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COMMUNICATING GOD'S WAR. ACCOUNTS OF HOLY WAR IN POLISH MEDIEVAL NARRATIVE SOURCES

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

The authors of Polish medieval narrative accounts from and about Poland communicated episodes of Christian holy war and proto-crusades in a distinct and consistent way from the early twelfth century. In this article I will argue that the anonymous author of the *Gesta principum Polonorum* presented the Polish conquest of Pomerania as a holy war, and that a hundred years later, the learned Vincentius Bishop of Cracow in his *Chronica Polonorum* depicted three military campaigns against the Prussian pagans and apostates as crusading expeditions. I will also argue that the first Polish historian, Jan Długosz, deliberately celebrated and highlighted these earlier accounts to his contemporary fifteenth century readership, using these histories to position Poland's rulers as having a longstanding and consistent commitment to crusading at a time when participation in crusades was a central concern of Poland's ruling elites. This article will conclude that each of these written works was a commissioned text and part of a deliberate strategy by the rulers of Poland to communicate their engagement in Christian holy wars at the periphery of Christian Europe.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Gesta principum Polonorum*, written in the first decades of the twelfth century, was commissioned by the Piast dynasty and heralded to Christendom at large the advent of their participation in the holy war against perceived external threats to Christians and their possessions.¹ In this first Polish narrative source, its anonymous author presented the conquest of Pomerania and its subsequent Christianisation as a holy war and a penitential act by the Polish ruler Bolesław III Krzywousty (the Wrymouth) who sought redemption of his sin of fratricide. Within a century of the subjugation of the Pomeranians, the *Chronica Polonorum*, written by a leading member of the Polish clergy, continued to demonstrate the extent of the Piast dynasty's support for the war conducted against heathens on God's command.² In the middle of the fifteenth century, this glorious dynastic past was revived and burnished for a contemporary audience in the context of an increasing Ottoman threat, and found representation in the monumental *Annales seu cronici incliti regni Poloniae* composed by the man who thus earned the appellation of the first historian of Poland. Jan Długosz embellished what had been written earlier by the authors of the *Gesta principum Polonorum* and the *Chronica Polonorum* and described all of these actions as acts of Holy War.³

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When those gathered at Clermont in November 1095 responded to the call by Pope Urban II to aid Christians in the East with the resounding cry "God wills it," the Piast dynasty who ruled the Poles was a relative newcomer to Christianity, having accepted baptism only a century earlier. And whereas established Christendom was marshalling to meet a distant threat, the realm of the Piast dynasty, located at the north eastern periphery of Christendom, skirmished almost continuously with their traditional enemies, the tribes of pagans whose lands bordered with the Poles to the north and the north east. These pagan proto-nations of the Po-

¹ *Gesta principum Polonorum*, ed. Frank Schaer, trans. Paul W. Knoll and Frank Schaer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003).

² *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Marian Plezia, Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Nova Series 11 (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1994).

³ The modern edition of all fourteen volumes was published between 1964–2006 as *Joannis Długossii Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, eds. Zofia Kozłowska-Budkowa, Danuta Turkowska, Jan Dąbrowski, Wanda Semkowicz-Zarembina, Krystyna Pieradzka, Bożena Modulska-Strzelecka, Stanisław Gawęda, and Krzysztof Baczkowski, 14 vols. (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1964–2006).

meranians and Prussians successfully resisted the influence of Christian missions aimed at their conversion and maintained adherence to their religious practices and distinct spirituality. They also persisted in rejecting the territorial extension of Piast overlordship which was associated with the Christian form of belief. In these borderlands between newly Christian Poles and societies that had been long characterised by violence and plunder, a new cultural and religious space was being established. In this place of liminality, where the introduction of Christianity normalised the need to displace religious ambiguity, a new disruptive and enduring ideology of Christian holy war was tried and tested.⁴ The idea that warfare can be conducted by Christians acting as God's "chosen instruments of force" was opportunistically embraced by the Piast dynasty as a means of extending the frontiers of Christendom whilst legitimising and justifying the expansion of their dominion north and north east.⁵

Gesta principum Polonorum

The new ideology of holy war began to take root at the Polish court during the reign of Bolesław III (1086–1138). Bolesław III, who initially (1102–1107) ruled Poland together with his half-brother Zbigniew (d. 1113), embarked on the conquest and Christianisation of the Pomeranians, one of the "most savage nations of pagan barbarians,"⁶ who lived along the shores of the Baltic Sea, north of Bolesław's realm.⁷ The idea of holy war found, I argue, its most prominent expression in the *Gesta principum Polonorum*, the work of anonymous author who after 1113 resided at the Polish court.⁸

⁴ Cf. Nora Berend, *At the gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims, and "pagans" in medieval Hungary, c. 1000 – c. 1301* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 54.

⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London: Athlone, 1986), 6. Cf. Christopher Tyerman, "Henry of Livonia and the Ideology of Crusading," in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, eds. Marek Tamm, Linda Kaljundi, and Carsten Selch Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 24.

⁶ *Barbarorum gentiliū ferocissimas naciones*, see: *Gesta principum*, ed. Schaer, Book I, Prohem: 12–13.

⁷ Stanisław Rosik, *Conversio gentis Pomeranorum. Studium świadectwa o wydarzeniu (XII wiek)* (Wrocław: Chronicon, 2010). See also *Poland, Pomerania and their neighbours' shaping of medieval European civilisation (10th–12th centuries)*, ed. Stanisław Rosik (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski, 2020).

⁸ Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński, *Poland, Holy War, and the Piast Monarchy, 1100–1230* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 77–106 (especially Chapter 3). Cf. Marian Plezia, *Kronika Galla na tle historiografii XII wieku* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1947); Tomasz Jasiński, *O pochodzeniu Galla Anonima* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Avalon, 2008); id., "Czy Gall Anonim to Monachus Littorensis," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 112, no. 3 (2005): 69–89.

