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THE POLISH RES PUBLICA OF NATIONAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES FROM THE PIASTS TO THE 20TH CENTURY

Początki Polski [*The Beginnings of Poland*]*,* a fundamental work by Henryk Łowmiański, is subtitled *Z dziejów Słowian w I tysiącleciu n.e.* [*On the History of Slavs in the 1st Millennium A.D.*]. Its sixth and final volume, divided into two parts, is also titled *Poczatki Polski* but subtitled *Polityczne i społeczne procesy kształtowania się narodu do początku wieku XIV* [*Political and Social Processes of Nation Formation till the Beginning of the 14th Century*][1]. The subtitle was changed because the last volume concerns the formation of the Piast state and emergence of the Polish nation. Originally, there were to be three volumes. The first volume starts as follows:

> The notion of the beginnings of Poland covers two issues: the genesis of the state and the genesis of the nation. The two issues are closely connected since a state is usually a product of a specific ethnic group and it is the state which, subsequently, has an impact on the transformation of its people into a higher organisational form, i.e. a nation.[2]

The final stage of those processes in Poland is relatively easily identifiable. It was at the turn of the 10th and 11th century when the name *Poland* was used for the first time to denote a country under the superior authority of the duke of Gniezno, and the country inhabitants, as attested in early historical sources.[3] It is more difficult to determine the *terminus a quo* of the nation formation and the emergence of Poland's statehood. Łowmiański, an outstanding historian, devotes the first three parts of his work to those issues, i.e. first five volumes, and in the sixth one, he finally discusses the notion of *Początki Polski,* i.e. the beginnings of Poland or its emergence, in the context of *Political and Social Processes of Nation Formation*. The sixth vol-

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[1] H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski,* Vol. I, Warszawa 1963 – Vol. VI, Parts 1 and 2, Warszawa 1985 (the last volume was published posthumously, the author died in 1984).

[2] H. Łowmiański (1963), *Początki Polski,* Vol. I, p. 7.

[3] Occasionally, the scarcity of historical sources gives raise to mythic theories about the origin of the Piasts. Recently, Przemysław Urbańczyk, an archaeologist from Cracow, in his book entitled *Mieszko Pierwszy Tajemniczy*, sought the origins of the first historical ruler in ...Great Moravia. This is not the place discuss his hypothesis. It is mentioned here for the record as it is part of the discussion about foreigners in Poland. See A. Krzemińska response, *Zamieszanie z Mieszkiem,* "Polityka" No. 27(2914), 3-9.07.2013, pp. 59-61 Her text was headed by an intriguing question on the cover of "Polityka" weekly: *Czy Mieszko I był Polakiem?* [Was Mieszko I a Pole?]

ume covers the period of over four centuries, i.e. from Siemovit's coming to power, described by Gallus Anonymous as the symbolic beginning of a new victorious dynasty, to the coronation of Władysław Łokietek [Władysław I, the Elbow-high][4].

Łowmiański identifies four stages in the Polish nation formation process: 1) the tribe of Polanians establishes the "Gniezno" state under the aegis of the Piast dynasty in the person of Mieszko I; 2) during the rule of Bolesław I Chrobry [the Brave], other ethnic groups assimilate into the dominant Polanian people, giving rise to the Polish nation which later overcomes the crisis after the death of Bolesław I; the nation cohesiveness is proved by moving the capital to Cracow in Lesser Poland and "the initiation of full national integration of ethnic group living in the River Odra and River Vistula regions"; 3) the testament of Bolesław III Krzywousty [the Wry-mouthed] of 1138[5] marks the beginning of the next stage, i.e. the times of feudal fragmentation characterised by a weakening of national bonds and, later, by a growing will to restore political unity and revive the Kingdom of Poland; 4) the success of the latter idea was initiated by Henry IV of Silesia in 1288 with his plan to create at least a particular kingdom of Cracow which two years later, before his death, was expanded by him by transferring the succession to Przemysł II of Greater Poland. That stage and at the same time the nation formation process were concluded with the coronation of Przemysł II in 1295 in Gniezno[6], which was a symbolic event, and – five years later – of Wacław II whose plan to incorporate Polish lands into the Kingdom of Bohemia did not succeed.

Starting from 1304, the idea of Poland's unification was effectively implemented by Władysław I who from a quarrelsome duke of Brzesko and Kuyavia (having such a reputation in the period from 1288 to 1300, for which he was exiled for a long time when he was not accepted in Greater Poland as the successor of Przemysł) turned into a true statesman and won support first in Lesser Poland[7] and later in the other Piast provinces. The first sixteen years following his return from exile were the time of gradual re-unification of Polish lands and strengthening of his power. In the final stage, that included his efforts aimed at winning the approval of Avignon (the papal capital at that time) for the renewal of the Kingdom which successfully led to Władysław's coronation. It was the first coronation of the King of Poland held in Cracow, i.e. in the Wawel cathedral.

The conclusion of Henryk Łowmiański's long research was as follows:

> In 1320, the main part of objectives was implemented but the objectives were far from being completed. The implementation of the unification programme took centuries and was never fully suc-

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[4] H. Łowmiański (1963), *Początki Polski,* Vol. I.

[5] See G. Labuda (1959), *Testament Bolesława Krzywoustego,* in: *Opuscula Casimiro Tymieniecki septuagenario dedicata,* Poznań, pp. 171-190.

[6] One must not forget about the role played by representatives of the society, including in particular the role of Archbishop of Gniezno Jakub Świnka in the course of the three decades from 1284 to 1314. He, without exaggeration, can be called the architect of the Polish kingdom reconstruction. See. M. Kosman (2000), *Między ołtarzem a tronem. Poczet prymasów Polski,* Poznań, p. 33ff.

