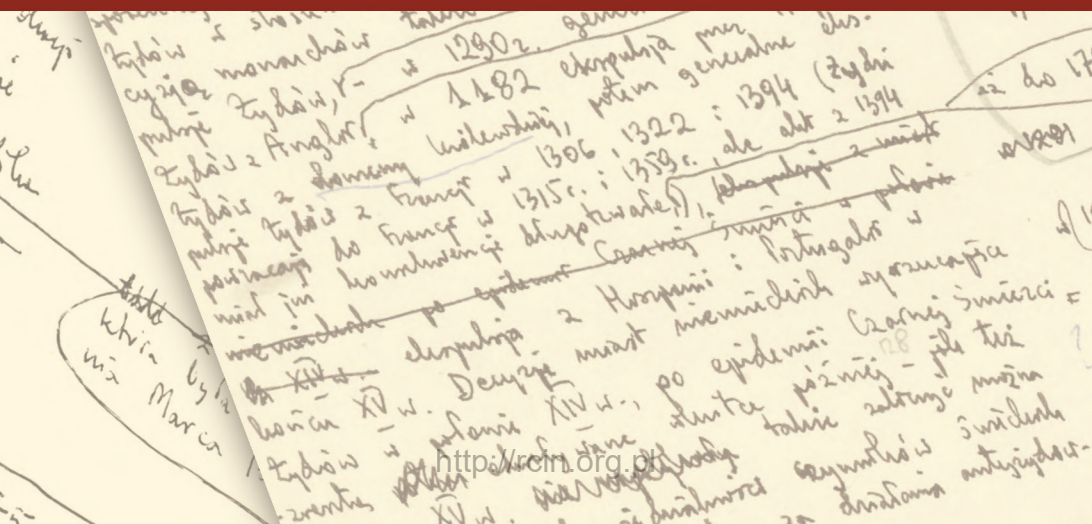
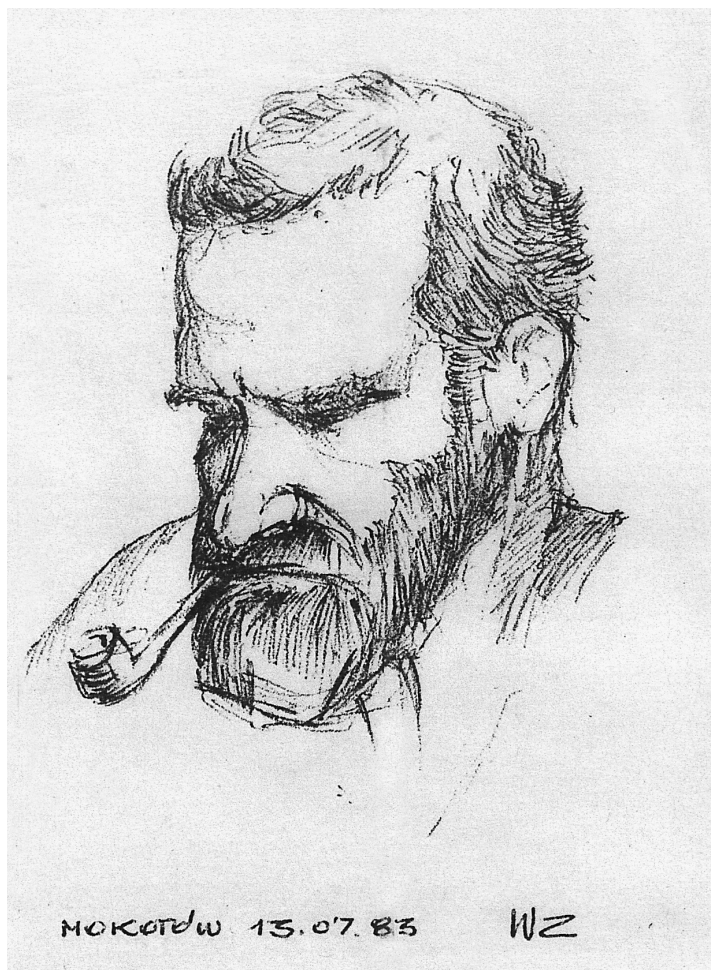


Bronisław Geremek

On the Middle Ages



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Sketch by Wojciech Złotowski, with whom Bronisław Geremek shared a prison cell on Rakowiecka St. in Warsaw, 13 July 1983 (courtesy of Hanna Zaremska).

TADEUSZ MANTEUFFEL INSTITUTE OF HISTORY
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Bronisław Geremek

On the Middle Ages

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Translated into the English by
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Hanna Zaremska

Bronisław Geremek, Historian

Bronisław Geremek was not someone who dwelt on a single matter. His life's passion was history, but, as he said, it was overcome by his sense of civic responsibility.

The period after the elections in 1989, a time of political upheaval in Poland, encouraged people to write autobiographies (which Geremek would never do), and give exhaustive interviews. As an intellectual, able to speak clearly and comprehensibly to both Polish and foreign listeners, and well-known as much as an advisor to Lech Wałęsa as for his books, he was an erudite and much sought-after interlocutor. Asked many times what led a historian of medieval history and culture upon the road to the strikes in Gdańsk and to mandates in the Sejm and Strasbourg, he recalled his teachers, his academic friends and the books which determined his scholarly career.¹ This enables us to keep track of his words and avoid the obvious difficulties posed by writing about a man who remains existent for many of us.

The History Faculty of Warsaw University, which Geremek joined in 1950 after completing the Joachim Lelevel High School in Warsaw, retained an exceptional place in his memory and in the minds of his student friends Antoni Mączak and Henryk Samsonowicz.² Here they met great scholars who fascinated them as historians and as people, and encountered the world of learning in a state of intellectual ferment. This is how Samsonowicz, not much older than Geremek,

¹ G. Duby, B. Geremek, *Wspólne pasje*, interview held by Ph. Sainteny, transl. E.T. Sadowska (Warsaw, 1995); *L'historien et le politique, entretiens avec Bronisław Geremek, recueillis par J.C. Vidal* (Paris, 1999).

² A. Mączak, W. Tygielski, *Latem w Tocznieli* (Warsaw, 2000), pp. 88–120; A. Sowa, *Henryk Samsonowicz – świadek epoki. Wywiad rzeka*, assisted by D. Truszczak (Warsaw, 2009), pp. 67–79.

remembers a post-war academic establishment in Warsaw: “On my own back, I carried books which had been dug out of various places in order to supply the University library and the library of our own History Institute. [...] Student activities [...] were held on University premises, but some also took place in private homes [...]. We had contacts with distinguished people, veritable masters of history, who were able to give us intellectual inspiration [...], but who also fuelled us with their attitudes to the changes in the past and to the changes taking place around us in the present.”³

Those times encouraged Geremek to consider his own place in his nation’s fortunes and his own attitude to the past. Awareness that one cannot learn or practice history without avoiding the recent war that had almost destroyed the world was present on both sides of the Iron Curtain. In an article about Lucien Febvre published in 1958,⁴ 26-year-old Geremek wrote about how the climate of emerging from the years of war and building a new world affected this great French scholar, one of the authors of the program of 20th-century historical reconstruction. Those times encouraged him to reflect upon history’s place in the humanities and the need for a fresh understanding of its tasks. At the turn of the 1940s and 1950s in Poland, Witold Kula, in a sketch called “Gusła”⁵ – written on impulse, even if it ended up left in a drawer – considered the sense and function of history in a world dominated by the ideology of Nazism and communism, and the manipulation of historical memory in totalitarian systems. The foremost scholars lectured at Warsaw University at that time: Tadeusz Manteuffel, Stanisław Herbst, Stefan Kieniewicz, Marian Małowist, and Aleksander Gieysztor. Their teachings engendered young people’s fascination with Marxism. It was not just young people who were attracted by communism’s ideals of social justice. Marxism attracted people with its cohesive explanation for the changes happening in the world.

Geremek became a historian, but not without hesitation: “I considered economics. I went to the University of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw to hear a few lectures, and got terribly bored. I tried a little sociology, but it all seemed too theoretical and not free enough.

³ Ibid., p. 57, 69.

⁴ B. Geremek, “Lucien Febvre (1878–1956)”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 65 (1958), pp. 320–324 (see pp. 73–79 in this anthology).

⁵ See W. Kula, *Wokół historii* (Warsaw, 1988), pp. 366–407.

So in the end I chose history. History, I said to myself, is the world of today, the world that surrounds me. To try to understand something about it – man, the country, the social group – I go back into the past a little. And I look around me, trying to understand the things around me. [...] I chose a seminar on modern history and, I must say, not very modestly, that I read... everything. [...] The professor set the *Communist Manifesto* as the subject of the first paper. [...]. I remember that seminar, those two hours of incomprehension; then I realized that I would suffocate if I remained there [...]. I made my choice, and it was the best choice possible [...]. For the Middle Ages gave me most of all a guarantee of freedom [...]. I could read and write anything and the censors could say nothing.”⁶

Geremek recognized three Warsaw professors as particularly important to his academic future: Tadeusz Manteuffel, Aleksander Gieysztor and Marian Małowist. The decisive role was played by the last of these – a pupil of Marcei Handelsmann, who died in 1945 after his internment in German concentration camps, and who, like himself, came from an assimilated Jewish family. Małowist regarded as one of his masters the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne, who wrote studies on the beginnings of medieval cities. The sociologist Stefan Czarnowski was also important in his academic life.⁷

The students of Małowist’s seminar regarded themselves as the “chosen few.” For them, he was everything that a university scholar ought to be: a researcher and a teacher. He attached no meaning to the ages or academic preparation of his students. He allowed them to take part in debates on issues that fascinated him and share his hypotheses. Years later, Małowist recalled: “I observed their intellectual development and characters closely. I tried to stimulate positive trends. Close contact with them was possible because these were small seminar groups [...]. I tried to encourage them to discuss academic issues and convince them that the world of learning cannot bear people of authority.”⁸

Marian Małowist was the master and teacher of a group of distinguished Polish medievalists; a person of difficult, but not incontrovertible, authority.

⁶ DUBY, Geremek, *Wspólne pasje*, pp. 12–13.

⁷ R. JAROCKI, *Widzieć jasno bez zachwyty* (Warsaw, 1982), pp. 49–86.

⁸ “O historii i historykach”, Marian Małowist spoke to B. Geremek, H. Szlajfer, M. Tymowski, ed. R. Stemplowski, *Res Publica*, 2 (1988), no. 2, p. 50.

With his left-wing past, Małowist did not refute the role which Marxism had played in his work; neither did his pupils. They appreciated the meaning of Marxism in learning to think in terms of major problems and in developing an interest in historical processes, mass events, and the evolution of systems and systemic crises. Małowist treated Marxism as a living and open theory. "Perhaps that is what saved me," said Geremek in an interview in 1990, "from the ossified Marxism contaminated with deceit and the spirit of death [...]. Official Marxism [...] was applied to research into the Middle Ages by means of quotations [...]. It is enough to look at the works of that period: the first few pages are invariably full of quotes from Stalin and Lenin [...]. This was more of an ideological and political canon to which the results of research had to be adapted, so that it could be accepted. In no way was it a way of thinking [...]. For me, Marxism was a way of thinking, a way of understanding, and I still consider it useful, even today, when I consider the problems of the modern society which I observe and in which I live. Very often, I have a feeling that history teaches me nothing other than a method of comprehension. That is the only lesson that can be drawn: a method of comprehension. In that sense, Marxism has not lost its significance."⁹

Małowist fascinated his students by the way he treated historical issues in juxtaposition with the issues of the day, considering this a way of understanding not just the past, but also the present: by his way of asking questions which emerged from observing the present day's events, his broad horizon of interests, the ease with which he overcame established chronological barriers, and his conviction that history is one and indivisible.

Most of all, he taught his students not only to read sources, but also to appreciate historical texts. These played an important role in their education. The ability to read in foreign languages was a preliminary condition for acceptance to the seminar. Małowist's students were to form a closely-knit cell: they were not to be mere uncritical continuers of the work of their predecessors, but were to be pioneers of change in twentieth-century humanities. Geremek's article on Lucien Febvre, included in this anthology and already referred to, reads like a programmatic declaration by a young researcher who is fascinated by a great scholar. Geremek perceives the inventiveness

⁹ DUBY, Geremek, *Wspólne pasje*, pp. 23–24.

of Febvre, but also appreciates the impact which works written at the beginning of the 20th century, then on the threshold of breaking through in the history of historical teaching, exerted on his academic fortunes. He appreciates the significance of the intellectual community of Strasbourg where Febvre held a chair in history and where he met Marc Bloch, friendship with whom, Geremek wrote in 1958, “gave birth to one of the biggest events in the historiography of our century, the ‘Annales’.” In his remarks on what the author of *La terre et l'évolution humaine* owes to his predecessors, Geremek says: “We underscore these influences not in order to play down the originality of this work; its greatness is based on the fact that it arose at the crossroads, as it were, of many disciplines, out of a friction between various thoughts and methods.”¹⁰

Geremek read voraciously and sought inspiration in talks with other researchers and with Warsaw medievalists close to him, Benedykt Zientara, Antoni Mączak, and Stanisław Bylina, and with his French and Italian friends Jacques Le Goffe, Jean-Claude Schmitt and Ruggiero Romano. He monitored the academic works that were being published and was gradually building his own library, while from his students he demanded a knowledge of historical works and periodicals being published not only in Poland. He remembered his intellectual debt towards Lucien Febvre, Marc Bloch, Fernand Braudel and Jacques Le Goff. The articles devoted to these four historians, included in the first part of this anthology, are more personal than the remainder: one is moved when one reads them; they are not just an expression of appreciation for the acuteness, originality and scope of intellectual horizons, but also a gesture of gratitude.

Arrested when martial law was declared in December 1981, Geremek spent many months first in prison in Białoleka and then in internment centres in Jaworze and Darłówek, and in 1983 he was moved to the prison on Rakowiecka St. in Warsaw. He regarded the absence of books as a painful chapter in this part of his life. One of his unpublished texts written in the Rakowiecka prison starts with the sentence: “Once again, I am in a situation where an absence of books is an annoying abnormality.”¹¹ He read books, reviewed those

¹⁰ Geremek, Lucien Febvre, p. 321 (see p. 75 in this anthology).

¹¹ Ibid., “*Nad Niemnem i ethos pracy*”, manuscript in the possession of Hanna Zaremska.

that interested him and seemed important, wrote books, and dreamed of others not yet written.

Geremek related in a lecture delivered at the Collège de France in 1993: “About twenty years ago, I was in a boat in the middle of a lake when I was surprised by a sudden thunderstorm. The boat overturned and I ended up in the water. Dusk was falling rapidly. It was the end of October and the water was cold. There was no question of any rapid help. I had to expect the worst. I must admit that in those last moments, I did not think about the things that I would now never do. Instead, I regretted the books on medieval history that I would now never write – one of them about the lepers’ plot in 1321, and the other about chess.”¹²

At the re nascent History Faculty of Warsaw University, Małowist promoted economic history: “I am a socio-economic historian. I never liked political history, “he confessed.¹³ He saw in economic processes the key to understanding the past and present. In an interview in 1987, he told Geremek: “The main problem of our times is the inequality of economic development and the backwardness caused by this.”¹⁴ He was fascinated by the division of Europe into an economically independent east and west in the late Middle Ages, the result of increasing disparities. His work on this subject earned him a place in world medievalism. This topic was also permanently present in the academic thinking of Małowist’s pupils, Benedykt Zientara, Henryk Samsonowicz, Andrzej Wyrobisz, Antoni Mączak, as well as Bronisław Geremek.

Unlike his master, Geremek was more attracted by social history, at that time regarded as of secondary importance in relation to economic history. “I saw the most important contribution of Marxist thinking not in the supremacy of economic factors, but in research into social factors,” he said.¹⁵

The subject of Geremek’s master’s thesis was the State of the Teutonic Order.¹⁶ Years later, he recalled this thesis as a study of

¹² Ibid., “Historyk w świecie polityki”, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9–10 January 1993 (see p. 37 in this anthology).

¹³ O historii i historykach, p. 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁵ Duby, Geremek, *Wspólne pasje*, p. 24.

¹⁶ Fragments of this work have been published: see B. Geremek, “Ze studiów nad stosunkami gospodarczymi między miastem a wsią w Prusach Krzyżackich

a political entity that was similar to later colonial states (for whose economies relations between towns and rural areas were important); a multi-ethnic state ruled mostly by German knights who exercised authority over a yet-to-be Germanised Prussian society, with a Lithuanian and Polish minority; a state in which a corporate-like representation of the estates came into being.¹⁷

In 1956, soon after gaining his master's degree, Geremek gained a scholarship and left for Paris.

He had already formed a warm affection for France in his early youth, when he was "more sensitive to words and less sensitive to things."¹⁸ This was due to the fact that he read the works of Balzac in their entirety, as well as those of Flaubert and de Maupassant, who were his favourite authors apart from Conrad. "At the end of the 1940s, I buried myself in French literature,"¹⁹ he wrote.

Paris introduced the fresh master's degree holder to a world of books which were unobtainable in Warsaw. Libraries and archives were now open to him, museums and cinemas waited. Geremek retained memories of the French capital from the mid-1950s, the songs of Juliette Greco and the impression made on him by the sight of Jean-Paul Sartre sitting at a table at the Deux Magots café, and evenings at the Cinémathèque on the rue d'Ulm, where he would move from the library of the neighbouring archives which closed at six in the evening. This is what he wrote many years later about the Bibliothèque Nationale, then located on the rue de Richelieu: "What a strange place. Hordes of people thirsty for knowledge and culture come here from all over the world, yet the BN does everything possible to deter them. The reading room is shaped like the hall of a railway station, the conspiratorial and highly esoteric catalogues, the shortage of space and books. Nevertheless, this place is very attractive. I have spent a fair portion of my life there, and every time I go back there, I have the impression that I am returning to my school classroom after a vacation; with a little regret that the vacation is over, and with a little joy that I am returning to school and to my friends. The situation

w I poł. XV w.", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 47 (1956), pp. 183–189; and id., "Problem siły roboczej w Prusach w pierwszej połowie XV w.", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 48 (1957), pp. 195–233.

¹⁷ *L'historien et le politique*, pp. 32–33.

¹⁸ Duby, Geremek, *Wspólne pasje*, p. 11.

¹⁹ Geremek, *Nad Niemnem* i ethos pracy.

with books in this library is worse and worse. They probably still do not have *Violence and Civil Disorder* (ed. L. Martines), because it is a foreign work and they have not been sent a copy yet, though it is equally possible that it is lying in a heap somewhere, waiting to be catalogued. The library of the Sorbonne is better supplied with foreign books.”²⁰

Geremek established his first contacts with French researchers at a time when the Parisian community of historians assumed an institutional form. After the death of Febvre in 1956, Fernand Braudel became the head of Section VI, Economic and Social Sciences, formed in 1948 at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Braudel also became editor in chief of *Annales*, and at the beginning of the 1960s he became director of the powerful Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, founded in 1959 on his initiative, and engaged in academic research in and outside France.

In Paris in 1956, Geremek attended lectures “on medieval Gnostics, on the postal services in the 16th century, on Venice and the Mediterranean, and on ‘dangerous classes’ in the 19th century,”²¹ enrolled in the seminar of Maurice Lombard,²² and met Braudel himself.²³ This is how he described the impact which his meeting with Braudel, whom he described as the “monarch of the ‘new humanities’,”²⁴ had on his manner of thinking and writing about history: “I was

²⁰ Id., letter, Washington, 22 September 1975. The quoted letters of Bronisław Geremek were addressed to Hanna Zaremska, except for one (cf. note).

²¹ Geremek, *Historyk w świecie polityki* (see p. 37 in this anthology).

²² Cf. “Rozmawiamy z profesorem Mauricem Lombardem o problemach gospodarki średniowiecznej”, interview given by B. Geremek, *Mówią Wieki*, 1961, no. 3, pp. 22–23.

²³ In 1958, as a doctoral student at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, with which he had been associated since 1954, Geremek gave a tour of Warsaw to Fernand Braudel, who had come to Poland to sign a cooperation agreement between the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes and Department I of the Polish Academy of Sciences. In the following year, together with his friend, the philosopher Tadeusz Mrówczyński, he gave an interview with Braudel (“Nowy humanizm”, *Argumenty*, 1960, no. 24, pp. 1, 8). In 1971, together with Witold Kula, he published a set of articles by Braudel (*Historia i trwanie*, foreword B. Geremek, W. Kula, transl. B. Geremek [Warsaw, 1971]). After Braudel’s death, Geremek wrote an article about him “Historyk długiego trwania” (*Więź*, 1986, no. 11/12, pp. 73–82; see pp. 87–99 in this anthology).

²⁴ Geremek, *Historyk długiego trwania*, p. 75 (see p. 91 in this anthology).

impressed by the combination of research into geography, the economy and society, the application of sociological and anthropological methods, an experiment with the chronology and literary form of writing, the treatment of geo-history in large chunks of time, and the history of structures and junctures, a history in which duration and people are present.”²⁵

Polish medievalism became open to the world in the 1950s, mainly thanks to scholars associated with the French periodical *Annales*.²⁶ The encounter of Polish scholars with French historiography, full of bilateral academic consequences brought on mainly by Małowist, with huge support from Witold Kula, one of Geremek’s closest friends and academic partners in later years, was no coincidence. Polish historians, working in a country where Marxism was the official doctrine, read authors who did not turn their backs on Marxism and who were indeed open to it. However, there were differences, of course.

Marc Bloch wrote in *Strange Defeat* in 1940: “I on my part have the greatest admiration for Karl Marx. I fear that as a man he was unbearable, and as a philosopher he was certainly not as original as some people made him out to be. But no one will equal him in social analysis. If any historians or other followers of revived learning ever decide to create a hall of fame, the bearded bust of the venerable prophet from the land of the Rhine will certainly find a prominent place in it. But is it enough that his teachings always serve as a point of reference for great doctrines?”²⁷ Marxist terminology, the mechanical treatment of history, debates on the base and the superstructure, the problem of the class structure in society, and the role of the masses in historical processes aroused the mistrust of Western European scholars.

Facts are to be set against problems, said the historians gathered around *Annales*, processes are to be set against events, the masses against great figures, and naïve analogies against historical analogies. One must not be bound by the generally accepted criteria of chronological history, a problem should be considered more important than chronology and political boundaries, the process of history

²⁵ *L'historien et le politique*, p. 47.

²⁶ Cf. P. Pleskot, *Intelektualni sąsiedzi. Kontakty historyków polskich ze środowiskiem "Annales"* (Warsaw, 2010).

²⁷ M. Bloch, *Strange Defeat*, transl. K. Marczevska (Warsaw, 2008), p. 238.

should not be considered in “mechanical” terms, in terms of changes and discontinuity, that which is permanent and repetitive should be relativized, behind facts one should see not just the causes, but also entire broader and closed structures that cannot be mutually reduced. And most of all, one must place man at the forefront and realize that he is shaped not just by great events, but also by those of lesser importance.

When one writes today about the demands made by the first-generation French scholars associated with the *Annales* school – Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre – and about their successors engaged in academic work after World War II, especially Fernand Braudel, they sound banal because their program was adopted by scores of researchers beyond the *Annales* school, including by some Polish scholars. But at that time, in the 1950s, things were different, and the program of historical renewal has to be gauged by the standards of those times. The importance of the breakthrough carried out by the Annalists needs to be appreciated; after them, history could no longer be written the way it had been before them. The break with dry, dull history, written by professors for other professors, meant that readers were appreciated and the recipients of historiography recognized at last. History, academic but impartial and erudite, focused on itself, isolated from the present and imprisoned in a simplified concept of facts and historical causes, now itself belonged to the past.

In an interview for *Le Monde* in 1987, Geremek said: “I place my entire intellectual achievement on the encounter of Marxism and Annales.”²⁸ With their style of writing about history and their fresh language, the Annalists made an impression on the young scholar just arrived from Poland.

In 1960, the *Argumenty* periodical, linked to the Warsaw community of philosophy historians, published a report by Geremek on Braudel’s visit to Warsaw, subsequently reprinted in *Kwartalnik Historyczny*.²⁹ Obviously moved and feeling he was witnessing a revolution in socio-sciences, including a change to the language, the young Polish scholar cited extensive excerpts from a lecture delivered by the figurehead of

²⁸ B. Geremek, M. Sot, “Les pauvres aussi ont ‘droit à l’histoire’”, *Le Monde*, 20 November 1987.

²⁹ B. Geremek, “Fernand Braudel o zadaniach humanistyki współczesnej”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 68 (1960), pp. 1159–1165 (see pp. 80–86 in this anthology).

the Annalists. Braudel was an excellent speaker and wonderful writer, while Geremek was sensitive to words and to the style of writing about the past.

“It is interesting,” he wrote in 1982, “that not just the view of the Middle Ages is changing, but also the epistemological attitude of researchers. The German model of criticism is becoming *démodé*, authors now want to reach out to broader readerships, and apart from that they seem to be eager to show how research is done; in other words, not just show the fruits of the research, but also the path that had to be taken. The elegant language suffers as a result, but at least the reader gains entitlement to participate in the research. This is how Le Goff and Duby are proceeding, but not Gurevich. I think this is because of differences in the way in which readers receive the works created by the social sciences; in other words, the intellectual market.”³⁰ Geremek spent six months in Paris in 1956. He cut short his visit when he learned about events that October in Poland.³¹ He returned to Paris six months later, and again in 1962, when he assumed chairmanship of the newly-formed Polish Cultural Centre at the Sorbonne.³² He quickly earned the recognition of scholars associated with the *Annales* and the Ecole, including due to his work on new issues in historical writings.

Published in Poland in 1962 and the result of research in Parisian libraries and archives in 1957–1958, the doctoral thesis entitled *Najemna siła robocza w rzemiośle Paryża XIII–XV w. (Hired labour in artists’ studios in Paris in the 13–14th centuries)* was published in France in 1968 and

³⁰ Id., letter, Białołęka, 8 January 1982. The review of which he writes in this letter has been published; cf. id., “Człowiek i grzech. Trzy książki o kulturze średniowiecznej”, *Znak*, 25 (1983), no. 1, pp. 77–102.

³¹ On his return from Paris in 1958, he wrote a review of *Les intellectuels au Moyen Age* by Jacques Le Goff, a scholar almost ten years older than Geremek who was to become a very close friend later; cf. *Przegląd Historyczny*, 48 (1958), pp. 137–139; he praises the sketch about the religious and moral attitudes of merchant-bankers and the suggestive picture of violence and exploitation. He notes with approval the references to the view of Marxist historians, but observes certain simplifications; he points out the failure to mention the basic Marxist subject of the relationship of trade to production and the widespread naïve analogy between modern capitalist monopolies and the privileged position of major commercial companies in the Middle Ages.

³² B. Geremek, “Ośrodek polski na Sorbonie”, *Kultura*, 1967, no. 37, p. 2; cf. Pleskot, *Intelektualni sąsiedzi*, p. 61.

again in 1982,³³ whilst the Italian translation appeared in 1975. The book is a pioneering study into a lower stratum of urban society of which not much had been known previously and had not been closely examined, people mostly belonging to the class of artisans (craftsmen and guild apprentices), as well as non-qualified labourers. Geremek includes the transformation of labourers into commodities in the birth of capitalism, economics and capitalist relations, considers the nature of the bonds between the employer and employee, and investigates the rotation of manpower. This work occupies the beginning of Geremek's research into the phenomena that preceded the modernization of contemporary society and its accompanying processes. This evolution could not have occurred without the commercialization of the labour market, the price of which was the removal to the margin of collective life, temporarily or permanently, of large sections of society who were an integral part of feudal society. Geremek devoted his post-doctoral dissertation (published in Poland in 1971 and in France in 1976, and again in 1991)³⁴ to the margins of Parisian society. In this he takes the next step "down," towards criminals, beggars and harlots, people despised, not fulfilling any function in economic life and deprived of any role in the feudal estate system. Geremek gave the selection of source texts on the margins of society, produced for the French series of publications "Collection Archive," the title "*Niepotrzebni światu*" ("Of No Use to the World").³⁵

Mercy and the gallows. The history of penury and charity and The world of the "beggar's opera." A picture of vagrants and paupers in 15th–16th century European literature are successive books, and we should not be misled by the dates of their Polish editions. After all, modern history has not remained aloof to the Middle Ages. In 1968, after Warsaw Pact forces

³³ B. Geremek, *Najemna siła robocza w rzemiośle Paryża XIII–XV w. Studium o średniowiecznym rynku siły roboczej* (Warsaw, 1962); French translation: *Le salariat dans l'artisanat parisien aux XIIIe–XVe siècles. Etude sur le marché de la main-d'œuvre au Moyen Age*, transl. Ch. Klapisch, A. Posner (Paris, 1968, 2nd ed., 1982); Italian translation: *Salariati e artigiani nella Parigi medievale secoli XIII–XV*, transl. G. Pinto (Firenze, 1975).

³⁴ Id., *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, transl. J. Birrell (Cambridge, 1987); French translation: *Les marginaux parisiens aux XIVe et XVe siècles*, transl. D. Beauvois (Paris, 1976, 2nd ed. 1991).

³⁵ *Inutiles au monde. Truands et misérables dans l'Europe moderne (1350–1600)*, ed. B. Geremek (Paris, 1980; Italian translation: *Mendicanti e miserabili nell'Europa moderna (1350–1600)*, transl. P. Procaccioli, Rome 1985 (second edition, 1989).

entered Czechoslovakia, Geremek left the Polish United Workers' Party. Although Tadeusz Manteuffel, then director of the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, did not allow the dismissal of employees who had surrendered their party membership cards, he was unable to guarantee them passports or protect their work from the Board of Censors. Geremek's manuscripts gathered dust on the shelves of publishing houses, waiting for clearance to be printed.

The book *Mercy and the Gallows*,³⁶ planned as one of a series of volumes by the Czytelnik publishing house, devoted to major issues in European history and written in the middle of the 1970s, was first published in Italy (1986) and then in France (1987). Antoni Mączak wrote in the *Res Publica* periodical in 1988: "The reader holds in his hands a review of the Italian edition, though the manuscript has been waiting to be printed for many years."³⁷ The book appeared in Poland at the same time as its German edition, in 1989.

Mercy and the Gallows addresses social attitudes towards pauperism. A broad timeframe ranging from the Middle Ages to today's Third World permits an overview of the changes to these attitudes and contrasts charitable work with the social reality of pauperism. Geremek spoke of this work thus: "The subject of my book was the problem of breaking stereotypes. I tried to show how ethics, accepted patterns and actual social attitudes are changing. In Christian ethics, pauperism is considered a value, but only when it occurs through one's own choice, not when it is dictated by life. In the modern world, pauperism is considered a social disease."³⁸

To the reader following the subject of the modern evolution of attitudes towards beggars and vagrants discussed in the book, it is obvious that the author is convinced that the basic causes of this evolution lay in the economy. Geremek associates the drastic increase in the number of paupers and the expansion of the social margins

³⁶ B. Geremek, *La pietà e la forza. Storia della miseria e della carità in Europa*, trans. A. Marx Vannini, in cooperation with M. Frau, B. Verdiani (Roma-Bari, 1986); French translation: *La potence ou la pitié. L'Europe et les pauvres du Moyen Age à nos jours*, transl. J. Arnold-Moricet (Paris, 1987); German translation: *Geschichte der Armut. Elend und Barmherzigkeit in Europa*, transl. F. Griese (München-Zürich, 1989); *Litość i szubienica. Dzieje nędzy i miłosierdzia* (Warsaw, 1989).

³⁷ See *Res Publica*, 1988, no. 2, p. 145.

³⁸ "Nędza i wyobrażenia społeczna", interview with B. Geremek by J. Strzemżalski, *Konfrontacje*, 1990, no. 6, pp. 14-15.

in Europe in the late Middle Ages with the crisis of feudalism, which affected the rural economy and the municipal labour market at the same time, and placed a question mark over the evangelical ideal of voluntary pauperism. The program of re-education through labour was consistently applied in the most developed regions of the continent. Vagrancy was combated steadily wherever capitalism underwent a stormy development, as in England. The fortunes of the poor reflected the transformations of societies in medieval and latter-day Europe.

In his studies in pauperism, Geremek cooperated with a group of historians led by a Sorbonne professor, Michel Mollat, engaged since 1968 in broad-scale research into this very issue.³⁹

Mercy and the Gallows ends with a chapter in which the author, a researcher of society and culture, treats the problem of pauperism, attitudes towards pauperism and the history of philanthropy and philanthropic institutions, as part of the history of charity, behind which stands the need to protect the satisfied against a revolt by the starving.

Geremek wrote *Świat "opery żebraczyj"* (literary: *The World of "Beggars' Opera"*),⁴⁰ published in 1989, in 1978 during his stay at the Smithsonian Institution's "Castle" as a guest of the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, where he participated in a program of research into the social margins of the pre-industrial era. This gave him access to the Library of Congress and to the collection of 16th–17th-century manuscripts in the Folger Shakespeare Library.

At the start of this stay in Washington, Geremek wrote: "I am working like a horse. I am over-fulfilling my plan of three pages a day. I am writing a "beggar's opera," finishing the first chapter. It bears the characteristics of an introduction, in other words a literary description, literature and society, and finally an outline, very academic, of the phenomenon of pauperism from the 14th to 17th centuries. I have yet to write a paragraph [...] providing a general instruction, a general presentation of literature [...] and attempting to juxtapose it with social development, i.e. if there is an association between the date

³⁹ *Recherches sur les pauvres et la pauvreté*, ed. M. Mollat (Paris, 1962–1972).

⁴⁰ B. Geremek, *La stirpe di Caino. L'immagine dei vagabondi e dei poveri nelle letterature europee dal XV al XVII secolo*, ed. F. Cataluccio, collective translation (Milan, 1988); *Świat "opery żebraczyj". Obraz włóczęgów i nędzarzy w literaturach europejskich XV–XVII wieku* (Warsaw, 1989); French translation: *Les fils de Caïn. Pauvres et vagrants dans la littérature européenne du XVe à XVIIe siècle*, collective translation (Paris, 1991).

and the place where works are written.”⁴¹ Only four months later, he reported: “I have finished the book. I do not know what to think of it. It seems like a book to be read, probably quite extensive, about literature, not about the reality; a book about thoughts on vagrants and beggars, not about vagrants and beggars themselves. I would have written it differently now, but that is normal.”⁴² The time of change described in *Mercy and the Gallows*, and the processes of pauperization in medieval and latter-day Europe, has given birth to a rich literature devoted to beggars, paupers and vagrants. Geremek presents them in his “opera” in the context of the changes taking place in economic and social life. He notes the association between the rhythm of these changes and the rhythm of the increase in literary output. He notes the existence of such associations in the second half of the 14th century, after the Black Death, when the population of vagrants and paupers rose dramatically; at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, when the Church and its attitudes towards pauperism went through an ideological crisis; and at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, when European society keenly felt the effects of the European wars that were one of the causes of the crisis in the first half of the 17th century.

Having put the period at the end of the last sentence of *The World of the “Beggar’s Opera,”* he did not put down his pen.

“I am about to start of work on a book concerning the social margin,” he writes in the letter cited above. “I do not know whether I will manage to write it [in Washington]; I have delivered a talk about it, despite my atrocious English, using my hands to help me (they are very clean because I am not engaged in politics), and I succeeded [...]. I am beginning with an article to Einaudi [publisher], a general outline on the margin, and in this way will gradually start on the book; one of the problems now is the matter of the Jews and Gypsies, whom I want to include in this concept.”⁴³

“I am considering the order in which to deal with problems: first degradation and pauperism, then mobility – vagrancy, crime – then ethnic exclusion (Jews, Gypsies), later infamy (disease, heretics, witches), and lastly the social margin as an anti-society and society’s attitudes towards the margin. This is yet another successive plan...

⁴¹ Id., letter, Washington, 1 February 1978.

⁴² Id., letter, Washington, 2 June 1978.

⁴³ Ibid.

I have no-one at all to discuss it with. In this regard, America seems a desert – a superb intellectual elite, but it is not in the habit of discussing, is not accustomed to the principle that when one has something to say, one must announce it first, otherwise someone else might usurp it. In any case, with my ‘social margins’ the problem is not just the structure, but rather the method of presentation – I must employ a ‘typical’ example. I do not always have many of them, and I would not like to repeat something that I have already written elsewhere (a small book for Gallimard, a volume for PIW,⁴⁴ converge with this book regarding the topic). In each chapter I intend to use the current situation as the point of departure, which poses a certain problem because today I asked my computer what it has to say about *poverty*, and it spit out a list of 170 book titles published since 1968!⁴⁵

“In any case, it turns out that the work is more difficult than it seemed at the beginning. In particular, including the problem of ethnic minorities has complicated the matter. Entire libraries have already been written about the Israelite world, so what can one choose? The erudition of S. Baron (*A Social and Economic History of Jews*) seems unreliable – almost two dozen volumes, a complete scope of literature, including the latest Polish works! This makes tackling the subject on a mere 20 pages even more daunting.”⁴⁶ Geremek returned from the United States in January 1979. The book he had planned, started in Washington, never appeared. However, in America he wrote a lot of papers that were meant to be chapters in that book. After a few alterations and additions, he published most of them as separate articles. One of them, *Jews in Christian society – from segregation to exclusion*, remained as a manuscript.⁴⁷ All of these texts, collated and placed in the order foreseen in the surviving publishing plan,⁴⁸ are contained

⁴⁴ This refers to *Inutiles au monde*; as well as Geremek’s, *Litość i szubienica*.

⁴⁵ B. Geremek, letter, Washington, 20 June 1978.

⁴⁶ Id., letter, Washington, 6 July 1978.

⁴⁷ Id., *Żydzi w chrześcijańskim społeczeństwie – od segregacji do ekskluzji* (see pp. 226–269 in this anthology).

⁴⁸ Plan of the book: *The Social Margin and Exclusion in Pre-Industrial Europe*: Chapt. I. The theory of the social margin – 1. The sociology of marginalization 2. People on the margins and the process of marginalization, 3. The social margin and the birth of modern society; Chapt. II. Poverty and social margins – 1. Poverty as a social condition and stigma, 2. The medieval ethos of poverty, 3. Poverty in rural areas and in towns, 4. Begging and professional beggars, 5. Pauperization and the exclusion of poor people in early modern Europe; Chapt. III. Vagrancy – 1. Social

in the second part of this anthology. His books on a medieval treatise devoted to chess and on leprosy and lepers in the Middle Ages also did not materialize.⁴⁹

As Geremek's research horizon is so broad, this historian of society is at the same time, and not "also," a historian of culture. Researching the social reality, he asks about attitudes towards this reality: examining the mechanisms of social isolation and degradation, he observes their economic foundation, as well as their roots in culture, expressed in the manner in which attitudes towards people affected by infamy manifest themselves. He provides food for thought with additional literature, to which he adds new sources series. In his research into the social margins, he first peruses court archives, and then reaches for the works of Villon;⁵⁰ high-level literature, but also literature at a lower level, the kind that not only discusses people affected by pauperism, but which is also dedicated to them. A lover of literature sensitive to the written word is also a researcher thereof.

Every historian has a book that has made a lasting impression on them, which they re-read, each time finding new thoughts to which they refer in the search for inspiration. For Bronisław Geremek, such

mobility, 2. Vagrants in medieval society, 3. Vagrancy as a crime – theory and practice, 4. Medieval and contemporary policy towards vagrants, 5. The public order and the labour market; Chapt. IV. Ethnic differences and social exclusion – 1. Attitudes towards strangers, 2. Jews in medieval society – from segregation to exclusion, 3. Gypsies: Adaptation to and rejection of coexistence, 4. The characteristics of differentiation; Chapt. V. Infamy and cultural margins – 1. Stigma and "untouchability", 2. Disease in a traditional society, 3. Heresy and social marginalization, 4. "Dirt" and "unworthy" occupations, 5. Magic and the social status of women. Cf. a manuscript of the plan in the archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre.

⁴⁹ Plan of the book *Lepers in the Middle Ages*: Chapt. I. The "phenomenology" of leprosy: Chapt. II. Leprosy in medieval Europe: history and geography; Chapt. III. The isolation of lepers – 1. Leprosy: types, distribution and figures, 2. The rules of life – statutes, The ceremony of exclusion; Chapt. IV. The leper as a literary figure; Chapt. V. Lepers and membership of society: leprous peasant and leprous king; Chapt. VI. Exclusion and coexistence: lepers in medieval society. Cf. a manuscript of the plan in the archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre.

⁵⁰ B. Geremek, *Życie codzienne w Paryżu Franciszka Villona* (Warsaw, 1972); Italian translation: *I bassifondi di Parigi nel medioevo. Il mondo di François Villon*, transl. A. Panzone, A. Litwornia (Rome-Bari, 1990); id., "Śmiech w cieniu szubienicy – o Villonie", *Znak*, 1983, no. 35, pp. 77–102 (see pp. 697–721 in this anthology).

a book was *The Autumn of the Middle Ages* by Johan Huizinga. Published in 1919 and noted by Bloch and Febvre, this work by the Dutch medievalist discusses the hopes, dreams, emotions and obsessions of people living in the late Middle Ages, at a time of vast cultural transformations; he talks of symbols, images and forms of expression of a society that is dying in order to give life to a new culture. Having read it many years before the Polish edition appeared, Geremek carried *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*⁵¹ with him.

The discovery of the history of mentality was brought about, says Geremek, by the books of Le Goff and Duby.⁵² Geremek shared these historians' attachment to the concept of an extensive Middle Ages, from the 7th to the 19th century, a recognition of the 12th century in the process of forming civilization at that time, and an interest in the history of culture, taken to mean a history of mentality which, by definition, has substantial duration because it is subject to slow, but never final, changes.

The program of research into the history of mentality⁵³ was born in the 1960s as the child of the period which marked the end of colonial wars and the process of decolonialization, the crisis in Marxism and fascination with psychoanalysis. In France, where efforts to investigate mentality were made first, as well as in countries where scholars undertook these investigations, various ways of engaging in this practice appeared. The questions were the same, but the answers were sometimes very different. Those questions concerned the structures of the human psyche that determine the formation of thoughts, opinions and imagination.

Geremek signals his interest in the history of mentality and in the revived history of culture in a text published in 1962 entitled "Mentality and Collective Psychology in History."⁵⁴ According to him:

⁵¹ J. Huizinga, *Jesień średniowiecza*, transl. T. Brzostowski (Warsaw, 1961).

⁵² *L'historien et le politique*, p. 48.

⁵³ The term "mentality" was used in the early 20th century in ethnology, and especially in psychology. It spread to history in the 1920s thanks to Marc Bloch and especially to Lucien Febvre, who, apart from mentality, also introduced to their work a second concept important in the language of historiography, *outillage mental*. See B. Geremek, "Odnowa historii kultury", *Problemy*, 1976, no. 10, p. 11 (see p. 386 in this anthology).

⁵⁴ Id., "Umysłowość i psychologia zbiorowa w historii", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 53 (1962), pp. 629–644 (see pp. 361–378 in this anthology).

“Once again one should stress the significance of class distinction and class membership for the collective psyche, and especially for certain strata of mentality, for a historian is expected to perform a quasi-strata-graphic analysis; various mental strata, thought patterns, ideas and forms of expression are described in different ways by different groups in different times: groups, classes, societies, and civilizations.”

He became interested in the history of mentality for methodological reasons. Reviewing a plan of research into collective psychology by Alphonse Dupront,⁵⁵ he stated categorically: “It is not enough for a historian to define medieval fears of the end of the world or panic, psychoses or irrational mass reactions in order to understand them. He must confront the primitive mentality hiding behind these fears with the type of economy and society in which they occur, and then he must transfer from the plane of long-term phenomena to shorter periods of time and investigate the direct causes of a given psychic reaction.”⁵⁶

In a letter to Witold Kula written in December 1962, Geremek does not hide his doubts: “Thank you for your remarks about my article on mentality. [...] I felt [...] the need to set my innermost thoughts and anxieties in order. I am particularly anxious about preserving the laws of historical craftsmanship in research into mentality. The greater the mass, collective nature of the phenomena in this sphere, the slower the rate at which they change or disappear. In collective reports on entertainment or death, in collective ‘fears’, one is struck by their virtual similarity over the space of millennia. The rhythm of changes here is similar to changes to the geographical environment. The research here fits the framework of Teilhard de Chardin’s program of research into man as a species, research into the human species. I do not know if a historian is allowed to sail into these waters. And if he is, this must require a different range of education, a different arsenal from that which most historians possess.”⁵⁷

Today, after many years, one must appreciate the acuteness of these remarks. The doubts about the possibility of fulfilling the goals

⁵⁵ A. Dupront, “Problèmes et méthodes d’une histoire de la psychologie collective”, *Annales ESC*, 16 (1961), pp. 3–11.

⁵⁶ Geremek, *Umysłowość*, pp. 633–634 (see p. 366 in this anthology).

⁵⁷ Quoted from: M. Kula, *Mimo wszystko: bliżej Paryża niż Moskwy. Książka o Francji, PRL i o nas, historykach* (Warsaw, 2010), p. 527.

of research into the history of mentality have not disappeared. But thanks to the methodological reflection encouraged by this research and the attempts of historians to rediscover former generations “in a biological and psychological dimension of consciousness and sub-consciousness,”⁵⁸ the traditional barriers to historical research posed by human action, the products of human thought and work and relations between people, have been overcome. In studies into the past, ethnology and linguistics have assumed greater importance. Work has been undertaken on the history of expressions, words and even manners of communication with the aid of linguistic and non-linguistic “codes.”⁵⁹ As a result, the view of man as an object of historical research has changed. This has required a different perception of the sources traditionally used by historians: literary texts, religious works, paintings and architecture, and other sources referred to less frequently, such as language and rituals. Geremek lends expression to his dedication to the transformation in the history of culture in a series of articles, some of which are in this anthology.

In the 1960s, Tadeusz Manteuffel, director of the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, launched a plan to produce a multi-volume history of Polish culture. This great undertaking was preceded by a broad debate among specialists working in various eras. The report on this debate, organized by the editors of the *Kwartalnik Historyczny* periodical and published in it, reflects the difficulties caused by differences of opinion about the way in which one should understand the concept of culture and its place in contemporary historical research. An answer was sought to the question how historical research that cannot be reduced to economic analysis can be included in the context of Marxist thought. The debate was opened by Stanisław Herbst, who said: “Some researchers tend to restrict research to the works of mankind. I belong to those who do not separate these works from behaviour. Those works and the behaviour associated with them always possess material and spiritual qualities.”⁶⁰ Geremek also noted: “In modern historiography, the call to practice the history of culture is

⁵⁸ Geremek, *Człowiek i grzech*, p. 78.

⁵⁹ Cf. id., “Średniowiecze i znaki”, *Teksty*, 1 (1972), no. 1, pp. 90–97 (see pp. 390–396 in this anthology).

⁶⁰ “Dyskusja nad zagadnieniami historii kultury”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 69 (1962), p. 71.

not only compatible with Marxism, but should also be an expression of further-reaching ambitions of Marxist historical thinking [...] postulates to shape the history of culture as a separate sphere are anachronistic today. Integration is presently occurring throughout the humanities, historians are reaching for related disciplines [...]. Therefore, the point is to arouse interest in the problems of human thought, creativity, mentality and past customs. Apart from a program of detailed research, the history of culture also presents a concise program whereby the history of culture is perceived as an aim towards a global perspective and a comparison of great structures in space and time. The concept of structure, emphasizing the moment of duration and permanence in historical transformations, also allows one to perceive changes of a fundamental nature.”⁶¹

Writing the volume on the Middle Ages was entrusted to a team of medievalists at the Department of the History of Medieval Society and Culture. The authors of this work, published in 1985, were Stanisław Trawkowski, Tadeusz Lalik, Bronisław Geremek and Jerzy Dowiat, who supervised the editing of the whole.⁶² The volume reflected the work of the team and the numerous talks held upstairs at the Krokodyl café in Warsaw’s old town. In compliance with Tadeusz Manteuffel’s concept, the volume was divided into two parts, one on life culture and the other on psychic culture.⁶³

The next volume of this collection, covering the period between the 13th and 15th centuries, was written by a team that was joined by Stanisław Bylina and a group of young researchers.⁶⁴ Geremek edited

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁶² *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej (X–XIII)*, ed. J. Dowiat (Warsaw, 1985); cf. J. Dowiat, B. Geremek, T. Lalik, S. Trawkowski, “Historia Kultury Polski wczesnośredniowiecznej. Założenia i konspekt”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 79 (1972), pp. 114–119. See Geremek’s articles in this anthology: “Poland in the cultural geography of medieval Europe”, pp. 452–466; and “Man and time: unity of medieval culture”, pp. 467–520.

⁶³ Contents: Poland in the geographical culture of medieval Europe; Part I. Life culture – 1. Concern for nutrition, 2. Clothing and body care, 3. Life in a community, 4. Social guarantees for existence; Part II. Psychic culture – 1. A view of the world, the channels for communicating thoughts, 2. The circles of scholars and their institutions, 3. Norms of behaviour and personal models, 4. Sense of beauty, 5. Man and time; Conclusion. The development paths of Polish culture in the early Middle Ages.

⁶⁴ *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej (XIV–XV w.)*, ed. B. Geremek (Warsaw, 1997).

and created the concept for this work, and also wrote the chapters which we include in this anthology.⁶⁵

During work on the volume, Geremek issued a text in which he presented the main points of the undertaking.⁶⁶ In it he formulates three tasks: to measure phenomena even if figures escape them, to identify collective attitudes, without being satisfied with individual ones, and to examine more profound psychological processes, and treat culture as a single whole.

The division into life culture and psychological culture, adopted in the first volume, was rejected in the second volume,⁶⁷ which in the introduction Geremek explains thus: “The structure of the lecture is changing [...] and perhaps also the way of looking at medieval culture. A simple comparison of the contents of both volumes illustrates this fact. There are various reasons for this. The range of sources for the

Apart from Geremek, the team included: Stanisław Bylina, Jacek Banaszekiewicz, Wojciech Brojer, Paweł Dobrowolski, Grażyna Klimecka, Halina Manikowska, Tadeusz Trajdos, Jacek Wiesiołowski, Małgorzata Wilska and Hanna Zaremska.

⁶⁵ See in this anthology: “Sense and awareness of geographical space”, pp. 521–575; “Public life and political culture”, pp. 576–610; “Man at play: ludic culture”, pp. 673–696; “Levels of culture: oral tradition and literary culture”, pp. xxx–xxx.

⁶⁶ B. Geremek, “Metody badań nad świadomością społeczeństwa polskiego w średniowieczu”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 85 (1978), pp. 311–314 (pp. 397–401 in this anthology); cf. T. Wiślicz, “Bronisław Geremek – historyk niemarginalny”, in: *Bronisław Geremek. Ojciec polskiego liberalizmu* (Łódź, 2010), pp. 56–64.

⁶⁷ Contents: Part I. The conditions for the development of culture – 1. The geographical landscape, 2. Technical change, 3. Housing conditions 4. Clothing and fashion, 5. Nutrition, 6. The sick and sickness; Part II. Centres and patterns of culture – 1. The royal court, 2. The social environment of rural areas, 3. Culture and rural customs, 4. The culture of the nobility, 5. The city: Social structure and lifestyle, 6. Meeting places for mass culture: the tavern and the bath house, 7. Church communities and culture, 8. Schools: school and university tuition, 9. Levels of culture: Oral tradition and literary culture; Part III. Collective imagination and mentality – 1. Scientific discovery and knowledge of the world, 2. Collective faith and religiousness, 3. Eschatological imagination, 4. Man in the face of death: beliefs and rituals, 5. Man at play: the culture of games. 6. Sin and misdemeanour: norms and practices of social morality, 7. Public life and political culture, 8. Culture and awareness of history, 9. Feelings of space and geographical consciousness; Part IV. The domains of creativity – 1. Writing, 2. Monuments of Gothic art in Poland; Part V. Cohesion and difference – 1. Districts and regions: the horizon of difference, 2. National and state bonds, Conclusion. The modernization of culture.

second part of the Middle Ages gradually broadens, allowing us to handle a richer array of problems. The new orientation in writings on the subject of social history and ethno-history has had a major impact on the way in which the authors determined the scope and structure of the work.”⁶⁸

Work on the book, abandoned in 1980 and resumed in 1983 when Geremek was released from prison, was completed in the middle of the 1980s. The volume appeared in print in 1996.

As a politician, Geremek continued to wield a pen. He wrote a great deal, but not about the Middle Ages.

He withdrew from the profession of historian in the 1980s. “History benefited from this as a *res-gesta*, but lost as a *res-scripta*” wrote Krzysztof Pomian.⁶⁹ Geremek did not regard the departure from his trained and beloved profession as a final step. From the internment centres in Jaworze and Darłówek and from the Warsaw prison on Rakowiecka St., he sent requests for history books. “The books I read are always similar muddles and of little use. But with time they fight well,”⁷⁰ he wrote from Darłówek. In a letter⁷¹ sent during investigative custody in Białoleka, slightly over two weeks after the declaration of martial law, he confessed: “To be honest, I am drawn mainly by the Middle Ages now. The calendar plays no part in my *emploi du temps*, the weekly rhythm is characterized by mass, and the daily rhythm by the light. That is how I practise the idea of medieval time, rather as in a monastery. Hence, I am little concerned about the year and month, and especially the day, the week, and holidays. I try to do something, but not much comes of it. Now I am reading Gurevich on popular culture.”⁷² From the prison cell he wrote: “Pay attention to the question of medieval geography in Poland [...]. I am not so much concerned about geographical knowledge as geographical imagination, attitudes towards space, etc. For I have in mind volume II of the *History of Medieval Culture* – the chapter on space-time imaginings [...]. Please look into Dąbkowski [*Polish Private Law*] and note what

⁶⁸ *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej (XIV–XV w.)*, p. 5.

⁶⁹ See *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14 July 2008.

⁷⁰ B. Geremek, letter, Darłówek, 23 September 1982.

⁷¹ Id., letter, Białoleka, 8 January 1982.

⁷² The book referred to here is: A. Gurevich, *Problemy sriednieviekovoi narodnoi kultury* (Moscow, 1981), Polish edition: *Problemy średniowiecznej kultury ludowej*, transl. Z. Dobrzyński (Warsaw, 1987).

he writes about borders, border disputes, the measurement of space (fields, pastures, forests). Then write to me and I will have something to think about.”⁷³

He read, made careful notes,⁷⁴ wrote new text, and considered new books and studies.

In a letter from the Jaworze internment centre, he wrote: “I plan to write an article about the history of work as a separate discipline, combining economic, social and any other history with problems of work ethics. I want to ask for help, for I need a little librarian help. I would be [...] grateful if you could see if the Warsaw University Library has any concise scholarly history of work, perhaps you can look in the catalogue under ‘work’. See if Kula⁷⁵ deals with the history of work.”⁷⁶

And later, in a text written in prison on Rakowiecka St. about the work ethos in *On the Niemen River*: “Polish historical writing has no tradition of research into the history of work. To be more exact, there is no tradition of a separate discipline or separate research material as is the case in Italy, France and Germany. However, there is a lengthy list of Polish studies into the history of human labour which fall within economic history. It has become fashionable to complain about the hollowness of historical-economic research, or investigating ‘cows’ tails’ instead of human fortunes, whilst people often forget that Polish historical writing owes its European reputation to this very sphere of research. Nevertheless, one can accuse this sphere of increasing techniques, a biased approach and a neglect of the subjective role of man in economic processes. [...] Attitudes towards work, work ideology and work ethics have attracted little attention in historical writings [...] the very sense of the concept of the history of work, combined with various aspects of man’s creativity, in investigating skills and psychological incentives, in considering work as a complex of actions and as a value. By its very nature, the history of work is anthropocentric. At one of its poles is the idea of work as a curse and a punishment for sins, and at the other pole is the model of work

⁷³ B. Geremek, letter, Warsaw, prison on Rakowiecka St., 19 June 1983.

⁷⁴ Cf. the archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre, exercise book with notes on books read, manuscript entitled “Jaworze March–April 1982”, cf. 1.4.

⁷⁵ W. Kula, *Problemy i metody historii gospodarczej* (Warsaw, 1963).

⁷⁶ B. Geremek, letter, Jaworze, 17 April 1982.

as a method of fulfilment for man and human dignity. A return to the perception of the past of man as *homo-faber* can be regarded as a projection of the hierarchy of values of a modern industrial society, whereas the great civilizations arose out of a cult of despising work, at least physical work [...] The history of work as a subject of studies and reflection must avail itself of the research techniques and series of documents of which research into economic history, material culture, social structures and social movements avails itself, but it should also refer to the history of ideas and to socio-psychological history, to the history of mentality.”⁷⁷

He never gave up the idea of returning to his profession. Considering giving up politics, he thought about writing a history of Europe.⁷⁸ In his lectures at the European College in Warsaw’s Natolin district, where he held the Chair of European Civilization, he returned to historic issues, and also to the Middle Ages. Constantly busy and at the limits of his physical strength, he visited bookshops and reviewed successive issues of the *Annales* faithfully sent to him by the editors, but was forced to kick his old habit of continuously monitoring historical literature. It annoyed him that the names of the young authors of new books were unknown to him. Without regular reading and without the calm required for academic work, he neglected to pick up his pen. The profession of historian was of little use in politics, he said. Nevertheless, this profession did not lose its lustre in his eyes.

His academic contribution to the development of medieval studies and his steadfastness in pursuing the path of research arouse admiration. Behind this achievement stands the joy which studying the past gave him; at his desk with a pen in his hand and pipe in his mouth, or in the archives, with a medieval manuscript before him.

“In our profession, two things go hand in hand: work and ambition. It is even difficult to separate the two, for the latter, unless it grows and develops, dwells in the former, but it is really only the former that I am concerned with, the pleasure of attaining something, thinking

⁷⁷ Id., *Nad Niemnem* i ethos pracy.

⁷⁸ The file with notes for his lectures at the European College was supplemented with fresh quotations and notes from the days when he worked on medieval history. As a politician, he surrounded himself with historians: Poland in the 1990s was a country where one could encounter many medievalists in Parliament, among diplomats and in the Foreign Ministry when Bronisław Geremek was foreign minister. He had confidence in people who shared his profession.

and writing. Writing should be regarded as something constant, a technique. You think up a title and write an article. You find the source, pick up a trail, and see what becomes of it. Then everything works out. One can stand the crowded buses better, and the tragic vista of the world recedes.”⁷⁹

Out of Bronisław Geremek’s extensive heritage devoted to medieval history, those works that well reflect his academic individuality, character and variety of research interests have found their way into this anthology. The basis of this publication are texts written in Polish, Polish versions of articles kept by him which were written only in French, and translations of texts whose Polish versions have not survived. The anthology contains one unpublished text: *Jews in Christian society – from segregation to exclusion*.

A bibliography of the works written by Geremek up to 1990 has been published in the collection of articles, *The Poor and the Rich. Studies into the history of society and culture were presented to Bronisław Geremek on his sixtieth birthday* (Warsaw 1992, pp. 5–18).

Thanks are due to Professors Halina Manikowska, Krzysztof Pomian and Henryk Samsonowicz for their help in preparing this anthology.

⁷⁹ B. Geremek, letter, Washington, 8 May 1978.

PART I

Historian about Himself, Historians and History

Historian in the World of Politics

Lecture delivered on 8 January 1993 at the International Faculty of the Collège de France: "Histoire sociale: exclusion et solidarité. Leçon inaugurale faite le Vendredi 8 janvier 1993," Collège de France, 1993. Based on: "Historyk w świecie polityki," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9–10 Jan. 1993, translation into Polish by H. Zaremska.

One can regard it as a coincidence that a Pole is a lecturer at the International Faculty of the Collège de France, and a medieval historian as well. Science is international *par excellence*, and truth can only be universal. But there is no doubt that the Poles are a people particularly bound to their national identity, and that of all the humanities, history is, by the nature of things, strongly dependent on national frameworks: collective memory contributes to the cohesion of an ethnic group more than an awareness of the communion of human fortunes. So is my presence here the result of a misunderstanding?

I do not think so. Poland appeared on the historical scene of our millennium as a periphery of the West. Situated between East and West, within the sphere of various influences and at the crossroads of different civilizations, she strove to be a part of European culture. Therefore, this participation was the result of a choice. In the cultural landscape of medieval Poland, Romanesque works of art sat next to Byzantine frescoes, and the images of Italian and German saints stand side-by-side with Russian and Byzantine icons. Polish cities of that period are inhabited by Germans, Italians, Jews and Armenians. It is under Polish influence that the last pagan ruler of Europe rejected the old gods and brought his people onto the path of Christianity. In this way, Lithuania became a Catholic country at the end of the 14th century. In the new era, Poland, a "commonwealth of many nations," found herself at the crossroads of eastern and Western civilization. Her culture radiated out to other cultures and she herself absorbed

the influences of others. She became a harmonious blend of many fatherlands. Adam Mickiewicz, the greatest Polish poet, was able to write: "Lithuania! My fatherland!"

Over one hundred and fifty years have passed since 22 December 1840, when Mickiewicz founded the chair of Slavic literature at the Collège de France, so that for four years, talking about Poland and the Slav world, he professed prophetic teachings about the moral renewal of mankind, Christianity and France's historic mission. The voice of this great Pole resounded in harmony with those of his colleagues, Collège de France professors Jules Michelet and Edgar Quinet. These three "Anabaptists of the Collège de France," despite their different loyalties, ideological basis and political behaviour, professed a communal future fate of mankind. *Ut omnes unum sint*, we read in an inscription on a medal commemorating these three Collège de France professors.

In modern history as well, especially this century, the fortunes of Poland have assumed an international dimension and seem to contain a universal message. When people said "Vive la Pologne, Monsieur," they expressed solidarity with the Polish nation, with the Poles deprived of national independence. From the strikes in the Gdańsk shipyard in August 1980 onwards, the struggle of Poles for freedom and for an end to the dismal heritage of Yalta engendered a powerful stream of support and solidarity. In February 1848, Mickiewicz is said to have told Pope Pius IX that God's Spirit is present in the shirts of the people of Paris. The surprise and admiration with which France and the West viewed the Polish "Solidarity" calls to mind those words of the poet.

Poland does not let herself be confined to her national destiny; likewise, history exceeds national frameworks. History cannot be reduced to studies into an ethnic community, nor can its tasks be limited to preserving and kindling national memory. History, worthy of its calling, recognizes national structures as one of many subjects of interest, it compares nations and tries not to restrict itself to just one. Marc Bloch, a master of my generation of historians and an icon of the new historiography, said of historians that they are reminiscent of legendary werewolves who, scenting humans, know that they are their prey. With its laconic nature, simplicity and metaphor, that sentence expresses the distinction of the French school of history, and defines the message to which it owes its worldwide success: combining the rigors

of erudition, modern-day issues and an anthropological perspective. It is this vision of a historian's work that pushed me into the arms of Clio.

At first, there were books to be read. Then, in 1956, came my first encounter with Paris, France, and French historians. I arrived with a bold plan: to be an apprentice of history, anxious to study the medieval history of paupers and the social margins. This was not a very popular subject at the time. As a Pole keen on studying the history of France and Europe, thirsty for knowledge and not very confident with my French, I turned to archives, libraries and the Collège de France in the hope that no one would compel me to speak. I heard lectures on medieval Gnostics, on the postal services in the 16th century, on Venice and the Mediterranean and on "dangerous classes" in the 19th century. Then I met Fernand Braudel for the first time, and to this very day it seems as if the author of the *Mediterranean Sea* has never left me. I have never been able to say enough to express my gratitude, as a historian and as a human being, to Fernand Braudel, my master, and to Jacques Le Goff, my friend. It is thanks to them that from my very first visit to Paris, the *Annales* community and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes became my spiritual home. In early 1956, the Collège de France taught me what intellectual freedom is, and fuelled my passion to study human activity.

So after many years I returned to the Collège de France to exploit Baudel's maxim of *docet omnia*. I thought a long time about what to choose as the subject of my lectures, until I remembered a certain episode. Apart from reading, the only hobby I recognized, or recognized until recently, was sailing. About twenty years ago, I was in a boat in the middle of a lake when I was surprised by a sudden thunderstorm. The boat overturned and I ended up in the water. Dusk was falling rapidly. It was the end of October and the water was cold. There was no question of any rapid help. I had to expect the worst. I must admit that in those last moments, I did not think about the things that I would now never do. Instead, I regretted the books on medieval history that I would now never write – one of them about the lepers' plot in 1321, and the other about chess. I never wrote these books. During a period of regret, I resolved to return to both subjects in my lectures at the Collège de France and propose two completely different series of lectures.

In the first series, I shall deal with exclusion in the Middle Ages. Lepers were rejected by medieval society, whose accusations whereby

lepers want to poison the healthy portion of Christianity can be considered as an expression of the highest social hatred. The second series is associated with my second unwritten book. It was supposed to be an analysis of a treatise on the game of chess, written at the end of the 13th century by the Dominican Jacobus de Cessolis. This was a popular work in which the author perceives chess as a mirror of society and as a reflection of the social role of the nobility and the common people. That which is social and that which is political is intertwined under the pen of this theologian and preacher. And then the question, somewhat naïve, emerges: What is the relationship between morality and political strategies? That is the spirit in which I wish to speak, but this time not about the Middle Ages, but about today: about ethic and political dilemmas in the post-communist era of Central Europe. A medievalist cast upon the waters of the ocean of politics, I will try to juxtapose a reflection on the medieval past with one on the quite recent past, even with modern times.

In 1925, during a talk with Werner Heisenberg, Albert Einstein noted: "Whether or not we can observe something depends on the theory we apply. It is the theory that determines what we can observe." I would not dare to apply this statement to the observation of society, especially history, but it seems to me that that theory plays a certain part in a historian's behaviour, in his choice of topics, and in the questions he asks himself; in other words, how he understands the nature of duration and evolution, the mechanics of human activity, the physiology of the social organism, the concept of society and that of the individual. Without according historiography any special place in social history, one must nevertheless admit that historiography expresses itself in various plans of past reality and includes phenomena that are obviously in opposition: exclusion and solidarity, collective behaviour and political strategies.

Can we not say that in the context of society, social exclusion can easily be understood as a set of factors, as Braudel says? We have every reason to perceive excluded people or the social margin as a collective similar to others, though situated lower down in the social hierarchy. Exclusion assumes the presence of a certain social divide. Society differs from the community by an absence of cohesive internal bonds, an absence of cohesion. Hence, studies into exclusion and the social margin lead to the identification of certain principles of organization and of social life, global structures with the aid of which

society expresses its relationship to others, to strangers. Societies may be classified according to whether they condemn or accept differences. One can even say that we have the right to judge them on the basis of whom they exclude.

Extreme, pulsating hatred also conceals political actions. The contest between what is political and what is social, between the governing and the governed, between politics and morality, is also on the horizon of social history.

Exclusion appears not only in the picture of a dark, repressive Middle Ages. We can observe how hostilities arise, the moments when they appear and disappear. These trends are rooted in the reality and mental structure of medieval societies, but they also appear in other eras. In this very society and at various levels, we can observe a tendency to seek enemies: this shapes the collective imagination and inculcates a sense of self-awareness.

I shall refrain from describing the full category of excluded people, but will dwell on two examples, two scenes from a long film. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Synod resolved that the Jews and Saracens must visibly differ from Christians. By way of explanation, the Synod fathers said that in certain parts of Christendom, Jews and Saracens cannot be mistaken for Christians because they dress differently, whilst in other countries these differences do not exist, and this is dangerous because sexual intercourse could occur “by mistake.”

This separation requirement is the chief message of the Lateran decree. Though it contains no “technical details,” one can see in it the beginnings of the “Jewish stigma” in Christian Europe. The decision of 1215 does not specify any clothes or emblems to be worn; this was left to the discretion of the church or lay authorities. The only document that was more specific in this regard was a letter from Pope Gregory IX to Tibbald I, king of Navarre, in 1234. This said that every Jew must wear a circle of yellow material attached to his breast or back. The round, or rather oval, sign of Jewry was adopted in France and Italy.

Two years after the Fourth Lateran Synod, King Henry III of England ordered English Jews to wear a sign in the shape of the tablets of Moses, made first of white, and later yellow, parchment. This sign appears in the German lands in the 15th century; before then, its distinguishing function had been performed by a conical hat. In 1418, a provincial Synod in Salzburg ordered Jewish women to wear small bells to warn Christians of the danger of direct contact. Such signs in

various shapes and colours – yellow, white and even red – ridiculed those who had to pin them on their clothes. The church and rulers cooperated in controlling the duty to wear them. However, it is the Church that seems to have developed this idea.

Did Innocent III really intend to segregate the Jews and disgrace them? The rules applicable to the Saracens had no real meaning beyond the Iberian Peninsula. Only one year later the Synod, in a letter to the bishops of France, the very same pope expressed concern over the consequences of the Synod's decision and warned the bishops against forcing Jews to wear distinguishing clothes because this could threaten their lives. The discharge from the duty to wear a sign while travelling suggests that this custom posed a real danger to Jews.

The decision of 1215 was not the first case of persecution of Jews in Christian Europe. A papal bull, issued in 1179 during the previous Lateran Synod, forbade Jews to acquire land, goods and money without court approval. Anti-Jewish sentiment flared during the Crusades. Charges of blasphemy and profanation preceded massacres: in York (March 1190) and in Bray-sur-Seine (at the end of 1191). However, on the other hand there is no shortage of evidence of mutual acceptance and neighbourly cooperation between Jews and Christians, for instance in the south of France. So how can one explain these outbursts of collective hatred?

In his "Dialog between a Christian and a Jew," Gilbert Crispin features a Jew in Munster who asks the dramatic question: "If the law of Moses is the law which is to be observed, why do you treat those who do so as dogs, chasing them off with sticks?"

Were Jews a target of religious or social segregation on the part of medieval Christian society? Yes, they were, and in the strongest and most cruel sense of the term. In 1291 the Jews were expelled from England; in 1394 they were finally expelled from France; and in the memorable year of 1492 they were expelled from Spain. The charges against them described them as enemies of the human race who wanted to poison Christianity and who for this purpose were seeking the help of other excluded persons, such as lepers.

The history of the lepers' plot in 1321 has its genesis in rumours reported by numerous chroniclers which claimed lepers in France wanted to poison wells, resulting in court actions that ended in a wave of repression in some parts of the country. Some chroniclers claimed that this was the work of Jews and Muslims, whilst others blamed

only the lepers. Bernard Gui (1266–1331) describes these events as “perverse machinations” by lepers against healthy people whom the polluted water was to kill or infect with leprosy. In this way, lepers were to attain the majority and assume power. This author relates: “They intended to gain control over towns and castles, share power over certain places, and confer upon themselves the titles of lords and rulers.” Another chronicler writes that the lepers had already shared among themselves the kingdoms of France, Germany and England, and the counties of Flanders and Blois. During interrogation – writes Barnard Gui, who was for a long time an inquisitor before he became bishop of Lodève – the plotters are said to have confessed that they had been preparing this plan for a long time, had convened a meeting of all the lepers of the world, and had appointed a chapter to lead the conspiracy.

One would think that the chroniclers would realize that these were rumours or literary invention. However, their reports are corroborated by surviving archival documentation. The inquisitional register of Jacques Fournier contains three statements by a certain Wilhelm Agassy, a leprous cleric, from near Pamiers. He describes conspiratorial preparations in detail. During a meeting at a hospice for lepers in Toulouse in 1320, the local administrator and organizer of the meeting, Jordan, presented a plan on poisoning the entire healthy Christian population of the city and the lepers taking power. He also said that the King of Grenada and the Sultan of Babylon had expressed their support.

The documents confirm these revelations. Does their credibility stand up to scrutiny? Bayliff Maçon sent to Paris a French translation of a letter from the “king of Tunis,” promising the Jews silver and gold in return for poisoning the Christians. Philip de Valois, lord of Anjou and future king of France, sent Pope John XXII a long report on a letter found in the house of a Jew called Benanis, talking of an agreement reached between the king of Jerusalem and the rulers of Granada. It emerges from this that the Jews had granted the Saracens the kingdom of France and had come to an arrangement with the lepers regarding the eradication of Christians.

So we have a plot here: not a plot by lepers, but a plot against them.

In June 1321, King Philip le Long confiscated the property of lepers’ hospices and imposed an enormous tribute on the Jews. So the royal treasury benefited from the plot very quickly. The monarchy also used

it for its political interests, for example to crush the movement of the so-called shepherds which had sparked the massacre of the Jews a year before. In this way, the king deprived the shepherds of the instrument of action which had won them popular support.

The political context of the issue, the complex strategy to which the monarch and the Church resorted in order to increase their influence on society, cannot distract us from the human aspect of this history. Lepers – men, women, and children – perished at the stake. A few years later, in 1329, a woman in Montpellier, appearing before a court, compared the massacre of the lepers to Herod's massacre of the innocents. Pursuant to a royal decree of 1321, anyone who confessed to his crimes under torture was to be burned. Those whose charges were not confirmed, as well as children aged up to fourteen, were sentenced to life imprisonment. There is no knowing how many hospices were destroyed and how any lepers lost their lives. In Uzerche in the diocese of Limoges, 37 lepers were burned between the middle of May and the middle of June 1321, in other words before the royal decree was proclaimed. At the end of August, a group of fifteen women and children were isolated in a lepers' hospice, having been previously branded. However, they were released one month later. Following protests from local landowners who were angry about the violation of their judicial rights, the king halted the disenfranchisement and demolition of lepers' hospices. Some bishops began to defend the lepers. In 1338 Benedict XII, already known to us as Jacques Fournier, who had interrogated Wilhelm Agassy seventeen years earlier, cleansed the lepers of their blame: the charges against them were declared groundless. The absurdity of the tales of an international conspiracy against Christians, discussed by judges and related by chroniclers, is obvious. What is surprising – may I recall the historian's right, and sometimes even duty, to be surprised – is the speed of changes to medieval attitudes towards lepers. The extent of charitable work in aid of lepers' hospices is explained by fear of the disease and sympathy for those afflicted. As a result, the hospices earned quite a considerable income. Although there was always a certain degree of ambivalence towards a leper, he or she was nevertheless considered a Christian pauper *par excellence*. A kiss given to a leper was a sign of heroic charity. Separation justified by hygiene and theology need not necessarily lead to infamy. Nevertheless, the events of 1321 display traces of this infamy and confirm a tendency to isolate lepers from

society. In an appeal to the king in 1320, during the shepherds' tumult, the authorities of Carcassonne demanded that lepers be shut away and that sick men and women be separated so that they could not reproduce. Obviously, the intention behind this was not to eradicate leprosy but to exterminate the lepers. During the same era, at the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, heresy was considered a spiritual plague, and leprosy, homosexuality and prostitution were likened to this. The charges against all categories of people regarded as existing on the social fringes employ the same arguments. Jews, heretics and lepers were compared to each other. The obligation to wear emblems of infamy was imposed not only on the Jews, but also on prostitutes, heretics and lepers.

Where do the roots of medieval exclusion lie? Does the hatred, articulated at the political level, correspond to hatred among the people? Did one inspire the other? Was a repressive society born in Christian Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries? Is the consolidation of a community through isolation a reaction to the crystallization of Christianity? Or is it the result of social frustration due to unfulfilled aspirations? Let us repeat: these obsessions are not confined to the past that has been finally closed; they do not appear merely in dark medieval history. Can we forget them when we think about collective attitudes towards people with AIDS or the outbursts of hatred in Rostock, Dresden and Berlin?

Only three years have passed since the days when Rostock, Dresden and Berlin were full of joy and hope. First there were mass escapes to the rich and free West, then came the fall of the Berlin Wall and a rapid march towards a united Germany. The whole world held its breath, watching on television how the border wall was dismantled stone by stone, how the crowds gathered night and day listening to speakers intoning the truth and musicians extolling freedom to the accompaniment of a guitar. That was a holiday of freedom, a holiday of the people. But then new images from Germany began to appear on the television screens, which also attracted attention, but which this time aroused concern. There were words of xenophobic hatred, criticism of foreigners, and calls for violence. The words of the bards of freedom seemed to be heard no longer. A surprising turn in the situation.

The events in Germany were worrying and disturbing. Their historical European antecedents remain alive in human memory. It suddenly transpires that post-communist dilemmas also appear

where hopes for the future seem well justified. I do not wish to interpret this case through fear of oversimplification. In the countries of Central Europe, despite the obvious difference in the general context, we also observe a radical change to the situation compared to 1989.

The crisis of the 1980s, which led to the collapse of the Soviet empire and of communism in Central Europe, had two pivotal moments: the birth of “Solidarity” in Gdańsk in 1980, and the velvet revolution in Prague in 1989. The force of resistance and solidarity of societies, their ability of self-determination and their resolve, overcame that which we call the system. That is the first dimension of these events. The second, no less important, was the complete and final end of the concept of democratic communism, which had formed the basis of the political strategy of Mikhail Gorbachev and of the Polish authorities when, in 1980, they agreed to the existence of a mass trade union movement and when they adopted the Round Table accords in 1989. It turned out that a single-party communist system cannot work under conditions of democracy and political pluralism, and that in a democratic context communism not only loses its significance, but must also vanish. Nevertheless, since the heady days of 1989, the illusion of a fast and simple transfer to “normality” and a return to pre-communist days has also disappeared. Both in economics and politics, a long and painful process of transition is necessary.

Leaving aside the different strategies of changes pursued in various countries, one can say that everything starts with a positive disorganization. This seems essential in order to crush the old system’s sense of permanence and set the mechanisms of a market economy and democracy in motion. Freedom has brought with it concern for standards of living and employment, and frustration over the fact that some get rich while others become poor. It has created a climate which encourages the rise of demagoguery and populism, and the search for scapegoats. When hope weakens in social life, hatred has room to spread.

Against this murky background, and also as a result of comparisons with areas where bloody conflicts occur as post-communist stagnation has set in, the real victories of the transformations in the countries of Central Europe stand out. These countries are rebuilding their economies and protecting their fragile democracies while doing so. They are determinedly facing up to economic, political and social challenges. That is very important, for emerging from communism

need not necessarily lead to Western development. It can equally lead towards neo-communism or fascism.

The experiences of recent years merit a careful analysis. This involves a brief period during which a decisive choice of scenario for changes was made.

The acceleration in urban and industrial development in Central Europe after the last war and the imposition of communist rule kindled hope in the hearts of citizens for an improvement, which was supposed to occur as soon as the destruction wrought by the war had been cleared. But that did not happen. The revolts that set the rhythm of the political transformations in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary coincided with material difficulties, rising food prices, and changes to economic life. During each disturbance, including during the Gdańsk strike in 1980, outlines for programs of economic reform were put forth. Consequently, each of these upheavals caused changes to official economic policy. The pathology of the system of real socialism was rooted primarily in the sphere of politics, but it also affected the economic sphere, and in a manner very troublesome and difficult to bear.

Was the economy the real reason for the opposition to communism and the fall of the communist system? Or should one agree with Alexis de Tocqueville and seek the real reason for revolution in the complex relationship between society's resistance to evil and a political desire to improve things? Economic considerations were of secondary significance in the increased struggle to dismantle the authoritarian system and attain freedom, but this significance increased markedly as soon as the moment of revolution had passed. The new situation is assessed according to economic efficiency and success. When "the thing is over," it is the economy that decides and politics becomes dependent upon it: it is the economy that determines democracy and may threaten it. The second dilemma is the issue of nationhood. It is significant that in all the anti-communist revolts, we encounter particular sensitivity to the national problem. In the national uprising in Budapest in 1956, the citizens, aspiring towards freedom, encountered Soviet tanks. Conflicts regarding material issues, too, assumed the nature of political movements; demands regarding the presence of Soviet forces and national identity appeared during every strike. There was a close link between demands regarding prices and demands regarding freedom, religion, national identity and independence. This

gave birth to an elementary sense of solidarity that did not require preliminary action. This relationship was of enormous significance in totalitarian countries where all social communication was monopolized. The monopoly was very efficient when it came to preventing joint action, but less so when it came to propagating the class struggle. National sentiment, boosted by religious feeling in Poland's case, was the strongest force of passive opposition to a system imposed from outside, a sentiment that shaped the language of truth and attitudes of solitary defence. How could it be that, as soon as the system had been overthrown, everything changed and this very same sentiment was now rechannelled towards aggression and xenophobia?

The great transformation in 1989 was achieved without the use of revisionary means. On the anniversary of the French revolution, there was a peaceful revolution. In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary, compromise was the most important strategy in regaining freedom. In Poland, compromise lay at the foundations of Solidarity: a strong trade union agrees to the leading role of the party, and in return receives a guarantee of independence. This move met with failure on 13 December 1981, but the five hundred days of Solidarity's legal existence changed the face of Poland and played a part in unhinging the mechanisms that broke the eastern bloc apart. The Round Table talks in February and March 1989 led, on the basis of a compromise, to an accord regarding elections, the acceptance of political pluralism, and free elections, but within a restricted political dimension.

In an acceptance of compromise and rejection of force, there appears the utopian picture of a "revolution of human dignity" which the great Hungarian historian István Bibó painted at the end of the last war. A conviction that everything necessary can be attained step by step through a process of transformation concealed a certain political calculation. Utopias are not always able to control collective behaviour, and political calculations are never able to do so. A transformation without severance, without injuries, weakens commitment and stifles hope for renewal.

How can one understand the personal vetting, de-communization programs, tales of a plot by the nomenclature, and the hunt for secret service agents and their collaborators? The need for justice or a demand for revenge? The victory of a revolution without a revolution brings no satisfaction, the absence of any "cleansing" leads to collective

disenchantment. In the Soviet Union, a dissident was almost by definition an isolated person condemned to isolation, a person on the social margin. A heretic *par excellence*, often a Jew, risked being shut away in a psychiatric hospital. A medievalist often feels that history sometimes moves back and forth like a pendulum. In the satellite countries, people belonging to the opposition frequently received greater support from society, and were less isolated and less exposed to persecution. The idea of a civic society went hand-in-hand with that of apolitical politics. An attempt was made to create a certain social life separated from authority and the state. The civic society was supposed to protect individuals against the whims of the totalitarian state, and invest collective efforts in education, independent thought, and the circulation of ideas and information. Utopia, so far removed from the reality in which the oppressed societies lived and suffering from what the great Czech philosopher Jan Patočka described as “moral disarmament,” seemed to be developing in Poland: inside the system a strong movement with ten million members had formed, capable of survival despite repression, a movement that soon created underground publishing houses and universities, and which ultimately appeared as a partner in dialog with the authorities. Such a civic society that was able to withstand the struggle for freedom and opposition to authoritarian rule, suddenly seemed to collapse from a single blow in the face of the challenges of democracy; without reference to solidarity, the common good and moral values, it lost its effectiveness. That is how society’s ability to organize itself to perform tasks whose aims do not converge with the short-term interests or gains of individuals or groups erodes. The social and political stage of post-communism seems to be completely empty: political reality and political culture have yet to be created. Was the earlier civic society merely a Potemkin village?

However, it is even worse. This time, the dualism of society and the state, the Manichean division into “us” and “them,” prevents the formation of democratic customs. Moral discourse cannot be expressed convincingly in the language of politics. Given the difficulties of the transitional period and the sacrifices it requires, it would seem appropriate to refer to ties of solidarity. Paradoxically, in a political vacuum where there is no party that represents the people’s real interests, the idea of a civic society seems to echo the political landscape of communist days, when the call for national unity weakly concealed the totalitarian reality. Perhaps it is this political vacuum,

inevitable or maintained, that is responsible for the triumphant return of the ghosts of the past. Where there is no political forum at which interests are clearly articulated, a diluted, nationalist and populist discourse takes place. If there are no rivals, one seeks enemies: the political chessboard is empty.

In presenting here medieval hatred and the anxieties of our times, I have tried to pursue the same line: to stifle emotions, analyse them, doubt those things that appeared certain, and sometimes convince people to believe in something that is not certain. Placing an analysis of the Middle Ages and of today's times in the same framework of social history, I am aware of the difference between my actions and my competencies in both cases. A scholar's active engagement in politics may conflict with specific qualifications of a scholar. His task is to analyse the reality, seek the truth and relate it. Hannah Arendt, so careful about the independence of scholars and mistrustful when it comes to active participation in political life, says that he who relates the truth is destined to enter the world of politics to discover that he is right. To this I would add one more argument: when he has an opportunity to serve the truth.

A historian examining the past sometimes feels anachronistic when examining the present; he hesitates to confirm the utility of his knowledge for an understanding of today's times. He tells the truth about what has already happened, and asks questions about mankind. Perhaps he is entitled to think that by examining the people of the past, he might help the people of the present to understand the twists and turns of fortunes and of history.

Marc Bloch – Historian and Citizen

This is the text of a lecture which, on account of the author's absence, was read by Jacques Le Goff at a conference at the Sorbonne on 17 June 1989, to mark the hundredth birthday of Marc Bloch.

It is based on a Polish manuscript (in the possession of Hanna Zaremska, with a copy in the archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre). The author furnished the Polish version with notes which, edited and reviewed, have been added to this publication. The French text, somewhat altered in relation to the Polish version, is called "Marc Bloch: historien et résistant," *Annales ESC*, 41 (1986), pp. 1091–1105.

I am particularly moved to be speaking today. I have many reasons to express my gratitude before this audience here. I cannot express it in words, therefore I will merely say thank you that I can be here.

The hundredth birthday of Marc Bloch provides an opportunity to reflect upon the life and work of this great historian, one of the fathers of the "French prevalence" in world humanities, a precursor of modern social history and a personal pattern for a historian-citizen.

I am confident that allowing a Polish historian to speak on this occasion possesses a certain significance and justification. In Polish historical writings, rural history (which was Bloch's primary field of interest), from Joachim Lelewel, via Franciszek Bujak and Jan Rutkowski, all the way to Witold Kula, has occupied a privileged position. Two years after Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch founded the *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*, the first issue of *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* (The Annals of Economic and Social History), founded by Bujak (1875–1953) and Rutkowski (1866–1949), appeared. This involved the friendship and cooperation of two historians, an outline for interdisciplinary work, a desire to exceed the traditional epistemological boundaries of historiography, and a desire not to combine studies of the past with reflections on the present.

An exchange of correspondence took place between Bloch and Rutkowski, they reviewed each other's work, and Rutkowski collaborated on the *Annals*.

Marc Bloch's works were known in Poland, they provided inspiration, and after the war *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien* (*An Apology for History, or the Historian's Craft*) and *Société féodale* (*Feudal Society*) were translated into Polish. The influence of the *Annals* school on Polish historians after the war was so great that one can say that the best achievements of Polish historiography was inspired by it. Postwar generations of Polish historians were associated with it. I also wish to refer to my personal record. One of the first books on history that I read, apart from *Les villes du Moyen Age* ("Cities of the Middle Ages") by Henri Pirenne, was Bloch's *Feudal society*, after which the latest issues of *Annales* and Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean* defined me as a historian and showed me what history could be. Then it was time to read the "whole of Marc Bloch," other works of French historiography, and then, in 1956, came personal contact with a community among whom the thoughts of Bloch were ever present.

The Polish example of extolling Bloch and the *Annals* is one of many. One can see this from the number of translations of Bloch's works, especially *The Historian's Craft*, into various languages, and from the notes in publications on medieval history from all over the world: Bloch was ever present in them during the four decades after the war. And more importantly, his works are the inspiration of world historiography, the research issues in his works are being continued, and the questions he himself asked in his works or which he concluded from his works are still being asked. Naturally, the entire international historical confraternity is paying homage to Bloch on the hundredth anniversary of his birth.

The works of Marc Bloch are awaiting a historian who would analyse them in terms of the history of historiography, who would try to understand them, define their place in 20th-century historical literature, demonstrate their connection with the times in which they arose, specify their methodological patterns, and present their inspirations and aspirations.¹ I will not even try to outline such

¹ One can quote a few attempts at this: Ch.-E. Perrin, "L'œuvre historique de Marc Bloch," *Revue Historique*, 199 (1948), pp. 161–188; J. Stengers, "Marc Bloch et l'histoire," *Annales ESC*, 8 (1953), pp. 329–337; and numerous commemorative

a program; I will merely reflect the message and topical nature of Bloch's works.

I shall do this by referring first of all to the three great works of Marc Bloch: *French Rural History*, *Feudal Society* and *The Royal Touch*. I must express two reservations right away. The order in which these works appeared is without doubt important for Bloch's intellectual biography, but one can leave this aside by considering the main features of his entire works. Each of his books separately can be considered to a certain degree outmoded or *dépassé*, "overtaken" by the research of ensuing decades, including Bloch's own later works, the studies of his students, and the research that continued the issues undertaken by the master from Strasbourg and Paris. However, we intend to treat these three books as *sui generis* documents, as a historiographical testimony.

Les caractères originaux was written to order. The Institute of Comparative Research into Civilization (*Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning*) in Oslo invited Marc Bloch to deliver a series of lectures which he turned into a book in 1931. Presenting the rural history of France in 250 pages, even if the title suggested "original characters," was a bold undertaking. In the introduction, Bloch wrote: "A historian who is aware of the difficulties of his craft – Fustel de Coulanges considered them the most difficult of all – will not decide without hesitation to describe in outline, in several hundred pages, a very long evolution that is not in itself clear, and in addition not sufficiently known."² But that is the very reason why the undertaking was so tempting: it entailed a broad subject, a long historical process, a topic requiring originality and broad interpretations, and a synthesis that would not cover up the white blotches of ignorance but, on the contrary, would fill them fully with substance. The risk paid off and the undertaking was crowned with success.

articles and introductions to the works of Bloch in various languages (see in particular: C. Fink, in: M. Bloch, *Memories of War, 1914–1915* (Ithaca–London, 1980); in the introductions to the Polish editions, by: W. Kula, in: M. Bloch, *Pochwała historii, czyli o zawodzie historyka*, transl. M. Jedlicka (Warsaw, 1960), pp. 5–21; and by F.A. Grabski, in: M. Bloch, *Spółczesność feudalne*, transl. E. Bąkowska (Warsaw, 1981), pp. 5–44. Cf. also: A. Burguière, "Histoire d'une histoire: la naissance des 'Annales'," *Annales ESC*, 34 (1979), pp. 1347–1359; and J. Revel, "Histoire et sciences sociales: les paradigmes des 'Annales'," *Annales ESC*, 34 (1979), pp. 1360–1376.

² M. Bloch, *Les caractères originaux de l'histoire rurale française* (Paris, 1952), p. VII.

The author starts his book by presenting the history of rural settlements, the main stages of land husbandry. Next, under the title "rural life," he discusses the basic features of the rural system in France; in other words, the principles of tilling and field enclosures. In the next two chapters, he discusses the development of seigneurage from the early Middle Ages, via the crisis in the 14th–15th centuries and the dusk of the Middle Ages, all the way to the French revolution. The next chapter describes social groups or, to be more exact, family farms, rural communities and the fragmentation of rural populations. The penultimate chapter deals with the beginnings of the agricultural revolution; in other words, the disappearance of collective benefits and collective pasturages, the technical breakthrough and the spread of individual farming. The book ends with a short chapter whose title reveals the author's program: "Continuation: The Past and the Present."

This list of chapters not only reveals just an excellent outline of rural history and a presentation of the historical origins of France's medieval rural landscape, but also offers a series of possible interpretations whose accuracy, sometimes when asking questions and sometimes when proposing solutions, would be confirmed by later research. Here are two examples: Bloch regards the crisis in the 14th–15th centuries as a key date in rural history. This sounds banal, or at least it may seem so to the modern historian. But in 1929? Wilhelm Abel's first work on the history of agricultural development did not appear until 1936, and the great debate on the crisis, or crises, in the 14th and 15th centuries, or on the agricultural depression of the late Middle Ages in which medievalists from all over the world took part, did not gather momentum until the Congress of Historical Studies in Rome in 1950. One would like to think that Marc Bloch appreciates the significance of this critique. He writes: "The crisis with the incomes of landowners closed the Middle Ages and opened modern times."³ He points out that this was a time of the "collapse of rural areas and depopulation." He believes this was a price that had to be paid for the "economic success of the 13th century."⁴ Historical research seems to confirm the accuracy of this hasty hypothesis which may appear as a stylistic formula. But the author points out that the collapse of rural areas and population increases caused a greater density of people in

³ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

towns and cities, which created favourable conditions for the spread of disease. Elsewhere, he says that the process of rural collapse and the acquisition of new arable land reached the limits of natural (i.e. ecological) possibilities. Apart from the demise of landowners' fortunes, he describes changes to the situation of the rural population which had to suffer the outcome of the Hundred Years' War,⁵ but also reaped far-reaching benefits from these countries' renewal. Reviewing in 1935 the work of Miss Page on the estates belonging to the abbeys of Crowland, Marc Bloch opposes overestimating the economic effects of the plague: "Can one indeed talk only of plagues? Are we not dealing with a deeper and more universal crisis which was felt simultaneously throughout Europe?"⁶ The prophetic nature of these statements is clear.

The second example is the "feudal reaction" which Bloch regards as an answer, or one of the answers, to the above crisis, as well as a significant phenomenon of later rural history. "The fall in the value of rents occurred on a European scale," he writes. "Throughout Europe, one observes the efforts of seigneurs to restore their fortunes. In Germany, England and Poland, the same economic drama occurred as in France, and presented the same problems. But in each of these countries, different social and political conditions determined different paths of action to save threatened interests."⁷ In this way, the varying developments of the agrarian system in modern-day Europe are contrasted. On the one hand, there is eastern Germany and Poland, with special reference to the seigniorial class, in other words the "Prussian model "of the countries east of the River Elbe: Bloch leaves this model of development aside. In the development of the agrarian system in England, he perceives a model similar to that in Eastern Europe, an increase in the number of farmsteads, but he also considers the abolition of the system of permanent land leases at a fixed rent important, as this enabled rents to be adapted to current economic conditions. In France, such a path of development was impossible because the landowning class there did not have the same political force and social prevalence as the gentry in England or of the Junkers in Prussia. The French gentry resorted to other means

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶ M. Bloch, *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 7 (1935), p. 323.

⁷ *Id.*, *Les caractères*, p. 131.

and restructured their domains at the expense of common land and peasant leases – doing so without the use of force, or at least without visible force, but using their cunningness and money instead.

The picture of this change of great landownership in modern-day France presented in *Les caractères originaux* is rather hazy and uncertain because the subject-matter was virtually uncharted – for the 16th century, Bloch could only refer to the excellent study of Paul Raveau, which itself only covered a single timeframe, leaving the following century virtually untouched (“in rural history, the 17th century remains *terra incognita*,” Bloch wrote in a letter to René Baehrel in 1942⁸). When making a historical comparison, one should also take into account the Mediterranean countries, of which Bloch says nothing. But nevertheless the issue remained – it was preceded by detailed research, repeated after the appearance of the classic regional studies into France’s rural history. The debate on the structural crisis of the 17th century also highlighted the significance of this issue. Nevertheless, this subject remains topical and, “in connection with the great survey into the European nobility” initiated by Bloch in the *Annales*, shows that apart from the different paths of development in individual parts of Europe, there was also a similarity and convergence of this development which invites one to take a fresh look at the problem of “agrarian dualism” in Europe.

There are many such original concepts and appropriate hypotheses in Bloch’s book. However, I have the impression that one has to seek the true significance of his work elsewhere. The charm of reading this book in my youth was the way in which Marc Bloch discussed the rural landscape – in the entire book, but especially in the 45 pages of Chapter 2, entitled “Agrarian Life.” After its publication, Bloch wrote that “half of it is a record of rural society, stating its past line by line. “This great palimpsest of land and fields awaits its palaeography.”⁹ But he himself had an excellent understanding of this palaeography, surprising for a man of the city.

Bloch engaged himself in rural history from the very start of his career as a historian. His thesis, under the supervision of Christian Pfister, was devoted to the lands of the chapter of Notre Dame in

⁸ M. Bloch, “Deux lettres,” *Annales ESC*, 2 (1947), p. 365.

⁹ M. Bloch, “Blanche de Castile et les serfs du chapitre de Paris,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 6 (1934), p. 483.

the 13th century, and his debut as a writer was an article about the intervention of Queen Blanca of Castile in a dispute between the chapter of Paris and its subjects in the middle of the 13th century;¹⁰ the subject reported to the Thiers Foundation in 1908 was the demise of serfdom in the Paris region. In his justification for the subject, the young *normalien* referred to Karl Bücher's theory of a medieval "economic revolution" which marked the appearance of regional markets with an urban center, considering this an important part of the release from serfdom and the spread of monetary leases. The Foundation sponsored the subject: in it Bloch spent the years 1909–1912, which in 1920 resulted in his doctoral thesis *Rois et serfs – un chapitre d'histoire capétienne* ("Kings and serfs – a chapter in Capetian history"). One can say with certainty that Bloch's preliminary interest belonged to the tradition of French rural historians of whom Febvre mercifully wrote in 1932 that "their peasants plow only with capitularies, using documents as a plow."¹¹ But Marc Bloch shattered the classic framework of this issue, seeking a human element and referring to the old master of French social history, Fustel de Coulanges, and his perception of history as a "lesson on human societies." He referred in particular to the experience and issues of *géographie humaine*, that great invention of French university thinking, and to the synthetic ambitions of Henri Berr and his periodical. It is in the *Revue de Synthèse* in 1912–1913 that he published the monograph *Ile-de-France*, taking a view of the issues in both their historical and a geographical context.

Decisive however was direct contact with the rural landscape. Charles Edmond Perrin believed that it was in 1919, during a joint trip to the Vosges, that Marc Bloch progressed from an archival knowledge of rural areas to direct contact with the problems of the agricultural system, as if he was drawing a system of fields visible from the summits.¹² But Bloch himself has left a clear testimony of this matter. Recalling his rural experiences during the First World War, he writes: "There is no doubt that the years in uniform gave more than one city slicker a greater opportunity to delve into the subject of

¹⁰ Id., "Blanche de Castile et les serfs du chapitre de Paris," *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France*, 38 (1911), pp. 224–272; id., *Mélanges historiques* (Paris, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 462–490.

¹¹ Lucien Febvre himself recalled these words in his *Avertissement au lecteur*, which was the foreword to the edition of *Les caractères originaux* in 1952 (p. IV).

¹² M. Bloch, *Mélanges*, vol. 1, p. XI.

nature and farming than short vacations spent in the country.”¹³ In any case, there is no doubt that Bloch acquired an excellent knowledge of the paleography of field systems and was able to use this knowledge in his socio-historical studies. The maps which he added to his book, and an excellent selection of fragments of field division plans from the 18th century, are something exceptional. As one of the great surveys in the *Annales*, Marc Bloch launched unprecedented documentary and analytical work; he returned to this topic constantly, and the article on cadastral plans published in 1943 is one of his last academic works.

The enclosure and cadastral plans enabled Bloch to present anew one of the chief problems of European rural history, and perhaps of European history; namely, the shape and structure of fields. Odd as this may seem, there was an academic conflict on this issue in which nationalist bias, encroaching upon the birth of European civilization, played a part. We know that when in the 1890s Frederic Seebohm asked Fustel de Coulanges whether there was a system of open strips of land in France, he received a negative answer: one can say that this was contrary to the obvious truth, but it was simply absent from the archives; it was necessary to find it by observing the world and perusing contemporary topographic documentation. The three types of fields in France which Bloch presented – open, irregular and enclosed – indicated not only that the process of enclosures was also known in France, but also placed, regardless of the change later brought by historians and geographers, the rural landscape and its deep entrenchment in customs and habits, in a historical dimension. There is hardly a better example of long-term studies than reading the enclosure and cadastral plans proposed by Marc Bloch.

Rural history as perceived by Bloch was a history of the land and of the people, equally sensitive to collective psychology and to material civilization. He treats the major problem of farming techniques, crop rotation and farming implements with the greatest attention; we know that several articles by Bloch contributed to an innovative and pioneering program in agricultural techniques.¹⁴ With a mixture

¹³ Review of the work of R. Blais entitled “La forêt et la campagne,” *Annales d’Histoire Sociale*, 2 (1940), p. 165.

¹⁴ Cf. M. Bloch, “Avènement et conquête du moulin à eau,” in: id., *Mélanges*, vol. 2, pp. 800–821; id., “Les transformations des techniques comme problème de psychologie collective,” in: *ibid.*, pp. 791–799; id., “Les inventions médiévales,”

of irritation and amusement, he once wrote of unerring historians with agricultural experience and a knowledge of farming practices who leave this subject aside when writing about local history: “One would think they consider this lowly labour unworthy of the domain of Clio and that they pass by heaps of manure, pinching their nostrils in shame.”¹⁵ One can say that Bloch was the opposite of these, for he loved the soil. Rural history attracted more and more of his attention. On the eve of the First World War, he launched a series of publications called “Les paysans et la terre.” In talks during the war he announced a periodical devoted to rural history.

The second book by Marc Bloch on which I wish to dwell is *Feudal Society*, which was also written to order. Bloch was meant to write several books for the series “*L’Evolution de l’Humanité*,” conceived by Henri Berr on the eve of the First World War and realized since 1920; he only managed to write this one. However, this response to the order concealed a conscious choice: this is indicated in a simple glance at the changing lists of titles for the collection planned by Berr. Two volumes of the treatise on medieval economic history – *Les origines de l’économie européenne* and *De l’économie urbaine au capitalisme financier* – suggesting a link to Perenne – were associated with the name of Marc Bloch at an early stage, whereas *Feudal Society* appears late. It is also enough to look at the book titles reviewed by Bloch, and at the subject of his research into rural history, in order to realize his great interest in feudal institutions and bonds. As early as 1912 he announced an article on the forms of severing fealty in old French law,¹⁶ whilst later studies into serfdom in medieval Europe as well as many arguments in *Les caractères originaux*, attest to the permanence of his interests. At the same time as *Les caractères originaux* there appeared in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* an article by Bloch about European feudalism.¹⁷ Associated articles on feudalism outside Europe no doubt fuelled the

in: *ibid.*, p. 822–832; *id.*, “Problèmes d’histoire des techniques,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 4 (1932), pp. 482–486.

¹⁵ *Id.*, “La vie rurale: problèmes de jadis et de naguère,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 2 (1930), pp. 97–98.

¹⁶ *Id.*, “Les formes de la rupture de l’hommage dans l’ancien droit féodal,” *Nouvelle Revue Historique du Droit Français et Etranger*, 36 (1912), pp. 141–177 (reprinted in: *id.*, *Mélanges*, vol. 1, pp. 189–209).

¹⁷ *Id.*, *European Feudalism*, *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York, 1935), vol. 6, pp. 553–559.

imagination of the French historian, just as the works of Otto Hintze or Walther Kienast on German literature or those of Paul Vinogradoff or Frank Merry Stenton on English literature did.¹⁸ *La Société féodale* by Joseph Calmette was rather a negative reference.¹⁹

In his works, Marc Bloch presents the main outlines of feudal society throughout the civilization of European feudalism between the middle of the 9th century and the first decades of the 13th century. During the 50 years since the book's publication, there has been fresh research that has altered this picture somewhat, but there have also been historiographical or ideological debates primarily on the terminology itself: feudalism as a formation, the feudal manner of production, the model of feudal economy. Let us try to leave aside these differences of opinion about terminology and historical philosophy, which had no meaning in Bloch's thinking. Bloch investigates and presents the formation in Western Europe (this includes the German lands) of a network of interdependencies. He shows not only their evolution, but also the changes wrought by the division into the first and the second *âge féodal* in the 11th century. He writes: "European feudalism, born in a society with very weak cohesion, where trade was negligible and money scarce, changed markedly as soon as human associations developed, and the circulation of commodities and money assumed a rapid pace."²⁰ In this way, the problem of ties between people is obviously connected with material life and economic conditions, but is treated independently.

This does not mean that Marc Bloch omits the problem of ownership and of land when describing this society, which is after all the outcome of agrarian structures. In fact, he shows that the soil is an object or an instrument in producing dependencies, and sometimes even a bearer of them. But most of all, demonstrating that dependence lies in Europe's social climate at that time, he displays in the same category as vassal relations the "associations between the lower social

¹⁸ O. Hintze, "Wesen und Verbreitung des Feudalismus," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 20 (1929); W. Kienast, "Lehnrecht und Staatsgewalt im Mittelalter," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 158 (1938); P. Vinogradoff, "Feudalism," in: *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 3 (1924); F.M. Stenton, *The First Century of English Feudalism, 1066–1166* (Oxford, 1932); id., "The Changing Feudalism of the Middle Ages," *History*, 19 (1934–1935).

¹⁹ J. Calmette, *La société féodale* (Paris, 1923).

²⁰ Bloch, *Feudal Society*, p. 152.

classes.” Here he finds the problem of seigneurage: “At a lower level, relationships found a natural framework in a group which, much older than vassalage, turned out to be much more permanent: this was seigneurage.”²¹ He does not treat seigneurage as a feudal institution, nor does he consider it necessary to stress that the greatest expansion of seigneurage occurred during the development of vassalage. In 1928, he wrote that “the institution of seigneurage is becoming understood only as one of the elements of a social system based on caretaker relationships.”²² Ten years later, he stressed the fact that seigneurage preceded the feudal society of the 9th–12th centuries and even survived where the strongest characteristic features of *féodalité* had lost their strength. Let us quote another sentence from which ends the first volume of *Feudal Society*: “Thus, the type of social organization that is characterized by a particular climate of human relationships expressed itself not only in new creations, but also colours, as if in a prism, that which it has inherited from the past and is conveying to succeeding eras.”²³

Let us carefully note this reference to “colours”; to the particular climate (Bloch calls it *tonalité*). This is not a literary style, but a way of understanding the past. It is difficult to summarize the richness of the thoughts expressed in the two volumes, the excellent outline of the last invasions and the thesis on the disappearance of invasion as a condition for the development of European feudal society, an analysis of fiefdom and vassalage, the role of force and of contracts in the development of feudal relations, the consolidation of aristocratic structures and the evolution of structures of authority. Throughout this discourse one observes a certain global trend: to encapsulate the most profound and fundamental relations that bind a society of civilization. It is a dream of romantic historiography to reconstruct the past in its integral dimension, but subject to a process of critique. Is it possible? Bloch is aware of the risk. When analysing the ideal of knighthood and court culture, he asks: “Is it worth struggling to explain something which, with our current knowledge of history, seems impossible to explain? Here we have in mind the *tonus* of

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

²² M. Bloch, “Classification et choix des faits en histoire économique: réflexions de méthode,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 1 (1929), p. 257.

²³ *Id.*, *Feudal Society*, p. 428.

a given culture and its magnetic properties.”²⁴ In this sentence there is no doubt about the justification for seeking this global structure, but there is an awareness of our poor knowledge of man.

Therefore, feudal society is connected by a certain general structure whose strength and domination set the limits in time of this model: individual elements and individual institutions of it may exceed these limits, appear in earlier eras and may endure when the entire social construction has lost its strength and ceased to function. Such an understanding of a certain society provides the book with an excellent introduction to the living conditions, apparently so far removed from the subject that even Henri Barr and Lucien Febvre have their doubts. And this presentation of the economic climate, the manner of perception and thought, collective memory, common law and case law was linked to the conviction that social history is closely linked to the economy and civilization, and provides that this link is perceived not as a cause and effect, or through the prism of determination, but in relation to human behaviour, social psychology. One could say that Bloch perceives and observes society and civilization of the “feudal age” in terms of synchrony, while at the same time seeking unifying features. This mode of thinking suits the formula of Fernand Braudel well, whereby society is a “set of sets,” for it lays its emphasis on a pluralism of structures and hierarchies in a given society. Braudel also perceives the preponderance of a single structure or hierarchy: “If we could define a coherent ‘*société globale*’, would this not simply mean that one hierarchy had succeeded in asserting itself over society as whole, without necessarily destroying the others?”²⁵

Let us proceed to the third book, *Royal Touch*.²⁶ It has in recent years been recognized as Bloch’s masterpiece. Georges Duby wrote in 1974 that this book allows Bloch to be regarded as the “inventor” of the history of mentality,²⁷ while Jacques Le Goff, in an excellent study written in 1983 (included in the introduction to the new edition)

²⁴ Ibid., p. 464.

²⁵ F. Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Centuries*, vol. 2: *The Wheels of Commerce*, transl. S. Reynolds (New York, 1979), p. 465; cf. A. Gurevich, *Déterminismes sociaux et liberté humaine* (Paris, 1963), p. 261 ff.

²⁶ M. Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, transl. J.E. Anderson (London, 1973).

²⁷ G. Duby, Préface, in: M. Bloch, *Apologie pour l’histoire ou métier d’historien* (7th ed.: Paris, 1974), p. 15.

showed this book's place in the historical thoughts of Marc Bloch, and performed a critical review of it in the light of the new research.²⁸ This allows us to be concise.

The book's subject, the supernatural power attributed to kings in France and England, was influenced considerably by German historical literature. The study mentioned earlier about the forms of severing homage, written in 1912, reveals Bloch's reading of works on German ethnological law and history of law. While staying in Berlin, Marc Bloch attended a seminar by the famous historian of religion Adolf von Harnack, while his discourse with the Hellenist Louis Gernet and the synologist Marcel Granet, who had also studied at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (Gernet was two years his senior), and who were also involved with the Thiers Foundation, no doubt maintained Bloch's interest in the history of culture. In the introduction to his book, Bloch recalls that he got the idea of investigating royal power and its healing properties a few years previously while reading the book by Théodore and Denys Godefroy, *Le cérémonial français* (1649), which contained documents on the healing powers of French kings. He became fascinated with this subject (as early as 1919, before defending his doctoral thesis on "kings and serfs," he had told Charles Edmond Perrin that he would deal with this subject), though it may have appeared odd. He was convinced that it was worth following this twisting path. After a while he also noticed that it was leading rather a long way. He realized that one could create history out of that which had hitherto been considered a mere anecdote;²⁹ and political history at that, because he considered his work as an introduction to the political history of Europe.

Bloch recalls that he wanted to give the book a second subtitle: *Histoire d'un miracle*, because its subject is a miracle: The kings of France and England healed scrofula by a touch of their hands. Bloch relates and analyses all of the evidence he succeeded in obtaining during his extensive quest. He places the beginnings of this phenomenon in the 11th century in the case of French kings, and in the 12th century for English kings (the latest research moves this timeframe forward by one century in both cases), and its gradual disappearance can be observed during the 18th and 19th centuries. Thus, he measures a phenomenon

²⁸ J. Le Goff, Preface, in: Bloch, *The Royal Touch*.

²⁹ Bloch, Introduction to *The Royal Touch*.

that extended over a long period of time, scrupulously examining the, let us say, medievalist dimension and combining it with a sensitivity to gestures, customs and words. In this combination of classic evolution and new issues, one can consider *The Royal Touch* the forerunner of the French school of history.

I think one should correctly understand Marc Bloch's announcement that he is engaging in studies of political history. After all, the centre of attention is authority and the complex and ambiguous association between the sacred and the profane, expressing the conflict between the *sacerdotium* and the *imperium*. The basic issue of analysis arises from the Durkheim school; Bloch considers a "collective imagination" on authority, on the supernatural, on miracles. And he proves that this is what constitutes a study of political history, raised above detailed facts, the history of individual rulers and their deeds examined from the roots, the ideology of power and relations between the rulers and the ruled.

Compared to such an intellectual priority, the conclusion seems surprisingly flat: we are dealing with either a collective illusion or – here Bloch refers to his thoughts on the mechanisms of rumour during World War I – a collective paranoia. In his book, Bloch writes: "For all religious phenomena, there are two traditional explanations. One – call it Voltairian, if you like – prefers to see the fact under study as the conscious work of an individual thought very sure of what it is doing. The other, on the contrary, looks rather for the expression of social forces of an obscure and profound nature; this might well be called the romantic approach."³⁰ He suggested combining these two explanations, indicating that they are not at all mutually contradictory. However, in his conclusion, did he not speak out in favour of one of these methods, the first one? As a result of this, this book, excellent for both narration and analysis, would lead to failure. One should seek the reason for this in the lack of support from other sciences about man. The ethnology of James George Frazer and Lucien Lévy-Bruhl did not provide sufficient support. Social psychology also did not provide the necessary conceptual tools, even though Bloch had received valuable inspiration from Charles Blondel and Maurice Halbwachs. Bloch's preference to think in terms of social groups did not help him in his interpretation in this case. Instead, it presented

³⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

him with a problem of human nature. Reviewing a work by Halbwachs on suicide in 1931, he wrote of the need to take into account the biological factor: “for here we are dealing with a certain order of research where both historians and sociologists, who tend to neglect this, are unable to overcome the attendant difficulties [...], perhaps the physiological immobility of man is one of the most significant issues of our research.”³¹

A historian pursuing these paths of thinking needed the support of disciplines other than his own. The shortage of conclusions was the price of pioneering work. Sciences on the subject of man contain a certain interdependence of paradigms. Presenting these three books may be viewed as the presentation of three spheres of interests by Marc Bloch: economic history, social history and the history of mentality. But this I think is a false impression, for each of these books contains a mixture of plans in an effort to grasp the human dimension of historical processes. In the plans of the enclosure of fields, Bloch perceives a social history, and at the same time indicates the religious problem of organizing space (referring to the great Polish sociologist from the Durkheim school, Stefan Czarnowski).³² Elsewhere, considering the problem of the history of money, he writes: “The economic history of medieval money, or rather its social history, is still waiting to be written [...]. That economic history can only unfold itself if is also a social history, i.e. if it takes into account the fact that human society is composed of various groups whose contrasting lifestyles are expressed in their financial practices.”³³ Bloch also repeats many times that great research into economic history must be social. In *Feudal Society*, he seeks the unity of an investigated society in a common cultural climate, and criticizes Georg von Below for ignoring the fact that institutions and associations between people are naturally rooted in the *mentalité commune* (common mentality).³⁴ To understand old society, it seems to him necessary to study the “ways of feeling and thinking” and the material basis of social groups. *The Royal Touch*

³¹ M. Bloch, “Un symptôme social: le suicide,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 3 (1931), p. 590.

³² Id., *Les caractères*, p. 65, fn. 57.

³³ Id., “Le problème de l’or au Moyen Age,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 5 (1933), p. 34 (reprinted in: id., *Mélanges*, vol. 2, p. 865).

³⁴ Id., “Un tempérament: Georg von Below,” *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 3 (1931), p. 556.

shows to a lesser degree that meeting point of research domains and plans, though Bloch does refer to the history of medicine and to the history of beliefs and superstitions. Let us not forget that the history of a certain miracle was an intrusion by the historical problem onto the territory of privileged history, for as Marc Bloch claims, the program of historical thinking possesses a global nature. He concurs with Fustel de Coulanges that history is a “science of human societies.”

I have talked about Marc Bloch’s thoughts, adhering to the scope of his works. It would be the right thing to present this heritage, but a huge part of it remains scattered. The reviews that made up a considerable part of Bloch’s work as a historian and which provide unusual evidence of his intellectual horizons still await a publisher. Following in Bloch’s footsteps, I have avoided shaking the philosophical base of his research into the past, because he himself avoided this issue, even in his methodological essay; he preferred to talk of a historian’s craft, of a “workshop” and historians, explaining this by his lack of a philosophical education. Nevertheless, understanding his thinking requires the reader to place oneself in the intellectual climate of the times.

Marc Bloch embarks upon historical work at a time when the paradigm of history in conformity with the teachings of Leopold von Ranke dominated European historiography, and was also present in great methodological debates. Graduation in 1904 from the Ecole Normale Supérieure, to which Bloch belonged, naturally established itself in the debate on the teaching of social sciences and on their epistemological status, in which Paul Lacombe, Charles Seignobos, François Simiand and Paul Mantoux³⁵ took part in the early years of this century. Acquainting himself with historiography, the young French historian joined the famous debate on methods (*Methodenstreit*), and a debate on the social history program of Karl Lamprecht. He learned history in a general state of *mise en question*, but he was also eager to

³⁵ M. Lacombe, *De l'histoire considered comme science* (Paris, 1894); Ch. Seignobos, *La méthode historique appliquée aux sciences sociales* (Paris, 1901); F. Simiand, “Méthode historique et science sociale,” *Revue de Synthèse Historique*, 6 (1905), pp. 1–22, 129–157 (reprinted in *Annales ESC*, 15 [1960], pp. 83–119); P. Mantoux, “Histoire et sociologie,” *Revue de Synthèse Historique*, 7 (1904), pp. 121 ff.; cf. G. Gemelli, “Tra due crisi: la formazione del metodo delle Scienze storico-sociali nella Francia repubblicana,” *Atti dell'Accademia delle scienze dell'Istituto di Bologna*, 66 (1977–1978).

bring history to the status of a science and was full of enthusiasm for the historical synthesis promoted by Henri Berr.³⁶

We have already mentioned the influence of the *géographie humaine* school. However, the sociology of Emil Durkheim played the leading role in forming Bloch's intellectual personality. Bloch recalled this years later in article about Simiand: "I bow in memory of all those who, in certain volumes of the *Année Sociologique* found one of the best tools of their apprenticeship in the humanities."³⁷ The results of this "apprenticeship" can be seen not only in the book on royal miracle-workers, but in all of Bloch's books, in the way he interprets historical phenomena, and in his assessment of the *Antibegrifflichkeit* of German history. This Durkheimish *parti pris* by Marc Bloch contradicted the chief trends in the *Revue de Synthèse* community, and when the *Annales* were founded it also contrasted with the reluctance of the publisher, Max Leclerc, to regard sociology as an uncertain science that was only just being formed,³⁸ and it also set Bloch apart from Lucien Febvre, who had distanced himself somewhat from the "sociologist" in history.³⁹

In *Apologie pour l'histoire* as well, Bloch reckons with the school of Durkheim. He underscores its importance for historians, who it taught to "enhance their analysis, attack issues more sharply and, if I may say so, not think in such simple terms."⁴⁰ He indicates that in its aim to extract the principles of "rational knowledge on the basis of the 'evolution of mankind'," the Durkheim school neglected important aspects of life. He does not hesitate to say that the thinking of Durkheim already belongs to the past, that it is *dépassée*.

³⁶ Cf. J. Revel, "Berr Henri," in: *La nouvelle histoire* (Paris, 1978), pp. 78–79; A.F. Grabski, "Teoria syntezy historycznej – Henri Berr," in: id., *Kształty historii* (Łódź, 1985), pp. 366–413.

³⁷ M. Bloch, "Le salaire et les fluctuations économiques à longue période," *Revue Historique*, 173 (1934), p. 2 (reprinted in: id., *Mélanges*, vol. 2, p. 891).

³⁸ P. Leuillot, "Aux origines des *Annales* d'Histoire Economique et Sociale (1928). Contribution à l'historiographie française," in: *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel*, vol. 2 (Toulouse, 1973), p. 320.

³⁹ Cf. L. Febvre, "La société féodale: une synthèse critique," *Annales d'Histoire Sociale*, 3 (1941), reprinted id., *Pour une histoire à part entière* (Paris, 1962); and id., "Histoire, économie et statistique," *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*, 2 (1930), pp. 581–590, where the author recalls the influence of the Durkheim school and of *L'Année Sociologique* on his generation.

⁴⁰ Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, p. XV.

The response to the crisis in historical thought, which is implicit in Bloch's works, is this: first, social history; second, comparative history; third, critical method. Let us say right away that none of these three cases involve the domain of history in the sense of the past or in the sense of discourse, but the manner of understanding historical works.

"We attach importance to the word 'social' next to 'economic'" – Marc Bloch wrote in 1928 about the title of a new periodical, and pointed out the need to research society's organization and group structures.⁴¹ These words conveyed importance, for at first the periodical firmly placed economics in the forefront of its tasks (Bloch even suggested the title "L'Évolution économique"). The changes to the periodical's name underline the increasing significance of the social domain: the first change – to *Annales d'Histoire Sociale* – took place ten years after the periodical's foundation, before the impact of the war years. As we have seen, Bloch sought a social dimension in every sphere of history. "If research into economic history is to reach its subject, it must be social," he wrote in connection with the thesis of Alfons Dopsch.⁴² Likewise, commenting on Johan Huizinga's book, he noted that one cannot talk of the psychological climate of the "autumn of the Middle Ages" without referring to social groups.⁴³

Alien to any monism in interpreting historical processes – though he noted with interest the ideas of Richard Lefebvre des Noëttes on the impact of transport technology on the development of civilization and was sensitive to the overall message of Marxism – Marc Bloch performed only one reduction of a historical phenomenon: to man. His famous sentence, that a historian is like a werewolf searching for a human body, is not just a catchy turn of phrase but an intellectual project. It signified a reference to the biological and psychological reality. The reference to the former only was limited, though Bloch was aware of the importance of the problem. We have already mentioned this, but the dialogue between history and biology remains difficult to this day. However, a reduction to collective psychology or mentality – what is reduction anyway? – is a component of Bloch's thinking

⁴¹ Leuillot, *Aux origines*, p. 318.

⁴² M. Bloch, "Économie-nature ou économie-argent, un pseudo-dilemme," *Annales d'Histoire Sociale*, 1 (1939), p. 16 (reprinted in: id., *Mélanges*, vol. 2, p. 877).

⁴³ See id., *Revue Historique*, 169 (1929), p. 399.

that grew with time.⁴⁴ He wrote in 1939 that relating the history of serfdom means presenting the “history of a certain sociopsychological concept, namely the loss of freedom.”⁴⁵ However, in *Apologie pour l'histoire*, stressing the mingling of human fortune with the physical world, he professes the independence of the world of human issues and says of the Black Death in the middle of the 14th century: “The plague was only able to spread so fast because of certain social conditions, psychological ones, in fact, and its mental effects can only be explained by detailed characteristics of the collective psyche.”⁴⁶ Historical research of our times distributes the biological and the socio-psychological components more evenly, nevertheless it fulfils Bloch’s anthropocentric message as a program of social history.

Here and there, Bloch indicates particular social problems in history, but usually this involved adding to the field of observation things that were not there before. “Historians have learned to seek their dishes in the kitchen,” said Eileen Power, in her lecture on medieval history as a social study, thus quoting a saying by Lord Acton.⁴⁷ This also signified a postulate to investigate structures that join and divide people, and examine societies and social groups: this was a program of profound social history. Bloch shared Lucien Febvre’s conviction that “social history is the same as history in general.”⁴⁸ For Marc Bloch, reference to comparative history was both a theoretical program and a practical lesson in thinking and writing about history. The book about royal miracle workers is a comparison of England and France. *Les caractères originaux* arose out of a comparison between England and the continent and out of reflections on linguistics (Antoine Meillet’s aim to grasp the *originalité*). He compares the English manor and the French seigneurage in a separate paper which developed into a posthumous book. For Bloch, comparative history of European societies was not merely a proposal for an academic career, but also an issue for research, a certain way of thinking about the Middle Ages and about France. In his speech at the Congress of Historical Sciences in Oslo in 1928, he expressed his views on applying the

⁴⁴ Id., *Mélanges*, vol. 1, p. 355.

⁴⁵ Id., *Economie-nature*, pp. 15–16.

⁴⁶ Id., *The Historian’s Craft*, p. 101.

⁴⁷ E. Power, “On Medieval History as a Social Study,” *Economica*, Feb. 1934, pp. 13–29.

⁴⁸ L. Febvre, *Combats pour l’histoire* (Paris, 1953), p. 20.

comparative method, saying that this should be used to disclose not only similarities, but also differences, and to determine the features of a given society, which makes sense only when one compares societies that neighbour each other in time and space. The comparison then becomes a divining rod, showing that we are facing a problem, but also allowing us to draw up a meaningful research profile. But Bloch also reaches for comparisons that are less specific but more universal. He compares European feudalism with Asian feudalism; he reaches for James George Frazer, considering the magic aspects of royal power; and he considers the end of the European invasions in contrast with the turmoil caused by the Siamese expansion into Indochina. Even if he talks of comparative history as a *discipline toute scientifique*, he has in mind the kind of reorganization of a historian's work and discourse that will provide results capable of comparison.

Contrasting the theoretical abstinence of idiographism with the requirement to understand phenomena, societies and civilizations, Marc Bloch does not reach for the program of Wilhelm Dilthey – *verstehen* and *comprendre* only possess lexicographic similarity – but remains within the bounds of French positivism and the thinking of Auguste Comte.⁴⁹ For the prime assumption in thinking in the early years of this century was the conviction that the same logic of learning applies to both nature and people. That is why Bloch resorted so often to metaphors referring to the exact sciences, embryology, physics or medicine. He regards the changes taking place in the sphere of exact sciences under the influence of the relativity theory as a reason to bring the natural sciences, with their certainty and precision, closer to human sciences, which acquire certainty as a result of the development of critical thinking. The point is most of all to exclude error and lies and reach the truth, and the best pages of *Apologie pour l'histoire* are devoted to this. Here Bloch perceives the originality of the humanities compared to natural studies. He wrote about this in 1934 thus: "A critique of sources is a faithful tool of the humanities, and because it is contrary to the natural sciences it is an original instrument of our experience."⁵⁰ He gave the search for the truth a certain moral dimension, treating it as an important value. In Fougères during

⁴⁹ Cf. G.G. Iggers, "Die *Annales*" und ihre Kritiker. Probleme moderner französischer Sozialgeschichte," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 219 (1974), p. 580.

⁵⁰ Bloch, *Mélanges*, vol. 2, p. 913.

the first years of the war, he completed his praise for the method of critique with words full of optimism: “History is entitled to include among its most permanent achievements the fact that by producing the tools of its trade, it opened before man a new path to the truth, and therefore towards justice.”⁵¹

These words lead one to reflect not only on the place of history and of historians in public life, but also on one more testimony which should be placed side-by-side with his books: the testimony of Marc Bloch’s death. Here I am broaching a delicate topic where silence has the greatest and most dynamic message. Here we have the problem of Marc Bloch’s character, and one should look at a historian’s biography from the angle of his final drama: the method of retrogression which he professed, and to adapt it to his own biography. Is this not an intellectual exercise? It seems certain that there is a logical association between Bloch the historian and Bloch the French resistance fighter.

The biography of Marc Bloch is a classic academic *curriculum vitae*, though ravaged by the vicissitudes of war. The son of a university professor proceeds via that great temple of the French cultural elite, the Ecole Normale Supérieure, along the same path as his father. Then comes a chair at the University of Strasbourg and then at the Sorbonne; research into medieval and early modern history, international fame, participation in the grand adventures of the French humanities, and the creation of the *Annales* and of that which he and Lucien Febvre called the “spirit of *Annales*” – all this fits within the model of academic success. And then there is the photograph taken in the streets of Lyon during the war: “Marc Bloch in a coat with an upturned collar and with a walking stick in his hand,”⁵² where he is calmly taking part in the drama and in the routine of conspiratorial work, changing his pseudonyms and using forged papers. Georges recalled: “Imagine this man whose calling was creative silence, surrounded by books, now running through the streets of the city and deciphering secret messages from the Résistance in some attic in Lyon.”⁵³ No doubt

⁵¹ Id., *The Historian’s Craft*, p. 67.

⁵² G. Altman, foreword to the first edition, in: M. Bloch, *Strange Defeat; a Statement of Evidence Written in 1940*, with an introd. by Sir M. Powicke and a foreword by G. Altman, transl. G. Hopkins (London, New York, Oxford, 1949), p. 14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

many French university people found their way into the resistance, but the place of this Sorbonne professor of advanced age – already called an “old historian” in *Strange Defeat* – seems to merit the highest place not just because it was paid for with the highest sacrifice, but because he constantly made a conscious choice of courage, risk, service and sacrifice. To understand this attitude, let us ask the irrelevant question: why?

Marc Bloch viewed a historian’s work as servicer to the people. He repeated the words of his master, Henri Pirenne, whereby a historian must turn to life because the association between the past and the present emanates from the very logic of historical research. He rarely talked about politics; only in *Strange Defeat*, under the fresh shock of France’s defeat, does he engage in sharp political criticism in which he does not spare his country’s military and social elite, and also considers the mechanisms of the class egoism of all social groups in France. He recalls the dreams, illusions, hopes and setbacks of his generation: the inability to exceed the horizon of material claims, sympathy for the Popular Front and the bitterness of broken illusions. Avoiding the use of left-wing or right-wing stereotypes, let us restrict ourselves to his own political self-definition. He considered himself a member of the “groups that advocate [...] genuinely liberal, impartial and progressive, in a humanitarian sense, aims and views.”⁵⁴ This does not sound political. In view of the events taking place around him, Bloch wants to serve primarily as a witness. During both world wars he makes careful observations and notes: this is evidenced by his notes during the years 1914–1915, the “green book” in which he recorded his military adventures of the 1939 and 1940 campaign (and which he had to destroy), and finally the excellent book which combines a social and political analysis with a careful observation of what the “oldest captain in the French army” saw and knew about his country’s defeat.

Bloch’s notes from the First and Second World Wars strike one with their serious treatment of the craft of war. War is “at the same time horrible and stupid,”⁵⁵ but proper conduct by a citizen under arms is dictated by the requirement of duty to defend his country. In 1939–1940 resistance against totalitarianism and dictatorships begins.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 213.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 182.

Bloch is one of those for whom the Marseillaise represented the cult of the fatherland.⁵⁶ And that is why he says that no one has the right to shun dedication and the supreme sacrifice. In his will, written in Clermont-Ferrand on 18 March 1941, he writes: “I have been tied to my fatherland by quite a long family tradition. I have been shaped by its spiritual heritage and its history. I really cannot imagine any other fatherland in which I could freely breathe. I loved her very much and served her with all my strength.”⁵⁷ As an agnostic, he wanted a non-religious funeral. But in the face of death, anti-Semitism and the ideology of total holocaust, he firmly said that he is a Jew. These words enable us to understand Bloch’s behaviour in public life better.

Marc Bloch’s childhood and youth coincide with the Dreyfus case.⁵⁸ It defined a generation on the threshold of the centuries: Bloch wrote that he felt a full member of the “generation of the Dreyfus case.” A subscription to pay for the monument to Colonel Henry in 1898–1899 reflects the atmosphere of that time: “real Frenchmen” and “Frenchmen from France” shouted “Vive la France! Mort aux juifs.” They shouted that “a Jew is not a Frenchman,” that Jews are people without a country (*des sans-patrie*); that they are the antithesis of the army.⁵⁹ It is in response to this distorted argumentation that Bloch wrote in *Strange Defeat* forty years later “I am a Jew [...] I feel neither pride nor shame from this [...] I refer to my origin only in one case – in the face of anti-Semitism.”⁶⁰ If I believe that for this soldier and resistance fighter, the son and grandson of French combatants, his Jewish descent was significant in the choices made in public life, then I admit that this was a particular argument. It gave meaning to the attitude of a man who, ready to serve his country, identified that country with the land, people and culture – with France.

In Marc Bloch’s biography, one also detects a message on a historian’s place in public life. This place is understandable *per se*. A historian knows a lot about the mechanisms of the political game, of the gulf between programs and implementation, between that which is desired and that which is possible, so that he does not develop a certain

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 179.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 224.

⁵⁸ Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft*, p. 95.

⁵⁹ Cf. S. Wilson, “Le monument Henry: la structure de l’antisémitisme en France, 1898–1899,” *Annales ESC*, 32 (1977), pp. 265–291.

⁶⁰ Bloch, *Strange Defeat*, p. 23.

reluctance to become involved. He also knows too much about misusing the lessons of history for dubious purposes to maintain his discipline at a certain distance from the reality. Marc Bloch, *dilexit veritatem*, claimed that the search for the truth should create a readiness to defend and serve it, that history and historians should serve what is real and just, serve freedom and brotherhood amongst people; that sometimes one should die for Gdańsk. I consider Marc Bloch's message important: it is backed by a unity of life and the work of a great historian.

[On the margin: Je ne crois pas être infidèle à sa pensée en disant, que après tout on peut mourir pour Dantzig. Je crois ce message important: il est fondé sur l'unité de la vie et d'œuvre d'un grand historien.⁶¹]

⁶¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 178: In 1939 no Frenchman was ready to 'die for Danzig'.

Lucien Febvre (1878–1956)

In: *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 65 (1958), pp. 320–324.

“All the accepted norms of that which we call human have been exceeded, the sound barrier has been broken, and a superhuman, extra-human, non-human era is nigh. It is no longer possible to stop. There is not a moment for reflection, for adaptation. In this endless race, we have become out of breath. Machines and automation have become the order of the day. Hence the loss of freedom, which may to an extent now be obsolete. Are we historians to remain indifferent to this flood of inhumanity that threatens to devour our de-civilized ‘civilization’? This is not a technical problem. It is a problem of life and death.” That is the conclusion of an article whose very title was shocking – “On Einstein and history”¹ – from the pen of one of the most interesting historical writers of our century, Lucien Febvre. This message contains one of the chief elements of his creativity, his decades-long struggle for humanism in science and in life, his struggle to find history a place in the era of split atoms, abstract art and cybernetics. Over a year has passed since Febvre’s death. His friends, students and colleagues have painted a picture of his life, creativity, reminiscences and first attempts at study and assessments.²

¹ L. Febvre, “Sur Einstein et sur l’histoire: méditation de circonstance,” *Annales ESC*, 10 (1955), p. 313.

² Of the more important posthumous memories and articles, the following are worth mentioning: A. Renaudet, “L’œuvre historique de Lucien Febvre,” *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 3 (October–December 1956), pp. 257–261; F. Braudel, “Lucien Febvre,” *Larousse Mensuel*, 14 (1957), no. 509, pp. 197–198; id., “Lucien Febvre et l’histoire,” *Annales ESC*, 12 (1957); Ch. Morazé, “Lucien Febvre et l’Histoire vivante,” *Revue Historique*, 217 (1957), pp. 1–19; id., “Lucien Febvre,” *Cahiers d’Histoire Mondiale*, 3 (1957), pp. 553–557; R. Romano, “Lucien Febvre,”

It is worth providing Polish readers with certain introductory material with which to reflect upon the historical thinking of Febvre.

Febvre's creativity shaped itself at a time when the work of Ernest Lavisse and Charles Seignobos on historical science suffered from increasing rivalry. In 1901 came the first volume of *Histoire socialiste* by Jean Jaurès, in 1906 *Révolution industrielle au XVIIIe siècle* by Paul Mantoux arrived, and from 1899 onwards came ever more volumes on the monumental history of Belgium from the pen of Henri Pirenne. And parallel to this was a revolution in geography: *Tableau de la géographie de la France* by Paul Vidal de la Blache in 1903, *La plaine picarde* by Albert Demangeon in 1905, *La Flandre* by Raoul Blanchard in 1906, and *Les paysans de la Normandie orientale* by Jules Sion in 1909. Under the influence of these intellectual currents, under the influence of masters from the Ecole Normale Supérieure where Febvre studied from 1898 to 1902, and finally under the influence of the political and social turmoil at the start of our century, Febvre became attracted to social issues, the mechanisms that govern the history of societies, and the determinants of the fate of people and social groups. Out of this arose his doctoral thesis: *Philippe II et la Franche-Comté*, defended in 1911 and published in 1912 when the author was already lecturing in the history of Burgundy at Dijon University.

And then came the great jump in subject-matter: from studies in Franche-Comté to a cosmic dimension: *La terre et l'évolution humaine*. This work was the result of over a dozen years of collaboration between Febvre and Henri Berr, whose plans to restructure historical science and whose historical projects attracted Febvre from his youth. The first part of the book was written in 1914, and completed after the war in 1921. Here, Febvre combines history with two other great interests: geography and sociology. In his doctoral thesis one can already see that he was interested in the impact of geography on society and that he focused on social groups and on ways of encouraging their action. *La terre et l'évolution humaine* arose after years of careful study of *L'Année Sociologique*, after he had acquired the thoughts and methods of Emile Durkheim and Lucien Levy-Bruhl, after the great outburst of debates between sociologists and historians on the issues of history, and after he had digested the extensive teachings of François Simiand and

Rivista Storica Italiana, 69 (1957), no. 2, pp. 313–316; “In memoriam: Lucien Febvre,” *Revue de Synthèse* (Jul.-Sept. 1956), pp. 275–278.

Maurice Halbwachs. At the same time, the book is the result of contact with German thinking, sociology and geography. We underscore these influences not in order to play down the originality of this work; its greatness is based on the fact that it arose at the crossroads, as it were, of many disciplines, out of a friction between various thoughts and methods, in the great polemical debate between great concepts, against Friedrich Ratzl. The debate between the thoughts of Ratzl, the social morphology of the Durkheim school, and the views of Vidal de la Blache, gave rise to the concept of the driving forces of the development of human societies, the needs of individuals and groups as the litmus paper of social forms, and the interdependence of various parts of the historical process.

In 1920, Febvre assumed an academic chair in Strasbourg, where he discovered an excellent intellectual community. Apart from Marc Bloch, with whom he had already been friends for several years, here he met Gabriel Le Bras, André Piganiol, Georges Lefebvre, Christian Pfister, Charles Edmond Perrin and, above all, Maurice Halbwachs and Charles Blondel; Blondel's book, *Introduction à la psychologie collective* (1928), fascinated Febvre for many years, and we find attempts to answer the questions in that book in Febvre's later works.

Friendship with Bloch – an odd relationship joining two people of different characters and methods of work – gave rise to one of the most significant events in the historiography of our century, the *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*. Soon after World War I, Febvre suggested to Pirenne the foundation of an international periodical devoted to economic history, but Pirenne failed to obtain the support of the League of Nations for this venture. The project was finally realized in 1929, and Bloch and Febvre became its editors. Charles Morazé,³ considering what had induced Febvre to create his own periodical and leave aside his hitherto forum, *Revue de Synthèse*, where he had struggled for a fresh perception of history for almost thirty years, suggests that with the new periodical Febvre wanted to bring the struggle for synthesis to the very focus of historical teachings, in addition to which he perhaps wanted to free himself from the somewhat out-dated ballast of “scientism” that burdened the work of Berr. *Annales* expanded their scope of topics from one year to the

³ Morazé, Lucien Febvre, p. 4.

next, gaining international fame, and assumed a place among Europe's leading periodicals of historiography.

In 1933 at the Collège de France, Febvre assumed a chair created especially for him: the history of modern civilization. That year, Anatol de Monzie appointed him editor of *Encyclopédie française* which, apart from *Annales*, occupied Febvre until the outbreak of war. The war disrupted the normal rhythm of his work, but also allowed him to concentrate on creative work. Three works emerged during the war: *Origène et Des Périers* (1942), *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVI^e siècle. La religion de Rabelais* (1942), *Autour de l'Heptaméron: amour sacré, amour profane* (1944).

Febvre's interest in the 16th century, the Reformation and humanism, first arose while he was preparing his doctor's thesis, but later he steadfastly continued work on these subjects. In fact, the 16th century is the main subject of his historical work; here he finds an experimental playground from which his thoughts emerge. In 1928, Febvre issued an excellent sketch, *Un destin. Martin Luther*, showing Luther as a man of profound faith, paying attention to an internal life far removed from doctrinarianism; in view of the challenges of his times and his country, this "great visionary, great lyricist of religion" had to become a man of deeds. One year later the excellent article *Une question mal posée: les origines de la réforme française*⁴ appeared, which Fernand Braudel considered Febvre's *chef d'œuvre*. During the same period, Febvre developed the idea of writing a book about Rabelais, the most distinguished of the three abovementioned wartime works, in reaction to the teachings of Abel Lefranc, learned publisher of the works of Rabelais. It is not without reason that Febvre kept saying that the best books emerge on the side-lines of other books. Febvre countered Lefranc's ideas on the atheism of Rabelais with a thesis he encapsulated in the subtitle of his book, *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVI^e siècle*. But these polemics are a pretext for an excellent treatise on the intellectual life and beliefs of Rabelais and his times, on the historical psychology of the individual and of society. The frequent misuse of the concept of historical psychology which was used to disguise poor books has a concrete meaning for Febvre. His interest in the 16th century was influenced by reading Pirenne's volumes

⁴ L. Febvre, "Une question mal posée: les origines de la réforme française," *Revue Historique*, 161 (1929).

about the Netherlands at the end of the Middle Ages. But the greatest influence came from the works of the great Jules Michelet, whose writings fired Febvre's interest in the psychology of people and societies in the past. But Febvre continued Michelet's work after over half a century of toil by generations of researchers. That is why Febvre does not launch hypotheses, but performs scrupulous research: his bibliography impresses the reader with its scope, and his analysis of facts is detailed and full of erudition. Between Michelet and Febvre there were fundamental changes to social sciences associated with history; therefore, for Febvre a historical fact is more complicated and has various implications. Last but not least, Febvre's thinking, both in his studies into the 11th century and his synthetic ideas, is shaped under the influence of Marxism.

Braudel, one of Febvre's closest friends and colleagues, cast an interesting light on this last matter. He stressed the importance that Febvre attached to Karl Marx and to his careful reading of Marx's works. In Marxism and in Marxist terminology, Febvre feared a mechanical treatment of history. The debates about the base and the superstructure seemed to him to be like fruitless polemics between "Byzantine" and "Roman" theologians. In his foreword to Huguette's and Pierre Chaunu's *Séville et l'Atlantique*, Febvre writes: "The foundation of history is not a smooth slab of granite, deep, without cracks and solid. Instead, I see it as the subsurface of one of our modern cities, a tangle of water and gas pipes, electric cables, heating ducts and tunnels through which people and their vehicles travel, cables through which their voices and thoughts pass, and, of course, sewer pipes and refuse heaps: they too are needed." The term "structure," so dear to *Annales*, does not suit the old master; surely rhythms, pulsation and current are better? Defending Febvre against attacks from some Marxists, Braudel writes in the abovementioned article: "In fact, they are attacking themselves, because Febvre's thinking does not oppose Marxist historiography: it even develops easily under the banner of living Marxism, in other words flexible Marxism, as our Polish colleagues rightly said at a conference at the Sorbonne in October, at which we could hear their friendly voices and their praise for Lucien Febvre."⁵ And if, despite this, we say that not much separates the works of Febvre from Marxism, it is not because he is courting some of the

⁵ F. Braudel, *Lucien Febvre et l'histoire*, p. 181.

terminology of Marxism; his comparison, quoted here, is excellent. However, a Marxist historian will not agree with Febvre on the class structure of society and the mutual relationships of various cases, or on the role of the masses in history.

In any case, one cannot always agree with Febvre. His thinking fluctuates constantly, is full of polemic vigour, and constantly needs adversaries, citadels, defensive walls... From virtually the first page, his Rabelais is full of polemic passion, enhanced by the unique nature of the arguments, underlining the author's own views. Febvre's thinking, individualistic, teasing and alien to any conformism, is not suitable to be tarnished or quoted with respect. It is living, critical thinking, often forcing one to opposition and polemics.

But one must agree with Febvre when, writing on history's place in a world full of ruins – this time after World War II – he demands: "Let us explain the world to the world! [...] History is only capable of letting us live in this world of established uncertainties with feelings other than fear"; or elsewhere: "As long as we hide in our offices, with windows shut and blinds drawn, alone with our notes, as long as we refuse to open our eyes to the world so that we may further pursue a history which, not daring to face life's problems, is unable to alleviate our growing unrest and depression in these times, we will remain without influence on the world around us." The humanism of this thought, the conviction of the socially valuable function of history, is what determines its lasting value.

Febvre collated his numerous speeches against traditional currents in history, his polemics conducted in the columns of various periodicals over the space of decades, and his various attempts to find new solutions, in a 1953 book bearing the significant title, *Combats pour l'histoire*.⁶

When a few years ago Febvre was awarded a commemorative volume to mark his 70th birthday, that "fan of living history" (*L'éventail de l'histoire vivante*), Georges Friedman, said to him: "Whereas France failed to maintain its leading cultural role in other spheres [...] in the sphere of reborn history, one that radiates to other social sciences, we can say that our country remains in the lead, and this we owe primarily to you, Sir."⁷ Indeed, the influence of the French historical

⁶ Cf. The remarks on this book: M.H. Serejski, *Nauka Polska*, 1955, p. 4.

⁷ G. Friedman, "Lucien Febvre toujours vivant," *Annales ESC*, 12 (1957), p. 5.

school and with it the thinking of Febvre, is spreading.⁸ Gathering the fruits of this thinking and putting it to productive use requires critical thought and forthright discussion. The picture of this rich and powerful individualism is not without influence on the development of modern historical writing.

⁸ None of Febvre's books, neither the book about Luther nor the one about Rabelais, have been translated into Polish. Must they really wait half a century, like Mantoux, *Industrial Revolution*, before publishers recognize them as classics?

Fernand Braudel on the Tasks of the Modern Humanities

In: *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 58 (1960), pp. 1159–1165.

At the end of May this year [1960], Fernand Braudel, professor at the Collège de France and chairman of Section of the VI Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, visited Poland at the invitation of the Polish Academy of Sciences. On 26 May, the president of the Academy, Prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński, conferred upon the French scholar the Commander's Cross of the Order of Poland's Rebirth, awarded by the State Council for conspicuous services for the development of cultural and academic cooperation between Poland and France. The results of this cooperation between the Academy and Section VI of the Parisian Ecole and the importance of these contacts for the Polish humanities are well known among Polish historians. One should add that these contacts continue to expand. The Polish Academy of Sciences has ten scholarships from the French school (and from scientific research establishments) at its disposal, and university humanities' faculties have a similar number of grants available.

The latest visit by the chairman of Section VI of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes was also a visit by a historian. The illustrious researcher into 16th-century Mediterranean civilization could be seen at the Central Archives for Historical Records on Długa St., busy reading the letters of Dantyszek, or in the library of the Institute of the History of Warsaw University, perusing the *Acta Tomiciana*, seeking works on the passage of social strata. Then there were personal talks in which Fernand Braudel, a lively and effective talker, advocated the unity and communion of human studies and of the humanities, and a modern shape to social studies – ideas of which Braudel is a particular champion and organizer.

An agrégé of the Sorbonne and a professor at the universities of São Paulo and Algiers, before the war Braudel came into contact with the *Annales* group and soon became a pupil and the closest friend of Lucien Febvre. After the war, *Annales*, bereft of Marc Bloch after his tragic death and appearing under another new title (before the war it was *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale*; in 1939 it became *Annales d'Histoire Sociale*; during the war *Mélanges d'Histoire Sociale*, and from 1946 *Annales: Economies–Sociétés–Civilisations*), resumed its former struggles, and Braudel found himself on the board of editors by Febvre's side. Appointed in 1950 to the chair of the history of contemporary civilization at the Collège de France, and shortly afterwards becoming head of the new Centre de Recherches Historiques, he developed broad-scale organizational, educational and editorial work, and after the death of Lucien Febvre assumed chairmanship of Section VI of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes and of *Annales*. This work was accompanied by his own creative quests: in 1948, Braudel's work on the Mediterranean world in the second half of the 16th century appeared, the fruit of several decades of study and one of the greatest events in post-war historical education: in 1952 a work appeared written jointly with Ruggiero Romano on the port of Livorno in the 16th century; and now a two-volume work on the history of material existence from the 13th to 18th centuries is being printed.

As during his previous visit to Poland in 1957, on this occasion Professor Braudel was also engaged in debates in Warsaw and Cracow on the unity of studies about man.

Fernand Braudel takes a critical view of the status of humanist studies in the world: "Preserving the traditional divisions, limits and specializations inherited from the previous centuries would mean the slow death of the humanities. Can one meet halfway the anxieties of today's world, its dramatic conflicts, with this ballast of methods and thoughts, this outmoded battle trail which suits the military strategy of the Second Empire? Overcoming the ossified limits between individual humanist studies is essential in order to attain academic progress. I have in mind the very *raison d'être* of the humanities. This is being understood more and more, and instead of complaints about the crisis in the humanities, one sees everywhere a great effort to bring the disciplines closer together and overcome the traditional divisions."

Therefore, the reintegration of the humanities becomes a burning necessity. But what are the instruments of this process? Professor

Braudel answers this question: “I think that the primary condition for an effective rapprochement between the social sciences is a renewal of the subject matter, and that is certainly the key problem of emerging from the impasse in which the humanities have found themselves. The traditional humanities as taught in the universities live a superficial life of 19th century issues, and their internal division reflects this state of affairs. The system of teaching in most European universities extends this dangerous state of affairs because it brings up a young generation in the same spirit, in a cult of superficial problems, in traditional research concepts. In the discipline that is closest to me, in other words history, teaching at universities is done as if nothing had changed in historical research in the last several decades. Political events continue to be narrated in the traditional manner and socio-economic relations are glossed over, even though this is where the greatest progress has been made in research recently. But what I mean is a renewal of a subject matter that is global, encompassing all the social sciences. In Polish, you use a term that reflects one of the needs of the humanities excellently: you talk of the comprehensive nature of research. It is when jointly undertaking research tasks in various humanist disciplines that we can teach these disciplines to live together without ceaseless warfare, inculcate a community understanding and demolish the walls that divide it.”

Indicating the need to continue and, at the same time, revise intellectual tradition, Braudel draws attention, and not for the first time, to the “unusual validity of the thoughts of Marx, already 100 years old” for a reintegration of the humanities, and says: “Whether one wants to or not, one comes across Marxist thinking everywhere, at each step, in every development path of the social sciences. In fact, it is impossible to adopt any position without it. Even if one denies this thinking, one lives with it. I confess that I sometimes fear the schematic dimension that is imparted to Marxist thinking, especially the idea of the primacy of economic conditions and of so-called ‘economic materialism’. Reading *Das Kapital* (even a poor French translation) convinces one of the comprehensiveness with which Marx analyses capitalism. A conspicuous feature of this analysis is that it demonstrates the social conditions of economics and throws a bridge between the economy and society, between the economic and the social spheres. And that is what makes Marxism topical – a capital weight of intellectual experience that has stood the test of life.

The influence of Marxism on the French humanities is clear and obvious... It lies at the root of the development of economic history, at the root of the *Annales* school.”

This insistence to rethink Marxism is significant to the editor of *Annales*. Several articles by Braudel published recently in that periodical display a greater reflection on the works of Marx, though many of Braudel’s arguments are controversial.

Fernand Braudel accords our discipline a special place in the rapprochement between the social sciences: “History is, or at least should be, the natural meeting place for the social sciences. A lack of understanding for this is the main weakness of the extensive social research in the United States. In their research into great political bodies, the Americans cloak their part in silence, and yet without them one cannot understand the present. History is also a subject of the present. The paradox is only fleetingly apparent. One can describe or experience the present, but to understand it one must resort to the past, to history. In long-term processes, one cannot separate that which we consider the present from that which happened before our time. Industrialization is by all means a modern fact and problem, but to understand it one must examine it from 1750 or 1800. The interdependence goes two ways: a study of the present cannot be separated from the past – if we do not want to restrict it to a ‘day to day’ chronicle of events, and research of the past, however distant, cannot be separated from today.”

History is at the service of the present; the present determines the research tasks of historiography, and directs the historian’s pen. New issues, new question marks, a new “survey” – this is what the present dictates to the historian. This does not alter the fact that a historian’s research must be subject to strict methods, that his reasoning must be solid and certain.

“History may and should be a culture of studies about man, and in this sense a long-term study is a particularly convenient field of observation and reflection for social sciences. Nevertheless, it is a disease of today that each science attempts to bear the whole of reality on its shoulders. The naïve imperialism of sociology, demography, history, economics or geography ordered each of them to create a unity of social sciences for their own benefit. A genuine rapprochement of all these disciplines, a genuine unity of all the sciences of man, and not just the annexation by one of them of all the others, is hardly the

point. Of course, this requires an 'equalization of fronts' of all the social disciplines; as far as I know, sensational progress has occurred recently in linguistics, sensational changes are occurring in political economics, but philosophy is at least fifty years behind natural history. History dominates other disciplines, but historians are still a long way away from recognizing a modern shape to their research. History as perceived by Henri Pirenne, Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre is still not always perceived by related disciplines. And what the *Annales* school is doing can best be described as a claim by historians of their rightful place."

The development of history as a discipline is primarily a choice of time: "Investigating the past, the historian has a choice between various dimensions of time in various periods. And one can say that history becomes a science, choosing a long period of time as a natural framework for understanding the past. A historian may err in his understanding of a short period of time, when examining the development of various junctures he can only come close to the probable shape, but when his thoughts embrace great durations and long-term trends, in a word the progress of history through long periods of time, then he has the possibility of understanding and of scientific research. This history of a 'long breath' is not a choice just for one dimension, but of all the three classic dimensions: an event, a juncture, endurance. This problem is not restricted to history; it concerns the social sciences as a whole, and also applies to research into the present. Information restricted to the present is misleading. Monitoring social development only on a day-to-day basis, in terms of the here and now, does not permit a reflection of the world around us. Whether we examine housing for workers or the role of the cinema and theatre in modern civilization, we cannot avoid the historical perspective, we cannot avoid thinking in terms of long-term processes."

These improvised Polish-French discussions revolved around yet another problem, that of structure. This vital issue for the humanities does not cease to arouse controversies and debates: *Annales* recently carried a report on a conference of French sociologists, historians, economists and philosophers on the concept of "structure."

In the French historian's opinion, the rapprochement of social sciences and the reintegration of the humanities represent a new program of the humanities: "Postulating a unity of teachings about man, we nevertheless also think that this term reflects well the

essence of the integration of the humanities. For its essence is a new quality of the humanities. This time we do not man a protest against the structures of the Christian world and the defence of man's ideals by reviving ancient Greek and Roman traditions. Today's era dictates to us the idea of human brotherhood, a defence of human dignity and life, as a task for today. Despite what the pessimists say, at a time of on-going industrial development, human issues occupy the front of stage as never before, and the need for new humanities is a revolutionary need. The rapprochement between human sciences and their integration is taking place in the new humanities [...] The subject of the sciences of man is the human species, not the individual and the social ties between individuals. A study of man and the human species, without separating the past from the present, cannot close our eyes to natural issues; it cannot be separated from biological issues."

Braudel spoke many times of the importance of an international intellectual rapprochement and of Polish-French cooperation, expressing praise for Poland. Well-conceived international cooperation is of paramount importance. "Intellectual rapprochement also involves a comparison of the results of research, which is particularly important in understanding the scientific nature of the humanities. For there are no two sciences: science is indivisible. And whether in Paris, Moscow or Warsaw, the language of science must be the same. Thus, in a certain sense, the development of international cooperation is an integral part of the process of unifying teachings about man and giving them a modern dimension."

The benefits of this for different countries are mutual. Fernand Braudel sees in this cooperation a particular role for France today, and "the Polish grantees to our Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes bring with them the language of the world – that in a nutshell reflects the most important issue. A Polish historian said to me that he believes the entire historical thinking of the world is to be found in his library. That is a rare, but enormous, privilege. So your grantees come, having been taught in a good school of traditional methods and broad Marxist philosophy, and carefully monitoring everything happening in Eastern and Western thinking. And in our Ecole, in a climate of free thinking, where the principle prevails that no one thought is better than the other, they encounter the whole world, colleagues of various nationalities, views and methods. Fascinated with the problem of the

base and the superstructure, they employ the concept of structure, that key concept in Western thinking.

“The fate of France, its role in European thinking, depends not so much on the realization of our House of Science project about man, as on this international discourse on human science that has commenced in France, in the open city of Paris. France has a chance to become the Italy of the new humanities. But it must be universal if does not want to succumb to the advancing progress of Anglo-Saxon thinking in Europe, universal in the sense of extensive dialogue with the East [...]. The first condition here is an open-door policy. For France and for Paris to play a role in the world, they must be open to the world.”

Historian of Longue Durée (on Fernand Braudel)

In: *Więź*, 1986, nos. 11/12, pp. 73–82.

In autumn 1979 the third volume of Fernand Braudel's *Capitalism and Material Life in the 15th–18th Centuries*¹ appeared in French bookshops. French media, especially the daily and weekly press, carried an avalanche of reviews and interviews on the illustrious historian and this surprising work. In fact, this was a late reaction by France to something that had been obvious for a long time in professional circles of the humanities and to broader circles of readers in Great Britain, the United States, Spain and Italy. One can also include Poland. Together with Witold Kula, for twenty years we planned the publication of a collection of Braudel's essays, *History and Duration* (but the disturbances in 1968 made it necessary to find a new publisher, so that the work finally appeared in 1971 due to the kindness of Czytelnik),² which was followed by a French edition and numerous translations. In 1976–1977, the publishing house Wydawnictwo Morskie released Braudel's classic two-volume work on the Mediterranean in the 16th century.³ His name became known to Polish readers, and his works were received with enthusiasm on Anglo-Saxon markets as soon as English translations became available, first *The Mediterranean* and then *Material Culture*. They were followed by criticism of Braudel's creativity,

¹ F. Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Centuries*, vol. 3: *The Perspective of the World*, transl. S. Reynolds (London, 1979).

² Id., *Historia i trwanie*, foreword B. Geremek, W. Kula, transl. B. Geremek (Warsaw, 1971).

³ Id., *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, transl. S. Reynolds (London, 1972–1973), vol. 2.

but also the highest accolades. A British historian said that if there were a Nobel Prize for history, only Braudel could qualify for it. In 1980, the French economist Jacques Attali recommended Braudel for the Nobel Prize in economics. In 1984, Braudel joined the French Academy at the age of 82.

He died on the night of 27–28 November 1985 at his country residence in Saint-Gervais. The obituaries in the French and British press were unanimous in bidding farewell to the “prince of history,” “master of new history,” “the world’s greatest historian” and “the first among historians.” This was no mere rhetoric. It was a statement of fact.

This French historian and his work have already begun to fade. It seems that *Clio* only becomes interested when the threshold of death has been passed. What remains are reminiscences of the great personality of a man who departed at the height of his creative powers, as if in defiance of his age, and who seemed to know nothing but successes. What remains is a work that reflects a seldom-encountered consensus of research and a global vision of the past. It is the business of historians of intellectual culture and of historiography to undertake work on the subject of Braudel. But for the time being it is worth outlining the life and work of the deceased historian.

He was born in the village of Luméville-en-Ornois in Lorraine on 24 August 1902. He was conscious of his peasant roots: his childhood was spent on a cottage built in 1806 (which was still standing in 1970), under the care of his grandmother. Later, in the village of Meriel near Paris, where his father was a teacher, he was able to get to know the rural micro-cosmos – both the natural environment (during a visit to the Białowieża Forest some time ago, he was able to identify plants he had first learned about in his childhood), as well as the human neighbourhood. Later, when his father gained promotion in his teaching career, he moved to Paris, where he completed secondary school, and studied history at the Sorbonne: at the young age of twenty he became a dean. He was to say later that this was the classic path of French advancement in three generations: peasant, teacher, university professor. His studies in Paris of history and geography, combined with the university education at the time, did not make a great impression on Braudel; he only recalls his interest in the geographer Albert Demangeon and the historian Henri Hauser. He wrote his thesis on Bois-le-Duc in the first years of the French revolution. He commenced teaching work in Algiers, where he stayed from 1923 to 1932, and then

in Parisian *lycées*. In 1935, he commenced teaching at the University of São Paulo, together with Claude Lévi-Strauss. One can say that his ship finally dropped anchor when he was nominated to the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in 1937.

It is during his time in Algiers that he became a historian. There he encountered the joy of teaching, which he later reminisced with emotion, and his students with fascination. He also undertook research work there. German history attracted him, but his stay in Algiers and knowledge of Spanish pulled him towards Spanish history. The subject of his doctoral thesis, associated with the history of diplomacy taught by Emil Bourgeois at the Sorbonne, is the Mediterranean policy of Philip II. Braudel commences a research odyssey into Mediterranean archives, primarily in Simancas (including the booty Napoleon had taken to Paris), but also the archives of Italian cities, Marseilles and Ragusa (Dubrovnik), and it is these that reveal to Braudel the riches of the Mediterranean in 1934. For Braudel's point of view moves away from Philip II; the Mediterranean now becomes the focus of his research. The lectures of Henri Pirenne in Algiers in 1931 on the collapse of Mediterranean unity in the face of Arab expansion in the 8th century demonstrate to Braudel that the sea creates collective fortunes. His first work on Spaniards in North Africa, published in 1928, remains linked to the old topic (though almost 20 years later it becomes the subject of an additional doctoral work and is highly commended), just like his reviews published in *Revue Africaine* and *Revue Historique* during this period, devoted primarily to diplomatic and political history.

Braudel's stay in Brazil, where he lectured in the history of general civilization, was of fundamental importance in shaping his historical thinking. He had at his disposal tens of thousands of microfilm frames recording his archival searches and had an opportunity to read broadly and reflect upon matters: the subject of his research gained proper organization and perspective. During his return voyage to Europe, he met Lucien Febvre, the illustrious historian of the 16th century and destroyer of the old order of university lectures on history. Until then, their contacts had been occasional and not very friendly, but the three weeks they spent on the ship together formed a friendly, intellectual bond between them. Braudel had found his master.

The war disrupted university life, and from the Rhineland front the young artillery officer ended up in German captivity. He spent five years

of the war in camps in Mainz and outside Lubeck. There, far from his academic workshop, he wrote *The Mediterranean* on school exercise books and sent them, one by one, to Febvre. Thus, this huge work, which was to occupy over 1,000 pages of print, was written from memory.

After the war, Braudel and Febvre worked to create a historiographical problem of a school of thought called the *Annales*, named after the periodical founded by Marc Bloch and Febvre in 1929. The gates of the Sorbonne remained shut to Braudel, but his academic career was crowned when he was appointed to a chair at the Collège de France in 1950, and after Lucien Febvre's death in 1956 he not only became editor of *Annales*, but also head of Section VI, Economic and Social Studies, of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. In this way he gained a major influence on French university life in the sphere of the humanities, established broad international contacts, and not only reoriented historical research, but also regrouped, as it were, the whole of social sciences around history: this was the natural result of the fact that all these methodological, organizational and editorial initiatives came from historians, were connected with history, and were primarily to serve historical research.

The section of the Ecole Pratique developed into an independent educational establishment where Braudel established a powerful foundation, the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, which he led until the end of his life and which combined dozens of institutes and laboratories, amalgamated into an academic combine, the only one of its kind. One can say that the program of lectures at the Ecole and the Maison was a unique program of modern humanities, and at the same time a shining testimonial to the success of Braudel's venture.

As a passionate historian, Braudel did not cease historical research for a single moment. *The Mediterranean*, defended as a doctoral thesis in 1947 and published in 1949, seems to remain alive in Braudel's lectures; after two decades, in 1966, a completely amended edition appeared, containing new research by the author and his pupils and enriched with fresh investigations of Mediterranean archives. Evidence of the continuation of this work are the books on the Mediterranean world published by the Ecole (including a joint book by Braudel and Ruggiero Romano about the port of Livorno),⁴ but it is surprising that

⁴ F. Braudel, R. Romano, *Navires et marchandises à l'entrée du port de Livourne (1547-1611)* (Paris, 1951).

an academic work like this was revised in the first place. One year later appeared *Material Culture, the Economy and Capitalism*, the first volume of Braudel's second great work, completed in the autumn of 1979. His death cut short the third great work, on the history of France, whose first volume (*The Identity of France*)⁵ appeared after his death.

Braudel carried these works inside him for a long time. While continuing work on *The Mediterranean*, in the 1950s he delivered lectures on "material culture, the economy and capitalism" and on the "history of France." He had an exceptional gift of expression in speech and in writing, thanks to which he wrote steadily; formulating ideas during the programs of his lectures, he wrote successive chapters only to throw them into the waste bin and start anew. This was not because of excessive perfectionism, but more because of the great demands posed by historical writing and thinking. He experienced success but did not chase after it; when he retired in 1973 it seemed as if this abdicating monarch of the "new humanities" had actually written only one book, the one on the Mediterranean, and would remain unknown to broader circles of readers, or would be remembered only as the spiritual father of more fashionable, more prolific writers. But it happened otherwise; he had the fortune to live long, preserving his entire creative strength. In the humanities at least, longevity has its importance in the mechanisms of academic success and fame. But in Braudel's case, this success and fame no doubt had their genesis in the unique originality and greatness of his works, both *The Mediterranean* and of *Culture* (an assessment of the third great work has to be left aside until it has been published). The common feature of these works is doubtlessly the modern research program behind them, demolishing the conventional habits of historical work and creating new standards of historical thinking.

"I fell in love with the Mediterranean, no doubt because I had come from the North, just like many others before and after me. I joyously devoted long years of study to it – this means more to me than my entire youth. In return, I hope that some of this joy and much of the glory of the Mediterranean will shine in this book." These are the opening words of *The Mediterranean*, imparting the tone of a personal reminiscence, usually absent in learned academic treatises. Making the hero of the work the sea is also a breach of convention. Yet this

⁵ F. Braudel, *L'identité de la France* (Paris, 1986).

may be regarded as a mere mental ploy or a poetic metaphor; after all, the subject of the book is not the sea itself, but people, their material and spiritual achievements, and their reaction to the opportunities and challenges flowing from the sea. Also breaking with convention is the table of contents, which looks like a separate work in itself, with its own literary rhythm. For example, the chapter on the economy begins with the following headings: “Correspondence, letters get lost. The sea’s dimensions: record speeds. Medium speeds. The valuable testimony of letters. Novelty – a luxury good. Contemporary comparisons. Empires and space. Three missions of Claude du Bourg (1576 and 1577). Space and the economy. The role of markets in economic life. Economic zones of limited range. Rectangle: Genoa – Milan – Venice – Florence.” Or the chapter on movement and stability, opening the subject of Mediterranean civilization: “What results from good events? How cultural artefacts wander. Radiation and a refusal to borrow. And Greek civilization? Stability and cultural boundaries. An example of a secondary border: Ifrikiya. Sluggishness of cultural exchanges and messages.”

However, the originality of the above table of contents in Braudel’s first work is the way in which the book is divided into three parts: first the natural environment, then collective fortunes and movements, and lastly, events, politics and people. This suggests a new intimation of how to understand history. Most of all, Braudel’s work has been seen to express the conviction that geography determines human fortunes and lays down the limits of human activity. *The Mediterranean* was thus meant to be a work on “geohistory” – a negative term to some, but an argument justifying the highest praise for others. However, a careful reading of the work does not hint at such a “geographical” approach: the first part is very aloof from the rest of the work; it neither presents nor explains the historical matter in the two remaining parts. The presentation of the Mediterranean past has also been perceived as a conscious strategy expressed in the following triple formula: structure – development – event. These three levels are meant to contain all historical processes and facts, and the network of connections between them represents a proper matrix for the interpretation of history.

However, the author himself does not reflect his thoughts in this methodological structure. Braudel understood this division into three parts (he even joked that according to academic custom, all

works should be divided into three parts) as a differentiation of the time registers in which history occurs. In the introduction to his book, he writes that: “the first part is about a history that is almost immobile [...] a history that flows slowly, changes slowly and often has sudden twists and turns [...]. From this immobile history, one can separate a history of slow rhythm [...] this is a history of societies and groups [...]. And finally, the third part: traditional history [...]. This history has short, fast, nervous impulses.” Even if, in 1949, Braudel described these three registers as a measure of geographical time, he did not regard them as a stiff paradigmatic construction. He attached primary importance to a broad look at and identification of various dimensions or rhythms of time in which human deeds, institutions and civilizations are located. In a controversial article on “long *duration*”⁶ published in 1958, Braudel not only showed that history naturally brings human sciences together, but also requires a re-orientation of historical interests, from the fortunes of individuals to collective fortunes, from micrograph to a “panoramic” perspective, and the realization that the importance of historical processes and facts develops in line with one’s observation thereof, until they seem to become immobile. In Lukania’s picture of Carlo Levi’s novel *Christ Stopped at Eboli*⁷ Braudel found the structures of the Mediterranean world, lasting from antiquity until today.

The reader of *The Mediterranean* is led through descriptions of coastlines, peninsulas and mountain ranges towards the rhythms of sea travel, large and small trade, financial operations, cattle drives, wealth and poverty, the social landscape, and a hierarchy of economic powers. Thus, economic history occupies pride of place. But the “secondary” time level, which Braudel describes as development, includes excellent chapters on empires, civilizations and methods of warfare, for the author is concerned not with the world of things, but with “collective fortunes.” Braudel spoke of political history with disdain on more than one occasion, but his disdain for *histoire événementielle*, the history of events (the heritage of Durkheim’s sociology, the great “Année Sociologique” debates early in the century and the “historical synthesis” community of Henri Berr) concerned not the

⁶ Id., “Historia i nauki społeczne: długie trwanie,” in: id., *Historia i trwanie*, pp. 46–89.

⁷ C. Levi, *Chrystus zatrzymał się w Eboli*, transl. A. Gontyna (Warsaw, 1949).

subject of this sphere, but the manner in which it is performed. The whole of part here of the work is, after all, devoted to the “plan of events,” the dramas of political history. It makes excellent reading because it is in the history of diplomacy that Braudel acquired his research skills. He was able to make use of royal archives in order to recreate great sea and land battles. Adding an afterword to his book in 1965, he dispenses with presenting his opinions in the category of the history of philosophy, but nevertheless asks the question, vital to each historian, about the nature and scope of the determinants that shape human activity and about the limits of human freedom. He writes: “I say, paradoxically, that a great man of deeds is he who is aware of the exact limits of his possibilities, acts within their narrow framework and tries to avail himself of that which is inevitable.”⁸ I do not think this sentence reflects the chief lesson of *The Mediterranean* properly. Instead, it reflects the author’s own preference for eras, a time of structures, which leads the historian towards the sources of life itself, towards that which is the most specific, the most common and most indestructible in life, that which is human in the most unanimous way.

Braudel’s first work arose out of a vast quest carried out in all of the more important archives in the Mediterranean zone, an accumulation of historical information and an observation of the current Mediterranean reality, complemented by a writer’s skill reflecting relationships between nature and man, and between people themselves. The author’s thinking shows obvious influence by great French geographers who had a unique ability to write about geography from the angle of the humanities, and demonstrate the association between time and space. To construct his message, Braudel did not require any special collection of concepts. It was different with his second work. Originally intended as one of the volumes in the “Fortunes of the World” series edited by Lucien Febvre, it was meant to be a presentation of the economic history of the modern world (whilst Febvre himself was supposed to prepare a volume on the spiritual history of that age). There followed twenty years of work, full of searches of archives and manuscripts. Even the archives of exotic places like Moscow, Warsaw and Cracow

⁸ F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II* (quotation translated into Polish by B. Geremek; the afterword to this work does not exist in the Polish edition).

were searched. But mostly the extensive heritage of literature on this subject was used. It was important to select theoretical assumptions which allow economic life before the age of industry to be presented as a concrete whole. Braudel masters the methods of analysis and concepts used by economic teachings, but rarely makes use of them. He simply tells of the pre-industrial economy. But how! From 1,700 pages flows a breathtaking narrative about the things that have changed or remained the same in material life, the exchange of goods, people and money, and in the dialectics of changing economic hegemonies and microcosms. The first volume reveals the spheres of inertia in material life, which he describes as “the structures of everyday life,” presents the world of objects and gestures rooted in a specific period in the human race’s past, and shows what people ate and what they did. In the second volume, he examines economic life, taking this to mean everything that goes beyond consumption and concerns trade, and paints capitalism as a phenomenon different from the market economy that arose out of this economy but cannot be identified with it. Unlike Marx, but like Mommsen, Rostovcev and Pirenne, he does not regard capitalism as a means of production, but as a sphere of the most intensive economic activities geared to an intense profitable exploitation of capital, occurring in various eras. Finally, the third volume presents the manner in which the commercial zones centred on great cities (Venice in the Middle Ages, Genoa and Amsterdam in the 17th century, London in the 18th century) formed over the space of time; Braudel refers to them as world economies (*économie-monde*, from the German term *Weltwirtschaft*). To understand how these systems functioned, it is essential to know the differences between the ways in which the centre developed and the ways in which the periphery developed. Capitalism arises out of the interplay among these differences.

In this general presentation, it was necessary to cite a few theses which sound like definitions. But Braudel himself avoids definitions, and even if he does introduce one, he immediately withdraws from it towards a metaphor, a comparison or – best of all – a historical example, in the conviction that human history is so complex, rich and varied that it does not allow any artificial formulae. This may make it more attractive to read, but the entire mental construction may suffer. Each time it is necessary to carefully follow the author’s thinking, so that one may know in what sense he uses the concepts

that are in circulation. “Material civilization”⁹ (Braudel once used what I consider a better term: “Material life”), in a sense containing the circulation of money and the processes of urbanization. The “economy,” signifying trade exchange and the market. “Capitalism,” this appears in many different senses, but none of them is a definition but a vague description, sometimes a metaphor, and most often a presentation by means of a historical example.

Avoiding a more complex and technical set of concepts and shunning a formalized theory of economic processes, Braudel relates the economic industry preceding the age of industry, concentrating on the “coexistence of the petrification, inertia and sluggishness of what is still quite a basic economy, with restricted and minor, though powerful, movements of contemporary growth. On the one hand, there are the peasants living a virtually autonomous life in their villages, almost in the form of an autarchy; and on the other hand, there is a market economy and expansive capitalism, acting on the basis of an oil stain, producing little by little and representing a configuration of the world in which we live.” It is significant that this unorthodox type of writing was understood by economists who sought, in the simplicity of the words “daily consumption – a market economy – capitalism” a certain way of thinking about the economy without a formal mathematical language.

In practice, when presenting the economic history of the 15th–18th centuries, Braudel exceeds the timeframe suggested in the title and includes the entire millennium, thus pursuing German economic and historical thinking. Paradoxically, he is closest to the most modest craftsman of this school, Josef Kulischer, writing successive editions of his *Universal Economic History*¹⁰ in St. Petersburg and Leningrad. Braudel follows the trails blazed by Werner Sombart and Max Weber, with whom he engages in ceaseless conversation: he argues more often than agrees, and seems to shrug at the famous debate about the role of religion in the birth of capitalism (for where were the Protestants when capitalism flourished in Italian cities?), and is therefore skeptical about the rationality of capitalism. Present throughout the entire work is Marx, whom Braudel appreciates and knows well, and with whom

⁹ Translated into Polish as *kultura materialna*.

¹⁰ J. Kulischer, *Allgemeine Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, vol. 1–2 (Berlin, 1958).

he concurs more often than with other researchers of modern-day economics, and when their paths diverge over fundamental issues, Braudel seems to find a smile of sympathy for Marx, believing that Marx was excessively fascinated by capitalism as a phenomenon. Braudel did not share the enthusiasm of Marx or Weber for capitalism. He preferred the market.

Braudel considers the differentiation between a market economy and capitalism as the chief component of his construction. It is the history of the market, the gradual expansion of market ties and the formation of world markets and market microcosms that have formed the real substance of economic development since the middle of or even the beginning of this millennium. The market is the spirit of dynamism. Braudel writes about this in almost a lyrical manner: "The market spells liberation, openness, access to another world. It means coming up for air. Men's activities, the surpluses they exchange, gradually pass through the narrow channel to the other world with as much difficulty at first as the camel of the scriptures passing through the eye of a needle. Then the breaches grow wide and more frequent, as society finally becomes a 'generalized market society'."¹¹ Here, Braudel rediscovers the thoughts of Karl Polanyi.

However, capitalism is but an outcrop on the market economy; it appears at the heights of economic life and, armed with the strength of money and power, places itself above the laws of the market, above free competition. It is wrong to believe that it is capitalism that determines the entire modern economic system or to ascribe to capitalists the chief role in scientific progress, for this function is performed by small enterprises, in other words the sector of market competition. In the long term, capitalism demonstrates great possibilities of adaptation. One can say about it what a certain resident of Amsterdam said of trade in 1784: "It is often ill but never dies." Observing capitalism without sympathy, Braudel reveals its strength: this also applies to the present.

The historian's reflections turn towards the lessons that flow from the experience of hundreds of years of history. It is the voice of a liberal who has no delusions but who has faith in the future. There is much in the world's structure that needs to be changed, but can this be done while preserving what needs to be preserved? Can one

¹¹ Braudel, *Civilization and capitalism*, vol. 2, p. 26.

imagine a glorious revolution which, while demolishing inequality and domination, preserves that which is most important, and which Braudel describes as freedom at the roots, independent culture, a market economy without wildcards, plus a little brotherhood? Systems which substitute a monopoly of capital with a monopoly of the state merely increase the errors of weakness: if capitalism restricts the functioning of the market, these errors lead to a failure of the market. And it has not been possible to replace it with anything else so far. *Material Culture, the Economy and Capitalism* is a treatise on economic history, but from a very general angle. It is not an economic history of the world, but a history of the world seen from an economic viewpoint. Braudel attaches particular importance to this, but he is able to expand the viewpoint to include collective psychology and socio-cultural attitudes. His second volume, after a discussion of the market and capitalism, contains an excellent chapter on society as a “set of whole systems,” another on social hierarchies, the state and culture. The essence of Braudel’s program is a global view by a historian: the maximum expansion of his field of observation in time and in space. An expansion in time because then one can properly appreciate the importance of phenomena and grasp the permanence and scope of changes; an expansion in space because a field of comparison opens itself and it becomes possible to understand historical phenomena.

Braudel wrote: “We shall begin with description: first of Europe, a vital witness and better known than any other. Then of countries outside Europe, for no description can even begin to lead to a valid explanation if it does not effectively encompass the whole world.”¹²

Lastly, one should repeat that Braudel was not only a scholar, but also a great writer. From his pen, the French tendency towards rhetoric became a virtue. Braudel’s virtuosity with words sometimes got the better of the precision or pedantry of his academic language. Perhaps that is also a major feature of the greatness of his works and an indication of their permanence. The young generation of French historians seems to follow paths other than those pursued by one of their masters: instead of a global perspective in time and space, they pursue mainly monographic studies in which global history is nevertheless surveyed. The coexistence of various paths of research is no doubt one of the reasons for the privileged status of the French

¹² Ibid.

school of history in modern historiography. It is difficult to foretell in which direction historical writing and humanist thought will develop, but one thing is certain: In the autumn of 1985, Europe lost one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century, and after Braudel history cannot be fulfilled the way it was before; it is no longer possible to get to know “durable” spheres, a quasi-immobile history and great structures of inertia in the global history of the human race. The lesson bequeathed by the French master is that history is a science of change and continuity, of passage and of duration.

Debt of Medievalists (on Jacques Le Goff)

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“L’usure. Quel phénomène offre, plus que celui-là, durant sept siècles en Occident, du XII^e au XX^e, un mélange aussi détonant d’économie et de religion, d’argent et de salut – figure d’un long Moyen Age, où les hommes nouveaux étaient écrasés sous les symboles antiques, où la modernité se frayait difficilement un chemin parmi les tabous sacrés, où les ruses de l’histoire trouvaient dans la répression exercée par le pouvoir religieux les instruments de la réussite terrestre?”¹

With these words begins a small book by Jacques Le Goff on medieval usury. Placing the rhetorical layer to one side, this fragment is a good example of the particular approach towards history by the author of *Medieval civilization 400–1500*. Le Goff investigates not only long duration; apart from socioeconomic structures he is also, if not most of all, interested in structures of thinking and imagination, the sub-conscious, political authority, and religious rules. Just like Marc Bloch, Le Goff could deny he is a medievalist and claim that he is a general historian: he dealt not only with antiquity but also the beginnings of the modern era; he wrote about Michelet and his times, and he compared medieval folk culture with today’s folklore. In his articles written for the *Enciclopedia Einaudi*, he not only touches upon problems of the methodology of history and the social sciences (as in other works), but he also investigates other fundamental issues during history, such as decadence, memory, eschatology, and modern times. Le Goff is bound neither by divisions into periods nor the limits

¹ J. Le Goff, *La bourse et la vie: Économie et religion au Moyen Age* (Hachette, 1986), p. 9; translated into English as: *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*, transl. P. Ranum (New York, 1988).

of specializations, because as far as the economy and mental culture of the Middle Ages are concerned, he regards the Middle Ages as a period that lasted 1,500 years. Yet the subject of his research and reflections is the 1,000 years between the 5th and 15th centuries: he is a great medievalist, a historian of the extensive Middle Ages, to whom other medievalists owe a great deal, who loves to work in a team, who loves to suggest group work on research into religious orders or the history of salt, on attitudes towards work, time, examples, visions and dreams. The satisfaction he derives from academic honours certainly does not equal what he feels when he sees his ideas and discoveries reflected in his own work and the work of others.

At the end of his essay of ego-history, Le Goff wrote: "I have not finished and I do not feel that I am finishing."² The publication of *Saint Louis* confirmed this, just as his keen research into laughter in the Middle Ages did as well. So it is difficult to relate creative achievements that remain open to new horizons. I intend to describe several characteristic features of Le Goff's Middle Ages, present a few of his "discoveries," and indicate hypotheses that set research tasks.

From the very first pages of its introduction, *Medieval civilization* demonstrates a new Middle Ages. Le Goff does not choose between *Golden Legend* and dark legend, between the stereotype of the *Dark Ages* and the stereotype of a bright Middle Ages, but places himself on the outside and seeks ground, foundations, and structures.³

Anxious to implement this idea, he also reaches out to archaeology, climatology of the past, the history of techniques and also, if not above all, to an analysis of texts, so that he may grasp the thought structures, consciousness and sub-consciousness, and the original matrices of cultural creativity, thought and the sensitivity of the people of those times. Le Goff resorts to documents, maps, tales, iconography (the footnotes to illustrations are an excellent pattern of "microcosmic" analysis) not because he wants to illustrate his work with them, but because he regards them as the prime material of historical analysis, "for just like a written text, an image is a basic medium of expression and a capital document of culture."⁴ Due to the publisher's guidelines,

² See *Essais d'ego-histoire*, ed. P. Nora (Paris, 1987), p. 239.

³ J. Le Goff, *Medieval civilization 400–1500*, transl. J. Barrow (Oxford, 1988), author's introduction.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Medieval civilization is a concise, simplified work, devoid of critical content and presenting an original, new vision. In the foreword, Raymond Bloch correctly grasps the book's intention: "The narrow framework of traditional historical research has been burst apart, history is delved into, and those who apparently took the lead are confronted with the severe collective reality of each society, each culture."⁵ Apart from a small encyclopaedia of medieval culture (the name which Le Goff calls his work, too modestly), we have before us a masterpiece that sets the beginning of European medieval anthropology.

