Medieval Studies

Acta Poloniae Historica
99, 2009
PL ISSN 0001 - 6829

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TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PRE-STATE POLAND (9th AND 10th CENTURIES) IN THE LIGHT OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES OF SEGMENTARY SYSTEM AND CHIEFDOM

The term "chiefdom" was introduced into political anthropology in 1955 by Kalervo Oberg[1]. He used it to define the political organization of those tribes of South American Indians which formed multi-village territorial organizations ruled by paramount chiefs to whom village chiefs were subordinated. With its two-level organization, chiefdom was different from systems comprising numerous independent villages inhabited by one ethnic group. The latter was described by Oberg as segmentary system. It lacked political ties that went beyond the village level. The villages-segments were held together by ethnic ties — culture, language, customs and types of economic activities. Oberg proposed the following evolution: homogenous tribes, segmented tribes, politically organized chiefdoms, feudal type states, city states and theocratic empires. His proposal was met with criticism and opposition, but the term "chiefdom" itself was readily accepted and its definition was expanded.

Already in the second half of the 1950s Oberg's terminological suggestion was taken up and developed by Marshall Sahlins in his work on the social stratification of tribes living in the islands of Polynesia[2]. To the element of power defining chiefdom, which for Oberg came to the fore, Sahlins added rank-based

[1] K. Oberg, *Types of Social Structure Among the Lowland Tribes of South and Central America*, "American Anthropologist", 1955, 57, pp. 472-487.
[2] M. Sahlins, *Social Stratification in Polynesia*, Seattle 1958.

social stratification (rank society). In the chiefdom there was a hierarchy of prestige, importance and influence headed by the paramount chief. His economic function was to redistribute goods received as gifts and to use them for the general purposes of the community. Thus there was no economic exploitation in chiefdoms. In addition, the paramount chief's status had no political foundations; he did not hold the monopoly of coercion and was controlled by the village chiefs as well as the whole community. Chiefdom defined in this manner was accepted in political anthropology as a term and tool for analyzing the socio-political reality.

Translating the term chiefdom into French was not difficult; the French equivalent is *chefferie*. In German not only *Herrentum*, but also *Häuptlingtum* and *Häuptlingschaft* are used. In Russian it is *vozhdestvo (вождество)*, similar to the Polish *wodzostwo*[3]. It has to be said the Russian and Polish equivalents of chiefdom are not entirely satisfying. They draw our attention to the military functions of the paramount chief, whereas his role was varied and the military functions were only part of it. Yet attempts to introduce in Polish research the term *szefatura* have failed[4]. The term is precise but its artificiality is off-putting. This is why the term *wodzostwo* has been accepted in Polish anthropology.

Even greater opposition and, consequently, delay was associated with the introduction of the term "chiefdom" into historical research. The reasons behind these difficulties are discussed below.

In political anthropology the term was entirely accepted in the 1960s. Elman Service used it in his synthetic and comparative study, *Primitive Social Organization*, published in 1962[5]. Like Sahlins, he too recognized, first of all, the social and economic foundations of chiefdoms. He associated the latter with the influence of the natural environment on production, while the social stratification was for him linked to the redistributive

[3] J. C. Muller, entry for *chefferie* in: *Dictionaire de l'anthropologie*, sous la direction de P. Bonte, M. Izard, Paris 1992, p. 138–139; entry for *wodzostwo*, in: R. Vorbich, *Słownik etnologiczny. Terminy ogólne (Ethnological dictionary. General terms)*, ed. Z. Staszczak, Warszawa–Poznań 1987, pp. 368–370.

[4] Oral information from Dr. Eugeniusz Rzewuski and Dr. Grzegorz Wiński concerning the work on *Wielka Encyklopedia PWN (PWN Great Encyclopaedia)*. I wish to express my gratitude to both of my colleagues for their contribution.

[5] E. R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization. An Evolutionary Perspective*, New York 1962, pp. 143–144, 154–159, 170; Idem, *Origins of the State and Civilization. The Process of Cultural Evolution*, New York 1975, pp. 15–16.

function of the chief. Oberg's evolutionistic proposal prompted Service to discuss it and present his own proposal of four levels of social integration, namely: band, tribe, chiefdom and state. This proposal too provoked criticism, especially with regard to the distinction between the tribe and the chiefdom. Service's critics pointed out that the term tribe did not define the level of political organization, i.e. tribal societies could have formed both segmentary and chiefdom-like systems of power[6]. In *Tribesman* (1968), Sahlins described both of these types of tribal organization[7].

The theoretical proposals and the extensive literature on various chiefdoms existing in various periods, in various civilizations and on different continents were summed up in 1981 by Robert Carneiro[8]. Just like his predecessors, he treated the chiefdom as a common historical phenomenon that could be a subject of comparative studies. In his view, the special, distinctive feature of the chiefdom was its two-level (village-centre)[9] management system, in contrast to the one-level (village) management of segementary systems and the three-level structure of the state (village-province-centre). Thus, in his evolutionistic proposal he placed the chiefdom between the segmentary system of autonomous villages and the state organization.

It seemed, therefore, easy to distinguish segmentary systems from chiefdoms. This, however, required taking into account Aidan S o u t h a l l's thesis about "segmentary states" that further complicated this picture. For Southall, a segmentary system was also one comprising an association of chiefdoms-segments into which an ethnic group could be divided[10]. The expansion of segmentation to include both types: segments-villages and seg-

[6] R. V o r b i c h, *wodzostwo*, p. 369; with a reference to J. H o n i g m a n n (ed.), *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, Chicago 1973.

[7] M. S a h l i n s, *Tribesman*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1968, pp. 20–27.

[8] R. C a r n e i r o, *The Chiefdom: Precursor of the State*, in: *The Transition to Statehood in the New World*, ed. G. D. J o n e s, R. K a u t z, Cambridge 1981, pp. 37–39.

[9] *Ibidem*, pp. 45–46.

[10] A. S o u t h a l l, *Alur Society. A Study in Processes and Types of Domination*, Cambridge 1956; i d e m, *The Segmentary State in Africa and Asia*, "Comparative Studies in Society and History", 1988, vol. 30, pp. 52–82, i d e m, *The Segmentary State: From the Imaginary to the Material Means of Production*, in: *Early State Economies*, ed. H. C l a e s s e n, P. v a n d e V e l d e, New Brunswick 1991, pp. 75–96.

ments–chiefdoms has its opponents[11] as well as its advocates[12]. However, the term "segmentary state" has not been accepted, because the essence of the state is centralization of power, whereas segmentation is the opposite of centralization.

Another difficulty is how to establish the borderline between the chiefdom and the state. This border is hard to define in research practise. Carneiro believed that the difference between the two lay in the fact that the state authorities had the monopoly on legal use of coercion, while in the chiefdom the chief had no such powers[13].

The criticism of simple evolutionism, which defined the inevitable stages in the development of human communities, led to the emergence in anthropology of Julian Steward's theory of multilinear evolution[14]. This theory rejects the notion of an identical and monolinear evolution of all human societies and the opinion that this evolution takes place automatically. Taking this theory into account, Carneiro proposed his typology of chiefdoms and pointed to the possibility, but not necessity, of the emergence of chiefdoms and their subsequent transformation into states[15].

The proposals concerning the typology of chiefdoms resulting from specific case studies, proposals that were systematized by Carneiro, are based on several elements. First, they refer to the most important feature, selected by the researcher, of a specific chiefdom. Second, they refer to greater or lesser complexity of that chiefdom's organizational structure. Third, they refer to its size.

[11] E. Terray, *Sociétés segmentaires, chefferies, Etats: acquis et problèmes*, in: *Mode of Production: the Challenge of Africa*, ed. B. Jewsiewicki, J. Létourneau, Ste Foy 1985, pp. 106–115. See also J. Middleton, D. Tait (eds.), *Tribes Without Rulers. Studies in African Segmentary Systems*, London 1970.

[12] P. Skalník, *Questioning the Concept of the State in Indigenous Africa*, "Social Dynamics", 1983, vol. 9 (2), pp. 11–28; idem, *Ideological and Symbolic Authority: Political Culture in Naun, Northern Ghana*, in: *Ideology and the Formation of Early States*, ed. H. Claessen, J. S. Osten, Leiden 1996, pp. 64–74; idem, *Authority Versus Power: Democracy in Africa Must Include Original African Institutions*, in: *The New Relevance of Traditional Authorities to Africa's Future*, ed. E. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, D. I. Ray, special edition of the "Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law", 1996, vol. 37–38, pp. 109–121. In Poland the advocates of a wider application of the term "segmentary system" include K. Modzelewski, *Barbarzyńska Europa (Barbarian Europe)*, Warszawa 2004, p. 348, and the author of the present article.

[13] R. Carneiro, *The Chiefdom*, p. 68.

[14] J. Steward, *Theory of Culture Change: the Methodology of Multilinear Evolution*, Urbana 1955.

[15] R. Carneiro, *The Chiefdom*, p. 65–67.

Taking into account the organizational base and the paramount chief's powers, Carneiro divides chiefdoms into military and theocratic chiefdoms. In the latter, the chief's prestige and powers were based on his role as a priest and on the sacred qualities attributed to him. Sacerdotal power can also exist alongside the power of the chief. In both cases a system of beliefs was the foundation of the organization and respect accorded to the authorities. Military chiefdoms, on the other had, were organized around the chief–commander. Waging of wars and taking of spoils were the basis both for the emergence of this type of chiefdom and its transformations, development and increasing social divisions[16]. The role of warfare in the evolution of political systems has been analyzed by many scholars. Marshall Sahlins formulated a thesis about predatory expansion of certain tribal organizations[17].

Another division of chiefdoms proposed by Carneiro, after Colin Renfrew, concerns group–oriented and individualizing systems[18]. In the case of the former, what is stressed during various ceremonies and practical activities (for instance, joint works for the benefit of the whole community) is social solidarity. The scope of group–orientation may vary — from the whole or majority of a community, through some of its groups, to just one group. In individualizing chiefdoms the chief has greater powers; he is the person who has prestige–enhancing goods at his disposal and he distributes them.

