

De Lituania

JAN STEJSKAL. ● LOMOUC

Jerome, originally Jan of Prague, was born approximately between 1368 and 1370. He studied at Prague University where he received the relatively high grades of a bachelor of theology. Jerome entered the Premonstratensian monastery of Strahov in Prague while completing his studies, and just after his graduation he left Prague and his monastery to go to Kraków where he became the private confessor of the king.

This article will describe the period of Jerome's life which he spent as a preacher in the "wild" Lithuanian lands. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the state formed after the unification of Lithuania itself (Aukštota), Samogitia (Žemudź) and the conquered territories in the Russian lands, reached its largest size during the reign of Grand Duke Witold (1392-1430). The area of this state in the period of its greatest expansion was about 900.000 km², while present Lithuania has only about 62.000 km², that corresponds with the area of Lithuania itself and Samogitia.¹ Lithuania itself is a relatively mountainous land, contrary to Samogitia, which is a low-land country, what can also be seen from the Lithuanian names of these two regions.² The river Niewiaża seems to be the natural border between these two regions, which will be the objects of my interest and which were interesting for the Christian missionaries because of their paganism, at the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th century. In this time there lived approximately 170.000 inhabitants in the territory of about 58.000 km², which means 3 persons per 1 km². In Prussia, for example, there lived the same number of people (170.000) in an area of 42.000 km², which gives 4

¹ W. Wielohorski. Litwa etnograficzna. Wilno 1928.

² Codex epistolaris Vitoldi magni ducis Lituaniae 1376-1430, ed. A. Procházka. Kraków 1882, pp. 466-467. This similarity was explained by Grand Duke Witold to Sigismund.

people for 1 km².³ It was the result of the permanent attacks of the Teutonic Order in this territory which explain why a wide territory near the border was covered by forest and was practically depopulated.

Generally, the missions were welcomed by the Polish King Władysław Jagiełło and his cousin Grand Duke Witold. Jerome had spent some time at the court of the king and learned the Lithuanian language there, according to our sources.⁴ Language barriers were the biggest problem of the Christian missions to Lithuania. Jerome was equipped with a letter of recommendation from King Władysław Jagiełło to Grand Duke Witold. This letter had been accepted, because Witold ordered his "captains" to help Jerome's activities.⁵ The systematic baptising of the people of the country was started and was strongly supported by the ruler and by the newly, 1387 established bishopric in Vilnius (Wilno). Witold ordered that: "...if some Ruthenian would like to be baptised, he can be; if he does not want to be, he may stay with his own religion (i. e. Orthodox), but every Lithuanian who does not want to be baptised will be baptised according to the bishop's will...".⁶

Jerome seems to have been the favourite confessor of Jagiełło which is why he was given the exceptional letter of recommendation. Jerome was not the first Czech priest of the king. There is evidence that "...Czech priests were at the court of Jagiełło, who instructed him about the Christian faith..."⁷ It is possible that the newly baptised king preferred the Czech Jerome, because he had good experience with Czech priests who had been coming to Vilnius earlier. In any case, Jerome set out on the journey to Lithuania.

It is not easy to specify exactly when Jerome left Kraków and started his mission activity in Lithuania. It was probably between the years 1395 and 1398. According to our sources he became the confessor of King

³ H. Łowmiański. *Popisy wojska Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego w. XVI. jako źródło do dziejów zaludnienia*. *Mediaevalia w 50 rocznicę pracy naukowej Jana Dąbrowskiego*. Warszawa 1960. p. 433.

⁴ A. S. Piccolomini. *Historia de Europa*. ch. 26: *Scriptores rerum prussicarum IV*, Leipzig 1870. pp.237-239.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ J. Kurczewski. *Biskupstwo wileńskie*. Wilno 1912, p. 165.

⁷ A. Procházka. *Dzieje Witolda w. księcia Litwy*. Wilno 1914, p. 41.

Władysław Jagiełło on August 30, 1394 at the latest.⁸ After some time spent at the king's court and corresponding to his own words in the *Tractatus Against the Four Prague Articles*, Jerome "spent three years preaching Christianity in the land of the Saracens".⁹ Although Lithuania was seen by the pope as a formally baptised country since 1390, there were many pagans left – especially in Samogitia – who were called *Sarraceni*¹⁰ throughout Europe. The year 1398 must be seen as the latest possible for the missions coming from Lithuania itself or from Poland to Samogitia, because on October 12, 1398 the territory was, according to the treaty, given to the Teutonic Order. It is possible that Jerome continued his mission in Lithuanian territory, but Samogitia was definitely closed for the former confessor of the Polish king.

