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Were strongholds church centres in the tenth- and eleventh-century Piast realm?*

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to review the idea of strongholds as church centres, put forward by Tadeusz Lalik in 1967. The paper also seeks to determine how advanced was the process of the Christianisation of the Polish lands in the second half of the tenth and throughout the eleventh centuries.

Introduction

In 1967, Tadeusz Lalik argued that strongholds were church centres and put particular emphasis on the role of eleventh-century castellan centres¹. The view had a major impact on historiography and the way scholars perceived strongholds in the Piast realm, not only in the eleventh-century, but also in the second half of the

* A research project funded under the 2014–2019 programme of the Minister of Science and Higher Education ('The National Programme for the Development of Humanities'), project no. 0046/NPRH3/H11/82/2014.

¹ T. Lalik, *Organizacja grodowo-prowincjonalna w Polsce XI i początków XII wieku*, [in:] *Studia średniowieczne*, ed. A. Gąsiorowski, I. Skierska, Warszawa 2006, pp 412–413. The study was first published in 1967, see idem, *Organizacja grodowo-prowincjonalna w Polsce XI i początków XII wieku*, *Studia z Dziejów Osadnictwa* 5 (1967), pp 5–51.

tenth century. This was related to a very optimistic view of the development of Christianity in Poland, which was assumed to have been fast-paced, accompanied by the concurrent establishment of a parish network and the erection of churches, also in the key strongholds². In order to assess the validity of this perception of the Christianisation processes in the tenth-eleventh-century Piast domain, this paper provides a comparison of the chronology of the most important strongholds and the dating of individual churches, at a macro-and micro – regional level. At the macro scale, the paper discusses selected major Piasts strongholds, such as Giecz, Gniezno, Poznań (Wielkopolska, Great Poland), Kraków (Małopolska, Little Poland), Kruszwica (Kujawy), Łęczyca (Ziemia Łęczycko-Sieradzka, the Land of Łęczyca and Sieradz), Płock (Mazovia), Wrocław (Silesia), Kałdus (Ziemia Chełmińska, Chełmno Land), Santok (Ziemia Lubuska, Lebus Land)³. A micro regional comparative analysis of all strongholds functioning in Kujawy in the tenth and eleventh centuries ought to reveal where and when strongholds and churches in fact co-existed. It is expected that both analyses will help determine the advancement of the Christianisation process in the tenth-and eleventh-century Piast domain and that they will provide factual evidence to assess the rulers' involvement in the development of church structures. To gain a detailed understanding of the Christianisation processes, the paper looks at the following issues:

- Were all or perhaps only some Christian churches erected in strongholds, suburbs or close to them?
- Is the location of churches somehow related to the development of open settlements?
- Were the motifs behind the decision to build a church in a given spot consistently associated with the presence of a stronghold?

The answers to these questions should indicate whether it is appropriate to perceive strongholds as church centres, and if so, in what period?

² J. Nowacki, *Archidiecezja poznańska w granicach historycznych i jej ustrój*, Poznań 1964, p 336; E. Wiśniowski, *Parafie w średniowiecznej Polsce. Struktura i funkcje społeczne*, Lublin 2004, pp 15–21; W. Kujawski, *Parafie diecezji wrocławskiej. Archidiakony: kruszwicki i wrocławski*, Włocławek 2014, p 35. Cf. W. Abraham, *Organizacja Kościoła w Polsce do połowy wieku XII*, 4th edition, Wodzisław Śląski 2009, p 192, with information on the churches in important strongholds beyond bishops' seats.

³ I discuss neither Pomerania nor the so called Red Towns, which were somehow more loosely connected to the Piast realm compared to other regions mentioned above. For the Red Towns, cf. K. Kollinger, *Polityka wschodnia Bolesława Chrobrego (992–1025)*, Wrocław 2014, p 284.

Main strongholds of the Piast realm

Let us now discuss three strongholds in Wielkopolska: Giecz, Gniezno and Poznań. Listed by Gallus Anonymous in his chronicle of the deeds of Bolesław the Brave⁴, all played a significant role in the state of the first Piasts. Michał Kara, for example, argues that the Piast dynasty had close relations with the Giecz land and the Giecz stronghold⁵, which is believed to date back to *c.* 865⁶. He also appreciates the cult-related character of Gniezno and perceives it as the ideological centre of a later Piast domain. Kara emphasises that the first half of the tenth century saw the development of the core of the primary Piast realm, i.e., the Gniezno land⁷. Whether the capital of the state of Mieszko I was located at Gniezno or Poznań has been a subject of a heated debate in historiography⁸, even though we now know

⁴ *Galli Anonymi Cronica et gesta ducum sive principum Polonorum*, with a preface and edited by K. Maleczyński, MPH s.n., vol. II, Kraków 1952, lib. I, cap. 8, pp 25–26. Polish translation: Anonim tzw. Gall, *Kronika polska*, trans. by R. Grodecki, with a preface and edited by, M. Plezia, Wrocław 1982, book I, chapter 8, p 24. English translation: *Gesta Principum Polonorum. The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, translated and annotated by Paul W. Knoll and Frank Schaer, with a preface by Thomas N. Bisson and with editorial corrections, Budapest, New York 2003, book I, chapter 8, p 47.

⁵ M. Kara, *Najstarsze państwo – rezultat przełomu czy kontynuacji? Studium archeologiczne*, Poznań 2009, pp 318–319, Cf. pp 304–307. Cf. also Z. Kurnatowska, *Początki i rozwój państwa*, [in:] *Pradzieje Wielkopolski. Od epoki kamienia do średniowiecza*, ed. M. Kobusiewicz, Poznań 2008, pp 320–321.

⁶ T. Krysztofiak, *Rozwój wczesnośredniowiecznego ośrodka grodowego w Gieczu w świetle źródeł archeologicznych*, [in:] *Architektoniczno-przestrzenne i przyrodnicze podstawy rekonstrukcji wczesnośredniowiecznych założeń obronnych Gieczu*, ed. A. Grygorowicz, K. Milecka, K. Tobolski, Poznań 2007, pp 24–26.

⁷ M. Kara, *Najstarsze państwo*, pp 304, 318. The cult-related character of Gniezno is particularly heavily stressed in the context of T. Sawicki's findings, *Badania przy kościele św. Jerzego w Gnieźnie*, [in:] *Gniezno w świetle ostatnich badań archeologicznych*, ed. Z. Kurnatowska, Poznań 2001, pp 175–184. Compare also arguments provided by other supporters of the cult-related nature of the Lech Hill: G. Mikołajczyk, *Początki Gniezna. Studia nad źródłami archeologicznymi*, Warszawa–Poznań 1972, p 71; Z. Kurnatowska, *Grody wczesnośredniowieczne u Słowian*, [in:] *Łąd nad Wartą. Dziedzictwo kultury słowiańskiej i cysterskiej*, ed. M. Brzostowicz, H. Mizerska, J. Wrzesiński, Poznań–Łąd 2005, p 40–41; L. Wetesko, *Historyczne konteksty monarszych fundacji artystycznych w Wielkopolsce do początku XIII wieku*, Poznań 2009, pp 76–77.

⁸ W. Hensel, *Poznań w starożytności i we wczesnym średniowieczu (Epoka wspólnoty plemiennej i wczesny feudalizm)*, *Przegląd Zachodni* 9 (1953), no. 6–8, pp 83–97 (especially pp 95–96);

that the term 'capital' is entirely improper in the case of the early Piast realm⁹. Nonetheless, the two powerful strongholds, each consisting of multiple parts, were the major seats of the first historical Piasts. Several other important and heavily fortified strongholds functioned in Wielkopolska, among them Grzybowo, Kalisz or Moraczewo, yet this paper focuses primarily on Gniezno, Giecz and Poznań.

The earliest of them, Giecz was one of the most important centres in the domain ruled by the first historical Piasts. Excavations at the stronghold uncovered a palace with a chapel and a church with a crypt. The palatial and sacral complex is archaeologically dated to the late tenth century or the turn of the eleventh century at the latest,¹⁰ yet it is important to remember that the structure was never finished and as such, on no occasion fulfilled its intended role¹¹. More important for our study is the church with the crypt, erected at the stronghold sometime in the first half of the eleventh century, perhaps at the beginning of the eleventh century¹². The church provides evidence that as early as during the times of Bolesław the Brave there was a church in Giecz.

