

# Introduction

The subject of this book is the idea of the unification of the Kingdom of Poland, known also as the idea of the rebirth of the kingdom or the unification ideology. The text centres around the history of that idea: around its genesis, development and functioning both before the unification itself, in the period of fragmentation, and later on, in the restored kingdom of the last Piasts and the monarchy of the first Jagiellons. The unification of the Polish lands did not end with the rebirth of the Kingdom of Poland at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The process lasted till the latter half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and its idea remained topical many years after the coronations of Przemysław II and of Władysław the Elbow.

The book belongs primarily in the field of the history of ideas and the study of source texts. Because the idea of the unification was formulated the earliest, and used the longest, in Polish mediaeval historiography, the analysis centres around historiographic texts broadly defined, i.e. annals, chronicles or *scripta minora*, and the lives of saints, that is, hagiography. Source criticism will also be applied to other types of evidence, both written and iconographic, examined by various auxiliary sciences of history. We will refer to these sources as an aid, so that we may read the historiographic and hagiographic texts more fully and present their social reception, i.e. the cultural areas where familiarity with the idea of the unification was discernible, as well as the channels of social communication through which the idea was transmitted. However, we are not going to discuss all the relevant written or iconographic sources, because the scope of this book does not allow for such exhaustive treatment; the subject deserves a separate monograph. Our focus here is the idea of the unification in historiography.

To present the idea, we are going to analyse the content and ideological functions of individual texts. Apart from sources directly concerning the rebirth and unification of the Kingdom of Poland, the idea is related to such topics as the unity and the borders of Poland or the nature of the Polish state as *regnum*. Moreover, the concept of *regnum Poloniae* is inseparably linked to stories about the Polish

crown and the Polish kings, probably the most important ideological motif in many historiographic works.

The scholarly discussion on the idea of the unification has so far involved the same small group of texts, with no attempt to go beyond them. It may be useful, therefore, to introduce some new sources, or perhaps not new, but entirely ignored in this context. We will also consider the dynamics of social transformations, as well as the way the ideas conveyed in the most important works of Polish mediaeval historiography reached the elites of that time, namely the breviary tradition.

The author presented his preliminary research into this subject in his paper *Funkcje i treści ideowe dziejopisarstwa polskiego wieków średnich* (The ideological functions and content of Polish historiography in the Middle Ages) at the symposium on the *Theatrum ceremoniale* in 1998 and, from a slightly different perspective, in his paper *Król w średniowiecznym dziejopisarstwie polskim* (The king in Polish mediaeval historiography) at the symposium “Rex Poloniae: The King in Poland in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries” in 2003. The theories proposed at those two symposia aroused much interest, but they were not submitted for publication in the conference proceedings. Many comments on the idea of the unification and the rebirth of the Kingdom of Poland have also made their way into the recently published article *Królewska pieczęć Przemysła II i jej historiograficzne inspiracje* (The royal seal of Przemysł II and its historiographic inspirations), which elaborates on the material discussed at the colloquium on armorial seals in 2004.<sup>1</sup> It is only in the present monograph, however, that the author considers his arguments to be fully analysed and ready to appear in print.

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The rebirth of the Kingdom of Poland and the unification of a significant part of the Polish lands at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the accompanying social, economic and ideological transformations, have ranked among the great themes of Polish mediaeval studies for years. Oswald Balzer’s monumental book *Królestwo Polskie 1295–1370* (The Kingdom of Poland 1295–1370), published shortly after Poland regained independence in 1918, was an unquestionable milestone in that field.<sup>2</sup>

Balzer argued that the restored Kingdom of Poland had been universal in its nature. He sought out a number of premises to show that the idea of unified Poland had been in use at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century not only in its territorial and linguistic,

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1 W. Drelicharz, “Królewska pieczęć Przemysła II i jej historiograficzne inspiracje,” in W. Drelicharz, Z. Piech (eds.), *Pieczęcie herbowe—herby na pieczęciach*, II Krakowskie Kolokwium Heraldyczne (Warszawa, 2011), pp. 33–86.

2 O. Balzer, *Królestwo Polskie 1295–1370*, vols. 1–2 (Lwów, 1919–20); 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Kraków, 2005). The second edition was issued in one volume, with the volumes and pagination of the first edition indicated in the margins. In the present monograph, all quotations from Balzer are given with their page numbers taken from the widely available 2005 edition.

but also its national dimensions. The unity relied on such factors as the common language, customs and laws, the uniform organisation of the Church subordinated to the archbishop of Gniezno, the traditions of Kraków as the capital city, of the grand duke and then of the supreme rule related to the principality of Kraków, the assemblies of the dukes, the patrimonial rights of the dynasty, the ideological effect of the royal insignia deposited in the Wawel cathedral, the all-Poland cult of patron saints, great families of knights settled in various principalities, and the national identity developing under the German pressure, with the principle of succession as the alleged legal basis of the unification process. In Balzer's opinion, the unifying tendencies at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century involved every social group in Poland: the clergy and knights above all, but also burghers and, to the least extent, the peasantry.