His stay in Samogitia is an important source for the study of pagan mythology and culture in this region.

The Christianisation in Europe had mostly come hand in hand with a stabilisation of the states and their ruling dynasties, when the administrative preferences of the Church began to be useful and compatible with the achievement of centralisation. This is one of the reasons why rulers supported the process of Christianisation. Generally, the initiative came from the rulers, as in the case of Bohemia in 845, Poland during the reign of Mieszko I, etc. Mieszko used this process for the removal of opposition in the country.¹¹ In Kievan Russia, as in Poland, baptism was accepted just after the consolidation of the state. The Lithuanian case was much more complicated, because the question of the acceptance of baptism was closely connected with the choice between western Catholicism and eastern Orthodoxy. Since the middle of the 13th century the rulers of Lithuania had started to flirt with baptism. The first baptised ruler was Mendog (Mindog), the consolidator of Aukštota (Lithuania itself), in 1251, but

⁸ J. Przeździecki, *Życie domowe Jadwigi i Jagiełły z regestrów skarbowych z lat 1388–1417 przedstawione*, Warszawa 1854, p. 55: "W niedzielę w dzień św. Felixa i Adaukta ... za 10 lokci sukna brunatnego danego panu Janowi, spowiednikowi króla J. M. 3 grzywny 8 wiardunki...".

⁹ Cod. bibl. Jag., n. 385, f. 276/b: "Quod ego facilliter probarem, eo quod tribus annis continuis fidem Christi predicans, ..."

¹⁰ For example: *Fontes rer. Boh.*, IV, p.287.

¹¹ H. Łowmiański, *Początki Polski. Z dziejów Słowian w I. tysiącleciu n.e.*, vol. 5, Warszawa 1973, p. 557.

he was assassinated in 1263. This was seen as a martyr's death for Christ,¹² but there are not many sources supporting this theory. On the contrary, the Russian chronicler writes: "...the catholic baptism of Mendog had been a cheat; he continued to sacrifice to his old idols and gods, to the first of them Nonadie, and to Telawel, Dwiriks, to the Hare God and to Medein. When he saw a hare, he did not leave the house; he burnt the dead and made his paganism official".¹³

The other formally baptised member of the ruling dynasty was Witenes (1295-1315). But this was all about the evangelium and its influence on the rulers in this time. Those included who were baptised were buried, according to an anonymous description, still in the pagan way: "...the son of the ruler established a special sacred forest and a group of priests to take care of the eternal fire. Then the body of his dead father was transported by the warriors to this place in the sacred forest and put on the pyre. The sword was given to the dead man's hands and his other weapons were put around him. His favourite servant, dogs, and his horse were also put on the pyre. When the fire started to burn, everybody threw on the pyre the claws of the lynx and started to cry..."¹⁴ Other rituals were practiced in the case of the peace agreement with Hungary by duke Kiejstut in the middle of the 14th century. Kiejstut had ordered the throat of an ox to be cut, then he bedaubed his face and hands with the blood, followed by his officers. Then he swore that he would rather follow the fate of this ox than infringe the agreement.¹⁵ These rituals were performed up to the time of Jagiełło.

Nevertheless, during the reign of Grand Duke Witenes the first catholic church was built (1298) and dedicated to St. Nicholas. This church was used especially by Christian foreigners. Two Franciscans living near the church carried out all the spiritual services for the Christians coming to Vilnius.¹⁶

The brother and successor of Witenes Giedymin (1315-1341) promised

¹² M. Kosman, *Drogi zaniku pogaństwa u Bałtów*, Warszawa 1976, p. 17.

¹³ A. Mierzyński, *Źródła do mytologii litewskiej*, Warszawa 1896, p. 139.

¹⁴ A. Brückner, *Starożytna Litwa. Ludy i bogi*, Olsztyn 1979, p. 70.

¹⁵ M. Kosman, *Forma umów międzynarodowych Litwy w pierwszej ćwierci XIII wieku*, *Przegląd Historyczny*, 57, 1966, n. 2, pp. 216-218.

