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Bishops and the Legitimation of War in Piast Poland until the Early Thirteenth Century*

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The last few years have been a period of remarkable dynamism in research on the relationships between the clergy and war in high medieval Latin Europe. In just over a decade, a number of published works on the involvement of churchmen in warfare have significantly enriched our understanding of this widespread subject.¹ What seems to be particularly important in this is the change of research models hitherto focused on the militarily active *Reichsbischöfe* or legal framework of clerical armsbearing. This was possible thanks to a shift of attention to cultural aspects of the clergy's presence in military affairs together with the Church's religious duty to the monarchy and political communities.

This modification of perspectives makes it clear that the clergy's activities relating to warfare had a multifaceted and strongly cultural character in the Middle Ages. This also applies to military service, to which territorial and national Churches were obliged within the administrative systems of particular monarchies. In addition to the legal requirements imposing the obligation to create an armed force and to support the military potential of the state, nowadays importance is also attached to the requirement for the Church and the clergy to maintain loyalty to the monarchy. However, this is not only about loyalty dictated by the principle of *servitium regis* or service with regalia, but also about the more complex idea of loyalty to one's community combined with a readiness to support it in the face of war threats. Obviously,

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¹ For a multi-perspective analysis of the clerical engagement in military affairs, see *Between Sword and Prayer* 2018. Other recent works include KEUPP 2006; TESSERA 2007; BARTHÉLEMY 2009; HAAS 2012; NAKASHIAN 2016; GERRARD 2016; WEBB 2016; LINCOLN 2017; GÜBELE 2018, pp. 119–148.

where the monarch's authority kept its rightful place in the hierarchy of the realm, loyalty was to be shown to the ruler. In addition to secular or legal aspects of fidelity, however, there were also factors rooted in the belief in the monarch's sacred status as guardian of the community and the local Church. As such ideas overlapped, the clergy's service to the monarchy was also perceived in religious terms as acting for the benefit of Christianity, God and internal order of a political community. Recently, Craig Nakashian has captured the essence of this notion, pointing out that in the context of war, bishops were judged by their double loyalty. They were considered to be better vassals of the earthly ruler, if they remained devoted to the King of Heaven and observed high religious standards. Conversely, bishops were seen as better servants of God, if they obeyed the earthly ruler loyally and supported him, and his subjects with available resources.² Even if such a thought was formulated primarily in the knightly epic, there is broad evidence of the acceptance of the model of a prelate with an impeccable moral attitude, who used his secular and spiritual sword for the peace of his community, not only by protecting it from various threats, but also by strengthening the position of the ruler.³

Seeing such a relationship of the higher clergy with the monarchy and its subjects makes scholars more sensitive to other aspects of war-related activity of the clergy, not just feudal and military considerations. This is reflected in the recognition of the importance of functions consistent with the clergy's spiritual mission, such as religious service to the ruler's army, preparing troops for battle and lifting their morale, performing religious rituals on the battlefield, conducting prayers for wartime success, or proclaiming homilies that provided warriors with heavenly support and encouraged them to devote themselves to their own polity and its religion.⁴ In this context, one can also refer to the importance of the religious arsenal of the clergy, which could be used in the interest of the local Church as well as the local community and the ruler.⁵

These issues have not yet been studied comprehensively, and have not yet been incorporated into a sufficiently detailed theoretical framework. Nevertheless, the work done so far demonstrates that one of the most important duties of the national Churches was to make the wars waged by their communities righteous and pleasing to God. Due to the rich source base on the *Reconquista*, historians interested in Iberian monarchies contribute the most to this problem. Carlos de Ayala Martínez has devoted a lot of attention to these matters, noting that it was customary for bishops to sanction royal warfare by providing it with sacred qual-

² NAKASHIAN 2017, pp. 161–178 esp. at 171–172; NAKASHIAN 2016, part II.

³ E.g. KEUPP, pp. 8–9; NAKASHIAN 2014, p. 79; GERRARD 2016, p. 42, 118–122; KOTECKI 2016, pp. 350–360; WEBB 2016, pp. 117–121. See also analyses of the role of Italian bishops in imperial service (TESSERA 2007) as well as French bishops supporting Louis VI (BARTHÉLEMY 2009, pp. 18–22).

⁴ In addition to the works referred to above, see esp. those on religious practices of war, including BACHRACH 2003; BACHRACH 2004; BACHRACH 2011; ROJAS GABRIEL 2016.

⁵ GERRARD 2016, pp. 113–135; KOTECKI 2016; LINCOLN 2018.

ities. In practice, this was done, on the one hand, by defining and promoting theoretical assumptions of holy violence, e.g. by modelling the attitudes of knightly society (like shaping piety, strengthening loyalty to the monarchy and its Church), and a specific narrativisation of military achievements (especially in texts written in cathedral milieus); and on the other by personal involvement in warfare to support the army with their authority, as well as to give religious service aimed to align the military action with God's will.⁶ These findings provide a good starting point for further research.⁷ For example, Kyle C. Lincoln, building on Ayala, has noted that the role of bishops was not limited to legitimising wars against infidels. The bishops also played a similar role in fighting against fellow believers, especially when the aim was to strengthen the position of the monarch and consolidate the community around the Christian values.⁸

The heart of this article is the following question: were Polish bishops similarly involved in providing legitimacy for the military action of the Piast rulers and their community? This question, not posed so far, arises on the grounds of the recent research on the relations between the Church of the Piast era and warfare, which makes it evident that these were formed according to patterns parallel to those known from other Western monarchies. In particular, it is clear today that until the mid-13th century the role played by the Polish Church and its hierarchy in warfare was influenced mostly by the rules specific to the model of the "state" or "monarch's" Church, requiring bishops to support the monarchy and its subjects.⁹ The attention focused in this research on such activities of bishops as providing wartime support with prayers, accompanying the armies, offering religious and mental preparation at the battlefield, allows us to assume that bishops were familiar with the activities performed for the monarchy, including those that involved the idea of the sacrality of ducal power and the community, and at the same time were compatible with the religious mission entrusted to them as men of the Church.

The same remarks should bring more attention to the forms of legitimisation of the military through sacralising efforts. Such forms were especially typical of those monarchies in which the power of the ruler retained high position in Church affairs, and whose status was not – at least abruptly – desacralised under the influence of reforming ideas. And this is the case of Poland, whose rulers remained attached to the idea of the sacral nature of their authority throughout the 12th cen-

⁶ AYALA MARTÍNEZ 2013, pp. 256–265 and passim; more in depth in AYALA MARTÍNEZ 2009, pp. 219–256; AYALA MARTÍNEZ 2018, pp. 207–232, with an analysis of the bishops' role in the proliferation of the crusade. For the question of how bishops legitimised war within the *Reconquista* tradition, see pp. 226–235.

⁷ Compare e.g. DORRONZORO RAMÍREZ 2018; ARRANZ GUZMÁN 2015; ROJAS GABRIEL 2016.

⁸ LINCOLN 2018.

⁹ See esp. KOTECKI, MACIEJEWSKI (2020). Also MACIEJEWSKI 2018; MACIEJEWSKI 2021 (forth.).

tury and beyond.¹⁰ At least to some extent the validity of these models seems to be based on the intense relations between the Piast rulers and the so-called Holy Roman Empire at the time,¹¹ and particularly on the influence of Frederick Barbarossa's model of power with the cult of Charlemagne as a suppressor of barbarians, Christianiser and saint at the forefront.¹² As can be deduced from the evident links between Polish prelates and the *Reichskirche* circles in the second half of the century, promoters of such ideas in Poland must have been primarily high representatives of the local Church stemming from the empire.¹³

For some time now, scholars have also been recognising the need to take into account the possible influence of the old traditions of sacralisation of warfare in Poland, although they have been persistently trying to perceive these issues mainly from the perspective of Levantine-centred crusade historiography.¹⁴ However, as can clearly be seen in the source material, ideas associated with the Mediterranean and papal calls for crusades to the Holy Land met, at least until the beginning of the 13th century, with a moderate response in Poland, and yet the sources suggest that the Piasts were familiar with methods of sacralisation of warfare. These accounts, however, almost completely lack references to the Levantine crusades, which does not necessarily come as a surprise when compared to how war with pagans was still perceived in the Empire in the second half of the 12th century.¹⁵ This is even less surprising in the context of models of the "imperial holy war" that can be traced back

¹⁰ In the discussion on the sacrality of ducal power in Poland, attention is usually focused on the period of the first Piasts' rule and the influence of the Ottonian models. However, as Paweł Figurski has pointed out, this perspective should be extended into the 13th century. See FIGURSKI 2017, esp. pp. 104, 106–109. Also see DALEWSKI 2004, pp. 228–230; WISZEWSKI 2014, pp. 91–95.

¹¹ The belief in the secularisation of the royal power in the Empire during the investiture contest has been questioned recently by Johanna Dale, who showed that the former models of the *Sakralkönigtum* were continued by the Hohenstaufen rulers and bishops in their service. DALE 2016, pp. 191–213. These conclusions correlate with those of David S. Bachrach (BACHRACH 2003, pp. 168–170), who has demonstrated that the practice of sacralisation of military campaigns by the clergy was continued under the Frederick Barbarossa in the guise known from the Ottonian and Salian period.