The *Gesta's* third book is particularly illustrative as it gives details of Bolesław III's military campaigns against the Pomeranians with whom "the duke of the Poles was constantly at war" so they can be "converted to the faith."⁹ The author implies that the conversion of these pagans were Bolesław's primary objective. The military campaigns of Bolesław III against the Pomeranians, I argue, are communicated in the *Gesta* as a hybrid of just war and holy war.

The author develops his narrative of Polish history in ways that meet the three criteria proposed by Saint Augustine of Hippo as the qualifications of just war: legitimate authority, right intention, and just cause. Firstly, the author ensures that Bolesław's legitimacy as a dynast and the ruler of the Poles is established. Secondly, the wars are characterised as having been fought with the right intention; namely they are motivated by Christian love for their neighbour manifested by the eradication of their pagan beliefs and through baptism offering them salvation and the membership of Christendom. Thirdly, the wars' ultimate goal is to secure peace along the Piast realm's northern frontier and with the Pomeranians' conversion to Christianity remove any further physical and spiritual harm to Christians. Peace, according to Saint Augustine, is a grace and a gift of God for those who are worthy of his grace (Christians) and those who are unworthy of it (pagans).¹⁰

The theme of holy war is highlighted by the author through use of biblical exemplars. Bolesław is in the *Gesta* "imitating the Maccabees" and as the protector of the Poles he defends "his country and avenge his injury."¹¹ The imagery of the Maccabees, biblical fighters who, ready to sacrifice their lives for their religion, fea-

⁹ *Contra quas regiones Polonorum dux assidue pugnat, ut eas ad fidem convertat*, see: *Gesta principum*, ed. Schaer, Book I, Prohem: 12–13.

¹⁰ Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński, "Chrzest pogan–Chrzest Polski. Konwersja ludów pogańskich a rozwój idei wojny świętej. Czy władztwo Mieszka mogło stać się celem wojny świętej?," in *Chrzest Mieszka I i chrystianizacja państwa Piastów*, eds. Józef Dobosz, Marzena Matla, and Jerzy Strzelczyk (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2017), 159–174. Cf. Dominique Bauer and Randall Lesaffer, "Ivo of Chartres, the Gregorian Reform and the Formation of the Just War Doctrine," *Journal of the History of International Law* 7, no. 1 (2005): 43–54; Robert L. Holmes, "St Augustine and the Just War Theory," in *The Augustinian Tradition*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, Philosophical Traditions 8 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 323–344; *The Cambridge companion to the literature of the Crusades*, ed. Anthony Paul Bale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 59.

¹¹ *Tum vero Boleszlauus in dubio magno pependit, utrum prius de recenti contumelia se debeat continuo vindicare, an ab inuasoribus suam patriam liberare*, see: *Gesta principum*, ed. Schaer, Book II, 34: 180. Cf. 1 Macc. 5: 17–21. Cf. *Neutrum tamen negligit fidelis Machabeorum imitator. Nam et quos in Pomeraniam destinat, de Pomoranis victoriam referunt*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book II, 28.3: 74. *Quem ergo aut illum Boleslai precursorem, aut hos Machabei iuvenes estimare potes, nisi summe, nisi superexcellens omnipotentie ministros?* see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book III, 15.1–2: 101.

ture prominently in the narrative sources of the First Crusade.¹² The crusading bull *Quantum praedecessores* of Pope Eugenius III and accounts of Fulcher of Chartres offer direct comparisons between the crusaders and the Maccabees.¹³ The author of the *Gesta* presents the wars waged by the Poles with the pagans as inspired by God, conducted at His command, and gives examples of God's direct intervention in their course.¹⁴

The Poles are likened to the Israelites. Their holy wars are approved by God when they are victorious and the battles where the Poles are defeated are seen as the sign of God's wrath. The Poles suffer defeat after they are sinful: they had "violated the observance of Lent"¹⁵ and neglected to celebrate one of the important holy days of the year.¹⁶ In another episode, avarice is the cause of the Piast army's failure when they are blinded by the prospect of plundering and looting.¹⁷ Whilst his troops can falter, in the *Gesta* Bolesław is the key to God's plan for humanity and he plays an instrumental role in God's design for Poland and Christendom. "If God were not with this man" claims the author of the *Gesta*, "he would never grant him so great a victory over the pagans."¹⁸ The author effectively fuses the Piast dynastic policy of securing the Polish northern frontier with the goal of bringing the

¹² Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the writing of history, 400–1500* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 145; *Dying for the faith, killing for the faith: Old-Testament faith-warriors (1 and 2 Maccabees) in historical perspective*, ed. Gabriela Signori, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 206 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Stephen J. Spencer, *Emotions in a crusading context, 1095–1291* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 66–67.

¹³ *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, vol. 180 (Parisii: Garnier, 1902), cols 1064–1066; "Historia Iherosolymitana. Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium, ab anno Domini MXXCV usque ad annum MCXXVII, auctore domno Fulcherio Carnotensi," in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, vol. 3 (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 1866), 319; *Fulcheri Carnotensis Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. and trans. Martha Evelyn McGinty (London: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941 (repr.: New York: AMS Press, 1978)), 9–10. See also Ane Bysted, *The crusade indulgence: text, context, and culture*, History of warfare 103 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 213–217.

¹⁴ *Namque Deus, christianorum conservator, sueque vigilie vindicator, paucorum fidelium audaciam in multorum perniciem paganorum suscitavit, quibus irruentibus dominice diei in gloria sue potencie brachio triumphavit*, see: *Gesta principum*, ed. Schaer, Book II, 19: 154.

¹⁵ *Quod flagellum Deus, ut credimus, omnipotens in transgressoribus observancie quadagesimalis ad correccionem exercuit, sicut quibusdam postea de ipso liberatis periculo revelavit*, see: *ibid.*, Book II, 2: 120.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Book II, 3: 120.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Book II, 28: 166–68.

¹⁸ *Nisi Deus hunc hominem adiuveret, nunquam tantam de paganis victoriam ei daret*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 12: 242.