[7] S. Gawęda (1966), *Możnowładztwo małopolskie w XIV i w pierwszej połowie XV wieku,* Kraków.

cessful despite significant accomplishments such as the re-adjoining Pomerania and incorporation of Mazovia and Podlasie [Podlachia]. However, in 1320, a new period in the history of the Polish nation began, marked with deep changes in national awareness which gradually surfaced from the earlier single-track process i.e. limited to a single traditional ethnic area. After 1320, national awareness gradually gained another dimension. The first sign of the new direction was the policy adopted by Władysław I, the Elbow-high, after his coronation: taking the Galicia–Volhynia throne by Bolesław Jerzy Trojdenowicz, a Mazovian Piast (1323/4), and then the alliance of Władysław and Giedymin sealed by the marriage of Władysław's son, Kazimierz [Casimir], with Giedymin's daughter, Aldona Anna (1325) which was close to a vague prefiguration of the Union of Krewo.

The above not yet major steps were preceded by the involvement of the Piasts in Ruś [Ruthenia] and by closer relations with Lithuania initiated by Bolesław II of Mazovia. However, their significance changed in the light of broader historical processes in the 14th century which led to a radical transformation of the political order and the map of Central and Eastern Europe. And Poland played an active role in the formation of the emerging international constellation, entering the path of initially successful and later dramatic events. The Polish nation gained a large arena for action and assimilated and transformed new cultural and ethnic elements. However, the hearth of its life and its essential ethnic strength were continuously within the spatial and civilisational frames from the Piast era.[8]

The early Polish nation was that of knights and later of nobles who had political awareness of Poland which was united under the rule of the last Piasts at the critical moment, i.e. while facing the growing threat from the Teutonic Knights in the first quarter of the 14th century. The two last Piasts, in particular Władysław I, were contemptuously called "lesser kings of Cracow" by their enemies, but under the rule of his son Kazimierz Wielki [Casimir the Great] Poland won its place on the political map of the continent.

In the pre-partition era, a specific place at the top of the social hierarchy belonged royal couples. Polish rulers, with minor exceptions, married foreign women, mainly from the ruling houses in German countries, Ruthenia, Hungary, France, or Italy. The wives were accompanied by female and male personnel who would often settle in the new homeland and became part of its culture while introducing their own elements.[9]

In the second half of the 13th century, hostility or, to say the least, reluctance of German monasteries towards Polish culture became increasingly evident. Eight Franciscan monasteries in Silesia broke the links with its Polish-Bohemian province and successfully applied for membership in the Saxon branch of the Franciscan order. That issue became a matter of concern during the synod of Gniezno convened in 1285 in Łęczyca by Archbishop Jakub Świnka. Prelates attending the synod agreed upon sanctions in case of similar practices in the future and sharply criticised those

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[8] H. Łowmiański (1985), *Początki Polski,* Vol. VI, Part 2, p. 928ff.

[9] Cf. O. Balzer (2005), *Genealogia Piastów,* introduction to the second edition by J. Tęgowski, Kraków; Z. Wdowiszewski (2005), *Genealogia Jagiellonów i Domu Wazów w Polsce,* Kraków; idem (1999), *Pierwsze pokolenia Giedyminowiczów,* Poznań-Wrocław. An influence of the king's wife on the example of Bona Sforza d'Aragona and her Italian retinue on Polish society in the sphere of politics, economy, and culture in the first half of the 16th century is most thoroughly described in the unfinished analytical synthesis by W. Pociecha (1949-1958), *Królowa Bona. Czasy i ludzie Odrodzenia,* Vol. I-IV, Poznań.

monasteries which refused to accept Poles as their novices. Should that happen, they authorised bishops to take away benefices. That was a sign of the episcopate concern with the aggressive attitude of Germans who limited the rights of native inhabitants of the Piast land. To safeguard those rights, the synod decided to protect the Polish language threatened at school and church in Silesia and ordered that parishes could employ only persons fluent in the national tongue and able to explain Latin texts in it. Another decision was to award benefices only to priests born on Polish lands and fluent in the native language. In addition, the synod passed a memorandum of bishops, which was sent to the Holy See on 17 January 1285. The document emphasised the unity of Polish territories and their protection of the Holy See, a manifestation of which was the joint collection of Peter's Pence in Poland. Furthermore, attention was drawn to threat of the German component as well as the threat posed by decisions of local dukes to single out villages and change their ethnic composition by populating them with German colonists.[10]

The growing hostility between the two nations manifested itself in the attitude of residents of Germanised towns to the Polish state and the reaction of the state power. In the course of Polish rule consolidation, in 1311 that is in times of the country unification under King Władysław I, Cracow, German burghers revolted. The response of the state was strong. As recorded in *Rocznik Krasińskich,* knights of Lesser Poland were supposed to kill everyone who was not able to correctly pronounce Polish words like *soczewica, młyn, miele, koło* which were difficult for Germans.

The last stanza of a song about those events titled *O pewnym wójcie krakowskim Albercie* [*De quodam advocato Cracoviensi Alberto or About a Cracow's mayor named Albert*]*,* whose author was probably of Bohemian descent, is an expression of concern about Slavic nations threatened by their western neighbour:

"I Czech zginął tymi dzieły,   [And so the Czech man perished,
Jego własność pochłonęły   All he ever cherished
    Chytre Niemca paszcze;   Devoured by German folks;
Wnet - i wszystko mu zagarnie,   Soon - they'll seize it all,
Co zostało, pójdzie marnie   And what is left, will be traded
    Na ciżmy i płaszcze"   For boots and cloaks]

The author is concerned about the future, describing Germans as humble when weak but insolent when feeling strong:

"Niemiec zawżdy, gdzie się wnęci,   [Germans always find a way,
    Droga mu otwarta;   No matter where they choose to stay;
Chciałby pierwszym zostać zgoła,   To be ahead of all men
A nie dając innym czoła,   Bowing to no one else,
    K'sobie wszystko zgarta.   Claiming it all for themselves.

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[10] I. Subera (1981), *Synody prowincjonalne arcybiskupów gnieźnieńskich. Wybór tekstów ze zbioru Jana Ważyka z r. 1761,* Warszawa, p. 52ff.