¹² On the role of Charlemagne in Barbarossa's ideology of imperial power, see esp. GÖRICH 2013, pp. 117–155. Cf. Przemysław Wiszewski's research showing the influence of Barbarossa's rulership ideology on the ways of expressing dignity and piety by Duke Henry the Bearded. WISZEWSKI 2011, esp. pp. 220–221.

¹³ See esp. DEPTUŁA 1968b, pp. 44–45, 63–67.

¹⁴ See esp. GŁADYSZ 2012. An example is also the latest book by Dariusz von Güttner-Sporzyński, who eagerly uses the concept of "holy war" or "protocrusade" to describe 12th century Piast wars, but always perceives these matters from the perspective of the Levantine crusades. GÜTTNER-SPORZYŃSKI 2014, chapters 3–4. For the deficiencies of such conceptualisation, see esp. CHEVEDDEN 2013.

¹⁵ DOBOZY 1986, pp. 341–362, esp. at 345. Maria Dobozy has noted that in German literature the role of the pope as a figure authorised to declare and conduct a holy war was completely diminished in late 12th century, and these competences were attributed to the king portrayed as *advocatus Dei* and follower of Charlemagne. Also see BUNDING-NAUJOKS 1963.

in Polish sources along with the tradition of the ideology of power built on the Old Testament models, and especially on the “Maccabean” idea of cultic unity of a people with its notion of a ruler engaging in a dialogue with God in order to secure heavenly succour in war.¹⁶

In this context, it is worth emphasising that according to the same traditions, the Church and higher clergy played a significant role in creating the ideological character of warfare. For instance, the Carolingians were seen as ruling their state-as-*ecclesia* with the participation of bishops in a manner justified by the Old Testament vision of the Chosen People ruled by a king supported by the wisdom of judges, prophets and patriarchs.¹⁷ When, as a result of this, the idea of the polity was placed in a sacred context, the image of the wars waged by the Carolingians gained a clear religious dimension, and all attacks on the Frankish territories started to be defined as attacks on the *ecclesia* and *populus christianus*. It goes without saying that a decisive influence on these ideas was exerted the ecclesiastical circles, which, using the exegesis of the Old Testament and St. Augustine’s works, provided warfare with an appropriate eschatological foundation.¹⁸ At the same time, the Frankish Church offered its readiness to support warfare, not only with its military but above all spiritual potential in the form of *pro rege/exercitu* prayers, also in direct contact with the army.¹⁹

In the following centuries this model of defining both war and the tasks of the Church for the monarchy proved to be dominant in the West, and especially on its frontiers. This is most evident in the Iberian monarchies in the period preceding the assimilation of the local traditions of the sacralisation of war with crusading ideals,²⁰ but the same phenomena can be observed also in the Empire and further afield on the borders of Latin Christianity.²¹ As David Kalhous and Ludmila Luňáková have pointed out, new polities emerging in those regions confirmed their position within Christianity mainly by way of conflict with “the others” and in doing so they used available models of imagining themselves at war as a new Chosen People.²²

However, among those interested in East-Central Europe, the awareness of the importance of such models in constructing an image of community and war-related violence does not go hand in hand with sufficient attention paid to the role of Churches and bishops in these processes. It seems, however, that those who argue

¹⁶ KOTECKI 2021 (forth.). See also DALEWSKI 2011, pp. 145–146, esp. at 154–155.

¹⁷ See esp. JONG DE 2006 with further literature cited therein.

¹⁸ NELSON 1998, pp. 91–92; SCHARFF 2002, chapter VII; ALBERI 2010, pp. 1–20; NELSON 2013, pp. 17–29; OTTEWILL-SOULSBY 2016, pp. 405–428.

¹⁹ See works cited above and esp. MCCORMICK 1984; BACHRACH 2003, *passim*.

²⁰ Esp. BRONISCH 2016, pp. 7–30.

²¹ For more, see esp. BUNDING-NAUJOKS 1963, *passim*; LAITSOS 2012, pp. 57–68.

²² KALHOUS, LUŇÁKOVÁ 2021 (forth.).

that the religious aspects of the authority of churchmen should not be underestimated are right, as these aspects had a strictly political impact and lay at the very foundation of the bishops' prominence in the monarchy.²³ Sharing this belief, we would like to demonstrate that religious qualities of the bishop's authority were of some importance in the Polish military life of the 11th to early 13th century, especially with regard to the power to provide legitimacy for Piast warfare. Following Carlos de Ayala, this issue will be considered on two levels: theoretical – seeking traces of modelling the war ideology by the bishops; and practical – pointing out concrete evidence of prelates sanctioning warfare by providing religious support for the army and the ruler.

Due to its limitations, this paper only signals the problem, which will need to be addressed more thoroughly in future research also by taking into account a wider range of sources.²⁴ Here, the focus will not go far beyond the accounts recorded in the oldest Polish chronicles, those by Gallus Anonymus from the early 12th century and Master Vincentius from the turn of the 13th century.

THE POLISH CHURCH AND FRAMING THE IDEOLOGY OF WAR

The problem of framing war ideology in Piast Poland still seems to be hardly noticed. This gap is not filled by the research on Poland's participation in the so-called "crusade movement", in which, at most, the potential role of the clergy in promoting crusade slogans on behalf of the Holy See is noted. Dariusz Güttner-Sporzyński has explicitly stated that bishops and clergy who made a career in Poland were transmission agents of the idea of crusade.²⁵ The problem is that the author means transmission from "crusade centres" such as the Holy See, and especially Provence (Saint-Gilles). It is not a question of challenging the fact that the clergy could bring the idea of crusade. One may, however, challenge the significance attributed to the connections of the Piast realm with the regions actively involved in the crusade movement at its beginnings. Poland's contacts with the papacy for most of that period were, if not occasional, then certainly not permanent and close, intensifying only at the end

²³ DEPTUŁA 1968a, pp. 46–48; PAUK 2017, p. 266. For a broader context GILSDORF, pp. 125–152.

²⁴ For more in-depth analysis of some aspects tackled here, see MACIEJEWSKI (forth.).

²⁵ GÜTTNER-SPORZYŃSKI 2014, pp. 3, 54–75. Elsewhere (GÜTTNER-SPORZYŃSKI 2016, p. 240), the same author states that "[i]n the absence of strong leadership from the papacy the local churchmen interpreted papal directives in regards to the forcible conversion of pagans to suit the conditions of the day. To secular rulers and their knighthood holy wars against the pagans of the Baltic in the twelfth century were no less meritorious even if its participants were not in receipt of the papal mandate". This statement reflects the heart of the views of the author, who apparently thinks that the ideas of "crusade" could not develop beyond the influence of the papacy. This view is rooted in Polish historiography. E.g. GRODECKI 1923, p. 112.

of the 12th century,²⁶ while its relations with Provence proved to be evanescent. At that time, the horizons of the Piast rule (and Piast Church) in the West were limited mainly to the areas under the influence of the Empire, and the greatest importance was attached to the imperial Lotharingia and eastern parts of the Empire. It was these areas that determined the main direction of both the reception of cultural models and the influx of clergy into Poland.²⁷ It is doubtful, however, that those Lotharingians and Saxons looking for a lucrative career in Poland would bring with them ideas typical of the Levantine crusading; if they had brought something, it might have been the ideas in the type of the Charlemagne's conquests. The echoes of Jerusalem, as evidenced by an appeal written by someone from the archbishop of Magdeburg's circle around 1108, reached these regions, of course, but their importance should not be overestimated, as they easily succumbed to the strength of the local traditions of the sacralisation of warfare.²⁸ Even in the second half of the 12th century the idea of crusade, referring directly to the imperial traditions, dominated in the Baltic region. It can be seen in the circle of Henry the Lion, who was compared by the Saxon clergy to the Old Testament King David and described as a second Charlemagne because he had conquered many nations and converted them to Christianity.²⁹ Similarly, despite much closer ties with Western centres than in the case of Poland, the same crusade ideas dominated in the 12th-century Denmark, where the measure of the kings' achievements was the nickname *Slavorum expugnator* and comparison to Charlemagne. In Denmark, as Janus Møller Jensen has observed, crusade was both part of state ideology and ideology of the Danish Church; it was also a field of close cooperation between the Church and the monarch.³⁰

It is precisely this kind of phenomena that seem to be the most visible in the sources concerning Poland. In the available accounts the Piasts are presented as suppressors of paganism, giving peoples the choice of baptism or death, i.e. according to a pattern well-known from the sources describing Charlemagne's conquests,³¹ and at the same time in line with the tradition of missionary war which justifies the fight against pagans by the need for ecclesiastical (baptism) and polit-

²⁶ SKWIERCZYŃSKI 2005, pp. 317–320.

²⁷ SIKORSKI 2015, pp. 241–262; SKWIERCZYŃSKI 2015, pp. 273–274; PAUK 2017, pp. 261–269.

²⁸ BUNDING-NAUJOKS 1963, p. 93. See also p. 110: “Man wäre nun analog zu 1108 leicht zur Annahme geneigt, der große Orientkreuzzug habe eine nachhaltige Wirkung auf den ostdeutschen Heidenkrieg geübt, die Kreuzzugs-idee habe sich weitgehend durchgesetzt. Doch die Quellen lehren uns das Gegenteil”. On p. 114, the author notes that after 1147, the popularity of the idea of a pope-led crusade in the eastern parts of the Empire decreased even further.

