

PAWEŁ LATOSZEK

Faculty of Historical and Social Sciences
Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE EARLY PIAST STATE BETWEEN 965 AND 973

The fog that shrouds the first contacts between the emerging Polish state and the Holy See is so dense that most of the ruminations concerning its nature will likely remain bound to the sphere of hypotheses, as will the investigations of other aspects of early Polish statehood. The first written mention of its founder (Mieszko I) in historical records does not portray him as a lead character. To make matters worse, references to events featuring the first Polish ruler are few and far between, as evidenced by the case discussed in this study.

By way of introduction, one should point out that the present-day literature on the subject is highly inconsistent as to this very aspect of Slavic history, i.e. the participation of the Holy See in Prince Mieszko I's conversion to Christianity. On the one hand, historiographers argue that it was Pope John XIII¹ who approved the Polish prince's conversion. On the other hand, a reverse conclusion can be drawn based on the Göttingen multi-volume *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, which details the early relations between Mieszko's state and the pontifical seat. The volume title *Polonia pontificia...*, edited by Waldemar Könighaus, specifies the epitaph on the destroyed tombstone of Bolesław I Chrobry as the earliest written reference on the relations between the Piast state and Rome, based on the mention that Bolesław's first haircut at the age of seven, following which his hair was sent to the Eternal City². When comparing Könighaus' research with the establishments made by Polish historiographers, even those who preclude the possibility of contacts between the Piast state and the Holy See prior to Mieszko's conversion to Christianity must be struck by the (currently contested) legal status of the first "Polish" bishop, Jordan, who is thought to have been directly answerable to the pope³. At the same time, while most Polish historians claim that the Piast "state" was assigned its missionary bishop in 968, they also maintain that "[the Holy See – P.L.] could not have been disposed to deal with the matters of a remote mission in Poland either in

¹ A. Kopiczko, *Jan XIII*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 7, eds. S. Wielgus, J. Duchniewski, M. Daniluk, Lublin 1997, col. 829.

² *Polonia pontificia sive repertorium privilegiorum et litterarum a Romanis pontificibus ante annum MCLXXXV-VIII Poloniae ecclesiis monasteriis civitatibus singulisque personis concessorum: Provincia Gnesensis – Archidioecesis Gnesensis, Dioecesis Poseniensis, Cracoviensis, Wratislaviensis, Plocensis, Wladislaviensis et Lubucensis: Pomerania – Dioecesis Caminensis exempta*, vol. 1, ed. W. Könighaus, Göttinge 2014, "Regesta Pontificum Romanorum", p. 12.

³ See J. Tazbirowa, *Jordan*, in: *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich. Encyklopedyczny zarys kultury Słowian od czasów najdawniejszych do schyłku wieku XII*, vol. 2, eds. W. Kowalenko, G. Łabuda, T. Lehr-Splawiński, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1965, p. 340.

965 or in 966⁷⁴ due to the political situation in the Apennine Peninsula at the time. Using the existing sources on the subject, this text strives to reassess the earliest moment for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mieszko's "state" and the Holy See.

1. The earliest mention of the relations between the Piast *regnum* and Rome: 973 A.D.

Chronologically, the earliest mention of contacts between the emerging Piast state and the Apostolic See comes from the epitaph on the non-existent Bolesław I's tombstone, whose inscription read, *Præcidens comam / Septentii tempore Romam*⁵. The statement was directly tied to Otto's I resolution of a dispute between Mieszko I and Margrave Odo in the wake of the former's victory over the latter in the Battle of Cedynia in 972. Concluding his account of the conflict, Prince-Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg wrote that, "hac de fama miserabili imperator turbatus de Italia nuncios misit, precipiens Hodoni et Miesconi, si gratiam suam habere voluissent, usque dum ipse veniens causam discuteret, in pace permaneret"⁶. Otto I returned to Saxony in March 973; based on an entry in *Annales Altahenses* ("Miszegeo [...], terror ecompulsus, filium mittit obsidem"⁷), and the fact that Bolesław's first haircut may have taken place around 973, some historians interpret it as the entrustment of the young prince to the Holy See to protect him from becoming the emperor's hostage⁸. Naturally, given that Otto I died later on that year, the transfer of the future Polish king to Germany in the aforementioned role appears doubtful. On the other hand, Bolesław's tombstone remains the earliest "tangible"⁹ mention of the direct contacts between the "Piast" state and the Holy See, while also demonstrating that Mieszko's "seeking Rome's support – despite its weakness under individual popes, and in spite of the Holy Roman Emperor's military superiority and the interference of the local nobles – [which – P.L.] is understandable and may have been effective. For although the Holy Roman Emperors at the time habitually exerted pressure on the successive popes by marching their troops to Rome, the popes did regain their autonomy whenever those troops were ordered out of the Holy See"¹⁰.

Thus, Waldemar Könighaus is partly right, as it turns out that the transcript of Bolesław's epitaph cited in the first volume of *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* does, indeed, constitute the earliest unambiguous mention of the relations of the young "Polish state" with the Apostolic See; and yet, as noticed by Marian Banaszak, "this act of trust would not have been possible without any prior contacts and mutual sympathy between Poland and Rome"¹¹.

⁴ T. Manteuffel, *Państwo polskie a papieżstwo oraz ruch monastyczny na Zachodzie w X wieku*, in: *Początki państwa polskiego. Księga tysiąclecia*, Poznań 2002, p. 254ff.

⁵ *Epitaphium Chabri Boleslai*, in: MPH, vol. 1, ed. A. Bielowski, Lwów 1864, p. 320. *W siedmioletniu obcinasz włosy / Dla posłania do Rzymu*. See *Nagrobek Bolesława Chrobrego rozpoznany przez Augusta Bielowskiego*, [s. 1], p. 8; see also footnote 2 above.

⁶ *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, lib. II, cap. 29, in: MGH SS rer. Germ. N.S., ed. R. Holtzmann, vol. 9, Berolini 1935, p. 76.

⁷ *Annales Altahenses Miores*, a. 973, in: MGH SS rer. Germ., vol. 4, ed. E.L.B. ab Oefele, Hannoveræ 1891, p. 11.

⁸ J. Strzelczyk, *Mieszko I*, Poznań 2013, p. 166; T. Manteuffel, *Państwo Mieszka a Europa*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny", 67/1960, p. 1026.

⁹ See A. Bielowski, *Wstęp do Nagrobka Bolesława Chrobrego*, in: MPH, vol. 1, p. 319.