Ten obyczaj wszyscy biorą;	This is their way;
Najprzód kłania się z pokorą	At first humble they stay
I do łask się wkrada,	To win favour with rich lords,
I wnet siebie, córki, braci	Trading their brothers and daughters,
Z możnym gniazdem koligaci	For power and gold
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To już pewna zdrada.	But soon they will betray them all,
Bo gdy wzrośnie mu potęga,	'Cause when their power grows,
Dalej patrzy, dalej sięga,	They reach for more and more,
Bierze inną postać"[11].	And take another form].

Over forty years ago (25-27 November 1971), during a Warsaw conference on fighting foreign influence (xenophobia and open approach) in the Polish culture, Benedykt Zientara delivered a paper which contained a synthetic overview of "the others" in medieval Poland. It began with the following maxim from Hungary, a state neighbouring with Poland in the 12th century: "A kingdom of one language and one way of life is weak and fragile". The Hungarian author of a set of guidelines for a future ruler believed in a positive impact of foreigners on every state due to popularisation of various languages, customs, and cultural achievements. That maxim proved to be true in the case of the first Piasts who, according to historical sources, surrounded themselves with bishops and monks from different parts of Germany and Italy, starting from Bishop Jordan, as well as with a number of immigrants from Bohemia whom Zientara hesitantly identifies with strangers. Bolesław I, in turn, offered financial incentives to foreign knights to encourage them to come to Poland. Their names are mentioned in the chronicle of Thietmar, bishop of Merseburg. At some point, also foreigners from more distant countries arrived at the Polish court, including some from Spain in the 12th century.[12] Zientara argued that:

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[11] After J. Nowak-Dłużewski (1963), *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce. Średniowiecze*, Warszawa, p. 29ff. Cf. R. Gródecki (1935), *Albert (Albrecht)*, the vojt (mayor) of Cracow from 1290 to 1312, *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* (hereinafter referred to as: *PSB*), Vol. I, Kraków, p. 43ff. Albert was a son and successor (along with his brothers) the post of Henryk, the vojt of Cracow under the rule of Bolesław V of Sandomierz and Leszek Czarny [Leszek, the Black]. In 1285, he earned Leszek's gratitude defending the Wawel (royal seat in Cracow) during a rebellion of knights and the gratitude of Władysław I in 1306, when he ceased to support the fading Bohemian rule and surrendered Crocow to Władysław I. However, in 1311, Albert and his brothers initiated of a plot against Władysław I. Albert was the leader of the plot, seeking to surrender Lesser Poland to the king of Bohemia, John of Luxembourg. After the rebellion was suppressed, Władysław I limited the prerogatives of the local government of Cracow while Albert, kidnapped by Bolesław, duke of Opole who represented the ruler of Bohemia, spent five years in prison. After his release, he went to Prague, where he soon died (after 1317). Perhaps – as the author of his short biography argues – although Albert's family came from Bohemia, "that was a German family both in terms of language and spirit".

[12] B. Zientara, *Cudzoziemcy w Polsce X-XV wieku: ich rola w zwierciadle polskiej opinii średniowiecznej,* in: Z. Stefanowska (ed.) (1973), *Swojskość i cudzoziemszczyzna w dziejach kultury polskiej*, Warszawa, p. 9ff.

Due to collaboration of such people, the Latin civilisation penetrated Poland deeply and inspired works which today amaze us with their quality. Representatives of the ruling class adopted European manners and, sometimes, gained substantial education, also while studying at universities abroad.[13]

Professionally and especially intellectually competent foreigners were useful for royal courts as an antidote to excessive aspirations of local aristocracy which grew in strength but was not always properly prepared to carry out requested tasks. The advantage of foreigners was well expressed by Duke Bretislaus II of Přemyslid dynasty who entrusted the Prague diocese not to a local priest but Herman, a German, commenting on that in the following way: "Because he is a foreigner, he will be of more use to the Church: he will not be impoverished by his family, he will not have to take care of children, he will not be robbed by a group of relatives, regardless of what he may gain". That comment of the duke was recorded by Cosmas of Prague in his chronicle.[14]

What was appreciated by some people, others, who treated foreigners as competitors, accepted reluctantly for understandable reasons. In the 13th century, the higher clergy had a strong position and blocked the path of local priests to senior positions. That was the background, though not the only one, against which the phenomenon of xenophobia started to emerge as early as during the early stage of the fragmentation period. More widely, xenophobia spread as dukes favoured foreigners who colonised villages and towns and awarded them exclusive privileges which the native population also wanted. An example is the town charter which Bolesław V granted to Cracow in 1257 which prohibited the settlement of Polish people there.[15]

In the 13th and 14th century, the demographic and economic dynamics of Germany (the growth of population by one third, i.e. to 15 million) led to migrations of peasants and craftsmen from the overpopulated areas to the east, first to regions between the River Elbe and the River Oder, and later across the latter. Gerard Labuda wrote about three huge migration routes: the southern one (along the Danube, to Bohemia, Slovenia, and Transylvania), the eastern one (Lusatia, Brandenburg, Silesia, central and southern Poland, and Ruthenia), and the northern one (along the Baltic coast, Mecklenburg, Pomerania, Prussia, Latvia, and northern Ruthenia). The latter route was taken mainly by burgesses and members of Christian military orders while the two former ones were taken mainly by peasants, craftsmen, and knights. Labuda listed also 38 towns which were granted German town law charters in Greater Poland in the 13th century, and 55 towns granted the same in the 14th century. The very first German town law charters in Poland were granted to towns in Silesia.

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[13] *Ibidem,* p. 13.

[14] The quotation after B. Zientara (1973), *op. cit,* p. 14.

[15] It is presumed that the first town charter was granted to Cracow by Leszek Biały [Leszek, the White] in the early 13th century. The document which survived, however, was issued after Cracow was destroyed by Tatars. It is the town charter granted by Bolesław V in 1257 which was extremely favourable to burgesses of German descent. Cf. *Kodeks dyplomatyczny miasta Krakowa,* Vol. I, Kraków 1879, No. 1.