During the three decades since its publication, research into medieval history has gone ahead, the history of medieval mentality and ideology has risen from a methodological program to a subject of monographic research, and "ethnological perception" has been recognized by medievalists. Therefore, some of Le Goff's analyses, theses and hypotheses can be considered passé. But that is what gives the work its pioneering, progressive nature.

Here are a few examples. In the chapter on material life, the reader will not conceal his or her surprise – and sometimes disappointment – with the way in which economic and mental problems are juxtaposed. The stagnation of medieval techniques is viewed in the context of a sense of indifference towards movement. "What interested men in the middle ages was not what moved but what was still. What they were seeking was rest, *quies*."⁶ An investigation of the materials used at that time leads to the conclusion that "the Middle Ages in stone" is an illusion because "the middle ages was a world of wood, in those days the universal material."⁷ Thus, few traces have survived until our times: wood, straw, and mud (*torchis*). Iron was scarce, which explains why it works such miracles. And possibly more: "Perhaps one should again think here of a possible influence of an outlook linked to a form of religious symbolism on the evolution of skills. In the Jewish tradition wood was good and iron was wicked, wood was the word which brought life, and iron the flesh weighing one down."⁸ Another example is hunger. Le Goff claims, with some

⁵ R. Bloch, *Préface*, in: J. Le Goff, *La civilisation de l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1965), p. 12.

⁶ Le Goff, *Medieval civilization*, p. 202.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

exaggeration, that medieval Europe is a world of famine. This is certainly an overstatement, for the history of nutrition in the Middle Ages is spasmodic: there were periods of equilibrium between the size of the population and the quantity of food it ate, but there were also drastic and serious shortages. Yet, Le Goff displays on the one hand an economy in disequilibrium, on the edge of poverty, and on the other hand indicates the omnipresence of hunger as the source of fears of an obsession connected with nutrition. He examines the reality and psychology of hunger primarily on the basis of a few literary tests and presents this in a fascinating manner, although for the time being this is a research topic. Over the past thirty years, major progress has been made in social history, as with economic history, and this has refreshed the field of vision even more than research methods. The pages which Le Goff devotes to this topic represent the start of this development. Two examples: the ideology of a three-part society, and social outcasts. Referring to the works of Georges Dumézil and Vasilij Abayev, the author puts forth the assumption (subsequently expanded in Warsaw in 1965 at a conference on the subject of the beginnings of the European states) that triple functionality manifested itself at about the year 1000, and outlines the transformations which the social order experienced in the Middle Ages. Thanks to the exhaustive work of Georges Duby on this subject, we have learned of the prime importance of the medieval division into classes and about the wanderings of the triple-level "community of the faithful" described by Bishop Adalberon of Laon. Further work on this subject introduced the concept of triple ideology to social and literary studies on the Middle Ages. We find similar intuitions in the pages which Le Goff devotes to the social margins, those excluded from society, and this issue will later draw the attention of medievalists. Today we have in hand research into the urban and rural margins, on disenfranchisement and declassification, on differences and ethnocentrism, crime and prostitution in the Middle Ages. However, we must not forget that both Bérout's story about the lepers released into Isolda and the story of Helmbrech, a highwayman who assumes the name Devour-Land, become under Le Goff's pen symbols of life on the edge of the human community and illustrate the research into the anthropological and sociological margins of medieval Christian society. Thus, the trail has borne fruit. Le Goff's approach towards questions of medieval culture combines an examination of material life with an investigation into

collective intellectual life. The chapters on the structures of space and time and on mentality, sensitivity and attitude provide eminent proof of this. Le Goff analyses attitudes towards time on the basis of the structure of the liturgical year and agricultural year, the operation of bells and clocks, and of spatial and time measurement systems. He also proceeds to a sociological dismantling of the concept of time, only to reassemble it later, seeking that which Marc Bloch called “a vast indifference to time”⁹ (though in Le Goff’s opinion “men in the middle ages were singularly sensitive to it [time], [...] they were not precise [...] since the terms of reference of the event mentioned did not involve figures”¹⁰). Le Goff’s conclusion is as follows: “The definite feature of agricultural, seigneurial, and clerical time was their narrow dependance on natural time.”¹¹ This concise treatise precedes a study published in *Annales* a few years earlier. In the chapter on mentality, sensitivity, and attitudes, we encounter a range of lively analyses supported by texts that are always new and original and which were expanded in later works by Le Goff and other historians. Following in the footsteps of Marcel Mauss, Le Goff is fascinated with the body. He writes: “the body provided medieval society with one of its principal means of expression.”¹² Therefore, he examines attitudes towards the body, sexuality, food, clothing and gestures. It is enough to recall the last work of Le Goff (conducted jointly with Jean-Claude Schmitt) on the subject of gestures and his lively analysis of vassal rituals in order to appreciate the richness and intellectual profundity of these pages, full of beautiful turns of phrase: “Churches were gestures in stone, and God’s hand emerged from the clouds to guide medieval society.”¹³

Le Goff creates his vision of medieval culture on the basis of French anthropology and a comparative analysis of Georges Dumézil. In Le Goff’s opinion, the most important bait offered by anthropology, which attracts the historian’s attention, is that it is also a history of differences. An ethnological interpretation of medieval culture leads him to resume, in a different and original way, major medievalist topics such as the folklore of the Merovingians or of the 13th century, but

⁹ Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 175.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 181.

¹² Ibid., p. 357.

¹³ Ibid.

most of all allows him to define the particular attitudes and behaviour of medieval society. Examining these differences, Le Goff delves into the most profound structures of medieval culture. Comparisons lead him onto the path of general history.

In Jacques Le Goff's historical work we make several important discoveries. I know that talking of discoveries in a historian's work may sound excessive, but I believe historians are also entitled to their own inventions – they discover not only documents and facts, but also phenomena, classes, structures and ideas.

Intellectuals in the Middle Ages, one of Le Goff's first books, was written to order, connected with his research into intellectual work in the Middle Ages. This book about the birth of European universities discusses the emergence of a social-professional class in urban communities. In the beginning, he says, there were cities, and together with them there arose, in the West, an intelligentsia.¹⁴ One cannot but praise the innovative approach in this modest volume, which suggests a certain concept, lays down the chronological framework for its application, provides exhaustive supporting documentation, and provides an insight into the professionalization of work within the framework of the division of labour in cities. The intelligentsia of the Middle Ages – quite a discovery.

A quarter of a century later, Le Goff published *The Birth of Purgatory*. This great work, written according to the best erudite tradition of great French treatises, is an unusual expression of intellectual conformism, almost a provocation. First, the author invites the reader to investigate with him various complex *dossier*, and introduces the reader to the concept of “purgatory” which emerged between 1150 and 1200 (or 1250), and to which he accords a supreme place in the Christian system of the afterlife, only to say unexpectedly at the end of these five hundred pages that he is not at all sure of his evidence, and that the medieval concept of purgatory may be regarded as of secondary importance compared to the dichotomy of heaven and hell. Also non-conformist is the book's main idea: belief is investigated outside its theological (and dogmatic) substance, as if it were a segment of the imagination of those times.

And here lies the discovery. Le Goff said that purgatory “was born” in the 12th century as the third location in the afterlife. The

¹⁴ J. Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, transl. T.L. Fagan (Cambridge, 1993).

appearance of this word suggests a special expansion of thinking. The concept of “purgatory” also expresses – via solidarity between the living and the dead and via a faith in the effectiveness of prayer – a new way of handling death, from which the Church derives a major instrument of authority. *The Birth of Purgatory* ends with a personal note: “Il y aura toujours pourtant, j’espère, une place dans les rêves de l’homme pour la nuance, la justice/justesse, la mesure dans tous les sens du mot, la raison (ô raisonnable Purgatoire !) et l’espoir.”¹⁵

* * *

In 1982, after the introduction of martial law in Poland, I presented Le Goff’s last book to a hundred inmates – intellectuals, students, workers – in the internment centre, as well as Georges Duby’s book on marriage in feudal France and Aaron Gurevich’s book on medieval folk culture. In an atmosphere of spiritual communion and eschatological expectation, my lecture about “man and sin in the Middle Ages”¹⁶ seemed to introduce a certain dissonance. The Christian model of fear acts in a frustrating manner as a result of a rejection of hope; an attitude that Le Goff accurately sensed.

I have mentioned only two of his “discoveries.” There are others; many others. For example, dreaming. A short article about dreams in the collective culture and psychology of medieval Europe, the fruit of a seminar which he conducted at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in the 1960s, preceded the study called *Christianity and Dreams (Second to Seventh Century)*:¹⁷ after the condemnation and persecution of those who believed in dreams, they were regained (if not appropriated) by medieval culture in the 12th century. Another example is investigations into clothing regulations and nutrition in medieval literature. Yet another is *Mélines maternelle et défricheuse*, whom Le Goff (with Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie) discovered and declared a goddess of feudalism.¹⁸

¹⁵ Id., *The Birth of Purgatory*, transl. A. Goldhammer (London, 1984), quoted after: id., *La naissance du Purgatoire* (Gallimard, 1981), p. 486.

¹⁶ Publishing the text of this lecture (“Człowiek i grzech. Trzy książki o kulturze średniowiecznej,” *Znak*, 1983, no. 338, pp. 77–102), I added a few pages on various historical models of Christianity.

¹⁷ See J. Le Goff, “Le christianisme et les rêves (IIe–VIIe siècle)”, in: id., *L’imaginaire médiéval. Essais* (Gallimard, 1985), pp. 265–316.

¹⁸ See id., “L’imaginaire médiéval,” in: id., *Pour un autre Moyen Age* (Paris, 1977), pp. 307–331.

Medievalists are grateful to Le Goff for new methodological solutions, discoveries, monumental works, academic hypotheses, and outstanding collective research. We are also grateful to him for a new way of thinking, conceiving and investigating the Middle Ages with exemplary erudite precision, freshness of mind and honesty towards his pupils, friends and colleagues. We do not have many historians who can claim that without their work, the picture of the era they investigated would be different. Jacques Le Goff is one of them.

Polish Historiography

This article is based on a Polish manuscript (in the possession of Hanna Zaremska, copy in the archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre).

French text: "Historiographie polonaise," in: *Dictionnaire des sciences historiques*, ed. A. Burgière (Paris, 1986), pp. 522–553.

Polish historiography has a vital link with the tradition of research. Reflections on the work of predecessors are seen as a way of creating a knowledge base and research programs. The first attempts to take a critical look at the historiographical past appeared at the turn of the 1860s. In 1859, Henryk Schmitt (1817–1883), a representative of the Lelewel group active in Lviv, published his article *Pogląd na rozwój ducha i kierunek dziejopisarstwa polskiego* (A view of the spirit and path of Polish historiography), which focused on the art of writing history: he praised his master, Joachim Lelewel, for his emotional engagement in the art of storytelling, but criticized the Cracow scholar Antoni Zygmunt Helcel for the cool and impassionate way in which he described past events. A few years later, the "history of histories" appeared on the curriculum of the final years of study at the Main School in Warsaw. This school did not have a chair in history at that time, but when teaching the "history of histories" Józef Kazimierz Plebański (1831–1897), titular head of the history department, engaged himself in the development of Polish historiography in 1863/1864, criticizing earlier historians for their political bias, calling for the objective treatment of national history, and stressing that a glorification of the past is a denial of the highest principles of historical research. In their own research, neither of these historians exceeded the bounds of mediocrity, but their writings on historiography sparked a debate which left a permanent mark on Polish historical writing on the subject of the modern age. This was a debate

between “pessimism” and “optimism” in assessing the country’s past, in response to the question why Poland had fallen. Apart from differences of opinion on the art of writing history, there appeared the problem of political options, a choice between a policy of conciliation and aspirations for independence.

In the final decade of the 19th century, this debate assumed the form of a discourse between two communities of historians, the Cracow school on the one hand and the Warsaw school on the other. The concept of school, already used by Schmitt, and then by Cracow historians (Józef Szujski and Michał Bobrzyński), and Warsaw historians (Władysław Smoleński), was initially associated with the art of historiography practiced by a particular master (the schools of Naruszewicz and Lelewel), whereas later it was used to describe an ideological-political program which historical research was meant to serve or which resulted from learning about the past. The Cracow school, monarchist in principle, advocated the cult of the state and legal order, treated the fall of the Polish state as a disaster brought on by the national faults inherent in Poles, and opposed Polish independence movements, regarding them as a manifestation of the Polish trend of conspiracy (*liberum conspiro*). The Warsaw school attached prime importance not to the state, but to the people, thus rejecting the pessimistic view of the nation’s past and the loss of its independence, considering this to be the result of force (Tadeusz Korzon [1839–1918] demonstrated that the Polish state fell at a time when the people had already risen and regenerated); the historians who subscribed to this trend opposed the conservatism and conciliatory character of the Cracow historians, whereas in political life they lent their support to Polish political movements. In historiography, historians tend mainly to seek developments of and changes to the subject of research, progress in the methods of research, and in the tools of historical analysis, whilst treating socio-political ideology as a subject of the history of political thinking. The particular circumstances in which modern Polish historiography developed – the absence of an independent state, the country’s partition and enslavement – made their mark both on the method of writing history and perceiving the nation’s past, and on society’s interest in history. In Poland, the truth about the past remained a political problem, and the old dispute about the reasons for Poland’s collapse or the *liberum conspiro* remained topical. In the Middle Ages, Polish historiography developed mainly as a record of

contemporary events in order to perpetuate the achievements of rulers and of events important to the state and to the Church. An immigrant from the West, Anonym Gall, wrote the first comprehensive treatise on Polish history at the start of the 12th century. Describing himself as a “foreign pilgrim,” Anonym says he wrote his work, “so that he may not eat Polish bread for nothing.” He describes the doings of Polish dukes in the conviction that they should be discussed in schools and in castles; it is noteworthy that he says that this first record of history is to serve the needs of lay society. The subject of his chronicle is contemporary history, the glorious reign and knightly deeds of King Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed (who ruled from 1102 to 1138), but the chronicler – in keeping with historiographical convention – also sets himself the task of restoring the genealogical memory of the ruling dynasty. He combines the legends heard at court and the information preserved in documents into a collective genealogical-historical structure spanning over two centuries. The next chronicle about the past appears 100 years later, from the pen of Master Wincenty, bishop of Cracow, in 1208–1217. His fascination with the past assumes a different form than in the case of Anonym Gall: Wincenty not only introduces legends to the genealogy of the Polish state (including ones associated with Cracow), but also incorporates Polish history into universal history by writing fantastic tales that associate the history of Poland with the fortunes of the Greek and Roman civilizations. The same construction is used by the author (or compiler) of the *Chronicle of Greater Poland* (*Kronika Wielkopolska*) which appeared at the start of the 13th century and devotes a lot of space to the history of the Slavic peoples. The three Polish chronicles mentioned here, exhaustive literary works in compliance with the medieval convention of writing chronicles, preserve a chronological order, but do not quote any years. Although written to glorify the rulers of the time, they sometimes describe the distant past to a greater extent than the latest events. The ruler’s fame seems to be shown by demonstrating his roots with the past, by showing a mythology of the beginnings of national and state unity.

Throughout the Middle Ages, from the 11th to the 15th centuries, current events were recorded and incorporated into the chronology of sacred and profound events in a particularly rich assortment of annals. The chronicle of Janek of Czarnkow, archdeacon of Gniezno, written in 1366–1371, combines the intentions of a chronicler with the accuracy

of an analyst; this colourful record is biased, bearing certain features of a political pamphlet. The most illustrious work of Polish medieval historiography, *Annales seu cronicae incliti regni Poloniae* by the Cracow canon Jan Długosz (1415–1480), combines a pragmatic delivery of history with an analytical approach. This huge work, in 12 volumes, presents the history of Poland from the mists of time all the way to the final years of the author's life, and is based on royal and church archives, Polish and foreign annals and chronicles, and the author's own research. In his writings, the author thought in terms of a man of the Church; he spoke out in favour of strong power for the king, but a power subject to the Church. Sometimes he issued biased opinions and did not spare his spitefulness both towards the image of rulers and towards the attitudes of powerful dynasties and nobility. Długosz's work was quoted extensively over the next few centuries, but only in manuscripts and by specialists (it was not printed in its entirety until 1711, in Leipzig). According to some, the reason for this delay was "not to betray the secrets of the kingdom," but according to others the real reason was to disclose matters which rulers and powerful men preferred not to commit to memory. A summary of Polish history by Marcin Kromer, printed in 1555, was the first popular historiographical work. It was commissioned by King Zygmunt August and was printed and widely read in Poland and Europe. The creation of the post of court historiographer and the need to picture the national past led to the appearance of many works on Polish history, of various qualities, in the 16th and 17th centuries. Also worth noting is the treatise *De historica facultate* (Basel 1557) by the distinguished Hellenist Stanisław Iłowski, marking the start of reflections on the methodological problems of historiography.

But the first modern historiographical undertaking was *Historia narodu polskiego (History of the Polish Nation)* by Adam Stanisław Naruszewicz, commissioned by King Stanisław August and published in 1780–1786, although it only covers the period up to 1388. The author, a Jesuit, bishop, talented poet and translator, availed himself of rich source materials (which became the Naruszewicz Files, subsequently used by generations of historians and still in use today), and conducted painstaking analytical-historical work. He focused on the history of the state, and regarded a monarch's power as the criterion by which to judge facts and people, for history is a tribunal. Commentators on Naruszewicz, using the example of English masters

(David Hume, Edward Gibbon and William Robertson), expanded the field of observation of the nation's internal life, covered later periods of Polish history, and considered the qualities and faults of the nation. The recent loss of independence resulted in an increased focus on the past, and a romantic sensitivity shaped a new way of viewing the past, as expressed by Lelewel and his school.

Joachim Lelewel (1786–1861), lecturer in history at the Universities of Wilno and Warsaw, was forced to spend the rest of life in France and Belgium after the failure of the November uprising. He left an enormous heritage covering every period of national history; the edition of his works published in 1864–1868 ran to 20 volumes. Insofar as Lelewel's works on medieval geography and coinage are confined to the academic sphere, his works on Polish history stand out as an exceptionally coherent and ideological historiological confrontation, although Lelewel's complex and flowery style of writing makes his work difficult for modern audiences to read. His historical concepts, combining enlightenment with romanticism, exerted a fundamental influence on Polish historiography and on society's historical awareness in the 19th century, and were the subject of great political and ideological controversies at that time. A democrat by conviction, in his works he opposed the monarchical concept of history, but was also critical of the "commonwealth of the nobility." He regarded the people as the champion of Slavic liberty, setting them against the nobility, whose domination stemmed from violence. His history, subject to the laws of reason, treats time and space as socio-cultural concepts and accords the social factor a privileged position in the historical future. A surprisingly modern program.

From the 1840s on, there were increasingly intensive efforts to catalogue sources and create an inventory of manuscripts. Rules on criticizing sources, proper editing and the qualifications of researchers were formulated. At German universities, Polish historians encountered a critical teaching of history modelled on the empirical sciences. Under the influence of positivist thinking, Polish historiography underwent a process of modernization. A major role was played by historical faculties and seminars at Polish universities during the partitions: in 1862 in Warsaw, deprived of a university since 1831, there appeared the abovementioned Main School (transformed into a Russian university in 1869), at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow a chair in history was established in 1869, and in Lviv in 1882. Other

faculties engaged in history also possessed importance; most of all the history of law, but also the history of art, the history of medicine and the exact sciences (in Cracow in 1897, the chair in the history of the exact sciences was awarded to Ludwik Birkenmayer). In other cities, research was performed under the auspices of local scientific societies centred on libraries, archives and periodicals. In 1882, the Scientific Society of Cracow became the Academy of Skills, whose first secretary was Józef Szujski (1835–1883), head of the chair of Polish history. The Academy sponsored major publications of source materials, searches of foreign archives (in 1885 there was an expedition to Rome and in 1892 to Paris), and in 1880, on the 400th anniversary of the death of Jan Długosz, the first congress of Polish historians from all of the partition zones took place, which developed into a regular event in Polish academic life, first meeting once a decade, and then every five years. Apart from occasional publications by scientific societies and scientific-literary periodicals, the first historical-cultural periodical, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, appeared in Lviv in 1886. Two cities in Galicia, Lviv and Cracow, led the way in the academic stream in the middle of the 19th century, due to the specific nature of Austrian partition. In Lviv (as in Poznań, in the Prussian zone), the concepts of Lelewel prevailed for a long time. Here, under the influence of German historical seminars, an impressive centre of historical erudition, the Ossolineum, was formed, with the illustrious publishers August Bielowski (1806–1876) and Wojciech Kętrzyński (1838–1918), and in the university a seminar was founded by Xawery Liske (1838–1891), a pupil of Leopold Ranke, Johann Gustav Droysen and Phillip Jaffé. The Liske seminar produced a group of historians of the Middle Ages and the modern era, including the illustrious medievalist and researcher Stanisław Smolka (1854–1924) who, after his studies in Lviv, continued his work in Gottingen under Georg Waitz and was connected from 1876 with the University of Cracow, and Stanisław Lucas (1855–1882), a researcher of modern-day culture and diplomacy (Polish historians make constant use of his 44 volumes of extracts from the archives of Paris and Chantilly relating to the 17th century). The Cracow community of historians was politically linked to the conservative camp, whose political philosophy corresponded to their own “illusion-free” view of the nation’s past. Claiming that history should impart a political sense to a nation, the Cracow historians professed the imperative of truth and a critical method, and called for objectivism

in research. Their *maitre à penser* was Ranke (12 of the 18 most distinguished representatives of the Cracow school studied at German and Austrian universities). In 1879, Michał Bobrzyński (1849–1935), a historian of law and politics, presented his *Dzieje Polski w zarysie* (*An Outline History of Poland*). Both Cracow historians wanted to break with the militant model of national activity professed by Lelewel and the myth of freedom as a special value of Polish history. Bobrzyński regarded such an uncritical understanding of the past as a sign of anarchist trends corresponding to the national Polish character. His work focused on the history of the state, and when he added to the fourth edition of his work (Warsaw 1927–1931) the partitions, a time when Poland was without independence, he indicated that it was not armed activity but “organic work” that served to regain independence.

In the final decade of the 19th century, the attraction of the “new school” of Cracow historians already belonged to the past, and the way of thinking about the past professed by Warsaw historians began to be recognized. In a series of lively and thorough studies, Szymon Aszkenazy (1866–1935), a professor of Lviv University who studied law in Warsaw and history in Gottingen (under Max Lehmann), presented the sense and vitality of the struggle for independence. He opposed the pessimism of the Cracow historians, but was himself accused of pursuing a national hagiography. Nevertheless, the modernization of historical research undertaken by the Cracow historians set the basic trend for the development of Polish historiography which the expansion of neo-Romanticism in historical research was unable to influence.

After the regaining of independence, Polish historiography enjoyed an expansion of its organizational structures. In addition to the universities of Cracow and Lviv, further seats of learning emerged: in Warsaw, Wilno, Poznań and Lublin. Scientific societies, headed by the Polish Academy of Skills in Cracow and the Warsaw Scientific Society, sponsored academic research. The Polish Society of History was established, and the volume of historical periodicals increased. The number of academic historians grew. Apart from the traditional contacts with German academics, there was increased contact with French historians. Polish historians took part in all the quests and paths of methodological inspiration that characterize European historiography in the 1920s and 1930s. Of particular importance are the impulses of historical sociology represented in the Warsaw group primarily by Stefana Czarnowski (1879–1937), a follower of Durkheim and a pupil

of Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert. Marxism also exerted an influence, but only on the margins of academic communities. In the political situation after 1945, this was no longer just one source of methodological inspiration, but became the binding ideological doctrine.

The process of the encroachment of Marxism was slower and less steady than in the remaining countries of this zone. The marginalization of "bourgeois historians" was limited. The 1951 methodological conference of Polish historians, described as the first - although there were no others - and attended by a delegation of Soviet historians, was meant to lay down a new interpretation of Polish history and an assessment of people and events as "progressive" or "reactionary." Polish periodicals became full of articles on the contribution of Joseph Stalin or Bolesław Bierut to the teaching of history, and "bourgeois" views in historiography were sharply condemned (e.g. a leading Polish historical periodical carried an article in the French communist press by Jacques Blot about the revisionism of the *Annales* school). The point was to lay down Marxist ideological methodological thinking, and most of all a political interpretation of history that justified the alliance with the USSR and the power of the communist party. After 1956, doctrinal requirements regarding historiography decreased, but the rigors of political censorship remained, disqualifying certain topics (especially in recent history) or certain authors from publication, and attempting to adapt the interpretation of history to the political situation. The liberation of academic publications from the yoke of censorship in 1981 was merely an episode. Despite these restrictions, learning developed rapidly, keeping a brisk pace with the chief trends of world historiography.

An increase in the number of universities, the emergence of specialist research institutions within the Polish Academy of Sciences (the History Institute and the Institute of the History of Material Culture), the work of the Polish Historical Society, the existence of several dozen historical periodicals, all this expanded the framework of historical research and boosted the ranks of historians and the results of their work. Without attempting to list all of the authors and their works, let us merely draw attention to a few paths of research. The continuous development of historiography is worth mentioning. This applies especially to a few groups, of whom the following stand out by way of example: Marcei Handelsman (1882–1945), who in Warsaw trained a team of medievalists seeking additional inspiration

from Louis Happen, Henri Irene, and Alfonse Disc (Stanisław Arnold, Tadeusz Manteuffel, Wanda Moszczeńska, Marian Henryk Serejski, Marian Małowist, and Aleksander Gieysztor), as well as specialists in modern times, who had privileged associations with French historians with whom the master himself was associated (Ludwik Widerszal, Mieczysław Żywczyński, Stefan Kieniewicz, and Józef Dutkiewicz). This continuity expressed public opinion's sensitivity to "pessimism" and "optimism" in assessing Poland's past and to the problem of national independence. This continuity, although broken occasionally, can be found in the main problems and paths of research.

Concerning world historiography, Polish historiographers made a particular impression in the spheres of economic history, the historical interpretation of archaeology and the development of material culture.

Early history attracted the attention of the whole of Polish historiography. The meagre resources covering this period encouraged the development of analytical methods and resourcefulness in research. The tradition of this research (Tadeusz Wojciechowski in Lviv and Stanisław Kętrzyński in Warsaw) found its continuation in contemporary medieval studies, backed by the extensive development of medieval archaeology. The monumental work of Henryk Łowmiański on the beginnings of Poland, and the studies of Gerard Labuda and Aleksander Gieysztor, as well as the excellent people under the leadership of these scholars, have shown the early Middle Ages in a new light. Likewise, the 19th century investigations into the social order (Franciszek Piekosiński and Stanisław Smolka), continued between the wars by the works of Kazimierz Tymienieck and Roman Grodecki on medieval agriculture, were continued in the research of Benedykt Zientara and Antoni Gaşiorowski.

The history of rural areas and the agricultural system in the modern age attracted the attention of historians even before economic history became a respectable subject in the universities, although agriculture was a key problem in 19th-century Poland, and attracted the attention of historians. However, the modern treatment of this topic can be linked to the master of Polish economic history, Jan Rutkowski (1886–1949) who, having first studied the agrarian system in Brittany in the 18th century, occupied himself with Polish agriculture in the 16th–18th centuries, taking the distribution of national income as the chief problem of economic life. Rutkowski's way of thinking and his aim

to clarify economic history let its mark on the paths of economic historiography in Poland, even more so than the results of individual research. In 1962 Witold Kula, following researchers into economic development in the modern era like François Simiand and Ernest Labrousse, and into the beginnings of the age of industry in Poland, published a controversial analysis of the feudal economy which inspired historical-economic research in Poland and in other countries. The research into the Polish economy in the 16th–18th centuries by Jerzy Topolski, Andrzej Wyczański and Antoni Mączak also went in this direction. Thinking in terms of models also influenced studies of the Middle Ages – the work of Karol Modzelewski on the organization of the Piast state in the 10th–13th centuries (Wrocław, 1975) proposed a model of ducal law (*ius ducale*).

The development of historical research in Poland after the last war was genuinely inspired by Marxism, but was also encouraged by earlier work on this subject by the Cracow historian Franciszek Bujak (1875–1953) and his team. In 1925, he published a series of works under the title, *Badania Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* (*Studies into Social and Economic History*), comprising 42 titles on such varied topics as the history of prices, credit, natural disasters, the landscape, settlements and trade contracts, which built up to an unrivalled collection of documents. The name of the periodical founded by Bujak and Rutkowski in 1931, *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* (*Annals of Social and Economic History*), echoed the periodical created by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch two years previously. The broad research plan of the creators of the Polish school of socio-economic history influenced the development of this discipline among their own pupils (in Bujak's Cracow–Lviv group: Stanisław Hoszowski, Stefan Inglot and Helena Madurowicz; in Rutkowski's Poznań circle: Władysław Rusiński and Jerzy Topolski), and elsewhere. The work of Marian Małowist in Warsaw on the history of the handicrafts and trade capital, continued by a group of his pupils (Maria Bogucka, Henryk Samsonowicz, Antoni Mączak, Andrzej Wyrobisz and others) examined the problem of model differences in the comparative dimension of dualism in Europe's economic development. In Cracow, Celina Bobińska investigated the history of rural areas and social movements in the 18th–19th centuries. In every academic group, social history was dealt with by a great number of researchers and formed the subject of many works. Use was made of extensive resources in order to

present the history of the feudal classes in the Middle Ages (works by Andrzej Wyczański on the peasantry) and of later society (Jerzy Jedlicki on the nobility, Tadeusz Łepkowski and Stanisław Kalabiński on the history of the working class in the 19th and 20th centuries). An innovative approach marked the work of Warsaw scholars on the subject of social structures in the 18th and 19th centuries (Witold Kula, Janina Leskiewiczowa and others).

In the history of culture, a separate chapter is the work of Aleksander Brückner (1856–1939), a distinguished representative of positivist humanities, who was able to combine the rigours of analysis with a program of synthesis. In hundreds of books and articles he easily discussed various periods of Polish literary and cultural history. This area of research attracted and still attracts historians of various epochs (Henryk Barycz and Janusz Tazbir on the 16th–17th centuries, Emanuel Rostworowski and Jerzy Michalski on the 18th century, Jerzy Jedlicki on the 19th century), but the tradition of descriptive, ideographic history found fertile soil here. Fresh inspiration appeared at the crossroads of various humanist disciplines. In medieval studies, the historian Karol Potkański (1861–1907) was inspired by ethnology, whilst Jan Karłowicz (1836–1903), specializing in folklore, interpreted medieval legends; ethno-history turned out to be very fertile. The studies of Aleksander Gieysztor into the religion and mythology of the Slavs showed that adding the results of archaeological excavations and linguistic research to the structural humanities made it possible to show early medieval culture in a completely new light. The tackling of the development of mentality and sensitivities, as well as studies into social models of culture and folklore, manifested a methodological reconstruction of the research horizon. Similar trends, though to a lesser scale, apply to the culture of modern times, where the work of Czesław Hernas on folk culture in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the work of Janusz Tazbir on geographical concepts in the 16th–17th centuries, merit particular attention. Work on the history of the Church, covering historical sociology and mass religion on a broad scale (Jerzy Kłoczowski and his colleagues) proceeded in a similar direction. The Napoleonic legend was researched (Andrzej Zahorski and Stefan Traugutt), as well as the development of national consciousness in the 19th and 20th centuries (Stefan Kieniewicz and Tadeusz Łepkowski).

The work of historians coincides with the work of specialists in related disciplines, for example the work of historians of 19th-century

literature (Maria Janion and Zofia Stefanowska) and the work of historians of philosophy, inspired by the research of Stefan Świeżawski into medieval philosophy. Historical issues were conspicuous in the work of sociologists and philosophers. Following in the footsteps of Stefan Czarnowski, his pupil, Nina Assorodobraj, published her study on the social margins in 18th-century Poland in 1946 (in subsequent years, this topic was also tackled by such historians as Józef Gierowski, Stanisław Grodziski and Mirosław Frančić), and then she occupied herself with historical awareness. This group focused primarily on the history of thoughts and ideas: the works of Leszek Kołakowski on heterodox thinking in the 17th century, Bronisław Baczko on the thoughts of Rousseau, Krzysztof Pomian on the comprehension of history in the 17th century, Jerzy Szacki and Andrzej Walicki on European conservative thinking. New methods and issues did not appear to the same extent in the sphere of political history. Research into the history of institutions and the law, which flourished in Cracow and Lviv in the 19th century, was continued and expanded. An example of the modern approach, taking into account ethnological and sociological aspects, is the work of Juliusz Bardach on the medieval state and society, and on Lithuanian law on the threshold of the modern era. The tradition of Szymon Aszkenazy, continued in Cracow by Władysław Konopczyński (1880–1952), was transposed to numerous works on modern political history (Władysław Czapliński, Zbigniew Wójcik, Józef Gierowski and Emanuel Rostworowski) and on 19th-century Polish history (Stefan Kieniewicz and Henryk Wereszycki). But most of all, an entire legion of historians in every Polish group – it is difficult to mention even the most prominent names – occupied itself with the history of the 20th century, beginning with Poland's regaining of independence in 1918. The passion of assessing these events has not dwindled and retains its political acuteness. But the chief problem, posed by the original requirement of historiography, has remained: to establish the truth and say what really happened. Hundreds of doctoral theses, monographs and documentary publications cover this period. The interest of readers follows this direction and supports the traditional type of historical research, whilst the “new history” finds its way into the readership market only with difficulty. Political history is reluctant to accept sociological and economic elements (whilst psychology and psychoanalysis have virtually no influence on Polish historiography), because it shuns any determinism. “In political history,” wrote

Władysław Konopczyński, “everything appears in the aspect of possibility and freedom [...]. History gains sense as a history of human responsibility.”¹ This attitude conceals a certain methodological conservatism, but also meets Polish aspirations halfway.

Polish historiography has made regular use of comparative studies. That was the case with Joachim Lelewel, author of an excellent comparison of Polish and Spanish history, and that was also the case with key contemporary historians: medievalists Henryk Łowmiański, Aleksander Gieysztor and Gerard Labuda, and economic historians such as Witold Kula, Marian Małowist and Jerzy Topolski, as well as historians of institutions like Juliusz Bardach, and modernists including Emanuel Rostworowski and Stefan Kieniewicz. But this also applies to original research into general history, primarily in European countries, especially France, Germany, Italy and England, and in recent years the history of other continents, especially Latin America and Africa. These investigations covered various topics such as medieval universities, the emergence and development of national ties, the social margins, development of the metric system, economic backwardness and totalitarianism. Just as in work on the theory of history, a methodological analysis of social processes in the context of overall history, combining the economy, the state, society and culture, with psychological and sociological interpretations, was applied to a broader scale than only the history of Poland.

¹ Quoted after: E. Rostworowski, “Władysław Konopczyński jako historyk”, in: *Spór o historyczną szkołę krakowską. W stulecie utworzenia Katedry Historii Polski UJ 1869–1969*, ed. C. Bobińska, J. Wyrozumski (Cracow, 1972), p. 220.

Remarks on the Concept of the “Masses” in Social History

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The set of concepts which historians tend to use contains many metaphors taken from everyday language which have a specific meaning in everyday life. This adds significant value to historical writing because it does not create a technical linguistic barrier between the historian and the reader. However, one cannot deny claims by scholars in the remaining human sciences that the set of concepts in historiography is not precise enough and has not been clearly defined or not defined at all. This does not pose any obstacles to describing events, but it does create difficulties for historical analyses and synthetic reflection, and also prevents inter-disciplinary dialogue in the humanities. This can be attributed to certain reluctance on the part of historians to consider methodological weaknesses in their knowledge, but also to a justified conviction that the set of concepts of modern humanities is not applied to research into old societies and cultures. Therefore, one should expect both an increased effort of reflection by historians, and the use of empirical concepts by representatives of other disciplines who may find here extensive room in which to investigate, hypothesize and verify the usefulness of the concepts used.

The concept of the “masses” which we intend to examine is an imprecise term that casts doubt on its usefulness. The scale of emotions connected with this term is broad: ranging from fear of the masses as a force of barbarity and destruction, to fascination.

Two formal aspects in using this term are clear: first, it is used most often in dichotomy; and second, it implies a strong sense of value.

The term the “masses” is used as a contrast to the term individual, either in the sense of “great individual” or in the sense of individual

personality – it thus implies a rejection of organized groups and elites. The quantitative element plays an important role here, but it may be interpreted in various ways. The masses can be taken to mean a statistical set of individuals to which the laws of great numbers apply, but which are denied real existence at the same time.¹ John Stuart Mill demonstrated that the “masses” is not a collective concept but, like the terms “mankind,” “nation” and “classes,” refers to gatherings of specified individuals. But if we regard groupings of people in a subjective way, we can assume we are dealing with a quality specified differently than simply stemming from a numerical superiority and from the fact that the behaviour of groups of people possesses specific features different from the behaviour of individuals. Each case of juxtaposition of the terms “individual – masses” has its justification. A historian considering the fortunes and actions of the individual cannot avoid referring them to the actions of the masses; he or she considers how a ruler or politician was able to organize group actions by his subjects or citizens and how they assessed him, or examines the “entrenchment” of the thoughts, views and programs of individuals, as well as their social resonance among wider communities. The historian perceives the individual’s distinguishing feature in the fact that the individual exceeds mediocrity and climbs above the level of the “average person,” which was the quintessence of the concept of the “masses” in earlier social statistics.² The pair of concepts of “group – masses,” whatever type of organized group it refers to, symbolizes an organization and articulation on the one hand, and a kind of “shapelessness” on the other. The group turns to the “masses,” appears “in the name of the masses,” and plans and arranges the actions of the masses, or opposes them. In the sphere of politics, such an apposition of groups and masses is suggested regardless of whether the group is concerned with oligarchic or democratic forms of power, though in this latter case it is of fundamental significance. In the juxtaposition of “elite – masses,” the integral parts of the first concept are formed precisely as in the case of “distinguished individuals” – by opposing mediocrity, which seems to be inseparably connected with the concept

¹ J. Szacki, *Historia myśli socjologicznej* (Warsaw, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 255 ff.; the author aptly describes the difference in views in early sociology as a dispute between “nominalists” and “realists.”

² A. Quételet, *Physique sociale, ou essai sur le développement des facultés de l'homme* (Bruxelles, 1869), vol. 2, pp. 369 ff.

of the “masses”;³ the external association between the two also stems from the fact that the functions of the elites are frequently determined in relation to the masses over whom they exercise control.

In the descriptions here, it is clear that the term the “masses” possesses a negative connotation, signifying a lower value.⁴ Also, it appeared and was mostly used in the language of rejection and polemics. In the discourses of theologians and anti-revolutionary diatribes of ideologists, the word “masses” sounded the same: it was associated with sin, evil and ignorance. However the element of assessment cannot be reduced to pejorative associations. In romantic visions of culture, it is the people – not the masses – that were regarded as the upholders of tradition and a source of inspiration. Political Messianism and various kinds of populist programs postulated “going to the masses” (*aller aux masses comme on va à la lumière*)⁵ or “going amongst the people,” because the people and the masses were identified with each other: their significance was determined by their numbers. The concept of the “masses” was used not only to describe the reality, but also to express a value, as a criterion for assessing the hitherto activity and passiveness of the masses, their rights and their aspirations. It functioned in various paths of political thinking and in the language of political struggle – it was not suitable for use in scientific thinking. The concept of the “masses” entered the sphere of humanist reflection together with psychology and social psychology, before they assumed the status of separate disciplines.

The circle of Hegel considered the problem of masses as a gathering of people. Hegel himself viewed society as divided into three “estates”: agricultural, commercial-industrial and “general” or official, and also recognized an unorganised mass, not yet formal and therefore not yet able to play any political role.⁶ His opinion of this phenomenon is clear

³ J.S. Mill (*On Liberty*, [London, 1859], p. 134) writes: “[Public opinion is] always a mass, that is to say, collective mediocrity.”

⁴ Cf. A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans., revis. and corr. H. Reeve, 1839 (Project Gutenberg, www.gutenberg.org), part 1, chapt. XV: “The moral authority of the majority is partly based upon the notion that there is more intelligence and more wisdom in a great number of men collected together than in a single individual, [...]. and human pride is thus assailed in its last retreat.”

⁵ *Grande Encyclopédie Larousse*, entry: *Masse*.

⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the philosophy of right*, ed. A.W. Wood, transl. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1991), p. 203; cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Hegel und der Staat*

when he says: “Many individuals together – and that is what I like to understand by the word ‘people’ – form a certain ‘togetherness’, but as a multitude, they are a shapeless mass whose movements and actions are incomprehensible, wild and terrible.”⁷ If belonging to an organized structure of civic society is required in order to leave this elementary behaviour behind and abandon the negative features of the masses, one can see why Hegel rejected the concept of *Pöbel*, who regards this as a by-product of industrial development and as a victim of pauperization. This is not a proletariat in the sense of a distinct class, but a stratum of the social margins located below the “estates” and composed of declassified or un-integrated elements.⁸

In the second quarter of the 19th century, the “neo-Hegelians” continued with their master’s reflections on the subject of contrasts with the reality, going beyond the sociological framework and focusing more on psychological issues. In his theological and literary works, Bruno Bauer accords to the “masses” the negative role of opposition to the “spirit.”⁹ He regards the masses as a basic obstacle to human progress, as a set of delaying factors. Therefore, this applies to the spiritual reality rather than to the social one, and clearly bears the hallmark of condemnation. Considering the masses to be “one of the main results of the French revolution” and also a result of that revolution’s “neutralization of feudal discrepancies,” he regarded the overcoming of the “phenomenon of the masses” as a condition for further progress and as the final stage in the show-down with the old order.¹⁰ Similar thoughts were expressed by those who accord the masses a subjective and creative role (under the condition of “enlightenment” or the development of consciousness, as proven by Arnold Ruge). Marx refers to them in his earlier works, originally applying the term “masses” to the “lowest and most elementary”

(Munich, 1920), vol. 2, p. 121; Szacki, *Historia myśli*, pp. 201–213 (in reference to *allgemeine Stand* he uses the term “thinking class”).

⁷ Szacki, *Historia myśli*, p. 299.

⁸ Cf. W. Conze, “Vom ‘Pöbel’ zum ‘Proletariat’. Sozialgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen für den Sozialismus in Deutschland”, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 41 (1954), pp. 333–364.

⁹ D. Hertz-Eichenrode, *Der Junghegelianer Bruno Bauer im Vormärz* (Berlin, 1959), pp. 101 ff.; id., “‘Massenpsychologie’ bei den Junghegelianern”, *International Review of Social History*, 7 (1962), no. 2, pp. 231–259.

¹⁰ Cf. Hertz-Eichenrode, ‘Massenpsychologie’, p. 246.

levels of society who undermine the state-oppressor, and later develops his hypothesis about the proletariat's historic mission of demolishing the capitalist order: the theory that attracts the masses becomes a material force, whereas the masses, acquiring consciousness, become a revolutionary force. Both under the pen of Marx himself and under the pen of Marxists who expanded the theory of hegemony, the term "masses" has a neutral connotation, assigning to the masses the role of a substratum of collective activity. The dialectics of the activity and passiveness of the masses becomes the subject of political thinking in conjunction with the development of the parliamentary system and of the role of political parties.

At the turn of the 20th century, Werner Sombart attempted to give a precise definition of "masses."¹¹ He claimed that four meanings of the word should be distinguished: statistical, concerning which he regards statistics as "the science of the masses"; cultural, in which the masses are a social stratum that is unenlightened in relation to the elites; sociological, in the sense of an amorphous and disorganised group of people without a single group connection; and psychological, regarding a group of people sharing a certain communion of thoughts, feelings and attitudes, in other words "collective will." Here one can see a trend to make the term "masses" more objective and deprive it of its valuation function (especially negative valuations). This objective trend continued with the introduction of a distinction between the "mechanical masses," who fit Sombart's proposed definition of masses from a sociological point of view, and the "organized masses," who are socially organized.¹² Sombart's attempt at systematization was merely a list of ways of observing the masses rather than a definition of the categories of the social reality, apart from which, contrary to the author's intentions, it applied better to former societies than to industrial society. Even in political discourse in which the obvious conditions of demagoguery functioned, the concept of "masses" was used in a positive sense only when it was accompanied by an adjective or other qualifier: people's, workers', peasant, revolutionary and similar,

¹¹ Sombart expounds this in *Deutsche Volkswirtschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1903) and in *Sozialismus und Soziale Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert* (Jena, 1897); he uses an edition with the altered title: *Der proletarische Sozialismus* (Jena, 1924), vol. 2, p. 99.

¹² P. Tillich, *Masse und Geist* (Berlin, 1922).

whereas without an adjective it was merely a synonym for a great number and of the attendant possibilities. The thesis about the natural passiveness of the masses and their stimulation by organized groups emerged at that time. Georges Sorel, a theoretician of syndicalism, demonstrated that the broad masses of society are always passive, and that only the fighting minority can develop their potential for action,¹³ whilst the socialist Robert Michels opposed the “collective” nature of the actions of the most valuable individuals, in other words “individualism,” as the bearer of humanity’s moral progress. In his later thinking (which earned him the opinion of pro-fascist), Michels regarded the oligarchisation of all mass movements and the formation of party elites as an iron principle of politics.¹⁴ The experiences of revolution in the 20th century also cast a new light on the role of the masses which had been viewed in the previous century mainly in the context of the great French revolution: the call of the Jacobins to act in the name of the “people of the future” was widely echoed in the programs of revolutionary movements which also referred to typical methods of struggle by minorities – terrorism.¹⁵ Sombart’s objective proposal failed, and the positive valuation of the concept of “masses” seemed to become part of the ideological sphere as a “false consciousness.”

The conviction about the negative and destructive nature of specific elements of group behaviour found its way to human consciousness much more easily. Georg Simmel regarded as a “social fate” the fact that individuals are brought together and united in masses mainly by the most primeval and fortuitous aspects of human personality.¹⁶ A conviction about the inevitability of future eras of power over the masses or of the “dissipation” of the masses, which accompanied the beginnings of social psychology, gave the very concept of “masses” a negative load and turned it into an instrument of a pessimistic vision of the social world. This applied less to the work of Gabriel Tarde on the “rights to emulate” those who rule social life and on the

¹³ G. Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence* (Paris, 1925).

¹⁴ R. Micheles, *Begriff und Aufgabe der ‘Masse’* (Frankfurt am Main, 1902), pp. 3 ff.; cf. H. Katz, “Ruchy społeczne – próba definicji”, *Historyka. Studia Metodologiczne*, 1 (1967), pp. 5–29; J. Baszkiewicz, F. Ryszka, *Historia doktryn politycznych i prawnych* (Warsaw, 1970), p. 336.

¹⁵ J. Baecheler, *Les phénomènes révolutionnaires* (Paris, 1970).

¹⁶ Cf. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, transl., ed. and introduction by K.H. Wolff.

growing importance of the phenomenon of the "public" in the modern world¹⁷ than to Gustave Le Bon's controversial book on the "psychology of crowds."¹⁸ Indicating that a crowd is a particular collective form of society, Le Bon counter-posed a "spirit of the crowd" and the "spirit of the individual," demonstrating that a crowd acts under the influence of collective suggestion which releases human instincts. Le Bon considered the main features of crowd psychology to be unanimity, emotion and primitive thinking. A man in a crowd appears as a barbarian, suggesting the destruction of culture. Thirty-five years later, José Ortega y Gasset, postulating a quantitative interpretation and a translation of the concept of "crowd" into the language of sociology, spoke of a "social mass," considering this to be the same as the mediocrity which is associated with negative morality.¹⁹ He uses the word "mass" heedless of any social stratification, for in every single social stratum he perceives a mass and a minority: the word "mass" means a way of existence and a spiritual attitude. The lively and controversial essay by this Spanish philosopher was most of all a manifesto of the catastrophism of civilization. The subject of his deliberations was not the concept of "masses," but a "revolt of the masses," the destructive role which the masses were to play in 20th-century European civilization. One can certainly say that the word "mass" carried a negative burden under the pen of Ortega and in writings in general.

Even Karl Mannheim, who postulated a program of "mass education" as a way of defending democracy against totalitarianism and who perceived positive opportunities in group integration, valued the concept of "crowd" or "masses" in negative terms (in any case, the word for both of these concepts is the same in German).²⁰ Mannheim claimed that treating every single group of people as a "mass" or

¹⁷ G. Tarde, *Les lois de l'imitation* (Paris, 1890); id., *Etudes de psychologie sociale* (Paris, 1898); cf. A. Kłoskowska, *Kultura masowa. Krytyka i obrona* (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 96 ff.

¹⁸ G. Le Bon, *The crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, transl. from French (London, 1920).

¹⁹ J. Ortega y Gasset, *Bunt mas i inne pisma socjologiczne*, transl. P. Niklewicz, H. Woźniakowski (Warsaw, 1982). A description of the views is presented by: S. Cichowicz, "Ortega y Gasset albo pasja życia", in: J. Ortega y Gasset, *Dehumanizacja sztuki i inne eseje*, transl. P. Niklewicz (Warsaw, 1980), pp. 5–24; J. Szacki, Introduction, in: Ortega y Gasset, *Dehumanizacja*, pp. ix–xliv.

²⁰ K. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist* (London, 1943), chapt. 5.

a “crowd” lay at the roots of Ortega’s pessimism, whereas unorganized groups should develop into institutionalized ones, and this inculcated institutionalized behaviour among individuals. Such an enlightenment of the masses may offer protection against a natural tendency towards the irrationality and “epidemics of emotions” that are inseparably associated with the masses as a sociological and psycho-sociological phenomenon. Social psychology received the proper instruments of academic research thanks to works on the forms of collective behaviour and social interaction.²¹ In these works, the dilemma of evaluating the concept of “social masses” is eroded, or rather transposed to the sphere of great debates on the subject of “mass society” and on “mass culture,”²² whilst the term itself seldom appears because it is of little use in empirical studies. Even the word “crowd” loses its evaluating function when applied to specific situations. This also applies to the distinction between *crowd* and *mob* in English.²³ This latter expression, possessing a clear negative undertone, means a “crowd in a high state of nervousness” and is thus neutralized. Unlike a philosophical reflection on the role of the masses, especially the essayist “crowd psychology,”²⁴ social psychology did not refer to history. Rather, it is historians who turned to social psychology in their search for ways to modernize the history of culture, establishing research programs into the history of mentality; by the way, the inspirations and concepts of anthropology proved much more useful in this sphere. But social history made much less use of modern social psychology, mainly because the subjects of empirical psychosocial research were not properly suited to the possibilities of sourced historical research. Social history found better inspiration in “crowd psychology,” usually rejecting its pessimistic philosophy and adopting the conviction that the common behaviour of

²¹ *Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. G. Lindzey (Cambridge, Mass., 1954); N.J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (London, 1962); J. Stoetzel, *La psychologie sociale* (Paris, 1963).

²² Cf. *Kultura masowa*, ed. C. Miłosz (Paris, 1959); E. Shils, “Considérations théoriques sur la notion de ‘société de masse’”, *Diogenes*, 1962, no. 10 (39), pp. 50–79; Kłoskowska, *Kultura masowa*, esp. chapt. 3.

²³ *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences* (New York, 1931–1935), vol. 4, pp. 612–613, vol. 10, pp. 552–554.

²⁴ Le Bon even devoted a separate book to the role of crowds in the French revolution (*La révolution française et la psychologie des révolutions* [Paris, 1912]), in which he argued that the revolutionary masses are “a subversive social residue dominated by criminal mentality” (p. 61).

a group differed from the individual behaviour of each of its members. The element of valuation inevitably returned. In simple terms, one can say that research into social and political movements was usually accompanied by an optimistic philosophy about the positive role of the "masses," whereas work on the subject of crowds was permeated by the conviction that consciousness was irrational and of low value in mass activities. The terminology often used concealed intentions, whereby the term "crowd" conveyed a sharper emotion than "masses." One can also observe changes in the way these terms were used, as the higher the level of social and political development, the lower the use of the word "masses." It was assumed that the only rational expression of collective action was that which could be described as political; in other words, action premeditated by the institutions created by a modern political society.

Mass events are classified most easily when they are inspired by elementary needs. In ancient Rome²⁵ and in pre-industrial Europe²⁶ the most frequent cause of upheaval was food shortages resulting from crop failures or trade problems: fear of starvation or starvation itself pushed people towards revolution. Elementary and instinctive stimuli cause a similar reaction in an individual and leads that person to join a crowd or mass in which the chief forms of expression are not thoughts but action, mainly of a destructive nature.

But is the action of the masses inseparably connected with this elementary characteristic? Edward P. Thompson, criticizing views about the "spasmodic" nature of peasant upheavals, demonstrated that a considerable role in shaping the collective behaviour of crowds in the 18th century was played by customs, culture and reason.²⁷ In mass events, appearing to the observer merely as a spasmodic outburst of anger, Thompson perceived an awareness of the adherence of demands to the traditional structure of rights and duties, thus causing a consensus to act. In this way, mass movements in pre-industrial societies are protected against negative evaluation in the structure of social life and of the common characteristics which Tönnies described as

²⁵ P.A. Brunt, "The Roman Mob", *Past and Present*, 35 (1966), no. 6, pp. 3–27.

²⁶ G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730–1848* (New York, 1964).

²⁷ E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century", *Past and Present*, 50 (1971), pp. 76–136.

Gemeinschaft. This applies to peasant revolts,²⁸ where passive resistance and general silence erupt in shouting and violence. But even in the case of a grouping of people dictated by chance, not within a village or castle, but, for example in the market place, local community ties and personal acquaintanceships retain their meaning and diminish the chance nature of a crowd, and the eruption of emotions constitutes a threat to group rights and interests. This is the source of urban upheavals in the feudal age, for crowds now become anonymous, and in the end, emotions cannot be reduced to rational group interests.²⁹

In spontaneous mass action, politics manifests itself in various forms, either inherent in the cause of the action, or formulated in the demands put forth. Fear of the power of the mob has accompanied political thinking since its ancient beginnings, but it is part of a theoretical mental rejection rather than a description of the social reality. Usually, groups intent on political power exploit the passiveness of the masses to achieve their aims. Solon is supposed to have said of the Athenians that each of them individually appears to be a cunning fox, but when gathered on the Pnyx they become a flock of obedient sheep. Regarding mass upheavals, they flare up due to a direct threat to elementary rights and needs, whilst the way they develop is usually steered by political groups.

The creation of a “civic society” in modern times has altered the role of the masses in politics, not only because it has extended the contract between the rulers and the ruled,³⁰ but also because it has introduced the masses as a physical presence, as well as public opinion to the structure of political life, and expanded the elementary interests of the masses to include political rights. The forms of action by crowds retain their instinctive and spontaneous nature (the violence of reaction spreading like an epidemic), but now they permeate other spheres, such as national rights.³¹ With reference to the situation in

²⁸ B.F. Porshnyev tries to analyse the patterns of peasant opposition in his *Feudalism and National Masses (Fieodalizm i narodnyje massy, Moscow, 1964)*.

²⁹ E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Le Carnaval de Romans: de la Chandeleur au mercredi de Cendres (1579–1580)* (Paris, 1979).

³⁰ H.J.S. Maine, *Ancient Law: Its Connection with the Early History of Society and Its Relation to Modern Ideas* (London, 1861); with a distinction between *status societies* and *contract societies*.

³¹ Cf. T. Łepkowski, “Tłum w powstaniu listopadowym”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 68 (1961), pp. 153–175.

the Roman Republic, Tacitus³² wrote that the aristocracy required freedom, whereas the people needed bread: in today’s societies, the slogan “bread and freedom” mobilizes mass movements and the action of crowds.

The forms of social protest develop in line with the development of modern political life. This is expressed in the development of organizational groups within societies. The 1789 revolution was marked by the activity of sections and spontaneous associations of the sans-culottes; in the June 1848 uprising, insurgent activity was led by unions of artisans gathering increasingly proletarian workforces employed in construction, metallurgy and the furniture and clothing industries, and workers’ protests in the second half of the 19th century were led by organized trade unions and political parties.³³ Vertical integration provides the basis on which to impart an institutional form to the conduct of the masses and creates channels via which the masses can articulate their desires.

This applies not only to the countries of the West, and can occur in various ways. The role of the Bazaar in Teheran as a place of action by crowds is well known.³⁴ However, this was a specific structure organized into guilds and surrounded by fear and hatred from the poorest groups of society, who were excluded from it. In 1926, the Bazaar comprised one hundred various corporations of artisans, seventy trade corporations and forty corporations of unqualified workers. The influence of religious leaders and political parties has passed through the Bazaar at key times in history, which creates the impression that social unrest is directed, but it also stems the tide of emotions and rationalizes them.

The experience of totalitarianism in the 20th century demonstrates not only the weakness of these processes of institutionalized behaviour, but also their strength, because the destruction of group ties and structures and the demolition of the system of representation are an inseparable part of totalitarianism. To give one example, at the Nuremberg rally in 1933, Hitler did not refer to the “salutary instinct

³² Tacitus, *The Histories*, I, 5.

³³ Cf. C. Tilly, L. Lees, “Le peuple de juin 1884”, *Annales ESC*, 29 (1974), p. 1074.

³⁴ E. Abrahamian, “The Crowd in Iranian Politics 1905–1953”, *Past and Present*, 41 (1968), pp. 184–210.

of the masses” as the reason for the rightness of national socialism.³⁵ Creating collective psychosis, Nazism referred to those negative and destructive characteristics which conservative thinking throughout the ages had considered to be the hallmark, the “spirit of the masses,” and had enjoyed considerable success. But the duration of totalitarianism also depends on the passiveness of the masses. The basic strategy of all authoritarian governments is not to allow independent institutions and groups not controlled by the apparatus of authority to develop, for that seems to guarantee that the masses will be held in a psychosis of fear and uncertainty on the one hand, and in silent acceptance on the other. But it is obvious that an absence of institutional forms of collective action creates conditions in which the only expression of activity by the masses is the crowd – and an eruption of moods.

For the actions of masses in the modern world do not find such obvious support and justification as when referring to the traditional rights of society. To a historian, a mass movement indicates the rejection of the forum of modern public life; it is like using stone tools in the space age. The experience of the 20th century poses new questions about the reason for the formation of the masses, for these spontaneous “crowd” protests create a certain self-discipline, a feeling of collective dignity, an expansion of the scope of economic needs. In any case, the term “elementary needs” is imprecise. Does it include the need for freedom? Modern research has led to the assumption that a feeling of freedom is encoded genetically,³⁶ but there is a fundamental difference between a desire for bread and a desire for freedom. If broad consensus for a desire for freedom is noted in a mass movement, if this aspiration creates a full communion of collective behaviour, then the concept of “masses” acquires a completely different meaning to the one imparted by traditional political and social thinking.

The new role of mass movements in the 20th century appears not only in the modern structures of political life and institutions, but also in conditions of hypertrophy and ossification of these structures. In both cases, mass movements lead to an eruption of emotions in violent form, representing a threat to society. But the degree of the danger depends on the level of awareness of the participants to these movements. A reference to certain basic values dilutes the

³⁵ E. Vermeil, *L'Allemagne. Essai d'explication* (Paris, 1945), p. 360.

³⁶ N. Chomsky, *Dialogues avec M. Ronat* (Paris, 1977).

destructive charge of mass movements. Referring to the remarks of Edward P. Thompson, one can say that even in the 20th century, mass movements – uprisings, spontaneous unrest, strikes and demonstrations – one can see a reference to a breach of group rights. A feeling of a communion of aspirations seems to justify mass movements in 20th century politics.

The role which mass movements attach to past events casts a significant light on their “feeling of justification.” Very often, the past merely serves as a historical costume for current demands, but there is no doubt that many mass movements use the past not to convey a message, but the past is actually the content of their program; a program that denies the present status quo because it is a denial of what went before, therefore the easiest remedy is to return to the old, traditional structure of relationships. In this way of thinking, one perceives a desire for a utopia of the past,³⁷ and an escape to the past due to an inability to create a consensus regarding the future. Obviously, a picture of the past formed in such a situation does not stand up to historical scrutiny; it is the result of various procedures of distortions or hasty updates. But here we are concerned with a general assessment of this type of collective attitude. Usually, one perceives its negative effects: a distorted picture of the past injures and restricts the imagination, widens the gulf with historical time (or progress, though this is an out-dated concept), and creates a false consciousness. I think it is also worth drawing attention to the other side of the coin,³⁸ i.e. the act that referring to the past stems from a desire to prove the correctness of present claims. Quoting information and myths about the past may not be meant to distort the past on purpose, not to express demagogical rhetoric, but to express basic values and rights. In this way, clear individual morality is adjusted to ambiguous collective morality. Thus, historic symbolism serves to convince society of the rightness of a protest, to justify disputes and to demonstrate that the other side is not right.

But to what extent is it correct to compare mass movements in the pre-industrial age with those of the 20th century?³⁹ Today, a reference

³⁷ Cf. J. Szacki, *Utopie* (Warsaw, 1968), pp. 82 ff.

³⁸ Cf. B. Baczeko, *Les imaginaires sociaux. Mémoires et espoirs collectifs* (Paris, 1984), pp. 231 ff.

³⁹ Cf. Rudé, *Crowd in History*, p. 5.

to common law no longer works, while reference to tradition only works to a limited extent, and in a way that sets people apart more than attitudes and behaviour. However, there is a very clear awareness of the correctness or justification of demands supported by basic religious, national or social values. Here, the historian senses that the research tools at one's disposal are inadequate, but may not realize that these new phenomena cast an important light on the concept of the "masses."

The metaphorical character of the term "mass" or the "masses" is undeniable, but is not a satisfactory argument with which to eliminate the term itself and all its synonyms and derivatives. One should consider various possibilities, for social history includes the problem of the inertia of milieus which may either support or encumber social change. One must consider the relationship between interests, rights and duties on the one hand, and moral values on the other. Separating the concept of the "masses" from its negative connotations allows us to apply the problem of values as the criterion by which to judge the collective actions and consider whether they are rational, even if they appear irrational in a modern context.

Concerning Traditions

In: *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 79 (1972), pp. 358–591 (review of J. Szacki's book *Tradycja. Przegląd problematyki*, Warsaw, 1971)

Jerzy Szacki's new book is a cross between various humanist disciplines; in its program, it is interdisciplinary. Considering its subject, it might even be classified under the "interdisciplinary history" pursued by American historians.¹ But perhaps it is better not to expand our horizons unnecessarily and admit with satisfaction that the erasure of the borders between humanist disciplines is a natural process, and treat Szacki's book as a "related" work. For it provides an opportunity to reconnoitre the situation with the human sciences, and I wish to limit my remarks about Szacki's book to this.

The relationships between history and sociology are complicated. The program of the integration of the humanities, regarded since the beginning of the 20th century as a condition for academic progress, has assigned a special role to these two disciplines. In the human sciences, history and sociology were meant to be disciplines with the longest tradition of cooperation, closely connected to each other and serving as an example of integration. For initially sociology was the child not only of philosophy, but also of history, from which it acquired literary habits, rules of construction and, most of all, resources. Later there were regular exchanges between history and sociology; a flow of information, methods and issues, and a transfer of researchers. The border between them was fluid; it was a simplification to claim that sociology dealt with the present while history dealt solely with the past – research and literary practice denied this. The annexation of subjects, books and people was frequent and mutual:

¹ See the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* that appeared a few years ago.

sociologists regarded the work of intelligent and skilled historians as part of their work, whilst historians were eager to support that work of sociologists which displayed a conscientious and professional handling of historical issues.

But there has also been no shortage of disputes in the relations between sociology and history.² In fact, they have been occurring since the end of the 19th century, and every now and then erupt with renewed force and in a different form. But this is a separate topic; it would be interesting to monitor these disputes and debates, and investigate the significance of the argument between the “historian and the sociologist in the development of humanist sciences.” Let us note that the divide between the two disciplines was only apparently the centre of attention. In fact, the development paths of both disciplines were a subject of interest. Although the sense of each debate differed, their basic subject was, on the one hand, the relationship between what is “individual” and what is “correct” in human affairs and social relationships, and on the other hand, the relationship between “empiricism” and “theory” in humanist research.

Thus, the dispute between historians and sociologists showed that the links between the two sciences were crystal clear. These disputes have weakened in recent years because the connections between history and sociology are loosening. This is a universal trend, confirming the views of sceptics in which the program of humanist integration is incompatible with the real development trends of science. This can be seen in the Polish humanities of recent years, and is also attributable to their path of development since the war. The traditions of “historical” sociology, going back to the medieval cult of the saints and the police archives of the 18th century, were very strong in Poland, but they were severed by the war and by the enforced inertia of Polish sociology during the post-war years. After 1956, Polish sociology developed under the influence of Anglo-Saxon models, and for reasons which cannot be analysed, empirical studies pushed what is commonly referred to as theoretical-sociological issues to the side-lines. At the same time, the Polish community of historians,

² Without trying to present a rich Polish and foreign literature on these discussions, it is worth noting the interesting comparison between the methods of both disciplines: R. Hofstadter, S.M. Lipset, *Sociology and History. Methods* (New York, 1968, “Sociology of American History Series”, 1).

perhaps influenced by the memories of the primitive “sociologies” that were expounded for a while, viewed the methods and concepts of sociology with mistrust and scepticism. With contacts between history and sociology thus weakened, the reasons to hold dialogue and debates also withered. The mutual flow of information also died: reviewers of sociological periodicals ignored history, and historians did not attend sociological debates. The present increasing indifference in relationships between Polish historians and sociologists is arousing the concern of both groups.

Regarding Jerzy Szacki’s book, one must say that here we are dealing with open thinking towards history. Szacki avails himself of the research of historians, is interested in the history of historical thinking and with the patterns of research by historians, demands that historical issues be present in sociological research, and calls for closer ties between sociologists and historians.³ He himself investigates the past and belongs to one of the most prolific pairings in the Polish humanities, that of Nina Assorodobraj and Bronisław Baczko, who undertook studies in the history of social thinking.⁴ It is worth pointing out that this research exceeds its classic (if not traditional) boundaries and in practice combines the inspiration and the methods of sociology, philosophy and history. It probably owes the least to the last of these, emanating directly from the works of Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber and Ernst Cassirer, and only in recent years has it found possibilities of partnership and cooperation in the new paths of contemporary historiography.⁵ The programmatic aim of the history of ideas has been to seek the proper instruments with which to investigate social consciousness. The programs of that research coincided with the pursuits of historians who, inspired by various methods, embarked upon the path of model thinking.⁶

³ At the congress of sociologists in Poznań in 1970, Jerzy Szacki’s report opened a symposium on “sociology and history.”

⁴ See R.C. Fernandes, “Vision du monde et compréhension historique”, *Annales ESC*, 26 (1971), pp. 387–398.

⁵ It is worth comparing A.O. Lovejoy, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore, 1948); and F. Gilbert, “Intellectual History: Its Aims and Methods”, *Daedalus*, 100 (1971), no. 1, pp. 80–97.

⁶ This applies not only to economic history, but also to socio-cultural history (B. Leśnodorski on Jacobinism, J. Tazbir on Sarmatians, E. Rostworowski on Polish enlightenment).

Use of the concepts “vision of the world,” “world outlook,” and “ideology” no longer set philosophers, sociologists, and historians apart, but began to unite them.

Nevertheless, Jerzy Szacki underlined more than once his difference from historians. In the introduction to his first book, indicating the fragmentary nature of his analyses, he wrote: “This book should not be considered a historical work in a strict sense. It is historical insofar that certain historical material has been used for it. However, a historian would have made completely different use of it; moreover, he would have enriched it considerably.”⁷ In his next book several years later, he confesses in the introduction: “In writing this book it has not been my intention to fill the ‘loopholes’ in people’s knowledge of the political movements at the time of the Great French Revolution [...]. Burrowing through piles of foreign books and brochures would not be exciting if its sole purpose were to present readers with the opinions of specific counterrevolutionary writers.”⁸ So the author’s intentions were quite different from those which the authors of historical works normally write about in their introductions. Last but not least, in a book on traditions, historians and history are treated as a subject of analysis. Here Szacki writes: “For tradition, there is no great pantheon of a guild of historians – a pantheon of chronology.”⁹ But calling to go beyond the traditional boundaries between the disciplines, he announces the following: “I am writing this book as an amateur, and not as a sociologist or historian, though I have appeared in these roles long enough to retain these or other professional tendencies and habits.”¹⁰

It is no coincidence that I recall Szacki’s earlier works, because the uniformity and consistency of his research is striking. In his book about national issues in the minds of the revolutionary nobility, he considers the role of the theory of the nation in the ideology of the “noble revolutionaries” of 1815–1831, and is particularly disturbed

⁷ J. Szacki, *Ojczyzna – naród – rewolucja. Problematyka narodowa w polskiej myśli szlacheckorewolucyjnej* (Warsaw, 1962), p. 9.

⁸ Id., *Kontrrewolucyjne paradoksy. Wizje świata francuskich antagonistów Wielkiej Rewolucji. 1789–1815* (Warsaw, 1965), pp. 5 ff.; Szacki also shuns the idea of a diachronic study suggested by the title: “Another feature of this book is that chronology plays an insignificant role in it” – fortunately, this idiosyncrasy regarding time is less evident in the book itself.

⁹ Szacki, *Tradycja. Przegląd problematyki* (Warsaw, 1971), p. 268.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

by references to tradition as an instrument of nationalism, and the unusual combination of traditionalism and “revolution.” In *Kontrrewolucyjne paradoksy* (*Counter-revolutionary paradoxes*), investigating French conservative thinking, he considers the dilemma of “restoration or conservation,” and demonstrates how a program for the future is built from a total reference to the “traditional” social order, and how retrospective ideals are placed before post-revolutionary society as an ideological proposal.

In his research into the history of Polish and French social thinking, Szacki employed two ideological models, two visions of the world: utopian and traditionalist. In a separate small work, *Utopie* (*Utopies*),¹¹ he compares various definitions of utopia and considers its place in modern-age European thinking. In *Tradycja* (*Tradition*), he examines the scope of meanings of tradition and traditionalism as they appear in European social thinking. The task of both these books is correctly stated by the subtitle of the second of them. But this “review of issues,” whose purpose is to achieve clarity in the conceptual apparatus of the history of social thinking, sets itself the task not only of answering the questions set by the subject of the work, but also to set in order and correctly formulate the questions themselves. Szacki announces that his book is not a treatise about traditions as a social phenomenon, but a timid attempt to penetrate the problem of tradition.¹² However, one should remember that Szacki’s previous studies provide a proper basis for such reflection and that, taken together, they present attitudes towards the past in modern-day social thinking. One may consider this combined literature an important component of the views proposed.

Anyone who has attempted, even if only slightly, to examine the concept of tradition or the use of this word in everyday language and in prose knows how difficult it is to find a common denominator for the multitude of meanings for it or to establish its denotation. Undertaking this toil – similar to that of cleaning the stables of King Augeas – he tries to warn readers against a priori definitions. Therefore, he first rates tradition as a set of connections between the present and the past, and attempts to define the essence of the dichotomy of attitudes towards the past noted in both psychology and in the history of social thinking. One of these attitudes, professing a program

¹¹ J. Szacki, *Utopie* (Warsaw, 1968).

¹² Szacki, *Tradycja*, p. 17.

of integral inheritance, he describes as traditionalist, whereas the other, calling for total innovation, for “taming the mare of history,” he calls utopian. In these categories he considers the dispute between rationalism and conservatism on the threshold of the 18th and 19th centuries and the paradoxes of the “sociological romanticism,” which tried to artificially amalgamate “utopia” and “tradition,” dragging the past into the service of the revolution. Finally, he takes a look at the “new rationalism of Hegel and Marx,” deriving his anti-traditionalism from the process of history itself. In particular, Szacki considers the blurred nature of the divisions, because he attempts to assign individual thinkers, schools and doctrines to these two ideological models. His analysis of the attitude of Marx and Marxists towards tradition is very enlightening, even if too narrow. This analysis confirms the impossibility of a dichotomist division of thinkers and ideologists into supporters and opponents of tradition.

In a second approach to the question of tradition, Szacki attempts to consider the different ways of understanding tradition, set the definitions of tradition in order, and classify, as it were, the connections between the present and the past. Therefore, he sets forth three ways of understanding tradition. First, tradition in the sense of deeds, where the achievements of a certain group are passed down from generation to generation. Second, tradition in subjective terms; in other words, a social heritage, a set of patterns, facts and values. Third, tradition in an objective sense, viewed as the attitude of a given generation (or a given group) to the past. Applying the term social transmission and social heritage to the first two meanings, he preserves tradition only for the third term. In his thoughts on tradition both in the sense of transmission and in the sense of heritage, Szacki reaches for anthropology and sociology, and also for history in a sense. He outlines the way in which other researchers have understood these terms, and at the same time demonstrates the problematic nature of the associations between the past and the present in these two dimensions. These outline analyses serve as an instrument in the book; they are meant to dispel ambiguities about the issue itself, but they also represent fascinating hypotheses and research programs (including the question of “faithfulness and betrayal in social transmission”).

It is significant that Jerzy Szacki regards tradition understood in an objective manner to be true tradition. Needless to say, the reader has certain problems with determining the author’s own viewpoint,

because he places a reconnaissance of the state of affairs above his own stance and refers to the most typical attitudes. Szacki says that an objective view of history is the most widespread, but also accords this key importance. He writes: "It is not the power of the dead over the living that is the proper subject of research into tradition, but the power of the living over the dead."¹³ And further: "The problem of tradition is a problem of the aims to which we subject our activity and of the hierarchy of values which we impose on the static world."¹⁴ However, Szacki's objective understanding of tradition seems to involve an analysis of the history of social thinking with its usefulness in examining conservative thinking. He himself shows this in a picture of traditionalism as a view of the world.¹⁵ It is now up to the reader to read his previous works,¹⁶ expanding the circle of analytical experience from which this construction arose. Traditionalism does not simply mean praise for the past, but an assessment and selection of certain "patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving" which have stood the test of time and belong to the social heritage. This global reference to the past also possesses an anti-individualistic nature (the individual should obey the "age-old" customs of the group), and an anti-rationalist one, at least in the sense that an acceptance of the patterns of the past does not require justification. That is the main point of the thesis, but it is also interspersed with other questions and issues. A historian of pre-industrial societies – especially a medievalist – cannot remain indifferent to the model of archaism¹⁷ presented in the book as a return to a social order that has passed (in contrast to conservatism as a desire to perpetuate the status quo), or the model of "integral traditionalism of pre-capitalist societies."¹⁸ Accepting or rejecting the hypotheses proposed or referred to here, one should nevertheless delve into the historical matter itself.

The book ends with an outline of the relationship between tradition and knowledge of history. Sociologists have a certain habit of stressing

¹³ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, chapt. 4.

¹⁶ Also: A. Walicki, *Osobowość i historia. Studia z dziejów literatury w myśli rosyjskiej* (Warsaw, 1958); and *id.*, *W kręgu konserwatywnej utopii. Struktura i przemiany rosyjskiego słowianofilstwa* (Warsaw, 1964).

¹⁷ J. Szacki, *Tradycja*, pp. 221 ff.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 206 ff.

that their interest is confined to the way in which society “thinks its history, not how it actually experiences it” (just like the distinction which Claude Lévi-Strauss makes between *société pensée* and *société vécue*). Szacki is interested above all in the psychosocial need for history and its social function; he says that this need and function correspond to those of tradition.¹⁹ But if tradition expresses a need to participate in values that used to exist (but whose dimension is eternity, which means that they exist forever), history aims to establish the present in the long process of change, and arranges a picture of the past in accordance with questions about the present.

I have tried to outline the course of Szacki’s thinking in the conviction that the condition for a rapprochement between the two disciplines is not just mutual information and an interest in different methods and results, but also a reorganization of one’s own thought patterns and a readiness to pursue a path of thinking different from that of the intellectuals in one’s own discipline. But there are three topics that interested me in particular: the relationship of sociology to history, the methodology of the history of social thinking, and the relationship between the “conscious” and “unconscious” in society’s attitudes towards the past. These three topics merit a little more attention.

As we have said, the author of *Traditions* reads historians and makes use of the fruits of historiography. But his attitude towards historiography manifests a little mistrust of the positivist model of science and academic methods, and scepticism of the programmatic forecasts of investigating real events and processes in order to satisfy “curiosity about the past.” However, this scepticism and this mistrust belong to modern historiography and are part of the self-knowledge of historians, for the epistemological situation of history is peculiar, starting with the language frame: this is probably the only case where science and the reality it describes are expressed by the same word (and in various language families). Historical discourse and the academic expose about the past is equally (and in no other academic discipline is it so strong) the child of the reality described and of current

¹⁹ In her research program into historical awareness, Nina Assorodobraj stresses the difference between history as a science and “history as an important and active ingredient of society’s knowledge about itself”, but she also outlines the influence of historical teaching on social awareness; cf. N. Assorodobraj, “Żywa historia. Świadomość historyczna: symptomy i propozycje badawcze”, *Studia Socjologiczne*, 3 (1963), no. 2 (9), pp. 31 ff.

sociopolitical practice; an understanding of the past and successive interpretations thereof are the result of transformations in today's society, its life and its spirit. This was recently demonstrated by the theologian, psychoanalyst and historian Michel de Certeau: "History, by placing itself on the dividing line between the past, which is its subject, and the present, the place where it is practiced, automatically finds the present in its subject and the past in its practice."²⁰ Most of all, history remains a narrative, not epistemological criticism. History, in other words the science of history, "relates to its own work and, at the same time, to the visible work of the past."²¹ The emphasis on historiography visible in this last statement reminds one that history is not knowledge of the past, but a discourse referring to the past;²² the historical reality is a reference to the models constructed by the historian and is the limit of their possibilities.

Such an interpretation of history provides a basis on which to examine its connections with tradition on two levels. For investigating traditions, the history of historiography becomes an observatory with the greatest scope of visibility: here we see the "energy of the message" (both in the historian's current work and in the sources on whose basis one constructs one's picture of the past) and tradition as a subject, or "social heritage," which the historian reports by taking part in it and describing it. Finally, there is tradition in an objective sense: the history of historiography allows attitudes towards history to be grasped not in instrumental references to the past, but via interpretation and research paths. It is true, Szacki writes, that changes to knowledge of the past have little effect on current historical stereotypes,²³ but neither can one ignore the fact that historical output creates a certain

²⁰ M. de Certeau, "Faire de l'histoire. Problèmes de méthodes et problèmes de sens", *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, 58 (1970), no. 4, p. 501.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 509.

²² See R. Barthes, "Le discours de l'histoire", *Social Science Information*, 6 (1967), no. 4, pp. 65–75.

²³ J. Szacki recalls an unpublished work by Ruth Benedict on the culture and behaviour of the Romanians, in which she looks at the way Romanians view the past, avoiding the relationship between these views and the truth or the truth professed by historical teachings. A pity! It is enough to take a look at "historical folklore" to realize the importance of people's thoughts on the history expounded in literature (cf. for example K.W. Cistow, *Russkiye narodnye socialnoutopicheskiye legiendy XVII–XIX vv.* [Moscow, 1967]; W.K. Sokolova, *Russkiye istoricheskiye priedaniya* [Moscow, 1970]).

set of these “patterns of feeling, thought and conduct” from which a choice is made, for there is no hermetic division between folk culture and the culture of the elites; the only difference is when and in what form the information about it is received. Therefore, one should refer to historical writings in their typical form, i.e. a discourse on the past, and not just to the general and ordered statements of historians. Therefore, instead of (or apart from) the general reflections of Febvre and Bloch, one should analyse the historical works of both historians; for instance, Febvre’s article on the attitudes of modern society to work, or Bloch’s views on freedom and bondage in the Middle Ages. One should reach for the works of the Cracow or Warsaw school of positivists, for their specific-historical works, and not for methodological disputes. One should reach for history textbooks²⁴ which provide a picture of historical attitudes and are the source of the stereotypes present in a given generation.²⁵ Nevertheless, let us admit that this would require special research – Szacki’s help to historians would have been rather limited here.

I said that his book is based mainly on the experience of the history of social thinking, though it is enriched with broad references to anthropology and cultural sociology. But the author writes about social thinking and concludes with social psychology; he examines the sayings of philosophers, sociologists and historians, and seems to speak out on collective behaviour and attitudes. This continues to be important in order to understand the methodological principles of modern ideas of thinking, which is far removed from traditional investigations of “doctrine” or “currents,” of thinkers and of writers, though he does attempt to investigate the very manner of thinking and its structure. One assumes that these remarks by philosophers, sociologists and historians are regarded as a testimony of collective thoughts and attitudes, that they are valued as the best and fullest

²⁴ J. Freyssinet-Dominjon, *Les manuels d'histoire de l'école libre: 1882–1959* (Paris, 1969). This work deals with a particularly interesting matter: the teaching of history in private schools, professing their attachment to traditions.

²⁵ Regarding the role of schools in creating historical stereotypes, we will quote a caption beneath a cartoon by Daumier called “The History Lesson”; “It is funny that you do not know the names of Dagobert’s three daughters! [...] So you know nothing! [...] Do you wish to remain useless to society to the end of your life!?” The cartoon is reproduced in *Histoire de France*, ed. M. Reinhard, vol. 1 (Paris, 1954), p. 21.

forms of expression. But should one not also take into account the differences and autonomy of the intellectuals who said these things? This setting expresses the interests of social groups and classes indirectly, preserving its own social and corporate ties. It is worth recalling Gramsci's remarks on the feeling of an unbroken historic continuity of various categories of "traditional intellectuals."²⁶ Therefore, one should not just treat statements as an expression of the attitudes, world vision or ideas of social groups or classes, but one should also consider the characteristics of their authors (comprising rationalists and anti-rationalists, traditionalists and utopians).

Methodological principles – or habits – explain the absence of a diachronic scale in this "review of issues." A historian requires this dimension not just because it is required for his craft, although modern historical research uses synchronic methods with increasing success. However, avoiding changes in time harms the proper formulation of questions and answers. In practice, historians have been faced with the problem of proceeding from one to the other type, a model or "world outlook," and the time dimension imposed itself on them persistently. Similarly, Szacki takes certain breaks in his expose and considers historical attitudes towards tradition.²⁷ But pursuing this route, one can distinguish between several attitudes towards the past that change as time goes by. The sharpness of divisions often becomes blurred. When in the Prophecy of Isaiah we read (Isaiah XLVIII, 19–19): "Do not recall the first things and look not upon the old. Behold, it is I who maketh new things," one could say that this turning away from the past in Judeo-Christian tradition can only be a divine action. Yet this call to turn away from the past reappears in some currents of mysticism and is realized in a certain sense. In medieval thinking, an argument

²⁶ In this connection it would be interesting examine some trends in American historiography over the last decade. Opposition to writing history from a position of liberal consensus is described as a struggle against the concept of historiography "in the service of the elitist and aristocratic definition of society and the promulgation of America (I. Unger, "The 'New Left' and American History. Some Recent Trends in United States Historiography", *American History Review*, 72 [1966–1967], pp. 1237–1263). The program of this "new left" is that historiography presents a picture of the past useful in order to build a new future, and therefore in order to radically transform society; H.S. Commager, *The Search for a Usable Past* (New York, 1967). See also *Pisma wybrane*, transl. B. Sieroszewska (Warsaw, 1961), vol. 1, pp. 685 ff.

²⁷ Szacki, *Tradycja*, pp. 107–110.

of reason is compliance with authority; members of medieval society felt that they were dwarves on the shoulders of giants (as Bernard of Chartres wrote), but thanks to this they can see better and further. According to the humanists, the human spirit “once,” in Greek and Roman times, reached the height of its possibilities, consequently one should refer not to any past, but to that in which the absolute level was reached. Thus, when examining historical traditions, one should also consider the shifting syndromes in which attitudes towards the past became entwined. It is difficult to examine every single set of circumstances in history, but it is certainly not enough to distinguish society before the invention of writing and society after its invention.

The reading of *Tradycja* also encourages one to consider the role of subconscious factors in shaping attitudes towards the past.²⁸ The scope of conscious choice (or valuation) of tradition, is much more restricted than an analysis of statements would suggest. Historians realize more and more that although it is difficult to examine subconscious motives, they cannot be ignored. We have already mentioned the doubt which a transfer from an examination of ideas to an examination of social attitudes and behaviour raises. Continuing this thought, one may ask whether this somewhat arbitrary transfer does not conceal the treatment of the subconscious as a kind of undisclosed consciousness. The conceptual apparatus of the historian of ideas is somewhat powerless here, but this applies to historical research in general: after all, psychoanalysis requires the patient’s cooperation, and our patient here cannot cooperate.²⁹ For rather a long time, history excluded the “irrational” from its field of vision, regarding as its subject only that which could be rationalized. But historians are gradually penetrating areas of the subconscious, in the footsteps of ethnologists.³⁰ Alphonse Dupront, a researcher of Enlightenment ideas and of the anthropology of pilgrimages, considers the “collective

²⁸ The fluidity of these borders is illustrated by Arno Borst’s excellent study of the genealogical legends of European nations: id., *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, vols. 1–4 (Stuttgart, 1957–1963); and L. Poliakov, “Des mythes des origines au mythe aryen”, *Annales ESC*, 25 (1970), pp. 408–433.

²⁹ See Ch. Morazé, “L’Histoire et l’unité des sciences de l’homme”, *Annales ESC*, 23 (1969), p. 236.

³⁰ See C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural anthropology*, transl. C. Jacobson, B. Grundfest Schoepf (London, 1993), p. 113 ff.

panic,” the throbbing of wild desires and dreams that hide inside the collective psyche.³¹ Investigating the culture of the Enlightenment, he assumes that it defines collective trends more than rational doctrines and constructions.³² Here, the researcher cannot restrict himself to articulated statements; he must create his own “texts,” just as linguists “recreate” the texts of the pre-Slavic language – texts that were never formulated.

This does not narrow down an examination of the past to within the scope of “historical awareness.” On the contrary, it must exceed this scope and address the dimensions of human desires in time and space, a feeling of temporal continuity and discontinuity, and a feeling of loneliness and communion. The analysis here must include all of the *minores* of writing, not just the writers at the forefront,³³ and include folklore, iconography, clothing fashion and slang (Marx wrote that an inertia of words gives new ideas a fashionable costume).

A measure of the importance of books is the feeling that, having read them, one is feels unsatisfied. The review and investigation of “problem areas,” as Jerzy Szacki described his book, is an excellent introduction to tradition and an illustration of modern historiography.

³¹ A. Dupront, “Formes de la culture des masses: de la doléance politique au pèlerinage panique (XVIIIe–XIXe siècle)”, in: *Niveaux de culture et groupes sociaux*, ed. L. Bergeron (Paris, 1971), pp. 149–167.

³² R. Robin, *La société française en 1789: Semur-en-Auxois* (Paris, 1970), p. 148.

³³ See J. Ehrard, “Histoire des idées et histoire sociale en France au XVIIIe siècle: reflexions de méthode”, in: *Niveaux de culture*, pp. 171–178, and the interesting debate following the report (especially pp. 186 ff.).

PART II

Social Margins and Exclusion

Social Margins of the Pre-Industrial Age – Categories and Comparative Problems

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In the earlier and current levels of interest in the social margins, the researcher easily detects the effect of an observation of current situations. When Stefan Czarnowski called for an investigation into the social margins in 1935, the first European humanist to propose this, he had in mind the danger of totalitarianism and the forced exploitation of people.¹ In American sociology, after Nels Anderson's well-known work about the American hobo,² an increase in the number of cases of declassing encouraged a closer observation of anomie and the processes that lead to asocial attitudes.³ The concept of social margins gave rise to the social work of Robert Ezra Park, who considered the role of social margins in cultural progress and social change.⁴ After him, this concept was applied in a narrower sense, primarily to minority individuals or groups surrounded by a majority environment (e.g. the Jews in Europe, Hindus in Africa, and the Chinese in South-East

¹ S. Czarnowski, "Ludzie zbędni w służbie przemocy", in: id., *Dzieła*, prep. N. Assorodobraj, S. Ossowski, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1956), pp. 186–193.

² N. Anderson, *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man* (Chicago, 1923).

³ O.K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, 1957) – article from 1939, in: *Contemporary Social Problems. An Introduction to the Sociology of Deviant Behavior and Social Disorganization*, ed. O.K. Merton, R.A. Nesbit (New York, 1961).

⁴ R.E. Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, 1950), pp. 345 ff.; I.E. Houselights, "Main Concepts in the Analysis of the Social Implications of Technical Change", in: *Industrialization and Society*, ed. B.F. Hoselitz, W.E. Moore (Paris, 1966), p. 26, attributes to Park the invention of the term of "social margins" and the first research into this topic.

Asia). Research into anomy and social marginalization led to an analysis of various levels of exclusion, including in former societies; preliminary probes led to systematic historical research. The history of crime appeared in the index of historiography: crime statistics and categories of crime revealed mechanisms of deviating from the norm and from connections with organized society.⁵ A program of research into social margins in the past also appeared in publications.⁶ Attempts at a preliminary categorization of marginalization disclosed similarities and analogies in various regions and eras.⁷

In Polish historiography, Czarnowski's reflections on "superfluous people" inspired a modern treatment of this topic. Apart from the basic sociological-historical study by Nina Assorodobraj,⁸ one can refer to a major series of works on loose people in cities and rural areas,⁹ and to surveys into loose people in Poland's past.¹⁰

Determining the essence and scope of social marginalization poses major difficulties. Sources do not provide us with precise distinctions. Common and statute law of the late Middle Ages mainly apply to the concept of crime and criminal, but they make a breach of the life standards set by a social class or estate punishable (e.g. if a common man avoids work). Moreover, an entire group can be labelled as "people of ill repute"; used as a pretext for dealing with people at fault, applying torture to discover the truth, etc. In French works on moral doctrine in the late Middle Ages, we find a description of criminals and dissidents whom the author describes as madmen (*vrays folz*

⁵ Here one can cite the work of Caen historians published in *Annales de Normandie*, and the series *Crimes et criminalité en France sous l'Ancien Régime (17e–18e siècles)* (*Cahiers des Annales*), p. 35 (Paris, 1971).

⁶ For example: "Marginalité et criminalité à l'époque moderne", *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 21 (juillet–septembre, 1974), special issue; H. Asséo, *Marginalité et exclusion: le traitement administratif des Bohémiens* (Paris, 1974); *Délinquance et exclusion sociale*.

⁷ See: A. Vexliard, *Introduction à la sociologie du vagabondage* (Paris, 1956); J. Baechler, *Les phénomènes révolutionnaires* (Paris, 1970).

⁸ N. Assorodobraj, *Początki klasy robotniczej. Problem rąk roboczych w przemyśle polskim epoki stanisławowskiej* (Warsaw, 1946; 2nd ed.: Warsaw, 1967).

⁹ N. Assorodobraj discusses them in the foreword to the book's second edition. To this one can add M. Frančić's thorough study: *Ludzie luźni w osiemnastowiecznym Krakowie* (Wrocław, 1967).

¹⁰ S. Grodziski, *Ludzie luźni. Studium z historii państwa i prawa polskiego* (Cracow, 1961, "Zeszyty Naukowe UJ. Rozprawy i Studia"), p. 30.

frénétiques); included in this group are thieves, burglars and various types of offenders, as well as gamblers and pimps. They are characterized not just by their way of life, which can be described as asocial, but also by their different ethics which defy the laws of property and are dictated solely by their own desires (*à la volonté de leur sensualité*).¹¹ In the terminology in use we mainly find terms such as “vagabond,” and “homeless person,” as well as a broad range of pejorative epithets indicating an asocial way of life. Polish legal documents, apart from such names for vagrants as *rustici vagi*, *laici vagi*, *vagabundae*, *vagantes*, increasingly use the term *luźni* (loose), meaning peasants without a master and short-term hired labourers.¹² The equivalent German term is *Leute* or *Losleute* (from which the Polish term derives),¹³ while in French the term *gens sans aveu*¹⁴ means the same. The term *hultaje* used in Slav lands had a broader meaning, equivalent to the Russian *gulashczye ludi* which includes periodic hired workers, loose peasants and all types of “layabouts.”¹⁵ An absence of stability is therefore a basic element of this historical terminology.

Czarnowski described the social margins as a group of “declassed individuals devoid of a specific social status and, from the point of view of material and intellectual output, regarded as superfluous and considering themselves as such”;¹⁶ however, a historian is seldom able to determine this bilateral feeling of redundancy. In the social margins one should distinguish between two levels of opposition which induce people to such an existence: firstly, opposition to the legal order in force, its institutions, laws and prohibitions; and secondly, opposition to the governing hierarchy of values and to the aims, intentions and interests which are inherent therein and which constitute the cultural framework of the social order.¹⁷ These two levels may be associated with

¹¹ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 1148; *folz* may be considered similar to the term *Narrenschiff* used by Sebastian Brant.

¹² Grodziski, *Ludzie luźni*, p. 14, ff.

¹³ A. Brückner, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* (Warsaw, 1970), p. 304.

¹⁴ Ch. Paultre, *De la répression de la mendicité et du vagabondage en France sous l’Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1906).

¹⁵ M. Dyakonov, *Oчерki iz sielskogo naseleniya v Moskovskom gosudarstvie* (St. Petersburg, 1898); I.D. Bielahev, *Kriestyanie na Rusi* (Moskva, 1903); A.M. Pankratova, “Naymity na Rusi v XVII v.,” in: *Akademiku B. D. Griekovu ko dniu siemi-diesyatiletiya* (Moscow, 1952).

¹⁶ Czarnowski, *Ludzie zbędni*, p. 186.

¹⁷ Cf. Merton, *Social Theory*, pp. 130 ff.

each other; a rejection of the social order may go hand-in-hand with the rejection of culture and ideology, but they can be separated.¹⁸ In communities that clearly pursue an asocial lifestyle, one sometimes encounters far-reaching conformity with the cultural standards in force, and sometimes even stricter compliance with the moral requirements and system of values that govern normal society.¹⁹ Likewise, one also notes a rejection of the basic values in force in communities that are fully integrated socially. In both levels, marginalization can manifest itself in an active and in a passive form, but most of all as an absence of the ties which the majority of society considers normal. In traditional societies before the age of industry, participation in social life depended on compliance with group connections and ties of solidarity, especially in the family, professional guild, religious fraternity and social neighbourhood. Individuals not subject to these ties and either excluded or not admitted to these communities appear to be socially superfluous and dangerous. This may be due to their refusal – in other words an active attitude – to participate in social ties and obligations. The individuals and groups who reject a given community's common values are in the community, but do not belong to it;²⁰ they thus remain alien to it and, most of all, are treated by that community as alien.

Here we describe the social margins as a certain social situation, not a permanent group, for we are investigating a milieu that is very inconstant and changeable. Naturally, the court archives describing the lives of people on the social margins suggest that this margin existence is permanent because the lives of the accused people up to the moment they face the court consist of a series of crimes. But one should also remember that only a small portion of this community was punished by the courts, and only in exceptional cases do we hear of anyone from the social margins being reintegrated into normal society – people attempted to disguise their negative past.

Seeking the denominators of margin existence, one should consider the various degrees of social condemnation, ranging from disgust, all

¹⁸ E. Neyman, "Typy marginesowości w społeczeństwach i ich rola w zmianie społecznej", *Studia Socjologiczne*, 6 (1966), no. 4 (23), p. 36.

¹⁹ Cf. J. Labbens, *La condition sous-prolétarienne* (Paris, 1965); H. Mendras, "Pour une sociologie de la contre-société", *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 8 (1967), p. 73.

²⁰ Merton, *Social Theory*, pp. 153 ff., 187 ff. – the author describes these attitudes as *retreatism*.

the way to firm, organized persecution. One can distinguish between two fronts of marginalization: socio-cultural and socio-economic.

Modern-age society inherited the complex work ethics of medieval Christendom. In these ethics, work is a duty, but devoid of honour and dignity. According dignity to physical work involved a slow and profound process of mental change. The range of crafts and occupations which under canonical law were regarded as an affront to dignity, or *mercimonia inhonesta*,²¹ diminished, but still physical labour continued to bear a social stigma for a long time. This applies especially to those occupations where qualifications were not important and the work was dirty and hard.

Distrust was ruled by various considerations in a more or less steady manner. Suspicion of strangers and xenophobia sometimes imparted an air of scandal to all kinds of minorities or ethnic groups of migrants when it came to cultural and religious differences, differences in physical appearance, etc. This was the case with Jews and Gypsies in the Christian West, and to a lesser extent, of course, towards regional communities (e.g. the Bretons in other parts of modern-day France).

Ideological difference was also a subject of distrust in medieval society. The condemnation of heretics was so great that they were excluded from society and, just like criminals, were sometimes branded with external symbols of shame (the word “heretic”). The heretical groups in which we see a combination of social marginalization and cultural marginalization sometimes had a strong feeling of isolation from society.²² This also applies to witches and anyone else involved in magic and healing, whose services were used quite extensively but who were nevertheless beset with fear and shame and who were pushed to the social margins (loneliness, living outside settlements, wandering).²³

There was a similar mistrust, albeit of a cultural nature, towards the sick and the lame, whereby lepers and other unfortunates were

²¹ J. Le Goff, “Métiers licites et métiers illicites dans l’Occident medieval”, *Etudes Historiques. Annales de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes de Gand*, 5 (1963), pp. 41 ff.

²² *Hérésies et sociétés dans l’Europe pré-industrielle, XIe–XVIIIe siècles*, ed. J. Le Goff (Paris–La Haye, 1968).

²³ Of more recent works, one can mention: R. Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1968); A.D.J. Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (New York, 1970); K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971); B. Baranowski, *Kultura ludowa XVII i XVIII w.* (Łódź, 1971), chapt. 10.

excluded on the threshold of the modern age.²⁴ This was a form of defence against a dangerous and unknown disease, but the decisions to isolate such persons were reached in the conviction that their fate was separate. This is particularly obvious regarding the descendants of lepers who, although they did not carry the disease themselves, were still compelled to live apart and were barred from most occupations. Regarding persons with a mental illness, following an era of uneasy tolerance, they were subject to isolation, if not downright repression. This was not just a defence against the physical danger of a deranged person, but was also caused by the feeling that mental illness signified a rejection of the established order: "He who opposes a particular society is mad."²⁵ However, there was a clear class factor applicable to the mentally ill: disgust, distrust and exclusion affected only the common people, not the higher classes.

The category of people subject to social marginalization includes those who were banished. Although the punishment of banishment possesses varying significance according to its duration and geographical constraints (a person could be banished from town, region or country), the banished person was nevertheless treated as deprived of all social rights.²⁶ In this way, the punishment for asocial conduct perpetuated asocial existence. Without exceeding the European horizon of our study, it is worth mentioning castes in Asian societies and the untouchables in the Far East.²⁷ There is a parallel between these and the *mercimonia inhonesta* of the Christian West that we mentioned earlier, for in both categories of people we find the eternal taboo of society. Finally, both in European and non-European agricultural societies (where slavery does not play a significant role), slaves are marginalized and deprived of all rights and dignity.²⁸

Distrust also applied to prostitution, however social attitudes towards prostitution are complex, and as early as in the Middle Ages one can observe not just a policy of abolition of prostitution, but also a policy of

²⁴ M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, transl. R. Howard, introd. by D. Cooper (London, 2001).

²⁵ R. Bastide, *Sociologie des maladies mentales* (Paris, 1965), p. 254.

²⁶ M. Handelsman, *Prawo karne w statutach Kazimierza Wielkiego* (Warsaw, 1909), p. 67.

²⁷ Cf. H. Passin, "Untouchability in the Far East", *Monumenta Nipponica*, 11 (1955), pp. 27 ff.

²⁸ G. Sjoberg, *The Preindustrial City* (Glencoe, 1960), pp. 133 ff.

tolerance, recognizing prostitution as socially or morally useful.²⁹ It is mainly pimping that was punishable, whereas prostitutes themselves were subject to isolation, that is to say restricted to certain parts of a city and forced to wear a special type of clothing or a certain emblem. This physical urban isolation complied with the conviction, common among societies, that clothing and external appearances reflected one's social status, whereas the area where one lived was an expression of social "value";³⁰ this also applies to certain other categories of marginalization at the time (Jews in Europe, Muslims in Lhasa). Beggars, too, were obliged to wear an external sign, and though the intention of this requirement was administrative, or even charitable, the sign of a beggar at a time of the development of philanthropy in modern times was an isolating factor.³¹

With beggars we proceed to the second front of the social fringes, related to socio-economic structures. Here, beggars enjoyed the greatest degree of toleration by society, because they had their place in the division of labour and a social function. Unlike prostitutes, of whom one could say the same thing, beggars possessed their dignity and moral quality both in Christian and in Muslim societies. Giving alms was considered commendable, and raised hopes for a reward in the afterlife and a remission of sins committed. Thus, beggars were needed, and some of them were incapable of work due to permanent incapacity, disease or ill fortune. The place of beggars in society is also illustrated by the fact that, like prostitutes, they formed their own corporate associations. Whether or not begging was a profitable business (there are few cases of a beggar's bag containing a large sum of money),³² it was devoid of dignity, required the wearing of tattered clothes, and led to the "development" of an unattractive, if not inhuman, appearance. These were ways of arousing compassion, but they were also obvious signs of social degradation.

²⁹ Le Goff, *Métiers licites*, p. 52; B. Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris*, transl. J. Birrell (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 211 ff.

³⁰ Cf. Sjoberg, *Preindustrial City*, p. 101.

³¹ Changes in attitudes towards poverty and beggars have already been widely covered in literature. A broader presentation can be found in: *Etudes sur l'histoire de la pauvreté (Moyen Age – XVIe siècle)*, ed. M. Mollat, vols. 1–2 (Paris, 1974); J.P. Gutton, *La société et les pauvres en Europe: XVIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1974).

³² Example in: J. Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England* (London, 1971), pp. 31, 100 (doc. 11).

A gradual change in attitudes towards beggars occurred on the threshold of the modern era, both in Catholicism and non-Catholicism.³³ The moral value of a beggar's life became doubtful and the social function of beggars diminished; henceforth, beggars were an object of organized care, and not of individual charity and compassion. Although this is most of all an edict of social policy, one can see here a more general phenomenon: the inclusion of beggars among the masses of vagrants and in the struggle against "idleness."

Vagrancy is not just one of the phenomena of social marginalization; it is the phenomenon *par excellence*. The concept of vagrancy as a crime developed very slowly in legal theory and practice. Before Napoleonic law adopted the contents of a wanderer's bag as a criterion by which to judge him as a vagabond, guild legislation in medieval Flanders adopted a similar minimum material requirement before accepting a wandering artisan.³⁴ In the Middle Ages and early modern times, the criteria distinguishing a vagabond were fluid and indistinct. The basic and most widely recognized criterion was the absence of a permanent abode, signifying a lack of sources of regular income and family. Wandering was regarded an asocial way of life, yet it was part of the existence of various categories of people who could not be suspected of living an asocial form of life: after all, merchants, knights and craftsmen wandered, as did pilgrims, but these migrations were under institutionalized supervision, including by the guilds. But vagrancy represents a particular kind of wandering which – as defined by an Italian theologian – had no purpose and did not serve the public good.³⁵

Vagrancy was considered a crime because it breached the established divisions of the social order. The degree of repression depended on the significance of vagrancy, its extent and the general situation on the labour market.³⁶ For vagrancy was primarily unemployment, either

³³ B. Geremek, "Frycza Modrzewskiego program opieki nad ubogimi – europejskie spory wokół pauperyzmu w XVI wieku", in: *Polska w świecie. Szkice z dziejów kultury polskiej*, ed. J. Dowiat et al. (Warsaw, 1972), pp. 207 ff. (see pp. 188–209 in this anthology).

³⁴ G. Espinas, *La vie urbaine de Douai au moyen âge*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1913), p. 976.

³⁵ I.B. Scanarolo, *De visitatione carceratorum* (Rome, 1675), p. 226.

³⁶ A review of anti-vagrancy legislation: C.J. Ribton-Turner, *A History of Vagrants and Vagrancy, and Beggars and Begging* (London, 1887); A.L. Beier, "Vagrants and the Social Order in Elizabethan England", *Past and Present*, 64 (1974), pp. 3–29 – the

because there was no work or because one was not suited to specific work. It was also a threat to the public order, not just because it could corrupt those who were working, but most of all because in the opinion of the ruling class it was most closely associated with crime, fraud and theft. Gangs of brigands were also a social product, recruited from expellees from rural areas and forced to choose an asocial lifestyle.³⁷ But in this case the social marginalization assumed an aggressive nature and created organized groups to fight the established order.

In the struggle against vagrancy, and generally in the system of repression of margin groups, one can distinguish two divergent situations. In the first, defence mechanisms are created by the social order in which marginalized people are considered a threat to the collective order. Repression was directed against anomy, in defence of the inviolability of property and human life. Margin groups were identified with criminal elements. The border between a vagabond without work and regular income and a professional thief or brigand became blurred. Public health was an additional consideration. In view of the chronic danger of all kinds of epidemics, migrants, including wandering merchants and craftsmen, were treated as potential carriers of the plague. In the case of vagrants, their own poverty, dirt and malnutrition were additional arguments in favour of their exclusion from human settlements. In the second model of repression against vagrants, the basic arguments are the labour situation and the demand for workers. This was a typical situation the transfer from feudalism to capitalism and the first accumulation of wealth.³⁸ The fragmentation of rural society led to a part of the peasantry becoming more proletarian; food crises revealed and encouraged these processes of proletarianisation and hunger pushed many rustics to the cities in search of temporary support, but many of them had no reason to return to their villages. Proletarianisation, the deprivation of factors of production, was also caused by disenfranchisement, depriving peasants of their land. This

author associates the severity of repression with the collapse of traditional paternalism in the minds of society.

³⁷ Research into vagrancy in the 16th and 17th centuries suggests that most vagrants were lone men, which caused fear of them; cf. P.A. Slack, "Vagrants and Vagrancy in England, 1598–1664", *Economic History Review*, 27 (1974), no. 3, p. 366.

³⁸ Cf. B. Geremek, "La popolazione marginale tra il Medioevo e l'era moderna", in: *Agricoltura e sviluppo del capitalismo. Gli aspetti storici*, ed. E.L. Jones, S.J. Woolf (Rome, 1968), pp. 201 ff.

mass of proletarianised peasants appeared on urban markets and could become the driving force of industrialization.³⁹ It is worth noting that these two processes, the emergence of a mass of superfluous people from rural areas and industrialization, did not always coincide, and that the gulf between an increased supply of manpower and an increased demand for manpower was considerable and long-lasting. But in any case, it was beneficial for employers, whether entrepreneurs or landowners, that this mass of people able to work but without work was available to the labour market as a “reserve labour force,” exerted pressure on this market by maintaining low wages, and encouraged the accumulation of capital or a high level of income for the ruling class. Thus, this economic motivation of the system of repression of the social margins occurred when there was significant demand for manpower and when this demand was low.

The internal structure of the social margins and the mechanisms of adaptation and repression applied to them varied according to the situation and developments. The very meaning of the concept of social margins changed. Despite the disgust heaped upon them, margin groups performed certain necessary functions. The exclusion to which the Jews in the Christian West were exposed did not prevent the use of their services in money lending, to which Christian morality displayed an attitude of indifference. Similarly, the metallurgical skills of Gypsies, who had been wandering around Europe since the 15th century, were used without scruple. Shepherds, excluded from rural communities not just because of their way of life but also on account of customs and superstition, were feared and despised, but even so their services were also used. This applies to all occupations which have been considered undignified at various times – from executioner, via potter, all the way down to drain cleaner. As in the developed societies of the 20th century, in the pre-industrial age, too, these jobs were usually performed by migrants from other regions or countries; ethnocentric attitudes coincide with the needs for a division of social functions, and in a certain sense encourage their realization.

Regarding the first front of marginalization, we note certain similarities and convergences in pre-industrial society because certain

³⁹ W. Kula, “Recherches comparatives sur la formation de la classe ouvrière”, in: *Première conférence internationale d'histoire économique. Contributions* (Paris, 1960), pp. 511 ff.

cultural mechanisms and mental attitudes have been anchored in that society for a very long time.

Beggars are a permanent phenomenon. Feelings of moral support for the weak and the destitute were dictated not just by ethical doctrine and the teachings of the great religions, but also by mercy and compassion. Documents recording the alms regularly given to selected persons suggest that there were very few beggars, on this basis one might believe that in cities in the late Middle Ages, the number of beggars did not exceed one percent of the total population. Yet reports on the giving of alms indicate a huge number of paupers: in 14th-century Florence, the brotherhood of Orsanmichele regularly helped about one thousand people, but when in 1330 someone specified support for all beggars in his will (“shameful paupers” and those in hospitals were not counted), about 17,000 people applied.⁴⁰ In Augsburg in the 15th century, almost 4,000 people received alms, but the tax returns of 1475 only mention 107 beggars in the city.⁴¹ Among the professional beggars noted in Europe in the late Middle Ages, we can distinguish to categories: those with an established abode in a city, and those of no fixed abode, wandering from town to town or village, observing the dates of fairs, markets and alms from monasteries. Regardless of the Christian duty to give alms, beggars were an object of disdain, the Italian and French theater in the late Middle Ages mocked them, and they were sometimes feared because it was believed that they hated prosperous people and were “enemies of the human race.”⁴²

We find a similar picture in different cultural spheres. In Russia the *sudiebnik* of 1589, in the part laying down the amount of compensation for insults (*byeschestyje*), reviews various categories of paupers.⁴³

⁴⁰ Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, ed. G. Dragomanni, vol. 3 (Firenze, 1845), chapt. 10, p. 162; Ch. de la Roncière, “Pauvres et pauvreté à Florence au XIV^e siècle”, in: *Etudes sur l’histoire de la pauvreté*, vol. 2, pp. 669 ff.

⁴¹ E. Maschke, “Die Unterschichten der mittelalterlichen Städte Deutschland”, in: *Gesellschaftliche Unterschichten in den südwestdeutschen Städten*, ed. E. Maschke, J. Sydow (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 56; F. Hartung, “Die augsburger Zuschlagsteuer von 1475”, *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reiche*, 19 (1895), pp. 95 ff.

⁴² Geremek, *Margins of Society*, pp. 192 ff.

⁴³ *Sudiebniki XV–XVI vyekov*, ed. B. D. Gryekov (Moscow–Leningrad, 1952), p. 384 (art. 64–71), pp. 472 ff.; cf. also I. Prizov, *Nishchiye na svyatoy Rusi* (Kazan, 1913).

It mentions widows and beggars settled near monasteries and churches, treats separately the vagrant beggars who sing songs and hymns, and a third group mentions the Muscovite beggars settled in the city. Judging from the amount of the compensation, we have here an entire hierarchy where those beggars settled in the city receive better treatment or are considered more dignified. But apart from beggars, the record of compensation paid also includes bastards, prostitutes and fortune tellers, for whom compensation was set at a very low level (the same for all three groups), whereas thieves, bandits, arsonists and all *lichiyе ludi* had no entitlement to compensation whatsoever. It is significant that this document, assessing the value of various categories of beggars, not only contrasts them with these *lichiyе ludi*, but also places them in a higher position than bastards, fortune tellers and prostitutes. The granting of this dignity by 16th century Muscovite Russia reflects an attitude typical for the medieval West, where beggars were considered to have a function. The time differences are obvious. In the 16th century, when beggars began to be shut way in workhouses and when they began to be identified with layabouts or vagrants, in Russia the monasteries were ordered to continue their charity towards them.⁴⁴

One sees similar procedures in eastern and Western Europe regarding the exclusion of artists. The Catholic Church was decidedly hostile towards the “family of Goliath,”⁴⁵ wandering story-tellers and jugglers (Honorius Augustodunensis described them all as *ministri Satanae*).⁴⁶ The legalization of this category of artists in the Middle Ages was very slow and involved efforts by the Church to “harness” this activity and exploit it for religious propaganda. That was also the origin of the theatre, which started as amateur performances of religious scenes; professional actors remained a target of suspicion for a long time. In Russia, these wandering jugglers were regularly persecuted by the church authorities, with the support of the state apparatus; this continued for a very long time and we still find

⁴⁴ *Sudiebniki*, p. 174 (1550), p. 407 (1589); on the weekly distribution of alms in monasteries, see *Akty sotsialno-ekonomicheskoy istorii sieviero-vostochnoy Rusi konca XIV–nachala XVI v.*, ed. B.D. Gryekov, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1958), no. 249 (ca. 1480).

⁴⁵ E. Faral, *Les jongleurs en France au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1910), pp. 42 ff.

⁴⁶ *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, vol. 172, no. 1148.

evidence of it in the 15th and 16th centuries.⁴⁷ *Skomorochi* (wandering artists) were treated with greater tolerance, they led stable lives and we find them in descriptions of rural life together with the local peasants⁴⁸ (just as settled singers and musicians, often organized into guilds, were tolerated in the cities). And here too we note differences in the way they were treated at different times. Wandering musicians and singers were considered troublemakers because they were harbingers of secular gaiety and made fun of the social order.⁴⁹

Examining the most general features of vagrancy in a comparative sense, one can say that its socially margin nature was due to the existence of a dual society, as it were: one within permanent organized settlements, and one with internal divisions and beset with “disorganization.”

The first type of vagrancy in modern-age Western Europe played a role limited to the Alpine regions. In the Alps and Pyrenees, vagrants manifested aggression and developed into gangs.⁵⁰ We see the same aggressive vagrancy in mountainous areas of the Slav countries where brigand was a traditional form of escape by highlanders from society.⁵¹ But in eastern Europe, extensive areas not yet colonized or only just being colonized provided a stage for vagrancy or refuge from serfdom or justice. In these border areas, groups with a low level of social stability emerged, constituting a social margin against the established social structures. Examples are the Cossacks in Ukraine and south-eastern

⁴⁷ *Akty sotsialno-ekonomicheskoy istorii*, vol. 1, no. 393 (1470), no. 652 (1504); cf. L.V. Cheriepnin, *Obrazovaniye russkogo centralizovannogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1960), p. 311 ff.

⁴⁸ *Akty sotsialno-ekonomicheskoy istorii*, vol. 1, no. 649; *Sudiebniki*, pp. 384, 472.

⁴⁹ Brückner, *Słownik etymologiczny*, p. 494.

⁵⁰ On banditry, apart from the classic works, see F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2, transl. S. Reynolds (London, 1975), pp. 734 ff.; cf. also: J. Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1957), pp. 259 ff.; J. Reglà Campistol, *El bandolerisme català* (Barcelona, 1962); P. Vilar, *La Catalogne dans l'Espagne moderne*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1962), pp. 579 ff.; E. Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (London, 1969).

⁵¹ On banditry in the Balkans, see Hobsbawm, *Bandits, passim*; on banditry in the Carpathians see W. Ochmański, *Zbójnictwo góralskie* (Warsaw, 1950); A. Melicherčík, *Juraj Jánošík, hrdina protifeudálního odboje slovenského lidu* (Prague, 1956); Z. Piasecki, *Byli chłopcy, byli... Zbójnictwo karpackie – prawda historyczna, folklor i literatura polska* (Cracow, 1973).

Russia. The fates of the Cossacks in both the Polish Commonwealth and in Russia are significant; they were exploited for war purposes and conscripted into armies.⁵² Here we encounter the impact of war on the emergence of vagrancy. War created social margins, and each demobilization created a mass of people accustomed to fighting and stealing, eager to continue their hitherto activity but this time in the ranks of organized military units.⁵³ At times of war, armies were followed by masses of marauders and vagrants, who were used by commanders and often conscripted at the last moment.⁵⁴ People of the margins, as well as organized groups of them, were also exploited in a more or less open manner by the opposing sides in civil wars, territorial conflicts and “private wars.”

The phenomenon of borderland vagrancy is also recorded by a researcher of 18th-century Spanish-American history. It occurred especially in pasturelands, where vagrancy was a way of life (as in the Arab-dominated Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages).⁵⁵ The savannah and steppes were inhabited by masses of “lost people,” as the governor of Buenos Aires described them in 1617. They derived their income from cattle breeding or, if this failed, cattle rustling. Another factor which encouraged vagrancy was war; the borders of war were settled by gangs of vagrants living alternately off theft or husbandry. They were ready to serve the war, but also did not hesitate to take up hostilities for their own benefit, encouraging anarchist warfare similar to the Cossacks.

Comparing the situation in the east and in the west of Europe, one must bear in mind the varying trends in agricultural development in different economic zones. In the countries east of the Elbe river at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, there was a tendency towards double serfdom and the development of a manorial economy in the service of masters, which limited the freedom of peasants; here, the ban

⁵² On the Cossacks, see W. Tomkiewicz, *Kozaczyzna ukrainna* (Lviv, 1939); G. Stoki, *Die Entstehung des Kosakentums* (Munich, 1953); Z. Wójcik, *Dzikie Pola w ogniu. O Kozaczyźnie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 1961).

⁵³ Gutton, *La société*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ D.L. Pochilevich, “Plebieyskiy lud (leznye) w dierievnie Riechi Pospolitiy”, w: *Jezhagodnik po agrarnoy istorii Vostochnoy Yevropy 1962 g.* (Minsk, 1964), p. 168.

⁵⁵ M. Gongora, “Vagabondage et société pastorale en Amérique latine”, *Annales ESC*, 21 (1966), pp. 159 ff.

on vagrancy possessed a different social context. In the state of the Teutonic Knights in the first half of the 15th century, there were orders not to expel “loose people” (*loze volk*) from the towns, those able to work were forbidden to beg, and even compulsory work was used.⁵⁶ In Poland, the 1496 Statutes of Piotrków introduced, apart from restrictions of the freedom of movement of peasants and regulations against their escape from service, a statute called *De laicis seu mendicis mendicatum euntibus*.⁵⁷ This placed the municipal authorities and rural vicars under a strict duty to control the right to beg, issue beggars with special emblems, and compel all those able to work to engage in some useful activity or take part in work on fortifications. This can be compared to similar anti-vagrancy legislation in France and England, but the context in which it was written is different. The article on beggars in the Piotrków statute is accompanied by a ban on employment migration from Mazovia to Prussia or Silesia, or from country areas to towns;⁵⁸ this ban also applied to the poorer peasantry, but most of all to hired agricultural labourers. Regarding migration from cities to country areas, the statute specifies that this mainly involves people who have no homes of their own and usually rent accommodation on a weekly basis. The sanctions here were meant to ensure an availability of manpower for the landed gentry at the lowest possible wages.⁵⁹ We also encounter this aim – obtaining the cheapest possible manpower – east and west of the Elbe, but the development prospects are different: in the west, cheap labour serves as a motor for the accumulation of capital, whereas in the east it is one of the factors that consolidate the economy of the gentry. This difference also occurs in a social dimension. In Western Europe the objective was to apply pressure to the labour market and increase the supply of manpower, whereas in Eastern Europe, from the turn of the 15th century, the priority was to restrict the movement of peasants. Free hired labourers, used by the arming economy, caused anxiety. In 17th-century Russia these were considered vagrants, and

⁵⁶ B. Geremek, “Problem siły roboczej w Prusach w pierwszej połowie XV wieku”, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 48 (1957), p. 226.

⁵⁷ *Volumina legum*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1859), p. 267.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 267; cf. J. Gierowski, *Kartki z rodowodu biedoty wiejskiej* (Warsaw, 1951), p. 21 ff.

⁵⁹ S. Śreniowski, *Zbiegostwo chłopów w dawnej Polsce jako zagadnienie ustroju społecznego* (Warsaw, 1948), p. 81.

their ranks consisted mainly of escaped peasants. The biographies of these vagrants often spoke of entry into service, which provided an opportunity for a stable existence and for establishing a family.⁶⁰

The sanctions against loose people in Poland⁶¹ or in Russia⁶² in the 16th and 17th centuries were intended to protect the social order, for loose people breached the system of serfdom and of peasant subservience, and were thus considered a “dangerous group” prone to crime. Rawa Voivode Anzelm Gostomski refers explicitly to the first of these dangers: vagrants are to be “cast in chains because they cause trouble.”⁶³ In line with the spread of peasant serfdom, loose people were identified with escaped peasants. The remedies for which the nobility reached are also significant. First of all, towns were ordered to bar their gates to loose people who spent the winter in the town, taking chance employment in return for low wages or simply for food. There were also efforts to stabilize loose people by offering them a long-term lease, resulting in a vagrant entering into long-term service and becoming tied to the land.⁶⁴

But these periodic hired labourers were also needed in the agricultural economy. In a situation where economic expansion depended mainly on increased manpower, loose people were hired regardless of their origin. This was particularly evident in construction, mining and some branches of production. Multitudes of *gulashche* – and a great number of them indeed, because during the 1692 plague 7,290 people died in Astrakhan alone – were employed in areas close to the Volga estuary.⁶⁵ This area attracted people from all parts of Russia in the hope of a better life and existence, either by legal “employment” or crime. There were three categories of *gulashche*: free men, those temporarily separated from their home towns, and escaped peasants.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Cf. Dyakonov, *Ocherki*, p. 109 ff.

⁶¹ Grodziski, *Ludzie luźni*, pp. 63 ff.

⁶² B.D. Grekow, *Chłopi na Rusi od czasów najdawniejszych do XVII wieku*, transl. A. Poppe et al., vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1955), p. 164.

⁶³ A. Gostomski, *Gospodarstwo*, ed. S. Inglot (Wrocław, 1951), p. 24.

⁶⁴ *Volumina legum*, t. 6 (St. Petersburg, 1860), p. 547 (1632); W. Dworzaczek, “*Dobrowolne*” *poddaństwo chłopów* (Warsaw, 1952), p. 37.

⁶⁵ I.V. Stepanov, “Gulashchiyee rabotnyye ludi na Powolzhje v XVII v.”, *Istoricheskije Zapiski*, 36 (1951), pp. 142 ff.; in the mid-18th century, the number of “gulashche” in this area was estimated at almost one million (including sailors and fishermen).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

But in most cases, this “looseness” was merely an episode, even if it lasted decades, before the life of the peasant stabilized and they entered into permanent service.⁶⁷

In the 18th century, a major change occurred in this area of European development.⁶⁸ Legislation now attempted to categorize these people and their manner of employment, and in particular to create pressure for them to function on the labour market. Basically this is a similar process to that in the West during the first centuries of the modern era. In both cases the genesis of vagrancy was similar: the collapse of feudal relationships, widening differences in the social and economic situation in rural areas, and a crisis of traditional handicrafts. This was an expression and a consequence of the transfer of masses of people from the agricultural to the non-agricultural sectors, whereby they lost direct control over the factors of production and became hired labourers. But during this transfer, which was a painful process on a collective and on an individual level, migrants lost their social status and their support from the traditional bonds of local communities. They became a great mass within towns⁶⁹ (or before their gates), which were incapable of exercising effective control over them. But most of all, a town was unable to guarantee them work and did not offer them stable and sufficiently attractive employment or sufficiently high wages to prevent the transfer from one sector to another from causing mass vagrancy.

The traditional handicrafts in the towns were unable to assimilate unqualified masses because qualifications or money were an essential condition for stability inside the towns. They were able to be hired by rural industry, the outwork system, as a result of which the exodus from rural areas was halted: instead of wandering people, there was now wandering industry (we observe this in 16th and 17th century England and Holland). Capitalist manufacturing placed no barriers on a lack of qualifications, so the mass of former manufacturers, both arrivals from rural areas and proletarianised craftsmen, constituted reserve manpower for industry.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 151.

⁶⁸ The best presentation of this change remains N. Assorodobraj's work, *Początki klasy robotniczej*.

⁶⁹ Frančić, *Ludzie luźni*, p. 116 ff., claims that they accounted for half the population of Cracow at the end of the 13th century.

However, socio-psychological barriers remained. The rhythm of urban life was alien to people just arrived from rural areas,⁷⁰ the fabric of social ties was totally different, and social life was marked by anonymity. Even if industrial work did not require essential qualifications, it still required adaptation to the new work within a certain time limit and under control. The cultural acclimatization of rural people to city life was slow and gradual, dictated by such mechanisms as the dates of trade examinations, marriage, etc. But industrialization, when a transfer from the country to the city became a mass phenomenon, did not create such mechanisms. Therefore, coercion was applied to the adaptation process,⁷¹ police discipline accompanied the beginnings of industry, and the emergence of groups of paupers not suitable for industrial work and falling victim to fluctuating developments was one of the costs of the birth of capitalism.

We see differences in the way in which the social margins were treated on the threshold of the modern era, a difference between the industrializing Europe and the agrarian lands east of the Elbe. On the one hand, repressions were applied to vagrants, layabouts and fraudsters in the name of good work ethics and a supply of manpower, and on the other hand efforts were made to preserve the general subservience of the peasants, and repressions were applied to peasants who had fled or layabouts who corrupted the morals of good working peasants. But if we abandon the time scales, we find a similar trend in the changeover from feudalism to capitalism, and in both of the spheres we have discussed the reason for the repressions is the disturbing freedom of people on the social margins.

One could add a third platform of comparison: the social aspects of 20th-century industrialization in the Third World, where a gradual disintegration of traditional society is taking place in similar conditions.⁷² Here we find many similarities where members of agricultural society have to adapt to industrial work, thus forming a social margin. But the assimilation of this agrarian mass into industrial society faces

⁷⁰ Cf. W.E. Moore, *Man, Time and Society* (New York, 1963).

⁷¹ W.E. Moore, *Industrialization and Labor: Social Aspects of Economic Development* (Ithaca–New York, 1951), pp. 59 ff.

⁷² *Ibid.*, *passim*; W.E. Moore, *The Impact of Industry* (New York, 1965), pp. 38 ff.; Kula, *Recherches comparatives*, p. 519 ff.

a barrier: an absence of qualifications,⁷³ for industrialization in the 20th century is taking place at a high technological level. Therefore, the labour market in the Third World possesses a particular characteristic: there seem to be two separate streams – one for qualified workers, and one for unskilled workers.⁷⁴ Due to this, the social margins do not pose a “reserve of manpower” for capitalist industry, cannot adapt to industrial society, and continues to exist outside that society. This third platform of comparison shows the similar way in which processes are born and the similarity of their socio-psychological mechanisms, but the development of the situation is totally different: time has altered the basic data of the problem.

⁷³ E. Hobsbawm draws attention to this difference in “La marginalidad social en la historia de la industrialización europea”, *Revista Latinoamericana de Sociología*, 5 (1969), pp. 237 ff.

⁷⁴ R.U. Miller, “La théorie de la main d’œuvre excédentaire”, *Bulletin de l’Institut d’Etudes Sociales*, 8 (1971), pp. 24 ff.

On Margin Groups in Medieval Cities

In: *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 76 (1971), pp. 539–554.

Organized societies with an established class structure possessed margin areas, a kind of *no man's land*, occupied temporarily or permanently by outcasts from various classes. The very existence of such a fringe was considered evidence of the formation of a coherent and cohesive social organism, whilst the size and nature of the margin could reflect the degree of development of the ruling social structures, their vitality, their ability to assimilate or their stasis.¹ At times of a breakthrough or major socio-economic upheaval, the margin contained elements which had no place in the governing social system and became a breeding ground for new social classes and strata. In research, this fact often provides a reason to regard margin communities not as a new social stratum, but as the harbinger of a new society. Thus, people on the medieval social margins were treated as the equivalent of a modern-age proletariat, attributing them with a class cohesion which they never had, and treating them as a foreign body in feudal society.²

¹ The problem of loose people has a good tradition in Polish research. It was undertaken by Stefan Czarnowski in his *Kultura* (*Dzieła*, vol. 1, ed. N. Assorodobraj, S. Ossowski [Warsaw, 1956], especially p. 71 ff.) and in a separate article (*Dzieła*, vol. 2, p. 186 ff.). The pioneering work of Nina Assorodobraj – *Początki klasy robotniczej. Problem rąk roboczych w przemyśle polskim epoki stanisławowskiej* (Warsaw, 1946) – is a classic work in this field. The work of Józef Gierowski (1950), Bohdan Baranowski (1953), Stanisław Grodziski (1961) and Mirosław Francić (1967) has increased our knowledge of this group. An attempt at a general interpretation of the problem was made recently by Elżbieta Neyman (“Typy marginesowości w społeczeństwach i ich rola w zmianie społecznej”, *Studia Socjologiczne*, 1966, no. 4, pp. 35–62).

² Cf. K. Kautsky, *Poprzednicy współczesnego socjalizmu* (Warsaw, 1949).

There were criminal and margin elements in rural areas and in towns in the Middle Ages, but it was difficult for them to survive among small concentrations of people. They could count on certain support only in larger concentrations, where acquaintanceships were less close and not everyone knew every else – and outside organized concentrations of people such as in forests, fields and open roads. In large, dense centres of population these elements could count not only on less persecution, but also greater opportunities of making a living, both dishonestly, i.e. in breach of the rules and customs in force, or honestly, by taking advantage of temporary job opportunities. In essence, criminal and margin elements grew out of the poor “dregs” of urban society.

Research into medieval social history did not pay much attention to this milieu,³ but one should not concentrate only on those divisions to which there were clear points of reference; divisions resulting from economic functions or financial conditions, or a combination of these factors. To provide a full picture of urban society, it is necessary to include the lower social strata which, to a greater extent than common people in general, were described in a multitude of terms and definitions. The community of urban hired workers attracted the greatest attention. At the end of the last century, Niccolò Rodolico devoted a separate study to the Florentine *popolo minuto*, and almost fifty years later dealt with the uprising of the *ciompi* as a “page from the history of the proletariat.”⁴ Victor I. Rutenburg⁵ also studied “hired

³ The social structure of medieval cities has been covered exhaustively by the school of Schmoller; the work of the master himself and that of his many pupils and followers on the subject of property statistics (*Vermögensstatistik*) provide rich material which has still not been used to the full; cf. G. Schmoller, “Die Einkommensverteilung in alter und neuer Zeit”, *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft*, 19 (1895), pp. 1076 ff. Recent years have brought new research into the social structure of medieval cities by Robert Henri Bautier, Jean François Bergier, Klaus Fritz, František Graus, František Kavka, Josef Maček, Heinz von und zur Mühlen, Henryk Samsonowicz, Johannes Schildhauer, and Philippe Wolff. Recently the subject has been undertaken in the collective publication *Untersuchungen zur gesellschaftlichen Struktur der mittelalterlichen Städte in Europa*, ed. Th. Mayer (Konstanz, 1966).

⁴ N. Rodolico, *Il Popolo minuto. Note di storia fiorentina (1343–1378)* (Bologna, 1899); id., *I Ciompi. Una pagina di storia del proletariato operaio* (Firenze, 1945).

⁵ V.I. Rutenburg, *Narodnyje dviženija v gorodach Italii. 14. – načalo 15. veka* (Moscow–Leningrad, 1958); id., “Najemnyje rabočyje v Italii XIV–XV v.”, in: *Iz istorii rabotčego klassa i revolyutsionogo dvizheniya. Sbornik Statei* (Moscow, 1958).

labourers” in Italian cities in the late Middle Ages. It is interesting that this research was inspired by the active role which this milieu played in the socio-political history of Italy in the late Middle Ages. The uprising of the *ciompi*, whose social forces have still not been fully deciphered, thus turned medieval urban labourers into a “historic” stratum. The innovative work of František Graus on the paupers of Prague before the time of Jan Hus,⁶ concentrating mainly on the community of hired labourers, was also intended to reveal the role which, in the author’s opinion, they could have played in the Hussite movement and in the formation of radical ideas.

Of the various categories of these “urban dregs” Graus concentrated primarily on the salaries,⁷ for this formed part of a sphere of research that was well defined and possessed a long tradition, the history of handicrafts and industry. But the entire category of paupers also aroused interest.⁸ The work of Graus includes other margin groups: beggars, prostitutes and vagrants. These are part of organized society like hired labourers, but their social situation and way of life conflicts with binding norms. They create a criminal world and contribute to it.

Interest in the history of crime has risen in recent years, and this research also covers periods for which there are no court statistics.⁹

⁶ F. Graus, *Chudina městská w době předhusitské* (Prague, 1949). The same author deals with the problem of urban and rural paupers in: “Au Bas Moyen Age. Pauvres des villes et pauvres des campagnes”, *Annales ESC*, 16 (1961), pp. 1053 ff.

⁷ B. Geremek, “Les salariés et le salariat dans les villes au cours du Bas Moyen Age”, in: *Troisième conférence internationale d'histoire économique, Munich 1965*, vol. 1, Paris 1968, pp. 533–574.

⁸ The problem of pauperism has been covered widely in recent European medieval studies; the first results of the Paris seminar of Michel Mollat have been published in several issues of the *Recherches sur les pauvres et la pauvreté aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age* (produced since 1962) and in the *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France*, 149 (1966); the research of Jean Glénisson into vagrancy and migration in the late Middle Ages is reported in *Annuaire de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (6^e section: 1964–1965); for German research into this topic, see: *Gesellschaftliche Unterschichten in den südwestdeutschen Städten*, ed. E. Maschke, J. Sydow, Stuttgart 1967. Materials on a Franio-Geran seminar in Saint-Cloud in 1962 on the role of these strata in history is being printed.

⁹ Y.M. Bercé, “De la criminalité aux troubles sociaux: la noblesse rurale du sud-ouest de la France sous Louis XII”, *Annales du Midi*, 76 (1964), pp. 41 ff.; J.C. Gégot, “Etude par sondage de la criminalité dans le baillage de Falaise (XVII^e–XVIII^e siècle)”, *Annales de Normandie*, 16 (1966), no. 2; Y.M. Bercé, “Aspects de la criminalité au XVII^e siècle”, *Revue Historique*, 239 (1968).

Although the statistical material which can be used to illustrate crime in the Middle Ages, even in the late period, is very meagre,¹⁰ court archives from this period permit an analysis of medieval vagrancy in terms of social history. They also allow the formulation of questions about the composition, role and life of urban communities whose very status was not compliant with the principles of social existence.¹¹

In medieval legislation, investigation into and punishment for crimes developed at the same time as the practice of private vendettas declined.¹² But cases involving “the community of ill repute” were treated differently under common law, according to the principle that it is the authorities who should exercise control over this community. A French authority on common law includes in this category of “ill repute” people who rent brothels, robbers, hooligans, killers and others with a tendency to do evil.¹³ In common law, “suspicious” people whom royal officials had a duty to watch over included poor people living in a town without any property or fixed income and who spent their time in taverns;¹⁴ King Louis IX ordered these people to be evicted from the towns. These “suspicious” people or people of “ill repute” were treated differently from others – the usual court procedures did not apply to them.

The series of laws against vagrants¹⁵ which we see in France, England and Spain in the 14th century, especially after the Black Death, was aimed at this very milieu. The critical situation on the

¹⁰ See J.A. Goris, “Zeden en criminaliteit te Antwerpen in de tweede helft der XIVE eeuw: neer de rekeningen der schouten van 1358 tot 1387”, *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 5 (1926), pp. 871 ff.; *ibid.*, 36 (1957), pp. 181 ff.

¹¹ In an article being prepared for printing, I deal with the composition and fortunes of the social margins in medieval Paris; the Paris material also provides a substantial basis for our thoughts in this article.

¹² A. Esmein, *Histoire de la procédure criminelle en France* (Paris, 1882), pp. 43 ff.; R. Grand, “Justice criminelle. Procédure et peines dans les villes aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles”, *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 102 (1941), p. 70.

¹³ *Les Livres de Justice et de Plet*, ed. L.-N. Rapetti (Paris, 1850), vol. 19, book 44, §12, pp. 317 ff.

¹⁴ *Les établissements de Saint Louis*, ed. P. Viollet, vols. 1–4 (Paris, 1881–1886), vol. 2, book 1, §37, p. 54.

¹⁵ Cf. B. Geremek, “La lutte contre le vagabondage à Paris aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles”, in: *Ricerche storiche ed economiche in memoria di Corrado Barbagallo*, ed. L. de Rosa (Napoli, 1970), vol. 2, pp. 211–236.

labour market, shortage of manpower in rural areas, and a feeling of concern for safety in the towns, dictated the creation of these laws – the prologue of “bloody legislation against the disenfranchised, “as Karl Marx called it.”¹⁶ The 1351 ordinance of John the Good in France, like the *Statute of Labourers* in England, ordered all vagrants, people without a trade and layabouts either to take up work or leave the city. At the same time, they recorded an increase in the number of such people. The quantity of anti-vagrancy legislation passed in subsequent years shows that these laws had little effect; an increase in the size of the police force and the arrest of these people at their nocturnal hiding places – near fortifications, in ditches and in hay barges moored in the port of Paris, did not help either.¹⁷ An unstable life style, no permanent place of residence,¹⁸ no regular income, ragged clothes – these were considered sufficient evidence of a breach of the recognized standards of an honest life.¹⁹

Court evidence indicates that many criminals, fraudsters and professional thieves well trained in the art of cutting haversacks came from the ranks of vagrants, people with no fixed abode, “living everywhere” and seeking an easy life.

“De bourses couper soutilment, D’entregetter legierement Un henap ou un pot d’estain Pour un d’argent, et de ma main Couper un mordant de courroie; De rober nul homme ne crain” boasts the hero of one of the satirical works of Eustache Deschamps.²⁰ But court documents show how strong was the link between the world of crime and the world of work, between the “dangerous classes” and the “working classes” of 19th-century Paris.²¹ Therefore, struggle against vagrancy was also for the sake of public safety; the removal of people

¹⁶ K. Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (London, 1887), chapt. XXIV, section 3.

¹⁷ Paris, Archives Nationales, Y 2, Livre rouge vieil, fol. 124 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 21803, fol. 151), edict of 1395.

¹⁸ Cf. Guillaume Du Breuil, *Stilus curiae parlamenti*, ed. F. Aubert (Paris, 1909), p. 15.

¹⁹ Interesting in this regard on the essence of vagrancy: Vexliard, “Vagabondage et structures sociales”, *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, 22 (1957), p. 97 ff.; and *Introduction à la sociologie du vagabondage* (Paris, 1956).

²⁰ Eustache Deschamps, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire, G. Raynaud (Paris, 1878–1903), vol. 5, chapt. MXXII, p. 291.

²¹ L. Chevalier, *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses à Paris dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1958).

with no fixed income, people without work or “suspicious people” was meant to protect the city against thieves.²²

The register of court cases examined by the royal tribunal in Paris in 1389–1392²³ shows a striking similarity of the socio-economic situation of 127 people accused of various offences (85 of whom were convicted of theft). Out of every ten people accused of theft, eight were hired labourers and servants.²⁴

The largest group of offenders were freelance craftsmen. This was due to limited access to freelance work. Moreover, the number of craftsmen reliant on orders was higher than the demand for work in this sector. Craftsmen found it more worthwhile to exploit the free work of apprentices than hire qualified artists who had to be paid. In such a situation of surplus supply over demand on the market for qualified manpower, craftsmen defended themselves at all costs against competition from “outsiders.” Guilds of craftsmen, the fruit of increased solidarity of people in this sector, defended most of all their own interests and strongly opposed an influx of craftsmen from outside the guild or without artistic qualifications.²⁵

The craftsmen whom we find among the community of offenders were those “outsiders,” having arrived from other places and not belonging to a trade association. In any case, they pursued several occupations which sometimes had nothing in common with each other – a potter worked for a cobbler, but was also a mason’s apprentice, porter and messenger;²⁶ another tailor worked as

²² In 1459 the city authorities of Amiens were visited by a man who had been born in that city (*enfant natif de cette ville*), but without any money, family or friends. He asked to be granted a trade apprenticeship. The authorities refused, but offered him one-off support on condition that he left the city for good. He was also warned that should he ever return, he would be flogged and sent to the galleys because he had already been in prison several times and was suspected of being a thief. See E. Maugis, *Recherches sur les transformations du régime politique et social de la ville d’Amiens des origines de la commune à la fin du XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1906), p. 315, fn. 3.

²³ *Registre criminel du Châtelet de Paris, du 6 septembre 1389 au 18 mai 1392*, ed. H. Duplés-Agier, vol. 1–2 (Paris, 1861).

²⁴ 40 percent are craftsmen and hired craft employees, 31 percent are agricultural labourers, 12 percent are domestic servants, 11 percent are traders, and 2 percent are people of noble origin.

²⁵ B. Geremek, *Najemna siła robocza w rzemiośle Paryża XIII–XV w. Studium o średniowiecznym rynku siły roboczej* (Warsaw, 1962), pp. 164 ff.

²⁶ *Registre criminel*, vol. 1, p. 50.

a porter.²⁷ The pursuance of several occupations shows that these people did not belong to any professional organization and were intent on deriving a living from anything. Their qualifications did not matter; they offered mainly their physical strength. The condition of the labour market compelled these circles of labourers to migrate.

Migrating from one town to the next in the 14th century was a part of the preparations to exercise a trade and marked the culmination of a trade apprenticeship.²⁸ But not all craftsmen migrated, only those who were unable to find independent work in their profession and who could not find a place for themselves in the corporate structures of their home town. Migration created an opportunity – or merely an illusion – for finding a place in the world and finding happiness, but it could also lead to crime. Society treated wandering craftsmen with mistrust. The statements given by these people before the judges of the Châtelet in Paris contain surprising details of the distances they travelled. Sometimes the distance between one location and the next was five hundred kilometres or more, and not always within one country.

A great number of the prisoners tried at the Châtelet were hired labourers of various sorts – farmhands, wagoners and winemakers. In a large city they found work on the properties and vineyards of the bourgeoisie, apart from which, when there was a carnival or a fair, it was easier to be hired while staying in a town.²⁹ Towns also provided earnings opportunities when the demand for manpower fell in rural areas. This was a restless feature of life: once someone had decided to leave their home, they were compelled to seek increasingly better living conditions until in the end they established a family and stabilized. In the court register of the Parisian Châtelet, almost 16.5 percent of all convicts were wandering farm labourers or rural vagrants.³⁰

Both rural labourers and domestic servants were essentially unqualified people whom the towns had provided limited possibilities of adaptation and socialization. Medieval cities received permanent migrations from rural areas, but this influx of rural elements had

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

²⁸ I deal with the migration of craftsmen in the article: “Les migrations des compagnons au bas Moyen-Age”, *Studia Historiae Oeconomiae*, 4 (1970), pp. 81–89.

²⁹ Paris, Archives Nationales, Z² 3257, fol. VII – about a farmhand who is recruited in Paris to work on the land, and once there he works as a porter.

³⁰ J. Glénisson, J. Misraki, “Désertions rurales dans la France médiévale”, in: *Villages désertés et histoire économique. XIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1965), pp. 280.

to undergo culturalisation. If new arrivals did not have enough resources to maintain themselves, a trade apprenticeship or long-term service was the proper way to adapt to town life. Of course this did not prevent the possibility of earning money; the towns offered many opportunities for physical work, albeit seasonal or temporary. Those who could not or would not find permanent work in a town or in the country could hope for such work.³¹ The above-mentioned Châtelet register describes such people as “without a profession” or “without an estate.” In practice, they took any work they could find. One example of many was a young man (22 years old), caught red-handed cutting a pouch containing money (and in the royal courtroom!), who confessed that he had never learned any trade, had been in service, wandered from place to place and worked as a farm labourer in a monastery, as a servant in a hotel and in the house of a Parisian townsman, operating bellows.³²

The hired labourer community was marked by a rather high degree of criminality. The fact that most cutthroats or thieves, even if occasional offenders, came from this milieu does not mean that this community can be identified only with such people. As noted above, the service sector was a very fluid, diversified body. Membership of it was in itself a manifestation of declassing and of the absence of a permanent place in society or a rejection of natural social ties. One can say – with a little, or perhaps even quite some exaggeration – that in medieval society, the stable world was a world of people who were either masters themselves, or served masters, or who enjoyed corporate liberties and privileges. Hired labourers and servants certainly had a master (and who, in the case of many trades, enjoyed corporate privileges, although not to a full extent), but the people encountered in the court records often changed their allegiance “to a master” or changed their occupation, place of work and employer. They include pauperized craftsmen and peasants, young people seeking their fortune or economic independence, and those for whom hired labour is a permanent condition. Their shifting fortunes, lack of work and

³¹ For the psychological effects of unemployment, see P.F. Lazarsfeld, M. Jahoda, H. Zeisel, *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* (Leipzig, 1933); B. Zawadski, P.F. Lazarsfeld, “The Psychological Consequences of Unemployment”, *Journal of Social Psychology*, 6 (1935), pp. 224–251.

³² *Registre criminel*, vol. 1, p. 185.

absence of resources from which to live often forced them into theft. Remaining outside the local social ties, they frequently found theft the only way in which to alter their situation.

In the mosaic of occupations practised by those who appear before the court, theft is the occupation *par excellence*, although often it is merely an additional way of earning money. This means it occurs occasionally and is the result of an absence of other possibilities of making a living or earning additional funds. But for some of these people, theft remained the chief occupation. The connections between craftsmen in this vibrant milieu often assumed the nature of criminal organizations.

The large community of people without fixed status established acquaintanceship at their workplace or in church, in a tavern, a house of ill repute or on a pilgrimage. In a tavern, before a tankard of wine, they planned “jobs.” A royal pardon granted to the perpetrator of a long series of thefts mentions his meeting in taverns with people of various sorts. One of the people he met there talked him into committing his first theft – breaking into the house of a certain prostitute – and in the next series of thefts he found permanent helpers and collaborators among the people in this milieu.³³

A readiness to share the risk lay at the roots of many associations of thieves where the principle of an equal share of the booty applied.³⁴ Organized gangs of thieves were also formed, acting in towns,³⁵ but most of all outside the town walls.³⁶ Roads, villages and small towns were haunted by armed gangs who were the plague of France during the truce during the Hundred Years’ War. In the second half of the 15th century, large gangs of brigands, of several hundred individuals, roamed France. A large part of their members were part-time soldiers for whom there was no war

³³ Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 207, no. CIII.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, JJ 170, no. VII; and *Registre criminel*, vol. 1, pp. 97, 140, 496, 499.

³⁵ On such a gang caught in 1449, see J. Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII, roi de France*, ed. A. Vallet de Viriville (Paris, 1858), vol. 2, p. 68; *Journal d’un bourgeois de Paris, 1405–1449*, wyd. A. Tuetey (Paris, 1881), p. 389; for the year 1460 see *Journal de Jean de Roye, connu sous le nom de Chronique scandaleuse: 1460–1483*, ed. B. de Mandrot (Paris, 1894–1896, vol. 1), p. 3 ff.

³⁶ On a gang of Parisians in Orleans, see P. Champion, *Notes pour servir à l’histoire des classes dangereuses en France des origines à la fin du XV^e siècle*, in: L. Sainéan, *Les sources de l’argot ancien* (Paris, 1912), vol. 1, p. 348.

action.³⁷ Paris was not the scene of their activities, but rather a stopping-off point, a place for their entertainment and winter accommodation. The city offered the gangs opportunities for exploiting their success – spending money and a high life in taverns and brothels. But when the pouch became empty, the Parisian tavern was the place where the next “job” was planned – in Paris itself or outside its walls. New members of the band were recruited here and a network of contacts what the local common people established. A transfer from occasional thieving to permanent thieving was not too difficult. The taverns were the scene of much boasting and showing off of one’s cunningness and skill at committing crimes³⁸ – objects were stolen not just for their value, but in order to display one’s skill in the art of theft.³⁹

Guilds of thieves appeared later.⁴⁰ Here, theft was considered an art, a profession, a craft, and to carry it out it was necessary to demonstrate one’s ability, involving a period of training and apprenticeship, followed by the purchase of admission to the guild. There were already “structured” groups of the art of theft in large towns towards the end of the Middle Ages,⁴¹ but essentially the milieu of thieves had no sharp boundaries and was closely intertwined with the community of workers. Unemployed labourers, vagrants, expelled from various social classes, thieves and brigands permeated a town’s society, mixed with the lowest strata of urban society, and neighboured the world of work and poverty.

³⁷ One of the most infamous of these was the gang of *coquillarts* with whom François Villon was involved: see Sainéan, *Les sources*, vol. 1, pp. 87–110; as well as the remarks of P. Champion in the annex, *ibid.*, pp. 393–422.

³⁸ Example in *Registre criminel*, vol. 2, p. 386.

³⁹ On the significance of such attitudes in the formation of a delinquent subculture in the proletarian community of large cities, see A.K. Cohen, *Delinquent Boy. The Culture of the Gang* (Glencoe, 1955).

⁴⁰ E. Coornaert, *Les corporations en France avant 1789* (Paris, 1941), p. 190. A description of the guild of thieves in 17th-century Paris is to be found in H. Sauvai, *Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris* (Paris, 1724), vol. 1, p. 513. For the guilds of *hultajs* in Poland, see J. Kołaczkowski, *Wiadomości o fabrykach i rękodzielnictwach w dawnej Polsce* (Warsaw, 1881), p. 16; in Belorussia, see D.L. Pochilevich, “Plebey-skiy lud (lezhnyye) v dierievnie Riechi Pospolitey”, *Ezhegodnik po Agrarnoy Istorii Vostochnoy Yevropy* 1962 g., Minsk 1964, p. 166.

⁴¹ One can mention in particular the spread of the skilled use of skeleton keys in the 15th century; Paris, Archives Nationales, X^{2a} 28, fol. 232 v°; X^{2a} 39, under the date 3 March 1472.

Abject poverty was also a profession: medieval cities crawled with beggars. They had their place in the division of labour in feudal society,⁴² for they permitted the faithful to do good deeds and provided them with an opportunity to redeem their sins. Medieval philanthropy acted mainly via institutionalized channels and served circles of chronic paupers who had been certified incapable of making a living, this incapability being subject to inspection. Care over these able and, in a certain sense, socially integrated categories of people was provided by hospitals and shelters that offered overnight accommodation to the homeless, churches and charities offering them support, and prosperous donors who sometimes had beggars whom they supported on a regular basis. Beggars sometimes formed themselves into a kind of corporation.⁴³ Before every church there was a horde of beggars, some of whom had their permanent place there – the will of a certain Parisian patrician lists 85 locations where almost 4,000 beggars regularly waited for alms.⁴⁴

But the growing number of beggars in cities in the late Middle Ages caused anxiety,⁴⁵ for they were not just “legitimate beggars,” in other words handicapped or unable to work, but also expellees from rural areas who were not suited for work in cities and therefore relied on support. No work or money forced some to crime, and others to begging. The traditional centres and institutions of philanthropy were also experiencing a crisis; alms from the monasteries, the primary source of charitable support, dwindled, and a lay system of care over the poor was not yet fully developed. Beggars were also considered a “dangerous class.”

⁴² W. Kula, *Teoria ekonomiczna ustroju feudalnego. Próba modelu* (Warsaw, 1962), p. 121.

⁴³ For the brotherhood of beggars in Lviv, see Ł. Charewiczowa, *Kłęski zaraz w dawnym Lwowie* (Lviv, 1930), p. 17; for the guild of beggars in Rome, see E. Rodocanachi, *Les corporations ouvrières à Rome depuis la chute de l'Empire romain* (Paris, 1894), vol. 1, xxv, note 1.

⁴⁴ “Testaments enregistrés au Parlement de Paris sous le règne de Charles VI”, ed. A. Tuetey, in: *Documents inédits sur l'histoire de France*, vol. 3: *Mélanges* (Paris, 1880), XXXIII, p. 528 ff.

⁴⁵ In Florence in the first half of the 14th century, assuming that Giovanni Villani's figures are correct (*Cronica*, ed. G. Dragomanni, vol. 3 [Firenze, 1845], X, 162, XI, 94), 20 percent of the population lived off alms; cf. R. Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz*, 4, part 1 (Berlin 1925), p. 176; E. Fiumi, “La demografia fiorentina nelle pagine di Giovanni Villani”, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 108 (1950), p. 107.

Medieval literature shows beggars without sympathy, in satirical or insulting tones.⁴⁶ Distrustful, cunning, deceitful, living a vagrant life and only pretending to be handicapped is how beggars appear in a French drama in the 15th century. Earlier, Eustache Deschamps described the wily tricks of false beggars, who threw their crutches into a corner as soon as they returned home, covering their bodies in artificial sores and crowding the churches – in fact thieves stealing from God and the merciful faithful.⁴⁷

Anti-vagrancy legislation was accompanied by ordinances aimed at reorganizing care over the poor. The 1351 ordinance of John the Good recommends that alms be given only to the genuinely poor, in other words the sick, lame and helpless, whilst healthy people should be expelled from hospitals and shelters⁴⁸ and compelled to work. The edict of King Charles VII from the middle of the 15th century describes the deceitful conduct of beggars simulating various diseases in order to receive alms. It describes many such practices in addition to those discussed in the famous 15th century work *Liber Vagatorum*.⁴⁹ In court records we also find beggars as criminals. Evidence given before courts sometimes mentions alms as a source of income. But usually we encounter professional begging. If a group of beggars is accused of poisoning a well,⁵⁰ it is difficult to establish to what extent the accusations are justified, but we can judge the degree of society's suspicion of beggars and of their alienation. However, we also encounter an accusation of a different kind, this time documented. At the beginning of 1449, a band of beggars and layabouts was arrested and imprisoned in Paris. They kidnapped children and prepared them

⁴⁶ G. Cohen, "La scène de l'aveugle et de son valet dans le théâtre français du Moyen Age", *Romania*, 41 (1912), p. 346 ff.; E. von Kraemer, *Le type du faux mendiant dans les littératures romanes depuis le Moyen Age jusqu'au XVIIe siècle* (Helsingfors, 1944; "Societas Scientiarum Fennica. Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum", XIII, 6).

⁴⁷ Eustache Deschamps, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 6, chapt. MCCXXIX, p. 230, chapt. MCCXLIX, p. 279; vol. 7, chapt. MCCXCIX, p. 52, chapt. MCC, p. 54.

⁴⁸ R. de Lespinasse, *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris* (Paris, 1886), vol. 1, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *Liber Vagatorum. Der Betler Orden*, Augsburg ok. 1512 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Rés. R. 409); *Liber Vagatorum. Le livre des gueux*, ed. P. Ristelhuber (Strasbourg, 1862); F. Kluge, *Rotwelsch, Quellen und Wortschatz der Gaunersprache und der verwandte Geheimsprachen* (Strassburg, 1901), pp. 35–80.

⁵⁰ *Chronique du religieux de Saint Denis*, ed. L. Bellaguet (Paris, 1839–1855), vol. 1, pp. 682 ff.; *Registre criminel*, vol. 1, pp. 419–480, vol. 49, pp. 1–16.

to become beggars, blinding or mutilating them.⁵¹ Beggars belonged to gangs of brigands, and their lifestyle naturally brought them close to delinquent groups.

Just as beggars had a place in the life of a city, so was prostitution not only tolerated by the law and the authorities, but was in a certain sense integrated into urban society. Although the church did not spare words of condemnation for depravity and prostitution, and prostitutes were attacked in church sermons⁵² and in medieval literature, church doctrine (St. Augustine's remarks on the utility of prostitution were authoritative) and medieval legislation accorded prostitution a place in society and in the division of social functions. It was treated as a *malum necessarium* (in the legislation of Louis IX, one can find "abolitionist" trends,⁵³ though they were not always realized in practice) and the authorities merely set bounds upon prostitution so that public order was not disturbed.

A large population centre like Paris, where the church-university community provided a clientele for "saleable love," had a large population of prostitutes. Brothels occupied extensive areas in Paris, both in the Ile de la Cité itself (probably the oldest area of prostitution in the city, headed by the Rue de Glatigny), and on both banks of the Seine. The city authorities tried to prevent these areas from spreading beyond their traditional boundaries, but new "streets of shame" or – to use a medieval term – "valleys of love," kept appearing.

Prostitution was a trade and was subject to the same corporate regulations as other trades: the requirement that it be exercised only during the day,⁵⁴ organized in a manner similar to guilds, and placed under municipal supervision. Even the assignment of a separate ghetto for prostitution echoes the concentration in one place of craftsmen

⁵¹ Paris, Archives Nationales, X^{2a} 25, fol. 34 v^o–36 v^o; *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, p. 389; Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII*, vol. 2, p. 67 ff.

⁵² A. Samouillan, *Olivier Maillard, sa prédication et son temps* (Toulouse–Paris, 1891), p. 215, 322; Ch.V. Langlois, "La société du Moyen Age d'après les fabliaux", *Revue Bleue*, 48 (1891), p. 295 ff.

⁵³ *Ordonnances des rois de France*, vol. 1, ed. M. de Laurière (Paris, 1723), p. 65; J. de Joinville, *The life of St. Louis*, transl. J. Evans from the text ed. by N. de Wailly (Oxford University Press, 1938). For the expulsion of prostitutes from areas belonging to Parisian abbeys, see L. Tanon, *Histoire des justices des anciennes églises et communautés monastiques de Paris* (Paris, 1883), pp. 347–348, 433.

⁵⁴ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 8078 (col. Duprè), fol. 77; N. Delamare, *Traité de la police de Paris* (Paris, 1722), vol. 1, p. 523.

exercising the same profession; that is probably how Parisian centres of prostitution emerged. But apart from the supervised and controlled sphere of the profession, there was also a very broad sphere of uncontrolled prostitution (as in the case of unqualified craftsmen), exercised outside the designated districts, often outside the city walls, at the roadside, in fortifications, and in meadows and gardens.

In this community we observe great disparities in wealth. The prosperity of some prostitutes was evidenced by the contents of their money boxes⁵⁵ and the fine furs and clothes which municipal vagabonds took from them. There were even some who, when going to church, not only wore rich clothing, but also ordered their servants to bear beautifully bound books, even though they could not read.⁵⁶ But apart from these prostitutes making themselves out to be madams, forebears of the courtesans in the Renaissance,⁵⁷ most members of this mini-world were ordinary “fillettes monstrans tetins. Pour avoir plus largement d’ostes.”⁵⁸ They often led a vagrant life, going from town to town and hanging out in taverns, bath houses, cemeteries or docks. Sometimes they combined their profession with others, working as laundrymaids, servants and sellers. Court records indicate that they were charged with robbing their customers. One girl imprisoned in the Châtelet confessed to over thirty thefts; she not only robbed her clients, but stole on every other occasion.⁵⁹

Prostitutes were branded with infamy and medieval legislation ordered them to wear distinguishing clothes or a distinguishing symbol, like Jews and lepers. They were to be separate from the “respectable” society whom they served and at whose expense they lived. This is what brings them close to other categories on the social margins. In any case, daily life brought prostitutes into contact with the criminal world. As with taverns, brothels were meeting places for

⁵⁵ A. Longnon, *Paris pendant la domination anglaise (1420–1436)* (Paris, 1878), p. 205.

⁵⁶ Paris, Bibliothèque de la Préfecture de Police, Livre vert vieil premier, fol. 201, Livre noir vieil, fol. 41.

⁵⁷ Cf. E. Rodocanachi, *Courtisanes et bouffons. Etude des moeurs romaines au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1894); R. Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne. Essai de psychologie historique* (Paris, 1961), p. 119.

⁵⁸ François Villon, *Le Testament*, vv. 1976–7, in: id., *Œuvres*, ed. B. Longnon, L. Foulet (Paris, 1958), p. 76.

⁵⁹ *Registre criminel*, vol. 2, p. 422 ff.

vagabonds and prostitutes, and prostitution districts were at the same time criminal habitats.⁶⁰ Inseparable companions of the prostitute were *houliers* and *ribauds*⁶¹ – the term given to vagrants and layabouts who reaped rewards from prostitution.⁶²

These pimps sometimes arranged prostitution, supplying customers and recruiting girls. But even if their work was of a professional nature, they were nonetheless professional criminals, living off theft and violence, but now with the additional come from prostitution, for on the social margins all manner of trades mingled. The *houliers* included members of yet another community: clerics and students.

The privilege of immunity from the jurisdiction of lay courts made membership of the clergy enviable.⁶³ The *privilegium fori* extended to anyone who had ever been conferred the sign of the clergy, the tonsure, even if he did not take his vows afterwards. The tonsure represented merely a superficial ability to read and write and a knowledge of basic prayers. Therefore, *tonsurati* included not only bona fide clergymen, but also students, officials, craftsmen and traders. Church courts were usually more lenient than lay courts, so there were frequent cases where men simulated tonsures or pretended they were clerics. This even became a certain identifying feature of criminals: aware of the risks of their profession, they had their heads shaved so that if caught, they could demand to be handed over to a church court.⁶⁴

A considerable number of common criminals came from the ranks of genuine *tonsurati*. Priests without a permanent posting, monks, vagrants and various other declassed members of the clerical society

⁶⁰ Members of the *coquillarts* were arrested in a brothel in Dijon; see J. Garnier, *Les compagnons de la Coquille. Chronique dijonnaise du XV^e siècle* (Dijon, 1842); Sainéan, *Les sources*, vol. 1, pp. 89 ff., 100 ff.

⁶¹ For the meaning of terms, see F. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française* (Paris, 1880–1895), vol. 4, p. 486, vol. 6, p. 183.

⁶² For example, see the description of a pimp in Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, trad., présentation et notes par A. Strubel (Paris, 1993); Villon, *Le Testament*, p. 63; id., “Ballada o Wilonie y Grubey Małgošce”, transl. T. Żeleński Boy, in: *Arcydziela francuskiego średniowiecza* (Warsaw, 1968), pp. 718–720.

⁶³ R. Génesal, *Le “privilegium fori” en France du décret de Gratien à la fin du XIV^e siècle*, chapt. 1 (Paris, 1921), p. 3 ff.; L. Pommeray, *L'officialité archidiaconale de Paris aux XV^e–XVI^e siècles* (Paris, 1933), p. 216 ff.; L. Genicot, “Clercs et laïques au diocèse de Liège à la fin du Moyen Age”, *Revue d'Histoire du Droit*, 23 (1955), pp. 42 ff.

⁶⁴ Paris, Archives Nationales, X^{2a}11, fol. 192 v°; X^{2a} 12, fol. 379v; *Registre criminel*, vol. 1, pp. 78, 80, 90.

belonged to gangs of thieves, helped plan thefts and frequented in criminal groups together with other delinquents.

They also included students. The medieval student community was part of urban society, but was in permanent conflict with it. Until a rowdy student established a position and status for himself, he was alien to feudal society. The very loves of scholars, or at least some of them, involved contact with the dregs of society. "Everything on drink and women"⁶⁵ is how Villon recalled his student days.

Villon's own career shows how straight was the road that led from student pranks and entertainments to permanent crime.⁶⁶ A burglary at the Collège de Navarre at Christmas 1456 in which Villon took part, also involved a former Parisian scholar who had already gained experience in thieving as a member of the *coquillarts*, another scholar who was a master of the art just like Villon, a certain monk from Picardy and a professional cutpurse.⁶⁷ The criminal community drew to its ranks students who no longer wished to study, scholars seeking money to settle their tavern debts, and titled members of the university "intelligentsia" who lacked a position.

Scholars from delinquent circles were also brought together by entertainment.⁶⁸ Normal days in medieval cities were filled with work from dawn to dusk, only Sundays and numerous holidays were free. Just like vagrants, the unemployed, beggars and students could freely make use of their spare time to the irritation of both employers and employed in the urban community. Students took the fullest and most active part in lay entertainments and carnivals.⁶⁹ Wandering storytellers, jugglers and artists included a considerable number of ex-students. The carnival culture is a secular culture and a culture of youth, although neither of these two aspects justifies treating

⁶⁵ Villon, in: *Arcydziała*, p. 722.

⁶⁶ P. Champion remains a valuable source of information on Villon: *François Villon. Sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1913); see also J. Dauvillier, "Les procès de François Villon", *Bulletin de l'Université et de l'Académie de Toulouse*, 51 (1943), p. 7.

⁶⁷ Documents, in: A. Longnon, *Etude biographique sur François Villon d'après les documents inédits conservés aux Archives nationales* (Paris, 1877), pp. 139 ff.; id., *Œuvres complètes de François Villon. Pièces justificatives* (Paris, 1892), pp. lxxv ff.

⁶⁸ J. Ptaśnik, *Kultura wieków średnich* (Warsaw, 1925), pp. 141 ff.; H. Waddell, *Średniowiecze wagańców*, transl. Z. Wrzeszcz (Warsaw, 1960), chapters xiii–xiv; J. Le Goff, *Inteligencja w wiekach średnich*, transl. E. Bąkowska (Warsaw, 1964), pp. 29 ff.

⁶⁹ M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, transl. H. Iswolsky (London, 1968).

this as a culture of the social margins. However, this culture was in opposition to the ruling culture – different in its basic structures. With its laughter it crushed and drowned the binding norms of life and extolled the lusts of the flesh, desire, *joie de vivre* and entertainment. The church regarded members of this culture as *ministri Satanae*,⁷⁰ as representatives of and servants to the devil.⁷¹ Church decrees, as well as the writings of theologians and moralists, treated with disgust the jugglers⁷² trying to usurp all channels of influence over people's imagination and sensitivities.⁷³ Nevertheless, this sphere of culture retained its margin nature – not of course in terms of quantity, but due to its opposition to the ruling culture.

Considering the various groups that exceeded the bounds of medieval society and breached the rules and regulations in force, we should now consider the links between these groups and the internal cohesion of the community which we call the social margin.

What all the people in this community have in common is that they are not engaged in production nor do they have a stable situation, and in addition they remain outside the urban structure of guilds.⁷⁴ However, this requires qualification, for the thieves, prostitutes and beggars sometimes formed themselves into a certain type of corporate body and, with the exception of the first category of people, were subject to the supervision of the municipal authorities. They were united by the fact that society regarded them as “alien.” Urban hired labourers, beggars, prostitutes and wandering clerics were burdened with the permanent stereotype that they were vagabonds, and that they spent all their time in taverns, gambled and devoted themselves to entertainment. Society considered these categories *en bloc* as a world of disorder, a world of the margins.

⁷⁰ Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium*, II, 18, in: *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, vol. 172, no. 1148.

⁷¹ J.J. Jusserand, *L'épopée mystique de William Langland* (Paris, 1893), p. 120.

⁷² See E. Faral, *Les jongleurs en France au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1910), Appendice III.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 44 ff. For legislation against vagrants in Rus' see: *Akty sotsyalno-ekonomicheskoy istorii sieviero-vostochnoy Rusi konca XIV–nachala XVI veka*, ed. B.D. Griekov, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1962), no. 393 (1470); L.V. Cherepnin, *Obrazovaniye russkogo centralizovannogo gosudarstva* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 311 ff.

⁷⁴ Engels described these elements as being outside the market community, feudal rivalry and guilds; see K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected letters: the Personal Correspondence, 1844–1877*, ed. F.J. Raddatz, transl. E. Osers (Boston, 1981), *passim*.

But they themselves did not have this feeling of unity. It would be fruitless to seek collective appearances by this community in urban social movements in the 14th and 15th centuries.⁷⁵ In the Parisian revolts, as with the people's revolts in Florence, London and Ghent, the *maillotins* or *cabochiens* were part of the crowd,⁷⁶ taking part in fighting, robbery and violence, but they are only exploited. War permitted many of them to enter into the "service of force,"⁷⁷ join armed gangs and integrate themselves socially, and they did this, if only for a while. A common feature of their mentality are certain anarchistic trends,⁷⁸ not only indifferent, but also hostile to the institutions and standards in force. They participate in the culture of carnivals, but also in the culture of woes and sacrifices and in the hypocrisy that makes a virtue out of their misery and suffering. It is easy to see that they share the beliefs, way of thinking and even the hierarchy of values of the society of which they are on the margin. The subculture of the margins duplicates the fundamental features of social culture, but opposes it at the same time: it announces and extols extreme attitudes and negates equilibrium and moderation. This applies to praise for extreme poverty and the involvement of margin elements in heretical movements. Paradoxically, this also applies to the view among society whereby entertainment is the sole way of life of the margins opposed to that society.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Städtische Volksbewegungen im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. E. Engelmann (Berlin, 1960) – a collection of the unequal values in individual social revolts during this period.

⁷⁶ About the crowd in the "pre-industrial" age, see: G. Rude, *The Crowd in History. A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730–1848* (New York, 1964), pp. 5 ff.

⁷⁷ S. Czarnowski, "Ludzie zbędni w służbie przemocy", in: id., *Dzieła*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1956), especially p. 189.

⁷⁸ *Hérésies et sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industrielle, XIe–XVIIIe siècles*, ed. J. Le Goff (Paris–La Haye, 1968), p. 278.

Frycz Modrzewski's Aid Program for the Poor – European Disputes on Pauperism in the 16th Century

In: *Polska w świecie. Szkice z dziejów kultury polskiej*, ed. J. Dowiat et al. (Warsaw, 1972), pp. 207–225.

The debates and polemics aroused by the problem of pauperism in the Middle Ages developed sharper contours on the threshold of modern times. For many centuries, this was primarily a question of doctrine. The basis of the dispute was not so much attitudes towards poverty as attitudes towards wealth. The “proponents of voluntary poverty”¹ doubted that the Church’s social doctrine was correct to approve of poverty. The praise of poverty, expressed not only by evangelical texts but also by early Christian traditions which were still current, was considered a condemnation of wealth or affluence, not only from an eschatological angle, but also from the angle of earthly morals.² Attitudes towards beggars from compulsion, not from choice, and towards the poor, not towards poverty in general, possessed secondary importance and did not appear with greater strength until the middle of the 14th century, when attitudes towards work became more prominent.³

¹ T. Manteuffel, *Naissance d’une hérésie: les adeptes de la pauvreté volontaire au Moyen Age*, trad. A. Posner (Paris, 1970).

² Cf. H. Baron, “Franciscan Poverty and Civic Wealth as Factors in the Rise of Humanistic Thought”, *Speculum*, 13 (1938), pp. 1–37.

³ W.J. Ashley, *An Introduction to English Economic History and Theory* (London, 1914), vol. 2, pp. 305 ff. (chapt. V: The Relief of the Poor); however, the review of the problem here is considerably outdated. Attitudes towards the poor in 16th-century socio-economic thinking was dealt with by Pierre Vilar in a lecture and seminar at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in 1957. Cf. also R.H. Bremner,

This now ceased to be a doctrinal dispute, or at least not just a doctrinal dispute, because it was to determine the social policy paths of state and municipal authorities. The theological arguments do not lose their significance, but now reference is also made to the public good. The significance of the theological arguments stems from the fact that the policy of repression towards the poor may easily be regarded as contrary to tradition and Christian doctrine. The social situation at the turn of the 15th–16th centuries led to determined steps at reforming care over the poor and the entire extensive sphere of philanthropy. However, it was necessary to provide this new social policy with doctrinal justification and demonstrate that it was fully compliant with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Attitudes towards the poor were connected with the significant sphere of conflicts of the Reformation.

Criticism of medieval charitable doctrine was reflected in the thinking of the Reformation. It provided a good opportunity to expose the superficiality of traditional, or “Roman,” piety, and was closely associated with Christian attitudes in social life and the question of “good deeds” or the problem of destiny.

Luther⁴ vehemently opposed Christian society's tolerance of beggars. In his appeal *An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des Christlichen Standes Besserung*,⁵ he devotes an article to beggars. He considered it necessary to eradicate begging from the entire Christian world.⁶ The ban on begging, he argued, must be accompanied by a proper program of care over poor people who are incapable of earning a living; such care should be provided by the cities from where these poor people come, and which should also ensure that vagrants and wrongdoers pretending to be poor do not take advantage of social aid.

“Modern Attitudes towards Charity and Relief”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1 (1958).

⁴ Cf. W. Betcke, *Luthers Sozialethik* (Gütersloh, 1934); P. Berns, *Die Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsauffassung bei Martin Luther* (Berlin, 1938); H.J. Grimm, “Luther's Contribution to Sixteenth-Century Organization of Poor Relief”, *Archiv für Reformations Geschichte*, 61 (1970), pp. 222–234.

⁵ *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 6 (Weimar, 1888), pp. 381 ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 450: “Es ist wol der grosten not eyne, das alle betteley abthan wurden in aller Christenheit. Est solt yhe niemand unter den Christen betteln gahn, es were auch ein leychte ordnung drob zumachen, wen wir den mut und ernst dazzu theten, nemlich das ein yglich stad yhr arm leut vorsorgt, und keynen frembden betler zuliesse, sie hiessen wie sie wolten, es weren walbruder odder betel orden.”

Supervisors should be appointed who, in consultation with the parish priests and municipal council, would organize support for the poor. However, this support should be in reasonable limits: “it is enough to render sufficient support to prevent death from hunger.”⁷ For it would be unfair for some to live off the work of others and, on top of this, achieve prosperity by receiving alms.

Although one can consider this criticism of begging also as a criticism of mendicant orders and an extension of the anti-mendicant attacks of previous centuries, it was accompanied by a program of reorganizing charitable aid. The dislike of beggars went hand-in-hand with a demand to reform social aid. This motive can frequently be encountered in Luther’s writings. In his *Sermon on Usury* (1520), Luther points out that the Old Testament forbade begging, therefore begging and beggars should not be tolerated under the New Testament either.⁸ A full account of doctrine towards the poor is contained in Luther’s *Ordnung eines gemeinen Kastens*,⁹ a statute of care for the poor written for the city of Leisnig in 1523.

The pamphlet against begging *Liber Vagatorum* finally appeared in a German version in 1523, with a foreword by Luther.¹⁰ In this foreword, Luther states the lessons which dukes, lords and municipal councils should learn from this description of the deceit of beggars. Villages and towns should draw up registers of their paupers and provide regular care and support only to them. They should refrain from helping vagabonds and fraudsters obtaining unnecessary alms, as well as monks or other persons collecting money for their causes.

The reformist attitudes of other masters towards begging developed in a similar direction as Luther’s, namely condemnation and a desire to eradicate this plague for good. In 1526, Zwingli produced a plan

⁷ Ibid., p. 451: “Es ist gnug, das zimlich die armen vorsorgt sein, da bey sie nit hungers sterben noch erfrieren. Es fugt sich nit, das einer aufs andern erbeit mussig gehe, reich sey und wol lebe bey einis andern ubel leben, wie itzt der vorkeret miszprauch gehet.”

⁸ Ibid., p. 42. One can find a similar motive in the *Sermon on good deeds*; cf. A. Ściegienny, *Luther* (Warsaw, 1967), p. 182.

⁹ D. Martin *Luthers Werke*, vol. 12 (Weimar, 1891), pp. 11–30.

¹⁰ *Von der falschen Betler buberey* (Wittenberg, 1513); cf. *Liber Vagatorum. Le livre des gueux*, ed. P. Ristelhuber (Strasbourg, 1862), pp. xl ff. This text was re-published many times in the 16th and 17th centuries; see J.B. Ristelhueber, *Wegweiser zur Literatur der Waisenspflege, des Volks-Erziehungswesens, der Armenfürsorge, des Bettlerwesens und der Gefängniskunde*, vol. 2 (Köln, 1840), p. 35.

to reform social care for Zurich and firmly recommended a ban on begging,¹¹ whereas Calvin opposed help for beggars without a distinction between those who deserve support and those who merely avoid work. Calvin does not treat poverty as a virtue; it is a test of faith to the same degree as richness. Although he recognized the need and justification for Christian charity, this charity could not serve as a screen for idlers. Calvin, and the authorities of Geneva, regarded begging as a breach of the social order. Well-organized charitable care, he argued, helps those who are genuinely in need and, at the same time, helps realize the ban on begging.¹²

Given the meaning which the great reformers attached to the subject of beggars and the reform of charity, it would appear obvious that German, Dutch and French cities would reform their policies towards beggars and social care.¹³ But in 1881 Franz Ehrle attempted to demonstrate that the Catholic countries already had their own charitable reform.¹⁴ This sparked a long historiographic controversy between Catholic and Protestant historians about the origins of the reform of charity and the role of individual urban centres in it.¹⁵

¹¹ R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: a Historical Study*, prefatory note Ch. Gore, (London, 1938; 1990 repr.), p. 103, 114–116; Johannes Oecolampadius also devoted two treatises to the poor: in 1523 *De non habendo pauperum delectu*, and in 1542 *De erogatione elemosynarum*. Tawney stresses that the Swiss reformers did not consider poor people as a policy issue or as a problem of social organization, but as an ethical issue.

¹² R. Stauffenegger, “Réforme, richesse et pauvreté”, *Revue d’Histoire de l’Eglise de France*, 51 (1966), pp. 52 ff.; a useful guide to Calvin’s social thinking is: A. Biéler, *La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin* (Genève, 1959); cf. J.F. Bergier, “La pensée économique et sociale de Calvin”, *Annales ESC*, 17 (1962), p. 348 ff.

¹³ A. Emminghaus, *Das Armenwesen und die Armengesetzgebung in europäischen Staaten* (Berlin, 1870).

¹⁴ F. Ehrle, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Reform der Armenpflege* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1881).

¹⁵ A few years later, Ehrle rejects the claim that the charitable reform in Ypres (1525) was patterned on Lutheran ventures in southern German cities, and proves that the statute of Nuremberg on the subject of the poor did not possess a Protestant nature; see: F. Ehrle, “Die Armenordnungen von Nürnberg (1522) und von Ypres (1525)”, *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 9 (1888), pp. 450 ff. In a similar vein was an expose of the problem undertaken by L. Feuchtwanger years later, “Geschichte der sozialen Politik und des Armenwesens im Zeitalter der Reformation”, *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung*, 32 (1908), pp. 167 ff., XXXIII, 1909, p. 191 ff. These theses were polemicized by O. Winckelmann, “Über die ältesten Armenordnungen der Refor-

Examining the aspects of charitable reform in the 16th century, we can leave these controversies aside here. It does not matter to us whether Ypres and Venice, reorganizing their care for the poor, followed in the footsteps of Nuremberg, or even whether the Nuremberg model was clearly of a Protestant nature. What matters is that in the 1520s and 1530s a broad initiative to institutionalize care for the poor and to prohibit begging swept through European cities. These initiatives were preceded by doctrinal disputes. “A reform to traditional forms of aid for the poor hung in the air.”¹⁶ It was undertaken not only by Protestant, but also by Catholic milieus. The change in attitudes towards the poor also finds its natural sources in humanist thinking, which rejected the notion that a mechanical accumulation of good deeds is the natural road to salvation. Before and during the Reformation, Christian humanism exerted a powerful influence over the shaping of a new social policy and new attitudes towards the poor.¹⁷

An antinomy of Christian attitudes towards the poor can be found in the writings of the great Erasmus.¹⁸ Hotly opposing formalized piety,

mationszeit (1522–1525)”, *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, 17 (1914–1915), pp. 187 ff., 361 ff. J. Nolf, in an exhaustive study of the charitable reform in Ypres (*La réforme de la bienfaisance publique à Ypres au XVI^e siècle*, Gand, 1915), demonstrated that the policy of the authorities of Ypres were largely independent of similar initiatives in southern Germany. Despite the claims of this work and the arguments of H. Pirenne, R. Bonenfant defended the idea that the charitable reforms in Dutch cities were of German origin and the edict of 1531, in “Les origines et le caractère de la réforme de la bienfaisance publique aux Pays Bas sous le règne de Charles-Quint”, *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire*, 5 (1926), pp. 887 ff., 6 (1927), p. 207 ff. He said that legislation about the poor spread in Saxony, transferred to Nuremberg and Strasbourg, and from there to German and French cities. He stressed that the laws of Catholic cities and countries unconsciously adopted Luther’s program. P. Tacchi-Venturi (*La vita religiosa in Italia durante la prima età della Compagnia di Gesù*, Rome, 1910, pp. 388 ff.) recognises the possible influence of the Nuremberg statute on the reform in Venice. B. Pullan (*Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice*, Oxford, 1971, p. 254 ff.) does not reject this possibility, either.

¹⁶ Tawney, *Religia*, p. 126.

¹⁷ N.Z. Davis, “Poor Relief, Humanism and Heresy: The Case of Lyon”, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 5 (1968), p. 215 ff.; Pullan, *Rich and Poor*, pp. 223 ff.

¹⁸ Of the huge amount of literature on Erasmus, not all of which can be reported here, see M. Cytowska, Wstęp, in: J. Huizinga, *Erasm*, transl. M. Kurecka (Warsaw, 1964); recent years have seen many new books, but the subject of Erasmus’ attitude towards poverty does not seem to have been dealt with separately.

Erasmus extolled *caritas*, which does not mean endlessly repeating prayers and going to church often, but most of all, treating all one's neighbours as "members of a single body." Presenting the principles of Christian conduct in the *Enchiridion*,¹⁹ Erasmus says that the basic commandments of love are: "lending a helping hand, gently rebuking the errant, instructing the ignorant, raising the fallen, cheering the depressed, supporting the weary, assisting the needy."²⁰ Thus, solidarity with the needy and help for the poor are a Christian virtue, whereas waste and idleness breach the rule of love for one's neighbour. "What? He is a member of the same body as you yet he is starving while you are gorged with meat? Your brother is naked, shivering from the cold, whilst so many clothes of yours are being ruined by mildew and moths?"²¹ The commandment of love also requires that one's own property be treated as the common good.²² For a rich man should treat his riches as the property of the community of which he but a member. Wrong is he who believes that a ban on ownership and the commandment of poverty apply only to monks: they apply to all Christians.²³

Erasmus matches his praise of work with a moral condemnation of avarice. He berates not the possession of riches, but a tendency to acquire riches. He extols not so much poverty itself as a condemnation of wealth.²⁴ Therefore, there is no contradiction between this attitude and the fierce criticism in *Moriae Encomium* of the mendicant monks who "put off their trumperies at vast rates, yet rove up and down for the bread they eat."²⁵ This criticism is further expounded in Erasmus' *Colloquia Familiaria*; one of which is devoted to the Franciscans.²⁶ Nevertheless, Erasmus also frankly discusses the matter of common

¹⁹ Cf. A. Auer, *Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen. Nach dem Enchiridion militis Christiani des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Düsseldorf, 1954).

²⁰ *Erasmi Opera omnia ex recensione Ioannis Clerici* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1703–1706), vol. 5, no. 36; a Polish edition: *Podręcznik żołnierza Chrystusowego*, transl. J. Domański (Warsaw, 1965), p. 143.

²¹ *Ibid.*, col. 46 C.