¹⁰ *Historia Kościoła w Polsce*, vol. 1: *do roku 1764, cz. 1: do roku 1506*, eds. B. Kumor, Z. Obertyński, Poznań-Warszawa 1974, p. 22.

¹¹ M. Banaszak, *Charakter prawny biskupów Jordana i Ungera*, "Nasza Przeszłość", 30/1969, p. 109.

2. Concerning the disputes on the metropolitan independence of the first “Polish” bishop

Before we consider the subject matter of this article, a recapitulation is due of contemporary historiographers’ stance on the relations between the first Polish Church entity and the Holy Roman Empire. The said stance is directly tied to a specific interpretation of an excerpt from the second volume of Thietmar’s chronicle, which includes one of the earliest mentions of Mieszko I. The excerpt in question goes as follows: “Gero Orientalium marchio Lusizi et Selpuli, Miseconem quoque cum sibi subiectis imperiali subdidit dicioni”¹². Some Polish historiographers, including Kazimierz Tymieniecki and Gerard Labuda, criticize its veracity, claiming that Thietmar erroneously summarized Widukind of Corvey’s account of the same events. According to Widuking’s chronicle, “Gero igitur comes non inmenor iuramenti, cum Wichmannum accusari vidisset reumque cognovisset, barbaris, a quibus eum assumpsit, restituit. Ab eis libenter susceptus longius degentes barbaros crebris preliis contrivit. Misacam regem, cuius potestatis erant Sclavi, qui dicuntur Licaviki, duabus vicibus superavit fratremque ipsius interfecit, predam magnam ab eo extorsit”. Widukind also states that, “Eo quoque tempore Gero preses Sclavos qui dicuntur Lusici potentissime vicit ed at ultimam servitutum coegit, non sine sui tamen gravi vulnere nepotisque, optimi viri casu, caeterorum quoque plurimorum nobilium virorum”¹³. Thietmar, who wrote the first two volumes of his chronicle fifty years after the military events referred to in this article, based his account exclusively on Widukind’s chronicle; he did not annotate Widukind’s version of the events with transcripts of oral history, but merely wrote a synopsis of the existing source, committing a number of errors in the process. While Widukind’s account begins with Margrave Gero, the author soon uses the implied subject to recount the story of Wichmann’s insurgency. Conversely, Thietmar attributes all deeds of the Saxon rebel to Gero¹⁴. He then reduces two chapters of *Rerum gestarum Saxonicarum* to merely one sentence, thus completely distorting the original account. One should, therefore, stress that 963 did not see Mieszko’s subjugation to Gero, but instead the mid-960s saw a fierce conflict between Mieszko and Count Wichmann; Polish historiography nonetheless takes the former version as a given.

On the other hand, Thietmar does mention the fact that, in 972, Margrave Odo “Miesconem imperatori fidelem tributumque usque in Wurta fluvium solventem collecto exercitu petivit”¹⁵. Mieszko thus paid tribute to the Holy Roman Empire for the lands extending all the way to the Warta, specifically for the territory he had captured from the Licaviki, who were first mentioned in Widukind’s account, and whom historians identify as the inhabitants of Lubusz Land¹⁶. Located on the western bank of the Warta, the said area also extended over the western bank of the Oder¹⁷, on account of the fact that if a given diocese had jurisdiction

¹² *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, lib. II, cap. 15, p. 55.

¹³ *Widukindi Monachi Corbeiensis, Rerum Gestarum Saxonicarum*, lib. III, cap. 66, 67, in: MGH SS rer. Germ., vol. 60, ed. G. Waitz, K.A. Kehr, Hannoveræ 1935, p. 141ff.

¹⁴ K. Tymieniecki, *Widukind i Thietmar o wypadkach z r. 963*, “Roczniki Historyczne”, 12/1936, p. 99ff, 104; G. Labuda, *Studia nad początkami państwa polskiego*, vol. 1, Wodzisław Śląski 2012, p. 35-37.

¹⁵ *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, lib. II, cap. 29, p. 75.

¹⁶ G. Labuda, *Mieszko I*, Wrocław 2009, p. 115, 120; J. Strzelczyk, *Mieszko I*, p. 99ff, 161.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

over part of a territory, it could stake claim to extend its jurisdiction over its remainder, even if it was divided by a natural border, e.g. a river¹⁸.

To better comprehend the chronicler's understanding of the stretch of land for which Mieszko paid tribute to the emperor, we should refer to Herbert Ludat, whose study is a vital reminder of the medieval point of view, according to which the Warta was a tributary of the Noteć¹⁹ (rather than the other way round, as contemporary geography has it), and therefore for the contemporaries of Mieszko it was the Noteć, rather than the Warta, that connected with the Oder. It should be stressed that the said tribute was not paid for retaining possession of the entire "state of Gniezno", but solely for the lands it acquired in 963, which was under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Brandenburg²⁰; moreover, the tribute paid by Mieszko was likely treated as a form of compensation (sic!) for the lands seized during the war. In the following years, as the newly-baptized prince proceeded to establish Church structures in the Piast *regnum*, the aforementioned lands were considered as independent from Germany, hence all mentions of the first "Polish" bishop in the Piast territory indicate its direct dependence on the Holy See.

The above mentions are tied to the figure of the first "Polish" bishop, Jordan, who is mentioned in *Rocznik kapituly poznańskiej*, which states, "Item anno Domini 968 Jordanus primus episcopus in Polonia ordinatus est et obiit 984"²¹. Moreover, *Rocznik poznański I (starszy)* adds, "Anno Domini 968 Iordanus primus episcopus Poznaniensis ordinatus est"²². Another mention of Jordan can be found in *Annales Bohemici*, which states, "968 Polonia cepit habere episcopum"²³. Jordan is also referenced by Thietmar in the sixth volume of his chronicle: "Iodran, primus eorum antistes, multum cum eis sudavit, dum eos ad supernæ cultum vineæ sedulus verbo et opere invitavit"²⁴, also mentioning the bishop in the second volume, on the occasion of the ordainment of the first Bishop of Magdeburg and his suffragans: "Auditus est hiis confratribus Brandenburgensis ecclesie pastor Thietmarus ante hos unctus et Iordan episcopus Posnaniensis"²⁵. On another note, Annalista Saxo's account states that "His confrateribus coaptavit inperator tres prius consecratos, hoc est Dudonem [...] Dudelinum [...] et Iordanem Poznanensem"²⁶.