¹⁶ M. Kosman, *Pogaństwo, chrześcijaństwo i synkretyzm na Litwie w dobie przedreformacyjnej*, *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* 1/115, 1972, p.188.

his official acceptance of baptism. but he never cast off his old pagan idols. His sons did the same, and so did his grandson Jagiełło, until he finally had come to some decision with regard to his religion. Many members of Jagiełło's family had already accepted baptism, especially the daughters of the Lithuanian rulers, who married the Christian rulers of the surrounding countries (Aldona Giedymin married Kazimierz the Great in 1325, Keana-Joanna Kazimierz the Pomeranian, etc.).

Jagiełło concluded a peace with the Teutonic Order in 1382 which finished the war between him and the Order. The price of this peace was half of the territory of Samogitia and Jagiełło's promise that after four years the whole country would be baptised, including the ruler.¹⁷

Territorial annexations in the east were thus balanced by the loss of Samogitia. Jagiełło was in actual or potential conflict everywhere: with Moscow in the east, with Poland in Ukraine and in the west with the Teutonic Order. Each of these powers had in its hands the strongest argument of the epoch: The paganism of Lithuania. Jagiełło had to unite with one of these rivals and had to make an important choice.

Just after the treaty with the Teutonic Order, he had some negotiations with Moscow. His mother Julianne was strongly propagating Orthodoxy and had completed some official discussions about Jagiełło's marriage with a daughter of Dymitre Donskii, but Dymitre made the marriage conditional on Jagiełło's acceptance of Orthodoxy.¹⁸ Jagiełło himself remembered the proposals which he had received: "...multi imperatores reges et principes diversi cum eodem duce magno Litwanorum cupiebant, affectabant et desiderabant parentelam proximitatis contrahere perpetuam...".¹⁹ But at this moment Jagiełło was looking for an ally against the Teutonic Order, who could also bring some important support for his territorial expansion to the east. Therefore he turned his attention to Kraków and the Catholic Church. Acceptance of the Orthodoxy could not have stopped the conflict with the Teutonic Order and it might merely have caused another argument to be used against the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

During the spring of 1385 Jagiełło took part in the summit with Polish lords in Krewa. On August 14 he put a declaration into the hands of the

¹⁷ M. Kosman, *Drogi zaniku...*, p.17.

¹⁸ *Akta unii Polski z Litwą* n. 1. Kraków 1932, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Polish lords that he would accept baptism according to the western liturgy: "...with all his not yet baptised brothers, relatives, lords and lands..."²⁰ Every pagan had to be baptised, but the Orthodox inhabitants of Jagiełło's lands were not included to this obligatory declaration. The first step was the baptism of the ruler on February 15, 1386, but before this act one of the great paradoxes of European history had happened. The Catholic Polish nobility declared the pagan Jagiełło Polish King on January 11, 1386. Jagiełło left the country for Poland in January 1386 and Skirgiello-Iwan became governor of the Grand Duchy. So under the rule of the Orthodox governor the Catholic Christianisation of the country had to continue.²¹

In 1387 Jagiełło had come back to Lithuania to fulfil his declaration from Krewno. Firstly he destroyed the old pagan holy places, then caused the baptism of the people of high ranks in the Lithuanian state. It probably took the form of plunging them under water.²²

The methods of baptism were strongly criticised by the Teutonic Order during the Council of Constance, because everybody who had accepted baptism got a present, usually some clothes. This was, according to the critics, why many people accepted baptism twice. That was nothing new: Already during the mission to the Normans in the 9th century robes were presented to the newly baptised people. One knight, when he had put on his dress, said to the priests: "... this is my twentieth time I have put my head over the baptistery and everytime I have received nice clothes, but now look at me. The shepherd should wear this dress, not a knight. Were I not shy to go home naked, I would disown your dress and your baptism..."²³

The presence of the Grand Duke and King Władysław Jagiełło during the baptism of the nobility was relevant, because the ruler played an important role in the hierarchy of the pagan religious system and he had to play the same role in the new one. His will was an order for his serfs. During

²⁰ Akta unii Polski z Litwą 1, p.1.

²¹ A. Procházka, *Dzieje Witolda...*, p. 42. He thinks that the Orthodox baptism of Skirgiello was the reaction on Witold's residence in the territory of the Teutonic Order.

²² J. Fijałek, *Kościółkatolicki na Litwie*. Warszawa-Kraków 1914, p. 24. M. Kosman, *Drogi zaniku...* p. 27. Kosman repeats Fijałek's opinion.