Those developments were possible because they met the interest of the Polish party seeking professionals who would settle in unpopulated areas.[16] That situation was well depicted by Henryk Sienkiewicz in his great novel about the beginnings of Poland under the Jagiellonian rule. One of its characters, Maćko of Bogdaniec, an experienced knight, together with his nephew Zbyszko, returns from a victorious war with the Teutonic Order in Lithuania. He must ensure that their family village, devastated during the home war and pawned before they went to war, is repopulated. On every occasion Maćko inquires about the possibility of getting new peasants, primarily captives. New inhabitants include Turks and squire Hlava, known also as Głowacz, from neighbouring Bohemia. Hlava is a very likeable character who, after his naturalisation, gets promoted to a minor knight.[17] For understandable reasons, Sienkiewicz does not underline the German colonisation when writing about struggles with the German element. He introduces representatives of that nation who settled by the River Vistula only incidentally. An example is the first scene in a Tyniec inn called "Pod Lutym Turem" where: "The innkeeper, a German, wearing a fawn cowl with dags, was pouring them beer from a bucket into earthen mugs and listening with great interest to their war adventures"[18].

Only at the beginning, the colonisation under the German law meant populating villages and towns with German people. Shortly, native people settled there as well and usually the only German was the *sołtys* (the village leader) or *wójt* (town hereditary alderman/mayor). That was typical of villages and small towns. In larger towns, in turn, German people were merchants, craftsmen, and clerks.

What was the impact of the demographic colonisation on ethnic relations?

People of German descent migrated in large numbers mainly to Lower Silesia, Lubusz Land, Western Pomerania, the New March, and Chełmno Land, and farther on to Prussia and Livonia. Some of them settled also in Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, Mazovia, Ruthenia, and – after the political situation of Teutonic Knights changed (in 1310) – also in Vistula Pomerania. The German patriciate became the dominant group in largest towns, including Cracow and Poznań. It is therefore no surprise that they opposed the attempts of Władysław I to unite the country: apart from rebellious Albert from Cracow, in Poznań, the main town in Greater Poland, mayor Przemko led a rebellion in the early 14th century. Jan Długosz, when writing about 1310, noted in his chronicle that:

> On the ninth of December [1309 – M.K.], Henryk, the duke of Greater Poland and Głogów, dies in Głogów and is buried in the monastery in Lubiąż. He was survived by four sons between whom his land was divided: Henry got Żagań, Konrad – Olesko, Jan – Ścinawa and Góra, and Przemysław – Głogów and its appurtenances. No part of Greater Poland was assigned to any of them. In fact, after the death of duke Henry, both prelates and lords of Greater Poland deserted his sons whom, and they saw it, Germans strongly encouraged and urged with their advice and directions to completely

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[16] G. Labuda (1971), *Polska granica zachodnia. Tysiąc lat dziejów politycznych,* Poznań, p. 61ff.

[17] Cf. H. Sienkiewicz (1988), *Krzyżacy,* Warszawa, *passim*.

[18] *Ibidem*, Vol. I, p. 5.

exterminate all Poles. In result, the prelates and lords at their congress, held in Gniezno, elected duke Władysław the Elbow-high to be their lord and king, depriving Henryk's sons of any power and authority in order **to put stop to the detrimental fragmentation** caused by their detaching their lands from the other lands of the Kingdom of Poland, and, subsequently, **to ease unification of the entire Polish Kingdom**.

Przemek [Przemko], a Poznań burgher, ignoring this decision and provisions agreed by the prelates and lords of Greater Poland, subjugated Poznań to motherland enemies – Głogów dukes. He fortified the Poznań cathedral and let in a garrison of enemies who ravished the homes of Poznań prelates and canons. All their dwellings were burned. The archdeacon of Poznań, Mikołaj known as Szamotuła, was killed and much other damage and devastation were done. When Polish soldiers chased the garrison away and peace was restored, it was agreed and decided that to penalise the crime committed by Poznań burgher Przemek, no son of any Poznań burgher would ever be allowed to take any senior office or cathedral prebend in the Kingdom of Poland".[19]

Most probably, Przemko (as that version of his name went down in history) was a son of Ludwik, a councillor of Poznań (1288-1302) and a great-grandson of mayor Tomasz who was mentioned in the town charter. From 1307 to 1310, he held the office of Poznań mayor, which was hereditary. During the conflict between Władysław I and dukes of Głogów, Przemko remained faithful to the dukes against majority of native inhabitants of Greater Poland who at that time were faithful to Władysław I. It is possible that he opposed Władysław I till November 1314 when the rebellion was finally suppressed by local knights. His later fate is unknown. He might have been killed during the rebellion or he escaped to Bohemia. The victorious ruler abolished the hereditary office of mayor in Poznań and confiscated related property.[20]

The involvement of the patriciate of largest towns in politics was linked to the patriciate growing economic importance. The latter led to intensification of antagonisms between affluent burghers having their allies in the Cistercian and Franciscan monasteries which were the mainstay of Germans, and local knights in native Polish lands. In Silesia, the German component was supported also by migrants from Lusatia and Brandenburg.[21]

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[19] *Roczniki czyli Kroniki sławnego Królestwa Polskiego dzieło czcigodnego Jana Długosza kanonika krakowskiego gorliwego badacza dziejów swego narodu zestawione z największą starannością i dbałością o prawdę historyczną*, Vol. No. 9, J. Garbacik (ed.) (1975), Warszawa, p. 78ff (my underlining – M.K.).

[20] J. Pakulski, *Przemko (XIV w.) wójt poznański,* PSB XXVIII, p. 723ff.; idem (1979), *Siły polityczno-społeczne w Wielkopolsce w pierwszej połowie XIV wieku,* Toruń,. In the first 100 years since Poznań got its town charter (1253), newcomers to Poznań (then on the Warta left bank) were originally mainly from the middle Oder region (Gubin, Gubinek, Kostrzyn, Krosno, Głogów, Ścinawa, Środa, Jawor). Some descendants of oldest immigrants involved in the rebellion led by Przemko, probably left the town after the revolt was suppressed by supporters of Władysław I. Cf. J. Topolski (ed.) (1988), *Dzieje Poznania*, Vol. I (to 1793), Part 1, Warszawa-Poznań, p. 247.