Another church was built in the suburbs of the Giecz strongholds. It has been broadly dated to the period between the late tenth and the late twelfth/early

Z. Wojciechowski, *Gniezno-Poznań-Kraków na tle kształtowania się państwa Piastów*, Przegląd Zachodni 7 (1951), pp 343–349, 355–358; H. Kóćka-Krenz, *Wczesnopiastowski Poznań w świetle źródeł archeologicznych*, [in:] *Gniezno i Poznań w państwie pierwszych Piastów*, ed. A. Wójtowicz, Poznań 2000, p 75; G. Labuda, *Gniezno stolicą wczesnopiastowskiego państwa polskiego*, [in:] *Gniezno i Poznań w państwie pierwszych Piastów*, Poznań 2000, pp 33–60.

⁹ The system practiced at the time was that of *rex ambulans* or *dux ambulans* – a ruler controlled his domain by constantly travelling round the state, and thus exercised judiciary power, oversaw strongholds and officials of local administration. In this way, internal tensions were prevented, opponents controlled and land exposed to external invasions supervised. A duke or a king simply did not need a 'capital' in the modern sense of the term, see P. Urbańczyk, *Najdawniejsze stolice państwa piastowskiego*, [in:] *Polska na przełomie I i II tysiąclecia*, ed. Sz. Skibiński, Poznań 2001, p 237; J. Dobosz, *Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy*, Poznań 2011, pp 133–134.

¹⁰ T. Krysztofiak, *Palatium w Gieczu – archeologiczne podstawy datowania reliktyw*, [in:] *Lapides Viventes. Zaginiony Kraków wieków średnich. Księga dedykowana prof. Klementynie Żurowskiej*, ed. T. Rodzińska-Choraży, A. Włodarek, Kraków 2005, p 303.

¹¹ T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Drewno i kamień – czyli co i kiedy zbudowali dwaj pierwsi Piastowie?*, [in:] *Średniowieczna architektura sakralna w Polsce w świetle najnowszych badań*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, Gniezno 2014, p 17.

¹² T. Krysztofiak, *Wczesnopiastowski kościół pw. Św. Jana Chrzciciela na grodzie w Gieczu w świetle najnowszych odkryć*, [in:] *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, Gniezno 2004, pp 181–198.

thirteenth centuries¹³. A recent view is the structure could not have been erected earlier than in the second half of the eleventh century¹⁴.

The Gniezno stronghold dates back to about 940¹⁵. The relics of stone architecture excavated on Wzgórze Lecha (the Lech Hill) have been a subject of on-going debate¹⁶. First, Mieszko I erected a rotunda church¹⁷; in a chapel built next to this church was buried probably the body of Adalbert of Prague¹⁸. Whether this church served as the cathedral after 1000 or a construction of a monumental basilica started immediately is uncertain¹⁹. There is no mention in the historical sources to confirm that Bolesław the Brave built a basilica. It is, however, likely that the duke did begin its construction, yet the building work was unfinished due to the unrest of the 1030s.²⁰ The cathedral (or rather, presumably, its fragment) was consecrated in 1064 under Bolesław the Generous²¹. Further investments in the cathedral were undertaken in the fourth quarter of the eleventh century by Władysław I Herman, who completed the building project initiated by his brother²².

Much better documented is the church architecture of the first Piasts in the Poznań stronghold. The first fortified structure is believed to have been con-

¹³ Eadem, *Romański kościół pw. św. Mikołaja i Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Marii Panny w Gieczu – wyniki prac archeologicznych*, Wielkopolski Biuletyn Konserwatorski 1 (2002), p 40.

¹⁴ Eadem, *Romański kościół*, p 40.

¹⁵ M. Kara, *Najstarsze państwo*, p 298.

¹⁶ This issue was recently discussed by T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Drewno i kamień*, p 17.

¹⁷ T. Janiak, *Problematyka wczesnych faz kościoła katedralnego w Gnieźnie*, [in:] *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, *Gniezno 2004*, pp 86–90 (particularly pp 87–88). Cf. L. Wetesko, *Historyczne konteksty*, p 103; idem, *Architektura i sztuka*, [in:] *Dzieje Gniezna pierwszej stolicy Polski*, ed. J. Dobosz, *Gniezno 2016*, pp 74, 76.

¹⁸ L. Wetesko, *Historyczne konteksty*, p 103.

¹⁹ Ibidem, pp 105–106; D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, p 35.

²⁰ L. Wetesko, *Historyczne konteksty*, pp 112–114. T. Janiak disagrees with this opinion, *Problematyka wczesnych faz*, pp 99–109.

²¹ *Rocznik Traski*, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (dalej MPH) s.n., vol. II, Warszawa 1961, p 828; *Rocznik małopolski* (Rękopis Kuropatnickiego), ed. by A. Bielowski, MPH s. n., vol. III, Warszawa 1961, p 146.

²² T. Janiak, *Problematyka wczesnych faz*, pp 109–115; L. Wetesko, *Historyczne konteksty*, pp 171–174. The cathedral (possibly completed) was consecrated in 1097, see Jan Długosz, *Annales seu cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, lib. IV, Warszawa 1970, pp 193–194. Tekst tłumaczenia Jan Długosz, *Roczniki czyli Kroniki sławnego Królestwa Polskiego*, ks. IV, przekł. J. Mrukówna, Warszawa 1969, pp 234–235.

structed at Ostrów Tumski in the late ninth/early tenth century²³. Most important for our study is the purported existence of a baptistery, a view advocated particularly in the earlier literature²⁴. The interpretation of the alleged relics of the baptismal basin is nevertheless open to discussion, especially because other explanations of the structure's function have been suggested²⁵. In a recent study, Aneta Bukowska has not confirmed the existence of the baptistery. She pointed out that a negative with a layer of stones at the bottom is in fact the only relic of any construction activity (regarding architecture) under the cathedral nave²⁶. Whether the structure was completed, what was its function or whether construction plans were ever put in effect is uncertain. However, we have some knowledge about the final years of Mieszko I's reign, when the construction of St Peter cathedral began. Ravished during an invasion led by Bretislaus I of Bohemia, the cathedral was supposedly reconstructed under Casimir the Restorer after the mid-eleventh century²⁷.

There is little disagreement as to the palatial chapel uncovered at Ostrów Tumski, although the dating of the structure is not as precise as one might wish.

²³ P. Sankiewicz, *Wczesnośredniowieczne konstrukcje obronne grodu poznańskiego*, [in:] *Poznań we wczesnym średniowieczu*, ed. H. Koćka-Krenz, vol. VI, Poznań 2008, p. 22; H. Koćka-Krenz, *Pozycja Poznania w X wieku w źródłach archeologicznych*, [in:] *Tu się wszystko zaczęło. Rola Poznania w państwie Pierwszych Piastów*, ed. A. Wójtowicz, Poznań 2010, pp. 35–36. Conversely, M. Kara argues that the first stronghold at Ostrów Tumski dates to the second quarter of the tenth century, M. Kara, *Najstarsze państwo Piastów*, p. 290. Since this is not a major focus of my paper, I shall not adjudicate between these conflicting hypotheses.

²⁴ K. Józefowiczówna, *Z badań nad architekturą przedromańską i romańską w Poznaniu*, Wrocław 1963, pp. 38–45; Z. Kurnatowska, *Poznańskie baptysterium*, *Slavia Antiqua* 39 (1998), pp. 51–69; eadem, M. Kara, *Początki architektury sakralnej na grodzie poznańskim w świetle nowych ustaleń*, [in:] *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, Gniezno 2004, pp. 51–56. This view has reappeared in some recent studies, see K. Ożóg, *Chrzest Polski*, Kraków 2015, p. 106.

²⁵ A. Holas, *Relikt romański w Katedrze Poznańskiej – baptysterium czy kierat? – na tle techniki budowlanej średniowiecza*, *Kronika Miasta Poznania* 3–4 (1993), pp. 208–223; P. Urbańczyk, *Czy istnieją archeologiczne ślady masowych chrztów ludności wczesnopolskiej?*, *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 102 (1995), no. 1, pp. 3–18; T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Drewno i kamień*, p. 15.

²⁶ A. Bukowska, *Najstarsza katedra w Poznaniu. Problem formy i jej genezy w kontekście architektury roku 1000*, Kraków 2013, pp. 135–137.

²⁷ H. Koćka-Krenz, *Najstarsze kościoły poznańskiego grodu*, [in:] *Kościoły w dobie chrystianizacji*, ed. M. Rębkowski, Szczecin 2016, pp. 127–129. Such an early chronology of the cathedral (the final years of Mieszko I's reign) is also supported by D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, p. 62.