²³ K. Szajnocha, *Jadwiga i Jagiełło 1374-1413*, 3-4, Warszawa 1969, p.175.

the year which Jagiełło had spent in Poland important changes regarding religion were not established.²⁴

We cannot see any reaction against baptism in Lithuania itself during the campaign of 1387.²⁵ But in Samogitia the situation was much more delicate. There were not so many foreigners propagating the new creed as in Lithuania itself (Auksztota), and the relationship between this territory and the centre in Vilnius was not so strong. The process was also complicated because of the language barrier. This is reflected in the activity of King Władysław Jagiełło himself: "...because none of the priests who had come with the king knew the language, the king himself was the mediator between them and the people. He taught them the Pater Noster and explained to them who really created the world...".²⁶ This happened in 1413, 26 years after the formal acceptance of Christianity, when Lithuania more or less freed Samogitia from the hand of the Teutonic Order.

M. Strykowski characterised the inhabitants of Auksztota and Samogitia as a wild tribe. According to his chronicle, they were dressed in fells, and their shoes were made out of bast. The iron which they used was usually stolen from Russian ploughs. Instead of helms they used animal skulls, and they generally lived like the wolves, etc.²⁷

Gilbert de Lannoy, who visited Lithuania in 1413–1414 described the dress of the Lithuanian women as simple. It reminded him of that of Picardy. The men had, according to Lannoy, long and dishevelled hair.²⁸ Długosz, contrary to Lannoy, writes about their short dress and their short, cut hair and beard.²⁹ Aeneas S. Piccolomini writes about the manners of the Lithuanian women. According to him they had a lover regularly as the "second husband". These lovers, so-called *matrimonii adiutores*, took the place of the husbands, when the latter did not fulfil their matrimonial

²⁴ M. Strykowski, *Kronika polska, litewska, żmudzka i wszystkiej Rusi*, 1574, Warszawa 1846, p. 78.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ J. Długosz, *Dziejów polskich ksiąg dwanaście*, tr. K. Mecherzyński, Kraków 1876–1877, vol. 4, p. 159.

²⁷ M. Strykowski, *Kronika*..., pp. 220–222.

²⁸ G. de Lannoy, *Podróże i misje do Polski*, in: *Cudzoziemcy o Polsce. Relacje i opinie*, Kraków 1971, p. 75.

²⁹ J. Długosz, *Dziejów*..., t. III, p. 446.

obligations.³⁰ According to Zarębski, this unreal story had its origin in the reports of the members of the Teutonic Order at the court of Frederick III, where A. S. Piccolomini lived.³¹

For the explanation of the contemporary life Lithuanian mythology would be the most important source, and it is deeply connected with Jerome's mission.

The first scholar who claimed to establish Lithuanian mythology was T. Narbutt. But he only put together everything he knew about Greece, Rome and India, which had nothing to do with the reality of Lithuania.³² Let me recall the strong tradition which tells about the origin of Lithuanians, repeated by T. Narbutt. Since the 15th century some similarities of the Lithuanian language have been compared with Latin and Italian (*ignis-ugnis, deus-dienas, noctes-naktis* etc.) including the name of the country and its inhabitants (*Litua, Lituani-l'Italia, l'Italiani*).³³ The conclusion was that the Lithuanians were the inhabitants of ancient Rome who had left the country as emigrants and carried with them not only the language, but also their religion, including the mythology.³⁴ During his mission to Samogitia (according to A. S. Piccolomini) Jerome had come to the tribe venerating the sun and the big hammer exhibited in the village. He asked the pagan priests what it meant, and they answered that many years ago the sun had been captured by a powerful king in a strongly fortified tower-jail. But the signs of the zodiac (!) liberated the sun, using this big hammer. Jerome explained to them that the sun and the stars were no gods. They were things created by God, and God ordered them to shine forever for the profit and help of the people.³⁵

What could be the reality in this report of Aeneas Piccolomini and what was a misunderstanding or use of the traditional picture of paganism? Jerome and Aeneas met each other during the Basel council, and I sup-

³⁰ A. S. Piccolomini. *Historia de Europa*, ch. 26, p. 275.

³¹ I. Zarębski. *Stosunki Eneasza Sylwiusza z Polską i Polakami*, vol. 1, Kraków 1939, p. 366.

³² T. Narbutt. *Dzieje starożytne narodu litewskiego*, vol. 1-9, Wilno 1835-1841.