When analyzing the phenomenon of goods distribution, Carneiro points to the circulation of commonly used commodities, mainly food, combined with the phenomenon of reciprocity and joint consumption of collected goods during various feasts and ceremonies. According to Carneiro, there was a separate system of distribution of symbolic or precious goods that enhanced the chiefs' prestige,

[16] *Ibidem*, pp. 47, 63–65.

[17] M. Sahlins, *The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion*, "American Anthropologist", 1961, vol. 63 (2), pp. 322–345; D. Webster, *Warfare and the Evolution of the State: a Reconsideration*, "American Antiquity", 1975, vol. 40 (4), pp. 464–470; *Guerres de lignages et guerres d'Etats en Afrique*, ed. J. Bazin, E. Terray, Paris 1982; M. Tymowski, *L'armée et la formation des Etats en Afrique Occidentale au XIX siècle*, Varsovie 1987.

[18] C. Renfrew, *Beyond a Subsistence Economy: the Evolution of Social Organization in Prehistoric Europe*, in: *Reconstructing Complex Societies: an Archaeological Colloquium*, ed. C. B. Moore, Supplement to the "Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental Research", Cambridge, Mass., 1974, pp. 69–95; R. Carneiro, *The Chiefdom*, p. 47.

goods that were acquired by way of external exchange[19]. We should add here that they could also be acquired in the form of spoils.

Carneiro's typology was followed by typologies developed by Timothy Earle and Krystian Kristiansen. For both scholars the basis of the division of chiefdoms was economic activities, types of redistributed goods and, most importantly, the organization of redistribution, the chief's place within this organization and the way in which the redistributed goods were used[20]. The organizational complexity of chiefdoms, their social or individual orientation, and the chiefs' powers were all determined by the type of redistribution.

When it comes to the degree of development and the complexity of organizational system, Carneiro proposes a division into simple and complex chiefdoms. He also introduces a three-level scale, with minimal, typical and maximal chiefdoms. It applies to the size of chiefdoms. The first type comprises at least two, usually several villages and populations of several hundred people. The second — the most common type according to the author — comprises several dozen villages and populations of around 10–12 thousand. The third type comprises chiefdoms that are evolving into states, hence their significantly bigger size. According to Carneiro, examples of such chiefdoms are Hawaii and Tahiti[21].

The problem of the borderline between the chiefdom and the state is of special importance for the supporters of the Early State theory[22]. According to this theory, the emergence of a state is a political breakthrough. Non-state organizations, including chiefdoms, are significantly different from state organizations. The formation of the latter is determined by the centralization and institutionalization of power, clear division into the rulers and the ruled, the authorities' and ruling class' monopoly on using legal coercion, the emergence of a system of duties and tributes paid by the ruled to the rulers and used for the needs of

[19] *Ibidem*, pp. 58–63.

[20] T. K. Earle, *Chiefdoms in Archaeological and Ethnological Perspective*, "Annual Review of Anthropology", 1987, vol. 16, pp. 279–308; idem, *The Evolution of Chiefdoms*, in: *Chiefdoms: Power, Economy and Ideology*, ed. T. Earle, Cambridge 1991, pp. 1–15, esp. pp. 2–3; K. Kristiansen, *Chiefdoms, States and Systems of Social Evolution*, in: *Chiefdoms*, 1991, pp. 16–43, typology pp. 23–25.

[21] R. Carneiro, *The Chiefdom*, p. 47.

[22] H. Claessen, P. Skalník (eds.), *The Early State*, the Hague 1978; idem, *Limits: Beginning and End of the Early State*, *ibidem*, pp. 619–635, esp. p. 621.

the state apparatus, a three-level system of administration covering the whole territory, and measures implemented to prevent any part of the territory from separating.

By using the term early state to describe the first states (first on the evolutionary scale), the authors of the theory assumed that it was a separate type of state from which more complex types could develop (though did not have to develop)[23].

A similar reasoning can be applied to non-state (pre-state) systems. They too comprised various types of organization, including chiefdom. In addition, chiefdoms themselves have different forms and can undergo transformations. The chiefdom — by developing a centre of power — becomes a type of organization that is closest to the state and that enables and facilitates (though does not determine) the emergence of states.

I have already mentioned Timothy Earle's typological proposal which followed Carneiro's article. He edited a collective study which not only maintained the thesis about a lack of automatic evolution of chiefdoms and their transition into states, but also added another thesis — concerning the fall of many chiefdoms caused by external threats and their disintegration under the impact of internal processes[24]. Therefore, the development and functioning of chiefdoms were by no means monolinear and were reversible in many cases.

The latest research on chiefdoms uses first of all the results of field studies in Africa as well as political science studies on contemporary African political systems.

E. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal together with his associates studied the formation and functioning of chiefdoms in Africa's past as well as the existence of chiefdoms within colonial systems and today's African states[25]. On the other hand, Peter Skalník — distancing himself from his own and Henri

[23] H. Claessen, P. Van de Velde (eds.), *Early State Dynamics*, Leiden 1987, *Introduction*, p. 2; M. Tymowski, *The Early State and After in Pre-colonial West Sudan. Problems of the Stability of Political Organizations and the Obstacles to their Development*, *ibidem*, pp. 54–69.

[24] T. Earle, *The Evolution*, p. 4; R. Cohen, *Evolution, Fission and the Early State*, in: H. Claessen, P. S. Skalník (eds.), *The Study of the State*, the Hague 1981, pp. 87–115; N. Yoffee, G. L. Cowgill (eds.), *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations*, Tuscon 1988.

[25] *Chieftaincy and the State in Africa*, special issue of "Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law", ed. E. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, 1987, pp. 25–26; E. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal and R. van Dijk (eds.), *African Chieftaincy in a New Socio-political Landscape*, Münster-Leiden 1999.

Claessen's earlier theory of Early State — wrote about the chiefdom as a universal political formation with a tendency to last in Africa but not to transform itself into a state[26].

The lasting existence of many chiefdoms has its exact opposite in the impermanence of others. The end of a chiefdom could involve not only its transformation into a state or conquest by another chiefdom, but also its break-up. Detailed studies provide many examples of such a desintegration of chiefdoms. The problem now remains of how long an organization would have to exist for it to be called chiefdom. Would the term chiefdom apply to an organization created by a skilful chief that existed only as long as he was able to make successful conquests and plunders, and that broke up after military defeats? Or an organization that lasted only as long as that skilful chief's active life?[27]

* * *

I would like to examine the influence of the above mentioned discussions by political anthropologists on historical research into the beginnings of the Polish state and to point out the possibilities that the theory of chiefdom gives historians.

History is a much older science than political anthropology. Studies into the emergence of Slav states (including the Polish state) are also older than anthropological studies dealing with the beginnings of states in world history in general and, especially, with chiefdoms. That is why historical studies developed for a long time totally independently from the initially non-existent and then burgeoning political anthropology. The research programme devoted to the origins of the Polish state that was carried out in the 1950s and 1960s in connection with the celebrations of the 1000th anniversary of Polish statehood referred neither to the theoretical output discussed above, nor to anthropological terminology. This was despite the fact that it was a very modern and interdisciplinary programme. Apart from historical methods, the studies into the beginnings of the Polish state drew on the achievements of a number of disciplines: archaeology, history of art, linguistics, historical geography, botany and zoology, econo-

[26] P. Skalnik, *Questioning*; idem, *Chiefdom: a Universal Political Formation?*, "Focaal. European Journal of Anthropology", 2004, vol. 43, pp. 76–98; idem, *New Forms of Political Power in Post-1990 Africa*, paper presented at the conference, "Beside the State", Milan. I wish to express my thanks to the author for making this text available.

[27] There is an analogy with the so-called "Samon's state".

mics and demography, theory of state and law[28]. The theory of chiefdom that was emerging at the time was not used, however, though we cannot fail to notice the considerable similarities between the theory of chiefdom and the results of research into the beginnings of Polish statehood.

Independently from though similarly to anthropologists, scholars conducting historical studies mentioned above treated the transition from tribal organizations to state organizations as a profound, crucial political change. This political change was considered to have been a result of long-lasting processes in the economy, demographics, settlement and social structures[29]. Some researchers advocated a thesis according to which a centuries-long process of the formation and development of tribal organizations preceded the emergence of the state. This research was crowned by the work of Henryk Łowmiański[30]. It was not until the last two decades that, following the introduction of such methods as dendrological dating of stronghold, scholars proposed a thesis about a rapid, short (covering just several decades) state breakthrough[31]. Lech Leciejewicz, however, still rightly stresses the importance of long-lasting civilizational processes

[28] A. Gieysztor, *Kierownictwo badań nad początkami państwa polskiego w latach 1949–1952 (Management of Studies into the Beginnings of the Polish State between 1949 and 1952)*, "Zapiski Archeologiczne" 1953, vol. 2, pp. 1–56, esp. pp. 40–46; A. Abramowicz, *Historia archeologii polskiej XIX i XX w. (History of Polish Archaeology in the 19th and 20th Centuries)*, Warszawa–Łódź 1991, pp. 155–162.

[29] H. Łowmiański, *Podstawy gospodarcze formowania się państw słowiańskich (Economic Foundations of the Formation of Slav States)*, Warszawa 1953, pp. 8–11; S. Trawkowski, *Jak powstała Polska (How Poland Began)*, Warszawa 1961, pp. 75–148; J. Dowiat, *Polska państwem średniowiecznej Europy (Poland as a Medieval European State)*, Warszawa 1968, pp. 34–65; G. Labuda, *Organizacje państwowe Słowian Zachodnich w okresie kształtowania się państwa polskiego od VI do połowy X wieku (State Organizations of Western Slavs in the Period of Polish State Formation from the 6th to mid-10th Century)*, in: *Początki państwa polskiego. Księga tysiąclecia (The Beginnings of the Polish State. A Millennium Book)*, vol. 1, Poznań 1962, pp. 43–71, esp. p. 44.

