

The Origins of the Polish Premonstratensian Circary

Premonstratensians came to Poland at about the same time as Cistercians, but far less is known about them. Most of Polish monasteries have no documents from 12th nor from the first part of the 13th century, so we learn about some of the Polish monasteries only when they were suppressed.

Premonstratensians arrived in Poland later than in the Kingdom of Bohemia and later than in the eastern part of Germany¹), but they had played an important role in Piast' state. First of all we should emphasize the fact, that Norbertines have popularized in Poland a type of convent for women, administrated by a prioress, but their monasteries were strictly subordinated to an abbey of canons. Those monasteries became an asylum for rich noble maidens and widows.

Anselm of Havelberg maintained that the Premonstratensian order had an influence in Poland at St. Norbert's time, and some of the historians suppose that the foundation of Premonstratensian abbeys began in Poland when Norbert of Xanten, archbishop of Magdeburg, was recognized by the pope as metropolian of the Polish dioceses in 1133²). We have no evidence that the movement of Premonstratensians reached Poland so early^{2bis}). The well-informed biographer of St. Norbert, John Capgrave, didn't mention the Poles, but the Slavs³), so

¹) *Annales Monasterii Strahoviensis*; Prague - Památník Národního Pisemnictva, No. DJ III,2, p. 11; D. Čermak, *Premonstrati v Čechách a na Moravě*, Praha 1877; V. Novotný, *Česke dejiny*, Praha 1928, volume I, part 3, p. 77; Z. Fiala, *Prémyslovske Čechy. Český stát a společnost v letech 995-1310*, Praha 1975, p. 81-82, 245-246; N. Backmund, *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, vol. I, 2nd ed. Berolini-Novii Eboraci 1983, p. 398-433; F. Prinz, *Böhmen in mittelalterlichen Europa*, München 1984, p. 166-7; F. Winter, *Die Prämonstratenser der zwölften Jahrhunderts und ihre Bedeutung für das nordöstliche Deutschland*, Berlin 1865; *Der Prämonstratenserorden in den alten deutschen Metropolen*, Wien 1919; A.K. Huber, *Die Prämonstratenser*, Baden-Baden 1955.

²) T. Manteuffel, *Przyczynek do działalności norbertanów Polsce*, in: *Opuscula*, Poznań 1959, p. 225-231.

^{2bis}) W. Grauwen, *Het Polenprivilege van Norbertus*, in: *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, vol. 48, 1972, fasc. 3-4, p. 223-231; the same, *Norbert, Erzbischof von Magdeburg (1126-1134)*, 2nd ed., Hamborn, 1986, p. 387-398.

³) *The Life of St. Norbert by John Capgrave*, ed. C.L. Smetana, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto 1977, p. 116; compare A.L. Gabriel, *The Role of the Canons of Premontre in the intellectual Movement of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century*, The Mediaeval Institute University of Notre Dame US, p. 203 and R.B. Brooke, *The Coming*

we can presume, that Anselm's words refer to West Pomerania, not to Poland. The monastery in Grobia in Uznam Island was founded by Anselm of Havelberg as a co-founder of this abbey⁴). The first foundations of Premonstratensian monasteries took place from the second half of the 12th century, according to sources of that time.

The Polish Premonstratensian circary had been shaped at the time, when the activity of Premonstratensian order already weakened. From studies of H. Kroll it appears, that 202 monasteries had been founded before 1150 over the whole of Europe⁵). Thus constituting the major part of all Premonstratensian monasteries existing in the Middle Ages.

The act from 1193, which had been given for St. Vincent abbey in Olbin near Wrocław and which is the first immediate testimony of the existence of this monastery, informs us, that the canons, who formed this abbey, had been recruited from St. Laurentius monastery in Kóscielna Wieś not far from Kalisz⁶). So we incidentally receive some information about enigmatic Premonstratensian monasteries in Poland.

At the time the above mentioned act was written, St. Laurentius monastery no longer existed and we do not have reliable information about it. In the forgery of the 13th century we read, that this monastery had been given the investiture of land by duke Mieszko the Old, duke of Poznań and Gniezno⁷). This information however doesn't provide any information about the probable time of its foundation nor its founder. A mysterious series of abbots' forenames, preserved in St.

of the Friars, London-New York 1975, p. 58-59; N. Backmund (review): H. Bengsch, *Bistum Berlin. Kirche zwischen Elbe und Oder mit tausendjähriger Vorgeschichte*, West Berlin 1985, in: *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, vol. 63, 1986, fasc. 1-2, p. 102; J.T. Lees, *Anselm of Havelberg's «Banishment» to Havelberg*, *ibidem*, p. 5-18.

⁴) M. Fitzhum, *Anselm von Havelberg als Vertreter der Einheit mit der Ostkirche*, *ibidem*, vol. 37, 1961, p. 139; S. Trawkowski, *Między herezją a ortodoksją. Rola społeczna premonstratensów w XII wieku*, Warszawa 1964, p. 194-200; C. Deptuła, *Arrowezyjska reforma klasztorów w Polsce po r.1180 a reforma premonstratenska. Z problematyki przemian polskiego kanonikatu regularnego w średniowieczu*, in: *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, vol. 17, 1969, No. 2, p. 19.

⁵) H. Kroll, *Expansion und Rekrutierung der Prämonstratenser 1120-1150*, in: *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, vol. 54, 1978, fasc. 1-2, p. 36-51, compare: T. Manteuffel, *Zakony kościoła katolickiego de połowy XIV wieku*, in: the same, *Szkice z dziejów papieżstwa*, Warszawa 1956, p. 29-30; W. Knapinski, *Święty Norbert i jego zakon. Początki norbertańskich klasztorów cyrkarii polskiej i nieco z ich dziejów*, Warszawa 1884, *passim*; J. Kłoczowski, *Zakony na ziemiach polskich w wiekach średnich*, in: *Kościół w Polsce*, vol. 1, Kraków 1966, p. 481, 438, 507.

