

A divided diocese at the end of the Christian world. The case of the bishopric of Włocławek

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Abstract. The construction of the gothic cathedral church in Włocławek on the new site by the local bishops, after the former one was burned down by the knights of the Teutonic Order in 1329, coincides with a time of political consolidation of the Kingdom of Poland and a significant reinforcement of the power of Polish kings. For that frontier bishopric, situated in the northern part of the country, it was also a period of stabilization and strengthening of diocesan structures. The earlier history of this diocese, however, was marked by divisions and political rivalry, as well as by an interesting institutional dualism. In my paper, I focus my attention on the period between 1123/1124 – 1330 and on showing how local bishops and chapters built the ecclesiastical structures of this long politically fragmented diocese which initially encompassed some areas that had to be christianised. I also intend to show the ways in which Kuyavian bishops dealt with the problem of loyalty to the rulers, sometimes hostile to each other, while maintaining of interests and well-being of their bishopric.

Keywords: bishops; Kingdom of Poland; 12th-14th centuries; Włocławek's diocesis.

[es] Una diócesis dividida en los confines de la Cristiandad. El caso del obispado de Włocławek

Resumen. La construcción de la catedral gótica de Włocławek en una nueva ubicación por parte de los obispos, tras el incendio de la anterior a manos de los caballeros de la Orden Teutónica en 1329, coincide con un tiempo de consolidación política del reino de Polonia y de un fortalecimiento significativo del poder de los reyes polacos. Fue también un período de estabilización y fortalecimientos de las estructuras diocesanas para este obispado fronterizo situado en la parte norte del país. La historia más temprana de la diócesis estuvo, sin embargo, marcada por las divisiones y la rivalidad política, así como por un interesante dualismo institucional. En el artículo, centraré mi atención en el período entre 1123/1124-1330 y en mostrar cómo los cabildos y obispos locales construyeron las estructuras eclesiásticas de esta diócesis políticamente destruída durante un largo tiempo, que inicialmente comprendía algunas áreas que tenían que ser cristianizadas. Trato también de mostrar los medios con los que los obispos de Kuyavia afrontaron el problema de la lealtad de los gobernantes, algunas veces hostiles entre sí, mientras mantenían los intereses y el bienestar de su obispado.

Palabras clave: obispos; reino de Polonia; siglos XII-XIV; diócesis de Włocławek.

Summary. 1. Introduction. 2. Origin. 3. Impact of the origins. 4. Political impact. 5. Final remarks. 6. Bibliography.

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1. Introduction

Włocławek today is a town with over 100, 000 inhabitants, located in the northern part of central Poland in the historical region called Kuyavia (in Polish: Kujawy). It is still a seat of the 900-year-old bishopric with a Gothic cathedral dating back mainly to the 14th and 15th centuries. The setting of the cathedral church's cornerstone in 1340, situated within the boundaries of a newly founded and transferred to another place *civitas cathedralis*, coincided with a consolidation of the Kingdom of Poland under the reign of King Casimir the Great. It also occurred alongside the conclusion of a perpetual peace treaty between Poland and the state of the Teutonic Order (1343), the order that had been responsible for burning down the former cathedral just eleven years ago².

The earlier history of this bishopric was determined by the political plans of Polish princes towards the eastern part of Pomerania (called also Pomerelia)³, which was a part of the diocese in question, as well as by the rivalry of many rulers of this part of Europe interested in conquering this land. The most important of them represented Poland, Denmark, the Margraviate of Brandenburg, the Duchy of (western) Pomerania, Bohemia, and last but not least, the Teutonic Order. Considering that the location of the Bishopric of Włocławek on both sides of political and cultural borderline was in fact the defining characteristic of the diocese and its development, this article will address the means used by the bishops for legitimization of their authority in the northern part of the bishopric. However, because of the diocese's complicated origins, a closer look at bishops' activity aiming to strengthen their power over the main church centers in Kuyavia seem to be no less important. The article will also demonstrate, using selected examples, how the bishops defended themselves and how they dealt with loyalty to the rulers from both sides of the border, often hostile to each other.

2. Origins

At the dawn of the 12th century the northern parts of Duchy of Poland, ruled by the Piast dynasty for over 150 years, had still pagan neighbors inhabiting Pomerania and

² Bieniak, "Powstanie miasta samorządowego", esp. pp. 92-96, 99-100, 105-107. The scholarship concerning Polish-Teutonic relations until the period of the ruling of Casimir the Great in Poland is extremely extensive, but written mostly in Polish and in German. *Vid.* for instance more recently and general contributions: Kurtyka, *Odrodzone Królestwo*, esp. chapters 2-3; Śliwiński, *Pomorze Wschodnie*, esp. parts 3-4; Biskup, and Czaja (red.), *Państwo Zakonu Krzyżackiego w Prusach*, chapter 2/1-3; Mühle, *Die Piasten*, esp. chapter 5, where cited older works. In English Knoll, *The Rise of the Polish Monarchy*, esp. chapter 4, the book, despite the passage of time, still has considerable value and may be the first introduction to the topic for Anglophones. *Vid.* also Milliman, *The Slippery Memory of Men*, esp. chapter 3.