²² Cf. R. Adams, *The Better Part of Valor: More, Erasmus, Colet and Vives on Humanism, War and Peace 1496–1535* (Washington, 1962), p. 198.

²³ *Erasmi Opera omnia*, vol. 5, no. 47 D. This extract spawned an exchange of correspondence between Erasmus and Ambrosius Pelargus in Freiburg in 1532.

²⁴ Cf. *Erasmi Opera omnia*, vol. 5, no. 59 C.

²⁵ D. Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, transl. M.M. Phillips (Cambridge, 1967).

²⁶ I refer to the edition: *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Colloquia Familiaria*, ed. P. Rabus (Ulm, 1747), pp. 344–363.

beggars in *Colloquia Familiaria*, which is a living reflection of the debates and problems of the time.

The problem of beggars and alms is eminently expressed in *A Noble Feast*,²⁷ which appeared in early editions of *Colloquia*.²⁸

Here, as in the *Enchiridion*, attitudes towards the poor form part of the considerations on the principles of Christian life and of the polemics targeted at superficial external rituals. Extolling discreet support for paupers “in an emergency,” Erasmus casts doubts on the tradition of ostentatious charity. He criticizes not only the hunt for alms by monasteries, but also excessive aid for “public beggars.” It is the cities themselves that should feed their poor, not tolerating vagrancy and not allowing healthy people to beg, people who “should be provided with work instead of money.”²⁹ One should give alms primarily to those paupers of whose material situation and moral qualities one is certain.³⁰

The question of beggars was important and must have taken up a lot of space in the debates of the intellectual community of this period if Erasmus devotes a separate colloquy to it. To the next edition of his *Colloquia*, in September 1524,³¹ he added a dialogue between the beggars Irides and Misoponus.³²

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 130–185.

²⁸ This work was included in the Froben edition of March 1522 and then, in an altered and expanded form – following attacks by Egmondan – in an edition published by the same press in summer 1522, cf. P. Smith, *A Key to the ‘Colloquies’ of Erasmus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927; Harvard Theological Studies, 13), pp. 8–11.

²⁹ *Colloquia Familiaria*, pp. 184 ff.: “TIMOTHEUS, Multi iudicant non admodum belle collocari quod datur istis mendicis publicis. EUSEBIUS, Et istis nonnihildandum est aliquando, sed cum delectu. At mihi consultum videatur, si singulae civitates suos alerent, nec ferrentur erroneas [= mendici vagabundi] huc et illuc circum cursitantes, praesertim validi, quibus opus suppeditandum sentio potius, quam pecuniam.”

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173: “praesertim his, quorum et paupertas et integritas mihi nota est.”

³¹ Smith, *A Key*, p. 36; E. Gutmann, *Die ‘Colloquia Familiaria’ des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Basel–Stuttgart, 1968; Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft, 111), pp. 63 ff.

³² *Colloquia Familiaria*, p. 406–411. M. Bataillon drew attention to this work in the context of the debate on the 16th-century reform of care of the poor, “J.L. Vives, reformateur de la bienfaisance”, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance*, 14 (1952) (Mélanges Augustin Renaudet), p. 141. One edition of *Liber Vagatorum* (*Bericht von*

This dialogue of beggars makes no secret of the tricks and deceit to which people in this occupation resorted. The end of the dialogue expressed a certain kind of praise for poverty.³³ Poverty, says Irides, is an excellent condition which it is not worth trading for royalty.³⁴ Just like kings, beggars may do what they wish, and at the same time they have no troubles or public commitments. They also enjoy public respect, as if they were blessed by God.³⁵ Misoponus, who has abandoned begging and now makes a living from alchemy, says that the freedom of beggars will soon come to an end. Cities announce a ban on begging in public, adopting the principle whereby each city is responsible for feeding those of its poor who are incapable of work, and force the remainder to work.³⁶

Here the tone is somewhat sharper in relation to the previous work; apart from the reference to specific reform measures, it is worth drawing attention to the statement about the duty to work. This is not a fresh postulate, and was already mentioned by Erasmus over ten years previously.³⁷ In fact, the question of obligatory work first appeared during the social crisis in the middle of the 14th century in the anti-vagrancy laws of many European countries.³⁸ In the 16th century, reforms of social aid for the poor, this postulate is part of the program to eradicate the plague of begging from city life.

It is also closely linked to the fundamental changes taking place to work ethics at that time. This is shown very clearly in Thomas

der falschen Betler Büberey, 1615) contains a translation of this work by Erasmus (cf. *Liber Vagatorum*, Ristelhuber, p. XLVII).

³³ M. Heep (*Die 'Colloquia Familiaria' des Erasmus und Lucien* [Halle, 1927], p. 51) derives this motive from Lucian.

³⁴ *Colloquia Familiaria*, p. 410: "Ego hanc miseriam ne cum regum quidem fortuna commutarim. Nihil enim regno similium, quam mendicitas." Gutmann (*Colloquia Familiaria*, p. 63) points out that Irides is a philosopher in a Pythagorean sense; in other words, he is a man who is internally completely free.

³⁵ *Colloquia Familiaria*, p. 411: "Nos veluti Deo sacros, etiam religione quadam metuit vulgus offendere."

³⁶ *Ibid.*: "Quia jam hoc mussant civitates, ne mendicis liberum sit quo Libet evagari, sed unaquaqueque civitas suos alat mendicos, et in his qui valent, aligantur ad laborem."

³⁷ *Enchiridion*, in: *Erasmi Opera omnia*, vol. 5, no. 13 D.

³⁸ Cf. B. Geremek, "La lutte contre la vagabondage à Paris aux XIVE et XVE siècles", in: *Ricerche storiche ed economiche in memoria di Corrado Barbagallo*, vol. 2 (Naples, 1970), pp. 215 ff.

More's *Utopia*.³⁹ In this ideal country, which the English humanist and friend of Erasmus described during a visit to Flanders in 1515, work is the universal duty of the inhabitants, and the chief function of the authorities is to prevent idleness.⁴⁰ No one can be idle; in other words without work, therefore there are no "strong and healthy beggars disguising their laziness behind a simulated disease,"⁴¹ as so many of them do in other countries. Elsewhere, More calls for a broad application of compulsory work as a punishment for thieves and vagrants, and as for beggars – and the mendicant orders – he addresses sharp, angry words at them, demanding their eradication.⁴²

The praise and even glorification of work was a dominant feature of 16th century thinking. Of course, there was also scorn for physical work and for all *mechanici*; and the intellectual superiority of Erasmus went hand-in-hand with a disdain for crafts and craftsmen. But More's praise for work was an example of profound changes to people's attitudes towards work in that century: work was now "the supreme right of man, struggling to overcome his fate and gain riches."⁴³ The problem of social care is included in the context of the social processes that shape modern society. The debate by municipal authorities on the subject of care over the poor and discussions by humanists over attitudes to work,⁴⁴ beggars, riches and poverty set the stage for the treatise by Vives entitled *De subventionē pauperum*,⁴⁵ a key work of the humanist social care reform program.⁴⁶

³⁹ Cf. K. Kautsky, *Thomas More and his Utopia*, transl. H.J. Stenning (London, 1927); E.W. Campbell, *More's Utopia and His Social Teaching* (London, 1930); R. Ames, *Citizen Thomas More and His Utopia* (Princeton, 1949); Adams, *The Better Part*, pp. 123 ff., *passim*; J.H. Hexter, *Preface*, in: *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. 4 (New Haven–London, 1965); M. Frąckowiak, *Poglądy ekonomiczne Tomasza More* (Poznań, 1967).

⁴⁰ Th. More, *Utopia*, ed. V. Michels, Th. Ziegler (Berlin, 1895), pp. 51 ff.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53: "robustos denique ac valentes mendicos adiunge morbum quempiam praetextentes inertiae".

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 24 ff., 27 ff.

⁴³ L. Febvre, "Travail: évolution d'un mot et d'une idée", *Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique*, 41 (1948), no. 1, p. 26 (reprinted in: *id.*, *Pour une histoire à part entière* [Paris, 1962], p. 657).

⁴⁴ H. Luthy, *Le passé présent. Combat d'idées de Calvin à Rousseau* (Monaco, 1965), p. 64.

⁴⁵ J.L. Vives, *De subventionē pauperum sive de humanis necessitatibus* – I refer to the 1555 edition: *Io. Lodovici Vivis Valentini Opera* (Basileae, 1555), pp. 889–922 (in my

Dedicating his work to the city fathers of Bruges and hailing that city's efforts to care for the poor, Vives points out that he was inspired to write it by his experiences in his native Valencia and by ideas emanating from Flanders.⁴⁷ In book one he first provides the general principles of charity, describes the doing of good deeds as a condition for society's existence,⁴⁸ explains why some people shun support for beggars (here he describes the tricks of false beggars),⁴⁹ and says how the poor should behave. Next, in book two, he provides a detailed program of reform to municipal social care.

Political rulers should have a feeling of concern for the poor.⁵⁰ Vives justifies this by way of general arguments, such as the need for social harmony in governing the commonwealth (a doctor cannot refuse to treat hands and legs because they are too distant from the heart). Poor people require help, not only because a considerable number of them are idle, whereas they could be useful to society,⁵¹ but also

quotation I correct the pagination error). The dedication is dated 6 I 1526, the first edition appeared in Bruges in March 1526. Vives wrote his treatise between June and December 1525; cf. H. de Vocht, *Monumenta humanistica lovaniensia* (Louvain, 1934), pp. 19 ff.

⁴⁶ On Vives, see: W. Weitzmann, *Die soziale Bedeutung des Humanisten Vives. Eine Analyse und Würdigung seiner Schrift 'De subventione pauperum'* (Leipzig, 1905); Bataillon, J.L. Vives; J. Corts Grau, "La doctrina social de Juan Luis Vives", *Estudios de Historia Social*, 2 (1952), pp. 209 ff.; Adams, *The Better Part*, pp. 246 ff., *passim*; A. Kempfi, "O Ludwiku Vivesie w Polsce epoki Odrodzenia", in: *Studia i materiały z dziejów nauki polskiej* (Series A, 10) (Warsaw, 1966); and Wstęp, in: J.L. Vives, *O podawaniu umiejętności*, ed. and transl. by A. Kempfi (Warsaw, 1968).

⁴⁷ Juan Luis Vives, *De subventione*, p. 889: "quod etiam ut facerem, iam pridem in Anglia rogatus eram a Domino Pratensi, praefecto vestro." R. Adams (*The Better Part*, p. 246) indicates that Vives' arguments fully comply with the views of English humanists, especially More, and considers it significant that he was a guest of More in April 1525 and started writing *De subventione pauperum* in June 1525.

⁴⁸ J.L. Vives, *De subventione*, p. 894: "Quocirca nulla res magis debet cogitationes hominum exacuere atque excitare quam studium aliis benefaciendi, siue quod is iussit, cuius praeceptorum amplissima est merces: siue quod aliter societates hominum nequeunt stare, siue inhumane et contra naturam existimandum est, non subuenire quibus possis."

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 895 ff.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 910: "Quantopere conueniat rectori ciuitatis curare pauperes."

⁵¹ *Ibid.*: "Praeterea nec est sapientis magistratus, et studiosi publici commodi, relinquere tantam ciuitatis partem non inutilem modo, sed perniciosam quoque et sibi, et aliis."

because they are carriers of epidemics and engage in theft, violence and prostitution.⁵² In his negative description of the community of beggars, apart from the abovementioned conduct of fraudsters pretending to be beggars, Vives also says that they fail to perform their Christian duties: they do not go to confession, do not listen to sermons, and live a frivolous way of life. Insofar as in his choice of arguments Vives urgently underlines the compliance of his reasoning with Christian doctrine, he nevertheless suggests that it is the duty of the lay authorities, not the secular authorities, to care for the poor.

Vives recommends that the Spanish municipal authorities should closely monitor hospitals and all philanthropic institutions. Specially appointed commissioners should make a record of all categories of poor people, residents of shelters, hospital patients, the sick and the infirm, public beggars and vagrants, and paupers suffering their poverty at home.⁵³ Next, work should be arranged for those beggars who are fit for work, mindful of God's commandment whereby one should eat bread earned by one's own toil. They should all be taught an honest trade. Many cities in Flanders complain about a shortage of workers in the handicrafts. One should ensure, Vives says, that the workshops have no shortage of manpower and that the poor are employed in them. Former lechers, chats and idlers should be given the heaviest and most poorly paid work, to serve as a deterrent. Alms should be given only to those who have not yet found permanent work, but even then they should be given minor jobs lest they succumb to idleness.

To hospitals and shelters, which should also be rid of healthy people,⁵⁴ one can also introduce lighter work, depending on the type of illness or infirmity of the inmates, whilst those who have been cured should be promptly sent off to work lest they, too, succumb to living off alms.

Beggars classified as healthy by the commissioners and originating in other cities should be sent to their cities of origin, with sufficient supplies only for their journey.⁵⁵

⁵² Here we see a clear echo of More's opinions about the origin of crime.

⁵³ Juan Luis Vives, *De subventione*, p. 914.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 915: "In hospitalibus qui ualidi sunt [...] exeant, et ad opus mitantur."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 914: "Ex mendicis ualidis alienigenae remittendi ad suas ciuitates, quod etiam iure Caesareo cauetur, adiecto uiatico."

Vives believes that the funds of hospitals, when added together, will be enough to provide financial support to municipal social care institutions, especially if the wages earned by the poor are added to this. For this purpose, the municipal authorities should supervise all hospitals. In exceptional cases, alms can also be collected in money boxes in three or four of the city's main churches, but this should be considered a temporary measure. Regarding the Church's role in helping the poor, Vives is rather discreet and merely reminds the reader that the Church was once very energetic in collecting alms and helping the poor, so now it should also encourage charitable feelings and help the poor.⁵⁶ Vives devotes a separate chapter to rejecting the accusations levelled against new charitable institutions and the new social policy of cities.⁵⁷ In this he foresees that some people will defend beggars against an alleged threat of banishment, others will quote from the Gospels ("*Pauperes semper habebitis uobiscum*"), whilst the poor themselves will be reluctant to change their way of life and accept work. Nevertheless, these accusations and reluctance must be rejected in order to stamp out the plague of beggars, for society will benefit from this program of reforms, both in terms of hygiene and in terms of a lower influx of people into criminal groups: a city without beggars will deserve admiration and its glory shall rise.

So Vives was well aware of the dangers of the subject he had tackled. In a letter to Cranevelt, he wrote: "I have not neglected any precautions."⁵⁸ Thus, he carefully justified the ban on begging, and completely avoided the question of mendicant orders. He also stipulated that none of his criticism of beggars could be considered a subtle attack on the mendicant orders. But even so, in 1527 the Franciscan Nicholas de Bureau sharply attacked the ideas of Vives as heretical and Lutheran. However, Vives' caution saved him from more serious consequences.

Broader Catholic circles remained uncertain whether the municipal social care reform, especially the ban on public begging, is contrary to the Church's teachings and whether it bears the hallmark of

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 916: "Hi [episcopi et sacerdotes] et Abbates, et alii ecclesiastici praefecti, si uellent, maximam egenorum partem subleurent magnitudine prouentuum."

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 918: "De iis qui nouas has constitutiones improbabunt."

⁵⁸ Cf. A. Muller, *La querelle des fondations charitables en Belgique* (Brussels, 1909); Bataillon, *J.L. Vives*, p. 143.

Lutheranism. Consequently, the authorities of Ypres, whose 1525 reform program⁵⁹ largely coincided with the arguments of Vives, and who had been attacked by the mendicants for succumbing to Lutheran influence, asked the Sorbonne to declare these accusations unfounded. Although in their response in 1531, the Sorbonne theologians said that the statute of Ypres on poor people is an expression of Christian piety, at the same time they rejected the ban on public begging as clearly heretical and as a sign of the followers of Walden, Wycliffe and Luther; they also stipulated that the traditional rights of the mendicant orders, as well as the property of the Church, cannot be violated.⁶⁰ Similarly, when in 1531 the humanist Jan de Vauzelles of Lyon proposed a program of organized social care, the local inquisitor, the Dominican Nicholas Morin, claimed that the charity of the reformers was aimed at discrediting Catholic piety.⁶¹

However, the sharpest polemics on the subject of beggars occurred in Spain.⁶² In 1545 Juan de Medina, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of San Vicente in Salamanca, published a treatise on the steps taken by Spanish cities to provide basic proper care for the poor.⁶³ Medina hailed these reforms, and in the spirit of the reforms in the 1520s, stated that they were in harmony with Catholic piety. He considered it best if no one asked for any alms (for he considered a beggar to be not one who receives alms, but one who asks for them), but at the same time specified the terms under which help should be given to those who cannot work and who are expected to take part in service to the Lord. In the same year, the Dominican Domingo de Soto published a treatise which polemicized with Juan de Medina and, at the same time, rejected the arguments of Vives and his municipal program of reforming social care.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ This program was put to print: *Forma subventionis pauperum quae apud Hyperas Flandrorum urbem viget*, Hyperas, 1531 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, R. 36215).

⁶⁰ Nolf, *La réforme*, p. 51.

⁶¹ N.Z. Davis, *Poor Relief*, pp. 259 ff.

⁶² M. Colmeiro, *Historia de la economía política en España*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1863), p. 35; P. Vilar, "Les primitifs espagnols de la pensée économique", in: *Mélanges offerts à Marcel Bataillon par les hispanistes français*, ed. M. Chevalier et al. (Paris, 1962), pp. 261 ff.

⁶³ Juan de Medina, *De la orden que en algunos pueblos de España se ha puesto en la limosna: para rimedio de los verdaderos pobres* (Salamanca, 1545).

⁶⁴ Domingo de Soto, *Deliberación en la causa de los pobres* (Salamanca, 1545).

Soto demands that those living off alms and wandering the country for this purpose be distinguished from vagrants who break the law and who are a danger to the public order. But he sees no legal or moral basis to force poor beggars to work. Just as beggars cannot be punished for being poor, they cannot be punished by being banished, he says. Indeed, one might forbid beggars from roaming the country, but first one would have to compel all communities to feed their poor. Poverty is a noble state, whereas the essence of social care is love; these are the unchanging principles of Christian ethics. Soto also stresses that in accordance with unchanging tradition, care over the poor is arranged by the Church, by the clergy, and not by lay people. This polemic resurfaced with renewed vigour in the second half of the century and continued in the next century,⁶⁵ but let us stop in the middle of the 16th century so that we can consider the role of Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski in the dispute on pauperism.⁶⁶

In his treatise *O naprawie Rzeczypospolitej* (*On Repairing the Commonwealth*), Frycz Modrzewski raises the issue of beggars several times, including in the broader context of good customs and proper government by the Commonwealth.

The book *O obyczajach* (*On Customs*) is not a theoretical, doctrinal treatise, but rather an investigation into the path of political reforms in a modern state; legal considerations take precedence over theological or philosophical ones. This book, too, is a utopia, a vision of a state of order and justice quite different from the reality. Seeking the rudiments of the social care program proposed by Frycz, we should most of all reconstruct his work doctrine. The humanist praise of work assumes various forms, including among the writers we discussed earlier. More's vision is optimistic: work is the duty of utopians, but also a pleasure; a sensible way to spend time and a requirement of social life. Vives' vision is darker, compliant with traditional Christian

⁶⁵ Bataillon, *J.L. Vives*, p. 151.

⁶⁶ Not much attention has been paid to Frycz's program of care over the poor in the rich range of literature about him – see, for example: G. Schramm, "Modrevius – Forschungen. Ein Literaturbericht über die polnischen Staatsschriftsteller und Theologen Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 6 (1958), pp. 352 ff. Cf. in particular: Ł. Kurdybacha, *Ideologia Frycza Modrzewskiego* (Warsaw, 1953), pp. 123 ff.; K. Lepszy, *Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski* (Warsaw, 1954), p. 21; E. Lipiński, *Studia nad historią polskiej myśli ekonomicznej* (Warsaw, 1956); W. Voisé, *Frycza Modrzewskiego nauka o państwie i prawie* (Warsaw, 1956), p. 101.

thinking.⁶⁷ According to Vives, the duty to work is explained by three factors: the curse of the human race, the commandment of Paul of Tarsus in the Second Letter to the Thessalonians, and a requirement of human nature.

We also find these three arguments of Vives in Frycz, but the Polish humanist's vision is more optimistic. People will work willingly and voluntarily when they realize that it is God's will that they obtain nourishment by the sweat of their brow.⁶⁸ Frycz does not want to regard work merely as a punishment for sin, claiming that even before the primeval sin Man was suppose to tend the Garden of Eden, for the human body is formed in such a way that its parts are to serve as work tools.⁶⁹ Quoting from one of the Psalms of David, Frycz says that work by one's own hands is the basis of happiness. He also combines physical work with mental work, believing that in their aim for a happy life, people should proceed from one type of work to another, thus avoiding the monotony of life and finding fresh incentives for work.

Thus, idleness is reprehensible because it conflicts with public order and goes against Christian morality. Remarks on this appear all over Frycz's work, but the fullest account of his work doctrine is to be found in the chapter devoted to the struggle against idleness. Frycz says that all officials should supervise the fulfilment of the duty of work. Discussing the tasks of the censors of conduct ("two in each district"), he says that they should constantly check who lives on what, and punish or haul before the courts all idlers "opposed to honest employment and hostile to virtue."⁷⁰ However, idlers are to be dealt with by special officials, guardians of public order, assisted by labourers.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Bataillon (*J.L. Vives*), p. 148 also talks of Vives' pessimistic work utopia.

⁶⁸ Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Commentatorium de Republica emendanda libri quinque*, ed. K. Kumaniecki (Warsaw, 1953, vol. 1, p. 97; Polish edition: *O poprawie Rzeczypospolitej*, transl. E. Jędrkiewicz, in: id., *Dzieła wszystkie*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1953), p. 166: "si deligenter secum reputauerint Deum ita in mundi exordiis constituisse, ut omnes uescantur pane cum sudore uultus sui."

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: "Haec enim uarietas membrorum corporis humani non ad ocium data est, sed quemadmodum auibus allae ad uolandum, ita homini membra pro instrumentis sunt ad laborandum."

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87 (Polish ed.: p. 155): "Ociosos, nulli honestae rei studentes, uirtuti infestos vel ipsi punirent, vel ad regem iudicesue ordinarios deferent."

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 94 ff. (Polish ed.: pp. 164 ff.).

Frycz's concept of idlers is very broad, and includes drunkards, vagrants, dice players and wastrels. He believes that gambling should be punished and taverns abolished, preserving only their function as places of rest for travellers and strangers. Frycz also condemns idleness by craftsmen: masters do not supervise their workshops, whilst in the absence of their masters the apprentices work sluggishly; this idleness too must be combated. Finally, Frycz attacks the hordes of idles at the courts of great lords, where most of the servants have nothing to do.

In this broad concept of idlers and elements superfluous to the public good, and in his search for ways to combat this evil, Frycz shares the humanist thinking we have seen in Erasmus and More. The conclusion which Frycz reaches in the chapter on idlers is also similar: "all idlers should either be chased away from the Commonwealth or punished."⁷² Frycz returns to the policy regarding idlers in the book *O prawach* (On Laws), but his program fails to assume a more precise and specific form. He wonders if it would be the right thing to introduce a law against idlers and expel them from the cities or punish them, or in any case prevent them from holding public office.⁷³ Those he has in mind is not the common "vagabonds" – for there were already laws against these – but broadly-conceived wastrels;⁷⁴ court hangers-on, ne'er-do-wells and people living above their means. For the sake of the public good, the sources of income of certain citizens and their lifestyles should be investigated each year.

From this work doctrine⁷⁵ and sharp rejection of idleness stems the attitude towards paupers and beggars which Frycz expressed in a separate chapter of *O obyczajach* (On Morals), immediately after he has discussed the struggle against idleness.

⁷² Ibid., p. 97 (Polish edition. p. 167): "Ad summam cum ocium multa uitia doceat homines languoremque eis afferat, omnes ociosi aut pellendi sunt ex republica aut poenis afficiendi."

⁷³ Ibid., p. 189 (Polish edition. p. 262): "Haud scio an sit in ociosos et ignauos lex aliqua ponenda et eos qui curam nullam habeant merendi de re tum publica, tum priuatorum [...]. Itaque ignaui et fuci omnes aut pellantur ex civitatibus aut aliis poenis afficiantur, ad publica uero munera nullo modo admittantur."

⁷⁴ Cf. S. Grodziski, *Ludzie luźni. Studium z historii państwa i prawa polskiego* (Cracow, 1961; Zeszyty Naukowe UJ. Rozprawy i Studia, 30), pp. 63 ff.

⁷⁵ The association between Frycz's attitude towards work and Calvinism has already been covered in literature; cf. Kurdybacha, *Ideologia*, pp. 121 ff.; P. Rybicki, "Elementy nauki o społeczeństwie w dziele Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego", in: *Studia i materiały z dziejów nauki polskiej*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1954), pp. 197 ff.

At once in the first sentence, Frycz states the first principle of the social care program: to prevent able-bodied people from begging, and ensure the “genuinely poor” of the conditions and means to live.⁷⁶ It is worth noting that this principle of contemporary social policy derives from the medieval doctrine of distinguishing between “genuine” and “false” beggars, and can be found both in doctrine and in legislation.⁷⁷ Next, following in the footsteps of Vives, Frycz divides the poor into three categories: those living in shelters (*in ptochodochiis*),⁷⁸ those begging in public,⁷⁹ and those who shamefully hide their poverty within their own walls. Supervision and control are required over all three categories.

The basic doctrine of social policy is to detect those persistently hiding from work and to force them to work, on pain of expulsion from the city.⁸⁰ Those beggars who are unable to work should be shut away in poorhouses. Frycz says, in a cautious and somewhat timid tone, that vagrant beggars whom he previously described as public beggars should not be tolerated because under the cloak of begging, they commit all kinds of crimes, thefts and murders.

This variation of tones in formulating a social policy program does not seem to be a stylistic exercise. The requirement to work was firmly justified in the Church’s traditional social doctrine, therefore one could demand without fear that beggars able to work but preferring to live off alms be put to compulsory work. Different is the proposal to confine “legitimate” beggars, i.e. those incapable of work, in shelters. This

⁷⁶ Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Commentatorium*, vol. 1, p. 98 (Polish ed.: p. 167): “Sed quemadmodum homines laboribus apti a mendicando repellendi, ita illis, qui uere pauperes sunt, hoc est, qui et uiribus corporis et rebus quibus se sustineant destituuntur, consulendum est, ut et aedes eis publicae constituentur et ad uictum omnia necessaria suppeditentur.”

⁷⁷ B. Tierney, *Medieval Poor Law: A Sketch of Canonical Theory and Its Application in England* (Berkeley, 1959); M. Mollat, “La notion de la pauvreté au moyen âge”, *Revue de l’Histoire de l’Eglise de France*, 52 (1966), p. 5 ff.

⁷⁸ Juan Luis Vives (*De subventionem*, p. 911) uses a somewhat different Greek expression: “in iis quae vulgo hospitalia dicuntur graece ptochotrophia.”

⁷⁹ Not only does Vives talk of those who “publice mendicant” (*ibid.*), but Erasmus also mentions these “public beggars”; J. Domański draws attention to this (*Trzy rozprawy*, p. 426).

⁸⁰ Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Commentatorium*, vol. 1, p. 98 (Polish ed.: p. 167): “Qui autem uidebuntur laboribus apti, ii laborare cogantur. Si recusent, ex ciuitatibus expellantur.”

involves a significant postulate to reform social care. Here, too, we encounter a change of attitude towards beggars. Organized shelters cannot be funded from private donations; they must have a permanent budget. Such a budget, says Frycz, should be allocated out of a city's regular resources, backed by voluntary donations. A special tax in aid of the poor can also be considered.⁸¹ Further, Frycz suggests collections in aid of the poor in boxes placed in churches and public spaces – this he accompanies with praise for charity and a reminder to observe the Christian commandments.

Finally comes the most sensitive and controversial issue: the use of church funds, or a certain part thereof, to finance aid for the poor. Frycz is cautious about this issue, so he reminds the reader that in the past, one quarter of a bishop's salary was intended for the poor. But he refers only to the goodwill of Church people, threatening them with punishment from God, but without suggesting any institutionalized form of compulsion. This would be too close to the program of secularization. In Spanish polemics on pauperism, even the proponents of a reform of care for the poor eagerly pointed out that this would not affect church property, and the response of the Sorbonne theologians to the query from the authorities of Ypres expressed this condition as an obvious principle.

Needless to say, the charitable reform proposed by Frycz complies fully with that "urban" reform,⁸² also in the sense that it introduces a secular element and call for the secularization of social care. Organizing this care is to be the responsibility of specially appointed supervisors of poor people (*pauperum curatores*). They are to exercise control over beggars,⁸³ decide who deserves support and who should be referred for work, arrange compulsory work, supervise shelters for the poor, ensure sufficient funds for the reformed social care system to work, and remind bishops of their duty to support the poor not in the form of alms for individual beggars, but by helping to finance lay charitable institutions. These supervisors are to combine care for the poor with a kind of police surveillance over the community of paupers.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99 (Polish ed.: p. 168): "si unusquisque detrahat aliquid sumptibus suis."

⁸² Bataillon, *J.L. Vives*, p. 141.

⁸³ Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, *Commentatorium*, vol. 1, p. 100 (Polish ed.: p. 170): "Sit igitur magistratus, qui curam habeat pauperum eaque commode dispenset, quae usibus eorum sunt consignata."

Frycz stresses that these would not be court officials making sure that the law is observed, but special officials reacting to the perverse events and misdemeanours supplied by life itself.⁸⁴

Apart from a layer of praise for Christian charity, one can see in Frycz a basic distrust and dislike of beggars. Therefore, he recommends careful consideration of “the exact cause of a permanently poor person’s poverty,” for the treatment of individual paupers would depend on this. Those who are poor through their own fault should be “fed less and given harder work,” whereas those who are poor through illness may be shown greater consideration. This is meant to propagate social pedagogy in which the duty to work is extolled, and condemn idleness. This is why Frycz suggests that the food given to the poor be meagre, but enough to satisfy hunger. This idea, which we have seen in a similar form in the writings of Luther and Vives, is intended to deter people from living without work. When begging is a profitable source of income, work obviously suffers. The lifestyle of paupers remaining under social care should serve as a warning and a deterrent for those who seek an easy way of life at the expense of others.⁸⁵ Therefore, modest support ensuring a minimum level of existence and the duty to work to the best of one’s ability are the requirements. Unlike Vives, Frycz does not propose collective workshops in shelters for the poor: the difference between the socioeconomic circumstances behind the proposal of the two humanists is obvious. The postulate to employ paupers in an “honest occupation”⁸⁶ to the best of their ability suggests a handicraft or gardening occupation. But the argument behind this is not the requirements of the labour market, but the moral turpitude caused by a lack of work, “wastage through idleness.”

Frycz concurs with Luther and Vives, probably subscribing to the views of the latter, that beggars from outside should be sent back to

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: “Et haec quidem de iis magistratibus hoc in loco dicenda mihi uisa sunt, qui rebus hominum considerent, qui peruersos mores castigarent, bonos reducerent quique non tam de iure, quam de facto et sceleribus perpetratis cognoscerent.”

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98: “Nam qui uitio suo decoxerunt, ferendi quidem inter pauperes ac, ne fame pereant, consulendum, uerum at uictus parcios illis praebendus est et laborum molestia exercendi sunt, ut et exemplo aliis sint et ipsi caueant, ne in peiora uitia relabantur.”

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 99 ff.: “Prouidendum est, ne ocio prorsus contabescant pauperes, sed quod et quantum quisque possit, id laboret, occupetur aliquo honesto opere fructumque laboris sui cum aliis communicet.”

the places from which they came.⁸⁷ In any case, this is a traditional principle of medieval doctrine, according to which each Christian district was under an obligation to feed its own poor. A city would sometimes expel beggars from other cities, but these were rare occurrences, dictated by extraordinary measures to guarantee hygiene during an epidemic. Sixteenth century reformers, propagating the duty of arranging care for the poor by means of institutionalized philanthropy and a policy of repression and police supervision, regard the expulsion of beggars as a normal part of a city's social policy. Fifty years ago, the fundamental impact of the work of Vives on the writings of Frycz was pointed out, and one of the chief arguments behind this was a comparison of Chapter XVIII of Frycz's book *O obyczajach* (On Morals) with Vives' treatise on helping the poor.⁸⁸ The similarity is strong enough to be able to say that the Polish humanist adopted the theses of the great Spaniard; even the publishers of Frycz Modrzewski's *Dzieła wszystkie* (Complete Works) (1953), criticizing the idea that Frycz was dependent on Vives,⁸⁹ said in a commentary to chapter XVIII that they considered it essential to indicate his dependence on the treatise *De subventionem pauperum*.⁹⁰ Yet it seems a simplification to bring the matter down solely to "influence," to the adoption of thoughts or arguments.

Most of all, one should bear in mind the way of thinking and method of theological argument at that time. The technique of argument and delivery of ideas was, as it were, determined in advanced and universal. Although the people of the 16th century enriched mankind's intellectual baggage⁹¹ with which they set off on "adventures of the mind," the way they thought – or at least the way they presented their thoughts – was exactly as it had been in previous centuries. Despite

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 98: "Quod de alienis mendicis intelligendum, ut et uli in suas ciuitates remittantur."

⁸⁸ Father J. Twardowski, *Jan Ludwik Vives i Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski* (Cracow, 1921; Rozprawy PAU, Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny, 38), pp. 61 ff., 115 ff.

⁸⁹ Wstęp, in: A.F. Modrzewski, *O poprawie*, p. 28.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 167 and in the Latin edition, p. 98: critique of the thesis of Father Twardowski; Kurdybacha, *Ideologia*, p. 96; Lepszy, *Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski*, p. 30; W. Voisé, "O ideologii społeczno-ustrojowej Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego", *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, 4 (1952), p. 2.

⁹¹ Cf. the comments of L. Febvre on *ouillage mental* in: *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI^e siècle. La religion de Rabelais* (Paris, 1942), pp. 383 ff., *passim*; and R. Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne. Essai de psychologie historique. 1500–1640* (Paris, 1961), pp. 86 ff.

the spread of the printed book, texts were still committed to memory as a rule. Quoting texts from memory was a permanent work method by writers: the border between words, phrases and expressions quoted from works and those recalled from memory became blurred. It would be an anachronism to investigate plagiarisms in writings at that time. Writers and thinkers borrowed each other's terms and expression by means of the tools of intellectual discourse.⁹² The choice of these tools – for it is always a choice, even if it concerns the Holy Bible, where all quotations can be found – is always significant.

Comparing Frycz's program of reform with the debates on pauperism being held throughout the European centres of thinking at that time, we have attempted to highlight the numerous sources of that program. After all, Frycz not only knew the writings of Vives; one can assume he also knew most of the opinions of Luther, More and Erasmus on the subject of beggars.

Referring to Vives' treatise, Frycz made a choice: he joined in the struggle for a reform of social care, though one may correctly assume that he was aware of the controversies this treatise had caused among Catholic theological circles; news travelled quickly in the literary commonwealth of the time. We do not know if he was aware of the disputes by the Spaniards over Vives and his attitude towards the poor, but he must have known that the reform of social care in the cities – that "municipalist heresy" – was showered with charges of Lutheranism and a desire to secularize the property of the Church and compromise its social mission.

Frycz's program had its domestic sources, both literary (Ostroróg⁹³) and social. It is in this context, too, that one should take a critical look at the place of poverty and beggars in the mentality of the Polish Reformation, consider the social substance of Frycz's program, and examine its relationship to Poland's actual situation and socio-economic development prospects in the middle of the 16th century.

⁹² Michał Bobrzyński wrote about this, citing the example of Modrzewski and Bodina: "After a while, [the reader] becomes convinced that this is political literature with an eclectic flavour, in which the most varied things are intertwined as in an encyclopaedia, whilst the underlying basic thinking very slowly penetrates the accumulated material and blossoms", M. Bobrzyński, *Szkice i studia historyczne*, vol. 2 (Cracow, 1922), p. 6.

⁹³ J. Ostroróg, *Memoriał w sprawie uporządkowania Rzeczypospolitej*, red. i przekł. z łac. A. Obrębski, Łódź 1994.

On Secret Languages

In: *Teksty*, 1980, no. 2, pp. 13–36.

The story of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages illustrate the scope of human imagination: variety is a disturbing phenomenon, morally ambiguous and contrary to the natural order of things. Once, “in the beginning,” everything was clear, uniform and similar, in a world of uniformity and equality, nothing upset the natural harmony of relations between people. The picture of a golden age when everyone understood everyone else and sought common understanding seems to contradict the linguistic reality of societies where differentiation was prominent. Language differences occurred not only within large concentrations of people and ethnic groups, but also within smaller, local communities. Contemporary sociolinguistics has shown how much the structure of society affects the functioning of language, how classes and groups deliberately or unconsciously form their own ways of using the *lingua franca*.

The historical development of languages displays an impressive richness. Obviously, it records “durable” processes of human civilization that exceed the available limits of historical consciousness and reach the barriers between “nature” and “culture.” As a result of archaeological progress, written documents are no longer the sole sources of information about the past, but nevertheless the tools of historical analysis have little effect in relation to language which, unlike archaeology, does not seem to permit the kind of research that would expose successive stages in cultural development.

Socio-historical reflections on language are obviously difficult because references to time are uncertain and correlations between social phenomena are weak. The situation is different with slang, used by social and professional groups to assert their independence.

These linguistic forms, which can hardly be called languages in their own right, directly reflect the social reality, and the need for the group using that slang to express itself clearly appears as a matrix in the development of the language.

Slang has been a subject of interest to linguists for a long time, and possesses an impressive bibliography. Sociologists such as Salillas and Niceforo and linguists such as Cohen, Dauzat, Guiraud and Stein, have already interpreted slang as a socio-historical phenomenon. Nevertheless, the origin of this phenomenon, its main features and its very meaning, remain a subject of controversy and do not cease to cause doubts. In 1919, Marcel Cohen regarded slang as a parasite attached to language from which it borrows its phonology, morphology and syntax. In this context, the secret nature of a language is not its prime feature, but is merely one of the defence mechanisms of the group that uses it. According to Cohen, the limited vocabulary of slang is due to the limited communication within a group.¹ Ten years later, Albert Dauzat investigated the socio-historical dimension of group languages, stating that the shape of a language is dictated by the social and geographical isolation of its speakers, their way of life, their migration, and the impact of other languages within the same area.² Pierre Guiraud, too, sets in first place the connection between slang and the group that uses it.³ In this way, the interest of linguists in these artificial group languages enters the realm of socio-history.

1. Discoveries of Secrets

Slang⁴ appears in history as the secret languages of groups that have been excluded from organized societies. The very fact that a group used a secret language automatically qualified it as criminal. Allowing just some people to understand it but not everyone else, slang lives off and functions within tension and conflicts between margin groups and

¹ M. Cohen, "Note sur l'argot", *Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris*, 21 (1919), pp. 132–147.

² A. Dauzat, *Les argots. Caractères, évolution, influence* (Paris, 1929).

³ P. Guiraud, *L'argot* (Paris, 1956).

⁴ We are dealing here with medieval and modern-day jargons, without delving into secret languages.

the remainder of society. However, a failure to observe the standards of collective life and social rules does not exclude a margin group from the cultural community. Such a group takes part in the linguistic communication of its ethnic group, but at the same time shuts itself away from it. Any secret communication arouses fear and curiosity, especially when it comes to language: differences in this dimension of human contact are automatically considered odd and contrary to the natural order. Therefore, a confrontation with a secret language creates an immediate desire to unveil the secret, and the successes and failures in trying to do so are our prime source of knowledge of slang. The way to unravel a secret language was first to decipher the terms used to describe professions and methods of action, and then undertake broader lexicographical research.

We encounter the first discoveries of the secret of medieval slang in the Arab-speaking world.⁵ As early as the 9th century, Arab intellectuals were keenly interested in the community of beggars and vagrants, finding in them a source of literary inspiration. In his *Book of the Miserly*, the Arab poet and scholar Al-Jahiz describes the life of a certain beggar and, in doing so, lists fifteen categories of beggars and fraudsters. In the first half of the 10th century, another writer, Al-Bajhaki, adds a dozen more categories to this list. Both writers indicate social and linguistic facts at the same time. In the second half of the 10th century, Abu Dulafa⁶ leaves us a more exhaustive picture of the community of beggars, mentioning almost one hundred different terms, often adding special expressions to describe the techniques of begging and cheating employed by each category of beggars. The community of beggars, described by the term *Banū Sāsān*, arouses interest merely because it uses a special and secret language. According to contemporary chroniclers, Abu Dulaf's wealthy mentor, the vizier Sahib Ibn Abbad, is said to have learned that secret language himself and invited beggars to his court to converse with them. Several centuries later, Arab literature provides fresh evidence of the existence of a language of beggars. The poet and traveller Safi al-Din (1276–1345) wrote a poem in beggars' jargon; unlike his predecessors

⁵ This issue is fully discussed by C.E. Bosworth in *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld*, vols. 1–2 (Leiden, 1976).

⁶ Cf. M. Kowalska, *Średniowieczna arabska literatura podróżnicza* (Cracow, 1973), p. 36.

he does not explain the meaning of the terms he uses, which gave rise to the assumption that this was the work of numerous linguists and lexicographers. This created a considerable thesaurus, amounting to, in the opinion of Clifford Edmund Bosworth, 540 different terms. Interpreting sometimes poses a major hurdle; all deviations from the standard language are considered evidence of the secret language *Sāsān*, and may be associated with unknown variations in dialect and sexual jargon.

In the case of medieval Arab beggars' jargon, the secret was discovered thanks to an interest in literature and during the study of literature. But European slang was deciphered in a different manner: through police and court investigations. This was a sluggish procedure, much more difficult than in the 19th and 20th centuries, when contacts and exchanges between criminals and society at large were fluid, creating a constant flow of contact between prison slang and everyday language. The prime place of the deciphering of medieval slang was the police and court environment, which regarded jargon as a professional crime technique. The most frequent way in which a secret language was revealed was when suspects divulged it during interrogation in order to mitigate their sentence or earn release. Here are three examples from different countries and times, but of a very similar nature. The term "jargon," which we use here to describe criminal slang, is derived from French, where it had already been used in this sense since the early 15th century (and from which the Italian term *gergo* is probably derived). The secrecy of jargon was first unravelled during the famous case of the gang with which François Villon was associated. While interrogating one of the members of the gang in Dijon in 1455, the prosecutor succeeded in obtaining valuable evidence on "jargon and other signs by means of which they tend to communicate." A list of some 100 words in that secret language includes names of individual criminal groups, criminal techniques, games of chance and judicial terms (justice, tribunal, torture, refusal to give evidence, gallows, etc). The Dijon prosecutor considered this discovery important enough to produce a special report on this subject and send it to other tribunals.⁷

⁷ These documents were introduced to academic examination by J. Garnier and M. Schwob, with a modern edition provided by L. Sainéan (*Les sources de l'argot ancien*, vol. 1 [Paris, 1912]).

Court archives very often record words and expressions used in criminal jargon. This can be attributed to the investigating authorities, who recorded it for their own needs, and to court writers and court personnel in general, who regularly liaised between the criminal sub-culture and the rest of society.

The oldest record of Polish criminal jargon, called *mowa waltarska*,⁸ can be traced to a court clerk in Poznań, who in 1574 recorded a conversation between two thieves in that jargon (one of them claimed to have learned it in Cracow), and provided a little glossary of fifteen words in that jargon, including names for various coins, money in general, silver spoons, weapons, padlocks, executioner and thief. Though fragmentary, this glossary gives an idea of the subject of conversations, which were meant to be incomprehensible to outsiders.⁹ In Jan Jurkowski's *Tragedya o polskim Scylurusie* of 1604 (*Tragedy of the Polish Scylurus*) words in that jargon appear in the monologue of Ktos, described in the *dramatis personae* as a "thief."¹⁰ We also find evidence of this language in *Peregrynacya dziadowska* (*The Beggars' Peregrination*) of 1614.¹¹ Matters concerning the life of beggars were meant to be shrouded in secrecy.

One way of hiding professional secrets is a secret language called "Libyan." But the "Libyan" talk of beggars was never deciphered; probably the courts were not interested in it as much as they were in the jargon of thieves.

Judging from the police prosecution of thieves, one can assume that the police had made a reconnaissance of this milieu and revealed its secrets. That is the subject of the third example, concerning Rome in the 16th century. Two Roman beggars interrogated by the authorities of Rome disclosed the internal organization of the community of beggars in the Eternal City. Their evidence¹² contains several dozen names of particular "specializations" in the profession of beggar,

⁸ See S. J. Bystroń, *Dzieje obyczajów w dawnej Polsce*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1958), pp. 322 ff. On the later development of Polish criminal slang, cf. the bibliography in: H. Ułaszyn, *Język złodziejski* (Łódź, 1951).

⁹ W. Maisel, "Poznański słowniczek żargonu złodziejskiego z XVI w.," *Język Polski*, 36 (1956), pp. 74 ff.

¹⁰ Jan Jurkowski, *Dzieła wszystkie*, vol. 1 (Wrocław, 1958), k. B4v.

¹¹ *Dramaty staropolskie*, ed. J. Lewański, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1961), pp. 142–178.

¹² Published in: M. Löpeltmann, "Ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der italienischen Gaunersprache im 16. Jahrhundert", *Romanische Forschungen*, 34 (1913), pp. 653–664.

but also gives the terms used by beggars to describe various types of fraud. The Roman court authorities also learned that the beggars had sworn revenge on traitors and resolved to create a new jargon to re-establish professional secrecy.

The discovery of the secrets of jargon in these cases applies to three groups: thieves, beggars and gamblers. Sometimes they share a common language, but at other times each of them creates its own jargon. But in all cases they employ a specific code to conceal the way they act and conceal their members, who realize that they are the subject of exclusion and repression and that their way of life conflicts with established norms. Thus, the work of the investigating authorities included deciphering codes whose secrecy was identified with crime; the very fact that a secret code existed was regarded suspicious and ominous.

News about secret languages spread mainly via police and court channels, and from there permeated to broader circles. Public interest in them has a very long tradition, and they also attracted the interest of the scholars of the time. In German literature¹³ following the appearance of a few fragmentary glossaries of criminal language (described as a jargon in the 14th century), special treatises and dictionaries of the criminal slang called *Rotwelsch* appeared in the 15th century. The archives of Basle were found to contain a work devoted to the fraud of beggars, including a list of 25 terms in that jargon. The dictionary of *Rotwelsch* compiled by Gerold Edlibach in about 1490 lists seventy terms, whilst the dictionary of Andreas Hempel of 1687 gives over 200. The dictionaries of German jargon¹⁴ became increasingly larger, but now they developed a different character: they were the fruit of antiquarian research. In this way, the vocabulary in them lost all reference to society and time, for it was not known whether the terms in them were actually still used by criminals.

The French humanists Henri Estienne (1566) and Guillaume du Bouchet (1597) wrote with admiration about the language of thieves in their time, which was said to be much richer and more effective than the ciphers used in state business. Du Bouchet, to show that

¹³ The documentation is collected in: F.C.B. Avé-Lallemant, *Das deutsche Gaunertum*, vols. 1–2 (Leipzig, 1858–1862); and F. Kluge, *Rotwelsch. Quellen und Wortschatz der Gaunersprache und der verwandten Geheimsprachen* (Strasburg, 1901).

¹⁴ S.A. Wolf, *Wörterbuch des Rotwelschen. Deutsche Gaunersprache* (Mannheim, 1956).

this language is not at all poor and that all the words it contains have a meaning and that it can be compared with Hebrew, Greek or Latin, gave a glossary of 72 jargon terms. In 1596, an anonymous treatise on the community of beggars and vagabonds was published, providing a glossary of terms used in their secret language. Finally, the most controversial treatise of this type, *Le Jargon ou Langage de l'argot reformé*, first published around 1630 and reprinted several times all the way to the 19th century, presented the organization of criminal groups to the broad public, regarding their jargon as their distinguishing feature and as the basis of their internal ties. Within the criminal community, which the above text treats as a closed world and describes as the kingdom of *argot*, jargon is an instrument of internal communication. With the publication of that treatise, the slang of French criminal communities, previously called *jargon*, *johelin*, or *narquois*, was now called *argot*. The dictionary of criminal slang published in 1837 by the illustrious Vidocq, a former criminal who also served on the galleys, and then became a policeman, contains over 1,500 jargon terms, most of which had already lost some of their secrecy and permeated the standard language.

A similar reconnaissance of criminal language was carried out in Italy.¹⁵ Humanist circles were fascinated by *gergo* as one of the branches of esoteric knowledge. In this way, jargon entered literature and became a subject of wordplay. Literary circles attached to the Medici court produced poems and letters in jargon, and dictionaries and treatises appeared, presenting both jargon itself and the groups on the social margins who used it. The reconnaissance of the secret language was followed by sociological reconnaissance. Dictionaries of Italian jargon at the end of the 15th century already contained almost 250,000 terms of jargon, translating them either into Latin or Italian. In the 16th and 17th centuries, printing propagated knowledge of Italian jargon, and dictionaries of jargon were immensely popular and became increasingly thick (a dictionary first published in 1545 and reprinted over 30 times contained about 630 entries). A characteristic feature in Italy was that successive discoveries of criminal codes applied to individual Italian dialects, connected with the country's linguistic and political situation; hence, Venetian, Tuscan, Milanese and other dialects were discovered.

¹⁵ Selected texts in: *Il libro dei vagabondi*, ed. P. Camporesi (Turin, 1973).

It was similar with the disclosure of criminal languages in other countries: *germania* in Spain, *calão* in Portugal, *cant* in England, *hantyrka* in the Czech lands, *hianchang* in China and *balaibalan* in India. However, the later deciphering of jargon in individual countries does not progress in a series. One should not think that we learn a new series of expressions in the same language and that our knowledge of the jargon increases as a result. Many jargons were short-lived. In any case, we notice that jargon remains a hermetic code only when confined to speech; i.e. only if it leaves no written trace. Deciphering jargon reduces or destroys its social function. Reviving jargon, for instance by introducing a small number of new terms, restores the secret and reactivates the jargon's social function. Thus, successive decipherings of jargon created specific archives of it. For a historian dealing only with the written record, jargon appears only when it is dying. The ephemeral existence of various forms of slang derives from the very essence of slang; but that is what includes it in the world of historical events, allowing it to be treated as an embodiment of human actions, impressions and thoughts.

2. Technical Slang and Margin Codes

By its very nature, jargon is a margin cultural phenomenon. It is born as such and undergoes change in line with the needs of the group that uses it. The modern meaning of the term has become considerably broader it now means any kind of slang used by particular professions or groups: pupils, students, soldiers, railwaymen, actors. Therefore, it satisfies the need by various groups to create a special language to be used in situations where there is a need for a language that deviates from standard speech. In a broad sense, jargon is not limited to criminals. As early as the 17th century, Niccolò Villani said that jargon (*gergo*) and the language of thieves (*jurbesco*) are not at all the same.¹⁶ Obviously, the effort to decode secret languages focused primarily on criminal jargon, but this was only one of the types of jargon that were current.

An ethnic language as a general code of communication does not mean that there are no sub-languages serving various social groups.

¹⁶ Niccolò Villani, *Ragionamento dell'accademico Aldeano sopra la poesia giocosa* (Venice, 1634), p. 80.

These sub-languages illustrate the gap between various cultures, and sometimes create a framework around which a sub-culture forms itself. The significance of jargon is that it is a conscious and deliberate creation by means of which a group asserts its separation from society at large. That is also the intention behind certain vocational languages. The earliest texts on the genesis of jargon said that they are influenced by groups of migrants who had previously developed their own language. Such was the nature of the *ofenskiy* language in old Russia.¹⁷

From the early 17th century, wandering traders, so-called *korobeyniki*, from the Kovrovo area of Vladimir province, wandered through Russia and got as far as Greece. As a means of communication, they used a language called *ofenskiy* or *atanskiy*. The great dictionary compiled by Peter Simon Pallas in 1786–1789 under the patronage of Tsarina Catherine II describes this jargon as a Suzdal dialect because traders in the Suzdal area used almost one hundred words borrowed from wandering traders. Many other local dialects used by Russian traders and artisans were recorded in the 19th century. A major part of their vocabulary were technical terms associated with a profession, but even words in the standard language (such as water, hand, give, work) were replaced with special terms. It is clear from the verbal resources of this jargon that it fulfilled the need for a large professional group to “shut” itself from outsiders, a form of defence of the group’s cohesion, or even a sign of the group’s superiority over the rest.

The example of the *ofenskiy* language illustrates the particular nature of trade in the pre-industrial age and the desocialization of a wandering life. The language of wandering merchants (*merciers*) in medieval France can be explained in a similar way. In the 14th century, it was discovered that this community of merchants had created its own corporate body of an esoteric nature, and a special language was a component of it. The earliest treatises on French jargon suggested that it was the language of merchants which formed the background of criminal slang, and that criminal communities adopted the language of the merchants.

¹⁷ V. Jagić, *Die Geheimsprachen bei den Slaven* (Vienna, 1896; Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 135.5), 133, pp. 1–80.

In most professional languages, one notes that they gradually become more esoteric due to their technical terms. The slang of the silk weavers of Lyon in the late 18th century was incomprehensible to outsiders because of the technical terms with which it was saturated, but also it had borrowed terms from local dialects and from criminal slang.¹⁸ Cesare Lombroso noted similar slang among wandering craftsmen (such as chair makers and masons) and craftsmen with a fixed abode in northern Italy.¹⁹ Actors also developed their own slang. Arab actors are known to have had their own slang since the 18th century.²⁰ Its vocabulary indicates that apart from technical terms associated with the acting profession, it included many new linguistic inventions meant to act as a barrier against people outside this community. Thus, admission to the acting community required not just learning the profession, but also initiation. In the case of actors, we are dealing with a professional group whose lifestyle separated it from the mainstream and imparted a certain level of infamy to it.

An interesting example of professional jargon is that of cattle traders, which borrowed heavily from Hebrew and Yiddish; most of the words in the language of Dutch cattle traders investigated after the last war were borrowed from those languages. This jargon reveals a history because of the requirements of Judaism, Jewish trade in cattle was very brisk and provided an opportunity for permanent contacts and encouraged the formation of a secret language. Likewise, the professional language of Jewish horse traders was adopted by non-Jewish horse traders and apparently helped preserve the intimacy of the language.

The genesis of a special language cannot always be established. Sometimes, it can be seen that a criminal slang developed out of professional jargon, whilst in other cases it is criminal slang that gives rise to the development of the jargon of certain professional groups.²¹ In each case, it is clear that the mechanism of creating

¹⁸ L. Sainéan, *L'argot ancien* (Paris, 1907), p. 260.

¹⁹ C. Lombroso, *L'uomo delinquente in rapporto all'antropologia, giurispudenza e alle discipline carcerarie*, Milan, 1878), p. 481.

²⁰ P. Kahle, "Eine Zunftsprache der ägyptischen Schattenspieler", *Islamica*, 2 (1926–1927), pp. 313–322.

²¹ Most 20th-century Arab jargon can be derived from the slang of 14th-century beggars and vagabonds; see A.L. Troickaia, "Abdolti – Argo tsekha artistov i musikantov Srednei Azii", *Sovietskoe Vostokovedenie*, 5 (1948), pp. 251–274.

a jargon derives from a natural tendency by each group to form its own specialized technical language. A tendency to make this language secret manifests itself among those groups who are aware of their margin status regarding the mainstream or who feel a need to be separate.

3. Communication and Separation

Jargon is, in essence, a counter-language, not just because it is formed and develops as a protest against the *lingua franca*, but also because its purpose is to deliberately sever general linguistic communication between people. At the same time, jargon serves to create an intimate level of communication between the members of a specific group. Thus, secrecy is an essential element of jargon.

But a lot of scepticism has been expressed on this issue, pointing out that jargon words whose meaning really is secret were limited in number, and many others, used as metaphors, were easily understandable. Nevertheless, contemporary linguistics has had to struggle to decipher old jargon, not always with complete success. Villon's ballads in jargon are still subject to varying interpretations. There is no reason to assume that jargon was more comprehensible to people then than it is to linguists today. The direct and close links between jargon on the one hand and standard slang on the other lowered the barriers of secrecy somewhat, and secrecy made itself felt on the border between crowd culture and elitist culture. Therefore, the main issue is not so much the secrecy of jargon as the question whether jargon developed out of a desire to make speech (or conversation) secret.

Without attributing secrecy a primary role in the development of jargon, one nevertheless notes that it influences the social function of jargon. In the behaviour of every small group one observes a tendency to isolate itself; this also applies to language. This can be attributed to two factors: an assertion of superiority and an awareness of one's margin status. In both cases, linguistic difference serves to assert the group's independence.²² This does not only apply to jargon: one notices a similar linguistic development among socially privileged groups who wish to demonstrate their superiority or who feel that

²² A. van Gennep, "Essai d'une théorie des langues spéciales", *Revue des Etudes Ethnographiques et Sociologiques*, 1 (1908), pp. 307 ff.

their status is uncertain or endangered. In France, the community of *mignons* in the 16th century, *précieuses* in the 17th century and *petits maîtres* in the 18th century used an intricate form of expression to differentiate themselves from the mainstream. Right up to the 20th century, the language used in aristocratic or bourgeois salons was different from the language used with servants or in daily life. The Russian aristocracy used French, a sign of snobbishness representing a disdain of the common people.

The cryptic codes used in children's games, in schools or in the army, may be interpreted in a similar way. An inversion of syllables easily creates a closed system of communication without the need for a separate vocabulary. The key or secret code is easy to decipher, but the special language can only be understood with a little experience. In this way, the group attained a level of secrecy which gave it a feeling of superiority over or separation from others. In the Far East, such cryptologic codes occur not at all in children's games, but in secret slang.²³ A secret code occurs not only in interpersonal relationships, but also in relationships between people and supernatural forces. Magic uses special expressions that are meant to remain incomprehensible to people but fully "understood" by supernatural forces. Ethnology reveals that cryptic languages of this kind are very prominent in customs and rituals. Some hunting and fishing tribes use such terms, expressions or languages as protection against breaking taboos. In the initiation ceremonies of young men, too, a secret language is used which cannot be understood by those who have not gone through the ceremony.²⁴ But in this case, the secrecy is of a ceremonial nature and is an external sign of participation in a group, and not of isolation.

In the case of groups on the social margin, the prime purpose of slang is concealment, and only then assertion; it is a professional technique. A way of life largely involving breaches of social standards required cryptic ways of communication, and that was the function of special verbal codes and gestures. As the secrets of jargon were unravelled, so too did information on special gestures come to light, with which thieves or gamblers conveyed information to each other. Occasionally these non-verbal means of communication were spontaneous and

²³ A. Niceforo, *Le génie de l'argot* (Paris, 1912).

²⁴ L. Krzywicki, "Pierwociny więzi społecznej", in: id., *Dziela*, vol. 1, ed. J. Lutyński (Warsaw, 1957), p. 461.

short-lived, but sometimes they developed into permanent codes or a “language of gestures.” This can be seen in the customs of large medieval gangs, the Italian Mafia and freemasonry. Some of these codes were inspired by the sign language of deaf-mutes. However, it is jargon that is the most efficient in concealing intentions and actions that cannot count on society’s approval. Lombroso (as with Rafael Salillas regarding the Spanish *germania*)²⁵ indicated the significance of jargon for confirming an individual’s association with criminal conduct and activity.

In the jargons we have discussed above, one can distinguish between two levels of vocabulary: technical-professional vocabulary, and a vocabulary which can be described as cryptologic. Technical-professional vocabulary combines the language of thieves with other professional slang. A considerable portion of the vocabulary is associated with criminal actions and describes various categories of specialists, theft techniques and types of fraud. Special terms are used for the tools of the thief’s trade, such as skeleton keys, crowbars and ladders. In the Spanish *Germania*, a thief whose uses a skeleton key is called an apostle or “St. Peter” – the association with the keeper of the keys of heaven was obviously inspired by popular iconography. Such vocabulary was used mainly for communication, not concealment, but still the nature of the trade gave this technical vocabulary an air of professional secrecy. In the age before industry, “normal” trades also endeavoured to preserve their vocational secrets.

The aim to ensure secrecy lies at the root of the creation of special vocabularies whose meaning had to be hidden from non-members of the group. Those accepted into the group had to learn to use this vocabulary. The corporate bodies of criminal groups arranged initiation procedures in which a knowledge of the jargon was on a par with a period of apprenticeship, the master’s examination and the oath. As with a tattoo, knowledge of the jargon was an outside sign that a person had “passed” the initiation.

The introduction of special words representing the most common meanings also shows that slang was meant to be secret. In the Italian jargon of thieves in the 15th century, there was a special word for

²⁵ Lombroso, *L'uomo delinquente*, part 3, chapt. IX; R. Salillas, *El delincuente español. El lenguaje (estudio filológico, psicológico y sociológico) con dos vocabolarios jergales* (Madrid, 1896).

“yes,” and in the following century dictionaries cited two new words with the same meaning. In Italian jargon, a special system was used for figures and numbers. Further developments in jargon show that it easily recreated a secret every time it was deciphered. This might have occurred in the course of spontaneous, evolutionary changes, or during planned changes. In the 1870s, the press reported on the emergence of new prison slang in Romania, and described how it happened. In one prison, in the face of sharper police persecution, the prisoners appointed a special board to create a secret language. The board was made up of thieves of other nationalities: Romanians, Hungarians, Jews, and Russians.²⁶ One can surmise that the aim was to introduce words of foreign origin, which was standard procedure in all closed slang. In medieval jargon one notes the presence of words from Greek, Latin or Hebrew, suggesting that students and clerics also belonged to the community of thieves. Similar contacts between vagrants and Gypsies in modern times resulted in the absorption of certain Gypsy words into specialist criminal jargon and slang. However, such influence was limited.²⁷ The anecdote about the creation of a Romanian dialect – whether true or not – shows one of the ways in which slang can develop. But the real process of the formation of slang usually remains unknown.

The richness of the vocabulary of slang shown in some dictionaries was only illusory and apparent, resulting from the abovementioned accumulation of knowledge. In fact, the jargons in use by a specific group at a specific time had a limited vocabulary. Apart from theft, there were two other spheres with their own special language: gambling, and prostitution and sex. Each had their specialist terminology, for apart from gamblers, pimps and prostitutes had their own language. Criminal jargon extended to both these specialized types of slang and created vocabulary for both of them, because the way of life of the social margin was interconnected. Regarding the social margin, conversations in prisons and taverns – the most frequent locations of jargon – focused on women and love. To this one can add another sphere, a specific social terminology. Jargon normally had its own names for the social

²⁶ Niceforo, *Le génie*, p. 100.

²⁷ Czech jargon borrowed heavily from standard German and German jargon, as well as from Hebrew; see K. Treimer, *Das tschechische Rotwelsch. Entstehung und Schichten* (Heidelberg, 1937).

institutions with which the social margin had contact, such as courts and the police and their employees, prisons or places of execution. In this way, the vocabulary of jargon, even if meagre, served the need to describe the reality surrounding its speakers.

4. Social Emblems and the Situation of the Margin

The development of social classes and groups is often accompanied by the development of their own languages, but only in the case of margin groups is this development seen fully.

One can state that the creation of special linguistic codes for the needs of minorities within an ethnic majority occurs parallel to desocialisation and exclusion. A transfer from technical or professional language to jargon as a secret means of communication means that a given group feels alien towards the mainstream or has been formally excluded from it. In a traditional community in which family ties and a stable life served as the basis for social existence, mobility was a destructive factor, severing these ties. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the earliest secret languages appeared among wandering professions and minorities. Here, vagrants played a major role as the carriers of jargon. The community of vagrants embodied a mixture of professional slang, foreign languages, dialects and prison terms, resulting in a linguistic canon with a range of vocabulary and a specific way of creating new words. A similar phenomenon, albeit on a lesser scale, occurred when a change of living conditions led to a new lifestyle and resulted in someone having to leave the family; it suffices here to recall the jargon of the barracks or trenches recorded by Céline. But in the case of criminal groups, we are dealing not only with a more profound severance of family ties, but also with a much more durable phenomenon. The use of jargon is a sign of professional crime, understood by most as evidence that the user is alienated from the mainstream, whereas the closed groups viewed the use of jargon as a sign of solidarity.

For margin groups, jargon is a way of protecting their interests. Unlike other communities, margin groups had no formal institutionalized structures. The organizations which they sometimes created in imitation of the mainstream were weak and impractical. The use of a common code replaced other group forms to a certain extent.

Therefore, jargon was not only of direct practical use, but also signified membership of a group or organization, as well as a certain scope of actions and privileges.

Jargon was also a way to tidy up the social view of the world of those who did not use it. Its secret nature allowed people on the margin to be treated not only as different, but also as potential criminals even if they had not broken the law. It also perpetuated the stereotype of the unity of a “different world,” a negative image of society. But in fact, jargon never expressed such unity. Secret languages were fully used only by professional criminal communities who had gained experience in living together, in a gang or in prison. In other groups, jargon functioned in proportion to the degree of their isolation, whereby its secrecy often weakened with the passage of time. In psychological terms, jargon is not a sign that of all those whom society does not accept are united, but a sign that certain groups perform, each of them separately, a dramatic *prise de conscience* of the differences in their needs and way of life. Out of this degrading separateness, jargon creates superiority and privilege.

Jews in Christian Society – from Segregation to Exclusion

Manuscript from 1978 (in the possession of Hanna Zaremska, copy deposited with the archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre), contains incomplete footnotes by the author, subsequently completed.

The history of the Jewish people in medieval Europe and the relationship between them and the Christian communities where they settled are burdened with stereotypes and emotions connected more with the times of historians than with the past they describe. The huge research effort by many generations of historians has turned this topic into a separate academic field,¹ so that dealing with the place of Jews in medieval life is no easy task. This is not just because of the huge quantity of documentation and differences of opinion expressed in historical writings, but also because of the disparity of the social situations that have been observed and analysed. Time and space are both coordinates in this disparity. During the 1,000 years of European history called the Middle Ages, the situation of Jews underwent change not just in its structure, which we will attempt to outline here, but also in its rhythm of evolution, influenced by the integration of families and groups into the natural and social environment, and by coexistence and conflicts, neighbourliness and alienness, friendship and hostility, and the suffering of the persecuted minority. This evolution did not at all proceed in a single smooth direction, from tolerance to martyrdom, but was subject to changes

¹ S.W. Baron's monumental work *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vols. 1–16 (New York, 1957–1969) may serve as a guide to the literature on this subject. An excellent presentation of the wealth of this knowledge is *The Study of Judaism*, vol. 2: *Bibliographical Essays in Medieval Jewish Studies* (New York, 1976).

and disruption, which lent a shape to the general development curve. The situation in space was also disparate, especially because the nature of the associations between Jews and rulers was dictated by the dependence of Jews on the policies and whims of the rulers in each country where Jews settled. In such a situation, each generalization on the subject of Jews and Europe seems to be an exaggeration, and at the same time creates the danger of a collapse into banality.

Mindful of this risk, we should nevertheless examine the basis of the attitudes of Christian Europe towards the Jews: were the Jews excluded from “global society,” or can they be regarded as a margin group? The American medievalist Gavin I. Langmuir said appropriately that a historian dealing with this issue must realize that the very subject of this research, as well as his experience as a man of the 20th century, imposes certain requirements and trends regarding an understanding and interpretation of the processes of the past.² The nature of the information examined and supplied by historiography means that judgments and moral assessments are a consequence of the historian’s work. This may be regarded as a weakness in historical research, for it hampers the development of a positivist model of the science of history as a particular motive in the historian’s social function and in the significance of history in shaping collective awareness. In an effort to understand the anti-Semitic movements of modern times, frequent reference was made to their historical roots, especially in the dark recesses of the Middle Ages. This, it seems, poses a certain danger to the understanding of the phenomenon in its contemporary dimension and to a proper interpretation of its functioning in medieval and early-modern society. For it is far from the truth to regard hostility towards the Jews as a continuous process, or to identify the medieval Christian society’s attitude to the Jews with anti-Semitism.³

² G.I. Langmuir, “The Jews and the Archives of Angevin England. Reflections on Medieval Anti-Semitism”, *Traditio*, 19 (1963), pp. 183–244.

³ J. Parkes wrote in 1938 in the introduction to his book on Jews in medieval society: “The history of anti-Semitism is long and complicated. To understand it, it is not enough to refer to the racial mysticism of our times, but to patiently trace its development in a later period when it had become an inseparable part of the history of the nations in which Jews lived, worked and suffered”; id., *The Jew in the Medieval Community: A Study of His Political and Economic Situation* (London, 1938), p. xii.

Religious hatred goes hand-in-hand with an intention of conversion, and the destruction of a religion's places of worship and extermination of its followers occurs during the expansion of the dominant religion. As long as voluntary or enforced conversion forms an integral part of the program, there can be no talk of a biological point of reference. The fact that conversion represented salvation from the stake or from expulsion does not diminish condemnation of religious fanaticism (as with Parkes, one can regard the persecution of Jews in the Middle Ages as an *abnormality* in which cause and effect differ), but shows that this fanaticism was based not on a difference of blood or race, but on a difference of beliefs and rituals. This is where one should perceive differences in anti-Jewish (or anti-Judaic) attitudes and the anti-Semitic attitudes of modern times.

This provides a kind of starting point for examining the relationships between the Jewish minority and the Christian world in the context of the social marginalization we are dealing with here, for the vision of the dark Middle Ages as the genesis of anti-Semitism makes it unnecessary to ask how tolerance of Jews in the Middle Ages developed into their exclusion, and what form this exclusion took. Processes of separation, exclusion and marginalization call for a certain involvement in social ties or a certain level of coexistence.

The processes of the Diaspora led to the formation of stable communities of Jews in medieval Europe, whose size should not be exaggerated. Not until the late Middle Ages, from the 13th century onwards, did the centre of gravity of the Jewish Diaspora shift towards Europe, but even then Jews constituted only a fraction of the total population. Studies into Jewish demography and the documentation available on this subject are too meagre to determine the size of the Jewish population in the Middle Ages with greater accuracy.⁴ One should realize that the Jews settled in medieval Europe in groups,⁵ especially in the cities, where their separation from the urban remainder became blurred. In some cities in the Iberian Peninsula – those under Islam rule and those under Christian rule prior to the

⁴ Cf. S.W. Baron, "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Civilization", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 12 (1942), pp. 1–48 (reprinted in: id., *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, New Brunswick, NJ, 1972, pp. 239–267).

⁵ R. Chazan, *Medieval Jewry in Northern France: A Political and Social History* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 207–220, provides a long list of places where individual Jews or Jewish families lived.

re-conquest – Jews formed the majority of the population, and even Barcelona in the 11th century had as many Jews as Christians. During the following centuries, Jews accounted for one-fifth to one-third of the population of many Spanish cities. In cities in northern France, Germany and England, the proportion of Jews was much lower and did not exceed one or two percent.⁶ In northern France, even in the 13th century Jewish communities seldom exceeded one hundred families, with some districts having a Jewish population of up to five hundred (the Jewish district in Troyes in the 11th–12th centuries is said to have had a population of 100–200).⁷ According to a tax census of 1292, the most important Jewish community, in Paris, had 121 Jewish families, but was augmented by the influx of Jews from other parts, such as England after the expulsion of the Jews there in 1290, and from other French cities.⁸ The census of the city of Lincoln lists 100 families, but one quarter of these are declared to be *nihil habent*; in other words, below the tax threshold.⁹

As the population in Europe rose during this period and more and more Jews immigrated, so did the number and size of Jewish districts increase. Certain shifts also occurred, altering the general balance. The fortunes and fates of Jewish communities in various countries also affected the demographic relationship between Jews and Christians. If we rely on the chronicles, the expulsion of Jews from England in 1290 affected 16,000 people, only 0.5 percent of the population. The expulsion of Jews from many English towns in the 13th century resulted in them being concentrated in only a dozen or so cities, with the result that at least one-tenth of the Jewish population of England in the reign of Edward I was concentrated in London, probably accounting for five percent of the city's population.¹⁰

⁶ Baron, *The Jewish Factor*, p. 241.

⁷ Id., "Rashi and the Community of Troyes", in: *Rashi Anniversary Volume* (New York, 1941; reprinted in: id., *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, pp. 268–283).

⁸ L. Rabinowitz, *The Social Life of the Jews of Northern France in the XII–XIV Centuries* (New York, 1972, 1st ed.: 1938).

⁹ C. Roth, "The Ordinary Jew in the Middle Ages: A Contribution to His History", in: *Studies and Essays in Honour of Abraham A. Neuman* (Leiden, 1962), pp. 435–437 (appendix).

¹⁰ Id., *A History of the Jews in England* (London, 1941), pp. 82 ff. The subject of the expulsion of the Jews from England is described by H.G. Richardson in: *The English Jewry under Angevin Kings* (London, 1960, appendix); cf. also the comments of Langmuir, *The Jews*, pp. 228 ff.

The general picture of Jewish settlements in Europe in essence denotes small groups, with larger groups appearing only in southern cities. The entire Jewish population of Western Christendom at the end of the 13th century is estimated at about 450,000, or one percent of the population, and only on the Iberian Peninsula was this percentage higher (6 percent in Portugal and almost 3 percent in Spain).¹¹ Although Jewish settlements in medieval Europe were by no means restricted to towns, as has often been said in earlier historical writings: the land and farming occupied an important part in Jewish life, especially in the early Middle Ages¹² when there were no legal obstacles to this, and there is no doubt that the towns were the chief places where Jews settled. Jewish urban settlement occurred along the great trading routes, and Jews often settled in the very heart of a city because this occurred during a city's initial development. This is attributable to Jewish involvement in municipal trade and to the needs of medieval societies and of the people governing Jewish settlements. Such a concentration of Jews and trade specialization had a major influence on relations between the Jewish minority and the Christians surrounding it; the presence of Jews was more striking than statistical figures suggest, and their long-term engagement in goods and money exchange brought them into permanent contact with the Christian community. It is this contact that gave rise to anti-Jewish prejudice in the Middle Ages. These contacts were neither profound nor of a mass nature, but this, according to socio-psychological studies, was a typical prerequisite for the emergence of ethnic or racial prejudice usually based on false or exaggerated facts or generalizations.¹³

Neither during group migration or individual wanderings of Jews did the Jewish Diaspora lose its ethnic or cultural identity in medieval Europe. In any case, the religion required a concentration of Jews, the quorum required to perform religious rituals was ten men. Rabbinical literature from the 13th century says that sometimes this quorum could

¹¹ S.W. B[aron], entry: "Population", in: *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), vol. 13, pp. 878 ff.; J. Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1961), p. 12, says that demographers place the Ashkenazi Jewish population before the first half of the 17th century at about 750,000, certainly half the overall Jewish population at the time.

¹² B. Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens dans le monde occidental, 430–1096* (Paris, 1960; Etudes Juives, 2), pp. 22 ff.

¹³ G.W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Boston, 1954), p. 261.

not be found, and Moses ben Jacob of Coucy relates places where there were not even two Israelites.¹⁴ However, one can assume that the above religious requirement and economic and social considerations induced people to settle in groups, and this trend subsequently increased, also due to waves of Jewish persecution. The religious bond formed the basis of the life of the community, whilst its strength was provided not so much by the Rabbinate, which had not yet fully developed, but by the vitality of tradition, a feeling of mystic community, and collective loyalty towards the commandments of the Talmud.¹⁵ In this tradition, the Jewish community found comfort both in the construction of internal solidarity and in any tendencies towards exclusion. This applied especially to relationships towards Christianity, regarding which, as the dominant religion, the Jewish community adopted a defensive stance, in the dimension of doctrine or truth, as well as in the dimension of human contacts. Ritual commandments¹⁶ regarding the purity of food or family life were intended to restrict Jewish contacts with Christians as far as possible, whilst the rigours of these commandments went hand-in-hand with the natural tendency of a minority group to refer to the traditions and faith of its ancestors in order to consolidate its own ethnic identity. In this deep connection between Israelites and their religion and tradition, one can see a continuation of a separate culture focused on adherence to the Talmud.

The internal solidarity of a Jewish community can be illustrated by the fact that, in interpreting a fragment of the Talmud, Jewish communities in northern France and Germany adopted the rule whereby to be accepted into the community, the entire community had to vote unanimously in favour of this.¹⁷ A measure of the stability of the Jewish districts may also be the fact that the bonds of kinship spread; in the Jewish district in Orleans in the 12th century, its members (except the Rabbi) were related to varying degrees

¹⁴ Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, p. 31.

¹⁵ J. Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York, 1962), pp. 20 ff.

¹⁶ Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, *passim* (see especially chaps. V, VI); Katz, *Exclusiveness*, part 1.

¹⁷ Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, pp. 255 ff.; and *The Herem Hayyishub: A Contribution to the Medieval Economic History of the Jews* (London, 1945). S.W. Baron (*Rashi*, p. 282) stressed, however, that in practice this doctrine was seldom effected by the will of rulers and territorial governors.

of kinship.¹⁸ In the dimension of religion, culture and customs, Jewish communities in the Middle Ages possessed far-reaching cohesion and remained under the influence of “cantering” mechanisms.

While identifying the trends to segregate and isolate Jewish communities in the Diaspora, one should remember that this segregation and isolation occurred mainly at a time of repression. In an atmosphere of hostility and in the face of persecution and manifestations of hatred, the centring forces were most effective. But under normal daily contact, togetherness triumphed over separation and blurred the contours of alienness.

Co-existence gradually established itself via doctrine and law. For the people of Israel, relations with other peoples were strictly dictated by the Bible and Talmud; the former was regarded as the written law, and the latter as an oral tradition. However, both were attributed to a revelation in which the attitude towards Christianity was similar to the attitudes towards Jewish sects and idolatrous peoples.¹⁹ Life in Europe, in which Christianity was the dominant religion, required a breaking of the mould formed in different times and conditions. This could not be achieved by altering the canon, which was anchored in the period of time between the destruction of the temple and the expected coming of the Messiah, but by a new interpretation of the Talmud in which all possible practical guidelines for conduct can be found. Among the basic prohibitions, particularly ambivalent was the ban on Jews taking part in any activity remotely connected with a different cult or religion, which possessed far-reaching practical implications. However, the commandments and prohibitions became increasingly flexible, and the interpreters of the Scriptures and of Judaic tradition now sanctioned social practices of coexistence. But still the Christians were included in the general mass of infidels, regarded by Judaism as idolaters. The traditional ban on sexual intercourse and eating with Christians remained in force in doctrine, but was regularly broken in daily life.

The attitudes of Christianity towards the Jews and Judaism were basically formulated in the writings of the Church Fathers, as well as

¹⁸ Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, p. 33. However, the author stresses that the next century paints a different picture: stability gives way to migration and disruption caused by segregation.

¹⁹ Katz, *Exclusiveness*, p. 25.

in the papal bulls and synod laws of the early Middle Ages.²⁰ The range of statements and attitudes set forth in literature is very extensive and far from coherent, but in them one can find both a tolerance of Judaism and its followers, and downright hostility towards it. For long centuries, the attitude of Pope Gregory I defined papal policy towards the Jews: just as Jews were not allowed to perform in their synagogues that which was prohibited by law, so too they should not be persecuted for that which they were permitted to do.²¹ Early Christian writings also refer to the theological doctrine of Jewish bondage (*servitus Iudaeorum*) as an eternal punishment for having rejected and crucified Christ.²² But they are also destined to provide eternal testimony of the truth of Christianity and to fulfil the biblical prophecy whereby the remnants of the *dispersio Iudaeorum* shall be saved. The conversion of the Jews to Christianity was to be one of the acts preceding the Last Judgement. This doctrine, expanded and broadly interpreted throughout the Middle Ages, cannot be considered a program of religious tolerance and humanitarianism, as it once was in an apologetic spirit.²³ During the first millennium, Christian-Jewish polemics remained more or less on an equal level: both the Church and the Synagogue firmly refuted the arguments professed by the other side.²⁴ This arose out of a period when Christianity was taking root in the West and its relations with Judaism were marked by competition and mutual interaction during the process of converting

²⁰ K.R. Stow provides a bibliographical review of this issue in “The Church and the Jews: From St. Paul to Paul IV”, in: *The Study of Judaism*, pp. 107–165. Basic texts were collated by B. Blumenkranz in *Les auteurs chrétiens latin du Moyen Age sur les Juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris, 1963). Among the huge bibliography on this subject, two works particular merit special mention: J. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue: A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism* (London, 1934); and Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens*.

²¹ *Gregorii I papae registrum epistolarum*, vol. 2, ed. L.M. Hartmann, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae*, II, book. VIII, 25, p. 27. An identical view is to be found in: *Constitutio pro Iudaeis* of Innocent III from 1199 (*Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, vol. 214, no. 302, col. 864).

²² See G. Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany: A Study of Their Legal and Social Status* (Chicago, 1949), pp. 332 ff.

²³ Cf. Critical remarks of H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden* (Leipzig, 1874), vol. 8, p. 5.

²⁴ P. Browe, *Die Judenmission im Mittelalter und die Päpste* (Rome, 1942; *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae*, 6, col. N. 8), pp. 55 ff.

the pagan world.²⁵ The very fact of this opposition can be regarded as a kind of partnership until the time when it became a ritual and institutionalized form of Christian apologetics and propaganda in the later Middle Ages.

The universal meaning of theology in the culture and social life of the Christian world meant that the legal status of Jews in medieval society derived from doctrine. Scholars are far from united in their opinions about the legal status of Jews in Christian Europe, and the subject remains controversial.²⁶ But regardless of how one interprets the status of Jews as alien, the disappearance of their ancient Roman entitlements and the development of their situation in Merovingian and Carolingian times, one can say that the legal situation of the Jews in the early Middle Ages was a combination of care by rulers and institutions on the one hand, and inferiority on the other. In the 5th and 6th centuries, Jews living in Gaul and on the Rhine were treated as part of the conquered Gallo-Roman population and enjoyed the rights granted to them under the codex of Theodosius and the decisions of former emperors, including the right of religion, the civic rights granted by Caracalla, and considerable court autonomy.²⁷ This legal status gradually diminished. According to some researchers (J.E. Scherer, S.W. Baron, and J. Parkes), this had already occurred during the early Middle Ages when, during the barbarization and Christianization of Europe, only the Jews remained outside the old Gallo-Roman society and were branded as “alien.” As such, Germanic custom law regarded them as an “object without a master,”²⁸ and the decrees and privileges of the Carolingian rulers provided them with basic legal guarantees and laid down their legal status for the coming centuries. Other researchers believe that the status of the Jews did not deteriorate until later centuries; Guido Kisch regards the Carolingian

²⁵ L. Poliakov, *L'Histoire de l'antisemitisme. Du Christ aux Juifs de cour* (Paris, 1955), pp. 42 ff., shows that both Christianity and Jewry were implanted in early modern Europe by way of conversion; cf. B. Blumenkranz, “Die jüdisch-christliche Missionskonkurrenz (3. bis 6. Jahrhundert)”, *Klio*, 39 (1961), pp. 227–233.

²⁶ Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, pp. 303 ff.; Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, vol. 4, pp. 49 ff., 262; Blumenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Missionskonkurrenz*, pp. 296 ff.; Langmuir, *The Jews*, pp. 196 ff.

²⁷ Parkes, *The Jews in Medieval Community*, p. 101.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 102: “According to Germanic Custom, a stranger was an object without a master.”

deeds as applicable to individuals which did not deprive Jews of their personal freedom or treat them collectively as “alien,”²⁹ while Bernard Blumenkranz argues that the Carolingian rulers did not breach Roman law and did not alter the hitherto legal status of the Jews, which remained in effect right up to the 9th century.³⁰ Not until the turn of the second millennium did the legal situation of the Jews change. In the 11th century they were separated from other social groups in a legal sense and encumbered with special taxes (Blumenkranz cites the tax in Mâcon in 1051 as the first tax paid by Jews merely because they were Jews), which was the price of tolerance and care.

However, even if one agrees that the Jews were deprived of their rights as early as under the Carolingians, the new legal situation did not affect their place in social life. Rulers were keen to use the services of Jews in diplomacy, trade and husbandry. The role played by Jewish communities in the Arab world, where they enjoyed the status of a protected minority³¹ and proved enormously useful in the functioning of the state and in the life of the world of Islam, was no doubt one of the factors that led to the formation of a favourable policy on the part of rulers towards the Jews who, depending on the ruler, could also expect good fortune.

Historical evidence clearly confirms that Jewish communities had a broad scope of independence and that Jewish society adapted to the *modus tolerandi* that emerged in post-Roman countries (only Visigoth Spain attempted to pursue a more theocratic and hence less tolerant political model).³² The legal situation of the Jews did not prevent their normal functioning in economic and social life, and even the ban on owning land was only applied to a limited extent. This allows a researcher to talk of “good-neighbourly” relations between the Jewish and Christian populations until the end of the first millennium.³³ The forms of Jewish associations and the institutional links between Jewish groups scattered across Europe have not been fully examined yet.

²⁹ Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, pp. 135 ff., 303 ff.

³⁰ Blumenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Missionskonkurrenz*, pp. 299 ff., *passim*.

³¹ Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, vol. 3, pp. 120 ff.

³² Y.F. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 19 ff.; B. Blumenkranz, “Die Entwicklung im Westen zwischen 200 und 1200”, in: *Kirche und Synagoge. Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden* (Stuttgart, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 102 ff.

³³ Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens*, p. 1.

The mysterious Jewish king of Narbonne, noted in Charlemagne's *Gesta* and sometimes taken to mean an official responsible for Jewish affairs or an exile from the House of David who had come to Spain,³⁴ has been treated in medievalist writings as evidence of the existence of a Jewish duchy in the southern part of the Carolingian empire; a duchy whose duke was a vassal of Charlemagne and his heirs, which preserved its independence for over a century, and which acted as a buffer between Islam and Christendom.³⁵ This is an obvious sign of the varied situation of Jews within the Diaspora, and whether this duchy is fact or fiction, it emerged as a legend in medieval traditions and left its mark on both Christian and Jewish writings, so that one should consider the real extent of Jewish "bondage" in early medieval times. This legend supports the view whereby the legal status and social situation of the Jews deteriorated drastically from the 11th century onwards.

An examination of the development of the attitudes of the Church, rulers and public institutions towards Jews over the Middle Ages is important for our study of this issue because it relates to Christian attitudes, which have their origins not in the relationships between different faiths and their institution, but out of social life and a collective mentality. This does not mean we are playing down the religious tone of psycho-social attitudes. One should not seek the genesis of the social situation of Jews in the commandments and prohibitions usually formulated by religions, but in the sphere of human imagination, beliefs and collective conduct. After all, we are concentrating on religion and traditions, with which common law came into contact and which influenced an interpretation of the law.

In the deterioration of the situation of the Jews in the early part of the second millennium, two series of phenomena can be observed that are not always interdependent and not always synchronized: on the one hand, from the first crusade onwards, there were waves of mass fanaticism that led crowds against the Jews in an effort at enforced conversion, but usually in an effort to exterminate Jews settled in Europe,³⁶ while on the other hand the papacy and its institutions undertook repression, segregation and expulsion.

³⁴ Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, vol. 4, pp. 46 ff.

³⁵ A.J. Zuckerman, *A Jewish Principdom in Feudal France, 768-900* (New York, 1972).

³⁶ For a description of the massacre, see Parkes, *The Jews in Medieval Community*, pp. 67-89. An attempt at examining the genesis of these movements is made by

The Crusades took place in a time of transition typical of medieval mentality: the massacre of Jews in French cities and in the Rhineland was understood as a punishment for the crucifixion of Christ. The crusade to recover the Holy Land was a re-enactment of holy history and enmeshed medieval society in the times of the Scriptures. But it would be an over-simplification to say that religious propaganda lay at the root of this fanaticism and hatred. The entrenchment of the faith and of the Scriptures in the hearts of a society seized with crusading fervour provided an excuse for Jewish persecution. Territorial rulers and bishops were powerless against these collective moods – whose sociological origins we shall examine shortly – and frequently tried to oppose them in defence of the benefits which the presence of the Jews gave them. Whether this persecution was carried out in order to “punish” the Jews or to rob them of their property, or whether the main reason for the attacks on Jewish districts was to free oneself from the burden of debts towards Jewish moneylenders, or whether this was just a fanatical hatred of infidels and outsiders, this was the expression of a mass attitude that was to persist in the Christian world for a long time. Although most of the accusations that fuelled the persecution of the Jews in Europe from the 11th century were to be found in anti-Jewish literature, the instruments of disputation and rhetoric as well as the intellectual and ideological techniques now became an integral part of the collective imagination, a part of collective convictions, and thus entered into the realm of religiousness over which Church institutions had no control. They then served as the driving force and justification for action.

The wave of pogroms during the first Crusade, when thousands of Jews fell victim to massacres, was followed by successive waves in Europe. The 15th century saw widespread preaching, extolling punishment for those who are “one hundred times” more guilty towards Christ than the Muslims,³⁷ and the canon of charges against the Jews spread. The crusade mentality became embedded in European consciousness as an anti-Jewish attitude, whether expressed in spontaneous

L. Dasberg, *Untersuchungen über die Entwertung des Judenstatus im 11. Jahrhundert* (Paris, 1965; *Etudes Juives*, 11), showing that they were linked to the development of chiliastic moods, and not with economic competition.

³⁷ These are the words of the abbot of Cluny, Peter the Reverent, in a letter to Louis VII (*Patrologia Latina*, vol. 189, pp. 366 ff.), and therefore not addressed to broader circles; nevertheless, they were propagated on a wide scale.

bouts of fanaticism or in occasional propaganda action.³⁸ In the 13th and 14th centuries, mass religious movements and social unrest led to waves of persecution throughout Europe: in 1320, the crusade of the shepherds (*pastoureaux*) led to the extermination of dozens of Jewish communities all over France until the combined action of the papal court in Avignon and the French monarchy put an end to this unrest, which was threatening to turn into a dangerous uprising. The Black Death in the middle of the 14th century once again turned the Jews into “scapegoats.” In the face of this mass catastrophe, the wave of fanaticism increased and the processions of flagellants through cities were accompanied by anti-Jewish protests. The Jews were blamed for this Europe-wide disaster, and the accusations of poisoning already put forward in the famous French lepers’ plot of 1321 (when the lepers, with the collaboration of the Jews, were suspected of wanting to poison the entire Christian world) became part of the negative image of Jews in the late Middle Ages.

The actions of church and lay authorities, which formed a kaleidoscope of the ever-worsening fate and condition of the Jews, were not synchronized. On the contrary, one can say that Jewry became a subject of rivalry and conflict between the *regnum* and the *sacerdotium*. The Church expounded and interpreted the basic principles governing Christendom’s attitude towards the Jews. The argument about Jewish hatred of the Church, a permanent springboard of doctrine, went hand-in-hand with the idea of *servitus Judaerum* as a punishment for rejecting and crucifying Jesus. The claim about the social weakness of the Jews was supported by their real legal situation within the Diaspora and by the doctrine, professed in Judaism, of the “bondage of Israel” while waiting for the Messiah. The religious reference to this “bondage” and papal prerogatives regarding the sphere of sin (*ratione peccati*) inducted 13th-century popes to declare that this “bondage” meant dependence on the Church and the Holy See.³⁹ This view was shared by St. Thomas Aquinas, who professed the Church’s entitlements regarding Jews and their property, describing them

³⁸ P. Alphandéry, *La chrétienté et l'idée de croisade* (Paris, 1954).

³⁹ M. Elias, “Die römische Kurie, besonders Innocenz III, und die Juden”, *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft*, 12 (1918), pp. 37–82; S. Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the Thirteenth Century* (New York, 1966), pp. 49–59, and *passim*; Baron, *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, pp. 285–322.

as *servii Ecclesiae*, but also claimed that the lay authorities were entitled to collect tax from the Jews.⁴⁰ The primary documents and privileges of Henry IV, Frederic I and Frederic II seem to be the tools of polemics with the papacy's claims towards the Jews, and also profess the Jews' dependence on the imperial treasury. It is interesting to note that papal declarations about the Church's rights towards the Jews and the declarations of emperors about their sovereign rights of authority over the Jews express a desire of care. Naturally, the popes seek a religious-doctrinal justification in which the most frequent argument is that the Jews serve as evidence of the fate of Christ, whereas their humiliation manifests the triumph of Christianity; the Jews are the guardians of the Old Testament; the commandment of Jesus of waiting patiently for the conversion of the Jews must be obeyed; and the prophecy of the salvation of the remainder of the Jews is to be fulfilled.⁴¹ In these very arguments, the protests of popes against the persecution of the Jews were justified. That is why anyone reading papal documents will have difficulty in finding any protective intentions in the face of this avalanche of hatred, and calls for separation seem to overcome calls for protection.⁴² In an exhaustive letter to Hervé, Earl of Nevers, in 1208, Pope Innocent III⁴³ explains at length the need for separation. He points out that lay rulers are settling Jews in towns and villages in order to reap benefits from their money dealings, and provide them with care at the expense of Christians. Insofar as the Jews themselves avoided meat bought and slaughtered by Christians, Christians ate meat from Jewish slaughter. Food remnants rejected by Jews on account of religious regulations governing nutrition are consumed by Christians – this applied to meat, milk and wine. The legal regulations applicable to Jews also act to the disadvantage of Christians. Both the *judaici superstitiones* and they themselves as “enemies of the cross” (*inimici crucis*) should be combated by the Christians. The preamble to this letter has a particular message in the context of these recommendations: “Cain was condemned to be an outcast on the face of the

⁴⁰ *Summa Theologiae*, 2.2.10.10; and the reply of Duchess Aquida of Brabant (*Divi Thomae Aquinatis doctoris angelici de regimine principum ad regem Cypri et de regimine Judaeorum ad ducissam Brabantiae*, ed. J. Mathis [Torino, 1924], especially p. 117).

⁴¹ Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 12.

⁴² Graetz, *Geschichte*, vol. 7, p. 5.

⁴³ *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 215, no. 190, col. 1470 ff.; Grayzel, *The Church*, no. 24.

Earth, but lest anyone should kill him, the Lord marked with the sign of the shaking of the head. Likewise, Jews against whom screams the blood of Jesus Christ should not be killed either, lest the Christians forget God's law, but should be scattered over the earth as outcasts until the shame leaves their faces and they begin to seek the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."⁴⁴ The association of Jews with Cain was one of the *topoi* of Christian writings about the Jews and anti-Jewish polemics (they were used by Peter the Reverent in a letter to the king of France in 1146),⁴⁵ and was also an obvious non-theological argument illustrating the low status of the Jews.

The theological-legal doctrine of "Jewish bondage" had an impact on the doctrine of Jewish dependence on the imperial treasury, described as "fiscal serfdom" (*Kammerknechtschaft*).⁴⁶ The Jews' political, legal and economic dependence on the emperor's treasury on his territory afforded them protection within the framework of peace institutions (land peace); it is interesting that most of the imperial documents saying that the Jews are the emperor's subjects or belong to him were written in the interests of the Jews with the intention of protecting their lives and property.⁴⁷ These documents thus lay down the emperor's powers of intervention and his duties towards the Jews. In a rhetorical preamble to the privilege of Frederick I Barbarossa for the Jews of Regensburg in 1182, we read: "It is our imperial duty and a requirement of justice and sensibility that we guard that which is due to each of our loyal subjects, not just followers of the Christian faith, but also those who differ from our faith and live in harmony with the traditions of their forefathers. It is our duty to allow them to continue with their customs and ensure peace for themselves and their property. This we pledge to all the emperor's present and future loyal subjects

⁴⁴ *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 215, no. 190, col. 1470 ff.: "Ut esset Cain vagus et profugus super terram, nec interficeretur a quoquam, tremorem capitis signum Dominus imposuit super eum; quare Judei, contra quos clamat vox sanguinis Jesu Christi, etsi occidi non debeant, ne divine legis obliviscatur populus Christianus, dispergi tamen debent super terram ut vagi, quatenus facies ipsorum ignominia repleatur et quaerant nomen Domini Jesu Christi."

⁴⁵ *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 189, col. 337.

⁴⁶ Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, pp. 331 ff.; Baron, *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, pp. 302 ff., p. 320 ff.

⁴⁷ Baron (*Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, pp. 320 ff.) stresses that the medieval meaning of serfdom was far removed from "bondage" and involved rights and duties. Cf. Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, pp. 131 ff., 333.

with a feeling of concern for the welfare of all Jews residing in our empire, of whom we know that they belong to the imperial treasury by our authority, etc.”⁴⁸ A few years later, in 1187–1188, Frederick I indeed fulfilled these pledges, going against the wave of Jewish persecution after the Mohammedans had taken Jerusalem. Jewish chroniclers note that the emperor did this in exchange for sums of money paid by Jewish communities;⁴⁹ the protection of lay rules had to be paid for, and the imperial treasury, just like that of other Western monarchs, earned a permanent income for the care given to Jews or simply for their presence. Regardless of the differences between the situation of Jews in England and France⁵⁰ and in the policies pursued by later monarchs in those countries, material benefits for the royal treasury were the prime justification for actions taken by the state. It is reckoned that during the reign of King Henry II of England, the sums paid by Jews (not counting gifts and bequests) accounted for one seventh of the English treasury’s income.⁵¹ In France the income was more fragmented, but in the 13th century one of the main unifying acts of the Capetian monarchy was the passing of legislation on Jews, which assured the king and powerful feudal lords of a monopoly on income from Jews in France, regulated the rights of each lord and the king regarding his Jews, and granted the monarch powers of surveillance and control.⁵²

During the 150 years between the ordinance of 1223 and statutes of 1230 and the final expulsion of the Jews in 1394, the king’s sole authority over the Jews developed and perpetuated itself. In the decrees and decisions of both popes and lay rulers, one notes elements of a program of Jewish persecution and a protective policy; the reasons for these opposing trends are to be found in the rivalry between the *regnum* and the *sacerdotium*, between kings and feudal lords, and between feudal lords and towns. Through this, historians

⁴⁸ J. Aronius, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden im fränkischen und deutschen Reiche bis zum Jahre 1273* (Berlin, 1902, 2nd ed. Hildesheim, 1970), no. 314a, p. 139. Cf. Baron, *A Social and Religious History*, vol. 4, pp. 274 ff., p. 92 (on the authorship of this preamble).

⁴⁹ Baron, *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, p. 299.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 314–320.

⁵¹ Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, p. 16.

⁵² G.I. Langmuir, “Judei nostril’ and the Beginning of Capetian Legislation”, *Traditio*, 16 (1960), pp. 203–239.

could establish without great difficulty whether the Church or the lay authorities, or both of them equally, bore greater responsibility for the persecution of the Jews. The religious motivation behind anti-Jewish actions by the people and the interpretations of doctrine performed by the papacy and church authorities naturally suggest that the Church was particularly responsible, but at the same time one can point to specific cases where the church authorities came out in defence of the Jews, as well as to the fact that the Jewish community in Rome had a longer continuous history than any other, and that (apart from expulsion by the emperor Louis in 855), Jew were not expelled from Rome as they were from other western parts.⁵³ Although the lay authorities had a more pragmatic attitude, it is they who ruthlessly exploited the Jews via their extensive administrative and court apparatus, as a result of which society became convinced of the inferiority of the Jews in relation to other social groups.⁵⁴ By the decisions of monarchs, successive expulsions of Jews took place, continuing right up to the modern era:⁵⁵ in 1290 there was a general expulsion of Jews from England, in force until 1650; in 1182 was the general expulsion of Jews from the domain of King Philippe Auguste, followed by general expulsions from France in 1306, 1322 and 1394 (Jews returned to France in 1315 and 1359, but the 1394 expulsion decree had lengthy consequences, until 1789);⁵⁶ and expulsions from Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th century. The decisions of German cities to expel Jews in the middle of the 14th century after the Black Death – nevertheless recalled soon afterwards⁵⁷ – and in the 15th century, can also be attributed to the anti-Jewish actions of the lay and public authorities.

⁵³ It is worth noting the legend of the Jews who sneered at the cross in Rome and of the punishment that befell the Eternal City for this in 1020 in the form of an earthquake (*Ademari Historiarum libri III*, ed. G. Waitz, in: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, IV: Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Caroli et Saxonici*), p. 139; cf. Parkes, *The Jews in Medieval Community*, p. 33.

⁵⁴ Langmuir, *The Jews*, p. 209.

⁵⁵ A review of decisions and events is given by Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 11, chapt. 50, pp. 192–283.

⁵⁶ On the expulsion of Jews from England to France in 1291, cf. Chazan, *Medieval Jewry*, pp. 182 ff.; on the 1306 expulsion and its significance for the royal treasury (confiscated wealth) see *ibid.*, pp. 191 ff.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1928), p. 986; E. Littmann, *Studien zur Wiederaufnahme der Juden durch die deutschen Städte nach dem Schwarzen Tod* (Breslau, 1928).

Mass acts of hatred, as well as actions by church and state authorities to separate and segregate the Jews, merged into a continuous deterioration in the situation of Jews in Europe between the 11th and 15th centuries. They also show that the Jews were being excluded from the minds of society and from day-to-day life. A breakthrough moment seemed to occur in the 13th century, when Jews were not only subject to exclusion and marginalization, but also to physical extermination and expulsion. From the end of the Middle Ages, the path of Jewish migration in Europe shifted: from the 14th century up until the second half of the 19th, migration was in the direction of Central and Eastern Europe, and, in early modern times, also towards the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸ Migrations to these areas until the middle of the 13th century, a period of massacres of Jews by Khmel'nitsky's forces and economic difficulties, occurred at a time of relatively harmonious coexistence and tolerance on the part of urban communities.⁵⁹ Resentment of their commercial acumen and competition created by Jews depended on the degree of economic development of local economies in certain countries and regions. Where economic development was weak and traditional forms of trade were firmly anchored, the antagonism towards the new arrivals was stronger than in more developed areas. But compared to Jewish settlements in the West, in Central and Eastern Europe one observes greater trends towards the separation of Jewish communities, which from the very beginning adopted a defensive attitude on account of the the persecution and discrimination which they had experienced earlier and which lay at the basis of the decisions to migrate, and on account of the linguistic and cultural barriers vis-à-vis the newly-settled countries, these barriers created not just by Jewish traditions and culture, but also by the customs the Jews had acquired during their previous existence in Europe.

Without attempting to examine the socio-psychological motives for the anti-Jewish sentiments and attitudes, we should at least consider further spheres in which hostility towards the Jews occurred.

In the economic sphere, the prime factor was the type of occupations held by Jews in Europe. Obviously, their role in money lending

⁵⁸ This issue is best presented by A. Kahan, "The Early Modern Period", in: *Economic History of the Jews*, ed. N. Gross (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 55–78.

⁵⁹ S.M. Dubnov, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* (Philadelphia, 1916), vol. 1, pp. 144–153; Katz, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, pp. 151–155.

comes first to mind, for the stereotype of the Jew-usurer was usually presented as the chief reason for social disapproval. In the writings of Bertold of Regensburg and Walter von der Vogelweide in the 13th century, the words “usurer” and “Jew” are treated as synonyms, whilst the verb *judaizare* often simply means “to borrow with interest.” In one of his dialogs in the early 12th century, Abelard has a Jew say these words: “They do not allow us to possess [...] earthly property [...]. All that is left to us is the profit gained from lending money, with which we maintain our miserable existence, but even for this we are hatred.”⁶⁰ From the early Middle Ages, first with Syrians and Greeks and from the 7th century on their own, the Jews engaged themselves in long-distance trade, very limited at the time, as well as in money lending. In doing so, they created an efficient and flexible organization, mobility and an international network of connections quite different from the local horizons and economic structure of Europe’s agrarian society. They acted upon instructions from and under the protection of rulers, princes and Church dignitaries; the Church’s ban on usury fuelled the activity of Jews in European financial dealings, from small consumption loans up to large loans for kings and the financing of wars. But, gradually, Christian society developed a tolerance of money lending until ultimately the Lombards, Italian bankers and, from the 15th century, *monti di pietà* eliminated the supremacy of the Jews in money-lending activities in Europe. Although the subject of usury was the key argument in the propaganda campaigns directed against the Jews in the 13th century and in the actions by the Franciscans in the 15th century, it is not at all certain whether these views were shared by the masses. Detailed research has shown that Jews who provided consumption loans often charged less interest than the Christians offering similar loans, probably through fear of persecution. In 1306, poorer segments of Parisian society protested against the expulsion of the Jews because they were less demanding than the remaining creditors.⁶¹ However, the weight of the condemnation which Christian ethics lay upon usury and the moral ambivalence of

⁶⁰ P. Abelard, *Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian*.

⁶¹ Cf. the chronicle of Godefroy de Paris after the diatribe following the events of 1306; F.M. Schweitzer, *A History of the Jews* (New York, 1971), p. 175; W.C. Jordan, “Jews on Top. Women and the Availability of Consumption Loans in Northern France in the Mid-Thirteenth Century”, *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 29 (1978), p. 48.

money operations practically put the blame on Jews for usury and, at the same time, provided an additional negative argument against them, as shown by the increasing number of Jews settling in Europe. To the broad masses, this activity appeared contrary to the traditions of organized social life.

In its basic structures, medieval society was agrarian, and this defined the way of thinking, values and Christian ethos of these times. The commodity-finance economy changed faster than people's mentality. Anything connected with money seemed to be cryptic, secret and morally uncertain. Activities involving money and trade in goods, as well as riches expressed in any way other than land, required ideological acceptance under Christian doctrine and morals. The role of the Jews was fixed before this "acceptance" occurred – which can be associated with the program of voluntary poverty and the spread of mendicant orders – after which the Jews were excluded from organizations and institutions that granted a religious sanction upon municipal trading. Jews could not belong to merchant or craft guilds in which the oaths and customs were connected with Christianity, could not belong to religious orders, were outside urban social life organized into parishes, and in the church calendar, when taking part in municipal events, they appeared in a subordinate role. The stigma of exclusion weighed upon the Jews from the very start of their business activities in medieval Europe. Their alleged sinfulness was not relieved by the giving of alms because they were Jews and their income did not serve Christian purposes; unlike the monasteries which, through broad-scale money lending, increased the Church's assets, and Italian bankers whose sins were remitted thanks to the *per Messer Dio* donation. Economic development and European society's moral maturity – as shown 100 years previously by Wilhelm Roscher, and later by many other historians⁶² – created the feeling that Jews were superfluous in commercial and financial dealings and intensified competition and rivalry; however, this factor acted closely with the religious factor⁶³

⁶² W. Roscher, "Die Stellung der Juden im Mittelalter, betrachtet vom Standpunkte der allgemeinen Handelspolitik", *Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, 31 (1875), pp. 503–526. Por. G. Kisch, "The Jews' Function in the Medieval Evolution of Economic Life", *Historia Judaica*, 6 (1944), pp. 1–12; id., *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, pp. 320–322, 536–638.

⁶³ Parkes, *The Jews in Medieval Community*, p. 266; Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, p. 322.

or, more broadly, with the socio-psychological factor. Although the exclusion of Jews from agriculture and land ownership was not a rule,⁶⁴ it was nevertheless a trend among all societies and communities, therefore the professional specializations of Jews in towns were segregated. Convictions of the inferiority of the Jews in the social hierarchy implanted in the minds of society in these times made the dependence brought on by borrowing their money all the more irritating because it breached the “inferiority” rule and caused a situation where the Jewish creditor was above the Christian.⁶⁵

The care extended by rulers towards Jews also made the Jews unpopular. This care stemmed from the subordinated legal status of Jews, who were sometimes categorized as devoid of rights (*Rechtlosigkeit*). Regardless of the exaggeration inherent in this term (hotly disputed in polemics on the subject of Jewish “serfdom”), it correctly illustrates the legal situation of Jews in Europe and the direction in which this situation was developing. In the minds of the masses, the exploitation of this situation in order to reap advantages was hardly noticed, and the actions of rulers towards Jews were seen as a means of protection. Jews were clearly associated with the existing system of coercion and rule, especially because they served as tax collectors, estate tenants, advisors and officials, and as representatives of landlords.⁶⁶ At the same time, they were direct agents of coercion, and were also the most defenceless and most exposed to mass hatred. This can be traced to the medieval movements against the Jews and to similar movements in Central and Eastern Europe in modern times. Paradoxically, the very group that was regarded as the most inferior and encumbered by moral and social exclusion was at the same time considered part of the existing social order and system of coercion. It is worth noting that people’s movements often emerged in the name of the “old order,” and conservatism was the most frequent pillar of people’s revolts. Thus, suspicion of Jews developed into hatred all the more easily because the Jews were considered instruments of oppression and, at the same time, as elements undermining the

⁶⁴ An example is Jewish properties in Silesia, see *Regesten zur schlesischen Geschichte*, vol. 1: *Bis zum Jahre 1250*, ed. C. Grünhagen (Breslau, 1886; Codex Diplomaticus Silesiae, 7), nos. 69, 92 and 97.

⁶⁵ Langmuir, *The Jews*, p. 239; esp. Jordan, *Jews on Top*, p. 47.

⁶⁶ Baron, *The Jewish Factor*, p. 261.

traditional order of an agrarian society.⁶⁷ There was no room here to distinguish between different categories in Jewish society, which was just as fragmented as the Christian society surrounding it, or to consider the potential usefulness and help of Jewish financial activities for the mass of peasants. In the face of mass delusion, convictions and prejudice, there is seldom room for rational assessment.

A Jew's place in medieval social consciousness was dictated mainly by alienness. This does not mean his or her legal status as an alien under the different "barbarian" legislation or in the medieval cultural dimension we discussed earlier, but ethnological alienness. The permanence of Jewish settlements, at least in some parts of Europe, did little to change this. One of the greatest advantages of Jews in their business, their particular mobility, was a dangerous difference in the minds of a traditional society deeply rooted in local networks of connections which comprised their basic system of life. The latest research dismisses the significance of linguistic barriers between Jews and local populations, and indicates that in practice, Jews in the Middle Ages quickly adopted the language of individual countries. This is shown by the names of Jews which were frequently Latinized under the Carolingian kings and later adapted to national languages, although an increased use of Hebrew names can be seen from the 11th century onwards.⁶⁸ In daily life, the Jews also adopted the common language. Even scholarly Hebrew writings contained words and expressions in the local language (also in the writings of Raschi, the most distinguished Talmudist of the 11th century⁶⁹), which means that the local language was the one in common use.⁷⁰ French was the *lingua franca* of Jews both in France and in Angevin England;⁷¹ just as German was adopted by Jewish communities settled in German lands and by subsequent immigrants to these areas. At the same time, Hebrew was kept alive and used more and more by both

⁶⁷ Kahan, *The Early Modern Period*, p. 73.

⁶⁸ Blumenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Missionskonkurrenz*, pp. 5–10; Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, pp. 239–243.

⁶⁹ A. Darmesteter, D.S. Blondheim, *Les gloses françaises dans les commentaires talmudiques de Raschi*, vols. 1–2 (Paris, 1929–1937).

⁷⁰ Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, p. 238.

⁷¹ J. Jacobs, *The Jews of Angevin England* (London, 1893); H.G. Richardson (*The English Jewry*, p. 4) even considers this testimony that the life of Jews in 11th-century England was patterned on that of the French aristocracy.

the Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, who used it parallel to Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Arab and other national languages, but it gradually lost its primacy.⁷² It was not just the intellectual tool of the elites, but on a mass scale it preserved its role as a cult language and one of the most important *rites de passage* in education and upbringing. As early as in late antiquity differences in language and speech were feared because they might conceal secret plots (the Emperor Justinian prohibited the use of Hebrew for this very reason), whereas in the imaginations of medieval society Hebrew was considered proof of the Jews' involvement with magic.⁷³ The increasing internal autonomy of Jewish communities in the face of persecution, segregation and exclusion, and even the expulsion of Jews from England and France in the Middle Ages, also had a linguistic impact. The fortunes of the Ashkenazim connected that branch of the Jewish Diaspora with the Germanic lands, so that this linguistic link became firmly established and had the furthest-reaching linguistic consequences. A blend of various linguistic features and forms of language gradually led to the formation of Yiddish in the 13th and 14th centuries. Migrations in the late Middle Ages and the deportation of Jews eastwards boosted this linguistic separation (in the Slavic countries, this distinction became even clearer, despite the adoption of local words and phrases). Similarly, in the southern, Sephardic zone, the use of the languages of the Iberian Peninsula led to the formation of Ladino which, oddly enough, underwent stronger development during the later history of this branch, after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain at the end of the 15th century.

Thus, the linguistic distinction of the Jews made its mark in the tradition of the people of Israel and in the new forms of the Diaspora. It was similar with customs, dress and food. Traditions, rituals, the law of the Talmud and the structure of the Diaspora resulting from contacts with other peoples separated the Jews from the peoples among whom they had settled. This separation was further intensified by the independence and internal cohesion of Jewish communities which was not erased, or even weakened, by a long presence in a given area. Only religious conversion overcame this separation and

⁷² Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 7, pp. 4 ff. Cf. Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, pp. 211 ff.

⁷³ J. Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews. The Medieval Conception of the Jew and its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (London, 1945), pp. 59 ff.

created an opportunity for autochthony.⁷⁴ But even this occurred with resistance, as shown in people's attitudes towards the "new Christians" on the Iberian Peninsula in the 16th and 17th centuries. The inborn "homelessness"⁷⁵ of the Jews, who considered themselves exiles and held immigrant status in most European countries, merely perpetuated their alienness among local societies. However, the basic determinants of this difference lie in religion. The religious difference of the Jews rested not just in the faith itself or in their culture and traditions, but was embedded in a giant dichotomy of friends and foes, solidarity and struggle. Obviously, the Jews were on the other side. Their daily contacts, personal connections, friendship and collaboration with Christians did not alter the latter's perception of them as a typical foe and a threat to Christendom. This attitude led to the famous words of Erasmus: "*Si christianum est odisse judaeos, hic abunde omnes Christiani sumus.*"⁷⁶ The sarcasm of these words does not diminish the accurate way in which they reflect the mass mentality and impact of anti-Jewish propaganda. Not even expulsions of Jews altered this state of affairs, because the image of those who had crucified Christ remained in the minds of people, albeit in an updated form. In the late Middle Ages and in early modern times, literature and drama abounded with images of the Jews as enemies, possessing negative moral qualities and representing a danger to Christians.⁷⁷ A Jew became associated with the enemy of the human race, the devil, to whom Jews were agents or were simply connected with him. Thus, the presence of Jews in Christian society represented a threat. This was not just in people's minds; it was reflected in reality and led to dangerous accusations. Suspicions that Jews poisoned wells is also to be found in anti-vagrancy campaigns. A trial in the small town of Manosque in Provence in 1313 serves as a typical example. A member of the Jewish community was accused of trying to poison the inhabitants of Manosque by throwing poison into an oven in which bread was being baked. The accusation

⁷⁴ Baron, *The Jewish Factor*, p. 259.

⁷⁵ Parkes (*The Jews in Medieval Community*, p. 206) differentiates between *homelessness* and *statelessness*, indicating that the latter term would be a complete anachronism with reference to the Middle Ages.

⁷⁶ Quoted by: Poliakov, *L'Histoire de l'antisemitisme*, p. 140.

⁷⁷ H. Michelson, *The Jew in Early English Literature* (Amsterdam, 1926), and M. Lifschitz-Golden, *Les Juifs dans la littérature française du Moyen Age* (New York, 1935). Cf. also Poliakov, *L'Histoire de l'antisemitisme*, pp. 139–154.

possessed certain material grounds connected with Jewish rituals, for witnesses said that they had seen the accused throw pieces of wood into the oven. The charge of attempting to poison “Christian bread” (*panem christianorum*) was a misunderstanding, for this was a ritual required under the law of the Talmud, which stated that Jews may not eat bread that was baked by Gentiles; therefore, in connection with the need to make use of a common oven, the alternative custom arose of throwing pieces of wood into the oven, symbolizing participation by Jews in the baking of the bread. As this ritual was unknown and suspicious, it resulted in charges of poisoning.⁷⁸ Several years previously, also in Provence, some Jews had also been accused of poisoning a well (this time because they were detained near the well with the body of a child).⁷⁹ In 1321 there was widespread news, referred to previously, of the poisoning of wells by Jews and lepers together:⁸⁰ there were accusations of poisoning in various parts of Germany in 1316 and 1319, and 14th-century historians writing about the Black Death in Germany in 1337⁸¹ blamed it on the Jews who they claimed had poisoned the wells.⁸² The role of Jews as doctors also provided fertile ground on which to sow accusations. Suspecting the Jews of poisoning became a stereotype in later literature, as shown in an English play of the Elizabethan period,⁸³ and was also used as an explanation for the origin of plagues in the 16th and 17th centuries. Leaving aside accusations against Jews of ritual murder, this classic element of medieval anti-Jewish propaganda (later continued in modern-day anti-Semitism) and the legend of Jewish poisoners, eminently illustrates the fear instilled by the presence of Jews. The image of the Jew as the enemy of Christian society developed into the image of an enemy of the entire human

⁷⁸ J. Schatzmiller, *Recherches sur la communauté juive de Manosque au Moyen Age (1241–1329)* (Paris–La Haye, 1973; *Etudes Juives*, 15), pp. 131 ff. An analysis of the development of food rituals is provided by: Katz, *Exclusiveness*, p. 41.

⁷⁹ Schatzmiller, *Recherches*, p. 133 ff.

⁸⁰ Lifschitz-Golden, *Les Juifs dans la littérature*, pp. 187–190; Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, p. 101 ff.; Poliakov, *L'Histoire de l'antisemitisme*, pp. 121–122.

⁸¹ Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, p. 103

⁸² E. Wickersheimer, *Les accusations d'empoisonnement portées pendant la première moitié du XIV^e siècle contre les lépreux et les Juifs. Leurs relations avec les épidémies de la peste* (Anvers, 1927); Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, p. 101 ff.; S. Guerschberg, “La controverse sur les prétendus semeurs de la ‘Peste Noire’ d’après les traités de l’époque”, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 8 (108) (1948), pp. 3–40.

⁸³ Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, pp. 95 ff.

race. On the one hand, this transformation illustrates the intensity of the hatred and fear, and on the other hand shows the extremes to which social exclusion can lead, namely disqualification from the human race. Exclusion occurred at different times and with varying intensity. We shall consider it in two dimensions: first, the material signs of separation and segregation; and second, the convictions and imagination of society.

Regarding material signs, we are dealing with distinguishing physical marks resulting from policies imposed by administrative edicts. By the nature of things, the Jews differed from European Christian societies whether in physical appearance or by the way they dressed.⁸⁴ The fact that certain distinguishing marks were imposed on them can mean that natural distinguishing features were too weak and were unable to make a sharp distinction between Jews and the rest of the population. However, researchers into the early Middle Ages stress the absence of differences in clothing, suggesting that the new arrivals were assimilated.⁸⁵ This is confirmed by Jewish sources, which say that Jews in Europe began to observe the custom of wearing external symbols only when the Church and lay authorities introduced this requirement to differentiate them from Christians.⁸⁶ The first stage of this differentiation was conservative dress, which became increasingly widespread in line with the Jewish community's increasing segregation. The custom of clothing was already noted in the 13th century and might have been the consequence of the increasing segregation, though it might also have developed parallel to it.

In any case, the decision of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 can be regarded as a turning point. The Council resolved⁸⁷ that Jews and Saracens of both genders, in all Christian countries and for all

⁸⁴ A description of the differences in Jewish clothing is provided by: I. Abrahams, *Jewish life in the Middle Ages*, enlarged, revised and edited by C. Roth (London–New York, 2005)]; and R. Straus, “The ‘Jewish Hat’ as an Aspect of Social History”, *Jewish Social Studies*, 2 (1942), pp. 59–72.

⁸⁵ Straus, *The ‘Jewish Hat’*, p. 65; Blumenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Missionskonkurrenz*, pp. 10–12.

⁸⁶ Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, pp. 174–176.

⁸⁷ *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 22, col. 1065: “In nonnullis ecclesiae provincias a Christianis Judeos, seu Saracenos habitus distinguit diversitas; sed in quibusdam sic quedam inolevit confusio, ut nulla differentia discernantur [...] statuimus, ut tales utriusque sexus in omni Christianorum provincia, et omni tempore qualitate habitus publice ab allis populis distinguantur.”

time, were to differ in their clothing from the remaining population in order to prevent sexual relations between the one and the other, which sometimes occurred “by mistake” (*per errorem*). The introduction to this decision also indicates that in some countries, the differences in clothing are already significant enough to prevent any misunderstandings. Interpreting this edict raises certain doubts. Most of all, the term *habitus* does not specify the subject of the decision; it can be broadly interpreted as external appearance, in which case the countries where these differences occur may be taken to mean France and Germany, where the Jewish communities exercised stricter controls over the their members’ adherence to Jewish traditions.⁸⁸ The Council edict does not specify in what way Jews are to differ, saying only that this is to be *qualitate habitus*. Bearing in mind the clothing hierarchy obeyed in traditional societies as a sign or expression of social status, this may be considered an instruction for Jews and Saracens to wear clothes of the poorest quality. But one can see that the purpose of this was to publicly distinguish both groups from Christians. In any case, the Fourth Lateranum decision is the first-ever decision in Christian Europe to impose the “Jewish sign.”⁸⁹

The sign can be traced to Byzantine and Arab tradition.⁹⁰ In the caliphate, non-Muslims were obliged to wear distinguishing signs, especially a belt, but also head coverings and patches on clothing: In 634, Caliph Omar ordered that Jews should wear honey-coloured or yellow clothes, Christians should wear blue, and magicians black. Under successive caliphs, this order was repeated and extended, and the colours and types of emblems also changed. In any case, the

⁸⁸ Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 67, no. 116; the author refers to the custom of wearing beards and sidelocks; he assumes that the council edict was addressed primarily to Spain, Portugal and England, where the tradition was not observed so closely.

⁸⁹ Of the rich literature on this subject, one should mention: U. Robert, *Les signes d'infamie au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1891); F. Singermann, *Die Kennzeichnung der Juden im Mittelalter: ein Beitrag zur sozialen Geschichte des Judentums* (Berlin, 1915); G. Kisch, “The Yellow Badge in History”, *Historia Judaica*, 4 (1914), pp. 95–144 (and an amended reprint: *Historia Judaica*, 19, 1957, pp. 89–146); Grayzel, *The Church*, pp. 59–71; Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 11, pp. 96–106, vol. 9, pp. 27–32.

⁹⁰ Singermann, *Die Kennzeichnung*, pp. 9–10; Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 61, no. 97; I. Lichtenstadter, “The Distinctive Dress of Non-Muslims in Islamic Countries”, *Historia Judaica*, 5 (1943), pp. 35–52; Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 3, pp. 139 ff.

order appears to have not been strictly adhered to under Islam, and at first did not have a derogatory function. But records from Baghdad in the 11th century and from Seville in the 12th century indicate that emblems were already being worn as a mark not only of segregation, but also of derogation. The legislation of the Almohads concerning the Jewish population seems to be the main influence on the decisions of Pope Innocent III.⁹¹ There is no doubt that his decisions regarding clothing were intended not just to distinguish the Jews, but also to discriminate against them.⁹² The attempted resistance to this decision by the Jews shows that from the very beginning, it was seen as an attempt to impose upon them the “mark of shame,” as later Jewish literature described it, and also posed a real danger in daily life. The requirement of differentiation was fulfilled primarily by wearing a special emblem on clothing or special headgear. Only one papal document from the 13th century specifies exactly what kind of emblem: in a letter to Theobald I, King of Navarre, in 1234, Pope Gregory IX orders that Jews wear a round piece of yellow silk sown on the front and back of clothes, with a width of four fingers.⁹³ Normally, local churches, lay councils and authorities introduced specific forms of Jewish emblems. In England in 1217, King Henry III introduced the duty of wearing two tablets of the ten commandments made of white parchment or linen; later the colour was changed to yellow. In Sicily and Naples in 1221, Frederick II ordered Jews not only to differ from Christians “in differentia vestum et gestorum,” but also to wear beards according to their age.⁹⁴ In France, the sign of the wheel (*rouelle*) was adopted, and in Italy (e.g. Venice and Parma) an oval emblem was imposed. In Spain and Portugal, the edict of the Fourth Lateranum was introduced, but it encountered major opposition

⁹¹ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 3, p. 298, note 22.

⁹² A. Cutler in a well-documented but unconvincing article (“Innocent III and the Distinctive Clothing of Jews and Muslims”, *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 3, 1970, pp. 92–116) attempts to demonstrate that Innocent’s decisions were connected with millennium ideals and a broad campaign of converting Jews and Arabs, for which their earlier social segregation was meant to create suitable conditions.

⁹³ Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 216: “Quoniam volumus quo Judei a Christianis discerni valeant et cognosci, Vobis mandamus quatenus imponatis omnibus et singulis Judeis utriusque sexus, signa, videlicet unam rotam de feltro seu panno croceo in superiori veste consutam ante pectus et retro ad eorundem cognitionem, cujus latitudo sit in circumferentia quatuor digitorum.”

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67, no. 114.

from the Jewish community and was later diluted by various royal exemptions. In the countries of the Holy Roman Empire, the “Jewish hat” was a distinguishing feature reliable enough to be adopted as a compulsory emblem of segregation in the 13th century, though here, too, Jews were required to wear a yellow emblem in the 15th century. In 1419, the synod of Salzburg introduced the additional requirement that Jews wear bells. Although this was not put into practice, the intention behind such an audible symbol as a warning sign is significant, similar to the rattle with which lepers were obliged to announce their presence. Apart from the colours white and yellow mentioned above, there was also the colour red. A feature common to all edicts was that the emblem should be clearly visible on the clothes and that it had a contrasting colour. Of course, the colour itself possessed a pejorative undertone.

Medieval Europe was slow to adopt these emblems, but very consistent in doing so. In France, not until 1269 can one say that the duty to wear these emblems became widespread, whereby this was attributable to the efforts of the Dominican Paulus Christianus of Burgos, a converter enjoying great influence in the French royal court.⁹⁵ Doubtlessly another important factor is that the Church’s decision regarding these signs not only did not infringe the rights of the lay authorities or affect the income they derived from the Jewish population, but actually provided them with a fresh source of income, from the fines for not wearing them, and from the proceeds from the sale of these signs.⁹⁶ The initial intention of Innocent III that both Jews and Saracens be obliged to wear the emblems gradually disappeared, which shows that these groups were not numerous in Christian Europe, but a continuation of this requirement can be seen in the Iberian Peninsula, where in the 15th century both Jews and Moors were obliged to wear emblems, whilst in Portugal in 1537 John III ordered Jews to wear a red star and the Moors had to wear a yellow crescent (in 1583, Philip II ordered that Jews arriving in Portugal wear a yellow hat or beret).⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Chazan, *Medieval Jewry*, pp. 150 ff.

⁹⁶ Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 70.

⁹⁷ Y.H. Yerushalmi, “Professing Jews in Post-Expulsion Spain and Portugal”, in: *Salo Wittmayer Baron Jubilee Volume*, ed. S. Lieberman (Jerusalem, 1975), vol. 2, pp. 1026–1027, 1054–1055.

Regardless of their form, colour or symbolic meaning, Jewish emblems served as signs of shame and derogation because they were obligatory. Although the physical features of Jews varied slightly in different parts of Europe, one can say that certain features of clothing and behaviour served as a natural distinguishing feature. It is significant that the Jewish hat was originally of neutral significance,⁹⁸ and not until it was made obligatory was it regarded as an emblem of infamy. In addition, this did not just depend on administrative decisions – the social impact of this emblem was connected with general attitudes and moods towards the Jews. In examinations of the history of the emblem, human intentions are often considered, whereby some accuse the legislators of creating a program of physical threat to the Jews, which subsequently came to pass, whilst others point to the protectionist actions of popes and lay authorities as a type of evidence of pure intentions.⁹⁹ Jewish society's reaction to the requirement to wear the emblem is the best indication of the way in which it was perceived. Differences in clothing and headwear were a natural process, the result of conservative trends and of Jewish society's isolation. A special distinguishing emblem was regarded as an obligation, imposed from outside and targeted against the Jews. It was a sign of shame, referring not to Jews' responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ, but to their place in social life: the emblem excluded the Jews, just as other emblems excluded prostitutes, lepers and heretics. It was also evidence of exclusion from the law, of weakness and guilt; it was an invitation to physical repression. It is significant that the fear with which Jews adopted the duty to wear the emblem and the regular attempts to cover it up were met with concessions even by the legislators themselves. Innocent III, in a letter to the bishops of France one year after the Fourth Lateran council, said that wearing the emblem should not be made compulsory if it constitutes a threat to life.¹⁰⁰ The fact that Jews were released from having to wear it when away from home or during a journey¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Straus, *The 'Jewish Hat'*, p. 65.

⁹⁹ Cutler, Innocent III, p. 109, note 60.

¹⁰⁰ *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 216, col. 994: "nec talem i.e. [habitum] portandum compellant, per quem possint vite dispendium sustinere"; Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 69, no. 31, p. 141 (the letter has not survived and only a rubric is known).

¹⁰¹ *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 23, col. 340; Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 326, no. 29.

shows that the threat of wearing it was real. The reality exposed by the emblem is one of social degradation in a climate of alienness and hostility from the surrounding society. The retrogressive perception of the material symptoms of segregation naturally leads us to the question of Jewish ghettos. The origin of this institution, a physically separate district in which Jews were enclosed, and its appearance and formation in various parts of Europe, remains uncertain despite an entire series of careful research. In spite of the stereotyped image of the ghetto, it is not at all a unique feature of medieval life, and the introduction of the Jewish emblem was not accompanied by the duty of physical isolation, as was the case in modern times.

A natural tendency of settlement is the social organization of its physical confines, which subsequently reflects the social connections of the residents, their family and neighbourly ties, their occupations and their social and material status.¹⁰² The geographical dispersal of the populations of medieval cities and the names of streets, recording their development, reflect the association between spatial behaviour and social history. People from the same area or same occupation arriving in a new city would settle together (and give a name to the street or district in which they lived). In this way, various guilds, brotherhoods and religious associations acquired additional strength, coinciding with natural family and neighbourly solidarity. In the case of foreigners, an additional unifying factor was language, especially in the face of linguistic variation in the new city. The religious differences of larger groups were of significant importance because these groups naturally congregated around the religious shrines as a defence mechanism (as in the case of Protestant migrants in the 16th and 17th centuries). The emergence of Jewish streets and districts in European cities¹⁰³ was a natural process and in compliance with the interests and wishes of the Jewish population.¹⁰⁴ It was also the result of a protectionist policy towards the Jews. When Bishop Rüdiger

¹⁰² Cf. J.A. Jakle et al, *Human Spatial Behavior: A Social Geography* (North Scituate, Mass., 1976), *passim*.

¹⁰³ A. Pinthus, "Studien über die bauliche Entwicklung der Judengassen in den deutschen Städten", *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, 2 (1930), pp. 101–132, 197–217, 284–300.

¹⁰⁴ L. Wirth (*The Ghetto*, Chicago, 1928, pp. 18 ff.) talks of a voluntary ghetto with reference to the Middle Ages. Cf. also Jakle et al., *Human Spatial Behavior*, pp. 273–274.

of Speyer attempted to bring Jewish merchants to his city in 1084 (arguing that this would boost the town's importance), he offered them a separate district in which to settle and promised to surround it with a wall.¹⁰⁵ There is evidence of a similar development in Worms in the 11th century. In many German cities, Jewish districts were enclosed in such a way, as evidenced by 14th and 15th century descriptions and in later urban plans. In the middle of the 11th century, the Jewish districts of Aragon were enclosed by walls and gates.¹⁰⁶ Originally, such enclosure was a privilege, not a sign of discrimination. Municipal authorities often stressed that walls and gates should be open to everyone during the day, and the exceptional location of the Jewish district in Cologne, close to the city hall, even required special orders that the gates to the district be open in the evenings when the city council held its meetings.¹⁰⁷ These closures were also of symbolic significance, for they were a sign of the Jewish district's autonomy, just as the city wall was generally a sign of the city's autonomy.¹⁰⁸ Their practical significance also proved itself during the growing anti-Jewish excesses, when they became a form of defence against pogroms. In fact, the walls of the Jewish district in Cologne were raised by the city authorities after the anti-Jewish riot in 1330.¹⁰⁹ The location of Jewish streets and districts in cities varied, depending mainly on the relationship between the arriving Jews and the city's spatial development. The role of Jews in trade meant that their businesses were located close to market places and trade routes. It is significant that larger cities had more than one Jewish district, resulting from an increase in the Jewish population and the influx of fresh Jews, or from the growth of the city. Thus, in medieval Paris there were several concentrations of Jews (which incidentally lasted in the city's topography until modern times albeit with intervals),¹¹⁰ and in

¹⁰⁵ Aronius, *Regesten*, no. 168; por. E. Carlebach, *Die rechtlichen und sozialen Verhältnisse der jüdischen Gemeinden: Speyer, Worms und Mainz, von ihren Anfängen bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1901), pp. 47 ff.; Parkes, *The Jews in Medieval Community*, p. 160.

¹⁰⁶ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 11, p. 89.

¹⁰⁷ A. Kober, *Cologne* (Philadelphia, 1940), p. 83.

¹⁰⁸ This is well noted by Wirth, *The Ghetto*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁹ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 9, p. 32, vol. 11, p. 94 ff.

¹¹⁰ R. Anchel, "The Early History of the Jewish Quarters in Paris", *Jewish Social Studies*, 2 (1940), pp. 45–60.

Constantinople, next to the district of Byzantine there was a district of Venetian Jews.¹¹¹

The non-obligatory but natural nature of Jewish concentrations within countries also meant that in some cases, Jewish businesses were located beyond the limits of the Jewish district, while in the case of small settlements and villages, there could be no question of separate districts or streets.

The progressing cultural and social separation also had an impact on settlements. Separatist trends were evident both in Church legislation and on the part of Jewish communities. The synod of Wroclaw in 1267 was very clear on this issue, laying down that Jews in the diocese of Gniezno live in their own districts separated by a wall or ditch, through fear of contact with the lawless practices of the Jews,¹¹² who could have a dangerous impact on a country that was a young branch of Christianity. In 1330, Benedict XII ordered Peter IV of Aragon (and, in the following year, the bishops of Tarragona and Saragossa), that Jews and Saracens live in separate districts so that they cannot enter into close contact with Christians.¹¹³ In 1320, the municipal inquisitor of Marseilles ordered that Jews (who enjoyed virtually all rights in that city) living outside the Jewish district were to move to the district within ten days.¹¹⁴ The enforced residence of Jews in their own separate district appears quite frequently among the restrictive regulations aimed against the Jews in the 15th century. The order by John II of Castile in 1412 is conspicuous in this regard. He decreed both Jews and Moors must live only in districts and villages allocated to them and separated from other neighbourhoods by a wall, and that this was to be complied with within eight days, on pain of severe penalties.¹¹⁵ Such edicts were of limited effect until the end of the Middle Ages. They were regularly repeated and were not always obeyed. It is significant that at a meeting of the Cortes of Toledo in 1480, Queen Isabel introduced an order of separation,

¹¹¹ D. Jacoby, "Les quartiers juifs de Constantinople à l'époque byzantine", *Byzantion*, 27 (1967), pp. 205–214; id., "Les Juifs vénitiens de Constantinople et leur communauté du XIII^e au milieu du XV^e siècle", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 131 (1972), p. 398.

¹¹² Aronius, *Regesten*, no. 724, pp. 301 ff. (art. XII).

¹¹³ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 9, p. 34.

¹¹⁴ Grayzel, *The Church*, p. 60, no. 96.

¹¹⁵ F. Baer, *Die Juden im christlichen Spanien* (Berlin, 1936 [1970]), pp. 264 ff.

giving Jews and Moors two years in which to move to their districts.¹¹⁶ Relocations of this nature, combined with the general deterioration in the social status of the Jews, led to the formation of a doctrine of segregation. In 1516, the Venetian Senate decided that Jews were to move to houses located in the *ghetto*. The papal bull of Pope Paul IV in 1555, *Cum nimis absurdum*, among an entire series of intimidating measures, ordered that all Jews move to a special *vicus* located in one of the worst districts of Rome.¹¹⁷ These two actions already represent a policy of repression and separation.

In the minds of Jewish society, mere residence in a separate urban space was not perceived as an encumbrance or a stigma.¹¹⁸ In fact, it provided them with a certain sense of security, facilitated the observance of religious rituals and, at a time of growing threats, encouraged mutual solidarity and the continuation and development of self-governing institutions.¹¹⁹ One should also note that the process of exclusion and degradation was applied at a time of spatial stabilization. The location of Jewish districts was perhaps a greater component of the policy of segregation and degradation than the imposition of compulsion on what was a natural and spontaneous phenomenon. It was standard practice to establish Jewish districts in the worst parts a city, far from the centre. A plan of a city is full of symbolism, in which distance from the centre possesses derogatory significance. That is how, and not just from the angle of commercial usefulness, one should perceive the shift of Jewish districts to outlying parts of the city to the decisions to settle Jews returning from the first expulsions only in distant districts. The proximity of Jewish districts to red light districts indicates the predominance of spatial allocation.

In the psychological sphere, the consequences of the creation of separate Jewish districts were, of course, the greatest when this was enforced from outside. Nevertheless, the consequences were considerable even when such districts were created without enforcement when Christians continued to live in the same district. During the progressing segregation and separation, spatial boundaries turned

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 346.

¹¹⁷ E. Rodocanachi, *Le Saint Siège et les Juifs. Le Ghetto à Rome* (Paris, 1891), pp. 160–165; L. Poliakov, *Les banchieri juifs et le Saint-Siège du XIIIe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1965), chapt. xi.

¹¹⁸ Abrahams, *Jewish life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 78–98.

¹¹⁹ Katz, *Exclusiveness*, p. 133; id., *Tradition and Crisis*, pp. 18 ff., *passim*.

into both sociological and psychological barriers in relations between Jews and the surrounding community, and merely enhanced mutual mistrust, suspicion and frustration.

In the sphere of mental separation, in other words the pejorative stereotypes about the differences of the Jews, basic references possess a religious nature. But it would be wrong to simplify the issue as a conflict between two religions and mutual propaganda and refutation, for we are dealing here with those aspects of the dispute which social consciousness employed as instruments of Jewish degradation.

In 1289, Charles II of Anjou ordered the expulsion of Jews from the countries of Anjou and Maine which belonged to him. The preamble to this document states the grounds of this decision which, obviously, refers solely to religious considerations. Thus: "In numerous parts of these countries [Anjou and Maine] many Jews, enemies of the life-giving Cross and of all Christendom, are perfidiously abandoning the path of truth of Christians of both genders. They seem to do so whenever they can. They rob people with their extensive fraud and usury, compel people to beg and – unthinkable! – co-habit with Christian maidens as husband and wife." Deciding to expel Jews, a ruler forfeits the income from the taxes paid by Jews, but prefers to "fill [his] chests with immoral mammon," and to compensate for the losses, representatives of the clergy and knights have imposed a single tax (three solids on smoke, and six dinars from day workers).¹²⁰

According to documents, this "peace from the subjects" is threatened in three areas. First, "the enemies of the Cross" lure people away from the path of truth; second, they engage in usury and ruin Christians; and third, they co-habit with Christians. This last argument seems worth stressing. "Open" co-habitation by Christians with Jews allows conspiratorial activity and influence on Christians of both sexes, as well as – regarded as particularly reprehensible – sexual relations with Christians. The tendency towards segregation manifests itself in the form of fear and reluctance, which social psychology usually associated with all kinds of prejudice: racial, ethnic and religious.

The stereotypes applied by church and lay authorities to the Jews underscored their role in the fate of Christ and in rejecting the New

¹²⁰ Text of a document published in: P. Rangeart, *Histoire de l'Université d'Angers*, ed. Lemarchand, vol. 2 (Angers, 1877), pp. 183–187 (after: Chazan, *Medieval Jewry*, pp. 185 ff.).

Testament. Christian writings contain images where *fides Christiana* is opposed by *perfidia Iudaerum*,¹²¹ and the glorious Church is opposed by the blind and enslaved Synagogue. Such images inspired works representing elitist culture. From these stereotypes, conclusions were drawn about the physical features, and hence physical differences, of the Jews. We have already said that a picture of Jews as enemies of Christendom and as heretics was formed. All elements of this picture highlight the differences between Jews and Christians, but in some cases a deeper dimension of difference is indicated: biological difference.

Christian art¹²² of the early Middle Ages does not give Jews any particular racial traits; features that would associate them with a specific ethnic group are portrayed weakly, and the clothes, the easiest and most frequent distinguishing feature, do not identify Jews, who basically dress in a way similar to the rest of the population. However, as the social segregation and persecution of Jews progressed, so too did iconography depict Jews more clearly as a different race. This was first done by means of external signs: comical hats, sometimes a beret, the Jewish emblem on clothes, and often a beard (which had already appeared in early medieval art but was not considered a sufficiently strong distinguishing mark either then or later). But, gradually, certain distinguishing features began to be applied to Jews, both in caricatures and in general iconography. English manuscripts of the 13th century, prior to the expulsions, contain illustrations showing Jews where the nose is the most prominent feature.¹²³ This also occurred in the 14th century, and in the 15th century became an established artistic convention. Without discussing

¹²¹ B. Blumenkranz, in a special article, examined the use of the term *perfidia* in medieval writings (“Perfidia”, *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, 22 (1952), pp. 157–170) regarding the Jews, noting that basically it corresponded to “non-faith”, and sometimes “false faith.” In languages in the later medieval ages, linguistic stereotypes relating to Jews stressed most of all falsehood, treachery and connivance, cf: M. Bulard, *Le scorpion. Symbole du peuple juif dans l’art religieux des XIVe, XVe, XVIe siècles* (Paris, 1935), pp. 42 ff. – one can assume that the modern meaning of perfidy and perfidious derived from the stereotypes applied to Jews.

¹²² For the fullest representation of the problem on the basis of over 150 iconographic documents, see B. Blumenkranz, *Le Juif médiéval au miroir de l’art chrétien* (Paris, 1966; Etudes augustiniennes).

¹²³ C. Roth, “Portraits and Caricatures of Medieval English Jews”, in: id., *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (Philadelphia, 1962), pp. 22 ff.

to what extent the artistic image of Jews contributed to their negative perception by society, one can merely state that this pejorative image developed in line with the increase in anti-Jewish sentiments, and sometimes even when there were no Jews at all in the local community. The pejorative significance of Jewish features is also evidenced by the fact that illustrators sometimes gave these features to heretics because heretics had no distinguishing features of their own.¹²⁴

Nevertheless, both in literature and in art, Jews were given physical characteristics which no other people possessed. In medieval mentality, monstrous features serve to identify that which is alien and unknown. The conviction that Jews have horns (ethnologists have noted this assumption among rural societies all over the world up until the 20th century), though not necessarily originating in the Middle Ages,¹²⁵ could have been born out of associations of Jews with the devil, the “horned hat,” or goats. This would not have been different from other medieval folk images of “alien” people. Jewish associations with various kinds of animals, as shown in art, possessed symbolic significance: the head of a goat may be considered a sign of resistance; a basilisk may represent the deadly danger of Jewish influence;¹²⁶ and a scorpion has various associations, chief of which are probably treachery, falsehood and danger.¹²⁷ When these symbols were used in medieval art to convey a message, subsequently repeated in sermons, the masses associated the message with dangerous or unclean animals.

This takes us to one of the most widespread anti-Jewish themes in medieval art, the so-called *Judensau*, a picture of Jews sucking milk from a sow. It appears in German architecture, in church and secular, public and private buildings from the 13th to the 16th centuries, and from the 15th to the 19th centuries was propagated in cartoons. It occurs almost exclusively in German art (numerous examples outside Germany, such as the 14th century sculpture in the chapel of St. Andrew in Gniezno Cathedral, can be attributed to German workshops¹²⁸),

¹²⁴ Blumenkranz, *Le Juif médiéval*, p. 33. The scorpion, associated with Jews, was also probably associated with heretics: see Bulard, *Le scorpion*, pp. 57–58.

¹²⁵ This is what J. Trachtenberg believed (*The Devil and the Jews*, pp. 44 ff.).

¹²⁶ Blumenkranz, *Le Juif médiéval*, pp. 64, 109; the author believes that the interpretation of both symbols remains an open issue.

¹²⁷ Bulard, *Le scorpion, passim* (comments on the basilisk, pp. 251 ff.).

¹²⁸ This motif has been dealt with excellently in: I. Shachar, *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and its History* (London, 1974; Warburg Institute Surveys, 5).

and was continued in German literature between the 16th and 18th centuries, starting with Luther. The image arose out of an allegorical illustration of sin in the light of medieval morals, contained in an encyclopaedia of animal symbolism by Hraban Maur in the 9th century. Here, a pig symbolized luxury (*luxuria*) and gluttony (*gula*), and in the 13th century German craftsmen associated it with Jews as the bearers of sins. With the passage of time, the motive became separated from the illustration, becoming more and more coarse and obscene, and the anti-Jewish message became more pronounced and developed into a tool with which to compromise Jews in the minds of society. The obscenity of the images, showing defecation and anal activities (eating faeces, kissing the pig from in front and behind, etc.) completely erased all theological references. And so Jews became associated with an unclean animal.

The image of the *Judensau* may be considered iconographic testimony of a certain state of minds, and at the same time as an instrument that forms this state of mind.¹²⁹ Jews developed an inhuman shape and were classified as animals. The allegory was transposed to the material plane.

A similar development is shown by the literary motive of *foetor iudaicus*, appearing as an allegory in apposition to the scent of holiness. An evil smell means that the devil is present inside the human body, which complaint was also levelled against witches. Medieval tales and legends associate a change of smell with religious conversion. In one such tale, a boy's parents can tell from their son's smell that he has been baptized, and to erase the effects of the baptism a mother tries to immerse her daughter in a sewer.¹³⁰ In the propagation of allegorical motives of doctrine, material elements are mainly applied, and abstract elements to a lesser extent. Associations with smell also occurred due to the use of the image of a goat in art; the invectives heaped upon Jews in sermons included "the smell of goats."¹³¹

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

¹³⁰ *Der Judenknabe*, ed. E. Wolter (Halle, 1879; Bibliotheca normannica, 2); *Caesarii Heisterbacensis Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. J. Strange, vol. 1, II, 26, p. 98 ff.; H. Loewe, *Die Juden in der katholischen Legende* (Berlin, 1912), p. 28 ff. Cf. also: I. Lévi, "Le Juif de la légende", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 20 (1890), pp. 249–252.

¹³¹ R. Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter* (Detmold, 1879), p. 621. It is worth noting that *foetor iudaicus* also finds a place in 16th-century literature: F. Secret, "Glanes pour servir à l'histoire des Juifs en France, à la Renaissance",

The divisive meaning of this is obvious, and it did not only apply to Jews. Medieval literature frequently refers to the smell of other people; German chronicles say this of the Slavs.¹³² Last but not least, there were attempts to prove the biological difference of Jews by means of particular diseases, menstruation by men, healing by means of blood and accusations of ritual murder.¹³³ In a biological dimension, it is similar to the rules on physical contact between the Jewish and Christian populations regarding diet and sex. Under these rules, the Jews are “untouchables.”¹³⁴ In both these spheres, the law of the Talmud placed upon Jews the requirement of separation, prohibiting mixed marriages and sex with non-Jews, and laying down the diet and the manner of cooking, and prohibiting Jews from eating together with non-Jews or partaking of food prepared by non-Jews.¹³⁵ The separatist commandments of the Church often argued that it was the Jews themselves who avoided contact with Christians. However, the attitudes of both sides evolved in different directions during the course of history. The Jews adapted their rules, established in different times and circumstances, to the reality of medieval European society and to the natural principles of coexistence, whereas the Christians developed a tendency to separate themselves under the influence of Church decisions and resolutions by the secular authorities.

Sexual life is often cited as an argument in favour of divisive decisions. It is referred to by edicts ordering Jews to wear a special sign or live in separate districts.¹³⁶ Without going into the psychological motives behind this argument, it is worth pointing out that it occurs in every divisive policy and is an integral part of the segregation syndrome. Sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews was punished with

Revue des Etudes Juives, 115 (1956), pp. 87–107; id., “Notes pour l’histoire des Juifs en France”, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 125 (1966), pp. 233–238; A. Jouanna, “L’idée de race en France au XVI^e siècle et au début du XVII^e (1498–1614)”, doctoral thesis (Lille, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 340 ff.

¹³² Por. Kisch, *The Jews in Medieval Germany*, p. 311.

¹³³ Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, p. 50 f., 149f.; Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 11, chapt. xlix.

¹³⁴ This is aptly described by M. Kriegel (“Un trait de psychologie social dans les pays méditerranéens du bas Moyen Age. Le Juif comme intouchable”, *Annales ESC*, 31, 1976, pp. 326–331), who examines an area considered more tolerant of Jews.

¹³⁵ Katz, *Exclusiveness*, pp. 26 ff.

¹³⁶ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 11, pp. 77–87.

varying degrees of severity, sometimes with the death penalty, and at other times only with a fine. In Padua, an edict of 1420 envisaged varying degrees of punishment for sex between a Jewish man and a Christian woman: from flogging all the way to death (depending on the Christian woman's social status); similarly, for having sex with a Jewish woman, a Christian man could be imprisoned or flogged.¹³⁷ Various historical sources relate that these rules were only applied to a limited extent. Both Jewish and Christian authorities complained about mixed sex and of Christian concubines in Jewish houses; and in literature, the subject of the seduction (and subsequent conversion) of female Jews first appears in Grimmelshausen in the 17th century.¹³⁸ One can assume that in practice sexual contacts and relationships were a part of more widespread social rules governing co-habitation and separation regarding the Jewish population (it is significant that sexual co-habitation occurred more often in Southern Europe). Of key significance is the "fear of sex," either a kind of defence of the "sex" market, or an expression of fear of sexual contacts with Jews. In any case, it is clear that legislators intended to compromise Jews in the eyes of society.

The regulations regarding separate eating are clearly connected with the ritual of "purity"; physical contact with a Jew would be a breach of this taboo. The statutes of Avignon in the 14th century stated that if a Jew or a prostitute touched bread or fruit at a market, they were obliged to buy it.¹³⁹ An urban decree in the northern Catalonian town of Solsona in 1434 on the subject of prostitutes and Jews forbids both from touching bread, meat, fish or dried fruit, unless they subsequently buy the goods they "polluted."¹⁴⁰ It is significant that Jews and prostitutes are treated jointly in a single prohibition (it was the same in a municipal edict in Cervera in 1399). Similar decisions regarding Jews alone, or Jews together with prostitutes, are noted in other cities in the 13th century (such as in Perpignan in 1299) and the 14th century. The list of food products which Jews were not allowed to touch grew

¹³⁷ A. Ciscato, *Gli ebrei in Padova (1300–1800)* (Padova, 1901), p. 282.

¹³⁸ F. Aronstein, "Eine jüdische Novelle von Grimmelshausen", *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, 5 (1935), pp. 237–241.

¹³⁹ R. de Maulde-La-Clavière, *Coutumes et règlements de la République d'Avignon au treizième siècle* (Paris, 1879), p. 200; id., "Les Juifs dans les états français du Saint-Siège au Moyen Age", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 10 (1885), p. 17.

¹⁴⁰ Kriegel, *Un trait de psychologie*, p. 327.

longer, whereas traders were not allowed to sell bread and cakes produced by Jewish bakers. In these prohibitions, one detects a certain type of *cordon sanitaire*, therefore a concern for hygiene. The treatment of Jews and prostitutes as a single category can be understood in this light. The same applied to public baths. In Tortosa in 1346, Jews could use the public baths only on Mondays, and Saracens only on Fridays, and prostitutes on both these days.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, in the minds of traditional society, the question of hygiene had a sociological dimension, being an element of social policy. We regularly come across such concern for hygiene in decisions excluding certain categories of persons from public life: the sick, vagrants, prostitutes, bad artisans and strangers. The element of “untouchability” is omnipresent. According to legend, prostitutes in France were obliged to wear special symbols after the queen gave a prostitute the kiss of peace at the Cathedral of Notre Dame. The allocation of separate residential areas for prostitutes was justified on the grounds of both hygiene and “dignity”; first, the requirement of separate residency was applied to Jews, whereas from the 15th and 16th centuries it was frequently extended to prostitutes.¹⁴²

In sociological and psychological terms, the situation of Jews in medieval and early modern-age Europe cannot be brought down to the classical stereotypes of pariahs or ghettos. The exceptional status of these people was obviously the result of their large population, religious differences, cultural identity and strong feeling of internal communal bonds. But most of all, one should observe the shifts in Jewish-Christian relations, which varied according to geographical areas and time. Tolerance and coexistence can be seen in Merovingian and Carolingian Europe. It can also be seen on the Apennine Peninsula until the 14th century, and later in the 15th and 16th centuries, when Jews migrated and settled in Central and Eastern Europe. But then the tolerance gradually gives way to intolerance, separation and exclusion, which had generally been present in Western Europe as a whole since the end of the 11th century, but became more pronounced in Central and Eastern Europe from the 17th century onwards. The story of persecutions, examined in historical writings through the lens of the “lachrymose conception of Jewish history” referred to by

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 328, 330.

¹⁴² See Rodocanachi, *Le Saint Siège*, p. 165.

Salo Wittmayer Baron¹⁴³ rather than through the lens of the contemporary social psychologically-based history of hatred put forward by Gavin Langmuir¹⁴⁴ – has interested us as a history of actions marked by segregation and exclusion; in any case, the persecutions were both the cause and the effect of exclusion because this involved a process of an ideological rationalization of actions caused by material considerations or subconscious attitudes and feelings. Among the mechanisms that led to segregation and expulsion in the 13th century, one notes a growth in the collective concept of *christianitas*, promoted by the papacy. The segregation of Jews undertaken by the papacy is part of the policy of consolidating the Christian community. Parallel to this process, we observe an increasing awareness of collective identity among the masses. The internationalization of the Christian faith created feelings of disgust or hatred towards other faiths. An increase in political, territorial and ethnic associations encouraged the exclusion of strangers. Both on the macro scale of the whole of Christianity and on a micro scale of small communities, the segregation of Jews as strangers *par excellence* may be considered the negative side of the consolidation of group ties.

But did the exclusion of Jews from global society turn them into a margin group? It is difficult to provide a clear answer.

Psycho-social and historical research often concludes that the place of Jews in former societies was on the margin. The school of Parke and its adherents regarded Jewish minorities as an almost classic example of margin society. During World War II, Everett Stonequist considered the problem separately and examined the marginalization of Jews on two planes: as a collective margin caused by many centuries of existence as a minority, and as an individual margin caused by indirect¹⁴⁵ participation in two socio-cultural systems. The aspect of collective marginalization, i.e. the existence of Jews as a margin group, was rarely investigated in later sociological works, and was not included at all in historical research. Various terms have been used to describe the social degradation of Jews in the later Middle Ages,

¹⁴³ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 6, p. 218, vol. 11, p. 282.

¹⁴⁴ Langmuir, *The Jews*, pp. 191 ff.; id., "Majority History and Post-Biblical Jews", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 27 (1966), p. 364.

¹⁴⁵ E.V. Stonequist, "The Margin Character of the Jews", in: *Jews in a Gentile World: The Problem of Anti-Semitism*, ed. I. Graeber, S.H. Britt (New York, 1942), pp. 296–310.

these terms mainly implying inferiority or exclusion. Salo Wittmayer Baron highlights the dual nature of the existence of the Jewish community: as part of the medieval corporate society; in other words, included in it, and at the same time as a group excluded from global society.¹⁴⁶ The increase in this latter phenomenon turned Jews into outsiders, further exacerbated by the propaganda about their alienness and their geographical mobility. Examining this phenomenon, Jakob Katz pointed out that the Jews have an increasing feeling of being separate, while their egocentric conviction of being the chosen race merely boosts their feeling of exclusion (in the 16th century, this developed into the idea of the existential separateness of Jews and of the impossibility of conversion to Judaism¹⁴⁷). In the history of Jewish persecution, reference is sometimes made to their “margin existence,”¹⁴⁸ but this is a just turn of phrase.

In the social and cultural sphere, the segregation and exclusion of Jews can be described as a process of marginalization, different from and additional to its traditional separation. In the economic sphere, however, the matter is more complex. Here we have a group where the material situation of its members varies considerably and where the social degradation of this group as a whole does not signify a simultaneous social degradation of its individual members. Neither can one say that this group does not take part in the social division of labour, or the trades and crafts which the group practices are very rich and varied, and in some crafts and trades (such as dyeing and grinding precious stones) and occupations (such as consumption credit and trade) the Jews are specialists. Of course, some of these specialized occupations in which Jews engage themselves or into which they are forced may be regarded as margin activities. This meant that, sometimes, Jews performed economic activities that were previously missing in their place of residence (which, by the way, was the reason for introducing them in the first place and placing them under the care of the rulers), or were not yet sufficiently developed. This applied not just to trade in goods and money, but also, for example,

¹⁴⁶ Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 11: “Citizen or alien conjurer.”

¹⁴⁷ Katz, *Exclusiveness*, p. 147.

¹⁴⁸ See E.H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1965), p. 147.

silk production. However, regarding trade and money-lending, one observes a certain level of disapproval of these activities on the part of agrarian societies, which might have encouraged newly-arrived persons of a different religion, i.e. strangers, to undertake them.¹⁴⁹ However, those who undertook them were pushed to the margin. It is the same with “dirty” occupations by Jews (the profession of dyer rose slowly in social status because of its “dirty” nature, regardless of the technical skills it required) and trading in used goods. The economic marginalization of the Jews was expressed primarily in their non-membership of the global corporate structures that arose out of the social division of labour; the absence of the right to belong to municipal associations, trade guilds and craftsmen’s unions resulted in Jews creating their own districts and guilds as a *contrepartie* to this state of affairs.

¹⁴⁹ Even though usury was equally condemned in Jewish religious doctrine and, through necessity, was made more flexible by charging non-Jews interest; see Abrahams, *Jewish life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 250 ff., 238; Rabinowitz, *The Social Life*, p. 45; Katz, *Exclusiveness*, p. 57.

Gypsies in Medieval Europe

In: *Przegląd Historyczny*, 75 (1984), pp. 569–596.

Contacts with other ethnic groups played a certain role in the shaping of national consciousness in medieval Europe, one of the chief areas of research by outstanding Polish historian Benedykt Zientara. Attitudes towards strangers in medieval times were varied, ranging from hospitality to rejection. In any case, xenophobia frequently served to create a collective, ethnic bond.¹ This negative element meant that the development of nations and states in the Middle Ages was accompanied by an element of exclusion, expressed in a fear of strangers, a dislike of particular nations, or the development of the persecuted ethnic minority syndrome. The fortunes of the Gypsies in medieval and early modern-day Europe reflect the formation of the mechanisms of exclusion and the long-term consequences for the *minority maudite*.²

The history of the Jews in European society presents the historian with a rich area of research: “Gypsology,”³ whose fruits can be

¹ S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (London, 1961), p. 114; cf. F. Znaniecki, “Studia nad antagonizmem do obcych”, *Przegląd Socjologiczny*, 1 (1930/1931), pp. 158–209; and *Swojskość i cudzoziemszczyzna w dziejach kultury polskiej*, ed. Z. Stefanowska (Warsaw, 1973).

² Ruggiero \ described the program of research into Gypsies thus: “To seek the reasons for their refusal to participate in social life and their tendency to live in ever-renewable dissipation, and also the causes of the hatred which they still encounter and which makes them an outlawed minority, a people accused of too many dishonourable deeds”, *Annales ESC*, 14 (1959), p. 177.

³ The collective bibliography closed in 1913 at over 4,500 titles; see G. Black, *A Gypsy Bibliography* (London, 1941). Of the concise works dealing with the history of the Gypsies, one should mention primarily: G. Colocci, *Gli zingari. Storis di un popolo errante* (Torino, 1883); J. Bloch, *Les Tsiganes* (ed. 3: Paris, 1969); H. Arnold, *Die Zigeuner. Herkunft und Leben der Stämme im deutschen Sprachgebiet* (Olten–Freiburg

seen in 16th-century writings and which, from the end of the 17th century, developed into an autonomous topic through the writings of Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellmann. This literature expressed first of all an interest in ethnography and linguistics. History also occupied an important part, but mainly as a description of acts and anecdotes. Recent years have seen considerable progress in expanding the research horizons of “Gypsology,” as a result of more intensive methods of anthropological and sociological research⁴ and renewed attempts at historical interpretation.⁵ Nevertheless, the range of information available until the 19th century was meagre, and came mainly from outside observers. Ambivalence over the ethnic status of the Gypsies was a further complication. The Gypsies combined a feeling of group identity and traditions with a far-reaching adaptation to their surroundings. Consequently, in modern research there has been disagreement over the very definition of Gypsies, which also caused problems in legislative decisions connected with the Gypsies in the past.⁶ In 1954, the anthropologist Rena M. Cotten proposed the following preliminary definition: “A Gypsy is a member of a cultural group which leads a nomadic way of life, engages mainly in the processing of metals, trading in animals and fortune-telling, and shares the common Roma language.”⁷ Twenty years later, Thomas Acton

im Breisgau, 1965); F. de Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans d'histoire des Tsiganes* (Paris, 1970). *The Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (hereinafter: JGLS, first number is the series, second – the volume) has carried a lot of historical documentation on Gypsies and provides regular biographical information.

⁴ Cf. R.M. Cotten, “An Anthropologist Looks at Gypsology”, JGLS, 3, 33 (1954), nos. 3–4, pp. 107–120; *ibid.*, 3, 34 (1955), nos. 1–2, pp. 20–37; as well as T. Acton, *Gypsy Politics and Social Change* (London–Boston, 1974); *Gypsies, Tinkers and Other Travellers*, ed. F. Rehfish (London, 1975).

⁵ Apart from the work of Vaux de Foletier, one can mention here O. van Kappen, *Geschiedenis der Zigeuners in Nederland* (Assen, 1965); A. Heymowski, *Swedish ‘Travellers and Their Ancestry* (Uppsala, 1969); H. Asséo, “Marginalité et exclusion. Le traitement administratif des Bohémiens”, in: *Problèmes socio-culturels en France au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1974), pp. 11–87; M.H. Sánchez Ortega, *Los gitanos españoles* (Madrid, 1977).

⁶ In Nazi ideology and practice, there was no doubt about the “non-Aryan” nature of the Gypsies as an ethnic group, which, as with the Jews, was subject to total extermination; cf. D. Kenrick, G. Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies* (London, 1972), especially chapt. IV: The Non-Aryans.

⁷ Cotten, *An Anthropologist* 33, p. 110; por. A.L. Kroeber, *Anthropology* (New York, 1948), p. 175.

considered it racist to treat modern Gypsies as an ethnic group and to impose a racial picture and genetic determinism upon a complex and varied reality,⁸ concluding that the word “Gypsy” simply describes anyone who claims they are one.⁹ At the same time, Acton pointed to “self-poisoning” and nomadic as the constituent factors of Gypsy society, and demonstrated that “its ethnic character is influenced by the economy.”¹⁰ Considering the place of Gypsies in European society, we can discard the difficulties posed by contemporary attempts to define them. Instead, examining the mechanisms leading to the degradation of Gypsies as an ethnic group, we will consider society’s attitudes towards new arrivals, accepting as a natural fact that an indigenous community regarded the Gypsies as different.

Linguistic studies have helped determine the early history of the Gypsies and the routes they took to Europe. We know that they originated in India, probably in the north-western regions of that country. Regarding the early type of population, various assumptions have been expressed; some researchers have claimed that the Gypsies were not an ethnically uniform group but a gathering of tribes which shared a nomadic existence. Jules Bloch attributed a leading role to the Roma, who left the Punjab and, for a certain time, stayed in Iran (as suggested by language influences).¹¹ Bloch describes their lifestyle thus: “These people, suited to all trades, as is the case with those who live on the margins of stabilized society, demonstrated certain types of skills which were valued and which the Gypsies carried out because it provided them with the means to live: musical and dance entertainment, fortune-telling (a gift automatically attributed to people from the East) and the manufacture and repair of metal goods.”¹² These groups are believed to already have had low social status at their point of origin, they are believed to have been “untouchables” under the Indian caste system, belonging to the pariahs or some other vagrant-criminal communities. In this sense, the lives of Gypsies in medieval Europe are seen as a continuation of their social status in their country of origin. However, in recent years the Gypsy scholar Jan Kochanowski, on the basis of linguistic and ethnographical

⁸ Acton, *Gypsy Politics*, p. 216.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

¹¹ Bloch, *Les Tsiganes*, p. 29 ff.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

studies, has put forward an entirely different concept, claiming that the European Gypsies were associated with the elitist aristocratic-warrior caste.¹³ Such a wide difference of opinion suggests that the documentary sources are uncertain and that research into the early history of the Gypsies had been merely tentative. In addition, it is not known what started their exodus from India. Gypsy oral tradition¹⁴ speaks of an armed conflict with other tribes or the military expansion of a neighbouring people, but hunger, religious persecution and the force of attraction of byzantine *prosperity* are also cited as reasons.¹⁵ Probably the first information about the Gypsies is that they were present on the territories of the Byzantine empire in the first centuries of the second millennium, whereas 14th century travellers and pilgrims to the Holy Land describe groups in Crete, Corfu and other Greek territories whose description corresponds to Gypsies.

At the start of the 15th century came the next migration of Gypsies¹⁶ from the Balkans to the west; this was not a mass exodus, and most Gypsies probably remained in the Balkans. One can assume that Turkish expansion was one of the main reasons for this migration, but the same hypothesis may be applied here as that concerning the first migrations from India. The Gypsies appear in Central and Eastern Europe in organized groups in 1417–1419, wandering through Transylvania, Hungary, Switzerland and German lands; a considerable number settle in Hungary (usually preserving their nomadic lifestyle), and reach the Czech lands, Italy, France and the Iberian Peninsula; in the following century, their wanderings and presence are noted in the British Isles and Scandinavia. In the first centuries of modern times, the whole of Europe already knows them.

¹³ J. Kochanowski, *Gypsy Studies* (New Delhi, 1963); and id., "Tsiganes noirs, Tsiganes blancs. Les Tsiganes dans la perspective des migrations indoeuropéennes", *Diogène*, 63 (July–September, 1968), pp. 31–52.

¹⁴ De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, p. 32.

¹⁵ Bloch, *Les Tsiganes*, p. 32.

¹⁶ Patterns of migration are shown by: P. Bataillard, "De l'apparition et de la dispersion des Bohémiens en Europe", *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 5 (1843–1844), pp. 438–475, 521–552; id., "Nouvelles recherches sur l'apparition et la dispersion des Bohémiens en Europe", *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 11 (1849), pp. 14–55; id., "Les débuts de l'immigration des Tsiganes en Europe occidentale", *Bulletin de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris*, Series 3, 12 (1889), pp. 255–265; series 4, 1 (1890), pp. 290–318; Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 24–58; De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, pp. 42–57.

We are dealing here mainly with their appearance as a group, for that is when they entered into confrontation with local populations, which not only left a mark in historical sources, but also caused a socio-psychological shock.¹⁷ Historians note isolated appearances of Gypsies in Europe before the mass waves of Gypsy migration in the 1420s and 1430s; municipal records of alms describe them as “pagans” or “Saracens.”¹⁸ But not until the Gypsies appeared en masse did local populations begin to ask who they were and how they should be treated.

The Gypsies described themselves as pilgrims and usually claimed to have come from Egypt or Lesser Egypt; the word “Egyptian” occurs most often in historical sources (the English name *Gypsy* is derived from this). In the cities where they appeared, they described various stories of their fortunes. The most frequent one is that they accepted baptism in their country, “Lesser Egypt,” when it was conquered by the Christians, but then they renounced the Christian faith when the “Saracen” re-conquered it, and were now on a pilgrimage to redeem their sins. In a story noted in *Journal d’un Bourgeois de Paris* in 1427, they say that when they renounced Christianity, the German emperor, king of Poland and other Christian rulers conquered their country and drove them out, leaving it to the Pope to decide whether they could return. So they all left for Rome, where the Pope ordered them to go on a seven-year pilgrimage around the world and forbade them from sleeping in beds (*sans coucher en lit*).¹⁹ In another tale related to the citizens of Amiens that same year, the Gypsies said they had been expelled from their lands for refusing to renounce the Christian faith.²⁰ The veracity of these claims was supposedly backed by documents – a letter of protection from the emperor, and a papal bull which they claimed to have obtained in Italy in 1422 and which promised Christians absolution from sin in return for helping Gypsies.²¹ Copies of these documents illustrate wagon trains

¹⁷ Cf. Th. Hampe, *Die fahrenden Leute in der deutschen Vergangenheit* (Leipzig, 1902), p. 77.

¹⁸ Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 32.

¹⁹ *Journal d’un bourgeois de Paris*, ed. A. Tuetey (Paris, 1881), pp. 218 ff.

²⁰ H. Dusevel, “L’apparition des Egyptiens ou Bohémiens à Amiens dans le XVe siècle”, *La Picardie*, 6 (1860), pp. 433–437.

²¹ No evidence of the issue of the letter to Gypsies has been found in the Vatican archives; see R.A. Scott Macfie, “The Gypsy visit to Rome in 1422”, *JGLS*,

of Gypsies in various places, and the alms they received show that they were given credibility, at least in the first half of the 15th century. However, the forgery of documents was already widespread in the late Middle Ages, and the information on documents and preserved copies of them is so uncertain that their authenticity raises doubts; descriptions of the fraud committed by beggars and vagrants in the 15th and 16th centuries very often mention the use of fake papal bulls and documents.²² Apart from an imperial deed and papal bull, Gypsies used various other kinds of documents and privileges which they claimed to have received from various sources; from the king of Poland, duke of Savoy and duke of Burgundy. A major number of these documents, especially the deeds issued by territorial lords, may be regarded as authentic.²³

The Gypsies encountered interest and wonder in broader circles of society. Here are a few descriptions by people at that time. In his *Chronicle of Bern*, Konrad Justinger notes that pagans, dark-skinned paupers, from Egypt arrived in Basle, Bern and Zurich in 1429 (*ungeschaffen, swartz, eilend lüte mit wiben und kinden*), wandering from country to country;²⁴ a similar description is given three years later by a Basle chronicler, who says that they were “pagans called Saracens,” dark-skinned and of unpleasant appearance (*ein ungestalt swartzes volk*).²⁵ The municipal books of Arras note the arrival of a Gypsy wagon train there in 1421, providing the significant title: *Merveilles. Venue*

3, 11 (1932), pp. 111–115. Only a French copy of the letter was found, see F. de Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes dans l'ancienne France* (Paris, 1961), pp. 20 ff.; id., “Le pèlerinage romain des Tsiganes en 1422 et les lettres du pape Martin V”, *Etudes Tsiganes*, December 1965, pp. 13–19.

²² Cf. B. Geremek, *Świat 'opery żebraczy'*. *Obraz włóczęgów i nędzarzy w literaturach europejskich XV–XVII wieku* (Warsaw, 1989).

²³ O. van Kappen published several such documents, from the letter of Sigismund of Luxembourg 1422 to 15th- and 16th-century German, English and Dutch letters (*Geschiedenis*, annex VI, VIII–XV; and JGLS, 3, 41, 1962, pp. 89–100). The same author has published a letter from the Emperor Frederick II from 1442 (JGLS, 3, 44, 1965, pp. 107–115), to which later mentions of the imperial privilege granted to Gypsies may refer.

²⁴ *Die Berner-Chronik des Conrad Justinger*, ed. G. Studer (Bern 1871), p. 286.

²⁵ *Basler Chroniken*, vol. 5, ed. A. Bernoulli (Leipzig, 1895), p. 180. A chronicler of Colmar expresses himself in similar words, saying that in 1418 *unschaffen swarce lüte* arrived there and stole *en masse*; see *Die älteste deutsche Chronik von Kolmar*, ed. A. Bernoulli (Colmar, 1888), p. 24.

d'estrangers du pais d'Egipte.²⁶ The description highlights their different appearance: dark skin, long hair, beards on the men, and turbans worn by the women who, over a long linen shirt, wear a woollen shawl tiled at the shoulder in which they carry their children. Earrings worn by women and children also attract attention. An anonymous chronicler describes the presence of Gypsies in Tournai in 1422 in a similar vein. Men (who he says are dressed better than the women) indulge in horse-trading, on which they are experts, whilst the women mainly tell people's fortunes. The appearance of Gypsies in Italy in 1422 is noted by several chroniclers, one of whom describes their arrival in Forlì. This was a group of 20 people. He says (*Et, ut audivi, aliqui dicebant*) that they came from India – one of the few cases known to 18th-century linguists where they actually mention their country of origin – and that they were on their way to the Pope to receive baptism. However, he says, these people were not too decorous, and were like wild animals or thieves (*gentes non multum morigeratae, sed quasi bruta animalia et furentes*).²⁷ A similar description is given by a chronicler in Bologna, where the Gypsies appeared before their arrival in Forlì; he writes that they were thin, dark and ate like pigs (*Erano magri e negri e mangiavano come porci*) and that their women persistently stole from people while telling their fortunes.²⁸ Several years later, a Parisian burgher records his impression of several visits he paid to Gypsies at a camp they had set up outside Paris in August 1427. He also notes the presence of earrings and the unusual clothes of the women. He considers their appearance repulsive, the men and women are “very dark” (this could refer to their skin or to their hair), and the women are the ugliest in the world (*les plus laides femmes que on pust voir, et les plus noires*).²⁹ From their appearance, clothes and way of life, the Parisian chronicler can conclude that “these were the poorest people who had arrived in Paris in human memory.”

Descriptions of the alien customs and general appearance of the Gypsies as an outside group show what an impression they made

²⁶ Archives communales d'Arras, BB6, fol. 54.

²⁷ *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 19, ed. A. Muratori (Mediolani, 1781), p. 890. More about Gypsies in Italy: B. Geremek, “L'arrivée des Tsiganes en Italie: de l'assistance à la repression”, in: *Timore e carità. I poveri nell'Italia moderna*, ed. G. Politi et al. (Cremona, 1982), pp. 27–44.

²⁸ *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 18, ed. A. Muratori (Mediolani, 1781), p. 611.

²⁹ *Journal d'un bourgeois*, pp. 220–221.

on local populations. The first sources reproduce the claims of the Gypsies themselves, explaining their arrival and their geographical and religious dimensions, for in medieval minds geographical origin was a qualitative determinant and attitude towards religion was a fundamental factor of assessment. A further set of documents covers the external appearance and customs of the new arrivals (the way they ate and slept). Last but not least, an important source of information is the descriptions of the internal organization of the Gypsies and their wagon trains. Their leaders are given colourful titles. A privilege issued by Sigismund of Luxembourg in 1423 calls the Gypsy leader Vladislav *waynoda Ciganorum*,³⁰ Prince of the Gypsies, a title also appearing in Hungarian documents of later centuries. Privileges, decrees and narratives refer to Gypsy leaders as lords, princes or counts, whereas in their places of origin they are described as having been kings. Their genuine titles are of no relevance (probably corresponding to the “chief” of a tribe), but what is worth noting is that an ethnic group described as pauperized and subservient is attributed with a political hierarchy similar to that of European societies. Descriptions highlight the external appearance of Gypsy leaders, who stand out from their subjects with their finery. One can assume that the judicial autonomy attributed to Gypsy groups when they appeared in Europe, and partly continued throughout subsequent centuries, also helped create a picture of the Jews as an established political body, centrally ruled and mutually cooperative.

The interest fuelled by these initial descriptions of Gypsies in Europe shaped a collective image of this group in various forms. An image of Gypsies took shape in both literature and art in the 16th and 17th centuries. Renaissance art³¹ focuses on their external appearance and their most striking occupation, fortune-telling. Tapestries in Tournai³² from the end of the 15th century mainly show “darkened” figures, with dark hair and exotic clothes (quite rich compared to the descriptions in records). One observes that the men are armed: they have swords, daggers or sabres worn at the belt, while in their hands or on the shoulders they carry a stick. If one regards clothes as a yardstick of social status, one can say that the exotic appearance

³⁰ Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 560 (*Bijlage V*).

³¹ De Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes*, pp. 37 ff.

³² E.A. Hamill, “A Fifteenth Century Tapestry”, *JGLS*, 3, 28 (1949), pp. 81–82.

of the Gypsies goes hand-in-hand with their positive social status (clothes and weapons), whereas the sticks they carry may symbolize their status as pilgrims. The occupations of Gypsies depicted in the tapestries are varied; one sees hunting with dogs and horse-riding. Their women are shown as fortune-tellers and their children are shown with hands held out to receive alms, but also stealing from pouches. There are also traditional accusations of Gypsies stealing poultry and they are additionally depicted as wandering artists and musicians. Their wagon trains draw spectators from the surrounding population of various classes. A wagon train also appears in Hieronymus Bosch's painting *The Haywain*;³³ the clothing of Gypsies is typical but less ostentatious than in the tapestries in Tournai, whereas the occupations – palmistry, pick-pocketing, vagrancy – are similar. Palmistry seems to be a leading feature of Gypsy women shown in modern-day art (a scene in Pieter Breughel the Elder's *Sermon of St. John the Baptist* showing a male Gypsy reading someone's palm seems to be an exception³⁴). The physical appearance and clothes of female Gypsies are presented very realistically. According to one anecdote on the life of Caravaggio, the fainter is said to have stopped a Gypsy woman passing by and invited her to an inn to pose as a model of a fortune-teller.³⁵ The physical appearance of Gypsies is painted in a tone that expresses an interest in exoticism with certain sympathy. Later art, whether in the series of engravings by Jacques Callot, or in Dutch genre painting, though continuing to depict palmistry, shows most of all the poor way of life and the vagrant existence.³⁶ Instead of sympathy one now experiences a threat: firearms, swords and daggers now include the Gypsies in the category of "dangerous vagabonds," whereas fortune-telling places them in the forbidden world of magic. Evidence of the stereotypes applied to Gypsies in iconography is given

³³ W. Starkie, "Jerome Bosch's 'The Haywain'", *JGLS*, 3, 36 (1957), pp. 83–87.

³⁴ D.E. Yates, "Pieter Bruegel's 'Sermon of St. John the Baptist'", *JGLS*, 3, 44 (1965), pp. 1–2, and reproductions; but fortune-telling Gypsies also appear in literature at this time (e.g. Hans Sachs).

³⁵ R. Regensburger, "Gypsy Fortune-Tellers as a Subject of the Italian Baroque Painters", *JGLS*, 3, 45 (1966), pp. 1–6, and reproductions.

³⁶ Callot's engravings in: G. Sadoul, *Jacques Callot – miroir de son temps* (Paris, 1969), p. 165 ff.; cf. D. Mac Ritchie, "Callot's 'Bohemians'", *JGLS*, 1, 2 (1870), pp. 7–17. Several examples from Dutch art are reproduced by Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis, passim*.

by Cesare Ripa in his *Iconologia* (edition 1, 1592).³⁷ In the instructions given there, we notice a key to interpreting iconographic symbols as understood in medieval times. Ripa introduces the Gypsy woman as a symbol of comedy, explaining this with the status of comedy in poetry, for comedy combines a *mediocrità dello stile e delle persone*. Comedy contains “easy proposals and difficult tasks,” just as Gypsies foretell to other people fortunes which they themselves cannot attain by reason of their poverty. The female Gypsy also appears as a symbol of poverty, which Ripa justifies in the wonderful words: “Rappresenta la povertà, in forma di zingara, perchè non si può trovare la piu meschina generatione di questa, la qualè non hà nè roba, nè nobiltà, nè gusto, nè speranza di cosa alcuna, che possa dare una particella di quella felicità, che è fine della vita politica.”³⁸ Obviously, this *vita politica* should be understood the way it was understood in those days, referring to social life and culture rather than state policy. The picture of the Gypsy woman as a symbol of poverty is augmented by the bird sitting on her head, the *codazinzola*, who is too weak to build his own nest. Ripa derived this connection with the wagtail, as a symbol of poverty, with the well-known Renaissance encyclopaedia of symbols by Giovanni Pier Valerian (edition I, 1556), in which the name Gypsy is derived from the name of the bird *cinclo*, or wagtail (both names apply to the same bird).³⁹ Valeriano also describes the extreme poverty of Gypsies as the main determinant of their existence, in addition citing their homelessness and vagrancy: “Essendo adunque il cingaro cosè mendico, che in nessun luogo habbi stanza, hanno persuaso alcuni, che quei vagabondi, i quali vunno per tutto il mondo con le moglie e figliuoli, che attendono alla chiromantia, e che in nissun luogo hanno habitatione.” Iconographic records present a stereotyped picture of Gypsies in a degrading manner. Although literature supplied sufficient arguments and materials to create such stereotypes, it also presented a broad intellectual interest in the different customs of Gypsies, their fortunes and their place in society. Renaissance scholarship is directed mainly towards the “Egyptian” provenance of Gypsies. Sebastian

³⁷ Cf. D.J. Gordon, “Gypsies as Emblem of Comedy and Poverty”, *JGLS*, 3, 23 (1944), pp. 39–42.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

³⁹ *Ioannis Pierii Valeriani Bellunensis Hieroglyphica* (Francofurti ad Moenum, 1614), p. 309.

Münster (1488–1552) in his *Cosmographia universalis* (edition 1, 1544) recalls that many years previously, in Heidelberg (probably between 1524 and 1527, when he was a professor there), he spoke to Gypsies who held a letter of protection from Sigismund of Luxembourg and who also told him where they had come from. Münster ridiculed their tale of the country of the Pygmies, which they said lay close to their own homeland, and also disbelieved their Egyptian origins (*sed fabellae sunt*).⁴⁰ In an earlier work in 1530, the French scholar Henri Corneille Agrippa said that the Gypsies had come from the territory lying between Egypt and Ethiopia, and also laid down their alleged Biblical genealogy. He claimed they were descended from Hus, son of Ham,⁴¹ which means that they were categorized among the worse tribes of the human race.