⁶) *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Śląska*, vol. 1-3, ed. K. Maleczyński and A. Skowrońska, Wrocław 1956-64, vol. 1, p. 163.

⁷) *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, vol. 1, ed. I. Zakrzewski, Poznań 1877, No. 35.

Vincent Abbey obituary book, made the historians suppose that those forenames refer to the superiors of St. Laurentius monastery⁸⁾. These forenames have been probably inscribed in the obituary book by the first monks in Olbin. Henze, Faustinus, Haco, Lodewicus, Raulinus and Willerius had been abbots in St. Laurentius monastery before this abbey was dissolved and the community was transferred to Wrocław. The register of the abbots of this monastery authorizes us to make a hypothesis. If we suppose that each abbot of St. Laurentius was in authority for at least three years, and that this monastery existed for about twenty years before the foundation of the St. Vincent abbey about 1185 — this after the dissolution of the St. Laurentius monastery near Kalisz — we can conclude that St. Laurentius monastery should have been founded in the early sixties of the 12th century⁹⁾.

The founder remains unknown, but we can assume with caution, that this monastery was founded by duke Mieszko the Old, because his investiture points at it. We would also like to mention, that St. Laurentius monastery in Kościelna Wieś near Kalisz had been a branch of the abbey in Steinfeld near Köln, as known from later sources¹⁰⁾. This dependance could point at duke Mieszko as a founder, since we know his interest in keeping relationships with influential political centres in the German Empire. His monastical foundations, for example abbey in Lad on Warta river, served that purpose.

We have also very scarce information about the second of the oldest Polish Premonstratensian abbeys in Witów near Piotrków Trybunalski. John Długosz wrote, that this monastery was founded in 1176 by Vitus of Chotel, the bishop of Płock. His opinion is based on a probably authentic document that therefore can be relied upon as a true one¹¹⁾. One should pay attention to the fact, already noticed by C. Deptuła — but it hasn't been related to the problem of foundation of the abbey in Witów — that the village «*Vitovo*» in archbishopric of Gniezno is

⁸⁾ *Liber mortuorum Abbatiae S. Vincentii Wratislaviensis*, ed. K. Maleczyński, B. Kürbis, R. Walczak, Warszawa 1971, p. XLIII and 10, 17, 48, 82, 27.

⁹⁾ Otherwise: B. Kürbis, *Najstarsza tradycja klasztoru panien norbertanek w Strzelnie*, in: *Roczniki Historyczne*, vol. 40, 1974, p. 26; S. Trawkowski, *Geneza regionu kaliskiego*, in: *Osiemnaście wieków Kalisza*, vol. 3, Kalisz 1962, p. 19, 34-35, 50-51; C. Deptuła, *Arrowezyjska reforma klasztorów w Polsce*, p. 23-25.

¹⁰⁾ *Catalogi circarium et ecclesiarum saeculorum XIII et XIV*, ed. N. Backmund, in: *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, vol. 3, p. 396-397.

¹¹⁾ K. Głowacki, *Kościół św. Małgorzaty i dawny klasztor norbertanów w Witowie*, Muzeum Okręgowe w Piotrkowie, 1984, p. 5-15; N. Backmund, *Iter in Poloniam*, in: *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, vol. 52, 1976, fasc. 3-4, p. 179.

mentioned in Pope Innocent's III edict from the year 1211, addressed to the prioress of Premonstratensian nuns covent in Busko¹²). The document refers without any doubt to Witów, the place of a Premonstratensian abbey and it confirms the relation of Długosz about bishop Vitus' foundation, because it is known without any doubt, that the monastery in Busko had been founded by Vitus' brother, Dzierżko («*Derslaus*»). Both monasteries — Witów and Busko — were connected by the community of estate, which is deduced from the above mentioned papal edict, because both were founded by the members of the same family.

Witów, like St. Laurentius monastery in Kóscielna Wieś, was utraquist. This means, that there was a convent of canons and a covent of virgins administrated by the same abbot. C. Deptuła and S. Trawkowski presume that the convent of virgins was transferred from Witów to another monastery about 1210, but we have the testimony, that the nuns were still residing there in 1241, because it is well-known from that time, that they were killed by the Tartars during an attack upon the monastery. Only three nuns, who managed to hide in forest survived¹³).

An important remark concerning the character of the Polish circary in the second half of 12th century, is that both oldest Polish Premonstratensian abbeys represented the tendency to oppose to the reforms initiated in Premontre aiming at the formation of separate abbeys for canons and provostries for nuns.

Dzierżko's document from 1190 includes another example of the specific character of the Polish circary. Dzierżko, the founder of the monastery in Busko, states, that his wife would inherit the estate from him only provided she would enter this monastery and bring in the estate as a dowry¹⁴). And so she did, Dzierżko's widow entered the monastery in Busko disregarding the interdiction of the authority of the Premonstratensian order regarding the reception of widows and married women into convents.

The Polish Premonstratensian circary had till 1181 only two monas-

¹²) *Zbiór dokumentów małopolskich*, ed. S. Kuraś, I. Sułkowska-Kuraś, vol. 1-8, Kraków-Wrocław 1962-1975, vol. 4, No. 870.

¹³) G. Labuda, *Zaginiona kronika w Rocznikach Jana Długosza*, Poznań 1983, p. 224.

