazione, la cui situazione è perfettamente legittima qualora sia "unius uxoris virum"<sup>32</sup>. Ancora una volta la tradizione e il diritto vengono evocati a sostegno dei matrimoni legittimi, contro i quali i patarini si erano scagliati solo con la forza e la violenza<sup>33</sup>.

Questi *sermones*, pronunciati "in secretario" cioè nel chiuso di una sacrestia, mostrano un volto della vicenda patarinica del tutto diverso da quello consegnatoci dallo stesso Landolfo Seniore nel seguito della sua narrazione, ove alla pacata dialettica teologico-giuridica subentra un'oratoria pubblica finalizzata alla sobillazione del popolo, simboleggiata dal patarino Landolfo che, fremente di rabbia, raduna il popolo nel teatro della città per rivolgergli una "orationem excitativam". Di quel discorso significativamente il cronista non riferisce i dettagli ma solo l'esito: l'indignazione generale contro il clero e la decisione di passare alla violenza per risolvere il problema<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 91.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 94: *Dixisti: "Sacerdos qui duxerit uxorem, deponatur". Bene dicis, et ego dico, si post acceptum sacerdotium duxerit uxorem, sui ordinis periculo subiaceat, sin autem in sacerdotio unius uxoris virum inveneris, quid separas quod non licet? Cur enim dividis corpus? Da mihi Ambrosium sanctum doctorem nostrum, qui dividat uxorem ordinis nostri a viro, altero nolente; et credamus semperque teneamus.*

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, p. 93: *Separasti nos ab uxoribus nostris, tu qui es Apostolo justior, sanctior prophetis, mundior patriarchis, non justitia, non caritate, imo lanceis et ensibus durissimisque injuriis, quas legaliter ab initio christianitatis nostri antecessores, sibi et nobis vim propter vitium naturae facientes, tradiderunt.*

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 94: *Landulfus [...] furialiter ex secretario in theatrum prosiliens, omnibus convocatis plebeicis orationem incitativam permultum super ordines universos, astante tamen Herlembaldo,*

La qualità stessa dell'impiego di argomentazioni giuridiche era condizionata in misura decisiva dalle condizioni effettive in cui le dispute si svolgevano, in primis la necessità di rispondere alle affermazioni degli avversari oralmente, in tempo reale e in contesti caratterizzati talora da una fortissima pressione emotiva. L'eco di tale tensione era talmente forte da oltrepassare perfino il filtro dell'inevitabile rilettura e ripulitura che la trasposizione per iscritto di quelle discussioni imponeva.

Che il clima a Milano fosse particolarmente rovente lo si capisce anche dalla relazione scritta da Pier Damiani di ritorno dalla legazione del 1059, laddove l'Avellanita riferisce che solo grazie alla sua concione sul *privilegium Romanae ecclesiae* riuscì miracolosamente a placare il popolo, dopo che Guido da Velate e i suoi collaboratori avevano fatto leva sul patriottismo ambrosiano per delegittimare l'intervento pontificio a sostegno della pataria. In effetti qualche dubbio sussiste circa l'effettiva possibilità che l'esaltazione del primato romano e la subordinazione della Chiesa di Ambrogio a quella di Pietro tranquillizzasse l'infuocata platea ambrosiana. Troppo evidente risulta il salto logico che Pier Damiani ci chiede di sopportare in questo caso, dopo averci raccontato di avere temuto per la sua stessa vita a causa dell'ira dei Milanesi<sup>35</sup>. Siamo evidentemente in presenza di una oculata rivisitazione degli avvenimenti, alla quale non è estranea la necessità di approfittare della relazione sull'ambasceria per soddisfare la precedente richiesta del destinatario, l'arcidiacono Ildebrando, di una sorta di compendio delle motivazioni a sostegno della dottrina del primato romano. Da qui un testo ove la cronaca si interrompe bruscamente per lasciare spazio a una zeppa contenente una versione molto verosimilmente rimaneggiata del sermone tenuto da Pier Damiani di fronte alla ribollente assemblea milanese. Un bell'esempio, anche questo, delle cautele metodologiche necessarie per leggere in controluce quelle che solo in apparenza costituiscono una innocente *reportatio* dei sermoni dell'età della riforma ecclesiastica.

## 5. IL VESCOVO DI FIRENZE PIETRO MEZZABARBA A GIUDIZIO

Meno drammatico, ma pur sempre emotivamente molto carico, ci appare il clima nel quale si svolse la discussione sinodale della Quaresima del 1067, che doveva giudicare la contestazione mossa dai Vallombrosani contro il vescovo di Firenze Pietro Mezzabarba<sup>36</sup>. Perfino dalle agiografie antiche di Giovanni

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*lacrimabiliter edidit. Quo audito, Herlembaldo adortante et tamquam rex imperante, in manibus populi super sacerdotes illico fit concursus. Quod si ipsos in secretario aut in ecclesia, in quibus nullam exhibebant reverentiam, comperissent, profecto ipso die gladiis et fustibus universos interemissent.*

<sup>35</sup> *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 2, nr. 65, pp. 231-232.

<sup>36</sup> M. D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza...*, pp. 142-144.



Gualberto traspare che furono tutt'altro che amichevoli i toni usati contro i "rivoluzionari" monaci toscani, apostrofati pubblicamente dallo stesso Pier Damiani con un poco lusinghiero paragone con le "locuste che devastano il giardino della santa Chiesa" di *Esodo* 10, 5<sup>37</sup>. Gioverà ricordare che la stessa immagine ricorre nella lettera 146 dello stesso cardinale-eremita, una sorta di riassunto delle posizioni da lui sostenute nel corso della legazione informale da lui svolta a Firenze proprio per dirimere l'*affaire* Mezzabarba<sup>38</sup>. La lettera mira a sintetizzare la posizione moderata di Pier Damiani in materia di ordinazioni simoniache. Lo stesso autore ci tiene a notare la perfetta corrispondenza degli argomenti addotti per iscritto rispetto a quanto aveva sostenuto nei suoi discorsi pubblici a Firenze: "Haec itaque si oblit non estis, omnia me vivis vocibus proferentem frequenter audistis. Non enim alia scribimus quam quae locuti sumus"<sup>39</sup>.

Tale circolazione degli argomenti e perfino delle immagini utilizzati per iscritto nella lettera 146 e oralmente sia a Firenze sia nel sinodo romano del 1067 apre uno spaccato significativo sulle modalità con le quali la dimensione della scrittura interagiva con quella dell'oralità nella comunicazione pubblica del secolo XI, che per il resto risulta a dir poco avaro di indicazioni esplicite in tal senso.

Anche l'anonimo autore della *Vita* di Giovanni Gualberto conservata presso la Nazionale di Firenze si mostra molto attento alla dimensione comunicativa. Secondo l'agiografo, Alessandro II per esempio motivò la sua simpatia per i Vallombrosani proprio sottolineando la semplicità (accanto alla retta intenzione) con la quale essi esponevano le loro ragioni<sup>40</sup>. Di tenore opposto il giudizio di Rainaldo di Como, vescovo imperiale ostile al radicalismo dei monaci toscani, con cui ingaggiò una vera e propria battaglia verbale ("multam verborum contentionem"), culminata con una provocazione atta a semplificare fino all'estremo la problematica giuridica dell'idoneità ad amministrare il culto dei sacerdoti uxorati: due preti celebrano la messa; uno è casto e buono, l'altro ha giaciuto la notte precedente con sua sorella.

<sup>37</sup> *Vita sancti Iohannis Gualberti auctore discipulo eius anonymo*, ed. F. Baethgen, in: MGH, *Scriptores*, XXX/2, Lipsiae 1926-1934, pp. 1106-1107: *Tunc Petrus Damianus episcopus Hostiensis, ut michi videtur compulsus et rogatus ab emulis adversae partis, obstitit nostrae parti, secundum quod audivi. Et surgens locutus est antedominum papam dicens: "Domne pater, isti sunt locustae, quae depascuntur viriditatem sanctae ecclesiae; veniat auster et perferat eas in mare rubrum"*.

<sup>38</sup> *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 3: (nr. 91-150), ed. K. Reindel, München 1989, in: MGH, *Epistolae*: II; IV, nr. 146, p. 542: *Huiusmodi quippe genus hominum ranis sive locustis merito comparatur, quia sicut Aegyptum illa tunc animalia percusserunt, ita per hos nunc vastatur aecclesia*.

<sup>39</sup> *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 3, nr. 146, p. 534.

<sup>40</sup> *Vita sancti Iohannis Gualberti auctore discipulo eius anonymo*, p. 1107: *Domnus vero papa, contemperando se utrisque, benigne respondit dicens: "Isti homines non omnino sunt refellendi, quia boni homines sunt et ea, quae dicunt, simpliciter et bona intentione locuntur"*.

Di quale dei due l'eucarestia è migliore? Dietro il tranello ordito da Rainaldo di Como, che ricorda da vicino analoghe trappole teologiche approntate a danno dei Valdesi nel secolo successivo<sup>41</sup>, sta naturalmente il tentativo di delegittimare l'avversario dimostrandone l'inadeguatezza a sostenere il dibattito. La semplicità dell'eloquio dei Vallombrosani elogiata da Alessandro II viene mutata di segno fino a diventare la prova della loro "quasi ereticità". Infatti Rodolfo, abate di Moscheto, cade nella trappola e risponde che quello consacrato dal prete incestuoso semplicemente non è il corpo di Cristo<sup>42</sup>. Il tranello ha funzionato e il sinodo prende una piega ostile ai Vallombrosani, che da accusatori del vescovo simoniacò si trasformano in imputati, "utpote agni inter lupos", potendo contare solo sull'aiuto di Ildebrando, che condivideva molta parte del radicalismo della loro *veritas*<sup>43</sup>.

## 6. UNA FONTE QUASI COMPLETAMENTE PERDUTA: I DISCORSI SINODALI

Il testo agiografico ora citato offre un osservatorio privilegiato sul sinodo quaresimale del 1067, mentre per le altre assemblee consimili dello stesso periodo le fonti sono assai scarse e la cronologia dei problemi in esse trattati si presenta estremamente fluida<sup>44</sup>. Ciò vale anche per i sinodi dell'inizio degli anni sessanta, a cui si riferisce però un passaggio famoso del *Liber ad amicum* di Bonizone di Sutri. Questi narra che Adelmanno, vescovo di Brescia, di ritorno dal sinodo del 1059 o del 1060, contrariamente a quanto avevano fatto gli altri vescovi lombardi, ostili alle norme sul celibato del clero e sulla simonia, radunò i sacerdoti della sua diocesi per dare pubblica lettura dei «decreta» di Niccolò II, ma fu bastonato, fino quasi a morire, dai suoi stessi

<sup>41</sup> Walter Map, *Swaghi di corte*, a cura di F. Latella, Parma 1990, I, pp. 178-183.

<sup>42</sup> *Vita sancti Iohannis Gualberti auctore discipulo eius anonymo*, p. 1107: *Inter omnes autem Rainaldus episcopus Cumanus vehementius restitit nostris. Nam sicut ipsum domnum Rodulfum abbatem referentem audiui, post multam verborum contentionem proposuit idem episcopus hanc questionem domno Rodulfo dicens: "Ecce dicamus, quod sint hic duo presbyteri, unus bonus et castus, alter vero preterita cum sorore sua iacuit nocte. Qui hodie ambo celebrant missam. Dic ergo, cuius horum sacrificantium corpus Domini videtur tibi esse melius?". Respondit domnus Rodulfus: "Neutrum dico esse melius vel deterius, sed dico illud, quod tanti conscius reatus optulit, non esse corpus Domini". At ille indignatus respondit: "Nunquam tecum amplius loqui volo". Et abbas illi: "Nec ego tecum".*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 1107: *Cum itaque pene omnes furerent contra monachos et dignos morte iudicarent eos, qui temerarie contra prelatos ecclesiae armari auderent, ceperunt nostri utpote agni inter lupos vexari et turbari nimis et clamare ad Dominum. Interea surrexit in concilio quidam vir egregius et excellentissimus alter amaliel, scilicet Ildebrandus monachus et archidiaconus ecclesiae Romanae, qui non pedetemptim ratiocinando, sed aperte atque fortissime defendit monachos contra omnium opinionem. Et quia placuit sibi, ut fieret defensor Christi, factus est postea vicarius Christi, hoc est papa urbis Romae. Nam quia Christus est veritas, cum defendendo testatur veritatem, testis extitit Christi.*

<sup>44</sup> Prezioso e a questo proposito esemplare *Die Konzilien Deutschlands und Reichsitaliens 1023-1059 (Concilia aevi Saxonici et Salici MXXIII-MLIX)*, ed. D. Jasper, in: MGH, *Concilia*, VIII, Hannover 2010.

chierici, evidentemente poco contenti di realizzare quelle riforme<sup>45</sup>. Dobbiamo immaginare che in quei casi la lettura dei decreti sinodali fosse accompagnata dalla predicazione atta a spiegarne la *ratio* sul piano giuridico, anche se l'esito violento di questo sfiorato assassinio nella cattedrale lascia pochi dubbi circa la disponibilità del clero bresciano a farsi persuadere, fosse pure con discorsi infarciti di citazioni canonistiche.

Negli stessi tutt'altro che tranquilli sinodi romani, che rispecchiavano le profonde differenze dottrinali e politiche presenti all'interno del mondo ecclesiastico, vescovi e grandi abati mettevano a frutto, accanto alla loro preparazione canonistica, anche le doti di eloquenza necessarie per sostenere le proprie idee. È interessante osservare a tale proposito che di una figura poliedrica come Pier Damiani nel *Liber ad amicum*, scritto a poco più di un decennio dalla morte dell'Avellanita, il già citato Bonizone di Sutri ricordasse solo che era un "vir eloquentissimus"<sup>46</sup>. Un ricordo a dir poco riduttivo e deludente, visto che il Damiani era stato, in quanto cardinale-vescovo di Ostia, al vertice della gerarchia ecclesiastica, punto di riferimento indiscusso per il monachesimo occidentale del tempo suo, giurista esperto e grande scrittore. Eppure quel richiamo di Bonizone alle sue doti oratorie non è casuale e anzi certamente costituisce un indice dell'importanza che aveva assunto agli occhi dei riformatori del secolo XI la parola declamata e il monopolio che su di essa doveva esercitare la gerarchia ecclesiastica, a fronte di una concorrenza laicale che si faceva sempre più pressante e per molti versi pericolosa<sup>47</sup>.

## 7. UN GIURISTA E PREDICATORE LAICO: CENCIO DI GIOVANNI TIGNOSO

Lo stesso Pier Damiani per esempio apprezzava il prefetto urbano Cencio di Giovanni Tignoso per la capacità di coniugare l'amministrazione della giustizia con una forma di comunicazione pubblica a metà strada fra l'oratoria civile e la predicazione<sup>48</sup>. Infatti Cencio, il giorno dell'Epifania del 1067, aveva parlato ai fedeli non come un *praefectus reipublice*, ma piuttosto come un

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<sup>45</sup> *Bonizonis episcopi Sutrii Liber ad amicum*, ed. E. Dümmler, in: MGH, *Libelli de lite*, I, Hannoverae 1891, p. 594: *Concilio igitur rite celebrato episcopi Longobardi domum remeantes, cum magnas a concubinitis sacerdotibus et levitis accepissent pecunias, decreta papae celaverunt preter unum, Brixensem scilicet episcopum; qui veniens Brixiam, cum decreta papae publice recitasset, a clericis verberatus, fere occisus est*. Commento il brano in N. D'Acunto, *La solitudine di Adelmanno, scholasticus di Liegi e vescovo di Brescia (secolo XI)*, "Brixia sacra. Memorie storiche della diocesi di Brescia", terza serie XIV (2009), pp. 179-186.

<sup>46</sup> *Bonizonis episcopi Sutrii Liber ad amicum*, p. 588.

<sup>47</sup> Incentrato sull'epoca immediatamente successiva ma utile anche per il secolo XI R. Zersfass, *Der Streit um die Laienpredigt. Eine pastoralgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Verständnis des Predigtamtes und zur seiner Entwicklung im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1974.

<sup>48</sup> Su questa figura e sulle problematiche ad essa connesse si veda D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza...*, pp. 47-83.

*sacerdos ecclesiae* e, quando parlava lui, “*nec saecularis hominis verbum, sed apostolicae praedicationis audiebatur eulogium*”<sup>49</sup>. La dottrina del sacerdozio regale dei fedeli consentiva al Damiani di saldare i diversi piani dell’esperienza di questo funzionario pontificio, autorizzato a declinare in maniera affatto particolare l’*officium exhortationis*, ma pur sempre tenuto a conservare la *mensura* del suo *ordo* di appartenenza e a non sacrificare sull’altare di un *proprium commodum* spirituale il perseguimento attraverso l’attività giudiziaria della *communem salutem plebis*: “*Iustitiam ergo facere quid est aliud quam orare?*”<sup>50</sup>. Risulta chiaro, in questa pagina come nelle lettere al marchese di Toscana Goffredo il Barbuto, la complementarietà ma anche la distinzione dei compiti propri della gerarchia ecclesiastica e dei detentori del potere politico, inteso prima di tutto in termini giurisdizionali, in ordine al dovere di correggere i reprobri attraverso l’applicazione rigorosa delle leggi e l’esercizio della violenza pubblica<sup>51</sup>. Il prefetto Cencio incarnava agli occhi di Pier Damiani una sorta di modello perfettamente speculare rispetto al sacerdote, perché aggiungeva alle prerogative giurisdizionali le sue indubbie capacità oratorie, del tutto assimilabili a quelle del buon predicatore. Di questo modello lo stesso Avellanita scorgeva tuttavia la pericolosità sul piano ecclesiologico, data la difficoltà per la gerarchia ecclesiastica di rinunciare al monopolio della parola pubblica o comunque di stabilire i limiti della comunicazione pubblica dei laici, la quale, sebbene chiusa entro il recinto dell’esortazione morale, rischiava fatalmente di sconfinare in ambiti dottrinali e dogmatici potenzialmente forieri di conflitti.

## 8. MISCELE IMPREVEDIBILI: PREDICAZIONE, DIRITTO E RIFORMA

In effetti nel secolo XI la predicazione (nel senso più esteso possibile), la dimensione giuridica e l’impegno per la riforma della Chiesa furono miscelati in maniera a dir poco imprevedibile. Inedito era nella storia europea soprattutto il coinvolgimento dei laici e delle collettività cittadine in questo vasto moto di rinnovamento di carattere organizzativo e disciplinare prima ancora che morale. L’equivoco di una Chiesa feudale immorale, generato e alimentato da storiografie di segno apologetico paradossalmente opposto, non consentiva infatti di capire che i riformatori non si opposero ai sostenitori di un sistema lontano dalla genuina ispirazione evangelica<sup>52</sup>. Si trattava piuttosto dello

<sup>49</sup> *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 3, nr. 145, p. 528.

<sup>50</sup> *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 4: (nr. 151-180), ed. K. Reindel, München 1993, in: *MGH, Epistolae*, II; IV, nr. 155, p. 71.

<sup>51</sup> D’Acunto, *I laici nella Chiesa e nella società secondo Pier Damiani...*, pp. 305-320.

<sup>52</sup> Su questo risulta ancora utile C. Violante, “*Chiesa feudale e riforme in Occidente (secc. X-XII)*”, Spoleto 1999.

scontro tra due sistemi, entrambi perfettamente legittimi. Anche in questo la predicazione dell'età della riforma si rivela del tutto in linea con i risultati degli studi dai quali emerge la sostanziale omogeneità del materiale canonistico utilizzato nella libellistica, che si poteva piegare indifferentemente a sostegno delle ragioni tanto dei riformatori di parte gregoriana che dei loro avversari<sup>53</sup>.

Le agitazioni patariniche e le risposte messe a punto dai "tradizionalisti" lombardi, così come le sollevazioni orchestrate dai Vallombrosani contro alcuni vescovi toscani forniscono il materiale più ricco per chi voglia osservare la predicazione durante la lotta per le investiture, ma non dobbiamo né possiamo lasciarci trarre in inganno dall'indubbia attrattiva esercitata da questi episodi. La parola predicata fu impiegata anche in ambiti e con modalità affatto diversi che vanno dai già citati sinodi quaresimali, alle discussioni tenute nel chiuso delle corti marchionali come quella di Goffredo il Barbuto o quella di Adelaide di Susa. Mentre alla corte di Tuscia l'argomento principale di discussione verteva sulla natura della simonia<sup>54</sup>, nella marca arduinica di Torino teneva banco il celibato ecclesiastico. In entrambi i casi troviamo l'alto clero locale, inquadrato nelle strutture delle chiese marchionali, impegnato a difendere, oralmente e canoni alla mano, le concezioni "tradizionali", a fronte di una nuova e diversa visione tanto del legame che intercorreva tra patrimonio e *officium* ecclesiastico, quanto del *Priesterbild* forgiato a imitazione del modello monastico<sup>55</sup>.

## 9. METODI NUOVI DELLA COMUNICAZIONE PUBBLICA PER UNA VERITAS NUOVA

Anche la già citata discussione semi-pubblica sostenuta "in secretario" da Arialdo e Landolfo contro i chierici designati per sostenere le ragioni del clero ambrosiano rese evidente la frattura fra tradizione e modernità: *modo*, adesso, cioè allora, le antiche leggi non valevano più. Nuova era infatti la *veritas* predicata dai patarini e nuovi dovevano essere i metodi della loro propaganda, tesa a ottenere il consenso delle collettività cittadine. Di ciò appare pienamente avvertito anche Andrea di Strumi, quando nella *Vita* di Arialdo riferisce che furono diffuse in città delle "cartulae" (oggi diremmo forse dei volantini) e furono fatti suonare dei campanelli per richiamare l'attenzione sulle *novae praedicationes* per ascoltare le quali il popolo, *semper*

53 Z. Zafarana, *Ricerche sul "Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda"*, "Studi medievali" 3a s., VII (1966), pp. 638-643, ora in Z. Zafarana, *Da Gregorio VII a Bernardino da Siena. Saggi di storia medievale*, Perugia-Firenze 1987, pp. 30-35.

54 D'Acunto, *I laici nella Chiesa e nella società secondo Pier Damiani...*, pp. 321-329.

55 Si veda ora C. Ciccopiedi, *Diocesi e riforme nel Medioevo. Orientamenti ecclesiastici e religiosi dei vescovi nel Piemonte dei secoli X e XI*, Cantalupa (Torino) 2012.

*novorum avidus*, si ammassava<sup>56</sup>. Infatti lo stesso Arialdo che, quando era “in secretario”, aveva utilizzato le medesime tecniche argomentative dei suoi avversari, sapeva benissimo che la sottigliezza delle distinzioni giuridiche mal si adattava alla predicazione nelle piazze, ove occorreva semplificare i contenuti. Da qui derivava la riduzione in termini morali di tutta la complessa discussione sul celibato del clero e sulla simonia. Per i patarini la vita austera dei *doctores* sostituiva la *lectio*, che i laici non erano in grado di capire e lo spessore ecclesiologico della discussione sul matrimonio del clero doveva essere ridotto nei termini molto più accessibili della necessità di garantire la purezza rituale dei sacerdoti.

Nella stessa prospettiva occorre leggere la *mise en scène* orchestrata da Erlembaldo ai danni degli *ordinarii* milanesi radunati a forza il sabato santo del 1066 nel teatro della città. Strappati dalle loro mani i vasi contenenti il crisma che solo due giorni prima Guido da Velate aveva consacrato, il patarino sparse il crisma per terra e lo calpestò, come se fosse fango (“quasi lutum”), come riferisce un indignato Landolfo Seniore<sup>57</sup>. Quella profanazione non mirava a negare il valore dei sacramenti in generale, bensì a destrutturare il legame tra significante e significato<sup>58</sup>, poiché secondo i patarini non valevano i sacramenti amministrati da (quelli che secondo loro erano) sacerdoti simoniaci e nicolaiti. Alle discussioni condotte su base razionale si sostituiva una *mise en scène* che in maniera a-logica rendeva immediatamente evidente il punto di vista dei *radicals* su un tema che non per questo perdeva la sua connotazione eminentemente giuridica e teologica.

Del tutto simili, anche se più articolate, furono le tecniche messe a punto dai Vallombrosani a Firenze. Bertoldo di Reichenau riferisce che anche i monaci di Giovanni Gualberto durante la polemica contro Pietro Mezzabarba “scriptis quibusdam publice protestati sunt”, dichiarando nulli i sacramenti amministrati dai loro avversari<sup>59</sup>. Quali fossero questi “scripti” non è chiaro, anche se viene spontaneo di pensare all’*Adversus simoniacos* di Umberto di Silva Candida. La parola scritta conservava intatta la sua autorevolezza, come conferma l’invito rivolto da Romualdo di Ravenna in tutt’altro contesto ai

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<sup>56</sup> *Andreae abbatis Strumensis Vita sancti Arialdi*, a cura di F. Baethgen, in: MGH, *Scriptores*, XXX/2, Lipsiae 1926-1934, p. 182: *per urbem mittuntur cartulae, tinniunt tintinnabula, nuntiantur novae praedicationes, ad quas populus semper novorum avidus cumulatur*.

<sup>57</sup> Landulphus Senior, *Historia Mediolanensis*, p. 96-97.

<sup>58</sup> Su questo tema mi sia permesso di rinviare a N. D’Acunto, *La profanazione dei simboli religiosi*, in: *Religiosità e civiltà. Le comunicazioni simboliche (secoli IX-XIII). Le “Settimane internazionali della Mendola”*. Nuova serie (Domodossola, 20-23 settembre 2007), a cura di G. Andenna, Milano 2009, pp. 407-422.

<sup>59</sup> *Bertholdi Chronicon*, ad. a. 1067, in: *Die Chroniken Bertholds von Reichenau und Bernolds von Konstanz 1054-1100*, ed. I.S. Robinson, in: MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum nova series*, XIV, Hannover 2003, p. 204.



chierici simoniaci delle Marche a mostrargli i “*canonum libros*” che li giustificavano<sup>60</sup>. Eppure quella predicazione attenta alla disamina razionale delle *auctoritates* canonistiche era integrata con gesti e atteggiamenti che esprimevano ancora una volta a-logicamente (qui nell’accezione che rinvia all’assenza delle parole pronunciate) le idee dei riformatori radicali e le rendevano accessibili ai fedeli incapaci di cogliere le sfumature concettuali del dibattito teologico-giuridico che solo chierici e monaci erano in grado di sviluppare. Anche i Vallombrosani fecero amministrare il battesimo in tre pievi della città senza il crisma, perché quello disponibile era stato consacrato da Pietro Mezzabarba. Inoltre essi ritenevano che le chiese officiate dai chierici fedeli al vescovo simoniaco fossero indegne del loro ingresso e del loro “*obsequium salutationis*” e, infine, si rifiutavano di impartire la benedizione a persone che ritenevano indegne<sup>61</sup>. Tutte pratiche, queste, che miravano a ottenere lo stesso effetto della profanazione del crisma da parte di Erlembaldo, in virtù della loro capacità di evocare il dato giuridico mettendone in evidenza il riflesso esteriore e la conseguenza più clamorosa: l’incapacità di simoniaci e nicolaiti di garantire ai fedeli il bene primario costituito dalla mediazione sacerdotale con la sfera del sacro.

Questa consapevole strategia di “predicazione” raggiunse il suo culmine con la prova del fuoco organizzata a Firenze dai Vallombrosani. Anche in quella occasione il complesso contenzioso giuridico fu semplificato e ridotto nei termini molto essenziali di una lotta dapprima fra il Cristo e Simon Mago, quindi fra quest’ultimo e Simon Pietro, che alla fine uscì vincitore dall’ordalia. La lettera dei canonici di Firenze ad Alessandro II copiata nella vita di Giovanni Gualberto di Andrea di Strumi ha la struttura del verbale relativo a una procedura giudiziaria, con una *narratio* iniziale, la parte probatoria consistente nella vera e propria prova del fuoco e il dispositivo finale della sentenza con la quale si chiede la deposizione del vescovo Pietro Mezzabarba<sup>62</sup>. Non deve trarre in inganno la forte tensione liturgica che percorre tutta l’ordalia. Il suo rituale rigidamente pianificato e codificato denota infatti la piena consapevolezza dell’importanza dell’aspetto procedurale, che rinvia inequivocabilmente anche alla dimensione giuridica. I Vallombrosani non fecero prediche nel senso proprio del termine poiché la forza persuasiva dell’ordalia consisteva proprio nella sua capacità di dimostrare la loro *veritas*

<sup>60</sup> *Petri Damiani Vita beati Romualdi*, ed. G. Tabacco, Fonti per la storia d’Italia, XCIV, Roma 1957, p. 75.

<sup>61</sup> Cfr. *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 3, nr. 146, pp. 535, 540.

<sup>62</sup> *Andrae abbatis Strumensis Vita sancti Iohannis Gualberti*, ed. F. Baethgen, in: MGH, *Scriptores*, XXX/2, Lipsiae 1926-1934, pp. 1096-1099. Da ultimo su questa ordalia si veda C. Frugoni, *La prova del fuoco: non sempre Dio si lasciava tentare*, “Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche. Rendiconti”, serie 9 XXII (2012).

in maniera finalmente inoppugnabile sul piano dialettico. Le fiamme avvaloravano i contenuti delle prediche antisimoniache dei Vallombrosani, ma solo la correttezza della procedura ne garantiva l'efficacia sul piano giuridico. Il cerchio si chiudeva attorno al povero Pietro Mezzabarba e al mondo antico il cui tramonto involontariamente aveva avuto il compito di personificare.

In conclusione possiamo affermare che le fonti relative alla riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI ci consegnano una sorta di cristallizzazione testuale di fenomeni nei quali la parola pronunciata (o meglio, *predicata*) aveva invece una dimensione preponderante per la qualità stessa della lotta che si stava conducendo. In tutto questo la dimensione giuridica svolgeva un ruolo fondamentale proprio perché di natura prima di tutto giuridica erano i problemi di organizzazione della Chiesa che agitavano il dibattito e che consentivano di tradurre in efficaci scelte istituzionali le istanze di rigenerazione che agitavano tutto l'Occidente.

#### ABSTRACT

During the Investiture Contest, terms such as simony, nicolaitism, lay investiture required a redominantly canonistic reflection. Traces of this huge «war of words» (I.S. Robinson) are actually more closely tied to the practices of writing than to the verbal sphere, but significant episodes of contamination are not lacking. In fact, the complexity of those debates prevented an easy translation in terms useful to the immediate controversy, which often involved not only the high-ranking lay people with the necessary clerical assistance, but also the masses that in the cities lined up from time to time in favor of either party in the field. For this reason the Investiture Controversy also involved some forms of "non verbal" communication, such as the trials by ordeal and the so-called "liturgical strike", which were able to frame complex juridical problems.



### III. CURRENT RESEARCH

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#### MAKING NEW IMPRESSIONS: THE 'EPISCOPAL' SEALS OF BENEDICTINE ABBOTS IN THE 13<sup>TH</sup> AND 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES\*



Around the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, abbots of certain Benedictine monasteries changed the representation on their seals from a figure with a tonsure and book to one fitted with the miter and crozier. In doing this, the abbots appropriated an iconography that was of singular importance for identifying a bishop.<sup>1</sup> This remarkable shift in sigillographic imagery opens new questions about the political and cultural engagement of the Benedictines in the 13<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, a time of clerical reform within the Church and cultural change throughout medieval society. Although this period was politically and spiritually dynamic, the Benedictines of the late Middle Ages have received virtually no attention in the scholarly literature.<sup>2</sup> This lacuna is due to the perception that, after the apogee of their power in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the

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1 A previous study that has remarked on this change is M. Bloche, *Les sceaux des abbés et du convent de la Trinité de Fécamp, XII<sup>e</sup> - début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, "Tabularia: Actes épiscopaux et abbatiaux en Normandie et dans le grand Ouest européen" (2013), p. 41. Open access available at: <http://journals.openedition.org/tabularia/1314>; DOI: 10.4000/tabularia.1314.

2 Notable exceptions in the literature on English Benedictines include J. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge 2011, pp. 255-315; J. Luxford, *The Art and Architecture of English Benedictine Monasteries, 1300-1540: A Patronage History*, Woodbridge 2012.

Benedictines were in a state of decline in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>3</sup> Scholars therefore prefer the reformed and mendicant orders for their dynamic innovations in spirituality and practice.

Yet there is much to be explored in the imagery Benedictine abbots used on their seals. Abbots utilized the powerful visual signifiers of liturgical vestments and ecclesiastical insignia to shape their public representations. The seals also bear witness to the unsung role the abbot played as he protected the rights and prestige of his monastic community.<sup>4</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup>-century Benedictine abbot Geoffrey of La-Trinité in Vendôme summed up the duties of the abbot in this way: “[to] defend ceaselessly the privileges of the abbey against the exactions of secular lords, against the ill will of secular prelates to protect the abbey or recognize its independence, against the rivalries of neighboring abbeys”.<sup>5</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> centuries were an active time for Benedictine abbots as they navigated, within an increasingly urban and politically complex landscape, the reforms imposed on them by the papacy.<sup>6</sup> Abbots strived to secure their spiritual and temporal domains against ecclesiastical and secular interventions, and their seals were an important component of this activity.

While scholars have gainfully studied royal and episcopal seals,<sup>7</sup> the seals of Benedictine abbots are an understudied but fruitful corpus for exploring visual archetypes.<sup>8</sup> In particular, abbatial seals can deepen our understanding of how seals operated more broadly in medieval culture. Seals are uniquely compelling objects because they occupied a place of liminality. Image-bearing

3 P. Schmitz, *Histoire de l'ordre de Saint Benoît*, III, Maredsous 1948, p. 210.

4 A. Davril, E. Palazzo, *La vie des moines au temps des grandes abbayes*, Paris 2004, pp. 39-42.

5 “Sans cesse défendre les privilèges de l'abbaye contre les exactions des seigneurs laïques, contre la mauvaise volonté des prélats séculiers à protéger l'abbaye ou à reconnaître son indépendance, contre les rivalités d'abbayes voisines.” Geoffrey of Vendôme is quoted in G. Giordanengo, *La fonction d'abbé d'après l'oeuvre de Geoffrey de Vendôme*, “Revue d'histoire de l'Eglise de France” LXXVI (1990), pp. 165-184. Cited in A. Davril, E. Palazzo, *La vie des moines...*, p. 41.

6 A useful English-language introduction to urbanization in the Middle Ages is D. Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City from Late Antiquity to the Early Fourteenth Century*, New York 1997.

7 The literature on medieval seals is vast. Helpful introductions include A. Coulon, *Introduction aux études d'histoire ecclésiastique locale*, in: *Elements de sigillographie ecclésiastique française*, ed. V. Carrière, Paris 1934, pp. 109-205; P.D.A. Harvey, A. McGuiness, *A Guide to British Seals*, Toronto 1996; B.M. Bedos-Rezak, *Medieval Identity: A Sign and a Concept*, “American Historical Review” CV (2000) 5, pp. 1488-1533; *Pourquoi les sceaux? La sigillographie, nouvel enjeu de l'histoire de l'art*, eds. M. Gil, J.-L. Chassel, Lille 2011. Open access for Gil and Chassel available at: <http://books.openedition.org/irhis/2914>.

8 For a thorough discussion of archetypes and seals, see B.M. Bedos-Rezak, *Medieval Identity...*, pp. 1529-1532; S. Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France*, Chicago 1994, pp. 85-96.

seals authenticated the textual documents to which they were affixed, and seals thereby operated at the junction between text and image, individual and archetype, giver and receiver, and public and private spheres. The Benedictine abbot also occupied a liminal social space: he faced inward to the spiritual life while also looking out to the world. The abbot was to be an exemplar of monastic virtue to his monks; however, he also engaged with the world, by tending to the aristocrats who were patrons, administering the abbey's lands and dependencies, and negotiating with other ecclesiastics in matters of collaboration and rivalry.

As will become apparent over the course of this study, Benedictine abbots developed a powerful archetype for representing themselves and the interests of their monastic communities. The image of a standing abbot wearing liturgical robes and miter while carrying a book or crozier developed out of contemporaneous discourse on the sacrality of the clergy, particularly bishops, and their vestments. Abbots who represented themselves on their seals with pontifical insignia were responding to a dramatically changing socio-political landscape. Foremost among these changes were the monastic reforms that were instituted by Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) and continued by his successors Gregory IX (r. 1227-1241) and Benedict XII (r. 1334-1342). These seals, I argue, bear witness to the complex role abbots held as a result of the reform movement and the broader cultural realities of the high and late Middle Ages.

#### SEALING THE PRIVILEGE: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHETYPES ON SEALS

The most important development in sealing practices was the establishment of visual archetypes based on social categories, which had far-reaching implications for later developments in visual culture, particularly portraiture.<sup>9</sup> Sealing documents with images impressed in wax began as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century, first with royal seals and extending soon thereafter after to episcopal seals.<sup>10</sup> The earliest episcopal seals in France depicted the bishop with a tonsure. However, by the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the archetype depicted the bishop with a miter.<sup>11</sup> The individual represented in the seal was

<sup>9</sup> See S. Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King...*, for a book-length study on the development of portraiture.

<sup>10</sup> J. Roman, *Manuel de sigillographie française*, Paris 1912, pp. 158-163; R.-H. Bartier, *Apparition, diffusion et évolution typologique du sceau épiscopal au moyen âge*, in: *Referate zum VIII Internationalen Kongress für Diplomatik, Innsbruck, 27. September - 3. Oktober*, eds. C. Haidacher, W. Köfler, Innsbruck 1993, pp. 1-235.

<sup>11</sup> J. Roman, *Manuel de sigillographie française*, p. 163; R.-H. Bartier, *Apparition, diffusion et évolution typologique...*, p. 237.



recognized not through individualized imagery, but rather from accepted archetypes.<sup>12</sup> The connective and highly tactile process of stamping allowed the archetype to serve as a substitute for a person's presence.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the individual's representation was not a portrait of an individual, but a likeness of the figure's social "type".<sup>14</sup> In this way, the seal's figural representation functioned as an emblem.

A discernable iconography for episcopal seals was codified by the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. The 1202 seal of Philippe de Dreux, bishop of Beauvais, can serve as a representative example of this archetype (fig. 1).<sup>15</sup> The figure is dressed in vestments worn at Mass: the chasuble and alb. Liturgical vestments verified and gave social weight to the documents that were impressed with an episcopal seal.<sup>16</sup> The liturgical vestments signaled the figure's membership in the priestly class. Louis Claude Douët d'Arcq, the director of the Archives Impériales (now the Archives Nationales [A.N.]) in Paris, described the seal's image as follows: "standing, frontal, mitred, with a crozier, and blessing".<sup>17</sup> Douët d'Arcq identified the miter, crozier, and blessing gesture as the essential markers of the episcopal type, as each attribute distinguished the bishop from other members of the clerical social order.<sup>18</sup> The bishop is responsible for the souls in his diocese just as a shepherd protects his flock; he blesses them as he dispenses the sacraments of the Church. The miter marks his high status within the Church. In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, Gulielmus Durandus, the Bishop of Mende, attached a specific virtue to each sartorial item worn by the bishop in the tract *On the Sacred Vestments*, which is book three of one of the most important ecclesiastical texts of the Middle Ages, the *Rationale Divinorum*.<sup>19</sup> According to Durandus, the sandals guard the bishop from defiled earthly

12 B.M. Bedos-Rezak, *Medieval Identity...*, p. 1532.

13 B.M. Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages*, Leiden 2011, pp. 95-108; idem, *The Bishop Makes an Impression: Seals, Authority, and Episcopal Identity*, in: *The Bishop: Power and Piety at the First Millennium*, ed. S. Gilsdorf, Neue Aspekte der europäischen Mittelalterforschung, IV, Münster 2004, pp. 136-154.

14 S. Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King...*, pp. 91-92.

15 L.C. Douët d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, II, Paris 1863, no. 6511, p. 492.

16 R.-H. Bartier, *Apparition, diffusion et évolution typologique...*, pp. 233-235.

17 "Debout, vu de face, mitré, crossé et bénissant." L.C. Douët d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*.

18 For a discussion of the importance of attributes on seals, see J.-L. Chassel, *Le langage des attributs dans les sources sigillaires du Moyen Âge: Emblématique, institutions et société*, in: *Des signes dans l'image: Usages et fonctions de l'attribut dans l'iconographie médiévale (du concile de Nicée au concile de Trente)*, eds. M. Pastoureau, O. Vassilieva-Codognet, Répertoire iconographique de la littérature du Moyen Âge, les études du RILMA, III, Turnhout 2014, pp. 157-190.

19 Guilemus Durandus, *The Sacred Vestments: An English Rendering of the Third Book of the 'Rationale Divinorum Officiorum' of Durandus, Bishop of Mende*, trans. T.H. Passmore, London 1899.

things,<sup>20</sup> the gloves lead the bishop to refuse vainglory and to do good works,<sup>21</sup> the ring reminds the bishop that he loves his bride, the Church,<sup>22</sup> the staff is the authority of power and doctrine,<sup>23</sup> and the miter shows that he is worthy of receiving the eternal crown.<sup>24</sup> The miter was the most powerful insignia of the episcopal office, with a shape that was based on the headdress of the high priests of the Old Testament.<sup>25</sup> The miter's appearance on episcopal seals was regularized by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in response to competition between bishops and abbots.<sup>26</sup> Durandus's tract was written at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup>-century Gregorian reforms, which came at the end of a longer historical development in which the emphasis on clerical purity and virtue required vestments that were visually and materially different from non-liturgical and non-priestly garb.<sup>27</sup> The vestment's distinguishing nature linked the virtues of the episcopal office to the visual representation of the bishop.

#### ABBATIAL SEALS AS AN EXEMPLAR OF MONASTIC VIRTUE

The abbots of Benedictine monasteries also used seals to authenticate their documents. These seals have not yet been the subject of a systematic study, due—as mentioned earlier—to a perceived lack of innovation in the seals' iconography.<sup>28</sup> However, the compositional variety and visual details of the seals replicated in the corpus of seal casts located at the Archives nationales in Paris (hereafter A.N.) challenge this perception.<sup>29</sup> Abbatial seals first appeared in the 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>30</sup> and developed into an archetype that Douët

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 91.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 106.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 111.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, pp. 93-94.

<sup>25</sup> F. Cabrol, H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, XI, Paris 1924, cols. 1554-1557; M. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy: Virtue and Power in Medieval Europe, ca. 800-1200*, Ithaca (NY) 2014, pp. 201-206.

<sup>26</sup> J.-L. Chassel, *Le langage des attributs...*, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> M. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy...*, p. 37.

<sup>28</sup> M. Bloche, *Les sceaux des abbés...*, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> The Centre de Sigillographie et d'Héraldique in the Archives nationales de France has a unique collection of plaster molds that were cast in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from original wax seals. The collection includes the seals referenced in the inventories of the national archives as well as those referenced in the departmental archives in France. For a complete description of the inventory, see <https://www.siv.archives-nationales.culture.gouv.fr/siv/cms/content/helpGuide.action;jsessionid=07ED553AD464D5721965E8D52711CFCA?template=&preview=false&uuid=a6ccb089-728e-405c-adff-456bf9f8470e>

<sup>30</sup> J. Roman, *Manuel de sigillographie française*, p. 167; M. Bloche, *Les sceaux des abbés...*, p. 28.

d'Arcq described in his inventory as the "abbatial type".<sup>31</sup> In characterizing this archetype, Douët d'Arcq pointed to the figure's liturgical garb, crozier, and book, presumably the Bible or the Rule of Saint Benedict (the Rule, for short).<sup>32</sup> The 1185 seal of Samson, the abbot of Saint-Ouen in Rouen, exemplifies this iconographical type (fig. 2).<sup>33</sup> Samson stands frontally, holding a crozier and book close to his torso. A tonsure is clearly visible on his head. A variation on this archetype, in which the figure is seated, derives from the ruler portrait.<sup>34</sup> As an example, the 1185 seal of Guillaume from Saint-Denis depicts a figure sitting on a throne<sup>35</sup> (fig. 3). He also has a tonsure and wears liturgical vestments while holding a book and a crozier. In both cases, the figures wear easily recognizable chasubles over albs.

Foremost, with the tonsure and book, the abbatial archetype signaled the abbot as a monk. The abbot's depiction in liturgical dress is therefore significant.<sup>36</sup> The abbatial archetype defined by Douët d'Arcq actually ventured away from the Rule's directives.<sup>37</sup> In the Rule, comments on clothing are limited to each monastery's climate needs and the outfitting of the community in a practical manner. According to the Rule, the abbot's dress should not be distinguishable from that of the rest of the monastic community. A monk was allotted two cowls and a tunic, which should be in good repair and should fit properly.<sup>38</sup> He was also given footwear, leggings, and boots.<sup>39</sup> For necessary travel, a monk should have a nicer set of clothing and return these at the end of the journey.<sup>40</sup> However, for the most part, abbatial seals do not depict the abbot wearing these garments.

Instead of the tunic, abbots wore liturgical vestments on their seals. Liturgical garments had been part of Benedictine abbots' sartorial repertoire since the early Middle Ages.<sup>41</sup> The abbots were also priests, and their role

31 L.C. Douët-d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, p. 56.

32 J. Roman calls this type the "classic type", see *Manuel de sigillographie française*, p. 167.

33 G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Normandie recueillis dans les dépôts d'archives, musées et collections particulières de la Seine-Inférieure, du Calvados, de l'Eure, de la Manche et de l'Orne, avec une introduction sur la paléographie des sceaux et seize planches photoglyptiques*, Paris 1881, no. 2852, p. 318.

34 M. Bloche, *Les sceaux des abbés...*, p. 41.

35 L.C. Douët-d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, no. 9015, 125.

36 J.-L. Chassel, *Le langage des attributs...*, p. 19.

37 *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (henceforth: RB), ed. and trans. B.L. Venarde, Cambridge (MA) 2011.

38 *Ibidem*, 55:4, 8, 10.

39 *Ibidem*, 55:6.

40 *Ibidem*, 55:13.

41 F. Chamard, *Les abbés du moyen âge*, "Revue des questions historiques" XXXVIII (1885), pp. 80-88.

was to lead the monks in the divine office. It was established in 826 at the council of Rome that abbots should be dressed in priestly dignity.<sup>42</sup> The bishop performed an abbot's ordination during Mass, which reflected the sacred role the abbot played in the monastery and in the Church. The liturgical vestments also manifested the abbot's inner virtue. According to the Rule, the abbot stood in the place of Christ,<sup>43</sup> and the abbot should be wise, chaste, sober, merciful, and learned in divine law.<sup>44</sup> The abbot's sigillographic representation therefore combined his monastic role with his priestly one.

Abbatial seals developed out of several facets of the abbot's office. Variations within the archetype emphasize one facet over others. Priestly vestments emphasize the abbot's sacral role and imbue the seal's image with an authority that underpins a legal document's authenticity. The 1123 seal of Robert from Corbie exemplifies this<sup>45</sup> (fig. 4). The tonsure, crozier, and book identify the figure as an abbot. In this case, however, the book and crozier are held away from the body, with the figure's hands outstretched in an *orans* position.<sup>46</sup> A maniple, hanging from the abbot's right arm, flutters away from his body.<sup>47</sup> The maniple and the *orans* gesture emphasize the priestly role of the abbot. Although the abbatial archetype was firmly established by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the shifting cultural landscape did not allow this archetype to remain static.

#### RENDERING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STEWARDSHIP: ABBATIAL SEALS IN THE MID-13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

The mid-13<sup>th</sup> century marked an important turning point in the development of abbatial seals. Beginning with this time, the figure was represented with a miter, a crozier, and a book or blessing gesture.<sup>48</sup> The earliest seal displaying the abbot crowned with a miter in the A.N. corpus occurs in 1240, with the seal of Siebald, the abbot of Saint-Chef (also known as Saint-Theudère) in Vienne (fig. 5).<sup>49</sup> The abbot stands frontally on a socle, wearing liturgical dress and

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 80.

<sup>43</sup> "You have received the spirit of the adoption of sons, in which we cry out 'Abba, Father'" (RB 2:3, quoting Romans 8:15).

<sup>44</sup> RB, 64:2.

<sup>45</sup> L.C. Douët-d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, no. 8667, p. 77.

<sup>46</sup> A gesture made by the priest during the canon of the Mass.

<sup>47</sup> M. Miller, *Clothing the Clergy...*, p. 250.

<sup>48</sup> J. Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient: Nach Ursprung und Entwicklung, Verwendung und Symbolik*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1907, p. 451. Bloche has also made this observation, see M. Bloche, *Les sceaux des abbés...*, p. 41.

<sup>49</sup> A. Coulon, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Bourgogne, recueillis dans les dépôts d'archives, musées et collections particulières des Départements de la Côte-d'Or, de Saône-et-Loire et de l'Yonne*, Paris 1912, no. 1433, p. 256.

holding a crozier in one hand and a book in the other. Instead of a tonsure, the seal clearly depicts the figure crowned with a miter. The 1249 seal of Guillaume, the abbot of Moissac, is the first to replicate the archetype initially described by Douët d'Arcq as an "episcopal type": "a standing figure, facing frontal, mitred, with a crozier, and blessing"<sup>50</sup> (fig. 6). Shortly following the appearance of Guillaume of Moissac's seal, abbots depicted in the episcopal archetype included the seals of Saint-Foy in Conques (1261), Cluny (1266), Vézelay (1263), and Saint-Martin in Autun (1285).<sup>51</sup>

As an archetype is by definition a conservative image and slow to change, the sudden appearance of a miter on an abbot's seal is both surprising and significant. Although the change from a tonsured figure to a mitred one might seem somewhat unexpected, several Benedictine abbeys had in fact, prior to and during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, procured the right to pontifical vestments, including the miter.<sup>52</sup> Only the pope could bestow the privilege to wear the miter, whether on a bishop or an abbot. Originally, the miter was for the exclusive use of the pope. This changed in 1051, when Pope Leo IX granted the archbishop Hugo von Besançon and seven cardinals the right to wear the miter on high feast days.<sup>53</sup> Abbots were first granted episcopal insignia in the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century, when Pope Alexander II (r. 1061-1073) gave the abbot of Canterbury permission to wear the miter and sandals.<sup>54</sup> Additional Benedictine communities whose abbots were given similar permissions prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century include Cluny in 1088 and Saint-Gilles in 1188.<sup>55</sup>

By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it was not uncommon for abbots to wear episcopal insignia during Mass, processions, and synods. Pope Innocent III acknowledged the symbolic power of vestments when he wrote that they served as visible signs of mysterious things.<sup>56</sup> Even though Innocent III attempted to reform the Benedictines in response to perceptions of their worldliness, the pope in fact gave rights to the miter and crozier to several Benedictine abbots, as

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50 "Personnage debout, de face, mitré, crossé, et bénissant" (L.C. Douët d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, no. 8842, p. 101). See n. 17 for the exact same phrase used for episcopal seals.

51 L.C. Douët d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, no. 8666, p. 77, no. 8652, p. 74; A. Coulon, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Bourgogne...*, no. 1458, p. 262, no. 1309, p. 231.

52 For example, at the Abbey of Saint-Germain d'Auxerre, two charters from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century (XLIV and XLV) issued by Innocent IV further invested the abbot and his successors with the right to wear priestly vestments (Bibliothèque municipale d'Auxerre, MS161, fols. 17v-18r). For a transcription of the first charter (XLII) giving the right to wear the miter and carry the crozier, see *Cartulaire général de l'Yonne: recueil de documents authentiques pour servir à l'histoire des pays qui forment ce département*, II, ed. M. Quantin, Auxerre 1860, pp. 376-377.

53 J. Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung...*, p. 452.

54 Ibidem, p. 453; F. Chamard, *op.cit.*, p. 94.

55 J. Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung...*, p. 453.

56 F. Chamard, *Les abbés du moyen âge*, p. 91.

did his successors Gregory IX and Alexander IV (r. 1254-1261). For example, Pope Innocent III gave the abbey of Saint-Pierre in Poultières these privileges when he exempted the abbey from the bishop of Langres's jurisdiction.<sup>57</sup> In 1256, Pope Alexander IV gave the same permissions to the abbots of Saint-Ouen in Rouen.<sup>58</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> century, it seems, was not entirely marked by the retreat of the Benedictines.

Receiving the right to wear the miter demonstrated that although abbots were leaders of their monasteries, they also played key roles in the Church hierarchy. Although the Rule had recognized that the abbot would have to deal to some extent with the outside world by virtue of traveling and receiving guests, the public role of abbots increased significantly after the Norman invasions of the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>59</sup> Abbots attended church councils and other high-stake meetings of the church. Cluny's abbots played a significant role in the Investiture Controversy, and many abbots were in attendance at the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>60</sup> At events such as these, pontifical garments increased the abbot's visibility and signaled his significant political power.

Receiving the privilege to wear the miter did not, however, mean that this exemption was immediately manifested on the abbot's seal. In some cases, this right didn't appear on the abbot's seal until decades and even centuries later. For example, at the abbey of Saint-Germain in Auxerre, Pope Urban II issued two charters, in 1186 and 1187, that gave the abbot pontifical privileges for major feasts of the year, Mass, processions, and church councils.<sup>61</sup> However, the first seal to depict the abbot wearing a miter only appeared years later, in 1293, on the seal of Abbot Guy de Munois.<sup>62</sup> The abbey of Saint-Denis gained the honor in the second quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century during the papacy of Gregory IX,<sup>63</sup> yet Saint-Denis's abbots continued representing themselves on their seals with the abbatial archetype until the 1362 seal of Robert II.<sup>64</sup>

57 H. du Tems, *Le clergé de France, ou tableau historique et chronologique des archevêques, évêques, abbés, abbesses et chefs des chapitres principaux du royaume, depuis la fondation des églises jusqu'à nos jours*, Brunet 1775, p. 53.

58 F. Pommeraye, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Ouen de Rouen*, Rouen 1662, p. 166.

59 F. Chamard, *Les abbés du moyen âge*, p. 78.

60 Ibidem. Some were high ranking—even having the status of Cardinal, as in the case of the abbots of La-Trinité in Vendôme. See I. Isnard, *L'abbatiale de la Trinité de Vendôme*, Rennes 2007, p. 19.

61 Bibliothèque municipale d'Auxerre, MS 161, fols.17r-17v.

62 A. Coulon, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Bourgogne...*, no. 1315, p. 232.

63 The right was originally granted in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but it was retracted by the abbot. M. Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye royal de Saint-Denis en France, contenant la vie des abbez qui l'ont gouvernée depuis onze cens ans: Les hommes illustres qu'elle a donnez à l'Eglise & à l'État: Les privileges accordez par les souverains pontifes & par les évêques: Les dons des rois, des princes & des autres bienfaiteurs*, Paris 1706, pp. 202-203.

64 L.C. Douët d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, no. 9025, p. 126.



The miter was the most visible pontifical vestment, and it is significant that, beginning in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, more and more abbots represented themselves on seals wearing the miter. Inclusion of the miter is the driving iconographical change on abbatial seals at this time. From this moment of iconographical transition, one unusual seal underscores the potency of the miter. The 1293 seal of Guérin, abbot of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, presents the abbot in the typical abbatial archetype, as defined by Douët-d'Arcq (fig. 7).<sup>65</sup> Guérin's counter-seal, however, depicts only an ornamented miter and lappets. Scholars of sigillography have remarked briefly on this shift in the abbatial archetype and on the delay between abbots receiving the right to wear a miter and the appearance of this right on Guérin's seal.<sup>66</sup> These two phenomena are interconnected and warrant further investigation of the historical context in which these changes occurred.

#### THE EFFECTS OF REFORM ON THE ABBATIAL ARCHETYPE

Although the privileges of the miter increased for Benedictine abbots in the early and mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, the historical changes of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries account for the iconographical change on their seals. First, the aristocracy intensified their influence by imposing taxes and meddling with the election of abbots.<sup>67</sup> Secondly, Benedictines found themselves in close proximity to other ecclesiastical and urban institutions, due to the fact that by the 13<sup>th</sup> century, their monasteries—which had originally been founded on the edges of early medieval towns—were now located in the center of medieval cities.<sup>68</sup> Third, the 13<sup>th</sup> century marks the beginning of the reforms initiated by Innocent III at the Fourth Lateran Council, which continued through the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the papacy of Benedict XII. These changes gave the abbot a more visible role and required him to engage more and more with the world beyond the monastery walls.

One of Innocent III's goals at the Fourth Lateran Council was to institute reforms for the clergy.<sup>69</sup> The reform of the Benedictines was thus only a part

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, no. 8941, p. 115.

<sup>66</sup> M. Bloche, *Les sceaux des abbés...*; J.-L. Chassel, *Le langage des attributs...*

<sup>67</sup> P. Schmitz, *Histoire de l'ordre de Saint Benoît*, III, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> For an example of the changing role of Benedictine abbeys from the early to the late Middle Ages, see A. Gajewski, *Saint-Bénigne at Dijon around 1300: La providence qui s'endort?*, in: *The Year 1300 and the Creation of a New European Architecture*, eds. A. Gajewski, Z. Opacic, Architectura Medii Aevi, I, Turnhout 2007, pp. 39-52.

<sup>69</sup> For the statutes of the Fourth Lateran Council, see <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp>; for a discussion of the Council's effect on reform, see Eudes of Rouen, *The Register of Eudes of Rouen*, trans. S.M. Brown and ed. J. O'Sullivan, New York 1964, pp. xx-xxi; J.M. Wayno, *Rethinking the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215*, "Speculum" XCIII (2018) 3, pp. 611-637.

of a much greater effort.<sup>70</sup> The most significant mandate Innocent III imposed on the Benedictines was a system of regional chapters.<sup>71</sup> The council statutes called for meetings every three years, and each region's abbots were supposed to attend, along with two abbots from Cistercian monasteries and the local bishop. These chapters were slow to meet in France.<sup>72</sup> One can imagine that monasteries founded in the early Middle Ages would not see much incentive to participate in a regional chapter. Why would they? These monasteries possessed the relics of the most prestigious saints and enjoyed the patronage of kings! Honorius III (r. 1285-1287) and Gregory IX continued the reform attempts by adding specific statutes that reaffirmed the chapter meetings and gave bishops more authority to visit monasteries.<sup>73</sup>

The iconographical change on abbatial seals that I have been tracking in this essay primarily occurred during the papacies of Innocent IV (r. 1243-1254) and Alexander IV. During their papacies, bishops were given greater power to visit monasteries and make corrections to those that did not strictly follow the Rule.<sup>74</sup> These reform efforts affected the seals' iconography in two ways. First, the reformist popes were concerned with undue outside influences on monasteries. The reforms were intended to promote the abbot's primary inward-looking responsibility as a model of the monastic life. Secondly, the statutes increased the abbots' outward-looking responsibilities by placing abbots and bishops in direct communication with each other, often in conflict, and such conflict precipitated the inclusion of the miter on the abbots' seals.

The conflicting effects of the reforms on the abbots are conveniently illustrated by Eudes Rigaud, the archbishop of Rouen, and his visits to the abbey of Saint-Ouen.<sup>75</sup> According to Rigaud's diary, when the archbishop visited Saint-Ouen on January 28, 1254, the monks reported that the abbot Nicholas was frequently absent from the office and communal meals.<sup>76</sup> On December 5, 1256, the regional chapter questioned Nicholas about why he was not ardent in following the Rule of Benedict.<sup>77</sup> In the midst of these accusations,

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<sup>70</sup> The statutes appear to have been directed towards the communal life, regular observance according to the Rule, and the protection of abbeys from secular aristocracy. In particular, regular observance referred to practices such as fasting and not eating meat. See P. Schmitz, *Histoire de l'ordre de Saint Benoît*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, pp. 51-53.

<sup>72</sup> J. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, p. 265.

<sup>73</sup> P. Schmitz, *Histoire de l'ordre de Saint Benoît*, III, pp. 54-55; Eudes of Rouen, *The Register...*, pp. 737-746.

<sup>74</sup> P. Schmitz, *Histoire de l'ordre de Saint Benoît*, III, p. 55.

<sup>75</sup> See the recorded visitations dispersed between 1249 and 1269 throughout Eudes of Rouen, *The Register...*

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, p. 219.

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, p. 296.

in 1257, Rigaud excommunicated Nicholas and wanted to prevent the abbot from wearing pontifical vestments, including the miter.<sup>78</sup> Alexander IV, however, reinstated Nicholas and his right to the miter.<sup>79</sup> Although Rigaud's diary paints a bleak account of the monastic life at Saint-Ouen, the abbot's privileges actually increased during this period. Nicholas's 13<sup>th</sup>-century tomb depicts him in full pontifical vestments: the miter, gloves, ring, crozier, and sandals,<sup>80</sup> but the miter does not appear on the surviving abbatial seals until the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Bishops complained that abbots wearing pontifical vestments rivaled the bishops at synods. Such complaints were not new. Bernard of Clairvaux echoed the concern about abbots wearing ornamented insignia.<sup>81</sup> In 1266, Clement IV issued a bull requiring abbots with pontifical privileges to only wear miters at synods that were made of plain gold or silver cloth, had no stones, and had only plain gold or silver *infulae*.<sup>82</sup> The miter seems to have been a specific point of contention between bishops and abbots, which was exacerbated by the visitation statutes. Nevertheless, the number of abbatial seals depicting the abbot with the miter increased in the third quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. For the first time in their abbey's history, the abbots Raimond of Saint-Germain de Près (1285), Hélié of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire (1285), and Thibaut de Falconnet of Luxeuil (1300) all included miters in their seals.<sup>83</sup> The reform movement, whether intended or not, reformulated the abbatial archetype with appropriated symbols of ecclesiastical authority.

#### ABBATIAL SEALS AS SIGNIFIERS OF MONASTIC AUTONOMY

As impactful as the reforms of the 13<sup>th</sup> century were on seal iconography, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century reforms were even more so. The Cistercian pope Benedict XII was not satisfied with what he observed regarding the Benedictines' strict adherence to the Rule. In 1336, Benedict XII issued the papal bull known as the *Summi Magistri*,<sup>84</sup> in which he tried to systematize the Benedictines into an "order".<sup>85</sup> The bull once again called for visits every three years and

78 F. Pommeraye, *Histoire de l'abbaye...*, p. 166.

79 Ibidem, pp. 166-167.

80 The tomb is currently located in the chapel of Saint Eloi at the abbey of Saint-Ouen, Rouen.

81 F. Chamard, *Les abbés du moyen âge*, pp. 89-90.

82 Ibidem, p. 95.

83 L.C. Douët d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, no. 8813, p. 97, no. 8910, p. 110, no. 9014, p. 125.

84 *Bullarum privilegiorum ac diplomatum Romanorum Pontificum: Amplissima collectio cui accessere pontificum omnium vitae, notae, & indices opportuni*, XIV, eds. G. Mainard, C. Cocquelines, A. Flavio Sanctis, Rome 1733-1762, pp. 214-240.

85 P. Schmitz, *Histoire de l'ordre de Saint Benoît*, III, pp. 65-69.

for abbots to become less involved with the affairs of the world. Yet, by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, many abbots were in fact major figures in French cities and were deeply engaged in political matters.<sup>86</sup>

Although Benedict XII attempted to return abbots to the contemplative life and protect them from outside influences, the pope's efforts actually had a greater affect on the abbots' diplomatic role and, as a consequence, the evolving appearance of the abbatial archetype. In seals from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, abbots were commonly represented within ornate Gothic architectural niches. This development follows the example of royal and episcopal seals, which also developed framing architectural features.<sup>87</sup> An exceptional example of a 14<sup>th</sup>-century bishop's seal is the second seal of Richard Bury, bishop of Durham. The seal matrix was likely carved in France in the circle of Jean Pucelle around 1334-1335 and was inspired by the seal of Jeanne, Queen of Navarre (fig. 8).<sup>88</sup> In Richard's seal, the bishop stands under the central canopy, with the elongated body recalling the elegant taste of the French court, and the miter he wears is studded with stones. The seal's design also participated in broader developments of microarchitecture that crossed media in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>89</sup> The architectural niche in which the bishop stands is an intricate and deeply cut network of latticework turrets, niches, and canopies. Angels can be found in the niches to the side and above in the gallery.

The architectural frame depicted on 14<sup>th</sup>-century episcopal and abbatial seals derived not only from royal seals, but also from current discourses about the proper way to frame the sacred. Microarchitecture symbolized the church where the sacraments were dispensed and salvation was offered.<sup>90</sup> The presence of microarchitecture on shrines, sacrament houses, and epitaphs pointed to

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<sup>86</sup> Examples include the abbots at Saint-Ouen de Rouen, Saint-Germain d'Auxerre, and Saint-Bénigne de Dijon. The public role an abbot played in the spiritual life of a medieval city can also be recovered from the historical record regarding his performance. For example, the 1334 funeral for the abbot of Saint-Ouen in Rouen, in which the body was fully vested in a miter, crozier, gloves, and ring before being carried on procession through the streets of Rouen, is vividly described in the *Chronique des Abbés de Saint-Ouen de Rouen*, ed. F. Michel, Rouen 1860, pp. 23-28.

<sup>87</sup> P.D.A. Harvey, A. McGuinness, *A Guide to British Seals*, pp. 63-69.

<sup>88</sup> T.A. Heslop, *Second Seal of Richard of Bury, Bishop of Durham*, in: *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200-1400*, eds. J. Alexander, P. Binski, London 1987, cat. 675, p. 496.

<sup>89</sup> M. Gil, *L'enlumineur Jean Pucelle et les graveurs de sceaux parisiens: L'exemple du sceau de Jeanne de France, reine de Navarre (1329-1349)*, in: *Pourquoi les sceaux? La sigillographie, nouvel enjeu de l'histoire de l'art*, eds. M. Gil, J.-L. Chassel, Lille 2011, pp. 421-435. Open access available at: <http://books.openedition.org/irhis/2914>.

<sup>90</sup> For the symbolic rhetoric of microarchitecture, see A. Timmerman, *Microarchitecture and Mystical Death: The Font Ciborium of St. Mary's in Luton, circa 1330-40*, in: *The Year 1300 and the Creation of a New European Architecture*, eds. A. Gajewski, Z. Opacic, Turnhout 2007, pp. 137-138; S. Guérin, *Meaningful Spectacles: Gothic Ivories Staging the Divine*, "Art Bulletin" XCV (2013) 1, pp. 54-55.

the sacred nature of the objects contained within them. Microarchitecture was thus didactic and supported the Fourth Lateran Council's effort towards training the laity in matters of faith.<sup>91</sup> The associations carried by such motifs also transferred to ecclesiastical seals, thereby transforming the figure on the seal into an ethereal member of the heavenly community. In seals with architectural niches, the seal's owner was presented more than ever before as a sacred figure whose virtue was signified as such by lavish vestments and miters as well as surrounding architectural motifs.