The descriptions of the lifestyles and customs of Gypsies by both these Renaissance scholars are pejorative. “They bear the stigma of the curse imposed upon their forebears” writes Agrippa. “They lead a vagrant life all over the earth; set up camp outside the cities, in fields and at the roadside, erecting there huts and tents: and engage in robbery, fraud and trade; and deceive people with fortune-telling with the aid of various tricks of chiromancy. With such fraud, they eke out their existence.”⁴² Münster calls them “pagan Christians commonly known as Gypsies, but in Latin as *Errones*” (which can be translated as “those who have gone astray”).⁴³ He calls them “people deformed by darkness” (*homines nigredine deformes*), sunburnt, dirty and clothed in rags. The thefts carried out by Gypsy women are said to provide them with the means for existence. Despite the tales they tell, they are “born into vagrancy, without a homeland, wandering from one country to another, living off goods stolen by their women, and living as dogs, not caring at all about religion. In the provinces through which they pass they accept into their ranks men and women who want to share their way of life.” Münster’s scepticism about the origin of Gypsy migration is far-reaching, and he rejects the thesis about their ethnic difference. This, he says, is simply a collection of

⁴⁰ S. Münster, *Cosmographia universalis* (Basileae, 1559), pp. 267–268.

⁴¹ H.C. Agrippa, *Déclamation sur l’incertitude, vanité et abus des sciences* (Paris, 1582), p. 310.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Münster, *Cosmographia*, p. 267.

vagrants from various parts and countries, especially France, for whom no crime is alien and who are burdens upon all European nations. Münster stresses that the Gypsies fluently speak the languages of the countries in which they live, but have also created their own language which is called *Rotwelsch* in Germany. Identifying the language used by Gypsies with the artificial jargon of criminal communities, Münster makes an obvious mistake (though the Gypsy language did indeed exert a certain influence on criminal jargon in various countries at the beginning of the modern era). However, this argument serves to reject the separate ethnic status of Gypsies.

Scholars and travellers in the 16th and 17th centuries displayed considerable interest in the language and origin of the Gypsies, and their views were not confined to the stereotypes described above.⁴⁴ Direct contact with Gypsies unravelled the secrets of the Gypsy language, and the first glossaries and dictionaries appeared (produced by the English explorer Borde in 1542, the French humanist Scaliger, and the Dutch scholars Jan van Ewsum and Bonaventura Vulcanius in the second half of the 11th century). Scholarly treatises examined the etymology of the name Gypsy, their original homeland and their role in general history, beginning with the Biblical genealogy of peoples and ancient history.⁴⁵ In these works, scientific findings were intertwined with legend because their task was to combine written tradition with the oral traditions to which the Gypsies refer. This literature cannot serve as a reliable basis on which to learn about collective attitudes towards Gypsies, but the opinions expressed concerning their origins confirm that they were generally accorded low ethnic or social status: they were included among the stigmatized tribes descended from Cain or Ham; or as one of the lost tribes of Israel; as the descendants of German Jews who escaped persecution in the 14th century and hid in woods, caves and empty spaces (Johann Christoph Wagenseil); or even as a cross-breed of Jews and Hussites or Jews and Moors.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ H.T. Crofton, "Borde's Egypt Speech", *JGLS*, 2, 2 (1908–1909), pp. 157–168; A. Kluyver, "Un glossaire tsigane du XVII^e siècle", *JGLS*, 2, 4 (1910–1911), pp. 131–142; "Vulcanius Romani Vocabulary", *JGLS*, 3, 9 (1930), pp. 16–25; A. Barthélémy, "Le glossaire tsigane-latin de Scaliger", *Etudes Tsiganes*, 21 (1975), no. 4, pp. 4–10.

⁴⁵ In German writings: A. Fritsch, *Diatribē historica de Zygenorum origine, vita ac moribus* (Iena, 1680); J. Thomasius, *Dissertatio philosophica de Cingarīs in disputationem proposita* (Leipzig, 1677).

⁴⁶ Cf. De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, pp. 18–25.

Naturally, the exotic appearance and lifestyle of Gypsies obviously attracted the attention of literature.⁴⁷ They appear constantly in Renaissance and Baroque prose and poetry. They are also given leading roles in Elizabethan drama in England and are the subject of entertainments and ballets at the French and English courts in the 17th century. Seventeenth-century Italian comedy shows a preference for Gypsy topics; Gypsies are frequently the heroes of 16th- and 17th-century popular literature, occupy a leading role in the work of Cervantes and picaresque literature; and in Grimmelshausen's works the Gypsy element occurs often. They appear in various situations and various moral assessments. Sometimes they are a subject of ridicule or laughter, at other times an object of ambivalent heroics – for they are often admired for their criminal skill and techniques of fraud. Last but not least, together with the entire vagrant community they are admired as genuinely free and exempt from material worries. The typical context in which they appear is, on the one hand, vagrancy and its associated criminal activities such as theft and fraud, and on the other hand, the dark and ominous world of sorcery.

It is worth drawing attention to two trends in the way in which Gypsies are shown in literature and in art during the first two centuries of their presence in Europe: first, the emphasis on their ethnic difference, shown in clothes, behaviour, physical appearance and history; in other words, here we have a stereotype of anthropological and cultural differences. Second, the treatment of the vagrancy of Gypsies as a criminal lifestyle and treating this as the main symbol of their difference, while at the same time erasing the difference between the new arrivals and local criminal communities. This second trend may be deemed a sociological stereotype. Both trends appear alongside each other, operate at the same time and, in the case of written works, appear in the very same work. The difference between them is

⁴⁷ For a general review, see *ibid.*, pp. 225–232. The following are some of the more detailed discussions: For German literature: W. Ebbardt, *Die Zigeuner in der hochdeutschen Literatur* (Allendorf, 1928); E.O. Winstedt, "Hans Sachs and Grimmelshausen on the Gypsies", *JGLS*, 3, 14 (1935), pp. 94–100, 149–155; in English literature: J.A.S. McPeck, *The Black Book of Knaves and Unthrifits in Shakespeare and Other Renaissance Authors* (Storrs, Conn., 1969), chapt. IX; for Spanish literature: W. Starkie, "Cervantes and the Gypsies", *JGLS*, 3, 39 (1960), pp. 131–151; and an earlier general review of the image of Gypsies in picaresque literature: R. Salillas, *Hampa. Antropologia picaresca* (Madrid, 1898), pp. 142–163.

obvious. Nevertheless, they both fulfil or are able to fulfil a negative function: rationalizing the real barriers between Gypsies and the native populations of European countries.

As for the Gypsies themselves, one observes among them a tendency both to adapt and to separate. The fact that only 100 years after their arrival in Europe their ethnic distinction from the local populations was no longer evident speaks for their ability to adapt. Regarding language, here too we see adaptation, as their lifestyle required of them knowledge of the local language. Wherever they appeared, they not only presented letters and privileges, but also related their fortunes. The tales they told were a way of gaining kindness and alms. Knowledge of the local language was also required for fortune-telling. Thus, Münster's reports on polyglot Gypsies⁴⁸ may refer to the very beginnings of their presence in Europe. From the outset, we note that they adopted local forenames:⁴⁹ the names of their leaders recorded in the first reports from the 15th century, such as Andrew, Michael, Nicholas and George, suggest that they adopted eastern Christianity, whereas a name like Vladislav suggests western Slav customs. The Christian forenames adopted by Gypsies were used in parallel with their Gypsy names, and even disguised them in view of the taboo on Christian names which they professed.⁵⁰

The Gypsies also adapted to the religious life of the countries where they stayed or settled; Christianized in the Byzantine world, they subsequently adapted to Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism, as well as Islam (Turkish tax records indicate that Christian Gypsies were charged higher taxes than Muslim Gypsies, which suggests that not all of them converted to Islam under Turkish rule).⁵¹ This was a partial adaptation, for the Gypsies still retained their old traditions, as a result of which a peculiar mix of beliefs and customs was formed. Presenting themselves as pilgrims and penitents, the first Gypsy groups arriving in Europe in the early 15th century held a status acceptable to Western Christianity society because their wanderings and pleas for support

⁴⁸ Münster, *Cosmographia*, p. 268.

⁴⁹ F. de Vaux de Foletier, "Les Tsiganes et leurs patronymes", *Vie et Langage*, November 1963, pp. 616–623.

⁵⁰ V. de Gila (= Jan Kochanowski), "Les noms de famille chez les Tsiganes baltes", *Etudes Tsiganes*, 2 (1956), no. 3, pp. 26–30.

⁵¹ M. Hasluck, "Firman of A.H. 1013–1014 (A.D. 1604–1605) Regarding Gypsies in the Western Balkans", *JGLS*, 3, 27 (1948), pp. 1–12.

possessed religious justification. Even if we regard their tales as merely a cunning way to gain help and alms, they were nevertheless addressed correctly, referring to the mass religiousness of the times and to the pious hopes of the late Middle Ages.

Their different appearance caused them to be identified with the non-Christians known in Europe at that time, whether “Saracens” or “Tatars.” The story of their conversion to, and subsequent rejection of, Christianity, was a kind of supplement to their physical characteristics; both factors contributed to the paradoxical view of Gypsies as “pagan Christians,” as Münster described them. The names used for Gypsies in European languages retain traces of this: to describe Gypsies, the Swedes adopted the name Tatars, whereas the Dutch used the word *heidens* or *heidenen*,⁵² in other words heathens; both names also appear in 15th century German sources. The Christianity of the Gypsies was viewed with mistrust. At the end of the 15th century, Felix Schmidt wrote that the Gypsies merely pretend to be Christians, they baptize themselves many times and make fun of the sacraments.⁵³ Münster, too, does not believe that they really are Christians. In the 17th century, diatribes against the heathenness – or heresy – of Gypsies were common. Both in Catholicism and Protestantism in the 16th and 17th centuries, there was a conviction that the Gypsies regarded Christianity as a mere instrument. Gypsies were refused baptism and marriage rites, and their paganism was cited as a reason for their expulsion from the Scandinavian countries in the 16th century. No doubt the religious ambivalence of Gypsies and their attachment to cultural tradition fuelled this scepticism and disapproval, but it also seems clear that the Gypsies did not assert their religious difference but, on the contrary, manifested a readiness to adapt to the beliefs and cults of the countries to which they had come.

Finally, there is the question whether the Gypsies adapted themselves commercially. There is no clear answer to this, for one notes that they did adapt, but at the same time preserved their traditional way of life. Ethnographic descriptions of Gypsy life at the time mention

⁵² On the meaning of this name and its dual connotation, in the sense of ‘pagan’ and in the sense of a ‘person living in the steppes, cf. Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 99–109. On German terminology, see E.O. Winstedt, “Some Records of the Gypsies in Germany, 1407–1792”, *JGLS*, 3, 11 (1932), p. 109.

⁵³ De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, pp. 110 ff.

first of all nomadism or “self-employment.”⁵⁴ Nomadism seems to be the way of life of an overwhelming number of Gypsies in Europe since the migrations in the 15th century. Nevertheless, the process of settling down occurs to a far greater extent than assumed. First, the Gypsies settled in the Byzantine world; but a particular form of settlement – not yet sufficiently investigated – was their involuntary serfdom in Moldavia and Wallachia, only abolished in the 19th century.⁵⁵ The efforts of Spanish rulers to settle Gypsies in *gitanerías* did not produce a mass result, but nevertheless some Gypsy families submitted to this stabilization.⁵⁶ Efforts⁵⁷ to settle Gypsies by way of administrative orders or by coercion usually ended in fiasco, but still in some cases Gypsies spontaneously associated themselves in certain settled occupations. Overall, nomadism defined the way of life peculiar to Gypsies. Modern research into nomadism shows that it was not confined to any particular tribal or ethnic group, but was the most common lifestyle shared by various groups.⁵⁸ Nomadism remained the strongest bond, to an extent that Gypsies themselves mingled with other nomadic groups in pre-industrial Europe. When the Gypsies appeared in Europe, sheep-keeping and cattle-breeding was not a major component of their nomadism. Rather, a major activity was hunting, often confirmed in early European sources. The wandering lifestyle of Gypsies was included in the services sector: they carried out minor repairs and engaged in petty trade, and provided services which, at the risk of anachronism, may be described as cultural services. Nevertheless, the skills and services they offered required a broader clientele. Cities rejected them and refused to accept their collective way of life, and rural settlements only offered a restricted market, so wandering presented the most economically

⁵⁴ Cotten, *An Anthropologist* 33, pp. 110–116; Acton, *Gypsy Politics*, pp. 245–270.

⁵⁵ P.N. Paniatescu, “The Gypsies in Wallachia and Moldavia: A Chapt. of Economic History”, *JGLS*, 3, 20 (1941), pp. 58–72; F. de Vaux de Foletier, “L’esclavage des Tsiganes dans les principautés roumaines”, *Etudes Tsiganes*, 16 (1970) no. 2–3, pp. 24–29.

⁵⁶ Sánchez Ortega, *Los gitanos*, pp. 373–391.

⁵⁷ Such was the nature of an attempt by Peter Brahe to settle Gypsies in Finland in the 17th century, see A. Etzler, *Zigenarna och deras avkomlingar i Sverige: historia och spark* (Stockholm, 1944), pp. 137 ff.

⁵⁸ O. Lattimore, *Studies in Frontier History* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 24 ff., 415 ff., 440 ff.

viable way of earning a living. Thus, nomadism was linked to economic necessity.

Nevertheless, economic determinism⁵⁹ is not a sufficient explanation for the nomadic way of life of Gypsies. Nomadism was the prevalent pattern of life, and the collective to tradition – serving as a defence mechanism in the face of repressions – consolidated this pattern even further. It retained its value and attraction among Gypsies who had already settled down, and it was a collectively accepted way of life and a traditional socio-cultural model.

One should not attach such significance to the preference for “self-employment” manifested by Gypsies. Their reluctance to work for an employer, to perform work falling under a specialization, and the division of labour and professional activity also performed by non-Gypsies (and competition with them) seems to be the result of the difference of Gypsies and the barriers they encountered during coexistence with the society of their new country.

Surprisingly, the list of occupations regarded as typically Gypsy remains unchanged until modern times (as a sign of continuation, American Gypsies today trade in cars rather than horses). From the times of the earliest records, the most important occupations are metalworking⁶⁰ and the repair of metal objects. Smithery and pot-making were already considered typical Gypsy occupations during the first migrations.⁶¹ Small-scale distribution, associated with vagrants and considered semi-criminal activity, also suited the Gypsy way of life. Gypsies were also recognized experts in horses due to their nomadic lives in which horses played a key role. We have already said that cultural services are a typical Gypsy activity. In the Middle Ages, the professions of musician, singer, storyteller and juggler were considered dishonourable and frowned upon by the Church.⁶² Although

⁵⁹ T. Acton exaggerates with his explanations (*Gypsy Politics*, p. 247) about nomadism in the light of modern economic rationalism. The eclectic description of R.M. Cotten seems more appropriate (*An Anthropologist* 33, p. 111 ff.).

⁶⁰ P. Bataillard even attributes to the Gypsies a pioneering role in the development of metallurgy.

⁶¹ They are mentioned by travellers describing Gypsies in the Balkans, see L. Wiener, “Gypsies as Fortune-Tellers and as Blacksmiths”, *JGLS*, 2, 3 (1910), pp. 5 ff.

⁶² W. Hartung, *Die Spielleute. Eine Randgruppe in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

this situation changed gradually towards the end of the Middle Ages, the stigma of marginalization continued to bear down upon artistic occupations. Here, gypsies displayed skills that were in demand: they performed at fairs, played in taverns and in court and military bands,⁶³ and the first European reports expressed admiration for female Gypsy dancers, but at the same time criticized the “obscenity” or “frivolity” of these dances (in fact, dancing was generally accepted with reluctance in the moral doctrine of the times). But most of all, they told fortunes. The first reports on the appearance of Gypsies in Italy, France and Germany underline this skill: Gypsies look at people’s hands and tell them what happened or what is in store for them. A Bolognese chronicler reporting the arrival of Gypsies in his city in 1422, notes that the wife of the Duke of the Gypsies, Andrew, foretold the future to the city’s residents.⁶⁴ Five years later, a Parisian burgher says that in a company of Gypsies there were “witches who looked at people’s hands and told them what has or what will happen to them.”⁶⁵ In the case of Paris, this foretelling was so popular that the church authorities took action against this, excommunicating those who practiced it and holding expiatory processions soon after the Gypsies had left the outskirts of Paris.⁶⁶

We have already said that fortune-telling became the most permanent Gypsy stereotype in literature and art, and historical and ethnographical writings confirm that this activity was widespread. Prohibitions by the Church and treatises on the subject of *superstitiones* were powerless; they merely confirm the connection between these “trades” and the Gypsy way of life. Sometimes one encounters approval for fortune-telling, and sometimes it is considered merely a technique with which to beg for alms. In any case, pamphlets about the “devious practices of beggars” mention chiromancy as one of the tricks of vagrants of all kinds, but do not attribute it exclusively to Gypsies. However, it is obvious that on a mass scale, fortune-telling was associated with unclean activities, and Gypsy women were accused not only of reading palms, or “physiognomy,” but also of placing curses

⁶³ F.W. Brepohl, “Die Zigeuner als Musiker in den türkischen Eroberungskriegen des XVI Jh.,” JGLS, 2, 4 (1911), pp. 240–244.

⁶⁴ *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 18, p. 611.

⁶⁵ *Journal d’un bourgeois de Paris*, p. 220.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 221; De Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes*, p. 29 (on the decision by the chapt. of Paris).

and performing magic. Suspicion of contacts with the devil and the exploitation of hellish forces placed Gypsy chiromancy in the context of the witch hunts in early modern times.

The wandering lifestyle of Gypsies resulted in them being accused of various crimes associated with vagrants. Accusations of theft were common. Significant in this regard is a report in a “diary of a Parisian resident.” First he notes that while a Gypsy woman reads people’s palms “their pouches are emptied as if by magic or through the actions of some hellish force or through special skill.”⁶⁷ He refers to public opinion, but adds that even though he himself paid three or four visits to a Gypsy encampment, he never lost a single penny (he never noticed any fortune-telling either, perhaps his clerical apparel acted as a deterrent). Nevertheless, scepticism about thefts by Gypsies was very rare, and even if the oft-repeated tales about the thieving skills of Gypsies were exaggerated (Cervantes wrote: Gypsies are “sent into the world for the sole purpose of thieving”), one can assume they had some basis in reality.⁶⁸ The Bolognese chronicler in 1422 writes that the king of Hungary had granted Gypsies a dispensation to steal without punishment, but this probably means that the Gypsies were subject to their own jurisdiction. Court records indicate that Gypsies were usually accused of two types of theft: stealing food on the one hand, and household utensils and money on the other. The crimes frequently recorded include petty fraud and, a whole series of tricks involving sleight of hand which exploited people’s naiveté and gullibility.⁶⁹

Certain changes occurred to the structure of Gypsy crime, in line with the deterioration in relations between Gypsies and the local populations. At first, even though groups of Gypsies were frequently portrayed as armed gangs, there were no recorded cases of armed robbery or violence involving bloodshed. But from the 17th century, such crimes increased.⁷⁰ Gypsy bands or individuals undertook the

⁶⁷ *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, pp. 220 ff.

⁶⁸ M. de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Exemplary Novels*, trans. W.K. Kelly, vol. 1, (London, 1881), p. 281.

⁶⁹ Reviews of Gypsy offenders recorded in court archives are provided by E.O. Winstedt, “Some Records of the Gypsies in Germany”, *JGLS*, 3, 13 (1934), pp. 98–113; Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, pp. 527–548; De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, pp. 59–72; Asséo, *Marginalité et exclusion*, p. 51 ff.

⁷⁰ Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 541.

fierce professions of war, easily transferring from this to plundering in the style of 17th century military life. Assessing these petty offences and fraud is a complex problem, for it is one of the factors that determine public attitudes towards Gypsies, generating the hostility of local populations, especially of the rural masses, who were the most frequent victims of the Gypsy way of life. Very often it is obvious that the charges are false, based on a stereotyped association of Gypsies with crime. In 1678, a Gypsy in Scotland was tried for the murder of another Gypsy. He was hanged despite the lack of evidence against him, whereas he himself had said he had not even been in the country at the time of the murder. Such conduct by the courts is all the more understandable when the crime is committed by a Gypsy against a non-Gypsy.⁷¹ However, one can assume that accusations of crimes, especially ones not involving bloodshed, were real and that theft was a Gypsy way of life. Of course, theft cannot be considered a “normal” way of life for it is a breach of norms. Nevertheless, in the criminal activities accompanying the wanderings of Gypsies, it is difficult not to notice a social and moral difference on the part of Jews – an objective and subjective alienness. It is significant that theft between Gypsies is regarded as a breach of the code of ethics and, as such, punishable.⁷² But these rules do not apply to the *gaujos* surroundings. A nomadic way of life seems to create a different set of ethics and different social behaviour. In the stabilized society of Christian Europe, the Gypsies rationalize their nomadism within the framework of pilgrimage and begging. They expect support, sometimes they enforce it, sometimes they obtain it by fraud, and sometimes they simply help themselves to it. Basing their existence on a lifestyle that is not accepted by the society surrounding them, cultivating a tradition of separateness, and performing functions and services of a margin nature and disapproved by society, they subject themselves to a limited degree of solidarity and to rules of coexistence common to all of them. The tales and legends about Gypsies are not a firm basis for historical interpretation, but what is significant is the number of legends about them that attribute their way of life to God’s commandments and biblical genealogy. According to one legend, the Gypsies are descended from Adam’s

⁷¹ See JGLS, 3, 33 (1954), p. 79; for the case itself, see D. Macritchie, *Scottish Gypsies under the Stewarts* (Edinburgh, 1894), pp. 108 ff.

⁷² Bloch, *Les Tsiganes*, p. 108.

first wife, the one he had before Eve, which releases them from the duty to work as an atonement for the original sin, and according to another tale the Gypsies were discharged from the duty to work as a reward for supporting Christ in his agony. Italian *zingaresche* from the 16th century tell of Gypsies as good Christians who foretold the future of Mary and the infant Jesus, and therefore they told their fortunes (a frequent motive in art and literature is the help the Gypsies are said to have given during the flight to Egypt).⁷³

Despite their different attitudes to work and the criminal activities accompanying their vagrancy, Gypsies offered mainly services that were in demand. In these services one notes a common characteristic: they possess a margin nature. Regarding each of them a fundamental ambivalence of attitudes can be observed: attraction and rejection.⁷⁴

They include metalworking, which in all societies was admired and feared at the same time. Control over the magical properties of fire gave blacksmiths an association with healing, fortune-telling and advice-giving, and made them particularly useful. But at the same time, it thrust them outside the social mainstream. For instance, the German *Kaltschmiede* or *Kessler* had their own organization and privileges in the Middle Ages, yet were still treated as outlaws.⁷⁵ The distinguished authority on religion, Mircea Eliade, points out the “close association between smithery, occult knowledge, and the art of singing, dancing and poetry”;⁷⁶ in the case of Gypsies, this association is evident. The trades practiced by Gypsies and the services they provided were accepted by local populations and satisfied social needs. But the moral ambivalence weighing down upon these trades and services pushed them into the margin; in other words, they created or exacerbated a margin situation: these activities aroused fear or suspicion, and in the minds of society their performance was associated with fraud and connected with crime. It is difficult to say anything certain about the historical origins of the trades practiced by Gypsies, but many of them seem derived from traditional Gypsy skills which they brought with them to Europe.⁷⁷

⁷³ Wiener, *Gypsies as Fortune-Tellers*, p. 9.

⁷⁴ J.P. Liégeois, *Les Tsiganes* (Paris, 1971), p. 86.

⁷⁵ Wiener, *Gypsies as Fortune-Tellers*, p. 14.

⁷⁶ Liégeois, *Les Tsiganes*, p. 86.

⁷⁷ A similar activity is observed among wandering and settled Gypsies in the Asian territories of Islam; see C.E. Bosworth, *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1976), p. 4.

However, it seems that some of them came into being when the Gypsies were still in the Balkans, and then appeared elsewhere in Europe. The nomadic lifestyle and trades together formed a single whole and were interdependent; in them we have perceived both a fulfilment of separate cultural identity and an effort to adapt to current conditions and opportunities. The parasitic way of life of which Gypsies were regularly accused was an outcome of these diverging trends and of the repression and exclusion suffered at the hands of European societies.

The persecution of Gypsies by European authorities developed into a “dark series”⁷⁸ in which various trends were intertwined: enforced assimilation, segregation, expulsion, extermination. The course of these was different and the relationship between them different in each European country. Without attempting to present the whole of anti-Gypsy legislation, we merely wish to point out its most typical characteristics.

The first official documents concerning Gypsies in the 15th century are protective, but as early as the 1470s repressions are laid down. In 1471, the council of Lucerne forbade Gypsies from staying in the Confederation, in 1499 a *pragmatica* in Medina del Campo ordered Gypsies to abandon their nomadic lifestyle or leave Spain, and in 1500, at an Augsburg synod, the Emperor Maximilian ordered Gypsies to leave the territory of the Empire. Other European countries took similar steps. The flood of repressive legislation may show that it had little effect. Almost 150 repressive laws can be noted in Germany alone in the 16th and 17th centuries, whereby the greatest increase in their number occurs between 1650 and 1750;⁷⁹ in Spain, some 150 similar laws were issued in the same period, and in Milan over 60 were issued between 1568 and 1693.⁸⁰ The repetition of these documents illustrates the permanence and continuation of the policy of repression, for it can be assumed that each one was aimed at expulsion, but the nomadic life of Gypsies allowed them to return without problems after a while. Legislative documents should not be considered a picture of the reality, for sources indicate that many legal edicts were of limited

⁷⁸ R.A. Scott Macfie, “Gypsy Persecutions: a Survey of a Black Chapt. in European History”, JGLS, 3, 22 (1943), pp. 65–78; Kenrick, Puxon, *The Destiny*, pp. 42–56; De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, pp. 76–89; Geremek, *L'arrivée des Tsiganes en Italie*, p. 36 ff.

⁷⁹ Scott Macfie, *Gypsy Persecutions*, pp. 71–73, 76.

⁸⁰ De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, p. 78.

effect. Despite severe prohibitions, Gypsies still found protectors, especially among the aristocracy,⁸¹ and against this background sharp conflicts sometimes occurred.⁸² Gypsies found shelter in taverns and private homes because the services they offered were attractive or in demand. On more than one occasion, they also avoided persecution thanks to their lifestyle, cunningness and fraud (e.g. creating false documents and forging passports).⁸³ The effectiveness of repressions depended on the strength of the executive authorities, the severity of the policy against Gypsies, and the degree of antagonism between Gypsies and the rest of the populace.

The Dutch authorities acted the most effectively and firmly. A series of repressive edicts by the Dutch authorities commenced in the first half of the 16th century, but not until the middle of the 17th century were there broad-scale police and military operations and a regular hunt for Gypsies, leading to the country being “cleansed” of Gypsies.⁸⁴ In England, too, increasingly severe laws and actions brought periodic success.⁸⁵ The statute of Henry VIII from 1530⁸⁶ (22 Hen. VII c. 10) ordered Gypsies to leave the kingdom within 16 days on pain of imprisonment. The statute of Philip and Mary of 1554 (1–2 Philip and Mary c. 4) imposes the death sentence on any who disobey, and allows anyone to confiscate the property of Gypsies unless, within 20 days, they “shall leave that naughty, idle and ungodly Life and Company, and be placed in the service of some honest and able Inhabitant

⁸¹ Scott Macfie, *Gypsy Persecutions*, p. 68; Asséo, *Marginalité et exclusion*, pp. 74 ff.

⁸² Cf. J. Ficowski, *Cyganie na polskich drogach* (Cracow, 1965), p. 31; De Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes*, pp. 101 ff.; H. Dubled, “Les incursions des Tsiganes en Alsace du XVe au XVIIIe siècle”, *Etudes Tsiganes*, 7 (1961), no. 3–4, p. 7.

⁸³ The interesting case of the company of 80 *lewde vagabondes* calling themselves Egyptians in England 1576–1577 is described by F.G. Blair, “Forged Passports of British Gypsies in the Sixteenth Century”, *JGLS*, 3, 29 (1950), pp. 131–137.

⁸⁴ Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 436 ff.

⁸⁵ In his famous pamphlet about vagrants (*Caveat*, London, 1567, fol. A III–VI), Thomas Herman indicates the effectiveness of repressions against Gypsies as an example of how to combat vagrancy. A similar opinion is expressed by a Somerset judge, Edward Hexel, in 1596 (*Tudor Economic Documents*, vol. 2, ed. R.H. Tawney, E. Power, London, 1924, p. 344 ff.) and Samuel Rid (*The Art of Juggling*, London, 1612, fol. 82v).

⁸⁶ T.W. Thompson, “Consorting with and Counterfeiting Egyptians”, *JGLS*, 3, 2 (1923), pp. 87–93. Cf. C.J. Ribton-Turner, *A History of Vagrants and Vagrancy, and Beggars and Begging* (London, 1887), pp. 483, 506.

or Inhabitants within this Realm, or that shall honestly exercise himself in some lawful Work or Occupation.”⁸⁷ Finally, the statute of Elizabeth of 1562 (5 Elis. c. 20) removes all doubt that emerged during the implementation of the previous law and states that the ban and expulsion also apply to Gypsies who were born in England and all those who “are or shall become of the Fellowship or Company of the said vagrants, by trans-forming or disguising themselves in their Apparel, or in a certain counterfeit Speech or Behaviour,”⁸⁸ whereby it is enough to be in the company of Gypsies for one month in order to fall under the provisions of the statute. The final paragraph of the statute of 1562 specifies the intention of the legislators: “shall not extend to compel any Person or Persons born within any of the Queen Majesty’s Dominions, to depart out of this Realm of England or Wales, but only to constrain and bind them and every one of them to leave their said naughty, idle and ungodly Life and Company.”⁸⁹ However, as in the case of the English anti-vagrancy laws of the 16th century, the practical implementation of these laws against Gypsies led to severe and bloody repressions.⁹⁰ A report from Yorkshire in 1596 describes how a company of 196 vagrants, probably Gypsies, were imprisoned. One hundred of them faced a tribunal and received the death sentence. Next, “whereupon issued execution, and nine of the most valiant persons having least charge of children, and found by the said inquest to be strangers, aliens born in foreign parts beyond the seas, and none of the Queene Majesty’s natural born subjects, suffered accordingly.” The lives of the remainder of the convicted persons were spared because the public sentence already handed out was intended to terrorize the entire company, apart from which it was taken into account that six children would have been orphaned.⁹¹ Persons who helped Gypsies were also subject to persecution. Court archives confirm these facts, and such persons were subject to various penalties, usually fines. The Church also inflicted such penalties.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 91–92.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 92.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁹⁰ Cf. H.T. Crofton, “Early Annals of the Gypsies in England”, *JGLS*, 1, 1 (1888–1889), pp. 5–24; “Supplementary Annals of the Gypsies in England before 1700”, *JGLS*, 2, 1 (1907–1908), pp. 31–34.

⁹¹ R.O. Jones, “The Mode of Disposing of Gypsies and Vagrants in the Reign of Elizabeth”, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 4th series, 12 (1882), pp. 226–231.

In Aberdeen in 1608, two people performed public penance on their knees for selling food to Gypsies.⁹²

The increasing repression is also evident in the laws of Italy. In Bologna in 1565,⁹³ a *bando contra li Cingani* was declared, which invalidated all previous privileges and concessions granted to Gypsies and ordered them to leave the city and the *contado* within eight days, otherwise the men would be sent to the galleys and the women and boys would receive 50 strokes of the stick. Urban officials and private citizens were permitted to help themselves to Gypsy property without punishment and expel them from the country. One year later, Cardinal Vitellozzo Vitelli, *camerlengo* of the Curate of Rome, issued a similar edict, but this time on direct instructions from the Pope (“per mandato et ordine espresso di Nostro Signore di sua viua voce a noi fatto”), expelling the Gypsies from Rome and from the entire Papal State, whereupon the authorities of Bologna, which belonged to the Papal State, published this edict.⁹⁴ Penalties were made more severe: the punishment during the first eight days after publication was flogging, but afterwards the punishment was the gallows. Similar grades of punishment can be observed in the laws of other Italian cities: confiscation of property, flogging, the galleys, and finally the gallows for men and flogging or the cutting off of an ear for women.⁹⁵ The first Bolognese edict also warns that even Gypsies who own homes in the city or are permanent residents, as well as all those “who dress unlike Gypsies but are Gypsies” are to be expelled – a clearer denial of assimilation and a clearer expression of persecution cannot be imagined. Not even in Spain, where repressions against Gypsies and Moors on account of “purity of blood” was this practiced. Nevertheless the message behind the Italian laws is obvious, especially those relating to the Papal State, and may be regarded as an expression of the Pope’s attitude, and therefore an example for Catholic countries.

⁹² D. Mac Ritchie, “The Crime of Harbouring Gypsies”, *JGLS*, 2, 7 (1913–1914), pp. 243–247.

⁹³ Andreas, “Two Italian Gypsy Edicts”, *JGLS*, 3, 13 (1934), pp. 45–49.

⁹⁴ F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 2, transl. S. Reynolds (London, 1975), p. 742.

⁹⁵ *JGLS*, 1, 1 (1888–1889), pp. 213–220; *JGLS*, 2, 3 (1909–1910), pp. 42–57, 88–111.

We can also note increasing severity in French laws.⁹⁶ Following local and regional actions, decisions to expel gypsies from the kingdom of France were reached early in the 16th century. This expulsion was subsequently laid down in a general edict of 1539. An edict by Charles X of 1561 sets out punishments for Gypsies: two months after its publication, Gypsies are to be caught, men are to have their beards and hair shaved and to be sent to the galleys, and women and children are to have their heads shaved.⁹⁷ The effects of these punishments were short-lived. In the first half of the 17th century, Gypsies were noted among armed formations in various parts of France, serving as mercenaries for various people or even acting on their own. This was a basic form of action by the authorities to restore public order. Service on the galleys for vagrants also included Gypsies.⁹⁸ Colbert finally took firm action. *Sa Majesté voulant purger le royaume de toute cette canaille*, he writes in a letter to one official, exhorting the arrest of Gypsies.⁹⁹ The degree of punishment also increased: men could now be sentenced to the galleys for life, and women and children were to be shut away in hospices. A royal edict of 1682, the culmination of Louis XIV's laws, is an interesting example of the persecution of Gypsies: what is punished is not their ethnic difference, but their criminal way of life. Placing women and children in hospices is a measure of assimilation – assimilation under repression.

Associating Gypsies with vagrancy in general is a universal practice. An example of this is an edict by the Kingdom of Valencia of 1586, which deals with the expulsion of vagrants, supervision over day workers, care for the poor (arts. 60–62) and, finally, the expulsion of Gypsies (art. 64). In this last topic, this edict recalls the edict of 1547 which, to put an end to the crimes committed by Gypsies, orders them to be expelled on pain of flogging. The 1586 edict imposes a more severe punishment of four years in the galleys.¹⁰⁰ The punishments handed out to Gypsies when they were caught were varied. Death by hanging was frequent, though handed down less frequently than foreseen

⁹⁶ This is the subject of an interesting analysis by H. Asséo (Marginalité et exclusion); a review of this legislation can also be found in De Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes, passim*.

⁹⁷ Asséo, *Marginalité et exclusion*, pp. 25 ff.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS esp. 60, fol. 55 (*Real cride y edicte*, print).

in the laws. Lynching was sometimes allowed (in an edict of 1571 the city council of Frankfurt am Main permitted the killing of Gypsies without punishment,¹⁰¹ whilst the *pragmatica* of Philip V of 1745 permitted the immediate killing of a Gypsy leading a vagrant way of life).¹⁰² Corporal punishment and public humiliation were the most frequent punishments: cutting off beards and hair, cutting off ears, branding and public flogging. Service in the galleys was also applied regularly to Gypsies in the 16th century,¹⁰³ as well as forced labour (e.g. in Spain, work in the mines at Almadén).¹⁰⁴ Deportation to penal colonies completed this repertoire of punishment. The repressive laws against Gypsies often justified the measures taken. The motives behind the anti-Gypsy policy in these documents again confirm the basic negative stereotypes about Gypsies.

From a religious angle, one of the motives behind the expulsion of Gypsies was their superstition or beliefs. The penitent way of life which the Gypsies themselves observed in 15th-century Europe, and which at first inspired kindness, came to be used against them. This was what the preamble to the 1539 edict of Francis I, banning Gypsies from France, says: "Whereas certain persons unknown calling themselves *Boesmians* have gathered many times and under the semblance of pretended piety ("*sous umbré d'une simulée religion*") and certain penance, which they claim to practice, and leading a vagrant lifestyle, have entered our kingdom, etc."¹⁰⁵ The penance displayed by Gypsies as an explanation for their wandering life is used to brand them as sinners. A medieval legend says that the nails used to crucify Christ were made by Gypsies; another legend says that Gypsies refused to help Mary during her flight to Egypt. Due to a change of attitude towards vagrants at the beginning of the modern era, the 15th-century tales which gave Gypsies an aura of holiness¹⁰⁶ become, a century later, an

¹⁰¹ Winstedt, *Some Records of the Gypsies in Germany, 1407–1792*, p. 128; R.A. Scott Macfie, *Gypsy Persecutions*, p. 74.

¹⁰² Sánchez Ortega, *Los gitanos*.

¹⁰³ De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, p. 82 ff.; I.A.A. Thompson, "A Map of Crime in Sixteenth-Century Spain", *The Economic History Review*, 21 (1968), p. 263; Sánchez Ortega, *Los gitanos*, pp. 107–108.

¹⁰⁴ R. Pike, "Penal Labour in Sixteenth-Century Spain. The Mines of Almadén", *Societas. A Review of Social History*, 1 (1973), p. 200.

¹⁰⁵ *Recueil général des anciennes lois*, ed. Isambert, vol. 12, p. 566.

¹⁰⁶ Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 38.

excuse for condemning them. The label “pagan” frequently applied to them now serves as an accusation. The Polish 16th century lawyer Jakub Przyłuski wrote: “As for that which they confess openly, in other words their wandering as a way of penance, they are obviously lying, and even the moles see how they forsook old Adam, were converted to Christ, and then reborn to perform good works.”¹⁰⁷ The most frequent justification cited in legislation is the theft committed by Gypsies, their notorious crimes and their vagrant lifestyle. This argument is given in individual indictments against Gypsies and *a fortiori*, when anti-Gypsy regulations form an integral part of the edicts directed against beggars and vagrants in general. As we have seen, legislation on Gypsies is very consistent in this regard: it says that their vagrancy is the basic reason for the repression against them. Thus, the case against Gypsies is exploited as a particular reason for the persecution of vagrants and criminals in general. However, one notes a level of uncertainty from the legislators and an ambiguity in their arguments.

One of the canons of medieval and modern-age laws on beggars and Gypsies was the intention to send them back from where they came, their place of birth or permanent residence. But what about “Egyptians”? Their home country was considered their place of permanent residence. However, ethnic difference could be regarded as a mitigating circumstance because it was associated with a lack of judicial competence by the local authorities. Hence, it was sometimes argued that the Gypsies only pretended to be ethnically different; this is stated in Spanish and in English laws. Therefore, pretending to be ethnically different could be regarded as yet another ruse by vagrants, and therefore an offence. Dutch laws of the 16th century talk of “various people, men and women of all nations who, claiming to be Egyptians or pagans, wander the country.”¹⁰⁸ Sixteenth and 17th-century writings often reject the notion that Gypsies are ethnically apart. The 16th-century French scholar Joachim du Chalard, rejecting the legend about the Egyptian origin of Gypsies, wrote: “In fact, most of them are French or disguised *mallorquins*, who have learned a language

¹⁰⁷ J. Przyłuski (Priluscus), *Leges seu statua ac privilegia Regni Poloniae omnia* (Cracoviae, 1553), 1. I, c. 19; Ficowski, *Cyganie na polskich drogach*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁸ Van Kappen, *Geschiedenis*, p. 608 ff. (*Bijlage XXXVIII, XXXVII*); cf. Heymowski, *Swedish Travellers*, p. 109.

understandable only to them so that they can practice their trade.”¹⁰⁹ Sometimes, this attitude results from a rejection of the misleading tales about the Egyptian provenance of Gypsies, but sometimes it also forms part of the policy of assimilation. This latter aspect is to be found in the edict of Philip II of 1619, which orders Gypsies to settle (in places with more than 1,000 families) and reject their clothes, name and language, on pain of expulsion. The edict of Philip IV of 1633 justifies similar steps, saying that they are not Gypsies “either by birth or by nature,”¹¹⁰ but Spaniards; the *pragmatica* of Charles III of 1783 expresses itself in a similar vein, saying that “los que se llaman y dicen gitanos no lo son ni por origen ni por naturaleza.”¹¹¹ Nevertheless, despite non-Gypsies belonging to Gypsy companies and vagrants pretending to be Gypsies, the ethnic difference of Gypsies and their undetermined political and legal status were an obvious fact and justified repressions. Modern-day developments provided additional arguments; Gypsies were accused of spying for foreign countries, being on the enemy’s side in political conflicts,¹¹² having associations with the Moors in Spain,¹¹³ and of being in league with the Turks as the general enemies of Christendom.¹¹⁴ The fact that the people of those times felt that the Gypsies were ethnically alien is also illustrated by the clear uncertainty of the authorities on how to handle Gypsies who were born in a particular country; could they also be expelled? This was clear in the English edicts cited (especially the statute of Queen Elizabeth of 1562). Gypsies born in a given country were treated differently by its court and police apparatus. “These are French families,” writes a Parisian court official in 1663 about a group

¹⁰⁹ J. du Chalard, *Sommaire exposition des ordonances du roy Charles IX* (Paris, 1562), p. 222; cf. J. Bodin, *Six Books on the Commonwealth*, J. McRae (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

¹¹⁰ Danvila y Collado, *El poder civil en Espana*, III, p. 113.

¹¹¹ Sánchez Ortega, *Los gitanos*, p. 282.

¹¹² For example, the charge against Gypsies in 1533 that they burnt five Hungarian villages on orders from Janos Zápolya led to their execution; H.M.G. Grellman, *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner* (Göttingen, 1787), pp. 55 ff.; Colocci, *Glizingari*, p. 99.

¹¹³ G. Borrow, *The Zincoli. An Account of the Gypsies of Spain* (London, 1923), p. 96 (on the memorandum of J. de Quihones of 1631).

¹¹⁴ This accusation was already made in the statute of Maximilian I from the Augsburg synod; see Winstedt, *Some Records of the Gypsies in Germany, 1407–1792*, p. 128 and *passim*.

of Gypsies wandering through the Ile-de-France, and recommended that they be sent back to their own country (*en leur pays*).¹¹⁵ The courts of Cracow in the 16th century treated “our” Gypsies differently from “other” Gypsies.¹¹⁶ A passport issued to a Gypsy woman, Giovanna di Fiorza in 1675 (in the words of Spanish privilege: *Juana de Forza, de nation Gitana, bien que nacida en Novara*) for herself and her children specified that in Milan, she be treated as a free person and a “patriot” (*sea tenida por Patriota, y libre*),¹¹⁷ which may be regarded as a recognition of the civil rights of a Gypsy born in Spain. These examples confirm the importance of political and ethnic considerations when taking action against Gypsies. Typical anti-Gypsy arguments are set out in a memorandum by the Toledo theologian Sancho de Moncady addressed to Philip II in 1613. Reviewing the question of the origin of Gypsies, he indicates two theories: according to one of them, the Gypsies are foreigners, and according to the other, those Gypsies who are Spaniards are gangs of godless people who recognize neither law nor religion, and who attract more and more Spaniards to vagrancy. All nations treat them with hatred, first as enemies of the countries through which they wander; second as vagrants; third as lechers and idlers; fourth as thieves; fifth for fortune-telling and superstition; sixth as heretics and idolaters, even though they declare themselves Christians; and seventh for using a secret and misleading language. The faults of the Gypsies listed here justify the conclusions that the Toledo professor presents to his king: the complete expulsion of Gypsies from the kingdom because they merit both banishment and death under the law in force.¹¹⁸

Previously we examined the legislative and practical activities against Gypsies only insofar as they described the motives behind the policies and social attitudes against the Gypsies. The persecution of the Gypsies demonstrates both the fanaticism of collective attitudes against them, and acts of solidarity and patronage on the part of various social circles, and allows us to understand the origins of an increase in drastic actions by groups of Gypsies. We have already stressed that

¹¹⁵ M. Molé, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, ed. Champollion Figeac (Paris, 1855), pp. 398 ff.; De Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes*, p. 84.

¹¹⁶ I owe this information to Prof. Hanna Zaremska.

¹¹⁷ Colocci, *Gli zingari*, p. 92, fn. 1.

¹¹⁸ Borrow, *The Zingali*, pp. 156–170.

different communities behaved differently, but we can also state that certain convictions and conceptions were persistent, resulting in the alienation of Gypsies. This can be observed in three dimensions.

In the social dimension, one can say that the change in attitudes towards the Gypsies away from general acceptance towards mistrust and exclusion was parallel to the general change in attitudes towards poverty and vagrancy. Descriptions of Gypsies and anti-Gypsy edicts regularly and constantly repeat that the Gypsies are “superfluous” and of no use to the public interest, which is a classic stereotype against vagrancy. In the case of Gypsies, an additional factor in favour of social exclusion was the trades they practiced on the one hand, and their customs and beliefs on the other. Here it seems that fear of their associations with “unclean forces,” charms and magic was more significant than religious difference. Resolutions by provincial synods in Italy in the second half of the 16th century call for stricter Church control over the religious life of Gypsies. The most prominent feature is the demand that Gypsies abandon their way of life which does not comply with Christian ethics and that support be given for the repressive actions of the lay authorities.¹¹⁹

In the political sphere, there is little evidence that modern Europe created such clear political distinctions that the presence of a stateless people created a sense of alienness associated with Gypsies. Nevertheless, the existence of such a political-state dimension is evidenced by the fact that persons arriving from foreign parts were said to come from a state body or monarchy. The repressive edicts or “passports” issued to Gypsies, and the distinction between “our” Gypsies and “others,” demonstrate an awareness of modern-day political identity to which the existence of Gypsies acted as a kind of obstacle.

Finally, the third dimension, which can be called socio-biological. Here we will ignore the actual genetic status and anthropological-physical characteristics of Gypsies,¹²⁰ and will concentrate only on the impact of these characteristics on human consciousness.

The controversial issue of skin colour already appears in the earliest texts which we have already discussed. The description contained in the *Chronicle of Constance* seems typical: „In 1430, there came black people who called themselves Gypsies and said that they came from

¹¹⁹ Geremek, *L'arrivée des Tsiganes en Italie*, p. 41 ff.

¹²⁰ H. Arnold, *Die Zigeuner* (cf. fn. 3), pp. 262–284.

Lower Egypt.”¹²¹ The continuation of the chronicle is significant in that their presence is associated with the hunger and disease which occurred in Constance in 1438. This combination is not just a question of style, nor a cause-and-effect narrative;¹²² the presence of “dark people” is considered a portent of disaster. The association of Gypsies with natural disasters also occurs in other chronicles. This can be regarded as evidence of the negative symbolism of “dark people.” The report of the Parisian burgher displays the negative aesthetic value of dark-skinned Gypsies. The Basel chronicle describes dark skin as an *ungestalt*. The physical details of their daily life were described with a feeling of disgust; it was noted that they were accustomed to sleeping on the ground or on hay, and that they dressed oddly. The municipal book of Mâcon in Burgundy in 1419 talks of people of horrible appearance who “sleep in the fields like animals,”¹²³ and this comparison appears frequently.¹²⁴ The above-mentioned chronicle of Bologna notes that the Gypsies “eat like pigs.”¹²⁵ The way Gypsies eat is a major component of the common people’s claim that they are “unclean.”¹²⁶ Gypsies are often reported as eating cats and carrion, and in the 17th and 18th centuries they were also accused of cannibalism.¹²⁷ One can deduce that the Gypsies’ attachment to tradition, the use of their own language, a secret system of signs and odd customs created in Europeans a sense of the biological-cultural difference of Gypsies. The legend of the “depravity” of Gypsies, especially female Gypsies, is a tool with which to strengthen that feeling. The incarceration of a Gypsy woman in a Paris hospice in 1688 was justified

¹²¹ *Quellensammlung der badischen Landesgeschichte*, ed. F.J. Mone, vol. 1 (Karlsruhe, 1848), p. 334; Winstedt, *Some Records of the Gypsies in Germany, 1407–1792*, p. 102 ff.

¹²² For example, Winstedt (*Some Records of the Gypsies in Germany, 1407–1792*, p. 103) understands this as an accusation against Gypsies for carrying the epidemic.

¹²³ De Vaux de Foletier, *Les Tsiganes*, p. 18.

¹²⁴ See *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 19, p. 890: “quasi bruta animalia.”

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 18, p. 612: “mangiaveno come porci.”

¹²⁶ Described in the chronicle of Münster as “syn ungetemet volck, bitter und vred, unreinlich und unkuesch”; see Winstedt, *Some Records of the Gypsies in Germany, 1407–1792*, p. 104.

¹²⁷ J. de Quinones in the 16th century places this accusation; see Borrow, *The Zincali*, pp. 89 ff.; the following examples of this accusation: De Vaux de Foletier, *Mille ans*, pp. 186 ff.; C.J. Popp Serboianu, *Les Tsiganes* (Paris, 1930), p. 36 ff., even proves the veracity of this accusation; Kenrick, Puxon, *The Destiny*, p. 33.

as follows: “Elle est Bohémienne et par conséquent très dépravée par habitude et par inclination.”¹²⁸

In these dimensions, the status of Gypsies in the minds of society is reduced to that of pariahs;¹²⁹ they are excluded from the community and denied coexistence. Their efforts to integrate are not approved. Their attempts at adaptation go hand-in-hand with the preservation of their own cultural identity, based on traditional taboos and a physical and ritual fear of contamination caused by direct contact with “unclean” objects and people.¹³⁰ A reason for the separation of the Gypsies is their nomadism. In their case, the “ghetto,” already a means of isolating minority groups, is mobile. Wherever they appear, they are rarely admitted within the settlement, but usually outside its walls. In processes of assimilation, two trends exist together: to accommodate them in separate areas, or to group them in larger communities where they should lose their identity. The migratory way of life of Gypsies and their conservative customs, clothes and culture clearly separate them from the rest of society. Regardless of their pride, honour and other features of Gypsy ethno-centrism, as early as the 16th century they are said to have claimed that they are descended from Abraham and Sarah, whereas everyone else is a bastard descended from Abraham and a servant.¹³¹ The Gypsies are regularly in a situation of material subordination and social inferiority. Even if they gain support by force or terror, they appear to be seeking support. If they steal, then obviously they commit a crime. In a situation of hatred, fear and envy towards Gypsies, which have sometimes led to pogroms and regular manhunts, sociological frustration connected with a breach of the hierarchy does not come into play. When a group is considered “inferior,” in certain situations it finds itself superior.

¹²⁸ Asséo, *Marginalité et exclusion*, p. 47.

¹²⁹ Cf. general remarks of W. Cohn, “La persistance d’un groupe paria relativement stable”, *Etudes Tsiganes*, 16 (1973), nos. 2–3, pp. 5–23; id., *The Gypsies* (Reading, Mass., 1973), p. 68; F. Barth, “The Social Organization of a Pariah Group in Norway”, in: *Gypsies, Tinkers*, pp. 285–299.

¹³⁰ J. Caro Baroja correctly indicates the significance of these attitudes; see Sánchez Ortega, *Los gitanos*, p. 445. Cf. also A. Rao, “Some Manus Conceptions and Attitudes”, in: *Gypsies, Tinkers*, p. 149 ff.

¹³¹ Du Chalard, *Sommaire exposition*, p. 222.

Problem of Impurity in the Minds of Medieval Society

In: *Obecność. Leszkowi Kolakowskiemu w 60. rocznicę urodzin* (London, 1987), pp. 175–182 (Warsaw, 1987).

The criterion of purity and impurity has a natural place in the internal organization of oriental societies.¹ Surrounding the question of “purity” is a subsystem of injunctions and prohibitions which largely dictates the way of life of these societies. This concept is one of the structures of social awareness, and also defines, or rationalizes, the dichotomist demarcation between societies, and occasionally provides the principle with which to establish a social hierarchy. In Hindu society, the opposition of pure and impure leads to the isolation of untouchables from the rest of society and to the inhibition of free contacts between people, but at the same time seems to coincide with the apposition of superior/inferior, thus creating a hierarchy of purity with different levels and a sharp separation from groups who are less pure; in other words, inferior.² This concept demonstrates how far these two categories are intertwined in the minds of society and, in many respects, how contradictory they are, biologically and socially, naturally and culturally. The human concept of purity operates in three spheres: first, hygiene in a broad sense; second, social superiority, i.e. prestige, one’s place in the hierarchy and its reflection in external appearances; and third, moral values. In these three interconnected spheres, the apposition of purity/impurity creates an entire series of categories

¹ L. Dumont, D.F. Pocock, “Pure and Impure”, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 3 (1959), pp. 9–39; L. Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus. Le système des castes et ses implications* (Paris, 1979), pp. 69–85.

² Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus*, p. 84.

whose order stems from a tendency of dichotomist polarization, so frequent in social consciousness. The prime consequence of this is the exclusion of the lowest categories from the main body of society. Each of the groups performs self-affirmation by cutting itself from the lower group, but society affirms its unity by excluding the lowest groups who are identified with impurity and possess no prestige, and are therefore morally reprehensible. Pariahs or the “untouchables” of Hindu caste society, the *eta* or “non-humans” (*hinin*) of Japanese society, and similar groups of “untouchables” in other Asian societies, are objects of segregation in which the regressing hierarchy of the social order is broken; they are burdened with impurity inside and outside, and any contact with them brings the threat of physical and ritual contamination.³ Separating these groups in settlement plans, food production, in matrimony; in other words, in sexual and family relationships, and in all social contacts was supposed to guarantee safety. However, this division persists in social consciousness and in social behaviour and attitudes, and to this day state legislations are powerless against them.

Research into the phenomenon of “untouchability” and into the cultural apposition of purity/impurity refer to the characteristics of the oriental civilization where this occurs. Hindu society is regarded as a classic case: the separation of “untouchables” and the universal criterion of purity are considered component parts of the caste structure and of the religious concept of defilement and purification.⁴ In other societies, one does not find a social context similar to this – impenetrable caste barriers and very poor mobility – but the very fear of defilement and its resultant segregation is inseparably connected with eastern civilizations. No doubt one of the reasons for this is that this phenomenon persists to this day in the Far East, even though it is deeply rooted in the past, and a comparison with the segregationist practices of Western societies (for example, the Negro population in the United States) shows the fundamental difference between East and

³ Herbert Passin (“Untouchability in the Far East”, *Monumenta Nipponica*, 11, 1955, no. 3, pp. 247–267) mentions in this context *peakchong* in Korea and *ragy appa* in Tibet. Cf. also J.D. Donoghue, “An Eta Community in Japan. The Social Persistence of Outcaste Groups”, *American Anthropologist*, 59 (1957), no. 6, pp. 1000–1017.

⁴ Passin, *Untouchability*, p. 248; J.H. Hutton, *Caste in India* (London, 1951), pp. 130, 144, and *passim*.

West. But is this phenomenon really alien to Western civilization? Ever since the times of the *Golden Bough*, ethnological and religious research has transcended the barriers between civilizations. In research into the function of taboos in various cultures and religions, especially into the defence mechanisms that usually surround everything that is sacred, an anthropological concept of purity has appeared in many cultures in various parts of the world.⁵ If one limits them to purity or contamination, then obvious associations with religious symbolism arise. However, it seems that we are dealing with a phenomenon that has quite a broad presence in European culture, even though it has been little noticed until now.

In the great debate on anthropological issues at the beginning of the 20th century, in the differences of opinion between Frazer and Durkheim, the question of impurity was employed to offset “primitive” societies against “civilized” ones. Frazer believed that in primitive societies, the concept of purity was entwined with religions, whilst in modern civilizations it is pushed into the kitchen and bathroom and becomes a question of hygiene. Durkheim, rejecting a straight comparison of magic and religion, demonstrated how magic rituals served to divide society into pure and impure. In this way, the concept of purity also emanated from the opposition of primitive and civilized; the permanent presence of the factor of magic in modern cultures turns this concept into an instrument for understanding European culture.⁶

The concept of impurity functions most of all in ideological discourse. In great religious polemics, we regularly encounter the concept of “purity” and “defilement.” Natalie Davis has highlighted the appearance of the concept of “pollution” in French writings of the 16th century, especially in discourses about popular movements in those times, when the accusations levelled against Protestants included being bearers of dirt and contamination.⁷ In any case, in disputes between Protestants and Catholics, both sides accused each other of “pollution,” whereby one of the chief points of these charges was a transcending of generally-accepted norms of sexual life.

⁵ M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Harmondsworth, 1970).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷ N.Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), especially p. 175 ff.

We find this same element, albeit on a considerably larger scale, in medieval polemics against heresy, where the charge of “impurity” was something to be refuted. Heretics were regularly accused of breaking both religious and social customs. They were accused of defiling the faith by falsifying religious truths, i.e. falsely interpreting them or spreading old “mistakes,” and by employing religious customs different from those commanded by the Church. They were accused of sexual debauchery and licence. Last not but not least, they were charged with violating certain principles of daily life, especially in the dietary sphere.

The application of symbols and concrete facts to the handling of impurity appears clearly in medieval theological discourse. In St. Thomas Aquinas’ treatise on the sacraments and purification according to the Old and New Testaments, both of these elements appear closely intertwined.⁸ First, sins are described, from idolatry and murder to adultery and incest, and bodily impurity which may dwell in humans, animals and objects. In people, impurity may be caused by contact with dirty objects, but corruption (*corruption*) is also a source of impurity. Thus, a corpse is considered impure, because death is corruption, and lepers are also impure because leprosy arises from a “corruption of the humours.” According to Aquinas, women stained with blood (during menstruation) as well as men contaminated with semen (during nocturnal ejaculation) are impure, because “any wetness emanating from a man bears an impure infection” (*immundam infectionem*). This impurity disqualifies participation in rituals and entrance to religious buildings, just as people avoid touching valuable objects with dirty hands. An additional explanation, according to St. Thomas, why blood and sperm are impure is that they were used in sacrifices in pagan cults. He also explains why lepers are impure by the fact that the faithful would avoid attending services through fear of contact with them.

St. Thomas’ treatise attaches primary importance to an analysis of figurative (*figuralis*) descriptions, not literal (*litteralis*) descriptions, of the impurity, defilement and purification that occur in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the severe, and even drastic, presentation of impurity, both physical and spiritual, reveals attitudes and behaviour in the Christian Middle Ages which are similar to the behaviour in other civilizations that one associates with impurity

⁸ *Summa Theologiae*, I, II q. 102 a. 5.

and pollution. There is no doubt that the Old Testament message of impurity made ancient Mediterranean civilizations a taboo subject in Christian theological discourse.⁹ Nevertheless, St. Thomas' treatise is an important document for it expresses the general attitudes and biological dimension of medieval anthropology.

The subject of impurity, pollution and "untouchability" in European mentality and social behaviour requires further research. The rapid process of cultural and social modernization sometimes occludes an understanding of the signs of the past and of former socio-psychological processes; it also discourages the appreciation in European attitudes of elements similar to those which ethnologists perceive in non-European societies.

This realization leads to the interpretation of European culture and its social horizon taking several important directions, similar to those shaped by modern ethnology regarding the observance and breaking of taboos. At this point we can merely discuss them generally, without resorting to examples.

In Christian European civilization this mainly concerns sin, which creates a symbolic and physical framework of defilement, and of moral and material dirt. Although this involves ideological discourse whose effective impact cannot be overestimated, this discourse is nevertheless accompanied by ritual confession and certain other liturgical habits of "purification" or excommunication, which fired the imagination and brought all of these injunctions and prohibitions into people's minds. The most prominent dimension was sex, encumbered with ambivalence coupled with the commandment to procreate and the need to satisfy desire. In traditional attitudes, the blame was placed on the woman, who was under an obligation to purify herself following confinement. This ambivalence also led to the situation where women were required to free themselves from sexual impurity before entering the sacred premises of a church.¹⁰ Medieval stories tell of punishment for those who entered a church in a state of mortal sin or

⁹ This applies especially to the dietary taboos discussed in the Old Testament (cf. S. Stein, "The Dietary Laws in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature", *Studia Patristica*, 64, 1957, no. 2; Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, chapt. III), but the concept of denigration also appears in Classical Greece: L. Moulinier, *Le pur et l'impur dans la pensée des Grecs d'Homère à Aristote* (Paris, 1952).

¹⁰ Cf. R. Caillois, *L'homme et le sacré*, (Gallimard, 1950; Collection Idées, 24), pp. 41 ff.

moral turpitude. The border between moral and physical dirt became blurred: St. Foy punished those who entered the basilica during the day without washing after the sexual act, “even if legitimate.”¹¹ Medieval law permitted divorce in two cases: adultery by women and incest, treating both transgressions as corruption. However, incest was given a broad interpretation, and covered even distant kinships. Marriages between cousins were widespread, and the canonical prohibition was often a convenient pretext for obtaining a divorce.¹²

The abovementioned treatise of St. Thomas attaches great importance to the concept of “corruption,” which is discussed in both physical and oral terms. This applies not only to dirt itself, but also the mechanisms where it is transferred through contact with an infected person. This is a broad scope because apart from dead bodies and attitudes towards them, the treatise also refers to disease as the decomposition of the body. Apart from leprosy, the disease most feared in medieval imagination was the plague, which commenced with the Black Death in the middle of the 14th century. The term “plague” also expressed disgust of human excrement and all effluences of the human body, which were employed in magic and which were not considered harmful until the late Middle Ages or Renaissance.

This leads us to a certain set of criteria which we can describe as biological, and which were used as a pretext to segregate specific groups of people – occupational, social or ethnic – from the mainstream of society. The primary criterion is the category of “dishonourable crafts.” These are listed most extensively in medieval church documents, in which certain trades are considered incompatible with membership of the clergy. A similar attitude is expressed in municipal decrees and professional guild statutes which take a clearly segregationist attitude, because even the descendants of people exercising dishonourable trades were themselves considered dishonourable (in the German lands, this attitude sometimes persisted until the 19th century). This category of tirades included anything connected with blood (butchers, executioners, barbers, surgeons), death and dead bodies (gravediggers, dog catchers, skinnners), dirt and excrement (cleaners, refuse collectors

¹¹ P.A. Sigal, “Un aspect du culte des saints: le châtimeut divin aux XIe et XIIe siècles d’après la littérature hagiographique du Midi de la France”, *Cahiers de Fanjeaux*, 11 (1975), p. 44.

¹² G. Duby, *Les trois ordres*, *passim*.

who also cleaned drains), and persons involved in satisfying human desire (prostitutes, pimps). Here there was an obvious convergence with situations examined by ethnologists; therefore, in the latest research into dishonourable trades in the Middle Ages, reference is made to the traditional obsession with taboos.¹³ The exclusion of lepers, which reached particularly dramatic proportions once the disease was identified, led to the emergence of an entire group of people (*cagots*, *cacous*) who did not have the disease themselves but who were genetically descended from those who did. The trades pursued by excluded people were the above-mentioned dishonourable ones (this persisted until the 19th century, and was even noted in the 20th century).¹⁴ Excluded people pursued excluded trades, and the circle was closed. Once again, we should note the striking analogy with pariahs in Hindu society. Finally, the biological criteria of segregation were also applied to strangers in the Middle Ages. This primarily affected Jews, both in the north, where their segregation was harsher, and in the south, where the Sephardim seem to have been treated better. The fear of contamination through any contact (sexual, or simply a touch), was motivated not just by the differences in religion and customs, but also by biological differences. Municipal decrees in Catalonia forbade Jews from touching bread, meat, fish or dried fruit at markets, and if any Jew contaminated an item with the touch of his hand, he had to buy it.¹⁵ In this way, the status of Jews – and in a cultural sphere that was generally favourably disposed towards them and where many even reached high political and commercial positions – became identified with the “untouchables.” But one encounters a similar attitude of segregation, albeit to a lesser degree, concerning other ethnic groups who were regarded not only as alien, but also as inferior.

¹³ J. Le Goff, “Métiers licites et métiers illicites dans l’Occident médiéval”, in: id., *Pour un autre Moyen Age* (Paris, 1977); B. Geremek, “Rzemiosła niegodne”, report at a colloquium of the Datini Institute, Prato, 1980 (cf. in this anthology: Commercial Activity and Social Exclusion: Dishonourable Professions, pp. 320–337); H. Zaremska, *Niegodne rzemiosło. Kat w społeczeństwie Polski XIV–XVI w.* (Warsaw, 1986).

¹⁴ F. Michel, *Histoire des races maudites de la France et de l’Espagne* (Paris, 1847), p. 1; H.-M. Fay, *Lépreux et cagots du Sud-Quest* (Paris, 1910).

¹⁵ M. Kriegel, “Un trait de psychologie sociale dans les pays méditerranées du bas Moyen Age. Le Juif comme intouchable”, *Annales ESC*, 31 (1976), pp. 326–330; N. Coulet, *Juif intouchable et interdits alimentaires* (Aix-en-Provence, 1978; Senefiance, 5), pp. 207–221.

Fear of contamination through touch or physical proximity in medieval Europe affected various categories of people excluded from society. Special signs or types of clothing were meant to serve as warnings against contact with these groups: both Jews and prostitutes had to wear a visible sign of their provenance, whilst lepers had to warn against their presence by the sound of their rattles. These signs are associated with other “negative stigmas” which not only created a sense of social inferiority among these groups, but also showed that these were some kind of “sub-humans.”¹⁶ Geographical separation was meant to enhance this segregation: such was the intention behind Jewish and red-light districts, and the location of lepers outside a city. The topography of medieval cities also displayed an obvious structure of values. Just as regional or ethnic groups concentrated in districts or particular trades occupied entire streets, so did communities burdened with infamy occupy particular areas.

Therefore, in medieval societies’ sensitivity to the concept of purity/impurity, we perceive an important component of social imagination. The boundaries of a socially organized area are altered by excluding from it those groups who have no place in it. This attitude obviously serves as an instrument with which to create an organized group and consolidate its unity. However, one should note its impact on the hierarchical medieval consciousness, on the caste concept of division between classes and groups, and on the awareness of the nobility and common people employing the principle of blood quality. The criterion of defilement operates primarily in a polar dimension, via exclusion, but it bears a practical significance, little known so far, in the concept of group divisions and their hierarchical structures.¹⁷

Comparative history obviously induces an expansion of the horizon of observation in time and space. But if the historian proceeds from institutions, structures and events to human imagination and behaviour, then this imagination and behaviour prove to be so deeply rooted in time that they inevitably become a problem of human nature.

¹⁶ Cf. E. Goffman, *Stigma* (New York, 1974), p. 4.

¹⁷ Cf. A. Jouanna, *L'ordre social. Mythes et hiérarchies dans la France du XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1977). Recently see: Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (“Auprès du roi, la Cour”, *Annales ESC*, 38, 1983, pp. 21–41) examined life and etiquette at the French court at the time of Saint-Simon from the point of view of the concept of defilement.

Fuerunt Cremati Leprosi. Riot or Conspiracy?¹

In: *Czas – przestrzeń – praca w dawnych miastach. Studia ofiarowane Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. A. Wyrobisz, M. Tymowski, cooperation W. Falkowski, Z. Morawski (Warsaw, 1991), pp. 257–264.

A historian of the Middle Ages is usually faced with laconic descriptions of events which only assume a concrete shape or colour when examined by a scholar or an artist, who impart life and a sense of cause and effect to them. It may happen that the only piece of information that has survived to our times is a sentence like: “In 1321, lepers were burned,” as stated in a French chronicle.² The rest has to be reconstructed by means of hypotheses, or one has to imagine the

¹ The subject matter of this essay employs an extensive literature, but not always of good quality. Of the general works on leprosy and lepers in the Middle Ages, the following deserve mention: H.M. Kölbinger et al., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Lepra* (Zürich, 1972); S.N. Brody, *The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca, 1974); P. Richards, *The Medieval Leper* (Cambridge, 1977); F. Beriac, *Histoire des lépreux au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1988); see also basic works devoted to the “affair of the lepers”: H. Chrétien, *Le prétendu complot des Juifs et des lépreux en 1321* (Châteauroux, 1887); J.M. Vidal, “La poursuite des lépreux en 1321”, *Annales de Saint-Louis des Français*, 4 (1899), pp. 419–478 (and in: *Mélanges de littérature et d’histoire religieuses*, vol. 1, Montpellier, 1899, pp. 483–518); M. Vincent, “Le complot de 1320 contre les lépreux et ses répercussions en Poitou”, *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de l’Ouest*, series 3, 7 (1927), pp. 825–844; G. Lavergne, “La persécution et la spoliation des lépreux à Périgueux en 1321”, in: *Recueil de travaux offerts à M. Clovis Brunei*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1955), pp. 107–113; M. Barber, “Lepers, Jews and Moslems: The Plot to Overthrow Christendom in 1321”, *History*, 66 (1981), pp. 1–17; G. Pichon, “Quelques réflexions sur l’affaire des lépreux de 1321”, *Sources*, 13 (1988), pp. 25–30.

² *Majus Chronicon Lemovicense, a Petro Coral et aliis conscriptum*, in: *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 21, p. 788 (incorrect date originally given: MCCC).

causes of such an event, or dismiss it altogether as made up because it is improbable. But this time the sources of information are exhaustive, descriptions appear in many chronicles, and archives come to our assistance. Nevertheless, many doubts remain, rendering the event unlikely. Until the middle of the 14th century, when the first wave of the plague reaped an enormous harvest, the most terrible disease in medieval Europe was leprosy. It is believed to have spread in the 8th century, before the Crusades, to which the spread of this disease from the East to Europe is generally attributed. Leprosy remained present in Europe for many centuries, until it finally disappeared at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries.

For medieval society, leprosy was the most terrible disease imaginable, arousing both pity and dread. In the 12th and 13th centuries, leprosy hospices appeared en masse in Christian Europe.³ Located outside settlements, sometimes similar to other hospices of this period, they often consisted of a group of huts around a chapel and thus became part of the medieval landscape. The creation of leprosy hospices was an obvious act of self-defence because everyone knew that leprosy was infectious, and justification for the isolation of lepers could be found in the Holy Scriptures. But at the same time, it was an act of charity and collective aid for those afflicted. Through gifts, donations and bequests, leprosy hospices accumulated considerable wealth with which to maintain their inmates. Additional funds were obtained by special collectors, and lepers themselves appeared on the streets, which the authorities did not prevent, asking for alms or accompanying the collectors in order to arouse pity. Lepers were compelled to use wooden rattles with which to warn of their approach; they were not allowed to touch anyone or anything and they could not eat or drink together with uninfected people.

They were excluded from social life. Once the disease was diagnosed, a leper forfeited his or her rights, property and family, and the right to pursue a trade (except for specific trades regarded as dishonourable). Lepers were treated as the living dead. Diagnosis of the disease was accompanied in the 15th century by a special liturgy of “separation”⁴

³ E. Jeanselme, “Comment l’Europe au Moyen Age se protégea contre la lèpre”, *Bulletin de la Société d’Histoire de la Médecine*, 25 (1931), pp. 1–155.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64; J. Imbert, *Les hôpitaux en droit canonique* (Paris, 1947), pp. 169–173, 305–309; F. Bériac, “Mourir au monde. Les ordines de séparation des lépreux

similar to a funeral: some liturgical books even stated that lepers be brought in front of a symbolic open grave in a cemetery. The severity of social exclusion and the accompanying church ritual of “separation” did not always lead to complete isolation from uninfected people. Leprous kings and princes were not confined to leprosy hospitals, and common lepers were also to be found living in towns and villages. But there is no doubt that the general tendency was separation, and that in the minds of society, a leper was the epitome of danger and disgust. Isolde could not have met a fate worse than being placed in the hands of lepers.

There was seldom an alternative. Medieval medical handbooks described in detail the external signs of the disease on the basis of which a diagnosis was made.⁵ A leper’s face was likened to the mouth of a lion, the skin blackened, the eyes and ears rounded, the eyebrows bare, the nostrils extended, the voice hoarse and nasal, the body covered in ulcers, and the breath stale. Guidon de Chauliac, the author of a famous 14th-century treatise on surgery, added to the above features the fact that lepers were usually “cunning, deceitful and impetuous, and enjoy interfering in other people’s business.”⁶ So when the French king Louis the Pious asked his courtier and future biographer, Joinville, whether he would prefer to become a leper or commit a mortal sin, that brave knight replied that he would rather commit thirty mortal sins than succumb to leprosy, whereupon the pious monarch explained to him that leprosy ends when a man dies, whereas mortal sin burdens him until the Last Judgment.⁷

Medieval people had no doubt that leprosy was infectious, so it is interesting that acts of mercy included serving lepers and even kissing them. The canonization of Louis d’Anjou is accompanied by the tale of his younger brother Robert, duke of Calabria. On Maundy Thursday, Louis and his brother were washing the feet of the poor, who included a leper, a tall man with a body disfigured by the disease and covered in sores. Duke Robert relates how his brother forced him, trembling with fear of infection, to kiss the leper’s fat and sore-ridden cheeks, and had the impression that a fire from an oven would not have been

en France aux XVe et XVIe siècles”, *Journal of Medieval History*, 11 (1985), pp. 245–268.

⁵ *Opera Arnaldi de Villa Nova* (Lugduni, 1509), book 214.

⁶ G. de Chauliac, *La Grande Chirurgie*, ed. E. Nicaise (Paris, 1890), p. 309.

⁷ J. de Joinville, *The life of St. Louis*, transl. R. Hague from the text ed. by N. de Wailly (Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 7 ff.

more fiery than the leper's breath.⁸ The harsh reality of this tale was meant to highlight the boundless or heroic compassion of the duke, but also to disclose the fear and revulsion which medieval society felt towards leprosy.

The "affair of the lepers" in 1321 possesses rich source material, probably because this was an unusual event. But what is striking is that all the tales contained in Latin and French writings of that period contain very similar stereotypes about lepers and similar praises of the just punishment that befell them in 1321. Let us examine a work by Bernard Gui called *Flores chronicorum*, a popular historical compilation which was first issued shortly after 1311, before the incident, but which was later updated. Gui (1266–1331) was a Dominican living in the south of France. He spent many years as an inquisitor in Toulouse, and described his experiences in the famous inquisitor's handbook.

"In the year of our Lord 1321," Bernard begins, "a plot by lepers against healthy people was discovered through the grace of God."⁹ Persons sick in body and demented in mind organized a plot and resolved to put specially-prepared poisonous powders in springs, rivers and wells. Healthy people drinking of these waters were to die from the poison or contract leprosy. In this way, there were to be fewer and fewer healthy people and more and more lepers. The chronicler discloses the purpose of the plot with disgust: "It may seem incredible, but they wanted to gain control over towns and castles, and even distribute power among themselves conferring upon themselves titles of rulers, lords and princes of various lands."

But as to the manner in which the plot was discovered, Gui and other chroniclers remain laconic and do not go into detail. Instead, Gui reports that during interrogations, the perpetrator and other accomplices revealed that the plot had been planned and prepared much earlier. Two years previously, meetings of leaders (or the elders) of lepers had been held in various places and a council of lepers – the leadership of the entire movement – had been appointed. Another French chronicler adds that these "elders" assembled from all corners of the Christian world to attend four assemblies, and only two leprosy hospices in England declined to send their

⁸ J. Paul, "Evangélisme et franciscanisme chez Louis d'Anjou", *Cahiers de Fanjeaux*, 8 (1973), p. 396.

⁹ B. Gui, *Flores chronicorum*, in: *Recueil des Historiens*, p. 732.

emissaries.¹⁰ It is these two centres of resistance that could have disclosed the plot. In any case, in the reports by the chroniclers, the lepers' plot appears as an international conspiracy, for the purpose was to poison the waters of all France and Germany,¹¹ and of the titles which the lepers wished to gain, the chroniclers mention the thrones of France, Germany and England, and the counties of Flanders and Blois.¹²

This description of the murky conspiracy is followed in the chronicles by reports on royal decrees and on the reprisals against lepers. In Poitiers on 21 June 1321, King Philip issued a special decree.¹³ Referring to the discovery of the lepers' plot against Christians, the king ordered that all those who admitted guilt be burned, and the rest tortured so that they reveal the truth, after which they would also be burned. Children aged up to fourteen and those who did not confess despite torture were to be jailed for life. The property of the lepers, and especially the worldly assets of the hospices, were to be given to the royal treasury.

Thus, property was confiscated and the lepers were burned *en masse*. The repressions were huge: In Poitou alone, out of 149 hospices, only seven survived the catastrophe.¹⁴ Lepers were burned in Carcassonne and Toulouse, and there were massacres and persecution in Artois and Burgundy.¹⁵

The chroniclers' reports about the lepers' plot could be regarded as a figment of the imagination or a tale circulating among people; there are many cases of such literary invention in the Middle Ages. But in this case, the reports are backed by documents in the archives. The inquisitional register of 1318–1325, reporting the case of Jacques Fournier, later to become Pope Benedict XII, contains evidence from a certain Wilhelm Agassa, a leprous cleric and manager of the Lestang leprosy hospice near Pamiers.¹⁶ He gave evidence three times: for

¹⁰ *Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, ed. H. Géraud (Paris, 1844), p. 34.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31: "per totam Franciam et Germaniam."

¹² *Chronique Anonyme*, in: *Recueil des Historiens*, p. 152.

¹³ H. Duplès-Agier, "Ordonnance de Philippe le Long contre les lépreux", *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, Seria 4, 3 (1857), pp. 265–272; P. Lehugeur, *Histoire de Philippe le Long* (Paris, 1897), p. 425.

¹⁴ Vincent, *Le complot de 1320*, p. 829.

¹⁵ G. Ducoudray, *Les origines du Parlement de Paris* (Paris, 1902), p. 363.

¹⁶ *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier, 1318–1325*, ed. J. Duvernoy, vol. 3 (Toulouse, 1965), pp. 135–147.

the first time on 4 June 1321 before a special delegate of the bishop of Pamiers, for the second time on 11 June before an official sent by the bishop, and for the third time on 6 July, on this occasion before the bishop himself. There are certain discrepancies between these three testimonies: in the later two he changed his mind about some of the lepers he mentioned by name, but considerably expanded his description of the plot itself. The fact that he was questioned three times was not normal inquisitional routine; this may suggest that Agassa's testimony was considered doubtful, at least by the bishop himself. At the start of the final questioning, the bishop asked him whether he had provided his evidence under torture. Agassa denied that he had done so under torture, but said that he had given evidence already after being tortured, and that he had repeated his evidence that same day on the market square in front of the inquisitor of Carcassonne and in the presence of many people, without coercion. So he was tortured, but only before the first, decisive testimony. Later he was not tortured. He himself said: "absque omni terrore tormentorum," without being threatened with torture; and he related the plot.

In his first evidence, after his torture, he spoke only about the poisoning of the wells and springs by various lepers over the preceding few months. Some of this testimony, targeted at specific people, he later withdrew. In the next two testimonies, he speaks only about himself.

In the weeks of the Assumption in 1320, a messenger brought him a letter from the manager of the leprosy hospice in Toulouse, inviting him to a meeting that was due to be held there the following Sunday. He went, and in the refectory he met supervisors and representatives of lepers from Toulouse, Cahors, Limoges, Agen and other areas. Several dozen people attended the meeting (once he says 40, later he says 50 or 60), of whom he personally knew only the host of the meeting and the manager of the hospice in Savardum, with whom he had come to the meeting. At the door was a "tall, dark man" in a helmet with a sword in his hand. Jordan, manager of the Toulouse hospice and host of the meeting, made everyone swear an oath of secrecy, and then explained the purpose of the meeting. "You know," he said, "that healthy Christians hold us sick people in contempt, do not allow us to their meetings, push us aside and expose us to ridicule. Therefore, key representatives of lepers [or perhaps elders – the Latin text talks of *maiores*] have decided to poison the healthy

Christians of the entire world.” Apparently, the whole venture had been resolved at other meetings before the one in Toulouse, but Agassa said he had never attended any such meeting before. Jordan also told the assembled people that the king of Grenada and sultan of Babylon would support them via the head of the hospice in Bordeaux, on condition that the lepers renounce the faith and laws of Christ, which was to occur shortly, at a “general assembly” of lepers from all over the world, in the presence of the king and sultan. The lepers were to obtain rule over the lands where their homes were: Agassa himself was to be given Pamiers and the entire county of Foix. After the two days of talks in Toulouse, the lepers were given bags of poison (composed of powdered church wafers mixed with the powdered skins of snakes and lizards and mixed with excrement).¹⁷ Then everyone returned home, scattering the poison in the bags along the way and where they lived. Thus, Agassa disclosed an international conspiracy, with the support of Muslim rulers, to eliminate Christians, destroy their faith and place in the hands of lepers that part of the world that was in the hands of Christians. Special letters have even survived in the French archives, written by the kings of Grenada and Tunis and translated into French on 2 July 1321 by a certain doctor, Master Pierre de Akkad, in the presence of the bailiff of Mâcon and bearing the seal of this royal official.¹⁸ The king of Granada confirms that the lepers were already given the gold they were promised, and in his letter the king of Tunis claims that the plan realized with the help of lepers and Jews was going ahead. Jews, by the way, are mentioned in some of the chronicles. According to one of them, the king of Granada first approached the Jews with the suggestion of poisoning the Christians, and it is they who recommended that the lepers carry out this task and organize the first meeting.¹⁹ Alleged letters from Arab rulers – the forgery of documents was a common medieval practice – were meant to lend credence to these allegations.

¹⁷ *Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, p. 32.

¹⁸ *Musée des Archives Nationales, Documents originaux de l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1872), no. 328, p. 182; see J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, XXV (Venice, 1782), col. 569–572; Chrétien, *Le prétendu complot*, p. 17.

¹⁹ *Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, p. 33; *Chronique parisienne anonyme de 1316 à 1339*, ed. A. Hellot, *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île de France*, 11 (1895), pp. 57–59; see E. Wickersheimer, *Les accusations d'empoisonnement portées pendant la première moitié du XIV^e siècle contre les lépreux et les Juifs* (Anvers, 1927).

The testimony of Wilhelm Agassa is a dramatic document, but by no means exceptional. In the archives of the town of Cahors, in the south of France, was a roll of parchment several meters long, containing transcripts of the interrogation of lepers in 1321, but the roll was already reported lost early this century and has never been found.²⁰ One chronicler notes that the king was sent a transcript from the interrogation of a “leader” of the lepers who told the judge in Parthenay that a certain rich Jew had given him ten pounds of poison for the water and had promised him more money if he talked other lepers into doing likewise.²¹ The convergence in time of all this evidence and the royal decree points to a clear cause and effect relationship: a plot was uncovered and those responsible punished. But in reality, it was different. The alleged effect preceded the alleged cause. If there was any machination, it led to the court of the kings of France.²²

Philip V, known as the Tall, second son of Philip the Fair on the French throne, was in difficulties. He was considering a new crusade, but the country’s economic condition forbade it, the peasants were revolting, and prophets and apostles were appearing in many places.²³ More than ten years earlier, Philip the Handsome, to free himself from debt and replenish the royal coffers, had accused the Order of Knights Templar of heresy, sorcery and connivance with Saracens, as a result of which several dozen Templars had been burned and the order’s assets confiscated. Court advisors may have suggested a similar idea to Philip the Handsome’s son. Much indicates that from 1319 onwards, the king’s emissaries toured the country and spoke of a secret conspiracy involving Jews, lepers and Saracen rulers.²⁴ In early 1320, an epidemic broke out – considered the result of poisoning. The king confiscated the money and property of the Jews and the property of the lepers’ hospice. In 1322, royal officials were still ordered to collect evidence from lepers regarding the poisoning of the waters, probably in order to create an excuse for the confiscation and persecution already carried out. However, the matter ended

²⁰ E. Albe, *Les lépreux en Quercy* (Paris, 1908), p. 15.

²¹ *Chronique de Guillaume de Nangis*, p. 32.

²² C. Ginzburg, “The Witches’ Sabbat. Popular Cult or Inquisitorial Stereotype”, in: *Understanding Popular Culture*, ed. S.L. Kaplan (Berlin, 1984), p. 42 (this was really a plot, but against lepers and Jews).

²³ P. Alphanbéry, *La chrétienté et l’idée de croisade*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1959), p. 258.

²⁴ Vincent, *Le complot de 1320*, p. 825.

there, and ten years later the pope ordered an investigation into the persecution of the lepers, and the property of the hospices was restored to them. Jacques Fournier, now as Benedict XII, ordered the Archbishop of Toulouse to commence such an investigation and decreed that the old accusations were wrong. A time of rehabilitation and reparations came.

But was the whole lepers' plot merely a deliberate machination invented and realized by the authorities? The chronology of events denies this. The madness of persecution began before the royal edict of June 1321. In the previous December, there had been a dispute before a court regarding authority: a bishop had accused a certain lord of sending a leper to the stake and imprisoning many others, which was a breach of the Church's authority.²⁵ That same year, 1320, many thousands of insurgent peasants marched through France, demanding battle with the enemies of the faith and the liberation of the Holy Land. The route taken by this fanatical crusade of paupers was marked by massacres not only of Jews, but also of lepers.²⁶ Thus, one year before the royal decree, lepers' hospices were burned, and those for whom Christian charity required care were consigned to the flames. The peasant units were overcome, but the hospices continued to burn, this time in defiance of the law, to the orders of and for the benefit of rulers, accompanied by broad propaganda and the evidence of lepers themselves.

We know little about those who protested and stood in defence of the lepers. A few years later, 1325, a woman from Montpellier, the soothsayer Boneta Prous, declared before judges that the massacre of the lepers had been inspired by Satan, just like Herod's massacre of the innocents.²⁷ However, she was a heretic.

Many facts connected with the events of 1320–1321 remain obscure despite modern research. Sociologists and psychologists suggest possible interpretations of the whole event: collective behaviour and individual attitudes. But the simplest question remains: why did people confess to crimes that they did not commit? Why did the

²⁵ H.M. Fay, *Lépreux et cagots du Sud-Ouest. Notes historiques, médicales, philologiques suivies de documents* (Paris, 1910), no. 181.

²⁶ Alphandéry, *La chrétienté*, p. 261.

²⁷ W.H. May, "The Confession of Prous Boneta, Heretic and Heresiarch", in: *Essays in Medieval Life and Thought Presented in Honor of Austin Patterson Evans*, ed. J.H. Mundy, R.W. Emery (New York, 1955), p. 12.

rumour of a conspiracy bear such fruit? Why did compassion towards those who were frequently called “good people,” or sometimes even “Christians,” develop into hatred? How does one explain the Church’s long silence – did it believe the rumours and accept the *raison d’état*? And why did differences cause fear, disgust and the frenzy of extermination?

We do not know if there is a single grain of truth in the lepers’ plot. All we know for certain is that they were burned in 1320 and 1321.

Commercial Activity and Social Exclusion – Dishonourable Professions

Paper delivered at the congress of commercial history in Prato in 1980: “Activité économique et exclusion sociale – les métiers maudits”, in: *Atti della XII Settimana di Studi – Gerarchie economiche e gerarchie sociale*, ed. A. Guarducci (Firenze, 1990), pp. 797–816. The basis for this publication is a Polish manuscript of the text (the archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre) with incomplete footnotes; a list of the works cited in the footnotes is to be found at the bottom of this article.

The valuation of work in the ideology and attitudes of European society has been a long and slow process. In feudal society, the disgust towards physical work inherited from ancient times found new inspiration and support in aristocratic structures, as well as in the ideological attitudes held by the Church. Medieval Christendom maintained an ambivalent attitude towards work. The teachings of the Scriptures, the lives of the Apostles and the rules of monastic life were unambiguous and made the commandment to work an integral part of the condition of those who had not been accorded a different function because of their birth, privilege, or sacrament. At the same time, association of the necessity of work with original sin generated a type of moral condemnation or disgust of work. However, this ambivalence was not a problem in the medieval agricultural community, in which work was included in the social hierarchy; in other words, it was connected to the relationship between lord and vassal. This situation changed with the development of towns at the start of our millennium. Slowly and with some resistance, Christian civilization accepted the new type of relations between people, in which commodities and markets began to play an increasing role and money and profit became the yardstick for human ambitions and achievements. The moral acceptance of these new phenomena lagged far behind the social reality.

The progressive division of labour in medieval society led to strict vocational specializations within towns. The structure of these specializations depended on the town's economy and population. In the largest centres, differences appeared between particular groups of specialists in trade and in the handicrafts. Specialization in trade was not such a "group-forming" process, but the creation of specializations in handicrafts was dictated by the requirements of production itself, and by the organization of craft guilds. Craft specialization depended on the size of a town and on its links with the market. In Paris in the middle of the 13th century, over 100 trades had their own statute, and in Venice the number exceeded 140. The divisions of production and corporate status required a certain hierarchy. This depended on the state of the municipal economy, on the wealth of a particular trade and, in the case of production branches involving specialization in various stages of production, also on the place of the trade in the production cycle. This structure of importance and prestige also changed in line with the development of cities and social movements, as a result of which the nature and composition of municipal authorities also changed. In each city, the richest and most powerful guilds aimed to capture the poorest and weakest ones.

The arrangement of trades in a strict hierarchy occurring in Italian cities was not typical of medieval guilds; the stiff structure of 21 larger, medium and minor *arti* in 13th-century Florence was due to the fact that each one of them encompassed several professions, and the very principle behind their organization seemed to have a close connection with political life. A general phenomenon was the supremacy of certain professions or guilds in municipal life, which was expressed in access to authority in a city where the mercantile oligarchy had collapsed, but primarily in the priority of certain guilds and trade associations in taking part in church processions and urban festivities. In London, 12 large guilds, each with its own coat of arms, separated themselves from the remaining 50 which had no right to their own coat of arms. In Basle, the leading guilds were known as *Herrenzünfte*.

In this hierarchy of the division of labour, a fundamental role was played by three factors: the wealth of a given trade, its place in the process of production and supply, and its involvement in the life of the city, especially in its administration. The hierarchy of urban society depended on these economic and political factors.

The concept of *inhonesta mercimonia* used by medieval theologians and lawyers concealed both factors. In the *Decretum Gratiani*, canonical law defined as less worthy those trades that were irreconcilable with membership of the clergy. *Privilegium fori*, which excluded the clergy from the authority of lay courts, applied, as far as we know, to a very broad circle of people, including clerics with only a low rank. Regarding the clergy, the principle was gradually formed whereby they should not perform lay occupations at all. As early as in the 13th century, in some parts of France there existed a rule which said that employment as a merchant or artisan led to the loss of one's "clerical privilege." But it was difficult to apply this rule to the multitudes of *tonsurati* who were obliged to eke out an existence practicing these very occupations. Nevertheless, certain types of occupation inevitably led to a loss of privileges.

This applies primarily to usury and harlotry. Court archives of the 14th and 15th centuries in particular include numerous examples of clerics who were considered "false" because they worked as pimps. But in fact, lists of occupations prohibited to clerics contained virtually every single municipal trade of this period. Legislation exhibits a tendency to make the clerical profession independent of lay society in the dual sense of the term, as a profession and as a calling. But one also observes a general mistrust on the part of agrarian societies towards urban occupations, as well as the impact of the low esteem of "mechanical occupations" on aristocratic and intellectual communities, as we have already seen. But certain significant leitmotifs can also be distinguished in this series of injunctions and prohibitions.

Apart from merchants and usurers, we find occupations obviously connected with urban society such as butcher, surgeon, barber, laundry worker, washer, dyer, weaver, potter and leatherworker. But millers, innkeepers and bakers also appear on the list of forbidden trades. It is worth noting that in the case of the "food" trades, the main concern was those trades that were not strictly urban. Condemnation of the occupation of innkeeper seems obvious in the context of the Church's traditional view of taverns as dens of sin and devilish temptation; the same applies to millers to a certain extent, because mills were the sites of parties and entertainments, not to mention prostitution, as a result of which they were often a target of attacks by preachers and moralists. Finally, there is the occupation of executioner, which appears on the list of occupations forbidden to the clergy more often than one

would expect. The fact that this occupation was not always mentioned in synod statutes may be due to the obviously “inconvenient” status of this occupation and the fact that it was virtually never practiced by clerics. Synod statutes and legal documents of the 13th and 14th centuries prohibit other trades. Thus, the statute of the provincial synod of Burgas in 1280 lists: furriers, tailors, leatherworkers, potters, innkeepers and butchers among *vilia official*. Synod statutes of Arras from around 1275 list among *inhonesta mercimonia*: weavers, traders (*mangones*), masseurs, butchers, dyers, cake sellers, tailors, skinners “and others” engaged in “vile occupations “like these.

The engagement of clergy in lay occupations was a constant subject of attention from central Church authorities. They were mainly concerned about a “vagrant” way of life (13th-century local statutes of the French church on the subject of clerics-vagrants treated this subject very harshly). The illustrious canonist Cardinal Hostiensis, rebuking vagabond clerics who spent their days in taverns playing dice and indulging in entertainment, suggested a deadline beyond which the continuation of this lifestyle would genuinely result in a loss of clerical privileges. In a decree at the end of the 13th century, Boniface VIII said that if a cleric acts as juggler, vagrant or clown for one year, he will automatically lose his privileges. If Hostiensis left a condemnation of the life of cleric-vagrants to the moral sphere, a papal decision not only clarified the concepts and lay down when a default occurred, obviously connected with legislative discourse, but also described these occupations as unworthy of clerics.

In the early 14th century, the great synod of Vienna generally considered the question of occupations that were unworthy of clerics. Apart from the occupations covered by *incompatibilitas*, the synod mentioned others, for French church legislation traditionally condemned a broader list of prohibited occupations. The treatise on French common law by Jean Boutiller entitled *Somme rural* lists the occupations which lead to the loss of clerical privileges. They are: *jongleur, cappuleur, gouliard, joueur de dez, yvrogne, bordelier, houlrier, tavernier, cabaretier, maquerel, boucher, foulon, barbier, ribault en chemise, joueur en place commune, enchanteur, sorcier, vuideur d'aisemens, putier, diffameur de diffamations publiques*. A similar list, albeit shorter, was set forth by Jacques d'Ableiges in his treatise on common law, in which he states that clerical privilege may not be held by “*jongleurs, bateleurs et joueurs de corde et d'autres jeux diffamez,*” as well as by “*escorcheurs, boucheurs, couratiers, clerks de taverne*

et moult d'autres personnes diffamez." The occupations mentioned in these two lists can be described in three categories: the first category is performed by jugglers, storytellers and wandering artists; the second is regarded as immoral behaviour; and the third category comprises municipal trades considered degrading. Jacques d'Ableiges does not take the second group into account at all. Both lists omit usury and armed robbery (or the soldier's craft in general), which of course are also reprehensible for a cleric.

The list of undignified trades underwent change during the practical enforcement of canonical law and was a subject of constant interest and interpretation by 13th- and 14th-century commentators. Subjects under consideration included the wearing of clothes fit for a cleric, the need to issue a single or several "reprimands" to a cleric before depriving him of his status, and the recognition that the very pursuance of certain occupations automatically leads to a loss of these privileges. In practice, during life in the late Middle Ages, the prohibitions of canonical law and of synod statutes were breached. Court registers provide examples of bankers who did not forfeit their *privilege fori* at all, and one also encounters clerics who were engaged in trade or ran taverns. However, these synod decisions and legal provisions may be regarded as evidence of the persistence of certain prejudices and attitudes and of a gradual adaptation to the social reality.

Jacques Le Goff believes that the medieval prohibition on clerics pursuing occupations unworthy of their status is typical of that era and reflects the real hierarchy of values and dignity of the various professions. In the case of France, municipal documents from this era do not allow a comparison of the rich synod legal documents with similar secular legislation. Urban patronage carefully guards the narrow entitlement to municipal privileges, and conflicts and controversies regarding the right to participate in urban administration often create the basis for municipal social movements. Municipal laws restricted passive voting rights to prosperous burghers, and even to the elites. Depending on the balance of forces in particular cities, craftsmen were generally barred from municipal authority and privileges; sometimes only a few oracular trades could participate in authority. In some cases, entire groups of active traders were barred.

In this variable hierarchy of prestige, depending on the structure of production in a given city, exclusion is not described precisely. Apart from church sources, there are no lists of "dishonourable

professions” the pursuit of which carried clear legal sanctions. But in practice, such evidence can be seen. Jean Lestocquoy has proved that in Arras until the 13th century, persons considered dishonourable were barred from participating in the municipal authorities. In 1535, a certain local innkeeper, Jean Sarrazin, was appointed a magistrate by the governor of Arras. The bench protested against this in defence of its autonomy, but the reason for the protest was that Sarrazin was pursuing a “dishonourable” profession: “Il est hostelain ten ant exchine publicq quy est manière de vivre vil et tenant table d’hoste à ung chascun venant logier en sa maison.” Here can be seen a condemnation of the occupation of innkeeper as is found in canonical law. It is also worth noting that the above innkeeper must have had sufficient wealth and prestige to find support from the governor. His son, by the way, embarked upon a clerical career and became archbishop of Cambrai, to which his father’s profession was no obstacle. In 1643 in Arras, access to public office was barred to all “personnes de condition vile et objecte,” which in practice disqualified anyone running a store or workshop. Twenty years later, the situation was different: in 1665, one-third of the magistrates’ bench of Arras was composed of merchants. The example of Arras cast doubt on whether this was indeed an extension of the canonical doctrine of dishonourable occupations. Rather, this displays the functioning of a certain stereotype, but this time without any social reference. The exclusion of people of “vile condition” is connected with the general nature of social consciousness at this time, but does not refer to any specific occupations which could form the basis of this vile or “dishonourable” condition. The series of synod resolutions and canonical law provisions is not continued in the secular customs of the modern age, at least with reference to the whole of Europe.

However, it does manifest itself in the documents of the municipal guilds in German lands. The guild statutes repeated everywhere that access to the crafts is only for people who are honourable and of good birth, which disqualified illegitimate descendants. In conflicts between trades, especially those of a similar nature, access to a trade was barred to those already practicing a different trade; sometimes this included the parents of a candidate applying to join a guild. Conflicts between burghers and citizens could lead to similar decisions where residents of the outskirts were not admitted to privileges and certain municipal tasks. In German municipal and guild statutes, a concern for the

high dignity of craftsmanship was also illustrated by a prohibition on certain groups from pursuing specific professions. This had practical repercussions regarding access to particular guilds, participation in municipal ceremonies, and the hierarchy of places in church, marriage and family and neighbourhood ties.

Apart from children, priests and illegitimate offspring, the statutes of individual guilds excluded all dishonourable people from gaining master's qualifications in the occupations discussed below. The goldsmiths of Cologne in the 15th century barred the children of leatherworkers, wandering players and weavers. Due to the considerable mobility of the artisan community, especially during the period of apprenticeship, it became the rule that a candidate for apprenticeship had to produce a document from his place of origin, certifying that he was of "honourable" birth. Documents of this type from Hamburg from 1472–1525 refer to the evidence of older people and established residents who had sworn under oath that the candidate was a *tüchtige, fromme Gesel* – properly born, of "honourable" parents, free, and not the child of a leatherworker, tanner, weaver or wandering player. A similar document issued in Hildesheim in 1681 states that its bearer is of respectable birth and that "auch Er und Seine Eltern Niemandes loht noch Eigen, noch wendischer Geburt, auch keines Zölners, Müllers, Baders, Bartschlehrers, Pfeifers, Leinewehbers, Schäffers oder sonst eines anders verdächtigten argwöhnischen geschlechts." The additional feature here, the declaration that the candidate is not of Slavic origin, is nothing unusual, often appearing in territories colonized by German peoples or on the Slavic-German borderlands: Slavic origin was clearly considered "dishonourable." The following long list of trades which, if practiced, would cause hereditary disgrace is close to the classic canon but by no means exhaustive. Other guild statutes, whereby German certificates of this nature apply to northern cities more often than southern ones, also include other trades. Similarly, state legislation, aiming to restore honour to bad artisans, and German lawyers in the 17th and 18th centuries, extended this list, adding new trades. The list includes:

- Executioners and their helpers, and sometimes other public officials including court clerks and prison wardens.
- Gravediggers. Even though this work was performed by church servants, church decrees specified that they were to be pious and decent people (an instruction by the Church of St. Catherine in Hamburg

in 1720); the work of gravediggers made them particularly feared when there was an epidemic, and often led to violence and lynching. In Wrocław in 1606, a gravedigger and his family were charged with poisoning a well.

— Butchers. Although this trade was prosperous and even prestigious in the late Middle Ages, butchers and their assistants directly engaged in the slaughter of animals were treated with suspicion.

— Tanners. This trade was incorporated in municipal society, but it still had a bad reputation because in involved contact with dead animals.

— Bath managers, considered suspicious because bath houses were often the scene of immoral goings-on. Both in municipal and in state legislation, this profession was introduced to the municipal system of guilds (a royal decree of 1406 orders that bath managers on the territory of the Reich be treated on a par with other artisans).

— Barbers. The above-referenced guild and municipal documents mention this occupation as dishonourable almost as often as that of executioner. A factor against barbers was that they engaged in quasi-medical practices: bloodletting and dressing wounds. At the same time, public opinion associated them with prostitution.

— Pimps and generally men and women engaged in prostitution. Although municipal administrations had created an organizational framework for this profession (separate districts or public brothels), they failed to remove the stigma of shame from the occupation itself.

— Players, wandering actors, musicians, clowns and acrobats. These occupations were traditionally disqualified from honourable municipal trades; the occupation of juggler had been condemned by the Church in the Middle Ages, and the situation of actors was ambiguous in modern times. Nevertheless, European culture assimilated both of these occupations.

— Canvas weavers. They were on the list of dishonourable occupations at least in northern and eastern German cities, and this stigma occasionally spread to the entire occupation of weaver. The traditional factor burdening the trade of canvas weaver was that they sometimes had to help put up gallows.

— Millers, who had bad reputations because of fraud committed when milling grain and because of frequent associations with prostitution, whereby in people's imaginations, millers appeared in robberies

and erotic deeds and, as canvas weavers, had to help put up gallows in towns.

— Shepherds, who were frequently involved in the slaughter of animals, handling dead animals, rural medicine and veterinary science, and were also suspicious because of how much time they spent with animals, life outside human settlements and suspected sexual practices. Rhymes such as *Schäfer und Schinder – Geschwisterkinder* (“Shepherds and slave drivers are brethren”) show that this occupation was long considered dishonourable in German folklore, despite the efforts of state authorities since the 16th century to recognize shepherds and grant them corporation status.

German state legislation in the 17th and 18th centuries dealt solely with *unehrliche Leute*, attempting to abolish the traditional criteria of exclusion from the minds of urban society, and in the process of doing so listed most of the trades mentioned above. Other occupations also appeared, though sporadically: porters, cart drivers, excise men, gardeners, night porters, chimney sweeps, potters, bricklayers... So the list is exhaustive and sometimes creates the impression that every municipal trade was recognized as honourable because some other trade was dishonourable; similarly, some dignified trades cut themselves off from others, regarding them as even more dishonourable.

Interpreting the phenomenon of dishonourable trades creates many heuristic difficulties. Firstly, one should consider the disparity between injunctions and prohibitions on the one hand, and the reality on the other. The extent to which instructions were complied with and the negative effects of infamy remain unknown. In Hamburg, the sons of a canvas weaver were not admitted other trades, yet in the 14th century they had their own guild, enjoyed municipal rights and served as soldiers. We have already seen that the richest documentation on this subject matter is to be found in German territories, where this became a separate subject of research and developed extensive literature, mainly historical-legal and ethnographic; consequently, the problems in time, the evolution of actual social attitudes, and changes to the situation obscured by the law, became blurred.

Let us take an example from southern Poland. In 1545, the potters of Biecz were discharged from the duty of digging a trench for the gallows which they had hitherto shared with brewers. We have already indicated that taking part in the construction of gallows was the most frequent sign of the infamy of a given profession. Potters were

discharged from this duty because they had been awarded municipal rights; therefore, they were to take part in erecting new gallows on the same terms as the other citizens. Brewers, however, were to continue digging trenches because, unlike the potters, they had no guild of their own, but were *simplices laboratores in civitate*, and thus obliged to perform this duty.

Thus, the infamy of a trade manifests itself as the outcome of an absence of municipal and guild rights, and disappears as soon as these rights have been granted. One might think that the question of municipal and guild rights largely determined a particular profession's place in or outside the hierarchy of trades. Trades of a rural nature were treated by urban societies with disdain. But one should note the process of conventionalization, where traditional attitudes were translated into the language of municipal corporate life: those municipal residents who had no municipal rights or own professional organization were treated as inferior. The fact that the formal dividing lines were shaped by the attitudes of exclusion rooted in tradition demonstrates the strength and persistence of the latter.

Including dishonourable trades creates a certain distortion in perception through a failure to appreciate the local nature of legal customs. In no German city do we come across a full list of dishonourable professions, and even the criteria determining whether a trade is honourable or dishonourable are not uniform. This also applies to the period in time: trades described as dishonourable in the 14th century have their own guild by the following century, say in their statutes that candidates for membership must prove that they are of honourable descent, etc. This difficulty becomes all the greater when one moves outside the German areas. Trades dismissed as dishonourable in German documents are quite honourable in other countries. One can cite the example of shepherds, the only profession on our list that does not primarily affect the town, but the country. In 14th–15th-century France, one does not find evidence that shepherds were excluded from social life. The guild statutes of Parisian bath managers in the 14th century carefully forbade sexual activity in bath houses, and prohibited their use by lepers and Jews. Likewise, the statute of barbers in the same city warns that no one accused of being a pimp may shave men's beards. In these three cases, the legal documents do not suggest any inferior status of these occupations, but from this one cannot conclude that they were not considered

dishonourable. In French court archives, shepherds are often suspected of sexual malpractice, and are also said to possess occult knowledge and indulge in sorcery. The entry in the statute of bath managers and barbers can be considered evidence that both these trades were generally associated with sexual malpractices.

A similar mistrust of dishonourable professions can be found in other European countries, both in the Iberian Peninsula and in Poland. But in no other country are they so formally codified as in Germany. Thus, caution warns us not to generalize the German model. Besides, even if we consider this phenomenon typical of societies in medieval Europe, one has to consider why the German documentation is so extensive. Were dishonourable occupations such a major issue in Germany?

The basic problems of interpreting phenomena concern historical sources and social functions. The material on dishonourable professions on which we have based this text comes from two fundamentally different series. One concerns the principles governing access to municipal and church privileges, and the second concerns municipal life and the life of guilds.

In the first case, the intention was to prevent the clergy from engaging in dishonourable trades, whereas in the second case the exclusion was of a hereditary nature. The range of canonical regulations came earlier, and practically expired when the guild regulations came into effect, but there is nothing to suggest that the latter regulations were influenced by the former. Rather, in both cases one can talk of a common source: the impact of Roman law and the concept of infamy expressed therein.

Roman law applied the term infamy to a considerable number of occupations which breached the standards of social coexistence. The Code of Justinian names over twenty *causae* which lead to infamy. Under Roman law, the performance of certain trades led to the loss of honour. This applies in the first place to procuring and sexual services, usury and acting on a stage, which was punishable by a praetorian edict; but the category of *personae turpae* encumbered by a socially-imposed *infamia facti* included a broader group of professions: innkeepers, executioners, tanners, actors, gravediggers, gladiators and various wandering petty traders (*tabernarii*, *ultimi negociatores*, *circitores*), as well as persons making a living from sexual services (*tabernaria mulier*, *lena*, *meretrix*). A special place among these is occupied by executioners,

which is mentioned in ancient literature as one of the most shameful of occupations (together with thieves, escaped slaves and coffin-makers). Executioners are ordered to live outside the city and are refused a decent place in a cemetery, where they should be buried together with suicides. Sexual services and procuring were equally scandalous, but ancient lawyers doubted whether infamy also extended to bath managers, and even greater doubts were expressed on whether the acting profession was also included.

There is no doubt that Roman legal tradition had an impact on the criteria by which canonical law declared the *incompatibilitas* of the clergy with specific occupations: the moral principles of Christianity coincided with ancient tradition. Likewise, one can conclude that Roman law affected the attitude in medieval European culture whereby some occupations were dishonourable. Nevertheless, it has been observed that some occupations were considered dishonourable even before the impact of Roman law. The record of the common law of Saxony (*Sachsenspiegel*) includes the concept of the “deprivation of rights and infamy,” under which one falls either by birth or by carrying out a trade. Apart from the children of priests and illegitimate children, the *Sachsenspiegel* mentions two professional groups: wandering players and *kempen*, in other words hired fight-men. Whereas the *Sachsenspiegel* does not apply to cities, one could assume that the hereditary dishonour of certain professions was already clearly present in common law. In fact, the impact of Roman law may have strengthened certain customs, given them a new form and defined the paths and methods with which to make legal interpretations, but one cannot say that the dishonour of certain occupations derives directly from ancient law. Instead, one should view this development through the prism of embedded habits and socio-psychological attitudes. In German research into *unehrliche Leute*, much has been done to apply ethnography to interpret this phenomenon. Ethnographical research has shown how persistent were the customs and attitudes described in medieval and modern-age documents, and what traces they left in local folklore; at the same time, it has tried to interpret in cultural terms the criteria of infamy, finding its associations with magic, sorcery, healing, manufacturing activity outside human settlements, and, last but not least, society’s dislike of dissolute life. Ethnographic interpretations considered the motives behind such treatment of occupations rather than the occupations themselves, and examined the reasons why a particular occupation

should be dishonourable, each occupation having different reasons. The law historian Karl von Amira explained the dishonour of the occupation of execution by the religious taboo associated with death, but he also completely separated the executioner's craft from other dishonourable occupations. Werner Danckert also pursued the path of religious interpretation, but he treated all dishonourable occupations in the same way, perceiving the source of their dishonour in ancient, pre-Christian rituals connected with death, life, love, natural disasters, the ambivalence of holiness and the shame inherent in all taboos.

There is no reason to restrict all of these different interpretations to a different timeframe or to different geographical areas on each occasion, or to apply legal criteria in some cases and ethnological ones in others. Of value is considering the fact that the very same phenomenon occurs in different times, different countries and different cultures. The persistence of the phenomenon of dishonourable trades raises the question what caused it. As far as death and blood are concerned, there was a general attitude of mistrust or fear of uncleanness and pollution. Regarding executioners and gravediggers, this mistrust and fear lasted a long time, but in the case of executioners the mistrust shifted away from a dislike of the trade towards a general dislike of public officials and executive authorities. The church's sanctioning of the craft of gravedigger diluted the stigma of "uncleanliness" weighing upon this profession. The craft of butcher was almost fully "tamed" by municipal society. Butchers not only gained considerable wealth, but also prestige, expressed in access to municipal functions. This was connected with the division of labour outside the profession, where the slaughtering of animals was carried out by lower ranks of workers, and the stigma of uncleanness continued to encumber the "slaughterers." However, in those trades involving contact with dead animals, the removal of skins, etc., workers preserved their stigma of uncleanness and continued to be the subject of separation. This also continued to a major extent with skimmers, even though the professional statutes of skimmers' guilds distinguished between those who removed the skins of animals and those who processed them.

Trade activity and monetary operations were traditionally mistrusted by agrarian societies. The spread of urban civilization removed this mistrust, so that they became accepted as primary functions of a city. Nevertheless, a traditional mistrust of money-lending persisted because of its associations with the sin of usury, but lower categories of trade

activity also remained suspicious. As in ancient Rome, wandering traders, door-to-door sellers and peddlers suffered poor regard in medieval society. The excuse for this degradation was the migratory and even vagrant way of life of these people, as well as their connections with the social margin and criminal gangs. The degradation of this low category of traders seemed to be exacerbated by the policies of the mercantile elites, who aimed not only to eliminate competition but also to secure the prestige of their own way of life, which required them to cut themselves off from the mercantile “proletariat.”

The process of “taming” dishonourable occupations also applies to those connected with or suspected of being connected with prostitution; prostitutes were organized into guilds or were placed under official supervision. The statutes of bath managers forbade them from tolerating prostitution inside bath houses. Nevertheless, the sinful undertone of this profession and its moral condemnation persisted. The case of wandering artists, musicians and actors is more complicated. The force of the Church’s condemnation of jugglers weakened with the passing of time, and these occupations became accepted in municipal life and contributed to a gradual advancement of artistic professions. The difference between elitist culture and mass culture nevertheless imparted a new sense to the traditional condemnation of artists: the stigma of shame bore down on those whose work was connected with laughter and popular entertainment. And here, too, a differentiation occurred within this profession. The more prosperous artists, stabilized socially and professionally, were accepted by society (the employment of artists in the courts of rulers was a contributing factor).

For a long time, the world of entertainment was associated in people’s minds with magic. In towns, this sector of occupations gradually adopted artisan techniques. But in rural societies, artisan occupations continued to be associated with magic practices, healing, etc., which no doubt influenced mass attitudes at least towards some crafts and artistic techniques, and encouraged the social development of the division of labour: occupations associated with magic, healing and alchemy became separate specializations removed from other trades.

But at the same time, the cultural attitudes that placed a value on trades and crafts, according honour to some and shame to others, continued to influence human consciousness in the middle ages and up to modern times.

Traditional societies possessed a strong hierarchy and tended to think in such terms. This also applied to municipal trades: the intention of creating equal conditions of activity for various guilds went hand-in-hand with the hierarchical development of urban society as a corporate body. Cultural aspects also played a part, creating a hierarchy of status and also determining relations between a corporate body and the outside world.

This latter factor is a natural process in the assertion of collective consciousness. The assertion of a city as a collective body was intended to separate cities from non-urban and disorganized communities. This is why groups of people in a city who did not possess municipal rights, engaged in trades of a rural or quasi-rural nature, and who were devoid of their own corporation, were treated as worse and inferior; they were separated and excluded according to traditional attitudes which condemned any activities that were in breach of the standards in force or which encroached upon the territory of *sacrum*. The relations of other groups with these groups were tainted by a fear of being sullied by association.

Hierarchical relations in municipal societies were also subject to criteria of this kind, pushing to the lowest level those occupations considered shameful and even differentiating between them according to the degree of shame. But as economic considerations prevailed over traditional prejudices, three elements emerged. The most apparent one was the material situation of a given trade, regarded *en bloc*. The second element was the way of life: in a traditional community, an occupation involving travelling was basically degrading, arousing mistrust and leading to isolation from the settled community. The third element was geographical location within a city. Plans of cities before the age of industry are symbolic, in which distance from the city centre (market square, city halls, etc.) reflects one's place in the material and social hierarchy. Occupations which for technical reasons had to be located away from the city centre bore the stigma of dishonour. Moreover, trades considered dishonourable were moved outside a settlement or located on the outskirts (e.g. an executioner's house).

Towards the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern age, hierarchical development occurred primarily in specific trades, making work for hire an object of degradation.

Finally, one should consider the specialization of ethnic and para-ethnic groups in certain trades. This assumed various forms.

The migration of specialists was vital for economic development, and applied particularly to the artisan elites. In some cases, rural migrants to cities were condemned to specialize in very poorly regarded and despised trades (e.g. in medieval Paris, the chief specialization of Bretons was road works). A wandering lifestyle resulting from the nature of production or services was an additional factor of degradation. Without going into detail about the problem of the social status of Gypsies in modern society, one can nevertheless give examples of their trades. Gypsies were engaged in metalwork (especially the manufacture of copper vessels), breeding horses, petty vagrant trade, artistic occupations, juggling, music and dance, and fortune-telling. One notes the connection between these occupations and a nomadic way of life, but it is also true that a nomadic life, which is itself undignified, makes the trades practiced during such a life also undignified.

We also encounter another group of artisans, a mysterious group of pariahs known as the *çagots*. They were considered descendants of lepers or simply lepers themselves, and were completely cut off from the rest of society in Brittany, on the Franco-Spanish border, on the Atlantic coast... They were forbidden, with varying degrees of success, from engaging in cattle breeding, farming the land and growing crops, but were allocated specific trades. Building records from the Bordeaux area in the 14th century note the recruitment of carpenters from among lepers; in 1471, a decree stated that the prime occupation of *çagots* was to be carpentry. A similar group of pariahs in Brittany, called *cacous*, performed typical undignified occupations: tanning or removing the skins from dead animals. The main occupations of this group included fortune telling, which seemed to be their main occupation in Brittany, as was carpentry in the Basque territories. But in both cases, the occupations were symbolically condemned as dishonourable because the fortune-tellers supplied the rope for gallows and the carpenters supplied the wooden boards for the scaffold.

The groups whom society traditionally banished outside its borders were the bearers of uncleanness, and their consequent degradation had to be followed by isolation. The type of occupation is of key importance: it may have been bad or dirty, and this caused fear of pollution; or it may have been associated with the dishonourable status of a group on account of its ethnic origin, disease or way of life. In these hasty remarks we wished to point to the odd persistence of certain cultural attitudes on the one hand, and on the other hand the

tension between these attitudes, the social reality, and the requirements of the social division of labour. Thus, the processes of exclusion also cast a light on the processes of social integration within a city.

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Sacrum and Profanum

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A surgeon's place in medieval society was a subject of particular controversy. Not because of his qualifications or the method by which he exercised this branch of science, but because of his socio-cultural status. In the Middle Ages, surgery was denied any association with medical science, surgery was separated from university medicine, and a strict divide was created between doctors, who were accorded suitable prestige, and surgeons, whose craft was considered a manual trade. No doubt this can be attributed to the work ethos prevalent at that time, whereby physical work was associated with low status. Communities of university intellectuals in cities created their own prestige and denounced physical work and “mechanical occupations” in general. Thus, doctors with a university education wanted to have nothing to do with surgeons as common workers. Nevertheless, the etymology of the name is unequivocal: the Greek word *cheirurgia* meant nothing other than “manual work,” and medieval treatises defined it as the ability to “operate” or “work on the body.” Medieval illustrations in medical manuscripts show doctors in a situation typical of medieval intellectuals, in a laboratory or workshop with textbook in hand, less often at a patient's bedside, holding a vessel with the patient's urine to the light of a lamp. A surgeon dressing wounds or removing cataracts does not appear so often in the iconography of this period.

Apart from professional competition, the model of medieval knowledge and the prestige of universities, a factor at play here was the medieval mentality: the blood taboo. The profession for surgeon was subject to moral disapproval as with all professions connected with blood. Access to the clerical profession was regulated in as much

detail as the privileges associated with this. Canonical law disqualified anyone from the benefits of *privilegium fori* who exercised a profession connected with blood or the body. Thus, surgeons appeared on the list of dishonourable professions together with gravediggers, skinners, butchers and bath managers. In the guilds of medieval cities, surgeons appeared together with barbers, for barbers not only shaved beards, but also dressed wounds and let blood.

Thus, the low status of surgeons in the social hierarchy possessed both a social justification, because surgery was considered a manual, hence “mechanical,” occupation, and cultural justification, because it involved contact with blood. Even if surgeons were sometimes needed, the occupation was still surrounded with fear and mistrust because it was associated with various types of medical practitioners: hypnotists, horse whisperers, country “hags” and various quacks engaged in treating animals. Doctor was a learned and prestigious profession, whilst a surgeon was the very opposite. And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, surgeons were expected to show the practical results of their work on the patient’s body, whereas doctors were expected only to diagnose the disease and foresee its course. A doctor had to perform the art of learned diagnosis and exoteric discourse, which was connected with the theoretical nature of medieval medicine. This is what placed medicine above surgery.

For the status of surgeon in medieval Europe, the main problem was the relationship between practice and theory. Needless to say, this situation changed over the centuries. The expansion of universities meant that medicine ventured beyond the walls of the monasteries, which until then had not only stored and copied ancient medical texts, but had also trained specialists. In Italy and France in particular, medical schools arose, which nevertheless attached little importance to the practical teaching of the doctor’s profession, and especially that of surgeon – the art of healing wounds and setting bones. Municipal guilds gathered surgical practitioners who had gained the right to practice their profession the same way as other artisans, through apprenticeship. Although in medieval Paris the guild of barbers only received its first statute in 1361, or at least it is the oldest Parisian statute known to us, as early as in 1311 one could gain the right to practice by passing an examination before a board of four sworn specialists. The Guild of SS Cosmas and Damian gathered surgical specialist who accompanied war expeditions. These included surgeons

to the king's court. Unlike doctors who, as with all people with university careers, were members of the clergy, surgical practitioners were laymen who, even if they succeeded in raising their status and separating themselves from barbers, still remained prejudiced in relation to "physicians," i.e. doctors.

In his *Chirurgia Magna* written at the end of the 13th century, Lanfranco of Milan lamented the separation between doctors and surgeons: "Physicians have left the performance of operations to laymen because, as some of them claim, they dread to do their own operating, or because, as I believe, they are simply unable to operate: things have reached the stage where the same person cannot possibly know both medicine and surgery."

Here, Lanfranco, a university don who taught surgery in Paris, who in other words combined a knowledge of medicine and surgery, defends the practical skill of healing patients, and warns against the social degradation of surgeons and against discontinuing the teaching of surgery in universities. A sign of this process was the fact that in the middle of the 14th century, Paris medical students were obliged to swear that they would not engage in surgery.

A view similar to Lanfranco's is to be found in the surgical treatises of Henri de Mondeville and Guidon de Chauliac. In his treatise written in 1363 (and used until the 18th century), de Chauliac, physician to the popes of Avignon, gained fame as the creator of French surgery, to a certain extent at the expense of his predecessor. Henri de Mondeville, from 1298 surgeon to King Philip the Handsome, taught surgery in Montpellier and Paris, and for 15 years until his death in about 1320, he edited a compendium of surgery. It is to him that medicine owes the antiseptic treatment of wounds and the use of bandages, which were never recognized at the time, whilst his work, widely used in the 14th and 15th centuries and remaining in use until the 18th century, having been translated from Latin to French, Provençal, English and Dutch, has now been completely forgotten. It is from the pen of Henri de Mondeville that the antagonism between doctors and surgeons finds the fullest expression.

Henri speaks of doctors with sarcasm, mocking their haughty scholarliness, fake medicines and their obsession with prescribing detoxification. But he does not spare surgeons either, accusing them of poor theoretical preparation, ignorance and even cruelty. He demonstrates that a surgeon must have a good knowledge of medicine,

especially anatomy, that he must be open to learning science and to the written word, as with manual practice, for surgery does not involve just manual operating but is most of all a theoretical science. A surgeon must be an *artifex scientificus*, a learned artisan.

The learned Parisian surgeon perceives the differences between a surgeon and a doctor in that the former relies on practice rather than books and does not engage in broad speculation on the causes of diseases; but, in fact, he takes a sceptical view of the division between the two professions. He recalls that according to the traditional division, medicine was all about diets and healing with the help of medicines, whilst surgery was about healing by means of operations. In place of this division, which caused so many conflicts, there was now a new doctrine which assigned to surgeons the treatment of all external diseases and diseases with external symptoms, whilst the treatment of internal diseases was assigned to doctors. The surgeon was to act openly, without secrets, and not to prescribe medication whose functioning was secret and might have been toxic.

In the introduction to his work, Henri de Mondeville distinguishes three categories of surgeons. The first one is surgeons *litterati*, who are acquainted with literature and have received medical knowledge: it is to them that the treatise is addressed. The second category is surgeons without training, unable to write, who learned their profession from trained surgeons and doctors. Finally, the third category is conceited simpletons with no knowledge whatsoever, claiming that they owe nothing to learned surgeons because the gift of the knowledge of operations has been passed from generation to generation since time immemorial.

Thus, the praise of empiricism and practice stops at the limits of popular medicine. The point is not just to separate surgery and medicine from occupations and trades of a lower status, from barbers or midwives, but also from the world of peasant knowledge encumbered by the dark world of magic. Henri de Mondeville reluctantly, and even disdainfully, refers to the means used by people's medicine, describing them as "empirical," in contrast with the "rational" resources envisaged by medical knowledge. Therapeutics, which was not defined by the principles of rational knowledge and school culture, became an uncertain area in which it was different to distinguish between true and false and between the art of a "learned artisan" and that of a quack. Henri adds some cunning advice for surgeons. Let them allow patients

suffering from fistula to wear a bag of herbs around their necks, even though the only remedy for fistula is a surgical operation. If the bags help, this will be a point in favour of the surgeon.

Situated between practical craftsmanship and theoretical knowledge, surgery is condemned to ambivalence. In a society divided into the literate and the illiterate, the educated and the uneducated, and “clergymen” and “laymen,” surgeons are not entirely on any one side; they are situated on both sides.

The moral ambiguity of the surgical profession did not prevent the profession from assuming a negative dimension associated with blood. There appeared the dimension of a victim, associated with blood and with a violation of the body, but together with this there was an association between blood and the soul, in the belief that the soul was located in the blood. Thus, in medieval writings about the qualities a surgeon should have, one finds more than rhetorical self-adulation of the profession and a tendency to create barriers to it. Henri de Mondeville requires that a surgeon possess well-shaped and supple hands and long fingers, but most of all that he possess keen intelligence and natural talent, so that he may obey the commands of the mind excellently and with precision. This is what distinguishes him from all the mechanical trades, which one can learn from simple observation.

In his treatise on surgery, the Flemish author Jehan Yperman (died ca. 1310) places similar demands upon surgeons, requiring that they have the proper qualities of body and character, shapely hands and slim fingers, a firm grip and an absence of trembling, but he also expresses a more vague formula: “You who want to be surgeons should demonstrate qualities of conscience, knowledge, divine care and full control over all body parts.”

This formula not only describes the required physical fitness, but also echoes the commandments of canonical law, requiring that candidates for the clergy be physically fit.

Thus, the fluctuating message of the Middle Ages about the place of surgeons among the sciences and trades reflects a persistent ambivalence not only of the *sacrum* and *profanum*, and empiricism and science, but also of infamy and holiness.

Heretical Movements and Social Eradication in the Late Middle Ages

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Sociological interpretations of heresy in the Middle Ages¹ aim to determine social attitudes towards heresy in two dimensions: first, heresy as an ideology of defiance of the dominant doctrine and established social order; and second, heresy as a collective phenomenon with its own ideological programs. These interpretations have encountered both firm acceptance and heated opposition. In works on the Middle Ages, heresy is one of the rare controversial issues regarding both the topic itself and the method by which to examine it. Herbert Grundmann, an unquestionable authority on medieval heresy, polemicized with the sociological interpretation of heresy and stood in defence of heresy as an autonomous religious and intellectual phenomenon. Such an epistemological approach did not stop him admitting

¹ Medieval heresy possesses a rich bibliography, so in order not to burden the reader with excessive notes, we shall refer to a useful bibliographical compendium: Z. Kulcsár, *Eretnekmozgalmak a XI–XIV. században* (Budapest, 1964) with some 5,000 titles; H. Grundmann, *Bibliographie zur Ketzergeschichte des Mittelalters (1900–1966)* (Roma, 1967) with 761 titles; C.T. Berkhout, J.B. Russell, *Medieval Heresies. A Bibliography (1960–1979)* (Toronto, 1981), with over 2,000 titles. On the historical sociology of heresy, see: A.P. Evans, "Social Aspects of Medieval Heresy", in: *Persecution and Liberty. Essays in Honor of G.L. Burr* (New York, 1931), pp. 93–116; and especially the conference documents of Royaumont: *Hérésies et sociétés dans l'Europe pré-industrielle, XIe–XVIIIe siècle*, ed. J. Le Goff (Paris, 1968).

that the appearance of heresy and the spread of sects depends on social factors.²

An analysis of the phenomenon of heresy cannot restrict itself to investigating the social acceptance of a new faith or its significance as an expression of class conflicts. Dealing with the subject of the medieval sociology of heresy, we shall try to avoid such simplifications. Our research questionnaire should primarily cover three groups of issues.³

- The internal structure of heretical groups and their relationship with global society.

- The spread of heretical ideas and the social structure of their adherents.

- Heretical movements as products of a specific historical and social situation.

Making an effort at interpretation, one must not forget the differences within the phenomenon of heresy itself, or expect universal answers that fit all heresies, or seek any particular socio-economic situations that might have caused a heresy to develop. Placing heresies in the context of the social crises of the more recent centuries of the Middle Ages, we do not intend to examine the genesis of heretical movements.

Joachim Wach, who worked on the sociological problem of sects, stressed that in order to understand this phenomenon, human attitudes and behaviour are more important than theological doctrine or philosophical ideas.⁴ Sects – heretics organized into groups – appear and develop when society is undergoing major changes, when the cracks in the edifice of society are already clear.⁵ Thus, heresy may be viewed as the symptom of a social crisis, which does not undermine its significance as a religious phenomenon.

Late medieval society experienced profound changes.⁶ The traditional stabilizing structures of society weakened, the bonds of

² *Hérésies et sociétés*, p. 218; M.D. Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from Bogomil to Hus* (London, 1977), p. XIV.

³ Cf. *Hérésies et sociétés*, p. 3–5.

⁴ J. Wach, *The Sociology of Religion* (Chicago, 1951), chapt. V.

⁵ J. Gillin, *A Contribution to the Sociology of Sects*, *American Journal of Sociology*, 16 (1910), pp. 236 ff., E. Paris, “The Sect and the Sectarian”, in: id., *The Nature of Human Nature, and Other Essays on Social Psychology* (Chicago, 1937), p. 281 ff.

⁶ Cf. R. Fossier, *Histoire sociale de l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1970), p. 281 ff.

dependence loosened, the cohesion of families eroded and the authority of institutions and elites fell, whilst the prestige of privileged groups ceased to be considered the natural consequence of God's law. The most interesting aspect of the social dimension is society's mobility, a migration of individuals who, abandoning their abodes, severed the social ties of solidarity and control. This mobility had numerous consequences: it enabled some to climb higher on the social ladder and attain prosperity and contacts, without any significant change to their professional or financial situation. The influx of huge numbers of people from the villages to the towns brought a collapse in the corporate rules of socialization and social acclimatization, resulting in masses of people uprooted from their places of origin and unable to find a place for themselves in the new situation. At the end of the Middle Ages, the processes of social eradication developed on two levels: on one level, people affected by changes, forced to leave their homes and abandon their professions and social roles, and on the other level margin groups unable to integrate with society, living on its margin, excluded and excluding themselves of their own free will.

The associations between social eradication and heresy should be examined in the broader dimension of social acclimatization and social crises, and, in a narrower sense, the participation of margin communities in heretical movements.

Attitudes of defiance have appeared at various times in the history of the medieval church. The church either assimilated or tamed them in various ways. The difficulties which the church encountered while struggling with heresies towards the end of the era were attributable to a weakening of its organizational structures and spiritual authority. In a world convulsed by crises, natural calamities and destruction caused by permanent warfare, the population's psychological resistance weakened, so that people felt under a greater threat. Divided internally and unsure of its own position, the Church failed to offer the faithful moral support and provided no guarantee of stability. It also mistrusted the rapidly developing piousness of society, an expression of society's increasing energy.⁷ The strength of religious movements, slipping out

⁷ E. Delaruelle, *La piété populaire au Moyen Age* (Torino, 1975); R. Manselli, *La religion populaire au Moyen Age. Problèmes de méthode et d'histoire* (Montreal, 1975); J.-C. Schmitt, "Religion populaire et culture folklorique", *Annales ESC*, 31 (1976),

of the Church's control, seemed to put a question mark over the very existence of the church as an organization.

Social and moral crises at this time were so strong that a defiance of established values and authorities occurred not only among isolated small groups, but also on a mass scale. Apart from new interpretations of the gospels, the doctrines and ideological programs of that time describe criticism of the church's organization and support for relationships between people and institutions that were alien to the spirit of the Gospels. Historical writings have attempted to qualify Hussitism as a revolution,⁸ but this idea was criticized. For us, it is enough to say that that Hussitism – the “outlawed” heresy⁹ – developed into a universal movement in the Czech lands, a faith that tried to develop into a church. Apart from Hussitism, which was born in a special political and national situation, we should mention other movements that called for the creation of national churches, i.e. Gallicanism and Anglicism.

The members of the new offshoot faiths and the social roots of their structures were highly diversified and cannot be subscribed to a single social common denominator.

In the great movements which enjoyed a short-lived triumph, an important role was played by criticism of the social order. However, during the course of achieving successes, the strength of these movements waned. They succumbed quite rapidly to conformism and soon ceased to undermine traditional family ethics and the norms of social divisions that compelled some to submit and granted others the right of domination.¹⁰

The situation is different in the case of movements with a more restricted significance. It must be remembered that programs which

pp. 941–953; R. Brooke, Ch. Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe 1000–1300* (London, 1984).

⁸ F. Seibt, *Hussitica. Zur Struktur einer Revolution* (Cologne–Graz, 1965); J. Macek, *Jean Hus et les traditions hussites: XVe–XIXe siècles* (Paris, 1973); R. Kalivoda, *Revolution und Ideologie. Der Hussitismus* (Cologne–Graz, 1976). On the role of the poor in the Hussite movement, see F. Graus, *Chudina městská v době předhusitské* (Prague, 1949).

⁹ On this exclusion, cf. J. Gonnet, A. Molnár, *Les Vaudois au Moyen Age* (Turin, 1974), p. 179.

¹⁰ On the attitudes of the Cathars about this issue, see J. Guiraud, *Histoire de l'Inquisition au Moyen Age*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1935), p. 91 ff.; E. Werner, “Die Stellung der Katharer zur Frau”, *Studi Medievali*, 3 (1961), no. 2, pp. 295 ff.; G. Koch, *Frauenfrage und Ketzertum im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1962).

called for “life in the world” to be given up have appeared in various forms during the history of the Church. The Church’s involvement in everyday life caused problems for individuals and groups. The solution to the problem of living in harmony with the Gospels without adapting to the requirements of social life was monasticism in various forms, asceticism and voluntary poverty.¹¹ These were acceptable to the church authorities, on condition that they did not undermine the Church’s spiritual *potestas* and organization, or the mediatory role of the *sacerdotes* in everyday religious practice. Programs involving the abandonment of life among society, though regarded by the Church as a safety valve, nevertheless constantly brushed against heresy. The inquisitor Wilhelm Pelhissou, active in the south of France, recorded the words of someone suspected of heresy who denied the charges, saying that he lived and slept with his wife, ate meat, cheated and made vows.¹² This declaration, made through fear of punishment, shows that in the minds of society, an acceptance of heretical faiths was considered contrary to the generally accepted lifestyle. The condemnation of violence by the adherents of numerous heretical movements, or their refusal to make a vow, placed them outside the framework of social life and public activity.¹³ In the light of this, it does not matter so much whether the Cathars indeed claimed that *matrimonium est meretricium, matrimonium est lupanar*,¹⁴ or whether inquisitors merely assumed that they held such a stance towards marriage. What matters more is that in the minds of society, “strangers,” which is what heretics were considered to be, were believed to hold such an asocial opinion.¹⁵ As long as someone’s attitude was one’s own choice and served merely to seek perfection, the Church could tolerate it. Otherwise the Church demanded condemnation of such an attitude, leading to the exclusion of the person involved.

¹¹ M. Mollat, *Les pauvres au Moyen Age. Etude sociale* (Paris, 1978), pp. 92 ff.; Gorre, *Die ersten Ketzer im 11. Jahrhundert. Religiöse Eiferer – Soziale Rebellen?* (Konstanz, 1982).

¹² C. Douais, *Les sources de l’histoire et de l’Inquisition dans le midi de la France aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Paris, 1881), p. 93.

¹³ Cf. Gonnet, Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, p. 181.

¹⁴ Guiraud, *Histoire*, vol. 1, pp. 91 ff.

¹⁵ Some Beghard communities were even granted the right to steal (*furtum eis licitum esse*; see J.L. Mosheim, *De beghardis et begunabus commentarius* [Leipzig, 1790], p. 257), tell lies and commit crimes; cf. S. Bylina, *Wizje społeczne w herezjach średniowiecznych. Humiliaci, begini, begardzi* (Wrocław, 1974), p. 191.

In Church discourse, it was repeated that heresy spreads among people of low birth, among the lower strata of society. This opinion, copied from one text to the other, belonged to the permanent repertoire of invectives and was used to condemn the followers of heretical ideas. Historiography sometimes sees this polemical discourse *à la lettre* and imparted a proletarian nature to heretical movements. Herbert Grundmann¹⁶ rejected this thesis when he spoke about the 12th century, but agreed with it when talking about the following century, when heresies spread through artisan communities and the common people in towns (calling them a proletariat would certainly be an abuse of the term). In the later Middle Ages, some groups of urban society opposed certain phenomena in religious life, and one must also remember that more and more rural people joined heretical movements.¹⁷ It seems that in both town and country, disaffected people and the social margins played an important role among the followers of heresies.¹⁸

In the 14th and 15th centuries, heretical ideas encountered wide reactions. They could be spread thanks to geographical and social mobility – one of the most important developments of the age. One must consider the importance of this mobility in three dimensions:

- The interest displayed by groups and individuals who had severed their ties with their previous community.
- The channels and specific places where news of heretical developments were spread.
- The appearance of nomads and vagrants via whom heresy spread.

Mobility had obvious socio-psychological consequences. Moving from the country to a town, or from a small town to a large one, meant a change of environment, if not of civilization. The adaptation of rural people to urban conditions primarily involved them getting used to new work requirements, under strict control from the professional corporation and family, and abandoning their original community in favour of new bonds of solidarity. Even if migrants moved in a group of relatives or neighbours (as in the case of resettlement), they were compelled to change their parish, and the parish was the basic structure

¹⁶ H. Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1961).

¹⁷ Cf. C. Violante, "Hérésies urbaines et hérésies rurales en Italie du XIe au XIIIe siècle", in: *Hérésies et société*, pp. 171–198.

¹⁸ G. Miccoli, *La storia religiosa*, in: *Storia d'Italia* (Torino, 1974), vol. 1, p. 653.

of culture at the time. In towns, community bonds were naturally weaker than in rural parishes. Religious fraternities, which played an auxiliary role towards parish organizations and professional guilds, played a certain role in the process of acclimatizing new arrivals; sometimes, these fraternities were composed of people from the same region. Medieval cities required a constant influx of new people, and mobility left a mark on their lives, being a feature of poverty.¹⁹ The search for a kind of eschatological security pushed many people towards chiliastic ideas, towards an ideological “escape” beyond the confines of the established orthodox order.²⁰

If a migrant was frustrated, he had special reasons to open himself to heretical ideas and join sects.²¹ As with all minorities, groups of new arrivals had stronger and more sincere bonds of internal solidarity,²² therefore they attracted people who had been treated with mistrust and were unsure of their future and felt unstable.

The circulation of people means the circulation of ideas. A migrant is more open to new ideas, and a change in the environment – natural and social – arouses a personal interest in new things, which makes it easier for the migrant to accept new proposals regarding religious faith.

¹⁹ C. Violante (*Hérésies urbaines*, p. 187) draws attention to the “surprisingly great mobility of Italian Beghards.”

²⁰ J. Chiffolleau, *La comptabilité de l'au-delà. Les hommes, la mort et la religion dans la région d'Avignon à la fin du Moyen Age (vers 1320 – vers 1480)* (Paris–Rome, 1980), p. 205; the author draws attention to the mental eradication of new residents of towns, deprived of participation in family memory and of contact with the graves of their relatives.

²¹ G.G. Merlo, *Eretici e inquisitori nella società piemontese del Trecento* (Torino, 1977), p. 110: “there are profound, though non-mechanical, links between social mobility and heresy.”

²² This attitude of internal solidarity is also expressed in a specific ethnocentrism, manifesting itself in the treatment of “others” as strangers. In a document from Munich reporting on the “errors of the Waldensians”, we find this kind of accusation: “*Item docent orare subditos suos in omni loco, in quo manent et ut primum orent pro illis, qui sunt in secta, quod omnipotentes Deus eos ab omni malo custodiat, et quod nobis christianis, quos inter se alienos i.e. credunt et nominant, permittat advenire bella, famem, pestilentiam et alia incommoda ut illo tempore ab eorum inquisitione et impugnatione cessemus [...]. Item vocant nos christianos vulgariter ‘die Fremden’ i.e. alienos, quia Deus non nos, sed tantum ipsos noscat*”, I. von Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1890), no. 26, pp. 339–340. Cf. E. Werner, *Nachrichten über spätmittelalterliche Ketzler aus tschechoslowakischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* (Leipzig, 1963; *Beiträge zur Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl Marx Universität*, 12), vol. 1.

The paths along which people and commodities travelled were also the paths along which heresies spread.²³ Before the age of mass media, “ideological epidemics” spread along roads. Given the slow speed of travel, technical difficulties and lack of safety, medieval roads created a particular climate of social contact and common life.²⁴ Roads also played a role in religious life. Concentrations of hermits along these roads²⁵ ensured alms for pilgrims lured by the piousness of these lonely people. Sermons were also addressed to migrants and vagrants. The places they visited were a subject of interest in church teachings and by mendicant orders. In the 11th and 12th centuries, church authorities regarded the work of itinerant preachers with suspicion,²⁶ often viewing these religious vagrants as heretics. A monk expelled from his cloister, Henri de Toulouse, who spent his life preaching to crowds, generally chose public roads where he could preach.²⁷ Pilgrims travelling alone or in groups were witnesses to regular spectacles. Processions of flagellants who swept through the continent in successive waves in the 13th and 14th centuries also chose roads and junctions for their pious practices. Great performers of godliness mingled with crowds of faithful on squares and in churches, but generally staged religious shows also on roads. It is enough to recall the wanderings of St. Vincent Ferrer and the crowds that accompanied him.²⁸ Communities of heretics scattered all over Europe maintained contact with each other not only through travellers, but also via simple religious agitators for whom

²³ G. Volpe, *Movimenti religiosi e sette ereticali nella società medievale italiana* (Firenze, 1971), p. 96.

²⁴ J. Jusserand, *La vie nomade et les routes d'Angleterre au XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1884).

²⁵ Id. p. 74; J. Leclercq, *Le poème de Payen Bolotin contre les faux ermites*, *Revue Bénédictine*, LVIII, 1958, pp. 52–86; this poem repeats the diatribe against vagrant hermits contained in the letter of Bishop Yves de Chartres (*Patrologia Latina*, vol. 162, col. 201 C). On the vagrancy of hermits, see L. Gougaud, *Ermîtes et reclus* (Ligugé, 1928), p. 50 (R. Rolle de Hampolle, *Incendium amoris: “gironagi qui sunt scandalum heremitarum”*).

²⁶ J. von Walter, *Die ersten Wanderprediger Frankreichs*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1903); J. Becquet, “L’Érémisme clérical et laïc dans l’Ouest de la France”, in: *L’eremitismo in Occidente nei secoli XI e XII* (Milano, 1965), p. 182–211; E. Werner, *Pauperes Christi* (Leipzig, 1956), pp. 25 ff.; Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, pp. 349–352.

²⁷ I. von Döllinger, *Geschichte der gnostisch-manichäischen Sekten im Früheren Mittelalter* (München, 1890), p. 77.

²⁸ Cf. M.M. Gorce, *Saint Vincent Ferrer (1350–1419)* (Paris, 1925), pp. 81 ff., 182 ff.

constant wandering was a way of asserting their religiousness. Ilarino da Milano was right to talk of “vagrant proselytism.”²⁹

Roads were where urban and rural heresies mingled, where the seed of heresy was transplanted from town to country. In some Western countries, persecution by the inquisition was closely connected with urban society; therefore, for the sake of safety, the followers of heretical ideas were eager to move to rural areas far from the centres of authority and difficult to reach.³⁰ The spread of heresies in rural areas and the creation of rural centres of heresy, such as the *Apostolici* in Italy and the Waldensians in Germany, were encouraged by the contacts established between rural and urban people during their travels. The protocols of hearings by the inquisition show that the first meetings between potential heretics and their sect often took place “on the road,” and in taverns.

One should not think that a heretic appreciated taverns more than a Catholic. The invective poured upon taverns by heretical preachers were reminiscent of the rantings of Catholic preachers. A Waldensian preacher said: “La taverna es fontana de pecca e le scola diavol.”³¹ The proselytising of heretical groups leads one to believe that the condemnation was often put into practice. A certain Dominican, describing the customs of the Waldensians, stressed that they are “temperati [...] in cibo et potu. Ad tabernas non sunt, nec ad choreas, nec ad alias vanitates.”³² For travellers, the tavern was a natural place of rest and the main place where they could establish contacts and exchange news³³ and opinions in an informal manner.³⁴

²⁹ I. da Milano, “Le eresie popolari del secolo XI nell’Europa occidentale”, in: *Studi Gregoriani*, ed. G.B. Borino (Roma, 1947), vol. 2, p. 89; on wandering *magistri* cf. Merlo, *Eretici e inquisitori*, p. 46.

³⁰ J.N. Stephens, “Heresy in Medieval and Renaissance Florence”, *Past and Present*, 54 (1972), no. 1, p. 59.

³¹ E. Combe, *Histoire des Vaudois* (Paris, 1901), p. 752.

³² *Reineri ordinis Praedicatorum contra Waldenses Haereticos Liber*, ed. J. Gretser, in: *Maxima Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum* (Lyon, 1677), p. 272.

³³ On the importance of taverns for circulating information on heresy and heretical ideas, cf. E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*, transl. B. Bray (London, 1978), *passim*.

³⁴ In 1382, a certain priest in Piedmont was accused of not taking a sufficiently active part in a tavern debate on the views of the Waldensians; cf. J. Gonnet, “Casi di sincretismo ereticale in Piemonte nei secoli XIV e XV”, *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi* 1960, no. 78, p. 14.

The records of inquisition tribunals mention taverns as places where heretics met. Innkeepers were suspected of heresy. In a trail of Lombard Waldensians in 1387, over 18 percent of the accused (whose occupations are noted in the source) were innkeepers or relatives of innkeepers.³⁵ This partly explains the hostility of the inquisitors towards a profession that they hated, but the fact that innkeepers were part of the world of vagrants is also significant. They witnessed their meetings and collected and passed on information. Those who did not denounce their guests and collaborate with the authorities were viewed with suspicion.

Millers and blacksmiths were treated similarly. Mills, situated within residential areas or outside their borders, were important places of rural social life where the spreaders of heretical ideas often met, and the owners of the mills were seen as adherents of heresy. They thus aroused the interest of the church authorities, who sometimes even ordered the demolition of mills. Smithies also played an important role in contact during this era. Blacksmiths, among whom there were also vagrants, were traditionally associated with magic and regarded with wonder and fear, on account of their physical strength and control of fire. Due to their loose connections with the social environment, they were susceptible to heretical influence and to the ideology of defiance.³⁶ The list of Lombard Waldensians (1387) contained virtually only blacksmiths and innkeepers.³⁷

Among heretics and those suspected of heresy, a prominent place was held by members of vagrant professions, especially merchants.³⁸ I do not mean rich, influential burghers. Heresies were frequently propagated by petty traders or peddlers, who carried their wares on their backs. The aforementioned list of Lombard Waldensians (1387) also included stallholders and dealers in used goods.³⁹ The Cathar community included coachmen and wandering salesmen. Italian followers of heretical ideas included manufacturers and sellers of

³⁵ *Processus contra Valdenses in Lombardia Superiori anno 1387*, ed. G. Amati, in: *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 1865, no. 39, pp. 3–61; Merlo, *Eretici e inquisitori*, p. 45, 104.

³⁶ Gonnet, Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, p. 173, fn. 224.

³⁷ *Processus, passim*.

³⁸ On the attitudes of burgher communities towards heresy, see Volpe, *Movimenti religiosi*, p. 96 ff.

³⁹ *Processus, passim*; see von Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, p. 97; Combe, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 542; Merlo, *Eretici e inquisitori*, p. 105.

sacks who wandered from village to village, and town to town.⁴⁰ To make it easier to enter prosperous homes, the Waldensians were accused of first advertising their goods, and then offering something more valuable: heretical ideas.⁴¹ Whether the wandering traders were vagrants by choice or through necessity, they certainly played a part in the dissemination of heresy.

The authors of anti-heretical treatises usually stressed that heretics are people without an education. While treating this opinion with caution, one should nevertheless note the important function played in sects by *illumines*, people of low education who had no fear of entering the sphere of doctrinal theories. Apart from preachers of heresies, they were important propagators of heretical ideas. Wandering intellectuals also played a part. Herbert Grundmann, who investigated German synod legislation in the 13th and 14th centuries, pointed to the role played by *clerici vagabondi*⁴² in the Beghard movement. It seems that the accusations against them were more the result of their lifestyle than their views. There is no direct continuum between the anticlerical satire of the Goliards and the anticlericalism of heresy, because the Goliards approached matters with scepticism and laughter, whilst the anticlericalism of heretics was full of ardent zeal. More importantly, the Goliards' feeling of affinity with a community which they criticized could not be permanent. The significance of migration in the formation of the medieval intelligentsia brought wandering clerics into contact with margin communities; this phenomenon seems more significant at the end of the era than at the time of the Goliards. The professionalization of intellectuals and the shortage of such benefices stabilized the life of this community. Among heretics, there was also no shortage of excommunicated monks and priests.⁴³ The roads were packed with clerics who indulged in fraud, giving themselves the

⁴⁰ A. Dupré Theseider, "L'eresia a Bologna nei tempi di Dante", in: *Studi storici in onore di Gioacchino Volpe* (Firenze, 1958), vol. 1, p. 401.

⁴¹ Reineri, p. 273: "*Aliquas merces gratas, et annulos et pepla dominis et dominabus exhibeant ad emendum. Quibus venditis si homines quaerant ab eo, habes plures ad vendendum; repondet, habeo pretiosiores gemmas, quam sunt istae; has vobis darem, si faceretis me securum, quod non proderetis me clericis.*"

⁴² Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen*, p. 391 ff.

⁴³ L. Fumi, "Eretici e ribelli nell'Umbria dal 1320-1330", *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria*, 5 (1899), p. 249 (the Franciscan Pietro Mini da Siena is described as "*per mundum vagabundus*").

right to fulfil clerical functions and often preying on human naivety.⁴⁴ Life propelled them towards propagators of heresy, so they helped disseminate their views and also acted as mediators in contacts with the followers of the “true faith.”

Court archives sometimes disclose the links between heresy and intellectual and artistic circles.⁴⁵ Among the victims of the hunt for heretics and witches in Artois (1459–1460) was a wandering poet and painter. Evidence of a different kind is provided by a pardon granted by King Louis XI in 1478 to a certain cleric, a master of the liberated arts. Together with two comrades, with whom he ran a “school of writing,” he set off from Paris to Meaux, then to Coulommiers, and further to Provins, Châlons, Reims and Troyes. In Troyes they were joined by a certain monk-hermit who believed in a trinity called Gloria-God which, he argued, was to ensure the clerics of salvation. To win followers, these *litterati* began to mint counterfeit coins.⁴⁶ A group of vagrants composed of intellectuals and their interest in a new faith may be considered a rather typical phenomenon, it seems.

One should not exaggerate the significance of social origin for membership of heretical sects. In fact, heretic groups consisted of people of various occupations,⁴⁷ and sometimes they consciously chose a profession requiring physical work (e.g. weaving). In lists of people suspected of heresy, we find representatives of all urban communities, hence the difference in the structures of heretical groups in various regions. The German Waldensians were recruited from among tailors, cobblers and millers, whilst their brothers in the Czech lands were generally rural people.⁴⁸ A register of Waldensians from Western Pomerania and Brandenburg dating from the end of the 14th century

⁴⁴ Teseo Pini, in his *Speculum cerretanorum*, includes them among the crowd of charlatans; see *Il libro dei vagabondi*, ed. P. Camporesi (Turin, 1973), pp. 5–69, and xxvii ff.

⁴⁵ Om *ioculatores* among the Beghards in Bergamo in 1291, cf. A. Borst, *Die Katharer* (Stuttgart, 1953), p. 139.

⁴⁶ Paris, Archives Nationales, JJ 206, fol. 220; S. Luce, *Les clercs vagabonds à Paris et dans l'Île-de-France sous Louis XI* (Paris, 1878), p. 3 ff.

⁴⁷ J. Guiraud, *Histoire de l'Inquisition au Moyen Age*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1938), pp. 295–302; list of people who in 1269 and 1284 attended meetings with an adept called Pagès.

⁴⁸ H. Haupt, “Waldensertum und Inquisition im südöstlichen Deutschland bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts”, *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 3 (1890), pp. 337–411; Werner, *Nachrichten*, p. 226.

does not always record their occupations, but most of them seem to be poor: peasants and artisans, day workers and fishermen, weavers and hatters.⁴⁹ Thus, associating the Waldensians with the “bourgeois opposition,” as was often the case, is quite incorrect because, as we have said, the links between various socio-professional groups and heretics varied not only between countries, but also between their regions. In medieval polemic discourse, heresy is a domain of lower social strata. A certain Dominican, discussing the mistakes of the Waldensians, said that the followers of Christianity included philosophers, educated people and princes, whereas heresy was supported solely by paupers, workers, women and illiterate people,⁵⁰ and not even heretical *doctors* were scholars.⁵¹ Another polemicist, Jan of Hamburg, did not hesitate to include vagrants, escaped nuns, thieves and malefactors among the community of heretics.⁵²

Opinions on the social origin of heretics are by no means mere rhetoric or invectives intended to put heretics in the worst possible light. These opinions suggest the reality: the masters and other key figures most active in heretical sects indeed included migrants from villages and small towns.⁵³ However, the most important factor was not so much social origin as the socio-psychological situation in which people had found themselves: the geographical mobility which placed them among a crowd of wanderers. In this movement of people, one can see not only the effectiveness of action and a need to propagate heresy, but also the consequence of social origins. By virtue of their

⁴⁹ These documents were first published by W. Wattenbach; they are now available in a new edition, see D. Kurze, *Quellen zur Ketzergeschichte Brandenburgs und Pommerns* (Berlin, 1975); cf. id., “Zur Ketzergeschichte der Mark Brandenburg und Pommerns vornehmlich im 14. Jahrhundert: Luziferianer, Putzkeller und Waldenser”, *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands*, 16/17 (1968), pp. 50–94; M. Erbstößer, *Sozialreligiöse Strömungen im späten Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1970), p. 122.

⁵⁰ *Reineri*, p. 263; other examples: Gonnet, Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, p. 173.

⁵¹ Gonnet, Molnár, *Les Vaudois*, p. 172; one should note that this last statement appears in a rather positive context.

⁵² J.W. von Hamburg, “Tractatus contra haereticos, behardos”, in: von Döllinger, *Beiträge*, p. 411 (new edition: *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte*, 14, 1962, pp. 336–386).

⁵³ Cf. list of Waldensian *rectores* in: von Döllinger, *Beiträge*, p. 367 ff., and an analysis of this list in: Werner, *Nachrichten*, p. 215 ff., Erbstößer, *Sozialreligiöse Strömungen*, p. 127 ff.

lifestyle and lack of family or neighbourly ties, these migrants, treading the roads as wandering preachers in order to strengthen the *credentials* in their beliefs, belonged to the world of vagabonds.⁵⁴ Thus, they have a place in the “mirrors of begging” that appeared in Italian and German didactic and satirical literature.⁵⁵

The lifestyle and social origins of the Beghards also brought them close to circles of vagrants. Alvare Pelayo (Alvarus Pelagius), who personally knew heretics in Umbria and France, said that most of them were shepherds, swineherds, coalmen, bricklayers and blacksmiths.⁵⁶ The Beghards⁵⁷ included not only those who had voluntarily abandoned material security, but also genuine paupers for whom begging was the only way to survive and wandering was their only way of life.

One might say that there is a direct dependence between vagrant heretics and some of the ideas they spread, so that in their doctrine one might seek confirmation of their social status. From that angle, one can appreciate why heretics were so hostile towards the judicial apparatus and why they condemned the persecution of malefactors.⁵⁸ However, this appears to be an oversimplification of the complex relations between the social condition and ideological discourse. Hostility towards a judge for sentencing a criminal to death is not a defensive reaction, but a denial of the right for some people to judge others, a condemnation of the death penalty. A waiver of the norms and customs of life, extolled in heretical doctrines, encourages an antisocial way of life, yet social eradication does not always lead to heresy. It can also be the consequence of joining a heretical group.

One should regard the spread of heresies in the late Middle Ages as the result and a reflection of the moral and social crisis at the

⁵⁴ Guiraud, *Histoire*, vol. 2, pp. 80–82: Guillelme de la Mote’s wanderings from hut to hut, through woods and along roads. Cf. also *Processus*, p. 49, 53; and von Döllinger, *Beiträge*, pp. 105–109.

⁵⁵ F. Kluge, *Rotwelsch. Quellen und Wortschatz der Gaunersprache und der verwandten Geheimsprachen* (Strassburg, 1901); *Il libro dei vagabondi*, *passim*.

⁵⁶ *Alvari Pelagii de planctu ecclesiae libri duo* (Lyon, 1517), p. 166.

⁵⁷ Bylina, *Wizje społeczne*, pp. 154–164; for anti-heretical discourse, see J.-C. Schmitt, *Mort d’une hérésie* (Paris, 1978).

⁵⁸ On the attitudes of the Waldensians towards the measure of justice and malefactors, cf. W. Wattenbach, *Über die Inquisition gegen die Waldenser in Pommern und der Mark Brandenburg* (Berlin, 1886), p. 65.

time. The quest for a fresh religion was associated with the shocks to which society was subjected and with an intensified need to take part in religious life; a feeling of eradication and exclusion encouraged people to abandon culture for the sake of religious nonconformity.

PART III

History of Culture

Mentality and Collective Psychology in History

In: *Przegląd Historyczny*, 53 (1962), pp. 629–644.

*Histoire des sentiments, cette grande muette*¹ – these words of Lucien Febvre can refer to the entire sphere of the history of mentality. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in the history of culture in various fields, an interest extremely significant to the development of historical science.² It is difficult not to note the internal dialectics of the development of historiography: it is, after all, a return to the original interest in historiography, to the traditional program of research. Not a return to tradition, but a consequence of the progress of science. In a historical context, an interest in the psychology of individuals, groups and societies is an expression of an increased interest in examining human fortunes. It is probably not a sign of doctrinal smugness if we find in this quest traces of the influence of Marxist reflection, in a dual sense: on the one hand a juxtaposition with Marxism; on the other hand, a Marxist interpretation of particularly complex individualized phenomena.

The rapprochement between history and psychology has a long and honourable history. Historians have explained the course of events, decisions by authorities and the fortunes of people with the aid of psychology. This did not require bringing the two disciplines together; for the historian, it was enough to possess knowledge of people and of the motives behind human behaviour based on his or her own “common sense.” This has led (and still leads) to amusing misun-

¹ L. Febvre, *Pour une histoire à part entière* (Paris, 1962), p. 853.

² Cf. debate on the history of culture (*Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 69, 1962, no. 1), as well as the remarks of J. Kłoczowski, B. Kürbis, A. Gieysztor, J. Baszkiewicz, S. Herbst, and A. Kersten at the VIII Congress of Polish Historians.

derstandings: false dramas of power held by teenagers, non-existence of spiritual separations, alleged psychic powers and portents... The motives behind human actions in the past has been gauged by the behaviour of people in the present, forgetting that even if man himself has not changed much over the centuries, the relationships and institutions surrounding him have.³ The field of interpretation was also very unstable: a distinguished French historian in the last century determined psychological features on the basis of surviving portraits of his heroes. However, he was wrong about one portrait of a calm, stay-at-home person who had not achieved anything special in history, yet in this portrait he saw the harsh and cruel features of Tsarina Catherine. Thus, in the search for academic exactitude, modern historiography has parted with psychology. Yet in the meantime, changes have occurred in psychology which are exceedingly important to the entire field of social sciences. Durkheim's concept of "collective consciousness" led humanism onto an important trail, known earlier (the Marxist idea of class consciousness) but little frequented. In 1928, the psychologist Charles Blondel outlined a program of collective psychology and postulated research into "the universal ways of feeling, thought and action."⁴ This entailed a proposal important to the whole of humanism, especially history. But it was not quickly understood. Lucien Febvre struggled with his typical zeal for a re-orientation of history towards the new psychology, demonstrating the importance of the work of Blondel, and late of Henri Wallon and Jean Piaget, to historians, to their research programs, and to an understanding of the process of history. The point of this was not wholly, or not only, to clarify the decisions and fortunes of individuals, but to investigate the mentality of past generations and of their worlds of imagination, and get to know the mental structures of communities, groups and nations.

Febvre formulated the importance of this subject matter and its research program in 1938 in *Encyclopédie Française*,⁵ and also included

³ Cf. remarks by M. Małowist (*Więź*, 1961), no. 10.

⁴ Ch. Blondel, *Introduction à la psychologie collective* (5th ed.: Paris, 1952). On collective psychology, cf. also: W. Helpach, *Einführung in die Völkerpsychologie* (3rd ed., Stuttgart, 1954); M. Halbwegs, *La psychologie collective* (Paris, 1942); P. Reiwald, *De l'esprit des masses. Traité de psychologie collective* (Neuchâtel-Paris, 1949), bibliography.

⁵ L. Febvre, "La psychologie et l'histoire", in: *Encyclopédie Française*, vol. 8 (Paris, 1938), after: L. Febvre, "Une vue d'ensemble. Histoire et psychologie", in: id., *Combats pour l'histoire* (Paris, 1953), pp. 207-220.

it many times in his later works.⁶ After the biography of Luther,⁷ in a monograph on the author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*⁸ written during the war, Febvre showed how one can reach collective psychology via individual fortunes, how important to an understanding of individuals it is to learn about the sensitivities of a given era, the resources and materials of thought, and forms of contact between people. Febvre's quests have lost none of their validity, and recent years have brought a few attempts to outline a profile of research into collective mentality and psychology and put it into practice. These attempts have come mainly from the community of French historiography. Although in Anglo-Saxon humanism as well there is vivid interest in collective (or social) psychology, it is significant that in France these attempts come from historians, and not from sociologists or historical philosophers. The history of different times and tempos postulated by Braudel and the *Annales*, with complex dialectics of short and long trends,⁹ does not remain separated from the problems of mentality in which historical time builds up in layers and in which various eras exist, as it were, side by side.

Two programmatic treatises appeared at almost the same time: *Histoire des mentalités* by Georges Duby,¹⁰ and the report by Alphonse Dupront on collective psychology delivered at the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Stockholm.¹¹

The traditional psychological method in history was to introduce psychology from the outside as a means of interpretation or clarification: Duby regards this as the intervention of subjectivism,

⁶ Especially id., "La sensibilité et l'histoire", *Annales d'Histoire Sociale*, 3 (1941), after: id., "Comment reconstituer la vie affective d'autrefois? La sensibilité et l'histoire", in: id., *Combats*, pp. 221–238; and other articles in *Combats*, section "Alliances et appuis"; id., *Au cœur religieux du XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1957), section "Aux approches de temps nouveaux"; and id., *Pour une histoire*, section "Histoire des sentiments."

⁷ Id., *Un destin. Martin Luther* (Paris, 1928).

⁸ Id., *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI^e siècle. La religion de Rabelais* (Paris, 1942).

⁹ Cf. F. Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences: The Long Duration", *Political Research, Organization and Design*, vol. 3(6), Feb 1960, pp. 3ff.; and id., "History and sociology", in: id., *On History*, trans. S. Matthews (Chicago, 1980), chapt. iv.

¹⁰ G. Duby, "Histoire des mentalités", in: *L'histoire et ses méthodes*, ed. Ch. Samaran (Paris, 1961; *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade*), pp. 937–966.

¹¹ A. Dupront, "Problèmes et méthodes d'une psychologie collective", *Annales ESC*, XVI, 1961, pp. 3–11.

a historian's own psychological experience; a safe intervention because the historian and his or her hero belong to the same generation or similar cultural circle, otherwise they would be led astray by the "psychological anachronism." Duby says that an understanding of man's shifting psychological attitudes, penetrating the historian's awareness, is the point of departure for a modern comprehension of the history of mentality.

In the context of the sciences of man, from which historical science reaps creative inspiration, Duby stresses the particular importance of contemporary American "social psychology," whose subject is man within groups of society. The historian may use the experience of tied discipline to analyse the source material which the centuries have bequeathed. Despite the fundamental differences in the research materials, the historian of mentality and social psychologist face a similar problem: how to decipher from the source materials authentic structures of mentality and behaviour? The techniques that psychosociologists use, including the diagrams and models created by social mathematics, may still be useful to the historian. These diagrams and models "may help identify and better observe certain trends in collective psychology, at least those that, in social behaviour, are subject to logic, i.e. ceremonies and customs." Apart from "collective consciousness," social psychology shows historians the association between the individual psyche and the social surroundings.

For the study of mentality, two planes of differentiation are of particular importance: via the study of various communities determined socially and geographically, and via the study of time. In this latter case, one would better use the plural. Duby distinguished between at least three rhythms, or three levels (*paliers*), at which one should study mentality: the level of brief time, such as an event; the level of longer time covering several centuries, for which he uses the term "development" borrowed from economists; and finally the qualities of mentality that are most resistant to movement and time. Apart from these three rhythms, there are structures connected with biological data, elements which virtually do not change; that is to say, which change so slowly that we do not notice.

Among the roads that lead to an acquaintanceship of mentality, Duby attaches importance, at least at the present stage of research, to the mental resources which people used in a given era, a study of education and information, and a study of myths and beliefs. In all three

of these directions, the historian is faced with the long toil of recording and analysing, patiently researching the slow changes to vocabulary and syntax, and examining those “guides of culture” – manuscripts, books, drama and, last but not least, a study of the conflicts between what Marxist historical literature calls the structure and superstructure, and between what Claude Lévi-Strauss calls the “real order” and the “imagined order, i.e. between “reality and customs.” In Duby’s opinion, a history of mentality perceived in this way would serve social history,¹² making broad use of the history of science and technology. Dupront describes as the history of collective psychology or collective psyche that separate historical discipline whose subject is the world of social consciousness. The very name of the discipline causes no small problems, as illustrated by the debate on Dupront’s report in Stockholm. Dupront timidly proposes another term: *analyse du mental collectif*, but realizing its oddity he adds a kind of list: the history of values, forms, mentality, symbols,¹³ and myths, whether within a single civilization or generally. In any case, let us emphasize that this is a proposal for a separate discipline, “not because we want to create yet another realm of historical knowledge, but because we are convinced it is essential.”

For this discipline, Dupront indicates three basic paths of research:

- a classification of forms, creativity, images and values in which collective mentality is expressed in historical time;
- an analysis of the rules of life, creative forces and the way (or ways) in which the people of a given country and time lived through their era;
- the extraction of periodic phenomena, rhythms, recurrent ideas, mental images, myths and groups of values.¹⁴

In these three paths of searches, the problem of time, or to be more exact the question of man in the face of time, makes itself felt,

¹² An interesting example of the importance of examining mental attitudes for social and economic history is the book by Ph. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, transl. R. Baldick (Harmondsworth, 1973).

¹³ An excellent example of the importance of researching symbols is P.E. Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik* (Stuttgart, 1954–1956).

¹⁴ Examples of such a study are the works of Dupront’s mentor: P. Alphanbéry, *La chrétienté et l’idée de croisade*, vols. 1–2 (Paris, 1954–1959); and R. Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l’Empire germanique médiéval* (Paris, 1950); and id., *L’idée d’Empire en Occident du Ve au XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1953).

for insofar as the subject of narrative historiography is what man does *in* time, Dupront's thoughts attach prime importance to what man actually does *with* time, the problem of man's psychic forces or "human strength." Examinations of this nature, attempting to determine needs, attitudes, collective ideals or mental mechanisms through the prism of an event, work of art or economic link, are not easy and create the danger of dilettantism, hence the importance of establishing rigid methodology.

Dupront, discussing ways of examining collective psychology, indicates three dimensions in which this is done: inventarisation, whether regular surveys or the construction of long series (e.g. the cult of the saints and its spread, or the iconography of Romanesque art); an analysis of concepts in order to reach collective consciousness via historical semantics; and an interpretive synthesis which will unveil a certain, cohesive mentality among the features previously disclosed in research. A particularly important matter for Dupront is the choice of time that corresponds to the collective psyche of a country, era or environment. This choice must entail long time periods, for only then can one count on a satisfactory picture of changes to social psychology.

Such a discipline possesses, in Dupront's opinion, its social utility and relevance.

The two programs presented here have much in common, but also many differences. Duby outlines a certain research topic. Dupront's methodological reflections are accompanied by organizational-scientific conclusions and an attempt to define the outlines of a new or separate discipline; the doubts about this proposal do not stem entirely from a reluctance to create a new specialization at a time when throughout the humanities there is a trend towards integration and the elimination of traditional divisions. For he realizes the importance of the argument whereby the integration of disciplines occurs on the basis of other disciplines that are already mature and established, whereas the history of collective psychology has not yet asserted itself as a discipline and has not passed the initial stage of gathering material. But it is also difficult not to notice that this "independence of the discipline" hides a certain methodology, and that such research is in danger of subjectivism. In one of his treatises, Dupront says that the history of collective psychology cannot become a "scheme of historical sociology" and shirk from explaining the meaning from phenomena, if *expliquer* means arranging into a scheme. "On the

scale of the history of collective psychology, there is no room for any law.” It is easy to understand Dupront’s defence of the separateness of collective psychological phenomena, but such a stance leads to subjectivism. For a historian, it is not enough to describe medieval fears of the end of the world¹⁵ as panic, psychosis or irrational mass reaction. To understand these fears, one must contrast the primitive mentality behind these fears with the type of economy and society that corresponds to it, and then proceed from these longer time periods to shorter ones and investigate the direct causes of a given psychological reaction. A historian’s curiosity would also remain unsatisfied if he or she referred to, for example, the psyche or reaction of the crowd;¹⁶ actually that is where the problem begins: the historian must determine the social composition of the crowd, the historical conditions that created it, the reasons for its collapse or dissipation, etc. To understand means to contrast, juxtapose and compare various types and orders of events, and combine and separate human events and groups.

* * *

The programmatic thinking and methodological reflections are already being accompanied by attempts at research. Without attempting to review them in full, it is worth focusing on the formation of contemporary mentality and compare it with medieval mentality. For this, I believe, involves a problem that is fundamental to research into mentality: the problem of change.

A key change to mentality occurred in the 12th century, when a modern mentality developed. That is when Western civilization took shape. Jean Dhont supports this argument by analysing social attitudes in 12th-century Flanders following the assassination of the Flemish duke Charles the Good (1127).¹⁷ The narrator of the

¹⁵ Cf. N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (Oxford, 1957); G. Leff, “In Search of the Millennium”, *Past and Present*, 1958, no. 13, pp. 89–95; E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels. Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester, 1959).

¹⁶ Cf. G. Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1959). A totally different perception of the crowd is presented by W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War, 1916–1919* (Oxford, 1953).

¹⁷ J. Dhont, “Une mentality du XII^e siècle. Galbert de Bruges”, *Revue du Nord*, 1957, p. 39.

event is Galbert de Bruges, an official at the chancellery of Flanders. He is not satisfied with noting the events connected with the murder as if in a diary, but also comments on the facts described. Galbert changes his mind about various claimants to the duke's inheritance, and about the basic interpretation of events. For Dhont, this evolution is of capital importance. Dhont observes two mental layers in the chronicler's thinking: First, superstition, though perhaps less than among his contemporaries. Belief in the power of magic spells leads him to say something quite unusual for a Christian, and probably a cleric: "Is it not unusual for a priest [meaning a priest from Bruges who casts anathema upon Wilhelm Cliton – B.G.] to be able to charm God to such an extent that God chases Wilhelm away from the country whether He wants to or not?" But gradually, Galbert's superstition gives way to what Dhont considers something more rational, a release from the influence of magic which attributed human fortunes to divine intervention. Even though it is apparently absurd, Dhont's thesis must be considered justified; in a broader context, one must say that compared to pagan beliefs, Christianity was a step in the direction of rationality. But Dhont also perceives in Galbert's arguments another element, an important one and quite new for Galbert's times: he ascribes to divine action an internal cohesion and logic. And that is the novel feature of the new or contemporary mentality. This argument is not entirely convincing. No doubt here we find a reflection typical of those times, a quest for ways to reconcile faith and reason. But we also find an element of logic in the "thought in a wild state" investigated by Lévi-Strauss,¹⁸ so one can claim that it is new or "contemporary."

Dhont employed the same event, the killing of Charles the Good, to investigate collective reactions in Flanders in 1127–1128.¹⁹ Apart from the various opinions presented by Galbert, Dhont observes specific solidarities, collective forces of various natures. That is how he regards first the *potentiae*: the senior vassal, urban communities, families and, albeit at a distance, the clergy; then, higher up, there is a group of barons occupying the most senior positions of the *potentiae* and of the city of a given region; and finally the actual connections

¹⁸ C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, transl. G. Weidenfeld (Chicago University Press, 1966), pp. 33 ff., and others.

¹⁹ J. Dhont, "Les 'solidarités médiévales'. Une société en transition: la Flandre en 1127–1128", *Annales ESC*, 12 (1957), pp. 529–560.

between various individuals and groups. This picture of solidarity in Flanders in relation to a specific event is of course described in historical terms, but Dhont also sees a certain stage in long-term evolution, features of both the old and the new situation; a new element for him is especially the role of urban solidarity. On a broader scale, he claims that after the first stage, when the collectives and ducal power are autonomous elements, there comes the second stage, when the collectives and the dukes cooperate normally. This second stage marks the transition from a medieval state to a modern one.

I do not think I will betray Dhont's thinking when I say that the springboard of his thoughts is public opinion and its layering, whilst the basic problem he analyses is the web of relations between the state and society. Here we find a subject-matter applied more broadly in modern history (Dhont, by the way, practices both medieval and the latest history). For him, the basic difference between medieval and modern is that in modern times, we have social classes and political parties, whereas in the Middle Ages there were "solidarities." The research procedure is as follows: from the range of reactions to the ruler's death and the variety of interests engaged in the bid for power, one identifies various organized groups of actions which previously existed *in potentia* or existed in fact (towards other events or interests). Thus, joint action is what determines the aforementioned "solidarity." An appreciation of this and of the consequent social differentiation in medieval Flanders seems justified, but nevertheless restricted and insufficient. One would like to compare these results with an analysis of collective psychological reactions, and contrast the platform of joint action with the platform of joint mentality. The two networks thus obtained would then have to be superimposed on a third: the network of class and of social-commercial stratification in medieval Flanders. Thus, apart from the importance of the relationship of individuals and groups towards state authority, we reiterate the importance of contrasting various phenomena. Reading Dhont's articles, one remains unconvinced about the thesis of a "modern" breakthrough that is said to have occurred in Western culture and civilization in the 12th and even 13th centuries. Therefore, we should seek the concept of changes to mentality in another sphere: the birth of the capitalist mentality.

This is a famous problem, tackled ever since Max Weber launched his thesis about the connection between protestant ethics and the spirit

of capitalism.²⁰ Studies into the attitudes of medieval and modern society towards economic life arose out of this debate on the subject of the theses of Weber and Richard Henry Tawney.

The first issue arising here is the mentality of medieval merchants. A new social group, therefore a new mentality, surely? Armando Sapori, regarding the Italian merchant of the 13th–14th centuries as a representative of the Renaissance and underlining the capitalist nature of his business, did not hesitate to recognize the novelty of this group in the sphere of mentality as well.²¹ Speaking on behalf of the continuity of the process of history, Sapori perceives in the 13th–14th centuries, apart from an artisan mentality, also a different, capitalist-like mercantile mentality, characterized by a respect for money, the gaining of profit, trade speculation and money lending. A sense of interest and enterprise which becomes the hallmark of this new group in medieval society.²² Its mentality is rationalistic; medieval merchants “act as if they believe that the human mind can comprehend and explain everything and act accordingly.”²³ Mercantile ethics also has a separate character, quite earthly and secular, “it is determined [...] by the morality of the interests which mercantile handbooks [...] have vividly expressed.”²⁴

Against such a picture of the mentality of medieval burghers, one could argue that it must be specific, and hence geographically

²⁰ M. Weber, “Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus”, *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 20–21 (1904–1905); E. Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (Tübingen, 1912); R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London, 1926); H.M. Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism. A Criticism of Max Weber and His School* (Cambridge, 1933); A. Fanfani, *Cattolicesimo e protestantesimo nella formazione storica del capitalismo* (Milan, 1934); H. Lüthy, *La banque protestante en France, de la révocation de l'édit de Nantes à la révolution* (Paris, 1959–1961).

²¹ A. Sapori, “Medioevo economico”, *Società*, 3 (1947), especially p. 658 ff.; id., *La cultura del mercante medievale italiano. Studi di storia economica medievale* (ed. 2: Firenze, 1946), pp. 285–325; id., *Le marchand italien au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1952), pp. xvii–xxvii.

²² N.S.B. Gras, *Business and Capitalism. An Introduction to Business History* (New York, 1937); Y. Renouard, *Les hommes d'affaires italiens du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1949). Cf. A. Mączak, “Business History”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 63 (1956), no. 1.

²³ Renouard, *Les hommes d'affaires*, p. 180.

²⁴ J. Le Goff, *Marchands et banquiers du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1956), p. 84. Cf. also J. Meuvret, “Manuels et traités à l'usage des négociants aux premières époques de l'âge moderne”, *Etudes d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 5 (1953).

confined. It would be historically wrong to transpose the image of Italian merchants to northern countries. But what we are mainly interested in here is the mechanism by which the consciousness of societies and groups changed and the birth process of new mentalities in certain times and places; therefore, the distinction of the Apennine Peninsula does not deprive the subject of significance. However, regarding the chronological breakthrough in Italy, historians are not unanimous. Researchers of later eras tend to accuse medievalists of premature modernization, a certain psychologically understood apologetic accent in relation to the period under review. An anachronism during the course of research, particularly dangerous to historical analyses, would have its source in a failure to appreciate the quantity of the discussed phenomena. Ruggiero Romano said that a major denominator of collective consciousness is the opinion expressed by the 14th-century moralist Paolo da Certaldo: A penny earned in fear of God is worth more than a pound earned godlessly.²⁵ This does not imply praise for money; earning it still threatens the soul with damnation, and in Romano's opinion, without demystifying money there can be no talk of modern mentality. This change occurred much later, in the 15th–16th centuries, between the time of Leon Battista Alberti and Galileo Galilei.²⁶

So is this just a question of the chronology of a given phenomenon? I think not. In fact, this is a negative answer to the question whether a new social group always constructs a new mentality. A new social group can adopt an old mentality and adjust it to its own purposes. Medieval trade remained stuck in a medieval society; it functioned under feudal economic conditions without altering its traditional structures,²⁷ and it is similar with mentality. Therefore, on the trail

²⁵ R. Romano, "Rinascimento dell'economia ed economia del Rinascimento", in: id., *Tra due Crisi: l'Italia del Rinascimento* (Torino, 1971).

²⁶ Id., "Il mercante italiano tra Medioevo e Rinascimento", in: id., *Tra due Crisi*. These two articles by R. Romano, together with a third ("Agricoltura e contadini nell'Italia del XV e del XVI secolo", published in the same volume) are a very interesting new look at the changeover from the Middle Ages to modern times, to the beginning of the Renaissance, and this within the framework of an integral concept of the process, i.e. a combination of culture and socio-economic changes.

²⁷ M. Małowist, *Studia z dziejów rzemiosła w okresie kryzysu feudalizmu w zach. Europie w XIV–XV wieku* (Warsaw, 1954); id., "Główne problemy rozwoju sił wytwórczych w okresie Odrodzenia", *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 2 (1954), no. 1/2.

of medieval trading, one should monitor not so much the birth of a new mentality as the gradual changes to the view and reactions of a specific social group and its adaptation to its work. Jacques Le Goff described this subject in a very interesting manner, using time as an example.²⁸ The evolution he discusses is changeable. The Christian time that dominates medieval mentality is theological by nature, and serves to bring man closer to God in the sphere of eternity. Church bells sound the passing of time, man is subjected to God and nature, whilst prayer and superstitious practices are his resources of action. But trade activity requires the measurement of time; to determine the length of a trade journey and draw up accounts it is essential to foresee time. Thus, under the influence of the needs of commercial life, time becomes rationalized and tamed. But time has no uniform character; apart from the rational concept of time realized by merchants, there is Biblical time, the time of the Church. In addition, in his professional work the merchant remains subject to the Church's time, which retains the horizon of salvation "as a different horizon of existence."

Nevertheless, the new concept of time also penetrated universal mentality. It ceased to belong to any particular group,²⁹ but, as with the concept of space, became one of the key features of the Renaissance breakthrough. Alphonse Dupront discussed this in his painstaking, though probably not sufficiently appreciated, essay *Espace et humanisme*,³⁰ one of the most interesting attempts in western literature to encapsulate the Renaissance breakthrough. For people living in the time of great discoveries, the discovery of new lands came as a great shock, not because of the collapse of hitherto geographical ideas, but because of the creation of fresh interest; a curiosity so intense that, henceforth, anything seemed possible. That is why the discovery of

²⁸ J. Le Goff, "Au Moyen Age. Temps de l'Eglise et temps du marchand", *Annales ESC*, 15 (1960), pp. 417–433; cf. also the Polish version of the lecture "Społeczeństwo średniowieczne i czas", *Argumenty* 1962, 41 (174). One can add to this an interesting study into grammatical tenses: P. Imbs, *Les propositions temporelles en ancien français. La détermination du moment. Contribution à l'étude du temps grammatical français* (Strasbourg, 1956).

²⁹ An interesting examination of the collective concept of time and of collective attitudes towards time is outlined in: M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris, 1950).

³⁰ A. Dupront, "Espace et humanisme", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 8 (1946), p. 7, 104. Cf. also: A. Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, 1957).

the “new world” altered people’s concept of geographical space³¹ and horizons,³² and this, coupled with other factors, released the human psyche from medieval isolation and led to self-knowledge and to the emancipation of the burghers, who now felt their own strength and social independence. Yet this was not so much the creation of a new, original value as a realization of the path of existing quests. A realization of the boundlessness of space, the desire to possess and an attitude of loneliness, these psychological discoveries via the vision of a civic “concept of the world” create a modern mentality and culture, and also define the bounds of humanist reflection which remain valid to this day.