¹⁴) *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Polski*, ed. L. Ryszczewski, A. Muczkowski, vol. 1, Warszawa 1847, No. 6; R. Grodecki, *Dzieje klasztoru premonstrańskiego w Busku w wiekach średnich*, in: *Rozprawy Akademii Umiejętności*. Wydział Historyczno-Filozoficzny, vol. 57, Kraków 1913-1914, p. 15-16.

teries, when in the last quarter of the 12th century a radical monastic reform, approved by the Polish episcopate, took place.

In the oldest official Premonstratensian catalogue from 1240, known as the catalogue from Ninove, two abbeys in Poland are noticed: St. Vincent's in Wrocław at the first place, and the abbey in Witów¹⁵). This catalogue doesn't mention nuns' monasteries and those abbeys, which position in the order was not established, because they had been under monastic reform at the beginning of the 13th century¹⁶).

While the catalogue of Ninove was completed, the abbey in Wrocław had the greatest weight in the Polish circary, because of its leading role in the Polish Premonstratensians monastic reform. Historians assign the beginning of the reform to the journey of Ciprianus, a member from the Czech abbey in Želiv (*Abbatia Siloe*) in 1181 to Premontre¹⁷). According to K. Maleczyński, obituary notes of Benedictine providence in St. Vincent Abbey ended about 1180: the date of Ciprianus' journey to Premontre. This enables us to suppose, that the removal of the Benedictines and their replacement by Premonstratensians from St. Laurentius monastery was the result of Ciprianus' journey. The rise of the new Premonstratensian house could be dated after 1181, but before 1193, we notice that the abbey in Wrocław was already well organized in 1193. So it is possible, that Premonstratensians were introduced to Olbim immediately after Ciprianus' return from France. It had been done with the agreement of the bishop of Wrocław and knight Łabędź's consent¹⁸).

At Ciprianus' suggestion, who was the first abbot in St. Vincent monastery, a nuns' monastery was founded in Strzelno for the convent of nuns from St. Laurentius monastery in Kalisz. A similar solution was adopted by the Premonstratensians in Wrocław. In Strzelno St. Norberts order settled in an already existing church (St. Mary) absorbing the group of canons regular, which was probably related to the

¹⁵) *Catalogi circarium et ecclesiarum*, p. 385.

¹⁶) C. Deptuła, *O niektórych źródłach do historii zakonu premonstratenskiego w Polsce w XII i XIII wieku*, in: *Archiwa, Biblioteki i Muzea Kościelne*, vol. 22, 1971, p. 206-207.

¹⁷) *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 2, Praha 1874, p. 477; B. Zientara, *Henryk Nrodaty i jego czasy*, Warszawa 1975, p. 103; S. Trawkowski, *Miedzy herezją a ortodoksją*, p. 197; the same, *Wprowadzenie zwyczajów arrowezyjskich w wrocławskim klasztorze na Piasku*, in: *Wiek Średnie*, Warszawa 1962, p. 111; C. Deptuła, *Arrowezyjska reforma klasztorów w Polsce*, p. 21; F. Göhrlich, *Urkundliche Geschichte der Prämonstratenser und ihrer Abtei zu hl. Vinzenz vor Breslau*, vol. 1, Breslau 1836, p. 38; N. Backmund, *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, vol. 1, p. 404-407.

abbey of canons regular of Trzemeszno. The monastery in Strzelno had been under powerful Wszeborowic family care, who erected the new magnificent church of Holy Trinity at the turn of the 12 and 13th centuries¹⁹).

Therefore the oldest Polish Premonstratensian monastery, St. Laurentius provostry near Kalisz ceased to exist. The convents were separated according the instructions of Premontre, and the newly created monastery in Strzelno became a direct branch of St. Vincent abbey.

We include also six other monasteries, created on the turn of the 12 and 13th century among those, which were founded under the influence of Ciprianus' monastic reform. The obituary book of the abbey in Premontre informs us that Ciprianus has been the founder of eight monasteries in Poland²⁰), at the same time his role was not to found monasteries but to reorganize existing houses and to incorporate them in the Premonstratensian order²¹).

S. Trawkowski mentions among the Ciprianus' foundations the St. Vincent abbey in Wrocław, the nuns' monasteries of Strzelno, Kalisz, Płock, Żuków and an unsuccessful foundation in Ołobok, also probably the monasteries of Krzyżanowice and Imbramowice²²). We don't agree with this list as a whole, because the monastery in Kalisz came into existence before Ciprianus' mission, while the convents in Krzyżanowice and Imbramowice far after the death of Ciprianus.

The monastery of nuns in Rybnik, hasn't been taken into consideration by St. Trawkowski since it was founded by duchess Ludmiła, the wife of Mieszko «Płatonogi», prince of Opole and Racibórz before 1211, according to S. Pierzchalanka-Jeskowa and E. Lange²³), but one

¹⁹) *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Śląska*, vol. 1, No. 73.

²⁰) B. Kürbis, *Dzieje fundacji strzeleńskiej w świetle dokumentów*, in: *Strzelno romańskie*, Strzelno 1972, p. 39-53; the same, *Najstarsza tradycja klasztoru panien norbertanek w Strzelnie*, p. 19-50; compare: W. Posadzko, *W sprawie fundatora i fundacji klasztoru norbertanek w Strzelnie*, in: *Roczniki Historyczne*, vol. 13, 1937, p. 25-37.

²¹) *L'Obituaire de l'abbaye de Premontre*, ed. R. van Waefelghem, Bruxelles 1912, p. 201.

²²) C. Deptuła, *O niektórych źródłach do historii zakonu premonstratenskiego w Polsce*, p. 203; see: *Norbert von Xanten. Adliger Ordenstifter. Kirchenfürst*, ed. K. Elm, Köln 1984.