The coronation of Przemysł II, Balzer believed, had a universal political and ideological impact. It signified the resurrection of the old Kingdom of Poland, not the establishment of a new kingdom of Greater Poland.

Balzer applied the term "idea" not only to the principal notion of the unification of Poland, the rebirth of the kingdom, and its nature, but also to certain factors contributing to the implementation of that programme. Consequently, he used such concepts as: "the idea of the unity of Poland;" "the idea of unification;" "the idea of the unification of the entirety [of the Polish lands];" "the idea of integrating the lands around a core;" "the idea of a homogenous state;" "the idea of politically integrating other parts of Poland with it [i.e. with the restored kingdom];" "the idea of the universal kingdom of Poland;" "the idea of a universal kingdom;" "the idea of a kingdom of universal stature;" "the idea of forming a particularistic kingdom;" "the idea of forming an imposed kingdom;" "the idea of a national kingdom;" "[the idea] of the rebirth of the national kingdom;" "the idea of rebuilding the national kingdom;" "the thought of integrating all the Polish lands, inherent in the idea of a universal kingdom;" "the idea of the particularistic kingdom of Greater Poland;" "the particularistic idea;" "the universal idea;" "the universal ideas;" "the idea of Kraków as the capital city;" "Kraków as the centre of the idea of the state;" "the idea of the capital status of the land of Kraków and the superior power of the Kraków ruler;" "the idea of the continuity of the earlier universalist notion of the kingdom;" "the idea of inheriting from Václavs;"<sup>3</sup> "the idea of inheritance;" "the idea of succession;" "the idea of royal authority;" "the idea of allegiance [to the king];" "the idea of inherited rights within the family;" or finally "the idea of royal command."<sup>4</sup>

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3 Balzer meant here Václav II and Václav III, the last kings of Bohemia from the Přemyslid dynasty. Václav II was crowned king of Poland in 1300. After his death in 1305, his son Václav III (1305–06) assumed the title of the king of Bohemia and Poland, though his formal coronation as the king of Poland never took place.

4 Ibidem, pp. 87, 91, 100, 112–13, 133, 250, 380, 383–4, 398, 401, 427, 490, 624, 635, 644–5, 648–9, 656, 661, 682, 689–93, 695–6.

Despite the considerable development of research in the subsequent years, Balzer's monograph has remained an important point of reference to everyone interested in the subject. Balzer's arguments will often be quoted in this book, too.

Near the end of the Second Polish Republic (in the late 1930s), under the increasing threat from the Third Reich, Roman Grodecki published his seminal article *Powstanie polskiej świadomości narodowej na przełomie XIII i XIV wieku* (The development of Polish national identity at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>5</sup> Despite its title, the text partly concerned "the ideology of the political unification." In Grodecki's view, "the ideology of the political unification of Poland and of safeguarding that unity through restitution of the royal crown" resulted from new Polish national identity<sup>6</sup> spurred by the arrogant behaviour of German arrivals, clergymen in particular, in Poland in the latter half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Conflicts between Tomasz II, Bishop of Wrocław, and the Franciscans at first and then Duke Henryk IV Probus backed by the Germans, alarmed the Polish hierarchy. It was then that the Polish Episcopate led by Jakub Świnka, Archbishop of Gniezno, began to firmly defend the Polish national interest. Resolutions passed unanimously at the provincial synods summoned by the archbishop to Łęczycza in 1285 and 1287 outlined a programme of strengthening "the rights of Polish inhabitants in their own land as regards the matters of the Church."<sup>7</sup> However, those and other activities of the Church in Poland resorting to Canon Law proved to be insufficient, and national identity "had to find support from some distinct redemptive political ideology aimed at gathering all Polish forces in joint defence against the German flood. A sense of helplessness in the period of fragmentation made people reminisce about the times when Poland had been a uniform state, strong and capable of defending itself against invasions (...) as recorded in the chronicles by Gallus and by Master Wincenty. Thus the ideology of the unification of the state was formed."<sup>8</sup>

In Grodecki's view, the role of the canonisation of St Stanisław in the development of the idea of national unity was overestimated. Stanisław had been a diocesan patron saint at first, not a national one. It was rather the cult of St Adalbert as the patron of Poland that "maintained the sense of spiritual unity in the whole of the population." But Grodecki slightly contradicted himself there, since he regarded the *Vita minor sancti Stanislai* itself as an expression of "the longing of Polish society for their own national saint." The propaganda for the canonisation and then the

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5 R. Grodecki, "Powstanie polskiej świadomości narodowej na przełomie XIII i XIV wieku," *Przegląd Współczesny* 52 (1935), pp. 3–35. A slightly modified version of that text, with the section on the idea of unification partly removed, was published after the war as a separate booklet with the abridged title *Powstanie polskiej świadomości narodowej*, Biblioteka Słowiańska, vol. 3 (Katowice, 1946).