³ This region is also called by scholars *Pomorze Gdańskie* (Gdańsk Pomerania) in Polish or *Pommerellen* in German.

Prussia. The former region had already been under Polish rule from time to time, and the Piasts had even established a bishopric there around the year 1000, though it collapsed some years after⁴. Now, in the beginning of the 12th century, the whole of Pomerania (approximately between Oder and Vistula rivers) was the land that occupied central place in Polish policy. Frequent military expeditions undertaken by Prince Bolesław III Wrymouth (1102-1138) against the north ended with the conquest of the eastern part of the region in the 1110s, whereas the western part, the Duchy of Pomerania, became a vassal state of Poland some years later⁵. This policy of the Polish prince was accompanied by idea plan of organizing a missionary expedition to the western part of Pomerania and an extension of Polish diocesan organization⁶. The full concept of that extension may have comprised the foundation of even five bishoprics, but it was not fully implemented. In any case, one of those planned dioceses was the Bishopric of Włocławek which, in its early days, was really frontier structure of church administration with missionary goals to achieve in the north.

It is widely accepted today that the Diocese of Włocławek was established not earlier than ca. 1123/24, i.e., during the stay of one of the papal legates in Poland⁷. It is very debatable, however, if Legate Gilo of Toucy (or of Paris), Cardinal-Bishop of Tusculum, and Prince Bolesław III Wrymouth set up the boundaries at that time of only of one or of two bishoprics for Kuyavia and Pomerelia. According to many scholars, the other see was to be founded in Kruszwica, situated also in Kuyavia. This was a quite important administrative center of the Piasts' realm, but had slightly declined since the turn of the 12th century. Very meagre and ambiguous evidence still allows to maintain two main hypotheses. The first is that there was only one bishopric in Włocławek, but because of lack of a suitable church there a new bishop appointed a temporary seat in Kruszwica (first maybe at St Vítus's, then at St Peter's church)⁸. The other is that the legate and the prince created two episcopal sees in

⁴ On the first bishop of Pomerania *vid.* Petersohn, *Der südliche Ostseeraum*, pp. 41-45; *idem*, *Kamminer Bischöfe* pp. 13-15; Rosik, "Reinbern-Salsae Cholbergensis aecclesiae episcopus", pp. 85-93; *idem*, *Conversio gentis Pomeranorum*, pp. 21-44. A closer look at the concept of the Church province of Gniezno, part of which was the first Pomeranian bishopric (situated in Kolobrzeg), gives for instance Michałowski, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. esp. 81-95.

⁵ Powierski, and Śliwiński, and Bruski, *Studia z dziejów Pomorza w XII w.*, pp 33-40; Rosik, *Bolesław Krzywousty*, pp. 163-191.

⁶ Petersohn, *Der südliche Ostseeraum*, pp. 456-471; Rosik, Bolesław Krzywousty, pp. 205-215; *idem*, "Otto of Bamberg's missionary activity", pp. 367-379.

⁷ Abraham, *Organizacja Kościoła*, pp. 93-97 already believed that Bishopric of Włocławek was founded in 1123-1125 but only Tazbirowa, "Początki biskupstwa na Kujawach", pp. 234 determined that no bishopric in Kuyavia had existed before the aforementioned Gilo's legatine mission. The problem of the origins of episcopal administration in Kuyavia and Pomerelia has been widely discussed for well over one hundred years. For that reason I have tried to limit myself to citing only the most important works. Lately, Marcin Danielewski, *Cuiavia christiana*, pp. 127-168 has given a broader overview of those research achievements, unfortunately not of the best quality.

⁸ Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, pp. 24-29; Spors, *Podziały administracyjne*, pp. 15ff. The church was built probably in the second quarter-century of the 12th century, more on this topic Danielewski, *Cuiavia Christiana*, pp. 208-209. Quite recently a group of scholars analyzed the meaning of artefacts from graves found in the St Peter collegiate during archeological excavations in 1960-1961 and their observations seem to confirm these were burials of clergymen occupied a high position in the Church hierarchy from the 12th century, Dąbrowska, "Nieznane groby średniowiecznych duchownych", pp. 21-29; Cybulska, and Orlińska-Mianowska, "Fragmenty dwóch tkanin", pp. 31-39; Janicki, "Romańskie napisy", pp. 41-49. On St Vítus's church in Kruszwica recently Kaczmarek, "Początki architektury sakralnej w Kruszwicy", pp. 311-332 who offers very interesting analyses of pieces of architectural material found during excavation works but with some mistaken conclusions concerning the beginning of the first Kuyavian bishopric.

Kuyavia, but some decades later they were joined together in one under the authority of bishop of Włocławek, who used Kruszwica for his temporary seat (at St Peter's)⁹. At any rate, the scholars agree on one point: Kruszwica was legally or only formally an episcopal seat in the 12th century, and the bishops of Kuyavia stayed there maybe until the last decades of that century. During this transition time they styled themselves with the neutral title *episcopus Cuiavienensis*, which was eventually overtaken in the 13th century by the title of *episcopus Wladislaviensis*¹⁰.