The Polish historiographer Gerard Labuda once defended Thietmar, claiming that, while writing his chronicle, the German historian simply projected the post-1000 state of affairs in the Polish Church under Bolesław I on the period of Jordan's ordainment as the missionary bishop of Poland. After all, contended Labuda, following the foundation of the Archdiocese

¹⁸ G. Labuda, *Studia...*, p. 115ff; idem, *Mieszko I*, p. 125.

¹⁹ H. Ludat, *Mieszko Pierwszy i jego trybut «usque in Wurta fluvium»*, in: *Słowianie – Niemcy – Europa. Wybór prac*, Marburg-Poznań 2000, p. 32.

²⁰ K. Zernack, *Polska a Niemcy i Cesarstwo w X wieku*, in: *Civitas Schinesghe. Mieszko I i początki państwa polskiego*, ed. J.M. Piskorski, Poznań-Gniezno 2004, p. 29. "[...] although the foundation document of the Diocese of Brandenburg establishes the Oder as its eastern border, the list of the nine *provincias* that should adjoin the diocese omits the area east of the Spreve lands around Kopanica. This omission extends [...] over the two remaining Slavic territories, Lubusz Land west of the Oder, and the Selpoli lands in the area of Beeskow."

²¹ *Rocznik kapituly poznańskiej*, a. 968, in: MPH series II, vol. 6, ed. B. Kübris, Warszawa 1962, p. 23.

²² *Rocznik poznański (starszy)*, a. 968, ibidem, p. 129.

²³ *Annales Bohemici*, a. 968, in: FRB, vol. 2, ed. J. Emler, Praha 1875, p. 380.

²⁴ *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, lib. IV, cap. 56, p. 196.

²⁵ Ibidem, lib. II, cap. 22, p. 65.

²⁶ *Annalista Saxo*, a. 968, in: MGH SS, vol. 6, ed. G.H. Pertz, Hannoveræ 1844, p. 622.

of Gniezno, bishop Unger was reassigned to the Diocese of Poznań; Labuda also argued that, in the second volume of Thietmar's chronicle the very context in which it was written demanded that the newly ordained Jordan be assigned to a specific archdiocese²⁷. On the other hand, had Thietmar written his chronicle without political bias, which is often attributed to his account, he may well have used the phrase *episcopus Poloniensis*. The inclusion of Jordan among the suffragans of the Archdiocese of Magdeburg, established in 968, served a specific purpose. Thietmar wrote his chronicle between 1012 and 1018, i.e. directly after the release of the so-called "Magdeburg Falsificate", a document that strove to "prove" that either John XII or John XIII founded the Diocese of Poznań as a suffragan diocese of Magdeburg (one should remember that in 1009 Thietmar was appointed Bishop of Merseburg)²⁸. Still, while Thietmar does indeed follow in the footsteps of the *Magdeburg Falsificate*, assigning Jordan to a specific German archdiocese, it is unsubstantiated to consider Jordan as a suffragan of Adalbert, as argued by both Thietmar and Annalista Saxo.

Though the *Magdeburg Falsificate* never saw the light of day, its very concept was to enable the Archdiocese of Magdeburg to falsify history and thus stake its claim to the Polish territories²⁹, as evidenced by the German scholar Paul³⁰. Still, it seems unjust to accuse Thietmar of Merseburg of showing the same tendencies as the authors of the *Falsificate*... The very concept was hatched between 1005 and 1012 by the Magdeburg hierarchs³¹, which means Thietmar may have been familiar with their intentions. While he misattributes Jordan to a wrong superior diocese, and thus reinforces the account of the supposed foundation of his own diocese by Otto I, he clearly differentiates between two separate groups of bishops (for more on that, see the subsequent section of this study)³².

It should be added that Jordan's status was that of a missionary bishop with no permanent seat, and as such he was obliged to maintain his presence at Mieszko's court and accompany the prince in his journeys across the *regnum*³³. Most importantly, even though a missionary bishop had to be assigned with a diocese of his own, since a privilege of exemption was required in order to become directly answerable to the Bishop of Rome³⁴, some historians have

²⁷ G. Labuda, *Studia*..., p. 149.

²⁸ A. Gąsiorowski, *Thietmar*, in: *Mały słownik kultury dawnych Słowian*, ed. L. Leciejewicz, Warszawa 1990, p. 385.

²⁹ K. Buczek, *Pierwsze biskupstwa polskie*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny", 52/1938, vol. 2, p. 170ff.

³⁰ P. Kehr, *Das Erzbistum Magdeburg und die erste Organisation der christlichen Kirche in Polen*, Berlin 1920, passim; W. Abraham, *Gniezno i Magdeburg*, in: *Organizacja Kościoła w Polsce do połowy wieku XII*, Wodzisław Śląski 2009, p. 277; J. Strzelczyk, *Mieszko I*, p. 139ff.

³¹ P. Kehr, op. cit., p. 14ff.

³² Moreover, it is not entirely clear why the *Magdeburg Falsificate*, whose creation overlapped with Thietmar's episcopate in Merseburg, was not used by Thietmar as he wrote his chronicle. For a cogent explanation of this paradox, see T. Jasiński, *Początki organizacji kościelnej w Polsce*, in: *Tu się wszystko zaczęło. Rola Poznania w państwie Pierwszych Piastów. Teksty wykładów wygłoszonych na sympozjum naukowym zorganizowanym przez Oddział Polskiej Akademii Nauk i Wydział Teologiczny UAM w Poznaniu dnia 8 grudnia 2009 roku*, ed. A. Wójtowicz, Poznań 2010, p. 99ff.

³³ G. Labuda, *Mieszko I*, p. 208; idem, *Studia*..., p. 147; P. Urbańczyk, *Mieszko pierwszy tajemniczy*, Toruń 2012, p. 246; W. Abraham, *Organizacja Kościoła*..., p. 115ff. Although W. Abraham at first mistakenly maintained that Jordan was appointed Missionary Bishop for the Piast *regnum* by Otto I, he subsequently retracted this opinion, see idem, *Gniezno i Magdeburg*, p. 271.