6 R. Grodecki, "Powstanie polskiej świadomości," p. 26.

7 Ibidem, p. 18.

8 Ibidem, pp. 25–6.

cult of St Stanisław were “momentous” factors in “evoking the sense of national unity,” referring thereby “to the period of Bolesław, the period of uniform royal Poland.”<sup>9</sup> The *Vita maior sancti Stanislai* brought the “fully crystallized ideology of the unification of Poland and restoration of the royal dignity,”<sup>10</sup> which, together with the *Vita*, reached the dukes and the people alike, becoming the “ideology and belief of the entire Polish nation.”

Historiography, however, was as important as the real action taken by Polish dukes at the close of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The plans for the coronation of Henryk IV, though unfulfilled, meant that “the idea of the unification was now combined with the idea of the royal crown as a symbol of unity and integrity of the Polish state. (...) it was the idea adopted by society itself, the idea of national defence, tended by the best and most enlightened individuals, instilling in the masses the longing for God’s chosen one who would place the royal crown on his temples again. Once the dynasty decided to serve that idea, social support was guaranteed, since the duke aspiring to the crown fulfilled the wishes of the whole society.”<sup>11</sup> The project of Henryk IV was first attempted by Przemysław II and then, after the episodic Czech rule, by Władysław the Elbow, who managed to accomplish it. But the victory was gained amid increasing aversion to the Germans, who were opposed to the political will of Polish society.

Jan Baszkiewicz’s well-known controversial monograph *Powstanie zjednoczonego państwa polskiego na przełomie XIII i XIV wieku* (The unification of the Polish state at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century), another important text on the subject, published in the early period of the communist rule in Poland, determined essential trends of Marxist discourse in Polish mediaeval studies.<sup>12</sup>

Jan Baszkiewicz considered the unification to have been brought about by economic factors as they were interpreted by historical materialism, i.e. as the development of productive forces resulting in the changed relations of production. Apart from crafts, trade and accompanying urbanization processes, he pointed out a factor belonging in the so-called superstructure, namely the threat from the outside. Poland divided into principalities was threatened mainly from the West, from the German lands, and the danger took diverse forms, from the open military aggression of margraves of Brandenburg and the Order of Teutonic Knights, through the political pressure from the Empire, to “implicit aggression,” such as the influx of German burghers, clergy and knights into the Polish lands. The sense of danger prompted Polish “ethnic” identity. The attitude to the unification was

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9 Ibidem, p. 27.

10 Ibidem, p. 30.

11 Ibidem, p. 34.

12 J. Baszkiewicz, *Powstanie zjednoczonego państwa polskiego na przełomie XIII i XIV wieku* (Warszawa, 1954). The monograph had several reviews soon after its publication, and a special conference was organised on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with the conference proceedings published in *CP-H* 57 (2005), issue 1.

closely connected with one's social class position. Peasants, burghers in towns and humble knights or clergymen supported the process actively, whereas lay or church magnates and the patriciate in cities were partly undecided, partly hostile. A definitely negative role was attributed to the German patriciate in Kraków and to the highest feudal group, local dukes.

While discussing the ideological aspects of the rebirth of the kingdom, Jan Baszkiewicz not only used terms known from earlier historiography, such as "unification tendencies," "the idea of unification," "the idea of the unification of the country," "the idea of the unified Kingdom of Poland" or "the idea of the unity of Poland,"<sup>13</sup> but he also proposed a new concept, or rather he moulded it from Grodecki's more elaborate term, namely "unification ideology," adopted subsequently by almost all Polish historians. Although Jan Baszkiewicz did not provide a clear definition, the context suggested that he understood the unification ideology as political awareness. Crucially, it was Baszkiewicz who introduced that expression into Polish mediaeval studies.<sup>14</sup>

The new concept was an obvious consequence of academic discourse becoming permeated with Marxist terminology, in which the word "ideology," though older than the doctrine itself, had an established position.

The concept of unification ideology could also be extended to include the matters discussed earlier by Oswald Balcer, and it was probably for that reason that the term was accepted so quickly. Although it enjoyed its greatest popularity in the 1960s, it has survived through the entire communist period until today. The expression—like, for example, the equally popular term "crusade ideology"—has been detached from the ideological atmosphere in which it was introduced, and it is apparently treated as something which does not require redefinition or new analysis. Irrespective of further developments in that field, Jan Baszkiewicz's notion of unification ideology seems to have earned a permanent place in Polish historiography.

Jan Baszkiewicz was also a scholar who wrote about the unification ideology more extensively than any other historian to date. His arguments, however, have not been discussed or reinterpreted, though even cursory reading shows that his source material was incomplete, while the chronology and the dating of the sources he quoted are viewed quite differently today.

In Jan Baszkiewicz's opinion, the unification ideology was propagated by the clergy. The Church, called at one point the "ideologist of the unification," played the part conforming to the rules which governed the social system in that period,

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13 J. Baszkiewicz, *Powstanie zjednoczonego państwa*, pp. 210, 255, 265, 340, 435.

