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Perception of the Body in the Middle Ages in Light of the Polish Chronicles

Postrzeganie ciała w średniowieczu w świetle kronik polskich

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to show the perception of a body in the Middle Ages through the prism of Polish chronicles. For this purpose, the Chronicle of Gallus Anonymus, the Polish Chronicle of Wincenty Kadłubek, the Chronicle of Wielkopolska and the Chronicle of Jan of Czarnków were analyzed in terms of occurrence of body references, both quantitative, metaphorical, symbolic and veristic. Although the chronicles are a source of information on mentality of their times, they are subject to the literary conventions used at the time, which needs to be borne in mind when interpreting the obtained data. In the presentation of the results, the division of a body into noble parts (head, heart), non-noble ones (belly, hands, genitals), and filters (eyes, lips and ears) was applied. According to this division, individual elements of the body were discussed and their appearance in chronicles was shown. Studies have shown that the number of body messages in all four chronicles come to 297 mentions. No chronicler, apart from Wincenty Kadłubek, directly explained his attitude to the body. Kadłubek, speaking through his characters, shows body

PUBLICATION INFO			
			e-ISSN: 2449-8467 ISSN: 2082-6060
			
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SOURCE OF FUNDING: Financed from the author's own funds			
SUBMITTED: 2019.01.14	ACCEPTED: 2020.01.14	PUBLISHED ONLINE: 2020.12.21	
WEBSITE OF THE JOURNAL: https://journals.umcs.pl/rh		EDITORIAL COMMITTEE E-mail: reshistorica@umcs.pl	

and soul as two integral elements. The political metaphor was noted above all in relation to the head as a metaphor of a ruler or a leader. It should be noted that these studies are an introduction to the research on the perception of the body in Polish Middle Ages.

Key words: body, Middle Ages, human, Polish chronicles, Christianity

Throughout the history of mankind, the body has been the central point of reference, as it serves man as an intermediary for communication with the surrounding reality¹. The body also constitutes a reflection of the period along with the laws defining it, as a factor of sorts shaping its vicinity. Hence, the body is a dynamic notion, inherent in the nature, and at the same time influencing and being influenced by ideologies, political systems, religion, and fashion². Such complexly perceived interdependence has since time immemorial been the object of interest of philosophers, theologians, and historians³.

In the research of Polish historians, the problems of perception of the body in the Middle Ages appears of secondary importance. In those studies, human body usually emerges only in the context of the saints⁴ and askesis, women and sexuality, art and interments⁵. In and of itself the body does not constitute the main object of interest in the majority of these works, as scholars refer to it to present specific phenomena and processes occurring in the medieval society, such as, for instance, the paths of sanctity, the cult of the relics, etc. The problems related to the body

¹ J. Tomczyk, *Antropologia filozoficzna i przyrodnicza w poszukiwaniu istoty człowieka*, 'Studia Philosophiae Christianae' 2008, 39, 1, p. 121.

² K. Konarska, *Niesforne ciało*, in: *Ciało cielesne*, ed. K. Konarska, Wrocław 2011, p. 10; M.H. Green, *Bodily Essences. Bodies as Categories of Difference*, in: *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Middle Ages*, ed. L. Kalof, Oxford–New York 2010, p. 149.

³ C. Saunders, *Voices and Visions: Mind, Body and Affect in Medieval Writing*, in: *The Edinburgh Companion to the Critical Medical Humanities*, eds. A. Whitehead et al., Edinburgh 2016, pp. 412–441; M. Matczak, *Archeologia ciała*, 'Przegląd Archeologiczny' 2013, 61, pp. 51–75.

⁴ B. Kowalska, *Dwoistość ludzkiego ciała w opisach żywotów świętych*, 'Częstochowskie Teki Historyczne' 2015, 5, pp. 13–27.

⁵ M. Krawiec, *Seksualność w średniowiecznej Polsce*, Poznań 2000; U.M. Mazurczak, *Dwie starożytne tradycje rozumienia ciała w sztuce średniowiecznej*, 'Roczniki Humanistyczne' 2007, 44–45, 3, pp. 54–55, 157–180; M. Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu. Relikwie w kulturze religijnej na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu*, Warszawa 2008; E. Wólkiewicz, *Grube ciało. Społeczne postrzeganie otyłości w średniowieczu*, 'Przegląd Historyczny' 2009, 100, 3, p. 495; G. Pac, *Kobiety, asceza i władza nad ciałem w późnym średniowieczu*, 'Przegląd Historyczny' 2009, 100, 3, pp. 525–545; U.M. Mazurczak, *Metafory ciała: głowa-twarz. Na wybranych przykładach malarstwa Duccia i Giotto*, 'Roczniki Humanistyczne' 2010, 58, 4, pp. 59–79; K. Bochenek, *Dusza jako zasadniczy punkt odniesienia krakowskiej antropologii średniowiecznej*, 'ΣΟΦΙΑ' 2011, 11, pp. 37–51.

most definitely encompass the latter issues, what is missing, however, is a holistic perspective, as well as many detailed analyses. Foreign works about the body turn out to be much more satisfactory. The subject is very popular among Western European researchers. There is an abundance of publications on the respective aspects of the body and corporeity, with particularly large number of works concerning the medieval sexuality⁶. A seminal work on the issues related to the body is the publication by Jacques Le Goff and Nicolas Truong: *The History of the Body in the Middle Ages*, for the Authors, the *body* is a place of tensions and paradoxes emerging at the intersection of human needs and the precepts and teachings of the Church⁷. Among the most recent works directly dealing with the history of the body one can list, among others, *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Middle Ages* edited by Linda Kalof⁸, as well as *Medieval Bodies: Life, Death and Art in the Middle Ages* by Jack Hartnell⁹. The abovementioned authors within the body-related problems seek for the notion of man's birth and death, sexuality and the division of sexes, the category of beauty of the human body, as well as its cultural representations. They also refer to bodily needs and processes that occur in the body.

The current study is intended as an attempt to trace and capture the shifts in the attitudes to perceiving the body within the history of the Polish Middle Ages. This task will be carried out through the analysis of the Polish chronicles, i.e. *Gesta principum Polonorum* by Gallus Anonymus of 12th century¹⁰, *Chronica Polonorum* by Winenty Kadłubek of the turn of 12th and 13th century¹¹, *Wielkopolska Chronicle* of 13th century¹², and the

⁶ These are, among others: J. Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation: Minority Groups in the Middle Ages*, London–New York 1990; *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages*, eds. S. Farmer, C. Braun Pasternack, 'Medieval Cultures' 2003, 32; *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gilmore Calder*, eds. C. Pasternack, L.C. Weston, 'The Review of English Studies' 2006, 57; R.M. Karras, J. Murrat, *The Sexual Body*, in: *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Middle Ages*, ed. L. Kalof, Oxford–New York 2010; M.M. Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture*, London–New Delhi–New York–Sydney 2015.

⁷ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *Historia ciała w średniowieczu*, transl. I. Kania, Warszawa 2006.

⁸ *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Middle Ages*, ed. L. Kalof, Oxford–New York 2010.

⁹ J. Hartnell, *Medieval Bodies: Life, Death and Art in the Middle Ages*, London 2018.

¹⁰ *Anonima tzw. Galla Kronika czyli Dzieje książąt i władców polskich*, ed. K. Maleczyński, *Pomniki Dziejowe Polski*, series 2, vol. 2, Kraków 1953; Gall Anonim, *Kronika Polska*, transl. R. Grodecki, ed. M. Plezia, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2008.

¹¹ Mistrz Wincenty (the so-called Kadłubek), *Kronika Polska*, transl. B. Kürbis, Wrocław 2008; *Magistri Vincentii dicta Kadłubek Chronica Polonorum*, ed. Plezia, *Pomniki Dziejowe Polski*, series 2, vol. 11, Kraków 1994.

¹² *Kronika Wielkopolska*, transl. K. Abgarowicz, Kraków 2010; *Chronica Poloniae Maioris*, ed. B. Kürbis, *Pomniki Dziejowe Polski*, series 2, vol. 8, Warszawa 1970.

Chronicle by Jan of Czarnków of 14th century¹³. There can be no doubt that the above chronicles constitute a valid source for the history of mentality of their eras. The analysis performed do not include the work by Jan Długosz *Annals or Chronicles of the Famous Kingdom of Poland*, as due to their size it would require a separate study. Parts of the body featured in the said chronicles were studied in terms of their quantity, but also for their symbolic, metaphoric and veristic value. It should be noted that this research are but a small section of what comprises the problem of the body and corporeity in the Middle Ages. The considerations at hand are only a contribution to studies on the complex and multidimensional issue that is the perception of the body in the Polish Middle Ages. Therefore, the subject requires interdisciplinary research that may in the future bring us closer to achieving a more complete picture of these problems.