³⁴ M. Banaszak, op. cit., p. 100-119. For a more recent manifestation of this line of argument, see D.A. Sikorski, *O rzekomej instytucji biskupstwa bezpośrednio zależnego od Stolicy Apostolskiej. Przyczynę do problemu statusu prawnego biskupów polskich przed rokiem 1000*, "Czasopismo Prawo-Historyczne", 55/2003, vol. 2, p. 184ff.

undermined this hypothesis, claiming that such acts were limited solely to the individuals with disputable metropolitan affiliation, and their structure was clearly defined³⁵. In the discussed case, a new diocese would be difficult to establish in Mieszko's state in the first place, given that "it was virtually impossible to delineate its bounds within a country whose boundaries were in a state of constant flux due to numerous wars³⁶"; hence Jordan and Unger should be legally classified as bishops answerable solely to the pope³⁷.

In the previous section of this study, we have established that Gero did not subjugate Mieszko to the Holy Roman Empire in 963, and that Mieszko's tribute to the imperial treasury, paid from 965 on for the lands bound by the Warta, was due solely as compensation for the seizure of Lubusz Land from the Diocese of Brandenburg³⁸. Such a state of affairs continued up until 979, when the Holy Roman Emperor Otto II personally led an expedition against Mieszko to punish him for the support which the Polish ruler and other Slavic leaders granted to the political camp of Henry the Quarrelsome. With Mieszko quickly humbling himself before the emperor, Otto II redirected his military operations to Bohemia, which he raided in 975 and 976, before eventually beating them in 977; by 978, Boleslaus II the Pious of Bohemia was back in the imperial fold, joining the emperor for the celebrations of Easter in Quedlinburg. Otto II's expedition against Mieszko was recounted in *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*: "Siquidem imperator a finibus sui regi procul remotus, super Sclavones quos adversum ierat expugnandos morabatur; [...] iam vero brumalis intemperiei pruinis incumbentibus, imperator revocata manu a bello, ad villam Polidam, propriam videlicet sedem, in natale Domini est reversus"³⁹. Given Thietmar's account of Mieszko's marriage with Oda of Haldensleben in 980 ("Cunctis æcclesiæ rectoribus et maxime antistiti suimet venerabili Hilliwardo displicuit. Sed propter salutem patriæ et corroboracionem pacis necesarie remedium salubre. Namque ab ea [...] captivorum multitudo ad patriam reducitur, vinctis catena solvitur, reisque carcer aperitur"⁴⁰), it is commonly assumed that throughout the 970s the Piast *regnum* and the Holy Roman Empire were in a state of war, which likely resulted in Mieszko's refusal to pay the contracted tribute⁴¹.

In view of the above, and based on Mieszko's independence from the Holy Roman Empire in the period investigated in this study, we may now proceed to discuss its crucial problem, especially given that "it is a misconception [...] to think that the Christianization of Poland could begin without a "papal license"; such an order of things would be simply impossible. It is equally unsubstantiated to think that the emperor's initiative was enough of a substitute for the pope's authority in this regard. In this case, the emperor was limited to, at best, approving the pope's choice of a German diocese as a missionary. [...] Under the circumstances at the

³⁵ G. Labuda, *Jakie uprawnienia kościelne przekazał cesarz Otton III księciu Bolesławowi Chrobremu na synodzie/zjeździe gnieźnieńskim w roku 1000? Po raz drugi*, in: *Studia...*, vol. 3, Wodzisław Śląski 2012, p. 456, footnote 31a.

³⁶ P. Urbańczyk, *Zanim Polska została Polską*, Toruń 2015, p. 286.

³⁷ A. Weiss, *Biskupstwa bezpośrednio zależne od Stolicy Apostolskiej w średniowiecznej Europie*, Lublin 1992, p. 257-259.

³⁸ G. Labuda, *Studia...*, p. 117 and footnote 56, p. 120.

³⁹ *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, lib. I, cap. 101, 102, in: MGH SS, vol. 7, ed. G.H. Pertz, Hannoveræ 1847, p. 442ff. See G. Labuda, *Studia...*, p. 124; J. Strzelczyk, *Mieszko I*, p. 168.

⁴⁰ *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, lib. IV, cap. 57, p. 196.

⁴¹ G. Labuda, *Studia...*, p. 124.

time, and in accordance with a practice followed since the Carolings (until the appointment of Jordan as bishop), Christianization of pagans could only be performed by the clergy of a diocese that neighbored on the-then pagan Poland [...], until the granting of the aforementioned “papal license” (*licentia apostolica*)⁴².”

3. The problems behind the papal license for the Christianization of Mieszko I’s “state”

It should be stressed that the Holy Roman Emperor was not entitled to organize the Christianization of a pagan entity (especially if it was not politically subjugated to the Holy Roman Empire) on his own, since it was nobody’s intention to diminish the competences of the Apostolic See in this regard – on the contrary, efforts made at the time to solidify its primacy⁴³! This aspect can be traced back to the reign of Charlemagne who, despite considering himself as the co-head of the Church, consulted the foundation of each new diocese with Rome; the first such consultation concerned Charlemagne’s request to bestow the pallium upon the newly ordained Frankish bishops, which was tantamount to delegating the authority to establish new metropolises to Rome⁴⁴, starting with the diocese of Salzburg (est. 798 by Leo III)⁴⁵, up until the Archdiocese of Magdeburg, founded by John XIII⁴⁶. Throughout that time, it was the “secular rulers [who – P.L.] were tasked with protecting the missionaries, providing for them and the centers of their activity, i.e. monasteries and dioceses, and delineating the borders of the latter [...]; conversely, the Holy See granted its blessing to the missionaries, obliged them to teach the Word of God in a heresy-free fashion, approved the foundation of new dioceses and archdioceses, and bestowed the privileges of the cross and the pallium upon their metropolitans.⁴⁷” Moreover, “the newly Christianized countries had no dioceses and archdioceses of their own, and since the missions were authorized by the pope, the foundation of new Church structures in the Christianized territories had to be approved by the Holy See. Under these circumstances, a rule began to form according to which the establishment of a new diocese, including in the countries with long-standing Christian traditions, had to be authorized in Rome. In the 10th century, the rule became a legal norm⁴⁸.” While it is difficult to disagree with Gerard Labuda’s and Roman Michałowski’s contention that the act of conversion could be licensed solely by the Bishop of Rome, it nonetheless begs the question whether such a papal license could be granted as late as two years after the said act of conversion. To this question, Polish historiography has offered a number of answers.

Jerzy Dowiat contends that Bishop Jordan arrived in Rome in mid-967, where he was directly appointed as a missionary to the *regnum* of Mieszko I by John XIII, who not only founded the Archdiocese of Magdeburg in Polabia but also granted the Bohemian abbess Maria Mlada permission to establish the first diocese in Bohemia and Moravia. Dowiat argues

⁴² Idem, *Mieszko I*, p. 100.