Hanna Kóčka-Krenz suggests that the residential palace and the chapel date back to the period shortly after the mid-tenth century²⁸, yet some concerns were voiced regarding the chronology of the structure²⁹.

In summary, the first church-related building projects in Poznań – and possibly Gniezno – date back to the times of Mieszko I. However, Bolesław the Brave was the first ruler to be deeply involved in building churches. Bolesław's initiatives are best evidenced in Gniezno, Giecz and other strongholds in Wielkopolska, such as Ostrów Lednicki or Kalisz.

Having discussed the chronological-geographical stronghold-church relations in Wielkopolska, let us now turn to nearby Kujawy. The most important stronghold in the Kujawy region was Kruszwica, which dates back to the last quarter of the tenth century (the results of dendrochronological analyses suggest that wood was felled in 976)³⁰. There were two churches in this administrative centre: St Vitus Church and St Peter Church³¹. Given the chronological framework of this paper, I will discuss only the former. St Vitus Church was mentioned as the

²⁸ H. Kóčka-Krenz, *Najstarsze kościoły*, p. 122. For a detailed study on the stone ducal residence see: eadem, *Badania Instytutu Prahistorii UAM nad zespołem pałacowo-sakralnym na poznańskim grodzie*, *Wielkopolski Biuletyn Konserwatorski* 1 (2002), pp. 26–32; eadem, *Początki monumentalnej architektury świeckiej na grodzie poznańskim*, [in:] *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, *Gniezno* 2004, pp. 71–84.

²⁹ D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, p. 69; T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Drewno i kamień*, p. 16.

³⁰ W. Dzieduszycki, *Przemiany społeczno-organizacyjne wczesnośredniowiecznych Kujaw – możliwości interpretacyjne archeologii*, [in:] *Archaeologia versus historiam – historia versus archaeologiam czyli jak wspólnie poznać średniowiecze*, ed. M. Brzostowicz, M. Przybył, D.A. Sikorski, Poznań 2012, p. 168.

³¹ This paper does not discuss numerous hypothetical or even known chapels and churches of Kruszwica (St Clement, St Gotthard, St Vincent, St Elijah or the Blessed Virgin Mary), because little is known about their chronology. More details on the issue can be found in: K. Górski, *Topografia wczesnośredniowiecznej Kruszwy*, *Studia Wczesnośredniowieczne* 2 (1953), p. 43; idem, *Dzieje Kruszwy do końca XVIII w.* [in:] *Kruszwica. Zarys monograficzny*, ed. J. Grzeškowiak, Toruń 1965, p. 197. The churches were also discussed by D. Kurzawa, D. Karczewski, *Czy istniał w Kruszwy kościół pod wezwaniem Najświętszej Marii Panny? Korekta do topografii średniowiecznej Kruszwy*, *Slavia Antiqua* 42 (2001), pp. 163–167; W. Dzieduszycki, *Kruszwica – piastowska domena nad Gopłem*, [in:] *Pradzieje Wielkopolski. Od epoki kamienia po średniowiecze*, ed. M. Kobusiewicz, Poznań 2008, pp. 410, 425, 427–428; D. Kurzawa, *Patrocinia średniowiecznych kościołów w Kruszwy*, [in:] *Z dziejów pogranicza kujawsko-wielkopolskiego*, vol. 3, ed. D. Karczewski, M. Wilczek-Karczewska, Strzelno–Kruszwica 2015, pp. 27–38.

basilica already by Master Vincent in the context of Bolesław III Wrymouth's expeditions to Pomerania³². Many issues concerning this church have been left unresolved. Unclear is, for example, its chronological framework. St Vitus church was commonly believed to have been located in the suburbium³³, as purportedly evidenced by excavated fragments of church interior design and architecture³⁴. Earlier hypotheses speculated that the church was out of use already in the fourteenth century³⁵. However, it has recently been demonstrated that the church ceased to fulfil its role before the beginning of the thirteenth century, possibly even in the second half of the twelfth century³⁶. Regardless of its exact location, i.e. whether it was built in the stronghold (a more plausible hypothesis in my opinion) or in its immediate vicinity, St Vitus Church was closely related to the Kruszwica settlement centre. When exactly the church was built is unknown, but a common (at least among archaeologists) view has it that it was built in the last quarter of the eleventh century³⁷, perhaps under Bolesław the Generous³⁸. Given

³² *Magistri Vincentii dicti Kadłubek Chronica Polonorum*, lib. III, ed. by M. Plezia, MPH s.n., vol. XI, Kraków 1994, pp 99–100. Polish translation: Mistrz Wincenty, *Kronika polska*, ks. III, translated and annotated by B. Kürbis, Wrocław 1996, pp 129–130.

³³ It is now known that the stronghold at Kruszwica was unaccompanied by any separate, distinct and fortified suburbia. Their function was taken over by unfortified settlements surrounding the stronghold. The fortified settlement had no internal divisions.

³⁴ K. Górski, *Topografia*, p 43; W. Hensel, *Najdawniejsze stolice Polski*, Warszawa 1960, pp 96, 100; idem, A. Cofta-Broniewska, *Starodawna Kruszwica. Od czasów najdawniejszych do roku 1271*, Wrocław 1961, pp 125–126; K. Górski, *Dzieje Kruszwicy*, pp 195–196, 200; W. Kujawski, *Włocławek – stolica biskupstwa*, [in:] *Włocławek. Dzieje miasta*, vol. I, ed. J. Staszewski, Włocławek 1999, p 46; W. Dzieduszycki, *Kruszwica – piastowska domena*, p 410; Cf. B. Dzieduszycka, W. Dzieduszycki, *Dzieje piastowskiego ośrodka w Kruszwicy we wczesnym średniowieczu*, [in:] *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia. Ideologia, historia a społeczeństwo*, ed. J. Dudek, D. Janiszewska, U. Świdarska-Włodarczyk, Zielona Góra 2005, p 459.

³⁵ K. Górski, *Dzieje Kruszwicy*, p 196.

³⁶ W. Dzieduszycki, *Kruszwica – piastowska domena*, p 410; B. Dzieduszycka, W. Dzieduszycki, *Dzieje piastowskiego ośrodka*, p 459.

³⁷ J. Kaczmarek, *Początki architektury sakralnej w Kruszwicy*, [in:] *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, *Gniezno* 2004, p 320; W. Dzieduszycki, *Kruszwica – piastowska domena*, pp 408, 410. D. Kurzawa has challenged this hypothesis, *Patrocinia średniowiecznych kościołów*, pp 28–29, yet he fails to include the critics of archaeological sources and does not refer to the latest works by Wojciech Dzieduszycki.

³⁸ J. Kaczmarek, *Początki architektury sakralnej*, p 320. We need to be careful with this hypothesis, as there are no written sources to confirm it unambiguously.

the paucity of sources, we can hardly argue that the church served as a cathedral, as G. Labuda rightly pointed out³⁹.

