

Tomasz Jurek

**AD MESTRIS LOCUM:  
WHERE WAS THE MONASTERY FOUNDED  
BY SAINT ADALBERT SITUATED?<sup>1</sup>**

There exist in medieval sources classical passages around which an incessant debate has raged. One of such is the line from *The Passion of Saint Adalbert*, discovered in a manuscript from the Bavarian cloister at Tegernsee (the so-called *Passion of Tegernsee*), which describes the saint's last journey from Germany to the east. Adalbert

Saxonica tellure in brevi recedens, in Polaniam regionem cursum direxit et ad *Mestris locum* divertens, coenobium ibi construxit monachosque quamplures congregans Aschricumque abbatem eos ad regendum constituit, qui postea archiepiscopus ad Sobottin consecratus est. In quo loco aliquantisper moratus est. Post hec videlicet sumpto baculo paucis se comittantibus latenter quasi fugam moliens Pruzę se intulit regiōni.

Consequently directed himself from Saxony to Poland, on route founding a monastery at *Mestris*, where he appointed Astrik abbot, later to become the archbishop of Hungary; having spent there a little time he was to subsequently head for Prussia with a small group of companions.<sup>2</sup> *The Passion of Tegernsee* has still to undergo a detailed

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<sup>1</sup> The article in Polish was published in *Roczniki Historyczne*, lxxv (2009), 7-23.

<sup>2</sup> New edition: Anna Rutkowska-Płachcińska, 'Pasje świętych Wojciecha i Brunona z tzw. kodeksu z Tegernsee', *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, 40 (2002), 19-40, here 38. More important are the older editions in *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*, i, ed. Max Toeppen (Leipzig, 1861), 235-6 (in the commentary there is information that the notation *Mestris* came into being from the correction of *Mestrys*); *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (hereafter: MPH), i, ed. August Bielowski (Lwów, 1864), 154; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (hereafter: MGH), *Scriptores*, xv, ed. Georg Waitz (Hanover, 1888), 706 (also the comment that *Mestris* is a correction of the original *Mestrys*). A Polish translation by Janina Pleziowa is in Marian Plezia (ed.), *Średniowieczne żywoty i cuda patronów Polski* (Warsaw, 1987), 32; a corrected version

source based analysis, since its character as a relic is not entirely established. It has been preserved in a codex containing hagiographic texts and kept at one time in Tegernsee, made up of parts composed in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. Our *Passion* is here inscribed by one hand from the second half of the eleventh century, possibly at the scriptorium at Tegernsee.<sup>3</sup> This is not an autograph. For the text itself had come about, as is widely accepted, already in the first quarter of the eleventh century most likely in Poland. At present the view that it had been taken from a now lost but much larger book on the martyrdom of Adalbert holds sway, although it is difficult to stipulate whether this could have been the *Libellus de passione s. Adalberti* mentioned by Gallus Anonymus. Even though *The Passion* was for a long time undervalued, while many historians were critical of its merit, it is today considered to be an extremely important source, particularly in the part concerning the final period of the hero, his stay in Poland and the martyrdom itself.<sup>4</sup> Consequently the source of interest for us is one deserving urgent attention for it refers to one of the earliest monastery foundations in East-Central Europe. It comes as no surprise therefore that it has captivated the interest of researchers.

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by Brygida Kürbis is in Jan A. Spież (ed.), *W kręgu żywotów świętego Wojciecha* (Cracow, 1997), 142.

<sup>3</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (hereafter: BSB), clm 18897, pp. 289–300 (the fragment of interest to us, pp. 290–1). The codex contains exclusively hagiographic texts, which confirm the hypothesis that the *Passion* arose as an extract drawn up for the needs of liturgical readings (*Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, iv, pt. 3 [Munich, 1878], 216–17; Rutkowska-Płachcińska, ‘Pasje’, 19–20). Besides this manuscript only a single copy is known (BSB, clm 23846), preserved in a codex of unknown origin created after 1461, containing equally exclusive hagiography including a collection of texts about St Otto of Bamberg (there is, however, an absence of reference to our *Passion* in the library catalogue, see *Catalogus*, iv, pt. 4 [Munich, 1881], 100).

<sup>4</sup> The state of research is summarised by Gerard Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup – męczennik, patron Polski, Czech i Węgier* (Wrocław, 2000), 19–25; *idem*, ‘Reminiscencje Pasji św. Wojciecha z Tegernsee (około 1025) w scenach jego żywotu na Drzwiach Gnieźnieńskich (około 1180)’, in *Homines et societas. Czasy Piastów i Jagiellonów. Studia historyczne ofiarowane Antoniemu Gąsiorowskiemu w sześćdziesiątą piątą rocznicę urodzin* (Poznań, 1997), 53–63; Rutkowska-Płachcińska, ‘Pasje’, 23–7; Henryk Fros S.J., ‘Wczesne żywoty św. Wojciecha. Stan i potrzeby badań’, in Antoni Barciak (ed.), *Środkowoeuropejskie dziedzictwo św. Wojciecha* (Katowice, 1998), 109–12.

In principle from its inception two general standpoints have been taken in the discussion. Some researchers have looked for *Mestris* in Poland – something that appears quite obvious given that Adalbert was making for this very country from Saxony. Resulting from this interpretation a concrete location has been signalled – Międzyrzecz, the name of which is indeed similar to the source inscription, and which is otherwise attested (by the chronicle of Thietmar) to being the site of an ‘abbey’.<sup>5</sup> Yet already one of the first publishers of the text, August Bielowski, was to direct (in 1864) his critical effort to showing that a Polish localisation was faulty, for the real search for its locality lay in Hungary.<sup>6</sup> For he considered that the Astrik mentioned by the hagiographer is attested through *The Legend of Saint Stephen*, as the creator of the Hungarian monastery ‘ad radicem Montis Ferrei’ (later on Pécsvárad).<sup>7</sup> There was therefore imposed a correlation of the two monasteries directed by Astrik, this being all the more the case that there entered into the equation a certain similarity in the names. Bielowski noted errors in its notation, claiming that in the name *Mestris* the final letter is in point of fact an *f*, while the central part of the word should be emended – which allowed him to establish a reading as *Montem F*. There also existed the premise that the author of the legend had not differentiated Poland and Hungary. Subsequent Polish researchers sought different

<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm von Giesebrecht, *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, i (3rd edn, Braunschweig, 1863), 740, 852; equally Waitz in the commentary to the edition in MGH, *Scriptores*, xv, 705–6. They even raised the idea that *The Passion* could have arisen in Międzyrzecz itself.

<sup>6</sup> Bielowski, in MPH, i, 151–2.

<sup>7</sup> ‘Legenda maior sancti regis Stephani’, ed. Emma Bartoniek, *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, ii (Budapest, 1938), 382–3: ‘ad radicem Montis Ferrei cenobium sub titulo sancti patris Benedicti construxit, ubi usque hodie congregata monasterialis disciplina regulari pollens sustentatione copiarum superhabundans’. King Stephen’s founding document is dated as 1015 yet is at present seen as a text edited in the 13th century though one on the basis of earlier notations. There we read: ‘quod nos per Dei subsidium, ob anime nostre remedium et pro stabilitate regni nostri monasterium Sancte Dei Genetricis Marie et Sancti Benedicti ad radicem Montis Ferrei diligenter construximus’, while the displayed document was to have been issued ‘in ipso die consecrationis dicti monasterii per ministerium domini Ascrici Colocensis archiepiscopi et primi abbatis predicti monasterii’ (*Diplomata Hungariae antiquissima*, i, ed. György Györffy [Budapest, 1992], no. 12). For information about the monastery see György Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarországnak történeti földrajza*, i (Budapest, 1966), 362–7.

solutions. Tadeusz Wojciechowski postulated a completely different reading for the mysterious name – the *ad* prefixing he considered to be a disfigured *T*, and in place of *mestris* he was prepared to perceive *mestn*. Therefore he proposed for himself a reading of *T(re)mestn*<sup>8</sup>, with the monastery being consequently located at Trzemeszno, with which there was connected an old tradition (the legend from the twelfth or thirteenth century about the saint states that it was just here that his body bought back from the pagans was consigned).<sup>8</sup> And yet here was a strong element of arbitrariness (even more so than in Bielowski's hypothesis), with its entirety resting on the argument that the beginnings of the monastery at Trzemeszno harked back to an extremely ancient date, something which quickly turned out not to be the case. In turn Stanisław Zakrzewski chose to see the monastery of Saint Adalbert at Łęczyca (*Lancicia*) – where the Bull of Gniezno of 1136 made reference to a certain 'abbatia Sancte Marie', and where later there appeared St Alexius' abbey (associated obviously with the Roman abbey on Aventine Hill and St Adalbert).<sup>9</sup> This idea (behind which there was nothing by way of a positive scent for it is impossible to derive from *Mestris* anything at all that would lead one to the name Łęczyca<sup>10</sup>) enraptured no one with the creator himself being far from convinced, treating it rather as a vague hunch.<sup>11</sup>

These increasingly wild ideas were to have also, however, the effect of an increasing number of researchers resigning from attempts

<sup>8</sup> Tadeusz Wojciechowski, 'O rocznikach polskich X-XV wieku', *Pamiętnik Akademii Umiejętności w Krakowie, Wydział Filologiczny i Historyczno-Filozoficzny*, 4 (1880), 188; *idem*, *Szkice historyczne jedynastego wieku* ([1904], 5th edn, Poznań, 2004), 57–8. Władysław Abraham was also for Trzemeszno, *Organizacja Kościoła w Polsce do połowy XII wieku* ([1893], 3rd edn, Poznań, 1962), 193.