The article uses a classification that divides the body into two symbolic, and at the same time contrasting parts, introducing the opposition between what is up, and what is down, the interior and the exterior. Medieval authors of medical tractates constructed concepts of this kind, in greater or lesser detail, providing a gradation of the various spheres of the body. The basic classifications were based on the division into the noble part, which included the head and the heart, and the ignoble, sordid, with stomach, hands, genitals. The remaining elements of the body had the so-called filter status, serving to differentiate between the good and the bad, i.e. eyes, mouth, and ears¹⁴.

In the Middle Ages, the body was a testament to the imperfection of human nature¹⁵. Such evaluation had its origin in the Augustinian thought, according to whom the corporeity, the body was the source of impurity and weakness¹⁶. Saint Gregory the Great referred to the body as 'the disgusting garment of the soul', one that concurrently constituted prison and poison for the soul¹⁷. In this regard, it would constitute a reminder of

¹³ *Joannis de Czarnkow Chronicon Polonorum, 1333–1384*, ed. J. Szlachtowski, *Pomniki Dziejowe Polski*, ed. A. Bielowski, vol. 2, Lviv 1872; *Kronika Jan z Czarnkowa*, transl. J. Żerbiłło, ed. M.D. Kowalski, Kraków 2001.

¹⁴ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

¹⁵ M. Markowski, *Epistemologia a metafizyka św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, in: *Homo viator. Teksty i studia nad antropologią filozoficzną w średniowieczu*, ed. M. Karas, Kraków 2009, pp. 166–167; É. Gilson, *Thomism. The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, transl. R.K Shook, A. Maurer, Toronto 2002.

¹⁶ 'Divided due to the fall of Adam, the man literally falls apart in death which is the punishment for original sin and breaks the nexus between the soul and the body'. B. Peklar, *Discussing Medieval Dialogue Between the Soul and the Body Questions of Dualism, 'Ars & Humanitas'* 2015, 9, 2, pp. 175–176.

¹⁷ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 31.

human frailty, underscoring that despite the spiritual power and social status, no-one can be certain that they would not yield to the temptations of the body¹⁸. That caused the fear of sin, of one's own body that was impossible to control¹⁹. Furthermore, the body was treated as the carrier of the original sin, as the sin of curiosity and pride, the actual reason of the expulsion of Adam and Eve²⁰ from the paradise, was transferred into the sexual sin²¹. This belief lingered on also in the Late Middle Ages, it transpired in hagiography, in theological discourse, as well as in pious deliberations, above all about women. Even though Saint Thomas Aquinas, a representative of scholasticism, spoke of the integrity of human nature, the idea did not resonate with society. While the Thomistic teaching of mutual permeation and complementation of the spiritual and corporeal elements was in fact only familiar to intellectual elites²².

The French historian, J. Le Goff, in his works on the history of the body and of man, writes that the Middle Ages experienced the collapse of the corporality, that resulted in the body being subjected to strict control²³. For it was believed that keeping the body in check would allow for perfecting of the soul; hence, asceticism became the means of reaching that goal, enabling man to come closer and become more similar to Christ²⁴. Therefore, all forms of behavior through which human corporeality displayed and imposed itself were eradicated and eliminated, as proved by the decline

¹⁸ R.M. Karras, *Seksualność w średniowiecznej Europie*, transl. A. Bugaj, Warszawa 2012, pp. 79–82, 87.

¹⁹ *Historia ciała*, vol. 1, *Od renesansu do oświecenia*, ed. G. Vigarello, transl. T. Stróżyński, Gdańsk 2011, p. 17; J. Le Goff, *Człowiek średniowiecza*, in: *Człowiek średniowiecza*, ed. J. Le Goff, transl. M. Radożycka-Paoletti, Warszawa–Gdańsk 1996, pp. 13, 42.

²⁰ In the medieval era, the female body was perceived through the prism of Eve, and hence it was considered to be weak and debased, both physically and morally. For instance, a painting from a thirteenth-century English Psalter underscores Eve's weakness and guilt, as the snake does have a female head. Moreover, in the Middle Ages it was thought that women had to maintain and improve their beauty, as they had lost the constant state as a result of God's punishment for yielding to diabolic temptation. M. Cabré, *Beautiful Bodies*, in: *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Middle Ages*, ed. L. Kalof, Oxford–New York 2010, p. 129.

²¹ J. Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²² A. Sutowicz, *Elementy formacji zakonnej w klasztorach żeńskich na przykładzie XIV-wiecznych konstytucji norbertanek cyrkarii wrocławskiej. Gest jako element języka »sacrum«*, 'Saeculum Christianum' 2011, 2, p. 57; K. Bochenek, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–51; P. King, *Why Isn't the Mind-Body Problem Medieval?*, in: *Forming the Mind. Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, ed. H. Lagerlund, New York 2007, pp. 187–205.

²³ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

²⁴ A. Sutowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 57; G. Pac, *op. cit.*, p. 531; A. Vauchez, *Duchowość średniowiecza*, transl. H. Zaremska, Gdańsk 2004, pp. 122–126.

of sport and theatre. Furthermore, a striking feature in that regard was the control of sexuality, the attribution of contacts with the devil to woman, the devaluation of manual labour, as well as the concept for a mask, lipstick, or even laughter. The changes in the conceptual framework outlined above were introduced and then made more profound by the Church Fathers²⁵.

There was also another attitude, a current of thought noting the positive values of the body, represented by the 13th century theologians, such as Saint Bonaventure²⁶, and the aforementioned Thomas Aquinas²⁷. They based their thought, among others, on the fact that the body of Christ constitutes the central point of reference for Christianity. God inscribed Himself in history, took on the form of man, defeated death by His resurrection, that is, the basic tenet of the Christian dogma²⁸.

THE FILTERS

According to Biblical verses, the mouth is the organ of speech, at the same time constituting also the part of the body – reflecting the human interior²⁹. Classification of the mouth as a filter entails the possibility of uttering both the good, pious words of prayers and sermons, as well as those coarse, obscene, and blasphemous³⁰. Moreover, thanks to the *mouth*, one could vouch of peace, enter into an oral agreement, and become one with the Lord's family. Such a status was granted with a kiss, during the ceremony of paying homage, and accolade. One should bear in mind, however, that as a symbol kiss was not unequivocal, depending on the circumstances and the person performing it. For instance, a kiss on the cheek – when signing a treaty indicated forgiveness, a kiss on the knee, hand, or foot signified subordination, meanwhile, in the greeting, it was a sign of peaceful intentions³¹.

The negative attitude to the mouth in the Middle Ages was partially the consequence of laughter. In spite of the fact that according to a definition put forth by Aristotle, who was held in much regard during that period,

²⁵ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

²⁶ Bonaventure heralded the unification of body and soul, for he believed that both these aspects constitute a single entity. B. Peklar, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

²⁷ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ F.M. Rosiński, *Antropologia biblijna ciała i cielesności*, in: *Ciało cielesne*, p. 78.

³⁰ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

³¹ *Ibidem*, s. 142; G. Althoff, *Potęga rytuału. Symbolika władzy w średniowieczu*, transl. A. Gadzała, Warszawa 2011, pp. 25, 28, 34, 47.

stating that 'laughter is a human feature', it remained ignominious until the 12th century. We should look for the source of this medieval condemnation of laughter in the division presented above. Laughter was alleged to originate in the abdomen, an organ belonging to the ignoble section of the body. According to the Rule of the Master, the teeth that were to serve as the barrier for laughter, with the mouth taking on the role of a bolt; together these were intended to obstruct other undesirable sounds³². Furthermore, due to the fact that the act of laughing contorted the mouth, and deformed the face, it was held in contempt also by itself³³. However, the 12th century witnessed the rehabilitation of laughter because of Thomas Aquinas, who saw it as a token of joy, in the personalist sense. The philosopher made the distinction between mild smile and laughter accompanied by opening the mouth. In his view, smile was to be a testament to one's control over the body and mind, and thus also over the facial expression and gestures³⁴. Besides the said open-mouth laughter, the unequivocal status of the mouth was largely effected by its direct association with the pleasures of consumption, considered to be the sin of gluttony and drunkenness³⁵.

The mouth appears in the selected chronicles twenty three times. It must be taken into account that in the *Chronicle* by Gallus Anonymus and that by Jan of Czarnków we registered only two mentions each, whereas in the *Wielkopolska Chronicle* – three. *Mouth* is presented in majority of the passages as the part of the body responsible for the well-known functions, i.e. consuming food and kissing someone. The chroniclers indicated – also indirectly – the finer function of the mouth, for example, 'No one ever heard a coarse or lewd word uttered by his mouth'³⁶, and 'judgement in the mouth of a sinner is a sword in the hands of a madman'³⁷.