Although 14<sup>th</sup>-century abbatial seals range from relatively simple to complex, some abbatial seals rival or surpass their episcopal counterparts in elegance and ornamentation.<sup>92</sup> The 1342 seal of Jean IV from Saint-Germain-des-Près presents the abbot in an elegant Gothic S-curve (fig. 9).<sup>93</sup> His miter is studded with stones, and the sleeves of his alb are long. He stands within a structure that recalls contemporary churches built in the flamboyant style, beneath a canopy of refined tracery between superimposed ornate side niches. The seal's architectural motifs eagerly participate in the Parisian architectural and visual culture of the later Middle Ages. Although it likely doesn't refer to any specific monument, the canopy appears very similar to the flamboyant lantern at the abbey of Saint-Ouen in Rouen (fig. 10). In addition to signaling the seal owner's place in the ecclesiastical and celestial order, the presence of microarchitecture also had the effect of minimizing the features distinguishing episcopal and abbatial seals.

#### AD CAUSES SEALS: SAINTS, BISHOPS, AND ABBOTS

So far, this brief survey of abbatial seals has centered on the great seals, which are reserved for the most important documents. Seals used for documents of lesser importance than those requiring an abbot's great seal are called *ad causes* seals. They too represent the abbot in full pontifical vestments, including the miter. The *ad causes* seal and its particular iconography further aligned the visual similarities between bishop saints, bishops, and abbots. *Ad causes* seals depict the abbot kneeling in an architectural niche directly below the abbey's patron saint, who is likewise represented in an ornate niche. This iconography is derived from episcopal *ad causes* seals that are organized in the same way. The 1293 *ad causes* seal of Guy de Munois, abbot of Saint-Germain d'Auxerre, is a typical example<sup>94</sup> (fig. 11). The seal depicts Guy with a miter and crozier

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>92</sup> See, for example, the 1320 seal of Robert from Fécamp. G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux...*, no. 2788, p. 310.

<sup>93</sup> L.C. Douët d'Arq, *Collection de sceaux*, III, no. 8912, p. 111.

<sup>94</sup> A. Coulon, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Bourgogne...*, no. 1315, p. 232.

kneeling in a niche below the figure of Saint Germanus. Guy embodies the abbatial virtues of humility and obedience described in the Rule. But this seal also had a highly political significance. In 1285 Guy received, on behalf of his abbey, two papal bulls granting freedom from the jurisdiction of the bishop of Auxerre.<sup>95</sup> In the standardized *ad causas* seals, two mitred figures (one a bishop saint and the other the bishop or abbot who owned the seal) are represented within the same image, and this encouraged the notion of a very close interconnectedness between saints, bishops, and abbots.

This brief survey of 14<sup>th</sup>-century abbatial seals demonstrates that, by and large, abbots who had the right to episcopal insignia chose to represent themselves with such insignia, even if the time between receiving the right and its depiction on seals was several decades or even centuries. Considering that the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries were a time of attempted reform of the Benedictine by the papacy, with the willing support of bishops, it seems logical to see the appropriation of episcopal insignia as the abbots' response in staking out their place within the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The evolving imagery on seals was directed at preserving independence in the face of the dynamic and complicated culture of the late Middle Ages.

The 1309 seal of Aymon de Montagny from the abbey of Saint-Antoine in Vienne adds yet another layer to this discussion<sup>96</sup> (fig. 12). Jocelin de Châteauneuf founded the abbey in the 11<sup>th</sup> century upon returning from Constantinople with the relics of Saint Anthony. Initially, the abbey was a priory Benedictine abbey of Montmajour.<sup>97</sup> In 1297, abbot Aymon received from the pope the abbey's independence from Montmajour, which contested this decision.<sup>98</sup> On his seal, the abbot of Saint-Antoine is shown, as now might be expected, with a miter and crozier while offering a blessing gesture. Aymon stands within an architectural niche surrounded by an ornamented backdrop. From the niche above, a mitred Saint Anthony blesses the similarly mitred abbot. No seals from his predecessors survive that would indicate whether Aymon's seal was the first from the abbey to show the abbot with a miter. Here it seems that Aymon used his seal to project his independent authority towards another Benedictine abbot. This case suggests that the miter was an essential symbol in crucial moments when an abbot established political relations with outside institutions that might challenge his community's

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<sup>95</sup> A. Heath, *Elevating Saint Germanus of Auxerre: Architecture, Politics, and Liturgy in the Reclaiming of Monastic Identity*, "Speculum" XC (2015) 1, p. 89.

<sup>96</sup> A. Coulon, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Bourgogne...*, no. 1432, p. 256.

<sup>97</sup> L.-T. Dassy, *L'abbaye de Saint-Antoine en Dauphiné: Essai historique et descriptif*, Grenoble 1844, pp. 15-46.

<sup>98</sup> Ibidem, p. 99; M. de Font-Reaux, *Saint-Antoine en Viennois*, "Congrès archéologique de France" (1925), p. 164.



autonomy. Benedictine abbots played a complex and important public role in the late Middle Ages. On the one hand, abbots engaged in public processions and Mass, as well as attending church councils. They also administrated their dependencies, protected their property and privileges from secular and ecclesiastical rulers, and safeguarded the sacred histories of their monastic communities and abbatial lineage. Abbots crafted sigillographic images for engaging in diplomacy and extending the abbey's power to those individuals and communities with whom political and spiritual relationships were negotiated. As did their owners, Benedictine abbatial seals functioned in these liminal spaces as institutional markers and strategic protectors during a dynamic time of change.

### ABSTRACT

Scholars have long recognized the utility of medieval seals and their imagery for understanding how secular and ecclesiastical rulers realized the outward expression of their offices. Benedictine abbots and their seals, however, have not been sufficiently studied for the ways in which abbots constructed representations of their office. Abbatial seals can reveal much about the role of abbots, both within the monastery walls and beyond them. In particular, one can observe a shift on Benedictine abbatial seals, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, from a figure wearing a monastic habit and tonsure to a figure wearing liturgical vestments and a miter. This shift in the iconography of abbatial archetype opens up new questions about the participation of abbots in contemporary discourse linking liturgical vestments to priestly virtue. Of particular interest to this study is the appropriation of episcopal signifiers, namely the crozier and miter. Seals depicting abbots in vestments normally associated with bishops instruct scholars to look anew at how abbots responded to reforms imposed on Benedictine houses by Popes Innocent III and Benedict XII. In addition, the appearance of abbots wearing miters and holding croziers on their seals mirrors the tensions between abbots and bishops for the right to wear these vestments in processions and at synods. At the historical moment when "episcopal" archetypes started to appear on abbatial seals, abbots had increased their papal-given privileges to wear miters and pontifical vestments in their churches and in public. The active role that abbots played in increasing their privileges and in the development of their seals challenges the conventional thought that the Benedictines were declining in the late middle ages and had little or no effect on contemporary visual and ecclesiastical culture.



**Fig. 1.** Seal of Philippe de Dreux, bishop of Beauvais, 1202, + *Sigillum Philippi Belvacensis episcopi*, Paris, Archives nationales, J362 no. 11, (cast). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 2.** Seal of Samson, abbot of Saint-Ouen, Rouen, 1185, + *Sigillum Samsonis abbatis Sancti Audoeni Rothomagensis*, Archives Départementales Seine-Maritime (cast located at the Archives nationales, Paris). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 3.** Seal of Guillaume, abbot of Saint-Denis, 1185, + *Willermi abbatis Sancti Dionsii*, Paris, Archives nationales, S226, no. 3, (cast). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 4.** Seal of Robert, abbot of Saint-Pierre, Corbie, 1123–1142, + *Sigillum Roberti abbatis Sancti Petri Corbiensis*, Paris, Archives nationales, S133, no. 8 (cast). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 5.** Seal of Siebald, abbot of Saint-Chef, Vienne, 1240, *Sigillum Siboudi abbatis Sancti Theuderii*, Archives Départementales Côte-d'Or B 11654 (cast located at the Archives nationales, Paris). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 6.** Seal of Guillaume, abbot of Saint-Pierre, Moissac, 1249, **+** *Sigillum Willemi abbatis Moyziacensis*, Paris, Archives nationales, J33, no. 20 (cast). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 7.** **a** – Seal of Guérin, abbot of Sainte-Geneviève, Paris, 1293, *Sigillum fratris Guerini abbatis Sancte Genovese*, Paris, Archives nationales, S 1495, no. 15 (cast). Photo by A. Heath; **b** – Counter seal of Guérin, 1293, **+** *Contrasigillum* (cast). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 8.** Seal of Richard Bury, bishop of Durham, 1334-1335, *Dunelmensis episcopus Ricardi dei gratias*, Durham, University Library, drawing in the public domain.





**Fig. 9.** Seal of Jean IV, abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Près, 1342, *Sigillum fratris Johannis abbatis Sancti Germani de Pratis Parisiensis*, Paris, Archives nationales, S 6349 (cast). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 10.** Rouen, abbey of Saint-Ouen, 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c. Photo by A. Heath.





**Fig. 11.** Seal of Guy de Muniois, abbot of Saint-Germain, Auxerre, 1293-1294, *Sanctus Germanus*, A.D. Côte-d'Or B 1010, (cast located at the Archives nationales, Paris). Photo by A. Heath.



**Fig. 12.** Seal of Aymon de Montagny, abbot of Saint-Antoine, Vienne, 1309, *Sigillum fratris Aymonis abbatis Sancti Antonii Viennensis*, A.D. Côte-d'Or B664 (cast located at the Archives nationales, Paris). Photo by A. Heath.

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REIMS

## THÉOLOGIENS ET POLITIQUE À L'ÉPOQUE SCOLASTIQUE (XIII<sup>E</sup>-XIV<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLES)



Dans un célèbre passage du *Songe du Vergier* (1378)<sup>1</sup>, Évrard de Trémaugon réplique aux attaques de Nicole Oresme en justifiant l'usage et la primauté de la science du droit en politique : les « sages » auxquels le roi devait recourir pour bien gouverner étaient les « experts en droit canon et en droit civil et en coutumes et en constitutions et lois royales », forts de la pratique du gouvernement et de l'expérience des cas particuliers, et non les « artiens », « philosophes moraux » qui cultivaient la science et les principes généraux du gouvernement contenus « dans les livres des Ethiques, des Economiques et des Politiques », mais n'en avaient ni « la pratique » ni la capacité de les « mettre à effet »<sup>2</sup>. Le roi ne confierait pas sa santé « au plus sage philosophe naturel qui soit » plutôt qu'à un médecin ; il ne devait pas confier le gouvernement à un « philosophe moral » plutôt qu'à un juriste<sup>3</sup>.

Quels « artiens » Évrard de Trémaugon visait-il ? Dans les classifications des savoirs où elle figurait depuis le XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, la « science politique » formait, avec l'éthique et l'économique, la « philosophie pratique »<sup>4</sup>. Son enseignement eût normalement incombé à la faculté des arts. Il y resta marginal. À Paris, au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, la traduction latine de la *Politique* d'Aristote, intégralement

1 Évrard de Trémaugon, *Le Songe du Vergier*, éd. M. Schnerb-Lièvre, Publications du CNRS, I, Paris 1982, p. 410-411.

2 Ibidem, p. 410.

3 Ibidem, p. 410-411, et J. Krynen, *Les légistes, "idiots politiques". Sur l'hostilité des théologiens à l'égard des juristes, en France, au temps de Charles V*, dans : *Théologie et droit dans la science politique de l'État moderne*, Rome 1991, p. 190-191.

4 Cf. C. Nederman, *Aristotelianism and the Origins of "Political Science" in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century*, dans : *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits. Classical Traditions in Moral and Political Philosophy, 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Variorum Reprints, II, London 1997, p. 179-194.

accessible depuis la fin des années 1260, n'y fait pas partie des programmes d'enseignements obligatoires<sup>5</sup>. En outre, la cible du juriste n'était pas un « artien ». Ancien maître en théologie<sup>6</sup>, Oresme était membre de la cour de Charles V (1364-1380) qui lui avait notamment commandé la première traduction de la *Politique* d'Aristote en langue vulgaire<sup>7</sup>. En le reléguant au plus bas degré de la hiérarchie des enseignements universitaires<sup>8</sup>, Évrard de Trémaugon dénigrait surtout un compétiteur.

L'intention polémique ne doit pas masquer le fait que l'intérêt des théologiens pour la politique ne représentait ni un écart, ni une singularité. La scolastique formait « une sphère de savoirs et de méthodes organiquement liés »<sup>9</sup>, dominés par la théologie qui incorporait les sources et les techniques de la philosophie et du droit. Aux XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles, ce sont des théologiens qui ont pris l'initiative de la réflexion politique<sup>10</sup>. À partir du début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, seuls les théologiens s'exprimeront au nom de l'université lorsqu'intervenant dans les débats parlementaires, elle prétendra conseiller le roi sur tous les aspects de la vie publique, en vertu « du postulat médiéval suivant lequel la politique se fonde sur la morale et ultimement sur la Révélation divine »<sup>11</sup>.

Évrard de Trémaugon établit l'incompétence pratique du « philosophe moral » ; il ne juge pas sa science illégitime. En définissant la « science du droit » comme la « pratique de philosophie morale »<sup>12</sup>, il suggère l'articulation de ces savoirs à la cour de Charles V. Leur hiérarchie s'y trouve toutefois bouleversée : les exigences du gouvernement promeuvent la pratique et relèguent la science des principes au second rang. Si théorie et pratique s'articulent dans un milieu curial indissociablement politique et culturel, la science politique produite en milieu universitaire se réduit-elle à une spéculation sans effet ? Comme l'a fait valoir Gianluca Briguglia,

5 J. Verger, *Théorie politique et propagande politique*, dans : *Le forme della propaganda politica nel Due e nel Trecento*, Rome 1994, n. 38, p. 38-39.

6 Il a obtenu le grade de maître en théologie à Paris en 1355.

7 Je me permets de renvoyer à E. Marmursztejn, *Nicole Oresme et la vulgarisation de la Politique d'Aristote au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, dans : *Thinking Politics in the Vernacular. From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, éd. G. Briguglia, Th. Ricklin, Fribourg 2001, p. 103-127.

8 Celui de la faculté des arts, propédeutique aux facultés supérieures de médecine, de droit et de théologie.

9 A. Boureau, *L'Empire du livre. Pour une histoire du savoir scolastique (1200-1380)*, Paris 2007, p. 14.

10 Cf. G. Briguglia, *Le Pouvoir mis à la question. Théologiens et théorie politique à l'époque du conflit entre Boniface VIII et Philippe le Bel*, Paris 2016, p. 39, 143.

11 S. Lusignan, « Vérité garde le roy ». *La construction d'une identité universitaire en France (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris 1999, p. 212.

12 « Et ainssi que Medycine est la pratique de Philosophie naturelle, aussi la science de Droit, si est la pratique de Philosophie morale, quant a toutes sez troys parties : Ethyques, Yconomique et Pollitique » (Évrard de Trémaugon, *Le Songe du Vergier*, p. 410-411).

les orientations théoriques ne se superposent pas simplement « à la réalité des faits et au flux des tensions historiques »<sup>13</sup> ; elles « s'entrecroisent, dans une multiplicité de contextes et de langages »<sup>14</sup>. Stimulée par les évolutions et les événements qui lui servent de cadre de référence (consolidation du pouvoir monarchique, condamnations doctrinales de 1277, querelle des Mendians et des séculiers, conflit entre Boniface VIII et Philippe le Bel...), la réflexion théologique contribue en retour à modifier les espaces politiques et l'opinion publique. Pas plus que les événements, les théories ne restent sans effet : « chacune de ces instances transforme à sa façon la réalité »<sup>15</sup>. En d'autres termes, les idées « fabriquent du réel », en « interaction complexe » avec les événements et les évolutions de structure<sup>16</sup>.

Longtemps dominante, la thèse qui prétendait dénier aux théologiens scolastiques tout intérêt pour la vie collective et laïque a été battue en brèche. Michel Senellart en prend le contre-pied lorsque, postulant la « productivité du christianisme » comme « agent d'une lente, mais puissante transformation de l'économie temporelle »<sup>17</sup>, il établit la contribution spécifique de la culture chrétienne médiévale au développement des arts de gouverner en montrant de quelle façon l'idée même de gouvernement politique s'est dégagée du concept non politique de gouvernement des âmes (*regimen animarum*), quoique la politisation progressive du concept n'ait nullement impliqué sa « sécularisation ». Gianluca Briguglia a d'ailleurs observé, pour le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, la coexistence et les interactions entre le modèle aristotélicien naturaliste des théorisations politiques de la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle et le modèle d'analyse théologico-politique<sup>18</sup>. Son ouvrage sur « les théologiens et la théorie politique à l'époque du conflit entre Boniface VIII et Philippe le Bel »<sup>19</sup> étaye la pertinence de la théologie dans le traitement des questions politiques. Au-delà des rapports étroits entre théorie politique et réflexion ecclésiologique<sup>20</sup>, il a montré que des questions purement théologiques, comme celles de Jean de Paris ou de Gilles de Rome sur l'eucharistie, ont non seulement permis de forger ou d'affiner des instruments conceptuels qui ont été ensuite utilisés dans le débat politique, mais qu'elles étaient en elles-mêmes porteuses

13 G. Briguglia, *Le Pouvoir mis à la question...*, p. 24.

14 Ibidem, p. 31.

15 Ibidem, p. 24.

16 A. Boureau, *La Religion de l'État. La construction de la République étatique dans le discours théologique de l'Occident médiéval (1250-1350)*, Paris 2006, p. 16.

17 M. Senellart, *Les Arts de gouverner. Du "regimen" médiéval au concept de gouvernement*, Paris 1995, p. 15.

18 G. Briguglia, *Le Pouvoir mis à la question...*, p. 117-118.

19 Ibidem.

20 Ibidem, p. 137.

d'« une interrogation radicale sur le pouvoir, sur cette relation invisible, mais très concrète, qui lie les hommes à la communauté chrétienne et les assujettit volontairement à la royauté du Christ »<sup>21</sup>. Dans une optique comparable, Philippe Buc a saisi les modes de conceptualisation du pouvoir et leurs mutations dans les gloses et les commentaires exégétiques entre le XI<sup>e</sup> et le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. En l'absence de discours spécifique sur le « politique », le jeu des sens de l'Écriture permet souvent d'y traiter, « simultanément et de manière indifférenciée », de théologie morale, de théologie spéculative et de politique<sup>22</sup>. Une « rationalité politique » émerge dans le cadre défini par la « rationalité religieuse »<sup>23</sup>. Alain Boureau a radicalisé cette position<sup>24</sup> : décentrer l'attention des « rares traités explicitement politiques de l'époque »<sup>25</sup> vers des considérations sur la divinité et la Création, sur la nature humaine et sur son destin, répond à la conviction suivant laquelle ces questions théologiques « produisent plus aisément des réflexions neuves où les urgences du temps infléchissent la pensée »<sup>26</sup>.

Cette conviction n'implique pas de considérer le discours religieux comme déterminant : « La spécificité de la pensée scolastique, toutes orientations confondues, est de constituer pour la première fois en Occident une science de l'homme, en complément exact de la science de Dieu »<sup>27</sup>. L'anthropologie scolastique invite à extraire de la culture savante une réflexion sur l'être humain qui porte aussi sur son existence collective. Les *Quodlibets* se prêtent particulièrement à une telle enquête. Lors de deux sessions annuelles, d'Avent et de Carême, ces disputes facultatives s'ouvraient à un public plus large que l'auditoire habituel du maître qui les présidait et laissaient à l'assistance l'initiative de questions qui, loin de ne porter que sur des aspects ardu de théologie spéculative, s'attachaient aux situations communes et aux cas concrets les plus variés. Roberto Lambertini a observé qu'à la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, les *Quodlibets* ont été le lieu d'une véritable réflexion politique, qui se développa ensuite dans les traités sur le pouvoir du pape nés de la querelle bonifacienne<sup>28</sup>.

21 Ibidem, p. 138 ; ces questions sont analysées au chapitre 2, p. 51-72.

22 Ph. Buc, *L'Ambiguïté du Livre. Prince, pouvoir et peuple dans les commentaires de la Bible au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1994, p. 40.

23 Ph. Buc, *Exégèse et pensée politique : Radulphus Niger (vers 1190) et Nicolas de Lyre (vers 1330)*, dans : *Représentation, pouvoir et royauté à la fin du Moyen Âge*, éd. J. Blanchard, Paris 1995, p. 145.

24 Cf. A. Boureau, *La Religion de l'État...*

25 Ibidem, p. 17.

26 Ibidem.

27 Ibidem, p. 20.

28 Cf. R. Lambertini, *Political Quodlibeta*, dans : *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages. The Thirteenth Century*, dir. C. Schabel, Leiden 2006, p. 439-474.

On s'attachera, sans exclusive, à ce mode d'intervention universitaire, moins bien identifié, par exemple, que les commentaires sur la *Politique* d'Aristote ou les miroirs des princes<sup>29</sup>, et qui a tout particulièrement contribué à la construction de l'autorité des maîtres dans la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>30</sup>. Parce que lorsqu'ils traitent du pouvoir, les théologiens traitent aussi de leur pouvoir d'en traiter, on envisagera la revendication d'autonomie qui forme le socle culturel de l'interrogation théologique sur le pouvoir politique. On analysera ensuite un échantillon de questions théologiques sur les fondements, les formes, l'exercice et les limites du pouvoir. On abordera enfin différents aspects de l'engagement des théologiens au service des pouvoirs laïcs, en des contextes qui influent sur la perception et l'usage des savoirs.

#### LE SOCLE D'UN QUESTIONNEMENT POLITIQUE : L'AUTONOMIE DU « CHAMP SCIENTIFIQUE »

C'est dans le cadre de l'université que les théologiens ont construit un rapport spécifique vis-à-vis des pouvoirs et une autorité propre à justifier leurs interventions en tous domaines. À Paris, l'émergence de cette institution au début du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle correspond à un phénomène corporatif spontané. Dominée par les maîtres, suscitée par un intérêt scientifique et par la conscience d'une identité professionnelle commune, l'association des maîtres et des étudiants prend forme juridique. Les tensions que cristallisent la revendication ou la défense de son autonomie corporative permettent d'en mesurer les enjeux : lorsque la papauté accompagne ce mouvement vers l'autonomie, elle donne forme d'octroi à ce qu'elle reconnaît ou garantit ; le règlement du conflit à propos de la licence d'enseigner, en 1213, assure à l'université la maîtrise de son recrutement, mais introduit simultanément les conditions de la suspension du droit concédé<sup>31</sup>. Or l'autonomie détermine l'existence même de l'université : en cas d'atteinte à ses membres (par exemple en 1229) ou à ses privilèges corporatifs (par exemple en 1255), l'université opte pour sa propre dissolution<sup>32</sup>.

La revendication d'autonomie corporative est indissociable d'une revendication d'autonomie scientifique qui s'exprime dans le discours des

29 Cf. C. Flüeler, *Rezeption und Interpretation der aristotelischen Politica im späten Mittelalter*, Amsterdam-Philadelphie 1992 ; W. Berges, *Die Fürstenspiegel des hohen und späten Mittelalters*, Leipzig 1938 ; J. Krynen, *L'Empire du roi. Idées et croyances politiques en France (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris 1993, p. 167-239.

30 Je me permets de renvoyer à ce sujet à E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres. Scolastique, normes et société au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 2007.

31 *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, I, n° 26, Paris 1889, p. 75-76.

32 Sur ces deux épisodes, voir A. Destemberg, *L'Honneur des universitaires au Moyen Âge. Étude d'imaginaire social*, Paris 2015, p. 237-240.



théologiens sur leur fonction. La liberté intellectuelle et l'ambition normative en constituent des motifs majeurs. La revendication d'indépendance intellectuelle se fonde sur la valeur irréductible de la vérité, sur les exigences propres de sa recherche et de son enseignement et sur l'affirmation de l'autonomie de ses gardiens contre toute volonté de réduire leurs positions à l'unité<sup>33</sup>. Ce discours, formulé à la suite des condamnations doctrinales de 1277, va très loin dans la défense de la valeur heuristique de la controverse. Il participe à la constitution d'un véritable champ scientifique, dominé par des théologiens qui se désignent comme des « docteurs de la vérité » auxquels incombe « la charge publique d'enseigner la vérité », de « dire la vérité en matière de foi et de morale »<sup>34</sup>.

Cette revendication se complète de l'expression de leur ambition normative. De façon générale, les théologiens avaient vocation à déterminer les normes indéterminées de la loi évangélique, conçue comme « loi de grâce » ou « loi de liberté » par contraste avec la Loi ancienne. Ces normes se constituaient par l'explicitation continue de la Révélation<sup>35</sup>. La « mutation scolastique » inaugure « un nouveau régime de la vérité, perçue comme construction ou reconstruction, contre la tradition, la narration et la coutume »<sup>36</sup>, qui donne lieu à des normes rationnelles, résultant de l'enquête contradictoire dont Abélard avait proposé le modèle pour résoudre les discordances entre les autorités. Les questions disputées et surtout les questions quodlibétiques donnent forme à cette procédure intellectuelle, qui contribue à l'avènement de maîtres au plein sens du terme en les mettant en position d'arbitrer entre les arguments antagoniques<sup>37</sup>. La systématisation de la dispute traduit l'émancipation par rapport à la tutelle étroite du texte biblique<sup>38</sup>. La théologie qui a pris corps, en tant qu'élaboration rationnelle de la foi, avec la mise en œuvre de la logique aristotélicienne, acquiert sa pleine légitimité scientifique lorsque Thomas d'Aquin la définit comme science « subalternée » à la science de Dieu, c'est-à-dire comme procédant des articles de foi, premiers principes connus grâce à la lumière de la science supérieure de Dieu<sup>39</sup>.

En termes de contenus, l'ampleur et la variété du questionnement quodlibétique (du mérite des docteurs au droit de fuite du condamné à mort

33 Cf. Godefroid de Fontaines, *Quodlibet XII*, 5, éd. J. Hoffmans, Louvain 1932, p. 101.

34 Ibidem, 6.

35 Henri de Gand, *Somme des questions ordinaires*, art. 8, qu. 6, dans : *Henry of Ghent Summae quaestionum ordinarium*, I, [reprint of the 1520 Edition] New York 1953, fol. 68r.a

36 A. Boureau, *Droit et théologie au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, « Annales ESC » XLVII (1992), p. 1116.

37 Cf. B.C. Bazan, *Les questions disputées, principalement dans les facultés de théologie*, dans : *Les questions disputées et les questions quodlibétiques dans les facultés de théologie, de droit et de médecine*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental, XLV-XLVI, Turnhout 1985, p. 32.

38 M.-D. Chenu, *La Théologie comme science au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* [1957], Paris 1969, p. 25.

39 Ibidem, p. 72-74.

en passant par l'acquittement des dîmes, le cumul des bénéfices, le mariage, le vœu, les rentes, la fiscalité royale, la législation sur l'usure ou le châtiment du vol...) suggèrent que les théologiens ont prétendu exercer une autorité universelle qu'on a proposé de qualifier de « juridiction intellectuelle »<sup>40</sup>, compte tenu du caractère normatif des cadres d'énonciation et de la teneur des déterminations magistrales. Les théologiens ont en effet explicitement assis leur autorité normative sur leur aptitude à saisir et à formuler les principes dérivés du droit divin ou naturel, considéré comme universellement accessible dans ses premiers principes, mais dont la connaissance des préceptes seconds, susceptibles de varier en fonction des cas, requérait les lumières spéciales de la science et l'aptitude au raisonnement.

Les théologiens se sont d'ailleurs prévalu de ces lumières pour affirmer leur supériorité sur les juristes. En diverses occasions, ils soulignent que les questions relèvent de leur compétence propre dans la mesure où elles relèvent du droit divin, de celle des juristes dans la mesure où elles dépendent du droit positif<sup>41</sup>. En outre, dans des questions sur les compétences nécessaires au gouvernement de l'Église qui mettent explicitement le droit et la théologie en concurrence dans un contexte de juridisation de l'Église, les théologiens ont revendiqué la capacité exclusive à former les prélats<sup>42</sup>, lesquels devaient savoir diriger l'ensemble des fidèles qui formaient l'Église, « ce qu'ils ne [pouvaient] faire sans l'Écriture divine »<sup>43</sup>.

La revendication d'autonomie institutionnelle et intellectuelle, spécialement fondée, à Paris, sur l'autorité et la normativité de la théologie, a contribué à l'évolution des représentations globales du pouvoir. Le schéma des trois pouvoirs mis en lumière par Herbert Grundmann<sup>44</sup> marque une rupture à la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le *Studium* accède au rang de pouvoir universel, assumant, à parité avec les pôles traditionnels du pouvoir médiéval, *Sacerdotium* et *Regnum*, un rôle spécifique dans le gouvernement de la société chrétienne. L'« usurpation tacite » de la catégorie de clerc<sup>45</sup>, qui a commencé à désigner les gens de savoir au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, a sans doute contribué à l'éclatement de la notion de clergie en deux instances, *Sacerdotium* et *Studium*. Distincts, les trois pouvoirs n'en sont pas moins organiquement associés. Suivant le canoniste

40 Cf. E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres...*, p. 14, 249.

41 Cf. Thomas d'Aquin, *Quodlibet II*, 8, éd. R.-A. Gauthier, 1996, vol. 2, p. 226 ; *Quodlibet XI*, 1, éd. cit., vol. 1, p. 164-166 ; Henri de Gand, *Quodlibet V*, 38, Paris 1518, fol. 214r.

42 Sur ce point, voir E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres...*, p. 39-42.

43 Jean du Mont-Saint-Éloi, *Quodlibet II*, 8, éd. J. Leclercq, *L'idéal du théologien au Moyen Âge*, « Revue des sciences religieuses » XXI (1947) 3-4, p. 127.

44 H. Grundmann, *Sacerdotium-Regnum-Studium. Zur Wertung der Wissenschaft im 13. Jahrhundert*, « Archiv für Kulturgeschichte » XXXIV (1951), p. 5-21.

45 A. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages*, Oxford 1985, p. 263.

Alexandre de Roes, le *Sacerdotium* forme les fondements de l'Église, le *Regnum* ses murs, le *Studium* son toit<sup>46</sup>. On a proposé d'envisager ce « troisième pouvoir » comme une forme de « juridiction intellectuelle »<sup>47</sup>. On suggérera la qualification complémentaire de « champ scientifique »<sup>48</sup>, revendiquant son autonomie et se réclamant de l'universel, obéissant à ses propres lois de fonctionnement interne sans être pour autant strictement indépendant des logiques externes, traversé de tensions<sup>49</sup>.

La « juridiction intellectuelle » que les maîtres ont exercée par la dispute a contribué à l'affirmation de leur magistère, avec pour double corollaire la prétention à l'évaluation et au contrôle des pouvoirs normatifs (laïcs aussi bien qu'ecclésiastiques) et, au-delà, à la production de normes propres, résultant d'une « exigence d'enquête intégrale en tous domaines »<sup>50</sup>. Le questionnement politique n'y présente pas de spécificité. Il s'intègre aux réflexions que les théologiens ont menées sur de très nombreux aspects de la vie collective.

#### PENSER LES ORIGINES ET LES FONDEMENTS DU POUVOIR : ÉLECTION, CONTRACTUALITÉ

La réflexion scolastique sur l'élection<sup>51</sup> permet d'appréhender un large spectre de questions sur les origines et les fondements du pouvoir, sur la définition et le rôle de la communauté politique. Jean Dunbabin a observé que le traitement de la question de la participation des hommes libres à la vie politique, sous les aspects de l'élection et de la correction du prince, permettait d'évaluer l'originalité des commentaires sur la *Politique* d'Aristote où le motif de l'élection est surtout traité<sup>52</sup>. Il apparaît aussi dans des sommes, des Quodlibets et dans des traités politiques comme le *De regimine principum* de Gilles de Rome (vers 1278), le *De iurisdictione* d'Hervé Nédellec (après

46 Alexandre de Roes, *Memoriale de prerogativa imperii*, chap. 25, éd. H. Grundmann, H. Heimpel, dans : *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Staatschriften des späteren Mittelalters*, I, Stuttgart 1958, p. 127.

47 Cf. E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres...*, p. 14, 249.

48 Cf. P. Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* [1992], Paris 1998.

49 Ibidem, p. 215-216, 231, 351, 380.

50 A. Boureau, *La Religion de l'État...*, p. 200.

51 Les développements qui suivent reprennent en partie E. Marmursztejn, *Élections et légitimité politique dans la scolastique au tournant du XIII<sup>e</sup> et du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, dans : *Élections et pouvoirs politiques du VII<sup>e</sup> au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, dir. C. Péneau, Bordeaux 2008, p. 143-162.

52 Cf. J. Dunbabin, *The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's Politics*, dans : *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy. From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100-1600*, dir. N. Kretzmann et al., [1982] Cambridge 1992, p. 723-737.

1312) ou le *Defensor pacis* de Marsile de Padoue (1324). Composés hors du cadre scolaire, ces traités emploient largement des références et des méthodes scolastiques<sup>53</sup>.

Dans l'approche scolastique, l'élection est toujours pensée dans son articulation avec l'idée de légitimité et toujours traitée en relation avec autre chose : l'origine divine, la légitimité héréditaire ou le contrôle du pouvoir. Le postulat de l'origine divine du pouvoir n'a pas fait obstacle à la réflexion. Brian Tierney a montré que la distinction entre institution divine de l'empire et institution humaine de l'empereur, élaborée par les juristes des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles<sup>54</sup>, s'était développée suivant deux voies majeures : celle de la raison donnée aux hommes par Dieu, qui leur faisait percevoir la nécessité de choisir des gouvernants ; celle de l'inspiration divine, qui guidait l'institution des gouvernants<sup>55</sup>.

L'idée que le pouvoir venait de Dieu par l'intermédiaire des hommes ressort tout particulièrement du traité *De iurisdictione* d'Hervé Nédellec. Le théologien dominicain y distingue le statut du pape (institué par Dieu), de sa personne (désignée par election humaine). L'*electio populi* fondait, de façon plus générale, la « juridiction politique ou publique »<sup>56</sup>, définie comme le « pouvoir d'ordonner, d'interdire, de juger », exercé en vue du bien de la chose publique<sup>57</sup>. Hervé Nédellec justifiait son rôle en combinant des principes fondamentaux de la *Politique* aristotélicienne (l'inclination naturelle de l'« animal politique » à vivre en communauté, la nécessité que celle-ci soit régie par un pouvoir apte à lui procurer la paix et l'unité) et une formule proche de la maxime romaine *Quod omnes tangit*<sup>58</sup>, réintroduite par les canonistes de la seconde moitié du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle : « Tout ce qui relève de la communauté doit procéder du consentement de la communauté [...]. Or le fait de détenir le pouvoir par lequel elle est gouvernée relève de la communauté »<sup>59</sup>. À la différence de la prise de possession violente, l'élection créait le droit de gouverner. L'idée se trouvait déjà chez Godefroid de Fontaines :

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53 Certains de ces traités s'apparentent à de véritables commentaires de la *Politique*, cf. S.M. Babbitt, *Oresme's Livre de Politiques and the France of Charles V*, « Transactions of the American Philosophical Society » LXXV (1985) 1, p. 16.

54 B. Tierney, *Religion, Law, and the Growth of Constitutional Thought, 1150-1650*, Cambridge 1982, p. 40.

55 Ibidem, p. 41-42.

56 Hervé Nédellec, *De iurisdictione*, éd. L. Hödl, München 1959, p. 14.

57 Ibidem, p. 15.

58 Cf. Y.-M. Congar, *Quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus tractari et approbari debet*, « Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France » XXXVI (1958), p. 210-259 ; A. Boureau, *Quod omnes tangit : de la tangence des univers de croyance à la fondation sémantique de la norme médiévale*, « Le gré des langues » I (1990), p. 137-153.

59 Hervé Nédellec, *De iurisdictione*, p. 16.

Quand on gouverne des hommes libres et non des esclaves, et que l'on tient son droit de gouverner (*ius principandi*) de toute la communauté, soit par élection, soit par institution, soit par acceptation et consentement, on ne doit gouverner qu'en vue du bien commun et de l'utilité commune<sup>60</sup>.

En définitive, l'origine divine du pouvoir donnait au prince une légitimité qu'actualisait le *ius principandi* conféré par le consentement de la communauté. La distinction entre le pouvoir et le droit de le détenir<sup>61</sup> crée les conditions mêmes de la réflexion sur l'élection.

Un petit corpus de textes sur le meilleur mode de désignation du prince (commentaires sur la *Politique*, miroirs ou *Quodlibets*) permet de distinguer trois groupes d'opinions. Dans la décennie 1270-1280, des théologiens comme Gilles de Rome ou Pierre d'Auvergne jugent que l'élection est meilleure *per se* mais que la succession héréditaire est meilleure *per accidens*. L'élection permettait d'obvier aux aléas du sort par le choix du meilleur prince, mais l'expérience démontrait la supériorité de la succession héréditaire. Selon Gilles de Rome, un roi gouvernait mieux un royaume qu'il savait devoir léguer à son fils, lequel aurait une juste perception de la dignité royale dont il ne s'enorgueillirait pas excessivement. Parce que l'habitude constituait une sorte de « seconde nature », les sujets accoutumés à obéir à la dynastie régnante inclinaient à obéir quasi naturellement à un gouvernement lui-même quasi naturel. Aussi le principe héréditaire conservait-il la paix qu'auraient menacée les dissensions entre les électeurs, écartait le risque de tyrannie, fondait un *dominium naturale* sur une sujétion habituelle<sup>62</sup>. Pierre d'Auvergne suit la définition aristotélicienne de la nature comme norme de fréquence ou de régularité pour établir que, le bon succédant au bon suivant le cours naturel des choses, l'élection serait moins naturelle que la succession héréditaire<sup>63</sup>.

En contrepoint, un texte quodlibétique de Godefroid de Fontaines sur la fiscalité royale révèle incidemment sa préférence pour l'élection : « Puisque, selon l'origine naturelle, le meilleur n'engendre pas nécessairement le meilleur », et quoique les électeurs puissent faire de mauvais choix, il serait « plus approprié que les princes soient institués par le peuple au moyen de l'élection, pour que le meilleur soit toujours porté à sa tête »<sup>64</sup>. En

<sup>60</sup> Godefroid de Fontaines, *Quodlibet* XI, 17, éd. J. Hoffmans, Louvain 1932, p. 77.

<sup>61</sup> Sur la distinction opérée par les scolastiques entre la chose et le droit dont elle est l'objet dans le registre des biens matériels, voir E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres...*, p. 210-215.

<sup>62</sup> Gilles de Rome, *De regimine principum*, Rome 1556, fol. 274r-v.

<sup>63</sup> Pierre d'Auvergne, *Questiones supra libros Politicorum*, III, 25, éd. C. Flüeler, *Rezeption und Interpretation der aristotelischen Politica im späten Mittelalter...*, p. 221.

<sup>64</sup> Godefroid de Fontaines, *Quodlibet* XI, 17, p. 76.

conséquence, « puisque la plupart du temps les rois ne sont pas élus, on ne doit pas nécessairement inférer qu'ils sont meilleurs et plus prudents du fait qu'ils sont rois »<sup>65</sup>. Henri de Friemar privilégiait également la voie élective, « parce qu'il vaut mieux que la chose publique soit régie par l'art plutôt que par le sort, par une décision plutôt que par la fortune, et que de cette façon les sujets sont incités à agir vertueusement et se vouent plus d'amitié et de révérence mutuelle »<sup>66</sup>.

Nicole Oresme tient enfin une position singulière, au début des années 1370, en se déclarant « absolument et simplement » partisan de la succession héréditaire, qu'il juge « absolument et simplement la plus expédiente », tout en considérant l'élection comme meilleure « sous condition »<sup>67</sup>. Il parvient à la même conclusion de Gilles de Rome et Pierre d'Auvergne par un cheminement inverse : pour Oresme, l'élection n'est pas meilleure dans l'absolu, mais dans certaines conditions de temps, de lieu, de mœurs. Toutefois, « la policie n'est pas gouvernée par si et ne doit l'en supposer fors ce qui est de fait. Et convient prendre les choses teles comme elles sunt communement »<sup>68</sup>. Il y aurait en outre « grand péril » à confier le pouvoir d'élire et de corriger le prince à une multitude susceptible d'empirer avec le temps, incapable d'éviter les « discordes et divisions » et qui pourrait se laisser induire à faire de mauvais choix<sup>69</sup>. Le souci de la continuité du pouvoir, moyen d'éviter les troubles intérieurs, conduit Oresme à rejeter l'élection dans le passé, comme fondement originel de la légitimité ou comme remède aux défaillances dynastiques<sup>70</sup>. Les régimes héréditaires n'excluaient pas, en effet, un consentement populaire fondateur, car le peuple pouvait choisir d'instituer un régime de succession héréditaire<sup>71</sup>.

La définition du rôle de la « multitude » associe la capacité d'élire à l'obéissance, mais aussi au pouvoir de corriger, voire de déposer le prince. Les questions de l'élection du prince et du contrôle du pouvoir supposent une définition de la communauté politique. La distinction entre « multitude bestiale » et « multitude ordonnée » semble avoir été introduite par Pierre d'Auvergne lorsqu'il précise les contours de la multitude aristotélicienne : la multitude « mixte et ordonnée » possède, grâce aux sages qui en font partie, la prudence nécessaire à la recherche du bon prince, et en elle-même

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>66</sup> Henri de Friemar, *Quodlibet I*, 20, dans : C. Stroick, *Heinrich von Friemar. Leben, Werke, philosophisch-theologische Stellung in der Scholastik*, Freiburg 1954, p. 246.

<sup>67</sup> Nicole Oresme, *Le livre de Politiques d'Aristote*, éd. A.D. Menut, « Transactions of the American Philosophical Society » LX (1970) 6, p. 109a, 154b.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, p. 155a.

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, p. 136b.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, p. 109a, 153b.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. E. Marmursztejn, *Élections et légitimité politique...*, p. 150.



la puissance de contraindre l'élu<sup>72</sup>. Il était expédient qu'une telle multitude élise et corrige les princes, du moins dans le cas des cités indépendantes<sup>73</sup>, l'élection et la correction du prince n'ayant pas lieu d'être en régime de succession héréditaire. Cette « communauté mixte » avait, en ses « sages », le discernement nécessaire pour déterminer la peine que le « peuple » avait le pouvoir d'infliger au prince, lequel concevrait moins de ressentiment d'être corrigé par une force impersonnelle<sup>74</sup>. L'élection délimitait ainsi un cadre dans lequel le prince gouvernait sous le contrôle de la multitude électrice. Même en « policie royal », Oresme n'excluait pas qu'une « multitude raisonnable » puisse connaître des questions les plus importantes et ait le pouvoir de « réformer le gouvernement, de composer ou de modifier ou approuver et accepter les lois [...], et d'en manifester l'évidence au moyen de la raison naturelle, à l'instar des maîtres de l'université de Paris »<sup>75</sup>.

Aux XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, le traitement de l'élection met en œuvre des savoirs communs sans déboucher sur aucune opinion commune. Les distinctions, oppositions et articulations qui structurent les discours participent toutefois à un même mouvement de construction d'une sphère politique procédant de la dissociation entre légitimité divine et légitimité humaine du pouvoir. La possibilité même de penser cette légitimité humaine induit une réflexion sur la participation politique. Si la « multitude » n'est nullement conçue comme un agent démocratique, l'élection est néanmoins pensée comme un principe de limitation et de contrôle du pouvoir.

La réflexion sur les fondements du pouvoir peut être saisie à d'autres échelles, dans des types de textes très différents. On évoquera brièvement la question *Quid ponat ius vel dominium ?* (« Que construit le droit ou le pouvoir ? »<sup>76</sup>), composée par le franciscain Pierre de Jean Olivi en 1280 et dont Alain Boureau a démontré la contribution à l'émergence d'une théorie contractuelle de la royauté<sup>77</sup>. Selon Olivi, pas plus que le droit de propriété, le langage ou le sacrement, le pouvoir ne pouvait se trouver « dans des "fondements", ni dans des "dispositions", ni dans des effets, ni dans une capacité spécifique de domination sur le libre arbitre, ni dans une totalisation

<sup>72</sup> Pierre d'Auvergne, *Questiones supra libros Politicorum*, III, 17, p. 215.

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>75</sup> Oresme, *Le livre de Politiques d'Aristote*, p. 274a.

<sup>76</sup> Éd. F. Delorme, *Question de P. J. Olivi "Quid ponat ius vel dominium ?" ou encore "De signis voluntariis"*, « *Antonianum* » XX (1945), p. 309-330 ; l'édition est révisée et présentée par S. Piron dans « *Oliviana* » V (2016) : <http://journals.openedition.org/oliviana/882> et <http://journals.openedition.org/oliviana/840>.

<sup>77</sup> A. Boureau, *Pierre de Jean Olivi et l'émergence d'une théorie contractuelle de la royauté au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, éd. J. Blanchard, dans : *Représentation, pouvoir et royauté à la fin du Moyen Âge*, p. 165-175.

de pouvoirs sur le modèle divin »<sup>78</sup>. Dans tous les cas, on avait affaire à une relation, reposant sur un accord de volontés, et non à une réalité existante<sup>79</sup>. La contractualité royale analysée par Olivi n'est pas la simple application d'une théologie de la volonté. Elle s'inscrit dans le cadre plus large d'une « "politisation" théologique du fidèle »<sup>80</sup>, qui s'effectue dans le passage progressif d'une conception vicariale à une conception contractuelle du pouvoir. La première avait cristallisé la légitimité du pouvoir dans une origine<sup>81</sup>. L'émergence d'une conception contractuelle du lien religieux, issue de la réflexion sur la causalité des sacrements, promeut le rôle de la volonté des fidèles<sup>82</sup>. L'efficacité sacramentelle est dès lors conçue « comme l'effet, sans cesse renouvelé mais jamais acquis, d'une relation entre les hommes et Dieu »<sup>83</sup>. On s'oriente ainsi d'une « légitimité par transmission » vers une « légalité de la médiation »<sup>84</sup>. Cette conception n'avait pas forcément d'implication démocratique. Le fondement contractuel n'excluait pas la gestion autocratique du pouvoir<sup>85</sup>.

#### PENSER L'EXERCICE ET LES LIMITES DU POUVOIR : FISCALITÉ, USURE, CONVERSION, EXPULSIONS

Des *Quodlibets* ancrés dans l'actualité et touchant aux domaines d'exercice du pouvoir laïc témoignent de ce que les théologiens ne se sont pas cantonnés dans l'examen théorique de la nature et des causes du pouvoir.

Dans les années 1290, Henri de Gand et Godefroid de Fontaines traitent de la fiscalité monarchique dans un contexte où le droit royal d'imposer était encore vivement contesté : les sujets étaient-ils tenus d'observer des statuts dont il n'était pas manifeste qu'ils soient exigés par l'utilité commune ?<sup>86</sup> Un prince, invoquant l'argument de l'utilité commune, pouvait-il imposer une taxe si la nécessité n'en est pas par elle-même notoire, et les sujets étaient-ils tenus de l'acquitter ?<sup>87</sup> De ces textes, analysés par ailleurs<sup>88</sup>, on retiendra l'idée suivant laquelle la loi, qui devait être acceptée par les sujets, n'était contraignante que si elle semblait manifestement inspirée par le souci de

<sup>78</sup> Ibidem, p. 167.

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, p. 166.

<sup>80</sup> Ibidem, p. 168.

<sup>81</sup> Ibidem, p. 169.

<sup>82</sup> Ibidem, p. 171.

<sup>83</sup> Ibidem, p. 172.

<sup>84</sup> Ibidem, p. 168.

<sup>85</sup> Ibidem, p. 174.

<sup>86</sup> Henri de Gand, *Quodlibet XIV*, 8, Paris 1518, fol. 567v-568r.

<sup>87</sup> Godefroid de Fontaines, *Quodlibet XI*, 17, p. 76-78.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. E. Marmursztejn, *L'Autorité des maîtres...*, p. 139-145.

l'utilité commune. En l'espèce, les maîtres tendaient au prince leur propre miroir : il fallait non seulement qu'il eût la science des principes auxquels sa loi devait se conformer, mais aussi la capacité de manifester l'adéquation entre la loi et ses principes, afin que ses sujets saisissent la raison de ce qui leur était imposé et l'approuvent en connaissance de cause. L'instruction secrète adressée par Philippe le Bel aux percepteurs de l'impôt exigé en mars 1303 fait écho à ces prescriptions :

Vous devez être avisés de parler au peuple par douces paroles et de montrer les grandes désobéissances, rebellions et dommages que nos sujets de Flandre ont fait à nous et à notre royaume, ceci afin de le rendre attentif à notre intention [...]. En toutes manières, montrez-leur comment, par cette voie de payer, ils sont hors des périls de leur corps, des grands coûts des chevaux et de leurs dépens, et comment ils pourront ainsi vaquer à leur marchandise et administrer les biens de leurs terres<sup>89</sup>.

Henri de Gand tempère la nécessité de manifester le bien-fondé d'une décision par la « confiance » que les sujets devaient avoir « en la prudence et la bonté du prince et de ses conseillers », et qui devait les porter à « croire et supposer que ces statuts tendent bien à l'utilité publique »<sup>90</sup>. Godefroid de Fontaines postule au contraire la tendance des princes à gouverner par leur volonté propre et à n'invoquer le bien commun ou le conseil pris auprès d'hommes avisés que de manière purement formelle, pour imposer de nouvelles charges à leurs sujets<sup>91</sup>. Il en tire une conséquence politique capitale :

Bien qu'il ne faille pas que chaque membre du peuple soit présent là où l'on traite, où l'on ordonne et où l'on établit de telles choses, il faut toutefois y associer ceux qui ont le plus de discernement [...] pour qu'ils approuvent ces choses et pour qu'il puisse apparaître à tous que la cause pour laquelle une telle charge leur est imposée est conforme à la raison et qu'il faut la recevoir volontairement<sup>92</sup>.

Le théologien se réfère aux assemblées représentatives qui avaient commencé de se mettre en place dans la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il applique au champ politique l'idéologie de conseil et de consentement portée par la maxime romaine *Quod omnes tangit* souvent invoquée par les clercs, depuis la seconde moitié du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, pour rappeler qu'ils ne devaient pas être taxés sans leur consentement.

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<sup>89</sup> Cité dans J. Favier, *Philippe le Bel*, Paris 1978, p. 179.

<sup>90</sup> Henri de Gand, *Quodlibet* XIV, 8, fol. 568r.

<sup>91</sup> Godefroid de Fontaines, *Quodlibet* XI, 17, p. 77-78.

<sup>92</sup> Ibidem, p. 78.

Loin d'être coupés du réel, les théologiens s'engagent dans des débats extérieurs au monde des écoles. Dans un contexte d'essor de la fiscalité monarchique, ils appuient la revendication du consentement à l'impôt. Ils offrent le modèle intellectuel de leur propre compétence à saisir et à manifester la raison des choses et mettent en œuvre la science qui leur permet de définir à la fois les critères du juste exercice du pouvoir et le rôle actif de la communauté politique.

La nécessité de la répression anti-usuraire est envisagée dans un cadre différent. Lors d'un *Quodlibet* disputé en 1297 par Godefroid de Fontaines, la question de savoir si les princes péchaient en n'expulsant pas les usuriers de leurs terres<sup>93</sup> se réfère au canon *Usurarum voraginem* promulgué au concile de Lyon II (1274). La prescription canonique s'accompagnait de lourdes sanctions à l'encontre de ceux qui en négligeraient l'application. La législation monarchique comportait de semblables dispositions dès 1269<sup>94</sup>. Leur réitération quasi littérale, en 1274<sup>95</sup>, témoigne moins de la résistance des usuriers que de celle des pouvoirs qui recouraient au crédit et tiraient parti de sa pratique par la taxation ou la confiscation des créances.

La solution de Godefroid de Fontaines se fonde sur le rappel des principes du bon gouvernement, puis sur une distinction entre usuriers étrangers et usuriers autochtones. Le prince devait viser à l'utilité commune et apprécier l'opportunité de son action en fonction des dispositions de ses sujets. Or il se pouvait que l'expulsion de mauvaises gens occasionne « des maux plus grands et plus nombreux pour la communauté, et qu'il serait encore plus difficile d'extirper »<sup>96</sup>. Ces principes généraux préparent la distinction entre usuriers étrangers et usuriers autochtones. Le prince devait expulser les premiers, qui ne pouvaient compenser par aucun bien le tort qu'ils causaient à ses sujets et qui appauvrissaient le royaume en envoyant vers leur terre d'origine des gains usuraires qu'ils n'avaient pas coutume de restituer à leur mort. Les princes qui les protégeaient péchaient non seulement contre le canon *Usurarum voraginem*, mais aussi contre le droit naturel en n'empêchant pas que l'on porte préjudice à leurs sujets. Il était possible, en revanche, de tolérer les usuriers nés dans le royaume, qui s'enrichissaient des biens d'autrui sans appauvrir le pays où ils résidaient avec les leurs et où ils conservaient leurs biens. Nombre d'entre eux restituaient les profits qu'ils avaient tirés de l'usure. S'ils n'étaient « pas excessivement nombreux », n'exigeaient pas d'« usures excessives » et étaient l'occasion de nombreux biens et de peu de maux pour

<sup>93</sup> Godefroid de Fontaines, *Quodlibet XII*, 9, éd. J. Hoffmans, Louvain 1932, p. 114-118.

<sup>94</sup> *Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race*, éd. É. de Laurière, I, Paris 1723, p. 96.

<sup>95</sup> Ibidem, p. 299-300.

<sup>96</sup> Godefroid de Fontaines, *Quodlibet XII*, 9, p. 115.

la communauté, ils semblaient pouvoir être tolérés<sup>97</sup>. Les usuriers autochtones bénéficient ainsi de l'excuse de l'utilité commune. En l'espèce, la loi humaine concédait l'usure, non qu'elle l'estime conforme à la justice, « mais pour ne pas nuire au plus grand nombre »<sup>98</sup>. Jugeant que la question posée visait les usuriers étrangers, Godefroid de Fontaines conclut que les princes auraient été tenus de les expulser « en vertu du droit naturel, en l'absence [même] de tout précepte »<sup>99</sup>.

Le théologien établit ainsi les principes et les limites de la normativité laïque dans un contexte où la pratique contredisait la norme conciliaire et la législation monarchique elle-même. En exerçant sa compétence à formuler les préceptes issus du droit naturel autant que les motifs de leur légitime suspension, le théologien affirme l'autorité de ses interventions dans le domaine politique. Quoiqu'ils portent sur des aspects pratiques, ces textes intègrent la définition de la finalité du pouvoir politique (le bien de la communauté, l'utilité commune), celle de ses moyens (la science des principes, la capacité de les manifester aux yeux de la communauté en tenant compte des circonstances) et celle de sa légitimité même (le spectre de la tyrannie détermine la position de Godefroid de Fontaines en faveur de l'élection du prince, du gouvernement par la loi et du recours aux assemblées représentatives).

La question sur l'expulsion des usuriers, en 1297, ne mentionne pas les juifs, mais elle se pose dans le climat créé par une série d'expulsions locales et par l'expulsion générale des juifs d'Angleterre en 1290<sup>100</sup>. De façon plus précise, la date à laquelle elle fut disputée correspondait au dernier terme du fouage que Philippe le Bel avait exigé de ses sujets de Saintonge et du Poitou pour prix de l'expulsion des juifs en 1291. Fixé pour six ans, ce fouage était destiné à compenser la perte des taxes jusqu'alors acquittées par les juifs. En 1297, l'éventualité de leur rappel forme vraisemblablement l'arrière-plan de la question, qui donne au théologien l'occasion de rappeler les normes existantes et les critères politiques de leur application.

La question de l'expulsion des juifs est envisagée plus directement dans des textes qui l'articulent parfois avec celle du pouvoir ou du devoir du prince de les convertir, dans un contexte où conversions et expulsions forment un aspect de l'affirmation de la souveraineté chrétienne et où, comme en Angleterre, les conversions créent les conditions de l'expulsion en suscitant la

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<sup>97</sup> Ibidem, p. 116.

<sup>98</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>99</sup> Ibidem, p. 117.

<sup>100</sup> Je me permets de renvoyer sur ce point à E. Marmursztejn, *Débats médiévaux sur l'expulsion des juifs des monarchies occidentales*, dans : *Les expulsions de minorités religieuses dans l'Europe des XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, dir. I. Poutrin, A. Tallon, Bordeaux 2015, p. 19-44.

crainte de l'apostasie des convertis<sup>101</sup>. Le devoir de conversion est au cœur de la question sur le baptême des enfants juifs du franciscain anglais Jean Duns Scot<sup>102</sup>, seul auteur scolastique à avoir soutenu le droit et le devoir de convertir sur la base d'un argumentaire strictement politique : si une « personne privée » ne pouvait enlever les enfants pour les faire baptiser, il en allait autrement « pour le prince, dont les juifs sont les sujets dans le gouvernement de la chose publique. Car Dieu a sur le petit enfant un pouvoir supérieur à celui de ses parents. Universellement, en effet, dans les puissances ordonnées, la puissance inférieure n'oblige pas à l'encontre de la puissance supérieure »<sup>103</sup>. Parce que le prince devait « s'appliquer avec zèle à servir le pouvoir de son seigneur suprême, à savoir Dieu », il avait le devoir « de soustraire les enfants au pouvoir de leurs parents qui voulaient les éduquer à l'encontre du culte de Dieu [...], pour attacher ces enfants au culte divin »<sup>104</sup>. Passant outre l'interdiction canonique des baptêmes forcés<sup>105</sup> et estimant que la conversion finale des juifs, après la chute de l'Antéchrist, ne représenterait qu'un « fruit modique » pour l'Église, Duns Scot préconise d'en « mettre un petit nombre à l'écart dans une île » où ils pourraient continuer d'observer leur loi. Ainsi pourrait s'accomplir la prophétie de la conversion finale du « reste d'Israël »<sup>106</sup>.

Ce qui ressort des discussions dans le détail desquelles on n'entrera pas ici<sup>107</sup>, c'est qu'à partir d'une tradition doctrinale de justification de la présence juive – pour expier le déicide et pour que puisse s'accomplir la prophétie de leur conversion à l'approche de la fin des temps –, et en deçà de la position radicale de Duns Scot, les scolastiques ont défini des exceptions et des critères censés régler l'action du prince : le nombre, la nocivité, le risque de subversion, l'ingratitude envers le prince dont la mort du Christ les avait rendus esclaves, constituaient autant de raisons d'ordonner l'expulsion des juifs. Le motif théologique de la servitude fondait les droits politiques du prince sur « ses juifs » : il pouvait les vendre, les convertir, *a fortiori* les expulser<sup>108</sup>.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. R.C. Stacey, *The Conversion of Jews to Christianity in Thirteenth Century England*, « Speculum », LXVII (1992), p. 282.

<sup>102</sup> Jean Duns Scot, *Utrum parvuli iudeorum et infidelium sint invitati parentibus baptizandi*, question éditée dans E. Marmursztejn, S. Piron, *Duns Scot et la politique. Pouvoir du prince et conversion des juifs*, dans : éd. O. Boulnois et al., *Duns Scot à Paris, 1302-2002*, Turnhout 2005, p. 48-52.

<sup>103</sup> Ibidem, p. 58.

<sup>104</sup> Ibidem, p. 60.

<sup>105</sup> Interdiction formulée par le canon 57 du concile de Tolède IV (633), inséré au Décret de Gratien, D. 45, c. 5, éd. E. Friedberg, col. 161-162.

<sup>106</sup> Jean Duns Scot, *Utrum parvuli iudeorum et infidelium sint invitati parentibus baptizandi*, p. 60-61.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. E. Marmursztejn, *Débats médiévaux sur l'expulsion des juifs...*

<sup>108</sup> Ibidem, p. 43-44.



## CONSEILLER ET SERVIR

L'engagement de théologiens au service du pouvoir entraîne-t-il, avec le changement de cadre institutionnel, une sortie de la scolastique, voire une substitution de la « propagande » à la science politique ? Dans l'exercice de la fonction de conseil, le rôle dévolu aux gens de savoir à la cour doit être distingué des grandes consultations de l'université. Mais pas plus que l'autonomie de l'institution n'est altérée par les sollicitations du pouvoir, les tensions qui traversaient le champ universitaire ne sont abolies à la cour, où la fonction de conseil a été revendiquée et disputée.

« Nouvelle source d'autorité », l'université a été consultée, à partir du règne de Charles VI, pour garantir les positions du pouvoir monarchique et en manifester la légitimité aux yeux de l'opinion publique. Ces interventions<sup>109</sup> ne font pas des maîtres des instruments passifs de la volonté royale. Dans l'affaire des Templiers, la réponse que les théologiens donnèrent, le 25 mars 1308, au questionnaire que le roi leur avait soumis dans le but d'obtenir leur appui, est défavorable à la politique royale. Déniant toute initiative au prince séculier en matière de répression de l'hérésie, ils confirmaient que les Templiers devaient être tenus *pro religiosis* et *pro exemptis*. S'ils justifiaient la poursuite des interrogatoires, du fait de la suspicion suscitée par les aveux de certains membres de l'ordre, ils affirmaient que les biens du Temple devaient continuer de servir leur visée initiale. « Voilà donc », concluaient les maîtres, « ce que nous avons conclu et rédigé unanimement, du mieux possible, voulant de tout cœur déférer aux exigences du roi ainsi qu'à celle de la vérité »<sup>110</sup>.

Le rôle public assumé collectivement par l'université en réponse aux sollicitations du pouvoir royal a été tenu individuellement par des maîtres à la cour, spécialement sous le règne de Charles V. Le milieu curial a donné lieu à des productions intellectuelles spécifiques. Commandes de traités sur le gouvernement, de traductions, de compilations, d'encyclopédies qui intéressent le pouvoir en vertu de la « dialectique entre description et maîtrise du monde »<sup>111</sup>, expriment un réel intérêt pour la culture savante en dehors du monde universitaire. Elle n'y est pas simplement vulgarisée. La traduction de la *Politique* par Oresme, par exemple, en produit une véritable

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<sup>109</sup> S. Menache, *La naissance d'une nouvelle source d'autorité : l'Université de Paris*, « Revue historique » CCLXVIII (1982) 2, p. 305-327.

<sup>110</sup> *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, II, n° 664, Paris 1891, p. 127 ; voir E. Marmursztejn, *Des avis sans efficace ? La "détermination" théologique entre opinion et norme dans l'université parisienne du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, dans : *Conseiller les juges au Moyen Âge*, dir. M. Charageat, Toulouse 2014, p. 62-63.

<sup>111</sup> B. Van den Abeele, *Encyclopédies en milieu de cour*, « Micrologus » XVI (2008), p. 32.

adaptation. Le commentaire, consubstantiel à la traduction, actualise le texte aristotélicien en y introduisant la discussion de questions contemporaines<sup>112</sup>. La transposition touche donc à la fois le texte et le milieu qui le reçoit. Elle détermine la promotion au rang d'idiome scientifique de la langue vulgaire<sup>113</sup> qui s'affirme alors comme « langue du pouvoir dans des rapports de substitution et de concurrence avec le latin »<sup>114</sup>. La commande de traductions nouait des liens inédits entre le pouvoir et le savoir<sup>115</sup>.

La fonction de conseil a-t-elle pour autant asservi le savoir ? La véritable « réflexion politique en images »<sup>116</sup> que constituent certaines expressions iconographiques de la sagesse du roi et de son lien avec les maîtres témoigne au contraire de l'éminence de la fonction magistrale. Les onze enluminures liées au *De regimine principum* de Gilles de Rome, contenu dans un manuscrit composite réalisé en 1372 pour Charles V, illustrent le lien privilégié des maîtres avec le roi qu'ils enseignent et conseillent<sup>117</sup>. À l'exception de trois, toutes les images mettent le roi et un maître au centre. Dans le cas où l'image représente une scène de dispute, le maître se tient debout face au roi siégeant sur son trône. Dans le cas où elle figure une scène d'enseignement, le maître, en chaire, est situé à la même hauteur que le roi. Les autres membres de l'entourage royal se tiennent en arrière du trône<sup>118</sup>. Le célèbre frontispice de l'un des manuscrits de la traduction par Oresme de l'*Éthique* d'Aristote fait même apparaître, dans le registre inférieur gauche où figure une scène d'enseignement, un dispositif iconographique inédit : au premier rang des étudiants, face au maître en chaire, on distingue nettement le roi couronné<sup>119</sup>.

Le *De regimine principum* de Gilles de Rome présente l'originalité d'aborder les problèmes de méthode posés par l'instruction des laïcs<sup>120</sup>. La « doctrine du gouvernement des princes » étant « comprise sous la morale », laquelle ne tolérât pas de recherche subtile mais relevait des actes particuliers, variables et donc très incertains, il fallait procéder « de manière figurée et grossière »<sup>121</sup> et user de la rhétorique, « manière de dialectique grossière »<sup>122</sup> qui constituait

112 Cf. E. Marmursztejn, *Nicole Oresme et la vulgarisation de la Politique...*, p. 119-125.

113 R. Imbach, *Dante, la philosophie et les laïcs*, Fribourg 1996, p. 105-106.

114 Cf. S. Lusignan, *La Langue des rois au Moyen Âge. Le français en France et en Angleterre*, Paris 2004, p. 17.

115 E. Marmursztejn, *Nicole Oresme et la vulgarisation de la Politique...*, p. 109.

116 A. Destemberg, *L'Honneur des universitaires...*, p. 28.

117 Ibidem, p. 29.

118 Ibidem, illustrations 4 et 5 du cahier central.

119 Ibidem, illustration 6 du cahier central.

120 Cf. R. Imbach, *Dante, la philosophie et les laïcs*, p. 52-55.

121 Gilles de Rome, *De regimine principum*, Rome 1556, livre 1, chap. 1, fol. 2r.

122 Ibidem, livre 2, chap. 8, fol. 182v.

un mode inférieur de transmission des savoirs, mieux adapté néanmoins que la démonstration à un public qui devait viser à l'action et au bien, non à la connaissance ni à la vérité<sup>123</sup>. Les princes devaient connaître la morale pour pouvoir « se diriger et diriger les autres »<sup>124</sup> ; le latin, « idiome littéraire grâce auquel [...] les sciences [...] sont plus facilement transmises »<sup>125</sup> ; les autres sciences à condition qu'elles servent la morale, soit « un peu de rhétorique et de dialectique », et la musique qu'Aristote jugeait utile aux bonnes mœurs<sup>126</sup>. Le droit est rangé parmi les sciences « subalternes et subordonnées » à la politique :

Les juristes peuvent être appelés ignares en politique (*idiotae politici*) parce qu'ils parlent de manière narrative et sans argument de ce qui touche à la politique. Il s'ensuit avec évidence qu'il faut honorer ceux qui connaissent les sciences politiques et morales plus que ceux qui connaissent les lois et le droit ; car de même que ceux qui connaissent et peuvent établir la cause sont plus honorables que ceux qui parlent sans pouvoir donner la cause de ce qu'ils disent, ainsi ceux-là sont plus honorables que ceux-ci<sup>127</sup>.