3. Impact of the origins

These close but unclear relations between St Peter's collegiate church in Kruszwica and the episcopal see in Włocławek, as well as a territorial concept of this diocese, had a strong impact on several aspects related to episcopal authority in the area and its functions. The ducal strategy of reorganization of the Polish church in 1120s differed, to a certain degree, from the pattern used by his predecessors. The former Piast bishopric in Pomerania during the 10th century was established in the central location of the whole region and in the rich Pomeranian economic center, but far from main Polish administrative seats of power. Now, all (two or three) episcopal sees, founded then in Kuyavia and in Lubusz (today: Lebus) Land, were situated in less significant but more secure places. That is, they were within the old borders of Polish realm, but their boundaries were to encompass also newly conquered lands. And they were established to strengthen Polish military and political achievements in Pomerelia and among Polabian Slavic tribes¹¹. This strategy failed in the case of Lubusz due to the church-political crisis in Polish-German relations, caused by competition for Pomeranian lands situated on the left bank of the river Oder. The bishopric of Lubusz did not take control under any area outside the Lubusz Land and became the smallest bishopric of Church Province of Gniezno. By contrast, the Bishopric of Włocławek was successful in building a network of diocesan administration not only in Kuyavia but also in Pomerelia.

Unlike most countries with ancient roots where dioceses remained small units, Polish bishoprics were extremely large. They covered usually an area between ca 18-53,000 km². Such information indicates that, except for the bishopric of Lubusz, they can be compared with the most immense bishoprics of western Christianity, for instance: Lincoln or York in England, Prague or Olomouc in Bohemia, or Constance in Germany¹². However, in the latter country an average area of all bishoprics was only as much as ca 13 000 km², and the same pattern was more or less implemented in the

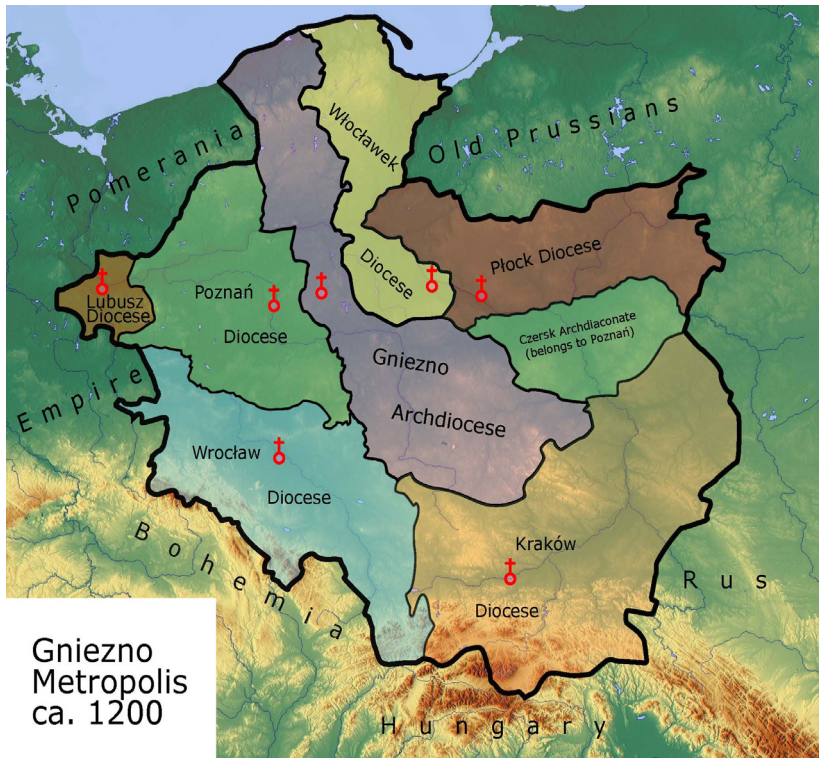
⁹ Labuda, "Początki diecezjalnej organizacji kościelnej", pp. 38-41, 52-59; *idem*, "Zamierzenia organizacji diecezjalnej na Pomorzu, esp. pp. 327-330 with important emendations concerning the borders of those two conjectured dioceses. *Vid.* also Powierski, and Śliwiński, Bruski, *Studia z dziejów Pomorza w XII w.*, pp. 45-54, 149-150.

¹⁰ The title *episcopus Wladislaviensis* appears for the first time on the seal of Bishop Ogerius from 1210, Piekosiński, *Pieczęcie polskie wieków średnich*, p. 39. More on this topic Maciejewski, "Uwagi o tytulaturze", pp. 89-99.

¹¹ Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, pp. 21-30; Weiss, *Organizacja diecezji lubuskiej w średniowieczu*, pp. 35-45; Pauk, "The Pomeranian Church Between Saxony, Poland, and Denmark", pp. 415-417, 421-422.

