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THE EARLIEST ECCLESIASTICAL CONNECTIONS
OF THE TERRITORY
BETWEEN THE VISTULA AND WIEPRZ RIVERS
(POLAND)

A b s t r a c t. The purpose of this study is to find the answer to the question of ecclesiastical administrative affiliation regarding the area between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers. This relatively narrow aspect of the research was the subject of academic controversy over the possible influence of the organization of Methodian Christianity, not only on the designated area, but in general on Polish soil. The vast majority of authors – even if some of them allow for a wide geographic range of Methodian influence – firmly opposes the idea of the presence of any structure of the Methodian rite in the lands north of the Carpathian Mountains, regarding this idea as unsubstantiated. The form of territorial organization of the Church involving the land between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers could only be in the Latin bishopric of Poznań, which was undoubtedly a permanent diocesan structure that depended directly on the Holy See from its earliest period. Theoretically, if the area between the Vistula and the Wieprz Rivers had been included in the territory that on the Czechs in the second half of the tenth century, it would have also belonged to the Diocese of Prague and the Metropolis of Mainz, or, a bit later, to the Diocese of Olomouc. The formal nature of that membership would have probably involved a lack of durable local structures of Christianity, which also had to be a characteristic of the first decades of their dependence on the Diocese of Poznan. It seems that it was only the entrance of the lands between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers into an administrative relationship to the Bishops of Cracow and the Metropolitans of Gniezno in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, which proved to be a stable association that would be strengthened in material and spiritual significance in the coming decades and centuries.

Key words: Lublin region; Piast state; Methodian Christianity; the Diocese of Poznań; the Diocese of Cracow; the Diocese of Lublin.

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INTRODUCTION

The recent bicentennial of the establishment of the Diocese of Lublin, Poland (1805/1807) has given historians, experts in the sociology of religion, and others a reason for an intense reflection. The circumstances surrounding the founding of the local Church, because of obvious reasons (an end to the hopes stemming from the Constitution of May 3, the failure of the armed uprisings, and the occupation of the nation) did not fall into the category of joyful events. Their seriousness, however, forced the Church to sort out its predicament, which had been complicated by the imposition of new boundaries. Of course, the date of the founding of the local diocese should not be considered to be a drastic turning point. The land from which it was formed had been a place where the Church has conducted intense organizational, missionary and pastoral activity for centuries. In this unfolding of the new stage of history, the local community brought with it a baggage load of achievements, which was centuries-old. It is worthwhile to give in to the temptation to reach back to the very beginning of the establishment of this tradition, and to collect these ecclesial experiences.

The title of this paper incorporates the geographical concept delineating an area between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers in eastern Poland. It is chosen deliberately, because terms such as “the Lublin region” or “the lands of Lublin” emerged much later than the period for which the greater part of this paper is devoted. The use of geographical, and even topographical, terminology, is more appropriate, in order to avoid – at least in the realm of language – an anachronistic mistake of looking at these past phenomena.

1. METHODIAN CONECTION

The question that arises on the basis of pre-source knowledge is whether or not some Christian influences reached the pre-Piast¹ lands between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers, and if so, whether it could possibly have created an organizational structure of the Church. In fact, this is a question of the scope of the Methodian rite influences and structures of the 9th and 10th centuries.

¹ The Piast family was the first historically recognized ruling dynasty in Polish history. Under its rule the Polish state was formed and Christianity was spread in the tenth century. That is why the pre-Piast epoch equals a pre-Christian and pre-state time in Polish history.

a) Concerns about the Presence of the Christian Tradition of Cyril and Methodius

The academic discussion of the presence of the Christian tradition of Cyril and Methodius on Polish soil is a more than century-old tradition, and has produced hundreds of studies. It is not the purpose of this inquiry to revisit the ongoing decades-old debate, and its controversies, or to present a discussion of the arguments used in it². The fact of the dispute is a sufficient evidence that the matter is not seen to be quite obvious. However, it remains crucial, insofar as without any real Methodian impact in the region between the Vistula and the Wieprz Rivers, it would be difficult to ascribe any formal belonging to the rite's structures in any way.