²³) S. Trawkowski, *Miedzy herezją a ortodoksją*, p. 199-200.

²⁴) S. Pierzchalanka-Jeskowa, *Dzieje klasztoru w Czarnowasie na Śląsku w wiekach średnich*, in: *Roczniki Historyczne*, vol. 4, 1928, p. 30-84; E. Lange, *Kloster Czarnowanz, Oppeln 1930*; lately H.E. Canefeldt, *The Norbertines in Silesia*, in: *Analecta Praemonstratensia*, vol. 58, fasc. 3-4, p. 264-313 misdates the removal to Czarnowasy.

should notice, that Ciprianus' name had been inscribed in monastic obituary book under the 23th of october: the same date we find in the obituary book of Premontre²⁴). As the presumable date of foundation we point to 1207 and connect it to Ciprianus' activity — he was bishop of Lubusz at that time. In 1228 the nuns left Rybnik at their own request and moved to Czarnowasy near Opole. The new monastery was subordinated immediately to the abbey of Premontre.

The nuns' monastery in Żuków near Gdańsk had been from its beginning a branch of St. Vincent's abbey²⁵). In the papal edict from 1201 St. Jacob church in Żuków is mentioned among St. Vincent abbey's properties. Later sources don't refer to St. Jacob's church, but to St. John the Baptist's church. Therefore A. Czacharowski excluded the possibility, that Żuków mentioned in the papal edict, is Żuków near Gdańsk²⁶), but this doesn't seem convincing, because it is weel-known, that St. Jacob wasn't very popular in the Premonstratensian order, in opposition to St. John the Baptist, whose worship was very important in the Premonstratensian spirituality²⁷). We recognize as a possibility, that the patron saint of this church was changed when the Premonstratensians came to Żuków. We detect a similar case in Strzelno, where nuns resided near St. Mary's rotunda and where they added the Holy Cross to complete the title of the church, which was characteristic for the Premonstratensians.

The nuns' monastery in Żuków was founded by the dukes of Pomerania in the estate administered by St. Vincent's abbey. We notice a parallel situation in the case of Zwierzyniec and it's branch in Kazimierz Dolny, founded on the land of Zwierzyniec monastery. As I mentioned already, the common possession involved also Witów and the nuns' monastery in Busko.

The origin of the monastery in Żuków is dated around 1212-1214, at the time of Alard, abbot of Olbin. Some nuns from the convent in

²⁴) W. Wattenbach, *Nekrolog des Klosters Czarnowanz*, in: *Zeitschrift des Ver. für Geschichte und Altertum Schlesiens*, vol. 1, 1855-56, fasc. 1, p. 228; compare with W. Schulte, *Das Todesdatum d. Bischof Cyprian*, in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichte Schlesiens*, vol. 41, 1907, p. 388.

²⁵) *Catalogi circarium*, p. 443.

²⁶) A. Czacharowski, *Uposażenie i organizacja klasztoru norbertanek w Żukowie od XIII do połowy XV wieku*, in: *Roczniki Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu*, vol. 68, 1963, fasc. 2, p. 1-14.

²⁷) Ch. Dereine, *Les origines de Prémontré*, in: *Revue d'histoire ecclesiastique*, vol. 42, 1947, fasc. 3-4, p. 370; A. King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*, London 1955, p. 196.

Strzelno formed with his permission a new convent in Żuków. It cannot be excluded, that the idea of founding the monastery near Gdańsk originated at Ciprianus' time. Therefore this must be before 1207, since under his administration the abbey in Wrocław got the investiture of St. Jacob's church.

St. Margaret's abbey in Witów, older than St. Vincent's abbey provided also some evidence of organized activity, because it managed to found one or two branch monasteries. John Długosz made it known, that Vitus of Chotel, the bishop of Płock, founded as many as three Premonstratensian monasteries: Witów, Płock and Busko²⁸).

His relation to the Premonstratensian order are confirmed by the note from the obituary book of Czarnowasy (under 27th November²⁹), but Długosz's relation is not precise. The oldest document concerning Busko monastery from 1190 mentions, that Dzierżko — Vitus' brother — brought the convent from Witów to Busko and that he was the founder, not Vitus. The monastery in Busko was founded probably in 1180-1185. This can be deduced from the note of the papal edict of 1210, concerning the investiture for Busko by the predecessor of Fulco on the see of Cracow: bishop Gedeon who died in 1185³⁰).

The Norbertine convent in Płock was set up near the already existing St. Mary's church, built by Dobiechna, the second wife of Wojśław who was the grandfather of bishop Gedeon of Płock from the Gryfita family. Near this church there was a chapter of Canons Regular, subordinated to the monastery of Canons Regular in Neuwerk near Halle about 1185, and at the beginning of the 13th century it was submitted to the abbey of Canons Regular in Czerwińsk³¹).

According to C. Deptuła, the Norbertine nuns' convent was brought to Płock not by Vitus, but by Gedeon, bishop of Płock, in the years 1206-1215³²). It should be stressed, that the monastery in Płock was primarily a canonical foundation, not Premonstratensian. Analogical interdependence can be observed in Strzelno, Brzesko and Zwierzyniec.

²⁸) Ioannis Dlugossi, *Annales seu Cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae, Liber Quintus*, Warszawa 1973, p. 120.

²⁹) W. Wattenbach, *Nekrolog des Klosters Czarnowanz*, p. 228.

³⁰) R. Grodecki, *Dzieje klasztoru premonstratenskiego w Busku w wiekach średnich*, p. 8.