<sup>9</sup> Stanisław Zakrzewski, 'Opactwo benedyktyńskie Św. Bonifacego i Aleksego na Awentynie w latach 977–1085' (1st edn 1903), in Gerard Labuda (ed.), *Święty Wojciech w polskiej tradycji historiograficznej. Antologia tekstów* (Warsaw, 1997), 100–4; cf. Karol Potkański, 'Opactwo na łęczyckim grodzie', *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności, Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny*, 43 (1902), 118–19, who was, however, very careful in linking the abbey with the times of Boleslav the Brave, and if this was to be the case he saw here merely one of a series of monasteries founded by the followers of St Adalbert.

<sup>10</sup> See Wojciechowski's 'sentence', *Szkice*, 58: 'It is completely impossible to create Łęczyca from this'.

<sup>11</sup> Stanisław Zakrzewski, *Bolesław Chrobry Wielki* (Lwów, 1925), 107–8, 382–3, where in recalling various possibilities he admits that it is Międzyrzecz that has 'the most data behind it'.

at a 'critical' correction or interpretation of the text, returning to the simplest of explanations: *Mestris* as Międzyrzecz. The approach of Heinrich Gisbert Voigt is characteristic, who initially suggested Trzemeszno, but in subsequent works opted already for Międzyrzecz.<sup>12</sup> The same was done by many other researchers. In the relevant literature of the interwar period this explanation had already become widespread.<sup>13</sup> However, the Slovak researcher Václav Chaloupecký drew attention to the Hungarian line of inquiry, claiming – for a certain variety – that the mater concerned the famous abbey of St Martin at Pannonhalma. For 'ad Mestris' was to have been a disfigured 'ad montem sancti Martini', in a similar way to the 'Polania' that appeared in the text, which was meant to be a mistaken representation of *Pannonia*.<sup>14</sup> This Hungarian hypothesis was to be taken up again – although admittedly in a somewhat different form – after the Second World War by the Polish historian Henryk Kapiszewski. Although he was to reject what Bielowski and Chaloupecký had made of *The Passion*, he was nevertheless to admit that the search for it lay within the territory of Hungary. The basic significance for him was to be still the fact noted by Bielowski, that Astrik was equally the abbot at *Mestris*, as well as at *Mons Ferreus*. So if he was in addition to have become subsequently the archbishop in *Sobottin* – which also was to be located in the Pannonia of the day – then there should be no doubt that his career was played out in Hungary. There one can come into contact with names similar to *Mestris*, out of which one may be even located next to Pécsvárad (this monastery being the continuer of *Mons Ferreus*). Kapiszewski nevertheless noticed that the Hungarian localisation is at

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<sup>12</sup> Heinrich G. Voigt, *Adalbert von Prag* (Berlin, 1898), 15, 295; *idem*, *Brun von Querfurt* (Stuttgart, 1907), 312.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre David, *Les Bénédictins et l'ordre de Cluny dans la Pologne médiévale* (Paris, 1939), 4; Leon Koczy, 'Misje polskie w Prusach i na Pomorzu za czasów Bolesławów' (1st edn, 1934), in Labuda (ed.), *Święty Wojciech*, 164; Mathilde Uhlirz, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reiches unter Otto II. und Otto III.*, ii (Berlin, 1954), 243, 318, 539; cf. the willingness of Zakrzewski to withdraw from his own Łęczycza hypothesis in footnote 11. Tadeusz Silnicki was undecided, 'Św. Wojciech – człowiek i święty oraz jego działalność na tle epoki', in Zbigniew Biernacki *et al.* (eds.), *Święty Wojciech 997–1947* (Gniezno, 1947), 64: 'There are speculations in relation to Trzemeszno (the least likely), Międzyrzecz and Łęczycza'.

<sup>14</sup> Václav Chaloupecký, 'Radla-Anastasius, druh Vojtěchův, organisátor uherské církve. Několik kritických poznámek', *Bratislava*, 1 (1927); I cite after Henryk Kapiszewski (cf. the next footnote).

odds with the account of *The Passion of Tegernsee*, according to which St Adalbert was to have travelled after all from Saxony to Poland. He was to note though that the use by the author of *The Passion* of the word *divertere* ('ad Mestris locum divertens') meant *deviate* – and therefore the saint did in fact travel from Saxony to Poland but on route he deviated his course to take in Hungary. This hypothesis is not as a consequence at odds whatsoever with the source.<sup>15</sup>

This small article by Kapiszewski was to have a breakthrough significance in the whole discussion on the question of *Mestris* and the first Polish monastery. His theses were viewed initially with a certain degree of caution,<sup>16</sup> but they were to be shortly referred to and revised in the numerous works of the most eminent expert of this epoch, Gerard Labuda. He maintained Kapiszewski's argumentation to its full extent, enriching it more with additional observations. Namely, he claimed that Adalbert did not have the authority to freely found monasteries in Poland, a country already subordinated to the then stabilised authority of Bishop Unger, though what he could do was exactly this in a missionary country like the Hungary of the time. Adalbert was evidentially in Hungary as is recalled – raising his contributions made to the Christianising of the country – by the well informed Bruno of Querfurt. Labuda also clarified certain threads from the biography of Archbishop Astrik, which allowed for the removal of the obstacles that had earlier arisen in identifying him with the abbot of *Mons Ferreus*.<sup>17</sup> The strength of argumentation

<sup>15</sup> Henryk Kapiszewski, 'Droga św. Wojciecha z Saksonii do Polski wiodła przez Panonię', *Nasza Przeszłość: studia z dziejów Kościoła i kultury katolickiej w Polsce*, 6 (1957), 289–99.

<sup>16</sup> These were accepted by Józef Nowacki, *Dzieje archidiecezji poznańskiej*, ii (Poznań, 1964), 756 (who nevertheless possibly believed more in Trzemeszno); Andrzej F. Grabski, *Bolesław Chrobry. Zarys dziejów politycznych i wojskowych* (Warsaw, 1966), 82–3 (cautiously), as well as Stanisław Mielczarski, *Misja pruska świętego Wojciecha* (Gdańsk, 1967), 47 (irrefutably); they were disputed, however, by Jan Powierski, 'Św. Wojciech w Polsce i w Prusach', *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* (1966), 563, basing himself on the opinion of Jadwiga Karwasińska, expressed in the commentaries in *eadem*, *Piśmiennictwo czasów Chrobrego* (Warsaw, 1966), 73. Also Andrzej Wędzki, 'Mestris', in *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, iii (Wrocław, 1967), 199, claimed that 'Międzyrzecz has the greatest number of adherents', but 'recently increasingly widespread is the view' as to the Hungarian localisation.

<sup>17</sup> Gerard Labuda, 'Droga biskupa praskiego Wojciecha do Prus', *Zapiski Historyczne*, 34 (1969), 361–80, particularly 362–70; *idem*, 'Święty Wojciech w działaniu,

and the authority of Labuda himself turned out to be overwhelming. Further researchers warmed to the Hungarian option,<sup>18</sup> slowly sceptics fell silent,<sup>19</sup> so that finally the thesis was to be considered henceforth the starting point for all further research.<sup>20</sup> This was all the easier given that in Międzyrzecz, with which earlier *Mestris* had been willingly identified, the hermitage of the Five Holy Martyrs started to

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w tradycji i w legendzie', in Kazimierz Śmigiel (ed.), *Święty Wojciech w tradycji i kulturze europejskiej* (Gniezno, 1992), 69–70; Gerard Labuda, *Szkice historyczne X–XI wieku* (Poznań, 2004), 186–201; *idem*, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 170–180. Earlier this researcher proclaimed the Międzyrzecz hypothesis, see *idem*, 'Św. Wojciech w literaturze i legendzie średniowiecznej' (1st edn 1947), in *idem* (ed.), *Święty Wojciech*, 214.