It is therefore appropriate to ask about the results of research and investigations regarding the presence of Methodian Christianity on the Polish territory, including the possibility of its existence in the region between the Vistula and the Wieprz Rivers. The thesis that it has had an actual and long-term presence, has advocated by a relatively wide range of researchers. In earlier years, Karol Potkański³, Karolina Lanckorońska⁴ and Józef Umiński⁵ belonged to that group. Amongst contemporary scholars, Antoni Mironowicz⁶ deserves a mention. Each of these scholars used both source inscriptions, which constitute indirect evidence in support of the theory that this rite functioned on Polish soil, as well as architectural and archaeological data, interpreting them in favor of the thesis at hand. It should be noted, however, that the written sources are not in any way conclusive, as in not one case do they provide direct information about the presence of Christianity in this region of the Polish lands. As for the architectural and archaeological sources, the case is even less clear. All of them have yielded quite divergent interpretations and evaluations by the specialists in these fields. It is worthwhile to consider an example of the so-called "tablets from Podebłocie", found in 1986 in southern

² An extensive discussion of this issue along with its bibliography can be found in several studies; G. LABUDA, *Studia nad początkami państwa polskiego*, vol. II, Poznań 1988, pp. 83-166.

³ K. POTKAŃSKI, *Kraków przed Piastami*, [in:] *Lehici, Polanie, Polska. Wybór pism*, ed. G. Labuda, Warszawa 1965, pp. 306-330.

⁴ K. LANCKOROŃSKA, *Studies on the Roman-Slavonic Rite in Poland*, Rome 1961, pp. 10-70.

⁵ J. UMIŃSKI, *Obrządek słowiański w Polsce IX-XI wieku i zagadnienie drugiej metropolii polskiej w czasach Bolesława Chrobrego*, „Roczniki Humanistyczne” 4 (1953), no. 4, pp. 1-44.

⁶ A. MIRONOWICZ, *Kościół prawosławny w dziejach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*, Białystok 2001; IDEM, *Kościół prawosławny w państwie Piastów i Jagiellonów*, Białystok 2003.

Mazovia⁷. These tablets have been dated to the 9th century. Scholars, including Tadeusz Wasilewski, have interpreted characters written on these tablets as a monogram IXSH, signifying "Isos Christos Nika"⁸, which thus prove far-reaching Methodian influences. According to other researchers, such as Edward Tryjarski, the tablets contain Turkish rune symbols. These symbols are relevant to the issues of trade and say "to repay one's debt"⁹. They have nothing to do with the subject of Christianity.

It should also be mentioned that some scholars have made arbitrary conclusions about an established presence of Methodian Christianity, based on the use of unconventional research methods, the suitability of which is difficult to ascertain. An example is the use of geophysical equipment in the research by Edmund Małachowicz¹⁰.

Undoubtedly, the methodological position of the proponents of the theory of the existence of Methodian Christianity on Polish soil, is very difficult. In fact, the current research supports the basic argument already mentioned, namely the lack of written sources which could clearly prove the existence of Methodian Christianity on Polish soil. Among the opponents of the thesis are: Władysław Abraham¹¹, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński¹², Henryk Łowmiański¹³ and Gerard Labuda¹⁴ to mention only a few of the well-known historians.

If so, following the latter position, Christianity had not reached or did not exist to any significant degree in the specified area, and there is no justification for the consideration of possible administrative membership in the area between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers to the particular administrative structure of the rite.

⁷ A. BUKO, *Archeologia Polski wczesnośredniowiecznej. Odkrycia – hipotezy – interpretacje*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 175-181.

⁸ T. WASILEWSKI, *Sensacja archeologiczna nad Wisłą. Odczytywanie tajemnicy*, „Kultura” 1987, no. 4, pp. 1, 4.