⁴³ R. Michałowski, *Zjazd gnieźnieński. Religijne przesłanki powstania arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego*, Wrocław 2005, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 58.

⁴⁶ M. Banaszak, op. cit., p. 74.

⁴⁷ G. Labuda, *Gniezno i Magdeburg*, in: *Studia...*, vol. 1, p. 255ff, footnote 62.

⁴⁸ R. Michałowski, op. cit., p. 19.

that the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Piast “state” and Rome preceded Mieszko’s conversion, contending that: 1) the name *Dagome* entered in the register known as the *Dagome iudex*⁴⁹ was supposedly a transliteration of Mieszko’s non-Christian name (Dzigom), and since he was introduced to the Bishop of Rome under his pagan name, the relations between his state and the Holy See must have preceded his baptism; 2) according to an entry in the *Polish-Hungarian Chronicle*, Mieszko I originally requested Rome’s blessing and a royal tiara during the pontificate of Leo VIII⁵⁰. With respect to the first argument, Dowiat may have advanced his method too far, failing to convince his peers and/or provide a written record of Mieszko’s pagan name, provided that he was, indeed, known under an alias.

Dowiat’s second thesis was backed by Tadeusz Manteuffel. On the one hand, the so-called *Polish-Hungarian Chronicle* is not recognized as a credible source, even with respect to the analyzed period, given that the chronicle confuses Mieszko I with Bolesław I when it recounts the Polish ruler’s efforts to secure a royal crown. On the other hand, the chronicle does mention the name of Leo VIII – who was Mieszko’s contemporary – rather than the more famous John XIII, so it may contain a grain of truth, after all. According to the current consensus, the *Chronicle* is thought to have confused Mieszko with his son Bolesław; on the other hand, the name Leo is commonly attributed to a Hungarian apocryphal account of the meeting between Attila the Hun and Pope Leo I⁵¹. Manteuffel concluded that while Mieszko may have indeed journeyed to Rome for the said negotiations, he must have conducted them with John XIII (perhaps viat the intermediacy of Maria Mlada?)⁵². Manteuffel later departed from the above hypothesis, contending that John XIII was too busy with other matters throughout his pontificate to deal with the problems of Slavic states⁵³. However, as aptly remarked by Bolesław Kumor, Manteuffel’s eventual conclusion is unsustainable in the light of the fact that the strategy for the establishment of Church structures in Mieszko’s *regnum* must have involved instructions from the Holy See⁵⁴. Throughout the 10th century, such instructions were issued as part of *Responsa Nicolai I Papæ ad consulta Bulgarorum*, penned by Pope Nicholas I in response to a range of religious and customs-related questions posed by Boris I of Bulgaria in the 9th century. Although these instructions offer a full reception of recommendations first made by Pope Gregory I, they are different from their predecessors for two fundamental reasons: 1) they refer to a Slavic mission; 2) the earliest known copy dates back to the turn of the 10th and 11th century, which indicates their continuous dissemination in Rome at the time⁵⁵. In my opinion, the problem of the earliest diplomatic relations between the Piast *regnum* and the Holy See may be resolved by verifying whether *Responsa...* makes any mention of the said relations, and by determining the time at which Rome endeavored to establish such contacts. To answer the first question, it is precisely in *Responsa...* that one encounters a reference of the ordainment of a temporary bishop

⁴⁹ See MPH, vol. 1, p. 148, or *Polonia pontificia...*, no 3, p. 13.

⁵⁰ J. Dowiat, *Metryka chrztu Mieszka I i jej geneza*, Warszawa 1961, p. 49, 52ff, 138, 145ff, 159-162. See R. Grzesik, *Żywot św. Stefana króla Węgier, czyli Kronika węgiersko-polska*, Warszawa 2003, p. 68ff.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 69, footnotes 72 and 73.

⁵² T. Manteuffel, *Państwo Mieszka a Europa*, p. 1024ff.

⁵³ See footnote 4 above. Manteuffel nonetheless continued to maintain that *the ties maintained between the Church organization in Poland and Rome were closer than it may appear*.

⁵⁴ B. Kumor, *Praktyka misyjna Kościoła w X wieku*, „Nasza Przeszłość”, 69/1988, p. 29.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 25, 28.

(preceding the foundation of a metropolis directly answerable to Rome), whose sole task was to evangelize and baptize before the eventual appointment of an archbishop and other members of provincial hierarchy. The said temporary bishop was to be consecrated by the Bishop of Rome himself⁵⁶.

One is reminded at this moment of an observation made by Bolesław Kumor, who advised “to point our attention to the participants of the Synode in Ravenna, held on April 14, 967 with Pope John XIII in the audience. The synode was reformist in character, but also considered the ordainment of the Magdeburg metropolis in the Slavic lands. Among the synode participants was one «Joannes episcopus Jordanensis», however no such diocese is mentioned either by P.B. Gams, the Roman register of titular and actual dioceses, or the *Hierarchia catholica*. Could it be, therefore, that “Jordanensis” stands for the second name of Bishop Jordan?⁵⁷”

While Rome did, in fact, consider the Slavic matters solely in April 967⁵⁸, some of the aforementioned annals situate the said considerations a year later. The list of scholars arguing for 967 as the date of acquisition of a missionary bishop by the Piast *regnum* includes the likes of Stanisław Trawkowski, Jerzy Dowiat, Tadeusz Manteuffel, Tomasz Jasiński, and Leszek Wetesko⁵⁹, whose accounts are based on the same historical record, i.e. Widukind of Corvey’s account of the death of Count Wichmann, whose dying wish to his knights reads, “Accipe – inquit – hunc gladium et defer domino tuo, quo pro signo victoriae illum teneat imperatorique amico transmittat [...]”⁶⁰. The count died of the wounds suffered in a defeat suffered against Mieszko I in 967, on his way towards the island of Wolin (as pointed out by Gerard Labuda)⁶¹. Reaching his dying moments, he stopped at a hut in the early morning and asked its residents that his sword be returned to the emperor, who considered the Piast his friend. Indeed, the following chapter (Chapter 70) of Widukind’s *Gesta...* begins with the words: “Imperator itaque acceptis armis Wichmanni [...]”⁶², and considering the fact that the count (as clearly indicated in Chapter 69) requested Mieszko’s subjects to have their ruler return his weapon to Emperor Otto II in Rome⁶³, the said excerpt must refer to Mieszko’s legation sent to Rome on the occasion of the upcoming coronation of Otto II as the Holy Roman Emperor!