²⁹ ASHCROFT 1986.

³⁰ JENSEN 2003, pp. 55–81.

³¹ HERBORDUS 1974, p. 68 (Book II, chapter 5); VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 126 (Book III, chapter 30). Compare BUNDING-NAUJOKS 1963, pp. 93, 111.

ical (tribute) subordination.³² In Gallus Anonymus' accounts, Bolesław the Brave and Bolesław the Wrymouth are the suppressors of pagan people, forcing them to become Christians; while the Prussians they harassed are descendants of the Saxons who only by escaping to the Baltic beaches managed to avoid the sword of Charlemagne.³³ There is no reference to the characteristic elements of crusade ideology from the South, but there is one to the traditional image of the monarch responsible for the expansion of the *Imperium Christianum*. Bruno of Querfurt was a proponent of this kind of idea; in his letter to King Henry II of Germany he complained about the lack of rulers who would follow the example of the Frankish emperor by making efforts to convert pagans by force. However, the same Bruno also praised Bolesław I for his readiness to take on an imperial mission to fight the heathens. He even presented Bolesław as a role model for Henry II, trying to convince him to fight on the Elbe together with Polish duke.³⁴ Contrary to some previous views accusing Bruno of "crusade fanaticism", his statements should be regarded instead as fitting within the established ideas concerning the ruler's duties in the *propagatio fidei*.³⁵ Thanks to churchmen like Bruno, this canon did not disappear in the 9th and 10th centuries, but along with the tradition of sacralisation of war was still cultivated under the Ottonians, spreading further east.³⁶

We do not have any other such detailed accounts of the mentality of the churchmen who were in contact with the Piast court at the time. However, by looking at this from only a slightly wider perspective, we can see that preaching the need for Christianisation with military means to rulers had been on the agenda of the churchmen in that region long before the First Crusade. For instance, according to Adam of Bremen (1070s), Adalbert, archbishop of Hamburg, apparently arranged a treaty between the German king and the Danish ruler, which led to a joint missionary war against the Slavs. The chronicler claimed that the same archbishop personally urged King Sven II of Denmark and his son-in-law, Duke Gottschalk, to wage war against the Wends, assuring both of them of God's favour for their action.³⁷ Presumably the Piast rulers, being part of the same network of ecclesiastical and political ties, were also confronted with similar views of the Church hierarchy. Therefore, there

³² On the northern tradition of political subjugation expressed through baptism and the imposition of taxes, see SELART 2021 (forth.).

³³ GALLUS 1952, pp. 111–112 (Book II, chapter 42).

³⁴ Miłosz Sosnowski (SOSNOWSKI 2016, pp. 128–129) suggests that the idea depicting the Piast struggles with pagans as comparable to Charlemagne's wars against Saxons had been present at the Piast court since Bruno of Querfurt. This cannot be ruled out, although it should be remembered that the image of Charlemagne as a great Christianiser and warrior persisted in the 11th and 12th centuries through external contacts.

³⁵ Compare BUNDING-NAUJOKS 1963, pp. 73–76; FRANCE 2003, p. 198.

³⁶ On the tradition of sacralisation of war under the Ottonians, see esp. GÜBELE 2018, pp. 187–190, 230–242.

³⁷ *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, p. 163 (Book III, chapter 21).

is no need to look for the source of methods aimed at giving Piast warfare a sacral dimension in contacts between Poland and the “crusading centres” in southern France or the Mediterranean region.

These remarks lead to the conclusion that the Polish Church dignitaries, strongly connected with the *Reichskirche* in the 11th and 12th centuries, must have known such competences. Although there is not much information on the attitudes of particular clerics, like Bruno of Querfurt, it is worth noting that both Gallus’ and Vincentius’ accounts – the main source of our knowledge about the elite mentality in Poland of those times – clearly emphasise the sacred nature of war against pagans. It seems to be significant because, as Carlos de Ayala has shown in his studies on León-Castile bishops’ role in the legitimisation of warfare, in the chronicles written in episcopal milieus, attempts to legitimise the monarchs’ wars were common, manifested primarily in the emphasis put on the ruler’s merits in securing the defence of the *ecclesia* and the local Christian community. This allows the author to conclude that local cathedral circles had created the ideology of war even before the papacy’s crusade initiatives came into existence in the region.³⁸

In this respect Master Vincentius’ accounts seem particularly noteworthy, because the chronicler’s mentality was formed in by the Cracow Church; and when his chronicle was written (before ca. 1205), Vincentius was an important representative of this circle. There is no room for a detailed analysis of *Chronica Polonorum* from this viewpoint. It is enough to mention that the chronicler deliberately introduced the motif of defending the Church or the community of Poles when presenting the Piast rulers’ wars. For instance, Bolesław IV became “zealous for the cause of God” and decided to wage war against the Prussians, because they attacked Polish lands and “like wolves they carried loot”.³⁹ The war was continued by Casimir II the Just, to whom Vincentius attributed the merit of eliminating the “great danger” that the Prussians began to pose after the unfortunate Polish campaign of 1166/1167. In this context, it is worth noting that the chronicler presented Casimir’s expedition against the Pollexians (1192/1193) as well as the duke himself — “the Prince of the Lechites” — in a truly imperial fashion, which contrasts with the general portrait of this duke as a gentle and loving ruler. In the account in question Casimir is depicted as a cruel avenger of the previous fiasco, merciless slayer of pagans, famous for the massacre, destruction of pagan temples, ravaging of castles, and finally burning of the entire “province of the heathens”

³⁸ AYALA MARTÍNEZ 2009, pp. 222–223, 230–231; AYALA MARTÍNEZ 2013, pp. 257–259. It is no coincidence that specific models were employed for this purpose, very similar to those that had previously appeared in Carolingian texts. On the idea of the defence of the Church and the Christian community in the ideology of war on the Iberian Peninsula before crusades, see also BRONISCH 2016, pp. 12–13 and *passim*.

³⁹ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 127 (Book III, chapter 30). See also the response of Casimir II to Vladimir II Yaroslavich’s invasion resulting in sacrileges as well as other crimes committed against churches and the clergy: VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 159 (Book IV, chapter 15).

and imposition of a suitable tribute. This portrayal is complemented by an unusual and dignified epithet applied to the ruler, *catholicus princeps*, as well as information about the religious ministry exercised by the bishop of Płock, Vitus, during the expedition, then about the duke's return to Cracow *cum triumpho*, and finally about thanksgiving for the great victory, expression of piety and joyous feast with bishops and dignitaries.⁴⁰

No less worthy of note is Vincentius' version of Gallus' story about the expedition of Bolesław III against Nakło in 1109, which can be viewed as the most emphatic local vision of the "crusade".⁴¹ Familiar patterns of presenting war as a destructive but sacred undertaking in a triumphant imperial manner can also be identified in this account. On the one hand, the author emphasises the greatness of the territorial conquest, the unprecedented enormity of the massacre of pagans and the fact that "many thousands" of them were brought to Poland in a triumphant march. On the other he refers to elements testifying to the holy character of the expedition, like St. Lawrence's support, religious preparations for war in Kruszwica, the "standard-bearer" holding a victory-bringing artefact accumulating power hostile to the pagans, and finally the appearance of a luminous angel which inspired the duke and the army to fight.⁴² Most importantly, however, Vincentius, unlike Gallus, portrays this expedition as an act of revenge for the Pomeranians' attack of on the church in Spycimierz, robbery of holy relics and attempt to kidnap the archbishop of Gniezno. Equally significant is the fact that this expedition is said to have complemented the revenge inflicted by the archbishop himself⁴³ — even before the duke embarked on the expedition, the archbishop made the assailants go insane with his prayers.⁴⁴ Apparently, the actions taken by the archbishop and the duke go hand in hand and are guided by the common goal, which is ecclesiastical and political subjugation of Pomerania.

The examples noted by Vincentius can be considered narrativisations taking into account the role of the Church in providing legitimacy for military action. These narratives are not the only examples in the chronicle; some parallels can be identified in the stories about the prayerful support of the Płock bishops to Mazovian warriors fighting against Pomeranians and Prussians⁴⁵. They can also be found in the account about the participation of Pełka, bishop of Cracow in the military activities of the Cracovians seeking to prevent Mieszko III from claiming the Wawel

⁴⁰ VINCENTIUS 1994, pp. 166–169 (Book IV, chapter 19). On the idea of brutal conquest and triumph over barbarians in the imperial ideology, see esp. BALDWIN 1990.

⁴¹ For a more in-depth analysis of this narrative's ideological meaning, see KOTECKI 2021 (forth.).

⁴² VINCENTIUS 1994, pp. 99–102 (Book III, chapters 14–16)

⁴³ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 99 (Book III, chapter 14): "Non iniuste igitur Boleslai seueritas in sacrilegos idolatras incanduit, non iniuste ultionem adiecit ultioni".

⁴⁴ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 96 (Book III, chapter 10).