14 S. Kwiatkowski, "Modernizm historiograficzny jako metoda wyjaśniająca w praktyce badawczej polskich mediewistów w XX wieku," in S. Kwiatkowski (ed.), *Mediewistyka polska w XX wieku (wybrane problemy)* (Warszawa, 2008), p. 60.

i.e. feudalism in its Marxist interpretation. Every ideology had then “to take on a religious form, and clergymen were *ex officio* ideologists of their times.”<sup>15</sup>

The ideology complemented the legal basis for the unification, its primary element being the principle of the eligibility of the ruler. The notion of *regnum Poloniae* was ideological and political in its nature. It gained its full political significance in the aftermath of the royal coronation of Przemysł II and, even more, of Władysław the Elbow. The term *regnum Poloniae* started to be used already in 13<sup>th</sup>-century sources, and this resulted from the “increasing tendencies towards the unification of the country, with the restoration of the royal crown as its symbol and starting point.”<sup>16</sup> The kingdom was divided (*regnum divisum*) at that time, but “the ideology of the unification of Poland emphasised more and more clearly that the kingdom would be restored to its previous state.”<sup>17</sup>

National or, as Jan Baszkiewicz described it in Marxist terms, ethnic identity developing rapidly at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century played a crucial role in the entire process, including the spread of the notion of *regnum Poloniae* throughout the Polish-speaking area. Apart from the tradition of the monarchy of Bolesławs in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, it was the primary factor contributing to the interpretation of the *regnum Poloniae* as the ethnically Polish area.<sup>18</sup>

However, the form assumed by the *regnum Poloniae* in the witnesses’ testimonies at the trial between Poland and the Teutonic Knights in 1339 cannot be dated back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. According to Jan Baszkiewicz, the coronation of Władysław the Elbow was the key event in that process. It was after 1320 that the notion of *regnum Poloniae* “gained popularity and depth, symbolising the Polish ethnic area and functioning as a vital argument for concluding the unification of the ethnically Polish lands. The concept of *regnum Poloniae*, used more and more commonly, became an expression of the unification ideology, an expression of the aspiration to reclaim the lost lands.”<sup>19</sup> Apart from its ideological value, the term gradually gained an “extremely important political meaning,”<sup>20</sup> reflected mainly in the king’s relationships with local dukes and in the centralisation of the state.

One chapter of Jan Baszkiewicz’s monograph discusses “the ideological aspects of the unification of Poland.” Its first part presents “the unification ideology,” while the second analyses “the development of ethnic identity.” The structure itself indicates that the author understood the unification ideology to be different from national identity, though related to it. In his view, the unification ideology was not only a “passive reflection of the most vital aspirations and tendencies of that time,” but also “a significant factor which revived and strengthened the tendencies for the

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15 J. Baszkiewicz, *Powstanie zjednoczonego państwa*, p. 311.

16 Ibidem, p. 403.

17 Ibidem, p. 405.

18 Ibidem, p. 406.

19 Ibidem, p. 410.

20 Ibidem, p. 411.

unification,” playing “an important active role in shaping the unified monarchy of Władysław the Elbow.”<sup>21</sup>

The idea of the unification was linked to the older idea of the unity of Poland, which, as pointed out earlier by some scholars (Aleksander Semkowicz, Oswald Balzer), was known already in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It “expressed the deep aspiration of Polish society to unify the Polish state, to overcome the political fragmentation.”<sup>22</sup>

In Jan Baszkiewicz’s opinion, “the traditions of the monarchy of the first Piasts underlay the rebuilding of the Kingdom of Poland in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, that is, the first stage of the unification of the country. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, like now, the traditions of Bolesławs’ monarchy (whether they were reconstructed faithfully or not): the traditions of greatness, power and glory, were primarily derived from the chronicle of so-called Gallus.”<sup>23</sup> At the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Master Wincenty (Kadłubek), drawing extensively on Gallus’ chronicle, presented the events in a slightly different way, but he generally adopted his predecessor’s “idea of the historical greatness of Poland,” while the theme of defending Polish independence from ancient and mediaeval Roman emperors ran through his narrative.<sup>24</sup> “The idea of freedom and independence of Poland, taken from Gallus and elaborated by Kadłubek, had an important part in the period when the explicit aspiration of the Empire to gain control over Poland had lost some of its weight, and the aggression of German feudal borderland states came to the fore. The role of Kadłubek’s text was essential: that popular work, permeated with the vision of powerful independent Poland repelling all enemy invasions, mobilized Polish society against the aggression.”<sup>25</sup> Although Jan Baszkiewicz viewed Kadłubek’s chronicle as “seriously flawed by the ideology of feudal fragmentation,” and he denied that Master Wincenty had been an advocate or a follower of the unification ideology, he agreed, building on the opinion of the earlier historians (Oswald Balzer, Marian Łodyński), that “the objective impact of Kadłubek’s work on the development of the unification ideology may be acknowledged without major doubts.”<sup>26</sup>

Baszkiewicz pointed out that Kadłubek, though confirming “the tradition of the greatness of the first Piasts’ kingdom,” had not revived it. In the scholar’s view, “the memory of the old kingdom” had lived in “direct tradition,” by which he probably meant oral tradition. In other words, written historiographic tradition coexisted with similar oral tradition, and Jan Baszkiewicz clearly overestimated the latter, as he stated, without giving any convincing examples, that “the role of tradition was particularly important in the Middle Ages, (...) tradition lasted then for

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21 Ibidem, p. 436.

