

# The origins of Poland in the light of testimonies of witnesses at the Kingdom of Poland versus the Teutonic Knights trial in 1422–1423\*

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The trials between the Polish Kingdom and the Teutonic Order in the 14th and 15th centuries, as well as their extant evidentiary material (the protocols of the proceedings), have long been studied by historians, as it is evidenced by the consecutive volumes of the “*Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*” published since the middle of the 19th century.<sup>1</sup> Monographs concerning the trials appeared only later. The first scholar who wrote a separate paper about the witnesses’ testimonies was, as far as I know, Marian Łodyński,<sup>2</sup> but they were not dealt with in a more detailed way until the interwar period, when they were studied by Kazimierz Tymieniecki.<sup>3</sup> The most important later studies on this subject include

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1) Helena CHŁOPOCKA, *Dotychczasowe edycje Lites ac res gestae w świetle krytyki* [The published editions of *Lites ac res gestae* in the light of critical appraisal], *Studia Źródłoznawcze. Commentationes* 10, 1965, pp. 109–114.

2) Marian ŁODYŃSKI, *Regnum Poloniae w opinii publicznej XIV wieku* [Regnum Poloniae in the public opinion of the 14th Century], *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 28, 1914, pp. 38–54.

3) Kazimierz TYMIENIECKI, *Proces polsko-krzyżacki z lat 1320–1321* [Polish-Teutonic Knights trials in the years 1320–1321], *Przegląd Historyczny* 21, 1918, pp. 77–148 and later publications, see Janusz BIENIAK, *Okres zjednoczenia państwa (łącznie z procesem polsko-krzyżackim) w twórczości Kazimierza Tymienieckiego* [Times of unification of the state (including the Polish-Teutonic Knights trials) in the works of Kazimierz Tymieniecki], in: Kazimierz Tymieniecki (1887–1968). *Dorobek i miejsce w mediewistyce polskiej*, Poznań 1990, pp. 23, 37–48.

those by Helena Chłopocka<sup>4</sup> and Wiesław Sieradzan<sup>5</sup>, as well as those by Janusz Bieniak<sup>6</sup>. The previous scholarship dealt not only with the actual course of the trials and their role in Polish-Teutonic relations, but also the witnesses' historical, national, state, social and political awareness. However, many problems have not yet been sufficiently investigated or have not become the subject of research at all. The vast majority of historians focused on the 14<sup>th</sup>-century trials. The trials of the 15<sup>th</sup> century have been studied much less intensely. For example, the study of the political consciousness of witnesses in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century trials has only begun.<sup>7</sup> One almost totally neglected issue is the witnesses' knowledge of and ideas about the earliest history of Poland.<sup>8</sup>

The mission of the pope's notary (referendary) Antoni Zenon, who was to bring peace between Poland and the Order, started in 1421. In July 1422, the Polish party presented to the papal nuncio 114 charges (later supplemented by four more), prepared probably by Paweł Włodkowic, Andrew Laskarz, and Mikołaj Kicki, the archdeacon of Gniezno, who, during that trial, performed the role of the main procurator of Władysław Jagiełło. The witnesses brought by the Polish side were called expressly for the purpose of answering charges. Forty-six persons were called to testify but only twenty-nine of them submitted testimonies.<sup>9</sup> These witnesses were among the Kingdom's political and intellectual elite. There were seventeen ecclesiastical witnesses (six members of the episcopate, prelates and deans of Cathedral chapters), and twelve secular witnesses (as many as six governors and castellans,

4) In addition to several papers on the issue, she is the author of the basic (also for the 15<sup>th</sup>-century trials) book: *Process Polka z Zakonem Krzyżackim w XIV wieku. Studium źródłoznawcze* [Polish Lawsuits against the Teutonic Knights in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. A Study of Source Material], Poznań 1967.