<sup>18</sup> Characteristic is the evolution of the views of Brygida Kürbis, who initially (*eadem*, 'O początkach kanonii w Trzemesznie, in *Europa – Słowiańszczyzna – Polska. Studia ku uczczeniu profesora Kazimierza Tymienieckiego* [Poznań, 1970], 330–1) treated the hypothesis as to the localisation of the monastery at Międzyrzecz and in Hungary as of equal stature, though several years later (*eadem*, 'Pogranicze Wielkopolski i Kujaw w X–XII wieku', in Czesław Łuczak [ed.], *Studia z dziejów ziemi mogileńskiej* [Poznań, 1978], 88–9, reprint in *eadem*, *Na progach historii* [Poznań, 1994], 226–8) came out clearly in favour of Hungary. Cf. Krystyna Józefowiczówna, *Trzemeszno, klasztor św. Wojciecha w dwu pierwszych wiekach istnienia* (Warsaw and Poznań, 1978), 52, footnote 13, who admits that she has changed her view on the strength of the arguments of the adherents of the Hungarian option.

<sup>19</sup> The Hungarian hypothesis is not affirmed by Jadwiga Karwasińska, 'Wojciech', in *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, vi (Wrocław, 1980), 549. Equally Plezia in his published translation of *The Passion* gives a version at odds with Kapiszewski's interpretation (see footnote 15), yet in the commentary admitted the whole notation to be 'bizarre' and evaluated that 'the author of *The Passion* had really no idea about what he wrote, and ... muddled the facts on his way', see *idem* (ed.), *Średniowieczne żywoty*, 37. The last to speak out against Adalbert's Hungarian route was, as far is known, Andrzej Żaki], 'Krajobraz naturalny i kulturowy szlaku wędrówek świętego Wojciecha w krajach Europy', in *idem* (ed.), *Święty Wojciech i jego czasy: materiały III Sympozjum Historyczno-Archeologicznego Polskiego Uniwersytetu na Obczyźnie Saint-Maurice, 12–13 kwietnia 1997 roku* (Cracow, 2000), 83–5.

<sup>20</sup> For example Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Apostołowie Europy* (Warsaw, 1997), 185; *idem*, *Bolesław Chrobry* (Poznań, 1999), 39; Ryszard Grzesik, 'Die Ungarnmission des hl. Adalberts', in Balázs Nagy and Marcell Sebők (eds.), *The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways: Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak* (Budapest, 1999), 230–40, particularly 233, 237–8; Paweł Stróżyk, 'Jeszcze o pobycie biskupa Wojciecha na ziemiach polskich w 997 roku', in Danuta Zydorek (ed.), *Scriptura custos memoriae. Prace historyczne* (Publikacje Instytutu Historii UAM, Poznań, 2001), 493–502.

be predominant in localisation. Hence Polish historians forgot as if about the same possibility for the localisation in Poland of an abbey founded by St Adalbert. In the newest works on the Church's beginnings in Poland and the first monasteries, the question of *Mestris* is not even mentioned.<sup>21</sup> Polish historians have, as if, rid themselves of the problem associated with this by recognising *Mestris* as a Hungarian monastery. And it in no way bothers them that the Hungarians most interested in this matter have not in any way accepted this gift. They simply do not believe in the possibility of *Mestris* being localised on their land. They do maintain, for all that, identification with the Polish Międzyrzecz, which Poles themselves had denied.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Marek Derwich, 'Studia nad początkami monastycyzmu na ziemiach polskich. Pierwsze opactwa i ich funkcje', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cviii, 2 (2000), 77–105 (this author accepts the existence of an abbey at Międzyrzecz, but connects it only with the hermitage of the Five Holy Martyrs); Józef Dobosz, *Monarchia i możni wobec Kościoła w Polsce do początku XIII wieku* (Poznań, 2002), 79–89 (with a very brief mention of *Mestris* in footnote 267, p. 85); also Aleksander Gieysztor, 'Pierwsi benedyktyni w Polsce Piastowskiej', in Klementyna Żurowska (ed.), *Benedyktyni tyńiecy w średniowieczu. Materiały z sesji naukowej, Wawel–Tymiec, 13–15 października 1994* (Cracow, 1995), 9–21, who in a Solomonic way does not include *Mestris* amongst Hungarian abbeys (he mentions, however, Międzyrzecz, p. 16).

<sup>22</sup> György Györffy, *Święty Stefan I król Węgier i jego dzieło* (Warsaw, 2003; Hungarian edition – 1977), 100, 177–8, 219–35; an overview of the literature: Grzesik, 'Die Ungarnmission', 237–8. Similarly in Czech literature, cf. Rostislav Nový, 'Slavníkovci v raně středověkých Čechách', in *idem*, Jana Zachová and Jiří Sláma (eds.), *Slavníkovci ve středověkém písemnictví* (Prague, 1987), 65 (who confuses in any case Trzemeszno with Międzyrzecz), as well as a translation of *The Passion* (Jana Zachová, *ibidem*, 190: 'Zastaviv se na místě zvaném Meziříčí založil tu klášter'. As an interesting detail one may mention that the Slovak historian Martin Homza, 'Vzt'ahy stredovekého Spiša a Malopol'ska od najstarších čias do roku 1138', *Historický časopis*, 43 (1995), 207–8, attempted to combine the account of *The Passion* with remains 'of an extensive monastery complex' discovered by archeologists near to Spišská Kapitula (Szepeshely). His argumentation is totally unthought through however. For he indicates that the proper source reading is *Mons Ferreus* (which is totally arbitrary and in addition is not associated with Spiš, for it represents afterall Pécsvárad!), that the church in Spišská Kapitula was dedicated to St Martin, while St Adalbert on travelling from Rome visited the grave of this patron in Tours (which afterall proves nothing!), that Anastasius-Astriuk was in 1001 the abbot of *Sclavenensis provincie* (out of which also nothing relevant results for the matter in hand!). One should add that at Spišská Kapitula besides this there are no other traces for the monastery's existence, hence one should probably start from a verification of its existence. At present this author is far more cautious in his comments though still maintains his hypothesis on the monastery, presumably



And such is the present state of the discussion. In order to join in one needs to begin with the fundamental matter, i.e. establishing the reading. The whole of the relevant literature undertakes an exegesis of the inscription *Mestris*, although Georg Waitz in his edition read it *Mestrys*. The matter is therefore not devoid of doubts. Although the palaeographic questions have played a key role on many of the stages of the discussion to date, nobody in the course of the one hundred years from the time of the first editions made the effort to look at the manuscript. This was to be done first by Henryk Kapiszewski, who attempted to explain doubts on the basis of a microfilm examination.<sup>23</sup> He claimed that in the notation of our name the final letter is (contrary to Bielowski's suggestions) for certain *s*, and before it a rasure, above which the writer had written in an *i* – and consequently the whole lection confirms *Mestris*. The fourteenth-century copyist of the text read it the same. These observations are confirmed by the newest edition of the relic by Anna Rutkowska-Płachcińska. My autopsy of the manuscript (by means of good quality colour scans) allows me to introduce somewhat additional observations. In the key word for us that is *Mestris* there is indeed a rasure between the *r* and *s* covering a single letter (fig. 1, p. 29). This must have been a low letter, in the lower part (as can be seen from the traces preserved despite the scraping) not rounded, yet wider than an *i*; to which is added the characteristic way of joining it with a horizontal line with the subsequent letter *s*. These conditions would reflect the best an *r*. Below the line of the writing there is to be found in this place a clear dot, which follows to be taken for a corrector's mark pointing to the removal of the erroneously inscribed letter.<sup>24</sup> While above the line there figures an overwritten *i*. All of this should be interpreted in the following way: the writer initially used another letter (presumably an *r*), yet in noticing his mistake he marked it with under dots and then having subsequently scratched out the mistakenly used letter above it (for writing on a freshly created rasure brings with it the

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founded by people from St Adalbert's circle, see Martin Homza, 'Včasnostredoveké dejiny Spiša', in *idem* and Stanislav A. Sroka (eds.), *Historia Scepusii: Dejiny Spiša. Dziejże Spisza do roku 1526* (Bratislava and Cracow, 2009), 233–5, 251–2.

<sup>23</sup> Kapiszewski, 'Droga', 291.