In summary, it may be inferred that both Mieszko’s legation and the appointment of the missionary bishop fell in the same year, but such a conclusion cannot be treated as fully binding for one fundamental reason, namely the fact that the two events were separated by a period of ca. six months. After all, according to the obituary at St. Michael’s Church in Lüneburg, Wichmann died on September 22⁶⁴, which means his expedition must have

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 27. See footnote 70 below.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 30.

⁵⁸ G. Althoff, *Ottonowie. Władza królewska bez państwa*, Warszawa 2009, p. 96ff.

⁵⁹ S. Trawkowski, *Jak powstawała Polska*, Warszawa 1959, p. 242-244, 248; J. Dowiat, op. cit. p. 162; T. Manteuffel, *Państwo Mieszka a Europa*, p. 1025; T. Jasiński, op. cit., p. 110-112; P. Urbańczyk, *Mieszko pierwszy tajemniczy*, p. 184ff, 236-240, 338ff; L. Wetesko, *Piastowie i ich państwo w lacińskiej Europie. Studia z dziejów kultury politycznej X i XI wieku*, Poznań 2013, p. 45ff.

⁶⁰ *Widukindi Monachi Corbeiensis...*, lib. III, cap. 70, p. 145.

⁶¹ G. Labuda, *Studia...*, p. 87.

⁶² *Widukindi...*, lib. III, cap. 70, p. 146.

⁶³ See G. Althoff, op. cit., p. 95ff.

⁶⁴ J. Strzelczyk, *Mieszko I*, p. 153; idem, *Wichman*, in: *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, vol. 6, eds. G. Labuda, Z. Stieber, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1977, p. 420.

taken place in late summer/early fall; consequently, Mieszko's legation to Rome would have to take place at the turn of October and November that year, which means the envoys would only be able to return to the Slavic territories at the beginning of 968 at the earliest, which in turn lends greater credence to the annals (sic!)⁶⁵. After all, the letter from Emperor Otto I to the Saxon princes and lords referenced in Chapter 70 of Widukind's text, is dated January 18, 968, and was sent from Capua⁶⁶. Naturally, upon handover of a gift as important as a defeated enemy's sword, the emperor must have considered Mieszko I as an ally in his struggle with the Veleti⁶⁷, yet (as duly noticed by Tomasz Jasiński) it seems highly unlikely that Jordan only received his nomination at the synode that convened between December 25, 967 and January 5, 968. In fact, even if the newly founded Diocese of Meissen received its founding charter at the synode (perhaps alongside the dioceses of Merseburg and Zittau)⁶⁸, the council's preoccupation with the organization of the Church in the Slavic states were limited to the formal adoption of previous establishments, and did not involve any personal decisions. Granted, the nomination of the Magdeburg hierarchs was delegated to Otto I, who proceeded to appoint them in the second half of 968⁶⁹, but (according to *Responsa...*) the nomination and consecration of the temporary bishop was left to the pope's exclusive discretion⁷⁰. Hence, if the synode held at the turn of 967 and 968 did, indeed, limit its decisions to the issue of the foundation charters, then the nomination of Jordan as the temporary bishop of Poland must have been made at the Synode of Ravenna in April 967, which was devoted to the debates on the organizational structure of the Church in the Slavic states, given the fact that the bishops answerable solely to the pope were routinely nominated at the synods which established new Church entities. It is more than plausible that, in return for Mieszko's defeat of Wichmann, the emperor merely saw the matter to its due end, i.e. made sure that Jordan was consecrated by John XIII (sic!) in December 967, even though his appointment did not come from the emperor himself, since the Christianization of Greater Poland had proceeded outside of his jurisdiction⁷¹, as corroborated by the synode's strict adherence to the instructions laid out in *Responsa...*, which is why Otto I was unable to include Jordan among the Magdeburg suffragans – to answer Tomasz Jasiński's question. It should be added that it was likely then that the Piast ruler received the so-called "Sword of Peter" from Rome as his designated *brandea relic*⁷². "Concomitant with the establishment of Church structures for

⁶⁵ Conversely, the plausibility of 968 seems to be corroborated by an entry in *Annales Bohemici* that confirms the foundation of the first Polish diocese (see footnote 23 above), which was made in the Moravian chronicle following the looting of Jordan's annals in the course of Bretislav I's raid of Greater Poland. The said entry is a testament to the early origins of the information (J. Strzelczyk, *Mieszko I*, p. 134. See T. Jasiński, op. cit., p. 109ff).

⁶⁶ J. Dowiat, op. cit., p. 162, footnote 43.

⁶⁷ T. Jasiński, op. cit., p. 112.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 112-114. As noticed by T. Jasiński, the hypothesis requires further investigations

⁶⁹ See R. Michałowski, op. cit., p. 114.

⁷⁰ *Responsa Nicolai Papae ad consulta Bulgarorum*, cap. 72, 73, in: MMFH, vol. 4, ed. L.E. Havlík, D. Bartoňková, K. Haderka, J. Ludvíkovský, J. Vašica, R. Večerka, Brno 1969, p. 91ff, Cap. 72: "[...] Nam interim episcopum habetote et, cum incremento divinæ gratiæ Christianitas ibi fuerit dilatata et episcopi per singulas ecclesias ordinati, tunc eligendus est inter eos unus, qui, si non patriarcha, certe archiepiscopus appellandus sit; [...]. Cap. 73: [...] a pontifice sedis beati Petri, a quo et episcopatus et apostolatus sumpsit initium, hunc ordinari valetis."

⁷¹ Otto I's illegitimacy as the organizer of the first "Polish" Church structures as aptly demonstrated by G. Labuda, *Jakie uprawnienia kościelne przekazał cesarz Otton III...*, p. 455ff.

⁷² L. Wetesko, op. cit., p. 48ff, 55ff; T. Jasiński, op. cit., p. 114-116.

the Western Slavic states in Magdeburg was the foundation of a Polish missionary diocese, under unspecified circumstances [...] around 966/967⁷³”. Granted, the person listed by name in the aforementioned Synode of Ravenna may not have been identical with the first missionary bishop of Poland, however the overlap seems more than coincidental. Having established that the Piast *regnum* implemented Rome’s Christianization guidelines⁷⁴, Jordan seems all the more natural as the direct subordinate to the Bishop of Rome, delegated to work in Mieszko’s inner circle, and hence – in my opinion – since the Synode of Ravenna took on the organization of Church structures in Polabia, there were no contraindications for that synode to elect the missionary bishop of Poland on the same occasion.