In the Bible, the eye is treated as the mirror of the soul, reflecting the emotional and internal life of a person, their conscience, and moods³⁸. Thus, the eyes are able to express sympathy, joy, anger, and empathy. The lack of sight, *blindness*, was considered to be a special punishment from God³⁹. It should be added, that in antiquity many peoples saw the eye as the symbol of the Sun-god. In Christianity, the eye is 'the symbol

³² J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–64.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ U. Mazurczak, *Dwie*, pp. 176–177.

³⁵ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³⁶ 'Nikt nie słyzył nigdy z ust jego żadnego słowa brzydkiego lub sprośnego'. *Kronika Wielkopolska*, p. 180.

³⁷ 'sąd w ustach bezbożnika, to miecz w rękach szaleńca'. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

³⁸ D. Forstner OSB, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, transl. W. Zakrzewska, P. Pachciarek, R. Turzyński, Warszawa 1990, pp. 347–348.

³⁹ F.M. Rosiński, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

of omniscience, paternal alertness and care of God, but also of an enquiring look⁴⁰. In spite of that, sight, much like the mouth, was in the medieval era treated with a hint of ambivalence, as they could be used for perpetrating misdeeds, such as looking at obscene paintings⁴¹.

In the chronicles, eyes were featured forty-one times, with their obvious role being underscored, as these fragments predominantly refer to the loss of eye or sight, for instance, because of the committed treason. 'Now, as Piotrek [Włostowic – author's note (hereinafter: a.n.)] similarly spoke to Władysław [Herman – a.n.], claiming that his wife had an intercourse with a knight, he should not only loose his tongue, and eyes, but also his life'⁴². This act marks the significance of the sense of sight, that one would deprive his rivals of, with a striking example thereof being the passage about the blinding of Zbigniew⁴³ by Bolesław III Krzywousty⁴⁴. Apart from the above, the eyes can be found in metaphors, in which open ones constitute the symbol of a good and alert ruler: 'Especially that the ruler ought to be wise, thorough, cautious and deliberate in everything and everywhere. For if in the smallest of things, such as presiding over a family, a house, a ship, a single [only] patch of land or serf, being neglectful proves dangerous, how much more so is falling asleep while rolling the Republic, when the eyes are closed, not to say – blind'⁴⁵. Similar in its tone, is another passage from the *Chronicle* by Wincenty Kadłubek: 'Oh thou, ruler of great alertness, whose eye did not know any sleep while wielding power!'⁴⁶.

The most notable fragment concerning *blindness* is the legend of

⁴⁰ 'symbolem wszechwiedzy, czujności i ojcowskiej troski Boga, ale także symbolem jego badawczego spojrzenia'. D. Forstner OSB, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

⁴¹ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

⁴² 'A ponieważ Piotrek [Włostowic – a.n.] podobnie odezwał się do Władysława [Hermana – a.n.], twierdząc, że jego żona miała stosunek z pewnym rycerzem, dlatego on powinien był stracić nie tylko język i oczy, lecz nawet życie'. *Kronika Wielkopolska*, p. 103.

⁴³ According to Gallus Anonymus, Bolesław sinned by enduring Zbigniew. Meanwhile, from the chronicle of Cosmas of Prague we can learn what exactly Bolesław did to his brother. See: *Kosmasa Kronika Czechów*, transl. M. Wojciechowska, Warszawa 1968, p. 367; Gall Anonim, *op. cit.*, p. 157; J. Nikodem, *Nieskruszony syn marnotrawny: Gall Anonim o dwóch powrotach Zbigniewa do Polski*, 'Studia Periegetica' 2010, 4, pp. 73, 77.

⁴⁴ J. Warylewski, *Krzyże i kapliczki pokutne (pojednania), jako element średniowiecznej jurysdykcji karnej*, 'Studia Gdańskie' 2016, 38, p. 150.

⁴⁵ 'Zwłaszcza że panujący powinien być mądry, rzetelny, ostrożny i przemyślny we wszystkim i wszędzie. Jeśli w rzeczach najmniejszych, powiedzmy we władaniu nad rodziną, domem, okrętem, nad jednym [jedynym] zagonem czy kmieciem zaniedbywanie jest niebezpieczne, o ileż niebezpieczniejsze jest zasypianie przy władaniu rzecząpospolitą, gdy oczy są zamknięte, żebym nie powiedział – ślepe'. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁴⁶ 'O, władco wielce czujny, którego oko snu nie zaznało podczas sprawowania władzy!'. *Ibidem*, p. 27.

Mieszko, who was said to have been blind⁴⁷ until he turned seven⁴⁸. Gallus Anonymus presented the passus both in a literal and a metaphorical sense. Scholars point out that the chronicler treated this instance of *blindness* as a sign – of having been chosen⁴⁹. 'For in the proper order, God Omnipotent, first returned bodily sight to Mieszko, and subsequently granted him the spiritual [sight], so that through the perception of the visible he could reach the acknowledgement of the invisible, and by the knowledge of the created [things] could have in sight the omnipotence of their Creator'⁵⁰.

On the leaves of the Bible, the ear can be found in the meaning of being heard, as well as with a description of a gesture – of covering one's ears – then understood as the rejection of a given word⁵¹. The ear also constitutes 'a spiritual disposition of being open to what is heard, and where the higher will obliges one to do something – to be obedient'⁵². The man is to be open to the word of God, Christ taught: 'Let anyone with ears to hear listen!'. In the Bible, one also comes across 'God's ears', an expression referring to His omniscience and his ability to hear prayers of all people⁵³. In the Polish chronicles, the ear appears eight times, it was featured in the work by Wincenty Kadłubek, and in *Wielkopolska Chronicle*. These citations present natural functions of the ears, i.e. hearing, they were phrased in idiomatic expressions: 'Yet when the tidings of the insult committed by his enemies has been heard (lit. has hit – transl. note) the ears of Bolesław [Krzywousty – a.n.], having bid farewell to his commensals he seizes his enemies, fights and tramples them, not only does he take back the stolen spoils, but augments it, soon he sends three select units of cavalry, to enter Moravia, ruin it with fire

⁴⁷ P. Wiszewski, *Struktura, Fabuła i historia. Wokół opowieści o odzyskaniu wzroku przez Mieszka (Galii Anonymi Cronicae, I, 4)*, 'Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej' 2009, 9, pp. 48–57; see: J. Banaszkiewicz, *Polskie dzieje bajeczne mistrza Wincentego Kadłubka*, Wrocław 2002; idem, *Podanie o Piaście i Popielu: studium porównawcze nad wczesnośredniowiecznymi tradycjami dynastycznymi*, Warszawa 2010.

⁴⁸ 'The man of the Middle Ages was fascinated with numbers, seven – the number of religion – seven gifts of God, seven sacraments, seven deadly sins'. J. Le Goff, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴⁹ P. Wiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–60.

⁵⁰ 'W stosownym bowiem porządku Bóg wszechmocny najpierw przywrócił Mieszkowi wzrok cielesny, a następnie udzielił mu [wzroku] duchowego, aby przez poznanie rzeczy widzialnych doszedł do uznania niewidzialnych i by przez znajomość rzeczy [stworzonych] sięgnął wzrokiem do wszechmocy ich stwórcy'. Gall Anonim, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁵¹ F.M. Rosiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–79.

⁵² 'duchową dyspozycję otwarcia się na to co usłyszane i tam, gdzie do czegoś zobowiązuje wyższa wola, posłuchania tego'. D. Forstner OSB, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 351.

and ravage it as enemies do'⁵⁴.