<sup>24</sup> Somewhat lower down on the same page 291, Kapiszewski claims that in the word *molliens* the writer included similar dots above and below one of the letters *l*, which meant for sure their erasing as mistaken usage.

risk of spilling the ink) wrote in the appropriate one. Finally it is confirmed therefore that the copyist's intention had been to write *Mestris*. One needs to also note that – something not stressed at all by hitherto publishers<sup>25</sup> – on the rasure there is inscribed another word key to our considerations: *Polaniam* (fig. 2, p. 29). Here in addition the corrections have been carried out by obviously another hand and in another ink, in a somewhat later writing. However, it can be seen that the initial *P* still originates from the original notation. Further there was almost for certain *u*, one high letter (more than likely an *l*), then some letter low and curved (of the *o*, *a* or *e* type), while further on it becomes impossible to recreate although the word was initially most likely shorter; for the letters added onto the scraped place (not differentiating in size from the primary text) filled in also the space before the subsequent word (*regionem*). Therefore the primary notation read most presumably *Puloni* or *Pulani* (*in Puloni/Pulani regionem*).<sup>26</sup> There is, regardless, no doubt whatsoever that this refers to a notation for the name Poland, while there is no question of the matter concerning *Pannonia*, as Chaloupecký would most willingly have seen here, and which would please all the adherents of the Hungarian thesis. The heavily archaic form both with regard to orthography as equally grammar (the name had not been Latinised), exudes a large degree of authenticity and appears to point to an earlier genesis for the text's archetype.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore in no way surprising that somewhat later a reader took it upon himself to alter this strange inscription to the form of *Polaniam* commonly in use at the time.

We shall consequently remain with the conviction that the author of *The Passion* thought about a journey to Poland, and with the standard reading of *Mestris*. So where may one locate this place? In Polish writings on the question the Hungarian option holds sway,

<sup>25</sup> This was done only by Waitz: MGH, *Scriptores*, xv, 706.

<sup>26</sup> The accuracy of such a reconstruction is confirmed by the fact that in the final part of the work there is written about Boleslav the Bold *Pulslaus* or *Pulslauus*.

<sup>27</sup> The results of these observations may have a significance for research into the genesis of the name for Poland, for which see of late Przemysław Urbańczyk, *Trudne początki Polski* (Wrocław, 2008), 317–60. My suggestion as to the reading of the primordial notation definitely should be used in verification using ultra violet rays. If the proposal stands up to analysis the form 'regio Pulani' may be treated as the still missing confirmation as to the existence of the 'tribal' name *Polanie*.

in the version published by Kapiszewski and Labuda (for also they rejected the ideas of Bielowski). It follows to note straight away that the reasoning advanced by Kapiszewski is in essence a loosely assembled supposition and not one based on source evidence. This researcher had three basic arguments: biographical (the identity of Astrik of *Mestris* and Astrik of *Mons Ferreus*), geographical (identification with the Hungarian locality) and philological (allowing one to read into the text a Hungarian direction for the journey). Let us examine them in turn.

Of fundamental significance is the person of Astrik, the abbot at *Mestris* and *Mons Ferreus*. It is this trail that resulted in all attention being directed towards Hungary.<sup>28</sup> The problem of Astrik's identity (known equally in the sources as Anastasius) is, however, a true Gordian knot. For a high-ranking clergyman by the name of Astrik or Anastasius is mentioned for this time in various sources from various countries. It is impossible to categorically establish whether in fact the matter concerns one or rather two or even several individuals living simultaneously.<sup>29</sup> Defenders of the unity of this personage<sup>30</sup> see a continuity in the career of Astrik/Anastasius, who initially was to have been the abbot at Břevnov, then at our *Mestris*, subsequently at *Mons Ferreus* in Hungary, acted as an envoy to Rome for a crown for St Stephen, and who finally was made archbishop of Esztergom. If we adopt such an explanation then it follows to draw attention to the fact that still in the spring of 1001 at Ravenna he appears as 'Anastasius abbas monasterii Sancte Marie Sclavenensis provincie'<sup>31</sup> – he was therefore an abbot at some Polish monastery (for the other potential site of Czech Břevnov bore another dedication, that of Saints

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<sup>28</sup> Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 177: 'PT [Passion] mentioning in his account the Abbot Astrik, localises with the same the *Mestris* monastery in Hungary'.

<sup>29</sup> An instructive overview of sources and opinions has been given by Wincenty Swoboda, 'Astryk-Anastazy', in *Słownik starożytności słowiańskich*, viii (Wrocław, 1996), 266–7, and Ryszard Grzesik, *Kronika węgiersko-polska. Z dziejów polsko-węgierskich kontaktów kulturalnych w średniowieczu* (Poznań, 1999), 146–52; see in addition Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 174–9.

<sup>30</sup> Especially Györfffy, *Święty Stefan*, 175–9.

<sup>31</sup> MGH, *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae*, ii/1: *Ottonis III. diplomata* (Hanover, 1893), no. 396; Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 179, who does not believe in the unity of all Astriks and Anastasius; he assumes that the matter here concerns the abbot of Łęczycza.

Benedict and Alexius). This constitutes a high probability of a Polish localisation for *Mestris* (unless one supposes that Astrik was to have had under his charge an additional abbey during his rich career). Yet it rather follows to lean towards a division of Astrik and Anastasius. Though even in this case there is no doubt as to the identity of the abbot from *Mestris* and the abbot from *Mons Ferreus*, for *The Passion of Tegernsee* points to the Hungarian connections of the former – he was then to become archbishop of Esztergom,<sup>32</sup> while *The Legend of St Stephen* written by Hartwick ascribes the same name to the latter.<sup>33</sup> This, however, is a long way off identifying the two monasteries.<sup>34</sup> Astrik's undoubted mobility allows one more freely to accept that he could have run various abbeys and these in various countries. From *The Legend* by Hartwick (to which we owe in particular a lot of information about the Hungarian fate of our abbot-archbishop) it is known that Astrik came to Hungary from abroad. Further on Hartwick continues: 'venerunt et alii duos de Polonia' (this refers to the Benedictine monks at Nitra, Benedict and Andrew Svorad). This would seem to give the impression that Astrik was to have come from Poland.<sup>35</sup> It is necessary though to take note of the fundamental differences in his roles within both monasteries – he was to have, according to Hartwick's *Legend*, founded *Mons Ferreus*,<sup>36</sup> while at *Mestris* he merely took over the administration of the abbey founded by St Adalbert. Already this comparison shows that – in wanting to be in accordance with the letter of the sources – we must see here two different objects.<sup>37</sup> This discrepancy was already noticed

<sup>32</sup> The identification of *Sobottin* was for a long time controversial and unclear. The eminent authority of Hungary's historical geography, Györfy, *Święty Stefan*, 181, considers as a certainty that it is Esztergom.

<sup>33</sup> 'Legenda maior', 383: King Stephen 'Strigoniensem ecclesiam metropolim ... constituens, cui iam dictum venerabilem Ascricum abbatem pontificalis dignitatis infula decoratum ecelectione canonica prefect'.

<sup>34</sup> Therefore a logical overuse is Kapiszewski's claim, 'Droga', 295, as if the very identity of the abbots 'is proof that the monastery *ad Mestris locum* and the monastery *ad radicem Montis ferrei* is the very same monastery'.

<sup>35</sup> 'Legenda maior', 382; see Wojciechowski, 'O rocznikach', 188.

<sup>36</sup> 'Legenda maior', 382–3 (see footnote 7).

<sup>37</sup> One may also notice that King Stephen's false foundation document for the monastery at Pécsvárad, that was allegedly issued to mark the consecration of the monastery in 1015, states that 'circumscriptio nostre donacionis ante nostram coronacionem fuit assignata ante annos XIII, prius quam fundamentum foderetur,

by Kapiszewski, in attempting to explain it he referred to various meanings of the word *construxit* used in both sources – Adalbert was to have gathered the community, while Astrik ‘to build’ then the monastery.<sup>38</sup> This is an unconvincing explanation for it bases itself on a manipulation of the text.

