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THE KNIGHTING OF POLISH DUKES IN THE EARLY
MIDDLE AGES: IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL
SIGNIFICANCE

Despite the defeat suffered in 1195 at the battle on the Mozgawa, Mieszko the Old did not abandon the thought of recovering the throne of Cracow, and soon embarked upon undertakings intent on winning the principate. This time, however, the old duke, mindful of distressing experiences from the previous expedition against Cracow, decided not to contest for his rights on the battlefield, but opted for diplomatic operations. Consequently, he proposed to Duchess Helena, mother of Leszko the White, the ruler of Cracow: "Let your son cede the principate to me, and I shall adopt him. Subsequently, when I present him with the knightly belt, I shall return it [i.e. the principate — Z. D.] to him, and render him an heir, upon the basis of legitimate custom, so that the Cracow dignity, and even the entire principate encompassing the whole of Poland, would be confirmed in your family by means of perpetual succession"¹. Recognising that "it will be safer to respect the uncle as a father than to have in him a constant enemy, and that it is better to rule by his grace than to be always dependent upon the predilection of the common people" Leszek and his mother consented to the proposal made by Mieszko the Old. At a specially held convention both sides swore to come to an agreement, and in 1198 Mieszko re-established his

¹Master Wincenty (so-called Kadłubek), *Kronika polska (Polish Chronicle)*, transl. and prep. by B. Kürbis, Wrocław 1992, p. 262; *Magistri Vincentii dicti Kadłubek Chronica Polonorum*, ed. M. Plezia, Monumenta Poloniae Historica (later MPH) n. s., vol. 11, IV, 25, pp. 187: *Cedat mihi filius tuus principatum, quem ego in filium adoptem, etque consequenter militiae cingulo a me insignito eundem restitutam, ipsumque heredem legitima sollemnitate institutam, ut Cracoviensis dignitas, immo totius Poloniae principatus in tua stirpe perpetua successione solidetur.*

rule in Cracow². Nonetheless, the old duke soon forgot his promises and the sworn oath; unsuccessfully did "Lestek ask his uncle to knight him: he requested and beseeched that the uncle would keep his promise and institute him the heir of Cracow"³.

Those fragments of the *Chronicle* by Wincenty Kadłubek, dealing with the events of 1198, show that in the relations between Mieszko and Helena special significance was attached to Leszek's initiation into knighthood, a ceremony to be performed by Mieszko. The Kadłubek accounts delineates a marked dependence between the knighting of Leszek, his designation as the heir of Mieszko and the restoration of rule over Cracow. The refusal to conduct the promised knighting appeared to close Leszek's path to the Cracow throne and to destroy all hopes for assuming sovereign rule over the principate. The significance attached to knighting by the negotiations conducted by Mieszko and Leszek makes it worthwhile to pose a question concerning the place of the ceremony of knighting rulers in the political and ideological reality of twelfth-century Poland, and to deliberate over the type of imagery associated with this event.

The link between the ceremony in question and the possibility of initiating the fulfilment of monarchic functions by the ruler, brought forth by Master Wincenty, is confirmed in assorted fashion by varied comparative material. The dependence between the act of presenting the ruler with his armour, and especially sword, and the assumption of regal power became marked particularly vividly in the Carolingian tradition of the Early Middle Ages. Much speaks in favour of the fact that the Carolingian rulers attached a constitutive character to the ceremony of handing over or girding the new monarch with a sword, which introduced the candidate to the throne to his royal rights. The presentation of a sword was accompanied by the handing over of royal supremacy, and enabled the ruler to commence the performance of his regal tasks⁴.

²Master Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 263; *Magistri Vincentii Chronica*, IV, 25, p. 188.

³Master Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 264; *Rogat dux Lestco, militiae primitiis insigniri; rogat, instat, ratam fore patris sponsonem et se Cracoviae heredem in solidum institui*, *Magistri Vincentii Chronica*, IV, 25, p. 188.

⁴See: W. Erben, *Schwertleite und Ritterschlag. Beiträge zu einer Rechtsgeschichte der Waffen*, "Zeitschrift für historische Waffenkunde" 8, 1918–1920, 5–6, p. 108 ff.; J. Flori, *Les origines de l'adoubement chevaleresque: étude des remises d'armes et du vocabulaire qui exprime dans les sources historiques latines jusqu'au début du XIIIe siècle*, "Traditio" 35, 1979, p. 218 ff.; E. Orth, *Formen und Funktionen der höfischen Ritterhebung*, in: *Curtialitas. Studien zu Grundfragen der höfisch-ritterlichen Kultur*, Göttingen 1990, p. 132.

Ceremonies of the presentation or girding with a sword are confirmed also during the eleventh and twelfth century. Nonetheless, at first glance, they appear to have a slightly different character than their Carolingian predecessors. Their connection with the mounting the throne by the new ruler is no longer so obvious. Furthermore, in contrast to Carolingian ceremonies, the royal ceremonies of the eleventh and twelfth century were described increasingly frequently in “knightly” categories. At the same time, eleventh- and twelfth-century sources include an increasing number of accounts concerning the knighting not only of kings or other great territorial rulers, but also of the petty feudal lords or even “simple” knights. This process did not run an equal course. The social range of knighting and the reference to “chivalric” terms in France and the Empire clearly differed. Initially, we encounter the application of “knightly” terminology in relation to rulers or great feudal lords chiefly in French and Anglo-Norman sources, the earliest examples of knighting “ordinary” knights come from France and the Anglo-Norman state, too. On the other hand, up to the second half of the twelfth century, sources from the Empire speak mainly about the knighting of royal sons and dukes, in reference to whom the use of “chivalric” terms is usually avoided, indicating only the presentation of a sword. Nonetheless, at the end of the twelfth century, the ceremony in question universally assumed a knightly form, introducing the young man to the circle of “knights”⁵.

⁵See e.g. P. Gauthier, *Essai sur l'origine de la noblesse en France au Moyen Age*, Paris 1902, p. 393 ff.; W. Erben, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–168; E. H. Massmann, *Schwertleite und Ritterschlag, dargestellt auf Grund der mittelhochdeutschen literarischen Quellen*, Hamburg 1932; E. Pietzner, *Schwertleite und Ritterschlag*, Heidelberg 1934; J. Blumke, *Studien zum Ritterbegriff im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, Heidelberg 1964, p. 101 ff.; *idem*, *Courtly Culture. Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford 1991, p. 231 ff.; P. van Luyn, *Les milites dans la France du XIe siècle*, “Le Moyen Age” 72, 1971, p. 217 ff.; J. M. van Winter, “Cingulum militiae”, *Schwertleite en “miles” — terminologie als spiegel van veranderend menselijk gedrag*, “Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis” 44, 1976, pp. 1–92; J. Flori, *Sémanique et société médiévale: le verse adouber et son evolution au XIIe siècle*, “Annales ESC” 31, 1976, 5, pp. 915–940; *idem*, *Les origines*, pp. 209–272; *idem*, *Pour une histoire de la chevalerie. L'adoubement dans les romans de Chretien de Troyes*, “Romania” 100, 1979, pp. 21–53; *idem*, *Du nouveau sur l'adoubement des chevaliers, XIe–XIIIe siècles*, “Le Moyen Age” 91, 1985, pp. 201–226; *idem*, *Aristocratie et valeurs “chevaleresques” dans la seconde moitié du XIIe siècle. L'exemple des lais de Marie de France*, “Le Moyen Age” 96, 1990, pp. 35–65; M. Keen, *Chivalry*, New Haven-London 1984, p. 64 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–170; F.-R. Erkens, *Militia und Ritterschaft. Reflexionen über die Entstehung des Rittertums*, “Historische Zeitschrift” 258, 1994, 3, p. 646 ff.

Without delving into the complex and still controversial origin of the rite of knighting, its connection with Carolingian ceremonies of handing over arms, the multiple functions, which in the eleventh and twelfth century were associated with the examined rite, or, finally, the formation of the knight stratum and ideology⁶, we wish to draw attention to several essential issues directly connected with the uncompleted ceremony of knighting Leszek the White.