[30] W. Hensel, *Polska przed tysiącem lat (Poland a Thousand Years Ago)*, Wrocław 1964, pp. 40–100; H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski. Z dziejów Słowian w I tysiącleciu n.e. (Poland's Beginnings. From the History of the Slavs in the First Millennium)*, vol. 1–5, Warszawa 1964–1973 (volume 6 deals with subsequent centuries, till the early 14th century).

[31] P. Urbańczyk (ed.), *Origins of Central Europe*, Warszawa 1997; H. Samsonowicz (ed.), *Ziemie polskie w X wieku i ich znaczenie w kształtowaniu się nowej mapy Europy (Polish Lands in the 10th Century and Their Significance for the Evolution of a New Map of Europe)*, Kraków 2000; Z. Kurnatowska, *Początki Polski (Poland's Beginnings)*, Poznań 2002, pp. 60–82; A. Buko, *Archeologia Polski wczesnośredniowiecznej (Archaeology of Early Medieval Poland)*, Warszawa 2005.

that are the basis for a rapid political transformation[32]. Yet both the researchers involved in the Polish millennium programme and those working today treat the tribe and the state as distinct and qualitatively different types of political organization[33].

Tribal organizations that existed within the territory of the future Polish state were identified thanks to their names preserved in written sources, the territorial scope of their settlements established by means of archaeological research and toponomastics, and thanks to the identification of their strongholds[34]. In addition, scholars used retrogression, moving back to the pre-state period the names and territorial divisions known from 11th and 12th century sources[35].

The theoretical assumptions guiding the research into the development of tribal organizations and the state were, especially in older studies, as follows: firstly, that tribes developed in a monolinear manner towards bigger, more complex organizations; secondly, that there were similarities in the organization and development between various neighbouring tribes; thirdly, that there was the phenomenon of political expansion during which weaker tribes were subordinated to stronger ones[36]. Some of these assumptions should now be verified.

Until as late as the 1990s, scholars studying the beginnings of the Polish state did not use the term chiefdom *(wodzostwo)*. The commonly used terms were prince *(książę)* and tribal princi-

[32] L. Leciejewicz, *Nowa postać świata. Narodziny średniowiecznej cywilizacji europejskiej (A New Form of the World. The Birth of Medieval European Civilization)*, Wroclaw 2000.

[33] L. Leciejewicz (ed.), *Od plemienia do państwa. Śląsk na tle wczesnośredniowiecznej Słowiańszczyzny Zachodniej (From the Tribe to the State. Silesia and the Early Medieval Western Slavdom)*, Wroclaw 1991; Z. Kurnatowska, *Territorial Structures in West Poland prior to the Founding of the State Organization of Mieszko I*, in: P. Urbańczyk (ed.), *Origins*, pp. 125–133; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 81–105, 165–204.

[34] Z. Hilczerówna, *"Małe plemiona" wczesnego średniowiecza i archeologiczne sposoby ich badania ("Small Tribes" of the Early Middle Ages and the Archaeological Methods to Study Them)*, "Slavia Antiqua" 1965, vol. 12, pp. 83–126; Z. Kurnatowska, *Początki*, pp. 18–24.

[35] Such approach was adopted already by S. Arnold, *Terytoria plemienne w ustroju adminstracyjnym Polski piastowskiej (w. XII–XIII) (Tribal Territories in the Administrative Structure of the Piast Poland, 12th–13th Centuries)*, in: S. Arnold, *Z dziejów średniowiecza (Middle Ages)*, Warszawa 1968, pp. 233–404. Many of his assumptions have since been corrected. See also K. Modzelewski, *Dziedzictwo plemienne w ustroju Polski piastowskiej (The Tribal Legacy in the Piast Poland)*, "Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej", 1975, vol. 23, № 3, pp. 351–383, article on legacy in the economic organization.

[36] See footnote 30.

pality *(księstwo plemienne)*. If the written sources contained the names of princes or information about the existence of this type of power (as it was the case with "the prince of the Vistula")[37], tribal organizations would be referred to as principalities. Lack of sources and perhaps also a limited theoretical reflection made it impossible to say whether all or just some known tribal organizations were indeed tribal principalities in what would subsequently become Poland. The existence of princely power was assumed with reference to some tribes on the basis of oral traditions of the ruling families written down in the 12th and 13th centuries. This was the case in particular with Polanians (though even the name of the tribe was reconstructed by means of retrogression and does not appear in the 9th and 10th century sources) and the oral tradition of the family that ruled the tribe and then the Polish state[38]. Traces of oral traditions also refer to princely families among the Vistulan and Pomeranian tribes[39]. We can add archaeological findings to this historical material. However, they are too vast when it comes to burials of powerful people from the mid-1st millennium AD and too limited when it comes to the centuries 7th to 10th, i.e. the period of stabilization of settlement among Western Slavs and development of their tribal organizations.

[37] T. Lehr-Spławiński, *Konstantyn i Metody (zarys monograficzny z wyborem źródeł) (Constantine and Methodius, a Monograph with a Selection of Sources)*, Warszawa 1967, pp. 177, *Żywot św. Metodego (The Life of St. Methodius)*, XI — in the original Old Church Slavonic version in Latin transcription, p. 242 — Polish translation.

[38] *Galli Anonymi Cronica et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, ed. K. Maleczyński, Monumenta Poloniae Historica, ns (henceforth: *MPH, ns*), vol. II, Kraków 1952, pp. 3 and 4, pp. 12–13; H. Łowmiański, *Dynastia Piastów we wczesnym średniowieczu (The Piast Dynasty in the Early Middle Ages)*, in: *Początki państwa polskiego (The Beginnings of the Polish State)*, vol. 1, pp. 11–163, esp. 114–122; K. Jasiński, *Rodowód pierszych Piastów (The Lineage of the First Piasts)*, Warszawa — Wrocław 1992, pp. 45–53. See also K. Buczek, *Zagadnienie wiarygodności dwu relacji o początkowych dziejach państwa polskiego (The Problem of Credibility of Two Accounts Concerning the Origins of the Polish State)*, in: *Prace z dziejów Polski feudalnej ofiarowane Romanowi Grodeckiemu (Studies into the History of Feudal Poland Presented to Roman Grodecki)*, Warszawa 1960, pp. 45–70, esp. pp. 45–56.

[39] K. Ślaski, *Wątki historyczne w podaniach o początkach Polski (Historical Themes in Tales about Poland's Beginnings)*, Poznań 1968, pp. 24–51, *Małopolska cycle*, pp. 84–87, *Pomerania cycle*; E. Skibiński, *Elementy historii oralnej w kronikach Galla Anonima i Wincentego Kadłubka (Elements of Oral History in Gallus Anonymous' and Wincenty Kadłubek's Chronicles)*, in: "Res Historica" 1998, vol. 3, *Kultura piśmienna średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych. Problemy i konteksty badawcze (Medieval and Early Modern Writing Culture. Research Problems and Contexts)*, ed. P. Dymmel, B. Trelińska, Lublin 1996, pp. 63–72.

A very important source confirming the existence of tribal principalities is the term *prince* [*książę* in Polish]. According to linguists, it comes from the pre-state times. In Old Slavonic it was *kъnęgъ*, later *kъnęzь* and came from the Germanic *kuningaz*. It signified a lord, chief or ruler. The time of the borrowing is a contentious issue. Some linguistics believe it took place between the 2nd and 4th century AD, but most place it in a period starting from the 6th century[40]. The term was recorded in 9th century sources, first of all in the life of St. Methodius[41]. Having a vernacular term at their disposal, a term that precisely described the functions of chiefs from the tribal era, historians saw no need to replace it with the term *wódz* (chief, *chef*) borrowed from political anthropology. Similarly, there was no need to use the term *wodzostwo* (chiefdom, *chefferie*), since the vernacular term *księstwo plemienne* (tribal principality) was more precise in describing one of the pre-state forms of tribal organization.

However, the delayed adoption of anthropological terms, especially that of chiefdom, resulted in difficulties and inconsistencies in historiography. Examples include the titles "Samon's state" and "Vistulan state"[42]. They were published in the 1940s, but the term "state" with regard to these chiefdoms would also surface in later years. Frequently — even today — authors use various terms that sidestep the issue: "statelet" or the terminologically inconsistent "tribal statelet", "tribal state", "multi-tribe state" and their opposites — "regional statelet" and "All-Poland state"[43].

Before historians it was archaeologists who borrowed the term chiefdom. In his studies into the power structures in the Polish lands in the first millennium, Przemysław Urbańczyk

[40] W. Kuraszkiewicz, entry for *ksiądz*, in: *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich (Dictionary of Slav Antiquities)*, ed. W. Kowalenko, G. Labuda, T. Lehr-Spławiński, vol. 2, part 2, Wrocław 1965, pp. 536–537; W. Boryś, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego (Etymological Dictionary of Polish)*, Kraków 2005, entries for: *ksiądz* and *książę* — pp. 268–269.

[41] See footnote 37.

[42] G. Labuda, *Pierwsze państwo słowiańskie. Państwo Samona (The First Slav State. Samon's State)*, Poznań 1949; J. Widajewicz, *Państwo Wiślan (Vistulan State)*, Kraków 1947.

[43] For instance — J. Dowiat, *Polska*, pp. 34, 36, 64; W. Hensel, *Polska*, p. 98. These inconsistencies, or sometimes a kind of distance from phenomena that are difficult to classify, are pointed out by H. Samsonowicz, who also adds the term "proto-state", *Plemię i państwo (The State and the Tribe)*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 2005, CXII, Nº 3, pp. 5–20, text on p. 7.

wrote about the "rank societies of chiefdoms"[44]. Archaeologists interpret "princely" burials, the existence of Roman imports and the fact that they were collected as manifestations of the emergence of princely power based on prestige and manifestations of wealth acquired through external trade[45]. The link between the results of archaeological studies and the anthropological theory of chiefdom is very clear. What is more, the emergence of "princely" political structures in Poland in the first half of the 1st millennium AD, their subsequent demise and the re-emergence of tribal principalities from ca 7th century testifies to the reversibility of political processes that was previously noted and described by anthropologists.