Among the parts of the body most often mentioned in the Bible there is the hand, arm, left and right hand, palm, fist. The hand alone may represent an entire person, offering one's hand is a sign of honesty and readiness to come to someone's aid. God's Hand is the token of His sovereign authority, using it God manifests his might and power⁵⁵. In the medieval symbolism, much like in the Bible, the hand signified protection and command. The best instantiation of it constitutes the motif of God's Hand appearing upon the sky in order to lead His people. God's Hand also symbolises protection and blessing. The motif was present in the representations typical of pre-Romanesque and Romanesque art, both religious and secular. In the early Middle Ages, the hand would stand for presence, omnipotence, justice, as well as God's love and grace. The motif of hand was very popular, as it reflected the doctrine – pervasive at the time – indicating that all authority comes from the Lord. The hand also illustrated the protection and blessing of all actions taken by the monarch⁵⁶. Moreover, the discussed part of the body was very often imaged in the gestures of prayer, during the devotion. Like the mouth, hands appear in the symbolic gesture of submission, homage. The vassal would place his palms in the palms of his master in a display of obedience and trust⁵⁷. The ancient symbolic distinction of the right hand was adopted by Christianity, as it was associated with man's authority and power, as well as with the procedure of affirming a vow therewith. In the legal realm, raising both hands or placing them on the Holy Scripture constituted a valid, and concurrently verbal confirmation. Marriage vows were also based on engagement (in Polish lit. 'handing over' – transl. note), with hands held tightly in a symbol of love⁵⁸. Additionally, in the Middle Ages, the hand and arm constituted the basic types of relics, though of a status lower in the hierarchy than the capital head. In spite of that, the unquestionable respect for the hand and arm in relation to other elements of the body can be observed⁵⁹. Its stature is indicated by the fact that persons of high social standing were offered such a relic, the purpose of the practice being

⁵⁴ 'Lecz gdy wieść o wyrządzonej przez wrogów obeldze obila się o uszy Bolesława [Krzywoustego – a.n.], pożegnawszy współbiesiadników dopada wrogów, zwalczając i rozgramia, zabraną zdobycze nie tylko odzyskuje, lecz jeszcze powiększa, i po niedługim czasie wysłał trzy dobrowolne oddziały jazdy, aby wkroczył do Moraw, zniszczył je ogniem i spustoszył zwyczajem nieprzyjacielskim'. *Kronika Wielkopolska*, p. 71.

⁵⁵ F.M. Rosiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 80–81.

⁵⁶ Z. Piech, *Ikonaografia pieczęci Piastów*, Kraków 1993, pp. 94, 113–114, 140.

⁵⁷ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 142; G. Althoff, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

⁵⁸ J. Hartnell, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁵⁹ M. Starnawska, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

entering or reinforcing friendship⁶⁰. The most distinguished instance of such an act is Otto III's donation of the arm of St Adalbert to Bolesław Chrobry during the Congress in Gniezno⁶¹.

In his work, J. Le Goff classified the hand as part of the ignominious section of the body, a decision stemming from the fact that hands could be used to perpetrate various misdeeds. Between the 5th and eleventh century, manual labour was believed to be an instrument of penance, a consequence of the sin committed by our first parents. Consequently, the Rule of St Benedict came to include the requirement of manual work, as a sort of reparation for the original sin⁶². In the analysed chronicles, however, there are no passages directly depreciating manual toil. Only one fragment from the *Chronicle* of Wincenty Kadłubek speaks of work as punishment⁶³, definitely not providing enough references to ascertain that Polish chronicles illustrate the notion in question. Moreover, starting in 13th century, one can notice a different attitude to work, viewed now in more positive light, as it comes to be endorsed and justified. Hence, manual labour represented in the mentality of medieval people an activity, oscillating between the noble, and the base⁶⁴.

The hand and the arm can be found in the analysed chronicles for a total of eighty-one times. In the symbolic sphere, the hand evokes a sense of authority, ownership, seizing, and transferring. One may use their hand to punish others: 'Meanwhile, noble King Władysław [Herman], though he felt it deeply in his soul, did not want to be the first to raise his hand in punishment'⁶⁵, to create something: 'It is the work of our hands, and it does not a creator befit, to admire his own creation [...]'⁶⁶. The hand would be described using human qualities, meaning that in a sense akin to the Bible, it was identified with the entire human being, as indicated by the descriptive terms such as: 'strong', 'unauthorised', 'generous'. In fifteen instances, the hand was mentioned as the element of the body lost due to being *cut off*, or perceived through its various functions, i.e. *holding things*, *stroking* etc. What emerges from all these passages is either a positive or

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 84.

⁶¹ Gall Anonim, *op. cit.*, p. 20; P. Bogdanowicz, *Zjazd gnieźnieński w roku 1000*, 'Nasza Przeszłość' 1962, 16, pp. 5–151; W. Graczyk, *Znaczenie Zjazdu Gnieźnieńskiego*, 'Notatki Płockie' 2000, 45, 1, pp. 3–6.

⁶² J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op.cit.*, pp. 7, 53–56.

⁶³ Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–178.

⁶⁴ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–56.

⁶⁵ 'Dostojny zaś król Władysław [Herman], choć ciężko odczuł to w duszy, jednak nie chciał pierwszy wyciągnąć ręki do karania'. *Kronika Wielkopolska*, p. 68.

⁶⁶ 'On jest dziełem naszych rąk, nie przystoi zaś twórcy, aby czcił lub uwielbiał swój twór [...]'. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

neutral image of the hand, contradictory to the account presented by J. Le Goff; therefore, we cannot classify this limb as unequivocally ignoble, and we attribute to it the status of a filter. The perception of the hand in the chronicles appears in this case to be more similar to that in the Bible than to that described by the French scholars, who ignored the fact that gesticulation and hand gestures played a particularly important role in the medieval religious life⁶⁷.

THE NOBLE SECTION

The heart is an organ that the Bible mentions frequently. It is worth pointing out that the ancient Hebrews ascribed to the heart not only biological, but also mental, emotional, decision-making, intellectual and spiritual functions, all understood literally. On such a reading, the heart constituted the inner man, the human depth, the locus of desires, thoughts, dreams, and all decisions. In the Bible, the most prominent role of the heart is that of a venue for religious and ethical life, as well as the source of good and bad intentions⁶⁸. The ancient Greeks seem to have considered the heart to be the first organ emerging during the development of the human foetus in the mother's womb⁶⁹.

During the Middle Ages, the inspiration for perceiving the heart was drawn from the New Testament; thus, it was seen as 'the seat of vital force', the centre for decision processes, moral awareness, unwritten law, encounter with God. Following Aristotle, medieval people would say that the heart is the source of sensations⁷⁰. Already in the 4th century, St Augustine pictured the heart as the seat of 'the inner-man'⁷¹. In the 12th century, religious love was propagated alongside secular love, with both these feelings residing in the heart⁷². In order to illustrate how the heart was treated during that period and how the notion thereof was developed, one has to most of all look at the following centuries. For it is towards the end of the 16th century, and particularly in the 17th century that one can notice the birth of the devotion

⁶⁷ J. Hartnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 179–180.

⁶⁸ F.M. Rosiński, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–80.

⁶⁹ J. Hartnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–127.

⁷⁰ In his *De anima*, following Plato, Aristotle claimed that the operation of bodily organs was controlled by the governing force of the soul. As opposed to Plato, however, instead of locating it in the brain, Aristotle argued that the sensing soul resides in the heart. *Ibidem*, p. 126.

⁷¹ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, pp. 138–139.

⁷² *Ibidem*, p. 141.

to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Baroque version of the mysticism of the heart, with the foundation for it laid by St Bernard of Clairvaux through his worship of 'most tender Heart of Jesus'⁷³. It was then that the shift occurred in identifying the pierced side of the crucified Christ, from the right to the left one, i.e. that adjacent to the heart⁷⁴. The medieval heart was an intelligent organ, even though not much was known about its actual function; it remained at the heart of the world of the Middle Ages. Both in the written and the picture form, it constituted a symbol conveying the lowest emotions and the highest flights of the human religious and romantic life. The heart was simultaneously open, astute, sensual, and spiritual⁷⁵.

In all four chronicles, the heart appeared for a total of fifty-six times. However, only once was it presented as a neutral part of the body. That passage comes from the *Chronica Polonorum* by Wincenty Kadłubek: 'Behold, the man is set for the fall of many, and a sword would pierce through your own heart, Sieciech'⁷⁶. Meanwhile, in all remaining instances, the heart is the seat of feelings, emotions, resolutions, and religious sentiments. Therefore, the heart can be filled with the feelings of love: 'So greatly had this deed endeared Mieszko [III the Old – a.n.] and with such great love inflamed his heart to his brother that, having forgotten all injuries, he enjoyed the warmth of fraternal embrace'⁷⁷; sorrow: 'When he most humbly tried to woo her, but all proved to no avail, with great pain in his heart, he directs himself to the old man surrounded by his many cordial companions'⁷⁸; bitterness: 'With my eyes [by any means] not dry, with great bitterness in my heart, I will only manage to stutter a little bit, let alone minor details'⁷⁹; joy: 'All these delights were completed by the most amiable jubilation of the revered Prince Casimir [II the Just – a.n.], that filled everyone's mind and heart brimful with joy'⁸⁰; fear 'It was reported that when Bolesław [Prince of Greater Poland – a.n.] assaulted

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 139.

⁷⁴ *Historia ciała*, p. 28; D. Forstner OSB, *op. cit.*, pp. 360–361; J. Hartnell, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁷⁵ J. Hartnell, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

⁷⁶ 'Oto ten postawiony na upadek wielu, a twoje własne serce, Sieciechu, miecz przesyje'. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷⁷ 'Ten postępek tak ujął Mieszka [III Stary – a.n.] i serce zapalił odtąd tak wielką miłości, do brata, że zapomniawszy wszelkich przywd cieszył się ciepłem braterskich uścisków'. *Ibidem*, p. 225.