During the eleventh and especially the twelfth century, the rite of knighting appeared to be predominantly a *sui generis* initiation rite, which enabled the young man to enter the circle of knights, despite the absence of unambiguously defined rules concerning the age at which a person should be knighted. Generally speaking, the initiation into knighthood denoted the end of a period of youthful dependence and liberation from control executed by guardians, and allowed the knighted person to undertake independent tasks also on the public-legal arena. Frequently, the ceremony of knighting was associated with the first public, adult decisions — a feud, the first war expedition, or

⁶Apart from the above mentioned works see: C. Erdmann, *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedankes*, Stuttgart 1935; J. Fleckenstein, *Zur Frage der Abgrenzung von Bauer und Ritter*, in: *idem*, *Ordnungen und formende Kräfte des Mittelalters*, Göttingen 1991, pp. 307–314; *idem*, *Die Entstehung des niederen Adels und das Rittertum*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 333–356; *idem*, *Zum Problem der Abschliessung des Ritterstandes*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 357–376, *idem*, *Rittertum und höfische Kultur. Entstehung–Bedeutung–Nachwirkung*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 421–436; *idem*, *Über den engeren und den weiteren Begriff von Ritter und Rittertum (miles und militia)*, in: *Person und Gemeinschaft im Mittelalter*, Sigmaringen 1988, pp. 377–392; G. Duby, *Les origines de la chevalerie*, in: *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, vol. 15 (*Ordinamenti militari in occidente nell'alto medioevo*, 2), Spoleto 1968, pp. 739–761, *idem*, *La diffusion du titre chevaleresque sur le versant méditerranéen de la chrétienté latine*, in: *La noblesse au Moyen Age*, Paris 1976, pp. 39–76; G. Althoff, *Nunc flant Christi milites, qui dudum extiterunt raptores. Zur Entstehung von Rittertum und Ritterethos*, "Saeculum" 32, 1981, pp. 317–333; K. Leyser, *Early Medieval Canon Law and the Beginnings of Knighthood*, in: *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter*, Sigmaringen 1984, pp. 549–566; K. F. Werner, *Du nouveau sur un vieux thème. Les origines de la "noblesse" et de la "chevalerie"*, "Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres", 1985, pp. 186–200; A. Barbero, *L'aristocrazia nella società francese del Medio Evo. Analisi delle fonti letterarie (secoli XI–XIII)*, Bologna 1987; *idem*, *Noblesse et chevalerie en France au Moyen Age. Une réflexion*, "Le Moyen Age" 97, 1991, 3–4, pp. 431–449; M. Stanesco, *Jeux d'errance du chevalier médiéval: aspects ludiques de la fonction guerrière dans la littérature du Moyen Age flamboyant*, Leiden 1988; D. Barthélemy, *Qu'est ce que la chevalerie en France aux Xe et XIe siècles?*, "Revue Historique" 118, 1993, 587, pp. 15–74.

marriage⁷. The public–legal character of knighting appears to be particularly distinct in the presentation of a sword to rulers or their sons. Apparently, both during the eleventh and the twelfth century, this ceremony to a considerable measure preserved its inaugurative nature, despite the inclusion of new, “knightly” contents, and continued to demonstrate the fact that a ruler had embarked upon the fulfilment of his regal tasks.

During the tenth century, the ceremony of the inauguration of rule was finally granted a liturgical character, at least in states which stemmed from the Carolingian Empire, and became included into the ritual tradition of the Church. The basic moments of the handing over of power to the new monarch included the rite of anointment and a presentation of the insignia of power, performed by the clergy. Assorted medieval coronation *ordnes* provided for the equipment of the new monarch with different insignia. Nonetheless, all coronation traditions envisaged that the insignia presented to the new ruler were to include, apart from a crown or a sceptre, also a sword, conceived as part of the rite of sacring and as testimony of the assumption of regal power. Presented to the king, the sword was to protect the Church, widows, and orphans, consolidate justice and battle against the enemies of the faith. The handing over a sword indicated the ruler’s responsibility for the retention of natural order in the realm entrusted by God, and emphasised not only his qualifications as a judge but also those of a knight. The sword worn by the ruler comprised a visible sign of his capability of being equal to his duties, and proved the possibility of an effective wielding of royal power⁸.

It seems, however, that despite the inclusion of the rite of knighting into the liturgical rite of royal sacring, there existed a palpable need for an even more distinct marking of the ability of the ruler to accept monarchic tasks, by means of a separate

⁷Cf. especially P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 418 ff.; J. Bumke, *Studien*, p. 109 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 154 ff.

⁸Cf. C. A. Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning. The Development of the Latin Ritual for the Anointing of Kings and the Coronation of an Emperor before the Eleventh Century*, Groningen–Djakarta 1957, p. 127 ff.; P. E. Schramm, *Kaiser, Könige und Päpste. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. 3, Stuttgart 1969, p. 44 ff., 76 ff.; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 32 ff.; J. Flori, *L’idéologie du glaive. Préhistoire de la chevalerie*, Genève 1983, p. 84 ff.; R. Elze, *Königskrönung und Ritterweihe. Der Burgundische Ordo für die Weihe und Krönung des Königs und der Königin*, in: *Institutionen Kultur und Gesellschaft*, Sigmaringen 1984, pp. 327–342.

ceremony of presenting him with armour, and especially a sword. In the case of monarchs who ascended the throne at a young age, the ceremony of re-knighting them at the time of their coming of age additionally confirmed the right to enjoy regal power, and was to enable them to commence independent rule. Such are the categories in which we should probably assess the ceremony of knighting Henry IV, King of Germany, performed in Worms in 1056⁹. The activity commenced at the time by the monarch leaves no doubt as to the significance ascribed to the Worms ceremony by the political plans of the young ruler.

Soon after the ceremony of girding with a sword, Henry set off on a tour of his kingdom. In the tradition of the assumption of power by German eleventh-century rulers, such a tour, undertaken after the coronation rites, comprised the last stage in the inauguration process, and permitted the newly crowned monarch to assume power legally¹⁰. Nonetheless, in 1054, the sacring of Henry V, crowned at the age of four, already during the lifetime of his father Henry III, was not completed by a post-coronation tour. There is no evidence that in 1056, after the death of Henry III, such a state tour was conducted by Henry IV. His right to the throne was to be confirmed only by a second enthronement on the stone throne in Aachen. Henry IV inaugurated his first state tour as late as 1065. The link between the ceremony of knighting Henry and the tour was by no means accidental. The initiation into knighthood, which testified to the attainment of majority by the young ruler, and which liberated him from onerous surveillance by his guardians, enabled Henry to finally commence activity that closed his inauguration, begun years ago, and ultimately confirmed his rule. The intention of the tour of 1065, which referred to traditional post-coronation monarchic tours, was to convince everyone that the king, already equipped with a sword, assumed full power over the realm entrusted to him eleven years earlier during the rite of sacring. The knighting ceremony at Worms could be perceived, therefore, as a *sui generis* re-inauguration of Henry, which opened up a new, independent stage in his

⁹*Lamperti monachi Hersfeldensis Opera*, publ. by O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS rer. Ger. in usum scholarum, Hannoverae 1894, p. 94; see: W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 109, P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 412; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 11, 21; J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 219.

¹⁰See: R. Schmidt, *Königsumritt und Huldigung in ottonisch-salischer Zeit*, "Vorträge und Forschungen" 6, 1961, pp. 97-233.

rule, and made it possible to appear before his subjects as a "true" ruler¹¹.

Akin contents were probably connected with the knighting of Philip I, King of France, whom at the end of the 1060s Baldwin VI, Count of Flanders, *regalis insigniuit militiae armis*¹². Philip, crowned in 1059, mounted the royal throne at the age of six, similarly to Henry IV, i.e. already during the lifetime of his father¹³. Presumably, in his case too, the ceremony of knighting, completed almost ten years after the coronation and proving the maturity of the young monarch, was to outfit him with measures permitting an independent assumption of royal power.

Additional light seems to be cast on the nature of the imagery associated with the ceremony of regal knighting, and the position granted to the rite of girding with a sword, among the basic instruments of early medieval power, by an account by William of Malmesbury, concerning the knighting of William I, the Duke of Normandy, by Henry I, the King of France. In a description of the first years of the reign of Duke William, enthroned in 1035 at the age of barely 7–8, William of Malmesbury writes extensively about the misfortunes experienced by a country ruled by an under-age monarch. The situation was changed by the knighting of the young duke who *militiae insignia a rege Francorum accipiens, provinciales in spem quietis erexit*¹⁴. In other words, the chronicler argues, order in the state can be maintained only by a ruler who has been knighted. The ceremony of presenting a sword to a ruler entering adulthood served the confirmation of his right to govern, and enabled him to realise his monarchic aspirations and effectively carry out the tasks facing him.

¹¹See: G. Schleibeleiter, *Der Regierungsantritt des römisch-deutschen Königs (1056–1138)*, "Mittellungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung" 81, 1973, p. 2 ff.

¹²*Recueil des actes de Philippe I^{er}, roi de France*, publ. by M. Prou, Paris 1908, p. 32; see: P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 415, p. 65; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 63; J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 221; J. Bumke, *Courtly*, p. 232; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 145, p. 75; D. Barthélemy, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹³*Ordines coronationis Francae. Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages*, publ. by R. A. Jackson, vol. 1, Philadelphia 1995, p. 217 ff.; see also A. W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France. Studies on Familial Order and State*, Cambridge–London 1981, p. 45 ff.

