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THE NINE-WEEK LENT
IN BOLESLAUS THE BRAVE'S POLAND.
A STUDY OF THE FIRST PIASTS' RELIGIOUS POLICY

I

While considering the religious policy of the first Piasts, one should at once refer to Thietmar's *Chronicle*, especially Chapters 2 and 3 of Book VIII, which discuss the customs prevailing then in Poland¹. The author speaks with emphasis of the terrible punishments inflicted upon those who committed transgressions in the sphere of religion and customs. Thus, for example, people who ate meat after the Septuagesima, had their teeth knocked out². Even fiercer torture threatened the adulterers, and the chronicler does not spare drastic details in this respect. And yet — the author says — in Boleslaus the Brave's state even worse things happen, which are neither pleasant to God, nor serve the reform of the people.

However, despite appearances, Thietmar does not condemn the Polish prince, on the contrary, he treats his severe attitude to his subjects with comprehension. In fact he thinks that Boleslaus, if he wants to hope for eternal salvation, cannot treat his people otherwise³. Indeed, in a country which has recently

¹ *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, ed. R. Holtzmann (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, nova series* 9), Berlin 1935 [henceforward cited as *Thietmar*], lib. VIII, cap. 2–3, pp. 494–496.

² *Et quicumque post LXX. carnem manducasse invenitur, abscisis dentibus graviter punitus. Lex namque divina in hiis regionibus noviter exorta potestate tali melius quam ieiunio ab episcopis instituto corroboratur*, *Thietmar*, lib. VIII, cap. 2, p. 494 (cited according to code 1, the lection in code 2 is almost identical, *ibid.*, p. 495).

³ *In huius sponsi [sc. Boleslavi] regno sunt multae consuetudines variae; et quamvis dirae, tamen sunt interdum laudabiles. Populus enim suus more bovis est pascen-*

adopted Christianity, the Divine Law must be defended by sheer force, since fasting as penance for sins imposed by the bishops is by far an insufficient measure⁴.

The cited fragments of the *Chronicle* show us the Polish monarch as a Christian sovereign who guards the Divine Law and at the same time as a law-giver who introduces the Divine Law in his country⁵. The *Chronicle* does not inform us whether the punishment for breaking the fast was established by Boleslaus or his father Mieszko. However, there can be no doubt that we are not dealing here with an ancient custom — Poland accepted baptism only in 966 — but with a legislative action of a monarch inspired by Christian values⁶. This action, at any rate, did not only consist of introducing new laws, but also of abolishing the old ones. Thietmar says that in pagan Poland after a husband's death his wife was beheaded, so that she would share his death. In the times when the chronicler wrote his work, this custom was no longer observed, most probably forbidden by Mieszko I or at

us et tardi ritu asini castigandus et sine poena gravi non potest cum salute principis tractari (Thietmar, lib. VIII, cap. 2, p. 494). On the interpretation of this passage see A. Gieysztor, *Przemiany ideologiczne w państwie pierwszych Piastów a wprowadzenie chrześcijaństwa* (*Ideological Transformations in the State of the First Piasts and the Introduction of Christianity*), in: *Początki państwa polskiego*, ed. K. Tymieniecki, Poznań 1962, p. 165, note 70.

⁴ See quotation in note 2.

⁵ On the legislation of central-European rulers in early medieval times, with a special consideration of Hungary, see recently J. M. B a k, *Signs of Conversion in Central European Laws*, in: *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, ed. G. Armstrong, I. W. Wood ("International Medieval Research", 7), Turnhout 2000, pp. 115–124; see also H. Ł o w m i a ń s k i, *Religia Słowian i jej upadek* (*The Religion of the Slavs and Its Downfall*), Warszawa 1979, p. 367. On the close links between the Church and monarchy in those times and that territory, see above all A. Gieysztor, *La chrétienté et le pouvoir princier en Europe du Centre-Est des origines jusqu'à la fin du XII^e siècle*, in: *La Cristianità dei secoli XI e XII in Occidente: Coscienza e strutture di una società. Atti della ottava Settimana internazionale di studio*, Mendola, 30 giugno – 5 luglio 1980 (*Publicazioni dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Miscellanea del Centro di studi Medioevali*, 10), Milano 1983, pp. 123–145; i d e m, *Le fonctionnement des institutions ecclésiastiques rurales en Bohême, en Pologne et en Hongrie aux X^e et XI^e siècles*, in: *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo* (Settimane di studi del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 28), Spoleto 1982, pp. 925–954.

⁶ J. M. B a k, (*Signs of Conversion*, p. 117, note 8) allows for the possibility that for breaking the fast (as we presume, connected with some pagan taboo) people were punished by having their teeth knocked out in pagan Poland, and that in the case under discussion the old custom was merely adapted to new circumstances. Even if this was the case — and we lack any data to make such an assumption — the prohibition of eating meat after the Septuagesima must have been issued by a Christian ruler.

the latest by his son, as being in discord with the newly adopted religion⁷.

Let us dwell for a moment on the legislative activity of the Polish Christian monarchy. Our attention is caught by a — seemingly — insignificant detail: as the above-cited source shows, in Boleslaus the Brave's state eating meat was forbidden not from Ash Wednesday onwards, but from Septuagesima Sunday (*dominica in Septuagesima*)⁸. Lent imposed on the believers various types of restrictions, and they concerned not only the type of food to be eaten⁹. However, if we look at the problem only from this point of view, Lent started in Poland over two weeks earlier than it was accepted elsewhere¹⁰. It embraced the whole period of pre-Lent, from Septuagesima Sunday to Ash Wednesday. Although Thietmar specifies that the prohibition we are concerned with was introduced *post septuagesimam*, yet this was a result of the principle, universally observed in the Middle Ages, that on Sunday there is no fast¹¹. Thus in practice, the abstinence from eating meat began in Boleslaus the Brave's state on the Monday following Septuagesima Sunday.

The information we have drawn from Thietmar's *Chronicle* is confirmed by other sources. A 12th c. life of St. Adalbert, (the so-called *Legend Tempore illo*), includes the following story¹². When this missionary to Prussia arrived in Poland, he asked the

⁷ Thietmar, lib. VIII, cap. 3, p. 494.

⁸ The problem of the nine-week Lent in Poland has been raised many times over the centuries — both in the discussions of the history of Poland and of the Church. Two articles have retained their scholarly value: T. E. Modelski, *Post dziewięciodniowy w Polsce (The Nine-Week Lent in Poland)*, "Przegląd Historyczny", 15, 1912, pp. 1–12, 127–138; A. Krasinśki, *Posty w dawnej Polsce (Fasting in Old Poland)*, "Przegląd Teologiczny", 12, 1931, pp. 190–235, esp. pp. 197–214; in both works there is a survey of the sources and literature on the subject. However, these issues call for a new treatment, mainly because none of the mentioned scholars was familiar enough with West-European sources — see note 94.

⁹ See on this matter M. Righetti, *Manuale di storia liturgica*, vol. 2, 2nd ed., Milano 1955, pp. 111–115; J. Chelini, *L'aube du Moyen Age. Naissance de la chrétienté occidentale. La vie religieuse des laïcs dans l'Europe carolingienne (750–900)*, 2nd ed., Paris 1997, pp. 309–310.

¹⁰ A. Krasinśki, *Posty*, p. 204.

¹¹ *Burchardi Wormaciensis Ecclesiae episcopi decretorum libri viginti, Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 140, Parisiis 1880 [henceforward cited as *Burchard*], lib. XIII, cap. 19, col. 888.

¹² *De sancto Adalbert episcopo*, ed. W. Kętrzyński, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 4, Lwów 1884, cap. 10, pp. 215–217.

people he met, about the way to the capital. However, these passers-by, instead of giving an answer, started to laugh at him, since they found both his language — Adalbert was a Bohemian — and his clothes offensive; the missionary wore a monk's habit, which they had never seen before. Then a miracle happened: at the Saint's bidding, the natives were struck dumb. When despite their unfriendliness, the bishop reached Gniezno and there, teaching the *Gospel* and working miracles gained great fame, they were ashamed of their wickedness and on arriving in the capital, asked his forgiveness. Having recovered their speech, they asked him to baptise them, and later to impose on them a special penance for their wicked deed. So thereupon, St. Adalbert ordered them to fast for nine weeks before Easter, two weeks longer than others did. Henceforward — the hagiographer concludes — in the whole of Poland a longer fast than in other countries was observed, with the only exception that for the first two weeks it concerned only abstinence from eating meat¹³.

The cited anecdote is, admittedly, completely unreliable, but due to the commentary provided by the author we know that in 12th c. Poland Lent started on Septuagesima Sunday, and that this custom, in those times, was regarded as very old.

The next source consists of the records of the Synod of the Gniezno Metropolis that took place in Wrocław in 1248, headed by Legate Jacob Pantaléon, archdeacon of Leodium and later Pope Urban IV. In Chapter 12 Jacob presents the complaint, addressed to him by German settlers who had recently arrived in the territory of the Wrocław and Cracow dioceses. The bishops demanded that these settlers abstain from eating meat in the period between the Septuagesima and Easter, and if they did not obey, threatened to excommunicate them. The bishops supported their claim by saying this was the custom of the local people¹⁴.

¹³ *Ibid.*, cap. 10, p. 217: *Precepit itaque illis vir dei, ut nouem septimanas ante pascha uno quoque anno ita costodiant, sicut ceteri fideles Christiani generali abstinentia septem ebdomadas rite obseruant. Quod illi preceptum desiderantissime suscipientes et in uita libenter custodierint et posteritati custodiendum tradere curauerunt. Nec frustra namque et in presens usque tempus eadem abstinentia per uniuersam Poloniam deuotissime obseruatur et quasi ab apostolis id traditum sit, inuiolabiliter colitur et tenetur, ita tamen ut per duas ebdomadas precedentes ab esu duntaxat carniū se abstineant.* See T. E. Modelski, *Post dziesięćtygodniowy*, p. 135 ff.

¹⁴ *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, vol. 2, W. Irgang, Wien-Köln-Graz 1978, N° 346, cap. 12, p. 210: *Cum nuper per Wratislaviensem et Cracouiensem dioceses*

Both the said Germans and their ancestors had always eaten meat up to Tuesday before Ash Wednesday and they brought this custom with them to the country where they settled. So they did not see why to give up this right, especially since it was not in discord with the faith and norms obligatory in the Catholic Church. At any rate, under the influence of German settlers already then many local people ate after the Septuagesima the dishes forbidden by the local bishops. Taking all this into consideration, Jacob of Leodium annulled the local custom, or more strictly speaking — its obligatoriness. Whoever should wish, was entitled to abstain from eating meat in the pre-Lent period, however nobody must be forced to this abstinence, against his wish — this was the legal formula decided on by the papal legate¹⁵.

It is worth paying attention to one more argument cited by the Germans. They indicated the fact that they had never taken a vow not to eat meat after the Septuagesima. This may well be a hint at the opinion that nine-week fasting was a result of some vow taken once by the Poles. We have come across this opinion while analysing the *Legend Tempore illo*. This was, evidently, a view more widespread than could be supposed, and the circle of its holders was by no means confined to a small group of intellectuals¹⁶.

Let us invoke, finally, *Miracula s. Adalberti*. This text, written towards the end of the 13th c., repeats after *Tempore illo* the anecdote about the circumstances of introducing the nine-week Lent. The author, however, informs the reader that this custom

transitum faceremus, accesserunt ad nos Theutonici, qui ad incolendam terram eandem de Theutonia advenerant, nobis querimoniam deponentes super hoc, quod eorum episcopi, ut dicebant, eos per excommunicationis sententiam compellebant ad hoc, ut singulis annis a Septuagesima usque ad Pascha a carnibus abstinerent pro eo, quod homines regionum illarum eisdem temporibus ab esu carnum consueverant abstinere.

¹⁵ On the issue of the fast at the synod in Wrocław see T. E. Modelski, *Post dziewięciotygodniowy*, pp. 132–134; J. Pfitzner, *Biesiedlungs-, Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte des Breslauer Bistumslandes* (Prager Studien aus dem Gebiet der Geschichtswissenschaft, 18), Reichenberd i.B. 1926, p. 76 ff.; A. Krasinski, *Posty*, pp. 204–206. B. Panzram, *Geschichtliche Grundlagen der ältesten schlesischen Pfarrorganisation*, Breslau 1940, p. 17 ff.

¹⁶ On the release of Poles from their vows see the Poznań annalist who relates the decision of the synod in Wrocław — *Rocznik kapituły poznańskiej* (*The Annals of the Poznań Chapter*), in: *Annales Poloniae Maioris*, ed. B. Kürbis (*Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, series nova, 6), Warszawa 1962, p. 25, see the year 1248.

is no longer obligatory in Poland, since in 1247 (*recte*: in 1248) it was abolished by some papal legate who did not want the Poles to differ from other nations in the observance of Lent¹⁷. Also other late-medieval Polish sources mention the prohibition to eat meat after the Septuagesima, once obligatory in Poland, and the abolition of this custom at the influence of Jacob of Leodium.

II

Both the *Tempore illo* legend and the records of the Synod of Wrocław are clear in what they say: the custom obligatory in Poland was something not encountered anywhere else. We get quite a different impression when reading Thietmar's *Chronicle*, for although its author takes no stand on this question, the stylistic form of the respective passage seems to show that the prohibition to eat meat after the Septuagesima was universally accepted. So a question suggests itself whether the medieval Church outside Poland had any norm or customs referring to the type of food eaten before Lent.

This question is rather troublesome, since the literature on the subject — apart from the untrustworthy works by Modelski and Krasin'ski — almost does not notice this problem, and even if it exceptionally does, then it evades an answer. Thus the only thing I can do is examine the sources, even if superficially, on my own. Naturally, there exists a relatively profuse and highly instructive bulk of writings concerning the formation of the liturgical year, including also the pre-Lent period, and I shall draw to a large extent on this literature¹⁸.

¹⁷ *Miracula sancti Adalberti*, ed. W. Kętrzyński, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 4, cap. 4, p. 230 ff.