⁹ E. TRYJARSKI, *Sensacja archeologiczna nad Wisłą. Ręka pogańska ze Wschodu?*, „Kultura” 1987, no. 12, pp. 1, 7; IDEM, *Wokół sensacji archeologicznej nad Wisłą. Śladami tureckiego pisma runicznego*, „Kultura” 1987, no. 13, p. 7.

¹⁰ E. MAŁACHOWICZ, *Architektoniczne ślady chrystianizacji Śląska w IX-X w.*, „Nauka” 2008, no. 3, pp. 161-176.

¹¹ W. ABRAHAM, *Organizacja Kościoła w Polsce do połowy wieku XII*, Poznań 1962, pp. 151-161.

¹² T. LEHR-SPLAWIŃSKI, *Misja słowiańska św. Metodego a Polska*, „Collectanea Theologica” 13 (1932), pp. 3-12; IDEM, *Nowa faza dyskusji o zagadnieniu liturgii słowiańskiej w dawnej Polsce*, „Nasza Przeszłość” 7 (1958), pp. 235-256.

¹³ H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Początki Polski*, vol. IV, Warszawa 1971, pp. 493-515.

¹⁴ G. LABUDA, *Studia nad początkami państwa polskiego*, vol. II, Poznań 1988, pp. 527-548.

However, the arguments put forward by supporters of the tradition of a Methodian presence in the lands north of the Carpathian Mountains, lead some researchers to take a more careful position. While not trying to lean toward a research hypothesis favoring the presence of the administrative structures of this rite in the specified area, there is no reason to methodologically exclude the possibility of finding evidence of the influence there of the Methodian tradition. An example is the vague assertion of Boleslaw Kumor – otherwise an opponent of complex hypotheses about the organizational presence of the Slavonic rite north of the Carpathian Mountains – which is worth quoting: “Summing up the whole issue of Methodian Christianity in southern Poland, one should take into account the possibility of this kind of Christianity in the Vistulans tribal state”¹⁵. This, however, refers to a certain missionary or ideological influence, rather than to the Methodian administrative structure.

b) The Hypothetical Range of Methodian Administrative Structures

The above facts require that any consideration of a Methodian administrative presence in the Christianity of the lands between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers be strictly hypothetical, resulting from a purely academic assumption of the presence of this rite, not only as a short-lived mission, but also as a stable structure.

Assuming that areas north of the Carpathian Mountains, including the region between the Vistula and the Wieprz, were dependent upon the State of Great Moravia – consequently, that there was a strong and enduring presence of a Methodian element in the area – it can be claimed that the lands belonged to the bishopric of the Cracow Slavonic rite¹⁶. Its membership continued, even after the removal of the Slavonic rite of Moravia in the 880s, and then after the fall of the Great Moravian state at the beginning of the tenth century, and last until at least to the second half of the eleventh century, the time of the transfer of the southern Polish territories to the sovereignty of the Czech state.

Moreover, sometimes Cracow was recognized as the metropolitan seat of the Slavonic rite, transferred directly from the Moravian city of Velehrad in connection with the migration of the clergy of this rite, who were subjected to exile¹⁷. Some authors – especially Karolina Lanckorońska – expound upon the

¹⁵ B. KUMOR, *Zagadnienie chrześcijaństwa metodiańskiego w Państwie Wiślan*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Sławistyka” 1982, no. 3, p. 54.

¹⁶ H. ŁOWMIĄSKI, *Początki Polski*, vol. IV, p. 491.

¹⁷ K. POTKAŃSKI, *Kraków przed Piastami*, pp. 306-330; J. WIDAJEWICZ, *Państwo Wiślan*, Kraków 1947, s. 111-127; H. PASZKIEWICZ, *The Origin of Russia*, Appendix VII: *A Polish Me-*

specific question of the structure of the Methodian rite, while pointing to a number of Cracow Metropolitan Methodian suffragans, such as Wiślica, Sandomierz and Wrocław¹⁸. In this case, the territory between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers fell within the Diocese of Sandomierz. All this, however, is of a far-reaching hypothetical nature, based on very scant sources, which are only of an indirect nature. Some of them, as a fruit of the deepened understanding of the results of archaeological and architectural investigations, have been rejected.