¹⁴*Wilhelmi Malmesbiriensis monachi De gestis regum Anglorum libri quinque*, publ. by W. Stubbs, "Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores", vol. 90, London 1889, 111, 230, p. 286; see: P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 396, p. 10; W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 109; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 66; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 145, p. 72.

The above cited examples of monarchic knighting demonstrate convincingly the importance held by the ceremonial presentation of a sword in the eleventh and twelfth century. The ceremony appeared to play the role of a *sul generis* inauguration rite, thanks to which, and regardless of the earlier completed sacring, or, as was probably the case with William, ducal enthronement¹⁵, the ruler was once again granted regal suzerainty.

Nevertheless, the special circumstances accompanying the monarchic knightings of Henry IV, Philip I and William the Conqueror incline towards caution in drawing far reaching conclusions. In all three cases, knighting was linked with the attainment of majority by the young rulers, and appears to have served predominantly the accentuation of the maturity. Full age, in turn, rendered possible the assumption of power, and freed from further dependence on guardians. Such an interpretation would deprive knighting of its constitutive character, and its performance would be conditioned only by a natural biological process and the need for a stronger ceremonial emphasis of a transition from one age group to another.

It seems, however, that the connection between the initiation into knighthood and the attainment of adulthood, so clearly outlined in sources, was much more complicated. Moreover, it should not conceal the actual meaning of the ceremony. One has the impression that it was not so much the rite of knighting which was a consequence of reaching full age, but that the majority of the ruler was the result of the completion of the rite. In the case of the monarchic knightings of interest to us, lesser significance was ascribed to majority in its public-legal sense. The essential factor was the, so to speak, symbolic majority.

This is the way in which we should probably understand the decision to precede the coronation ceremony of the ten year-old King of England, Henry III, by a knighting ceremony (1216)¹⁶. Similarly, in 1226, the inauguration of the rule of Louis IX of France was preceded by knighting the eleven year-old king, conducted in Soissons¹⁷. In 1249, controversies between lords were the only reason why the coronation of eight year-old Alex-

¹⁵See: H. Hoffmann, *Französische Fürstenweihen des Hochmittelalters*, "Deutsches Archiv" 18, 1962, I, p. 98.

¹⁶See: P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 396, par. 10.

¹⁷P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 396, par. 10, p. 418, par. 74; J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 222.

ander III of Scotland was not preceded by a knighting¹⁸. With all certainty, during the thirteenth century, the ceremony of knighting contained different contents than was the case in the eleventh or even the twelfth century. We are entitled to assume, however, that the concern, discernible in the sources, for preceding the coronation ceremony with knighting, was to a considerable degree justified by the old images of the role of monarchic knighting, which perceived this rite as a ritual introduction to the entire range of royal rights¹⁹. The ceremony of knighting proved the chivalric qualification of the ruler, and thus his ability to tackle one of the main tasks of the monarch — to maintain peace and order in the kingdom, entrusted to him in the inauguration rite, and to repel external threats. In this manner, knighting enabled the monarch, regardless of his age, to appear before his subjects as a true ruler, capable of caring for their security. Hence the completion of inauguration rites, royal coronation or ducal elevation, was insufficient for the legitimate assumption of power. It was necessary to demonstrate the rights to the throne additionally, in an act of a ceremonial presentation of a sword, which reflected the military, knightly aspect of regal power.

By no means do we wish to contrast monarchic charisma, granted to the king by the rite of sacring, with his knightly functions and those of a military commander²⁰. It is our intention to merely indicate the two-course nature of monarchic inaugurations, resulting from a need for a stronger ritual accentuation — by means of the ceremony of knighting — of the monarch's capability of fulfilling the military duties imposed upon him during the inauguration rite. In this sense, knighting also played the role of an inauguration rite, enabling the ruler, regardless of his age, to embark upon regal tasks. Consequently, in special situations, the act of knighting could also demonstrate monarchic aspirations, validate the rights of the candidate to the throne to assume power, and manifest his capability of "being" a ruler²¹.

Such tasks were probably formulated prior to the knighting of Henry, the young Count of Anjou, and later King Henry II,

¹⁸See: F. W. Skene, *The Coronation Stone*, "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland" 8, 1871, p. 71 ff.; A. A. M. Duncan, *Scotland. The Making of a Kingdom*, Edinburgh 1975, p. 554 ff.

¹⁹Cf. J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 222 ff.; M. Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 72 ff.

²⁰Cf. D. Barthélemy, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

²¹J. Bumke, *Studien*, p. 109.

performed by David I of Scotland. The ceremony took place in 1149, soon after the Henry's arrival in England, where he intended to win the royal crown²². Presumably, in accordance with the plans of Henry, who readied himself for a decisive confrontation with Stephen of Blois, the knighting was to convince everyone about the possession of knightly qualifications demanded from a ruler, and comprise the first stage in his monarchic inauguration, whose completion was to take on the form of regal sacring, already after the victory over Stephen²³. Similarly, the knighting John, the son of Henry and carried out by the latter (1185) appeared to be connected with projects for handing over rule over Ireland. As a knight, John could initiate the pursuit of his claims to Ireland, ultimately confirmed by a coronation performed with a crown sent specially for this purpose by the pope²⁴. The circumstances accompanying the knighting of Arthur, Duke of Brittany (1202), since we choose to remain within the Plantagenet circle, performed by Philip II Augustus of France, are convincing testimony of the special character of knighting, decisive for the possibility of realising monarchic rights. Together with the belt of a knight, Arthur received from Philip-Augustus the hand of his daughter Marie, a confirmation of rights to Brittany, and a grant of Poitou and Anjou, at the time ruled by his uncle, John Lackland, the King of England. Soon after the completion of the knighting ceremony, and outfitted with a sword presented to him by King Philip, Arthur set off against King John, for the purpose of fighting for his rights on a battlefield. On the one hand, the act of knighting appeared to corroborate Arthur's rights to a legacy due to him, and, on the other hand, to equip him with measures enabling effective undertakings²⁵.

²²*Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, publ. by L. Delisle, Rouen 1872. p. 251 ff.; see: P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 394, par. 4, s. 418; I. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

²³See: W. L. Warren, *Henry II*, London 1973, p. 180.

²⁴*Rudolfi de Diceto, Londonensis decani Ymagines Historiarum*, publ. by W. Stubbs, "Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores", vol. 62/63, London 1876, p. 38; see: P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, s. 419, par. 76; W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 110; P. E. Schramm, *Geschichte des englischen Königtums im Lichte der Krönung*, Weimar 1937, p. 54; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 79; W. L. Warren, *King John*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1978, p. 35 ff; ultimately, the coronation never took place.

²⁵*Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, publ. by H. F. Delaborde, Paris 1882, p. 152, 210; see: P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 418, par. 74; W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 110; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 85; J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 224; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, d. 165.

The account describing the ceremonies of knighting Boleslaus the Wrymouth, found in the *Chronicle* by Gallus, possesses a special significance for our reflections. It shows that at the beginning of the twelfth century, the ceremony of presenting the ruler with a sword was assigned special rank also in Poland, and that, to a considerable measure, it was associated with visions about the possibility of inaugurating the realisation of monarchic rights, created for the ruler. Let us, therefore, take a closer look at the work by Gallus.

The ceremony of knighting Boleslaus took place in Płock on the day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The year is not certain²⁶; Karol Maleczyński proposed the year 1101. The Płock ceremony could have been modelled on the presentation of a sword by Emperor Henry IV to his son Henry V, which was held in Leodium during Easter of the same year²⁷. This assumption appears to be quite reasonable. Ladislaus Herman maintained close, also family, contacts with the imperial court. The assorted endeavours pursued by Herman, which show traces of an emulation of imperial behaviour, indicate that the entourage of the Polish duke attached great importance to ceremonial acts demonstrating the splendour and majesty of the ruler²⁸. This complex of ventures could have also included knighting the ducal son, and it is quite possible that the ceremony performed with such impetus in Leodium might have exerted a direct influence upon the decision made by Ladislaus Herman. Nonetheless, it seems unnecessary to link the Płock ceremony of knighting Boleslaus the Wrymouth exclusively with the knighting of Henry V. It follows from Gallus, that a sword had been presented already earlier to Zbigniew, the older son of Ladislaus Herman²⁹. At this stage, however, we do not attempt to resolve the eventual inspiration of

²⁶See: T. Tyc, *Zbigniew i Bolesław (Zbigniew and Boleslaus)*, Poznań 1927, p. 13; R. Grodecki, *Zbigniew książę Polski (Zbigniew, prince of Poland)*, in: *Studia staropolskie ku czci Aleksandra Brücknera (Old Polish Studies in Honour of Aleksander Brückner)*, Kraków 1928, p. 77.