¹⁸ On the development of the Christian calendar in ancient and the earliest medieval times see above all T. J. Talley, *Les origines de l'année liturgique* (translation from the English original, 1986), Paris 1990 (the issues connected with Lent are discussed mainly on pp. 184–247, the pre-Lent period on pp. 239–242). On the issue of the pre-Lent period also P. Siffrein, *Zwei Blätter eines Sakramentars in irischer Schrift des 8. Jahr. aus Regensburg*, "Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft", 10, 1930, pp. 19–29; J. Froger, *Les anticipations du jeûne quadragésimal*, "Mélange de science religieuse", 3, 1946, pp. 207–234; A. Chavasse, *La structure du Carême et les lectures de messes quadragésimales dans la liturgie romaine*, "La Maison-Dieu", 1952, N° 31, pp. 76–119, esp. 86–93; idem, *A propos d'une anticipation du jeûne quadragésimal*, "Revue des sciences religieuses", 52, 1978, pp. 3–13. See also M. Righetti, *Manuale*, pp. 95–101.

On the threshold of the Middle Ages, Latin Christianity saw the rise of a period of Lent lasting six weeks and preceding Easter. Since there was general consent that on Sunday restrictions characteristic of this period were not valid, it was accepted that Lent in fact embraced 36 days. This gave rise to a peculiar interpretation: some Fathers of the Church thought that Lent was a tithe paid by a Christian to God for the whole year¹⁹. This interpretation competed with others. It seemed obvious that the time preceding Easter should refer to the fast of Christ who prepared Himself for taking up public activity. But Christ stayed in the desert not for 36 but 40 days, therefore the former number of the days of Lent was considered insufficient. The necessity to strictly observe the number of 40 was also indicated by numerous parallels in the *Old Testament*, e.g. the period of the Jews' pilgrimage in the desert (40 years) or of the deluge (the same number of days). For the same reason some thought it necessary to start the period of penance and renunciation earlier.

These were precisely the reasons why in the second half of the 5th c. the notion of *Quinquagesima* appeared, designating the seventh Sunday before Easter and the fast starting on that Sunday. There was a fairly common conviction that Good Friday and Holy Saturday, although filled with no less mortification, did not come within Lent. Given such a calculation, the seven week fast embraced exactly 40 days. Not much later — in the second half of the 6th c. — the *Sexagesima* was established as the eighth Sunday before Easter, which designated an even longer period of renunciation and mortification. Its emergence was probably connected with a view common in the East, but having also followers in the West, that Saturday is not a day to fast. If we take into consideration this principle, the number of days designated for mortification from the *Sexagesima* to Good Friday (exclusive) amounted precisely to 40 days. It should, however, be noted that some monastic communities in the West observed Lent from the eighth Sunday before Easter, although they did not regard Saturday as a day excluded from the restrictions of the fast. During the 7th c., the *Septuagesima*, i.e. the ninth Sunday before Easter, was also included in the liturgical calendar. If the *Quinquagesima* and *Sexagesima* were established in order to round up the

¹⁹ G. Constable, *Monastic Tithes from the Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge 1964, p. 18.

number of actual days of fasting to 40, in the case of the Septuagesima no connection of this kind can be seen, and it is not certain at all to what extent the week following it was in the earliest times designed for ascetic practices resembling those of Lent²⁰.

The above described changes in the liturgy and ascetic discipline took place first in Italy, mainly Capua, Rome and Turin, and unless we take into account Provence, they did not start to influence other countries until the end of the 7th c. A real breakthrough, however, occurred in Carolingian times. The Romanization of the Frankish liturgy, carried out at the behest of the kings from this new dynasty, contributed to the dissemination of the Roman Ecclesiastical Calendar. As a result the Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays became well-known and observed first in many and finally in all the countries of Latin Christianity.

A question arises, however: did the pre-Lent period in Carolingian and Ottonian times involve a duty of some special mortification? And above all, since this is of greatest importance to us, were the believers obliged to some special kinds of mortification in the week after the Septuagesima?

Let us start a review of our source basis with texts that reconstruct the state of affairs in the second half of the 8th c. Bishop Teodulf of Orléans in his diocesan legislation, consisting of two capitularies²¹, does not mention the Septuagesima at all.

²⁰ In our exposition we rely mainly on the cited works by J. Froger and A. Chavasse. T. J. Talley seems to understand the process of the formation of the pre-Lent period in a different way. He inclines to the opinion that the Sundays in the pre-Lent period were formed as a result of an attempt to combine two traditions: the first, prevailing until the 4th c. A.D. in the East, mainly in Egypt, commanded to begin a forty-day fast on 7 January, the day after Epiphany that commemorated the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. It referred to Jesus' stay in the desert, where he went right after His baptism. Abolished by the 1st Council in Nicaea, it survived in monastic milieu and due to them reached the West. The second tradition, prevailing since the mentioned Council, combined the forty-day fast with Easter. Talley holds that the Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays arose as an attempt to shift the beginning of Lent backwards, up to Epiphany (*Les origines*, p. 242). This conception is highly hypothetical, be it because the very existence of the forty-day fast beginning on 7 January is a subject of controversy. For Talley's views see M. Schneiders, "Diabolus a Domino recessit". *Did Lent originally begin the day after Epiphany? Some remarks on Irish evidence adduced by Thomas Talley*, "Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft", 30, 1988, pp. 294-298; *idem*, *The Pre-Paschal "Quadragesima": an innovation of the first Nicaean Council? A piece of "evidence" from Ireland*, "Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft", 33, 1991, pp. 285-289.

It is not mentioned even in the first capitulary, issued about the year 800, although it says a lot about Lent²². But all the relevant instructions refer to the period of 40 days before Easter. Even in the monastic environment, the period beginning with the Septuagesima did not involve any great rigours of ascetic life. Teodomar, abbot of Monte Cassino in the years 778–797, while describing the customs in his monastery, says point blank that the day on which the monks start Lent is the Quinquagesima²³.

From our point of view, the most eloquent, however, is the liturgical compilation that arose in 750–787 in Swabia, most probably at Sankt Gallen²⁴. What I have in mind is *Ordo XV*, one of the texts included in it. Its author records the fact that Romans celebrate Septuagesima Sunday, and at the same time explains their reasons. What they intend to do is to honour Easter and remind the believers that its time is coming. The author of the compilation also remarks that if the Greeks stop eating meat on the Sexagesima, pious Romans do it on the Quinquagesima. The inhabitants of the Eternal City start the actual fast on Wednesday and Friday after the Quinquagesima²⁵. So we can see: the Sep-

²¹ *Capitulare Theodulfi episcopi Aurelianensis ad parochiae sacerdotes*, as well as *Capitulare secundum Theodulfi episcopi Aurelianensis*, in: J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio*, vol. 13, Florentiae 1767, col. 994–1022. On these capitularies see P. Brommer, "Die bischöfliche Gesetzgebung Theodulfs von Orléans. Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Kanonistische Abteilung", 60, 1974, pp. 1–120 (on the question of dating these texts pp. 23–24; on the fast in Theodulf's legislation pp. 103–106).

²² *Capitulare Theodulfi*, cap. 36–43, col. 1004–1005.

²³ *Theodomari abbatis Casinensis Epistula ad Theodoricum gloriosum*, in: *Initia consuetudinis benedictinae. Consuetudines saeculi octavi et noni*, K. Hallinger, (*Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum*, 1), Siegburg 1963, cap. 15, pp. 132–133. The later Carolingian monastic legislation did not extend the fast up to the Septuagesima, either, see *Initia consuetudinis benedictinae*, index s.v. Septuagesima, p. 621.

²⁴ What I have in mind is the so-called *Collectio Sangallensis*, in: *Codex Sankt Gallen 349*. For the time when it was compiled see M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut Moyen Age*, vol. 3: *Les textes (suite)*, (*Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense*, 24), Louvain 1951, p. 92, see also pp. 6–15; also the editor's note for *Ordines aevi regulae mixtae*, cited in the next note (pp. 8–10).

²⁵ Text published by M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines*, vol. 3, pp. 114–115: *Deinde septuagissima apud eos [Romanos] celebrantur et hoc faciunt vel pro reverentia tante festivitatis vel pro eruditionem populi, ut per numerum dierum cognoscat iam adpropinquare diem pasche et preparat se unusquisque secundum ordinem et virtutem suam, qualiter ad ipsum sanctum diem cum tremore et reverentia, contrito corpore et mundo corde perveniat. Et non solum septuagissima sed et LXma, Lma, XLma, XXXma, XVma et VIIIma semper pro ipso ordine celebrantur. Greci autem LXma de carne levant ieiunium; monarchi vero et Romani devoti vel boni christiani*

tuagesima exists, but nobody refrains from eating meat either on this Sunday or on the days that follow.

The sources cited here prompt us to conclude that in the 8th century no connection was perceived between the Septuagesima and fasting. This question did not suggest itself at all. It appeared for the first time in the correspondence exchanged between Alcuin and Charlemagne. The Anglo-Saxon scholar says that some people ask why the Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima are celebrated, and where the names of the mentioned Sundays come from²⁶. When he was in Rome he came across the following interpretation: the peoples of the East observe Lent for nine weeks, the Greeks for eight and the Latin peoples for seven. And hence precisely came the custom known in the Roman Church, to call the respective Sundays Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima. However, Alcuin himself, distrusting the Masters that he met in the Eternal City, proposes a different explanation. He draws attention to the circumstance that seventy days after Septuagesima Sunday comes Low Sunday, and here precisely should be sought the reason for Septuagesima Sunday's name. To better justify his view, he uses an allegorical interpretation. Number 7 is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. It is a well-known thing that It was sent on earth seven weeks after Resurrection, it is also well-known there are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. On Low Sunday the newly-christened receive the Holy Spirit from a bishop who lays his hands on them. The Anglo-Saxon intellectual was prone to think, it seems, that the Septuagesima arose in order to honour the mystery of the Third Person of the Trinity. Alcuin's deliberations on the Sexagesima and Quinquagesima are even more complicated, but are based, in principle, on a similar mode of thinking.

Charlemagne in an elegant, but firm way rejects the conclusions reached by his illustrious correspondent²⁷. In fact, he is

a Lma leuant. Primum autem ieiunium IIIIta et VIIta feria post Lma. id est [una ebdomada] ante quadragissima apud eos publice agitur. We cite the text according to the manuscript Codex Sankt Gallen 349. The editor in the same place provides variants drawn from other manuscripts, considerably departing from the text we cite. However, from our point of view these differences are of no real significance. See also Ordines aevi regulae mixtae, ed. J. Semmler, in: Initia consuetudinis benedictinae, pp. 39, 70.

²⁶ *Alcuini sive Albini Epistolae*, ed. E. Duemmler, in: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, vol. 2, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolarum* vol. 4, Berolini 1895, N° 143, pp. 224–227, especially 225 ff.

convinced that the method employing the allegory of numbers errs in its being completely optional. He rather proposes to return to the facts ignored by Alcuin. It is true, indeed, that some Christians keep fasting for six weeks, others for seven or eight, and still other for nine. And precisely this circumstance explains where the names of Sundays that precede Lent are taken from. Since the period of fasting observed by the first of them is called the *Quadragesima*, it follows naturally that the Sundays that begin the prolonged fast will be called *Quinquagesima*, *Sexagesima* and *Septuagesima*. The monarch also knows the reasons that make some people observe a prolonged period of mortification and renunciation. All the Christians — he says — are led by the guiding principle to contribute a tithe due to God and to follow the example of Christ Our Lord. Where do these differences come from, then? The answer is simple: the period of renunciation should always embrace exactly forty days. So, if somebody thinks that it is forbidden to observe the fast not only on Sundays, which is a universally accepted rule, but also on Thursdays, then the period of mortification should start on the *Sexagesima*. If, on top of that, he takes a stand that it is unbecoming to observe the fast on Saturday, then for such a person the period of renunciation starts on the *Septuagesima*. It is worth noting that the monarch never specifies at any point of his letter, where the latter Christians live.

So we can see that the problem of a nine-week fast was finally raised in the Carolingian monarchy, but at the beginning this was purely a matter of erudition and theory. Alcuin, and Charlemagne after him, did not ask the question whether mortification should start as early as the *Septuagesima*. They only wanted to ascertain whether anybody observed the fast from this Sunday onwards at all, and if so — why. If nobody observed the fast, they asked about the reasons why the liturgical calendar included a day with such a name. We see that the theologians were perplexed by the existence of a Sunday which evidently opened the preparations for Easter.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, N° 144, pp. 228–230. Charlemagne's views, without, however, realizing they were his views, were related with approval by an anonymous bishop in his letter addressed after the year 804 to an unknown monastery: *Appendix ad Alcuini epistolae*, ed. E. Dümmler, in: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, vol. 2, N° 4, pp. 491–493.

The cause of their helplessness is quite clear: in Carolingian Europe the period of Lent did not start on the Septuagesima, but two weeks later. Alcuin states it point blank. It was also a well-known fact that although the Greeks started fasting earlier in the year than the Latin peoples, yet not on the Septuagesima, but on the Sexagesima. However, since the connection between the mentioned Septuagesima Sunday and the period of mortification and renunciation suggested itself as if on its own — Alcuin alone was the man to doubt this *iunctim* — everybody looked towards the nations of the East, suspecting that there the preparation for Easter lasted for nine weeks. At any rate, it was not clear to everybody whether this custom was still obligatory, or whether it was a thing of the past²⁸. Attempts were also made (by Charlemagne, for example) to understand the reason for the prolonged period of mortification, and in order to explain it, the Greek customs, forbidding the fast on Saturdays and Sundays, were associated with the legend of Pope Melchiades, who allegedly forbade it on Thursdays²⁹. It was easier to explain the reasons that made such or other Christians respect a nine-week fast, than to show which Christians actually observed it.