Moving on, considering the research methodologies in the studies on the history of early Polish statehood, in which a small volume of records is inevitably juxtaposed with other sources and establishments, the aforementioned hypothesis seems just as warranted as the one estimating that the tribute treaty between Mieszko I and Otto I (as part of which the Piast was to compensate the emperor for the seizure of Lubusz Land) was signed between January 965 and November 966, which was when the emperor returned to Germany to deal with all matters related to the eastern borderlands of the Holy Roman Empire⁷⁵. It seems, however, that we are in possession of a source that may corroborate our hypothesis, namely Thietmar’s account of the foundation of the Archdiocese of Magdeburg⁷⁶, in which the chronicler “distinguishes between two groups of bishops. The first includes those who swore their allegiance to the Archbishop of Magdeburg. [...] the second group includes the Bishop of Brandenburg and the Bishop of Poznań⁷⁷”. Moreover, Thietmar lists them solely in combination with the clergymen ordained to Christianize Slavs, while mistakenly claiming he was consecrated long before the Magdeburg hierarchs, together with Jordan. The case is more straight-forward with Annalista Saxo, whose account verges beyond that of Thietmar’s and was evidently based on other records. As a result, Annalista Saxo not only correctly mentions Dodilo as the Bishop of Brandenburg but also adds that Dudo and Jordan were consecrated before 968, too (*tres prius consecratos*)⁷⁸. If the mentions of Jordan in Thietmar’s chronicle, the Polish annals, and the Bohemian account pertain to the person bearing the same name listed in the register of participants of the 967 Synode in Ravenna, then we may go a step further and conclude Jordan must have been present in Rome in 967, since the missionary practice of the Latin Church, which had been solidifying since its adoption by Gregory I, demanded that no Christianization efforts be undertaken in pagan countries without the pope’s prior approval⁷⁹.

This warrants a question: Were the contacts between Mieszko’s *regnum* and Rome established via Jordan in 967, or was it possible that the diplomatic relations between the

⁷³ G. Labuda, *Magdeburg i Poznań*, p. 250ff.

⁷⁴ B. Kumor, *Historia Kościoła*, vol. 2, *Wczesne średniowiecze chrześcijańskie*, Lublin 2001, p. 128.

⁷⁵ See G. Labuda, *Studia...*, p. 108, 118, 121; idem, *Mieszko I*, p. 125; A. Pleszczyński, *Niemcy wobec pierwszej monarchii piastowskiej (963-1034). Narodziny stereotypu. Postrzeganie i cywilizacyjna klasyfikacja władców Polski i ich kraju*, Lublin 2008, p. 63ff.

⁷⁶ See footnote 25 above.

⁷⁷ M. Banaszak, op. cit., p. 71.

⁷⁸ See footnote 26 above; M. Banaszak, op. cit., p. 75. Cf. T. Jasiński, op. cit., p. 103ff.

⁷⁹ M. Wyszynski, *Chrzest Polski w świetle wytycznych misyjnych dla Słowian*, “Prawo kanoniczne”, 9/1966 no. 1-2, p. 11ff.

Piast state and the Holy See were established beforehand, in 965? In other words, what is the earliest possible moment in which Jordan was granted the pope's missionary license? Two possibilities must be considered here: 1) if Jordan arrived as a clergyman among Doubravka's entourage, he must have travelled to the Holy See to receive his bishop's orders and the pallium; in this case, our ruminations can only date back as far as 967, given that Jordan may have been a stranger to Rome before that date (at least as per historical records); 2) if the Bishop of Rome personally appointed Jordan as his missionary (perhaps he even hailed from the Apennine Peninsula?), the Apostolic See must have been privy to the initiative of Mieszko's Christianization before appointing a suitable man for the job and authorizing him for missionary work on behalf of the pope. Could Rome thus have been in possession of such intelligence as early as in 965?

It has been occasionally signaled that Jordan may have first arrived in Greater Poland in 965 (966), as part of Doubravka's entourage, as persistently maintained by Gerard Labuda⁸⁰. Conversely, Jerzy Dowiat claims Jordan could not have visited the Piast *regnum* at that time, given that he had not yet received his Apostolic license, nor had he been appointed bishop; Dowiat also emphatically rejects the hypothesis of Mieszko's baptism coming from Jordan⁸¹. A more detailed discussion of this particular aspect was offered by Stanisław Trawkowski, who notes that the term *ordinatio* used in the annals may refer to either Jordan's consecration two years after Mieszko's baptism or his appointment to a specific diocese. It seems doubtful, however, that the 966 legation to Mieszko's state was led by Jordan, for he simply would not have been able to obtain his missionary license due to the political situation in Rome at the turn of 965/966⁸². On the one hand, one is at a loss when confronted with the terminology used in the source texts: "Item anno Domini 968 Jordanus primus episcopus in Polonia ordinatus est". In its early medieval sense, *ordinare* is a multifaceted term, denoting all types of acts pertaining to the appointment of a bishop⁸³. Still, Jordan's presence at Mieszko's court at the turn of 965/966 may be justified by one reason only: any priest wishing to Christianize a given area had to be duly authorized by the local ruler⁸⁴. It was only upon receiving such authorization that the aspiring missionary was able to apply for the papal license. A case in point for the above procedure can be found in St. Methodius' first visit to the Holy See (869/870), following which the Greek missionary decided to continue to his missionary work among the Slavs, however he did not make it to Moravia, where he had preached with Cyril/Constantine, due to a civil war that broke out in its confines⁸⁵. Instead, Methodius was accepted by the Pannonian ruler Kocel "who sent him back to the Apostolic See [...] to be ordained as the Bishop of St. Andronicus' See in Pannonia [...], and it so happened that

⁸⁰ G. Labuda, *Mieszko I*, p. 96; idem, *Jakimi drogami przyszło do Polski chrześcijaństwo?*, in: *Studia...*, vol. 3, Wodzisław Śląski 2012, p. 161. "Having no other positive evidence of the Polans' first principal missionary, we should rest assured it was none other but Jordan who came to Gniezno as part of Princess Doubravka of Bohemia's entourage [...]. Having baptised Mieszko, it was only natural for Jordan to head for Rome to receive his consecration and return to Poland as a missionary bishop and direct ancillary of the Holy See."