³⁹ G. Labuda, *Początki diecezjalnej organizacji kościelnej na Pomorzu i Kujawach w XI i XII wieku*, Zap. Hist. 33 (1968), z. 3, footnote 68. Very important in this context is the question of the establishment and functioning of one or two bishoprics in Kujawy. I would argue for a rejection of a hypothesis, common in the earlier literature, about earlier than twelfth-century diocese organisation in Kujawy: M. Gumowski, *Biskupstwo kruszwickie*, Poznań 1921, pp 8–11; S. Librowski, *Kapituła katedralna włocławska. Zarys dziejów i organizacji*, Warszawa 1949, pp 3–5; K. Górski, *Topografia*, pp 53–55; W. Abraham, *Statuty kapituły w Kruszwicy*, *Polonia Sacra* 8 (1956), z. 3–4, pp 253–254; W. Hensel, A. Cofta-Broniewska, *Starodawna Kruszwica*, pp 66–67; J. Tazbirowa, *Początki biskupstwa na Kujawach*, *Przegląd Historyczny* 53 (1962), no. 2, pp 232–234; S. Librowski, *Wizyty diecezji włocławskiej. Wstęp ogólny*, *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne* 8 (1964), pp 15–20; K. Górski, *Dzieje Kruszwicy*, pp 191–194; idem, *Jeszcze o początkach biskupstwa kruszwickiego*, Zap. Hist. 31 (1966), z. 4, p 93; S. Librowski, *Z dziejów katedry a następnie kolegiaty św. Wita w Kruszwicy*, *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne* 15 (1967), pp 251, 253. In accordance with the information from 'The Wielkopolska Chronicle', these studies usually assumed that a bishopric with a seat at Kruszwica was established by Mieszko II, see *Chronica Poloniae Maioris*, ed. By B. Kürbis, MPH s.n., vol. VIII, Warszawa 1970, cap. 11, p 17. Polish translation: *Kronika wielkopolska*, translated by K. Abgarowicz, edited and with a by B. Kürbis, Warszawa 1965, chapter 11, p 71. The most convincing approach to the issue is that of Gerard Labuda, who argued that two bishoprics were established in 1123: one in Kruszwica and the other in Włocławek. The Kruszwica bishopric embraced Kujawy and Pomerania, where missionary activity was necessary, while Włocławek was to focus its pastoral activities on Chełmno Land, Ziemia Dobrzyńska (Dobrzyń Land) and the Christianisation of the Prussian tribes. Unable to succeed in the Prussian mission, the diocese of Włocławek, or at least a large part of it, was soon incorporated into the bishopric of Płock. Then, after 1148, Werner, the Bishop of Włocławek, came down to Płock. In the 1150s, perhaps c.1157, the bishoprics of Włocławek and Kruszwica merged. The years 1168–1185 saw a canonical combination of both dioceses, see G. Labuda, *Początki diecezjalnej organizacji*, pp 40–41, 58–59. Cf. idem, *Mieszko II król Polski (1025–1034)*, 2nd edition, Poznań 2008, pp 117–119. G. Labuda's theses regarding the bishoprics of Kujawy and their chronology was partly supported by, e.g., J. Dobosz, *Monarcha i możni*, pp 204–205, 216–219; S. Radzimski, *Początki organizacji diecezjalnej na Kujawach w świetle przekazu bulli Innocentego II z 4 czerwca 1133 roku*, *Nasze Historie* 6 (2001), pp 80–81, 83. The idea was challenged, e.g., by A. Bogucki, *Przynależność administracyjna Kujaw w XI-XII wieku*, [in:] *Stolica i region. Włocławek i jego dzieje na tle przemian Kujaw i Ziemi Dobrzyńskiej*, ed. O. Krut-Horonziak, L. Kajzer, Włocławek 1995, p 15; J. Maciejewski, *Biskupstwo włocławskie i jego kujawsko-pomorscy ordynariusze w Polsce piastowskiej – stan i perspektywy badań*, [in:] *Historiograficzna prognoza 2000. Stan i potrzeby badań nad dziejami regionów kujawsko-pomorskiego i sąsiednich*, ed. M. Grzegorz, Bydgoszcz 2000, pp 79–80. An interesting explanation has been put forward also by M. Michalski, *Ustanowienie i wczesne dzieje biskupstwa kujawskiego*, [in:] *Scripta minora*, vol. I, ed. B. Lapis, Poznań 1996, pp 106–108.

From the west, Wielkopolska borders Ziemia Lubuska, with one of its most important local centres – Santok. The stronghold's roots go back to the tribal period⁴⁰ (the second half or the late ninth century)⁴¹ and it was remodelled several times, also in the 970s⁴², when Santok was already included into the Piast realm. Excavations at the stronghold produced traces of a stone structure, at first believed to have been erected in the late tenth or in the early eleventh century⁴³. Twenty-first-century verification research has not brought any decisive conclusions as to the chronology or the function of the structure⁴⁴.

From the south-east, Wielkopolska borders Central Poland (the Land of Łęczyca and Sieradz), with its key stronghold at Tum near Łęczyca, most likely erected in the late eight or the early ninth century. The first phase of the stronghold in Tum lasted until the end of the tenth century⁴⁵ and the second phase dates between the end of the tenth and the beginning of the twelfth century, when the stronghold's fortifications and the entire interior were destroyed by

⁴⁰ It is essential to note that phrases 'tribal times', 'tribal period' or 'tribal strongholds' etc. have been widely used in historiography. Recently, P. Urbańczyk has been critical of the terms, P. Urbańczyk, *Mieszko Pierwszy Tajemniczy*, Toruń 2012, pp 103–109. However, I believe that these cannot be avoided while we refer to the findings of earlier historiography or summarise the results of studies. Besides, in many cases the terms were used properly. In recent historiography, several authors have used them very skilfully, e.g., M. Brzostowicz, *Bruszczewski zespół osadniczy we wczesnym średniowieczu*, Poznań 2002; J. Poleski, *Wczesnośredniowieczne grody w dorzeczu Dunajca*, Kraków 2004; idem, *Małopolska w VI-X wieku. Studium archeologiczne*, Kraków 2013; J. M. Piskorski, *Pomorze plemienne. Historia – archeologia – językoznawstwo*, Wodzisław Śląski 2014.

⁴¹ M. Brzostowicz, *Wielkopolska północna w czasach przedpiastowskich*, [in:] *Pradolina Noteci na tle pradziejowych i wczesnośredniowiecznych szlaków handlowych*, ed. H. Machajewski, J. Rola, Poznań 2006, p 272.

⁴² M. Kara, *Z badań nad kulturą mieszkańców grodu santockiego w X wieku – głos archeologa*, [in:] *Santok „Strażnica i klucz królestwa”. 30 lat Muzeum Grodu w Santoku*, ed. W. Popek, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2010, pp 28, 32–33.

⁴³ Z. Hołwińska, *Dzieje wczesnośredniowiecznego grodu w Santoku*, [in:] *Z dziejów Santoka i kasztelanii santockiej*, ed. M. Szczaniecki, Poznań 1961, p 36.

⁴⁴ K. Zamelska-Monczak, *Santok – badania archeologiczne w 2007 i 2008 roku. Stan i perspektywy*, [in:] *Santok „Strażnica i klucz królestwa”. 30 lat Muzeum Grodu w Santoku*, ed. W. Popek, Gorzów Wielkopolski 2010, pp 51–54.

⁴⁵ W. Stasiak, M. Trojan, *Gród łęczycki w okresie przedpiastowskim (faza I, koniec VIII – koniec X wieku)*, [in:] *Początki Łęczycy*, vol. II (Archeologia o początkach Łęczycy), ed. R. Grygiel, T. Jurek, Łódź 2014, pp 65–73.

fire⁴⁶. Neither in the stronghold nor in its suburbia were any relics of church architecture registered, yet nearby we find the collegiate church of Tum. Its chronology puts it beyond the scope our interest, but inside archaeologists uncovered some stone relics, which according to the recent studies date back to the period after the mid-eleventh century at the earliest⁴⁷. It has been lately suggested that the structure was built sometime between 1065 and 1075, more likely at the beginning of this time frame⁴⁸. Nonetheless, there is no rationale for providing such precise dates of the origin of the church. In the case of Tum, the church was located outside the stronghold, and moreover, it was built during the reign of Casimir the Restorer or his successors at the earliest.

Turning now to Silesia, let us take a look at Wrocław. The first fortified settlement in Wrocław was established in the first half of the tenth century⁴⁹, while the island's inner fortifications are believed to date from 940–960⁵⁰. Shortly after, sometime in the 980s, a new stronghold was erected⁵¹ and functioned until the 1030s, when the stronghold ramparts were partially levelled⁵². The structure was remodelled not earlier than in the 1050s⁵³. Little is known about the church architecture of Wrocław⁵⁴. Due to the poor knowledge of the earliest stone architecture

⁴⁶ Eidem, *Podstawy chronologii absolutnej fazy II*, [in:] *Początki Łęczycy*, vol. II (Archeologia o początkach Łęczycy), ed. R. Grygiel, T. Jurek, Łódź 2014, p 104; R. Grygiel, *Okres kasztelański (faza III, lata 50. XIII – połowa XIV wieku)*, [in:] *Początki Łęczycy*, vol. II (Archeologia o początkach Łęczycy), ed. R. Grygiel, T. Jurek, Łódź 2014, p 269.

⁴⁷ J. Sikora, *Uwagi na temat tzw. opactwa Panny Marii w Tumie pod Łęczycą*, *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej* 50 (2002), no. 3–4, pp 397, 401.

⁴⁸ P. Oczko, *Kościół łęczycycki we wczesnym średniowieczu – studium z historii sztuki*, [in:] *Początki Łęczycy*, vol. 3 (W kręgu historii i historii sztuki), ed. R. Grygiel, T. Jurek, Łódź 2014, p 215.

⁴⁹ S. Moździoch, *Spółeczność plemienna Śląska w IX-X wieku*, [in:] *Śląsk około roku 1000*, ed. M. Młynarska-Kaletynowa, E Małachowicz, Wrocław 2000, p 41.