Before long, however, this matter of theory and erudition took on an ascetic and moral character. “Should not we, people of the West, also begin the fast on the Septuagesima?” — was a question posed a quarter of a century later by Amalarius of Metz. He voiced his opinion on this question several times, and especially in his letter to Abbot Hilduin and — very extensively — in his liturgical treatise entitled *Liber officialis*³⁰.

Amalarius answers this question in the affirmative. In his letter to Hilduin he invokes the duty to maintain the ties with the Universal Church: since somewhere in the world Christians start (or perhaps once started) the period of mortification and renun-

²⁸ Commenting on the information given in Alcuin's letter, that the Eastern peoples observe fast from the Septuagesima, Amalarius of Metz allows for such a possibility, however he does not refer this fact to contemporary times, but to the past (a letter to Abbot Hilduin, *Amalarii Epistolae*, ed. E. D u e m m l e r, in: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, vol. 3, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolarum* vol. 5, pars prior, Berolini 1898, N° 6, p. 248).

²⁹ *Le Liber pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, ed. L. D u c h e s n e, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Paris 1955, p. 168.

³⁰ *Amalarii Epistolae*, N° 6, pp. 248–250; *Liber officialis*, in: *Amalarii episcopi Opera liturgica omnia*, ed. I. M. H a n s e n s, vol. 2 (*Studi et testi*, 139), Città del Vaticano 1948, lib. I, cap. 1: *De septuagesima*, pp. 26–36.

ciation on the Septuagesima, then we in the West should start Lent on the same Sunday³¹. This assertion is accompanied by an unexpected statement: as a matter of fact — says the author — the Latin Church observes the fast right from the Septuagesima, since on this day precisely believers stop singing in churches the *Alleluiah*. Indeed, the essence of the fast is humility and this humility is practiced by Westerners, when they refrain from singing *Alleluiah*, and give up using the Hebrew language, much more dignified than Latin or Greek.

Amalarius returned to this issue when working on his liturgical treatise. He then took the opportunity to view this problem in a broader perspective. His point of departure was: the Septuagesima is a 70 day period opened by the ninth Sunday before Easter (i.e. *dominica in Septuagesima*), and ending with Saturday after Easter. This observation allowed the author to use an allegorical interpretation, of which he was a past master³². He drew attention to the fact that number 70³³ brings to mind the seventy years of captivity that God's people, driven out of Jerusalem for their sins, suffered in Babylonia, and that there is a certain correspondence between the expulsion of the Jews and the Septuagesima. The latter is a symbol of the earthly life of Christians, who are slaves of their sins and because of them live far from Heavenly Jerusalem. But just as once God's people returned to Jerusalem after seventy years, so now the believers — the catechumen through baptism, and the baptized through penance — return to their Heavenly Homeland due to the Resurrection. And this Resurrection of Our Lord is celebrated by the Church at the end of the seventy day period.

³¹ *Amalarii Epistolae*, N° 6, p. 249.

³² On the significance of allegory in Amalarius' liturgical thought see above all: A. Kolping, *Amalar von Metz und Florus von Lyon. Zeugen eines Wandels im liturgischen Mysterienverständnis in der Karolingerzeit*, "Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie", 73, 1951, pp. 424-464; R. Suntrup, *Die Bedeutung der liturgischen Gebärden und Bewegungen in lateinischen und deutschen Auslegungen des 9. bis 13. Jahrhunderts* (Münstersche Mittelalterforschung, 37), München 1978, pp. 35-37, 42-69; A. Ekenberg, *Cur cantatur? Die Funktion des liturgischen Gesanges nach den Autoren der Karolingerzeit* (Bibliotheca theologiae practicae, 41), Stockholm 1987, esp. pp. 11-22; R. Messner, *Zur Hermeneutik allegorischer Liturgieerklärung in Ost und West*, "Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie", 115, 1993, pp. 415-434.

³³ On the symbolic meaning of number 70 H. Meyer, R. Suntrup, *Lexicon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen* ("Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften", 56), München 1987, col. 755-760.

From the simile between the Septuagesima and the Babylonian captivity, Amalarius draws conclusions of an ascetic character. He thinks, e.g. that in the liturgical period under discussion people should abstain from pleasures and luxuries. This is the way to act for those who are enslaved by moral evil and therefore live far from their Homeland³⁴. In another place, invoking Prophet Jeremiah, he says that as long as you stay in Babylonia you should utter no sound of joy. Therefore in the period of the Septuagesima neither *Alleluiah*, nor *Gloria in excelsis Deo* are sung. These are songs of the angels, and moreover, the word *Alleluiah* is Hebrew³⁵. During the seventy years of Babylonian captivity — the author goes on — the Jews observed the fast. On the other hand, the Greeks begin fasting not on the Septuagesima, but on the next Sunday (i.e. Sexagesima), and clergymen in the West — on the Quinquagesima. However, the creator of the liturgy calls for a deeper change, than we undergo, or than Amalarius does³⁶.

In his ascetic deliberations the author derives his inspiration also from the texts of the Mass destined for Septuagesima Sunday. Among other things he draws attention to the initial words of the introit: *Circumdederunt me gemitus mortis, dolores inferni circumdederunt me*, as well as of the gradual: *Adiutor in opportunitatibus, in tribulatione*. This serves him to draw the conclusion that the Septuagesima is a period of pain and suffering. And where there is suffering, there should be fasting, too. And fasting during the Septuagesima is nothing else but common suffering with those enslaved by sin. And the author concludes: if we suffer together, we shall reign together, too³⁷.

³⁴ *Septuagesimus numerus ad memoriam nobis reducit omne tempus praesentis saeculi, quo alieni sumus a caelesti Hierusalem. Ideo auctor officii nostri septuagesimam posuit in nostris officiis, ut illo in tempore a deliciis huius mundi abstinendo ostenderemus in nostra conversatione qualiter per omne tempus saeculi vivere debeant subiecti, qui post baptismum peccatis alienamur a caelesti Hierusalem (Liber officialis, lib. I, cap. 1, pp. 29–30).*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32 ff.

³⁶ *Per septuaginta annos captivitatis, quos nos mutamus in septuaginta diebus, ieiunium erat apud Iuaeos. [...] Greci proximam ebdomadam sanctificant suo ieiunio; clerici nostri, auctore Telesforo papa, qui constituit septem ebdomadarum ieiunium ante pascha, tertiam suo. Praeceptor tamen officii nostri amplio rem mutationem requirit, quam agam [...] (ibid., p. 33).*

³⁷ *Ubi labor et dolor, ibi ieiunium, saltim amicitiae huius mundi; ubi ieiunium, ibi humilitas mentis; ubi ieiunium septuagenarium, compassio captivorum. Si compatimur et conregnabimus, (ibid., p. 36, see also p. 34).*

So we see: Amalarius postulates observing the fast in the period of the Septuagesima. When he was writing his letter to Hilduin, he was convinced that the Latin Church acquitted itself of this duty, by giving up the singing of *Alleluiah*. Now he takes another view. Although he still thinks that liturgical restrictions are necessary, yet he regards them as insufficient. And precisely for this reason he reproaches the clergy in the West for beginning the period of mortification and renunciation no earlier than the Quinquagesima, instead of on the Septuagesima.

It seems that the author attaches great weight to the nine week fast, in a literal sense. One sentence is especially worthy of note: "if we suffer together, we shall reign together, too". In fact, it can be interpreted to the effect that the observance of mortification and renunciation in the period of the Septuagesima is a condition of eternal salvation.

Were Amalarius' postulates introduced in practice? While seeking an answer to this question, let us first look up the homily destined for Septuagesima Sunday, written by an anonymous Carolingian writer active in Auxerre in the 9th c.³⁸ In this homily the preacher directs his teachings to the monks. The author probably knew *Liber officialis*, since there is a place in his text where he refers to the Babylonian captivity as a prefiguration of the Septuagesima³⁹. However, in contrast to Amalarius, he concentrates mainly on the analysis of the texts of the Masses said on Septuagesima Sunday, especially the readings. The lesson taken from *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, 9, 24–27, speaks of runners taking part in a race in a stadium. To win the prize, they abstain from everything. Christians should act likewise, the more so because they endeavour to get not a temporal but eternal prize. The preacher calls on the believers to abstain not so much from food, as from vices; this will let them reach their goal quicker. It is not clear whether these words are to encourage Christians to begin fasting as early as the Septuagesima. It can even be doubted.

³⁸ This is the first of the four homilies published by R. Quadro in the appendix to his article *L'omelario di Eirico di Auxerre*, in: *L'école carolingienne d'Auxerre de Muretach à Remi 830–908*, ed. D. Iognat-Prat, C. Jeudy, G. Lobrichon, Paris 1991, pp. 275–295, the homily in question is on pp. 285–287.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

Much clearer is another fragment of the homily. While referring to the evangelical pericope of the day (*Matthew*. 20, 1–16), the author says: *Ipse namque* [i.e. the Lord of the vineyard] *praesens ieiunium ad hoc congrue instituit, ut peccata innumera quae carnis delectatione caeteris anni diebus commisimus, in hoc tempore per poenitentiam et carnis mortificationem tergere studeamus. Insuper etiam dies ista quae veluti ianua ieiuniorum exstitit, et canticum laetitiae, id est alleluia, subtrahit, per omnem continuationem sui officii uocem poenitentis et plangentis exprimit, docens nos ab immoderata laetitia debere cessare, et in fletu et lacrimis poenitentiae manere*⁴⁰. We see: on Septuagesima Sunday there is talk of the fast commencing on that day and of the sins that should be wiped out by penance and mortification. The preacher remembers that on that day *Alleluiah* is not sung, but with the help of the word *insuper* informs that he did not have it in mind when he wrote about penance and mortification.

Thus it seems that the thought of the necessity to observe the fast during the Septuagesima did start to spread in some monastic circles. It should, however, be doubted whether these circles were large and whether the fast became an institution in the 9th c. It seems that even among the monks this postulate did not take on a legal form and remained in the sphere of ideals. Even less so was it obligatory for the totality of believers. This is beyond any doubt. In this sphere no trace of Amalarius' treatise can be noticed.

To make sure this view is right let us first see what is said on this matter in the canonical collections compiled in the 9th and at the beginning of the 10th century, and later let us examine the discussion that ensued as a consequence of Patriarch Photius' encyclical directed against Pope Nicholas I.

Carolingian collections of canons, whether genuine or forged, do not mention the nine week fast at all. Though it is true that the authors of some canonical collections would like to prolong the pre-Paschal period of mortification and renunciation, yet the matter under discussion was whether this period should start on the Quinquagesima or Ash Wednesday. Nobody mentioned the Septuagesima. The mentioned restrictions also referred rather to the clergy than to the totality of believers⁴¹. However, since this

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

canon commanding the fast from the Quinquagesima onwards was so consistently repeated in canonical collections, it means that nobody thought of defending the fast that began two weeks earlier.

In 867, in a terribly complicated political situation which is not worth discussing here, the Patriarch of Constantinople Photius, together with the synod he assembled, deposed Pope Nicholas I from his office⁴². The charges against the latter raised by the Greek included the point that the Roman Church did not abstain from eating meat for eight weeks before Easter, and from eating eggs and cheese for seven weeks⁴³. The Pope, whose authority was thus threatened, appealed for help to some outstanding hierarchs of the Frankish Church and received it⁴⁴.

In 868 a synod was assembled in Worms, which took up the defence of Nicholas I. It aimed to show that Photius' charges were

⁴¹ See the false decree by Pope Telesphorus (+JK 34) included in the Decrees of Pseudo-Isidorus (*Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni*, P. Hinschius, Lipsiae 1863, pp. 109–110), where it is said among other things: [...] *cognoscite a nobis et a cunctis episcopis in hanc sanctam et apostolicam sedem congregatis statutum esse, ut septem hebdomadas plenas ante sanctum pascha omnes clerici in sorte domini vocati a carne ieiunent; quia sicut discreta debet esse vita clericorum a laicorum conversatione, ita in ieiunio debet fieri discretio [...]. Has ergo septem ebdomadas omnes clerici a carne et deliciis ieiunent, et hymnis et vigiliis atque orationibus domino inherere die noctuque studeant*. This document was later many times repeated in other canonical collections that arose in the 9th–11th centuries; e.g. *Collectio canonum Remedii Curiensi episcopo perperam ascripta*, ed. J. Herwig (*Monumenta iuris Canonici*, series B: *Corpus collectionum*, 2), Città del Vaticano 1976, cap. 28, pp. 151–152; *Diversorum patrum sententiae sive Collectio in LXXIV titulos digesta*, J. T. Gilchrist (*Monumenta iuris Canonici*, series B: *Corpus collectionum*, 1), Città del Vaticano 1973, cap. 48, n. 239, p. 148. The forgery under discussion is based on the untrue information given by *Liber pontificalis*, that the said Pope Telesphorus commanded starting Lent after the Quinquagesima, *Le Liber pontificalis*, p. 129; see T. J. Talley, *Les origines*, p. 241.

⁴² On the international context of this issue see J. L. Wiecznyński, *The Anti-Papal Conspiracy of the Patriarch Photius in 867*. "Byzantine Studies", 1, 1974, N° 2, pp. 180–189.

⁴³ *Nicolai I. Papae Epistolae*, ed. E. Perels, *Epistolae Karolini Aevi*, vol. 4, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Epistolarum* vol. 6, fasc. 1, Berlini 1912, N° 100, pp. 600–609, esp. 603.