⁷⁸ 'Gdy o nią największą pokorą zabiegał, lecz nic osiągnąć nie mógł, z wielkim bólem serca udaje się do starca w licznym towarzystwie serdecznych przyjaciół'. *Ibidem*, p. 260.

⁷⁹ 'Z oczyma [bynajmniej] nie suchymi, z wielką goryczą w sercu zdołam wyjąkać ledwie odrobinę, a coś dopiero szczegóły'. *Ibidem*, p. 145.

⁸⁰ 'Do tych wszystkich rozkoszy dołączyła się nader miła wesołość najdosłojniejszego księcia Kazimierza [II Sprawiedliwy – a.n.], która umysł i serce wszystkich błogo przepętniła radością'. *Kronika Wielkopolska*, p. 125.

Casimir [Prince of Kujawy, Łeczyca, and Sieradz – a.n.] and his troops, such great fear took possession of their hearts that they thought all trees were Bolesław's soldiers, and terrified of it, they resorted to escape⁸¹. The heart may conceal true thoughts and feelings: 'In and of themselves the words seemed rather honest and conciliatory; still, he may have had one thing ready on his tongue, and something else hidden in his heart'⁸². There is a single passage, in which the heart is regarded as the seat of religious sentiments: 'However, neither could sword of sermon tear their hearts away from paganism, nor the sword of destruction could entirely eradicate this brood of vipers'⁸³. The epithets used about the heart point to its mental and emotional functions, for it is presented as being 'zealous', 'obstinate', 'parched', or 'most timid'. As can be inferred from the examples, the heart above all functioned within the mental and emotional sphere.

In the Bible, the head is treated as the dominant element of the body, another symbol and image of the whole person⁸⁴. For most peoples it was considered to be the part of the body with presiding role, the seat of vital energies, soul, and most of all – the brain. Bearing in mind this conviction, one may find it less challenging to comprehend the motivation behind head-hunts, which were intended as a means of total annihilation of a foreigner or an enemy, and of appropriation through that act of their personality and power. One should also regard in this context the medieval instrument of social control – beheading⁸⁵.

The chronicles speak of the head sixty-eight times, on thirty-one instances as a neutral element of the body, without any apparent symbolic or metaphorical value. In these passages, the head may be chopped off, lost, or adorned. Meanwhile, in the other citations, the head appears as a metaphor, a feature to be discussed later in the article. It should be added that the descriptive terms used about the head employed in the chronicles are testament to the fact that the head symbolises the entire person: 'gray head', 'innocent head', 'terrifying head', 'tireless head'. The greatest number of mentions of the head can be found in the *Chronicle of*

⁸¹ 'Podają, że gdy Bolesław [książę Wielkopolski – a.n.] napadł na Kazimierza [książę Kujaw, Łeczycy i Sieradza – a.n.] i jego wojsko, tak wielki strach opanował ich serca, że myśleli, iż wszystkie drzewa stanowią wojsko Bolesława i tak tym wystraszeni, szukali ratunku w ucieczce'. *Ibidem*, p. 266.

⁸² 'Słowa same przez się brzmiały dość szczerze i pojednawczo, lecz być może co innego na języku miał w pogotowiu, a co innego kryło się zamknięte w sercu'. Gall Anonim, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

⁸³ 'Jednakże ani mieczem nauczania nie dało się serc ich oderwać od pogaństwa, ani mieczem zniszczenia nie można było tego pokolenia zmij zupełnie wytępić'. *Ibidem*, p. 9.

⁸⁴ F.M. Rosiński, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁸⁵ J. Hartnell, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Wincenty Kadłubek, in which the metaphoric use gains in prominence.

THE IGNOBLE SECTION

Since antiquity, stomach had played the leading role, with the other members seen as subordinate to it. It was believed to transform nutrition into blood to supply the whole organism with it⁸⁶. Now, in the Middle Ages, stomach was dethroned and associated with the lower parts of the body; thus becoming identified as the locus of debauchery and lust⁸⁷. Furthermore, *gula* – the sin of gluttony, naturally connected with stomach, used to be perceived in the 5th and the 6th century as the cause of all other transgressions and sins. The attitude to *gula* relented over time, as can be observed in the opinions of Thomas Aquinas, according to whom gluttony was one of the less significant cardinal sins. It should be remembered that ‘the sin of gluttony was not treated lightly in the theological writings of the period. It was commonly associated with the transgression committed by Adam and Eve, and hence particularly steeped in odium. We may also find representations of *gula* and *luxuria* as two daughters of the devil. At the time, the theologians never doubted that in order to receive God’s grace one had to fast’⁸⁸. There are no mentions of stomach in the Polish chronicles.

Genitals are inexorably associated with the basic objective of a medieval marriage, that is with procreation⁸⁹, any disfunction in that regard could lead to the annulment of marriage⁹⁰. Moreover, during the discussed period, male reproductive organs were treated in a special way, as they were attributed medicinal properties. Consequently, the pudenda market blossomed, and there were even acts of thievery of private parts from under the gallows⁹¹. In the Middle Ages, male genitals function within the social reality – independently, as a representation of male body, endowed both with mobility and its own will: ‘a jilted lady persuades her inconstant lover to cut off his penis, because it allegedly

⁸⁶ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 141.

⁸⁸ E. Wólkiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 512–513.

⁸⁹ M. Ozorowski, *Cele małżeństwa w nauczaniu teologów średniowiecza*, ‘Studia Teologiczne’ 2002, 20, pp. 87–89; M. Pogorzelska, *Cele małżeństwa w doktrynie i w prawie kanonicznym*, ‘Studia Teologiczne Nawróćcie się i wierźcie w Ewangelię’ 2014, 32, pp. 424–425.

⁹⁰ M. Biniś-Szkopek, *Małżeńska przeszkoda impotencji i oziębłości płciowej w świetle akt poznańskiego konsystorza z XV wieku*, ‘Kwartalnik Historyczny’ 2019, 126, 2, pp. 253–281.

⁹¹ T. Grabarczyk, *Na gardle karanie. Kara śmierci w średniowiecznej Polsce*, Warszawa 2008, p. 101.

scares the ladies. He does so and is miraculously healed with a special cream, but then he is beaten and chased out of town by the women and finally dies after thirty-four years as hermit. Meanwhile, the penis, having been hidden in a nunnery, is also very unhappy on his own in his cold and drafty hiding place under the stairs and decides to offer himself up to the nuns leaving the morning service. But rather than killing him, as he had hoped, the nuns delighted to see him, and each wants to keep him for herself. They resort to staging a tournament with the penis as a prize, but this descends into an undignified scramble for the penis. At the end, the penis is stealthily carrying away into an uncertain future, while order is restored in the nunnery⁹².

In the chronicles, reproductive organs were brought up three times, and the mentions refer to the biological function thereof; they are presented, for instance, in the circumstance of being forcibly removed: 'It was also said that the Czechs seized him [Mieszko II⁹³ – a.n.] treacherously during a rally, and bound his genitalia in such a way, that he could no longer beget [offspring], because King Bolesław, his father, had injured them in a similar manner, having blinded their Prince, and his own uncle⁹⁴. 'Now, this Pannonian⁹⁵, the son of perfidious treachery, he deprived of both eyes, and having cut his tongue, injured him further by removing his reproductive organs, lest another, even worse transgressor is born of that viper's seamen and of [such a] traitor⁹⁶. Meanwhile, in the chronicle by Jan of Czarnków, we can read that '[...] Mikołaj, known as Kórnik, the Bishop of Poznań, after a long and serious illness, lived his last day in Ciężęń, the estate belonging to his church. For over two years, he had suffered from the cancerous disease of his private parts, which, however – in spite of the doctors' interdiction – did not stop him from frolicking with girls, until, at last, he went down shaking with the quartan fever, that was to not leave

⁹² S. Riches, B. Bildhauer, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁹³ According to Błażej Śliwiński, it was Bezprym who suffered castration. B. Śliwiński, *Bezprym pierwotny syn pierwszego króla Polski (986-zima/wiosna 1032)*, Kraków 2014, pp. 129–141.

⁹⁴ 'Opowiadają też, że Czesi schwytali go [Mieszko II – a.n.] zdradziecko na wiecu i rzemieniami skrepowali mu genitalia tak, że nie mógł już płodzi [potomstwa], za to, że król Bolesław, jego ojciec podobna im wyrządził krzywdę, oślepiwszy ich księcia, a swego wuja'. Gall Anonim, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁹⁵ The son of Włodar, desiring to take revenge on Bolesław III Krzywousty, paid off an inhabitant of Pannonia. The latter impersonated an exile, claiming the main reason for his escape to have been the death sentence against him, pronounced as a result of his support for the Poles and willingness to thwart ambushes against them. *Kronika Wielkopolska*, p. 91.