⁴⁵ VINCENTIUS 1994, pp. 92–95 (Book III, chapters 8–9).

throne after the death of Casimir II – the same Mieszko whose earlier reign in Cracow was perceived by Vincentius as a profanation of the “royal province”, its community, and the local Church.⁴⁶ Finally, the importance of the bishop’s authority as a factor legitimising warfare is presented in the story of the civil war during the reign of Władysław II the Exile. According to the account, the support shown to the younger dukes by the archbishop of Gniezno, Jacob of Żnin, encouraged them to oppose the grand duke, who, striving for sole authority, turned not only against his brothers but also against his subjects, calling for foreign aid under his banners. In this narrative, the archbishop’s decision is a factor that triggers hidden mechanisms bringing God’s wrath upon the “tyrant” and allowing the “juniors” to triumph despite their hopeless position.⁴⁷

The quoted examples from Vincentius’ chronicle seem sufficient to confirm that the chronicler was aware of the bishops’ role in providing ideological foundations for placing military actions in a sacred context. The representativeness of Vincentius’ account cannot be denied in this respect. The only difficult aspect seems to be the assessment of how far back the described tradition goes. When considering this issue, one can only refer to the chronicle written by Gallus, which also includes many accounts presenting the wars of the Piasts as just and holy.⁴⁸ However, it is more difficult to assess the value of this chronicle, since in the case of Gallus – “the exile and the pilgrim”, as he called himself – it is more problematic to determine to what extent his vision reflected the vision of the Polish episcopate, especially given that it was believed that Gallus’ views on these matters were only expressions of his personal opinion.⁴⁹ However, it has been suggested more recently that while writing the chronicle, Gallus worked closely with local clergymen, mainly those associated with the court. We also know that these court clerics were not separate from the bishops, but on the contrary, the ducal chapel of the early 12th century appears rather as a central body of the Polish Church, from which came most bishops and with which they kept in touch during their ministry.⁵⁰ These relationships might even shed light on why the bishops seem to have been both Gallus’

⁴⁶ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 181 (Book IV, chapter 23), where the chronicler mentions Pełka praying for the victory of Cracovians during the Battle of Mozgawa. As Jacek Maciejewski (MACIEJEWSKI 2018, pp. 423–424) has noted, the bishop’s prayers could not be, however, presented in the chronicler as fully successful due to the sacrilegious nature of the civil war. For an account of Mieszko III’s first, disruptive reign in Cracow, see VINCENTIUS 1994, pp. 129–137 (Book IV, chapters 1–3).

⁴⁷ VINCENTIUS 1994, pp. 120–122 (Book III, chapter 28).

⁴⁸ Compare DALEWSKI 2011, pp. 160–165; KALHOUS, LUŇÁKOVÁ 2021 (forth.). Also GÜTTNER SPORZYŃSKI 2014, pp. 92–102; GÜTTNER SPORZYŃSKI 2016, pp. 227–237. The conclusions drawn in these studies are undermined by the fact that Gallus’ work is compared only to the chronicles of the First Crusade.

⁴⁹ GRODECKI 1923, pp. 110–112. Andrzej Grabski disagreed with this view. See GRABSKI 1961, pp. 62–63.

⁵⁰ PAUK 2014, pp. 211–277.

informants, patrons and even controllers of his work.⁵¹ According to the currently prevailing opinion, it was the duke's chaplains and some bishops that made Gallus improve the image of Bolesław the Wrymouth in Book III of his chronicle.⁵² Thus also the description of wars in this chronicle must have been at least partly based on the worldview of the ecclesiastical elite of the realm.

At this point it needs to be noted that the defence of the Polish community is a main factor aimed at legitimising wars also in Gallus' view. This motif can be seen best in the portrait of Bolesław III, who is depicted as *defensor patriae* and at the same time an avenger of the wrongs done to Poland. More significantly, this passage includes points that emphasise the religious and even "ecclesiastical" dimension of this function. For example, Bolesław defeated the invaders for the first time when he was knighted on the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary;⁵³ when a church was consecrated in the borderland, Bolesław left the feast to defend the country against Bohemia; when Henry V crossed the Oder River near Głogów (1109) with his army, the local people participated in a festive service, while Bolesław resisted the invaders; when the duke was absent from Mazovia, which was attacked by Pomeranians, the local governor and the bishop of Płock helped him out in defending the province along with the Płock Church.⁵⁴ Similar elements can also be found in the descriptions of offensive operations, e.g. in the story of the Nakło expedition.⁵⁵ They are, however, particularly underlined by Gallus in his description of the expedition to Bohemia in 1110. This campaign is presented as revenge for "our and our ancestors' wrongs", which can be viewed as a reference to the great invasion of Břetislav I (1038/039) which resulted in a destruction of Poland and its Church as described in the chronicle. Consequently, the information about Polish bishops taking part in this expedition takes on a deeper meaning. It enhances the ideological image of the expedition as "sacred vengeance", which turned out to be exacted not only by the duke and his

⁵¹ It was Czesław Deptuła (DEPTUŁA 1968a, p. 45), who first noticed that Gallus portrayed bishops as co-authors of the chronicle. For a more in-depth analysis, see WISZEWSKI 2010, pp. 135, 148–150, 153, 164. It is also significant that Gallus has a good understanding of the Polish Church and he knows all members of the episcopate.

⁵² Recently Grischa Vercamer has attributed such a role to court chaplains, but Barbara Kowalska rightly emphasises that it were bishops portrayed in the chronicle as a collective authority, who by participating in ducal penance allowed Bolesław to stay in power after the trial with Duke Zbigniew. Such a portrait demonstrates the chronicler's dependence on the episcopate during the writing of Book III. KOWALSKA 2012, pp. 242–43; VERCAMER 2019, pp. 45–88.

⁵³ Since the knighting took place in Płock, it was presumably part of religious ceremonies taking place in the Płock cathedral, a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary. See PAUK 2010, p. 515.

⁵⁴ GALLUS 1952, pp. 86–87 (Book II, chapters 18–19); pp. 100–101 (Book II, chapter 33); pp. 133–134 (Book III, chapter 5); pp. 118–119 (Book II, chapter 49).

⁵⁵ Here, Polish troops (*populus, christiani*) are surprised by the enemy when they listen to the Holy Mass in the camp. GALLUS 1952, pp. 127–128 (Book III, chapter 1).

knights but also by the entire community united under the authority of Bolesław and the Polish Church in the ruler's service.⁵⁶

BISHOPS AND THE SACRALISATION OF WARFARE

In this part of the study, the focus will be on the practical aspect of the legitimisation of war by bishops engaging in sacralising efforts also aimed at mobilising the subjects to participate in armed ventures. The source which can be used in this context to a small extent includes liturgical texts, unfortunately.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the available narrative sources offer at least some information that seems to confirm the practice of bishops striving to legitimise military operations, or in other cases at least presume such efforts. The available evidence is unfortunately quite laconic, although its value depends partly on appropriate contextualisation. It is also worth noting that it concerns various categories of warfare, not only wars conducted against pagan neighbours but also against fellow believers, both external enemies and those within the community. This is not without significance as it allows us to observe that the practice of legitimisation of military activities by bishops was not only a consequence of the adoption of the holy war or crusade ideology, as it is occasionally argued, but rather a result of the Church's functional role within the Piast monarchy.

What can be regarded as the most representative assessment of sacralisation practices are the voices referring to the role of Bishop Vitus during Casimir II's 1192/1193 expedition against the Pollexians as described by Master Vincentius.⁵⁸ According to Maria Starnawska and Mikołaj Gładysz, the celebration of the Holy Mass and the bishop's administering of Holy Communion to the knights before the battle should be perceived as a performance of a specifically crusading ritual.⁵⁹ For Mikołaj Gładysz the context of the chronicler's account and the analogy to the rituals mentioned by Gallus in his depiction of Bolesław's expedition to Pomerania (1103) testify not to a "customary" but a "crusading" nature of this ritual and thus

⁵⁶ On the Bohemian campaign, GALLUS 1952, pp. 149–153 (Book IV, chapter 23); on Břetislav I's expedition to Poland, GALLUS 1952, p. 43 (Book I, chapter 19).

⁵⁷ For the liturgy of war, see esp. ERDMANN 1963; MCCORMICK 1984; MCCORMICK 1992; GÜBELE 2018, pp. 187–190. The only known text of the liturgy of war in earlier medieval Poland appears to be a rare formula of blessing the *vexillum triumphale* included in the Cracow Pontifical from the end of the 11th or early 12th century. *Pontificale Cracoviense*, p. 69. In some respects this formula corresponds closely to the description of the Nakło campaign in Vincentius' chronicle. For a more in-depth analysis, see KOTECKI 2021 (forth.).

⁵⁸ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 166 (Book IV, chapter 19): "Illa subinde incomeabili heremi uastitate trium naturalium dierum cursu citatissimo uix emensa, iubet quarto antelucano catholicus princeps omnem exercitum salutaris Hostie ante omnia sacramento confoueri sacri ministra sacrificii uiro reuerendo Plocensium antistite".