22 Ibidem, p. 435.

23 Ibidem, p. 436.

24 In fact, Kadłubek could only have meant the mediaeval rulers of the German lands. Poland had not existed in antiquity; when referring to those times, chroniclers presented fictional events.

25 Ibidem, p. 437.

26 Ibidem.

a very long time.”<sup>27</sup> In that respect, he definitely followed Balzer, whom he quoted, claiming that in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Poland, historiography functioned side by side with vivid national oral tradition.

The unification ideology, Jan Baszkiewicz argued, was to be detected “in the sources” from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, its first tentative signs being the increasingly critical opinions on the situation at that time. The criticism “was not yet, or at least not always, tantamount to the unification ideology, but it was the first step toward a deliberate programme of rebuilding the political unity.”<sup>28</sup> To this author, the earliest example of that criticism was the *Vita minor sancti Stanislai*, dated by him precisely to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, which explains why he suggested dating the unification ideology to the same period. Apart from the negative view of the feudal dismemberment of Poland, the *Vita minor* mentioned the lost royal crown and the collapse of the kingdom. The theme was elaborated on in the *Vita maior sancti Stanislai*, the text providing “the fully developed notion of the unification of Poland”<sup>29</sup> and originating “presumably in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century,”<sup>30</sup> though Jan Baszkiewicz had some doubts there.<sup>31</sup> Among the sources critical of the political fragmentation, he also quoted “the chronicle by so-called Mierzwa in its part published as the *Franciscan Annals of Kraków*,” dating allegedly from the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the letter of Jakub Świnka, Archbishop of Gniezno, addressed to the college of cardinals, the coronation petition issued by the assembly in Sulejów in June 1318, known from the reply by Pope John XXII of 20 August 1319, as well as much later texts written after the definitive rebirth of the Kingdom of Poland: a letter of the Wrocław chapter to Władysław the Elbow after Nanker had been appointed bishop of Wrocław, and the *Chronicle of the Princes of Poland* by Piotr of Byczyna. The “universal aspiration to change, to reform the present situation” at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century was discernible already in the vision of Boguchwał, Bishop of Poznań, described in the *Chronicle of Greater Poland*.

The unification ideology, according to Jan Baszkiewicz, developed rapidly. In comparison with Master Wincenty’s chronicle, “deeply-rooted in the entire system of feudal fragmentation” and by no means promoting the idea of the unity of Poland, the *Vita minor* and the *Vita maior sancti Stanislai* could be seen as evolutionary links conveying the views of successive generations and thus reflecting the dynamics of the unification ideology. The ideology was expressed in religious terms, because the political division of 13<sup>th</sup>-century Poland was presented as the punishment for the killing of Bishop Stanisław by Bolesław the Bold (Śmiały). The accompanying parallel suggested that God would restore unity to the divided kingdom just as He had made the bishop’s hacked body grow together again. Key elements of the

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27 Ibidem, p. 438.

28 Ibidem, p. 439.

29 Ibidem, pp. 438–9, n. 15.

30 Ibidem.

31 Ibidem, p. 440, n. 16.

unification ideology, visible already in the *Vita maior sancti Stanislai*, included the criticism of the political fragmentation, the idea of the rebirth of the kingdom, and the promotion of the cult of Bishop Stanisław as the patron saint of Poland.<sup>32</sup>

The connection between the idea of the unification and the veneration of the Kraków martyr was an important element of the developing ideology, and Jan Baszkiewicz sought to explain its causes: “The cult of Stanisław raised the prestige of Kraków from the very beginning. When the reasons for the unification of Poland accumulated, the unification ideology, linked *in some part* with the cult of Stanisław, was formulated most emphatically (in the sources we know) by the hagiographer of the canonised bishop. In other words, advocates of the unification of Poland used the cult as their ideological weapon. The connection with Stanisław of Szczepanów *and not with someone else* was in fact quite accidental. The development of the unification idea peripherally to the veneration resulted from the promotion of Stanisław as the patron saint of Kraków and of Poland.”<sup>33</sup>

Since the cult of St Stanisław raised the prestige of Kraków and Lesser Poland, other principalities aspiring to become the centres of the unification entered into what Jan Baszkiewicz called “hagiographic competition,” the term borrowed from Gerard Labuda.<sup>34</sup> The competition took two forms: the cult of St Adalbert renewed on Archbishop Świnka’s initiative, which Baszkiewicz perceived as intended to raise the prestige of Greater Poland, and the canonisation and cult of St Hedwig, grandmother of the dukes of Lower Silesia, which “increased the authority not only of the Silesian land, but also of its rulers from the Piast line.” The ultimate goal was to “strengthen the political authority of the specific political centre, of Silesia.”<sup>35</sup>