²⁷K. Maleczyński, *Bolesław III Krzywousty (Boleslaus II the Wrymouth)*, Wrocław 1975, p. 47; for the knighting of Henry V see: *Annalista Saxo*, publ. by G. Waitz, MGH SS, vol. 6, p. 734; *Annales Magdeburgenses*, publ. by G. H. Pertz, MGH SS, vol. 16, p. 180.

²⁸R. Michałowski, *Principes fundator. Studium z dziejów kultury politycznej w Polsce X–XIII wieku (Princes fundator. A Study from the History of Political Culture in Poland. Tenth–Thirteenth Century)*, Warszawa 1989, p. 160 ff.

²⁹*Galli Anonymi Cronica et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, publ. by C. Maleczyński, MPH s. n., vol. 2, II, 17, p. 85.

the Płock spectacle. Regardless whether the ceremonies of knighting both sons of Herman can be associated with the monarchic aspirations of that ruler, and the adaptation of German patterns at the Polish court, and if so, then to what extent, the significance which the *Chronicle* by Gallus attaches to the knighting of Boleslaus the Wrymouth is convincing proof that already at that time the rite of knighting Polish rulers possessed distinct and unambiguously comprehended contents. Let us, therefore, return to Gallus.

Seeing that Boleslaus *etate florebat, gestique militaribus prepollebat*, Ladislaus Herman decided to carry out a ceremonious presentation of a sword. Preparations for the Płock ceremony were disturbed, however, by news about the Pomeranian attack against Santok. Since none of the magnates decided to face the assailant, the army was led by Boleslaus, who won a victory and *sic redens armiger victor a patre gladio precinctus cum ingenti tripudio sollempnitatem celebravit*. During the Płock ceremony, Ladislaus Herman presented a knightly belt *ob amorem et honorem filii* also to many of the peers of Boleslaus³⁰.

At first glance, the initiation of Boleslaus into knighthood appeared to serve only the accentuation of the knightly merits of the young duke, without exerting direct influence upon his position in the state, the range of his power, or the possibilities of political and military activity. Already earlier, Ladislaus Herman made basic decisions concerning the division of the state and the delineation of separate provinces for his sons³¹. Upon numerous previous occasions, he also entrusted Boleslaus, not yet a knight, with army command³². In the Gallus narrative, the independence of the political and military undertakings of Boleslaus, a minor and without the status of a knight, did not give rise to any doubts. In this sense, even the initiation character of the rite of knighting appears to become obliterated. In the opinion of the chronicler, Boleslaus fulfilled his monarchic tasks, and especially the duty of guaranteeing his subjects security, long before his father girded him with a sword. Although not yet a knight, Boleslaus repelled Pomeranian invasions much more effectively than his older brother Zbigniew, who already carried a sword³³.

³⁰*Ibidem*, II, 18, p. 86.

³¹*Ibidem*, II, 8, pp. 74–75.

³²*Ibidem*, II, 7, p. 74; II, 10, p. 76.

³³*Ibidem*, II, 17, p. 85.

Nonetheless, a careful examination of the *Chronicle* convinces us that knighting Boleslaus was not a mere court ceremony, devoid of practical significance and held to celebrate the attainment of maturity by the young duke. It could have been connected with much more serious and concrete political contents.

Our attention is drawn in particular to the description of the expedition led by Boleslaus against the Polovtsy, which the hero of the *Chronicle* inaugurated soon after completing the Płock ceremonies. The magnificent victory won by Boleslaus, already wearing his knightly belt, is presented by Gallus as a foretaste of later accomplishments, realised by God through the mediation of the valiant ruler³⁴. The victory over the Polovtsy was not the first military success of Boleslaus. Upon many earlier occasions, prior to the knighting, he proved his superiority in confrontations with numerous enemies³⁵. The battle against the Polovtsy was, however, the first which was conducted by Boleslaw in his capacity as a knight. Hence, presumably, the significance attributed to it by Gallus. The reader has the impression that despite his earlier military conquests, Boleslaus could fully demonstrate his knightly qualifications, and thus prove his ability for shouldering the burdens of a ruler, only after being presented with a sword. It is not surprising that in a description of the first ventures pursued by Boleslaus after the death of Ladislaus Herman in 1102, after taking over part of the legacy due to him as well as the assumption of independent rule, Gallus once again stressed that his hero set off on an expedition against the Pomeranians, now as *novus miles*³⁶. The fact that while recounting the enthronement of Boleslaus Gallus recalled that the former had been knighted by his father, appears to accentuate the independence of the young duke, and to indicate a full range of monarchic supremacy, unaffected by the claims of his older brother.

The ceremony of knighting plays an essential role in the portrayal of the heroic deeds of Boleslaus the Wrymouth, proving the correctness of his claims to the whole state, divided by Ladislaus Herman. In a description of preparations for the Płock ceremony Gallus stressed that Ladislaus decided to present

³⁴*Bolezlao itaque milite noviter constituo, in Plaucis Deus revelavit, quanta per eum operari debeat in futuro, ibidem, II, 19, p. 86.*

³⁵*Ibidem, II, 13, p. 78; II, 14, p. 78; II, 15, p. 79.*

³⁶*Ibidem, II, 22, p. 89.*

Boleslaus with a sword because *in illo puero successiois fiduciam expectabat*³⁷. In this manner, the act of knighting took on the character of a ceremony which introduced Boleslaus to monarchic rights and allowed him to appear as the sole, unquestioned and legal successor of Ladislaus Herman. Additionally, this *sui generis* inaugurative sense of the Płock event is underlined by words which Gallus ascribed to one of its participants, who, imbued with a prophetic spirit, was to declare that thanks to the knighting of Boleslaus *plus Deus... regnum Polonie visitavit... totamque patriam per hunc... factum militem exaltavit*³⁸. Gallus seems to suggest that the presentation of a sword to Boleslaus was accompanied by the handing over of monarchic suzerainty to the young duke.

Indubitably, the Gallus narrative should be approached with a great dose of caution, since it was subjected to the prime purpose of praising the merits of Boleslaus and demonstrating his superiority over his older brother. Hence, Gallus indicated that the still not knighted Boleslaus not only equalled the knighted Zbigniew, but was even better at fulfilling the predominantly knightly duties of a ruler. At the same time, upon several occasions the chronicler did not hesitate to emphasise, perhaps in an exaggerated manner, the significance of the Płock ceremony, whenever it could serve the purpose of lauding Boleslaus. Regardless of its one-sided and tendentious nature, the *Gallus Chronicle* appears to be important evidence of the presence in the political reality of Poland at the beginning of the twelfth century, of imagery attaching special qualities to the ceremony of knighting the ruler.

It is from this perspective that, in our opinion, one should assess also the uncompleted knighting of Leszek the White (1198). Leszek was offered the Cracow throne in 1194 after the death of Casimir the Just. The report by Wincenty Kadłubek, dealing with those events, leaves no doubt that the elevation of the barely 7–8 year-old Leszek was accomplished with full respect for the ceremonial of ducal inauguration³⁹. Much speaks in favour of the assumption that during the twelfth century, the handing over of power to Piast dukes took place in the course of

³⁷*Ibidem*, II, 18, p. 86.

³⁸*Ibidem*, II, 20, p. 87.

³⁹*Maistri Vincentii Chronica*. IV. 21. d. 17 ff.

an extensive liturgical spectacle, whose chief contours were outlined by gestures and ritual behaviour borrowed from the rite of royal sacring. Fundamental moments in the Piast ceremonies of establishing new rulers were probably designated by a Church benediction and the presentation of the insignia of power, performed by the clergy. Signs of monarchic superior authority, presented to the new duke as proof of his enthronement, included, next to a banner and possibly a crown or a helmet, also a sword⁴⁰. As in royal sacring, during the ceremony of ducal inauguration the new ruler was outfitted with measures enabling him to rule effectively and proving his qualifications as a knight. During the spectacle of the inauguration of power in 1194, Leszek the White too was ceremoniously presented with a sword. Nonetheless, four years later, according to the *Chronicle* by Kadłubek, he made extremely intensive efforts to be knighted again.