Cross to these pagan nations, the “viper race” who had most obstinately refused evangelisation.¹⁹

As the *Gesta* relates, in the aftermath of the siege of Czarnków in 1108 the army of God is victorious against powerless pagan deities. Its leader, Bolesław, emerges as a true Christian ruler who through the conversion of Pomeranian elite destroys their sinful pride, and offers them God’s peace. Bolesław delivers salvation to the pagans and thus, according to the author of the *Gesta*, possesses the qualities of a warrior of Christ.²⁰

The Christian ruler, Bolesław, proclaims the author of the *Gesta*, extinguishes the Pomeranian error and idolatry.²¹ Again, God responds to Bolesław’s prayer when asking for “God’s favour” and thus the “idolatry of the Pomeranians and their martial pride be crushed.”²² The author of the *Gesta* echoes the descriptions of the capture of Jerusalem by the Christians in 1099 and emphasizes the enormous size of casualties amongst the pagans in his description of the battle of Nakło on 10 August 1109.²³ In the *Gesta* the bloody victory is gifted to the Piast armies by the mercy of God.

The author of the *Gesta* sets the Christian Poles and the pagan Pomeranians apart both in terms of religion and civilisation. The Pomeranians are persistently described as pagans,²⁴ foreigners²⁵ and barbarians²⁶ who are “in want of cultivation

¹⁹ *Viperalis progenies*, see: *ibid.*, Book, Prohem: 12; *ibid.*, Book II, 33: 181. Cf. Güttner-Sporzyński, *Poland, Holy War*, 98.

²⁰ *Igitur inpiger Boleslauus iterum Pomoraniam est ingressus et castellum obsessurus Carnkou magnis viribus est aggressus; machinis diversi generis preparatis, turribusque castellana munitione preminencioribus elevatis, armis tamdiu ac instrumentis oppidum impugnavit, donec illud facta dedicione suo dominio mancipavit. Insuper etiam ad fidem multos ab infidelitate revocavit, ipsumque dominum castelli de fonte baptismatis elevavit. Audientes autem hoc pagani, ipseque dominus paganorum, sic facile videlicet corruisse contumaciam Charncorum, ipse dux Boleslauuo primus omnium se inclinavit, sed eorum neuter longo tempore fidelitatem observavit*, see: *Gesta principum*, ed. Schaer, Book II, 44: 200.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Book III, 1: 224.

²² *Hodie, Deo favente, sanctoque Laurencio deprecante, Pomoranorum ydolatria ac militaris superbia vestris ensibus conteretur*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 1: 224.

²³ *De christianis ibi quidam probi milites cadunt, paganorum vero de XL milibus decem milia vix evadunt. Testor Deum, ope cuius sanctumque Laurentium, prece cuius facta fuerit ista cedes. Admirabantur, qui aderant, quomodo tam subito a militibus minus mille peracta fuerit tanta strages. Dicuntur enim ipsi Pomorani certo numero computasse de suis ibi XXVII milia corruisse, quod in paludibus interessent, nec illi quidem sic evadere potuissent*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 1: 224.

²⁴ For example *Pagani*, see: *ibid.*, Book II, 1: 118.

²⁵ *Gentiles*, see: *ibid.*, Book I, 25: 92. Cf. *ibid.*, Book I, Prohem: 12; *ibid.*, Book I, 6: 32.

²⁶ *Barbari*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 1: 224. *Natio barbarorum*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 1: 224. *Regio barbarorum*, *ibid.*, Book II, 15: 140. Also *barbarorum gentilium naciones*, see: *ibid.*, Book I, Prohem: 12.

or refinement.²⁷ They are motivated by their aggressiveness²⁸, contumacy²⁹ and natural faithlessness.³⁰ This faithlessness is the source of Pomeranian treachery, deceit and pride. The *Gesta* highlights that the vainglory of the Pomeranians must be routed by the power of the Christian sword.³¹ Indeed, the author comments that pride is the reason why the Pomeranians oppose the advances of the Christian army.³² The eradication of pride as a mortal sin contributes to the Poles' just cause to conclude the holy wars against such a "rebellious tribe" in accordance with the teachings of Saint Augustine.³³

The author of the *Gesta*, influenced by the eleventh-century reformers for whom the crusade was the culmination of the idea of holy war, presented the Polish conquest of Pomerania as a holy enterprise conducted by a Christian dynasty to eradicate pagan idolatry. Through adoption of the elements of the just war principles such as a just cause, right intention, and legitimate authority, the author of the *Gesta* legitimised the use of sacred violence against neighbours of Poland and communicated to the reader the God's command by such actions by the Piast dynasty.

Chronica Polonorum

Commissioned by Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy (the Just) the *Chronica Polonorum* was written in the final decades of the twelfth century by Vincentius, a prelate elected in 1208 as bishop of Cracow and one of the council fathers of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.³⁴ The second of the earliest Polish narrative sources, the

²⁷ *Inculci*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, Epist.: 212.

²⁸ *Ferocitas*, see: *ibid.*, Book I, Prohem: 12; *ibid.*, Book II, 42: 194.

²⁹ *Contumaces*, see: *ibid.*, Book II, 1: 116; *ibid.*, Book II, 48: 206.

³⁰ *Perfidia, prima perfidia, naturalis perfidia*, see: *ibid.*, Book I, Prohem: 12; *ibid.*, Book II, 42: 194; *ibid.*, Book, 48: 204.

³¹ *Militaris superbia*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 1: 224.

³² *Superbiam sunt erecti*, see: *ibid.*, Book II, 3: 120.

³³ *Insurgendi fiduciam*, see: *ibid.*, Book II, 1: 118. *Rebelles, gens rebellis*, see: *ibid.*, Book II, 1: 118; *ibid.*, Book II, 48: 206. Cf. David J. Macqueen, "Augustine on Superbia: The Historical Background and Sources of his Doctrine," *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 34 (1977): 193–211. As opposed to war which is motivated by "the love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance and the lust of power." *Nocendi cupiditas, ulciscendi crudelitas, impacatus atque implacabilis animus, feritas rebellandi, libido dominandi*, see: *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, vol. 42 (Parisii: Garnier, 1865), XXII: 74, col. 447.