⁵⁰ P. Rzeźnik, *Gród wrocławski około roku 1000*, [in:] *Śląsk około roku 1000*, ed. M. Młynarska-Kaletynowa, E Małachowicz, Wrocław 2000, p 141.

⁵¹ S. Moździoch, *Spółeczność plemienna*, p 41.

⁵² Ibidem, p 42.

⁵³ Idem, *Nowe dane do zagadnienia socjotopografii piastowskich grodów kasztelańskich w X–XIII wieku na przykładzie Wrocławia i Bytomia Odrzańskiego na Śląsku*, [in:] *Osadnictwo i architektura ziem polskich w dobie zjazdu gnieźnińskiego*, ed. A. Buko, Z. Świechowski, Warszawa 2000, pp 336–337.

⁵⁴ Problematykę tę starał się wyjaśnić E. Małachowicz, *Architektura wczesnośredniowiecznych*

in general or about its chronology, the interpretation of research results is seriously flawed, a point already discussed in previous literature⁵⁵. There has been a lot of controversy particularly about the two first churches in Wrocław. Considering the paucity of sources, it is unreasonable to discuss their existence or chronology. On the other hand, it is a well-known fact that Wrocław had a cathedral since 1000. The question is which church acted as the cathedral: a pre-existing church, the scanty relics of which were excavated, or the so called Cathedral of Bolesław the Brave? Or perhaps both churches were in fact one and the same, an idea suggested earlier in the literature⁵⁶. The issues are still pending further research, including detailed verification excavations, source material and archaeological documentation.

Moving on now to consider Kraków in Małopolska, the most important aspect to discuss in the context of this paper is the chronology of Kraków. The rampart encircling Wawel is commonly believed to date from the ninth or the first half of the tenth century, although the earliest dendrochronological dates (the 970s) come from Okół⁵⁷. There were several church-related structures in Kraków, yet considering present dating techniques and the sheer number of structures within the stronghold, it is impossible to determine the relative chronology of the relics⁵⁸ or to pinpoint tenth-century structures. It seems that Kraków, with its number of churches, came to be unrivalled in the Piast domain and in the entire Central Europe no earlier than in the first half of the eleventh century⁵⁹.

budowli katedry wrocławskiej, [in:] *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, *Gniezno* 2004, pp 293–305.

⁵⁵ Z. Pianowski, *Uwagi o początkach architektury na ziemiach czeskich*, [in:] *Polska na przełomie I i II tysiąclecia*, ed. Sz. Skibiński, Poznań 2001, p 373; P. Rzeźnik, A. Żurek, *Wrocław około roku 1000*, [in:] *Polska na przełomie I i II tysiąclecia*, ed. Sz. Skibiński, Poznań 2001, pp 344–345; D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, pp 98–118.

⁵⁶ P. Rzeźnik, A. Żurek, *Wrocław*, p 346.

⁵⁷ J. Poleski, *Wczesnośredniowieczne grody*, pp 36–37.

⁵⁸ T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Drewno i kamień*, p 21. This paper does not discuss tenth- and eleventh-century church architecture in Kraków, because this is not the primary purpose of my study. For more information about the churches see Z. Pianowski, *Architektura monumentalna wczesnośredniowiecznego Krakowa*, [in:] *Kraków w chrześcijańskiej Europie X–XIII w.*, ed. E. Firlet, E. Zeitz, Kraków 2006, pp 162–219; D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, pp 71–97; J. Firlet, Z. Pianowski, *Wawel wczesnośredniowieczny i jego budowle*, *Studia nad Dawną Polską* 3 (2013), pp 29–68; K. Ożóg, *Chrzest Polski*, pp 188–191.

⁵⁹ T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Drewno i kamień*, p 23. J. Firlet, Z. Pianowski, *Wawel wczesnośredniowieczny*, pp 43–44.

Note that in 1000, Kraków became the seat of a bishopric, and following the events of the 1030s and the return of Casimir the Restorer to Poland, its rank even increased⁶⁰.

Let us turn now to two regions with the Prussian neighbours, i.e., Mazovia and Chełmno Land. Sitting on the banks of the Vistula River, the Mazovian Płock was established no earlier than in the 970s⁶¹ and its church architecture is even younger, with the oldest St Lawrence church built possibly already in the first half of the eleventh century⁶². The first Płock cathedral dates from the last quarter of the eleventh century. Other architectural structures, such as the church in the courtyard or the relics discovered in front of the cathedral, were erected no earlier than at the end of the eleventh century⁶³. It transpired that the Piasts did found some religious architecture in Płock, yet were much less engaged in church building than we previously assumed⁶⁴. The investment activities were clearly related to the creation of the bishopric of Płock, established during the reign of Bolesław the Generous, probably in 1075⁶⁵, and the growing importance of Płock.

The case of Płock resembles that of Kałdus. The early medieval fortified settlement In Kałdus was established sometime in the eleventh century. Burnt down in the 1030s, the stronghold was a bustling place again starting from the turn of the

⁶⁰ Several authors recognised this role of Kraków, e.g., G. Labuda, *Studia nad początkami państwa polskiego*, vol. 2, Poznań 1988, pp 296–320; J. Dobosz, *Monarcha i możni*, pp 110–116; D.A. Sikorski, *Kościół w Polsce za Mieszka I i Bolesława Chrobrego*, Poznań 2011, pp 523–526. Cf. Remarks on the exceptional role of Kraków in the eleventh century: R. Michałowski, *Princeps fundator. Studium z dziejów kultury politycznej w Polsce X–XII wieku*, Warszawa 1993, pp 71–88.

⁶¹ M. Trzeciecki, *Początki Płocka*, [in:] *Płock wczesnośredniowieczny*, ed. A. Gołębniak, Warszawa 2011, pp 96–97.

⁶² A. Bukowska, *Relikty architektury wczesnośredniowiecznej – formy i datowanie*, [in:] *Płock wczesnośredniowieczny*, ed. A. Gołębniak, Warszawa 2011, pp 209, 214.

⁶³ Ibidem, pp 201, 211, 214.

⁶⁴ Earlier interpretations of religious architecture and its dating as early as to the times of Bolesław the Brave have been recently rejected, and the research method of their author severely criticized, see A. Bukowska, *Relikty architektury wczesnośredniowiecznej*, pp 168–171.

⁶⁵ J. Dobosz, *Monarcha i możni wobec Kościoła w Polsce do początku XIII wieku*, Poznań 2002, pp 129–131; A. Krawiec, *Król bez korony. Władysław I Herman książę Polski*, Warszawa 2014, pp 38–41; N. Delestowicz, *Bolesław II Szczodry*, Kraków 2016, pp 295–296.

twelfth century until the first quarter of the thirteenth century⁶⁶. Excavations at the stronghold exposed the relics of a church, a two-phase building according to Wojciech Chudziak, the chief archaeologist at the site. For us, most interesting is Phase I, which purportedly dates from the first half of the eleventh century (according to Chudziak, the church was built under Bolesław the Brave or Mieszko II). Chudziak argued that the second phase of the church dates to the second half of the twelfth century or the first quarter of the thirteenth century⁶⁷. His research results were nevertheless severely criticised by other scholars⁶⁸, who argued that such an early chronology of the church is definitely incorrect. The first half of the twelfth century was suggested as a possible date of the church's origin⁶⁹.

The paper presents merely a selection of strongholds. A more detailed account could include also Kalisz, Łekno, Ostrów Lednicki or Przemyśl, yet it is not the numbers that count. Besides, overviews of the earliest church centres in Poland⁷⁰ or Wielkopolska⁷¹ have recently been published. The specific objective of the above part of this study was to examine whether T. Lalik's hypothesis can be accurately applied to all parts of the Piast domain and to each of its key strongholds. Such attempts – unjustified as it turned out – were occasionally done in previous studies. Our analysis has demonstrated that not every stronghold, or its suburbia (Kałdus), had a church. Occasionally, the relics of stone architecture are discovered outside the stronghold, yet usually in its vicinity (Łęczycza). Moreover, in some of the key strongholds of the Piast realm, the first churches were founded as late as in the first or second half of the eleventh century (Kruszwica, Kraków).

⁶⁶ W. Chudziak, A.M. Noryśkiewicz, B. Noryśkiewicz, *Zasiedlenie okolic Góry św. Wawrzyńca w ostatnich trzech tysiącach lat w świetle historii roślinności*, [in:] *Wczesnośredniowieczny zespół osadniczy w Kałdusie. Studia przyrodniczo-archeologiczne*, ed. W. Chudziak, Toruń 2004, pp 213–216, 222.