2. THE POZNAŃ CONNECTION

Without a doubt, on the basis of written evidence, it may be accepted that from very early times, the territory between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers belonged to the Latin Church. In this case, concrete, diocesan presence remains dependent upon the determination of the shape of the political boundaries of the early Piast state, in which the first clear structure of the church administration was the Diocese of Poznan.

a) The Oldest Structure of the Latin Church Administration

Attempts at the verification of a potential membership of the lands between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers to the Diocese of Poznan, were not quite successful. At any point in its history, did it form a part of the aforementioned administrative structure? Was the Diocese of Cracow not the first, to which it belonged?

Clearly, a network of local Churches that make up the Metropolis of Gniezno – including the Diocese of Cracow – appeared in the Polish territory by the end of the tenth century. Any previous organization, as the historical sources indicate, needs to be connected with its center in Poznan. What was its nature? Was it a regular diocese, and if so, what territories were included in its boundaries? Did it include the geographic area that is of interest to this study?

tropolitan See of the Slavonic Rite, London 1954, pp. 381-404; L. KOCZY, *Slavonic Rite in Poland*, „Palaeologia” 4 (1955), no. 3-4, pp. 319-328; J. UMIŃSKI, *Obrządek słowiański w Polsce IX-XI wieku*, pp. 1-44; H. KAPISZEWSKI, *Zagadnienie metropolii słowiańskiej w Sandomierzu*, „Studia Historyczne” 1 (1958), no. 1, pp. 73-78; K. LANCKOROŃSKA, *Studies on the Roman-Slavonic Rite in Poland*, pp. 10-70; H. ŁOWMIAŃSKI, *Początki Polski*, vol. IV, pp. 493-515; Z. DOBRZYŃSKI, *Obrządek słowiański w dawnej Polsce*, part 1-3, Warszawa 1989.

¹⁸ K. LANCKOROŃSKA, *Studies on the Roman-Slavonic Rite in Poland*, pp. 75-77.

It would seem that the most common Polish ecclesiastical terminology related to its earliest history includes the terms of “missionary bishop” or “missionary bishopric”. Their popular understanding, however, does not give a clear answer to the questions raised above.

The term “missionary bishop” for the first bishops in the Polish lands – Jordan († 984) and Unger († 1012) – was introduced by Władysław Abraham in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century¹⁹. The scholar concluded that the bishops’ task of the Christianization led them to view Prince Mieszko’s Poznań as a base for their missionary work, but not as a proper episcopal see. This conclusion followed from an otherwise legitimate belief, supported by the academic evidence of the German historian Paul Kher²⁰, that the Poznań Church did not belong to the Metropolis of Magdeburg, which was established in the year 968. Since it did not belong to the Metropolis of Magdeburg, and the Metropolis in Gniezno did not yet exist, the legally existing Diocese of Poznań would be exempted, that is directly dependent on the Holy See. However, the problem is that the investigation was at a stage that left the matter insufficiently clear, and ultimately unknown. It was believed, therefore, that exemption was not possible, and thus the local Church organization could not be independent. So it became easier to describe the situation that unfolded in Poznań by the term “missionary bishopric”. This point of view was supported by such authors Gerard Labuda, Józef Umiński, Jerzy Dowiat, and Zygmunt Sułowski²¹. An important role is played in this case by a relatively narrow argument that would later be disproven, that there can be no mention of an episcopate without clear boundaries, which would be a difficult task, given the changing early-Piast territory of the state.

The problem with the terms “missionary bishop” and “missionary bishopric” lies in the fact that such terminology remained completely foreign to ecclesiastical law at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In that era, the

¹⁹ W. ABRAHAM, *Organizacja Kościoła w Polsce*, pp. 112-119.

²⁰ P. KHER, *Das Erzbistum Magdeburg und die erste Organisation der christliche Kirche in Polen*, „Abhandlungen der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften“, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 1920, no. 1, pp. 18-63.