³¹) *Zbiór dokumentów i listów miasta Płocka*, vol. 1, ed. by S.M. Szacherska, Warszawa 1975, No. 3 and 6.

³²) C. Deptuła, *Początki klasztorów norbertańskich w Dłubni-Imbramowicach i Płocku*, in: *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, vol. 16, 1968, fasc. 2, pp. 21-34.

The new monastery in Płock quickly came into conflict with the cathedral chapter and was therefore banished to Promna on the Pilica river, where Ivo Odrowąż, the bishop of Cracow and a great patron of Premonstratensians and Cistercians built the monastery and St. Mary Magdalen's church. Later the convent returned to Płock. The subordination however of Płock's monastery to the abbey in Brzesko-Hebdom dates from the time of the settlement in Promna under Ivo Odrowąż's protection, because it's known from Długosz's relation, that bishop Ivo had extended this abbey's «*ius paternitatis*» over nuns' monasteries in Little Poland³³).

The creation of nuns' monasteries in Busko and Płock was a fragment of Ciprianus' plan to suppress double-abbeys. This plan was successful in the case of St. Laurentius, but in Witów it was only realized partially. In spite of the foundations of the convents in Busko and Płock a group of nuns still resided in Witów abbey in 1241.

At the beginning of the 13th century there came into being one more Polish Premonstratensian line descending from the Czech abbey in Strahov near Prague, the branch of which was the abbey in Brzesko and subordinated to its provostries of virgins in Zwierzyniec (near Cracow) and in Imbramowice³⁴). The oldest document mentioning the foundation of the abbey in Brzesko is the edict of Pope Eugene IV which dates from 1441. There we read that knights Strzeżysław and Wrocisław founded the abbey with duke's Bolesław Kędzierzawy consent. This permits to date the foundation to the period before 1173, so before the duke's death, but nothing more precise can be said about it³⁵).

The names of the founders who belonged to the Geraft family are enigmatic. Wrocisław appears in a document from 1149, and from the

³³) Ioannis Dlugossi, *Liber beneficiorum dioecesis Cracoviensis*, vol. 3, ed. by A. Przewdziecki, Kraków 1864, pp. 75, 104-107.

³⁴) About abbey in Strahov see: *Statni Ustředni Archiv in Prague. Memoria Tabulares Monasterii Strahoviensis*, No. 205, book 103, (among other things: «*Cathalogus Abbatum Stahoviensium*»), ibidem, *Urbař strahovskeho kláštera*, No. 203, book 4207 (about this source see: Roztislav Novy, *Strahovský urbar z r.1410*, in: *Zapisky katedry českých dejin a archivního studia*, vol. 7, 1963, p. 39); *Pamatnik Narodneho Pisemnictva, Chronologia Series Canonorum Praemonstratensium Sioenorum*, No. DH V,16; D. Čermak, *Premonstrati v Čechach a na Morave*, p. 1-8; N. Backmund, *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, vol. 1, p. 343-398; E.A. Weyrauch, *Geschichte des Prämonstratenser Chorherren Stiftes Strahov*, Prag 1863, p. 7; A. Merhautowa, *Rané středoveka architektura v Čechach*, Praha 1971, p. 245.

³⁵) *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Małopolski*, vol. 4, ed. by F. Piekosiński, Kraków 1905, no. 1405.

18th century exists a version which tells us that the abbey had been created in that very year. It should be emphasized, that investiture of thithes for the abbey in Brzesko took place after the time of bishop Ivo Odrowąż's, this is around 1218-1229³⁶). It can be assumed, that the foundation took place a short time earlier, because the investiture of thithes was as a rule the first and the most important succour for newly created monasteries and the Premonstratensians were especially sensitive to it³⁷). John Długosz wrote down, that bishop Ivo had founded the abbey in Brzesko-Hebdów and he was not far from the truth if we assume, that this monastery had been primarily a canonical foundation, established at the time of duke Bolesław Kędzierzawy's, and where Premonstratensians were brought in, like in Strzelno and Płock. It is not known, when it took place, because the investigation in the archival materials of the abbey in Strahov shows, that it was not known in the mother abbey when the branch in Brzesko came into being³⁸).

A number of reasons indicates that a Premonstratensian convent came to Brzesko when Henry was abbot in Strahov — he died in 1194 — and when in Cracow duke Kazimierz Sprawiedliwy reigned, whose wife, Helen from Znojem in Moravia, descended from the founding family of the Premonstratensian monastery in Louka near Znojem³⁹). When Henry was abbot in Strahov, his monastery showed the greatest activity in founding new branch houses. Apart from the monastery in Louka, monasteries were founded in Geras and Kounice and probably in Brzesko.

The later date of the foundation of the Premonstratensian abbey of Brzesko can be proved also by the fact that the already mentioned catalogus of Ninove from about 1240 doesn't mention its existence⁴⁰). Still we have to remember, that materials for this catalogue were

³⁶) W. Semkowicz, *O początkach rodu Geraltów i fundacji klasztoru Norbertanów w Brzesku*, in: *Miesięcznik Heraldyczny*, vol. 2, 1909, p. 17-23; S. Kuraś, *Katalog opatów klasztoru premonstratenskiego w Brzesku-Hebdowie*, in: *Nasza Przyszłość*, vol. 9, 1959; p. 39-49; compare with I. Długosi, *Libere beneficiorum*, vol. 3, p. 75.

³⁷) G. Constable, *Monastic Tithes from their Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge 1964, pp. 158-160, 189.

³⁸) See the note No. 34.