Les finalités pratiques du gouvernement déterminaient donc les contenus et les méthodes de l'instruction du prince. On perçoit chez Gilles de Rome l'écho de ces exégètes du tournant des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles, qui, commentant Isaïe 11, 17 (« Le lion, tel un bœuf, mangera la balle du blé »), déniaient au roi tout accès autonome à la *sapientia*<sup>128</sup>. La Glose ordinaire explique que « les princes de ce monde et les autres simples se satisfont de la surface de la lettre, car ils ne comprennent pas le grain [...], c'est-à-dire le sens intérieur »<sup>129</sup>. La *Bible moralisée* de Louis IX reprend l'essentiel des termes de la Glose<sup>130</sup>. Simple laïc, le prince dépendait des interprètes et devait s'en tenir au savoir qu'il pouvait assimiler. Pour les maîtres, « le critère habilitant à l'exercice du pouvoir est la forme d'intelligence qui leur est propre : la capacité à comprendre les Écritures »<sup>131</sup>, inaccessible sans leur médiation. En contrepoint, Oresme revendique la « connaissance de la vérité » lorsque, vilipendant les juristes, il assigne une des causes de leur ignorance des moyens de conserver l'État au fait qu'il ont « dès leur jeunesse entendu de telles lois et les ont réputées

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123 Ibidem, livre 1, chap. 1, fol. 2v.

124 Ibidem, livre 2, chap. 8, fol. 184v.

125 Ibidem, fol. 184r-v.

126 Ibidem, fol. 184v.

127 Ibidem, fol. 183v-184r.

128 Ph. Buc, *L'Ambiguïté du livre...*, p. 186.

129 Ibidem, p. 188.

130 Ibidem, p. 189 et n. 44.

131 Ibidem, p. 182.

bonnes. Et Averroès dit au prologue de la *Métaphysique* qu'avoir pris l'habitude d'entendre dans sa jeunesse des choses fausses empêche la connaissance de la vérité. Et dit que pour cela, ceux qui apprennent d'abord les lois ne peuvent après apprendre la philosophie »<sup>132</sup>.

La cour constitue donc aussi un lieu de concurrence et de conflits pour imposer « la légitimité politique de tel ou tel champ du savoir aux yeux du roi »<sup>133</sup>. Le débat intellectuel se complique d'enjeux de pouvoir. Les juristes, de plus en plus sollicités par les princes, assument la gestion des affaires : Raoul de Presles et Evrard de Trémaugon, par exemple, sont maîtres des requêtes de l'Hôtel, tandis que les théologiens comme Oresme, Jean Golein ou Jean Corbechon n'ont pas d'ancrage stable dans l'administration royale<sup>134</sup>. Un épisode majeur de cette lutte a opposé, comme on l'a vu, le juriste Évrard de Trémaugon au théologien Nicole Oresme. Jacques Krynen a montré qu'Oresme avait porté sur le terrain idéologique le conflit avec les juristes, qu'il considérait comme un véritable groupe de pression, fondé sur une communauté d'opinions, voire un projet politique commun<sup>135</sup>, usant des formules de l'absolutisme issues du Digeste, attribuant au roi une plénitude de pouvoir régulièrement proclamée depuis 1300<sup>136</sup>, exposant le royaume à la tyrannie. Oresme leur oppose le concept de « posté modérée », suivant lequel seules les choses qui ne pouvaient être déterminées par la loi relevaient de l'arbitre des princes<sup>137</sup>.

En théorie, la cour, comme « extraordinaire machine intégratrice du savoir »<sup>138</sup>, pouvait faire coexister ces contradictions. En pratique, la vision intransigeante de la souveraineté promue par les juristes l'emporte. En mai 1374, tandis qu'Oresme achève son travail sur la *Politique* d'Aristote, le roi fait entrer Évrard de Trémaugon au conseil. Il lui commande un traité dont le but initial semble avoir été de préciser les rapports entre la monarchie et la papauté, mais qui envisage finalement toutes les questions importantes sur le gouvernement, les droits royaux, la société ou la politique du royaume. Achievé en mars 1378, le *Songe du Vergier*, entièrement voué à la justification de la politique royale, est une véritable « synthèse des pétitions de l'absolutisme »<sup>139</sup>. Si, après 1380, les griefs politiques faits aux juristes ne

132 Oresme, *Le livre de Politiques*, p. 244.

133 E. Anheim, *Culture de cour et science de l'État*, « Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales » CXXXIII (2000), p. 41.

134 S. Lusignan, « Vérité garde le roy »..., p. 259.

135 J. Krynen, *Les légistes, "idiots politiques"...*, p. 181.

136 Ibidem, p. 184.

137 Ibidem, p. 185.

138 E. Anheim, *Culture de cour et science de l'État*, p. 45.

139 J. Krynen, *Les légistes, "idiots politiques"...*, p. 189.

sont plus de saison, les critiques à leur encontre ne cessent guère. Au-delà du corporatisme ou de la concurrence professionnelle, Jacques Krynen a proposé d'expliquer cette persistance par la croyance profonde des théologiens « en la vocation éminente de leur savoir », par une vision de la théologie « qui fonde la revendication de leur fonction sociale » et motiverait, « au-delà des implications doctrinales particulières, le sempiternel reproche d'idiotie fait aux juristes »<sup>140</sup>.

La fragilisation effective de la position des théologiens après du roi dès Charles VI les a conduits à un « repli » sur l'université, qui commence alors à intervenir régulièrement dans les débats parlementaires où elle exprime son ambition de « bénéficier, sur un pied d'égalité avec le Parlement, d'une reconnaissance institutionnelle de son devoir [de conseiller] le roi »<sup>141</sup>. Serge Lusignan y voit une réplique aux juristes, qui trouvaient l'assise de leur influence dans les institutions administratives du royaume<sup>142</sup>. De fait, au Parlement, seuls les théologiens intervinrent au nom de l'université. Comme le dit Jean Golein dès 1372 dans le *Traité du sacre*,

quoique le roi de France ne se reconnaisse aucun seigneur temporel sur la terre, il s'estime toutefois soumis à la loi divine. Et cela apparaît dans l'ordre qu'observe depuis longtemps sa fille, notre mère l'université de paris, car si elle vient devant lui pour quelque chose que ce soit, nul ne doit proposer quoi que ce soit au nom de l'université de Paris s'il n'est maître en la sainte divinité ou [membre] de la faculté [de théologie], et il doit montrer que c'est par la loi divine qu'il doit régler les choses et à la loi divine qu'il doit obéir, et pas du tout aux lois impériales et canoniques, sauf si elles s'accordent à la loi théologienne et divine<sup>143</sup>.

En définitive, le christianisme a moins formé un barrage qu'un canal pour la réflexion politique, tout en intégrant un « dispositif de blocage » qui permettait au politique « d'accroître ses forces sans s'émanciper du contrôle religieux »<sup>144</sup>. À l'époque scolastique, la science politique apparaît principalement comme une science philosophique élaborée par des théologiens. Inscrite dans le secteur pratique annexe au champ de la théologie spéculative, elle y revêt une dignité particulière, car s'attachant au « bien ultime et parfait dans les affaires humaines », elle est considérée, par rapport aux autres sciences pratiques, comme « principale et architectonique »<sup>145</sup>. Dans le ressort que les théologiens ont assigné à leur « juridiction intellectuelle », leur enquête se déploie en

<sup>140</sup> Ibidem, p. 197-198.

<sup>141</sup> S. Lusignan, « Vérité garde le roy »..., p. 259.

<sup>142</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>143</sup> Ibidem, p. 212 (la citation est ici donnée en français modernisé).

<sup>144</sup> M. Senellart, *Les Arts de gouverner...*, p. 201.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas d'Aquin, *Sententia libri Politicorum*, éd. léonine, t. 48A, Rome 1971, p. 70.

différents genres et porte aussi bien sur les fondements que sur l'exercice du pouvoir. Même lorsqu'elle s'attache à des problèmes de pratique politique (la fiscalité, la répression de l'usure, l'expulsion des juifs...), elle remonte aux principes qui en étayaient la résolution.

Le domaine politique est particulièrement révélateur du concours et de la concurrence des savoirs scolastiques. Il est traversé par la tension quasi structurelle entre la théologie et le droit, entre la science des principes et celle de la pratique politique, dont les valeurs respectives varient en fonction du contexte institutionnel de leur exercice. Les juristes l'emportent à proximité du pouvoir monarchique, où ils contribuent à une construction rigoureuse de la souveraineté. La position des théologiens, fragilisée à la cour où principes et pratique politiques s'articulaient néanmoins, se renforce par leur retour à l'université et à ses sources de légitimation à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle.

La focalisation sur la théologie, et bien souvent sur la théologie parisienne, ne suppose pas d'y réduire la réflexion politique. Les relations entre la culture savante et le pouvoir se sont aussi nouées ailleurs<sup>146</sup>. Il s'agissait ici de s'intéresser à des gens de savoir qui jouissaient d'une position institutionnelle forte, construite sur la revendication de leur autonomie intellectuelle, dont le rapport au pouvoir n'était pas de pure extériorité et dont l'autorité leur permettait d'offrir au pouvoir politique, avec leur science, leur propre modèle de gouvernement de soi et des autres. L'exercice de cette autorité en dehors de l'université – et notamment à la cour, qui suscite des productions intellectuelles spécifiques et redéfinit les positions – la met à l'épreuve sans en modifier les expressions.

#### ABSTRACT

L'article traite de la façon dont l'évolution de la fonction sociale et intellectuelle des théologiens, principalement parisiens, des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles, a influé sur les conceptions et sur l'exercice même du pouvoir politique. Postulant que les idées « fabriquent du réel » en interaction complexe avec les événements et les mutations structurelles, il s'agit de manifester à la fois l'intérêt des théologiens pour la vie collective et la pertinence de la théologie dans le traitement des questions politiques.

Parce que lorsqu'ils traitent du pouvoir, les théologiens traitent aussi de leur pouvoir d'en traiter, la revendication de l'autonomie du « champ scientifique » qui forme le socle culturel de leurs interrogations est examinée en premier lieu. Des textes sur l'élection et sur la contractualité du pouvoir sont ensuite mobilisés pour envisager leur réflexion sur les origines, les fondements et les formes du pouvoir, ainsi que sur la définition et le rôle de la communauté politique. Loin de se cantonner dans l'examen théorique de la nature et des causes du pouvoir, les théologiens

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<sup>146</sup> On verra par exemple C. König-Pralong, *Le Bon usage des savoirs. Scolastique, philosophie et politique culturelle*, Paris 2011, spécialement p. 298-310 ; E. Coccia, S. Piron, *Poésie, sciences et politique : une génération d'intellectuels italiens (1290-1330)*, « Revue de synthèse » CXXIX(2008) 4, p. 549-586.



en ont envisagé l'exercice et les limites dans des questions concrètes portant sur des sujets d'actualité comme la fiscalité, la répression de l'usure, la conversion et l'expulsion des juifs. Différents aspects de leur engagement au service des pouvoirs laïcs sont enfin abordés. Il en ressort que les consultations collectives de l'université n'en ont pas fait l'instrument passif de la volonté royale et que, d'autre part, les tensions propres au champ universitaire ont persisté à la cour, notamment sous le règne de Charles V, où la fonction de conseil est âprement disputée entre théologiens et juristes. Traversé par cette tension quasi structurelle, le domaine politique témoigne du concours et de la concurrence des savoirs scolastiques, dont les valeurs respectives varient en fonction du contexte institutionnel de leur exercice.

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**VERS LA LÉGITIMATION DU TYRANNICIDE  
EN ANGLETERRE :  
L'EMPOISONNEMENT DE JEAN SANS TERRE  
DANS LES SOURCES DES XIII<sup>E</sup> ET XIV<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLES**



La mort du roi d'Angleterre Jean sans Terre, à Newark, dans la nuit du 18 au 19 octobre 1216, en pleine guerre civile, fit l'objet de rumeurs d'empoisonnement dès les années 1220, avant de donner lieu, quelques décennies plus tard, à un récit complexe qui fait une large place à l'idée du tyrannicide.

L'empoisonnement de Jean entra ensuite dans la tradition historiographique puis littéraire : dans les années 1590, la pièce de Shakespeare, *The Life and Death of King John*, attribue le décès de Jean au poison, sans que le barde n'estime nécessaire de s'étendre sur les circonstances ou les motifs de cet acte, jugeant sans doute le public déjà suffisamment informé à ce sujet.

Comment expliquer le développement de cette tradition ? Le décès de Jean par le poison confirmait la nature détestable du règne<sup>1</sup>. Surtout, il pouvait servir de mise en garde pour les gouvernants dans le contexte de tensions croissantes, autour de 1300, entre le roi et la communauté politique au sujet de la pression fiscale exercée par le gouvernement royal, alors que se multipliaient, un peu partout en Occident, des rumeurs d'empoisonnement de

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<sup>1</sup> Dans la tradition littéraire, Jean est lui-même accusé d'empoisonnement : l'épisode selon lequel il aurait tenté d'empoisonner la fille de Robert fitz Walter, qui avait refusé ses avances, fut repris dans certains textes. Dans ses *Chronicles of England* (1580), John Stow s'inspire de la Chronique de Dunmow, d'après laquelle Jean aurait envoyé un messenger pour empoisonner la jeune femme – devenue « Mawde the Faire » – qui avait refusé ses avances : John Stow, *The Chronicles of England from Brute vnto this present yeare of Christ*, Londres, 1580, p. 242 ; cf. I. Djordjevic, *King John (Mis)Remembered : The Dunmow Chronicle, the Lord Admiral's Men, and the Formation of Cultural Memory*, Farnham 2015.

gouvernants. Même s'il est fictif, l'empoisonnement de Jean dans les sources des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles constitue un exemple remarquable de légitimation du tyrannicide.

## 1. LES DERNIERS JOURS ET LA MORT DE JEAN SANS TERRE

Après l'échec des négociations relatives à l'application de la charte concédée par Jean aux barons rebelles dans la prairie de Runnymede en juin 1215, la guerre civile avait repris à la fin de l'été. Le siège de Rochester à l'automne 1215, la décision des barons de se tourner vers Louis, le fils de Philippe Auguste, pour lui offrir le trône, le débarquement de celui-ci dans le Kent en mai 1216 furent autant d'étapes dans la dégradation de la situation et l'évolution vers une guerre ouverte. Au mois de septembre 1216, Jean reprit l'offensive contre ses ennemis dans l'est du pays, et secourut la garnison restée fidèle du château de Lincoln<sup>2</sup>. Le 2 octobre, il quitta Lincoln en direction de Grimsby, sur la côte, avant de redescendre vers le sud par Louth, Boston et Spalding, arrivant enfin à Lynn (King's Lynn), un port important où il pouvait espérer des ravitaillements, et où il fut somptueusement reçu par les bourgeois de la ville. C'est à Lynn, le 10 octobre, que la santé du roi semble s'être brusquement dégradée. Il prit toutefois la décision de reprendre la route vers le nord, passant par Wisbech, par l'abbaye de Swineshead les 12 et 13 octobre (fête de saint Édouard), puis par le château de Sleaford les 14 et 15 octobre, arrivant enfin à Newark le 16 octobre<sup>3</sup>. Jean avait sans doute alors hâte de pouvoir rejoindre une forteresse où il serait en sécurité.

Les derniers jours de cet itinéraire sont bien retracés dans la chronique de l'abbaye de Crowland (Lincolnshire) : alors que le roi venait de reprendre pied à Lynn, faisant fuir ses ennemis, écrit le chroniqueur, il reprit la route rapidement, mais dans des conditions pénibles dues à la maladie. Une fois parvenu au château de Sleaford – qu'il avait pris au cours de la guerre à l'évêque de Lincoln Hugh de Wells, alors absent du pays –, son état s'aggrava, et il se fit transporter par litière jusqu'au château de Newark, une autre possession de l'évêque de Lincoln<sup>4</sup>. Le chroniqueur de Saint-Albans Roger de Wendover rapporte que des messagers envoyés par des barons qui

<sup>2</sup> Les événements sont résumés dans W.L. Warren, *King John*, London 1978<sup>2</sup>, p. 253 ; également F. Lachaud, *Jean sans Terre (1166-1216)*, ch. 24, Paris 2018.

<sup>3</sup> J. Crockford (née Kanter), *Peripatetic and Sedentary Kingship : The Itineraries of the Thirteenth-Century English Kings*, Ph. D. King's College London, 2011, p. 750.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoriale fratris Walteri de Coventria. The Historical Collections of Walter of Coventry*, éd. W. Stubbs, I-II, Rolls Series, LVIII, London 1872-1873, II, p. 231: *Sed cum a facie ejus fugissent qui apud Linniam congregati erant, reversus est dominus Rex cum festinatione, eo quod morbo ut fertur dissinteriae graviter fatigaretur. Et cum venisset ad castellum cui nomen Lafford, quod episcopo Lincolnensi occasione werrae ad tempus abstulerat, morbo ingravescente, in lectica jactari se fecit*

souhaitaient entrer dans la paix du roi se présentèrent à Newark. Mais Jean, mourant, ne put les recevoir<sup>5</sup>. Son destin l'appelait, comme l'écrit Matthieu Paris, le successeur de Roger de Wendover<sup>6</sup>.

Une lettre envoyée par Jean à Honorius III le 15 octobre montre son souci d'assurer son salut<sup>7</sup>. On doit malgré tout écarter l'hypothèse d'une conversion du roi *ad succurrendum*, que semblait suggérer la découverte, lors de l'ouverture de son tombeau en 1797, d'une coiffe sur le chef du roi : on crut qu'il s'agissait d'une coiffe monacale<sup>8</sup>, mais cet objet doit en réalité être identifié comme la coiffe de lin portée au moment de l'onction royale, et qui fut posée sur la tête du roi défunt, sous une couronne, au moment de l'inhumation<sup>9</sup>. Jean se confessa et reçut l'extrême-onction, avant de donner des directives relatives à sa succession, et de prendre un certain nombre de dispositions religieuses, contrairement à ce qu'affirme Ralph, chroniqueur de l'abbaye cistercienne de Coggeshall (mort vers 1226)<sup>10</sup>, qui le dit intestat. Le testament de Jean, aujourd'hui préservé à la cathédrale de Worcester, et qui mentionne la grave infirmité dont il est atteint, dut être dicté dans ses derniers moments<sup>11</sup>.

Jean mourut dans la nuit du 18 au 19 octobre. À suivre le témoignage de Ralph de Coggeshall, des membres de son entourage se livrèrent au pillage de ses biens, avant de se disperser en laissant nu le corps du roi<sup>12</sup>. Un récit similaire figure chez Giraud de Barry et chez Roger de Howden au sujet de la

*ad Neuwerck, castellum itidem Lincolnensis episcopi, sed ea ratione qua prius in manu Regis tunc temporis existens.*

5 Roger de Wendover, *Flores historiarum*, éd. H.G. Hewlett, I-III, Rolls Series, LXXXIV, London 1886-1889, II, p. 196.

6 Matthieu Paris, *Chronica majora*, éd. H.R. Luard, I-VI, Rolls Series, London 1872-1882, II, p. 668.

7 J. Gillingham, *At the Deathbeds of the Kings of England, 1066-1216*, dans : *Herrscher- und Fürstentestamente im westeuropäischen Mittelalter*, éd. B. Kasten, « Norm und Struktur » XXIX (2008), p. 509-529, à la p. 521 (renvoie à *The Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala, Papal Legate in England, 1216-1218*, éd. N. Vincent, Woodbridge 1996, no. 140b) ; S. Church, *King John's Testament and the Last Days of His Reign*, « English Historical Review » CXXV (2010), p. 505-528, à la p. 519.

8 Valentine Green, *An Account of the Discovery of the Body of King John in the Cathedral Church of Worcester, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1797*, Londres-Worcester 1797, p. 4 ; cf. U. Engel, *The Conversion of King John and Its Consequences for Worcester Cathedral*, dans : *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, éd. G. Armstrong, I.N. Wood, Turnhout 2000, p. 321-338, à la p. 324.

9 S.D. Church, *King John : England, Magna Carta, and the Making of a Tyrant*, London 2015, p. XXIII ; U. Engel, *Worcester Cathedral. An Architectural History*, trad. H. Heltay, Chichester 2007, p. 209.

10 Ralph de Coggeshall, *Chonicon Anglicanum*, éd. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series, LXVI, London 1875, p. 184 : *Aegritudo autem ejus per dies paucos invalescens, apud castellum de Neuwerck intestatus decessit...*

11 Le document est édité et traduit dans S.D. Church, *King John's Testament...*

12 Ralph de Coggeshall, *Chonicon Anglicanum*, p. 184 : *Familia autem ejus, omnia quae secum habuerat, diripuerunt, et concito cursu ab eo diffugerunt, nihil cum corpore relinquentes unde*

mort d'Henri II, et il s'agit peut-être de l'expression du chaos qui devait suivre la disparition du roi, placé au cœur du système de pouvoir<sup>13</sup>, tout comme d'un procédé destiné à souligner le contraste entre le luxe qui entoure le roi vivant et le dénuement qui suit toute mort. Ralph de Coggeshall établit aussi un lien entre le décès du roi et une soudaine tempête, ainsi que « des visions horribles et fantastiques » que rapportèrent certains, et qu'il dit préférer passer sous silence, suggérant malgré tout que l'âme de Jean a été aussitôt emportée en enfer<sup>14</sup>.

Une fois le corps du roi défunt préparé par l'abbé de Croxton, et les entrailles inhumées dans cette maison de l'ordre de Prémontré<sup>15</sup> – une opération peut-être nécessitée, à suivre la chronique de Crowland, par la corpulence de Jean<sup>16</sup> – le corps du roi fut acheminé jusqu'à Worcester, pour être inhumé en grande pompe dans la cathédrale, sans doute le 23 octobre. La scène donne lieu à une représentation iconographique dans un manuscrit du deuxième quart du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>17</sup> : la procession funéraire approche les murailles de la cité et semble sur le point d'entrer par l'une des portes. Deux hommes portent sur leurs épaules le cercueil contenant le corps du roi, posé sur des brancards et recouvert d'un drap de soie : la forme de cet objet rappelle celle d'un reliquaire et il correspond sans doute à ce que les sources latines désignent sous le nom de *feretrum*<sup>18</sup>.

## 2. LES CAUSES DE LA MORT DE JEAN

De nombreuses chroniques ne font que mentionner rapidement la mort de Jean, ajoutant parfois une indication au sujet de son inhumation. C'est le cas par exemple de la chronique de l'abbaye de Glastonbury, composée dans les années 1340 : elle fait simplement état de la mort du roi, dans la dix-septième année de son règne, donnant toutefois la date de 1217, et non 1216, pour son

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*cadaver honeste operiri posset ; sed castellanus ejusdem, in quantum potuit, de corpore exenterato et nudo procuravit.*

<sup>13</sup> S. Church, *Aspects of the English Succession, 1066-1199 : The Death of the King*, Anglo-Norman Studies, XXIX : *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2006*, éd. C.P. Lewis, Woodbridge 2007, p. 17-34, aux p. 33-34.

<sup>14</sup> Ralph de Coggeshall, *Chonicon Anglicanum*, p. 184 : *Circa vero mediam noctem, hora scilicet qua decessit, tantus fragor venti et turbinis in urbe sola insonuit, quod cives timerent de subversione domorum suarum... Multae autem horribiles et phantasticae visiones a multis de eo postmodum narratae sunt, quarum tenorem hic describere supersedimus.*

<sup>15</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, II, p. 668.

<sup>16</sup> *Memoriale fratris Walteri de Coventria*, II, p. 232.

<sup>17</sup> Londres, The British Library, ms. Egerton 3028, f. 61r (manuscrit du *Brut* en anglo-normand) : <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMINBig.ASP?size=big&IllID=11749>.

<sup>18</sup> Sur cet objet, voir en particulier S. Church, *Aspects of the English Succession*, p. 21-28.

inhumation à Worcester au milieu du chœur des moines<sup>19</sup>. D'autres chroniques tardives indiquent de manière erronée Winchester, et non Worcester, comme lieu de l'inhumation de Jean. Quant aux causes du décès, la plupart des chroniques composées au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'attribuent, quand elles en font état, à la maladie. C'est encore le cas dans la version la plus ancienne du *Brut* en anglo-normand, une sorte d'histoire nationale qui tire son nom de Brutus, le Troyen légendaire fondateur du royaume britannique : cette version, qui est sans doute antérieure à la fin du règne d'Édouard I<sup>er</sup> (1272-1307), nous montre Jean tomber soudainement malade à l'abbaye de Swineshead, alors qu'il tente de rejoindre Lincoln, puis se rendre château de Newark où son état s'aggrave jusqu'à ce qu'il décède<sup>20</sup>.

Lorsque le récit est circonstancié, c'est à une crise de dysenterie que les chroniqueurs renvoient. La chronique de Crowland montre le roi accablé par la dysenterie, ajoutant qu'à Newark, sa condition empira encore<sup>21</sup>. Il en est déjà ainsi chez Ralph de Coggeshall, plus proche des événements, mais le chroniqueur cistercien s'empresse aussi de donner des connotations morales à son récit, attribuant nettement la détérioration de la santé de Jean au péché de gourmandise : « là (à Lynn), à ce qu'on rapporte, à cause d'une énorme voracité – son estomac était constamment insatiable – il engouffra de la nourriture à l'excès, et il eut une crise de dysenterie provoquée par une indigestion. » Et il ajoute qu'à Sleaford, il fallut saigner le roi, sans que cette opération n'améliore son état<sup>22</sup>. Roger de Wendover, repris par Matthieu Paris, attribue aussi l'aggravation de l'état du roi, déjà fiévreux, au péché de gourmandise, et plus précisément à l'absorption, en grande quantité, de poires et d'un cidre de poire<sup>23</sup>, produits en abondance dans la région. Dans la

19 *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey. An Edition, Translation and Study of John of Glastonbury's Cronica sive Antiquitates Glastoniensis Ecclesie*, éd. J.P. Carley, trad. D. Townsend, Woodbridge 1985, p. 202.

20 *The Oldest Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicle. An Edition and Translation*, éd. J. Marvin, « Medieval Chronicles » (2006), p. 284 : « Mes auint issint qil voleit estre ale a Nichole, e vint en chiminant al abbe de Swinesheuede a herberga iloke e demora deux iours. E par cas li le prist vn sudeine maladie, et pus senparti de iloque e vint en le chastel de Newerke. E la maladie li greua taunt qil ne poeit auant aler. Mes iuest iloke trois iours, ou quatre tut le plus, e morust lendemain de Seint Luke Leuangelist. » (d'après Londres, The British Library, ms. add. 35092, f. 137r ; également Paris, BnF ms. fr. 14640 et nouv. acq. fr. 4267). Également Londres, The British Library, ms. add. 35113, f. 75v (XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle).

21 *Memoriale fratris Walteri de Coventria*, II, p. 231.

22 Ralph de Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, p. 183 : [...] *ibidem, ut dicitur, ex nimia voracitate qua semper insatiabilis erat venter ejus, ingurgitatus usque ad crapulam, ex ventris indigerie solutus est in dysenteriam. Postea vero cum paululum cessasset fluxus, phlebotomatus est apud villam in Lindessi, quae dicitur Lacford.*

23 Matthieu Paris, *Chronica majora*, II, p. 667-668 : *Auxit autem aegritudinis molestiam pernicioza ejus ingluvies, qui nocte illa, de fructu persicorum et novi ciceris potatione nimis repletus, febrilem in se calorem acuit fortiter et accendit.*



plupart des récits, l'extrême fatigue de Jean, peut-être en partie consécutive à ses incessants déplacements depuis le départ du château de Corfe à la mi-juillet 1216, transparaît nettement<sup>24</sup>.

De mauvaises nouvelles auraient encore davantage contribué à la détérioration de la santé du roi. Dans la matinée du 11 octobre, une partie du bagage royal fut perdue dans le Wellstream, un cours d'eau qui se jette dans le Wash, et que des hommes de la Maison du roi tentaient de traverser en utilisant un raccourci bien connu<sup>25</sup>. Ralph de Coggeshall rapporte que c'est à Sleaford, le 14 octobre, que Jean apprit cet incident, recevant dans le même temps la visite d'envoyés de la garnison de Douvres<sup>26</sup>, laquelle venait de conclure une trêve avec Louis. Selon l'Anonyme de Béthune, une chronique rédigée peu de temps après les événements dans l'entourage de Robert de Béthune, seigneur de Dendermonde, un allié de Jean, « aussitôt après avoir entendu cette nouvelle, il tomba malade »<sup>27</sup>. D'après une source plus tardive, la chronique dite de Henry de Silgrave, écrite après 1271, sans doute au prieuré de Douvres, la mort de Jean serait due à une forme de dépression, « atteint par la fatigue, à ce qu'on dit, et oppressé par l'acédie »<sup>28</sup>. Dans l'*Historia Anglorum* de Matthieu Paris, Jean meurt au terme d'une vie marquée par de nombreux troubles et des labeurs inutiles, devenu lui-même presque insensé en raison d'une profonde amertume, et ne possédant plus rien sur cette terre, pas même sa propre personne<sup>29</sup>. C'est cette image tragique d'un roi accablé par son sort qui l'emporte ensuite dans de nombreux textes, par exemple dans un rouleau généalogique du dernier quart du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle : « apres mult de tribulacions e divers travaux e les pertes de ses terres de outremer, il trespasa de cest secle en graunt amerture de pensee, e fu enterré a Wyrecestre »<sup>30</sup>. L'accent

24 J. Crockford (née Kanter), *Peripatetic and Sedentary Kingship...*, p. 744-750 pour les déplacements de Jean en 1216. Cf. également Sean McGlynn, *Blood Cries Afar. The Magna Carta War and the Invasion of England 1215-1217*, nouvelle édition, Stroud 2015, p. 183.

25 Voir J.C. Holt, *King John's disaster in the Wash*, « Nottingham Medieval Studies » V (1961), p. 75-86 et W.L. Warren, *The Accident to King John's Baggage Train in October 1216*, dans : idem, *King John*, app. C. Également McGlynn, *Blood Cries Afar...*, p. 183-184.

26 Ralph de Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, p. 183-184 : *Huc ergo cum venissent nuncii inclusorum castri Doverae, et intimassent causam adventus sui, morbus ex dolore concepto recruduit. Praeterea maximus dolor eum angebat, quod capellam suam cum suis reliquiis, et quosdam summarios suos cum varia suppellectili, in itinere illo amiserat apud Wellestrem, et multi de familia ejus submersi sunt in aquis marinis, et in vivo sabulone ibidem absorpti, quia incaute et praecipitanter se ingesserant, aestu maris nondum recedente.*

27 *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*, éd. F. Michel, Paris 1840, p. 180-181.

28 *Chronicon Henrici de Silegrave*, éd. C. Hook, London 1849, p. 101 : *taedio (ut dicitur) affectus sive accidia circumventus...*

29 *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Historia Anglorum*, éd. F. Madden, I-III, Rolls Series, XLIV, London 1866-1869, III, p. 194 ; Matthieu Paris, *Chronica majora*, II, p. 668-669.

30 Londres, The British Library, ms. Royal 14 B V.

mis par plusieurs auteurs sur le péché d'acédie est frappant ; on doit peut-être comprendre cela à la lumière de la littérature médicale sur les humeurs, où le lien est fait entre acédie et lâcheté, un défaut souvent reproché à Jean. L'idée selon laquelle Jean souffrait de « mélancolie » ou d'acédie contribua peut-être aussi à accréditer l'idée d'une mort du roi par le poison<sup>31</sup>.

### 3. LES PREMIÈRES RUMEURS D'EMPOISONNEMENT EN FRANCE

Aucun indice strictement contemporain ne vient étayer l'idée selon laquelle Jean ne serait pas décédé de mort naturelle. Toutefois, dès les années 1220, la rumeur selon laquelle le roi aurait été empoisonné se répandit, d'abord en France. Le récit du chroniqueur limousin Bernard Itier, rédigé avant 1220, comporte une notation au sujet de Jean « roi des Anglais, empoisonné au mois de novembre » (alors que Jean était mort en octobre)<sup>32</sup>. Dans la foulée, l'auteur indique que « Louis règne en Angleterre »<sup>33</sup>. On peut présumer que Bernard Itier, moine, bibliothécaire et chantre de l'abbaye de Saint-Martial de Limoges, ne disposait, sur les événements qui se déroulaient outre Manche, que d'informations d'une fiabilité douteuse, et cela en dépit de la présence d'une *Historia Anglorum* parmi les livres de son abbaye<sup>34</sup>. Le caractère hésitant des informations reçues par l'auteur est suggéré à plusieurs reprises dans sa chronique. À l'année 1211, par exemple, il indique qu'il a entendu que l'interdit posé sur l'Angleterre a pris fin ; mais ce n'est que pour barrer ensuite cette indication et noter dans la marge « Hoc falsum fuit » (f. 213r). À l'année 1212, il annonce qu'Étienne Langton est devenu archevêque en Allemagne (*sic*), et qu'un parent du pape a été nommé au siège de Cantorbéry. Par ailleurs, la mort de Jean par empoisonnement n'est pas la seule occurrence de ce type dans la chronique de Bernard Itier. On trouve par exemple une rumeur semblable pour l'abbé de Fongombault, mort en 1210<sup>35</sup>, et il est possible que le chroniqueur limousin ait été particulièrement réceptif à ce genre de nouvelles.

31 P. Levron, *La mélancolie et ses poisons : du venin objectif au poison atrabilaire*, dans : *Le Poison et ses usages dans l'Occident médiéval*, éd. F. Collard, « Cahiers de recherches médiévales » XVII (2009), p. 173-188, à la p. 181.

32 La chronique de Bernard Itier se présente sous la forme de notes marginales dans deux manuscrits liturgiques réunis dans le ms. latin 1338 de la BnF. Elle a été éditée notamment par J.-L. Lemaître, *Les Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Âge*, Paris 1998.

33 Paris, BnF, ms. latin 1338, f. 220r : *J. rex Anglorum pocionatus mense Novembrio. Ludowicus regnat in Anglia*.

34 Paris, BnF ms. latin 1085, f. 7r, mentionné par J.-L. Lemaître, Bernard Itier, *Chronique*, p. LVIII).

35 Paris, BnF ms. latin 1338, f. 211r, mentionné par F. Collard, *In claustris venenum. Quelques réflexions sur l'usage du poison dans les communautés religieuses de l'Occident médiéval*, « Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France » LXXXVIII (2002), p 5-19, à la p. 13.

S'il faut peut-être attribuer l'indication donnée par Bernard Itier au sujet de la mort de Jean à une information erronée, on doit malgré tout souligner l'importance prise par la rumeur et par la diffamation pendant le règne de Jean et dans les décennies qui suivirent, un phénomène qui révèle sans doute la fragilité d'un régime dont la légitimité fut dès ses débuts mise en cause. En France, dans le cadre du rattachement du duché de Normandie au domaine royal, lequel nécessitait sans doute de présenter Jean comme un tyran ou un roi inutile ne méritant pas de régner, on vit courir des rumeurs au sujet de la mort d'Arthur, le rival de Jean pour les territoires Plantagenêt, aux mains de Jean lui-même, et des chroniqueurs anglais pourtant hostiles au roi n'hésitent pas à parler à ce sujet de campagne de diffamation<sup>36</sup>. Ces bruits furent certainement encouragés par les opposants au gouvernement royal qui avaient trouvé refuge en France, ou par d'anciens membres de l'entourage du roi qui souhaitaient se disculper de tout soupçon. En 1212, dans une période de forte tension politique, des rumeurs circulèrent aussi au sujet de Jean et de sa famille – le pape aurait déposé le roi, l'un de ses fils aurait été assassiné, la reine violée : dans cette atmosphère délétère, exaspérée par la prophétie d'un certain Peter de Wakefield, qui prédisait la chute de Jean avant la Pentecôte 1213, le roi dut renoncer à un projet d'expédition militaire et fut conduit à revenir sur certains aspects de sa politique fiscale. Quelques années plus tard, dans le contexte de la guerre civile, la rumeur d'empoisonnement du roi n'avait rien d'in vraisemblable.

Apparemment, malgré tout, aucun auteur ne reprend, en Angleterre, pendant le règne d'Henri III, la rumeur de la mort de Jean par le poison : ainsi, on n'en trouve l'écho ni chez Wendover, ni chez Matthieu Paris, les deux chroniqueurs de Saint-Albans toujours ouverts aux informations qui permettent de composer un bon récit. Et pourtant on a relevé plus de vingt mentions d'empoisonnement dans les *Chronica majora* de Matthieu Paris<sup>37</sup>. En revanche, c'est à nouveau en France – même s'il s'agit de l'œuvre d'un maître d'origine anglaise – que la rumeur est reprise, deux ou trois décennies plus tard. Jean de Garlande, dans son *De Triumphis Ecclesie*, un poème composé entre 1229 et 1252<sup>38</sup>, et qui célèbre les triomphes de l'Église sur les infidèles

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<sup>36</sup> Roger de Wendover, *Flores historiarum*, I, p. 315-316: [...] *increbuit opinio per totum regnum Francorum de morte Arthuri et per omnes nationes transmarinas, adeo quidem quod rex Johannes suspectus habebatur ab omnibus quasi illum manu propria peremisset, unde multi animos avertentes a rege semper deinceps, ut aussi sunt, nigerrimo ipsum odio perstrinxerunt*. Également *Historia Anglorum*, II, p. 95-96.

<sup>37</sup> F. Collard, *De l'émotion de la mort à l'émoi du meurtre. Quelques réflexions sur le sentiment de la mort suspecte à la fin du Moyen Âge*, « Revue historique » CCCCCLVI (2010), p. 873-907, aux p. 878-879.

<sup>38</sup> L.J. Paetow, *The Crusading Ardor of John of Garland*, dans : *The Crusades and Other Historical Essays Presented to Dana C. Munro*, éd. L.J. Paetow, New York 1928, p. 207-222, aux p. 211-212.

et les hérétiques, mentionne en effet que Jean est mort après consommé des pêches empoisonnées :

Hélas, acte blâmable ! Lui, libéral, lui, fort, consomme des pêches imprégnées de poison, et meurt d'un flux de ventre. Tout comme on tend les fils du lin qui a roui, je tire des dits moraux de différents décès. La noble élégie ici s'élève, car les poisons mêlés aux boissons terminent la tâche des épées. Les dirigeants ont deux choses à craindre : le mauvais conseil et le venin caché. La mort se cache dans les deux. Le poison en tue beaucoup, le conseil un certain nombre. Mais l'on voit par les résultats que le second est pire que le premier<sup>39</sup>.

On ne peut établir de filiation entre ce texte et la chronique de Saint-Martial : comme le rappelle Jean-Loup Lemaître, aucune copie ne fut faite de la chronique limousine, qui ne sortit pas non plus des murs de l'abbaye<sup>40</sup>. En revanche, Jean de Garlande séjourna à Toulouse, peut-être en 1218, et en tout cas entre 1229 et 1232. Dans le contexte de la lutte contre l'hérésie cathare, il est possible qu'il ait eu vent de rumeurs relatives à l'assassinat du roi d'Angleterre : parmi les croisés on trouvait en effet plusieurs rebelles à Jean, comme Hugh de Lacy, comte d'Ulster, qui s'était réfugié en France en 1210 avant de rejoindre les rangs de la croisade albigeoise<sup>41</sup>. Quant à la maison de Toulouse, elle entretenait des liens directs avec l'Angleterre, Jeanne, la sœur de Jean sans Terre, ayant épousé le comte de Toulouse Raymond VI en secondes noces. Tout comme la proximité des terres sous domination Plantagenêt, il s'agissait là de circonstances favorables à la circulation de nouvelles, vraies ou fausses, concernant les développements en Angleterre. On note malgré tout que Jean de Garlande, loin d'approuver le recours au poison pour se débarrasser de la personne du roi, se lamente sur la mort de Jean sans Terre, et n'évoque pas le tyrannicide<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Jean de Garlande, *De Triumphis Ecclesiae Libri Octo. A Latin Poem of the Thirteenth Century*, éd. T. Wright, London 1856, III, v. 265-274, p. 55 : *Heu, dolus! Hic largus, hic fortis, tincta veneno / Pessica consumit, et lue ventris obit. / Sicut de lino tenduntur fila reducto, / Casibus ex variis ethica dicta traho. / Hinc gravis emergit elegia, nam gladiatorum / Officium peragunt toxica mixta cibis. / Sunt ducibus metuenda duo, suggestio prava, / Virus et occultum; mors in utroque latet. / Occidit virus multos, suggestio plures, / Inde per effectus est ea peior eo.* Je souhaite remercier Elsa Marguin pour cette indication. Le poème est conservé dans un seul manuscrit, Londres, The British Library, ms. Cotton Claudius A X.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard Itier, *Chronique*, p. LVII.

<sup>41</sup> N. Vincent, *English Liberties, Magna Carta (1215) and the Spanish Connection*, dans : 1212-1214 : el trienio que hizo a Europa. *Actas de la XXXVII Semana de Estudios Medievales, Estella, 19 al 23 de julio de 2010*, Pampelune 2011, p. 243-261, à la p. 250.

<sup>42</sup> Sur le caractère modéré des positions de Jean de Garlande, cf. M. Hall, *An Academic Call to Arms in 1252 : John of Garland's Crusading Epic De Triumphis Ecclesie*, « *Crusades* » XII (2013), p. 153-174, en particulier p. 161-164.

## 4. L'ESSOR DU RÉCIT

Il faut ensuite attendre le dernier tiers du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle pour voir la rumeur de la mort de Jean par le poison reprise, cette fois en Angleterre, dans plusieurs chroniques. Thomas Wykes (m. 1291/1293), clerc séculier au service de la royauté puis chanoine d'Osney, un prieuré augustinien situé près d'Oxford, fonde son propre texte, pour le règne de Jean, sur la chronique de cette maison, mais alors que celle-ci mentionne sobrement la mort du roi, Wykes fait état de la rumeur de l'empoisonnement : « La même année, Jean, empoisonné, à ce qu'on rapporte, dans un monastère de l'ordre de Cîteaux qui est appelé Swineshead dans la province de *Holanda*, commença à dépérir sans cesse en raison de la violence du poison ; progressant ensuite jusqu'à Newark, il mourut là après quelques jours<sup>43</sup>. » Une version de la continuation de la chronique de William de Newburgh rédigée à l'abbaye cistercienne de Furness (Cumbria) sans doute dans les années 1290 rapporte la mort de Jean en des termes proches : « Et la même année, le jour de la fête de saint Luc l'évangéliste, le roi Jean mourut, empoisonné à Swineshead par celui qui était chargé de la réception des hôtes dans la dite maison, et il fut inhumé à Worcester »<sup>44</sup>. Dans sa chronique rimée, Peter de Langtoft (m. vers 1305), chanoine du prieuré de Bridlington (Yorkshire), écrit également que Jean fut empoisonné à l'abbaye de Swineshead : « En le abbaye de Swinesheved home l'enpusonait<sup>45</sup>. » L'épisode figure aussi dans la chronique du chanoine Walter (m. vers 1305), du prieuré de Guisborough (Yorkshire) : ici il donne lieu à un récit très circonstancié, où les motivations et les circonstances de l'empoisonnement de Jean par un frère convers de l'abbaye de Swineshead sont longuement détaillées<sup>46</sup>.

À peu près contemporain est le texte qui accompagne une des images de la série connue sous le titre *Effigies regum Anglie*, conservée à la British Library. Il s'agit d'images représentant les rois depuis la Conquête normande, et dont

<sup>43</sup> *Annales monastici*, éd. H.R. Luard, I-V, Rolls Series, XXXVI, London 1864-1869, IV, p. 59 : *Anno eodem rex Johannes in monasterio quodam Cisterciensis ordinis quod Swynesbeued dicitur in provincia Holandae, intoxicatus, ut dicebatur, continuo coepit ex violentia veneni contabescere, indeque progrediens apud Newerk ibidem post dies paucos expiravit.* ibidem, p. 60 pour la chronique d'Osney (*Obiit xiv. Kalendas Novembris Johannes rex Angliae...*).

<sup>44</sup> Londres, The British Library, ms. Cotton Cleopatra A I, f. 182r : *Et anno eodem die sancte Luce evangeliste Johannes rex obiit veneno extinctus apud Swinesheired a quodam hospitali dicte domus et sepultus est apud Wigorniam.*

<sup>45</sup> *The Chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft, in French Verse, from the Earliest Period to the Death of King Edward I*, éd. T. Wright, Rolls Series, XLVII, London 1868, II, p. 134 : « Le ray Jon sa terre xviiij. aunz guyait ; / En le abbaye de Swinesheved home l'enpusonait ; / Il gist à Wyncestre, il mesmes le voloit ».

<sup>46</sup> *The Chronicle of Walter de Guisborough*, éd. H. Rothwell, London 1957, p. 154-156.

le titre est « Icy sunt les roys de Engleterre del tens seynt Edward le confesseur jeske al tens le roy Edward fiz al roy Henry le III ». En-dessous de chaque image, qui illustre l'épisode le plus marquant de chaque règne, figure un court texte en prose française. L'ensemble de ces feuillets devaient à l'origine précéder une chronique, sans doute un *Brut*. La page correspondant au règne de Jean (f. 5v) représente la scène de son empoisonnement. À l'intérieur d'un cadre architectural qui symbolise l'abbaye de Swineshead, l'image est divisée verticalement en deux parties : à droite, on voit un moine remettre au roi une coupe comprenant le breuvage empoisonné, alors que dans la partie de gauche un groupe de moines observe la scène. Le court texte qui figure l'image présente ainsi le règne :

Après Richard regna Jon sun frere, en ky tens Engleterre fust entredyt VI aunz e III quarters e I moys par la pape Innocent, pur mestre Esteven de Langeton', ke le roy ne vout receyvere a ercevek de Kaunterbyrs : si estoyt dunk le grant guere entre ly e les barons norrays, dunt veent sir Lowys, fiz le roy Phylippe de Fraunce, en Engleterre. Le roy Jon regna XVII aunz e demy. Puis veent a Swynesheued, e fust enpoysoné par une frere de la meson, si come fut dit. E le roy morut a Neuwerk, e sun cors fust enterré a Wyrcestre<sup>47</sup>.

À partir du début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, la version de l'empoisonnement de Jean l'emporte largement dans les textes relatifs à son décès, en s'enrichissant de détails inédits. Présent dans la version longue du *Brut* en anglo-normand à partir des années 1330<sup>48</sup>, l'épisode entra ensuite dans la traduction anglaise de ce texte<sup>49</sup>, avant de figurer dans les grandes fresques historiques – le *Polychronicon* du moine de Chester Ranulf Higden (m. 1364), qui influença l'auteur de l'*Eulogium historiarum*, un moine de l'abbaye de Malmesbury, puis la chronique du chanoine de Leicester Henry Knighton (m. vers 1396)<sup>50</sup>. À ce

47 Londres, The British Library, ms. Cotton Vitellius A XIII, f. 5v. Le mot « pape » est écrit sur une rature, peut-être faite à l'époque de la Réformation.

48 J. Marvin, *John and Henry III in the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut*, dans : *Thirteenth-Century England XIV. Proceedings of the Aberystwyth and Lampeter Conference*, 2011, éd. J. Burton, P. Schofield, B. Weiler, Woodbridge 2013, p. 169-182, à la p. 181 ; cf. également *Prose Brut to 1332*, éd. H. Pagan, « Anglo-Norman Texts » (2011), p. 235-236.

49 *The Brut or the Chronicles of England edited from MS. Rawl. B171, Bodleian etc.*, éd. F.W.D. Brie, Early English Text Society, Original Series, CXXXI/1, Oxford 1906, p. 169-170 (d'après Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Rawlinson B. 171).

50 Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, VII, 33, éd. C. Babington, J.T. Lumby, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden, Monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translation of John of Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, I-IX, Rolls Series, XLI, London 1865-1866, I-VIII, p. 196 ; *Eulogium historiarum*, éd. F.S. Haydon, I-III, Rolls Series, IX, London 1858-1863, III, p. 109-111 ; Henry Knighton, *Chronicon*, éd. J.R. Lumby, I-II, Rolls Series, XCII, London 1889-1895, I, p. 199-201.



groupe de textes, on peut joindre un passage des Annales de Bermondsey, rédigées au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle et inspirées par le *Brut* en prose<sup>51</sup> : toutefois, ici, c'est un moine bénédictin de Worcester qui est rendu responsable de l'empoisonnement de Jean<sup>52</sup>. Si la plupart des versions du *Brut* marquent bien la dégradation de l'état du roi, voire son empoisonnement, de son séjour à l'abbaye de Swineshead, qui figurait sur l'itinéraire royal dans les derniers jours de la vie de Jean, dans quelques textes du *Brut* le moine cistercien est en effet devenu un bénédictin de Worcester : c'est la présence de cette tradition un peu différente qui explique la représentation de l'empoisonnement de Jean par un moine bénédictin et non plus par un cistercien, dans un manuscrit du *Brut* enluminé à Bruges vers 1480 par le peintre connu sous le nom de maître d'Édouard IV<sup>53</sup>.

En parallèle au *Brut*, le texte connu sous le titre *Courte chronique anonyme métrique en anglais* offre un certain nombre de traits spécifiques<sup>54</sup>. Seuls les manuscrits Auchinleck (National Library of Scotland, vers 1330-1340), add. 19677 (Londres, British Library, vers 1390-1400) et Dd. XIV 2 (Cambridge, University Library, peu après 1432), traitent de manière détaillée le processus qui mène à l'empoisonnement de Jean, et il semble qu'il s'agisse ici d'additions à la version la plus ancienne de la chronique<sup>55</sup>. Dans la version du manuscrit Auchinleck, le roi est empoisonné à Swineshead par un moine dont le nom est donné : il s'agit d'un certain Simon, qui agit en concertation avec son frère, et qui meurt lui-même après avoir goûté au poison<sup>56</sup>.

Au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'empoisonnement de Jean était devenu un lieu commun et on le retrouve par exemple mentionné à son sujet dans les listes de rois, comme dans celle qui fut insérée au début du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle sous le titre *Nomina regum Anglie post conquestum* dans le manuscrit 469 de la Parker Library<sup>57</sup>.

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51 J. Marvin, *John and Henry III in the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut*, p. 169 (The British Library, ms. Harley 231).

52 *Annales monastici*, III, p. 453-454 : *Et hoc anno obiit Johannes rex Angliae apud Newerk, vel ut quidam ferunt, venenatus cum cerusis per quendam monachum nigrum Wigorniae.*

53 Londres, Lambeth Palace, ms. 6, f. 160v.

54 *An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle Edited from the Manuscripts with Introduction and Glossary*, éd. E. Zettel, Early English Text Society, Original Series, CXCVI, London 1935.

55 Ibidem, p. XCVII.

56 Le texte du manuscrit Auchinleck, f. 304ra-317rb (National Library of Scotland, ms. Advocates 19.2.1) est reproduit et transcrit intégralement sur <https://auchinleck.nls.uk/mss/smc.html>. Le passage concernant l'empoisonnement de Jean sans Terre figure aux v. 2227-2284. Les citations en français renvoient à la traduction du texte donnée par Marie-Françoise Alamichel pour le Centre d'Études médiévales anglaises en 2015 (hal-01396551).

57 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, ms. 469, f. 188r : *Johannes frater eius nequam anno 1199 coronatus regnavit annis 17 et di. obiit veneno Wygorni sepelitur.*

Toutefois, un certain nombre de chroniques font la part des choses, entre les faits avérés – la maladie de Jean – et la rumeur. C'est le cas de Ranulf Higden : dans son *Polychronicon*, il écrit que Jean mourut de dysenterie à Newark, que son corps fut éviscéré à Croxton et inhumé à Worcester. Et c'est dans un second temps qu'il mentionne la rumeur populaire (*vulgata fama*), selon laquelle Jean aurait été empoisonné à l'abbaye de Swineshead<sup>58</sup>. La très large diffusion du texte de Higden, en particulier dans ses traductions en anglais, devait assurer la pérennité de cette version des choses<sup>59</sup>. Henry Knighton reprend le texte de Higden en l'entrelaçant avec celui de Walter de Guisborough, si bien que différents motifs sont juxtaposés pour l'assassinat de Jean, de manière assez artificielle : après avoir rapporté le décès de Jean dû à une crise de dysenterie, il rapporte lui aussi la rumeur de son empoisonnement et expose deux motifs pour cet acte, la volonté de Jean d'augmenter le prix du pain et le dévolu qu'il aurait jeté sur la sœur de l'abbé de Swineshead<sup>60</sup>. On retrouve également côte à côte le récit véridique et la rumeur chez Polydore Vergil<sup>61</sup>.

La rumeur de la mort de Jean sans Terre par le poison trouva une vaste postérité au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans les chroniques et sur les planches, avec notamment la pièce de John Bale (1589) puis le *King John* de Shakespeare. Le rôle joué par les moines dans cette version des faits explique sans doute,

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58 Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, VII, 33, VIII, p. 196 : *Rex Johannes septimo decimo regni sui anno et sexta mense obiit apud Newerk morbo dysenterico die sancti Kalixti papae, sed apud Croghtoun monasterium ordinis Praemonstrensis exenteratus, et apud Wygorniam in medio choro monachorum sepultus. Tradit tamen vulgata fama quod apud monasterium de Swynesheved alborum monachorum intoxicatus obierit*. Cette version est reprise dans la traduction en anglais par John Trevisa à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle et dans une autre traduction en anglais conservée dans le manuscrit Harley 2261 de la British Library (ibidem, p. 197).

59 Cf. A. Gillespie, O. Harris, *Holinshed and the Native Chronicle Tradition*, dans : *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*, éd. P. Kewes, I.W. Archer, F. Heal, Oxford 2013, p. 135-151.

60 Le traitement de l'épisode par Knighton est analysé dans D. Schmidt, *Forging English Royal Reputations 1066-1272*, thèse de doctorat Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen 2014, p. 387-388.

61 *Historia Anglica*, livre XV, éd. D. Sutton, Irvine 2005, rév. 2010 (<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/15lat.html>) : *Sed vi morbi ad Slefordiam arcem, quae nunc etiam extat, subsistere coactus est, sive, ut quibusdam magis placet, Newarcum iter convertit, ubi loci in arce quae inibi munitissima est, magis animi tristitia quam morbo consumptus, paucis post diebus, decimoquarto Calendas, sive, ut non nemo tradit, pridie Idus Novembris, occidit, anno aetatis altero et quinquagesimo, cum regnasset decimoseptimo plusque menses sex ac dies septem ac viginti. Sunt qui scribant (vel hoc non omittere libet, quo satisfaciamus vulgo) Ioannem post amissum exercitum, ira et furore accensum, pervenisse ad coenobium monachorum ordinis Cisterciensis, quod Suineshedum vocant, et ibi indignatum ab annonae vilitatem, utpote quod haud quisquam id temporis Anglica genti inimicior erat, iracunde dixisse se intra paucos dies ita facturum ut multo carior esset, et ea voce monachum quendam concitatum continuo regi administrasse venenum vino infusum ab se prius degustatum quo liberius ille hauriret, et ita ambos uno fere temporis puncto animam efflasset*.

comme les difficultés du roi avec l'Église, que Jean ait été compté au rang des martyrs protestants par John Foxe dans ses *Acts and Monuments*<sup>62</sup>.

## 5. LES SUPPORTS DU POISON ET LES CIRCONSTANCES DE L'EMPOISONNEMENT

D'un texte à l'autre, les supports et la nature du poison varient. Selon plusieurs auteurs, c'est en consommant des fruits empoisonnés que Jean trouve la mort. Chez Jean de Garlande, ce sont des pêches (*De Triumphis Ecclesie*, III, v. 265-266), chez Walter de Guisborough (p. 155) et chez Henry Knighton (I, p. 199-201), des poires, dans le manuscrit Auchinleck, des « prunes blanches » (v. 2256, *ploumes white*). On retrouve les prunes au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle dans la Chronique de John Hardyng<sup>63</sup>. Les Annales de Bermondsey disent que Jean a été empoisonné *cum cerusis*, ce qui peut renvoyer à des cerises, mais peut-être aussi à de la céruse, à moins qu'il ne s'agisse d'une déformation du terme « cervoise »<sup>64</sup>. Ailleurs, le poison a été mêlé à un breuvage, cervoise ou vin ; un texte du *Brut* mentionne une « novele buve », sans doute une allusion à un cidre récemment pressé<sup>65</sup>. C'est ce qui faisait écrire, en 1881, au révérend Spurrell, que la crise de dysenterie aurait été provoquée par l'absorption d'un cidre local encore vert<sup>66</sup>.

Il faut mettre à part la scène reprise dans les *Effigies regum Anglie*, où le roi se voit présenter, par un moine de l'abbaye de Swineshead, une coupe comprenant le breuvage empoisonné. Il ne s'agit sans doute pas d'une scène de repas – ce que l'on trouve dans la plupart des textes et sur l'image du manuscrit 6 de la bibliothèque de Lambeth Palace – mais de la présentation au roi du calice avec le vin de communion ou le vin d'ablution. En Angleterre, les canons du concile de Lambeth de 1281 rappelèrent l'interdiction de faire communier les fidèles sous les deux espèces, une pratique contre laquelle Innocent III s'était déjà élevé<sup>67</sup>, mais ceux-ci buvaient un peu de vin commun

<sup>62</sup> Pour la postérité du thème à l'époque moderne, voir en particulier C. Levin, *Propaganda in the English Reformation. Heroic and Villainous Images of King John*, « Studies in British History » XI (1988), p....

<sup>63</sup> *The Chronicle of John Hardyng, Together with the Continuation by Richard Grafton*, éd. H. Ellis, London 1812, p. 272.

<sup>64</sup> Ou bien s'agit-il de cerises (*cerusa*) ou encore de cervoise (*cervisia*) ? *Annales monastici*, III, p. 453-454 : *venenatus cum cerusis*...

<sup>65</sup> Londres, The British Library, ms. Royal 20 A XVIII, f. 277v : « luy fut aporté novele buve q'il mult ama, mes tele viaunde estoit priveement enpinsonné... ».

<sup>66</sup> Rev. F. Spurrell, Notes on the death of King John, « Archaeological Journal » XXXVIII (1881), p. 302-308.

<sup>67</sup> M. Andrieu, *Immixtio et consecratio*, « Revue des sciences religieuses », II (1922), p. 428-446, à la p. 445 ; *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, II, A. D. 1205-1313, éd. F.M. Powicke, C.R. Cheney, Oxford 1964, II, p. 895.

après avoir reçu l'hostie. Il est probable que l'ensemble de ces planches fut réalisée vers la fin du règne d'Édouard I<sup>er</sup> ou au début du règne d'Édouard II, et il est difficile de dire si on peut les dater d'une période antérieure au décès de l'empereur Henri VII en 1313, au sujet duquel le bruit courut qu'il avait été empoisonné par le moyen d'une hostie, du vin de communion ou du vin d'ablution empoisonnés, qui lui auraient été remis par un dominicain<sup>68</sup>. Il existait aussi un précédent insulaire pour cette forme d'empoisonnement : lors du décès de l'archevêque de York William fitz Herbert en 1154, l'archidiacre Osbert de Bayeux fut immédiatement accusé de l'avoir assassiné au moyen d'un poison mélangé au vin de messe. En 1227, William fitz Herbert fut canonisé, et cette cérémonie, comme la translation du corps en 1284, contribua sans doute à raviver cette rumeur, peut-être également savamment entretenue par le clergé de York en mal de martyr<sup>69</sup>.

Quant à la nature même du poison, quand elle est précisée, il s'agit de bufotoxine, un poison obtenu à partir de la peau, du mucus ou du venin de crapaud. Dans le texte de l'*Eulogium historiarum*, la préparation de ce poison est donnée dans le détail. Le moine chargé de servir Jean à table se rend dans le jardin du couvent et y trouve un crapaud particulièrement affreux : il le prend et le dépose dans un bassin, puis le pique avec un couteau jusqu'à ce que l'animal rejette son venin. Recueillant soigneusement celui-ci, il le dispose dans la coupe destinée au roi<sup>70</sup>. Dans une version du *Brut* en anglo-normand qui date de la seconde moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, le crapaud est directement mis dans un hanap, puis percé avec une broche : le venin jaillit de toutes parts et le moine n'a plus qu'à remplir le hanap de cervoise<sup>71</sup>. La courte chronique métrique en anglais montre le moine équeuter des prunes pour insérer le poison à l'intérieur des fruits, avant de replacer les queues, « pour que la ruse ne soit pas visible ».

La littérature sur les poisons accorde une place importante au venin ou au sang de crapaud, et le milieu conventuel, avec la connaissance que les

68 F. Collard, *L'empereur et le poison : de la rumeur au mythe. À propos du prétendu empoisonnement d'Henri VII en 1313*, « Médiévales » XLI (2001), p. 113-131, aux p. 114-115 et 120.

69 J. Burton, *William of York [St William of York, William fitz Herbert] (d. 1154)*, dans : *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, 2004 (<https://doi-org.janus.biu.sorbonne.fr/10.1093/ref:odnb/9606>). Roger de Wendover (*Chronica sive flores historiarum*, éd. H.O. Coxe, II, London 1841, p. 271-272) cite l'épisode, repris par Matthieu Paris, *Chronica majora*, II, p. 203.

70 *Eulogium historiarum*, III, p. 110 : *Monachus gardenum adiens unum invenit bufonem teterrimum, qui eum capiens et in pelvim ponens atque cum cultello suo stimulans donec suum venonum emovebat, qui illud diligenter colligens et in ciphum regis apposuit.*

71 The British Library, ms. Royal 20 A III, f. 195r : « Lors entra le moigne en un jardyn et trova leinz un grosse crapaude et la mist en un hanap ; si la percea parmy de une broche, si qe le venym failli de totes partz. Puis emplī il le hanap de bone cervoise... ».

moines apothicaires avaient des propriétés des plantes et des animaux, était sans doute perçu comme favorable au recours au poison<sup>72</sup>. Dans le texte du *Brut* reproduit dans le manuscrit Royal 20 A III, les effets du poison sur le moine sont décrits ainsi : « ses oels furent crevez et sa boele espadue et mort » (f. 195r). Cela diffère quelque peu de la description donnée dans les traités sur les poisons des effets du sang, du venin ou de la bave de crapaud sur les victimes : d'après ces traités, ce sont plutôt des maux cardiaques et une mort rapide qui s'ensuivent. Par ailleurs, l'espace de temps entre l'empoisonnement et le décès de Jean tend à varier d'un texte à l'autre : dans les premiers textes qui font état de l'empoisonnement, le décès suit une maladie de quelques jours. D'après les *Annales de Waverley* par exemple, la maladie dure trois ou quatre jours<sup>73</sup>. Dans d'autres versions, Jean meurt presque immédiatement. Dans la *Chronique métrique en anglais* du manuscrit Auchinleck, Jean voit son ventre gonfler, il blasphème en jurant sur la croix que son ventre va exploser en trois, mais ensuite ne prononce plus un mot et meurt.

Les contrepoisons recommandés dans des traités comme ceux de Pietro d'Abano ou de Guillaume de Marra allient un thériaque qui contient de la poudre d'émeraude avec des séjours répétés du patient dans le ventre d'un animal à quatre pieds (*sic*). Le bezoar, ou crapaudine, une pierre que Pietro d'Abano dit se trouver dans la tête du crapaud, est également recommandé comme remède<sup>74</sup>. Dans le cas de Jean, aucun texte ne signale le recours à d'éventuels contrepoisons. En revanche, dans le récit de Walter de Guisborough, repris par Knighton, alors qu'on présente le poison à Jean, des pierres précieuses placées devant le roi lors de son repas commencer à suinter, un signe sûr de la présence de poison<sup>75</sup>. Dans plusieurs lapidaires, le diamant suinte lorsqu'il est mis à côté d'un venin, par exemple un crapaud<sup>76</sup>. S'agit-il ici d'un écho distant de la prédilection de Jean, à l'instar d'autres princes, pour les vertus prophylactiques des pierres précieuses ? Un épisode rapporté par Adam d'Eynsham, le biographe d'Hugues d'Avalon, nous montre Jean et le saint évêque de Lincoln dialoguer à Fontevraud, quelques jours après la mort de Richard. Jean montra à Hugues une pierre précieuse qu'il portait en pendentif, assurant que ceux qui la portaient étaient certains

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<sup>72</sup> F. Collard, *In clauastro venenum. Quelques réflexions sur l'image du poison dans les communautés religieuses de l'Occident médiéval*, « Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France » LXXXVIII (2002), p. 5-19, à la p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> *Annales monastici*, II, p. 286.

<sup>74</sup> Franck Collard, *Le poison et le sang dans la culture médiévale*, « Médiévales » LX (2011), p. 129-155, à la p. 147 pour Pietro d'Abano, *De venenis et eorum remediis*, vers 1310.

<sup>75</sup> *The Chronicle of Walter de Guisborough*, p. 156.

<sup>76</sup> A.-F. Cannella, *Gemmes, verre coloré, fausses pierres précieuses au Moyen Âge : le quatrième livre du « Trésorier de Philosophie naturelle des pierres précieuses » de Jean d'Outremeuse*, Genève 2006, p. 224 et 227.

de ne jamais perdre le pouvoir<sup>77</sup>. Jean possédait aussi un sceau secret qu'il portait à son doigt, fait d'une gemme taillée en forme de buste féminin<sup>78</sup>. Enfin, les documents administratifs mentionnent de nombreuses pierres précieuses possédées par Jean. Toutefois, la mention de pierres précieuses placées sur la table devant le roi à Swineshead reflète sans doute plutôt une pratique répandue dans plusieurs cours européennes au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, le recours à l'« épreuve », pierre précieuse ou objet d'orfèvrerie monté de pierres précieuses, parfois sous la forme d'un arbre ou d'un dragon, que l'on plaçait à proximité des boissons et des aliments, soit dans les cuisines, soit sur les tables, de manière à pouvoir déceler le poison<sup>79</sup>.

Plusieurs récits nous montrent également Jean exigeant du moine ou du convers qui lui présente les fruits ou le breuvage de les consommer en sa présence, afin de vérifier qu'ils ne sont pas empoisonnés. Dans le récit Walter de Guisborough, repris par Knighton, le convers imprègne des poires de poison, sauf trois, dont il mémorise soigneusement l'aspect ou la disposition dans le plat où elles sont présentées. Alors que les pierres précieuses qui sont placées devant le roi commencent à suinter, Jean se méfie et ordonne au convers de manger l'une des poires, ce qu'il fait à trois reprises, prenant bien soin de ne prendre aucun des fruits empoisonnés. À la fin, Jean, dont la méfiance est retombée, et qui, poussé par la gourmandise, ne peut plus se contenir, prend l'une des autres poires. Il meurt pendant la nuit, alors que la fuite du convers est assurée par ceux qui détestent le roi<sup>80</sup>. En revanche, dans le texte de la chronique métrique conservée dans le manuscrit Auchinleck, si le moine consomme deux fruits afin d'apaiser la méfiance du roi, il meurt lui aussi.

<sup>77</sup> *Magna vita sancti Hugonis. The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, éd. D.L. Douie, D.H. Farmer, II, Oxford 1985, p. 139.