As a classic example of the “Polish concept of the unification,” Jan Baszkiewicz quoted the coronation petition based presumably on the resolutions of the great assembly in Sulejów in June 1318, which had represented the Polish clergy, knights and burghers in demanding the royal crown for Władysław the Elbow from Pope John XXII. “The requested coronation of Władysław the Elbow was essential for the struggle against anarchy and aggression. At the same time, it was a symbol of the unity of his restored monarchy, an expression of the unification ideology.”<sup>36</sup> The coronation petition thus reflected another characteristic feature of the unification ideology—“royalism,” as Baszkiewicz termed it in inverted commas: the view that the unification meant the rebirth of the *regnum Poloniae*, because the rebirth was necessary to overcome the political fragmentation and its consequences. The concept emerged already in the royal coronation of Przemysław II, which in turn had a great impact on the development of the idea of the restored *regnum Poloniae*.

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32 Ibidem, pp. 441–2.

33 Ibidem, pp. 444–5.

34 Ibidem, p. 445.

35 Ibidem, p. 446.

36 Ibidem, pp. 447–8.

Jan Baszkiewicz pointed out the “ideological significance” of the notion of the “homogeneous *Regnum* including practically all the Polish lands,” the notion of the universal Kingdom of Poland which gathered “the masses of Polish society around the programme of maintaining the unity of Poland and of encompassing the entire Polish ethnic area, first of all Eastern Pomerania (with Gdańsk), with the borders of the Polish monarchy.”<sup>37</sup> The notion, which was yet another feature of the unification ideology, had a major role in the struggle for the unity of Poland.

As mentioned above, the process of unification entailed a close relationship between the unification ideology and the development of national identity, termed ethnic identity by Jan Baszkiewicz. In the Marxist terms typical of the Stalinist era, Baszkiewicz emphasised the difference between *ethnic* and *national*, considering national identity as originating only with the period of the Industrial Revolution. The connection between the unification ideology and ethnic identity resulted from “the progressive socioeconomic development and the struggle against the threat of aggression from the outside” which underlay them both, and it ran very deep: the “unification ideology, like the process of overcoming the political fragmentation, was linked closely to growing ethnic identity. Ethnic identity helped to consolidate and broaden the programme of the unity of Poland, of combining all Polish ethnic lands into one political organism, while the effort to carry out that programme deepened Polish ethnic identity even more.”<sup>38</sup> In the author’s view, ethnic identity at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century was very broad in scope, involving not only the higher classes: dukes and lay or church magnates, but also knights of all ranks and even the peasantry.

The clearest indication of the “growing sense of ethnicity” was the focus on the glory of Poland and on the Polish struggle against the aggression of external enemies, as well as the praise for historical tradition, regarded as “the central idea” of Polish writing in the 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>39</sup>

The speedy unification of the Polish lands into the homogeneous monarchy, however, did not end in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, the unified estate monarchy did not include all ethnically Polish lands. The unification of Poland, initiated at the close of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but partly dating as far back as the first half of that century, was still on the agenda for the next two hundred years. The last major achievements of the unification party were the incorporation of Eastern Pomerania in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century and the gradual incorporation of Mazovia in the 15<sup>th</sup> and the early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>40</sup>

Jan Baszkiewicz returned to the theme of the rebirth of the *regnum Poloniae* several times. He modified his opinion on the political and social determinants of

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37 Ibidem, p. 448.

38 Ibidem, p. 456.

39 Ibidem, p. 457.

40 Ibidem, pp. 460–1.

that process, drawing near Balzer's position, though he wrote consistently about "the unification ideology." Apart from his synthetic article *Rola Piastów w procesie zjednoczenia państwowego Polski do roku 1320* (The role of the Piasts in the process of political unification of Poland till 1320),<sup>41</sup> we should mention the last one among his later publications, a small academic book for the general public, *Odnowienie Królestwa Polskiego 1295–1320* (The rebirth of the Kingdom of Poland, 1295–1320), issued in 2008.<sup>42</sup> The book largely sums up Banaszekiewicz's text *Polska czasów Łokietka* (Poland in the times of Władysław the Elbow),<sup>43</sup> a similar type of publication from 1968, but it is complemented with the results of detailed research carried out in the last few decades and with some new observations concerning the ideological context of the reunification of the Polish lands.

Among more recent studies, Janusz Bieniak's *Wielkopolska, Kujawy, ziemie łęczycka i sieradzka wobec problemu zjednoczenia państwowego w latach 1300–1306* (Greater Poland, Kuyavia, the lands of Łęczyca and Sieradz, and the problem of the political unification in 1300–06),<sup>44</sup> a thorough response to Jan Baszkievicz's first publication, merits special attention. The monograph, based on sources and free from the ideological limitations of historical materialism, gives a complex view of the social determinants of the unification and shows the role of individual knightly families and family ties between inhabitants of various principalities. Genealogical research on the lay or church magnates among whom the idea of the rebirth of the kingdom became popular has revealed the real scope of social support for the unification. Moreover, the book offers a reinterpretation of several unification concepts. Janusz Bieniak has continued to write on the rebirth of the Kingdom of Poland at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in a number of his subsequent publications, some of them addressed to the general public.