All the research programs, essays and detailed studies discussed here persistently called for broad investigations into phenomena and a chronological and geographical classification of the extensive field of mental happenings. An attempt to take up this challenge was the book by Robert Mandrou,³³ published in 1961, therefore it is worth taking a closer look at it.

* * *

People who, as wonderfully expressed by Jules Michelet, lived in France “from the time of Columbus to the time of Galileo, from the discovery of the earth to the discovery of heaven,” are the subject of Mandrou’s book. “Our method,” he writes, “involves dismantling modern culture into its various components in order to reassemble it, observing the lives of people who are the creators and bearers of this culture.” Restricting the geographical framework to France, Mandrou explains that this decision is justified by the fact that France is situated at the crossroads of routes and cultures, exposed to both Nordic and Mediterranean influences. Therefore, by studying the people of France “in the first century of the modern era,” one can observe not only the France of that age, but also a certain reflection of the world at that time, the world that people knew.

Due to the practicalities of dealing with the past, the historian cannot come to terms with the concept of an “eternal man,” a being of unchanging

³¹ Cf. P. Francastel, *Peinture et société. Naissance et destruction d'un espace plastique. De la Renaissance au cubisme* (Paris, 1951).

³² G. Atkinson, *Les nouveaux horizons de la Renaissance française* (Paris, 1935).

³³ R. Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne. Essai de psychologie historique 1500–1640* (Paris, 1961).

conduct, thinking and life. Not only does the framework of human activity change, but the form and structures of this activity and thinking also evolve. To encapsulate these differences, Mandrou employs three points of observation: the physical, the sentimental and the intellectual, then he presents modern man in a social context, and finally he attempts to consider the significance of specific chapters of human activity.

Mandrou presents “physical man” in the framework of nutrition, or rather the malnutrition of most people; clothing and housing; health; and disease and the struggle against disease. In 16th-century France, with a population of only 16 million, it seems a paradox to talk of overpopulation, but as the country was plagued by hunger, it is an important issue. Evidence of this is the growing number of miscarriages (punishable by death; the victims of punishment were “merely” servants). Man’s psyche at the start of the modern era is different, and even the hierarchy of the senses is now different: hearing and touch take precedence over sight, says Mandrou.³⁴ Psychological reactions become violent, passions become diluted, natural phenomena assume a stark contrast and are cloaked in secrecy and fear.

The modern era witnesses the collapse of the strongest social bond: the unity of religion. The Reformation introduces a choice, says Mandrou. It breaks up religious solidarity, though preserving the religious framework per se. Febvre demonstrated that agnosticism, and especially atheism, were not widespread in this period.³⁵ People continued to be bound by a “collective requirement” in three forms of solidarity: the family, the parish and the social class, a requirement imposed by living conditions and the mutual need for help and joint action.

Mandrou begins his review of human activity with “prosaic occupations” of manual work, the money sphere and capitalist spirit, and finally games and pastimes. He attaches particular importance to the “professional sphere” and attempts to identify the reasons behind the attitudes of individual socio-professional groups. In this period he notices the formation of a permanent divide between manual workers and intellectual workers. Thus, the artist, now becoming aware of his honour, becomes separated from the rest of society. Artists, humanists, scholars and philosophers are those who, escaping

³⁴ One can doubt this thesis which Mandrou repeats after Febvre (*Le problème de l'incroyance*, p. 471). A critique thereof: DUBY, *Histoire des mentalités*, p. 956.

³⁵ L. Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance*.

from daily life and routine, exercise their calling and their profession. Although a modest elite in numerical terms, it nevertheless firmly exceeds the bounds of everyday religious life.

Investigations into religious feelings at this time lack the basic materials required. A classification of religious practices is missing. The concepts of people in those times are different, and contemporary methods of religious sociology and its models and classifications prove to be of little value. There was an enormous variety of religious practices during that time, not much different than today. Mandrou places devout believers and libertines at two opposite poles, but stresses that in both cases, the groups are numerically small. He claims that the age of humanism (in France) did not have the courage to question religious faith. Not until the early 17th century did a group of religious skeptics, mainly scholars, appear: “hesitant precursors, bearers of an intellectual truth still devoid of the power of radiation.” A mass phenomenon, however, were intermediate attitudes in which superstition, pagan relics and religious zeal became mixed.

Finally, apart from this prosaic activity, apart from the work of artists and scholars and religious life, there is a third set of attitudes: a tendency to escape from the world, from the monotony and burden of daily life. This escape can take a *sensu stricto* form, i.e. travel, wandering, escaping to the world of dreams and imagination;³⁶ an escape from a world that cannot be controlled by science and human forces to an “evil” world of devilish magic in order to regain this control, even at the expense of eternal damnation;³⁷ and, in the end, escape from life itself – suicide. These spiritual attitudes and the frequency with which they occur are a particular testimony to collective psychology in this first century of the modern era.

A burgeoning of feelings and moods and of social aggression, being the reverse side of solidarity, feelings of helplessness in the face of nature, belief in God’s omnipotence – these are the main outlines of the common human psyche in this era. Within this framework there takes shape different mental structures, different world outlooks, different “visions of the world.” Mandrou rightly demands the social classification

³⁶ At the same time as Mandrou’s book appeared a work by M. Foucault, *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l’âge classique* (Paris, 1961), discussing the particular form of “escape” that is madness.

³⁷ Cf. A. Koyré, *Mystiques, Spirituels, Alchimistes du XVI^e siècle allemand* (Paris, 1955).

of these individual visions. The role of social and professional groups is of fundamental importance here. Such a reconstruction of the vision of the world leads to a consolidated vision of societies, and hence a synthetic vision of a given culture. Mandrou points out the major breakthrough that occurred during this time, when secular culture assumed dominance over church culture and the spiritual environment which had enjoyed cultural primacy until then.

With its subject matter and structure, Mandrou's book follows on from the research program once defined by Febvre. That great French historian's thinking can be felt on almost every page. Needless to say, *Introduction à la France moderne* remains an extensive research plan, detailed and effective. There are a few pages where Mandrou realizes the program and demonstrates historical analysis and construction (e.g. the chapter on the nobility, the part about escape from the world, and general conclusions) and, let us add, he does this with great talent. But most of all he whets the appetite and points the way for research. He indicates the expediency of research into historical psychology, understood as a part of integral history. But he also encourages critical reflection.

Mandrou is aware of the complex social and economic conditions encumbering man's behaviour and his mental structure and view, his 'vision of the world.' He notes them, but correctly warns against simplifying them. Apart from painting an overall picture, he shows the enormous dependence of human attitudes on the social situation and social affiliations. The model of layers he applies is excessively varied. In the network of social and professional groups, social classes appear to be only one of the numerous links that share equal importance. A historical analysis no doubt requires variation, but one should preserve principles similar to those used by a statistician when creating a weighted index: one must remember the varying importance of the divisions applied, and their carrying weight. Constructing a greater whole out of these elements, one cannot neglect the role of the social classes and their joint "vision of the world" as one of the main gauges of order.

In the picture of classes, cultures, mentalities and attitudes, the least space is occupied by the common masses,³⁸ and therefore the greatest

³⁸ An attempt to take up Mandrou's challenge is: P. Deyon, "Mentalités populaires. Un sondage à Amiens au XVIIe siècle", *Annales ESC*, 17 (1962), pp. 448–458.

space by the nation. One cannot blame the author for this, it is the fault of the source material he has at his disposal. But the fact that the historian seeks evolution and change, usually in a traditionally short period of time involving a few centuries, also seems important. Where communication and information is poor and access to education limited, mentality evolves much more slowly.

The question of changes to human mentality over time also encourages critical reflection. The development of human thinking from 1500 to 1640 compared to previous and later period remains for me a question without an answer, and this is not just my subjective feeling. The point of reference in the book is modern mentality, a picture of the author's own psyche and that of his contemporaries.

* * *

The above remarks, not meant to be an exhaustive presentation of the subject of the book, are intended merely to encourage thoughts on the way in which research into mental culture and into the collective psychology of past generations may develop. The choice of bibliography was not random or dictated by sympathies: in French historiography, attempts at research fall on particularly fertile soil. The remarks in the margins of several French books are self-explanatory, though I also realize the importance of the proposals in this regard put forward in English-language, and especially German, historical writings; the influence of the idealistic *Geistesgeschichte* and *Formgeschichte* can also be found in the discussed works, as with the work of Bechtel on "styles" of thought, economy and especially the excellent *Autumn of the Middle Ages* by Johan Huizinga. One may consider the critical reflection on the subject matter in two dimensions: historical time and social conditions.

Mentality and historical time, as well as the problem of change to the mentality of an era, has been a major issue in previous reflections. The history of mentality is one of those areas of historical reconnaissance where it is equally difficult to capture the moment of change and establish exactly what is new. This is not only because of the natural continuity of history, but also because of a particular feature present in human mentality: the coexistence of "old" and "new" layers. Occasionally it is enough to change certain elements for us to talk of a new mentality; the mental attitudes of the Renaissance are

formed out of the substance of medieval mentality.³⁹ But a failure to appreciate the changes or breakthroughs caused by such piecemeal developments means neglecting the complexity of historical time. The problem of novelty is also connected with the problem of propagating new mental attitudes: is Michel de Montaigne meant to be the decisive factor, or venerable authors of economic textbooks? I do not think the adoption of the concept of “average man”⁴⁰ was the correct solution, for the distinction is abstract and false. The point is only to distinguish the things that differ, the different attitudes of an artist, scholar or thinker which make them stand out from the masses.⁴¹ An excellence of these attitudes or mentality is also a kind of testimony of the culture and general mentality of the era which spawned them, and a confirmation of their limits. And in the case of Montaigne, is it not significant how superstition abruptly appears in the keen thoughts of a rational thinker?

When considering the conditions behind the development of and changes to mentality, the forum of basic divisions lies in the choice of methodological principles and in a general understanding of the historical process. Once again, it is necessary to stress the importance of class distinction and class membership to the collective psyche or, to be more precise, to certain layers of mentality. The historian needs to perform a sort of stratygraphic analysis; various mental layers, thought habits and patterns, concepts and means of expression are determined by various eras and various types of social groupings: group, classes, communities and civilizations. Therefore, the programmatic postulate must be determined in two directions. Research into the history of mentality and the collective psyche, important and not sufficiently appreciated, should enter the realm of historians’ interest, but in the sense of integral history, without creating new divisions and new “protected hunting grounds,” without the baggage of subjectivism.

³⁹ Dupront says: “les forces vivantes de l’ordre ancien sont les composantes les plus nouvelles de l’ordre nouveau” (*Espace et humanisme*, p. 33).

⁴⁰ Philippe Wolff applies this concept to economic history in *L’histoire et ses méthodes* (p. 852).

⁴¹ Cf. an interesting debate on this topic: R. Barthes, “Histoire et littérature. A propos de Racine”, *Annales ESC*, 16 (1960), no. 3; and P. Francastel, “Art et histoire. Dimension et mesure des civilisation”, *Annales ESC*, 16 (1961), no. 2. An example of the role of a “leadership group” in the evolution of mentality is given in: J. Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, transl. by T.L. Fagan (Cambridge, 1993).

Revival of the History of Culture

In: *Problemy*, 1976, no. 10, pp. 6–11.

“This is the display of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that things done by man not be forgotten in time, and that great and marvelous deeds, some displayed by the Hellenes, some by the barbarians, not lose their glory, including among others what was the cause of their waging war on each other.”¹

Thus begins the historical work of the man whom Cicero called “the father of historical writing.” The Greek historian wanted to narrate universal history within the collective memory of his times. For this purpose, he relied heavily on geography and presented elements of knowledge of nature and mathematics, but most of all he combined history with ethnography. He was often accused of philandering, and as with the Polish Kadłubek, his interpretations of historical events were deemed irrational and he is said to have been too susceptible to tales and legends. However, one should do justice to this venerable historiographer of 2,500 years ago; with his passion for customs, habits and beliefs, he was a historian of culture.

A Privileged Discipline

In historical sciences, the history of culture has been a privileged discipline, leading the development of the humanities and providing a forum for the comparison and confrontation of various methods and techniques of research. Its tasks and programs were interpreted

¹ Herodotus, *The Histories*, with an English translation by A.D. Godley (Cambridge, 1920).

in various ways. In the 19th century, when firm academic rules and a program of historical research developed, culture was the subject of a conflict between, on the one hand, an essay-like but cohesive outlook that presented the history of culture as a single whole (e.g. the works of Jacob Burckhardt on Italian culture during the Renaissance), and, on the other hand, a descriptive narrative of cultural achievements which was difficult to summarize because it was regarded as the fruit of spontaneous human action. Attempts in 19th-century German writings to present culture in a more sociological dimension, e.g. by Karl Lamprecht and his school, occurred on the margins of historiography. Descriptive examinations of various spheres of human activity represented the mainstream.

In the words of one German researcher, for a long time cultural history was regarded as a triumphal procession of the best models of civilization throughout the globe. It became increasingly difficult for the historian to accept such a prospect. The skepticism towards it is attributable to two factors. The collective experience of the 20th century has shown only too well that it is the worst manifestations of culture that march in these triumphal processions: the historian cannot turn his or her back on a perspective where the most excellent models of civilization are being eradicated. On the other hand, the epistemological experience of other sciences, especially other spheres of research into the past, have a powerful impact on the investigations and methods applied in cultural history. Economic history, which has moved to the forefront of historical research as a result of impulses and inspiration from Marxism, has taught historians to ask questions about the quantitative dimension of phenomena; instead of the words "a lot" and "a little," answers are required to the question "how much," and historians are now encouraged to think in terms of long processes, serial phenomena and facts en masse. Likewise, an increased interest in material culture overcame the old curiosity about isolated subject and indicated the huge importance of man's natural and material environment, and the material conditions for human activity.

The Subject of Research

Thus, the subject of research in cultural history has expanded. It is not enough for the historian to record the writings of Rej as the man who

revealed that “the Poles are not geese and have their own language,” but he now has to find out who Rej’s audience was, what was the print run of his books, and what the writer imagined and felt. An excess of Baroque decoration? Yes, but also attitudes towards death, the expression of which must be sought in painting, in the tens of thousands of wills stored in our archives since the 15th century, and in the personal notes of burghers and landowners. Table manners, everyday politeness, the etiquette of eating, forms of greetings, clothes and fashions – for the cultural historian these are not just manners and custom, but languages and systems of codes with their own internal logic. Medieval sermons are important documents for historians dealing with writing and languages. Latin texts were annotated with Polish words to help preachers translate them into Polish, so that they could communicate them to the congregation. But at the same time, within the text of a sermon, one can detect various layers. For the sake of a better presentation of moral arguments, a sermon may include parables and images drawn from all spheres of culture at the time. The cultural historian begins to investigate the process of the spread of culture, the changeover from a culture addressed to scholars to a culture addressed to the illiterate masses.

One can say that in conveying “facts,” cultural history is guided by three rules:

- To weigh and measure phenomena, even if they resist weight and measurement;
- To discover collective attitudes, behaviour and feelings not only on an individual level, but also on a deeper psychological or subconscious level;
- To treat culture as a whole which, in a certain time and place, possesses a certain common “style” to which the means and forms of expression, intellectual and artistic creativity, feelings and behaviour adhere.

The Paths of Research

Thus, modern cultural history has been included in research into “durable” historical processes. In traditional research into culture, the time dimension has been extended further than in other spheres. Obviously, customs lasted over centuries and changed slowly. It is the same with fashion and artistic styles. But when undertaking an analysis of

medieval culture, the historian also examines human feelings, hopes and fears which seem to be embedded in biological mechanisms and in apparently unchanging “human nature.” The synthesis of medieval culture by the French historian Jacques Le Goff² and the essay on categories of medieval culture by the Soviet medievalist Aaron Gurevich³ indicate that the historian may and should investigate psychological culture and the slow yet vital transformations taking place to society. The new path of investigations in this regard, called the “history of mentality” by French historians and now generally known by that term, can already boast considerable achievements and an energetic research program.

The history of mentality took shape under the powerful impact of social psychology and ethnology, reaping its methodology and research topics from both these disciplines. Consequently, it also developed an interest in the common man. This term sounds pejorative, but in fact it means man in a universal sense, man brought up in a society of common feelings and thought patterns. In this way, the history of mentality abandons traditional historiography, which sought to examine heroes; outstanding, above-average people. However, the research techniques applied in social psychology and ethnology prove to be of little use to a historian who remains constrained by the nature of surviving documentation on past centuries. Just as an archaeologist during his work uncovers successive cultural layers in which traces of human activity can be seen, so does a historian of mentality discover fresh clues in written documents.

Literature is of fundamental importance here. The Soviet researcher Mikhail Bakhtin, one of the most distinguished figures in 20th-century humanities, examined the sense of humour in medieval culture through the prism of François Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Rabelais is certainly an uncommon figure. But by applying this “layered” method, one can find mass, common feelings in his work. It is a paradox of folk culture that when examining it, one should rely not on that culture’s own voice, but in the voice reproduced in elite culture. In this way, we discover elements in folk culture that in traditional history might be smothered. They remained invisible to the historian because they

² J. Le Goff, *Medieval civilization 400–1500*, transl. by J. Barrow (Oxford, 1988).

³ A. Gurevich, *Categories of medieval culture*, transl. by G.L. Campbell (London, 1985).

had left no written records, but had survived solely in oral tradition. After all, medieval and early modern folk literature is literature for the people, and not a product of the people. However, oral folk tales can in fact be found in medieval writings. In the collection of tales to which preachers referred to make their sermons more interesting, we find many records of oral tales. Told in taverns in front of the fireplace, in mills and market squares, they reached cloister kitchens and refectories, and then ended up beneath the pen of a monastic scribe. The historiography of recent years appreciates more and more this reliance on folklore by church culture in the late Middle Ages. For a long time, the medieval church treated traditional culture as hostile territory, as a depository of old religions. Struggling against superstition, it negated folklore. But this attitude changed in the 13th century. Insofar as, in the spread of Christianity, we encounter a combination of Christian and pagan beliefs and the superimposition of Christian rituals upon pagan ones, in the Middle Ages and early modern period we now see a taming of local traditions and their adaptation to folk beliefs and practices. Folklore was subsequently absorbed and exploited in religious propaganda and moral teachings. Research by Czesław Hernas revealed the next stage in this process: the birth of folklore in the 17th century and its acceptance in written culture. Nineteenth century folklore records contain much older cultural works that were continued over many centuries. Numerous discoveries and surprises doubtless still await the historian.

Iconography also plays a vital role in examining the culture of past centuries. Painted church interiors fulfilled more than a mere liturgical and decorative role. They were also meant to serve as sources of information for the illiterate masses and, apart from the written word, were the most important means of conveying history and religious truths. At the same time, these painted histories satisfied the demand for tales and literature because they related certain events and the unusual adventures of the saints, as well as daily life. Occasionally, they told of national history. A French story from the 13th century tells of the tricks Parisian thieves used to play: They would lead peasants newly arrived in Paris to the Cathedral of Notre Dame and explain to them what the sculptures on the cathedral façade meant: "This is Charlemagne, and this is King Pepin." But while saying this they would cut the string of a peasant's bag tied to his belt. In this warning against thieves, we find confirmation of the informative role

of medieval art. In painting and sculpture we also find visible signs of human behaviour and gestures. We see how people expressed joy and anger (a meaningful scene sculpted on the capital of a Romanesque column: two men pulling each other's beards), how they showed pain and pleasure, how they expressed requests and threats. In investigating mass culture and folk mentality, the historian can seldom refer to direct evidence. But asking new questions stimulates a search for such messages. And it has transpired that one can indeed find direct testimony. The French historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie described a delightful picture of a small rural community in the south of France, in Montaignou.⁴ He referred to a record of interrogations by the inquisitor who, in the 14th century, severely interrogated all of the inhabitants of the village in an attempt to stem the spreads of heretical views. Everyone described in detail their lives and those of their family, their moral misdemeanours and attitudes towards religion, and their contact with neighbours and strangers. The result was a picture similar to that produced by an ethnologist when studying a group of people. Consequently, on this basis, the historian can examine the mentality of this close-knit group and analyse their statements. A similar type of analysis is given in a recent book by the Italian historian of modern culture, Carlo Ginzburg,⁵ about a northern miller, Dominico Scandella, called Menocchio, who during the inquisition was burned at the stake as a heretic. Virtually nothing was known about his life until 1584, when he was denounced and interrogated. Fifteen years later, he faced a court on the same charges. The protocols of evidence from both hearings and the witness testimonies allow us to recreate what the common man felt and believed in these times. There is no doubt that with his religious views, Scandella was above average; he was condemned as a heretic because his views were not those of the average man. He also had his own cosmological concept ("the world arose the same way as worms arise out of rotten cheese"). We also encounter his thoughts and feelings on daily life and the world, his fantasies and personal dreams. Via a miller, an active figure in creative folk culture, we percolate through to mass mentality.

⁴ E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaignou: Cathars and Catholics in a French village 1294–1324*, trans. B. Bray (London, 1978).

⁵ C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, transl. J. and A. Tedeschi (London, 1992).

This last example leads us to one more aspect of research into mentality. Historians tended to reject from their records anything that could not be explained rationally; in other words, anything that seemed inconvenient and contrary to common sense. Ethnologists examining distant cultures, as with travellers visiting distant lands, considered it obvious that they would get to know completely alien cultures, so they sought out those characteristics of alienness. The profound Eurocentrism of the humanities meant that what had been observed among non-European peoples was impossible or unlikely in the European past. Therefore, historians glossed over not only reports on cases of cannibalism or bloody sacrifices in the Middle Ages, but also any records of collective fear and panic, or prohibitions and injunctions against magic. Whenever these issues appeared on the pages of books, they were regarded as a manifestation of primitivism, ignorance and lack of culture, which gradually vanished under the influence of the spread of civilization. In any case, ethnology used to treat "primitive cultures" the same way. But now, the attitudes of ethnologist and historians have changed. Both of these "sciences of man," history being the oldest science in the humanist family and ethnology the youngest, rejected the view of modern culture as a mental reference, and attempted to understand old cultures as a certain whole in which knowledge and outlooks on the world are intertwined, thinking and magical practice are a tool with which to control the world, and collective mechanisms and behaviour are different from those in the 20th century. Research into heretical movements, witchcraft, witches, magic, demonology and Satanism, and into all of the great fears and collective panic, covered the Middle Ages, but now spreads further and further into the modern age, showing that these attitudes continued right until the 19th and 20th centuries.

Mental structures change very slowly, and this is one of the greatest difficulties of historical research. Although history no longer defines itself as the "science of changes" but as the science of duration, we nevertheless refer investigations into human activity and fortunes to time. We examine the great civilizations in the conviction that their duration has a beginning and an end. This is not precise: we know that the Battle of Grunwald (Tannenberg) was fought on 15 July 1410, but we are unable to provide the exact dates when people believed in the healing role of certain gestures or became convinced that time has a quality, days are divided into favourable and unfavourable, etc.

In examining changes to mentality and the replacement of certain thought structures by others, an analysis of the set of mental factors of production plays a particular role.

Mental Equipment

The excellent scholar of the Renaissance, Lucien Febvre, introduced to historical-cultural research the concept of *outillage mental*, meaning mental equipment. The Polish term: *wyposazenie mentalne*, is not an entirely faithful translation, because it does not reflect the reference to tools, which the French term does. We are dealing with a kind of set of mental instruments. A French historian examining the religious views of Rabelais and his philosophical reflections attempted to gauge the vocabulary and grammatical precision of the French language in the 16th century. When investigating intellectual culture, it is important to note that the language of the time does not contain such terms as abstract and specific, concept and condition, intuition and classification. The syntax is shaky and imprecise, the use of tenses haphazard; sentences are long and complicated, and the narrative becomes lost in the details. What Lucien Febvre writes about 16th-century French can be applied to other languages of that time, especially those that have been present in written culture for a shorter period than modern Western languages. Paradoxical as it may seem, this also applies to Latin as used in the Middle Ages. Language historians used to regard medieval Latin with disdain, calling it a vulgar, “kitchen” language. But that merely proves that it was a living language, adapting to the needs and possibilities of the people of that time. One example: it is surprising how medieval texts use such words as indeed, therefore, and hence (*ergo, igitur, autem, item*); they are used as conjunctions between sentences that have no logical connection with each other. But one should not consider this as evidence of a poor knowledge of the language or a misuse of words which one does not fully understand. It is more the result of a misunderstanding of the logic of the medieval spoken and written language, different from our language today. Apart from vocabulary and syntax, the proverbs and sayings that formed literary stereotypes were also important in the shaping of mentality. Under the influence of rhetoric, which determines literary tastes and preferences, people’s remarks which we find in literature

seem to be organized mechanically, defined in advance, and ordered as if by some obligatory regulations. One cannot help feeling these remarks are neglected if viewed from a literati angle, the angle of “high” literature. The last work by Flaubert, uncompleted, is *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, a story of two scribes who, thanks to their pensions and an unexpected inheritance, could devote themselves to pursuing their dreams: considering the affairs of the world. Two simple people – two fools, as some critics say – boldly tackle the most complex problems, from the mechanisms of human history, via the working of steam power, all the way to the secret of growing asparagus. Each time, the result of these thoughts is a treatise composed of common sayings. As an annex to the book, Flaubert also drew up a glossary of the terms and quotations that appear during the conversation in the book. It is enough to take a look at today’s informal conversations on press articles to see how greatly oral and written statements remain connected with stereotyped formulations and expressions. The cultural historian does not bemoan the linguistic poverty, but rather is happy that in this way, he or she can look into the laboratory of thinking, at the mental mass production. I use here expressions that are alien to the sphere of thought such as laboratory, production, resources and instruments. Some may find this offensive, but I mean to underscore the mass dimension of mental phenomena and equate them with semi-automatic mechanisms.

If one agrees that there is a close connection between vocabulary and the requirements it is meant to fulfil, then as these requirements change, so do the resources of mental production. Poor language, with a simple structure, without subtle tenses and syntax, and with limited abstract resources, satisfied the requirements of rural societies. But such language was no longer satisfactory for the spreading urban civilization which began in the Middle Ages, and was a barrier to the attainment of practical goals and the development of thinking. The linguistic floodgates suddenly burst open: a new vocabulary and precise use of tenses developed, and abstract concepts spread. As in technology, social requirements in culture lead to inventions, though sometimes one has to wait for them.

Time and space hold a special place in the mentality of the people of a given era. They seem such an obvious category of getting to know and understand the world that it is difficult to image that they could change. And yet they did. In rural communities, the agricultural cycle

provided the time framework. There was no need to measure time in minutes and according to dates, when the rhythm of life was set by the rhythm of nature, the changing of the seasons, the times of sowing and reaping, and the onset of daytime and night-time. But life in the towns required a more precise measurement of time, so first hours were observed, and later minutes. The first clocks appeared in the 14th century, and one town after another treated itself to giant clocks to measure the passing of time. Collective memory was also vague; in reminiscences about the past, people only grew accustomed to the concept of years and dates with great difficulty, and very seldom did they go back beyond one year. However, family memories were longer, one remembered episodes in one's own life and that of the monarch, and a point of reference in time was, for example, the birth of a son, the death of a wife, etc. When the clock and the calendar finally gained control over people's activities, ways of thinking about man and the world changed in relation to rural communities, and a modern mentality was formed.

A similar process occurred in the conception of space. Witold Kula, in his excellent book about measurements,⁶ showed how deep an impact the metric reform had on ways of thinking, the economy, social life and administration, and how huge were the psychological and cultural obstacles to the introduction of modern units of measurement. This was due to the different concept of time in traditional cultures. People's imagination of time was a combination of factual knowledge and folk tales. Even the famous Venetian merchant and traveller, Marco Polo, who reached distant China and the Persian Gulf, so he saw and knew far more than anyone else at the time, mixed in his books legends and tales of various odd customs and natural phenomena. As soon as one ventured beyond one's local community, out of sight of the parish church tower, everything became possible and strange things became probable. The needs of seafaring, trade and farming required that the concept of space be set in order, and the natural criterion for this was human work and man himself. That is why the area of land that could be ploughed in one day was called "day" (German: *morga*), road distances were measured in terms of the number of days of travel, and short units were measured in terms of parts of the body (foot, elbow, step). And here, too, ambiguous

⁶ W. Kula, *Miary i ludzie* (Warsaw, 1970).

concepts gradually gave way to precise measurements, and a modern awareness of geographical space developed.

Regarding the conception of time and space in old culture, not only in the Middle Ages but also in “barbarian” times and occasionally in the modern era, there was often a lack of depth in a similar manner as in paintings. In human consciousness, events of the past seemed to exist parallel to each other, without any differences in depth.

Historians attempt to expand this inventory of resources and categories of culture, for it transpires that we still know little about the mentalities, sensitivities, feelings and gestures of people in the past. Reaching for the methods and research questionnaire of other disciplines, history rejuvenates and modernizes itself. This is also a way of repaying a debt, for it is history that gave shape to other humanist disciplines. Preserving the differences in methods and techniques and the differences in professional qualifications, humanism, as a science of man and society, regains a sense of its own unity.

Middle Ages and Signs

In: *Teksty*, 1 (1972), no. 1, pp. 90–97.

Medieval Night

“God! what a life of toil is mine!” These are the words of Charlemagne when, soon after the loss of Roland, the archangel Gabriel announces fresh war preparations. The clash of weapons ceased, and the emperor meted out justice and stilled his great anger. Then came the night, which stills all troubles, and with it fear of darkness, of the unknown, of traps or people and fortunes. “The day passed on into night’s dark shade.” Day was the time of contacts and communication, whereas in the night, fear pushed one to loneliness. Night was a time of dreams and longings: a form of contact with hidden forces removed from time and reality. Medieval night was not just physical, but also psychological and mental, a state of the conscious and subconscious. But this murky medieval night does not signify at all the annoying stereotype of the “dark Middle Ages.”

Contemporary Visions of the Middle Ages

The global visions of the Middle Ages which medieval studies have created in recent decades seem to contradict each other. And they do indeed, for on the one hand we are examining brilliant intellectual and artistic achievements, the most wonderful attainments of the time: soaring architecture, learned treatises and a harmony and substance of social life. But on the other hand is a world of negative facts: economic underdevelopment, violence, illiteracy, fear and uncertainty. It is not

enough to say that these two visions complement each other and are correct, because each one applied to a different sphere of culture and a different social community. In fact, these two models coexist not only on a global level, on the level of civilization, but also inside the psyche of individuals. Not without reason did the Chartres school treat man as a microcosm.

Signs of the Hidden World

Medieval man felt surrounded by innumerable hidden phenomena and exposed to numerous signs, for better or for worse. He experienced the evangelical *et erunt signa in coelo* on a daily basis, he sought and asked about them because he knew that these signs in heaven and on earth were direct portents of forthcoming events. These signs formed themselves into cohesive groups. One such group of signs foretold the end of the world and accompanied the medieval Great Terror. The fifteen signs counted and described by St. Jerome contain a strict hierarchy: from the inside of the earth, via human behaviour, all the way to the heavenly vault: “On the ‘first’ day all the seas will rise fifteen cubits above the mountains; in the ‘second’ day all the waters will be plunged into the depths, so that scarcely will they be visible; on the ‘third’ day they will be restored to their previous condition; on the ‘fourth’ day all the great fishes and other things that move in the waters will gather together and, raising their heads above the sea, roar at one another contentiously; on the ‘fifth’ day, all the birds of the air will gather together in the fields, wailing to one another, with neither bite nor sup; on the ‘sixth’ day rivers of fire will arise towards the firmament rushing together from the west to the east.” Then there will be an earthquake, people will rushing hither and thither like madmen, and the stars shall fall from heaven – all of these unusual and unheard of things, but merely a recount of the catastrophes and disasters that threatened man in real life.

Reading the Signs

Human life on a millennial scale consists in waiting for signs. Any unusual event could be considered a portent, an announcement

of the End, or it could be merely a reminder of the ultimate fate of man. The signs that were supposed to accompany the advent of the Antichrist are described and known so well (writes Maciej of Janów in the 15th century) that even children will identify them easily. But the whole of medieval man's life involved looking for signs: they signalled important events in the stream of everyday life, allowed people to learn about the future, and helped them reach decisions and make important choices in life.

Revelations and “Unconscious History”

Signs are a form of communication with supernatural powers controlling human fortunes. Miraculous visions were a privilege of the few chosen ones. The picture of life filled with manifestations of divine will as shown in the lives of the saints and in medieval miracles is impressive, a source still not fully appreciated by modern historical writings. Nevertheless, lesser mortals also expected revelations at important moments in their lives. A dream represents hope of contact and serves as a guidepost for life. The emperor Charlemagne receives warnings and advice from his holy guardian (*The Song of Roland*), whilst the expedition of Brzetysław to Poland in 1039 to remove the relics of St. Adalbert (Wojciech) in Gniezno only succeeds when the saint appears to Bishop Sewer and instructs him how to do this (described in *Chronica Boemorum* or *Chronicle of Bohemians* by Cosmas of Prague). Here, we are not only dealing with the hagiography and the ecclesiastical domain of medieval thought and feeling, but we can also observe a socialization (and Christianization) of visions. The social history of culture in collective imagining attains a privileged status of investigations into layers of “unconscious history.”

Nature, a Collection of Signs and Symbols

Nature is not only a laboratory, not merely the great smithy portrayed in the 14th century miniature *Tale of the Rose*. Medieval man views nature as a world of significant objects, beings and systems. The human senses perceive colours not only as a physical sensation, but as a psychological symbol: black is the colour of the prince of

darkness, green the colour of life, and brown the colour of degradation and death. Plants, animals and minerals are symbols and bearers of values, at the same time as which they function according to their power: for good or for evil. Yellow stones heal jaundice; red ones heal diseases of the blood. Apple and evil have the same word in Latin, *malum*, therefore the apple is a symbol of evil and the fruit which Eve picked from the tree of knowledge. An egg is a good symbol, protecting against bad twists of fate, therefore it plays a particular role in magic rituals. The lion is a symbol of power and strength, but also of violence; the viper represents hypocrisy and anger, and the fox inevitably calls to mind cunningness and agility. Thus, medieval tales of animals are an easily readable picture of the organization of society and human conduct. Zoomorphic figures serve as amulets, exploiting the forces and properties borne by animals. At the same time, a real encounter with a fox or viper, the finding of a coloured stone, or the catching of an exotic fish occurs not only on a physical plane, but also on a symbolic one. Interpreting these symbols requires a certain knowledge, which is held by professionals; but it is also universal, an attribute of maturity, a part of human experience, and is handed down from generation to generation. Folk knowledge and scholarly knowledge meet at the forum of folklore, which is not just a crucible of culture, but also a repository of culture present in every civilization. This concept of nature as a collection is confirmed in modern folklore in the variety of historical layers.

Understanding Transcendence

Visions and manifestations were also an attempt to establish contact with occult forces. Magic rituals and those involving phallic symbols and eroticism provide numerous examples. Art also arises out of a need to communicate with transcendence, which also refers to certain symbols, some of whom are known to everyone and others only to initiates. A miniature painting or building was a symbol in the “starting” situation, when the artist used a codified language of symbols, and in the “finishing” situation, when the recipient not only read the message encoded by the artist, but also interpreted the work of art according to his or her own sensitivities, seeking hidden contents.

Dante's Theory of the Word and Literature

When Dante laid down his doctrine of the word as a total sign, he indicated the polysemic nature of a literary work, where one perceives not only the literary meaning of the word, but should also understand its allegorical (or mystical) sense (*istius operis non est simplex sensus, immo dici potest polysemum, hoc est plurium sensuum*). For these words are symbols of things, whilst language is the "faithful hand of the spirit" (according to Alan of Lille). Such treatment of language and words gave rise not only to a dispute between "realists" and "nominalists" in medieval philosophy, not only to the development of grammar as the study of "literal" and "allegorical" speech, but also to folk etymology, which assumed that a name not only described an object, but also defined its essence and sense.

The Name and Sense of Life

Here too, one of the *topoi* of medieval hagiography is the thesis on the name of a saint and his future mission. Holiness does not record itself in time and in the order of diachronia; it does not simply come into being, but manifests at a given moment, therefore its appearance has to be seen earlier, in the miraculous signs that accompany a birth or in a name given at baptism. But in social consciousness, the association between person's name and his or her fortunes is not only discovered *ex-post*. This is why among Slav tribes, the choice of a name out of the catalogue of Slav names was important because the name was supposed to exert magic influence over the life of its bearer, determine fame or misfortune, and protect the individual. A name out of the Christian calendar placed its bearer under the protection of the patron saint bearing the same name, but the choice of a name was also influenced by the legend of the saint and the miracle he performed. Names were also subject to etymological research in order to discover their hidden meaning, and therefore their possible effect on the bearer's (e.g. the name of the Blessed Salomea announced her life, for *salutis metus* means the path of salvation). One need not add that these etymological arguments were usually invented.

Writing, a Magic Resource

Writing is not only the conveyance of signs from an enlightened culture, and not merely a way of recording and communicating holy contents. In an unenlightened society, in a culture of illiterates, writing also possesses its external form: it is not without reason that the beautiful Carolingian font was labelled the writing of illiterates, indicating its association with that Frankish leader who placed large letters carved from wood under his pillow in the hope that he would finally learn them in this way. Writing appears as a magical resource, and a piece of parchment or paper with writing on it fulfils a magical purpose regardless of what is written on it. In this magical dimension, a particular role is played by the "Holy Joe," or parish teacher, an intermediary between folk culture and scholarly culture. It is he who copies "letters from heaven," the producer of such letters written "in golden letters with God's finger." In this way, a letter of the alphabet has all the greater effect on a personality sensitive to symbols, and shows that with its shape it represents nothing, but is merely a sign.

Predictions of the Future

If the practice of daily life appears to medieval man as an important component of the eternal plan, this is due to the multi-dimensional view of the associations between cause and effect, the continuous intervention of the significance of human action, supernatural events and natural phenomena. A deed, gesture or event foretells or causes a future event. Roland's stepfather, the wicked Ganelon, dropped his glove and staff; the Franks were sure that this portended a great loss. But Roland assured them that he will never let go of the bow which Emperor Charlemagne is due to give him: he shall not create a bad omen and its real consequences. Here, there are two independent layers: on the one hand, portents predicting a dark future; and on the other hand, random gestures, facts, numbers and days which must be avoided so as not to be entrapped by their inevitable effects.

Prophesies

But during this era, man persistently sought forecasts of the future, threw dice, observed the flight of birds, counted the petals on flowers and looked at the sky. Shepherds, artisans and scholars prophesied. "The minds of everyone are obsessed with prophesying," wrote the French chronicler Commynes. Rulers and politicians sought signs for their actions: a white dove foretold peace in Picquigny in 1485; in 1503 a stone from the sky foretold the crusade which the Emperor Maximilian was planning. Collections of prophesies remained in circulation and were given ever-changing interpretations. The middle of the 13th century saw the revival of astrology in Europe, whereby the fortunes of cities, nations and individuals could be read from the way the stars were arranged. It was felt that human life must be programmed from the top, and it is only due to man's imperfect senses and intellect that we are not aware of this program or fail to observe or comprehend the signs foretelling the present and the future.

Dramatic Struggle

The attitudes which we have outlined here can easily be dismissed as superstition and scorned. But perhaps it is better to understand the structure of such beliefs and appreciate man's dramatic struggle with his own weaknesses, uncertainty and chance, and see in it a protest by the individual against the complicated world. After all, people read horoscopes today...

Methods of Research into the Consciousness of Medieval Polish Society

Speech delivered during a discussion organized by the editors of *Kwartalnik Historyczny* at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 24 October 1977; *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 85 (1978), pp. 311–314.

I wish to present some of the experiences of the team of people here at the History Institute, engaged in research into medieval culture. It is not a program, but a certain reflection and experience which have developed during more than a dozen years of work. The subject of our research is psychological culture, which we are trying to investigate on three cultural levels: methods and results; observation, sensitivity and thought; and consciousness.

Regarding psychological culture, we observe man's relationship with the world and the relationship between the individual and the group, exactly as people understood them in the Middle Ages. In our research, consciousness exists as the consciousness of individual life, a consciousness of personality on the one hand and a consciousness of the bonds that join and separate communities on the other. The research has brought home to us a group of problems which I believe are also milestones on the way to getting to know consciousness during this era.

Above all, we are trying to define the limits to the knowledge and consciousness of medieval society. This means that we are investigating the degree of medieval knowledge of persons and objects, as well as basic concepts and vocabulary. This we consider a kind of upper limit of the possibilities of that time. During the era in question, almost three centuries, we are attempting to consider fluctuations to this optimal, potential limit of social consciousness.

We are also attempting to determine systems and models of the world outlook of this era, assuming that the researcher has introduced

a certain hierarchy that complies with the internal hierarchy of the topic we are examining. In these systems and models, we are trying to recreate the model of the world conceived, constructed and disseminated mainly by the Church, which is connected to the system of social morality and ideology sanctioned by the Church. This leads us onto the trail of a set of ideas which one can call global ideology. This is an attempt to discover in what categories people of that era understood the social world. So when the chronicler Anonym Gall talks of *militēs bellicosī* and *rusticī laboriosī*, in this concise formulation we find a certain global ideology of feudal society – the one that leads onto the trail of a bipolar or tripolar understanding of feudal society. Having investigated global ideology, we are attempting to reconstruct something that can be called class and group ideologies, parochial ideologies; in other words, those sets of concepts and ideas which determine the place of individual societies in the entire social construction. Medieval documentation allows us to investigate the ideology of classes who sought power or who were conscious of exercising power; but it is much more difficult to examine the programs and views of groups that had no direct connection to power and did not seek it. And lastly, the fourth level of research is collective memory. Historical consciousness is present both in global ideology and in ideological, parochial systems. It is interesting that historical consciousness, just like collective memory, is arranged according to the needs of social classes and communities.

A separate area is the effect of groups and communal structures on social consciousness. Here, the historian examines the spread of ideas and the functioning of the models referred to earlier. For it is not enough to study the ethical code of knights, determine its origins and establish the landowners' place in it; it is necessary to demonstrate how the class reality of the nobility affects the social reality, how court society functions, and what signs of prestige and custom set the nobility apart. This is primarily a complex problem of relations between the elites and the masses. I do not need to stress the obvious documentary, material and analytical issues with which the medieval historian must struggle when he or she proceeds from the level of elite culture to the level of mass culture. For the latter, we only have very fragmentary documentation. One possible way to reconstruct collective consciousness and study the impact of social privilege on the formation of group consciousness is to investigate certain formalized

languages and behaviours. Thus, when examining the political culture, we do not resort to the political treaties concluded in those times, but we refer to specific political behaviour, we examine the documents of local parliaments and reports by diplomatic missions. Regarding other areas of social consciousness, one can refer to formalized codes, for example the etiquette of eating and politeness. Here, I have in mind the works of Frowin and Słota, in whose descriptions of table manners we find a reflection of social consciousness. And this too seems more fertile than examining normative sources. A fundamental problem for class consciousness is the role of the institutions representing the estates and pre-parliamentary and post-parliamentary life, which provide an opportunity to examine political consciousness and political behaviour at least on a random basis. Similar investigations should be made of the remaining classes, i.e. the burgher community and the peasant masses.

The mass structures of consciousness are the historian's basic subject of interest, but they should be related to social divisions. Here, it is important to identify situations that stimulated group consciousness. These can be situations where a group feels a certain threat posed by privileges already gained, or becomes convinced that it should obtain such privileges.

Having performed an inventory of the knowledge and having acquainted oneself with the models and the group and communal structures of consciousness, it is necessary to determine the hierarchy of collective ties and solidarities. Most of all, it is essential to establish blood ties, as the importance of these in medieval society is obvious. The family is the place where collective interests take shape and where both succession and a memory of the common part are cemented. Common law is testimony of the strength of family ties and solidarities.

Local connections and membership of a local community were vital. The role of the parish in this cannot be overestimated. The parish was not just a church authority, but the mainstay of the community. Membership of parish determined the level of attachment to the soil.

Lastly, the third level is the complex question of state and national identity. It would not be true to say that in the Middle Ages, national identity superseded state identity. We can say that these are independent processes, that a feeling of belonging to a state, a feeling of dependence on authority, often preceded national awareness,

an awareness of belonging to a common culture or language. In the case of the burghers of Polish cities, we note a well-developed awareness of membership of a state body, and certainly much less developed awareness of membership of a nation.

In addition, an important research task is to assess the intensity of above-state or above-national ties. We note among the elites that they belong to *Christianitas*, Europe and the Slav community.

The Tatar invasion in the 13th century and Turkish expansion in the 14th and 15th centuries served to help create a sense of broader ties. Although foreign policy and dynastic interests during the Jagiellonian era placed Polish matters in a broad European context, one must nevertheless observe that the clergy and knights were bound by interests that went above the state; likewise, merchants were allied with interregional or inter-municipal guilds and solidarity which transcended national borders.

In such levels of investigations of consciousness, it is very difficult to capture changes in development. The anthropological path of investigating culture and social consciousness create the risk that the dynamics of the changes will be obliterated. Here, medievalism resorts to certain remedial techniques. First, we refer to investigations into terminology and concepts. So we examine literary texts; not their prime contents, but their secondary subject matter, which describe a better picture of everyday consciousness. We attempt to combine synchronic investigation of culture with an investigation of the moments when continuity was broken, moments of breakthrough when the way of observing and thinking about the world really changed. The data we have in this regard are fragmentary and sometimes very unreliable. The point is to extract “polemological” moments when a conflict occurs, whether between groups or between cultures, or between concepts and sets of values. Such a “polemological” moment is a clash of two national groups, a war, but it can also be an encounter between the humanist community and the scholastic one. The changing dynamics can be seen the most easily in the elites. Regarding the masses, change is very slow. I shall conclude this hasty inventory of problems by indicating the path our quest is taking. We believed that a rich set of questions would also help us gain answers regarding the meagre documentation, and the documentation relating to our medieval period is meagre. A rich questionnaire, the core of which was established during research into the modern age, seems to be providing certain results.

We are trying to resort to mass documents. Mass sources, in other words those that were not used or little used in researching consciousness, include court files, especially of ecclesiastical courts. Furthermore, we are attempting to examine the sources traditionally used in researching cultural history by means of a kind of secondary analysis, bypassing the primary programmatic contents and to determine contents at the second or third level. We believe that it is this second or third level that is a revelation of mass culture and common consciousness. And, remaining in the sphere of literature, which has been the traditional basis on which to investigate culture, we believe that this is a domain of sources that holds great promise.

Communal Bonds in Medieval Europe

In: *Dziesięć wieków Europy. Studia z dziejów kontynentu*, ed. J. Żarnowski (Warsaw, 1983), pp. 19–81.

In European thinking, the concept of Europe has caused varying interest.¹ The cultural and political development of other continents, European expansion beyond Europe's borders and a sense of political or cultural threat encouraged an assertion of European identity and the historical roots of European unity to be sought. The initiatives of supranational organizations after the two world wars intensified a reflection of the essence of "Europeanness" and inspired the consideration of the historical fortunes of the European community.

Outlining here the supranational bonds in medieval Europe, we are treading a path already trodden by researchers into the idea of Europe, for considerable areas of this subject-matter remain little known. Areas not sufficiently covered in literature include an accidental perspective of research² and a failure to appreciate the separate structures of the Middle Ages. In previous research, expressed in programs rather than analyses, the role of the Middle Ages per se is not understood at all. Occasionally one wonders if one can talk of the Middle Ages at all, if both of these concepts contain an internal contradiction. But this has not prevented a synthetic attempt to look upon the Middle Ages.³

¹ A rich bibliography of this topic can be found in R.J. Sattler, *Europa. Geschichte und Aktualität des Begriffes* (Braunschweig, 1971).

² Deserving of mention here is the work of O. Halecki on the history of European unity, in which Central-Eastern Europe attains a place in the interpretation of European history.

³ Cf. O. Halecki, *Europa. Grenzen und Gliederung seiner Geschichte* (Darmstadt, 1957), p. xiii; R.S. Lopez, *Naissance de l'Europe* (Paris, 1962); H. Dannenbauer, *Die Entstehung Europas. Von der Spätantike zum Mittelalter*, vols. 1–2 (Stuttgart, 1959–1963);

The Middle Ages was not a period when the European idea was asserted, and the concept of Europe was not very widespread. In addition, the modern expansion of the European idea commenced in opposition to medieval universalism, and was also often associated with the processes of intellectual secularization that took place under humanism.

The importance of research into community links and into European consciousness in the Middle Ages is obvious. Due to the lack of evidence of the concept of Europe in medieval literature, we can capture the nature and essence of the concept at the very beginning, when it struggled for a place in the terminology of the era. To understand this, one must most of all examine community links in medieval Europe and how they reflected social consciousness, and also compare this picture with the geographical concept of Europe. Ancient tradition⁴ requires that we note a dual concept of Europe: as a geographical part of the world, and as a civilization. Previous research has not led to a complete consensus of opinions about Europe's place in ancient geographical awareness on the one hand and the myth about the capture of Europe on the other; the prevalent view is that the mythical Europa is simply an eponym for that part of the world. Ancient associations between the geographical and mythical concepts of Europe go even further because Europe is seen as a system of cultures and communal fortunes. Xenophon's juxtaposition of Europe, an area of freedom, with Asia, an area of despotism,⁵ held sway over the next few millennia as the foundation of a European program in which the postulate of supranational political identity attained an ideological and social dimension.

One is obliged to concur with Arnold J. Toynbee that this juxtaposition of Asia and Europe worked because of general ignorance and the fantasies that grew out of this ignorance.⁶ Detailed research

G. Labuda, "Powstanie Europy średniowiecznej", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 72 (1965), pp. 153–158.

⁴ An outline of the political issues associated with the concept of Europe in antiquity is presented by R.H. Foerster, *Europa. Geschichte einer politischen Idee* (Munich, 1967), pp. 11–27; D. de Rougemont, *Vingt-huit siècles d'Europe* (Paris, 1961), pp. 9–27.

⁵ G.A. Momigliano, "L'Europa come concetto politico presso Isocrate e gli Isocratei", *Rivista di Filologia e d'Istruzione Classica*, 61 (1933).

⁶ A.J. Toynbee, "Asia' and 'Europe': facts and fantasies", in: id., *A Study of History*, vol. 8 (London, 1954).

reveals that in ancient writings, the term “Europe” appears in various geographical meanings, whereas in the Middle Ages it was not assigned any cultural significance. One cannot overestimate the importance of semantic and historical research into modern cultural history, but nevertheless one has to realize its obvious limitations. This research assumes more importance when the use of the words and concepts we are examining becomes more widespread. But it would be absurd to make the terminology and concepts of contemporary research dependent on the terminology and concepts employed in the age we are examining.

Referring to the ancient tradition of viewing Europe as a part of the world and as a civilization, as a geographical term and as a historical-cultural concept, we must formulate the research questionnaire in compliance with the requirements of modern historiography and the interests of our times. There is no danger of any anachronism here because our task is to determine the roots of our cultural community and the processes that formed this community. We must also determine the extent which medieval society was aware of these links. The danger of an Occidental view of Europe based on the concept of Ranke should also be considered, who identified Europe with the Germanic-Roman world.⁷ Such a view not only eliminates the Slavic peoples from the European horizon, but also distorts the picture of European civilization, creating the impression that Europe is a single uniform model and not an amalgamation of various different cultures.

1. The Heritage of Rome and Imperial Unity

Europe as a civilization and as a sociocultural unity took shape under the influence of various cultural traditions and shifting changes and processes. The ancient cultural heritage that acted as the bond of European unity is associated primarily with the Mediterranean region, whereas the development of medieval Europe was dictated primarily by structures located more in the centre of Europe. One can say that medieval Europe emerged out of the collapse of the world whose

⁷ L. von Ranke, *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514* (Berlin, 1825); cf. G. Barraclough, *Introduction*, in: *Eastern and Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London, 1970), p. 7 ff.

commercial, political and cultural centre was the Mediterranean. Thus, we associate Europe's medieval beginnings with the assimilation of Mediterranean civilization.

This process, commenced by the Romanization of the Alpine regions, continued under the expansion of Western Christianity which continued the tradition of imperial Rome, for Pope Gregory VII said that *quibus imperavit Augustus, imperavit Christus*. People in the Middle Ages were aware of the link between *romanitas* and *christianitas*; this can be seen in historiographic treatises, historical writings and documents.⁸ Leopold von Ranke wrote that Caesar's conquest of Gaul marked the start of a new configuration of the West, which assumed its final shape during the Christian synthesis that combined the ancient world, Christianity itself, and the young barbarian peoples.⁹ The basic structures and centres of this synthesis lie outside the Mediterranean Basin.

The time horizon of the European community was defined in various ways in the great debates that commenced the genetic processes of medieval society. Opposing the radical juxtaposition between the ancient world and the Middle Ages, Alfons Dopsch argued that Europe's cultural development was a continuous process from the times of Julius Caesar until the time of Charlemagne.¹⁰ For him, the significance of the Mediterranean to the communal links of the ancient world was of secondary importance because its influence could not be felt in agrarian life.

The great historiographic debate between the "Germanic" and "Roman" schools of thought in interpreting the genesis of European societies and nationalisms assumed secondary importance. Academically, Dopsch's proposals were very fertile, producing dozens of works, among which it is worth mentioning the works of the Warsaw Merovingian and Carolingian seminar of Marcelli Handelsman.¹¹ But there were also attempts to deny or discredit Dopsch due to his hasty

⁸ W. Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955), p. 276.

⁹ L. von Ranke, *Über die Epochen der neueren Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1888), p. 18.

¹⁰ A. Dopsch, *Wirtschaftliche und soziale Grundlagen der europäischen Kulturentwicklung aus der Zeit von Cäsar bis auf Karl den Grossen* (Vienna, 1918–1920).

¹¹ Cf. M. Handelsman, "Badania szkoły warszawskiej nad wczesnym Średniowieczem", in: id., *Średniowiecze polskie i powszechne. Wybór pism*, ed. A. Gieysztor (Warsaw, 1966), pp. 342–348.

generalizations and the changes in the manner of perceiving history. A blurring of medieval opinions on the birth of Europe, which is what interests us, was also a subject of debate and criticism. People limited the picture of the continuous development of civilization to economic relationships, focusing on the differences and discontinuations that lay at the roots of the formation of medieval Europe.

A different view was adopted by the illustrious Belgian historian Henri Pirenne.¹² Assuming that, in its basic structure, the ancient world possessed a Mediterranean character, Pirenne concentrated on the Mediterranean. In a history of medieval Europe written in a prisoner-of-war camp during World War I, he wrote: “For centuries, Europe has leaned towards the Mediterranean. It is from the Mediterranean that civilization spread, it is at the Mediterranean where various cultures communicated with each other. On every shore, basic social existence was the same, the same religion predominated, and customs and ideas were the same or very similar. The Germanic invasion changed nothing of basic European structures. Despite this, one can say that in the middle of the 7th century, Europe still constituted a Mediterranean whole, as in the times of the Roman Empire.”¹³

A breakthrough occurred only with the Arab invasions, which severed the ties between north and south and between east and west. The invasion broke apart Mediterranean unity and established an Arab presence on the *Mare nostrum*. Contacts between Europe and the East were broken. Removed from the Mediterranean, left to its own fate, threatened in the coastal regions of Italy, Provence and Catalonia, and remembering the Arab invasion which in 711 gained control over Visigoth Spain and was overcome in the 8th century only with great difficulty, medieval Europe shifted its fulcrum of political and

¹² Following the first lecture on his theses in two articles (“Mahomet et Charlemagne”, *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire*, 1, 1922, pp. 77–86; and “Un contraste économique: Mérovingiens et Carolingiens”, *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire*, 2, 1923, pp. 223–235), Henri Pirenne devoted to these theses his last book, published posthumously: *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Paris, 1937). Pirenne’s views provoked a huge debate which is still continuing, its primary elements and a bibliography can be found in: A. Riising, “The Fate of Henri Pirenne’s theses on the consequence of the Islamic Expansion”, *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 13 (1952), pp. 87–130.

¹³ H. Pirenne, *Histoire de l’Europe, des invasions au XVII^e siècle* (Paris–Bruxelles, 1936), p. 22 (published after his death, this book contains the first outline of an idea which Pirenne expounded in his studies after the war).

cultural supremacy from the south to the north. Having broken up the ancient *Orbis Romanus* and closed the Mediterranean to European peoples, the Arab invasion now set the development path of medieval Europe towards the north. Its proper centre became an area between the Loire and the Rhine, which is where the Carolingian empire was to develop. Thus: "Without Mohammed, there would have been no Charlemagne."¹⁴

Pirenne's thesis did not withstand criticism. The first polemic voices showed that one should not overestimate the continuing presence of oriental merchants in Italy and Gaul until the 8th century, the flourishing and great international trade joining the East and the West during the Merovingian era, or the disastrous impact of Arab expansion on Europe's economy and on its links with the East.¹⁵ Maurice Lombard went the furthest in his criticism: he argued that the Arab invasions not only did not stop the development of great trade, but actually provided a powerful impetus to its further development, providing the West with the ores it needed to trade with the East and intensifying European circulation of precious metals.¹⁶ Thus, at the base of European development and the West's commercial assertion lay a revival of commercial-monetary exchange and an influx of ores following the Arab expansion.

In the disputes about the beginnings of the Middle Ages and the genesis of European societies, we are only interested in the issue of Mediterranean and European unity. We should therefore examine the Carolingian era from the same angle.

Obviously, a juxtaposition of the barbarian world and of post-Roman socio-economic and cultural structures during the early Middle Ages, especially during the Carolingian period, is of key importance to the entire "European millennium." The community that took shape during the early Middle Ages found its inspiring strength in the unity of Latin Christianity, but the basic unifying component was the ethnic

¹⁴ Id., *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, p. 210. See also A.R. Lewis, *Naval Power and Trade in the Mediterranean A.D. 500–1100* (Princeton, 1951).

¹⁵ P. Lambrechts, "Le commerce des 'Syriens' en Gaule, du Haut Empire à l'époque mérovingienne", *L'Antiquité Classique*, 6 (1937), pp. 35–61; id., "Les thèses de Henri Pirenne", *Byzantion*, 14 (1939), pp. 513–536; R.S. Lopez, "Mohammed and Charlemagne. A Revision", *Saeculum*, 18 (1943), pp. 14–38.

¹⁶ M. Lombard, "Les bases monétaires d'une suprématie économique. L'or musulman du VII^e au XI^e siècle", *Annales ESC*, 2 (1947), pp. 143–160.

and linguistic bond of the Germanic and Roman community. The Carolingian empire is an important place of observation because within its borders, the institutional seeds of nationhood sprouted which, when the empire fell, led to the beginnings of today's "Europe of nations," a community of separate peoples and countries.

Europe occupies quite an important place in Carolingian political terminology. In his study of Carolingian unity,¹⁷ Marian H. Serejski notes that Europe is mentioned over thirty times in Carolingian writings, which can be considered evidence of Europe's place in literature and in the minds of Carolingian social and political elites. This can hardly be regarded as the continuation of ancient literary tradition.¹⁸ The Carolingian empire asserted its unity in European terminology. The particular role played by the Franks, to whom the papacy appealed for help and protection,¹⁹ increased the prestige of the name "Franks," precisely as the prestige of the name "Romans" increased; under the pen of a monk from Sankt Gallen, the name *Francia* came to signify all Christian countries west of Asia.²⁰ The Carolingian empire joined three parts of Europe: Italy, Gaul and Germany,²¹ therefore it was necessary to specify a more exact limit of Charlemagne's political rule. Europe served the function of a concept well: an instrument of political propaganda and rhetoric which creating the geographical and social base for Carolingian hegemony and for the Carolingian world (*orbis, mundus*), understood as a single political construct patterned on the *Orbis Romanus*, and thus as one of the political authorities existing in the world. That is why from under the pens of Charlemagne's chroniclers and panegyrists appeared the terms *Europae venerandus apex*, *Europae veneranda pharus* and *rex pater Europae*.²²

¹⁷ M.H. Serejski, *Idea jedności karolińskiej. Studium nad genezą wspólnoty europejskiej w Średniowieczu* (Warsaw, 1937), p. 87.

¹⁸ As suggested by H. Gollwitzer, "Zur Wortgeschichte und Sinndeutung von 'Europe'", *Saeculum*, 2 (1951), p. 164.

¹⁹ Serejski, *Idea jedności*, p. 29; A. Gieysztor, *Władza Karola Wielkiego w opinii współczesnej* (Warsaw, 1938), p. 29.

²⁰ G. Kurth, *Etudes franques* (Paris–Bruxelles, 1919), vol. 1: *Francia et Francus*.

²¹ *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (hereinafter: MGH), *Scriptores*, vol. 15, part 1, p. 359: *qui tres praestantiores Europae species solidum satis corpus sceptrigero sibi dominatu, Dei propitio, subegit, Italiam videlicet, Galliam atque Germaniam*.

²² Serejski, *Idea jedności*, pp. 87 ff.; Gollwitzer, *Zur Wortgeschichte*, p. 165; De Rougemont, *Vingt-huit siècles*, p. 48.

Even more significant is that at the turn of the 9th century, *Annales Fuldenses* identified Europe with the lands of Charlemagne.²³ This is not just evidence of the perpetuation of this identification in tradition, but also an indication that the concept of Europe had no life of its own after Charlemagne. Borrowed from the glossary of geographic scholarship, it became a political term associated with short-lived rule, and later with any attempts to renew it. But it did not assume a cultural substance. Is this because no socio-cultural feeling of communion was formed?

The concept of Europe appears several times under the pen of Alquinus, one of the most representative figures of the Carolingian elite.²⁴ Most interesting is a letter dated 790 addressed to the Anglo-Saxon teacher Colcu.²⁵ Describing the general political situation, Alquinus says that after the conversion of the Saxons and Frisians to Christianity, the Church “in parts of Europe” (*in partibus Europae*) enjoys peace and is growing in strength. Victories over the Slavs and Avars, a halt to Greek expansion in southern Italy, victories over the Saracens in Spain – all this is also included in the Church’s string of successes. But in this picture, Auguin points to a black smudge: the power of the Saracens is spreading; they already control the whole of Africa and a major part of Asia. Identifying the Church with Europe is highly significant. Every victory by Charlemagne is regarded as a victory by the Church and Christianity. The victory over the Byzantines is also regarded as such. Frankish, i.e. Christian Europe, is juxtaposed with Saracen Africa and, to a major extent, Asia. Thus, the traditional map of *orbis terrarum* is imbued with religious substance, whilst the concepts of Europe, Asia and Africa receive a socio-cultural sense.

However, one should not overestimate the meaning of these geographic concepts. In one of his letters, replying to the question “of what is there three?,” Alquinus replies, with typical medieval erudition, that there are three parts of the world: Europe, Africa and India (which is used here as a synonym for Asia).²⁶ That seems to be

²³ *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. F. Kurze (SRG, in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae, Hannoverae, 1891), *sub anno* 888, p. 116.

²⁴ On the role of Alquinus in the articulation of Carolingian imperial ideology, see A. Gieysztor, *Władza Karola Wielkiego*, p. 24 ff.

²⁵ *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, ed. E. Dümmler, vol. 2, MGH, *Epistolae*, vol. 4 (Berlin, 1895), p. 32.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p 124: *Totus orbis in tres dividitur partes, Europam, Africam et Indiam.*

the typical context in geographical terminology and in the simplest model of knowledge of the world. The adaptation of the term Europe to the Carolingian reality seemed to suit the universalist or imperial ambitions of the Frankish ruler; an interesting letter from a cleric sent to Charlemagne soon after his coronation describes him as the lord of Europe.²⁷ In the Carolingian era, the concept of Europe acquired a political sense, serving the formation of Western imperial ideology:²⁸ the eastern empire had no need of this concept because it was heir to the “world” heritage of the Roman Empire.

In relation to Byzantium, the imperial assertion of Charlemagne was described as the continuation of Roman succession. Thus, the “European” rhetoric of the Western emperor’s panegyrists possessed a programmatically and considerable polemic character regarding Byzantium. But there was nothing new or original in that situation. It merely expressed Charlemagne’s separation from the increasingly anti-Greek policies of the Latin Church. The papacy was the fulcrum of the Western empire’s Latin identity;²⁹ the *imperium occidentale* was the growth factor, expression and guarantor of the Latin Church’s power.³⁰ The disintegration of Christianity and the creation of a distinct cultural identity of the Latin Church was a *fait accompli* long before the schism in the 11th century. Thus, for the Latin West, the hostile eastern world was no longer just the Muslim Arab world, but Christian Byzantium as well.

In retrospect, this may be considered the main contribution of the Carolingian community to the formation of European bonds. In the Roman-Germanic lands, the rule of Charlemagne, joining “Italy,” “Gaul” and “Germany,” and also extending feelers into the Slav

²⁷ Ibid., p. 503: “*quod ipse [Deus] te exaltavit in honorem regni Europe*”. Cf. L. Halphen, *Charlemagne et l’Empire carolingien* (Paris, 1949), pp. 208 ff.

²⁸ Cf. E.E. Stengel, “Kaisertitel und Souveränitätsidee”, *Deutsches Archiv für Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 3 (1939), p. 25; E. Rosenstock, J. Wittig, *Das Alter der Kirche* (Berlin, 1927), vol. 1, pp. 461 ff.

²⁹ R. Wallach, *Das abendländische Gemeinschaftsbewusstsein im Mittelalter* (Leipzig–Berlin, 1928; Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance, 34); Y. Congar, “Orient et Occident. Quatre siècles de désunion et d’affrontement”, *Istina* 1968, no. 2, pp. 131–152.

³⁰ A. Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium Geschichts – und Staatsphilosophie des Mittelalters und der politischen Renaissance* (Munich–Berlin, 1929), pp. 155 ff.; W. Ohnsorge, *Das Zweikaiserproblem im früheren Mittelalter* (Hildesheim, 1947).

lands,³¹ reaching for the Byzantine sphere of influence and toppling the power of the Avars, created the basis for the assimilation of the Slavs into the Western community.³² The Carolingian empire provided the stimulus for a cultural community that outlasted the empire itself.

Regardless of whether cultural development during the Carolingian or post-Carolingian era was inspired by the East – both by the Greeks and the Arabs – the Western community developed an awareness that it was separate from the East.³³ The adhering bond, regardless of any negative features, was to be Christianity, and the Christian nature of Byzantium was no obstacle to this. But at the same time, there was a great debate on the continuation of the imperial tradition, whose natural centre was the “second Rome,” Constantinople.³⁴

Byzantium announced itself as the heir and continuer of the Roman Empire, at the same time asserting itself as the head of the entire Christian community. The fact that the Church and the state in Byzantium were completely amalgamated made it easier to justify this doctrine, which did not have to rely on any geographical limits. The tale of Pope Leo IV rejecting the cloak sent to him by the patriarch of Constantinople and declaring himself the sovereign of all Christian Europe is very significant.³⁵ However, one sees here a clear sign of rejection on the pope’s part; he advocates or proposes a division of the empire into spheres of influence: Rome retains Europe, and Asia is left to Byzantium.

But Byzantine universalism refused to accept this doctrine and insisted on a single Roman successor state. The behaviour of Byzantine emperors ostentatiously denied or ignored the institutions of the

³¹ G. Labuda, *Pierwsze państwo słowiańskie. Państwo Samona* (Poznań, 1949).

³² K. Tymieniecki, “Z dziejów tworzenia się Europy w X w.”, *Przegląd Zachodni*, 1955, no. 11, p. 139; F. Graus, “L’Empire de Grande-Moravie, sa situation dans l’Europe de l’époque et sa structure intérieure”, in: *Das Grossmährische Reich*, ed. F. Graus, J. Filip, A. Dostál (Prague, 1966), pp. 205–219; H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski* (Warsaw, 1970), vol. 4, pp. 230 ff., 299 ff.

³³ Wallach, *Das abendländische Gemeinschaftsbewusstsein*, p. 13; J. Fischer, *Oriens, Occidens, Europa. Begriff und Gedanke ‘Europa’ in der späten Antike und im frühen Mittelalter* (Wiesbaden, 1957).

³⁴ Of the exhaustive literature on this subject, one can mention two collections of studies by distinguished experts: F. Dölger, *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt* (Darmstadt, 1972); and W. Ohnsorge, *Abendland und Byzanz* (Darmstadt, 1958). See also: A. Michel, *Die Kaisermacht in der Ostkirche (843–1204)* (Darmstadt, 1959).

³⁵ MGH, *Epistolae*, vol. 5, p. 607; Serejski, *Idea jedności*, p. 97.

Western empire. This was expressed in the peculiar hierarchy at the Byzantine court, where all the rulers were accorded ranks, the highest of which was held by the emperor. However, this system eventually waned in the face of reality, and in the end was limited to the language of diplomatic protocol. A given magnate was greeted in the manner that suited his status and his connections with the empire, but the opportunities for practicing these ceremonies gradually faded as the influence of Byzantium and its universalist aspirations diminished. The Byzantine Empire's political horizon was eventually restricted to the East.³⁶ Only there can one perceive genuine efforts at unification made by the Byzantine emperors. In relations with the European West, one cannot talk of the realization of any imperial hegemony, not even when the interests of the Byzantine Empire were directly at stake, as in the case of the Norman expansion in Italy. From time to time, there was still talk of a political unification of the East and West under the Byzantine scepter, which in practice could have meant papal supremacy over the West, but there was no commercial, institutional or civilizational basis for this.

The surprise felt by Bishop Liutprandus of Cremona at the hostility of the Byzantines during his second visit to Constantinople in 968 as emissary of Otto I reflects the civilizational differences between the East and the West.³⁷ Liutprandus, coming from a family with Lombard-Byzantine connections and fluent in Greek, felt keenly that the capital of the Byzantine empire was treating him like a barbarian and that his master, the Roman emperor, was considered a usurper. No doubt this account is slightly exaggerated, calculated to make an impression on the reader, but it does reflect a basic difference between the East and the West.³⁸ Nevertheless, even within the sphere of influence of the Byzantine Empire itself, the principle of eastern

³⁶ Cf. F. Dölger, "Europas Gestaltung im Spiegel der fränkisch-byzantinischen Auseinandersetzung des 9. Jahrhunderts", in: *Der Vertrag von Verdun 843*, ed. Th. Mayer (Leipzig, 1943), pp. 207–273; and Dölger, *Byzanz*, pp. 282–369.

³⁷ *Liutprandi relatio de legatione constantinopolitana*, in: *Liutprandi episcopi cremonensis opera omnia*, ed. E. Dümmler (MGH SRG, Hannover, 1877), pp. 136–166. For a bibliography on Liutprandus, see W. Ohnsorge, *Konstantinopel und der Okzident* (Darmstadt, 1966), p. 177.

³⁸ For the differences between the customs of "Greeks" and "Latins", see Wallach, *Das abendländische Gemeinschaftsbewusstsein*, p. 31 ff.; F. Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa* (Rome-Bari, 1961), pp. 38–42.

universalism did not find permanent support. The emperor's prestige fluctuated, which hardly contributed to the empire's unity. Even the structure of the Church was a problem; autocephalic trends in the development of Eastern Church institutions dominated Byzantium's religious supremacy.

In the West, universalism was the subject of a dispute between secular and spiritual authority. The *renovatio imperii* carried out in the 10th century sanctioned the ambitions of the Saxon dynasty to take over Carolingian imperial traditions and build a political structure founded upon imperial hegemony.³⁹ Without discussing the complex issues of a revival of the empire and its subsequent fortunes, we should at least note one aspect, namely the extent of an awareness of the Carolingian heritage.

The imperial hegemony of Germany was based strictly on the internal unity of Germany.⁴⁰ But these processes were not always interconnected: a focus on imperial interests in Italy did not encourage German unity. Nevertheless, the symbolic prestige of the Roman emperor served mainly to integrate the German kingdom and establish successive dynasties: Saxon, Salician and, last but not least, Swabian (the Hohenstauffens), in a situation of Roman hegemony vis-à-vis the German princes and magnates. The universalist program of the German emperors referred mainly to the policies and internal situation of the *Regnum Teutonicum* and its expansionism. The paths of this expansion were changeable. The South was particularly tempting – dismembered and affluent Lombardy, for which southern German princes, and later Henry I the Fowler (919–936), had an appetite. The imperial policies of the Ottos met these ambitions halfway.⁴¹ The policy of eastern expansion made itself felt more keenly. It was officially sanctioned by

³⁹ See P. E. Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio* (Darmstadt, 1962; reprint of 1929).

⁴⁰ A review of the issues of German unity: H. von Srbik, *Deutsche Einheit. Idee und Wirklichkeit vom Heiligen Reich bis Königgrätz*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1935), p. 15 ff.; G. Tellenbach, *Die Entstehung des deutschen Reiches* (Munich, 1940); *Die deutsche Einheit als Problem der europäischen Geschichte*, ed. C. Hinrichs, W. Berges (Stuttgart, 1960); G. Labuda, "Tendances d'intégration et de désintégration dans la Royaume Teutonique du Xe au XIIIe siècle", in: *L'Europe aux IXe–Xle siècles. Aux origines des Etats nationaux*, ed. T. Manteuffel, A. Gieysztor (Warsaw, 1968), pp. 77–91.

⁴¹ Cf. L. Santifaller, "Otto I, das Imperium und Europa", in: *Festschrift zur Jahrtausendfeier der Kaiserkrönung Ottos des Grossen*, part 1 (Vienna, 1962); *Otto der Grosse*, ed. H. Zimmermann (Darmstadt, 1976; Wege der Forschung, 450), bibliography.

the imperial principle intended to protect and expand Christendom at the expense of “barbarians” and “bad Christians.”

Thus, in the assertion of German imperial ambitions, we should primarily note German political interests, for which imperial policy was merely a tool, and reference to Roman hegemony as an excuse for universal hegemony was merely verbal. It is interesting also to note Liutprandus’ reaction to the invective from the Byzantine emperor, who said: “You are not Romans at all, but Lombards,” to which Liutprandus replied that the Lombards, Franks, Saxons, Lotharingians, Swabians and Burgundians have such a disdain for Romans that when they wish to insult an enemy, they call him a Roman, with which word one associates weakness, avarice and deceit.⁴² Federico Chabod identifies in this report a confrontation of Germanic and Roman consciousness;⁴³ when interpreting it, he says, one should bear in mind that the word Roman is used as a synonym of Byzantine, and that the pejorative designation of “Roman” thus refers to the increasing animosity between the “Latins” and the “Greeks.” However, panegyrists of the Otto dynasty and officials of the Saxon dynasty clearly reach for Roman nomenclature⁴⁴ and underline the “Roman” nature of the rule of the Ottos; the Roman element became an integral part of German imperial policy in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the real structure of political forces superseded the verbal provisions of doctrine.⁴⁵ However, the excessive involvement of emperors in Apennine affairs affected the cohesion of Germany and sapped its strength; this applies to both Otto III and Frederick II.

The case of Otto III⁴⁶ is particularly significant. He was firmly involved in the program *Renovatio Imperii Romanorum*, referring to

⁴² *Liutprandi relatio*, p. 142: “id est Romanorum nomine, quicquid ignobilitatis, quicquid timiditatis, quicquid avaritiae, quicquid luxuriae, quicquid mendacii, immo quicquid vitiorum est, comprehendentes.”

⁴³ Chabod, *Storia dell’idea*, p. 38.

⁴⁴ See in particular C. Erdmann, “Das ottonische Reich als Imperium Romanum”, in: *Ottonische Studien*, ed. H. Beumann (Darmstadt, 1968), pp. 174–203; and W. Ohnsorge, “Konstantinopel im politischen Denken der Ottonenzeit”, in: *Poly chronion. Festschrift für F. Dölger* (Heidelberg, 1966), pp. 388–412.

⁴⁵ J. Baszkiewicz, *Państwo suwerenne w feudalnej doktrynie politycznej do początków XIV w.* (Warsaw, 1964).

⁴⁶ M. Uhlirz, “Das Werden des Gedankens der ‘Renovatio Imperii Romanorum’ bei Otto III”, in: *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull’Alto Medioevo*, vol. 2: *I problemi comuni dell’Europa post-carolingia* (Spoleto, 1955), pp. 201–219.

combined ancient and Carolingian tradition. He thought of creating a community of Christian peoples which would restore the former glory of the Roman Empire, restoring to the emperor and the pope the city of Rome as its capital.⁴⁷ But it was an illusion that the fulcrum of the revived empire could be restored to Italy, and such an idea could not gain the support of the German magnates. The concept of an empire of which “Germania” was to be a component with “Gallia,” “Italia” and “Sclavinia”⁴⁸ was alien to the German princes; an empire would exist to serve German interests. This is why Bruno of Querfurt writes with such sarcasm about Otto’s liking for Rome where he wished to stay and which he wanted *ioco puerili* to restore to its former glory: “...with a vain effort, he attempted to restore the faded glory of ancient Rome.”⁴⁹ In the development of the German idea of an empire, combining Roman tradition, German expansion and Christian piety,⁵⁰ one observes the basic importance of the Carolingian heritage. This applies primarily to the function of the Carolingian empire as a bond of imperial ideology,⁵¹ but generally relates to the role of imperial universalism in European history. To a minor extent, and only occasionally, the universalism of the Holy Roman Empire created new supranational links. In the European perspective with which we are concerned here, imperial universalism serves to prove that memories of Carolingian unity were long indeed.

The economic and ethno-political reality of the Christian world at that time was characterized by profound parochialism. It was practically impossible to realize a universal imperial model either under the Ottos or under the Hohenstauffens. Between the haughty doctrine of “world domination” and the reality, there was a deep abyss.⁵² The elements joining imperial universalism were negligible,

⁴⁷ Cf. W. Dzięcioł, *Imperium i państwa narodowe około r. 1000* (London, 1962).

⁴⁸ An analysis of a miniature showing these four symbolic figures is made by P. Skubiszewski, “W służbie cesarza, w służbie króla. Temat władzy w sztuce ottońskiej”, in: *Funkcja dzieła sztuki* (Warsaw, 1972), pp. 17–72, especially p. 38 ff. (containing a hitherto bibliography on the subject).

⁴⁹ *Vita quinque fratrum eremitarum*, ed. J. Karwasińska, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (hereinafter: MPH), series nova (hereinafter: SN), IV, 3 (Warsaw, 1973), p. 44: “*inveteratae Rome mortuum decorem renovare supervacuo labore insistit.*”

⁵⁰ Baszkiewicz, *Państwo suwerenne*, p. 115.

⁵¹ R. Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval* (Paris, 1950).

⁵² G. Barraclough, *The Mediaeval Empire: Idea and Reality* (London, 1950).

and doctrine served mainly to further the expansionist aims of the German state.⁵³

In essence, the conflict between imperial and papal universalism does not exceed the framework we have described here. In its universalist aims, the papacy had stronger support than the empire in the form of an extensive organizational structure and centralized apparatus. Advocating the doctrine of complete papal authority *super gentes et regna*, the popes insisted they remain one step ahead of the emperors in Christian political society.⁵⁴ The basic subjects of the dispute were global power and the political unity of Christianity, so that when one considers that medieval Christianity failed to create political unity, one sees that the political universalism of the papacy remained in the realm of ideas and doctrinal programs.

Indeed, the papacy's political triumphs only applied to Italy itself. Elsewhere in Christendom, at the zenith of its power the papacy created a system of the political subservience of rulers: from Innocent III⁵⁵ the head of the Roman Church acted as arbiter and master of Christian rulers, and was the direct supervisor of kings and princes. The dispute between the papacy and the empire applied to the countries of the empire in a broad sense (i.e. including the empire's claims for control over Christian countries), and the subject of the dispute was control over Western Christendom, taken to mean the empire. Innocent III exceeded this framework, was keenly interested in the countries of Central-Eastern Europe, interfered in Poland and Hungary, and also encroached upon the Balkans and achieved temporary control over Bulgaria and attracted Bosnia and Serbia to the Roman sphere of influence and papal rule.

In the most developed theocratic programs, the secular state was made subservient to the church state, the pope was accorded imperial prerogative, and the Church is recognized as the *Imperium Romanum*.⁵⁶

⁵³ Baszkiewicz, *Państwo suwerenne*, chapt. 2; however, he associates the doctrine of *dominium mundi* with German political expansion too one-sidedly.

⁵⁴ W. Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London, 1949); M. Pacaut, *La Théocratie. L'Eglise et le pouvoir au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1957); E. Potkowski, "Papiestwo a państwa europejskie (XIII-XV w.)", in: *Katolicyzm średniowieczny*, ed. J. Keller (Warsaw, 1977), pp. 9–106.

⁵⁵ J. H. Powell, *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?* (Boston, 1963; Problems in European Civilization).

⁵⁶ W. Fritzemeyer, *Christenheit und Europa* (Munich–Berlin, 1931), p. 5.

The efforts of theology went towards political justification for the Church, combining a spiritual and a secular element. Considering the authority to grant indulgences, Thomas Aquinas examined the concept of the Church as a *congregatio* and noted that the Church was a political entity or community, because it comprised the people (*populus*).⁵⁷ The Church was also meant to control both authorities in practice. In this way, the traditional divide between “priest” and “warrior” would be overcome. The list of titles of Gregory IX included “vicar of God the Almighty, Emperor of the Heavens.” A universal Christian state is how the Church styled itself.⁵⁸ However, this doctrine was mere words, far removed from the reality.

The idea of imperial unity, from the Carolingian construct to the dispute between pope and emperor over domination of the *res publica Christiana*, changed its substance and its political and territorial referents many times, and referred to various social forces. In the minds of feudal society, marked by hierarchies and dependence, it was the crown of political structures and the natural order of Christian society as a kind of “international community.”⁵⁹ This was important not only to doctrine and the learned theologians and lawyers. It exerted influence on the awareness of the political elites, created a certain set of political symbols common to all of Christian Europe,⁶⁰ and ensured the duration of the idea of a “unity” transcending differences, as a programmable reality possible to be attained. Nevertheless, the political development of medieval Europe led not towards imperial unity, but to a consolidation of the sovereignty of individual nation states. The “Roman” unity found expression in the cultural community of *christianitas*.

⁵⁷ S. Thomae Aquinatis *Summa Theologiae*, Suppl. questio XXVI, art. 1: *Ecclesia assimilatur congregationi politicae*.

⁵⁸ A. Hauck, *Der Gedanke der päpstlichen Weltherrschaft bis auf Bonifaz VIII* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 44 ff.

⁵⁹ Cf. W. Sawicki, “Prawo międzynarodowe średniowiecznej ‘Christianitas’”, *Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne KUL*, 14 (1967), no. 5, pp. 21–40; the author overestimates the role of institutions and the law in relation to *Christianitas*.

⁶⁰ P.E. Schramm, “Die Staatssymbolik des Mittelalters”, in: *X Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche* (Rome, 1955), vol. 7, pp. 200–201; id., “Il simbolismo dello Stato nella storia del Medioevo”, in: *La storia del diritto nel quadro delle scienze storiche. Atti del primo Congresso internazionale della Società italiana di Storia del diritto* (Florence, 1966), pp. 247–267.

2. *Christianitas* as a Cultural Community

Christianitas as the basic concept joining medieval Europe was not a realization of the universal mission of Christianity, that *ordinatio ad unum* of the whole world, in which the *humanum genus* without exception was to find a place for itself.⁶¹ This was primarily a political-religious construct, defining the geographical space of Rome's hegemony and the extent of its influence and laws. It is also different from the concept of the Church,⁶² whose "metaphysically uniform awareness"⁶³ supports a certain hierarchical order and defines the place of the clergy in the exercising of power. The concept of *christianitas* involves a secular political reality and, at the same time, a sphere of collective spiritual life. For Roman rule, which assumed a bipolar nature at the turn of the second millennium headed by a pope and an emperor, was to rest not only on unity and a collaboration of institutions, but also on a communion of basic religious and cultural rights and a common concern for salvation. In any case, the unity of Catholicism was the product of a sharp struggle for hegemony over collective beliefs and mentality; the *christianitas* community developed with the stamping out of pagan beliefs and of trends considered heterodoxical.⁶⁴

An examination of the conversion of European peoples, whose comparative history remains to be processed, reveals that Western Christianity was present in their minds. The religious instruments of the new faith were somewhat rudimentary, at least on a mass scale. The lives of the holy missionaries reveal a program of Christianization that was more or less developed, but which always concentrated on the nature of the cult, on religious rites, and not on truth.⁶⁵ The description of the Christianization of Western Pomerania by Otto, bishop

⁶¹ P. Rousset, "La notion de chrétienté aux XIe et XIIe siècles", *Le Moyen Age*, 69 (1963), pp. 191–203.

⁶² G. Ladner, *The Concepts of 'Ecclesia' and 'Christianitas'* (Rome, 1954; *Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae*, 18), pp. 49–77.

⁶³ A. Dupront, "La croisade après les croisades", in: P. Alphandéry, A. Dupront, *La chrétienté et l'idée de croisade* (Paris, 1954–1959; *L'Evolution de l'Humanité*, 38), vol. 2, p. 275.

⁶⁴ Correctly noted by G. Barraclough, *History in a Changing World* (Oxford, 1955), p. 38 ff.

⁶⁵ Cf. J. Schmidlin, "Frühmittelalterliche Missionsmethode", in: id., *Katholische Missionsgeschichte* (Steyl, 1924).

of Bamberg, may be considered a rich program of conversion:⁶⁶ it was necessary to build churches in which to serve the Lord in a Christian manner (*more Christianorum*), fast on Fridays and feast on Sundays, give the saints their due, observe Lent, christen children on Easter Saturday and provide them with godparents, not tolerate marriages between godparents and relatives, and not bury one's dead in fields and forests but in cemeteries, as required by Christian rituals (*sicut mos est omnium Christianorum*). Last but not least, Otto teaches the Pomeranians that they may no longer raise temples to pagan deities, practice any form of magic, or mingle with pagans, but must go to church for confession or summon priests to their homes for this purpose, and do penance on certain occasions. In addition, women with children should receive a blessing in church.

This inventory of commandments and prohibitions shows that conversion meant most of all abandoning old customs and adopting new ones, whereby particular attention was drawn to the external aspect of religious practices. This does not at all diminish the significance of collective conversion, but it does show that Christianization meant the spread of the *mos Christianorum*, and the adaptation of the customs and behaviour of various ethnic groups to the common Christian canon⁶⁷ of rituals, which gave and gives the Christian West a certain internal unity.

The concept of *christianitas*, supported by this set of common cultural values, expressed the collective consciousness that spread during the Middle Ages. Papal universalism and the crusades used this concept as an efficient instrument of propaganda. But it was not merely a political term employed by papal officials, lawyers, theologians and poets. The cultural community took shape thanks to Latin, the universal medium of communication in Western Christendom, and as a result of common liturgies and rituals such as the recognition of Sundays and holy days, the internal arrangement of churches, landscaping methods, etc. Even when Christianization was not a total process, when old traditions continued to exist side by side with the new Christian ones and the message of Christianity was not perceived

⁶⁶ *Ebonis Vita Sancti Ottonis episcopi babenbergensis*, II, 12, in: MPH, SN, VII, 1 (Warsaw, 1966), pp. 74–75.

⁶⁷ S. Piekarczyk, *Barbarzyńcy i chrześcijaństwo. Konfrontacje społecznych postaw i wzorców u Germanów* (Warsaw, 1968), especially p. 327 ff.

everywhere, membership of the Roman Church was the bond that cemented common culture. The migrations and changes within the Church's elites consolidated the integration of Western Christianity. Ethnic changes in the clerical community, especially at its higher levels, occurred not only as a result of missionary activity, but also during normal everyday religious practice. Saint Boniface, apostle of Germania and bishop of Mainz (from 747), one of the great builders of the community of *christianitas*, was an Anglo-Saxon, as was Alquinus, an advisor to Charlemagne, and from 796 abbot of Tours.⁶⁸

In Christianized Poland, the ranks of the church hierarchy and community were strengthened by arrivals from other countries: Frenchmen, Germans, Italians. The bishopric of Płock, formed under the reign of King Bolesław the Bold, drew its leaders from France and elsewhere; in the 12th century, the bishops were: Alexander of Malonne; Werner from Burgundy or southern Germany; Wit, probably from a family of Polish knights; and Lupus, said to have come from France.⁶⁹

The shortage of personnel in some countries who were trained to perform church and state functions and were qualified to teach and offer other intellectual services, and the excess of these people in other countries, caused migrations which ultimately led towards a unification of the intellectual culture of the Christian world.⁷⁰ The circulation of manuscripts, and literary and encyclopaedic works, performed a similar function. In this way, the cultural and religious

⁶⁸ Cf. F. Flaskamp, *Die Missionsmethode des heiligen Bonifatius* (Hildesheim, 1929; Geschichtliche Darstellungen und Quellen, 8); G. Schnürer, *Die Anfänge der abendländischen Völkergemeinschaft* (Freiburg im Br. 1932), vol. 1, p. 202.

⁶⁹ Cz. Deptuła, "Krag kościelny płocki w połowie XII wieku, *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 8 (1959), pp. 5–122; id., "Niektóre aspekty stosunków Polski z cesarstwem w wieku XII", in: *Polska w Europie*, ed. H. Zins (Lublin, 1968), pp. 35–92; id., "Płock kościelny u progu reform XIII wieku. Biskup Lupus i jego czasy", *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, 21 (1973), pp. 43–90.

⁷⁰ An interesting record of the common nature of these migrations is provided in a letter from a certain abbot from Gembloux who, in the 1260s, warned his friend against the dangers of settling in Poland; see O. Górka, "List Gwiberta z Gembloux (w. XII) do scholastyka Arnulfa", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 40 (1926), pp. 27–38. Guibert writes: *nolite incognitum laboriosum et siluosum iter [...] nolite nos incaute extere et barbare genti immergere* (ibid., p. 33). Herbord also writes about the shortage of literati in the life of St. Otto: *Itaque in Poloniam peregre vadens, ubi sciebat litteratorum esse penuriam* (*Herbordi Dialogus de Vita S. Ottonis*, III, 32, in: SRG, in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae, ed. G.H. Pertz, Hannoverae, 1868).

resources of writing and education became standardized, together with the manner of propagating these contents as depicted in medieval literature and art.

The main beneficiaries of this were the church and court elites, for those who took part in these exchanges were most aware of the cultural substance of Christianity. However, these Christian cultural contents were not shut away behind the walls of monasteries and cathedrals; even in periods when public preaching had a limited effect, church services were attended by the broad masses, whilst church architecture, sculpture and painting were appreciated universally.⁷¹ One can say that even if the impact of the message of Christianity became shallower and fewer people understood it, the intellectual and artistic heritage of Latin Christianity exerted a profound influence on the masses and was reflected in the collective psyche of the ethnically and culturally mixed community.

The formation of community ties within Christendom was further consolidated by collective actions which engaged mainly the "political societies," and later drew increasing numbers of common people. The prime example is the crusades.

Research into the history of the crusades, their objectives and achievements, and their national and social composition, have revealed a huge diversification of the situation.⁷² Without examining the different details of each crusade, one can nevertheless consider their general significance. The mission of recovering the sites sacred to Christianity served to crystallize the unity of the Christian world and the communion of its interests and actions. The crusades were marked by rivalry between the pope in Rome and the emperor in Constantinople over leadership of the *res publica Christiana*. The first crusade took place at the end of the 11th century as a triumph of the papacy, whose idea it was and who commanded the actions, but the crusades in the 12th century took place beyond the papacy's

⁷¹ Cf. B. Geremek, "Chiesa", in: *Enciclopedia Einaudi* (Torino, 1978), vol. 2, p. 1087 ff.

⁷² A review of research and issues was outlined by T. Rosławski, "Przegląd nowszych badań nad historią wypraw krzyżowych", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 65 (1958), pp. 1311–1335; list of bibliography: H.E. Meyer, *Bibliographie zur Geschichte der Kreuzzüge* (Hannover, 1960); J. B. Brundage, *The Crusades. A Documentary Survey* (Milwaukee, 1962); F. Cardini, *Le Crociate tra il mito e la storia* (Rome, 1971); D. Bigalli, "Oriente e Occidente di fronte alle crociate", *Studi Storici*, 15 (1973), pp. 931–939.

supervision. This time, the great rulers of the Christian West asserted themselves as guardians of the interests of Christianity and, in this regard, competed with each other.⁷³

Behind these events there ruled the crusading principle, expressed in theological discourse and legal doctrine in various ways, but exerting strong influence on the minds and emotions of the broad masses.⁷⁴ Indeed, the crusading idea took hold of collective mentality. Nevertheless, some rulers reacted to the papacy's calls with reluctance or indifference, for political calculations were always at play: King Louis VI of France was prepared to offer one twentieth of his income, but did not hesitate to join the crusade because he feared the actions of King Henry II of England on the continent, whilst Frederick Barbarossa was reluctant to support the crusade initiative of Alexander III because he preferred the crusade to be an imperial, not a papal, initiative. There are more such examples. Nevertheless, the crusading flame and zeal among the masses remained keen for a long time.

After the first crusades, the crusading spirit seemed to grow in strength despite the setbacks suffered by the papacy in the Holy Land and by the crusaders themselves; a crusade "is developing into a normal form of spiritual life in the Christian west."⁷⁵ The crusading appeals of the popes were addressed first to the feudal knighthood, to knights without land in their own country, and to warriors.⁷⁶ The response was very strong, for a crusade not only offered hopes of great adventure and attracted those for whom there were no opportunities in their own country, but it also offered a prospect to realize the ideals of the "knightly order." Military defeats and shortages of supplies weakened the eagerness of these communities to embark on long journeys, but

⁷³ L. Koczy ("Narody w pierwszej wyprawie krzyżowej", *Teki Historyczne*, 11, 1960, pp. 41–96) indicates the linguistic and ethnic variety of the *Christi membra* in the first crusade (*linguis, tribus et nationibus differentia*).

⁷⁴ On the idea of the crusades, see: C. Erdmann, *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugs-gedankens* (Stuttgart, 1935); M. Villey, *La croisade. Essai sur la formation d'une théorie juridique* (Paris, 1942); E. Delaruelle, "Essai sur la formation de l'idée de croisade", *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 1941, pp. 24–45, 86–103, 1944, pp. 13–46, 73–90, 1953, pp. 226–239, 1954, pp. 50–63, 1960, pp. 241–257; Alphandéry, Dupront, *La chrétienté*, vol. 1–2.

⁷⁵ Alphandéry, Dupront, *La chrétienté*, vol. 1, p. 215.

⁷⁶ That is the crux of the famous speech by Urban II at the synod of Clermont in 1095, here he addressed his appeal mainly at the French knighthood; see *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux* (Paris, 1866), vol. 3, p. 728.

nevertheless the idea of service for the sake of the Christian community served to cement supranational bonds of knighthood, and continued to drive people to take part in crusading initiatives on European soil.

The papal appeals were received with the greatest zeal by the rural and urban masses who, full of religious fervour, duly embarked upon the crusades, but in doing so ruined the military preparations and got out of order. The historian dealing with the crusades must ascribe to this fervour a low level of effectiveness, but must also admit that these movements were vital in the formation of a collective Christian consciousness. In *christianitas*, an intensification of the religious experience went hand-in-hand with social identity on a macroscale. The anti-Jewish riots, pogroms, calls to embark on the crusades and the routes taken by them all testify to the processes of collective identification: among the various motives for these acts of hatred, the overriding one was hatred of "foreigners."⁷⁷ In this way, the sense of "being with one's own people," shaped in traditional local ties, was transposed to the broadest level, to the level of the Christian community.

One should not think that the crusades erased the antagonism between eastern and Western Christianity for the sake of a joint defence of holy Christian sites. Before the scandal of the fourth crusade, which, instead of Palestine, headed for Byzantium and sacked and stripped that glittering metropolis of its riches, the antagonism between Rome and Byzantium, following the recent schism (1054), was not trifling.⁷⁸ The idea of the crusade was aimed at the East's traditional dominance in regarding the purity of Christian doctrine. The crusades were the sole work of the Christian West and an affirmation of its unity in the service of Christianity.⁷⁹

Oriental influence, which was already strong before the crusades, made a very deep impact on the culture, customs and religious life of Western Christianity during the crusades. Regardless of this, the cultural distinction of Western Christianity towards Byzantium revealed

⁷⁷ Cf. L. Winowski, "Stosunek średniowiecznej Europy do obcych innowierców", *Prawo Kanoniczne*, 4 (1961), pp. 593–680.

⁷⁸ S. Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: a Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford, 1956).

⁷⁹ Of course, participation in the crusades was much broader and included Greek Christian and the peoples inhabiting the eastern fringes of medieval Europe. On the participation of Russ in the crusades, see: W.T. Pashuto, *Miasto drevnney Rusi v istorii Yevropy* (Moscow, 1972), p. 198 ff.

itself and consolidated during the crusades. Even if the fourth crusade had not taken place, the course of the crusades and the literacy evidence show that there was no room for Byzantium and eastern Christianity in the concept of *christianitas* that was shaping communal ties around the Christian faith.⁸⁰

Last but not least, an important social aspect of the crusades, going beyond psycho-religious motives, was migration. Socio-historical and economic research into the origins of the crusades reveals major changes to great aristocratic family structures caused by the migrations during the first centuries of the second millennium. The increased number of young people (*iuvenes*), younger sons of knights and the aristocracy, who were unable to find places for themselves that befitted their status, exerted pressure on local structures.⁸¹ Similar processes of demographic expansion and relative overpopulation were noted in peasant communities in faster-developing regions of the West. With respect to the famous children's crusade of 1212, it was assumed that this was a movement composed of social elements uprooted from rural areas, connected with the migration of young people. Such migrations assumed mass proportions at this time.⁸² Eagerness to take part in the crusades gradually waned, but the idea behind them survived in the community and represented a break with the feudal order and appealed to the dreams of the oppressed classes.⁸³

The spread of the crusading idea from the knighthood to ordinary people can be attributed to the increasing *prise de conscience* of the Christian community. Regardless of their socio-economic motives, migrations aroused religious feelings by referring to Christian solidarity.

⁸⁰ L. Bréhier, *L'Église et l'Orient au Moyen Âge. Les croisades* (Paris, 1907); J. Ebersolt, *Orient et Occident. Recherches sur les influences byzantines et orientales en France avant les Croisades* (Paris-Brussels, 1928); W.M. Daily, "Christian Fraternity, the Crusaders and the Security of Constantinople 1097-1204", *Medieval Studies*, 22 (1960), pp. 78 ff.

⁸¹ G. Duby, "Au XIII^e siècle. Les 'jeunes' dans la société aristocratique", *Annales ESC*, 19 (1964), pp. 835-846.

⁸² P. Toubert, "Croisades d'enfants et mouvement de pauvreté au XIII^e siècle", in: *Recherches sur les pauvres et la pauvreté* (Paris, 1965-1966), vol. 4.

⁸³ One can indicate the example of the so-called *capuciati*, recruited from peasants in southern and central France, who, in response to an appeal by Alexander III, set off to battle against armed gangs in their own country in return for exemption from the crusades, but who later had to be brought to order themselves. See A. Luchaire, *La société française au temps de Philippe-Auguste* (Paris, 1909), p. 10 ff.

A migrating group developed bonds which were no longer cemented by common origin, common language or ethnicity. However, the crusading spirit continued later in the form of migrations by farmers and craftsmen. French migration towards the Iberian Peninsula, Flemish colonization and the great waves of German settlement in south-eastern Europe⁸⁴ all occurred in the name of the unity of the Christian world, and the ethnic confrontations and displacement helped to tie the threads of European unity.

The crusades also helped the formation of Christianity as a political community.⁸⁵ We have already discussed this in the context of the development of the imperial idea, therefore here we need only point out that the papacy's political aspirations were aimed at a broad reform of Church institutions and activities, a restructuring of monastic life, and a standardization of the life of Latin Christendom. The Cluny reform movement and its broad geographical extent are testimony to this process of unification of the Church structures of the Latin West.⁸⁶ The subsequent history of monastic orders is a continuation of this process.

Another factor that helped solidify the Christian community was the threat of Tartar incursions into Europe. Chronicles and papal diplomatic activities provide evidence of the great fear that seized European countries in the East and in the West in the first half of the 13th century. The *timor Tartarorum* seemed to be a universal feeling, and correspondence between European rulers prior to the Mongol offensive of 1240–1241 and later expressed the anxiety that had seized Europe. The first impressions of David, the Christian king of the Tartars, who liberated the Holy Land and defeated (or exterminated) the Saracens quickly faded. The frightful tales of the destruction of Hungary and the detailed reports on Mongol successes in the East, Rus', Hungary and Poland created a climate of dread.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Such an interpretation of German colonization against the background of other settlement migrations at the time is given in *Die deutsche Ostsiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der europäischen Geschichte. Reichenau Vorträge 1970–1972*, ed. W. Schlesinger (Sigmaringen, 1975), especially p. 802 (a summary of the debate by K. Zernack).

⁸⁵ Wallach, *Das abendländische Gemeinschaftsbewusstsein*, pp. 24 ff.

⁸⁶ A. Brackemann, *Zur politischen Bedeutung der kluniazensischen Bewegung* (Darmstadt, 1955).

⁸⁷ D. Sinor, "Les relations entre les Mongols et l'Europe jusqu'à la mort d'Arghoun et de Bela IV", *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale*, 3 (1956); A.F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach*

The mendicant orders played a notable role in spreading news of the Mongol danger and in inciting Christian rulers to take joint action. Unifying action was also expected from the pope and the emperor; but the orders that came from both these centres were contradictory. The internal differences of the Christian world were exposed with full strength and took precedence over the feeling of threat. Nevertheless, the common denominator of any action taken was the defence of the joint interests of Christendom. At the first synod of Lyon in 1245, Innocent IV spoke of the *insolentia Saracenorum, schisma Graecorum, sevitia Tartarorum* as a great danger to Christianity:⁸⁸ the threats from these three quarters may be considered a factor that led to the self-identification of *christianitas*. Did the “great fear” of the Tartars really reach such mass proportions?

It is difficult to answer that question. The source materials that we have at our disposal come from the clergy and reflect the knowledge, moods and feelings of the clerical community, as well as the community of royal courts and state and church institutions. One assumes that information like this easily passed from the elites to the masses because such “panicky” news made a strong impression.⁸⁹ The appearance of legends and fables connected with the Mongol world and on the defence of Christianity against Tartar invasion illustrates the degree of society’s sensitivity to the peril that hung over the Christian world. But the real extent of this fear could be gauged only in those regions through which the Mongols had passed or which were in direct danger from them. Their expectation of help from other Christian countries created feelings of Christian unity. Meanwhile, in the countries of the Christian West, the “great fear” of the Tartars was a brief episode, and the disputes between rulers, the failure of the crusading expeditions, and the lack of zeal to undertake joint action indicated the weakness, rather than the strength, of the bonds that joined Christianity.

obcych X–XIII w. (Warsaw, 1964), part VIII; V.T. Pashuto, “Mongolski podhod v glub Evropy”, in: *Tataro-Mongoly v Azii i v Evrope* (Moscow, 1977), pp. 210–227.

⁸⁸ *Relatio de concilio Lugdunensi*, in: *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, vol. 2 (Hannoverae et Lipsiae, 1904–1906), no. 401, p. 514, MGH, *Leges*; O. Halecki (“Diplomatie pontificale et activité missionnaire en Asie aux XIIIe–XVe siècles”, in: *XIIIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques. Rapports*, Vienna, 1965, vol. 2, p. 10) underlines the role attributed by Innocent IV to Poland, Lithuania and Halician Rus’ in the struggle against the Mongols.

⁸⁹ See D. Bigalli, *I Tartari e l’Apocalisse. Ricerche sull’escatologia in Adamo Marsh e Ruggero Bacone* (Firenze, 1971).

The geographical boundaries of the medieval *christianitas* seemed to be determined naturally and somewhat automatically by the extent of the religious conversion that marked the eastern and northern borders of the Christian world in the 10th century. Within its boundaries lay the Scandinavian countries, Hungary and the Slav lands. Regarding the Slav lands, here there was a confluence of Greek and Latin influence, and both churches took part in the conversion of the Slavs. Following the Christianization work of Cyril and Methodius, this conversion followed the typical medieval process where power and religion and the state and church were closely intertwined and the success or failure of the conversion depended on a decision from the ruler. As a result of the work of such Church people as St. Adalbert, the presence of Latin Christianity in Slav lands was assured. International reaction to the martyrdom of St. Adalbert, descriptions of the life and death of Sławnikowic, and interest in the popes and emperors illustrate the place which the conversion of the Slavs occupied in Christian consciousness at this time.⁹⁰ St. Adalbert's visit to Rome, where he stayed at the monastery of San Alessio on the Aventine, was also important not because it led the Polish émigré bishop into the world of Greek asceticism, ecclesiology and liturgy, but also because it associated him with Rome.⁹¹ This is an example of the integration of the social elites of the Western Slav lands with the Christian community, whose spiritual and symbolic centre remained Rome. But due to the political and official character of early medieval conversion, its mass effects in the sphere of culture and beliefs were limited and slow. Hence, for a long time yet, the Slavs retained their reputation not only as a *gens inculta*, which is how the English monk Bartholomew described them in the middle of the 13th century,⁹² but also as a people who, in the words of the Florentine encyclopaedist Brunetto Latini,⁹³ live like animals just like all people who live on the edge of the world. This opinion of the Slav lands persisted until the middle of the 13th century, so that even

⁹⁰ J. Karwasińska, "Państwo polskie w przekazach hagiograficznych XI i XII wieku", in: *Początki państwa polskiego* (Poznań, 1962), vol. 2, pp. 233–244.

⁹¹ K. Bosl, *Mensch und Gesellschaft in der Geschichte Europas* (Munich, 1972), p. 230: "war das Zentrum seiner geistigen Existenz nicht mehr Prag, sondern Rom und hier vor allem das griechisch-lateinisch-slavisches Emigrantenkloster San Alessio."

⁹² MPH (Warsaw, 1960–1961), VI, pp. 587 ff.

⁹³ B. Latini, *The Book of the Treasure*, transl. P. Barrette, S. Baldwin (New York, 1993), p. 174.

though their rulers had been converted, the territories in question were only slowly included in the cultural sphere of *christianitas*. Thus, knowledge of the Christian community had different levels of density; the further one went to the outer regions, the less dense it became.

Medieval *christianitas* in collective activity proved not to be strongly unified. In the community's spiritual life, local traditions and customs were supplemented by unifying religious and cultural rites, and the community shared the values of respectable life where certain norms were accepted and extolled, and others were condemned. The patterns of holiness were similar throughout the community. An important unifying element was the universal nature of the law on Church matters that was binding in the entire territory of the *christianitas*, as well as the increasingly broad pattern of rules on human conduct and on interpersonal relations.⁹⁴

The knightly ethos was fed by legends of Mediterranean battles and northern traditions. Although this ethos sounded differently in the poems of Provençal troubadours, the songs of German minnesingers, and the words of Polish historiographers, it nevertheless preserved the universal dimension of a *miles Christi*. Institutional church structures also played a part: they provided the whole of *christianitas*⁹⁵ with a unifying dimension. But the *res publica Christiana* manifested itself increasingly as a family of independent nations. The papacy and the empire, traditional centres of universalist programs, underwent a deep crisis. At times of trial, such as the crusades or the danger of a Mongol invasion, it transpired that even if these communities did not contradict the cultural and spiritual unity of *christianitas*, they did not express this unity and serve it.⁹⁶ The European idea of the late Middle Ages took as its point of departure the parochial nature of Europe's political and cultural associations.

⁹⁴ G. Le Bras, *Institutions ecclésiastiques de la chrétienté médiévale. Préliminaires* (Paris, 1959; Histoire de l'Eglise, 12), pp. 45 ff.

⁹⁵ J. Kłoczowski, "O historię porównawczą społeczeństw europejskich. Struktury społeczne, polityczne i kulturalne Europy XIII w., *Przegląd Historyczny*, 47 (1976), pp. 527–535.

⁹⁶ K. Bosl (*Europa im Mittelalter. Weltgeschichte eines Jahrtausends*, Bayreuth, 1975, p. 229) shows that if the first crusade displayed the papacy's increasing prestige and strength, subsequent crusades caused increasing dissatisfaction with the papacy's wealth: "Man begann an der Stellvertretung Christi durch einen verweltlichten Papst zu zweifeln."

3. Towards European Ties

Europe's basic structures begin with the formation of nation-states from the 9th to the 11th centuries. The ensuing "European millennium" saw the creation of divisions, maintaining nations and states at the forefront of collective ties.⁹⁷ Societies felt most strongly bound to their local communities and to blood relatives; based on these two associations, an awareness of broader associations developed. *Christianitas* marked the beginning of a confessional and cultural unity on a mass scale. Nevertheless, people gradually became aware of cultural, ethnic and regional differences, which was noted by a 14th-century French author who admitted that Europe is inhabited by peoples of "various faiths."⁹⁸

Imperial and papal universalism failed to create a sense of political unity, whilst the imperial crisis in the 13th century brought home to at least the intellectual and political elites that there was no unifying construction whose universalism would not affect the sovereignty of nation states.⁹⁹ The anti-imperial and anti-papal polemics of the 14th century¹⁰⁰ destroyed the moral and philosophical basis of the universalist programs of the *imperium*, which were irreconcilable with the fresh sovereignty of states. This also explains the success of the concept of Europe, which was coming into increasing use in the 15th century, for this concept was a universalist one that did not breach the sovereignty of any particular state, did not give priority to any authority, and did not accord to any nation or state any leading or messianic role.

The appearance of the concept of Europe in the political and everyday vocabulary of the late Middle Ages has been examined in detail on more than one occasion.¹⁰¹ The outcome of this examination is

⁹⁷ Pointed out by A. Gieysztor (*La Pologne et l'Europe au Moyen Age*, Warsaw, 1962, p. 3) and G. Arnaldi ("Regnum Langobardorum – Regnum Italiae", in: *L'Europe aux IXe–XIe siècles*, pp. 105–122), warning against the excessively unifying "European" perspective.

⁹⁸ Pseudo-Brocardus, *Directorium ad passagium faciendum. Recueil des croisades*, ed. Ch. Koehler (Paris, 1906), vol. 2, p. 382.

⁹⁹ M.J. Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1962).

¹⁰⁰ Presented by Baszkiewicz, *Państwo suwerenne*, pp. 372–395.

¹⁰¹ Most of the works dealing with these issues have already been quoted. The best study on this topic remains D. Hay, *Europe. The Emergence of an Idea* (Edinburgh, 1957, 1969).

an exhaustive lexical survey revealing that the word “Europe” came into increasing use in the 14th century, and especially in the 15th century, and lost the scholarly undertones it had had in previous centuries. Semantics is vital to the issue with which we are concerned here, for the use of words and the contexts in which they appear illustrate collective consciousness and give an indication of the changes taking place within it. Nevertheless, investigating collective consciousness in this way requires a mass of documentation and lexical resources. The concept of Europe in 14th and 15th century vocabulary finds little support here.

Nevertheless, usage of the word increased.¹⁰² In church documentation of the Avignon period and in official records, the geographical framework of the Church is of key importance. An argument applied in favour of retaining Avignon as the seat of the popes was the fact that this town in the south of France was closer to the *fines moderni ecclesie catholicae* and was more centrally positioned than Rome in relation to the current borders of Catholicism. Europe gradually became associated with Christianity, indicating that not many countries outside Europe had Christian rulers.¹⁰³ The disputes at the synod of Constance over the manner of organizing nations¹⁰⁴ also provided a basis for thoughts about the geographical framework for the Church’s activity, and Europe then seemed a natural expression. An informative memorandum at the synod of Constance regarding the statute of individual nations at the synod¹⁰⁵ refers to geography, indicating that the earth is divided into three parts: Asia, Africa and Europe, whereas Europe is divided into four duchies or kingdoms (*regna*): Rome, Constantinople, Ireland (currently continued by the English monarchy) and Spain. The domain of the papacy in Europe is also divided into four parts. The memorial lists the following regions, and at the same time the Churches that

¹⁰² Id., “Sur un problème de terminologie historique. ‘Europe’ et ‘chrétienté’”, *Diogenes*, 1957, 17, pp. 50–62.

¹⁰³ C.E. du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1665–1673), vol. 4, p. 409: *Supponendum est quod prope istam Europam habitant his temporibus Christiani. Unde nulli vel pauci principes christiani dominantur extra Europam.*

¹⁰⁴ L.R. Loomis, “Nationality at the Council of Constance”, *American Historical Review*, 44 (1939), pp. 508–527.

¹⁰⁵ G.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (Paris, 1901–1927, repr.), XXVII, col. 1058–1070. See an analysis of this text: Loomis, Nationality; and Hay, *Europe*, p. 77 ff.

are subject to the pope in Europe:¹⁰⁶ the eastern region, to which belong Hungary, Bohemia, Poland and Germany; the Western region, comprising France and Spain; the northern region, comprising England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland (as well as the islands belonging to them), Denmark, Sweden, and Norway; and finally the southern region, comprising Italy and the Greeks remaining faithful to Rome, i.e. the Cypriots and Cretans.

This memorandum, characteristic of medieval scholarship and its traditional classifications, focuses on Europe with its three interconnected divisions: geographical, political, and religious. Europe is no longer considered an antique geographical term, but now possesses a political and, more importantly, a religious sense. Stressing that Christianity as a Roman domain is limited to Europe (*sola Europa modo est Christiana*, says one of the synod documents)¹⁰⁷ works in the other direction, placing an equals sign between Europe and Christianity. That is also the sense imparted to the concept of Europe by one of the most illustrious cultural minds of the 15th century, Enea Silvio.¹⁰⁸

Noting that the concept of Europe had only a limited scope, we have no basis to regard a change to this scope as evidence of mass consciousness. However, the field of observation concerns the forge where key concepts of social history are formed. From synod documents and from the works of scholars and encyclopaedists, words spread to common use: in the 16th century, the word Europe and its derivatives became part of everyday language. Thus, a change to the function of a word is an important symptom. The context in which it is used suggests a certain internal cohesion of countries and peoples on the one hand, and an incorporation into the broader world, of which Europe is part, on the other hand.

In this first area we face most of all the myth of unity created by the political and intellectual elites. The unity of the Carolingian era was shallow, as were trade exchange and relationships between courts and monasteries. The following centuries saw a huge increase in an exchange of goods and thinking, but they remained at a parochial level. Instead of wonderful trade fairs with goods from all over the

¹⁰⁶ Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, col. 1066: *Orientalis vero plaga sive Ecclesia Christianitatis obedientiae papalis in Europa*.

¹⁰⁷ Hay, *Sur un problème*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁸ Fritzemeyer, *Christenheit*, pp. 18–29.

world, there were local markets. Such contacts determined the degree of local ties.

The development of commerce encouraged trade along the land and river routes of Europe, as well as along European shores.¹⁰⁹ This trade created contacts between distant corners of Europe. But differences in natural and human resources between parts of Europe and different levels of regional development led to a commercial interdependence. This lay at the basis of the geographical division of labour on a macro-scale; in other words, the specialization of regions and countries in certain types of manufacture, for example cloth-making in Flanders, mining in Central Europe and grain and animal breeding in Poland.

One should not overestimate the extent of these specializations and the resultant commercial interdependencies, especially if they concern small-scale production and luxury goods. The general trend was to attain a balanced development of various branches of production in individual countries and regions. Moreover, these international and interregional contacts led to increased commercial ties, reflected in mercantile structures and organizations. A broad horizon of connected interests appeared in Europe, but it caused competition rather than European solidarity.

The Europe-wide economic links also affected the market situation. The economic figures in the late Middle Ages, regarding for example the exchange of goods, circulation of money and wages, indicate an economic rhythm common to Europe.¹¹⁰ Major differences took shape in the Middle Ages between the development of particular regions, attributable to different speeds of economic development. These differences, already apparent in the 14th and 15th centuries between the

¹⁰⁹ M. Małowist, *Wschód a Zachód Europy w XIII–XVI wieku* (Warsaw, 1973); J. Kłoczowski, "Rozwój środkowowschodniej Europy w XIV wieku", in: *Sztuka i ideologia XIV wieku*, ed. P. Skubiszewski (Warsaw, 1975), pp. 13–52; G. Labuda, "Europa 'gotycka' XIV w.", in: *Gotyckie malarstwo ścienne w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*, ed. A. Karłowska-Kamzowa (Poznań, 1977), pp. 7–23; H. Samsonowicz, "Changes in the Baltic Zone in the XII–XVI Centuries", *Journal of European Economic History*, 4 (1975), pp. 655, 672; id., "Europa Jagiellońska – czy jednością gospodarczą?", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 84 (1977), pp. 93–100.

¹¹⁰ W. Abel, *Agrarkrisen und Agrarkonjunktur in Mitteleuropa vom 13. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1935); id., *Die Wüstungen des ausgehenden Mittelalters* (Stuttgart, 1955). See also F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, transl. S. Reynolds, vol. 1 (London, 1975); id., *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme* (Paris, 1967), pp. 100 ff.

west and south on the one hand, and the north and east on the other, had an impact on relationships between the town and the country, and between the nobility and the peasantry. However, one also notes certain common patterns that transcended the general customary features of the feudal period. This especially concerns the aristocracy and the nobility.

The aristocracy and the nobility was the factor that bonded the history of European societies until the end of the 18th century. Regardless of its varying economic functions in different areas, the nobility occupies the centre of the historical stage; it is the nobility that holds power and prestige, and occupies key places in the state and the Church.¹¹¹ Its lifestyle and social attributes made a mark on the whole of social life. Heraldic emblems served as a common language. The noble court as a sociological model and as a type of “household”¹¹² shaped the life of traditional societies until the industrial revolution, and was reflected in the organization of the lives not only of burghers, but also of peasants. The ethics of the life of a knight and landowner were a universal value to which all social strata were to adapt, even when they declared themselves hostile to these values.

One can indicate a similar role of cities and municipal culture in Europe. In his sociology, Max Weber outlined the basic differences between Moslem, Indian and Chinese cities creating the “oriental” type of city, and between classical ancient cities incorporated in a rural environment and medieval European cities.¹¹³ European urbanization occurred on two planes: first, the development of a network of towns vital to the economy and its attendant hierarchies; and second, as separate centres of artistic-industrial output.¹¹⁴ The tendency towards the autonomy of the cities was the result of their distinct situation

¹¹¹ Bosl, *Mensch und Gesellschaft*, p. 53 ff. (chapt. 3: Der aristokratische Charakter der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft in Europa. Versuch über Mentalität). F. Heer (*Europäische Geistesgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1965), p. 56) says: “1000 Jahre Europa bedeuten 1000 Jahre Vorherrschaft des europäischen Adels”, but he counts the “European millennium” from the 9th century.

¹¹² O. Brunner, *Adeliges Landleben und europäischer Geist* (Salzburg, 1949). Critical remarks on Brunner’s concept on the sidelines of his controversial book, *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1956) were presented by F. Braudel, *Historia i trawanie*, transl. B. Geremek (Warsaw, 1971), pp. 316–333.

¹¹³ M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1952).

¹¹⁴ G. Sjoberg, *The Preindustrial City* (Glencoe, 1960); L. Mumford, *The City in History* (New York, 1961); Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle*, chapt. 8, especially pp. 391 ff.

and led to the emancipation of the burghers and to the creation of an urban ideology; in other words, the programmatic articulation of the distinction of the urban citizenry. There were the differences between Florence, Ghent, and Poznań in terms of population, geographical area, architecture and prosperity, but they had features in common: the population was concentrated within the city walls, specific parts of towns were allocated to particular trades, and social life was organized into corporations according specific privileges.

Thus, from the point of view of an outside observer, one can see major common features in the European social landscape in the late Middle Ages. But for medieval society, these common features appeared to a limited extent. A knight's excursions, participation in court life, international tournaments, diplomatic events and participation in overseas crusades, including the European "adventures" of the Teutonic knights, imparted an awareness of this community. Literature also helped in this. In urban society, a similar role was played by trade expeditions, migrations of specialists and the wanderings of artisans. Knowledge of trade and of money matters required a knowledge of various weights, measures, currencies and prices on European markets, as well as a knowledge of various countries, towns and companies. Municipal councils also informed each other of events and matters that were of common interest, regardless of national borders. Nevertheless, these contacts took place within particular spheres of influence, within which relationships became closer. It is enough to recall the amazement of the French knights when they encountered Italian culture during the Italian expeditions in the 15th century in order to realize the extent of mutual contacts between individual European countries.

Medieval universalisms disintegrated in the face of the reality, but each of them left a permanent mark in collective consciousness in the form of reference points. Genuine community links formed at the lowest level of society, during the increasing flow of information, goods and people. The strongest and most durable heritage was certainly left by the Latin Christian community, which propagates a certain world outlook governed by a common rhythm of time emanating from the church calendar and fed by common or similar literature.

In the sphere of psychological culture, one observes a common mentality and sensitivity, evident in human reactions and collective imaginings; the genesis of these common traits is not necessarily the

Church or common literary or artistic sources, but can also be the common way of life to which we previously drew attention.¹¹⁵

Of course, a kind of *prise de conscience* of cultural European communion occurred in the community of medieval intellectuals, especially in the universities. Medieval universities,¹¹⁶ to whom 13th-century scholastic thinking attributed the third force that ruled the world, after the *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, were closely linked to the universal mission of the Church, which cultivated the idea of a community of teachings and thoughts. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the universities developed closer ties with national monarchs, also reflected in their geographical location, and acquired a national character. This service to the monarchy was reflected in specific actions, diplomatic events, the word of the synods, polemic literature and historiography. Intellectual circles inside the universities and monasteries conducted ethnographical debates and examined ancient history in a biblical context.¹¹⁷

It is significant that the histories of peoples from the peripheries of medieval Christianity included not only invented tales of their participation in Greek and Roman history, but also biblical claims that these people were descended (Genesis 9, 25–27) from Japheth.¹¹⁸ This illustrates an awareness in medieval writings and teachings of a certain geographical concept of Europe, incorporating a certain communion. All communities develop sharper contours when confronted,

¹¹⁵ J. Ortega y Gasset, in his *La rebelión de las masas* (Madrid, 1930; French translation: Paris, 1961, p. 12 ff.) demonstrated that in the Middle Ages, it was the West that was a civilizational union and that Europe was merely the physical area where that unity was being realized.

¹¹⁶ Older literature about the universities is described by N. Schachner, *The Medieval Universities* (London, 1938), pp. 377 ff.; whilst more recent literature appears in the work of S. Stelling-Michaud, “Universités européennes en Moyen Age et à la Renaissance”, in: *XI Congrès International des Sciences Historiques. Rapports* (Stockholm, 1969), pp. 97–143.

¹¹⁷ A. Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel* (Stuttgart, 1957); B. Kürbis, “Kształtowanie się pojęć geograficznych o Słowiańszczyźnie w polskich kronikach przeddługoszowych”, *Slavia Antiqua*, 4 (1953), pp. 252–282; A.F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach obcych*, chapt. 4; id., *Polska w opiniach Europy Zachodniej XIV–XV w.* (Warsaw, 1968), p. 120 ff.; F. Šmahel, *Idea národa v husitských Čechách* (Prague, 1971), p. 152; J. Banaszkiewicz, *Kronika Dzierzwy. XIV-wieczne kompendium historii ojczystej* (Wrocław, 1979). An important position in this regard is the work of F. Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit. Überlieferung im Mittelalter und in den Vorstellungen vom Mittelalter* (Cologne–Vienna, 1975).

¹¹⁸ Cf. Hay, *Europe*, chapt. 1; De Rougemont, *Vingt-huit siècles*, p. 9 ff.

antagonistically or peacefully, with other communities. The end of the Middle Ages brought momentous phenomena in this regard: the Turkish expansion and migration to other continents.

The “great fear” of the Tartars in the 13th century, which we referred to earlier, was only a temporary phenomenon with limited impact. But the Turkish expansion over the next few centuries constituted a general and total threat to the whole of Christian Europe. This was not uniformly reflected in European diplomacy.

The popes and national monarchs sought contacts with the Porte, whilst the Turkish problem itself was considered through the prism of internal European political relations and basic international conflicts.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, the expansion of the Turks, coming closer and closer to Europe, possessed a certain unifying effect. Christian rulers joined efforts to face the Turks. These efforts stemmed mainly from the papacy, in the traditional crusading spirit. But these initiatives failed to produce any great joint operation either at the end of the 14th or in the 15th centuries. The Christian community no longer supported the idea of crusades and resented the idea of any theocratic “Christian monarchy” or any imperial universalism, so that papal ideas of a crusade did not find an echo and initiatives such as a “Christian league” collapsed. Much more attractive was an undertaking by the king of Bohemia, George of Poděbrady, who in 1462 proposed an alliance of Christian kings.¹²⁰ There had been similar proposals of an alliance of Christian monarchs before,¹²¹ but they had been announced by publicists and lawyers, whereas this time the initiative came straight from one of the monarchs himself, and in the face of a direct threat

¹¹⁹ A review of the subject-matter is given by B. Stachoń, *Polityka Polski wobec Turcji i akcji antytyureckiej w wieku XV do utraty Kili i Białogrodu (1484)* (Lviv, 1930; Archiwum Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie, 7).

¹²⁰ The text of the proposed treaty is to be found in the Central Archives of Historical Records, fol. 578–587. A publication by the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (*The Universal Peace Organization of King George of Bohemia. A Fifteenth Century Plan for World Peace 1462/1464*, Prague, 1964) contains an edited version of this text, as well as a political-legal study by V. Vaneček. Regarding literature on the subject, one should mention in particular: R. Heck, “Czeski plan związku władców europejskich z lat 1462–1464 a Polska”, in: *Studia z dziejów polskich i czechosłowackich* (Wrocław, 1950); and G. Polišínský, “Bohemia, the Turk and the Christian Commonwealth (1462–1620)”, *Byzantinoslavica*, 14 (1953).

¹²¹ See P. Dubois, *De recuperatione Terre Sancte*, ed. Ch.V. Langlois (Paris, 1891; Collection de textes pour servir à l’enseignement).

by the “common enemy.” His introductory words of this *Tractatus pacis toti Christianitati fiendae* indicate the deplorable condition of the Christian world, once an *aurea provincia* and now completely broken up and so weak that the Turks could expand their borders with impunity. Nothing could stop them now: having occupied the Greek empire, they had swallowed huge areas of Africa and Asia and were now nibbling away at Christian provinces and kingdoms.¹²²

This difference of concepts is highly significant; first the geographical names of both parts of the world, then the Greek empire, and finally *christianitas*, identified slowly with Europe. The internal peace initiative for the sake of standing up to the external enemy was addressed to the monarchs and called for solidarity of action within the framework of the sovereign rights of each state; thus, the Turkish threat was not exploited as an argument in favour of universalism. The failure of George of Poděbrady’s plan, which won the support of Matthias Corvinus and Casimir the Jagiellon, but did not dispel the suspicion of Louis XI, serves as testimony to the selfishness within Europe.

The Turkish question made a far deeper impact on social consciousness. Interest in the Turks was broad, historiographic works not only recorded events as they happened, but also displayed an interest in Turkish history; literature shows signs of geographical and ethnographical interest in Turks in the 15th century.¹²³ In any case, this relates to earlier reports on the Tartars. The invention of printing served to propagate knowledge of the Turks, and texts describing the Turkish danger appeared. The works printed in the 15th century included the repetition of a report by the Venetian deputy Bernardo Giustiniani to the pope saying that over the space of 26 years, the perfidious Turk had managed to conquer two empires (Byzantium and Trebizond), four kingdoms, twenty provinces and two hundred cities.¹²⁴ Descriptions of Turkish customs are dominated by the most varied *fabulae seu ficticia*, as Georgius de Hungaria writes in his description of the Turkish

¹²² *The Universal Peace Organization*, p. 71: “*Spurcissimi denique Teuceri, qui a diebus paucissimis primo inclitum Grecorum imperium deinde quamplures cristianitatis provincias et regna in suam potestatem redigere.*”

¹²³ Cf. F. Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne* (Warsaw, 1925), pp. 114–137.

¹²⁴ *Tractatus quidam de Turcis* (Nuremberg, ca. 1477); uses the following edition: Nürnberg ex tip. Conrad Zeninger, 1481: “*Nam in XXVI annis Turcus perfidus dua imperia, IV regna, XX provincias et CC urbes suo imperio subiugavit.*”

expansion.¹²⁵ Georgius himself has good reason to demand that his testimony be lent credence. In 1436, when he was still fifteen years old, he was captured by the Turks to serve as a janissary and spent over twenty years with them. Thus, he was able to tell European readers “how horrible, how terrible is the sect of the Turks.”¹²⁶

Similar in nature are the so-called *Memoirs of a Janissary*, a Turkish chronicle written in the final years of the 15th century by Konstanty Mikhailovich, a Serb from Ostrowica, who served eight years in the Sultan’s guard and then settled in Poland.¹²⁷ Written thirty years after his return to Christendom, it is mainly a work of political propaganda intended to incite the Christians to unite in the struggle against the Turks. From what we know of Konstanty’s agitation, he held bitter feelings towards the pope, the emperor and Christian monarchs. He hoped for a crusade, trusting mainly in Olbracht. His work was meant to serve as pro-crusade agitation, and his information about the Turks contains descriptions of their illegitimate claims.

However, more important than these anti-Turkish attacks is that the reader is offered descriptions of their customs as a contrast to Christian ones. This can be considered an expression of Christian ethnocentrism; obviously, an acquaintanceship with new geographical and cultural areas consolidates one’s own feeling of identity and solidarity. Knowledge of the Turks and of the danger of Turkish expansion encouraged a communion of interests and bonds joining the Christian countries of Europe.

Expansion beyond Europe and the attendant progress in geographical knowledge also expanded European consciousness.¹²⁸ Only a few

¹²⁵ Georgius de Hungaria, *De ritu et moribus Turcorum*, G. Teutonicus et Sixt. Riesinger (Rome, ca. 1481–1483); I have used a copy of this held by the Vatican Library. A copy of this treaty survives under the title *Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequitia Turcorum* (Lat. 9522), pp. 41–67, with the annotation “scriptus 1499”; this is no doubt the date on which the copy was made (if this date were the date on which it was written, the author would have had to be aged almost 80). Bujak (*Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, p. 130) wrongly identifies this manuscript with the Latin version of *Memories of a Janissary*; see id., note 128.

¹²⁶ Georgius de Hungaria, *De ritu*, III: “*Quam terribilis, quam timenda est secta Turcorum.*”

¹²⁷ *Pamiętniki Janczara, czyli Kronika turecka Konstantego z Ostrowicy napisana między r. 1496 a 1501*, ed. J. Łoś (Cracow, 1912; Biblioteka Pisarzy Polskich, 63).

¹²⁸ State of the problem: P. Chaunu, *L’expansion européenne du XIIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris, 1969; Nouvelle Clio, 26). An interesting account of contacts between Central

European countries took an active part in this expansion, but even before the great discoveries, the geographical horizon of medieval Europe changed significantly as society became eager to learn of the wonders they had read about in medieval works.¹²⁹

In fact, travellers' tales underlined these wondrous images: Marco Polo visited an enormous area of the Asian landmass and lived there a long time, but his writings are mainly narratives of the wonders of life and man and about the wholly alien customs which people of that era found impossible to believe and classified as fairy tales.¹³⁰ In any case, this heightened curiosity consolidated among European Christian peoples their sense of identity vis-à-vis other continents.

As sailing and navigation techniques developed from the 14th century, there was a need for a cartographic representation of territories on maps and charts. The name "Europe" gradually appeared on these maps;¹³¹ there is no doubt that this reflected the place which Europe began to occupy in people's minds as a constellation of countries, religions and civilizations.¹³² Thus, a concept taken out of the inventory of academic knowledge, as abstract and pedantic as rules of grammar and mnemonic verses, now assumed a life of its own and grew in substance, becoming an integral part of the intellectual culture of the late Middle Ages.

The work of the great 15th-century humanist, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, is a record of particular importance in this regard.¹³³ We know of his keen interest in the Turkish cause and of his efforts to overcome the danger. In a famous letter to Mehmed II, he invited the sultan to convert to Christianity, promising him in return administration of "all Greece, all Italy, all Europe," and perhaps the

Europe and Asia is provided by J.P. Roux, *Les explorateurs au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1969).

¹²⁹ Cf. B. Olszewicz, *Legendsy geograficzne średniowiecza* (Cracow, 1927) (e.g. on the location of paradise, see p. 55 ff.).

¹³⁰ Y. Renouard, "L'Occident médiéval à la découverte du monde", *L'Information Historique*, March–April 1955, pp. 49–57; and id., *Etudes d'histoire médiévale* (Paris, 1968), vol. 2, pp. 661–675.

¹³¹ Hay, *Europe*, p. 90 ff.; the work of L. Kretschmer remains valuable, *Die italienischen Portolane des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1909).

¹³² Cf. A. Gieysztor, "Polska w 'El Libro del Conoscimiento' z połowy XIV wieku", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 65 (1965), pp. 397–412.

¹³³ Fritzemeyer, *Christenheit*, pp. 18–29; see also A. Berg, *Enea Silvio de Piccolomini (Papst Pius II) in seiner Bedeutung als Geograph* (Halle, 1901).

eastern empire as well.¹³⁴ He tried to unite the Christian rulers in an alliance, arguing that combating the Turks is a task for the whole of Christendom, and not just for the countries bordering the Turkish Empire and directly threatened by it. But he also approached the issue as a humanist, reading treatises on the subject of the Turks, and in his work he regarded the Turkish question as an important impulse for getting to know the world situation at that time. This latter purpose was served especially by the monumental work *Cosmography*.¹³⁵ It was never completed, but the treatise on Europe¹³⁶ may be regarded as finished.

In it, Enea Silvio reviews European countries in terms of the memorable facts associated with them.¹³⁷ The order in which he presents the countries is rather surprising: he commences his treatise with Hungary, followed by the Balkan countries, and then describes the history and customs of the Turks,¹³⁸ as well as the battles with the Turks and the heroes of them: Hunyadi and Skanderbeg. Then comes a description of Poland, Lithuania, Livonia, Prussia, Saxony, Thuringia, the three Scandinavian countries, Bohemia, Holland, France, Franconia, Bavaria, Alsatia, Lorraine, England, Scotland, Spain and, finally, Italy. The description of Italy is the longest, taking up sixteen chapters out of a total of sixty-six. Apart from Italy, Silvio is clearly interested in the border countries of the empire. The text of the treatise, as well as its contents, suggests that Enea Silvio is also interested in the border countries of the Christian world and in the border itself, shrinking under the pressure of Turkish expansion.

The technique with which Silvio describes these countries is very significant. One notes that he is very concerned with the accuracy of the terminology he uses. He regards the concept of Europe in a broad

¹³⁴ Pio II, *Lettera a Maometto II*, ed. G. Toffanin (Naples, 1953).

¹³⁵ *Cosmographiae, vel de mundo universo historiarum liber I*, in: *Aeneae Sylvii Piccolomini (...)* *opera quae extant omnia* (Basileae, 1551) (hereinafter: *Opera omnia*), vv. 281–386.

¹³⁶ *Europa in qua sui temporis varias historias complectitur liber I*, in: *Opera omnia*, vv. 387–471.

¹³⁷ Enea Silvio writes about this in his introduction thus: “*Quae sub Frederico tertio eius nominis imperatore apud Europeos, aut qui nomine Christiano censentur, insularum homines, gesta feruntur memoratu digna*” (ibid., vv. 387).

¹³⁸ Ibid., IV, vv. 394: “*De Turcarum origine et propagatione, victu, vestitu, et moribus eorum.*” It is significant that in the case of the Turks, this is a description of the people, not the country: in this way, Turkey is not included in Europe.

sense, also employing the adjective “European”¹³⁹ in contrast to “Asian,” and he also mentions “Europeans,” which had already been in use for some time but seldom appeared. Obviously, these words sounded better in humanist Latin than *christianitas*; in any case, Silvio clearly states that he identifies Christians as Europeans (e.g. in the foreword to his treatise on Europe).¹⁴⁰ But the need to underline this association testifies to the effort needed to adjust one’s preconceptions to the new reality.

The subject of Turkey, which keeps reappearing in Silvio’s works (he even mentions anti-Turkish actions in his description of Spain), also occurs in the context of separating Europe from Asia and determining what the borders of Europe are. Faced with the Turkish threat, Western societies are particularly aware of the role of the countries of Europe’s eastern borders.¹⁴¹ The role of Poland as the only effective Christian bulwark against Turkish expansion was stressed by Machiavelli and by key thinkers of the 16th century.¹⁴²

The community of scholars in the 15th century realized that the terms in current use were imprecise. In his famous critique of the heritage of Constantine, Lorenzo Valla examines the fragment of a document in which Constantine apparently hands over to Sylvester the towns and lands of the West. Indicating the awkward style and artificial erudition of the forger who created the document, Lorenzo Valla asks the significant question (XIX, 61): “Where are the borders of the West? Where do they begin? Which way do they run? Are the terms West, East, South and North as certain and fixed as Asia, Africa and Europe?”¹⁴³ The Italian humanist ascribes to these last three names a degree of certainty, assuming that the geographical borders of the continents are known. Regarding Europe, 15th-century minds faced

¹³⁹ *Opera omnia*, pp. 290, 291, 305, 308; Enea Silvio Piccolomini is perhaps the first Latin writer to use this form (Hay, *Europe*, p. 86: he recalls the form *Europico* used by Boccaccio in his *Esposizioni sopra la Commedia di Dante*). Cf. Fritzemeyer, *Christenheit*, p. 28.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. fn. 138.

¹⁴¹ *Opera omnia*, p. 445.

¹⁴² J. Tazbir, “Poland and the Concept of Europe in the Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries”, *European Studies Review* 1977, no. 7, p. 32.

¹⁴³ Laurentii Vallae, *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio*, ed. W. Schwahn (Leipzig, 1928), p. 54: “*Qui sunt fines occidentis? ubi incipiunt? ubi desinunt? Num ita certi constitutique sunt termini occidentis et orientis meridieique et septentrionis, ut sunt Asiae, Africae, Europae?*”.

a question similar to that which Valla asked about the West, for the eastern border of Europe, separating it from Asia, was not clear.

Describing the division of the land mass into Asia, Africa and Europe, Enea Silvio precisely fixed the northern and southern border of Europe: the southern border comprises Spain, Italy and the Peloponnese, and the northern border Germany and Norway.¹⁴⁴ Ancient and medieval scholarship had no difficulty with determining the remaining borders of Europe. To the west was the Atlantic, to the east the Don River and the Meotida Marches (the Sea of Azov).¹⁴⁵ But when it came to establishing the borders of Europe as a civilization associated with Christianity, as Silvio tried to do, then the problem of borders became more complex.

Most of all, it was necessary to cope with the post-Byzantine succession. We have stressed that the community to whom one can attribute the prehistory of European connections took shape in firm opposition to Byzantium. But the collapse of the eastern metropolis altered the situation. In the face of the Turkish threat, Enea Silvio hesitates to associate the Greek Church with Latin Christianity not by way of political accords, but in the name of profound solidarity.¹⁴⁶ With the fall of Constantinople, the Christian community (*christianitas*) lost its eye and its shoulder,¹⁴⁷ but Pius II regarded the lands of the Greek Church as an integral part of the Christian community. In his letter to Mehmed II, he speaks of eastern Christianity with clear disdain, but he has in mind the Nestorian and similar sects in Asia and Africa, whereas Europe as a synonym of Christianity also includes the heritage of the Greek Church.

This is assuredly not just an ideological concession, but also a certain policy of Rome which for centuries had not ceased its efforts

¹⁴⁴ *Opera omnia*, p. 284: “*Europa per Hispaniam, Italiam et Peloponnesum australior est, parallelum qui per Rhodum ducitur attingens in septentrionem per Germaniam et Norvegiam maxime protensa.*”

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 285: “*Europae et Asiae coniunctio fit per dorsum quod inter paludem Meotim et Sarmaticum oceanum excurrit supra Tanais fluvii fontes.*” This sentence, slightly altered, was taken from Ptolemy. The best explanation of geographical views on Eastern Europe is given by E. Wisotzki, *Zeitströmungen in der Geographie* (Leipzig, 1897), pp. 399–440.

¹⁴⁶ *De Constantinopolitana clade ac bello contra Turcos congregando*, in: *Opera omnia*, CXXXI, pp. 678–689.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 679: “*ex duobus Christianitatis oculis alterum erutum, ex duabus manibus alteram amputatam dicere possumus.*”

to restore the Church's unity through submission to the authority of the popes. What is important here is that Christian Europe was treated as a fatherland; we are in danger "in Europe, that is in our own home."¹⁴⁸ Thus, the border of this fatherland is more religious (hence the minimization of the importance of Christians in the East) and cultural than geographical and political. This included the horizon of the Byzantine empire, a significant novelty in relation to previous centuries.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, it was necessary to define an eastern, continental border of Europe. This involved difficulties not only because of the poor knowledge of geography at the time and of the absence of Eastern Europe in ancient and medieval literature, but also because of the shifting fortunes of Christianity in this part of Europe. The Church's struggle with Hussitism, the failure of Latin missions to Rus', the great Polish-Teutonic polemics about the degree of Christianity in Lithuania and the authenticity of the conversion of Jagiełło, caused certain suspicion about the permanence of the links between Slav Europe and the European or Christian Community. Nevertheless, the conversion of Lithuania was an important event for European awareness, for this was the last European country to be Christianized. Only now could one justly identify Europe with Christianity. The freshness of the Jagiellonian monarchy complied with the general nature of the cultural structures of Central-Eastern Europe, and could also have inspired feelings of European connections. But was there room for Rus' in this community?

Both the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy and Hungary traditionally maintained ties with Rus', and Rus' was always on the political horizon of these countries and this part of Europe. As we have said, the Turkish threat was associated in people's minds with memories of the Mongol invasion whose main victim was Rus', a Christian country. People in the late Middle Ages did not see why the name "Europe" should not include the lands and peoples of Rus' or why its

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 678: "*Nunc vero in Europa, id est in patria, in domo propria, in sede nostra, percussi caesique sumus.*" A copy of this oration can also be found in the chronicle of Sędziwoj of Czechło. Cf. J. Wiesiołowski, *Kolekcje historyczne w Polsce średniowiecznej, XIV-XV wiek* (Wrocław, 1967), p. 100.

¹⁴⁹ K. Buczek in his article "Maciej z Miechowa jako geograf Europy Wschodniej", in: *Maciej z Miechowa 1457-1523. Historyk, geograf, lekarz, organizator nauki*, ed. H. Barycz (Wrocław, 1960; Monografie z dziejów nauki i techniki, 15), pp. 80 ff., gives an exemplary review of knowledge in this regard.

traditional border should not be the Don river,¹⁵⁰ even if the physical division had become associated with the cultural division. There were also sporadic attempts in the 15th century to establish the Volga as the border of Europe,¹⁵¹ and yet more attempts in the 16th century,¹⁵² but they met with no major success. The process of European *prise de conscience* involved both a realization of Europe's place in the world at that time and increasing knowledge of Europe itself: the identification of Europe's eastern edge was part of that process in which the European east ceased to be *terra ignota*.¹⁵³

This border began to be regarded as the "shield," and later as the "bulwark," of Europe. The terms *scutum* and *antemurale* were applied both to Hungary and to Jagiellonian Poland, especially since the Battle of Varna. In the West's opinion, the territory of schismatic Rus' was not treated this way; the Latin west tended to place schismatics on the same level as "Saracens," but in the face of the expansion of the crescent, the other side's cross played a decisive role. Knowledge of the European east was obtained from ancient geography, especially from the works of Ptolemy, which enjoyed renewed interest during the Renaissance.¹⁵⁴ Europe's place in the writings of Enea Silvio and in the historical-geographical and cartographic works of Nicholas of Cusa stemmed from classical tradition. Soon afterwards, "Scythia" and "Sarmatia" began to appear in geographical and cultural descriptions of

¹⁵⁰ Herodotus (*Histories*, IV, 20 and 100) regards the Tanais, i.e. the Don, as the border between the Scythians and the Sauromatians; later, this is regarded as the border between Europe and Asia, whereas Ptolemy (*Geography*, III, 5) regards the Tanais as the border between European and Asian Sarmatia. Regarding ancient knowledge of geography, cf. S. Czarnowski, *Argonauci na Bałtyku. Konwencje a rzeczywistość w kształtowaniu się greckich pojęć geograficznych*, in: id., *the Histories* (Warsaw, 1956), vol. 3, pp. 242–260.

¹⁵¹ Buczek, Maciej z Miechowa, p. 132, fn. 174: on a map of the world dated 1458 by Fra Mauro, the Volga is regarded as the border of Europe.

¹⁵² The treatise which the Polish diplomat Mikołaj Rozembarski (Nicolaus de Rozemberg Polonus) wrote in 1563 at the request of Emperor Maximilian I (*Explanatio compendiosa de situ, moribus et diversitate Scithicarum gentium*, The Princes Czartoryski Library, MS 26, pp. 593–619), placed the border of European Scythia on the Volga; see H. Barycz, "Rozwój nauki w Polsce w dobie Odrodzenia", in: *Odrodzenie w Polsce: materiały sesji naukowej PAN, 25–30 października 1953*, vol. 2: *Historia nauki*, ed. B. Suchodolski (Warsaw, 1956), part 1, p. 125.

¹⁵³ Noted by Grabski, *Polska w opiniach Europy Zachodniej*, p. 451.

¹⁵⁴ B. Strzelecka, "Odrodzenie 'Geografii' Ptolemeusza w XV wieku. Tradycja kartograficzna", *Czasopismo Geograficzne*, 31 (1960), pp. 343–355.

the European community. Ancient geographic and cartographic tradition divided Central and Eastern Europe into “Germany” and “Saxony,” with the Vistula regarded as the border between them.¹⁵⁵ Investigations into the use of the concept of Sarmatia have revealed that it came into vogue in the middle of the 15th century,¹⁵⁶ parallel with the spread of the concept of Europe. Chroniclers, historians, cosmographers and geographers mentioned Sarmatia often; Długosz¹⁵⁷ does so, in various contexts. Arguing that the “Northern Ocean,” in other words the Baltic, also bears the name *Mare Sarmaticum*, he explains this last name by the fact that on its shores the Sarmatians, i.e. the Poles, had their lands and cities.¹⁵⁸ He also uses the terms Sarmatian Alps and Sarmatian Mountains¹⁵⁹ to describe the Carpathians. The Sarmatians are identified with the Poles several times. Długosz also uses the term *Sarmacia Europica*, but notes that writers and historiographers of old called Poles and Russians Sarmatians, just as the mountains separating the Poles and Russians from the Hungarians are called the Sarmatian Mountains.¹⁶⁰

Długosz’s *Chorografia* takes as its point of departure a description of Europe in which the Japhethite Biblical genealogy and the separation between peoples in terms of language, laws, customs and beliefs¹⁶¹ are combined with a geographical description of Europe from the border with the Don river. In this geographical-cultural description of Europe, the Slav lands are given a prominent position among the Japhethites, and the origins, deeds and general prosperity of the Slavs are highlighted.¹⁶² The statement that Byzantium lies in Europe

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach obcych*, chapt. 2: On the collapse of ancient thought patterns and the development of geographical knowledge.

¹⁵⁶ T. Ulewicz, *Sarmacja. Studium z problematyki słowiańskiej XV i XVI w.* (Cracow, 1950; Biblioteka Studium Słowiańskiego UJ, A7).

¹⁵⁷ On the geographical explanations of J. Długosz. cf. Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, pp. 91–105; J. Kornaus, *Jan Długosz, geograf polski XV wieku* (Lviv, 1925; Prace Geograficzne, 5).

¹⁵⁸ *Ioannis Dlugossii Annales seu Cronicae incliti regni Poloniae* (Varsaviae, 1964), book 1 p. 67: “*aliquando Sarmaticum nominatur Mare, quod in littoribus suis Sarmate sive Poloni regiones et urbes possideant.*”

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 74–76.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 89: “*A veteribus autem scriptoribus et historiographis Sarmacia Europica appellatur, et tam Rutheni, quam Poloni Sarmate nominantur.*”

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁶² Cf. K. Pieradzka, “Genealogia biblijna i rodowód Słowian w pierwszej księdze ‘Annales’ Jana Długosza”, *Nasza Przeszłość*, 8 (1958), pp. 83–116.

is also remarkable:¹⁶³ this is clearly polemical in the context of the whole treatise, which claims to be as description of Europe. The lands of Rus' are also described in the *Chorografia*, but to the extent to which they appeared on the political horizon of the Jagiellonian monarchy. Długosz gives the term Rus' an ethnic nature, whereas he mentions *Moscovia* rarely, and rather as a political concept.¹⁶⁴ But what is important is that Długosz includes the lands and peoples of Rus' in the geographical and historical contours of Europe, and in the history of the Japhethites, as with other Slav peoples,¹⁶⁵ as well as in Roman history.¹⁶⁶

In the intellectual work of the Cracow university community, the question of Europe and the European East is omnipresent. No doubt it occupied a place in teaching at the University of Cracow. The example of Jan of Głogów is particularly significant here.¹⁶⁷ A copy of Ptolemy's *Cosmography* in an Ulm edition of 1486 preserves Jan's notes from 1494¹⁶⁸ (which Bujak considered the outline of a geography lecture at Cracow University),¹⁶⁹ and he is also probably the author of the treatise *Introductorium cosmographiae*, which is a commentary on Ptolemy.¹⁷⁰

In his description of parts of the world, Jan escapes to comparisons meant to make it easier to assimilate the text in the tradition of medieval mnemonic techniques. Thus, he likens Asia to a great and

¹⁶³ *Ioannis Dlugossii Annales*, p. 67: "Bisancium insuper, sive Contantinopolitana urbs in Europa sita est."

¹⁶⁴ Cf. A.L. Khoroshkievich, "Terminy 'Russiia' i 'Moskoviia' v 9–13 knigakh 'Annalov Polshy' Jana Długosha", in: 'Cultus et cognitio'. *Studia z dziejów średniowiecznej kultury* (Warsaw, 1976), pp. 203–208.

¹⁶⁵ See especially *Ioannis Dlugossii Annales*, p. 169.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹⁶⁷ W. Seńko, *Wstęp do studiów nad Janem z Głogowa*, part 2 (Wrocław, 1964; Materiały i Studia Zakładu Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej, 3), p. 36; M. Zwiercan, "Jan z Głogowa", in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, 10 (1962–1964), part 3, p. 452.

¹⁶⁸ L.A. Birkenmajer, 'Stromata copernicana'. *Studja, poszukiwania i materiały biograficzne* (Cracow, 1924), p. 105 ff.

¹⁶⁹ Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, p. 42 ff.

¹⁷⁰ Jagiellonian Library, MS 2729, fols. 113–149; here we use a summary by Bujak (*Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, pp. 33–41), who described this work as an anonymous treatise by a Cracow professor at the very beginning of the 15th century. W. Seńko (*Wstęp do studiów*, p. 36) believes that Jan of Głogów's handwritten notes (Jagiellonian Library, MS 2703, fols. 127–132) were preliminary redactions of the treatise.

powerful bear, whilst Europe is shown as a winged dragon whose head reaches the northern edges (*cardines*) of the word, the throat is Livonia, the wings are Hibernia and Albion, the legs are the Balkans and Italy, the trunk is Pannonia and Dacia, and the tail is Spain: *guttur Poloni et Lituani possident, femora Germani et Galli occupant*. Such a view of Europe (medieval and modern-age maps were full of images of Europe represented as a woman or a queen) exceeded scholarly pedantry and may have been in broader circulation. What is important here is the inclusion of Europe as a whole, in which the countries of the Jagiellonian monarchy, Poland and Lithuania, have a place.

Throughout the 15th century, the concept of Sarmatia was extended to include the entire Jagiellonian monarchy, a trend in geographical writings at the time.¹⁷¹ However, Długosz's inclusion of Rus' in Europe, expressed in the *Chorografia*, did not conform to geographical writings during this period. In one of Jan of Głogów's notes to Ptolemy's *Cosmography*, "Moscovia" is identified with Asian Sarmatia;¹⁷² in other words, Muscovy is excluded from Europe. Without judging the degree to which this nomenclature was current, one can say that it was a leading trend among 15th century *litterati*. The most important fact is that the ancient distinction between European Sarmatia and Asian Sarmatia was identified as the border between Europe and Asia:¹⁷³ here, again, we see the application of an ethno-cultural division to a geographical one. The spread of the concept of Sarmatia in society's minds in the 15th and 16th centuries also helped the inclusion of Central and Eastern Europe in European awareness.

The treatise by Maciej of Miechów of 1517 about Asia and European Sarmatia,¹⁷⁴ that the "first modern-age geography of the European east,"¹⁷⁵ was a summary of medieval knowledge of this subject and an attempt to adjust it to the reality. Two dozen editions of Maciej's work, not to mention translations into Italian, Polish and Dutch, testify to this

¹⁷¹ Ulewicz, *Sarmacja*, p. 43 ff.

¹⁷² Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, p. 75 (the text of the note reads: "*haec tabula habet Sarmatiam asiaticam, nunc dictam Moszkowiam*").

¹⁷³ Cf. Wisotzki, *Zeitströmungen*, p. 403 ff.

¹⁷⁴ Maciej of Miechów, *Descriptio Sarmatiarum Asianae et Europianae et eorum quae in eis continentur*, ed. 3 Cracow, 1521 (this third edition, released during the author's life, is considered the basic one); Polish transl. T. Bieńkowski (Warsaw, 1976).

¹⁷⁵ B. Olszewicz, "Geografia polska w okresie Odrodzenia", in: *Odrodzenie w Polsce*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 342.

work's importance and enormous popularity. He presents a geographical treatise parallel with an ethnographical and historical one, but here too we observe a typical tabularization of geography.¹⁷⁶ Jan does not identify the Jagiellonian monarchy with European Sarmatia but, in compliance with the old tradition, sets the border of European Sarmatia on the Vistula and Don rivers, including in it only the Russians, Lithuanians, Balts and Muscovites, whilst situating Asian Sarmatia, i.e. Scythia, between the Don and the Caspian Sea, stating that it is ruled by the Tartars, who displaced or conquered the peoples who lived there originally.

Thus, unlike Scythia or the Tartar lands, Jan places Rus', Lithuania, Livonia and Muscovy in Europe. In his writing he continuously makes comparisons with other European cities and rivers, especially in Italy. He explains this by the fact that the work is addressed to Western (perhaps especially Italian) readers, for whom such a comparison makes it easier to imagine unknown lands. But these comparisons also introduce new territories to the cultural map of Europe. Describing the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Jan notes that "it has more forest animals than in any Christian state." He compares Wilno to Cracow, Novgorod to Rome, and Moscow to Florence and Prague.¹⁷⁷ In his description of "Moscovia," one notes a certain distinct tone. Polemicizing with hitherto opinions about this country, first he corrects geographical inaccuracies (which brought him fame in humanist circles), then reports on the alleged nomadism of its inhabitants,¹⁷⁸ and lastly he says that in Moscovia, "there is only one Russian, i.e. Slavic, language," apart from which Greek rites are used there, whilst the bishops are

¹⁷⁶ This issue requires further investigation. T. Ulewicz (*Sarmacja*, p. 56) asks whether Maciej of Miechów omits Poland from the description of European Sarmatia in order to "avoid discussing makeshift countries." H. Barycz ("Maciej z Miechowa. Studium z dziejów kultury naukowej Polski doby Odrodzenia", *Nauka Polska*, 6, 1958, no. 3, p. 97) believes that this treatise could have been a fragment from a planned work on the Slav lands. One notes that Maciej also does not mention Poland in preliminary, general descriptions of European Sarmatia, so perhaps he wishes to treat the Polish lands between the Oder and Vistula as a traditional part of the Latin sphere, as with Bohemia, and the ancient division of Germania-Sarmatia confuses him in this regard?

¹⁷⁷ Maciej of Miechów, *Descriptio Sarmatarum*, book 2, tr. 1, chapt. III (Polish ed.: p. 72).

¹⁷⁸ Buczek (Maciej z Miechowa, p. 141) assumes this refers to a method of pacification of lands recently conquered by the Muscovite rulers, which Maciej of Miechów regarded as testimony of a way of life.

subject to the patriarch of Constantinople and only the Kazan Tartars are pagans, as are their kin in Asian Sarmatia.¹⁷⁹ However, in the description of Muscovy, we find no information or data on Church organization, as we do with regard to the remaining territories of European Sarmatia. This may be not only because of an absence of verifiable data, but also because this territory as regarded separate from the remaining parts of European Sarmatia.

We have dwelt on the geographical and ethnographical outpourings of Długosz, Jan of Głogów and Jan of Miechów primarily to show how the intellectual elites of medieval Europe handled the question of separating Europe from Asia, especially in its cultural dimension. The place of Rus' and Muscovy was a subject of constant disputes in research into European unity in the Middle Ages.¹⁸⁰ The second issue is the course of this border itself, on the Urals, in compliance with modern-age European geography (which was not finally determined until the 19th century), or further west. In fact, the essence of the dispute was the cause of "Russia's divorce from Europe."¹⁸¹ History, international connections, and the system of government and basic structures of Kievan Rus' mean that there was general agreement that this area is included in European civilization.¹⁸² However, the Mongol onslaught and the unification operations of Muscovite dukes have been seen as processes which excluded this area from Europe. The marriage of Ivan III in 1472 to the sister-in-law of the last Byzantine emperor and heir of the Palaeologus, Sofia, is regarded as a powerful factor that revived the ideology of Moscow, the "third Rome," and as evidence of the separation of Muscovy from the European community whose centre was Rome.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Maciej of Miechów, *Descriptio Sarmatarum*, book 2, chapt. I (Polish ed.: p. 76).

¹⁸⁰ Wisotzki, *Zeitströmungen, passim*.

¹⁸¹ Cf. T. G. Masaryk, *Russland und Europa* (Berlin, 1913).

¹⁸² G. Vernadsky, *Kievan Rusia* (New Haven, 1948), p. 1 ff., raises the issue of Rus' (and Russia's) membership of Europe; G. Stöckl, "Die politische Religiosität des Mittelalters und die Entstehung des Moskauer Staates", *Saeculum*, 2 (1951), pp. 393–415, claims that Muscovy was European in the first period of its existence.

¹⁸³ O. Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe* (New York, 1952), p. 145; Cf. C. Toumanoff, "Moscow the Third Rome. Genesis and Significance of a Politico-Religious Idea", *The Catholic Historical Review*, 40 (1955), pp. 411–447; W. Lettenbauer, *Moskau, das dritte Rom. Zur Geschichte einer politischen Theorie* (München, 1961); A.L. Goldberg, "K priedistorii idei 'Moskva – tretii Rim'", in: *Kulturnoye nasledie drevniy Rusi* (Moscow, 1976), pp. 111–116.

Leaving aside the political context of this question and the manner of presenting the entire question of the eastern borders of European civilization, one can say that the dispute was primarily historiographic.¹⁸⁴ The point is to establish the geographical and cultural horizon to which modern-age and contemporary European consciousness refer, what historical tradition nourishes it, and how it continues. Reflection on European unity in the Middle Ages must deal with this issue in a different dimension and answer the question: what place did the issue of Europe's eastern borders occupy in European supraregional consolidation in the late Middle Ages and in European awareness?

Monitoring the universalist concepts that took shape over the thousand years of the Middle Ages, we have also noted that they were reflected in collective consciousness. However, these were primarily propaganda programs proposed by elitist circles, not collective feelings of togetherness and solidarity. Of course, this is connected with problems of documentation, for we have no classic documents on social awareness for the Middle Ages. Research into medieval social consciousness rarely confirms the presence of great bonds transcending local communities; after all, the population was bound primarily to its local populace. The development of economic and social life in the final centuries of the Middle Ages led to an expansion of international relations and to the formation of zonal connections and structures. But even so, medieval consciousness preserved its local horizons. In the mentality of people of that age, any connections between people were mainly ones of blood and geographical proximity. In both of these dimensions, small groups appeared, with the corresponding collective solidarities. Nevertheless, the family, settlement and parish did not narrow the horizon of medieval social consciousness, and this horizon was supplemented by broader regional, national and cross-border links.

The most important thing is that it is these small groups and solidarities which provided the template for relations on a macroscale. Medieval historiographers explained the historical fortunes of Europe

¹⁸⁴ This was a subject of discussion at the history congress in Warsaw in 1933; Cf. J. Bidlo, "Ce qu'est l'histoire de l'Orient européen, *Bulletin d'Information des Sciences Historiques en Europe Orientale*, 1934, no. 6, pp. 11-73; M. Handelsman, "Quelques remarques sur la définition de l'histoire de l'Europe Orientale", *Bulletin d'Information des Sciences Historiques en Europe Orientale*, 1934, no. 6, pp. 74-81; O. Halecki, "Qu'est ce que l'Europe Orientale?", *Bulletin d'Information des Sciences Historiques en Europe Orientale*, 1934, no. 6, pp. 82-93.

in terms of blood kinship, and described European geography in terms of neighbourly proximity. Only in this form – feelings of blood ties and neighbourliness – could European consciousness beat a path from elite communities to broader groups. However, this occurred in only a single direction, from the elites to the masses, until the close of the Middle Ages; and its impact on them masses was weak. Only the flood of geographical discoveries, faster flow of information and the invention of printing, leading to a growth in trade and an international division of labour, allowed this consciousness to spread. The first two centuries of the modern age permanently introduced Europe to intellectual circulation and to social consciousness.

Poland in the Cultural Geography of Medieval Europe

In: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej X–XIII wieku*, ed. J. Dowiat (Warsaw, 1985), pp. 8–26.

A foreigner, asked to describe the history of Poland and its ruling dynasty, wrote that the country of the Poles is located far from the pilgrimage routes and hardly known by anyone except those who travel [that way] to Rus'.¹ In these words from Gallus Anonymus we see the geographical horizon defined by Polish medieval culture until the 12th century, when these words were written; a culture situated on the periphery of the Christian West but also within the cultural sphere of influence of Byzantium.

If we wish to describe the medieval beginnings of Polish culture and the creation of the state organization which served to develop this culture, we must examine how Polish medieval culture developed from the early Slav heritage, consider how Western Christianity influenced the development of this culture, and look at the main paths of cultural contacts.

1. Slav Continuity

For many long centuries, the creative processes of human civilization took place in the Mediterranean basin. European ethnic groups received development impulses from the Mediterranean, and plans for an exchange of people, commodities, products and information were

¹ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum. The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, transl. and annotated by P.W. Knoll and F. Schaer, with a preface by Th.N. Bisson (Budapest, New York, 2003).

geared to the Mediterranean. Migration and trade expeditions were undertaken by peoples described in ancient tradition as barbarians, but anxious to get closer to Mediterranean centres of civilization and learn from their cultural achievements. Natural conditions did not facilitate contacts between the Slav peoples and the Mediterranean and its civilizations. The mountains of the Balkan Peninsula, the Alps, Danube and the Sudeten and Carpathian Mountains, not to mention steppes and forests, represented barriers which kept the Slav peoples on the sidelines of the influence of classical civilization.

Archaeological explanations have revealed rich traces of contacts between the Baltic and Carpathian regions and the Roman Empire. The graves of tribal leaders from the 1st to the 3rd centuries (such as the graves of princes at Lubieszewo near Gryfice in Western Pomerania and in Łąg Piekarski near Turek in Greater Poland)² were found to contain numerous luxury items originating from Roman provinces and from Italy itself. The archeological evidence suggests Roman sources not only of precious goods and goods for pleasure, but also those for everyday use such as tools. Discoveries of Roman coins³ (such as the hoard found at Chmielów Piaskowy near Opatów) illustrate healthy trade and the presence of Roman traders in these areas, attracted by the prospect of trading in amber. An extensive network of trade in luxury ceramics from the Roman provinces, especially Gaul, created local trade centres serving the Slav lands. The influence of Rome can also be seen in metal production, pottery and farming.

Thus, one can assume that the social elites of the Slav tribes enjoyed the fruits of contacts with societies in the Roman provinces, and that these contacts left a permanent mark on the culture of these areas. Needless to say, one should not overestimate the evidence of contacts between the Slav lands and the Mediterranean, for they did not affect the mentalities and sensitivities of the Slavs or their relationship with nature. In the first millennium of our era, the Slav peoples played only a marginal part in Mediterranean cultural heritage, whilst the migrations in the middle of the millennium, though bringing some tribes closer to the fringes of the Roman Empire, eradicated the previously existing network of exchange and contacts.

² L. Leciejewicz, "Nowy grób z importami rzymskimi w Łęgu Piekarskim", *Archeologia*, 7 (1955), pp. 102 ff.

³ A. Kunisz, *Chronologia napływu pieniądza rzymskiego na ziemię Małopolski* (Wrocław, 1969); W. Hensel, *Polska starożytna* (Wrocław, 1973), p. 396.

The Slav peoples developed crafts, customs and practices that gave shape to the Slav ethnic community: “Wooden construction, the manufacture of artistic products from stone, clay, wood, bone ivory, metal, textile and leather displayed richness of forms and technical mastery.”⁴ A gradual accumulation of skills and forms of expression primarily concerned living culture. Regarding psychological culture, as long as writing had not yet been adopted, development was not very fast. Traditional ways of conveying techniques proved more resistant to new developments, but nevertheless they helped perpetuate customs and cultural rites. However, the language became richer. It absorbed social experiences, passed them on from one generation to another, and in a certain sense altered the way in which the world was perceived. In the middle of the first millennium, before the migrations which stirred Slav tribes and led them to new contacts, the structure and vocabulary of the spoken Slav languages already displayed considerable maturity and complexity, allowing the articulation of various commercial activities, social phenomena and psychological states.

Stressing the role of the long development of Polish medieval culture on the threshold of the second millennium, we refer here to the pan-Slavic cultural community. This is according to reports from foreign travellers and chroniclers who treated the Slav peoples *en bloc*, describing their rites and customs in general terms. Gallus Anonymus, too, at the start of his treatise on Polish history, considers it necessary to define Poland’s place in the Slav world: “[Starting] from the north, Poland is the northern part of Slav territory.”⁵ He tends to exaggerate the region’s natural riches. The Slav community is also brought together by its linguistic features; in other words, in all Slav-based languages one detects traces of the original Slav language, as well as far-reaching similarities in daily culture and social organization, as evidenced by archaeological material.

However, later research casts a shadow on the permanence of the Slav cultural community as the Middle Ages began following the migrations of the 5th to 7th centuries. Historical fortunes divided the Slavs ever further. In his description of the Slav countries, the Jewish

⁴ A. Gieysztor, “Kultura artystyczna przed powstaniem państwa polskiego i jej rozwój w ośrodkach wczesnomiejskich”, in: *Sztuka polska przedromańska i romańska do schyłku XIII wieku*, ed. M. Walicki (Warsaw, 1971), pp. 23–24.

⁵ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, Introduction.

traveller Ibrahim ibn Jacob clearly notes these divisions: “Were it not for their discord, caused by the multitude of branches and divisions into tribes, no people would exceed them in strength.”⁶ Among the Western Slav tribes, joined by an extensive similarity of language, differences between the various tribes appeared. Of the southern Slavs, an important role was played by the Moravian Slavs who had earlier created state institutions and attained a high level of culture and commerce. They exerted influence over the Bohemian and Slovak tribes and had an impact on southern Polish tribes, albeit to a lesser extent. The northern Slav tribes, those along the Elbe River and in Pomerania, benefitted from the proximity of the sea, which permitted extensive contacts with the Arab world, illustrated by the discovery of Arab coins, oriental silverware and glass, and silk. Thus, the different natural conditions in which the various Slav tribes lived, together with geopolitical factors and the influence of outside civilizations, created permanent differences between the tribes and unequal historical development. This served to crush the unity of the Slav cultural community. At the turn of the second millennium, when socio-political development became more dynamic and ethnic cultural communities took shape not only among the Slavs but also in other parts of the continent, these differences in development trends took on major significance.

2. In the Sphere of Latin Culture

In the Europe taking shape at the turn of the first and second millennia, Poland defined a place for itself as a result of the decisions reached by the leaders of the Piast dynasty. It entered the sphere of the Christian West, Latin Europe. It is difficult to say whether this was the result of a choice and to what extent the Piast elites were made to face this choice. In a much-quoted treatise on the preparations for the Christianization of the court of Kiev and Rus', a chronicler of Rus' history described the members of various religions and the rites they practised: the Bulgars were Muslims, the Germans Roman Christians,

⁶ *Relatio Ibrahim Ibn Jakub de itinere Slavico, quae traditur apud al-Bekri*, ed. T. Kowalski, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (hereinafter: MPH), series nova (hereinafter: SN), transl. T. Kowalski (Cracow, 1946), p. 51.

the Khazars practiced the Jewish faith, and the Byzantines professed Greek Christianity.⁷ Prince Vladimir's decision to adopt the Greek rite effectively assigned Rus' to Byzantine culture and strengthened influences and contacts in that direction; but one can surmise that the tradition of conflicting proposals regarding the state religion to be adopted, much discussed in writings, was a general reflection of the situation of Kievan Rus', exposed to influence from various civilizations. However, in the case of Poland in the 10th century, the trend towards Western culture seemed to be fixed. Although, following the conversion of Bulgaria, Greek missionaries reached as far as the central Danube, extending their influence via Moravia to southern Poland, one fails to see any closer connections between Poland and Byzantine civilization and the Byzantine sphere of economic and political interest. Historical fortunes connected the emergent Poland with the Europe that grew out of the Carolingian heritage. The political interests of the country of the first Slavs were important to Mieszko I's decision to adopt Christianity, and were echoed in the West.

In the cultural awareness of the Carolingian era, the lands of barbarian peoples extended beyond the *limes Sorabicus* or *limes Saxonicus*. It is in this direction that the expansionist aims of the Carolingian empire drove, and with its forward settlements, on the left bank of the Elbe and upper Danube, radiated their influence towards the Western Slav tribes. Some artistic products reached Poland from Frankish territory, notably weapons encrusted with silver (found in excavations near Szczecin, among other places). The political interest of the Western Frankish state in the Slav world (researchers wonder about the legal-political nature of the links between that state and the Slav peoples) continued in the Ottonian concept of imperial politics that took shape in the 10th century.

In the eastern policy of the Otto emperors, the Slav lands became an important component of the imperial structure. Imperial emissaries reached as far as Rus': in the above-mentioned report by the Russian chronicler concerning the Germans telling Vladimir about Roman Christianity, historians see a parallel with the mission of Bishop Adalbert to the court of Kiev in 961, where he was sent by

⁷ *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, Laurentian Text, transl. and ed. by S. Hazzard Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), pp. 96 ff.

the emperor Otto I. This policy was realized primarily in relation to Bohemia and Poland. According to Otto I's concept, one of the four parts of the empire was "Sclavinia." In a well-known miniature portrait, four provinces pay homage to Otto: Rome (Italy), Gaul, Germany and Sclavinia. Thus, Poland was not only joining the *respublica Christiana*, but was due to become a partner in the European political structure regarding contacts with all three pillars of the former Carolingian empire. The congress of Gniezno in the year 1000, where emperor Otto III met with the Polish prince Boleslaw the Brave in a political display reminiscent of Byzantium, introduced the Polish ruler to the Ottonian family of kings.⁸

Regardless of subsequent relations between the empire and the Slav territories, these political deeds and aims affected Poland's cultural adaptation to western patterns and templates. The emerging Polish state gradually assumed the cultural features of a separate ethnicity. At the same time, the ruling dynasty and the aristocracy engaged in creating a new political structure endeavoured to adapt Poland to the culture of post-Carolingian Europe, so as to adopt the forms and patterns established in the West. We see the results of this in the legal system, administrative organization and social customs. These processes of cultural adaptation affected not only Piast Poland and its Slav neighbours, but also, at different times, the entire barbarian world out of which Europe gradually took shape.

Tenth century Europe, towards which Poland was embarking under the first Piasts, had a great variety of political structures, shifting state borders and unstable rule. The initiatives of the Otto emperors to turn the German lands into a zone in which the future Europe may take shape had no lasting consequences. In the established division of the west into two linguistic zones, Romance and Germanic, the Romance zone took the permanent lead in propagating medieval culture, and it is in this zone that the great initiatives that shook the Christian world were born: the crusades, which had such an impact on mobility and on the mentality of medieval society; the Cluniac reform to monastic life; the birth of the Cistercian order, which combined agriculture with the task of spreading Christianity; and the revival of teaching. These initiatives spread, but grew weaker the further they ventured

⁸ T. Wasilewski, "Bizantyjska symbolika zjazdu gnieźnieńskiego i jej prawno-polityczna wymowa", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 57 (1966), p. 1 ff.

from the centres of intellectual life. Centres of teaching developed most intensively along an axis leading from the Loire to the Main, via central France, all the way to the southern fringes of Germany. They developed primarily around cathedrals and large monasteries. At the turn of the second millennium, the most dynamic centres of teaching of this type in France were the Benedictine monastery in Fleury on the Loire, the repository of the relics of St. Bernard, and the spiritual centres of Rheims and Chartres. In the next century, parallel with Chartres, which retained its intellectual excellence for a long time, the cities of Orleans, Tours and Angers and, in the north, Laon and Tournai, established themselves as centres of learning. In the British Isles, following the Norman invasion in 1066, the cities of Canterbury, York and Winchester developed into centres of learning. On the territory of the German empire, monastic centres in Franconia and the Rhineland, the monasteries in Echternach, Cologne and Sankt Gallen, and churches along the banks of the Meuse, continued and developed the traditions of learning, and propagated teaching, thus serving the need to train secular and spiritual staff and prepare people to occupy church and state positions. The Loire, Seine, Meuse and Rhine seem to have been the prime locations of intellectual culture at the beginning of the second millennium. If the continuation of Carolingian intellectual activity was reflected in the geographical dispersal of centres of culture, the core of the construction expanded considerably, especially in the north.

The patronage of rulers was very important to the spread of culture in medieval Poland. In particular, monarchs sought ways of sanctifying their power and granting it prestige through the sponsorship of artistic activity and education. This was a kind of second dividing line of Europe: in the south, beyond the Loire, extensive areas were devoid of regal authority, whereas in the north, monarchies took shape and consolidated their power. The Capetins on the southern fringes of France did not exercise power, but along the Rheims–Orleans–Chartres axis they boosted signs of royal prestige in forms and methods often borrowed from the Carolingian arsenal. This applied even more to German rulers, whose imperial entitlement to Provence or Italy were merely an illusion, but who built a firm monarchical structure beyond the Rhine. In Aachen, Leodium, Reichenau, along the Rhine and along the old routes of the Caroline heritage, German rulers asserted the prestige of the monarch.

The emperor Henry II wanted Bamberg to be the chief centre of imperial glory. Bamberg also provided the template on which to model church structures in Slavs lands conquered for Christianity.

The West, professing the principle of a transfer of the centre of power (*translatio imperii*), followed by a theory of the transfer of the centre of learning and culture (*translatio studii*), referred to the heritage of ancient times and endeavoured to continue the Mediterranean tradition. Indeed, some church centres, especially the monasteries, preserved ancient traditions of writing and passed them on. But, in fact, Mediterranean tradition was continued in the East; it is Byzantine culture that assimilated and perpetuated the classical heritage. The media of this tradition in the eastern empire were not monasteries, but secular centres of culture and the cities, headed by the capital of the eastern empire. Travellers from the West arriving at the Byzantine court were treated like barbarians. This was noted with disgust by Otto I's emissary, Luitprandus of Cremona, in the 10th century. That is also how the Byzantines treated western knights who passed by during the crusades. Byzantine culture flourished under the rule of the Macedonian dynasty; the University of Constantinople extended its courses in philosophy and law; Greek literature, apart from propagating the classical forms and contents of Hellenistic tradition, produced popular literature; and architecture and the applied arts defined a form and means of expression that characterized Byzantine art until its demise.

The impact of centres of Byzantine culture, especially those that developed in southern Slav territories, attaining originality and a special sensitivity, could be felt to a greater or lesser extent in the entire Slav part of Europe. The adoption of Greek culture in Rus' brought the Hellenic world even closer to the Western and southern Slav lands. The actual impact of Byzantine civilization upon the artistic and cultural civilization of medieval Poland remains a question that is little known and requires steady investigation. The evidence of trade links found in archaeological material, the scant influence of Greek art on local artistic creativity, and perhaps the habit of covering oneself in jewels noted by Gallus Anonymus⁹ – all of these facts and phenomena constitute weak evidence. More significant may be the fact that Mieszko II apparently knew not only Latin, but also Greek. Even if this was the result of very careful schooling in his youth, it

⁹ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, Introduction.

could have helped open the door to the world of Greek thinking and writing. Needless to say, in the fragmentary information we have on the subject of the first Polish libraries, we find no record of Greek books.

European culture in the year 1000 is a lagoon dotted with little islands at a great distance from each other. Individual centres of culture had a wide range of influence and communicated with each other, but natural borders, mountains, waters and plains created difficult barriers. Participation in culture was a question of effort and of overcoming those barriers, and not of a cultural osmosis that can occur when there is a greater density of population and a smoother flow of information, customs and commodities. The proximity of Greek culture to Poland's borders did not determine its actual transfer to Poland or any alternative choice of culture. Due to the geohistorical situation in which Poland had found itself, the efforts of the Piast dynasty to adopt a more developed model of culture were directed towards the Latin West, from where the initiatives vital to the formation of Polish culture also came.

3. Migrations and Cultural Contacts

Most of all, it is people who came. The Church's efforts at conversion and organization immediately required trained personnel capable of performing missionary work and assuming ecclesiastical positions. These personnel were supplied by monasteries and cathedrals, those closest such as in Moravia and Bohemia, and those further away, as far as Italy. However, the hermits of St. Romualdus, who settled in Western Poland as early as the 11th century, first in Międzyrzecze and later in Kazimierz Biskupi near Gniezno, remained in constant touch with their home abbey in Avellana. There were particularly lively contacts between church institutions in lower Lorraine and Poland. It is significant that this is from where Rycheza, wife of Mieszko II, came. The archbishop's throne in Cracow was occupied by Aaron, a Benedictine from Brunvillare, who had previously been in Stavelot in the diocese of Leodium, and who was accompanied to Poland by Benedictines from the monastery of St. James in Leodium. Lively contacts with southern German centres, especially Regensburg and Bamberg, continued for a long time. It is from Bamberg that a group of missionaries came to convert the Pomeranians during the reign of Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed.

This influx occurred not only during the initial stage of Christianization, but also later. Polish Church institutions and monastic communities readily took advantage of the influx of people from the West. Canons regularly availed themselves of the congregation of Arrouaise (founded first in Sobótka in 1110, but later transferred to Wrocław), and the Premonstratensians, who settled in Silesia and Lesser Poland in the middle of the 11th century, also maintained contact with their home centres for a while. We find foreign arrivals in the capitals of the bishoprics. The first bishops of Piast Poland, Jordan, Unger, Poppo, Reinbern, came from Western counties that had been converted earlier. Later arrivals included the bishop of Kujawy, Swidger of Bamberg, who served under Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, and the brothers Alexander and Walter of Malonne, who administered the dioceses of Płock and Wrocław in the 12th century. The importance of this migration of Church people for Polish culture is best illustrated by the work of the intellectual and artistic circle in Płock under Alexander of Malonne and his successor Werner, who probably came from the Bavarian-Frankish community. But there was also activity in the other direction; Polish clerics went to the west. One of the pupils of St. Romualdus near Ravenna was a Polish duke from the family of King Bolesław the Brave.¹⁰ Poles sometimes also joined foreign monastic orders, but more often they paid visits to them to acquire knowledge. Having been sent off to study, they returned laden with the tools with which to practice spiritual work: holy books, learned treatises and encyclopaedias, and they also contributed to their community the knowledge of Western customs and of artistic and intellectual achievements that they had acquired while abroad. The knowledge they gained did not always inspire literary activity as was the case with Master Wincenty. Instead, this knowledge more often served the spiritual and diplomatic work of the Church, which was more important than writing. Bishop Matthew of Cracow was a scholar well versed in Latin culture, but we have no evidence of his literary output apart from a letter to Bernard of Clairvaux, inviting him to come to Poland and lead a group of missionaries to Rus'.¹¹

¹⁰ Piotr Damiani, *Vita S. Romualdi*, in: MPH, vol. 1, ed. A. Bielowski (Warsaw, 1960–1961), p. 326.

¹¹ "List Mateusza biskupa krakowskiego do św. Bernarda," in: MPH, vol. 1, p. 15 ff.; M. Plezia, "Dzieje środowiska umysłowego w Krakowie przed założeniem

Iwo Odrowąż, chancellor to Leszek the White in 1206–1218, and later bishop of Cracow, left no trace of his written works, yet the intellectual prestige which he enjoyed, his contacts with key intellectual centres of the West and rich library of books, allow him to be regarded as an illustrious representative of medieval Latin culture. The international character of the Catholic Church also encouraged journeys to various countries, especially Italy. Annual reports say that Getko, bishop of Cracow, together with Ivo of Modena, brought the relics of St. Florian of Modena to Cracow.¹²

Migrations of clergy not only enriched the culture of church communities and not only inspired intellectual life and creativity, which for a long time had been the monopoly of the church, but also had a powerful influence on political protocol and the administrative practice of court and state institutions. It suffices to mention Gallus Anonymus, who came to the court of Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed from the West and who, "so as not to eat Polish bread for nothing," took to writing the first Polish chronicle.¹³ Clerics, often of foreign origin, engaged in diplomatic activities; Bishop Reinbern was sent on a mission to Kiev by Bolesław the Brave and was imprisoned there. But it is not only the clergy who migrated; lay people did so as well. The army of Bolesław the Brave included knights from abroad, and units of Gerang knights accompanied the Kiev expedition in 1018 and also assisted Casimir the Renewer when he returned to Poland. The chronicler, who was probably prone to exaggeration, speaks of hundreds of foreign knights.¹⁴ An interesting tale, recorded by Thietmar, is that of the Saxon knight Erich who, wanted for murder in his own country, sought refuge in the army of Bolesław the Brave.¹⁵ Gallus Anonymus writes about Bolesław's kindness towards foreign knights thus: "Any brave man who came to the king to serve as a knight and gained recognition was henceforth regarded not as a knight, but as a son of the king; and if the king heard that one of them was unable to cope with horses or anything else, he would endlessly shower the

uniwersytetu", in: id., *Od Arystotelesa do 'Złotej Legendy'* (Warsaw, 1958), p. 415 ff.; id., "List biskupa Mateusza do św. Bernarda", in: *Prace z dziejów Polski feudalnej ofiarowane Romanowi Grodeckiemu w 70. rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw, 1960), p. 124 ff.