⁶⁷ W. Chudziak, *Wczesnośredniowieczna przestrzeń sakralna in Culmine na Pomorzu Nadwiślańskim*, Toruń 2003, pp 90–95.

⁶⁸ T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Kilka uwag w sprawie metody prezentacji i interpretacji relikwów budowli sakralnej w Kałdusie*, [in:] *II Forum Architecturae Poloniae Medievalis 2009*, ed. K. Stala, Kraków 2011, pp 376–379; D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, pp 151–162.

⁶⁹ T. Rodzińska-Choraży, *Kilka uwag*, p 379; D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, p 162.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ J. Wrześniński, A.M. Wyrwa, *Architektura świecka i sakralna wczesnośredniowiecznej Wielkopolski – nowe odkrycia i interpretacje*, [in:] *Wielkopolska w dziejach. Archeologia o regionie*, ed. H. Machajewski, Poznań 2008, pp 153–172.

Sometimes it is difficult to determine the chronology of some churches or of some unidentified relics of stone architecture, such as those in Płock, Santok or Wrocław. However, churches built in the tenth and eleventh centuries were typically related to strongholds. This unsurprising, since strongholds were settlement, economic and administrative centres and usually attracted open settlements. The presence of the ducal administration and probably the ruler's armed forces also facilitated the activity of the emerging structures of the Polish Church. This initial process of Christianisation did not witness a swift transition to the construction of religious architecture away from strongholds, in clusters of open settlements of earlier origin, nor the continuity of settlement since the tribal period into the reign of the first Piasts. It is hoped that the results of a regional analysis from Kujawy (a region bordering Wielkopolska) will bring an in-depth understanding of the issue.

Strongholds and churches in the tenth-and eleventh-century Kujawy

This section analyses the most important strongholds in Kujawy, fairly securely dated to the period between *circa* the mid-tenth and the end of the eleventh centuries. In addition to the above-mentioned Kruszwica, these include: Bydgoszcz-Stare Miasto, Jankowo, Kołuda Wielka, Krukowo, Krusza Zamkowa, Mietlica and left-bank Włocławek⁷². It is remarkable that virtually none of these strongholds yielded any relics of church buildings, neither is there any mention about churches in written sources⁷³. Much as this is understandable in the case of the left-bank of Włocławek⁷⁴, which was established sometime in the late elev-

⁷² All structures were discussed in my 2016 book; the list could be complemented with a few strongholds (Dźwierzchno, Kościelec, Morzyce, Racice, Raciecín-Broniszewo), see M. Danielewski, *Sieć grodowa na Kujawach oraz jej funkcje od połowy X do końca XIII wieku*, Poznań 2016, *passim*. However, it is important to note that the chronology of these structures is not precise enough for them to be included in this paper; hence my decision to leave them out of my present study. Besides, there is no data whatsoever about any churches related to them.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, s. 281–301, 303–304.

⁷⁴ Earlier Włocławek, listed also by Gallus Anonymus: *Galli Anonymi*, lib. I, cap. 8, pp 25–26. Polish translation: Anonim tzw. Gall, *Kronika polska*, ks. I, rozdz. 8, s. 24. English translation: *Gesta Principum Polonorum. The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, book I, chapter 8, p 47, was most probably located on the right-bank of the Vistula and should probably be

enth/early twelfth centuries⁷⁵, or the stronghold at Krusza Zamkowa of roughly the same age⁷⁶, it is hard to explain the absence of any church buildings in other strongholds, which functioned for at least a few decades in the analysed period of time. The problem of Mietlica may possibly be explained by its genesis. It is likely that this stronghold, which shows unbroken continuity from the tribal times to the mid-eleventh century, with well-developed settlement⁷⁷, was not the best choice to locate a church. But the absence of religious architecture in structures built under the first Piast, such as Jankowo, Kołuda Wielka or Krukowo⁷⁸, is somewhat puzzling. Moreover, there was not any church in the Bydgoszcz stronghold, which sat on a river island probably from the late 1030s⁷⁹. The thirteenth-century St Giles church provides the earliest example of sacred architecture in Bydgoszcz⁸⁰.

It is surprising that the region of Kujawy, which borders Gniezno Land (the distance between Gniezno and the Kujawy's westernmost stronghold at Jankowo is roughly 43 km as the crow flies) is covered by such a loose network of churches. Only one religious building is known to have been erected during the analysed period, and that is a church in Kruszwica, founded in the last quarter of the eleventh century. Obviously, the poor state of field research might be to blame, yet some strongholds, among them Bydgoszcz, Krusza Zamkowa, Kruszwica or Włocławek were fairly well explored, and excavations covered a fairly large of

identified with Zarzeczewo, an idea put forward by: A. Andrzejewska, *Sprawozdanie z badań archeologicznych przeprowadzonych w Zarzeczewie gm. Fabianki w 2008 r.*, p. 24. Delegatura Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Ochrony Zabytków (dalej WUOZ) we Włocławku.

⁷⁵ M. Danielewski, *Sieć grodowa*, p. 134.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 143.

⁷⁷ This settlement is discussed, e.g., by B. Dzieduszycka, *Z badań nad kształtowaniem się osadnictwa wczesnośredniowiecznego na przykładzie regionu nadgoplańskiego, regionu zachodnich Pałuk i regionu środkowego biegu Baryczy*, *Slavia Antiqua* 35 (1994), pp. 71–81.

⁷⁸ M. Danielewski, *Sieć grodowa*, pp. 139, 141, 144–145.

⁷⁹ The earliest wood from the stronghold fortifications was dendrochronologically dated to 1037–1038, *Ibidem*, p. 126.

⁸⁰ R. Kabaciński, *Kształtowanie się podstaw rozwoju bydgoskiego ośrodka miejskiego*, [in:] *Historia Bydgoszczy*, vol. 1, ed. M. Biskup, Warszawa–Poznań 1991, pp. 86–87; Z. Zyglewski, *Bydgoski kościół św. Idziego w świetle źródeł ikonograficznych i kartograficznych*, *Kronika Bydgoska* 19 (1998), p. 164. An alternative view can be found in B. Rogalski, *Nie rozwiązana „zagadka” architektury średniowiecznego kościoła św. Idziego w Bydgoszczy*, *Kronika Bydgoska* 20 (1998), pp. 319–323. Rogalski suggests that St Giles church is of a fourteenth-century date.

their surface areas. It is therefore reasonable to conjecture that any relics of stone church architecture, should there be any, would have been already registered so far. We should not blame the state of archaeological research for all unresolved issues.

A hypothesis has been put forward that the strongholds had wooden churches; this could explain the absence of stone relics. One such structure was built in Kalisz (Wielkopolska). Excavations at the site produced traces of a wooden church, which dates to the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century⁸¹. Other examples include a wooden church from Ostrów Lednicki, dated to the third quarter of the tenth century⁸², or from Wawel (Kraków)⁸³. It is therefore theoretically possible that merely wooden churches were erected in the tenth- and eleventh-century Kujawy. However, at the current stage of research, this is merely an educated guess. Previous research suggests that Kujawy was a periphery in terms of the development of ecclesiastical structures, church foundations and thus also the progress of the processes of Christianisation. It is therefore unsurprising that as late as in the second half of the eleventh century Christian inhumation and cremation happened to co-occur at cemeteries⁸⁴. Interestingly, in

⁸¹ T. Baranowski, *Kościół drewniany w Kaliszu jako przykład możliwych rozwiązań architektonicznych we wczesnej fazie chrystianizacji Polski*, [in:] *Kościół w dobie chrystianizacji*, ed. M. Rębkowski, Szczecin 2016, pp 147–148. Conversely, D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, p 182, believes that the church functioned in the first half of the eleventh century.

⁸² J. Wrzeński, M. Kara, *Kościół nr II na Ostrowie Lednickim – kamienny czy drewniany?*, [in:] *Początki architektury monumentalnej w Polsce*, ed. T. Janiak, D. Stryniak, Gniezno 2004, p 177; J. Wrzeński, *Kościół na Ostrowie Lednickim – odkrycie, interpretacje, rekonstrukcja*, Wielkopolski Biuletyn Konserwatorski 3 (2006), pp 175–176.

⁸³ D.A. Sikorski, *Wczesnopiastowska architektura*, p 73; P. Urbańczyk, *Co się stało w 966 roku*, Poznań 2016, pp 146–147.