Undoubtedly, the completion of the inauguration rites was accompanied by a presentation of full monarchic rights to Leszek. In practice, however, owing to his age, power was wielded by the guardians of the young duke. Kadłubek indicated primarily the role played by Duchess Helena, the mother of Leszek. Presumably, however, the decisive voice belonged to the Cracow lords, headed by Bishop Pełka and voivode Mikołaj⁴¹. It seems that Leszek experienced the tutelage of the magnates, restricting his independence, as an onerous restriction. At any rate, the decisive role in negotiations conducted between Leszek and Mieszko the Old in 1198 was played by the dependence of Leszek upon the lords of Cracow and their limitation of his ducal power. By proposing an agreement, Mieszko depicted the situation of the young duke subjected to control exercised by the magnates, and

⁴⁰See: Z. Dalewski, *Ceremonia inauguracji władcy w Polsce XI–XIII wieku (Ceremony of the Inauguration of the Ruler in Poland. Tenth–thirteenth Century)*, in: *Imagines potestatis. Rytuály, symbole i konteksty fabularne władzy zwierzchniej. Polska X–XV w. (z przykładem czeskim i ruskim) (Imagines Potestatis. Rituals, Symbols and Plot Contexts of Supreme Authority. Poland from the Tenth to the Fifteenth Century — with a Bohemian and Ruthenian Example)*, Warszawa 1994, pp. 9–30; idem, *Władza — przestrzeń — ceremoniał. Miejsce i uroczystość inauguracji władcy w Polsce średniowiecznej do końca XIV w. (Authority — Space — Ceremonial. The Place and Ceremony of the Inauguration of the Ruler in Medieval Poland to the End of the Fourteenth Century)*, Warszawa 1996, p. 111 ff.

⁴¹*Magistri Vincenti Chronica*, IV, 23, p. 183; cf. W. Sobociński, *Historia rządów opiekuńczych w Polsce (The History of Custodian Rule in Poland)*, "Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne" 2, 1949, p. 283; R. Grodecki, *Polska piastowska (Piast Poland)*, Warszawa 1969, p. 173 ff.

dependent on their favour, in extremely dark hues, enjoining: *Excute igitur non coronam, sed luteam testam, ridiculum capitibus gestamen, arte figulorum et compositum et impositum. Auream decet principes diadema, non fictile...*⁴². The consent expressed by Leszek in response to Mieszko's proposal appears to indicate that he did not feel secure on the Cracow throne, and wished, to free himself from the restraining guardianship of the magnates with the assistance of his uncle. As Kadłubek demonstrated indirectly, the power wielded by Leszek was restricted, since the liturgical ceremony of elevating him to the ducal throne, performed four years earlier, did not provide the young ruler with rights to a full assumption of supreme monarchic authority. He required an additional confirmation of the title to ducal power. Everything seems to indicate that this purpose was to be served by the ceremony of knighting, which, by proving the maturity of the young duke, would permit him to finally appear as a real and not merely a nominal ruler. It is not surprising, therefore, that having seized power in Cracow, Mieszko rapidly retracted the promise to initiate Leszek into knighthood. After all, the longest possible retention of the existing state of his nephew's dependence, which made it impossible for Leszek to compete effectively for his right to the throne of the principate, lay in the interest of Mieszko.

The hopes which Leszek the White attached to the ceremony of knighting, and the fears harboured by Mieszko the Old in connection with the completion of this rite, leave no doubts as regards the place held by knighting in visions of monarchic authority in Poland at the end of the twelfth century. Under the Piast dynasty, this rite played the part also of an inauguration, in which the claims of the ruler to monarchic supremacy, confirmed already by the ceremony of ducal inauguration, were additionally validated, enabling the knighted duke to actually "be" a ruler.

There arises the question why did Leszek the White connect chances for the realisation of his plans of gaining independence with Mieszko the Old. Let us, therefore, try to take a closer look at the arguments used by Leszek in his attempts at completing the discussed ceremony.

⁴²*Magistri Vincentii Chronica*, IV, 25, p. 188.

In the case of royal sons, the act of knighting was usually carried out by the father⁴³, and the royal scion accepted a knightly belt from other persons only in exceptional circumstances. The most usual reason was a conflict with the father. Thanks to the ceremony of knighting, which demonstrated his qualifications as a knight and his majority, the royal son, at odds with the ruler, could fight for his rights more effectively and present claims to participation in power already during the lifetime of his father. It is precisely in those categories that we may evaluate the decision made by the future King of France Louis VI, estranged from his father Philip I, to accept the knightly belt from Guido, the Count of Poitou (1098), or consider the knighting of Richard the Lion Heart, Duke of Anjou, rebellious towards his father Henry II of England, which was performed by Louis VII, the King of France, in 1174⁴⁴.

The situation became more complicated when the throne was mounted by a minor, not yet knighted. The ceremony in question contributed to the establishment of special relations between the main participants of the rite — the knighted and the person performing the ceremony. The bond linking both participants was permanent, and considerably exceeded the one-time act of the presentation of a sword. Its characteristic features included the unequal status of the partners and the specific dependence of the person being knighted upon the one who carried out the rite. The latter appeared as a *sul generis* guardian and teacher of the young knight, whom he instructed about the duties of a knight and led into adulthood. As a result, the knighted person was obligated to show respect, loyalty and obedience towards the person completing the ceremony⁴⁵.

Presumably, visions of the type of bonds between the knighted and the person performing the rite, were not solely theoretical constructions or exclusively literary fiction. Much speaks in favour of the presupposition that they concealed concrete obligations and unambiguously delineated political

⁴³P. Guilhiermoz, *op. cit.*, p. 414, par. 74; W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 117; J. Bumke, *Studien*, p. 102 ff.

⁴⁴P. Guilhiermoz, *op. cit.*, p. 414, par. 74; W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 108; J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 225.

⁴⁵P. Guilhiermoz, *op. cit.*, p. 414 ff.; J. Bumke, *Studien*, s. 109 ff.; M. Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 68 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 156 ff.; D. Barthélemy, *op. cit.*, p. 50 ff.

contents. Hence Norman sources tried to bypass the role played by Henry I of France in the knighting of William the Conqueror⁴⁶, while the Bayeux tapestry accentuated the scene of the ceremonious handing over of arms by William to Harold, the future King of England. In the first case, an attempt was made to prove the independence of the Norman dukes, and in the second — to emphasise the dependence of Harold, and thus prove the incorrectness of his claims to the throne and the legal nature of William's right to the English crown⁴⁷. The character of dependencies between the knighted and the person conducting the ceremony appeared particularly acutely during the previously mentioned royal elevation of Alexander III of Scotland in 1249. At the time of his enthronement Alexander, who was eight years old, had not been knighted. The question of presenting the young ruler with a sword already before the completion of the inauguration rites was raised in the course of preparations for the coronation. Ultimately, the knighting did not take place because the majority of the lords did not consent to the presentation of a sword by Alan Durward, the then justiciary of Scotland. Since it proved impossible to reach an agreement as regards the person who would perform the knighting of the king, it was finally decided to place Alexander on the throne and entrust him with regal supremacy despite the fact that he was not a knight, and despite the doubts produced by this move⁴⁸.

The controversy concerning the knighting of a ruler, who disturbed the course of the elevation of Alexander III, indicates clearly that this privilege was connected with concrete political contents. We are entitled to presuppose that the presentation of a sword to a ruler enabled the person carrying out this act to assume the role of a royal guardian, even if only to a limited degree, and, at the same time, obligated the monarch girded with the knightly belt to demonstrate his gratitude. This is probably the reason why, if we are to believe Lampert of Hersfeld, during the ceremony of knighting Henry IV in Worms (1065), the young

⁴⁶D. Barthélemy, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁴⁷E. Pietzner, *op. cit.*, p. 44 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 138; D. Barthélemy, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁴⁸See: W. F. Skene, *op. cit.*, p. 71 ff.; A. A. M. Duncan, *op. cit.*, p. 554 ff.

ruler decided to gird himself with the belt of a knight⁴⁹. In this way, he avoided all obligations undermining his independence, and could demonstrate even more vividly the assumption of independent rule in the state⁵⁰.

Nonetheless, the Kadłubek description of the negotiations between Mieszko the Old and Leszek the White, conducted in 1198, demonstrates clearly that the young duke attached enormous importance to the acceptance of a knightly belt precisely from Mieszko, despite the obligations which could be imposed upon him *vis à vis* his uncle. Presumably, the ceremony of knighting could have resulted in additional bonds between its participants, which Leszek, in contrast to Mieszko, was especially interested in accentuating. The description by Master Wincenty points to a certain dependency between the completion of the knighting of Leszek by Mieszko and the latter's designation of Leszek as his successor. In the interpretation proposed by Kadłubek, knighting the nephew would testify not only to his independence but was also to facilitate Leszek's rank as the legal heir of his uncle⁵¹.