5) Besides several papers on this issue, he wrote two books on the trials: *Świadomość historyczna świadków w procesach polsko-krzyżackich w XIV i XV wieku* [The Historical Consciousness of the Witnesses at the Trials between Poland and the Order of the Teutonic Knights in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries], Toruń 1993, and *Misja Benedykta Makraia w latach 1412–1413. Z dziejów pokojowych metod rozwiązywania konfliktów między państwowych w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w późnym średniowieczu* [Mission of the Benedykt Makraj in the years 1412–1413. From the history of peaceful methods of resolving international conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe in the late Middle Ages], Malbork 2009.

6) He dealt with the 14<sup>th</sup>-century trial in numerous papers, but his methodological contribution is also valid for the study of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century trials.

7) On this subject, see a very good paper by Dariusz WRÓBEL, *Postawy polityczne elit w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XV wieku w świetle aktów procesów polsko-krzyżackich z lat 1422–1423* [Political attitudes of Poland's elites in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century], *Annales UMCS* 58, section F, Lublin 2003, pp. 35–58. Without being aware of this work, I also wrote about some of its topics in my book *Mazowsze w Koronie. Propaganda i legitymizacja władzy Kazimierza Jagiellończyka na Mazowszu* [Mazovia in the Crown. Propaganda and Legitimization of Casimir Jagiellon's power in Mazovia], Cracow 2004, pp. 301–303.

8) What is meant by Poland's beginnings is the period spanning from the Congress of Gniezno (the witnesses did not refer to earlier periods) until the times of Bolesław Chrobry (Bolesław the Brave) and murder of Stanislaus. In the Late Middle Ages, these were clear dividing lines in the history of Poland. More on this subject in the monograph under preparation *Początki Polski w tradycji historycznej późnego średniowiecza* [The Beginnings of Poland in the Historical Tradition of the late Middle Ages].

9) On the territorial and social provenance of witnesses, see the tables in: W. SIERADZAN, *Świadomość historyczna*, pp. 27–28. On the lack of testimonies from some witnesses, see D. WRÓBEL, *Postawy polityczne*, pp. 40–42.

the Kingdom's marshal, four Poznan burghers and one nobleman who was not an official). The interrogations of witnesses started in Poznań on 20 July 1422, continued in Łęczyca, Grzegorzowo, Kozięglowy, Niepołomice, and were finalized in Cracow in February 1423, when Antoni – clearly at the order of the pope – ended the proceedings and returned to Rome.<sup>10</sup>

The first article of the indictment states that the Kingdom of Poland has existed for four hundred years and that from the very beginning it included all the Kingdom's properties, that is all the princedoms, fiefs, appurtenances and borders separating it from all adjacent kingdoms. This is how it had been in former times, since the creation of the Kingdom, and it still is today, and nobody remembers it any other way.<sup>11</sup> The second article enumerates the lands belonging to the Kingdom of Poland and owned by its consecutive rulers.<sup>12</sup> Apart from the “de regno”<sup>13</sup> argument, the Polish party also used other arguments to prove that the lands occupied by the Teutonic Knights were in fact Polish. For our present purpose, three more articles are of some importance. In the fourth article it was emphasised that Peterpense (*denar sancti Petri*) was paid only on the lands belonging to the Kingdom of Poland and it was not paid in the neighbouring lands and provinces, while article five explained that Peterpense was paid in the Chełmno, Pomerania and Michałowo regions, which – according the indictment – testifies to the fact that these lands belong to the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>14</sup> Finally, in article thirty one it was stated that the Kingdom of Poland had always been ruled by kings and had never been under the supreme power of any emperor.<sup>15</sup>

Although the articles quoted above did not indicate any direct need to use the stories on the beginning of Poland, it was actually answering to these articles that many witnesses referred to the most ancient history of the country.<sup>16</sup> Amongst twenty-nine witnesses as many as sixteen (that is more than 50%) referred to the