¹² *Annales Regni Polonorum deperditi* (sub anno 1184), in: MPH, SN, V, p. 65.

¹³ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, III, letter.

¹⁴ *Thietmari Merseburgensis Episcopi Chhronicon*, VII, 72.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, VII, 16.

knight with gifts.”¹⁶ The memories of foreign arrivals from the West were often preserved in family tradition, for example in given names (e.g. Bałdrzych–Balderic–Baudry). The Polish knighthood was also joined by knights from the neighbouring countries Bohemia and Rus’, who brought with them the established customs of warriors.

Missions to other countries, and especially participation in the Crusades, provided an opportunity to see the world of Western knights. Probably only a few individuals in Poland went on the Crusades, but the best known example is one of the sons Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, Henryk Sandomierski. Nevertheless, the effects of participation in the Crusades may well have extended further than the individual. Poles appeared only sporadically on the great medieval pilgrimage routes along which goods were traded and Latin culture exchanged. But in this case too, the adventures of individuals provided a geographical and mental framework for Polish culture. Chroniclers record as a memorable event the journey of Jaks of Miechów to the Holy Land in 1162;¹⁷ news of this knight’s contacts with people and objects of the East had an impact on the collective imagination.

The contacts which the princely dynasty established with foreign countries were very important because they subsequently influenced court procedures and served as a model for the conduct of the entire ruling class. Greater attention should be paid to marriages between princes than the diplomatic situation of the Piast dynasty, for such marriages enriched the artistic life and customs of the court. The Piast rulers were particularly well acquainted with the Bohemian court, for Bolesław the Brave was there as a hostage and Mieszko II as a prisoner. Casimir the Renewer got to know not only the Byzantine court, but also the Hungarian court and the church and lay community along the Rhine. Polish knights and important men also appeared at the imperial court on various occasions. Finally, an important impulse for contacts and influence were wars, for they confronted military techniques and tactics, and provided testimony of the engagement of both sides fighting according to the knightly spirit of battle. Our information on economic migration is more scant, even though Poland lay at the crossroads of crucial European trade routes, as noted in the earliest journals of travellers. The large Jewish colony in Przemyśl

¹⁶ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, I, 16.

¹⁷ *Annals of the Cracow Chapter* (1162), p. 61.

must have maintained contacts with its kinsmen scattered all over Europe. Foreign merchants came to Poland, served the needs of the ruling class, and mingled with the burghers. The *Book of Henryków* records the activity of a Wallonian merchant in Wrocław as an affluent man whose heirs belonged to the knighthood.¹⁸ The creators of Polish culture also included foreign architects and craftsmen whose names are not recorded. We have little information on the independent activity of Polish merchants outside Poland, but one can assume that merchants from Cracow and Wrocław plied the trade routes leading south and east via Rus', were active in the Kievan state, and may have formed a mercantile colony in Perejaslav. Poles were also present on distant trade routes in the West, but these are sporadic cases.

The 13th century witnessed mass migrations involving not only individuals but entire groups of both rural and urban society for the purpose of colonization. This time, the confrontation with new customs and languages had an impact not merely on the social elites, but on the general masses. Considering the flow of objects and information accompanying the flow of people, one should also consider the balance of artistic imports and the circulation of documents and influence of styles. Such imports were mainly for the benefit of church communities and manors, but sometimes they included items destined for knights (such as a bronze bowl found in a 12th century grave of a knight in Czersk). Research into the history of music, art, literature, law and everyday customs in the Middle Ages has resulted in a rich store of knowledge to which one should refer when examining individual spheres of culture. Here, we need only indicate certain general outlines of these contacts. Inventories of imports from the German lands mention Saxony, where an energetic artistic and artisan community in Hildesheim supplied the Polish clergy with basic religious items. Saxon workshops also supplied small liturgical items, such as jugs and bowls for washing hands. Bavaria was also involved in these exports; it is enough to mention a richly decorated manuscript from the monastery of St. Emmeram in Regensburg (The Emmeram Gospels). Artistic imports in the treasuries of Polish Churches and monasteries indicate the great importance of centres of handicrafts in France and lower Lorraine; pastorals, reliquaries, enamelware and

¹⁸ P. Górecki, *The Text and the World: The Henryków Book, its Authors, and Their Region, 1160–1310* (Oxford, 2015), I, 3.

objects from precious metals originated in French workshops near Limoges. Wonderful ducal diadems, dated from the middle of the 13th century, can be attributed to Lower Lorraine. Beautiful chalices were also thought to come from Trimesne, but have recently been attributed to local production. From Dinant (the Netherlands) came cast metal goods, a specialty of that area. Some valuable products came from North Italian workshops, and occasionally from Sicily. Textiles found in the garden of an abbey in Tyniec, dating from the 12th century, are associated with workshops in Palermo (but it is also possible that they come from England).

We do not find many artistic products from the east, Byzantium or the orient, preserved in Polish art collections. Polish trade contacts and the participation of Polish knights in the crusades have not left permanent records in art inventories. An Arabian silver chest from the 11th century, a silver box from Byzantium dating from the 11th/12th centuries and a few glass products (decorated with engraved patterns) are examples of the few imports from the east.

Library inventories from the 11th and 12th centuries show that manuscripts, especially liturgical ones, as well as literary works, came from the same direction. Many have not survived, and some of those that have survived came to us later. But one can say that the books in circulation in medieval Poland and the miniatures which decorated them were the work of scribes and artists from all over Europe: from nearby, Germany and Bohemia, and further afield such as France and Italy. Links with scriptoria and artist studios along the Meuse River were particularly strong, as they satisfied the demands of the Polish clergy for religious works and also took orders from monasteries, missionaries, church dignitaries, etc. Orders from individuals also increased. In the 12th century, canons brought religious treatises from Bologna, and one can assume this was typical.

The handful of examples given here shows the geographic extent of Poland's artistic contacts at that time. The importance of the lands along the Meuse is worth stressing, for they were a source of people of culture, cultural values and patterns.

Regarding law and legal culture, there were major efforts at the start of the second millennium to adopt Western legal standards and incorporate them into Polish common law. Before Roman law extended to Polish legal culture, canonical collections found themselves in churches. The *Collectio Tripartita*, dating from the middle of the

12th century, was certainly kept in Gnieźno and Cracow. The chronicle of Master Wincenty is largely a monument of legal culture of a high quality, displaying a good knowledge of the law. But church officials also needed people versed in the law, and they themselves referred to legal works. Thietmar says of Bolesław the Brave that he referred to the “canons”: “When he himself felt, or became convinced through some Christian warning, that he had sinned much, he ordered that canons be brought to him so that he could read how to make good his sins, after which he attempted to do penance according to the instructions therein.”¹⁹

The number of works of art in circulation in Poland in the Middle Ages was negligible and modest compared to the main centres of Latin culture. Moreover, the works that reached Poland were of a more modest calibre, and that Polish culture was supplied by rather second-rate centres of creativity and distribution. The peripheral nature of Polish culture lasted at least until the end of the 12th century. While admitting this, we relate only to a single stratum of culture: elitist culture, involving sublime art. At the summit of culture, the Poland of the first Piasts did not match the patterns which it followed. However, culture on a mass level was different; here, the changes to Polish culture that took place were parallel to those taking place in the European culture as a whole.

4. Under the Sign of Syncretism

Medieval culture took shape under the sign of syncretism, combining cultural features of the barbarian world with the heritage of Mediterranean culture. It belonged to the agrarian world, developed within its framework and was subject to its social structure. Hence, the ancient vision of the world and of man’s place in it did not match the social reality surrounding medieval man, his social experiences and his rhythm of life. The traditional beliefs and cults practiced by barbarians, by Germanic or Slav tribes, were intertwined with practical daily life, man’s relationship with nature, and interpersonal relationships. During its spread, Christianity adopted features of these

¹⁹ *Chronicon Thietmari Merseburgensis*, ed. Arno Mentzel-Reuters und Gerhard Schmitz, MHG, *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, Nova Series* (München, 2002).

beliefs and rites to make it easier to stifle paganism as a system and to fulfil its social role better. At every stage of its expansion, when it faced the task of imparting or enhancing the faith to the masses, Christianity adopted traditional customs and practices. At the same time, the Church developed a monopoly on higher forms of culture, especially the written word. Intellectual culture as propagated by the Church derived from a didactic and simplified system of encyclopedic knowledge from the late classical age, and developed in contrast to, and to a considerable extent separately from, the general culture of lay society.

In secular medieval society, the syncretism of cultural models and patterns was still very evident. Aristocratic patterns of life grew mainly out of blood ties, which strengthened feelings of family kinship. But this focus on blood ties had its origin in barbarian mentality, with which the Christian doctrine of the family mingled. It was similar with the ideals of knighthood, which derived from the values and imagination of warriors, but which were also sanctioned by the Church as a moral duty.

Thus, Poland's association with the world of Latin culture placed it not only before an arsenal of rich and efficient intellectual culture, but also before cultural models and patterns which had formed in the West out of a combination of barbarian and Christian values. This culture, born out of syncretism, became the subject of repeated syncretism in Poland and elsewhere. The processes of cultural acquisition preserved a considerable stratum of traditional customs and the rituals of local populations. These two strata of syncretism: that which Western Christian society adopted from the heritage of the barbarians and that which Latin culture took over from the local traditions of Polish tribes, are often difficult to distinguish in the historical monuments detailing the first centuries of Piast Poland. In this context, it is worth indicating a significant consequence of Poland's weaker involvement in elite Latin culture. One can assume that the distance between the culture of the social elites and that of the masses was smaller in Poland than in the West. Thus, it was easier for folklore to penetrate culture in Poland as the barriers to this were weaker, and the paths of interaction between elite culture and mass culture could form more easily.

Underlining the syncretism nature of medieval culture in Europe and Poland, we should return to the subject occasionally; in particular,

we should note the complex links between Polish medieval culture and Latin culture and their interdependence. The sociologist and historian Stefan Czarnowski, examining the Romanization of Gaul, wrote: "The adoption of a foreign culture does not at all result in the erasure of the home culture [...]. Much of Celtic Gaul's culture survived not only tribal independence, but also the Roman Empire, the Merovingian and Carolingian periods, and the long centuries of French history, and survives to this day."²⁰ These words may also be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Latinization of Piast Poland.

In essence, medieval culture was international due to the cultural role and character of the Catholic Church. This, combined with the role of Latin as the universal language of that culture, created the possibility and necessity to participate in the cultural work of the main centres of the West. News of the martyrdom of St. Adalbert reached Rome together with the first information about Poland and its neighbours. In any case, matters of importance to the fortunes of Poland were decided on the banks of the Tiber. Conversely, Poland was an important area for the implementation of the policies of both the powers of the Middle Ages: the papacy and the emperors. Of prime importance is the fact that church personnel and artistic influence came from territories of both empires: Roman and Germanic. This had a bearing on the articulation of the ideology of the Polish state and the formation of a feeling of independence by the Polish monarchy, which took shape within the context of imperial ideology (an example of this is the attempt to introduce the cult of Emperor Henry II in the diocese of Płock in the 12th century).

It is interesting to note how society's imagination, accustomed to a local geographical horizon, adopted a broader dimension of the world. News about a pilgrimage to the Holy Land or goods or merchants from distant countries brought this broader dimension home to local awareness. However, the restricted nature of military relations, the migration of people and the flow of information meant that the awareness of medieval man had a narrow horizon, limited to the local environment.

²⁰ S. Czarnowski, "Studia z historii kultury", in: id., *Dziela*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1956), p. 55.

Man and Time: Unity of Medieval Culture

In: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej X–XIII wieku*, ed. J. Dowiat (Warsaw, 1985), pp. 432–482.

1. Preliminary Remarks

Piecing together a picture of the culture of the past from dispersed and fragmented sources, one should proceed from the works of man to the conditions that led to their creation. In works of culture and in traces of human activity, we seek ways of thinking and ways of feeling, ways of reconnaissance and imagination, and ways of selecting cultural topics. But the further one delves into the human psyche, the more difficult it is to grasp the dynamics of change; in other words, to determine how changes occur and what the characteristics are of the various periods of cultural development. Apart from the various diverse elements that comprise Polish culture during the first Piast kings, one notices certain unifying features that enable one to perceive the culture of this age as a “whole.” It is difficult to expect that we can find a universal instrument that permits historical reconnaissance in the same manner for every period. Until now, there have been various concepts and categories regarding medieval culture: ways of expressing the world, perceiving nature and the afterlife and sensitivity to colours and beauty. By these means it has been possible to determine attitudes towards ownership, work, collective thinking and ways of measuring space. But in order to understand the essence of culture, it is particularly important to understand people’s conception and attitudes to time.

This issue is a very recent one in historical writings. Although an examination of chronology was essential in order to achieve progress in historical research, it merely revealed differences in the measurement

of time,¹ without disclosing any differences in the perception of and sensitivity to time. It is this issue that has been examined in the latest research² and recognized as an important indicator of medieval man's attitude towards time and his view of the world.

Man's attitude towards time needs to be considered in three separate dimensions: the calculation of time, the rhythms and forms of using time, and the perception of time. In all of these dimensions we shall attempt to find elements that illustrate psychological attitudes towards time. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that changes to the furthest layers of the human psyche are slow and hidden beneath an apparent similarity of human behaviour. In an agrarian society, the regular changing of the seasons, the regularity of the movements of the sun and moon, and the play of light and darkness, create a framework for the passage of time. Human time seems to be fully subject to nature, coordinated and identified with it. Knowledge of natural time was widespread, for it was essential in order to engage in agriculture and resulted from direct observations and an accumulation of suitable experience. Man learned how to make the best use of the opportunities afforded by nature, and adapted his work and lifestyle to nature's rhythm.

Nevertheless, the order of nature was superimposed by the order of culture. An understanding of time was one of the most intimate elements of an understanding of the world, and to plan his work man sought spiritual, religious and mythological inspiration. Therefore, in the rhythm of nature he perceived the action of supernatural forces and sought a pre-established order of time. The three spheres of folk knowledge, soothsaying and magic, and religious beliefs, determined the basic perception of time. This involved a comparison and contrast of the cultural systems and contents of pre-Christian Slavic tradition and those brought by Christianity.

¹ In Polish literature on the subject, one can mention the university scripts of A. Gieysztor (1948) and J. Szymański (1972), and the textbook *Chronologia polska*, ed. B. Włodarski (Warsaw, 1957).

² F. Stelling-Michaud, "Quelques aspects du problème du temps au moyen âge", *Etudes Suisses d'Histoire Generale*, 17 (1959); J. Le Goff, "Au Moyen Age: Temps de l'Eglise et temps du marchand", *Annales ESC*, 15 (1960); A. Dupront, "Histoire et temps", *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France*, 1960–1961; A.J. Gurevich, *Categories of medieval culture*, transl. G.L. Campbell (London, 1985).

In the long process of Christianization, traditional and new cultural concepts existed by side with each other and occasionally mingled. Western Christianity brought a church calendar organized into a pattern of holy days based on a type of hierarchy in which, apart from the great feast days, there was room for days marking the passage of time (e.g. church processions in May were an opportunity to ask for blessings for successful future harvests) and for various local feasts. From the very beginning, this structure of the liturgical year, created in the Mediterranean basin, referred to natural time and was adapted to time's natural rhythm. In Christian practice, the liturgical year was further adapted to local tradition and different local conditions. The liturgical year was sufficiently rich and flexible to absorb various local traditions and holidays.

Christianity brought not only a rhythm of holy days and prayer, but also a general concept of time as a part of eternity that incorporated the drama of the creation of the world, incarnation and the Last Judgment. Thus, time was no longer a series of changes, but part of a great continuum subject to and leading to God.³

We shall examine the feelings and imaginations of the masses towards time, yet source information on this subject is meagre. Therefore, we must resort to indirect information, reaching for detailed analyses whereby we shall be able to grasp certain social differences in the way in which time was perceived. These differences were dictated mainly by differences in the way of life. This also applies to attitudes towards the past. Here, we encounter the complex issue of memory, both collective and individual. Considering collective memory, we must remember that it involves two processes: on the one hand, the objective process of the accumulation of certain common memories and messages about the past; and on the other hand, specific ideological programs that serve to cement a collective memory of a series of past events. Interest in the past was generally very scant. Of greater interest was living in the present, dictated by the slow rhythm of life and referring not only to the present, but also to the past and future.

³ Cf. H.I. Marrou, *L'ambivalence du temps de l'histoire chez Saint Augustin* (Montréal-Paris, 1950); E.S. Lear, "The Medieval Attitude Towards History", *The Rice Institute Pamphlet*, 20 (1933).

2. Names of Months and Time Measurements

The development of civilization, raising social and economic requirements, brought various systems of calendars. These were based on astronomical observations, the length of the day and night and, most importantly, the phases of the moon. A heritage of ancient Mediterranean civilization was the Egyptian solar calendar (where the year was divided into 12 months of 30 days each, plus an extra five days at the end of each year, giving a total of 365 days), and the Babylonian lunar calendar (which divided the year into 12 synodic months and added a 13th month every few years), and the Roman solar-lunar calendar. This was the calendar adopted by medieval Europe in the form of a reformed Julian calendar served, more or less effectively, the needs of Christian institutions (work on its implementation and improvement continued ceaselessly until the end of the 15th century). But this scholarly product of natural observations and abstract reflection has limited social utility. Parallel with this was work on measuring the cycles of time. Examining the ways in which time was determined and the signs used for this is less important than examining the development of the systems of measuring time. It is not enough to state that at a certain moment, Polish culture chose the Julian calendar from the other possibilities. One must also examine how this system was contrasted with previous practice. The fact that the Julian calendar was the product of spontaneous human thinking and collective imagination is of particular significance to the history of culture.

Considering the scarcity of sources describing how time was measured in medieval Poland, it is particularly important to consider the local names of months that have survived in Slavic folklore and traditions (the oldest records of these date from the 11th century).⁴ The illustrious Slavic Franz Miklosich created a list of over 25 names of months.⁵ They disclose various spheres of human activity in harmony with the rhythm of nature. Many names derive from the names of plants: broad beans, birch, cherry, oak, lime tree, rose, heather and barley. To this group are added names that reflect the general periodic

⁴ V. Jagič, *Entstehungsgeschichte der kirchenslavischen Sprache* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 229 ff.

⁵ F. Miklosich, *Die slavischen Monatsnamen* (Vienna, 1868; Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 17), pp. 1–33.

appearance of nature: the yellow month (*zloti*) or green month (*zelen*, which can also be taken to mean the month of cabbage), and the months where the leaves fell and plants blossomed. A second, short list of names refers to animals: thus, the month of “warmth” (*greti*, which probably derives from the habit of cows to warm themselves in the stable in winter by crowding close to each other), the month of goats and locusts (*izok*; H. Łowmiański believes that this does not mean locusts in the proper sense, but insects associated with hay-gathering in the summer),⁶ milk, wolf, dog, dove, jackdaw, and cuckoo. We also include here the month *rjuti*, when deer mated. A larger group of names is associated with natural phenomena and the weather. *Babine léto* was the first month of autumn (the equivalent of September), which was also called *jesen* (*jesień* in Polish). The same applies to the month of spring (*jar*); the month of winter, ice and fog (*bruma*), and the cold month (*stud*, signifying the 11th, 12th or 1st month, as well as *ljuto*, the second month, in other words February); and the hot months of summer (*žar* or *pražnik*), to the weather and the month of the sun (i.e. winter solstice), and the month of flax (*pazdernik*), when flax was generally picked. This name can be interpreted in a different way, it may be associated with the winds that blow during this time (*pázderit* in Russian; *pazdernik* was not only the name of the month of October, but also the cold northern wind that blew at that time).⁷ Economic activities are the inspiration behind the names of the next, fourth group of names of months: reaping, hay and wine-making. Slav names of months refer to the Christian holidays in which they occur. One encounters significant dates of the Christian calendar, Easter, *peřtikosty* (from *Pentecost*) and All Saints’ Day, as well as the names of saints: Andrew, George, Gregory, James, John, Luke, Maria Magdalena, Martin, Michael, Peter, Philip, Demetrius, Elias. This association between saints and the holidays that occur on those days can be seen especially in the names of Hungarian months.

Noting the richness of Slav names of months, one must remember the geographical and chronological disparity in which they arose. The names were recorded in various periods, and many arose during the late Middle Ages or early modern times. Needless to say, many names

⁶ H. Łowmiański, *Podstawy gospodarcze formowania się państw słowiańskich* (Warsaw, 1953), p. 265.

⁷ K. Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa Słowian* (Warsaw, 1967), vol. 2, part 1, p. 199.

have not survived; they disappeared without leaving a trace in writings,⁸ which applies especially to the last of the above-mentioned lists of names because names associated with old pagan customs had to be suppressed in line with the spread of Christianity. However, the core of Slav names was formed rather early, and probably already existed in the middle of the first millennium as an independent Slavic linguistic development. There is no reason to suppose that these names were transposed from areas of Roman or Germanic settlement.

More serious problems occur when we consider the genesis of the names of the months. Were these names the names of months from the very beginning?⁹ It is more likely that they originally signified time periods of unequal length, making up the general pattern of warm and cold weather. The irregular names are also due to the fact that they only applied to small areas, and this explains the large number of Slav names of months known to us: they arose spontaneously over a lengthier time period in various parts of the Slav world. The very old names for spring (*vesna* and *jar*) and of winter, and somewhat later autumn and summer, show that the Slavs distinguished between the two main seasons, which differences were obvious. But this divide was merely an admission, so general that it allowed no definition of divisions in time. Divisions were defined by more detailed names reflecting natural and human events. In this sense, one can assume that some names of months were originally the names of the lesser seasons;¹⁰ a constant principle in the creation of calendars is determining when crucial changes occur and naming the period of these occurrences accordingly.

We still cannot be certain whether these small time periods were amalgamated into a common calendar in early Slavic days or whether they were associated with the phases of the moon. However, it is very likely that before Christianity, and without the influence of the Christian calendar, a lunar-based time measurement developed in the Slav lands and earlier terminology was applied to it. Successive phases of the moon were named after the “critical moments” that occurred

⁸ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 156.

⁹ Cf. E. Hofmann, “Kultur und Sprachgeist in den Monatsnamen”, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, 59 (1931), p. 132.

¹⁰ K. Moszyński (*Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 146) disagrees with such treatment of the names of months.

during them. There was no question of any standard terminology, if only because the phenomena during which the phases changed occurred sooner or later according to climatic changes and the geographical situation of particular areas.

The irregularity of names lasted a very long time and shows that we are dealing with a process that is still continuing. It is worth quoting some names of months in the Julian calendar which occur in the earliest Polish writings in the 14th century and were recorded by Jan Łoś:¹¹

- I *ledzen, prosinech, stitschen, tyczyen, luthy*
- II *luty, sticen, sechen (?), strompacz*
- III *vnnor, marzecz, mersheczech*
- IV *ilzyquyad, kwyecyen, lsz[yk]vuat, izzygwyyeth, quetschen, kvyeczen*
- V *may*
- VI *ugornyk, zok, czyrvyen, czyrwyecz*
- VII *łypiecz, lypyen*
- VIII *schyrypyen or czyrwyen*
- IX *wrzeschen, paszdzyernyk or wrzeszynu, paszdzernya, payacznik, stojatschen*
- X *listopad, lystopadl, passczerszen*
- XI *grudzen, payącznik, lystopad, peschtschernic, wrzesyen*
- XII *grudzen, proschyen.*

We can see here¹² a certain terminological harmony which will subsequently become part of the Polish language.

Thus, if local names of seasons and months retained their lively and open nature even in the late Middle Ages, and were the subject of individual and collective choices, one can consider them an important record illustrating the way in which medieval society perceived time.

¹¹ J. Łoś, *Początki piśmiennictwa polskiego. Przegląd zabytków językowych* (Lviv, 1922), p. 137; W. Nehring, *Altpolnische Sprachdenkmäler* (Berlin, 1886), p. 31.

¹² *Calendar of Plock* (the Polish names of months were added in the 15th century) lists the months in the following order: luthy, strompacz, marzec, ilzyquyad *alias* kweycyen, may, ugonryk *alias* zok, lypiecz, schyrypyen *alias* czyrwyen, wrzeschen, lystopad, grudzen, proschyen, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historia* (hereinafter: MPH), ed. W. Kętrzyński (Warsaw, 1960–1961), V, pp. 445–461.

3. The Calendar and Observations of Nature

The origins of Slav terms for periods of time and the structure of the calendar that appeared in the Middle Ages disclose a direct influence by nature. This has enabled researchers into medieval economic life to use Slav names of months in order to discover the importance of particular types of commercial activity, and especially to highlight the importance of farming in the Slav lands,¹³ whereby gathering and fishing have left weaker traces in these names. We have seen that the names of periodic events were largely dictated by agricultural activity. However, the group of names associated with flora also draws attention to the basic pattern of vegetation, especially the culminating period, that of blossoming and growth. Observing the rhythm of nature, man also learned how to exploit it; the abovementioned culminating period was when man utilized the results of the vegetation. In a certain sense, this also applies to names associated with animals; here one observes the interests of hunters and breeders, for whom a knowledge of animal behaviour possesses practical importance (the month of *greti*, when cows gathered together tightly in search of warmth, or the month of *kymati*, when cattle were threatened with madness from insect bites). The names of months associated with animals also refer to sexual activity of animals as an indicator of the climax: the month of *rjuti* or *rujeń* is the mating season of deer and elk (according to some interpretations, *berezen* is also associated with sexual activity as a month of fertility). An observation of nature led to the discovery that the life of plants and animals is cyclical and that events repeat themselves. Nature appeared to man in a rhythm of time in which the growth cycle possessed importance (germination, blossoming, maturity and decay), but the most important factor was the regularity of the key moments of growth and vegetation. Man attempted to tame and harness nature's time. He also wanted to understand it; that is to say, not merely label and name it, but also grasp the signs and signals inherent in it. In this way, the time of nature is an overriding dimension to which man adapts himself; the rhythm of human life had to be adapted to nature's time, which laid down the time when man should produce and consume, work and rest.

¹³ Łowmiański, *Podstawy gospodarcze*, p. 27.

4. The Rhythm of the Calendar and Labour

We have shown that Slav names for periods in the calendar developed out of the names of basic rural activities and that the rhythm of nature laid down the basic rhythm of labour. However, in the names of the months we find few references to seasonal work: apart from August, the month of reaping (also accompanied by the name *žęti* with the same meaning) and *ugornik* (occurring parallel with June), the oldest Polish calendars do not contain any other names of this type. We find several other names referring to agricultural work in other Slav lands: the months of reaping (*kositi*), threshing (*młatiti*),¹⁴ feeding (*obroč*) and sowing (*sejati*; this month is the first to appear in the autumn season). The name April (*lżykwiat*) can also be associated with agricultural activity. According to some interpretations, this month meant the time when fruit trees blossomed, whilst *trawień* was the month when cattle had to be led out to pasture: the name *sieczeń* is explained either as the time when wood was chopped for fuel or when trees were felled. The Polish names for June and October (*czerwiec* and *październik*) indicate non-agricultural activity. June was when the *czerwiec* (*coccus polonicus*, *porphyrophora polonica*), was collected; this was an insect that, when dried and ground to powder, was used as a scarlet dye for textiles (from this comes the name *czerwony* (red) in Polish and similar names in other Slav languages);¹⁵ before the spread of the American weevil, *czerwiec* was also a product known beyond Slav territories and not only satisfied local needs but was also traded. Thus, it is understandable that the gathering of this insect was part of the annual rhythm of labour.

The Soviet archeologist Boris Aleksandrovich Rybakov argued that the names of ceramic vessels used by the Kiev Polanie people reflects a division of the year into months, with separate dates for when “the fire was lit.” The symbols of typical activities also determine the rhythm of labour: the sign of the coulter represents our April, the sign of the wheatsheaf represents August, the bird catcher’s net represents September, and the sign of linen represents October.

¹⁴ According to some researchers, September (*wrzesień*) means the month of threshing, from the Church Slavic *vřešti*, to thresh; see F. Miklosich, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der slavischen Sprachen* (Vienna, 1886), p. 383.

¹⁵ A.W. Jakubski, *Czerwiec polski* (Warsaw, 1934); Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 1, p. 381 ff.

Likewise, periods of good weather and rain were also reflected in the names of months. Apparently, in the first half of the first millennium, the Slavs used a sign calendar for the vegetation year between April and August. The names of Slav holidays were included in this framework. If one accepts this, then the association between agricultural labour and the calendar possesses a long Slav tradition. Periods of the calendar were represented by symbols, identifying particular periods of nature.

While perceiving the connection between the names of months and seasonal agricultural work, and realizing the impact of agricultural work on Slav names for time periods, one should not view the calendar as a kind of mnemonic device for planning rural life. The important place which names associated with labour occupy in the first calendar are connected with the general character of man's perception of time in those days: it was a specific, concrete perception based on observation. Sharing the view of 19th century ethnographers, whereby early man was incapable of abstract thought, historians sometimes denied that old cultures were able to observe nature in more general terms. In our thoughts on how the inhabitants of Polish lands viewed time, we notice how patterns of thought on the subject of time periods develop into "critical dates which divide time."¹⁶ In some names, one can find esthetical considerations: names containing the word yellow or green obviously suggest a focus on colour, and not only on nature and farming. Thus, the creation of systems of time measurement and calendars is the natural outcome of observing nature and of perceiving its unchanging regularity. But it also answers certain questions which daily life places before man, and serves his needs.

5. Names and *sacrum*

Giving names to individual periods of time reflects man's intention to harness time, not only in order to passively adapt to the harsh requirements of nature, but also in order to exploit nature, not only to subject himself to nature, but also to influence it. Here we find a combination of production and magical practices. Man's production is combined with magical practices and incorporated in the rhythm

¹⁶ H. Hubert, M. Mauss, *Mélanges d'histoires des religions* (Paris, 1928), p. 219, 17.

of time in a manner that is difficult to decipher. In comparative history of religion, emphasis is laid on the strict connection, and occasionally the similarity, between perceiving the world and perceiving time:¹⁷ placing the creation at the beginning of time, the concepts of the world and time are treated alternately (in some languages, the words for the world, the earth and the year are the same), and the year cycle is considered a renewal of the world. At the roots of this identification of the world and time is the conviction that both are sacral realities, works of God, which is why in most religions ceremonies are dispersed according to an annual rhythm of moments when man seeks contact with the hereafter.

The names of the months connected with great Christian feast days and with the names of popular saints can be considered the result of the Christianization of local culture. Just as we see the locations of Christian rites superimposed on the traditional locations of pagan rites, so the names of time periods associated with pagan tradition were replaced by names associated with Christianity. Following the policy of Christianization, only a few names of periods associated with pre-Christian tradition have been handed down to us: the month of holidays (*svęť*) is the eleventh month of our calendar, the month of lights (*svesfa*) corresponds to February, and the month *rusaliya* corresponds to June or July. These last two illustrate two major events in the annual cycle. The month of lights represents the breakthrough, the winter solstice, in which a renewal of fire occurs, widely noted in European folklore:¹⁸ the old fire is extinguished and the new one lit, thus marking the end of the year or the end of the “sun.” The month *rusaliya* recalls the Slav holiday in which researchers perceived a continuation of ancient rites and in which the subjects of religious ceremonies are *rusalki* (myths from Serbia, *samovily* or *samodivy* in Bulgaria), and the spirits of the departed.¹⁹

The question of holidays indicates the importance of the religious element in creating time divisions. It is significant that the Russian word *god* and the Bulgarian-Serbian *godina* mean both year and

¹⁷ M. Eliade, *Images and Symbols. Studies in Religious Symbolism*, transl. Ph. Mairet (Princeton, 1991), p. 388 ff.

¹⁸ K. Wypych, “Jahresfeuer in Polen”, *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 22 (1973), pp. 86–115.

¹⁹ W. Klinger, *Wschodnioeuropejskie rusalki i pokrewne postaci demonologii ludowej a tradycja grecko-rzymska* (Lublin–Cracow, 1949).

holiday:²⁰ If the rhythm of holidays was one of the main impulses to create calendar systems, it is understandable that holy days became embedded in the language. Thus, an analysis of the Slav names for months shows that the measurement of time was not merely a question of random thought, but a question of culture in which observations of the rhythm of nature, the experience of agriculture and the system of beliefs are closely intertwined.

6. Measuring Time

Discussing the Slav names for months, we have concluded that the need to give names to time involved the need to measure it. Changes of time were gauged by the regular changes to nature, but most of all by observations of the heavenly bodies.²¹ Our information about the period in which we are interested is too scant to allow us to use the results of ethnographical studies to determine people's knowledge in medieval Poland. But no doubt the methods of observing the heavens and the practical conclusions drawn from them were the same.

Most of all, observation of the sun drew attention to the most general divisions; this observation created a general picture of the cycle of natural events and commercial activities during the year, and brought an internal division into four seasons. In the linguistic resources which Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński considers a form of the Slavic heritage,²² we find all four names of the seasons, summer, winter, spring and autumn, but we do not know when the names were invented or in what order. One can assume that the division into summer and winter was the most important distinction,²³ perhaps spring as well (the Germanic peoples had a year divided into three seasons),²⁴ whereby the most important

²⁰ L. Niederle, *Manuel de l'antiquité slave*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1926), p. 332 ff.

²¹ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 50 ff., 430 ff.; M. Gładyszowa, *Wiedza ludowa o gwiazdach* (Wrocław, 1960), chapt. III.

²² T. Lehr-Spławiński, *Język polski. Pochodzenie, powstanie, rozwój* (Warsaw, 1951), p. 46 ff.

²³ K. Potkański, "Wiadomości Długosza o polskiej mitologii", in: id., *Pisma pośmiertne*, p. 60.

²⁴ M.P. Nilsson, "Studien zur Vorgeschichte des Weihnachtsfestes", *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 19 (1916–1919), p. 97.

period for determining the flow of time was summer. It is worth noting that in old Russian, the word *lato* had three meanings: time as a whole, summer, and year.²⁵ We also find this latter meaning in Polish. This is an obvious sign that time was measured in summers (just as the Germans measured it in winters),²⁶ and that summer was the main subject of interest and central period of the annual cycle. In our climate, changes to sunlight and temperature differences are sufficiently sharp and clear to determine the onset of a season and periods of vegetation. Observation of the stars also helped, although ethnographical studies suggest it was of minor importance in Polish folk astronomy in the 19th and 20th centuries, when knowledge of meteorology became more widespread and more precise time divisions were introduced. The observation of the position of Orion and the Pleiades helped plan the calendar of farming activities,²⁷ identified the arrival of spring (the setting of Orion in the evening) and the time for harvesting fruit.

A careful observation of the moon created a lifestyle under former conditions, involving nights spent out in the open, the rhythm of pasture, nocturnal hunting and fishing, and finally the different forms in which the moon appeared. This observation of the changing moon provided a psychological incentive to measure time in short cycles. Traditionally, up to our times, measuring and counting years had been less important than the internal division of years, because these divisions determined the occurrence of magic rites, holy days and activities. The phases of the moon were an excellent indicator of time, and the number of different words for the individual phases (some of them dating from the Middle Ages) illustrates the importance of observations of the moon in folklore.

Folk astronomy, involving observations of the sun, moon and stars, provided a framework with which to divide and measure time. As in the case of Slav names for the months, here too we perceive a need not only to learn and discover, but also the presence of magic and rituals, for the sun, moon and stars were the subject of fear and wonder, and man monitored their movements in order to avail himself

²⁵ I.I. Sreznevsky, *Materialy dlya slovarya drevnerusskogo yazyka* (Moscow, 1958), vol. 2, col. 77.

²⁶ G. Bilfinger, *Der Burgerliche Tag* (Stuttgart, 1888), p. 15.

²⁷ K. Moszyński (*Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 167 ff.) writes that in Bulgarian folklore, there was a virtually complete calendar of economic activities based on an observation of the position of the stars.

of supernatural powers or offset dangers. Thus, the measurement of time was the natural result of the observation of the heavenly bodies.

7. The Standardization of Time Divisions

The standardization of time differences and the introduction of more accurate calculations of time were connected primarily with the needs of the Church. The Church required an established calendar, with fixed days marking church holidays and the feast days of saints.

Movable feasts in particular compelled church communities to concentrate on the calendar, which was not uniform year upon year, but required changes and adjustment each year. The church authorities were naturally concerned with the exact calculation of time, but public institutions also felt the need for the population at large to be aware of divisions of time. It was essential to have a standard time division applicable to the whole country in view of important events and dates, such as the deadlines for settling dues, military deadlines, the dates of court cases and daily administrative procedures.

The measurement of time was a platform where the traditional system of time encountered the formalized measurement of time brought by people and Church institutions. Due to the syncretism that occurred in this encounter, we observe numerous names regarding time, and therefore the very system of calculating time. To see this syncretism, it is sufficient to compare the names of the months used by Slav peoples. Here are typical examples: for names of the months, the Polish language combines terms from the Latin calendar (such as *maj*) with traditional Slav terms (such as *listopad*); the Czech language has preserved all of the Slav names; and Russian has adopted only the Latin names of months. Russian demonstrates the slowness with which syncretism took place: for a long time, two sets of terminology existed side by side, the traditional Slavic and the imported Latin. This required explanations (such as *oktabr, rekomyi, and listopad*).²⁸ In the case of Polish, this eclectic calendar, comprising mainly Slavic terms, also developed during its evolution and by choosing terms used locally. But most of all, one should remember that two systems of calendar terminology existed parallel with each other: Polish, grown

²⁸ Sreznevsky, *Materialy dlya slovarya*, vol. 2, col. 23.

out of popular knowledge and folk terminology; and Latin, used by the Church and generally in writing. Insofar as the first system of terminology was preserved in oral communication and in everyday use, the second system was used in science and literature, yet still had to play an educational role, for a knowledge of the calendar was needed for communication and mutual understanding: the church calendar had to be communicated to the faithful, and the implementation of administrative decisions, announced in written deeds, required an understanding of the terminology used. Often, the Latin names for months used by the Church had the Polish names written above them. Thus, in a Cracow calendar of the 13th century,²⁹ in addition to the Latin name *januarius* we see the later addition *prosinech*; in addition to *februarius* we see *yathen sive sechen*; and in addition to *martius* we find *unnor*. In the Płock calendar from the 14th century³⁰ all of the Latin names of the months had the Polish names added above them (probably in the 14th century, *luthy* as the first day of the month and *proschyen* as the last).

The system of names given to time divisions was vivid, it represented something specific, not abstract; a Russian chronicler noted: “*and over a rough road, for it was then the month of Gruden, called November*”³¹ – obviously this last name meant nothing, whilst “*grudzień*” referred to a specific condition of nature. This process of creating names of time divisions through mutual borrowing persisted throughout the Middle Ages. Thus, the terminology for measuring time was a living process, and the measurement of time was not a sudden one-off invention, adoption or borrowing, but a form of human activity intended to get to know nature and make use of it.

8. The Week and the Day

Thus far we have examined mainly the months, not only because of the lexical material available to us on this subject, but also because of the importance which this division played in everyday life. The

²⁹ MPH, SN, transl. T. Kowalski (Cracow, 1946), V, p. 109 ff.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 445–461.

³¹ *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, Laurentian Text, transl. and ed. by S. Hazzard Cross and O.P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 190 (*sub anno* 1097).

course of nature and human activity encouraged a natural division of time into months, as well as into long and short seasons. The emergence of a calendar connected with solar months served as an impetus to standardize lunar months and create mechanisms of orientation according to these months (in Russian sources, one comes across differentiation between natural or “blue” months and “book” months).³² In the case of the week and the division into days with separate names, the natural justification for the division is considerably weaker than in the case of the month. We have seen that the phases of the moon created a natural division of the month, important on account of various forecasts and magical practices (e.g. moonless nights were considered unlucky for practical activity). The phases of the moon determined favourable times for sowing plants and gathering herbs. Modern ethnology admits that the week is primarily a social invention, varying in length in different societies (from 3 to 10 days) and not reflecting the natural rhythm.³³ There is no information on how individual days were given their names in our culture, indeed in Slav civilization as a whole, or on how they were grouped into re-occurring internal divisions of months. We can only assume that each phase of the moon was counted (thus, the first, second and third day of the waxing moon, and then the full moon and waning moon). However, it seems that the week is a division of time adopted from Western civilization.

The Polish names of the days of the week emerge relatively late in written sources. Polish names first appear in literature in the 15th century (in Czech literature, in the 14th century),³⁴ but no doubt they were in oral circulation much earlier. In Latin Church terminology, the names of the months were numerical: Sunday was the first day (*feria prima*, but called primarily the Lord’s Day, *dies dominica*), followed by the other days (*feria secunda, tertia, etc.*), until the seventh day, named after the Sabbath, *sabbatum*. In Polish terminology, the days are also named numerically, but are not patterned on Church names because *wtorek* (Tuesday) is equivalent to the Church’s third day, *czwartek*

³² Sreznevsky, *Materiály dlya slovaryá*, vol. 1, col. 1396 (for the years 1136 and 1471).

³³ Cf. J. Goody, “Time. Social Organization”, in: *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 16 (New York, 1968), p. 33.

³⁴ E. Klich, *Polska terminologia chrześcijańska* (Poznań, 1927), p. 141.

(Thursday) the fifth day, and *piątek* (Friday) the sixth day. Linguists have argued about the origin of Slav names of the days,³⁵ especially *środa* (Wednesday). The prevailing view is that the week and the names of the days were borrowed by the Slavs from the Roman cultural zone and adopted during the course of contacts with the lands of the patriarchate of Aquileia.³⁶ However, the formation of the names was original; Sunday, the day when one does not or should not work, is the basic day, followed by *poniedziałek* (Monday) the second day, *wtorek* (Tuesday), the fourth day is *czwartek*, the fifth – *piątek*, then – *sobota* and *niedziela*, the middle day, *środa* (Wednesday), is named separately (as *media*, *hebdomas*, *mezzedima*, *Mittwoch*). It is worth recalling that the numerical terminology based on an observation of the phases of the moon (the first day or night after the full moon, etc.) may have made it easier to adopt and spread a weekly system of names. Insofar as the Polish names of the days reflect their cyclical nature (the same days recurring), so in old Russian terminology Sunday determines the entire seven-day cycle, and counting by Sundays remained for a long time in Slav folklore.³⁷

The fact that we do not encounter as many different of names of the day as for names of the months suggests that the names of the days were of less significance. We have already seen that certain phases of the moon, especially the new moon and the full moon, were celebrated in folklore,³⁸ which should boost the importance of the week in social consciousness. As Christianity spread, a fundamental issue was heeding the prohibition of work on Sunday, which remained a permanent topic of church sermons until the late Middle Ages. It was much easier for the Church to enforce compliance with this rule because it was reflected in traditional habits and mentality. In the

³⁵ F. Miklosich (*Die christliche Terminologie der slavischen Sprachen*, Vienna, 1875, p. 19) derives the days of the week in Slavic languages from German, whereas V. Jagič (*Archiv für slavische Philologie*, vol. 23, p. 537) regards *srěda*, Wednesday, as a purely Slavic term. J. Matuszewski, in: *Słowiański tydzień. Geneza, struktura i nomenklatura* (Łódź, 1978), claims that the first day in the Slavonic week was Sunday, from which the following days were counted.

³⁶ J. Melich, "Die Namen der Wochentage im Slavischen", in: *Jagič-Festschrift* (Berlin, 1908), pp. 212–217; P. Skok, "La semaine slave", *Revue des Etudes Slaves*, 5 (1925), p. 19 ff.

³⁷ Sreznovsky, *Materiały dlya slovary*, vol. 2, col. 379–382; T. Lehr-Splawiński, "O pochodzeniu wyrazu 'tydzień'", *Język Polski*, 13 (1928), pp. 12–14.

³⁸ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 452 ff.

commercial sphere, it would be difficult to explain by the biological need for a periodic day of rest. The varying rhythm of work in the past and the multitude of various holidays meant that the commandment to “rest on the seventh day” was not considered a natural necessity. What mattered more was the weekly work rhythm in order to determine periodic replacements.

Days of the week were frequently associated with market days. A market day was a natural time boundary, introducing a certain rhythm of production to social life and eventually becoming a firm component of the measurement of time. The genesis of weekly markets in our latitudes remains little known. It seems that markets were a fixed institution of social and economic life as early as the 11th century.³⁹ In this way, particular days of the week acquired specific meaning, for market days were fixed locally. The day when a market was held was determined by the local market and rhythm of trade, but news of markets in neighbouring localities was also known. A kind of rhythm of trade exchange developed in which market days were determined in cycles: over medium-sized areas, markets were held in different places on successive days. Place names such as *piątek* (Friday) and *środa* (Wednesday) testify that markets were held there on a particular day. Near Kalisz, there are places called Piątek and Sobótka, where markets are recorded in the 11th century, and Wtorek, recorded in the following century.⁴⁰ The naming of places according to market days thus occurred before German colonization, and became popular during the course of settlement.⁴¹

Until now, we have used the concepts of day and night as units of calculation. From observing nature, people naturally developed the concept of *doba* as a combination of day and night⁴² (the word *doba*, as with *dzień* and *noc*, is derived from old Slavonic). In medieval Latin writings, a distinction was made between the *dies naturalis* as meaning the entire 24-hour period (between one sunrise and the next)

³⁹ H. Ziółkowska, “Ze studiów nad najstarszym targiem polskim”, *Slavia Antiqua*, 4 (1953–1954), pp. 151 ff.; T. Lalik, “Märkte des 12. Jahrhunderts in Polen”, *Ergon*, 3 (1962), pp. 364 ff.

⁴⁰ S. Trawkowski, *Geneza regionu kaliskiego*, in: *Osiemnaście wieków Kalisza*, ed. A. Gieysztor, vol. 3 (Kalisz, 1962), p. 24 ff.

⁴¹ J. Matuszewski, *Nazwy administracyjne osad lokowanych na prawie niemieckim* (Łódź, 1974), p. 73.

⁴² Bilfinger, *Der Burgerliche Tag*, p. 263.

and *dies artificialis* as only the daytime between sunrise and sunset. However, the question arises whether night and day was used in traditional time calculation. It appears, as with the Germans (noted by both Tacitus and Caesar),⁴³ it is mainly nights that were taken into account. In old Polish law, time was usually counted in terms of nights (except for judicial years);⁴⁴ a 13th-century book of common law uniformly uses night as a unit of measurement. The supremacy of night over day results mainly from traditional observations of the moon, but may also have its origins in pagan tradition. The old tradition of commencing a celebration on the previous evening may also be the result of using night as a measure of time. The Christian calendar introduced the practice of determining time according to days rather than nights.

9. The Division of the Day

Folk culture, the Church and learned knowledge all introduced smaller divisions of day and night.

An observation of the sun and moon provided ample evidence of these divisions. Differences in lighting and the sun's position permitted a differentiation between morning and evening, between dawn and dusk, and noon.⁴⁵ Among these divisions, only noon is a precise mark. Determining the time of day by noting the position of the sun in the sky or the length of shadows was known to ancient cultures at an early stage of development, and posed no difficulties (on cloudy days, one could tell the time through the behaviour of animals, which tended to act in a particular manner at noon). In agricultural practice, the need to determine noon precisely was not as urgent and required only a vague idea of the time of day. Dawn and dusk played a similar general function of the passing of time. The 13th-century *Cracow Annals*, reporting the death of the Cracow Bishop Prandota, noted that he died at about dusk.⁴⁶ The record does not refer to any more precise

⁴³ Tacitus, *Germania*, 11; Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, VI, 18.

⁴⁴ P. Dąbkowski, *Prawo prywatne polskie*, vol. 1 (Lviv, 1910), p. 288.

⁴⁵ For the old Slavonic origin of these names, see Lehr-Splawiński, *Język polski*, p. 46 ff.

⁴⁶ *Annals of the Cracow Chapter*, in: MPH, SN, V, p. 92.

canonical categories of time. One can also assume that the rhythm of daytime determined man's physiological habits. Nevertheless, one should note that poor people possessed little sensitivity to the rhythm of mealtimes because these were irregular, and people ate when they had time to do so and when they had something to eat in the first place. Only suppertime was of a regular nature, but here the end of work or the approaching dusk were obvious indicators.⁴⁷

An observation of the sky provided indications of time differentiation at night. Knowledge of the movement of the stars provided basic orientation at night-time.⁴⁸ In particular, the Pleiades, Orion and the Great Bear enabled time to be measured (particularly important in winter, when the nights were long), but this only permitted a general indication of north and south or a division of time into three or four parts. This was significant for some magical practices or to determine the correct time to gather herbs. The main practical purpose of this observation was to determine when to get up in winter, because people got up and began work before dawn. It was very common to determine time by the crowing of cocks (the first, second and third crowing), which was of course an imprecise way of telling the time, but it nevertheless harmonized the community into a joint time rhythm; when the cock crowed for the third time, everyone knew it was the start of the day.

Church procedures, and especially prayers in monasteries, required a more precise division of the day than the natural division. This purpose was served by a system of unequal hours (*horae inaequales*), which divided service to God into seven (and from the 13th century, six) canonical ours, from *matutina* which occurred three quarters into the night and *hora prima* at dawn, to *completorium* at sunset. The difference between canonical hours and the natural flow of daytime had to be offset by various time divisions at daytime and nighttime, at various times of the year.⁴⁹ This allowed church time to be measured in terms of the practical passage of time. Historiographic works and

⁴⁷ L.L. Leshan, "Time Orientation and Social Class", *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 47 (1952), p. 589.

⁴⁸ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 138 ff.; Gładyszowa, *Wiedza ludowa*, pp. 147 ff.

⁴⁹ G. Bilfinger, *Die mittelalterlichen Horen und die modernen Stunden* (Stuttgart, 1892); H. Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit* (Hannover, 1891), vol. 1, p. 184.

documents frequently refer to time in canonical terms. The *Cracow Annals* notes that there was an earthquake on the last day of January 1257 at *hora prima*,⁵⁰ whilst Gallus, not providing any precise data, notes in his chronicle that Władysław Herman's battle with the Pomeranians was fought at the "third hour of the day."⁵¹ Describing Herman's movements prior to battle, the chronicler provides very significant information: that Władysław ordered that all the forts of the Pomeranians be burned "at a certain day and hour."⁵² Warfare required coordinated action and, as this example shows, the application of precise time definitions.

The church division of the day was too abstract to be used more broadly. It only satisfied the requirements of scholars and scribes. But it is significant that the natural divisions of the day were also used in writings; we have already cited the chronicle referring to dawn, whilst elsewhere there is reference to dawn, midnight and similar times.⁵³

The attendance of church services, and especially the ringing of bells, served to acquaint people with canonical hours and taught them to think in such terms. Church bells were a natural regulator of the day, and were sufficiently important to be referred to in medieval official documents. Expressions such as "when the bells of the Franciscans toll for the second time" suggest that bells were considered the precursors of clocks, at least in cities.⁵⁴ From the 13th century onwards, it was also the practice to summon the faithful with three tolls of the bell in the morning and in the evening, for prayer.⁵⁵ The ringing of bells no doubt made an impression on the senses, and the powerful sound lent a magical air to time divisions and made people sensitive to the passage of time.

⁵⁰ *Annals of the Cracow Chapter*, p. 87 (the Polish publisher altered the date from 1257 to 1259).

⁵¹ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, II, 2: "hora quasi diei tertia."

⁵² *Ibid.*, II, 1: "nominante die in hora constituta."

⁵³ *Ibid.*, II, 28: "aurora lucescente"; Traska's *Annales*: "in media nocte" (*sub anno 1227*); *Sancti Adalberti episcopi pragensis et martyris Vita prior*: "medie noctis hora esset."

⁵⁴ Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung*, p. 43.

⁵⁵ *Synody diecezji wrocławski i ich statuty* ("Concilia Poloniae"), ed. J. Sawicki (Lublin, 1963), p. 332 (1279); A. Gieysztor, "O dacie średniowiecznego dzwonu 'pro pace' ze Słaczna na Śląsku", in: *Studia Hieronymo Feicht septuagenario dedicata* (Cracow, 1967), pp. 143–147.

10. Instruments for Measuring Time

The development of the measurement of time necessitated suitable intellectual techniques and instruments for measuring time.

This applies especially to calendars, which reflected not just a way of thinking about time, but were also a means with which to measure the passage of time. In Slav culture, one notes the early appearance of primitive forms of calendars. Excavations in the territory of Rus' have revealed clay tiles and vessels with regular geometrical patterns, accompanied by ideograms representing animals. Soviet archaeologists regard these objects as occult agricultural objects and date them to the 4th century.⁵⁶ The number of signs corresponds to the number of days in the year, and special signs signify the feast of Kupała and other holidays associated with agricultural work. Such ideographic representations of agricultural calendars have been noted in many primitive cultures, suggesting that they predate the invention of writing.⁵⁷ They remained in use by the peasantry for a long time, especially because the use of signs and symbols did not require an ability to read. The most widespread form of these calendars was carvings on wood.⁵⁸ Days were carved on sticks, and special signs used to mark holidays. Later, sticks were replaced by wooden boards on which it was more convenient to carve a calendar. Under the influence of church time and the graphic forms used in the later Middle Ages, a pictorial peasant calendar emerged which helped the illiterate to determine time.

We do not know which of these calendar forms was used on Polish territory. Folklore has preserved the custom of counting the number of notches on a stick or signs on a board to determine particular (lunar) months.⁵⁹ One can assume that this method, even in a simple form, was used to present the complete lunar cycle, or at least to show

⁵⁶ B. Rybakov, "Jazycheskaya simbolika russkich ukrasheniy XII v.", in: *Międzynarodowy Kongres Archeologii Słowiańskiej*, vol. 5 (Warsaw, 1970), p. 352 ff.

⁵⁷ W. Endrei, "Kalendarze dla analfabetów", *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 15 (1967), p. 481.

⁵⁸ I.I. Sreznevsky, "Svernnyj reznoy calendar", in: *Trudi II archeologitheskogo syesda*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1876); A. Riegl, "Die Holzkalender des Mittelalters und der Renaissance", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichte*, 9 (1888), p. 82 ff.

⁵⁹ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 903 ff.

holidays, the days for various magical practices, and to know which days were lucky or unlucky.

However, written calendars were in use by the Church and its institutions. They were an essential component of the church liturgy and thus became part of the heritage of writing that accompanied the development of structures of Christianity. Divided into months, they recorded saints' days and instructions on how each particular saint's day was to be observed. Their association with church ceremonies meant that they often appear in missals and books of prayer. The oldest calendars preserved in our collections of manuscripts, dating from the 11th century, were brought to Poland from the west and possess a universal nature, citing a very large number of saints and, apart from a list of saints, containing the Roman calendar. Somewhat later calendars, including those produced by foreign scribes and brought to Poland, were subsequently adapted to local church needs with the aid of annotations. The so-called *Calendar Trzebnica* was probably brought to Poland by St. Hedwig from Kitzingen in the diocese of Würzburg, and the names of Polish saints were added to it.⁶⁰ However, local differences between dioceses and changes to the dates on which a particular diocese held particular events were so great that it became necessary to prepare local calendars and constantly adapt them to church practices. The decorative elements on calendars rendered them valuable, whilst the colourful writing highlighting a saint's day and important church festivals was an iconographic code of time, combining abstract time with human time. However, this type of calendar served only the Church community. Only its practical realization reached the population at large. Church ceremonies and the commercial customs of everyday life, where payment deadlines and market days occurred on the days of saints more popular in the Middle Ages, meant that the calendar records of saints permeated the consciousness of society. The church calendar was also taught in schools at various levels, primarily in training the clergy. A method of teaching the calendar and the days of movable feasts was a mnemonic work called *cisiojanus*:⁶¹

⁶⁰ W. Semkowicz, "Kalendarz trzebnicki pierwszej połowy XIII w.", *Sprawozdania z Czynności i Posiedzeń PAU*, 35 (1930), no. 7, pp. 7 ff.

⁶¹ J. Fijałek, "Cyzjojan polski z r. 1471, z wiadomością o cyzjojanach w ogóle i w Polsce", *Prace Filologiczne*, 12 (1927); J. Novakova, "Počátky českého cisjojanu", *Sborník Historický*, 15 (1967), p. 5 ff.

it was produced before 1246 and spread in European teaching curricula, especially in Bohemia, Germany and Poland, particularly in the later centuries of the Middle Ages.

More precise instruments for measuring time during the period that concerns us did not yet play any social function. Sundials, sand clocks and water clocks did not venture beyond the laboratories of scholars or the libraries of monasteries. Not until the late Middle Ages did the mechanical clock quickly develop, tables of hours appear, and the astronomical calendars of Cracow gain fame.⁶²

Last but not least, man himself was a kind of instrument for measuring time. The counting of successive years was limited to the academic community, whilst among the common people time was limited by human memory. Life provided a template with which to measure time; youth and old age, generations (“how far does human memory go”), events in family and political life, and the reigns of rulers provided points of temporal reference.

Academic knowledge, followed by lexical knowledge, also provided certain reference points in human life, thus creating natural time divisions on a macro scale. According to medieval encyclopedias, human life was divided into seven stages: infancy, up to the age of seven; childhood, up to the age of fifteen; adolescence, up to the age of twenty-five; youth, up to the age of thirty-five; adulthood, up to the age of fifty; senility, up to the age of seventy, and finally infirmity. This expanded hierarchy of age is a pattern of academic culture. In everyday life, these age divisions were certainly not so rigid. However, one should bear in mind that these concepts concealed certain rights and duties regarding upbringing, education, work and all areas of the law. So even if the borders between particular periods were not observed so strictly, these natural divisions were nevertheless used to mark the passage of life.

⁶² A. Birkenmajer, *Krakowskie tablice syzygijów na r. 1379 i 1380. Przyczynek do dziejów astronomii w Polsce XIV w.* (Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Matematyczno-Przyrodniczy, 21, 1891); Z. Gloger, *Słownik rzeczy starożytnych* (Cracow, 1896), p. 138.

11. Rhythms of Time and the Spending of Time

Social psychology and practical experience indicate that the way time is spent is determined by social and natural conditions, and this in turn develops personality and attitudes towards time.

In medieval agrarian society, the basic rhythm of time was set by nature. When discussing the names of months, we noted how important an observation of nature and the life of plants and animals were for measuring and determining time. Human activity became intertwined with nature's time and depended on its slow course. Work became faster during major agricultural periods such as ploughing and harvesting, especially the harvesting of grain and hay, due to the intensiveness of this work and the need to take advantage of the good weather. But even then, work time was regarded as extensive rather than intensive; work commenced early and ended late. Gathering, gardening and hunting were marked by a slow time rhythm and patient waiting. Rej in *Zwierciadło* warns against unnecessary haste which only "leads faster to the grave."⁶³

The success of work was connected not only with production, but also with the cult practices that accompanied it. The Church struggled to Christianize cult agricultural practices, disseminated the customs of blessing work with holy water, and popularized the aims connected with agricultural work. Nevertheless, magical practices persisted, against which severe synod resolutions were issued and which were still condemned in church sermons in the 14th and 15th centuries. A production gesture was accompanied by a magic gesture, and both of them were intertwined in the hands of the sower. This lent a particular significance to human work and determined the order of basic chores, whilst the use of time itself was suspended between natural and supernatural forces.

Work and life remained dependent on the natural light. There was little work in winter when the day was short, and only some chores could be done in darkness, whilst, as we said, work commenced before dawn. During the rest of the year, some farming work could also be done after dark. Fishing and hunting, and occasionally gathering, were largely carried out at night. But basic agricultural tasks could

⁶³ M. Rej, *Żywot człowieka poczciwego*, ed. J. Krzyżanowski (Wrocław, 1956), book III, chapt. VII, 6.

only be performed in the daytime, between dawn and dusk, which formed the natural limits of the working day. It seems that artificial lighting was of limited significance in rural communities. The interiors of cottages were lit by torches, i.e. burning pieces of wood. Candles or lanterns fueled by oil or animal fat appeared somewhat later. The artificial light in a cottage served an auxiliary purpose; the light from the fire produced enough light by which to dine and carry out housework.⁶⁴ In any case, artificial lighting did not encroach upon farming work. It retained its festive and prestigious nature, serving churches and manors; the darkness of the rural night seemed to be alleviated only by church lighting, and the lighting in churches and manors appeared to be a sign of significance, honour and prestige.

The situation was generally the same in cities. Artificial lighting was important inside enclosed spaces where the light of day was sparse, but most of the time was sent out in the open. Nevertheless, daylight was an important regulator of time. Working time in cities was similar to that in rural areas; in any case, the great importance of agricultural tasks in the lives of the urban population encouraged this variety in the use of time. Dawn and dusk were the natural limits of work, but some urban regulation required that certain trades be performed at night so that the quality of the work could be inspected during the day. Artificial lighting made its way to urban life very slowly. This was a particular problem in winter because, unlike in rural areas, there was no differentiation in production tasks. On the contrary, in winter urban residents were freed of the burden of agricultural work and could spend their time as they wished. This encouraged them to make more use of artificial lighting and to work beyond daytime.

Gradually, in production and in urban life incentives appeared to intensify work in a way never before known in rural life.

The spread of trade and the breaking of local trade barriers led to greater orders and work to meet demand, i.e. the market. This encouraged an intensive and extensive increase in work, no longer just occasionally, but permanently. Without overestimating the importance of this increased work rhythm in the lives of craftsmen, one should note the increasing differences in urban life, setting it apart from vegetative rural existence.

⁶⁴ J. Kostrzewski, *Kultura prapolska* (Poznań, 1947).

This applies even more to urban dwellers engaged in trade. The lifestyle of merchants in medieval cities was dictated by the flow of time: trade was carried on in the daytime, depending on the temperature and time of year, but also on agricultural harvests. However, the rhythm of merchants' lives also depended on specific fairs and markets, and on travel, which was also undertaken at night. Distances in time and geography between individual markets also had a direct effect on mercantile calculations and on plans on how to make use of time. At the same time, the mercantile calculations had to take market factors into account. The abundance of crops depended on the time of year, on the seasons of maritime travel, and on the possibility of shipping goods by river. Here, time was of greater value, haste was profitable and brought good earnings, and income was the basic component of the mercantile mentality.⁶⁵ The development of urban legislation increased the importance of the time component. In trade and credit agreements, time was more than just a certain bind linking both contracting partners, but an integral part of the contract itself, influencing its nature and its terms. One can say the same about employment and servitude contracts, apprenticeship agreements and others. In any case, the law had a broad impact on people's sense of time. Regulations and directives treat time as an important component, in various aspects. We do not know since when the legal principle of the law not being retroactive (*lex retro non agit*) has applied in Polish law, but it was certainly in force prior to King Casimir the Great's statutes for Małopolska (Little Poland) in the mid-14th century. In property law, the concept of antiquity or time immemorial was important.⁶⁶ In court proceedings, the times when a defendant should appear in court were crucial.⁶⁷ Time was also a determinant of the severity of a crime. The *Book of Elbląg* envisaged a lower penalty for insulting an official in a tavern if this was done after sunset; in this case, both the place and the time of day determined when an official could be considered a private person.⁶⁸ Obviously,

⁶⁵ Le Goff, *Au Moyen Age*; H. Samsonowicz, *Życie miasta średniowiecznego* (Warsaw, 1970), p. 110 ff.

⁶⁶ A.Z. Helcel, *Pism pozostałych wydanie pośmiertne*, vol. 1 (Cracow, 1874); H. Grajewski, *Granice czasowe mocy obowiązującej norm dawnego prawa polskiego* (Łódź, 1970).

⁶⁷ J. Bardach, *Historia państwa i prawa Polski*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1964), p. 300.

⁶⁸ *Najstarszy zwód prawa polskiego*, ed. J. Matuszewski (Warsaw, 1959), art. 15, p. 192.

the development of municipal life made time more important in both law and in judicial practice.

We can say that in the use of time by medieval society and the rhythm of rural life was predominant, and that vegetative time governed both rural and urban life. However, different ways of spending time gradually developed in cities, the result of social organization and increasing material property. We see similar features of working time in another sphere: the organization and arrangement of free time.

12. Free Time

In the lives of agrarian communities, the borders between free time and working time were very fluid. As we have seen, people worked all the time, making the most of natural working conditions, and this determined how remaining free time could be used. But work did not possess an intensive nature, also because it was enmeshed with religious life and entertainment. Work during sewing or during the harvest was accompanied or disrupted by moments of amusement. There is no strict demarcation between work and rest, so that free time does not possess any biological justification and is not an essential physiological requirement. The natural time for regenerating one's strength is night-time. Thus, a holy day can hardly be regarded as free time, for this is a sacred day which man does not have at his disposal but should use it to devote himself to serving the Lord. Weddings, funerals and christenings were an opportunity for rest or entertainment, they disrupted normal working time, but they were imposed by events and not dependent on human will. Foreign and domestic observers of Polish medieval life were surprised by the amount of entertainment present. Games accompanied family celebrations and annual holidays. Music accompanied war expeditions (Thietmar writes of trumpeters who went before Slav units attacking the Germans), singing spurred the knights into battle. Such a role was played by the hymn *Bogurodzica*; singing was a form of celebrating harvests, and orchestras composed of bagpipes, drums and crum-horns welcomed Zbigniew when he returned from exile in 1111,⁶⁹ as indeed they welcomed Bretislav II when he entered Prague in

⁶⁹ *Chronicon Thietmari Merseburgensis*, III, 21.

1092,⁷⁰ and they also inspired dancing at weddings.⁷¹ Nevertheless, entertainment did not determine free time and was not identifiable with it. Away from holy days and celebrations, entertainments merely filled the rural time “vacuum,” the time wasted from the point of view of agricultural utility, winter evenings, rainfall and similar.

Under the conditions of rural life, free time, i.e. the time at one's disposal, was a limited social privilege. It was generally enjoyed only by the nobility and by knights. Hunting carried out by knights possessed fundamental economic importance, for it supplied the lord's table with meat and was also a pastime which helped prepare people for the art of war. Various types of wrestling, jousting and horse racing played a similar purpose. There is a story of a horse race which was to determine who took the title of a duke.⁷² The evil trick with hooks, planted into the track of an adversary during a horse race, was adopted from ancient literature,⁷³ but the story itself shows that racing was known in Poland. Such pastimes supplemented the daily life of knights and nobles, and also kept them ready for war. One can view the game of chess in similar terms; in the Middle Ages it was regarded as a school of battle tactics and strategy. A chess set from the 13th century found in Sandomierz shows that this game was known to the Polish nobility. A more popular game, because it required less skill, was checkers, found in Gniezno, Poznań and Szczecin, and especially dice.⁷⁴ Archaeological excavations have revealed dice, made of animal bone and sometimes weighted with lead. One can assume that some of these noble games were also played by the common people; wrestling and racing were indulged in especially by rural youth, and dice attracted the rural population.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum. The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, transl. and annotated by P.W. Knoll and F. Schaer, with a preface by Th.N. Bisson (Budapest, New York, 2003), III, 21, 25.

⁷¹ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. B. Bretholz unter Mitarbeit von W. Weinberger (MGH SRG, NS 2, Berlin, 1923); English edition: Cosmas of Prague, *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, transl. L. Wolverson (Catholic University of America Press, 2009; Medieval Texts in Translation).

⁷² Bishop Vincentius of Cracow (Kadłubek), *Chronica Polonorum*, I, 13 (henceforth: *Chronica Polonorum*).

⁷³ S. Witkowski, “Podstęp Leszka z kolcami u Kadłubka i jego źródło”, in: *Księga pamiątkowa ku czci O. Balzera*, vol. 22 (Lviv, 1925), p. 677 ff.

⁷⁴ Kostrzewski, *Kultura prapolska*, pp. 455 ff.

⁷⁵ *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, vol. 2, part 2 (Wrocław, 1965), p. 173.

Free time on a mass scale is an urban invention, but it also developed gradually in line with the establishment of fixed working hours. In addition, cities also afforded recreational opportunities for the surrounding population. Coming to the market and visits to town provided an opportunity for a merry time. Urban organizations arranged various kinds of entertainment. Meetings of artisans or merchants developed into feasts and banquets. The tavern was one of the venues of free time.⁷⁶ In the tavern, people met to eat and drink. Dice plying spread from the taverns, which were also venues for various wandering artists, musicians and storytellers. Until the late Middle Ages, preachers were fond of condemning the idle way of life in taverns and the shamelessness of performers and dancers in them. Until the end of the 12th century, taverns were to be found almost exclusively in cities, but later they spread to the country and became a universal phenomenon, becoming more of a hindrance to regular working hours and serving as a temptation to while away one's hours contrary to the rules of society.

It is significant that in the cities we observe a tendency to organize free time and to control an excessive freedom of it which might endanger public order. Hence, medieval urban organizations offered entertainment in a controlled, supervised form, and even Carnival excesses were bound by strict time limits.

13. Feast Days and Annual Holidays

We have already examined feast days on more than one occasion, but now it is time to do so in a systematic manner, in the context of traditional and Christian customs, attempting to grasp medieval attitudes towards and perception of time. Christianization involved the adoption of a certain pattern of feast days to consolidate the Christian faith. In *Żywot św. Ottona z Bambergi*,⁷⁷ describing the evangelical work of the Pomeranian mission, Herbord reports on the teaching of Christian days of fasting and feast days, and mentions the latter. They

⁷⁶ I. Cieśla, "Taberna wczesnośredniowieczna na ziemiach polskich", *Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne*, 4 (1958), p. 159 ff.; S. Trawkowski, "Taberny plockie na przełomie XI i XII wieku", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 53 (1962), pp. 731 ff.

⁷⁷ *Herbordi Dialogus de Vita S. Ottonis*, II, 17, in: SRG, in usum scholarum ex Monumentis Germaniae, ed. G.H. Pertz, Hannoverae, 1868).

include ten feast days in the Christological cycle: Conception, Birth, Circumcision, Annunciation, Appearance in the Temple, Baptism, Transubstantiation, Passion, Resurrection, Assumption, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and general feast days of the Apostles and other saints. But we do not know, especially with regard to the last group, which of these feast days were really observed. Apart from Easter, the Decent of the Holy Ghost and Christmas, which of course possessed fundamental importance, surviving church calendars from various parts of Poland mention dozens of other holy days.⁷⁸ There were considerable differences between dioceses and individual churches and monasteries regarding the overall number of holidays and, in particular, which of them should be observed. This was due to different local customs, as local churches were named after various different saints and particular localities had their own traditions of commemorating the saints.⁷⁹ In any case, the list of holy days was very changeable; the canonization of new saints and ideological or political programs of the Church and state authorities introduced new holy days to the calendar. In this way, the calendar became full of days which were graphically distinguished as holidays.

But these signs in the calendar had a limited social impact. They mainly concerned the Church authorities, who regulated the order and content of prayers services. Interesting evidence of the spread of affairs concerning feast days to lay circles is provided by a letter of dedication from Matilda of Lorraine, which accompanied the liturgical book *Ordo Romanus*, sent to Mieszko II as a gift. The letter says that the book is to help the Polish duke acquaint himself with the holidays of the Church year.⁸⁰ The masses fulfilled the Church calendar only partly. No doubt the order of services, the lighting of candles and the various components of church proceedings were observed by the congregation. This depended on the authority and influence of the diocese: where there was a manor or monastery nearby, the impact of the clergy was without a doubt stronger. The engagement of congregations was also expressed in singing, and the variations in the sequence of procedures

⁷⁸ Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung*, vol. 2, p. 52 ff., 90 ff., 98 ff.; *Chronologia polska*, p. 131 ff.

⁷⁹ For "national" saints, see C. Deptuła, "Niektóre aspekty stosunków Polski z cesarstwem w wieku XII", in: *Polska w Europie*, ed. H. Zins (Lublin, 1968), p. 35 ff.

⁸⁰ *Epistola inedita Mathildis Suevæ... ad Misegonem II., Poloniae regem*, III, 29, ed. Phil. Ant. Dethiero (Berolini apud Behrium, 1842), p. 5: "quid significant varietates, quae per diversa tempora in eisdem recoluntur officiis."

of various different feast days, including on Sundays, left a permanent mark in people's sensitivities and memories.⁸¹ On a mass scale, the basic pattern of worship was determined by Sundays and the main holidays. The limited influence of the church calendar and of resistance towards it is illustrated by repeated warnings by church authorities to heed the prohibition of work on Sundays and the days of fasting.

Days of fasting were an important regulator of the rhythm of time and a major test of religious faith. In a description of various religions by a Russian chronicler, presented to Włodzimierz, the Catholics are said to "fast according to their strength."⁸² The church put in great effort to enforce compliance in this sphere. Every week there was a partial fast (on Fridays and also on Wednesdays). Over the year, major fasts, called Dry Days, occurred quarterly (*quatember, quattuor tempora*): after the first day of Lent, after Pentecost (*Pentecostes*), after the Raising of the Cross (14 September) and on St. Lucy's Day (13 December). Notwithstanding the degree to which these fasting days were observed, they naturally had an impact on the imagination and memory. The injunctions regarding fasting applied not only to food, but also to various entertainments, hunting, meeting, and even sexual activity. The liturgy of services also varied, especially prior to Easter, which in the Polish Church was celebrated from the Seventieth Day (*Siedemdziesiątnica*) (illustrated by the Polish names *Starozapustna, Mięsozapustna i Zapustna*), and not from Ash Wednesday.⁸³ Fasting itself probably did not affect all social strata equally; in fact, it made little difference to the normal everyday nutrition of peasants, but the mood imparted by days of fast no doubt made a mark on the annual rhythm of life, whereas for the clergy these days were so natural that the Church counted the calendar according to the number of Dry Days.⁸⁴

⁸¹ J. Woronczak, "Tropy i sekwencje w literaturze polskiej do połowy XVI wieku", *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 43 (1952), p. 335 ff.; P. Sczaniecki, *Służba boża w dawnej Polsce* (Poznań, 1962), p. 63 ff.

⁸² *Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 97.

⁸³ *Statuta synodalia dioecesis sanctae ecclesiae* (Bratislava, 1855), p. 317; MPH, IV, p. 207 ff.; Cf. E. Modelski, "Post dziewięciodniowy w Polsce", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 15 (1912).

⁸⁴ *Bajka ludowa w dawnej Polsce*, ed. H. Kapeliś (Warsaw, 1968), p. 135; "Rachunki żupne bocheńskie z lat 1394–1421", ed. J. Karwasińska, *Archiwum Komisji Historycznej*, 15 (1939), p. 132.

Holy days were subject to various prohibitions, primarily the ban on working and on any secular activity, because these days were to be devoted to the Lord. The requirements of commercial life meant that these prohibitions were readily supported in the Christian religion for the sake of economic necessity.⁸⁵ Holidays were also associated with magical practices, remnants of the past, and were still embedded in collective ethnographic memory.⁸⁶ In the celebration of holidays, we see a combination of liturgical church prohibitions on the one hand, and folklore of various origins on the other. We have very scant information on folklore during the period that concerns us, and reaching conclusions on the basis of material from later centuries is not justifiable: folk culture is not just a straightforward heritage of traditional beliefs, but is a component of the mass imagination parallel with official and elitist culture: magical practices and beliefs appear and spread parallel with the spread of Christianity, and in people's minds there is no conflict at all between the two.

In any case, the rhythm of Christian holidays conformed to the basic structure of traditional or pre-Christian holidays because it was closely associated with events in the natural year. This was due not only to the need to adapt to the requirements of agrarian life and its work rhythm of active and dead seasons, but also due to the "critical moments" of natural time: the winter solstice (22 December), summer solstice (21 June), the spring equinox (20 March) and the autumn equinox (22 September).

The illustrious medievalist of the last century, Karol Potkański, confirmed that the solstices of natural time were generally observed. He wrote: "A man who has to live constantly with nature, whose entire life is closely linked to and dependent upon it, usually observes in minute detail what is happening in nature. Of course, he knew nothing about the summer or winter solstices based on astronomical calculations, but he was certainly aware that the days became longer or shorter. He may have done so when this change could easily be observed, for instance around Epiphany, or in the first half of July."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ G. Dumézil, *La religion romaine archaïque* (Paris, 1966), p. 536.

⁸⁶ J. Klimaszewska, "Zakazy magiczne związane z rokiem obrzędowym w Polsce", *Etnografia Polska*, 4 (1961), p. 109 ff.

⁸⁷ Potkański, *Wiadomości Długosza*, pp. 60–61.

We have already discussed the effects of observing the sun in pre-Christian days and their place in Slavonic culture. Researchers see evidence of this observation in the sites of temples and churches. But there is no doubt that these differences were perceived and felt in everyday life. In particular, the shortest days of the year, the “pathetic period of nature,”⁸⁸ struck the imagination and created moods. The re-emerging reign of the sun and the lengthening of the day after the winter solstice filled people with joy. Christmas fell on the day of traditional ceremonies connected with the winter solstice. The day of the summer solstice was St. John’s Day, not possessing much significance in the church calendar, but nevertheless connected with very old folk customs (the burning of fires). We also note certain customs connected with the spring equinox, of which there is little record (according to some researchers, 21 March, St. Benedict’s Day, was celebrated at a church in Cracow dedicated to that saint).⁸⁹ Neither do we know whether the autumn equinox, marked in the Church calendar as the day of St. Thomas the Apostle, was associated with traditional rites.

Easter was an important period in the Church calendar. Easter, or rather the entire period of 50 days between Easter and Pentecost, involved the traditional welcoming of spring and the start of the farming year. After Lent, during which one bade farewell to winter (14th-century Czech and 15th-century Polish sources recall the old customs of drowning a straw doll or image of death),⁹⁰ came a time of joyous revival during which prayers and magic practices were supposed to ensure luck and good harvests.

A 13th-century manual for confessors, produced by the Cistercian monk Rudolf, mentions several ceremonies connected with annual holidays. Among the “magic practices intended to attain happiness” he mentions the custom of laying the table on Christmas Eve “for the queen of heaven,” in order to win her protection and support, the eating of meat at the beginning of Lent to ensure good crops, and the laying of thorn branches on roofs and laying boards in

⁸⁸ Dumézil, *La religion*, p. 329.

⁸⁹ K. Römer, “Podanie o Kraku i Wandzie”, *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 3 (1872), p. 12 ff.

⁹⁰ A. Brückner, “Wierzenia religijne i stosunki rodzinne”, in: *Początki kultury słowiańskiej. Encyklopedia Polska PAU*, t. 4 (Cracow, 1912), p. 160; Potkański, *Wia-domości Długosza*, p. 42 ff.

front of doors on the day of the Apostles Philip and James, in other words 1 May.⁹¹

Celebrations of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost shared cult elements. Ethnographical research has highlighted the importance attached to commemorating the dead on most Christian holidays, and the rites associated with this.⁹² Regardless of the degree of religious devotion, the purpose of commemorating the dead was to ensure the kindness of supernatural forces: caring for the dead, sometimes combined with symbolic sacrifices to demons, was an obvious and integral part of these rites. An additional element of holidays was forecasts of economic success, marital success and similar. "Wishing to know the future like God,"⁹³ signs of future events were sought during feast days, in the spring, and on the days of St. John, St. Andrew and St. Catherine. The past, the present and the future mingled and became intertwined.

Celebrating holy days is a manifestation of religious devotion, an expression of honour to God and of a respect for the Church's commandments. Master Wincenty, as with Gallus Anonymus, underlines this as a mark of dignified and commendable conduct. When the armies of Władysław Herman fought the Pomeranians, they did not spend Lent too religiously, consequently "they did not enjoy success, so that it appeared that even demons fought against them";⁹⁴ but the Poles broke off the war at Easter. Apparently, in 1109 Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed stopped the battle of Nakło so that the army could rest, "which he felt obliged to do on account of St. Lawrence's Day."⁹⁵ Wincenty describes how Casimir the Just carefully observed saints' days and describes in detail how, on the eve of his death, he spent the day at the church of St. Florian: "He devoted the entire day of St. Florian to the Lord, in prayer. The following day he laid a magnificent feast."⁹⁶ The joy of the feast was affected by the "festive joy of success" (*et rerum et temporum festivior amoenitas*).

⁹¹ *Summa de confessionis discretione* by monk Rudolf, § 42, 44, 45, in: *Katalog magii Rudolfa* ed. E. Karwot (Wrocław, 1955), p. 27 ff.

⁹² W. Klinger, *Doroczne święta ludowe a tradycje grecko-rzymskie* (Cracow, 1931); id., *Obrzędowość ludowa Bożego Narodzenia. Jej początek i znaczenie pierwotne* (Poznań, 1926).

⁹³ *Summa de confessionis discretione*, p. 24, 29 (§ 24, 53).

⁹⁴ *Chronica Polonorum*, II, 22.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 14.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, IV, 19.

Annual holidays also played an important role in providing economic life with a solid structure in time. As we have said, they were derived from natural time and adapted to agrarian life, but they also represented certain stages in commercial trade and duties. It is worth noting that one of the words for celebration in old Russian was connected with market fairs.⁹⁷ The illustrious connoisseur of medieval law and customs, Przemysław Dąbkowski, wrote that in contacts between groups of people, “the significance of holidays was similar to that of the cities. Just as the cities were the geographical point where society mingled, so holidays created a suitable point in time.”⁹⁸ Holy days were fixed as the deadlines by which to pay for services, and also served as the dates of pledges. Last but not least, annual fairs were held on these days.

Historians have often noted the connection between the sites of fairs and the sites of ancient cults. They have also conjectured that more important fairs were derived from annual pagan rituals.⁹⁹ Indeed, many annual fairs in Poland were held at Pentecost.¹⁰⁰ The spread of this springtime date of the fair may suggest that it was connected with rituals to welcome the spring (this fair was associated with the Slav holiday called *stado* described by Długosz,¹⁰¹ but the reconstruction of this holiday remains highly hypothetical). Regardless of the origin of the spring fair or whether or not it existed in the distant past, its association with the Church holy day is certain. Combining market trading with church festivities assured merchants of greater protection and security, and also obviously guaranteed them a greater volume of customers.¹⁰² Pentecost was also an important period of baptism, which ensured that more people would come to church, and therefore to the fairs as well.¹⁰³

We have indicated the association between the spending of time and a feeling of rhythm of time, focusing on attitudes towards free

⁹⁷ Sreznevsky, *Materialy dlya slovarya*, vol. 3, col. 1051–1055.

⁹⁸ Dąbkowski, *Prawo prywatne*, p. 292.

⁹⁹ K. Maleczyński, *Najstarsze targi w Polsce i stosunek ich do miast przed kolonizacją na prawie niemieckim* (Lviv, 1926), p. 49 ff.

¹⁰⁰ M. Młynarska-Kaletynowa, “Targ na Zielone Świątki”, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, 15 (1967), p. 25 ff. (contains a bibliography).

¹⁰¹ K. Potkański, *Wiadomości Długosza*, p. 3 ff.

¹⁰² S. Trawkowski, “Olbin wrocławski w XII wieku”, *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, 20 (1958), p. 85.

¹⁰³ Matuszewski, *Nazwy administracyjne*, p. 73.

time and reversing, as it were, the natural hierarchy where work was in the first place. This also stems from our knowledge of the daily life of various social groups, and from the nature of source documents, which seldom afford a glimpse of intimate life inside cottages and manors. In the case of professional and social communities, we can assume that each community had a different rhythm of life at different times of the year and in different months, and even on different days and times of the day. In the monasteries, time was fixed precisely; the day began with matins and was punctuated by the monotony of canonical hours which divided the day into uneven intervals: the rhythm of prayer released the monks from the supremacy of natural time. In the life of knights, the rhythm of time was determined by nature, for on nature depended the art of war, as well as hunting and husbandry. Military plans had to take husbandry into account. The *Russian Primary Chronicle* notes the significant reply by soldiers of Świętopełk to the plan for a war expedition in spring 1111: "it was not advisable to open hostilities in the spring, since they would ruin the peasants and their fields."¹⁰⁴ In any case, it was not just a question of people, but also of horses, for they too fulfilled both functions: husbandry and warfare. In the life of a knight, winter was a time of "delight and feasting," but the chronicler hails his duke for not taking a vacation like an indolent person.¹⁰⁵ The time of peasants was obviously linked to the life of nature, slowing down in winter and speeding up in summer. Lastly, exactly as in the monasteries, time in the cities seemed to be free of total dependency upon nature, for it retained a similar structure of activities to that of rural life. However, the natural length of the day determined working hours, and the rhythm of trade reflected basic agrarian tasks and periodical good transport conditions. Vegetative time seemed to rule both town and country in the Middle Ages.

14. Sense of Time and Attitudes towards Time

In our discussion on the subject of time, we have often referred to linguistic evidence. In linguistic resources we have found certain clues

¹⁰⁴ *Russian Primary Chronicle*, p. 505.

¹⁰⁵ *Galli Anonimi Cronica et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, ed. K. Maleczyński, in: MPH, SN, II (Cracow, 1952), 3, 18.

as to the manner of thinking about time and on its measurement. But the grammatical structure of Polish writing before the invention of writing also provides valuable information. Linguists have concluded that different tenses, differentiating between past, present and future actions, were in use. The structure of grammar is both evidence of and a matrix for awareness, therefore we can assume that the distinction between the past, the present and the future was firmly embedded in the way in which people of those times thought. But we do not know to what extent the different tenses were applied, because we have no texts. Differentiation between events does not mean that time was perceived as a chain of events formed according to fixed and uniform criteria. The existence of the past tense says nothing about identifying the depth of a past event, whether it occurred in the recent or in the remote past. Thus, the grammatical structure does not tell us about the temporal horizon of the people of that period. Nevertheless, the ability to distinguish between different events suggests a certain sensitivity towards time. However, we must try to establish the limits of that sensitivity, attitudes towards time and perception of time.

The fact that in an agrarian society, time possessed a vegetative nature, subjected to the slow rhythm of nature, meant that the calculation of time was associated with the passage of the seasons, phases of natural life and agricultural work. But this also had consequences in world outlook.¹⁰⁶ The time of nature imposed the idea of the repetitiveness of time; changes appeared as a repetition. The new “moon,” i.e. month, meant a change, but it was merely a repetition of the same phenomenon. The growth of plants, life of animals, the ebbs and flows of water, events in human life, all these showed that life was but a repetitive cycle of events, an ever-turning wheel. Not even human life, apparently a linear development from birth to death, managed to break that cyclical structure of human awareness, for the life of individuals was connected with the life of the collective and the family, and seemed to be included in the regular rhythm of vegetative time. The life of the individual only apparently had a beginning and an end, for it was a transitional event in collective life.

The Christian doctrine of time which we examined at the beginning did not breach this basic framework of time, but created a conceptual

¹⁰⁶ Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, *passim*.

framework which secular time made subject to divine time, regarding time as an attribute of and the property of God.

The presentation of the changing seasons, months and tasks, so often repeated in medieval iconography, were meant to illustrate God's control over daily human life. The German theologian Rupert of Deutz argued that "signa, tempora, dies et anni" should be sown in iconography because that would encourage the peasantry to worship the Lord and serve the Church of Christ.¹⁰⁷ The requirements of religion are realized in the repeated rhythm of "work and days," different for each social estate, but time is in God's hands.

The philosophy of time expounded by the Church Fathers and its great doctors probably had not much influence on the Polish cultural elites of the first quarter of our millennium, which were not greatly engaged in theological thought. From under the pen of Master Wincenty, who was well versed in legal doctrine but who also occasionally tackled philosophical issues, appeared the problem of time in its theological dimension. Having described the congress of Gniezno in the year 1000 and stressed the thoughts and feelings of Bolesław the Brave, the chronicler reports a wise man who lived in poverty and shunned riches (researchers believe this story was invented by Kadłubek).¹⁰⁸ The philosopher justifies his scorn for riches and property thus: "nothing is ours save for two things, the spirit and time, which nature has given us as our own."¹⁰⁹ Regardless of the ancient philosophy (especially the writings of Seneca) to which the author refers, it is worth stressing the meaning of this general reflection of time. The contrast between time and the soul leads to the classical medieval philosophy where time is the property of God. However, apart from this, thoughts of time as man's property occur quite rarely in medieval thinking. This is, in essence, a humanist valuation of time: if man has time for property, he may use it at his discretion, and the way he does so is subject to ethical scrutiny. Time

¹⁰⁷ Rupertus abbas Tuitiensis, *De sancta trinitate et operibus eius*, [cited after:] W. Endrei, "Mutation d'une allégorie. L'hiver et le sacrifice du Nouvel-An", *Annales ESC*, 21 (1966), p. 984.

¹⁰⁸ O. Balzer, "Studium o Kadłubku", in: *Pisma pośmiertne Oswalda Balzera*, vol. 2 (Lviv, 1935), p. 27; B. Kürbis in a commentary to the Polish edition of Bishop Vincentius of Cracow (Kadłubek), *Chronica Polonorum*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁹ *Chronica Polonorum*, II, 11.

has meaning, it is something valuable; the condition of humanity is realized in duration and in time's passing.

Some documents from the 13th century contain a rich set of stereotypical definitions of time. The preambles of some of them very often cite the passage of time as justification to conclude a contract or make a gift. This style of writing was expressed in various ways and was meant to underscore the impermanent actions of man: "as long as the letter exists, so too does the decision taken."¹¹⁰ In the chancellery of Konrad, Duke of Mazovia, a certain clause of 1221 envisages that the contents of a contract shall be binding over successive generations.¹¹¹ Time is a destructive force against secular affairs, "mundus caducus est":¹¹² generations succeed each other and memory passes together with the dead;¹¹³ impermanence is a basic feature of time¹¹⁴ which changes as constantly as the tides.¹¹⁵ A document by King Bolesław the Shy of 1255 grants time a destructive force, and the drawing up of the document is justified with the following words: "For time transmits a certain plague upon matters, so that the things that have occurred should not lapse from human memory due to the destructive effects of time."¹¹⁶ Disappearance over the course of time and impermanence are a human weakness:¹¹⁷ "Man's days are short, as is the number of months of his life in your hands, O Lord,"¹¹⁸ "human life (*etas eius*) passes like a shadow,"¹¹⁹ "the human condition changes according to the nature of time" ("status hominum est mutabilis secundum varietatem temporum").¹²⁰

The various expressions in these documents share a common trait. Time is considered a human weakness because the natural tendency

¹¹⁰ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Polski* (hereinafter: KPol.), ed. L. Rzyszczyński et al. (Warsaw, 1847), vol. 1, no. 34, 64, 65.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 13, 14.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, no. 28; *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski* (hereinafter: KWp.), vol. 1, ed. I. Zakrzewski (Poznań, 1877), no. 221.

¹¹³ KWp., vol. 1, no. 214.

¹¹⁴ KPol., vol. 2, no. 21.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 45.

¹¹⁶ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Małopolski* (hereinafter: KMp.), vol. 1, ed. F. Piekosiński (Cracow, 1876), no. 42.

¹¹⁷ KPol., vol. 1, no. 20.

¹¹⁸ *Id.*, no. 9.

¹¹⁹ KMp., vol. 1, no. 119; KPol., vol. 3, no. 33.

¹²⁰ KWp., vol. 1, no. 504.

of secular things is to disappear and collapse into the “depths of oblivion,”¹²¹ therefore time corrupts and destroys, whereas writing is considered a weapon with which man can fight this destructive force of time. Obviously, one should not overestimate the social impact of this philosophy that was hidden beneath the stereotypical preambles of documents, for they were copied by one chancellery from another and became, as it were, a tool used by individual scribes. The gap between chancelleries and urban households was as great as that between Latin and the vernacular language. Nevertheless, these formulations are valuable for they illustrate the prevailing medieval doctrine regarding time and show that this doctrine was applied in practice. They express and formulate the simplest and most obvious convictions about time. The fact that they are repetitive and monotonous is of no importance. They provide a ready ideological discourse on time and express certain features of a common approach towards time.

15. Memory of the Past

Memory and forgetfulness are a major problem of collective attitudes towards time. Memory is offset against the destructive force of time. Memory is served by writing, documents and prayers. Institutions and people care for memory because it lays down the conditions of their existence. In medieval society, the past is an important factor. It applies to mass thinking, where only the things that are backed up by authority, documents and extensive spheres of the law possess any weight. Creating a bridge between the past and the present, memory is meant to perpetuate the truth on the one hand, and on the other hand sanction and legitimize the present. A work called the *Księga Henrykowska*, dating from the second half of the 13th century, describes the property of the Cistercian monastery at Henryków. The first half of the book covers the period 1227 to 1269, whilst the second half describes the period after 1310, in order to gather evidence of the past to defend the monastery’s property. Apart from citing documents from the monastery’s archives, the author digs deeply into his own memory and those of witnesses of the past.¹²² One of the most important

¹²¹ KPol., vol. 1, no. 10.

¹²² *Księga Henrykowska*, in the index the caption *memoria*.

testimonies is that provided by a certain rustic called Kwiecik who related “all the old history of property surrounding that monastery.” He was “very old, therefore he remembered events from many years” (*erat valde antiquus, unde recordabatur facta multorum annorum*).¹²³

The old man is a witness of the past, and before the law and the courts such a witness takes the place of a document or letter. So it is understandable that the Cistercians at Henryków kept him on their payroll for many years, because they could refer to his memory. In medieval urban societies, in fact in many societies before the invention of writing, old people were accorded the role, occasionally formal and institutionalized, of custodians of the past. The average life span was not very long in those days, so that old people were not common, but this made them an important source of information on medieval culture.

Historiographic records very often refer to old people. In a chronicle about the beginnings of the ducal dynasty, Gallus Anonymus refers to a story conveyed to him by “venerable sages” (*seniores antiqui*)¹²⁴ The *Annals of the Cracow Chapter* of 1254 records the death of a knight called Cletko aged “one hundred or more years”;¹²⁵ it is he who told Piotr, bishop of Kielce, about the numerous miracles of St. Stanisław, and about the deeds of famous Polish knights.

However, can one conclude from this fact that individual memories in medieval society were very long? We still know too little about the individual processes of memory and the structure of human memory¹²⁶ to be able to answer that question. In research, it has been stressed that in cultures before the age of writing, memory played a much more important function than after the appearance of writing, and that individual psychological characteristics adapted to this situation and to the need to remember. But one should also note that the need to remember depended on the social division of labour and sometimes became a professional function; not everyone had to remember a lot or for a long time. The chronicle of Kadłubek cites the accounts of wise old men about events in the past. But Jan and Matthew, who engage in dialogue in the chronicle, are described as

¹²³ Ibid., p. 117.

¹²⁴ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, I, 3, p. 15.

¹²⁵ *Annals of the Cracow Chapter*, p. 87 ff.

¹²⁶ It is worth recalling the remarks of K. Potkański (“Prawa pamięci i rozpraszania energii”, in: *Pisma pośmiertne*, vol. 2, p. 279 ff.).

people of advanced years (*ambo grandaevii*), admit that they possess no “venerable knowledge of past days.”¹²⁷ On the other hand, in the case of these sages, specialists in memorizing, there was a kind of literary confusion between actual facts and fictitious narrative. The need for truth applied only to the legal sphere; elsewhere, the truth, and therefore the reliability of memory, was not at all significant.

Medieval law has provided additional incentives to be interested in past generations. The Church forbade marriages between relatives, whereby this prohibition also applied to couples who shared a common ancestor up to seven generations earlier. Therefore, one had to know one’s own family tree, up to seven generations previously. One can suppose that this requirement did not apply to the masses, but mainly the aristocracy. Nevertheless, the weight of this prohibition created a problem for everyone, because it caused a need to remember the past. Memory of ancestors was also a religious duty. Days commemorating the dead played an enormous role in folk tradition and have survived. Thus, memory of the dead is a part of the customs of the times. This applied mainly to ancestors whom one knew and with whom one lived, but later, especially among prosperous circles, tombstones, documents and church foundations lengthened memories of the past and increased the number of generations included in memory. An additional feature perpetuating memory are place names, named after their first lord (e.g. Januszów named after the knight Janusz, later called Henryków after “sir” Henryk).¹²⁸ Memories of common ancestors served as a bond that held the family together.

The problem of family is also a problem of property, rights and obligations, and inheritance. It included the law of kinship, which allowed relatives to question decisions on the sale of land, but only land bequeathed by a father or grandfather, not land handed down by a lord. Proving one’s right of ownership required knowledge of one’s ancestors or forebears and of their former actions. In the *Henryków Book*, one can see the effort and toil that went into defending one’s property rights: memory defended ownership, and lack of memory could cause disenfranchisement. Therefore, it was necessary to “frequently refresh in one’s memory”¹²⁹ deeds of ownership and the

¹²⁷ *Chronica Polonorum*, I, 1.

¹²⁸ *The Henryków Book*, I, 2 (“*racio nominis Heinrichov*”).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 8.

actions of forebears. This applied not just to feudal lords, knights, abbots and bishops, but also peasants, who referred to the memory of tradition, or rather immemorial tradition, in order to pursue their old entitlements or acquire new ones. The *Henryków Book* describes the fortunes of the family of the previously mentioned rustic Kwecik. His grandfather, Głęb, received from Duke Bolesław the Tall a forest subsequently named Głębowice, where he created a clearing in a place later called Wielka Łąka; his descendants had to leave this place, and the place where Kwecik resettled was named Kwecikowice.¹³⁰ The book entry probably derives from Kwecik's own account, whose memory is incorporated in local place names and lays down the framework of family traditions regarding land ownership by peasants.

We treat memory and reminiscences in a pragmatic context, for that is how they are presented in written documents dating from the first centuries of our millennium. We know too little about pre-Christian beliefs and mythology to consider the changes to memory that occurred in line with the development of written records. For it is not straightforward to proceed from memory to historical imagination.¹³¹ Nevertheless, the need for knowledge of the past appears as the need for a collective memory on the part of institutions, communities and social classes. The development of historiography and of interest in the past indicates that it is mainly the state, the Church, and aristocratic and spiritual communities who encouraged effort to reconstruct the past and record events.

The historical writings from the early Middle Ages are not exhaustive, but do they represent all of the most important types of this literary category.¹³² Apart from the two historical works already mentioned, that of Gallus Anonymus from the early 12th century and of Master Wincenty, called Kadłubek, from the beginning of the 13th century, we possess quite an exhaustive corpus of annals, catalogues of bishops, biographies of saints and secular people, and calendar notes.

¹³⁰ Ibid., I, 9.

¹³¹ See J.P. Vernant, "Aspects mythiques de la mémoire en Grèce", *Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique*, 56 (1959), pp. 1 ff.

¹³² For the types of historical narrative, see B. Kürbis, "Więź najstarszego dziejopisarstwa polskiego z państwem", in: *Początki państwa polskiego. Księga Tysiąclecia*, ed. K. Tymieniecki (Poznań, 1962), vol. 2, p. 218; B. Guenée, "Histoires, annales, chroniques. Essai sur le genres historiques au Moyen Age", *Annales ESC*, 28 (1973), p. 997 ff.

These illustrate a need to remember the past, a need which would grow in successive centuries. Historiography is not considered a primary source either in Poland or in the West, but assumes significance only when it is associated with rhetoric.¹³³ It remains subservient or inferior to theology and dialectics, nevertheless one can find in it an answer to a direct social requirement. Most of all, historiography serves the needs of the manor, which one notices in further stages of historiographic development from the 11th to the 13th centuries.

In the development of historical record keeping and in the shifts of its major centres, one clearly notes a “parallel development of Polish annalistics and a general Polish historical process.”¹³⁴ On the threshold of Polish statehood at the turn of the 11th century, there appeared in Gniezno a chronicle (or two) of foreign origin, most probably from Germany, describing events connected with the Carolingian monarchy and Germany. In Gniezno, current events connected with the ducal court were added to the German entries. In these oldest of Polish annals (they have not survived, and scholars are reconstructing them from later extracts), the family entries concern almost exclusively affairs of the ducal dynasty, and the starting point is Mieszko’s marriage to Dobrawa and his conversion to Christianity. When the ducal capital was transferred to Cracow, the annals proceeded to be kept by the Cracow chapter, which then also recorded events in the church community and in the life of Małopolska (Little Poland). The 13th century saw the emergence of annals in other parts of Poland: Wielkopolska (Greater Poland), Silesia, Pomerania and Mazovia.

Apart from manorial courts and chapters, annals were kept by monasteries and churches, and were frequently posted on boards (used to calculate feast days) which were part of the standard equipment of each church.¹³⁵ Recording an event under a date imparted to it a historical dimension of continuity and permanence. In this way, historical time was regarded as a continuum, on a uniform scale. Very detailed information on daily events can often be obtained on the basis of calendar entries. Church calendars recorded in particular the deaths of rulers, rich donors and bishops, but in this case the year

¹³³ Guenée, *Histoires*, p. 1016.

¹³⁴ G. Labuda, “Gdzie pisano najdawniejsze roczniki polskie?”, *Roczniki Historyczne*, 23 (1957), p. 96.

¹³⁵ W. Kętrzyński, “O rocznikach polskich”, *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Humanistyczno-Filozoficzny*, 34 (1897), p. 268.

was not recorded at all. The entry was meant to help remember the dates of death in church services.

The first Polish chronicler of the Polish ducal dynasty announced his intention of “writing about Poland, especially Duke Bolesław and to recount some of the memorable deeds of his forebears.”¹³⁶ The real purpose is, therefore, contemporary history; earlier history is presented in order to “move from the roots upwards towards the branches of the tree.” Thus, the past is viewed through the prism of the present; displaying the character and noble deeds of ancestors is an integral part of the description of power because blood ties are the basis for inheriting the ethical property of ancestors. In this way, the past is updated so that that permits an understanding of the present.¹³⁷ The denominator is the present, therefore Gallus associates the beginnings of Poland with the beginnings of the dynasty to which his beloved sovereign belongs. Neither Gallus nor Kadłubek give the precise dates of the events they describe. In any case, this complied with the literary category to which their work belonged. Nevertheless, dates serve no programmatic purpose because, at least in Gallus’ accounts, time is but a chain of events reflecting the psychological and ethical unity of the ruling family. Thus, it is not the years that are a scale of the passing of time, but people, the successive rulers of the Piast dynasty. Such a treatment of the past is also connected with the need to participate in the values of the past and update them, as in the case of mythological imagination.¹³⁸ Historical time assumes certain features of mythological time; this can be seen particularly in the tales of Polish warfare contained in both of these chronicles.

Master Wincenty transfers the centre of gravity of his program from the person of the ruler and the ruling dynasty to the state and its institutions. *Gesta ducum* serves here to disclose the system of public law and order, the structure of the state and the basis of the freedom of its citizens. The chronicler presents the past on the orders of his duke, treating the “examples of ancestors” as a mirror of chivalry and honour, anxious to “allow people to participate in the virtues of

¹³⁶ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, Introduction.

¹³⁷ C. Deptuła, “Średniowieczne mity genezy Polski”, *Znak*, 1973, no. 233/234, p. 1368.

¹³⁸ M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, transl. R. Sheed (Lincoln, [1996] 1958), p. 57 ff.

their ancestors.”¹³⁹ The basis of Kadłubek’s morality is the conviction that memory of the past is not only necessary for literature, moral didactics and rhetoric, but is also a value per se. In the introduction of the chronicle (I, 1–2), the two interlocutors of the dialogue are described as “people of today” (*hodierni sumus*), not knowing much about what happened in the past. The source of knowledge is the tales of sages, “for in sages lies wisdom and sagacity.”¹⁴⁰ One of the interlocutors, Matthew, is described as an imbecile, “so that I do not know whether there was a short moment preceding this present time.” Regardless of the rhetoric contained in it, this statement is evidence of the conviction that memory of the past is a value. The chronicler must seek it; it is a subject of deliberations among the learned communities of the time, and with the aid of painstaking etymological analysis, traces of the past are contained in words and names. But for Kadłubek and Gallus, past deeds indicate moral patterns worthy of emulation; the message of virtues is conveyed via a direct inheritance of these virtues or memories of them. For Master Wincenty this is not a path of biological communication, but of moral commitments towards the past: In his will, Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed “leaves his four sons commitments [stemming from] the virtues of his ancestors, and succession in the kingdom.”¹⁴¹

Regardless of the lack of dates, both chroniclers rigorously observe the order of events. Gallus often stresses the need to present events one after the other, i.e. in the order in which they occurred. When he rushes ahead in his narrative, he excuses himself: “sed cur rota currum precurrit” – “why does the wheel outpace the cart”;¹⁴² elsewhere, he explains that for the sake of style, he relates the pilgrimage of Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed before the siege of Nakło. Gallus mentions several days (not stating the years) from the Church calendars whose entries he used. Care to preserve the correct order of events is evidence that the chronicler possesses the correct historical imagination, whereby the year remains the measure of time even if it is not named. Thus we encounter in Gallus expressions such as “the following year,”¹⁴³ and associations with the year are evident in references to holidays.

¹³⁹ *Chronica Polonorum*, Prologue, 4.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 2.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, III, 26.

¹⁴² Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, I, 4.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, III, 26.

But an observance of the rules of chronological narrative appears most clearly in the way in which the chronicler describes the latest events, contemporary history. In memories of history, we find a very significant distinction between generations: the problem of truth in historical narrative concerns contemporary history, imbued with genuine memory, verified by witnesses. That is one of the reasons why chroniclers are afraid to relate contemporary events. Gallus seems to share the broader fear of a historian of secular matters that he is dealing with petty and unworthy issues, for in theology secular time is regarded as destructive, a regular spoiling of existence already corrupted with original sin. "I have recorded the wars of kings and princes, not the Gospels," says Gallus.¹⁴⁴ The Czech chronicler Cosmas, living at the same time, express in alarming words his fear of dealing with current affairs: "it is better to be silent about today's people and times than to tell the truth, because the truth always gives birth to hatred [...]. Therefore, it seems much safer to relate dreams that no one will confirm than to write the history of people today."¹⁴⁵ Apparently, Kadłubek retorted that, "on the one hand, the truth arouses hatred; but on the other hand, anger may bring about punishment" and asked rhetorically: "For who, I ask, will dare to tread barefoot on knives?"¹⁴⁶ But despite these fears, both the state of one's own memory and that of one's environment, as well as the requirements of literature, induce chroniclers to record the latest events first of all and place them in chronological order. Regarding more distant events exceeding the scope of direct memory, the concern for a special chronological order appears much less; the prime importance here is the succession of families and the order of generations.

The personification of time provided by medieval iconography very often contains an interesting association between time and kinship. In the 13th century manuscript of the *Decretum Gratiani* (of Italian origin), belonging to the chapter of Gniezno,¹⁴⁷ we find the depiction of a "tree of kinship" (*arbor consanguinitatis*), which an old man, representing time, is holding in his hand. It has a practical purpose:

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., III, letter.

¹⁴⁵ Cosmas of Prague, *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, pp. 182 ff.

¹⁴⁶ *Chronica Polonorum*, IV, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Gniezno, Library of the Archbishopric Chapt., MS 28, fol. 280v; a similar miniature in a different manuscript of *Decretum Gratiani*, Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble, MS 34, fol. 185.

the panels are meant to determine the degree of kinship with which one cannot enter into marriage. This association of time and kinship, which we mentioned in the context of family traditions, confirms man's relationship with time and his role in the established rhythm of time. Time is not just an abstract concept. Presented in the form of a crowned sage, it seems to remind us that the sage had power over time's passing and he himself represents duration. The kinship panels are a representation of time, but in the numerical annotation of degrees and names of kinship, we find a belief in the chronological succession of generations and a kind of update of past generations.

We also encounter these dialectics of the succession of events and their synchronic coexistence when we consider the place of contemporary history in the time horizons of medieval culture. The Holy Bible, taught in schools in words and in pictures in churches, introduced names and events of ancient history to people's minds. The lives of the saints, which affected the imaginations and lives of medieval people particularly strongly, also imparted an exhaustive message about remote matters, strangers and foreign countries. Distant holy history and secular history mingled in people's minds: in both categories there was a sharp divide between persecutors of the faith and its defenders, into brave and timid people, into good and evil. We find traces of knowledge of ancient history in our historiographic masterpieces, whereby the division between holy history and secular history is observed more stringently. Gallus Anonymus reaches into ancient history in order to justify his idea of recording the lives of the princes: he recalls "the glory and chivalrous deeds of the Romans and the Gauls," Alexander the Great, Antioch, Cleopatra and the fortunes of Troy.¹⁴⁸ Sometimes he mingles his descriptions with elements of ancient mythology.¹⁴⁹ Master Wincenty reaches much further into ancient literature and examples. His chronicle cites historical people and facts as anecdotes or as lessons in morality. In his series of tales of ancient history, Kadłubek also weaves the beginnings of Polish history, referring to alleged battles between the Poles and the Romans and Gauls.¹⁵⁰ He claims these facts are true, "known in ancient history"

¹⁴⁸ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, III, letter.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, III, 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Chronica Polonorum*, I, 3.

("ex antiqua historia").¹⁵¹ He also considers "surprising but quite credible" (*rem miram sed fidei plenam!*)¹⁵² the report on the defeat of Alexander the Great by the Poles and the correspondence between Alexander and the queen of Poland, and attributed to Leszek III many victories over the armies of Julius Caesar.¹⁵³

For a long time, these tales were the main reason why Master Wincenty's chronicles were ignored by modern-day historiography, because they were contrary to the facts. Yet this was the way in which legends, anecdotes, and scraps of knowledge about the past of the own ethnic group combined with elements of the heritage of the antique cultures, which set the boundary of European civilization. The right point of reference was not the scale of historical time, a chronological chain of successive years and events, but a mythological time, combining scraps of old beliefs with scraps of knowledge about the past, in which events were taking on a symbolic meaning and were updated, for they were continued by deeds of their contemporaries, shaped their actions and minds.

This same purpose, combining national history with the progression of universal history, is fulfilled by annalistics, although in a different way. The structure of the record of events is marked by a strict chronology of the history of the world. All events, occurring around the world or in Poland, are measured in linear terms, marked by successive years. The abovementioned oldest annals introduced a picture of the history of the world from its very beginnings, i.e. from the *creatio mundi* and Adam, and was referred to in later Polish annals.¹⁵⁴ In strict order after Adam and his descendants appear, the monarchs of the ancient East, the prophets of the Old Testament, the Persians and Romans, the Roman emperors, Christ and the apostles, and the Christianization of the European peoples. This is an arithmetical calculation, the entry notes (via Orosius) that 5,199 years passed from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ. Later, the annals include events of the Carolingian era (beginning with the death of Beda, wrongly given as 730 instead of 735) with increasing accuracy, and finally Polish history.¹⁵⁵ In the chain of events drawn up

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, I, 4.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, I, 10.

¹⁵³ B. Kürbis, *Wstęp*, *ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁴ Kürbis, *Więź*, p. 225.

¹⁵⁵ *Annals of the Cracow Chapter*, pp. 23 ff.

with chronological precision, one can observe a characteristic love of numbers and the symbolic contacts they suggest. It does not matter how true the internal calculations within the framework of historically verifiable facts are. What matters is that the annals presented the past in a standard chain of events which the human mind could grasp as a linear progression.

Historiographic manuscripts provide evidence of the consciousness of specific social communities. Most of all, they reveal the intellectual horizons of the elites of that time. No doubt they were addressed to as wide a readership as possible: although Gallus insisted that his work be read aloud and commented upon, so that it could serve as a textbook of knowledge and education in schools and palaces,¹⁵⁶ it mainly served the interests of the intellectual and political elites of those times. Apart from the ducal manors, which, as we said before, together with the cathedrals were the centres of historiographic writings, the families of knights played an enormous role, preserving reminiscences of their own past in order to perpetuate not only their own deeds, but also those of the broader chivalric community. Thus we find three powerful families responsible for the appearance of historiographic works: the Pałuki, who produced the *Rocznik Świętokrzyski (Annals of the Holy Cross Monastery)*, the Łabędzie clan who helped produce the poem on Piotr Włostowic, and the Avdank clan (Awdańcowie), who sponsored Gallus Anonymus' chronicle.¹⁵⁷ The past served not only as a pretext to certain current views, but often as the primary justification for particular claims. The aspirations of the bishops of Cracow in the 12th and 13th centuries became an incentive for producing a catalogue of bishops.¹⁵⁸

These inspiring groups were interested in receiving works, citing them and getting to know them. The more people these learned visions of the past reached, the more blurred their time horizons became, at the same time as which they ceased to be regarded as accounts of real events and became tales, anecdotes and legends. In church communities, holy history attracted the greatest attention, for this was part of essential education and was impressed on the

¹⁵⁶ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum*, III, letter.

¹⁵⁷ M. Plezia, *Kronika Galla na tle historiografii XII wieku* (Cracow, 1947), p. 47.

¹⁵⁸ MPH, III, p. 313 ff.; J. Szymański, "Historiograficzne analogie Passawy i Krakowa z XIII w.," in: *Polska w Europie*, pp. 93 ff.

memory as a result of contact with manuscripts and iconography. Psalters and prayer books conveyed scenes from the life of Christ, John the Baptist and the apostles. Two psalters from the end of the 11th century, from Pułtusk and Gniezno (of Czech provenance) were decorated with miniatures showing scenes from Christ's childhood and the Passion.¹⁵⁹ The *Ewangeliarz Kruszwicki* (*Gospel Book of Kruszwica*, second half of the 12th century, Saxon-Westphalian workshop) describes the story of St. John the Baptist and the calling of Matthew.¹⁶⁰ The *Psalterz Trzebnicki* (*Psalter of Trzebnica*, ca. 1220, workshop of Lubiąż) contains a long series of miniatures from the Christological cycle, from the Annunciation to the Last Judgment.¹⁶¹ The decorations on liturgical vessels show a mixture of scenes from the Old and New Testaments; in its struggle against heresies in the 12th century, the universal Church increased its Old Testament propaganda, applying sets of events from the Old and New Testaments. The iconography on chalices from Trzemeszno (late 12th century, imported from Western Europe) fulfils this purpose. Apart from scenes of the Annunciation, there appears Aaron's rod, treated as a representation of Mary, whose attribute is a branch from an almond tree, and other scenes show the history of David and of Elijah.

For clergymen viewing illuminated manuscripts, liturgical books and vessels showing the Holy Bible provided images about the history of the world, in which the past is represented in various ways. This was a holy history, and thus took place somewhat outside time. Nevertheless, in these scenes one can find a certain continuity that possesses a symbolic value, and served as a lesson in culture which helped enrich people's knowledge of past events.

Secular people, too, became acquainted with the contents of the Holy Bible as a result of lessons of religion, which thus provided them with the basic tenets of the faith and with ethical values. However, until the beginning of the 13th century, the teaching process was limited and rudimentary. The iconographic message of Church decorations not only exerted a great visual impression, but also helped perpetuate narrative contents in the memory, not only on the subject of holy

¹⁵⁹ Cracow, The Princes Czartoryski Library, MS 1207; Gniezno, Library of the Archbishopric Chapt., MS 1.

¹⁶⁰ Gniezno, Library of the Archbishopric Chapt., MS 2.

¹⁶¹ Library of Wrocław University, MS I, fol. 440.

history, but also secular history. We do not know what the decorations of the earliest churches looked like because the oldest frescoes have worn away. One can cite an example from neighbouring Bohemia: a fresco dated about 1134 in the chapel of St. Catherine in Znojmo presented the coronation of the legendary founder of the Bohemian dynasty Przemysl. A medieval painting apparently showed a group of French rustics arriving in Paris and being shown the figures of Pepin and Charlemagne among the sculptures on the façade of Notre Dame. From this, one can assume that figures and events from the distant and not-so-distant past were known by and popularized among not only scholars connected with religious writings, but also among the public at large.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Natural relics of the past, living reminders of old times, played a special role. These included household furnishings, costumes, but most of all ancient boulders and pillars associated with ancient cults or serving as geographical points of orientation. A similar function was played by mounds and earthworks. They were a source of inspiration for the production and circulation of folk tales.

Sense and Awareness of Geographical Space

In: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV–XV wieku*, ed. B. Geremek (Warsaw, 1997), pp. 629–668.

The concept of time and space is not only an obvious reference to the history of culture and its basic coordinates, but is also part of the psychological culture of each epoch. For time and space are forms of the world's existence and categories of perceiving and understanding reality. We have already attempted to show attitudes towards time and methods of thinking as an instrument with which to understand the nature of medieval culture as a whole and the mentality of medieval people.¹ We set ourselves a similar task in this chapter, striving to comprehend the changes that took place to psychological life in the late Middle Ages and during the 14th and 15th centuries. But here we wish to examine in particular how people imagined the past.

Regarding a sense of time and space as important components of psychological and mental history, we assume that we are dealing with historical variables. In the field of view of culture, man appears as a biological creation endowed with permanent psycho-physical features, motives and aspirations, but the subject of the observation is relationships between people, ways of action, and the thoughts and feelings of a specific historical community. The size of a man's brain and his bone and muscle structure of course affect his actions and behaviour, including in the cultural sphere, but these changes are so slow that they do not occur within a historian's time frame, and cannot form the subject of investigations. Does a sense of time and space, determining a man's view of the world, imagination and memory,

¹ See "Człowiek i czas: jedność kultury średniowiecznej", in: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej X–XIII w.*, ed. J. Dowiat (Warsaw, 1985), pp. 432–482 (see pp. 467–520 in this anthology).

fit into a historian's horizon? Answering this question in the affirmative, we are convinced that people in the distant past felt time and space differently than 20th-century people do. Therefore, medieval people not only dressed, lived and worked differently than we do, they also felt differently about the world and themselves.

Modern science and philosophy have established a firm link between time and space. In research into the history of culture, especially in work on the history of literature, the concept of "space-time" (in his critical literary works, Mikhail Bakhtin uses the term *chronotope*),² derived from the theory of relativity, has proved to be a useful tool for examining the parallelism of time and space structures. It might seem that it is completely irrelevant to medieval culture, however in old medieval philosophical thought one finds that reflections on time and space are closely associated. Nicholas of Cusa, one of the most illustrious philosophers of the 15th century, wrote about the three-dimensionality of time and space, whose point of reference is a past-present-future construct, and about the infinity of the world as an expression of the infinity of God. Thinkers of the previous century introduced to philosophical reflection infinite space and the empirical world of Aristotelism, including this in God's infinity.³ This allows a historian of 15th-century European philosophy to conclude that the work of Nicholas of Cusa shows that considering infinity in conjunction with three-dimensionality is a sign impressed in space-time.⁴ Of course, the scope of philosophical thought was restricted, but it displays the intellectual possibilities of that era, and sets the limits of the medieval vision of the world.

1. Territory: Landscape, Words and Names

Fifteenth century tableaux showing primary scenes from the Bible or the lives of the saints also show a landscape. Naturally, the landscape is in the background, and unless it contains some symbolic features to

² M. Bakhtine, *Esthétique et théorie du roman*, traduit par D. Olivier (Paris, 1978), p. 535 ff.

³ A. Koyré, "Le vide et l'espace infini au XIV^e siècle", *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 17 (1949); and in: *Etudes d'histoire de la pensée philosophique* (Paris, 1961), pp. 33–84.

⁴ S. Świeżawski, *Dzieje filozofii europejskiej XV wieku*, vol. 3: *Byt* (Warsaw, 1978), p. 234.

underscore the main scene, it is reduced to a poor decoration which does not present a real picture of the land and nature. Even in the background nature is offset against living things. Corn fields show contrasts between people, knights engaged in hunting and peasants harvesting grain. Forests appear as venues of miraculous scenes or of wildlife. As in medieval literature there is no evidence of how individuals experienced nature, so in artistic descriptions there are mainly borrowings from ancient rhetoric and from biblical descriptions of plant life. This absence of realism in presenting nature was once regarded as a sign of far-reaching medieval indifference towards landscapes and towards nature in general. But perhaps one should say not indifference, but merely a different way of treating nature (in any case, our information concerns not only the artists of that time, one should consider how aesthetic norms and patterns served to distort or, as Aaron Gurevich has said, “filter” human feelings and emotions).⁵ Nature as a whole is treated as God’s creation and as a place chosen by God where the first couple could live after their expulsion from Paradise. People of rural societies were aware of their close link to nature on which they depended, tilling the soil “by the sweat of their brow,” and obtaining essential food and materials for their huts and clothes. They did not experience nature (Arno Borst talks of *die unbelebte Natur*⁶), but lived in an intimate relationship with it, turning it into the object of their creative activities, trusting its regularity and fearing its caprices. The poorer their technical equipment and knowledge, the greater was their fear of nature, but they attempted to understand their dependence. The natural environment in which people lived seemed to offer endless opportunities. Given the population density – we know how low it was – people were overwhelmed by the vastness of nature. Aiming to conquer it, they had to get to know and tame the geographical environment. Recognizing that part of space occupied by “man’s territory,”⁷ one can say that it occupied the three great elements and components of nature: earth, water and air. Medieval people employed the force of the air only to a limited extent,

⁵ A.J. Gurevich, *Categories of medieval culture*, transl. G.L. Campbell (London, 1985), p. 66.

⁶ A. Borst, *Lebensformen im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt am Main–Berlin–Vienna, 1979), pp. 133–228, especially 211; Gurevich, *Categories of medieval culture*, p. 59.

⁷ See M. Godelier, “Territory and Property in Primitive Society”, *Social Science Information*, 17 (1978), no. 3, p. 399 ff.

and made no use of the surrounding atmosphere at all. Internal water masses were treated in strict association with the earth. Was the sea, at which the state of the first Piasts had its border, part of the territory perceived in this way?

The sea offered the greatest resistance to human action, nevertheless it was exploited commercially, socially and politically. It not only served as a border, but also created an incentive to communicate with other groups of people. Exploitation of the commercial opportunities afforded by access to the sea, well appreciated by the medieval Polish state but not always fully realized, required proper use of the coastline, the construction of ships and boats, and the organization of communities engaged in sailing and fishing.⁸ No doubt the endlessness of the sea inspired medieval minds, to whom tales and sermons brought news of people's fortunes on it. In the works of Gallus Anonymus we read how Polish warriors were pleased to reach the Baltic. The voyages of pilgrims, merchants and sailors taught Poles about the sea. Nevertheless, feelings of fear and alienness persisted towards the sea, especially the oceans, which appeared as an element unknown to man and utterly unconquerable. The sea was not yet man's territory; in other words, a part of nature and space exploited by him. Ships were the main objects on the sea, they were not just homes but also, as it were, parts of the world. They bore names and were protected by patron saints. The sea was a dangerous and untamed element. A popular 15th-century folk tale from Silesia tells of the dangerous adventure of a certain rustic who, before venturing on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, angered St. Thomas because he refused to adopt his name, probably because of the tradition of "doubting Thomas" – the skepticism of Thomas the Apostle was exploited by preachers to condemn a lack of faith. When a storm broke out at sea and the ship was close to sinking, the crew decided that there was someone on board towards whom the forces of nature were ill disposed and that he had to be thrown overboard to save the rest. The unfortunate pilgrim, certain that he was the cause of the impending disaster, then prayed to St. Thomas. The storm abated and the ship was saved.⁹ This story is

⁸ Cf. G. Labuda, "Kultura morska w dziejach społeczeństwa", *Rocznik Gdański*, 39 (1979), pp. 5–29.

⁹ J. Klapper, *Exempla aus Handschriften des Mittelalters* (Heidelberg, 1911), no. 74, pp. 58–60.

an example of the effective power of saintly intervention, but it also shows man's weakness vis-à-vis the sea and the occult forces that determine man's fortune upon the sea. Magical activity is also an expression of an effort to tame nature. Thus, one can conclude that if the instrument of such action is a human sacrifice, this shows that we are dealing with a very strong element. Testimony of the untamed sea is also the *Legend of St. Alexis*, in which after much wandering, the holy man set off on a journey to the Holy Land, but when storms and strong winds pushed the ship towards the shores of Italy, he decided to remain there for the rest of his days.¹⁰

Polish documents contain scant information about the sea's place in medieval mentality, and historical attitudes towards the sea have not yet been systematically analysed. But the paucity of this information does not mean that the significance of the sea was undervalued. Water in general, and the sea in particular, occupied an obvious place in folk cosmology, including in the Slav lands, but unlike the land, the sea was viewed in more negative terms. According to traditional geographical knowledge, the ocean was viewed as the source of all seas and flowed around the world like a river. The personification of the sea in a 15th century fresco in Lublin Castle also testifies to the place which the sea occupied in people's imaginations. In exotic dreams of distant lands, peoples and creatures, the sea also acted as a boundary between the known and the unknown. However, Polish medieval culture never tamed the sea. One can conjecture that the neglect of the sea evident in Polish 15th-century writings expresses a medieval attitude even more clearly than Renaissance works. Mikołaj Rej states with a certain amount of cockiness: "I have never been on the sea so I do not need to catch herrings,"¹¹ while Sebastian Klonowic says that because of the country's fertility, Poles do not need to seek their fortunes on the sea: "The Pole may know nothing of the sea if he is busy with ploughing."¹²

These words no doubt express the fact that in the division of labour and economic specialization, Poland was an agricultural producer successful enough to leave maritime transport, and the transport of Polish

¹⁰ C. Verdiani, "Problemy wzorców polskiej 'Legendy o św. Aleksym'", in: *Średniowiecze. Studia o kulturze*, ed. J. Lewański, vol. 4 (Wrocław, 1968), pp. 56–191; for the text of the legend, see *ibid.*, pp. 136–143.

¹¹ M. Rej, *Zwierciadło*, ed. J. Czubek, J. Łoś, vol. 2 (Cracow, 1914), p. 325.

¹² S. Klonowic, *Flis to jest spuszczenie statków Wisłą i innymi rzekami do niej przypadającymi*, ed. S. Hrabec (Wrocław, 1951), p. 30.

grain, to others. A lack of interest in the sea – only the sea itself, not maritime trade, transport and fishing – is nevertheless expressed in the poverty of linguistic terms associated with the sea, that there was no spontaneous initiative to give names to areas of water (although the coastline itself was frequently given names). For as there were no incentives in the form of ownership rights to give such names, so there was no need to create material divisions.

The development of settlements delineated and shaped the natural environment in which man lived. This primarily involved an adaptation to the opportunities offered by the qualities of the soil and the natural terrain. Following the path of the two river networks predominant in Poland, people settled in the forests and plains. In densely populated areas, the area of forest dwindled, reaching one third of its original size by the end of the Middle Ages, but in less populated areas and in Lithuania, the area of forests remained vast, covering most of these areas. It is estimated that in central and Western Wielkopolska at the end of the 14th century, forests covered over half the area of land.¹³

Regardless of the differences in population density and husbandry, the local land was divided into arable and settled land on the one hand, and unsettled and "deserted" (*puste*) land on the other. This last word, appearing in old Polish usually to describe an area husbanded by man and subsequently deserted, also means a place devoid of people. That is the sense in which Polish translations of the Bible use the word to describe African deserts, the Dead Sea, and distant places where an evil soul hides after leaving the body (Luke 11, 24), whereas in historical documents it is used to describe forested areas not put to agricultural use.¹⁴ A 15th-century text translates the Latin *vasta solitudo* as a "broad expanse of empty wilderness."¹⁵ That is the meaning applied to the term "desert" in the 14th and 15th centuries, especially in reference to border areas and the Polish-Lithuanian border: "*vastitatem al. pustinya Horoszowcze*" (1448), "*terram [...] in et super vastitate al. na pustini [...] terra Podolie*" (1448), "*deserciam al. pustinya, dictum Padmona*" (1451).¹⁶ The fact that some of these "deserts" have the name "pustynie" may

¹³ K. J. Hładylowicz, *Zmiany krajobrazu i rozwój osadnictwa w Wielkopolsce od XIV do XIX wieku* (Lviv, 1932), p. 78.

¹⁴ *Słownik staropolski*, vol. 7, no. 5 (Cracow, 1975), pp. 397–400; *Słownik łaciny średniowiecznej w Polsce* (Warsaw, 1969), vol. 3, no. 1, col. 395–396.

¹⁵ *Słownik staropolski*, vol. 7, no. 5, p. 398.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 400–401.

suggest that they were areas that were already settled or used to be settled, but it is possible that a large area of unused land bordering farmland and used to grow crops and breed animals was given its own name. It is significant that in translations of the Bible and in descriptions of Biblical scenes, a synonym for desert (*pustynia*) is the word *puszcza*, although they may not at all have been forested areas (we also note this meaning in the Lithuanian statute quoted above). For a *puszcza*, meaning a large forested area not husbanded by man, is the opposite of a settled area. Although in old Polish this word is used to describe forest areas in general, in the latter part of the Middle Ages, following major colonization, this term began to be used in contrast to the word *las* (in Latin a contrast of the terms *desertum* and *forestum*), which was used to describe a small forested area owned and managed by someone. A *puszcza* was also managed, it provided animals, honey and forest produce, but it was untamed by man and a rather murky and ominous area. Behind the dark line of trees there was a world of demons which might be dangerous to people but which could be put to use with the aid of magic charms. A great forested area was uncharted land to which human hands imparted a new countenance by turning it into an area of cultivation. Colonization plans were meant to ensure a regular spread of agriculture to forest areas, involving certain landowner obligations.¹⁷ The limit between a *puszcza* and a settled area must have made a major impact on people's spatial imagination, judging by the multitude of words used to describe various forest areas and the increasing specialist terminology in medieval Latin documents. To the general word *las* (*silva*, *nemus*) were added descriptive words such as "dark" or "dense." Separate Latin terms were used to describe particular types of forest, although these may have been translations of common Slav or old Polish words that had survived in place names and in Slav folklore. A 15th-century document relating to Mazovia gives three names: *w lesye, w dombrowye, w boru*.¹⁸ The use of these words in Slav folklore confirms that these are distinct names: a *las* is mainly deciduous, a *bór* is coniferous, and a *dąbrowy* forest means it is a forest of oak trees (*dąb*) or mainly oak trees. Moszyński, quoting a 15th-century record

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 402 (entry: *puszczany*).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, no. 3 (Warsaw, 1954), p. 142; vol. 2, no. 2 (Warsaw, 1957), p. 42; vol. 4, no. 1 (Warsaw, 1963), p. 3.

of a dense overgrown forest commonly called a *gozd* (“cum densis nemoribus et opacis silvis vulgariter gosdi dictis”), that the term *gozd* or *gwozd* meant a mountain forest in rocky areas, in contrast to a *łag*, which was a forest in low-lying areas.¹⁹ The word *gaj*, originally referring to sacred Slav sites, appears in 14th- and 15th-century Latin documents as *gaius* (or *gaiutri*) and describes a small forest, usually deciduous. It is significant that this Latinized Slav word is described in the most various Polish expressions (*vulgariter*), thus: *gay*, *zapust*, *zapusta*, *debrz*, *krang* and *kanth*.

The multitude of names is not just the result of the classification of forest areas according to their use, but also the result of observing nature, which provided examples of different types of forest. This is shown by the use of various names in the naming of places;²⁰ e.g. *Zagość*, meaning a settlement located beyond a *gozd*.

The vast number of geographical terms in old Polish describe the physical characteristics of land. In 1905, before the great works of Polish lexicography, Franciszek Bujak noted several dozen Polish terms to describe marshy, wet or boggy land.²¹ It is worth citing them to illustrate the richness of this vocabulary (although it no doubt requires verification and even expansion): *brodno*, *brodło*, *brudno*, *brno*; *bagno*; *bloto*; *bebło*; *bielawy*; *chobot*; *chechło*; *chrapy*, *chropy*; *chebdy*; *cembrzucha*; *grądy*; *gręza* and *zęza*; *krempa*; *kujawy*; *kaleń*, *kalej*, *kalisz*; *kałuża*; *łęg*, *ług*, *łużyce*; *mokre*, *mokrsko*, *mokrzyisko*, *mokrzesa*, *moczydło*, *moczydlica*, *moczar*; *młaka* and *młoka*; *pleśń*, *pleśnica*; *pałuki*; *słotwina*, *słocina*; *topiel*; *tymienica*.

Referring to linguistic items, we have difficulties dating them. Obviously, most of this terminology is derived from old Slav languages, but it is important that they persist in language and retains their function, thus constituting a matrix of collective imagination and mentality. This applies especially to place names, an important linguistic source for historians.

Research into Slav place names has considerably improved our knowledge of their meaning and on how and when they appeared.

¹⁹ K. Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa Słowian* (Warsaw, 1968), vol. 2 p. 49. Cf. *Słownik staropolski*, vol. 2, p. 477.

²⁰ List in: *Słownik łaciny średniowiecznej w Polsce*, vol. 4, col. 482; and A. Samsonowicz, “Ze studiów nad terminologią leśną średniowiecznej Polski”, in: *Szkice z dziejów materialnego bytowania społeczeństwa polskiego*, ed. M. Dembińska (Warsaw, 1989), pp. 59–86.

²¹ F. Bujak, “Studia nad osadnictwem Małopolski”, *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Humanistyczno-Filozoficzny*, 47 (1905), p. 122.

Historians associate place names with the history of settlements, changes to the geographical environment and social and political system, and have attempted to classify them according to their meaning.²² Without entering into the rules by which such classifications were made, one can determine why people settled in particular places and gave them particular names. The largest group of names reflects the local topography. Out of the 3,175 place names in Małopolska contained in the *Liber beneficiorum*, a description by Jan Długosz of parishes and possessions in the Cracow diocese, 1,340 or 42 percent of the names are topographical.²³ Topographical names indicate the type of soil (Roztoka, Skąpa, Góra, Zagórze, Jamno, Brzeg, Mokre, Suche, Piaseczno, Krzemień), the local flora (Szczawnica, Lipnik, Cisowo, Brzozowagać, Brzeziny, Zalasewo, Podlesie) and the fauna, though in this case it could refer to people with names similar to animals (Wilki, Rysie, Borsuki, Orle, Jastrzębia Góra, Żurawiniec, Wilczy Ług).

The meaning of many place names also indicates human activity to transform the natural landscape, e.g. Poręba, Wyreby, Trzebowiski, Trzebień, Przysieka, Żary, Łaziska, Karczowisko. Some names reflect the social status of a settlement (numerous Wolas and Lgotas, places temporarily exempt from rent and compulsory work), market days (Środa, Piątek, Targowisko) and religion (Świątamarza Marzy, Święte Miejsce, Kościelec, Wsześwięte). Some names recall an event of which there is usually no precise information (Tumidaj, Bógzapłać, Wdzięczność, Zazdrość). Names relating to ethnic groups serve as evidence of migration and settlement (Pomorzany, Prusy, Węгры, Przemyślany, Raciborzany). Diminutive names suggest the names of their founders (Janówek – Janów, Borzęcinek – Borzęcin, Wroniniec – Wronin, Brudzewek – Brudzew).

Thus, in the names of places we find a description of the natural landscape, ownership relations, settlement processes, human toil and family structures. The process of naming places shows that first there is a vacant place which, through human toil, is gradually transformed into a settlement, with its relevant social and family divisions.²⁴

²² W. Taszycki, *Słowiańskie nazwy miejscowe (Ustalenie podziału)* (Cracow, 1946); S. Urbańczyk, "W sprawie chronologii słowiańskich nazw miejscowych", *Prace Onomastyczne*, 5 (1961), pp. 129–145; S. Rospond, *Problem chronologizacji w toponomastyce słowiańskiej* (Warsaw, 1978; Z polskich studiów slawistycznych, 5), pp. 509–516.

²³ Bujak, *Studia nas osadnictwem*, p. 114.

²⁴ A. Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian* (Warsaw, 1982), p. 228.

In reading old place names as a source of culture, we are dealing with a description of time and space. Medieval man was probably not aware that archaic names were a record of the past, just as 20th century man rarely associates the names of places with the distant past which they conceal.

Nevertheless, in most cases medieval man read in a place name a reference to an “event” – geographical, social, family – with which the place was closely associated. One can also surmise, although researchers are skeptical about this, that sometimes names gave a certain aesthetic sensitivity to the landscape. The naming of places involved the perpetuation of signs which, even if they ceased to be used in their original form, nevertheless aroused a spatial awareness through their association with the beginnings, i.e. according to time. The setting of borders during settlement processes expanded the process of giving names beyond human settlement to cover the entire territory, whereby imparting meaningful or mythical elements to places and border points, a kind of “fictionalization of space,” was a way of not just perpetuating memories of division and borders, but also of getting to know and taming the terrain.²⁵

2. Boundaries: Property and Sanctity

The acquisition of territory was not merely a process that took place between people and nature. It was also a social process, involving distribution and division. Borders acquired significance vis-à-vis various types of territory: private property, church lands and state provinces. In all of these cases, divisions came into being very slowly and gradually. For a long time, natural barriers served as divisions: rivers, forests and mountains.²⁶ As in modern times, the American frontier represented a movable, shifting border of settlement and enfranchisement, so in medieval Poland we observe a mobility of divisions. The presence of huge areas of unsettled land allowed the expansion of or changes to a territory’s borders, while the eastward expansion of the Polish monarchy at the end of the Middle Ages created new

²⁵ J. Banaszkiwicz, “Fabularyzacja przestrzeni. Średniowieczny przykład granic”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 86 (1979), pp. 987–999.

²⁶ B. Zientara, “Frontiera”, in: *Enciclopedia Einaudi*, vol. 6 (Torino, 1979), pp. 403 ff.

border areas. Thus, the borders of a territory were to a considerable extent flexible and open. Not even the steady consolidation of the Church's organization in medieval Poland led to a final settlement of borders. The parish network was not full, the parishes were not clearly demarcated, and empty spaces existed between one parish and the next (parishes consisted of specific villages together with their lands, and not a specific geographical area). Although considerable certainty regarding the limits of individual borders is noted in the 15th century, efforts to regulate parish boundaries were undertaken as early as the 12th century.²⁷ This was in any case associated with the general process of a stricter demarcation of territory according to commercial and ownership criteria, as a result of the general expansion of settlements.

The need to fix borders was connected with the need to make property or groups of property immune from general jurisdiction or to enfranchise arable land "belonging to no-one." It was necessary to separate a given area from the agrarian structure consisting of a complicated network of collective and individual rights; it became necessary to fix a linear boundary. This process acquired various legal procedures and developed into a public event. Initially, a boundary was set by the duke himself, or his representative, who personally walked or rode around the whole territory with a considerable entourage.²⁸ This is how source documents describe the fixing of the boundaries of Trzebnica by Henry the Bearded in the early 13th century, mentioning cuts on trees (*arborum significazione*) and border mounds (*aggerum erectione*), as well as the deposit of border stones.²⁹ Special stakes were also driven into the ground as border markers. The circuit of borders on foot (*circuitio*) or horse (*circumequitatio*) was common practice, and Polish medieval documents are full of such descriptions, as well as descriptions of settlement undertakings and of disputes that led to the fixing of boundaries. The names of places such as Ujazd and Ochodza, probably formulated when this custom was not yet widespread, testify to this. It is interesting, and proves the firm

²⁷ E. Wiśniowski, *Rozwój organizacji parafialnej w Polsce do czasów Reformacji*, in: *Kościół w Polsce*, vol. 1: *Średniowiecze* (Cracow, 1968), pp. 237–372; W. Wójcik, *Ze studiów nad synodami polskimi* (Lublin, 1982), p. 38 ff.

²⁸ Bujak, *Studia nad osadnictwem*, p. 171.

²⁹ B. Zientara, *Henryk Brodaty i jego czasy* (Warsaw, 1975), p. 112.

establishment of the practice of fixing boundaries, that the Polish term was Latinized in various forms (*granicies, granicio, granicialis*), and in addition was adopted by German settlers. That is probably the origin of the German word *Grenze*.³⁰

The fixing of borders was not just public, but ceremonious. The cuts on trees were in the form of a cross. Where the subject was contentious, groups of neighbours attended. The documents showing the boundaries were drawn up and exhibited at the location (*in graniciebus*), immediately after the boundary-fixing ceremony.³¹ Legal custom required that the person establishing the boundary should sit on a log to hear the parties and witnesses.³² If a boundary ran along a stream, it was necessary to wade into the water barefoot. In the court records of Wielkopolska, we find an entry describing a boundary dispute between “Mrs. Rogowska” and “Mrs. Ludomska” from 1398. Apart from an official sent by the court, the procedure was attended by the local community, as usual. The official took his boots off and waded into the water, but everyone else preferred to walk alongside the stream. An argument broke out between the parties, and some people pushed others into the stream. It was said: “When you go, you shall swear,” which expressed the link between swearing an oath about the boundary and its physical establishment.³³ But the issue was not formally settled then because “having arrived at the scene, they erected two mounds without swearing the oath.” The earth was to have been sworn at the boundary place agreed upon which, as Brückner has said, “could be any natural feature (tree, trench, stream, etc.) suitable to serve as a boundary between properties.”³⁴

Without delving into the legal contents and the origins of the customs making up “boundary law,” it should be noted that they contain a clear magical element and an awareness that the fixing of

³⁰ Borst, *Lebensformen*, p. 164.

³¹ *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Z archiwum tak zwanego bernardyńskiego*, vol. 13: *Najdawniejsze zapiski sądów przemyskich i przeworskiego, 1436–1468* (Lviv, 1888), p. 429 (1463): “in loco granicierum”; *Zbiór Dokumentów Małopolskich* (hereinafter: ZDM), part 3: *Dokumenty z lat 1442–1450*, ed. S. Kuraś (Wrocław, 1969), no. 679, p. 117 (1444); Cf. *ibid.*, no. 734, p. 189 (1446).

³² *Ibid.*, no. 734, p. 188: “iudicialiter sedentes in arbore fracta, alias Nakłodzycze.”

³³ *Wielkopolskie rotty sądowe XIV–XV wieku*, vol. 1: *Roty poznańskie*, oprac. H. Kowalewicz, J. Kuraszkiwicz (Poznań, 1959), no. 396.

³⁴ A. Brückner, *Dzieje kultury polskiej*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1957), p. 62.

boundaries involved an element of nature of the supernatural. This may be due to the fact that in the 15th century, it was still common to swear oaths on the sun, a custom possibly acquired from Bohemia, where the person swearing appeared barefoot, indicating the need for direct contact with nature, whereby he first waded through the water and then trod the land, turned towards the sun and swore his oath (this custom is described by Czech sources; Polish 15th-century sources say only that knights took this oath by spreading their fingers towards the sun).³⁵

Boundary descriptions are full of a variety of names that cannot be identified with settlements. Of course, this conforms to the need for topographical precision and memory: a description perpetuated in a name ensures that the boundary is embedded in the memory. But in this case, the giving of names was not only a technique. In documents describing the boundaries between villages and properties, one notices the difficulty with translating Polish names into Latin, as scribes were not always able to find a Latin equivalent. Establishing a conventional boundary line, it was necessary to refer to the characteristic features of the terrain and to the names adopted by custom. Forests, hills and rivers were permanent markers. Rivers had their own names, as did streams and lakes, but forests and hills also occasionally had their own names (forests: *Okrągły Gaj*, *Kąt Boru*, *Przeryty Bór*, *Ulików*, *Sobianów*, *Korzeń*). Visual and folk tale associations led to names such as Babinek and Kukła.³⁶ Boundaries were also marked by roads, a cultural element introduced to the landscape by man. These were named after the places where they led, but occasionally from their characteristics, for example: *gościniec Lissakowsky*, *Solna droga* and *Krzywa droga*.³⁷ Individual fields, meadows and pastureland also bore their own names, such as *Wodomecz Wielgie pole*, *Male pole*, *Gory*; pastures: *Mischowa*, *Crolowlaszek*, *Napędzidło*; meadows: *Kłoda*, *Suchegorki*, *Mesikanth*. A document from 1391, connected with a dispute, lists the following names: roads: *Krzyszchowa droga*, *Moczydlna droga*; fields: *Pasieczna niwa*, *Clinecz*, *Clucz*,

³⁵ Swearing an oath by the sun remains a contentious issue: *ibid.*, p. 528; W.A. Semkowicz, *Przysięga na słońce* (Cracow, 1916); Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, pp. 446 ff.; Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian*, p. 133.

³⁶ ZDM, part 4: *Dokumenty z lat 1211–1400*, ed. S. Kuraś, I. Sułkowska-Kuraś (Wrocław, 1969), p. 73; ZDM, part 3, p. 34.

³⁷ ZDM, part 3, p. 34; ZDM, part 5: *Dokumenty z lat 1401–1440*, ed. S. Kuraś (Wrocław, 1970), p. 122.

Zawadzinske kole, Welikanywa; forest: Ocrangligay, pastures: Slobowalanka, Dobroschowska lanka, Zbojne, Potrkowkierz; and finally various settlements (*loci*): Jablonka, Socolow damb, Corithko, Sadowa rola, Kluczowa gruszka.³⁸ Ethnographers, linguists and historians were surprised to note that even lakes received their own names according to the way they were divided.³⁹

The fixing of borders, involving the use of natural features, also led to the creation of conventional signs such as cuts on trees, mounds and rocks. Sometimes these assumed a life of their own and were given names, regardless of their boundary function.⁴⁰ Mounds erected as boundaries were similar to cromlechs and funerary mounds, which also served to mark borders and which were additionally the subject of folklore.⁴¹ People probably forgot that these mounds were artificial, built on purpose.

Rocks and boulders used as boundary markers were also given their own names and inspired legends. Surviving megalithic monuments were described as the “graves of giants” and served as markers.⁴²

The linear boundary of properties and land usually took the form of a belt of unploughed land, which retained its rural border name until modern times. In medieval times, the term “border” appeared as *gadis*, *meta*, *limes*, *semita*. In *Liber beneficiorum*, Długosz notes that a boundary was identified by a continuity of its features.⁴³ The width of a boundary also depended on its function. Very often, they also served as access roads to fields, around which disputes also arose.⁴⁴

³⁸ ZDM, part 4, pp. 225–262.

³⁹ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 844.

⁴⁰ R. Kiersnowski, “Znaki graniczne w Polsce średniowiecznej”, *Archeologia Polski*, 5 (1960), pp. 257–289; Banaszkiwicz, *Fabularyzacja przestrzeni*.

⁴¹ Interesting material on the subject of mounds is presented by R. Kiersnowski, “Mogiły i cmentarzyska pomorskie w przekazach źródeł pisanych z wieku XII–XIV”, *Materiały Zachodnio-Pomorskie*, 1 (1955), pp. 109–142.

⁴² Cf. *Pommerellisches Urkundenbuch*, edc. M. Perlbach (Danzig, 1882), no. 327 (document of Father Mestwina from 1281). Ethnographical material presented by Baruch, *Boże stopki. Archeologia i folklor kamieni z wyżłobionymi śladami stóp* (Warsaw, 1907).

⁴³ *Ioannis Dlugossii Liber beneficiorum dioecesis cracoviensis*, vol. 1 (Cracoviae, 1863), p. 101: “agri distincti sunt per myedze et nyaszdy.”

⁴⁴ W. Kuraszewicz, A. Wolff, *Zapiski i rotę polskie XV–XVI wieku. Z ksiąg sądowych ziemi warszawskiej* (Cracow, 1950), no. 800, p. 64.

The problem of boundaries and boundary markers is associated with the division of land and with its organization according to ownership status. Severe written and common law rules protected the inviolability of borders. Folk beliefs, recorded at the close of the 19th century, supplemented the law and provided additional protection of boundaries: the spirits of the dead were said to watch over boundaries, “unclean” objects connected with the dead person were placed at village boundaries, and a cruel death awaited anyone who moved a boundary stone or excavated a mound. There is no doubt that optical features made a great impression on medieval people when associated with a boundary, therefore increasing importance was attached to demarcating a border and creating certain guarantees of its inviolability. But all of these conventionalized procedures and name-giving efforts harboured a psychological process of taming the land. Boundaries closed off an area where people lived, worked and prayed; they restricted the place of the individual, family and group in the microcosmos. Thus, medieval man expanded his territory, turned vast, open spaces into new territory and arranged life in closed and divided areas of territory.

Creating boundaries not only afforded protection against the aims of neighbours and intruders, but created a new quality of the terrain. Names given to territory reflected a certain new quality. On the one hand, there were names like *Raj*, *Rajsko*, *Rajec*, and *Paradyż* (from the Latin *paradisus*, meaning paradise) and, on the other hand, *Piektło*, *Piekielko*, *Piekielnik*, denoting hell. Thus, they not only represented fertile and beautifully situated locations, but also barren land, in other words extreme opposites.⁴⁵ The enclosure of an area within a boundary, for example inside a family circle (“hearth”), or within walls and palisades, created a closed area where people could undertake activity.

In an exhaustive study into the magical and religious aspects of dividing space,⁴⁶ Stefan Czarnowski used the example of ancient Rome, but also referred to Chinese geomancy and old Polish boundary laws, to highlight the importance of boundaries and people’s imaginings about the strength of spirits. The fixing of boundaries, he writes, presents a closed space to the rest of the world, and at the same time

⁴⁵ W. Taszycki, “Pierwiastek chrześcijański w polskich nazwach miejscowych”, in: id., *Rozprawy i studia polonistyczne*, vol. 1: *Onomastyka* (Warsaw, 1958), p. 276.

⁴⁶ S.Z. Czarnowski, “Podział przestrzeni i jej rozgraniczenie w religii i magii”, in: id., *Dziela*, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1956), pp. 221–236.

creates a religious unity within an existing community. He states: "The effect of creating a separate territorial unity is the creation of favourable living conditions for daily life by removing the harmful impact of spiritual forces, in other words desacralization. On the other hand, desacralization can mean the liberation of a place of cult, meaning the choice by a priest of the location of a temple with the aid of a gesture, magic wand or spell is sacralization."

Expanding the concept of sacralization, this can mean not merely choosing a sacred site for a temple, but also erecting sacred features inside a separated area. Witold Taszycki has shown the impact of the names of saints and of Christian symbols on the naming of places. Some traditional names dating from pre-Christian times associated with cults were also subject to Christianization. This may apply to place names containing the word "saint," or the Cracow name "Mogiła," which refers to a pre-Christian mound.⁴⁷ The same boundary-fixing role was fulfilled by signs carved onto rocks, which were no doubt a pre-Christian custom. A physical tour of the boundaries on foot or horse represents a symbolic closing of the circle which, as with oaths sworn before mounds and entering into the ditches from which the earth for the mounds was obtained, may be regarded a magical practice intended to protect a specific territory. The words of a Warsaw oath, used to fix the borders of a possession, sound like a magic formula: *Where I have gone, there is my right, while Nicolaus' (land) is on the left, and in this way we have been separated for ever, so help me God and the Holy Cross.*"⁴⁸

The customs accompanying the fixing of boundaries in old religions included sacrifices as a result of which boundary markers assumed cult status and could be considered "the boundaries of the gods." Certain Polish customs accompanying the setting of boundaries may be durations of old customs: beating a boy with a stick near a freshly-erected mound may have been meant to impress the new boundary into memory, but it could also have been a ritual.

Inside an enclosed area, the community strove to counteract evil forces and ensure happiness, for if the area was used and inhabited, not only its natural features were involved, but also the supernatural forces active there. The religious processions led by priests, circuiting

⁴⁷ Taszycki, *Pierwiastek chrześcijański*, p. 278 and *passim*.

⁴⁸ Kuraszewicz, Wolff, *Zapiski i roty*, no. 799, p. 64 (modernized spelling).

arable fields to ensure good crops or counteract drought, was an act in favour of a specific community within its enclosed area. In each area a local patron was worshipped. The custom of expelling evil forces or confessing one's sins reached deep into the past and expressed the spiritual communion of a society enclosed within its borders.⁴⁹ The building of palisades around villages to protect them from plague (in distant India, the "epidemic cart" was taken beyond the village boundary) was meant to be a magical barrier between the village and the "wilderness," or unknown remainder of the world, from where an epidemic might originate. This illustrates the connection between demarcating an area and the formation of a magic circle creating an area that was subject to joint action. Apart from being a conventional dividing line, a boundary is a space possessing its own characteristics, "different in nature to the land adjoining it."⁵⁰ For as we have seen, a boundary was an element of the "wilderness" encroaching upon a settled and husbanded territory. It is on the boundary, as on the branches of trees, upon which "evil," wrapped in a cloth, was cast out of peasant huts. Ghosts and demons, usually harmful, haunted boundaries as they were believed to haunt isolated and desolate areas. Invisible beings and all evil influences were said to wander along boundaries and roads.⁵¹ That is where the evil strangler was said to lie in wait for reapers talking a nap.⁵² If we assume that sanctity, in other words the supernatural world, extends beyond a settled area (and a temple or place of cult attracts these forces to this area, thus turning the area sacred), then any boundary is a sacred place in itself. The etymology of the Polish word *miedza*, meaning boundary, may also reveal an analogy with sacred places and temples which, even if not located in a central position, were nevertheless regarded as the central points of the settlement because the action of sanctity, i.e. the action of supernatural forces, radiated from them.

⁴⁹ *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, vol. 2, part 2 (Wrocław, 1965), p. 444.

⁵⁰ Czarnowski, *Podział przestrzeni*, p. 227.

⁵¹ Cf. Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 712.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 690 ff.

3. *Sacrum* and *profanum* in Organized Space

In medieval imaginations about open and closed spaces – both enclosed and unenclosed – the criterion of sanctity played an important role, as we have seen. Notwithstanding the spread of Christianity, this led to a division of the world into a sphere of man and a sphere of supernatural forces, whereby medieval culture imposed on this division a hierarchical structure; different spheres of sanctity and profanity. Apart from a horizontal division into “settled areas” and “wilderness,” there was also a vertical division in which the surface of the earth, man’s abode, was divided with “above”; in other words, heaven, the home of the gods and all good forces, and “below,” the inside of the earth and the bottom of the seas, the abode of the devil and the forces of evil. Enclosing this space within a house or settlement, man aimed to create a convenient arrangement in relation to good and evil forces, for he viewed his own microcosm in terms of a macrocosm.

In his abovementioned treatise, Czarnowski wrote that selecting a sacred spot within a settlement attracted supernatural forces: “The macrocosm enters into the microcosm and is contained within it. A sacred place is something more than a summary and image of the world: it is the world. It encloses the cosmos and is equivalent to it.”⁵³

One can relate these words not just to a temple itself, but also to the way in which an enclosed space is arranged. A house or settlement is arranged according to its economic and practical functions, but also in a manner that ensures the support of natural forces within the area; in other words, it is adapted to the actions of these forces. In areas inhabited by man, where he leads his daily life, the sacred element becomes present through rituals in which the magic component is combined with liturgical and paraliturgical Christian activity.

This rule is fulfilled mainly by enclosing an inhabited space as a fort or house. These sacred features of boundaries should also be ascribed to walls.⁵⁴ In peasant huts, particular magical significance was attached to coal, ceiling beams and the entrance threshold. Slav tradition contains the custom, confirmed in modern times, of burying beneath the house threshold various objects believed to have the

⁵³ Czarnowski, *Podział przestrzeni*, p. 226.

⁵⁴ *Księgi sądowe łęczyckie od 1385 do 1419, Teki Pawińskiego* (Warsaw, 1897), vol. 3, p. 541 (1398); Cf. also ZDM, part 5, p. 380 (1437).

magic power of keeping evil forces at bay and preventing them from entering. In Poland, we do not encounter traces of the Russian custom of burying stillborn infants (or dead children) beneath the threshold of a house, but certain elements of beliefs connected with the threshold seem to refer to this custom.⁵⁵ Archeological excavations have shown that various items were buried for this purpose in the Middle Ages: a black rooster, an egg or the head of an animal.⁵⁶ Diatribes against medieval superstitions suggest that many of these customs continued to be practiced under the cloak of Christianity.

These sacrifices involved the belief in a house spirit looking after the family and protecting it against “outside” demons.⁵⁷ It was meant to act within the household, but had no assigned place. Modern-day descriptions of folk beliefs say that the house spirit resided mainly in a stable or pig-sty (which, as we know, were attached to the cottage or stood separately within the village), or occasionally a corner near the fire or stove. The house spirit was endowed with the epithet “poor,” which Stanisław Urbańczyk associates with the fact that in the Christian era, the house spirit was included in the sphere of condemned superstitions, and thus regarded as a “poor creature.”⁵⁸ But even if this linguistic hypothesis is true, it does not alter the fact that this “poor creature” is still remembered and its protection is believed in. A similar protective role was fulfilled by the custom of blessing a house, the product of both Christian piety and pagan tradition. The Silesian Mikołaj of Jawor notes at the beginning of the 15th century the widespread custom of writing on the wall the date of the first thunderclap in the year, which was meant to protect the house against a lightning strike.⁵⁹ Covering a house in greenery (a custom brought over by German colonists according to some, and an ordinary Slav tradition according to others), or bringing objects into the house that were consecrated in church, were also activities

⁵⁵ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 581 ff.

⁵⁶ Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian*, p. 237; J. Tomicka, R. Tomicki, *Drzewo życia. Ludowa wizja świata i człowieka* (Warsaw, 1975), p. 129 ff.

⁵⁷ Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa*, vol. 2, part 1, p. 662 ff.; Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian*, p. 234.

⁵⁸ S. Urbańczyk, *Religia pogańskich Słowian* (Cracow, 1947), p. 44.

⁵⁹ S. Bylina, “*Licitum – illicitum*. Mikołaj z Jawora o pobożności masowej i zabo-nach”, in: *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. B. Geremek (Wrocław, 1978), p. 150.

to bless a house. We do not know whether there were any Christian artefacts inside a peasant's cottage, but the wearing of charms or amulets was a subject of condemnation by preachers; one can assume that objects like these were often hung in the house. Our scant knowledge of the plans of rural settlements and homes makes it impossible to reconstruct their interiors, but no doubt the residents would have been crowded in a single room. Later, homes were divided into a "dark" and a "bright" or "white" part. The dark part would have been sleeping quarters equipped with a fire without a chimney (dark because it was filled with smoke), and the bright part, either without heating or fitted with a stove and chimney, would have been grander. In such a layout, and this applies to the homes of prosperous people, lower nobility and rural peasants, we see a division into daily life and Sundays and holidays. This division was also reflected in the broader layout of castles and manors. Furnishings depended on the prosperity and social status of the owners. An important part of prosperous households was the outside courtyard, where meetings, jousts and spectacles were staged. Inside, the great hall, sometimes known as the palace, off which chambers led, was also significant. Due to the different lifestyle of the nobility, the division into workdays and holidays inside their homes was not as sharp as in peasant households. Therefore, the higher the social and financial status, the greater the residential role of house, which provided the conditions in which to spend "free time." This was an external sign of the owner's social status and prestige. One can surmise that belief in the magic properties of wood beams and of coal also existed among the residents of prosperous homes, no doubt introduced by rural workers. In larger residences, private chapels appeared. Castles founded by bishops, which played such an important role in the development of secular architecture in the 14th and 15th centuries, certainly had separate chapels as a matter of course. A castle in Uniejowo built in the 14th century, subsequently developed into a brick fortress, included a separate residential house and a chapel. Gothic castles in Silesia had chapels located in their courtyards or near the main rooms, or above the castle gates (to make an impression); the castle in Namysłów has its chapel in a bay above the entrance. Religious objects d'art were an important part of furnishings, but their aesthetic value came second to their prime purpose of encouraging prayer and sacred devotion inside the home.

In castles, the requirements of defence and architectural traditions resulted in tall constructions. This applied not only to defensive towers, which often served as accommodation, but also the residential quarters themselves, which consisted of several storeys and rose to significant heights. Residential buildings in the cities were similar. One must remember that most of the houses in cities, especially smaller ones, and in the suburbs of larger cities, were modest, similar to rural cottages, because they consisted of a chamber and a parlour. Larger dwellings, as with rural houses, had a large entrance hall. Until the end of the Middle Ages, houses were built mainly of wood, but in the 15th century more multi-storey housing began to be constructed, particularly in compact market centres such as Cracow and Poznań. Due to the high prices of urban plots, especially in market cities, burghers' houses were narrow and tall. This can be seen especially in Pomeranian cities within the territory of the Teutonic Order. Henryk Samsonowicz says that height is an additional element of the urban concept of space, which assumes three dimensions.⁶⁰

In urban dwellings, it was important to combine commercial and residential elements. In most cases, urban houses were similar to rural housing; they had gardens and animal pens for breeding, but they also possessed specifically urban facilities such as artisan workshops and stores, usually on the ground floor. In Pomerania, storerooms were located in the attic or on upper floors. Residential quarters preserved the previously-mentioned dual division into spaces for sleeping and eating, and places for ceremonious entertainment (*stuba alba*), and remaining rooms. On a vertical level, the higher the floor, the more valuable the rooms. Urban workers rented their premises on an upper floor or in the basement. It is significant that in wills, following the division of the estate, widows were provided with two rooms fulfilling these two functions. In the case of urban housing, developing with the owner's wealth and social status, the "residential" part of the house assumed greater importance; the plans of manors, castles and houses envisaged an aim for privacy, for which certain rooms were richly furnished with paintings and sculpture. There is no information on the extent to which Polish burghers' houses had private

⁶⁰ H. Samsonowicz, "Pojęcie przestrzeni w mieście średniowiecznym", in: *Problemy nauk pomocniczych historii*, ed. J. Szymański, vol. 3 (Katowice, 1974), pp. 7–15.

chapels or portable altars, as was the case on the West in the late Middle ages, but religious objects such as icons did appear in houses, depending on the owner's wealth. Nevertheless, patrician residences sometimes emulated castles and included chapels. In Cracow, the house of Karniowski ("pod Baranami"), had a great hall on the first floor (*palatium*) with a chapel protruding over the street.

In cottages, manors and houses, the space was arranged in a manner that ensured rest and commercial activity which had to be performed in closed spaces, offered defence against intruders, and afforded a prestigious residential purpose. Space in religious buildings had to comply with liturgical requirements on the one hand, and had to express the power of the Church on the other. Without going into detail regarding architecture or liturgy, let us examine the internal arrangement of churches in view of the influence they exerted on people during this period. The influence was bipolar, proceeding in two directions. As Adam Miłobędzki correctly wrote: "In the late Middle Ages, the development of spatial concepts was connected with changes to architectural systems. Architecture itself provided a satisfactory source of inspiration."⁶¹

A church was a sacred place *par excellence*, and the strict liturgical rituals during which the building was consecrated and "cleansed" in the event of profanation, made a vivid impression of the building's sanctity. The interior was arranged in relation to man, depending on the form in which religion required communion with God. Within the church, people had guaranteed divine protection, and the forces of evil remained at the front door (although medieval storytellers often claimed that demons entered a church together with human sins), and inside a church man had the best conditions for prayer and for attaining grace. A church was meant to cause wonder. It was a place of trust and care; the right of sanctuary afforded by churches was an expression of this. At the same time, it was a place where God appeared in His omnipotence; therefore it had to arouse feelings of fear and humility. A church's internal arrangement, as with its external appearance and internal furnishings, was adapted to these two emotions. The sacred centre is the altar, before which masses are celebrated and where relics and the Eucharist were kept.

⁶¹ A. Miłobędzki, "Architektura Królestwa Polski w XV wieku", in: *Sztuka i ideologia XV wieku*, ed. P. Skubiszewski (Warsaw, 1978), p. 470.

The development of the Eucharistic cult, accompanied by the raising of the host and a ciborium, meant that the sanctity of a church was connected with the Eucharist. One can say that the sanctity of the church radiated concentrically and ended at the entrance to the nave, which “blemished” persons (those excommunicated, penitents, women after confinement) were not allowed to cross. Next to the altar was the place reserved exclusively for the clergy; the seal of Prince Leszek the Black has an image of a bishop’s throne in an unusual situation: the bishops celebrating mass at the altar, but on the other side of the altar the prince kneels. Underlining the distinction between a lord or prosperous master and the common crowd of faithful assumed various forms and occasionally led to the creation of a raised space or gallery, as then a proximity occurred towards the *sacrum*, but in a vertical plane, not horizontal. Space inside a medieval church was arranged in a hierarchical manner, expressed in the way in which the congregation sat: the higher one’s place in the social hierarchy, the closer one sat to the sacred centre of the church.

This also applies to the division between the men’s and women’s areas. In large cathedrals, the nave was reserved for liturgical purposes, whilst the faithful sat in the transept, whereby men sat on one side and women on the other. In Poznań, men stood on the side of the gospels and women on the side of the epistles, but in Cracow it was the other way around.⁶² This difference between the two cathedrals, and in two dioceses, still awaits a more detailed analysis and interpretation, but it certainly did not mean that men were given a “better” place. Churches were usually aligned towards the east. A division into male and female sides was rigorously observed in the custom of the “kiss of peace” during mass. The statute of the bishop of Płock, Jakub of Korzkiew, Syrokomla coat of arm (1396–1425), ordering the return of the old custom of the kiss of peace, says that the kiss should be conveyed to each gender separately, accompanied by the exchange of words “peace be with you” and “amen.”⁶³ It is significant that the Płock document notes the evolution of this custom, which began to be restricted to the area of the choir, i.e. only to the clergy. The kiss of peace instilled

⁶² P. Sczaniecki, *Śłużba Boża w dawnej Polsce. Studia o mszy św.* (Poznań–Warsaw–Lublin, 1962), p. 26, 49.

⁶³ *Synody diecezji płockiej i ich statuty*, ed. J. Sawicki (Warsaw, 1952; *Concilia Poloniae*, 6), pp. 252 ff.; Sczaniecki, *Śłużba Boża*, p. 174.

a feeling of fellowship among the congregation. The intention of the Płock bishop was to stop restricting this custom to the clergy and to unite the celebrating priest, other clerics and the congregation. The limited effect of this venture is that unlike in other countries, where the congregation offered each other the kiss of peace, in Poland they went to kiss the holy relics at the altar.⁶⁴

The interior of churches was arranged to serve the needs of a house of God, but it also fulfilled a social hierarchy and the intention of its founders, seeking a place for themselves in the sphere of *sacrum*. This is why churches contained tombs, including Wawel Cathedral and Silesian churches: the abbey of Głogów holds the effigies of Duke Konrad I of Głogów and his wife Salomea from the end of the 13th century, and the Church of the Holy Cross in Wrocław has a monumental tomb of Henryk IV Probus from the beginning of the 14th century. The hierarchical nature of the church interior is also reflected by the position of the stalls. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the traditional architectural model of cathedrals was still observed, and churches maintained the traditional arrangement of the congregation, where the faithful were separated from the main scene of the liturgy and from the privileged seats, reserved for the clergy and the social elites. But as changes occurred to the model of Catholicism and religious teaching, in line with a trend to make Church services more Christian, especially in Małopolska in the 15th century, there was a trend to reduce the dimensions of churches to a size that suited liturgical purposes and to bring the spatial structure down to a human, more private and more intimate level in relations between God and man, so that the partition between the choir and the nave was removed. This trend could be seen in wooden and brick parish churches and in guild chapels. An architectural historian wrote: "The new churches were smaller, adapted to genuine practical use, and possessed an almost secular nature, in the sense of serving as a place for practicing various kinds of individual and collective devotion and listening to sermons. The dimensions of the church interior had to correspond to the human scale of distance between the congregation and the altar, which together with the ciborium now served the role of the *sacrum*."⁶⁵ The new human scale of church interiors seemed to be associated with

⁶⁴ Sczaniecki, *Służba Boża*, p. 170.

⁶⁵ Miłobędzki, *Architektura Królestwa*, pp. 469–470.

the propagation of Christian contents according to a new concept of *sacrum* spread by religious teaching.

Usually attached to a church was a cemetery, as in the sphere of the living, the sphere of the dead was also governed by hierarchy: burial inside the church was the most prestigious. Cemeteries gradually became separate plots of land, with their own fencing, often a brick wall, and a gate. Cemeteries involved various beliefs and aroused fear. In Slav tradition, the dead were cremated and buried in woods or in wasteland, away from human settlement, and the magic action of a boundary – a heap of stones or a wooden fence – was meant to prevent the dead from “coming back.” The graves of those who had died a violent death were fenced off with staves. The church found it very difficult to compel people to bury their dead solely in cemeteries near the church (reminders to do so continued to be issued in some areas until the 18th century). Many traditional beliefs remained in effect. The fencing of cemeteries and the *sacrum* of churches was meant to prevent the souls of the dead from returning; it is interesting that most ghosts and spectres are associated with those who were not buried in a cemetery on “consecrated ground.”⁶⁶ In the Middle Ages, cemeteries even served as public spaces where congregations gathered on Sundays and engaged in petty trade. Parishioners used them as gardens and forecourts, and they were used as parish schools. At night, the cemetery was the only, or one of the few, illuminated places in the settlement, which attracted people of suspicious character. Entertainments, often prohibited by the Church, were held in cemeteries. Sermons were delivered and theatre plays staged.

A mobile element of sacred organization were processions, occupying a very important place in the late Middle Ages. They took the form of prayers, for example for protection against the plague or drought. On Sundays and the main holidays, processions went around the church. In the 14th century, the dioceses of Wrocław, Płock and Cracow adopted the custom of holding processions on Corpus Christi introduced to the church calendar in 1264, which later spread to the entire country.⁶⁷ At first, Corpus Christi processions took place inside

⁶⁶ A. Labudda, *Liturgia pogrzebu w Polsce do wydania Rytuału Piotrkowskiego (1631)* (Warsaw, 1983), p. 217; *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1962), p. 466.

⁶⁷ Sczaniecki, *Śłużba Boża*, p. 35 ff.

and around churches, but later they extended beyond the cities. This is how Długosz describes a procession in Cracow in 1451: “Zbigniew, cardinal and bishop of Cracow, sang the great service and bore the Most Holy Sacrament in a procession around the Cracow market square. He was followed by King Casimir with Queen Zofia and all the nobles, to the sound of trumpets. The processions of all parish and monastic churches were held at the same time as the castle church procession.”⁶⁸

Apart from the integrating and festive function of processions, one should note the rules of precedence. As the sacred centre of the procession was the Most Holy Sacrament, the order of precedence began with the priest who bore the monstrance: the further away from the sacrum, the worse the position.⁶⁹

The spatial order of a procession found interesting reflection in a dream by a Cracow resident, Weronika, reported by Długosz in 1438.⁷⁰ The framework of this vision was a large procession from the Cracow church of St. Florian to the walls of the city, Wawel Cathedral and back to the church. Weronika saw the church in the shape of stairs, successive levels of which represented moral “ranks”: pilgrims “who want to serve God and the world at the same time,” and prelates, who are “in arce dignitatis ecclesiasticae.” The spatial hierarchy was presented in the classic vertical scale, in which the “top” is perfection and holiness. Spatial organization also applied to settlements; in other words, villages and cities. We have already mentioned the magical significance of the circle formed by the boundaries of a settlement. Although villages and rural settlements were by nature open areas, the construction of additional buildings occasionally led to a tendency of enclosure, an expression of which was the location of gates at distant points of the settlement. We do not know if a square contained within these boundaries was used in the internal life of the village. If the village held markets, then the market place would obviously be the central point. The village tavern was an important part of collective life,

⁶⁸ *Ioannis Dlugossii seu Canonici Cracoviensis Historiae Polonicae Libri XII*, ed. A. Przezdziecki (hereinafter: *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*), vol. 5, Cracoviae, 1878), p. 84.

⁶⁹ H. Zaremska, “Procesje Bożego Ciała w Krakowie w XIV–XVI wieku”, in: *Kultura elitarna*, pp. 25–39.

⁷⁰ *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*, vol. 4 (Cracoviae, 1877), pp. 596–601. Cf. an analysis of the dream: U. Borkowska, “Przykład pobożności mieszczańskiej w XV wieku. Weronika z Krakowa”, in: *Sztuka i ideologia XV wieku*, pp. 111–121.

on account of its trade function and its function as a place of contact, culture and entertainment. A parish church was also a component of a social hierarchy and prestige. A tall belfry integrated the settlement with its surroundings, and the adjoining cemetery created a local community of the living and the dead, consolidating family ties and neighbourly relations. The fact that not every village had a market and parish church created a horizon which, while remaining local, exceeded the bounds of the settlement: the local market and parish network were the basic reference points of a community. Regardless of differences in their size, appearance, arrangement and degree of isolation, cities and villages created a varied and hierarchical organization, of which churches and adjoining cemeteries were a fixture. In addition to Catholic churches there were also Jewish synagogues and Orthodox churches. The municipal parish church, naturally connected with the civic community, coexisted in large cities with the cathedral and with separate parish cloisters. Occasionally, churches were dispersed and could not integrate the urban community.

Settlements were planned according to the basic commercial and social functions of the community, division of labour, the town's defences and the local self-government. Both in semi-agricultural cities, with an open plan, and more enclosed cities organized around trade and crafts, the market square played a primary role. Such a function was already accorded during the planning process, where a rectangular space would serve as the focal point of the settlement (*aedificare more civili*).⁷¹ The market square accommodated the town's authorities, as well as trading stalls and shops. The central location of markets meant that the town hall had to be built on the edge of the square away from the centre, as in Cracow and Poznań, in result of which it was possible to "observe business and measure the pulse of the town" from the windows of the town hall.⁷²

The market square was a very prestigious location and, judging from the prices of land, one notes that the further away from the market square, the less prestigious the location. Population growth,

⁷¹ ZDM, part 6: *Dokumenty króla Władysława Jagiełły z lat 1389–1417*, ed. I. Sułkowska-Kurasiowa, S. Kuraś (Wrocław, 1974), p. 311; Cf. A. Berdecka, *Lokacje i zagospodarowanie miast królewskich w Małopolsce za Kazimierza Wielkiego (1333–1370)* (Wrocław, 1982; *Studia i materiały z historii kultury materialnej*, 55), p. 143.

⁷² J. Wiesiołowski, *Socjotopografia późnośredniowiecznego Poznania* (Warsaw–Poznań, 1982), p. 141.

the development of cities with denser housing, and the appearance of suburbs and “new cities” altered the social-urban landscape, but the tendency of concentric prosperity and prestige in relation to the market square and the town’s chief communication artery persisted. The urban division of labour was reflected in the way members of the same trade settled. Just as there were prestigious places, so too there were “infamous” ones: areas of prostitution, the house of the executioner, dirty or indecent crafts, tanneries and bath-houses, which tended to be located close to water sources and close to or outside the town boundaries or walls.

Urban society affirmed its importance by means of impressive buildings, especially the parish church. In large cities such as Cracow, Lviv, Gdańsk, Torun and Poznań, the parish church was no less ostentatious than the cathedral and town hall, and was decorated equally richly. Town walls also played an important role. Although they were not a common sight in Polish cities, they were regarded not only as a permanent enclosure providing security, but also as an expression of the urban authorities’ freedom. It is significant that town walls often appear on a town’s seal, for they were the most characteristic visual feature of a town and reflected a different lifestyle.

Thus, urban space manifests itself as a rationally planned area, and from town plans one can read its commercial functions and qualities. Approaching a town, a stranger saw obvious symbols of the medieval vision of the world: a tall church tower, the silhouette of a castle, or town hall with a clock, representing municipal culture.

Pilgrimages played an important role in the formation of feelings of space: both those to the world’s centres of Christianity (pilgrims from Cracow could be encountered on routes leading to the Holy Land, Rome and Santiago de Compostela), as well as those to closer destinations. They caused mobility and feelings of interpersonal communion, introducing an element of religion to the establishment of local markets. A town’s reputation as a sacred place, attracting the pious from various parts, boosted its prestige. As Poland’s capital in the 15th century, Cracow had 17 churches which contributed to the city’s splendour.

During pilgrimages, space fulfilled a particular function as a form of contact with the *sacrum*. Merely stepping onto the road was a temporary separation from normality, the *profanum*, in order to concentrate on contact with God. There was no strict divide between the *sacrum* and the *profanum*, on the road pilgrims mingled with wandering merchants,

vagabonds and musicians. For all of them, the sight of a church tower on the horizon was a sign of safety. In the case of pilgrims, the destination of a hard journey was a factor that made overcoming the distance a sacred act. In any case, the distance need not have been great: "A pilgrim may also be satisfied if the sacred journey is of minimum length, enough to circle a holy grave or reach a miraculous spring or grotto, or walk around the object of the cult on one's knees."⁷³ The important thing was the conviction that during the journey, one did not only cross the borders of territories, settlements or parishes, but also the borders of *sacrum*, that one was now entering sacred territory.

4. Geographical Knowledge and Awareness

In a school compendium on the history of the world, one of the most illustrious representatives of the Parisian academic community in the 12th century, Hugo of St. Victor, considered the basis of historical events and the way in which to commit them to memory. He argued that learning history and historical interdependencies should be directed towards three elements: the people who commit deeds, the places where they are committed, and the times when these acts occur.⁷⁴ In medieval writings on the history of the world, as well as in the chronicles of nations, cities and dynasties, we encounter interest in those "places" where "events occur." In the Middle Ages, knowledge of geography, together with elements of cartography, is enshrined mainly in historical writings.⁷⁵

The concept of geography itself was never used in medieval terminology and only came into vogue when Ptolemy's *Introduction to Geography* entered into Western circulation. However, the word "cosmography" appears with a similar meaning, and Vitello described cosmographers as those who describe the Earth (the first translations of Ptolemy in the 15th century continued to use the concept cosmography). Thus, cosmographical text dealt with both astronomy

⁷³ A. Witkowska, *Kulty pątnicze piętnastowiecznego Krakowa. Z badań nad miejską kulturą religijną* (Lublin, 1984), p. 125.

⁷⁴ Cf. A.D. von den Brincken, "Mappa mundi und Chronographia. Studien zur imago mundi des abendländischen Mittelalters", *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 24 (1968), p. 124.

⁷⁵ G.H.T. Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages* (London, 1939).

and theology, because cosmography described the Earth as the work of God.⁷⁶ At the close of the Middle Ages, distant journeys to unknown lands revealed new horizons and created a need to get to know the world better. Nevertheless, medieval teachings insisted on focusing on the place of water in the picture of the cosmos. In his work on 15th-century European philosophy, Stefan Świeżawski writes: “The mystery of seas and waters occupied minds more than the secrets of unknown territories.”⁷⁷

Even in the famous academy founded by the Portuguese Henry the Navigator in 1416, knowledge of the earth came after knowledge of the sea, because the practical needs of Portuguese sailing and Portuguese aims of overseas conquests determined the basic interests of scholars. Until the end of the 15th century, geographical discoveries had no significant effect on scholars of that time. However, astronomy and investigations into optics and perspective, and finally practical knowledge of maritime navigation, created a need for geographical knowledge and led to geography becoming a subject of writings and gradually an academic discipline.

Treatises on cosmography and “descriptions of the world” written in the 14th and 15th centuries (such as the *Tractatus de imagine mundi* by Pierre d’Ailly, which was read by Christopher Columbus), combine information and descriptions with myths and legends. This applies not just to geography, but to knowledge about the world in general. The inspiration of empiricism was still restricted, and people of authority brought up in the literary tradition of the Church and formulating medieval erudition continued to dominate. Knowledge of the world’s lands and seas was presented by encyclopaedic works: ancient ones such as Gaius Plinius’ *Historia Naturalis*, well-known in the Middle Ages in whole or in part (in Poland, this work was known due to a compilation by Solinus in the 3rd century)⁷⁸ and medieval ones, which served as school textbooks and popular literature, and which one can equate with modern-day almanacs and diaries. Encyclopaedia entries about space – seas, land, continents, the Earth, mountains and

⁷⁶ *Słownik łaciny średniowiecznej w Polsce*, vol. 2, col. 1382.

⁷⁷ S. Świeżawski, *Dzieje filozofii europejskiej XV wieku*, vol. 5: *Wszecławiat* (Warsaw, 1980), p. 154.

⁷⁸ L. Hajdukiewicz, “Pliniusz w Europie”, in: Pliniusz, *Historia naturalis (selection)*, transl. I. Zawadzka, T. Zawadzki (Wrocław–Cracow, 1961; Biblioteka Narodowa, 2nd series, 128), pp. xlvi, lxvii ff.

rivers, the air and wind, the heavens and the stars – were parts of the great picture of the macrocosms. This picture was meant to show not just the work of the Creator, but also the coexistence of Good and Evil, and of God’s order and the Earthly order. It taught what had happened beyond the direct experience of the individual and the collective, therefore there was no obstacle to combining facts, events and empirical descriptions with all kinds of tales. Descriptions of real and imagined journeys existed side by side. Therefore, the qualitative differences between geographical knowledge and mass imagination regarding the very way of thinking were less than the quantitative differences relating to the store of knowledge and its horizons.

Neither early or later in the Middle Ages did Poland produce any original works in the nature of tales of the history of the world (if we exclude a chronicle of popes and emperors by one Martin the Pole, written outside Poland at the end of the 13th century), a “description of the world” or “treasury”; in other words, a work of encyclopaedic content. Foreign works of this kind did circulate in learned circles, that is to say they formed part of libraries and were read and copied. Therefore, they helped form general impressions of the world and were used by Polish authors interested in their own country, which was nevertheless incorporated in the context of world time and space.