²¹ G. LABUDA, *Magdeburg i Poznań (Założenie arcybiskupstwa magdeburgskiego i biskupstwa poznańskiego na tle wschodniej polityki misyjnej Ottona Wielkiego)*, „Roczniki Historyczne” 14 (1938), pp. 194-195; J. UMIŃSKI, *Powstanie biskupstwa poznańskiego i zależnego odeń archidjakoatu czerskiego*, „Wrocławskie Wiadomości Kościelne” 7 (1952), no. 1-2, pp. 35-64; J. DOWIAT, *Metryka chrztu Mieszka I i jej geneza*, Warszawa 1961, pp. 36-54; Z. SUŁOWSKI, *Początki Kościoła polskiego*, [in:] *Kościół w Polsce*, ed. J. Kłoczowski, vol. I, Kraków 1968, s. 46-48, 70-72.

Holy See used to send bishops to new areas that it wished to be Christianized. However, these members of the hierarchy had the task of establishing firm administrative structures quickly in order to form a permanent diocesan ecclesiastical organization. The immediate superior of such bishops remained the pope himself. This was due to what became the very characteristic of the Middle Ages, the tendency to follow a very strict adherence to the rules of governance for a metropolitan see. The Holy See thus avoided subjecting the diocese in a new country to the rule by foreign metropolises. In a wider perspective, the first named bishopric was to be the capital of the new province of the Church.

Starting from these assumptions and exploiting gaps in the arguments of other authors, Józef Nowacki presented a new concept with regard to the relevant problems²². In his opinion, the capital city of Poznań was from the very beginning the home of the regular diocesan bishop. In 965, the future wife of Mieszko I, Dobrawa, came to Poznań along with Bishop Jordan. After the baptism of the Prince in the year 966 there were favorable circumstances for the establishment of a permanent organization in the Polish Church. Probably Dobrawa's sister, Mlada-Maria, while she was staying in Rome in the years 965-967, she managed to win the favor of the Holy See for the erection of a new administrative structure based on her account of the actual state of affairs in the homeland of Mieszko. The difficulty of interpretation arises, however, in that there is no document establishing the existence of the Diocese of Poznań. Nevertheless, the source texts from the early eleventh century indirectly indicate the functioning of the formal Diocese of Poznań in the year 968. Undoubtedly it was not a missionary bishopric, as the canon law did not provide for the existence of such structures. In the natural order of things, the borders of the diocese became those of the state of Mieszko I.

The development of the phenomenon of exemption for the period from the seventh to the twelfth century, particularly in the relevant publications by Anzelm Weiss²³, leads to the conclusion that the issue did not result in a particular act of formal exemption for the Diocese of Poznań or in the issuance of any such document. The consequence of the Pope's practice was the sending of bishops to the new country, where they would enjoy the power of papal authority while founding episcopal sees, still being subjects of Rome until a local metropolitan structure could be established there. From that mo-

²² J. NOWACKI, *Dzieje archidiecezji poznańskiej*, vol. I, Poznań 1959, pp. 1-52.

²³ A. WEISS, *Biskupstwa bezpośrednio zależne od Stolicy Apostolskiej w średniowiecznej Europie*, Lublin 1992, pp. 256-258.

ment on, the metropolitan took custody of these dioceses, in the name of the Pope. The symbolic expression of these relationships was the passing of the Roman pallium to the metropolitan bishop.