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10) Krzysztof BACZKOWSKI, *La missione del nunzio Antonio Zeno in Polonia negli anni 1422-1423*, in: *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne* 86, Cracow 1987, pp. 15-27; Zenon Hubert NOWAK, *Międzynarodowe procesy polubowne jako narzędzie polityki Zygmunta Luksemburskiego w północnej i środkowowschodniej Europie (1412-1424)* [The International *bona fide* Trials as an Instrument of the Politics of Sigismund of Luxembourg in Northern and East-Central Europe], Toruń 1981, pp. 113-121; Krzysztof Ożóg, *Uczni w monarchii Jadwigi Andegaweńskiej i Władysława Jagiełły (1384-1434)* [Intellectuals in the Reigns of Hedwig of Anjou and Ladislas Jagiełło (1384-1434)], Cracow 2004, pp. 242-248; Stanisław ZAJĄCZKOWSKI, *Studia nad procesami Polski i Litwy z Zakonem Krzyżackim w latach 1420-1423* [Studies on the Poland's and Lithuania's trials against the Teutonic Order in 1420-1423], *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 12, 1937, pp. 384-398.

11) *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum* II, ed. Adam Tytus DZIAŁYŃSKI, Poznań 1855, p. 24.

12) *Ibidem*, p. 25.

13) Compare D. WRÓBEL, *Postawy polityczne*, pp. 43-45.

14) *Lites*, p. 25. Andrzej Łaskarzewicz described the argument concerning Peterpense as the *magnum argumentum*, *ibidem*, p. 116.

15) *Ibidem*, p. 31.

16) Other Polish-Teutonic Knights trials lack references to the beginnings of Poland. Compare Helena CHŁOPOCKA, *Tradycja o Pomorzu Gdańskim w zeznaniach świadków na procesach polsko-krzyżackich w XIV i XV wieku* [The Tradition about Gdańsk Pomerania in the Testimonies of Witnesses at the Polish-Teutonic Knights Trials of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries], *Roczniki Historyczne* 25, 1959, no. 1, p. 69.

beginnings of Poland.<sup>17</sup> These statistics would be even higher if we were to take into consideration the fact that some witnesses were not even asked about the aforementioned articles, in particular articles 4–5 and 31.<sup>18</sup> Some witnesses among those who did, while not talking about the early times of Poland, stated that the trustfulness of these articles of indictment was borne out by ancient chronicles and/or by the life of the Saint Adalbert of Prague.<sup>19</sup> Thus they quoted the same sources referred to by the witnesses recounting stories about the beginnings of Poland.

It seems, then, that the witnesses' knowledge about the beginning of Poland was substantial. Moreover, it was shared by representatives of various social strata. Those who referred to the origins of Poland included clergymen and secular witnesses alike, the representatives of the episcopate as well as other clerics (canonries and prelates), both clergymen, nobles, and burghers. All this was known to the inhabitants of Lesser and Greater Poland, Cuyavia, Mazovia, and even to a Silesian witness in the trial (cantor John of Poznan). When confronting the testimonies on the most distant history of Poland, it seems unlikely that witnesses coordinated their testimonies or were influenced by the preceding testimonies.<sup>20</sup>

The testimonies of the witnesses of the Poznan-Cracow trial do not yield a systematic vision of the birth of Poland. The witnesses do not refer to what may be called legendary tales or to the beginning of Christianity in Poland. They mention only the birth of the Polish Kingdom, its restoration and the history of Casimir I the Restorer. These were the sole threads associated in the witnesses' minds with the articles about which they were questioned. The first article on the existence of kingdom in Poland in ancient times and article thirty-one, referring to Poland's sovereignty and mentioning that it was never subordinated to an emperor, were obviously associated with the coronation of Bolesław I the Brave (in the Middle Ages usually linked to the Congress of Gniezno in 1000). While the fourth and fifth articles on the payment of Peterpense naturally brought to mind the history of Casimir I the Restorer.