³⁴ Vincentius is known in the Polish historiography as *Wincenty Kadłubek* or *Mistrz Wincenty zwany Kadłubkiem*. The attribution of the patronymic "Kadłubek" of unknown origin does not assist in the identification of his origins. Brygida Kürbis, "Wstęp" in *Magistrii Vincentii Chronicon Polonorum*, ed. and trans. ead., Biblioteka Narodowa, Seria I 277 (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1992), III–CXXXI; *Writing history in medieval Poland: Bishop Vincentius of Cracow and the "Chronica Polonorum"*, ed. Darius von Güttner-Sporzyński, *Cursor Mundi* 28 (Turn-

work communicates the information about three military expeditions, each of which was directed against pagan Prussian tribes neighbouring the Piast realm to the north east. These three accounts, I argue, constitute the only extant description of the Polish dynasty's holy wars against the Prussians concurrent with the Second and Third Crusades. The first of these expeditions related in the *Chronica Polonorum* took place in November–December 1147, the second in October 1166, and the third in 1192.

The first of the expeditions needs to be understood within the political situation of the Piast realm at the time of the Second Crusade.³⁵ The reins of power rested in the hands of Bolesław IV Kędzierzawy (the Curly) who successfully deposed and exiled his half-brother Władysław II in 1146 and claimed suzerainty of Poland. In July–August 1147 the Piast's armies participated in the Wendish Crusade in order to counteract Conrad III of Germany's support for exiled Władysław II.³⁶ In the winter months of 1147, Bolesław IV led his armies north of the Polish province of Mazovia in order to "subjugate the lands of the Prussians"³⁷ who, according to the author of *Chronica Polonorum*, were "dangerous not so much to the body as to the soul."³⁸

Vincentius draws on the ideas of Bernard of Clairvaux to explain the action against the Prussians and points to the pagan threat to the salvation of the Poles. Bernard of Clairvaux, who preached crusade against the pagans in northern Europe, had forbidden the crusaders of the Wendish Crusade to make any truce with the pagans until "they shall be either converted or wiped out."³⁹ Vincentius's ac-

hout: Brepols, 2017). Cf. *The Fourth Lateran Council and the Crusade Movement: The Impact of the Council of 1215 on Latin Christendom and the East*, eds. Jessalynn Lea Bird and Damian J. Smith, *Outremer Studies in the Crusades and the Latin East* 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).

³⁵ The reign of Bolesław IV is analysed in detail in Magdalena Biniś-Szkopek, *Bolesław IV Kędzierzawy – książe Mazowsza i princeps* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2009).

³⁶ *Annales Magdeburgenses*, ed. Georg H. Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores* 16 (Hannover: Hahn, 1859), 187. Cf. Mihai Dragnea, *The Wendish Crusade, 1147: the development of crusading ideology in the twelfth century* (London: Routledge, 2020). Cf. *Joannis Długossii Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, Liber 5–6, eds. Krystyna Pieradzka, Zofia Kozłowska-Budkowa, and Danuta Turkowska (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1973), 40–41. There Długosz constructs his own account of the expedition *In subsidium autem Terre Sanctae*.

³⁷ *Precipuum uero industrie studium in populandis Getharum prouinciis Boleslaus inpendit*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book III, 30.14: 126.

³⁸ *Quos non tam personis quam animabus constat esse infestos*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 30.14: 126.

³⁹ *Donec, auxiliante Deo, aut ritus ipse, aut natio deleatur*, see: *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, vol. 8, eds. Jean Leclercq, Charles H. Talbot, and Henri-Marie Rochais (Rome: Cistercienses, 1977), 433 (doc. 457), dated after 13 March 1147; *The Letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. and trans. Bruno Scott James (Stroud: Sutton, 1998, 2nd edition), 10; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What*

counts reveal the same attitude to forcible conversion, as presented earlier in the *Gesta principum Polonorum* with respect to the conquest of Pomerania by the Piast dynasty. Vincentius's narrative employs Saint Augustine's interpretation of the parable of the great banquet in the New Testament (Luke 14:15–23) where the poor men are compelled by the wealthy to take part in the supper and gain nourishment, against their own inclination.⁴⁰

For Vincentius, Bolesław's actions are justified because the Poles offered salvation to the Prussians by forcing them to be baptised. Vincentius proclaims that even "the pretext of justifiable fear" does not free one from a vow. He explicitly refers to baptism accepted "under compulsion" and justifies its effects because "often one benefits from actions against one's own will."⁴¹ Bolesław's strategy of forcible Christianisation is evident from the opening of the campaign in Prussia. The author of the *Chronica Polonorum* reports that once Bolesław IV had defeated the Prussians "after many battles" and decreed that "those who would choose the Christian manner of worship would not be harmed" but those "who would not renounce the sacrilegious heathen rites" would be killed.⁴² Vincentius reveals that the threat of force had the opposite effect on Prussians' adherence to Christianity: their faith was transient like water vapor, the more it was "forced upon them, the more transitory it was."⁴³ Indeed, concludes Vincentius, the apostates, like "slippery frogs" soon "immersed themselves in the filth of deep-rooted idolatry."⁴⁴

Were the Crusades? (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 3 edition), 10. Cf. Kristin Skottki, "Until the Full Number of Gentiles Has Come In: Exegesis and Prophecy in St Bernard's Crusade-Related Writings," in *The uses of the Bible in Crusader Sources*, eds. Elizabeth Lapina and Nicholas Morton, Commentaria 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 236–272.

⁴⁰ Hans-Dietrich Kahl, "Compellere intrare: Die Wendenpolitik Bruns von Querfurt im Lichte hochmittelalterlichen Missions- und Völkerrechts," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 4, no. 1 (1955): 161–193; Jonathan Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an Act of Love," in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance H. Berman (New York: Routledge, 2005), 53.