<sup>78</sup> A. Ailes, *The seal of John, Lord of Ireland and Count of Mortain*, « Coat of Arms » New Series, 4, CLXXXI p. 341-350 ([http://www.theheraldrysociety.com/articles/england/the\\_arms\\_of\\_prince\\_john.htm](http://www.theheraldrysociety.com/articles/england/the_arms_of_prince_john.htm)) ; P.D.A. Harvey, A. McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals*, London 1996, p. 35-36.

<sup>79</sup> R. Lentsch, *La proba. L'épreuve des poisons à la cour des papes d'Avignon*, dans : *Les Prélats. L'Église et la société, XI<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles. Hommage à Bernard Guillemin*, textes réunis par F. Bériac, collaboration A.-M. Dom, Bordeaux 1994, p. 155-162 (cité dans Collard, *L'empereur et le poison...*, p. 122).

<sup>80</sup> Walter de Guisborough, *Chronicon*, p. 155-156 : *Venit itaque conuersus ille et applausit regi sicut et alias facere consueuerat, et dixit ei « Placet ne tibi, o rex, comedere de fructu meo nouo. » « Placet », inquit. « Vade et affer. » Tulitque preparata pira et statuit ea coram rege. Moxque lapides preciosi qui coram rege fuerant in sudorem vertebantur. Et ait rex, « Quid attulisti, frater. Numquid venenum porrexisti. » At ille « Non venenum, o rex, sed fructum optimum. » Et rex « Comede, » inquit, « de fructu tuo. » Moxque apprehenso vno ex piris cognitis, comedit saporose. Et rex « Comede », inquit, « et alterum ». Et comedit. « Adde », inquit, « et tertium ». Et fecit sic. Nec vltius se potuit continere rex, sed apprehenso vno ex venenatis comedit, et eadem nocte extinctus est. Nec tamen periit conuersus sed inter manus odientium regem dilapsus est.*



Dans l'*Eulogium historiarum*, où c'est un breuvage empoisonné qui est servi au roi, un dialogue prend place entre Jean et le moine au moment où celui-ci lui présente la coupe « à la mode saxonne », en lui disant « Wassayl » et en ajoutant que toute l'Angleterre se réjouira de ce « Wassayl ». Le roi répond « Drinkhayl », et le moine, avec un visage joyeux, boit dans la coupe, avant de la présenter au roi qui boit volontiers<sup>81</sup>. Un peu plus tard, lorsque le roi ressent les effets du poison, et qu'il apprend que le moine est mort à l'infirmierie, il s'exclame : « à présent je connais la prophétie de ce moine quand il disait que toute l'Angleterre se réjouirait de ce "Wassail" »<sup>82</sup>. Dans le texte du *Brut* préservé dans le manuscrit Royal 20 A III, la mise à l'épreuve du moine par le roi se présente sous une forme différente : « Puis emplî il le hanap de bone cervoise et la porta devaunt le roi et dist en genoillaunt : "Sire woseil qe unqes jour de vo(s)tre vie ne goutastes tiele hanapee". – "Comencez, par amours", fait le roi. Estes vous qe le moigne bust un bon trait et bailla le hanap al roi. Et le roi bust auxint un bon trait, rebaillaunt le hanap, et cil emporta le hanap et debrija en pieces et tourna en sa fermerie et morrust de maintenaunt, de qî le alme Dieu face merci... » (f. 195r). Dans ces différents récits, on observe un lien implicite entre la gourmandise et l'exercice d'un pouvoir sans mesure : et c'est la figure d'Alexandre qui apparaît peut-être en filigrane, combinant insatiabilité, démesure et rumeur d'empoisonnement<sup>83</sup>. Si Jean sans Terre ne partage aucune des qualités du conquérant, il est tout aussi insatiable et avide de nourriture sinon de vin, et le thème commun aux deux personnages, dans la réputation qui leur est faite, est bien l'exercice d'un pouvoir marqué par l'hybris.

## 6. UN TYRANNICIDE

L'étude ancienne de Louis Lewin sur le poison dans l'histoire avançait qu'on ne pouvait exclure la mort de Jean par empoisonnement<sup>84</sup>. Rien toutefois dans les témoignages contemporains de la mort de Jean ni dans les dispositions

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<sup>81</sup> *Eulogium historiarum*, III, p. 110 : *Monachus autem ab abbate suo absolutus intrepidus calicem cum veneno regi praesentavit, ipsumque more Saxonico salutavit, et ait : Wassayl, et subjunxit, quod tota Anglia gauderet de illo Wassayl. Rex dedit responsum : Drinkhayl, et monachus laeto vultu ciphum hausit ; quo hausto regi obtulit, qui libenter potavit et statim toxicatus est.*

<sup>82</sup> Walter de Guisborough, *Chronicon*, p. 111 : *Vere nunc cognosco prophetiam illius monachi dicentis quod tota Anglia gauderet de illo Wassail.*

<sup>83</sup> Sur le lien entre démesure, insatiabilité et empoisonnement dans le traitement de la figure d'Alexandre par les auteurs médiévaux, cf. H. Bellon-Méguelle, « Mourir de laide mort despite ». *L'empoisonnement d'Alexandre dans la littérature française médiévale*, dans : *Le Poison et ses usages...*, p. 141-160, en particulier p. 145-148.

<sup>84</sup> L. Lewin, *Die Gifte in der Weltgeschichte*, Berlin 1920, p. 477-479, cité par F. Collard, *Le Crime de poison au Moyen Âge*, Le Nœud gordien, Paris 2003, p. 4, note 3.

prises par le roi lui-même ne semble permettre une telle interprétation, et le recours au thème du poison doit sans doute être compris à la lumière de développements plus larges et postérieurs à son règne. L'intérêt croissant pour les sciences de la nature n'est sans doute pas une explication suffisante<sup>85</sup> et il faut donc se tourner vers d'autres facteurs. Il est probable que l'essor du thème de l'empoisonnement de Jean doive beaucoup à l'influence de la littérature de fiction, comme l'ont montré les travaux de Franck Collard, le crime d'empoisonnement étant en quelque sorte le « pendant négatif du Saint Graal »<sup>86</sup>. Dans plusieurs régions d'Occident, vers la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, l'empoisonnement des grands semble aussi avoir occupé une place de plus en plus large dans la culture politique. En France, les morts de Louis VIII (1226) et de Philippe Hurepel (1234) avaient déjà fait l'objet de rumeurs<sup>87</sup>, mais en France et dans l'Empire, c'est surtout autour de 1300 et dans les premières décennies du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle qu'on voit se multiplier les soupçons de poison. Les décès de Jeanne de Navarre (1305), d'Henri VII (1313), de Louis X (1314), de Philippe le Long (1322), de Marie de Luxembourg (1324) furent tous accompagnés de rumeurs d'empoisonnement.

L'Angleterre présente un cas de figure différent. Roger de Wendover repris par Matthieu Paris, tout comme l'auteur de l'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal font du trait d'arbalète reçu par Richard à Châlus une arme empoisonnée<sup>88</sup>, mais cette version des choses ne l'emporta pas par la suite. En Terre sainte, en juin 1272, le seigneur Édouard, héritier du trône d'Angleterre – le futur Édouard I<sup>er</sup> – fit l'objet d'une tentative d'assassinat avec un poignard empoisonné, et il est possible que l'épisode ait influencé les traditions relatives à la mort de Jean. Froissart fait aussi état d'une rumeur de projet d'empoisonnement du jeune Édouard III répandue par Roger Mortimer pour perdre Edmond, le comte de Kent<sup>89</sup>. Mais les rumeurs d'empoisonnement semblent avoir occupé là moins de place qu'ailleurs en Occident. On peut sans doute parler ici de « fiction identitaire », comme l'écrit Franck Collard, celle d'un royaume qui dit ne pas connaître, ou très peu, le crime de poison<sup>90</sup>.

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85 Sur ce point, voir notamment F. Collard, *De l'émotion de la mort à l'émoi du meurtre. Quelques réflexions sur le sentiment de la mort suspecte à la fin du Moyen Âge*, « Revue historique » CCCCCLVI (2010), p. 873-907, à la p. 883.

86 Comme l'explique F. Collard, *Le crime de poison dans la littérature médiévale. Les médiévistes face aux textes*, dans : *L'Œuvre littéraire du Moyen Âge aux yeux de l'historien et du philologue*, dir. L. Evdokimova, V. Smirnova, Rencontres, LXXVII, Série Civilisation médiévale, IX, Paris 2014, p. 31-39, à la p. 33.

87 F. Collard, *De l'émotion de la mort à l'émoi du meurtre...*, p. 878.

88 D. Schmidt, *Forging English Royal Reputations 1066-1272...*, p. 378 ; F. Collard, *Le Crime de poison au Moyen Âge...*, p. 136.

89 Mentionné par F. Collard, *Le Crime de poison au Moyen Âge...*, p. 243.

90 Ibidem, p. 273-275 et p. 275 pour l'expression.

L'empoisonnement de Jean apparaît donc comme un exemple relativement isolé dans le contexte anglais. Et la manière dont cet acte est considéré dans les différents textes, à l'exception de celui de Jean de Garlande, suggère que nous sommes bien ici en présence d'un tyrannicide : l'auteur de cet acte ne s'en voit pas blâmé, et il est même loué pour cette action dans certaines versions. On note toutefois que certains auteurs présentent l'auteur du tyrannicide comme un moine – cistercien d'abord, bénédictin ensuite – alors que d'autres préfèrent en faire un frère convers. Chez Walter de Guisborough, repris par Knighton, c'est un frère convers qui se décide à se débarrasser de Jean, afin d'empêcher celui-ci de violenter la sœur de l'abbé ; la justesse de son acte est d'ailleurs confortée par le fait qu'alors que les poires empoisonnées sont disposées devant le roi, celui-ci proclame qu'il va taxer le pain à outrance<sup>91</sup>. Chez Ranulf Higden, c'est un convers également qui décide de tuer le tyran, afin d'empêcher la taxation du pain.

Chez Walter de Guisborough, le convers révèle son projet à l'abbé et sollicite son pardon pour l'acte qu'il va commettre : « Pardonne-moi, ô père, et prie pour moi, et j'ôterai la vie de l'homme injuste de la terre et la peur qu'il inspire de la société des hommes ». L'abbé lui répond qu'il souhaite la même chose, mais qu'il n'est pas permis de porter la main sur la personne du roi<sup>92</sup>. Dans le texte de l'*Eulogium historiarum*, le moine qui a décidé d'empoisonner le roi se confie à l'abbé ; le passage se situe ici après que le roi a révélé sa volonté de taxer lourdement le pain. L'auteur narre que ce moine a décidé d'accueillir le martyr volontaire et d'accomplir librement la prophétie que Caïphe avait prononcée contre le Seigneur Jésus Christ : Il est préférable qu'un seul meure plutôt que tout un peuple. L'abbé loue Dieu avec des larmes provoquées par la joie et la constance du moine. Ensuite, ayant reçu l'absolution de son abbé (*ab abbate suo absolutus*), le moine présente la coupe empoisonnée au roi. Lui-même meurt ensuite, empoisonné en même temps que le roi, et trois moines sont chargés de célébrer des messes perpétuelles pour son âme<sup>93</sup>.

Dans la version du *Brut* conservée dans le manuscrit Royal 20 A III (f. 195r), le moine reçoit aussi l'absolution : « Le moigne qi estuet devaunt ly fust moult dolent et pensa q'il meismes suffreit la mort pur faire hative remedie

<sup>91</sup> Walter de Guisborough, *Chronicon*, p. 154-156.

<sup>92</sup> Ibidem, p. 155 : *At ille « Ignosce mihi, pater, et ora pro me, et auferam vitam iniqui a terra et timorem ipsius a conuersacione hominum. » Cui abbas « Vellem quidem hoc, fili mi : non tamen licet in personam regis manum extendere. »*

<sup>93</sup> *Eulogium historiarum*, III, p. 110 : *Monachus cum abbate de proposito suo consulens et confitens omnia abbati narravit a principio et voluntarium assumpsit martyrrium et prophetiam quam Cayphas contra Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum in Passione sua prophetavit libenter sustinuit, hoc est : Melius est quod moriatur unus quam tota gens pereat ; abbas Deum laudans cum lachrymis prae gaudio et constantia monachi.*

si en nule manere poeit. Le moigne ala a soun abbee et soi fist confesser et moustra en sa confession ceo qe le roi out dit et pria de estre assouth'. Car il dorroit al roi un tiel wosseil dount tote Engleterre serroit joious. » Et cinq moines célèbrent des messes perpétuelles pour son âme. Chez Ranulf Higden, contrairement à ce qu'on trouve dans la version de Walter de Guisborough, où l'auteur du tyrannicide est sauvé, le convers meurt en même temps que le roi – si l'on comprend qu'il a dû également ingérer le poison qu'il a présenté au roi, le récit est elliptique –, mais il a auparavant reçu le viatique<sup>94</sup>. Le texte du manuscrit Auchinleck offre une version quelque peu différente au sujet de la nature de l'acte : un moine de Swineshead entend Jean faire le serment d'affamer le pays et rapporte l'épisode à son frère. Il nous vaut mieux mourir tous les deux, dit-il, plutôt que de voir l'Angleterre affligée de cette manière. Il demande alors à son frère de sonner les cloches pour lui et de célébrer l'office divin : que Dieu, dit-il, te vienne en aide, et qu'il m'accorde tout ce que je demande. C'est pour que Jean ne puisse plus faire de mal à l'Angleterre qu'est prise la décision de le tuer par le poison. Le moine se confesse pour purifier son âme devant la Vierge, qui servira d'intercesseur pour lui auprès du Fils. Plus loin, l'auteur de la chronique prie Dieu d'accorder le salut au moine qui a lui-même goûté aux fruits empoisonnés, car il n'a agi ni par envie, ni par haine, mais pour sauver toute l'Angleterre, « bot for to saue al Jnglond ».

## 7. LES MOTIFS DE L'EMPOISONNEMENT : LUXURE ET TYRANNIE FISCALE

Lorsque les motifs de l'empoisonnement sont donnés, ils apparaissent de deux sortes : la luxure du roi et sa volonté d'infliger des souffrances au peuple en augmentant le prix du pain. Chez Walter de Guisborough, repris par Henry Knighton, les deux motifs sont combinés. Jean, ayant entendu que la sœur de l'abbé de Swineshead, elle-même prieure d'une maison proche, était d'une grande beauté, aurait jeté son dévolu sur elle et dépêché plusieurs de ses hommes pour la capturer. C'est pour empêcher le viol qu'un convers offre à l'abbé d'empoisonner le roi. L'épisode s'appuie sur la réputation de luxure de Jean, justifiée en partie par ses nombreuses maîtresses, mais délibérément exploitée par ses ennemis. Après l'échec de son complot contre Jean à l'été 1212, Robert fitz Walter dut s'enfuir en France où il aurait répandu la rumeur selon laquelle le roi Jean avait voulu séduire sa fille, l'épouse de Geoffrey de Mandeville<sup>95</sup>. Plusieurs textes rapportent au sujet de Jean des épisodes qui le

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<sup>94</sup> Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, VIII, p. 196.

<sup>95</sup> *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*, p. 119 et p. 121. Pour la déconstruction de l'épisode, cf. M. Strickland, *Fitzwalter, Robert (d. 1235)*, dans : *ODNB Online* (<https://rprenet.bnf.fr:443/http/www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9648>, accessed 20 février 2014).

montrent comme brutalisant les femmes qui se refusent à lui, sans que l'on sache s'il faut faire là une place à la fiction : les démêlés de Jean avec le couple formé par Eustace de Vescy et sa femme semblent en effet dénoter l'influence du fonds littéraire<sup>96</sup>. Quant à ce que rapporte Matthieu Paris, dans un récit qu'il met dans la bouche du clerc Robert de Londres, au sujet des habitudes sexuelles de Jean et de son épouse Isabelle d'Angoulême, celle-ci multipliant les amants, celui-là les faisant étrangler dans le lit conjugal, il faut sans doute le prendre *cum grano salis*<sup>97</sup>.

L'autre motif, que l'on retrouve chez Walter de Guisborough, chez Ranulf Higden et dans plusieurs versions du *Brut*, est la décision annoncée par Jean, alors qu'il séjournait à l'abbaye de Swineshead, de faire augmenter le prix du pain. Plusieurs chroniques mentionnent la cherté de la nourriture pendant le règne de Jean : « En tot son temps estoit grant chierté de viaunde »<sup>98</sup>. Mais Jean est accusé d'avoir projeté d'accroître le prix du pain. Son assassinat devait permettre d'éviter au peuple de plus grandes souffrances<sup>99</sup>. Chez Walter de Guisborough, alors que le roi attablé discute avec ceux qui sont présents autour de lui, il demande quel est le prix du pain qu'on lui sert. Apprenant qu'il vaut une obole, sa réaction est de dire que la fertilité de la terre – sous-entendu le bas prix du pain – est la cause de la rébellion des barons et du peuple contre lui. S'il est encore en vie au bout d'une année, alors un pain de ce poids vaudra 12 deniers (soit 24 fois le prix actuel). Ses serviteurs sont indignés par ces paroles et certains d'entre eux se retirent pour comploter la mort du roi avec le convers<sup>100</sup>. Chez Ranulf Higden, c'est parce que le convers a entendu Jean jurer au cours d'un repas qu'il fera en sorte que le pain, qui coûte alors une obole, atteigne en un an 12 deniers, qu'il prend la décision d'empoisonner le roi.<sup>101</sup> Dans le manuscrit Royal 20 A III de la British Library, le roi attablé demande à un moine quel est le prix du pain qui est mis devant lui. Le moine répond que ce pain vaut une maille (ou une obole, un demi-denier), et Jean menace de le porter à 20 sous, c'est-à-dire 480 fois le prix du pain qu'on lui présente<sup>102</sup> ! On note que dans le texte du

96 *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, éd. R. Howlett, I-IV, Rolls Series, LXXXII, London 1884-1890, II, p. 521.

97 Matthieu Paris, *Chronica majora*, II, p. 563.

98 Londres, The British Library, ms. add. 35113, f. 75v (*Brut*, XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle).

99 Londres, The British Library, ms. Royal 20 A III, f. 195r.

100 Walter de Guisborough, *Chronicon*, p. 155.

101 Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon*, VII, 33, VIII, p. 196.

102 Londres, The British Library, Royal 20 A III, f. 194v-195r : « Si vint par l'abbie de Swyesheued et demora illoeqes deux jours ; et si com il fist amanger, il demaunda un moigne de leinz combien un pain qe devaunt ly fust mis sur la table valust. "Sire, fait le moigne, le pain valt une maille". "Ha Dieu", fait le roi, "com bon marchee y ad de pain en Engleterre. Par quei se jeo puisse vivre, einz qe du my an soit passee, un tiel payn valdra vint souds."

*Brut* conservé dans le manuscrit Royal 20 A XVIII de la British Library, c'est Jean lui-même qui provoque sa propre mort par des paroles inconsidérées<sup>103</sup>. Quant à la courte chronique métrique en anglais du manuscrit Auchinleck, elle offre une version singulière : le règne est ramassé sur douze années, au lieu de dix-sept, si bien que l'interdit et la décision de Jean de taxer le pain sont présentées presque simultanément. Le roi réunit son Parlement et décide un assaut tel que l'Angleterre se nourrira d'« une épaule » – une épaule de mouton ? – et d'une miche de pain blanc<sup>104</sup>. Le thème apparaît à nouveau dans des vers du second quart du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle attribués à John Lydgate, qui mentionne la rareté des denrées sous le règne de Jean, si bien qu'un pain qui normalement vaut une obole se vend douze deniers, mais qui montre le roi convoquer un parlement et jurer de livrer un tel assaut que l'Angleterre pourra à peine se nourrir<sup>105</sup>.

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Quant ceste parole ert dite, le roi pensa moult et sount suspira et mania le pain. Par Dieu fait il la parole qe jeo ay dit soi tendra lieu adecertes. Le moigne qi estuet devaunt ly fust moult dolent et pensa q'il meismes suffreit la mort pur faire hastive remedie si en nule manere poeit. Le moigne ala a soun abbee et soi fist confesser et monstra en sa confession ceo qe le roi out dit et pria de estre assouth'. Car il dirroit al roi un tiel wosseil dount tote Engleterre serroit joious. Lors entra le moigne en un jardyn et trova leinz un grosse crapaude et la mist en un hanap ; si la percea parmy de une broche, si qe le venym failli de totes partz. Puis emplil il le hanap de bone cervoise et la porta devaunt le roi et dist en genoillaunt. Sire woseil qe unqes jour de vo(s)tre vie ne goutastes tiele hanapee. Comencez par amours fait le roi. Estes vous qe le moigne bust un bon trait et bailla le hanap al roi. Et le roi bust auxint un bon trait, rebailaunt le hanap, et debrisa en pieces et tourna en sa fermerie et morrust de maintenaunt, de qi le alme Dieu face merci. Car cynk moignes chauntent pur ly especialement et chaunteront desques al fin del mounde. Le roi senti grant mal et comaunda oster la table et maunda pur le moigne qi bust a ly, et hom ly dist qe ses oels furent crevez et sa boele expandue et mort. Quant le roi ceo oi, il comaunda trusser et sen vait al chastel de Newerk et la morrust il lendemain seint Luke quant il out regné dis et sept aunz, cynk mois et cink jours ».

**103** Londres, The British Library, ms. Royal 20 A XVIII, f. 277v : « L'an ensuant vynt Louwis le fiz le roy de France en Engleterre ; meisme l'an estoit le roy Johan en une leu pres de Sainte Botulf ove plusiurs grantz seigneurs de la regioun et come il fist amanger et fut servy des riches viaundes come a tiele seigneur conveinst, pris un payne en sa mayne et dist : "si dieus me doigne vie a ceste [hui] un tiele payne vaudra XVI s.". Et ceste paroule lui fist grant mal, kar l'endemayne cum il fist amanger illoek au jour de pessoun, luy fut aporté novele beve, q'il mult ama, mes tele viaunde estoit priveement enpinsonné, dont il avoit la mort pur sa parole susdit, et morust illoek a grant joye de son poeple et fut enterré a Wincestre ». Le texte date sans doute des premières décennies du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle puisqu'il couvre les années jusqu'au couronnement d'Édouard II.

**104** National Library of Scotland, ms. Advocates 19.2.1, v. 2227-2240.

**105** Londres, The British Library, ms. Cotton Julius E IV, part I, f. 5r : « In his time was grete dirthe, / xii pens an halfe peny lofe was wurthe. / Thanne he made a parlement / And swere in angre verament / That he wuld make suche a sawwte / To fede all Englonde with a spawde. / A monk anon therof hirde / And for Englonde was sore aferde. / A poyson than he ordeyned anon / So was he poysonid and deid right sone ».



Comment expliquer cet épisode ? Le lien entre la rébellion fiscale et la motivation du moine ou du convers qui se charge d'empoisonner le roi prend une coloration particulière si l'on rappelle qu'en 1207 lors de la levée d'un Treizième sur les biens meubles, l'abbaye de Swineshead fut particulièrement visée par les officiers royaux, qui avaient tout lieu de penser que le sénéchal de la comtesse d'Aumale y avait entreposé de l'argent afin d'échapper à la taxe, et qui confisquèrent les fonds de l'abbaye destinés aux constructions<sup>106</sup>. Par ailleurs, Jean entretenait un conflit répété avec l'ordre cistercien, ce qui pourrait expliquer le lien entre la rumeur d'empoisonnement de Jean et une abbaye cistercienne.

Malgré tout, on peut se demander si l'apparition tardive du thème ne fait pas davantage allusion aux difficultés de l'Angleterre vers la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle et notamment à la cherté des denrées pendant les décennies autour de 1300. En revanche, il est difficile de voir là une allusion à une taxe spécifique sur le pain : le prix du pain était fixé par l'assise du pain et de la cervoise – c'était le poids du pain qui variait, non son prix, et si les autorités locales semblent avoir engrangé des recettes grâce aux amendes imposées aux contrevenants, en revanche on ne trouve pas mention de taxe sur le pain<sup>107</sup>. Toutefois, l'assiette des taxes sur les biens meubles incluait bien les céréales, et la dénonciation de la volonté de Jean de faire monter le prix du pain renvoie peut-être à cette forme de taxation. Deux taxes sur les biens meubles eurent lieu pendant le règne de Jean sans Terre : une taxe d'un Quinzième sur les marchands à partir de 1202, une taxe d'un Septième sur les biens meubles des comtes et des barons en 1203, et le Treizième de 1207, particulièrement impopulaire<sup>108</sup>. Mais ce fut surtout à partir de la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle que les taxes sur les biens meubles prirent leur essor, d'abord pour rembourser les dettes contractées pour financer la croisade, puis en vue du financement des guerres contre le pays de Galles, la France et contre l'Écosse, avec des levées sur les biens meubles en 1275, 1283, 1290, 1294, 1295, 1296, 1297, 1300 et 1301, sans compter tailles et aides diverses, toutes négociées en Parlement<sup>109</sup>. Les levées continuèrent sous le règne d'Édouard II (1307, 1309, 1313, 1315, 1316, 1319, 1322)<sup>110</sup>. À partir de 1322, les confiscations opérées sur les opposants au roi permirent au gouvernement royal de se passer de la taxation et par conséquent de toute négociation en Parlement.

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<sup>106</sup> W.L. Warren, *King John*, p. 149.

<sup>107</sup> Sur ce point, voir J. Davis, *Baking for the common good : a reassessment of the assize of bread in medieval England*, « *Economic History Review* » LVII (2004), p. 465-502, *passim*.

<sup>108</sup> M. Jurkowski, C. Smith, D. Crook, *Lay Taxes in England and Wales 1188-1688*, Public Record Office Handbook, XXXI, London 1998, p. 6-8.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 20-29.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29-36.

L'intervalle de temps entre le règne de Jean et le thème de la mort du roi en raison d'une fiscalité excessive suggère que les différents textes qui évoquent la mort de Jean par le poison relèvent plutôt d'une mise en garde du gouvernement contemporain que d'une dénonciation des exactions de Jean. On note que Jean de Saint-Victor établit un lien similaire entre la politique fiscale du roi Philippe V le Long (m. 1322), qu'il dit décidé à lever une taxe d'un cinquième sur les biens de ses sujets, et la rumeur de son empoisonnement ; ici aussi, les paroles de la prophétie de Caïphe sont reprises par le chroniqueur<sup>111</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Jean était considéré comme un tyran par une partie de ses contemporains et encore davantage par les auteurs de la génération qui suivit sa disparition. L'idée de la déposition du roi avait été évoquée en 1212 et à nouveau en 1215 et en 1216. Vers la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, la réputation tyrannique de Jean ne faisait aucun doute : Walter de Guisborough, également repris par Knighton, rapporte qu'un prêtre attaché à la personne du roi pendant sa vie continuait à prier pour son salut après sa mort, jusqu'à ce qu'une apparition divine lui enjoigne de renoncer à ces prières et de lire le psaume 51, sur celui qui se fait gloire dans la méchanceté, et qui sera puni pour cette raison.

Le décès de Jean sans Terre par le poison venait confirmer la nature néfaste du régime. Dans le *Policraticus* de Jean de Salisbury (1159), un chapitre du livre VIII est intitulé « Que la fin de tous les tyrans est misérable » (ch. 21) et on le retrouve partiellement repris dans un manuscrit du dernier tiers du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle conservé à la Parker Library et connu sous le titre *De tyranno et principe*, avec une section intitulée *Omnium tirannorum finem esse miseriam*<sup>112</sup>. Le seul texte faisant autorité et qui évoquait alors, mais de manière ambiguë, la possibilité du tyrannicide était bien le *Policraticus*, repris par Thomas d'Aquin dans des termes tout aussi incertains. Les cercles de clercs qui avaient lu ce texte, notamment à Cantorbéry, pouvaient entretenir l'idée qu'il était licite de se débarrasser du tyran, à condition d'avoir au préalable rompu tout lien de fidélité avec lui. Malgré tout, le *Policraticus* semble exclure le recours à l'empoisonnement, ou du moins son auteur suggère-t-il qu'il n'a jamais lu dans les textes juridiques que le recours au poison était licite pour se débarrasser du tyran.

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<sup>111</sup> I. Guyot-Bachy, *Expediebat ut unus homo moreretur pro populo*. Jean de Saint-Victor et la mort du roi Philippe V, dans : *Saint-Denis et la royauté. Mélanges offerts à Bernard Guenée. Actes du colloque international en l'honneur de Bernard Guenée*, éd. C. Gauvard, F. Autrand, J.-M. Moeglin, Histoire ancienne et médiévale, LIX, Paris 1999, p. 493-505, en particulier p. 498 et 503.

<sup>112</sup> Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, ms. 469, f. 161v.

En réalité, ce n'est sans doute pas dans la diffusion du *Policraticus* ni des textes inspirés par ce traité qu'il faut chercher la mise en place, en Angleterre, dans les années 1290, du récit de la mort de Jean par le poison. Dans une période de tensions politiques croissantes, le règne de l'aïeul du roi, à présent lointain sans être légendaire, pouvait servir de repoussoir, et la destinée supposée de Jean était une mise en garde pour le roi contemporain. Après des expéditions coûteuses au pays de Galles, la reprise de la guerre contre la France, puis le déclenchement des hostilités avec Écosse conduisirent en effet à une lourde taxation des populations, alors que le consensus politique qui avait marqué la première moitié du règne s'effaçait pour laisser la place à une opposition croissante entre le roi et une partie de la communauté politique. L'aboutissement de ces tensions fut une crise politique majeure en 1296-1297, lorsqu'Édouard I<sup>er</sup> voulut taxer les laïcs comme le clergé pour financer sa guerre contre la France, et cela en dépit de l'interdiction papale de détourner les fruits de la décime. Il se refusa également dans un premier temps à concéder à nouveau les « chartes » – la Grande Charte et la Charte de la Forêt – avant de céder à la pression des grands et des prélats réunis. C'est peut-être ce point précis qui suggérait une analogie entre Jean sans Terre et Édouard I<sup>er</sup>.

La leçon pouvait conserver sa pertinence pour le règne d'Édouard II, marqué par une taxation importante, au moins jusqu'en 1322, et par des conflits répétés entre le roi et les barons, qui aboutirent au début de l'année 1327 à la déposition du roi, déguisée en abdication, puis, quelques mois plus tard, à la disparition d'Édouard, sans doute assassiné. Toutefois, ce n'est pas le destin de Jean, mais celui-ci de son propre père que Walter Milemete présenta à Édouard III pour le mettre en garde contre les excès du pouvoir dans le traité qu'il offrit au jeune roi<sup>113</sup>. Mais la présence de l'épisode de l'empoisonnement de Jean sans Terre dans plusieurs textes eux-mêmes largement diffusés, avec des variantes, devait garantir sa perpétuation dans la tradition historiographique et littéraire.

Le résultat est en tout cas, au fil des textes, la création d'un tyrannicide fictif exemplaire : dans plusieurs versions, l'auteur du tyrannicide n'hésite pas devant le sacrifice ultime de sa propre vie : le salut de l'Angleterre l'emporte désormais sur le crime de lèse-majesté. En d'autres termes, vers la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, le tyrannicide était devenu politiquement acceptable.

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<sup>113</sup> Sur ce point, je me permets de renvoyer à F. Lachaud, *Un 'miroir au prince' méconnu : De nobilitatibus, sapienciis et prudenciis regum de Walter Milemete (vers 1326-1327)*, dans : *Guerre, pouvoir et noblesse au Moyen Âge. Mélanges en l'honneur de Philippe Contamine*, dir. J. Paviot, J. Verger, Paris 2000, p. 401-410. Des additions tardives à la fin du volume qui contient la continuation de William de Newburgh rédigée à l'abbaye de Furness présentent en ces termes la disparition d'Édouard II : *Dominus autem rex detentus in castro de Bercley positus infra annum illum obiit cujus mortis modus ignoratur* (Londres, The British Library, ms. Cotton Cleopatra A I).

## ABSTRACT

Épuisé et malade après plusieurs mois de campagne militaire intense contre ses barons révoltés et leurs alliés français, le roi Jean sans Terre mourut au château de Newark dans la nuit du 18 au 19 octobre 1216. Quelques rares témoignages suggèrent, avant la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, que sa mort ne fut pas naturelle. Mais, sous le règne d'Édouard I<sup>er</sup> (1272-1307), le consensus des chroniqueurs est bien que le roi a été empoisonné, par les moines de l'abbaye de Swineshead, située sur l'itinéraire du roi entre la ville de Lynn et le château de Newark. Cette version de la mort de Jean entra dans la tradition historiographique et c'est celle qu'on retrouve dans le théâtre shakespearien. Les chroniques exposent de manière variée les motivations des moines : il s'agit pour ceux-ci soit d'empêcher que le roi ne fasse enlever la sœur de leur abbé (une allusion à sa réputation de luxure), soit qu'il lève des taxes exorbitantes sur le pain (une référence à la cupidité du roi et à l'exaction fiscale qui a marqué son règne). Dans plusieurs de ces récits, l'empoisonnement de Jean est légitimé comme un véritable tyrannicide : loin d'être condamné, cet acte fait l'objet d'éloges. Les clés de ce développement doivent sans doute être cherchées non pas tant dans la mémoire, à plusieurs décennies de distance, du règne de Jean sans Terre, mais dans la diffusion du thème de l'empoisonnement du gouvernant dans les écrits autour de 1300, et, dans le cas de l'Angleterre, dans les évolutions politiques et fiscales de la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, marquées par des tensions croissantes entre le roi et la communauté du royaume. L'exemple malheureux de Jean sans Terre pouvait servir d'avertissement au roi contemporain.



PIOTR ŁOPATKIEWICZ  
KROSNO

## CRACOVIAN HODEGETRIA 1400-1550

### THE PHENOMENON OF REPEATABILITY OF ICONOGRAPHIC TYPES IN LATE-MEDIEVAL PANEL PAINTING



*Dedicated to the memory of Professor Jerzy Gądomski*

Paintings depicting St. Mary of Kraków constitute a variant of Hodegetria-type images that is even today often referred to as “Piekarska” (Piekary Type). This type of painting – in the medieval times consequently painted on wooden panels – showing Madonna and Baby Jesus in various types of half-figure, was one of the most widespread religious cult objects of the Middle Ages. In Poland, under early Jagiellonian reign, the most renowned Hodegetria was one held in the Jasna Góra Monastery. Due to its uniqueness and numerous legends that elevated it to relic status, it became the destination of pilgrimages, and with time, an iconic object of national stature.<sup>1</sup>

Slightly earlier, starting from the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century, and on a different level – more strongly saturated with popular piety – grew the cult of St. Mary of Kraków. In contrast to the Częstochowa image, which still only existed in one copy in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (its first copies and iterations were created only in the early modern period), we today know of a several dozen Kraków-type Hodegetria depictions created in that century, stored in parochial and monastery churches of the Kraków diocese. The remarkable number of medieval iterations of St. Mary of Kraków, the unusually early

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<sup>1</sup> The state-related and national aspects of the cult are discussed by J.J. Kopeć, *Geneza patronatu maryjnego nad narodem polskim*, “Roczniki Humanistyczne” XXXIV (1986) 2, pp. 275-292. The genesis of artistic forms and the medieval history of the depiction has been discussed by A. Różycka-Bryzek, *Obraz Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej. Pochodzenie i dzieje średniowieczne*, “Folia Historiae Artium” XXVI (1990), pp. 5-26.



beginnings of this trend, as well as the far-reaching faithfulness of the reproductions of the iconographic and formal layout of the original (which was likely lost rather early), today constitute the distinguishing features of the discussed phenomenon.<sup>2</sup>

Reproducing paintings of Mary that were regarded as miraculous or charitable was a common practice in Italy as early as in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In other European countries, this practice developed at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and each given series of copies generally comprised no more than several or a dozen copies. It should be noted that such endeavours were typically short-term and with a local scope. In this context, the initiatives connected with setting out the Kraków series, whose beginnings date back to early 15<sup>th</sup> century, can be regarded as largely unprecedented on the European scale.<sup>3</sup> It is indeed impossible to find an undertaking that could match the extent of the Kraków initiative, both in terms of the number of reproductions (we know of approx 80 of such dating back to before mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), and its time frame, which is still ongoing – despite the passage of 600 years. This is a completely unprecedented phenomenon of this scale in late-medieval Europe, and its real extent is entirely unknown in contemporary science.

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2 Cf. J. Gadomski, *Wprowadzenie*, in: *Prolegomena do badań nad obrazami Hodegetrii typu krakowskiego*, ed. J. Gadomski, with the participation of M. Schuster-Gawłowska, M. Lempart-Geratowska, H. Małkiewiczówna, M. Nowalińska, A. Sękowska, Kraków 2014, p. 10. "Fenomen powtarzalności typu ikonograficznego w malarstwie na przykładzie Hodegetrii małopolskiej 1400-1600" (Phenomenon of Repeatability of Iconographic Types in Paintings Based on the Example of Lesser Poland's Hodegetria from 1400-1600) is the title of the research project carried out since 2013 at the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The project's lead is Professor Marta Lempart-Geratowska. From the very beginning, the key members of the research team were Professor Jerzy Gadomski, Professor Małgorzata Schuster-Gawłowska, Helena Małkiewiczówna, Małgorzata Nowalińska and Anna Sękowska. Following the death of Professor Gadomski (spring of 2015) and Helena Małkiewiczówna (summer of 2016), in August of 2016, the author of the present paper joined the team. For the purposes of this project, in 2013, at the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art, at the Sub-Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Easel Paintings, at the initiative of the long-standing Head of the Sub-Faculty, Professor M. Schuster-Gawłowska, the Archive of Cracovian Hodegetria Documentation was established, gathering materials on over one hundred paintings of this type made between early 15<sup>th</sup> century and late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

3 Some practices equivalent to the wide-scale copying of St. Mary of Kraków may only be observed in the Czech Republic, where in the prime of International Gothic art – the painting from the St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague (ca. 1415), and especially the Madonna from Roudnice (ca. 1390) were reproduced. Copies of the latter were painted as early as at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, cf. A. Matějček, J. Myslivec, *České madonny gotické byzantských typů*, "Památký Archeologické" IV-V (1934-1935), pp. 1-24; K. Stejskal, *Die byzantinischen Einflüsse auf die gotische Tafelmalerei Böhmens*, in: *Ikone und frühes Tafelbild*, Halle 1988, pp. 157-162; M. Bartlová, *Icon-Like Images in Bohemian Medieval Art*, "Ikonotheke" XX (2009), pp. 15-32; H. Belting, *Obraz i kult. Historia obrazu przed epoką sztuki*, Gdańsk 2010, pp. 369, 381-386.

The earliest commentaries on the paintings of the discussed type noted their typological resemblance to the depiction from the town of Doudleby,<sup>4</sup> situated in southern Czech Republic, and deemed it as earliest in the chronological timeline, and the term “Doudleby Type” was coined due to the apparent dependence of the Polish Hodegetria on the Czech depictions. At the same time, the alternative name “Matka Boska Piekarska” (St. Mary of Piekary) was gaining popularity – in reference to the Gothic painting from Piekary Śląskie (currently held in the Opole Cathedral) – not the earliest depiction – as was rightly emphasized – but one leading in terms of popularity and extent of its religious cult status.<sup>5</sup> This name, used from late 1930s to refer to paintings that were indisputably of the Kraków type, was adopted by the authors of the notebooks and volumes of *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce* (Polish Historic Works of Art Catalogue) – covering the then-existing Kraków Voivodship – who used the uniform term: “Obraz Matki Boskiej z Dzieciątkiem, oparty o czeski typ Madonny Doudlebskiej (nazywany w Polsce piekarskim)” (Painting of St. Mary and Child, based on the Czech Doudleby Madonna type (known in Poland as the Piekary Type)).<sup>6</sup> In subsequent years, the last element of this term gave rise the names “Madonna Piekarska” (Madonna of Piekary) and “Piekary Type”,<sup>7</sup> which are still used today, despite their conventional and anachronistic nature.

In mid-1980s, Jerzy Gądomski undertook to replace the adjective “piekarski” with the designation “małopolski” (Małopolska, Lesser Poland) (“Hodegetria małopolskiego typu”, Lesser Poland-type Hodegetria)<sup>8</sup> in reference to the geographic region – a name clearly alluding to administrative district divisions. Somewhat later, taking into consideration an important aspect – the place of creation of the discussed paintings in Medieval times – the same researcher proposed another name: “Matka Boska Krakowska” (St. Mary of Kraków), “Hodegetria typu krakowskiego” (Kraków-Type Hodegetria), “Hodegetria Krakowska” (Cracovian Hodegetria), or the “typ

4 T. Dobrowolski, *Sztuka województwa śląskiego*, Katowice 1933, p. 43, fig. 41; M. Walicki, *Stilstufen der gotischen Tafelmalerei in Polen im XV. Jahrhundert. Geschichtliche Grundlagen und formale Systematik*, “Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego”, XXVI, 3-6, Warszawa 1933, pp. 23-24, fig. 3.

5 T. Dobrowolski, *Rzeźba i malarstwo gotyckie w województwie śląskim*, Katowice 1937, pp. 58-60, 105, fig. 43, 44, table 71; T. Dobrowolski, E. Szramek, *Obraz Matki Boskiej Piekarskiej w Opolu na tle gotyckich wizerunków podobnego typu*, “Roczniki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk na Śląsku” VI (1937), pp. 3-13.

6 *Katalog zabytków sztuki w Polsce*, I, Województwo krakowskie, ed. J. Szablowski, 1-15, Warszawa 1951-1953.

7 Cf. T. Mroczo, B. Dąb, *Gotyckie Hodegetrie polskie*, in: *Średniowiecze. Studia o kulturze*, III, ed. J. Lewoński, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1966, p. 32.

8 J. Gądomski, *Imagines Beatae Mariae Virginis Gratosae. Małopolski typ Hodegetrii z XV wieku*, “Folia Historiae Artium” XXII (1986), pp. 29, 45, 47.

krakowski” (Kraków Type).<sup>9</sup> The adjective used above expresses the essence of the phenomenon much better, since the country’s former capital was undoubtedly the first location where copies of the today-unknown original icon were painted.<sup>10</sup> The painting that later became the model for the long series of Kraków-made iterations was lost, and hence the entirety of our present knowledge on was derived from the features of its Kraków-made “copies”, which can be examined first-hand.<sup>11</sup> Typologically, the Kraków copies are nowadays the only credible source of information on their prototype, because the successive copies painted through decades consistently included the same iconographic and formal layout, which – mimicking the features of the model painting – guaranteed that the newly-created depictions would adopt the same special protective features that were ascribed to the original. The invariance of the iconographic characteristics of the copied type and their number – unprecedented in the 15<sup>th</sup> century – also testifies to the powerful cult-like status of the lost original.

Helena Małkiewiczówna, attempting to conduct a theoretical “reconstruction” of the original painting, concluded that it was definitely a rectangular painting of unknown dimensions, and it was most likely not directly associated with the altarpiece.<sup>12</sup> Based on the conclusions made by the researcher, grounded in a detailed analysis of the earliest depictions preserved today, one may in turn conclude that the square painting depicted a half-figure of Mary with Child sitting on her left arm. Mary’s half-figure was shown from the frontal perspective, with her head presented in a subtly three-quarter view (although predominantly frontal), slightly tilted forward and very slightly towards her left arm. Her long face, with blushing cheeks, was characterized by the large, almond eyes (directed downwards, ignoring the viewer) embedded between her heavy eyelids, in strongly shaded eye sockets, beneath well-articulated arches of the large, black eyebrows. Characteristic features of the depiction include the elongated, straight nose

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9 J. Gadomski, *O włoskim pochodzeniu wzoru małopolskich Hodegetrii z wieku XV*, “Folia Historiae Artium” Seria Nowa IV (1998), pp. 217-218, 223.

10 The exhaustive work by H. Małkiewiczówna, *Wczesne Hodegetrie Krakowskie (do około połowy wieku XV). Kilka uwag wstępnych I*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1400-1450*, eds. M. Schuster-Gawłowska, M. Lempart-Gerátowska, Kraków 2015, pp. 15-71.

11 Years ago, A. Różycka-Bryzek aptly defined the notion of “copy” as understood in medieval times in *Pojęcie oryginału i kopii w malarstwie bizantyńskim*, in: *Oryginał, replika, kopia. Materials from III Seminarium Metodologiczne Stowarzyszenia Historyków Sztuki, Radziejowice 26-27 września 1968*, Warsaw 1971, pp. 106-107; cf. J. Białostocki, *Innowacja i repetycja*, ibidem, pp. 26-28.

12 The detailed reconstructed description of the non-preserved model painting is in this case an important achievement of H. Małkiewiczówna, *Wczesne Hodegetrie Krakowskie...*, pp. 18-22.

and the unusually small lips (with the lower lip slightly pushed out). On the sides of Madonna's head hung somewhat wavy strands of light-coloured hair. Mary's right hand, with a smooth metacarpus, very long fingers, markedly bent thumb, and aligned horizontally, pointed to Jesus – resting on her left hand. Her left hand, slightly bent at the wrist, falling downwards, with a markedly bent thumb, held up the Child through the tunic. Madonna wore a dark-blue gown with long sleeves, lined with wide, golden bands under her neck and at the wrists. Mary's head and arms were covered by a maphorion of the same colour as the gown, shaped as a long, wide shawl or scarf with a dark-red lining, lined with a wide, golden material. The maphorion hooded the visibly convex, as-if artificially "elevated" head of Mary – covered with a tulle veil; it bent at a single point above the forehead, exposing its red lining under the neck, and hung softly, revealing a fragment of the gown. Beneath, bound by a brooch, it split, once again revealing the lining, and exposing another fragment of the gown under the half-moon-shaped gap. Both flaps of the maphorion came back together around the waist. Slung over Mary's left hand (under the sitting Child figure) and the edge of the maphorion, hanging in a wavy line from Mary's right forearm and revealing the lining, they made up the first (upper) horizontal fold. Slightly below was the second, lower, parallel fold – hanging – together with the flap's ending – downward and at a tilt – near Mary's left palm.

In the original painting, the Child sat on Mary's left forearm, positioned at a distance from her and in upright position, perhaps slightly tilted forward, with its head somewhat raised upwards and facing Mary in a three-quarter view. It bore a clear similarity to the Mother in that it also had blushing cheeks, a tall forehead, identically shaped eyes, an elongated nose, one visible ear (always the left one), and strands of hair hanging low, down to the neck. The Child's left hand, pointing upwards, made the Latin gesture of blessing, while its left palm rested on the upright Gospel Book. Its legs, bent at the knees, were parallel to one another, and the toes of the two of its little feet extended from beneath the long, wide-sleeved tunic, with the right foot presented clearly from its bottom side.

The original undoubtedly had a smooth background covered with gilded foil, and adorned with ornaments made by punching and knurling.<sup>13</sup> The broad halo of Madonna extended up to the upper edge of the painting, while the Child's smaller halo met with the one of his Mother. The earliest preserved finely-punched inscription found on Mary's halo on the Hodegetria

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<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the earliest preserved original Cracovian Hodegetria images had their backgrounds painted over in the Early Modern Period. The earliest available examples (from the second quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century) whose original backgrounds have been preserved are the paintings in Łososina Dolna and Kędzierzyn-Koźle (fig. 3-4).

in Kędzierzyn-Koźle (ca. 1440),<sup>14</sup> beginning with the antiphon: *Regina coeli letare alleluja...*, suggests that it was copied from the original painting, where an inscription – made using an analogous technique – must have filled the halo's rim.

It is difficult to settle whether the lost original painting was held at the Wawel Cathedral, which is suggested by the diocese-centered reach of its cult and the fact that the locations of Medieval-era depictions (treated as its clear copies) span a wide area, often extending to the outer edges of the Kraków diocese – and definitely Kraków itself.<sup>15</sup> The deciding argument in this regard, and possibly the most important one, may be the indisputable fact that the creation of the discussed paintings was associated with painting workshops of Kraków – at least until early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Going back to mid-15<sup>th</sup> century at least, we can identify several workshops based in the capital city that clearly specialized in producing paintings depicting St. Mary of Kraków.

Given the extremely sparse written records on the matter, such conclusions could not be reached if not for material sources, in this case the paintings themselves. The fact that researchers have been able to gather such an impressive body of knowledge – especially with respect to the paintings' original artistic characteristics, technological construction and background decoration methods used<sup>16</sup> – is mainly the result of the ongoing conservation works that were initiated several decades ago. In many cases, it was none other than stratigraphic examinations, especially the uncovering of the original layers of paint, that served as starting points for the subsequent stages of research, making way for complex analyses – now utilizing methods typical for art history.

With regard to the Cracovian Hodegetria, for years, historians of art mainly sought to determine the times when specific paintings were created, often relying on historical information (almost non-existent with regard to the

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Sękowska, *Kędzierzyn-Koźle*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1400-1500...*, pp. 224-233, fig. 9, 9a, 9b.

<sup>15</sup> Paintings which may have been the original model for the discussed type include the numerous (non-preserved) paintings of Madonna and Child held at the Kraków Cathedral, mentioned as late as in early 17<sup>th</sup>-century records of bishop's visits. Cf. J. Gądomski, *Gotyckie malarstwo tablicowe Małopolski 1420-1470*, Warszawa 1981, p. 25, f.n. 20, p. 37, f.n. 137, or the painting gifted to the St. Mary's Basilica in Kraków by Jadwiga of Poland (noted in the treasury of the church in 1397), *ibidem*, p. 24, f.n. 19.

<sup>16</sup> Much attention was paid lately to the technical questions regarding Cracovian Hodegetria paintings. The most important works include the research by M. Schuster-Gawłowska, *Technologia obrazów Hodegetrii typu Krakowskiego*, in: *Prolegomena...*, pp. 39-65; eadem, *Technologia obrazów Hodegetrii Krakowskich z lat 1400-1450*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1400-1450...*, pp. 133-142; eadem, *Technologia obrazów Hodegetrii Krakowskich z lat 1450-1490*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1450-1490*, ed. M. Schuster-Gawłowska, M. Lempart-Gerátowska, Kraków 2017, pp. 33-62.



Early Modern period), but mainly by analysing the original paintings, most of which have been uncovered recently by conservators. Comparative analysis has become a widely-used method in such research, both with regard to style and iconography, despite being constrained by certain clear limitations. One of such constraints that we are still facing frequently is the glaring scarcity of comparative materials, making it impossible to determine the precise period of origin of paintings that lack stylistic counterparts. When attempting to determine the dates of creation of the depictions, especially if one is aware of the changes underwent by the Kraków type, much information can be derived from the iconographic features of the paintings. One should, however, keep in mind that due to its unchangeability, the iconographic type of St. Mary of Kraków may have delayed the evolution of the style, and the painters' goal to accurately reproduce the model may have – to some degree – restricted their creativity, thereby limiting the possibility of applying stylistic innovations with respect to decoration techniques or types of motifs used. Despite the fact that we have now collected eighty examples dating back from early to mid 15<sup>th</sup> century, the circumstances mentioned above still cause serious difficulties in determining even the approximate dates of creation of the vast majority of the preserved paintings.

The first pertinent opinions of historians of art concerning the depictions in question come from 1930s. The frames of reference were the individual paintings of Mary and Child, shown in a half-figure, cloaked with a maphorion, with her right hand – aligned horizontally – pointing to Baby Jesus held on the left arm. Among the Gothic paintings known at the time, including some associated with the region of eastern Silesia, were both early examples – from the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Koźle, Bytom, Cieszyn), as well as depictions dating from several decades later (Opole – from Piekary Śląskie, Podole, Pajęczno). The aforementioned works, originating from a wide area and period, did not yet forecast their actual territorial distribution or the serial and continuous nature of their creation in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which was noticed much later. The 1930s' research, based on sparse historical materials (see works by Dobrowolski and Walicki cited above), was not expanded until the 1960s, when a substantial number of new depictions of the discussed type was identified, compelling Teresa Mroczo and Barbara Dąb to take up the somewhat forgotten subject of "Piekary Madonnas".<sup>17</sup> The classification of paintings (most of them substantially modified, but at that time already amounting to more than an estimated thirty copies) adopted by the authors was based on relatively arbitrary criteria, and failed to produce satisfying results, considering the broad scope of the subject matter. Despite

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17 T. Mroczo, B. Dąb, *Gotyckie Hodegetrie polskie*, pp. 18-74.



the substantial strengths of the work, which was developed over the course of half a century, it resulted in unsatisfactory conclusions regarding both the geographic distribution of the paintings and their possible associations to painting workshops.<sup>18</sup>

The next attempt at taking a general look at Kraków-type Hodegetria – undertaken by Jerzy Gadomski and limited at the time to examining the twenty best-known paintings from the 15<sup>th</sup> century – ultimately led to the finding that their creation – initiated in Kraków in that century – was distinctly serial in nature.<sup>19</sup> The list of works that were known at the time, presented according to the chronological criteria assumed by the author, included observations regarding slight alterations in the manner of presentation or alignment of certain details, which – without breaking any overarching rules – began in approx. 1460 and were reproduced consistently until at least the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> With respect to the pattern followed by the Kraków-made series of paintings, the researcher made an important inference, claiming that the Byzantine type of Hodegetria image underwent iconographic and stylistic occidentalization that may have taken place in Italy.<sup>21</sup> Czech influences may also have played a part during the painting's travel to Poland.<sup>22</sup> Twelve years later, Gadomski reiterated his theory on the Italian origin of the pattern, supporting it with further arguments.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, pp. 63-64, map on p. 45.

<sup>19</sup> The key work in this regard, finally published in 1986, J. Gadomski, *Imagines Beatae Mariae Virginis...*, was heralded by a short article by the aforementioned author, announced as early as in 1976, cf. idem, *Grupa małopolskich obrazów Madonny z Dzieciątkiem z połowy XV wieku*, "Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Komisji Naukowych", PAN Oddział w Krakowie, XIX Januاری- -June 1975 (1976) 1, pp. 124-125.

<sup>20</sup> Gadomski was the first to note that a key part in this regard might have been played by the Hodegetria from the St. Mark's Church in Kraków, cf. J. Gadomski, *Imagines Beatae Mariae Virginis...*, pp. 35-36, fig. 7; cf. B. Miodońska, *Gotycka Hodegetria w krakowskim kościele św. Marka*, "Nasza Przyszłość" LXXI (1989), pp. 79-108.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, pp. 42-46; cf. J. Gadomski, *O włoskim pochodzeniu wzoru małopolskich Hodegetrii...*, pp. 220-221.

<sup>22</sup> It would be impossible to dispute the existence of Czech influences on the cult-like depiction of Mary on its way to Poland, especially since a similar type of Hodegetria was also known in the Czech Republic. However, the earliest Czech example – the painting from St. Vincent's Church in Doudleby (ca 1440) points towards some significant differences, both with respect to the earlier the more contemporary Cracovian Hodegetria. In the Doudleby painting, the colour of Mary's coat and Christ's tunic is the same, the garments lack polychrome ornaments, and the following elements differ from the Kraków paintings: shape of the brooch, alignment of Madonna's right and left hand, and the Child's feet. The Doudleby painting also features a second layer of the coat, above the forehead, at the height of Mary's right eye, while in the Lesser Poland paintings, it appears only sporadically, in the more recent depictions from Saints Peter and Paul Church in Kraków or the painting from Podole, cf. J. Gadomski, *Imagines Beatae Mariae Virginis...*, p. 46, f.n. 62.

<sup>23</sup> J. Gadomski, *O włoskim pochodzeniu wzoru małopolskich Hodegetrii...*, pp. 217-224.

The systematic research of inventories, the continuously initiated new research as well as conservation works led to the constant expansion of our collection of paintings of the discussed type. Some of such discoveries became subjects of publications, in which the paintings were regarded in the context of associated works; attempts were made to determine their dates of origin, and even some suggestions were made concerning the possible funding initiatives for the paintings. The list of paintings known today – even those painted during medieval times – remains incomplete. The future will surely bring about new discoveries of more recent, Gothic and Late Gothic depictions, still uncovered from beneath the more recent layers of paint. But given the multiplicity of known examples, we can already conclude today that further discoveries will likely not change the general theory regarding the circumstances in which the depictions were painted, or their overall geographical distribution within Poland. Of course, we will never reach comprehensive knowledge regarding the original paintings, and it seems aimless to deliberate on what percentage of the original depictions comprise our today's collection (although it does not appear to exceed 15-20%).

However, as early as a dozen-or-so years ago, researchers concluded that in today's situation, we should gather all information on individual paintings, systematize the collected materials, and finally carry out detailed research on the Cracovian Hodegetria iconography, aiming to prove the extraordinary prevalence of the iconographic type that was likely shaped in late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Jerzy Gadomski took up this task at the end of his life, with his research substantially aided by Helena Małkiewiczówna and the expertise and technical support of Małgorzata Schuster-Gawłowska, Marta Lempart-Geratowska, Małgorzata Nowalińska and Anna Sękowska from the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art of the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków.<sup>24</sup> This cooperation resulted in the 2011 compilation (in typescript) of a hundred and several dozen monographic entries regarding Cracovian Hodegetria paintings created until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, development of an outline for the idea of a several-volume long publication on all of the currently known works of the type, and finally, establishing the Archive of Cracovian Hodegetria Documentations in 2013. Financial support made it possible to publish – in 2014 – the first monograph, under the guidance of Jerzy Gadomski, anticipating the future multi-volume publication.<sup>25</sup> Only a year

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<sup>24</sup> At this point, one can conclude without much exaggeration that the three-volume corpus on Gothic panel paintings from the Lesser Poland region still remains the *opus magnum* of J. Gadomski, but the Cracovian Hodegetria, related subject matter – first contemplated in 1975 and researched continuously until his death in 2015 – can be regarded as the *opus vitae* of this remarkable scholar.

<sup>25</sup> *Prolegomena do badań nad obrazami Hodegetrii typu krakowskiego...*

later, the key first volume of the monumental edition came out,<sup>26</sup> while in 2017, the second volume was published.<sup>27</sup> As this article is being written, the third volume of the publication is in the last phases of preparation for printing, and it will conclude the deliberations on the paintings of the discussed type dating from the late Middle Ages.<sup>28</sup> Works on the fourth and fifth volume are well under way, and these entries will present the phenomenon of repeatability of the iconographic type of Cracovian Hodegetria in the Early Modern period (1550-1750) and later, up to contemporary times (1750-2018).<sup>29</sup>

Concluding the research on the repeatability of the iconographic type of Cracovian Hodegetria in late Medieval times has now allowed for a synthetic (highly abridged) presentation of the results reached. These deliberations will be conducted as part of three vaguely defined stages, corresponding to the three consecutive volumes (devoted to Medieval times) of the completed part of the publication.

The early period, associated in Kraków with the beginnings of the initiative of copying the lost model painting, is currently represented by thirteen panels that raise fundamental questions on the contemplated phenomenon.<sup>30</sup> We still do not know exactly when the initiative was launched. What were its causes and where should we look for its progenitors? What was the origin of the lost painting that became the model for such a numerous series of copies, and what route did it take to finally arrive in Kraków? What led to the Medieval iconographic type having such extraordinary prevalence, why was it copied and why did it enjoy such a remarkable cult status for consecutive centuries? None of the known source materials conveys direct answers to any of these questions. In view of the glaring lack of sources, we may only attempt to answer these questions by examining the materials at our disposal – a scant number of preserved paintings.

Based on definable stylistic features, we can conclude that the earliest Hodegetria – copying the features of the non-preserved original image – may have been painted at the turn of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century, in favourable circumstances created by the stabilization of the Kraków painting circles, leading to the establishment of a separate painters' guild in 1404, and more precisely, the fact that the names of seniors of this organization appeared in

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<sup>26</sup> *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1400-1450...*

<sup>27</sup> *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1450-1490...*

<sup>28</sup> *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1490-1550*, eds. M. Schuster-Gawłowska, M. Lempart-Geratowska, P. Łopatkiewicz, M. Nowalińska, A. Sękowska, Kraków 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Volumes four and five of the compilation, published as a single volume, are planned for publication in 2019.

<sup>30</sup> J. Gądomski, *Wczesne Hodegetrie Krakowskie około: 1400-1450*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1400-1450...*, p. 117.

municipal records for the first time.<sup>31</sup> The early depictions have one common feature: a tight interplay of the painting style and the calm and rather economical composition – a defining feature of the discussed iconographic type – as well as the soft layouts of the draperies, the delicately shaped complexion – painted with the use of lights and shadows, and the frugal colour tone (at least in part dictated by the principles of the iconographic type).<sup>32</sup> The finely balanced ornaments, especially present in early paintings, painted in an exceptionally subtle manner – present both in decorations of backgrounds and halos, and fabrics of draperies – as well as the sophisticated painting craft connected with a refined shape of lines and the visible desire to underscore the physical beauty of the Mother and Her Son, correspond with the dominant trends of the international style, which reached its peak in Central Europe in approx. 1400. The turn of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century is thus defined by the creation of the first Cracovian Hodegetria depictions: from the Dominican Church (fig. 1) and the Church of the Holy Cross in Kraków, and the following two decades are marked by the creation of paintings from the churches in: Zembrzyce (fig. 2), Łososina Dolna (fig. 3), Rudawa, and Koprzywnica.<sup>33</sup>

Near 1460, when a new generation of painters took over the initiative in Kraków, showing preference towards an angled layout of draperies, characteristic of the so-called late-Gothic realism, the Hodegetria-painting field underwent serious changes that initiated the last period of stylistic traditions of late Middle Ages, which ended in mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> In the last four decades of 15<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the following century, the demand for Kraków-type paintings saw a significant rise.<sup>35</sup> Orders came not only from parishes situated in the Kraków diocese, but also its outer fringes. Presumably, at least from mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, Hodegetria paintings started being used as centrepieces of triptychs.<sup>36</sup>

31 *Cracovia artificum 1300-1500*, ed. J. Ptaśnik, *Źródła do historii sztuki i cywilizacji w Polsce*, IV, Kraków 1917, p. 37, no. 147.

32 J. Gadomski, *Wczesne Hodegetrie Krakowskie...*, pp. 118-119.

33 Cf. *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1400-1450...*, Catalogue: items 1-6, pp. 148-205.

34 Cf. P. Łopatkiewicz, *Hodegetrie Krakowskie okresu dojrzałego około 1450-1490*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1450-1490...*, pp. 17-31.

35 We are already in possession of 37 examples from the period of 1450-1490, cf. *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1450-1490...*, Catalogue items 14-50, pp. 63-288.

36 The only complete example of such solution known today is the altarpiece from the church in Trzemeśnia (ca. 1460), cf. J. Gadomski, *O tryptyku z Hodegetrią w Trzemeśni*, in: *Amicissima. Studia Magdalенаe Piwocka oblata*, Cracoviae 2010, I (text), pp. 51-59, vol. II (figures), pp. 559-567; M. Schuster-Gawłowska, J. Gadomski, *Trzemeśnia*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1450-1490...*, pp. 102-107, fig. 19a, 19b, 19c. The fact that altar retables featuring Hodegetria were rather popular in the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> century, is evidenced by the hinge slots for fitting wings, visible on the original frames of the paintings.

The known paintings from before mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, generally of a small size – with their height not exceeding 100 cm, became a rarity after first half of the century. The upsurge of the creative initiative was accompanied by the increase and clear standardization of dimensions of the depictions and a slight modification of the details of the composition, which might have been caused by the new techniques of reproduction of the original that involved using templates. The key changes to the composition manifested most clearly in the figure of the Child leaning closer to Mary, with its blessing hand moved closer to Mary's neck. Other noticeable changes include a sharper intersection of the edges of the maphorion above the brooch with which it was bound, and the formerly-used small decorated ornament adorning the edges of the outfit was replaced by a wide band. In the discussed period, new iconographic motifs appeared, e.g. the minuscule iconographic inscription "Maria" on the hem of the gown, under Mary's neck. One of major influences on these transformations might have been the painting ordered for St. Mark's Church in Kraków (fig. 5). The modifications introduced were later reproduced consistently in two Kraków-based workshops operating in the third quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, specializing in making paintings and altarpieces depicting Cracovian Hodegetria, and these workshops were referred to by substitute terms: [workshop] "of Master of Hodegetria from Wojkowice Kościelne" and "of Master of Hodegetria from St. Mark's Church in Kraków".<sup>37</sup>

The end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and at least the first two decades of the following century did not see any decline in the production of Kraków-type Hodegetria paintings. An impasse may be observed in the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The stylistic and technological transformations seen in the major works made in Kraków-based workshops that specialized in panel paintings also passed onto Kraków-type depictions, whose iconographic features had generally remained unchanged up until that point.<sup>38</sup> The most significant changes that occurred starting from late 15<sup>th</sup> century include the sharpening of the complexion modelled using lights and shadows, an increasingly stronger angled layout of the draperies, and finally, the deepened chiaroscuro of the folds of the Child's tunic and the lining of Mary's maphorion. New iconographic elements include the apple (fig. 7), often (since approx. 1500) slid under Madonna's right thumb,<sup>39</sup> slightly weakening the former meaning

37 P. Łopatkiewicz, *Hodegetrie Krakowskie okresu dojrzałego...*, pp. 25-29.

38 Cf. P. Łopatkiewicz, *Hodegetrie Krakowskie schyłku średniowiecza 1490-1550*, in: *Hodegetrie Krakowskie 1490-1550...*, pp. 17-41.

39 The earliest examples of such iconographic motifs in Kraków Hodegetria images include the painting from the Kraków Norbertines' cloister and the panel from Piekary Śląskie (currently in Opole) – both painted in ca. 1490, cf. *Prolegomena...*, pp. 140 and 144, fig. 31 i 33.



of the gesture – pointing to the Son – the Saviour. Technological innovations include new ways of decorating halos and backgrounds of paintings. Smooth surfaces, subtly decorated by knurling and punching, were replaced by ornaments – deeply carved in chalk mortar – making up a type of shallow relief – usually depicting floral motifs (fig. 6),<sup>40</sup> and frequently geometric ones – since early 16<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 7),<sup>41</sup>

Mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and the accompanying crisis of the painting craft in Kraków caused an abrupt drop-off in the demand for Cracovian Hodegetria, which had peaked for almost a century and a half. We only know of a handful of paintings dating from the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century. Depictions of Our Lady of the Snows and the accompanying faith in its protection against the Turkish threat gained greater popularity in the Kraków diocese. Despite being highly marginalized and forgotten, new versions or copies of the depictions of St. Mary of Kraków will systematically appear up until the present day. The six hundred-year-long history of the Kraków type of Hodegetria is thus made up of the history of creation of the depictions, their designated cult-related function, as well as the changes of locations, numerous reproductions, refurbishments, conservation-related interventions and all activities taking place in the changing conditions of the successive historical periods.