¹² Szymański, *Biskupstwa polskie w wiekach średnich*, p. 180; Jurek, *Biskupstwo poznańskie*, p. 230. Cf. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, pp. 219-220.

territory of Teutonic Knights in Prussia¹³. It means that Bishopric of Włocławek was not so large as other Polish dioceses but with over 18 000 km² it can be regarded as an extensive medieval diocesan structure.



Map 1. Polish bishoprics at the turn of the 13th century (by Radosław Kotecki)

Not only the size but also the shape of the boundaries of the Bishopric of Kuyavia deserve mention here, because it had very elongated form. Such a shape of diocesan borders seem to be, in a sense, a distinctive feature of the whole Polish ecclesiastical administration during Piast rule. A conspicuous disparity concerning the distance between different parts of dioceses and the episcopal seats appears almost everywhere¹⁴. The reasons for this were of political and practical nature and they are well visible in the unique shape of the episcopal sees in Poland. The majority of them had their cathedral towns in rather central parts of the realm, but in peripheral position in relation to a whole area of given bishopric, and they had its boundaries more or less open towards eastern or northern peripheries. It must have been a deliberate decision because the seats were in secure locations under rulers' control and far from direct external threats. This was a very convenient solution for the new church organization¹⁵. What is more, the Bishopric of Włocławek was endowed according to the papal bull from 1148, with the estates which were suitable dispersed across

¹³ Radziwiński, "Geneza", pp. 145-147.

¹⁴ *Vid.* more Maciejewski, "Shaping Dioceses in Medieval Poland".

¹⁵ *Ibidem.*

the country beyond the borders of the diocese towards Kraków and with St Michael Chapter on the Wawel Hill situated near the most important princely palace and Cracovian cathedral church¹⁶. Those estates could have been also very useful in journeys undertaken by Kuyavian bishops, because the archbishops of Gniezno did not usually summon the meetings of their suffragans or church synods to the metropolitan see due to its peripheral location. Instead, they were held in different places, usually important religious and administrative centers situated in central Poland, located in the territory of Archdiocese of Gniezno (usually close to the archbishops' estates) or very near its borders¹⁷.

And as traveling was a part of the job for medieval bishops, the size and shape of the diocese in question did not facilitate episcopal tasks. A one way journey from his cathedral church to the most remote parts of his bishopric (280 km) would take the bishop of Włocławek around two weeks. Unfortunately, we have rather poor evidence for studying medieval bishops' itineraries in Poland¹⁸. However, we are lucky enough to document on a solid basis that Bishop Maciej Pałuka of Włocławek traveled along local roads, mainly within his diocese, for a distance of at least 1000 km in the first half of 1350. It appears that he really was, to use Julia Barrow's expression, a man on the move¹⁹. And there is also no doubt that bishops of Kuyavia repeatedly visited the northern part of their bishopric, where they usually chose the road along the Vistula River and stayed both in ducal strongholds and their own country manor houses²⁰. In the 13th century, they even made an attempt to organize a larger complex of estates in the central part of eastern Pomerania, perhaps with a view to locating the main center of church administration for this land there. In 1241, Bishop Michał, under pressure of current political affairs, agreed to convert the tithe collected in the Duchy of Sambor II, the younger brother of Prince Świętopelk, into 14 villages, which were to become the basis of this manor complex²¹. Officially, the bishop claimed that he had wanted to be able to stay longer in Pomerania in order to better fulfill his episcopal duties²². The truth was, however, much different. Bishop Michał did it because he supported the younger member of Pomerelian dynasty against his older brother, with whom the bishop was in poor relations. What is more, shortly after this exchange, the bishop began efforts to cancel this transaction. These efforts were repeated by his successors, and successfully completed only in 1282, when Bishop Albierz was able to reverse aforesaid conversion under the new financial agreement with Prince Mściwoj II²³.

From the spatial point of view, it seems to be especially interesting that in 1198 there were probably two archdeacons (as bishop's officials) in the diocese in question,

¹⁶ *Pommerellisches Urkundenbuch*, no 2. Pauk, "The Pomeranian Church Between Saxony, Poland, and Denmark", p. 420 is right that "material endowment of bishopric of Włocławek provokes questions about the "internal" political functions of the Kuyavian bishops in the 12th-century power elite; in particular, about the role of the ecclesiastical institution, strictly dependent on its ducal founder, in the reorganization of the ducal resources in Małopolska (Lesser Poland)".

¹⁷ Maciejewski, "Places of Bishops' Consecration", pp. 43-53.

¹⁸ The last report on itineraries of Polish high-ranking clergy gave Węcowski, "Polskie itineraria", pp. 22-26.

¹⁹ Maciejewski, "*Susceptio episcopi*", p. 69.

²⁰ Maciejewski, "*Per totam terram equitando*", pp. 60-63.

²¹ More on this topic Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, pp. 80-83; Śliwiński, "Kasztelania gorczyńska", pp. 513-530.

²² *Pommerellisches Urkundenbuch*, no. 76: bishop "domicillum habere affectaret in Pomorania, quatinus (!) ibi alternatim commorans episcopale officium efficacius et salubrius in clero exerceret et populo"; Maciejewski, "*Per totam terram equitando*", p. 62; Śliwiński, "Kasztelania gorczyńska", p. 526.