⁴¹ *Est autem, ubi nec iusto metus pretextu rescindi potest obligatio; puta Christiane fidem religionis cum quisquam etiam coactus susceperit, tenere tenetur, quamvis nemo sit cogendus ad id, ad quod inutiliter cogitur, quamvis coacta servitia Dominus aspernetur, quamvis non sit beneficium, quod ingeritur recusanti, nec sacrificium quod exprimitur inuito. Sepe tamen invititis beneficia prestantur*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book III, 13.3: 99.

⁴² *Quorum quibusdam uix tandem post multa bellorum discrimina subactis, hoc edictum iussit promulgari, ut qui Christiane characterem religionis elegisset, absolutissima donatus libertate, nullum in personis, nullum in fortuna pateretur dispendium; qui autem sacrilegum gentilitatis ritum deserere neglexisset, ultimo capitis infortunio indilate plecteretur*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 30.14: 126.

⁴³ *Set ad modicum parens vapor illorum fuit religio, tanto videlicet brevior quanto coactor*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 30.15: 126.

⁴⁴ *Mox enim salax illa ranuncolorum lubricitas in apostasie resilit gurgitem, inolitis idolatrie sordibus obscenius immergitur*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 30.15: 126.

Contrary to the exhortations of Bernard of Clairvaux for Christian rulers not to accept any truce with the pagans until their conversion was secured, Bolesław IV exacted no punishment for “the crime of apostasy as long as they [the Prussians] continued paying tax.”⁴⁵ Vincentius sees Bolesław’s indolence as the sign of future failure because “Bolesław thought that it will suffice if they [the Prussians] give back to the prince what is the prince’s, even if they refused God, what is God’s.”⁴⁶ In the *Chronica Polonorum* God’s judgement is swift as in the Old Testament and as the Prussians “lay waste as wolves carrying off prey”⁴⁷ divine justice exacts punishment on the one “who in sluggish idleness did not hasten with zeal in God’s business” and thus Bolesław receives “more severe tribulation when he awoke from his deep sleep.”⁴⁸

The awakening of Bolesław comes with the tragic death of his brother, Henry of Sandomierz on 18 October 1166 during an expedition to bring the end to the Prussian rebellion.⁴⁹ The surprising death of the prince who represented among Piast dynasts the qualities of the archetypal Christian warrior was a tragic loss for the dynasty but also a political defeat.⁵⁰ Henry was the only twelfth-century Piast who travelled to the Holy Land and has been tentatively identified as the leader of a Polish contingent during the Second Crusade. His support for the military religious orders is documented by the charter which established the first Hospitaller commandery in Poland.⁵¹ The *Chronica Polonorum* does not reveal any details

⁴⁵ *Nec enim ulla exigitur apostatici ultio piaculi, dummodo salva sit tributalium reuerentia pensio-num. Set qui salutis fidem, qui salutare fidei rescindere fedus non horruit, coacte servitutis pactum qua, obsecro, devotione custodiet?*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 30.16: 127.

⁴⁶ Cf. Matthew 22: 21. *Sufficere siquidem sibi arbitratus est Boleslaus, si quod principis est dependatur principi, licet quod Dei est denegetur Deo*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book III, 30.16: 127.

⁴⁷ *Non solum tributa non dependunt, set contingentia queque occupant, occupata diripiunt, direpta luporum instar absportant*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 30.17: 127.

⁴⁸ *Unde factum est, ut quem zelus Dei molliter torpentem non movit, durior saltem tribulationis ictus stertentem excitaret*, see: *ibid.*, Book III, 30.17: 127.

⁴⁹ *Dux Hinricus interfectus est cum exercitu suo in bello in Prussica*, see: *Annales Cracovienses priores cum kalendario*, ed. Zofia Kozłowska-Budkowa, Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Nova Series 5 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978), 62. *Dux Henricus cum exercitu suo interficitur in bello in Prussia*, see: *Annales Poloniae Maioris*, ed. Brygida Kürbis, Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Nova Series 6 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1962), 114.

⁵⁰ For the details of the hypothesis that Henry travelled to the Holy Land twice (1147 and 1153/1154) see Mikołaj Gładysz, *The Forgotten Crusaders. Poland and the Crusader Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 98–120; Güttner-Sporzyński, *Poland, Holy War*, 135–160. Cf. Agnieszka Teterycz-Puzio, *Henryk Sandomierski (1126/1133–118 X 1166)* (Kraków: Avalon, 2009).

⁵¹ Güttner-Sporzyński, *Poland, Holy War*, 138–141.

of the expedition beyond commentary on the shocking defeat of Polish troops in Prussia. Vincentius claims that he is literally lost for words and declines to enumerate losses of the Polish armies, perhaps in a deliberate strategy to distance himself from Bolesław's inaction and his long acceptance of the Prussian apostasy.⁵² The death of the Jerusalem pilgrim Henry of Sandomierz was the fatal blow to the dynasty's aspirations of incorporating lands of the Prussians into their realm and the Prussian acceptance of Christianity.

The third of the holy war episodes reported by the *Chronica Polonorum* is the expedition led, a quarter of the century after the death of Henry of Sandomierz, by Bolesław IV's youngest brother and successor, Kazimierz II.⁵³ The author of the *Chronica Polonorum* depicts an episode totally unknown from any other sources aimed at "taming the ferocity"⁵⁴ of one of the Prussian tribes whom he identifies as "Pollexians"⁵⁵ who inhabit inaccessible lands defended by "the expansive forests, dense bush and bituminous swamps."⁵⁶ The identification of the singular tribe is more remarkable because only very scant information has been preserved about the pagan societies of the southern Baltic littoral. Vincentius seems to be more informed about this expedition and its target perhaps because it was led by his patron Kazimierz II and as the chaplain of the Duke Vincentius was at his side. He reports on the speedy progress of the Piast army who crosses dense forests in three days.⁵⁷ In order to maximise the reader's attention to the expedition, Vincentius characterises the Pollexians as "very savage" and "more ferocious than all wild animals."⁵⁸ Kazimierz II, as a Christian ruler, writes Vincentius, will defend himself and his warriors against the pagans by participating before the battle in holy mass with the "whole army receiving the Host of salvation and the Holy Sacrifice."⁵⁹ The

⁵² *Quorum nomina, personas, generositatem, prosapiam, dignitates, strennuitatem, industriam, fortunas nec superficetenus quidem cursu attingere, nedum disserendo exequi omnis disertissimorum sufficeret facundia, quos lamentationum varietates, a diversis diverso modo deplorate, usque hodie lugubriter deplangunt*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book III, 30.21: 127.