The earliest Kraków-type Hodegetria paintings created up until late Medieval times (defined for the purposes of this article as the period between 1400 and 1550) allow (at least in part) to provide an explanation concerning the cause of the extraordinary multiplicity and territorial spread of the paintings, and their religious cult status that persisted for several centuries. It is increasingly more probable that the key to answering this question might be the apotropaic qualities ascribed to the depictions. This interpretation is based on a written record – a quite extraordinary one – since it is tightly associated with the paintings themselves. It is an incipit from an antiphon, inscribed along the rim of Madonna's halo, reading "*Regina coeli, laetare, alleluia, Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia*". Made in Gothic minuscule print, with abbreviations, it was initially drawn out of the background using the art of puncturing, and, in later periods, plastic carving in chalk mortar.<sup>42</sup>

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40 The floral motifs decorating the background became the distinguishing feature of the workshop of the "Master of Hodegetria from Kamieniec Podolski", likely the same as the workshop known under the name "Master of Mary's Family", cf. *Prolegomena...*, p. 148, fig. 35.

41 One of the earliest examples of the rhomboidal background decoration is the painting in the Milejów church, painted in approx. 1500, cf. *Prolegomena...*, p. 142, fig. 32.

42 We may hypothesize that from the very beginning, the inscription – adopted from the lost model painting – filled the rims of the halos or was placed on the frame, which is equally probable. The antiphon *Regina coeli...* was inscribed on frames of Czech paintings,



Lately, several attempts have been made to show that in late Middle Ages, the depictions of Madonna combined with the inscription of the above-mentioned antiphon (at least its beginning) were believed to protect against epidemics.<sup>43</sup> According to the legend told by Wilhelm Durand in *Rationale divinorum officiorum* (Lib. VI, Cap. 89, no. 3), when in the times of Pope Gregory I (590-604) Rome was struck with a dangerous epidemic, the pope ordered a procession carrying the depiction of Mary. It is recounted that at that point, Angels appeared next to the painting, chanting the hymn: *Regina coeli*.... Due to the prayers, the epidemic ceased.

In late Middle Ages, when Europe was once again afflicted with epidemics, first the so-called black death in 1348, and then the numerous waves of bubonic plagues in the 15<sup>th</sup> century – also reported in Poland,<sup>44</sup> people fell back on Durand's account and started inscribing the words of the allegedly Gregorian antiphon on depictions of Madonna.<sup>45</sup> It is highly likely that the Cracovian Hodegetria were the first paintings in Poland where the text of the antiphon *Regina coeli*... was coupled with the depiction of Madonna. This conclusion entails that the inscription (appearing in the rim of the halo or on the frame of the painting) was one of the original components of this iconographic type.<sup>46</sup> The reason for associating the Cracovian Hodegetria images with the account of Durand – who went to great lengths to emphasize the protective powers of the paintings against the plague – is in particular the sheer scale of the phenomenon, the extraordinary number of the depictions, their spread within the Kraków diocese, as well as the long history of their copying. The initiative undertaken must have been dictated by the need to safeguard

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e.g. the Madonna in Wrocław (ca. 1410-1420) or the Madonna from Wyżny Bród (ca. 1430), see A. Matějček, J. Pěšina, *Gotische Malerei in Böhmen*, Prag 1955, pp. 77-79, table 203, 214; J. Royt, *Nástin vývoje zobrazení Madony v českém malířství 14. a první poloviny 15. století*, in: *Artifex doctus. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Jerzemu Gadomskiemu w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, Kraków 2007, I, pp. 130-131.

<sup>43</sup> J. Gadomski, *Wątki włoskie w tryptyku Koronacji Matki Boskiej w Łopusznej*, in: *Studia z historii i historii sztuki, "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego"*, Prace Historyczne, LXXXIX (1989), p. 109, 111, f.n. 15; idem, *Typ ikonograficzny*, in: *Prolegomena do badań nad obrazami Hodegetrii typu krakowskiego*..., pp. 32-33; idem, *Wczesne Hodegetrie Krakowskie*..., p. 121.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. E. Giedroyc, *Mór w Polsce w wiekach ubiegłych. Zarys historyczny*, Warszawa 1899, pp. 44-47.

<sup>45</sup> Clearly in reference to Durand's text, on the above-referenced Czech paintings from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and on some Polish depictions (triptychs in Łopuszna and Paczółtowice), banderoles with the text of the antiphon are held by angels, cf. J. Gadomski, *Typ ikonograficzny*, in: *Prolegomena*..., pp. 32-33.

<sup>46</sup> Due to numerous repairs, frequent removal of background and halo decorations and the destruction of most original frames of the paintings, the inscription in the halo's rim was preserved only in about a dozen Hodegetria painted up until mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. However, they are in a condition that is much different from the original.

droves of religious followers and protect them against the dangers posed by the mass epidemics that occurred over and over again in late Middle Ages. It is highly likely that this impressive joint initiative was undertaken against these great common threats.<sup>47</sup>

We possess only partial explanations regarding the causes, circumstances and beginnings of the initiative leading to the widespread copying of paintings of Madonna and Child in Kraków, intended for churches situated mainly in the former Kraków diocese. The copied original has been irretrievably lost, and the currently-known records about the paintings that were once held in the churches of the former capital do not provide grounds to regard them as original works that directly put into motion the initiative undertaken in the Kraków diocese. One may hope that the forthcoming conservation-related discoveries, supported by research by art historians, will help better explain the Byzantine (in terms of type) and Italian (in terms of stylistic features) sources of the Cracovian Hodegetria and provide a better picture of the genesis of this religious cult-related and artistic phenomenon, which – in terms of its reach, duration and, in particular, the number of copies – remains an unprecedented phenomenon across late-Medieval Europe.

translated by Piotr Gumola

#### ABSTRACT

Paintings of Our Lady of Kraków constitute a type of Hodegetria that is still (although incorrectly) referred to as St. Mary of Piekary. The depictions of this type, presenting various half-figures of Mary and Child, were among the most popular cult objects in the Middle Ages. In Poland, under early Jagiellonian reign, the most renowned Hodegetria was the one held in the Jasna Góra Monastery, with its cult gradually rising up to the national scale. Somewhat earlier, since the beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> century, grew the cult of St. Mary of Kraków. However, in contrast to the Częstochowa image, we today know at least fifty Cracovian Hodegetria which were created in that century and were stored in churches of the Kraków diocese.

The practice of copying depictions of Mary was widespread in Medieval Europe. However, such endeavours were typically short-term, with a local scope, and any given series of reproductions would not exceed several or a dozen copies. In this context, the initiatives that gave rise the Cracovian series can be regarded as largely unprecedented on the European scale. It is indeed impossible to find an undertaking that could match the extent of the Cracovian initiative, both in terms of the number of reproductions (we know of approx. 80 of such dating back to before mid-16<sup>th</sup> century), and its time frame (the practice of copying the model painting is still alive today).

Currently, it is increasingly more probable that the key to answering this question might be the apotropaic function ascribed to the depictions. The source of this interpretation is the incipit taken from the antiphon, closely linked with the paintings: *Regina coeli*... According to the legend told by Wilhelm Durand, when in the times of Pope Gregory I Rome was struck

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47 J. Gądomski, *Wczesne Hodegetrie Krakowskie...*, p. 126.

with a dangerous epidemic, the pope ordered a procession carrying the depiction of Mary. At that point, Angels appeared next to the painting, chanting the hymn: *Regina coeli...*, after which the epidemic ceased. It is highly likely that the Cracovian Hodegetria were the first paintings in Poland in which the text of the antiphon: *Regina coeli...* was coupled with the depiction of Madonna. The inscription appearing either in the rim of the halo or on the frame of the painting was one of the original components of this iconographic type. The chief reasons for associating the Kraków Hodegetria images with the account of Durand, who emphasized the protective powers of the paintings against the plague, include the sheer scale of the phenomenon, the extraordinary number of the depictions, their spread within the Kraków diocese, as well as the long history of their copying.

The causes, circumstances and beginnings of the initiative leading to the widespread copying of paintings of Madonna and Child in Kraków – intended to be kept in churches situated mainly in the former Kraków diocese – have been explained at least in part. Unfortunately, the copied original has been irretrievably lost, and the currently-known records about the paintings that were once held in the churches of the former capital do not provide grounds to regard them as original works that directly put the series of reproductions into motion. One may hope that the forthcoming conservation-related discoveries, supported by research by art historians, will help better explain the Byzantine (in terms of type) and Italian (in terms of stylistic features) sources of the Cracovian Hodegetria. Perhaps future studies will paint a better picture of the genesis of this cult-related and artistic phenomenon, which – in terms of its reach, duration and, in particular, the number of reproductions – remains an unprecedented phenomenon across late-Medieval Europe.



**Fig. 1.** Hodegetria from the Dominican Church in Kraków (ca. 1400), photo by P. Gąsior.



**Fig. 2.** Hodegetria from St. John the Baptist's Church in Zembrzyce (ca. 1420), photo by P. Gąsior.



**Fig. 3.** Hodegetria from SS. Peter and Paul Church in Łososina Dolna (ca. 1430), photo by P. Gąsior.





**Fig. 4.** Hodegetria from St. Sigismund's Church in Kędzierzyn-Koźle (ca. 1430), photo by P. Gąsior.



**Fig. 5.** Hodegetria from St. Mark's Church in Kraków (ca. 1460), photo by S. Michta.



**Fig. 6.** Hodegetria from the church in Kamieniec Podolski, most likely initially held at the Latin Cathedral in Lviv, currently part of the collections of the State Museum of Western and Oriental Art in Kiev (ca. 1500), photo by Archive of Cracovian Hodegetria Documentations.



**Fig. 7.** Hodegetria from St. Mary Magdalene's Church in Milejów (ca. 1510), photo by T. Borkowska.



MARCIN SUMOWSKI\*  
TORUŃ

*PASTOR ET OVES*  
PARISH PRIEST IN LATE-MEDIEVAL PRUSSIAN TOWN\*\*



“Sicut sine capite membra corporis  
non possunt vivere, ita, quia  
caput eius est, sine plebano  
ecclesia esse non potest”<sup>1</sup>

In mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, in Danzig (today: Gdańsk) – the largest and most dominant city of the region – a serious deficit of clergy was reported. According to a document belonging to the Polish King, dated December 1455, town councillors pleaded that the monarch – the city’s ruler at the time – increase the number of local parishes. Due to the expansion of the suburbs and an increase in population, the two existing Danzig’s parishes proved insufficient. The municipal authorities argued that such state of affairs impeded access to church services. Those shortages caused serious spiritual damage, including – in particular – people dying without receiving

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1 “Just as body parts cannot live without the head, the [parish] church cannot persist without its head – the parish priest” G. Braun, *Epistola de miseria curatorum seu plebanorum*, “Beiträge zur bayerischen Kirchengeschichte” XXII (1916), p. 39. The quote comes from a letter from a parish priest sent to his relative, who considered entering into priesthood. In the context of this interesting source, see e.g. E. Bünz, “Neun Teufel, die den Pfarrer quälen”. *Zum Alltag in den mittelalterlichen Pfarreien der Oberlausitz*, in: *Stätten und Stationen religiösen Wirkens. Studien zur Kirchengeschichte*, eds. L.A. Dannenberg, D. Scholze, Bautzen 2009, pp. 19-54.



sacraments.<sup>2</sup> In response to the town councillors' pleas, at the beginning of the following year, the Włocławek's bishop ordained a new division of parishes in Danzig. Henceforth, not two, but six parish priests were to watch over the inhabitants of the city and its suburbs.<sup>3</sup>

However, demographics did not always directly translate to the number of the town's parishes.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, we should not interpret the councillors' plea merely as a reaction to the growth in population, but rather as an expression of the religious needs of the community. Importantly, the expressed expectations towards clergy did not concern parish churches, but they related strictly to priests.<sup>5</sup> Clergymen were the agents counted on to prevent the damage done to the town residents' souls. Calls to promote the town's existing churches to the ranks of parish churches were – in reality – pleas for new clergymen to be ordained. In fact, canon law defined the parish community by reference to the figure of the parish priest.<sup>6</sup>

The special position held by this type of clergyman – acting as an intermediary between institutional Church and the devotees – granted him continuous interest from historians.<sup>7</sup> This article is concerned with the topic of the social significance of the described church function and the figure and position of the person fulfilling it. The author endeavours to explore the role of the parish priest in the specific, municipal environment. However, the analysis will focus on the social and cultural domains rather than financial<sup>8</sup>

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2 P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig*, IV: *Urkunden bis 1626*, Danzig 1918, no. 139. Cf. a similar request of councilmen from Frankfurt am Main: F. Schmieder, *Die Pfarrei in der deutschen städtischen Kirchenlandschaft. Kirchliche, herrschaftliche, bürgerliche Gestaltung*, in: *Die Pfarrei im späten Mittelalter*, eds. E. Bünz, G. Fouquet, *Vorträge und Forschungen*, LXXVII, Ostfildern 2013, pp. 131-132.

3 P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 140.

4 Cf. F. Schmieder, *Die Pfarrei in der deutschen städtischen Kirchenlandschaft...*, p. 136 et seq.; E. Bünz, *Pfarreien und Pfarrgemeinden im spätmittelalterlichen Deutschland*, in: *Pfarreien in der Vormoderne. Identität und Kultur im Niederkirchenwesen Europas*, eds. M.C. Ferrari, B. Kümin, Wiesbaden 2017, pp. 36-37.

5 P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 139: "nobis humiliter supplicantes, quatinus de remedio et consilio salutari providere atque fundacionem, erectionem et auctionem plurium **ecclesiarum et rectorum parrochialium**, qui illis preessent et ipsorum abunde sive vigilancius intenderent [emphasis by M.S.]".

6 A. Reitemeier, *Die Pfarrgemeinde im späten Mittelalter*, in: *Die Pfarrei im späten Mittelalter*, pp. 341-342. The special role of the parish priest, acting as a deputy of the hierarchical structure of the Church, was noted by D. Kurze in *Klerus, Ketzer, Kriege und Prophetien. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, eds. J. Sarnowsky, M.-L. Heckmann, S. Jenks, Mitwirkung M. Glauert, Warendorf 1996, p. 39.

7 Cf. e.g. I. Skierska, *Pleban w późnośredniowiecznej Polsce*, in: *Kolory i struktury średniowiecza*, ed. W. Fałkowski, Warszawa 2004, pp. 155-180; E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce. Struktura i funkcje społeczne*, Lublin 2004, pp. 57-87.

8 Cf. H. Steffen, *Die soziale Lage der Pfarrgeistlichkeit im Deutschordensstaate*, "Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands" XXIII (1929), pp. 1-97; J. Sarnowsky,

or legal aspects.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the subject matter will be explored from three angles:

- I. The profile of the parish priest candidate, and thus the expectations regarding his descent, education and intellectual culture. This discussed subject matter is part of the recently-evolving prosopographic research on the lower clergy,<sup>10</sup> although in the present work, statistical analyses will have to be omitted in favour of the social significance of the priests' biographies.
- II. The cultural model of the parish priest's activity that not only included his duties, but also determined his way of life. It is subsumed within the problem of social role – understood as the set of patterns and norms associated with one's position within society.<sup>11</sup>
- III. Social practices – understood as the role of the parish priest in interactions with the townsfolk. This realm includes the parish priest's position in the town as head of the parish church, his relations with town authorities, as well as his involvement in various networks within the social ecosystem.

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*Die wirtschaftliche Lage der Pfarreien im Deutschordensland Preussen: Das Beispiel der Vikare zu Mühlhausen*, in: *Vera lex historiae. Studien zu mittelalterlichen Quellen. Festschrift für Dietrich Kurze zum 65. Geburtstag am 1. Januar 1993*, eds. S. Jenks, M.L. Laudage, J. Sarnowsky, Wien 1993, pp. 373-420. Cf. E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce...*, pp. 68-87.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g. B. Moeller, *Kleriker als Bürger*, in: *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag am 19. September 1971*, II, Göttingen 1972, pp. 195-224.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g.: E. Bünz, K.-J. Lorenzen-Schmidt, *Zu den geistlichen Lebenswelten in Holstein, Lauenburg und Lübeck zwischen 1450 und 1550*, in: *Geistliche Lebenswelten. Zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte der Geistlichen in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. M. Jakubowski-Tiessen, Neumünster 2005, pp. 11-57; K.-J. Lorenzen-Schmidt, *Anmerkungen zur Prosopographie des vorreformatorischen Niederklerus in Nordelbien*, in: *Klerus, Kirche und Frömmigkeit im spätmittelalterlichen Schleswig-Holstein*, eds. E. Bünz, K.-J. Lorenzen-Schmidt, Neumünster 2006, pp. 105-125; H. Gerlic, S. Jujeczka, *Altare i altaryści w kościele św. Marii Magdaleny we Wrocławiu*, in: *Śródmiejska katedra. Kościół św. Marii Magdaleny w dziejach i kulturze Wrocławia*, ed. B. Czechowicz, Wrocław 2010, pp. 189-342; M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni w średniowiecznym Toruniu. Studium prozopograficzne*, Toruń 2012. Cf. also S. Jujeczka, *Duchowni średniowiecznej Legnicy. Studium prozopograficzne nad klerem diecezjalnym*, Legnica 2006.

<sup>11</sup> P. Burke, *Historia i teoria społeczna*, Warszawa-Kraków 2000, pp. 63-64; cf. also F. Znaniecki, *Relacje społeczne i role społeczne. Niedokończona socjologia systematyczna*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 267-280.

## I

## SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL ORIGIN

“gonstiger dan einen frembden”<sup>12</sup>

Social and territorial origin determined the initial social position of the future parish priest and largely defined his future career path. From among the four types of relations described by Wolfgang Reinhard, these descent-related features had a bearing on two dimensions: of kinship (Ger. *Verwandschaft*) and “fraternity” (Ger. *Landsmannschaft*).<sup>13</sup> They influenced the social expectations vested in the candidate for head of the town’s parish.

Historiographical sources agree that members of lower, parish-level clergy were of local, municipal descent, which is consistent with the aforementioned function of the categories of social relations.<sup>14</sup> However, within Prussia,

<sup>12</sup> From the letter by Barnard Sculteti, candidate for parish priest, addressed to the town council of Gdańsk: State Archives in Gdańsk (henceforth: AP Gdańsk), 300D/41A, no. 40.

<sup>13</sup> See: A. Radzimiński, *Związki rodzinne duchowieństwa kapituł katedralnych w Polsce średniowiecznej jako czynnik awansu i kariery na tle porównawczym*, in: *Genealogia. Rola związków rodzinnych i rodowych w życiu publicznym w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle porównawczym*, eds. A. Radzimiński, J. Wroniszewski, Toruń 1996, p. 244. For more information on how these factors impacted the careers of Prussian priests, see R. Stachowiak, *Kirchenkarrieren von Thorner Bürgersöhnen im Spätmittelalter – Verwandschaft, Landsmannschaft, Freundschaft und Patronage*, “Historie. Jahrbuch des Zentrums für Historische Forschung Berlin der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften” IV (2010/2011), pp. 249-252, 256-260, 266-267; idem, *Duchowni pruscy w Kurii Rzymskiej w XV i na początku XVI w. – zabiegi o kariery i beneficja*, in: *Parafie w średniowiecznych Prusach w czasach zakonu niemieckiego od XIII do XVI w.*, eds. R. Biskup, A. Radzimiński, Toruń 2015, p. 220; cf. also K. Mikulski, *Mieszczanie toruńscy w kapitule warmińskiej i chełmińskiej*, in: *Duchowieństwo kapitulne w Polsce średniowiecznej i wczesnonowożytnej*, ed. A. Radzimiński, Toruń 2000, p. 114; cf. T. Borawska, *Gdańszczanie w kapitule warmińskiej w XIII-XVI wieku*, in: *Duchowieństwo kapitulne w Polsce średniowiecznej i wczesnonowożytnej*, p. 122 et seq.

<sup>14</sup> G. Matern, *Die kirchlichen Verhältnisse in Ermland während des späten Mittelalters*, Paderborn 1953, pp. 24-27; J. Kłoczowski, *Kler katolicki w Polsce średniowiecznej: problem pochodzenia i dróg awansu*, “Kwartalnik Historyczny” LXXXVIII (1981) 4, pp. 925-927; R. Czaja, *Deutscher Orden und Stadtklerus in Preussen im Mittelalter*, in: *Ritterorden und Kirche im Mittelalter*, ed. Z.H. Nowak, *Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica*, IX, Toruń 1997, p. 83; I. Skierska, *Pleban...*, pp. 162-164; A. Radzimiński, *Duchowieństwo*, in: *Państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach. Władza i społeczeństwo*, eds. M. Biskup, R. Czaja, Warszawa 2008, pp. 429-430; idem, *Parafie i duchowieństwo parafialne w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach*, in: idem, *Kościół i duchowieństwo w średniowieczu. Polska i państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach*, Toruń 2012, pp. 246-248; M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni...*, pp. 70-76; idem, *Kler diecezjalny w społeczeństwie średniowiecznego Torunia – przyczynek do badań nad funkcjonowaniem duchowieństwa miejskiego epoki*, in: *Kościół i duchowieństwo w średniowiecznej Polsce i na obszarach sąsiednich*, eds. A. Radzimiński, R. Biskup, Toruń 2013, pp. 171-172; A. Radzimiński, *Die Kirche im Deutschordensstaat in Preußen (1243-1525)*, Toruń 2014, pp. 208-211. However, research problems regarding the source materials have been noted, making it difficult to reach general

historians emphasise the role of the patronage of the Teutonic Order, which often treated prebends as gratification for priests remaining in its service. This caused an increase in regional mobility of parish priests – especially those in charge of the largest and most important municipal parishes. Such clergymen, despite being native townsfolk, more often served in parishes outside of their birthplace.<sup>15</sup> Moving on to small towns, we observe a higher number of parish priests of local origin.<sup>16</sup> However, after the Thirteen Years' War, which brought an end of the Teutonic Order's reign over a significant part of the country, members of local families also started to appear in parishes of large towns.<sup>17</sup>

The local descent certainly affected how the parish priest was perceived within society, and influenced the manner in which he participated in the life of the community.<sup>18</sup> It is not surprising then that such local origin was highly valued by municipal authorities. This issue is clearly exemplified in the letter by disillusioned townsfolk of Elbing (today: Elbląg), addressed to the bishop of the Ermland (today: Warmia) region in early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The councilmen complained about the patronage system employed by the Polish king, who was planning to put an "outsider" in charge of the local parish.<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, both in Prussia and in the town itself, there had been people competent to hold such position. The councilmen stressed that such practices were in violation of their privileges. On the other hand, clergymen who aspired to take charge of a town parish were able to take advantage of people's favouritism toward their own folk. When a Lauenburg (today: Lębork) local, Barnard Sculteti,<sup>20</sup> candidate for parish priest in St. Mary's Church in Danzig, sought

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conclusions: E. Büinz, K.-J. Lorenzen-Schmidt, *Zu den geistlichen Lebenswelten...*, pp. 27-29; K.-J. Lorenzen-Schmidt, *Anmerkungen zur Prosopographie...*, pp. 114-117.

15 R. Czaja, *Deutscher Orden und Stadtklerus...*, pp. 83, 86.

16 Cf. R. Czaja, *Dzieje miasta w średniowieczu (XIII wiek - 1466 rok)*, in: *Brodnica. Siedem wieków dziejów miasta*, ed. J. Dygdała, Brodnica 1998, p. 93; W. Długokęcki, *Elita władzy miasta Malborka w średniowieczu*, Malbork 2004, p. 87; M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni...*, pp. 71-74, 174-175, 181-182, 190-192, 223-224, 243-244.

17 Cf. e.g. M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga. Z problematyki społeczno-religijnej*, Elbląg 1996, p. 188 et seq.; idem, *Elbląskie duchowieństwo katolickie na tle dziejów miasta 1246-1945*, Elbląg 2005, p. 72 et seq.; M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni...*, pp. 71-74, 136-138, 170-171, 176-178, 232-234, 241-242.

18 Cf. H.J. Mierau, *"Vita communis" und Pfarrseelsorge. Studien zu den Diözesen Salzburg und Passau im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, Köln-Weimar-Wien 1997, p. 143.

19 *Akta Stanów Prus Królewskich*, V, 1: 1501-1504, ed. M. Biskup, cooperation K. Górski, Toruń 1966, no. 69: "seine ko. gnade sall dasselbte broth widder des landes unde unseres privilegium sollichem **awszlendisschen manne also eyllende** vorgeben sam hy im lande adir in unserer stadt nicht weren guttir leute kynder unde tuechtige personen, die solchs wirdig weren zuhaben [emphasis by M.S.]", cf. also M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga...*, pp. 193-194.

20 For more information about him, see T. Borawska, *Bernard Sculteti jako rzecznik interesów warmińskich w Rzymie na przełomie XV i XVI wieku*, "Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie"

the town council's acceptance for the papal nomination, he emphasised his local origin. In his letter addressed to the council, he expressed hope that he would be welcomed more kindly than an "outsider" would in his place.<sup>21</sup> Both of these sources – appealing to the importance of local origin – demonstrate the two dimensions of such "locality". The ideal candidate was definitely the parish priest originating from a local townsfolk family, which came with prestige and satisfied the town council's aspirations to control religious life. The second dimension – however – refers to "familiarity" in the context of Prussia as a country. "Outsiders" were seen as people from outside the community, especially considering that they were often referred to as foreigners (*awszlendisschen manne, landes auszegling*). Wolfgang Reinhard's "fraternity" (*Landsmannschaft*) clearly comes into view here.

#### EDUCATION AND INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

"wissende und in der schrift vorsuchte vorwezer, lerer und prediger"<sup>22</sup>

The parish priest – responsible for the condition of his devotees' souls – was expected to possess a proper intellectual background. The list of required skills was defined by the liturgical and pastoral duties. The priests were first and foremost required to know Latin and Scripture, which were already preconditions for being ordained to the priesthood.<sup>23</sup> Johann Merkelin, author of treatise written in the Ermland region, *Liber de instructione simplicium sacerdotum*, regarded the study of Scripture as a condition for being a priest. The practice was the source of beneficial knowledge (*scientia lucrativa*), whose rejection would be tantamount to excluding oneself from the clergy. The author supported his claim with quote from the bible: "because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me [Hosea 4:6]". According to him, a priest's qualifications also included the knowledge of religious rites – a necessary condition for clergymen's

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(1972) 2-3, pp. 343-361; eadem, *Sculteti Bernard*, in: *Słownik biograficzny kapituły warmińskiej*, ed. J. Guzowski, Olsztyn 1996, pp. 220-221.

<sup>21</sup> AP Gdańsk, 300D/41A, no. 40: "hoffe ich wol yr mir yo gonstiger dan einen frembden und des landes auszegling sein werdet".

<sup>22</sup> From a document held at the foundation of the library of St. Mary's Church in Gdańsk: P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 122.

<sup>23</sup> T. Borawska, *Życie umysłowe na Warmii w czasach Mikołaja Kopernika*, Toruń 1996, p. 39; cf. I. Skierska, *Pleban...*, pp. 164-166; A. Orczyk, *Kształcenie i formacja duchownych w średniowieczu*, Lublin 2013, pp. 126-132; cf also F.W. Oediger, *Über die Bildung der Geistlichen im späten Mittelalter*, Leiden-Köln 1955, pp. 46-57. About exams before ordination, see e.g. S. Petersen, *Die Schreibfähigkeit von Geistlichen im spätmittelalterlichen Bistum Ratzeburg*, in: *Klerus, Kirche und Frömmigkeit...*, p. 220 et seq.



faithfulness to God.<sup>24</sup> It was the Bible and the competences associated with the priest's *officium* that defined the basic expectations regarding the parish priest's knowledge. These expectations were expressed in the introduction to the 14<sup>th</sup>-century synod statutes from Ermland. The rationale for their announcement was the need to improve clergymen's deficient knowledge with regard to their "professional" duties.<sup>25</sup> The local Church regulations were supposed to be the fundamental source of knowledge for the parish priest. Both the statutes themselves, as well as visitation questions, clearly state that the priest had to be familiar with their provisions.<sup>26</sup> Guidelines for visitors used in Prussia, which were directly related with the statutes, also touch upon the matter of knowledge of the priestly duties.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, in order to acquire the requisite skills to assume the function of parish priest, it was sufficient to take education in a parish school. It was a point of departure for clergymen on their path to priesthood and career in Church.<sup>28</sup> Municipal parish schools in Prussia, especially those situated in large towns such as Thorn (today: Toruń) or Kulm (today: Chełmno), offered a sufficient level of education.<sup>29</sup> Similar was the case of cathedral institutions

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24 Jan Merkelin, *Liber de instructione simplicium sacerdotum*, I, ed. M. Borzyszkowski "Textus et Studia. Historiam Theologiae in Polonia Excultae Spectantia" XII (1982) 1, pp. 71-73: "Unde clericis et maxime sacerdotibus, qui non curant scripturam propter scientias lucrativas timenda est scientia Domini, qua dicitur *quia tu scientiam meam repulisti, et ego repellam te, ne sacerdotio fungaris* (Hosea 4:6)"; "Quorum sacramentum notitiam, si non habuerunt sacerdotes, non filii Dei, sed paucius filii Belial in sacra scriptura appellantur".

25 *Constitutiones synodales Warmienses, Sambienses, Pomesanienses, Culmenses necnon provinciales Rigenses*, ed. F. Hipler, Brunsbergae 1899, col. 1: "sacerdotes plerumque simplices ipsa ignorantes, quamvis tamen eorum respiciant officium et (quae?) circa ipsa versentur quotidie scire teneantur".

26 *Ordinancia castri Heylsbergk*, ed. C.P. Woelky, in: *Scriptores Rerum Warmiensium*, I, eds. C.P. Woelky, J.M. Saage, Braunsberg 1866, p. 340; B. Ulanowski, *Instrukcja dla wizytatorów synodalnych w prowincji gnieźnieńskiej*, "Archiwum Komisji Historycznej" V (1889), p. 32; *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 22 (no. 44), 34 (no. 52), 273, 287 (no. 10).

27 See e.g. the instructions used in the Włocławek diocese, which also applied to Danzig and other Pomerania parishes: Archiwum Diecezjalne we Włocławku (Diocese Archive in Włocławek), ABKP, Ac. ep. 1 (107), fol. 1r-1v. Their preserved part is consistent with the 1482 guidelines from Gniezno: *Acta capitulorum nec non iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum selecta*, ed. B. Ulanowski, II: *Acta iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum dioecesium Gneznensis et Poznaniensis (1403-1530)*, Kraków 1902, no. 651, pp. 285-291. In the Włocławek diocese, they were used in late 15<sup>th</sup> century: A. Tomczak, *Kancelaria biskupów włocławskich w okresie księgi wpisów (XV-XVIII w.)*, Toruń 1964, pp. 115, 127-130; S. Librowski, *Wizytacje diecezji włocławskiej*, part I: *Wizytacje diecezji kujawskiej i pomorskiej*, vol. 1: *Opracowanie archiwalno-źródłoznawcze*, fasc. 2: *Wizytacje w latach 1123-1421*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" X (1965), p. 190. They include a question regarding priests who lack knowledge on canons and sacraments: "Item an sciat aliquem presbiterum de quo sit fama qui nesciat canonem vel conficere sacramenta".

28 E. Bünz, K.-J. Lorenzen-Schmidt, *Zu den geistlichen Lebenswelten...*, p. 30 et seq.

29 See G. Matern, *Die kirchlichen Verhältnisse in Ermland...*, pp. 50-54; Z. Nowak, *Czy Mikołaj Kopernik był uczniem szkoły toruńskiej i chełmińskiej?*, "Zapiski Historyczne" XXXVIII



operating in each of the four Prussian chapters.<sup>30</sup> The knowledge acquired in those centres alone was undoubtedly sufficient to carry out parish priest's duties adequately.<sup>31</sup> However, many priests continued their education at the university level. In the case of parish priests in municipal parishes, this might have had a pastoral context, considering the environment in which they were operating. On the one hand, the municipal pastoral auditorium increased one's intellectual competences,<sup>32</sup> and on the other hand, the parish priests attending universities faced competition from the Mendicant orders.<sup>33</sup> However, it appears that career was the principal reason for taking up studies.

Future clergymen predominated among students from Prussia.<sup>34</sup> Upon returning to their country, they would often become parish priests, sometimes in their native towns.<sup>35</sup> We may thus conclude that especially in 15<sup>th</sup> and early-

(1973) 3, pp. 13-30; T. Borawska, *Życie umysłowe na Warmii...*, pp. 52-60; cf. F.W. Oediger, *Über die Bildung der Geistlichen...*, p. 68 et seq.; K. Ożóg, *Kultura umysłowa w Krakowie w XIV wieku. Środowisko duchowieństwa świeckiego*, Wrocław 1987, pp. 43-49.

30 T. Borawska, *Życie umysłowe na Warmii...*, pp. 60-64; M. Glauert, *Das Domkapitel von Pomesanien (1284-1527)*, Prussia Sacra I, 2003, pp. 253-255; R. Biskup, *Das Domkapitel von Samland (1285-1525)*, Prussia Sacra II, Toruń 2007, pp. 173-176; R. Krajniak, *Duchowieństwo kapituły katedralnej w Chełmży do 1466 roku. Studium prozopograficzne*, Toruń 2013, pp. 56-57. For more information on the teaching in cathedral schools, see K. Stopka, *Szkoły katedralne metropolii gnieźnieńskiej w średniowieczu. Studia nad kształceniem kleru polskiego w wiekach średnich*, Kraków 1994.

31 A slightly different opinion was held by A. Karbowski (Szkoly dyecezyi chełmińskiej w wiekach średnich, Toruń 1899, pp. 24-25, 35-37, 39) and M. Borzyszkowski (Szkoly diecezji warmińskiej w okresie od XIII do połowy XVI wieku, "Studia Warmińskie" II (1965), p. 35). As rightly noted by I. Skierska (Pleban..., p. 167), higher, university-level education was not intended to prepare one for pastoral duties.

32 Z. Nowak, Czy Mikołaj Kopernik..., p. 20; Z.H. Nowak, *Die Rolle der Gelehrten in der Gesellschaft des Ordenslandes Preußen*, in: *Gelehrte im Reich. Zur Sozial- und Wirkungsgeschichte akademischer Eliten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. R.Ch. Schwinges, Berlin 1996, pp. 213-214. Cf. E. Potkowski, *Książka rękopiśmienna w kulturze Polski średniowiecznej*, Warszawa 1984, pp. 53-57; K. Ożóg, *Elity intelektualne w Polsce średniowiecznej. Stan i perspektywy badań*, in: *Genealogia. Stan i perspektywy badań nad społeczeństwem Polski średniowiecznej na tle porównawczym*, eds. J. Pakulski, J. Wroniszewski, Toruń 2003, p. 207; E. Potkowski, *Książka i pismo w średniowieczu. Studia z dziejów kultury piśmiennej i komunikacji społecznej*, Pułtusk 2006, pp. 76-77; A. Bartoszewicz, *Piśmienność mieszczańska w późnośredniowiecznej Polsce*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 35-36.

33 T. Borawska, *Życie umysłowe na Warmii...*, p. 36; R. Kubicki, *Środowisko dominikanów kontraty pruskiej od XIII do połowy XVI wieku*, Gdańsk 2007, pp. 90-100; idem, *Zakony mendykanckie w Prusach Krzyżackich i Królewskich od XIII do połowy XVI wieku*, Gdańsk 2018, pp. 189-192, 224-234.

34 R. Ruciński, *Studia uniwersyteckie mieszczan wielkich miast pruskich w średniowieczu*, "Klio" X (2008), pp. 76-77.

35 Z. Nowak, *Związki Prus z uniwersytetami w Roztoce i Gryfii w XV i początkach XVI wieku*, "Zapiski Historyczne" XXXIII (1968) 4, pp. 34-35; Z.H. Nowak, *Z zagadnień życia intelektualnego w diecezji chełmińskiej XIV-XV wieku*, in: *Z przeszłości diecezji chełmińskiej 1243-1992*, ed. M. Biskup, Toruń 1994, p. 24; T. Borawska, *Studia uniwersyteckie młodzieży grudziądzkiej w średniowieczu*

-16<sup>th</sup> century, clergymen in Prussia were well-educated.<sup>36</sup> Priests in big towns were particularly learned, since their education was associated with their work for the local ruler, who rewarded them with lucrative and prestigious prebends.<sup>37</sup> Parish priests in smaller towns would sometimes finance their studies using their benefices.<sup>38</sup> In university records, such priests already appear as heads of town parishes, which supports the above hypothesis.<sup>39</sup> Universities might also have been of considerable significance in priests' senior years. The Alma mater of parish priest of Konitz (today: Chojnice), Johann Rogge, Paris University, requested him to attend the Council of Constance.<sup>40</sup> In turn, the death of Johann Matcz, parish priest of Thorn, was recorded in 1530 at the Leipzig University.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, he must have retained connections to the university that he had attended.

Well-educated parish priests also influenced the intellectual culture of their towns. This was directly reflected in the fact that parish libraries were established, often to the credit of priests.<sup>42</sup> Andreas Slommow, parish priest

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*i u progu czasów nowożytnych (XIV-XVI wiek)*, "Rocznik Grudziądzki" XX (2012), pp. 50, 58; M. Kurr, *Studenti z Bytowa, Łęborka i Łeby w okresie średniowiecza do 1525 roku*, "Acta Cassubiana" X (2008), p. 34.

36 From 48 town parish priests from the Ermland bishops' region, 28 entered into university: G. Matern, *Die kirchlichen Verhältnisse in Ermland...*, p. 72.

37 Cf. T. Hirsch, *Die Ober-Pfarrkirche von St. Marien in Danzig*, Danzig 1843, p. 99 et seq.; P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, I: *von der Anfängen bis 1517*, Danzig 1913, p. 85; Z.H. Nowak, *Die Rolle der Gelehrten...*, p. 218; A. Radziwiński, *Duchowieństwo...*, pp. 433-434; M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni...*, pp. 76-80; A. Radziwiński, *Die Kirche im Deutschordensstaat...*, pp. 209-210. However, one should add that even parishes in smaller towns might have served as such gratification or compensation for priests who were useful for the Teutonic Order: see e.g. R. Czaja, *Dzieje miasta w średniowieczu (XIII wiek - 1466 rok)*, in: *Brodnica...*, pp. 93-94.

38 Cf. R. Ruciński, *O sposobach finansowania studiów przez mieszczan wielkich miast pruskich w średniowieczu*, "Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych" LXIII (2003), pp. 96-97. The researcher also noted that parishes in large towns acted as a reward for one's education, not a means to acquiring it.

39 *Prussia scholastica: Die Ost- und Westpreussen auf den mittelalterlichen Universitäten*, ed. M. Perlbach, Braunsberg 1895, pp. 1-2, 19-25, 42, 50-51, 104, 115. For more information about student-parish priests, see also K. Górski, *Studenti z Prus w Bolonii w XIV i XV w.*, "Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie" (1989) 1-4, pp. 4-6; T. Borawska, *Preußische Jura-Studenten an italienischen Universitäten vor 1525*, in: *Von Preußenland nach Italien. Beiträge zur kultur- und bildungsgeschichtlichen Vernetzung europäischer Regionen*, ed. M. Mersiowsky, A. Mentzel-Reuters, "Innsbrucker Historische Studien" XXX (2015), pp. 101, 104, 106, 113.

40 *Visitatio archidiaconatus Camenensis Andrea de Leszno Leszczyński archiepiscopo A. 1652 et 1653 facta*, cur. P. Panske, *Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu*, XI, Toruń 1907, pp. VIII-IX; K. Bruski, *Chojnice w średniowieczu (do roku 1466)*, in: *Dzieje Chojnic*, ed. K. Ostrowski, Chojnice 2010, p. 73.

41 See M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni*, pp. 170-171.

42 See J. Sarnowsky, *Buchbesitz, Bibliotheken und Schriftkultur im mittelalterlichen Preussen*, [in: *Mittelalterliche Kultur und Literatur im Deutschordensstaat in Preussen: Leben und Nachleben*,

of St. Mary's Church in Danzig, played an important part in the founding of the local library, which was approved by the Grand Master in 1413.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the priest was responsible for acquiring books for the library and ensuring the integrity of its collections.<sup>44</sup> In later times, another priest, Nicolaus Schwichtenberg – once a curator of the St. Mary's Church Library – donated a part of his rich book collection to the library.<sup>45</sup> He later became an official and parish priest at St. John's Church, where he established another parish library.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the creation of the parish library in Elbing is owed to the local parish priest, Nicolaus Wulzak.<sup>47</sup> His appointment as parish priest in early 15<sup>th</sup> century took place close to the period of creation of the library.<sup>48</sup> As in the case of other libraries, its original collection might have included books donated by the parish priest.<sup>49</sup> In the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century,

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eds. J. Wenta, S. Hartmann, G. Vollmann-Profe, Toruń 2008, pp. 294-296; R.G. Päsler, *Deutschsprachige Sachliteratur im Preußenland bis 1500. Untersuchungen zu ihrer Überlieferung*, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2003, pp. 61, 69-70.

<sup>43</sup> P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 122. For more information on the clergyman, see O. Günther, *Andreas Slommow und Johannes Zager in den Handschriften der Danziger Marienbibliothek*, "Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins" LVII (1917), p. 144 et seq.; Z.L. Pszczółkowska, *Andrzej ze Slomowa*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego*, ed. S. Gierszewski, I, Gdańsk 1992, pp. 31-32.

<sup>44</sup> See Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin-Dahlem, XX. Hauptabteilung (henceforth: GStA PK, XX. HA), Ordensbriefarchiv (henceforth: OBA), no. 28338 (A. Mentzel-Reuters, *Arma spiritualia. Bibliotheken, Bücher und Bildung im Deutschen Orden*, Wiesbaden 2003, p. 225); GStA PK, XX. HA, Ordensfolianten (henceforth: OF) 97, fol. 5r-5v. For more information on the library, see A. Mentzel-Reuters, *Arma spiritualia...*, pp. 222-230; Z.L. Pszczółkowska, *Biblioteka przy kościele NP Marii w Gdańsku i jej piętnastowieczny regulamin*, in: *Studia o książce dawnej i współczesnej*, eds. I. Imańska, J. Tondel, "Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Bibliologia, V, Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne, 376, Toruń 2006 pp. 75-87.

<sup>45</sup> O. Günther, *Die Handschriften der Kirchenbibliothek von St. Marien in Danzig*, Danzig 1921, p. 13; H. Haßbargen, *Das Testament des Danziger Offizials Nikolaus Schwichtenberg*, "Mitteilungen des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins" XX (1926) 4, p. 92.

<sup>46</sup> Priest's biography: Z. Nowak, *Schwichtenberg Mikołaj*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego*, ed. S. Gierszewski, IV, ed. Z. Nowak, Gdańsk 1997, pp. 185-186. For more information on the library, see B. Gryzio, *Inkunabuly z biblioteki kościoła św. Jana w Gdańsku*, "Libri Gedanenses" XXXI/XXXII (2013-2014), pp. 5-19.

<sup>47</sup> Biographies: Ch. Krollman, *Nicolaus Wulsack*, in: *Altpreussische Biographie*, II, ed. Ch. Krollmann, Marburg 1967, p. 472; M. Arsyński, *Mikołaj Wulzak (około 1360-1429) duchowny elbląski i mecenas sztuki*, in: *Zasłużeni ludzie dawnego Elbląga. Szkice biograficzne*, ed. M. Biskup, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź 1987, pp. 8-12; T. Borawska, *Wulzak Mikołaj*, in: *Słownik biograficzny kapituły warmińskiej*, pp. 285-286; M. Arsyński, *Wulzak Mikołaj*, in: *Słownik Biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego*, IV, pp. 492-493.

<sup>48</sup> See more recent source: *Peter Himmelreich's und Michael Friedwald's, des Löwentödters, Elbingisch-Preussische Geschichten*, ed. M. Toeppen, Leipzig 1881, p. 31. On the library, cf. M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga...*, p. 99.

<sup>49</sup> Reportedly, the ownership signatures of the priest still appeared in library books in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century: M. Toeppen, *Elbinger Antiquitäten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des städtischen Lebens im Mittelalter*, II, Danzig 1872, p. 110, fn. 1.

Hieronimus Waldau – Thorn parish priest – acquired books for his own use and for his successors.<sup>50</sup> One of his books still contains his notes, which testify to his intellectual horizons.<sup>51</sup> Parish priests in smaller towns also undertook similar initiatives. In Rößel (today: Reszel), a town with well-educated parish priests, the local library was established in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>52</sup>

Just as the knowledge possessed by the parish priests was first and foremost supposed to be practical, the libraries were chiefly intended to cater to pastoral needs.<sup>53</sup> The libraries' inventories, which included numerous preaching compendiums, lend credence to this conclusion.<sup>54</sup> Books held there were of utilitarian nature, intended to improve the intellectual capabilities of the parish's clergy for pastoral purposes. Knowledge and ministry also went hand in hand in the narrative adopted in the 1428 statutes of the church province in Riga, where *pastores ignorantēs* were equated with *pastores mutuos*, who could not speak the language of their parishioners.<sup>55</sup> The Danzig library was to be established exactly to this end – so that the numerous parishioners had “wise leaders, teachers and preachers, knowledgeable in Scripture”.<sup>56</sup>

50 See ownership notes: J. Tondel, *Inkunabuty w zbiorach Biblioteki Wyższego Seminarium Duchownego w Pelplinie*, Toruń-Pelplin 2007, p. 372 (no. 125); p. 393 (no. 199); p. 396 (no. 212).

51 *Die Aufzeichnungen des Thorer Pfarrers Hieronymus Waldau*, ed. O. Günther, “Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins” XL (1907), pp. 221-251. More on the notes and the figure of the parish priest: M. Sumowski, “Ego Jeronimus Waldaw...”. O tożsamości późnośredniowiecznego plebana toruńskiego, “Zapiski Historyczne” LXXIX (2014) 1, pp. 63-81.

52 *Das Rößeler Pfarrbuch. Aufzeichnungen der Kirchenväter an der Pfarrkirche zu Rößel in den Jahren 1442 bis 1614*, ed. G. Matern, A. Birch-Hirschfeld, Braunsberg 1937, pp. 15-17, 41. For more information on the library, see A. Wagner, *Der gotische Bücherschrank aus der “Libraria” der Pfarrei in Rößel*, “Zeitschrift für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands” LVII (2013), pp. 3-17. Biography of the founder: T. Borawska, *Datteln (Klunder, Clunger, Klinger) Arnold*, in: *Słownik biograficzny kapituły warmińskiej*, pp. 40-41. About the education of the parish priests in Rößel: G. Matern, *Die kirchlichen Verhältnisse in Ermland...*, pp. 70-71; A. Radziwiński, *Parafie i duchowieństwo parafialne...*, p. 246.

53 For more information about the function of church libraries, see E. Potkowski, *Książka rękopiśmienna...*, pp. 173-174, 208-209, 213-214.

54 *Das Grosse Ämterbuch des Deutschen Ordens*, ed. W. Ziesemer, Wiesbaden 1968, p. 462; E. Potkowski, *Książka rękopiśmienna...*, pp. 159-165; A. Mentzel-Reuters, *Pfarrbibliotheken des Deutschen Ordens in Thorn und Bern*, in: *Neue Studien zur Literatur im Deutschen Orden*, eds. B. Jähnig, A. Mentzel-Reuters, Stuttgart 2014, pp. 108-109; M. Superczyński, *Inwentarz fary chełmińskiej i jej biblioteki z XV wieku*, “Folia Torunensia” XVII (2017), pp. 207-218. See also M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, “Tu ergo flecte genua tua”. *Sztuka a praktyka religijna świeckich w diecezjach pruskich państwa zakonu krzyżackiego do połowy XV wieku*, Pelplin 2014, pp. 98-100.

55 *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 309 (no. III).

56 P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 122: “Wir haben ouch czu herczen genomen, das die selbige pfarre kirche czu unser frauwen in Danczk von gotis gnaden reich von folke ist und wol noth ist, das sie wissende und in der schrift vorsuchte vorwezer, lerer und prediger haben, den selben ouch notdorft ist, gutter bucher czu haben, das sie das volk den weg der worheit und den weg der ewigen salikeit lernen und weizen mogen und wissen”.

## PATRONAGE OVER TOWN PARISHES

“in plebanis ydoneis provisuri”<sup>57</sup>

To what degree did the above-mentioned factors such as origin and education influence one's chances of obtaining a parish prebend? The Teutonic Order held the patronage over most municipal parishes in Medieval Prussia. The region's ruler nominated the parish priests in 71 out of 97 of those parishes.<sup>58</sup> As a result, in Prussia, patronage became a system of gratification of priests who were useful to the ruler.<sup>59</sup> An example given by Johann Karschau, lawyer and cleric-diplomat, illustrates this function of municipal parish prebends. In 1435, while in Basel, the priest sent a letter to the Grand Master, in which he thanked him for the parish in Friedland (today: Pravdinsk), at the same time requesting a better prebend, in Schippenbeil (today: Sępólno). He clearly referred to those parishes in the context of his readiness to serve the ruler.<sup>60</sup> The example of the parish in the New Town in Elbing is also meaningful in this context. In 1437, Nicolaus Salfeld – parish priest in Fischau (today: Fiszewo) and student at the Bologna University – requested that the Grand Master grant him a town parish, preferably the already-mentioned Elbing one.<sup>61</sup> He also offered his service, and his good education and links with the Order ultimately allowed him to obtain the prebend. As promised by the Grand Master, Bartholomeus Liebenwald was to become his successor,<sup>62</sup> and although the latter did not become head of the said parish, he also served the Teutonic Order.<sup>63</sup>

It is difficult to determine with certainty whether all municipal parishes in Prussia were part of the gratification system for the subjects. With regard

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<sup>57</sup> From the privilege of Kulm of 1233: *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, I/2, ed. R. Philippi, Königsberg 1882, no. 105 (p. 79).

<sup>58</sup> A. Radziwiński, *Die Kirche im Deutschordensstaat*, p. 242.

<sup>59</sup> See my discussion on the patronage of the Teutonic Order in Thorn: M. Sumowski, *Zakon krzyżacki a patronat nad beneficjami kościelnymi w średniowiecznym Toruniu*, “Rocznik Toruński” XLI (2014), pp. 155-167. While parishes, especially the large ones, were important for the ruler, the other town prebends had smaller significance in the discussed system, perhaps even negligible.

<sup>60</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, IV: 1424-1435, eds. V. Röhrich, F. Liedtke, H. Schmauch, Braunsberg 1935, no. 588; H. Boockmann, *Die Rechtsstudenten des Deutschen Ordens. Studium, Studienförderung und gelehrter Beruf im späteren Mittelalter*, in: *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag am 19. September 1971*, II, Göttingen 1972, p. 334.

<sup>61</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 7355; see H. Boockmann, *Die Rechtsstudenten des Deutschen Ordens...*, pp. 349-350; K. Górski, *Studenci z Prus w Bolonii...*, p. 8; T. Borawska, *Preußische Jura-Studenten...*, p. 113.

<sup>62</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 10198.

<sup>63</sup> Biography: T. Borawska, *Liebenwald Bartłomiej*, in: *Słownik biograficzny kapituły warmińskiej*, p. 150.



to most parishes, especially those of lesser standing and wealth, the decisions on who headed them might have been made locally, and in that case, local priests were favoured. Some letters by Teutonic Order commanders have been preserved, in which they proposed candidates for parish priests to the Grand Master, not only in town parishes.<sup>64</sup>

In the context of the patronage by the territorial rulers, researchers often suggest that parish priests in Prussian town parishes were automatically affiliated with the Teutonic Order, suggesting at the same time that clergymen were alienated from the townsfolk.<sup>65</sup> The Order did have the ability to put forward its own candidates for parish priests.<sup>66</sup> It undoubtedly nominated its candidates in the largest towns.<sup>67</sup> In addition, some parishes were associated with the names of canons (priests) from cathedral chapters, three of which comprised members of the Teutonic Order.<sup>68</sup> However, the Order did not always have the opportunity to put forward its brothers as candidates for parish priests, sometimes – for example – due to shortages of possible nominees.<sup>69</sup> When in the Osterode (today: Ostróda) Congress of 1411 the Prussian estates demanded that the territorial ruler does not inherit the goods

64 GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 9616, 11345, 28378.

65 See e.g. J. Tandecki, *Struktury administracyjne i społeczne oraz formy życia w wielkich miastach Prus Krzyżackich i Królewskich w średniowieczu i na progu czasów nowożytnych*, Toruń 2001, p. 101.

66 *Tabulae Ordinis Theutonici*, ed. E. Strehlke, Berolini 1869, no. 466. Even as late as in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, this privilege must have been important for the Order: cf. *Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie*, III/2, ed. H. Koeppen, Göttingen 1971, no. 221; R. Czaja, *Deutscher Orden und Stadtklerus...*, p. 85.

67 R. Czaja, *Deutscher Orden und Stadtklerus...*, p. 82; A. Radzimiński, *Die Kirche im Deutschordensstaat...*, p. 243.

68 M. Glauert, *Das Domkapitel von Pomesanien...*, pp. 257-258; R. Biskup, *Das Domkapitel von Samland...*, pp. 180-185; R. Krajniak, *Duchowieństwo kapituły katedralnej w Chełmży...*, pp. 62-63; idem, *Średniowieczni plebani kościoła parafialnego pod wezwaniem św. Mikołaja w Chełmży, in: Parafie w średniowiecznych Prusach...*, pp. 141-154.

69 For more information on the numbers of Teutonic clergy, see S. Józwiak, *Liczebność konwentów zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach w pierwszej połowie XV wieku*, "Zapiski Historyczne" LXXII (2007) 1, pp. 7-8, 18-19; D. Hungs, *Der Deutschordenspriester*, in: *Priester im Deutschen Orden. Vorträge der Tagung der Internationalen Historischen Kommission zur Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens in Wien 2012*, ed. U. Arnold, Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, LXXVII, Weimar 2016, pp. 132-135. See also J. Sarnowsky, *The Priests in the Military Orders – A Comparative Approach on Their Standing and Role*, in: idem, *On the Military Orders in Medieval Europe. Structures and Perceptions*, Farnham-Burlington 2011, p. 6. In Prussia, staffing problems began after the Grunwald defeat, as noted by K. Kwiatkowski, *Bezpośrednie następstwa wojny*, in: S. Józwiak, K. Kwiatkowski, A. Szweda, S. Szybkowski, *Wojna Polski i Litwy z zakonem krzyżackim w latach 1409-1411*, Malbork 2010, pp. 721-724. About secular clergyman working in the Teutonic castles, see M. Sumowski, *Secular Clergymen in the Castles of the Teutonic Order in Prussia*, "Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica. Yearbook for the Study of the Military Orders" XXIII (2018), pp. 203-234.



of the deceased parish priest, they referred only to secular clergy (*wertlich pfarrer*), not regular clergy.<sup>70</sup>

Even without their formal membership in the Order, there is no doubt that parish priests were affiliated with the powers that be. Such affiliation might have influenced relations, especially during conflicts of Prussian estates with the Teutonic Order, and in the course of the ensuing war.<sup>71</sup> However, it does not seem fitting to describe a priest as a state official.<sup>72</sup> It was the ruler's patronage – understood as the compensation for the subject's service and his salary – that established the mutual relations. The town parish in itself did not come with any specific "state" duties; rather, becoming the head of a parish was the result of already having fulfilled such duties. On the other hand, the relationship between the parish priest and the town was multi-layered. The absence of the term *unser* in towns' accounts regarding priests did not necessarily indicate their alienation, but rather testified to the fact that municipal authorities had no influence on the election of parish priests.<sup>73</sup>

Patronage over parishes played an important role among the ruler's other privileges from the very beginning of the Prussian reign.<sup>74</sup> It is no wonder then that due to the change in power in Prussia brought about by the Thirteen Years' War, influential big-city councils sought to take over in this regard and install their own candidates in parishes.<sup>75</sup> This initiative reflected in their support for people from their community, as described above. In towns, this ambition coalesced with the late-Medieval phenomenon of "church municipalisation", through which municipal councils attempted to increase their control over parish churches.<sup>76</sup> The problem of nominating parish priests was thus in equal

<sup>70</sup> *Acten der Ständetage Preussens*, I: 1233-1435, Leipzig 1878, no. 112, par. 10; cf. R. Czaja, *Deutscher Orden und Stadtklerus...*, p. 86.

<sup>71</sup> In 1455, the parish priest in Thorn, Laurentius Bernardi, took part in a conspiracy in favour of the Teutonic Order – an effort intended for the Grand Master to reclaim the mutinous town. Priest's biography: M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni...*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. R. Czaja, *Deutscher Orden und Stadtklerus...*, pp. 83, 86; J. Tandecki, *Struktury administracyjne i społeczne...*, p. 101. The special "officer" status was enjoyed only by the parish priests of Gdańsk and Toruń, who paid part of their incomes to the treasury of the Grand Master: *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399-1409*, ed. E. Joachim, Königsberg 1896, pp. 1-2, 44, 90, 132, 204, 280, 329, 370, 438, 450, 516. Cf. comments by chronicler from a later period: *Simon Grunau's Preussische Chronik*, I, ed. M. Perlbach, Leipzig 1876, pp. 672-673.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. J. Tandecki, *Struktury administracyjne i społeczne...*, p. 101, fn. 91. In fact, a patron from outside the town was not an exceptional phenomenon in Prussia, see e.g. Z. Zyglewski, *Religijność w miastach kujawskich późnego średniowiecza*, in: *Ecclesia et civitas. Kościół i życie religijne w mieście średniowiecznym*, eds. H. Manikowska, H. Zaremska, Warszawa 2002, p. 330.

<sup>74</sup> M. Dygo, *Studia nad początkami władztwa zakonu niemieckiego w Prusach (1226-1259)*, Warsaw 1992, pp. 241, 243 et seq.

<sup>75</sup> See W. Rozyńkowski, *Patronat nad parafiami w średniowiecznej diecezji chełmińskiej*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne" XLIX (2001) 2, pp. 136-138.

<sup>76</sup> R. Czaja, *Miasta pruskie a zakon krzyżacki. Studia nad stosunkami między miastem a władzą terytorialną w późnym średniowieczu*, Toruń 1999, p. 46 et seq. See also below.

regard a matter of origin, education, and service – all unequivocally remaining subject to power, whose agents obtained the right to patronage as early as in the Privilege of Kulm – model for most towns in Prussia. According to its provisions, it was the ruler's duty to ensure that "appropriate parish priests are appointed".<sup>77</sup>

## II

### PASTORAL DUTIES

"ut omnes curati [...] in aliis ad officium suum spectantibus diligentes sint"<sup>78</sup>

The parish priest, as well as other priests, was primarily responsible for liturgy-related duties, connected with conducting mass.<sup>79</sup> The visitation instructions used in Prussia – the Pomesania, Samland and Włocławek<sup>80</sup> instructions – addressed the proper fulfilment of liturgical duties. For example, the Włocławek instruction include a question about clergymen who did not have appropriate skills in the above regard. Thus priests should conduct mass regularly, especially on Sundays and holidays, and not neglect

<sup>77</sup> *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, I/2, no. 105, p. 79: "Et in eisdem ecclesiis jus patronatus nostre domui retinemus, eis in plebanis ydoneis provisuri".

<sup>78</sup> From the synod statutes of the Ermland region of 1449 and 1497: *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 17 (no. 22), 29 (no. 22).

<sup>79</sup> The matter was discussed in detail by I. Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny w średniowiecznej Polsce*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 107 et seq., 189-194. See J.R. Marczewski, *Duszpasterska działalność Kościoła w średniowiecznym Lublinie*, Lublin 2002, pp. 293-323.

<sup>80</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, OF 270, fol. 129r-130v; 224r-225r (M. Sumowski, *Wzorzec duchownego w średniowiecznej instrukcji wizytacyjnej. „Inquisitorium clericorum” z diecezji sambijskiej*, in: *Collegarum et Discipulorum Gratitude. Studia ofiarowane prof. Andrzejowi Radziwińskiemu z okazji 60. urodzin*, eds. R. Biskup, K. Kwiatkowski, Toruń 2018, pp. 206-214); Archiwum Diecezjalne we Włocławku, ABKP, Ac. ep. 1 (107), fol. 1r-1v; H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts der Provinzen Preussen und Posen, mit Urkunden und Regesten*, Königsberg 1837: *Anhang einer Urkundensammlung*, no. 77; W. Abraham, *Exhortatio visitationis synodalis z dyjecezyi Włocławskiej z wieku XIV*, "Archiwum Komisji Historycznej" V (1889), pp. 219-231; B. Ulanowski, *Instrukcja dla wizytatorów synodalnych...*, pp. 29-32. The Pomesania and Samland instructions have been analysed by S. Kwiatkowski, *Klimat religijny w diecezji pomezjańskiej u schyłku XIV i w pierwszych dziesięcioleciach XV wieku*, Toruń 1990, p. 197 et seq. Cf. J. Wiśniewski, *Kościół i kaplice na terenie byłej diecezji pomezjańskiej 1243-1821* (1992), I, Elbląg 1999, pp. 63-65. Recent work on Prussian inquisitoriums: A. Radziwiński, *Die Kirche im Deutschordensstaat...*, pp. 183-188. The Włocławek instructions have been discussed in idem, *Wizytacje, synody i ustawodawstwo synodalne*, in: *Dzieje diecezji włocławskiej*, I: *Średniowiecze*, ed. A. Radziwiński, Włocławek 2008, pp. 72-77. For a general overview of visitation instructions, see S. Librowski, *Wizytacje diecezji włocławskiej...*, fasc. 1: *Wstęp ogólny do wizytacji*, "Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne" VIII (1964), pp. 126-127; fasc. 2, p. 190. Recently I. Skierska, *Pleban...*, pp. 156-158. The researcher used these materials in her work on parish priests in late-Medieval Poland.

this duty without due cause. These documents also advised against priests interrupting an ongoing mass or celebrating more than one mass a day, except for holidays specified in the canon law. In addition, questions were posed regarding clergymen who conducted mass in places subject to an interdict or in the presence of persons who had been excommunicated. The priest was also expected to be appropriately prepared for the celebration, i.e. he should be ordained, not be subject to the penalty of suspension, and observe the Eucharistic Fast. Synod statutes also included provisions on mass-related duties.<sup>81</sup> The Pomesania and Samland laws put an obligation on priests to celebrate mass at least three times every week.<sup>82</sup> Those duties bound all priests. However, they were especially relevant for the parish priest – due to his administrative position and pastoral responsibility.

The execution of duties related with religious cult by parish priests is illustrated – for example – by the accounts of Andreas Sandberg – parish priest of Strasburg (today: Brodnica). Therein, the priest kept a record of his income from church services conducted in the years 1439-1446, correlating them with specific days and ceremonies.<sup>83</sup> This piece of evidence allows us to conclude that the priest regularly carried out his liturgical duties. It suggests that for at least most of the time covered, he was present at the parish. The parish priest recorded Sunday and holiday masses, as well as funerals, weddings, and processions. The daily routine of his parish, as illustrated by his accounts, seems consistent with the model.

The parish priest's "care for souls" was, however, mainly connected with teaching and giving sacraments.<sup>84</sup> The Samland statutes of 1441 stressed the significance of preaching Gospel to the devotees. It should not be sacrificed for the sake of excessively prolonging other rites, like – in this case – the Eucharistic Memorial.<sup>85</sup> The priest should preach the Word of God *in vulgari* and teach his devotees prayers in their own tongue.<sup>86</sup> In this regard, the language used for pastoral duties remained of the utmost importance. The

<sup>81</sup> For more information concerning the statutes of Prussian dioceses, see A. Radziński, *Synodalstatuten im Deutschordensland Preußen*, in: idem, *Kirche und Geistlichkeit im Mittelalter. Polen und der Deutsche Orden in Preussen*, Toruń 2011, p. 291 et seq. They have been translated into Polish: *Statuty Synodalne Warmińskie, Sambijskie, Pomezańskie, Chełmińskie oraz Prowincjalne Ryskie*, trans. J. Wojtkowski, Olsztyn 2010.

<sup>82</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 262 (no. 3), 277 (no. 28); I. Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny...*, pp. 108-110.

<sup>83</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 9026. See A. Radziński, *Piętnastowieczne rachunki plebanów z Torunia i Brodnicy jako źródła do badania dziejów parafii w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne" XLVIII (2000) 2, pp. 473-482.

<sup>84</sup> See J.R. Marczewski, *Duszpasterska działalność Kościoła...*, pp. 323-379.

<sup>85</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 271-272 (no. 5).

<sup>86</sup> Ibidem, col. 264 (no. 17), 276-277 (no. 27). See I. Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny...*, pp. 182-189.

parish priest of Heilsberg (today: Lidzbark Warmiński), who did not speak Prussian, was expected to employ a priest who spoke in that tongue.<sup>87</sup> The situation was similar in the case of the Polish language, frequently spoken in Prussian towns.<sup>88</sup> We now have access to numerous mentions of Polish priests who worked in that region.<sup>89</sup> They might have been employed personally by the parish priests seeking to satisfy the pastoral needs of their followers.

Another element of *curam animarum* was the sacrament-related service of the parish priest. The cited visitation questions included inquiries about priests – probably parish priests in this context – who neglected this duty, especially when a devotee was sick. There were also questions regarding priests who allowed parish members to die without confession. The importance of confession was emphasised, with a reminder that breaking the secrecy was strictly prohibited. What was important in Prussia, the seal of confession also bound interpreters who aided parish priests unfamiliar with the tongue of their devotees.<sup>90</sup> Followers were required to confess their sins to their local parish priest.<sup>91</sup> However, the priest could not grant absolution for all sins, some of which were reserved for the bishop, while others for none other than the pope himself.<sup>92</sup> The priest could, however, receive special powers in this

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<sup>87</sup> *Repertorium Germanicum*, V: *Eugen IV. (1431-1447)*, eds. H. Diener, B. Schwarz, Ch. Schöner, Tübingen 2004, no. 9202. Dr Radosław Krajniak has been kind enough to point to these source.

<sup>88</sup> See K. Mikulski, *Struktura etniczna mieszkańców i status społeczny ludności pochodzenia polskiego w Toruniu od końca XIV do połowy XVIII wieku*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne" LXIII (1997), pp. 111-129.

<sup>89</sup> See Archiwum Archidiecezji Warmińskiej w Olsztynie (Archive of the Warmia Archdiocese in Olsztyn), AB H 196, fol. 16r, 36r; AP Gdańsk, 368/III, no. 35; AP Gdańsk, 426, 1 [pages not numbered]; GStA PK, XIV. HA, 322A, no. 4, p. 277; GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 9026, fol. 12r; O. Günther, *Andreas Slommow und Johannes Zager...*, pp. 150-152; *Nowa księga rachunkowa Starego Miasta Elbląga 1404-1414*, ed. M. Pelech, Warszawa-Poznań-Toruń 1987-1989, no. 1164, 1166, 1261, 1330; M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga*, pp. 201-202; M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni...*, pp. 133-134, 138, 216, 244-245; idem, *Kler diecezjalny...*, p. 177; idem, *Duchowieństwo parafialne Nowego Miasta Torunia i jego społeczne oddziaływanie w średniowieczu*, in: *Nowe Miasto Toruń. 750 lat lokacji*, eds. K. Mikulski, P. Oliński, W. Rozykowski, Toruń 2014, pp. 92-93.