The weakest part of Kapiszewski’s reasoning is the toponymic argumentation. For he was only able to show the existence of the locality of Mester – inscribed similarly to *Mestris* (for in the form *Mester*, *Mestur*, *Mestery*, and this already from the eleventh century), and lying in the county of Vasvár (*Castrum Ferreum*, which can nicely be associated with *Mons Ferreus*), yet having no connection with any monastery whatsoever (and for sure not with Pécsvárad, which lies in a completely different part of Hungary<sup>39</sup>). On the other hand, the existence of a locality one admittedly situated very close to Pécsvárad, but in turn bearing a name (Mindszent) recalling in no aspect *Mestris*,<sup>40</sup> a name in which some have searched for the ancient *Mestrianæ*, is obviously a valueless argument for the Roman onomastic tradition had for certain not survived until the tenth century in Pannonia. Therefore in total Kapiszewski gathered only a handful of observations, seemingly appealing, though in point of fact saying nothing and unable to hide the fact that he had been unable to find in Hungary a locality that had even a slight possibility of being identified with *Mestris*. Nothing equally comes from the fact, raised by Kapiszewski in another place that Pécsvárad lies at the foot of the hill Mecsek (from whence it is

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XVII<sup>o</sup> anno a fundacione monasterium iamdictum est consecratum’ (*Diplomata Hungariae*, i, no. 12, p. 80). From this it would result that the investiture occurred 14 years earlier and only later was construction of the monastery commenced – not earlier though than in 1001. On the other hand, the foundation was to have taken place 17 years before the consecration, therefore in 998. The chronological elements are consequently internally contradictory, as is emphasised by Györffy (*ibidem*, 71–2), and of little worth, with their compilation clearly undertaken by the editor of the present version of the document. This researcher considers the year 1038 to be a credible date for the consecration of the monastery as given by ‘*Annales Posenienses*’, ed. Imre Szentpetery, in *Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum*, i (Budapest, 1937), 125.

<sup>38</sup> Kapiszewski, ‘Droga’, 296.

<sup>39</sup> Pécsvárad is situated in the south of Hungary, while Vasvár is in the north-west part of the Pannonian Basin.

<sup>40</sup> See Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza*, i, 341–2, where the references and source notations of the name are compared.

in fact somewhat closer to *Mestris*) – for this name was not used in the Middle Ages.<sup>41</sup>

There still remains the philological argument. The whole matter rests on the translation of the word ‘divertens’. The meaning proposed by Kapiszewski, i.e. *divertere* = ‘to deviate from a route’ is, indeed, acceptable. Although this is by no means the only one, or the fundamental meaning of this word. The said verb means first and foremost ‘to go’, ‘to direct oneself’, ‘to head towards’, ‘to depart’, etc., though it equally means ‘to stop over somewhere’.<sup>42</sup> The use of this or some other meaning is all context dependent. St Adalbert left Saxony for Poland and founded a monastery, ‘having directed himself towards *Mestris*’, ‘having stopped off in *Mestris*’,<sup>43</sup> or equally ‘having deviated to *Mestris*’. In the first and second case the searched for locality must have lain on the actual route of the journey, in the last – one may allow for diversion from this. ‘Diversion’ from a route must, however, have its reasonable limits. We know the starting point and the aim of the journey. Adalbert returned in 996 from Rome, he was in France, and then – as the oldest *vitas* well convey – he appeared at the imperial court and took his leave of Otto III. The emperor was in the November and December on the Rhine and it was there that this farewell took place – possibly already in November in Mainz, or maybe only at Christmas in Cologne.<sup>44</sup> Hence Adalbert was to undertake his final journey, one that ended on 23 April 997 in a martyr’s death in Prussia. In Poland he was to have met, as Bruno of Querfurt clearly writes in his life, Boleslav the Brave and was in Gniezno,<sup>45</sup> which he left at

<sup>41</sup> *Korai magyar történeti lexikon (9–14. század)* (Budapest, 1994), 447.

<sup>42</sup> *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch bis zum ausgehenden 13. Jahrhundert*, iii, 6 (Munich, 2003), col. 870–2; *Słownik łaciny średniowiecznej w Polsce*, iii (Wrocław, 1972), col. 763–6; *Latinitatis mediae aevi lexicon Bohemorum. Slovník středověké latiny v českých zemích*, ii (Praha, 1993), 112; Marian Plezia (ed.), *Słownik łacińsko-polski*, ii (Warsaw, 1959), 224.

<sup>43</sup> And so in the translation by Janina Pleziowa: ‘he directed his steps to the Polish land, where he stopped over at the place called *ad Mestris* and there constructed a monastery’ (Plezia [ed.], *Średniowieczne żywoty*, 32); Brygida Kürbis corrected this translation to: ‘deviating to the place *Mestris*’ (Spieź [ed.], *W kręgu żywotów*, 142). Also Jana Zachová translated it as: ‘having stopped over’ (cf. footnote 22).

<sup>44</sup> Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 162–7, who opts for November and competently debates with the Christmas thesis.

<sup>45</sup> *S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris Vita altera auctore Brunone Querfurtensi* (hereafter: *Vita II*), ed. Jadwiga Karwasińska, in MPH, series nova, iv, pt. 2

the end of March at the latest.<sup>46</sup> And it was from Poland, as Bruno describes, that Adalbert sent a legation to Prague with the final question as to the possibility of returning to his bishopric chair.<sup>47</sup> Admittedly Gerard Labuda believes that it must have taken place earlier before Adalbert decided whatsoever on his journey eastward, but a fundamental basis for altering a totally explicit source account cannot be seen.<sup>48</sup> Equally it results from the *Vita* by John Canaparius that the reply from Prague was sent to Poland – for immediately after its receipt the saint undertook the quick decision as to whether he should travel to the Lutici or the Prussians.<sup>49</sup> Gerard Labuda trusts however the information contained in the shorter version of the *Vita* by Bruno of Querfurt, that Adalbert sent legates to Hungary from Poland, desiring to draw to himself his tutor (Radla).<sup>50</sup> Adalbert's stay in Poland must have therefore lasted relatively a long time. The timetable for the future martyr's activities must have been a tight one. All the more so it follows to assume that he came to Poland quickly, possibly along the shortest and most direct route. From the Rhineland he should have travelled straight to Poland. The reference in *The Passion* to leaving Saxony also indicates such a route. If Adalbert

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(Warsaw, 1969), 'Redactio Longior', cap. 24, p. 29–30. Stróżyk, 'Jeszcze o pobycie', 496–8, suggested Cracow, but this is an unnecessary correction of a source that clearly states Gniezno.

<sup>46</sup> Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 188, assumed that Adalbert spent Easter (28 March) together with the duke and then moved on to Gdańsk, which appears more likely than Mielczarski's idea, *Misja pruska*, 87, who considered that Adalbert was already in Gdańsk on Easter Saturday.

<sup>47</sup> *Vita* II, cap. 23, p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 166–7, 181. A certain source catch for such an explanation is the Cosmas account (*Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, ed. Bertold Bretholz, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, Nova Series, ii [Berlin, 1923], lib. I, cap. 30, p. 54), according to which Adalbert sent the legation to Prague during his stay in Mainz. It is difficult, however, to give preference to the account of this 100-year-later chronicler over those of almost contemporary hagiographies. Cf. Václav Novotný, *České dějiny*, i, pt. 1 (Praha, 1912), 654–5, who attempts to harmonise the accounts in such a way that the archbishop of Mainz sent his own legates to Prague. Stróżyk, 'Jeszcze o pobycie', 497–8, supports the sending of a legation from Poland.

<sup>49</sup> S. *Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris Vita prior* (hereafter: *Vita I*), ed. Jadwiga Karwasińska, MPH, series nova, iv, pt. 1 (Warsaw, 1962), cap. 26–7, p. 38–40.

<sup>50</sup> *Vita* II, 'Redactio Brevior', cap. 23, p. 61.

was then to 'deviate' into the direction of Hungary, he would have had to have travelled a roundabout route through Bavaria – for the simplest, through Prague, was obviously closed to him. The difference is fundamental – from the banks of the Rhine to Gniezno Adalbert would have covered around 700 km, a route via Hungary (one needs to remember that Pécsvárad lies on the southern extremes of the country) would have involved him in a journey of at least 1700 km.<sup>51</sup> Evidence against Kapiszewski's proposed explanation of meaning for the word *divertere* is also contained in the narrative structure of the account. If in reality the matter had concerned a long diversion to Hungary then there would have disappeared from the account of *The Passion of Tegernsee* the presence of the saint in Poland – a country mentioned in the very first words. We would have received a narrative and logical oddity: Adalbert was heading for Poland but acted in Hungary and went straight from there to Prussia. His only activity in Poland itself involved stealing through it stealthily. This oddity was astutely noted by Labuda.<sup>52</sup> It even aroused a certain astonishment in the researcher for such a vision stands at total loggerheads with everything we know about the saint's stay in Poland. However, finally Labuda quoted the absence of information in *The Passion* about Poland as an important argument for the Hungarian localisation. This creates obviously an argumentative vicious circle. In essence the ignoring of Adalbert's acts in Poland would have created a strange situation, all the more so, that *The Passion* was created most certainly – at least this is how it is predominantly seen – in Poland itself and its author should have been interested in matters Polish.