The theme of the unification ideology has been approached from quite a different angle by Zenon Piech, whose book *Ikonografia pieczęci Piastów* (Iconography of the Piasts' seals) discusses the multifacial ideology of the Piasts' ducal and royal emblems.<sup>45</sup> Among diverse iconographic motifs related to heraldry, authority,

41 J. Baszkievicz, "Rola Piastów w procesie zjednoczenia państwowego Polski do roku 1320," in R. Heck (ed.), *Piastowie w dziejach Polski. Zbiór artykułów w okazji trzechsetnej rocznicy wygaśnięcia dynastii Piastów* (Wrocław, 1975), pp. 49–68.

42 J. Baszkievicz, *Odnowienie Królestwa Polskiego 1295–1320* (Poznań, 2008).

43 J. Baszkievicz, *Polska czasów Łokietka* (Warszawa, 1968).

44 J. Bieniak, *Wielkopolska, Kujawy, ziemie łęczycka i sieradzka wobec problemu zjednoczenia państwowego w latach 1300–1306*, *Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu* 74, issue 2 (Toruń, 1969).

45 Z. Piech, *Ikonografia pieczęci Piastów* (Kraków, 1993), pp. 129–52. Piech has written on the same subject in his papers: "Pieczęć Leszka Czarnego z przedstawieniem św. Stanisława. Próba interpretacji," *Analecta Cracoviensia* 15 (1983), pp. 331–43; "Studia nad symboliką zjednoczeniową pieczęci książąt piastowskich w drugiej połowie XIII i początkach XIV wieku," *ZNUJ* 807, *Prace Historyczne* 84 (1987), pp. 37–60; cf. also "Strój, insygnia i atrybuty książąt piastowskich do końca XIV w.," parts I–II, *KHKM* 38 (1990), issues 1–2, pp. 3–35; issues 3–4, pp. 199–222.

religion and knightly culture, symbols of the unification play a prominent part. Piech is not the first scholar to attempt interpretation of the ideas encoded in mediaeval seals, but only his analysis linking sigillography with political and social history reveals the significance of systems of communication.

A more comprehensive approach to the theme of the unification has also been proposed by Sławomir Gawlas in his monograph *O kształt zjednoczonego Królestwa* (Toward the shape of the unified Kingdom).<sup>46</sup> Interestingly enough, although he analyses social and economic factors which contributed to the rebirth of the *regnum Poloniae* in its specific shape, putting them in their European context, Gawlas hardly discusses ideological factors at all. His earlier publications contain a number of important, though general observations on the unification ideology. When describing the state of research into Polish national identity in the Middle Ages, Gawlas points out that in order to appraise the role of the unification ideology and national identity closely related to it, one needs to consider other aspects of social consciousness as well, particularly such traditional means of the legitimization of power as laws of succession and allegiance to the ruler.<sup>47</sup> In his article on political awareness of adherents of Władysław the Elbow in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, he expresses his doubts about the scope and function of the unification ideology permeated with national themes. In his view, national identity could not have played a significant social role in that period; the unification ideology itself, which had originated in Lesser Poland around the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, was limited to the elite of the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, and therefore “by itself, it could never have led to the restoration of the Kingdom.”<sup>48</sup> Gawlas, however, does not go beyond these rather general conclusions. He mentions a “more extensive analysis” of the unification ideology to be carried out in the future, but his project still awaits its implementation.<sup>49</sup>

Recent studies of the monarchy of Władysław the Elbow and Kazimierz the Great (Wielki) have been summed up by Janusz Kurtyka in his book *Odrodzone Królestwo*<sup>50</sup> (The restored Kingdom), which also includes some comments on the processes preceding the emergence of the last Piasts' monarchy. Kurtyka gives his

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46 S. Gawlas, *O kształt zjednoczonego Królestwa. Niemieckie władztwo terytorialne a geneza społeczno-ustrojowej odrębności Polski* (Warszawa, 1996).

47 S. Gawlas, “Stan badań nad polską świadomością narodową w średniowieczu,” in A. Gieysztor, S. Gawlas (eds.), *Państwo, naród, stany w świadomości wieków średnich. Pamięci Benedykta Zientary 1929–1983* (Warszawa, 1990), p. 193.

48 S. Gawlas, “Verus heres. Z badań nad świadomością polityczną obozu Łokietka na początku XIV w.,” *KH* 95 (1988), no. 1, p. 79.

49 Ibidem. Gawlas also planned an extensive analysis of social relationships as reflected in the records of the trials between Poland and the Teutonic Knights, a theme related closely to historical identity of the Polish elite at the end of the unification process, but the text has not been published yet; see S. Gawlas, “Stan badań nad polską świadomością,” p. 185, n. 105.