* * *

There is an analogy between the anthropological chiefdom and the Lekhitic (and, more broadly, Slav) tribal principality; we might even say they are identical. The principality was a regional form of the general phenomenon of chiefdom.

A question now arises whether historians and archaeologists can, by borrowing the term chiefdom and theories formulated in political anthropology and applying the comparative method, supplement and expand our knowledge of the Slav tribal principalities. This is not about the term itself, but about discovering the mechanisms and the course of political changes[46].

I believe that it could be revealing to use to that end the anthropological theory of multilinear development, and the knowledge of the varied territorial and demographic sizes of various chiefdoms known to anthropologists, to compare the typology of chiefdoms with information concerning Slav tribal principalities, and to take into account the phenomenon of reversibility in the development of chiefdoms.

In an article devoted to the interpretation of the term "Slav tribe" in Polish historiography, Piotr Boroń noted that "it has

[44] P. Urbańczyk, *Struktury władzy na ziemiach polskich w I tysiącleciu n.e. (Power Structures in Polish Lands in the First Millennium AD)*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 1996, CIII, Nº 4, pp. 3–22, quote on p. 11, also p. 4 — "redistribution system of chiefdoms".

[45] *Ibidem*, pp. 5–7 (imports), pp. 14–16 (mounds); J. Kolendo, *Kontakty Rzymu z barbarzyńcami z Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej (Contacts Between Rome and the Barbarians form Central and Eastern Europe)*, in: *Starożytny Rzym we współczesnych badaniach (Ancient Rome in Recent Studies), Państwo-Społeczeństwo-Gospodarka (State-Society-Economy). Liber in memoriam Lodovici Piotrowicz*, ed. J. Wolski, T. Kotula, A. Kunisz, Kraków 1994, pp. 211–232, esp. pp. 219–221.

[46] H. Samsonowicz, *Plemię*, p. 7.

been accepted that it [the tribe] designates various social or territorial–political organizations preceding the emergence of the state"[47]. He went on to conclude, on the basis of the variety of definitions in historical literature, that the term was ambiguous and vague.

"Today it seems [to P. Boroń — MT] that treating the tribe and the state as two completely different systems is a mistake". In the light of the comparative findings of political anthropology this last view and the article's conclusion are not convincing. The same applies to Tadeusz Lalik's reservations who many years ago decided that the "tribe" was a very general term and hence its loose connections with early medieval sources; as a result it was an academic creation[48].

We can certainly agree with the thesis about the tribe as an academic creation. But when it comes to the negative assessment of the reception and use of this creation — this is something we cannot accept. Terms such as "tribe" and "state" (as well as many others) were not used in all communities of distant past, communities we study today. But these terms are tools used in analyzes of historical material. After all, when describing the past we apply modern terminology and not only terminology of the period.

Piotr Boroń is obviously right when he notes that "the notion of tribe has a variety of meanings" and that "we are dealing with an extremely rich word"[49]. However, the same applies to the terms "state", "empire" or "city", as well as many others, which does not mean that we should give up these terms. We use "city" to describe 15th century Warsaw and contemporary Warsaw, 17th century London and today's New York, despite the fact that these are very different cities. No one, however, would like to reject the term.

If we adopt, therefore, a very general definition of the tribe, the conclusion seems obvious and close to P. Boroń's view — that Slav tribes (including Lekhitic–Polish tribes) that emerged and

[47] P. Boroń, *Słowiańskie plemię. O pojęciu i jego rozumieniu w polskiej historiografii (The Slav Tribe. On the Concept and Its Interpretation in Polish Historiography)*, in: "Historia" CLII, special edition: *Viae historicae. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Profesorowi Lechowi A. Tyszkiewiczowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin (Viae historiae. Jubilee Book Dedicated to Professor Lech A. Tyszkiewicz on His 70th Birthday)*, Wrocław 2001, pp. 189–207, quote on p. 191.

[48] *Ibidem*, p. 191 — T. Lalik's quoted view.

[49] *Ibidem*, p. 206.

functioned from around the 7th to 10th century differed considerably. Their structure could have been dominated by territorial or by kin ties; the tribes could have had different sizes, demographic potentials or staying power.

The picture of the pre-state past seems much more complex than most scholars have assumed so far. The predominating view in historical literature has been that the organization of various Slav tribes was similar and so was their monolinear development. The comparative theory of Slav laws stressed the similarity of those laws and their shared origins as well as the resulting similarities in the organization of Slav tribes[50].

For a long time, the acknowledged differences I am analyzing in the present paper included the unequal potentials of these tribes. Henryk Łowmiański distinguished small and big tribes as well as associations of tribes. He believed that the creation of bigger and more complex structures was a process eventually leading to the formation of states[51]. It was not until recent years that the thesis about other, numerous differences between the tribes was advanced by Henryk Samsonowicz, who wrote that "the 'tribe' is by no means a uniform system and it was not only the size of a human population and its military power but also its natural environment, occupations, time... perhaps also psychological features that defined it in a variety of ways"[52]. This image is much closer to the anthropological theory of multilinear development; it finds additional support in this theory thanks to the use of deduction and comparative method. Political anthropology and the theory of chiefdom allow us to include among the differences that existed between tribes also the types of their political organization.

[50] J. Bardach, *Historia państwa i prawa Polski*, t. 1, *do połowy XV w. (The History of the Polish State and Law, vol. 1, Until the Mid-15th Century)*, Warszawa 1965, pp. 23, 27, 33–35; idem, *Metoda porównawcza w zastosowaniu do powszechnej historii państwa i prawa (The Comparative Method in the General History of the State and the Law)*, "Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne", vol. XIV, 1962, № 2, pp. 9–61.

[51] S. Zajączkowski, *Podziały plemienne Polski w okresie powstawania Państwa Polskiego (Tribal Divisions in Poland During the Formation of the Polish State)*, in: *Początki Państwa Polskiego. Księga Tysiąclecia (The Beginnings of the Polish State. A Millennium Book)*, ed. K. Tymieniecki, G. Labuda, H. Łowmiański, Poznań 1962, vol. 1, pp. 73–109; H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski (Poland's Beginnings)*, vol. 4, Warszawa 1970, pp. 33–46.

[52] H. Samsonowicz, *Plemię*, p. 10.

Ninth–tenth century sources are a testimony to organizational differences between those tribes and between tribal principalities. If we analyze them with reference to the above mentioned typology of tribal organizations and the typology of chiefdoms, we can pinpoint these differences and provide better explanations for them.

First, there is the question of the types of Lekhitic tribal principalities; second, we need to establish whether all Lekhitic tribes or just some of them were indeed principalities.

There is a consensus in the literature on the subject that the tribal organization which gave rise to the Polish state and which is commonly referred to as the tribe of Polanians, was a principality[53]. Archaeologists find compelling evidence of its expansion lasted from approximately the end of the 9th to ca mid–10th century and was later continued by Mieszko I's state organization. This evidence includes numerous fortified settlements burnt in the first half of the 10th century as well as new strongholds erected near or at the sites of those that had been destroyed[54]. That nature of the principality was very much military is confirmed by the existence of *drużyna* (an armed retinue) that was part of the prince's entourage, an instrument of conquests and maintaining internal order[55]. Archaeology provides us with evidence that at least some of the members of that retinue were ethnically alienated from the rest of the society[56]. They were,

[53] See footnote 38.

[54] Z. Kurnatowska, *Territorial structures*, pp. 125–135; idem, *Wielkopolska w X wieku i formowanie się państwa polskiego (Wielkopolska in the 10th Century and the Formation of the Polish State)*, in: *Ziemie polskie*, pp. 99–117; eadem, *Początki Polski (Poland's Beginnings)*, Poznań 2002, pp. 47–48 and 61–62; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 165–204.

[55] *Ibrahima Ibn Jakuba Relacja z podróży do krajów słowiańskich w przekazie El-Bekriego (Ibrahim Ibn Jacob's Account of his Journey to Slav Countries as Given by El-Bekri)*, edited and translated by T. Kowalski, *MPH*, *ns*, vol. 1, Kraków 1946, p. 50; A. F. Grabski, *Uwagi o drużynie wczesnofeudalnej na ziemiach polskich (Reflections on the Early Feudal Armed Retinue in Polish Lands)*, "Studia i materiały do historii wojskowości", vol. 4, 1958; A. Nadolski, *Polskie siły zbrojne i sztuka wojenna w początkach państwa polskiego (Polish Armed Forces and the Art of Warfare During the Beginnings of the Polish State)*, in: *Początki państwa*, vol. 1, pp. 187–211; A. Węcki, entry for *drużyna*, in: *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich (Dictionary of Slav Antiquities)*, vol. 1, part 2, Wrocław 1962, pp. 391–393.

[56] K. Jażdżewski, *Cmentarzysko wczesnośredniowieczne w Lutomiersku pod Łodzią w świetle badań z r. 1949 (Early Medieval Burial Ground in Lutomiersko near Łódź in the Light of 1949 Studies)*, "Materiały wczesnośredniowieczne", 1951, vol. 1, pp. 91–191; A. Nadolski, A. Abramowicz, T. Poklewski, *Cmenta-*

therefore, all the more willing to serve the prince and the ruling dynasty.

On the other hand, we lack direct evidence of the political significance of the Polanian notables and clan elders. There is no indirect evidence either obtained by means of retrogression. Local clans did not make their mark on the policy of the first Piasts to the extent that such clans from the Małopolska region did.