⁴⁴ F. Dvornik, *L'affaire de Photios dans la littérature latine du Moyen Age*, "Annales de l'Institut Kondakov", 10, 1938, pp. 69–71; W. Hartmann, *Das Konzil von Worms. Überlieferung und Bedeutung* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch–Historische Klasse. Dritte Folge, 105), Göttingen 1977, pp. 28–31 and *passim*; K. Kennedy, *The Permanence of an Idea: Three Ninth Century Ecclesiastics and the Authority of the Roman See*, in: *Aus Kirche und Reich. Studien zur Theologie, Politik und Recht im Mittelalter. Festschrift F. Kempf*, ed. H. Mordek, Sigmaringen 1983, pp. 105–116.

groundless. As far as the matter of our interest goes, the bishops gathered in Worms did not try to deny the facts of which the Pope was accused. They chose quite a different line of defence⁴⁵. They made a distinction between the fast established by Christ Himself or by the Apostles — i.e. a forty-day fast — and the fast commanded by the Church. In the latter case the discussion dealt with the Ember Days and the pre-Lent period. By way of the mentioned evasion the Fathers at the synod took a relativistic view of Photius' charge: since moderation in consuming food in the pre-Lent period does not result from Christ's or the Apostles' command, its obligatoriness may also be subject to discussion. On the other hand the bishops willingly agreed with the opinion that the period starting with the Septuagesima should be one of mortification, however, they took their own special view of ascetic practices. These practices should not, in their opinion, consist in abstaining from eating meat, but in *delectationis mortificatio*. The Fathers of the Synod explained what they had in mind: in the mentioned liturgical period there was no singing of *Gloria* or *Alleluiah*. This was an example of great renunciation, since the Church gave up the songs sung by the angels in heaven, and refrained from using Hebrew, a language more dignified than Latin and Greek.

The defence of the Pope, at the request of Hinkmar of Reims, was also taken up by Ratramnus of Corbie⁴⁶. Naturally, he had to devote a lot of attention to the problems of Lent. His position on this question may be roughly summarized in two points. Firstly he observes that although the Latin Church begins the fast later than the Greek, yet it refrains from eating meat for as many days as the latter. This is because Saturday is a day of mortification in the West, in contrast to the East. Secondly he draws attention to the fact that the essence of the fast is humility. Therefore, by giving up the *Alleluiah* and the solemn celebration of the martyrs' days, the Latin Church, in fact, starts Lent nine weeks before Easter⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ Worms Mai 868. *Responsio contra Graecorum haeresim*, in: *Concilia Aevi Karolini DCCCLX–DCCCLXXIV*, ed. W. Hartmann (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Concilia*, 4), Hannoverae 1998, pp. 298–302, esp. 301–302. See W. Hartmann, *Das Konzil von Worms, passim*.

⁴⁶ J.-P. Bouhot, *Ratramne de Corbie. Histoire littéraire et controverses doctrinales*, Paris 1976, pp. 60–67.

⁴⁷ *Ratramni Corbeiensis monachi Contra Graecorum opposita, Patrologiae cursus*

The polemic around Photius' letter shows one irrefutable thing: in Carolingian West eating meat was not forbidden on Septuagesima Sunday or in the week that followed it. If such a prohibition had existed indeed, the accusation raised by the Greeks that in Rome Christians did not abstain from meat for the whole eight weeks, would in the West meet with a rejoinder that the Latin peoples did abstain from meat even for nine weeks. Instead, an artificial quibble was sought in a reference to the liturgy, and Ratramnus felt compelled to admit that the people of the West started Lent on Ash Wednesday.

Now it is time to analyse Ottonian sources. We shall start our survey with two texts: *Liber de divinis officiis*, and the so-called *Ordo L. Liber de divinis officiis* is a liturgical treatise⁴⁸. Early at the beginning of scholarly medieval studies it was wrongly attributed to Alcuin, therefore in present day historiography its author is usually called Pseudo-Alcuin. For the sake of simplicity, we shall use the same name. The real authorship of this treatise remains obscure. Some suppose that the author was Remigius of Auxerre († about 908)⁴⁹, but not all scholars go along with this attribution and even those who would be prone to agree, prefer to speak of the school of Auxerre⁵⁰. There is

completus. Series latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 121, Parisii 1852, lib. IV, cap. 4, col. 317-322. See also the argumentation compiled on this subject on the same occasion by the bishop of Paris, Aeneas, *Aeneae Parisiensis Liber adversus Graecos*, *ibidem*, cap. 174-177, col. 741-743.

⁴⁸ There is no critical edition. We make use of the edition: *De divinis officiis liber*, *Patrologiae cursus completus*. Series latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 101, Parisii 1851, col. 1174-1286; this is a reprint of Martin Froben's edition (1777), who based himself on the edition by André Duchesne (1617). We have checked the fragments included in the manuscript of Düsseldorf, Universitätsbibliothek, C 91, in the edition of this manuscript prepared by B. Kürbis and others, *Kodeks Matyldy. Księga obrzędów z kartami dedykacyjnymi (Matilda's Codex. The Book of Rites with Dedication Pages)*, (Polska Akademia Umiejętności, *Monumenta sacra Polonorum*, 1), Kraków 2000; we have collated the fragments left out of the mentioned codex with the manuscript: Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 1979.

⁴⁹ P.-M. Gy, *La géographie des tropes dans la géographie liturgique du Moyen Age carolingien et postcarolingien*, in: *La tradizione dei tropi liturgici. Atti dei convegni sui tropi liturgici Parigi (15-19 Ottobre 1985) — Perugia (2-5 settembre 1987) organizzati dal Corpus Troporum sotto l'egida dell'European Science Foundation*, ed. C. Leonardi, E. Menestó (Bibliotheca del "Centro per il Collegamento degli Studi Medievali e Umanistici nell'Università di Perugia", 3, Spoleto 1990, p. 20; B. Bolz, in: *Kodeks Matyldy*, p. 112, and B. Kürbis seems to go along with it, *ibid.*, p. 113 ff.

⁵⁰ So says A. Wilmart, in: *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, Paris 1922, vol. 5, col. 1027.

general accord, however, that Remigius was the author of the treatise about Mass which was included in Pseudo-Alcuin's compilation as Chapter 40⁵¹.

The problem of authorship is very closely linked with the question about the time of its origin. The unanimously accepted *terminus post quem* is the turn of the 9th c.⁵², however, it is possible that the time of the preparation of *Liber de divinis officiis* can be defined more precisely as the beginning of the second half of the 10th c.⁵³ Obviously, the latter dating would completely rule out Remigius' authorship.

The treatise in question is, however, a compilation, therefore it is of less importance to us when the whole of it was created, than when the fragments of interest to us were written. What matters to us are Chapters 8 and 9 according to Migne's edition. We know that Chapter 8 was part of a small liturgical collection included in full in the work of Pseudo-Alcuin⁵⁴. Thus, this collection was of Carolingian origin, just like the text of Chapter 8⁵⁵.

In the case of Chapter 9 we are dealing with a different situation. There can be no doubt that it was not part of the original version of *Liber de divinis officiis* and was later introduced to it by an interpolator⁵⁶. We do not find it in the earliest, Paris manuscript of Pseudo-Alcuin (Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 9421), the date of the origin of which is defined as the second half of the 10th c. But it appears in the manuscript now held at Troyes, the

⁵¹ P. Glorieux, *Pour revaloriser Migne. Tables rectificatives (Mélanges de sciences religieuses, 9. Cahier supplémentaire)*, Lille 1952, p. 55; J.-P. Bouhot, *Pour une édition critique de l'Expositio missae de Remi d'Auxerre*, in: *L'école carolingienne d'Auxerre*, pp. 425–434; C. Jedy, *Remigii Autissiodorensis opera (Clavis)*, in: *L'école carolingienne d'Auxerre*, p. 472.

⁵² A. Wilmart, *Notice du Pontifical de Poitiers*, "Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft", 4, 1924 (printed: 1925), p. 81, note 197; M. Andrieu, *L'"Ordo Romanus antiquus" et le "Liber de divinis officiis" du Pseudo-Alcuin*, "Revue des sciences religieuses", 5, 1925, pp. 642–650, esp. 650. C. Vogel, R. Elze, *Le pontifical Romano-Germanique du dixième siècle*, vol. 3: *Introduction générale et Tables* (Studi e testi, 269), Città di Vaticano 1972, p. 15. all date the origin of the compilation to about 910.

⁵³ J.-P. Bouhot, *Pour une édition critique de l'Expositio*, p. 429.

⁵⁴ It is included in the 11th c. Vatican manuscript Reg. Lat. 234; on that subject see J.-P. Bouhot, *Pour une édition critique de l'Expositio*, p. 428 ff. and *passim*.

⁵⁵ We have not seen this manuscript and rely on the description by Bouhot, *loc. cit.*

⁵⁶ J.-P. Bouhot, *Pour une édition critique de l'Expositio*, p. 427.

date of which is established as the beginning of the 11th c.⁵⁷, as well as in some other manuscripts of the treatise⁵⁸. The text of the interpolation should be thus attributed to some anonymous Ottonian author.

In Chapter 8 the author takes up the subject of the pre-Lent period. He knew very well Amalarius of Metz's *Liber officialis*, and to a large extent made use of this treatise. Following in the footsteps of the mentioned liturgist, he puts forward the view that the period beginning with the Septuagesima should be for believers a time of renunciation and mortification. It is true — he says — that on Septuagesima Sunday there is no singing of the *Alleluiah* and *Gloria*, and that the deacons take off their dalmatics; it is also true that the Greek begin the fast on the Sexagesima, and the Latin clergy on the Quinquagesima. All this, however, does not seem sufficient, considering the fact that the creator of the liturgy demanded from believers a more radical change. To support his view the author cites the texts of the Mass destined for Septuagesima Sunday. He is convinced that by choosing them, the creator of the liturgy wanted to call on the Church to start the fast, mortification and renunciation as early as that Sunday⁵⁹.

One can easily see that neither the reasoning nor its conclusions go here beyond what Amalarius of Metz had already written. However, the situation is different in the case of Chapter 9. The writer — certainly Ottonian — draws there a parallel, borrowed from Amalarius, between the Septuagesima and the Babylonian captivity. In fact he says that just as the Jewish people spent seventy years in exile, so, too, the Christian people during seventy days should try to return to their Homeland, that is the Heavenly Jerusalem; in order to return there, they must spend those days in keeping vigil, fasting and praying⁶⁰. And whoever does this —

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*. It is included not after Chapter VIII as in Migne, but in the final part of the treatise, on fol. 150–152.

⁵⁸ On the basis of B. Bolz's description, in: *Kodeks Matyldy*, pp. 98 and 108, we may mention two: Berlin DSB, Phill. 1711 and Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. 25 in scrinio.

⁵⁹ *De divinis officiis liber*, cap. 8, col. 1182.

⁶⁰ *Hanc ergo captivitatem [sc. Babylonicam] Judaici populi, quae nostram praefiguravit peregrinationem, annuatim recolens sancta Ecclesia, et in memoriam reducens celebrat Septuagesimam: ut sicut ille populus septuaginta annos, quamvis invitus, in captivitate et peregrinatione est detentus, ita nos, id est Christianus populus, septuaginta dies nostram peregrinationem et praesentis vitae aerumnam*

adds the author in another place — he will happily celebrate Easter and sing endlessly the *Alleluiah*, that is a song of joy and the Lord's adoration⁶¹. The formulation "endlessly", uttered here, gives this statement an eschatological dimension. The liturgist, as we see, puts forward the view that the observance of a nine-week fast is a road leading to eternal salvation. This is what Amalarius of Metz thought⁶². But his commentator, taking up the same thought, expressed it more clearly and tellingly. And in this sense, among the statements that postulated to begin Lent on the Septuagesima, his is the most far-reaching.

Ordo L originated in the years 950–963 in St. Alban's monastery at Mainz as a part of *The Roman–German Pontifical*⁶³. In his commentary to Septuagesima Sunday⁶⁴ the liturgist makes use of the formulations and whole sentences which are known to us from Chapter 8 of *Liber de divinis officiis*. He took them over either from the mentioned treatise⁶⁵, or — which is more probable

voluntarie recolentes, ad patriam, quae est superna Hierusalem, redire cum omni aviditate, bonis dediti operibus, vigiliis scilicet et jejuniis et orationibus, intente studeamus (ibid., cap. 9, col. 1185 C).

⁶¹ *Ergo quincunq̄ue in his diebus Septuagesimae saluberrime institutis, cursum suum, id est vitae hujus praesentis statum bene direxerit, ut deposita omni inepta laetitia et vanitate, in jejuniis et vigiliis et orationibus, eleemosynisque ac caeteris bonis operibus assidue insistat, et peregrinationis suae assidue recordatus fuerit, hic sanctum Pascha feliciter celebrabit: canticum etiam letitiae, id est Alleluia, quod est laus Domini, sine fine cantabit (ibid., col. 1186 C).* The manuscript from Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 1979, fol. 152 r., in the last sentence omits *etiam*.

⁶² See note 37.

⁶³ C. Vogel, R. Elze, *Le Pontifical Romano–Germanique du dixième siècle*, vol. 3: *Introduction générale et Tables (Studi e testi, 269)*, Città di Vaticano 1972, pp. 11–14.

⁶⁴ *Septuagesima ergo, ut predictum est, computatur secundum titulationem sacramentarii et antiphonarii novem ebdomadibus ante pascha, in septimam sabbati. Populus Dei in Babylone detentus est captivus septuaginta annis. Quibus expletis, reversus est Hierusalem. Ideo auctor officii nostri septuagesimam posuit in officiis nostris ut hoc tempore a deliciis abstinendo ostenderemus in nostra conversatione qualiter per omne tempus saeculi vivere debeant qui post baptismum peccatis se alienant a celesti Ierusalem. Quapropter Alleluia illo tempore non cantatur apud nos, sed tractus, id est luctus, nec Gloria in excelsis Deo, quae sunt cantica caelestia, et in quibusdam locis dalmaticarum usum intermittitur. Greci proximam ebdomad, id est sexagesimam, sanctificant suo ieiunio: clerici nostri, auctore Telesphoro papa, sequentem, id est quinquagesimam, qui constituit septem ebdomadum ieiunium ante pascha. Quadragesima vero Christus suo nobis dedicavit ieiunio (Le pontifical Romano–Germanique du dixième siècle. Le texte, vol. 2, ed. C. Vogel, R. Elze (Studi e testi, 227), Città di Vaticano 1963, cap. 99, n. 42, p. 13).*

⁶⁵ M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut Moyen Age*, vol. 5: *Les Textes (suites) Ordo L (Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense. Etudes et documents, 9)*, Louvain 1961, p. 63.