50 J. Kurtyka, *Odrodzone królestwo. Monarchia Władysława Łokietka i Kazimierza Wielkiego w świetle najnowszych badań* (Kraków, 2001).

well-thought-out opinion on research carried out by other historians, moderating, highlighting or complementing their results, and thus offering real prolegomena to a synthesis of the history of Poland in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There is no need to discuss the monograph more extensively here, as it will often be referred to in this publication. Suffice it to say that in Kurtyka's view, Władysław, at first merely one among many Polish dukes equal in status, had to build both the material and the ideological bases for his advantage over the other "natural lords" from the Piast line.<sup>51</sup>

In the last several years, numerous studies of the socio-political history of Poland in the period of the unification have been published by Tomasz Jurek, undoubtedly the most eminent contemporary expert on the subject. His publications will be quoted here many times; it is difficult to disagree with him when—while commenting on Oswald Balzer's monumental work—he remarks that "the great questions of the unification ideology need to be discussed anew."<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, no comprehensive modern monograph on the ideological aspects of the unification and the rebirth of the Kingdom of Poland has been published to date. This is surprising, especially as apart from many valuable new results in political, social or economic history, there has been significant development in research on diverse iconographic sources, such as coats of arms, seals, coins, funerary sculpture or pilgrims' symbols, and their ideological elements related to the unification draw much attention in those studies. The research tends to be fragmented, divided among various auxiliary sciences of history, with no attempt at comprehensive presentation. This lack of synthesis may primarily be due to the fact that there has not been any overall analysis of historiographic sources, which are fundamental for the ideological questions, as it is from them that the context for interpreting the iconographic material should be drawn. Jan Baszkiewicz noted that as far as the unification process at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is concerned, "reticence of narrative sources limits (...) the conclusiveness (...) of research efforts" in heraldry, sigillography and numismatics.<sup>53</sup> The real obstacle, however, seems to be not so much the "reticence" of mediaeval historiographic texts as their insufficient examination.

The recent studies of Polish mediaeval historiography of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries have yielded results important for reconstructing the unification ideology, but for various reasons they have been difficult to be combined into one framework. Brygida Kürbis wrote in her article published in 1958:

(...) through historiographers, all three principalities (Lesser Poland, Greater Poland and Silesia) vied with one another for their duke's right to ascend the throne. In all three principalities, chroniclers' attempts at a broader approach

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51 Ibidem, p. 58.

52 T. Jurek, "Przedmowa," in O. Balzer, *Królestwo Polskie*, p. XIII.

53 J. Baszkiewicz, *Odnowienie Królestwa*, pp. 165–6.

that would provide a setting for the specific political concept were in keeping with the plans of the duke unifying the monarchy. Annals have their deep historic message as well. (...) Mediaeval historiography primarily concerned current political issues; it was addressed to those who participated actively in the struggle for political power and who strove to keep that power to themselves. Usefulness of such literature as a storehouse of information about the past to those loving it more disinterestedly seems to have been less important at that time, at least in the most influential works of Polish historiography.<sup>54</sup>

Soon after, Kürbis published her monograph *Dziejopisarstwo wielkopolskie XIII i XIV wieku* (Historiography of Greater Poland in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries), the first major contribution to the debate about the idea of the unification and rebirth of the *regnum Poloniae* as presented in mediaeval historiography.<sup>55</sup> This fascinating study of sources showed the great potential of research into the fundamental texts of Polish mediaeval historical writing, which are relatively few. However, the author's too strong dependence on her theory, disputed by most historians, that the *Chronicle of Greater Poland* dated back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century made it difficult to incorporate her arguments into an overall presentation of the ideological aspects of the unification.

Jacek Banaszek's book *Kronika Dzierzwy: XIV-wieczne kompendium historii ojczystej* (The *Chronicle of Dzierzwa: A 14<sup>th</sup>-century compendium of Polish history*)<sup>56</sup> is another important voice in the debate. Banaszek not only gives comprehensive analysis of the chronicle, but he also shows that the text resulted largely from the needs of those who supported one of the notions of the unification, as it was to serve the purpose of legitimizing the rule of Władysław the Elbow in Kraków.

In his monograph on the annals from the *Annales Polonorum* group, the author of the present book has advanced the theory, accepted by other scholars, that the so-called Lesser Poland annals derived from the "unifying compilation" which was made in the Franciscan circles in Kraków in 1306–25 on the suggestion of the royal court, and then continued and used many times in its two redactions.<sup>57</sup>

The subject has also been discussed by other authors in the context of various mediaeval texts, especially the lives of St Stanisław, the *Miracula sancti Adalberti* and the *Polish Chronicle*. The remarks will be referred to and commented on in the next chapters of this study.

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54 B. Kürbis, "Ze studiów nad kulturą historyczną wieków średnich w Polsce," *SŻ* 3 (1958), p. 51.

55 B. Kürbis, *Dziejopisarstwo wielkopolskie XIII i XIV wieku* (Warszawa, 1952).

56 J. Banaszek, *Kronika Dzierzwy. XIV-wieczne kompendium historii ojczystej* (Wrocław, 1979).

57 W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka małopolska XIII–XV wieku. Kierunki rozwoju wielkich roczników kompilowanych*, RAUhf, vol. 99 (Kraków, 2003).