Thus Adalbert left the Rhine and travelling through Saxony fairly quickly reached Gniezno. Within the framework of such a journey there is no possibility to talk of 'deviations' to some Hungarian locality

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<sup>51</sup> Grzesik, 'Die Ungarnmission', 233, attempts to explain this strange situation in the following way that the route through the Polabian region was too dangerous as a result of the Slavic uprising that had been widespread since 983. This argument is unconvincing. Firstly because even the northern route via Magdeburg was sufficiently safe for the imperial cortege to return this way 3 years later, while the southern route through Thuringia and Meissen ran on the whole through completely peaceful localities. And secondly the rebellious Slavs should not have frightened off a hot head who was prepared to go alone to the Lutici.

<sup>52</sup> Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 180: 'the author of *The Passion* completely missed out the visit to Poland'.



or other. *Mestris* had to lie definitely closer to the route in question. There does not appear to be any need whatsoever to abandon such an obvious solution. The strength of Kapiszewski's philological supposition pales in the face of the feebleness of his remaining arguments – if in Hungary there is no equivalent locality, and Astrik could have been during his lifetime the abbot at various monasteries there is no reason whatsoever that Adalbert must have gone to Hungary itself. For such a journey has no independent confirmation whatsoever. The fact that Adalbert was (or rather had been several times) in Hungary is confirmed by the *Vita* by Bruno of Querfurt. But his information that 'Ungris nunc nuncios suos misit, nunc se ipsum obtulit',<sup>53</sup> has no chronological references and generally is related – not excluding Labuda himself – to earlier times, with an indication for the turn of 994/5.<sup>54</sup> More is given on the Hungarian achievements of Adalbert in the later, though probably reliable, *vita* – *Tempore illo*; here is related, however, that next the saint made for Rome, and so there are no bases whatsoever to link this episode with the winter of 996/7.<sup>55</sup> Gerard Labuda's observation – to which he attaches much importance – that Adalbert as a missionary bishop could have founded monasteries only in a missionary country such as Hungary was then, for in Poland this would have been impossible without the participation of the local bishop Unger, also does not give us much. For from the short words of *The Passion of Tegernsee* it does not result at all that Adalbert, in founding his own monastery, acted without the knowledge and approval of the relevant Church authorities. It is equally difficult to accredit evidential credibility to Labuda's comment that the oldest vitas (by John Canaparius and Bruno of Querfurt) are silent about Adalbert's monastery founding in Poland. For this argumentation is two-edged – the vitas are even more silent about the founding in

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<sup>53</sup> Vita II, 'Redactio Longior', cap. 16, p. 19.

<sup>54</sup> Labuda, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 140–1; cf. Gabriel Adriányi, 'Der heilige Adalbert und Ungarn', in Śmigiel (ed.), *Święty Wojciech w tradycji*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', ed. Wojciech Kętrzyński, MPH, iv (Lwów, 1884), cap. 7, pp. 213–14; Grzesik, 'Die Ungarnmission', 234–5; *idem*, 'Skąd wielkopolski hagiograf św. Wojciecha wiedział o spaleniu przez niego pogańskiego bałwana na Węgrzech?', in Zydorek, *Scriptura custos*, 485–91; Ryszard Grzesik, 'Węgierski etap misji św. Wojciecha', in Stanisław Pietrzak (ed.), *Święty Świerad i jego czasy: materiały z sympozjum naukowego w Tropiu, 10–11 lipca 1998* (Nowy Sącz, 2001), 136–57.

Hungary of anything at all, as well as knowing nothing about the hero's Hungarian expedition. It results from their content that having said farewell to the imperial court, Adalbert set off straight away for the Polish sovereign, Boleslav,<sup>56</sup> although it follows to admit that they are not accounts accurate in their detail. One may also recall the already mentioned fact, one accepted equally by Labuda, that Adalbert during his stay in Poland was to have sent – on the basis of the *Vita* by Bruno – an urgent legation to Hungary. It would be a most curious way to behave if he had himself only just returned from there.

Following on from all that has been said we have to give up on the localisation of our monastery in Hungary. If we are to suppose that Adalbert travelled straight from Saxony to Gniezno, the location of *Mestris* must be looked for exclusively in Poland. For from *The Passion of Tegernsee* it clearly results that the saint founded a monastery already following his departure from Saxony ('Saxonica tellure recedens'). So where in Poland? The ideas of Tadeusz Wojciechowski (Trzemeszno) and Stanisław Zakrzewski (Łęczyca) are today beyond any discussion. It would be difficult to discuss the case for Łęczyca given that nothing really points to it. Andrzej Nadolski's idea also gives us nothing, with its identifying of *Mestris* itself with Trzemeszno, as the planned seat, yet searching for the actual and desired seat in Łęczyca.<sup>57</sup> The localisation at Trzemeszno has finally been discounted by recent research (historical and archaeological) into the beginnings of the local monastery there. It is now known that it arose in the first half of the twelfth century.<sup>58</sup> There consequently remains only Międzyrzecz situated in the north-west of Greater Poland. For which exceptionally strong arguments speak out. These have been, after all, known for a long time with nobody refuting them in the hitherto discussion, or even lessening their importance. For new hypotheses have been created without due consideration of the importance of existing views.

The first thing, that which initially strikes one, is the very notation of the name *Mestris*. It is extremely close to the toponym Międzyrzecz.

<sup>56</sup> *Vita* I, cap. 26, pp. 38–9; *Vita* II, 'Redactio Longior', cap. 23, pp. 28–9.

<sup>57</sup> Andrzej Nadolski *et al.*, *Łęczyckie opactwo Panny Marii w świetle badań z lat 1954–1956* (Prace i Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi, Seria Archeologiczna, 4, Łódź, 1960), 76–84.

<sup>58</sup> Labuda, *Szkice*, 187–93; lately Marcin Wiewióra, *Zespół klasztorny kanoników regularnych w Trzemesznie w świetle badań archeologiczno-architektonicznych* (Archaeologia Historica Polona, 9, Toruń, 2000).

Though it follows to realise that in the Middle Ages it was pronounced somewhat differently, as if borne out by the entries for this and other similar names which were numerous in Slavdom (it is enough to mention the Silesian Międzyrzecz, a territory in the fork of the Oder and Barycz, as well as the Czech and Moravian localities of Mezeříčí). In the place of the present day *dz* they always contain an *s* or *z*, which also corresponds to the taking root of German names of the type Meseritz or Meseritsch.<sup>59</sup> That this pronunciation was in use extremely early on is shown by the oldest notation of the name Międzyrzecz occurring in the chronicle of Thietmar – *Mezerici*<sup>60</sup>. The proximity to the notation *Mestris* becomes all the closer if one is to allow for a minor emendation responding to the conditions of palaeography – in relation to the unusual similarity of the letters *e* and *t* (in the Middle Ages always low) then one is able to admit that the form *Mestris* came about through copying from the primordial *Meseris*. For the identification of such a notation should not arouse any doubts whatsoever.

Secondly, possibly the most important matter, the account of Thietmar attests to the existence of an abbey in the Greater Poland Międzyrzecz. For the chronicler relates how the German army of King Henry II, heading in the autumn of 1005 on Poznań, arrived ‘ad abbaciam quae Mezerici dicitur’.<sup>61</sup> This account is not to be rejected and attempts at discrediting it have been completely unconvincing.<sup>62</sup> Therefore there existed a monastery in Międzyrzecz at the turn of the eleventh century. There is concealed in this, however, a certain pitfall. Hitherto researchers into Thietmar’s account have associated it with the events recalled in the *Vita Quinque Fratrum* by Bruno of Querfurt: when forces of the German king entered Poland and

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Miłosz Sosnowski, ‘Co wiadomo o lokalizacji pustelni tzw. Pięciu Braci?’, *Roczniki Historyczne*, 71 (2005), 16.

<sup>60</sup> See the next footnote.

<sup>61</sup> *Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, ed. Robert Holtzmann, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, Nova Series, ix (Berlin, 1935) (hereafter: Thietmar), lib. VI, cap. 27, p. 306; *ibidem*, 307, second version, known from the fourteenth-century copy where the form is: *Metzcerize*.