³⁹) The obituary book of Steinfeld in: *Statni Ustredni Archiv in Prague, Cathalogus Abbatum* (see the note No. 34) without the pagination; Památník Národního písemnictví in Prague, *Annales Monasterii Strahoviensis* (see the note No. 1) p. 29; T. Wasilewski, *Helena księżniczka znojemská, žena Kazimierza II Sprawiedliwego Przyczyniek do dziejów stosunków polsko-czeskich w XII wieku*, in: *Przegląd Historyczny*, vol. 69, 1978, fasc. 1, pp. 115-120.

⁴⁰) *Catalogi circarum*, p. 385.

collected certainly far earlier, probably at the beginnings of the 13th century. The monastery in Brzesko was then in a period of reorganization according to the spirit of Norbertine rule, which didn't proceed without difficulties at all. From Czech sources it is known that the reform of the Premonstratensians in Poland was accompanied by strong perturbations connected probably with the defiance of old canonical congregations incorporating them into «*Ordinis Praemonstratensis*», and the letter of Gervais of Chichester, the abbot of Premontre to Ivo Odrowąż proves, that bishops of Cracow — except Ivo — didn't manifestate any fervour to propagate the idea of the Premonstratensian reform⁴¹). Only Ivo Odrowąż supported the new order by affiliation into it the monastery in Brzesko-Hebdów. It is probable, that his protection didn't limit only to organizational works, but he gave Czech Premonstratensians real assistance in building a new conventual church in Brzesko, which shows the influence of Cistercian architecture, especially of the abbey in Mogiła near Cracow, one of Ivo's foundations⁴²).

We will return to Ivo's role in creating the Polish Premonstratensian circary, when discussing foundation of the monastery in Imbramowice, now we should pay attention to the fact, that Czech Premonstratensians achieved the reform of the monastery in Zwierzyniec near Cracow⁴³).

There was also an old chapter founded before 1176 by Iaxa and probably subordinated to the commandory of the «*Fratres Sanctissimi Sepulchri*» in Miechów. From fairly credible sources, everybody knows that Wojsława, *magnat* Hroznata's sister — Hroznata was the founder of two Premonstratensian monasteries in Teplá and Chotiesov — stayed in Cracow towards the end of the 12th century. Wojsława was the wife of the governor of Cracow's castle and according to later monastical sources, she effected the reform in Zwierzyniec introducing into the chapter the Norbertine nuns from Czech provostry in Doxan on Ohra river, which, as the sources testify, had relations with Polish

⁴¹) S. Kutrzeba, *List generała Premonstratensów Gerwazego z Chichester do Iwona Odrowąża z roku 1218*, in: *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, vol. 16, 1902, p. 587; compare with C. Deptuła, *O niektórych źródłach do historii zakonu premonstrańskiego w Polsce*, p. 196-209; the same, *Monasterium Bethlehem. Wokół misji biskupa Henryka Zdika i początków opactwa w Brzesku*, in: *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, vol. 18, 1970, fasc. 2, pp. 27-44, where there is quite pointless supposition.

⁴²) W. Łuszczkiewicz, *Komunikat o opactwie norbertańskim zwanym «de Brzesko»*, in: *Sprawozdania Komisji do Badań Historii Sztuki w Polsce*, vol. 4, 1891, pp. LIII-LIV.

⁴³) J. Rajman, *Klasztor norbertanek na Zwierzynku koło Krakowa w wiekach średnich* (a doctor's thesis), Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Krakowie (Pedagogical College), pp. 77-87.

monasteries during the 12th century. The sources also prove Iaxa's donation for the monastery in Doxan⁴⁴).

The procedure of Zwierzyniec's affiliation to the Premonstratensians ended at the beginning of the 13th century and it should be emphasized also, that there are some indications that Hroznata's family participated in the reorganization of the monastery in Brzesko (prior John Hroznata in the first part of the 13th century)⁴⁵).

In the first half of the 13th century the Polish Premonstratensian circary was finally shaped into two lines: Steinfeld-Wrocław and Strahov-Brzesko. Apart from the above mentioned monasteries, there were also monasteries in Dłubnia-Imbramowice, Kazimierz Dolny and Krzyżanowice. The two first monasteries were founded at the initiative of the provost in Zwierzyniec, which was one of the most important Premonstratensian monasteries in Poland in the 13th century.

Ivo Odrowąż established that a part of the nuns of Zwierzyniec, led by abbess Gertruda who was probably bishop Ivo's sister, moved into the monastery of Imbramowice. The story about this fact is preserved in John Długosz's works from the 15th century, which can be trusted⁴⁶). According to the document of John of Rzeszów, bishop of Cracow, of the 7th of october 1477 which is neglected by the historians, the monastery in Imbramowice was founded by bishop Ivo Odrowąż⁴⁷). It is hardly possible to verify if this notice is independent of Długosz's account of the fact, but it cannot be excluded, that bishop's chancellery still had the minute of the foundation document in the 15th century.

The other Zwierzyniec's branch monastery came into being in a nuns' estate in the district of Lublin, in Skowieszyn, which beared as early as in the 13th century the name Kazimierz in honour of duke Kazimierz Sprawiedliwy (the Rightous), the benefactor of the monastery in Zwier-

⁴⁴) J. Emmler, *Necrologium Doxanense*, in: *Sitzungsberichte der Königl.-böhmischen Gessellschaft der Wissenschaften in Prag. Vorträge in den Sitzungen der Classe für Philosophie, Geschichte und Philologie* 1884, pp. 94, 96, 104.

⁴⁵) *The Registry of the Monastery in Zwierzyniec in Cracow, The Obituary Book*, No. 38.