³³ J. Długosz. *Dziejów ...*, vol. 3, p. 442.

³⁴ J. Długosz. *Dziejów ...*, vol. 3, p. 443.

³⁵ A. S. Piccolomini. *Historia ...*, ch. 26, pp. 237-239.

pose that Jerome told this story to Aeneas at that time.³⁶ It seems to me that Jerome did not understand this myth well. According to Lithuanian mythology the sun is not a god but an object made by god Telawel, who hammered the sun and the stars.³⁷ Jerome was educated at Prague University and his image of the mythology was influenced by classical Greek and Roman mythology, where the sun had the form of a god. He had known how the "classical paganism" looked like. In this case he was completely ignorant of old Slavic mythology, which was not far from the Lithuanian; or it could have been Aeneas Piccolomini's fantasy. The people in Samogitia did not venerate the sun and not the hammer, but the god-smith, who made the sun and the hammer they used as some kind of relic, to apply Christian terminology. So in that case, if my theory is right, Jerome might have seen some hammer, perhaps the hammer of Telawel.

There is an interesting testimony of Saxo Grammaticus concerning the "hammer". The Danish Prince Magnus, the son of Niels (1105-1134), coming back from an expedition to the east took with him a big hammer as a trophy.³⁸ But in this case, the hammer was not used for the liberation of the sun, but the heavenly powers originally used it for breaking the ice in the rivers during the spring.³⁹

There is also a parallel in Finnish mythology, where god Ilmarinen takes the same role as the Lithuanian Telawel.⁴⁰

But what about the signs of the zodiac? They also seem to be an anachronism in the Lithuanian case. In the mythology of this region there was not found anything that could recall the zodiac. Perhaps the myth which originated from Belarus can be used as some kind of comparison. This myth tells about twelve sons who became hammers according to God's decision to pursue the devils to hell.⁴¹ It proves the existence of the hammer as an instrument of God's will, but nothing which could be connected with the signs of the zodiac.

³⁶ A. Krchňák, *Čechové na basiléjském sněmu*. Rome 1967, p. 56, p. 132.

³⁷ M. Kosman, *Drogi zaniku...*, p. 73.

³⁸ A. Holder-Egger, *Saxonis Grammatici Gesta Danorum*. Strassburg 1866.

³⁹ J. Powierski, *Z badań nad mitologią bałto-słowiańska*, in *Slavia Antiqua*, vol. 24, p. 311.

⁴⁰ A. Mierzyński, *Źródła do mytologii...*, p. 142.

⁴¹ A. Brückner, *Starożytna Litwa...*, p. 155.

We can prove the existence of these signs in the Czech lands only in the 12th century, in the Homiliar of Opatovice, where the author writes about special amulets, which represented the astrological signs. They were put on the neck and used against illness.⁴²

The other evidence (14th century) is included in the speech of Thomas Štítný: "...the people keep the pagan astrological signs, they venerate the Moon, the stars and the order of them, which has the name zodiac ...".⁴³

Nevertheless it is not a usual pagan stereotype, it could be an invention of Jerome or Aeneas.

According to Piccolomini, the other tribe which Jerome visited in this time venerated snakes. Inhabitants of every house which he entered had venerated their own snake as some kind of home idol. They sacrificed to this snake a meal, usually milk. The housekeeper himself fed the snake everyday. Jerome ordered them to bring all the snakes to one place and burn them. But one of them was so big that it was not possible to burn it.⁴⁴

The cult of the snakes outlived Jerome's mission. There is much more evidence about this cult later. Nicholas of Hussow writes in 1525 that "...not far from our land the people are venerating snakes. They also sacrifice to the woods ...".⁴⁵

King Sigismund August writes in 1547 to bishop Mariejowski: "...the people venerate snakes and sacrifice to them publicly or in privacy ...".⁴⁶

It proves according to this evidence that the people really did it, so that it is not some kind of stereotype or the imagination of Jerome or Aeneas. But there is one thing which sounds like a motif to me. It is the question of the big snake, which could not be burnt. I would like to return to this case later, in connection with some other similarity. In the Czech tradition, there exists some kind of home idol too. Bohuslav Balbín writes about "...the

⁴² F. Hecht, *Das Homiliar des Bischofs von Prag, Beiträge zur Geschichte Böhmens I*, Prague 1863, p. 21.