⁵⁹ STARNAWSKA 1999, p. 184; GŁADYSZ 2012, p. 131.

the whole expedition.⁶⁰ However, such an argument can hardly be accepted, simply because the same chronicler mentions similar practices when describing the Polish expedition to Bohemia in 1110, which suggests a customary nature of this rite during expeditions against both pagans and those against other Christians.⁶¹ Trying to determine the character of the Pollexian expedition, we should not forget either that celebrating Mass and giving Holy Communion during a military campaign were part of the tradition rooted in Carolingian and post-Carolingian realities.⁶²

In this context, it is also worth recalling the findings regarding the themes highlighting in the narrative in question, which seem to refer to the traditional or even imperial formula of the sacralising efforts. First of all, this canon includes details recorded by the chronicler and concerning the situational context of the rite itself and the bishop's relations with the duke. It should be emphasised that according to the source, it was the duke himself who is said to have ordered the whole army to receive Holy Communion before the battle, and the bishop is presented as only meticulously carrying out the duke's will.⁶³ Such a viewpoint allows us to see in the narrative a reflection of the ruler-chaplain relationship characteristic of the tradition of the monarch's religious leadership in a campaign and, at the same time, the tradition of performing religious service by bishops for the benefit of the ruler and his army. Thus, the situation is close to the traditional models of sacralising military violence.⁶⁴ The information about a three-day army march through the wilderness (*heremum*) before the bishop celebrated holy rituals at dawn (*antelucano*) on the fourth day of the campaign can also be presented in this context. According to Carolingian practices, war-related religious rituals combined with the reception of *viaticum* should be preceded by three days of self-sacrifice and fasting, during which the army cleansed itself of sin and established a proper tie with God.⁶⁵ The reception of Holy Communion at dawn before the battle was also part of this tradition, although these rites became part of the knightly culture as well.⁶⁶ It is worth noting, however, that

⁶⁰ GALLUS 1952, p. 95 (Book II, chapter 28). Mikołaj Gładysz (GLADYSZ 2012, pp. 121–146) assumes that Casimir II's expedition against the Pollexians was conceived as a Polish contribution to the Third Crusade. The only arguments here are the date of the campaign and the fact that the pagans are called the followers of the Saladin (*Saladinistas*). However, such arguments are not convincing.

⁶¹ See also PTAK 2014, pp. 36–37.

⁶² BACHRACH 2003, pp. 59–60, 79–81, 95–96, 106–107; BACHRACH 2011, p. 17.

⁶³ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 166 (Book IV, chapter 19): “iubet quarto antelucano catholicus princeps omnem exercitum salutaris Hostie ante omnia sacramento confoueri sacri ministra sacrificii uiro reuerendo Plocensium antistite”.

⁶⁴ Compare evidence in BACHRACH 2003, pp. 17, 41, 69, 80, 96–97, 138–139.

⁶⁵ Such a practice is clearly mentioned in Charlemagne's famous letter to his queen Fastrada written during the Avar campaign. For more on this rite, see MCCORMICK 1984, p. 11; MCCORMICK 1992, p. 221; BACHRACH 2003, pp. 42; POHL 2008, pp. 29–30, 31, 43.

⁶⁶ On three-day preparation for battle during crusades, see MCCORMICK 1992, p. 215; BACHRACH 2003, pp. 113, 119; GAPOSCHKIN 2017, pp. 2–3, 112, 114–115, 123–124.

the motif of preparing for the battle before dawn can be also found in the narrative about the campaign of Bolesław III against Nakło.⁶⁷ Moreover, the main preparations during the Bohemian campaign (1110) are described in Gallus' work as having taken place at daybreak as well.⁶⁸ Interpreting these latter accounts only from the perspective of crusade models seems even less likely than in the case of Vincentius' depiction of the Pollexian campaign. Thus, it seems to be more appealing to see that all these accounts include traces of providing legitimacy to the monarch's expeditions, characteristic of early medieval customs of sacralisation and ritualisation of warfare.

Special attention should be drawn to Gallus' information about the role of bishops during Bolesław III's 1110 Bohemian campaign. The whole reference is concise, but the author includes in it details that seem highly significant. What is striking is that Gallus saw the prelates' actions as part of a procedure in which everything was decided in advance and took place "as always" (*more solito*) in such situations. This procedure began with the duke's speech delivered at dawn to encourage his knights to avenge the wrongs that the Polish community had suffered from the Bohemians, and at the same time to ensure the God's favour. Then the bishops started to act:

After this [duke's] speech was finished a general mass was celebrated throughout the camp, the bishops delivered the divine word to those of their diocese, and the whole people were strengthened by Holy Communion. When all this was properly performed, they advanced from the encampments in their ordered ranks according to custom and so gradually made their way to the entrance of the woods.⁶⁹

In this account the connection between bishops and the combat units that are part of the army is particularly evident. Masses, Holy Communion and marching out into battle, all the stages of preparation in which the bishops assisted, are said to have taken place within separate encampments, which the chronicler described as *stationes*. This term is understood as units recruited from different lands or provinces of the Piast realm, which found its explicit expression in the chronicler's words "queque provincia [...] in sua statione perstitit."⁷⁰ At the same time, Gallus states that

⁶⁷ Here the element of light is represented by the *angelus lucis*. KOTECKI 2021 (forth.).

⁶⁸ This is evidenced by the words of the speech delivered by Duke Bolesław just before the Holy Mass was celebrated by the bishops: "Iam aurora (ap)paret cito dies illa gloriosa exardebit": GALLUS 1952, p. 150 (Book III, chapter 23). Similarly, Bolesław's knights received Holy Communion just before they proceeded to attack Kołobrzeg "aurora lucescente" (1103). See GALLUS 1952, p. 95 (Book II, chapter 28).

⁶⁹ GALLUS 1952, p. 150 (Book III, chapter 23): "Hac oratione completa missa generalis per omnem stationem celebratur, sermo divinus suis parochianis ab episcopis predicatur, populus universus sacrosancta comunione confirmatur. Quibus rite peractis, cum ordinatis agminibus more solito de stationibus exierunt et sic paulatim ad silvarum introitum pervenerunt".

⁷⁰ GALLUS 1952, p. 149 (Book III, chapter 22). Gallus' words are considered as evidence of the territorial structure of militia units in the army of Bolesław III. Por. ZAJĄCZKOWSKI 1955, p. 318; ZAJĄCZKOWSKI 1958, p. 45; DOWIAT 1959, p. 47. Andrzej Feliks Grabski (GRABSKI 1959, p. 215)

these units were made up of diocesans of individual bishops present in the army. This is a very intriguing detail since it seems to suggest that the role attributed to bishops was rooted in the organisation of the army based on provinces or dioceses. This issue has hardly received any attention so far; only Jerzy Sójka has observed that the passage suggests that “the bishops from the respective dioceses, i.e. those from which the army was called up for the expedition, joined war campaigns to serve as chaplains.”⁷¹ Such an idea is convincing, but the passage is even more emphatic and allows to assume that it might have been the bishops who participated in the mobilisation of the levies of militia forces (Gallus’ *populus*) in cooperation with the provincial administration. This idea finds support in another place of Gallus’ work, namely in the account of Simon, bishop of Płock, who in the face of the Pomeranian invasion of Mazovia is said to have organised local defence together with the governor of the province.⁷² The high position of the bishop in the provincial secular hierarchy of the Piast realm is a phenomenon also found in the second half of the 12th century.⁷³

At this point, however, a complex problem emerges. The participation of Polish bishops in the structures and procedures of army mobilisation needs to be further analysed in the future, particularly in the context of the administrative functions of imperial bishops. Gallus focuses more closely on the competences which give warfare sacred qualities but also on modelling the identity of the army, rather than on administrative qualities. It seems, though, that such competences should not be contrasted with each other. On the contrary, in monarchies where the custom of bishops’ public duties were well established, such a duality was natural, allowing monarchs to improve the process of mobilising the army and making the endeavour part of a sacred plan. A similar role was played by French bishops, who cooperated with Louis VI, raising levies on behalf of the king with the help of the ecclesiastical structure, and at the same time providing the recruits and the monarch with appropriate religious services.⁷⁴ Much the same information can be found in English sources,⁷⁵ while in the case of the peripheries of the Latin world an illustration is the text of the arrangement of the Norwegian King Magnus V with the archbishop of Nidaros, Eysteinn, i.e. famous *Canones Nidrosienses* (ca. 1164). The latter is par-

interprets this account in terms of the erosion of the hitherto uniform command structure over the army at the turn of 12th century. However, the calling out of a militia force from the provinces of the Piast realm resembles rather a system of raising select levies of the *regna* of the Ottonian kingdom in offensive military campaigns. See BACHRACH 2012, pp. 71–77.

⁷¹ SÓJKA 1994, pp. 98–99. Also see PTAK 2014, p. 39.

⁷² GALLUS 1952, pp. 118–119 (Book II, chapter 49). Attention is drawn to chronicler’s statement about Pomeranian captives. They were brought before the governor and bishop respectively, which suggests a shared scope of competence.

⁷³ See DEPTUŁA 1973, pp. 86–89; PAUK, WÓLKIEWICZ 2013, pp. 76–78.

⁷⁴ BARTHÉLEMY 2009, pp. 18–22.

⁷⁵ SHARPE 2017, pp. 266–267; for a broader chronological perspective, see NIGEL 2011, pp. 210–218.

ticularly interesting, as it allowed bishops, abbots and other clerics – in the part regulating the participation of clergy in war – to accompany royal expeditions in order to provide spiritual support for the army and the king; it also obliged them to encourage the faithful and royal subjects (“per singulas civitates burgos et villas populum sibi commisum”) to fight for the good of their homeland.⁷⁶ The true is that, we don’t know of the existence of such regulations in Poland, but as such rules were typical in the High Middle Ages, we can suspect that Gallus’ account reflects similar patterns in Poland.