⁴⁶) *Siedemsetleć dzieje klasztoru PP. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach na podstawie klasztornego archiwum*, Przemyśl 1926, pp. 1-17; G. Deptuła, *Początki klasztorów norbertańskich w Dłubni-Imbramowicach i Plocku*, p. 17; N. Backmund, *Iter in Polonia*, p. 181 mentions, that it had been the utraquist monastery; compare with Z. Kozłowska-Budkowa, *Uposażenie Klasztoru PP. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach*, in: *Studia Historyczne ku czci S. Kutrzeby*, vol. 2, Kraków 1938, pp. 369-380.

⁴⁷) *The Registry of the Archiepiscopal Curia in Cracow, Acta Episcopalia Cracoviensia*, vol. 3, p. 129v.

zyniec. The house in Skowieszyn was in 1249 according to the best authorities named as a provostry of virgins. It had a modest income, but was protected by Mazovian knighthood. The monastery in Kazimierz suffered from repeated Tartar and Russian invasions and ceased to exist around the end of the 13th century⁴⁸).

The activity of the abbey in Brzesko in the 13th century seems have been modest. We practically know nothing about its activity in the field of monastic life, besides a very enigmatic notice of a foundation of a Premonstratensian nuns' monastery in Ołobok, in the district of Kalisz, attributed to Valterus, abbot of Brzesko⁴⁹). The monastery in Ołobok was known to the author of the second catalogue of Ninove, from about 1270, but it is known without any doubt, that the Cistercian nuns' covent from Trzebnica (in Silesia) was brought to Ołobok in 1211⁵⁰). It is possible, that the information from the catalogue of Ninove is wrong, which seems to be probable since this source has got some important weaknesses (for example: monasteries in Imbramowice, Krzyżanowice and Kazimierz Dolny are not mentioned).

It is difficult to explain the origin of the monastery in Krzyżanowice on the Nida river, a monastery of Wrocław's branch⁵¹). It surely existed in 1247, but the information from duke Bolesław the Bashful's document in 1254, stating that the Cracow prince renewed his father's Leszek the White's foundation, seems rather enigmatic. Długosz wrote, that the monastery in Krzyżanowice had been founded by Iaxa, the same who founded the monastery in Zwierzyniec. The great chronicler was not able to point at the specific revenue of the foundation and this fact makes us doubt about the authenticity of his narrative. Some historians, as E. Wiśniowski and C. Deptuła, tried to reconcile the discrepancies in the sources and assumed, that Iaxa primarily had

⁴⁸) C. Deptuła, *Cella de Skowiszyn. Przyczynek do najstarszych dziejów Kazimierza Dolnego nad Wisłą*, in: *Rocznik Lubelski*, vol. 10, 1967, pp. 113-124; compare with J. Rajman, *Nadanie dóbr skowieszynskich dla klasztoru Norbertanek na Zwierzyniu*, in: *Rocznik Kazimierski* (in the press).

⁴⁹) C. Deptuła, *O niektórych źródłach do historii zakonu premonstratenskiego w Polsce*, p. 191.

⁵⁰) H. Likowski, *Najdawniejsze dzieje klasztoru cysterek w Ołoboku*, in: *Sprawozdania z Czynności i Posiedzeń Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności*, vol. 26, 1921, No. 7, p. 5; compare with: *The Registry of the Benedictine Nuns Monastery in Staniatki*, No. 26, p. 336-337.

⁵¹) E. Wiśniowski, *W sprawie początków klasztoru norbertanek w Krzyżanowicach*, in: *Roczniki Humanistyczne*, vol. 8, 1960, fasc. 2, p. 215; C. Deptuła, *Dwie fundacje klasztoru norbertańskiego w Krzyżanowicach*, ibidem, vol. 11, fasc. 2, p. 95-123.

founded the monastery of canons and that duke Bolesław only in 1254 brought in the nuns from Strzelno. The monastery in Krzyżanowice, like in Imbramowice and Kazimierz, isn't mentioned in the catalogue of Ninove from 1270, but only in the register from 1320, known as the catalogue of Tongerlo⁵²). If we assume again, that one started to collect informations about the monasteries for the catalogue from 1270 on a much earlier date, which seems be right, considering the necessary visitations by the abbots. Therefore authors of the catalogue did not insert the notes about Imbramowice and Krzyżanowice because these monasteries were in a period of reorganization. It gives us a basis to suppose that the monastery in Krzyżanowice is coeval to Imbramowice and Kazimierz, which means that it was founded in the first part of the 13th century.

Lately N. Backmund has formulated the opinion, that this abbey had been founded between 1227 and 1247 as an utraquist monastery⁵³). His dating may be right, but regarding to the character of this monastery one should be careful. The notes from 1247, 1293 and 1326 testify only about a provost in Krzyżanowice. However, we have no sources mentioning the abbot. This investigator of Premonstratensians history has quoted some enigmatic note about the abbot of Krzyżanowice from 1354, however the source of it's provenience is not known⁵⁴). In the obituary book of Zwierzyniec we find only a list of forenames of the provosts of Krzyżanowice⁵⁵). It seems therefore to be impossible, that the monastery depending of the masculin St. Vincent Abbey could have the nature of an utraquist house.

According to the sources there's no doubt, that the monastery in Krzyżanowice had been from it's origin a provostry of virgins.

In the middle of the 13th century existed in Poland twelve houses of St. Norbert's order. Among these as much as nine were monasteries of virgins, which can be considered as a specific characteristic of the Polish circary. All these had large estates, not smaler than the latifundia of the Benedictines and the Cistercians. The process of foundation of Polish Premonstratensian monasteries finished in the middle of the 13th

⁵²) *Catalogi circarium*, p. 443.