[21] In the Middle Ages, in Western Pomerania, Germans' inflow was mainly promoted by dukes and bishops of Kamień, while a similar role in the Terra Transoderana was played by the Brandenburg margraves, and in the Vistula Pomerania, Chełmno Land, Prussia and Livonia by the Teutonic Order. Cf. G. Labuda (1971), *Polska granica zachodnia...,* p. 63.

In the period of feudal fragmentation, national integration at the level of knights was an issue petrified enough to see that a too numerous influx of Germans was a threat. In contrast, the influx of small groups (Flemings, Walloons) who arrived in Silesia in the 12th century and quickly assimilated with the Polish community or with German immigrants was not a subject of concern. The same applied to individual migrants (clergymen, knights) from Italy, France, Bohemia, Hungary, and Ruthenia who often arrived in retinues of wives of Polish dukes or were expelled from their countries for political reasons. However, Germans who settled in compact groups, maintained their distinctness "and thanks to assuming a decisive role in trade and crafts and thanks to their considerable influences in courts and the Church, became a factor shaping the future of the Polish nation and state"[22].

In villages and small towns, it was the coexistence of immigrants with the locals which facilitated assimilation. Newcomers valued the new living conditions which were better than in their faraway homelands and the privileges which they were grated shortly. That was the bottom-up shaping of the situation. Among the upper class, however, anti-German xenophobia was increasingly evident. Germans, aware of their power, would get involved in fights between the Piast dukes and thus earned that negative attitude. The determinant of ethnicity was now the language which distinguished **us** from the **others**.

Teutonic Knights' aggression against the lands of the Kingdom of Poland, which was undergoing the unification process, contributed to the strengthening of national awareness in the time of last Piast monarchs. The response of the monarch, Władysław I, included both defensive warfare and diplomatic efforts and lawsuits against the invaders filed in courts (*judicium ecclesiasticum*), first in Inowrocław in 1320-1321, then in Warsaw in 1339. The lawsuits were also filed later in times of King Władysław Jagiełło, i.e. once the Polish-Lithuanian Union was created. Their detailed documentation *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum* first published in the 1850s has been an invaluable source of data for research on ethnic relations in Greater Poland and Pomerania.[23] Helena Chłopocka, an expert researcher, offered the following conclusion in one of her papers:

> The past was discussed all the time and everywhere. The never-ending political tension within provinces during the feudal fragmentation period, the atmosphere of the struggle to unite the fragmented heritage of the Piasts, and the constant internal threat, all contributed to the growth of national awareness. The latter contributed to deepening the interest in the past [...] The idea of great *Regnum Poloniae* gradually spread throughout the society to become the expression of *communis opinio.* Its actual reality was defended by witnesses from various provinces who testified at Polish-Teutonic trials in the 14th century and by their descendants in the 15th century.[24]

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[22] B. Zientara (1973), *op. cit.,* p. 18.

[23] H. Chłopocka (1959), *Kilka uwag o tradycji historycznej,* in: *Opuscula Casimiro Tymieniecki...,* p. 20ff.

[24] *Ibidem,* p. 24.

In the course of that process, Polish national awareness kept growing stronger and met with various reactions of the population of foreign descent: 1) indifference, 2) identification with the adopted homeland, or 3) hostility. The latter attitude was typical of those Germans who took a favourable view towards the Teutonic Order during the wars waged under the rule of Władysław Jagiełło and Kazimierz IV Jagiellończyk.

The renewed monarchy proved to be a successful project in the last years of Władysław I. After the death of Casimir III, the Great, and the turmoil accompanying the unfortunate personal union with Hungary, the collective political leadership of Lesser Poland lords took the historic decision, approved by Greater Poland lords, to form a union with formally pagan Lithuania. Those relations, strengthened with the Union of Lublin in 1569, were to last until the sovereign *Res Publica Polona* was eliminated by neighbouring partitioning powers in 1795. In the times of Polish-Lithuanian Union and Commonwealth, Lithuanians defended their distinctness and made sure that Poles did not hold any official positions in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania or acquire lands. Poles, in contrast, did not impose such limitations when it came to marriage. This is a separate issue, however, and we shall only note that in the period from the 15th to the 18th century there was considerable "fraternisation" between the nobility of the two nations.[25] (That brotherhood kept deepened after the partitions of Poland until conflicts surfaced after the modern Lithuanian nation emerged in the second half of the 19th century.[26]) Let us only quote Henryk Łowmiański's view on the genesis of the Union of Krewo (1385). [27] His interpretation was based on his deep understanding of the realities of that time and may be surprising to current readers:

> If in the genesis of the Union defence motives dominated among Lithuanians, that does not exclude that the boyars were not interested in expansion. Actually, the support of Poland was to help them, *inter alia*, to continue the expansion to the east. What is more, **it was a Lithuanian who was to sit on the Polish throne, which was likely to inspire hopes that – with their king – Lithuanians would be promoted to influential positions in Poland. That is what boyars could expect on the basis of their own experience.** Indeed, the Lithuanians who accompanied their duke when he settled in the Ruthenian [Kreva] castle were later part of the group which

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[25] The formation process of a modern Lithuanian nation, was based mainly on the peasantry and there was a conflict between an ethnic Lithuanian and a historical Lithuanian who integrated with Polish people by sharing their culture. The latter was part of nobles' integration in both parts of the Res Publica before the partitions. The process did not stop when, following the 3rd partition, the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian state were cordoned off by the partitioners.

[26] Cf. P. Łossowski (1975), *Litewski ruch narodowy w polskiej myśli politycznej (1883-1914),* in: *Polska myśl polityczna XIX i XX wieku,* vol. I: *Polska jej sąsiedzi,* Wrocław, pp. 119-157. See also idem (1966), *Stosunki polsko-litewskie w latach 1918-1920,* Warszawa; idem (1982), *Litwa a sprawy polskie 1939-1940,* Warszawa; idem (1985), *Po tej i tamtej stronie Niemna. Stosunki polsko-litewskie 1883-1939,* Warszawa.