⁵³ Józef Dobosz, *Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2011).

⁵⁴ *In Pollexianorum ceruicosam feritatem animosius accingitur*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book IV, 19.1: 166.

⁵⁵ *Sunt autem Pollexiani Getharum uel Prussorum genus*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.2: 166. For a discussion of the identification of the Pollexians, see Jerzy Nalepa, "Połeksianie (Pollexiani) – plemię jaćwieskie u północno-wschodnich granic Polski," *Rocznik Białostocki* 7 (1967): 7–33.

⁵⁶ *Propter uastissimas solitudinum intercapedines, propter concretissimas nemorum densitates, propter bituminata inaccessibilis palustria*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book IV, 19.2: 166.

⁵⁷ *Illa subinde incommensabili heremi uastitate trium naturalium dierum cursu citatissimo iux emensa*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.4: 166.

⁵⁸ *Gens atrocissima, omni ferarum inmanitate truculentior*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.2: 166.

⁵⁹ *Catholicus princeps omnem exercitum salutaris Hostie ante omnia sacramento confoveri sacri ministro sacrificii viro reverendo Plocensium antistite*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.4: 166.

Poles are facing “enemies of the Holy Faith”⁶⁰ and will act “against the shameful idolaters.”⁶¹ They are advised to trust God rather than their weapons.

Vincentius magnifies their danger by referring to them as the *Saldinistas*, the kinsmen of Sultan Saladin (c. 1137–1193).⁶² Vincentius describes Saladin as the “most obstinate enemy of the Holy Sepulchre”⁶³ and therefore places the campaign against the Pollexians on the same level as a crusader expedition to Jerusalem.⁶⁴ The erudition of the author and his knowledge of contemporary events demonstrate that the Piast court was not only aware of the events affecting the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem but took steps to participate in the broader Christian action against those seen as the threat to Christendom. In order to set apart the pagan Pollexians from the Poles, Vincentius outlines the military strategies of the pagans. They do not give battle; they hide behind natural defences and trust in deception than in force of their weapons. Deception is the evil trait which characterises the prince of Pollexians. He initially negotiates with Kazimierz II, “admits that he has suffered defeat” and asks for mercy as well as gives several hostages.⁶⁵

When the author reports on the success of Kazimierz’s expedition, he claims that the Pollexian leaders “humbled themselves at the feet of Kazimierz.” He demonstrates the depth of their defeat by writing of ritualistic posture of the Pollexians’ ruler who acknowledges Kazimierz’s superiority “with his neck bent.” Kazimierz’s victory over the pagans is complete when the Pollexians beg at the Piast’s feet “for their own salvation and that of their fellow tribesmen.”⁶⁶

The author of the *Chronica Polonorum* communicates the three instances as holy wars conducted by the Piast dynasty of Poland. Their conduct, however, was undertaken without explicit authorisation from the papacy nor was there the granting of indulgences, which places them among many of the proto-crusading

⁶⁰ *Contra sacre professionis hostes*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.4: 166.

⁶¹ *Contra spurcissimos idolatras pugnatueros*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.4: 166.

⁶² *Decebat enim contra Saldanistas*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.4: 166. See also: Jonathan Phillips, *The life and legend of the sultan Saladin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

⁶³ *Arocissimum Dominici sepulcri hostem Saladinum*, see: *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, Book IV, 160.10: 161.

⁶⁴ *Catholicus princeps omnem exercitum salutaris Hostie ante omnia sacramento confoueri sacri ministro sacrificii uiro reuerendo Plocensium antistite. Decebat enim contra Saldinistas, contra sacre professionis hostes, contra spurcissimos idolatras pugnatueros, plus in armis fidei confidere, quam in martialis armature fiducia*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.4: 166.

⁶⁵ *Horum princeps Pollexius dolo ad Kazimirum accedit, uictum se fatetur, misereri suorum postulat, famulatio suscipi obsecrat, tributaria sese obsequela obstringit, in fidei pignus uades aliquot seu ob-sides exhibet, plures exhibiturum pollicetur*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.7: 167.

⁶⁶ *Donec omni pene conflagrata provincia, tam princeps illorum quam magistratuuum potestates, ad Kazimiri scabellum pronis ceruicibus prosternuntur, tam suam quam reliquiarum salutem deprecantes*, see: *ibid.*, Book IV, 19.16: 168.

expeditions conducted in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries along the Baltic shorelines.

Annales seu cronici incliti regni Poloniae

During his education at the University of Cracow, Jan Długosz (1415–1480) attended lectures given by Jan of Dąbrówka. In his lectures on rhetoric, Jan of Dąbrówka often used examples taken from the *Chronica Polonorum* and offered his own extensive commentary to the work by Vincentius Bishop of Cracow.⁶⁷ When Jan Długosz started his own great work sometime later, the *Annales seu cronici incliti regni Poloniae*, he also used Vincentius's text to establish the chronology of the early history of Poland and construct his own version of the history of the realm of the Poles. Długosz wrote about approximately five hundred years of history of the region and many have drawn comparisons between his work and the *Chronicles* of Jean Froissart and the *Memoires* of Philippe de Commines. When subjected to critical analysis Długosz's writing reveals his own vision of history, and when placed in the context of other sources Długosz's commentary is an active intervention into the historical record and thus the manufacture of history and deliberate amplification.⁶⁸