— from the small liturgical collection known to us, whose existence is testified by the Vatican manuscript Reg. Lat. 234⁶⁶. Just like Amalarius, the author of *Ordo L* thinks that the Septuagesima should be a time of refraining from pleasures and delights. Therefore — he says — we do not sing the *Alleluiah* or *Gloria* on these days, or put on the dalmatics. He also reminds us that the Greeks observe the fast from the Sexagesima onwards, and the Latin clergy from the Quinquagesima, but he does not repeat the view that such an ascetic effort is not sufficient. Instead he says that Christ sanctified a forty day period with his fasting.

The intention of the liturgist from Mainz is not clear. On the one hand he emphasizes the necessity of renunciation in the period of the Septuagesima, on the other, however, his text may be interpreted so that the Church acquits itself of this duty merely by restrictions in her liturgy. However, this is not said straightforwardly, we do not even know for certain whether this was what the compiler had in mind. One thing, however, cannot be doubted: the liturgist from Mainz commanded to refrain from pleasures and luxuries in the pre-Lent period and this could certainly be understood by any reader. It is worth nothing that *The Roman-German Pontifical*, prepared under the supervision of archbishop William and probably at the behest of Otto I, became well-known and valued all over the Empire⁶⁷. Of greatest import was that the opinion according to which the pre-Lent period should be a time of mortification and renunciation was expressed on the pages of such an outstanding work. Hence it gained authority and became universally known. Amalarius' treatise, and later, Pseudo-Alcuin's compilation cited private views. The *Pontifical* was an official text, obligatory in the whole of the German Church.

Thus we reach the conclusion that in Ottonian times the postulate to prolong Lent up to nine weeks was voiced more frequently and with more conviction than before. However, the essence of the breakthrough that occurred at that time, was that this postulate started to be put into practice.

⁶⁶ So does J.-P. Bouhot assert firmly, in *Pour une édition critique de l'Expositio*, p. 429.

⁶⁷ See on this subject E. Palazzo's synthetic comments, *Les sacramentaires de Fulda: étude sur l'iconographie et la liturgie à l'époque ottonienne* (*Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen*. Veröffentlichungen des Abt-Herwegen-Instituts der Abtei Maria Laach, 77), Münster 1994, p. 180.

Let us first draw attention to the fact that the first restriction relating to the type of food eaten in the pre-Lent period appeared in monastic *consuetudines* in Ottonian times. They do not concern meat, but animal fat, or strictly speaking — dishes prepared with the use of this fat⁶⁸. It is well-known that monks did not eat meat at all⁶⁹. Carolingian *consuetudines* also forbade eating fat, but this prohibition came into force on the Quinquagesima, the day when monks started Lent⁷⁰. Now in some monasteries this prohibition started to be obligatory two weeks earlier, on the Septuagesima. This was mentioned by Anglo-Saxon texts — the famous *Regularis concordia* created in the 970s⁷¹ as well as Abbot Aelfric's letter to his brethren, dating from the beginning of the next century⁷². This prohibition was also introduced, beginning with the end of the 10th c., by the *consuetudines* of Cluny⁷³. It was also recorded in a German source, namely a collection of customs of St. Emmeram's monastery in Regensburg⁷⁴, dating from the years right before 970⁷⁵.

⁶⁸ On the question of using fat in early-medieval monasteries see J. Semmler, *Die Beschlüsse des Aachener Konzils im Jahre 816*, "Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte", 74, 1963, pp. 52–53.

⁶⁹ Apart from poultry, which was consumed several times a year in Carolingian times.

⁷⁰ See e.g. *Synodi primae Aquisgranensis Decreta autentica*, ed. J. Semmler, in: *Initia consuetudinis benedictinae*, cap. 20, pp. 462–463; *Regula sancti Benedicti abbatis Anianensis sive Collectio capitularis*, ed. J. Semmler, *ibid.*, cap. 74, p. 534; as well as the index included in this volume s.v. *pinguedo*.

⁷¹ *Regularis concordia Angelicae nationis*, in: *Consuetudinum saeculi X/XI/XII Monumenta non-Cluniacensia*, ed. K. Hallinger (*Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum*, 7, 3), Siegburg 1984, cap. 55, p. 102; *In Septuagesima pinguedo intermittatur usque in Quinquagesimam, a Quinquagesima uero quadragesimalem teneant abstinentiam more solito*.

⁷² *Aelfrici abbatis epistula ad monachos Egneshamenses directa* in: *ibid.*, cap. 26, p. 163; *Consuetudo dicit intermittere pinguedinem a Septuagesima*.

⁷³ The earliest trace is the so-called redaction of Saint-André de Villeneuve near Avignon, *Cluniacensium antiquorum Redactiones principales*, in: *Consuetudines Cluniacensium antiquiores cum redactionibus derivatis*, ed. K. Hallinger (*Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum*, 7, 2), Siegburg 1983, cap. 29, p. 46 (manuscript B): [...] ipso die [sc. in Septuagesima] dimittere sagimen ad comedendum usque in Pascha.

⁷⁴ *Redactio sancti Emmerami dicta Einsidlensis*, in: *ibid.*, cap. 67, p. 245; *In Septuagesima pinguedo ad edendum dimittatur, in Quinquagesima oua et caseum*. The later monastic *consuetudines* — both German and English — take over these restrictions, sometimes even making them more rigorous, see e.g. *Redactio Viridunensis*, in: *ibid.*, cap. 6, p. 386; *Decreta Lanfranci monachis Cantuariensibus transmissa*, ed. D. Knowles (*Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum*, 3), Siegburg 1967, cap. 18, pp. 17–18.

Restrictions also affected lay people, with the only difference that they concerned matrimonial law. In the Early Middle Ages the principle, taken over from antiquity, was in force, according to which contracting marriages was forbidden on definite days of the year⁷⁶. These were Sundays and holidays, but also, and in the first place, the days on which there was a duty of abstinence, because it implied conjugal abstinence, too. As a result contracting marriages was forbidden during Lent, and sometimes also during Advent, on the Ember Days in the year and the eves of certain holidays. However, the pre-Lent period was not mentioned in this context. A breakthrough came only at the end of the 10th and in the first quarter of the 11th c.⁷⁷ The Synod at Aachen, held in 992, agreed that the mentioned prohibition should be in force from Septuagesima Sunday⁷⁸, and the Synod assembled at Seligenstadt in August 1023 confirmed this principle⁷⁹. An identical decree was adopted by the Anglo-Saxon Synod held at Enham in 1009⁸⁰. The new prohibition was introduced to *Burchard's Decree*⁸¹. It is also worth noting that Thiet-

⁷⁵ See *Consuetudinum saeculi X/XI/XII Monumenta. Introductiones*, ed. K. Hallinger (*Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum*, 7, 1), Siegburg 1984, pp. 172–174, 426–429.

⁷⁶ J. Freisen, *Geschichte des canonischen Eherecht bis zum Verfall der Glos-senliteratur*, 2nd ed., Paderborn 1893, pp. 644–646.

⁷⁷ J. Freisen, *loc. cit.*; K. Ritzer, *Riten und religiöses Brauchtum der Eheschliessung in den christlichen Kirchen des ersten Jahrtausends* (*Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen*, 38), Münster 1962, pp. 292–294; A. Amiet, *Die liturgische Gesetzgebung der deutschen Reichskirche in der Zeit der sächsischen Kaiser 922–1023*, “*Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Kirchengeschichte*”, 70, 1976, pp. 257–261.

⁷⁸ *Bernoldi Chronicon*, ed. G. H. Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores*, vol. 5, Hannoverae 1844, p. 423: *Aquisgrani in generali synodo coram legatis Ioannis papae sancitum est, ut quatuor ebdomadis ante natalem Domini, et a septuagesima ante Pascha, et 14 diebus ante festum sancti Ioannis baptistae nullus saecularia placita agere aut coniugium contrahere praesumat.*

⁷⁹ *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Legum sectio IV*, vol. 1, ed. L. Weiland, Hannoverae 1893, N° 437, p. 633 ff.: *De legitimis coniugiis ita visum est, quod nullus christianus uxorem ducere debeat ab adventu Domini usque ad octavas epiphaniae et a septuagesima usque in octavas paschae nec in supranotatis quatuordecim diebus ante festivitatem sancti Ioannis baptistae neque in supradictis ieiuniorum diebus sive in omnium sollempnium dierum precedentibus noctibus.* See H. Wolter, *Die Synoden im Reichsgebiet und in Reichsitalien von 916 bis 1056*, Paderborn 1988, p. 300 ff.

⁸⁰ J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio*, vol. 19, Venetiis 1774, col. 301: *Et ordalium et iuramenta et matrimonia semper sint prohibita summis diebus festis, et veris ieiuniis quatuor temporum, et ab adventu Domini ad octavam Epiphaniae, et a septuagesima ad XV dies post pascha [...].*

mar criticized Boleslaus the Brave for marrying his fourth wife Oda after Septuagesima Sunday, without canonical permission⁸².

We should also make note of the restrictions relating to public life. In Carolingian times a custom started to take shape for trials and other public meetings not to be held during Lent⁸³. Later, successively, various other days were added, on which abstinence was required⁸⁴, and finally — but only at the turn of the 10th c. — the pre-Lent period was added, too. Thus the above-mentioned synods at Aachen and Enham forbade ordeals or the observance of *placita saecularia* before Easter, beginning with the Septuagesima⁸⁵. The legal norm under discussion was adopted by the legislation of Anglo-Saxon kings: Aethelred in 1008 and Canute the Great in 1027–1034 forbade ordeals and taking court oaths in some periods of the year, among others in the pre-Lent⁸⁶. They referred to the legislation of King Edward of 921–938, who, however, in this context wrote only about holidays and the days of statutory fasting, and did not mention the Septuagesima at all⁸⁷.

Thus we reach the following conclusion: the conviction that Lent should last nine weeks, under the Ottonian dynasty found its reflection in positive law. There is much evidence for that. On the other hand, it should be said clearly that even then eating meat was not forbidden during the Septuagesima, nor — as far

⁸¹ Burchard, lib. IX, cap. 4, col. 816; see commentary provided for this canon by H. Hoffmann, R. Pokorny, *Das Dekret des Bischofs Burchard von Worms. Textstufen — Verbreitung — Vorlagen* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Hilfsmittel, 12), München 1991, pp. 53 and 212.

⁸² Thietmar, lib. VIII, cap. 1, pp. 492–494.

⁸³ A. Amiet, *Die liturgische Gesetzgebung*, pp. 49–51.

⁸⁴ See e.g. records of the synod at Erfurt of 932, *Die Konzilien Deutschlands und Reichsitaliens 916–1001*, part I, ed. E.-D. Hehl (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Concilia, 6), N° 8 A, *Gesta synodalia*, cap. 2, p. 108: *Insuper quoque gloriosissimus rex ad augmentum christiane religionis concessit, ut nulla iudiciaria potestas licentiam habeat sua auctoritate christianos ad placitum bannire VII diebus ante Nativitatem Domini et a quinquagesima usque ad octavam Pasche et VII diebus ante nativitatem sancti Ioannis Baptistae, quatinus adeundi ecclesiam orationibusque vacandi liberius habeatur facultas.*

⁸⁵ See notes 78 and 80.

⁸⁶ *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. F. Liebermann, vol. 1, reprint of 1st ed. (Halle 1903), Aalen 1960, pp. 242–243 (par. 18), pp. 252–253 (par. 25), pp. 298–299 (par. 17, 1).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 132–133 (par. 9).

as laymen and the lay clergy were concerned — were there any other restrictions concerning meals. Let us first recall that both Pseudo-Alcuin and *Ordo L* clearly state that the Latin clergy start the period of corporal mortification (*ieiunium*) not earlier than the Quinquagesima, and the author of the first of the mentioned treatises even expresses regret on this account. Let us also invoke other facts. The collections of decrees with *Burchard's Decree* at the head, created in the 10th–11th centuries, do not mention any restrictions regarding the consumption of food that would be binding from the Septuagesima onwards, although Burchard dwells extensively on the subject of abstinence. Thus he writes about the forty day fast beginning on Ash Wednesday, Rogation Days, Ember Days, and finally on the eves of holidays, however, he does not say anything about the fast obligatory from the Septuagesima onwards⁸⁸. It is true that occasionally the compilers of canonical collections demanded that Lent should start earlier than on Ash Wednesday, but in this case they had in mind the Quinquagesima, and did not extend this command to laymen⁸⁹. The fact that this postulate was persistently reiterated shows that nobody tried to introduce a nine-week period of abstinence from consuming food.

Certainly, there were some people who gave up meat as early as the Septuagesima, but this was a result of their personal piety, and not a legal command. Let us cite the example of Henry II. Thietmar says that on a certain Sunday, because this was the Septuagesima, the emperor did not eat meat⁹⁰. Is this a proof of the nine-week Lent? It should be doubted. If the monarch had been directed by a universally binding legal norm, his chronicler would keep silent about his behaviour, regarding it as obvious⁹¹.

Let us sum up the results of our research. We have succeeded in establishing that although the *dominica in Septuagesima* did not begin Lent, the question of fasting in the period which it opened recurred again and again. This was due to the place it occupied in the calendar, as well as the character of the texts of

⁸⁸ Burchard, lib. XIII: *De ieiunio*, col. 883–890. Burchard prepared his famous *Decree* in the reign of Henry.

⁸⁹ See note 24.

⁹⁰ Thietmar, lib. VII, cap. 52, pp. 492.

⁹¹ This view is contested by T. E. Modelski, *Post dziewięcioletniowy*, p. 137 ff.; A. Krasinski, *Posty*, p. 200 ff.

Mass read and sung on that day. This was the first of a series of Sundays that prepared the Church for Eastertide, which was sufficient reason for sticking to its penitential character. Another argument was provided by the texts of the Masses. Their principal motif was the power of evil and sin, which, however, with the Lord's help, could and should be challenged by man.