Nine witnesses knew about the role of Otto III (the majority of witnesses added to the name of the emperor the numeral – the Third) in establishing the Kingdom

17) These were witnesses number I (Poznan dean Piotr of Kobylin), II (Poznan cantor Jan), III (Poznan bishop Andrzej Łaskarzyc), VII (Poznan notary public Jerzy Merkił), VIII (Poznan councilman Henryk Buchwald), X (Poznan burgher Mikołaj Szatkowski), XII (Łęczycza scholar/teacher Wojciech of Bielaw), XIII (Gniezno archbishop Mikołaj Trąba), XIV (Wrocław bishop Jan Pella), XV (Płock bishop Jakub), XVI (Wrocław canon Piotr Kluka), XVII (Płock cantor Maciej), XX (Papal protonotary Zbigniew Oleśnicki), XXIII (Marshal of Kingdom Zbigniew of Brzezia), XXIV (Cracow bishop and chancellor of the Kingdom Wojciech Jastrzębiec), XXIX (Chełmno bishop Jan Biskupiec); *ibidem*, pp. 99–100, 108–110, 117–118, 138, 142, 150, 167, 175–177, 180–181, 190, 199, 208, 214–215, 223–225, 228, 252–253, 266–267, 270–271, 313.

18) On the omission of some articles in the questions directed to witnesses, see Janusz BIENIAK, *Środowisko świadków procesu polsko-krzyżackiego z 1339 r.* [Environment around the witnesses of the Polish-Teutonic Knights trial in 1339], in: *Genealogia – kręgi zawodowe i grupy interesu w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle porównawczym* [Genealogy – professional circles and groups of interest in medieval Poland against a comparative background], Toruń 1989, ed. Jan Wroniszewski, pp. 13–15.

19) *Lites*, p. 176, 211, 287, 297, 300.

20) Compare W. SIERADZAN, *Świadomość historyczna*, p. 16.

of Poland and in the first coronation of a Polish ruler.<sup>21</sup> Some recalled that Emperor Otto III visited the grave of Saint Adalbert, but only some pointed out that it took place in Gniezno. Many witnesses did not mention the circumstances of the emperor's arrival in Poland, but only said that he had established a kingdom in Poland and that he had liberated Poland from dependency on the emperor. Only some stated directly that Otto III had crowned the Polish ruler. What are predominant are the general claims that Otto "made" Bolesław a king or/and created/made (e.g. *creavit*) a kingdom in Poland. Naturally quite often (though, interestingly, not by all the witnesses) one recalled on this occasion the name of the first Polish king – Bolesław, sometimes with the sobriquet ("Chabri"), and one of the witnesses (Zbigniew Oleśnicki) even gave the correct year of the death of this king (1025). Two witnesses did not mention the role played by Otto III in the history of Poland but they talked about the historical figures related to the beginning of the kingdom: King Bolesław I the Brave and King Mieszko I ("rex Meschko").<sup>22</sup>

Ten witnesses knew about the fall of the Kingdom in Poland (some added that it happened after the death of Bolesław the Brave) and how the only heir – Casimir – was brought from a monastery to the country.<sup>23</sup> Whereas the general outline of the story was known to many witnesses, only some of them mentioned the name of Casimir (and one witness, Zbigniew Oleśnicki, even called him Mieszko!). The majority of witnesses referred broadly to a "certain monk". Only some recalled that he was brought in from a monastery in Cluny, and few of them added that it was a Benedictine monastery. Many witnesses did not name the monastery, and one (Poznan notary public Jerzy Merkil) clearly stated that he did not know in which monastery the Polish ruler had served as a monk. (Incidentally, this witness did not refer to Casimir by his name). Each of the aforementioned ten witnesses associated the introduction of Peterpense in Poland to an obligation imposed on the country by a certain pope (none of the witnesses recalled his name) in return for a dispensation for Casimir – letting him leave the monastery and the monkish profession and allowing him to return to Poland. Three witnesses from Greater Poland – two clergymen and a burgher – added to this condition still other obligations put upon Poles: wearing a white linen scarf around the neck, wearing white linen "instead of a stole" and wearing short hair cut above the ears.<sup>24</sup> There were however various descriptions of whom these obligations concerned. Piotr from Kobylin and

21) *Lites*, pp. 108, 142, 175, 180–181, 190, 199, 223, 228, 266, 270, 313. Witness no. II, VII, XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XX, XXIV, XXIX.

22) *Ibidem*, pp. 109, 167.