The lack of big fortified refuge strongholds within the territory where Mieszko I's predecessors lived allows us to state that this principality was not oriented towards the entire tribal community or a large part of it. Peasants were not protected during external invasions. The fact that the Polanian tribal principality was located away from the long-distance trade routes[57] limited its possibilities of organizing its activities around external exchange. There were also few local products that would be attractive to foreign traders. Slaves could have been the main export[58]. Their sufficient supply could only be guaranteed by military expeditions and spoils taking. In such a situation external trade and

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rzysko z XI w. w Lutomiersku pod Łodzią (11th Century Burial Ground in Lutomiersko near Łódź), Łódź 1959; H. Modrzewska, *Osadnictwo obcoetniczne i innoplemienne w Polsce wczesnego średniowiecza (Foreign Ethnic and Tribal Settlement in Poland in the Early Middle Ages)*, Warsaw 1984, pp. 15 and 92; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 343–373.

[57] Z. and S. Kurnatowscy, *Rola szlaków komunikacyjnych w wykreowaniu i dalszym rozwoju wczesnopaństwowych ośrodków stołecznych (The Role of Communication Routes in the Creation and Further Development of Early State Capitals)*, in: *Instantia est mater doctrine. Księga jubileuszowa prof. dr hab. Władysława Filipowiaka (Jubilee Book of Professor Władysław Filipowiak)*, ed. Wilgocki et al., Szczecin 2001, pp. 94–100; S. Suchodolski, *Początki rodzimego mennictwa (The Beginnings of Local Minting)*, in: *Ziemie polskie*, pp. 351–360; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 170–171; idem, *The "Tribal" Societies and Rise of Early Medieval Trade: Archaeological Evidence from Polish Lands (8th–10th C.)*, in: *Post Roman Towns, Trade and Settlements in Europe and Byzantium*, ed. J. Henning, vol. 1, *The Heirs of the Roman West*, Berlin–New York, in print, quoted after A. Buko, *Archeologia*, p. 391.

[58] A. Gieysztor, *Local Markets and Foreign Exchanges in Central and Eastern Europe before 1200*, "Ergon" 1966, vol. 5, pp. 761–777; H. Samsonowicz, *Handel dalekosiężny na ziemiach polskich w świetle najstarszych taryf celnych (Long-Distance Trade in the Polish Lands in the Light of the Oldest Tariffs)*, in: *Społeczeństwo-gospodarka-kultura. Studia ofiarowane Marianowi Małowistowi w czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej (Society–Economy–Culture. Studies Presented to Marian Małowist on the 40th Anniversary of the Beginning of His Academic Career)*, ed. S. Herbst et al., Warszawa 1974, pp. 289–302, esp. p. 294; idem, *"Długi wiek XX". Z dziejów powstawania Europy ("The Long 20th Century". On the Origins of Europe)*, Poznań 2000, pp. 94–101. See also T. Lewicki, *Osadnictwo słowiańskie i niewolnicy słowiańscy w krajach muzułmańskich według średniowiecznych pisarzy arabskich (Slav Settlement and Slav Slaves in Muslim Countries According to Medieval Arab Writers)*, "Przegląd Historyczny, 1952, vol. 43, № 3–4, pp. 473–491.

acquisition of valuable objects that were the source of prestige for the prince and members of his military retinue could exist thanks to warfare and plunder.

The prince's redistributive function involved, therefore, mostly dividing spoils, mainly among the members of his armed retinue. The peasants, on the other hand, did not participate in the plunder economy. They had to pay substantial duties, however, in farm produce, animals and fruits of the forest, and, in addition, they were forced to work in severe conditions at stronghold construction sites and in transport of building materials. It is a powerful testimony to social divisions created through coercion.

The tribal principality of the Polanians in the first half of the 10th century can, therefore, be compared to a military chiefdom, individualistically focused on the prince, his dynasty and his military retinue.

Let us remember that when Marshall Sahlins described such tribal organizations, he used the term "predatory expansion"[59]. There is ample evidence that the same can be said about the tribal principality of Mieszko I's predecessors. The features of this principality were conducive to its transformation — through centralization of power, territorial expansion and deepening of social divisions — into a state. The method was coercion used by the prince.

So far the prevailing view in literature was that the tribal principality of the Vistulans was an organization similar to the Polanian principality, though formed earlier, in the second half of the 9th century. The chances of this principality for uniting Lekhitic tribes and forming a state were ruined when the "Vistulan prince" became subordinated to the state of Great Moravia and after its break-up to Bohemia[60].

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that the organization of the tribal principality of the Vistulans was different from that of the Polanians and it is this difference between the two organizations that contributed to the failure of the Vistulans and the success of the Polanians in the 10th century.

Although the Vistulan prince was described by the author of the *Life of St. Methodius* as a powerful ruler who, according to

[59] M. Sahlins, *The Segmentary Lineage*, pp. 322–345.
[60] Recently A. Buko, *Archeologia*, p. 178.

him, "abused Christians" — which could mean that he fought them — there are no references to his military retinue, an equivalent of the armed retinue of the Polanian prince. The social foundation of the Vistulans' principality was probably different from that of the Polanians'. The system of power included not only the prince and his dynasty, but also notables–clan elders. We can draw conclusions about the role of those elders on the basis of the retrogression method, taking into account the events associated with the people's revolt and the fall of the first Piast state following the death of Mieszko II. The notables of Cracow managed to maintain internal order in this part of Poland at the time, even when there was no ruling prince[61]. In the Wielkopolska region, on the other hand, chaos reigned supreme.

The fact that the tribal organization of the Vistulans was socially peasants–oriented can be seen in the existence of big refuge strongholds[62]. As the prince's power strengthened, this orientation may have narrowed. Yet in the 9th and 10th centuries it still remained notable elders–oriented and not merely prince–oriented.

The economic foundations of the Vistulans' principality too seem different from those of the Polanians'. The principality was situated on the trade route from the Bohemian Prague to Kiev in Ruthenia and was part of the external exchange structure[63]. Exports and transit were not necessarily limited to slaves. The intensity of the exchange and the variety of goods were, therefore, greater than in the case of the Polanians. Consequently, prestigious goods may have been available not only to the prince but also to the notables. That the goods were collected through trade and not only through war and spoils taking is confirmed by various discoveries of coin hoards and primitive money — in the

[61] D. Borawska, *Kryzys monarchii wczesnopiastowskiej w latach trzydziestych XI wieku (The Crisis of the Early Piast Monarchy in the 1030s)*, Warszawa 1964, p. 181; J. Bieniak, *Państwo Mieciawa. studium analityczne (Mieciaw's State, an Analytical Study)*, Warszawa 1963, p. 122; J. Wyrozumski, *Historia Polski (History of Poland)*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1978, p. 132.

[62] E. Dąbrowska, *Wielkie grody dorzecza górnej Wisły. Ze studiów nad rozwojem organizacji terytorialno-plemiennej w VII–X wieku (Great Strongholds of the Upper Vistula Basin. Studies on the Development of the Territorial–tribal Organization in 7th–10th Centuries)*, Wrocław 1973; A. Żaki, *Archeologia Małopolski średniowiecznej (The Archaeology of Medieval Małopolska)*, Wrocław 1974, pp. 373–376, 380–386; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 93–97.

[63] See footnote 57.

form of iron axes[64]. Thus it was the social (concerning notables–clan elders) and not the individualizing orientation of the Vistulan tribal principality that can be seen in the role of external trade and distribution of goods.

The social orientation of the Vistulan tribal principality and the fact that the principality developed over a much longer period than the principality of the Polanians allow us to formulate a hypothesis that at least at the beginning the organization was created through a social contract and not through coercion[65].

In the light of the theory and typology of chiefdoms it is worth asking whether or not some of the Lekhitic tribal principalities were theocratic. So far the studies into the Slav mythology and beliefs have focused on a reconstruction of a uniform or at least similar system of these beliefs. Scholars have suggested that such a system covered either the whole Slavdom or its eastern and western parts[66]. The characteristic features and the organization of beliefs of the Polabian Slavs which could be found in late 10th–12th century sources have been interpreted either something that could refer also to other Slavs or, on the contrary, as something separate resulting from the influence of the neighbouring Christendom[67].

We should give credit to Aleksander Gieysztor and his pupil Leszek Słupecki as well as Jacek Banaszkiewicz for expanding the source base concerning the Slavs' beliefs to include ethnographic and anthropological materials and for using retrogression and the comparative method to interpret them. When making comparisons, these researchers take into

[64] T. Lalik, *O cyrkulacji kruszczów w Polsce X–XII w. (On the Circulation of Precious Metals Between the 10th and 12th Centuries)*, "Przegląd Historyczny", 1967, vol. 58, N° 1, pp. 1–27; A. Żaki, *Archeologia Małopolski*, pp. 301–307 (primitive money), 307–310 — 8th–9th century Byznatine and Arab (coins); E. Zaitz, *Wstępne wyniki badań archeologicznych skarbu grzywien siekieropodobnych z ul. Kanonicznej 13 w Krakowie (Preliminary Results of Archeological Analyses of the Axe-shaped Money Hoard Found at 13 Kanoniczna Street in Cracow)*, "Materiały archeologiczne", 1981, vol. 21, pp. 97–124; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, p. 96.

[65] E. Service, *Origins of the State*, pp. 25–28, 290 ff.; idem, *Classical and Modern Theories of the Origins of Government*, in: R. Cohen, E. Service (eds.), *Origins of the State. The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, Philadelphia 1978, pp. 21–33, on social contracts pp. 27–28; H. Claessen, P. Skalník (eds.), *The Early State, Introduction*, pp. 16–17.

[66] A. Brückner, *Mitologia słowiańska i polska (Slav and Polish Mythology)*, Warszawa 1980 (a collection of studies from 1912–1929); H. Łowmiański, *Religia Słowian i jej upadek (The Slavs' Religion and Its Decline)*, Warszawa 1979.

[67] *Ibidem*, pp. 187–194.

account materials concerning the beliefs of all Indo-European peoples[68]. Their studies explore, first of all, the beliefs themselves and only later the relations between the beliefs and political systems. Karol Modzelewski, on the other hand, when comparing legal and political systems of Germans and Slavs, demonstrates an inextricable connection between the functioning of these systems and beliefs[69].