<sup>62</sup> Labuda, *Szkice*, 230, 464–5; *idem*, *Święty Wojciech. Biskup-męczennik*, 172, attempted to prove that the notation *Mezerici* could not signify Międzyrzecz, and that it follows to correct it to *Cazimerici* (i.e. Kazimierz). See Sosnowski’s apt criticism, ‘Co wiadomo’, 12–19.

arrived at a village in which there was located a hermitage of future martyrs, above the church there burnt a wondrous light which lasted over an hour.<sup>63</sup> Consequently there is imposed an identification of the two episodes. The majority of researchers consider that the hermitage of the Five Holy Martyrs must have been located exactly at Międzyrzecz.<sup>64</sup> In which case there could not have been located in the same Międzyrzecz the monastery founded by St Adalbert. In turn opponents of such a localisation for the hermitage – with Labuda at the head – are prepared in polemical fervour to contest totally the reference of Thietmar’s account to Międzyrzecz.<sup>65</sup> Both the former and the latter exclude in any case the possibility that the ‘abbey’ mentioned by the German chronicler is to be identified with the monastery founded by St Adalbert. It appears that it is just this directing of the interpretation of Thietmar’s excerpt into a discussion about the localisation of the hermitage that has caused the thesis as to the Polish localisation of *Mestris* to be forgotten. So of key significance for us is the recent ascertainment that Thietmar and Bruno were for certain not talking about the same event. For in as far as the former describes the expedition of 1005, then from the context in which the description of the miracle is placed within Bruno’s account it results that the miraculous light appeared in 1004.<sup>66</sup> There disappeared therefore the source basis for a combining of the hermitage with Międzyrzecz, and with the same that *abbacia* becomes available for other identification. We may consequently locate with ease St Adalbert’s monastery there.

<sup>63</sup> *Vita Quinque Fratrum eremitarum ... auctore Brunone Querfurtensi*, ed. Jadwiga Karwasińska, MPH, series nova, iv, pt. 3 (Warsaw, 1973), cap. 16, p. 69.

<sup>64</sup> The discussion on the localisation of the hermitage is summarised by Marek Derwich, ‘Kilka uwag w sprawie Pięciu Braci Męczenników’, in *Cracovia – Polonia – Europa. Studia z dziejów średniowiecza ofiarowane Jerzemu Wyrozumskiemu w sześćdziesiątą piątą rocznicę urodzin i czterdziestolecie pracy naukowej* (Cracow, 1995), 181–8; Labuda, *Szkice*, 206–13, 461–7; as well as Sosnowski, ‘Co wiadomo’, 7–29, to which Gerard Labuda again refers in ‘Pięciu Braci Męczenników (1003) w Międzyrzeczu czy Kazimierzu?’, *Roczniki Historyczne*, 72 (2006), 225–9.

<sup>65</sup> See footnote 62.

<sup>66</sup> Tomasz Jasiński, ‘Zapiski kronikarskie i rocznikarskie o Pięciu Braciach Męczennikach’, in Ryszard Jałoszyński (ed.), *Kult Pięciu Braci Męczenników w Kazimierzu Biskupim: materiały sympozjum historycznego zorganizowanego 13 listopada 2002 r. w Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym Misjonarzy Świętej Rodziny...* (Kazimierz Biskupi, 2003), 21; Sosnowski, ‘Co wiadomo’, 20–3.

Thietmar's account is meaningful for another reason as well. Namely it attests to Międzyrzecz lying on one of the roads leading from Saxony to the centre of the Piast state. This referred to the road crossing the Oder at Krosno.<sup>67</sup> In heading for Poland Adalbert could of course have taken another route, crossing the Oder lower down, at Lebus (Lubusz), or rather higher up, at Bytom or Głogów, but Międzyrzecz always lay sufficiently close that it would have been easy to 'direct oneself', 'stop over at', 'deviate from a route' – and it is in point of fact here in this context that the word 'divertens' becomes totally comprehensible.

There is also an important clue contained in the local topography. The oldest church of the Międzyrzecz settlement was situated at a distance of 1.5 km to the west of the stronghold, lying within the fork of the rivers Obra and Paklica. This church is mentioned for the first time in 1259. It then bore the name of St Adalbert, one attested to later as well. Equally the settlement concentrated around the church, constituting the property of the Poznań bishopric, adopted the name Święty Wojciech (St Adalbert), changed only in modern times to Wojciechowo (a possessive form from the Polish name for Adalbert, Wojciech).<sup>68</sup> Names of this type are a rare occurrence in Poland, but this besides it does not follow to draw the conclusion as to the preservation of an exceptional tradition connected

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<sup>67</sup> Thietmar, lib. VI, cap. 26, p. 304. On the routes see Stefan Weymann, 'Ze studiów nad zagadnieniem dróg w Wielkopolsce od X do XVIII w.', *Przegląd Zachodni*, ix, 6-8 (1953), 209–11, 229–34; Maciej Przybył, 'Poznań na tle szlaków komunikacyjnych od X do XIII wieku', in Zofia Kurnatowska and Tomasz Jurek (eds.), *Civitas Posnaniensis. Studia z dziejów średniowiecznego Poznania* (Poznań, 2005), 111–29; Wojciech Dzieduszycki and Maciej Przybył, "'Trakt cesarski" – próba odtworzenia przebiegu drogi pielgrzymki Ottona III do Gniezna na podstawie analizy źródeł pisanych i archeologicznych', in *ibidem* (eds.), *Trakt cesarski. Itawa – Gniezno – Magdeburg* (Biblioteka Fontes Archaeologici Posnanienses, 11, Poznań, 2002), 17–31; Kerstin Kirsch, 'Reise- und Handelsrouten zwischen mittlere Elbe und Oder um 1000', *ibidem*, 409–21.

<sup>68</sup> *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, i (Poznań, 1877), no. 379, and see in addition to the interpretation of this document Tomasz Jurek, 'Kościoły średniowiecznego Międzyrzecza', in Hanna Kóčka-Krenz and Władysław Łosiński (eds.), *Kraje słowiańskie w wiekach średnich. Profanum i sacrum* (Poznań, 1998), 613–21, particularly 615–17; cf. also Stanisław Kozierowski, 'Badania nazw topograficznych dzisiejszej archidiecezji poznańskiej', *Roczniki Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk Poznańskiego*, 42 (1915), 287, 404; Nowacki, *Dzieje archidiecezji*, ii, 571, 756.

with the presence of the holy patron. For we have but a handful of analogical names appearing within the framework of larger settlement agglomerations, where the individual elements are defined by the titles of churches.<sup>69</sup> For sure this same mechanism operated in Międzyrzecz. The settlement situated around the church was placed sufficiently far from the stronghold and the town located next to it in the mid thirteenth century that it required a separate name. Strange is the actual positioning of the church – fulfilling right up until the moment of the town’s foundation the role of a single parish – at such a significant distance from the stronghold. It is easiest to explain it in terms of the adaptation for pastoral services of a church that had initially fulfilled other functions, functions which had dictated its out-of-the-way location. In research to date it has been suggested – something I personally have done<sup>70</sup> – that it is in the said Międzyrzecz’s Święty Wojciech that it follows to look for the hermitage. At present, when the connection of the hermitage with Międzyrzecz has been seriously questioned, it would follow to advance another hypothesis: Święty Wojciech is most likely the location of the monastery founded in 997. This corresponds to the topographic requirements. For a monastery of monks turning their backs on the world a location somewhat far from

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<sup>69</sup> We know the settlements as Święty Jan (St John), Święty Marcin (St Martin), Święty Wojciech (St Adalbert), Święty Roch and Święty Łazarz (St Lazarus) near Poznań (with the last two not having medieval records), Święty Wojciech near Gdańsk, a couple of separately standing chapels (St Martin near Sulmierzyce, St Roch near Odolanów) as well as the village Święty Stanisław (St Stanislas) near Stanisławów in Rus’, founded only in the 16th century (*Słownik geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego i innych krajów słowiańskich*, xi, [Warsaw, 1890], 699–700). It follows to note, however, that Święty Wojciech near Gdańsk was an extremely old settlement, one at times connected with the Gdańsk activities of the future martyr (Mielczarski, *Misja pruska*, 78–81). In 1236 the Gdańsk Duke Swietopelk bestowed immunity on the abbot of Mogilno and villages ‘ecclesie sancti Adalberti ad quercum’, which shows that already then there was a *praepositura* of the Benedictine abbey in Mogilno at Święty Wojciech (*Pommerellisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. Max Perlbach [Danzig, 1882], nos. 54–6); this Pomeranian possession of the Mogilno abbey may refer to the times of Boleslav the Wry-mouthed, see Jan Powierski, *Prusowie, Mazowsze i sprowadzenie Krzyżaków do Polski*, i (Malbork, 1996), 153–7. Cf. also Maksymilian Grzegorz, *Osady Pomorza Gdańskiego w latach 1309–1454* (Warsaw, 1990), 159.