23) *Ibidem*, pp. 99–100, 110, 118, 138, 150, 208, 214, 224, 252–253, 267. Witnesses no. I, II, III, VII, VIII, XVI, XVII, XX, XXIII, XXIV. All in all, the Peterpense argument appears in the testimonies of as many as 23 witnesses (out of 29). See Jacek BANASZKIEWICZ, *Fabularyzacja przestrzeni. Średniowieczny przykład granic* [Fictionalization of Space: An example of medieval borders], *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 86, 1979, pp. 997–999.

24) *Lites*, pp. 100, 150, 267. Witness no. I, VIII, XXIV. Compare Tomasz JUREK, *Fryzura narodowa średniowiecznych Polaków* [National hairstyle of medieval Poles], in: *Scriptura custos memoriae. Prace historyczne*, ed. Danuta Zydorek, Poznań 2001, pp. 649–650, on the testimonies of the witnesses in the trial 1422–1423. Incidentally, this scholar referred to the testimonies of only two witnesses, and altogether omitting the enunciations of Wojciech Jastrzębiec.

Wojciech Jastrzębiec maintained that they concerned nobility while burgher Buchwald said that all Poles had to comply.

The witnesses of the Poznan-Cracow trial, as the source of their knowledge indicated public knowledge (“publica vox et fama”). Besides, they referred to information received from trustworthy authorities, personal experience, sometimes to written sources.<sup>25</sup> As to the beginnings of Poland, the sources of historical knowledge were quite well defined. Although sometimes even then the witnesses referred to “publica vox et fama”, more often they provided information from specific persons (groups of persons), or from written sources.<sup>26</sup> While talking about the beginnings of Poland, some witnesses mentioned their parents/ancestors (including father and grandfather) or elderly and eminent subjects of the Kingdom.<sup>27</sup> One of these enunciations is particularly interesting. Mikołaj Szatkowski, a burgher, was one of those who referred to his father as the source of his knowledge. He testified he was approximately 150-years-old and acquired his knowledge about Bolesław the Brave from the tales by his father, who, according to Mikołaj, lived close to 200 years and saw that king in person.<sup>28</sup>

The witnesses mentioned written texts as supplementary sources of knowledge acquired from various persons, but more often they were referred to as autonomous sources. Many witnesses referred to old chronicles,<sup>29</sup> to the Life of Saint Stanislaus<sup>30</sup> and the Life of Saint Adalbert.<sup>31</sup> Only one witness (Zbigniew Oleśnicki) specified the “old chronicle” he quoted.<sup>32</sup> The work about Saint Adalbert might have been “The Miracles of Saint Adalbert”, where, amongst other things, one finds a description of the coronation of Bolesław the Brave during the Congress of Gniezno,<sup>33</sup> while in case of the Life of Saint Stanislaus it might have been a work by

25) See W. SIERADZAN, *Świadomość historyczna*, pp. 113–114 and table II on p. 116.

26) On references to sources written during the trial, see Helena CHŁOPOCKA, *Chronikalische Berichte in der Dokumentierung der Prozesse zwischen Polen und dem Deutschen Orden*, in: *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewusstsein im späten Mittelalter*, hg. von Hans Patze, Sigmaringen 1987, pp. 476–477; Jadwiga KRZYŻANIAKOWA, *Erudycja historyczna Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego w świetle jego zeznań na procesie w 1422 r.* [Historical erudition of Zbigniew Oleśnicki in the light of his testimonies at the trial in 1422], in: *Ars historia. Prace z dziejów powszechnych i Polski*, Poznań 1976, pp. 477–479.

27) *Lites*, p. 110 (*audiuit a multis antiquis dicti Regni*), 138, 142 (in both: *audiuit a patre suo*), 150 (*audiuit – ab Auo suo homine multum antique et a multis alijs maioribus suis et ab alijs diuersis hominibus*), 167 (*[audiuit] a patre suo*), 190 (*audiuit – a suis progenitoribus et alijs multis in ipso Regno*), 223 (*dixit eiam se multociens audisse fieri sermonem de contentis in ipso articulo inter Seniores et maiores Regni Polonie*), 252 (*audiuit a maioribus et senioribus ipsius Regni Polonie*), 313 (*audiuit a suis progenitoribus et maioribus Regni*). In the spelling of the text, I follow the edition of this source.