Above all, however, Gallus emphasises the role of bishops as professionals of worship. They are presented as intermediaries between the army (and the duke) and Heavens, attracting God’s grace with Holy Mass and supplicatory prayers, raised, as can be assumed, together with the duke himself, who is said to have prayed all night until the morning pre-battle celebrations.⁷⁷ These elements, in turn, enable as to see the chronicle as providing evidence of support — in the form of priestly service — given to the monarch during the war,⁷⁸ and episcopal mediation between the ruler and the sacred in a manner close to old but enduring traditions of the “royal” religion of war and customary place of episcopacy vis-à-vis the ruler.⁷⁹

The permanent use of such a practice in Poland in the 12th and first half of the 13th century is evidenced not only by the narrative sources mentioning the prayerful assistance given to the army by bishops,⁸⁰ or by Master Vincentius’ account of Bishop Vitus’ service to Casimir II, but also by the immunity charter issued by Bolesław V the Chaste for the Cracow bishopric in 1258. By issuing this document the ruler released the Cracow bishop, canons and clergy from the obligation to participate in public expeditions on condition they be praying for the army in their churches.⁸¹

⁷⁶ *Latinske dokument* 1959, no. 10 (chap. 3). For commentary, see esp. TAYLOR 2019, pp. 6–7.

⁷⁷ GALLUS 1952, p. 149 (Book III, chapter 22): “Eadem nocte Bolezlauo post matutinas orationibus persistente”. The chronicler probably means the office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which he mentions elsewhere, alluding that the duke established the custom of celebrating such an office the night before an expected battle. See GALLUS 1952, p. 95 (Book II, chapter 28). The duke is also said to sang this office “cum episcopis et capellanis” during his penance pilgrimage to Hungary: GALLUS 1952, p. 158 (Book III, chapter 25). For more on the religious context of the expedition to Bohemia, see WISZEWSKI 2010, pp. 306–308, 317–321.

⁷⁸ For some examples of religious preparations for battle with the participation of rulers and bishops from the ruler’s household, see: GOLDBERG 1999, pp. 66–67; BACHRACH 2011, pp. 13–31; ROJAS GABRIEL 2016, pp. 280–282 and passim; DORRONSORO 2018, pp. 262–264. On prayerful support given by bishops to monarchs during military campaigns, see KOTECKI 2016, esp. at pp. 341–342, 350–360.

⁷⁹ On bishops as intermediaries between rulers and the sacred, see ISABELLA 2011, pp. 148–149; GILSDORF 2014, pp. 125–152.

⁸⁰ For more, see KOTECKI 2016b, pp. 142–167; MACIEJEWSKI 2018, pp. 411–438.

⁸¹ PIEKOSIŃSKI 1874, p. 75 (no. 59). The charter’s message unambiguously suggests that until it was issued, the duty to provide the ruler with prayerful support was associated with the obligation

Another aspect of Gallus' narrative which can be discussed in the context of the bishops' role in ensuring legitimacy for military actions is reflected in the reference to the exhortations delivered to Bolesław III's soldiers. Unfortunately, Gallus includes hardly any details concerning the content of these *sermones*, but it is doubtful that the chronicler has ordinary pastoral homilies in mind. As is evident from numerous accounts of speeches delivered by the clergy during military campaigns, such sermons were aimed to lift the morale of the troops and assure the army that God would recognise his people in the upcoming battle. The aim of such "sermons" was to justify the armed struggle and convince the warriors that they needed to sacrifice themselves in the name of the ruler, homeland and religion, which is best shown by the accounts of the clergy's speeches during wars against other Christians.⁸²

A wider knowledge of such competences among the Polish episcopate is indicated by other independent sources. Master Vincentius' account of the Pollexian campaign and the role which Bishop Vitus is said to have played in the spiritual preparation of Casimir II's army can be referred to in this context again. Although no exhortation is mentioned directly, the relationship between the bishop's role and the army's morale is strongly emphasised by the chronicler.⁸³ On the other hand, Vincentius explicitly writes about this kind of practice in his story about the invasion of the Pomeranians in Mazovia (1109), recalling even the words of encouragement which the bishop of Płock allegedly uttered to the defenders before the military struggle.⁸⁴ Another testimony of such practices is to be found in Jan Długosz's accounts of the role of the bishop of Płock, Gedka, in the fights against Prussians, probably taken from older sources.⁸⁵ No less intriguing is the information recorded by the author of *Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, who describes Archbishop Vincentius of Niałek encouraging the garrison of the Lubusz castle to withstand bravely the siege by the margrave of Turin until the expected succour of Duke Władysław III

of service in *expeditio*. However, it cannot be ruled out that the formula was borrowed from an older charter.

⁸² Compare examples in BLIESE 1988, pp. 543–556; BLIESE 1991, pp. 489–504; BACHRACH 2003, pp. 1–19. For Scandinavian parallels, see JENSEN 2013, pp. 97–99. See also speeches by the Danish king and archbishop of Lund before the battle of Fotevik (1134) recorded in *Knytlinga Saga* 1986, p. 138.

⁸³ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 166 (Book IV, chapter 19). According to Vincentius, after the completion of the rituals, the Polish knights "intrepidi pretium querunt".

⁸⁴ VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 93 (Book III, chapter 8). Also, bishop of Cracow, Pelka, apparently comforted his people during the battle of Mozgawa in 1195 (VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 181 (Book IV, chapter 23)), and after the battle dissuaded them from taking revenge on the defeated, but at the same time encouraging them to seize Cracow: "Sic persuasi, animositate seposita non animo": VINCENTIUS 1994, p. 182 (Book IV, chapter 23).

⁸⁵ Długosz's account is known only from Samuel Nakielski's *Miechovia* (NAKIELSKI 1634, p. 28): "Masoviae milites ab ipso Gedkone episcopo animati viriliter resistebat". On its reliability, see MACIEJEWSKI 2021 (forth.).

Spindleshanks announced by the prelate.⁸⁶ All these examples point to the customary place – also beyond the crusading context – of religious service of bishops to the Piasts and the Polish community. This situation is also consistent with the practices found in the Hungarian and Danish accounts referring to the 12th- and 13th-century realities. Taken together, all this evidence suggests that the whole region was participating in the tradition of local Churches providing sacred legitimacy to the rulers and warfare.⁸⁷

Closing these reflections, the focus should be shifted to the role that churchmen played during the civil war of 1144–1146 between the sons of Bolesław III. It can be concluded from Master Vincentius' account that Archbishop Jacob of Žnin played a significant role in this conflict. According to the chronicler, the archbishop assisted the younger dukes, Bolesław and Mieszko, encouraging them in their confrontation with their elder brother, thus contributing to the final defeat of Duke Władysław. At the same time, the chronicler links the defeat to the information about God's wrath said to have fallen on the duke's army during the siege of Poznań — the last bastion of the "juniors". It can, therefore, be concluded that in Vincentius' times it was believed that the support shown by the archbishop to the younger brothers made God's grace leave Władysław and pass to Bolesław and Mieszko. However, such a perspective raises the question whether the author built solely upon his general knowledge of the archbishop's stance in this war or whether such a view emerged under the influence of some concrete reports about the efforts of the prelate or possibly other churchmen supporting "juniors" against the senior prince?

Our main narrative source does not answer this question. However, apart from Vincentius' chronicle, there are a number of sources referring to this war and enabling us to identify clergymen's attempts to strength the position of the "juniors" in the sacred plan, even if we reject the most unreliable of them: the 16th-century *Cronica Petri comitis Poloniae*⁸⁸ and the legend of the church of the Blessed Vir-

⁸⁶ ANNALES REINHARDSBRUNNENSES 1854, p. 180: "archiepiscopus [...] ad castrum Lubus [...] veniens [...] castrenses obsessos confortans animavit".

⁸⁷ For Denmark, compare JENSEN 2018, pp. esp. 201–204; for Hungary, see ZUPKA 2021 (forth.).