⁹⁶ 'Owego zaś Panończyka, syna wiarołomnej zdrady, pozbawia obu oczu i po odcięciu języka upośledza go przez usunięcie narządów rodnych, aby z nasienia żmii i z [takiego] zdrajcy nie urodził się jeszcze zgubniejszy wiarołomca'. *Ibidem*, p. 96.

him until the end'⁹⁷.

METAPHORICAL TAKE

The notion of the mystical body of Christ as the Church was a typical notion for the Middle Ages, though it should be noted that it was not of biblical origin. Initially, it was applied in liturgical and sacramental sense; however, over time its character shifted to the sociological. Until the 12th century, the term *corpus Christi mysticum* was used in the discourse on real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Subsequently, after 1150, the term came to be used in relation to ecclesia. It was only sanctioned by an official approval of Pope Boniface VIII⁹⁸. According to his interpretation, at the helm of the body, i.e. the community of *corpus mysticum Christi*, there was the head – Christ, whereas the visible head was Christ's Vicar on Earth, the Bishop of Rome⁹⁹.

We find bodily metaphors in the famous chapters of the *Policraticus* by John of Salisbury (where the Prince represented the head, the Senate – heart, and peasants – feet), and also in the writings of Isaac of Stella, who saw Christ as the head of the *corpus mysticum* and interpreted the members as archbishops, bishops, and other Church hierarchs. Not only the body of Christ was used as a metaphor: the 13th century Cistercian textbook '*die Heilige Regel*' was divided into chapters corresponding to the parts of the body of the Virgin Mary¹⁰⁰. In the 13th century, such 'anthropomorphic' metaphors constituted a stable model¹⁰¹, and it was transferred to the realm of the secular, adapted to the community of the state. According to Ernst Kantorowicz, the term *corpus reipublicae mysticum* was used halfway through the 13th century by Vincent of Beauvais. Whereas Antonius of Rosellis, a late medieval jurist, distinguished five different *corpora mystica* for 'a village, town, province, kingdom, and the world'. This notion took

⁹⁷ '[...] Mikołaj zwany Kórnik, biskup poznański, po długiej i ciężkiej chorobie zakończył dzień ostatni w Ciężeniu, majątności swojego kościoła. W ciągu więcej niż dwóch lat cierpiał on na chorobę raka w częściach płciowych, to go jednak, pomimo zakazu lekarzy, nie powstrzymało od spółkowania z dziewczętami, aż, póki nie zaczęła go dobrze trząść febra czwartaczka, która już go odtąd nie porzuciła'. *Kronika Jana z Czarnkowa*, p. 102.

⁹⁸ L. Chmielewska, *Johannes Althusius: pierwszy teoretyk federalizmu*, 'Doctrina. Studia społeczno-polityczne' 2012, 9, p. 26.

⁹⁹ E.H. Kantorowicz, *Dwa Ciała Króla. Studium ze średniowiecznej teologii politycznej*, transl. M. Michalski, A. Krawiec, ed. J. Strzelczyk, Warszawa 2007, pp. 158–160.

¹⁰⁰ S. Riches, B. Bildhauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 200–201.

¹⁰¹ E.H. Kantorowicz, *Dwa Ciała Króla*, p. 162.

hold and came to be commonly used by laymen, consequently losing its complex and originally liturgical meaning¹⁰². Within this social metaphor, the body would also represent the family, for instance in the *Sachsenspiegel* we discover a description of the family as a body, in this concept headed by man and women, with the kids constituting arms, and grandchildren – elbows¹⁰³.

In the chronicles, we can find references to such political metaphors. These literary devices include the application of the *head*. The latter plays the role of the ruler, the leader, the person, or thing in presiding position. One example of that could be the passage in *Wielkopolska Chronicle*, presenting an older, experienced and life-wise man as a ‘grey head’, serving as a supervisor to lead the younger man: ‘For a grey head does not a suckling’s cheek befit, and a child’s play it is for infantile recklessness to rule over the prudent, because the wiseman says: Woe to the country, whose King is a child’¹⁰⁴. The chronicles also feature passages evoking the supervisory role of the head as the ruler that appears surrounded by its subjects – other body parts: ‘At last, he calls the mighty of Krakow district to come to their senses, and not support themselves on a reed cane, but command Lestek to give up the throne and once again recognise him as the Prince; they should not distance themselves from him as their rightful head if they are his legitimate members, for it is not befitting for them to be parted with their single unity’¹⁰⁵. Head metaphors were also used in legitimisation of conquering other settlements: ‘Indeed, he took over some of the settlements owned by his sons, that is, Wiślica and three others, claiming that they belong to Krakow province and that one should not separate parts of the body from their head’¹⁰⁶. There are also

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, pp. 168–170.

¹⁰³ S. Riches, B. Bildhauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 200–201.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Albowiem siwej głowie nie przystoi lico niedorostka, a i wręcz dzieciństwem jest, aby roztropnymi rządziła dziecięca nieroztropność, ponieważ mędrzec mówi: Biada krajowi, którego królem jest dziecię’. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 241. In the *Wielkopolska Chronicle*, a similar sentence is cited, following Kadłubek. ‘Nie przystoi bowiem, aby nad siwą głową panował młokos, a nawet bardzo to dziecinne jest, żeby roztropnym mężom rozkazywała chłopięca nieroztropność, gdyż mędrzec mówi: Biada ziemi, której król jest dziecięciem!’ [‘It is unbecoming that a milksop rules over a great head, and it is also greatly childish that prudent men be governed by boyish imprudence, because the wisemen says: Woe to the land, whose King is a child!’]. *Kronika Wielkopolska*, pp. 126–127.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Wreszcie wzywa do możnych dzielnicy krakowskiej, aby się opamiętali, aby nie wspierali się na trzcinowej lasce, aby Lestkowi kazali ustąpić z tronu, a jego ponownie uznali za księcia; niech nie odłączają się od niego jako prawowitej głowy, jeżeli są prawowitymi członkami, gdyż niestosownie jest odstawać od swojej całości’. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Owszem, zajął nawet niektóre grody synowców, mianowicie Wiślicę i trzy inne,

similes in which the head represents the Prince, whereas the other limbs – clerks: ‘What is more, [these clerks], as if conspiring against their own life, as if conspiring towards the Prince’s perdition, increase oppression by injuries, multiply injuries by oppression. That circumstance was the reason of their unflinching hatred towards the Prince. For the madness of the head brings woe upon the other body members, whereas the error of the members reaches the head: who does not counteract the evil when able to, appears to acquiesce to everything’¹⁰⁷. In one of the fragments, the head was used to symbolise the Archbishop of Gniezno, Marcin: ‘Pomeranians would very often set snares to capture him, willing to poison or strangle, or in any other way assassinate him, either because he forbade them to perform their blasphemous rituals, or because he required them to pay tithe and submit the *primitiae*, or [lastly], by removing him to cut off the kingdom’s and concurrently the wisdom’s head’¹⁰⁸.

John Salisbury’s political metaphor also featured eyes, ears, and the mouth – serving as advisors to the head in making decisions, aimed mainly to keep the body safe; these parts of the body represented Prince’s assistants. It was the duty of the heart, an equivalent of the Senate, to keep the proper operation of the body; stomach in this political organism was referred to the economy and financial matters, its duty being feeding other members. Hands and palms fulfil the desires of the body, being the metaphor of soldiers obeying the State’s commands. The body is held upright by legs and feet, the counterparts of peasants¹⁰⁹. We do not find metaphors of this kind in the Polish chronicles. Even the mentions of these parts of the body on the leaves of the histories are scarce, as the ear and the foot appear merely eight times each, whereas stomach is not introduced at all. And though hand has sixty-nine mentions, while tongue – twenty-five,

twierdząc, że należą do prowincji krakowskiej i że nie powinno się było oddzielać członków od głowy’. *Ibidem*, p. 260.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Co więcej, [owi urzędnicy], jak gdyby sprzysięgli się przeciw własnemu życiu, jak gdyby w dostatku spiskowali na zgubę księcia, ucisk zwiększają przez krzywdy, mnożą krzywdy przez ucisk. Ta okoliczność była powodem nieubłaganej nienawiści do księcia. Albowiem za szaleństwo głowy często pokutują członki, a błąd członków niekiedy odbija się na głowie: kto mogąc zapobiec złu, nie zapobiega, zda się godzić na wszystko’. *Ibidem*, pp. 183–184.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Pomorzanie bardzo często zastawiali sidła na niego, chcąc to go otruć, to udusić lub jakimkolwiek sposobem zgładzić, i to bądź dlatego, że zabraniał im bałwochwalczych obrzędów, bądź dlatego, że wymagał od nich dziesięcin i pierwszych plonów, bądź [wreszcie], aby przez sprzątniecie go uciąć głowę królestwa zarazem i rady’. *Ibidem*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁹ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus. Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, transl. C. Nederman, Cambridge 1991, V. 2.

the references to the political metaphor are simply not there, it only being recorded in relation to the *head*.