Basing on the results presented in the above investigations, it should be recognized that in the Poland of the second half of the tenth century, there existed a Church structure in Poznan, which included all lands and subsidiaries subjected to the Duke of Gniezno. The answer to the question of whether the diocese also covered the land between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers, however, depends on the results of the research concerning the political affiliation of that area to the first Piast.

b) The Geographic Scope of the First Piast State

Modest source evidence forces historians to comment with great caution about the history of Lublin. It is certain that since the beginning of the Middle Ages, these areas were inhabited by the Slavs, and in terms of how their internal divisions were established, they can be defined as a local branch of the Western Slavs. It is not impossible that the first people in these lands were called Croats²⁴. There is some controversy in the matter of the settlement in the Lendians' tribal areas. While some authors would be inclined to assign the land between the Bug River in the east and the Nida River in the west²⁵, others see them only on the Pripyat River²⁶, or as one of the minor tribes of Rus, without a more precise identification of their territory of residence²⁷. A possible solution is that the local people had a specific name prior to their entry into the Polish state, however, the name was not preserved in source materials²⁸. It is possible that areas between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers in the seventh century belonged to the state of Samon, which is supported by archeological discoveries²⁹. It is likely that these areas were later included in the organizational body of Great Moravia. There are also some difficulties re-

²⁴ A. GARDAWSKI, Z. SUŁOWSKI, *Najdawniejsze dzieje*, [in:] *Dzieje Lubelszczyzny*, vol. I, ed. T. Mencil, Warszawa 1974, p. 117.

²⁵ Ibidem, pp. 123-126; A. ROZWAŁKA, *Lubelskie wzgórze staromiejskie w procesie formowania średniowiecznego miasta*, Lublin 1997, p. 83.

²⁶ I. KUTYŁOWSKA, *Rozwój Lublina w VI-XIV wieku na tle urbanizacji międzyrzecza środkowej Wisły i Bugu*, Lublin 1990, p. 178.

²⁷ K. MYŚLIŃSKI, *Polityczna problematyka pogranicza polsko-ruskiego do końca X wieku*, „Rocznik Lubelski” 15 (1972), pp. 134-140.

²⁸ Z. SUŁOWSKI, *Przedlokacyjny Lublin w świetle źródeł pisanych*, [in:] *Dzieje Lublina. Próba syntezy*, ed. J. Mazurkiewicz et al., vol. I, Lublin 1965, p. 32.

²⁹ A. GARDAWSKI, Z. SUŁOWSKI, *Najdawniejsze dzieje*, pp. 106-109, 127-128.

garding the territorial scope of the Vistulan state. Opinions are divided whether the land between the Vistula and Wieprz belonged to it in the ninth century³⁰. In the tenth century this area was part of the political structures of Lesser Poland, which nonetheless, in the second half of this century – before 968 and up to about 990 – were subjects of the Czechs. In this case, the land between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers at this stage of its history would not be a part of the oldest Polish diocese, but it would be associated with the Prague Church that was established in 973, and the Mainz Metropolis, possibly after the Diocese of Olomouc. A competing view regarding this area is that as early as in the first half of the tenth century, in contrast to other areas of Lesser Poland lying to the south and south-west, this area was captured and came to be dependent on the emerging Piast state³¹. In this way, this area in the years 968-999 would have been included within the borders of the Diocese of Poznan. A completely different problem is the issue of the practical consequences of this state of affairs.

3. THE CRACOW CONNECTION

It is a plain fact that the land between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers has belonged for a long time to the Diocese of Cracow, seemingly from the beginning of its existence, although the arrangements of its original borders must remain in the realm of academic hypotheses. It is worthwhile to note that the remote geographical area of those lands made them vulnerable to new administrative arrangements associated with the current political and ecclesiastical situation.

a) The Establishment of the Diocese of Cracow and Definition of its Borders

It is quite commonly assumed that in the year 1000, in connection with the Congress of Gniezno, the Diocese of Cracow was established as a part of the newly founded Metropolis of Gniezno. Since there is no documentation of the foundation or erection of the Diocese of Cracow, which would describe the limits of its geographical range, the possibility of its membership in the area

³⁰ K. MYŚLIŃSKI, *Polityczna problematyka pogranicza*, pp. 133-134; A. GARDAWSKI, Z. SUŁOWSKI, *Najdawniejsze dzieje*, pp. 128-129; I. KUTYŁOWSKA, *Rozwój Lublina*, p. 178.

