
SUMMARY

Cuiavia Christiana. On the threshold of Christianity and the Church in Kuyavia in the 10th-12th centuries

This book has been divided into three major chapters preceded by a foreword. Chapter one, entitled “The grave fields and the funeral rites in Kuyavia” has been further divided into three sub-chapters. In the first one, I present grave fields from Kuyavia which were submitted for further discussion. In this part, I also present the history of the research into these necropolises. The subsequent sub-chapter refers to the rate of Christianization and the chronology of the first skeletal grave fields. Here, I focused primarily on selected Christian funeral traditions, never neglecting, however, the pre-Christian traces left in the sepulchres. The considerations pertaining to the features of the Christian funeral rites are based primarily on an analysis of written sources, chiefly from Central and Eastern Europe. In the part related to skeletal grave fields from the Piast dynasty dominion dating back to the second half of the 10th century and the early 11th century, I resorted to archaeological excavations. Therefore, the rate of Christianization was approached holistically as fully reflected in the subsequent sub-chapter. There, I present grave fields from Kuyavia in the light of research into religious conversion together with information on the oldest skeletal grave fields in Kuyavia, necropolises/cremation graves, church grave fields, funeral gifts, funeral feasts of ancient Slavic religion (*triznas*), personal equipment related to the Christian and pagan cults, sepulchral equipment, eastern arrangement of the dead and arranging the dead on their backs with arms crossed on the pelvis. Each sub-chapter ends with conclusions in the form of points.

Chapter two: “Church organisation in Kuyavia in the 10th-12th centuries” has been divided into two sub-chapters. In the first one, I present the origin of the Kuyavia diocese with special emphasis placed on the origin and the number of the local bishoprics. The subsequent sub-chapter is dedicated to the arch-diaconates and deaneries in Kuyavia and, first and foremost, the early parishes (parish organisation). Of special importance is the last part of the sub-chapter because in it I made an attempt to explain why an early parish organisation has been identified for the Piast dominion, dating back to the rule of Bolesław the Brave. In the context of these considerations, I also focused on the oldest sacral architecture from the region of Wielkopolska. As a result, I could prove that, contrary to some opinions, early parishes (from the 10th and 11th centuries) did not exist in the Piast dominion. Just like in chapter one, every sub-chapter finishes with conclusions.

Chapter three, “The first churches and the oldest religious communities in Kuyavia”, is divided into two sub-chapters preceded by a foreword and followed by conclusions. To a large

extent, this part of the book supplements the considerations from the previous chapter on the early parishes (the parish organisation) but exclusively with respect to Kuyavia. All the churches and monasteries of my interest are discussed in two chronological parts; the first one covers structures from the 10th–11th centuries while the other one deals with churches from the 12th century. Among the presented churches are buildings raised after the 12th c. but whose origins have been lately dated back to the 10th, 11th or the 12th century. All these considerations are summed up in the conclusions. At the end of the dissertation I present the concluding remarks and the bibliography, supplemented by a list of abbreviations, a list of figures and tables as well as the indispensable geographic index.

In the light of the considerations I conclude that the rate of Christianisation in Kuyavia was very slow; this connects very well with opinions of scholars emphasising Mieszko I's poor involvement in propagating Christianity and the limited effectiveness of evangelisation of the subjects of Mieszko I and his successors. What is more, as a region peripheral with respect to Wielkopolska (the ideological and political centre of the Piast dominion), Kuyavia did not raise any interest of the rulers or the Church with respect to extending the ecclesiastical structures throughout the second half of the 10th century and a majority of the 11th century. But for the observations on the grave field and recognition of some changes to the funeral rites, one could conclude that Kuyavia was Christianised as late as in the last quarter of the 11th century i.e. much more than 100 years after the actual date of Mieszko I's baptism.

In the light of the above reflections, the second half of the 11th c. and the end of that century seem of special importance to an analysis of the rate of Christianisation. Construction of St. Vitus church in Kruszwica was most probably accompanied by a change to the funeral rites. The number of burials and skeletal grave fields increased (including Brześć Kujawski, Byczyna, Dźwierzchno, Kruszwica, Lubomin); the number of burial gifts in the form of vessels diminished (with some exceptions from the rule like the necropolis in Moravia). However, there was no ecclesiastical network in Kuyavia at that time while the region did not enjoy a separate diocese. The rate of Christianisation in the area in question started to grow as late as during the reign of Bolesław the Wrymouth. The prince ensured that bishoprics were established in Kruszwica and Włocławek. While over time one of the dioceses proved ephemeral, the efforts introduced a new quality to both the extension of the church structures in Kuyavia and the Christianisation of the local population. All these phenomena intensified in the second half of the 12th century and we can presume that the successors of Bolesław the Wrymouth ruling in Kuyavia (Bolesław IV the Curly and his son Leszek, Casimir II the Just, Mieszko the Old and his son Bolesław) strongly supported the Church in its Christianization efforts.

The above conclusions based upon observations of grave fields, the church organisation and the oldest churches do not indicate that the process of Christianisation of the population in Kuyavia had been already over in the late 12th century. A large-scale extension of the church structures did not occur until the 13th and 14th centuries; it was related to the construction of a growing number of churches and an emergence of a parish organisation.

Translated by Ewa Dratwa