<sup>90</sup> See *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 262 (no. 5).

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, col. 16 (no. 16), 28 (no. 16), 264 (no. 17); 265 (no. 28), 315 (no. XVI). With the consent of the parish priest, one could confess before a different clergyman, however the former remained the actual confessor: ibid., col. 276 (no. 25). The townsfolk also often confessed to private confessors, but to this end, one had to be granted a special privilege: see. Biblioteka Gdańska PAN (Gdańsk Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences), Ms. Mar. Q 41 [parchment flyleaf on the back binding]; AP Gdańsk, 300D/43, no. 56-57, 70; AP Gdańsk, 300,43/4b, fol. 82r; AP Gdańsk, 368/II, no. 115; AP Gdańsk, 368/III, no. 35; *Das Rößeler Pfarrbuch...*, pp. 54, 82.

<sup>92</sup> The list of such sins, which included incest, raping a virgin, murder or sacrilege, was included in the statutes of the synod: *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 18 (no. 27), 30-31 (no. 33), 269-270 (no. 46), 278 (no. 37), 288-289 (no. 7). See also "Formularz z Uppsali" ..., no. 274. Priests granting

regard. For example, in 1450, the parish priest of the New Town of Thorn was granted such authorizations from Rome. The priest was allowed to grant his parishioners absolution for all sins except those reserved for the Holy See.<sup>93</sup>

The needs of parishioners with respect to confession and anointing of the sick – associated with approaching death – were key in the context of the priest's constant readiness to serve. As we will see below, those rites were expressly invoked with respect to the problem of priests' residence. In addition, the synod statutes emphasised that priests were not allowed to refuse sacraments to devotees or bar them from entering the church, even if they did not carry out their duties, most likely financial in this case.<sup>94</sup>

However, one of the pastoral duties was the control of the parishioners' religious lives. One of the elements on the itinerary of parish visitations in Late-Medieval Ermland region was a meeting of visitors with the parish priest, during which the latter was expected to provide information on the manner in which devotees participated in services, what their attitudes were toward fasts and how they carried out their duties toward the Church.<sup>95</sup> The supervisory function of the priest was also mentioned in the statute provisions which required clergymen to reprimand parishioners who would not attend mass.<sup>96</sup> The parish priest's control also involved a moral assessment of the parishioners' behaviour. In accordance with Church-wide norms, the priest should not administer sacraments or funerals to unrepentant sinners and usurers. The same rule applied to parishioners who neglected the duty to receive Communion once a year.<sup>97</sup> Due to the "parish obligation", the parish priest was not allowed to administer pastoral services to devotees outside of his jurisdiction.<sup>98</sup>

The pastoral significance of the continuous presence of the parish priest was strongly emphasised in relation to the matter of residing in the parish.<sup>99</sup>

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absolution for these sins were subject to denunciation in the course of visitation procedures: H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts...*, no. 77, pp. 259-260.

<sup>93</sup> *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, I, ed. C.P. Woelky, I, Danzig 1885, no. 593; *Kirchliches Urkundenbuch der Neustadt Thorn 1263-1455*, ed. A. Semrau, "Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn" XXXVIII (1930), no. 118, p. 117; M. Sumowski, *Duchowieństwo parafialne...*, p. 91.

<sup>94</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 3 (no. 12), 17 (no. 25), 30 (no. 25), 267 (no. 41), 275-276 (no. 22).

<sup>95</sup> *Ordinancia castri Heylsbergk*, p. 340.

<sup>96</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 16 (no. 15), 28 (no. 15), 264 (no. 18).

<sup>97</sup> OF 270, fol. 129v, 224v-225r (M. Sumowski, *Wzorzec duchownego...*, p. 209, no. 23; p. 213, no. 18). Cf. S. Kwiatkowski, *Klimat religijny w diecezji pomezańskiej...*, p. 39-40, note 44.

<sup>98</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 3 (no. 10), 15 (no. 10), 27 (no. 10), 267 (no. 41). See I. Skierska, *Obowiązek mszalny...*, p. 69 et seq.

<sup>99</sup> See I. Skierska, *Pleban...*, p. 179; E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce...*, pp. 65-67.



Statutory norms were formulated in such a way as to limit the absence of the priest to one or two months, and ensure a substitute. Residency was key for the fulfilment of the obligation to administer sacraments to the devotees.<sup>100</sup> Excessively frequent changes of parish priests were seen as detrimental to the parishioners.<sup>101</sup> During the Diocese synod of 1438, the bishop of Kulm expressed his concern for ensuring an uninterrupted availability of religious ministry. He permitted some chaplains and parish priests to stay at home, so that they could temporarily administer sacraments in neighbouring parishes during the Synod.<sup>102</sup> Such solutions were also required when the position of parish priest became vacant or if he left the parish for other reasons. The forms included in documents used for appointing temporary substitutions in the event of death of the existing parish priest express the necessity to maintain the continuity of pastoral care – for the sake of the devotees' souls.<sup>103</sup> The situation was analogous in parishes whose parish priests were granted temporary leave.<sup>104</sup> Such a substitution was procured, for example, by the parish priest of Konitz, when he left for the Council of Constance.<sup>105</sup> His example illustrates that the matter of the required residency overlapped with other duties of some clergymen, not connected with their pastoral function. Such cases emerged most frequently when parish priests from large towns set out for diplomatic service.<sup>106</sup> However, the phenomenon of accumulation of parish prebends has not been observed in Prussia, at least not in the times of the Teutonic Order.<sup>107</sup>

The above-listed responsibilities were part of the basic set of duties of the parish priest's *officiumi*.<sup>108</sup> They were included in the earliest-known statutes of the Ermland Diocese, and restated in later laws. To fulfil those duties, the priests were required to be diligent while celebrating mass, preaching sermons, hearing confessions, as well as giving baptisms, Communion

100 *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 278 (no. 37), 314-315 (no. XV-XVI).

101 For more information on the matter of mobility of clergy, see M. Sumowski, *Trzy dokumenty do badań nad mobilnością kleru niższego w Prusach z pierwszej połowy XV w.*, "Studia z Dziejów Średniowiecza" XIX (2015), pp. 335-346.

102 *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 563.

103 "Formularz z Uppsali". *Późnośredniowieczna księga formularzowa biskupstw pruskich*, commentary and edition R. Biskup, *Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu*, CIX, Toruń 2016, no. 205-206.

104 *Ibidem*, no. 201.

105 *Visitatio archidiaconatus Camenensis*, pp. VIII-X.

106 See K. Militzer, *Herren der Schriftlichkeit und Verwaltungsfachleute: Kanzler der Hochmeister*, in: *Priester im Deutschen Orden...*, pp. 13-14.

107 The legal awareness of the prohibition to have two prebends is apparent from the source materials: GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 11526, 19503. For more information on the matter of accumulation, see also M. Sumowski, *Duchowni diecezjalni...*, pp. 66-68.

108 See E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce...*, pp. 67-68.



and other sacraments.<sup>109</sup> Those responsibilities made up the cultural model in which the parish priest was conceptualized as a shepherd. However, this model, developed by the Church, had to be intelligible to the town populations. The above-referenced request for new priests, put forward by Danzig councilmen, supports this claim.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES

“propter mandatorum nostrorum [...] executionem”<sup>110</sup>

In addition to performing liturgical and pastoral functions, the parish priest also had a host of duties associated with church administration.<sup>111</sup> Although he cannot be regarded as a state official, as I have remarked earlier, he most certainly was a church official. In the above regard, priests acted as the bishop's representatives. In Prussia, where archpresbyterates operated, the archpresbyters' positions were generally filled by local parish priests.<sup>112</sup>

As a representative of church administration, the priest was required to communicate the will of the bishop or church court to the parishioners, generally during mass. The parish priest – Church representative that maintained the closest relations with devotees, was required to announce from

<sup>109</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 3 (no. 11): “ut curati in missis celebrandis, sermonibus faciendis et confessionibus audiendis, baptismo, eucharistia et aliis sacramentis ministrandis temporibus debitis se diligentes”; see col. 17 (no. 22), 29 (22).

<sup>110</sup> From the synod statutes of Samland of ca. 1427: *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 265 (no. 25).

<sup>111</sup> An excellent source material for the research on the administrative functions of parish priests and on everyday life in a Medieval parish is the aforementioned register, preserved from Prussian bishoprics, and known in historiography as the “Uppsala Register” (Formelbuch aus Uppsala). Since it was part of the canon law, it can also be used for analysing problems that are not exclusively associated with Prussia. For more information on the work, see A. Radzimiński, *Piętnastowieczny formularz z Uppsali jako źródło do badania dziejów Kościoła w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach*, in: *Aetas media, aetas moderna. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, eds. H. Manikowska, A. Bartoszewicz, W. Fałkowski, Warszawa 2000, pp. 231-246; R. Biskup, M. Glauert, *Das preussische Formelbuch des 15. Jahrhunderts aus Uppsala. Vorstellung eines Editionsprojektes*, in: *Editionswissenschaftliches Kolloquium 2011: Quellen kirchlicher Provenienz, Neue Editionsprojekte und aktuelle EDV-Projekte*, eds. H. Flachenecker, J. Tandecki, cooperation K. Kopiński, Toruń 2011, pp. 369-380; R. Biskup, *Tzw. „Formularz z Uppsali” jako źródło do dziejów parafii w państwie zakonu niemieckiego w Prusach (XIV-XV w.)*, in: *Parafie w średniowiecznych Prusach...*, pp. 27-49. See my review in English: M. Sumowski, “Formularz z Uppsali”. *Późnośredniowieczna księga formularzowa biskupstw pruskich edited Radosław Biskup*, (Fontes 109, 2016), 396 pp. ISBN 978-83-65127-16-7, „Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej / Bulletin der Polnischen Historischen Mission” XIII (2018), pp. 255-258.

<sup>112</sup> See A. Radzimiński, *Die Kirche im Deutschordensstaat...*, pp. 56-59.

the pulpit the dates of secular synods, contents of visitation questions, and impel parishioners to participate.<sup>113</sup> It was also the priest's duty to publicly summon parishioners before the court of a bishop or official.<sup>114</sup> During mass, when applicable, the priest was also responsible for announcing that the penalty of excommunication was imposed on a devotee, or if such person was released from such penalty.<sup>115</sup> Acting as an official, the parish priest gave prebends to other clergymen on behalf of the diocese's ordinary. As priest who fulfilled the most important and prestigious function in the parish, on bishop's behalf he grant investiture for town chapels or hospitals and assign the neighbouring parishes to priests as prebends.<sup>116</sup>

In the course of carrying out his administrative duties, the parish priest also issued documents to the parishioners. In 1433, parish priest of St. Catherine's Church in Danzig and official in the Pomerania region, issued a written certificate of a marriage that had been concluded before him.<sup>117</sup> Parish priests were responsible for granting devotees permission to go on pilgrimages, which required leaving the parish temporarily.<sup>118</sup>

They were also required to possess seals that were used for performing administrative duties. The above requirement was repeated in the Pomesania visitation instructions as well as the synod statutes.<sup>119</sup> The seals were expected to contain depictions of parish church patrons, as well as appropriate signatures. This attribute emphasised the significance of the administrative function of the parish priest, acting as bishop's representative. However, as indicated by the ordinaries in the statutes' narrative, the seals were intended for "carrying out instructions issued by us and our official".<sup>120</sup>

<sup>113</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 6010; H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts...*, no. 75, p. 253; no. 80, p. 267; no. 81, p. 269; no. 82, p. 273. "Formularz z Uppsali"..., no. 214, 216, 329, 349. See S. Kwiatkowski, *Klimat religijny w diecezji pomezańskiej...*, p. 200.

<sup>114</sup> "Formularz z Uppsali"..., no. 62, 65, 67, 69-71, 74, 355, 365-366, 369-370.

<sup>115</sup> Ibidem, no. 68, 77, 83-87, 89-93, 125, 233-236.

<sup>116</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, IV, no. 40; *Kirchliches Urkundenbuch der Neustadt Thorn*, no. 39, pp. 84-85; "Formularz z Uppsali"..., no. 110, 112, 114-115, 118-119, 123, 149, 202, 203, 221, 277, 394-395. See R. Biskup, Tzw. „Formularz z Uppsali” jako źródło..., p. 38.

<sup>117</sup> AP Gdańsk, 300D/70, no. 73.

<sup>118</sup> Biblioteka Gdańska PAN, Ms. Mar. Q 29 [interior of the binding]; *Das Rößeler Pfarrbuch...*, p. 59; O. Günther, *Andreas Slommow und Johannes Zager...*, pp. 149-150; idem, *Die Handschriften der Kirchenbibliothek von St. Marien in Danzig...*, pp. 274-275, 533; B. Możejko, *Materiał źródłowy z Gdańska do dziejów późnośredniowiecznych pielgrzymek – rekonesans badawczy*, in: *Pielgrzymi, pogrobowcy, prebendarze*, ed. B. Śliwiński, *Studia z Dziejów Średniowiecza*, XV, Malbork 2009, pp. 116-117.

<sup>119</sup> H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts...*, no. 77, p. 261; *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 4 (no. 15), 279 (no. 42).

<sup>120</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 265 (no. 25): "Item plebani [...] habeant sua sigilla [...] propter mandatorum nostrorum ac officialis nostri executionem".

## MODEL OF A GOOD PASTOR

“tam doctrina, quam vita exemplari”<sup>121</sup>

The cultural model of the priest – especially the parish priest – also included a set of character traits and the propagated moral attitudes<sup>122</sup>. Righteousness (*idoneitas*), knowledge (*scientia*), fairness in life and customs (*vite ac morum honestas*) were synonymous with being ordained a priest and fit for holding a prebend *cum cura*.<sup>123</sup> The priest should also be free of irregularities (*irregularitas*) resulting from illegitimate birth, physical defects or lack of Christian meekness.<sup>124</sup> This model was expressed both by the cited visitation questions and the synod statutes. In these legal norms, much stress was placed on the “life and fairness of priests” (*vita et honestate clericorum*). Priests were thus expected to dress in a dignified manner, refrain from frequenting taverns, carrying weapons and spilling blood, avoid immodest forms of entertainment and practice restraint during contacts with women.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>121</sup> From the “textbook” treaty for priests: Jan Merkelin, *Liber de instructione simplicium sacerdotum*, p. 201, cap. 65, v. 23-25.

<sup>122</sup> About the model of a good priest: M. Sumowski, *Wzorzec duchownego...*, pp. 197-214.

<sup>123</sup> “Formularz z Uppsali”..., no. 320, 334, 409.

<sup>124</sup> For more information on this topic, see: W. Ülhof, *Irregularität*, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, V, Freiburg 1986, col. 766-767; R. Puza, *Irregularität*, in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, V, Lf. 3, 1990, col. 663-664; A. Radziwiński, “...super irregulatione, si quam propterea incurrit”. *Dyspensy ex defectu perfectae lenitatis duchowieństwa w okresie pontyfikatu Marcina V*, in: *Venerabiles, nobiles et honesti. Studia z dziejów społeczeństwa Polski średniowiecznej. Prace ofiarowane Profesorowi Januszowi Bieniakowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin i czterdziestopięciolecie pracy naukowej*, eds. A. Radziwiński, A. Supruniuk, J. Wroniszewski, Toruń 1997, pp. 115-124; idem, *Dyspensy papieskie super defectu perfectae lenitatis. Konflikty późnośredniowiecznego kleru oraz metody ich przezwyciężania*, in: *Historia testis temporum, lux veritatis. Księga pamiątkowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Januszowi Małkowi z okazji siedemdziesiątej piątej rocznicy urodzin i pięćdziesiątej piątej rocznicy rozpoczęcia pracy naukowej*, eds. W. Polak, M. Białkowski, A. Czwołek, S. Galij-Skarbińska, J. Kufel, P. Ruchlewski, Toruń 2012, pp. 23-34; idem, *Dyspensy de diversis formis dla polskiego duchowieństwa. Z dziejów stosowania prawa kanonicznego i obyczajowości w późniejszym średniowieczu*, “Roczniki Historyczne” LXXXIII (2015), pp. 107-128; see also idem, *Życie i obyczajowość średniowiecznego duchowieństwa*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 84-85.

<sup>125</sup> See e.g. *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 32 (no. XIV), 312 (no. XI). See J. Wiśniewski, *Średniowieczne synody pomezkańskie – dekanat sztumski (1601-1821)*, Elbląg 1998, pp. 7-82. These norms belonged to the wider European model of the priest and were thus often repeated on a supraregional scale: see K. Dola, *XV-wieczne synody diecezji wrocławskiej o życiu i postudze kleru (Studia nad dziejami duchowieństwa śląskiego w XV w.)*, “Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego” IV (1974), pp. 85-106; A. Margas, *Obraz duchowieństwa śląskiego w świetle wrocławskich statutów synodalnych do początków XV w.*, “Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Historia” XXXIII (1980), pp. 161-180; J. Fijałek, *Życie i obyczaje kleru w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle ustawodawstwa synodalnego*, Kraków 1997; R. Bubczyk, *Gry w szachy i kości jako rozrywki*

The statutes also enumerated the traits that were desired in priests, often presented in contrast to their opposing traits. Bestowing sacraments in a dignified manner required chastity (*castitas*) and modesty (*modestia*).<sup>126</sup> Temperance (*continentia*) was contrasted with intemperance (*incontinentia*), diligence (*diligentia*) – with indolence (*desidia*). Diligent priests (*diligentes*) – with careless priests (*negligentes*), ardent (*attenti*) – with negligent (*incurii*).<sup>127</sup> Traits condemned in priests included avarice (*avaricia*), malice (*malitia*) and indiscretion (*indiscretio*).<sup>128</sup> The negative traits characterized unworthy priests (*indigni*), who were described in metropolitan statutes.<sup>129</sup>

According to this set of laws, priests should live pure and exemplary lives (*caste et exemplariter*).<sup>130</sup> The second element of the model of a priest is particularly significant in the discussed context. The analysed model of the priest was to a large extent based on the pastoral aspects of his life. This way of life in and of itself was supposed constitute the *exemplum* – example for the lay people. Due to their function, parish priests and priests of higher ordinations were especially prone to the judgement by the lay people.<sup>131</sup> The bishop of Ermland reminded the clergy of this fact before the synod of 1497. The ordinary stated that lay people are not only led towards good by good example, but also priests' malice disposes them towards evil.<sup>132</sup> A similar narrative was espoused a century earlier by Johann Merkelin. He claimed that teaching and providing example were two equal faculties of good clergy. Parish priests who neglected one's own and their parishioners' behaviour, spoiled them – both through word and through example (*subditos inficiunt et necant verbo et exemplo*).<sup>133</sup> Their opposite were clergymen concerned with more than their own clean conscience. Such priests were required to prevent

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*duchowieństwa w średniowiecznej Polsce*, "Annales Univeristatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio F: Historia" LVIII (2003), pp. 25-33; S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Udział duchowieństwa w tańcach w świetle średniowiecznego ustawodawstwa synodalnego*, "Liturgia sacra. Liturgia – Musica – Ars" XVIII (2012) 1 (39), pp. 85-100; eadem, "Nie szata zdobi człowieka". *Polskie statuty synodalne w walce o skromność ubioru duchownych*, in: *Ecclesia semper reformanda. Kryzysy i reformy średniowiecznego Kościoła*, eds. T. Gałuszka, T. Graff, G. Ryś, Kraków 2013, pp. 443-464.

<sup>126</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 261-262 (no. 1), 273-274 (no. 1).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 3 (no. 11), 17 (no. 22), 19 (no. 30), 273-274 (no. 1).

<sup>128</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 303 (no. 10).

<sup>129</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 309 (no. III).

<sup>130</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 314 (no. XIV).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibidem*, col. 273: "parochialium ecclesiarum rectores et alios in sacris ordinibus constitutos, qui per altitudinem regiminis et officii in specula constituti quasi signum positi sunt ad sagittam".

<sup>132</sup> *Memoriale domini Lucae, episcopi Warmiensis*, in: *Scriptores Rerum Warmiensium*, II, ed. C.P. Woelky, Braunsberg 1889, p. 106: "bono ad bona, malo autem ad mala layci facile ducuntur".

<sup>133</sup> Jan Merkelin, *Liber de instructione simplicium sacerdotum*, p. 207, cap. 66, v. 118-119.

devotees from committing sinful errors, both by teaching and by giving example.<sup>134</sup>

### III

#### PARISH PRIEST'S INFLUENCE ON THE CHURCH AND CLERGY

“permittant plebani regere ecclesiam suam”<sup>135</sup>

The pastoral and administrative functions of the parish priest, as well as the accompanying prestige, elevated the priest to a special position within the community. This position was chiefly associated with guiding religious cult, and was thus correlated with the amount of power that the parish priest had over the local parish church and its clergy.

The authors of the provincial statutes of Riga of 1428 expressed their concern for the parish church, whose poor condition supposedly led to a decrease in the devotees' piety. However, they did not charge the priest, but rather the administrators (*provisores*), with making the required repairs. They saw the role of the parish priest in inspiring the lay people to make charitable donations, in part by his financial support for church assets.<sup>136</sup> This fund, referred to as *fabrica ecclesiae*, was administered by lay officials known as vestrymen (*vitrici, kirchenfetere*). In addition to being responsible for the construction works carried out in the church, their duties included supplying sacramental bread flour, wine and liturgical vessels, and employing church attendants.<sup>137</sup> When in 1361, the bishop of Kulm discussed funds for the

<sup>134</sup> Ibidem, p. 201, cap. 65, v. 23-25: “Et non solum sufficit sacerdotibus pura conscientia, sed debent etiam alios ab errore malitiae cum omni diligentia revocare, tam doctrina, quam vita exemplari”.

<sup>135</sup> From a resolution of conflict between the town council of Elbing and the parish priest, 1364. *Codex Diplomaticus Warmienses*, II: 1341-1375 (*Nachträgen von 1240-1340*), eds. C.P. Woelky, J.M. Saage, Mainz 1864, no. 363, p. 375.

<sup>136</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 324-325 (no. XXXII).

<sup>137</sup> For more information on this topic within Prussia, see Ch. Herrmann, *Die Kirchenväter der Danziger Marienkirche. Stellung, Aufgaben und Wirken vom 14. bis zum Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Chronik der Marienkirche in Danzig. Das “Historische Kirchen Register” von Eberhard Bötticher (1616). Transkription und Auswertung*, eds. Ch. Herrmann, E. Kizik, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2013, pp. 115-149; idem, “Zur Zier geputzett und rein gemacht”. *Das Verhältnis der Kirchenväter zu den Kunstwerken der Marienkirche*, in: *Chronik der Marienkirche in Danzig...*, pp. 205-214; M. Sumowski, *Rachunki wityryka kościoła św. Jakuba w Toruniu z 1468 roku*, in: *Parafia w średniowiecznych Prusach*, pp. 237-271 [it includes older literature]. The topic of how *fabricae ecclesiae* functioned in towns is currently the subject of my own research, carried out as part of the project of the National Science Centre, entitled “Średniowieczne rachunki kościołów toruńskich – opracowanie edycja, digitalizacja” (Medieval Accounts of Churches in Toruń – Compilation, Editing, Digitization), under the supervision of Professor Piotr Oliński. These matters, within the scope of German



reconstruction of the tower of the St. John's church in Thorn, which had been destroyed in a fire, he named the vestrymen as the administrators of those funds. He remarked, however, that they should act with the knowledge (*cum certa sciencia*) and under the guidance (*cum consilio*) of the parish priest.<sup>138</sup> With regard to the church building, the priest – acting as the administrator of the parish – rather exercised supervisory and advisory functions.

The position of the parish priest in this regard is well-illustrated by the method of organization of the parish treasury. Pursuant to the settlement between the council of Elbing and the parish priest of 1364, the priest was allowed to place offertory collection boxes in front of the church, and the income was distributed between him and the church fund. The existence of this division is supported by the fact that the second key to every collection box was in the possession of the *fabricae*.<sup>139</sup> Similar solutions were proposed within synod statutes. The church assets were to be held in a small treasury with three keys. Two of those were held by the vestrymen, while the third belonged to the parish priest.<sup>140</sup> In the Ermland region, visitors were instructed to verify whether the priest actually possessed such a key.<sup>141</sup> Diocese authorities also intervened when this custom was not followed by lay church administrators.<sup>142</sup> In addition, the cited statutes stipulated that the parish priest should be present during settlements of church finances. In fact, some accounting materials include mentions of the priest's presence during the procedures of preparing the balance sheet.<sup>143</sup> In Röbel, since 1484, vestrymen were obliged to report expenses to the parish priest, in the presence of the town councilmen. In accordance with statutory norms, the matter of three keys to the treasury was regulated.<sup>144</sup>

The supervision of the church building and its assets was thus divided between the parish priest and town authorities, represented by vestrymen.

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towns, have been discussed exhaustively by A. Reitemeier, *Pfarrkirchen in der Stadt des späten Mittelalters: Politik, Wirtschaft und Verwaltung*, Stuttgart 2005 ("Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte", Beiheft CLXXVII). See also E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce...*, pp. 175-187; I. Skierska, *Zarząd finansami parafii w późnośredniowiecznej Polsce*, "Ecclesia. Studia z Dziejów Wielkopolski" VIII (2013), pp. 7-26.

<sup>138</sup> *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 308.

<sup>139</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, II, no. 363, p. 372; *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, VI/1, ed. K. Conrad, Marburg 1986, no. 280, p. 157; M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga*, p. 107; E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce...*, p. 182.

<sup>140</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 286 (no. 6), 304 (no. XI). See E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce...*, p. 178.

<sup>141</sup> *Ordinancia castri Heylsbergk*, p. 339.

<sup>142</sup> See "Formularz z Uppsali"..., no. 430.

<sup>143</sup> *Das Röbeler Pfarrbuch...*, pp. 9, 37, 95, 97.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 92-93; G. Matern, *Geschichte der Pfarrgemeinde SS. Petri und Pauli in Röbel*, Königsberg 1935, p. 108.



However, it is difficult to define the exact distribution of competences. This led to disputes – which were mentioned by the authors of synod statutes – and to accusations levelled against lay administrators who had reportedly appropriated church funds.<sup>145</sup> It seems, however, as illustrated for instance by the distribution of the keys – of which two were held by lay people – that they were the ones who had the deciding voice with regard to church finances and organization of construction works. The duties of the parish priest, as described above, involved care for the souls of the parishioners – not the church building. He was its “host”, and as such, held a degree of responsibility for it. Parish visitors were instructed to inquire whether priests misappropriated the assets of the church granted to them as prebend.<sup>146</sup> We have also observed numerous mentions of parish priests’ permissions for funding, conferrals granted to them, settlements of disputes concerning conferrals, compilation of inventories, and actions of vestrymen taken with the permission or in the presence of the parish priest.<sup>147</sup> The actual level of engagement of the parish priest in the administration of the church building was the product of both his function and prestige, but it also hinged on his personal relations with municipal authorities and the local community’s acceptance of his role. The parish priest often acted rather as a benefactor towards his own parish church. He would donate funds for construction works, assign some of his income to the church, or fund various endeavours.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> See e.g. O. Günther, *Eine Predigt vom preußischen Provinzialkonzil in Elbing 1427 und die “Ermahnung des Carthäusers”*, “Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins” LIX (1919), p. 99.

<sup>146</sup> GSStA PK, XX. HA, OF 270, fol. 130r, 225r (M. Sumowski, *Wzorzec duchownego...*, p. 210, no. 35; p. 213, no. 26); H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts...*, no. 77, p. 260. Any temporary departure of the parish priest was granted by way of a special document whose model contained a form addressing the God’s service and ministry of the substitute priest, with an instruction that the church assets should not be diminished while the substitute is serving. “Formularz z Uppsali”..., no. 201.

<sup>147</sup> See e.g. *Das Rößeler Pfarrbuch...*, pp. 13-15, 45-46, 62, 65-66, 73-74, 77, 80, 82, 96, 107, 127, 140.

<sup>148</sup> See e.g. Archiwum Państwowe w Toruniu (Toruń State Archive), Kościół św. Jana (St. John’s Church), no. 8, fol. 90v; GSStA PK, XX. HA, Perg. Urk. LIV, no. 41; A. Semrau, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Goldschmiedekunst in Thorn*, “Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn” XVI (1908) 4, p. 79; *Handfesten der Komturei Schlochau*, ed. P. Panske, Danzig 1921, no. 123; *Die Aufzeichnungen des Thorner Pfarrers...*, no. 2, pp. 228-229; *Das Rößeler Pfarrbuch...*, pp. 11, 22; *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, III/2, ed. H. Koeppen, Marburg 1958, no. 542, 619; *Księga długów miasta Torunia z okresu wojny trzynastoletniej*, eds. K. Ciesielska, I. Janosz-Biskupowa, Toruń 1964, no. 157; *Nowa księga rachunkowa Starego Miasta Elbląga*, no. 1425; P. Oliński, *Fundacje mieszczańskie w miastach pruskich w okresie średniowiecza i na progu czasów nowożytnych*, Toruń 2008 [the work also addresses priests’ foundations]; *Fundacje artystyczne na terenie państwa krzyżackiego w Prusach. Katalog wystawy w Muzeum Zamkowym w Malborku 25 czerwca - 12 września 2010 roku*, I, ed. B. Pospieszna, Malbork 2010, p. 197.

Church norms clearly described the parish priest as being in charge of the religious life in the church. Authors of Prussian synod statutes required that vicars serving in parishes be obedient to the parish priests with respect to how religious worship was organized.<sup>149</sup> This type of chain of command was sometimes mentioned in documents granting investiture.<sup>150</sup> Those remarks often stipulated that a vicar should assist the parish priest during holiday celebrations.<sup>151</sup> Priests serving in chapels outside the parish church, often in hospitals, were instructed to follow the advice of the local parish priest and, sometimes, assist him in celebrating mass.<sup>152</sup> This hierarchy is well illustrated by the example of the chaplain of St. George Hospital in Graudenz (today: Grudziądz), who was ordered to comply and abide by the parish priest in spiritual matters ("unterthenig und gehorsam syn, in allen redelichen geistlichen sachen").<sup>153</sup> However, the authority of the parish priest over vicars from municipal chapels was neither full nor obvious. When in the second half of 14<sup>th</sup> century, the parish priest from St. Mary's Church in Danzig attempted to compel priests to participate in masses that he conducted, which was met by resistance from municipal authorities.<sup>154</sup>

Of course, the situation differed for parish vicars, who were employed by the parish priest directly and acted as his personal chaplains, aiding or substituting him during service.<sup>155</sup> It could be that they were the ones referred to in the visitation question which addressed parish priests who accepted

<sup>149</sup> *Constitutiones synodales*, col. 271 (no. 2), 277-278 (no. 36), 312-313 (no. XII).

<sup>150</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensesis*, III: 1376-1424, ed. C.P. Woelky, Braunsberg-Leipzig 1874, no. 585. See also *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 215.

<sup>151</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensesis*, IV, no. 40.

<sup>152</sup> Archiwum Diecezjalne w Pelplinie (Pelplin Diocese Archive), *Diplomata et epistolae*, Różne, no. 17; J. Voigt, *Geschichte Marienburgs, der Stadt und des Haupthauses des deutschen Ritter-Ordens in Preußen*, Königsberg 1824, no. 27, p. 571; *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensesis*, II, no. 286; IV, no. 142; *Handfesten der Komturei Schlochau*, no. 143. See also *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 303.

<sup>153</sup> X. Froelich, *Geschichte des Graudenzers Kreises*, I, Graudenz 1868, pp. 109-110. Cf. *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 450.

<sup>154</sup> P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 90; Cf. P. Oliński, *Fundacje mieszczańskie w miastach pruskich...*, p. 247. Cf. AP Gdańsk, 508D/329, no. 2505; W. Długokęcki, *Elita władzy miasta Malborka...*, p. 89.

<sup>155</sup> See e.g. AP Gdańsk, 300, 32/79, p. 64; AP Gdańsk, 508D/329, no. 2505; J. Voigt, *Geschichte Marienburgs...*, no. 3, p. 520; *Quellen-Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg im Mittelalter*, ed. M. Perlbach, Göttingen 1878, p. 140; *Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch...*, p. 275; P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 110; W. Długokęcki, *Elita władzy miasta Malborka...*, pp. 84, 89. The division of the parish clergy into parish priest's chaplains and vicars serving at the altar does not, however, seem strict. Descriptions referring to priests as "parish priest's chaplains" may have sometimes referred to the entire clergy who served in the parish and were headed by the parish priest, who could in turn request their periodic assistance. Cf. G. Matern, *Geschichte der Pfarrgemeinde...*, p. 71.

unknown vicars, whose customs and ordination were questionable.<sup>156</sup> However, examined more broadly, this remark portrays the parish priest as someone who controls the life and customs of the clergymen serving in the parish.

In the case of hospital clergy, their relationship with the parish priest had a pastoral significance. Due to the specific nature of hospitals, the clergy serving at such establishments would often perform duties inherent to the parish priest, such as administering sacraments to the sick. In the Hospital of the Holy Spirit in Marienburg (today: Malbork), the chaplain was allowed to administer *curam animarum* only when the parish priest and his chaplains were unable to do so, especially at night.<sup>157</sup> In turn, the chaplain of St. Jacob's Hospital in Danzig obtained pastoral permissions, but limited only to the residents of the hospital.<sup>158</sup> Persons staying at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in the same town were also discharged of the pastoral authority of the parish priest.<sup>159</sup> It seems that the rank of provost, which was held by some priests serving at hospitals, made them partially independent from the local parish priests.<sup>160</sup>

In addition to the liturgical and pastoral dimensions, the parish priest's authority over the town clergy had a financial aspect. It was not without reason that documents granting prebends included a condition that such prebends should not cause injury to the parish priest, likely understood in the context of worship service and the related offerings.<sup>161</sup> Some such documents went as far as to include a clause stipulating that the parish priest would receive a subset of offerings or additional income as compensation for the operation of vicarages.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>156</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, OF 270, fol. 130r, 225r (M. Sumowski, *Wzorzec duchownego...*, p. 210, no. 34; p. 213, no. 24); H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts...*, no. 77, pp. 260-261.

<sup>157</sup> J. Voigt, *Geschichte Marienburgs...*, no. 3, pp. 520-521; W. Długokęcki, *Elita władzy miasta Malborka...*, p. 78.

<sup>158</sup> P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 123; A. Szarszewski, *Szpital i kościół św. Jakuba w Gdańsku. Zarys historyczny*, Toruń 1999, pp. 13, 160-161.

<sup>159</sup> P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 109, 111; cf. M. Sadowski, *Powstanie i rozwój szpitala św. Elżbiety w zamierzeniach zakonu krzyżackiego na przełomie XIV i XV wieku*, "Folia Historica Cracoviensia" VI (1999), pp. 34-35, 39.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, I/2, no. 458; *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 114; cf. M. Horanin, *Ścieżka leprozoriów w państwie zakonnym w Prusach*, "Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie" (2005) 2, p. 136, fn. 17.

<sup>161</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, Perg. Urk. XXIII, no. 20a; XXIII, no. 79; *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, II, no. 286, 307; III, no. 73, 585; IV, no. 40, 142; *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 306; P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 111, 123; *Handfesten der Komturei Schlochau*, no. 112.

<sup>162</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, II, no. 286; *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte des vormaligen Bisthums Pomesanien*, ed. H. Cramer, fasc. 2, "Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für den

While the performance of rites by town vicars was theoretically supposed to be overseen solely by the parish priest, he had to share his command over church attendants with town councilmen. The administration was to be managed collectively, and the town authorities were responsible for putting forward – to the parish priest – candidates for bell-ringers.<sup>163</sup> In 1427, the Grand Master gave the town councilmen of Danzig the right to fill the positions of bell-ringer and teacher at St. Mary's Church, which required the consent of the parish priest. However, with regard to their duties, such persons answered to the parish priest ("undirtanig seyn und gehorsam").<sup>164</sup> Just like in the case of vicars, this dependence resulted from the parish priest's supervisory role with respect to the worship conducted at the parish.

The question of the level of control held by the parish priest over the parish church and clergy is a complex matter, with an additional, religious dimension. The point of view held by the Church is illustrated in an interesting fashion by a provision contained in the aforementioned document, where – in 1364 – a dispute was settled between the town council of Elbing and the parish priest.<sup>165</sup> Therein, the bishop of Ermland stated that lay people should not work on church grounds without the consent of the parish priest. They were not the persons entitled to wield effective control over the church. According to the ordinary, their work was of administrative nature, and should be founded upon care for the church, not control over it ("non auctoritatis sed dispositione providencie et sollicitudinis"). Emphasis was placed on the status of the church, understood as a place reserved for service to God, where secular gatherings should not take place. This way, the religious authority of the parish priest within the church was highlighted – as control over a holy place. The primacy in this regard was also supposed to translate into the parish priest's authority over clergy with respect to the organization of worship. Town councilmen were thus instructed to "let the parish priest lead his church". However, the actual level of control held by the parish priest, both with respect to town vicars and the church building, was in fact determined by his relationship with the lay people.

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Regierungsbezirk Marienwerder" XVI (1886), no. 124; G. Liek, *Die Stadt Löbau in Westpreussen mit Berücksichtigung des Landes Löbau*, Marienwerder 1892, pp. 596-599, no. 16; *Handfesten der Komturei Schlochau*, no. 112, 143.

<sup>163</sup> See e.g. AP Gdańsk, 508D/329, no. 2505; W. Długokęcki, *Elita władzy miasta Malborka...*, p. 89.

<sup>164</sup> P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 129. See also the somewhat more recent settlements between the council and the parish priest: GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 7262. Cf. *Das Rößeler Pfarrbuch...*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>165</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, II, no. 363; *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, VI/1, no. 280; M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga...*, pp. 107-109.

## DISPUTES BETWEEN PARISH PRIESTS AND TOWN COUNCILMEN

“controuersias [...] Jura parrochialia concernentes”<sup>166</sup>

Aspirations of control over town churches held both by parish priests and town councilmen led to disputes. It seems that in Prussian towns, we can distinguish two distinct phases of controversies of this type. We may observe that the first disputes took place in 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Among sources from that time, we have access to settlements between the parish priests and councils of Kulm (1320),<sup>167</sup> Danzig (1363),<sup>168</sup> Elbing (1364),<sup>169</sup> Königsberg (today: Kaliningrad) (1385),<sup>170</sup> Marienburg (1395)<sup>171</sup> and Braunsberg (today: Braniewo) (1402).<sup>172</sup> All of those dispute settlements relate to problems that are in fact identical, and as such, they can be analysed using a common interpretive paradigm.

In the document settling the Danzig dispute, compiled by reference to the mutual complaints between the parish priest and the town council, we will find the fundamental cause of the conflict. The parish priest directed his accusations toward the council and the vestrymen (“kegen den rat und kegen dye kirchfetere”), thereby expressly suggesting that the charges relate to problems connected with the administration of the church and its assets. In fact, it does seem like the distribution of offerings between the parish priest and the *fabricae ecclesiae* may have laid at the heart of the conflict. It led to issues connected with payments for baptisms and funerals, offerings left beneath paintings, offering collection boxes, testament donations, or the parish priest’s compensation. We can regard these items as a set of model disputes. In addition, irregularities emerged in connection with the selection of the bell-ringer, accusations of appropriation of the church area by the parish priest,

<sup>166</sup> From the resolution of a conflict between the town council of Elbing and the parish priest, 1364. *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, II, no. 363, p. 370.

<sup>167</sup> H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts...*, no. 22.

<sup>168</sup> P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 90.

<sup>169</sup> H.F. Jacobson, *Geschichte der Quellen des katholischen Kirchenrechts...*, no. 24; *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, II, no. 363; *Preussisches Urkundenbuch*, VI/1, no. 280; M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga...*, pp. 92-93, 107-109.

<sup>170</sup> *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Samland*, ed. C.P. Woelky, H. Mendthal, III, Leipzig 1905, no. 541. There had been disputes between the Samland cathedral chapter and the townsfolk of the Old Town. However, those concerned the local St. Nicholas’ Church. One should also keep in mind that the parish priest of that parish was one of canon priests. See: R. Biskup, *Das Domkapitel von Samland in Königsberg (13.-16. Jahrhundert). Bemerkungen über Einfluß einer kirchlichen Institutionen auf das Stadtleben*, in: *750 Jahre Königsberg. Beiträge zur Geschichte einer Residenzstadt auf Zeit*, ed. B. Jähnig, Marburg 2008, pp. 82-85, 88.

<sup>171</sup> AP Gdańsk, 508D/329, no. 2505; W. Długokęcki, *Elita władzy miasta Malborka...*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>172</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, III, no. 384.



as well as claims that the council was meddling in spiritual matters. Within this context, controversies concerning ministry also appeared. For example, the Danzig parish priest complained that not all parishioners accepted his jurisdiction. The matter of devotees' fulfilment of their duties was also among problems mentioned in the Elbing and Braunsberg settlements.

A characteristic feature of the aforementioned settlements from the 14<sup>th</sup> century was their broad scope. Such documents generally concerned several controversial issues and introduced comprehensive principles for how the parish priest should conduct himself in relations with the town council. As such, they can be treated not as mere records of disputes, but also normative sources. We should keep in mind that in the discussed century, the institutional bodies of the Church within Prussia were still very young. This means that the presented settlements should not be perceived exclusively in the context of the conflicts resolved therein, but also as a response to the need of regulating religious life in developing towns.

Disputes reported from the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century more often took the shape of negotiations on individual cases. They emerged both in small and large towns, with varying frequency.<sup>173</sup> However, although these generally did not concern a wide spectrum of disagreements – as opposed to the settlements from the preceding century – both tended to share a common source of contention. Similar problems would re-emerge, such as the issue of collecting and distributing offerings – this time left beneath a specific painting, altar or chapel. In Löbenicht, in 1406, a dispute emerged with respect to the painting of Saint Barbara, which the parish priest wanted to place on the main altar.<sup>174</sup> Town councilmen were concerned that this would lead to a decrease in offerings donated at the chapel of the same saint. Thus, the conflict revolved around financial matters, but it nonetheless touched upon the problem of shaping the religious space of the church. In Danzig, in 1443, a general issue returned, relating to the administration of the assets

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<sup>173</sup> See *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, III, no. 423 (Wormditt, today: Orneta 1406); H. Lenz, *Geschichte der Stadt Zinten*, Königsberg 1913, *Urkundenband*, no. 4, pp. 256-258 (Zinten, today: Korniewo 1420); GStA PK, XX. HA, OBA, no. 10438, 10674, 10908; *Urkundenbuch des Bisthums Culm*, no. 588, 589; R. Czaja, *Dzieje miasta w średniowieczu (XIII wiek - 1466 rok)*, in: *Brodnica*, pp. 94-95; R. Biskup, *Magister Andrzej Sandberg z Czarnego (Chojnic) – przykład kariery duchownego krzyżackiego w XV w.*, in: *Ziemia chojnicka w okresie zmagani Polski z zakonem krzyżackim*, ed. J. Knopka, Chojnice 2010, pp. 27-28 (Strasburg, 40s and 50s of the 15<sup>th</sup> century); *Die Chronik des Johannes Freiberg*, ed. F.A. Meckelburg, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, VI, eds. W. Hubatsch, U. Arnold, E. Maschke, Frankfurt am Main 1968, pp. 363-364; R. Biskup, *Das Domkapitel von Samland (1285-1525)...*, p. 448 (Königsberg 1517).

<sup>174</sup> *Quellen-Beiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg*, pp. 138-139; F. Gause, *Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preußen*, I, Köln-Weimar-Wien 1996, p. 65; M. Jakubek-Rackowska, "Tu ergo flecte genua tua"..., p. 226, fn. 87.



of St. Mary's Church.<sup>175</sup> At that time, there also appeared religious disputes, related to the Hussite issue.<sup>176</sup> However, finances and church administration remained the chief points of dispute.

As indicated by the bishop of Ermland, who settled disputes between Elbing's parish priest and town council, controversies around "parish rights" (*Jura parrochialia*) were the cause of conflicts.<sup>177</sup> These issues, dealing with control over the church and manifesting in the offerings left by devotees, lied at the centre of conflicts both in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. Disagreements did not stem from parish priests' affiliation with the Teutonic Order, matters of patronage, or politics.<sup>178</sup> Of course, in individual cities, every dispute undoubtedly had an individual character, also with respect to loyalty toward the patron. However, the conflicts shared a common cultural and social theme, manifested by the parallel struggles for power: of the parish priest – portrayed within the Church narrative as a shepherd possessing "power over souls"; and of the council – increasingly interested in prerogatives with respect to the town's religious life.<sup>179</sup>

#### AFFILIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND LAY PEOPLE

"so ech syn gode Frindt sy gewest und noch sy"<sup>180</sup>

Both as part of his pastoral function and through relationships with family and friends, the town's parish priest operated within various social circles. Those connections may have determined his position within the town's community to an equal degree as his role as priest. Such affiliations influenced his career,

<sup>175</sup> GStA PK, XX. HA, Perg. Urk. L, no. 37; T. Hirsch, *Die Ober-Pfarrkirche von St. Marien...*, pp. 47-48; M. Biskup, *Pod panowaniem krzyżackim (od 1308 r. do 1454 r.)*, in: *Historia Gdańska, I: do roku 1454*, ed. E. Cieślak, Gdańsk 1978, p. 616; R. Krajniak, *Duchowieństwo kapituły katedralnej w Chełmży...*, p. 111.

<sup>176</sup> See S. Kwiatkowski, *Klimat religijny w diecezji pomezańskiej...*, p. 126.

<sup>177</sup> *Codex Diplomaticus Warmienses*, II, no. 363, p. 370.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. R. Czaja, *Deutscher Orden und Stadtklerus...*, pp. 87-88; idem, *Die städtische Geistlichkeit in den Auseinandersetzungen der preußischen Städte mit dem Deutschen Orden im 15. Jahrhundert*, in: *Emotion, Gewalt und Widerstand. Spannungsfelder zwischen geistlichem und weltlichem Leben im Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. A. Köb, P. Riedel, München 2007, pp. 130-133.

<sup>179</sup> For more information on late-Medieval impact of religion on the life in towns, see e.g.: H. Manikowska, *Religijność miejska*, in: *Ecclesia et civitas...*, pp. 11-34; M. Słoń, *Religijność komunalna w Europie środkowej późnego średniowiecza*, in: *Zbożnost středověku*, eds. M. Nodl, K. Bracha, J. Hrdina, P. Kras, *Colloquia mediaevalia Pragensia*, VI, Praha 2007, pp. 9-21.

<sup>180</sup> From the testament of Philip Bischof, mayor of Danzig, 1483: G. Löschin, *Beiträge zur Geschichte Danzigs und seiner Umgebungen. Meistens aus alten Manuscripten und selten gewordenen Druckschriften*, I, Danzig 1837, p. 18; T. Hirsch, *Die Ober-Pfarrkirche von St. Marien...*, pp. 130-131.

resonated with the prestige and social acceptance of his position, and were surely of help when seeking rapport with the town council.

Priests often featured as members of brotherhoods organized by lay people. For example, the parish priest of Löbenicht was member of the brotherhood of the poor in his town. At the same time, however, he was exempted from membership fees, which seems to emphasise his status.<sup>181</sup> The register of Elbing's porters' brotherhood included the name of the local parish priest. The book also featured the name of the former parish priest, which may suggest a continuity of membership.<sup>182</sup> The relations with the brotherhood may have been important, although it is possible that the parish priest's membership was of honorary nature.

The place of the parish priest within the web of affiliations is best exemplified by the accounts of the parish priest of Thorn, Johann van Ast.<sup>183</sup> dating from 1445-1446.<sup>184</sup> An interesting category of his expenses were amounts spent on feasts that were organized at regular intervals. And because the priest would mention the names of their participants, we possess an exceptional source material on his network of affiliations. According to the analysis of the source conducted by its publisher, Andrzej Radzimiński, the guests of the pastor included, in particular, members of the town's ruling groups.<sup>185</sup> For example, he would often host personalities such as Peter Pape and Conrad Knouff – former members of town authorities.<sup>186</sup> Importantly, they both lived on the same street as the parish priest, who was in fact a neighbour of the second of these personalities.<sup>187</sup> On the street in question, situated behind the parish church, lived wealthy merchants and members of town authorities.<sup>188</sup>

<sup>181</sup> *Das Kontenführungsbuch der Elenden Bruderschaften von Königsberg-Löbenicht (1477-1523)*, ed. D. Heckmann, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2000, p. 56.

<sup>182</sup> AP Gdańsk, 426, 1 [pages not numbered]. On the topic of such parish priests, see also M. Józefczyk, *Średniowiecze Elbląga...*, pp. 190-193.

<sup>183</sup> See biography: W. Rozynekowski, *Ast Jan*, in: *Toruński Słownik Biograficzny*, ed. K. Mikulski, III, Toruń 2002, pp. 18-19.

<sup>184</sup> A. Radzimiński, *Rachunki plebana kościoła parafialnego Świętych Janów w Starym Mieście Toruniu z lat 1445-1446*, "Roczniki Historyczne" LXIX (2003), pp. 172-187. See also idem, *Przy stole Jana van Ast – plebana św. Janów w Starym Mieście Toruniu*, in: *Materiały z VII Sesji Naukowej Uniwersyteckiego Centrum Archeologii Średniowiecza i Nowożytności „Wypożyczenie wnętrza w średniowieczu” Toruń, 21-22 listopada 2002 r.*, Toruń 2004, pp. 157-171.

<sup>185</sup> A. Radzimiński, *Rachunki plebana...*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>186</sup> Ibidem, pp. 177-178, 181-184; R. Czaja, *Urzędnicy miejscy Torunia do roku 1454*, Toruń 1999, pp. 119, 214.

<sup>187</sup> See *Księga ławnicza Starego Miasta Torunia (1428-1456)*, eds. K. Ciesielska, J. Tandecki, Toruń 1992-1993, no. 757, 1687; *Księgi szosu i wykazy obciążeń mieszkańców Starego Miasta Torunia z lat 1394-1435*, eds. K. Mikulski, J. Tandecki, A. Czacharowski, Toruń 2002, pp. 181, 209-210; K. Mikulski, K. Kopyński, *Herbarz patrycjatu toruńskiego*, I, Toruń 2008, pp. 115-116.

<sup>188</sup> T. Jasiński, *Z zagadnień topografii społecznej średniowiecznego Torunia (część I – Stare Miasto)*, "Zapiski Historyczne" XLVIII (1983) 3, pp. 19-20; K. Mikulski, *Przestrzeń i społeczeństwo Torunia od końca XIV do początku XVIII wieku*, Toruń 1999, pp. 352-353.

The fact that the parish was situated in the area reflected the prestige and surely influenced the social relations of the priest.

The position of the parish priest in secular social circles was determined by his prestige, wealth, as well as his lifestyle. The example of Johann van Ast shows that the priest was closest to the richest town merchants and councilmen – people of similar wealth, conditions of daily life, and intellectual interests. He was close to the same people against whom he had once struggled for control of the church.<sup>189</sup> Maintaining such relationships put him in the circles of power. When in 1483, the mayor of Danzig, Philipp Bischof wrote his testament, he expressed his hope that one of his sons would join the clergy. He asked the local parish priest to advise his son in that regard. His relationship with the priest must have been very good, since he referred to him as a “good friend”.<sup>190</sup>

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In an accusation made by the townsfolk of Danzig in 1363 against their parish priest, he was charged with failing to meet his obligation to reside in the city. Allegedly, the priest would leave the town without their knowledge.<sup>191</sup> The Teutonic commander who settled the dispute noted that a priest was allowed to leave the city for important assignments. However, he was supposed to inform the council of such leave and ensure proper substitution. The substitute priest was expected to carry out all tasks of the parish priest (“der vol brenghen muge, daz eyne pherrer gebort czu tuned”). Thus, the complaint made by the people of Danzig stemmed from their need for the continuous presence of the parish priest in the city. They expressed, in fact, the same pastoral needs almost a century later, requesting more municipal parishes.

The functioning of the parish priest in late-Medieval towns is a complex issue, encompassing the topics of power, social roles, religious culture, organization of space for its expression, as well as social relations in general.

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<sup>189</sup> But this covers only the parish priest’s relationship with lay people. As a priest, he would often enter into relations with other clergymen: as part of brotherhoods of priests, within the local parish community, or through his membership in priesthood. A good example is the parish priest of Thorn, Hieronimus Waldau, whose private notes indicate, through his self-identification, that he maintained such relationships: see M. Sumowski, “*Ego Jeronimus Waldau...*”, pp. 71-74. The priest, however, also identified with the town and the country of Prussia, which he accentuated explicitly.

<sup>190</sup> G. Löschin, *Beiträge zur Geschichte Danzigs...*, p. 18; T. Hirsch, *Die Ober-Pfarrkirche von St. Marien...*, pp. 130-131; B. Możejko, *Rozrachunek z życiem doczesnym. Gdańskie testamenty mieszczańskie w XV i początku XVI wieku*, Gdańsk 2010, pp. 68-70. See W. Długokęcki, *W sprawie późnośredniowiecznych testamentów gdańskich*, “Zapiski Historyczne” LXXVI (2011) 3, pp. 130-131.

<sup>191</sup> P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig...*, IV, no. 90: “her buzen landes vert, wen is yn gelustet, ane yre wissen, zo wissen sy nicht, wen sy vor eyne pherrer haben sullen”.

In this article, I have attempted to present a fragment of this broad topic, portraying the figure of the parish priest in a social and cultural context. These deliberations are based on my doctoral dissertation on lower clergy in late-Medieval towns. The extensive amount of materials imposed the need for simplifications and limitations in citing both the source materials and literature. I hope that further detailed studies will allow to provide deeper insight into the respective areas. The social significance of the figure of parish priest is the key to understanding how Medieval parishes operated.

In the narrative of the Church, the sheer existence and functioning of the parish community required an appropriate pastor. It was the parish priest who was supposed to provide the focal point for the religious life of the town, which was in fact one and the same with its social life. One could go as far as to claim that without the parish priest, the town could not exist as a community, whose nature – after all – was also religious. Despite occasional disputes, even townspeople understood the key role played by the presence of this figure. Of course, they had expectations toward the parish priest and were vocal about them. Members of the lay community also strove to actively co-create the religious life of the town, either expecting cooperation from the clergyman or taking initiatives by themselves. The townspeople did, nonetheless, fit the Church metaphor of the “shepherd and the sheep”. If that is the case, then perhaps they did agree with the maxim expressed in the register of Prussian bishoprics, stating: “oves sine pastore deviant vagabundi”.<sup>192</sup>

translated by Piotr Gumola

#### ABSTRACT

The article explores the role played by the figure of parish priest in the urban society of late-Medieval Prussia. The discussed problem has been presented from three angles: I. prosopography of the town parish priest, understood as the social expectations regarding his origin, education, and career; II. cultural model of the parish priest and his social roles; III. interactions between the parish priest and the townspeople. Matters discussed in detail include, among others, patronage over town parishes, scope of ministry-related and administrative duties of the parish priest, moral and personality traits making up the model of the good priest, authority of the parish priest over the town church and its clergy, disputes with the town council, as well as the relationship between the parish priest and the townspeople. In the course of analysing these problems, the figure of the town parish priest has been portrayed within various social and cultural contexts. The analysis has demonstrated the complexity and breadth of this function and allowed to address the key role played by the parish priest in the functioning of the parish.

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192 “Formularz z Uppsali”..., no. 205.



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STOCKHOLM

## ETERNAL BONDS OF LOVE OR FOREIGN OPPRESSION? ENTANGLED IDENTITIES IN LATE-MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIA



In 1397, a union monarchy between the three Scandinavian kingdoms was established in Kalmar. It became a key framework for the political development within and between Denmark, Norway and Sweden in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in spite of the fact that it was only periodically fully realized.<sup>1</sup> An initial period of strong union monarchy was interrupted by political turbulence in the 1430s that led to the dethronement of the union king, Erik. From the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century until its dissolution in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Kalmar Union was only implemented during shorter periods of time in all three realms. Sweden had its own king or regent (*riksföreståndare*) for much of the time. Throughout the later Middle Ages, the political development in Scandinavia involved attempts to maintain union government, to negotiate the conditions for a continued union between the realms, or warfare to achieve or withstand such a goal. The idea of a union between the Scandinavian kingdoms was remarkably resilient; it could serve as a flexible political tool for the power ambitions of kings and elites, as well as for the mobilization of broader social strata.

In the political sources from the period, there are many more or less formulaic statements of the particular bonds of affinity and solidarity that were presumed to exist between the three realms. In numerous treaties resulting from negotiations between leading men from the Scandinavian kingdoms in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the essential unity of the realms is solemnly

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<sup>1</sup> H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater: statsbildning, politisk kultur och identiteter under Kalmarunionens upplösningsskede 1512-1541*, Stockholm 2000, pp. 52-62; C. Rock, *Herrscherwechsel im spätmittelalterlichen Skandinavien: Handlungsmuster und Legitimationsstrategien*, Ostfildern 2016, p. 422.



stated. Ideally, the relationship entailed mutual trust, solidarity and love for the benefit and continued existence of the three realms. "The three realms" or only "the realms" was an established concept in late-medieval Scandinavia; it was the common way of referring to Denmark, Norway and Sweden.<sup>2</sup> The unity and affinity between the Scandinavian realms constituted one theme in the political imagination of the period. It coexisted with another theme of alterity and antagonism that could be applied to wrongful and unjust, or "foreign" rule. In Sweden, the latter theme in particular was translated into chronicles, songs and other forms of narratives about the past, while official treaties as the results of negotiations, could reflect both themes.

The aim of this article is to highlight the interplay between the conceptions of unity and alterity that marked union politics and conflicts in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, as documented in contemporary narrative sources and treaties.<sup>3</sup> As will be elaborated below, the forms and norms of the political imagination, such as collective identities, ideals, and references to the past, are elements that influence the exercise and consolidation of power. What kind of identities and relationships of unity or alterity did the political interaction on the union level generate or provoke, as indicated by treaties and narrative sources?

The two themes mentioned above will serve as a framework for analysis: on the one hand proclamations of affinity and unity between Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and on the other hand expressions of alterity and hostility against what was seen as threatening, unjust or foreign elements in the political life. It is important not to see these two themes as opposites, nor as equal to a preference for union government or national government. What may at first appear as contradictory themes, can instead be seen as a mutually reinforcing or interdependent notions.

In the contemporary political discourse, the realm was conceived as a legal community and a safeguard of rights and privileges of particular groups as well as the inhabitants of the realm. National, or regnal identities were important, if not fundamental parts of the interplay between unity and difference, but, as I will argue, the pragmatics of other kinds of loyalties and bonds as well contributed to the formation and expression of complex notions of identities, or entanglement, in the sources. The notions of entanglement, cultural memory and identity will be used as analytical tools to show the complexity of identity formation.

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2 H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater...*, pp. 52-53.

3 The article is part of an ongoing research project on memory, conceptions of the past and identity formation in late-medieval Scandinavia, financed by Anna Ahlström and Ellen Terserus Foundation. The article format does not allow for a more comprehensive review of the source material, which includes mainly historiographical texts.

## CULTURAL CONCEPTIONS OF PAST AND PRESENT AS MEANS TO POWER

The study of identity formation and the interplay of unity and difference within the union of Sweden, Norway and Denmark in the Middle Ages is also a study of cultural memory. The extant sources include narratives of political events, letters or treaties documenting the formal recognition of the outcome of negotiations and meetings or references to traditions and commonly acknowledged ideals that have or have not been violated in the past. This article is not primarily about memory processes as such, but departs from the notion of memory, and more specifically collective memory, as a crucial part of what connects and keeps people together as communities, by means of linking past and present and future.<sup>4</sup> As an analytical approach, this temporal dimension is one aspect that distinguishes memory from other concepts used to study cultural phenomena.<sup>5</sup> As will be evident from the analysis, both unity and alterity are based on references to the past; to a continuous historical community, to time-honoured laws and traditions, and to agreements made by forefathers. According to Astrid Erll, the carriers of collective memory are "groups which are restricted both chronologically and spatially[...]. A central function of remembering the past within the framework of collective memory is identity formation. Things are remembered which correspond to the self-image and the interests of the group."<sup>6</sup> It is primarily this link to collective identities that is examined here.

Memory studies have been an expansive field of research in the last decades.<sup>7</sup> An important and well-known approach to memory has been the theoretical work developed by Aleida and Jan Assmann on cultural memory. In his book on cultural memory (*kulturelles Gedächtnis*), Jan Assmann explores the link between memory, identity and cultural continuity that he considers crucial for the formulation of connective structures that bind people together on a social and temporal level. Justice systems have a binding effect on the social level, while history and myths create cohesion through time.<sup>8</sup>

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4 J.V. Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering*, Cambridge 2002, p. 31; A. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Houndmills-Basingstoke-Hampshire 2011, pp. 109-11; J. Assmann, *Communicative and Cultural Memory*, in: *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. A. Erll, A. Nünning, Berlin 2008, pp. 109, 113-14.

5 See for example the definitions by Astrid Erll in A. Erll, *Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction*, in: *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, p. 2; A. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p. 7.

6 A. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p. 17.

7 L. Bond, S. Craps, P. Vermeulen, *Introduction*, in: *Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies*, eds. L. Bond, S. Craps, P. Vermeulen, New York 2017, pp. 1-2.

8 J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 2-3.

The concretion of identity is one of the foremost characteristics of cultural memory, although this is not a singular, homogenous process.<sup>9</sup> Identity must be seen as a *plurale tantum*; a dynamical process that also demands concepts of alterity and multitude, as a precondition for unity.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, solidarity and antagonism are significant elements in the formation and reinforcement of collective identities.<sup>11</sup> Norman F. Cantor also stresses the interrelatedness of unity and identity. Unity presupposes identity, which is "a consciousness of cohesion, of corporate belonging together, and cultural homogeneity". Unity depends on identity but is also a broader concept "the applied form of identity through institutions, programs, and leadership practices".<sup>12</sup>

Jan Assmann describes collective identity as belonging to the "category known as the social and political *imaginaire*".<sup>13</sup> Both memory and collective identity is part of the political imagination, and thus connected to power. Power needs to be explained and linked to a meaningful origin in the past, but also to a future of remembrance and justification. The temporal dimension of power is thus manifested in memory, but also in forgetting; power holders are served by a selective celebration of past occurrences, and selection also involves forgetting.<sup>14</sup> Assmann also sees memory, cultural identity and political imagination as elements of ethnogenesis. When cultures and societies grow and expand, the original congruence (in face-to-face societies) between social (ethnic), political and cultural formations cease to exist, which creates a need for a renewed cultural connective structure that can bind people together. According to Assmann, this leads to a search for means of both integration and distinction. When communities expand through conquests, migration or alliances, this changes the ways in which symbolic meanings are created and sustained. It can also change the ways in which histories, myths and other forms of symbolic meaning are communicated. Instead of the close and direct circulation of meaning through generations and kin that Assmann labels communicative memory, institutions and ceremonies for the preservation and maintenance of cultural memory developed. The expansion of societies, territorial or demographical, requires means of stabilization (of people, institutions and political organization) that promotes a sense of community. Such expansionist changes produce cultural reflectiveness,

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9 J. Assmann, *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*, "New German Critique" (1995), pp. 129-130.

10 A. Erll, *Memory in Culture*, p. 109.

11 J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization...*, pp. 115-16.

12 N.F. Cantor, *Ideological and Cultural Foundations of European Identity in the Middle Ages*, in: *The Birth of Identities: Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. McGuire, Copenhagen 1996, p. 11.

13 J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization...*, p. 115.

14 *Ibidem*, p. 54.

consciousness and codification of norms, precepts and values. It can also result in cultural stratification and distinction.<sup>15</sup> It thus seems as if Jan Assmann sees development of power and politics as highly conducive to processes of cultural formation.

For Assmann, cultural processes work at two levels: on one level, they seek to promote integration, and thus a stronger internal identity and sense of community. But, as mentioned above, on another level, there are concurrent processes of alienation externally. Culture has a limitic dimension – it distinguishes itself from other cultures.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, the processes of integration and distinction are multidimensional and may result in different kinds of shared cultural identities, that not necessarily encompass everyone within a society. Social stratification and cultural complexity can result in the creation of self-images that only apply to a small group – the elite, that considers itself the representative of the whole population – or – as the exclusive carrier of cultural identity.

The question of identity and political imagination in terms of a particular social elite as the primary exponent of such notions is relevant in a discussion of the medieval context, where the extant source material represents the cultural and political activities of the elite. It is particularly relevant in a discussion of identity formation that is claimed to encompass broader social strata, and not only the aristocratic elites. The analysis of identities and the interplay of difference and unity in medieval Scandinavia will show the complexity of cultural and political stratification and distinction. In my opinion, it is important not to overlook for example the potential role of the legal system for the formation of collective identities that also included common people, since it linked people together both horizontally and vertically. Mia Korpiola argues that the legal authority of the common people in medieval Sweden, referred to as the “consent of the people”, was too firmly entrenched in society to be seen as an empty formula used by the elite.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, the concept of nativism is also useful. A key element of nativism is a conscious distinction between what is perceived as indigenous and what is perceived as foreign. The distinction then becomes an important feature in defining threats to the own group, and in attempts to protect and safeguard those interests or essential elements felt to be threatened by outsiders. As a concept, nativism shares some features with nationalism, such as the emphasis on the particular status of those belonging to the community. However, nativism does not necessarily presuppose a nation or a national

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<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, pp. 124-29.

<sup>16</sup> J. Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization...*, pp. 132-134.

<sup>17</sup> M. Korpiola, “Not without the Consent and Goodwill of the Common People”: *The Community as a Legal Authority in Medieval Sweden*, “Journal of Legal History” XXXV (2014), p. 118.

community, but may just as well describe the beliefs and attitudes of smaller sociocultural communities or groups.<sup>18</sup> This flexibility makes the concept of nativism useful in studies of medieval societies, with their particular social structures.

In this article, I would also like to approach the formation of identities and interplay of unity and alterity within the Kalmar Union as entanglement, inspired by a study on Jewish culture in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. While the context of that study is different, and the interplay of hostility and cooperation very different from the one highlighted here, the authors emphasize how connections between groups and peoples are created and maintained through both hostile and friendly encounters: “[e]ntanglement implies complexity; the things being tangled (threads, vines, branches) can cross many times, becoming difficult or impossible to pull apart, but still remain distinct, as with two colors of thread or two types of plant”.<sup>19</sup> In fact, there is a very literal illustration of such entanglement in one of the fifteenth-century sources from medieval Scandinavia. In *The Danish Rhyme Chronicle* (ca. 1460-1474), Queen Margaret describes her ambition to create a strong and lasting union of Denmark, Sweden and Norway:

Then snor som leggis aff strenge tree  
 hwn brøsther fuld neppelige  
 Th<sub>3</sub> syer wijsman for wthen spee  
 om hwn leggis lemppegelæ  
 ieg lade en snor m<sub>3</sub> allæ sterck  
 tha ieg wand swerigis krwne  
 Och erffde norgæ tijl danmark  
 ath the skullæ staa i lwne  
 Inth<sub>3</sub> wold elder wærdens machth  
 kan the same rigæ beskade  
 Ee medhen the bliffue w<sub>3</sub> samme pacth  
 som ieg them sammen lade.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> I.P. Grohse, *Nation and Nativism in Medieval Scandinavia. A Workshop Introduction*, “Frühmittelalterliche Studien” LI (2017), pp. 397-405. See also the application of this concept in idem, *Nativism in Late Medieval Norway*, “Scandinavian Journal of History” XLII (2017), pp. 219-44.