⁴³ Č. Zibrť, *Seznam zvyklostí a pověr pohanských*, Praha 1894, p. 48.

⁴⁴ A. S. Piccolomini, *Historia de Europe*, ch. 26, pp. 237-239.

⁴⁵ Nicolai Hussoviani *Carmina*, ed. J. Pelczar, Kraków 1894, p. 86.

⁴⁶ M. Kosman, *Reformacja i kontrreformacja w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim w świetle polemiki wyznaniowej*, Wrocław 1966, p. 28.

foolish women who prepare the meal for the home's 'little housekeeper' ...". This ritual was usually performed on Thursday⁴⁷.

Piccolomini also tells how Jerome continued in his missionary activity to the territory of the tribe which sacrificed to the sacred and eternal fire, and a specially established group of priests took care of this fire. They had a second important role, to augur the fate of sick persons with the help of this fire. They usually surrounded the fire and observed the shadows of the sick person, which had appeared behind the flames. When they saw the face of the sick person, he would survive the illness, but if they saw his back, this person would die. Next morning they told the relatives of the sick whether he had to make his last will, especially regarding his property. Jerome, according to Aeneas, had scattered this fire and introduced the Christian faith into the area.⁴⁸

Fire was, together with the main gods, an important object of veneration in Samogitia and in Aukštota. Fire and its smoke were like mediators between the earth and the gods living in heaven. That is why, in my opinion, the main sacrifices were put into the fire as gifts to the heavenly gods, especially Perun and Telawel.

For example, in 1320 the marshal of the Teutonic Order coming from Memel attacked the land near Worní, but he was overthrown and killed. Then his armoured body, sitting on his horse, was sacrificed to the fire.⁴⁹

Another comtur of the Teutonic Order was sacrificed in 1389. He was stifled in the smoke upon the fire and then also, dressed in armour, thrown into the fire.⁵⁰ The second story happened in the part of Samogitia which formally belonged to the Teutonic Order in this period, according to the agreement from the year 1382.

There are some references about the main sacred fire. This fire had been situated on the high bank of the river Niewiaża.⁵¹ Another main fire, situated in Vilnius, was scattered during Władysław Jagiełło's mission in 1387, and the pagan altar, which was situated near this fire, was broken. Some group of chaplains established for the ceremonies of the sacrifice was

⁴⁷ B. Balbín. *Miscellanea historica regni Bohemiae*. Prague 1681, vol.3, p. 196.

⁴⁸ A. S. Piccolomini. *Historia de Europe*, ch. 26, pp. 237-239.

⁴⁹ A. Mierzyński. *Źródła do mytologii*, p. 120.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ J. Długosz. *Dziejów ...*, vol. 4, p. 150.

dissolved. Then the church was founded in the former pagan sacred place, which corresponds with the usual practice of the missions.⁵² This is in the same way similar to the experience of Jerome, but the sacred fires were throughout the whole country, and the scattering of the pagan sacred fires seems to have been a favourite stereotype. The auguring from the flame reminds us of the "classical cults", and we have no more evidence for it. It could be an invention of Jerome or Aeneas.⁵³

The last tribe which was visited by Jerome, according to references of Aeneas, was the tribe which sacrificed to its gods in the sacred forests. He preached to this tribe for "many days". Finally, he ordered the people to fell the forest. The people agreed and came with axes, but everybody was afraid to start felling the trees. Therefore Jerome himself felled the first timber. The people, seeing that nothing wrong happened, followed his example. But in the middle of the forest was the biggest and oldest oak, and the people believed that this oak was the seat of the god of this forest. Somebody tried to cut the timber, but his axe reflected off the timber and wounded him. Everybody started to cry because they supposed that god had punished the wounded person; nobody wanted to continue working or even touching this timber. Jerome ordered the wounded person to get up and showed that the injury was not serious. Then the people after seeing that nothing wrong had happened continued to fell the trees with Jerome, and they destroyed the whole forest. There were more sacred forests in the region, and Jerome ordered them also to be felled. But the people stirred up against Jerome, and the women went to Grand Duke Witold and declared that they would rather leave the country than relinquish the old manners. They said that they had no place anymore where they could find God (!) to ask him for the rains. But Jerome decided to destroy everything. Therefore, the Grand Duke promised the women that he would finish Jerome's activities, and he withdrew him promptly.⁵⁴ According to

⁵² J. Długosz. *Dziejów ...*, vol. 3, p. 443. Č. Zíbrt. *Seznam ...*, p. 32. He writes about the famous recommendation of Pope Gregory I to bishop Augustin, the missionar in Anglo-Saxon lands. Gregory recommended to build the Christian churches in the places of the old pagan sanctuaries.