⁸⁸ According to *Chronica Petri* (MPHns, III, pp. 12–14), the bishops went to Władysław and begged him in vain to show mercy to the younger dukes. Furthermore, the same source states that in the face of Władysław's aggression, the "juniors" gave themselves to the protection of God and St. Stanisław, and did receive heavenly aid allowing them to ultimately defeat their brother's army. The value of the account, however, is questionable, because the source (as is evidenced also by the reference to St. Stanisław, who was not canonised until 1253) reflects the reality of the end of the 13th century, when the original version was probably created. For more, see WOJTOWICZ 2018, pp. 105–126. For Janusz Bieniak the information on the bishops' visit to Władysław's court was, however, fully credible as supplementing the information provided by Vincentius and matching the information about the role of the episcopate as a collective guardian of Bolesław III's Act of Succession. See BIENIAK 1996, pp. 41–42.

gin Mary at the Poznań castle.⁸⁹ Independent and contemporary evidence is provided by charters and letters which confirm the presence of important churchmen of the realm at conventions organised by the younger dukes during the conflict,⁹⁰ but also the fact of excommunication of the high duke by Archbishop Jacob.⁹¹ Even more widespread support of the churchmen for the younger sons of Bolesław III is confirmed by papal warnings addressed to the Polish clergy, which resulted from the lack of efforts to restore Władysław in his rights and the disregard of the ecclesiastical censure imposed by the legate on the supporters of younger brothers.⁹²

The 14th-century *Chronicle of Greater Poland* is also of some value in this context. It significantly emphasises the role of Archbishop Jacob, presenting him as the key figure in the climactic moment of that war — the siege of Poznań. Although the chronicle presents the archbishop as an unsuccessful conciliator, recalling his ineffective intervention in Władysław's camp, his admonition, and the anathema imposed on the high duke, it is said to have been a critical point for the outcome of the war, as immediately after Władysław rejected cooperation with the archbishop, the nobles from the “junior” provinces began to fight the senior duke, while Mieszko and Bolesław dared to storm Władysław's positions. Although we might be reluctant to accept this elaborate story as a fully reliable record of events,⁹³ the position of the archbishop and the ecclesiastical circles supporting the “juniors” was perhaps reflected accurately in this chronicle, which also included the accusation against the high duke over his indifferent attitude toward the suffering inflicted upon the Polish *gens* by pagan forces in his army.⁹⁴ This information is consistent with Master Vincentius' account, and finds clear confirmation in Eugenius III's bull (1149), according to which the archbishop excommunicated Władysław, because the duke “collecta Sara-

⁸⁹ This legend is about Casimir the Restorer; however, as Teodor Tyc (TYC 1926, pp. 125–126) noted long time ago, some of its plot may be derived from stories about the Poznań battle of 1146. These may possibly include the information about prayers before the battle and about heavenly aid.

⁹⁰ Among the supporters of Bolesław and Mieszko, apart from Jacob of Żnin, there were mainly prelates from Mazovia, Kuyavia and Greater Poland. See DEPTUŁA 1959, pp. 49, 62–63; BINIAŚ-SZKOPEK 2009, pp. 127–128, 183–184.

⁹¹ This is confirmed by Eugenius III's bull addressed to Henry Zdík, bishop of Olomouc (1149). For an edition, see BISTRICKÝ 1990, pp. 252–253 (no. 26).

⁹² BINIAŚ-SZKOPEK 2009, pp. 183–184.

⁹³ The origin of this account remains unknown. Although some of its details find confirmation in other sources, the possible influence of Arthurian literature on the construction of the plot has also been suggested. WIESIOŁOWSKI 1995, pp. 123–135.

⁹⁴ MPHns, VIII, p. 51: “Jacobus primus, archiepiscopus Gneznensis [...] sub obstacione vindictae divine obiurgando monuit [High Duke Władysław]: ut a fratrum persecucione cessaret et super effusione christiani sanguinis, stupracione virginum ac violacione matronarum, que incessanter barbarica gens sui exercitus sua gente, de qua et ipse oriundus exstiterit, nefarie exercebat, clementer compaciens, ad propria studeat placatis fratribus declinare”. A similar theme can be found in *Cronica Petri comitis Poloniae*: MPHns, III, p. 13.

cenorum multitudine [...] terram Christianorum invasit et multa mala, innumera etiam et execrabilia in ea temerario ausu commisit.”⁹⁵ The available sources seem to demonstrate that the clergy supporting the younger dukes with the archbishop at the forefront provided the “juniors” with sacred recognition of their rights to rule over the community as rulers who respected the duty to defend their people, their homeland and the Polish Church. Such an act must have also strengthened the legitimacy of their right to use military means against the high duke.

What can be used in support of such a view are the notes written in Poznań about Mieszko’s gifts made in the aftermath of the Poznań victory, a source usually omitted in reconstructions of this war. One note, included in the folio of the Codex Eugenianus of the Vincentius’ chronicle by a 15th-century hand, recalls that after the victory the duke gave the village of Góra (near Żnin) and *Gnegno* (perhaps Żnin itself⁹⁶) to the archbishop, while donated the village of Lusowo to the Poznań bishopric.⁹⁷ Despite the late provenance of this record, its content cannot be rejected in advance.⁹⁸ First of all, the lack of Góra and Żnin in the Bull of Gniezno is of very significant in this context, suggesting that two later archbishop’s villages came from a donation made after 1136.⁹⁹ In turn, the information on Lusowo is confirmed by a much older note, dating back to the late 12th century, which was included in another Poznań manuscript with theological writings. Although this note is a copy too, its content seems close the events of the year 1146, since it mentions bishop of Poznań, Boguchwał, who died in the year of the Poznań battle. More importantly, this note also emphasises the connection between the donation of Lusowo

⁹⁵ See n. 91 above. We can suspect that the papal charge against Władysław comes from the followers of the younger dukes, perhaps Archbishop Jacob himself.

⁹⁶ It is doubtful that the name *Gnegno* should be read as Gniezno. Such a name does not correspond to the medieval nomenclature of Gniezno (see NALEPA 2005), but it is close to the name of Żnin — *Zneyno* or *Znegno*. Mieczysław Brust (BRUST 2001, pp. 90–95), respecting the value of the note regarding the donation of Góra, doubts that the duke gave the Żnin stronghold to the archbishopric, since it was only handed over around 1250. Therefore, the donation of Mieszko III probably included the village of Żnin without the stronghold itself.

⁹⁷ “Vladislaus secundus regnat quem Mescio frater iunior devicit ante Posnaniam et Ruthenos: qui Mescio post victoria dedit Goram archiepiscopi et Gnegno. Posnaniensi ecclesie Lusow”: HOFMAN-DADEJOWA 1924, p. 394. Codex Eugenianus was kept in Poznań until at least the middle of the 16th century. See ZWIERCAN 2017, pp. 65–66.

⁹⁸ For additional arguments, see JUREK 2000, pp. 35–36 n. 145; JUREK 2018, pp. 182, 284, 492. It is worth noting that Mieszko III’s realm included the region of Żnin probably since 1138. For this, see Magdalena Biniąś-Szkopek (BINIAŚ-SZKOPEK 2009, pp. 48–56), who convincingly argues that under Bolesław III’s Act of Succession Mieszko III’s part of the realm was to border Kuyavia of Bolesław IV in the east. We should also agree with the suggestion (pp. 146–148) that Bolesław IV never ruled in Gniezno or in Greater Poland.

⁹⁹ Compare WOJCIECHOWSKI 1924, pp. 21–22; MODZELEWSKI 1980, p. 220 n. 25; TRAWKOWSKI, 1995, p. 222 n. 4.

and the Poznań victory.¹⁰⁰ Thus, all those sources make it possible to argue that at least one of the victors repaid the churchmen for the help he received from them during the confrontation with the older brother. The generous earthly donation was certainly a proper reward for the clergy who had proved useful in the service of the ruler, and at the same time it was an appropriate form of gratitude to God for the grace of victory or atonement for participating in the fratricidal strife.¹⁰¹

The discussion on the role of the clergy in legitimising the position of one of the parties in a domestic conflict can also be held in a broader context. The picture of the prelates' involvement on the side of Bolesław and Mieszko, as depicted in available sources, seems to be specific of the 12th century, especially of those monarchies in which the local churches, despite the reception of reform ideas, continued to respect traditional public duties and honour the supreme position of the ruler in the earthly and clerical hierarchy. From the second half of the 11th century onwards, information on the bishops' involvement in domestic conflicts, not only as mediators, but also as active supporters of one side, becomes a clear symptom of this. In these conflicts, the party who managed to win the support of churchmen could count on the ideological strengthening of its aspirations, and even help thanks to ecclesiastical censures imposed on its opponent.¹⁰²

The bishops, however, playing their role of statesmen and pastors, mostly opted for the lawful ruler. Explicit examples can be found across Latin Christianity, also on the peripheries closer to the Piast domain. In the context of Polish matters, it is worth mentioning an example of the Norwegian Archbishop Eystein, who supported King Magnus Erlingsson against the pretender Sverre Sigurdsson. This support was based on a mutual agreement concluded between the king and the archbishop, which resulted in the above mentioned *Canones Nidrosienses*.¹⁰³ It is no coincidence that the document contained provisions allowing the Norwegian bishops and other clergy to provide spiritual assistance to the royal army, as well as to encourage the subjects to fight for the peace of the homeland against any troublemakers. Such a role of the Norwegian churchmen finds its confirmation also in *Sverris saga*, written

¹⁰⁰ ZAKRZEWSKI 1877, no. 8: "Notum sit omnibus fidelibus tam presentibus quam futuris, quod dominus dux Meseco post victoriam que fuit in Poznan dedit villam que vocatur Lusow cum hominibus ibi manentibus beato Petro pro remissione peccatorum suorum".

¹⁰¹ As a thanksgiving to God, the donation of Lusowo is interpreted by Tomasz Jurek and Tomasz Ginter: JUREK 2000, p. 35; GINTER 2008, p. 160. On donations to clergy as a way to reward the service during war, see AYALA MARTÍNEZ 2018, pp. 216, 221, 224; GERRARD 2016, pp. 187–190, 198–199; NAKASHIAN 2014, pp. 56–57; NAKASHIAN 2016, pp. 20, 76, 81, 135, 137, 139; LINCOLN 2018, p. 22. Compare also n. 106 below.