In the mid fifteenth century the invading Ottoman Turks were sweeping across Europe. In this context, communication about and celebration of the Polish twelfth-century crusading movement became an imperative for the Polish court.⁶⁹ Jan Długosz's need to attribute the Poles with a long tradition of involvement in Christian holy war influenced his accounts of the twelfth century war against the pagans. In the absence of details in the *Chronica Polonorum* he chose to present the only twelfth century Piast *crucesignatus* who travelled to the Holy Land, Duke

⁶⁷ Paul W. Knoll, "Jan Długosz, 1480–1980," *The Polish Review* 27, no. 1/2 (1982): 3–28; Marian Zwiercan, "Historia badań nad Jana z Dąbrówki 'Komentarzem do «Kroniki polskiej» mistrza Wincentego zwanego Kadłubkiem," in *Komentarz Jana z Dąbrówki do Kroniki Biskupa Wincentego*, eds. Andrzej Dąbrówka and Mikołaj Olszewski, *Studia Staropolskie Series Nova* 42 (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2015), 15–27; id., "A History of the Manuscripts of the *Chronica Polonorum*: The Influence of Vincentius on History Writing," in *Writing history in medieval Poland: Bishop Vincentius of Cracow and the "Chronica Polonorum"*, ed. Dariusz von Güttner-Sporzyński, *Cursor Mundi* 28 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 63–78.

⁶⁸ Güttner-Sporzyński, *Poland, Holy War*, 136–159 (especially Chapter 5). Cf. Jerzy Grygiel, "Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia wobec polityki krucjatowej papieżstwa w pierwszej połowie XIV wieku," *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne* 123 (1997): 31–44.

⁶⁹ Jerzy Grygiel, "The crusading movement in the foreign policy of Bohemia and Poland in the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth century," in *Holy war in late medieval and early modern East-Central Europe*, eds. Janusz Smolucha, John Jefferson, and Andrzej Wadas (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2017), 161–172.

Henry of Sandomierz, as the perfect Christian prince. Moved by love of God, abandoning his earthly possessions, Henry followed the way of the cross. Henry's tales are credited by Długosz with spreading of the news about "the Holy Land, and of the fierce and bloody battles being fought in its defence."⁷⁰ According to Długosz, Henry, like those who returned home from the Holy Land, carried with him the conviction of having experienced an unprecedented and epic event. The very fact that he survived was seen as a miracle that could only be explained by God's guidance.

Jan Długosz dated the Piast expedition for 1154 using the entry about Henry's pilgrimage recorded in the *Annals of Lubinenses*.⁷¹ He associated Henry's journey to the Holy Land with Henry's "honouring of the Holy Sepulchre" and the duke's enlisting with the "army of Baldwin, king of Jerusalem" as to "very gallantly fulfilling the knightly duty of fighting the Saracens."⁷² The author of the *Annales* ascribes to Henry a "dream of a martyr's crown"⁷³ suggesting that his devotion to the defence of Christendom was inspired by his "lack of regard for earthly concerns" as he strived for "higher causes."⁷⁴ In this account of Henry's "whole year in the Holy Land" the scale and the nature of fighting of the Saracens is revealed by references to the death of "many of his knights" in battle.⁷⁵ According to Długosz, when Henry returned to Poland "unharméd" he was received "with great reverence and sincere joy."⁷⁶ Whilst the author of the *Chronica Polonorum* did not refer to Henry as a crusader, or even as a pious and devout prince, Jan Długosz communicates these qualities to indicate the long involvement of the Polish dynasts in the

⁷⁰ *Cuius relacione et qualitas, condicio statusque Terre Sancte et quam acerrima quamque fortissima cum barbaris pro illius defensione agantur prelia, cepit vulgari et diffundi*, see: *Joannis Dlugossii*, 5–6, eds. Pieradzka, Kozłowska-Budkowa, and Turkowska, 53.

⁷¹ *Henricus dux de Sandomir ivit Iherosolimam*, see: "Annales Lubinenses," in *Roczniki wielkopolskie*, ed. Brygida Kürbis, Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Nova Series 6 (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1962), 113. Cf. Tomisław Giergiel, *Rycerstwo ziemi sandomierskiej: podstawy kształtowania się rycerstwa sandomierskiego do połowy XIII wieku* (Warszawa: DiG, 2004), 56–57; Gładysz, *The Forgotten Crusaders*, 99–106.

⁷² *Postquam vero Terram Sanctam incolumis attigit, Sancto Sepulchro adorato milicie Baldwin Iherosolimorum regis se coniungit fortissimique militis in certaminibus cum Saracenis habitis opera exercens, martirii palmam se suspirabat adepturum*, see: *Joannis Dlugossii*, 5–6, eds. Pieradzka, Kozłowska-Budkowa, and Turkowska, 52–53.

⁷³ *Martirii palmam se suspirabat adepturum*, see: *ibid.*, 52–53.

⁷⁴ *Sublimioris etenim animi illum ceperat cura magnusque animus terrenis et infimis contemptis, magna quotidie, quibus et virtus enitescere et propiciari Divinitas posset, meditabatur*, see: *ibid.*, 52.

⁷⁵ *Anno integro illic exacto aliquibus militibus suis, partim in conflictibus huiusmodi occisis, partim intemperie eris absumptis in patriam sospes rediit*, see: *ibid.*, 52–53.