²³ Śliwiński, *Mściwoj II*, pp. 277-279.

one in Włocławek and another one in Kruszwica. The latter was abolished soon after, but in 1233, when the bishopric was subdivided into three archdeaconries, as provinces of ecclesiastical administration, two of them were established in small Kuyavia, and only one in much larger Pomerania²⁴. This shows that the Chapter of St Peter occupied an important position in the ecclesiastical space of the bishopric, all the more that both archdeaconries (in Kruszwica and in Włocławek) were, as usual in Poland, qualified as prelature prebends respectively in their chapters²⁵. Such a decision can be explained on the ground of heritage of the past and defending the interests and rights of St Peter's collegiate church in Kruszwica. In the 13th century, this collegiate church and its chapter was so respected by the bishops of Włocławek that they celebrated here the liturgy of Easter, at least time to time, if not annually²⁶.

This special position of canons from Kruszwica within the Bishopric of Włocławek is confirmed also by a peculiar anomaly concerning the rights of a cathedral chapter. The existence of two bishoprics in Kuyavia or special position of Kruszwica as an episcopal seat within Bishopric of Włocławek in the 12th century caused there were also two chapters in Kuyavia closely related to the bishop. This view is confirmed by several bishops' charters, issued from 1215 for the next 100 years. These mention advice and permission given to bishops by both Kuyavian chapters from Włocławek and from Kruszwica, even calling the latter "the older sister" of the former²⁷. It means that, in the course of that time, the chapter of St Peter was involved in the administration of the diocese. Therefore, it must have inherited a prerogative ascribed by canon law to a cathedral community. I am not sure if the situation we encounter in Kuyavia has close analogy in diocese of Brandenburg, as Peter Kriedte claimed. The better parallels seem to be bi-cephalus bishoprics in England (Lichfield-Coventry, Bath-Wells), but this remark needs deeper analysis²⁸. In any case, that outstanding place of Kruszwica was based only on local custom, so as time went by during the 13th century, the slow process of expiring the control rights of the chapter in Kruszwica as a community coincided with the practice of including its prelates among the canons of Włocławek. This, in turn, guaranteed them participation in the episcopal administration. Finally, these two chapters formed a common cathedral milieu and thanks to this, the prelates of Kruszwica participated in election of Włocławek bishop.

4. Political impact

However, neither the size nor the shape of the diocese or involving two chapters in diocesan administration, were the most important impediments for fulfilling the duty of *episcopus ordinarius* in medieval Włocławek. Unsurprisingly, the most important

²⁴ The chronology of the appearance of the archdeaconries as territorial units in the Diocese of Włocławek is a controversial issue, cf. Guldon, Powierski, *Podziały administracyjne Kujaw*, pp. 9-10; Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, pp. 58-60; Spors, *Podziały administracyjne*, pp. 47-49.

²⁵ The archdeacons of Pomerania were included among Kuyavian canons until the beginning of the 15th century when a new prelature was created for them in the cathedral chapter in Włocławek, Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, p. 349-351.

²⁶ Maciejewski, "Per totam terram equitando",

²⁷ Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, p. 27; Maciejewski, *Działalność kościelna Gerwarda*, pp. 71-73; Bieniak, "Wzajemne powiązania", pp. 53-68.

²⁸ Cf. Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, pp. 29-30; Harvey, *Episcopal Appointments in England*, pp. 3-4.

factors were political matters. The Polish bishoprics, built up at monarch's initiative and for their funds, were treated as a tool for enhancing and reaffirming the political power of Polish kings and princes. This was very common throughout medieval Europe. But the division of the Piast monarchy into many independent duchies at the turn of 13th century, in addition to the struggles to unite their dominion again, resulted with political borders which did not comply anymore with boundaries of ecclesiastical units²⁹.

In the 1220s in the north of Poland, a former governor of Piasts in Pomerelia, Świętopełk II, gained independence. Since then, the Bishopric of Włocławek and Archbishopric of Gniezno no longer belonged only to one political domain. Additionally, this part of Pomerania was also infected by internal rivalry of local dukes which resulted in numerous conflicts, including military ones, within the Pomerelian ducal lineage³⁰. Furthermore, in the beginning of the 14th century, after the death of the last Pomerelian prince, Mściwoj II, and restoration of the Polish rule for a very short time, Gdańsk Pomerania was conquered partly by margraves of Brandenburg, partly by the Teutonic Order³¹. So, after the waning of Piasts' authority in Pomerelia, the bishops of Włocławek were separated from two-thirds of their diocese by political border. No wonder they saw the one of the main goals in maintaining their position in the northern part of the diocese to collect their rightful revenues, to keep the boundaries unchanged and to prevent the ideas of creating a new bishopric in Pomerelia.