In both of these research approaches the comparative method has yielded outstanding results. However, from the point of view of our goal — examining the differences between Lekhitic tribal organizations — this method carries with it a risk of blurring these differences. While accepting a general picture of Slav beliefs, let us nevertheless focus on the information testifying to the existence of differences among Lekhitic tribes, differences that evolved between the 7th and the 11th centuries and influenced the differences between the political organizations of those Polish tribes.

We have known for a long time that sources dealing with the beliefs of various Polish tribes are extremely scarce when compared with sources dealing with other Slav tribes. Recent studies have demonstrated that this is not a result of some weakness of these beliefs but rather of their different social functions. Perhaps archaeology will provide us with new findings that will change this conclusion. Not so long ago, on the Lech Hill in Gniezno archaeologists discovered a huge cult hearth that was used in this centre of power before the advent of Christianity[70]. Even this hearth, however, does not allow us to treat the Polanian principality as a theocratic chiefdom. Each political system has to have

[68] A. Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian (The Slav Mythology)*, Warszawa 2007 (1st edition — 1983), pp. 43-67; *ibidem*, L. Słupecki, *Afterword*, pp. 323-360; J. Banaszkiewicz, *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu. Studium porównawcze nad wczesnośredniowiecznymi tradycjami dynastycznymi (The Legend of Piast and Popiel. A Comparative Study into Early Medieval Dynastic Traditions)*, Warszawa 1986, pp. 12-24.

[69] K. Modzelewski, *Barbarzyńska Europa*; Idem, *Wielki krewniak, wielki wojownik, wielki sąsiad. Król w oczach współplemieńców (Great Relative, Great Warrior, Great Neighbour. The King in the Eyes of his Fellow Tribesmen)*, in: *Monarchie w średniowieczu — władza nad ludźmi, władza nad terytorium (The Monarchies in the Middle Ages — Power over People, Power over Territories)*, ed. J. Pysiak, A. Pieniądz-Skrzypczak, M. Pauk, Warszawa-Kraków 2002, pp. 47-71.

[70] T. Sawicki, *Gnieźnieński zespół grodowy w świetle najnowszych badań (The Fortified Stronghold Complex in Gniezno in the Light of Recent Studies)*, in: *Studia z dziejów cywilizacji. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Jerzemu Gąssowskiemu w pięćdziesiątą rocznicę pracy naukowej (On the History of Civilization. Studies Presented to Professor Jerzy Gąssowski on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Beginning*

its own legitimacy. In tribal organizations it was obviously based on religious grounds. But only in some of these tribes the organizational features of cult were more prominent than other types of relations. There is no evidence to suggest that this was the case in the Polanian principality. The success of Christianization imposed by the prince and the destruction of the above mentioned place of cult testifies to the supremacy of the prince's individual and military authority.

Were there any other theocratic principalities on the territory of the future Poland? Nothing points to the Vistulan principality in this respect. The intense church investments on the Wawel Hill testify to the role of Christiany throughout the 10th century[71]. Perhaps the traces of beliefs that did have a significant impact on political systems are those that can be found in the places of cult on Ślęża Mountain and Łysa Góra (the Bare Mountain)?[72]

Jacek Banaszkiewicz carried out an outstanding analyzis of the role of Ślęża in the sacralization of the Ślężanie tribe, comparing it with other similar cases, mainly the miraculous spring that sacralized the Glomacze community. He noted that "this form of sacralization of tribal existence — not yet through a personified tribal god — is perhaps an earlier solution". Ślęża Mountain gives the local tribe "a name", identity, sense of unity and separateness from other tribes[73].

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of his Academic Career), ed. A. Buko, Warszawa 1998, pp. 207–216; idem, *Z badań nad przemianami topografii i funkcji grodu książęcego na Górze Lecha w Gnieźnie (Studies into the Transformation of the Topography and Function of the Prince's Stronghold on the Lech Hill in Gniezno)*, "Slavia Antiqua", 1999, vol. 40, pp. 9–29; idem, *Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół grodowy w Gnieźnie (Early Medieval Fortified Stronghold Complex in Gniezno)*, in: *Gniezno w świetle ostatnich badań archeologicznych (Gniezno in the Light of Recent Archaeological Research)*, ed. Z. Kurnatowska, Poznań 2001, p. 87 ff.

[71] Z. Pianowski, *Początki zespołu architektury sakralnej na Wawelu. Stan badań i interpretacji do 2000 (The Origins of Church Architecture on the Wawel Hill. Research and Interpretations up to 2000)*, in: *Początki chrześcijaństwa w Małopolsce (The Beginnings of Christianity in Małopolska)*, vol. 5, *Dzieje Podkarpacia (History of the Podkarpacie region)*, ed. J. Garncarski, Krosno 2001, pp. 63–79; E. Zaitz, *Kraków u progu drugiego tysiąclecia (Cracow at the Beginning of the Second Millennium)*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 109–160.

[72] L. Słupecki, *Ślęża, Radunia, Wieżyca. Miejsca kultu pogańskiego Słowian w średniowieczu (Ślęża, Radunia, Wieżyca. Places of Pagan Cult Among the Slavs in the Middle Ages)*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny", 1992, vol. 99, Nº 2, pp. 3–15; idem, *Afterword*, in: A. Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian*, pp. 336–339.

[73] J. Banaszkiewicz, *Origo et religo — wersja słowiańska. O sposobach budowania tożsamości wspólnotowej w społecznościach wczesnego średniowiecza — "wzorcotwórcze pamiątki" i opowieści o nich (Origo et religo — the Slav version. On the Methods of Building Common Identity in Early Medieval Societies*

In the case of Silesia, there was no regional unification. On the contrary, the region was inhabited by seven separate tribal groups. We do not know the reasons behind this segmentation. We can surmise that the sense of separate identity built by the Ślężanie tribe around their holy mountain consolidated these tribal divisions. In addition, we have no evidence of the existence of princely power among Silesian tribes. Of course, it is about the alleged lack of princes — equivalents of the paramount chiefs known from anthropology, i.e. ruling princes. The existence of lower level chiefs — of large families and villages — does not seem obvious. Andrzej B u k o points out that "it is puzzling that there was no tradition [in Silesia] of creating power centres in the pre-state period". Obviously, *ex silentio* argumentation may be misleading. Princely power may not have existed at all in various tribes; it is equally possible that it was weak and the tribes were organized and represented outside by other institutions (assemblies, elders). We cannot be sure whether Silesia was settled by acephalic tribes comprising segments–villages. Rather, the existence of the name *opole* and the institution of *opole* [a medieval association of villages] can be evidence of the existence of bigger segments comprising several or dozen or so villages[74].

The creation of the Silesian Walls may testify to a lack of expansiveness of Silesian tribal organizations but also to joint actions by several tribes and thus inter-tribal ties that evolved through arrangements and agreements between those tribes rather than through expansion by one of the tribes[75].

— "model mementos" and Accompanying Tales), in: "Res historica", 1998, № 3, *Kultura piśmienna średniowiecza i czasów nowożytnych. Problemy i konteksty badawcze (Medieval and Modern Writing Culture. Research Problems and Contexts)*, ed. P. D y m m e l, B. T r e l i ń s k a, Lublin 1998, pp. 37–62, quotations from pages 60–61.

[74] Z. P o d w i ń s k a, *Zmiany form osadnictwa wiejskiego na ziemiach polskich we wczesnym średniowieczu. Źreb, wieś, opole (Changes in the Forms of Rural Settlement in Poland in the Early Middle Ages. 'Źreb', Village, 'Opole')*, Wrocław 1971, pp. 275–342; K. T y m i e n i e c k i, entry for *opole, organizacja opolna*, *Słownik Starożytności Słowiańskich (Dictionary of Slav Antiquities)*, vol. 3, № 2, Wrocław 1968, pp. 491–493; L. L e c i e j e w i c z, *Słowiańszczyzna Zachodnia (Western Slavdom)*, Wrocław 1976, pp. 93–97; A. B u k o, *Archeologia*, p. 193.

[75] E. K o w a l c z y k, *Systemy obronne wałów podłużnych we wczesnym średniowieczu na ziemiach polskich (Defence Systems of Linear Earthworks in the Early Middle Ages in Poland)*, Wrocław 1987, pp. 36–103; According to A. B u k o, *Archeologia*, p. 99, this was supposed to "strengthen the frontiers for at least several tribal organizations". See also L. T y s z k i e w i c z, *Organizacja plemienno-grodowa a państwowo-grodowa na przykładzie Łużyc i Śląska (The Tribal and State Organization of Strongholds as Exemplified by Lusatia and Silesia)*, in: *Local-*

Cult sites were also concentrated on Łysa Góra (the Bare Mountain)[76]. A question remains, however — which tribal organizations did this centre of cult serve? Did it influence only those in its vicinity? The settlement in the region has been archaeologically identified, but we know nothing about the local tribal organization. Perhaps Łysa Góra influenced the organizations of the Lędzians and Vistulans situated further away — and the role of this site as a cult place was due to its extraterritoriality? Some scholars deny that Łysa Góra had any sacred significance at all in the tribal period[77].

The map of possible places of cult in Poland includes about twenty such sites[78]. The religious factor undoubtedly played a part in the creation of ties among tribal communities. But its existence cannot be regarded as proof that there were tribal principalities of a theocratic nature. The locations of cult sites — mainly in the eastern part of Małopolska and around Łysiec as well as in Silesia and Pomerania — seem to suggest the opposite. These sites usually functioned among tribes with no confirmed princely power (Lędzians and Ślężanie) or tribes in which this power was limited by sacerdotal power (Pomerania). We can suspect that in the Polanian and Vistulan tribal principalities the cult of sacred objects (mountains, sources) associated with the

ne ośrodki władzy państwowej w XI–XII wieku w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej (Local Centres of State Power in the 11th and 12th Centuries in Central and Eastern Europe), Spotkania Bytomskie 1 (Bytom Meetings 1), ed. S. Moździoch, Wrocław 1993, pp. 7–20, esp. pp. 12–13; K. Modzelewski, *Nowe formy więzi społecznej na Śląsku w XI–XII wieku (New Forms of Social Ties in Silesia in the 11th and 12th Centuries)*, in: *Od plemienia do państwa. Śląsk na tle wczesnośredniowiecznej Słowiańszczyzny Zachodniej (From the Tribe to the State. Silesia and the Early Medieval Western Slavdom)*, ed. L. Leciejewicz, Wrocław 1991, pp. 181–194, esp. p. 188.