⁸⁴ A cemetery of this type was excavated at Morawy, where evidence of cremation was registered at an inhumation cemetery, see K. Jażdżewski, *Interesujące zabytki z czasów piastowskich na Kujawach*, *Z Otchłani Wieków* 12 (1937), z. 9–10, p 127; Z. Rajewski, *O wczesnośredniowiecznych grobach popielnicowych w Wielkopolsce i na Kujawach*, *Wiadomości Archeologiczne* 25 (1958), z. 3, p 199. The chronology of the cemetery is based on a fresh analysis of the archaeological evidence, see M. Danielewski, *Wczesnośredniowieczne Morawy – cmentarzysko z XI wieku*, [in press]. A cemetery at Bodzanowo is slightly different. It yielded early medieval inhumation burials, dated to the late eleventh/early twelfth centuries, and among them were mysterious patches of dark grey soil, possibly evidencing some cremation practices at the site, see B. Zielonka, *Cmentarzysko w Bodzanowie w pow. aleksandrowskim*, *Przegląd Archeologiczny* 10 (1958), pp 377, 381; idem, *Końcowe sprawozdanie z badań w Bodzanowie w pow.*

Kujawy, the graves of the dead were richly furnished throughout the entire period in question, and the practice continued well into the thirteenth century. The cemeteries of Bodzia, Brześć Kujawski or Markowice provide ample examples⁸⁵.

Fundamental for this study is the question of tribal structures, which are detected until the mid-eleventh century (especially upon Lake Gopło). I have already mentioned how Mietlica (the largest of the strongholds in the vicinity of Lake Gopło), functioned well into the eleventh century along with its well-developed settlement base. It seems that cremation was practised at the only recognised cemetery in the vicinity of Mietlica⁸⁶. Some controversy arose around the chronology of two other tribal settlements, i.e., Kościelec and Racice, but it is possible that they also functioned after the mid-tenth century⁸⁷. Finally, even the late tenth century stronghold at Kruszwica was not founded from scratch, but

aleksandrowskim, *Przegląd Archeologiczny* 13 (1961), p 381. The question is whether these traces are attributable to the Early Middle Ages or rather earlier periods. It is important to note in this contest that according to archaeologists, the cremation rite gradually disappeared from the Piast domain throughout the second half of the tenth-the first half of the eleventh centuries, see M. Kara, *Przemiany kultury funeralnej na ziemiach dorzecza Warty w okresie formowania się państwa Piastów w świetle nowszych ustaleń archeologii*, [in:] *Viator per devia scientiae itinera. Studia nad problematyką okresów przedrzymskiego, rzymskiego, wędrówek ludów i czesnego średniowiecza*, ed. A. Michałowski, M. Teska, M. Żółkiewski, Poznań 2015, p 310.

⁸⁵ E. Byrska-Kaszewska, *Cmentarzysko średniowieczne w Starym Brześciu powiat Włocławek (Stan. 4) cz. 1*, *Prace i Materiały Muzeum Archeologicznego i Etnograficznego w Łodzi. Seria Archeologiczna* 2 (1957), pp 85–124; A. Buko, M. Kara, T. Douglas Price, W. Duczko, K.M. Frei, I. Sobkowiak-Tabaka, *A unique medieval cemetery from the 10th/11th century with chamber-like graves from Bodzia (central Poland). Preliminary result of the multidisciplinary research*, *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 43 (2013), 3, pp 423–442. The results of research at the Markowice cemetery have not been published as of yet, but the archaeological record clearly demonstrates that it functioned well into the thirteenth century and that the dead were accompanied by rich grave goods.

⁸⁶ W. Hensel, Z. Hilczer-Kurnatowska, *Studia i materiały do osadnictwa Wielkopolski wczesnohistorycznej*, vol. 4, Wrocław 1972, p 54; B. Dzieduszycka, *Rejestr stanowisk archeologicznych w rejonie Jez. Gopła (woj. Bydgoszcz)*, *Fontes Archaeologici Posnanienses* 26 (1975), p 154. The question is whether the cemetery can be securely related to the strongholds; this issue is still pending further field research.

⁸⁷ See footnote 76. For the chronology of these structures see: M. Danielewski, *Kujawy plemienne a formowanie się władztwa Piastów w świetle dotychczasowych badań osadniczych*, [in:] *Tradycje i nowoczesność. Początki państwa polskiego na tle środkowoeuropejskim w badaniach interdyscyplinarnych*, ed. H. Kóćka-Krenz, M. Matla, M. Danielewski, Poznań 2016, pp 215, 217.

sat on an earlier dynamically functioning open settlement. Besides, Kruszwica, systematically empowered owing to Mietlica, which was denuded of settlement, stood in 1096 by Zbigniew's side, and shoulder to shoulder with the pagans called by Bolesław III's half-brother, its detachments put futile resistance against Władysław Herman⁸⁸. These events certainly complement the above image, although we cannot be certain whether this was not the chronicler's trick to portray a later opponent of Bolesław III in the worst possible light.

It follows that the process of the Christianisation of Kujawy must have proceeded slowly. As a result, the strongholds were not church centre throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries. We know of merely one stronghold with a church, functioning in this period and region, most likely destroyed in the course of the 1096 events⁸⁹. The tenth-eleventh-century Kujawy was very poor in religious architecture, especially compared to adjacent Wielkopolska. The present state of research seems to suggest that Christianisation of the area took long time to finish. Merely one church is a testimony to the process – the one discovered in the most important stronghold of Kujawy, Kruszwica.

Conclusions

These findings have significant implications for the understanding of how the process of Christianisation proceeded. It has been shown from this analysis that some strongholds were indeed ecclesiastical centres, but definitely not all of them. Furthermore, despite performing significant functions in the Piast realm, some were lacking any religious architecture until the late eleventh century. I have also demonstrated that churches were rarely erected in peripheral strongholds or in areas unrelated to any fortified settlements, i.e., in open settlement clusters of tribal origin. The single most striking observation to emerge from this study concerns the region of Kujawy. We have seen how small the number of churches founded in the area was; in fact, there was only one, in Kruszwica. Following his baptism, Mieszko I apparently restricted himself to single investments in

⁸⁸ Anonim tzw. Gall, see *Galli Anonymi*, lib. II, cap. 5, p 67. Polish translation: Anonim tzw. Gall, *Kronika polska*, ks. II, rozdz. 5, p 72. English translation: *Gesta Principum Polonorum. The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, book II, chapter 5, p 129.

⁸⁹ J. Kaczmarek, *Początki architektury sakralnej*, p 320. Note that after the 1096 conflict, the Kruszwica stronghold was not restored; it turned into an open centre, see W. Dzieduszycki, *Przemiany społeczno-organizacyjne*, p 173.

sacral architecture. On the other hand, it is undisputed that the second phase of Christianisation came with the reign of Bolesław the Brave. The number of churches built at the time significantly increased. It seems that Bolesław actively pursued the Christianisation of Poland, supported and co-founded the construction of churches. Although some of his investments were uncompleted, as was the case with the cathedral in Gniezno, it is evident that the Christianisation efforts sharply intensified. The events of the 1030s severely delayed the process, but the investments attributable to the second half of the eleventh century, especially the initiatives of Bolesław the Generous, demonstrate that this period saw the beginning of a significant development of ecclesiastical structures, and thus construction projects related to the sacral architecture in such centres as Gniezno, Łęczyca, Płock, possibly Kruszwica. Yet, pre-Christian traditions continued to flourish throughout the entire eleventh century. Since the baptism of Mieszko I throughout the second half of the tenth and eleventh centuries, Poland is typified by religious dualism: despite the introduction of Christianity, pagan beliefs were still widespread.

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Were strongholds church centres in the tenth – and eleventh-century Piast realm?

In the earlier literature, it was commonly assumed that strongholds were church centres. This was due to a belief in the rapid progress of Christianity in Poland and the significant role of Mieszko I in the process. However, more recent studies on the strongholds and religious architecture have shown that such views were too optimistic. The number of churches erected under Mieszko I was much smaller than it was previously assumed. In fact, the process of the Christianisation of the population in the second half of the tenth and the eleventh centuries was long and arduous. This is particularly evident in Kujawy – a region that is peripheral, yet lies near the heart of the Piast domain. There were few construction projects related to the development of church structures in the eleventh century in the region. What is more, people in Kujawy held firm to their tribal

traditions, and their deep-rooted beliefs are most evident in the funeral rite. It appears therefore that this was a time religious dualism in the Piast governance.