We should also remember that the theologians of those times, such as Amalarius and his followers, used special methods of interpretation of the liturgy. They went on the assumption that each, even the minutest detail of the rites had been introduced by their author on purpose and with premeditation so that even the smallest element of the holy rites should carry a moral instruction for the believers. Therefore, while considering the meaning of the Septuagesima, they tried to establish, at all costs, its ascetic and spiritual message. Both on account of its place in the liturgical year and the meaning of the texts of the Mass it seemed obvious that this message was an encouragement to abstinence, renunciation and mortification.

In this situation, some liturgists came to the conclusion that Lent should start as early as the ninth Sunday before Easter. This postulate encountered favourable conditions in the 10th–11th centuries. A tendency was then gaining strength to treat ecclesiastical regulations in a more rigorous way and to make them increasingly rigid. Some facts connected with this phenomenon will be provided in the later part of this article. Let us only note here that the atmosphere of strictness and rigour was probably a factor due to which the problem of the nine-week fast met with the interest of the circles who made decisions in the sphere of religious policy.

However, the essence of the problem was that ecclesiastical tradition knew nothing of obligatory mortification and renunciation in the first week preceding Lent. Even if theoretical deliberations had led the religious élites, or at least some of their members, to the conclusion that there was a duty of some form of abstinence right from the Septuagesima, and that this duty should be supported by some legal norm, yet the imposition of the latter was not an easy thing in practice. One had to reckon with the resistance both of ecclesiastical circles traditionally and legalistically-minded, and of wide circles of believers who were not attracted by the perspective of prolonged Lent, painful enough

as it was. The new requirements could be most easily imposed on the monks, while laymen were at the most ready to accept the prohibition of contracting marriages in the pre-Lent period — troublesome only in very few cases. However, it proved impossible to impose the prohibition of conjugal intercourse, logically linked to the former⁹². Thus it was even less probable that believers might be effectively forbidden to eat meat.

Under such circumstances the attempt at prolonging the period of mortification and renunciation backwards up to nine weeks was practically a failure. It failed in the most important point: no restrictions could be introduced concerning the type of food consumed. Those rigours that were introduced were troublesome only for some individuals: the people who wanted to contract a marriage *post Septuagesimam*, or those who were anxious to open proceedings in a law-court precisely in this period. These restrictions did not concern society as a whole; people could go on living as if Lent had not been prolonged.

As a result, at the turn of the 10th c. a paradoxical situation prevailed: canon law did not take into consideration the fast starting on the Septuagesima; nevertheless the zealous clergy and pious laity were deeply convinced that such a duty existed and that one must abstain from eating meat. This explains the attitude of Thietmar, who approved of the repressions reaching the subjects of Boleslaus the Brave even a dozen or so days before Ash Wednesday.

And what shape did Lent take in the Eastern Churches? The narrow scope of this article does not allow us to devote much attention to this issue. It is not even necessary, since Poland of the first Piasts was under the influence of Western Christianity and drew her inspirations and models from the West. So we have to confine ourselves to text-book knowledge and repeat after the compendia that both in the Egyptian and Byzantine Churches Lent took the shape of eight weeks before Easter. In the first week it was forbidden to eat meat, and in the remaining ones also milk and its products. For us the following fact is of supreme importance: there was no abstinence from meat in the ninth week before Easter⁹³.

⁹² In the penitentiary supplemented to the *Decree*, Burchard sets penance for conjugal intercourse in the *Quadragesima*, however he does not envisage any penance for this in the *Septuagesima* (lib. XIX, cap. 5, col. 960 A).

III

Let us now return to Polish problems. The material we have collected allows us to place the issue in a larger context. We have succeeded in establishing that there was no nine-week prohibition of eating meat in any country of early-medieval Europe except for Poland. Thus, it seems, we witness an anomaly on a European scale. On the other hand, however, the mentioned prohibition inscribed itself perfectly in the tendencies present in the West of those times. The West also experienced attempts at prolonging Lent backwards — up to the Septuagesima inclusive. The only difference was that the legal norms introduced in Germany and England were much more lenient than the modifications made in Poland and did not concern the most important thing, i.e. the type of food consumed.

In this situation a question arises: what were the reasons for the radicalism of the Piasts⁹⁴? We have no sources at our disposal

⁹³ *Catholicisme. Hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, vol. 2, Paris 1954, p. 555, s.v. Carême (En Orient); *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2, New York–Oxford 1991, p. 1206 s.v. Lent; T. J. Talley, *Les origines*, p. 240; *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, New York 1991, pp. 1093–1097, s.v. Fasting.

⁹⁴ The attempts to explain the reasons why in Poland abstinence was obligatory from the Septuagesima onwards have so far gone in two directions. Firstly, reference was made to the influence of the Eastern Churches where Lent lasted longer than in the West (such a position was assumed, among other people, by J. Pfützner, *Besiedlungs-, Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte*, p. 76 ff.). This interpretation is evidently fallacious, since in Poland not an eight-week fast, as in the East, but a week longer one was obligatory (so do argue, quite rightly, T. E. Modelski, *Post dziewięciodniowy*, p. 136, and A. Krasinski, *Posty*, p. 209 ff.).

The latter two researchers — and this is a second kind of interpretation — have put forward a thesis that the nine-week period of abstinence was observed in some milieux and in some areas of Carolingian and Ottonian worlds, and that in this connection the Polish custom was simply a reflection of customs well-known to the Latin Church and brought to the Warta and Vistula regions by missionaries. The mentioned historians emphasize at the same time that in Western countries there were various norms concerning the term of the commencement of Lent, which in the course of time underwent standardization. Eventually, a withdrawal from the nine-week Lent was gradually effected, and the old custom survived the longest in Poland.

This interpretation is equally fallacious. We know that the nine-week abstinence from eating meat was not known in the West as a legal norm, and its establishment on the Warta and Vistula rivers should be regarded as an innovation on a pan-European scale. The cited scholars fell victim to the over-superficial study of the texts and too narrow an inquiry in the sources. They were impressed by the fact that Carolingian literature says a lot about the Septuagesima as the term of the commencement of Lent. However, they did not notice that these deliberations either do not refer to Western societies, or are a kind of evasion. Thus Modelski, *o.c.*, p. 130, to support his stand cites the records of the synod

that would inform us about the intentions of the legislator or the circumstances in which the respective law was issued. Therefore, while raising this question we do not promise its unequivocal solution. We can only propose some alternative answers, of various degrees of probability.

Let us, however, first establish when the prohibition of eating meat in the Septuagesima was introduced in Poland. The *terminus ante quem* is obvious — it was the year 1018, when Thietmar was writing the respective fragment of his chronicle. The year 966 — the date of the introduction of Christianity — is equally obvious as the *terminus post quem*. However, it seems that the bottom limit can be moved to about the 990s, since it was precisely then that the conviction of the need to prolong Lent started to be translated in Western Europe into legal norms binding upon the laity. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that the Piast monarchy introduced the respective modification without drawing inspiration from the countries of advanced Christianity. Thus we may surmise that the author of the decree would rather have been Boleslaus the Brave than Mieszko I⁹⁵.

We shall try to answer the question of our interest, by analysing the Polish situation in two contexts: of Ottonian Germany and early-medieval Hungary. Let us start with the German context. We shall outline it by characterizing in brief the legislative activity of Henry II, focussing our deliberations on four synods: at Thionville (1003), at Dortmund (1005), in a non-Saxon locality (1006) and in Rome (1014).

We know about the synod at Thionville (Diedenhofen) that it assembled at the behest of Henry II, and was held in the same time and place as a state meeting, also convened by the king⁹⁶.

at Worms of 868, which, as we know, is a misunderstanding. On the other hand neither of the historians takes into account the sources of canon law, or they simply ignore their meaning. The conceptions developed later by Modelski and Krasinski were analysed before me by W. Szcześniak, *Obrządek słowiański w Polsce pierwotnej rozważony w świetle dziejopisarstwa polskiego* (*The Slav Rites in Primeval Poland in the Light of Polish Historical Studies*), Warszawa 1904, pp. 184–186.

⁹⁵ A. Krasinski, *Posty*, p. 202, maintains that the seventy-day fast came to Poland with the adoption of Christianity, however, he does not present any proof worthy of note.

⁹⁶ The most important source for this synod is *Vita Adalberonis II. Mettensis episcopi auctore Constantino abbate*, ed. G. H. Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores*, vol. 4, Hannoverae 1855, cap. 15–18, p. 663 ff; this life was written a few years after the bishop's death (†1005). From the literature on the

The direction of the synod debate was established by the monarch himself, who voiced a fierce attack on the bishops. He charged them with a lack of zeal carrying out their pastoral duties, accused them of not fighting the evil which grew rank in their dioceses, and especially of keeping silent while the people contracted marriages in spite of canonical obstacles. He supported his attack by a concrete example of the marriage of Conrad of Carinthia with Matilda of Swabia, which, if tolerated longer, might bring the wrath of God not only upon the guilty party but also on his whole homeland. We know that this couple had a common ancestor in the person of their great grandfather, King Henry I⁹⁷. So they were bound by a fourth degree kinship according to the German measure, which, in principle, was permitted by the law of those times. However, the essence of the problem was that, according to some canonists, siblings, in this case the children of Henry I — Otto I and Gerberga — should not be taken into account in such calculations, hence Conrad and Matilda would be bound by a third degree kinship, which could not be tolerated by the Church. Henry II applied this stricter method of calculation⁹⁸. The king's attack on this couple met with support from Adalberon, bishop of Metz, who went much farther in his accusation. He presented their genealogy in such a way that, according to his calculation, they were bound by a second degree kinship. Adalberon's stand aroused a scandal, the indignance of Conrad and his supporters, a general uproar and tumult, so that the synod did not consider the case presented by the king and dissolved, it seems, without a verdict.

The debate of the synod in Dortmund was also directed by Henry II⁹⁹. He pointed out to the assembled bishops many

subject see H. Wolter, *Die Synoden im Reichsgebiet*, pp. 215–218; R. Folz, *Adalbéron II évêque de Metz 984–1005*, in: *Ex ipsius rerum documentis. Beiträge zur Mediävistik. Festschrift für Harald Zimmermann*, ed. K. Herbers [et al.], Sigmaringen 1991, pp. 411–415; B. Schilling, *Zur Datierung einer Synode Heinrichs II.*, "Jahrbuch für westdeutsche Landesgeschichte", 17, 1991, pp. 67–73; H. Hoffmann, *Mönchskönig und rex idiota. Studien zur Kirchenpolitik Heinrichs II. und Konrads II.* (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Studien und Texte*, 8), Hannover 1993, p. 52 ff. Both the place and the year of the synod are the subject of discussions, however, this is of no consequence for the present deliberations.

⁹⁷ See the genealogical table provided by R. Folz, *Adalbéron*, p. 413.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 411 ff.

⁹⁹ The only source is *Thietmar*, lib. VI, cap. 18, pp. 294–286; see also lib. VII, cap. 33, pp. 438–440. On the subject of this synod see A. Amiet, *Die liturgische Gesetzgebung*, pp. 212–217; J. Wollasch, *Geschichtliche Hintergründe der*

irregularities that took place in the Church, and having taken their advice, decided to counteract these inadequacies in future. In order to diminish the burden of his sins, he issued, together with the Fathers of the Synod, a decree containing two points: in the first place a praying brotherhood was set up, and in the second — the fast commanded on the eves of certain precisely named holidays, and on Ember Days. As regards these eves, the second point of the decree repeated the resolutions of the synod at Erfurt in 932¹⁰⁰, with one exception: on some eves it allowed to fast according to the customs of Lent, but on others it introduced more far-reaching restrictions, by excluding all food and drink apart from bread, water and salt. Equally strict rigours were to be observed on Ember Friday before Christmas.

About half a year later a synod took place in Saxony, about which we know only as much as Thietmar of Merseburg wrote, and he expounded all the problem in one sentence¹⁰¹. Nevertheless, we can gather that this time again, the debate was practically directed by Henry II and that it was he who decided the resolutions. The latter forbade contracting marriages discordant with canonical rules, selling Christian slaves to pagans, and threatened to excommunicate those who did not want to comply with the Divine Law. Of interest is the stylization of the mentioned sentence: the chronicler emphasizes that it was the ruler — not the synod — who issued respective prohibitions, that it was him who ordered to excommunicate the sinners, and that it was him, not the synod — who did it on the basis of his canonical and apostolic authority.

Some Italian canonical collections, in the first place the *Colletio canonum in V libris*, created not later than 1023, contain altogether six canons provided with a note *Henrici regis*. This note shows that their creation had something to do with the legislative activity of Henry II¹⁰². Four of them concern ecclesiastical

Dortmunder Versammlung des Jahres 1005, "Westfalen", 58, 1980, pp. 55–69; H. Wolter, *Die Synoden im Reichsgebiet*, pp. 220–224; H. Hoffmann, *Mönchskönig*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ *Die Konzilien Deutschlands*, N° 8 A, cap. 1, p. 107.

¹⁰¹ *Sinodali iudicio iniustas fieri nuptias christianosque gentilibus venundari presens ipse [sc. Henricus] canonica et auctoritate apostolica prohibuit Deique iusticiam spernentes spiritali mucrone interfici precepit* (Thietmar, lib. VI, cap. 28, p. 308). On this synod H. Wolter, *Die Synoden im Reichsgebiet*, p. 224 ff.; H. Hoffmann, *Mönchskönig*, p. 53.

questions: they forbid practicing simony, ordaining clergymen under a definite age, consecrating sanctuaries for money, finally making donations or pledges from the properties of the Church. On the other hand, two defend injured parties: they forbid persecuting sea-wrecked people and impose a fine for the theft of property from a burnt house. Both the former and the latter are synodal decrees, since they threaten to excommunicate those who break them. Probably they were issued by the same synod. It was most likely headed by Pope Benedict VIII and held in Rome at the beginning of 1014, right after the coronation of Henry II as emperor. It is worth noting that the canons issued by the synod were regarded as monarchical decrees.