When it comes to political matters, it should be noted that during the 13th century, the bishops of Kuyavia became very important political players, highly involved in relations between the Kuyavian dukes and their neighbors. This situation gave the prelates of Włocławek many opportunities to profit from supporting the opposing parties. It also carried, however, numerous threats to their administrative and pastoral activities. To demonstrate how complex the tasks undertaken by the bishops of Włocławek, I will discuss some threads concerning the northern part of the bishopric under discussion because only here the conflicts between bishops and rulers caused real threats for stability of diocesan borders, and difficulties in exercising of episcopal authority. All of this provoked many harsh interactions between the bishops and local authorities and it reveals that the one of the most important issues was negotiating a pattern of tithing in Pomerelia.

Undoubtedly, the rulers of eastern Pomerania belonged to the beginning of the 13th century to the Polish political and administrative elite, and they used their ducal title (*dux*) on the same grounds as the other Piast governors ruling in the extensive provinces of the Polish realm. Then they tried to loosen their political ties with Poland and after the death of Leszek the White, Prince of Kraków, during a *colloquium* in Gąsawa in 1227. This significantly weakened Polish political influence in Pomerelia³². Despite the fact that Świętopełk of Gdańsk was a perpetrator of that sudden attack on Polish princes at the meeting in Gąsawa which ended with the death of Prince Leszek, Bishop Michał of Włocławek remained on good terms

²⁹ More Maciejewski, "Shaping Dioceses in Medieval Poland".

³⁰ Śliwiński, "Stosunki polityczne", pp. 191-240

³¹ The best analysis of those events was given recently by Śliwiński, *Pomorze Wschodnie*. In English *vid.* Milliman, *The Slippery Memory of Men*, pp. 113-115.

³² *Vid.* esp. Śliwiński, "Zerwanie Świętopełka", pp. 191-239; Bieniak, "Polityczne okoliczności śmierci", pp. 35-60.

with the Pomerelian Duke for the next several years³³. According to some scholars, the bishop was to act in this way for the sake of protecting his diocese, preventing the emergence of a new Pomerelian bishopric, as an exempt diocese directly under the Holy See³⁴. Such a threat seems real, especially if we notice that ecclesiastical boundaries could broaden or shrink depending on current political situations. This is easily traceable in the case of Słupsk Land. Its ecclesiastical affiliation immediately after conquering Pomerelia by Bolesław III is uncertain, but from the turn of the 13th century at the latest until the beginning of the 14th century it formed a part of Archbishopric of Gniezno as Archdeaconry of Słupsk. However, when the land was taken by the margraves of Brandenburg and then seized by a Pomeranian prince of Wolgast, the bishops of Kamień also enlarged their diocese eastward and Gniezno lost its northern outskirts³⁵.

After all, there is no firm evidence for that aforementioned claim regarding the 1230s or 1240s but a bit later, Prince Świętopełk tried probably to increase his independence from Poland and to free his land from any Polish ecclesiastical and lay influences. For we are able to confirm close cooperation of the prince and the Bishop-Elect of Sambia, Tetward, in the early 1250s. The latter could not take his diocese in possession for some reasons and being, in practice, *episcopus in partibus infidelis* and remaining in the diplomatic service at Świętopełk's court, he was to seize "a part of the diocese" of Bishop of Kuyavia. This action met with the strong and successful reaction from the side of Bishop Michał, and thanks to the unequivocal attitude of the Holy See and Świętopełk's defeat in the war with the Teutonic Knights, the threat to break up the Włocławek diocese was averted³⁶. In any case, it becomes clear that over time, the relations between the Bishop Michał and Prince Świętopełk became marked by distrust and even hostility. From one side the Bishop of Kuyavia was drawn into the complicated relationships within the Kuyavia, Pomerelia and the Teutonic Order political triangle. From the other hand he was involved in the internal struggles within the new dynasty of Pomerelian dukes. And what is the most important, the Kuyavian prelate openly supported Świętopełk's enemies during those disputes and wars³⁷.

The events of the year 1238 seem to be a good example of such difficulties. At that time, Duke Świętopełk II invaded Kuyavia and plundered, among others, many episcopal estates. Shortly afterward, however, he was forced to promise to give satisfaction to Bishop Michał for those damages and robberies and because he had not allowed him to come to the archdeaconry of Pomerania. The reasons of that prohibition were partly of political nature, since the prelate had openly supported Świętopełk's opponents during that war. But another motive could have been also vi-

³³ Jasiński, "Dokumenty biskupa kujawskiego Michała", pp. 99-118; Dekański, *Początki zakonu dominikanów*, pp. 92-96; Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", p. 100-101.

³⁴ Szacherska, *Opactwo cysterskie w Szpetalu*, pp. 46-47, 52; Śliwiński, *Pogranicze*, p. 129; Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", p. 107. The suggestion of the older scholars that the case concerned only several frontier parish churches is completely arbitrary and unconfirmed by any sources.

³⁵ Śliwiński, "Przynależność państwowa ziemi słupskiej", pp. 277-281; Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", pp. 87-88 where the older works are cited.

³⁶ Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, p. 90-92; Milliman, *The Slippery Memory of Men*, pp. 57-59; Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", p. 84. The suggestion of the older scholarship that the case concerned only several frontier parish churches is completely arbitrary and unconfirmed by any sources.