Translated by Agnieszka Tokarczuk

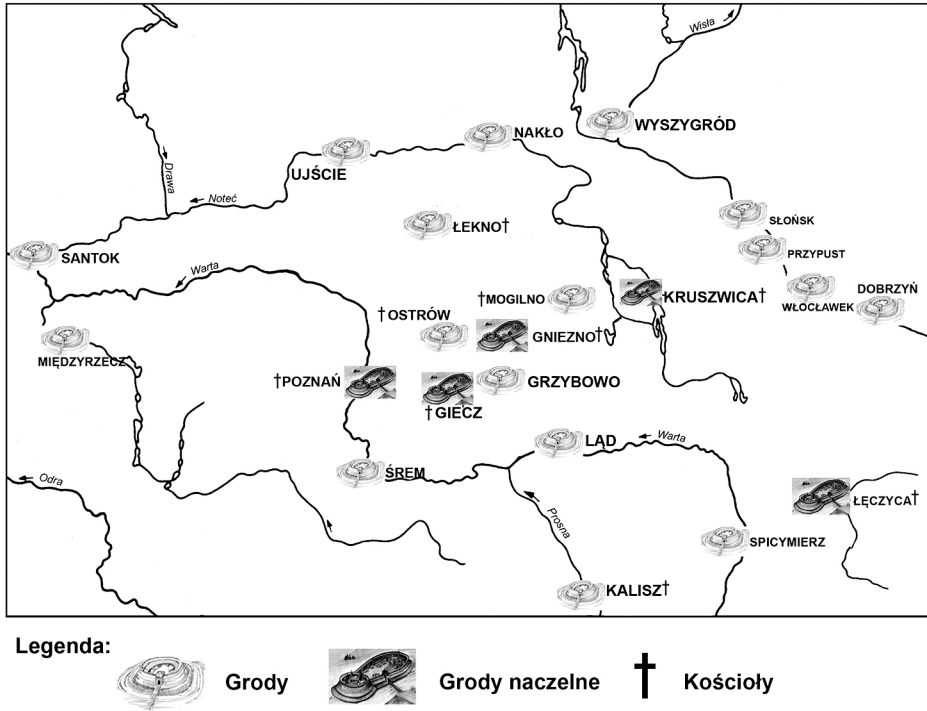


Photo 1. Map showing selected tenth-twelfth century strongholds from Wielkopolska, Kujawy and Central Poland. Photo M. Bucka and M. Danielewski.

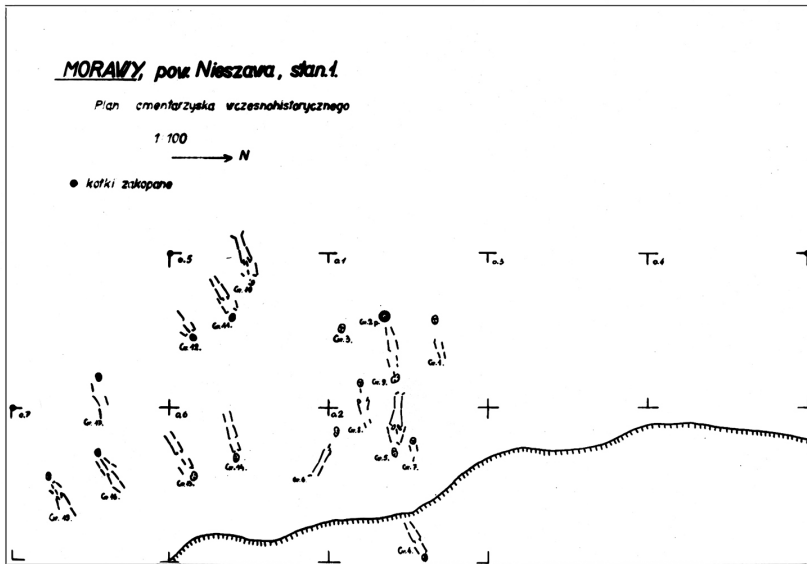


Photo 2. Plan of the cemetery at Morawy (Dobre Commune, Radziejów District, Kujawy-Pomerania Province) in the course of 1937 excavations headed by Stanisław Madajski. Collection of the National Archaeological Museum in Warsaw.

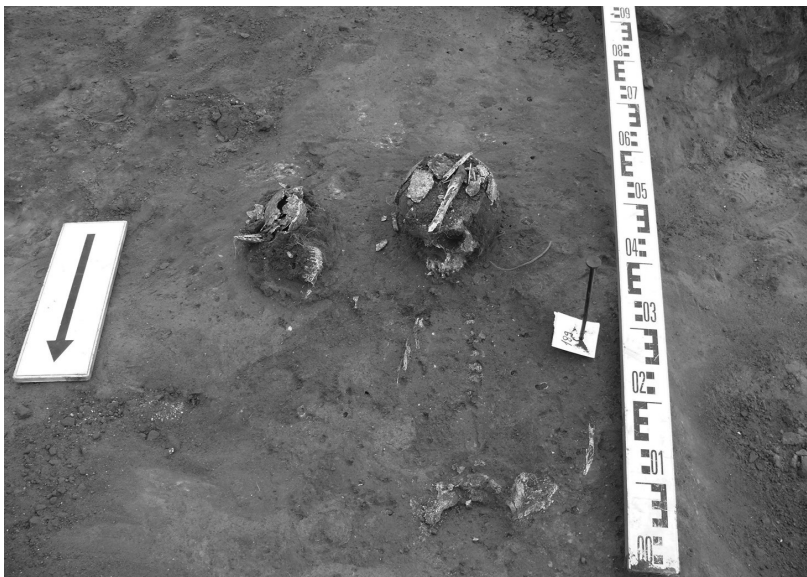


Photo 3. Child burial with a temple ring, twelfth/thirteenth century (Strzelno Commune, Mogilno District, Kujawy-Pomerania Province). Photo M. Danielewski.

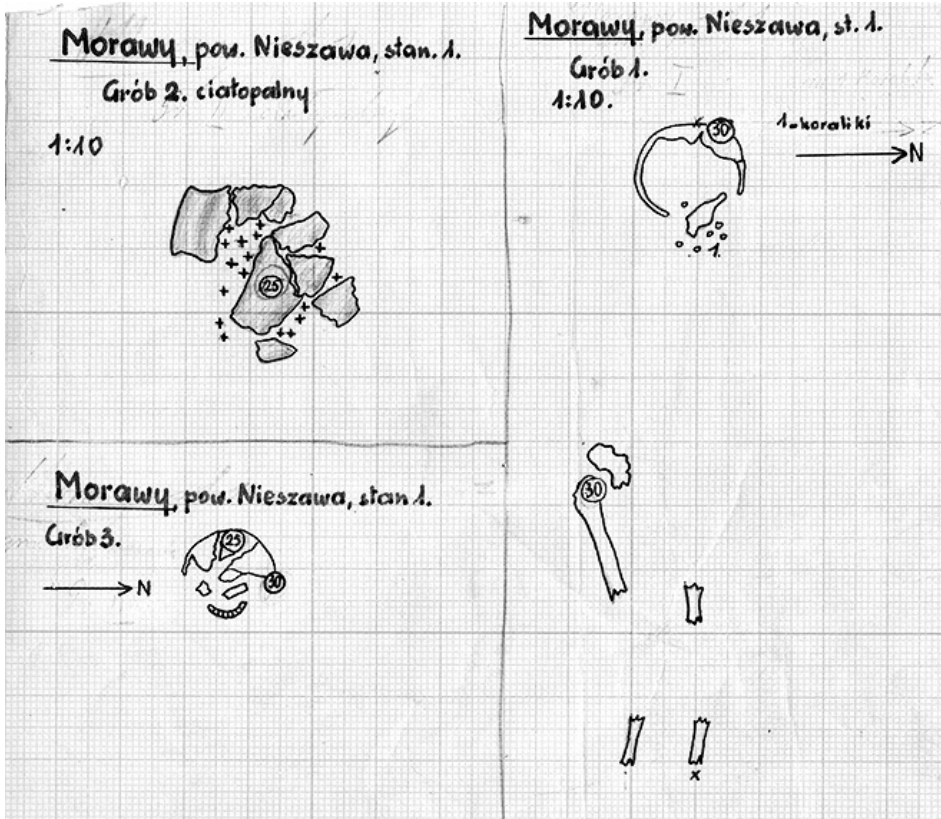


Photo 4. Graves 1–3 from the Morawy cemetery (Dobre Commune, Radziejów District, Kujawy-Pomerania Province), including a cremation burial. Collection of the National Archaeological Museum in Warsaw.