³¹ A. GARDAWSKI, Z. SUŁOWSKI, *Najdawniejsze dzieje*, pp. 129-131; Z. SUŁOWSKI, *Przedlokacyjny Lublin*, p. 34; I. KUTYŁOWSKA, *Rozwój Lublina*, p. 178; A. ROZWAŁKA, *Lubelskie wzgórze staromiejskie*, pp. 56-59.

between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers is based on the concept of the political affiliation of these lands to the state of the Piast dynasty, which extended there, at least from the end of the tenth century, if not before. Undoubtedly, therefore, the area between the Vistula and the Wieprz Rivers were, in the early eleventh century, within the administrative boundaries of the Diocese of Cracow. These boundaries can be described precisely on the basis of lists from the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which contain the names of parishes that payed Peter's pence at that time. The eastern boundary of the Diocese of Cracow was formed by the following parishes: Czemierniki, Biskupice, Bychawa, Wysokie, Goraj. In fact, the diocese thus extended into the basin of the Wieprz³².

As the Diocese of Cracow was territorially very large, it was necessary to improve its management and internal administration by establishing archdeaconries, that is mid-level structures of the Church. Such an archdeaconry, involving the lands between the Vistula and the Wieprz Rivers, was established in Lublin at the end of twelfth century. There is source evidence from 1198 about the archdeacon who served as its head³³.

b) An Unsuccessful Attempt to Create the Diocese of Lublin

The Lublin archdeaconry, forming part of the Diocese of Cracow, had borders that touched in the east the Latin Diocese of Chełm, which was formed at the end of the fourteenth century. Interestingly, it was from beyond the Wieprz River that an initiative to establish the Diocese of Lublin came in the first decades of the fifteenth century. The planned Diocese of Lublin was to encompass the Lublin County area, and, therefore, not all of the archdeaconry, but the majority of the designated divisional units of the state administration.

The idea was probably that of Bishop John Biskupiec that, in difficult conditions, including a huge Orthodox dominance, attempted to organize a Church in Chełm. In 1424, a precise project was undertaken to separate the Lublin district from the Diocese of Cracow, and to include it into the Diocese of Chełm, and subsequently to transfer it to the Lublin episcopal see. The king Władysław Jagiełło, in support of the plans, submitted the relevant request to the Holy See through the canon Mikołaj Lasocki. In response, the Pope Martin V, in his bull "Ad Apostolicae Dignitati", issued on October 17, 1424, ordered Wojciech Jastrzębiec, the Archbishop of Gniezno, to carefully examine whether he would

³² B. KUMOR, *Granice metropolii i diecezji polskich (966-1939)*, „Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne” 18 (1969), p. 347.

³³ IDEM, *Dzieje diecezji krakowskiej do roku 1795*, vol. IV, Kraków 2002, p. 61.

consider the matter appropriate, and brought forth a proposal to force the inclusion of the Lublin district in the Diocese of Chełm. A condition, resulting from the current canon law, was an approval for this work, involving the depletion of the territory of the Diocese of Cracow, by the Bishop of Cracow and the local chapter of the cathedral. In a separate Bull “Ad Ea Quae”, published on November 4, 1424, the Pope told the bishop to move to Lublin, and to make the appropriate changes to the name of the diocese.

Efforts to reorganize the ecclesiastical structures in the Lublin region, however, met with considerable opposition from the Bishop of Cracow, Zbigniew Oleśnicki. Probably because of his influence, in 1425 the states’ assembly association of Sieradz Polish states and sent a January 25 letter to the Pope, asking for the withdrawal of the previous decisions concerning the Church relations in the region. The Bishop of Cracow defended the integrity of his diocese in a separate letter, and complained that John Biskupiec made a fraudulent attempt to detach the district of Lublin and connect it to the Diocese of Chełm. He asked at the same time that the case be reconsidered by the officials appointed by the papal decision.

The official response of Martin V to these supplications took place on January 29, 1426 year. By the power of the bull “Iustus et Honestis,” the Pope told Lucidus, the cardinal deacon of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Cosmedin Church, to settle the dispute.