[27] More on the circumstances of the Union of Krewo in: M. Kosman (1992), *Orzeł i Pogoń. Z dziejów polsko-litewskich XIV-XX w.,* Warszawa, p. 94ff.

ruled that territory. That was common practice during feudal fragmentation that when a duke settled in a newly conquered province, his knights did too. In Poland [...], **Lithuanians were not prepared for that but they might have not realised it at the time when the union was created**.[28]

1385 to 1569 was the time of the multinational Jagiellonian monarchy.[29] When the last ruler from that dynasty, Sigismund II Augustus, died, the monarchy was transformed into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Actually, it was to be transformed to a monarchy consisting of not two but three parts. That turned out to be impossible due to the delayed and unfulfilled idea of the Treaty of Hadiach (1658) to create a Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian Commonwealth, i.e. Commonwealth of Three Nations.[30] In the 19th century, in times of partitioned Poland, the Polish nation, as it had been in the Jagiellonian era, was divided into Poles, Lithuanians, and Ruthenians.[31] That was the situation until modern Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Lithuanian nations emerged on the map of Europe. The Polish nation was the only one, the formation of which was peaceful. It was based on the tradition of the state of the nobility with a number of features of a "political nation" from the pre-partition period.[32]

Marcin Kromer, who started his public carrier working at the Chancery of king Sigismund II Augustus and was a bishop of Warmia and a great historian of the Golden Age, in his work *Polonia sive de situ, populis, moribus, magistratibus, et republica regni Polonici libri duo* published in 1575, wrote:

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[28] H. Łowmiański (1999), *Polityka Jagiellonów,* Poznań, p. 38 (my underlining - M.K.). According to the publisher, the manuscript of this book dates to 1942-1948.

[29] Poles had the skills and played a leading role in political, economic, and cultural transformations and in the introduction of Catholicism to the hereditary Jagiellonian state. Some remained there for good, others returned to their homelands as old men. See M. Kosman (1981), *Polacy w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim. Z badań nad mobilnością społeczeństwa w dobie unii jagiellońskiej 1386-1569,* in: *Społeczeństwo Polski średniowiecznej. Zbiór studiów,* Vol. 1, Warszawa, 1981, pp. 347-378. In the time of the Res Publica of the Nobility, there were massive ethnic migrations which started after the Battle of Grunwald (the First Battle of Tannenberg) in 1410 to Teutonic Prussia (and later Ducal Prussia) from Mazovia and from the Great Duchy to territories called later Lithuania Minor. Cf. M. Kosman, *Udział ludności litewskiej w rozwoju kraju* and *Stosunki wyznaniowe w Prusach Książęcych,* in: G. Labuda (ed.) (1984), *Historia Pomorza,* Part 2, Poznań, pp. 449-368 and 521-537.

[30] The 350th anniversary of the Polish-Cossack Treaty of Hadiach was commemorated with several publications including Piotr Borek (ed.) (2009), *W kręgu Hadziacza A. D. 1658. Od historii do literatury,* Kraków.

[31] Cf. S. Kieniewicz's (1980) comments in his *Historia Polski 1795-1918,* 5th edition, Warszawa, passim, e.g. p. 277ff.

[32] More in: Zofia Stefanowska (ed.) (1976), *Tradycje szlacheckie w kulturze polskiej.* Materials from the seminar organised on 23-24 November 1973 in Warsaw by the Psychosociology of Literature Group at The Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa.

[...] the Polish language is clearly different from all other language, of course apart from the fact that it adopted many names of tools, activities, and other matters related to craftsmanship and public life if I am not mistaken, from our German neighbours long settled [in Poland – M.K.].[33]

And today, not only there are many German merchants and craftsmen living in our towns but there are also towns and villages the entire population of which speaks the German language, both in Podgórze and neighbouring Ruthenia and Spiš, and in the borderlands of Greater Poland whereto, just like to Silesia and Prussia, German settlers were once brought and where, later, many common German people arrived on their own initiative in search for jobs. What is more, some Polish knighted families are descendants of German settlers as evidenced by their emblems, i.e. coats of arms and their names. But now, after having long made their home here and in result of marriages, both **a huge majority of them** as well as of burghers and peasants **turned into Poles.** Besides, Poles eagerly learn German due to its wide usage and their close contacts and relations with the Germans.

However, Poles learn Latin even more eagerly [...] In Ruthenia, and in particular in its southern parts, the Polish language happens to be used more often than the local one because since the native people accepted the supremacy of Poland[34], Poles have eagerly settled there to profit from fertile soil and to fight with Tatars.

In Ruthenia and Podolia there are also Armenians active in trade; whereas Jews in Ruthenia are many and their concentration in some towns and villages in other parts of Poland is even higher, except for Prussia. Both nations use their own languages but at the same time they speak Polish or Ruthenian; and Jews speak the German language everywhere."[35]

The above quotation is a bird's eye view of ethnic relations in the *Corona Regni Poloniae* called the Crown. A characteristic of those relations from a perspective of a foreigner was offered in *Reports*[36] by Nuncio Claudio Rangoni who spent several years in Poland at the turn of the 16th and 17th century.

Wacław Potocki, the author of an erudite study on the origin of the proverb *jak świat światem nie będzie Niemiec Polakowi bratem* [*since time immemorial, a German has never been a brother to a Pole*], which was popular in the mid 17th century, quotes also another saying from that time:

"Nie będzie jako świat światem Rusin Polakowi bratem.
Jak z zimy lata, tak z Rusina nie będzie brata".
[Since time immemorial, a Ruthenian has never been a brother to a Pole.
Like winter will not be summer, a Ruthenian will not be a Pole's brother][37].