³⁷ Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, p. 83-91; Śliwiński, *Pogranicze*, p. 129; Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", pp. 106.

tal. In this very year, Bishop Michał received from Rome a renewed papal protection bull, originally issued in 1148, but now thanks to a tiny interpolation in the text, the tithes, which had belonged so far to the bishopric only from the district of Gdańsk, were now to be collected from all over Archdeaconry of Pomerania³⁸. It is sometimes believed that the aim of the bishop's forgery was only an adjustment of the record from the papal bull to the current administrative division of Pomerelia in 1230s. One must also take into account that on this occasion, Bishop Michał began to treat a tithe in cereals (*decima annona*) as an ordinary church tithe collected throughout the entire Pomerelian archdeaconry, which definitely dominated other forms of fiscal charges for the bishopric³⁹. Further efforts of the bishops of Włocławek resulted in the fact that in 1277 this tithing appeared in the most favorable form for the Church as praedial tithe (*decima manipulata*), i.e., directly collected on peasants' fields⁴⁰. Those long-lasting and persistent efforts seem to prove that ecclesiastical tithes were important parts and distinctive attributes of a system of episcopal authority within medieval society⁴¹.

To protect their rights in Pomerelia (and not only there) the bishops of Kuyavia used typical chief ecclesiastical sanctions like excommunication and interdict, as in other parts of medieval Europe. Alongside such spiritual *sticks* they had also something what could be recognized as a *carrot* for Pomerelian dukes, because they implemented an interesting innovation in their titles given in charters. When the matters covered by a document concerned Archdeaconry of Pomerania, the bishop's title often appeared not as *Wladislaviensis* or *Cuiaviensis* but as *episcopus Cuiaviae et Pomeraniae*. Some scholars argue that it was an *ad hoc* attempt to salvage the bad relations between Bishop Michał and Prince Świętopełk II and not a result of any deliberate politics, because the new title did not appear on bishop's seals⁴². Nevertheless, the practice is well documented for a period of about 60 years, what covers more or less the time of independent reign of the dukes of Pomerelia and pontificates of some prelates of Włocławek. It seems to confirm the belief that the concept shows signs of durability and was repeated over and over again. Therefore, it is hard to doubt that the use of this title not only meant to legitimize the episcopal power in both parts of the diocese, but it was also a tribute to the independence of the dukes of Pomerelia, who accepted the Pomeranian title of the bishops of Włocławek with satisfaction⁴³. And, of course, it had nothing to do with changing an official name of the diocese. This strategy of using bishop's documents to secure the diocesan borders and strengthen unity of such politically divided bishopric seem to have been a helpful idea which, under favorable circumstances, could open the way to strengthening relations between Kuyavia and eastern Pomerania. We can actually ascribe such

³⁸ *Pommerellisches Urkundenbuch*, no. 2 (1148): "...castrum Kdanzc in Pomerania cum decima tam annone, quam omnium eorum, que de navibus solvuntur, decimam partem de moneta et de iudiciis totius episcopatus"; *Pommerellisches Urkundenbuch*, no. 61: "...in castro Danczk et in Pomerania decimam tam annone quam...".

³⁹ Kriedte, *Die Herrschaft*, pp. 41-42; Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", pp. 101-102.

⁴⁰ *Pommerellisches Urkundenbuch*, no. 288: "Invenimus insuper in eisdem privilegiis decimas manipulatas et decimam de solutione tabernarum, theloneum, monetarum, navium, omnium iudiciorum..." Kriedte, p. 42.

⁴¹ Broader this problem is discussed by Eldevik, *Episcopal Power and Ecclesiastical Reform*. Vid. also, Pauk, "Saxony-Poland-Pomerania", esp. s. 272-283.

⁴² Bruszevska-Głombiowska, *Biskup włocławski Michał*, pp. 38-39; Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", pp. 107-108.

⁴³ Maciejewski, "Uwagi o tytułaturze", pp. 94-98, where documentary evidence is given, although the author did not properly appreciate the idea at that time.

activity to two Kuyavian bishops: Albierz (1276-1283) and Wisław (1284-1300), who supported the rapprochement policy between the last ruler of Pomerelia and the Piasts from Kuyavia and Greater Poland⁴⁴.

The conquest of Gdańsk Pomerania by Teutonic Knights (1308-1309) was a tremendous political transformation for the bishops of Kuyavia which indicates how much things have changed compared to the previous century. During the first several years after those events Bishop Gerward (1300-1323), although he was among the closest followers of the Polish prince, remained on good terms with the new lords of that part of Pomerania. However, questioning some episcopal rights in the northern part of his diocese by the Oder prompted him to make an unequivocal political declaration in favor of Polish ruler in the Polish-Teutonic Knights' conflict over this land ca. 1317. The result of this was that he could not freely administer the northern part of his bishopric⁴⁵. His successor, Maciej Pałuka, had to face even more serious problems.