28) *Et hoc scit pro tanto quod habuit a patre suo quem dixit vixisse prope ducentos Annos quo ipse vidit primum Regem Polonie Boleslau Chabri vocatum et dicebat ei quod ille Boleslaus fuit primus qui reduxit omnes ducatus ad obedienciam Regni Polonie*, *ibidem*, p. 167.

29) *Legit in cronicis antiquis*, *ibidem*, pp. 99, 108, 175, 199, 208, 211, 223–224, 228, 266, 270, 313. See also pp. 176, 287, 297, 300.

30) *Ibidem*, pp. 99, 223 (in both cases: *vita sancti Stanislaï*).

31) *Ibidem*, pp. 180–181, 190, 199, 223, 266. See also pp. 176, 287. Recalled as: *vita beati/sancti Adalberti*, *legenda et vita beati Adalberti*, *legenda et passio beati Adalberti*, *legenda beati Adalberti*.

32) *Legit – in Cronica Vincenciana*, *ibidem*, p. 223. It is possible, but far from certain, that we deal here with the chronicle by Wincenty Kadłubek.

33) *Miracula sancti Adalberti*, in: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* 6, Kraków 1893, pp. 221–238.

Wincenty from Kielce (Kielczy). It cannot be excluded, however, that the witnesses were not referring to these particular writings but to – very numerous in late Middle Ages – remakes and adaptations of the lives of both those saints.<sup>34</sup> One of the witnesses (Poznan notary Jerzy Merkil), while mentioning the sources of his knowledge on the times of Bolesław the Brave, recalled still another written source – the epitaph on the tombstone of the ruler in the Poznan Cathedral.<sup>35</sup>

It is not easy to give a general assessment of the witnesses' knowledge about the beginnings of Poland. The lacking details in their statements (e.g. rarely mentioned reasons and circumstances of Otto III's sojourn in Poland, rare mentions of the name of Bolesław the Brave) was not necessarily due to their ignorance. For the sake of the trial, many such details were simply superfluous and one may rather wonder about the willingness (of some witnesses) to describe a given event more closely. While, on the other hand, one can also notice the superficiality of many statements. Such was the case, I think, in the testimonies regarding Casimir Monk / the Restorer. One of the witnesses clearly shows his ignorance as to the monastery that monk/prince (not mentioned by name here) belonged to.<sup>36</sup> Often, they not only fail to mention the monastery in Cluny; they do not even mention Casimir's name, although one would rather expect the prince's name to be self-evident to them all. No witness mentioned the name of the pope who gave Casimir permission to return to his country.

In assessing the witnesses' knowledge about the beginnings of Poland one also needs to consider the errors in their statements. Some witnesses mixed up persons and even sequences of events. Poznan dean Piotr from Kobylin said that the Kingdom of Poland was deprived of the crown because of the murder of Saint Adalbert by a certain king named Bolesław. This honour was however restored by ... Casimir the Monk.<sup>37</sup> Also Zbigniew Oleśnicki – who was at the time the Gniezno canon, provost of Saint Florian in Cracow, King's secretary and a papal protonotary – was wrong in his presentation of the beginnings of Poland. According to this witness

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34) Piotr WĘCOWSKI, *Strata korony królewskiej po śmierci św. Stanisława w opinii pisarzy późnego średniowiecza* [The loss of the kingdom's crown after the death of Saint Stanislaus in the opinion of the late medieval writers], in: *Christianitas Romana. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi R. Michałowskiemu* [Studies offered to Professor R. Michałowski], ed. Krzysztof Skwierczyński, Warszawa 2009, pp. 289–290.

35) *Lites*, p. 143. See Ryszard GANSINIEC, *Nagrobek Bolesława Chrobrego* [The tombstone of Bolesław the Brave], *Przegląd Zachodni* 1951, no. 7/8, pp. 375–376.