[76] E. and J. Gąssowscy, *Łysa Góra we wczesnym średniowieczu (Łysa Góra in the Early Middle Ages)*, Wrocław 1979; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 107–109.

[77] M. Derwicz, *Wiarygodność przekazów pisemnych na temat kultu pogańskiego na Łyścu (The Credibility of Written Accounts of the Pagan Cult on Łysa Góra)*, in: *Słowiańszczyzna w Europie (Slavdom in Europe)*, ed. Z. Kurnatowska, Wrocław 1996, vol. 1, pp. 97–104; A. Buko, *Pogańskie miejsca święte w krajobrazie osadnictwa wczesnośredniowiecznego na Wyżynie Sandomierskiej (Sacred Pagan Sites in the Early Medieval Settlements on the Sandomierz Upland)*, in: *Człowiek, sacrum, środowisko. Miejsca kultu we wczesnym średniowieczu (Man, Sacrum, Environment. Places of Cult in the Early Middle Ages)*, ed. S. Moździoch, *Spotkania Bytomskie IV*, 2000, pp. 61–83, on Łysa Góra pp. 61–67. Recently, however, the role of Łysa Góra as a centre of pagan cult has been questioned — L. Słupecki, *Afterword*, in: A. Gieysztor, *Mitologia*, p. 338–339.

[78] A. Buko, *Archeologia*, p. 127.

sacralization of the whole community was marginalized in favour of the cult of the ruler's predecessors. This is confirmed by the surviving oral traditions[79]. However, these cults proved to be insufficient to ensure legitimacy and effective functioning of those principalities, and were eventually replaced — by the prince's will or eternal pressure — by Christianity.

The biggest number of questions concerns the types of Lędzian and Mazovian tribal organizations. In the northern and eastern part of Małopolska, archaeologists have discovered several big regions of settlements (around Zawichost and later Sandomierz, around Lublin and Chełm) as well as a few smaller ones. Chodlik is the location of the biggest fortified refuge stronghold in the region[80]. It may testify to a communal, social orientation of the local tribal organization. On the other hand, we have no evidence of the existence of princely power among the Lędzians. Lack of concentrated settlement and the presence of refuge strongholds suggest that this may have been an acephalic organization, while the existence of the name *opole* suggests a segmentary structure.

Similarly, archaeologists have identified at least three territorial units and several smaller settlement groups in Mazovia[81]. The type of those tribal organizations remains unknown. In any case, we have no information about local princes. Some conclusions can be drawn from the documented intensive stronghold building activity towards the end of the 9th and at the beginning of the 10th century[82]. The strongholds may have been erected both

[79] K. Ślaski, *Wątki*; J. Banaszkiewicz, *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu*; idem, *Tradycje dynastyczno-plemienne Słowiańszczyzny północnej (Dynastic and Tribal Traditions of Northern Slavdom)*, in: *Ziemie polskie*, pp. 261–277, esp. pp. 263–268; M. Tymowski, *Oral Tradition, Dynastic Legend and Legitimation of Ducal Power in the Process of the Formation of the Polish State*, in: *Ideology and the Formation of Early States*, pp. 242–255.

[80] S. Hoczyk-Siwkowa, *Kotlina Chodelska we wczesnym średniowieczu (Chodelska Valley in the Early Middle Ages)*, Lublin 2004, pp. 23–32; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 32, 87.

[81] M. Dulinicz, *Archeologia o Mazowszu w czasie powstawania państwa polskiego. Zarys problematyki (Archaeology on Mazovia During the Formation of the Polish State. An Outline of the Problem)*, "Archeologia Polski", 1999, vol. 44, nos. 1–2, pp. 93–116; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp.84–85.

[82] M. Dulinicz, *The First Dendrological Dating of the Strongholds in Northern Mazovia*, in: *Origins of Central Europe*, pp. 137–141; idem, *Badania grodzisk mazowieckich (Studies on Mazovian Strongholds)*, in: *Osadnictwo i architektura ziem polskich w dobie Zjazdu Gnieźnieńskiego (Settlement and Architecture of Polish Lands During the Period of the Congress of Gniezno)*, ed. A. Buko, Z. Świechowski, Warszawa 2000, pp. 145–158.

by tribes organized in segments (villages, *opoles*) and by small, local organizations headed by princes. The former seems to be more likely. According to A. Buko "Mazovian territories lacked at that time state-building initiative"[83]. Stronghold were built probably by local communities which wanted to defend themselves against the likely aggression on the part of the Piasts.

We know nothing about external expansion of either the Lędzian or Mazovian tribes.

When it comes to tribal organization, there were considerable differences between Eastern Pomerania on the one hand and Western and Central Pomerania on the other. In Eastern Pomerania archaeologists have identified numerous settlements — probably identical to small tribes — dating back at least to the 9th century[84]. We have no information about whether those organizations eventually evolved into principalities. It was probably an area of segmentary tribal organization.

There are many more sources connected with Western and Central Pomerania. Archaeologists have identified there two big regions of settlements located between Szczecin and Parsęta, as well as seven small regions of settlements in the Parsęta and Rega river basin[85]. Settlement in this area dates back to the 6th century. There are links between the Western Pomeranian tribes and the Polabian tribes in their respective material cultures and political organizations known to us from later written sources[86].

An important characteristic of this region was its early development of urban economy. Wolin emerged at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries and by as early as the 9th century it became an emporium maintaining long-distance contacts through sea

[83] A. Buko, *Archeologia*, p. 191.

[84] L. J. Łuka, *Ziemia gdańska w okresie wczesnośredniowiecznym (od VII do połowy X w.) (The Gdańsk Region in the Early Middle Ages [from the 7th to the Mid-10th Centuries])*, in: *Historia Gdańska (History of Gdańsk)*, ed. E. Cieślak, vol. 1, Gdańsk 1978, pp. 25-68; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp.82, 185.

[85] W. Łosiński, *Osadnictwo plemienne Pomorza VI-X wiek (Tribal Settlement in Pomerania Between the 6th and the 10th Centuries)*, Wrocław 1982; idem, *Miejsce Pomorza i Wielkopolski w kształtowaniu się gospodarki towarowo-pieniężnej w Polsce wczesnofeudalnej (The Place of Pomerania and Great Poland in the Formation of Trade and Money Economy in Early Feudal Poland)*, "Slavia Antiqua", 1996, vol. 37, pp. 163-180, on Great Poland's backwardness and its peripheral location pp. 163-174; M. Dulinicz, *Kształtowanie się Słowiańszczyzny Północno-Zachodniej. Studium archeologiczne (The Evolution of North-Western Slavdom. An Archaeological Study)*, Warszawa 2001; A. Buko, *Archeologia*, pp. 91, 196-197.

[86] A. Buko, *Archeologia*, p. 82.

routes[87]. Szczecin and Kołobrzeg developed approximately one hundred years later and in the 11th century they took over the functions of Wolin, which had been destroyed by a Danish invasion. A characteristic feature of these towns was a multi-ethnic composition of their populations.

The above mentioned towns were not only centres of long-distance trade, craft and sailing, but also centres of local cults. We can learn about them both from archaeological findings and 12th century written sources from the Christianization period[88].

Princely power developed among Western and Central Pomeranian tribes, though it was limited by their system of beliefs as well as their rich and influential town merchants. Tribal principalities in that region can, therefore, be described as society-oriented entities, organized around groups of their urban populations, merchants and craftsmen, and people fulfilling sacerdotal functions. The economic basis of their social diversity was long-distance sea trade, which provided them with prestigious goods and money[89]. Thus it was a distinct type of tribal principalities, differing substantially form Polanian and Vistulan principalities. This organization was also completely different from the organization of Silesian, Mazovian and Lędzian tribes. The features of the Pomeranian economy made the region a very attractive expansion target. However, the organizational, social and cult-related differences hindered the integration of Western and Central Pomeranian tribes with the Piast state. Integration of Eastern Pomeranian tribes was easier.

* * *

[87] L. Leciejewicz, *Początki miast nadmorskich na Pomorzu Zachodnim (The Origins of Maritime Towns in Western Pomerania)*, Wrocław 1962; W. Filipowiak, *Wolin — die Entwicklung des Seehandelszentrums im 8–12 Jh.*, "Slavia Antiqua", 1995, vol. 36, pp. 93–104; W. Filipowiak, H. Gundlach, *Wolin-Vineta. Die tatsächliche Legende vom Untergang und Anstieg der Stadt*, Rostock 1992; T. Ważny, *Badania dendrochronologiczne portu i osady w Wolinie (Dendrochronological analyzis of the Wolin port and settlement)*, in: *Instantia*, pp. 155–165.

[88] L. Leciejewicz, *Początki*, pp. 54, 81, 121–140, 256–281; idem, *Die Stammesburgen als Ausgangpunkt der frühen Stadtentwicklung an der pommerschen Ostseeküste*, "Acta Visbyensia", 1985, 7, pp. 171–184; W. Łosiński, *W sprawie genezy osiedli wczesnomiejskich u Słowian nadbałtyckich (On the Origins of Early Urban Settlement Among Baltic Slavs)*, "Slavia Antiqua", 1994(95), vol. 35, pp. 101–128, on Kołobrzeg and Szczecin pp. 106 and 109.

[89] L. Leciejewicz, *Początki*, pp. 158–186; W. Łosiński, *Miejsce Pomorza*, pp. 163–164, 173.