The last years of the reign of King Władysław the Elbow (r. 1320-1333) were marked by military clash with the Teutonic Order, and Bishop Maciej, was not only a faithful supporter of the Polish crown, but also argued with the Grand Master (Werner von Orseln) over the way of collecting diocesan tithes in Pomerelia. No wonder then, the bishop's estates were not spared during the war and in 1329 they were pillaged again by the Teutonic Knights. What is more, on Easter Sunday of that year, Włocławek was burnt together with the cathedral church, and soon after that, this fate was shared by the bishop's town in Raciążek⁴⁶. Maciej Pałuka threatened the perpetrators with excommunication if they would not repair the damage caused to the Church of Włocławek, but this was in vain⁴⁷. In the summer of the following year, the Teutonic Knights, after the short siege, seized the episcopal stronghold in Raciążek, which housed a treasury, significant supplies of food, and many items of weapons⁴⁸. After this loss, the Kuyavian prelate reached again for spiritual weapons and asked the Holy See for help. However, before the pope was able to respond to this complaint, the bishop reached an agreement with the Order, thanks to which he regained his stronghold, provided that the fortress would not become a base for any anti-Teutonic military activities⁴⁹. This agreement was used by many scholars to accuse the prelate of betraying the Polish king. Janusz Bieniak proved, however, that Bishop Maciej did so in concert with an archbishop of Gniezno and King Władysław, whom he could no longer help in the current situation. And thanks to this pact, he not only reinstated his authority as a church superior within his bishopric, but he was also able to redeem from captivity the defenders of Raciążek⁵⁰. In this dramatic moment, the bishop was forced to agree on alternation of the mode of collecting tithes in

⁴⁴ On good relations between these two prelates and Prince Mściwoj II more Smoliński, "Relacje książąt", pp. 114-118.

⁴⁵ Maciejewski, *Działalność kościelna Gerwarda*, pp. 124, 127-129. In 1318-1319 Gerward conducted negotiations at the papal court in Avignon where he obtained papal permission for coronation of Polish Prince Władysław the Elbow and for commencement of the trial for the robbery of Gdańsk Pomerania against the Teutonic Order, Abraham, "Stanowisko", pp. 32-34; Chłopocka, *Procesy*, p. 23; Bieniak, "Wiec ogólnopolski w Żarnowie", pp. 476-478.

⁴⁶ Zajączkowski, *Polska a Zakon Krzyżacki*, pp. 150-152.

⁴⁷ *Codex diplomaticus Poloniae*, 2/1, no. 249; Maciejewski, "Biskupi na wojnach monarchów", pp. 86-87.

⁴⁸ *Kalendarz i spominki włocławskie*, p. 83.

⁴⁹ *Codex diplomaticus Poloniae*, 2/1, no. 252.

⁵⁰ Bieniak, *Wielkopolska*, s. 15-16.

Pomerelia to the detriment of his bishopric and to give up any compensation due to him for the injustice he suffered. But getting out of the way of confrontation became a good solution for both the bishop and the king to whom he remained faithful.

5. Final remarks

For over two centuries, the boundaries of Polish Church virtually coincided with borders of the Piast realm. However, by the mid-13th century, constant incapability between political and ecclesiastical borders became characteristic feature of Polish diocesan pattern for the several next centuries. This is especially true in relation to Bishopric of Włocławek. Not only was the see established partly for newly conquered pagan territory; it was also the scene of the ferocious struggles for territorial domination that defined relations between the bishops and lay authority.

The bishops of Włocławek had to deal with the polycentric arrangement of the centers of ecclesiastical authority in Kuyavia as a legacy of the complicated beginnings of this diocese. They were able, however, to make a slow transfer of the powers of the chapter in Kruszwica as an institution, leaving the canons of Kruszwica among the church elite of the bishopric. The bishops of Kuyavia had also to deal with the difficult problem of administration of the Pomeranian archdeaconry, which was distant from their capital and became politically separated from the realm of Polish princes and kings. Despite this difficult situation, they were able to implement quite successful strategies to legitimize and strengthen their power. They not only maintained their loyalty to the Piast dynasty, but also managed to keep the northern part of the diocese under their control and to establish firm ecclesiastical structured framework of both sides of the border.

That maintaining of the ecclesiastical unity of the lands included in the Włocławek diocese probably also much facilitated the inclusion of these lands into the Polish crown after the victorious Thirteen Years' War (1454-1466). Interestingly, although political unity was restored, some cultural and social differences persisted. Probably being aware of this, the clergy of the diocese of Włocławek, gathered at the diocesan synod in Piotrków in 1555, and implemented a new official episcopal title (*Wladislaviensis et Pomeranie*)⁵¹. This appears to have referred, in a sense, to an idea invented in the 13th century but should be the subject of further research. Similarly, it would certainly be worth examining thoroughly how the relations of the Kuyavian bishops with their superiors, the archbishops of Gniezno, influenced the fate of the bishopric of Włocławek and political activity of its prelates. It would be all the more interesting that the metropolitans of Gniezno, although in a much smaller extend, experienced similar difficulties in connection to the political divisions of their diocese.

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