Wacław Potocki frequently criticised Germans and expressed that criticism in a number of his poems for example in *Moralia:*

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[33] It is a regular cultural phenomenon. It suffices to mention numerous borrowings from the Czech language to Polish during the Christianisation process in times of first Piast monarchs and, especially, later borrowings from Polish in the Lithuanian language.

[34] Establishment of Poland's supremacy over Red Ruthenia started with the expedition of Casimir III, the Great, in 1340.

[35] M. Kromer (1984), *Polska czyli o położeniu, ludności, obyczajach i sprawach publicznych Królestwa Polskiego księgi dwie,* Olsztyn, pp. 54-56 (my underlining – M.K.)

[36] C. Rangoni (2013), *Relacja o Królestwie Polskim z 1604 roku.* [Polish translation], Opole.

[37] After G. Labuda (1996), *Geneza przysłowia: „jak świat światem nie będzie Niemiec Polakowi bratem*, w: idem, *Polsko-niemieckie rozmowy o przeszłości. Zbiór artykułów*, Poznań, p. 99 (first edition: 1966).

"Nigdy w szczerej **nie** żyli Polak
z Niemcem zgodzie
Polaka pycha, Niemca wolność bodzie,
Stąd przypowieści miejsce,
że póki świat światem,
Nie będzie nigdy Niemiec Polakowi bratem"[38].

[A Pole and a German have **never** lived
in harmony,
A Pole pricked by the pride and a German
by the freedom of the other,
Hence the saying: since time immemorial,
A German has never been a Pole's brother.]

Sayings like that should not be understood too literally, especially since in a concrete situation, "a German" could be easily replaced with another neighbour be it a Ruthenian or a Czech. However, though there were conflicts, there was also neighbourly cooperation. Labuda, the author of a great synthesis of the history of the Polish western border, wrote that the Polish-German border was the most "stable" border in Europe from the 16th to 18th century, even if in converted commas.[39] We know, however, how that ended for the Res Publica under the rule of Stanisław-August Poniatowski. In times of the Res Publica of the Nobles, the so-called second German colonisation took place. There were also migrations of Netherlandish peasants who left their homeland because of religious persecutions to settle in Vistula Pomerania as well as in Kuyavia and Greater Poland. Poland, after all (I mean the degeneration of the state of the nobility as a system and gross simplification of counter-reformation), was an oasis of freedoms while the western part of the European continent headed towards the Enlightenment. People from Mazuria, in turn, colonised southern parts of the Duchy of Prussia and Polish districts were created there. Labuda, wrote:

> While Europe's quietest frontier of the modern times was calm and restful for several centuries, everything around it kept changing: economy, social structure, military potential, and political systems. In result of those changes, the western border of the Republic started to move as well and so fast that in 25 years time, it disappeared. [40]

In the partition period, i.e. between the loss of independence and World War I, demographic relations changed considerably which was due to the political situation and economic and social transformations. In around 1880, Poles constituted approx. 45.9% of Galicia's population, followed by Ukrainians (42%) and Jews (11%) of whom some assimilated with Polish people. Ukrainians had the highest birth-rate.

From 1873, Galicia was *de facto* an autonomous province of Austria-Hungary and Germanisation was not much threat to the native people.[41] The situation was different in the Kingdom of Poland, especially in territories incorporated into the Russian Empire. There Russification was systematically intensified, especially in administration. At the same time, native inhabitants were forced to leave their home-

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[38] *Ibidem.*
[39] G. Labuda (1971), *Polska granica zachodnia…*, p. 94 (title of chapter XIV).
[40] *Ibidem,* p. 109.
[41] J. Buszko (2000), *Od niewoli do niepodległości 1864-1918 (Wielka historia Polski,* Vol. 8), Kraków, p.46.

land as part of repressions after a number of suppressed uprisings against the Russian partitioner. Many were sent to Siberia (from 1863 to 1865 alone, such was the fate of over 15 thousand people) and sentenced to death. Some migrated to the West, particularly after 1831 (Great Emigration). A common issue for all partitioners was labour emigration.

The rebirth of Poland's statehood had its impact on relations between the nations involved. For understandable reasons, both German and Russian administration as well as considerable numbers of new colonists who arrived in the 19th century left the territory of the (Second) Republic of Poland.

Having widely discussed German colonisation in the Middle Ages and later migrations from the west, we cannot forget about other less numerous minorities on the Polish lands before the partitions. The most significant minority of them was the Jewish nation. In the Middle Ages, Jews made Poland their home and were awarded a number of privileges by the rulers. During the partitions, their population amounted to approx. 800 thousand people, most of whom lived in towns. To the end of the 19th century, the number of Jews in the Kingdom of Poland alone was the same. According to the 1921 census, that is one conducted after Poland regained independence, the Jewish population amounted to 2.8 million, i.e. over 10% of the population total. All national minorities together constituted one third of the total population at that time. That was a challenge in the unification programme of the Republic.

Old Polish traditions of the state of the nobility were particularly strong in Eastern Borderlands where they clashed with objectives of new nations seeking to become fully independent (sovereignty). In most cases, that resulted in conflicts with Polish neighbours. Among the landed gentry, family conflicts emerged. To give an example of the Narutowicz family: Gabriel Narutowicz was elected the first President of the (Second) Polish Republic [42] while his brother Stanisław remained in their homeland (Samogitia) after Poland regained independence, declared to be a citizen of Lithuania and spelt his name as Stasis Narutovićius. He, unsuccessfully, tried to find a space for himself between historic and ethnic Lithuania. Stanisław was one of many who tried to combine the different traditions of Vilnius and Kaunas. Michał Römer was another example of difficult choices made. [43]

After 1918, a small number of emigrants returned to Poland. Most of them were already naturalised in their new countries and their children too as they were born

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[42] Gabriel Narutowicz had to leave his homeland in his youth due to his involvement in patriotic activities and sought refuge in Switzerland where he became a leading figure among Polish emigrants and an academic authority. He lived there until the end of World War I when he returned to Poland. Cf. J. Pajewski, W. Łazuga (1993), *Gabriel Narutowicz pierwszy prezydent Rzeczypospolitej,* Warszawa. Authors of that book dedicated it to the memory of Kazimierz Narutowicz (the son of Stanisław - Stasys) who expatriated to Poland after World War II and settled in Poznań.