It appears that during the eleventh and twelfth century the ceremony of knighting was given additional meaning. Despite its inclusion into the spectacle of knighting and its endowment with new contents, in special circumstances the act of the presentation of a sword could be still perceived in categories of activity that predominantly emphasised the rights of the knighted

⁴⁹*Lamperti monachi Hersfeldensis Opera*, p. 94. The Lampert account can give rise to certain doubts. It follows from a letter by Cardinal Maiard addressed to Henry IV that the knighting of the ruler was performed by Eberhard, the Archbishop of Treves, with the consent of Adalbert, the Archbishop of Bremen and guardian of the young monarch, see: *Registrum oder merkwürdige Urkunden für die deutsche Geschichte*, publ. by H. S u d e n d o r f, vol. 2, Jena 1851, no. 13, p. 16; cf. W. E r b e n, *op. cit.*, p. 109, 118; E. O r t h, *op. cit.*, p. 145, par. 73.

⁵⁰The conviction, that no one had the right to knight the ruler and that the latter should himself gird the sword was exceptionally vivid in the inauguration tradition of Castille and Portugal. In both countries one of the most important moments in the spectacle of the elevation of the ruler was marked by a ceremony which involved the new king picking up the sword lying on the altar. This act contained a ceremonial exteriorisation of his military supremacy, and his function as the supreme commander and first knight, in which no one could supplant him and thus no one could entrust the monarch with it. See: P. E. S c h r a m m, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 3, Stuttgart 1956, p. 826 ff.; H. H o f f m a n n, *op. cit.*, p. 105; T. F. R u i z, *Une royauté sans sacre: la monarchie castillane du bas Moyen Age*, "Annales ESC" 39, 1984, 3, p. 441 ff.

person to a future succession after the person conducting the knighting⁵².

In this context, our attention is drawn to a report by Foulque IV, the Count of Anjou, concerning the knighting performed in 1060 by his uncle, Count Geoffrey II the Hammer, the then ruler of Anjou. According to the interpretation suggested by Foulque, who seized the throne of Anjou by depriving his older brother, Geoffrey III the Bearded, the rightful successor of Geoffrey the Hammer, of power, the ceremony of knighting seems to have played an important role, proving the correctness of his right to rule the county and the legitimacy of the coup, additionally supported by a Church sanction and the imprisonment of the older brother⁵³.

Similar contents can be connected also with the knighting of Geoffrey IV Plantagenet, another ruler of Anjou (1127). The act itself was performed by Henry I of England, and the ceremony took place several days before the wedding of Geoffrey and Matilda, the daughter of King Henry. With all certainty, an important place in the political plans pursued by Henry was held by the knighting of his future son-in-law. Much seems to indicate that the king, who after the death of his only son William wished to ensure the English throne for Matilda, envisaged the ceremony of knighting her fiancé, Geoffrey, as an act that would place stronger emphasis on ties with the young count and the presentation of Geoffrey as a future heir⁵⁴.

The permanent nature of the imagery linking the acts of the ceremonial presentation of a sword with the handing over of succession is indicated also by accounts concerning the knighting of Henry VI and Frederick of Swabia, the sons of Frederick Barbarossa, at the great convention held in Mainz in 1184. The ceremony, performed by Barbarossa, was granted, primarily, the

⁵¹Magistri Vincentii Chronica, IV, 25, p. 187.

⁵²Cf. P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 414; J. Bumke, *Studien*, p. 109 ff.; J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 223 ff.

⁵³Foulque IV le Réchin, *Fragmentum Historiae Andegavensis*, in: *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise*, publ. by L. Halphen, R. Poupardin, Paris 1913, p. 236 ff.; see: O. Guillot, *Le comte d'Anjou et son entourage au XIe siècle*, vol. J, Paris 1972, p. 102 ff.

⁵⁴Jean de Marmoutier, *Historia Gaufredi ducts Normanorum et comitis Andegavorum*, in: *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou*, p. 177 ff.; see: J. Bumke, *Courtilly*, p. 234 ff.; M. Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 65 ff.; G. Duby, *Le chevalier, la femme et le prêtre. Le mariage dans la France féodale*, Paris 1981, p. 240 ff.

character of a magnificent court spectacle, and conceived as already part of a new knightly tradition. Nothing seems to indicate that the knighting of Henry VI or his brother could be associated with concrete political strivings. It is also impossible to say that it in any manner influenced their position in the state. In the first place, the Mainz ceremony demonstrated the chivalric splendour of the Emperor and his sons, and the accentuation of the new knightly identity of the political elites of the Empire. This is the way in which it is described in the majority of pertinent sources⁵⁵. Nonetheless, other accounts propose a slightly different version of the event — the knighting of Henry VI was linked directly with imperial plans to designate him as successor. In the words of the chronicler of Ratisbon, Frederick Barbarossa: *Hainricum filium suum gladio circumcingit, quem sibi in regno instituit successorem et regem fecit*⁵⁶. Notwithstanding the actual course of the Mainz ceremonies or the intentions of their authors, the act of handing over a sword to the royal son remained, at least for some spectators, a ceremony manifesting his rights to the throne, and proving the legitimacy of his future succession.

As we recall, in the earlier cited account by Gallus, similar functions were fulfilled by the knighting of Boleslaus the Wrymouth, performed by Ladislaus Herman, a ceremony which seemed to be linked directly with a plan for entrusting the ducal throne to the younger son. According to Kadlubek, also in the case of Leszek the White the knighting carried out by Mieszko the Old would presumably provide the young duke with the right to vie for succession after the death of his uncle. Hence the consent expressed by Leszek for resigning from Cracow in favour of Mieszko, in return for the knighting ceremony; hence too the subsequent unwillingness on the part of Mieszko to keep his earlier promises. It seems that Leszek envisaged agreement to his uncle's proposal as a measure that would ultimately strengthen his position in Cracow, and permit a fully legal assumption of the rank of the supreme duke. For the price of a temporary renouncement of Cracow in favour of Mieszko, Leszek expected to receive, by means of the knighting, a confirmation of the correctness of

⁵⁵See: J. Fleckenstein, *Friedrich Barbarossa und das Rittertum. Zur Bedeutung der großen Mainzer Hoflage von 1184 und 1188*, in: *Das Rittertum im Mittelalter*, Darmstadt 1976, pp. 392-418; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 128 ff.

⁵⁶*Annales Ratisponenses*, publ. by W. Wattenbach, MGH SS, vol. 17, p. 589; see: E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 13; J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 219.

his monarchic aspirations and his recognition as the rightful heir to the throne.

The legitimacy of the election of 1194, which placed Leszek on the Cracow throne, must have given rise to serious doubts. If we are to believe the Kadłubek account, Casimir the Just could have obtained papal and imperial confirmations of his hereditary rights to the rank of principal duke soon after the expulsion of Mieszko the Old from Cracow⁵⁷. Nevertheless, most members of the dynasty, and especially the senior, toppled in 1177, did not intend to come to terms with the fact that Casimir broke the resolutions of the statute of Boleslaus the Wrymouth. In this situation, Leszek was compelled to embark upon activity that would guarantee him stronger foundations for his claims. An excellent chance was offered by the agreement with Mieszko, made in 1198, which provided Leszek with an opportunity for appearing not only as the successor of Casimir the Just but also as the heretofore senior of the dynasty, allowing him to cherish hopes for reinforcing his position in Cracow and for the future expansion of his rule over the entire demesne of Mieszko the Old. According to Kadłubek, a ceremonial confirmation of the conditions of the agreement between Mieszko and Leszek was to be accomplished by the ceremony of knighting Leszek by his uncle. The rite of knighting was to present Leszek with the throne of the supreme duke and his recognition as the successor of Mieszko; thus, it was to lead to an actual assumption of suzerainty over the Piast monarchy.

The account in the *Chronicle* by Wincenty Kadłubek, describing the negotiations conducted by Mieszko the Old and Leszek the White in 1198, convinces the reader that in the political and ideological reality of Poland at the turn of the twelfth century the ceremony of knighting rulers to a considerable degree retained its basic, inaugurative meaning. The rite of knighting,

⁵⁷ *Magistri Vincentii Chronica*, IV, 9, p. 150; IV, 21, p. 177; see: J. Adamus, *O mniemanej ustawie łączycykiej z r. 1180 (On the Presumed Łęczyca Law of 1180)*, "Collectanea Theologica" 17, 1936, p. 183 ff.; R. Grodecki, *Polska*, p. 97 ff.; J. Bieniak, *Polska elita polityczna XII wieku (Polish Political Elite of the Twelfth Century)* (part 1. *Tło działalności (Activity Background)*, In: *Spółczesność Polski średniowiecznej (Polish Medieval Society)*, Warszawa 1982, p. 56 ff.; H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski. Polityczne i społeczne procesy kształtowania się narodu do początku wieku XIV (The Beginnings of Poland. Political and Social Processes of the Shaping of a Nation to the Beginning of the Fourteenth Century)*, vol. 6, part 1, Warszawa 1985, p. 159 ff.

which enabled the young ruler to commence independent governance, served predominantly the stability of his rule and the strengthening of his position on the royal throne. It seems that changes did not occur until the first decades of the thirteenth century. The thirteenth-century knightings of Polish dukes, depicted by sources from the period, were already part of a new current of chivalric customs and tradition, and lost their inaugurative, monarchic functions. It is probably in those categories that we should assess the ceremonies conducted in 1245 and 1252 in Gniezno and Poznań. During the course of the first ceremony, held in Gniezno cathedral, Przemysł I, the Duke of Great Poland, *ctnxit gladio militari* his brother, Boleslaus the Pious⁵⁸. Seven years later, this time in the cathedral of Poznań, the same Przemysł I *cingens insigniviv caractere militari* his brother-in-law, Konrad I, the Duke of Głogów⁵⁹.