¹⁰² HOUSLEY 2002, pp. 70–97; NAKASHIAN 2014, pp. 59, 74; GERRARD 2016, pp. 115, 122, 123, 124–125, 128; GERRARD 2018, pp. 145, 150; LINCOLN 2018, pp. 26, 28–32. In this way churchmen also justified violence on behalf of the Church. See esp. ALTHOFF 2019, pp. 203–208.

¹⁰³ For his part, the king promised to maintain the safety of the Church and peace of the realm. Compare BAGGE 2011, pp. 13–16.

a little later on the Sverre's initiative, which notes that Archbishop Eystein (who was also the author of the *Canones*) and some of his suffragans supported the king during the civil war, militarily, serving as an aid, by consolidating people's loyalty to Magnus, and also on the ideological level. For example, in enlisting supporters for the king, the archbishop is said to have proclaimed that if someone died fighting in the king's name and for the homeland, he would ascend to heaven before blood cooled down in his veins.¹⁰⁴

Very similar evidence is also provided by Vincentius of Prague in his account of the Moravian dukes' rebellion against Duke Vladislav II of Prague, events almost contemporaneous with the civil war in Poland. The chronicler presented this rebellion in a very specific way, as an act of sacrilege against the God-sanctioned order of the Bohemian community. No less significant is the fact that bishop of Olomouc, Henry Zdík, is said to have been the most important supporter of the Prague duke. According to Vincentius, having heard about the rebellion, the prelate took vigorous measures to endorse Vladislav, first trying to resolve the conflict peacefully, by convincing dukes to maintain loyalty to the senior, and then, in the face of the rebels' tenacity, placing their land under interdict, and then going to Vladislav to support him personally during the fighting, even during the Battle of Vysoká (1142); he apparently assisted Vladislav in the aftermath of his defeat in that battle.¹⁰⁵ The importance of the bishop's role is further confirmed by the events that followed Vladislav's regaining of control over Bohemia, when Moravian dukes tried to take revenge on the bishop for their failures, and also is shown by Vladislav's gratitude experienced by Zdík, the greatest manifestation of which was the approval of the Podivín Castle in the Olomouc bishopric's rights.¹⁰⁶

What we know about the role of Archbishop Jacob of Žnin in the war between the sons of Boleslaw III seems highly significant in the context of the evidence in question, even though the archbishop did not side with the senior duke of the dynasty but with his younger brothers. The Polish Church, headed by the archbishop, obviously owed his fidelity to Władysław as the high duke, but this fidelity – particularly in the reality dictated by the provisions of Bolesław III's 1138 Act of Succession – was dependent on mutual rights of the other members of the Piast dynasty being respected¹⁰⁷; but also probably on respect for the rights of the Church and internal peace of the community which should be guarded by the Piasts, together with the episcopate. Władysław's transgression of these norms helps to understand the reaction of Jacob of Žnin, who, seeking to rebuild the violated order and social hierarchy, transferred his loyalty to Bolesław and Mieszko, automatically sanction-

¹⁰⁴ *Saga of King Sverri*, 1899, chapter 38. Compare TAYLOR 2019, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ VINCENTIUS PRAGENSIS, pp. 411–412. On the role of Henry Zdík in this conflict, see BISTRICKÝ 2006, p. 36; ŽEMLIČKA 2009, p. 21.

¹⁰⁶ BISTRICKÝ 2006, pp. 36, 37–38.

¹⁰⁷ KWIATKOWSKI 2016, p. 135.

ing their position in the sacred plan, and providing them with a mandate to remove Władysław by force. It is doubtful that the support of the archbishop and probably a greater part of the clerical elite was the result of a well thought-out strategy to increase the independence of the Polish Church at the expense of the rulers, as it is sometimes presented. Rather, it was a decision within the rules of territorial or national Churches. It is enough to mention the findings of Craig Nakashian, who, on the basis of the abundant Anglo-Norman sources concerning the involvement of ecclesiastical dignitaries in civil wars, has shown that during these conflicts, though the clergymen mostly stood by the kings, they were not only guided by blind loyalty to them, but also by the need to ensure internal order and Christian rules within the community. This sometimes resulted in some instability between the prelates and the rulers in power, but it did not mean any fundamental change in the Church's functioning principles within the monarchy.¹⁰⁸ Supporting contenders from among the ruling family for the sake of stabilisation of the hierarchy of power and social relations seems to follow this very logic. It seems that this is how the actions of Archbishop Jacob and the ecclesiastical circles cooperating with him should be understood, when Duke Władysław, in their opinion, ceased to be a guarantor of order and internal peace in the community.

CONCLUSION

What emerges from these different examples suggests that Polish bishops in the 12th and early 13th century were not unaware of certain competences enabling them to both create war ideology and sanction military violence. These competences are shown as being performed in line with the spiritual mission of bishops as religious leaders and pastors with jurisdiction over the Polish community. At the same time, however, they seem to correspond to the high position of the prelates gained under Piast patronage in the period preceding the acceleration of the autonomy of the Polish Church before the mid-13th century. During this period, bishops were perhaps particularly predestined to engage in matters of warfare as they were obliged to perform public duties on behalf of the rulers, but also – as Czesław Deptuła put it – to assist the monarch in forging a powerful Christian Poland.¹⁰⁹ Their competences should be seen therefore as another manifestation of the fulfilling of the mission of the episcopate and the Polish territorial Church for the benefit of the monarchy. Such a conclusion is also supported by the role played by other national Churches

¹⁰⁸ NAKASHIAN 2014, pp. 79–80. Sean Gilsdorf has demonstrated that there were some instabilities in the relations between bishops and kings during periods of dynastic conflict in the Empire, especially when the king acted too resolutely towards his opponents (and relatives) and was reluctant to accept bishops' mediation. See GILSDORF 2014, pp. 125–152.

¹⁰⁹ DEPTUŁA 1968a, p. 52.

respecting the position of monarchs as heads of the secular and clerical hierarchy. A similar picture can be found, at least to some extent, in Polish sources.

However, as in other areas of Latin Christianity, in Poland, too, bishops came to be expected to support those military undertakings which served the good of the community for which they carried out their mission. Since the Carolingian times, these beliefs had remained deeply rooted in the episcopal ideals, but they also corresponded to the principles of political culture, and especially the ideology of war as a tool for protecting one's community. On the one hand, bishops were involved in those actions that strengthened the power of the Piasts against their enemies; on the other — their assistance can be seen to be provided in internal conflicts to those dynasts who sought to guarantee the internal order and peace of the realm. But the role of factors rooted in the idea of just war, of which churchmen had always been the main depositaries, should not be overlooked either. This concept obliged the clergy to support and justify those undertakings which served to establish the peace of God on earth and to strengthen Christianity, as well as to support the ruler in declaring and waging wars on behalf of his subjects, which had always been the main principle of this concept. The fact that Polish sources particularly emphasise the involvement of bishops in warfare aiming at protecting the monarchy — its people and, at the same time, the Church's faithful — from external or internal threats should be considered a result of the awareness of these principles.¹¹⁰

The available sources also allow us to believe that the involvement of bishops as authorities with the power to legitimise warfare was influenced by their knowledge of the idea of war as a God-sanctioned and holy undertaking. This problem, however, needs to be properly understood, also because the notion of "holy war" — as Alexander Pierre Bronisch underlines — is an artificial term, additionally misconstrued by means of its defining in the context of the Levantine Crusades, when we should speak instead of an enduring tradition of war sacralisation.¹¹¹ Bearing this in mind, it is still possible to accept that Polish bishops' competences were anchored in the tradition of holy war, but with the reservation that this idea was not — as Paul E. Chevedden puts it — a product of crusading initiatives of the papacy but resulted "from the historically rooted values and norms of the community of Christian peoples (*populus christianus*)".¹¹²

¹¹⁰ See esp. KOTECKI, MACIEJEWSKI 2020, pp. 16–19.

¹¹¹ BRONISCH 2016, p. 27.

¹¹² CHEVEDDEN 2010, p. 224. For more on such a conceptualisation, see CHEVEDDEN 2013, pp. 191–225.

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Summary

In the article the author examines the question of the legitimisation of military activities of the Piasts by Polish bishops in the period preceding the intensification of the autonomisation of the Polish episcopate vis-à-vis the monarch. The question emerges from the recent research into the links between the Church of the Piast era and warfare, which demonstrate that war-related military activity of prelates was shaped until the 1200s by the rules of public service in line with the model of a state (monarchical) Church. At the same time scholars conducting that research argue that the military duties of the clergy should no longer be viewed as stemming only from being rooted in the political system of the day and the rules of feudal service. The present article provides additional arguments in favour of such a view, with the author also suggesting that the religious dimension of bishops' wartime service — highlighted in the sources — should not be treated as dictated only by the Church's pastoral mission or inspired by the crusading ideology. Instead, the author proposes that the bishops' warfare-related religious activities, especially their efforts to present the monarchs' military endeavours as having a religious nature, be regarded as an integral part of public service. Such a perspective makes it possible to define the activities of Polish bishops as a phenomenon drawing on models of Carolingian origin and requiring the clergy to place the wars waged by monarchs in a unique context of religious ideas and to build an ideological integrity of the body politic in the face of military actions.