[43] Michał Römer and his role in the *Krajowcy* group of mainly Polish-speaking intellectuals in Wilno and in the formation of an independent Lithuanian state is discussed in: Z. Solak (2004), *Między Litwą a Polską. Życie i działalność Michała Römera 1880-1920,* Kraków.

there. The oldest son of Polish bard Adam Mickiewicz, Władysław Mickiewicz[44] was born in France. When he arrived to Poland, he was treated like a living "monument" to his father.

According to censuses of 1921, 1931, and 1938, Poles constituted 69% of the population, Ukrainians respectively 14%, 8% and 8.4%, Germans 4% and 3.1%, and Belarusians 4%. The percentage of Russians, Czechs, Lithuanians, and "natives" of Polesie was smaller. In 1918-1939, small changes were induced by state authorities. Poles prevailed in central and western voivodships e.g. 93% in Kraków voivodship, and in major cities e.g. 93% in Poznań. In Volhynia, Poles constituted only 17% of the population.[45] In 1918-1939, historical conflicts from before the partitions were a difficult heritage and attempts to restore the situation which existed in times of the state of the nobility did not make things easier when modern Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Lithuanian nations emerged and their respective statehood aspirations were ignored. In fact, conflicts dating back to Władysław Jagiełło and Vytautas turned out to be still relevant in diplomatic relations between Poland and Lithuania and to national propaganda.[46]

Arbitrary decisions were made after World War II.[47] The territorial losses in the east were compensated by lands in Silesia and Pomerania which were referred to as the Recovered Territories (for a few dozen years, however, it was forbidden to speak of the Lost Territories, just like the official *repatriation* (to) replaced *expatriation* (from)). The mass migration of people from across the Bug River to the Oder region began. As part of political migrations, whole groups of historical residents of Vilnius, Stanisławów (Ivano-Frankivsk), or Lviv moved to new territories (some villages

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[44] His extensive memoirs, which have been recently published anew, are a valuable source of information on the history of Polish emigrants and the life of emigrants of various nationalities who settled in the capital of France. Cf. W. Mickiewicz (2012), *Pamiętniki,* Warszawa.

[45] More on ethnic relations during the interwar period in: Cz. Brzoza (2001), *Polska w czasach niepodległości i drugiej wojny światowej 1918-1945 (Wielka historia Polski,* Vol. 9) Kraków, pp. 51-55. Apart from Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, and Belarusians, all other ethnic minorities constituted not more than 1% each. Largest minorities to a lesser or bigger extent objected to the state policy on national groups. The conflicts manifested themselves in various forms. That issue, however, goes beyond this sketchy paper.

[46] Cf. K. Buchowski (2006), *Litwomani i polonizatorzy. Mity, wzajemne postrzeganie i stereotypy w stosunkach polsko-litewskich w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, Białystok; *Polacy w niepodległym państwie litewskim 1918-1940,* Białystok 1999; *Panowie i żmogusy. Stosunki polsko-litewskie w międzywojennych karykaturach,* Białystok 2004. See also M. Jackiewicz (1997), *Polskie życie kulturalne w Republice Litewskiej 1919-1940,* Olsztyn. More on the evolution of ethnic awareness in the territories annexed by the Russian partitioner in studies based on thorough source research conducted by French historian D. Beauvois (*Trójkąt ukraiński. Szlachta, carat i lud na Wołyniu, Podolu i Kijowszczyźnie 1793-1914,* Lublin 2005; *Wilno – polska stolica kulturalna zaboru rosyjskiego 1803-1832,* Wrocław 2010). D. Beauvois's approach has met with interest of Polish historiographers and inspired creative discussions.

[47] More on World War II and its consequences in: K. Jasiewicz (ed.) (2002), *Tygiel narodów. Stosunki społeczne i etniczne na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej 1939-1953,* Warszawa--London.

arrived with their own parish priests and worshipped paintings). In the last decades, those migrations were documented in numerous publications and excellent essays whose authors came from those areas (I will mention but two authors Jerzy Janicki and Tadeusz Olszański) and young historians fascinated with the history of the Borderlands (to mention the impressive work done by Stanisław Sławomir Nicieja). And here we are in the historical reality shaped after World War II.[48]

ABSTRACT

The Polish state within the span of over a thousand years of history changed its borders several times but it is conventionally accepted that its ethnic territory stretches from the river Odra in the west, to the Bug in the east, and from the Baltic Sea in the north to the mountain ranges in the south. The article deals with the issue of the shaping of national identity of the knighthood in the Middle Ages and then its subsequent transformations during Poland's partition, the emergence of ethnic minorities (especially Germans and Jews) and the attitude of the local population to them in the pre-partition period. The discussed phenomena include xenophobia and xenophilia, the Polonisation of foreigners and their impact on Polish culture during the partition of Poland. In the interwar period a new concept of minorities was developed with regard to Ukrainians, Belarusians and Lithuanians inhabiting their ethnic territories which had been incorporated into the Polish state. Politics determined new borders after the end of World War II which resulted in yet another migration of the peoples, this time from the east to the west and the ensuing assimilation processes.

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[48] A synthetic overview of ethnic transformations in the post-Yalta reality was offered by P. Eberhardt (2010), *Migracje polityczne na ziemiach polskich (1939-1950),* Poznań. More on the history of Polish people who remained in the eastern parts of the former Polish Republic after 1945 in: A. Srebrakowski (2001), *Polacy w Litewskiej SRR 1944-1989,* Toruń; A. Bobryk (2006), *Odrodzenie narodowe Polaków w Republice Litewskiej 1987-1997,* Toruń; J. Sienkiewicz (1998), *Nasza racja stanu. Wybór publikacji 1988-1998,* Toruń. See also M. Kosman (2011), *O kresach w historii i legendzie. Studia i szkice z dziejów polskiej granicy wschodniej,* Part 1, Poznań.