⁵³ S. Rubin. *Geschichte des Aberglaubens*, Leipzig 1888. p. 27.

⁵⁴ A. S. Piccolomini. *Historia de Europe*, ch. 26. pp. 237-239.

tradition he said: "... Christ can manage without his faithful, but I cannot manage without my servants...".⁵⁵

M. Strykowski gives us the same story but with a different end. The wounded person was not some unknown man but Jerome himself, and he was gravely wounded. But just when he made the sign of the cross over his injury, it disappeared, and he continued his work.⁵⁶

Strykowski placed this story in the year 1387, at the official beginning of the baptism of the land. But we know for sure that in this time Jerome was neither in Lithuania nor in Poland. He was in Prague. It seems to me that M. Strykowski took the story from an unknown source or simply from an oral tradition, not from Piccolomini, because there is an important difference between them. It is also possible that Strykowski simply transformed Piccolomini's story according to his own imagination and joined it to his chapter about the baptism of Lithuania in 1387. An exact comparison of these two works must be done to answer this question exactly, and it is not the object of my work.

Let me come back to the case of the oldest tree which could not be felled, or the biggest snake which could not be burnt. In each story, celebrating the missions, there had to be some stereotypical difficulty, to be overpowered with the help of God. This is a phenomenon, which makes each of those stories unreal and must be connected with a special medieval way of thinking.

However, the "Polish" baptism of Lithuania was made in a tolerant way, on the contrary to the way practiced by the Teutonic Order; the slightly fanatic style of Jerome was exceptional.

Generally, it is possible to say that this tolerant way of baptising won Samogitia from the hands of the Teutonic Order. There is a deep contrast between the methods of Christianisation of these two sides.⁵⁷ The delegation from Samogitia informed the council in Constance about the style of the Teutonic Order in the case of the baptism of the territory. They said:

⁵⁵ J. Fijałek. *Kościół...*, p. 50.

⁵⁶ M. Strykowski. *Kronika ...*, pp. 79-80.

⁵⁷ M. Kosman. *Drogi zaniku...*, p. 43.

“...the Order did not build any church and did not establish any priest in its part of Samogitia...”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ A. Procházka. Na Soborze w Konstancji. in: *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejęności, Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny*. 35. Kraków 1897, pp. 22-24.

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31

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HERAUSGEGEBEN VON GERHARD JARITZ

GEDRUCKT MIT UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER KULTURABTEILUNG
DES AMTES DER NIEDERÖSTERREICHISCHEN LANDESREGIERUNG

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Vorwort

Das vorliegende Heft von *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* setzt zum einen die Publikation von Vorträgen am *International Medieval Congress* in Leeds mit dem Beitrag von Christian Krötzl fort. Zun anderen kommt ein Referat des Herausgebers bei der Tagung *Medieval Medicine. Healing Body and Mind* zum Abdruck. Zwei weitere Aufsätze stammen von Absolventen des Mittelalterprogramms an der Central European University in Budapest.

Nahezu gleichzeitig mit *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 31 erscheint Sonderband IV unserer Reihe, der sich mit dem Alltag von Lehrlingen in Sachsen vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert auseinandersetzt. Sonderband V wird eine Arbeit von Frau Felise, einer Schülerin von Hans-Werner Goetz, Hamburg, beinhalten und sich der Behandlung des Alltags in mittelalterlichen Stadtchroniken widmen.

Verhandlungen hinsichtlich Sonderband VI und VII sind im Gange. Wir hoffen, Ihnen zu Beginn des Jahres 1995 genaueres mitteilen zu können. Heft 32 wird im Februar 1995 zum Erscheinen gelangen.

Wir möchten die Gelegenheit wahrnehmen, unseren Mitglieder ein frohes Weihnachtsfest sowie Erfolg und Ruhe für das Jahr 1995 zu wünschen. Außerdem möchten wir sie neuerlich herzlich einladen, uns Beiträge für unsere Publikationsorgane zu übermitteln. Wir werden uns bemühen, diese nach gegebenen Möglichkeiten rasch zu publizieren.

Gerhard Jaritz, Herausgeber