36) *Lites*, p. 138. Cf. Wiesław SIERADZAN, *Świadomość historyczna przedstawicieli patrycjatu miasta Poznania w świetle ich zeznań na procesie polsko-krzyżackim w latach 1422–1423* [Historical awareness of the representatives of Poznan patriciate in the light of their testimonies at the Polish-Teutonic Knights trials in 1422–1423], in: *Studia nad dziejami miast i mieszczaństwa w średniowieczu* [Studies on the history of towns and the burgher class in the Middle Ages], Toruń 1996, p. 199.

37) *Lites*, pp. 99–100. J. Krzyżaniakowa, while referring to Piotr's testimony, she assessed that "it was a rather limited [historical] knowledge, and in the case of the beginnings of Poland it was based only on the life of Saint Stanislaus", Jadwiga KRZYŻANIAKOWA, *Piotr z Kobylina – sylwetka późnośredniowiecznego pralata* [Piotr from Kobylin – a profile of a late medieval prelate], in: *Homines et societas. Czasy Piastów i Jagiellonów* [The times of Piasts and Jagiellons], Poznań 1997, p. 349, footnote 25. See there, p. 353. Incidentally, this author failed to mention the errors in the sequence of events in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, as presented by Piotr.

(who on that occasion referred to ancient chronicles) King Bolesław had a son by the name of Mieszko. After Bolesław's death, he was banished together with his mother, the widow of Bolesław the Brave. During the banishment Mieszko became a monk in the monastery in Cluny. After a period of time spent there, as the only heir to the Kingdom, he was brought back to the country. In return for papal consent, Poland was subjected to Peterpense. As can be seen, Oleśnicki had mistaken the names—he ascribed the life story of Casimir Monk to Mieszko II.<sup>38</sup>

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Based on the testimonies in the Poznan-Cracow trial, we can conclude that in the 1420s some knowledge of the beginnings of Poland was rather widespread in Polish society. However, it was not very thorough. It was in fact rather superficial, general, sometimes imprecise or even erroneous (the names of some important characters of the Early Middle Ages were not known, neither were the circumstances of their actions, moreover the protagonists and the sequence of events were confused).<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, it seems that the awareness of Poland's origin by the majority of inhabitants of the Kingdom of Poland (including its political and intellectual elite) was limited to some characters and events, and focused on some key notions and even keywords (e.g. the crown of Bolesław the Brave, Peterpense – Casimir Monk).

38) *Lites*, pp. 224–225. Thus far, not much attention has been paid to the errors (quite significant!) made by Oleśnicki. Usually he is presented as the greatest erudite from amongst the witnesses. J. KRZYŻANIAKOWA, *Erudycja historyczna Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego*, p. 480, actually noticed Oleśnicki's errors (stating, amongst other things, "so it can be seen that Oleśnicki did not remember all that well what he had read and the ancient history of Poland was not a subject of his particular interests"), but these claims did not affect the overall tenor of her paper. The author evaluates Oleśnicki's historical erudition unequivocally positively.

39) While analyzing the testimonies of one of the witnesses, the Poznan cantor Jan, T. Jurek noticed multiple gaps in his historical knowledge: Tomasz JUREK, Nacionis de Slesia. *Ze studiów nad świadomością historyczną na późnośredniowiecznym Śląsku* [From the studies of historical awareness in late medieval Silesia], in: *Nihil superfluum esse. Prace z dziejów średniowiecza ofiarowane Profesor J. Krzyżaniakowej*, eds. Jerzy Strzelczyk – Józef Dobosz, Poznań 2000, pp. 446, 448. On the superficiality of the historical knowledge of the witnesses concerning the history of Pomerania, see H. CHŁOPOCKA, *Tradycja*, pp. 122–128. Cf. also W. SIERADZAN, *Świadomość historyczna*, pp. 43–44, 49, 53, 67, 83–84, 106–107 etc.; Leszek ZYGNER, *Kultura historyczna przedstawicieli Kościoła plockiego w świetle ich zeznań na procesie polsko-krzyżackim w latach 1422–1423* [Historical culture of the representatives of Płock Church in the light of their testimonies as the Polish-Teutonic Knights trials in 1422–1423], *Notatki Płockie* 1994, no. 1, pp. 5–6.