⁷⁶ *Partim intemperie eris absumptis in patriam sospes rediit, et tam a germanis suis Boleslao et Myeczslao quam univervis Polonie optimatibus maximo honore et animorum gratulacione exceptus est*, see: *ibid.*, 52–53.

cause of crusade perhaps in order to build the credentials of the dynasty and the actions expected of them by the demands of contemporary threats to Christendom. Długosz highlights the achievements of Henry for the crusading movements by reminding his readers that Henry also established the Hospitaller Commandery in Zagość, the first of the military religious orders' outposts in the region.⁷⁷

Jan Długosz's communication of the revered crusader cause in his deliberate expansion of the story of 1154 pilgrimage by pious Duke Henry of Sandomierz is followed by his construction of the events and Henry's death in the 1166 holy war against the Prussians. Almost certainly known to Długosz from Bishop Vincentius of Cracow's narrative of the pagan ambush, which had led to Henry's death, he presents the death of "the most famous prince Henryk of Sandomierz"⁷⁸ as a vivid account of "fighting in the line of battle."⁷⁹ According to Długosz, Henry was repeatedly wounded and died with many of his excellent knights from countless wounds. This perfect Christian knight "gave up his soul rather than discontinue the war" against the Prussians, the Saracens of the north. Henry "having faced the adversary bravely" writes Jan Długosz "preferred to die than to live in dishonour."⁸⁰ He died together with the knights who were "bogged down and drowned in the deep, muddy water." Długosz finishes his account with the emphatic comparison of the death suffered by Christians to "sacrificial offerings" as they "died pierced with enemy's spears."⁸¹ The account of the 1166 expedition concludes with the explanation that, in this resounding defeat at the hands of the Prussians, God had tested the Poles.⁸²

The judgement of God invoked by Jan Długosz for the unsuccessful action of the Polish princes aimed at subjugating the pagan Prussians follows the estab-

⁷⁷ Ibid., 53. Cf. Andrzej Tomaszewski, "Sub habitu templariorum – porta occidentalis ecclesiae Oppatoviensis," in *Kultura średniowieczna i staropolska: studia ofiarowane Aleksandrowi Gieysztorowi w pięćdziesięciolecie pracy naukowej*, ed. Danuta Gawinowa (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1991), 295–303.

⁷⁸ *Princeps celeberrimus Henricus Sandomiriensis*, see: *Joannis Dlugossii*, 5–6, eds. Pieradzka, Kozłowska-Budkowa, and Turkowska, 84.

⁷⁹ *In acie pugnans*, see: *ibid.*, 84.

⁸⁰ *Cum pluribus insignibus militibus occisus plurimisque vulneribus consertus prius spiritum quam bellum deposuit prestabatque per virtutem mori quam ad ignominiam vivere, et armis nequicquam tutantibus transfossus in terram moribundus defluxit*, see: *ibid.*, 84.

⁸¹ *Et licet secundum et item tertium atque quartum agmen primo auxilium laturum iniussu ducum et prefectorum accurrisset, fere tamen singuli, qui incaucius studio suis succurrendi erumpebant aut scenosis involvebantur, suffocabanturque gurgitibus aut hostilibus hastis et cuspidibus, in mortem propriam caeca rabie ruentes, quasi quaedam victime excepti confossique obtruncabantur; neque enim relinquebatur ullum aut cadendi aut effugiendi in tanta rerum iniquitate spacium, Pruthenis et a fronte, tergoque, et a leva, dextraque urgentibus et iacula vibrantibus in inclusos*, see: *ibid.*, 84.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 85.

lished trope of the crusader narratives. In communication of the holy war against the Prussians, Jan Długosz's view responds to the contemporary Saracen threat faced by Poland. Therefore, Długosz's narrative extends beyond the religious justification of war and incorporates Henry's love of his country, which was to ensure victory for the nation.⁸³ His narrative, however, referred to Henry's expedition to the Holy Land as the most charismatic way of achieving penance and his descriptions of the dangers of war thus highlighted the extraordinary penitential merit secured by Henry as a pilgrim and knight of Christ.

CONCLUSION

Each of the accounts presented by the authors commissioned by the Polish court was a part of a deliberate attempt to communicate engagement of the dynasty in holy war. The examination of these accounts demonstrates that each needs to be examined in the context in which it was written. Moreover, the approaches of the authors suggest that holy war embraced by the Piasts was a dynamic concept which evolved in response to the political conditions of the Piast realm: far away from the pilgrim routes to Jerusalem and facing their own pagan threat.

A twelfth century writer claimed that "God has instituted in our time holy wars, so that the order of knights and the crowd running in their wake [...] might find a new way of gaining salvation."⁸⁴ The Piast dynasty and their knighthood proved to be as much influenced by the idea of crusade as were other peoples across Christendom. From the early twelfth century the Piasts commissioned written works which, in addition to presenting the dynastic history of Poland, also included accounts of the Polish participation in Christian holy wars through variety of means and in geographically different places.

Polish narrative sources present the instances of holy wars fought by the Poles according to a universal formula for holy war against enemies of Christendom. They also demonstrate that the Piast response to the idea of holy war underwent a change during the twelfth century. In the first quarter of the twelfth century the conquest of Pomerania was presented as a war *deo auctore* in the *Gesta* according to the principles of just war theology.

During the Second Crusade, the Piasts, who participated in the Wendish Crusade under the command of Mieszko III (July–August 1147), took part in the

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁸⁴ *Dei gesta per Francos et cinq autres textes*, ed. Robert B. C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis 127A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 87.

Prussian expedition led by Bolesław IV (November–December 1147) vividly presented in the *Chronica Polonorum*, whose author outlined that engagement under the influence of the ideas of Bernard of Clairvaux, who forbade the truce with the infidel until they relent and accept Christianity. Vincentius also strongly admonished the Piasts for the inconsistency of their approach to conversion of pagans and framed the October 1166 punitive expeditions against the Prussian apostates as a failure to obey God's command. The 1192 expedition was placed by Vincentius on the same footing as the crusades to the Holy Land by marking the pagan tribe of Pollexians as the kinsman of Sultan Saladin and therefore translating the threat posed by the Muslims to Jerusalem to the borderlands of Prussia and Poland.

Jan Długosz based his writings on the accounts of the *Gesta principum Polonorum*, the *Chronica Polonorum* and other extant primary evidence; he gave the Piast tradition of participating in Christian holy war coherence, intellectual weight and literary frame. Like any other narrative source, Długosz's commentary is an active intervention into the historical record and a deliberate elaboration. In the service of the Polish Court, his remaking of the earlier accounts was adorned with the facts either corroborated by his wide historiographical knowledge or appeared on the pages of his *Annales* as creation of his intellect and the demands of the times he lived in.

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