At that time, Poland had undergone important developments in terms of power. In autumn 1424, unexpectedly a male heir was born to the Jagiełło family. The ascension of Władysław Jagiełło to the throne in Cracow happened as a result of the choice of Polish lords, and now he had to win over the Polish nobles for his son. The ecclesiastical conflict about the Lublin region had to be ended, as the king granted his support to the Bishop of Chełm, pitting him against the most powerful and influential of all the Polish lords, that is, against the Bishop of Cracow. Eventually therefore, the king withdrew his support from the project regarding the establishment of the Diocese of Lublin, and without his support, the implementation of these plans had no chance of success. The Bishop of Chełm – not only because there was no prospect of a favorable outcome, but also because he was perhaps influenced by the direct persuasion of the crown – withdrew from the dispute with the Bishop of Cracow. The final judgment was issued on June 21, 1426 by Cardinal Lucidus, after the case between the Bishop of Cracow’s prosecutor Jan Helling, and the prosecutor of the Bishop of Chełm, Jan of Łańcut. The latter reportedly submitted his voluntary resignation from his principal claim to the district of

Lublin. As a result, the previous decisions were annulled by the papal decree “Noveritis, Quod Nuper.” Thus, the area between the Vistula and Wieprz Rivers remained throughout the Middle Ages a part of the Diocese of Cracow³⁴.

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³⁴ Z. STARNAWSKI, *Źródła do sporu o przynależność diecezjalną powiatu lubelskiego w XV w.*, „Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne” 11 (1964), no. 4, pp. 157-183; J.R. MARCZEWSKI, *Duszpasterska działalność Kościoła w średniowiecznym Lublinie*, Lublin 2002, pp. 69-72; IDEM, *Dzieje chełmskiej kapituły katedralnej obrządku tacińskiego*, Lublin 2013, p. 58.

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NAJWCZEŚNIEJSZE POWIĄZANIA KOŚCIELNE
TERENU MIĘDZYRZECZA WISŁY I BUGU

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest znalezienie odpowiedzi na pytanie o najwcześniejszą kościelną przynależność administracyjną obszaru między rzekami Wisłą i Wieprzem. Zagadnienie to było już przedmiotem kontrowersji akademickich w zakresie możliwego wpływu chrześcijaństwa metodiańskiego nie tylko na wskazanym obszarze, ale w ogóle na ziemiach polskich. Zdecydowana większość autorów – nawet jeśli niektórzy z nich dopuszczają przekonanie o jakimś oddziaływaniu metodiańskim – stanowczo odrzuca obecność jakiegokolwiek zorganizowanej struktury tego obrządku na ziemiach na północ od Karpat. Organizacja terytorialna Kościoła między rzekami Wisłą i Wieprzem może być bez wątpienia wiązana dopiero z poznańskim biskupstwem łacińskim. Było ono dla omawianego terenu bezsprzecznie pierwszą trwałą strukturą diecezjalną, zależną zresztą bezpośrednio od Stolicy Apostolskiej. Co prawda, jeśli założymy polityczną przynależność tego terenu w drugiej połowie X wieku do Czech, należałoby uznać jego jeszcze wcześniejsze uzależnienie od diecezji praskiej i metropolii mogunckiej oraz nieco późniejszą przynależność do diecezji ołomunieckiej. Formalny charakter tego związku pozbawiony byłby jednak trwałych lokalnych struktur chrześcijaństwa, co musiało być zresztą charakterystyczne także dla pierwszych dekad zależności od biskupstwa w Poznaniu. Wydaje się więc, że dopiero wejście ziem między Wisłą i Wieprzem w kościelno-administracyjną zależność od biskupów krakowskich i metropolitów gnieźnieńskich na przełomie X i XI wieku okazało się stabilnym związkiem pod względem materialnym i duchowym.

Słowa kluczowe: Lubelszczyzna; państwo Piastów; chrześcijaństwo metodiańskie; diecezja poznańska; diecezja krakowska; diecezja lubelska.