<sup>70</sup> Józef Mitkowski, ‘Św. Wojciech a jego bezpośredni następcy w męczeństwie’, in Biernacki *et al.* (eds.), *Święty Wojciech 997–1947*, 327–8; Jurek, ‘Kościoły’, 619–20; Derwich, ‘Studia nad początkami’, 82.

existing settlements seems appropriate, but at the same time within the safe neighbourhood of an imposing stronghold, one guaranteeing potential protection and escape. An analogical localisation, several hundred metres from a stronghold, had presumably the somewhat later abbey at Łęczycza.<sup>71</sup>

The verification of such a hypothesis could result from the findings of archaeological research at Święty Wojciech. The digs conducted to date there have not brought, one should admit, any materials from the turn of the tenth/eleventh century.<sup>72</sup> The church at Święty Wojciech might not have left any traces as it was most likely made of wood. As such it is spoken of in the fifteenth century as well as in modern times, when visitations attest to the totally wooden character of the church building including the enclosure.<sup>73</sup> Although later the name of St Adalbert was attached to the place, its initial designation must have been different. Possibly it was dedicated to the Mother of God. Anastasius mentioned above, the abbot 'monasterii Sancte Marie Sclavenensis provincie', appearing in 1001, may be associated with Międzyrzecz<sup>74</sup> – although obviously he could have also come from one of the other

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<sup>71</sup> Nadolski *et al.*, *Łęczyckie opactwo*, who associate the abbey with the foundations of the construction uncovered under the later collegiate church; see, however, the doubts advanced by Zbigniew Morawski, "Sedes translata". Łęczycza na początku XII wieku', in *Aetas media, aetas moderna. Studia ofiarowane Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw, 2000), 292–3, who sees in the construction rather the *palatium* (Pfalz) raised by Duke Sbigneus.

<sup>72</sup> Witold Hensel and Zofia Hilczer-Kurnatowska, *Studia i materiały do osadnictwa Wielkopolski wczesnohistorycznej*, vi (Wrocław, 1987), 386–7; Stanisław Kurnatowski, 'Dzieje Międzyrzecza i okolicy w świetle źródeł archeologicznych', in Tomasz Łuczak and Dorota Matyaszczyk (eds.), *Międzyrzecz i okolice* (Międzyrzecz and Gorzów Wielkopolski, 1998), 36–9, 55–7 (and maps).

<sup>73</sup> In 1476 the priest Mikołaj committed himself 'reedificare et de novo ex lignis ... construere ecclesiam in Swyanthywoczyczech villa ... episcopi Pozn. ante Myędzyrzecz', who burnt down the church as a result of his own carelessness (Poznań, Archiwum Archidiecezjalne [Archepiscopal Archive] [hereafter: AAP], Acta episcopalia II, fo. 456). The visitation of 1607 notes: 'ecclesia ibidem lignea tituli Sancti Adalberti, caemeterii sepum ligneum malum et ruinosum, tectum ligneum bonum, campanile contiguum ecclesiae ligneum' (AAP Acta visitationum 3, fo. 136v); in 1640: 'oratorium tituli ac patrocinii S. Adalberti ex lignis aedificatum et contextum bene et seaptum' (*ibidem* 10, fo. 76); in 1724/5 the temple was already in a seriously ruined state (*ibidem*, 22, fo. 176; Józef Łukaszewicz, *Krótki opis historyczny kościołów parochialnych w dawnej diecezji poznańskiej*, ii [Poznań, 1858], 366).

<sup>74</sup> Similarly David, *Les Bénédictins*, 5.

Boleslav the Brave monasteries probably existing in Poland. The abbey of Our Holy Mother ‘at the stronghold’ at Łęczycza particularly suggests itself, the beginnings of which – as the second patrociniūm of St Alexius indicates – stretch back for certain to these very times.<sup>75</sup>

It is time to summarise our considerations. There are no bases to accept that the ‘locum Mestris’ recalled in *The Passion of Tegernsee*, to which St Adalbert travelled from Saxony to Poland in order to found a monastery, lay in Hungary. It follows to look for this place in Poland. As a result of the similarity in name (particularly in relation to the emanation of *Mestris* to *Meseris*) and its location close to the routes leading from Germany into the heart of Poland it seems as if here we have an identification with Międzyrzecz, where in 1005 we have the existence of an ‘abbey’ really attested through the account of Thietmar. Most certainly it follows to look for the monastery in the village Święty Wojciech near Międzyrzecz. The adoption of such a hypothesis means that it follows to look for the hermitage of the Five Holy Martyrs somewhere else, which has been most often to date associated with Międzyrzecz itself. The whole discussion into the matter should be realigned. The founding of St Adalbert at Międzyrzecz is certainly the oldest attested Polish monastery. However, it is difficult to affirm whether other abbeys did not already exist at this time, but there do not exist any source references for them.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Potkański, ‘Opactwo’, 118–25; Kazimierz Jasiński, ‘Kult świętego Aleksego w średniowiecznej Łęczycy’, *Roczniki Historyczne*, 72 (1996), 7–19; Derwich, ‘Studia nad początkami’, 97 (where also, 95–9, is a summary of the discussion into all the traces for the existence of monasteries in Poland of the times of Boleslav the Brave); see also footnotes 9 and 71. Also Labuda relates Abbot Anastasius of 1001 to Łęczycza (see footnote 31).

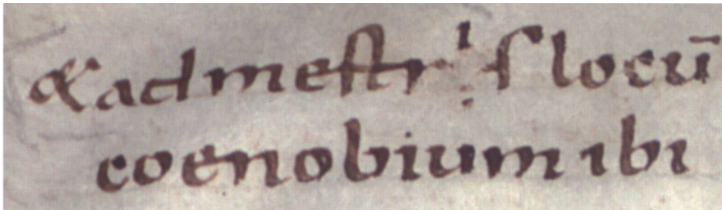
<sup>76</sup> Marek Derwich, ‘Czy Dobrawa była fundatorką pierwszego opactwa polskiego? Ze studiów nad początkami Kościoła na ziemiach polskich’, in Jiří Šouša and Ivana Ebelová (eds.), *Inter laurum et olivam* (Z pomocných věd historických, XVI = Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philisophica et historica 1–2/2002, Prague, 2007), 637–43, proves that it was already Dobrawa who founded the nunnery of St George in Poznań though this thesis is probably not able to be substantiated. I would consider the Łęczycza abbey to be undoubtedly later – the dedication of St Alexius was brought by St Adalbert and his companions, and consequently the abbey could not have been founded before 977. Łęczycza could have been established at the earliest by St Adalbert in the spring of 997 but this is fairly unlikely (for the assembly of personnel for both abbeys was probably not possible, as *The Passion of Tegernsee* accounts for only a single monastery), and so – considering the position – Międzyrzecz should have arisen first.



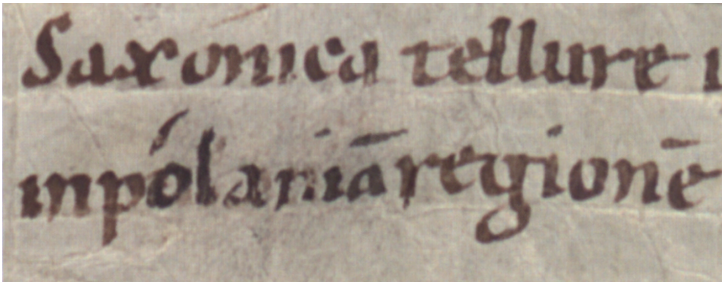
The change in the localisation of the *Mestris* monastery is also of significance for a reconstruction of St Adalbert's final route. It did not run, however, through Hungary for the only trace of being in that country was to have been the very founding of the said monastery. This ascertainment leads, in turn, to a revision of considerations as to the Polish section of this route. If Adalbert came from the west to Gniezno and stayed longer in Międzyrzecz, and was to fritter away at best a couple of months in Poland then his range of activities are rather limited to the northern lands, and therefore the Greater Poland centre of the Piast monarchy. One doubts as to whether Adalbert reached Cracow, which had been considered hitherto to be a definite station along his route.

The matter of identifying *Mestris* is also interesting for its methodological considerations. It shows what a burdensome baggage overly thought up hypotheses can often be for the historiography of the early Middle Ages. The effort put into their construction, and subsequent verification and discussion masks at times a perception of the simplest and most obvious solutions.

trans. Guy Torr



1. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 18897, p. 291



2. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 18897, p. 290