In their general descriptions of Poland, historical writers of the 13th and 14th centuries presented the country as one of the Slav Christian nations. In his introduction to the *Life of St. Stanisław*, Wincenty of Kielce writes that Poland lies in the east and that in its days of glory her borders extended to Hungary, Saxony, Rus’ and Carinthia;⁷⁹ but it is curious that the first two countries he speaks of border a river (the Danube and Soława), and regarding the third country, he mentions only Kiev, “which is the metropolis of Rus’” (in this way recalling Bolesław the Brave’s entry into Kiev). With regard to the fourth country, he talks of mountains that form the border. About Poland itself, he writes only that the country extends over great areas and is divided into “numerous and great provinces.” The *Chronica Dzirsvae*,

⁷⁹ *Vita sancti Stanislai episcopi Cracoviensis*, ed. W. Kętrzyński, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (hereinafter: MPH), IV (Warsaw, 1960–1961), pp. 364–365. For an idea of the geographical knowledge of Polish chroniclers, see F. Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne* (Warsaw, 1925), pp. 78–90.

a Cracow compendium from the early 14th century, outlines the origins of the people and their fortunes against the background of the Slav community, carefully noting the northern borders – here he mentions Sweden, Pomerania, Kashubia, and Saxony – and the southern borders, Bohemia, Moravia, Styria, Carinthia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Hungary, and Bulgaria.⁸⁰ As in the earlier chronicle of Gallus Anonymus, here too the information on the Slav countries serves to locate Poland in the world. This occurs to a greater degree in the *Kronika wielkopolska* from the same period. In its introduction, called interpolation, the Slav author presents an exhaustive treatise on the Slav peoples, their origins, on their dispersal, and an etymology of Slav names. His knowledge stems from medieval encyclopaedic and historical works, and is full of inconsistencies, unlikely anecdotes and obvious errors. The horizon of the geographical description of the Slav countries is broad here, and in this case as well the chronicler turns towards the north and south. His interest in northern Slav countries and in the Slav-German border area may be due to the location of his home territory and a political observation of the court of Wielkopolska. But it is clear that the author explains the meaning of Slav names and places the ethno-genesis of his own people in Slav time and space. He considers Pannonia to be the original homeland of the Slavs, from where the three brothers Lech, Rus' and Czech came to establish three new "kingdoms." He continues: "And because many other Slav kingdoms and nations arose later, it is worth identifying and explaining their names."⁸¹

The chronicler from Wielkopolska complies with medieval teachings in his explanations of the origin of various names, but he also follows literary tradition, especially the chronicle of Martin the Pole, to which he refers when he names the rivers that flow through territories inhabited by the Slavs.

Apparently, the author discusses the reign of individual Slav princes. And here too he refers to the river system. For example, he says that the Slav princes ruled over "the lands of Slavonia and Carinthia, lying along and in the region of the rivers Elbe, Oder, Piana, Dołża, Wkra, Rzeknica, Warnawa, Hobola, Spree, Hyla, Suda, Mieca, Trawna and

⁸⁰ *Chronica Dzirsuae (Miersuae Chronicon)*, ed. Ch. Pawłowski, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, Cracow 2013, pp. 2 ff.

⁸¹ *Cronica Magna Lechitarum et Polonorum*, transl. into Polish by K.Abgarowicz, published in MPH, vol. 2, p. 48.

others.”⁸² In his account of Polish history, he draws attention to territory, the sites of settlements and the topography of battlefields. He mentions neighbouring countries and territories inhabited by pagans, and describes in detail the riches of the cities and territories of Wielkopolska.

In Długosz, the descriptive “places where events occur,” develop into an independent chorographic treatise and take up half of the first book of the *Annales*. Historians of Polish geography regard the *Chorografia*, i.e. a geographical description of Polish lands, included in the *Annales* only after final editing, as the first word of Polish geographical erudition. Indeed, this is the first such extensive treatise on universal history, as perceived in those times, to appear in Polish historiography. It is an eclectic creation, based on a knowledge of numerous works of medieval historical-geographical literature. Długosz describes Polish lands in detail. Just as Polish history is woven into the medieval history of the world, so the territory of the Polish state is woven into the *mappa mundi*. Thus, Długosz’s *Chorografia* takes into account every dimension of the inhabited medieval world; in other words landholdings, the borders of Christendom, political and administrative divisions, and the local horizon.⁸³

As with his predecessors, Długosz places the homeland of the Slavs in Pannonia; he describes with admiration the natural riches of the southern Slav lands. Having told of the separation of the founder-brothers Lech and Czech, Długosz describes Polish territory in these words: “A very extensive country, rich in forests, groves and woods, covered in heaths and moors and, as it were, eternal backwoods, watered by many rivers, streams and lakes.”⁸⁴

After this physiographical description, the Polish state’s relationship with its neighbours is described much more accurately than was the case with 14th century historiographers (Rus’, Hungary, Bohemia and Moravia, Denmark and Saxony), but the horizon of neighbourhood is extended towards the Mediterranean and Adriatic, all the way to Venice and Aquileia. Thus, the “territory of the Poles” is identified with the Slav lands, but towards the south, where there were no longer any

⁸² Ibid., p. 66.

⁸³ Cf. Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, pp. 91–105; W. Szelińska, *Chorografia Regni Poloniae Jana Długosza* (Cracow, 1980).

⁸⁴ *Ioanni Długossii Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, book I (electronic edition: <https://dlugosz.polona.pl/en/roczniki/ioannis-dlugossi-annales-seu-cronicae-incliti/75>) (hereafter: *Ioannis Długossii Annales*).

independent Slav states in Długosz's time. Seven main rivers delineate Polish territory: the Vistula, Oder, Warta, Dniester, Bug, Niemen and Dnieper. Of course, there is a certain air of formality in describing the historic territory that was the cradle of the Polish state. Długosz views it through the prism of the Jagiellonian dynasty. He underlines the Vistula's role as the "most famous Polish river, "constituting the main axis of the Polish state. "For the Vistula waters most of the Kingdom of Poland and it is easy to accord it supremacy among Polish rivers."⁸⁵ He describes the first three rivers as Polish, but the remaining four he describes as rivers of "Polish and Russian lands." Next he describes the courses of all these rivers, their sources and estuaries, as well as their tributaries. The detail with which he describes the seven rivers and their tributaries is surprising, for he also describes the topographical location of cities and villages, the boundaries between particular territories, and ownership relations. However, the accuracy of the description depends on the degree of knowledge of the terrain. Thus, for the Vistula's catchment area Długosz mentions 101 rivers, 51 for the Oder, 19 for the Dnieper, ten for the Niemen, and only three for the Dniester.

Lakes are described according to their location, size, fish resources and physical features (e.g. Lake Krynica, from which the water disappears occasionally) or historical events (e.g. Lake Niezamyśl in Wielkopolska, hated by the Teutonic Knights because they were defeated in battle by its shores). Again, the description of rivers and lakes is rich with details and focuses on topographical precision. Apart from rivers, the main feature of Długosz's description of Polish territory are the mountains, but here his geographical interest seems more restricted and his scope of knowledge narrower, and he concentrates more on fictional tales associated with the major mountains rather than the mountain chains.⁸⁶

In first place is Góra Kalwaria, or Łysa Góra. Długosz notes that according to legend, it was once inhabited by Cyclops, who are said to have built the castle whose ruins remain on the summit. Next he mentions Wawel, where the royal castle and basilica of St. Stanisław

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

⁸⁶ S. Alexandrowicz, "Ziemie Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w 'Chorografii' Jana Długosza", in: *Studia z dziejów geografii i kartografii*, ed. J. Babicz (Wrocław, 1974), pp. 295–317.

are located, as well as the cavern where “the dragon famed in oral and written lore” lived.

Next comes Jasna Góra, the site of annual pilgrimages to the holy icon. After this he lists over two dozen other mountains and hills, mainly describing the legends and historical events associated with them rather than their physical features. The description of “the more famous cities and townships,” also to be found in the first book of the *Annales*, can be considered a continuation of the *Chorografia*. Here Długosz lists cities that are the seats of bishoprics, headed by Cracow as the capital of the Kingdom, followed by Gniezno as the former capital, and Lviv, which he describes as Poland’s third city. He lists several dozen other Polish cities, referring to historical events and legends associated with them, and to their commercial role: “the city of Gdańsk, known not only among the Poles but also among other states and neighbouring nations, not a large city but one famous for its expanded trade.”⁸⁷

This description of cities introduces an element of culture to topography, disclosing the cultural development of the country’s landscape. It focuses on the external appearance of cities and on their place in the landscape. Here is how Długosz describes a border fortress, Kamieniec Podolski: “Shaped like a crown, instead of walls and buttresses [it has] a high and steep cliff. The Seret River surrounds it from virtually every side. Shaped thus by nature, the view of it fills the traveller with admiration, surrounded on all sides not by a ditch or palisade as other cities, but deep ravines which strike fear into one’s heart. It is so well concealed that no suspects there is a town there until one has entered it.”⁸⁸ Obviously, this description is based on a personal visit.

All of the geographical descriptions by Długosz, both those in the *Chorografia* and other descriptions of villages, cities, roads, districts and battlefields throughout his writings, are similar. As in another of his works, the *Liber beneficiorum*, in a detailed description of the diocese of Cracow he avails himself of writings and archives, as well as his own observations and information provided by other direct observers. Inevitably, there are many errors.

Geographical accuracy varies according to the area, for example Długosz is far less acquainted with Mazovia than other Polish territories. Nevertheless, his description is impressive.

⁸⁷ *Ioannis Dlugossii Annales*, book I.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Due to the limited circulation of Długosz's works during the period we are examining, it is difficult to consider his knowledge as a reflection of general knowledge. One can say that this was the upper limit of people's geographical knowledge at that time. This knowledge was useful for the needs of the Polish court and church, politics, diplomacy, regions with other countries and Rome, and to assert the historical rights of the Polish monarchy. Polish propaganda in a dispute with the Teutonic Order and the testimony of witnesses in Polish legal actions with the Order indicate that along with historical knowledge, this geographical knowledge was indeed used. But the same sources also indicate a poor geographical orientation. Asked about the borders of the Kingdom of Poland in a Polish-Teutonic trial in 1422, many Polish witnesses, including high state dignitaries, were unable to give an exact answer.⁸⁹ Regardless of the differences between the state of knowledge among Długosz and his contemporaries, his very way of thinking about the countryside and landscapes reflects the mentality of the time, for example mingling legend with fact. But one should realize that in his age, there was a tendency to set knowledge according to the principles of empirical observation, focus on the hydrography of the terrain, and state exact distances and areas. He seems to have used the so-called German mile (somewhat over 7 km), and a check of the data he gives shows that the road distances are quite accurate but the areas (e.g. of lakes) are exaggerated.

Długosz refers to areas where biblical events took place, as he does to general history, in order to create a proper context in which to present national history. Teaching about holy sites occupies a separate role in religious education; in this way, the macrocosmic horizon is imparted to the consciousness of individual societies. We find evidence of this in a work by a distinguished 15th-century theologian, Jacobus de Clusa, who was first a Cistercian but subsequently became a Carthusian. In his work *De malis huius saeculi* (On the evils of our times),⁹⁰ from the point of view of the impending end of the world, he

⁸⁹ *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*, ed. T. Działyński (Poznań, 1855), vol. 2, *passim* (e.g. the testimony of Zbigniew from Brzezia: p. 252).

⁹⁰ Jakub z Paradyża, "O bolączkach naszych czasów", in: *Wybór tekstów dotyczących reformy Kościoła*, ed. S.A. Porębski (*Textus et Studia Historiam Theologiae Exultatae Spectantia*, 6), 1978, pp. 106–273.

presents the geography of Christianity as evidence of the progress of evil and sin. In his description of the world, we perceive the mentality of a monk who has read the works of the Church Fathers for whom the Bible is a subject of continuous meditation, hence also a tone of nostalgia: the holy places known to the author from reading and meditation are in the hands of infidels. Asia, the largest and noblest part of the world containing the centre of the earth and the remains of many apostles, has fallen into the hands of idolatry and atheism. It is the same with Africa, where once St. Cyprian was bishop of Carthage and St. Augustine was bishop in Hippo, but now the lands and the people have been taken over by the powers of darkness.

Apart from this bookish view, one notes in Jakub's description elements of empirical observation and references to his own country. On the basis of evidence confirmed by his own observation, he notes that even in nearby Cracow, royal seat and capital of the Kingdom of Poland, the rule of the real faith, i.e. Catholicism, has weakened, and next to Catholic churches one encounters the "temples of infidel Ruthenians."⁹¹ Cracow remains the starting point for a description of the Christian world. First he describes Lviv and Rus', then Lithuania and the neighbouring Tatars "and other nations, I know not what they are called." Referring to a reliable informer, Jakub proves that this way one can reach the Holy Land and the lands and peoples described in the Bible. The list of place names seems to define the horizon of knowledge introduced by learned books to the monastery cell: Ethiopia, Constantinople, Arabia, the kingdoms of Sheba and Tarsus, India, Antioch, paradise on Mount Ararat, Babylon, Nineveh, Assyria, Syria, the lands of the Medes and Persians, Egypt, Libya... Looking "to the right from Cracow," Jakub lists Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, Transylvania, up to the border of Turkey; whereas "top the left from Cracow" he mentions Prussia, the Baltic coast from where sailing routes led to England, Flanders and the Scandinavian countries, and thence south to Rome and Spain. However, he is unable to say how far south from Rome the Catholic faith extends.

One can accuse Jakub of supplying geographic information that is rather limited and devoid of academic ambition (although he does mention the division of the world into seven climates professed by Ptolemaic astronomers, and gives the distance from Lviv and Buda

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 199.

to Cracow in miles). A lot of his knowledge comes from reading religious books, but a considerable amount also stems from oral information and personal observation. One can say it is closer to the level of general knowledge in which the image of the *orbis terrarum* was formed primarily by the teaching of religion, than the level of knowledge represented by natural philosophy expounded by the Cracow university community in the 15th century, where philosophical cosmology took shape and an important school of astronomy gradually developed in which space in various dimensions was discussed. Cracow commentaries (the first known one is dated 1416) to the then popular treatise of John of Holywood (*Sacrobosco*) *Of the sphere*, taught for a long time at Cracow University, and together with the commentaries of young Cracow scholars about the works of Aristotle, are evidence of thoughts about the structure of the universe. Historians of philosophy point out that the Cracow community broke the traditional idea about the dual structure of the world (the “sub-lunar” zone, consisting of four elements, and “supra-lunar” zone with a fifth element, i.e. *quinta essentia*, in other words quintessence).⁹² Together with the structure of the universe, the Cracow natural philosophers also reflected on the concept of place. In a commentary to Aristotle’s *Physics* (written before 1425), Benedykt Hesse wrote: “Considering the matter of place is a task for both the mathematician and the natural philosopher, but in different ways because the mathematician considers place in terms of quantity, while the philosopher does so in terms of motion.”⁹³

The concepts of space and vacuum were also considered. Apart from a learned and hermetic philosophical discourse inside scholarly salons, one notices religious thinking due not only to the primacy of theology over science, but also due to the mentality of that era. In around 1435, Jan of Słupcza said that God’s omnipotence is so great that apart from the stellar sphere, he can create vacuums, places, bodies, motion and time.⁹⁴ Benedykt Hesse, considering the Earth’s motion, recalled that the Earth moves around the heavens as roast meat around a fire.⁹⁵ He asks whether hurricanes and seas storms can be explained by natural causes

⁹² M. Markowski, *Filozofia przyrody w pierwszej połowie XV wieku* (Wrocław, 1976; Dzieje filozofii średniowiecznej w Polsce, 4), p. 102.

⁹³ Cited after: *ibid.*, p. 116.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 131.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 176.

and whether the tides are supernormal phenomena.⁹⁶ Without going into the essence and subject of this treatise, it is worth pointing out the way of thinking: he refers to conditions and images which one may also refer to common awareness. However, it is obvious – and this is all we know – that the Cracow scholars read about the debated the structure of the world, vacuum, eternity, the heavens and stars, and space on and above the earth. But how ordinary people viewed this things we do not know.

Not until the end of the 15th century did geographical issues acquire separate academic status at Cracow University. A Latin translation of a discovered work by Ptolemy about cosmography aroused interest in geography in Europe, as well as an interest in European commentaries on Ptolemy and descriptions of the world. The abovementioned treatise by Pierre d’Ailly (written in 1410) was brought to Cracow. This made it possible to refer to authorities, which was a condition for geography to become part of the medieval university’s sphere of interests. The first lecturer in geography at Cracow University was probably Wawrzyniec Korwin, a Silesian born in Nowa Środa, whose *Cosmographia* was printed by his pupil, Henri Bebel, in Basel (1496). Korwin refers not only to Ptolemy, but also to other ancient authors, especially Strabo and Solinus. Dividing the world into five zones, with two cold ones, Korwin wrote about lands enmeshed in eternal ice, with no changing of the seasons and devoid of plant life, in which a ploughshare shall never turn the soil. On both sides of the equator he sees a zone of eternal fire without settlements. However, the southern temperate zone is surely inhabited, but “we northern inhabitants will never be able to convince ourselves of this.”

The testimonies of Macrobius and Strabo confirm this view, but Korwin himself prefers not to delve deeper into it: “We shall not talk about those who walk completely the other way, whose existence is denied by our holy religion, or those who live under a different temperature of our world.”⁹⁷

Opinions about distant parts seems to be a permanent horizon of agricultural Poland; in any case, Korwin hails the “land of the agrarian Sarmatians,” notes the importance of Cracow University, extols the

⁹⁶ M. Rechowicz, *Św. Jan Kanty i Benedykt Hesse w świetle krakowskiej kompilacji teologicznej z XV w.* (Lublin, 1958), p. 244.

⁹⁷ Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, p. 25 ff.

salt mine in Wieliczka as a Polish curiosity and, last but not least, provides a description in verse of his native Silesia.

The flourishing of geography in Cracow – in the *Chronicle of the world* by Hartmann Schedel, published in Nuremberg in 1493, Cracow is mentioned a key centre of geographical knowledge parallel with Vienna and Tübingen – occurred at a time of great geographical discoveries, and although university teaching remained faithful to the interpretation of authoritative writers, daily events and fresh news provided incentives to deal with this topic. A distinguished Cracow scholar of this period, the philosopher and mathematician Jan of Głogów, is the author of an exhaustive commentary on the treatise of Ptolemy, entitled *Introductorium cosmographiae* (published in three editions: 1492, 1494, and 1501–1505).⁹⁸ He takes into account the discoveries of Portuguese explorers. Of the island of Ceylon, discovered during these expeditions, Jan writes that it is inhabited, a fact refuted by John of Holywood. He demonstrates that Portuguese expeditions in 1501 and 1504 crossed the Equator. The final edition of the treatise contains an ambiguous note on the discovery of a new continent. Jan's notes written in 1494 on the margins of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* (a manuscript of 1486 is preserved in the collections at the Jagiellonian Library) contains a metaphorical description of the world. Asia is presented as a great and powerful bear, and Europe is as a winged dragon whose limbs and organs make up the individual countries. Even a scholarly treatise on geographical knowledge contains tales similar to literature on the wonders of nature. The discovery of Ptolemy in the late Middle Ages provided a huge impulse to develop an interest in geography among university communities. An essential ancient "authority" thus appeared. At the same time (as correctly noted by Father François de Dainville), the medieval heritage of post-classical geographical knowledge was rejected. Nevertheless, the gap between university geography and empirical knowledge of the world was narrower in Poland than in other countries. In this case, the practicality that was characteristic of Polish medieval scholarship made itself felt. Ptolemy's learned commentators included new information in their treatises, and in conjunction with these, outside the university communities, work was in progress on a description and presentation of the world.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 33 ff.; Świeżawski, *Wszecławiat*, p. 151.

Evidence of the state of the intellectual elite's geographical knowledge at the end of the 15th century is provided in a treatise by Maciej of Miechów entitled *De duabus Sarmatiis*, printed in Cracow in 1517.⁹⁹ The author studied in Cracow from 1474 to 1478, studied astronomy and medicine at Italian universities, and was then connected with Cracow University (being appointed rector several times). In an apology for his work, this is how Maciej describes the tasks he set himself: "Just as the Portuguese king has revealed the southern part of the world right up to India and the lands inhabited by people living beyond the Ocean, so let this work open up to everyone's eyes the northern part of the world with the people living on the Northern Ocean and further east, to which the king of Poland created access with his military operations and wars."¹⁰⁰

In the service of the Commonwealth and in defence of its good name, Maciej writes with conviction about the beliefs and legends regarding Poland in circulation in the West (talking about the European and Japhetite origins of the Slav peoples), and at the same time provides a geographical description of the lands of Eastern Europe that is unprecedented in Latin literature. In doing so, he refers to both personal observations and the reports of explorers, merchants, and prisoners of war who knew eastern lands from experience.

Maciej discusses space primarily in historic and ethnographic terms, devoting particular attention to the Tatars (this was probably one of the reasons why the book was so attractive to Western readers). Identifying two separate Sarmatias "bordering on and joined to each other," the first one he describes as Europe and includes in it the "territory inhabited by the Ruthenians, Lithuanians and Muscovites" from the Vistula to the Don, and the second one he describes as Asian, extending from the Don to the Caspian Sea, and inhabited by the Tatars. But most of all, this illustrates a clear distinction between Asia and Europe, not only demonstrating geographical thinking in terms of parts of the world, but also illustrating the participation of the Polish elites in the formation of a European awareness.

⁹⁹ Maciej of Miechów, *Descriptio Sarmatarum Asianae et Europianae et eorum quae in eis continentur*, ed. 3 Cracow, 1521; Polish transl. T. Bieńkowski (Wrocław–Warsaw, 1976).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, book I.

The description, strictly geographical, is rich in physical features, it provides the location of the sea and rivers, describes various lands and their main cities and castles, describes the flora and fauna as well as the soil and natural resources, gives the area of countries and cities, and their distances. It is interesting that Maciej attaches great importance to the trade exchange that links these territories to other countries. Describing various denominations on Russian lands, this is how he describes the Armenians, inhabiting chiefly Kamieniec and Lwoin: "They are very experienced merchants, they travel to Jaffa, to Constantinople, to Alexandria in Egypt, to Cairo and to India, and bring goods from everywhere."¹⁰¹

He also makes comparisons with other cities and rivers, comparing Wilno to Cracow, Novgorod to Rome and Moscow to Florence and Prague.

Progress in geographical knowledge was accompanied by the development of the scientific instruments with which to examine the world, in other words cartography.¹⁰² An image of Poland, with other Slav countries, had already appeared on medieval *mappae mundi*, wall paintings which appeared in Europe in the first half of the 13th century. The requirements of maritime travel introduced sailors' maps which also showed the Baltic coast, as well as Polish territory further inland. The inclusion of Poland on these maps was based on the accounts of travellers and from descriptions provided by adventurous observers. Maps of this kind appeared in Poland itself in the same manner, but information about them and surviving copies are very rare. Maps were an important aid for political and military plans. In 1421, the year of Poland's dispute with the Teutonic Order, the pope was presented with a fabric ("ein gemolittuch im gleichnisse einer mappe mundi"), showing the Polish-Teutonic border area. There is much to indicate that the fabric was a Polish cartographical product belonging to the *mappae mundi* category, although it was also assumed that it came from the papal collections and was made by Cardinal Fillastre, an ardent cartographer and papal chronicler in the Polish-Teutonic trial.¹⁰³ This fabric has not survived. However, the codex of Sędziwoj of Czechło

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰² K. Buczek, *Dzieje kartografii polskiej od XV do XVIII wieku* (Cracow, 1963).

¹⁰³ B. Strzelecka, "Ze studiów nad geografiją i kartografiją XV w.", *Czasopismo Geograficzne*, 30 (1959), p. 301 ff.

has preserved two outline maps showing the Royal Prussia and the Teutonic lands; it is assumed that they were drawn after a reconnaissance by military intelligence.¹⁰⁴

In Polish scholarly libraries copies of descriptions and cartographical representations of the world can be found. A codex of 1478 by Jakub of Kowalewice, dean of the Lowicz abbey and notary to Archbishop Jan Odrowąż Sprowski, contains, apart from theological and medical works and verses, a round image of a *mappae mundi* (type T–O, i.e. a T within an O), where the top half of the circle is taken up by Asia with 15 “provinces,” whilst the lower half is shared by Europe, also with 15 “provinces,” and Africa, with 11 or 12 “provinces.”¹⁰⁵

Similar maps are to be found in many 15th-century Cracow manuscripts, serving as illustrations of astronomical, astrological or philosophical treatises.¹⁰⁶ They are associated with the teachings of Cracow University, but they were probably also part of the intellectual resources of not only university people, but other social groups as well. Over a dozen maps found in manuscripts in the Jagiellonian Library display varying degrees of geographical accuracy. One of them, a type T–O map, in a manuscript by Wojciech of Brudzew, is oriented towards the north, but the west is to the right, which means that the situation of the continents is reversed. But this simple error did not diminish the usefulness of this picture of the world, for these maps were meant to illustrate the order of the seven climates, the winds, and the four corners of the world. In accordance with knowledge of the world in those times, the Earth was divided into cold, temperate and inhabited areas; this was not an exhaustive categorization, but it illustrates the criteria by which space was ordered: according to climates, conditions of settlement and life, and geographical knowledge.

An astrological treatise by John the Spaniard, recorded in a Cracow codex of 1453, contains a map of the world with relatively rich geographical detail. The centre of the world is Jerusalem, and the territories and great cities of ancient civilizations are shown, but European countries are represented with particular accuracy. These

¹⁰⁴ B. Olszewicz, *Dwie szkiecowe mapy Pomorza z połowy XV wieku* (Warsaw, 1937).

¹⁰⁵ U. Puckalanka, “Nieznana mapka świata w polskim rękopisie z XV w.,” *Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki Polskiej*, series C, no. 13 (1968), pp. 1–10.

¹⁰⁶ W. Wolkenhauer, *Erhard Etzlaubs, Reisekarte durch Deutschland aus dem Jahre 1501* (Berlin, 1919).

are the names shown on the map: Rome, Spain, Catalonia, England, Flanders, Burgundy, Bavaria, Meissen, Bohemia, Hesse, Moravia, Hungary, Silesia, Westphalia, Saxony, Transylvania, Poland, Wallachia and Rus'. It is notable that Poland appears on one map, and situated quite accurately. One might think that such detail would make a map useful not just to scholars, but also to ordinary citizens for the sake of their practical interests.

It is significant that the "map of the world" technique was used to show earthly paradise. In a 1423 manuscript containing the sermons of Hieronymus of Prague, a map of paradise is drawn as a *mappae mundi* and arranged around four rivers between which Adam was supposed to live: They are the Ganges, Nile, Tigris and Euphrates. The technique of spatial imagination spread to religious knowledge.

Both Jan Długosz and the Cracow geographers at the end of the 15th century used the more detailed maps that accompanied the works of Ptolemy. Thus, cartography was subject for some time to a certain inertia and an insistence upon showing places connected with the classical past. Nevertheless, trade activity and military intelligence encouraged empirical observations of terrain.

Poles took part in the development of cartography in the 15th century, supplying information about their own country. As a result, a 15th-century map of Central and Eastern Europe drawn by Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, distinguished scholarly son of a fisherman, surprises the viewer with its accurate names of Polish locations (provinces and lands, and even places of secondary importance); it may well be that Mikolaj's source of information was Długosz, who may have met the mapmaking cardinal when he visited Rome in 1449 or 1450. If Mikolaj's map retains the tradition of academic learning, then a map of Germany by Erhard Etzlaub at the end of the century possesses a clear practical purpose.¹⁰⁷ It is a map of roads in Germany and neighbouring countries (eastwards it extends to Malbork, Cracow, Sandomierz and Budapest). Polish names are often distorted, but distances between particular places are shown in miles by means of dots. In this way the map could have served as a practical guide for all kinds of travellers, especially pilgrims heading for Rome. The great

¹⁰⁷ E. Schnayder, "Mapy świata ('mappae mundi') w łacińskich rękopisach średniowiecznych Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej w Krakowie", *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 29 (1979), pp. 19–53.

accuracy with which Etzlaub shows distances on Polish soil shows that he possessed detailed empirical data, no doubt obtained from merchants. Consequently, the accuracy of locations beyond the roads is rather worse. Not until the following century did a map by Bernard Wapowski, who studied at Cracow University, represent an original Polish contribution to mapmaking, combining medieval erudition with an empirical knowledge of one's own country gained from observation.

Maps of lands and seas (*descriptio in piano*), as with globes (*descriptio in solido*), were instruments of scholarly knowledge and supported the development of knowledge about the universe – in close association with Cracow astrology and astronomy – but did not go beyond a narrow circle of specialists. Nevertheless, one notices that in the 15th century, knowledge of geography developed towards more practical uses, so that certain elements of geographical knowledge permeated to broader social circles. Surviving manuscripts contain notes describing ways of determining latitude and longitude and of marking distances between two places in miles.¹⁰⁸ Gazetteers of places appeared, stating their position. One of them, recorded in a codex of 1448, takes the alleged location of the centre of Paradise as the starting point for establishing geographical position. Medieval mentality made a similarly significant mark on the making of maps, in which deliberate distortions were made in order to suitably show the central location of the Holy Land or Rome. Pilgrimages also aroused geographical creativity, encouraging the copying of manuscripts containing descriptions of the Holy Land (in the codex of Sędziwoj of Czechło from the middle of the 15th century, there appears a copy of a description of the Holy Land by Jacques de Vitry written two centuries previously, whilst other libraries belonging to church institutions and private individuals contain numerous copies of other descriptions) and to produce something in the nature of guidebooks to religious sites: Palestine, Rome and local sites of miraculous happenings.¹⁰⁹

Although chronicles and documents record that over 20 Polish pilgrims visited the Holy Land in the 14th century, and foreign reports from Palestine mention many Polish pilgrims, we only know of one written account of a pilgrimage: in an unpublished description of

¹⁰⁸ Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, pp. 11, 15.

¹⁰⁹ K. Dobrowolski, "Studia nad kulturą naukową w Polsce do schyłku XVI stulecia", *Nauka Polska*, 17 (1933), pp. 75 ff.

Mount Sinai and St. Catherine's monastery by a priest from the Cracow diocese of the Holy Spirit, written about 1471. One can assume that he knew the description of the Holy Land by the Cracow Bernadine monk Anzelm (1507), in the appearance of Jerusalem and individual distances, which are compared to Polish reality (Jerusalem is made to look like Cracow, Hebron looks like Sącz, Jordan looks like the Warta, and the distance between the house of Pontius Pilate and that of Caiaphas is the same as the distance between the Bernadine monastery and the Church of the Holy Spirit in Cracow).¹¹⁰ This may have had earlier equivalents, but in any case it retains the typical features of geographical imagination in the 15th century. The location of events in the Holy Bible is transposed to the local horizon. Geography, the description of distant lands and unknown spaces, serves to get to know God and the truths of religion. In the *Metrifocale* of Marek of Opatowiec from the 14th century, the term *cosmographo*, meaning a geographic description, is translated as *divinum describo*; in other words, a description of the Creator's work.¹¹¹ This applies to broad circles of society, for in various forms of church teachings there appeared the names of foreign countries and places, whereby this propagation of knowledge of inhabited territory served to "tame" the strange world – similar to the way in which sacred time was updated with knowledge of its exotic difference. Literary texts provide evidence of this.

The so-called *Contemplation of Przemyśl* (*Rozmyślanie przemyskie*) describes the Holy Family's flight into Egypt with striking realism, including details of daily life and of the journey itself. We read: "They proceeded through desert and wilderness where they had not a single road or path [...] along the road they suffered great shortages, hunger, thirst, heat from the sun, great cold, cloudbursts, hail, stormy winds, lightning, forests, mountains, fear of brigands, in the day they suffered from heat and in the night from cold."¹¹² Apart from the literary cadence of this description, one notices the

¹¹⁰ This description was printed as a supplement to Jan of Stobnica's *Introductio in Ptolomaei Cosmographiam* (Cracow, 1512); Cf. Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, p. 146.

¹¹¹ R. Gansiniec, *Metrifocale Marka z Opatowca i traktaty gramatyczne z XIV i XV wieku* (Wrocław, 1960), p. 231.

¹¹² *Rozmyślanie o żywocie Pana Jezusa tzw. Przemyskie*, ed. S. Vrtel-Wierczyński (Warsaw, 1952), col. 81–82, transcript from: *Średniowieczna proza polska*, ed. Vrtel-Wierczyński (Wrocław, 1959), p. 160.

emphasis on the climatic differences in the exotic territories described.

In another apocryphal work, *Historia Trzech Króli* (the Polish translation probably appeared at the end of the 15th century, but several copies of the original Latin text *Historia trium regum* by Hans of Hildesheim, who died 1375, exist in Polish libraries) we find the same accent in the description of Palestine: “In the winter before Bethlehem, the summer and the winter hardly differed, for in some places it was very cold, and in others it was summer mingled with winter.”

The different climate in these distant lands also causes a different way of measuring the seasons and the months. The heat and drought meant that “nothing green can grow in the summer,” and that not until September and October do plants begin to thrive, and at Christmas barley begins to grow.”¹¹³

A 14th-century Polish text about the legend of St. Alexis also allows one to enter the detailed dimension of the past associated with epic time. This work, in verse, does not reveal many geographical names, but the names Laodicea, Syria and Rome set down, as it were, the world’s horizon. In this extensive area, great deeds occur and the models of human conduct are created. However, as soon as the words “in Rome there was a certain lady” appear, the tale is immediately given its context. The story begins and ends at the centre of the Christian world, in which its two highest authorities, the emperor and the pope, live: “So here is the pope, the cardinal, the emperor, and the chaplains.” The exotic names of the countries recall memories of religious history: St. Alexis travelled to Syria because “that is where [the church of] St. Paul was.”¹¹⁴

In the case of the legend of St. Alexis, one should ask, as in the case of other written works: Who read it, who listened to it? The circle of readers and listeners was certainly not large, but one can assume it included the clergy, nobility and burghers. The tale of St. Alexis may also have been used in religious education, and the manner of telling what happened at some time and in some place largely corresponded to the contents generally heard from the pulpit.

Beyond the local horizon, known from personal observation, knowledge mingled with fantasy, legend and tales. Writings served to form such an imagination. The stories of St. Brendan’s voyage to the isle of paradise or the vision of Tindal go hand-in-hand with Marco

¹¹³ *Średniowieczna proza*, p. 323.

¹¹⁴ Verdiani, *Problemy wzorców*, p. 141.

Polo's accounts of his journey to distant China or the geographical descriptions of medieval encyclopaedists. In Polish collections of manuscripts, one can come across many copies of works like these. A Cracow manuscript contains an interesting example of the geographical interests of the lay community. The mayor Dzierśław, probably Derśław of Rytwiany, noted among the students of Cracow University, and subsequently the mayor of Sandomierz and castellan of Cracow, translated from German into Latin, a description of fantastic foreign journeys written in the middle of the 14th century by Jean de Mandeville (the French original was translated into 10 languages and has been preserved in over 300 manuscripts and almost 100 editions), and an excerpt from this translation was made in 1474 by Maciej Palecki, a clergyman and teacher – and it is this extract that has survived to today.¹¹⁵ It is interesting that a secular man is curious about this kind of work and translates it into Latin in order to introduce it to readers. It does not matter that the geographical description is completely misleading and we can include it among medieval fantasy. It attracted people with its exoticism, and it could be cited from the pulpit and discussed in the tavern or at the market.

Literary works allow us to enter the world of general imaginings and give us a clue, for there is no detailed evidence, about the news of near and distant countries that circulated in society and painted an oral picture of the expansiveness of the world. It depended on one's social affiliation, occupation and the fortunes of oneself and one's family. The flow of information between countries and between cities and villages, and the juxtaposition of information from scholarly sources, literary fantasy and the experience of explorers, was the chief element in forming a geographic horizon, defining its local contours, and nudging it beyond the local framework. Fantasy filled any space that was not already filled with fact.

5. Measuring Space

In the Bible, medieval society could read that: *Omnia in mensura, et numero, et pondera disposuisti* ("but you have set all things in order by measure and number and weight!", Wisdom 11, 20), but in everyday

¹¹⁵ Bujak, *Studia geograficzno-historyczne*, p. 6.

life there was no uniform system of weights and measures, which varied from area to area. Not until the late Middle Ages did a standard system spread and more accurate instruments of measurement appear. Nicholas of Cusa, who is credited with introducing methods of measurement to European science, the use of the hour-glass and bells to measure time operated by flowing water, repeated the saying: “mens a mensura dicitur,” deriving the word “mind” from the word “measurement.”¹¹⁶ The scholars of Cracow, especially Benedykt Hesse, understood the meaning of measures and measurements in reflections on nature, and considered time as a measure. The social impact of these scholars was limited to the intellectual elite, and one can say that it did not affect the way of thinking of people in general. However, they realized the increasing importance of measures in the imagination of people at that time.

This applied to the measurement of time. If rural society remained totally bound by the monotonous rhythm of vegetative time, the development of life in the cities required the accurate measure of time during the day. Merchants and artisans measured their work on an hourly scale far broader than the one used for prayers in monasteries. Cities required a common rhythm of life required by the division of labour and the coexistence of various trades. Apart from using church bells and night watchmen to announce the time, the cities began to use their own instruments with which to measure time: mechanical clocks. They appeared in churches in cities as early as the early 14th century; public clocks began to be built in the first half of the century, and in Polish cities they appeared in the second half and in the following century (Wrocław 1367, Kazimierz 1387, Cracow 1390, Gniezno 1418, etc.). Towards the end of the 14th century, mechanical clocks were to be seen in many cities in Silesia, Małopolska and Pomerania, and in the 15th century almost every larger Polish town had one.¹¹⁷ The assembly and conservation of the complex clock mechanisms required specialists, and these *horologistae* are mentioned in the records of Cracow and Lviv as early as in 1410. The clock became a permanent

¹¹⁶ Świeżawski, *Wszecławiat*, vol. 5, pp. 198, 339; Markowski, *Filozofia przyrody*, pp. 116, 133.

¹¹⁷ C.M. Cipolla, “Clocks and Culture, 1300–1700”, in: id., *European Culture and Overseas Expansion* (London, 1970), p. 117; *Chronologia polska*, ed. B. Włodarski (Warsaw, 1957), pp. 98–100.

part of urban life, which meant that not only was time measured more accurately, but also that man was more independent of nature.

Regarding the measurement of space, there were similar changes, but far less intensive. The measuring of sizes and distances was an obvious practice in daily life, possessing both a practical and a magical dimension. In agrarian communities, the need for precise time measurement was not significant. In the rural world, extensive farming and the presence of unfarmed land made their mark on spatial awareness, so that for a long time there was no demand for exact time measurement.

As in other countries during this time, distances in Poland were anthropometric. The human body and its parts served as basic measures. Units of measure such as the elbow or foot were conventionalized, which permitted a standard system of measurement, finally in some areas. The measurement of the area of land referred to human activity. The chief unit of agricultural measure was the time taken to till the soil. The size of fields was also expressed in terms of the quantity of seed sown. But despite a far-reaching conventionalization of units of measure, the units used in some areas survived here, apart from which approximate measurements using the term “about” and “more or less” were stated. As people colonized new areas, they introduce their units of measurement to the new territories. Sixteenth-century dictionaries treated such terms as *jutro* or *jutrząka* as analogies of the *morga*, defining them as the size of land that could be ploughed with one (or more) oxen in one day. Of course, these names concealed various possible areas of land, depending on the locality.¹¹⁸ Old units of measurement continued to be used, such as *radło*, *plóg*, *żreb*, *dziedzina*, *włóka*, *łan*, but these more resembled units of management (and of collecting benefits).

No doubt the variety of different names, resulting from differences between the written and the spoken language, caused many difficulties. One had to be aware of the mutual quantitative relationships between the terms. A document dated 1368 from Trzebnica explains the relationship between the *łan* and the old Polish *dziedzina* thus: “according to custom, three Polish *łans* were equal to one *dziedzina* (*zezyna*).”

¹¹⁸ Examples: *Słownik łaciny średniowiecznej w Polsce*, vol. 4, col. 1111–1113 (entry: *iugerum*); E. Stamm, *Staropolskie miary*, part 1: *Miary długości i powierzchni* (Warsaw, 1938).

Needless to say, the lack of precision in measuring the size of fields and the variety of names seems to have puzzled only outside observers. Medieval rural inhabitants felt no need for quantitative accuracy. The “quality” of a given plot of land, in other words its economic utility, seemed to be its natural unit of measure. The diversity of units of measuring land was obvious. In his geometry handbook from the middle of the 16th century, Stanisław Grzepski wrote: “Measurement is not the same everywhere: in Prussia, Mazovia and Lithuania they measure in *włókas*; in Great Poland in *szladas*; and in Lesser Poland and Rus’ in *lans*.”¹¹⁹ Not only were the names different, but the same name meant different areas of land.

The need to standardize the measurement of fields probably arose during colonization. However, this was done without the need to use conventional measures, but by applying a loose geometrical plan. In old Polish there existed the term *obszar*¹²⁰ to describe fields or land that were not divided into *lans* or which had been created during settlement (“superfluitates agrorum, residuitates et excrescencias ultra mensuram laneorum”),¹²¹ which illustrates the relativity of such terms as *lan* and *włóka*, relating to the economic situation existing at the moment when an organized rural community was formed. Natural, anthropometric measures satisfied the requirements of demarcation and division, and disputes could be over boundaries and not only the size of land. The mention in one 15th-century document of a unit of measurement of three *stadia*, and a width of “edge to edge,”¹²² illustrates well the eclectic nature of defining quantitative measurements in conjunction with traditional units.

The role of specialists in rural colonization remains a contentious issue among historians.¹²³ During settlement, their task was to divide up the rural area and fix the boundary of fields; this was often done simply by the settlers themselves. As early as the 15th century there was frequent mention of surveyors. A measurement handbook from Chełm, *Geometria culmensis*, written about 1400, distinguishes between two types of measurers: *mensores literati*; in other words, trained

¹¹⁹ S. Grzepski, *Geometria to jest miernicka nauka* (Wrocław, 1957), pp. 105, 109.

¹²⁰ *Słownik staropolski*, vol. 5, pp. 387–389.

¹²¹ ZDM, part 5, p. 273, 277.

¹²² *Ibid.*, part 3, p. 154.

¹²³ J. Szewczyk, *Włóka. Pojęcie i termin na tle innych średniowiecznych jednostek pomiaru ziemi* (Warsaw–Łódź, 1968), p. 12.

surveyors who supervised the demarcation of land, and *mensores layci*, who acted as assistants in this work, measuring out the land with the aid of staves, ropes and their own footsteps.¹²⁴ This specialization may have applied mainly to cities, but in the 15th century we read about surveyors active in rural areas and helping to divide land in connection with inheritance. Interestingly, most of this activity occurred in Mazovia, where ownership was less developed and inherited divisions caused disputes. With the appearance of professional measurers came the use of measuring ropes to divide urban space and fulfill larger construction projects.¹²⁵

The city created the need for specific techniques which made it independent of the natural rhythms of nature. Urban life involved constantly measuring goods and work, people and objects, time and money – and space. The closed nature of urban space precluded, at least to a major extent, extensive thinking in topographical terms. A broad knowledge of surveying (i.e. measuring) was required in order to plan urban space accurately. Research into medieval surveying and planning techniques has shown that the chessboard pattern of cities was the result of applying medieval surveying techniques largely adopted from ancient times. Consequently, cities were built within walls or fortifications according to detailed, or attempted detailed, measurements. The division of urban space into plots is associated with the organization of urban space according to the two main points in it: the market square and the parish church. But, as we have seen, the value of a property depended not only on its size, but also its location, so that a plot closer to the city centre or along shopping streets was more valuable on account of the greater trading opportunities it afforded and the social prestige it carried. These differences of value were measured in terms of money, which provided an impetus to measure the dimensions of property.

“Inside the walls,” writes Henryk Samsonowicz, “the conspicuous feature was [...] the division of the urban space. Plots of land, gardens, squares, streets, courtyards; in dense built-up areas there was no room

¹²⁴ *Geometria culmensis*, ed. H. Mendthal (Leipzig, 1886); Cf. B. Zientara, “Przemiany społeczno-gospodarcze i przestrzenne miast w dobie lokacji”, in: *Miasta doby feudalnej w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej. Przemiany społeczne a układy przestrzenne*, ed. A. Gieysztor, T. Rosłanowski (Warsaw–Poznań, 1976), p. 88.

¹²⁵ T. Zagrodzki, *Regularny plan miasta średniowiecznego a limitacja miernicza* (Wrocław, 1962; *Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne*, 5), pp. 8 ff.; Zientara, *Przemiany*.

for unused land. The need to measure was connected with the need to value [...]. Space began to have a definite, albeit variable, value.”¹²⁶

As cities developed, their plans changed. Dwelling areas spread beyond the original town boundaries, and new building and communal projects were adapted to the needs of the populace concentrated there. Plots of land were often divided into halves and quarters. This required the application of small units of measure and accurate measurement, as was the case in the construction of churches. In building contracts, surfaces were measured in *pręty* and *łokcie*; that is what was agreed upon by the patricians of Płock (1353) in a contract with bricklayers to raise the city walls.¹²⁷ Use of the *łokiec* (elbow), and even semi-elbow, merely indicates the practice of measurement, but not its accuracy, and certainly not its uniformity. The abovementioned handbook by Grzepski notes that Mazovian surveyors used the mercantile elbow “surviving in some districts.”¹²⁸ But local variations in measures continued to be used by individual cities for many centuries, and the use of commercial units when measuring space reflected the need for accurate measurement. Urban space had its value and its price, was subject to the laws of the market, and the practical requirements of daily life required the adaptation of measurement techniques to spatial thinking.

Due to increased mobility and the nature of various commercial activities, the spatial horizon of urban dwellers was extensive and not restricted to the local topography. Knowledge of the world was based on natural features, especially hydrographical one, and cities; to urban dwellers, the world appeared as a network of cities, extensive but managed. The records of Polish merchants contain itineraries in which the choice of route, not the distance, was important, but the listing of names of cities serves as a description of the route chosen.

Regardless of its size, great trading broke through the local framework of medieval imagination. The trade routes that passed through Poland introduced the dimension of the world, according to those times and the extent of international trade connections, to the mentalities and

¹²⁶ H. Samsonowicz, “Kultura miejska w Polsce późnego średniowiecza”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 90 (1983), p. 773; id., *Die funktionale Gliederung des städtischen Raumes* (Cologne–Vienna, 1984; Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, 29), pp. 91–103.

¹²⁷ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Księstwa Mazowieckiego*, ed. J.T. Lubomirski (Warsaw, 1863), no. lxxiii.

¹²⁸ Stamm, *Staropolskie miary*, p. 57.

actions of the merchant communities of Polish cities, and not only a few of the largest centres, but also many secondary trade locations. Genoese colonies, Tana on the Sea of Azov and Kaffa in the Crimea, and the Moldavian ports of Kilia and Białogrod set the rhythm of transit-trade exchange between Poland and the East, and introduced exotic countries and products to Poland. Trade in Hungarian copper expanded knowledge of southern neighbours. The Baltic opened the trade horizon towards the north, but mainly towards the west: this was an area of operations by the powerful Hansa, which consisted not only of Prussian and Western Pomeranian cities, but also, for a while, Cracow and Wrocław. Foreign merchants arrived in Poland and often settled or appointed agents. Lviv was a trade emporium representing various nations, including Italians, Jews, Germans and Armenians. Italian merchants reached many Polish cities, and Florentine and Genoese merchants settled in Cracow, Lviv and Poznań. German merchants learned Polish, as evidenced by various Polish-German dictionaries and phrase books surviving from the 16th century. One of them contains the interesting sentence: “*Moy mily Tomasz ucz szya dobrze popolsku. Meyn liber Thomas lernt gut Polnysch.*”¹²⁹ Such works assisted the trade activity of Polish burghers. Polish merchants went on trade expeditions during which they travelled through their own land and neighbouring countries. A surviving memorandum by a Cracow merchant from the early 15th century illustrates regular trade contacts with Flanders and excursions by Polish merchants to the centres of European trade.

The problem of distances manifested itself to urban residents at various levels. Trade, travel and the conveyance of goods taught people to think in terms of tangible and comparable distances, but the units of measurement applied to closed spaces hardly suited long distances. Agricultural units of measurement could be applied to shorter distances, as shown in court evidence from the middle of the 15th century: “when I was two *stajania* [stations] from the church, I heard the church bells ringing.”¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Meaning: “My dear Thomas, learn good Polish”; *Eyn kurze und grüntliche Underweisung*, col. A4 (according to the reproduction in *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 30, 1980, no. 1–2).

¹³⁰ *Acta capitulorum nec nom iudiciorum ecclesiasticorum*, vol. 2, ed. B. Ulanowski (Cracow, 1902; Monumenta Aevi Historica), no. 392 (1459): “in duobus ingeribus ad ecclesia.”

Miles were used to measure longer distances; the geographical works referred to earlier and early maps applied miles on the basis of information from and the experience of merchants. But the most natural and understandable unit of measuring distance was the time taken to travel that distance, on foot, horseback or ship. This was sufficiently accurate for urban needs: it was necessary to get to town in time for the fair or to sign a trade or credit contract, but this was far from topographically precise.

Distances measured in days helped people envisage the time required for people, products or news to arrive. Thus, in the 15th century, Gdańsk was one day away from Grudziądz and Królewiec, five days from Poznań and Lubecki, eight days from Wrocław and Kowno, 12 days from London and Bruges, and from Venice 36 days by sea and 14 days by land. These figures apply to average speeds of travel overland, but faster times were possible (e.g. the distance between Cracow and Gdańsk might be covered in three days instead of ten).¹³¹

The world of urban culture crated the strongest incentives to weigh and measure upwards, across and even downwards (e.g. in order to establish the depth of harbours). The quantitative thinking applied to closed and tight urban spaces was of limited use in measuring greater distances. Under the influence of geographical discoveries and of geography and cartography in general, a tendency to measure open spaces became widespread in modern times. This was accompanied by a change to people's views of and attitude towards space. This change was a long and slow process, but it had its beginnings in late medieval urban culture.

¹³¹ H. Samsonowicz, *Późne średniowiecze miast nadbałtyckich* (Warsaw, 1968), p. 220.

Public Life and Political Culture

In: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV–XV w.*, ed. B. Geremek (Warsaw, 1997), pp. 577–602.

The association between public life and political culture in the late Middle Ages is significant because that is when the attitudes of modern political life began to take shape. The 14th and 15th centuries saw an expansion of public life in line with the development of dynamic relations between the rulers and the ruled, and the formation of decision-making, advisory and representative bodies. This was expressed in the manner of exercising authority, in a state's institutional structures and in political events, but also in political culture: in governing attitudes, political conduct at various levels and in various communities, and in reflections on the state and politics.

1. Authority, Officials, and the Nobility

The organization of Casimir the Great's kingdom illustrates the success of centralized policy, but also shows a continuation of the political institutions and customs of the previous era, when the state apparatus exploited traditional institutions and relations in order to penetrate social life. In particular, the institution of the *wiecz* (assembly) was preserved, which in 13th century Poland was used to regulate relations between the nobility and the political society of a district. At these assemblies, which sources call *colloquium generale* (or *colloquium solemne*), the duke considered court cases that had been brought before him and placed matters before the assembled gentry for which he wished to gain support.

The development of urban privilege obliged the duke to seek advice or obtain approval for certain issues. Following the unification

of the Kingdom, the institution of the *wiec* altered: it continued as a higher court of land (*colloquium*) and as a council of the landed gentry (*consilium, conventio*), engaging in administrative and legislative activity at the traditional local level.¹ The unification of the state and the integration of individual provinces created an extensive system of authorities and brought a uniform law, although this was a slow and gradual process. Without going into the history of institutions in detail, one can say that society's involvement in political life expanded.

An increasing role in political life in this period was played by the "community of the nobility" (*communitas nobilium, universitas nobilium*). It met at national, provincial and local levels in order to guard or assert its privileges, or to decide on monarchical issues that were required for the common good. Nevertheless, local, parochial interests always took precedence. A general *sejm*, apart from the presence of a multitude of nobles, and royal officials, was also attended by prelates (representatives of the chapters) and representatives of the cities. The form in which a *sejm* was convened in Niepołomice in 1422 "for a reform of the state" was conventional but nevertheless significant: it convened "prelates, barons, nobles, burghers and the common people of our kingdom" ("prelatos, barones, nobiles, cives et vulgum Regni nostri ad nos in Nepolomice vocavimus").² At least in this case society was more broadly represented, certainly including municipal representatives, but regarding the "common people" it hardly represented the broadest segment of society: the peasants.

Regarding the subsequent pattern of the three assembling estates, the king, the senate and the nobility, one can say that it is these three political entities that appeared in public life in the late Middle Ages. Each of them was aware of its role, its objectives and its interests, as well as the means and resources of public activity. Considering the question of participation in public life, one must bear in mind two issues in particular: an ability to reconcile various interests and positions in order to gain consensus within the framework of the "political nation," and an awareness of overriding

¹ Cf. J. Bardach, "O genezie sejmu polskiego", in: *VIII Powszechny Zjazd Historyków Polskich, Historia państwa i prawa* (Warsaw, 1959), p. 5 ff.; S. Russocki, "Zgromadzenia przedstanowe w Europie Środkowej", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 65 (1975), pp. 171–188.

² *Akta grodzkie i ziemskie z czasów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. Z archiwum tak zwanego bernardyńskiego*, vol. 9: *Dyplomatarysz* (Lviv, 1883), no. 24, p. 33.

principles or the “common” good, which should come before parochial interests.

This also applies to the rulers, though in a particular manner, because state policy was identified with dynastic policy; in other words, it therefore represented an expanded and developed family strategy. But in relations with its subjects, the monarchy referred to the sacred principles of its dignity, as well as to its role as ruler, defender and provider. The liturgy of royal funerals, expeditions, and especially coronations – expanded into “symbolic dramas required for an artificial representation of social relationships”³ – disclosed and realized this program. But in political life, the monarch, or the dynasty, faced a need to play a political game: external, with universal powers and with other nations; and internal, with the political nation.

This game commenced with the king’s election. The system of electing kings, which contributed to the development of Polish parliamentarism, compelled the Polish monarch to win the support of political groups. In the final years of his life, King Władysław Jagiełło had to struggle for the support of local assemblies to ensure the succession of one of his sons, born from his marriage to the daughter of Prince Holszański. He gained an oath in this respect at an assembly in Sieradz (1432), “for which King Władysław and Queen Zofia thanked the prelates and lords in attendance.”⁴

However, this decision was reached by an electoral assembly, specially convened after the death of Jagiełło in 1434. But after the death of Władysław III at the Battle of Warna, when news circulated in the country that the king had not in fact been killed in this battle, the king’s brother, Casimir, was only elected at the fourth assembly. Such a way of gaining the throne required, therefore, a reconnaissance of the political situation and an ability to attract people and gain support: it required political talent. Some late medieval rulers had better developed talent, and others had worse, but in order to rule the country, perpetuate the dynasty and make war, each of them had to conduct a political game. The education of the sons of kings went

³ A. Gieysztor, “Spektakl i liturgia – polska koronacja królewska”, in: *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. B. Geremek (Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow–Gdańsk, 1979), p. 9.

⁴ *Ioannis Dlugossii seu Canonici Cracoviensis Historiae Polonicae Libri XII*, ed. A. Przewdziecki (hereinafter: *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*), vol. 4 (Cracoviae, 1877), p. 471.

beyond the curriculum of the education of knights and education in general.⁵ A knowledge of history served as an introduction to politics. Długosz, whom Kazimierz Jagiellończyk appointed tutor to his sons in 1467, wrote in an apology to his *Annales* that “in order to govern the Commonwealth efficiently, it is worth knowing and memorizing the noble deeds of one’s ancestors [...]. I say that this may serve kings, dukes and other heroic men as an example and a mirror.”⁶

Without exaggerating the level of education of royal sons, one may assume that learning about the past was seen as a way to prepare future monarchs for political life. But the most important preparation was participation in the life of the court, which was a genuine political “apprenticeship.”⁷

It was similar with the education of the sons of powerful nobles. The political elite that exercised power together with the king was limited to a small number of families, but was also subject to a certain rotation. Rulers strove to surround themselves with their own people, but even Jagiełło and Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, able monarchs who ruled for a long time, were compelled to accept the situation where the power of monarchs derived from a combination of wealth, high office and high social prestige. Therefore, the king had to respect the status of these people and their families, and win their support. However, there was a reverse effect here: royal favour was a powerful factor in increasing one’s wealth and an instrument of furthering one’s official career and general prestige. In particular, staying at a royal court provided an opportunity to make a fast career because it was possible to learn about the functioning of the court and state, and establish favourable acquaintanceships, not to mention that it offered easy access to the king. The career of Jan Tarnowski serves as an example. As a 12 year-old boy, he won the favour of King Jan Olbracht and had access to him even when the king was ill, when no other courtier had such access. Also important were studies, during which important friendships were made both at home and abroad. Individual talents were also significant, perhaps more so than education. As Antoni Gąsiorowski has correctly written: “Intellectual skills

⁵ J. Skoczek, *Wychowanie Jagiellonów* (Lviv, 1932).

⁶ *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*, vol. 1.

⁷ F. Papée, *Jan Olbracht* (Cracow, 1936), p. 9; S. Orzechowski, *Wybór pism* (Wrocław, 1972), p. 214.

seemed at least as important as diplomatic dexterity, valour, combat efficiency, etc.”⁸ For some, confidence and experience accorded prestige on the king’s council, whereas others gained prestige by their conduct (Długosz hailed Wincenty of Szamotuły, castellan of Miedzyrzecze, for his manliness, but also for his talent for joking) or their accomplishments at jousts and tournaments.

Before the creation of the senate as one of the two chambers of the Polish parliament, which probably occurred towards the end of the 15th century, the royal council took part in ruling the country and exercising a major influence on the king’s decisions regarding domestic and foreign policy. One can say that this body, directly connected to the monarch (and recommended by him) represented the collective interests of the state. It functioned in cooperation with or under pressure from the community of powerful nobles, resulting in state interests often coming into conflict with individual ones. The greatest such conflict known was between the lords of Małopolska and the lords of Wielkopolska, which lasted in various forms throughout the 14th and 15th centuries. There is no doubt that in this conflict, as in every struggle for power, the parochial interests of powerful families, competing for power and a state income, prevailed.⁹ But also significant is the fact that each of these two sides overcame the interests of any parochial individuals within their own ranks. Both sides formed comprehensive programs of foreign policy: that of Małopolska was directed towards Rus’, and that of Wielkopolska was geared for a long time to the recovery of Silesia and Pomerania. Although this conflict expressed the divergent interests of the two sides, they nevertheless shared a feeling of responsibility for the state and displayed political thinking in terms of the state. The king’s closest entourage comprised lords who were not only devoted to their monarch, but who also possessed a certain knowledge of politics and the political institutions of other countries, and who thought in terms of the collective interests of the state as a political whole.

The actions of the monarch and of officials became subject to particular political ceremony which sometimes contrasted with the

⁸ A. Gąsiorowski, *Urzednicy zarzadu lokalnego w późnośredniowiecznej Wielkopolsce* (Poznań, 1970), p. 121.

⁹ Id., “Monarchia nierównoprawnych stanów”, in: *Polska dzielnicowa i zjednoczona. Państwo, społeczeństwo, kultura*, ed. A. Gieysztor (Warsaw, 1972), p. 306.

simple relations that existed during hunting sessions or the modest lifestyle of the court of Kazimierz Jagiellończyk (who was even accused of parsimony). At official procedures, attention was paid to ceremony and priorities. The coronation of Kazimierz Jagiellończyk in 1472 was marred by a dispute between dukes and bishops as to who should go first before the king. This was no doubt due to the patterns observed at other European courts, as well as diplomatic activity. Regarding diplomacy, Poland became skilled at applying the correct diplomatic techniques thanks mainly to the royal chancellery, composed of people not only of proper education, but also equipped with a knowledge of the instruments with which to conduct state affairs – not merely the ability to write and draw up documents, but also a knowledge of law and traditions, and of the patterns of administration in other countries.¹⁰ In the development of political culture, the king's chancellery radiated ideas and patterns of conduct. It is significant that a royal chancellery often comprises a large number of church dignitaries. At the same time, key members of the nobility established a political formation, as was the case in the second half of the 15th century.¹¹

The political careers of royal dignitaries often show that their main incentive was the interests of their families, riches, envy and greed for power. Together with Zbigniew Oleśnicki, bishop of Cracow, a controversial figure regarding his political role but nevertheless a statesman of great value and broad horizons, is his brother Jan Głowacz of Oleśnica, whose public activity consisted mainly of unscrupulous efforts to boost his own fortune. But apart from the presence of parochial interests and greed in conflicts with the monarchy and the appearance of “parties,” we also observe a difference in political concepts, those in favour of a strong central state and strong monarchy, and those representing an oligarchic system of government.

¹⁰ J. Krzyżanowska, *Kancelaria królewska Władysława Jagiełły. Studium z dziejów kultury politycznej w XV wieku*, vols. 1–2 (Poznań, 1972–1979); I. Sułkowska-Kuraszowa, *Dokumenty królewskie i ich funkcja w państwie polskim za Andegawenów i pierwszych Jagiellonów, 1370–1444* (Warsaw, 1977); also *Polska kancelaria królewska w latach 1447–1506* (Wrocław, 1967).

¹¹ W. Knoppek, “Zmiany w układzie sił politycznych w Polsce w II połowie XV w. i ich związek z genezą dwuizbowego sejmu”, *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, 7 (1955), no. 2, pp. 55–98.

2. Political Careers and Diplomacy

An ability to win the king's favour (and that of his family) and to gather political support may be regarded one of the personal talents of politicians of this time; and we know that such a talent was important in a political career, on a par with wealth and family connections, and probably more important than education. Technical-intellectual skills were also significant, for example the art of speaking and negotiating skills. Oratorical skill developed in importance in line with the evolution of estate assemblies and representational bodies. It was also important in court life and in international institutions such as synods and royal embassies.

At that time, using proper Latin, it was necessary to present Polish arguments and defend Polish interests, and display a knowledge of the law and an ability to refer to theological and historical arguments. This applies especially to the long conflict, which assumed various forms, between Poland (and in the 15th century, the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth) and the Teutonic Order. During proceedings before papal nuncios, the clergymen representing Poland's interests displayed the ability to refer to canonical law, the *ius gentium*, and authorities. This is evidenced by Polish activities at 15th-century synods.¹² At the synod of Constance (1414–1418), the Polish delegation not only took part in the debates on the shape of relations between the synod and the papacy, but also energetically raised the issue of the Polish-Teutonic dispute and opposed the anti-Polish pamphlet of Falkenberg. In the important issue of union with the Eastern Church, two Poles who played a major role are Archbishop Mikołaj Trąba and the bishop of Płock, Jakub of Korzkwa, who introduced the mayor of Kiev, Grzegorz Camblak, to the pope for an audience. Poland's representatives also defended Polish interests at the holy synod of Basel, where a broad campaign targeted at Polish interests was waged. Representatives of the Church hierarchy and of Cracow University were additionally active at this

¹² A. Prochaska, *Na soborze w Konstancji* (Cracow, 1893; Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności. Wydział Humanistyczno-Filozoficzny, 35); K. Pieradzka, "Dwie polskie relacje kronikarskie o soborze w Konstancji", in: *Mediaevalia. W 50 rocznicę pracy naukowej Jana Dąbrowskiego* (Warsaw, 1960), pp. 207 ff.; J. Fijałek, *Mistrz Jakób z Paradyża i Uniwersytet Krakowski w okresie soboru bazylejskiego* (Cracow, 1900); *Dzieje Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w latach 1364–1764* (Cracow, 1965), pp. 91 ff., 115 ff.; A.F. Grabski, *Polska w opiniach Europy Zachodniej XIV–XV w.* (Warsaw, 1968), p. 307 ff.

synod, also attended by an official embassy of Poland headed by the bishop of Poznań, Stanisław Ciołek. At the end of July 1434, an official service was held in memory of the dead Jagiełło; the speech by Mikołaj of Kozłów, professor of theology at Cracow University, was hailed as a skilful panegyric honouring the dead king. Quoting extensively from Seneca and Christian writers, Kozłowski hailed Jagiełło's services in the conversion of Lithuania and Courland, presenting a picture of a just monarch, brave in battle, avoiding warfare and opposed to bloodshed. This image of a model Christian monarch was intended to dispel the negative stereotypes of Poland that were then in circulation.¹³ Poles were among the most influential fathers of the Basel synod. They included Dzierżaw of Borzymów, archdeacon of Cracow and twice rector of Cracow University. In 1439 he represented the synod at the signing of the peace treaty between France and England, and was also one of the 30 electors appointed by the synod to elect the pope. Enea Silvio notes that he was pleasant, *conversazione suavis* and amused the synod fathers, arguing that a Pole cannot subject himself to the severe rule of one meal during a papal election, "let the French be abstentious, but let the Poles eat as much as they wish."¹⁴

Diplomatic activity required not only a knowledge of court customs, personal relationships and kindness from other people (giving presents played a major role), but also an ability to paint a positive picture of a distant and little-known country and its ruler. The external appearance of the Polish delegation was also important. This is how Enea Silvio describes the entry of the Polish delegation, headed Jana of Rytwiany and Maciej of Raciąż (1461): "Everyone's eyes were drawn by the delegation of the king of Poland, preceded by a large procession of young men of noble birth, wonderful countenance and fair hair falling to their shoulders. Dressed mainly in robes of green, they sat on powerful stallions. In one hand they held a crossbow, as was the custom of the land, and in the other a sword and quiver of Libyan bearskin. Their heads were adorned with hats decorated with green feathers or with garlands of flowers."¹⁵ The exotic elements

¹³ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, vol. 2, ed. A. Lewicki (Cracow, 1891), no. 221, pp. 323–330.

¹⁴ *Aeneae Sylvii Commentariorum historicorum libri 3 de concilio Basiliensi* (Helmstadii, 1700), p. 94, 103.

¹⁵ I. Zarębski, *Stosunki Eneasza Sylwiusza z Polską i Polakami* (Cracow, 1939), p. 82.

we read in this description did not diminish the prestige of the king represented by this delegation.

But there was nothing exotic about the Polish delegation that went to Prague in 1467 to support the prospect of an internal reconciliation in Bohemia. The mission entrusted to Jakub of Dębno, Stanisław Ostroróg and Jan Długosz was the preservation of close relations between the two countries and a mutual reconnaissance of the situation. The delegation came to Prague in October at the head of a procession of 300 horses and remained four months. Although this delegation had no particular success, the delegates demonstrated sufficient oratorical and negotiating skills to convince King George of the need for reconciliation with Rome and for talks with the king's opposing camp, the Catholic league.¹⁶

The speeches that had to be delivered before the pope in Rome were a test of the education and general culture of the representatives of the Cracow court, and also had to serve the interests of the Polish state at the same time. The oratorical performances, some of which were printed from the 15th century onwards (the oldest printed speech is that of Jan Tarnowski to Pope Innocent VIII in 1486) sometimes exceeded the anticipated reception. The speech by Jan Ostroróg before Paul II in 1467 was such a panegyric in praise of Poland that it evoked satirical responses from Italian writers.¹⁷

The requirements of *raison d'état*, Poland's international commitments, and the importance of the Polish monarchy on the European stage, all this required knowledge, preparation and skill. Politics called for the development of political culture.

Always the first consideration was the spiritual and secular elite, the court community and the social circle of the king's chancellery. These communities influenced state policy, formulated political programs, and were present in chronicles and documents. However, it is difficult to say how far broader circles of society were engaged in politics.

¹⁶ F. Kiryk, *Jakub z Dębna na tle wewnętrznej i zagranicznej polityki Kazimierza Jagiellończyka* (Wrocław, 1967), p. 97 ff.; A. Strzelecka, "Kontakt Długosza z Pragą (1467)", in: *Studia z dziejów kultury i ideologii ofiarowane Ewie Małczyńskiej w 50. rocznicę pracy dydaktycznej i naukowej*, ed. R. Heck, W. Korta, J. Leszczyński (Wrocław, 1968), pp. 164–179.

¹⁷ *Wybór mów staropolskich*, ed. B. Nadolski (Wrocław, 1961), pp. 31 ff.

3. The Political Culture of the Nobility

The basic issue is the political culture of the nobility. This cannot be judged by the deeds and words of the most distinguished and best-educated state officials. One would have to examine the general political mentality and public engagement by the nobility as a whole. As it is, knowledge of this subject remains meagre, for we do not know a great deal about the consciousness of people during this era. The scant historical evidence of these matters indicate that individuals and families tended to side with groups that represented their interests, as well as with the state and church community. Public service played a major role as an expression of dignity and good service for the benefit of the Kingdom. It comprised political and oral elements stemming from both Christianity and from ancient literature. Valour, physical strength and courage were in themselves the qualities of a knight, but they only assumed importance when applied to a higher cause, i.e. service to one's king and country. This also applies to knowledge which, although it played a limited role in the pattern of noble life, nevertheless assumed greater importance as university education spread among the young nobility, but here too a university education became more useful when it served the common good, public affairs, the state and the Church.¹⁸ Here we are rather discussing the theoretical shape of the model of culture among the nobility, without knowing how far it was applied in practice.

The evidence presented by nobles during the Polish-Teutonic legal proceedings provides a glimpse of their mentality. Although the form of the questions, dictated by canonical law, meant that the answers were mainly stereotypes, elements of real awareness do nevertheless appear.

In the first canonical proceedings held in Inowrocław and Brześć Kujawski in 1320 and 1321 on the seizure of Gdańsk Pomerania, evidence was given by a knight called Żyra of Krupocin, who "said what he knew."¹⁹ Regarding the situation in Gdańsk and Pomerania

¹⁸ Cf. M. Koczerska, "'Spominki o Ciołkach'. Z dziejów ideologii możnowładczej XV wieku", in: *Cultus et cognitio. Studia z dziejów średniowiecznej kultury* (Warsaw, 1976), p. 272.

¹⁹ *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*, ed. H. Chłopocka, vol. 1 (Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow, 1970), pp. 35-35; Cf. K. Tymieniecki, "Studia nad XIV wiekiem. Proces polsko-krzyżacki z lat 1320-1321", *Przegląd Historyczny*, 21 (1917-1918), pp. 123-125.

before the events of 1308, he referred to the *publica vox et fama* both in Pomerania and in neighbouring lands, but he also referred to his own extensive knowledge because he had spent most of his life in Pomerania. So everyone knew that Gdańsk castle was governed on behalf of Łokietek by the Pomeranian judge Bogusza, just as everyone knew what the territorial limits of the authority of princes was. Żyra's account of the atrocities and massacres perpetrated by the Teutonic Knights in Pomerania was based on what he himself had seen (he showed a scar on his face which he gained during the defence of Świecie against the Teutonic Knights), but the most significant feature is his general commitment to Pomeranian affairs. In answer to the routine question whether he was giving evidence out of fear, hatred or bias, he replied that he was doing so for the sake of justice "because he had been raised in this area." Another knight, Piotr of Szczytno, also providing evidence in these proceedings as a witness, knew Pomerania from many journeys he had made there before it was taken over by the Teutonic Knights, but he described their doings in great detail, saying that they are so well known that there is hardly anyone who has not heard of them.²⁰ Piotr's condemnation of the Teutonic invasion was motivated by the fact that the Teutonic Knights had seized the property of local knights who had faithfully served their lord, had seized their land violently, and had treated the inhabitants with cruelty.

In legal proceedings held in Warsaw in 1339, the subject of the dispute was defined in more general terms and concerned all the Polish land seized by the Teutonic Knights. Reference was made to events much further in the past than the capture of Gdańsk. The previous case referred to events that had occurred 12 years previously, whereas this one in Warsaw was about events that had occurred many decades earlier, beginning with the negotiations of Konrad I, duke of Mazovia, with the Teutonic Order. The subject was the agreements, the value of land, and the course of Polish-Teutonic conflicts. Evidence was given mainly by royal officials, but a man named Waclaw, described as *illiteratus* because he did not know Latin, was asked what he understood by the term *vox et fama publica*, and replied that it meant "what all people, especially those of noble birth and prosperous people, commonly say (*nobiles et seniores*)."²¹

²⁰ *Lites ac res gestae*, ed. H. Chłopocka, pp. 36–37.

²¹ *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*, ed. I. Zakrzewski, vol. 1 (Poznań, 1890), p. 222.

For representatives of the key group of lords possessed a greater knowledge of the history of the lands that were the subject of the dispute, as well as about their value, i.e. the income they yielded. But the sources of their knowledge were similar to that of common knights (Jan of Płonków, asked where he had obtained his knowledge of Kujawy, replied that his father, grandfather and great grandfather had all lived there, just like he had,²² and that he had seen much with his own eyes). The information about the Teutonic Knights provided by knightly witnesses at the Warsaw proceedings concerned the history of the Teutonic presence and usually came from their parents. One knight, Bogusław Łazęka, referred to information from a friend of his, a man of “advanced years” (“a quodam vilano suo antiquo multum, qui ita narrabat sibi et dixit”).²³ Some witnesses also displayed a knowledge of the law, for example one Antoni, a knight from Kujawy, said that Duke Leszek had leased some land with his brothers before he pledged it for three hundred ducats.²⁴ Finally, descriptions of the rape and pillage perpetrated by the Teutonic Order were used to show that justice was on the side of the Poles. Judging from the evidence of witnesses at these Polish-Teutonic legal proceedings, one can say that a firm feature of Polish political life was thinking in terms of a state community, whereby the basic points of reference are history and law (or a feeling of justice). Characteristic of the mentality of this time is the reference to tradition and to the fact that the Teutonic Knights violated the principles of loyalty and property. But one cannot fail to notice, either, that witnesses used arguments which complied with canonical and secular law. The similarity of the evidence suggests that witnesses received certain legal assistance and possibly instructions about what to say, so that before giving evidence they had already spent some time in a legal environment.

The Teutonic issue played an increasing role in the late medieval fortunes of the Polish monarchy. It led to military conflicts among which the “great war” of 1410 spread the valour of the Polish knights throughout Europe, whilst the Thirteen Years’ War, ending with the peace of Torun (1466), led to a fundamental change in the balance of forces between Poland and the Teutonic Order. It also occupied a central

²² Ibid., p. 234.

²³ Ibid., p. 253.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 298.

place in the diplomatic activities of the Polish court, relations with other states, in the international Christian forum, relations with the papacy and in church synods. The work of the king's chancellery as a centre of forming political strategy was backed by the church hierarchy and the community of Cracow University, as well as by lay knights and envoys. The evidence given in Polish-Teutonic legal proceedings in the 15th century shows that not only the political elite, but also broader sections of society, were aware of the Teutonic issue. Moreover, the Polish community of knights was generally aware of the weight of this issue and able to comprehend it in terms of the law and teachings of the Church, and the political morality of the time. A piece of 15th-century correspondence from Poland to a church dignitary in Rome reporting on the Polish-Teutonic war claims that the Teutonic Order is fighting *contra iustitiam*, which was an argument of fundamental ideological and cultural weight in the religious community.²⁵ One can also view the abovementioned giving of evidence as an ability to apply appropriate arguments representing the political and legal culture of the knights.

The above statement can also be applied, albeit with some modification, to the Turkish problem which headed European politics in the 15th century and defined Poland's role and place in the Christian world. In this case, too, one can say that the knights had certain knowledge of these facts, as well as of Poland's political and commercial interests, and felt responsible for Poland's role as a "shield" of Christianity.²⁶ It was difficult for knights to exceed their local horizon, nevertheless it was required of them in order to fulfil their public duties and exercise engagement in the monarchy's domestic and foreign policies. Naturally, the state's great foreign policy matters did not play a great role in the daily life of the knights. They were an additional component, viewed through the prism of internal and local affairs. The nobility's political culture at this time was formed primarily by involvement in the reaching or obtaining of decisions at the local level, or by winning privileges. The nobility was not always the active party in this process. One can say that it was the policy of winning landed

²⁵ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, vol. 1, ed. A. Sokołowski, J. Szujski, A. Lewicki (Cracow, 1876), no. 42, p. 3.

²⁶ Cf. U. Borkowska, "The Ideology of 'Antemurale' in the Sphere of Slavic Culture (13th–17th Centuries)", in: *The Common Christian Roots of the European Nations* (Florence, 1982), pp. 1206–1221.

privileges – conducted mainly by the powerful elite – that permitted the integration of various communities into the nobility. As Franciszek Piekosiński observed, via landed privileges one can discover “what trends occupied the minds of and guided the deeds and actions of the Polish nobility of the 15th century.”²⁷

As they gained privileges, the nobles took an active part in the public life of the nobility. However, little is known of the forms which their political activity took at the local and national levels up until the end of the 15th century.

Noble privileges were normally extorted from the monarchy whenever it needed the nobility’s support – to gain the throne, ensure succession or accept armed service, and other benefits in times of war. In the privileges won by the nobles, one can discern their interests and program: to satisfy their commercial interests, reduce their obligations towards the ruler and increase their powers in the life of the state. An active role in the struggle for privileges was played by the most powerful group of nobles, who were anxious to restrict the powers of the king, but also by noble leaders aware of the difference in interests among the nobility as a whole. This latter group acted as a crowd, often subject to the manipulation of the more powerful nobles, and not always having its own representatives.

The demand for privileges was sometimes expressed in extraordinary conditions, in a kind of social tumult. That was the background to the privilege of Czerwińsk. The nobility gathered by Jagiełło in an expedition against the Teutonic Knights crossed the Vistula at Czerwińsk, set up camp, and while in camp formulated their demands. The mechanism for gaining privileges during Kazimierz Jagiellończyk’s expedition against the Prussians in 1454 was similar: here, too, the crowd of the nobility acted by means of a tumult. Długosz condemns the conduct of the knights of Wielkopolska at Cerekwica: “Forgetful of their obligation of obedience to and respect for the king and Commonwealth, and brought up in the pursuit of pleasures and entertainments, instead of war they engaged in disputes and demanded from the king the confirmation of former liberties and the granting of new ones, else they would not do battle at all.”²⁸

²⁷ F. Piekosiński, *Wiece, sejmiki, sejmy i przywileje ziemskie w Polsce wieków średnich* (Cracow, 1900).

²⁸ *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*, vol. 5.

However, one should also note more peaceful behaviour. First it was necessary to formulate a certain set of privileges, create a consensus of nobles around it, and submit it to the king via representatives. This usually meant formulating instructions for these representatives who had to hold talks, or prepare a document containing the demands of the nobles, called "petitions."²⁹ Some royal deeds formed in this way reflect the thinking of the nobility and preserve their style of writing.

The nobility's participation in public life created certain patterns of collective behaviour which eventually became standard practice in meetings of nobles, and eventually in assemblies.

At assemblies of nobles, decisions were reached not by voting and a mathematical majority, but according to the principle of *pars sanior*. Borrowed from church councils, this principle meant that consensus had to be reached to make a decision; in other words, all contentious demands had to be dispelled and approval gained for the motions and proposals submitted by the leaders of dynasties, and officials and dignitaries at higher positions. Thus, the decision was taken by a dignitary or representatives, but all those taking part in the assembly had to express approval. When only the representatives of the nobles took part in the assembly, there was an obvious opportunity for political advancement by active people capable of attracting others to their cause and proficient in the art of oratory. Such representatives, numbering 12 and sent to the assembly of Łęczycze (1448), were described as "nobles specially delegated and appointed, endowed with all prerogatives, so as to speak and offer consultation at the side of dignitaries."³⁰

When realizing this principle of participation in an assembly, it was necessary to remove all active opposition. Therefore, frequent use was made of violent intervention, taking the form of a tumult, whenever a decision did not comply with the wishes of a powerful or influential group. This is what happened at the assembly of Łęczycza (1420), where the following were to be tried: Wojciech Jastrzębiec, bishop of Cracow; Zbigniew of Brzez, marshal of the Commonwealth; and Janusz of Tuliszkow, castellan of Kalisz, whom the king had accused

²⁹ H. Grajewski, "Artykuł statutu warckiego o przymusowej sprzedaży sołectw", *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, 21 (1969), no. 1, p. 133 ff.; J. Bardach, "Początki sejmów", in: *Historia sejmów polskiego*, ed. J. Michalski (Warsaw, 1984), p. 23 ff.

³⁰ A. Pawiński, *Sejmiki ziemskie* (Warsaw, 1895), supp. no. 20.

of failing to properly discharge their obligations towards Sigismund of Luxemburg.³¹ A crowd of “brothers, relatives and friends” promptly appeared in protest and caused a tumult, which was only settled through the efforts of other dignitaries. The tumult was a violent form of influencing the reaching of decisions, but the form most commonly used was “consultation.”

In the 15th century, political decisions were also reached by means of “arithmetical” voting. Długosz reports on this form of voting, describing how it was used to diffuse a conflict at the election of King Władysław III: the marshal of the Kingdom announced to the assembled nobles that the *omnes maiores* had resolved to give the crown to Władysław and those who agreed had to proceed to the right of the hall, and those who regarded this decision harmful to the Commonwealth had to proceed to the left.³²

In the general picture of political behaviour by the nobility, we do not know the proportion of nobles who acted in the interests of the monarchy, and the proportion of those who acted for the sake of their own parochial or egoistical interests. This depended largely on the balance of forces between the king and court officials, on the skills of key politicians, and on the political situation at any particular moment. The basic role of the nobility was to approve decisions that had been reached. Kings were chosen by a body of dignitaries and representatives, but afterwards the marshal informed the “community” of assembled nobles of the choice that had been made. Custom required that the assembled nobles be asked three times whether the choice was in accordance with their will, whereupon they had to answer “yes” three times and raise their hand.³³ This picture of a sea of raised hands and repeated cries may, in a nutshell, be regarded as evidence of the formation of “democracy by the nobility,” but hidden behind it were various forms of political scheming, and efforts to gain support for decisions and create the principles for the functioning of the assembly system.

³¹ *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*, vol. 4, pp. 262–263.

³² *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*, vol. 4, p. 544.

³³ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, vol. 3, ed. A. Lewicki (Cracow, 1894), no. 390, p. 404 (on the election of Jan Olbracht in 1492).

4. The Aspirations of the Nobility: The Light and the Shade

We have discussed the place of general affairs and of the international and domestic horizon in the minds of the nobles. But there is no doubt that local affairs also occupied an important place. An expression of this was participation in assemblies. Participation in local assemblies was high because it did not involve major expenditures, and the matters discussed at local assemblies were clear, interesting and important from the point of view of individual interests. But at other assemblies, absenteeism was considerable, although these assemblies were not rendered void because their resolutions also applied to those who were absent. At least that was the legal principle. But when representatives were appointed to an assembly, the instructions which they were given were dominated by local issues concerning everyday life (e.g. the brewing, measurement and serving of beer) and commercial affairs (e.g. trade conditions). However, an obvious concern for taxation and military matters led to the general problems of the monarchy's policy. The nobility were also aware that they need not approve the decisions reached or the king's policies. When the Prussian estates rose against their ruler, the Teutonic Order, the medieval "law of resistance" (*ius resistendi*) encouraged Polish philosophers and jurists to put forth arguments whereby the people might oppose tyranny and unjust rule.³⁴ This principle lay at the roots of the development of democracy by the nobility. It was supported by the law of the estates and by the formation of the principles whereby that which binds everyone should thus be approved by everyone ("quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus comprobari debet"), and that none one may be imprisoned without a court sentence ("neminem captivabimus nisi iure victum"), a medieval inheritance from which the modern structure of freedom by the nobility arose. We do not know if the idea of liberty played a key role in shaping the consciousness of the nobles in the late Middle Ages, but certain elements of it can be found in the political practices of the time, such as confederacies.

The origins of confederacies in medieval Poland is not precisely known. The practice of confederacies in the 14th and 15th centuries

³⁴ K. Górski, "Pisma polskie w obronie Związku Pruskiego a geneza 'złotej wolności'", *Roczniki Historyczne*, 18 (1949).

arose out of the right to offer resistance. In the 15th century, the main purpose of opposition was defence against the king's anger and a resultant confiscation of property without a court judgment.³⁵ A fraternity established in Poznań on 2 September 1352 by 84 knights led by marshall Maciek Borkowic offered assistance against the seizure of property by the king or local authority.³⁶ A confederacy established in Wielkopolska in 1383 consisted of the knights and three cities of that region, Poznań, Pyzdry and Kalisz, and its purpose was defence against the actions of the authority of Wielkopolska. A confederacy of the nobles of the Lviv region was formed against the Russian marshal Andrzej Odrowąż. A defence of ownership rights and of the freedom of the individual lay at the roots of confederacies of the nobles, which expressed a communion of interests and a feeling of respect for the law, but in many cases confederacies merely expressed class or group egoism.

A confederacy formed in 1406 in Piotrków in the king's absence concerned a traditional subject of conflicts between the nobility and the clergy: the requirement to surrender one tenth of agricultural output.³⁷ However, this time the confederates stressed their loyalty to the king and merely opposed abuse by the clergy. They ceremoniously swore to offer mutual assistance; and also resolved to appoint four representatives from each territory to advise on how to defend the rights of the nobility against the clergy. Anyone who refused support in this cause was threatened with exclusion from the royal community and with confiscation of his property (“de tota communitate regni abicere volumus et promittimus bona et hereditates desertare”).

The confederacy of Piotrków, where the clergy also spoke out in defence of its rights, represented the broadest cross-section of society, combining dignitaries and the nobility (in a document of 1406: “domini barones, proceres et nobiles regni Poloniae”; and in a document of 1407:

³⁵ Z. Wojciechowski, *Państwo polskie w wiekach średnich. Dzieje ustroju* (Poznań, 1948), p. 296 ff. (literature); on *ius resistendi* in Poland see: *ibid.*, p. 124 ff.; J. Bardach, *Historia państwa i prawa Polski*, vol. 1, ed. 2 (Warsaw, 1964), pp. 450 ff.

³⁶ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, ed. I. Zakrzewski, vol. 3 (Poznań, 1877), p. 313; Cf. W. Moszczeńska, “Rola polityczna rycerstwa wielkopolskiego w czasie bezkrólewia po Ludwiku Wielkim”, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 25 (1925), pp. 81 ff.; J. Łojko, “Konfederacja Macieja Borkowica”, *Roczniki Historyczne*, 43 (1977), pp. 29–58.

³⁷ The documents of the Piotrków assemblies of 1406 and 1407 have been published by M. Bobrzyński in the series of *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności*: vol. 1, 1874, pp. 108–121; *Codex epistolaris saeculi*, vol. 1, nos. 34, 35, pp. 26–30.

“pallatini et castellani et omnes dignitarii, barones, milites, clientes ac tota universitas de omnibus terris regni Poloniae”). In the 1406 document we find not only the signatures of families, but also their seals (*genealogiae sigillorum*), whereas on the 1407 document we find the seals of the territories, in other words Wielkopolska, Kujawy, Sieradz Łęczycza, Wielun and Dobrzyń. This confederacy thus expresses a communion of interests of the entire class of nobility. In this context, article III of the 1406 document assumes particular significance, saying that the rights of the nobles derive from natural law, “whereby the nobility has its roots in liberty, and liberty in the nobility” (“Item, quia iure dictante naturali, cum nobilitas ex libertate et ex contra libertas ex nobilitate originem suum censentur obtinere”). Therefore, according to the confederacy, a nobleman may contribute one tenth of his output solely out of his own free will, and no one may compel him to do so. Should anyone excommunicate him for refusing to contribute, he may refer to the law of property and demand judgment upon those who excommunicated him.

The concept of freedom in the Piotrków document is attributed to the nobles. It does not rule out obedience to the king or any other form of allegiance, but mainly signifies the strength of the privileges held, personal inviolability and legal protection. The confederacies of the late Middle Ages created a common awareness transcending the local horizon of political engagement and the parochial interests of the nobility. This concerned the class of nobles, but also the supreme interests of the state. That was the case during the interregnum following the death of King Louis I the Hungarian (confederacies of 1382 and 1384),³⁸ and those were the aims set by the confederacy of 1438 against wars and breaches of the public order,³⁹ and a confederacy formed the following year by 160 nobles from the Cracow, Sandomierz, Lublin and Rus’ regions to remove the evil that had penetrated the Kingdom while the king was still a minor.⁴⁰ Regardless of the fortunes of individual confederacies, the motives for forming them illustrate the political and ideological mentality of the nobility.

The practice of forming confederacies in the 14th and 15th centuries occasionally expresses contradictory intentions of forming a league

³⁸ Zob. Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności, vol. 1 (1874), p. 163.

³⁹ *Codex epistolaris saeculi*, vol. 1, no. 248, pp. 365–366.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 255, pp. 389–391.

in defence of supreme interests or the rights of a particular group in the face of excessive strength by central authority, but also to protect parochial interests.

The nobility's reference to laws and freedoms also suggests that the nobles viewed themselves as a "political nation" as early as in the 15th century. In a treatise called *De natura iurium et bonorum regis* published in 1507, Stanislaw Zaborowski wrote: "I do not say that the king possesses a higher authority than himself in the Commonwealth, but that the whole community of the Kingdom is above him and assumes a higher place."⁴¹ This "community" (*communitas*) is the nobility as a political nation. Still poorly organized politically, it was only merely creating its representative institutions, and appreciated the natural supremacy of the law, the "common law of the Commonwealth" as described in 1504.⁴² Gradually, too, the nobility acquired a political education by participating in the land courts, and eventually in assemblies and councils.⁴³ The picture of a tumult of nobles situated in a negotiating circle, as illustrated by Józef Siemieński in the 16th century, also applies to the previous two centuries.⁴⁴ It is difficult to balance the positive and negative effects of the nobility's increasing role in public life, but the pattern of political activity certainly raised the common good, that of the nobles and that of the country as a whole, above parochial interests.

Poles, Lithuanians and Russians were bound by the fortunes of the Jagiellonian monarchy in the 15th century. This was significant in the formation of political structures and all socio-cultural processes. It served to bring together societies with different institutions, different levels of material and spiritual development, and different traditions. The main direction was set by the Polonization of culture, but this went in both directions. Cultural osmosis occurred, but differences still remained. In 1529, Olbracht Gasztold (Albertas Goštautas), marshall of Wilno, protesting against the introduction of the Polish judicial system, claimed that the field system and the organization of property

⁴¹ This treatise was issued by M. Bobrzyński in: *Starodowane prawa polskiego pomniki*, ed. A. Helcel (Warsaw-Cracow, 1877), vol. 5, p. 35.

⁴² *Volumina Legum*, ed. J. Ohryzko, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1859), p. 135.

⁴³ Cf. S. Russocki, "Uwagi o kulturze politycznej Polski XVI-XVII w.," in: *Dzieje kultury politycznej w Polsce*, ed. J.A. Gierowski (Warsaw, 1977), vol. 18.

⁴⁴ J. Siemieński, "Polska kultura polityczna w XVI wieku," in: *Kultura staropolska* (Cracow, 1932), p. 157 ff.

in Lithuania were different than in Poland, so that a mechanical transfer of Polish customs to Lithuania would only create confusion.⁴⁵

Political relations, relationships between the monarch and courtiers, and the legal situation of the knights were also governed by different traditions. The very form of court documents indicates this. In the 1380s, a patrician in Łuck, Fiodor Danilewicz, and his brother Michał, swore an oath of allegiance to King Władysław in the following words: *sluszati mi gospodarja swojeho welikoho korolja wo wsem, kak mi powelit i bojati mi sja jeho kak Boha*.⁴⁶ This formula, especially its final words, has no equivalent in Polish documents of that time. Moreover, it would have been unthinkable. A similar custom of granting power, noted in sources from the end of 1482⁴⁷ and called brow-beating, originated in the actual physical beating of one's brow as a gesture of gratitude and allegiance.

However, regardless of the different cultural and political traditions between Poland and Lithuania, the political elites – the nobles and the boyars – engaged themselves in mutual rapprochement. In the Wilno-Radom agreement of 1401, Poland was represented by dignitaries of the king, whilst Lithuania was represented by 30 Lithuanian boyars who signed in their own name and in the name of all the boyars of Lithuania, who appeared here as an independent political entity for the first time in history.⁴⁸

Over a dozen years later, after the battle of Grunwald, representatives of the nobles and boyars of both countries met at Horodle to sign a treaty (1413), referring to complete unanimity (“*unanimem identitatem et voluntatem animorum*”).⁴⁹ This accord expressed a conviction of the unity and equality of the nobles, spreading this feeling throughout the monarchy. Here, a symbolic and factual fraternization of the Polish nobles and Lithuanian boyars occurred by means of the

⁴⁵ *Acta Tomiciana*, vol. 11 (Poznań, 1901), pp. 163–165.

⁴⁶ *Akta unii Polski z Litwą, 1385–1791*, ed. S. Kutrzeba, A. Semkowicz (Cracow, 1932), no. 15, p. 12 (the document has no date, between 1386 and 1388).

⁴⁷ J. Bardach, “Czołobicia i pokłony. Karta z dziejów administracji Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w XV–XVI wieku”, in: id., *Studia z ustroju i prawa Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego XIV–XVII wieku* (Warsaw, 1970), pp. 378–390.

⁴⁸ *Akta unii*, no. 39, p. 38; S. Kutrzeba, “Unia Polski z Litwą”, in: *Polska i Litwa w dziejowym stosunku* (Warsaw, 1914), p. 492 ff.; Bardach, *Studia*, p. 39; H. Łowmiański, *Studia nad dziejami Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego* (Poznań, 1983), p. 356.

⁴⁹ *Akta unii*, nos. 49–51, p. 50 ff.

adoption of 47 Catholic boyar families into Polish families.⁵⁰ In their document issued at Horodle, the Lithuanian boyars said: "we have adopted the coats of arms, which we have not been accustomed to using, from the gentry, who inherited them from their ancestors."⁵¹

This act of adoption by Polish dynasties was an important event because it showed that the Polish nobility was capable of placing affairs of state above its own interests.

During the changing fortunes of the Polish-Lithuanian union, the Lithuanian boyars occasionally supported and sometimes opposed a tightening of relations with Poland, but a factor that was always considered was the attractiveness of Polish noble privileges. This encouraged the boyars to improve their own situation. They wanted to gain privileges, but without forfeiting their traditional freedoms and the political distinction of Lithuania. The process of the political integration of the boyars had started before the country's conversion to Christianity, but was not an accomplished fact until the end of the 14th century.⁵²

The first landed privilege in Lithuania (1387), granted to the Lithuanian boyars by King Władysław Jagiełło, clearly referred to the Polish nobles and expressed the wish that the boyars enjoy the same privileges accorded to the nobles in other parts of the Kingdom of Poland, and that they should not be exposed to unequal rights because they are subjects of the same crown and constitute a "common whole."⁵³ The importance of the boyars in the conclusion of the Wilno-Radom accord (1401) and the Horodle treaty (1413) serves as evidence of the formation of a Lithuanian "political nation."

The gradual development of real powers by the privileged estates in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the crystallization of political awareness during the process of gaining the equality of Lithuania created the proper framework for an integration of the nobility in the multinational Commonwealth.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ A. Semkowicz, "Braterstwo szlachty polskiej z bojarstwem litewskim w unii horodelskiej 1413 roku", in: *Polska i Litwa*, pp. 393–446.

⁵¹ *Akta unii*, no. 50, p. 58.

⁵² Łowmiański, *Studia nad dziejami*, pp. 315 ff., 355.

⁵³ *Zbiór praw litewskich od roku 1389 do roku 1529* (Poznań, 1841), p. 2.

⁵⁴ J. Bardach, "Krewa i Lublin. Z problemów unii polsko-litewskiej", in: id., *Studia*.

5. The Other Estates

We have considered problems regarding the political life of the Polish monarchy in the late Middle Ages mainly in terms of the contest between the king, the powerful estates and the nobility, noting that the consolidation of the nobility as a political entity lay the foundations of the political system of modern-day Poland. But the problems of political culture also affected other social estates and circles.

This applies primarily to the clergy, for it is the clergy that supplied most of the “technicians of authority” – chancellors, diplomats, and political writers defending the interests of the monarchy. The political elite comprised a mixture of laymen and clergymen. The church hierarchy was fully aware of its state role at the side of the king. In 1450, the Cracow clergyman (and subsequently bishop) Tomasz Strzemiński reported to Pope Nicholas V the appointment of the bishop of Wrocław with these words: “The bishops have [in Poland] first place and first voice on the king’s council, secret and important affairs are decided upon with their advice; consequently, only he who is pleasant to the king and country and useful to the Church and Commonwealth may be appointed bishop.”⁵⁵

These two allegiances, to the Church and to one’s country, seldom came into conflict. The Polish clergy in the 14th and 15th centuries felt strongly Polish, a feeling they extended not just to their engagement in social and public life, but also to their very service to God. This was expressed in the patriotic tones of sermons and in the support of armed religious crusades against the pagan Turks and against the Catholic Teutonic Order, and in participation in great international undertakings by the Polish monarchy.

Despite the conflict of interests and competitive privileges between the nobility and clergy, the political conduct of both estates displayed far-reaching similarity; key churchmen had ambitions similar to the great lords, and a rank-and-file cleric revealed a parochial horizon of interests not dissimilar to noblemen. This similarity was enhanced by the barring of senior church positions to the non-nobility, to the “pebs,” for whom the statutes of Jan Olbracht (1496) created a kind of *numerous clausus* in church honours.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Codex epistolaris saeculi*, vol. 3, no. 38, pp. 50–51; Wojciechowski, *Państwo polskie*, p. 175.

⁵⁶ *Volumina Legum*, vol. 1, p. 120.

Due to a combination of various factors, the political role of the town and urban dwellers diminished over the latter part of the Middle Ages. Regarding fiscal issues, the cities were merely an object of policy and had less and less to say about the fiscal burden resting upon them. In the election of kings, the voice of the cities counted, especially during the Koszyce negotiations following the election of Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, but after that it had little significance. The cities underwrote treaties concluded by Polish kings in the 14th and 15th centuries. Cities took part in some confederacies together with the nobles, and at the Radom confederacies (1382 and 1384) they were allowed to delegate two councillors each to the confederate boards created in particular provinces. But this had no influence on the emerging system of representation, in which the cities were unable to secure themselves a position equivalent to that of cities in other European countries. A congress in Brześć in 1435 was attended by representatives of the more important towns in the Kingdom, including Cracow, Poznań, Kalisz, Lviv, Płock, Warsaw, Słupsk and Stargard.⁵⁷ But the presence of representatives of the Polish towns in congresses was sporadic. The incorporation of Prussia into the Kingdom in 1454 altered this state of affairs somewhat because representatives of three cities, Gdańsk, Torun and Elbląg, were entitled as members of the Prussian council to take part in the senatorial assembly. In 1492, these three cities sent delegates to take part in the king's election, whilst the smaller conurbations of Royal Prussia had to contribute towards the costs of the Prussian delegation.⁵⁸

Polish cities took a very limited part in the reaching of decisions on public affairs, even affairs that concerned them directly. They occasionally protested against the fiscal burdens resting on them (such as the objection by the municipal council of Cracow in 1487, which Kazimierz Jagiellończyk regarded as a revolt and lacked the required strength of resistance). For the burghers failed to formulate a common urban policy or gain privileges which would have given them the status of an estate and made them a subject of political life.

⁵⁷ Piekosiński, *Wiece*, p. 47.

⁵⁸ M. Biskup, "Udział stanów Prus Królewskich w elekcjach władców polskich na przełomie XV i XVI wieku", *Zapiski Historyczne*, 34 (1969), no. 3, pp. 84 ff.

The patrician elites of large cities were aware of the benefits and dangers to their commercial interests which the king's policies might bring. Therefore, they attempted to influence these policies, pledging suitable sums to the royal treasury. In this way, they obtained favourable trade or fiscal privileges from the king.

In the internal life of the cities, a division of public duties was meant to ensure law and order. The wording of urban oaths in the Polish language in the second half of the 15th century gives an idea of the chief concepts of public order.⁵⁹ The mayor and councillors swore to "God and the king," whilst artisans swore to "God and our lord councillors." Municipal officials swore to "exercise justice," look after widows and orphans, not let their actions be guided by love or hatred, and not succumb to bribery, whereas craftsmen swore to be obedient and assist justice, and not to pass arbitrary rules that could harm the urban community. Apart from justice and allegiance to the authorities (and common interests), one can note a strong respect for the law. In an oath by a magistrate recorded in the early 16th century, we observe all these undertakings: "I swear to God and our King, and to the law to which I am subject, that I shall exercise justice towards the rich and the poor."⁶⁰

In a situation of parochial urban interests and low integration by urban residents and their generally weak engagement in public life, the political awareness and culture of urban communities remained closed within the city walls. The contents of urban libraries indicate an interest in general political and historical issues, and obviously urban dwellers monitored international events, if only because they could influence trade transactions, which means that urban parochialism did not necessarily mean a narrow horizon of interests. Urban life, with its self-government and corporate structures, required proper preparation for authority and a struggle to win power. It also required a knowledge of the law. Of the great social groups, it is the urban community that displayed the greatest level of legal culture, as participation in the daily life of a city required this. Commercial and social interests also required that cities establish contacts with other urban centres in Poland and abroad. Confederacies were formed and

⁵⁹ *Chrestomatia staropolska. Text from 1543*, selected and edited by W. Wydra, W.R. Rzepka (Wrocław-Warsaw-Cracow, 1984), p. 196 ff.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

correspondence exchanged on the subject of criminals and outlaw, and applications for residency. On account of the presence of foreign ethnic groups in Polish cities (especially Germans and Italians), and the membership of the Hansa by Cracow and Prussian cities, this generated an openness to world issues. But this had little effect on public life on a national scale, for on this scale the urban population felt weak, subjugated and threatened.

We know the least about the awareness of the peasants, but we can assume that public life only filtered through to them via secondary channels. War brought the destruction of fields and homesteads, or armed service in defence of the country. Royal decisions and talk of noble assemblies brought news of taxes or other obligations for the benefit of the state, or restrictions on leaving one's village. There is no doubt that the peasants were aware of some general state matters; church sermons contained certain elements of information about things happening in the Kingdom. Oral tradition also provided elements of knowledge that one may call political. The previously mentioned fact that in a Polish-Teutonic trial (1339), Bogusław Łazęka said that he had learned of the Teutonic takeover of Chełm from an old peasant in his village, proves that some people had this type of information and interests.⁶¹

Public affairs entered the lives of peasants primarily via the law and rural self-government bodies. Changes to the legal situation of groups during the 13th and 14th centuries, connected with the introduction of German law in rural areas, resulted in the parallel existence of Polish and German legal provisions, as well as far-reaching legal syncretism. The opinion of Benedykt Zientara, whereby "the huge majority of rural courts acted on the basis of a so-called rural arrangement composed of a combination of German law, Polish common law and precedence "may be considered realistic."⁶²

Nevertheless, the long coexistence of common law and written law was very important to legal awareness among peasants (a decision of 1468 juxtaposes written law, *iurium scriptorum dispositiones et statuta*, with common law, *vetus consuetudo*).⁶³ This meant that appealing to

⁶¹ *Lites ac res gestae*, ed. Zakrzewski, vol. 1, p. 253.

⁶² B. Zientara, "Struktura chłopów w Polsce średniowiecznej", in: *Struktura feudałlní společnosti na území Československa a Polska do přelomu 15. a 16. století*, ed. J. Čierny, F. Hejl, A. Verbik (Prague, 1984), p. 172.

⁶³ A. Gąsiorowski, "Uchwały piotrkowskie i nowokorczyńskie roku 1468", *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, 20 (1968), p. 72.

custom was not merely a principle applied by the courts, but a fundamental expression of law and justice. The increasing dependence of peasants on their landowning masters may have been tempered, but it nevertheless continued for some time.

The traditional organization of property, guarding the rights of the members of the community, was not disturbed by the process of state centralization, but was exploited for the purpose of centralization. "A powerful monarchy could not allow these rights to be suppressed by an attack on the ownership and freedom of the peasants, the state would thus have destroyed the very foundation of its power."⁶⁴ The association of neighbours was an important resource of collective memory, for it preserved knowledge of the course of boundaries, performances, inventories, the size of agricultural fields, and the rights and duties of the peasants. The association also performed various court functions, offered defence, helped the state apparatus to pursue offenders, provided decisive evidence in contentious ownership issues, and decided upon routine affairs. In 1377, the statute of Siemowit III of Płock stated that in the event of a dispute over fields or "custom" (*usus*), the matter was to be decided by evidence given by the community or by elders ("debet probare cum vicinia que dicitur ossada, vel cum senioribus").⁶⁵ Although little is known about how rural self-government bodies were formed in the late Middle Ages or how they functioned,⁶⁶ one can say that the tradition of organized support played an important role.

A self-governing body comprised all the peasants in a given village and all members of the rural community, in other words the *gromady* (this term first appears in 14th-century Polish legal sources). The *gromada* approved the decisions of the village leader, the *sołtys*, reached decisions concerning the economic and social life of the village, and fulfilled certain court functions (according to one legal entry, the *sołtys* established a court register with the *gromada*'s approval). The *gromada* also acted as a party in conflicts with the lord, provided evidence in boundary issues, provided character references about its

⁶⁴ K. Modzelewski, "Organizacja opolna w Polsce piastowskiej, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 87 (1986), p. 219 (pp. 177–222 and *passim*).

⁶⁵ *Archiwum Komisji Prawniczej*, vol. 5 (Cracow, 1897), p. 239.

⁶⁶ Cf. J. Wyrozumski, "Gromada w życiu samorządowym średniowiecznej wsi polskiej", in: *Spółczesność Polski średniowiecznej*, vol. 3, ed. S.K. Kuczyński (Warsaw, 1985), pp. 219–251.

members, and performed certain executive actions. One legal source records a resolution by the *gromada* of the village of Krzemieniewo in 1412 whereby “if a peasant is charged, he is to be discharged with the help of peasants of properties bordering on both sides” (in this resolution, the principle of “consensus fuit tocius communitatis” applied).⁶⁷ This resolution by a *gromada*, the oldest one known on Polish soil, added a principle to legal proceedings that can be said to be based on common sense. We do not know the scope of the affairs with which people from the *gromady* dealt. It appears obvious that an assembly of the entire village, participation in talks and the reaching of resolutions required a certain level of social culture, and helped form rules governing collective public life, although only on a local scale.

A custom also appeared in rural areas whereby rural courts were to be presided over by seven magistrates recommended or even appointed from among the peasants. In some cases, under Polish law, there were two magistrates, usually headed by the lord of the property who acted as judge, and under German law the *softys* acted as judge, accompanied by up to seven magistrates. Even if the magistrates did not play a leading role in the passing of sentences, they nevertheless represented the community of peasants and their traditions, customs and sense of justice. This has been accurately described by the illustrious expert on medieval Polish rural history, Kazimierz Tymieniecki, thus: “The magistrates knew more about customs, and to a certain extent were representatives of the collective conscience, rather than judges in a literal sense of the word.”⁶⁸

It is this which gave the magistrates social significance and enabled them to be regarded as a factor that generated social awareness among the peasant class.⁶⁹ In any case, rural benches cooperated with the *gromady* in clearing the members of the *gromady* of charges or providing character references.

⁶⁷ K. Dobrowolski, “W sprawie skupu sołectw w Polsce XV i XVI w.”, *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 38 (1924), p. 12; K. Tymieniecki, “Uchwała gromadzka z początku XV w.”, *Roczniki Historyczne*, 6 (1930), pp. 236–238.

⁶⁸ K. Tymieniecki, *Historia chłopów polskich*, vol. 2: *Schyłek średniowiecza* (Warsaw, 1966), p. 271.

⁶⁹ *Księga sądowa wsi Wary. 1499–1623*, ed. L. Łysiak (Wrocław, 1971), nos. 43, 66, 67.

6. Political Thinking

Political life required experts who were well versed in the law and in the art of correspondence and oratory, as well as suitable legal instruments in this regard. Polish laws passed in the late Middle Ages not only illustrate legal expertise, but also illustrate ways of thinking about affairs of state and relations between the rulers and the ruled. However, this picture applies only to the ruling elites and the community of officials. The fact that laws were spread in writing and were copied and translated indicates a much broader phenomenon. In Mazovia in the first half of the 15th century, the statutes of Casimir the Great and Władysław Jagiełło were translated from Latin to Polish (by the custodian of the Warsaw church of St. John, Świętosław of Wojcieszyn), and a Mazovian statute was similarly translated by the Warsaw friar Maciej of Rożan.⁷⁰ Similar translations were made elsewhere in the country, as well as on lands of Rus'. Also translated was a collection of verdicts by a Magdeburg court which acted as a higher instance court in judging cases in cities ruled by German (or Magdeburg) law. This set, written in German in the 14th century, was translated into Latin and Polish in the following century.⁷¹ The oldest Polish translations date from the middle of the 15th century and were probably done in Lviv. The appearance of Latin-Polish legal dictionaries in the 15th century illustrates the demand for knowledge of the law.

The need to use the law also provided the impetus to produce collections of laws.⁷² The invention of printing offered new possibilities here, and works were continuously printed, from the *Syntagmas* (1488) all the way to the statute of Jan Łaski (1506). The creation of these mass legal instruments was an essential component in the modernization of legal culture at the end of the Middle Ages.

Apart from compilations of law, intellectual communities produced political writings of great practical significance.

Reflections of politics and society were made by various groups, but we know only of the university intellectual environment. We only have

⁷⁰ F. Piekosiński, "Tłumaczenie polskie statutów ziemskich", in: *Archiwum Komisji Prawniczej*, vol. 3 (Cracow, 1895).

⁷¹ *Najstarsze staropolskie tłumaczenie Ortyli magdeburskich*, ed. J. Reczek, W. Twardzik (Wrocław, 1970–1972).

⁷² *Polskie statuty ziemskie w redakcji najstarszych druków. Syntagmata*, ed. L. Łysiak, S. Roman (Wrocław, 1958).

sporadic knowledge of the thinking of other legal communities, for example Długosz describes a speech in 1459 by the mayor of Sandomierz, Jan Rytwiański, criticizing on behalf of the country's entire nobility the deeds of King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk and his council.⁷³ A treatise attributed to Jan Ostroróg can be considered evidence of the way of thinking of an influential magnate, but its authorship and age are uncertain. We can only limit ourselves to the intellectual output of the Cracow clergy on the subject of affairs of state and policy. The Cracow community lent importance to reflections on policy produced by Matthew of Cracow, Stanisław of Skarbimierz, Paweł Włodkowic, Paweł Worczyn, Jan of Ludzisko and Jacobus de Clusa.⁷⁴ The intellectual stimulus for these reflections was provided by commentaries on Aristotle's *Politics* and the need to satisfy the monarchy's ideological and political needs.

A Cracow treatise of 1410, of unknown authorship (but attributed to Mikołaj Budissen, one of the first students of Cracow University), constitutes a significant treatise on moral philosophy.⁷⁵ Its point of departure is a knowledge of man, followed by a knowledge of looking after the home which "teaches man to live in harmony with the law," and finally knowledge of power.

A similar axiological view of the state is presented by Stanisław of Skarbimierz, a pupil of Prague University and later master of Cracow University and its first rector following its restoration. In one of his learned sermons based on the *Book of Wisdom* (*Sermones sapientiales*, written between 1409 and 1415), indicating the importance of wise laws in the state, he says: "One should use well the acts that emanate from God's law, for the state belongs to God only when its driving force is the truth, love of one's neighbour, justice and equality."⁷⁶ Thus, the state's strength lies not in military power, but in the allegiance, harmony and discipline of its citizens and a respect for the common good. Stanisław devotes a separate sermon to this last topic, an extended lesson in civil duties. Referring to St. Augustine, he teaches: "Each inhabitant of the country, because he is part of the community,

⁷³ *Ioannis Dlugossii Historiae*, vol. 5, pp. 293–295.

⁷⁴ W. Seńko, "Z badań nad historią myśli społeczno-politycznej w Polsce w XV wieku", in: *Filozofia polska XV wieku*, ed. R. Palacz (Warsaw, 1972), pp. 29 ff.

⁷⁵ P. Czartoryski, *Wczesna recepcja 'Polityki' Arystotelesa na Uniwersytecie Krakowskim* (Wrocław, 1963), pp. 36–120 ff.

⁷⁶ Stanisław ze Skarbimierza, *Sermones sapientiales*, ed. B. Chmielowska (Warsaw, 1979), part 2, pp. 74–75.

should, according to his strength, defend justice, and defend and multiply the common good and, if necessary, shed his blood for it.”

Furthermore, the success of the state depends on an adherence to five cardinal principles, primarily justice, but viewed in a hierarchical sense, the kind that “ensures the higher estates of respect and of obedience to their just instructions.”

In addition, the kingdom requires “concord which contains unanimity,” dispelling private interests and bias. The third element is the cooperation of citizens, the fourth principle is government based on good advisors, and the final principle is action governed by a common objective which removes disparate ambitions.⁷⁷

Poland’s dispute with the Teutonic Order inspired considered written output by the Polish intellectual community on the subject of the law, politics and political morality, especially the question of just wars and the methods of introducing Christianity.

This first issue was the subject of a sermon by Stanisław of Skarbimierz, in essence an expanded treatise on war and peace.⁷⁸ It starts with the statement that man is “the most dignified being in the world” (“dignissima creaturarum mundi”) and that it is human nature which determines the laws and ethos of conduct. The natural law to which Stanislaw refers derives directly from man as a creation of God, and requires his intelligent conduct.

The requirement to consider the justification for war is an important part of the entire treatise: “Let a Catholic monarch and knight consider whether a war is just or not, and let them take a sword into their hands only with the authority of the law or man.”

In a just war, a Catholic monarch is entitled to use the help of pagans because “monarchs repelling force with force are protected by natural law, which is shared by the pagans.” The broad extension of this thought resulted from the situation of the Polish monarchy and the charges brought against it by the Teutonic Order. On the theory of war and peace, Stanislaw refers to the laws that govern nature. Indicating the natural right to self-defence, he writes: “One can observe this among unintelligent creatures that defend themselves how they can.”

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 275–286 (Polish translation: pp. 89–97).

⁷⁸ L. Ehrlich, *Polski wykład prawa wojny XV wieku. Kazanie Stanisława ze Skarbimierza ‘De bellis iustis’* (Warsaw, 1955), Latin and Polish texts.

He defends the internal value of peace likewise: “Not only sentient beings, but also animals seek peace because they avoid death and oblivion as they are able to, like delicate flowers which flourish better if they do not experience any shocks from winds.” During the time of Polish-Teutonic conflict, Stanislaw’s conclusion that a Catholic monarch may use the help of pagans against “evil Christians” and that a Christian should not hesitate to die to ensure peace possessed obvious and appropriate significance.

These issues were also dealt with by Paweł Włodkowic of Brudzew who, following his studies in Prague and Padua (under the supervision of the famous theologian Francesco Zabarelli) taught jurisprudence at Cracow University. He was actively engaged in the Polish-Teutonic legal disputes: in 1413 he attended a council in Buda, in 1414 and 1415 he spoke out in favour of the Polish *raison d’état* in Constance, arguing against the views of Hans Falkenberg, who defended the Teutonic Knights, and attended court cases in 1420, 1421 and 1424. Between 1415 and 1421 he wrote at least seen treatises and memoranda about the Teutonic cause. In 1432 he wrote, this time from Padua, an exhaustive letter to Zbigniew Oleśnicki, summarizing the Teutonic case after the latest Teutonic attacks on Polish territory.⁷⁹

Applying the criteria of classic military doctrine expounded by Raymond of Penyafort in the 13th century, Włodkowic shows that the wars waged by the Teutonic Knights cannot be considered just, all the more so because they attacked “peaceful unbelievers,” and “all laws speak out against those who attack others who wish to live in peace.”⁸⁰ Włodkowic derives his recognition of the Teutonic wars as unjust from the natural right of nations. In a memorandum of 1416 (*Ad aperiendam pregnantem materiam*), rejecting the right of popes to make gifts from the property of unbelievers, he argues that unbelievers cannot be deprived of their property because they are based on the natural rights of nations (“quia sunt de iure naturali gentium”).⁸¹ In his letter to Oleśnicki (1432), Włodkowic writes: “The Teutonic Knights submit documents containing the heresy whereby Christians may invade the countries of unbelievers for the purpose of taking

⁷⁹ *Pisma wybrane Pawła Włodkowica*, ed. L. Ehrlich, vol. 1–3 (Warsaw, 1968), Latin text and Polish translation.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 58.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

over their countries [...], and yet no one in his right mind doubts that unbelievers are law-abiding countries, and this on the basis of the natural right of nations (“infideles esse iusta dominia ac de iure gencium naturali”).⁸² In this way, the medieval concept of the “right of nations” is also applied to people of other faiths, to non-Christians.

Just as countries created by use of force (and not by the will of God or political agreement) are unjust, and just as force should be excluded from international relations, so should force be forbidden when converting others to Christianity, and pagans should not be converted by force. Włodkowic returns to this issue in virtually all of his political writings, supports it with exhaustive arguments, and refers to the doctrine of Pope Innocent IV, which granted nonbelievers the right to their own countries, the teachings of his Paduese mentor Zabarelli, and to the moral rules of the Gospels. Apart from its condemnation of Teutonic claims, Włodkowic’s writings possess a more universal significance, hailing the services of the Polish monarchy which succeeded in converting other nations by peaceful means.

The stance of Włodkowic expressed the views of Polish intellectual and political circles. In 1413, Andrzej Łaskarz, dean of Cracow and provost (*praepositus*) of Wrocław, with his studies in Padua behind him, rejected the documents and arguments of the Teutonic Knights, demonstrating that *de iure* no one may be compelled to adopt the Christian faith, and that service by compulsion does not please God (“servicia coacta Deo non placent”); thus, only conversion through the word of God is permissible, for under the law an unbeliever is still our neighbour.⁸³ Interestingly, at a trial in Buda in 1412, the attorneys of Courland rejected the claims of the Teutonic Knights whereby they had concluded some kind of agreements concerning that territory, and demonstrated that for as long as anyone could remember, up until the era of the king of Poland and duke of Lithuania, Courland had had no lords or masters, “but had been a community living under certain laws, ordinances and the law of nations” (“erat una communitas sub certis legibus, gubernacionibus et iure gencium vivens”).⁸⁴ This

⁸² *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 214.

⁸³ *Lites ac res gestae*, ed. Zakrzewski, vol. 2, p. 295; Cf. L. Winowski, “Sprawa stosunku do pogan w polsko-krzyżackim procesie z lat 1412–1414”, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*, Seria A, 6 (1956), pp. 99–117.

⁸⁴ *Lites ac res gestae*, ed. Zakrzewski, vol. 2, p. 150.

doctrine was applied in practice in the work of the royal chancellery. Jagiełło's message of August 1409 addressed to the rulers and lords of Christian Europe says that under the rule of Jagiełło and Witold, Lithuania had been converted to the Catholic faith and that the work of baptism had been completed over the space of twenty years, whereas the Teutonic Knights had been incapable of converting the country during the course of two hundred years.⁸⁵

The idea of sovereignty was also an important element in Polish political thinking. A European debate on this issue began to grow from the start of the 14th century in connection with the crisis in universalist concepts and the development of natural monarchies; it concerned the sovereign rights of rulers and the sovereignty of kingdoms.

This issue was not as widely reflected in the political writings of the next century because this was no longer required. It remained in people's consciousness as an obvious fact. This can be illustrated by the words of Jan Ostroróg to Pope Paul II: "After waging so many wars with so many peoples, our country, not having experienced foreign rule, remains whole and unviolated to this day, which no other nation can claim."

Apart from traces of oratorical exhibitionism, these words reflect a feeling of the basic value of the sovereignty of one's own country. Current problems of the Church occupied a prominent place in the work of 15th century Polish intellectuals. They felt an increasing need to reform internal life in the Church, its institutions and the Roman curia. The writings of Matthew of Cracow, pupil of Prague University and later master in Prague and Heidelberg, played a major role and also influenced the views of the Cracow masters. Matthew's treatise, called *De praxi Romanae curiae* (1403), criticizes the practices of the Roman curia and suggests a comprehensive program of Church reform; the fact that Matthew was appointed bishop of Worms in 1405 illustrates the strength of reformist effort within the Church. The view whereby the Church is composed of the faithful and not the church hierarchy headed by the pope, and that the highest authority of the church is the synod, whose decisions the pope also has to obey, reflects conciliarist opinions. The doctrine of conciliarism, recognizing the supremacy of the synod over the pope, was widely accepted by the Polish intellectual community, and Polish writings on this subject were widely acclaimed

⁸⁵ Ibid., annex xlix, p. 437.

abroad. We mention this in the context of political thinking because this reflection on the Church had a major impact on opinions about the role of the state: it is conciliarism and its theory of synods as the highest church authority that inspired the idea of political representation in the Polish system of law in the 15th century, and in Polish political thinking over the following century.⁸⁶

Literature on the subject of political thoughts had a very restricted circulation under the conditions of the time, and only the social elites had access to it, so one can say that the views expressed in such literature are primarily those of the Polish intellectual elites at the time. However, it seems that such views marked the horizon of political awareness at that time. They had a direct impact on political practice and on social consciousness, primarily via the work of the state chancelleries, and secondly via the universities where Polish political authors taught. As we know, many illustrious sons of the nobility studied at Cracow University, and introduced their store of knowledge to public life.

This influence cannot be overestimated, precisely as the degree of society's involvement in public life cannot. Nevertheless, one can say that during the late Middle Ages, various political organizations appeared, resulting in a kind of political contest in which parochial interests came into conflict with the common good and the needs of the state. However, as time went by, the notion of a "political nation" developed, which was taken to mean the same as the nobility, so that not only did the rural population play no major part in public life, but the cities were excluded altogether. However, these patterns of political conduct had their equivalent in the collective life of towns and villages.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Dzieje Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, p. 139 ff.

Levels of Culture: Oral Tradition and Literary Culture

In: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV–XV w.*, ed. B. Geremek (Warsaw, 1997), pp. 366–380.

When we examine culture it is not enough to analyse only its works and the products of people's hands and mind. We must also examine collective thinking, imagination and feelings. We then face the difficult issue of the structure of culture. One can consider this from a social point of view; in other words, the cultural differences between various communities and the models of culture created by them. However, cultural processes possess a certain quality that cannot be reduced to social coordinates. The place of a knight or burgher in culture depends more on his knowledge of writing or his mobility than his socio-legal status. Thus, when speaking of levels of culture, we have in mind the difference between "high" and "low" culture, learned and unlearned, elitist or universal. Naturally, one is first attracted by high culture, and not only because it is at this level that the greatest contributions are made to national culture, but also because the historical evidence that creates an image of past culture is on a high cultural level. So does the condition of the historical sources create a distorted view? It seems that such distortion is limited because the development of culture involved a flow and transfer of information and influence between the different levels of culture, so that they were not hermetically sealed off against each other. High culture was infiltrated by popular culture, which processed it, and the resultant model served as a template for all other levels of culture.

1. Literary Culture

Writing has a particular delimiting effect. In medieval culture, as in all traditional cultures, a knowledge of writing was a privilege. Writing

served the purposes of the ruling culture and was an instrument of power. There is no doubt that the spread of education in the late Middle Ages also spread literacy: more people learned to read and write. The permanence of this rudimentary knowledge depended on its practical application. Apart from groups professionally engaged in writing (for the Church, state and municipal administration and schooling), the scope of applying this skill remained limited.

This depended largely on the production and circulation of books. Before printing caused a revolution in this regard, the circulation of manuscripts had intensified during the 15th century.¹ The universities played a major role here: thousands of people who passed through the university even without gaining a degree nevertheless learned to write and developed the habit of reading, and eventually a collection of books. Apart from the works required to practice religious services, church instructions and various structures of the church hierarchy acquired considerable libraries. The libraries of monasteries sometimes consisted of several hundred volumes (the Dominicans of Wrocław had almost 400 manuscripts in the 15th century), and the libraries of cathedrals and of parishes also reached considerable proportions. The size of the library at the chapter of the parish church at Szamotuły is illustrated by the fact that its deacon, Stanisław, lent out as many as 27 manuscripts.²

Monasteries played a major role in the development of book culture, a role which has not been greatly examined until now. This applies especially to key monastic centres in the Polish monarchy, such as the Benedictine monastery of Łysa Góra of the monastery at Trzemeszno, which contained not only liturgical and legal works, but also works on history, architecture and medicine.³ A library inventory of 1465 recorded works of antiquity: Tacitus' *Germania*, Caesar's *De bello gallico* and Vitruvius' *De architectura*. The monastic scriptorium was active throughout the 15th century, and the task of copying works was performed by the monks themselves, including Prior Martin from 1423 to 1426 and Abbot Maciej from 1469 to 1470, as well as

¹ E. Potkowski, *Książka rękopiśmienna w kulturze Polski średniowiecznej* (Warsaw, 1984).

² *Acta capitulorum* (henceforth: AC), ed. B. Ulanowski (Cracow, 1894–1908), vol. 2, no. 1272.

³ J. Wiesiołowski, "Oświata i kultura na pograniczu wielkopolsko-kujawskim u schyłku wieków średnich", *Roczniki Historyczne*, 42 (1976), pp. 133–136.

professional scribes. It is interesting that in Trzemeszno, historical events were written down and poetical works created. It can be said that in the 15th century, when European monastic centres were losing their former cultural significance, in Poland they remained important centres of “literary” culture.

Cathedral libraries also existed, depending on the education and interests of bishops. They thus provided intellectual work opportunities for the clerical elite. An example is the cathedral library in Płock, whose stocks gradually increased due to the output of the cathedral scriptorium from the 12th century and due to an influx of manuscripts from outside. It is estimated that in the 15th century, the library possessed some two hundred codices in manuscript form, supplemented in the second half of the century by a large quantity of incunabula. Apart from works on the subject of theology and liturgy, there were many legal works, which encouraged scholars from Płock to study in Bologna. Bishop Jakub of Korzkwa, judge at the Roman Rota from 1385 to 1396, bought many legal manuscripts from Italy and also initiated the copying of works on canonical law. Roman law was also well represented: in the 14th and 15th centuries the library received parts of the *Corpus iuris civilis*. Derśław of Karnice, doctor of laws and a canon at Płock, brought back from Rome the *Digestum vetus*. Another canon, Mikołaj of Myszyniec, a graduate in Roman law, brought the codex of Justinian. While in Rome, in 1444 and 1445 he produced two indexes of works of use in the work of lawyers, and when back in Płock in 1448, he produced another two indexes. This shows that a cathedral’s own library encouraged intellectual work among the religious community.⁴

Books were considered costly and valuable, hence they were often bequeathed under people’s will. As a result, the libraries of some church institutions expanded, but in particular book collections of Cracow University were growing, where the custom of professors bequeathing their private books to the university was being established.

The libraries of Cracow professors sometimes ran into several dozen volumes, which is understandable because they were the tools of their trade.⁵

⁴ A. Vetulani, “Średniowieczne rękopisy płockiej biblioteki katedralnej”, *Roczniki Biblioteczne*, 7 (1963), pp. 313–343; W. Góralski, *Kapituła katedralna w Płocku XII–XVI w.* (Płock, 1979), pp. 237–246.

⁵ W. Szelińska, *Biblioteki profesorów Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego w XV i początkach XVI wieku* (Wrocław, 1966); J. Zathej, “Biblioteka Jagiellońska w latach 1364–1492”, in: *Historia Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, ed. I. Zarębski (Cracow, 1966).

By the 15th century the libraries of these professors reached sizable proportions: Jan Isner and Jan Szczekna each had one hundred manuscripts, Łukasz of Wielki Koźmin had about two hundred, and the library of Jan Dąbrówka was said to be even larger. Students at the university also had their own books, some of which exceeded the required school reading. Andrzej Przekora of Morawiany, who studied from 1457 to 1459, had seventeen books which constituted his private library. Most of them were textbooks or commentaries on university teachings (including the *Chronica Polonorum* of Master Wincenty).⁶

Once they performed their professional functions, clerics continued the habit of collecting books which they had started when students. The private libraries of bishops and canons contained not only works on theology and the law, but also historical and literary works. They served the political work of the clergy and were used for sermons and religious teaching, but one can assume that some of them were simply read for pleasure.

The private libraries of lay people, rare in Poland until the end of the Middle Ages, also contained a variety of works. Legal works occupied a conspicuous portion of the libraries of noblemen and burghers in connection with their functions or involvement in public or court affairs. Lay people also possessed religious books, mainly prayer books and religious teachings. Books on medicine, commercial affairs history, and fiction were also to be found.

Given the situation with the production of books in the Middle Ages, the concept of a library possessed particular significance. A library might consist of a single manuscript in which works of various origins had been copied. Occasionally copies were ordered and sometimes the copies were deliberately produced by the owner or collector who thought the copy may be useful in the future, but usually the reason for copying works was that paper was very costly and had to be put to the fullest use.

Liturgical works, beautifully bound and richly illustrated, were valuable items which became part of a church treasury and were therefore not in general circulation, although this varied over time. Collections of sermons, an obvious source of reference for preachers, also appeared widely in church libraries. The need to deliver sermons

⁶ *Zapiski Andrzeja Przekory 1457–1459*, ed. T. Wierzbowski, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (hereinafter: MPH), III (Warsaw, 1960–1961), pp. 418–419.

meant that parish libraries had works of liturgy and fiction where inspiration for sermons could be found. An inventory of books in the parish church of Beszow near Częstochowa in 1421 lists, among 36 volumes, such works as the *Chronicle of popes and emperors* by Martin the Pole, and the *Scholastic History* by Piotr Comestor⁷ (the Glutton). But such a library at parish level may be regarded as an exception. The libraries of parish churches seldom contained books other than liturgical works.

In prestigious religious books and in libraries, whether cathedral or parish, it was difficult to find anything other than professional works of written culture. The recorded libraries of urban residents also had a professional nature, although the dominant subject here was law. Smaller, single-volume libraries reflected the taste of their owner. In the libraries of the nobility one could find historiographic works, probably used for political needs or connected with the requirement to preserve the history of one's family, but these collections, too, reflected the taste of this community.⁸

If we consider the book as a basic instrument and determinant of culture which one can describe as "literary" (in the medieval sense of the word, when *litterati* were people who could write), then we note a considerable variation in this culture as well as a certain internal cohesion. The difference lay in the geographical, not the cultural, location (the difference between town and village, the town with a small cathedral or the village with a parish church...) and on a sociological level, i.e. social or material status. The Christian character of the contents and the manner of presenting them formed by the system of education, as well as the requirements and practical activities of the church and monarchy, provided a common bond. Readership tastes and skills were formed in school, where writing was to serve the work of the Church and was not simply a way of perpetuating and conveying contents, but possessed a certain air of sanctity: the work of monastic scriptoria was considered service to God, and the work of Jan of Kęty, professor at Cracow University, was not merely an expression of piety, but constituted the hard work of a copyist.

⁷ J. Fijałek, *Zbiór dokumentów zakonu oo. Paulinów w Polsce*, vol. 1: 1328–1464 (Cracow, 1938), no. 82.

⁸ J. Wiesiołowski, *Kolekcje historyczne w Polsce średniowiecznej XIV–XV w.* (Wrocław, 1967).

During the late Middle Ages, two models of culture faced each other: a clerical model and a secular model. In “literary” culture this was expressed by an increase in the quantity of works of secular content and a greater penetration of books into secular communities. Soldierly circles were interested in historical literature and epics. The expansion of the state administration led to an increase in chancelleries and the production of documents. But it is in the municipal community that writing and books assumed a certain autonomy. Religious books continued to occupy prime position because the above secular model had developed in the Middle Ages within, and not apart from, Christian culture, but a greater number of books now met political requirements and interests, and the demand for fiction. Writing itself not only served the production of books, but was also needed to maintain commercial accounts and generally became a technique of urban life.

2. Oral Communication and Popular Culture

Apart from the “literary” stratum of culture, there was a broad field of unwritten culture involving oral communication. We do not know much about this, and we can only judge its significance from the traces it left in medieval written sources.

It should be remembered that the boundary between written and oral communication was very fluid in the Middle Ages. Even reading to oneself involved the generation of sounds, for people often read aloud. In fact, books were meant to be read aloud because they served as a means of contact between the reader and the audience. Therefore, an inability to write did not disqualify anyone from access to written culture.

Preaching played a particular role in the spread of culture, especially “literary” culture. It involved colourful language because the preacher had to describe religious imagery to convey its meaning to the congregation and maintain their attention.⁹ To do so, he quoted from the Bible and from historical works and fiction. The art of preaching and the images that decorated churches not only spread a certain

⁹ B. Geremek, “Exemplum i przekaz kultury”, in: *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. id. (Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow–Gdańsk, 1979), p. 53 ff. (cf. pp. xxx–xxx in this anthology).

rudimentary knowledge of theology, but also a knowledge of religious events and prominent people who had gained favour in the service of God, thus illustrating the struggle between good and evil. Therefore, literary knowledge was spread by oral communication. This even threatened the clergy's monopoly over theological knowledge, reflected in the phenomenon of heresy, which was rare in Poland, and also in the anti-clericalism of the 15th century and the independent attempts by secular people to re-interpret religious contents. For example, in 1450 a certain tailor from Łomża called Jan Zolandek (Żołądek?) stood before a bishop's court in Pułtusk, accused by three priests of an affront to morality (they demanded 500 florins and a revocation of the insult). He had accused the first priest, in the presence of numerous parishioners, of inaccurately reading the Gospel on Easter Sunday because he did not say that Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene in the guise of a gardener with a hoe ("ortulans cum fossorio"). He had accused the second priest of mistakenly identifying two pupils who went to Emmaus as apostles, and the third priest he accused of distorting the Gospels by failing to quote Christ's words to his apostles: "I give you peace...", adding that he knew the words that had been omitted because he had heard them from other preachers.¹⁰

The bishop's court found Jan guilty and sent him to prison. The exclusive right of the clergy to religious knowledge was upheld. But it is interesting that the Łomża tailor had knowledge of the Scripture and referred to the sermons of other preachers, and probably knew the Apocrypha (although probably not from his own reading). This indicates the role of the pulpit in propagating book knowledge, but also the fact that the recipients of the knowledge manifested a proactive attitude towards the reception. And finally, this excellent detail: the discussion on the faithful reading of the Gospel was held between townspeople at the dinner table, at home. It can be seen as the indicator of the importance of cities for the process of spreading culture, but it also can be seen as a symptom of a certain "Bible culture" among lay people which in later time – during the Reformation – disappeared in Catholicism.

The art of preaching sermons also consisted in relating various stories which served as a lesson in morality. Thus, the congregation could learn about the emperors of classical time, about whom the tales

¹⁰ AC, vol. 3, nos. 16–18.

were sometimes quite fictitious, but the preachers also spoke about many ancient and medieval writers whom they regarded as authorities. The stories obtained by preachers from various sources quickly passed by word of mouth, and one can find some in a 19th-century inventory of Polish folklore drawn up by Kolberg. Conversely, stories communicated orally found their way to medieval story books and texts. A 13th-century collection of tales by Caesarius of Heisterbach contains four stories which took place in Poland: about a cruel prince, a converted rustic who only knew the prayer *Hail Mary*, a leprous princess and a Eucharistic miracle with a Jewish boy in Wrocław.¹¹ The story of the massacre of Jews in Wrocław in 1453 also reached a popular 15th century anthology of tales.¹² Such stories may have been learned either by reading a text or by hearing it told by someone who had. Caesarius of Heisterbach claims he heard these tales from Polish Cistercian monks who were visiting monasteries along the Rhine, and from a German monk who had visited Polish monasteries. In the early 16th century, a Polish Bernadine monk, Brother Seweryn, who was wandering through Italy, wrote down stories he had heard in Italian monasteries. But many of the tales collected by Brother Seweryn appear in the *Flowers of St. Francis*,¹³ so that the relationship between oral and written stories is often relative. The culture of oral communication in the Middle Ages remains little known. We know them only from the light they cast on written works. The development of book culture meant that oral tales were now committed to writing. An unusual Silesian legend was printed in 1504. A Tatar empress, having heard many tales about the wonders of Christian lands, begged her husband, the emperor Balthus, to allow her to go there, and she set off on a journey to Christendom in a wonderful convoy. She was passing through Silesia when the inhabitants of Środa attacked the convoy, murdered the empress and took Tatar treasures with them as spoils. In revenge, the emperor organized a punitive expedition, to which Silesia also fell victim, but somehow the inhabitants of Środa beat the Tatars “The legend of the Tatar empress,” wrote Benedykt Zientara, “in the version recorded in Legnica, is an interesting

¹¹ K. Dobrowolski, “Przyczynki do dziejów średniowiecznej kultury polskiej z rękopisu szczyrzyckiego”, in: *Studia staropolskie* (Cracow, 1928), p. 337 ff.

¹² *Speculum exemplorum*, Strasburg, 1487 (*editio princeps*: Deventer, 1481).

¹³ *Z opowiadań średniowiecznych*, ed. H. Kowalewicz (Warsaw, 1974).

mix of various local and external tales formulated in the 13th and 14th centuries.”

But at its root lies a real event: the inhabitants of Środa rally did carry out an attack but against the prince of Czernihów, Michał Wsiewołodowicz, while fleeing from the Tatars. They not only stole the treasures, but killed the prince’s niece. In this way, the story of the Środa attack circulated from the 13th century; its details underwent changes, the facts were eroded in time, but the story lived on. The story may suggest that a version of the legend current among urban circles was recorded.¹⁴

Oral tales made the rounds of all social circles, each of which created it in folklore, but the folklore recorded by the writing community, especially the clergy, had the greatest chances of being committed to manuscript. These social circles also recorded various jokes and tales, to which copyists added their own. Among knights and courtiers, oral tales played an important role, though we seldom find traces of them in historical sources. Długosz wrote the following after receiving news of the battle of Zawichost between Polish and Russian forces in 1205: “The victory itself was so loud and famous that even neighbouring nations praised it and mentioned it often. The Poles who had won this victory and whose fortunes had increased thanks to the riches and honours, rejoiced in its outcome in various songs which we hear to this day.”¹⁵

These songs may have been known and performed in Długosz’s time, but we hear nothing of them “to this day,” not even traces of them remain in medieval documents, at least in those that have survived. Any fragments of songs to be found in documents are but remnants of the former oral communication. In any case, songs of knightly deeds of valour and valiant lords were not restricted to the circle of knights and courtiers. They were certainly repeated by storytellers in taverns and market places, and thus became part of folklore.

A picture of folk culture in the late Middle Ages emanates primarily from medieval sermons and literary works. A rich inventory of folk

¹⁴ J. Klapper, “Die Tatarensage der Schlesier”, *Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*, 31–32 (1931), pp. 160–196; B. Zientara, “Cesarzowa tatarska na Śląsku – geneza i funkcjonowanie legendy”, in: *Kultura elitarna*, pp. 172–179.

¹⁵ *Ioanni Dlugossii Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Poloniae*, book 6 (Varsaviae, 1964); Cf. L. Szczerbicka, *Pieśni historyczna w świadomości XV–XVIII w.* (Wrocław, 1968).

beliefs is to be found in the sermons of Stanisław of Skarbimierz from the 14th and 15th centuries: *Magistris non inclinavi auream meam* and *Domine Deus rex celestis*.¹⁶ He relates those features of folk tales and beliefs which he considers contrary to the Christian faith, but even these, albeit condemned, helped people in their struggle with nature, allowed an understanding of the world, and the future to be predicted and potentially influenced. One can find elements that predate Christianity. The intensity of preachers' attacks on superstitions and occult practices cannot be considered evidence of the preservation of pagan beliefs. Rather, it is a sign of a more profound Christianization of the masses that is meant to permeate daily life and family customs. Of course, preachers pointed out glaring breaches of Church commandments, which also served as an effective oratorical trick. This resulted in a picture of customs and beliefs that present to the 20th-century observer a less "gloomy" and more harmonized vision of the world and man. Folk sayings at the end of the Middle Ages functioned as a "generalized observation, as a practical maxim, as an anonymous quotation, as an allusion to a known event, as an economic or calendar indication,"¹⁷ and reflect a certain level of resources of information and associations, and perhaps also the way of thinking of simple, uneducated folk. We have already seen that the number of proverbs and sayings originating in the Middle Ages and surviving to our times, whether orally or in writing, is considerable.¹⁸ Regardless of whether they are descended from ancient or medieval writings, or whether they existed only orally, there is much to suggest that they served the folk community.¹⁹ Sayings were not at all restricted to folk culture, they were also widely used in magic rites and superstitions by all social classes. Clerics wore amulet and wrote "wondrous letters."

¹⁶ Stanisław ze Skarbimierza, *Sermones sapientiales*, ed. B. Chmielowska (Warsaw, 1979), pt. 1, pp. 82–94; id., *Sermones super 'Gloria in excelsis'*, ed. R.A. Zawadzki (Warsaw, 1978), pp. 103–104. Cf. M. Kowalczykówna, "Wróżby, czary i zabobony w średniowiecznych rękopisach Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej", *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej* (hereinafter: BBJ), 29 (1979), nos. 1–2, pp. 5 ff.

¹⁷ J. Krzyżanowski, "O najdawniejszych przysłowiaach polskich", in: id., *Szkice folklorystyczne* (Warsaw, 1980), vol. 3, p. 204.

¹⁸ A. Brückner, "Polnische Sprichwörter im XV. Jahrhundert", *Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, 15 (1893), p. 475 ff.; J. Krzyżanowski, "U średniowiecznych źródeł przysłów polskich", in: id., *Szkice folklorystyczne*, p. 177 ff.

¹⁹ Cf. J. Krzyżanowski, *Mądrzej głowie dość dwie słowie* (Warsaw, 1975), vol. 3, p. 243 ff.

A student of Cracow University, Kasper Rockenberg, recalled in 1420 that he had once cured himself of fever by transferring his possessions to a Jew, Zacharias, on the basis of a notarial deed, without the right of redemption.²⁰ Even if this sounds like a student joke, we know that magic practices were applied by people of all levels and were used at court on various occasions.

The fact that we learn about oral tradition with the aid of written sources distorts our picture somewhat. One can assume that oral communication preserved certain non-Christian traditions as elements of folk culture. The program of Christianization of the masses in the late Middle Ages expressed the significance of the independence of folk culture and created an effort by church institutions to spread religious teachings to the masses. But still there was a need to include folk elements in these teachings, so that Christianization included elements of folklore.

This leads to the conclusion that syncretic processes continued in the late Middle Ages, and intensified during the Christianization of the masses. Cultural patterns and contents permeated through different cultural levels. The elites and the masses did not use written and oral sources to the same degree and in the same manner, but they shared common fears and interests in the world; the forces of the unknown, and the wrath of God, as well as hopes of reward and salvation.

3. The Beginnings of the “Printing Revolution”

Towards the end of the period we are examining, there appeared something that was to alter the functioning of culture: printing. Nevertheless, this development, often described as a cultural revolution, took place gradually, so that at first printed works and manuscripts continued to exist side by side.²¹ Printed and written works had a mutual impact, and there were often cases where a written manuscript had been copied from a printed one. At first, printed

²⁰ M. Kowalczyk, *Krakowskie mowy uniwersyteckie z pierwszej połowy XV wieku* (Cracow, 1970), p. 94.

²¹ Cf. B. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1979).

books functioned the same as written ones, they were sold in the same way and served the same communities; in other words, they primarily satisfied the needs of the church and schools. But as printing techniques spread, the number and print runs of published titles rose and the prices of books fell, and the scope of “literary” culture expanded. However, regardless of the quantitative factor, the printed book caused a cultural change. This applies especially to high culture, which now received a standard form of communication and a greater variety of presentation. In the exact sciences, it was now possible to reproduce graphs and technical drawings in the same form. Different universities were able to refer to the same texts, which created a feeling of a literary community on the one hand, and permitted criticism of the text on the other, which lay at the roots of modern humanism. Printing also meant that the Church now had not only an efficient form of teaching, but also a tool with which to standardize the liturgy and, more generally, religious orthodoxy.

Historians of modern-age culture claim, perhaps with a little exaggeration, that between the “manuscript culture” and the “printed culture” there are more differences and contrasts than continuity. The chief difference between the two is occasionally said to be the increased use of words over images, yet it is printing that perpetuated images and made them an inseparable part of books. A more important difference is that books were no longer listened to, but read. Manuscripts combined oral communication and literary communication because a handwritten book, due to its rarity, was primarily meant to be read out loud and thus listened to. But a printed book could be read privately. Although printed books continued to be read out loud on occasion, especially among the lower masses and in popular culture, printing nevertheless created standard texts, which were the springboard for profound cultural transformations.

Printing also led to the creation of organized enterprises, where not only the technology was new, but also the organization of production. These companies resorted to publicity and the search for new ways to convey thinking. Nevertheless, this development was gradual because before permanent printing houses developed, there were printing workshops which lasted only a short time.

The first printing activities in Poland took place in Cracow. From 1473 to 1477 a wandering Bavarian printer ran a printing studio there. He was probably Kasper Straube, whose presence is also traced to

Dresden and Leipzig and who, in Cracow, printed books ordered by the church authorities. His printing output included three treatises by Franciszek de Platea (probably ordered by the Cracow Bernadine monks), later works by St. Augustine, a calendar for the year 1474 and Torquemada's *Explanatio in Psalterium*.²² Detailed examinations of this last-named incunabulum have shown that technical difficulties occurred during printing, as well as a shortage of paper, with the result that the font and even the paper varies. This illustrates the technical difficulties which the first printing workshops faced.²³ Interesting is the printing output of another Cracow printer, Szwajpolt Fiol, in business from the end of the 1480s to November 1491. This was an extremely enterprising immigrant from Franconia, living in Cracow since 1491, and in 1489 he worked on draining flooded mines.²⁴ Szwajpolt Fiol printed Church books in Church Slavonic, and is said to have produced no less than 500 sheets. These prints in Cyrillic script, furnished with the coat of arms of Cracow and dedicated to King Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, were probably destined for Muscovy and were related to Kazimierz Jagiellończyk's energetic eastern policy. It seems the Church authorities put an end to Fiol's business, accusing him of some distortion *in causa fidei*,²⁵ and a prohibition on the printing of Russian books issued by Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki could have been the result of intrigue in the Cracow court. In the 16th century, the Cracow printing industry assumed a permanent shape with the printing house of Jan Haller, who enjoyed a privileged position, and apart from Latin texts, Cracow printing output now included Polish books, probably from the start of the century. The oldest printed books in Polish are said to be *Historia umęczenia Pana naszego Jezusa Chrystusa*

²² A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, *Z dziejów polskiej książki w okresie Renesansu* (Wrocław, 1975), p. 22 ff.; *Dawna książka i kultura*, ed. S. Grzeszczuk, A. Kawecka-Gryczowa (Wrocław, 1975), p. 17 ff.

²³ B. Kocowski, "Śląskie egzemplarze Turrecrematy 'Explanatio in Psalterium' i Plateanus 'Opus restitutionum' w świetle badań porównawczych", *Roczniki Biblioteczne*, 5 (1961), pp. 221 ff.

²⁴ Cf. Z. Kozłowska-Budkowa, "Fiol Szwajpolt", *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (hereinafter: PSB), vol. 6 (1948), p. 470; K. Heintsch, *Materiały do życiorysu i działalności Fiola* (Wrocław, 1957); M. Błońska, "Próba nowego spojrzenia na dzieje krakowskiej oficyny drukarskiej Szwajpolda Fiola (około 1483–1491)", *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 4 (1968), pp. 51–62.

²⁵ *Cracovia impressorum XV et XVI saeculorum*, ed. J. Ptaśnik (Lviv, 1922), no. 56, p. 22 ff.

and *Raj duszny* (1512–1513).²⁶ Apart from Cracow, there were several other printing centres in the 15th century, in Pomerania and Silesia. Apparently, in Chełm from 1473 to 1478 a printing house was operated by monks who had arrived from the Netherlands, which produced at least seven works including by the Italian humanists Poggio Bracciolini and Leonardo Bruni.²⁷ We find the *Facetiae* of Poggio among 12 books known to have been printed by Kasper Elyan in Wrocław, to whom the first attempt to show Polish speech in graphic form may be attributed. The synod statutes of the Wrocław bishops printed by Elyan in 1475 include Polish versions of three major prayers.²⁸ The final decade of the 15th century also saw two interesting printing operations in Pomeranian cities:²⁹ in 1492 the printing house of Jakub Karweyse operated in Malbork, and from 1498 to 1499 Konrad Baumgarten ran a printing house in Gdańsk. Karweyse printed the biography of Dorota of Mątowy, enjoying the support of the starost of Malbork, Tęczynski; this was connected with the fact that the beatification of Dorota represented a conflict between the interests of the Jagiellonian monarchy and the Teutonic Order. Baumgarten is also an example of an itinerant printer: after Gdańsk he worked in Olomouc and in Wrocław, where in 1504 he printed the text of the popular legend of St. Jadwiga in German, with numerous woodcut illustrations; in his Gdańsk printing works he printed the *Agenda*, a basic handbook for the diocese of Wilno. The several dozen incunabula printed in Poland show that, as in other key European centres of printing, printers fulfilled primarily orders from the Church and from the universities. Their output may be considered modest in terms of quality and quantity, but Fiol's output, although disrupted, stands out in its originality and serves as evidence of Poland's cultural radiation.

The presence of Polish printers outside Poland is also interesting. Two Poles, Jan Adam and Stanisław Polak, worked at the printing house of Maciej of Moravia in Naples. They also worked independently: the

²⁶ T. Ulewicz, *Wśród impresorów krakowskich doby Renesansu* (Cracow, 1977), pp. 62–93 ff.

²⁷ E. Szandorowska, "Czy w Chełmnie nad Wisłą drukowano inkunabuły?", *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 4 (1968), pp. 23–49; Cf. A. Lewicka-Kamińska, "Zagadka drukarza Kazań papieża Leona I", *Roczniki Biblioteczne*, 20 (1976), pp. 495–562.

²⁸ M. Burbianka, "Badania nad warsztatem Kaspra Elyana", *Roczniki Biblioteczne*, 16 (1972), pp. 39–48.

²⁹ Z. Nowak, *Początki sztuki drukarskiej na Pomorzu w XV wieku* (Gdańsk, 1976).

former was printing in Naples in 1478, and the latter moved to Seville in 1490 and became a distinguished printer and publisher in Spain.³⁰

The Polish demand for printing was satisfied primarily by foreign printers. This applies especially to religious books – missals, breviaries and prayer books – which Polish dioceses ordered from Italian and German printers. Many dozens of Polish works were printed in various European countries in the second half of the 15th century. Of the more than 170 works by Polish authors printed abroad, two thirds were written by the 13th-century theologian and historian Martin the Pole, the 14th-century theologian Matthew of Cracow, and three 15th-century authors: the theologian Mikołaj of Błonie, the philosopher and astronomer Jan of Głogów, and the theologian and philosopher Jacobus de Clusa. All of these were handbooks and compendia for church and university purposes. A major proportion of Polish printed works were the Cracow forecasts very popular in Europe at the time, and also to be found among European manuscripts. One can say that early printing helped boost Polish intellectual output, but much of it was traditional writing, i.e. theological, moral and spiritual, disseminated mainly by German printers (especially in Leipzig and Strasbourg).³¹

The key issue is the extent of imports of incunabula to Poland. The dramatic losses suffered by Polish libraries in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as the difficulty with establishing the provenance of incunabula, present even a cautious estimate of Polish imports of works printed before 1500 (Polish libraries today hold 20,000 items, but one must bear in mind the changing borders and destruction). Nevertheless, a comparison of two libraries of Cracow professors indicates the breakthrough wrought by printing. The library of Jan Dąbrówka (1427–1472) had 90 handwritten volumes and not a single incunabulum, whereas in the library of the theologian Piotr Świątoplek of Nieznanowice (1460–1497), three manuscripts and 202 incunabula have survived. Trade in books expanded far beyond the previous trade in manuscripts in the 15th century. Insofar as handwritten books were imported mainly from Bohemia (theology, liturgy, religious instruction), Italy (law, classical author, humanist literature) and France (theology, philosophy), imports of printed

³⁰ A. Ruppel, *Stanislaus Polonus. Polski drukarz i wydawca wczesnej doby w Hiszpanii*, ed. and transl. T. Zapiór (Cracow, 1970).

³¹ Ulewicz, *Wśród impresorów*, p. 39 ff.

books were more diversified: Religious, theological and philosophical titles and textbooks were imported from Germany, philosophical works from France, legal and classical works from Switzerland, and textbooks and classical authors from the Netherlands.³² In larger cities, specialist booksellers (*bibliopoli*) were engaged in selling books, but there were also itinerant book dealers and merchants for whom a book was merely a commodity. As early as 1477, the Poznań burgher Piotr Lubik supplied books to the Lviv market, employing Poznań traders (likewise, in 1486 the Cracow bookseller Jan Pfeffer supplied books to Lviv), and at the turn of the century his agents travelled around Mazovia with books. Booksellers were also the first publishers of books, initially ordering them from foreign printers, and later from Poland. Jan Haller was first a wine merchant, but from 1494 he sold books. In 1499 published a missal by Cardinal Fryderyk, and in 1502 the Cracow breviary, whilst the above-mentioned Lubik published the Gniezno breviary in 1500 and the Poznań missal in 1505. In Gdańsk, there were at least two bookshops with hundreds of titles for sale. Jerzy Mandt, Gdańsk delegate to Hanseatic congresses, brought back with him incunabula for his clients.³³ Specialized booksellers, itinerant book trading and occasional trading in printed works existed side by side. In a process where books became a commodity, the invention of printing accelerated this process considerably.

We do not know how many people read printed works in the second half of the 15th century, or what social classes they represented. There is no doubt that access to books became easier. Probably the only change was a greater supply of books to the urban community. Generally, printed books in the 15th century had a circulation similar to that of manuscripts: they were tools of “higher” culture, serving the church, school and university community. Printing also altered the work profile of writers and thinkers: instead of spending their time copying, they could expand their knowledge. But there is no evidence of how books permeated the community of common people. Oral communication continued to prevail there.

³² W. Szelińska, *Biblioteki profesorów*; ead., “Rola książki w życiu umysłowym Polski w XV w.”, in: *Dawna książka i kultura*, p. 201 ff.

³³ J. Wiesiołowski, “Społeczeństwo a książka w późnośredniowiecznym mieście polskim. Poznań i jego osiedla przedmiejskie w XV i na początku XVI wieku”, *Studia źródłotwórcze*, 23 (1978), p. 78; Z. Nowak, “U źródeł piętnastowiecznego drukarstwa na Pomorzu”, in: *Dawna książka i kultura*, p. 42.

Narratives, Conventions and Sources – Literary Work in Research into Medieval Culture

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In: *Dzieło literackie jako źródło historyczne*, ed. Z. Stefanowska, J. Sławiński (Warsaw, 1978), pp. 114–145.

In his practical work, the medieval historian is constantly faced with the problem of the message of literature as a record of the past. Modern research programs, reaping the attainments of quantitative economic history and ethnology, do not cease to treat a literary work as a historical source. On the contrary, a historian's interest in the literature of the era he is examining now finds new justification and inspiration. In the history of culture, focusing on mass phenomena and processes, we do not find any series of documents that would enable us to monitor mass behaviour and feelings. Thus, a valuation of the material and spiritual traces of the past occurs. Regarding literature, we can harbour particular hopes because literature covers everyday life when the historian regards "ideal moments" as "real moments."¹ If the subject of research is mental mechanisms and collective behaviour, it does not matter whether we are investigating a phenomenon or event that really happened, or which was the product of writer's imagination; both the author and his hero become part of the information on the basis of which we attempt to recreate the very mechanism of imagination, a kind of matrix that shapes feelings, sensitivity and mental images. In this way, the transfer from

¹ E. Köhler, *Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der höfischen Epik* (Tübingen, 1970).

a product of the mind to a product of reality is diluted. One can say that a change in interest in the history of culture – away from a traditional examination of human output towards an examination of collective mentality – revalues a literary work in modern historiography.

In a historian's reflections on a literary work, one can distinguish between four areas in which separate historiographic programs occur.

First, a literary work may contain direct information on an event which has to be shed of its literary form and subjected to critical analysis. Such information can only be of auxiliary assistance because it can only be verified with the aid of historical documents. Genuine information retains its value, while information that does not withstand criticism is rejected. One of the codices in the library of the chapter of Płock, dating from 1457, says in verse form that King Władysław is alive.² As historical documents confirm that King Władysław died at the battle of Varna in 1444, the Płock verses are meaningless. However, the verse describing the killing of Andrzej Tęczyński by the citizens of Cracow, confirmed in a document, may be considered a valuable source.

Secondly, the global history of culture requires an examination of writing as an integral part of the process of creating culture. In this regard, a historian's interest is located within the scope of reconnaissance of literary sociology, allowing literary creativity to be juxtaposed with social structures, communities and collective taste.³

Thirdly, literature is regarded as the best (or only available) mirror of the interests, concerns and joys of a specific era or social group. In this regard, cultural sociology has formulated certain patterns of using literature as a short cut to empirical research.⁴

Finally, the history of mentality and socio-cultural history possesses in literature its basic documentation for examining collective attitudes,

² Ed. S. Kwiatkowski, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 5 (Warsaw, 1960–1961), p. 991; Cf. A.F. Grabski, “Wiersze o klęsce warneńskiej. Z dziejów okolicznościowej poezji politycznej w Polsce XV w.”, *Prace Polonistyczne*, 23 (1967), pp. 26–54.

³ Cf. R. Zimand, “Pułapki socjologii literatury”, in: *Problemy socjologii literatury*, ed. J. Sławiński (Wrocław, 1971), pp. 9–28; S. Żółkiewski, “Badania kultury literackiej i funkcji społecznych literatury”, in: *ibid.*, pp. 53–77; *id.*, “Poła zainteresowania współczesnej socjologii literatury”, in: *Problemy metodologiczne współczesnego literaturoznawstwa*, ed. H. Markiewicz, J. Sławiński (Cracow, 1976), pp. 407–439.

⁴ R. Mandrou, “Histoire littéraire et histoire culturelle”, *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 70 (1970), no. 5–6, p. 861 ff.

behaviour, sensitivity and ways of thinking.⁵ This requires reading differently, proceeding from the foreground to the background, and paying great attention to literary works and genres of mediocre quality. The whole of written output is important: neither falsehood nor mediocrity disqualify the value of a source. The Płock verses of 1457 are a key source of information not about an event, but about attitudes towards a king, about the mechanisms of a legend, and about the need to dream and imagine.

The order in which a historian values the manner of utilizing these literary resources seems to correspond to their effectiveness and the hope that may be attached to each of them. But in each case, the historian rejects virtually automatically the genres of literature. As literature is easily the subject of humanist discourse, it seems to be a more flexible product of historical construction and interpretation than art or music.⁶ And yet when examining a literary work, the historian waives a certain level of information contained in the work. Many of the qualities that make a literary work original can be regarded as signs of a certain reality and collective psychology.⁷ This is well known in the racism and theory of literature,⁸ whereas historical research still rarely follows this path of interpretation. Instead of eradicating the iver structure and separating pictures of people and situations from the patterns and conditions that govern them, the historian should make these patterns and conventions the subject of examination. They reveal a literary work's relationship to a specific social reality, although it suffices to extend this timeframe to the "durable" dimension, and to extend the spatial framework to the cultural circle in order to treat these structures, conventions and models as instruments with which to expose the social reality.⁹

⁵ Cf. J. Le Goff, "Les mentalités. Une histoire ambiguë", in: *Faire de l'histoire*, ed. J. Le Goff, P. Nora (Paris, 1974), vol. 3, pp. 76–94; R. Sprandel, *Mentalitäten und Systeme. Neue Zugänge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1972).

⁶ Mandrou, *Histoire littéraire*, p. 864.

⁷ Interesting examples of such an interpretation: D.S. Likhachev, "Literaturnyj etiket russkogo srednevekov'ja", in: *Poetics*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1961), pp. 637–649; id., *Poetika drevnerusskoj literatury* (Leningrad, 1967), pp. 84 ff.

⁸ Maria Janion indicates that literary skills and literature are the subject of investigations into literature: ead., "Marksizm a humanistyka rozumiejąca", in: *Konteksty nauki o literaturze*, ed. M. Czermińska (Wrocław, 1973).

⁹ Janusz Sławiński, "Socjologia literatury i poetyka historyczna", in: *Problemy socjologii literatury*, p. 39.

Historical thinking and writing are naturally connected with a written record of the past, but direct traces of the past are also sought in them. In medieval culture, based overwhelmingly on the authority of the written word, writing techniques, which lent a certain sacred air to the written word, automatically accorded value to tradition and memory. This encourages the medieval historian to seek, in historical writings, contents that transcend the sphere of writing and were recorded in memory in a more or less conventionalized form.

Memory and the need for memory are a socio-psychological phenomenon intertwined with the requirements and development of the institutions of collective life and group ties.¹⁰ Thus, it is not only the psychological flaws of memory that act when reminiscences are communicated, but also social mechanisms that form and deform these reminiscences. Historiographic work, i.e. creativity, intended to record accounts of past events, is evidence of the weakness of the collective structure that is a moment to preserve and cultivate memory. Maurice Halbwachs even said that “generally, history begins only where tradition ends, when social memory extinguishes or dissolves.”¹¹ Thus, when searching for collective memory, the historian may refer to the written message only in its least reliable parts, when out of the “mists of history” he can extract substance. The boundary between historiography and a literary work is blurred. The historiographic search for the mythical “beginnings” of the process of justifying the present by relating the past¹² is subject to the same laws of argument as any literary work (for writing about the past is literary activity); historiography and literature both provide a record of past events and the needs and wishes of societies. Heading in this direction, one can consider historiography as a history of a “world in history.”

In a report delivered in 1936, Mikhail Bakhtin said that it is memory, not reconnaissance, that is the basic creative strength of old literature.¹³

¹⁰ M. Halbwachs, *Spoleczne ramy pamięci*, transl. M. Król (Warsaw, 1969), p. 217, and *passim*; J.P. Vernant, “Aspects mythiques de la mémoire, *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique*, 56 (1959), pp. 1 ff.

¹¹ M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris, 1950), p. 68.

¹² K. Pomian, *Przeszłość jako przedmiot wiary. Historia i filozofia w myśli średniowiecza* (Warsaw, 1968); Cz. Deptuła, “Średniowieczne mity genezy Polski”, *Znak*, 25 (1973), pp. 1365–1403.

¹³ M.M. Bakhtin, “The epic and the novel. Towards a methodology for the study in the novel”, in: *Theory of the Novel. A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore & London, 2000), p. 321 ff.

An epic was a record of the national past very distant (“epic distance”) from the present, whereby its prime source was folk tradition, not personal experience. Regardless of the differences in views about the genesis of the epic¹⁴ and its constitutive differences (Zhirmunskiy juxtaposes it with fable and Propp with myth),¹⁵ the prevalent conviction is that the epic corresponds to collective memory, and not history.

Both romantic and positivist historical writings have tried to find a historical truth in *chansons de geste*¹⁶ concealed beneath convention. The positivist history of literature rejected *en bloc* the conviction of romantic historiography, whereby an epic is a primeval history. Disregarding folklore and oral accounts, it attributed *chansons de geste* to an individual creativity that combined elements of history with legend, subjecting them to poetic discipline. Historical and historical-literary research in our century has studied *chansons de geste* as carriers of oral tradition, while defendants of the “individualist” theory (Italo Siciliano) place the poet-creator among the community of 11th-century cultural elite who achieved a synthesis of old and new elements.¹⁷

Thus, the French epic can be regarded as a partial truth of the past as a result of entangling tradition with literary creativity.¹⁸ The change that occurred in the 11th century was connected with the interests of the nobility and aristocracy, the response to which was a profound exploitation of the resources of tradition and itinerant topics.¹⁹

¹⁴ J.M. Meletinskiy, “O genezise i putiakh differenciacii epicheskikh zhanrov”, *Russkij Folklor*, 5 (1960), pp. 81–101.

¹⁵ V.M. Zhirmunskiy, *Epitcheskoye tvorchestvo slavianskikh narodnostey i problemy sravnitel'nogo izucheniya eposa* (Moscow, 1958); W.J. Propp, *Russkij geroicheskiy epos* (Leningrad, 1955).

¹⁶ Basic reading: M. de Riquer, *Les chansons de geste françaises* (Paris, 1957); I. Siciliano, *Les chansons de geste et l'épopée* (Turin, 1968); R. Menéndez-Pidal, *La chanson de Roland et la tradition épique des Francs* (Paris, 1960); J. Rychner, *La chanson de geste. Essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs* (Genève, 1957); P. Le Gentil, *La chanson de Roland* (Paris, 1967); M. Waltz, *Rolandslied, Wilhelmlied, Alexiuslied. Zur Struktur und geschichtlichen Bedeutung* (Heidelberg, 1965); D. Poiron, “Chanson de geste ou épopée”, *Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature*, 10 (1972), no. 2, pp. 7–20.

¹⁷ P. Le Gentil, “Les chansons de geste: le problème des origines”, *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 70 (1970), pp. 992–1006.

¹⁸ J. Frappier, “Réflexion sur les rapports des chansons de geste et de l'histoire”, *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie*, 73 (1957), pp. 1–19; P. Le Gentil, “Quelques réflexions sur les rapports de l'épopée et de l'histoire”, in: *Mélanges*, ed. I. Franck (Saarbrücken, 1957).

¹⁹ Le Gentil, *Les chansons de geste*, p. 1005; Cf. also G. Labuda, *Źródła, sagi i legendy do najdawniejszych dziejów Polski* (Warsaw, 1960), p. 232.

In this way, the epic became not just a source of information about people and events in the past – information that in any case acquired value only when confronted with news from other sources – but also became a historical source in itself, for it took into account historical culture and the collective need for reminiscence, while at the same time it permitted an examination of the mechanism by which collective memory was organized. The absence of the epic in medieval Polish historiography prevents this perspective from being applied to Polish culture. The fragments of Polish epics that have survived to this day suggest that the epic was in cultural circulation, fulfilling functions similar to those in the West and responding to social demands. To a certain extent, one can credit the chronicles of Gallus Anonymus and Master Wincenty with a similar role.

Aleksander Brückner did not hesitate to describe Gallus Anonymus' *Chronicle* as the "first historical tale."²⁰ That "rhyming prose," rhythmical and conforming to the classic principles of *ars dictandi*, is an epic tale of a country and a dynasty that proceeds from the distant past to the present. It presents the Poles as heroes who "deserve to be raised above all others because, although surrounded by so many Christian and pagan peoples and attacked by them many times, have never been completely subjugated by anyone."²¹

Anonymus first presents a series of legends relating to Wielkopolska, and proceeds to matters which "faithful memory" has recorded. Here he tells of Mieszko, his blindness in childhood, his miraculous recovery, marriage to Dobrawa and conversion to Christianity, followed by the "magnificence and power of the famous Bolesław." Written 100 to 150 years after the events associated with both rulers, the chronicle adheres to the epic principle of distance in time. Gallus Anonymus also abides by this principle to a certain extent in his biography of Bolesław the Wry-Mouthed, his prime literary venture;²² this is an

²⁰ A. Brückner, "Pierwsza powieść historyczna", *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 3 (1924), p. 117; a model monograph of the chronicle still is: M. Plezia, *Kronika Galla na tle historiografii XII wieku* (Cracow, 1947).

²¹ Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta Principum Polonorum. The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, transl. and annotated by P.W. Knoll and F. Schaer, with a preface by Th.N. Bisson (Budapest, New York, 2003), Introduction, p. 11.

²² T. Tyc, "Anonim – biograf Trzeciego Bolesława", *Przegląd Warszawski*, 4 (1924), p. 55 ff.

epic construction where the distance of prestige and fame is replaced by the missing distance in time.

Master Wincenty's²³ exhaustive account of fables, which was the basis for his fame as a historian, fulfils epic qualities to a certain extent. Placing his own ethnic community in the ancient past, Wincenty treats fictitious accounts on a par with the narrative of historians. He uses a series of legends from Małopolska to present the genesis of Polish statehood, but these are tales with a separate and independent construction. Further in the chronicle we find, apart from philosophical and legal discourses, various literary works: stories, exempla, and tales. As with the English chronicle Geraldus Cambiensis, he seems to want to provide his readers with *materialis delibatio* rather than *historiae narratio*.²⁴

The origins of the series of legends contained in our historiography still await more exhaustive research, but it seems that they were written by scholars who belonged to the intellectual clerical elites. The role of court circles in these creative processes does not seem to be appreciated. Yet court communities are important places of cultural communication; this is one of the key channels where folklore permeates culture and literature. The legend of Wanda in Kadłubek's chronicle contains poetical traces which may have spawned an oral epic. That is the origin of the largest series of fables in Polish medieval writings, the tale of Wisław, Walter and Helgunda in the *Kronika wielkopolska*.²⁵ Tales narrated at the courts of princes, including at the court of Prince Henryk of Sandomierz and Duke Przemysław of Wielkopolska, ended up in the pages of the *Kronika* as an epic tale of Polish history.

Thus, we come to the conclusion that medieval tales of the past are important not only as sources of information on events, but also – perhaps most of all – as works of literature which, in addition, include the truth. We can regard tales of the past as an expression of sensitivity to the past, the limits of the imagination of time, and the

²³ To O. Balzer's basic work, *Studium o Kadłubku* (published in: *Pisma pośmiertne Oswalda Balzera*, vols. 1–2, Lviv, 1934–1935), we can add the exhaustive introduction by B. Kürbis to the Polish translation of the *Chronica Polonorum*: Wstęp, in: *Mistrza Wincentego 'Kronika Polska'*, transl. K. Abgarowicz (Warsaw, 1974).

²⁴ B. Kürbis, Wstęp, p. 67.

²⁵ S. Zakrzewski, "Źródła podań tyniecko-wiślickich", *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 28 (1914), pp. 351–486; G. Labuda, "Powieść o Wałgierzu z Tyńca i o Wisławie z Wiślicy", in: id., *Źródła, sagi i legendy*, pp. 243–298.

collective mechanisms that form collective memory. From this point of view, the conventionalized properties of these tales and their basic structure serve as a rich source of information.²⁶

The historian's mistrust of the source value of literary works is primarily because a work is subject to conventionalized forms on the one hand, and to its author's unlimited imagination (or fantasy) on the other. The literary value of a work was considered an obstacle to establishing the truth because it was impossible to translate into the language of social reality and seemed independent of the cultural relations and social structures that interest the historian. Yet a literary work itself is a treasure of culture and, as such, must find itself within a cultural historian's horizon of research. The codification of the recording of literature went a particularly long way in the Middle Ages,²⁷ whereas codification itself is a symptom of expression of literary forms of expression. To medieval society, poetry was an art because it was subject to rules that defined its form and content.²⁸ In both medieval literary traditions, epic and lyric, there were established registers of discourse and forms of expression. The basic classification of writing was adopted from antiquity, and classical literature was the main point of reference for medieval poetry.²⁹ Of course, the Scriptures also introduced a change of perspective. In the Bible, people sought medieval patterns of excellence and criteria for esthetic valuation. This effort to classify writing in terms of discourse (*demonstrativum, deliberativum, iudicialis*), style (*humile, medium, sublime*), and form (*dramaticum, narrativum, mixtum*) had obvious consequences for the general development of medieval writing, but to a major extent it was a university intellectual exercise, more important to the history of thought than to literary practice.

Important, however, were the patterns that determined whether a particular style suited the content and laid down the attributes for

²⁶ Cf. B. Geremek, "Wyobrażenia czasowa polskiego dziejopisarstwa przeddługoszwowego", *Studia Źródloznawcze*, 22 (1977), pp. 1–17.

²⁷ E. Faral, *Les arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1923).

²⁸ W. Tatarkiewicz, "La poétique médiévale et le problème de la forme et du contenu de la poésie", in: *Poetics*, pp. 651–654; id., *Historia estetyki*, vol. 2: *Estetyka średniowieczna* (Wrocław, 1962), p. 135 ff.

²⁹ E. de Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale*, vol. 2 (Brugge, 1946), p. 42; H.R. Jauss, "Littérature médiévale et théorie des genres", *Poétique*, 1970, no. 1, pp. 79–101.

individual styles.³⁰ As in ancient poetry, to each of the three styles were assigned the name and condition of the hero, the animals associated with him, his place of sojourn, and plants. A serious or high style was suitable for a valiant knight, the proper animal for him was the horse, the proper weapon a sword, the place of sojourn a city or castle, and the correct plant the laurel or cedar. The symbols for a middle style of writing were a farmer, ox, plough, farmstead and apple tree, whilst the symbols for a modest or low style were a shepherd, sheep, stick, pasture and beech tree.

It is very difficult to interpret the non-literary symbols inherent in this conventionalized literature or establish their cultural origin. Although in the trio of typical heroes – *miles dominans*, *agricola*, *pastor otiosus* – one can find a reflection of Dumézil's hypothesis of the Indo-European ideology of the three functions, their interpretation remains very uncertain (especially that of the *pastor otiosus*, which is difficult to identify with a physical force). More certain is a sociological interpretation of the functioning of these conventions regarding the estates. In the 13th century, Johannes de Garlandia ascribes these three styles "to the three estates to which people belong: the modest style of writing suits shepherds, the medium style is appropriate for farmers, and the noble style is for distinguished persons who lead the shepherds and farmers."³¹ Obviously this classification does not correspond to the actual divisions of medieval society, but efforts to establish such associations were typical of the social awareness of those times. The rules of iconography³² governing the social reality served to categorize ways of thinking into a system.³³ The hierarchy of means of expression was associated with the hierarchy of social relations. The consequence of this was that personal patterns were dictated by a person's place in the social hierarchy and on his or her function and role. Regardless of the changes taking place to social ideals and specific historical circumstances, a good ruler, bishop, knight or townsman continued to be subject to the same personal or literary stereotypes.

³⁰ Faral, *Les arts poétiques*, p. 87.

³¹ *Poetria magistri Johannis Anglici de arte prosayca metrica et rithmica*, ed. G. Mari, in: *Romanische Forschungen*, 13 (1902), p. 920, Polish translation of the excerpt in: W. Tatariewicz, *Historia estetyki*, p. 147.

³² Cf. F.A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, 1966), chapt. 4.

³³ Cf. C.S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: an Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, 1994).

All elements seemed to be included in this codification, and the variety of possible patterns seemed to be exploited by classical literature as an ideal. In this connection, the work of a medieval author was likened to a game of chess,³⁴ in which games played by masters are repeated, but with a varying combination of possible solutions. In this respect, the Middle Ages display considerable irregularity, departing from the rules established by *artes dictaminis* or *artes poetical*, mixing styles and subjecting them to social etiquette and literary convention.³⁵

Of the literary regulations that were applied with particular fondness in medieval writings, the authority of the written word takes the lead. A literary work was produced not only within the framework of an established convention, but also with the aid of fictional descriptions and imagery obtained from reading literature. This reflected the uncertainty and suspicion with which human imagination was treated in the Middle Ages. In an aim to create a model of the universe and understand the world of humans and of nature, medieval man realized his own physical and mental weakness. An expression of this weakness and a resource with which to overcome it was a reliance on the previous achievements of culture; the image of “dwarves on the shoulders of a giant” is an excellent illustration of this attitude.

This complicates ethnographical-historical research into medieval culture because the preferences of writers expressed in their works are subjected to a particular system in force at a certain time and place. In the poem *Brut* written at the turn of the 13th century by the English cleric Layamon, we find a description of the beings that inhabit the aerial spheres and possess good and bad attributes. This description is fundamentally similar to the beliefs of primitive people who saw spirits inhabiting the whole of nature, but it is also the fruit of reading and a long process of assimilation and adaptation. Layamon borrows his description from the Norman poet Wac, who wrote in the middle of the 12th century and based his ideas on the *Historia Regum Britanniae* by Godfrey of Monmouth (before 1139), whilst Godfrey based his description on *De Deo Socratis* by Apuleius (2nd century). This chain of inspiration can be carried further back, for Apuleius followed in the footsteps of Plato, whilst in Plato we find a modified account of

³⁴ B. Rifting, “Metod v srednevekovoy literaturye Vostoka”, *Voprosy Literatury*, 1969, no. 6, p. 93.

³⁵ Cf. J. Ziomek, *Renesans* (Warsaw, 1973), p. 22.

mythology. C. S. Lewis indicates the major difference between medieval and primitive culture regarding the written word: Lewis believes in demons and writes about them because he read about them in books, whilst the beliefs of “wild people” crumble when confronted with book culture.³⁶

Thus, the literary rigours to which medieval creativity are subject are not an obligation imposed by cultural arrangements, but they actually disclose these arrangements. Occasionally they are the creation of cultural structures, and sometimes they create such structures themselves. Leaving aside the question genetic ties, there is no doubt that literary convention is strongly linked to the collective psyche.

The rigours of literary convention coincided with the action of compulsory linguistic convention. The transfer from “documentary” language to “memorial,” i.e. literary, language³⁷ was achieved by creating a special type of deviation from the forms of expression current in melodic and prosaic expression. A medieval written work was sung, rhymed or recited in verse, but was also subject to rules governing style. The result of this was what Zumthor calls a “supralanguage”³⁸ which created out of everyday language an advanced register of expression. This was not a feature of individual authors, but rather a common quality.

At the same time, everyday language preserved a constant supply of conventional models. The codification of some medieval poetry ignored a few important literary conventions regarding presentation. The general outline of medieval works was subjected to an inventory of topics such as the seven cardinal sins and the five senses. However, in the invention of its basic protagonists,³⁹ medieval writings referred widely to allegory, a typical method of presentation and thinking at that time.⁴⁰

³⁶ Lewis, *The Discarded Image*.

³⁷ P. Zumthor, *Langue et techniques poétiques à l'époque romane* (Paris, 1963), pp. 32–33, and “Rhétorique et langage poétique dans le moyen âge roman”, in: *Poetics*, pp. 745–753.

³⁸ Id., *Langue*, p. 179 ff.

³⁹ V.A. Propp, *Morfologia bajki*, transl. W. Wojtyga-Zagórska (Warsaw, 1976), especially chaps. 3 and 8.

⁴⁰ Cf. C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (New York, 1958). An interesting view of opinions on the subject of allegory in medieval philosophical thinking is given by P. Skubiszewski, “O myśleniu alegorycznym w średniowieczu”, in: *Granice sztuki*, ed. J. Białostocki (Warsaw, 1972), pp. 49–57.

Let us pause to consider an example of the compete personification of moral principles in medieval literature, the French *Roman de la Rose* (*The Romance of the Rose*). The way in which the allegorical images in this took shape is significant.⁴¹

Prudentius presented an allegorical struggle between virtues and faults in *Psychomachy*. It featured the following couples: Faith and Idolatry, Purity and Decadence, Patience and Anger, Humility and Pride, Moderation and Wastefulness, Charity and Avarice, and Harmony and Discord (the last betrayal before death bears its real name: Heresy). Here we see the simplest pattern, consisting of opposites of good and evil, according to which these pairs of antonyms were formed. But insofar as the set of antonyms was taken from linguistic structures, in writing the effect was the opposite: the influence of literature on language. In the pair *Caritas – Avaritia*, in other words Charity and Avarice, the medieval concept of *caritas* is identified with generosity solely because it appeared as the opposite of greed. A far-reaching examination of these patterns was made by Allan de Lille at the end of the 12th century. His *Anticlaudianus*,⁴² expounding upon Prudentius, performs an inventory of the basic semantic concepts, stating sub-categories for each one, resulting from a profound philosophical reflection. Thus, wastefulness heads a set of concepts in which the following appear: Heresy, False Love, Inconstancy, Wastefulness, Sweetness, Pain, Delight, Success, Enjoyment, Utilization, Poverty, Prosperity. In this expanded list, the effort of heroes pursues a path shaped by language, whereby the author's philosophy is somewhat imposed on everyday language and adds concepts that have no justification in everyday language.

The first part of the *Roman de la Rose*⁴³ (the first half of the 13th century) is a re-examination of the existing images of vices and the

⁴¹ L. Batana, "Paradigmes lexicaux et structures littéraires au Moyen Age", *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 70 (1970), no. 5–6, pp. 821–822.

⁴² Alanus de Insulis, *Anticlaudianus*, ed. R. Bossuat (Paris, 1955; *Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Age*, 1).

⁴³ Wilhelm z Lorris, Jan z Meun, *Powieść o Róży*, transl. M. Frankowska-Terlecka, T. Giermak-Zielińska (Warsaw, 1997). Regarding allegorical procedures in the work, see: G. Paré, *Les idées et les lettres au XIIIe siècle. 'Le Roman de la Rose'* (Montreal, 1947); J.V. Fleming, *'The Roman de la Rose': A Study in Allegory and Iconography* (Princeton, 1969); M.R. Jung, *Etudes sur le poème allégorique en France au Moyen Age* (Berne, 1971); D. Poirion, *'Le Roman de la Rose'* (Paris, 1974).

application of the procedure. Wilhelm de Lorris also resorts to a lexical series which serves to illustrate narrative. The characters appearing in the *Roman de la Rose* only make sense when they are referred to the ideas they personify, whereby the metaphorical mechanism of the work (the search for a rose, symbolizing passion) accompanies the allegorical procedures. Interestingly, the allegories in the *Roman* can be read as a transposition of mythology (and the logic of myths), containing the key to understanding the meaning of some of the images, and at the same time the presentation of the opposites of faults and virtues leads to their erasure in the general picture of utopia. Thus, in this way, allegory mingles and juxtaposes various time dimensions: the mythical past, the present with its virtues and faults, and future harmony.

I have said that medieval society's attitude towards language and culture was highly semiotic, and every linguistic symbol was allocated a certain iconic value.⁴⁴ The treatment of words as symbols in medieval literature is connected with the general convention of etymology, which also serves to categorize each protagonist in mental and moral terms. In the *Song of Roland* "Roland is manly whilst Olivier is sagacious"; if the first name derives from history, the second is a symbolic creation. The etymology behind the name Olivier still rouses certain controversies,⁴⁵ but it is most probably associated with the word *oliva* as wisdom (either the wisdom of God or wisdom of faith in God). Thus, the linguistic message turns Olivier into a secular wise man; his name illustrates and explains his role in the entire narrative.

The procedures to which we have paid attention here seem to indicate a trend to avoid intellectual effort by subjecting everything to ready-made conventions. Nevertheless, the application of these literary techniques was not limited to primitive cultures. Flaubert's *Dictionnaire des idées reçues* leads to a similar thought pattern of ready associations. By studying techniques of expression and narrative, the cultural historian acquires valuable information on collective mentality,

⁴⁴ J. Lotman, "K problemie tipologii kultury", *Trudy po Znakovym Sistemam*, 1967, p. 34.

⁴⁵ A. Pauphilet, "Sur la 'Chanson de Roland'", *Romania*, 59 (1933), p. 177; L. Spitzer, "Études d'anthroponymie ancienne française", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 58 (1943), pp. 589 ff.; P. Aebischer, "L'état actuel des recherches relatives aux origines de l'anthroponyme Olivier", in: *Mélanges de langue et de littérature du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance offerts à Jean Frappier* (Geneva, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 17–34.

the way of thinking of people at that time, and the instruments of psychological culture.