<sup>19</sup> E. Baumgarten, R.M. Karras, K. Mesler, *Entangled Histories: Knowledge, Authority, and Jewish Culture in the Thirteenth Century*, Philadelphia 2016, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Den danske rimkrønike* - the bond twined with three threads will scarcely break, the preacher says without scorn, if it is done appropriately. I twined a bond with all strength, when I won Sweden's crown, and inherited Norway to Denmark, that they should remain in peace. No violence or worldly power can harm the realms, as long as they keep the pact through which I united them. See *Den danske rimkrønike. 1, Ghementrykket 1495: med variantapparat*,

The metaphor from *Ecclesiastes* 4:12 adds authority to the image of the queen's political legacy. Queen Margaret appears as the mastermind of the union, who skillfully unites the realms that have legitimately come into her possession into a durable union. It is a vision of a strong and lasting union, that will protect the realms from violence and worldly powers. But the promised benefits will only come out if the realms keep together in accordance with the queen's intention.

Below, I will first briefly introduce some of the issues raised in scholarly research on the Kalmar union, before discussing some of the sources. The analysis will mainly focus on vernacular 15<sup>th</sup>-century rhyme chronicles from Sweden and Denmark, since there are few traces of literary endeavors in Norway from this period.<sup>21</sup>

### THE KALMAR UNION

In writings about the Kalmar Union, various themes have been brought up. The union has been described as the dynastical project of an astute and skillful regent, Queen Margaret; as a result of inter-Scandinavian aristocratic aligning or collaboration to counter pressure from the Hanseatic League and German influence; as a polity characterized by monarchical ambition clashing with aristocratic interests; as precursor of the later Nordic "national" states, or in the case of Norway, as a period of national decline. As argued by Harald Gustafsson, the Union of Kalmar can also be seen as a potentially viable state alternative that ultimately "failed".<sup>22</sup>

The Kalmar Union had been preceded by other forms of unions in Scandinavia, such as the personal union between Norway and Sweden from 1319, or between Sweden and Scania in 1332. In Norwegian historiography, the beginning of the personal union under Magnus Eriksson in 1319 has

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ed. H. Toldberg, København 1961, p. 151; L.B. Mortensen, *Danske Rimkrønike*, in: *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, 2016 [electronical source, accessed 7 April 2018].

<sup>21</sup> H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater...*, p. 311; S. Bagge, K. Mykland, *Norge i dansketiden: 1380-1814*, Oslo 1987, pp. 60-61.

<sup>22</sup> L.-O. Larsson, *Kalmarunionens tid: från drottning Margareta till Kristian II*, Stockholm 2003, pp. 21-23, 454-459; E. Opsahl, *Norwegen 1319-1397: ein "willenloser Trabant" der Nachbarländer?*, in: "Huru thet war talet j kalmarn": Union und Zusammenarbeit in der nordischen Geschichte. 600 Jahre Kalmarer Union (1397-1997), eds. D. Kattinger, D. Putensen, H. Wernicke, Hamburg 1997, pp. 83-96; A. Bøgh, *On the Causes of the Kalmar Union*, in: "Huru thet war talet j kalmarn": Union und Zusammenarbeit in der nordischen Geschichte..., pp. 9-13; H. Gustafsson, *A State That Failed?*, "Scandinavian Journal of History" XXXI (2006), pp. 206-207, 216-217. For a long time, research on the Kalmar Union was influenced by nationalistic or Scandinavist attitudes, see A. Bøgh, *On the Causes...*, p. 9; T. Lindkvist, *Schweden auf dem Weg in die Kalmarer Union*, in: "Huru thet war talet j kalmarn": Union und Zusammenarbeit in der nordischen Geschichte..., p. 45.



traditionally been attributed great significance as the beginning of a long era of union government and a weakened position of the state in relation to its neighbor realms. Swedish historians instead tend to emphasize the election of Queen Margaret in 1389, or the Kalmar meeting in 1397 as the decisive moments.<sup>23</sup> As regards Denmark, the royal election in 1376 has been described as the starting point of the later Nordic union.<sup>24</sup> For Aksel E. Christensen, the recognition of a common king in two or more realms was an important (but not decisive) element in the concept of a Nordic union, in addition to an agreement of mutual support and cooperation sanctioned by representatives of each realm, and the maintenance of independence in terms of laws and institutions. Christensen argues that there were in fact few substantial obstacles for a Nordic union in regard to areas such as language, law and justice, religion or culture, where there were considerable overlaps and mutual understanding. The inter-Scandinavian dynamic was rather driven by political forces, to which Christensen counts more elusive elements such as national consciousness or sense of community, and more tangible realities such as monarchical ambition and a striving to uphold regnal integrity.<sup>25</sup>

In his study of the political development within the Kalmar union in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, which eventually led to the final dissolution of the union and the establishment of two new states, Harald Gustafsson investigates the political culture, state formation process and the various arguments used to initiate and bolster up political action in the period. He departs from the notion that much previous research has taken the outcome of the process, the creation of the states of Sweden and Denmark-Norway, for granted, as a "natural" endeavor towards national unity. Instead, he argues that the union of the Scandinavian realms remained a viable option for much longer than previously acknowledged. The conglomerate state was a common early-modern phenomenon and the medieval Scandinavian union monarchy could have evolved into an early-modern state. So why did it not?

As Gustafsson concludes, the establishment of the *new* territorial states of Sweden and Denmark-Norway in the 16<sup>th</sup> century never replaced the old, medieval realms that continued to exist as fundamental political-cultural entities.<sup>26</sup> The realms and sub-regnal levels constituted the primary levels of identification and political-cultural imagination in the medieval era.<sup>27</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup> *Norsk historie. 1: 750 - 1537*, ed. O.G. Moseng, Oslo 2007, pp. 170-71; E. Opsahl, *Norwegen 1319-1397: ein "willenloser Trabant" der Nachbarländer?*, p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> A.E. Christensen, *Kalmarunionen og nordisk politik 1319-1439*, København 1980, pp. 100-103.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 23-28. See also H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater...*, pp. 333-334.

<sup>26</sup> H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater...*, p. 335.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 331.

fundamental role of the notion of the realm and its corollary “in service of the realm”, as a forceful and rallying concept that signified the continuity of the realm as an imagined community, is also emphasized by Martin Neuding Skoog, in his recent study of the development of the military institutions and political processes in late-medieval Sweden.<sup>28</sup> Skoog argues that more groups and levels of society were included among those in service to the realm and thus supposedly aware of, or somehow motivated by the idea of the realm, than previously acknowledged.

The prominence of the regnal level in the political culture of the union period in comparison with the idea of “the three realms” is one important factor in the dynamics of the late-medieval state formation process, according to Gustafsson. He also observes the lack of a contemporary common historiography or other types of narratives on the level of the union, which indicates an absence of cultural conceptions that could bind people together on the basis of the union. The kingdom, and the ancient common past of its people, was a self-evident point of departure for the history writers, even within the Danish-Norwegian kingdom after 1537, when history writing received new impetus.<sup>29</sup> The importance he attributes to questions of a common historical past, identity formation, norms and values, makes his study relevant for the present article.<sup>30</sup>

The question of to what extent there were feelings of national allegiance in medieval Scandinavia has been debated, frequently in terms of the applicability of concepts such as nationalism to premodern societies.<sup>31</sup> To some extent, the positions taken have been a consequence of the different meanings attributed to the analytical concepts. According to Thomas Lindkvist, there was no national consciousness as such in Sweden in the Middle Ages. During its development as a Christian kingdom, Sweden had retained a profoundly federal and regional character while the church, the aristocratic elites and the development of an increasingly centralized monarchy constituted a (fragile) regnal level. The development and articulation of a more distinct Swedish self-image, combined with a repudiation of foreign influence in the realm, occurred as an aristocratic response to increasing monarchical power, and

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28 M.N. Skoog, *I rikets tjänst: krig, stat och samhälle i Sverige 1450-1550*, Lund 2018, pp. 498-499, 509-510.

29 H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater...*, pp. 309-318, 331.

30 Ibidem, pp. 329-334.

31 S. Bagge, *Nationalism in Norway in the Middle Ages*, “Scandinavian Journal of History” XX (1991); E. Opsahl, *I hvilken grad oppstod norsk nasjonalfølelse og identitet i middelalderen?*, in: *Tankar om ursprung: forntiden och medeltiden i nordisk historieanvändning*, eds. S. Edquist, L. Hermanson, S. Johansson, Stockholm 2009; M.B. Larsen, *National identitet i dansk senmiddelalder?*, “Historie” II (1998); F. Hervik, *Nordisk politikk og europeiske ideer. En analyse av nordiske forfatningsdokumenter 1282-1449*, Bergen 2012, pp. 74-83.

can thus be linked to the formation of a regnal elite.<sup>32</sup> An early expression of such an aristocratic program, he argues, was the Charter of Liberties, issued in 1319 in connection with the election of King Magnus Eriksson. Nevertheless, Lindkvist and other historians also point out that a somewhat paradoxical outcome of the Kalmar Union was the strengthened awareness of a collective identity linked to the realm as a political community in the late Middle Ages, both in Sweden and Norway, and probably also for broader segments of the population.<sup>33</sup> Even for Finland, which was part of the Swedish realm at the time, the Kalmar union was a period of consolidation in terms of evidence of a sense of *patria* linked to the Finnish territory, and increased institutional and structural development.<sup>34</sup>

As mentioned above, the roles and respective interests of the union kings and the aristocratic elites in union politics have been the focus of much research into the union era. The secular and ecclesiastical elites were a mainstay of the political system, and occupied positions that linked them both to royal power, their peers and to the people in the Scandinavian realms. The intermarriages of the Scandinavian aristocracy as well as their acquisition and possession of estates in more than one realm, particularly in border areas between Denmark and Sweden, became an important factor in the political development of the period.<sup>35</sup> Gottfrid Carlsson argued for the significance of a sense of aristocratic Scandinavism for the establishment of the Kalmar Union. This interpretation has been disputed by historians who argue that the existence of a sense of aristocratic community should be seen more as a consequence of the unions and became more evident in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> In his study of the dissolution phase of the Kalmar Union,

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32 T. Lindkvist, *Schweden auf dem Weg...*, pp. 45-46. In regard to the question of a medieval Danish identity, Ole Feldbæk somewhat reluctantly concedes the existence of a Danish national identity among the elite, but stresses the limited scope of such feelings. See O. Feldbæk, *Is there Such a Thing as a Medieval Danish Identity?*, in: *The Birth of Identities: Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. McGuire, Copenhagen 1996, p. 133. See also M.B. Larsen, *National identitet...*, pp. 330-331.

33 T. Lindkvist, *Schweden auf dem Weg...*, p. 48; *Norsk historie. 1: 750 – 1537...*, p. 272.

34 A.-P. Palola, *Finnlands Stellung in der Kalmarer Union*, in: *"Huru thet war talet j kalmarn": Union und Zusammenarbeit in der nordischen Geschichte...*, pp. 346-47; J.A. Eriksson, *Finland*, in: *Den nordiske adel i senmiddelalderen: struktur, funktioner og internordiske relationer*, eds. O.J. Benedictow, T. Dahlerup, K.-G. Lundholm, København 1971, pp. 130-131.

35 J.E. Olesen, *Inter-Scandinavian Relations*, in: *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia. Vol. 1, Prehistory to 1520*, ed. K. Helle, Cambridge 2003, p. 710; P. Enemark, *Fra Kalmarbrev til Stockholms blodbad: den nordiske trestatsunions epoke 1397-1521*, København 1979, p. 12; S. Imsen, *Noregs nedgang*, Oslo 2002, pp. 40-41.

36 G. Carlsson, *Medeltidens nordiska unionstanke*, Stockholm 1945, pp. 38, 56-57; A.E. Christensen, *Kalmarunionen og nordisk politik...*, pp. 36-39; K.-G. Lundholm, *Sverige*, in: *Den nordiske adel i senmiddelalderen...*, pp. 99-104.

Harald Gustafsson stresses the evidence for a strong sense of regnal belonging among the aristocrats; to be a Swede was the same as being a subject to the Swedish king and law, and the aristocratic elites ultimately chose to act for their "team" rather than for a Scandinavian elite.<sup>37</sup>

For Steinar Imsen, writing about the unions from the perspective of a Norwegian decline in the late-medieval period, the kings were the driving force in regard to the attempts to establish a Nordic union between 1319 and 1537, when Norway was incorporated in the Danish kingdom.<sup>38</sup> He relates the history of the Kalmar Union as a development from the initial attempts to create a monarchical federation (rather than a confederation) under the rule of Queen Margaret and her foster son King Erik, to a union characterized by a strong aristocratic-constitutional factions that opposed unrestrained monarchical rule in accordance with a constitutional program that was forced through in Kalmar in 1436. Imsen refers to the well-known idea of the Kalmar Union as a construct of the opposing principles of *regimen regale* and *regimen politicum*, introduced through Erik Lönnroth's radical reinterpretation of the historical context of the union in 1934. This means that even if dynastical and monarchical ambitions were decisive for the instigation of the Kalmar Union, the union era also included periods of more prominent aristocratic initiatives that involved a much more significant role for the councils of the realms. In the absence of a king, the council of the realms represented the level of sovereign power.<sup>39</sup>

Power relationships in the Middle Ages were largely personal. From a present-day perspective, the elite groups in medieval Scandinavia were small. The social and political interaction between the members of the secular and ecclesiastical aristocracies and their latitude were guided by their personal interests, family assets and political allegiances, but also, I will argue, to some extent curtailed by conditions related to prevailing cultural conceptions of ideal or proper forms of government. The relationship between pragmatic considerations of material, dynastical and personal power and gain, and the exploitation and expression of cultural conceptions of history, norms and values, constituted one important dimension of the game of power in medieval Scandinavia.<sup>40</sup>

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37 H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater...*, pp. 317, 330. There is also evidence that the aristocratic families increasingly divided inheritance and estates according to existing regnal borders at the end of the Middle Ages, and that fewer families owned estates on both sides of the Swedish-Danish border. See K-G. Lundholm, *Sverige*, pp. 102-103.

38 S. Imsen, *Noregs nedgang*, p. 34.

39 Ibidem, pp. 38-39.

40 H. Gustafsson, *Gamla riken, nya stater...*, p. 334.

## UNION AND UNITY?

As Harald Gustafsson has concluded, the union is somewhat elusive phenomenon in the sources. It lacked a specific designation other than “the three realms”.<sup>41</sup> Instead, the separate realms and their rulers provided the framework for history writing in medieval Scandinavia. This was so even before the period discussed here. As a legacy of the golden age of Danish historiography, the *Compendium Saxonis* (ca. 1342-1346), an abbreviated version of Saxo Grammaticus’ *Gesta Danorum* (ca. 1200), was composed at a time when the Danish kingdom was in a process of re-union. It provided much of the matter for the 15<sup>th</sup>-century vernacular rhyme chronicle discussed here, *The Danish Rhyme Chronicle*.<sup>42</sup> Through such historiographical links, the distant past of the realm was connected to the political realities of 15<sup>th</sup>-century Denmark. *The Danish Rhyme Chronicle* was composed around 1460-1474, probably in a monastery in Sorø on Sealand and printed in 1495.<sup>43</sup> It was the first known text in Danish to be printed, which can be taken as a sign of its presumed relevance to a contemporary audience. *The Danish Rhyme Chronicle* shares a somewhat unusual narrative structure with the Old Swedish *The Little Rhyme Chronicle* (ca. 1450s).<sup>44</sup> In both chronicles, history is told in monologues held by the successive rulers of Denmark and Sweden. The dynastical *Karl’s Chronicle* (ca. 1452)<sup>45</sup>, written and composed on behalf of King Karl Knutsson (Bonde), is the longest of the vernacular rhyme chronicles written in medieval Sweden. It was traditionally seen as one part in a series of rhyme chronicles (together with *Erik’s Chronicle* (ca. 1320s), *The Connecting Poem* (ca. 1450s, written to connect the narratives of *Erik’s Chronicle* and *Karl’s Chronicle*) and *The Sture Chronicle* (1497)<sup>46</sup> that covers the period from mid-13<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The mid-15<sup>th</sup> century was a productive time for

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup> *Den danske rimkrønike...*; M.B. Larsen, *National identitet...*, pp. 325-27. See also A.L. Knudsen, *The Use of Saxo Grammaticus in the Later Middle Ages*, in: *The Birth of Identities: Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. McGuire, Copenhagen 1996, pp. 151-56.

<sup>43</sup> According to Pernille Hermann, most scholars believe it was written between ca. 1470-1477, see P. Hermann, *Politiske og æstetiske aspekter i Rimkrøniken*, “Historisk Tidskrift [Denmark]” CVII (2007), pp. 393-395.

<sup>44</sup> *Lilla rimkrönikan*. It was written by an anonymous writer, probably on behalf of Karl Knutsson (Bonde).

<sup>45</sup> *Karlskrönikan*. A thorough analysis of the composition of the chronicle showed how the chronicler incorporated and adapted earlier verse composition into a chronicle that served to gain support for King Karl Knutsson. Johan Fredebern, secretary to the council of the realm, has been identified as the author of original parts that were incorporated in the chronicle. See H. Schück, *Engelbrektskrönikan: tillkomsten och författaren*, Stockholm 1994, pp. 148-149, 173-184.

<sup>46</sup> *Erikskrönikan*, *Förbindelsedikten* and *Sturekrönikan*.



vernacular history writing in Sweden. Part of the impetus was undoubtedly linked to the needs of the king, Karl Knutsson (Bonde) to mobilize support for his rather fragile power position. The main part of *The Sture Chronicle* eulogizes Sten Sture the Elder, the ruler of Sweden in the decades after 1470. The realms consequently constitute a basis for a discussion of the union as unity and difference.

In *The Danish Rhyme Chronicle*, the monologue of Queen Margaret describes her acquisition of the three kingdoms as the legitimate outcome of lineage, inheritance and conquest, as the quotation above illustrated. She creates the conditions for a threefold power that should be duly maintained by good men, knights and squires in all three realms. The unity of three different realms also creates a common border that sets the realms apart from other polities, or "worldly powers".<sup>47</sup> Such a projection of unity was part of King Hans' royal duty. He was enjoined by the representatives of his realms to secure the capacity of the universities of Uppsala and Copenhagen eternally, "thenne try rige till hether oc werdighet" (to the honour and dignity of the three realms) as a precondition for his accession to the throne in 1483.<sup>48</sup> This is an image projected to an imagined external world (distinction), that also conveys qualities that unite the realms (integration). The expansion of monarchical power that the dynastical union entailed can be interpreted in terms of Jan Assmann's theory of the processes of political expansion that initiates an interplay of integration and distinction.

A powerful image of the three realms united against an enemy, worthy of a modern film, also appears in *The Connecting Poem*. The battle between Queen Margaret and King Albrekt at Åsle in 1389 is described as a confrontation between arrogant, self-assured Germans in their shining suits of armour, who completely lose heart when their enemies appear under the banner of the three realms, with the Swedes at the front.<sup>49</sup> The Germans and King Albrekt are the target of hostility, that unites the Swedes, Danes and Norwegians under Margaret. This may be a sign of a relative hierarchy of antagonism: hostility between the union realms is secondary to the hostility against German influence. But the narrative of Queen Margaret's assumption of power in Sweden continues in *Karl's Chronicle*, where the chronicler describes it as a kind of madness: "mik tykte the svenska ey wara kloke" (the Swedes

<sup>47</sup> *Den danske rimkrønike...*, p. 151.

<sup>48</sup> *Kong Hans' norske og danske håndfesting, 1. Februar 1483*, in: *Norske middelalder dokumenter* (henceforth: NMD), eds. S. Bagge, S.H. Smedsdal, K. Helle, Bergen 1974, p. 474.

<sup>49</sup> *Förbindelsedikten (Fortsättning af Gamla Krönikan för att sammanbinda henne med den Nya till ett helt verk: skrifven vid år 1452)*, in: *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor. D. 1, Gamla eller Eriks-krönikan: folkungarnes brödrastrider: med en kort öfversigt af närmast föregående tid, 1229-1319* (henceforth: SMR 1), ed. G.E. Klemming, Stockholm 1865, p. 191.



appeared imprudent to me).<sup>50</sup> The lack of prudence is apparent in that the Swedes allow a *foreigner* to exercise power in realm, something that their law prohibits. Foreign rule is detrimental to the realm; and to the chronicler, the queen is a foreigner. Alterity has a strong impact within the political imagination.

The lodestar for the government of the realm, “*rikens besta oc bestanda*” (the best and the duration of the realm) is also repeated as a formula for the government on the union level.<sup>51</sup> Pledges are made for welfare and duration of the three realms and the monarch. What is desired is an eternal peace and loving commitment between the king on the one side, and the three realms on the other, and all inhabitants (*inbyggare*) and subjects (*wndersate*).<sup>52</sup> The union does not presuppose a unitary relationship of power or identification. Inhabitant and subject are two modes of identification, that may diverge or become oppositional. This is apparent for example in *Karl's Chronicle*, where the need to choose between king and realm, and implicitly to give priority to the identification as subject or inhabitant is demanded from the men of King Erik during the Engelbrekt uprising.<sup>53</sup> The elements that made up political identities also created entanglement: relationships of allegiance or subordination that were intertwined but remained (conceptually) distinct.

The interplay between unity and separation is visible in the account of a meeting of secular and ecclesiastical aristocracies, burghers and common men at Tälje after the dethronement of King Erik in 1439. The Swedish archbishop argues that they should elect Duke Christopher, whom the Danes have chosen, since that would secure the union of the realms. Those present at the meeting refuses, since the rule of foreign kings had always brought misfortune upon the Swedes.<sup>54</sup> Later on, the king's envoys urge the Swedes to elect Christopher, who is praised as the fairest lord in the world. But the chronicle also relates that the delegates confirmed through promise and letter, that peace would persist between the realms irrespective of whom the Swedes elected as their king.<sup>55</sup> The marshal, Karl Knutsson (Bonde), agrees to Christopher's election, against a substantial reward, then becomes king in Sweden after Christopher's death in 1448. After his accession to the Swedish throne, King Karl is willing to uphold the connection between the realms. The

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50 *Karlskrönikan*, in: *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor. D. 2, Nya eller Karls-krönikan: början av unionsstriderna samt Karl Knutssons regering, 1389-1452* (henceforth: SMR 2), ed. G.E. Klemming, Stockholm, 1866, p. 3.

51 *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 255-56.

52 *Sverges traktater med främmande magter: jemte andra dit hörande handlingar. D. 3, 3, 4, 1409-1520* (henceforth: ST), ed. O.S. Rydberg, Stockholm 1895, no. 516, p. 319.

53 *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 41, 186.

54 *Ibidem*, p. 219.

55 *Ibidem*, pp. 227-228.

Danish and Swedish councils agree to meet and pledge themselves to the old union that should be maintained irrespective of the conflict about Gotland and the election is not an obstacle to the union as such.<sup>56</sup>

The realms and their rulers are the narrative, emotive hubs in the chronicles and each chronicle focuses on one realm, even if certain experiences and conditions becomes entangled across regnal communities. The shorter chronicles in Old Swedish, such as *The Little Rhyme Chronicle* pays no attention to the establishment of a Scandinavian union as a commitment on the part of the realms, which is apparent in the short monologue of Queen Margaret for example.<sup>57</sup> In *Karl's Chronicle*, the chronicle explicitly states that his attention will be focused on Sweden in his account of King Erik's government, even if, as he acknowledges, the realms have similar reasons to complain.<sup>58</sup> The chronicler intends to describe Sweden's suffering, and to keep silent about the suffering of Denmark and Norway even if he acknowledges that they share much the same experience. The three realms have the same king and his rule causes despair and suffering on all levels of society.<sup>59</sup> The suffering of the Swedish peasants under the king's bailiffs is emphasized. In contrast, *Karl's Chronicle* emphasizes the patience and mildness of Karl Knutsson (Bonde), who seeks to avoid conflicts that spill the blood of Christians and the devastation of the peasantry.<sup>60</sup> But it is the King Erik's treatment of the aristocracy that occasionally places Swedish and Danish aristocrats in the same position vis-à-vis the union monarch. King Erik willfully creates estrangement between himself and the aristocracies of his realms, and he also attacks Danish aristocrats and robs them of their castles, according to the chronicle's account of the efforts to conclude the treaty of Kalmar.<sup>61</sup> Swedish and Danish aristocrats also find themselves humiliated and ignored at the wedding of King Christopher and Queen Dorothea in Copenhagen in 1445, when King Christopher instead favours his Bavarian men, bestows precious gifts and land upon them, and makes even the poorest into a rich man.<sup>62</sup> The presence of lords and princes from the German areas puts emphasis on

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<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, p. 260.

<sup>57</sup> *Lilla rimkrönikan*, in: *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor. D. 1, Gamla eller Eriks-krönikan: folkungarnes brödrastrider: med en kort öfversigt af närmast föregående tid, 1229-1319* (henceforth: SMR 1), ed. G.E. Klemming, Stockholm 1865, p. 230. See also *The Prose Chronicle (Prosaiskkrönikan)*, in: *Småstycken på forn svenska*, ed. G.E. Klemming, Stockholm 1868, pp. 238-239.

<sup>58</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> As established by Herman Schück, the initial part of *Karl's Chronicle* is in fact an originally separate composition, a plaintiff's poem that systematically accounts for the king's violation of his royal oath. See H. Schück, *Engelbrektskrönikan...*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>60</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, p. 292.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, p. 158.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, pp. 245-246.

the Swedish and Danish men as a group alienated from their king and his preferred associates; they are wronged by their king.

## COMMUNITY AND TIME

The political imagination comprised not only references to a distant past, but also pledges made for eternity. Formulas and phrases in treaties and historical narratives refer to old freedoms and privileges, to the traditions and agreements of forefathers and parents, but also to coming generations, born and unborn, current and future inhabitants of the realm, and to dynastical continuity.<sup>63</sup> Temporal continuity is an essential element in the collective self-image of communities, as mentioned in the introduction. The assumption of the political continuance of the community is a basis for political action towards other groups, whose continued existence is also presupposed.

The references to the past are sometimes specific. Documents from the negotiations in Kalmar in 1436 refer to the memory of the late Queen Margaret and her sapience, that brought about the union of the realms.<sup>64</sup> The truce negotiated in the aftermath of the Battle of Brunkeberg between the respective supporters of Sten Sture the Elder and the union king, Christian I in 1471, expresses the Swedes' wish to restore matters between the realms and the monarch as they were in the time of King Christopher.<sup>65</sup> The fortunate years of the union during Christopher's reign is also a theme in *The Danish Rhyme Chronicle*. In the king's monologue, he describes how he was summoned from Bavaria by Danish men, to take on the government of the three realms and was successful in upholding peace and unity: "I medhen ieg leffde the stode i fred" (while I lived there was peace between them).<sup>66</sup> For some political factions, the reign of Christopher thus seems to have represented an ideal of the past, that could be cited as a model for the government of the union.<sup>67</sup>

This is not the attitude of *Karl's Chronicle*. Christopher's reign is not what God intended for Sweden. *Karl's Chronicle* recounts several signs and visions that confirm God's plans for Karl Knutsson and Christopher. One of the

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<sup>63</sup> ST, 473a, pp. 147-152; 475, pp. 160-165; 495a, pp. 257-258; *Svenska rådet...*, pp. 165-167; NMD, 114, p. 430; 116, pp. 436-441; 122, pp. 456-457; *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, p. 280.

<sup>64</sup> ST, p. 171.

<sup>65</sup> ST, 514, p. 303. This is not mentioned in the contemporary *The Sture Chronicle*, where the outcome of the battle is construed as a miraculous escape from Danish oppression. See *Sturekrönikan*, in: *Svenska medeltidens rimkrönikor. D. 3, Nya krönikans fortsättningar eller Sturekrönikorna: fortgången af unionsstriderna under Karl Knutsson och Sturarne, 1452-1520* (henceforth: SMR 3), ed. G.E. Klemming, Stockholm 1866, pp. 82-83.

<sup>66</sup> *Den danske rimkrønike...*, p. 153.

<sup>67</sup> L.-O. Larsson, *Kalmarunionens tid...*, p. 258; J.E. Olesen, *Rigsråd, Kongemagt, Union: studier over det danske rigsråd og den nordiske kongemagts politik, 1434-1449*, Aarhus 1980, p. 376.

visions is that of an old, godly maid who says that God revealed Karl's future as Swedish king to her. She predicts that war, starvation and pestilence will cause destruction in the realm as long as Karl is prevented from fulfilling his destiny.<sup>68</sup> The destiny of kingship and government is thus also a matter of obeying the will of God. In *The Skiby Chronicle* (ca. 1534), Povl Helgesen claimed that the Swedish realm had been suffering from calamities from the day they chose to elect their own candidate as king, instead of Christian I. They had had to live with the consequences of not abiding with the union pact until the present day.<sup>69</sup>

When *Karl's Chronicle* relates the attempt of King Karl Knutsson to become king of Norway, the Norwegian peasantry receives him with open arms. They have summoned him, because they seek protection from the bailiffs' violence. The king brings good fortune and ample harvests; and his wondrous luck in journeying across the country clearly marks him out as a king graced by God.<sup>70</sup> Nature itself confirmed the appropriateness of a Swedish-Norwegian union monarchy. The political imagination also encompasses a future that is in God's hands and sometimes is revealed by signs and visions.

As argued by Jan Assmann, political power is served both by remembrance and forgetting. The political efforts to restore peace and unity between the realms sometimes resulted in explicit vows to forget about past events. This is what Christian I promised in his communication with the Swedes, both as new king in 1457 and in his attempts to regain the throne in 1465.<sup>71</sup> A collective forgetting and an agreement to act as if the acts of war and hostility never had happened was seen as part of the process of restoring the bonds between the realms and royal power.

## ALTERITY AND UNION

The fear of foreigners and their potential political and economic power was a principal concern in the political discourse in all Scandinavian realms in the later Middle Ages. It was voiced over and over again in treaties, historical narratives, songs, pamphlets and letters as demands for an exclusion of foreigners from political positions and a monopoly of castles and council offices for native-born inhabitants of the realms. The reality was pragmatic; the interplay of cooperation, family connections on the one side, and competition and political factions on the other was a fundamental part of the political

<sup>68</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 230-231, 249-250.

<sup>69</sup> P. Helgesen, *Den skibyske Krønike*, in: *Historiske kildeskrifter og bearbejdelser af dansk historie især fra det 16. aarhundrede*. R. 1. Bd. 1, ed. H. Rørdam, København 1871, p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 272-278.

<sup>71</sup> ST, 496, pp. 263; 509, p. 285, X, p. 665.

game. The control of castles and fiefs was central for the control of the realm and for the power of the aristocracies of the realm and brought questions of birth, national belonging and loyalties to a head. The castles of the realm were only to be given to indigenous men; this was the demand of the regnal elites and the law as stated in treaties.<sup>72</sup> The power of foreign men, lords and rulers was seen as a very palpable threat against this principle. *The Danish Rhyme Chronicle* relates the struggles of Valdemar IV Atterdag against the German power in Denmark, and states that the intention of Count Gerhard of Holstein is to completely lay waste the Danish aristocracy.<sup>73</sup> But the foreign threat could also target other groups. *Karl's Chronicle* describes in visual detail how foreign (Danish and German) bailiffs torment and exploit the peasants in Sweden as a justification of the later uprising against King Erik.<sup>74</sup>

The alterity of foreigners in positions of power could be reinforced by gender aspects. A foreign woman holding a castle, such as Ida Henningsdotter Königsmarck, who held Kastelholm on Åland in 1434 after her husband's death, challenged both male, indigenous and aristocratic prerogatives of power, the remarks about her in *Karl's Chronicle* show.<sup>75</sup> In nativist terms, shifts of power that benefited external groups, could constitute a threat towards the own community. The control of crown castles by foreign men (or women) threatened the power of native-born men according to a kind of zero-sum-logic. In 1483, King Hans had to promise the representatives of his realms not only to exclude foreign men from the governing institutions, but also that he would place no man of dishonourable birth (*wanbyrding*) in positions of influence.<sup>76</sup> Native birth was thus not enough, but some level of social distinction was also required.

Who counted as foreigner then? In connection with the negotiations with the union king in Kalmar in 1436 regarding the restoration of the union monarchy in Sweden, the precise meaning of key terms such as native (*inländsk*) and foreign (*utländsk*) became the subject of discussion. The Swedish council proposed a somewhat circular definition that identified every man in Sweden as a foreigner who was not Swedish. Norwegians and

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<sup>72</sup> See for example ST, 469c, p. 134; NMD, 118, pp. 446-447, 119, p. 449.

<sup>73</sup> *Den danske rimkrønike...*, p. 145.

<sup>74</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 25-26, 35-36.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 34. Ida Henningsdotter had German ancestors, and was the widow of a member of the Danish council of the realm. "Königsmarck, Släkter – Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon" <<https://sok.riksarkivet.se/Sbl/Presentation.aspx?id=11939>> [accessed 15 April 2018]. The gender of Queen Margaret is also stressed as an anomaly, for example in *The Little Rhyme Chronicle*, where she states that she, a Danish woman, used her prudence to succeed where Danes had previously failed – in conquering Sweden. See *Lilla rimkrönikan*, in: SMR 1, p. 230.

<sup>76</sup> NMD, 130, p. 469.

Danes were not Swedes, and thus foreigners in Sweden. Moreover, native should be seen as synonymous with native-born (*infödd*). To be a resident in the realm, or inhabitant was thus not enough to count as Swede and to be eligible for appointment to council, castle or fief in Sweden.<sup>77</sup> The union king opposed the stricter interpretation of *inländsk* based on birth and its political and constitutional implications. In 1435, he had assured the Swedes of his intention to follow the Swedish law in regard to the rights of native men.<sup>78</sup> The king, however, held the view that foreigners who had settled in Sweden could count as naturalized Swedes.

Alterity was a structuring element in political contexts, that was closely connected to power and political representation. It could also appear as more stereotypical and vilifying characterizations of enemies, that drew on their allegedly inherent vices. In the Swedish 15<sup>th</sup>-century rhyme chronicles, there is a tendency towards a more marked antipathy towards the Danes as a collective in the later instalments of the chronicles.<sup>79</sup> The beginning of *Karl's Chronicle* describes mainly *royal* transgressions, perpetrated by bayliffs and other men serving the Danish union king.<sup>80</sup> Later on in the narrative, agency is increasingly transferred to Danes as a collective. The conflict over the status of Gotland in 1449 is used by the chronicler to portray the Danes as ungodly murderers, who attacks defenseless babies and mothers.<sup>81</sup> The foul deeds are linked to the group as such. The *inherent* faithlessness of the Danes as a group is a prominent topic of *The Sture Chronicle*, which illustrates the importance of visualizing alterity in a process of unification against an enemy.<sup>82</sup>

In the Swedish rhyme chronicles, the relationship between Norway and Sweden is rarely described in antagonistic terms, but rather as a particularly close relationship of solidarity.<sup>83</sup> There are some exceptions, for example the account of a siege of Älvsborg in *Karl's Chronicle*, and the clash between Swedish and Norwegian forces in *The Sture Chronicle*. The latter passage in particular clearly depicts the event as a conflict between different communities, Norwegians and Swedes, rather than as a war about power and kingship within the Kalmar union. The narrative itself represents the military encounter

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<sup>77</sup> ST, *Svenska rådet...*, p. 165; M. Nordquist, *Swedes and Others – Identity Formation in Medieval Sweden*, "Frühmittelalterliche Studien" LI (2017), pp. 438-441.

<sup>78</sup> ST, 473a, p. 148.

<sup>79</sup> M. Nordquist, *A Struggle for the Realm: Late-Medieval Swedish Rhyme Chronicles as Ideological Expressions*, Stockholm 2015, pp. 37-41.

<sup>80</sup> As mentioned above, this part of the chronicle is based on a separate "plaintiff's poem".

<sup>81</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 268-271.

<sup>82</sup> M. Nordquist, *A Struggle for the Realm...*, pp. 228-229, 244-245.

<sup>83</sup> In *The Sture Chronicle*, the strong and lasting bond between Norway and Sweden finally breaks, when the deceitful Danes manages to have Hans elected king in both Norway and Denmark. *Sturekrönikan*, in: SMR 3, pp. 87-88.



as motivated by patriotic motives on both sides. The commander, Kolbjørn Gerst, calls on his Norwegian men to force the Swedes off Norwegian land, which indicates that there is a clear demarcation line between the realms and a link between territory, community and an emotional involvement. There is also an explicitly patriotic element in the chronicle's account of how the Swedes are willing to die for the benefit of Sweden.<sup>84</sup> Patriotism is a political virtue that is attributed to soldiers as well as kings: both King Karl and King Christian suffer and risk their lives for the realm according to chronicles.<sup>85</sup> Imsen argues that patriotic sentiments can be traced among rich peasants and low aristocracy in Norway, in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, in addition to a skepticism towards foreign men, even if they were "naturalized".<sup>86</sup>

Warfare brings both unity and alterity to the fore in the chronicles. *Karl's Chronicle* ends with an account of the war between Karl and Christian in 1452. The description of Karl's levied troops conveys a picture of military might and splendour, where representatives of all social categories of the realm, aristocracy, townsmen, men from the mining districts and peasants unite under the banners of St George, St Erik, St Olaf, the Virgin Mary and the three crowns, the heraldic symbol of Sweden. King Karl argues that Christian's men "derfua vort land i grundh" (devastate our land), therefore they should march into enemy land and once they have crossed the border, ravage the countryside.<sup>87</sup> The border line is thus very clearly a mark of alterity.

#### FRIENDSHIP AND FAMILY BONDS: DOUBLE-EDGED RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships of family and friendship appear as distinct threads in the entanglement of political identity as expressed in the political sources from the union era. Kinship sustained networks that involved legal, economic, political and institutional ties on both collective and individual level, in addition to an emotional involvement.<sup>88</sup> Kinship constituted a fundamental form of collective belonging and sense of fellowship that also was a structural

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<sup>84</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 212-213; *Sturekrönikan*, in: SMR 3, pp. 1-4. The chronicle's reference to the Norwegian commander, Kolbjørn Gerst, who was a member of the Norwegian Council and supported Christian I, may have been perceived by the audience as a reference to the broader political context. In his survey of aristocratic immigration to Norway in the later Middle Ages, Erik Opsahl mentions Kolbjørn Gerst as one of the powerful men who probably had German ancestors. See E. Opsahl, '*som ieg tusindfold indfødder war*': norsk innvandringshistorie ca. 900-1537, Tromsø 2007, p. 151. It shows the entanglement of collective identities and political mobilization.

<sup>85</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, p. 181; *Den danske rimkrønike...*, p. 159.

<sup>86</sup> S. Imsen, *Noregs nedgang*, p. 46.

<sup>87</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 293-296.

<sup>88</sup> L.-O. Larsson, *Kalmarunionens tid...*, pp. 229-230.

element in the politics of the Middle Ages. Erik Opsahl argues that notions of friendship and brotherhood, with their strong Christian implications, were essential elements in the formation of a sense of community of Norwegians in the Middle Ages. This is apparent for example in the letter to the inhabitants in the Agder region, written by the Norwegian magnate Erik Sæmundson, as part of his mobilization of support for Karl Knutsson as king of Norway in 1449. In the letter, Sæmundsson encourages the peasantry to act in favour for Karl Knutsson by addressing them as friends, countrymen and Norwegians. His interaction with the local population thus involved an activation of the vertical and horizontal bonds that existed between the elite and the common people, and represented mutual and meaningful relationships. For Opsahl, this indicates the existence of a Norwegian national identity, that also must have resonated among broader segments of the population.<sup>89</sup> In Norway, there were strong economic and family bonds between the aristocratic families and Danish, Swedish and German aristocrats. Almost the entire Norwegian elite had kinship bonds to “foreign” aristocrats.<sup>90</sup> In Norway, the exclusive rights of the inborn men were interpreted more liberally than in Sweden, since men married to Norwegian women were included.<sup>91</sup>

Brotherhood occurs in the sources as an image of unity and solidarity. The union treaty between Norway and Denmark from August 1450 stipulates that the realms hereafter remain together “i bröderligh kerlighed” (in brotherly love).<sup>92</sup> Political relationships are also framed in figurative terms of father and son, which implies a close relationship of natural subordination and respect. In the narrative sources, it is nevertheless striking how words describing close family relations are also used in a figurative sense to also emphasize the threatening character of actions that violate such relationships. In *Karl's Chronicle*, the father-son relationship is used in a figurative sense to emphasize the seemingly subordinate position of Karl Knutsson as “son” in relation to political actors, senior to him either in age or status, such as the seneschal (*drots*) Krister Nilsson (Vasa) and King Christopher.<sup>93</sup> In both cases, the “father” turns out to be more of a threat against the welfare of the “son” and the community and realm that he represents.

The breaking of family bonds involves a destruction of the basis of social cohesion. *The Connecting Poem* recounts how the uprising against King Albrekt

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<sup>89</sup> E. Opsahl, *Nasjonal identitet i middelalderen?*, in: *Bohuslän som gränslandskap: före och efter Roskildefreden*, ed. H. Carlsson, Uddevalla 2013, p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> S. Imsen, *Noregs nedgang*, p. 41; E. Opsahl, *-som ieg tusindfold indfødder war...;* idem, *I hvilken grad oppstod norsk nasjonalfølelse og identitet i middelalderen?*.

<sup>91</sup> S. Imsen, *Noregs nedgang*, p. 45.

<sup>92</sup> NMD, 121, p. 455.

<sup>93</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 160-162, 234.

in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century leads to warfare and destruction in the Swedish realm. The chronicler uses metaphors of both fratricide and patricide to convey an image of a complete dissolution of the community and an erosion of the most fundamental bonds of affinity when brother kills brother and son kills father. In addition, the chronicler accuses the king of giving away Swedish maids and widows to his German men without consulting their kinsfolk, and thus violating the norms of kinship.<sup>94</sup> The relationships of family are used figuratively to illustrate fundamental threats against community, and to provoke emotional responses from the readers or listeners of the narrative. The dimension of foreign – native in the chronicle's narrative also involves a mobilization of collective solidarity and a sense of community under threat.

How did the chroniclers navigate in their representation of a political reality that did not uphold a clear cut division of foreigners and native men? In the rhyme chronicles, the entanglement of political, social and economic relationships in the political interaction is reflected in a somewhat uneasy narrative stance that vacillates between pragmatic and principal viewpoints. This becomes evident for example in the attitude towards kinship, political actions and allegiance.

Brotherhood in particular seemed to be recognized as a double-edged political asset. *Karl's Chronicle* also relates the conflict between Karl Knutsson, then marshal, and the brothers Bengt, Bo and Nils Stensson (Natt och Dag) that culminated in 1439. On behalf of King Erik, Nils Stensson had ravaged the region of Östergötland displaying "danabroca", the Danish flag, which the chronicler mentions several times.<sup>95</sup> After a reconciliation with Karl and the formal recognition of their friendship with him, the three brothers promises to remain faithful to the realm and to the marshal (Karl Knutsson). According to the chronicle, Nils and Bo Stensson then wanted to become their own lords, and turn against the marshal again. When Nils later dies, the chronicler concludes that it was God's will in order to protect the realm from further harm.<sup>96</sup> Here brotherhood constitute a kind of inverted force directed against the realm and its ruler, instead of an example of cohesion and loyalty.

On several occasions, *Karl's Chronicle* relates how Karl Knutsson navigates politically through establishing or relying on family connections, that were inter-Scandinavian. When the sister of Karl Knutsson marries Claus Nilsson Sparre av Ellinge, the groom is described as a man born in Scania, of good family, whose fortune, wisdom and manliness is praised by everyone.<sup>97</sup> Claus

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<sup>94</sup> *Förbindelsedikten*, in: SMR 1, pp. 188-190.

<sup>95</sup> *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, pp. 205-207.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 219-223.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 175. Karl Knutsson's daughter married Erik Eriksen (Gyldenstjerne), described as a pious knight from Jutland in *Karl's Chronicle*, see *ibidem*, p. 249.

Nilsson later became member of the Danish Council, and was a cousin of the Axelsson brothers, the sons of the Danish magnate Axel Pedersen (Tott).<sup>98</sup> The Axelsson brothers became a powerful force in later union politics, both as individuals and as brothers, and attained positions of influence in both Sweden, Denmark and across the Baltic sea.<sup>99</sup>

In 1450, *Karl's Chronicle* recounts how the king gives Åbo castle to Erik Axelsson (Tott), one of the Axelsson brothers who was married to a relative of Karl Knutsson, and who made his career mainly within the Swedish realm. The chronicler states that Erik Axelsson is "aff thz ypasta slecthe war han/som j danmarch wara kan" (of the finest family that there is in Denmark), but adds somewhat cryptically that if the king wants to keep Åbo, he should not not depend on Danish help in any way.<sup>100</sup> On the same occasion Karl Knutsson gives Örebro castle to Erengisle Nilsson (Hammerstaätten), whom he considers most suited for the position. Again, the chronicler adds a comment: Erengisle's wife is the daughter of Olof Axelsson, but the king does not think that she will take after (*slekta*) her father.<sup>101</sup> The comment is a foreshadowing of future events: as the narrative shows, King Karl is proven wrong.

Olof Axelsson also belonged to the Axelsson brothers, but was member of the Danish council and in the service of the Danish king. He appears frequently in *Karl's Chronicle*. Shortly after the mention above, the chronicle relates how his men are reported to burn and ravage Swedish territory.<sup>102</sup> In connection with the Danish attack on Stockholm in 1452, led by Olof Axelsson, his daughter Birgitta, who was married to the commander of Örebro castle, provided the Danes with information about the whereabouts and the forces of King Karl. She was condemned to death for treason but was eventually pardoned. All of this is related in *Karl's Chronicle* and in *The Sture Chronicle*.<sup>103</sup> The chronicler's comment thus was an allusion to what many of the chronicle's audience knew about; that Olof Axelsson's daughter would remain loyal to her father's cause and betray her husband's lord and the Swedish realm. Family bonds could turn out to be subvertive; to threaten rather than strengthen the realm and its ruler, when there was a conflict between the loyalties of descent and of other circumstances.

In *The Sture Chronicle*, matters are brought to a head in regard to the Axelsson (Tott) brothers. The chronicle describes how their control of

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98 H. Gillingstam, 'Sparre av Ellinge, släkt – Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon' <<https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/Presentation.aspx?id=6234>> [accessed 11 April 2018].

99 H. Rebas, *Axelssönerna och det gamla Livland*, "Gotländskt arkiv" LXIII (1991), pp. 178–181.

100 *Karlskrönikan*, in: SMR 2, p. 285.

101 Ibidem.

102 Ibidem, p. 292.

103 Ibidem, pp. 308–309, 321–325; *Sturekrönikan*, in: SMR 3, p. 14.

strategically important crown castles around the Baltic threatens to evolve into a power base in the hands of one family, and beyond the reach of both Sweden and Denmark. The chronicle blames the clever marriage strategies of the Axelsson brothers, which includes Sten Sture the Elder, who was married to a daughter of Åke Axelsson, but also the ambiguous political and regnal identity of the brothers.<sup>104</sup> While they act within the same political framework based on kinship, friendship and power, Sten Sture never lets family commitment and interests take priority to the best interests of the realm and its inhabitants. According to *The Sture Chronicle*, he knows how to handle entangled loyalties and tackle the threat from Ivar Axelsson, the last surviving brother who in the end has to decide between his Danish and Swedish allegiance.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to explore some of the identities and relationships that the political interaction within the Kalmar Union gave rise to, as expressed in mainly narrative sources such as the Swedish *Karl's Chronicle*. The analysis of how the relationship between the kingdoms of the union was represented in political discourse involved an inquiry into aspects of identity and belonging within the pragmatics of a game of power in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Scandinavia. The interplay between unity and hostility that marked much of the history of the Kalmar Union was used as an analytic approach for the examination of identities and relationships. In previous research, the Kalmar Union has been seen as both an arena for aristocratic Scandinavism, dynastical or monarchical ambition, and for expressions of national awareness. In my view, the formation of identities related to the realm or to the union in the late-medieval period has to be understood as a complex process of entanglement, where the different threads remain both distinct and intertwined. The resonance of collective identities linked to the realms in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was significant, based on the arguments and imaginary of the political discourse.

In the vernacular chronicles of Denmark and Sweden, differentiating between categories of men such as inborn and foreigner, Dane or Swede, was a prominent way of expressing views about legitimate claims to power and privileges in the realm. In the construction of coherent and meaningful narratives of a common past, identities linked to place of birth and regnal belonging were apparently important, which indicate an awareness of a sense of community that also involved obligations towards the community.

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<sup>104</sup> *Sturekrönikan*, in: SMR 3, pp. 89-93. See also M. Nordquist, *A Struggle for the Realm...*, pp. 175-179.

Nativism, as the conscious distinction between what is perceived as indigenous and what is perceived as foreign, describes a fundamental element in the interplay of unity and alterity, that frequently influenced the political discourse. At the same time, personal bonds based on friendship, kinship and allegiance played a fundamental role in the frequently pragmatic political dealings of the period, and are also acknowledged in narratives of the past and in the addresses to political audiences. Loyalty based on such bonds was a strong imperative in the political culture, but the narratives also show the potential double-edged implications of such loyalties.

#### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the occurrence of two common but contradictory themes in the political discourse in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Scandinavia: on the one hand proclamations of the essential bonds existing between Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and on the other hand expressions of hostility against what is represented as foreign rule. The aim is to examine how different forms of discourse reveal coexisting and sometimes oppositional expressions of identity, with a particular focus on the role of cultural memory in the elaboration of these themes. A crucial political framework for the analysis is the Kalmar Union, which throughout the century constituted a common, if not always implemented, form of government of the Scandinavian kingdoms.

The article explores the occurrence of nativist ideas of origin and identity within the pragmatics of a game of power in 15<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavia. In the vernacular chronicles of 15<sup>th</sup>-century Denmark and Sweden, differentiating between categories of men such as inborn and foreigner was a prominent way of expressing views about legitimate claims to power and privileges in the realms. In the construction of coherent and meaningful narratives of a common past, identities linked to birth and regnal belonging were apparently important. At the same time, personal bonds based on friendship, kinship and allegiance, played a fundamental role in the political dealings of the period. Particular bonds of love were also perceived to exist between the realms, as shown in the treaties negotiated between the realms. Rather than giving priority to the importance of one specific sense of identity in the political game of the period, it is argued that the complex relationships governing political action and discourse in late-medieval Scandinavia should be conceived in terms of entangled identities, where the different forms of identification and allegiance remain distinct, while at the same time inseparable from each other.





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**FROM WAWEL HILL TO VOLKHOV RIVER BANK:  
TO THE QUESTION OF THE PRESUMPTIVE INFLUENCE  
OF THE PRE-ROMANESQUE POLISH ARCHITECTURE  
TO THE DECORATION OF SO-CALLED  
“COLUMNS OF OAK SOPHIA FROM NOVGOROD”\***



THE ORIGINS OF FINDINGS AND FIRST HYPOTHESIS

Of all the objects of decorative art found during the archaeological excavations of Novgorod, the most famous and at the same time the most mysterious are two oak carved fragments (Fig. 1), which in the literature are often called “columns of oaken Sophia” (this is one of the versions of the origins of these pieces). The general history of their discovery is clear enough, but the exact details less so, and there are some differences between the authors of the first publications that give rise to number of key questions, and thus too, to a wide range of conclusions regarding the dating, existence, and decoration of the objects.

The two large wooden fragments in question, decorated with flat-relieved carvings forming a part of a larger structure (the exact nature of which remains unclear), and currently (until 2017, now in the storage room of the Novgorod Museum) presented in the exposition of the Novgorod Museum, were found in 1953 at the excavation of the Nerevsky site by A.V. Artsikhovsky.

One of these fragments is covered by a braided ornament with two medallions, the upper one of which appears to be a griffin, and the lower

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one, a centaur (the object was split in half at some point, meaning that only one half of the medallions with the back parts of the animal's torso has been preserved). Both creatures have predatory animal bodies and long tails twisted into an interlace band. The carving occupies the entire visual surface of the preserved fragment. The banded ornament, made at the edges in the form of a net with equal, loose meshes, gradually turns into rounded, identical loops as it approaches the center.

In the upper part of the composition there is a frieze of a double band, composed of twisting undulating lines. A similar decorative belt runs along the upper edge of the second wooden fragment, which depicts a highly stylized vegetative shoot, a conventional spear-shaped palmette: the central triangular leaf "sprouts" from a powerful stem with two shoots twisted on either side. At the top of the palmette there is another plant element in the form of a double symmetric shoot, the lateral branches of which pass into abstract plant curls.

Initially, the finds were presented by A.V. Artsikhovskiy in an article that did not contain illustrations, published in no. 4 of the Bulletin of Moscow University in 1954<sup>1</sup>. According to this first publication, they were found in the 20th building layer, which at that time was dated to the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The dimensions as given by the author were: a fragment with medallions – L-111 cm, D-59 cm; fragment with palmette – L-80 cm, D-51 cm. A.V. Artsikhovskiy initially believed that they were round wooden pillars, carved in the early XI century and probably used as porch supports. After serving their purpose, these pillars were then cut into wooden fragments and used to pave the yard.

The second publication is by P.I. Zasurtsev, who mentions them in his book on Novgorod. He too, refers to the archeological discovery of the pieces<sup>2</sup>, but gives slightly different circumstances of the discovery. According to his version, the wooden parts were reused not for paving the yard, but as a base for a house. In his version, they could belong to the first – wooden – St. Sophia Cathedral (hence the name given to the pieces in some sources). Like A.V. Artsikhovskiy, P.I. Zasurtsev believed that these fragments were the remains of round columns, but he quoted completely different dimensions: 150-170 cm.

Details of the finds were also published twice by B.A. Kolchin. In the first volume of *Works of the Novgorod archaeological expedition*<sup>3</sup>, published in 1956,

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1 A.V. Artsikhovskiy, *Column from the Novgorod Excavations*, "Moscow University Bulletin. Social Science Series" (1954), 4, pp....

2 P.I. Zasurtsev, *Novgorod, Discovered by Archaeologists*, Moskva 1967, pp. 98-99.

3 B.A. Kolchin, *Topography, Stratigraphy and Chronology of the Nereva Excavation*, MIA. LV (1956), p. 100.

he wrote that they were reused as the supporting planks of the floor. Later, in the journal "Novgorod antiquities. Carved wood"<sup>4</sup>, released in 1971, he described them as the planks under the floor of the house. In the publication of 1971, which was published after the creation of the dendrochronological scale of Novgorod<sup>5</sup>, more specific timescales were clarified with a timeline of the 20<sup>th</sup> layer, which was then dated to the 1040-80s. This date was used for the findings in all subsequent studies. In addition, in this publication, Kolchin drew attention to the fact that the detail of the rapport with the braid is not broken, but it is bending, forming a border. On the basis of this, he first voiced the assumption that initially they were not columns, but semi-columns.

This opinion has prevailed in literature until today.

#### ART HISTORIANS' FIRST OPINIONS

The second phase of research on the Novgorod semi-columns can be attributed to the publications of art and architecture historians. The fragments were referred to by various researchers, but most often they were used as illustrations when discussing general topics. For example, the interior of an old Russian household or the ornamental decoration of the facades of temples. The subject was never the focus of an independent study during the Soviet period. Moreover, these references at times contradicted the initial conclusions regarding the original purpose of the findings, with each author deciding in his own way, most often simply expressing, but not proving, his opinion, and sometimes not taking into account other articles on the topic by fellow researchers.

Despite the differences on the issue of the initial use of the Novgorod semi-columns, for a long time there were no serious disputes regarding their decoration. Nobody wrote about this at all, or simply deferred to the opinion by A.V. Artsikhovsky in his first publication on the topic. According to his theory, the braided ornament with which one of the finds is decorated is of Slavic origin; it finds analogues to it in the stone carving of Dalmatia (Dubrovnik and Split) and Poland. A.V. Artsikhovsky compares the animal figures with the Vladimir-Suzdal reliefs, and sees images similar to them on the walls of St. George's Cathedral of Yuryev-Polsky. He concludes that in the Novgorod semi-column we can see an early version of that artistic tradition, which then fully bloomed in the architecture of Vladimir-Suzdal<sup>6</sup>.

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4 B.A. Kolchin, *Novgorod Antiquities. Carved Wood*, Moskva 1971, pp. 24-25.

5 P.G. Gaydukov, *For the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beginning of the Discussion "About Novgorod chronology"*, "Novgorod and Novgorod Land. History and Archeology" XXIV (2010), p. 107.

6 A.V. Artsikhovsky, *Column from the Novgorod Excavations...*

At present, Russian scientists believe the theory that the semi-columns with braided decor are of Slavic origin, to be obsolete, and incorrect. This is because all the examples given by the author, are stylistically very far from what we see in the Novgorod fragment. It is obvious that the addition of this concept was influenced by the interdisciplinary approach used by Artsikhovsky (he at times dealt rather loosely in the matters of the history of art), but also by the historical period. The discovery of the findings coincided with another round of exacerbation of the "Norman theory", in which Artsikhovsky took a tough anti-Norman position<sup>7</sup>. In such a situation, the range of monuments, in principle, considered by the author, was limited to the art of the Slavic world, and these examples, apparently, were generated by the restriction in the choice of sources – they are taken from a fairly general work, that of J. Strzygowski *Altslavische Kunst*<sup>8</sup>.

An effort to fit the Novgorod findings within the system of the old Russian pre-Mongolian wooden architecture was undertaken by Y.P. Spegalsky. According to his reconstruction, which, however, even the author himself considered to be hypothetical due to the uniqueness of the findings and the lack of further evidence, the oak fragments were part of a residential building. However, the attribution proposed by the author is quite wide – they could be part of an open gallery<sup>9</sup>. Spegalsky drew attention to the design of the monuments – a smooth belt at the upper edge of the fragments, which probably separated the pillars (the author believes that the fragments belong to the pillars) at their completion, and a vertical strip framing the edge of the ornament. The author believes that this shows the presence of a vertical slot, which served to attach this pillar to boards or planks.

The range of hypotheses regarding the origin of the Novgorod findings would be incomplete without mentioning two more publications. G.N. Bocharov, in the book *Applied art of the Great Novgorod* was of the opinion that the available fragments could be the remains of interior pillars<sup>10</sup>, and V.L. Yanin, in the popular science article *The Day of the Tenth Century*, published in the journal "Knowledge is Power", suggested that these semi-columns were part of the Church of the Transfiguration at the Razvazh<sup>11</sup>. In addition, in the article V.L. Yanina suggests another, much later date of the layer in which the findings were found – the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century,

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7 L.S. Klein, *The Dispute about the Vikings*, Spb., (2009), p. 38.

8 J. Strzygowski, *Die Altslavische Kunst*, Augsburg 1929.

9 Yu.P. Spegalsky, *Dwelling of the North-West Russia of the 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Leningrad 1972, p. 172.

10 G.N. Bocharov, *The Applied Art of Veliky Novgorod*, Moskva 1969, pp. 75-76.

11 V.L. Yanin, *Day of the Tenth Century. Knowledge is Power*, Moskva 1983, no. 3, p. 18.

and she very interestingly noted, that oak in Novgorod was only for building temples, and not residential and commercial buildings.

“TRACES OF SCANDINAVIA” IN TRYING TO FIND SOME ANALOGIES

The third stage of the study of these pieces of cultural heritage began in the mid-1990s, and is characterized by a shift in the focus of research attention from the Slavic to the Scandinavian artistic tradition.

This shift began in a small article by architect and historian of architecture I.N. Kudryavtsev titled *Wooden Semi-columns from Novgorod and Northern European Analogy*<sup>12</sup>, published in 1995. The author made a bold and unexpected suggestion that the carved semi-columns found in Novgorod could be a part of the decor of a building, similar to Scandinavian stave churches (*stavkirke*).

The idea of the existence of the Scandinavian church in ancient Novgorod does not seem so fantastic if we look at the history of the Gothic Yard (Gotsky dvor) – the trading post of Gotland (and later Hanseatic) merchants. From written sources, we accurately know that the church of St. Olaf was located at the Goths' Dvor. Opinions vary on the timeline of the construction of this church. E.A. Rybina connects the emergence of the church and the entire Gothic Yard with the legend about mayor (posadnik) Dobrynya, that is, with the border of the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>13</sup>. However, other researchers do not rule out an earlier appearance, soon after the approval of the cult of the saint (1031)<sup>14</sup>, who visited Russia during his lifetime and performed a variety of miracles, some of which, according to the texts, took place in Novgorod<sup>15</sup>. Presumably, if there is a reference to the existence in 11<sup>th</sup> century Novgorod of a pillar church structure, it should be related to the church of St. Olaf. However, even if we accept the early dates of the construction of this building, its location is limited by the Gothic court, located on the Trade side, near the residence of the prince<sup>16</sup>. The wooden carved semi-columns were found on the Sofia side – at the excavation of Nerevsky site, on the exact opposite end of Novgorod. It is not likely that the people of Novgorod would have moved the remains of the destroyed church so far as to use them as spolia for paving the yard or as foundations of a house.

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12 I.N. Kudryavtsev, *Wooden Semi-columns from Novgorod and Their Northern European Analogies*, “Slavic-Russian Antiquities” II (1995), p.....

13 Y.A. Rybina, *Foreign Yards in Novgorod XII-XVII Centuries*, Moskva 1986, p.....

14 T.N. Jackson, *Austr i gordum: Old Russian Toponyms in Old Scandinavian Sources*, Moskva (2001), pp. 100-102.

15 E.A. Melnikova, *The Cult of St. Olav in Novgorod and Constantinople*, “Byzantine Annals” LVI (1996), p.....

16 Y.A. Rybina, *Foreign Yards in Novgorod...*, p. 19.



A slightly different opinion about the topography of the possible construction of the pillar structure is presented by V.Ya. Konetsky and K.G. Samoilov, whose article *On some aspects of the culture of medieval Novgorod*<sup>17</sup> finally consolidated in Russian science the opinion about the Scandinavian origin of the semi-columns. The authors provide information about the presence on the manor "A" of the excavation in the Nerevsky site of an unusual orientation. Indeed, in contrast to the norm for standard estate development in Novgorod, which was parallel to the streets, this building was built along the East–West axis. The building, named "D", was archaeologically documented in the layers 26, 22–20 and 17–14, and thus dated from 989 to 1268 at frequent intervals. However, only as of the 15<sup>th</sup> layer (from 1224 to 1238) does it begin to be fixed as the frame of a log house. Before, the whole construction seems to have been very vague. However, the archaeological state of the building does not contradict with the fact that it could be a frame structure. From this, the authors conclude that it is highly likely that the remains of the building entail those of a church, first built using the Scandinavian construction technique, and which was then, at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt in the frame of a log house.

The conception of I.N. Kudryavtsev, V.Ya. Konetsky, and K.G. Samoilov would be convincing if the carefully reconstructed architectural and archaeological situation gave unambiguous conclusions about the actual frame character of the construction, and not only about its incomprehensible design, as well as if the assumption about the presence on estate "A" of a church made using the Scandinavian construction techniques was reflected in the style of carved fragments. At this stage, however, we are faced with a significant contradiction: the braid, which is decorated with the Novgorod find, does not correspond to any of the styles that existed in Scandinavia during this period.

Usually Russian scientists do not pay attention to such stylistic discrepancy. So, V.Ya. Konetsky and K.G. Samoilov consider the decor to be Scandinavian *a priori* ("... any unbiased researcher cannot not see the North European analogs of the woven ornament on the "columns "..."<sup>18</sup>), and I.N. Kudryavtsev cites three Norwegian examples in support of his concept: the churches in Dal, Lardal, and Oyfjell (Øyfjell). However, all of them are from the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Scandinavian art experienced a strong influence of the Romanesque style. The "Romanization" of Scandinavian art commenced at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and was accompanied

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<sup>17</sup> V.Ya. Konetsky, K.G. Samoilov, *Regarding Cultural Aspects of Medieval Novgorod*, NIS VII (XVII) (1999).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

by the emergence of a new set of features, not typical for the visual system of the Viking Age<sup>19</sup>. At the same time, the images in the medallions, which can be compared with those that we see on the Novgorod semi-columns, are fixed on the escarpment of the Norwegian wooden portals at the earliest in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries. These compositional elements, that Scandinavian researchers associate with the advent of the tradition of the Anglo-French “Channel School”<sup>20</sup>, are thus introduced by Romanesque art rather than being autochthonous.

At the same time, the Novgorod findings are archaeologically dated to 1040–80, and were likely carved no later than the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century (taking into consideration that they had to serve for some time for their intended purpose). As such, if these objects were created under the influence of the Scandinavian tradition, it would be a tradition of the art of the Viking era, and not the “Romanized” Scandinavian art of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. During the period of time focused upon here, in Scandinavia there are the styles of Mammen (960–1020), Rignrike (980–1090), and Urnes (1050–1170)<sup>21</sup> (Glosecki, 2016. P. 20), but the decor of the Novgorod “columns” does not fit with any of them.

#### OPINION OF A SCANDINAVIAN RESEARCHER

This discrepancy encouraged Scandinavian scientists to join the discussion, which lead to the Novgorod “columns” becoming known outside of Russian scientific circles. In 2003, Erla Hohler, a leading researcher of carved decoration of Norwegian frame churches, published an article titled *Two Wooden Posts found in Novgorod: A Note on Their Date and Stylistic Connection*<sup>22</sup>. In this article, she convincingly proved that the decor of the semi-columns is not related to Scandinavia. E. Hohler makes her conclusions based directly on the style, and not on the design features or archaeological context. In her research, she applied the scheme used in the study of Scandinavian portal carving, where the formation of wooden sculptures is considered as a process

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19 S.H. Fuglesang, Stylistic Groups in Late Viking and Early Romanesque Art, “Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia. Rome” I (1981), pp. 96–125.

20 E.B. Hohler, *Norwegian Stave Church Sculpture. Analytical Survey, Catalogue (Medieval art in Norway)*, I, Oslo 1999, pp. 101–102.

21 Scandinavian authors often do not indicate the exact dates of styles, and prefer to base them not at the time of creation, but rather on the ornamental features of things. Dates in this study are taken from a general work devoted to animals in medieval art. They are given for the convenience of correlating Scandinavian and Russian monuments, and they should be considered not as exact, but as approximate time intervals.