The above cited ceremonies of ducal knightings seem not conceal any concrete political contents, although one cannot exclude the possibility that Przemysł planned to connect them with a close political subjugation of both dukes knighted by him⁶⁰. The two knightings performed by Przemysł, however, seem to possess the nature of a knightly promotion, and should be associated with the new patterns and norms of chivalric culture, which during the first half of the thirteenth century encountered considerable interest and a lively reception at the court of the

⁵⁸*Rocznik kapituly gnieźnieńskiej (Annal of the Gniezno Charter)*, publ. by B. Kürbis, MPH s. n., vol. 6 t, p. 8; cf. *Chronica Polontae Maioris*, publ. by B. Kürbis, MPH s. n., vol. 8, 78, p. 90.

⁵⁹*Rocznik kapituly poznańskiej (Annal of the Poznań Charter)*, publ. by B. Kürbis, MPH s. n., vol. 6, p. 30; cf. *Chronica Polontae Maioris*, 90, p. 98.

⁶⁰Cf. T. Jurek, *Konrad I glogowski. Studium z dziejów dzielnicowego Śląska (Konrad I of Głogów. A Study from the History of Provincial Silesia)*, "Roczniki Historyczne" 54, 1988, p. 115 ff. The political dimension of the dependency which at the end of the thirteenth century was to connect the knighted person and the one who performed the knighting seems to be indicated also by the obligation of Henry Probus to accept the belt of a knight exclusively from Přemysl Ottokar II, King of Bohemia, see: *Das urkundliche Formelbuch des königlichen Notars Henricus Italicus aus der Zeit der Könige Ottokar II. und Wenzel II. von Böhmen*, publ. by J. Voigt, Wien 1863, no. 50–51, cf. however W. Irgang, *Die Jugendjahre Herzog Heinrichs IV. von Schlesien. Quellenkritische Untersuchungen*, "Zeitschrift für Ostforschung" 35, 1986, 3, p. 340 ff. In 1289 Henryk Probus was also supposed to have resorted to the rite of knighting for the purpose of establishing stronger links with other Silesian dukes, probably Henryk of Głogów and Boleslaw of Opole, cf. T. Jurek, *Henryk Probus i Henryk glogowski. Stosunki wzajemne w latach 1273–1290 (Henryk Probus and Henryk of Głogów. Mutual Relations in the Years 1273–1290)*, "Sobótka" 42, 1987, p. 252.

dukes of Great Poland⁶¹. The multiple and increasingly profound reception of assorted forms and symptoms of knightly customs and culture at the courts of thirteenth-century Piast dukes — from tournaments to literature⁶² — had to affect also the comprehension and significance of the ceremony of knighting. Its link with the acceptance of independent authority by the young ruler grew obliterated. As in Western Europe, the ceremony became, in the first place, a courtly spectacle serving only the demonstration of the knightly aspect of the monarch, together with a presentation of his virtues and merits in accordance with the demands of chivalric cultural and moral standards.

Finally, reflecting on the types of functions fulfilled in eleventh- and twelfth-century Poland by the ceremony of knighting a ruler it is difficult not to pose a question concerning the ritual aspect of the knighting and the nature of the royal activities which comprised the promotion of the young monarch to the rank of a knight.

Unfortunately, the Kadłubek account of the uncompleted ceremony of knighting Leszek the White does not provide much information. In his description of the negotiations conducted by Leszek and Mieszko, Master Wincenty first recalled the proposal made by Mieszko to gird his nephew with *cingulum militiae* and then the request formulated by Leszek, who wished his uncle to distinguish him with *militiae primorditis*⁶³. The ambiguity of the expressions used by the chronicler makes it possible to say only that the chief moment of the planned ceremony was the act of the presentation of a sword or rather the girding of Leszek with the

⁶¹Cf. J. Więsiółowski, *Przemysł-Lancelot, czyli Strażnica Radości nad Wartą (Przemysł-Lancelot, or the Keep of Radość on the Warta)*, "Kronika Miasta Poznania" 1995, 2, p. 123-135.

⁶²See e.g. R. Sachs, *Narracje na średniowiecznych diademach turniejowych (Narratives on Mediaeval Tournament Diadems)*, "Sprawozdania Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk" 102, 1984, pp. 38-41; S. K. Kuczyński, *Turnieje rycerskie w średniowiecznej Polsce (Knight Tournaments in Mediaeval Poland)*, in: *Biedni i bogaci. Studia z dziejów społeczeństwa i kultury ofiarowane Bronisławowi Geremkowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin (The Poor and the Rich. Studies on Social and Cultural History Offered to Bronisław Geremek upon His Sixtieth Birthday)*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 295-306; J. Więsiółowski, *Tristan, Hamlet et consortes*, "Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Heraldycznego" 8, 1992, pp. 1-11; *Idem, Romans rycerski w kulturze społeczeństwa późnośredniowiecznej Polski (The Chivalric Romance in the Culture of Polish Late Medieval Society)*, in: *Literatura i kultura późnego średniowiecza w Polsce (Polish Literature and Culture during the Late Middle Ages)*, Warszawa 1993, pp. 141-151; Z. Plich, *Ikonoграфия pieczęci Piastów (The Iconography of Piast Seals)*, Kraków 1993, p. 89 ff.

knightly belt. Also the Gallus account of the knighting of Boleslaus the Wrymouth forces us to limit ourselves to similar conclusions. Gallus mentioned merely the fact that Boleslaus the Wrymouth received a sword from Ladislaus Herman⁶⁴. The accounts by both chroniclers are by no means exceptional in this respect. In the overwhelming majority of cases, authors describing ceremonies of knighting concentrated their attention solely on noting the fact that the young man was presented with a sword or girded with a belt. At times, they mentioned the initiation into knighthood, without delving into the details of the course of the ceremony⁶⁵. Meanwhile, it appears that at least in certain instances, the presentation of a sword was accompanied by the presentation of other elements of knightly outfitting: spurs, helmet, shield, spear or armour, and that the ceremony itself assumed the form of an expanded ceremonial, composed of assorted ritual activities containing multiple symbolic messages⁶⁶. We can only surmise to what degree they were present in the ceremonies of knighting Polish dukes during the eleventh and twelfth century.

The rites described in a pontifical written, presumably, during the second half of the eleventh century at the request of the Cracow bishopric⁶⁷, and stored in the Jagiellonian Library (MS 2057), include also two “knightly” benedictions — *Benedictio super vexillum* and *Benedictio armorum*. The first is a blessing of a banner, and the second mentions a sword, a spear, armour and a helmet⁶⁸. Both formulae from the Cracow pontifical are texts relatively rarely found in liturgical literature; nonetheless, they are part of a wider complex of various benedictions, included into liturgical books due to attempts made by the Church, aiming at the introduction of “knightly” ceremonies into its ritual tradi-

⁶⁴Galli *Anonymi Cronica*, 11, 18, p. 86.

⁶⁵See: P. Guilhaumez, *op. cit.*, p. 393 ff.; J. Bumke, *Courtly*, s. 231 ff.; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 14 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, s. 137 ff.

⁶⁶See: J. Bumke, *Courtly*, p. 234 ff.; M. Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 102 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 138 ff.

⁶⁷*Pontyfikal krakowski z XI wieku (Cracow Pontifical from the Eleventh Century)* (Jagiellonian Library Cod. MS 2057), publ. by Z. Obertyński, Lublin 1977; see: W. Abraham, *Pontyficalne biskupów krakowskich z XII wieku (The Pontifical of Cracow Bishops from the Twelfth Century)*, RPAU, Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny, ser. 11, 41 (66), 1927, p. 9 ff.; Z. Obertyński, *Wstęp (Introduction)*, in: *Pontyfikal krakowski XI wieku (Patterns and Analogies of Select Formulae in Eleventh-Century Cracow Liturgy)*, “Studia Źródłoznawcze” 14, 1969, p. 36 ff.