The cited facts enable one to assert that the activity developed by the monarch at the synods was aimed above all at enforcing the observance of canon law. Henry put especially a lot of effort into the fight against breaking matrimonial law. We know from another source that even if attacking one or another aristocratic family on this ground could be politically detrimental, this did not diminish the monarch's zeal¹⁰³. It can also be noted that the king was prone to interpret traditional canons in a more rigorous way. He approached in this way both matrimonial problems and the fast on some eves of holidays and the Ember Days.

At the same time we are struck by Henry the Second's deep concern for the state of the Church. There can be no doubt that his activity at the synods sprang precisely from this anxiety. The monarch was convinced that people — both the clergy and laity — did not observe Divine Law and that the priests did little to counteract this state of affairs. This conviction went hand in hand with his sense of sinfulness. The king thought that moral evil might bring divine punishment not only upon the man who

¹⁰² The most important editions: *Constitutiones et acta publica*, vol. 1, N° 30, p. 62; *Collectio canonum in V libris (lib. I-III)*, ed. M. Fornasari, (*Corpus christianorum, Continuatio medievalis*, 6), Turnholti 1970, lib. I, N° 72, p. 63, N° 90, p. 69 ff, N° 178, p. 115, lib. III, N° 211, p. 412 ff; M. Wojtowysch, *Die Kanones Heinrichs regis. Bemerkungen zur römische Synode vom Februar 1014*, in: *Papsttum, Kirche und Recht im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Horst Fuhrmann*, ed. H. Mordek, Tübingen 1991, p. 167 (none of these publications present all the six canons). The most important literature: M. Fornasari, *Enrico II e Benedetto VIII e i canoni del presunto concilio di Ravenna del 1014*, "Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia", 18, 1964, p. 46-55; M. Wojtowysch, *Die Kanones*, pp. 155-168; H. Hoffmann, *Mönchskönig*, p. 56.

¹⁰³ H. Hoffmann, *Mönchskönig*, pp. 52-55.

committed it but also on the one who, seeing his neighbours' transgressions — kept silent¹⁰⁴. Moreover, he lived in constant fear of punishment sent by God on his whole Homeland for the sins of particular persons. As we can see, the opinion prevailed that a political collectivity was as a whole responsible to God, therefore the participants in the synod at Dortmund imposed a more rigorous fast on all the believers. Indeed, they hoped that due to the mortification of the total population their sins would be at least partly wiped out.

What strikes us is also the position held by the monarch at the synod. He convened the debates, determined their topics, and gave the accepted decrees legal force¹⁰⁵. This dominating role was perceived and approved, which can be easily seen if we analyse the language used by contemporary observers. For the authors of Italian collections of canons, the decrees of the synod in Rome presided over by the Pope were the canons of king Henry, and Thietmar contended that it was the monarch who forbade contracting marriages discordant with the law, and that he did it by force of his apostolic authority.

A similar, if not higher, position in the Church was enjoyed by the king of Hungary. We can form our opinion on this subject on the basis of St. Ladislaus' first book of decrees, presenting the resolutions of the synod which assembled at Szabolcs in 1092¹⁰⁶. Its preamble contains a statement that the said assembly was headed by the king¹⁰⁷. Of interest, from our point of view, is also par. 37. On the strength of this canon two new eves of holidays were introduced to the liturgical calendar — one preceding St. Stephen's Day, the other — St. Gerard's Day. Moreover, the eves of St. Martin's Day and of St. Peter's Day were extended into three days each. In the latter case, this was only a confirmation of the decision taken earlier by King Andrew. What strikes us in the

¹⁰⁴ *Vita Adalberonis*, cap. 16, p. 663 ff.

¹⁰⁵ On the position of the king at the synod in Ottonian times see H. Wolter, *Die Synoden im Reichsgebiet*, pp. 482-489.

¹⁰⁶ See B. Hóman, *Geschichte des ungarischen Mittelalters*, vol. 1: *Von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Ende XII. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1940, p. 311 ff.

¹⁰⁷ *Sancti Ladislai regis decretorum liber primus*, ed. G. Györffy, in: *idem, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft der Ungarn um die Jahrtausendswende*, Wien-Köln-Graz 1983, prologue, p. 279: [...] *in civitate Zabolch sancta synodus habita est, presidente christianissimo Hungarorum rege Ladislao cum universis regni sui pontificibus et abbatibus, necnon cunctis optimatibus, cum testimonio totius cleri et populi.*

said paragraph is the statement that the respective regulations were issued by the monarch, while the role of other people assembled was reduced to voicing an approval¹⁰⁸. We can see that although the king did not act alone, yet it was him who made binding the decisions at the synod.

The legislative activity of the Arpads shows a tendency to make the canons more rigid. In this they also resembled Ottonian Germany, especially the times of Henry II. The paragraph discussed above provides some examples that illustrate this phenomenon. One must realize that on the eves of holidays fasting was obligatory, so any increase of their number put an additional burden on the shoulders of believers. One can easily understand that Ladislaus, raising Stephen and Gerard to the rank of the patrons of his kingdom, wanted to precede their Days with days of concentration and mortification and thereby to make them equal with the great holidays¹⁰⁹. However, increasing the eves threefold seems to be a bit extravagant. Even if similar cases happened in other countries (which are not known to us), yet certainly they must have been of quite an exceptional character.

We find another example of making the canon more rigorous in paragraph 31, which shows that the inhabitants of Hungary were obliged to observe the fast on Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday¹¹⁰. This principle must have been introduced by one of the earlier kings, since it is described in the text by the word "our custom". Ladislaus' role would be confined to adding that these rogours were also obligatory for foreigners. We remember: in Western Europe the clergy — but only them — were obliged

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, cap. 37, p. 285 ff: *[I]n hac vero sancta synodo a venerabili rege Ladislao statutum est, ab universis collaudatum et canonizatum, ut vigilie celebrentur beati Stephani regis et Gerardi martyris, et tres dies ad festivitatem sancti Martini. Et quod patruus suus Andreas rex cum omnibus, quid tunc erant, episcopis, vovit et statuit, iste rex christianissimus destruere noluit, sed firmiter roboravit, scilicet dierum trium vigiliam ad festivitatem sancti Petri.*

¹⁰⁹ On Ladislaus' role in the propagation of the cult of Saint Stephen and St. Gerard, G. Klaničay, *Rex iustus. Le saint fondateur de la royauté chrétienne*, "Cahiers d'Etudes Hongroise", 8, 1996, pp. 34–58, esp. pp. 39–47.

¹¹⁰ *Sancti Ladislai regis decretorum liber primus*, cap. 31, p. 285: *De carnis dimissione. Latini, qui Hungarorum consuetudini legitime consentire noluerint, scilicet, qui postquam Hungari carnes dimiserunt, ipsi iterum in secunda et tertia feria comederint, si se nostre consuetudini meliori non consenserint, quocumque volunt, eo vadant. Pecuniam vero, quam hic acquisierunt, hic relinquunt, nisi forte resipuerint et carnes nobiscum dimiserint.* See T. E. Modelski, *Post dziesięćgodniowy*, p. 133.

to begin Lent after the Quinquagesima. Although it is well-known that Nicholas I wanted to extend this principle to embrace the laity, yet this was not met with approval, even among the bishops¹¹¹. But what the Pope did not succeed in doing was achieved by the king of Hungary, who imposed on all his subject a period of abstinence from meat prolonged by two days. This aroused the discontent of the *Latini* (probably people of the Italian origin) living in the Arpads' monarchy. The ruler, however, was inflexible and warned the defiant foreigners that if they did not submit to the local law, they would have to leave the country, leaving in it all the profits they gained there.

Perhaps the examples cited above will allow us, at least to a certain extent, to understand the policy of Boleslaus the Brave. It is very likely that the principles of the legislative policy in religious matters were in Poland similar to the principles and practices applied in the Empire and in Hungary. Indeed, the Piasts created their monarchical ethos in constant contact with German society and culture, and the Polish Church was inspired by the same spirituality and directed by the same legal principles as the Church in the West. On the other hand, the Arpads, rulers of a newly-Christianized state, faced cultural challenges similar to those faced by the Polish princes.

By forbidding eating meat after the Septuagesima, Boleslaus the Brave was certainly directed by the opinions of Western theologians who maintained that Lent should start as early as the ninth Sunday before Easter. The prince must have been impressed by the arguments put forward by these intellectuals, supporting the view that abstinence and mortification in the period preceding Lent were necessary for salvation. In consequence, feeling responsible for the eternal life of his subjects and at the same fearing divine punishment, he imposed on his land a fast prolonged by two weeks. The Polish prince's behaviour could be inscribed in the policies of so many other early-medieval rulers who interfered in the matters of liturgy and Church discipline, motivated by a concern for divine worship and the salvation of the people.

¹¹¹ *Pseudo-Liutprandi Liber de vitis pontificum Romanorum. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina.* ed. J.-P. Migne, vol. 129, Parisiis 1853, cap. 107, col. 1253 B. See on this matter W. Hartmann, *Das Konzil von Worms*, pp. 52, 75.

Therefore we should seek the explanation of the problem under discussion in the great religious zeal shown by Boleslaus the Brave and in the seriousness with which he treated his duties as a Christian monarch. At the same time we should take into consideration a factor that is not negligible: Boleslaus, as the prince of a newly-Christianized country was in fact in a very comfortable position, at any rate much easier than some West-European kings who would face the same task. Indeed, the newly-established local Church had neither the strength nor possibility to oppose a ruler on whose will its existence depended, and on the other hand religious customs were not yet strongly rooted among the population. For this reason the heightened requirements met with less resistance than in the countries of developed Christianity. What, despite the monarch's sincerest will, would be impossible to impose in the West, turned out to be possible in Poland.

This interpretation, certainly correct in its essence, does not, however, render the whole complexity of the problem. In order to realize this complexity, one must compare Boleslaus' behaviour with the legislatorial activity of Henry II and the Hungarian kings. We already know that the German ruler attached great importance to the observance of all the principles of religious life, fearing that divine punishment would affect his whole country. We know that he treated these canons with much rigourousness, in order to wipe out his own and his people's sins by imposing on them additional penance. Thus it is not difficult to indicate far-reaching similarities between the behaviour of the Polish prince and the German king.

However, there was one essential difference. Henry II, given all his strictness, in principle stuck to tradition. In establishing canonic obstacles, he declared for a more strict method of calculating the degrees of kinship, although in those times there was no clarity at all as to the way of acting in such matters. On the days of penance and some eves of holidays he demanded subsistence on bread, water and salt, but Bavaria then knew at any rate very rigid fasts¹¹². And if because of the zeal of Henry, his predecessors and successors, canon law became more and more rigorous, this happened by means of hardly noticeable steps,

¹¹² *Die Konzilien Deutschlands*, N° 9, p. 129 ff.

supported by carefully collected precedents. In contrast, Boleslaus the Brave took more liberties in dealing with tradition. In no other country was there a prohibition of eating meat in the pre-Lent period, and although some people thought that Lent should start with the Septuagesima, this view never became a legal norm. It cannot be denied that some restrictions in the way of life during the Septuagesima were quietly introduced into the ecclesiastical legislation, but they were not very burdensome. In contrast, the Polish prince imposed on his subjects what was most essential and at the same time the most painful during Lent: it was abstinence from eating meat. Boleslaus, it seems, did not bother about the binding canons, and in making them more rigid, did not confine himself to small steps.

Greater liberties with regard to ecclesiastical law were taken by the Hungarian kings. They introduced three days' eves, and prolonged Lent backwards to the Quinquagesima. In both cases they went beyond the universally accepted norms. But Boleslaus the Brave outdid the Hungarian rulers by his radicalism: it was one thing to prolong Lent by two days, but a different matter to prolong it by two weeks.

The innovation introduced by the Piast ruler departed so far from the canons and made ecclesiastical law so rigid that we have to ponder whether this move was not some kind of manifestation. However, before we try to specify this thought, we have to answer the following question: on the strength of what competence did Boleslaus issue such a regulation? To be as precise as possible, we have to introduce some distinction. On the one hand the decree under discussion changed princely law, since it introduced a penal sanction that was not known to ecclesiastical law and was certainly exacted by the state apparatus, although there is no direct evidence in the sources to support this conjecture¹¹³. On the other hand, however, this was an act that changed canon law, for it introduced a substantial modification into the liturgical year. As regards the secular legislation, the ruler issued the respective regulation probably on the basis of the same prerogatives he made use of when introducing Christianity. The Chris-

¹¹³ On the participation of the state in punishing transgressions against custom and religion see *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. B. Bretholz (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, nova series* 2). Berlin 1923, lib. II, cap. 4, pp. 85–88.

tianization of the country entailed a necessity to “renew”, or in fact to modify the traditional law¹¹⁴. Did, however, Boleslaus possess the competences to change ecclesiastical law? And if so, by what right?

There can be no doubt that such competences pertained to the synod, but rather provincial than diocesan. If this observation is true, we gain another criterion for establishing the dates: the prolongation of Lent up to nine weeks was accomplished, it seems, only after the establishment of the archbishopric of Gniezno, i.e. at the earliest in March 1000.

We know, however, that in those times the active member of the synod was the ruler, without whose approval synodal decrees could not assume legal force. At any rate, this was the case as regards essential matters, and the establishment of the fast in the period of the Septuagesima was quite essential, since it introduced a far-reaching modification into the liturgical calendar. Therefore one can hardly doubt that the synodal decree under discussion was promulgated by Boleslaus the Brave, who assumed full responsibility for it.

It is worth referring, in this context, to the description of the assembly in Gniezno penned by Gallus Anonymus. The chronicler says, among other things: *Et tanta sunt illa die dilectione cuniti [sc. Otto et Boleslaus], quod imperator eum fratrem et cooperatorem imperii constituit, et populi Romani amicum et socium appellavit. Insuper etiam in ecclesiasticis honoribus quicquid ad imperium pertinebat in regno Polonorum, vel in aliis superatis ab eo vel superandis regionibus barbarorum, sue suorumque successorum potestati concessit [...]*¹¹⁵. Thus we learn that Boleslaus the Brave received from the Emperor certain prerogatives concerning the matters of the Polish Church. It is often accepted that they embraced mainly, if not exclusively, the right of the investiture of bishops¹¹⁶. However, the author uses a

¹¹⁴ With reference to early-medieval German tribes see G. Dilcher, *Gesetzgebung als Rechtserneuerung. Eine Studie zum Selbstverständnis der mittelalterlichen Leges*, in: *Rechtsgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte. Festschrift für Adalbert Erler*, ed. H. J. Becker [et al.], Aalen 1976, pp. 13–35, esp. 28.