⁵³) N. Backmund, *Iter in Poloniam*, p. 183; compare with: J. Zdanowski, *Kościół pod wezwaniem św. Tekli i były klasztor norbertanek w Krzyżanowicach pod Pińczowem*, in: *Nasza Przeszłość*, vol. 17, 1963, pp. 103-122.

⁵⁴) N. Backmund, *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, vol. 3, Straubing 1956-1960, p. 598.

⁵⁵) See the note No. 45.

century. After 1294, the St. Margaret's provostry of canons was founded in Bytom by the St. Vincent abbey; and at the beginning of the 15th century, the abbey in Nowy Sącz was founded near the St. Spirit poor-house⁵⁶).

The origin of eight monasteries can be attributed to the reform of abbot Ciprianus, as I have already mentioned: Wrocław, Strzelno, Żuków, Czarnowąsy, Busko, Płock, Brzesko and Zwierzyniec. These monasteries were the fundamental core of the Polish circary. Its development differed from Western Europe, but was similar to the Kingdom of Bohemia. We recognize as a specific nature of Polish Premonstratensians that the new order contributed very little to create new monasteries, but took over already existing ones.

In Strzelno, Płock, Zwierzyniec and Brzesko resided the Canons Regular or «*fratres S. Sepulchri*», who had given up their seat to Premonstratensians, like the Benedictines in St. Vincent's abbey in Wrocław.

The Premonstratensian monasteries in Poland were protected by powerful knight families. The *magnat's foundations predominate the duke's. We include families of the name Wszeborowic, Łabędź, Gryfita, Odrowąż* and knights bearing the Janina arm among the great protectors of the Premonstratensian order.

From the beginning, the movement of the Premonstratensians in Poland took different forms because, apart from the Steinfeld line, which was represented by St. Vincent Abbey and its branches, there existed also a Strahov line (Strahov was the branch of Steinfeld too). This diversity was expressed not only in hierarchic subordination. The line coming down from St. Vincent's abbey can be called the orthodox line of Polish Premonstratensians, where the basic postulate of the reform which was the suppression of double abbeys was fully put into practice.

The foundation of the Brzesko group had difficulties about which the superiors of Czech monasteries informed Premontre. We observe various anomalies in the Brzesko line, e.g. the use of the title of abbes, which was forbidden among Premonstratensian nuns, by information

⁵⁶) F. Göhrlich, *Urkundliche Geschichte der Prämonstratenser*, vol. 1, p. 57; about abbey in Nowy Sącz see: N. Backmund, *Monasticon Praemonstratense*, vol. 1, p. 417-418; the same, *Iter in Poloniam*, p. 182; B. Kumor, *Opactwo norbertańskie w Nowym Sączu*, in: *Currenda*, vol. 109, 1959, p. 86-90; the same, *Kopiarz opactwa norbertanów w Nowym Sączu*, in: *Studia Historyczne*, vol. 17, 1974, p. 474.

about prioresses or enigmatic abbots of Brzesko and Witów, which appeared sometimes as abbots of Zwierzyniec or of Busko⁵⁷). We can point to the oldest seal of the monastery in Zwierzyniec, which has the inscription «*Ecclesia S. Augustini de Zverincia*», but it represents the abbot, not the provost. There aren't such examples in sphragistics of Czech monasteries⁵⁸). The relations between the monastery in Zwierzyniec and the abbey in Brzesko-Hebdów were so close in the first half of the 13th century, that we could even guess an attempt of conserving the house of virgins into the old type of abbey, so the tendency quite opposed to Ciprianus' intentions⁵⁹).

Finally it is worth to give some comments on titles of Polish Premonstratensian monasteries, because they may trace connections between Polish abbeys and the oldest monasteries in France and Germany. There is the characteristic title of St. Mary, in the case of the churches in Brzesko, Busko, Czarnowasy and primarily in Płock. This might be an indication of a full relationship at the time of foundation with monasteries in Floreffe, Cuissy and Tongerlo, and first of all with the abbey in Strahov⁶⁰).

There were numerous churches dedicated to St. John the Baptist: Żuków; probably Kazimierz Dolny and also Zwierzyniec. This dedication was secondary, the first patron being St. Augustine. The church took it surely from the monastery in Doxa, from where was recruited the first convent of Premonstratensian nuns, on the other hand, dedication to St. John the Baptist points at Prémontré, the mother-abbey of the order⁶¹). The dedications to the cult of the St. Mary, specially to the Virgin Mary, as well as to St. John the Baptist, are the dominating titles of churches, which we find among the Premonstratensians. There is no evidence for the cult of the Holy Sepulchre and the Passion of Christ which was so characteristic for the order. Only once appeared

⁵⁷) *Dokumenty Klasztoru PP. Norbertanek w Imbramowicach (1228-1450)*, ed. by Z. Kozłowska-Budkowa, Kraków 1948, No. 2; C. Deptuła, *O niektórych źródłach do historii zakonu premonstratenskiego*, p. 195.

⁵⁸) *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Małopolski*, vol. 1, ed. by F. Piekosiński, Kraków 1876, No. 39; compare with: P.F. Křivský, *O pečetech a erbech v rade premonstratskem a cisterciakem*, Praha 1946, pp. 25, 42-43, 46, 52.

⁵⁹) J. Rajman, *Klasztor Norbertanek na Zwierzyńcu*, pp. 88-89.

⁶⁰) F. Petit, *La spiritualité des Prémontrés aux XII et XIII s.*, Paris 1947, pp. 253-260.

⁶¹) See the note No. 27.

the invocation of the Holy Cross, as the second dedication, in Strzelno, although the cult of the Holy Cross was widespread among Premonstratensians (in Prémontré and Averbode)⁶²).

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⁶²) F. Petit, *La spiritualité des Prémontrés*, pp. 87-88.