Attempting to summarise this analysis of the four chronicles, one must conclude that the number of passages pertaining to the body parts, whether symbolic, metaphorical, or natural, proves not to be substantial. The total amount of occurrences of body parts in the chronicles amounted to 297, with the greatest number of those in the *Chronica Polonorum* by Master Wincenty Kadłubek, then in the *Wielkopolska Chronicle*, in Gallus Annonymous' work, and the least in the chronicle by Jan of Czarnków. The actual number of references to the body must have been largely influenced by the style used in these chronicles. Therefore, it is worth pointing out at this juncture that the text of the extant text of the chronicle by Jan of Czarnków appears to be incomplete¹¹⁰. This could, in a way, explain the scarce number of indications of body parts in the work by Author from Czarnków. The style of Wincenty Kadłubek's chronicle has been acknowledged as ornamental, filled with allegories and personifications, a fact that is reflected not only in the plurality of references to parts of the body, but also in the application of 'organic' metaphors. Meanwhile, according to Teresa Michałowska, Gallus Annonymous in his narrative comes off as more factual, restrained, and acute¹¹¹.

Medieval chroniclers, as indicated also by other scholars, never particularly focused on the descriptions of the physical appearance of their characters¹¹². Obviously, that does not mean that we do not find any of those, say, in the cited passage presenting Casimir II the Just, where – admittedly – Kadłubek remarks that 'one ought not to focus on the external qualities of his body'¹¹³, but nevertheless continues: 'which by their very charm as if the rays of light bewitch the eyes of the onlookers. Extraordinarily noble [is] the sophistication of [his] figure, both of the facial features, and the slender constitution of his body, slightly taller than men of average height. His gaze appealing, marked by a kind of reverent dignity'¹¹⁴. One should note, following Teresa Michałowska, that Wincenty Kadłubek was a political ally and a praise-singer of Casimir II;

¹¹⁰ J. Wyrozumski, *Horyzont polityczny Janka z Czarnkowa*, 'Studia Źródłoznawcze' 1990, 32–33, p. 57; C.K. Święcki, *Szkic o życiu i twórczości Janka z Czarnkowa*, 'Notatki Płockie' 2008, 2 (215), p. 17.

¹¹¹ T. Michałowska, *Średniowiecze*, Warszawa 1996, p. 138.

¹¹² E. Wólkiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

¹¹³ 'nie wypada zajmować się zewnętrznymi przymiotami jego ciała'.

¹¹⁴ 'które już same wdziękiem swoim niby promieniami słońca [oczy] patrzących czarują. Nadzwyczaj szlachetna [jest] wytworność tak [jego] postaci, jak rysów twarzy oraz sama wysmukła budowa ciała, nieco przerastająca ludzi średniego wzrostu. Spojrzenie jego ujmujące, nacechowane jednak jakąś pełną szacunku godnością'. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

hence, he spared no efforts to present the ruler in the best possible way, both in terms of bodily endowments, and his governance¹¹⁵. However, it proves rather difficult to imagine the appearance of the ruler on the basis of the description provided by Kadłubek. Jan of Czarnków spoke of Kaziek Słubski in the following manner: 'He was of frail composition, and though violent and fickle, still rather lively and willing to be involved in action'¹¹⁶. In Jan's chronicle, there are two other accounts of – in that instance female – appearance: 'After the demise of his first wife, Siemowit took another, the daughter of Władysław, Prince of Ziębice, from the court of Charles IV, King of Czechia and Holy Roman Emperor, a woman of extremely beautiful countenance and attractive physique, who he begot three sons with'¹¹⁷. In the chapter narrating the death of Zawisza, Bishop of Krakow, Jan writes than 'People say that he once noticed in a village belonging to his church, a beauty-faced daughter of a pauper and desired her, but the pauper, her father, being an honest man, did not consent to the disgrace, and hid with her behind a grain barrack lest she be raped'¹¹⁸. However, these accounts are very general, lacking in details and references to the body.

The reason for such 'disembodiment' could be seen in the binding literary, rhetorical, and poetic standards, which pertained most of all to the manner of constructing characters, the sphere of style and language, and the guidelines for presenting the events in an orderly fashion¹¹⁹. As a result, the depiction of rulers was based on a few fundamental guidelines; first of those being that when describing sovereigns, it was not the physical appearance but the character traits that the authors focused on. When referring to matters related to the body, they indicated its proportion, harmony, paying particular attention to the height, driven by the principle that a ruler should be taller than average men. Application of most of these principles can be discovered in the above passage about Casimir II the

¹¹⁵ T. Michałowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 136–137.

¹¹⁶ 'Był ciała wątłego, a chociaż gwałtowny i niestały, mimo to pełen życia i łatwo dający się do działania porywać'. *Kronika Jana z Czarnkowa*, p. 69.

¹¹⁷ 'Po śmierci swej pierwszej żony pojął Siemowit drugą, córkę Władysława, księcia ziemickiego, z dworu Karola, króla czeskiego i cesarza rzymskiego, niewiastę nader pięknego oblicza i powabnego ciała, z której spłodził trzech synów'. *Ibidem*, p. 83.

¹¹⁸ 'Opowiadają bowiem, że raz ujrzał w jakiejś wsi, do jego kościoła należącej, pewną pięknego lica córkę jakiegoś biedaka i zapragnął jej, lecz biedak, ojciec jej, będąc uczciwym człowiekiem, nie zgodził się na hańbę, a bojąc się gwałtu na córce, ukrył się z nią na bróg zboża'. *Ibidem*, p. 101. A. Teterycz-Puzio, *Kobieta w świetle wybranych środkowoeuropejskich źródeł narracyjnych z XI–XIV wieku*, 'Słupskie Studia Historyczne' 2012, 18, pp. 23–24.

¹¹⁹ T. Michałowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 106, 117.

Just¹²⁰. Such enigmatic representations may cause the impression that the characters have been, in a sense, deprived of their bodies, and the authors strove to present their protagonists as, say, valiant, virtuous, generous, or pious men¹²¹. The reason behind such state of affairs may have had something to do with the fact that the first historians were dependant on the State's authority, and their role comprised of preparing grounds for 'patriotic' attitudes, expressed in the apology of the country's history and of the dynasty in power. Moreover, the basic ideological assumption of that form of literature was its didactic function, with the past events constituting reference points for morality. In their interests, chroniclers focused on what was lasting and stable in order to present permanent truths, as well as constant and invariant nature of certain dependencies and moral tenets¹²².

When attempting to demonstrate chroniclers' attitude towards the body, one has to remain cautious, as on the basis of the very number of references it could be inferred that the authors strayed from the subject. The only one to directly display his opinion about the body is Wincenty Kadłubek, who in several passages speaks through his characters: 'It is easy for a man to learn the path of prudence when he first gets to know himself. For if there is a twain within a man, that is the body and the soul, what is the soul for? To offer a wise reflection. And the body? To be the chariot of virtues. Destroy one or the other, you will kill the man'¹²³. The expressed belief regarding the relation joining the should with the body was drawn from Epicurean writings, according to which the death of the body was to concurrently put an end to the life of the soul¹²⁴. Another passage also points to the tight connection between the body and the soul: 'He says that a risible thing is a mutilated brute, a headless man; that very same is the body without a soul, a lamp with no light, the world without the sun – as the country without a king'¹²⁵. While in a different fragment, he says: 'And one should not fear the risk of death, especially when rescuing brethren,

¹²⁰ R. Bubczyk, *Kazimierz Sprawiedliwy – władca idealny Mistrza Wincentego (Chronica Polonorum, LIB.4)*, 'Kwartalnik Historyczny' 2009, 106, 1, pp. 35–36.

¹²¹ J. Le Goff, N. Truong, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹²² T. Michałowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–106.