Thus, a direct link appears between allegorical patterns and linguistic conventions. The moral message seems to be the natural consequence of linguistic patterns. But, obviously, the story itself is to provide the moral lesson. The invention of allegories as a general method of interpretation creates a huge demand for narrative material which the Middle Ages obtained from all sources. All situations and objects of daily life assumed the qualities of a fable. This process of creating fables was applied to writing and iconography, and even in the teaching of philosophy and religion. Hence the importance of the medieval genre known as *exempla*.⁴⁶

The *exempla* seem to assimilate the entire output of Eastern and Western fables, resulting in dozens of anthologies containing thousands of stories serving as the basis of sermons, religious teaching, monastic works and storytelling in manors and at market fairs. Their origin is diversified, they were born out of the heritage of classical and oriental literature, and were sometimes passed on by folklore and oral storytelling. The historian has difficulty in dealing with these fables because it is problematic to locate them precisely in time, and the gap between the time they arose and the time they were applied is very wide, and attempt to refer to specific events or history are usually misleading.

The broad and diversified scope of the function of *exempla* illustrates their importance as a source of information for investigating culture. When examining medieval culture, they allow the researcher to penetrate the levels of mass culture, for *exempla* are an expression of mass culture and shape it. Occasionally the mechanisms of allegory and moralization acting in these tales reveal surprising facets of the medieval imagination.

English chronicles tell of the division of William the Conqueror's property.⁴⁷ He summoned his sons and asked each of them what bird

⁴⁶ J.Th. Weiter, *L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1927); F.C. Tubach, *Index exemplorum* (Helsingfors, 1969). I present the status of and issues with investigating *exempla* in the article "Exemplum i przekaz kultury", in: *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. B. Geremek (Wrocław, 1978) (see pp. 649–672 in this anthology).

⁴⁷ The legend and its subsequent transformations are presented in: A. Taylor, "What Bird Would You Choose to Be? – a Medieval Tale", *Fabula*, 1965, no. 7, pp. 97–114.

they would like to be. Robert said he would like to be a falcon because it flies well and has the respect of princes; William said he would like to be an eagle because that is the king of birds; and Henry said he would like to be a sparrow because it obtains its food innocently and lives in a throng. (The father resolved that Robert would have Normandy, William would have England, and Henry would receive 5,000 pounds.)

The symbolism of the birds in the above story complies with original mental patterns. Here, too, one sees a reflection of Dumézil's triad as a pattern of ideological imagination descending from Indo-European culture.⁴⁸ The eagle is associated with a magical-royal sovereign, the falcon with the strength of a warrior, and the sparrow with fertility. The transformations which this motive underwent were recorded in literature and affected the symbolism of the legend somewhat, but without altering its basic structure. But this legend seems to have led quite an intensive life, for it was exploited by English preachers, written down by the Franciscans, and recorded in two Dominican works in the 14th century: *Scala coeli* by the French writer Jean Gobi, and *Summa predicantium* by John Bromyard of England. Different birds appear in different texts; the youngest son is sometimes offered the choice of a crane or swan, with the explanation that these birds have long necks through which no evil word or lie will pass. Here, the symbolic structure of the message is altered or eroded. One can only surmise whether the swan or the crane is a symbol of fertility like the stork,⁴⁹ in which case the original structure remains unaltered. However, one can assume that the message in this tale changes in time, because the symbolism of birds provided different possibilities of interpretation.

This *exemplum* illustrates the importance of the duration of allegorical imagery in culture, expressing man's images of the world and illustrating his attempts to find order in the world's organization. The development stages of the work are also significant. The researcher into its history believes that in the beginning there was a fable which provided the basis for a record in English chronicles on the one hand, and on the other hand spawned a literary work whose first versions

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴⁹ Cf. G. Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York, 1961), pp. 14, 25 (a very simplified presentation). For the symbolical meaning of the stork, crane and swan in folklore, see S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, vol. 6 (Copenhagen, 1958), pp. 174, 755, 772.

appear in an Icelandic saga and in the German work of Berthold von Holle (in the second half of the 13th century). No traces of this fable have been found in classical literature, but regardless of its genetic continuity, the most important thing is the regularity of its association with folklore. The differences appearing in successive records indicate that the story was passed on orally, and being committed to writing did not put an end to its life in folklore. This is important in order to understand the relationship between elite culture and mass culture in the Middle Ages. One standard clerical book preserved among Polish manuscripts⁵⁰ contains, apart from sermons, liturgical prayers and exorcisms, a set of 90 *exempla*, most of them taken from the *Gesta Romanorum*. They include the *De ciconia adulterata*, where we find a great deal of symbolism represented by individual birds.⁵¹

A tale is also to be found in the *Speculum Naturale* by Vincent de Beauvais⁵² who, discussing the marital fidelity of storks, tells of the severe punishment that befell the adulterous female stork and her lover. This story appears in the 13th century in one of the first collections of *exempla*, Stefan de Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversiis materiis praedicabilibus*.⁵³ In the chapter about the various effects of confession, the first of which is that confession purifies the soul, there appears the story of the unfaithful female stork. Stefan says he had heard this story from elsewhere (*Audivi quod in quadam abbacia...*). He relates that in a certain abbey there was a nest of storks whose life was observed by the monks. They noticed that whenever the male stork left the nest to find food for the fledglings, the female would betray him with another stork, after which she would wash herself in a nearby stream so that her partner never smelt the infidelity. The monks decided to put an end to this. They stopped the female stork from flying to the stream until the male stork returned, and when he did return and smelled the smell of infidelity, he summoned the other storks

⁵⁰ National Library, MS III 8054 (= Kras. 52).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, col. 118 v. In Thompson's index, this motive (noted as T 252.2.1: "the king watches the stork killing his unfaithful wife") is confirmed in *Gesta Romanorum*, *Scala coeli* and in Spanish *exempla*; see S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, vol. 5 (Copenhagen, 1957), p. 370.

⁵² Vincentius Bellovacensis, *Speculum naturale* (Venice, 1494), c. 198v. This takes place in an unspecified house ("in eminentiori loco domus cuiusdam").

⁵³ A. Lecoy de la Marche, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon dominicain du XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1877), p. 159.

and the unfaithful female stork and her lover were caught *in flagranti* and pecked to death before all the storks, as if a sentence had been carried out (“quasi esset sententia data contra eos”).

This story also appears in *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection dating from the middle of the 14th century.⁵⁴ In keeping with its nature, it has its own title: *On the judgment of adulterers*. The beginning, completely in literary form, is interesting: “Once upon a time there was a knight who had a wonderful castle where a pair of storks had built a nest; beneath the castle was pure spring...” The rest of the story is similar: the knight blocked access to the spring, the female stork was unable to wash herself and returned to the nest, whilst the male, having detected the smell of infidelity, flew off and returned with a flock of storks which, in the presence of the knight, killed the unfaithful female stork. Apart from replacing the monks with the knight, this story makes certain changes, such as removing the unfaithful stork’s lover and the scene *in flagranti*, and adding the flock of storks

But the basic differences between these two versions lie at an allegorical level, for the story is meant to serve as an example and thus serve an educational purpose. Stefan’s version retains the structure of a “natural tale” whilst the only allegory is the association between the spring and the purifying function of confession. Apart from this spring-confession association, the allegorical meaning of the remaining elements of the narrative remains obscure. The moralizing message of the *Gesta Romanorum* provides quite a clear allegorical interpretation. The two storks are Christ and a soul married to Christ; when the soul breaches its faith through sin, it escapes to the spring, i.e. confession, in order to rid itself of the smell of perfidy. And the knight who has barred access to the spring is simply the devil who constantly diverts man away from confession. Finally, the warning: “If Christ finds you impure, that is not confessed, on the day of judgment, he shall no doubt fall upon you with a host of angels who shall kill you.”⁵⁵ In the version recorded in the abovementioned manuscript, we find not only a separate title and a few stylistic improvements and short cuts,

⁵⁴ *Gesta Romanorum*, ed. H. Oesterley (Berlin, 1872), cap. 82 (74), p. 410. The date when this work was written and how it was propagated require further investigation.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 410: “Inde si Christus in die iudicii te invenit non lotum i.e. non confessum, sine dubio contra te veniet cum multitudine angelorum et eternaliter te occident.”

but also an improved ending which may have aroused theological doubts: the sentencing of an “unclean” soul to eternal damnation.⁵⁶

Transposing the action from a monastic community to a lay community facilitated the allegorical function and permitted the entire narrative structure of the exemplum to be a subject of morality. In a sense, the story is translated from one language to another. The male stork is Christ, the female is the soul, the flock of storks are angels, the spring is confession and the knight is the devil: in this way, the allegorical structure is completed. Generally, moralization adds value to a literary fable,⁵⁷ for anything that had several meanings (and different interpretations) was more valuable in the Middle Ages. The convention of moralization served the ideological supremacy of the Church and the corps of clerics. Confession was identified with a miracle, for it was regarded as the miraculous absolution of all sin; and salvation remained in the hands of the people and of Church institutions. Allegory enabled religious imperatives to be presented in the form of situations common in everyday life. The tale of the unfaithful stork is a reference to mass mentality and exposes this mentality.

The fortunes and structure of a literary genre as a whole can also provide important information for the purposes of sociocultural analysis. We can then recreate a specific system of values which reflect the relationships between people and their attributes and conduct, and also establish the rules and types of narrative form. This may apply to the poetry of troubadours,⁵⁸ a characteristic literary form on account of its mysterious origins and monotony. Traditionally, this

⁵⁶ National Library in Warsaw, MS III, 8054, fol. 118v: “eterne dampnacioni dabit.”

⁵⁷ Important in this regard is an exchange of scholarly correspondence between Zbigniew Oleśnicki and Eneas Silvius Piccolomini in 1453 (*Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, Cracow, 1876), pp. 315–336, especially p. 316).

⁵⁸ The bibliography on this subject is vast. Of unchanging validity is the work of A. Jeanroy, *La poésie lyrique des troubadours*, vol. 1–2 (Paris, 1934), about which the author of a popular work on troubadours H. Davenson, *Les troubadours* (Paris, 1961), says with justification that it combines an intimate knowledge with an exhaustive understanding of the subject. The state of research into the topic is illustrated by university lectures from J. Frappier, *La poésie lyrique en France aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Paris, 1949); J.Ch. Payen, *Les origines de la courtoisie dans la littérature française médiévale* (Paris, 1966). This genre is also tackled by: E. Köhler, *Trobadorlyrik und höfischer Roman* (Berlin, 1962); R.A. Fridman, “Lyubovnaya liryka trubadurov i yeyo istolkhovaniye”, *Uchenye zapiski Ryazanskogo Gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo instituta*, 34 (1965), pp. 87–418.

monotonous conventionalization of feelings was used as an argument illustrating the weakness of the poetical spirit of the troubadours.

“Personal feelings and free and living experience are stifled beneath the weight of scholarly pedantry,” wrote Alfred Jeanroy at the close of the last century.⁵⁹ In this way, it appeared that this poetry would remain condemned as a collection of banal, conventionalized tales, displays of romantic rhetoric, devoid of more profound substance and individual experience. Therefore, if this poetry was merely a question of fashion and a ritual of life, it is difficult to find in it any associations with the social reality.

But a poet’s subjection to the discipline of style can be regarded as his incorporation in the social structure expressed by Provençal poetry.⁶⁰ With this assumption, Erich Köhler made an interesting attempt to interpret the convention by which troubadour poetry is expressed, treating literature as a “reflection and interpretation of a social situation, a point of contact between reality and an ideal picture.”⁶¹ Analysing the stereotypical concepts of troubadour poetry, Köhler perceives in them a reflection of the interests and desires of social groups.

This is how Köhler examines the three main figures in troubadour poetry: maiden, lover and rival (*lauzengier*),⁶² seeing this as a reflection of the social tensions in feudal society, especially a struggle by the lower noble circles to establish their rightful place in that society. The poetical paradox of courtly love, “namely a refusal to satisfy passion, distant love, is in the end nothing other than a subliminal projection of the material and social situation of the lower nobility.”⁶³ That group’s effort to integrate with feudal court society makes it the bearer and propagator of a hierarchical pattern of dependence that also fully applies to the upper classes of nobility. In this way, it becomes the ideal of the entire nobility, transcending the differences that separate it and sanctioning the existing social hierarchy.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ E. Köhler, “Observations historiques et sociologiques sur la poésie des troubadours”, *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, VII, 1964), p. 41.

⁶⁰ R.R. Bezzola, *Le sens de l’aventure de l’amour* (Paris, 1947), p. 83.

⁶¹ Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poésie médiévale* (Paris, 1972), p. 22, describes the assumptions of Köhler in this manner.

⁶² Köhler, *Trobadorlyrik*, p. 155 ff.; id., *Observations*, p. 43.

⁶³ Id., *Observations*, p. 28.

⁶⁴ Id., “Les troubadours et la jalousie”, in: *Mélanges de langue et de littérature*, pp. 543–559.

The key concepts of the Provençal lyric reflect these tensions. Thus, the troubadours put forth *largueza*, generosity,⁶⁵ as a demand addressed to the aristocracy, but two different categories of people addressing these demands can be perceived. One demands this generosity without referring to their services, whilst the other insists that this generosity is due to them in reward for their services. This is where the difference between the old ruined nobility and the good new nobility emerges. Nevertheless, court life is the basis of the existence of both groups. Thus, a proclamation of generosity as a measure of the glory and power of feudal lords safeguards the interests of those who depend on life at court.

Court life also creates a certain pattern of behaviour that is highly formal and full of moral stereotypes. This is expressed by the concept of courtesy, *cortezia*,⁶⁶ a word that appeared in the middle of the 12th century, describing the moral quality of the individual on the one hand, and the character of the life of court society the other. The refinement of life was to go hand-in-hand with a kind of moral elegance, whilst the court had to lay down the etiquette for social divisions. Tamed love, whose place was the court and which lay at the root of courtesy, required moderation and control over one's passions.⁶⁷

The attitudes of the troubadours towards love are significant.⁶⁸ They treated it as a value per se, as a positive feature of heroes. Naturally, the price of love is the lady, who praises and displays herself, usually regardless of her real age. Such a valuation of love was without precedence in Western tradition, and it was thought to come from Arab culture. A mingling of literary motives was used to explain the appearance of the subject of love in troubadour poetry, but not many concrete arguments to support this view have been found. What is striking perhaps is that this topic emerged at the same time as the emergence among aristocratic society of a group called *iuvenes*⁶⁹ excluded from established institutions and structures, and

⁶⁵ Id., *Trobadorlyrik*, pp. 67 ff.

⁶⁶ Zumthor, *Essai*, p. 466 ff.

⁶⁷ J. Wettstein, 'Mezura'. *L'idéal des troubadours: son essence et ses aspects* (Zurich, 1945).

⁶⁸ E. Köhler, "Sens et fonction du terme 'jeunesse' dans la poésie des troubadours", in: *Mélanges offerts à René Crozet*, vol. 1 (Poitiers, 1966), pp. 567–583; J. Flori, "Qu'est-ce qu'un bachelier?", *Romania*, 96 (1975), pp. 289–314.

⁶⁹ G. Duby, "Au XIII^e siècle: les 'jeunes' dans la société aristocratique", *Annales ESC*, 19 (1964), pp. 835–846.

living an itinerant way of live or living off the courts as parasites. Köhler justly underlines the margin status of these “youngsters” both sociologically and psychologically. Expecting advancement, they were under pressure from the higher groups whose ranks they were eager to join, but also from the lower groups whom they wished to leave; the hypertrophy of honour is also connected with this state of tension. The place of youth and young people in the Provençal lyric can be seen as an expression of the importance of this group as an audience of the troubadours and as a group from which this literature emerges and whose ideology it represents.

Thus, the conventions of troubadour poetry led to the basic tensions of feudal society: love is related in terms of feudal political terminology,⁷⁰ whilst legal-political concepts serve as a lesson in morality where individual relationships are reduced to collective interests. But the conventions of this genre can also indicate longer-term processes. The particular place occupied by women in this poetry may also encourage thinking about the socio-political and cultural features of the south of France, where some researchers perceive the remnants of an archaic social order in which women predominated in practice and in ideology.⁷¹

Thus, the concepts, patterns and behaviour embedded in the conventions that govern literature may be treated as a reflection of collective mentality, as well as an expression of a given society’s integration or disintegration. Along this path of thought, the historian investigates not so much the message of a literary work, but rather its substance, determining the scope of the information on the facts and feelings which it reveals. Thus, a literary work may be regarded as having certain “pattern-forming features,” for their contents may

⁷⁰ E. Wechssler, “Frauendienst und Vassalität”, *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 24 (1902), pp. 159–190; R. Lejeune, “Formules féodales et style amoureux chez Guillaume IX d’Aquitaine”, in: *Congresso di studi romanzi*, vol. 8 (Firenze, 1956), pp. 227–248.

⁷¹ Such a hypothesis was put forth by two illustrious French haematologists, Jean Bernard and Jacques Ruffié, “Hématologie et culture. Le peuplement de l’Europe de l’Ouest”, *Annales ESC*, 31 (1976), pp. 661–676, who say that in certain remote parts of Western Europe there are ethnic groups with a predominant blood type 0 Rh–, the descendants of an autochthonic people from the Palaeolithic or bronze age, and claiming that these people accord women a separate, matriarchal place in their community.

influence human behaviour, attitudes and actions. An inability to read posed no obstacle to this, because the Middle Ages produced a system of communication between the written and the spoken word. The history of culture and mentality makes the conventional rules of medieval literature its subject, seeking therein the appropriate cultural matrices that possess a long-term effect.

Exemplum and Message of Culture

Paper delivered at a conference held by the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kazimierz on the Vistula River in December 1976.

In: *Kultura elitarna a kultura masowa w Polsce późnego średniowiecza*, ed. B. Geremek (Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow–Gdańsk, 1978), pp. 53–76.

There is a revived interest in the history of culture in modern research. This interest is taking two paths in particular. On the one hand, the results of economic and social history have directed historiography as a whole towards an examination of mass events, and research into the history of culture has focused on the functioning of culture and the social impact of cultural events as well as on the creators and recipients of culture. On the other hand, the development of psychology, both social psychology and psychoanalysis, and the “epistemological mutation” that has occurred in ethnology, are compelling the history of culture to deal with processes and events that exceed the classical framework of conscious history: the subconscious, stereotypes of social behaviour, attitudes and sensitivity. Both of these trends, but especially the second one, enjoy excellent support from sources. Literature – especially that with a lower level of artistic sublimation but still with a broad social scope – permits one to monitor the material of culture and the cultural patterns that have been subjected to mass supplication and to follow behaviour, attitudes and sentiments, and to value judgments.

One should bear in mind the general methodological reorientation, involving a renewed interest in the narrative methods employed in medieval literature: *exempla*. Fuelled by a romantic passion for the Middle Ages, the first critiques about *exempla* appeared at the turn of the last century, together with anthologies of basic medieval works. This work continued over successive decades, and new editions of

sources, monographic studies and comparative essays appeared.¹ There were also attempts at a synthetic presentation of the issue of the medieval exemplum; one can mention in particular the dissertation by the Dutch researcher C. G. N. De Vooy, who examined the presence of legends and exempla in Dutch medieval literature,² the work of Joseph A. Mosher on the exemplum in English literature,³ and the exhaustive (and most widely documented) treatise of Jean Thiébaud Welter,⁴ who also began work on the monumental *Thesaurus Exemplorum*.⁵ Nevertheless, the condition of the basic materials on the subject of exempla and of research into the contents and functions of this type of fable, do not satisfy the requirements of modern erudition or the needs for a synthesis of medieval culture.⁶ Important anthologies of exempla still await an academic edition; even Lecoy de la Marche's anthology of the exempla of Stefan de Bourbon⁷ omit the importance of works which the publisher dismissed as marginal.

¹ Cf. Reviews of research: Th. Crane, "Medieval Sermon-Books and Stories", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 21 (1883-1884), pp. 49-78; id., "Medieval Sermon-Books and Stories and Their Study since 1883", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 56 (1917), pp. 369-402. Eduard Neumann and Joseph Klapper ("Exempel", in: *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 1, Berlin, 1958), pp. 413-417) cite the basic bibliography. See the exhaustive bibliography in: R. Alsheimer, *Das Magnum Speculum Exemplorum als Ausgangspunkt populärer Erzähltraditionen. Studien zu seiner Wirkungsgeschichte in Polen und Russland* (Frankfurt, 1971).

² C.G.N. De Vooy, *Middelnederlandsche legenden en exempelen. Bijdrage tot de kennis van de prozalitteratuur en het volksgeloof der Middeleeuwen* (s'Gravenhage, 1900).

³ J.A. Mosher, *The Exemplum in the Early Religions and Didactic Literature in England* (New York, 1911).

⁴ J.Th. Welter, *L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1927). Cf. also E.R. Curtius, "Exempla - Literatur des Mittelalters", *Romanische Forschungen*, 56 (1942).

⁵ This editorial project was only partly realized: J.Th. Welter, "Un recueil d'Exempla' de la fin du XIIIe s.", *Etudes Franciscaines*, 30 (1913); id., *Le Speculum Laicorum* (Paris, 1914); id., *La Tabula Exemplorum* (Paris, 1926); id., "Un nouveau recueil franciscain d'Exempla de la fin du XIIIe siècle", *Etudes Franciscaines*, 42 (1930).

⁶ At a folklore conference in 1967, Rudolf Schenda said: "Attempts, beginnings, the absence of a firm path and of coherent knowledge of a clearly defined subject", R. Schenda, "Stand und Aufgaben der Exemplarforschung", *Fabula* 1969, no. 10, p. 77.

⁷ A. Lecoy de la Marche, *Anecdotes historiques. Légendes et Apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon* (Paris, 1877).

The two anthologies of exempla published by the Wrocław folklore expert Joseph Klapper on the basis of Silesian manuscripts are of little value in historical research because they treat individual exempla separately from each other, rather than as a structural whole.⁸ Recently, the American researcher Frederic C. Tubach published a compendium of medieval exempla which, despite the criticism it has attracted, constitutes an instrument with which to systemize research.⁹ One also awaits the outcome of a survey into 13th-century exempla and their connections with traditional medieval culture undertaken by Jacques Le Goff (who also announced an academic edition of the works of Stefan de Bourbon).

The very definition of an exemplum encounters difficulties, for virtually every researcher has his or her own concept. But the broadest definition is that of Welter, who considers an exemplum to be a “text, tale, story, parable or description that can serve to support a doctrinal, moral or religious argument.”¹⁰ Thus, an exemplum can be “any narrative or descriptive work about the past or present.”¹¹ But this broad definition seems to be a sign of the absence of a defence against the formal variety of this essentially simple form of narration. The German folklore expert Rudolf Schenda defines an exemplum as a “didactic proposal of a moral nature,” or as a “colourful tale intended to introduce moral principles,”¹² but this definition places an excessive stress on morality. Perhaps Crane describes an exemplum better,¹³ saying that church scribes used the word exemplum in two senses: in the general sense of an example, and in the sense of an “illustrative story,” which he claims applies to the sermons of Jacques de Vitry and to the style of these short tales in general. Regarding the nature of exempla, two aspects stand out: they are closely associated

⁸ *Erzählungen des Mittelalters in deutscher Übersetzung und lateinischen Urtext*, ed. J. Klapper (Breslau, 1914; Wort und Brauch, 12), J. Klapper, *Exempla aus Handschriften des Mittelalters* (Heidelberg, 1911).

⁹ F.C. Tubach, *Index exemplorum* (Helsingfors, 1969); H.D. Oppel, “Zur neueren Exempla-forschung”, *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 28 (1972), pp. 240–243.

¹⁰ Welter, *Lexemplum*, p. 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹² Schenda, *Stand und Aufgaben*, p. 81.

¹³ *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the ‘Sermones Vulgares’ of Jacques de Vitry*, ed. T.F. Crane (London, 1890; Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, 261), p. xviii.

with live speech, primarily with sermons, which is reflected in their very structure;¹⁴ and their subject is human behaviour and motives, presented as a relationship between man and God, in the dimension of sin and grace, miracle and punishment, and salvation.

The ambiguity of the definitions also reflects the diversified evolution of the exemplum and of its literary and social function. When the Church expanded during the first centuries of its existence, it needed an instrument with which to propagate the faith, but one which exceeded the classic framework of the doctrine of Church fathers, which was too rigid to make an impression on the general masses, not to mention the clergy. Such an instrument was the exemplum and legends. The basic material was provided by the Bible, followed by the lives of the saints and church fathers, and early homiletic literature (headed by the works of Gregory the Great). From the *Vitae Patrum* of the 4th and 5th centuries to Honorius Augustodunensis in the 12th century, the exemplum developed as a way of presenting the principles of Christian ethics. Frederic C. Tubach, using the term protoexemplum¹⁵ to describe this period, points out the uniformity of the moral pattern contained in the “illustrative stories” of this time. The uniformity was the result of a structural reference to the struggle between good and evil, and from the style of narrative in which the organization of earthly life and its social reality seem irrelevant. This type of narrative is represented by a story cited by Jacques de Vitry from the *Vitae Patrum*: a woman entices a hermit to commit a sin, he leads her to a market place, but she is ashamed to commit a sin with him in front of everyone, and the hermit says that he is more ashamed to sin in the desert in the eyes of God and the angels than in front of people.¹⁶

A fundamental change to the nature and structure of the exemplum occurred in the 13th century. References to the ethical perfection of metaphysical absolutism disappeared, to be replaced by a severe juxtaposition of divine order and earthly life, accompanied by a complicated narrative of human fortunes that took into account the psychology of the individual and social situations. The characters in the narrative

¹⁴ Cf. S. Battaglia, “L'esempio medievale”, *Filologia Romanza*, 6 (1959).

¹⁵ F.C. Tubach, “Exempla in the Decline”, *Traditio*, 18 (1962), pp. 407–417; id., “Strukturanalytische Probleme. Das mittelalterliche Exemplum”, *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, 59 (1968), pp. 25–29.

¹⁶ *The Exempla*, no. 256, p. 108; Cf. *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 73, no. 327.

no longer appeared as symbols of good or evil, but as examples of good and bad human conduct, wisdom and stupidity, knowledge and cunning. Such is another tale recorded by Jacques de Vitry: A woman accuses a young man of raping her, but he denies it. The judge orders him to pay the woman ten ducats of silver, but when the happy woman departs with the money, the judge tells the young man to go after her and take the money from her. But she raises such a tumult and defends herself so strongly that it is impossible to tear the money away from her. The judge orders her to return and to give the money back to the young man, for if she had defended her honour as fiercely as her money, the young man could not possibly have raped her.¹⁷ The moral message of this lies not in the tale itself, it has to be added: the allegorical interpretation allows this tale, which is also meant to entertain, to be used as an instrument of preaching.

Welter considered the disappearance of original creativity and the regurgitation of old fables at the expense of doctrinal messages as a sign of the decadence of the exempla.¹⁸ He dates the emergence of this decadence to the very twilight of the Middle Ages, the 15th century. Tubach's opinions are more radical, for he regards the entire late Middle Ages, when proto-exempla, coherent collections of religious principles, were ousted by a variety of tales constituting a *speculum mundi*, as the demise of the exemplum. "The exemplum became a mirror of life, an organic part of a social context, an expression of literary and folklore imagination."¹⁹

Given such a view of the development of the exemplum, it seems pointless to distinguish between its two development phases. One can find a reflection of the social reality and of literary and folklore also in the *genera minora* of earlier religious writings, except that the social reality and folklore tradition were different from that in the late Middle Ages. In late medieval literature, one also finds severe lessons in Christian ethics which Tubach attributes to the proto-exemplum. Moreover, the literary functions of simple tales did not extinguish in the late Middle Ages. The literary significance of these works and their place in literature certainly did change, but when we examine the circulation of exempla in the late Middle Ages and their publication

¹⁷ *The Exempla*, no. 255, p. 107.

¹⁸ Welter, *L'exemplum*, pp. 454–455.

¹⁹ Tubach, *Exempla in the Decline*, p. 417.

and readership in later centuries, up to the Baroque age, we notice that not only did a certain literary form persist throughout this time, but also a certain set of mental images and scenes.²⁰ It is their function and application that changed. In the early Middle Ages, stories were conveyed mainly orally, and were written down primarily to be discussed or read out loud. In line with the increasing role of books in culture, these stories began to be read more often. Guttenberg's printing revolution was chiefly responsible for this, but nevertheless, as early as in the 14th and 15th centuries,²¹ and later in the 17th and 18th centuries, the *Magnum Speculum Exemplorum* (*The Great Mirror of Examples*) was circulated in Russian translation and in manuscript form. This transformation may be seen as a changeover from collective reception (sermons, readings aloud in monasteries of the type of *hodie legenda est vita*²² etc.) to individual reception.

A key change occurred in the 12th and 13th centuries, which one may consider within the framework of formal literary evolution. Cistercian, and later Mendicant, literature began to make increasing use of oriental narratives filtering through to the West. The chief phenomenon in this regard is a combination of changes to the structures of Western Christianity at the turn of the 13th century,²³ expressed by the Fourth Lateran Council. The folk predication became the basic instrument of religious teaching. The translation of truths of the faith was intended to implement ethical morals and commandments into the lives of society and the individual. Fables illustrated certain situations and attitudes that were commendable and worthy of emulation, as opposed to others that were to be shunned. In sermon books, exempla appeared as natural arguments in favour of a subject (occasionally a single sermon contained several, and rarely over a dozen, exempla), while

²⁰ G. Kuttner, *Wesen und Formen der deutschen Schwankliteratur des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1934; Germanistische Studien, 152); E. Moser-Rath, "München Erzähler auf der Kanzel Zu Form und Funktion des barocken Prädigtmärleins", *Fabula*, 1959, no. 2, pp. 1–26.

²¹ Collections of tales of this kind used to circulate among Italian humanists but were never honoured by being committed to print. They include *Speculum cerretanorum* by Teseo Pini, which was not printed until the 1970s in: *Il libro dei vagabondi*, ed. P. Camporesi (Turin, 1973; Nuova universale Einaudi, 145).

²² Cf. J. Krzyżanowski, "Legend in Literature and Folklore", *Fabula*, 1967, no. 9, pp. 111–117.

²³ Cf. J. Kłoczowski, "Kryzysy i reformy w chrześcijaństwie zachodnim XIV–XVI wieku", *Znak* 1971, nos. 205–206, p. 852.

at the same time in the 13th century anthologies of exempla were published, providing preachers with a veritable arsenal of stories to be used in their sermons. The two great Mendicant orders competed in their publishing activity. On the part of the Dominicans, Stefan de Bourbon's *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus* gave over 3,000 exempla. Other Dominican works included Humbert de Romanis' *De abundantia exemplorum* (also known under the title *De dono timoris*), or the alphabetically arranged compilation by Martin of Opava. On the part of the Franciscans, there was John of Wales' *Breviloquium de virtutibus* and the anonymous English *Liber exemplorum*. The work by John of Wales deals with the duty of *secundum varietatem statuum eorum*; this type of anthology, adapted to the needs of preaching, was a frequent product of medieval scriptoria;²⁴ many anthologies of exempla were arranged in alphabetical order or according to their topic or source from which they were taken (e.g. from the Bible or from the works of St. Augustine), while others were accompanied by allegorical or moral interpretations (e.g. the famous treatise on the game of chess by the Italian Dominican friar Jacopo de Cessolis).²⁵ The alphabetical order of the material in *Satyrica historia* by the Venetian Franciscan friar Paolino Minorita (ca. 1344) is an example of the increasing use of medieval fables for moral teaching.²⁶

Exempla in Slav culture have often been noted by researchers, especially literary historians,²⁷ but have never been researched systematically. Researchers were interested in the fact that early Slav literature made extensive use of the rich material to be found in medieval exempla, illustrated by the works printed in the 16th century and by the impact of medieval fables on the output of 16th-century

²⁴ Such a collection was analysed by A. Hilka ("Neue Beiträge zur Erzählungsliteratur des Mittelalters", *Jahresbericht der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Vaterländische Kultur*, 90, 1912); this article is not taken into account by Th. Welter in his analysis of this collection (*L'exemplum*, pp. 236–244).

²⁵ An impressive survey of all types of collections of exempla was made by Th. Welter (*L'exemplum*).

²⁶ A.-D. von den Brincken, "Tabula alphabetica", in: *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel*, vol. 2 (Göttingen, 1972), pp. 909–923.

²⁷ Cf. J. Krzyżanowski, *Romans polski wieku XVI* (Warsaw, 1962); id., *Proza polska wczesnego renesansu 1510–1550* (Warsaw, 1954); T. Kruszewska-Michalowska, "Narodziny i rozwój nowelistyki w literaturze staropolskiej", in: *Studia z dawnej literatury czeskiej, słowackiej i polskiej*, ed. R. Heck (Warsaw–Prague, 1963), pp. 267–599.

writers. In any case, the written word was not the only source of teachings; this role was also played by the church pulpit. From the pulpit came a knowledge of medieval tales, evidence of which we find in the works of, e.g., Mikołaj Rej. The presence of medieval exempla in Polish culture merits all the more attention because this is a long history and there has been no penetrating inventory of the contents of medieval Polish libraries regarding exempla.

Martin of Opava's²⁸ *Promptuarium exemplorum* is a 13th-century compilation of *exempla* which one can associate with the church communities of the Slav countries. Martin of Opava, known as Martin of Poland, who achieved such notoriety through his chronicle of popes and emperors that his name became a kind of technical term or synonym for historical writing, has never been the subject of a monograph.²⁹ Of the works attributed to him, the anthology of sermons called "de tempore et de sanctis" raises no doubts as to its authorship. Known as a distinguished preacher,³⁰ Martin gathers in this work 391 sermons, plus over 200 exempla added in an annex. Starting with the Strasbourg edition published in 1484,³¹ Martin's collection of sermons went into several editions and enjoyed a certain popularity. The collection of exempla called *Promptuarium exemplorum* is secondary to those of Stefan de Bourbon and Humbert de Romans both in terms of structure and choice of material. With regard to Stefan de Bourbon, the changes in Martin's collection are minimal (with separate chapters on the *conceptio* and *nativitas* of the Virgin Mary); only a few exempla are missing in Stefan de Bourbon's. Given the limited originality of the anthology,³² it is difficult to expect any connections between the

²⁸ Bibliography on Martin: K. Langosch, *Verfasserlexikon*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1943), pp. 282–289; *Nowy Korbut*, vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1964), pp. 504–505.

²⁹ Cf. J. Umiński, "Pochodzenie i kariera Marcina Polaka", *Collectanea Theologica*, 24 (1953); J. Kłoczowski, *Dominikanie polscy na Śląsku w XIII–XIV wieku* (Lublin, 1956), p. 140 ff.; id., "Marcin Polak", in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 19 (Wrocław, 1974), pp. 559–561.

³⁰ S. Barącz, *Rys dziejów zakonu kaznodziejskiego w Polsce* (Lviv, 1861), vol. 2, pp. 5–15; B. Vydra, *Polska středověká literatura kazatelská* (Prague, 1928), p. 84 ff.

³¹ *Sermones Martini ordinis praedicatorum penitentiarii domini pape cum promptuario exemplorum* (Argentinae, MCCCCLXXXIII). A summary of the collection is provided by J.Th. Welter, *Lexemplum*, p. 228 ff.

³² Julian Krzyżanowski describes the *Promptuarium exemplorum* as a collection of independent exempla where the literary aspect prevails over the moralizing aspect (*Romans polski*, p. 106); however, this argument applies less to Martin's

fables and the local issues of the community where the author was born. The theologians closely linked to the curia (perhaps the curia's preacher) seem to have been very careful when selecting the exempla for inclusion, rejecting those of whose origin they were uncertain or those where the fable component was stronger than the religious message. Therefore, Martin should not be considered in association with other anthologies of exempla from the second half of the 13th century, and his clear preference for exempla of the religious-moral type may be seen as the influence of Roman curia circles. Apart from Martin's collection, we have no other anthology of exempla that can even remotely be associated with the Slav region. Nevertheless, in the 16th century there were manuscripts in circulation containing transcripts of exempla in various forms, such as the *Gesta Romanorum*, which was popular in Bohemia and Poland in the late Middle Ages.

Another prominent collection of anthologies is to be found in a manuscript kept in the library of Olomouc and called *Opowiastki ołomunieckie*.³³ But these exempla coincide with late medieval literary prose and appear in codices together with geographical reports and historical tales. Nevertheless, the trend to treat exempla as literary fables need not be considered as evidence of a firm trend to turn them into fables.³⁴ Church communities, and especially the monasteries, continued to produce and duplicate exempla and were very grateful to receive them. The inclusion of fables connected with daily life and the fortunes of ordinary people was very well suited to the program of Christian teachings at this time.

Regardless of independent collections of exempla, they are also present in other literary works. An inventory of exempla in pre-Hussite Czech literature has recently been made, showing that exempla were used as educational literature and cited in philosophical and satirical writings.³⁵ But, obviously, the natural place for exempla were in sermon books. This has not yet been carefully verified with regard to the Czech lands, where Konrad Waldhauser included a few exempla in his works and where Hussite preaching was generally opposed to

anthology than to other anthologies of this period. Nevertheless, the title given by Martin to his annex collection would require closer analysis.

³³ *Olomoucké povídky*, ed. E. Petrů (Prague, 1957).

³⁴ E. Petrů, *Vývoj českého exempla v době předhusitské* (Prague, 1966), p. 109 (chapt. 9: *Laicizace exempla*).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 49–86.

this technique of sermonizing. In any case, the collection of sermons by Jan Sylvanus, Hieronimus of Prague and Jagiełło's confessor, called *Linea salutis* and *Exemplar salutis*, contain no fable material (exempla were added by Polish copyists).³⁶ Polish sermon literature is very rich in fables.

This especially applies to Peregrin of Opole³⁷ at the beginning of the 14th century, a very interesting writer who used anecdotes in his sermons and included in them examples from the Bible, human life and natural history (such as his tale of the habits of snakes in his sermon about St. Bartholomew). From the early 14th century, the publication of sermons in Poland increased.³⁸ Some of this material was original, but mostly it consisted of reprints of the best-known European sets of sermons,³⁹ which were mainly compilations. Brückner's investigations have revealed the richness of their descriptions of daily life, local customs and tales. But to acquaint oneself with the contents of mass religious teaching, one should examine the "collections" of various works that make up individual codices, both those containing only sermons⁴⁰ and those that combine various forms of religious writing. In the Świętokrzyski codex from the 15th century⁴¹ we find, apart from treatises on the subject of confession, penance, sin and the ten commandments, exempla entitled "miracula bona et utilia" (fols. 153–174), "de quaedam regine" (fol. 157v), "de tentacione dyaboli"

³⁶ National Library in Warsaw, MS IV, 3018 (fols. 1–85: *Exemplar*; fols. 86–165: *Linea*), MS IV, 3019 (fols. 35–129v: *Linea*).

³⁷ J. Wolny, "Łaciński zbiór kazań Peregryna z Opola i ich związek z tzw. 'Kazaniami gnieźnieńskimi'", in: *Średniowiecze. Studia o kulturze*, ed. J. Lewański, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1961), pp. 172–238; id., "Incipity 127 kazań Peregryna", in: id., *Polonica w średniowiecznych rękopisach bibliotek monachijskich* (Wrocław, 1969), pp. 175–184.

³⁸ A. Brückner, *Kazania średniowieczne* (Biblioteka Warszawska), vol. 1, pp. 241–258; 1892, vol. 2, pp. 445–471; id., "Kazania średniowieczne", *Rozprawy Wydziału Filologicznego Akademii Umiejętności*, 24–25 (Cracow, 1895); id., *Literatura religijna w Polsce średniowiecznej*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1902), pp. 13–38.

³⁹ Jerzy Wolny described the status of research in his studies into religious teaching and preaching, contained in: *Dzieje teologii katolickiej w Polsce*, ed. M. Rechowicz, vol. 1: *Średniowiecze* (Lublin, 1974), pp. 149–209, 273–308.

⁴⁰ For example, in the collections of Wrocław University Library, MS I. O. 123 (*Sermones varii cum exemplis*, with exhaustive hagiographical material), MS I. O. 134 (*Sermones collecti per fratrem Stanislaum 'Geyszeler'*, with considerable fable material).

⁴¹ National Library in Warsaw, MS II, 3015; M. Hornowska, H. Zdzitowiecka-Jasieńska, *Zbiory rękopiśmienne w Polsce średniowiecznej* (Warsaw, 1947), p. 333.

(fol. 162v). The exempla preserved in these anthologies also await a detailed inventory.⁴²

The considerable manuscript resources in Silesian church libraries have already attracted the attention of researchers interested in medieval exempla. Joseph Klapper based his two anthologies of exempla on them. A codex in the Dominican monastery in Wrocław, probably produced in the middle of the 14th century, contains, apart from several theological treatises, sermons and religious texts, an exhaustive collection of exempla which forms the core of Klapper's anthology.⁴³ In addition to this relatively Polish collection of exempla in Silesia, there are a few others. An interesting fact is that the collections produced in the scriptoria of Małopolska or Silesia contain no local anecdotes. Some sermons include elements of local folklore or superstitions which are to be avoided. Very interesting material regarding the combating of folklore is contained in a collection of sermons, not yet fully investigated, recorded by Piotr of Miłostaw (Brückner mistakenly says he is the author).⁴⁴ The lives of local saints have also provided the subject matter for exempla. Generally, exempla seem to represent a strictly liturgical body of literature taken from written sources, not from oral communication.

Why this is so requires further research,⁴⁵ but it seems that this is due to the Church's general attitude towards folklore. The smooth flow of folk tales that we see in European collections of exempla expresses the Church's effort to use them to propagate Christian values. But this required considerable ideological determination on the part of Church structures. The process of Christianization on Polish territory was still young, the apparatus of religious teaching was weaker, and folklore was regarded as a vestige of paganism, and therefore totally alien and hostile. Nevertheless, the hostility towards folklore in Polish sermons

⁴² The National Library in Warsaw, MS IV, 3019 contains two alphabetical sets of exempla: one called the *Naturalia bona et utilia ad predicacionem* (fols. 190–208) and the other called *Liber figurarum cum exemplis naturalibus* (fols. 208–279).

⁴³ Wrocław University Library, MS I, F. 115, fols. 160–206; *Erzählungen*, no. 1–164.

⁴⁴ The error was disclosed by J. Wolny, "Materiały do historii wagantów w Polsce średniowiecznej", *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 19 (1969), p. 81.

⁴⁵ It is difficult to take seriously J. Klapper's claim (*Erzählungen*, p. 14) that this was because later German colonists were not so naive and no longer had enough "sagenbildende Kraft" to introduce their own tales to the collections of 14th- and 15th-century exempla.

did not prevent the adoption of certain pagan elements, such as the traditional dates of festivities, the Christianization of magic practices, etc., but it prevented a broader application of the oral heritage of culture.

Regarding the oral heritage, apart from the elitist communities represented in writings, one should pay attention to Church communities, especially the monasteries. Naturally they turned out religious texts, but in the form of simple fables about incredible events, unusual happenings, wonders and fears. One can consider this a kind of church folklore, but it nevertheless reached the masses. Kazimierz Dobrowolski has pointed out the importance to our cultural history of a medieval group of tales relating to Polish territory and contained in the collection of Cesarius of Heisterbach.⁴⁶ Four of the tales (I, 36; III, 3; III, 6; III, 13) were contained in *Polonia*: about a cruel price, a simple converted peasant who knew only the Hail Mary, a leprous princess and the miracle of a Jewish boy in Wrocław. Research has shown that these tales have older equivalents, so that transposing them to Poland was a literary trick to make them more plausible in Poland. However, Cesarius refers to the sources of his tales, which he says were brought to the Rhineland by Polish Cistercian monks. Another source named by him is the German Cistercian Gottfried of Altenberg, said to have visited Polish Cistercian monasteries. On the basis of Dobrowolski, one can assume that these tales originated in Poland (especially Silesia), in the sense that they were told in the Cistercian monasteries of Silesia and Wielkopolska.

“Legends” like this, read or told,⁴⁷ created or recycled, were an integral part of monastic life. Before being written in the pages of manuscripts, they circulated from mouth to mouth in monastic communities. They also provided the subject of writings about the saints;⁴⁸ descriptions of miracles contain elements of exempla and sermons, suitably adapted to the circumstances.⁴⁹ In the intensive work

⁴⁶ K. Dobrowolski, “Przyczynki do dziejów średniowiecznej kultury polskiej z rękopisu szczrzyckiego”, in: *Studia staropolskie. Księga ku czci Aleksandra Brücknera* (Cracow, 1928), p. 337 ff.

⁴⁷ Cf. Krzyżanowski, *Legend in Literature*.

⁴⁸ K. Dobrowolski, “Żywot św. Jacka. Ze studiów nad polską hagiografią średniowieczną”, *Roczniki Krakowskie*, 20 (1926), p. 31 ff.

⁴⁹ In this direction, Danuta Borawska, *Z dziejów jednej legendy* (Warsaw, 1950), p. 43 ff., conducted her analysis of the Piotravín legend, indicating an association with exempla from the anthologies of Jacques de Vitry and Stefan de Bourbon.

of scriptoria regarding collections of sermons and exempla, one sees the creation of an instrument of internal religious life and a means with which to teach religion to propagate Church propaganda. This requirement exceeded the needs of preaching; the creation of more exhaustive forms of exempla suited the needs of monastic communities. An example is the tales written down by the Polish Bernadine monk Brother Seweryn in the early 16th century.⁵⁰ He recorded exempla from the *Fioretti* circle, adapting them, as he himself admitted, to the size of the paper he had at his disposal. Interestingly, Seweryn never read these tales, but heard them during his journeys to Italy. Printing had not yet created an intimate bond between an oral tale and the record of a scribe.

Ethnographic and folklore research into exempla has tried to classify them into categories, but the results of this have proved less fruitful than they were in the case of classifications of tales. One can say that if exempla have already found their Aarne and Thompson (I have in mind Tubach's *Index Exemplorum*), then they still await their Proppa: to establish the subconscious relationship between the persons and forces appearing in an exemplum, categorizing the narrative content and investing the rules and paths of change. The divergence between the results achieved is connected not only with the variety of the criteria adopted or the shortage of analytical work, but also with the variety represented by the mass of exempla.⁵¹

The later the compilations, the easier it is to subject the material contained in them to historical-literary analysis. Fable contents are transposed from one collection to another, and tales are copied with varying degrees of literary reworking. By way of example, let us look at the origin of the tales contained in a later 15th-century anthology called *Speculum exemplorum*.⁵² The 1,266 exempla to be found in the ten *distinctiones* are broken down as follows:

⁵⁰ *Z opowiadań średniowiecznych*, transl. and ed. H. Kowalewicz (Warsaw, 1974; *Silva Medii et Recentioris Aevi*, 3).

⁵¹ E. Neumann has classified exempla into ten types, according to the source: 1, biblical; 2, tales from the *Vitae Patrum*; 3, hagiographical, from the lives of the saints; 4, visual; 5, secular; 6, historical; 7, legendary; 8, fables; 9, natural and geographical; 10, personal, from the author's own experience and events (*Reallexikon*, p. 414).

⁵² *Speculum exemplorum* (Deventer, 1481).

<i>Distinctio</i>	Source	Number	%
I	Gregory the Great and Pietro Damiani	112	9
II	Church Fathers	250	20
III	Bede and the Cistercians	66	5
IV	Vincent de Beauvais	82	6
V	Thomas de Cantimpré	136	11
VI	Cesarius of Heisterbach	103	8
VII	Lives of the saints	106	21
VIII	Lives of the saints	163	
IX	<i>Ex diversis</i>	218	17
X	<i>Noviter conscripta</i>	30	2

The group of tales noted in *Distinctio X*⁵³ is an obvious subject of interest because they are the personal contribution of the compiler, who seems to report on matters that were current when he was alive.⁵⁴ The author of this collection, probably a Dutchman,⁵⁵ was connected with the Augustinian monastery in Windesheim and with the *devotio moderna* movement. This affected both the contents of the tales and their location. The dates of the events do not seem to interest him; in one case he says that the “event occurred ten years ago, after dusk” (X, 4), and in another case he says the event happened shortly after the death of Geert Groote, in other words after 1378 (X, 11). In all other cases we read that the event happened sometime in the past, but we gain the impression that they happened fairly recently. The

⁵³ “Incipit decima et ultima distinctio Speculi exemplorum in qua habentur exempla que aut verissima relatione didici, aut in libris theutonicis scripta inueni vel ipse facta cognoui.”

⁵⁴ An attempt at analysing this section, which was not very successful, was made by Juliane Matuszak, *Das Speculum exemplorum als Quelle volkstümlicher Glaubensvorstellungen des Spätmittelalters* (Siegburg, 1967; Quellen und Studien zur Volkskunde, 8).

⁵⁵ The most frequent attribution is to the Carthusian Aegidius Aurifaber. Cf. reviews of arguments for and against: Matuszak, *Das Speculum exemplorum*, p. 10; B. Kruitwagen, “Het ‘Speculum exemplorum’”, *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis van het bisdom van Haarlem*, 29 (1905), p. 359 (suggesting Herman of Ludingakerka).

author makes his reports credible by referring to his own presence at the scene and to the fact that he personally knows people who were there (X, 18 and 25), which also suggests that the events he describes happened recently. He mentions locations more frequently: in ten cases the scene is a Dutch town, and in eight cases a German town. Half of the described events concern a spiritual community, especially a monastic one.

This allows us to ask about the sources of this new group of exempla. In two cases, the author refers to his own reading: "I read in a certain German book" (X, 14), "I read in a certain book" (X, 15); in both of these cases, the texts are more literally refined than the rest. In the remaining cases, the narration is original whether the author referred to written or oral texts. One can say, with some simplification, that these are records of monastic folklore, real tales of various wonders. It is interesting that brothers and monastic servants also appear in these tales (X, 5, 12 and 13) – simple, uneducated people very susceptible to excitement and ecstasy in a monastic environment. It is worth quoting one tale: A certain monastery in Münster fell into a conflict with its neighbours, who were peasants, over pigs which were pasturing in the forest. Consequently, a lay brother was appointed to watch over the pigs to make sure they did not go beyond the monastery premises. But the brother missed the fact that he could not attend religious services. He told the pigs to stay within the monastic precincts and went to the monastery. Despite the scheming actions of the peasants, who were hostile to the monastery, the pigs did not cross the set limits. As we can see, the miraculous events here occur on a simple level, within the sphere of daily life. Although this is a tale in the tradition of the *Flowers of St. Francis*, it was related in monastic kitchens rather than in refectories, while the record of such events that are still topical, in other words they occurred recently, indicates the speed of miraculous intervention in man's daily life. This is not just a rationalization of miraculous folklore, but also an argument about regular divine or devilish intervention in human activity.

Another tale is about events in 1453 in Wrocław,⁵⁶ during Lent after the feast of the Raising of the Cross (X, 2). The Jews are said to have desecrated the host, resulting in the destruction of the Jewish district

⁵⁶ "Wratislavia que theuthonica Breslau nuncupata est et in regione Bohemie sita" (*Speculum exemplorum*).

in Wrocław (about 150 Jews are said to have been burned and the rest were converted to Catholicism). The conflict itself is no doubt a historic event, connected with the visit to Wrocław by John Capistranus.⁵⁷

Both the sermons of John Capistranus and the journeys of monks between monasteries helped spread the news about the events in Wrocław around Europe. This tale was among the best-known itinerant tales in medieval times.⁵⁸ It is surprising how many Eucharistic miracles are associated with Wrocław. As early as in VIII *libri miraculorum*, Cesarius of Heisterbach finds a tale of a Eucharistic miracle with a Jewish boy (“in Polonia contigit, quod dicturus sum, in civitate, quae vocatur Bresslavia” – III, 13), which takes place in Wrocław.⁵⁹ It belongs to the group of tales which Godfried of Altenberg and other Cistercians brought from Polish monasteries, as a result of which they ended up in Cesarius’ anthology.⁶⁰

So we see how far tales of incredible events travelled, due to the constant wanderings of monks from one monastery to another. It seems that monasteries were the crucibles where folk tales were mixed with fables and from where they spread further afield.

No medieval Polish compilations of exempla similar to German or French ones have survived, but the collection of Cesarius of Heisterbach and Polish hagiographical works show that such tales were produced and passed on orally, seldom being committed to writing. One such famous Polish tale is about an abbot kidnapped in 1456 by a “devil of terrible countenance like a Negro.”⁶¹ This tale from the

⁵⁷ L. Oelsner, “Schlesische Urkunden zur Geschichte der Juden im Mittelalter”, *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichtsquellen*, 31 (1864); *Scriptores rerum Silesiacarum*, vol. 7, no. 5; *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1960–1961), pp. 785–789, vol. 4, pp. 1–5. The event itself and the reports about him merit a more detailed examination from the angle of the circulation of information in the Middle Ages. It is also worth noting that a 15th-century Polish sermon book includes a report on anti-Jewish unrest in Silesia in 1453; apart from describing the “Jewish plot”, it also discusses the effective anti-Jewish action of John Capistranus in Wrocław and its failure in Cracow (National Library, MS IV, 3021, fol. 223v).

⁵⁸ Cf. P. Browe, “Die Hostienschändungen der Juden im Mittelalter”, *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, 34 (1926), pp. 167–197.

⁵⁹ This was a very popular tale in the Middle Ages. A different version is given by J. Klapper (*Erzählungen*, no. 58, p. 278, literature).

⁶⁰ Dobrowolski, *Przyczynki*, p. 337 ff.

⁶¹ First published by Wojciech Kętrzyński (*Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, p. 6, pp. 588–589), and lately by Henryk Kowalewicz (*Z opowiadań średniowiecznych*, p. 7 ff.).

pen of Michał of Kleparz, abbot at the Benedictine monastery of the Holy Cross on Łysa Góra, is actually a pamphlet addressed to the Cistercian abbot Mikołaj Rziga of Wąchock, warning against dissipation. We do not know enough about the two abbots to determine what divided them and why the abbot of Łysa Góra was so hostile towards the abbot of Wąchock. There is no basis for claiming that Michał of Kleparz availed himself of tales circulated orally.⁶² But one suspects that tales like this were easily circulated by people in general. The Benedictine abbot writes of a recent event (he says: *nunc*), so that the recipients of the tale saw the devil *hic et nunc*, in the direct vicinity and in their own homes.⁶³

We have dwelled on exempla and on collections of late exempla. We can extend our examination of their origins and mechanisms to earlier anthologies. We can conclude that inside monasteries, fables were circulated between the library, the refectory and the kitchen, during which "book" culture mingled with oral information. In the 13th century anthologies of exempla, the component of oral fables seems stronger than in later anthologies. The folklore element is also richer here; one can surmise that the objective was to "tame" folklore for the purposes of Christian culture. The absence of written records of these oral tales in Poland suggests not only the poor development of literary writing in medieval Poland, but also a negative attitude towards folklore which is rejected without any effort to assimilate it.

The question about the link between exempla and oral tales does not solve the question of the links between folklore and fables. The second dimension of these links – the functioning of exempla, the extent of their presence and their paths of circulation – may be of greater importance to the history of culture. There is no need to prove that the fables circulated orally drew heavily upon book culture. In this way, book culture settled its debt to folk culture. In Kolberg's surveys, we sometimes find tales which Jacques de Vitry or Cesarius of Heisterbach obtained from oral sources. Fables quoted to illustrate religious teachings fired people's imaginations (as well as literary

⁶² S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington, 1955–1958): G 303, 3, 1, 6 ("Devil as a black man") and Q 457.

⁶³ Henryk Kowalewicz claims that these tales are based on a real event: the kidnapping of the abbot of Wąchock by "masked perpetrators dressed as devils" (*Z opowiadań średniowiecznych*, p 8); but this positivist interpretation seems unjustified.

imagination), and spread to the traditional centres of oral communication: mills, taverns and market fairs.

The illustrative role of exempla in religious teaching can also be considered in a literal sense. It is not easy for the historian to speak out on the subject of the powers of observation of people in past centuries. We know that such sensitivity was also brought about by historical, though gradual, changes but the evidence of these changes is scant and uncertain. It seems that medieval society reacted more strongly to visual impulses than aural impulses, and that images (not books, for they played the weakest role in mass culture) conveyed religious and moral messages and fired the imagination. Therefore, fables were not only meant to facilitate an understanding of abstract truths, but also create pictures in the mind of the recipient. In fact, this remains true to this very day.

The subject matter of exempla was adapted to the requirements of moral theology, the truths of the faith, and the main topics of religious instruction. But no less important was their secondary function: to inspire collective and individual thinking.

Without attempting a complete review of the situations contained in this material, I wish to point out the images of supernatural and transcendental events conjured up by exempla. Humbert of Romans taught that the subjects of sermons are to be: *deus, angelus, homo, caelum, diabolus, mundum, infernum, praecepta, consilia, sacramenta, scriptura, virtutes, and vitia*.⁶⁴ Exempla are geared to this subject matter. But insofar as quotations from the Bible and other Church writings were used to illustrate truths about God, heaven, the sacraments and service to God, fables were used to illustrate punishment and reward, supernatural intervention in human dealings, and support for human endeavours.⁶⁵ Dramatizing these topics, our didactic tales stage a game between people, angels and devils. People's understanding of angels considerably exceeded their role in classic Church doctrine.⁶⁶ In these tales, an angel is most of all a being that guards people, unveils secrets of the future and helps them in need, and not a singer of the glory of God. He is ominous not only in the struggle for a dying person's soul

⁶⁴ *De officio praedicatoris*, in: Humbertus de Romanis OP, *Opera de vita regulari*, ed. J.J. Berthier, vol. 2 (Rome, 1889), p. 370.

⁶⁵ Cf. also M. Günter, *Psychologie der Legende* (Freiburg, 1949), p. 7.

⁶⁶ Matuszak, *Das Speculum exemplorum*, p. 22 ff.

or in an apocalyptic vision of judgment, but also in his role as guardian. In Zwolle⁶⁷ a particularly handsome young man goes to a party with a group of friends, but later he tries to prevent them from sin. This annoys them, so they force him to go to a courtesan. He gives her money, but he does not commit sin with her; instead, he compels her to abandon her path of sin. He rejoins his friends, who are convinced he has done what they told him. When he returns home, he sees down a side-street a dark figure in a halo of light who strikes him in the face so firmly that he falls over. It is his guardian angel, who at God's command wanted to turn him from the path of evil and make him forsake his bad company. If in this case the angel is fierce and seems unfair, then obviously he wants to protect the young man. But occasionally the angel appears as the vengeful hand of God's justice: he kills the boy because ever since he was born, the parents have ceased to be generous and give alms.⁶⁸ In another case, the bloody severity of an angel shocks a pious hermit who does not understand that the angel is meting out punishment for sins that have not yet been committed.⁶⁹

But it is the devil and his strength that occupies a key role in these tales. Descriptions of the devil seem to conform to stereotyped images of the devil and his deeds. However, we should note the double image of the devil, employed to illustrate the fickle views and assessments so typical of folklore.⁷⁰ The devil⁷¹ appears both beautiful⁷² and ugly, old and young, elegant and in rags. One can say this is merely to show how dangerous and inconstant he is and how well he can disguise himself. But the devil can also behave well and favourably to a person. For example, the devil appears to some bad, disobedient pupils: he assumes the form of their teacher, who died three previously, and gives them a severe whipping.⁷³ In another case, he warns against committing a sin (he shouts "pfui" three times).⁷⁴ A certain monk

⁶⁷ *Speculum exemplorum*, X, 9.

⁶⁸ *Erzählungen*, no. 110, p. 321.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 211, pp. 411–414.

⁷⁰ Cf. J. Le Goff, in: *Niveaux de culture et groupes sociaux* (Paris, 1971), p. 28.

⁷¹ See F.C. Tubach, *Index exemplorum*, no. 1550. With reference to *Speculum exemplorum* Cf. Matuszak, *Das Speculum exemplorum*, pp. 37–45.

⁷² Very significant is the exemplum published by J. Klapper (*Erzählungen*, no. 194, pp. 396–400).

⁷³ *Speculum exemplorum*, V, 42 (Tomasz z Cantimpre, *De proprietate apium*).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, V, 67.

in Mainz curses a priest who told him to wear pointed boots – the curse turns against him, the devil seizes him on the street and roughs him up.⁷⁵ In an exemplum about a moneylender from Assisi noted by the Polish Franciscan monk Brother Seweryn in Italy, the devil (“quidam demon [...] in humana forma”) appears as a messenger of God. In front of the basilica in Assisi, a moneylender who had received the sacrament but had not performed restitution was buried, and the devil saw to it that the moneylender “reiecit Corpus Christi in calicem,” and then, having paid homage to the host, the devil seized the moneylender’s body from the grave.⁷⁶ Significant are the words which the devil utters to the sacristan: “Ego sum demon, qui ex precepto Dei in hac forma ad te veni.”

The appearance of the devil in Polish art and literature – and also in the late Middle Ages – still requires detailed study. Such a dual presentation of the devil in folklore certainly merits attention. But one should also note a tendency in Church teachings to give the devil excessive strength and to apportion all the blame to him. In a collection of sermons written in about 1407 by Maciej of Grochow, a vicar in Kcynia, there is the tale of a servant girl who left her mistress but later returned, saying that the devil had tempted her. But the devil, who had been monitoring the entire episode, shouted from a corner that it was not true.⁷⁷ There is no doubt that the pulpit was a powerful source of information about the devil. Combating Satanism, preachers conveyed knowledge about the devil. But the pulpit was also the scene of a struggle against the excessive presence of dark forces in people’s minds. One of the key topics of religious teaching was the struggle against magic practices, regarded by the Church as *superstitiones*. The tales often served to illustrate the arguments on this subject. But here the warnings in these tales against occult religious practices of a magic nature should be noted. The Szczyrzyc manuscript which Kazimierz Dobrowolski examined some years ago contains four tales recorded by a Cistercian monk from that monastery, Jan Szarłat, about the wondrous meaning of the words “et verbum caro factum est.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ibid., X, 27.

⁷⁶ *Z opowiadań średniowiecznych*, p. 63, 64 (based on an entry on a blank page of an incunabulum at the Chapt. Library of Gniezno, Inc. 81, MS 378).

⁷⁷ Brückner, *Kazania średniowieczne*, vol. 2, p. 455.

⁷⁸ Dobrowolski, *Przyczynki*, p. 348; Cf. *Erzählungen*, no. 119, p. 324; *La Tabula exemplorum*, nos. 64–65, p. 20, 21.

These words have the power to expel demons from of people who are possessed and drive away the devil when he tempts the faithful. A certain monk who failed to kneel or otherwise show respect when uttering these words (“nec aliquam reverendam faceret”), was hit in the face by the devil. This stems from a conviction about the magical strength of the word. Interesting in this regard is an exemplum that appears in a Silesian sermon of about 1470:⁷⁹ an experienced and religious (“peritissimus et valde devotus”) doctor called Tomasz, who worshipped his patron, used the following words to heal his patients: “Dominus meus et deus meus sanet te.” Another Silesian manuscript includes a story that reveals the controversial nature of the name Tomasz:⁸⁰ a certain *rusticus* resolves, “according to the doctrine of Pope Celestine,” to choose himself a patron from among of the Apostles. According to custom, he shuffled some holy pictures, and when he picked the “cartula cum nomine sancti Thomae,” he rejected it, but the card kept coming up in subsequent picks. Following his vicar’s advice, he went to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. During the journey, the ship encountered a storm, and lots were cast (“sortes committunt”) to determine who was to blame for such a dire event, and it transpired that it was the *rusticus*. So to obtain God’s help, it was decided to throw him overboard, but St. Thomas saved his life.

Where we are not dealing with exempla from holy history, it is important to lend credence to the events described, hence the stress laid on place, and sometimes time (seldom is the actual year given; usually vague references to history are made, as in the case of *Gesta Romanorum*, or to one’s own memory or witnesses). The procedure of credibility was important in sermons, but it also occurred when the exemplum occurred in a different type of literature, for example in historiography.⁸¹ Without going into further detail here, it is worth stressing the fluidity of the border between a historical tale and a literary fable. An interesting example is the story of the division of William the Conqueror’s estate, to be found in an English chronicle

⁷⁹ Klapper, *Exempla*, no. 75, p. 60 (*Collectio variorum sermonum*, University Library of Wrocław, MS I. F. 740 from the library of the regular canons in Żagan, 1470).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 74, pp. 58–60 (*Sermones de tempore et sanctis*, University Library of Wrocław, MS I. F. 759 from the Franciscan monastery in Jawor, mid-15th century).

⁸¹ Cf. Interesting remarks by B. Kürbis in: *Mistrza Wincentego ‘Kronika Polska’*, transl. K. Abgarowicz (Warsaw, 1974), p. 58 ff. and *passim*.

(a so-called continuation of Wace):⁸² the king asks each of his sons what bird they would like to be. One son says he would like to be a falcon, another an eagle, and the third a sparrow, and he divided his estate according to their choices (accompanied by words of proper justification). This tale was told in English sermons and also found its way into two anthologies of exempla (Gobi and Bromyard). A closer investigation of this tale by Archer Taylor⁸³ has revealed major differences in the way it was recorded, which show that the tale lived its own life and continued to be passed on by word of mouth. Taylor believes that this is a tale exploited on the one hand by historiography, and on the other hand by literary sources in various countries (one version is Berthold von Holle's *Crane* from the 13th century, in which the sons of the rulers of Bohemia, Austria and Bavaria appear, the subject of competition is the hand of a princess, and the birds that appear are the sparrow, falcon and titular crane). Historical legend is intertwined with literary fable. The interesting thing is the connection between recorded written exempla and oral tales, repeated not once but several times.

Exempla were an instrument of religious teaching, most of all preaching. In the post-Lateran model of Christianity, they served as a mass medium for conveying the truths of the faith and the principles of Christian conduct. The historian examining the functioning of exempla encounters basic obstacles because he is supposed to investigate a stratum of universal culture, yet he only has documentation relating to elitist culture at his disposal, for we learn about exempla from the medieval manuscripts of monastic libraries, from records made by learned people, while for a long time access to these manuscripts was confined to elitist circles, mainly the monasteries. Thus, exempla travelled from one monastery to another, one author borrowed them from another, so the restricted nature of this circulation is obvious. But we should also remember that medieval exempla were associated with the spoken word and that in medieval culture, their primary dimension was not the written word, but the spoken word, in other words sermons, discourses and reading aloud. It is in this sense that we can consider exempla as a record of a mass culture, though

⁸² F. Michel, *Chroniques anglo-normandes*, vol. 1 (Rouen, 1836), p. 182 ff.

⁸³ A. Taylor, "What Bird Would You Choose to Be? – a Medieval Tale", *Fabula* 1965, no. 7, pp. 97–114.

neither the form in which exempla have survived – here I mean the language and the storyline – nor the number of manuscripts indicate their mass nature.

Concerning style, exempla come in a great variety. They contain legends, eastern tales, tales of miracles, ancient fables, monastic tales, anecdotes, tales and parables from the Bible, and observations of nature and mythology.⁸⁴ Delivered and listened to, they were meant to serve as illustrations of and set examples for proper conduct, similar to the function of the legends in the categorization of Jollesa regarding “simple forms.”⁸⁵ They continued in this role for a long time, being employed in Baroque preaching and in modern-day religious literature.⁸⁶

Exempla were also meant to entertain, thus breaking the monotony of religious teaching. The element of entertainment increased towards the end of the Middle Ages. Collections of exempla were read not only for the purpose of education or information, but also for amusement. In line with this development, they underwent a process of secularization, forfeiting some of their original religious nature. The narrative element now exceeded the moral element (Eduard Petrů gives the Olomouc collection as an example).⁸⁷ However, this process was far from uniform.⁸⁸ In fact, the secularized versions of exempla were circulated widely among religious circles. Cesarius of Heisterbach says that he himself was a witness when Abbot Gervardus gave a sermon during which many monks and many lay people slept. He paused and said: “Listen, brothers, listen. I shall tell you something new and interesting. There was once a king called Arthur...”⁸⁹ In this way, he woke everyone up and was able to complete his sermon. This illustrates the type of interests which readings aloud in monasteries and medieval liturgical drama attempted to satisfy. Julian Krzyżanowski claims that a late collection of exemplary fables, the *Gesta Romanorum*, was intended to

⁸⁴ Cf. Tubach, *Strukturanalytische*, pp. 25–29.

⁸⁵ J. A. Jolles, *Einfache Formen* (Halle, 1929; 2 ed.: 1956).

⁸⁶ Cf. E. Moser-Rath, *Predigtmärlein der Barockzeit. Exempel, Sage, Schwank und Fabel im geistlichen Quellen des oberdeutschen Raumes (Fabula, Reihe A, 5)* (Berlin, 1964); Alsheimer, *Das Magnum Speculum*.

⁸⁷ Petrů, *Vývoj českého exempla*, p. 109 ff.

⁸⁸ Cf. H. Bausinger, “Exemplum und Beispiel”, *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde*, 59 (1968), p. 35.

⁸⁹ R. Ganszynieć, “Trzy dziełka Cezaryusza z Heisterbachu o Matce Boskiej”, *Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie*, 3 (1923), p. 61.

be read by monks, either to be read to them in refectories or read by them in private, whereby it was meant to both teach and entertain.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, these secularized fables continued to be used in sermons as a means with which to propagate religious contents.

The focus of exempla on sin, which religious teaching was meant to combat with the aid of descriptions of situations and striking metaphysics, means that exempla may be regarded as a mirror of the medieval “counter-culture.” The exhaustive issue of the eschatological imagination of medieval people, especially the place of the devil and the threat of hell, still awaits examination, but exempla played a significant role in shaping this imagination, no less great than iconography. However, the catalogue of questions regarding research into exempla also includes the role of the negative contents of these tales. Warnings against evil, descriptions of diabolical monstrosity and the “vivid” teachings about the devil and hell served not only to combat real sin and concealed beliefs, but also drew attention to the very practices and beliefs that were being combated. Thus, research into the functioning of exempla teaches us about the sensitivities and imaginations of medieval society via features both drawn from this culture and contributing towards it.

⁹⁰ Krzyżanowski, *Romans polski*, p. 109.

Man at Play: Ludic Culture

In: *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV–XV w.*, ed. B. Geremek (Warsaw, 1997), pp. 511–532.

1. Ludic Culture

From classical antiquity all the way to the 20th century, historians have claimed that games and entertainments are an important component in the formation of culture. An examination of the habits of the animal world naturally shows that apart from activities to preserve the species, in other words hunting for food and reproduction, there are other activities that constitute recreation. An observation of the behaviour of sentient creatures demonstrates that recreation plays an important role in life, a role which increases in line with the species' development. In its basic functions, a sentient creature appears to be a creator and reproducer on the one hand, and a creature at play on the other. *Homo sapiens* is not just *homo faber*, but also *homo ludens*. The Dutch philosopher and culture historian Johan Huizinga correctly noted: "The presence of recreation is not connected with any degree of culture or with any form of world outlook."¹ He defined the very essence of play and its general features and functions thus: "It is an activity that occurs within certain limits of time, space and sense, in a visible order, according to voluntary regulations, and outside the sphere of material utility or necessity."² This final part of the definition has already encountered major resistance and is of little use to us; the utilitarian element, whether in a magic sense or in the

¹ J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: a Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, introd. by G. Steiner (London, 1970), p. 4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

sense of gain (e.g. winnings from a game) is permanently present in the games culture of this era.

Recreation in a broad sense is part of the tradition of European philosophical reflection, and is a continuation of the distinction between *otium* and *negotium* as the basic spheres of human activity.³ *Negotium* is the sphere of material utility or necessity, which includes work and actions to secure material and social existence. The other sphere is free time, but merely in a certain sense, for the concept of “entertainment” covers a broad field of non-work related activity such as artistic creativity, thought and contemplation, joy and desire. The difference in the way in which former and today’s societies understand free time lies not in the different ways of reflection, but in the different ways of social existence.

In agricultural societies, the boundary between work time and play time was far from distinct. The work rhythm was deprived of intensive effort, human actions were dictated by natural conditions, and games and pastimes relieved the monotony. Recreation was dictated by natural conditions in the same manner as work: both were governed by artificial requirements and both were contained within the framework of family life. In a peasant household where income was increased mainly through increased working hours, free time was wasted time. Recreation was present at work, production processes were inseparably connected with magic procedures and games. Singing and dancing accompanied work not only as entertainment, but as activities to ensure the efficiency of work, because they set the working rhythm and helped earn the favour of supernatural forces.

The development of urban life gradually introduced a distinction between work time and recreation, but did not introduce any free time. Therefore, insofar as recreation accompanied human life at various stages of cultural development, its role and significance changed according to various cultural patterns and systems. The basic spheres of entertainment: competition, games, mimicry and ecstasy, remained unchanged. They were all to be found in medieval culture, but in certain social spheres particular features predominated, for example the effort element was strongest among knights, mimicry was strongest among peasants, and ecstasy was associated with religiousness, which meant that it was omnipresent.

³ R. Caillois, *Les jeux et les hommes* (Paris, 1958).

2. Free Time

To an outside observer, medieval culture seems saturated with recreational elements. Daily life sometimes appears to be a colourful series of tournaments, hunts and poetry contests. Such a conclusion may be deduced not only by observing the lives of the social elites, especially the knight community, but court books also provide a lot of material about the recreation of the lower social orders, presenting these people in tavern discussions, drunken entertainments, games of chance and dances. This outside observation does not diverge from the truth, but one should discuss its application in time, place and society.

In fact, as far as the use of free time is concerned, there were no major differences between the early and late Middle Ages. The differences occurred in the intensity with which free time was expended and in participation in religious life and prayer.

The development of the cities and urban life in Poland introduced on a broad scale a rhythm of time that can be described as artificial because it no longer depended on the vegetative rhythm of life. Of course, daylight and dusk continued to regulate life in the cities as well, but the conditions of collective existence in a larger population and production requirements introduced their own organization of time. Night was brought on not just by dusk, a subjective observation by the individual, but also by the sound of bells, announcing the night-time curfew, during which the city fell quiet within its walls. Urban directives laid down the times at which the city gates should be opened and shut; in Wrocław in summer, the city gates were opened at around 4.30 am and closed at 8.00 pm, and in winter they were opened at 7.30 am but closed as early as 3.30 pm.⁴ If we regard the opening times of gates as a demarcation, then the urban day was between eight and sixteen hours long. The closing time of gates was determined mainly by safety considerations, so that no enemies, vagabonds or criminals could sneak in at night. Distrust of the night and a fear of the dark was the basis behind the rules governing public life and handicrafts in the cities. Work in the daylight was considered a guarantee of a manufacturer's honesty because he produced his goods virtually in public. Daylight also certified the honesty and fairness of

⁴ J. Gilewska, *W późnośredniowiecznym Wrocławiu* (Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow, 1967), pp. 1–11.

commercial or financial transactions, because urban life and contacts were subjected to informal public scrutiny.

The spread of artificial lighting in cities had very little effect on the daily rhythm of life. Artificial lighting did not come into general use, and it was too expensive to be used as a means with which to extend working hours. City streets sank into darkness, night guards carried torches. Citizens, too, walking the streets after dark, were obliged to carry torches or lanterns.

Needless to say, dusk in the cities did not automatically bring nocturnal rest. It was also a time of family life and entertainment. In urban regulations, nighttime was determined by the order to extinguish lights, but the provisions governing this requirement and the fines collected for ignoring it show that the time when nighttime began was very flexible. There was little time for entertainment not only in winter, when the evenings were long, but also in summer. Despite prohibitions, parades, masquerades, fights and brawls occurred at night. An order by the authorities of Wrocław (1478) said that “whoever goes about at night and disturbs the peace” shall be punished with a fine.⁵ But after dusk, life was drawn to the taverns and brothels, the main locations of recreation.

That is where representatives of various urban communities, occasionally including clergymen, spent their time “at night.” In the files of church cases, we come across the case of a Poznań vicar, already accused of regularly visiting taverns, who one evening, after the curfew, went to a tavern, got drunk, and then went to a brothel where the prostitutes tore the clothes off him and let him out naked into the street.⁶ Evenings were spent drinking beer or wine, or playing games of chance, especially dice. The dark interiors of taverns were lit by the light of torches or lanterns, but rather sparingly, as a careful count was kept on the number of lanterns and torches lit.⁷ When a light went out, this often gave an opportunity for a brawl, crime, or drunken pastime.

The atmosphere in cities provided various incentives for spending free time. Municipal regulations provide evidence of the tension

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶ *Acta capitulorum* (hereinafter: AC), ed. B. Ulanowski (Cracow, 1894–1908), vol. 2, no. 1573, p. 707.

⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 1982, p. 936.

surrounding free time. This applied to the entire urban community, where both the municipal and the church authorities tried to combat gaming habits. But the chief target was hired workers, who were the object of increasing prohibitions preventing them from “loitering” on free days or avoiding work on Mondays.⁸ The injunctions and prohibitions connected with free time in the cities were intended to coordinate the rhythm of work time with that of family life, so that free time was confined to holidays and remained a social privilege.

With its sanctions and prohibition, the rule of the third Franciscan order, intended to introduce lay people to certain rules of monastic life, gives a reversed picture of the reality. Translated into Polish at the end of the 15th century, it announced: “Brothers are not to attend dishonourable events and pastimes, neither to manors nor to dances.” They were to avoid “waste” and all entertainment not only on work days, but also on holidays, which should not be regarded as free time but as a time of service to God.⁹

The gulf between regulations and practice varied according to the community, but contrary to expectations this gulf was narrower in peasant communities than in urban communities. In rural areas, recreation was strongly flavoured with a religious element and often bordered on magic practices. The Church’s struggle against recreation was a sign of its powerlessness to subject rural life to Christian values.

Urban habits of making intense use of free time were very slow to penetrate rural life, still subject to the rhythm of nature. It is the demands of the seasons, not the demand for gain, that dictated the intensity of work. There was no haste, neither were there any institutional determinants of work time. The time and place of recreation were important family events (weddings, christenings, funerals), religious festivals, and social gatherings (fairs). Court records often report drunkenness, tavern brawls, and other pastimes, but this was not necessarily the general picture. The tavern, drinking and playing dice seemed to be basic forms of escape from the monotony of daily life. Church prohibitions and the warnings of preachers were of

⁸ *Najstarszy zbiór przywilejów i wilkierzy miasta Krakowa*, ed. S. Estreicher (Cracow, 1936), p. 41, no. 33.

⁹ *Chrestomatia staropolska. Teksty do roku 1543*, selected and edited by W. Wydra, W.R. Rzepka (Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow, 1984), p. 160.

little use. The efforts of such authorities and institutions to expand liturgical forms and parish institutions in compliance with the late medieval model of Christianization set by the fourth Lateran Council (1215) were aimed not only at “keeping the Sabbath holy,” i.e. not working, but also at spending it in the service of God. This was difficult not only for lay people, but even for the clergy. It was not easy to turn *otium* into a time spent usefully and respectfully, according to social status and intellectual capacity. In noble circles in the 13th century, there appeared the custom of reading religious literature, cultivated and supported especially by the ladies of this group. The popularity of such manuscripts led to the translation of religious works into everyday language, initiated also by the spouses of kings and court ladies. The wives of burghers were also involved. Nevertheless, such a manner of recreation had a limited impact. The desire for play and for having a good time overcame any need for moral education.

In the culture of that age, watching and listening were greater sources of knowledge and pleasure than reading. This also applies to public spectacles, the basic way of breaking the monotony of daily life. This is why masses of spectators watched events such as royal processions, parades, coronations, funerals and other ceremonies. Public executions, watched by crowds, also provided emotion. An execution was meant to instil fear, but it was a major source of entertainment in the Middle Ages. However, in general there was not a great deal of entertainment, for this was a subject of competition and social tension.

3. Recreation as a Social Privilege

Recreation remained most of all a social privilege. In the community of knights, organized for warfare, it was not easy to distinguish between “work” and “play.” Essential recreation, to regenerate one’s strength, was mixed with essential training of skills.

Medieval warfare was subject to a peculiar code of conduct and actions which regulated not only professional activity, but also games and recreation. Even the rules of combat contained a recreational element. When in 1422 Jan Głowacz of Oleśnica summoned Duke Konrad Niempecz, a knight at the service of the Teutonic Knights, to a duel, the summons was formulated in a manner that expressed

a desire for entertainment and good fun.¹⁰ Apart from military service, soldiers had to undergo regular training and contests to maintain their fitness and prepare them for the art of war. That was the purpose of exercises with the use of arms and horse riding. But a special role was played by tournaments, which appeared in Poland in line with the spread of chivalry. These were a continuation of the contests and games known in Slav culture and tradition, but they now became an institutionalized form of culture transposed to Polish territory.

As early as the 13th century, Silesian dukes held knightly tournaments, and also took part in tournaments at European courts. It was the ambition of each ducal court, and the royal courts, to organize a tournament whose status depended on the number and quality of the contestants and the degree of its attraction. The descriptions of tournaments indicate that these were colourful events in which contests of military skill went hand-in-hand with displays of fashion and weapons.¹¹ Performances by musicians and jugglers provided variety in the evenings. However, these exercises of skill were not just for show or entertainment. They were a considerable challenge. In the *Dialogue of Master Polikarp with Death* (*Rozmowa mistrza Polikarpa ze Śmiercią*), Death sees its customers among the tournament participants (verse 204): “I see among my clients anything that wields a weapon.”¹²

The image of great tournaments sometimes hides the policy of holding local tournaments and contests, more common in knightly life. Jan Muskata, complaining about the behaviour of Henry IV who arranged food for his court in the bishops’ town of Nysa, says that Henry presided over the tournament for four days. Contests in military skill were an inseparable part of free time, in keeping with the role of the knights. But they were also public spectacles, enjoyed primarily by the ladies of the court, but also by outside spectators. They were also watched by the local citizenry, who became just as excited as football spectators (at a tournament in Wrocław where Bohemian knights defeated German knights, the German citizenry attacked the Bohemians).

¹⁰ *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi magni ducis Lithuanie 1376–1430*, ed. A. Prochaska (Cracow, 1882), no. 557, p. 579.

¹¹ W. Iwańczak, “Turniej rycerski w Królestwie Czeskim – próba analizy kulturowej”, *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 27 (1983), no. 5, pp. 39–54.

¹² W. Taszycki, *Najdawniejsze zabytki języka polskiego* (Wrocław, 1951), p. 223.

Military exercises and displays played an important role in knightly corporate initiatives in the late Middle Ages. They served as a bond of chivalrous fraternities, such as the fraternity of knights created in Legnica in 1413 under the name of The Order of Hunting Dogs, which held annual court ceremonies and knightly contests on the first Sunday after the feast of St. Martin (11 November).¹³

However, as the class of knights descended into landowners, the recreational nature of knightly contests increased, but as long as the duty of military service existed, these contests served a practical purpose: training. Similar military contests, e.g. archery, were held at lower social levels. The associations of marksmen that appeared in a city's or town's organized social life, but their primary purpose was to preserve combat readiness. There were many such associations in Polish cities from the 14th to 15th centuries. In Cracow, the brotherhood of marksmen practiced on the figure of a rooster on the second day of Pentecost. The tradition of horse racing was also cultivated in cities. Various contests involving animals, cock fights, bull fights, bear-baiting, attracted spectators. Records of these pastimes in various European countries suggest that this involved the ritual of animal slaying. Cock fights have certainly been noted in Poland. One of the poems in a student anthology called *Metra de sancto Gallo* recalls the custom of bringing cocks to a cock-fight, with the provision that the cock be adult, fat and fitted with good claws (cock fights, probably introduced from the Romance countries, were an integral part of student festivals).¹⁴

The appearance of menageries in some courts, especially in the larger ones, also deserves mention. Making presents of wild boars or exotic animals was popular in the Middle Ages, and in the early part of that period it was "good etiquette" for one ruler to gift such presents to another. This led to the custom of maintaining menageries. In 1406 the Florentines, asking Jagiełło to win his favours, sent him a pair of lions. In the accompanying letter, describing the royal symbolism of these

¹³ H. Markgraf, "Über eine schlesische Rittergesellschaft am Anfange des 15. Jahrhunderts", in: id., *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte Schlesiens und Breslaus* (Breslau, 1915), pp. 81–95; F. Szafranski, *Ludwik II brzesko-legnicki feudal śląski z doby późnego średniowiecza* (Wrocław, 1972), p. 62.

¹⁴ H. Kowalewicz, *Zasób, zasięg terytorialny i chronologia polsko-lacińskiej liryki średniowiecznej* (Poznań, 1967), p. 246.

animals, they provided instructions on how to provide the lions with proper living conditions.¹⁵ More common were birds, bred by the courts and also by the bourgeoisie. The miracles of St. Jan Kanty include the tale of Krzysztof Szafraniec of Pieskowa Skała, who was particularly attached to his birds, a parrot and a blackbird.¹⁶

Thus, recreation, the product of a society organized for war, passed from the higher to the lower classes. Nevertheless, in essence it remained a social privilege. The weaker the chivalrous function of the nobility, the more prestigious it became to attend tournaments and to know how to use a weapon.

We also find a combination of utility and recreation in hunting.¹⁷ Although this was a favourite sport of the nobility, it was also a basic source of supply of meat for the table. The economic utility of hunting is obvious, but it was a manner of testing the ability of knights to engage in war and maintain their combat readiness. Here, economic utility went hand-in-hand with prestige. With the aid of a system of hunting rules, medieval legislation attempted to keep the masses away from hunting, so that it was not just a practice of chivalrous life, but also a privilege.

Most of all, hunting was a favourite way of spending one's time in a king's court. Władysław Jagiełło, who occasionally spent the entire winter hunting in the Lithuanian steppes, liked to send gifts of animals to rulers, courtiers, church officials, and even to the councillor and university professors in Cracow. Hunting grounds were extensive, and Jagiełło and Witold also went hunting in the wide steppes of the Teutonic Order (with the latter's permission). Falcons trained for hunting were often the subject of gifts. There is much evidence that they were used in hunting, but one can assume that they were rather a luxury. Fishing, too, played a dual role as a sport and as a useful source of food.

But protests began in the 15th century against hunting as a "manly" sport. These came not only from the peasants, who in this way lent expression to their economic frustrations, but also from intellectual circles pursuing humanitarian aims. We find evidence of this in

¹⁵ *Codex epistolaris saeculi decimi quinti*, ed. A. Sokołowski, J. Szujski, A. Lewicki, vol. 1 (Cracow, 1876), no. 33, p. 25.

¹⁶ *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (hereinafter: MPH), VI (Cracow, 1898), p. 507.

¹⁷ A. Samsonowicz, *Łowiectwo w Polsce Piastów i Jagiellonów* (Wrocław, 1991).

the biography of Grzegorz of Sanok, who, according to Kallimach, condemned the bourgeois snobbery attached to hunting.¹⁸

The home life of the knights (the bourgeoisie as subject to the same laws of nature as the peasantry) and changes to social roles and material situations created greater opportunities for using one's free time. Consequently, the role of games and entertainments increased, depending on the prosperity and prestige of the court.

Feasts and banquets occupy a special place. Food was a gauge of prosperity and prestige in medieval society. A table full of food and drink was a source of pleasure. Banquets were both rest and the result of the "work" of hunter knights. They lasted a long time and were properly illuminated because the chambers were lit by daylight and by the light of candles and torches; they were accompanied by performances by musicians and artists, especially in more prosperous households.

Games also played a special role in court life. Of these, one should mention first of all chess. This game was introduced together with the Western model of court life, and we have reason to assume that its popularity spread. Moreover, a chess set was part of a knight's essential equipment, and was a symbol of courtly existence. It seemed to mirror social situations, struggles, conflicts and competition. The theory of chess was used in moral teachings. Chess illustrated the justification of social roles in the face of a conflict, and created a lay picture of individual and collective action that required no reference to supernatural forces. The game itself was not widespread among the chivalrous class, for it was, after all, a complicated, intellectual game.

Feasts, banquets, visits, group meetings and participation sports and pastimes took shape among the social elites, from whom they were adopted by lower social orders in imitation, in line with their material possibilities and ambitions. The urban bourgeoisie was best able to provide the conditions for recreation, especially banquets. In all social classes, food was an inseparable part, if not the essential condition, for all recreation. The feast of kings in the house of the Cracow burgher Wierzynek is a classic example. More important is that these customs were present in the lives of the municipal elite.

¹⁸ *Vita et mores Gregorii Sanocei Leopoliensis episcopi. Auctore Philippo Buonacorsi Callimacho*, ed. L. Finkel, in: MPH, VI, p. 212; *Faccje z dawnej Polski*, ed. T. Tyc (Poznań, 1917), pp. 62–63.

Parties in the suburban gardens of Cracow patricians, described by Jan Ursyn at the end of the 15th century, show that the patterns of court behaviour had permeated to the bourgeois community.

A description of an excursion to the country is contained in a letter from Jan Ursyn to Maciej Drzewicki at the end of the 15th century. A group of friends went to a rural residence where, Ursyn writes, “we did not miss a single pastime or, one can say, childish game. First there was hunting for wild birds (using a hawk), then there was fishing (with a net), then a swim, and finally a feast, after which the whole company went for a walk, singing and playing the lute.” The Cracow company then watched peasants dancing until sunset.¹⁹

In the style of this letter and its imagery, one discerns the influence of humanist literary styles and idyllic ancient scenes. But the nature of this trip to the country by a group of urban dwellers, their sensitivity to the charms of rural nature, and their bird hinting, all cast a light on the pattern of recreation adopted by the urban community as well as the bourgeoisie and “intelligentsia” of that time.

Entertainment on a broad scale was organized by urban institutions. Brotherhoods and guilds arranged various kinds of Church festivities which often took the shape of great public spectacles. They also held social events for their members, such as dinners. Artisans also had their customs, and a parade of craftsmen was often like a masquerade. Individual guilds were attached to particular churches or chapels, but so were inns and taverns. In Wrocław, when people stayed away from work on Mondays, they frequently spent that day in taverns, often to the sounds of percussion, and even armed with weapons. Similar customs of collective entertainment developed in rural areas, especially on holidays, but also during the working week, involving elements of magic tricks. Entertainment gradually assumed a formal shape and was organized according to groups of society, which made it easier to subject them to institutional supervision. Games of chance were popular, and at least some of them passed from court circles to social circles. They were indulged in by all levels of medieval society or, to be more exact, the men of all levels of society. As with the lay authorities, the Church authorities combated these pastimes with

¹⁹ Jan Ursyn of Cracow, *Modus epistolandi cum epistolis exemplaribus et orationibus annexis*, ed. L. Winniczuk (Wrocław, 1957), p. 40: “In quo nullum certe gaudendi, ymmo vt verius dicam repuerescendi genus omisimus.”

severity, but when their efforts failed they tried to limit their extent. This applied especially to dice.

It is dice in particular that were firmly condemned in both lay and Church legislation. The intensity of games of chance, measured in terms of stakes, is significant. The statute of King Casimir the Great imposed a fine of one *grzywien* on anyone who bet more than one *wiardunek* (dice or balls).²⁰ Later legislation made it illegal to incur debts while playing. Church directives disqualified from Easter communion all dice players as well as those who permitted dice playing in their homes or shared the winnings.²¹ It was also condemned by preachers.

In sermons, dice playing was condemned as a superstitious practice. The popular pastimes condemned by the Church were the use of dice at Christmas to foretell the future or to try one's luck. Condemnation of this custom (also banned in Bohemia by Arnost, bishop of Prague, in 1357) also appears in a 15th-century sermon book and is mentioned in Rej's *Postylla*.²² In another sermon book containing the sermons of Sylwan, dice playing was generally prohibited by way of an allegory where each throw was a sin and the entire game was a Satanic mass.

"The god of dice players is Astaroth, whose name is invoked during the game, whose church is the tavern; his altar is the table, the Bible and prayer books are the points on the dice; where lights shine as in church, where the priests are the players and the ministrants are the spectators."²³ Worth noting is that this condemnatory vision has its equivalent, and perhaps its source, in the parodied mass of dice players in one of the poems of the *Carmina Burana*.

The popularity of dice is indicated by the degree of its professionalization. Players appeared who not only spent their entire time playing, but who also possessed professional skills. They were able to cheat (if a piece of metal was correctly placed, it was possible to control the throw). Dice players earned separate names, recorded in the 15th-century Polish. Those disqualified from Easter communion

²⁰ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Katedry Krakowskiej św. Wacława*, ed. F. Piekosiński, vol. 1 (Cracow, 1874), no. 25, p. 29: "luserit [...] cum zaxillis sine Globis."

²¹ J. Wolny, "Materiały do historii waganów w Polsce średniowiecznej", *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 19 (1969), nos. 1–2, p. 77.

²² A. Brückner, *Kazania średniowieczne* (Cracow, 1895), p. 72.

²³ Wrocław, The Ossolinsky Library, MS 414, k. 227; A. Brückner, *Literatura religijna w Polsce średniowiecznej*, vol. 3: *Legends i modlitewniki. Szkice literackie i obyczajowe* (Warsaw, 1904), p. 57.

included *costarze*²⁴ (this is a plural form of the word *costarz*) and a verse about death says of a *kostyrz* who cursed when he lost a game, that he is already in hell, drinking tar:

*Zły to cynek kostyrze siadł,
Gdy po uszy do piekła wpadł.
Nie pomogą mu i dryje.
Już tam w piekle smołę pije.*²⁵

The presence of special names for dice or their surfaces indicates their popularity.²⁶ But everyone seemed to play with everyone else, regardless of status or class. Masters played with servants, priests were regularly accused of playing with peasants, burghers played with noblemen or clergymen.²⁷ The game seemed to transcend social divisions, but these made themselves felt when disputes over a game had to be resolved in the courts.

Other games of chance underwent a development similar to dice. Playing cards gradually became popular from the end of the 14th century. At first, they were an imported luxury commodity, and so not available to everyone, but they soon began to be manufactured in Poland and quickly found their way into taverns and schools. In any case, the manufacture of cards permitted one's own patterns and even images to be placed on cards. In a dispute between two residents of Wielun and a local teacher, a deck of 18 cards was shown where one card was longer and was decorated with red thread;²⁸ this may have been a mere decoration, but it could also have been a sign of cheating. Apart from dice and cards, spillikins,²⁹ skittles,³⁰ bowls and billiards³¹ were games of chance. In addition, chess was condemned when money was at stake.³²

The motive behind the prohibitions of these games are their chance nature, and in the moral condemnation of these one finds

²⁴ Brückner, *Kazania*, vol. 2, pp. 349–351 (manuscript copied in 1431).

²⁵ Id., *Średniowieczna poezja łacińska w Polsce* (Cracow, 1852), p. 45.

²⁶ AC, vol. 2, no. 872.

²⁷ Ibid., no. 1982, 1172, 872.

²⁸ Ibid., no. 872: "XVIII cartas inter quas una carta longior et spissior cum cordibus in colore rubeo."

²⁹ AC, vol. 3, no. 277: "ludus lignorum alias yerki."

³⁰ Ibid., no. 371: "lusit priamnos alias kraglye."

³¹ AC, vol. 2, no. 994.

³² Brückner, *Kazania*, part 2, pp. 349–351: "aleatoribus scacorum pro pecunia."

similar reasons as in the condemnation of usury by Christian doctrine; the grounds for a sentence from a judge in Poznań (1443) is that the accused person played dice "for condemned gain."³³ Therefore, a frequent line of defence in court cases involving games of chance was that the game was not for money but for a service, which was meant to erase the reprehensible nature of the game.³⁴ Occasionally, games of chance encountered firm opposition. In 1445, a parson complained when he visited a school and found clerics playing cards. When he criticized one of them, he called him an evil man and a hypocrite.³⁵ Jakub Sekuła, mayor of Pniew, was accused before a Poznań court in 1435 of frequently playing dice, even though it had been forbidden by previous mayors. Moreover, since his appointment to that office, Jakub had publicly announced that "playing dice is not a sin at all, but a kind of trade transaction."³⁶

One can say that recreation automatically reveals its extra-recreational associations. In the case of games of chance, this is not merely a departure from the monotony of daily activities, but they also represent hope for a sudden improvement to one's life.

4. Dancing: Ritual and Entertainment

Another kind of general entertainment has different associations: dancing. In its work of Christianization, the Church combated dancing not only as a manifestation of moral laxity, but also as a remnant of pagan practices. Nevertheless, dancing continued to be used as a magic ritual in the late Middle Ages; we find a reference to this in a 13th-century biography by the Cistercian monk Rudolf of Rude Raciborskie, and in the 15th century it was condemned by preachers as a sign of idolatry. In Church practice, dancing was preserved as part of the liturgical rite; indeed, church services incorporated elements of dance.³⁷

³³ AC, vol. 2, no. 1172.

³⁴ Id., no. 1238: "plebanus confessus est se lusisse tasserres pro pecunia, sed pro capillacione crinium, videlicet nyechainiego" (1449).

³⁵ Ibid., no. 1202.

³⁶ Ibid., no. 1066: "dicebat publice, quod ludere tasserres non est peccatum sed est quasi quoddam forum."

³⁷ M. Gorzkowski, *Historyczne poszukiwania o tańcach* (Warsaw, 1869), p. 67; Č. Zibrť, *Jak se kdy v Čechách tancovalo: dějiny tance v Čechách na Moravě, ve Slezsku*

Both the clergy and lay people danced. In the 13th century, Pope Innocent III forbade dancing in churches and in 1279 the papal nuncio Phillip forbade dancing in churches and cemeteries, but the regular re-occurrence of these injunctions up until the 16th century shows that they had limited effect.

Dancing is a universal mass form of group entertainment, an expression of joy and collective feelings.³⁸ In 1267, people danced on the day when Paweł of Przemankowo, chancellor to King Bolesław the Shy, was appointed bishop of Cracow (even though this was on the second Sunday of Lent). Dancing accompanied all family festivities and collective recreation; Cracow scholars danced during their merry excursions to Tyniec (described in a letter from Gregory IX in 1230), peasants danced in the taverns, craftsmen danced in their guild halls. The universality of dancing is obvious and fully documented, but it is difficult to establish what was danced and how.

Collective dancing took the form of a *korowód*, a procession of dancers to the sound of music, singing or clapping, or all three combined.³⁹ The combination of cavorting and clapping seems to be an old Slav tradition. In fact, a combination of various elements – dancing, clapping, singing, gesticulation and mimicry – is deeply rooted in folk tradition. The most widespread form, present across the whole of Slav territory, was the closed circle.⁴⁰ This was noted during St. John's Day celebrations, when at the centre of a circle was a fire, and at weddings. Jumping over the fire, dancing while holding weapons (recorded in Bohemia) and acrobatic feats by individual dancers provided additional entertainment. Occasionally the circle opened up into a procession.

a na Slovensku od nejstarší doby až do konce 19. století (Prague, 1895), p. 8. The Church's attitude to dancing is described in the synodal law by J. Fijałek, *Średniowieczne ustawodawstwo synodalne biskupów polskich. Życie i obyczaje kleru w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle ustawodawstwa synodalnego* (Cracow, 1893), pp. 28–34. Interesting material on the Church's teachings on this subject has recently been given by M. Kowalczykówna, "Tańce i zabawy w świetle rękopisów średniowiecznych Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej", *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 34–35 (1984–1985), pp. 71–89.

³⁸ *Z dziejów polskiej kultury muzycznej*, ed. Z.M. Szwejkowski, vol. 1 (Cracow, 1958), p. 20.

³⁹ K. Moszyński, *Kultura ludowa Słowian* (Warsaw, 1967), vol. 2, part 2, pp. 300–395.

⁴⁰ Cf. W. Hensel, *Wyobrażenie tańca 'koło' na ceramice wczesnośredniowiecznej*, in: *Cultus et cognitio. Studia z dziejów średniowiecznej kultury* (Warsaw, 1976), p. 193 ff.

A procession was often formed to bid farewell to winter or death, and was also a regular feature of carnivals.

The church's ban on dancing, clearly regarding it as moral turpitude, merely emphasized the sexual aspect of dancing. A stereotype of medieval morality, based on St. Augustine, is that it is better to plough on Sundays than to dance (this instruction appears both in Czech poetry and in a philosophical treatise by Jan of Głogów).⁴¹ The Czech work, condemning dancing, begins with the significant words: "Dancing is a circle at whose centre is the devil, who compels one to dance through fear or shame. Each faithful person should shun dancing," whereas the second treatise exposes women as tools of Satan when they "entice men to dance." This work, very popular in the Middle Ages,⁴² exists in many copies, including in Polish manuscripts. In a manuscript containing a Polish version of the sermons of Sylwan called *De modo ducendi coream*, a note explains that a work "directed against those who dance and shout" was published by a preacher called Conrad in Prague in 1389.⁴³ A condemnation of dancing, especially by the clergy, is regularly repeated in Church legislation and in the files of Church courts. Priests belonging to brotherhoods were forbidden not only to dance, but also to watch dancing, both of which were punishable.

One should distinguish between formal group dancing, held primarily in the open air, "beneath the blossoming lime trees" and the dancing that took place inside taverns (as well as inside urban homes and in villages).⁴⁴ Fewer people took part in this second form of dancing, and it seemed to consist mainly of jumping and singing. The files of a church court in Poznań (1449) include a case involving a parson from Siekierki who, on his way to visit a sick man, popped into a tavern where, drinking beer with the peasants, he danced so

⁴¹ Cf. Zibrť, *Jak se kdy v Čechách*, p. 40: "le by bylo orali/než v nedeli tancovali"; *Słownik łaciny średniowiecznej w Polsce*, vol. 2, p. 370: "melius est arare dominico die quam choreizare."

⁴² See: *Věstník České akademie*, 11 (1902), no. 193, p. 752 ff.

⁴³ Wrocław, The Ossolinsky Library, vol. 414, col. 343: "Explicit collectum de chorea contra corizantes et orizantes Prage per quendam puscillatorem nomine Conradis predicatorem ibidem sub anno domini °LXXXIX (sic!)." On Waldhauser's sermons against dancing, see F. Menčík, *Konrád Waldhauser* (Prague, 1881), no. 4.

⁴⁴ See Zibrť, *Jak se kdy v Čechách*, p. 63, this is how urban dancing is described by Bohuslav Hasišteinský of Lobkovice.

vigorously that he “lost his chalice containing the host.”⁴⁵ The Czech preacher Tomáš Štítňý ze Štítňého, condemning dancing as the source of mortal sin and disintegration of family life, underlines the element of jumping to which women are accustomed from youth: “vším snaženstvím strojí se k’skokóm, k tańcóm svym ruchem.”⁴⁶ In lexical expressions we often find an association between *saltus* dancing and *exultacio dicitur* “chanting.”⁴⁷

Shrovetide was regarded as a time of dancing *par excellence*. Medieval preachers saw this as evidence that the Lord’s time had been rendered to Satan, time which should be spent better praying in church. Again we can quote Tomáš Štítňý: “I kto nas od tebe, pana dáble, tyto dni rozdelí, zdali hlad, jenz nam jest lehek pro te trpeti, zdali zima neb nahota, zdali pot v tancích vylity, cíii bolest noh v úzkých a utáhlych strevicích?”⁴⁸ People cavorting is the oldest and most common form of dancing, from which developed more diversified and refined dancing, especially among court and knightly circles as well as in urban communities.

In court communities, dancing was a fashion observed and followed very closely. Dances came to Poland from southern Europe via Bohemia, Hungary and Germany. With the dancers arranged into pairs and performing elaborate gestures and movements, court dancing developed a conventional form, but also required instruction. This elaborate dancing gradually spread to the population at large, but was not adopted in whole. Elements of elaborate dancing continued to be combined with folk dancing. The appearance of dance instructors seems to suggest that dancing assumed established and conventional forms, but spontaneous, wild and joyful dances, such as on feast days and inside taverns, continued.

While there is no doubt that dancing assumed conventional forms, requiring airs and graces which had to be taught, spontaneous forms of dancing continued to exist. In fact, proper movement and coordination was a target of dance instruction not always easy to attain. In descriptions of people being instructed in dance, one comes across people

⁴⁵ AC, vol. 2, no. 1233, p. 562: “sicque in saltucoree capsella in qua deferetur Corpus Christi.”

⁴⁶ Zibrť, *Jak se kdy v Čechách*, p. 47.

⁴⁷ Brückner, *Literatura*, vol. 1, p. 60; *Słownik staropolski*, vol. 6 (Wrocław, 1970), p. 148.

⁴⁸ Quoted by: Zibrť, *Jak se kdy v Čechách*, p. 47.

with a natural talent for dancing (able to move, bow, and gesticulate in time with the music). But this refinement, part of the curriculum of cultural education, concerned only the social elites, not the masses.

5. The Arts of Entertainment

The arts of entertainment expanded in line with the increasing role of entertainment in human life. The social situation of these “artists” was inseparably connected with moral ambivalence. They were in demand and their performances enlivened court life. The fees paid to performers appeared in the accounts of royal and ducal courts as well as Church authorities. And yet these people were still under a shadow of condemnation, stemming from medieval Church doctrine. This spirit of condemnation weakened in the late Middle Ages, but the work of entertainers remained suspicious. In any case, it depended on the type of entertainment and on the social group where it was provided. Making music, singing, storytelling, and performances by trained animals were various forms of entertainment which produced specialists. A demand for these specialists was created most of all by the courts, which needed to ensure continuous popular entertainment for the sake of their status and prestige. Thus, a musician or group of musicians had a permanent place in some courts, depending on their wealth. This applied especially to the king’s court, which served as a pattern for other courts to follow. At the court of Casimir the Great, royal wives surrounded themselves with singers and musicians: Queen Aldona enjoyed singers, harpists and cymbalists; Jadwiga of Głogów maintained a full-time zither player, Ulrich; and Jadwiga of Anjou had a court musician, Handslika, who played the zither at meals with Wilhelm in the Franciscan refectory in Cracow. The love of music by Elżbieta Łokietkówna, mother of Louis of Hungary, caused a scandal: the dancing and singing at the old queen’s court is said to have caused social upheaval in Cracow in 1336 when Elżbieta’s Hungarian courtiers were massacred. Jagiełło, cultivating his old passions at the Cracow court, enjoyed the company of Russian pipers, and he probably had a full-time band which became a permanent feature of the courts of successive kings. Apart from musicians, there were various other specialists in the art of entertainment. A traditional figure is the jester, whom we meet in the courts of kings and other

rulers. Duke Witold sent the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order a jester and dwarves from his court, as a present.⁴⁹

Medieval canonists, whose opinions and pronouncements are also to be found in Polish manuscripts, distinguished between several categories of performers. The ones condemned by them included those who succumbed to the imagination and announced the errors of their masters, and those who went from tavern to tavern playing instruments; excluded from condemnation were only those musicians who performed at the courts of kings, dukes or burgher's houses to entertain the hosts and guests.⁵⁰ While such a scholastic opinion cannot be regarded as a mirror of the reality, it seems nevertheless that professional performers, musicians and entertainers had a much more stable position than itinerant actors, jugglers and musicians.

A professional class of entertainer appeared not only among court circles, but also in the cities, where eventually they formed themselves into guilds. They were in constant and considerable demand in the cities, where family and corporate events provided them with work opportunities. Nevertheless, municipal laws attempted to limit the presence of entertainers in municipal life. King Casimir the Great ordered that no more than eight entertainers perform at weddings, whilst in 1378 a councillor in Cracow limited their number of four.⁵¹ Municipal institutions also provided a stable position for musicians, such as the city trumpeter (some say that the Cracow trumpet call was composed in the 15th century); and the fees paid to musicians (*fistulatores*) occupied a prominent place in the municipal accounts.⁵² The professional stability of the community of entertainers is illustrated by the presence of Polish entertainers at foreign courts and in foreign cities at the end of the 14th and 15th centuries: there were Polish musicians in the Teutonic Order, a Polish bard at the court of Duke Albrecht II of Lower Bavaria, a Polish musician in Zwickau and Hamburg, and a Polish violinist in Turin and Leipzig. Musicians at the service of kings were probably sent abroad as a gesture of diplomacy. Apart from playing instruments (the main instruments noted in the 16th century

⁴⁹ *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi*, no. 1292, pp. 774–775.

⁵⁰ Wolny, *Materiały do historii*, p. 76: “serviunt eis ad refrigerium capitis et faciei eorum.”

⁵¹ *Kodeks dyplomatyczny*, vol. 1, no. 21, p. 24; *Najstarszy zbiór*, no. 12, p. 27.

⁵² *Najstarsze księgi i rachunki miasta Krakowa od r. 1300 do 1400*, F. Piekosiński, J. Szujski (Cracow, 1878), p. 292 (1390), p. 296 (1391), p. 301 (1393).

are bagpipes), these entertainers also sang, danced and told stories, no doubt in German.⁵³

Wandering musicians without a permanent engagement performed at great banquets. Łukasz of Wielki Koźmin recalls them in one of his sermons, describing them as “loud and talkative” and receiving the most generous gifts. They also served to combine urban and rural culture, performing in taverns and at rural dances.

6. The Rhythm of Holidays and Carnival “World Upside Down”

The basic rhythm of mass entertainment was set by holidays; in other words, Sundays and Church feasts, together with associated local festivities. This rhythm did not change a great deal compared to the initial period of Christianization in Poland in the first quarter of the second millennium. A syncretism amalgamation of folklore and Christian customs led to a uniform rhythm of celebration in Poland, with insignificant regional variations. Ethnic migrations caused a few changes, the new arrivals bringing with them their own customs which were adopted in local Polish customs. Interestingly, the Church was less concerned about “keeping the day of the Sabbath holy,” i.e. recognizing that day and refraining from work, than about the manner of celebration. The clergy paid attention to Christian practices and the entertainment that accompanied holidays.

Family events provided an opportunity for fun. This applies in particular to weddings, which involved a special type of humour full of sexual innuendo. Wakes after funerals also afforded entertainment, judging from the fact that priests were instructed to leave them as soon as possible.

The most common forms of entertainment relate to Sundays. Combined with Saturday afternoon, and in towns often extended until Monday, Sunday was the right time for entertainment: food, drink, fun and games, and dancing. Only some of this time was spent in church. The bans on opening taverns during church services show that the attractiveness of these places threatened church attendance.

⁵³ W. Salmen, “Przyczynek do historii polskich szpilmanów w późnym średnio-wieczu”, transl. K. Swaryczewska, *Muzyka*, 2 (1957), no. 3, pp. 47–50.

The venues of Sunday entertainment were mainly the tavern, but also the square in front of the church (occasionally priests were accused of playing in front of the church), the market square and the street. The family home was also a venue, although our information on this is not extensive. Obviously, for the social elites much entertainment occurred inside their residences, but in the case of the peasantry, entertainment at home was similar to the tavern: meetings with friends, drinking and playing dice.⁵⁴

In terms of the calendar year, the period of entertainment *par excellence* was Shrovetide, or Carnival, especially the final week. The entertainments indulged in during this period obviously include masquerades (forbidden by the bishop of Poznań in 1420),⁵⁵ which sometimes even spread to the cemetery. Descriptions of Carnival do not indicate precisely what segments of society took part, but one can assume that they were primarily the nobility and urban communities, especially young people, and probably did not include many from the peasantry. Nevertheless, the Carnival procession of fun and laughter possessed universal significance, if only for the amusement it caused.

An anthology of sermons collected by Piotr of Miłosław in 1464 includes one for the last Sunday of Carnival, describing the moods on the final day of Carnival when clergymen shortened their sermons and artisans left their workshops. The devil and his servants, musicians, jesters and singers, tempt people to dance, drink, and sing songs “that kindle bodily desire.” On these days, some people seemed to be worshipping the god *Miśopust* (Slavic carnivals), whose name does not appear in any calendars, either Catholic or pagan. The god is represented by an attractive woman wearing a wreath and holding a sceptre in her right and a peacock in her left, dressed in colourful clothes and attended by musicians, clowns, performers, etc.⁵⁶

The picture presented by the Shrovetide sermon is important not only for its moral message, but also for its imagery. Entertainment, in its extreme form, appears as a complete reversal of the religious and moral order. Men dressed in women’s clothes and dancers in masks

⁵⁴ AC, vol. 2, no. 1871.

⁵⁵ *Concilia Poloniae*, vol. 7: *Synody diecezji poznańskiej i ich statuty*, ed. J. Sawicki (Poznań, 1952), p. 155.

⁵⁶ Wolny, *Materiały do historii*, pp. 85–87; Brückner, *Kazania*, part 3, p. 23 (137).

skipped among the graves (forbidden by the Uniate synod under Bishop Janisław in 1326),⁵⁷ mixing life and death – all this seems to reverse the world order. Similarly, there was the student festival in Cracow where the king of the students is appointed, only to be flogged after eight days of “rule.”⁵⁸

These extremes illustrate one of the most important characteristics of entertainment: its difference from normal life is intended to breach life’s proper structures. A form of defence against the anarchical forces inherent in entertainment is to make it uniform, create order out of disorder, and prevent its disintegration.

7. Laughter and the Sense of Ridicule

Laughter is sometimes considered a constituent part of entertainment, its external attribute, and even its objective. Bakhtin and Likhachev discuss the “culture of laughter” (with respect to medieval France and Rus’) as a literary-historical phenomenon, i.e. identified through the medium of literature, but in which important structures of mass sensitivity and the general conduct of a given era manifest themselves. Considering the fact that laughter and a sense of humour form part of morals and civilization and change in line with changes to that model, one can ask: what made medieval people laugh?

Most of all, laughter has various functions. It accompanies all entertainment and joy, and is a sign of general merriment and good mood. Medieval chroniclers describe laughter as a means of expressing a positive climate surrounding persons and events. Laughter also plays an ironic function when it is used to disgrace someone (funny names). But laughter is primarily a response to various situations considered amusing, whereby the things that cause the amusement take various forms.

Any departure from the norm, any difference, is funny. Thus, physical deformity, ugliness, and an inability to adapt to social life; in other words, also blindness’ and lameness, are funny. Imitations of a different person or of a different role, and all kinds of dressing up and travesties, are also funny.

⁵⁷ *Starodowane prawa polskiego pomniki*, ed. A. Helcel (Warsaw–Cracow, 1870), part 2, p. 402: “clerici vel laici induti monstribus larvarum.”

⁵⁸ Kowalewicz, *Zasób, zasięg*, p. 242 ff.

Therefore, anything that reverses the social or moral situation in a broader sense is funny. During student festivals, students in fancy dress would enter a church and the congregation would find it funny (according to Jan Hus). A jester whose job it is to make people laugh says he is a knight, and Duke Witold (who had presented this jester to Teutonic Knights), of course agrees, as a joke, that he should be a knight for half a day. Here one should include certain elements of insanity; an example is a text on insanity included in a manuscript from Królewiec (Königsberg) containing Stanisław Ciołek's *Liber Cancellariae*.⁵⁹ This is a summons from a crazed weaver, Maciej, to other crazed persons, describing himself as a "supporter of all madness, liberated from all unnecessary reason." Significant here is not merely the "praise of idiocy" broadly present in literature at that time, but also the social condition of the hero; madness is the fact that the weaver undertakes intellectual reflection. That is the "funny" situation.

Dishonesty also caused laughter;⁶⁰ the greater the dishonesty, the greater the laughter. The *Chronicle of Polish Dukes (Kronika książąt polskich)* tells of a duke who bought milk from traders at a market stall, poured it into a communal container, and then refused to pay, telling the traders to take their milk back. This caused a fight among the traders over the milk and it was spilled, while the duke enjoyed this tremendously (and, in the end, paid for the spilt milk). This duke makes other *facta digna ridiculo*.⁶¹

The third domain of laughter is coarse humour and sexual innuendo. We know that this was a subject of tavern humour, recorded in literature in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is also represented in numerous court records, sometimes as "literary attempts"; they seldom appeared in writing, and if so mainly as student activity. This type of humour includes the *Cantilena inhonesta*, a rhymed Polish work containing subtle word play. We also find this kind of humour in nicknames, which occasionally developed into proper names.

Art also contained laughter. Although humorous Polish iconography is much poorer than in Western Gothic art, there is no shortage

⁵⁹ *Liber Cancellariae St. Ciołek*, ed. J. Caro, *Archiv für Österreichische Geschichte*, 52 (1874), p. 129 (Polish translation in: *Facecje z dawnej Polski*, p. 58); and T. Tyc, *Z dziejów kultury w Polsce średniowiecznej* (Poznań, 1924), p. 41.

⁶⁰ *Słownik staropolski*, vol. 3 (Wrocław, 1962), p. 105.

⁶¹ *Kronika Xsiążąt polskich*, ed. Z. Węclewski, in: MPH, III (Warsaw, 1960–1961), pp. 510–511.

of comical scenes in the miniatures contained in manuscripts and in Church sculpture. The figure of the court jester appears on the margins of miniatures and in the Augustinian polyptych of Mikołaj Haberschrack. Miniatures showing wild people, apes in red boots and apes making music together with a bear introduce a humorous element to manuscripts. But it seems that there was a moral purpose to this, these humorous illustrations were intended to amuse or ridicule. These illustrations and amusing messages were of limited range not only due to the limited accessibility of manuscripts, but also many funny illustrations required a “key” to understanding them. A sculpture on one end of the buttresses in St. Mary’s Church in Cracow, showing a woman riding a man like a horse, and which is taken to represent Filis who rode Aristotle, may have been viewed by more people than a manuscript, but it also required a knowledge of the literary work to which it referred. Otherwise, it merely conveyed a moral message, the loose morality of women. On the other hand, some scenes of demons conquered by God aimed to instil fear, but were generally perceived as funny.

Laughter appears in various cultural circles and in all social communities. It also occurs in church culture; when works were being read aloud in monasteries, the actions of the devil sometimes caused laughter, and the failure of these actions were meant to arouse laughter and merriment. But laughter and the culture of laughter primarily involved secular groups. Indeed, laughter was an important constituent of secular culture, determining its independence and serving as an instrument for the cultural emancipation of secular society.

Laughter in the Shadow of the Gallows – on Villon

In: *Znak*, 1983, no. 35, pp. 77–102.

This article appeared with an annotation that it had been censored; information that it was written in the internment centre at Jaworze has been removed.

[----] [Act of 31 July 1981 on the control of publications and performances, Article 2 clause 1 (Journal of Laws 1981, no. 29 item 99, as amended in: *Journal of Laws* 1983, no. 44, item 204)]

Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński translated François Villon's *Testament* during World War I, in the autumn and winter of 1916, when the Austrian authorities assigned him to a railway first-aid point as a "recruited doctor." Later, he recalled how he would escape from the "cruel nonsense" of this war, from the bustle, heat and stifling atmosphere of the barracks where he was accommodated, into the world of poetry. He also had the impression that "these verses were oddly vivid in an atmosphere of death and despair." What I have to say pursues this very path. I wish to attempt to consider the fortunes in the creativity of a famous and misunderstood poet, engulfed in his own legend. After all, what do we know about Villon?

Some years ago, there was a survey among students of Romance studies at a French university, to find out how much they knew about Villon. The results were surprising. Nearly all of the students thought highly of Villon's work, explaining this by the depth of Villon's poetic inspiration, strength of conviction, the universal nature of his poetry, the originality of his life's experience beyond the law, and his "questioning" attitude (the survey was held shortly after the student riots in 1968). The answers mainly concerned the poet's character: "a man of a complex personality, an evil-doer and an outlaw, traces of

whom reside in each of us”; “a poet and a man of deeds, opposition in the face of oppression and authoritative rule”; “this is the experience of a man of a certain era, distant from the perspective of time, but close from the human perspective.” Seldom did the students make any formal remarks about the “musicality of the verses” or “poetic spontaneity.” The second question asked how much of Villon’s poetry the students knew. The result was catastrophic. It transpired that they only knew two of his ballads: *Ballade des dames du temps jadis* and *Ballade des pendus*, they could not remember any of his poems properly, and every third student claimed that they only knew about Villon’s poetry through the songs of Brassens and Reggiani. And these were students of Romance studies!

In essence, knowledge about Villon had survived from school days (the above two ballads had been part of French school curricula for many years as examples of Villon’s poetry), but not many had read his poetry since then (an anthology of Villon’s poetry in pocket format had only recently been published). The images of the vagabond poet in people’s minds were essentially stereotypes, flavoured with current slogans. And what about Poland? No one here has conducted a similar survey, but I have the impression that the outcome would be no worse, even though there is no reference to school knowledge, and that there would be similar stereotypes. Boy’s translation, though imprecise and far removed from the text, was in itself an excellent work and ran to many editions (including a 1950 edition with illustrations by Maria Hiszpańska). Villon is present in Jerzy Lisowski’s *Anthology of French Poetry*, Francis Carco’s *Le roman de François Villon* has also been translated into Polish, and Villon’s social group has attracted the attention of Polish readers. But the translation of Villon’s poetry had to be an interpretation, otherwise it would have been impossible. The stereotype spread in France comes from the same source as Boy’s interpretation: from academic surveys and literary criticism at the turn of the 20th century, resulting in the publication of Villon’s complete works by the archivist Auguste Longnon in 1892 and an exhaustive two-volume biography of Villon by the historian Pierre Champion, published in 1913. A work by an archivist, a work by a historian; Villon’s poetry was understood only from his biography, from dusty archives about Villon himself and about the people whose names appear in his works. The judicial archives of Ile-de-France and Burgundy provide a picture of the lives of *pendus*, gallows-figures:

robbery, games of dice and cards, taverns and brothels. It is they of whom Villon writes in his verses, it is they whom he extols, for he is one of them. That is the convention of interpretation applied by Boy; his interpretation somewhat distorts or augments the imagery of the work. The Polish reader is provided with a clear picture of Villon: a poet, criminal and vagabond who praises his own life and those of his comrades, and the emotional tones of remorse, regret, past loves and fear of death are the result of committing crimes.

Encyclopaedia entries about François Villon usually say this: He was born François des Loges, *alias* de Montcorbier, known as Villon, in Paris in 1431. The date of his death is unknown, and that he is the author of *Les Lais* (*Legacy*), also known as *The Legacy*,¹ and of *Testament* (*Le Testament*) known as the *Great Testament*, and of several small works and a few ballads written in incomprehensible jargon. Then, the encyclopaedias discuss his stormy criminal life, mirrored in his literary output. And finally there is a general appraisal, that he was a great poet at the end of the Middle Ages or that he was France's first modern-age poet. School textbooks, compendia, encyclopedias and dictionaries introduce this information to common knowledge. This is worth knowing. But hardly anyone knows that all of this information – all of it! – is doubtful, hypothetical and internally contradictory. One can even say that none of it is true, either the names given or some biographical details, or the association between Villon and his output. Who was Villon? We know nothing certain about him, not even whether he actually wrote, or is merely the hero, of the works attributed to him. And who was the author? An anonymous person calling himself Villon! The Shakespeare connection is not unique in literary history.

Without attempting to climb the steep paths of the history of literature and literary criticism, I would like to examine Villon's work as a documentary of its time. To do so, I must present some information about the fortunes of this work and of its main protagonist. I must not only cast aside the "legend of Villon," but also dismantle the rich critique of his work and the literary portrait formed by the accumulation of the fruits of research. For here we are dealing with a rare case where academic research sprouts a legend, and the efforts of erudition merely impart mythology to a person and his work.

¹ The *Legacy* was translated into Polish after this article was written; see *Legaty, czyli Mały Testament*, transl. J. Kowalski (Poznań, 1994).

Not many manuscript records of Villon's works have survived, and none can be considered written in his own hand. W.G.C. Bijvanck's suggestion that two of Villon's works are contained in a 15th-century manuscript of poetry by Charles d'Orleans has not been confirmed. No manuscript that has survived to our times contains the whole of Villon's output. His works appear in various places in anthologies compiled by copyists. The body of his work is to be found in a first printed edition produced by the Parisian printing house Levet in 1489. This incunabulum includes both "testaments" (i.e. the *Legacy* and *Testament*), several loose ballads together described as a "codicil," and six ballads written in a secret jargon.

Levet's edition provides the basis of almost twenty more editions over the following forty years. In 1533, Clement Marot, one of the most illustrious representatives of French humanism, prepared a new edition of Villon's works which is regarded as the first attempt at a critical edition. Marot admitted that readers at that time were unable to comprehend either the ballads written in a jargon to which they had no key, nor most of the *Lais*, because they did not understand the allusions to people, places or events to be found in them. Despite this, said Marot, the poetry of Villon preserves its force, and time has been unable to diminish the brightness of the "myriad colours" of these verses.

Over thirty editions of Villon's works appeared between 1489 and 1542, which shows that they were widely read and that the invention of printing propelled the medieval poet into popularity. But after this came a period of silence lasting entire centuries, not counting an edition published in Paris in 1723 (and reprinted in the Hague in 1742). Memory of Villon seemed to vanish completely. The Romantic poets rediscovered his creativity: the enthusiasm of Gautier may no doubt be attributed to the fact that seven editions of Villon appeared between 1832 and 1879. The resurgence of his popularity did not immediately cause major critical works, so that a major reason for the rapture over the poetical climate of the "testaments" was that most of the text was not understood.

The work of the historian Auguste Longnon marked a breakthrough. Following a painstaking search through the medieval Paris archives, Lognon produced a key to understanding Villon, and then prepared a first edition of his works that complied with the requirements of modern critique and editorial rules. In his study into the life of

Villon published in 1877, Longnon printed for the first time historical documents mentioning both Villon himself and all those to whom he had made “bequests” in both “testaments.” The illustrious Romance scholar Gaston Paris investigated Villon’s texts, set them to verse, and undertook a historical-literary interpretation. In fact, the poet, writer and essayist Marcel Schwob was the real author of the legend surrounding Villon, combining an interpretation of the medieval “outlaw poet’s” work with a close examination of his life. Slowly, each biographical detail mentioned in Villon’s works, the name of every beneficiary, and each event related in the “testaments” found confirmation in documents. It may seem a paradox that Schwob presented his attempts at interpretation in scholarly communiqués and readings at the Academy of Inscription and Literature or in the Parisian Society of Linguistics in the 1820s, but it is in the archives of Paris and Dijon that Schwob discovered important documents about 15th century criminal gangs and jargon, and copied and examined them, for he believed this was the only way to understand Villon’s poetry. A continuation and summary of the research of Marcel Schwob is the work of Champion, which remains the chief undisputed historical monograph about Villon in the light of historical archives. These archive searches and scholarly treatises created a bridgehead over the centuries: the “outlawed poets” of the 19th century, Baudelaire and Verlaine, found their hero in the shape of a medieval Parisian poet, Villon.

I mention the fortunes of research into Villon because they enable one to understand how his output and his biographical details became completely intertwined. Due to the great interest in the colourful lives of the medieval social margin displayed towards the end of the 19th century and the romantic and post-romantic fashion for everything medieval, Villon developed into a bard representing opposition to the established order, a literary flower of crime, misery and imprisonment. Autobiographical lyricism was a supreme value in 19th-century literary taste, regarded by critics as the basic key to literary interpretation. Later, literary tastes changed, and so did the programs of literary criticism, but in Villon’s case the above pattern of thought remained unchanged: it is Villon’s biography that made his poetry great. Even Paul Valéry, who called for an internal analysis of poetical texts and rejected the idea of interpreting literary output on the basis of biography, considered in Villon’s case the “biographical issue” as vital

for an understanding of his works, and devoted his attention to them, drawing a parallel between Villon and Verlaine.

Pierre Guiraud opposed this tradition of research into Villon and attempted a fresh interpretation of both of his “testaments.” He denied that they were autobiographical and claimed that they were didactical and satirical works referring to the style of medieval rhetoric. He said they had been written in a community of lower court attendees who enjoyed playing with court terminology and procedures, making these an object of satire and parody. In an earlier work, Guiraud tried to decipher ballads written in jargon that no one had yet understood, and applied the same lexicographical key to both of Villon’s “testaments,” believing that the names in them were not really names of real people but cryptograms: it was enough to break the names down into syllables in order to understand their meanings. Instead of poetry of love and entertainment, we find word play; instead of autobiographical lyricism, we have a verbal code by an unknown court writer. Guiraud’s interpretation may be considered scholarly pedantry (he himself admits this!), deaf to the real voice of poetry. Nevertheless, his interpretation has rendered a service, as it has undermined the thesis about the inevitable intertwining of biographical legend with poetry and about the impossibility of understanding this poetry without any autobiographical point of reference.

This is not the first time that doubts appear regarding the authorship of the “testaments.” But they were not caused by the discovery of new documents or by the discrediting of previously existing sources, or by an analysis of the works themselves. The doubts were caused by an automatic assumption that a criminal cannot be a poet and that common crime cannot possibly be associated with a gift from the Muses. Thus, the dispute over Villon exceeds the framework of the 19th century question of *poètes maudits* and assumes a new form; a prehistory, as it were, of the problem of Jean Genet in modern literature. From all these sediments of literary legend and the likes and prejudices of researchers and literary people, is it at all possible to establish anything certain about Villon and his works?

The works themselves state their authorship clearly. The *Lais* begin with the words “I, François Villon, begin in the year 1456,” and repeat his name at the end. *The Great Testament*, written, as the *Lais*, in the first person, mentions the author by name and asks for prayers for the soul of a “poor” Villon once in ballad form, and once in the form of an

epitaph, saying: “here lay the poor François Villon,” and eventually in the final ballad: Here concludes and ends the last will of the poor Villon; apart from this, Villon’s name appears twice in *Testament* in the form of an acrostic. In smaller works, too, his name appears in this form several times.

A few biographical details are also to be found in the text. Both in the *Lais* written in 1456, and in the *Great Testament* written a few years later, shortly after Louis XI had ascended the throne, Villon describes himself as an *escholier*; in other words, a student. But in the *Legacy* he says that a university conferred some “nomination” upon him which he bequeaths to a Parisian cleric, which may be considered a university degree. The *Great Testament* begins with the words “In my thirtieth year of age,” which led researchers to assume that he was born about the year 1430. There he recalls his deceased father and his “poor mother,” to whom he caused much grief and pain, and master Wilhelm de Villon, who, he says was more than a father to him and rescued him from many crises (researchers have found that this was a chaplain at the Church of St. Benedict in the Latin Quarter, a master of the liberal arts and a law professor). Some other details of our hero’s life emerge against the Parisian university and judicial background. His was a stormy life, leading via various Parisian groups, and eventually to exile, from Paris to Roussillon:

There is no bush or shrub
Which did not have (this is the truth)
some tatters from his shirt [...].²

The searches by Longnon, Schwob and their successors have revealed Villon’s name in Paris university files and court archives. Two letters of amnesty were found, issued by the royal chancellery in January 1456: to “Master François de Loges, alias de Villon, twenty six years of age or thereabouts” and to “François de Monterbier, master of the liberal arts.” The subject of both documents is the same: involvement in a fight in the cloisters of St. Benedict’s, where a priest called Philippe Sermoise (or Chermoye) was killed. It has been conjectured that both letters concern one and the same person who, for the sake of caution, provided two names so that he could receive a letter of amnesty

² *The Complete Works of François Villon*, transl., with a biography and notes by A. Bonner, and an introd. by W.C. Williams (New York, 1960), p. 155.

in each name. The register of the Parisian faculty of the liberal art contains, under the year 1449, an entry whereby François de Montcorbier became a teacher, then in May 1452 a licentiate, and in August 1452 a master of the liberal arts. Assuming the next hypothesis, whereby the differences in the names are a coincidence and that des Loges – de Monterbier – de Montcorbier – de Villon are one and the same person, we achieve the first structure of Villon’s monograph: he successfully completed university in Paris, and four years later was involved in a bloody fight over love. Court and university archives note another two criminal affairs involving Villon (no other names are given). Towards the end of 1456, less than one year after the amnesty letters, Villon and a group of friends broke into the College of Navarre, which belonged to the faculty of theology, and stole 500 ducats in gold. One of the group, Guy Tabarie, a master in the liberal arts, was caught and tried, while Villon himself left Paris and did not return until the autumn of 1461. In 1462, he was imprisoned in connection with the robbery, but released through the efforts of the College of Navarre, to whom he pledged to repay 120 ducats. A few months later, in December 1462, he was involved in a brawl in which one of his friends mortally injured a scribe and owner of a scriptorium, François Ferrebourg. This time, Villon was sentenced to death by a Paris criminal court known for its severity, but he appealed and the Paris parliament commuted his sentence to ten years in exile. The appeal verdict of January 1463 is the last historical trace of Villon. There is no contradiction between the information in the historical documents and the autobiographical information contained in both “testaments.” The said François des Loges, called Villon, appearing in the first letter of amnesty was 26 years old in 1456; in the *Great Testament* the author writes in 1461 that he is aged 30. So the age is correct. In both cases, the scene is Paris and the university community. In the *Legacy*, written in the winter of 1456 around Christmas, the poet, listening to the sound of the Sorbonne bell, says he must flee from Paris, putting this down to unrequited love. But it is difficult to expect him to give the real reason, so perhaps he wrote this work soon after the robbery at the College of Navarre? We find no mention of the killing of Father Sermoise in any of Villon’s works, but perhaps he preferred not to mention it. Neither is there any reference to Ferrebourg’s death, but it occurred after the *Great Testament* had been written, and the moving epitaph called *Ballade des Pendus* is considered

by critics to have been written while Villon was still waiting for the result of his appeal against being hanged.

If there is indeed no contradiction between the autobiographical and personal information in the documents and the information given in Villon's works, there is no reason to associate these two threads of information. The documents contain no indication that Villon was a poet, and his poetry makes no mention of the events described in the documents. Thus, archives and poetry are joined by the name Villon and the social topography of the action. It is difficult to deny that the entire reasoning in categories of autobiographical interpretation is based on a very shaky foundation and remains a hypothesis.

For it is also possible that some Parisian author or even an arrival from the provinces (a linguistic analysis indicates influence by eastern French dialects) used the name of a criminal who was popular in Paris and composed two contrasting testaments according to autobiographical convention. Historical archives provide a great deal of information about Villon the criminal, the hero of the work, but nothing about the anonymous author who adopted the name of the hero he describes. Thus, separating the hero and the author does not merely disintegrate a certain model of interpreting the *Great Testament*, but may also help understand and feel this poetry and its place in the "autumn of the Middle Ages" and in modern culture.

So there is no Villon the ruffian poet, but an anonymous and completely unknown writer, perhaps a court scribe, who assumed the name Villon just for fun? I do not intend to – and would not be able to – enter into a detailed discussion about Villon the author and Villon the literary hero, in which one should refer to a textual analysis, historical-literary criticism and lexicographical research. I merely want to say that for me, this entire mental construction is equally as hypothetical and shaky as the autobiographical legend.

First of all, there is Villon's name. Why should an anonymous author use it as his own, reminding the reader of this in his narrative? This would be understandable if it were a controversial name, if the deeds of the Parisian master who embarked upon the path of robbery and bloody brawls were generally known. And this in 1456, when Villon already had one brawl and perhaps involvement in the 1451 student riots to his account. There is no trace of such a reputation of Villon in the literary and historical documents of that time, and yet modern chronicles record major events in Paris in detail, not omitting

the *causes célèbres* of that time. Only in the *Great Testament* can one find evidence that Villon was more widely known. He recalls that when leaving Paris in 1456:

[...] I composed on my departure
certain legacies, in ‘fifty-six,
which some, with no consent of mine,
have wished to call a *Testament*; [...].³

But this is merely evidence that the previous author enjoyed a certain success. We do not even know if this success went further than the community of Paris, who may have known some of the legatees who were being ridiculed long after Villon had left Paris for good and all trace of him was lost. One can say that Villon’s name began to live its own life when it appeared in print by Levet and became the French equivalent of *Sowizdrzał*. Popular literature distributed and read at fairs included the “Free Banquets of Master François and his Companions” (printed around 1500), showing Villon as a buffoon, cunning fellow and master of fraud, who can always have a free banquet at other people’s expense. In the 16th century, his name began to appear as a generic name of fraud, either as a verb or as a noun (*villon*, *villoner*, *villonerie*). In Rabelais, one finds two anecdotes about Villon in which attempts were made to find historical evidence of him after 1463. In one of them, Villon appears as a court jester to King Edward IV of England, and in the other he spends his last days at Saint-Maixent in Poitou and engages in staging mystery plays together with a troupe of “jugglers.” But there is no evidence whatsoever of Villon’s reputation before the final decade of the 15th century, and everything suggests that he became a hero of folklore only after his works had been printed. That is when Villon’s name became known and developed its own life independent of the works in which it appeared. For a legend obviously has a distorting effect: the popular image of Villon was formed by the facetious *Ballad for Fat Margot* or the ballad containing a good lesson for bad men (*Ballade of Good Doctrine*). The words “everything for the tavern and for girls” were remembered, but everything else was forgotten. Assuming that an anonymous author merely used Villon’s name to underscore the facetious nature of the “testaments,” one fails to understand why

³ Ibid., p. 63.

the name appears only in minor works that have no connection with those works. In a letter to friends in which he asks them not to forsake him in need, when he is waiting for release from jail (“Will you leave poor Villon?”), one can assume this retains the same convention. But it does not explain the *Epistle to Marie d’Orléans* written in the style of “high poetry” and signed “your poor François,” or the *Ballade of Good Doctrine* and the *Ballade of Franc Gontier Refuted*, in which Villon’s name appears.

Villon’s disappearance without a trace after January 1463 should come as no surprise. Perhaps he ended up in a troupe of “comedians,” as Rabelais says, or perhaps he died as a hermit in some roadside brawl, as literary legend is fond of saying. But he may just as well have received a good position, abandoned Paris, and treated his poetical adventure as a sin of youth. That is what happened to more than one vagrant poet in the 12th and 13th centuries as soon as he received a proper post. One is surprised to find former *goliards* among people who made rapid careers in churches and schools, as bishops and professors.

I do not believe it is worth wasting paper about the authorship. The author of Villon’s poetry is simply Villon, except that we know nothing certain about him. The most likely hypothesis is that he was a Paris university student who has left traces in court records, that he came into conflict with the law, sat in prison and faced the threat of the gallows. He got to know the community of Parisian lawyers not only in the dock, but he was also very likely a court scribe (or a writer in the Paris tax chamber); after all, we do not know what he did between 1452, when he gained his university degrees, and 1456, when he left Paris. The acceptance of these hypotheses does not mean that we agree with this autobiographical interpretation of Villon’s creativity, for the “testaments” can be taken as works of late medieval imagination and poetic sensitivity, if we remove the criminal layer imposed by legend.

The idea of a testament as a poetic message used by Villon in 1456 and 1461 is nothing surprising for this period, for it was also referred to by the popular 15th century poet Alain Chartier, and also appears in literary parodies produced by the corporation of court officials called “Basoche” as a form of scholarly entertainment. These were popular works which ridiculed anything that was normally serious and even sacred.

In the Bakhtin's "culture of laughter," both of the "testaments" function with their formal poetic structure and their content. Word play is standard practice. Villon resorts to dialectical differences, which provide a richer source of double meanings full of sexual innuendo or the use of the names to represent characters. Here is an example: In the *Great Testament* there appears a man called Jehan Le Loup, i.e. John Wolf, described as a "decent fellow and a merchant," who is at the same time a Parisian police officer. His name kindles associations: *enjane* means he cheats while *loup* signifies someone who is bad and quarrelsome, but it also means the sexual act.

It may be surprising that a poet used such word tricks. Villon's minor works include one called the *Ballade de proverbes*, in which every verse begins with the word *tant* and several others, a deliberate monotonous construction. But one should bear in mind that such fun was standard literary practice in those times. In 15th century French literature, one encounters many examples of works involving a play on words, double entendre and metaphors. Etymology played a major role in writing and in medieval culture in general. It was considered the key to understanding the meaning of words. In learned treatises and in the lives of saints, names had hidden meanings. A man's name often characterized his physical and psychological feature, and foretold his future deeds. The etymology of the name of a city was meant to enable one to understand its historical fate. The use of such formal procedures did not restrict readership of these texts to the initiated, for the art of polysemy was widely applied in medieval culture. It meant that the same text could be read at four levels, as it were. Even with scenes from the Bible, whether painted or written, the way they were understood depended on the knowledge and culture of the recipient. Instruction on the "four senses" of the Bible was a manifestation of the polysemic culture of this age. The creativity of Provençal troubadours also contains a mystic element, *trobar clus*, imposed as it were upon the romantic layer and comprehensible only by the initiated. It is in his context that the formal structure of Villon's poetry must be understood. Various codes were used, understandable to some readers or listeners but not to others. Some understood the scholarly references to classical literature and historical events, others perceived the derision towards well-known members of Parisian society, and others enjoyed the coarse verbal allusions. The same text or a fragment could be interpreted in a serious manner on the one

hand, or as satire on the other.

The use of the first person allows Villon to place the emphasis on laughter. He laughs mainly at himself; at his life, his escapades, his long years of education, even his death. He wants to be remembered as a buffoon and wants to have the epitaph mentioned earlier placed on his grave. He mocks love, yet he directs the laughter against himself. In the famous *Ballad for Fat Margot*, he presents himself as a pimp. Self-derision reaches a peak here, and the humour borders on the obscene. In the last stanza of the ballad, where the initial letters of the verses form the name “Villon,” he calls:

Through wind, hail or frost my living's made.
 I am a lecher, and she's a lecher with me.
 Which one of us is better? We're both alike:
 the one as worthy as the other. Bad rat, bad cat.
 We bod love filth, and filth pursues us;
 we flee from honor, honor flees from us
 in this brothel where we ply our trade.⁴

The audience at the time had no doubt this was a joke. The name Margot was a synonym for a prostitute, but “Fat Margot” was the name of a well-known tavern in the Parisian Cité. But the target of the coarse laughter evoked by the ballad is the author himself.

He wishes to include everything in his laughter. He does not spare court officials or municipal councillors, professors and bishops, priests and monks. He touches urban and church institutions, courts and hospitals, monasteries and cemeteries. Noah and Lot are the subjects of a jocular ballad, and he exposes the truths of the faith to laughter. He recalls the fires of hell in a parody of a testament, and in hell recalls a wine lover:

Guzzlers who, since drinks are so expensive,
 imbibe their coats and shirts
 would not fare so well down there.
 May God spare us this, all jokes aside.⁵

Even the prayer he seems to turn into a joke, and call the name of God when in need of a rhyme. He preaches moral obligations, but

⁴ Ibid., p. 107.

⁵ Ibid., p. 65.

they sound like a praise of what they condemn. When he addresses his friends “with whom I had good times, whose souls are sick and bodies well”, his moral teaching sounds almost like a mockery – both of himself, preaching morals, and of those he addresses.

Are you shocked by such evil as this?
 Then go work in the fields with the farmers
 and patch up the sores on horses and mules
 if you don't even know how to read;
 you'll be alright, if you're not too impatient.
 But if you're a fellow who combs and cleans hemp,
 be careful the money you make doesn't vanish
 all to the girls and the taverns.⁶

The double ballad of the Belle Hëaulmiere, noted in 1415 and referring to a certain Parisian beauty, though this may well have been the name of a Parisian inn, pour scorn upon the love of women because beauty passes away with age:

I'm sure there is no man smart enough,
 (where his wits as fine as purest silver),
 to avoid being stripped by love
 of his last rags and beaten just as I, [...] ⁷

Here, death applies equally to the prostitutes (for the Beautiful Armourer is addressed to girls of loose morals), and to staid women, accusing female nature of a tendency to be immoral and claiming that even loose women were once virtuous. A call for free love (love as much as you desire) makes a mockery of traditional courtly love and its subtle and refined procedures. However, one must not forget that here, as in many other cases, laughter and joy are a counterpoint to the inevitable decay of the body and pathetic old age. Significantly, the counterpoint here is old age and death, that the body is countered by its decay, that Eros is faced by Thanatos. There is no talk of sin. In *La volonté de savoir*, Michel Foucault argued that in the middle of the 16th century, new requirements regarding conscience and spirituality led to a social prohibition on discussing sex. And before then? The example of Villon leads one to assume that the wide border of sinful-

⁶ Ibid., p. 113.

⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

ness went hand-in-hand with greater freedom to discuss sex than was the case in the modern age.

Villon's amorous images are earthly, and sometimes shocking with their course detail (sometimes exaggerated in Boy's translation). Here, we discover Mikhail Bakhtin's thesis in which the culture of laughter opposes the old order of the world, referring to the "bottom of the body." This is not just eroticism. In some of Villon's poetry, the human body is an object of bitter laughter due to its drastic nature. Here is a forecast of death:

I feel my thirst approaching: I spit gobs of phlegm
as white as cotton, as big as tennis balls [...].⁸

Villon leads this tone to the limits of aural and mental tolerance in his ballad on envious tongues (later editors gave titles to individual ballads, but have left this one unnamed). In it, Villon curses: "let them fry, those envious tongues" in the form of a recipe, parodying medieval cookery books. This literary device lends them a particular tone. Scatology appears in various parts of *The Testament* but *The Legacy*, full of erotic associations, has no scatological elements. However, the ballad on envious tongues has a Pantagruel-like tone, combining taste with distaste. In the kingdom of taste, which is the kitchen, there are extreme cases of distaste.

The above counterpoint principle is an integral part of the "back-to-front" model represented in medieval Carnival culture. In a general sense and in their detailed imagery, both of Villon's "testaments" belong to this model. Villon calls young poor students university masters (including himself), bearing titles conferred by a key French university and fulfilling major Church functions. In *The Legacy*, he mentions among the legatees "three small children, completely naked, orphans with no property, with nothing to wear." And who are they, in truth? One is a rich spice merchant, another is a notary in Chatelet, and the third is one of Paris' most affluent pawnbrokers. The poor orphans are usurers, rich Parisian patricians! A similar "back-to-front" situation applies to most of the characters in Villon's "testaments" – he does this either through the descriptions of the characters or through the type of legacy, and also applies word associations. A Parisian

⁸ Ibid., p. 61.

foundling hospital near Notre Dame Cathedral bears the name “hospital for found children”; instead of making them a bequest, Villon deals with “lost children”:

Item: to the Foundlings nothing, but those
who’ve gone astray must be consoled [...].⁹

Another example of this literary device is a ballad called *Les contredits de Franc Gontier*. A popular tale by Philippe de Vitry, bishop of Meaux (who died in 1362) praises the simple life of the poor rustic Franc Gontir and his wife, Helene. Villon presents Gontir as a model of virtuous life in poverty, a model which was popular in medieval literature and was an attack on the comforts of court life. Villon juxtaposes the picture of Gontir, eating rye, oatmeal or barley bread, with the bare soil for a mattress, with another picture:

A fat canon seated on downy cushions,
beside a stove in a room well-matted,
and Dame Sidoine lying at his side [...].¹⁰

And because, as he says, “there is no treasure quite like living at one’s ease”, such an easy life would appeal also to the poor:

If Franc Gontier and his companion Helen
had ever led a life as sweet as this,
they wouldn’t give a damn for scallions
or onions which cause bad breath,
nor for their curds or stews.¹¹

Villon claims that he suffers a poverty no worse than Gontir, but unlike Gontir he takes no liking to it. This is not merely a conflict of literary imagery, but also a denial of the medieval praise for poverty and a reversal of the very values that dominate the world outlook.

In Villon’s work one discerns various sociological images of various groups and social categories: burghers and clerics, university people and police and court officials, men and women. Occasionally these images are surreal. For example, in *The Legacy* we see a cleric sitting at a table

⁹ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 99.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 101.

in winter, and in the distance, the bell of the Sorbonne announces the Angelus, the ink freezes in the inkwell, the wind blows out the candle, and his head collapses on the pulpit... Villon often writes in a tone of grotesque exaggeration, even scorn, occasionally using imagery. The world of crime occupies a special place in this imagery.

The fortunes of the historical Villon and *The Testament* can be treated as a picture of the life of the social margin and as evidence of its imagination. When I occupied myself years ago with the social margins in later medieval Paris, the biography of François des Loges, called Villon, did not stand out in my files from others whose lives I could have reconstructed on the basis of court files. Among the verses of *The Testament* I found the names of other people from this group, the names of the taverns which they used to frequent, and a peculiar topography shaped by prisons, roads and gallows. But leaving aside the biography of the real or imagined author, the picture of medieval crime painted by this poetry belongs to the *monde détourné*, to the reversed world, and that is probably how it was read at that time.

“Now whether you peddle indulgences, or learn to use loaded dice, or counterfeit coins” are the first words of the *Ballade of Good Doctrine* mentioned earlier. Added to this list later are musicians, thieves, comedians, jugglers and card players. All of them are – clients for the gallows. In a previous ballad, in which Villon uses the jargon of thieves (to go to Montpipeau means to steal, and to go to Rueil means to commit a crime), Villon recalls Celin de Cayeux (Koleń Kaięński in Boy’s translation), the son of a locksmith, who organized or took part in the robbery at the Navarre College, belonged to the gang called the *Coquillards*, and who hung from the gallows in 1460. This is a warning, but with gallows humour. As I have said, the moral admonition in this context sounds like praise for a carefree way of life, easy money and equally easy spending.

In another ballad, Villon boasts that he understands well the secret jargon of fraudsters. This is expressed not only in the jargon in *The Testament*, but mainly in his works written in jargon. Levet’s edition of 1486 contains six ballads under the joint title *Le jargon et jobelin dudit Villon*. They were already incomprehensible in the 16th century, and parts of them have still not been interpreted. In 1968, Pierre Guiraud announced a fresh attempt to decipher Villon’s jargon ballads. He believes they were encrypted according to three codes: theft, games of chance, and romance. Every word, and thus every ballad, has three

meanings, and the whole must be read on three levels. The result is coherent, but hypothetical and open to discussion, especially when reading the third code, romance. Limiting ourselves to the first level of readership, where Guiraud's assumptions seem the most certain, so we find in each of the six jargon ballads a picture of a different category of the world of thieves and fraudsters which, as I tried to show in my book *Świat "opery żebraczej,"* was standard practice in medieval and modern-day literature. Villon presents in turn: burglars and thieves, the bandits known as the *Coquillards*, fraudsters and thieves acting in taverns, card sharps, those who "trick" naive people, and finally all sorts of money forgers. The jargon ballads do not extol crime, but condemn it. In these encrypted ballads, we find the same tone as in *The Testament* – a derisory moral admonition. Crime leads to death. Court flunkies and their clients are everywhere, and whoever falls into their hands ends up in torture and betrays himself and his companions. And finally, the gallows (and for money forgers, being boiled alive), a dismal picture of *fourches patibulaires*, where the bodies of several evildoers hang next to each other, swaying in the wind. Fear of torture, and fear of the executioner's hand placing the noose around one's neck, is meant to deter one from crime and fraud.

Thus, this "counter-society" which Villon addresses in its own language and which is incomprehensible to ordinary society, is a subject of laughter and scorn. As in a modern-age picaresque tale, a fraudster becomes the victim of fraud. A vagabond, bird of freedom, ends up in jail. He who causes a fight falls victim to a fight. He who inflicts death ends up dead himself.

From the fact that Villon knew the secret jargon of crime, one can conclude that he was being self-derisory and was laughing at his own circle. In such a case, he must have returned to a biographical interpretation: Villon, having taken part in a burglary of the Navarre College in 1456, might, as biographers suggest, have entered the world of organized crime after leaving Paris and joined the *Coquillards*, where he was taught the jargon. But one often forgets that jargons were not just a professional code, but also a literary product. That was the case with the Arab beggars' jargon in the 11th century and the Italian *furbesco* in the 15th century. In the court of the caliphs and in the Florentine court of the Medici, the fashion for things esoteric and exoteric might have encouraged people to learn secret jargons

and treat them as literary forms. Jargons assumed their own existence and lost their role as a linguistic tool of a professional group. Among the jargons of the 15th century, one can still detect an aim to conceal activities from the police, and even a certain pride and sense of superiority felt by a closed society. Under Villon's penmanship, a counter-punctual exploitation of a secret language occurred: ballads in jargon declare the strength of the authorities' apparatus and mock the miserable condition of the criminal society.

I do not believe one can judge Villon merely of playing a "reversal" game like children do (when they say yes, they mean no, etc.), or that this is merely a joke or mockery. In the world of the Carnival, the "topsy-turvy" world is the established order. This is a model of a world that is not only a negative of the real world, but also a denial of the prevailing social vision. Here, death acted as a liberator: it opposed pathos, undermined convention, supported sublimation, and overthrew the hierarchy of people, objects, values and words. In the realm of laughter, the word is an instrument of laughter: it reveals its elasticity, changeability and ambiguity. Word play strips discourse, a manifestation of official culture, of its seriousness. Thus, laughing at words and fraud oppose the domination of official ideology and culture.

Critics of Bakhtin's concept of the culture of laughter have shown that there is no justification in identifying the popular culture of laughter and the official or elitist culture of seriousness as the diachronic consequence of medieval and modern-age (or perhaps Renaissance) culture. For where would Villon's place be? Treating Villon's model of laughter as simply a tool of the "destruction of the old model of the world, created by a dying era, and the creation of a new model whose centre is man," which is how Bakhtin described the laughter of Rabelais, would be an indefensible simplification. Leaving aside the model of downplaying the cultural value of the Middle ages, it is difficult to accept a simple, dichotomous juxtaposition of the culture of laughter and the culture of seriousness. Poor Villon, the funny and derisory Villon, is at the same time a poet of seriousness, thoughtfulness and a facilitator of reflections on life.

Most of all, Villon's works testify an extensive literary and intellectual culture. In *The Testament* we find numerous references to historical and literary figures. In the *Autre Ballade des seigneurs du temps jadis* appear Charlemagne and the famous 14th century military leader Bertrand du Guesclin, in addition to whom Villon names an entire galaxy of

European dukes and kings who died between 1454 and 1461. Among the “ladies of ages past” he mentions famous beauties of ancient times, one of them being Archippa (Archipiades in the original); he means Alcibiades, who was regarded as a woman in the Middle Ages because Boetius called him a model of good looks. There is also the scholarly “Hélöise, so wise, for whom Pierre Abelard was gelded and made a monk at Saint-Denis.” Medieval women’s names appear: Big-footed Berta, legendary mother of Charlemagne, and Alice. He gives historical examples: Arembourg, who in the 13th century inherited the county of Maine from her father, and, from most recent history, Joan of Arc, “good Joan of Lorraine whom the English burnt at Rouen.”

The references to literature are varied. Villon recalls the *Tale of the Rose*, referring to Macrobius, the tale of the Danish Stallion, and the *Legend of Teofil*, recorded many times in the Middle Ages. In the form of an exemplum, in other words a separate tale, one finds in *The Testament* an anecdote about Alexander the Great’s conversation with a robber. Villon even states the origin of this anecdote:

Valerian, whom Romans called “The Great,”
vouches for this story’s truth.¹²

In any case, it does not come from Valerius Maximius at all, but from John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* (perhaps through a work by Jean de Bueil called *Jouvencel*), but it is interesting that Villon wanted to underline his knowledge of ancient culture. He also displays a knowledge of ancient history in the minor work *Ballade au nom de la Fortune*.

This literary and historical erudition is not just an instrument of laughter, but a subject of laughter per se; it reflects mockery of the frequent habit of simulated learning in medieval poetry. But these references are also a means for the author and his readers to communicate and take part in culture. In the Middle Ages there was a continuous exchange between scholarly culture and popular culture. In popular culture, religious and secular history functioned in the form of opinions and fables recorded and perpetuated in church sculptures and paintings, iconography, and exempla in sermons. The story of Lazarus, of the love between Heloise and Abelard, the news about the Scottish king, “half of whose face, from the forehead

¹² Ibid., p. 31.

almost to the teeth, was as red as a berry” (King James II of Scotland, who died in 1460), functioned synchronically, next to each other, in medieval minds.

Villon’s intellectual university output, although also subjected to the ridicule of readers, can be seen in his works. Many years ago, Étienne Gilson produced an excellent analysis of the elements of scholastic culture in both “testaments.” In *The Legacy*, the legates include books from the classic school curriculum such as *Ars memorativa*. Occasionally there are allusions to the legal issues that troubled the canonists at the Sorbonne, Parisian lawyers and the municipal clerical community in general, for one record states: “And the itemized decree, *Omnis utriusque sexus*, against the bull for Carmelites, I bequeath to priests – let them enforce it” – which refers to the bull of 1446, confirming the right of the Mendicant orders to hear confession, which was a breach of the clergy’s right laid down by the Lateran Council in 1215 in the decree called *Omnis utriusque sexus*. The final verses of *The Legacy*, after the end of the legates, are a lesson in medieval psychology given the way Aristotle was understood at the time. Villon himself refers to Aristotle, saying that he read in his works, “if my memory serves me right”, that “sensation roused itself and next incited Fantasy, which woke other organs and held that sovereign part suspended, near to death by oppression of forgetfulness which was dispersed through me to prove itself allied with Sense.”¹³ Stirring up mental faculties sets fantasy in motion and reveals the unity of the senses. This is a joke about academic thinking, but is indeed a lesson itself in a nutshell.

This also applies to the *Ballade des menus propos*, in which Villon recounts everything he knows. He says he can tell people apart from their clothing, knows about secular and lay clothing, and can tell the difference between industrious people and layabouts. He knows about trees, fruit, and wine. He also knows what can be interpreted from “visions.” He knows the authorities in Rome and knows about the “error of the Bohemians” (i.e. the Hussite heresy). There is only one thing in the world that he does not know: himself: “I have learned about everything except myself.” In the monotonous list, the refrain rings out with vigour. The final ballad message is preceded by the words: “I know death, which swallows everything.” He praises

¹³ Ibid., p. 17.

knowledge and a derision of knowledge of man, a confrontation of learned knowledge of man and man's self-consciousness – laughter goes hand-in-hand with thoughts on the human condition. And, most of all, death.

In Huizinga's vision of the "autumn of the Middle Ages" as a crisis in a certain culture, the issue of death is regarded as an important contributing factor to the feeling that the old world has outlived itself. Over 25 years ago, in an excellent work about the sense of death as the Middle Ages finally gave way to the Renaissance, Alberto Tenenti discussed the images associated with the concepts of "life" and "death" in poetry, art and literature on the art of death. Recent years have seen an enormous expansion of research into social attitudes towards death. Historians have examined sources such as wills, masses ordered for the deceased, and iconography and tombstones. This research is gradually revealing a picture of the changes that have taken place in the way that people view death. In Christian civilization, society has been both indifferent and sensitive to death. Christianity has put forth the idea of man's individual responsibility for his death (which Philippe Ariès dates at the end of the Middle Ages), as well as a feeling of common fate caused by original sin. It is difficult to talk of sharp divisions because in the history of mentality, one ought not to think in terms of sharp changes, but more in terms of gradual alterations to phenomena and a gentle shift in the balance of behaviour, where some forms of conduct take precedence over others. Although there is not necessarily a connection between attitudes and the collective behaviour stored in the subconscious on the one hand, and literary discourse on the other, Villon's vision of death should be considered in the light of this new research. The very form of the works, a parody of a testament, seems to bring forth the question of death. However, death is hardly mentioned in *The Legacy*; it is not the justification for the work, nor does it encroach upon the humour of the legates: a testament is agreed to be drawn up prior to departure on a journey, except that the return is never certain: "I am not a man without a blemish. Nor am I formed of steel. Yet the life of human beings is uncertain...." However, in *The Testament* death doubtlessly sets the tone of the work and is a recurrent leitmotif in it. It appears most of all as a personification known in medieval iconography, with whom Villon conducts a discourse or talks about it, and the reader receives a picture of the Grim Reaper.

Death, I appeal against your harshness;
 which took away my mistress,
 and still you'll not be satisfied
 until you have me listless too.

Since then, I've had no strength or vigour.
 But when alive, what harm did she do you?

Death is merciless; it gets everyone: wise, mad, lay people, priests,
 it spares neither noble nor peasant. Nor is there any use in seeking
 help; man is alone in the face of death:

And no one can relieve him in his agony;
 for he has no brother, child or sister
 who in that moment wants to take his place.¹⁴

In a long verse, Villon mentions popes and emperors, kings and dukes, monks and beautiful women – they have all died. In this picture, history appears to be a great cemetery in which there is room for those who live. This repetitive thought about the equality of all classes, estates and professions before death is of course a reflection of the popular literary and artistic motive of the “dance of death,” which will continue in later centuries. At the cemetery near the church of the Innocents, in the 15th century there was a giant fresco, the *Danse Macabre*, in which death dances with representatives of all the estates.

This image of death, which belonged to late medieval literature (and is also known in Polish medieval literature) is accompanied in Villon's work by a discourse in terms of the “realism of the body” concerning the physiological image of death. After all, death occurs in pain and in degradation of the body:

Whoever dies, dies in pain
 such that breath fails him:
 his spleen bursts upon his heart,
 he sweats – good God, what sweat!¹⁵

Death causes spasms, makes the face pale, distorts the nose, expands the neck, tenses the nerves and tendons, and makes the body limp.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁵ Ibid.

The poetic verse here possesses the function of anatomical sketches. This unnerving description, which seems to be medical observation cruelly imposed on the picture of physical love (after all, the next verses talk of love play: “Make love when you want”), is extended in the final part of *The Testament*, when Villon describes the cemetery at the Church of the Innocents where there is no longer time to play and where a heap of bones and skulls in the ossuary appears to be the result of eliminating social differences prior to death: “You have no master or servant there.” Those who ruled and those who bowed to them now lie together in a heap. My conscientiousness as a historian compels me to point out that differences in health and social status were preserved at this cemetery in the Middle Ages. The poor were buried in a *fosse commune*, whilst the rich could have their own graves and mausoleums. Prayers for the dead and the number of masses said for them also made a distinction between rich and poor. But Villon presents these images of decay and of heaps of bones and skulls with macabre realism, from the moment of agony to the moment of death when the soul leaves the body. We find the same tone in the *Ballade des pendus*, in which he mentions the living the names of the dead, and addresses affluent people with the names of the wretches who dangled on the gallows:

You see us, five, six, strung up here:
as for our flesh, which we have fed too well,
already it has been devoured and is rotten,
and we, the bones, now turn to dust and ashes.¹⁶

For the loss of those sentenced is all the more terrible because they are to continue the revolting spectacle of execution. The bodies of persons hanged on the gallows and swaying in the wind, blackened and dried, surrounded by a cloud of crows, are also meant to warn people of death. We find gallows in the foreground or background in every ballad written in jargon. Their function is to make everyone equal vis-à-vis the criminal world; they erase the differences between courage, cunning and criminal skills. A face contorted in pain, as the sixth jargon ballad shows, is an example of Villon’s derisory didacticism, but it also demonstrates a sense of the macabre prevalent at that time.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 163.

The vision of death, inevitable, merciless, painful, is a counterpoint to Villon's praise of life and sensual joy. In this way, the lyrical picture of the passing of the world becomes particularly dramatic. One can say that two refrains from Villon's ballads, dealing with death, have entered European literature: "Where are the snows of days gone by?" and "Gone with the wind." But this tone is set by the entire body of "autobiographical confessions" in *The Testament*: both the derisory regret for the past years of youth and reminiscences of life, love and play. The shadow of death hangs over them.

The demographic crises of that time, and the major epidemics that shook Europe in the 14th century, are sometimes held responsible for the macabre elements in late medieval literature and art. There is no doubt that the sight of cities decimated by the plague, heaps of bodies carried through the streets in carts and the mass graves brought by the Black Death in 1348–1350 and several more times until the end of the century, left a powerful mark on social consciousness, but I believe that those historians who say that the "obsession with death" in the late Middle Ages had a more complex origin and was connected with changes to the structure of families, migration processes and socio-psychological weakness, are correct. And that the autonomy of the individual and the need to break the loneliness of death appear when one is afraid of it.

In the *Ballade of the Hanged*, Villon turns to God and to people, asking for mercy for souls and for prayer. He calls:

Commend us, now we are dead,
to Jesus, Son of Virgin Mary,
that His grace's source shall not dry up for us.¹⁷

We have said that Villon's laughter embraces everything and that he directs his scorn against bishops, monks and priests, and that even prayer seems to be parodied. So when he asks: "Men, here there is no joking, but pray to God that He absolve us all," are we to believe him?

And this is not only when he writes about death that Villon constantly refers to God; this extends to all his writings. It suffices to look at the index to see, how often it repeats. It cannot, however, be reduced to the means of expression and the language he used, neither

¹⁷ Ibid.

to his exuberant, colourful style of Villon's discourse with God. He writes, for example:

May God grant great men good works,
and a life of peace and quiet.

[...]

But to the poor who, like me,
have nothing, God grant them patience!¹⁸

In the following verses, as if foreseeing a reprimand for encroaching into matters of faith which the universities and clergy reserved for masters of theology, Villon explains that, after all, it is Jesus who told the parable of the rich man for whom hellfire is in store, not a soft bed, and of poor Lazarus who was brought back to life.

Finally, there is the lovely prayer to the Virgin Mary, an unappreciated jewel of medieval literary poetry. Villon dedicates this ballad to his mother, and places the prayer in her mouth:

Lady of Heaven, Regent of earth,
Empress of the infernal marshes,
[...]
Let me have that joy, high Goddess,
to whom all sinners in the end must come,
filled with faith, without idleness or pretence.
In this faith I wish to live and die.¹⁹

In this prayer for absolution of sins Villon presents a touching picture of simple, unlearned faith, faith of simple people, with limits defined by the parish community, and content by the message of paintings in the local church, most probably commented upon from the pulpit:

I am a woman old, poor, and ignorant,
who has never learned to read.
In my parish church I see
a painted Paradise with harps and lutes
and a Hell where the damned are boiled:
one frightens me – the other gives me joy and happiness.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

²⁰ Ibid.

Villon defends himself against pathos, but as soon as he deals with a serious topic he immediately tries to erase the seriousness with his laughter. He agrees to discuss matters with theologians, and he should not deprive the preachers of this topic. Villon's laughter is not slanderous. "May this work be finished without taint of sin by me." Those are important words.

How should one reconcile laughter, which was mistrusted in medieval Christian culture, with the serious issue of death and human fate? Aaron Gurevich, examining the function of the grotesque in medieval culture, aptly indicated the harmonious coexistence in this culture of the *sacrum* and the *profanum*. The Latin writings of the *Golliards* in the 12th and 13th centuries is full of parodies and travesties which, apart from satirizing the clergy, talk also of a "mass in return for pieces of silver," which seems to border on slander. Parodies on religious topics were frequent in medieval French poetry (as shown in the work of Eer Ilvonen in 1914). This procedure of turning something sacred into something profane defined the limits of the *sacrum*, and by treating its forms autonomously, extracted its real sense. The polysemic nature of medieval culture, the coexistence of various registers of meanings, applies not only to individual words and phrases, is expressed not merely in a conventionalized interpretation according to different "senses" (as in the case of the four senses of the Scriptures), but also in the special combination of laughter and seriousness, the physical and the spiritual, "low" realism and the sublime. A dichotomous, divisible interpretation in the spirit of Bakhtin would not permit an understanding of Villon's poetry or of the medieval vision of the world.

The dispute over who wrote the *Great Testament* has no essential significance. Whether the author was the historical François Villon or an anonymous poet who took Villon's name, the key to understanding this work must be sought in the work itself. The "autobiographical legend" has helped decipher the allusions to objects and persons contained in both testaments and interpret Villon's poetry. After all, the demented laughter of the university "bohemians," scorn of the world and of people, and thoughts on the human condition all appear in the shadow of the gallows.

[----] [Act of 31 VII 1981 on the control of publications and performances, Article 2 clause 1 (Journal of Laws 1981, no. 29 item 99, as amended in: *Journal of Laws* 1983, no. 44, item 204)]

NOTE

This text was written in special circumstances, far from any libraries, and was presented by being read out in October 1982. Not intending to impart any academic context to it after it was written, I will limit myself to presenting some basic bibliography. As far as the works of Villon are concerned, I have used: F. Villon, *Œuvres*, ed. A. Longnon, L. Foulet, Paris 1930, and not the latest, exemplary edition by J. Rychner and A. Henry (Genève 1974–1977). As far as possible, I have taken Polish versions of the works from T. Boy-Żeleński's translation, *Villon, Wielki Testament* (in: *Arcydziela francuskiego średniowiecza*, Warsaw 1968). The primary biographical-historical work about Villon remains P. Champion, *François Villon, sa vie et son temps*, Paris 1913 (2nd edition, Paris 1934). One can also compare this with the recent book by J. Favier, *François Villon*, Paris 1982; according to that author's intentions, this is an excellent illustration of life in Paris in the 15th century, in which Villon's works are regarded as a testimony of history and compared with the archival records of that period. The following works are important in an analysis of Villon's creativity: I. Sicilian (*François Villon et les thèmes poétiques du Moyen Age*, Paris 1971; *Mésaventures posthumes de maître François Villon*, Paris 1973) and J. Dufournet (*Recherches sur le 'Testament' de François Villon*, Paris 1971–1973; *Nouvelles recherches sur Villon*, Paris 1980). The controversial works of P. Guiraud of which I write are: *Le jargon de Villon, ou Le gai savoir de la Coquille*, Paris 1968, and *Le 'Testament' de Villon, ou Le gai savoir de la Basoche*, Paris 1970.

Uniwersytet Warszawski

Nr 902.

DYPLOM

Ob. Bronisław Geremek
urodzony dnia 6 marca 1922. r.
w Warszawie

po odbyciu studiów wyższych
w latach
specjalizując się w zakresie
historii

i złożeniu egzaminu dyplomowego
z wynikiem bardzo dobrym
otrzymał w dniu 1 lipca 1952. r.

DYPLOM UKOŃCZENIA STUDIÓW WYŻSZYCH

na Wydziale Historycznym
stopnia drugiego

Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego

i uzyskał tytuł magistra historii.

Krzysztof
KRETEJTOR
Pieczęć

DZIEKAN

Warszawa, dnia 18 stycznia 1961. r.



Pieczęć

Własnoręczny podpis

902.

Wzór Ser 65 CND 458 Bz. SZTT Suficid 914 6.58 19.30 plam.

1. Bronisław Geremek's master's diploma; 1955 (archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre)

Trędowaci w średniowieczu

- I "Fenomenologia" trądu
- II Trąd w średniowiecznej Europie: historia i geografia
- III Izolacja trędowatych. Leprozoria: typy, rozmieszczenie, statystyka. Zasady życia - statuty. Ceremoniał ekskluzji
- IV Trędowaty jako typ literacki
- V Trędowaci a ~~szlachta~~ przynależność społeczna: trędowaty chłop i trędowaty król
- VI Ekskluzja i współżycie: trędowaci w społeczeństwie średniowiecznym

- + 1. Spisek trędowatych 1321
- 2. Odor sanctitatis i trędowaci
- 3. Rzemiosła trędowatych
- 4. Trędowaci dziedziczeni

2. Plan of an unwritten book about lepers in the Middle Ages; 1978 (archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre)

Prokuratura Wojewódzka w Warszawie
Wydział Śledczy
ul. Świerczewskiego 127
Warszawa

Potygnę sprawy: II DS 93/93

Upniejnie proszę o pozwolenie dostarczenia doc. dr.
hab. Bronisławowi Geremekowi, przebywającemu w Mesae
Śledczym przy ul. Rakowieckiej 37, niżej wymienionych
książki naukowych, która umożliwiłaby mu konty-
nuowanie pracy w ramach problemu M.R. III/1
obejmującej opracowanie wraz z zespołem tomu II
„Dzieje kultury polskiej”

1. Norb N. Elias, *Przemiany obyczajów w cywilizacji
Zachodu*, Warszawa 1980

~~2. J. Wyrozumski, *Wasiński Wielki*, Wrocław 1982~~

~~3. A. Zaid węgierski, *Homo faber i homo ludens*
Warszawa 1983~~

2. J. Biulostocki, *Symbole i dżazy w świecie*, t. I
Warszawa 1982 (statuki, t. I)

~~4. M. Stelcin-Kamiński, *Ze świata sag*,
Warszawa 1982.~~

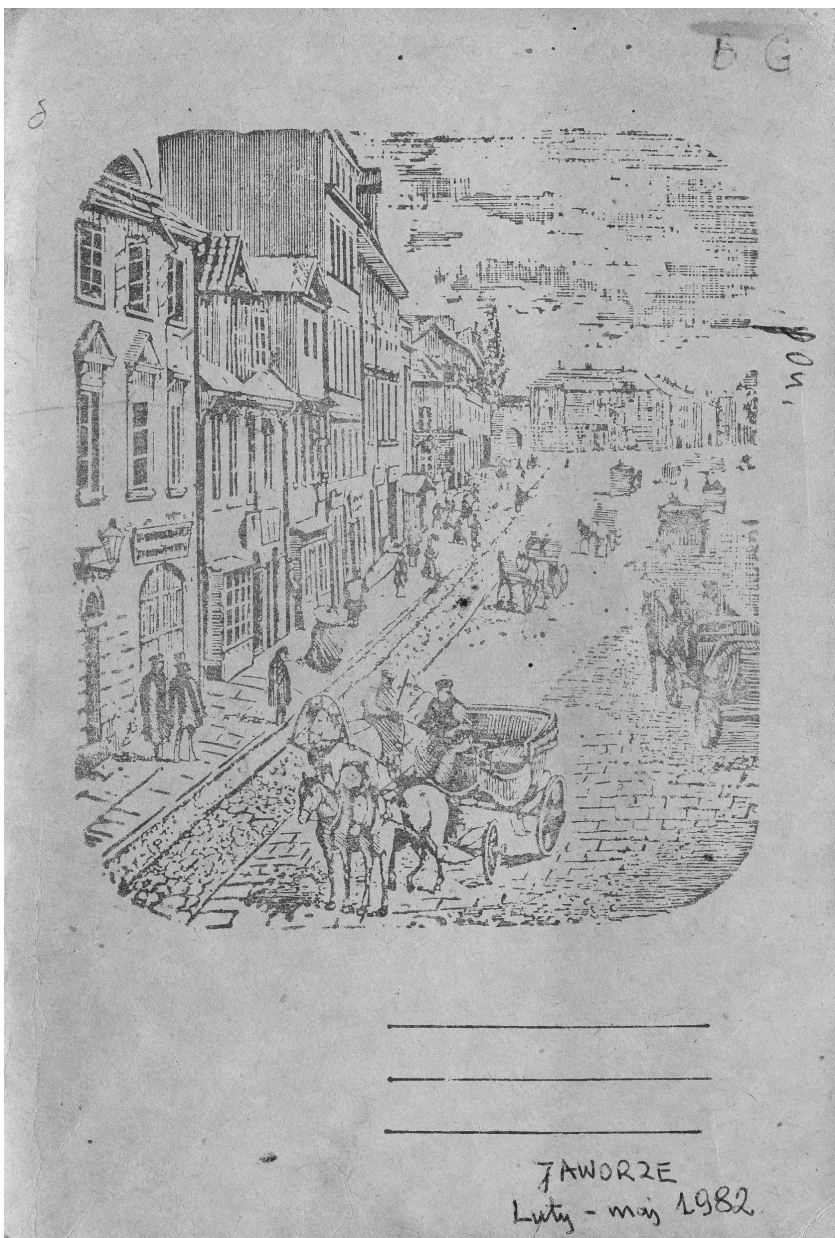
~~Stranach~~

3. A. Brückner, *Dzieje kultury polskiej*, t. II
Warszawa.

Dyrektor Instytutu Historii PAN

Czesław Madajczyk

3. Draft of an application to the District Attorney-General in Warsaw for permission to have books delivered to the prison, 7 June 1983 (courtesy of Hanna Zaremska)



4. (Here and the next page) The cover and a page from a notebook with a list of books written down at Jaworze internment centre; 7 June 1983 (archives of the Foundation Prof. Bronisław Geremek Centre)

19. LE GUFF. La naissance du purgatoire. Paris 1951, Gallimard, 199 p.

intertextualité mythologique - Lucien: "traces"

mythe mibecque v. 15 min IV.
Lycée latin de Saint. roman-puritanisme polémique
christianisme. Zoroastrien usage de l'apocryphe = amonage
de VI.

- 11) Dodel possibilité suite humaine et judaïsme - mod
Dodel d'adest. (mots/visions) riq / p'ubis
- 13) P'op'm'm'm' m' purgatoire = p'ous sp'ualit'az'q' x
mythi (sp'ualit'az'q' de la p'ous).
- 16) P'op'm'm' plus p'ud'ic'm'm' organ'm'm' i'q'u'q',
p'op'm'm' p'op' v'ob'is et h'ull'm'm'
16) C'op'm'm' plus m'p'ic' ob'p'm'm' p'roch'is v'ob'is
P'ous h'ull'm'm' d'ic'm'm'
- 18/23 Og'ic'i - lab'or'm'm'm' v' h'od'ic'q' o'la
o'm'p'm'm'z'q' q'm'm' - p'at' m' m'm' p'ol'ic' v' d'ic'
o'm'm' Z'ob'm'm'm' p'ous o'm'p'm'm'. F'z' h'ic'is.

Succès de stylisme
i' ep'ist'ol'm'm'm'm' v'ob'is
du. D'ic'm'm'm'm' v'ob'is
p'at' h'ull'm'm'z'q' o'm'm'
v'ob'is - (v. 24-25). D'ic'm'm'
lyt'ic'q' - d'ic'm'm'

1. Les images antiques I les amitiés avant le Purgatoire

- 5-32) Purgatoire d'ic'm'm'm'm' i' les images
ant'ic'm'm'm' - se t'ob'is d'ic'm'm' h'ull'm'm', non
d'ic'm' g'ic'm'm'm'm'. A m'ic' : la v'ob'is d'ic'm' h'ull'm'm' /
53) Ap'ol'ic'm'm' v'ob'is. Par'ic' - v'ob'is m'ic' = o'm'm'?
- 74) Par'ic' s'ic' p'op'm'm' i' s'ic' F'ic'm'm' - v'ob'is p'op'm'
t'ic' m'ic' h'ic' p'ob'ic' o'm'm' (v'ob'is - p'op'm'm')

D'ic'm'm' v'ob'is o'm'm'
v'ob'is d'ic'm' d'ic'm' - d'ic'm'm'
(i-66).

2. Les pères du Purgatoire

- 30) L'ic'm'm' h'ull'm'm' - o'm'm' o'm'm' m' p'roch'is t'ic'm'm'
a v'ob'is t'ic'm'm' m'ic' d'ic'm'm' h'ull'm'm' : K'ic'm'm' P'ic'
h'ull'm'm' (+ 265) ; D'ic'm'm' (+ 253/4). P'ic'm'm' d'ic'm'm'
h'ull'm'm' h'ull'm'm' d'ic'm'm'm'm'
- 82) K'ic'm'm' : o'm'm' h'ull'm'm' d'ic'm' am'm'm'm' - v'ob'is
v'ob'is d'ic'm' m'ic'm'm'm' - p'ic'm'm'm'.
D'ic'm'm' - p'at'ic' p'at' o'm'm'm'm' l'ic'm'm' p'ic'm'm' d'ic'
o'm'm' = h'ull'm'm'.
- 43) Augustin - m'ic'm'm' o'm'm' o'm'm'. M'ic'm'm' d'ic'm'
h'ull'm'm'm'm' v'ob'is m'ic'm'm'm'm' (v'ob'is = m'ic'm'm')
Z'ic'm'm'm' h'ull'm'm' m'ic'm'm' m'ic'm'm'
- 103) L'ic'm'm' p'ic'm'm' p'ic'm'm' p'ic'm'm' d'ic'm' p'ic'm'
d'ic'm' D'ic'm'm' m'ic'm'm' p'ic'm'm' p'ic'm'm' m'ic'm'm'
v'ob'is v'ob'is (2 d'ic'm'm' v'ob'is).

D'ic'm'm' d'ic'm' Augustin
v'ob'is h'ull'm'm' v'ob'is XII. h'ull'm'm'
v'ob'is.

MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE
ÉCOLE DES HAUTES ÉTUDES
EN SCIENCES SOCIALES
GROUPE D'ANTHROPOLOGIE HISTORIQUE
DE L'OCCIDENT MÉDÉVAL

54, BOULEVARD RASPAIL
75006 PARIS
49.54.23.00
FAX N° : 49.44.93.11

Paris, le 16 Janvier 1990

Pr. Stanislaw BYLINA
Instytut Historii PAN
Rynek Starego, 29/31

00272 VARSOVIE Pologne

Cher Professeur et ami,

Laissez-moi d'abord vous remercier pour vos voeux si amicaux
et vous dire pour vous et les vôtres les voeux affectueux
que nous formons Hanka et moi.

Ce sera bien sûr avec joie que j'apporterai mon modeste
tribu aux Mélanges qui seront offerts à Bronislaw Geremek.
Mon titre serait : "Le rire médiéval entre la Cour du Prince
et la place publique".

Veuillez agréer, Cher ami, l'expression de mes sentiments
les plus cordiaux et les plus fidèles.

Jacques LE GOFF.

Jacques Le Goff

6. Jacques Le Goff's letter in response to the request for an article to the book dedicated to Bronisław Geremek, *The Poor and the Rich*; 16 January 1990 (courtesy of Hanna Zaremska)



Watykan, 15 stycznia 1998 r.

+ Drogi Panie Ministrze,
Panie Profesorze,

Pragnę serdecznie podziękować za ofiarowane mi "wielkie dzieło" jakim jest zbiorowa praca Autorów książki "Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV-XV w.". Dziękuję też Panu Profesorowi za osobistą dedykację dla mnie na egzemplarzu ofiarowanym w dniu 25 listopada 1997, w imieniu zespołu autorskiego. Z pewnością była to praca wymagająca wiele trudu i wnikliwego poszukiwania materiałów z wszelkich dziedzin życia ówczesnych ludzi i wspólnot.

Gratulując publikacji, pozdrawiam serdecznie i błogosławię

Jan Paweł II

Pan Minister
Prof. Bronisław Geremek
Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych
Warszawa

POLONIA

7. Letter from Pope John Paul II to Bronisław Geremek, editor of *Kultura Polski średniowiecznej XIV-XV w.*; 15 January 1998 (courtesy of Hanna Zaremska)