⁶⁸*Pontyfikal krakowski*, pp. 69–70.

tion⁶⁹. Much seems to speak in favour of the fact that, together with a successive *Benedictio principis*, both blessings were written down in the pontifical for the sake of their employment during the liturgical ceremony of handing over ducal authority to the new monarch, in order to compensate for members of the Piast dynasty the loss of the royal crown⁷⁰. There now arises the question whether, taking into consideration the originally "knightly" purpose of the mentioned texts and their general contents, the benedictions from the Cracow pontifical could not have been used also during the ceremony of knighting Piast dukes.

Despite the efforts made with various intensity by the Church for the purpose of subordinating chivalric customs to the rules of a liturgical spectacle, the ceremony of knighting continued to be a rite which, basically, remained outside Church tradition. The Church failed at situating knighting within the framework of liturgy⁷¹. Nonetheless, attempts made in this direction exerted a certain impact on the course of knightly ceremonies. True, it would be difficult to define the extent to which assorted forms of "knightly" benedictions occurring in numerous liturgical books were actually used in the ceremony of knighting, and to what degree they reflected a postulated reality and the efforts made by the Church to subordinate those rites to liturgical rules⁷². It seems, however, that at least in the case of the presentation of a sword to sons of rulers, such benedictions, which were composed, after all, of texts borrowed from formulae of royal coronations, could have been applied, if only to a limited extent⁷³. The ceremony of knighting was usually performed on a holiday, and the rite of the presentation of a sword was preceded by a ceremonious Holy Mass⁷⁴. We cannot exclude the possibility that during the

⁶⁹See: A. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, vol. 2, Freiburg im Breisgau 1909, p. 289 ff.; C. Erdmann, *op. cit.*, p. 74 ff., 326 ff.; J. Flori, *Chevalerie et liturgie. Remise des armes et vocabulaire "chevaleresque" dans les sources liturgiques du IXe au XIve siècle*, "Le Moyen Age" 84, 1978, pp. 247-273, 409, 442; *idem*, *A propos de l'adoubement des chevaliers au XIeme siècle: Le pretendu pontifical de Reims et l'ordo ad armandum de Cambrai*, "Frühmittelalterliche Studien" 19, 1985, pp. 330-349; R. Elze, *op. cit.*, p. 331 ff.

⁷⁰See: W. Abraham, *op. cit.*, p. 3 ff.; Z. Dalewski, *Ceremonia*, p. 11 ff.; *idem*, *Wladza*, p. 113 ff.

⁷¹See: J. Flori, *Les origines*, p. 238 ff.; M. Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 74 ff.; J. Bumke, *Courtly*, p. 239 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 152 ff.

⁷²Cf. C. Erdmann, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁷³J. Flori, *Chevalerie*, p. 268 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 143 ff.

service ushering the non-liturgical ceremony of receiving a sword, the future knight was blessed by the priest celebrating the Mass, and took upon himself the duty of protecting the weak and combating the enemies of the Church. The presence of knightly blessings in the Cracow pontifical, regardless of the probable references made to them during the ceremony of ducal inauguration, entitles us to assume that the ceremony of knighting the Piast dukes could have been supplemented also by liturgical activity, and that the rite of presenting a sword could have been accompanied by a presentation to the young duke of other components of knightly armour. Notwithstanding how strongly marked was the participation of the Church in ducal knighting, decisive importance was undoubtedly attached to the rite of handing over a sword, completed by the duke. The efforts made by Leszek the White, intent on accepting a sword from the hands of Mieszko the Old, show how difficult it was for anyone else to replace the duke in this role.

Attention should be drawn to yet another detail in the Gallus account of the knighting of Boleslaus the Wrymouth. The chronicler noted that during the Płock ceremonies the belt was received not only by the young duke, but also by many of his peers⁷⁵. The Gallus version comprises the oldest source-material evidence of group knightly promotion. Testimonies of group knightings accompanying the presentation of a sword to the son of a ruler appear in twelfth-century Western European sources only sporadically. More numerous information concerning mass-scale knighting, performed together with the ceremony of presenting the royal heir with a sword, originate from the thirteenth century⁷⁶. In Poland, such an early inclusion of group promotion into the ceremonial of knighting a young duke — and there is no reason to doubt the reliability of the Gallus account — seems to indicate the significance which the court of Ladislaus Herman attached to the Płock ceremonies. Certainly, the expansion of the presentation of a sword to Boleslaus the Wrymouth by means of a spectacle involving the group knighting of his peers must have

⁷⁴W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 123 ff.; J. Bumke, *Courtly*, p. 240; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 11 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 141. This was the course of the thirteenth-century knighting of Boleslaus the Pious and Konrad of Głogów.

⁷⁵*Gallii Anonymi Cronica*, II, 18, p. 86.

⁷⁶W. Erben, *op. cit.*, p. 134 ff.; J. Bumke, *Studien*, p. 115 ff.; *idem*, *Courtly*, p. 244 ff.; J. M. van Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 14 ff.

been a ducal initiative. Ladislaus could have been concerned with guaranteeing the knightly promotion of his younger son a more lavish setting, and enhancing the spectacle aspect of the Płock ceremony. It seems, however, that the ducal motifs could have been more complex. Apart from concern for a suitable ceremonial form of the spectacle of the knightly promotion of the young Boleslaus, the decision made by Ladislaus Herman about the group knighting of his son's numerous peers could have been determined also by essential political arguments. Such collective knighting could be perceived as an important instrument of the political impact exerted by the ducal court, with whose aid an attempt was made to connect young aristocrats with the person of the ruler, and to render relations between the duke and the young knights more personal and direct. The Płock ceremony of group knighting, in the course of which the sons of, presumably, foremost families were to receive belts from Ladislaus Herman, offered the duke, whose authority had been undermined by recent controversies with his sons, an opportunity to appear anew in complete monarchic splendour and the truly regal role of a military commander, who outfits and generously awards his warriors⁷⁷.

It must be kept in mind that the ceremony of group knighting was also associated with other contents. Such an event, when the son of the ruler and a group of his peers were knighted together, generated a *sul generis* relationship of knightly brotherhood. The young monarch and the men knighted together with him became linked by special bonds. It was within this group that he found his closest friends and companions of wartime and chivalric adventures, while the awareness of the specific nature of the relations between the monarch and his knighted peers could be maintained for many years⁷⁸. It is quite possible, therefore, that Ladislaus Herman intended the knighting of the peers of Boleslaus, which accompanied the knightly promotion

⁷⁷In this context attention is drawn to the account in the *Hipac Latopis* about the knighting of numerous boyar sons, performed by Boleslaus the Curly in Łuck (1149), which additionally indicates the significance which was attached to the ceremony of knighting in the *instrumentarium* of Piast ducal authority during the twelfth century, see: PSRL, vol. 2, leaf 54.

⁷⁸Cf. J. Bumke, *Studen*, p. 118; G. Duby, *Les "jeunes" dans la société aristocratique dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XIII^e siècle*, "Annales ESC" 19, 1964, p. 837 ff.; E. Orth, *op. cit.*, p. 162 ff.

of Boleslaus, to strengthen the bonds between the young duke and his peers, to ensure their local support, and, at the same time, to guarantee solid and permanent foundations for his rule.

The Kadłubek account concerning the unrealised knighting of Leszek the White does not inform us whether also in this case the ceremony of presenting the young duke with a sword was to be expanded by means of a group promotion of his peers. Thirteenth-century sources devoted to ceremonies of knighting Piast dukes do not offer any directives. Quite probably, depending on a given situation, ducal knighting was to follow different courses. It is highly doubtful whether a strictly defined and, moreover, observed ceremonial assumed form in the course of the twelfth century. We are entitled to presume, with a certain dose of probability, that during the knightly promotion of the young duke the participation of the Church was marked, to a smaller or greater degree, and that the essentially non-liturgical ceremony of knighting could be supplemented by the liturgical spectacle of blessing the new knight. The knighted duke could have been presented also with elements of the equipment of a knight other than a sword. It is difficult to judge to what measure the group knighting of the companions and peers of the young monarch became a permanent part of the presentation of a sword to the duke, as in the case of the promotion of Boleslaus the Wrymouth, conducted in Płock. Regardless of the doubts produced by the ceremonial form of ducal knighting, the character of associated functions appears to be sufficiently clear-cut. In twelfth-century Poland, the rite of presenting a sword to the young ruler comprised a ceremony which, first and foremost, granted the duke full regal rights and enabled him to really assume power. Notwithstanding the ceremony of ducal inauguration, the supplementation of the rite indicated his recognition as capable of wielding power independently, or, in other words, his acknowledgement as a ruler.

(Translated by Aleksandra Rodzińska-Chojnowska)