¹²³ 'Najłatwiej zaś człowiekowi poznać drogę roztropności, gdy człowiek wpierw pozna samego siebie. Jeżeli bowiem dwoje jest w człowieku, mianowicie dusza i ciało, na cóż jest dusza? By dała myśl mądrą. Na cóż ciało? By było rydwanem cnót. Zniszcz jedno lub drugie, zabijesz człowieka'. Mistrz Wincenty, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹²⁵ 'Mówi, iż śmieszne jest okaleczałe bydłę, bezgłowy człowiek; tym samym jest ciało bez duszy, tym samym lampa bez światła, tym samym świat bez słońca – co państwo bez króla'. *Ibidem*, p. 11.

for the death of the body does not annihilate a man, but leads him to the prize for bravery'¹²⁶, and 'for he did not tremble before the death of the body, for he deemed it to be the gate of life'¹²⁷. Thus, Master Wincenty treats both body and soul as inherent elements constituting the man, and does in no way depreciate the body. He points to the importance of the soul, without which the body would not be able to exist. Although in other texts, admittedly, there are references to the body and the soul, the authors do not outline no concept regarding those. The body is usually presented in the natural context, whereas the soul usually at the instant of death: 'Let his soul now and forever happily rest in the Lord'¹²⁸. It also seems that the chroniclers in few cases indicated the wickedness of the body for didactic purposes, in order to present the fate of those sinners, illustrated particularly in the passages from the chronicle of Jan of Czarnków. 'For he did not stay clear of meretricious sin [Mikołaj of Kórnik – a.n.], particularly the defilement of virgins; therefore, he was afflicted with the cancerous disease, he was rash to speak obscenities; therefore, he suffered wounds on his tongue and in his throat, and to such a degree that before he died, they say, he could hardly speak, and swallow any liquid, unable to even close his mouth, so when he died he was left with a gaping maw, while his right side was, so they say, completely shredded because of operations. Long time did he suffer before his death, the better he could repent for his sins'¹²⁹. Such remarks were fostered by the characteristic style of these chronicles, in which the author was free to express his stance regarding the events he narrated.

As we have demonstrated above, none of the discussed authors, with the exception of Kadłubek, does not directly betray his attitude towards the body. However, certain assumptions can be drawn on the basis of a short fragment included by Gallus Anonymous about the embalming of corpses of German Knights who fell in the struggles between Emperor Henry IV

¹²⁶ 'I nie trzeba się lękać niebezpieczeństwa śmierci, zwłaszcza gdy chodzi o ratowanie bliźnich, ponieważ śmierć ciała nie unicestwia człowieka, lecz prowadzi do nagrody za męstwo'. *Ibidem*, p. 123.

¹²⁷ 'Bowiem śmierci ciała się nie obawiał uważając ją za bramę życia'. *Ibidem*, p. 127.

¹²⁸ 'Niech dusza jego teraz i na wieki szczęśliwie w Panu spoczywa'. *Kronika Jana z Czarnkowa*, p. 55.

¹²⁹ 'Nie unikał bowiem grzechu wszetecznego [Mikołaj z Kórnika – a.n.], zwłaszcza gwałcenia dziewic – więc był dotknięty chorobą raka, był pochopny do mówienia rzeczy sprośnych – więc cierpiał na rany na języku i w gardle, a to tak, że przed śmiercią, jak powiadają, ledwo mógł mówić i połykać jakikolwiek napój i nie mógł zamknąć ust, tak że i po śmierci został z otwartymi ustami, a prawy bok jego, jak powiadają, był od operacji zupełnie pocięty. Długo się męczył przed śmiercią – tym skuteczniej mógłby żałować za grzechy'. *Ibidem*, pp. 98–99.

and Bolesław III Krzywousty. 'For everyday noble men died there, who after the removal of their entrails, were embalmed with salt and aromatics, and placed on carrying wagons so that the Emperor could take them to Bavaria or Saxony, as the [only] tribute [from] Poland'¹³⁰. Following Janina Brzozowska-Ciura, it should be acknowledged that embalming of human body described by the chronicler is presented in its natural form, as a practice appropriate for the Middle Ages¹³¹. It was a well-known practice during the discussed period applied when transporting corpses; these were embalmed and subsequently sewn into a leather bag¹³². The description of the procedure featured by Gallus Anonymus in his chronicle is of neutral character and does not trigger any surprise in the author. However, it is not easy to decide how Anonymus interpreted the practice, whether he saw it as an attempt to prolong the life in the decomposing body¹³³, or merely a practical manner of corpse transportation. Despite that, we may suppose that chronicler's laconic account expresses his reverence for the bodies, as he does not deny the knights the right to rest in their homeland. In the *Wielkopolska Chronicle*, we can also track an indirectly expressed opinion about the body. The author reveals it in the fragment, in which he presents his account of the Synod of Wrocław, during which a papal legate allowed the guests to consume meat dishes from the Shrovetide up to the Pentecost. The author explains that the reason for alleviating the regulation was the fact that Poles oftentimes broke the fast, and consequently man's soul was at risk of perdition¹³⁴. Thus, the author of the *Wielkopolska Chronicle* indicates that the deeds of the body bear influence upon the condition of man's soul; however, refrains from commenting the abolishment of the regulation in any way.

Political metaphors are above all noticeable in the *Chronica Polonorum* by Wincenty Kadłubek, who was familiar with the famous work by John of Salisbuty – *Policraticus*¹³⁵, as it was probably the source of the organic motifs that he used. In spite of the fact that the other authors of chronicles

¹³⁰ 'Codziennie bowiem ginęli tam szlachetni mężowie, których po wypruciu wnętrzości balsamowano solą oraz wonnościami i składano na ładownych wozach, aby cesarz mógł ich zawieźć do Bawarii albo do Saksonii, jako [jedyny] trybut [z] Polski'. Gall Anonim, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

¹³¹ J. Brzozowska-Ciura, *Stosunek do ludzkiego ciała i sekcji zwłok polskich przekazach średniowiecznych*, 'Prace Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Częstochowie' 2000, Zeszyty Historyczne 6, pp. 65, 68.

¹³² J. Grzeszczak, *Bonifacy VII wobec średniowiecznych zwyczajów grzebalnych. Bulla Destande feritatis i jej interpretacje*, 'Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne' 2013, 27, p. 197.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 199.

¹³⁴ *Kronika Wielkopolska*, pp. 161–162.

¹³⁵ T. Michałowska, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

also were educated men¹³⁶, versed both in writings both by ancient and their contemporary authors, they did not use metaphors of this kind, neither with regard to the Church, nor the State. However, the question to be asked here is whether at the outset of the 12th century, when Gallus Anonymus was composing his *Gesta principum Polonorum* – such metaphors were commonplace. The opposite appears to be the case, for, as indicated before, anthropomorphic metaphors were adapted to secular notions only in the latter half of the 12th century, and the work by John of Salisbury, one that Master Kadłubek knew well, was created in a similar time, i.e. in 1159¹³⁷.

This study is to be treated as an introduction to the issues of body perception in the Polish Middle Ages, and it is vital that the analyses should be extended with other sources, for instance, of iconography, sermons and tractates of various types, thus enabling to create a more complete image of the discussed phenomena. An important place in that research is due to the problem of perception of female body, an extensive and complex phenomenon that still awaits in-depth treatment in the Polish literature.

(translated by LINGUA LAB)

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STRESZCZENIE

Celem artykułu jest próba ukazania postrzegania ciała w średniowieczu przez pryzmat kronik polskich. W tym celu przeanalizowano Kronikę Galla Anonima, Kronikę Polską Wincentego Kadłubka, Kronikę Wielkopolską oraz Kronikę Jana z Czarnkowa, pod względem występowania wzmianek, dotyczących ciała, zarówno w wymiarze ilościowym, metaforycznym, symbolicznym, jak i werystycznym. Co prawda kroniki stanowią źródło ukazujące mentalności swoich czasów, jednak podlegały stosowanym wówczas konwencjom literackim, co trzeba mieć na uwadze przy interpretacji uzyskanych danych. W przedstawieniu wyników badań został zastosowany podział ciała na część szlachetną (głowa, serce), nieszlachetną (brzuch, ręce, genitalia) oraz filtry (oczy, usta oraz uszy). Wedle tego podziału omówiono poszczególne elementy ciała i ukazano ich sposób występowanie w kronikach. Badania wykazały, że liczba wiadomości dotyczących ciała we wszystkich czterech kronikach wynosi 213 wzmianek. Żaden kronikarz oprócz Wincentego Kadłubka nie wyłożył nam bezpośrednio swojego stosunku do ciała. Kadłubek wypowiadając się poprzez swoich bohaterów, ukazuje ciało i duszę, jako dwa integralne elementy. Metafora polityczna została odnotowana przede wszystkim w stosunku do głowy jako metafory władcy czy przywódcy. Należy zaznaczyć, że owe studia stanowią wstęp do badań nad postrzeganiem ciała w polskim średniowieczu.

Słowa kluczowe: ciało, średniowiecze, człowiek, polskie kroniki, chrześcijaństwo

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