⁸¹ J. Dowiat, op cit., p. 54.

⁸² S. Trawkowski, *Początki Kościoła w Polsce za panowania Mieszka I*, in: *Civitas Schinesghe. Mieszko I i początki państwa polskiego*, ed. J.M. Piskorski, Poznań-Gniezno 2004, p. 58.

⁸³ M. Banaszak, op. cit., p. 111.

⁸⁴ M. Wszyński, op cit., p. 12.

⁸⁵ See J. Leśny, *Konstantyn i Metody. Apostołowie Słowian – dzieło i jego losy*, Poznań 1987, p. 59.

he was”⁸⁶. Following two visits to Kocel’s court, and having established mutual trust with the Pannonian prince, Methodius was sent to Rome⁸⁷, where he was ordained the Bishop of Pannonia. Jordan’s case, however, seems to be different from that of Methodius’, since there is no clear evidence of his presence at Mieszko’s court prior to 967.

The aforementioned Stanisław Trawkowski claims that Jordan may have been appointed archbishop, and as such he was released from his previous duties by the Bishop of Regensburg, and subsequently delegated to Mieszko’s state, having been authorized to perform his baptism⁸⁸. Trawkowski’s hypothesis seems unsubstantiated, not only due to his own recognition of the fact that the Bishop of Regensburg was not authorized to license his subordinates to undertake such actions in a *regnum* located outside of his jurisdiction but also because the Bishop of Regensburg was not granted such license from the pope, either, and was hence unable to delegate a subordinate archbishop to Mieszko’s “state”. Under such circumstances, the Christianization of Greater Poland would have commenced without Rome’s authorization, and Trawkowski’s analogy to the case of Ripaldus as a case in point is invalid, since the latter was active in Kocel’s Pannonia, which had previously been subjected to the Archdiocese of Salzburg by Leo III⁸⁹. Most importantly, however, it must be stressed that Christianization in 10th century Europe was reserved strictly to the priests who were ordained as bishops and presented with the pallium. Missionary work was strictly regulated by the pope’s license, hence we should reject the possibility of Jordan’s appointment as missionary to Mieszko’s “state” prior to the Synode of Ravenna in April 967, not least because of the political turmoil in the Eternal City caused by the vacancy on the papal throne, which began with the imprisonment of the newly elected Pope John XIII on October 1, 965 and lasted until his release in November 966⁹⁰.

Last but not least, it should be added that if, in the light of the above considerations, we were to assume that Jordan was indeed ordained by the Bishop of Rome as a missionary in Mieszko’s *regnum* in the first half of 967, it means that the pope must have known of the previous efforts towards the Christianization of the Piast state. According to the available historical records, the “Apostolic license” may have been expedited by Mlada Maria’s negotiations with the pope in Rome, conducted at some point of her stay in the Holy See between 965 and 967, as suggested by Tadeusz Manteuffel⁹¹. Moreover, the fact that none among the chroniclers of the metropolises bordering on Greater Poland specifies the name of the person who baptized Mieszko I, and the fact that no legal and political claims were made by Mieszko’s neighbors during the subsequent foundation of the Archdiocese of Gniezno, seems to corroborate the validity of a hypothesis put forward by Leszek Wętecko, who contends that “secular patronage could replace clerical advocacy. [...] After all, nothing prevented a ruler from approaching the Holy See directly in order to request that the pope

⁸⁶ *Żywot Metodego*, cap. VIII, in: *Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego (obszerne)*, trans. T. Lehr-Splawiński, Warszawa 2000, p. 111.

⁸⁷ The first visit of the Solun Brothers to Kocel’s court is mentioned in *Żywot Konstantyna*, cap. XV, in: *ibidem*, p. 73, while their second stay at the Pannonian ruler’s seat is referenced in *Żywot Metodego*, cap. VIII, p. 109.

⁸⁸ S. Trawkowski, *Początki Kościoła...*, p. 59ff.

⁸⁹ See footnote 45 above; D. Treštitik, *Powstanie Wielkich Moraw. Morawianie, Czesi i Europa Środkowa w latach 791-871*, Warszawa 2009, p. 123; J. Leśny, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

⁹⁰ S. Trawkowski, *Początki Kościoła...*, 58; G. Althoff, *op. cit.*, p. 91, 95.

⁹¹ J.A. Sobiesiak, *Bolesław II Przemysłyda (†999). Dynasta i jego państwo*, Kraków 2006, p. 167, 175.

send his missionaries to prepare the prince and his court for conversion⁹². In the end, while the identity of the person who baptized Mieszko I remains dubious, it seems warranted to conclude that the said person must have been a bishop.

The relations between the Holy See and the early Piast state between 965 and 973 **Summary**

The earliest mention of the relations between the Holy See and Mieszko's I country comes from an epitaph on Bolesław Chrobry's (destroyed) tomb. The epitaph mentions young Bolesław Chrobry's stay in Rome, where he was possibly sent as a German hostage in 973. The earlier connection between the Holy See and the Polish Missionary Bishop Jordan, who was directly answerable to the Pope, is seen as problematic. As per medieval records, Jordan was ordained as the Bishop of Mieszko I's country in 968, even though it is commonly assumed he was ordained bishop in 967. The event is connected with the transfer of the Saxon rebel Wichmann the Younger's sword to Otto I. The author of this study strives to connect Jordan's appointment as bishop with the establishment of the Archdiocese of Magdeburg. According to the existing evidence, Jordan's nomination took place during the Synode of Ravenna in April 967, which saw the adoption of new Church structures across the Slavic states. Since it was only the pope himself who was entitled to license the Christianization of pagans, the author contends that the relations between the Holy See and the early Piast state must have predated Mieszko I's baptism.

Keywords: Mieszko I, Bishop Jordan, Holy See, Missionary bishop, *licentia apostolica*.

Note on the Author: Paweł Latoszek (b. 1991 in Warsaw) is a graduate of, and a doctoral candidate at, the Institute of Historical Studies of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, where he defended his M.A. thesis on the Great Moravian influences in Poland at the turn of the 9th and 10th century, supervised by rev. prof. Waldemar Graczyk (2015). His research interests include the Christianization of early medieval Slavdom, and the origins of European states.

Translated by Józef Jaskulski

⁹² L. Wetesko, op. cit., p. 33.