¹¹⁵ *Galli Anonymi Chronicae et Gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, ed. K. Maleczyński, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica, nova series*, Cracoviae 1952, lib. I, cap. 6, p. 19 ff.

¹¹⁶ See e.g. S. Zachorowski, *Rozwój i ustrój kapituł polskich w wiekach średnich (The Development and System of Polish Chapters in the Middle Ages)*, Kraków 1912, p. 237 ff.

general term, he writes about *ecclesiastici honores*. Hence, it seems that what is at stake here are all kinds of authorizations concerning ecclesiastical matters¹¹⁷. Indeed, *honor* in Latin is not only an "ecclesiastical office", or "dignity", but also "power", "competence", "privilege", to say nothing of completely rudimental meanings such as "reverence", "a token of reverence" and "honour"¹¹⁸. There can be no doubt that the ruler of Poland also received the right of the investiture of bishops. Yet what comes into play here were probably also liturgical privileges, e.g. *laudes regiae*¹¹⁹, as well as everything that resulted from the duty of the protection of the Church, its doctrine and discipline. Consequently, also the right to convene a synod, to sit on it, to co-preside over it, to determine the topics of debate, to propose the content of decrees, to confirm them and to put them into practice.

In the previous sentence the chronicler says that Otto III established Boleslaus the Brave as a collaborator of the Empire. One can hardly resist an impression that there was a cause-effect relationship between the latter fact and that of according *ecclesiastici honores* to the Polish ruler. This is indicated by the proximity and succession of both events in the text, as well as by the logic of the situation. Since Boleslaus became a collaborator of the Empire, he was bound to receive the authorizations of the Emperor, at least to some extent¹²⁰.

¹¹⁷ See W. Abraham, *Organizacja Kościoła w Polsce do połowy XII wieku (The Organization of the Church in Poland up till the Middle of the 12th c.)*, 3rd ed., Poznań 1962, pp. 133 ff, and 208 ff; G. Labuda, *Zakres uprawnień władczych nad Kościołem polskim nadanych przez cesarza Ottona III księciu Bolesławowi Chrobremu w Gnieźnie w roku 1000 (The Scope of Sovereign Authority Over the Polish Church Accorded by Otto III to Prince Boleslaus the Brave in Gniezno in the Year 1000)*, "Roczniki Historyczne", 64, 1998, pp. 7-12.

¹¹⁸ J. F. Niermeyer, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus*, Leiden 1976, s.v. honor 3, p. 495; A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*, 1st ed. 1954, Brepols, 1993, s.v. honor 1, p. 393; idem, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs du Moyen Age (Corpus christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis)*, Turnholt 1975, s.v. honor 1, 2, 9, 10, p. 441.

¹¹⁹ On the subject of *laudes regiae* in medieval Poland see B. Kürbis, *Polskie laudes regiae w kronice Anonima Galla (The Polish Laudes Regiae in Gallus Anonymus' Chronicle)*, in: *Cultus et cognitio. Studia z dziejów średniowiecznej kultury*, ed. S. K. Kuczyński [et al.], Warszawa 1976, p. 310.

¹²⁰ If only of this reason we take a sceptical view of G. Labuda's thesis (*Zakres uprawnień, passim*), according to which in Gallus' formulation *quicquid ad imperium pertinebat in regno Polonorum* the word *imperium* denotes the sovereign authority not of the emperor, but of the Polish king. On the question of Boleslaus the Brave's competences as a collaborator of the Empire see recently J. Strzelczyk, *Otton III*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 2000, p. 137.

This being said, we could infer that Boleslaus introduced a nine-week Lent on the basis of his competence resulting from his new dignity. Thus if we are right in surmising that the legal act in question was a kind of political manifestation, we thereby gain an indication that allows us to determine the meaning of this manifestation¹²¹. Boleslaus probably wanted to show that he was really a collaborator of the Empire, since he made such a wide use of the prerogatives pertaining to the mentioned dignity. If the nine-week Lent was established in the reign of Henry II, which is quite probable, this would be a move of an extremely polemical nature. The German king, it seems, refused to recognize the dignity gained by Boleslaus the Brave at the assembly in Gniezno¹²². In this situation, by prolonging Lent by over two weeks, Boleslaus tried to show the world that he was a collaborator of the Empire, that he had a right to enjoy the prerogatives pertaining to this dignity, and that he acquitted himself perfectly of his duties, since he was so energetic in his care for the glory of God.

This does not mean that the Polish ruler was cynical. He certainly sincerely believed that fasting should start on the Septuagesima, however political considerations might be a decisive factor that stimulated him to change his personal views into a universally binding norm. While forbidding eating meat after the Septuagesima, Boleslaus came across a difficulty resulting from canon law, which knew nothing of such a fast. So if Boleslaus had directed himself solely by religious considerations, he would have probably dropped his design, being afraid of transgressing against precisely religious principles. We know that he attached great weight to canon law as a norm of behaviour¹²³. What encouraged him, were needs of a political nature.

We may also draw this analysis in a different direction. Let us recall the *Legend Tempore illo* again. Its author's view of the history of Poland is rather original. He goes on the assumption

¹²¹ On the legislative activity of the kings in the early Middle Ages as a manifestation of power see P. Wormland, *Lex scripta ad verbum regis: Legislation and Germanic Kingship*, in: *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P. Sawyer, I. N. Wood, Leeds 1977, pp. 105–138.

¹²² On Henry the Second's policy towards Poland see recently K. Görich, *Eine Wende im Osten? Heinrich II. und Boleslaw Chrobry*, in: *Otto III. — Heinrich II. eine Wende?*, ed. B. Schneidmüller, S. Weinfurter ("Mittelalter Forschungen", 1), Sigmaringen 1997, pp. 95–167; S. Weinfurter, *Otto III. und Heinrich II. im Vergleich*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 404–406.

¹²³ *Thietmar*, lib. VI, cap. 92.

that his native country adopted Christianity only in St. Adalbert's time and due to his actions. This view is a fallacy, but it allows to ascribe an outstanding role in the history of Poland to this saint.

The hagiographer summarizes this role in the following sentence: *Sancto igitur spiritu per famulum suum predicante multaque illic signa mirabiliter faciente, christianam legem Polonia gratanter universa suscipit sanctique instituta viri ouanter amplectens supra firmam petram fundari meruit*¹²⁴. Thus we learn that the Saint's activity was of dual significance: it was due to him that Poland received Christian law, but she also accepted with love what the author calls *sancti instituta viri*. It is true that the hagiographer does not specify what actually underlies this definition, but one can hardly doubt that among other things what he has in mind is prolonged Lent. This is the only instruction of the Saint, mentioned in his Life, that does not come within the notion of *lex christiana*. Thus it turns out that in the author's opinion the establishment of the nine-week Lent yielded considerable consequences; due to the adoption of this principle his Homeland was built on solid rock.

Yet beginning the period of abstinence with the Septuagesima was an exclusively Polish custom — this is emphasized by the hagiographer. The Polish people is thereby distinguished from among other Christian peoples, as if it were situated closer to what is good and holy. Thus we arrive at the following conclusion: the nine-week Lent was for the author a cause for national pride; for this reason precisely he associated it with the person of St. Adalbert and devoted to him so much place on the pages of his work.

The manner of thinking confirmed in the 12th c. cannot be transferred automatically back towards the beginning of the previous century, or the hagiographer's mentality be mistaken for the principles of a politician. We are perfectly aware of that. Nevertheless one circumstance is striking: while establishing the new regulation of canon law, Boleslaus the Brave must have realized the fact that the length of the fast would distinguish the Poles from other peoples. In this context it is worth citing the argumentation used by the assembly at Szablóc, when they

¹²⁴ *De sancto Adalberto episcopo*, cap. 11, p. 217.

commanded foreigners to observe the fast longer than it was accepted in Roman countries: the members of the synod said clearly — “our” custom is better¹²⁵. So perhaps it is true that what motivated the Piast prince as well as the Hungarians was national pride. Or may be Boleslaus had in mind something else: the creation of his own nation.

It is a well-known fact that Poland arose by way of conquest: the Piasts — a dynasty of the *Polanie* — relying on the human and material potential of their native tribe, conquered various peoples which had settled in the basins of the Odra and Vistula rivers. The result was a political organism without a uniform ethnic basis. No wonder that in the 10th c. the terms used to denote the new state and its inhabitants above all referred to their bonds of dependence, and not to the tribal or national collectivity. Thus the authors of the sources wrote about the state of Mieszko, a Gniezno state, or the *Licikaviki*, i.e. Lestek’s men. A breakthrough came about the year 1000, when the ethnic name *Polacy* (= *Polanie*), and the name *Polska* (Poland), connected with it, started to spread. These names existed even earlier, however, at the turn of the first millenium their significance rapidly grew¹²⁶. Suffice it to say that in the course of a short period they ousted other terms so far serving to denote the Piast state and its inhabitants. We are inclined to treat it as the result of Boleslaus the Brave’s conscious policy. Its objective was to integrate the monarchy on the basis of an ethnic collectivity embracing all the inhabitants of the newly-constructed principality, not only the native *Polanie*, although this collectivity was ment to refer to the tribal consciousness of the latter. What suggests itself here is the following hypothesis: the prolongation of Lent by two weeks was a move that was to help the mentioned project. In this manner a common element was created for all the inhabitants of this country regardless of their tribal origin and at the same time distinguishing them from all the other nations — an element, let

¹²⁵ See note 110.

¹²⁶ H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski (The Beginnings of Poland)*, vol. 6, part 1, Warszawa 1985, pp. 21–23; G. Labuda, *Studia nad początkami państwa polskiego (Studies of the Beginnings of the Polish State)*, (Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza, seria Historia, 140), vol. 2, Poznań 1988, pp. 461–463. Our point of view on this subject has been presented in R. Michałowski, *Początki arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego (The Beginnings of the Gniezno Archbishopric)*, in: *1000 lat archidiecezji gnieźnieńskiej*, ed. J. Strzelczyk, J. Górny, Gniezno 2000, p. 34 ff.

us add, of a religious nature, i.e. capable of focussing the positive emotions of the wide circles of population. From this moment onwards their own national collectivity appeared to be better than others, more zealous in matters of faith.

It is time to summarize our exposition. We have succeeded in formulating a few unquestionable assertions and a few hypotheses that find a better or worse justification. There can be no doubt that the Piast dynasty imposed on its subjects a kind of fast that was not known as a legal requirement anywhere else, and that it did it with good effect. Indeed, this rule was in force for 250 years and was abolished only under the pressure of external factors: the German colonists and the papal legate. We can also accept with much probability that this prolonged Lent was introduced by Boleslaus the Brave, and rather after the Congress of Gniezno than earlier. Nor can there be any doubt that by taking the respective decision, the Polish ruler drew practical consequences from the theological discussions going on at that time in the West.

We enter unfirm ground only at the moment when we want to answer the following question: was Boleslaus directed exclusively by religious zeal when he forbade eating meat after the Septuagesima, or perhaps also political considerations were here at work? We rather go along with the second solution. However, we cannot say whether Boleslaus wanted to manifest a confirmation of his monarchal rights, or to integrate in one nation the tribes and ethnic collectivities he ruled over. In the context of the processes and events taking place about the year 1000, we are justified to put forward both the former and the latter hypotheses.

We will finish our deliberations with a reflection concerning two matters. It might seem that the rulers who Christianized their countries took pains to soften as much as possible the requirements posed by the new religion, in the hope that in this way it would be easier to gain their people's acceptance. But Boleslaus the Brave took a contrary course: he made these requirements even more difficult. Over a hundred years earlier Pope Nicholas I, while explaining to Boris of Bulgaria on what days one should abstain from eating meat, assumed the attitude that these days should not be increased beyond indispensable necessity¹²⁷. What

¹²⁷ Nicolai I. *Papae Epistolae*, N° 99, cap. 4, p. 570 ff. On the subject of the fast in Nicholas the First's Responses see L. Heiser, *Die Responsa ad consulta*

he took into consideration was that Christianity was new to Bulgarians and therefore they should not be burdened with too heavy a yoke. The monarch ruling over Gniezno was of a different opinion: he thought that the rigours might be or sometimes even should be increased.

There is still another matter, connected to the former. The stand taken by Boleslaus the Brave on the question of the fast is the best proof that Poland did not accept Christianity passively. It does not mean that the Piasts made a selection of the tenets of faith and principles of morality, accepting some and rejecting others. This was not the case. The point is that on some questions they took their own stand, proposing solutions that were not encountered elsewhere. This is shown not only by the example of Lent, but also by the offering of the Gniezno state to St. Peter. Religious peculiarities occurring in newly-Christianized countries are sometimes explained by scholars by referring to the phenomenon of syncretism. However, the mentioned interpretation cannot be applied to Boleslaus' case, since the innovations introduced by the Piasts did not go beyond the logic of Christianity — at any rate, such as existed at that time. We have already mentioned that the prohibition of eating meat after the Septuagesima resulted from the discussions held in the West. Let us only add that the offering of the Gniezno state to the Prince of the Apostles referred to the custom known in the post-Carolingian kingdoms, such as the offering of the convents to St. Peter.

(Translated by Agnieszka Kreczmar)

Bulgarorum des Papstes Nikolaus I. (858–867). Ein Zeugnis päpstlicher Hirten-sorge und ein Dokument unterschiedlicher Entwicklungen in den Kirchen von Rom und Konstantinopel, ("Trierer Theologische Studien", 36), Trier 1979, pp. 155–181.