A comparison between the results of anthropological studies of tribal systems (both segmentary systems and chiefdoms) and the information about the tribes of the future Poland allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1) Lekhitic tribes differed among themselves in terms of their political organization and not only in terms of their territories, size of their populations and their activities. Their evolution was multilinear; the period between the 7th and the 10th centuries saw the emergence and development of different types or Lekhitic tribal organizations.

2) There is no evidence to suggest that all known Lekhitic tribal organizations were tribal principalities — i.e. chiefdoms from the point of view of anthropology. Only some of the tribes — Polanians, Vistulans and Pomeranians — can be said with absolute certainty to have developed principalities.

3) Some of the other Lekhitic tribes probably evolved into segmentary organizations. There were three possible types of segmentation of ethnic units. The first was the acephalic village system. We cannot rule out that this is how some tribes, described as small, were organized. This would apply, for instance (though we can only surmise), to the late developed, small settlements in the Eastern Pomerania.

The second type could include organizations in which segments comprised groups of villages or small tribes. The frequent occurrence of the name *opole* may testify to the fact that this type of segmentary organization outnumbered others. Whether princely power evolved in these segments — we do not know.

The third type of segmentary system was the associations of tribes. Such associations corresponded to Southall's thesis about the existence of the "segmentary state". However, a lot of evidence points to the fact that those associations were organized around communal institutions of each segment (assemblies, tribe elders, perhaps shared centres of cult). Hypothetically, we may list examples of Silesian tribes with their joint defence investments; perhaps we could even come up with an example of a Lędzian tribe (or rather a group of Lędzian tribes).

Associations of tribes did not necessarily develop the institution of a prince, but such an evolution was one of the possible paths of development. Some principalities, for instance that of the Vistulans, may have evolved in such a way.

4) The reversibility of the formation and development of tribal chiefdoms can be followed thanks to archaeological sources from the first half of the 1st millennium AD. On the other hand, we know very little about this reversibility between the 7th and the 10th centuries, particularly in the context of internal break-ups. An example of the decline of a chiefdom from outside of the future Poland was the so-called Samon's state. Lack of sources is probably the only reason why we cannot confirm the existence of more examples of this kind. We know a bit more about the destruction and transformations of tribal organizations, which, between the 7th and the 10th centuries, followed fighting between tribes and subjugation of one tribe by another or resulted from the conquest of tribes by the neighbouring states. The sources dealing with those phenomena that come from the 9th and 10th centuries are much more extensive. In the 9th century the tribal principality of the Vistulans and the Silesian tribes were subordinated to the Great Moravian state, and in the 10th century — first to the Bohemian principality and then to Mieszko I's principality. Lędzian tribes were subordinated first to the Kievan Rus' and then to Mieszko I's principality. The tribal principalities of Western and Central Pomerania were temporarily controlled, between the 10th and 12th centuries, by Poland of the first Piasts.

However, subjugation did not necessarily mean the destruction of the local tribal organization; on the contrary, such an organization could continue to function as a lower level of administration in the victorious state or as a separate, peripheral organization, loosely associated with the centre. This is was probably the fate of the Vistulan principality in Great Moravia.

Liberation from external control and return of the local tribal organization to independence can be regarded as a reversal of the transformation of this organization into a fragment of the state that ruled it. An analyzis of the political situation in the Polish lands and throughout Western Slavdom in the 9th and 10th centuries indicates that there was a profound difference in this situation — in comparison with the first few centuries of the 1st millennium. In the 9th and 10th centuries the development of tribal organizations, mainly principalities, unification of tribes and emergence of states were definitely more common that the disintegration of political systems and the reversibility of state-formation.

During the formation of the Polish state the last and best known example of reversal of this process was the pagan revolt after the disaster of Mieszko II. The political disintegration, however, was brief. The Polish state was rebuilt, both with respect to internal policy and external political situation.

5) The principalities that emerged among Lekhitic tribes differed among each other. We can point to several types of these principalities.

The Polanian principality was a military chiefdom, individualizing, prince–oriented, formed over a short period of a few decades thanks to rapid expansion. This organization was formed and developed by means of coercion.

The Vistulan principality evolved over a longer period of at least one hundred years, but for some time it existed as a subordinate part of external state organizations. It was a society–oriented principality. Its origins might have been based on a social contract (a suggestion supported by the existence of refuge strongholds) and not coercion. It is likely, though, that as the principality grew and the centralization of power became more pronounced, this social orientation was narrowed to the notables–clan elders.

The principalities of Western and Central Pomerania can be described as loosely centralized, town population–oriented organizations the social divisions of which were shaped primarily by participation in external trade which supplied luxury goods. A unique feature of those tribes was the multi–ethnic populations of their main towns and ports.

Until ca mid–11th century these principalities did not launch territorial expansion; rather, they were themselves targets of external invasions. Perhaps this lack of expansiveness resulted from the fact that the needs of the princes, elders and merchants were satisfied by trade. From the second half of the 11th century Pomeranian principalities undertook expansion, including raids into Poland. This may testify to the fact that the local political organization was changing and the role of princes was growing as was the role of their armed retinues and notables taking part in military operations. The period of military expansion ended when the Pomeranian principalities were conquered by Poland.

6) The differences among Lekhitic tribal principalities were a decisive factor in the creation of the Polish state in the 10th century and its development in the 11th century.

The Polish state was created by Piast princes by means of coercion. The type of the Piast principality was conducive to that method. Outside, coercion was manifested in military expansion and conquests. In internal relations, coercion was used to create social divisions, impose duties and maintain order. The prince used coercion to impose Christianity. His armed retinue was the instrument of coercion.

The period of expansion and state-building by means of this method was brief; it lasted several decades. According to Przemysław Urbańczyk, "from the archaeological point of view Mieszko I's state came out of nowhere"[90]. This was not unusual, as studies research into early states in pre-colonial Africa demonstrates. Jan Vansina has remarked that "probably all African kingdoms were enlarged through conquests... conquests were made by the core of the organization. From this core followed a territorial expansion of the state by means of military operations or threat of such operations. How this core came to be a kingdom in the first place still remains unclear"[91].

Yves Person's and Michał Tymowski's studies, on the other hand, have demonstrated how rapidly — over the lifetime of one generation — a state could be created, if this goal was pursued through military coercion and the ruler's opponents were acephalic segmentary organizations[92].

There is a lot of evidence suggesting that Mieszko I's predecessors faced a similar situation in the initial stage of their expansion. It was not until Mieszko I's times that the ruler had to deal with the resistance of well organized tribal principalities. However, during his reign the war machine was powerful enough to crush the resistance of other tribal principalities.

Coercion was an extremely efficient method of state-building, but the decline of the first Piast state after Mieszko II's reign revealed the method's weaknesses. An organization created by

[90] P. Urbańczyk, *Struktury*, p. 19.

[91] J. Vansina, *A Comparison of African Kingdoms*, "Africa", 1962, vol. 32, pp. 324–335, quotation from p. 329.

[92] Y. Person, *Samori Une révolution Dyula*, vol. 1–3, Dakar 1869, 1970, 1975, pp. 269–360 (formation of the state between 1861 and 1881), pp. 2045–2046, 2057–2059 (revolutionary changes); M. Tymowski, *L'Armée*, pp. 230–239.

coercion and acting on behalf of and for the benefit of the group that used force could just as well be overthrown by force.

In comparison with the Piast principality, the principality of the Vistulans turned out to less effective when it came to state building. Its social orientation and the fact that prestigious goods could be obtained by trade limited the expansiveness of the Vistulans. However, other features of their principality proved to be very useful and effective in rebuilding the state system when it disintegrated. The Vistulan principality evolved over a much longer period than the Polanian principality. The social acceptance of its existence, legitimacy of power and principles of the functioning of the community seem to be more firmly embedded in social structures. Several defeats against external opponents taught the group that ruled the Vistulan principality how to survive such events. Neither Great Moravia, Bohemia, nor, probably, the Piasts managed to destroy the inner social structure of this principality. As a result, the Vistulan elites maintained their ability to preserve order during the crisis of the 1030s. During the reconstruction of the state (when the so–called second Piast state emerged) the structures that existed in Małopolska, around Cracow, structures that were a legacy of the Vistulan principality, proved to be very effective.

7) None of the Lekhitic tribes developed a theocratic system of power. In the Piast principality, the prince's power found its justification in military successes, and the system of belief was expanded to include the cult of the ruler's predecessors. The princes' actions were made legitimate by the ruling family's oral tradition which was treated as sacred. This cult proved to be insufficient in the face of the needs of the newly emerging state. Mieszko I decided to impose Christianity on his principality. The Vistulan principality too was made legitimate by the oral tradition of the ruling family. Hypothetically, however, we can surmise that its legitimacy had another basis as well — social contract. Christianization arrived not as a result of the ruler's decision but of an external invasion. Baptism did not lead to the disintegration of the principality, did not destroy the principles of its social orientation, nor did it destroy the earlier forms of its legitimation.

The organizing power of the cults that existed in Pomeranian principalities was greater than in the Vistulan and Polanian principalities. Princely power, however, was weaker. This pheno-

menon affected the future of the tribes from Western and Central Pomerania. Their princes were unable to impose Christianization on their subjects and the enduring paganism led to invasions from Germany and Poland, and, eventually, to incorporation into external state structures and Christianization by force. But the existence of princely power enabled the Pomeranians to maintain their separateness within the victorious states, which the acephalic tribal organizations incorporated into states failed to achieve.

8) The variety of Lekhitic tribal organizations and the variety of tribal principalities were a phenomenon that facilitated the creation of the state and its internal integration probably to a greater extent than the differences in territorial and demographic potentials of those organizations.

(Translated by Anna Kijak)

«Acta Poloniae Historica»

Semiannual edited under the auspices of the Committee
of Historical Sciences and the Institute of History
Polish Academy of Sciences

President: Jan BASZKIEWICZ
Editor–in–chief: Maria BOGUCKA

Vol. XCVII, 2008

CONTENTS

Board of editors:
Publisher: Wydawnictwo Naukowe *Semper*
ul. Bednarska 20A, 00–321 Warszawa, Poland
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