22 E.B. Hohler, *Two Wooden Posts Found in Novgorod: A Note on their Date and Stylistic connection*, Collegium Medievale, XVII, Oslo 2003.

that takes place under the influence of stone sculptures, which came from mainland Europe. By analyzing the character of the braid, E. Hohler notes that the double line of weaving and the image of mythical creatures, placed in medallions, were widespread in Europe, but only appeared in Scandinavia in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, in her opinion, the correct conclusion is the first idea presented on the topic (recognized by Russian scientists as outdated), that of A.V. Artsikhovsky, i.e., the theory of a single tradition, reflected both by the Novgorod semi-columns and the stone carving of Vladimir-Suzdal cathedrals.

To begin with, E. Hohler, as well as A.V. Artsikhovsky, draws parallels with St. George's Cathedral of Yuryev-Polsky. E. Hohler then builds a logical chain of reasoning: wooden sculpture, of course, existed in Ancient Russia, but no fragments remain. Motifs such as the griffin and centaur most likely came from Byzantium, as did complex weaving with a double contour. Similar motifs are widely distributed in monumental-decorative sculptures of Western Europe, and are found in reliefs of the Vladimir-Suzdal temples, formed under the German-Lombard influence. Given the fact that these reliefs and the carving of the Novgorod columns have much in common, they should be dated to the same time. Thus, the Novgorod columns are a variant of the Vladimir-Suzdal wood carving.

The time difference of two centuries, separating the Novgorod and Suzdal carvings, is explained with a possible error in fixing the finds, which, in turn, is due to a discrepancy in the data of the first publications. Moreover, E. Hohler indicates that she went to Novgorod together with a PhD of architecture Ola Storsletten to study the semi-columns, during which trip they did not confirm a credible affiliation with *stavkirke*.

The obvious difference between the approaches of Russian and Norwegian scientists is due to the different nature of the material with which researchers have had to work. The main tool in the study of Scandinavian portal carvings is a stylistic analysis, which is carried out not only on the formation of the typology, but also using the definition of dates. In this case, however, we are dealing with an archaeological monument, stratigraphically dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and the assumption of an error of two centuries looks overdone, given that similar cases in the Novgorod material are unknown. However, the idea that the Novgorod finds have nothing in common stylistically with Scandinavian art, as expressed by a leading researcher of Norwegian portal carving, is extremely important and deserves more attention.

It is quite interesting that E. Hohler's article became, first, the only publication entirely devoted to the stylistic analysis of the Novgorod finds, and, secondly, it was not reflected in Russian historiography where they continue to be considered a slightly modified version of the Scandinavian

tradition. So, when talking about the ancient banded ornament, M.A. Orlova points to the analogy to the Urnes style<sup>23</sup>. However, the braid of Urnes is significantly different from the monument in question. A distinctive feature of the Urnes is a specific difference in the thickness of the weaving braid, which creates a special refinement, even a “mannerism” of this style. In the Novgorod semi-column with medallions, we see a double ribbon without a difference in thickness, which is an explicit proof that these monuments belong to different artistic traditions.

The only publication that takes into account the opinion of E. Hohler was the article “*The Archaeological Study of the Wooden Religious Architecture of Medieval Novgorod*”<sup>24</sup>, by the Russian researchers M. Rodionova, V. Popov, and the author of these lines, N. Tochilova. This work was published in English in the book *Historical Wooden Architecture in Europe and Russia: Evidence, Study and Restoration*, and therefore has not received wide resonance in the domestic scientific society. This work presents the history of the study of Novgorod finds and shows a range of opinions of the origin of their decor. This work does not offer its own theory, but raises the important question about the complexity and ambiguity of the existing scientific material.

It is appropriate to note another publication whose value is found precisely in the fact that the objects in question are not included in it. The 1992 edition of *From Viking to Crusader. The Scandinavians and Europe 800-1200*<sup>25</sup> contains items collected from around the world related to Scandinavia in the period in question. In particular, the book contains several not so well-known finds from Novgorod and from the Rurik Hillfort (Rurikovo Gorodische), but the Novgorod semi-columns were not included in this collection. Obviously, the authors, of whom E. Hohler was one, were well acquainted with the Novgorod archaeological material and did not include them on purpose, since they did not consider that their decor was of Scandinavian origin.

So, despite the fact that the Novgorod carved semi-columns are the most artistic items from the archaeological layer of the ancient Novgorod, and that they cause legitimate interest for specialists of several disciplines (archaeologists, art historians, and historians of architecture), there is at present no consensus on what artistic tradition they belong to, and what the design elements are. The Artsikhovsky-Hohler theory cannot be fully convincing

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23 M.A. Orlova, *Ornament and Other Elements of Decorative Furniture in the Painting of the Mid-1120s - Early 1160s*, IRI II (2012) 1, pp. 368-369.

24 M.A. Rodionova, V.A. Popov, N.N. Tochilova, *The Archaeological Study of the Wooden Religious Architecture of Medieval Novgorod*, in: *Historic Wooden Architecture in Europe and Russia: Evidence, Study and Restoration*, Basel 2016, pp. 43-48.

25 E. Roesdahl, L. Árnadóttir, T. Edgren, E.B. Hohler, N.-K. Liebgott, G. Tegnér, *From Viking to Crusader. The Scandinavians and Europe 800-1200*, Uddevalla 1992.

due to the fact that the examples presented by Dalmatian and Polish have no obvious similarity with the Novgorod finds, and the iconographic parallels with the decor of St. George's Cathedral of Yuryev-Polsky are from a period too long before the monument. The theory of Kudryavtsev, Konetsky, and Samoilov, in turn, is based on the design features of the parts themselves (dealing, basically, only with the fact that these are semi-columns, not columns), but does not take into account the stylistic aspects of their decor.

For us can be interesting the references to the Novgorod findings in the context of the conversation about the carved stone capitals of the columns of Chernigov. E.I. Arkhipova refers both the Novgorod and Chernigov monuments to the Romanesque tradition, which probably came through the Lombard masters, though not directly, considering that wood carving was an analogue of the later stone version<sup>26</sup>. Indeed, these monuments have a lot in common. Double bands, and a loose undulating ribbon interlase on one in the Novgorod pilasters find parallels in the so-called "capitals of columns of 1860" of Borisoglebsky Cathedral of Chernigov, lost during the war, as well as in the central part of a large palmette, decorating another semi-column, which almost exactly matches the palmette in the center of capital of columns with figures of animals (wolves or cheetahs (?)).

The idea of including the Novgorod semi-columns in the circle of ancient Russian monuments, created under the influence of the Romanesque tradition, seems a good one. However, the difficulty lies in the fact that the wooden fragments from Novgorod remain the sole example of the art of the XI century. The Romanesque influence on the stone carving of Chernigov dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and the "romanization" of the art of Scandinavia also starts at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Of course, one should take into account the possibility of the existence of the decor of wooden architectural buildings of Ancient Russia that is not available for study, but which may have already developed some local tradition. However, without proper evidence, such assumptions always remain unfounded.

#### RETURNING TO THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT

In this situation, it seems to be reasonable to cross-check the concept of A.V. Artsikhovsky with the new data that have appeared in the last half a century. For this, it is necessary to refer to the art of central Europe, or more particularly, to the Wawel Cathedral mentioned by the researcher. In his article, A.V. Artsikhovsky presents as an example one Wawel relief,

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<sup>26</sup> E.I. Arkhipova, *Romanesque Architectural Carving of Borisoglebsky Cathedral in Chernigov*, Kiev-Chernigiv 2012.

seen by him during a trip to Poland and published by J. Strzygowski<sup>27</sup>. This stone fragment is decorated with an interlaced ornament of double bands, although its rapport differs from what we see in Novgorod. However, the A.V. Artsikhovsky example is not the only sample of Wawel reliefs with braided lines. The fragment published by J. Strzygowski was discovered in 1899 while working in the chapel of the Virgin Mary Snejnaya of the Cathedral of Wawel, where Bishop Samuel Matzevsky (1499-1550), buried in 1550, is located. It was built into the gothic wall of the chapel, but originally belonged to an earlier construction<sup>28</sup>.

In the course of conservation works of 1914-1920 in the western wing of the Wawel Cathedral, two more fragments with plaits were found: a capital of the column and a fragment of the column trunk<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, in 1972, almost twenty years after the publication of the article on the Novgorod finds, four more stones that are most interesting in this context, were found<sup>30</sup>. They were discovered during the excavation of the tomb of Elizabeth of Germany (1436-1505), wife of king Casimir IV, located in the chapel of the Holy Cross in the Cathedral of Wawel<sup>31</sup>. Like the first relief, these fragments were reused for a second time.

Today, all seven stone blocks found in different years by a group of Polish researchers are connected with one building – the Church of St. Gereon. Dating, according to different versions, to the first half of the XI century, the middle or, after the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. (Malik, 2000/2001. S. 197; Wawel, 2000. S. 164). Other scholars distinguish the findings of 1972 in a separate group and do not refer them to the Church of St. Gereon, but rather, to the first Wawel Cathedral, raised in the late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>32</sup>. This early date is due to the fact that during excavations undertaken in 1981-1983, the time of the first Basilica was revised in association with the Foundation of the Cracow Archdiocese in 1000 and, accordingly, pushed back to the very beginning of XI or even the end of 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>33</sup>.

27 J. Strzygowski, *Die Altslavische Kunst*, S. 218, fig. 203.

28 B. Malik, *Relikty przedromańskiej dekoracji plecionkowej na Wawelu*, "Studia Waweliana", IX-X, Kraków 2000-2001, S. 195.

29 Ibidem; *Wawel 1000-2000. Jubilee Exhibition 5 May - 30 July 2000. Guidebook (Artistic Culture of the Royal Court and the Cathedral. Cracow Cathedral-Episcopal, Royal and National*, Kraków 2000, p. 164.

30 B. Malik, *Relikty przedromańskiej dekoracji...*, p. 195; *Wawel 1000-2000...*, p. 164.

31 S. Kozieł, *Badania archeologiczne w kaplicy Świętokrzyskiej na Wawelu w latach 1972-1973*, *Studia do Dziejów Wawelu*, IV, Kraków 1978.

32 A. Bukowska, *Questions Surrounding Monumental Architecture of Early Medieval Poland around the Year 1000*, "Situne Dei" (2009), pp. 30-31.

33 J. Firlet, Z. Pianowski, *Sprawozdania z badań w podziemiach katedry wawelskiej 1981-1983. Odkrycie kościoła przedromańskiego*, *Sprawozdania Archeologiczne*, XXXVIII, Kraków 1985.



For a comparison with the Novgorod semi-column, of greatest interest are the Wawel findings from 1972, and more precisely, two of the four fragments, decorated with a band with a medallion, in the center of which is the figure of the animal (fig. 2). Barbara Malik suggests that both fragments are part of the same plate and offers reconstruction, which results in a whole circle, and thus the full rapport of the banded ornament (fig. 3) becomes clear. According to this reconstruction, the decoration of the flagstone consisted of two medallions surrounded by a complex but regular interlacing of bands, in the gaps of which small rosettes were placed. As the surviving fragments of the medallion represented the figure of an animal, there was possibly some image in the second one too.

Obviously, the reconstruction of B. Malik is hypothetical. However, if the complete decoration of the Wawel stone did indeed consist of two medallions, then a parallel to the Novgorod monument can be drawn. A careful examination of the Novgorod semi-column makes it clear that, despite the fact that the braid itself continues until the end of the preserved fragment, its lower part does not contain medallions. That is, it is likely that there were only two circles here initially, and the rest of the surface was occupied by interlace.

The number of medallions, however, is a fragile ground for comparison, since it can only be assumed theoretically, on the basis of a reconstruction. It will be more useful to compare the present preserved elements of the decoration of the Wawel plate and the Novgorod "column" according to the following criteria:

**The structure of interlace bands.** In both cases, the interlace ribbons have a constant width and consist of two convex bundles. The width of the double ribbon of the Novgorod semi-column is about 2 cm, the depth of the background is 1-1.2 cm (according to Kolchin). The width of one ribbon of Wawel braids - 1.2 cm (Malik), the depth of the background is not given. The ornament of the Wawel stone is formed by two ribbons laid side by side, which are interwoven at the intersections according to the basket principle, which results in a complex joint structure. In the gaps between the weave there are small rosettes. The whole composition has a regular structure. In the Novgorod find, this doubling is absent. The ornament is created by one band, and it is denser and without gaps. At first glance it seems that the Novgorod interlace has structure, but on closer examination it turns out that there is no order in it. When coloring the drawing of the Novgorod find in different colors, it became clear that the pattern is created by chaotically thrown loops.

**Medallions.** In both monuments weaving ribbons form round medallions. On the one hand, in the Wawel stone they have the form of a closed circle,

and in Novgorod this circle is formed by ribbons emerging from the braid, and, accordingly, can be imagined as open at the crossing of interlaces. On the other hand, in both monuments a single principle of edging of this circle is applied: interlace bands are thrown onto it. The only difference is that in the Novgorod example the loops are “tied” around the outer outline of the medallion, and thus the zoomorphic motif is inside the second, more clearly defined circle, whereas in the Wawel stone the whole loop of the medallion crosses the loop, so the circle in which the zoomorphic motive is located is less pronounced.

**Border of ornament.** In both monuments the interlacing bands, reaching the edge of the surface set aside for an ornament, turn back making a wavy end at the frieze of the image plane. In addition to this, the ornamental field of the semi-column is bordered by a convex border. There is no such a border on the Wawel stone.

**Zoomorphic images.** Images of animals on the Novgorod semi-column, despite the fact that only the rear of the torso has survived, are more elaborate and better inscribed in the medallions. Both the griffin and the centaur occupy the entire space of the circles allotted to them, stepping with their paws on the edge of the band. In addition, their bodies themselves are modeled more elaborately than on the Wawel stone: the tails are braided, and although structurally unrelated to the framing ornament, they echo its forms. The body of the animal in the stone of Wawel (in the opinion of Malik, the animal depicted is a lamb) has no ornamental details and is not so skilfully inscribed in the composition of the medallion. The animal’s figure is quite schematic, the back of the body far behind the ornamental edge, and the head, on the contrary, rests on the border.

Through this comparison, it is possible to see that, although the decor of the Wawel stones and the Novgorod semi-column cannot to be called identical, they are nonetheless very similar. In both cases, we see an ornament formed by double interlace bands without differences in thickness, and laid around loops. In each of the monuments the main semantic core of interlasing are medallions with zoomorphic figures, and braided ornaments that frame these medallions. Moreover, the connection of the medallions with a wicker box on the structure in both sites is identical: at the edge of the circle loose stitches are present, as if pinning a medallion on an ornamental network. The edges of both monuments are decorated in the same way – the interlace of bands, reaching the border of the surface, turn back, creating a wavy edge of the ornamental field. In addition, the combination of medallions with a woven field is identical in the structure of both monuments: free loops are thrown around the edge of the circle, as if securing the medallion within an ornamental interlacing. The edges of both monuments, the weaving ribbons,

are identically decorated, turning to the surface border, then turning back, creating a wavy edge of the ornamental field.

Obviously, A.V. Artsikhovsky could not know these reliefs, found almost twenty years after the Novgorod finds. His other example from Wawel, apparently, appeared due to a coincidence of circumstances: a 1953 mission to Poland, which he writes about in his article, and the need to find an analogy within the Slavic art. However, further developments in archeology unexpectedly gave us a confirmation of this theory, which at the time of its publication was more likely a random and seemingly inaccurate observation.

#### SLAVIC REGION AND ITALIAN INFLUENCE

The study of the Wawel stones has a complicated and rather unfortunate history. The main article focusing on them, in which the commonalities in their decor are analysed, but which has no direct analogies in other monuments, was released in 1974 by E. Nogich-Czepelova<sup>34</sup>. However, at that time the researcher did not yet know about the latest finds in the Holy Cross chapel and thus she did not include them in her work<sup>35</sup>. Rather, she focused on the capital of the column and on the fragment of column from the excavations of 1914-1920, as well as on the stone block with a braided ornament from the chapel of the Virgin Mary Snejnaya. According to her concept, established among Polish scholars, and later extrapolated to the findings from the chapel of the Holy Cross, the Wawel braiding is a specific pre-Romanesque version of the development of the Italian art of the Carolingian era<sup>36</sup>. Accordingly, the conclusions reached by E. Nogich-Czepelova regarding the decor of the Wawel stones intersect with the conclusions of E.I. Arkhipova on the topic of the origin of the band on the Chernigov capitals of the semi-columns. "In both cases, the researchers find the roots of this tradition in the art of Italian masters, which became widespread in Europe and reached the western frontiers of Russia<sup>37</sup>. There remains an open question about how to categorize the origins of the Novgorod semi-column: did it come into being as an independent reaction to the Italian tradition, or is it the result of a style, or styles, borrowed through an intermediary region?

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<sup>34</sup> E. Nogiec-Czepielowa, *Pozostałości dekoracji rzeźbiarskiej I katedry wawelskiej*, "Folia Historiae Artium" X (1974).

<sup>35</sup> *Wawel 1000-2000...*, p. 164.

<sup>36</sup> E. Nogiec-Czepielowa, *Pozostałości dekoracji rzeźbiarskiej I katedry...*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>37</sup> O.M. Ioannisyany, *On the Origin, Dating and Chronology of Chernigov Architecture of the XII Century*, "Ruthenica" VI (2007).

The seven stone fragments with bands lines are unique monuments that have no exact iconographic analogies and are not recorded in written sources in Poland (Malik, 2000/2001. S.195). However, such braided decor finds very close parallels in the art of the neighboring regions. Thus, a comparative study was carried out between the Wawel finds and the columns from the crypt of the church of St. Vitus in Prague. In this study, E. Nogich-Chepelova made a stylistic analysis of these monuments and found out that the Prague decor is younger than the Wawel finds (Nogieć-Czepielowa, 1974: 22). Czech scholars support this point of view, and even express a hypothesis about a possible entry point for the Polish tradition to the Czech Republic, namely, through the masters that arrived as a consequence of the marriage in 1085 of the Czech king Vratislav II with Svetoslava of Poland (Merhautová, Třeštík, 1983. S. 83). In the context of relations with Russia, it is important to note here that Svetoslava Polskaya was the daughter of the Polish prince Casimir I the Restorer, and the sister of Yaroslav the Wise, Maria Dobronega.

The existence of comprehensive Russian-Polish contacts during this period is unquestionable. Most clearly, they can be traced in the architecture of the Kindom of Galicia – Volhynia, studied by O.M. Ionnisian in the article *The history of Polish-Russian Architectural Relations at the End of the 11<sup>th</sup> - Early 13<sup>th</sup> Century*. Here, he conducts a wide reconstruction of the artistic process taking place on the western borders of the ancient Russian state at the time. He indicates that among the western neighbors of Russia, Poland holds a special place: “None of the medieval states of Europe, bordering Russia, did not come into contact with it in such a huge area [as Poland] – from the Carpathian Mountains in the south to the Neman and Western Dvina in the north. After the establishment of statehood in Russia and in Poland between the Rurik and Piast dynasty, as of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the closest and most deeply rooted dynastic ties are established”<sup>38</sup>.

In the architecture of the northwest, such obvious architectural borrowings have not been found, but rather, other cultural and ethnic aspects are represented, which are reflected in the archaeological material. Research on the ceramics from the 10<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries at Novgorod and Rurik Hillfort (Rurikovo Gorodische), conducted by V.M. Goryunova, showed the presence in these centers of Western samples from the Polish and German territories, as well as local forms imitating them<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, the strength of the west Slavic impulse was such that it was under its influence that potter's

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38 O.M. Ioannisyan, *Regarding the History of Polish-Russian Architectural Ties at the End of the XI - Beginning of the XIII Century*, DID XXII (2002), p. 206.

39 V.M. Goryunova, *Early Ceramics of the Rurikovo Gorodische and Trends in the Development of Early Ceramics Complexes in the Urban Centers of Northern Russia of the 10<sup>th</sup> - early 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Proceedings of IIMK RAS, XVIII, 2005.

wheel was used for the first time in the north-west of Russia<sup>40</sup>. Additionally, we should not overlook the basic ethnic commonality of these two regions: V.V. Sedov convincingly proved the west Slavic origin of Ilmen Slovenians, based on the analysis of burial rituals and craniological material<sup>41</sup>. Of course, the ethnic aspect and the distribution of types of ceramics in the early Slavic environment cannot alone be used as confirmation of the migration of masters, or of the borrowing of artistic traditions. However, they do show the presence of stable Russian-Polish bonds in the pre-state and early state period. This, in turn, could indirectly affect the fact that in the early centuries of Novgorod history, the Polish artistic tradition was received and assimilated with no resistance.

Returning to the discussion about Polish and Czech architecture of this period, it must be stated that the fragment of the column from the Wawel has a lot in common with the columns of the crypt of St. Vitus church, where not only fragmented, but also whole samples have been preserved. Anežka Merhautová and Dušan Třeštík published research on two columns from this cathedral, both dated 1061-1094.<sup>42</sup> One of these columns is very similar to the Wawel example – its surface is decorated with a complex weave of braids, and divided by an oblique braid wrapping around a circle located almost in the middle of the trunk.

A similar decor, consisting of different types of weaves and braids, and braiding on cylindrical surfaces, can be seen on a number of Novgorod objects of decorative and applied art. These items are composed of handles of maces or staffs, which, according to B.A. Kolchin, were most widely distributed distribution in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>43</sup> In turn, the ornamentation is very similar to the one that decorates the other Czech and Polish columns, in the way the “dragon” mane is worked out, as if carved on a handle of one of the Novgorod buckets of the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. When talking about this ornamentation, it is extremely difficult, and indeed, not always possible to find exact parallels, but the way of organizing the wicker (complex weaving by the type of braids, using double or triple ribbons) that decorates many of the pre-Mongolian Novgorod objects has a great similarity to the architectural carving of the Czech Republic and Poland of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>40</sup> V.M. Goryunova, *Regarding the Emergence of Early-ceramics Production in North-West Russia*, in: *At the Origins of Russian Statehood. For the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Archaeological Study of the Novgorod Ryurikovo Gorodishche and Novgorod Regional Archaeological Expedition*, Historical and Archaeological Collection, Sankt Petersburg 2007, p. 238.

<sup>41</sup> V.V. Sedov, *Slavs in the Early Middle Ages*, Moskva 1995, pp. 244-245.

<sup>42</sup> A. Merhautová, D. Třeštík, *Románské umění v Čechách a na Moravě*, Praha 1983, pp. 66-67.

<sup>43</sup> B.A. Kolchin, *Novgorod antiquities. Carved wood*, Moskva 1971, pp. 21-23.

### “STYLISTIC POLYPHONY” ART OF ANCIENT NOVGOROD

It is important to pose a theoretical question concerning the concept of “style” of the early period of Novgorod art. It is characteristic that in the articles of different authors writing about the Novgorod semi-columns, the discussion most often concentrates on only one of them – that decorated with bands and medallions. The semi-column with a palmette is usually mentioned only casually, and is generally not analyzed, although it is likely that both belonged to the same monument. If we consider them together as parts of the same architectural structure, then inevitably there is a dissonance, since it is difficult for us with our modern understanding of style and harmony to picture these fragments in one ensemble.

It is interesting to extrapolate this observation about the stylistic disagreement of the initial period of Novgorod history to a wider range of monuments, for which this region provides such rich pickings. The archaeological wet layer, and multiyear excavations, provide a large amount of material, consisting not only of individual works of high art, but of a much larger amount of common life objects, which provide a good picture of the everyday visual context that surrounded people during this period. As an example, we will choose several monuments belonging to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and try to trace the stylistic sources of their decor. We begin with two 11<sup>th</sup> century wooden beams, and trace<sup>44</sup> them back to the works which were clearly formed under the influence of the art of Scandinavia. Also from 11<sup>th</sup> century are pieces such as the previously mentioned ladle handle in the form of a dragon’s head<sup>45</sup>, the Polish and Czech analogies of which were demonstrated above. Additionally from the same century is the wax tablet<sup>46</sup>, of which the decoration motif on the back side is almost completely repeated in the ornament of a silver Byzantine reliquary of the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>47</sup>. On the other hand, there are also, occasionally, and surprisingly, exact matches. For example, one of the previously mentioned beams and a sledge bar of the 11<sup>th</sup> century are decorated with truly identical “dragon” bodies<sup>48</sup>. Thus, archaeological excavations can at times provide almost exact analogies of previously found items, but these are special cases, usually related to occasions where one should talk about one workshop or one master, and not about the unity of artistic traditions

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44 Ibidem, table 19.

45 G.N. Bocharov, *The Applied Art of Veliky Novgorod*, Moskva 1969, table 54.

46 Ibidem, table 46.

47 V.P. Darkevich, *The Secular Art of Byzantium*, Moskva 1975, p. 225.

48 N.N. Tochilova, *Scandinavian Artistic Tradition in the Wooden Archaeological Monuments of Applied Art of Ancient Novgorod X-XIII Centuries*, “Novgorod and Novgorod Land. History and Archeology” XXIX (2015), p. 268, fig. 3: 2.



as a whole. The world of Novgorod applied art of this period turns out to be extremely diverse, and therefore, it seems to be quite risky to talk about a single “style” in the modern understanding of this term.

In this stylistically chaotic visual environment, some traditions can be detected, however: Byzantine, Scandinavian, and, presumably, Pre-Romanesque. The latter, to the best of our knowledge, was not previously mentioned in discussions of the Novgorod archaeological material, although its presence in the “small forms” of ancient Russian art has been noted upon by researchers<sup>49</sup>. For this reason, when working with Novgorod pieces, we regularly encounter monuments that mystify us with their uniqueness, the key point being not the “originality” of individual finds, but rather, the astounding absence of any unity at all within the visual environment.

As an obvious example of such a stylistic “polyphony”, one well-known ancient Russian monument is worth mentioning. This is the Yuryev Gospel (1119-1128), the initials of which are attributed by researchers to different traditions as separate pieces, namely, Byzantine and northern European<sup>50</sup>. Regarding this feature of the monument, which is a good representation of the state of Novgorod art of the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, M.A. Orlova writes: “Rather, here you can talk about the initial stage of the emergence of individual elements of the new style in the ethnically diverse medieval artistic environment, filled with works of different cultural areas. This demonstrates the art of Novgorod”<sup>51</sup>. In contrast to the Novgorod semi-columns, which can still be attributed to a single building with only some probability, the unity of the St. George Gospel does not cause us to doubt. This is a single monument, and, moreover, a monument not of grassroots culture but of the diversity of traditions stemming from various regions, and which are easily distinguished.

In the end, let us return to the second Novgorod semi-column, decorated with large palmette, which is often called the “Tree of Life”<sup>52</sup>. The decor of this object is split into two parts: an empty field at the bottom, and an ornamental composition at the top. Due to this feature, there can be a feeling that the monument is incomplete. However, it was discovered after being used in a way other than its initial purpose, which indicates it was previously used elsewhere, and therefore completed later. Here, we express an admittedly risky assumption, which, unfortunately, cannot be confirmed at this stage: it might be possible that this piece is the result of a possible division of

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49 L.A. Belyaev, *Common European Elements in Old Russian Art. X-XII Centuries*, “From the History of Russian Culture” I (2000), p. 740.

50 M.A. Orlova, *Ornament and Other Elements of Decorative Furniture...*, pp. 373-374.

51 Ibidem, p. 374.

52 E.I. Arkhipova, *Romanesque Architectural Carving...*, p. 315.

a wooden fragment into the "shaft" and "capital" of the column. Such architectural decoration was widespread in Poland – for example, in the cities of Wąchock and Jędrzejów<sup>53</sup>. Iconographically, the capital of Jędrzejów Enzhejów is especially close to the Novgorod image, decorated with a large palmette with curls on the sides<sup>54</sup>. However, all these examples belong to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and if earlier specimens are not found in Poland, thus proving that this tradition existed here earlier, they cannot be used as direct analogies of the Novgorod "column".

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this article, we would like to summarize the main points.

1. The braided ornament of the Novgorod "column" does not find any analogies in the Scandinavian art of the late Viking Age.

2. The medallions with animals show traces of the Romanesque tradition; however, the monuments known to us, created under its influence in the territories connected with Russia, belong to a later time. The closest analogy we found was in Pre-Romanesque Polish art of the late 10<sup>th</sup> - early 11<sup>th</sup> century, and a more detailed study of Polish-Czech monuments of this period revealed other parallels between Russian and Central European art of this time.

3. Russian-Polish bonds of the early period of the Old Russian state are not as broadly known as Russian-Byzantine or Russian-Scandinavian, but they are nonetheless confirmed by the historical context, as well as matrimonial relations and archaeological material.

4. Despite this, in our view, the decor of the Novgorod semi-columns was created under the influence of Pre-Romanesque art: in this instance it arrived to Russia from Polish lands, which is confirmed by the presence of this tradition in north-western Russia in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This, in turn, proves the emergence of Romanesque elements in previously known monuments of Old Russian art of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>53</sup> M. Walicki, *Dekoracja architektury i jej wystrój artystyczny*, *Dzieje sztuki polskiej: sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska do schyłku XIII wieku*, I, Warszawa 1971, pp. 468-469, w. 565, 573, 574.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, C.468, w. 565.

## ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the Romanesque style influence on the decorative art of Veliky Novgorod in the pre-Mongol period. The main attention is paid to two unique fragments of monumental-decorative wood carving found by A.V. Artsikhovsky during excavations in 1953. Modern Russian researchers refer them to the Northern European artistic tradition, while Scandinavian scholars deny this interpretation and consider that Novgorodian artifacts relate to the Old Rus art itself. The article gives a detailed analysis of the historiography and put forward a new hypothesis. According to it, the Novgorodian fragments represent the local variant of early Romanesque art that probably came to Russia through Central Europe. The style of the Novgorodian finds is analyzed in detail. It does not correspond to the Scandinavian styles that exist during this period. Particular attention is paid to the stylistic comparison of the Novgorodian artifacts and stone remains of the First Wawel Cathedral in Krakow.



## IV. BOOK NOTICES

Maciej Badowicz, *Studium z dziejów wina w państwie zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach XIV-XV wieku. Produkcja, dystrybucja, konsumpcja* (Study on the History of Wine in the Teutonic Order State in Prussia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries. Production, Distribution and Consumption), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2017, 144 pp., appendices, bibliography, paperback.

Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego issued a work by Maciej Badowicz, Ph.D., graduate of the University of Gdańsk, on the history of wine in the Teutonic Order state. The book is composed of an introduction, a summary, a bibliography and four chapters discussing the topic and arranged in the order of the titular problems. Chapter one is about the history of the grapevine and includes a theoretical outline of the methods and conditions of its cultivation as well as the ways of making wine. Chapter two brings the reader closer to natural conditions in Prussia, analyses their impact upon winemaking, and goes on to consider the titular production in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The following chapter presents ways of distributing wine in the Teutonic Order state, while chapter four refers to the history of mentality and culture, with the author focusing on the culture of wine consumption. Noteworthy appendices contain a table featuring the costs of purchasing wine, a comparison of the costs of wine and transport, the amount of wine kept in the cellars of particular convents and commandries in a period spanning from more than a decade to several score years, a comparison of units of the liquid volume of wine, lists of persons responsible for vineyards and a map of vineyards in the Teutonic Order state.

Anna Maleszka

*Chryścianizacja „Młodszej Europy”* (The Christianisation of the “Younger Europe”), ed. Józef Dobosz, Jerzy Strzelczyk and Marzena Matla, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, series: Historia, no. CCXXVIII, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Poznań 2017, 318 pp., introduction in Polish and English, summaries in English, hardcover.

*Chryścianizacja „Młodszej Europy”* is the second of three planned volumes from a series on the Christianisation of Europe and the state of Mieszko. The volume contains fifteen articles dedicated to assorted aspects of Christianisation in countries of so-called Younger Europe, which includes, i.a. the Baltic region, the Balkans, Hungary, and Bohemia. The presented reflections are divided into two parts and preceded by a bilingual introduction; moreover, each article is accompanied by an English-language summary. The first text by Roman Michałowski on the conversion and Christianisation of Saxony is followed by an article by Jakub Morawiec about the most important aspects of the Christianisation of Scandinavia. The Moravian and Slovak setting of the missionary undertakings of the bishoprics of Passau and Salzburg is discussed by Krzysztof Polek, while the text by Marzena Matla indicates the impact of the Christianisation of Bohemia upon the consolidation of the power of the ruling dynasty. Gábor Barabás presented (in English) reflections on the development of the early Church structure in Hungary. The Christianisation of the southern Slavs is described by Zdzisław Pentek, and Jarosław Dudek proposed a general characterisation of the Christianisation of the nomadic steppe peoples of the Eastern Europe. An article by Karol Kollinger analyses sources portraying the stay of Olaf Tryggvason in Rus’ and its connection with the Christianisation campaign conducted by Vladimir I Sviatoslavich. The Christianisation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is the topic of a text by Jarosław Nikodem. The Crusades in Prussia, Pomerania, and Livonia are discussed by Dariusz von Güttner-Sporzyński, whose text opens the second part of the volume. *Strategia misyjna ad gentes na łacińskim Zachodzie – strategie i rozwiązania* by Miłosz Sosnowski, followed by *Doktryna i praktyka misyjna Kościoła na Wschodzie w IV-XII wieku* written by Maciej Salamon, deal with a similar problem, namely, the shaping and adaptation of the Christian doctrine for the needs of Christianisation in the West and East Europe, respectively. Two successive articles cast light on the transformations of mentality and culture among non-Christian societies in the wake of the period of conversion and Christianisation. Andrzej Krawiec wrote about *Konsekwencje chrystianizacji dla społeczności i społeczeństw „Młodszej Europy”*, and Andrzej Pleszczyński outlined *Postawy i działania europejskich społeczeństw pogańskich*

*w średniowieczu wobec misji chrześcijańskich – zarys problemu.* The text closing the volume – Marek Cetwiński's *Początki chrześcijaństwa w pamięci historycznej „Młodszej Europy”* – is about the functioning of Christianisation in the collective memory and written tradition in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary.

Anna Maleszka

Norbert Delestowicz, Wojciech Lorek and Robert T. Tomczak, *Poczet wielkich mistrzów krzyżackich w Malborku 1309-1457* (Gallery of the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order in Malbork, 1309-1457), Avalon, Kraków 2018, 342 pp., bibliography, paperback.

*Poczet wielkich mistrzów krzyżackich w Malborku 1309-1457*, a successive publication on the Polish book market about the Teutonic Order, issued in 2018 by Wydawnictwo Avalon, was written in a popular form by Wojciech Lorek and Norbert Delestowicz, Ph.D. students at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, as well as Robert T. Tomczak, graduate of the same university. The book contains seventeen biographical sketches about the grand masters of the Teutonic Order residing in Malbork. The gallery also includes Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, who “ultimately changed the course of politics pursued by the Teutonic Knights from the Mediterranean Basin to the Baltic Sea” (p. 9). Chronologically, the publication encompasses the years 1302–1467, with each biographical note preceded by an illustration showing a coat of arms of a given master. The note also contains information about the origin of the dignitaries, their careers in the Order and their policies as heads of the Order on the background of assorted events and social, political and economic processes in a given period. The presented publication – outfitted with an introduction, a summary, and a bibliography – popularizes research results of Polish and German historians studying the Teutonic Order.

Anna Maleszka

Mateusz Goliński, *Dzieje miast praskich do początku XV wieku* (History of the Towns of Prague to the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century), Księgarnia Akademicka, Wrocław 2018, 476 pp., bibliography, lists, maps and indexes, paperback.

*Dzieje miast praskich do początku XV wieku* – a monograph by a specialist on the history of towns and burghers in the Central Europe – is the first complex presentation of the history of mediaeval Prague to appear on the Polish book market. The author made use of copious literature on the subject (Polish, German and Czech) as well as available sources, including archaeological



ones. Mediaeval Prague was composed of a number of separate communes and town planning complexes. The author mirrored this division in the layout of his work by dedicating a separate chapter to each unit. The publication consists of twelve chapters, an introduction, a preface, a bibliography, lists, maps and indexes. The introduction renders precise the author's intention – Mateusz Goliński cast light on the natural conditions of the sites of the development of the towns of Prague; he also outlined the cultural backdrop of this terrain and summed up the state of knowledge about the onset of the settlement, i.e. the castle-town of Prague. Chapter one, *Podgórze*, analyses the functioning of the centres of "proto-urban" settlements (p. 23) around the Prague castle-town, i.a. from the viewpoint of spatial development, the economic activity of the population, social structure, ownership relations and the Church. The following chapter, *Narodziny miasta praskiego*, discusses the moulding of the Old Town by examining this process upon a number of levels: legal, political, spatial, socio-ethnic and religious. Reflections contained in chapter three, *Kształtowanie specyfiki Starego (Więszczego) Miasta*, concern the further development of the Old Town, its laws, economy, social life, self-governments and impact upon cultural, social and religious life in the region and beyond. Chapter four deals with the New (Lesser) Town, today known as Malá Strana (p. 137) – its emergence, foundations and jurisdiction. The next chapter is dedicated exclusively to the inner politics of the towns, i.e. fourteenth-century transformations occurring in the Bohemian state and the ensuing new quality in relations between the towns of Prague and the monarchy. Chapter ten, *Zewnętrzne uwarunkowania w funkcjonowaniu metropolii*, could be regarded as a continuation of those reflections and closely studies relations between the towns of Prague and Bohemian monarchs and lords, as well as other external subjects, i.a. the Church. Fourteenth-century social and community life in the Old Town became the topic of deliberations pursued in chapter six, which also contains sub-chapters about spatial transformations taking place during that period. The economic aspect of the functioning of Prague in the fifteenth century was extensively depicted in the following chapter, with chapter eight and nine presenting the history of the foundation and growth of the New Town and the Lesser Town, respectively. The author devoted much attention to local spatial solutions. Chapter eleven is a characteristic of the population of the Prague towns – its professional structure, economic prosperity, the ambitions of prosperous burghers resulting in social stratification, ethnic relations, religiosity and the growing militarisation of the townspeople. Finally, chapter twelve paints a likeness of the towns of Prague envisaged as a setting for fifteenth-century processes and events of supra-regional significance, i.a. Reformation movements.

Anna Maleszka

Paweł A. Jeziorski, *Proskrypcja i banicja w miastach pruskich późnego średniowiecza* (Proscription and Banishment in the Prussian Towns During the Late Middle Ages), Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa 2017, 334 pp., bibliography, abstracts in English and German, list of illustrations, index of persons, index of places, subject index for the Elbląg court register, paperback.

The problem of banishment and proscription in the late mediaeval Prussian towns has not occupied much space in heretofore historiography despite the fact that sources pertaining to Elbląg or Bartoszyce are preserved in manuscripts. Paweł A. Jeziorski, known as the author of publications dealing with the social margin in the Prussian and Livonian towns of the Later Middle Ages, decided to fill this gap with the presented monograph composed basically of two parts. In part one, *Proskrypcja i banicja w miastach pruskich późnego średniowiecza z uwzględnieniem kontekstu środkowoeuropejskiego*, the author focused his attention on differences between banishment and proscription, as a rule treated as identical both in tradition and pertinent literature. In doing so he analysed the proscription mechanism in sources of town law in the Central Europe upon the basis of selected examples, choosing as his point of departure *The Saxon Mirror* (*Sachsenspiegel*) and subsequently considering the Magdeburg, Chełmno (Kulm) and Lübeck law and particular town laws, i.e. town statutes and free city statutes (*Willkühr*). A further part of the book analyses the proscription procedure within the context of the municipal system. An interesting fragment deals with the participation of the Teutonic Order in the proclamation of proscriptions in the Prussian towns. Paweł A. Jeziorski proposed an analogous approach to banishment in the late mediaeval Prussian towns by analysing town statutes and associated procedures. Noteworthy chapters discuss the perception of proscribed and banished persons in the urban environments of the period. Separate attention is drawn to equating proscription and banishment in heretofore historiography, with the author resolving a number of terminological questions in select sources. The chapter *Średniowieczne rejestry/księgi proskrybowanych/banitów* brings the reader closer to this specific source material containing lists of persons affected by banishment or proscription. The author cited examples from the Central Europe: the towns granted the German law and the towns of Prussia governed by the Chełmno and Lübeck law. As a result the reader is offered a survey of preserved registers and an in-depth analysis of sources encompassing the construction of entries pertaining to proscription and banishment in preserved court registers. Chapter three (part one) focuses on registers of the proscribed conceived as a source for the history of crime,

exemplified by the Prussian towns. The author thus embarked upon the fragmentary nature of sources, types of crimes (manslaughter, assault/bodily injury, arson, robbery, etc.), second offences and, so to speak, the profile of perpetrators and their victims (accusers), followed by a copious presentation of violence in the daily life of Prussian burghers. A separate chapter completing the first part of the publication analyses withdrawals from proscription, annulments of the verdict of banishment and the act of reprieve performed by a newly elected grand master of the Teutonic Order.

Part two of the discussed monograph is an edition of the Elbląg court register preserved in a manuscript in the Acts of the Town of Elbląg fond (call no. 369,1/131) at the State Archive in Gdańsk. The preceding introduction contains comments on the extant manuscript (state of preservation, watermarks, dates and place of origin) and a presentation of the principles of the latter's edition. The text is outfitted with an extensive critical apparatus including not only footnotes (textual and subjective) but also indexes of persons, places and subjects.

Radosław Biskup

Krzysztof Kaczmarek, *Święcenia duchowieństwa w diecezji gnieźnieńskiej w latach 1482-1493* (Ordinations of the Clergy in the Gniezno Diocese in the Years 1482-1493), Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu, Poznań 2018, 401 pp., appendices, bibliography, index of persons and authors, summary in English, paperback.

This is a successive publication by Krzysztof Kaczmarek on the ordination of members of the lay clergy. This time the author examined ordinations in the Gniezno diocese upon the basis of preserved lists of bishops from the years 1482-1493. The book is divided into three chapters, with the first one characterising the mentioned lists as sources and drawing attention to their sometime imprecise description as "ordination books"; actually, they were lists of the ordained added to acts of activities performed by bishops. The author analysed the origin of this material and its form. Chapter two is a presentation of the praxis of ordination in the titular diocese at the end of the fifteenth century. Here, the author discussed questions concerning assorted degrees of ordination, the bishops performing the act, the dates and places of the ordination as well as the "entitlement" determining the possibility of taking higher holy orders. In doing so he took a closer look at statistics concerning the analysed problem. Chapter three depicts portraits of the ordained based on analyses of issues from a prosopographic-method questionnaire, i.e. territorial and social origin as well as education. Krzysztof

Kaczmarek also briefly draw attention to the subsequent history of ordained members of the clergy. An integral and highly essential part of the publication, taking up half of its size, consists of appendices. Appendix I contains the source edition of the lists which served the author for the purpose of analyses. In Appendix II Krzysztof Kaczmarek made an alphabetical list of the ordained clergy together with information about the successive taking of holy orders.

The publication is part of recently developing studies on ordination in mediaeval Poland, particularly thoroughly pursued by the author. A fundamental contribution made by the book is the edition of sources opening new research opportunities, especially within the range of prosopographic studies dealing with the clergy, which made considerable progress in recent Polish historiography.

Marcin Sumowski

*Katalog rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Uniwersyteckiej w Toruniu* (Catalogue of Mediaeval Manuscripts of the University Library in Toruń), ed. Marta Czyżak with the cooperation of Monika Jakubek-Raczkowska and Arkadiusz Wagner, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu, Toruń 2016, LVIII, 462 pp., introduction in Polish and German, indexes of manuscripts, incipits, persons, subjects and places, list of illustrations, paperback.

The presented catalogue of 72 mediaeval manuscripts kept at the University Library in Toruń is the outcome of over 70 year-long studies conducted by the staff of the Manuscript Section at the University Library. After 1945, as a consequence of World War II turmoil, the overwhelming majority of the valuable manuscripts (66) originating from the former State and University Library in Königsberg found themselves among the resources of the then newly emergent University Library in Toruń. The fond in question encompasses eleventh-fifteenth-century codices from Germany, Italy and, predominantly, the territory of the former Teutonic Order demesne in Prussia. The manuscripts comprise an invaluable source for researchers studying the intellectual and religious culture of the former Teutonic Order state.

The point of reference for the authors of the catalogue consisted of principles conceived primarily at the Jagiellonian Library in Kraków (*Zasady opisu katalogowego rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*) as well as other European libraries. This is the reason why the catalogue contains, in accordance with the above-mentioned principles, manuscripts originating prior to 1520. Their sequence in the catalogue is designated by inventory call

numbers granted to the codices in 1948–1950. The description of each codex follows a scheme: I. general description of the codex (including current and former call numbers, language of the main text, time of the origin of the manuscript, writing material, size and numbers of leafs), II. table of contents (including distinction of particular units of the text with attention paid to the author and title, and incipits and explicits in the case of unknown texts; and fragments of texts prepared according to the publishing instruction), III. bibliographical description (including structure of sections, parchment and watermarks, script and ornaments, notes and glosses, binding, state of preservation, history of the codex and bibliography, including Internet access to codex catalogues). The lavishly illustrated catalogue is supplemented with an introduction in German as well as a concordance of current and pre-war call numbers and indexes (cited manuscripts, incipits, persons, subjects and places, dated manuscripts).

Radosław Biskup

Paweł Kawiński, *„Sacrum” w wyobrażeniach pogańskich Prusów. Próba interpretacji na pograniczu historii i etnologii religii* (The Sacred in the Imagery of Pagan Prussians. An Attempted Interpretation on the Borderline of the History and Ethnology of Religion), Monumenta Literaria Prussiae. Series C: Monografie, no. 8, Oficyna Wydawnicza Pruthenia, Olsztyn 2018, 409 pp., summary in English, lists of maps and illustrations, bibliography, indexes, paperback.

*„Sacrum” w wyobrażeniach pogańskich Prusów. Próba interpretacji na pograniczu historii i etnologii religii*, the second publication of Oficyna Wydawnicza Pruthenia, is a monograph by Paweł Kawiński, Ph.D., graduate of the University of Gdańsk. At the same time, it is the second book issued by this publishing house intent on reconstructing the history of Prussian culture from the viewpoint of the Teutonic Order. The author's objective is to present the manner of comprehending "the concept of sanctity in the collective consciousness of the Prussians" (p. 52). In order to achieve this goal, he resorted to a corpus of sources relatively rarely used by historians studying the history of mediaeval Prussia and enhanced his historian's workshop with methodological inspirations borrowed from the accomplishments of cultural anthropology. The selected topic called for subjecting the collected material to linguistic analysis. The publication is divided into an introduction, five chapters, a summary, maps and illustrations, a bibliography and indices. In the opening chapter the author constructed a conceptual backdrop of imagery functioning in the culture of the Prussians (life and death, world,

man, time and space). The second chapter analyses axiological categories in the Prussian language ("good", "evil", etc.) as well as the vocabulary of the Prussians associated with ritual activity and the sphere of the *sacrum*. Chapter three is dedicated to the cult and its organisation among the Prussians as well as the pantheon of deities in Prussian religious beliefs. The following chapter, *Przejawy sacrum w waloryzacji przestrzeni*, being of particular interest to historians, is about the emergence of religious cult centres, their varied functions and the impact of beliefs upon the range and character of Prussian settlements. Chapter five tackles the problem of belief in life after death among the Prussians.

Anna Maleszka

Adam Kosecki, *Miasta kujawskie w średniowieczu. Lokacje, ustrój i samorząd miejski* (Towns of Kuyavia during the Middle Ages. Locationes, Municipal System and Self-government), Avalon, Kraków 2018, 564 pp., lists of tables, maps and illustration, bibliography, paperback.

*Miasta kujawskie w średniowieczu. Lokacje, ustrój i samorząd miejski* – a monograph by Adam Kosecki, Ph.D., graduate of the Kazimierz Wielki University of Bydgoszcz – is an attempt at a complex presentation of the mediaeval history of towns founded in the land of Kuyavia. The book is composed of four chapters as well as an introduction, a summary, maps, lists and a bibliography. In the introduction the author described the purposes of his publication: a synthesis "concerning the emergence of Kuyavian urban centres prior to the end of the fifteenth century", i.e. "following *locatio* processes and the emergence and development of institutions governing the towns of Kuyavia" (p. 8). In doing so, he presented extensively the state of research on problems of interest to him. A. Kosecki perceived towns predominantly as a legal phenomenon, limiting himself to analysing three elements of the origin and functioning of the urban centres mentioned in the sub-title. Chapter one lists in chronological order successive Kuyavian *locationes* in the light of written sources and literature on the subject. The author's intention was to establish, as meticulously as possible, the chronology of the origin of the titular towns. A summary of the chapter consists of tables illustrating the research. Chapter two collects the outcome of analyses of the contents of *locatio* privileges and other documents registering the progress of a given town. The author closely followed accessible written sources and set up a catalogue of the ensuing rights and duties of the citizens of each town. Urban centres were divided into three groups: founded in ducal and royal estates (2.1.), established in Church estates (2.2.) and established in private towns, i.e. founded in the estates of



the gentry (2.3.). Chapter three, divided according to the same criterion, examined the functioning of settlers and the activity of voigts in the towns of Kuyavia. Particular aspects of the activity of the officials of territorial lords were depicted with the assistance of numerous examples. The chapter ends up with a brief summary. A subsequent stage in the growth of *locatio* towns, i.e. the appearance of self-government urban organs, is analysed in chapter four. Here, the author focused attention on court benches, town councils and the office of the mayor – their evolution and functioning in particular towns. This chapter also ends up with a wider comparison – a summary of the conducted analysis. Numerous maps closing the volume present the state of the Kuyavian urban network in assorted stages of its development.

Anna Maleszka

Rafał Kubicki, *Zakony mendykanckie w Prusach Krzyżackich i Królewskich od XIII do połowy XVI wieku* (Mendicant Orders in Teutonic Order and Royal Prussia from the Thirteenth Century to the Mid-sixteenth Century), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk 2018, 448 pp., appendices, summary in English, bibliography, lists of maps, illustrations and tables, indexes of places and persons, paperback.

This synthesis by Rafał Kubicki is about the functioning of mendicant orders in late mediaeval and early modern Prussia. The range of the author's interests thus encompasses the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Austin Friars, the Carmelites and the Observant Friars. The publication is composed of five chapters, of which the first one presents problems associated with the foundation of mendicant monasteries in the titular territory. The author examined foundation acts as well as planned and unrealised foundations and analysed the original endowment of the monasteries together with its changes in later periods. The following chapter discusses the activity of monasteries upon the basis of an analysis of their inner organisation and surrounding. Chapter three contains reflections on local leading groups within the orders, with the author drawing attention to the social, territorial and national origin of the monks and their place within the intellectual elite. In chapter four he took a close look at the peripheral character of Prussian monasteries, while the fifth chapter considers the role played by mendicant orders in the Church and society, with due mention of their relations with the diocesan and lay clergy as well as with territorial authorities. The presented reflections end on the Reformation and its effects for the orders in question.

The publication is supplemented with numerous illustrations and maps helping to situate the discussed problem. The author also prepared useful

appendices: the first contains lists of the superiors of Prussian mendicant monasteries, the second features an edition of a fragment of a seventeenth-century chronicle concerning the foundation of Carmelite monasteries, and the third includes a list of Franciscans from a monastery in Gdańsk. The considerable merit of the publication lies in the fact that it is a synthesis, which makes it possible to treat it not only as an analytical publication but also as a textbook.

Marcin Sumowski

Juliusz Latkowski, *Mendog, król litewski (ok. 1203 - 12 sierpnia 1263)* (Mendog, King of Lithuania, ca. 1203 - 12 August 1263), Avalon, Kraków 2018, 223 pp., appendices, indexes of persons and places, paperback.

King Mendog joined a group of European rulers whose biographies were published by the Avalon publishing house. This is a new edition of a biography by Juliusz Latkowski, issued for the first time in 1892 in the "Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności Wydziału Historyczno-Filozoficznego w Krakowie" series. The discussed edition is supplemented with a preface by Jan Jurkiewicz, presenting the then state of knowledge about Mendog and discussing later, including present-day works on the protagonist as well as bringing the reader closer to the author of the earliest biography, which still occupies a prominent place in Polish and Lithuanian historiography. The Latkowski publication consists of eighteen chapters, of which the first casts light on the background of the examined events, while successive ones describe Mendog's activity as the ruler of Lithuania, arranged in chronological order all the way to his death. The author focused his attention primarily on relations between Mendog and neighboring states as well as questions involving the Church and the christening of Lithuania. The book is outfitted with appendices, i.a. a critical presentation of seven documents presumably issued by Mendog. The biography made use of archival and narrative sources as well studies in Polish, German, and Russian.

Anna Maleszka

*Najstarsze księgi kamlarskie Głównego Miasta Gdańska z XIV-XV wieku* (Earliest Account Records of the Main Town of Gdańsk from the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries), ed. Marcin Grulkowski, *Studia i Materiały do Dziejów Kancelarii w Gdańsku*, vol. 2, Series B: *Księgi kamlarskie* (Account Records), vol. 1, Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Gdańsk 2017, 378 pp., bibliography, abstract, tables, indexes of persons, places and subjects, paperback.

*Najstarsze księgi kamlarskie Głównego Miasta Gdańska z XIV-XV wieku* contains an edition of three earliest account records (Kämmerei books) from the Main Town of Gdańsk: an account record of the Main Town of Gdańsk from 1379-1382, accessible registers of the Kämmerei of the Main Town of Gdańsk from the second half of the fifteenth century and a register of the revenues and expenses of the Kämmerei of the Main Town of Gdańsk from 1481-1483. The presented publication inaugurates a series which is to include mediaeval registers kept by the office of the Kämmerei of the Main Town of Gdańsk. In the introduction Marcin Grulkowski outlined two other publishing sub-series connected with the history of the functioning of the chancellery of the Main Town of Gdańsk: Series A, which is to encompass monographs on assorted problems associated with the town chancellery in Gdańsk during the Middle Ages and the modern age, and Series C – to include an edition of tax registers and records. Subsequently, the author characterised the functioning of the office of the Kämmerei in the Main Town of Gdańsk during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries against a wide comparative Hanseatic background. In the view of the character of the titular institution he brought the reader closer to monetary relations prevailing in late mediaeval Prussia by indicating the significance of published sources for the history of monetary circulation in the Baltic Sea basin. The edition of the three mentioned sources was based on a publishing instruction devised by Adam Wolff and German instructions by Walter Heinemeyer, Matthias Thumser and Dieter Heckmann. Chapters II, III and IV contain the editions being arranged according to the following scheme: outer appearance, inner configuration and contents of the source, summary in German and edition. The editions are accompanied by illustrations and a copious critical apparatus.

Radosław Biskup

*Origines et Mutationes. Transfer – Exchange – Power*, ed. Aleksandra Girsztowt, Piotr Kitowski, Andrzej Gierszewski, Libron – Filip Lohner, Kraków 2017, 289 pp., introduction in Polish and English, Polish summaries, bibliography, paperback.

The reviewed English-language collective work *Origines et Mutationes. Transfer – Exchange – Power*, published in 2017, appeared thanks to the financial support of the University of Gdańsk. This is a collection of topics considered in the course of two editions of the “Origines et Mutationes” international conference dedicated to the history and culture of Baltic countries. The publication is divided into two parts: the first one *Transfer* is composed of nine articles and the second one *Exchange and Power* – of eight texts. The Middle Ages being the most broadly presented period in the articles constituting this volume. From the geographical point of view the majority of texts deal with the history of states along the southern Baltic coast. The publication contains a bilingual introduction and a bibliography of sources and works used by the authors of the articles. Each article is supplemented with an abbreviation in Polish and has a title in Polish.

The volume starts with a text by Jakub Szerle from the University of Gdańsk, *Countries of the Baltic Sea basin in light of Historia Ecclesiastica by Orderic Vitalis*, focused on a search for and a discussion on the scarce mentions of Baltic countries contained in the titular work. Grzegorz Płotka, from the same university, presented an outline of a biography of Duke Przybysław (Pribislav) II of Mecklenburg, based on pertinent writings and sources – a summary of the state of related research. The following text *The mendicant orders in the State of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in the 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries – research proposal* by Rafał Kubicki (University of Gdańsk) constitutes an outline of a research project composed of an abbreviated abstract and a fuller presentation of points comprising the latter. The merit of the text lies in the expansive literature on the subject collected in the footnotes. The article by Urszula Sowina from the Polish Academy of Sciences and Wacław Kulczykowski from the University of Gdańsk *The first urban water supply systems in the State of the Teutonic Knights: the transfer of hydrotechnical knowledge* is about the development of “the hydrotechnical infrastructure” (p. 61) in the Teutonic Order state. The authors sought inspiration for the introduction of the titular innovation in similar solutions functioning in the mediaeval West and South Europe. Artur Karpacz (Jagiellonian University) wrote about *God’s symbol or Saint John the Baptist attribute – depictions of the Lamb of God in mediaeval Poland and the state of the Teutonic Order in Prussia*. His article, containing numerous illustrations, discusses ways of portraying the Lamb of God in sculpture, ornaments and painting in mediaeval Poland and Prussia.

Justyna Kluska (Polish Academy of Sciences) is the author of a second text on the history of art *From imperial Prague to Baltic Sea. State of research on transfer of artistic ideas between Bohemia and Eastern Pomerania in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries*. This is about the permeation of ideas and artistic currents as well as artists from Bohemia, primarily Prague – the new imperial seat and thus the new cultural and political centre of Central Europe. The article is supplemented with over ten illustrations. The next author Krzysztof Wroński (University of Gdańsk) analyzed the impact of the development of firearms upon transformations in the architecture of castles in Western Pomerania during period spanning three centuries (from fourteenth to seventeenth). The object of interest of Karolina Belina from Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen is university registers and *Stammbuch* (books of friendship) which enable her to investigate early modern era students from the Baltic region. The first part of the publication ends with an article by Andreas Kappelmayer from Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. This is also about early modern history, and the author draws attention to the activity of Count John Casimir Wittelsbach of Pfalz-Zweibrücken-Kleeberg involved in recruiting North German soldiers and officers into the Swedish army. The second part of the volume, *Transfer and Exchange*, begins with an article by Jan Eskildsen, *Slavic Church Architecture in Scandinavia. Early medieval exchange of architecture and possible Eastern Orthodox influence*, reflecting on the sources of the rounded solids of churches in Scandinavia; the text includes photographs of buildings. Marius Ščavinskas from the University of Memel wrote about *The stage of "spotted" Christianisation in West Baltic society. Links to social transformations in the 13<sup>th</sup> century*, presenting the conception of "spotted" Christianisation during the era of Christian missions. In accordance with this notion Christianity took root locally, around important persons and centres: the author proposed reflections about the land of Chełmno and Prussia. The cult of St. Olaf within the Baltic region is the topic of an article by Karl Christian Alvestad from the University of Winchester, with attention focused on the cult by 1300; the author also summed up heretofore pertinent studies. In his second text published in this volume Artur Karpacz presented a study on the parish church in Łazany as an illustration of the strong impact of the Gothic style upon modern architecture in Polish lands. Piotr Kołpak (Jagiellonian University) discussed the absence of canonised rulers among Early Piast monarchs. In doing so, he studied the possible reasons for this phenomenon by comparing political conditions in the Piast realm and neighboring states in which the canonisation of rulers took place. In his second article Rafał Kubicki drew attention to windmills in the Teutonic Order state, which, he argued, played a subsidiary role in relation to water mills. His article is accompanied by a list of windmills in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

as well as two maps illustrating the sites of both types of mills. Jakub Rogulski (Jagiellonian University) prepared an abbreviated version of an article published in "Zapiski Historyczne" (2017, fasc. 82) *Titles, seals and coats of arms as symbols of power and importance of the Lithuanian dukes before the Union of Lublin*. Cezary Wołodkiewicz, author of the closing article *Wolne Miasto Gdańsk jako element napoleońskiej potęgi w rejonie Morza Bałtyckiego w latach 1807-1812. Aspekty militarne*, concentrated on the town of Gdańsk as a link in the political and military system introduced by Napoleon. The article is supplemented with two diagrams indicating the nationality of members of the local garrison across the years and a table showing artillery equipment and buildings intended for quarters.

Anna Maleszka

Jacek Osiński, *Z dziejów Polski wczesnopiastowskiej. Genealogia, ustrój, podbój* (From the History of Early Piast Poland. Genealogy, System and Conquest), Avalon, Kraków 2018, 296 pp., bibliography, indexes, paperback.

In 2018 Jacek Osiński, Ph.D. and a graduate of the Institute of History at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, published his successive book about Piast Poland. This collection of sketches *Z dziejów Polski wczesnopiastowskiej. Genealogia, ustrój, podbój* is closely connected with the author's studies and conceptions concerning the origin and character of feudal fragmentation in mediaeval Poland. The book is composed of ten chapters-sketches and contains an introduction, a bibliography and indices. The introduction indicates that the publication presents the author's views concerning feudal fragmentation and is closely associated with his anticipated next publication about the Statute of Bolesław Wrymouth (Krzywousty). The first chapter is a summary of the state of research on connections between the Piast dynasty and Pomerania, followed by a critical discussion of sources mentioning the mysterious Siemomysł (Zemuzil) of Pomerania. The third sketch features the author's research and hypotheses about the state system during the lifetime of Mieszko II. In the fourth chapter Jacek Osiński wrote about the reign of Kazimierz Restorer (Odnowiciel) from the point of view of Polish-Bohemian relations. The author envisaged Polish-Bohemian relations as a key for reflections pursued also in chapter five, which analyses the last decade of the rule of Władysław Herman. In turn, Polish-Pomeranian relations at the time of Władysław Herman are the topic of the seventh sketch, while the eighth one presents the author's deliberations on rivalry between the successors of Herman and the impact exerted on their policies by relations with Pomerania and the Bohemian state. The reign of Bolesław the Wrymouth



is the topic of chapter six *Zakres władzy zwierzchniej w Polsce przed wydaniem statutu przez Bolesława Krzywoustego*, chapter nine is about *Bolesław Krzywousty wobec nadnoteckiego władztwa (1108-1113)* and the last, tenth chapter, discusses *Problem związków rodzinnych łączących Świętobora i Świętopętkę z Bolesławem Krzywoustym*.

Anna Maleszka

Monika Raczkowska-Jakubek, Juliusz Raczkowski with the cooperation of Tomasz Kowalski, translation by Joanna M. Arszyńska, *Średniowieczne malowidła ściennie w kamienicach mieszczańskich Starego i Nowego Miasta Torunia. Medieval Wall Paintings in Burghers' Houses of the Old and New Town of Toruń*, Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, Toruń 2017, 545 pp., bilingual (Polish and English) edition, appendix, paperback.

A presentation of the outcome of research conducted in 2015-2017 for the purpose of creating catalogues of mediaeval polychromes in burghers' houses in Toruń. The authors divided their publication into three parts: the first one being a presentation of discoveries, conservation and sites of the research; part two focuses on artistic themes, including a characteristic of composition systems, the workshop and the style and chronology of the paintings; and the last part deals with the functions and contents of the polychromes.

The merit of the presented publication lies in a catalogue of murals preceded by a plan of the town with marked sites of the polychromes. Each object is described in detail, including the date of its discovery, the historical and current function of the interior, a characteristic of the object and the state of its preservation and accompanying research. The documentation is supplemented by ground-plans and cross-sections of interiors as well as photographs. The catalogue also has an appendix recording paintings currently damaged or plastered over – pertinent data was obtained in the course of research.

The presented publication is an extremely valuable contribution not only from the point of view of historians of art. The reader's attention is drawn by lavish illustrations. Another unquestionable asset is the fact that this is a bilingual study making possible a wide reception of the authors' findings within international historiography. This feature is particularly important considering the imposing number of Toruń murals, exceptional on a European scale.

Marcin Sumowski

*Traktat „De institutione regii pueri”* (The *De institutione regii pueri* Treatise), ed. Christian Gastgeber, Piotr Oliński, *Fontes Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu*, vol. 110, Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu, Toruń 2016, 81 pp., illustrations, bibliography, introduction in German, indexes of persons and places, paperback.

The initiator of publishing the *De institutione regni pueri* treatise was Ingrid Roitner, to whom the publishers Christian Gastgeber and Piotr Oliński dedicated the presented edition. The titular educational treatise matches the current of this type of literature written in all epochs and was edited for Vladislaus II (Władysław Jagiellończyk) in the name of his mother Queen Elizabeth of Habsburg in connection with the anticipated birth of his first-born son Louis. This is the second edition of the work, whose manuscript – the base of the edition – is at present kept at Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (call no. “Cod. 10573”). The first edition – with a modest research apparatus and devoid of numerous fragments of the original – was issued by Heinrich Zeissberg in 1877. In the introduction the authors embarked upon the question of the preserved foundation of the edition and copies. By referring to findings made by Aleksander Przezdziecki they established the time of the origin of the treatise as “from December 1502 to early 1503”. The introduction devotes much space to authorship, which historiography attributed to Kallimach, Queen Elizabeth, Erazm Ciołek or Maciej Drzewicki. The publishers, presenting the discussion concerning the author (authors) and conducted since the mid-nineteenth century, undertook, upon the basis of the contents, an attempt at identifying the author and concluded that he was probably an Italian humanist from Rome or South Italy. Next, they embarked upon outlining the intertextual analysis conducted earlier by other researchers, situating the treatise within the current of educational literature preserved from antiquity and indicating numerous pertinent references in the discussed text. The consecutive chapter introduces the reader to the structure of the treatise and, following the example of Antoni Danysz, mentions the most important topics (i.a. religious education, virtues, choice of a teacher, scheme of lessons, recreation, literary studies, hunting, good manners and politeness, ambition, etc.). The reception of the treatise and the history of the Viennese manuscript are considered separately and followed by a description of the manuscript, which is the basis of the edition, and a presentation of the principles of editing it, the point of departure being Adam Wolff’s publishing instruction intended for written historical sources by the mid sixteenth century. In accordance with principles observed in the

“Fontes Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu” series the publishers included a preface in German.

Radosław Biskup

Sławomir Zonenberg, *Stosunki krzyżacko-mendykanckie w Prusach do 1466 roku* (Relations between the Teutonic Order and Mendicant Orders in Prussia until 1466), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2018, 424 pp., bibliography, indexes of persons and places, summary in English, paperback.

The presented publication embarked upon the question of relations between mendicant orders in mediaeval Prussia and the local territorial ruler, i.e. the Teutonic Order. The author chose the year 1466 as the closing stage of his reflections – it was then that the knights lost a considerable part of their demesne, including regions with most of the mendicant monasteries. The book is divided into four chapters discussing relations between the Teutonic Order and the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Austin Friars and the Carmelites.

The publication is based on traditional methodology aiming at a description of the titular relations upon the basis of an analysis of accessible sources. Despite the fact that the examined problems had already been tackled on the margin of numerous studies, heretofore historiography did not situate relations between the mendicants and the Order in the centre of its interests. Minor books on this theme have appeared so far but a complex interpretation has been lacking. Sławomir Zonenberg successfully has filled this historiographic gap.

Marcin Sumowski

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